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INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF KLAVDIYA  
PLOTNIKOVA'S KAMAS

MA thesis

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## **Table of contents**

Preface.....	4
Chapter 1. Introduction .....	7
1.1. Research history of Kamas language .....	7
1.2. History and fate of the Kamas language community .....	8
1.3. Klavdiya Plotnikova’s biography and symbolism .....	9
1.4. Explanation of relevant terminology.....	11
1.5. Objectives of the study and problematic points .....	12
Chapter 2. Theoretical background.....	14
2.1. Language contact .....	14
2.1.1. Codeswitching vs borrowing .....	17
2.1.2. Pidginisation.....	18
2.2. Language shift and interference .....	19
2.3. Bilingualism and the individual .....	20
2.3.1. Language attrition .....	21
2.3.2. From language attrition to language death.....	23
2.3.3. Designations for the last speaker .....	23
Chapter 3. Analysis of the language material .....	25
3.1. Language data .....	25
3.2. On transcription.....	29
3.3. Transcript of the file SU0211.....	30
3.4. Analysis.....	48
3.4.1. Phonetics .....	48
3.4.2. Morphology.....	49
3.4.2.1. Noun morphology .....	49
3.4.2.2. Verb morphology .....	52
3.4.3 Syntax.....	54
3.4.4. Lexicon.....	55
3.4.5. Extralinguistic features .....	57
Chapter 4. Analysis of post-shift Kamas in the framework of language contact theories .....	58
Conclusion .....	61

Abbreviations .....	62
References .....	63
Resümee .....	67

## **Preface**

It is a known fact that smaller Uralic languages have not been extensively studied. There are big gaps in general linguistic knowledge about languages that still have a relatively large amount of speakers left like Komi or Erzyan. When it comes to the really small languages on the verge of extinction, the materials available are scarce and often in forms which are difficult to comprehend to an outsider, or even to a linguist that does not happen to belong to that particular school or has not specialised in fennougristics. The intention of this thesis is to look at a less-known language objectively, making all the prerequisites clear and the analysis as transparent as possible so that it could serve a wider audience than just the samoyedologists. The idea is to take a fixed, limited amount of material and go into detail about as many aspects of it as possible. As the subject of my research I have chosen the language of the alleged last Kamas speaker, Klavdiya Plotnikova. Despite the fact that there is a substantial amount of recordings of her speaking Kamas, other relevant information that would provide a useful context to the material itself is far from being enough for an exhaustive modern linguistic analysis.

This paper presents the results of transcribing a limited part of one recording of Plotnikova's Kamas in a modern comprehensible phonological transcription, analysing the text on different linguistic levels, comparing it to the Kamas variant spoken before the language shift from Kamas to Russian took place, and making possible conclusions concerning the variety of Kamas spoken by Plotnikova, its characteristics and the manner of its emergence. This work was preceded by a year of Kamas studies with my supervisor, professor Gerson Klumpp. The written sources which could serve as a guide to Kamas grammar, such as Kai Donner's grammar (Joki 1944) and Gerson Klumpp's dissertation (2002b) were used as reference material, but since both of these are written in German, a language which the author of this paper is less than fluent in, it must be said that most of the author's knowledge

of Kamas comes from the forementioned extended course, studying the available texts and articles about the language.

This thesis consists of several parts. Since it is a case study of one person's language use, a very specific and narrow topic, it is essential to know as much as possible about the speaker and her language community. Therefore the first part of the thesis is an introduction which gives an overview of the Kamas language community, its history and the socioeconomical reasons why the Kamas tribe stopped speaking their language. It also presents information about Klavdiya Plotnikova's personal history, as much as is known from her own testimonies and the descriptions of the linguists that worked with her. The third topic in the introduction of the thesis gives a short history of the linguistic research carried out in the 1960s in Abalakovo and also later by samoyedologists in Estonia, Finland and Germany.

The second chapter of the thesis gives the study a context in language contact theory, describing possible outcomes in different circumstances and individual language attrition mechanisms. The third part of the thesis contains the description of the way Plotnikova's variety of post-shift Kamas has come about as well as a detailed analysis of an example of her language as it is documented in the recording chosen for this study. An essential part of the thesis also found in chapter 3 is the transcription of the recording, which includes four lines: the phonetic line, the phonematic line, the interlinear glossing and an English translation. Chapter 4 continues the study, looking at the findings of the detailed analysis of the previous chapter in the light of the theoretical framework and fusing the two together to form a more holistic approach to the language data. This is perhaps the most illuminating, but also conjectural part of the thesis. Since the lack of data about the existing materials and the Kamas language in general does not allow drawing explicit and straightforward conclusions, the answers to the research questions must be found through reasoning based on indirect evidence.

The final parts of the thesis are the conclusion, where the main findings are brought out, and a summary of the work in Estonian.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Gerson Klumpp, who first sparked my interest for Kamas. He has been a great teacher and continued to inspire and motivate me whenever I needed it.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research history of the Kamas language and gives an overview of the sociolinguistic background of the small Kamas language community in the 19th and the 20th century. The last section of this chapter contains the biography of Klavdiya Plotnikova and the explanation of her role as a symbolic figure among the community of Finno-Ugric researchers and activists.

### **1.1. Research history of Kamas language**

The first linguist to study Kamas language in depth was the Finnish linguist Matthias Alexander Castrén, who visited the tribe in 1847 and spent two weeks in their winter settlement in the dale of river Ilbin, studying Kamas, composing an overview of its grammar and a dictionary containing about 900 words (Matvejev 1964). The next professional linguist to engage in Kamas was Kai Donner, who carried out fieldwork in the area twice, in the years 1912 and 1914, spending two months in the village of Abalakovo in 1914 (Matvejev 1964). The results of his expeditions were a dictionary containing over 3000 words, a grammar sketch and a collection of texts. Donner's manuscripts on Kamas were later edited by Aulis Joki and published as the book "Kai Donners Kamassisches Wörterbuch nebst Sprachproben und Hauptzügen der Grammatik" (1944) which is the most comprehensive source of Kamas lexicon and texts up to the present day.

After Donner's fieldwork there was a gap of almost fifty years in Kamas research, with the exception of Arkadi Tugarinov, a local historian and ornithologist that visited Abalakovo in 1925. In his article (1926) Tugarinov describes the Kamas as very kind, hospitable and easy to talk to, mentioning that their linguistic expression and gestures are distinct of those of Russians. He also wrote down a few words from the single Kamas-speaking old people that were still alive. After that the language

was believed to be extinct by the linguists (Matvejev 1964). In 1963 a toponymy expedition from the Ural State University led by Aleksandr Matveev visited the area to document possible remaining place names with Samoyedic etymology. By chance they came across Klavdiya Plotnikova, who spoke some other language than Russian, which was quickly identified as Kamas. Some fieldwork with her was carried out immediately. Later that year Matveev met the Estonian researcher Paul Ariste and his students in Uzhhorod in a conference of Fenno-Ugristics (SKN: 2:09) and made them an offer to send an Estonian linguist to Abalakovo to work with Plotnikova. Ariste assigned one of his students, namely Ago Künnap, for the job. It should be mentioned here that Ariste had the idea that each sub-branch of the Uralic language family should have one of his students as a specialist of that particular sub-branch. In his system, Ago Künnap was destined to be the one studying Samoyedic languages. Künnap first visited Plotnikova in Abalakovo in the following year, 1964, and continued his visits for a few years, making in total four field trips. As a result of this work he published several articles (Künnap 1964, 1965a, 1965b), later also some transcriptions of the recorded Kamas (KT I–V, Künnap 1992a, 1992b) and a brief typological overview of the language (Künnap 1999). He also used the data for his two volume study on Kamas inflectional morphology (Künnap 1971, 1978).

A modern-day linguist actively researching Kamas is Gerson Klumpp, who has written several works about the language, including his dissertation about the converb constructions in Kamas. The Hungarian linguist Janurik Tamás has also conducted research on Kamas.

## **1.2. History and fate of the Kamas language community**

The Kamas people used to be a nomad tribe living on the slopes of the Sayan mountains and in the valley of the river Ilbin. Their sources of subsistence were hunting, gathering and reindeer herding. By the end of the 19th century there were



only about 130 people left in the tribe. (Matvejev 1964) It is very likely that the tribe had always been a rather small one. In the end of the 17th century 525 Kamas people were counted in the census of the local yasak-books (Dolgikh 1960: 239). The area has historically been inhabited by different Turkic and Samoyedic ethnic groups which had cultural as well as linguistic contacts between themselves for a lengthy period of time. In Kamas there are many loanwords and several grammatical constructions that have been adopted from Turkic. The decisive events which determined the fate of the tribe happened in the beginning of the 20th century, when the Kamas were forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and settle down in the villages with the Russian settlers. According to Tugarinov (1926) and Matvejev (1964) the reason for this change was losing their reindeer herds to devastating livestock epidemics. The indigenous people were also susceptible to illnesses brought by the newcomers and the health and vitality of the Kamas dropped fast. Many children died very young. There was a majority of men over women in the Kamas population and many Kamas men married Russian women, which resulted in adopting the Russian language and agricultural lifestyle. The cultural assimilation was very fast and irreversible, as was the death of Kamas language. The social impact of being forced to adopt the lifestyle of Russian settlers was fatal to the Kamas tribe, and alcoholism and the violent behaviour induced by it quickly devastated the small vulnerable indigenous population. (Donner 1979, Künnap 1999)

### **1.3. Klavdiya Plotnikova's biography and symbolism**

Klavdiya Plotnikova (b. Andzhigatova) was born in 1895 in the small village of Abalakovo in Central Siberia, Krasnoyarsk krai, Ribinsky district, and lived there for her whole life. Her father was a Russian named Zakhar Perov and her mother a Kamas, born Afanassia Andzhigatov. Andzhigatov's was one of the old Kamas families that had a parallel Kamas name in addition to the Russian version Andzhigatov. Castrén presents the name in the form of *Sela*, Donner's more specific

version is *śiləzəŋ*, meaning 'the Fat (clan) people' (*śil* 'fat' + *-zəŋ* PL). Donner worked with Klavdiya Plotnikova's aunt Avdakeja Andzhigatov and describes her as an excellent informant. (Joki 1944: XL) Plotnikova herself later also said that she remembered Donner's visit to Abalakovo very well (Matvejev 1964).

Plotnikova's parents had eight children (Lena, Dyoma, Klavdiya, Nadya, Aprosyia, Vera, Manya and Maksim), of which four died at an early age. Written sources do not shed much light on Klavdiya's earlier years. She has later said herself that they did not live in hunger, with enough meat for everyone to eat (SKN). She was discovered by Matveev's expedition in 1963. At that time she was 69 years old, but still active and in relatively good health.

Plotnikova has been described as generous, humorous, talkative, calm and intelligent, generally a pleasant informant to work with by Künnap (1964) as well as Tiit-Rein Viitso<sup>1</sup> who conducted interviews with her during her visit to Tartu. Klavdiya Plotnikova died on September 20th 1989 in the age of 94.

Klavdiya Plotnikova has become quite well known among Finno-Ugrists as the last speaker of Kamas, or "the last Kamas". The events in the year 1970 turned her into a symbol of dying languages and tribes. It was the year of the third international congress of Finno-Ugric studies in Tallinn, and Plotnikova was brought to Estonia for this occasion. She became a phenomenon, everyone wanted to see her and speak to her. She also gave a speech at the congress and had an interview for the radio. In the same year the film "Veelinnurahvas" by Lennart Meri was released, which starts with a scene of Plotnikova speaking Kamas and eating wild raspberries on a beautiful forest glade. Although the scene is preceded by shots of picturesque mountain landscapes and the caption at the start says "Klavdia Plotnikova, Abalakovo küla" – "Klavdiya Plotnikova, Abalakovo village", the scene is actually also filmed in

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<sup>1</sup> Tiit-Rein Viitso, p.c.

Estonia during Plotnikova's visit. The scene is followed by the narrator's text "This language is older than any written history". Such presentation of Plotnikova definitely reinforced her image as an almost mythical figure, a carrier of ancient unique information not found anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, in the research carried out with her, she was also treated as such and not as a regular informant. The recordings that were made with her indicate that she was allowed to speak Kamas and only Kamas in order to extract all of the valuable linguistic data she had to offer and avoid any "contamination" or foreign influence in her speech. The date of Plotnikova's death, 20th of September, has been celebrated in Helsinki as the memorial day of extinct Uralic languages since 2011 and her portrait has been used in the popular graphic imaging by the students of Finno-Ugric studies in the University of Helsinki.

#### **1.4. Explanation of relevant terminology**

In this study it is important to distinguish between *pre-shift* and *post-shift* Kamas (cf. Klumpp 2013a: 46). Pre-shift Kamas denotes the language as it was spoken before the whole language community shifted to Russian. Pre-shift Kamas was not officially standardized in any way and also varied to an extent on an individual level. As mentioned in paragraph 1.1, the only considerable source of pre-shift Kamas is the text collection in Donner's "Kamassisches Wörterbuch" (Joki 1944). These texts originate from the final period of pre-shift Kamas when the language was changing under the pressure of more prestigious Russian and the rapid language shift had already begun. Therefore, this is not "pure" Kamas anymore either, but since good sources of even earlier Kamas varieties do not exist, it will serve well enough as the standard for pre-shift Kamas in the context of this study.

The notion of post-shift Kamas is used here to denote the variety that was spoken after the language community had entirely shifted to Russian. It is important to

mention that Plotnikova was not the only Kamas speaker known to linguists in the 1960s. There was another informant found in 1964, Aleksandra Semënova. She was originally also from Abalakovo, but lived in the city of Krasnoyarsk and had allegedly not spoken Kamas for about 50 years. There are two recordings with her available in the Archive of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages. Semënova was 89 years old when she was discovered by Matveev and Künnap and died shortly afterwards, so it was not possible to document her language to the extent that it was with Plotnikova. (Künnap 1965a)

It is not entirely justified to classify Semënova's language variety as post-shift Kamas, since she had spoken Kamas in her youth, shifted to Russian with the community and ceased to speak Kamas after the shift. It is more appropriate to consider it a heavily attrited version of pre-shift Kamas. The distinction between the two varieties is not based solely on the time frame, but also on the generation of speakers and the differences in acquisition and development of their language. Plotnikova kept speaking Kamas also after the shift and in Lennart Meri's film "Veelinnurahvas" (Meri 1970) it is claimed that after her last Kamas-speaking relative died, she kept speaking Kamas to God. Therefore in this study the term post-shift Kamas is conditionally synonymous with Plotnikova's variety of the language.

### **1.5. Objectives of the study and problematic points**

The goal of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it aims to describe the chosen limited amount of linguistic data in detail, shedding light not only on the material itself but also on its background: the way it was recorded, the personal history of the informant and the sociolinguistic setting. In a standard linguistic paper this part of the research would include all the information necessary for an in-depth analysis and subsequent reasonable conclusions about the subject. Here lies the first problem – the available information about Klavdiya Plotnikova's history of language use and the

sociolinguistic background is scarce, not nearly enough for an exhaustive study. The metadata for the recordings with her is virtually non-existent. Tapes are missing even dates, times and location of the recordings. It is unknown how much Plotnikova consulted with the linguist during the breaks between the takes. There are no suitable recordings of other Kamas speakers to serve as comparative material. It is not possible to say much about the way Plotnikova's idiolect has changed or developed over time, since all the recordings are from the same period. Yet the second objective of the study is to analyse the data and draw conclusions about the way Plotnikova's unique idiolect has emerged and the factors that have played a role in its development. In this stage it is often necessary to rely on indirect evidence for the aforementioned reasons. It must be stated that this study does not intend to be exhaustive on the given topic in any way but rather to set the preliminary scene for a future more in-depth quantitative research.

## **Chapter 2. Theoretical background**

For this study, it is important to have an understanding of the processes which can happen in a multilingual society over the course of time. This includes contact-induced language change, language shift, language attrition and language death. The following chapter is based on several theoretical works on language contact and aims to give a background for the following analysis by describing different language contact situations, their development over time, outcomes of different situations and factors which have an effect on this outcome. Since this study is mostly descriptive in nature, the chapter consists of a variety of approaches to language contact. Such multidirectional approach is essential for understanding the complex situation from which Klavdiya Plotnikova and her language emerged.

### **2.1. Language contact**

Language contact as a research field has been growing rapidly and gaining more importance during the past five decades or so. By now a lot of literature about the topic is available and it is known that contact-induced change has happened to nearly all languages. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 1–3)

When looking at language contact, it must be acknowledged that the character of changes induced by contact is mostly determined by social factors rather than inherent characteristics of the languages themselves. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 36) In a bilingual or multilingual society the languages can have different roles according to the domains they are used in. There is often a dominant or prestige language, which is used as the default language in the public domain. It is the language used to interact with state agencies, the language of most of the media and the education system. The non-dominant language in this case remains to be spoken only in the domestic sphere. (Matras 2009: 45) Similarly, languages can be divided

into majority and minority languages by the proportion of speakers in a given territory or society. The majority language is often also the dominant language, but not in all cases. In many post-colonial countries, English or French had become and remained the dominant language despite never being a language spoken by the majority of the population. (Matras 2009: 45–46) Depending on state policy, minority languages may also gain an official status and become the medium for education, media and state affairs. In a bilingual community bilingualism may also not be divided equally between the speakers of both languages. In the increasingly interconnected globalising world where new mediums for communication are gaining ground, the roles and domains of specific languages are getting more complicated to determine precisely and the linguistic landscapes can be viewed as a dynamic continuum rather than a set of clearly divided entities (Matras 2009: 47).

There are different ways in which two languages influence each other in a contact situation. The cover term for this kind of influence is interference. Interference includes lexical and structural borrowing, codeswitching and substratum interference. In any kind of interference there is a target language and a source language: change induced by the source language takes place in the target language. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 39)

Lexical borrowing and mild structural borrowing can happen in a relatively monolingual situation through the adoption of loanwords for specific items or phenomena without an equivalent in the native language (e.g. the Algonquian word *skunk* was borrowed into American English without the English-speaking population learning Algonquian) (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 77) or borrowing of syntactic rules from one prestigious literary language to another. An example of the latter case is Standard English which has been influenced by Latin (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 78).

Thomason and Kaufman define borrowing as “incorporation of foreign elements into the speaker’s native language” (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 21). In addition to lexical borrowing, elements from phonology, morphology and syntax can also be borrowed. Thomason and Kaufman have developed a borrowing scale (1988: 74-76), which is based on the degree of internal structure of grammatical subsystems changed in relation with the intensity of contact. According to their hypothesis, the more intense the contact between languages (and consequently the bigger the cultural pressure in the population to learn the source language) the more complicated grammatical structures can be borrowed. The scale is divided into five stages. In the first stage there is only casual contact between the target language and the source languages, resulting only in lexical borrowing of non-basic vocabulary. In the second stage the contact is slightly more intense and limited borrowing of minor phonological and syntactic features (in addition to lexical elements) can also occur. The third stage includes borrowing of function words (e.g. adpositions), derivational affixes, possibly numerals and personal pronouns, as well as small changes in syntactical and phonological patterns. In the fourth stage more structural borrowing occurs, and new phonological features and morphological categories can be incorporated in the target language. In the fifth and final stage typologically significant changes happen on all levels of the target language under circumstances where the cultural pressure in favour of the source language is very strong. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 74–76). Matras criticizes the aforementioned scale in his book “Language contact” (2009) for not explaining the reasons why intensive cultural pressure also brings about structurally more extensive borrowing, pointing out that the intensity of contact might not always determine the extent to which structures change in a language. Among other hierarchies, Matras brings out one of his own, based on the frequency of borrowing of the categories in question in 27 different contact languages:



nouns, conjunctions > verbs > discourse markers > adjectives > interjections > adverbs > other particles, adpositions > numerals > pronouns > derivational affixes > inflectional affixes (Matras 2007: 61).

He analyses several borrowing hierarchies developed by different authors and comes to a conclusion that the very first motivation to borrow an element lies in its intrinsic semantic-pragmatic function, and only then do the social or cultural attitudes come in to determine the wider reception and adoption of a certain borrowing in the speech community (Matras 2009: 163).

### **2.1.1. Codeswitching vs borrowing**

An important issue that comes up when analysing the speech of a bilingual is the differentiation between borrowing and codeswitching. According to Matras (2009: 111) we can only talk about codeswitching when the speaker consciously separates between the subsets of elements in their repertoire, or simply put, languages. Therefore, from the speech of a monolingual we can only find borrowings but not codeswitching. Bilinguality is the first measure in the multi-dimensional codeswitching continuum presented by Matras (2009: 111). Other criteria are composition, functionality, unique referent (specificity), operationality, regularity and structural integration – the relevancy of each of these is explained below. The compositional factor contrasts complex phrases and single lexical items: the former are less likely to be borrowed as a whole and require fluency in the source language to be inserted into speech. Exceptions to this tendency can be found, such as the greeting *as-salāmu aleykum* borrowed from Arabic into several Asian and African languages. Conscious stylistic choices which differ from default expressions are prototypically codeswitching in the functional perspective. The specificity criterion explains the separation between codeswitching and borrowing in certain situations of speech of bilinguals where the inserted word is a general one, but it is not used as the cover term, but refers to a single specific real-world entity or institution. A good

example is a child in a Syrian immigrant family in Germany addressing her grandmother using the German *Oma*, but still speaking to her in Arabic. Matras calls such designations “*para-lexical*” items and sees them as being closer to the borrowing side of the scale than the insertion of elements from core lexicon without such specific referent that are used for creating a special conversational effect. On the operational scale, borrowings are seen as being produced non-consciously and since it is much easier to consciously retrieve core lexical elements from different subsystems than to do so with non-referential operational elements, the latter belong to the borrowing side of the continuum. Regularity here means relative independency of context rather than frequency, so the occurrences where the item from L2 could be inserted in any context once again fall into the borrowing side of the scale. So does the insertion of elements which are more structurally integrated into the target language, for example when loanwords are phonologically adapted to the target language. (Matras 2009: 110–113)

### **2.1.2. Pidginisation**

Another result of language contact can be development of pidgins, defined by Matras as “languages that arise from situations of semi-communication among a population of potential interlocutors who have no single language in common” (2009: 277). The same author differentiates between *foreigner talk* and *pidginisation*, the former being a simplification strategy which is applied in certain situations by using only a selected portion of the repertoire. Unlike foreigner talk, pidgin is a conventionalised language variety with a determined set of grammatical rules (Matras 2009: 276). Thomason and Kaufman mention that the border between pidgin and foreigner talk can be fuzzy and understandably so, since foreigner talk can be the starting point of a pidgin development process (1988: 168). The shared repertoire of a stabilised pidgin becomes independent from the lexifier, and the grammatical domain and the inventory of referential items expand (Matras 2009: 278). Between the first signs of pidginisation and a fully developed stable pidgin there is a whole continuum of intermediate stages.

In literature pidgins are also defined as languages without a community of native speakers, which is the decisive difference between creoles and pidgins. Pidgins are typically grammatically and stylistically restricted, although this is not always the case (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 170). The role of a pidgin is also restricted socially, since it mainly functions as a medium between two or more groups (Thomason & Kaufman 1988). In most cases the lexicon of a pidgin comes from one lexifier language, but without adopting the grammatical diversity of the lexifier (Matras 2009: 284–285). This seems to be a natural process, but may also be a deliberate strategy of the speakers of the lexifier language, as was the case with a pidgin based on the American native language Delaware used in the seventeenth century between the Delaware Indians and the European settlers for trading purposes. The Delaware speakers used a both grammatically and lexically simplified version of their own language as a pidgin which was even mistakenly thought to be the real Delaware by some settlers. Such strategy would facilitate communication with foreigners while at the same time concealing the real Delaware language. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 175)

## **2.2. Language shift and interference**

Language shift is a process where the entire speaker community shifts to another language so that their original language disappears (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 111). It is a process which can occur in different linguistic landscapes and can result in very different developments and outcomes depending on the particular circumstances. The term *interference through shift* is used to designate the changes taking place in the target language as a result of the shift. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 116) This type of interference is in turn generally divided into three according to the type of social relations between the shifting group and the target language speaking group. The three types are *superstratum*, *substratum* and *adstratum*. In the

case of superstratum, the socially and politically dominant group takes over the language of the group they have conquered or invaded. Substratum is the result of the opposite situation where the indigenous population shifts to the language of the dominant group. In a shift situation where neither group is dominant, the term adstratum is used. In all of these cases, the disappearing language leaves some traces of it in the target language. Yet, language shift can also happen without interference. The main factors that determine the amount of interference are the duration of the shift and the size of the shifting group. When a small indigenous community shifts to the language of a politically dominant group very quickly, there is a very small probability of any kind of substratum interference. In case of a large community, the interference is definitely more since the shifting speakers will not become fully bilingual before they stop using their native language. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988)

Hans-Jürgen Sasse points out that language shift starts when negative attitudes towards the native language appear, and as a result language transmission from one generation to the next stops (1990a: 10–11). The end result of language shift is language death through abandonment of the original native language. An exception to this is a situation where a language is spoken in different geographical areas. In one of those theoretical groups of speakers the socio-political factors trigger the change of language attitudes or domains and eventually lead to abandoning the native language in that group, whereas in the other group the circumstances favour maintaining their native language. In this case only the variety of the shifting group is lost and the language itself is maintained.

### **2.3. Bilingualism and the individual**

Yaron Matras describes an adult bilingual speaker as someone who has access to a complex linguistic repertoire not strictly divided into separate languages. From this repertoire a speaker can choose elements to use with respect to the social context and

the communication setting. If the context is appropriate, they can mix languages or insert elements from language A to speech in language B, since they have all elements from both at their disposal. (Matras 2009: 4)

### **2.3.1. Language attrition**

Language attrition as a phenomenon can happen on two levels: the individual level and the society level. In this subchapter the mechanisms of language attrition in an individual are briefly explained. Although language attrition research has been a growing field, most studies have been conducted on groups of L1 speakers in an L2 environment, principally immigrants, or second language attrition after years of not being used. No studies were found about first language attrition in single adult individuals, so the following chapter will give an overview of general trends and findings in language attrition theories in order to explain which factors play a role in this process.

According to Barbara Köpke (2007), the brain mechanisms which have an effect on the course and tempo of attrition are *plasticity, activation, inhibition* and *subcortical involvement*. Brain plasticity determines how fast languages can be acquired but also has an effect on attrition speed. As the greater plasticity enables young people to learn a language quickly, it also means that if they learn a second language which becomes dominant, it may replace the first language in a similarly rapid manner, so the attrition can be as quick as the acquisition. It is claimed that if the replacement should happen in later years, the first language is much more likely to be preserved. (Köpke 2007)

*Activation* is a brain mechanism which enables accessing linguistic elements from the memory (Köpke 2007). According to Michel Paradis' *activation threshold hypothesis* language attrition happens gradually when the use of L1 becomes less frequent. As the usage frequency drops, the effort needed to recall a linguistic item grows because of the heightened activation threshold. The more frequently an element is used, the

lower the activation threshold becomes. Another prediction made by Paradis in the framework of the activation threshold hypothesis is that the ability to comprehend the attriting language will disappear more slowly than the ability to produce it since comprehension does not require as low an activation threshold. (Paradis 2007) Paradis also argues that re-acquiring a language can be a faster process than the first acquisition, but bases this argument only on studies about children who have spent a considerable amount of time in an L2 environment and then have been reimmersed in their native language environment and recovered L1 (e.g Slobin et. al 1993). No similar studies about adults are quoted and the existence of such is unknown to the author of this paper as well. Therefore the question of attrition and reactivation tempo in adults remains unclear.

With her study about selective attrition in the language of native Turkish speakers in an English-speaking environment, Ayşe Gürel (2007) demonstrates how grammatical elements in L1 (in this case different reflexive nominative pronouns) may or may not be susceptible to attrition depending on whether or not there is a competing form in L2. If the L1 construction does not have an equivalent in L2, it is much less likely to be affected by attrition. On the other hand, if there is a competing form in L2, the activation threshold of L1 becomes higher and thus the L1 construction less accessible (Gürel 2007: 104).

Inhibition is another brain mechanism that plays a role in the L1 attrition process. According to Köpke, inhibition helps bilinguals suppress the linguistic subset which is not necessary in a given speech situation, e.g. L1 repertoire in an L2 conversation. Inhibition and activation are interrelated mechanisms and contribute to the attrition process simultaneously: when L1 is strongly inhibited, the activation threshold becomes very high, at the same time activating a dormant L1 first requires efforts to inhibit the dominant L2. (Köpke 2007: 12–13)

Activity in the subcortical structures of the brain connects emotions and language processing. The subcortical involvement could determine the emotional factors which might contribute to attrition, such as motivation for maintaining a language or L1 inhibition after a negative emotional experience. (Köpke 2007: 14–15)

### **2.3.2. From language attrition to language death**

This subchapter will briefly describe the prototypical process of language death where the speakers of the disappearing language gradually shift to the dominant language. The description is mainly based on Hans-Jürgen Sasse's approach to investigating cases of language death, which he presents in his article "Theory of language death" (1990a). A further section is dedicated to the descriptions of different types of semi-speakers or rememberers and a discussion of an appropriate term for the so-called last speakers of a language.

Sasse distinguishes between three parameters in researching language death, which can be first studied separately and later interconnected for a complete analysis of a case of language death. The first one of these is the external setting of the language shift, which does not include language-internal or sociolinguistic factors, but explains the political and social circumstances that have triggered the process which leads up to the death of a language. The second level is the sociolinguistic level, speech behaviour in Sasse's terms, and it takes into account factors such as language domains and attitudes. The third and for this study, perhaps the most important level is the actual language data, and here the changes in the linguistic material should be described and analysed. (Sasse 1990a: 5–6) Sasse points out that in a perfect situation a linguist should have access to materials gathered from the same community in different points of time equivalent to different stages of the decaying process (Sasse 1990a: 7).

### **2.3.3. Designations for the last speaker**

The last speakers of a dying language are not bilinguals as such, for one subset clearly dominates over the other. Since their language has already been altered by

attrition, incomplete acquisition or both, it is understandable that a distinct designation is necessary to distinguish them from fully competent speakers. In his article “Language death” (1994), Lyle Campbell makes the distinction between *rusty speakers* or *forgetters*, whose competence has reduced by the lack of usage and the resulting attrition, and *semi-speakers* who have never acquired the language in its full complexity (Campbell 1994: 1960). The latter term came into wider use from the articles of Nancy Dorian, a linguist dedicated to researching the dying East Sutherland dialect of Gaelic in Scotland. She describes the Gaelic semi-speakers as “[individuals] who could make themselves understood in imperfect Gaelic but were very much more at home in English” (Dorian 1977: 24). In a more recent paper by Putnam and Sánchez (2013: 478), the authors prefer the term *heritage speaker* because they see “semi-speaker” as a label resulting from comparison with the standard variety of the language in question and implying imperfection of the language variety spoken by the heritage speakers. Such developments in terminology are natural since for the first researchers, the last speakers were mainly used as sources to document the dying language in as much detail as possible. As language attrition and language death have gradually become research fields in their own right, more neutral terminology for the speakers of affected varieties has come about. *Heritage speaker* is the most fitting general term also for this study.



## **Chapter 3. Analysis of the language material**

This chapter consists of several parts. It starts with a description of the used language data, followed by the transcript. Subchapter 3.3 presents the detailed linguistic analysis of relevant sentences and constructions from the transcript, comparing them to post-shift Kamas and Russian.

### **3.1. Language data**

The Kamas language materials used for this study come from two different eras. Kai Donner's text collection, an addition to his dictionary of Kamas (Joki 1944), is the only available substantial source of pre-shift Kamas texts. The examples of pre-shift Kamas in the following analysis originate from the eleven tales which make up the main part of the collection.

As for post-shift Kamas, the recordings made with Klavdiya Plotnikova available in the Archive of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages exceed ten hours. A small part of the recordings was transcribed by Ago Künnap and published as a series under the name "Kamassilaisia tekstejä" (KT I–V) in the journal *Fenno-Ugristica*. The last part of the series includes a lament and 28 riddles under the names "Kamassilainen itkuvirsi 1914 ja 1965" (Künnap 1992a) and "Kamassilaisia arvoituksia" (Künnap 1992b) correspondingly. In order to obtain the lament and the riddles, Künnap first translated the ones found in Donner's text collection (Joki 1944) into Russian and then had Plotnikova produce them in her Kamas.

As the main material to be analysed in this study I have chosen a part (00:07–06:56) of the file SU0211 which was recorded by Ago Künnap in Abalakovo in the summer of 1964. This file is accessible online in the Archives of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages of the University of Tartu (SU0211).

It is one of the several recordings with Plotnikova which have been transcribed by Künnap (KT I). The transcription he uses is based on the one used by Donner, but is phonetically much more specific, for example marking eight different vowel lengths. This could be useful for linguists interested in phonetics of Kamas, but Künnap's attempt to document Plotnikova's Kamas in ultimate detail is also a disadvantage, since pursuing such level of accuracy ensures a bigger amount of mistakes in the transcription, especially considering that it was done in times when technical possibilities for determining the most accurate quantitative and qualitative values of each sound were not yet available. For these reasons the transcription is rather outdated and impractical for modern linguistic analysis. Furthermore, Künnap presents the transcribed parts in short numbered passages, leaving the impression that this was the actual order of the sentences being uttered and not marking the breaks in the recordings where the tape is restarted. In reality, the transcribed sentences are often uttered in different order, alternating with breaks and untranscribed sentences. The following table presents the actual correspondence of the recording (SU0211), Künnap's transcription in Kamassilaisia Tekstejä I (KT I) and the numeration of sentences in this thesis.

Recording (time)	Kamassilaisa Tekstejä I	Numeration used here
00:07-00:24	Section 5, sentences 1-6	1-6
00:24-00:26	-	7
00:26-00:39	Section 5, sentences 7-9	8-10
00:39-00:50	Section 22, sentences 8-9	11
00:50-03:04	Section 2, sentences 1-20	12-32
03:04-03:15	Section 7, sentences 4-5	33-34
03:15-03:36	Section 21, sentences 1-2	35-38
03:36-03:42	Section 17, sentence 13	39
03:42-03:48	Section 22, sentence 10	40
03:48-04:01	Section 24, sentences 1-2	41-42
04:01-04:11	Section 7, sentences 7-8	43-45
04:11-04:20	Section 24, sentences 3-4	46-47
04:20-04:55	Section 2, sentences 21-28	48-54
04:55-04:57	-	55
04:57-05:19	Section 2, sentences 29-33	56-60
05:19-05:22	-	60
05:22-05:36	Section 10, sentences 6-9	61-64
05:36-05:38	-	65
05:38-05:46	Section 9, sentences 1-2	66-67
05:46-06:04	Section 8, sentences 5-8	68-70
06:04-06:07	-	71
06:07-06:15	Section 8, sentence 12	72-73
06:15-06:37	Section 10, sentences 10-14	74-77
06:37-06:51	Section 8, sentences 1-4	78-80
06:51-06:56	Section 8, sentence 11	81

**Table 1. Correspondence of takes in the recording and sentences in the publication**

In addition to the transcription, there is a Russian translation and several comments on interesting or incorrect forms. In 1964, after returning from Abalakovo and completing the transcription, Künnap sent it to Matveev, who in turn visited Plotnikova in Abalakovo again and had her provide a translation to the text. (KT I) This translation can often be helpful, but it also contains errors and ambiguities, some information has been lost in the process of acquiring the translation. A good example is sentence 11 in passage 2, (sentence 22 according to the numeration used here): *dīn stara stoibe amnobi?i, dīgattə kubi?i* has been translated as 'Там на старой стойбе стояли, да вот умерли' ('They stood there at the old settlement, but died') (KT I: 118). There are three mistakes here. First, the verb *amno-* 'to live' has been translated as 'to stand'. Second, the verb *ku-* 'to see' has been mixed up with the verb *kü-* 'to die'. It must be said though, that Plotnikova pronounces *ö* and *ü* often as *o* and *u*, which might be an individual trait of her speech or a long-term result of speaking Russian, where the sounds *ö* and *ü* do not belong into the vowel inventory. Yet, the interpretation of *ku-* here as 'to see' is apparent when looking at the context. The third mistake is of different character, namely the word *dīgattə* has been transcribed as *da vottə* and interpreted as the Russian speech particle *да вот*. The right translation would be 'They lived in the old settlement, then saw.' Such mistakes make the transcription and the translation a rather unreliable source and therefore Kamassilaisia Tekstejä has been used in this study only as a secondary source for double-checking the transcription and translation for more obscure parts of the recording. All the relevant comments by Künnap about the Kamas forms are taken into account and referenced accordingly.

The code produced by Plotnikova is often very jumpy and disjunct. The recording is divided into many small portions by stopping and restarting the tape. The part of the recording used as the basis of this thesis consists of 34 such fragments, the longest one consisting of 10 sentences and the shortest ones of a single one. There are cases where the tape is stopped and restarted, but the sentence or the topic continues after the break. One possible reason for that could have been that the informant was

struggling to find the right word or means of expression and during the break in the recording she tried to determine it, possibly consulting with the linguist.

### **3.2. On transcription**

This study continues to use the simplified phonological transcription principles that have been developed by Gerson Klumpp for his dissertation (see Klumpp 2002: 34–37). Some phonetical peculiarities and changes of Plotnikova’s variety of Kamas will be reflected in the phonetic line of the transcription. It will be sufficient here since it is not a purpose of this work to deal with the phonetics of Kamas in depth. The phonological transcription is comprehensible for a wider audience and at the same time compatible with the transcription in Donner’s text collection and dictionary. Some distinctive phonological features of post-shift Kamas will be discussed in chapter 3.4.1. A reader more interested in the phonetics of Plotnikova’s spoken Kamas can find texts in very detailed phonetical transcription available in the text collection by Künnap (KT I–V) and compare them to the sound files available in the Archive of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.murre.ut.ee/arhiiv/>

### 3.3. Transcript of the file SU0211

- (1) *mən teinen su murānə mambiem*  
*mǎn teinen šö mara-nə mĩm-bie-m<sup>3</sup>*  
I today that area-LAT go-PST-1SG  
'I went to that area today.'

- (2) *dĩn nukka amnola?bo*  
*dĩn nükke amno-la?bə.*  
there woman live-DUR  
'A woman lives there.'

- (3) *amā?, amōra? kapusta!*  
*ama-? amora-? kapusta*  
eat.PFV-IMP.2SG eat.IPFV-IMP.2SG cabbage  
'Eat, eat cabbage!'

- (4) *ōi, ugādə namzəga!*  
*oi, ugāndə namzəga!*  
oh very sour  
'Oh, very sour!'

- (5) *əm ama?*  
*em ama.PFV-?*  
NEG-FUT.1SG eat-CONN  
'I won't eat it.'

---

<sup>3</sup> Verb stem *mĩn-*, assimilation *mĩn-* + *-bi* > *mĩmbi*

- (6) *dəgəttə kopto kambi íuʔsittə i mən*  
*dīgəttə koʔbdo kam-bi<sup>4</sup> tüʔ-zit-tə i mǎn*  
 then daughter go-PST shit-INF-LAT and I  
*dənzi.*  
*dĩ-n-zíʔ*  
 (s)he-GEN-INS  
 'Then the daughter left to shit and I (went) with her.'
- (7) *a mən [məʔ- mu-]*  
*a mǎn*  
 but I  
 'But I...'
- (8) *dəgəttə də šobi, a mən dəʔnə íabaktərliam*  
*dīgəttə dĩ šo-bi, a mǎn dĩ-nə íǎbaktər-lia-m*  
 then (s)he come-PST but I s/he-LAT speak-PRS-1SG  
 'Then she came, and I speak to her.'
- (9) *tən məmbiəl íuʔsittə, mən tənzi*  
*tǎn mĩm-bie-l tüʔ-zit-tə, mǎn tǎn-zíʔ.*  
 you go-PST-2SG shit-INF-LAT I you-INS  
 'You went to shit, I (went) with you.'
- (10) *də bar kakənr̥luʔbi ugāndə toŋ*  
*dĩ bar kakkənar-luʔbi ugāndə tǎŋ*  
 s/he PTCL laugh-MOM-PST very strongly  
 'She started to laugh very hard.'

<sup>4</sup> Verb stem *kan-*, assimilation *kan-* + *-bi-* > *kambi-*

/<sup>5</sup>

- (11) *kəškəʔi*      *bar*    [iʔəʔ-] *ujuʔi*    *ezemnəʔpoʔju*      *ugāndə*.  
*kışkə-iʔ*      *bar*                    *üjü-iʔ*    *izemneʔbə-jəʔ*      *ugāndə*  
rub-PL            PTCL                    foot-PL hurt.DUR-3PL      very  
'(They) rub, (my) feet are hurting very (much).'

/

- (12) *ikkō*    *pe*      *kalla*    *dürbiʔi*,                    *il*      *bar*      *mbidə*  
*iʔgö*    *pe*      *kallaʔ<sup>6</sup>*    *dür-bi-iʔ*                    *il*      *bar*      *ĩmbi-de*  
many year    go.CV    disappear-PST-3PL    people PTCL    something-INDF  
*ej*      *temʔneʔi*  
*ej*      *ĩmne-iʔ*.  
NEG      know-3PL  
'Many years went by, people do not know anything.'

- (13) *dizen*                    *bar*    [iʔ-]    *ikko*    *inezəndə*  
*dĩ-zen*                    *bar*                    *iʔgö*    *ine-zeŋ-də*  
(s)he-PL.GEN    PTCL                    many    horse-PL-3SG.POSS  
*i*      *tužujuʔi*                    *ikko*.  
*i*      *tüžöjə-iʔ*                    *iʔgö*.  
and      cow-PL                    many  
'They (had) many horses and many cows.'

- (14) *i*      *ulār*    *ikko*,    *kürizəʔi*                    *ikko*,    *uja*                    *amnoʔpoju*  
*i*      *ular*    *iʔgö*,    *kuriza-iʔ*                    *iʔgö*,    *uja*                    *amnaʔbə-jəʔ*  
and      sheep    many    chicken-PL                    many    meat                    eat.DUR-3PL

<sup>5</sup> Here and hereafter: a slash marks a break in the recording, stopping and restarting the tape.

<sup>6</sup> Verb stem *kan-*, assimilation *kan-* + *-laʔ* > *kallaʔ*



*ikko bar*

*iʔgö bar.*

many PTCL

'And many sheep and many chickens and (they) are eating much meat.'

(15) *sud bar ikko*

*süt bar iʔgö.*

milk PTCL many

'(There was) much milk.'

/

(16) *nuzañ bar amnolaʔpiʔi*

*nu-zañ bar amno-laʔbə-bi-iʔ.*

Tatar-PL PTCL live-DUR-PST-3PL

'The Tatars were living.'

(17) *kudajdə abiʔi [pa- paʔc-] pāzi, dəgəttə [piʔ-]*

*kudaj-də a-bi-iʔ pa-ziʔ, dıgəttə*

icon-3SG.POSS make-PST-3PL wood-INS then

*piğəʔ abiʔi, dəgəttə sāzənzəbi abiʔi*

*pi-gəʔ a-bi-iʔ, dıgəttə sazən-zəbi a-bi-iʔ.*

stone-ABL make-PST-3PL then paper-ADJ make-PST-3PL

'They made icons out of wood, then from stone, then they made out of paper.'

/

- (18) *bazaj kudaj abiʔi i noldubiʔi bar*  
*baza-j kudaj a-bi-iʔ i nulduʔ-bi-iʔ bar.*  
 iron-ADJ god make-PST-3PL and erect.MOM-PST-3PL PTCL  
 'They made iron god(s) and erected (it/them).'

/

- (19) *dəzeŋdə aŋi bar svečkaʔi noldubiʔi,*  
*dī-zeŋ-də aŋi bar svečka-iʔ nulduʔ-bi-iʔ,*  
 (s)he-PL-LAT they (Ru.) PTCL candle-PL erect-MOM-PST-3PL  
*nendəbiʔi*  
*nendə-bi-iʔ.*  
 light- PST-3PL  
 'They put up, lit candles for them.'

/

- (20) *nuzaj bar məmbiʔi džiŋegənə*  
*nu-zaj bar mīm-bi-iʔ dije-gən.*  
 Tatar-PL PTCL go-PST-3PL taiga-LOC  
 'Tatars nomadized in the taiga'
- (21) *dəgəttə šəšəgəj ibi, dak šoləʔjə dobər bar*  
*dīgəttə šišəge-j i-bi, tak šo-luʔ-jəʔ döbər bar.*  
 then cold-ADJ be-PST so come-INCH-3PL here PTCL  
 'Then it was cold, so (they) started coming here.'

(22) *dən stara stoibe amnobiʔi, dəgəttə kubiʔi*  
*dǐn stara stoibe amno-bi-iʔ, digəttə ku-bi-iʔ.*  
 there old settlement live-PST-3PL then see-PST-3PL  
 '(They) lived there in the old settlement, then saw.'

(23) *don bu ej kandġa*  
*dön bü ej kändə-lia.*  
 there water NEG freeze-PRS  
 'There the water does not freeze.'

(24) *dəgəttə don [s- nub- nolu-] noldlaʔboʔjə bar maʔsi*  
*dǐgəttə dön nuld-laʔbə-jəʔ bar maʔ-ziʔ*  
 then there stand-DUR-3PL PTCL tent-INS  
*i don amnolaʔbiʔi*  
*i dön amno-laʔbə-bi-iʔ.*  
 and there live-DUR-PST-3PL  
 'Then (they) settled there with tent and were living there.'

/

(25) *dizeŋ bar məmbiʔi*  
*dǐ-zeŋ bar mǐm-bi-iʔ.*  
 (s)he-PL PTCL go-PST-3PL  
 'They nomadized.'

(26) [*akč- akč-*] *akčit bar todām ibi*  
*aʔdžǐ-t bar tədam i-bi.*  
 road-3SG.POSS PTCL narrow be-PST.  
 'The road was narrow.'

- (27) *oŋi kandəga d̄irə barə, kandəgaʔi kak nābəʔi*  
*oŋi kandə-ga d̄irgit bar, kandə-ga-iʔ kak nabə-iʔ.*  
 single go-PRS as PTCL go-PRS-3PL like duck-PL  
 'One goes as, (they) go like ducks.'

/

- (28) *džijenə kambiiʔ*  
*đije-nə kam-bi-iʔ.*  
 taiga-LAT go-PST-3PL  
 '(They) went to taiga.'

- (29) *oŋi ej kaĺĺa, a ikko kalləʔi*  
*oŋi ej kallia, a iʔgö kalləj-jəʔ.*  
 single NEG go.PRES.3SG but many go.FUT-3PL  
 'Not only one goes, but many will go.'

/

- (30) *dəzeŋ bar đijegə šomugaʔi*  
*d̄i-zeŋ bar đije-gəʔ šonə-ga-iʔ*  
 (s)he-PL PTCL taiga-ABL come-PRS-3PL  
 'They come from the taiga.'

- (31) *oŋiʔ š̄ide teʔtə nāgur sumna maktuʔ*  
*oŋi š̄ide teʔdə nagur sumna maktuʔ*  
 single two four three five six  
 'One, two, four, three, five, six.'

- (32) [o-] *ońiʔ ońiʔtsiʔ* [kaʔ- šolə-] *šonaʔpoʔju*  
*ońi ońi-ziʔ* *šon-naʔbə-jəʔ*  
 single single-INS come-DUR-3PL  
 'One by one they are coming.'

/

- (33) *bu bar kǎnzəlaʔpi*  
*bü bar kǎnzə-laʔbə-bi*  
 water PTCL freeze-DUR-PST  
 'The water/river was freezing.'

- (34) *uj-zi [nulial] nulal dək, dəbər ej saʔməliəl*  
*üjü-ziʔ nu-la-l tak, dibər ej saʔmə-lia-l*  
 foot-INS stand-FUT-2SG so here NEG fall.in-PRS-2SG  
 '(If) you stand with foot like this, here you do not fall in.'

/

- (35) *mən udźuga ibim, mǎn [ig-] iam*  
*mǎn udźüge i-bi-m, mǎn ia-m*  
 I small be-PST-1SG I.GEN mother-1SG.POSS  
*togonorbi*  
*togonər-bi*  
 work-PST  
 'I was small, my mother worked.'

- (36) *kuba ia i abi pargaʔi šobi*  
*kuba ia i a-bi parga-iʔ šöʔ-bi*  
 skin mother and make-PST fur.coat-PL sew-PST

'Mother made skins and sewed fur coats.'

/

- (37) *jamaʔi*      *šoʔpi* [užə- uzər-]      *užus*      [soʔ-] *šoʔbi*      *i*  
*jama-iʔ*      *šoʔ-bi*      *üžü*      *šoʔ-bi*      *i*  
boot-PL      sew-PST      hat      sew-PST      and  
'(She) sewed boots, and sewed a hat.'

- (38) *abam*      *bar*      *šerbi*  
*aba-m*      *bar*      *šer-bi*  
father-1SG.POSS      PTCL      dress-PST  
'My father wore it.'

/

- (39) *təj*      *mǎn*      *šalbə*      *naga,*      *ej*      *temnem*  
*tüj*      *mǎn*      *šag-bə*      *naga,*      *ej*      *tǐmne-m*  
now      I      strength-1SG.POSS      not.exist      NEG      can-1SG  
*də*      *girāmbi*  
*dǐ*      *girām<sup>7</sup>-bi*  
this      go.where-PST  
'I do not have my strength, I do not know, where it went.'

/

---

<sup>7</sup> Prenominal verb formation: *girə* 'where to' + *kan-* 'to go' > *girān-*.

- (40) *ugāndə*[*pin-*] *pimniəm* *bar* *məna* *sădər**la?**po*  
*ugāndə* *pim-nie-m* *bar* *măna* *sădər-la?**bə*  
 very fear-PRS-1SG PTCL I.ACC tremble-DUR  
 'I am very afraid, I am trembling.'

/

- (41) *teinen* [*d̥i-*] *d̥ijəgən* *šābila?* *ugāndə* *šišəge*  
*teinen* *d̥ije-gən* *šā-bi-la?* *ugāndə* *šišəge*  
 today taiga-LOC spend.the.night-PST-2PL very cold  
*ibi*  
*i-bi*  
 be-PST  
 'Today you spent the night in taiga, (it) was very cold.'

- (42) *da* *mi?* *ugāndə* *kännāmbi?**ba?* *bar* *tăŋ*  
*da* *mi?* *ugāndə* *kännām-bi-ba?* *bar* *tăŋ*  
 and we very freeze.RES-PST-1PL PTCL strongly  
*kännāmbiba?*  
*kännām-bi-ba?*  
 freeze.RES-1PL  
 'And we froze totally, we froze very much.'

/

- (43) *ugāndə* *šəšəgə,* *bu* *bar* *kannāmbi*  
*ugāndə* *šišəgə,* *bü* *bar* *kännām-bi*  
 very cold water PTCL freeze.RES-PST  
 'Very cold, water froze.'

(44) *mən*            *üjüzəbi*            [*nul-*]            *nulbiam*  
*mǎn*            *üjü-zəbi*                            *nul-bia-m*  
I                    foot-ADJ                                stand-PST-1SG  
‘I stood with my foot.’

(45) *də*    *ej*    *bəldəbi*  
*dǐ*    *ej*    *bǎldə-bi*  
this    NEG    break-PST  
‘It did not break.’

/

(46) *kamən* [*mu-*]    *kunolzittə*    *iʔbələl*            *surāraʔ*  
*kamən*            *kunol-zit-tə*    *iʔbö-lə-l*            *surara-ʔ*  
when                sleep-INF-LAT    lie.down-FUT-2SG    ask-IMP  
‘When you will lay down to sleep, ask?’

(47) *öʔləl*            *mǎna kunolzittə*            *dön*  
*öʔ-lə-l*            *mǎna kunol-zit-tə*            *dön*  
let-FUT-2SG    I.ACC    sleep-INF-LAT            here  
‘Will you let me sleep here?’

/

(48) *baštəp dən*    *nubiʔi*            *ilbinən*            *tōndə*  
*baštəp dǐn*    *nu-bi-iʔ*            *ilbinə-n*            *tō-ndə*  
first    here    stand-PST-3PL    Ilbin-GEN    edge-LAT/LOC.3SG.POSS  
‘... (at) first (they) stood there, on the shore of (river) Ilbin.’



(49) *dəgəttə do bu kubiʔi*  
*dǐgəttə dǐ bü ku-bi-iʔ*  
 then this water find-PST-3PL  
 'Then they found this water.'

(50) *ej [mu-]*  
*ej*  
 NEG  
 'Does not...'

(51) *əj kanzlia [di-] dizeŋ don maʔi noldubiʔi*  
*ej kǎnzə-lia dǐ-zeŋ dǒn maʔ-iʔ nuldə-bi-iʔ*  
 NEG freeze-PRS (s)he-PL there tent-PL put.up-PST-3PL  
 'Does not freeze, they put up tents there.'

(52) *i dobər amnoštə šobiʔi*  
*i dǒbər amno-stə šo-bi-iʔ*  
 and here live-INF.LAT come-PST-3PL  
*kamən šəšegə molāmbi*  
*kamən šišegə mo-lām-bi*  
 when cold become-RES-PST  
 'And (they) came to live here when it got cold.'

/

(53) *dəzeŋ bar šobiʔi ilbińdə amnolaʔpiʔi*  
*dǐ-zeŋ bar šo-bi-iʔ ilbiń-də amno-laʔbə-iʔ*  
 (s)he-PL PTCL come-PST-3PL Ilbin-LAT live-DUR-3PL  
 'They came to Ilbin, were living (there).'

- (54) *dəgəttə dobər šobiʔi, bu kubiʔi,*  
*dīgəttə döbər šo-bi-iʔ, bü ku-bi-iʔ*  
 then here come-PST-3PL water find-PST-3PL  
*də ej kańnia*  
*dĩ ej kǎnnia*  
 this NEG freeze.PRS

'Then (they) came here, found water, it does not freeze.'

- (55) *dor maʔsaŋdə noldəbiʔi*  
*döber maʔ-zaŋ-də nuldə-bi-iʔ*  
 here tent-PL-3SG.POSS set.up-PST-3PL

'They set up their tents here.'

- (56) *dobər [šo-] šonugaʔi amnoʔittə*  
*döbər šonə-ga-iʔ amno-zit-tə*  
 here come-PRS-3PL live-INF-LAT

'(They) come to live here.'

- (57) *kamən šišegə molalləi*  
*kamən šišegə mo-lalləi*  
 when cold become-RES.FUT.3SG  
 'when it will become cold.'

/

- (58) *dəzeŋ ej malāmbi, dəgəttə kandəgaʔi dźijənə*  
*dĩ-zeŋ ej mā-lām-bi, dīgəttə kandə-ga-iʔ dīje-nə*  
 this-PL NEG stay-RES-PST then go-PRS-3PL taiga-LAT

'They did not stay here, then they go to taiga.'

(59) *vezde bar džugun mambiʔi*  
*vezde, bar du-gən mīm-bi-iʔ*  
 everywhere all land-LOC go-PST-3PL  
 'Everywhere, in the whole land they nomadized.'

(60) *dželamdə kambiʔi dñn bu ikkō*  
*delam-də kam-bi-iʔ, dñn bü iʔgō*  
 Sayan.mountains-LAT go-PST-3PL there water much  
 'They went to the Sayan mountains, there (is) much water.'

/

(61) *oñi kuza don, a oñi kuza dən*  
*oñiʔ kuza dən, a oñiʔ kuza dñn*  
 single man there but single man here  
 'One man (is) there, and one man (is) here.'

/

(62) *kanaʔ dibər dōbər*  
*kana-ʔ dibər, dōber*  
 go-IMP there here  
 'Go there, here!'

(63) *dibər em kanaʔ i*  
*dibər em kana-ʔ i*  
 there NEG.1SG go-CONN and

*dobər em kana?*  
*döbər em kana-ʔ*  
 here NEG.FUT.1SG go-CONN  
 'I will not go there and I will not go here.'

/

(64) *kədə dərə molai*  
*kăda? dărə? mo-lai*  
 how so become-FUT.3SG  
 'How will it become like that?'

(65) *əj kállal [d'ni-]*  
*ej kallia-l*  
 NEG go.PRS-2SG  
 'You do not go.'

/

(66) *de kuzə ugāndə jakšə [amo-] amnolaʔpom*  
*dĩ kuzə: "ugāndə jakšə amno-laʔbə-m"*  
 this man very well live-DUR-1SG?  
 'This man: I live very well.'

(67) *dən bar əmbi ige*  
*dĩ-n bar ĩmbi i-ge*  
 (s)he-GEN all what be-PRS  
 'He has everything.'

/

- (68) *đirəgi?*      *bar*    *šobi?i*      *məni*    *šəkezi*      *đəbaktərzittə*  
*đirək-i?*      *bar*    *šo-bi-i?*      *mǎn-i*    *šikə-zi?*      *íăbaktər-zit-tə*  
settler-PL      PTCL    come-PST-3PL I-ADJ    language-INS    speak-INF-LAT  
‘The foreigners came to speak in my language.’

/

- (69) *dəzeŋ*      *mən*    [š- št- šik-]      *šəkəm*      *tušəle?po?ju*  
*dǐ-zeŋ*      *mǎn*           *šikə-m*      *tüšə-le?bə-jə?*  
(s)he-PL      I.GEN           language-1SG.POSS    learn-DUR-3PL  
‘They are learning my language.’

/

- (70) *surāra?*,      *a*      *mən*    *norbuləm*      *tənan*  
*surara-?*,      *a*      *mǎn*    *nörbə-le-m*      *tǎnan*  
ask-IMP      but    I      tell-FUT-1SG    you.LAT  
‘Ask, and I will tell you.’

/

- (71) *tən*    *əmbidegə*      *ibiel*  
*tǎn*    *ĩmbide=gö*      *i-bie-l*  
you    something-INDF=else    take-PST-2SG  
‘You took something else.’

/

(72) *tən ugāndə numo [šək-] šəkəl*  
*tǎn ugāndə numo šikə-l*  
 you.GEN very long tongue-2SG.POSS  
 'You have a very long tongue.'

(73) *a mən udžugə šəkəm*  
*a mǎn udžüga šikə-m*  
 but I.GEN small tongue-1SG.POSS  
 'But I have a small tongue.'

/

(74) *[m-] mi? bar [šo-] šobiba? [aktš-] aktšinə*  
*mi? bar šo-bi-ba? a?dži-nə*  
 we PTCL come-PST-1PL road-LAT  
 'We came to the road.'

(75) *kuzə bar šonuga mi?ńibə*  
*kuzə bar šonə-ga mi?-ńibə*  
 man PTCL come-PRS we-LAT  
 'A man comes to us.'

(76) *surāra? a?tši gibər də kandəga a to*  
*surara-? a?dži, gibər dī kandə-ga, a to*  
 ask-IMP road where (s)he go-PRS but this  
 'Ask the way, where does he go, but this...'

/

- (77) [m-] *mi?* *bar* *əj* *dəbər* *možet* *kambiba?*  
*mi?* *bar* *ej* *dībər* *možet* *kam-bi-ba?*  
 we PTCL NEG there maybe go-PST-1PL  
 'Maybe we will not go there.'

/

- (78) *tən* *bar* *ej* *íəbaktərial* *a* *mən* *íəbaktərian*  
*tǎn* *bar* *ej* *íəbaktər-ia-l,* *a* *mǎn* *íəbaktər-ia-m*  
 you PTCL NEG speak-PRS-2SG but I speak-PRS-1SG  
*tənzi?*  
*tǎn-zi?*  
 you-INS  
 'You do not speak, but I speak to/with you.'

- (79) *a* *mən* *ej* *təmnem, [mə-]mən* *təmnem,* *a*  
*a* *mǎn* *ej* *tǐmne-m* *mǎn* *tǐmne-m* *a*  
 but I NEG know-1SG I know-1SG but  
*íəbaktərzittə* *ej* *moíam*  
*íəbaktər-zit-tə* *ej* *mo-lia-m*  
 speak-INF-LAT NEG can-PRS-1SG  
 'But I do not know, I know, but I cannot say (it).'

- (80) *nada* *tən* *šəkəl* *sajni?sittə* *i*  
*nada* *tǎn* *šekə-l* *sǎj-ńe-zit-tə* *i*  
 need you.GEN language-2SG.POSS off-tear-INF-LAT and  
*baru?sittə*  
*baru?-sit-tə*  
 throw.away  
 'Your tongue should be torn out and thrown away.'

/

- (81) *dəzeŋ*            *tüšəlubɪʔi*            *də*    *i*            *tože*    *nuzəŋ*  
*dĩ-zeŋ*            *tüšə-luʔ-bi-iʔ*            *dĩ*    *i*            *tože*    *nu-zaŋ*  
(s)he-PL        learn-INCH-PST        this    and        also    Tatar-PL  
*moluʔjuʔ*  
*mo-luʔ-jəʔ*  
become-MOM-3PL  
'They started to learn it and will also become Tatars.'

### 3.4. Analysis

#### 3.4.1. Phonetics

This study does not focus on phonetical and phonological details of post-shift Kamas, but some characteristics of it ought to be mentioned still. It is supposable that Plotnikova's pronunciation is quite russianized, but this claim is hard to prove without very specific in-depth analysis since there are no other proper recordings of Kamas to serve as comparative material. There is one eight-minute audio file of pre-shift Kamas available in the Archive of Estonian Dialects and Kindred Languages, the digitized version of Kai Donner's phonograph recordings from the year 1914, but its quality is not good enough to be used as a comparison (cf. Klumpp 2013a). One feature that hints Russian impact in Plotnikova's speech is frequent substitution of /ü/ and /ö/ (which do not belong to the phonetic repertoire of Russian) for /u/ and /o/.

There is one distinctive feature in Plotnikova's language which indicates that she has spoken Kamas for a considerable amount of time in her life: a strong glottal stop. She uses it a lot, but inconsistently. It is often missing in places where it should be and there are occasions where the glottal stop is uttered in places where it does not belong, for instance in sentence 8 where the word form *dĩ-nə* 'to her', demonstrative



*dī* plus lative case ending *nə*, she pronounces the word *dīʔnə*. This phenomenon occurs often of Plotnikova’s speech and could be explained as a manifestation of hypercorrection, since the glottal stop is one of the most distinctive features that sets Kamas apart from Russian.

### 3.4.2. Morphology

Like other Uralic languages, Kamas has diverse nominal and verbal morphology. There is not much left in Plotnikova’s variety of the language. Her use of cases is inconsistent and more complex verb forms do not appear in her speech. The following subchapter presents a detailed discussion of the found irregularities.

#### 3.4.2.1. Noun morphology

There is an interesting inconsistency in government in sentence 17 where Plotnikova describes different materials out of which icons or figures of gods were made of: *kudajdə abiiʔ paʔziʔ, dīgəttə piʔgəʔ abiiʔ, dīgəttə sazənzəbi abiiʔ* ‘they made gods with wood, then from stone, then with paper’.

(17)	<i>kudaj-də</i>	<i>a-bi-iʔ</i>	<i>pa-ziʔ,</i>	<i>dīgəttə</i>
	god-3SG.POSS	make-PST-3PL	wood-INS	then
	<i>pi-gəʔ</i>	<i>a-bi-iʔ,</i>	<i>dīgəttə sazənzəbi</i>	<i>a-bi-iʔ.</i>
	stone-ABL	make-PST-3PL	then paper-ADJ	make-PST-3PL

‘They made gods out of wood, then from stone, then they made out of paper.’

The verb in question is *a-*, to make. The first two materials mentioned are semantically comparable, but strangely Plotnikova uses instrumental case for *pa* ‘wood’ and ablative case for *pi* ‘stone’. One possible explanation for this is that the first choice of case has been made according to the Kamas pattern, for in pre-shift Kamas a material out of which something was made of was expressed by using instrumental case, e.g.

*bulān kuba-ziʔ      esseŋ-də      maʔ      ha-bi*  
 moose skin-INS      children-LAT      tent      make-PST

'He made a tent for the children out of moose skin.' (Joki 1944: 92)

The second choice of case on the other hand is based on the Russian pattern, just using Kamas elements, cf Russian sample sentence:

*он      сдела-л      скульптуру      из      камня*  
 M.3SG      make-PST.M.3SG      sculpture.ACC      PREP:from      stone.GEN

'He made a sculpture from stone.'

Another puzzle in this sentence is the way in which the third material, paper, has been expressed with the ending *-zəbi*. There are at least two ways to interpret this. It could be explained as the combination of instrumental case ending *-ziʔ* and the possessive suffix *-bə*, with an accidental metathesis of vowels. Before determining its nature, several things have to be taken into account: first, *-bə* is a first person possessive suffix. Although in pre-shift Kamas there is a case of *-bə* being used as the third person possessive suffix (Joki 1944: 94), it is quite unlikely Plotnikova would use it as such. Second, the order of suffixes in Kamas is generally Px-Cx, except for the youngest instrumental case, where it is the opposite, Cx-Px. The combination *-ziʔ+-bə* violates this rule. Thirdly there is one more instance of the ending *-zəbi* in the analysed text: in sentence 44, *mān üjüzəbi nulbiam* 'I stood with my foot'. For both of these instances, Künnap suggests that *-zəbi* is an adjectivizer (KT I: 130-131). It is a well-founded hypothesis, and *-zəbi* is definitely a derivational suffix used to make adjectives out of nouns. There are many such adjectives presented by Donner in the Kamassisches Wörterbuch (Joki 1944), including *ujüzəbi*, translated as 'foot-; of foot'. There are many others, for examples *urguzəbi* 'steppe-; of steppe' (< *urgo* 'steppe'), *tärtaksəbi* 'scarred' (< *tärtak* 'scar') etc. The adjectivizer assumption fits

well to explain sentence 17, especially since paper differs in its characteristics from wood and stone and it is a good reason to express it in different linguistic manner as well. In 44, however, if the form is produced using the same suffix, it should be considered an adverb of manner, not an adjective. It is possible that the *-zabi* words could be used in both functions. However, considering the interpretation of sentence 44, one more factor should be taken into account: there is a very similar clause in sentence 34: *üjüzi? nulal* ‘you stood with foot’, where the same action is expressed by using only the instrumental case ending *-zi?*. Both of these instances describe standing on ice so that it does not break. This comparison gives some additional credibility to the first hypothesis of *-zabi* being a combination of the instrumental *-zi?*, at least concerning sentence 44, especially because here the following suffix *-bə* fits the context as a first person possessive.

Another deviant detail about adjective derivation appears in sentence 68, where the adjectivizer derivational affix *-j* is added to a pronoun (*mǎn* ‘I’). Such word formation pattern (pronoun + adjectivizer) was not used in pre-shift Kamas.

A previously unattested form can be found in sentence 6, where Plotnikova forms the instrumental of the third person singular pronoun *dǐ* as *dǐnzi?*, adding the genitive marker *-n* before the instrumental case ending *-zi?*. This is not the case in pre-shift Kamas, where the instrumental ending is added directly to the stem: *dǐ* : *dǐzi?*. The form seems to be constructed analogically to the instrumental forms of first and second person pronouns *mǎn* and *tǎn* where the *n* belongs to the stem and the nominative and genitive are identical: *mǎn* : *mǎn* : *mǎnzi?*, *tǎn* : *tǎn* : *tǎnzi?*.

Künnap (1965b: 255) has mentioned that Plotnikova often loses genitive and accusative case endings (*-n* and *-m* accordingly). In the analysed material possession is mostly expressed by possessive suffixes and other genitive functions are not used either, except for one postpositional phrase, in sentence 48, *ilbiñən tōndə*, ‘on the

shore of (river) Ilbin'. It is a locative adverbial phrase which has possibly been preserved as a construction that Plotnikova remembers as a whole rather than producing it on the spot from the nouns and case endings. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that it is the one and only instance in the analysed material where she uses the lative-locative third person singular possessive suffix (-*ndə*). The accusative case was also absent in the studied sample. There is one case where Künnap has marked the accusative in his transcription, namely in sentence 14 (KT I: 118, passage 2, sentence 3). In the phrase in question the object *uja* 'meat' is not definite and therefore there would be no need for using accusative case (cf. sentence 3). There is one instance where accusative case could be used, namely in sentence 49 in the phrase *dī bū kubii?* 'they found this water'. Here the object is definite and accusative case would be appropriate.

There is an interesting case of morphological contamination in sentence 22, where the locative phrase *dīn stara stoibe* 'there in the old settlement' consists of a Kamas pronominal locative adverb and two Russian loanwords, *старая* 'old (feminine gender)' and *смоўба* 'settlement'. The correct form of the Russian phrase would be *в староў смоўбе*, but Plotnikova produces the adjective in its short form without a case ending, and the noun declined in the correct case, but does not add the preposition *в* to the beginning of the phrase. Neither does she use Kamas locative case.

#### **3.4.2.2. Verb morphology**

One characteristic element of pre-shift Kamas is the converb constructions, which also deserve a longer analysis here. In pre-shift Kamas the converb constructions were very common, consisting of two verb forms, and became essential in expressing verb aspect. The original function of converbs was expressing a certain type of action, used on their own or in coordination with another verb, e.g. *pāktəla?* *sa?məbi* 'breaking collapsed = burst and collapsed' (Joki 1944: 88) or *pāktəj mü?lü?bi* 'bursting thrust = thrust so that the object bursts' (Joki 1944: 99). There is only one

converb construction of this kind in the sample of text analysed for this study: *kallaʔ dūrbiiʔ* 'going disappeared = left; (here) went by' in sentence 12.

As a result of code-copying from Turkic, Kamas developed a set of aspectual auxiliary verbs, which underwent a process of grammaticalization, melting together with the preceding converb ending *-LAʔ* and turning into a morphological aspect marker. An example of such process is the development of resultative aspect marker *-lām-*:

*küleʔ kambiiʔ* 'dying went' > *külāmbiiʔ* 'died'

*kōlaʔ kambiiʔ* 'drying went' > *kōlāmbiiʔ* 'dried up'

In the given examples the verbs take a past tense ending, but in pre-shift Kamas there were many different possibilities of combining the aspectual markers and the tense markers for expressing different tense-aspect meanings. (Klumpp 2005)

Since these aspect markers had already emerged as morphological elements, lost their lexical meaning and in this way become a fixed and essential part of grammar, they have also been preserved in post-shift Kamas. Here are the verb forms found in the analysed materials which contain an aspect marker of this origin, categorized according to the aspect reading:

**Durative:** *amnolaʔbə* 'was living', *amnaʔbəjəʔ* 'they are eating', *amnolaʔbəbiiʔ* 'they were eating', *nuldləʔbəjəʔ* 'they were standing', *amnolaʔbəiʔ* 'they were living', *šonnaʔbəjəʔ* 'they are coming', *kānzəlaʔbəbi* 'was freezing', *sādərleʔbə* 'was freezing', *amnolaʔbəm* 'I am living', *tüšəleʔbəjəʔ* 'they are learning', *izemneʔbə-jəʔ* 'they are hurting'

**Resultative:** *kännāmbibaʔ* 'we froze up', *kännāmbiiʔ* 'froze up', *molāmbiiʔ* 'became', *molalləi* 'it will become', *mālāmbiiʔ* 'did not stay'

**Inchoative:** *tüšəluʔbiiʔ* 'they started to learn', *šoluʔjəʔ* 'they started coming'

**Momentaneous:** *kakkənarluʔbi* 'burst our laughing', *nulduʔbiiʔ* 'they erected', *nuldluʔbiiʔ* 'they erected'

In the future it would be interesting to study the way Plotnikova used such aspect markers in comparison with Russian verb aspect to see if there might be some correlation between the two, i.e. if she uses elements from Kamas to express verb aspect in the Russian way. The topic has been shortly discussed by Klumpp (2002b: 327–328)

There is another type of converb constructions in pre-shift Kamas which does not occur in the analysed material: the temporal converbs, which are formed using the suffix *-bi-*, locative case ending (without the coaffix *-gə-*) and a possessive suffix, e.g. *ku-bi-n-dən* 'in their seeing' (Joki 1944: 99). No participles are used either. Pre-shift Kamas had several different participles with various functions (see more in Klumpp 2002b: 102–105)

There are several occasions where the tense used does not match the context or the tense used in the previous sentence. In sentence sequences 12–14, 26–29, 53–57 and 58–59 Plotnikova switches between using past and present tense, although it is clear that she is speaking of past events.

In sentence 5 there is an ambiguous case concerning the first word *em* 'I will not', which is not pronounced clearly. There are two possibilities: either she simply overpronounces the first vowel or, as Künnap has suggested (1965a: 256), produces a contamination form *ejm* by mixing the negation particle *ej* and the negation verb in first person future tense *em*.

### 3.4.3 Syntax

The sentences that Plotnikova produces are often very short. In the sample text, Plotnikova mostly sticks to the Kamas SOV word order, placing the verb in the sentence-final position. The Russian SVO word order is used in some sentences

where an infinitive verb form is in the object position, as in sentence 56.

- (56) *döbər*            *šonə-ga-iʔ*            *amno-zit-tə*  
here                come-PRS-3PL            live-INF-LAT  
'(They) come to live here.'

The Kamas SOV type can also be found in the example text:

- (52) *i*            *döbər* *amno-stə*            *šo-bi-iʔ*  
and    here    live-INF.LAT    come-PST-3PL  
'And (they) came to live here.'

An example of how Plotnikova fails to indicate direct object in the way it is done in pre-shift Kamas using accusative case was already given in the subchapter 3.4.2.1. Another similar instance occurs in sentence 81, where in the phrase *dīzey tūšəluʔbiiʔ dī* 'they started to learn it' the object *dī* 'it' is a direct object and should be marked as such by accusative. It is possible that Plotnikova constructs the sentence according to the Russian syntactic model, where in such case one would use the pronoun *этого*, which does not have a separate accusative form.

#### 3.4.4. Lexicon

In sentence one, there could be two possible interpretations of the phonetic phrase *sumuranə*. The first and more plausible reading is the one which Künnap also presents (KT 1976: 121), separating it into two lexemes, *šö* 'that there' and *maranə* 'to the end', which fits into context very well. The second possible reading would be *sumuranə* as a toponym with a lative case ending, but no evidence of such toponym around Abalakovo can be presented. It might still be a microtoponym in the local rural environment and the possibility of this reading being correct cannot be ruled out.

Two of the four Kamas demonstrative pronouns (cf. Klumpp 2013b) are found in the sample text: the most common demonstrative *dī* 'this' and the distal *šö*. The proximal demonstrative *dii* and the alternative distal demonstrative *ide* are not found.

In sentence 31 Plotnikova uses the word *oñi* 'single' instead of the numeral *oʔb* 'one' which would be expectable when counting numbers.

As the amount of material used as the basis of the analysis in this thesis is so limited and definite, it makes it possible to separate and analyse all the elements in Plotnikova's language which originate from Russian. These come about in different ways and forms, having found their way into Kamas at different periods and for different reasons. The first category of such elements would be simple Russian loanwords from different eras (pre-shift/post-shift). Here's a list of pre-shift loanwords which are also found in Donner's dictionary (Joki 1944) (Russian equivalents are given in the parenthesis): *i* (и) 'and', *kak* (как) 'like', *kapusta* (капуста) 'cabbage', *kuriza* (курица) 'chicken', *možet* (может) 'maybe', *nada* (надо) 'to be necessary, need to', *svečka* (свечка) 'candle'. There are two post-shift loanwords found in the sample text, but not in Donner's dictionary (Joki 1944): *tože* (тоже) 'also', *vezde* (езде) 'everywhere'.

In sentence 19 Plotnikova uses the Russian pronoun *añi* (они) instead of the Kamas *dīzeŋ*, which is the only occurrence of spontaneous codeswitching in the sample text. It is an interesting occurrence since it appears right after the Kamas *dīzeŋ*, so it cannot be a substitution caused by high activation threshold for the Kamas alternative. It is possibly a stylistic choice to contrast the two different entities mentioned.

There is a possible case of calquing in sentence 1, with the word *mara* 'edge, end' used in the sense of Russian *край*, where a semantic expansion has taken place from 'end, edge' to also designate 'area, further part/end of a settlement'. There is a chance



that this additional meaning could have been an independent development in Kamas, but there is no data available to confirm or refute this assumption.

#### **3.4.5. Extralinguistic features**

There are cases in the series of sentences uttered successively where the topic changes very quickly and sentences following each other are tied quite loosely or not at all. This is the case in the series of phrases 1-10, where in addition at some point it can be deduced that Plotnikova is reenacting a dialogue but does not mention who of the supposed participants utter which phrases nor are there any lexical clues about when the dialogue starts or ends. This would suggest that her level of proficiency in Kamas does not allow her to produce all the necessary context and join the phrases into a consistent whole. Then again, there are cases where she manages to produce context to a dialogue (e.g. sentence 8).

There are a lot of repetitions in Plotnikova's speech. She counts numbers in Kamas on several occasions, one such instance can also be found in the sample text. Often she does not count the numbers in the right order or misses some of them.

The solid conclusion that can be made here is that the quality of Kamas produced by Plotnikova varies a lot and is inconsistent.

#### **Chapter 4. Analysis of post-shift Kamas in the framework of language contact theories**

Looking at the language materials this work is based on, it is clear that Klavdiya Plotnikova was a Kamas heritage speaker but not a Russian-Kamas bilingual. She does not have free access to all the elements in Kamas, her speech is jumpy and not fluent. The activation threshold for Kamas lexicon and constructions in these recordings is high for her. On the other hand, an assumption can be made that as the language also played a role for her in her religious practices, the subcortical involvement could have contributed to her motivation to maintain the Kamas repertoire that she had acquired.

An important aspect about the recordings, the only evidence for any conclusions about Plotnikova's language variety, is the setting where the recordings were made. She was asked by the linguists to speak exclusively in Kamas, a request which brings about the necessity for her to make a clear distinction in her repertoire between Kamas and Russian elements and to abstain from using the Russian elements. Such conscious inhibition effort affects her lexicon more than other elements of language and she tries to operate with Kamas lexical elements only, while continuing to use the Russian model of syntax and sometimes word order.

It is also possible that Plotnikova half-consciously uses some simplification strategies in order to make her speech more understandable to the linguist. The setting is artificial and it is impossible to say how her language would have been different, had she spoken in a natural social context. This could only have been found out, had there been more post-shift Kamas speakers left to serve as a base for the natural communication situation. It can only be assumed that if such a community would have existed, it would have developed into a different variation of post-shift Kamas with more Russian interference.

Some of Plotnikova's constructions suggest that she did not acquire full fluency in Kamas as a child. She does not have full command of Kamas and in order to compensate for that she uses hybrid constructions such as a bilingual children might use. It has been found that in the cases of incomplete acquisition the young speakers fail to acquire more complex constructions, for they shift to the dominant language so early that the later stages of the natural language acquisition process are interrupted (Sasse 1990b: 34–35). Often it seems that she remembers certain forms and sentences as fixed entities and produces them as indivisible units rather than constructing them on the spot from available lexical and grammatical elements. The assumption that Plotnikova's Kamas is a result of incomplete acquisition would explain why she has such great trouble expressing herself, why her speech is often repetitive and her sentence structure mostly very simple. It is unlikely that attrition would impact fully acquired language so strongly that the subject cannot even count numbers right in her mother tongue.

Kai Donner also mentioned (1979: 236) that the younger generation didn't speak Kamas so well and were already shifting to Russian. It must be remembered that although the pre-shift Kamas materials serving as comparative materials also for this thesis are essentially/exactly the Donner materials, he specifically chose informants whose Kamas was less influenced by Russian and that those texts do not reflect all the variations of Kamas which were spoken already then and very likely had been more influenced by Russian. Hence the Kamas that Plotnikova learned as mother tongue was possibly much more influenced by Russian than the pre-shift Kamas we can see in the *Kamassisches Wörterbuch*. Another factor that should not be forgotten is the influence of other languages spoken in the same area. The language shift took place in a multilingual society where Kamas was a minority language alongside the dominant and more prestigious Russian. The distribution was an asymmetrical one with Kamas only being spoken in the domestic domain and somewhat in the public domain, but it was never an institutional nor even a codified language. In addition to Russians, the Kamas had mixed with also Tatars, Karagas and Kott. The families

were often multiethnic and eventually all of them adopted Tatar or Russian as the main language. Due to the author's lack of competence in Turkic and Yeniseic languages the extent of influence of them in Kamas is impossible to determine, but all of them must have had some effect on the language. Klavidiya Plotnikova's maternal grandmother was Kott, so there is possible Kott influence also in her idiolect, but the amount or characteristics of it are very hard to identify.

## Conclusion

The idiolect of Klavdiya Plotnikova and the factors that have played a role in its emergence have been the main themes of this thesis. The research history of the Kamas language started already in the 19th century but the number of scholars who have written about Kamas is very small. The nomadic Kamas tribe went through a cataclysmic change of lifestyle during the period between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, abandoning their nomadic way of life. This process brought along rapid loss of their culture and language, as the Kamas assimilated with the Russian settlers. Klavdiya Plotnikova was born during this period of change and was the last person to be found speaking Kamas. Her idiolect is quite different from post-shift Kamas, strongly affected by Russian and the years of diminished usage. The code she produces on the tape is often inconsistent and irregular.

Language contact theories help understand how Plotnikova's variety has come about. She was likely not able to acquire Kamas fully in her childhood when the younger generation (to which she also belonged) stopped speaking it and shifted to Russian in just one generation's time. In order to explain the characteristics of her Kamas, it must also be taken into account that in her later years the language attrited heavily.

This thesis is a preliminary work for a future in-depth analysis of post-shift Kamas. The amount of recordings of the named variety exceeds ten hours and offers a great opportunity for a detailed quantitative analysis. Those materials deserve to be worked through systematically and without a doubt contain valuable insight about Kamas as well as processes that happen in an incomplete acquisition and language attrition situation.

## **Abbreviations**

The abbreviations in the glossing follow the Leipzig glossing rules. The additional abbreviations are following:

PTCL – particle

PERF – perfective derivation

ADJ – adjectivizer

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## Resüme

Magistritöö uurib kamassi keelt kõnelenud Klavdia Plotnikova idiolekti, toetudes erinevatele keelekontaktide käsitlevatele teooriatele. Plotnikova avastati 1964. aastal Abalakovo külas Krasnojarski krais Venemaal kui viimane kamassi keele kõneleja. Selleks ajaks oli kogu kamassi keele kõnelejaskond üle läinud vene keelele, mis teeb Klavdia Plotnikovast ainsa keelenihke-järgse kamassi keele kõneleja. Plotnikovast sai tänu osavõtule Tallinnas 1970. aastal toimunud rahvusvahelisest fennougriistide konverentsist ja esinemisele Lennart Meri filmis „Veelinnurahvas“ (Meri 1970) väljasurevate hõimude sümbol ning müütiline isik.

Üks töö olulisemaid osi on 81-lauseline transkriptsioon salvestusest, mille on 1964. aastal Plotnikovaga teinud Ago Künnap. Transkriptsioon koosneb neljast reast: foneetiline transkriptsioon, lihtsustatud fonoloogiline transkriptsioon, gloss ja tõlge inglise keelde.

Töö teoreetiline osa annab ülevaate erinevatest keelekontaktide, keelenihet ja keele hääbumist käsitlevatest teooriatest. Keelekontaktide ja keelenihke toimumise korral võib olenevalt asjaoludest tulemuseks olla väga erinevad keelevariandid ning protsessid, näiteks sõnade ja ka grammatiliste struktuuride laenamine ühest keelest teise, koodivahetus, keele lihtsustumine või ka sellele järgnev uue pidžinkeele teke. Seda, milliseid mõjutusi kontaktis olevad keeled teineteiselt saavad, määravad nii keelte sisemine struktuur kui ka kontaktiolukorra sotsiaalsed ja poliitilised faktorid. Keele hääbumise analüüsimisel tuleb arvesse võtta keele aktiveerimise ja pärssimise mehhanisme ajus.

Plotnikova idiolekt on omapärane, mitmeti vene keele poolt mõjutatud ning erineb tunduvalt enne keelenihet räägitud kamassi keele variandist, mida 20. sajandi alguses käis Abalakovos dokumenteerimas soome keeleteadlane Kai Donner. Töö praktiline

osa koosneb ühe Ago Künnapu poolt Plotnikovaga tehtud salvestuse transkribeerimisest ja selle lingvistilisest analüüsist. Välja on toodud erinevused Plotnikova keelevariandi ning enne keelenihet räägitud kamassi keele vahel, samuti on kirjeldatud selgeid vene keele mõjutusi. Plotnikova kõneleb salvestustel hüplikult, kordab ning parandab end tihti. Tema keeles leidub vorme, mida pole varasemas kamassi keele variandis esinenud ning tema süntaksimudel on tihti selgete vene keele mõjudega. Plotnikova keel on mitmeti vastuoluline ja ebaregulaarne. Näiteks võib tuua juhuse, kus samas lauses esineb nii kamassi- kui ka venetüübiline verbirektsioon. On selge, et Plotnikova on kamassi keelt lapsepõlves kuulnud ja õppinud, ent pole jõudnud keele täieliku omandamiseni. Tema kamassi keele repertuaar ei võimalda tal vabalt kõike vajalikku väljendada, tihti peab ta piirduma fraaside ja vormidega, mida ta mäletab terviklike üksustena.

Magistritöö loogilise jätkuna näeb autor mahukama materjali põhjal tehtavat kvantitatiivset analüüsi, mis võimaldaks anda süstemaatilisema ülevaate Klavdia Plotnikova keelest ning keelenihke-eelse ja -järgse kamassi keele erinevustest.

## **Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks**

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