ETHNONYMS OF SIBERIA AND THEIR ADJECTIVIZATION IN ENGLISH

ORIENTAL INQUIRIES INTO ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY

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Ethnonyms of Soviet Asia in the linguistic, ethnographic and anthropological literature written in English offer an interesting example of a terminological confusion in disciplines for which the English terminology has not been standardized. Words denoting exactly the same objects or phenomena differ from author to author, due to their extraordinary endings they seem to be totally alien to English, their extraordinary internal structure (as far as both phonetics and word-formation are concerned) sometimes misleads the authors of the scholarly works themselves.

The purpose of the present paper is to discuss certain suggestions concerning a number of Siberian ethnonyms in English. These suggestions could lead to the standardization of these words in English or, at least, to help lexicographers working on the standardization of English scientific terminology in their (inevitable in some near future) efforts at establishing terms acceptable to the linguistic competence of native speakers of English and simultaneously acceptable to specialists acquainted also with languages — sources of those loans.

While reviewing recent English-language publications in the fields concerned, one may easily discover the tendency to replace long-established, traditional Siberian ethnonyms, such as Yukaghir, Yenisei-Ostyak, Gilyak, Kamchadal, Koryak, Gold, Tungus, Lamut, Ostyak, Vogul, Cheremis, etc.,

* The ideas presented in this paper came to me when I was asked to write a review of C. F. and F. M. Voegelin's *Classification and index of the world's languages*, New York — Oxford — Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1971; to avoid the imputation of groundless opinions I decided to use initial data for the following remarks from the publication.
The ethnonymy Ola should rather be written Olcha or Uleha, the adjective being Olehan/Ulehan. The original ethnonym of Ulehan is [nani], sometimes incorrectly identified with [nani], a name denoting Golds in their own language. New terms to name Golds in English should be Nana (noun Nom. Sg.), Nana (Nom. Pl.), and Nana (adjective) - analogous sets are also numerous.

As far as the name for Lamuts is concerned, Even may be maintained throughout the three categories (namely, noun Nom. Sg., Nom. Pl., adjective) or Evens (Nom. Pl.), Even/Evans (i) may be introduced.

Oro should be rather written as Orosh (Nom. Sg. and adjective), the plural form Oroshes being suggested here as possible.

Orokon and Orosh is the same people, contrary to some authors, therefore one name only should be selected for further use. Here forms Orok, Oroks, Orosh are proposed; Orosh was a name given to Orosh by Russian settlers in Sakhalin. The original name is [ulta] or [uhta].

Itlemen should be simply Itlemen (as noun Nom. Sg. and adjective) and Itlemens (Nom. Pl.). Forms Mari (Nom. Sg., adjective), Mari (Nom. Pl.) for Cheremis; Manai (Nom. Sg. and adjective), Manais (Nom. Pl.) for Voguls are proposed (in a way parallel to Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, etc.).

The name Altai would better serve in English as a geographical name only; in linguistics, ethnography and anthropology it is safer to use the old term Orot. The term Altaic should, however, be preserved with the traditional, well-established meaning.

The form Kumand should rather be changed to Kumandish. The adjective formed from Turkmén should rather be Turkménish while noun Nom. Pl. should be Turkmens. If Mordva is adjectivized to Mordvin then it would not be correct to adjectivize Tuva into Tuvin or even Tuvian.

Finally, ethnonymy Ol' for Yukaghir and Nymylyk for Koryaks should be rejected as improper. Ol' is the original name only for Southern Yukaghir from the Kolyma River basin. Northern Yukaghir from the tundra call themselves [Badul]. Similarly, Nymylyk is a poor imitation of the original word [naimlyj] denoting Koryaks living in settlements; nomadic reindeer breeders call themselves [t]a[t]is[i] or [t]a[t]j[i]a[n]. Therefore in both cases the preservation of the old terms Yukaghir(s) and Koryak(s) is the best solution.

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1. Both [nani] and [nanj] have the same etymology: na “earth, ground” + [n][j] “human being” = “people from the territory”; the word Olcha/Uleha is most probably of Ork origin.

2. [itlomτn] “those who live, exist.”
It will not be difficult to conclude that suggestions presented above were formulated on the basis of the following three criteria: the use of English derivational suffixes in the formation of the loans under concern, fidelity to principles of English orthography and orthoepy, and preference of forms analogous to ethnonyms already well-established in English.\(^4\)

\(^4\) On the basis of the same criteria ethnonyms like Nenish and Ennish have been coined and used in the Soviet ethnographical literature in English. Needless to say, they should replace mediocre incompetent respective imitations from Russian Nenets and Enets = Enete = Yenete.