

Aspect in Enets (< Samoyedic < Uralic): a case-study of Slavic-style system in a non-Slavic language

Slavic languages are known cross-linguistically by their “classifying” (derivational) viewpoint aspect distinguishing lexically perfective and imperfective verbs. Though such aspect systems are rather rare and have so far been studied mainly in Slavic and some areally close languages, they are still attested in other languages. The Samoyedic (< Uralic) group of languages is the case, as there an aspectual opposition of the two classes of verbs is present, as well. In my presentation, I will concentrate on Forest Enets and show in detail its aspect system based on an extensive text collection. In contrast to Slavic, in Enets, as well as in other Samoyedic, a majority of underived verbs are perfective, while imperfective verbs are built from them with imperfectivizing derivations; still, underived imperfective verbs and perfectivizing derivations are also widely used. This can be connected to the fact that a significantly broader distribution of perfective verbs is found in Forest Enets than in e.g. in Russian. At the same time, in many aspects, Forest Enets follows Russian pattern. This concerns using imperfective with adverbials of duration; using imperfective with phasal verbs; expressing completed events with imperfective verbs; type of aspectual composition.