

Sociolinguistic and linguistic outcomes of Nivkh-Russian language contact

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Nivkh (Paleosiberian) is spoken in several dialects on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur region of Russia. It is a heavily endangered language which is being currently replaced by Russian. The paper provides a survey of sociolinguistic situation on Sakhalin Island, tracing the development of language shift from Nivkh to Russian and analyzing political, socioeconomic and cultural reasons for language marginalization. Furthermore, the paper considers various changes that have taken place in Nivkh under the influence of Russian in the realm of phonology, lexicon, and grammar. A special attention is paid to various morphosyntactic changes, such as the elimination and emergence of some grammatical markers and forms, the shift to obligatory subject-verb agreement, and the alternations in the word order.