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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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JACOBSON, Steven A.

2001 *A Practical Grammar of the St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo Language*. Second Edition. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. xii + 216 pages.

This work is a revised and much expanded version of a preliminary edition published in 1990 under the same title.

The extensive Preface contains charts and maps regarding the position of St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo (henceforth Yupik) in the Eskimo-Aleut family of languages. Yupik, more precisely called Central Siberian Yupik in the linguistic literature, is spoken on Chukotka peninsula in Russia, as well as on St. Lawrence island, which is politically part of Alaska. It is the only indigenous language spoken natively both in the "New World" and in the "Old World." For Canadian readers, I note that the term "Eskimo" is not considered derogatory by Native people in Alaska and Siberia.

Jacobson is refreshingly candid about the strengths and limitations of the book. Even though the plan and coverage of this text is quite similar to that of the longer *A Practical Grammar of the Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo Language* (Jacobson 1995), it remains a preliminary work. Less is known about Siberian Yupik than about Central Alaskan Yup'ik, the closely related and largest indigenous language of Alaska. It is not a "teach yourself text," even though it has been successfully used as such, and is primarily designed for students with some background in Eskimo languages or linguistics, either because they are native speakers of Yupik, or because they have studied another Eskimo language.

It definitely is not a conversational or notional-functionally oriented text, being set in the tradition of the (admittedly old-fashioned) "grammar translation" method. Therefore, one finds in it sentences to translate from English into Yupik such as: "The white (Caucasian) woman minister has a big husband" (p. 28) or "My sister's husband's younger siblings' big dog's teeth are small" (p. 47). Obviously, the only justification for such sentences is to practice the students' control of the grammatical rules of Yupik.

The main purpose of the text, then, is to provide students with an understanding of the structure of Yupik, and to enable them to read and translate Yupik texts into English. These goals are achieved admirably. Furthermore, since much of the grammatical discussions are not available anywhere else in the linguistic literature, this text will also be useful to Eskimologist and general linguists. Throughout the grammar, and starting with the Preface, Jacobson skillfully integrates his contributions with those of other scholars, and, with a grace nowadays rarely found in pedagogical works, gives credit to other scholars for their discoveries and contributions.

Chapter 1 discusses the phonology, phonetics and spelling of Yupik. Helpful notes comparing the spelling of Yupik with that of other Eskimo languages of Alaska are provided. Jacobson points out interesting facts such as: "unlike all other Eskimo languages, Yupik does not have long or geminated consonants" (p. 3). This is correct,

but phonetically, Yupik consonants can be quite long, and there exists expressive gemination of consonants. Compare *itertuq* "s/he went in," with *itf:Jertuq* "s/he sure went in!" Also: "Unlike all Eskimo languages, Yupik does not have diphthongs, that is, clusters of two unlike vowels" (p. 4). This is true from a phonological point of view. However, Yupik does have phonetic sequences such as [aj] in *ayveq* "walrus" or [aw] in Awliinga (a personal name), which could be interpreted as diphthongs from the point of view of other Eskimo languages. For Yupik, there is overwhelming phonological evidence that these have to be interpreted as vowel plus consonant clusters, and therefore they are written ay and aw, rather than *ai and *au.

The discussion of rhythmic length, stress and overlength is complicated by the fact that Jacobson has two presentations of it. I am not convinced that the first presentation (pp. 6-8), which Jacobson appears to favour, would be easier to follow and more intuitively appealing to the beginner than the second one (p. 9).

Chapters 2 through 18 contain vocabularies, grammatical discussions, and Yupik-English and English-Yupik translation exercises. Each of these chapters presents ca. 25-40 vocabulary words, ca. 2-6 postbases, and a few inflectional endings. Grammatical discussions are very thorough, with particular emphasis and exemplification of the morphophonemic patterns according to which postbases (*i.e.* derivational suffixes) and inflectional endings combine with bases (*i.e.* stems) and with each other. Most chapters are divided between a "discussion of postbases" and a "discussion of grammatical topics." Generally, what is meant by "grammatical topics" is the inflectional endings and their usage. Certainly, the discussions of postbases are also grammatical topics.

Occasionally, gaps in our knowledge are pointed out, as regarding the participial mood (pp. 72-74). My present hypothesis is that the Yupik participial mood, in its verbal uses, does not actually express past tense, but has two primary meanings: (1) "because" (as suggested by Jacobson), and (2) a non-experiential evidential meaning, often with mirative (unexpected information) connotations.

Jacobson is particularly adept at presenting inflectional endings and postbases in small, carefully paced chunks, clearly the result of extensive teaching experience of the language. Some pedagogical grammars of Eskimo languages have the students study the complete inflectional paradigms, a daunting task, before touching on the postbases. Jacobson's approach is obviously superior, although the curious linguist will have to consult the appendices for the full display of inflectional endings.

A few typos in the Yupik are *iiye-* instead of *iye-* (p. 21), and *llaaghanwa* instead of *llaaghanwha* (p. 125). The translation "Before it bit me the dog barked" on p. 86 should be "Before it barked the dog bit me."

An attractive feature at the end of most chapters is the maps, diagrams, pictures and facsimiles from other books in Yupik. Examples are facsimiles of the first Soviet textbook in Yupik, including a page on Lenin and Stalin, in a Latin orthography (p. 48), and a complete chart of kinship terms (p. 132).

Chapter 18 is a bit of a pot-pourri of items that one expects Jacobson to expand upon in future versions. It contains a very accessible and concise account of the Cyrillic system for writing Yupik (used in Russia since 1937), with examples of text in Cyrillic.

The book ends with nine attractively annotated stories in Yupik, all published earlier (one is in Cyrillic); various appendices, including charts of all the inflectional endings; a Yupik to English vocabulary of bases; a Yupik to English vocabulary of postbases and enclitics; an English to Yupik vocabulary; a subject index; and an up to date bibliography, with many items annotated.

After Jacobson's own masterful grammar of Central Alaskan Yup'ik, this is the best pedagogical introduction to Eskimo grammar. It is to be hoped that Jacobson will publish a much needed conversationally oriented companion to this book (or maybe the reviewer himself should get his act together and do this). I am waiting eagerly for the publication of the revised version of Badten *et al.* (1987), the comprehensive dictionary of Yupik, which, together with the work under review, the pioneering and ongoing Russian work, and my own work, will form an enviable documentary record of the Central Siberian Yupik language.

References

BADTEN, Adelinda, W., *et al.*

1987 *A Dictionary of the St. Lawrence Island / Siberian Yupik Eskimo language*, ed. by Steven A. Jacobson, Fairbanks, Alaska Native Language Center.

JACOBSON, Steven A.

1995 *A Practical Grammar of the Central Alaskan Yup'ik Eskimo Language*, Fairbanks, Alaska Native Language Center.

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KRUPNIK, Igor and Dyanna JOLLY (eds)

2002 *The Earth is Faster Now: Indigenous Observations of Arctic Environmental Change*. Fairbanks: Arctic Research Consortium of the United States (ARCUS). xxvii, figures, photos, maps, tables, appendix. 356 pages.

Editors Igor Krupnik and Dyanna Jolly have collected 10 chapters, each with notes and references, in *The Earth is Faster Now*. The book takes the emerging field of climate change and the documentation of traditional knowledge (TK) as its focus. It discusses eight research projects associated with climate change science in the Arctic to show that science can be improved with "Indigenous Observations." The book is not exhaustive — there are many communities, other projects and elders whose