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Old-New Tungusic Sources: Nanay Materials in a 19th-Century Russian Phrase Book

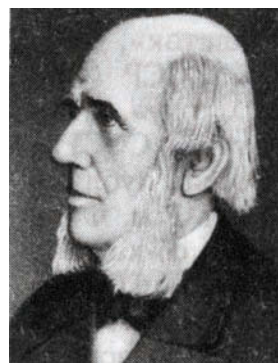
The aim of this paper is to investigate an old source, to the best of my knowledge unreported in specialist literature, that contains extensive linguistic materials on some Eurasian languages, among others Nanay, Ewenki and Ulcha. The work in question is *Сибирскій переводчикъ по линіи строющейся сибирской и уссурійской желѣзныхъ дорогъ и по всѣмъ нароходнымъ сибирскимъ рѣкамъ* by Adal'bert-Vojtex Vikent'evič Starčevskij (Адальберт-Войтех Викентьевич Старчевский, shorter version Al'bert Starčevskij, 1818–1901) and published in Saint Petersburg in 1893. I have decided to contribute such a topic to this Festschrift precisely because Prof. Juha Janhunen was kind enough to lend me his personal copy of this bibliographical *rara avis* during one of my stays in Helsinki between September and December of 2009.

The origin of Janhunen's own personal copy are, according to his own recollections, as follows: in the front page of the book both the personal signature of the well-known orientalist Kai Donner and "Tomsk 1911" can be read without problems. Donner paid his first visit to Tomsk in 1911 so it can be safely assumed that he purchased the book while conducting research in the region. The famous uralist Aulis Joki, one of Janhunen's former teachers, obtained Donner's copy. It was after Joki had passed away that Janhunen got the book directly from the shelves of Joki's personal library. The book is preserved in fair condition and presents the typical measurements at that time in Russia for hardback *Taschenbücher*.

The phrase book gives information about eleven languages: I. Siberian Tatar, II. Kirghiz, III. Kalmuck, IV. Yakut, V. Altai Tatar (= Татарскій-Алтайскій), VI. Minusinsk Tatar (= Татарскій-Минусинскій), VII. Northern and Hill Tungusic, VIII. Buryat (four dialects), IX. Nanay (= Гольдскій), X. Amur Tungusic and XI. Ulcha (= Манганскій). Three genealogical lineages are represented: I–II + IV–VI belong to the Turkic stock, III + VIII to Mongolic and VII + IX–XI to Tungusic. There is a vocabulary, basic conversational dialogues and a brief grammatical description for each of these languages. Since at that time there was nothing but (short) vocabularies of Ulcha, it is logical that Starčevskij could offer neither grammatical notes nor dialogues for this language. In this contribution I

shall focus only on the Nanay section as this is one of the Tungusic languages on which Janhunen has done some work (see *inter alia* Janhunen 1985). I leave for the (near) future the task of analysing the Ewenki and Ulcha materials if deemed necessary.

The author of the book, A.V. Starčevskij, was a rather well-known figure in Saint Petersburg during the second half of the 19th century. His intellectual activity concerning languages produced numerous, and eminently practical publications. Starčevskij was by education a lawyer, but, as it turned out, he became a very prominent journalist, whom friends and other acquaintances held in great esteem (Ščerbakova 2007: 165–168).



Despite the fact that his works are widely regarded as little more than mechanical *verbatim* reproductions of linguistic materials extracted from myriad primary and secondary sources, it is undeniable that Starčevskij was a tireless gatherer of information who knew very well where and what to investigate. Many of the sources to which he had access were published in obscure or highly specialized periodicals, books and diaries, etc. It is also manifestly clear that he had to be something of a talented learner of languages (I have been unable to confirm whether he really was a polyglot) as well as a keen observer of linguistic facts, otherwise it is very difficult to understand the quality of the many grammatical sketches he reproduced in his apparently trivial phrase books and pedagogical works.

The phrase book seems to deliver exactly what one would expect after knowing the *opinio communis*. Had this been all the truth, there would have been no need to carry out a philological analysis. However, and as it usually is with figures like Starčevskij, there is always room to hope that some source used by him is not available to us any more. This would endow Starčevskij's work with linguistic interest. As a matter of fact, Wolfgang Schulze kindly informed me that part of the Udi materials mentioned in one of Starčevskij's books (published in 1891) are unprecedented, meaning that whatever source Starčevskij used, it has been lost since and Starčevskij's notes are all that remain. To discover whether this is the case with the Nanay materials in the phrase book, it is obviously necessary to analyse them. I think that whatever one finds in the end, it is well worth the effort.

I have been unable to confirm whether Starčevskij was commissioned to undertake this work. Unlike the vast majority of Starčevskij's output, the phrase book has a very real, actual and practical goal: “Для объясненій съ нашими инородцами живущими на прилегающихъ къ этимъ дорогамъ и рѣкамъ мѣстностямъ”. This sentence, following the main title of the phrase-book, may be translated as ‘To make oneself understood by the foreigners living in the adjoining regions of those roads and rivers’. Taking into account the future

importance that the Trans-Siberian railway (one which Prof. Janhunen knows very well) would have for the history of the continent (see e.g. Lattimore 1962: 16–18, 99, 141–145), this seems to be a serious occasion and an important task for Starčevskij.

In fact, the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway (an English coinage with no direct Russian translation) has been vividly described in travel literature. There are even some mentions of the natives' attitude towards its construction. Contemporary travellers who could not make use of the railway do not bother even to mention its construction. A member of the Bombay Civil Service, Henry E.M. James, travelled extensively in Manchuria and writes that the only train he saw in the region was a train of pack mules (1887: 560). He relates that he even doubts the viability of its construction (1888: 97), admitting that it remains to be seen whether it is or isn't an appropriate invention in such latitudes. However, once services were already available, there was praise for the railway (see e.g. Sowerby 1919: 75–78, with annotations when no railway is at one's disposal). Robert Jefferson, a businessman travelling throughout Siberia, noted down in his diaries:

[...] I had an interesting conversation with a Russian official on the subject of the railway. The Mongolian map was spread before us, and I traced from memory the course the line would take over the north-eastern Gobi. "Do you think you will have difficulty with the natives in this province?" I asked. My official friend simply winked. "If we do," said he, "we have plenty of Cossacks to keep them in order; and if the Cossacks are once in they won't come out very soon. And," continued he airily, "of course that part of the country north of the line must eventually become Russian." (1897: 228)

This contrasts very much with the apparently benevolent intentions that Starčevskij seemed to be appealing to with his phrase book.

The prologue (pp. iii–vi) is typically propagandistic – a wonderful occasion to show a bit of sensationalism, for after all Starčevskij was a mass-media journalist – including appropriate comparisons to the corresponding railway network of the United States and even the British navy. Starčevskij explains in ten points why the construction of the (Trans-)Siberian railway is so important and what it will mean for the Russian Empire. Not surprisingly, there is no description of native peoples inhabiting the territories across which the new Siberian railway will run. The prologue is dated August 20, 1893 in Saint Petersburg.

In the following table, based on Sem (1976: 14–24), I summarize all the old sources known to us published before 1893 (our *terminus ante quem*) to which Starčevskij may have had access and eventually benefited from (the "Year" column refers to the year the materials were gathered, not when they were published):

Year	Author	Characteristics	Comments
1855	R. Maak	+160 words	M. Only those words with the label CA are Nanay.
1858	M. Venjukov	+140 words, a couple of sentences	See Alonso de la Fuente (2011)
1859	A. Brylkin	+800 words, grammatical sketch	B
1855–1860	C. von Maximowicz	??	Kotwič (1909: 212) claims “1855–1860” and Sem (1976: 15) “1860–1885”.
1869	A. Orlov		No original materials
1869–1870	A. Protodjakonov	279 words, grammatical sketch	Grammar lost, dictionary (incomplete, but originally containing approx. 1000 items) in Protodjakonov (1869–1870). Reported in Kotwič (1909: 212) and Avrorin (1959: 9 ft. 2)
1876	I. Zaxarov		No original materials (based on A. Protodjakonov’s materials)
1881–1885	P. Protodjakonov	Texts	Four texts in Walravens (1992). See PP, published in 1901, apparently containing every word published up to that date (including A. Protodjakonov’s complete manuscript?).

Had Starčevskij had access to Maximowicz’s notes, he would have benefited from the manuscript, for Grube’s dictionary, where they were included, did not appear until 1900. As for A. Protodjakonov’s materials, we know that the sinologist P. Kafarov brought them to Saint Petersburg, so Starčevskij may have had a look at them, but since they have been never published, we cannot know for sure.

The basic vocabulary (pp. 313–329) is divided in sections according to the lexical category of the word: I. Verbs (313a–315b), II. Pronouns (316a), III. Particles (316a–317b), IV. Adjectives (317b–318b), V. Numerals (318b–319a), and VI. Nouns (319a–329b). It becomes immediately clear that the main source had to be Brylkin. However, Starčevskij replaced all instances of Brylkin’s “ходзенскій / ходзен(ы)”, a Manchu-Chinese term (cfr. modern *Hezhen*, Chinese 赫哲 *hèzhé*), with “гольдскій / гольд(ы)”. I will ignore whether political considerations played any role here.

It is Starčevskij who arranged the words according to lexical category and reversed the languages (Brylkin’s is Nanay-Russian, whereas Starčevskij’s is Russian-Nanay). He also seems to have simplified and homogenized Brylkin’s orthographic customs. Thus, cf. B (11a) <акиламэ> :: S (315b) <акиламэ> ‘to sink’, B (15a) <мјаоà> :: S (327a) <мяоа> ‘heart’, or B (5) <тси> :: S (412) <ци> INSTRUMENTAL case ending. I must admit that it is unclear what Brylkin was implying when he used <тс> in opposition to <ц>, e.g. B (15a) <коцò> ‘nut’ ::

<коци> ‘intestine’ :: <кутси> ‘pigeon’, cf. S (325b) <коцо> ‘id.’, (322b) <коци> ‘id.’, (320b) <куци> ‘id.’, respectively, corresponding to Literary Nanay *kosoa* ‘nut’ (NRS 230b), *kuuci* ‘pigeon’ (NRS 236a) and Kili *koci* ‘(large) intestine’ (Sunik 1958: 179b). Be that as it may, it is only natural that Starčevskij carried out these changes because the intended public of his phrase book was mainly people with neither training nor possibly interest in linguistic facts. It goes without saying that Starčevskij’s decision to drop accent marks must also be seen in this light. Though his decision to get rid of <-ъ> may seem less understandable, we must bear in mind that this is a Russian orthographic convention, not necessarily to be applied to foreign materials as Brylkin had systematically done.

If my calculations are correct, Brylkin (+800 words) cannot be in theory the only source consulted, for Starčevskij’s vocabulary contains +1050 items. What is the origin of such a discrepancy? Starčevskij duplicates (and even triplicates) many items because he glosses according to Russian meanings, not to Nanay words. For instance, В (11a) <ајактачимэ> ‘to be angry; to be in a bad temper (Russ. сердиться; злиться)’ appears twice in Starčevskij’s vocabulary: under (314a) Злиться, and under (315a) Сердиться. This accounts for the difference in the number of entrances between Starčevskij and Brylkin. There are, however, a few items which would deserve individual treatment, since their ultimate origin may appear to some mysterious. Due to space limitations, I shall deal only with one instance.

Starčevskij seems to have decided that fauna and flora terminology should be left out as they are of no use to railway workers. Consequently, if we compare each of the words under heading A in Brylkin’s glossary with the corresponding words in Starčevskij’s vocabulary, we will soon discover that the only word absent from the latter is В (11a) <авата> ‘black fox (Russ. чёрная лисица)’ (I think that В [11a] <айкони-чумчо> ‘ring finger’ is just an involuntary oversight, for the rest of the fingers mentioned in В are glossed in S [325b]). However, a few words belonging to such specialized vocabulary made their way into the glossary, among them <хулу> & <улюки> ‘squirrel (Russ. белка)’ and <ульги> & <угдуки> ‘chipmunk (Russ. бурундук)’, both in (319b). Only the first words of each pair, namely <хулу> and <ульги>, have been documented before and since: М (VIIIa) *xulu*, NRS (478b) *xulu* ‘id.’ and PP (342b) *ul’gi*, NRS (428b) *ulgi* ‘id.’, respectively. What about <улюки> and <улгуки>? The former is genealogically related to *xulu* via Proto-Southern Tungusic */xöLö-ki(i)/ ‘id.’ (see SSTMJa II: 263b-264a for materials concerning other Tungusic languages). The loss of */x/ in initial position is a diagnostic feature of Kili, which was formerly considered to be a Nanay dialect but is now regarded as a language in its own right. Information at hand confirms that Starčevskij took this word from an old Kili source, most likely М (Va) *uluki*, from which G (48b) *uluki*, or Sunik (1958: 196a) *uluki* ‘id.’ However, none of the old Kili sources can help us to understand the motivation behind Starčevskij’s <ю>. Could he have had access to an unknown source?

As far as <улгуки> goes, it does not appear in any Nanay source. It turns out that Ewenki is the only Tungusic language where something similar to

<улгукы> is attested, namely *ulgukii* ‘id.’ Actually, Starčevskij included *ulguki* in the Northern and Hill Tungusic (= Ewenki) glossary with the translation ‘common chipmunk (Russ. обыкновенный бурундук)’ (241b) alongside <уллгукы> ‘chipmunk’. As can be quickly inferred from the materials presented in SST-MJa (II: 258b), both terms with or without the derivative suffix */-ki(i)/ are not attested in the same language. I think it would be a mistake to propose that Starčevskij attests the contrary, namely that Nanay preserves both *ulgi* and *ulguki*, because this is not what modern Nanay dictionaries reflect. In this case I would propose that Starčevskij may have made a mistake here, repeating the Ewenki word in the Nanay section.

The basic conversational dialogues (pp. 396–398), or more properly, sentences are divided into five sections and are all copied from Brylkin. Five deal with flora and fauna, e.g. B (21) <Бурò Турченгаду сахаринь син’геривà.> = *Bu-ro Turceŋa-du saxarin singeri-wa* {give-IMP Turceŋa-DAT black mouse-ACC} ‘Give Turceŋa (a pet?) a black mouse.’ Starčevskij left these out, but as happened above, he did so inconsistently, e.g. S (397a) = B (21) <Нидаду бурò эмахава.> = *Nida-du bu-ro ämaxa-wa* {dog-DAT give-IMP fish-ACC} ‘Give the dog a fish’. Here Starčevskij corrects Brylkin, who has *<Нидаду> instead of <Нидаду>. It is my understanding that most imperatives and other conjugated forms quoted in sections II (396a–397a), IV (397b) and V (397b–398b) are the result of Starčevskij’s own elucidation. The origin of a few expressions, e.g. (396a) <зароде> ‘good morning!’, (396b) <Нангда ду буру> ‘give me credit!’ or (398b) <Ду, мука даланэ> ‘in the water’ (cf. B [21] <Мукà доланэ> ‘id.’), remains unclear to me.

As for the grammatical sketch (pp. 412–414), one can safely conclude that it is based on Brylkin (B 3–8), including even the examples of noun inflection and conjugation. Starčevskij eliminated the section on phonology (B 3–4 §1) and simplified or modified many of Brylkin’s statements, not always for the benefit of the reader. To begin with, Starčevskij got rid of all the exceptions. Thus, when explaining that the accent usually falls on the last syllable of each word, Starčevskij just says “word” whereas Brylkin comments that as exceptions one should take into account most of the disyllabic words (see S 412 :: B 4 §2). Brylkin noted that the knowledge of the Manchu language by one of his informants may have motivated the irregular use of the PLURAL marker *-sul(-)*. Starčevskij opted to ignore this comment and explains only that such a marker is “rarely used (рѣдко употребляется)” (see S 412 :: B 5 §4 Remark 4). Brylkin explicitly mentioned that there are no 3rd person personal pronouns, while Starčevskij says nothing of this in spite of the fact that such a piece of information seems relevant (see S 413 :: B 6 §7).

In summary, Starčevskij’s Nanay materials are a mixture of Brylkin and Maak’s previous publications, though it cannot be dismissed out of hand that he had access to other unknown sources. I would like to stress that neither Brylkin nor Maak’s materials have been properly (i.e. philologically) described, as happens in the case of Starčevskij’s phrase books and many other old sources.

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	<i>M</i>	Maak 1859
<i>B</i>	Brylkin 1861	<i>NRS</i>	Onenko 1980
DAT	dative	<i>PP</i>	Protodjakonov 1901
<i>G</i>	Grube 1900	<i>S</i>	Starčevskij 1893
IMP	imperative	<i>SSTMJa</i>	Cincius 1975–1977

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