

Evidentiality in Nganasan

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1. The aim of the presentation is to provide a description of Nganasan evidentiality in a broader spectrum than earlier investigations. Evidentiality is not discussed as a grammatical (morphological), but as a semantic category (e.g. Nuyts 2017, Aikhenvald – Dixon 2015,). We focus on the following questions: which Nganasan constructions fall into the scope of evidentiality and what kind of correlations can be detected between them.

2. Nganasan evidentiality has been studied to some extent (cf. Gusev, 2007, Kuzņecova and Usenkova 2004). However, research so far has only focused on evidentiality expressed through morphological means. Following Gusev, Aikhenvald (2004: 47–50) discusses Nganasan evidentiality in her monograph, and creates a complex system with the following subtypes/categories:

- (1) Direct, visual evidential.
- (2) Direct, non-visual (sensory) evidential: it can refer to any sort of non-visual perception. Among them, the most frequent type involves access to the information through hearing, but it can also be accessed through taste/odor detection, or tactile perception. This is the reason why the term auditive is used more frequently for this category in the Samoyedic linguistics, for example:

Tahariâa	ŋonə	ba-mi	logiâ-mini-t'i
well	again	dog-Px1Du	bark-AUD-OBL.3SG

'The dog was barking (the speaker did not see the dog)'
(TKF_041210_NenetsManAndGiant_flkd.016)

- (3) Inferred: the inferential is used to mark inferences made on the basis of visual evidence.
- (4) Reportative/renarrative: a reported evidential marks any secondhand information. It can come from some specific person

This classification serves as a starting point of our analysis.

3. Our analysis is based on data from a Nganasan corpus that is being compiled at the University of Hamburg (Brykina et al. 2016). The corpus primarily contains narrative texts. This fact has to be reckoned with/taken into consideration during the analysis. A substantial proportion of the texts are folklore texts recorded during fieldworks. In addition to these, the corpus contains personal and life stories, family histories, and even some dialogues. The speaker typically does not focus on one hearer, but usually tells the story for a broader audience. Especially in case of life stories, the speaker also takes into account that the hearer is the researcher. Our results are based on 162 texts (cc. 112 000 tokens).

4. In the presentation, we argue that Nganasan evidentiality has to be investigated not only from a morphological, but also from a lexical and syntactic point of view. There are lexical items and constructions (e.g. reported speech) that express evidentiality and/or epistemic modality.

The presentation will investigate the following topics:

- morphological means: categories of mood expressing evidentiality,
- nominalized constructions expressing evidentiality (auditive/sensitive),
- „epistential” lexical means (particles, adverbials, etc.),
- reported speech constructions,
- other means of perspectivization: the metanarrator ”Mouth”.

References

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