

Reflexives in Nanai: reorganization of the grammatical system

1. Introduction

- Nanai:

< Tungusics, Khabarovskij Kraj;
endangered:

- the ethnic group itself is quite large; the number of speakers is much smaller; almost all speakers are bilingual (and fluent in Russian); almost all speakers are older than 50; the use of the language is very restricted; the situation was just the opposite in the 1st half of the XX century. Cf. Kalinina, Oskolskaja, Gusev in print.

Table 1. The number of Nanai speakers, the Census of 2010

N of the ethnic group	N of Nanai speakers	N of Russian speakers	N of monolingual Nanai speakers
12003	11%(1347)	99%(11994)	9

NB The data may be overestimated.

- Such a sociolinguistic situation is expected to predispose the grammatical system a) to contact induced changes, b) to more rapid and extensive internal changes.
- A case study: the system of reflexives.
- Reflexives in subordinate clauses in Nanai and in Russian: the possibility / impossibility of control across clauses.

(1) əj inda_i [naj mə:pi: xalia-gila-j-wa-ni] məхə-хə-ni,
thisdog man REFL.ACC.SG harness-DEB-PRS-ACC-3SG feel-PST-3SG
čop čoča-xa-ni
at.once escape-PST-3SG

Эта собака_i почувствовала, [что ee_i <personal pronoun> запрягут], и сбежала.

‘This dog_i felt [that one was going to harness it_i <lit. itself>] and escaped’. (Onenko 1980: 279)

Table 2. Control of reflexives across clauses

	Nanai, V. A. Avrorin’s grammar (1959, the data of the 1940’s)	Nanai, modern field data (2015- 2016)	Russian
the antecedent of the reflexive in the subordinate clause = the subject of the superordinate clause	a default option	very restricted: only under certain conditions	forbidden in the corresponding semantic types of clauses

● Further questions:

? Is this a rapid contact induced grammatical change?

? Is there any evidence of intermediate stages? Which fragments of the system are more / less stable? Why?

? Does this change follow also any internal tendency that already exists in Nanai?

● The data used:

- elicited data from 2 speakers of Dzhuen variety (rad – 1961, jgd – 1957) and 2 speakers of Naikhin variety (nsz – 1934, nchb – 1937);

- text data (field records 2009–2013; texts from Avrorin 1986; texts from Beldy, Bulgakova 2012; text examples from Onenko 1980) – as an additional data source.

2. The inventory of reflexive markers in Nanai

● Two morphosyntactic types of reflexives:

- noun-like reflexive pronouns (2): *mə:p-* (in accusative) / *mən-* (in other cases), Table 2;

- possessive reflexive suffixes (3): SG *-i~bi*, PL *-(w)ari~(w)əri~(b)ari~(b)əri*, Table 3.

(2) *gə təj tuj bud-ki-ni=da mə:pi wa:-xa nuči-du-i*
 well that so die-PST-3SG=EMPH REFL.ACC.SG kill-PST small-DAT-P.REFL.SG
 ‘Well, this one died this way. He_i committed suicide (=killed *himself*_i) as a child’.
 (sds_110811_ns_RodovyjeDerevja.017)

(3) *totara=tani ŋa:l-i silkə-j dərəg-bi dərəg-bi silkə-j*
 then=and hand-P.REFL.SG wash-PRS face-P.REFL.SG face-P.REFL.SG wash-PRS
 ‘Then she_i washes [*her hands*]_i, she_i washes [*her face*]_i’.
 (ssb_120809_ns_SonnyjMaljchik.021)

● Two structural types of reflexives (following the classification Kemmer 1993):

- «light» reflexives: the simple form – used in neutral contexts;

- «heavy» reflexives: the intensifier *mən(ə)* + the simple form – used in more emphatic contexts (4); (5).

(4) *Mi: mən-ži=də mənə dəŋsi-ə-si-əm-bi*
 1SG REFL-INS=EMPH self take.care.of-NEG-ASSERT.NPST-1SG
 ‘{Friends! You will die at least and what can I do?} I_i am not a master of *myself*_i’.
 (Beldy, Bulgakova 2012: 40, text 8)

(5) *mənə pokto-la-i=tu ənə-žəm-bi*
 self road-LOC-P.REFL.SG=LIMIT go-FUT-1SG
 ‘I_i will keep going [*my own way*]_i!’ (npo_120809_ns_SkazkaLisa.021)

Table 3. The system of reflexive markers in Nanai

	light	heavy
pronouns	<i>mə:pi</i> (‘REFL.ACC.SG’)	<i>mənə mə:pi</i> (‘self REFL.ACC.SG’)
possessive affixes	<i>ŋa:la-i</i> (‘hand- P.REFL.SG’)	<i>mənə ŋa:la-i</i> (‘self hand-P.REFL.SG’)

Table 4. Reflexive pronouns

	SG	PL
ACC	<i>mə:p-i</i>	<i>mə:p-əri</i>
DAT	<i>mən-du-i</i>	<i>mən-du-əri</i>
DIR	<i>mən-či-i</i>	<i>mən-či-əri</i>
ABL	<i>mən-žiəži-i</i>	<i>mən-žiəži-əri</i>

INS	mən-ẓ̌i-i	mən-ẓ̌i-əri
LOC	mən-dulə-i~mən-dul-i	mən-dul-əri

Table 5. Possessive markers

	SG	PL
1	sogdata-i ‘my fish’	sogdata-pu ‘fish’
2	sogdata-si ‘your fish’	sogdata-su ‘fish’
3	sogdata-ni ‘his/her fish’	sogdata-či ‘fish’
REFL	sogdata-i ‘the fish of (him)self’	sogdata-wari ‘the fish of (them)selves’

3. Polypredication in Nanai

- Mainly non-finite subordinate clauses.

I. Subordinate clauses with nominalizations («participles») marked by a case suffix (according to the semantics of the clause).

II. Subordinate clauses with non-finite forms («converbs») marked by a frozen marker going back to a case suffix.

III. Subordinate clauses with finite forms and conjunctions.

(IV. Same-subject verb constructions.)

Cf. more details in Gerasimova 2007.

Table 6. Polypredication in Nanai

type	structure	example
complement clauses	NMLZ-ACC-PERS	<i>n'oani žare-j-wa-ni</i> '{I know,} that he sings (sing-PRS-ACC-3SG)'
temporal and some other adverbial clauses	NMLZ-CASE-PERS (INS, DAT/ESS, LOC, ACC, + postpositional constructions)	<i>n'oani žare-j-do-a-ni</i> ‘while he is singing (sing-PRS-DAT-OBL-3SG)’ <i>n'oani žare-j-wa-ni</i> ‘because he sings (sing-PRS-ACC-3SG)’
relative clauses	V-NMLZ-PERS	<i>žaren n'oani žare-j-ni</i> ‘the song he sings (sing-PRS-3SG)’
purpose clauses, temporal-conditional clauses	V-PURP(DEST)-PERS V-COND(DIR)-PERS	<i>n'oani žare-go-a-ni</i> ‘so that he sings (sing-PURP-OBL-3SG)’; <i>n'oani žare-če-a-ni</i> ‘if / when he sings (sing-COND-OBL-3SG)’
conditional clauses	Vfin CONJ (<i>oseni</i>)	<i>n'oani žare-j-ni oseni</i> ‘if he sings (sing-PRS-3SG)’

4. Reflexives in dependent clauses

4.1. The old system

- The rules for reflexives in dependent clauses:
 - described briefly in the Grammar of Nanai by V. A. Avrorin (1959: 257–258);
 - for «standard Nanai» (≈ Naikhin variety).
 - confirmed by the data from Avrorin’s texts collected in the 1940’s.

- The antecedent of heavy reflexives = the subject of the dependent clause:

(6) əj təkpiələn-du Pu:gə-wə wa:-or-ži žoža-go-xa-či,
 this meeting-DAT Puge-ACC kill-IMPS-PRS-INS judge-REP-PST-3PL
 Surgi Pu:gə-wə mənə ŋa:la-ži-j=tul wa:-go-a-ni
 Surgi Puge-ACC self hand-INS-P.REFL=LIMIT kill-PURP-OBL-3SG
 ‘On this meeting they decided to kill Puge, they decided, that Surgi: must kill Pugi with [*his own hands*]_i’ (Avrorin 1986: 247, text 44)

- The antecedent of light reflexives = the subject of the main clause:

(7) mə:pi səkpən-ži-du-ə-ni goja-do-a-ni žapa-ra:
 REFL.ACC.SG bite-NPST-DAT-OBL-3SG fang-DAT-OBL-3SG take-CVB.NSIM
 sore-mi dəru:-xə-ni
 quarrel-CVB.SIM.SG begin-PST-3SG
 ‘When the boar tried to bite *him*_i <lit. *himself*>, he_i take (the boar) by the fangs and started to fight’. (Avrorin 1986: text 38)

These rules are not strict. V. A. Avrorin mentions that the following exceptional uses are also possible:

light reflexives controlled by the subject of the dependent clause;

anaphors (personal pronouns and possessive affixes), referring to the subject of the main clause.

He interprets such uses as the result of the contact influence of Russian.

4.2. The new system

- The picture observed in the speech of modern speakers differs notably from the system described by V. A. Avrorin.
- Some examples with control across clauses from old texts are forbidden by modern speakers.
- The current system seems to be unstable and demonstrates micro-variation even at the «idiolectal» level.
- An outline of the system:

1) The antecedent of both heavy and light reflexives = the subject of the dependent clause.

The subject of the main clause is expressed in the dependent clause by anaphoric elements (personal pronouns, personal possessive affixes).

(8) Soli čoča-lo-xa-ni, mapa <mən> sogdata-i žəp-či-du-ni
 fox escape-INCH-PST-3SG bear self fish-P.REFL eat-PRS-DAT-3SG
 ‘The fox_j escaped, while the bear_i was eating [*its fish*]_{i/*j}’. (elicit.)

(9) Soli čoča-lo-xa-ni, mapa <n'oani> sogdata-wa-ni žəp-či-du-ni
 fox escape-INCH-PST-3SG bear 3SG fish-ACC-3SG eat-PRS-DAT-3SG
 ‘The fox_j escaped, while the bear_i was eating [*its fish*]_{j/*i}’. (elicit.)

NB This is the same picture as in Russian.

2) Control of reflexives across clauses is consistently accepted by speakers only in one fragment of the system:

- the subject of the dependent clause can be marked by the possessive reflexive suffix referring to the subject of the main clause;

- both light reflexives and heavy ones are possible in this context.

(10) Mapa təj gujsə-du <^{OK}mən> tətʉ-ji bi-i-wə-ni osese-i-ni
 oldman thattrunk-DAT <self> clothes-P.REFL.SG be-PRS-ACC-3SG not.want-PRS-3SG
 ‘The oldman_i does not want [*his clothes*]_i to be kept in the trunk’. (elicit.)

4.3. Possible explanations

● Contact influence: no control across clauses in the corresponding polypredicative constructions in Russian:

=> the reorganization of the reflexive system in according to the Russian model (pattern-borrowing in terms of Sakel 2007).

● Possible internal preconditions:

- no clear-cut between finite and non-finite forms;
- main indicative paradigm goes back to nominalization forms:

(11) mapa žobo-j-ni (work-PRS-3SG) = 1) ‘working of the oldman (poss)’; 2) ‘the oldman (is) working’; 3) ‘the oldman works’

- «old» finite verb paradigm («assertive mood») is quite marginal and of a low frequency (cf. the data in Smetina 2015);

- => possible reinterpretation of non-finite dependent clauses as more proper clauses.

● The situation of (near) language decay (cf. e.g. Sasse 1992; 1994; 2002).

more rapid and intensive syntactic change;

simplification of the system?

- yes: no distinction between heavy / light reflexives;

- no: control across clauses everywhere > under certain conditions (more complex rules).

● The stability of the position SUBJ_{DEP}-POSS_i=SUBJ_{DEP*i*}: no competing interpretations (no competition between SUBJ_{DEP} and SUBJ_{MAIN}).

4.4. A more detailed picture: the evidence of intermediate stages

Table 7. Reflexives in polypredication: a detailed picture (elicited data)

	pronoun light	pronoun heavy	pronoun anaf	poss light	poss heavy	poss anaf	poss-subj light	poss-subj heavy	poss-subj anaf
complement_acc (see)	dep, ?main	dep	main	*	dep	main	main	main-ok	?main
complement_acc (know)	dep, ?main, *	dep	main	dep	dep	main	main	main-ok	?main
complement_acc (like)	dep	dep	main						
complement_acc (wait)	dep		main	main-ok	main-ok	main	main		main
complement_acc (not.want)	dep		main			main			
tmp_dat	dep	dep	main	dep	dep	main	main, ?dep, ?	main, *, dep	main
tmp_instr			main			main	main		
relat	dep, *	dep, *	main	dep, *, ?main	dep, ?main	main	main		main
tmp-cond_cvb				dep	dep	main	?main		main
purp_cvb	dep, ?main	dep, ?main(+acc)	main				main	main-ok	?main
cond_fin	dep	dep	main				main		main

* dep – the controller is the subject of the dependent clause; main – the controller is the subject of the main clause

4.4.1. A special position: the subject of the dependent clause marked with the possessive affix

The Possessor of the subject of the dependent clause = the Subject of the main clause

2 strategies:

- 1) a possessive reflexive (as in the old system);
- 2) a possessive anaphor (personal affix) (as in Russian) – can be forbidden / estimated as less acceptable by some speakers (in some examples, cf. below):

(12) Mapa sa:-ri sogdata-i ^{OK/???}<(n'òani) sogdata-ni> n'á:-xam-ba-ni
 bear know=PRS fish-P.REFL 3SG fish-3SG go.bad-PST-ACC-3SG
 'The bear_i knows that [*his fish*]_i went bad'.

4.4.2. The difference between light reflexives and heavy ones

The tendency to avoid light reflexives as an intermediate strategy.

Only for some speakers (jgd – more consistently, rad – partly); only in certain contexts, cf. below.

Table 8. Heavy / light reflexives: 3 strategies of using in subordinate clauses

	light	heavy
the old system	= SUBJ _{MAIN}	= SUBJ _{DEP}
the intermediate system	*	= SUBJ _{DEP}
the new system	= SUBJ _{DEP}	= SUBJ _{DEP}

4.4.3. The difference between the types of dependent clauses

No difference between structural types of clauses (with nominalizations, with converbs, finite ones).

I. Complement clauses and purpose clauses as deviant types

They reveal more preference to the control across clauses.

So these are more «resistant» types (?).

a) Reflexive pronouns: some speakers estimate some contexts with the superordinate control as acceptable exactly in these types of clauses.

b) Light possessive reflexives: tend to be forbidden exactly in these types of clauses;

c) Possessive affixes on the subject of the dependent clause with the reference to the subject of the main clause: anaphors can be forbidden exactly in these types of clauses.

? Why complement clauses and reason and purpose adverbial ones?

- the most integrated into the structure of the main clause, cf. Verstraete 2008 on common features of these types of subordinate clauses crosslinguistically;

- NB some probability of mismatches in the data for complement clauses.

II. Relative clauses

This type of complex constructions is hard to be elicited and it needs more investigation.

III. Conditional clauses

Conditional clauses are finite while the other types are non-finite

However no effect for conditional clauses:

(- all types of reflexives are normally controlled by the subject of the dependent clause;)

- the possessive reflexive affix on the subject of the dependent clause controlled by the subject of the main clause is accepted:

(13) ^{OK}Ami-ni / ^{OK}amim-bi əjniə əčiə žižu-ə osi,
 father-3SG / father-P.REFL today NEG return-NEG if
 piktə n'òambani ičə-či-nə-gu-žə
 child 3SG.ACC see-IPFV-MPURP-REP-FUT
 'If [*his father*]_i does not come back, the child_i will go and search him'. (elicit.)

5. An adjacent case: reflexives in causative constructions

- Constructions with the morphological causative marker in Nanai:
evidently mono-clausal;
probably bi-eventual.
- The controller of reflexives: a competition between the Causer (the subject) and the Causee (the object).
- The elicited data: cf. Table 9.

Table 9. Reflexives in causative constructions

	reflexive pronoun	possessive reflexive affix
light	Causer	Causer
heavy	Causee	Causer / Causee
anaphor	*	Causee

The difference between pronouns and possessive reflexives: pronouns are more likely to permit the Causee as the controller.

- (14) Arčokan naonžokam-ba *mə:pi* uləsi-wəŋ-ki-ni
 girl boy-ACC REFL.ACC love-CAUS-PST-3SG
 ‘The girl_i caused the boy to love *her*_i’ (elicit.)
- (15) Arčokan naonžokam-ba *mənə mə:pi* uləsi-wəŋ-ki-ni
 girl boy-ACC self REFL.ACC love-CAUS-PST-3SG
 ‘The girl caused the boy_i to love *himself*_i’ (elicit.)

6. Parallels in Udihe

- The system presented is Udihe (following the description Nikolaeva, Tolskaya 2001: 779--780) is similar to the new system in Nanai (not the old one):

- (16) Ise-si:-ni, *biata-ŋi:* omo aziga gumu eme-ini
 see-IPFV-3SG boy-P.REFL one girl EVID come-3SG
 ‘(The mother_i) sees that [*her son*]_i and a girl are coming’ (ibid.: 779)

7. Concluding remarks

- Reflexives in polypredication in Nanai – two systems:
 - the old one (described by V. A. Avrorin): with regular control across clauses;
 - the new one (attested nowadays): with very restricted control across clauses.
- Why?
 - the influence of Russian;
 - internal preconditions: no clear-cut between finite / non-finite clauses;
 - the status of endangered language.
- Stability / non-stability within the system:
 - SUBJ_{DEP}-POSS_i = SUBJ_{MAIN} – the most stable fragment: no competing interpretations;
 - the intermediate strategy of avoiding light reflexives;
 - complement clauses and purpose clauses as the most resistant ones.
- Simplification or no simplification?
 - pro: no difference between heavy / light reflexives (more simple rules);
 - contra: control across clauses everywhere > under certain conditions (more complex rules) => intermediate, non-stable stage?

- Further questions:
 - more factors involved: e.g. the order of clauses is underinvestigated;
 - more speakers: different age, different competence;
 - more data on dialectal variation: the diachronic change or dialectal features?
 - more text data: old texts (to fill the gaps in Avrorin's description) and contemporary texts (to verify the elicited data).

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Abbreviations

ABL — ablative; ACC — accusative; ASSERT — assertive; CAUS — causative; COND — conditional; CONJ — conjunction; CVB — converb; DAT — dative; DEB — debitive; DEST — destinative; DIR — directive; EMPH — emphatic; ESS — essive; EVID — evidential; FUT — future; IMPS — impersonal; INCH — inchoative; INS — instrumental; IPFV — imperfective; LIMIT — limitative; LOC — locative; MPURP — motion-cum-purpose; NEG — negative; NMLZ — nominalization; NPST — nonpast; NSIM — non-simultaneous; OBL — oblique; P — possessive; PERS — personal markers; PL — plural; POSS — possessive; PRS — present; PST — past; PURP — purposive; REFL — reflexive; REP — repetitive; SG — singular; SIM — simultaneous; SUBJ — subject.