

Dynamic Diachronic Modell of the Parts-of-Speech System of Nganasan
(Typological, Areal and Genetic Background of Nganasan Adjectives)

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Samoyedic is classified as one of the two main branches of the Uralic language family. Four Samoyedic languages are spoken today: Nenets, Enets, Nganasan, and Selkup. The number of **Nganasan** native speakers is 500. They live on the Taimir Peninsula from the lower Yenisei in the west to the Khatanga Bay in the east.

In my poster I consider a multiple approach to a particular model designed for parts-of-speech system from a diachronic point of view. Cross-linguistically many theories have been brought forward regarding one of the main problems of classification: the status of the adjectival category and the lexical categorization of property concept words (e.g. Bhat 1994, Beck 2002, Dixon 1982, Wetzler 1996).

Lexical categorization of property concept words plays an important role in the build-up of the parts-of-speech system because the adjectival category as a swing-category between NOUN and VERB does not show universal features. There are several languages, e.g. English in which adjectives are distinct from both nouns as well as verbs. These languages differ from one another concerning the constitution of the adjectival class. For example English has a large, open class of adjectives, and others have only smaller, closed classes. In a large number of languages found over of North America, East and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific, adjectives are indistinguishable from verbs. Most languages in Europe, North Africa, North Asia and Australia tend to treat adjectives in a similar way to nouns, the same as in case of Nganasan:

	VERBS		ADJECTIVALS		NOUNS	
Verbs	//	Adjectives	//	nominal Adjectives	//	Nouns

It shows that also in Nganasan the property concept words are categorized as noun-like adjectives, and their (morpho)-syntactic properties are similar to those the nouns, (however, there are few stative verbs as well).

If, investigating the circumstances of the development of parts-of-speech in a given language, we approach to the parts-of-speech system of from a diachronic point of view, besides the typological viewpoint two further ones, a genetic and an areal should be taken into consideration.

We can approach parts of speech systems from a genetic point of view. The adjectivals of the Uralic languages are usually characterized as noun-like adjectives, however the presence (or absence) of the adjectival category as a distinct category in the Uralic proto-language is an open

question. In Proto-Uralic the difference between noun and adjective mainly lies in derivation, in Proto-Samoyedic we can reconstruct a larger number of adjectival lexemes, (partly complex) affixes and structures being prototypical of adjectives, at the same time in Nganasan there are several special characteristic features.

The cornerstones of the model:

(1) structure of comparison

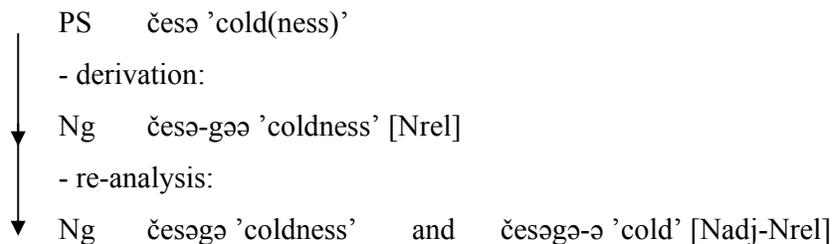
- Source schema (X is Y from Z) and its role in the classification

(2) morphological gradation

- moderative suffixation and its role in the classification

(3) adjectival suffixes:

In Nganasan we can find much more adjectival affixes than in other Samoyedic languages, but today these affixes are unproductive. They mark only the "adjectivness" of the lexeme. We can establish a kind of "wave-like process" since PS, e.g.:



(Note that Nadj-suffix is not productive today, but Nrel-suffix is the most productive one nowadays.) In Nganasan we can find a systemic morphological markedness of Dixon's (1982) semantic types: e.g. the basic COLOUR terms have a special marker, while PHYSICAL PROPERTY and DIMENSION have another one. The members of VALUE do not have markers, e.g.:

COLOUR d'aba-**kuə** 'red', tusaj-**kuə** 'black', siraj-**kuə** 'white', etc.

DIMENSION: hirə-**gəə** 'high', tantə-**gəə** 'wide', d'ürə-**gəə** 'deep', najba-**gəə** 'long', etc.

PHYSICAL PROPERTY: česə-**gəə** [Nadj]/česi-**tiə** [PtImp] 'cold',

hekə-**gəə** [Nadj]/heku-**tiə** [PtImp] 'warm', etc.

(4) structure of adjectival predication

In Nganasan there is a morphological marked "split" in some semantic types (PHYSICAL PROPERTY): the members of this type can occur as noun-like adjectives or stative verb in predicative position depending on their time-stability.

(5) attributive adjective, agreement

In Nganasan there are strong, special agreement rules for adjectives and its head-noun in case, person, and number.

An areal examination can serve with interesting results in the case of Nganasan, as its areal background differs not only from the genetic one, but also the languages of the area in question differ from each other in many respects, too: first of all, they belong to different language types: Evenki is an agglutinative, tense-prominent language, while Yeniseian and Chukchee-Kamchatkian languages are incorporative. The genetically isolated Yukaghir is an agglutinative, but aspect-oriented one in which property concepts words are lexicalized as verbs. In this section we have to inspect comparison phrases.

To summarize it can be stated that the status of a particular word class is not permanent, but it always "swings" also diachronically in interaction with other system (e.g. tense-aspect system) of the language, although there are some structure, that are more or less independent from the above mentioned interaction (e.g. comparison).

Abbreviations

Nadj	denominal adjectival suffix
Ng	Nganasan
Nrel	relational adjectival suffix
PS	Proto-Samoyedic
PtImp	imperfective participle

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