

Ethnolinguistic aspects of Nikolay Nevskiy's research on Miyako-Ryukyuan

The purpose of the present paper is to introduce the legacy of Nikolay A. Nevskiy's studies of Miyakoan regiolects from the angle of ethnolinguistics/linguistic anthropology¹, a field that was established roughly in the times when Nevskiy conducted his Miyakoan research.

Although the use of term "ethnolinguistics" would be an anachronism when describing Nevskiy's linguistic research, it can be argued that Nevskiy's methodology reflected a number of notions that are relevant to the field in question. Conversely, Nevskiy's approach to language studies can be contrasted with dialectology, the framework which one could probably expect from an early 20th century student of unwritten minority languages related to a dominant language.

After defining what will be comprehended as "ethnolinguistics" in the present discussion, the paper will proceed to describe Nevskiy's research of Miyako-Ryukyuan – as based on this author's Ph.D. thesis (Jarosz 2015) – and identify which components characteristic of Nevskiy's approach can be regarded as "ethnolinguistic". The theoretical background of ethnolinguistics will be introduced mostly following the Duranti 1997 handbook.

1. The origins of ethnolinguistics

The invention of the term *ethnolinguistics* as such is attributed to Bronisław Malinowski, who is often considered the father figure of modern ethnography; the introduction of fieldwork into anthropological methods as opposed to so-called

¹ These two names for the discipline are apparently synonymic, "ethnolinguistics" being preferred in non-English speaking parts of Europe while "linguistic anthropology" is the term of choice in the US and UK; this split possibly reflects the traditional European preference for the term "ethnology" and its cognates, as opposed to the American inclination towards "anthropology" (Duranti 1997:2). For this reason, the two terms will be regarded as having roughly the same referent, and thus they will be used in this paper interchangeably.

“armchair anthropology” is regarded as one of his greatest contributions to the said discipline (Riley 2007:125).

As implied in Duranti 1997:2, Malinowski may have first used the term in question in the following passage from a 1920 paper:

There is an urgent need for an ethno-linguistic theory, a theory for the guidance of linguistic research to be done among natives and in connection with ethnographic study (Malinowski 1920:69).

The way this passage is formulated already implies an interdisciplinary core approach to this “ethnolinguistic” framework postulated by Malinowski. It essentially identifies the necessity to adopt special theoretical tools to study language not as an abstract ideal system, but as a means of communication representative of and inseparable from a speech community that is the subject of an ethnographic study.

The Western school of linguistic anthropology, the American counterpart of ethnolinguistics (cf. footnote 1), was propelled to development in the first half of the 20th century by the works of American scholars such as Franz Boas (1858-1942), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) and Edward Sapir (1884-1939).

Another academic beside Malinowski who challenged the framework of “armchair anthropology” and replaced it with the participant-observation method of research, Boas argued that in modern anthropology, language should be not just a means but a subject of study in its own right. This led him to the creation of the concept of *cultural relativism*, which revolutionized contemporary ethnographic/anthropologic studies.

A notion inspired by Boas’ experience with native American languages and the consequent observations that the world perceived and categorized through, say, Kwakwaka’waka, should differ significantly from the same “objective world” perceived and categorized through English, cultural relativism postulates that “each culture should be understood in its own terms rather than as part of an intellectually or morally scaled master plan, in which Europeans or those of European descent tend to be at the top” (Duranti 1997:54-55). In other words, by discarding an evolutionistic stance towards the cultures developed in the history of mankind, cultural relativism subjectified the minority languages and cultures which so far had tended to be regarded, implicitly or explicitly, as inferior, “primitive” or “savage” as opposed to the white-Western culture represented by the scholars conducting the study of the people in question.

Emphasizing how a culture could not be fully understood without the knowledge of the community’s language, Boas made native languages of the studied communities an integral part of his anthropological research. Consequently, he published numerous volumes that focused on native language transcriptions of his informants explaining the past traditions of their community, such as ceremonies or art (ibid., 53).

Boas' successors, Sapir and Whorf, have been immortalized through the notion of linguistic relativity, an extension of Boas' cultural relativism conventionally referred to by their names as the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis. Rooted in its authors' background in native American studies, linguistic relativity is "generally understood as the principle that language conditions habits of speech which in turn organize and generate particular patterns of thought", established as an idea "of central relevance to debates on the nature of the mutual determination of language, mental representations, and social action" (Jourdan and Tuite 2006:5). To set the principle of linguistic relativity as the theoretical starting point in one's linguistic research is to acknowledge the distinct mind-frames of speakers of different languages shaped precisely by the specific language that they speak.

Over the course of the 20th century, objectives and approaches identified with ethnolinguistics/linguistic anthropology had come to be defined in ways exemplified by the following citations:

[Linguistic anthropology is] the study of speech and language within the context of anthropology (Hymes 1963:277).

[Linguistic anthropology is] the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice [...] it relies on and expands existing methods in other disciplines, linguistics and anthropology in particular, with the general goal of providing an understanding of the multifarious aspects of language as a set of cultural practices (Duranti 1997:2-3).

Basically, if one was to summarize ethnolinguistics in terms of what differentiates it from the more "traditional" or "pure" (i.e. non-interdisciplinary) subfields of linguistics, such as dialectology, the following three points could be highlighted:

- ethnolinguistics is not just concerned with the language for the sake of the language, i.e. a system of arbitrary signs abstracted to a large degree from its users and the circumstances of its use;
- it does not separate language from its use or a speech act from the speaker;
- the speakers are perceived as social actors, and their language as a tool of reflecting, maintaining and recreating the cultural rules and values of their community.

2. Nikolay Nevskiy: the profile

What follows in this section is a brief introduction to Nevskiy's biography. Readers who are interested in more in-depth accounts of Nevskiy's life and research are encouraged to refer to the following sources: Nevskiy and Oka 1971 (biographical chapter by Katō, 261-335); Nevskiy 1978 (biographical chapter by Gromkovskaya, 162-189); Gromkovskaya and Kychanov 1978; Ikuta 2003; Katō 2011.

Nikolay A. Nevskiy (1892-1937) was a Russian specialist in Oriental studies. Having completed courses in Japanese and Chinese studies, he graduated from Saint Petersburg Imperial University in 1915.

Also in 1915, upon the completion of his university education, Nevskiy set out for his alma mater university-founded stay in Japan. Initially, the stay was scheduled for two years. In 1917, however, following the outbreak of October Revolution in his homeland, Nevskiy decided it was not safe to return to Russia, which ultimately led to him spending another twelve years in Japan.

Consequently, the stay in Japan is associated with the most prolific period of Nevskiy's scholarly life. During that time, Nevskiy resided in three academic centers: Tokyo (years 1915-1919), Otaru on Hokkaido (1919-1922), and Osaka (1922-1929).

Nevskiy's shifts in academic interests paralleled his residence changes. Living in Tokyo, Nevskiy focused on the research of Japanese folk traditions related to Shinto and shamanism, especially of the Tōhoku (north-eastern Honshu) area. In Otaru he proceeded with the study of the Ainu, the aboriginal people of Hokkaido, collecting and analyzing their folklore, language and oral literature. Finally, while in Osaka, Nevskiy largely conducted research on the Miyako language, oral literature and ethnography, as well as Tsou, the Austronesian language of an indigenous people of Taiwan, which at the time was a part of the Japanese Empire.

To this day, however, the most recognizable academic contribution by Nevskiy remains his study of the Tangut language and writing system. Tangut was a Tibeto-Burman language of the medieval Xixia kingdom and it had a highly complicated script inspired by Chinese characters. Nevskiy succeeded in deciphering the said script. Released posthumously in 1960, *Тангутская филология* 'Tangut philology', his two-volume manuscript dictionary, was a Tangut studies milestone.

Nevskiy returned from Japan to the USSR in 1929, one of the reasons being Nevskiy's wish to concentrate on his Tangut research; in Leningrad, he had access to the world's greatest collection of Tangut-related sources stored at the Asiatic Museum. For less than a decade that followed until his untimely death, his focus remained on Tangut studies.

In October 1937, Nevskiy and his Japanese wife Isoko were arrested by the NKVD under allegations of being Japanese spies. They were found guilty in a torturous interrogation, and executed by a firing squad on November 24 (Ikuta 2003:20-21). Nevskiy's reputation was restored in the Khrushchev Thaw, while *Тангутская филология* was awarded a Lenin Prize for an outstanding academic achievement in 1962. Nevertheless, the damage was done, as Nevskiy's sudden and tragic demise prevented him from completing most of the multifaceted works he had initiated. A large number of his research initiatives – including the study of the Miyako islands – were left unfinished, and some had been abandoned at an early stage of preparation.

3. Nevskiy's research on the Miyako islands

Nevskiy became interested in the Miyakos under the direct influence of prominent figures of early Ryukyuan studies. These valuable personal acquaintances included ethnographer Kunio Yanagita, ethnographer and linguist Fuyū Iha, linguist Tōsō Miyara, and historian Kanjun Higashionna.

As revealed among others by Nevskiy's correspondence with Higashionna (Nevskiy and Oka 1971:176-177, Tanaka 2013:217) and Nevskiy's research drafts preserved in Nevskiy's archive of the Tenri University Library, until c.a. 1920 Nevskiy was primarily interested in Okinawa, the political and cultural center of the former Ryukyu Kingdom. He attempted to study Old Ryukyuan *omoro* songs and an 18th-century Classical Ryukyuan dictionary *Konkō Kenshū*, as well as Okinawan *utaki* shrines and their deities (Jarosz 2015:26-28). None of this research, however, has ever been published. In the decade that followed, Nevskiy's interest shifted towards a southern periphery of the Ryukyus, and namely the Miyako islands.

Before Nevskiy, both language and culture of the Miyakos had been largely an uncharted research territory. In a letter to Nevskiy from 1925, Yanagita called the islands "a land untouched by research" (Tanaka 2013:218). Earlier still, in a paper first published in 1911, Iha claimed that "regions that are difficult to access, such as the Kunigami area and Miyako-Yaeyama, have not really undergone Japanization yet and so they maintain their old language and traditions in an unchanged shape" (Iha 2000:378). Nevskiy was thus aware that field research of the little known, mysterious islands, which might have preserved a significant number of archaic linguistic and cultural characteristic extinct elsewhere in Japan, was highly in demand.

Nevskiy visited the Miyakos three times: in 1922, 1926 and 1928. He spent there an estimated total of about two months. He conducted fieldwork which consisted of interviews with Miyakoan natives, collecting samples of oral literature such as songs, proverbs or riddles, as well as studying aspects of traditional Miyakoan life: beliefs, rituals, housing, food, etc. Consequently, his research objectives cannot be classified as either linguistic or ethnographic. This observation is further confirmed by an analysis of the content of his Miyako-related publications (cf. Jarosz 2015:31-38): in linguistic papers, he drew heavily from the folklore sources, and conversely, in ethnographic papers he unfailingly introduced native Miyakoan terms, as well as transcripts of songs and stories in their original Miyakoan versions. Furthermore, he often reflected upon the etymology of specific Miyakoan terms and expressions, comparing them against similar or related expressions elsewhere in Japan. Nevskiy was thus clearly driven to combine both disciplines in an approach called *ethnographic linguistics*, which will be explained later in part 4.

As was the case with much of the research executed by Nevskiy, few of the results of his Miyakoan studies were published during his lifetime. These scant exceptions mostly consist of papers on Miyakoan *ajagu/aagu* songs and other

aspects of Miyakoan folklore, which would be issued in Japanese ethnographic journals while Nevskiy was still in Japan (for reprints cf. Nevskiy and Oka 1971:3-19, 32-34, 43-60, 61-75, 76-93, 94-99). A single major Miyako-centered paper released in Russian was *Представление о радуге как о небесной змее* 'representation of the rainbow as a heavenly snake', first released in a 1934 festschrift devoted to Sergey Oldenburg, and then reprinted in the 1996 issue of St. Petersburg Journal of Oriental Studies (Gromkovskaya 1996:412-421).

By contrast, a number of major collections of Nevskiy's Miyakoan work based on his handwritten sketches were only released over the last forty years.

Фольклор островов Мияко 'folklore of the Miyako islands' was published in 1978 (Nevskiy 1978), and translated and re-edited for the Japanese market in 1998 (Nevskiy 1998). The original 1978 editor was Lydia Gromkovskaya, who typed, collected and arranged the content of Nevskiy's drafts on Miyakoan oral literature stored at the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts.

The aforementioned 1996 volume of St. Petersburg Journal of Oriental Studies, entirely devoted to Nevskiy's life and legacy and co-edited by Gromkovskaya and Vladimir Alpatov, introduces a handful of short and often unfinished pieces on Miyakoan language and culture, which also include lecture resumes. The Miyakoan collection in Gromkovskaya 1996 thus involves, among others, *Общие сведения о географическом положении, официальном статусе и языке Мияко* 'general information on the geographic location, official status and the language of Miyako' (282-284), *Лечение болезней [на Мияко]* 'curing diseases [on Miyako]' (285-290), *О фонеме р* 'about the phoneme /r/' (396-402), and *Основные положения к докладу 'Фонетика Мияко в японо-рюкюской фонетической системе'* 'main theses of the lecture *Miyakoan phonetics within Japano-Ryukyuan phonetic system*' (431-433).

Nevskiy's largest work dedicated to Miyakoan was a Miyakoan-Japanese-Russian dictionary draft. Spanning over roughly 1,200 pages of B5-size manuscript, the final version of the draft has been preserved, again, in the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, catalogued under allegedly Nevskiy's own title *Матерьялы для изучения говора островов Мияко* 'Materials for the study of the language of the Miyako islands', henceforth the *Materials*. This source was released in Japan in 2005 (Nevskiy 2005) as a limited, not-for-sale facsimile edition.

Nevskiy abandoned his work with the *Materials* at a stage when almost all entries had been arranged alphabetically and most had been supplied with meta-language explanations, usage examples and references. The draft character of the *Materials*, however, makes them extremely difficult to use in their original manuscript form. Large parts may be difficult to decipher or even illegible, while even larger fragments appear incomprehensible at first glance due to Nevskiy's idiosyncratic work-in-progress manner of writing, which involved, among others, mixing multiple meta-languages of the explanation sections of entries, an abundant usage of not explained and not readily understandable abbreviations and lexical labels, or a phonetic tran-

scription system with non-standard usage of a number of symbols. Therefore, the manuscript version of the *Materials* cannot be easily used as a dictionary.

This author's Ph. D. project (Jarosz 2015, with a forthcoming e-monograph release as Jarosz 2017; cf. also a separate transcript in Nevskiy 2013) involved a full transcript, tentative editing and commentary of the Japanese facsimile release of the *Materials*. A future project will involve more advanced editorial interventions into the *Materials*, so that they can serve as an actual, functional dictionary.

4. The "ethno" components of Nevskiy's linguistics

At this point it cannot be confirmed if Nevskiy was directly influenced by Boas' ideas or familiar with his publications on linguistic anthropology. Equally unclear if still less likely is that Nevskiy's Miyakoan research approach was inspired by Sapir and Whorf's achievements – they both were Nevskiy's contemporaries and conducted their major studies in parallel to Nevskiy's Miyakoan fieldwork. Who Nevskiy was undoubtedly influenced by, however, was his teacher and academic master Lev Sternberg (1861-1927), a representative of the Russian school of ethnography, whose ideas upon examination turn out to bear striking resemblance to Boas' postulates of cultural relativism, participant-observation and the role of language in anthropological study.

Like a large number of his peers, Sternberg was tied to Siberia not by choice, but as a political outcast banned there by the authorities of the Russian Empire. Turning his plight into a scholarly vocation, Sternberg specialized in the study of North-East Asia and Paleosasiatic peoples, especially Nivkh (Gilyak), Uilta (Orok) and Ainu.

In all of his ethnographic research, Sternberg promoted a method he called *ethnographic linguistics* (Nevskiy 1998:359). According to this notion, the study of linguistics and ethnography are mutually inseparable. Consequently, an ethnographer cannot conduct any satisfying field research unless they acquire a thorough knowledge of the native language of the community or the people they are studying. An ethnographer's proficiency in that language needs to be sufficient to enable them to collect the data in the native language of the given community, without the assistance of a bilingual intermediary.

Malinowski's concept of ethnolinguistics appeared about a generation later than Sternberg's ethnographic linguistics. Given the Western nature of Malinowski's educational and academic background, it seems unlikely that he had been influenced to a large extent by Sternberg or his peers. Nevertheless, both terms and their implied content are similar enough to explain why there are so many ethnolinguistic/anthropolinguistic components to Nevskiy's Miyakoan research. The most essential of these components have been highlighted in the list below.

To a large extent, this list agrees with the modern notions and topics of interest to ethnographers and anthropological linguists as discussed in Duranti 1997:90-99, who also emphasizes that “linguistic anthropologists adopt ethnographic methods to concentrate on the ways in which linguistic communication is an integral part of the culture of the groups they study” (ibid., 96).

1. Nevskiy went to the field with some practical knowledge of Miyakoan. Over the course of 1921/22 New Year’s holiday week in Tokyo, and then directly before his first journey to the Miyakos in 1922, Nevskiy received Miyakoan lessons from a young native speaker, Kimpu Uiuntin (who later took on the Japanized name Kempu Inamura and went on to become an ethnographer himself), learning the rudiments of Miyakoan phonetics and grammar. The results were reportedly astonishing to the natives Nevskiy met in Miyako, who were surprised to hear Nevskiy repeat Miyakoan words they taught him with clear and accurate pronunciation (Katō 2011:139-140).

2. Nevskiy did not use traditional dialectological wordlist questionnaires. This fact implicitly points at his awareness that words were not mere labels for constant, universal concepts that could be freely substituted from one system (language/ethnolect/dialect) to another. That is to say that Nevskiy recognized that recording a list of Miyakoan translation equivalents of selected Japanese words carried an inherent risk of randomness. First, translation equivalents do not necessarily mean conceptual and usage equivalents; second, there was no guarantee that a list of vocabulary items essential in Japanese would translate to a list of items as essential in Miyakoan, and conversely, that such a list would not omit items of key importance in Miyakoan speech life which in Japanese were of no relevance or nonexistent altogether. Thus, it can be assumed that Nevskiy saw it necessary to examine a language inductively, on its own terms, rather than through the skewing lenses of the dominant language of the area.

Therefore, in order to construct his Miyakoan lexical lists, Nevskiy would either abstract specific words from longer speech acts – which meant that along with the word he obtained at least one possible context natural for this word to appear in – or ask the natives about Miyakoan names of specific items (such as tools, plants, or parts of the house) that happened to be around at the given moment.

In the latter case, Nevskiy was not only interested in the particular word form, but also in the usage and value to the community of the represented item. Entries in the *Materials* thus abound in such community-relevant information. This is not limited just to culture-specific vocabulary. For example, the entry for the word *tuzmi*: ‘night blindness, nyctalopia’, apart from Japanese and English translations involves information that “as medicine they use pig’s liver, *wa:nucimu*”. On the other hand, the entry for the word *ij* ‘dog’ includes sociolinguistic commentaries (“this word is sometimes used as a swearword”) as well as an account of beliefs and symbolism associated with the animal in question (“in Uechi they say that

old dogs become werewolves and that they wear for example shells of the hermit (*ammagu*) crab as their shoes” and “in Uechi they say that if you train a dog for three days it will be loyal to you for three months, and if you train it for three months it will stay home only for three years”) and its practical meaning to the community (“dog meat is customarily eaten as a medicine for syphilis (*nabana*)”).

Apart from such everyday words, the *Materials* are a collection of a multitude of culturally relevant and culture-specific vocabulary, the semantic areas of which involve kinship terms, names of wells, deities, shrines and ceremonies, food and beverages, plants, animals, household items, or terms of architecture, agriculture and textile production, to name just a few.

3. In a fashion resembling of Boas' study of native American peoples, throughout his research Nevskiy honored native Miyakoans' perspective by incorporating and employing their own accounts of their culture and language, spoken and written alike. Preparing for and during his fieldwork, Nevskiy surrounded himself with Miyakoan intellectuals and put their perceptions and understanding of their own culture (history, customs, beliefs) at the center of his research, attributing them with a subjective rather than objective status. Other than recording their recounts of songs or stories, he also often cited their opinions on the topics of his interest.

Nevskiy's aforementioned acquaintanceship with Kimpu Uiuntin is one example of this kind of subjective approach to his informants. Other instances involved: Kanto Kuninaka, a mayor of the village Irabu on a small Miyakoan island of the same name, himself engaged in the study of local history and traditions together with etymology of relevant terms (cf. Kuninaka 1941); Kantaku Tomimori, an educator and historian who in 1910 published *Kyōdōshi* 郷土史 'local history [of Miyako]', an early contribution to modern Miyakoan studies (Motonaga 2012:68); Kōnin Kiyomura, a historian interested in local traditions and folklore, best known as the author of 1927 *Miyako shiden* 'the history and legends of Miyako' (Kiyomura 2008), which can be considered the first systematic reference book on Miyakoan history; or Katsuko Maedomari, a female teacher from Yokohama and at the same time a native informant of the Sarahama-Ikema regiolect.

4. Nevskiy displayed a sensitivity towards the sociolinguistic and stylistic variation of Miyakoan. In the *Materials*, he carefully noted the registers of a large number of entry words and example sentences, distinguishing primarily between the contemporary spoken language and archaic language of the songs. Less commonly he explicitly differentiated spoken language items diachronically, labeling them as “modern” or “archaic”, or according to the social status of their users, such as “aristocracy” or “commoners”.

Undoubtedly, Nevskiy saw languages as multilayered living organisms of different shades, rather than as ideal homogenous entities. This attitude matches to a large degree Duranti's description that linguistic anthropologists typically do not

just work on a language variety but on the language variety (or varieties) spoken in a *particular community*. In other words, linguistic anthropologists start from the assumption that any notion of language variety *presupposes a community of speakers* (1997:72; emphasis by Jarosz).

5. When recording texts that he later used for his linguistic analyses, Nevskiy selected genres that represented important cultural notions and belief systems of the Miyakoans. His collections, apart from the aforementioned traditional songs, including ceremonial chants, epic songs (*ajagu* in the narrow sense) which reflected Miyakoan ideas of storytelling, or improvised festive *to'gani*, involved spoken stories with a moral, as well as shorter forms such as proverbs, riddles, or superstitions.

5. The “non-ethno” components of Nevskiy’s linguistics

It possibly goes without saying, but since Nevskiy was not consciously working within the theoretical frame of linguistic anthropology – if any such firm frame existed in his times at all – his methods necessarily differed from what is understood today as ethnolinguistics.

One key difference involves the notion of participant observation (cf. Duranti 1997:99-102). Ideally, a fieldwork researcher of ethnolinguistics is supposed to be a distant observer or a bystander that blends with the examined community, making sure his foreignness or outsider status is not a distraction to the community members actively participating in the setting or activity that is being studied. It appears that typically, it takes an extended period of fieldwork residence in the community in order to gain the level of non-intrusiveness and transparency to the native community members that is called for in this approach.

This certainly cannot have been the case with Nevskiy. First, the amount of time he actually spent in the Miyakos was necessarily limited, his three stays combining to a total of about two months. Second, he was a white man on the periphery of late Taishō/early Shōwa Japan, a country in which any westerners, let alone those fluent in Japanese and interested in local cultures, were still a rarity. Indeed, accounts remain of the spectacular and permanent impression that Nevskiy’s arrival in the islands left on the local people, especially the remote islands of the group such as Irabu (Katō 2011:136-140) and Tarama (Kanna 2008:155). Therefore, given these time and period limitations imposed on Nevskiy’s research, it was impossible for him not to be perceived by the communities of his study as the Exotic Outsider, even if one assumes this would have been Nevskiy’s methodology had he had a choice. This, in turn, naturally diminishes the “ethnolinguistic” ring to Nevskiy’s research regarding one of the rudiments of this discipline.

Another crucial difference between linguistic anthropology and Nevskiy’s approach concerns the primary research objective displayed by both. Modern lin-

guistic anthropology focuses on the way a language lives in the community at the time of the study, simultaneously representing and reproducing meanings specific to the studied culture. This question is addressed in the form of three key theoretical notions: performance, indexality and participation (Duranti 1997:14-21). On the other hand, Nevskiy's focus was on the fossilized traditions and the meanings represented by them. He was primarily interested in the Miyako of the past, one that was already obsolete to his own informants. His goal was to study archaic Miyakoan language and culture, as he linked it to his broader study of the linguistic and ethnic history of the Japanese archipelago. This is reflected in the choice of the source material he was most focused on studying – the old *ajagu* songs and their archaic language, backed up by the study of Classical Ryukyuan. A scrupulous description of contemporary Miyako was not a part of his research plan, and in case such contemporary themes did appear in his research output, it was more of a byproduct than an intentionally achieved goal.

Conclusions

Nevskiy's research methods, which he applied to his study of the Miyakos in a manner similar to his research of other peoples such as Ainu or Taiwanese Tsou, reflected Sternberg's school of ethnographic linguistics, which turns out to share a range of shared assumptions with Western ethnolinguistics or linguistic anthropology. As a consequence, even though Nevskiy almost certainly was not directly influenced by the works of Boas or his academic heirs, the common grounds between Nevskiy's and Boasian standards of language research are difficult to overlook.

What distinguishes Nevskiy as a student of a Japonic regiolect is that the position he adopted was ethnolinguistic rather than dialectological. Not only did he appreciate the intricate mutual influences between local language and culture, he also consciously tried to capture them in his research, successfully merging the approaches provided by both ethnography and linguistics. A further reflection of this attitude is witnessed in his efforts to learn practical Miyakoan. These efforts can be interpreted not just in communicational terms, but also as an attempt to understand the studied culture from their members' perspective.

These characteristics sets Nevskiy's research apart from other recorded attempts at studying Miyako and the Ryukyus in general (cf. Jarosz 2015:371-385). Over the course of the 20th century, there may have been a number of researchers such as Fuyū Iha or Shuzen Hokama – both native Okinawans, incidentally – who practiced both linguistic and folklore studies of the Ryukyus. Unlike Nevskiy, however, they did not combine these two disciplines to produce a synthesized ethnolinguistic output, at least not in their works this author is familiar with. If this conclusion is correct, then Nevskiy was not just the first linguist to have conducted his field-

work in the Miyako, but also the only one who reached for transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches in order to more fully define the essence of Miyakoan language as used within its community.

Thus, one is rather safe to conclude that Nevskiy's late Taishō/early Shōwa research on the language of the Miyako islands was a unique endeavor in the scale of Japano-Ryukyuan studies. Its methods as well as underlying theoretical assumptions have aged well, making Nevskiy's "ethnolinguistic" works such as the *Materials* relevant and relatable even a century later. Furthermore, the output they produced was ahead of its time by decades, uncompromisingly preceding the ideas of Japonic linguistics that only surfaced at the turn of the new millennium (cf. *ibid.*, 377-379).

Nevskiy's contribution to Japano-Ryukyuan linguistics is perhaps best summarized by Shigehisa Karimata, a leading specialist in Ryukyuan language studies, in the following citation on Nevskiy's legacy.

It has been ninety years since Nevskiy's first visit to the Miyako islands, but even after all this time his work has not become obsolete at all. From now on it should become still more attractive (Karimata 2012:26-27, translated from Japanese by Jarosz).

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アレクサンドラ・ヤロシュ

論文概要

昭和初期における「民族言語学」: ニコライ・ネフスキーと宮古語研究

本論文ではロシアの東洋研究者であり、1915年から29年まで日本で過ごし、日本固有の信仰や、アイヌ、琉球、台湾の先住民であるツォウ族、滅びた西夏王朝のタングートの文字などの研究に身を捧げたニコライ・ネフスキー（1892-1937）の業績を紹介する。特にここでは、琉球諸島／沖縄県の南の遙か離れた太平洋に浮かぶ宮古島の言語の研究に焦点を当てる。

ネフスキーはちょうど大正と昭和にまたがった1922年から28年までの間に最も活動的に宮古語の研究を行った。ネフスキーが「民族言語学 (ethnolinguistics)」という1920年にマリノフスキによって提唱された造語を知っていたかどうかは議論の余地がある（デュランティ 1997: 2）。また、ネフスキーが言語人類学のパイオニアであるフランツ・ボアズの直接的影響下にあるということも、サピア＝ウォーフの研究がネフスキーの宮古語の研究と並行して行われていたことから疑わしい。しかしながら、ネフスキーの宮古語研究のアプローチは民族言語学／文化人類言語学 (anthropolinguistic) の前提と多くの共通項を持つと論じることはできる。ネフスキーの方法論の中核には、ネフスキーの師であるレフ・シュテルンベルクによって提唱され、民族学的研究の中の言語学的研究の不可避性を訴えた「民族学的言語学 (ethnographic linguistics)」が横たわっている（ネフスキー 1998: 359）。

そして、ネフスキーの宮古語-日本語-ロシア語の辞書の草稿（ネフスキー 2013）を調べてみると、確かに、任意の語彙の形態や文法的形態素に関心を抱くというよりもむしろ、ネフスキーは言語学的データをより大きな全体像の一部、つまり宮古の伝統や精神の中に織り込まれたものとしてアプローチしていることに気づく。自然な日常会話、歌、物語、諺やなぞなど様々な例を見出し語として加えたのである。この多くの見出し語自体が、宮古の文化領域との強い結びつきを示しており、それらはどちらかのメタ言語での単なる対応語よりもメタ言語による記述的な説明を与えることが容易だったであろう。彼はまた様々な資料提供者と協力しており、その中で名前を知られている幾人かは宮古の知識人たちで、彼らの言語に対する洞察はネフスキーの仕事に貢献した。その一方、言語の研究に直接関係していないネフスキーの宮古に関する論文、例えば民間伝承、民族衣装、民間信仰などに関心を寄せたものは、言語学的な裏付けをしばしば紹介し、宮古語特有の表現の意味やそれらが表す概念に重きを置いた。

上記に述べたように、日本の島々の言語の先駆的研究-そのアプローチと目標はおそらく現代の言語人類学の方法とそれほど遠くないと言えるだろう-がいかに行われたかという注目に値する過程を描き出すことができるだろう。

キーワード: ニコライ・ネフスキー、民族言語学、文化人類言語学、琉球諸語、宮古語、欧州の日本学

Keywords: Nikolay Nevskiy, ethnolinguistics, anthropolinguistic, Miyakoan, Japanese Studies in Europe