

In the Language of Their Hearts: Emotions and Language Choice in Child-Parent Interaction, Insights from a Yupik village

La langue de leurs coeurs : Lien entre les émotions et le choix de la langue dans les interactions entre les parents et leurs enfants dans un village yupik

На языке сердец: Эмоции и выбор языка в детско-родительском взаимодействии, на наблюдениях из эскимосского села

Daria Morgounova Schwalbe

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Tchoukotka : Comprendre le passé, les pratiques contemporaines et les perceptions du présent
Chukotka: Understanding the Past, Contemporary Practices, and Perceptions of the Present

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Article abstract

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Daria Morgounova Schwalbeⁱ

ABSTRACT

In studies of language choice and minority language shift and maintenance, attention is frequently given to factors other than emotions: social context of contact, language politics, linguistic competence and attitudes, educational policies, and political agendas in a society. Yet human language is ideologically saturated, aesthetically experienced empirical phenomena, characterized by complex dynamics and linked to group and personal identities, morality, aesthetics, and epistemology. While negative moral emotions (e.g., shame) may lead people to abandon their first language, heritage languages may still be perceived as “more emotional,” and their loss and maintenance is a deeply emotional matter. Drawing on Pavlenko, Cavanaugh, and Ahmed, I discuss the role of emotion-related factors—*affective repertoires* and *perceived language emotionality*—in language choice of native Chukotkan parents, as a way of understanding human interactivity and the potential of the local environment for children’s acquisition of their heritage languages. Perceived language emotionality, I argue, is an important yet often overlooked aspect of heritage language sustainability and learning. The focus of this article is not on how bodies are transformed into objects of emotions (e.g., “the shamed one”), but on interplay between emotions and multilingual phenomena: how language and wordings are used to move people, to produce affects, attachments, equalities, and authenticities.

KEYWORDS

Language, emotions, affective repertoires, parent–child interaction, Yupik

RÉSUMÉ

La langue de leurs cœurs: Lien entre les émotions et le choix de la langue dans les interactions entre les parents et leurs enfants dans un village yupik

Dans les recherches liées au choix de la langue et aux changements et à la préservation des langues minoritaires, le facteur de l’émotion est souvent écarté au profit de l’étude du contexte social des relations interpersonnelles, des politiques

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linguistiques et pédagogiques, des comportements et compétences linguistiques ainsi que des agendas politiques de la société. Pour autant, le langage humain est saturé d'idéologie, de phénomènes empiriques éprouvés esthétiquement, caractérisés par des dynamiques complexes mais aussi liés à des identités, des morales, des esthétiques et épistémologies personnelles et de groupe. Là où les émotions négatives d'ordre moral (comme la honte) peuvent mener certains à l'abandon de leur première langue, les langues d'héritage peuvent être perçues comme « plus émouvantes », et l'enjeu de leur disparition et de leur conservation est profondément sensible. En m'appuyant sur Pavlenko, Cavanaugh et Ahmed, je discute dans cet article du rôle des facteurs liés à l'émotion – des *répertoires affectifs* (*affective repertoires*) et de l'*émotivité linguistique ressentie* (*perceived language emotionality*) – dans le choix de langues des parents autochtones de Tchoukotka afin de comprendre les interactions humaines et le potentiel de l'environnement local dans l'acquisition des langues d'héritage par les enfants. Je montre que l'émotivité linguistique ressentie est un aspect négligé, et pourtant important, de l'apprentissage des langues d'héritage et de leur pérennisation. Cet article ne s'intéressera pas à la transformation des corps en objets d'émotion (par exemple, « celui qui fait honte »), mais plutôt à l'interaction entre les émotions et les phénomènes multilingues : comment la langue et les formulations sont utilisées pour toucher les individus, produire des émotions, des liens, des sentiments d'égalité et d'authenticité.

MOTS-CLÉS

Langue, émotions, répertoires affectifs, interactions parents-enfants, Yupik

АННОТАЦИЯ

На языке сердец: Эмоции и выбор языка в детско-родительском взаимодействии, на наблюдениях из эскимосского села Дарья Моргунова Швальбе

В исследованиях, посвященных выбору языка, языковому сдвигу и сохранению миноритарного языка, внимание часто уделяется факторам, отличным от эмоций: социальному контексту контактов, языковой политике, языковой компетенции носителей и отношениям к языку, образовательной политике и политической повестке в обществе. Между тем язык — это идеологически насыщенный, эстетически переживаемый эмпирический феномен, характеризующийся сложной динамикой и связанный с групповой и индивидуальной идентичностями, моралью, эстетикой и эпистемологией. В то время как отрицательные моральные эмоции (например, стыд) могут заставить людей отказаться от своего родного языка, языки наследия могут по-прежнему восприниматься как «более эмоциональные», а их утрата и сохранение — глубоко эмоциональный вопрос. Опираясь на работы Павленко, Кавано и Ахмед, в статье обсуждается роль эмоциональных факторов – *аффективных репертуаров и воспринимаемой языковой эмоциональности* – при выборе языка коренными родителями Чукотки, как способ понимания человеческого взаимодействия и потенциала местной среды для усваивания детьми их языков наследия. В статье утверждается, что воспринимаемая языковая эмоциональность является важным, но часто упускаемым из виду аспектом устойчивости и усваивания языка наследия. В центре внимания этой статьи находится не столько то, как человеческие тела трансформируются в объекты эмоций (например, «пристыженный»), сколько само взаимодействие между эмоциями и явлением многоязычия: как язык и языковые обороты используются в повседневной

речи для того, чтобы эмоционально тронуть человека, произвести впечатление на собеседника, создать ощущение привязанности, равенства и аутентичности.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

Язык, эмоции, аффективные репертуары, детско-родительские отношения, эскимосы-юпик

Language, as previously pointed out, “has historically been assumed to be independent from emotions” (Caldwell-Harris 2014b, 1), and the study of language (linguistics) and language learning (cognitive science) from the study of emotions (psychology). In the traditional view of linguistic semiotics, language is a system of coded meaning, “artificial, conventional, and arbitrary entities intentionally produced by humans for the purpose of communication understood as exchange of encoded meanings” (Kravchenko 2007, 651). In this traditional view, “‘language is in the mind,’ and the scientific study of language or linguistics sets out to tell us important things about the architecture of the mind” (Culicover 2005, cited in Kravchenko 2007, 651). Since “in the modular view of the mind emotion and language should have little timely overlap in their processes and representations” (Caldwell-Harris 2014b, 1), emotions came to be neglected in cognitive science and in linguistics.

Following the traditional inner-outer dichotomies (McNabb 1989, 51) that separate mind from the body, agent from environment, and the study of language structure from the study of language use, studies of minority language shift and maintenance have been more preoccupied with the relationship of language *use* and *non-use* (and with the relation of use and non-use to status and power revealed through dominance of one language or another, see Schwalbe 2015), rather than with the cultural, societal, and emotional complexity of cross-cultural encounters, which can only be revealed through the study of natural language as an empirical phenomenon, situated in real time and space. Looking for causal factors of language attrition and loss, these studies paid little attention to emotional factors and affect in their analysis of linguistic situation and change.¹ In recent decades, inspired by increased attention to emotions in the neuroscience and cognitive

1. McNabb (1989, 50), referring to Bateson’s (1958) distinction between cultural systems of thought and values and affect (emotions), argues that “the expression of affect is practically all we can know about emotions per se. We may suggest and even insist that underlying emotions influence our inter-personal behavior... But social scientists can only observe and analyze expression which, whatever else it may be, is surely (and chiefly) a social and linguistic convention.”

psychology, emotions have become the subject of a flourishing academic interest in social sciences and linguistics, to an extent that we today categorically speak of “the affective turn” (Frederiksen 2012; Pavlenko 2013).

A series of studies in bilingual interaction have shown that language and emotions are deeply interrelated phenomena and that they come together in the situated interaction. Pavlenko (2004) shows that dominant language is not necessarily the language of emotions, but other—native or heritage—languages may seem equally emotional. Others have shown that native language can have an emotional advantage (Anooshian and Hertel 1994; Puntoni, de Langhe, and Van Osselaer 2009) and that switching into the minority language can be used by bilingual speakers for their advantage and manipulation (Heller 1982, 1988; Jørgensen 1998). In psychotherapy, bilinguals can codeswitch into their less proficient language to obtain emotional distance on a topic (Altarriba and Rivera-Santiago 1994; Schrauf 2000; Dewaele and Costa 2013), while bilingual parents may use their native language (L1) to discipline and scold their children (Hoffmann 1971; Pavlenko 2004) as a way of showing authority (Schwalbe 2020). Switching into the L1 may mark an affective stance, to signal intimacy or solidarity (Pavlenko 2004; Schwalbe 2015), while switching into the less proficient (majority) language (L2) “may be used to mark distance, an out-group attitude, or to describe emotions in a detached way” (Gumperz 1982; Zentella 1997; Pavlenko 2004).

Switching into a shared L1 in multilingual societies may facilitate intimacy and emotional connection, while a lack of (switching into) a shared language may lead to frustration and miscommunication (Piller 2002; Caldwell-Harris 2015, 3). Songs and stories, just like saying *I love you*, are often performed by bilingual parents in their L1 (Heye 1975; Pavlenko 2004). Pavlenko (2005) and Dewaele (2010) state that bilingual speakers frequently report that swearing, praying, lying, and saying *I love you* “feel differently when using a native rather than foreign language” (Caldwell-Harris 2014b, 1). Others have pointed towards reduced emotionality of the L2 (Colbeck and Bowers 2012), particularly in decision-making tasks (Keysar, Hayakawa, and An 2012; Costa et al. 2014) and lying in a foreign language (Caldwell-Harris and Ayçiğçer-i-Dinn 2009; Caldwell-Harris 2015).

Researchers working with Iñupiaq and Yupik communities have similarly noted that speaking Indigenous languages “feels much more authentic,” “more natural,” and that it makes people “feel better” or “feel more spiritual” (Baloy 2011; Reo et al. 2019, 219). It provides a “deeper sense” of oneself (i.e., a feeling of being “more Inuit” and “somewhat more whole”), as well as a deeper connection to people, place, culture, and the environment (the land, sky, ice) (Moore 2019, 3–4). For some Iñupiaq and Yupik speakers, native language is “also about feeding your soul, your spirituality” and is “the key to a prosperous and healthy life” (Reo et al. 2019, 219; see also Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007; Oster et al. 2014). Whereas Dorais and Sammons (2002, 121–22), who studied linguistic situation in the Baffin villages of

Iqaluit, Kimmirut, and Igloodik from 1994 to 2002, observed that while English is generally used for speaking about activities having to do with the daily life in a contemporary Arctic community, Inuktitut is used to talk about Inuit culture and to express feelings (Dorais, forthcoming).

According to Pavlenko (2004, 179), *perceived language emotionality* (feeling and emotional reaction about one's respective languages) and *affective repertoires* (i.e., "linguistic means for emotional expression" [183]) offered by specific languages "play a role in language choice and use in parent-child communication, in particular in emotional expression." Emotions may also be an important factor in intergenerational transmission and learning of heritage languages by the potential speakers (Lee 2009; Baloy 2011).² Yet the role of such affective factors on situational language choice in Inuit/Yupik parent-child interactions in Arctic communities has not been studied in detail, nor has it been systematically described.

Briggs, in her seminal work (1970, 1975, 1976), provides a systematic analysis of Inuit emotions. Focusing on Inuit emotions per se—that is, as a distinct cultural system of concepts, thought, and values—her analysis "emphasize[s] the language of affect: the terms Inuit use, the definitions they offer, and the social contexts that are the occasions for the use of those terms and the meanings they are said to convey" (McNabb 1989, 53). Not only does her analysis show that emotions "might be constructed and construed differently in different worlds" (Briggs 2000b, 158), but also that specific acts "may depict more than one emotional or mental state" and that the values (being embodied in specific acts) "find their expression in interaction" (McNabb 1989, 53–54). In "Emotions Have Many Faces: Inuit Lessons," arguing for the study of emotional concepts, Briggs writes,

The meanings of emotions are always inextricably embedded in—not only coloured, but profoundly shaped by—the contexts in which they are used: the purposes of their users, and the associations and memories of their hearers. This is why investigation of what emotion concepts mean to their users can tell one so much about those users: their social arrangements and personal relationships, their values, their ideas about human nature and proper behaviour, and in general, the emotional texture of life: what it feels like to be an Inuk (or another kind of person), living in a particular time and place, with particular associates. (2000, 160–61)

2. Lee (2009) found that there was a mixture of pride and shame for youth learning their heritage languages (see also, Moore 2019). Whereas Baloy has argued, following Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998), that for the contemporary Inuit speakers, "the ultimate motivation for learning... aboriginal language is ultimately spiritual" (it feels good), and it is psychological: learning the ancestral language "gives peace, real identity, and intellectual pleasure" (Baloy 2011, 518, 530).

Analyses of emotions (paying attention to the unique lexical features and the way people express emotions through linguistic means) may therefore not only help us to better assess the scope of heritage language use within domestic space, but it also allows us to access ideas, feelings, and values of the local population, to understand how these values are transmitted through linguistic means, and how they may motivate potential speakers to continuously use and learn their heritage languages (Baloy 2011; Sidorova, Ferguson, and Vallikivi 2017).

Following Pavlenko (2004), this article discusses the role of emotion-related factors in Yupik parents' linguistic features³ choice as a way of understanding local interactivity (i.e., “sense-saturated coordination that contributes to human action” [Steffensen 2013, 195]), the complex linguistic family dynamics, and the potential of the local environment and the family context for children's acquisition of Indigenous languages. By displaying how the local parents may resort to using linguistic features (with identifiable emotional associations) associated with their heritage language for emotional (aesthetic and psychological) purposes *in situ*, I show how emotions may become a decisive factor in the maintenance (at least of some parts) of a minority language.

To understand the casual factors of Indigenous language emotionality—that is, how sense-specific histories contribute to later action and perception—I turn to the affective economies approach (Ahmed 2004b). More specifically, I look at the contemporary discourses of “shame” and “guilt.” Along the lines of Cowley and Vallée-Tourangeau (2013, 14), I argue that sense-specific histories and ideologies “contribute to people's later action and perception.” Past events, as Uryu, Steffensen and Kramsch (2014, 41) show, “become powerful constraints on the interactional dynamics between interlocutors, as they use these events to project and mold their dialogical and social identities.”

Overall, this article provides an insight into the interactive, social, and, to some extent, cognitive and psychological processes (of meaning-making) surrounding heritage language use, sustainability, and learning in Chukotka.⁴

3. Linguistic “features” are “elements associated with particular languages” (Ferguson 2016, 143; Jørgensen et al. 2011). They “carry indexical meanings (Peirce 1955; Silverstein 1976, 2003), intrinsically as well as by virtue of their association with that language” (Ferguson 2016, 143).

4. Briggs makes it clear that the study of emotions cannot be separated from cognition, rather we should speak of emotion-cognition. She writes, “In this view—which I agree with—one cannot experience emotion without labelling (cognizing) it. Without the cognitive component, emotion is experienced merely as amorphous, physical disturbance. On the other hand, cognition—understanding of any sort, not to mention interaction—would be impossible without emotion” (2000, 159).

It also supports the view that languaging, defined here as an activity where wordings play a part (Cowley 2019),⁵ is a complex (coordinated and embedded) sense-making activity. Based on common way of understanding, (physical) wordings can be used for self-realization, identification, adaptation, and affect; to claim rights, attachments, authenticity; and/or as a way of remembering.

Methods, Data, and Analytical Procedures

Conventionally, studies in language shift define norms of behaviour in sociological terms, which “stand apart from individual behaviour” (Gumperz and Hymes 1972, 435), and, hence, pay little attention to complexity of human interaction. Since this article focuses on situated interaction, and on language and emotions as part of lived experience, I take the interactivity-based perspective as a point of departure. The interactivity-based perspective (Love 2004; Thibault 2011) “prioritise[s] what individuals actually do in real-life situations as they draw on experience and non-local constraints” (Trasmundi 2020, 29). According to this perspective, language is embodied and, to a certain extent, embedded, in a sense that representations “link experience with physical patterns” and “are embedded in cultural process” (Cowley and Vallée-Tourangeau 2013, 5). In other words, “While part of action, language *is* also part of history,” and during talk, people “draw on interactivity to create and construe wordings” (Cowley and Vallée-Tourangeau 2013, 5). Since I am primarily interested in interaction between language and emotions in terms of language practice in relation to broader norms and beliefs (or ideologies), the approach combines ethnographic methods, such as ethnography of speaking (Hymes 1962, 1974; Fitch and Philipsen 1995), micro-analysis of social interaction captured through observations (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1983) and audio recordings, with interactional sociolinguists (Gumperz and Hymes 1972; Gumperz 1982; Rampton 2017).

The following discussion takes as its case study the village of Novoe (New) Chaplino—one of the two traditional “Eskimo”⁶ villages in the

5. According to Cowley (2019, 462), “As experience takes on a verbal aspect, people use its constraints to perceive and act. The results consist in activity where wordings play a part or, simply, languaging.”

6. The term *Eskimo* (эскимос, эскимосский) is still commonly used in Chukotka to denote Inuit and Yupik people. The term has been widely discussed in Canadian and Danish contexts, where it is considered inappropriate because of its negative connotation (see Oparin and Schwalbe 2021) and links to the long, painful colonial history and subordination of Inuit. In 1977 the Inuit Circumpolar Council recognized the term *Inuit* as an official name for all those people, who previously were called “Eskimos.” The term *Inuit*, however, comes from the Inuktitut language, and was originally used by linguists to denote people who spoke languages belonging to the

southeast of the Chukchi Peninsula, with a total population of 462 people (as of September 2018), most of whom are Natives. The primary data consist of ethnographic participant observations (Spradley 2016), audio and video recordings of situated interaction from specific events (including traditional drum dance, sea mammal hunting, and diverse celebrations and meetings on local and regional levels), with retrospective commentary from local participants (Rampton 2017), and semi-structured opened-ended interviews with the residents of the village (Kvale 1997). The interview data comprise 47 tape-recorded interviews (10 in 2003, 19 in 2005, and 18 in 2018),⁷ including a few group interviews, to bring us closer to the “natural speech” (Vakhtin and Golovko 2004). The data were recorded over the course of three separate trips to Chukotka: in March to May 2003, August to October 2005, and in August 2018, covering a total of 6 months. Altogether, I interviewed 15 people (11 women, 4 men) in 2003, 22 people (14 women, 8 men) in 2005, and 20 people (13 women, 7 men) in 2018. The respondents included several community Elders and leaders, local schoolteachers, hunters, few artists (carvers), a social worker, as well as a few school children between the age of 10 and 15. Most of the respondents were between the age of 24 and 40, and their level of Yupik language competence varied from being fluent (Elders) to speaking half-and half (mostly women in their forties) to very limited knowledge (few lexical items).⁸ In 2018, 7 of the participants were my former respondents. I conducted all interviews in Russian and subsequently transcribed them.

In 2003 I conducted a short, one-page survey among the schoolchildren in Novoe Chaplino, which aimed to get an understanding of the local kids’ own assessment of their Yupik and Chukchi language skills (self-reported

so-called “eastern branch” of the Inuit/Yupik/Unangan (previously: Eskimoaleut) language family. In accordance with the International Labor Organization (ILO)’s Convention 169 and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)’s Board of Directors General Meeting 2010, the politically correct terms are those taken from the peoples’ own languages. In this paper, I will use the term *Yupik* (*Yupitit* in pl.) to refer to Asiatic Yupik population of the Chukchi peninsula and the St. Lawrence Island, and I will use the term *Inuit* to refer to the Inuit people of Canada and Greenland, but also, in accordance with ICC guidelines, as an overall name for all those people who previously were called “Eskimos.” When used in direct citations, the term “Eskimo” will be used.

7. The 2003 corpus includes twenty additional interviews with residents of Novoe Chaplino and six with residents of Sireniki, conducted by the research team. In seven of these, I participated as an interpreter. An additional interview with the Indigenous leader (Liudmila Ivanovna) Ainana was conducted in Provideniya. In 2005 and 2018 I conducted few additional interviews in Provideniya, and in the city of Anadyr. Three more interviews with residents of Novoe Chaplino were conducted during fieldwork in Gambell: one in July 2007, and two in May 2018.

8. The question of “speakers,” “non-speakers,” and “semi-speakers” is discussed in Morgounova 2010.

behavioural proficiencies and language attitudes). Sixty-four questionnaires, comprising 75% of all school children in the village between the age of 10 and 17, were collected. Among other things, the children were asked if they spoke the Indigenous language and if they used Yupik words in their Russian speech. They were also asked to give a few examples of known Yupik words and Yupik-Russian mixed sentences. In 2005 the questionnaire was extended to an eight-page survey and included a set of questions regarding reading comprehension and writing skills in Yupik and Russian/English and code-switching (see Morgounova 2010). The survey provided a body of another 150 questionnaires, collected in Anadyr College, Provideniya Technical School, and the local school in the village of Novoe Chaplino. The possible answers were structured in a five-level scale (Dorais and Sammons 2002).

Perceived Emotionality of Yupik

In Chukotka, language, and particularly heritage language (Yupik and Chukchi, or *Lyg* "oravell'an"),⁹ is a highly emotional matter. The Yupik language (*акузипиг*)¹⁰ is associated with traditional values, such as respect for elders, harmony with the environment, and care for children, and, in the words of the Native residents, is "a matter of pride to every Eskimo in Chukotka." For most adult residents of Novoe Chaplino, Yupik is cohesive with emotionally charged memories. These memories are linked to the local people's individual and collective experiences. For Liudmila, a local woman, whom I have known since 2003 and who is in her fifties, Yupik is more than a means of communicating with elderly people. It is also a way to (re)connect with her ancestors, local nature, and the past. I remember sitting in her kitchen back in 2005, listening to our 2003 recordings of the local drum singing. Liudmila smiled as she listened. She accompanied the singing with hand gestures, trying to keep up with the singing voice on the tape recorder—her Uncle Nasalik. "The Eskimo dance is like telling a story. The singers tell the story to the sound of the drums, and the dancers do it with their hands. Each gesture is a whole sentence," she explained. Recalling with grief and love (you could see it in her eyes) how Nasalik taught them to sing, how he

9. The local name for the "Chukchi" people is *lyg* "oravell'an" (лыгъоравэльт'ан). For description of Chukchi-Eskimo contact, see Pika, Terentyeva, and Bogoiavlensky (1993), de Reuse (1994), and Morgounova (2004).

10. The common word for *language* in the Chaplino/ St. Lawrence Island Yupik language is *улю* (*ulu*, in the Latin script, which is used by the St. Lawrence Island people). *Акузипиг* (*akuzipig*) means "speaking in a real, genuine language" (from *акузи*, *akuzi*, "to speak" and a Yupik postbase *-ник*, *pik*, which means "real, genuine, authentic, old-fashion," Jacobson 2008) and is used by the residents of the St. Lawrence Island as an alternative to *Yupik*. In Chukotka, the most commonly used word is *юпигыстун*, which means "speaking in a language of the Yupik people."

scolded them for not singing correctly, and how he encouraged her to keep practicing, she noted melancholically, “It is as if the soul of the village had gone with him.” Her words here emphasize the emotional connection between the Yupik language (singing) and the past. In fact, although many of my respondents claimed that the people no longer know the meaning of the words in Yupik songs, the rhyming sounds are embedded in locals’ memory, and they create joy and satisfaction.

Local stories and fairy tales are also sometimes told in Yupik because “it is better and funnier to listen to stories in Yupik.” “Whoever understands well can laugh heartily,” I was told (interview 2005). Most of the Yupik stories are directly related to old Yupik settlements. Different toponyms have different stories connected to them. Many toponyms are also connected to specific songs, dances, and personal experiences. In pre-Soviet times, this feeling of locality—that is, the sense of belonging to a specific place—was an important factor in the identification of various local groups (Krupnik and Chlenov 2013), and, in a sense, is still maintained through Eskimo stories and songs. Hence, even when a fairy tale is told in Russian, the Yupik names of localities, main characters, animals, and objects characteristic of traditional culture are continuously performed in Yupik (see Krupnik 2000), and the narrator usually ends the story by traditionally spitting passionately over their right shoulder.

Those who still remember how to speak the language (and who used Yupik as their L1 as children) talk about how proud they are to speak their language, how speaking Yupik makes them *feel good*, and they talk about the “passion of Yupik.” “Do you know when pride came? When we started traditional dancing and singing our songs—such passion!” a local resident of the village of Novoe Chaplino told me.

For forty-three-year-old Elina, speaking Yupik is also a matter of equality, and a way of escaping shame: “Today I feel that I am equal with everyone, even with the Russians, but five years ago, for example, I was ashamed of speaking my language” (interview 2003). In fact, for many adult Yupik residents of Chukotka, speaking Indigenous languages is connected to shame (and more recently, guilt). Many remember how ashamed they were of speaking their language with their parents and grandparents as children. Aleksandra, who is around fifty and still speaks the Native language fluently, remembers,

We were ashamed. I was even ashamed of my grandmother when she came to visit me in the boarding school. She came to visit me, and I would say to her, “Why did you come?” Such an old Eskimo came, the Russians are looking. Then, we strived to speak only Russian, to be Russians. If we were addressed in Eskimo, we would say, “But I don’t understand.” So neglectful. [As if to indicate], Why do you speak

Chukchi to me, when I am so-called Russian? We all wanted to be like Russians. Today, we speak, and we understand. (Interview 2005)

For Aleksandra, then, who also shared with me that she speaks the language because the Elders “always liked when we talked like that [in their language],” the act of speaking Yupik becomes not only a way of “remembering the old days,” but also a way of “healing of the past wounds” by entering into shame (Ahmed 2004b, 101; Kizuk 2020, 165).

Interestingly, today, those who do not speak Yupik at all are often shamed for not being able to speak their language; they are said to be “less Yupik” or “totally Russified” (*совсем обрусел Rus.*), which carries a negative connotation. Concomitantly, young people in particular often talk about how ashamed they are of not being able to speak their language. In autumn 2005, during the Day of the Young Leaders at the Anadyr College, students were asked whether they wanted to speak their Native language. A young girl raised her hand and said, “I want to speak my language because I am ashamed of not being able to speak it.” By declaring her shame, this young girl acknowledged her attachment to a group (“the Chukchi”), but also her emotional attachment (and loyalty) to the Chukchi language as an integral part of her identity.

Her statement reflects the contemporary discourses of language endangerment, which frame the loss of endangered languages as regrettable and irreversible phenomena (as “already lost”) (Schwalbe, forthcoming), but it also echoes the local parents’ and grandparents’ grief about “losing connection to their children,” who no longer speak their language.¹¹ When rationalizing about language loss, parents and grandparents often talk about “the lack of linguistic environment” (*отсутствие языковой среды Rus.*) in the villages, and they often blame the Russian language. They talk about how difficult it is for the children to speak and learn their Native languages when everyone else speaks Russian, and how “the children are overloaded at school”: “They have no time for the Eskimo language”; “Russian is more important, especially if you want to study at a university, and now also English, but Eskimo—no.” These were the opinions often expressed by the locals in 2003, 2005, and 2018.

Although the local population of Chukotka may perceive their heritage language learning as problematic, the Yupik language *per se* as well as the act of speaking Yupik (*юпигыстун*) has a high symbolic and affective value, presumably by virtue of its emotional link to the past and its association with

11. In her research on Indigenous languages in Vancouver, British Columbia, Baloy (2011, 518) has also noted that “grief and anger over language loss is increasingly expressed as Native leaders and community members voice their concerns over past wrongs and seek redress. For many, loss of language has become symbolic of government oppression and assimilation policies.”

ethnocultural identity. This emotionality plays an important role in the Native population's choice of linguistic features in situated interaction in domestic and local space.

Affective Repertoires and Emotion-Related Factors in Language Choice of Yupik Parents

For the majority of the Novoe Chaplino residents, Russian is the language that they have the best command of, and therefore Russian feels natural for expressing feelings (such as, writing a poem in Russian, even though it might be dedicated to the love of one's Native language). In everyday interaction, however, as I have observed, switching into Yupik and inserting Yupik lexical features (single- and multiple-word items) are frequently used (intuitively or consciously) to perform affect, show respect, indicate something close to the heart (something warm and tender), convey a level of intimacy, poke fun, mark satire, or claim parental authority.

As I discuss elsewhere (Schwalbe 2020), purposeful and accepted switching from Russian to Yupik occurs in a variety of situations and for various purposes.¹² Yupik greetings like *куякамкын* ("I am happy to see you" (singl.)), for example, is often used at the opening encounter to express respect for community Elders, or between friends, to indicate positive emotional (warm or intimate) relation with the person. Locals might also resort to using Yupik in a situation of a threat or warning; and it is used as a secret language between parents or between parents and older siblings to hide something from the younger children, for example, when they need to buy a present, or when parents are arguing. Since children have very limited proficiency in Yupik, parents and grandparents can argue and express their emotions in Yupik without involving their children and, hence, prevent them (consciously or unconsciously) from being hurt (cf. Pavlenko 2012). A similar strategy can be used with outsiders, to exclude them from parts of a conversation, in particular when the topic of the conversation is sensitive, and/or when there is a need to protect or warn someone "within the group" about an "outside" danger (Schwalbe 2020, 111–12).

In (grand)parent–(grand)child interaction, switching into Yupik is often used to perform affect; to calm and comfort a child (positive); or to instruct, discipline, or even scold them (negative affect). In these cases, switching is often limited to single Yupik words and expressions, including instructions and commands of the type: "*атиҕу насяпра*" (put on your hat), "*ак,уми*" (sit down), "*таҕи*" (come here), "*к,ытыхтын*" (lift your head), "*ауытын*"

12. Note, there is a clear distinguish between "accepted" and goal-oriented (and often marked) "alternation" and "insertion" types of code-switching, and a more fluid and unmarked type of bilingual simultaneity (or fusion) that is perceived as code-mixing (discussed in Schwalbe, forthcoming).

(move away), “*к, аюльта*” (let’s have tea), “*нигитун*” (be careful), “*ныпрыг, и*” (shut up), “*ан,*” (take it), “*ин, ах, тын аз, а*” (go to bed), “*таватын*” (enough), etc. “*К, аюн, лъасии?* (do you want tea?), *таг, итах, тиг, у каюмын* (put on the kettle),” Liudmila would tell her sixteen-year-old son. “*Sasha, к, ытых, тын* (lift your head),” she would repeatedly tell her three-year-old granddaughter when tying her hat under the chin. “*Ныпиик*, (hush), Anna, you will wake Sasha,” she disciplined her other granddaughter.

According to Liudmila’s best friend, a former teacher and a speaker of Yupik, Aleksandra Mumikhtykak, parents talk to their children in Yupik to express something dear to the heart, something warm and close: “It is done intuitively, because we are used to it, since our grandparents did this. Because it feels good.” Yet Liudmila herself, who spoke the Yupik language as a child and who relearned the language in the post-Soviet years, tells me that she does this rather intentionally: “What I know, I try to pass to my grandkids, as a play, well, in this way I teach them to speak, to understand.” Liudmila thus presents a rational argument for her actions, rather than purely emotional (“because it feels good”).

Note that the younger generation of parents often adopts this way, or style, of speaking from their own parents. I observed younger parents using words such as “*ак, умн*” (sit), “*якук, лъюми*” (be careful), “*к, угакми*” (attention!), “*иглы*” (let’s go), “*к, аюн, лъасии*” (would you have some tea?) with their children, as well as with their own parents, in a narrow family circle or in communication with close friends.

Switching into Yupik may be used to signal more intense affect, be it positive or negative, to mark an affective stance and/or authority, which signifies that the interlocutor is serious and really means what he/she is saying (in a function similar to raising the voice in monolingual parents). In fact, a series of studies have shown that bilingual parents often prefer to perform authority, and thus scold and discipline their children, in their native language, since they often have the best command of it (Zentella 1997; Pavlenko 2004). During my 2007 fieldwork on the St. Lawrence Island, in a Native village of Gambell, for example, where most of the adult population by that time were Yupik-English bilingual and where the Yupik language is the key to kinship-interpreted group membership, parents would regularly switch into Yupik when scolding and disciplining their children. “It is more meaningful to discipline children in Yupik. It just means more. When I speak in my native language, they know I mean business. Then, they *have* to listen,” a young mother in her thirties explained to me. Switching in this case is then also about a feeling of “getting in control.” In Chukotka, where the knowledge of Yupik is often deficient and particularized, parents as a rule scold their children in the Russian language, but they use Yupik wordings for instructions, warnings, encouragement, and endearment (usually carrying a positive affect).

It is also common to call children, particularly small children, by Yupik affective common nouns (nicknames). Such words as “*ниник*” (“baby,” borrowed from the English language), “*аг,вык,сик*,” (walrus), “*к,уйн,ик*,” (domestic reindeer), “*юк*” (a person), and adjectives “*ниниг*,” (good), “*сыг,лык*,” (bad), “*амакылг,и*” (little), “*ик,атук,ак*,” (dirty), “*к,инутаалг,и*” (lazy) can be used as affective names, either positively, to express love and endearment, or they can be used as swear words (often with older children) to express disapproval, contempt, or anger by ascribing to the negative qualities denoted by a certain word, hence carrying an explicit social meaning (Schwalbe 2020).

Small children are, in fact, often spoken to in what Briggs (2000, 162) calls “a repertoire of emotionally exaggerated voices” (she categorizes these as “fear; disgust; saccharine persuasion; tenderness, and so on), which provides “another kind of clue to adult meanings.” In Chukotka, change in voice is additionally marked by a change in linguistic register. One of the most conspicuous examples is the use of Yupik interjections (or exclamations), including “*ā-a*” (yes), “*уук-* / “*хук*” (beware!), “*кā*” (oh!), “*чā*” (oh), “*тава*” (expressing pain, ouch!), “*ка-ай*” (regret, ah-ay-ay), “*ка-ку*” (careful!), “*ынта*” (well; oh well!), “*кыкā*” (painful), “*у-ух*” (ugh, dirty), “*к,ā*” (shh, quiet), and “*сā*” (meaning “I don’t know”) with small children to express warm feelings, and as part of baby talk. I remember watching a three-year-old Sasha reach for a cup of hot coffee. “*Уук* (be careful!), *ууук* (you will burn yourself), don’t touch,” the child’s mother, Liuba (who was in her early twenties at the time), warned the girl quietly (2005). In 2018 Sasha herself would use a similar strategy with her younger siblings.

Another interesting example of language play is insertion of Yupik words into well-known Russian songs and poems, such as the poem written by Agnia Barto, a prominent Russian children’s writer:

Матросский насяпырак,
Тапх,аг,рак в руке,
Несу я ан,бях,пак
По быстрой реке.
И скачут йамынгу
За мной по пятам
И просят меня:
“Прокати, капитан”¹³

13. The poem translates into English as follows (Yupik words are underlined): “A sailor’s hat, a rope in the hand / I carry a steamer down the streams of the river? / And frogs are jumping, chasing my steps / And ask me: ‘Give us a ride captain [Jack]’” (Schwalbe 2017).

Here, Yupik words “*насяпырак*” (hat), “*танх,аг,рак*” (rope), “*ан,ьях,пак*” (steamboat), and “*ўамынгу*” (frogs) are inserted into the poem instead of Russian equivalents. According to a local teacher, Elina, this is part of the strategy that parents and teachers use to teach younger children some Yupik: “In this way, they learn, and they understand.”

Indeed, poems and songs often have an affective dimension (they provoke curiosity, festivity, romance, and love), and they are easier to remember because they “stick with us” (Kolata 1995). Several studies have shown that rhyming can be an important technique to remember things (Rubin 1995) and a way to improve children’s L2 vocabulary (Zahro 2010; Lau 1997), and, hence, help the learning process. Others (Feld 1990, 1994) have emphasized the link between sound, voice, sentiment, and meaning. Songs also provides a space for local creativity. Recently, for example, the local children in the village of Novoe Chaplino created the following song:

Ты ман, тачка, я ман, тāk'
Ты кумачка, я кумак¹⁴ (Oparin and Schwalbe 2021)

Accent as Affect

Accents can be also emotionally charged, and they may be used to evoke different feelings and social hierarchies of place, as they circulate in everyday conversation (Cavanaugh 2005, 127–28). In Chukotka, there is a clear distinction between “pure” and “accented” Russian, and there is a distinction between what are identified as stereotypical “Eskimo” and “Chukchi” accents. Although the Native peoples of Chukotka strive to speak the Russian language fluently (that is, without an accent), there are certain variations in the way different ethnic groups sound and cultural associations with them within the community. Because language is also part of history, and because various forms of talk are associated with various social and ethnic identities, accents in Chukotka carry a series of connotations. Linked to the social hierarchies and the long, intense history of contact between the Yupik and the *Lyg'oravet'lan* (Chukchi) people, and the settlers, accents may serve as an indicator of national character of the Yupik people, ethnicity, and/or

14. This song uses the rhyme and word play from a popular Russian song by Oleg Gazmanov “Ты рыбацка, я рыбак; Ты морячка, я моряк” (you are a fisherwoman, I am a fisherman; You are a sailorwoman, I am a sailor). Note, the Russian suffix *-чка* in “рыбацка” “морячка” indicates feminine gender. The Yupik rhyme, instead, uses the Yupik word “ман, тāk,” which translates as “eatable whale skin with blubber” (in Greenlandic *mattak'*), and the rhyming “ман, тачка” (with the Russian suffix *-чка*), and “кумак” (*кумачка*), which means “louse.” So basically, the song says, “you are a mattak-woman—I am mattak-man, you are a female louse—I am a male louse,” and is used for fun.

social status. In this sense, accents are “ideologically [and emotionally] saturated linguistic items with histories of meanings” (Cavanaugh 2005, 128), and they are often brought into play during communication on local (village and family) levels.

The so-called Yupik talk, which can be defined as play of intonation associated with the way the elderly people spoke Yupik, can be brought into conversation to evoke a positive character of the Yupik people, or simply for fun (*в шутку Rus.*) or teasing (*дразнить друг друга Rus.*). “When we do it for teasing, it is like this: someone asks something, we tell him *ся-я* [“cā” marked with intonation]—I don’t know [*accompanied by hand gestures and laughter*].” Locals explain this “fun,” “jovial” use of the Yupik linguistic and paralinguistic cues in terms of a positive (jovial) character of the Yupik people: “We, Eskimos, are very cheerful people, sort of easy going, you know, and we have good sense of humour,” Aleksandra explained to me in one of the interviews (2005).

Humour or wit is generally regarded as an important, integral aspect of the Yupik character and is an aspect of self-identification of the Chaplino, Naukan, and St. Lawrence Island people. It is an important expressive device in Inuit/Yupik culture, which can be used to “express amusement at errors, stupidities, misfortunes, and minor pains, both their own and others,” as “a reaction to fear, or to being startled,” “to experiences defined as happy or pleasant,” or “as a way of expressing, and simultaneously denying, hostility” (Briggs 1970, 339–41). In encounters with family members and friends, such expressions of emotions are also frequently accompanied by language play with the insertion of Yupik wordings and accented speech, particularly: “*К,ā, Люда, тагиман,а сярэ,суг,*” (Oh, [feels] good, Liuda, I come to see you), Aleksandra would tell Liudmila when visiting her. At some point, Aleksandra explained to me,

I say something to her [in Yupik], she says something back, and this is how we start. We might laugh, but the fact is that we speak Eskimo, and we understand, and we try to remember how it should be, and it makes us feel so good (“*нам от этого так хорошо бывает*” *Rus.*). And we even exaggerate a little, “*К,ā, Люда, наты так,син,* [with the vowels drown out for emphasis] (Oh, Liuda, how are you).” That is how our grandmothers said it, stretching (*протяжно Rus.*). She [Liuda] immediately takes on the role and “*к,уякамкын к,айульта!*” (oh, good you came in / I’m so glad, let’s have tea). And then we talk, we remember [in Russian]. (2003)

Here, Aleksandra indicates that speaking Yupik gives her internal satisfaction (because “it makes us feel so good”). This verbal exchange makes her feel connected with Liuda. More importantly, it gives her a sense of identity and makes her feel that she “belongs” to her people.

Accented speech may also be used for satirical marking and mocking (or teasing), to express negative attitudes and feelings towards someone or something. Cavanaugh (2005, 129) points out that as acoustical “things in the world,” accents can index both speakers (subjects) as well as “qualities detached from the speakers, and at times even places themselves (objects).” During the Soviet times, deviating from the standard types of speech, such as accent, were associated with certain speakers (subjects). Accents indicated not only poor command of the Russian language, but also a certain (negative and deteriorating) stereotype of the Indigenous people: “In their eyes, we were all like Chukchi,” a Native woman told me, meaning “uneducated, illiterate and backward kind of people” (Schwalbe 2015, 18). Today, the “Eskimo” and “Chukchi” accents in Russian speech are associated with “the way elderly people talk” (or talked back in the past) and can be used to evoke the old and often outdated stereotype of Indigenous people as “primitive” and “backward,” for condescending and humiliating affect. Interestingly, children may also use this form of talk when teasing each other, often as a way of distancing themselves from an identity that is regarded as “unwanted” and having “less worth.”

Hence, accent can be used to mediate the sets of beliefs about certain speakers, to signify both positive and negative qualities of the Yupik people, and to “exhibit speakers’ attitudes about and orientation towards their own positions in the social [and linguistic] landscape” (Cavanaugh 2005, 131), becoming in Kathrin Woolard’s (1999, 16) words “a resource for creating sociolinguistic meaning.” Because accents are often detached from people (Cavanaugh 2005), they can also be used to impose a certain affect onto a speaking body, to move people, to create a certain atmosphere: to ease the situation, to denote the lack of seriousness, to mark closeness, intimacy, and so on. Hence, accents can carry not only a symbolic but also metaphorical (dialogical) meaning.

Emotions and Language Learning

According to Briggs (2000, 161), “the answer to how Inuit children learn about emotions—and also almost everything else worth knowing about social life—lies in a sort of play¹⁵ that adults engage in, most often with small children as protagonists and objects.” Certainly, the use of Yupik in family

15. Briggs uses the word *play* in the senses of both game and drama, but “most importantly,” she writes, “the activity is play in that adult players perceive themselves to be ‘pretend talking’; they don’t intend to follow up with ‘serious’ action, statements or questions that sound very serious indeed,” and which are often labelled as “teasing,” “because the children don’t know that what is happening to them is playful” (2000, 161).

(and local) context is often emotionally charged. People resort to the use of Yupik as a resource to create social, linguistic, and affective meanings, to express their emotions (love, care for children, fear, happiness, etc.), their emotional attachments (to a person, a place, ancestors, etc.), to move people (affect). However, two questions remain: What exactly is learned in the process of children socialization? And what shapes our emotional responses to a particular language or a way of speaking?

A survey conducted in grades 5 through 11 of the Novoe Chaplino School in 2003 and 2005, showed that almost all schoolchildren (except for a few) had some lexical knowledge of the Yupik language, including traditional vocabulary, and a series of greetings and commands. While none of the children claimed to be fluent in their native language, three considered their knowledge to be “fairly good” (*достаточно хорошо*). Most children could cite few examples of Yupik words they used regularly. These often included words such as “*ан,ьяк*” (skin boat), “*айвык*,” (walrus), “*ан,мух,нак*” (walrus bull), “*аг,вык*,” (whale), “*ман,тāk*,” (whale skin with bacon), “*нун,их,та*” (lace), “*нунивак*” (*Rhodiola rosea*, a popular edible plant, the word can also mean “tundra”), “*ан,укак*,” (fireweed), “*к,увыхси*” (*Polygonum tripterocarpum*, food plant), “*к,икмик*,” (dog), “*ууна*” (sea peach), “*угрāk*,” (black gull), “*тун,ту*” (caribou), “*к,икү*” (clay used in the past for lamps that burned seal fat), “*к,аюутак*,” (wooden tray for cutting and serving the meat) “*уунг,ак*,” (harpoon), “*уунг,аник*” (harpoon tip), and “*к,иунаг,ак*” (parka), and short commands such as “be careful,” “attention!,” “sit down,” “go,” and few particles, with the Chukchi particle *наqam* being the most frequently mentioned (see Morgounova 2010, 171, 123; Schwalbe 2020, 108–09, 112–13). An overview of the questionnaire research is presented in Table 1.

Obviously, much of the children’s vocabulary is linked to the Yupik traditional lexicon and can be explained in terms of pragmatic function—as a compensation for a lexical gap in the Russian language, either because a similar term does not exist in the Russian language or because the meaning of the word in the Russian language is different from Yupik. However, it might also be related to the way Yupik (and other Indigenous languages) are perceived in society. In the Soviet time, the only legitimate way of performing your identity was through “traditional culture,” such as singing and dancing. This model has been transmitted through the schooling system, where Indigenous children continued to learn their traditional culture (usually just separate words related to this culture) rather than how to actually speak their languages (on the political dimension of mother tongue, see Slezkine 1994; Schwalbe 2015). With the shift in the political environment and politicization of ethnicity in Chukotka in the post-Soviet years, the Yupik people began to actively (re)introduce the Yupik language (what they still knew) to their children, imitating community Elders and the ways they remembered their own parents used to talk.

Table 1. 2003 Questionnaire results

Children who participated in the research, divided by age and ethnicity								
Age	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years
Total: 64	2	11	11	7	6	12	12	3
Yupik	2	9	9	6	5	12	12	2
Chukchi	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1
Russians	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-assessed Yupik language competence								
Fluent in Yupik	Speak Yupik quite well			Speak Yupik a little			Do not speak Yupik	
0	3			50			4	
Amount of most regularly used Yupik words known to the children								
Only 6	Only 7	Only 8	Only 9	10 words	11 words	at least 12 words		
7	0	3	1	0	1	46		
The amount of Yupik words used by the children in their everyday Russian conversation								
No words		Few words		Some words		Many words		
8		22		25		2		
Examples of Yupik words, often used by the children								
Max. 2 words	Max. 4 words	Max. 6 words	Max. 8 words	Max. 10 words	More than 12			
7	4	9	13	1	19			
Examples of Yupik phrases that are often used by the children when speaking Russian								
None	Max. 2 phrases	Max. 4 phrases	Max. 5 phrases	More than 5 phrases				
6	24	12	3	7				

As the children grow up, they pick up and use single- and multiple-word items and wordings associated with the Yupik language and learned in childhood (including greetings, commands, sentences of the type “let’s have tea,” “sit down,” as well as particles such as “*нак,а*” (*no*), “*а-ā*” (*yes*), “*кā*” (*oh!*), “*сā*” (*I don’t know*), etc.); and when they themselves become parents, they persistently repeat “*атáсиқ* (*one*), *мāлғук* (*two*), *пиңáют* (*three*)...” when talking to their own children.

Affective Language Economies

What shapes the local peoples’ emotional responses to their heritage language? Caldwell-Harris (2014b, 2) points out that one of the explanations for why native language is more emotional is caused by the family context of learning: “The family context of learning means that everyday language

carries the full range of emotions. A mechanism for connecting experience of emotions with specific phrases and words is amygdala-mediated learning.” Therefore, “utterances that are learned early become tightly connected to with the brain’s emotional system” (Caldwell-Harris 2014b, 2). While this might partly explain why some people today feel attached to Yupik, it does not answer the question entirely. For most residents of Novoe Chaplino, Yupik is no longer their L1. Already in the 1980s, the number of fluent speakers in the Yupik language was said to be no more than two hundred, all over fifty-five years old (Vakhtin 2001). In 2018 the fluent speakers of Yupik were so few that they could be counted by fingers, while only a couple of dozens, most of whom were over fifty years old, could pass as bilingual. Moreover, the positive attachment of the local population to their native languages as well as switching and integration of Yupik into the everyday (Russian) speech is a relatively recent phenomenon. During the Soviet times, people were prohibited from speaking their language in public, and it was not until the 1990s that it became appropriate (and common) to speak Yupik. The primary casual factor, then, lies within the context in which the language is learned and used.

One of the reasons for the perceived emotionality of Yupik—that is, the emotional attachment the local people feel to the Yupik language, which leads to positive language orientation, or language loyalty (Fishman 1966; Dorian 1980)—is their perception of Yupik as the key aspect of their ethnic identity. Because ethnicity is initially experienced as kinship ties (Fishman 1989), language is perceived as part of one’s cultural and historical (and even biological) inheritance, allowing one to feel (and assert) connection with one’s kin through singing, dancing, and remembering (in Yupik). These practices are linked to the local people’s individual and collective experiences and memories, and to the cultural and emotional history of contact (and, in recent years, the decolonizing discourse) (Schwalbe 2015). Therefore, the Indigenous people’s relationship to their native languages, just like their social lives, which are mediated by communication, are highly emotional, even if it is covered by outward negation and indifference. Heritage language revitalization “represents opportunity for reclamation of native identity and pride, decolonization and assertion of sovereignty” (Baloy 2011, 530).

Ahmed (2004b, 10–11), however, claims that we cannot understand emotionality without also looking at collective feelings (the effect of the impression left by others) and their historicity: how emotions move through circulation of objects and how they work “to shape the sur-faces of individual and collective bodies” (1). Just like money accumulates value through circulation, so do emotions circulate to create affective value—what Ahmed calls affective economies. Emotions, she argues, are not coincidental; they do not circulate freely, but they circulate according to a historically bound pattern and are bound to objects (i.e., involve transformation of others into

objects of feelings): some are bound to happiness, others to the opposite (Ahmed 2004b, 11; see Thisted 2018, 2–14). Such objects “become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension” (Ahmed 2004b, 11). The feeling “becomes ‘real’ as an effect, shaping different kinds of actions and orientations (13).

My argument is that Yupik language in Chukotka is more emotional because historically Indigenous languages have been saturated with affect, becoming a site of personal and social tension. Even in the pre-revolutionary Russia, when “ethnicity” (*национальность Rus.*) was not recorded in documents, people, when required, were identified by their “native language” (*родному языку Rus.*) or religious belief. In 1932 the ascription of people to a particular ethnicity in new Soviet passports (the fifth column) came to be determined by language (if your parents speak “Eskimo,” then you are “an Eskimo”) (Baiburin 2019). During the Soviet time, languages became saturated with affect, and Indigenous languages became saturated with stigma (Eidheim 1969; Goffman [1963] 1990), which played a critical role in the production of political legitimacy (and illegitimacy). Soviet life was “full of promise” (Yurchak 2006). Happiness was bound to the proletarian struggle and to “being/becoming Soviet” (Yurchak 2006; Spivak 1988; Ahmed 2004b, 162), and the Indigenous values were seen as an obstacle on the way to achieving that. Supported by emotionally charged experiences, these ideas came to be accepted as true, and the values ascribed to them as right.¹⁶

Russia’s relation to Chukotka was that of a father (or an older brother), who has taken care of its children and therefore has taken on a responsibility to educate and discipline them. In achieving political legitimacy and providing the normative subject with a vision of what is lacking, languages were attributed with affect. Russian was “the desired language” because it allowed the Natives “to pass as Russians,” and, as one of my informants puts it, “we all wanted to be like Russians.” Above that, as I have noted elsewhere (Schwalbe 2015, 18), good command of the Russian language also allowed at least some Indigenous people to receive preferential treatment by the system. Consequently, the Russian language was seen as an investment in the proletariat struggle for better future, an investment in children’s future, and a way to a better life. Other languages were transformed into “unnecessary” and even “the hated” through discourses of shame, guilt, and contempt.

16. Briggs (1975, 189–90) points out that “ideas and values must be supported by emotionally charged experiences to make the ideas seem true and the values seem right” (see also McNabb 1989, 57).

Shame and Guilt

Shame and guilt are two strong and culturally specific emotions, which are culturally constructed, and which may affect a peoples' conceptions of themselves (Benedict [1946] 1967; Briggs 1970; Rosaldo 1984; Kizuk 2020). According to Tomkins (2005), shame is one of the primary “negative affects,” whereas Ahmed (2004b, 13) describes shame as “an intense and painful sensation that is bound up with how the self feels about the self, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body.” In the Western (and Russian) view, shame (*стыд Rus.*) is different from guilt (*вина Rus.*). “Unlike guilt, which focuses on failing to live up to a norm or breaking a rule, shame is often taken to be a response to a global failure of the self” (Kizuk 2020, 163), and has moral connotations.

The closest word for “guilt” in the Yupik language is *сыг,лыг,ьюг-* (or *seghleghyug-* in the Latin autography, used for the St. Lawrence Island Yupik),¹⁷ which denotes “feeling bad (for a short time), to have hurt feelings,” usually as a consequence of doing something wrong (from *сыг,лык*, “bad deed, wrong or useless thing” and postbase *-юг-* “to feel”) (Petuwaq Koonooka, personal communication, August 2021). A Yupik word for “shame” is *к,уганах,алык (quganaghbalek)*, which literally means “How despicable!” (how disgraceful, how shameful). It can also be used as *к,уганаг,к,а (quganagh-qa)* to denote someone doing shameful, disgraceful things. Hence, the term is more directed towards evaluation of a person’s action (in relation to social norm) than towards the self. Another word for “shame” is *кайн,у- (kaungu)*, which literally translates as “(to feel/be) embarrassed, ashamed, or timid (shy).” Briggs (1970), discussing a similar term (*kanngu*) among Inuit in Canada, translates it as “shyness,” which she describes as “a wish to avoid displaying or exposing oneself before others” (350), and which may be expressed through silence, refusal to talk, blushing, and avoiding eye contact (351), which might be associated with embarrassment and shame in Western culture. Yet, in contrast to Indigenous shame (which comes from moral evaluation), this feeling, according to Briggs, is without moral connotations; it is associated with reason, which is valued (351).

The contemporary ideas of “shame” (*стыд Rus.*) and “guilt” (*вина Rus.*) seem to have entered the Yupik society through the Russian language. Like Asian cultures, which “place high priority on relationship harmony and respect for authority—discourage anger expression and value shame (Kitayama and Markus, 1995)” (Cole Bruschi, and Tamang 2002, 984), Inuit and Yupik traditional cultures, at least as documented in ethnological

17. Apart from a few phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical peculiarities, the Chaplino Yupik and the St. Lawrence Island Yupik are practically identical languages (Krauss 1980; Vakhtin and Golovko 1987; de Reuse 1994; Morgounova 2010, 68–69).

literature, seem to place high priority on social conventions that “inhibit public display of strong emotions” and value “restrain and self-control” (McNabb 1989, 53; Briggs 1970, 1975). McNabb points out that, with few exceptions, Inuit have often been described (in Western literature) as “passive, slow-paced and quiet (Collier 1973), phlegmatic and indifferent (Oswalt 1963), shy, deliberate, reserved and noncommittal (Chance 1966; Coles 1977; Foulks 1972; Kleinfeld 1978)”; these generalizations have merely been accepted “as facets of Inuit etiquette” (McNabb 1989, 53). For instance, when I asked Aleksandra whether she spoke Yupik in public, she categorically asserted, “We would never speak in our language in front of the Russians, because it is not allowed. We, the Eskimos, have an inherent feeling of etiquette (*врождённое чувство такта Рус.*)” (2005).

Because shame is bound to love (Ahmed 2004b), it may drive individuals “to modify their bodies, personalities, life trajectories, and, for that matter, linguistic repertoires” (Pavlenko 2013, 20). Indeed, it seems that in the pursuit of their desire of becoming Russian, the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka came to modify their life trajectories and personalities, and they came to abandon their language in favour of Russian at an incredible speed. In the years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which left the Chukotka’s Indigenous people in socioeconomic, ideological, and emotional hole (a feeling that they were left by their Big Brother), people began searching for new attachments as a way of surviving the crisis. Because of the proven historical and linguistic connections across the Bering Strait, the Yupik language soon became a new way to make sense of the world. It was a way of reconnecting with other Yupik and Inuit people, reconciling with the pain of the past, and claiming rights and authenticity (Schwalbe 2015). This is when “pride came.” Many felt they had the right to speak their language and they felt emotional attachment to this language, and a need to speak it. In the situation of language attrition, the individual speakers’ declarations of pride and shame (for not being able to properly speak their Indigenous language) came to be a way of acknowledging the value of the Indigenous languages, and of their people, producing a strong community desire to revive the language. In the 1990s, along with the reinstatement of the subsistence sea mammal hunting, the local people started to reinvent the Yupik language. In recent decades, discourse of language loss (*потеря родного языка Рус.*), which places guilt and responsibility for language loss on the Indigenous people (Schwalbe, forthcoming), has replaced language revitalization efforts; and “desire for English” replaced “desire for Yupik.”

Today, shame is tied to Yupik identity and to the anxiety of being discredited as social agents not only by the settlers, but also by one’s “own people.” Many today say they are afraid speaking their languages in fear of saying something wrong, being not understood or being humiliated publicly, which influences the overall language choice of the speakers. At the same time, the local interaction, as the Russia’s relationship to its Indigenous

people, is still (and again) very much dominated by the long-established affective “Big Brother” economy (“We always said the Russians won’t leave us”) and the settler colonialism that “has an active interest in maintaining itself” (Kizuk 2020, 167). Representation of the Chukotka’s Indigenous people contains what Kladakis (2012, 34) calls “a stereotype of cultural deterministic description of [them] as natural people who surrender under the encounter with ‘the modern’” (see also Thisted 2003, 2010)¹⁸—a stereotype that is somewhat outmoded and often wrong but prevails in local discourses, making settlers appear as more responsible, more concerned, and more sensible than the Indigenous people. One way for the settlers to disclaim their own responsibility for injustice is by shaming the Indigenous people for losing their language and culture (Kizuk 2020, 170). In Chukotka, in contrast to Greenland (Thisted 2018) or Canada (Kizuk 2020), there is no proximity promise of reconciliation. The settlers continue to see themselves as superior, while continuous portrayal of the Indigenous people as “being problematic” (more prone to suicide and alcohol abuse), “outmoded,” and “dull” carries emotional value and has the “disorienting effect” (cf. Butler 1997) of an insult, but also locks Indigenous people in emotional (and political) dependency on Russia and the Russian language.

Bringing Yupik into play in domestic and local interaction, however, enables individual speakers to enact history and attachments by projecting certain emotions and memories onto their interlocutors, and by doing so, controlling, and constructing their own world within a world. In 2021, in response to my question about an article that I wrote on the language situation in Chukotka, an acquaintance, a Sireniki-born resident of Chukotka wrote to me:

For a long time, I did not understand, why write obvious things... Now, I understand that classification of today is already yesterday—it’s history; that today’s everyday knowledge is tomorrow’s preserved traditions, culture...Certainly, in this century of globalization and the all-seeing Eye, we try to maintain something which is ours, secret, so that we are not scrutinized—hence, the secret language, language of identity, or as my children used to say, “mom’s language” (*мамский язык Rus.*).

This short response entails the view that emotionality of Yupik, just as affect, is “a product of human interactions that are grounded in a cultural context, and the associations that are implicated by those interactions and that context” (Rosaldo 1984, 141–42; see also McNabb 1989, 64).

18. Thisted (2003, 62), in describing relation between Greenland and Denmark, talks about “Arctic Orientalism,” which assumes that representation of the other as uncivilized makes the one who describes appear as civilized, which is somewhat similar to the Danish way of describing Greenlanders.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, four things come into focus. First, languaging (understood as “a cover term for activities involving language: speaking, hearing (listening), writing, reading, ‘signing’ and interpreting sign language” [Love 2017, 115]) is an activity in which wordings play a part (Cowley 2019, 462). Despite the overall dominance of the Russian language, the local speakers bring Yupik into play to construct a variety of meanings, to express attachments (emotional and social), and to affect others.

Second, people adapt to the changing environment, and they change their social trajectories, personalities, behaviours, and linguistic repertoires accordingly by considering both structure (social and linguistic constraints) and the surrounding conditions (e.g., that the language is not spoken anymore). Bringing Yupik words and ideas about the Yupik language (e.g., “language shame”) into a conversation allows local people not only to express their attachments but, more importantly, to feel connected, both with each other and with past experiences, to feel that they “belong.”

Third, perceived language emotionality affects linguistic repertoire and language choice in family context and is “inherited” and embedded in the sense that affective repertoires of the local people (who seem to reproduce some of their own language socialization experiences—“because our parents did it”) are channelled by pre-existing (due to historical conditions) emotional and ideological discourses, but also by personal relations and levels of intimacy between the interlocutors. These conditions influence children’s linguistic, emotional, and cognitive development (vocabulary, decision making about behavioural displays, identities, and worldview).

Fourth and finally, although Indigenous languages are considered as more emotional, it is difficult to escape the stigmatized past, decades of trauma, and cultural accusations, guilt, and shame accumulated in language. While the life of the Indigenous people of Chukotka is almost always bound to loss, and accumulates many different feelings—hope and abandonment, happiness and grief, denial and knowledge, control and powerlessness, bitterness and gratitude, pride and shame, repressed feeling and unexpressed emotions, etc. (and this pendulum can also be experienced within a single conversation)—the energy of the affect can be released in one moment by a single word: “Chukcha.”¹⁹

19. In the soviet public discourse, the native people were often pictured as “backward,” “stubborn,” and “naïve” kind of people, and “the Chukchi” were the worse ones. An obvious manifestation of this marginalization is the vast number of jokes about the Chukchi, as well name “чукча” (Chukcha) per se. It basically means “stupid, naïve, dumb person, who lacks ability to comprehend properly,” and is still widely used in this sense all across the country (e.g., a Russian expression “*ну ты чукча*” [you are a Chukcha], meaning “stupid.”).

Overall, we cannot argue against the fact that prolonged and intense history of contact, “which engages the speaker’s emotions and thus the limbic system, results in a shift in the bilingual mental lexicon” (Pavlenko 2004, 194). Yet what we see in Chukotka is that, even in the situation of language loss, Indigenous people continue to draw on “our” words (and “our” worlds) for affective connotations, and that they draw meanings from multiple emotional connections. As De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007, 496) indicate, “interactions often have an affective dimension in the sense that we can feel varying degrees of connectedness with the others.” We can express this connectedness and a range of human emotions associated with it through the use of the available linguistic (and paralinguistic) resources. In monolingual communication, emotions “can be conveyed directly (I am angry) or indirectly (You are an IDIOT!), with a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic cues available for performing affect” (Pavlenko 2004, 179). In a multilingual setting, like the one we see in the Arctic, affect can be additionally signalled through code-switching and language play, where linguistic (single- and multiple-word items) and paralinguistic features (accents, intonations, etc.) associated with different languages are brought into everyday conversation and gain meaning from what Caldwell-Harris calls “sensorimotor and emotional embodiment” (2014b, 3, 2014a). In Chukotka, Yupik wordings carry a range of meanings. Some words and forms of talk become linked to positive memories, where others are associated with pain, punishments, stigmatization, and shame, invoking sensory images, physiological reactions (“feels good”), as well as feeling of anxiety, embarrassment, restrain, shame, and guilt.

The emotional, personal attachment that one feels to their ancestral language is a strong factor in sustaining (and reintroducing) the Yupik language in domestic interaction. People continue to bring Yupik linguistic and paralinguistic features into their talk because it gives them peace, a sense of belonging, and internal pleasure (it feels good, it feels better, more right), whereas a mixture of pride and shame in recent years seems to motivate at least some young people to learn their heritage languages (Lee 2009; Moore 2019). Besides, for the Yupik residents of Chukotka, who no longer speak their language fluently but in fragments (*частично говорят Rus.*), a significant dimension of renewed intergenerational transmission (and language revitalization efforts) involves (re)introduction of the Yupik lexical items (including emotionally charged words and expressions) and paralinguistic features into the everyday talk. “Playing with language” seems to create an opportunity for local parents and teachers to engage potential speakers with the Yupik language. It also introduces children to important aspects of Yupik culture and values (respect for elderly people, care for children, humour, restrain and self-control), becoming a local way of resisting

the dominant monolingual ideologies of the state, which have historically promoted and made room for only one language – Russian.

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