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**NATIVE LANGUAGE AS THE BASIS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY
(THE CASE OF RUSSIAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE NORTH)**

To date, there is an array of studies revealing the specific features of people's ethnic identity through their native language (Achkasov 2011, p. 204 – 218; Joseph 2005, p. 20 – 48; Kuznetsova 2011, p. 102 – 105; Marusenko 2015; Titov 2017; Fishman 2005, p. 132 – 140). The given research stands out from the existing ones due to the author's comprehensive approach to formulating conclusions and recommendations.

The object of the study is minor indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of Russia (MIPNSF). The subject of the research is native language as the basis of MIPNSF national identity. The statistical database is comprised of eight censuses: the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897; the all-Union censuses in 1926, 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989; and the all-Russian censuses in 2002 and 2010. The censuses of 1937 and 1939 were analysed only methodologically (general census/all-Union census/all-Russian census hereinafter are referred to as GRC).

As of 2020, the key document regulating the issues of Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North is the Common List adopted in 2000 and including 47 peoples. In 2006, 40 minor indigenous peoples of the

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North, Siberia, and the Far East in the List were identified. The main criteria for classifying peoples as MIPNSF are the following:

1. 1) small population numbers (less than 50,000 people);
2. 2) specificity of traditional occupations – hunting, reindeer herding, fishing, etc.;
3. 3) nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle.

To formulate conclusions and recommendations, we aim to accomplish four interrelated objectives:

- to analyse normative legal acts when forming a relevant List of MIPNSF;
- to identify the distinguishing features of statistical accounting and dynamics of MIPNSF population according to the all-Union/all-Russian censuses for the period 1926 – 2010;
- to systematize the fundamental reasons behind a decrease in the number of MIPNSF who considers the language of their nationality as their native language;
- to develop proposals concerning the revitalization of MIPNSF languages.

Key words: ethnic identity, nationality, native language, minor indigenous peoples

Normative legal acts when forming a relevant List of MIPNSF

There are still vivid debates in the scientific community about the year in which the first List of MIPNSF was approved.

Here is the most popular quote about the List of 26 nationalities in 1926: “In 1926, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) adopted a Decree “On the approval of the Provisional Regulations on Managing Indigenous Peoples and Tribes of the Northern Outskirts of the RSFSR”, which identified 26 indigenous peoples.” It is cited by international organizations (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2014, p. 6), researchers (Donahoe et al. 2008), and academic historians (Golovnev 2012, et al.).

An independent analysis of numerous normative documents on whether it is possible to claim that the List of 26 indigenous peoples of the North appeared in 1926 produces negative results. It is worth noting that the first list of northern indigenous peoples appeared not in 1926, but 1925, and was approved by the Resolution “On Tax Benefits”.

In 1926, the Provisional Regulations on Managing Indigenous Peoples and Tribes of the Northern Outskirts of the RSFSR identified 36 (thirty-six!) indigenous peoples. However, the population census in 1926 contained information that there were 27 northern indigenous peoples.

In the period from 1930 to 1935, a List of 27 northern peoples was approved. In 1970–1980, it was reduced to 26 due to the Soyots excluded from the List. The Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of February 7, 1980 provided a List of 26 northern indigenous peoples (no Soyots included);

- in 1991, the List was expanded to 27 peoples by adding the Tozhu Tuvans;
- in 1993, the Shors, Teleuts and Kumandins joined the List, which increased the number of northern indigenous peoples to 30 until 2006;
- in 2000, the Common List of Minor Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation was approved.

The List incorporated 45 indigenous peoples of Russia¹, 40 of which were included in the List of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation in 2006. In 2006, the List of 30 indigenous peoples was expanded by the Alyutors, Veps, Kamchadals, Kereks, Soyots, the Taz People, Telengits, Chelkans, and Chulym.

Only 4 out of 40 MIPNSF – the Veps, Telengits, Chelkans, and Chulym – are new indigenous peoples that were not covered in the official documents of 1925–2006.

To date, the 2006 List of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation has been amended with regard to the names of peoples: in 2010, the Tofalars (obsolete: Tofa) and the Evens (obsolete: Lamuts) in 2011.

1 In 2008, “vod” were added in the Leningrad region, and in 2010, “seto (seto)” were added in the Pskov region, but they do not belong to the KMN SSDV. Thus, for 2020, the Unified List of Indigenous Minorities includes 47 peoples, which is indicated on page 1 of this article.

Special features of statistical accounting and dynamics of MIPNSF population for the period 1926–2010

Despite the List of 27 indigenous peoples approved in 1926, the statistical departments and institutions of the Soviet Union did not aim to record them in the all-Russian censuses until 1989.

When conducting censuses, independent records were maintained for the following number of MIPNSF:

- in 1926, according to the statistical observation plan – 25 indigenous peoples (the List and dictionary of indigenous peoples for the 1926 All-Soviet census included 25 peoples excluding the Nganasans and the Entsy that were to be counted as part of the Nenets group), but scientists independently calculated the numbers of the Nganasans and the Entsy, therefore, in fact, there were 27 indigenous peoples;
- in 1937, according to both the statistical observation plan and the data obtained – for 16 indigenous peoples only;
- in 1939 – for 13 indigenous peoples (the Koryaks, Mansi, Nanais, Nenets, Nivkhs, the Sami people, Selkups, Udege, Khanty, Chukchis, Shors, Evenks, and Evens);
- in 1959 – for 22 indigenous peoples. There is a special record in the section “Peoples of the North” for the Orochs, Ulchs, and Yukaghirs. The Dolgans and Tofalars were identified beyond the Peoples of the North section. In the Dictionary of 1959, the Oroks were named among the Nanai people. However, when publishing the census results, no data for the Oroks were provided: the numbers for the Nganasans were revealed instead, which, according to the statistical observation plan, had to be categorized as “Other peoples of the North”;
- in 1970 and 1979 – for 23 indigenous peoples (the Negidals were singled out from the Evenks). The Tofalars in 1970 and 1979 were not included in the group “The peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East”. In 1970, the Aleuts and Eskimos with an individual code were assigned to Section 2 “Nationalities and indigenous peoples living mainly outside the USSR”;
- in 1989 – for 26 indigenous peoples (the Oroks, Chuvans, and Enets added). In the same year the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 was adopted. All 26 peoples were classified as “Peoples of the North” within the USSR territory.

- in 1990, when releasing the data of the 1989 All-Soviet Census, the Population Statistics Department of the RSFSR Goskomstat combined disparate statistical data on the “Peoples of the North” in dynamics – for 1970, 1979, and 1989;
- in 2002 – for 30 indigenous peoples;
- in 2010 – for 40 indigenous peoples.

Hence, prior to the 1989 census, MIPNSF were grouped into larger categories or assigned to the “Other peoples of the North” section.

In 2005–2008, a research project was performed to restore, digitize, and analyse the archival materials of the Polar Census in 1926–1927 (this is an alternative title for the 1926 MIPNSF census). The project was funded by a government agency The Norwegian Research Council headed by Professor D.G. Anderson at the Arctic University of Norway. As a result of the project, a number of monographs were published that contained data first released since 1926 (Anderson 2013; Kominko 2015).

Some subjectivity in the MIPNSF numbers is also typical of the censuses of 1989, 2002 and 2010.

The censuses of 1989, 2002, and 2010, in contrast to the previous ones, present a detailed statistical picture as all MIPNSF with an independent ethnic status were taken into account. However, in this case some “elements of subjectivity” are also present, since there is a possibility of “changing ethnic identification”.

Since 1926, the wordings of the census forms have implied respondents’ self-determination, which may result in a change of nationality or leaving the question unanswered:

- changing ethnic identification is especially likely for people of ethnically mixed origin: children from mixed families first recorded according to their mother’s nationality as grown-ups may change it to their father’s nationality in the subsequent censuses, or vice versa;
- the number of people who did not indicate their nationality in the census form is growing at a fast pace: from 316 people in 1979 to 5,629 million people in 2010, which is nearly 4% of the Russian population (Bogoyavlensky 2013, p. 99).

Self-determination of respondents is in line with Article 26 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation: “Everyone has the right to determine and indicate their national identity. No one can be forced to determine and indicate their national identity.”

In December 1932, there was adopted the Decree “On the Creation of a Unified Passport System for the USSR and Compulsory Registration of Passports”. Among other personal details, passports contained information about nationality. However, as mentioned above, this information in many cases did not correspond to the facts from the census forms. In August 1974, the Council of Ministers of the USSR approved a new Regulation “On the Passport System in the USSR” that introduced the nationality column in the passports. In 1997, this column was removed.

According to Russian researchers, the increase in the number of MIPNSF in 1926–2010 is due to ethnic indifference that refers to the erosion of ethnic identity expressed in the uncertainty of ethnic affiliation and irrelevance of ethnicity” (Egorova et al. 2013, p. 157). Some scholars argue that this natural rise is assimilation and ethnic re-identification (Ziker, Anderson 2010, p. 3).

According to the GRC, the increase in 1926–2010 was as follows:

- MIPNSF with an independent ethnic status in the modern List of 40 indigenous peoples grew by 34% (from 192,100 to 257,900 people);
- 27 status peoples of the North (including the Soyots in 1926–2010) grew by 65% (from 135,100 to 222,300 people ²).

Fundamental reasons behind a decrease in the number of MIPNSF who perceive the language of their nationality as their native language

The concept of depopulation means a stable, systematic decrease in the absolute population number in any territory (at macro-, meso- or micro levels). It is difficult to apply this concept to MIPNSF, since the increase in population is primarily due to the growing number of ethnic groups taken into account. Against the backdrop of the rising number of indigenous small-numbered peoples, depopulation is associated with a stable and systematic fall in the absolute number of the population considering the language of their nationality as their mother tongue.

Since the 18th century, researchers have viewed language as the basis of national identity. In the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897, “nationalities were not included in the list of questions, and the population was distributed according to their native language.” This was due to the fact that prior to the census, in 1872, Saint-Petersburg

2 Calculated by the author.

hosted the 8th International Congress on Statistics, where it was agreed that “language is indeed recognized as the most reliable criterion for calculating nationalities.”

As the Russian statistician Seraphim K. Patkanov put it, “Language is the most suitable and, moreover, rather objective criterion for determining the nationality of residents” (Patkanov 1912, p. 130). This view is shared by Juliette Cadiot, a researcher of the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris (Cadiot 2000, p. 128; Cadiot 2005, p. 441; Cadiot 2007).

It is noteworthy that, in addition to their language, MIPNSF have key population genes. According to Sargylana S. Ignatyeva, “these genes keep the culture on a leash: an innate repertoire of behavioural strategies, a matrix with encoded modes of social reactions, spiritual preferences and subconscious instincts transmitted from generation to generation by members of the same race” (Ignatyeva 2015, p. 104).

Ulyana A. Vinokurova, an Honoured Scientist of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), discusses the phenomenon of *kogito*: “The phenomenon of *kogito* (an act of thinking, will, feelings, representation) as a driving factor of evolution explains the mental diversity of communities adapted to habitats differing in life-sustaining resources” (Vinokurova 2014, p.165).

The northern peoples have “a special role of space in the formation of the habitat, which is characterized by low permeability, inaccessibility, and autonomy; labour as the basis of physical and spiritual well-being; a culture of dignity that forms a free and responsible person; taking care of children (the tradition is preserved in ethnopedagogy, folklore, cultural heritage of the peoples of the North); culture of human conservation” (Ignatyeva 2015, p. 107).

Thus, the main peculiarity of these people is their ability to live in the North for a prolonged period of time.

For the period 1959–2010, critical negative dynamics of the population numbers was observed in the Veps (–63%), the Chuvans (–28%), and the Orochs (–23%); and negative dynamics of the people considering the language of their nationality as their mother tongue was recorded in the Orochs (–99.6%), the Chuvans (–80%), and the Veps (–78%).

From 1959 to 2010, the number of MIPNSF rose by 60% exhibiting the multidirectional dynamics for 40 peoples, which is associated not only with an increase in the number of nationalities and birth rate,

but also with their special rights introduced in 1999 and enshrined in various legislative acts of the Russian Federation.

According to the 2010 census, approximately half of MIPNSF believe that Russian is their native language.

Scientists of the past and present hold the view that “for all peoples, language remains a stable basis for the identification of the nation” (Drobizheva 1985, p. 7).

In 2012, the work “Expeditionary Ethno-Linguistic Studies of the Language and Culture of the Selkups in the Tomsk Region” was published. The study concentrated on three groups of informants: those who actively speak the language of their nationality; those passively speaking the Selkup language; and those who do not speak the studied language, but are bearers of the Selkup language. The verbal reactions of the members of the Selkup and Russian ethnic groups to the stimuli, such as “place”, “sky”, “sun” and “swamp” demonstrated “significant differences both in the categorization of space by the Selkups and Russians and in the perception of various environmental objects” (Polyakova 2013, p. 128). For instance, “in the Russian linguistic consciousness, a swamp is an underdeveloped, dangerous territory that does not possess any economic or other sort of value. At the same time, for native speakers of the Selkup language, a swamp refers to berry, cranberry, moss, water, and breadwinner” (Polyakova 2013, p. 127 – 128). The study concludes that “associations of the Selkups who are both actively and passively proficient in the Selkup language differ from the reactions of the Russians, and associations of the Selkups who do not speak the language of their nationality coincide with Russian associations” (Polyakova 2013, p. 127).

There are seven major reasons behind a reduction in the number of MIPNSF perceiving their nationality language as their mother tongue.

The first reason is the denial of the positive experience of the missionary school of the Russian Empire. Since 1917, after the Great October Socialist Revolution, it has been argued for many decades that the peoples of the North did not have a written language and were massively illiterate. By 1917, thanks to the missionaries of the Russian Empire, the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the North had a Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet. The missionaries managed to lay the foundations of the writing system in 27 (68%) out of 40 MIPNSF.

Unfortunately, this experience was disregarded, and the alphabets were created from scratch, but this time on the basis of the Latin script. The use of the Latin writing system was explained in the following way:

“In the 1920s, the non-Russian peoples of the USSR still kept in memory the policy of national oppression of the tsarist authorities, so the introduction of a Russian-based writing system could have been misunderstood. Amid those conditions, alphabets created on the Russian script would have faced more difficulties than those based on the Latin alphabet, which would have slowed down the pace of the cultural revolution.”

The second reason is the inconsistency of managerial decisions when building a language system for MIPNSF. Initially, the drafts of the peoples of the North’s alphabets were developed on the Latin basis (1926–1931), and later – from 1937 – on the Cyrillic script. The creation of the Unified Northern Alphabet halted the development of writing for the peoples of the North for at least 10 years (1926–1937). On February 11, 1937, the Council of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR adopted a resolution on the transition of the written language of the peoples of the Far North to the Russian graphic basis.

Before the Great Patriotic War (The Eastern Front of World War II), books were published in 9 languages: Koryak, Mansi, Nanai, Nenets, Khanty, Chukchi, Evenki, Even, and Eskimo.

The third reason is the imposition of an ideological model on languages or the introduction of “Marxism into linguistics”. From 1920 to 1950, with the approval of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the “class essence of language” was promulgated:

- “All languages are historically linked... and none of them – with the exception of the communist speech of the future – has an advantage over the rest”;
- “once nations are certain about the advantages of a common language over national languages, national differences and languages will start withering giving way to a world language common for all” (Joseph V. Stalin 1928-1929: 349).

The so-called “new teaching” about language greatly impaired the study of national languages and the development of theoretical and practical issues of linguistics.

“The Bolsheviks believed that the formal equality of nations will cause their abolition in the individual consciousness” (Arel 2009, p. 19).

Currently, such a situation is regarded as a dispute between primordialists and constructivists (Fishman 2005).

The fourth reason is staff shortage, which affected the quality of and avenues for further research. The results of the intensive research and

organizational work completed by Russian scholars were mainly in vain. The reasons for that are of a dual nature – objective and subjective. The objective reasons are the small number of each nationality, the scattering over a vast territory and numerous dialects within a language. The subjective reason is a conversion of the alphabets' graphic representation from Latin into Cyrillic.

The fifth reason is a disrupted link between generations. Whole generations of the indigenous peoples of the North were brought up in boarding schools. Rituals, customs, and traditions were declared harmful holdovers.

The sixth reason is the policy of “the common Russian language”.

The seventh reason is that for more than a century MIPNSF have been living among the Russian-speaking population. As early as 1897, the indigenous peoples of Siberia were a minority and surrounded by the Russian-speaking population.

These seven major reasons have contributed to a decrease in the number of MIPNSF regarding the language of their nationality as their native language.

Proposals concerning the revitalization of MIPNSF languages

Since the 18th century, researchers have treated language as the basis of national identity, since it reflects a link between the past, present, and future. As a whole, the number of MIPNSF who named the language of their nationality as their native language is going down (according to 40 peoples in the total population): in 1959 – 73%; 1970 – 66%; 1979 – 61%; 1989 – 53%; in 2002, the census did not contain a question about the native language; in 2010 – 34%. Over 50 years, there was a 39% decline in relative terms.

In the present study, a grouping of peoples with the corresponding languages is carried out, for each of which its own policy should be framed both at the state and regional levels. Ethno-regional identity should serve as the basis for such policies. In tables compiled using primary data indigenous peoples are differentiated according to their residence – on the territory of one, two or more constituent entities of the Russian Federation – with a view to understanding the feasibility and effectiveness of regional policy's implementation and coordination.

There are five groups in total.

The first group: MIPNSF according to the 2010 General Russian Census who named the language of their nationality as their native language (over 35% of the number of the ethnic group) (Table 1).

This group encompasses 11 indigenous peoples demonstrating mainly a positive population dynamic and the younger generation.

Here, the Chelkans (the Altai Mountain group of languages) with a positive population dynamic are of particular interest. Roughly 55% of the people name the language of their nationality as their native language, and 24% of the people speak the Chelkan language. Despite the fact that 99% of the Chelkans speak Russian, solely 40% of the ethnic group believe it to be their mother tongue.

The second group: MIPNSF according to the 2010 General Russian Census who named the language of their nationality as their native language (less than 35% of the number of the ethnic group) (Table 2).

This group consists of 13 indigenous peoples. The most alarming trends in this group are observed in:

- the Veps. This ethnic group is characterized by a negative population dynamic and a high level of language proficiency (39.8% of the people), but only 28% of them can call Vepsian their native language. Population aging is typical of this ethnic group. The median age is 54.8 years, which is the maximum age for all the 40 MIPNSF;
- the Kumandins. They demonstrate a negative population dynamics and population aging. The median age is 40.8 years;
- the Evens. From 1959 to 2010, their population rose by 148%. According to the latest census, about 30% of the Evens believe Russian to be their native language; 25% name the Even (Lamut) language as their native language, and only 22% can speak it. The situation is aggravated by the fact that approximately 80% of the ethnic group live on the territory of three regions of the Russian Federation. In terms of the number of the ethnic group, the Evens rank fourth following the relatively numerous Nenets, Evenks and Khanty;
- the Evenks. This ethnic group is scattered around four regions of the Russian Federation.

The third group: MIPNSF according to the 2010 General Russian Census who named the Russian language as their native language (over 90% of the number of the ethnic group) (Table 3).

This group is represented by 8 indigenous peoples with an extremely low level of proficiency in the language of their nationality (from 0.5

to 5.1% in the number of the ethnic group) and young population (the median age in Russia according to the 2010 GRC is 38 years).

The fourth group: indigenous peoples with other officially “added” languages that do not speak their native language and show zero knowledge of it. This group incorporates six indigenous peoples: the Kamchadals (Russian added in 2002); the Soyots (Buryat and Tuvian added in 2002); the Taz people (Chinese and Russian added in 2002); the Telengits (Altaic added in 2002); the Tozhu Tuvans (Tuvan added in 2002); and the Chuvans (Russian and Chukchi added in 2002).

The fifth group: indigenous peoples, the number of which in 2010 did not exceed 5 persons with unwritten languages, and who do not recognize their native language and do not speak it: the Alyutors and Kereks.

Thus, 40 indigenous peoples can be distributed in the following manner:

- 11 peoples (28%), more than a third of which name the language of their nationality as their native language (Table 1);
- 13 peoples (32%), less than a third of which name the language of their nationality as their native language (Table 2). This group is highly heterogeneous in terms of the population dynamics, the scattering in the territory of the Russian Federation and high rates of population aging;
- 8 peoples (20%), whose national language was replaced with Russian, and 90% of which call Russian their native language (Table 3);
- 6 peoples (15%), to which other languages were officially “added”³. These peoples left behind the recognition and language proficiency, since nowadays nearly all of them are unwritten;
- 2 peoples (5%) numbered up to 5 members who do not speak their native language – the Alyutors and Kereks.

Despite the fact that the 2010 census asked a question about nationality, the language assimilation is becoming noticeable. MIPNSF are switching to Russian. In the 2020/2021 census, the following languages are expected to disappear: Kerek, Alyutor, Chuvanese, and Oroch. The vitality of such languages as Aleutian, Enets, Negidal, Orok (Ula/

3 In addition to the six peoples, the following languages were added to: the Koryaks (Aliutor added in 2002); the Kets (Khanty and Yugh added in 2010); the Eskimos (Sirenik and Yupik added in 2002); the Dolgans (Yakut added in 2010).

Uilta), and Chulym-Turkic is under threat since they are spoken by less than 50 persons.

There are precedents of peoples disappearing along with their language (Sumerians) or languages saving lots of lives (the Navajo language during the Second World War (Navajo ciphers)).

UNESCO distinguishes between six levels of language endangerment: safe, vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered, and extinct. According to this classification, in 2010, 131 languages in Russia were embraced in groups 3–6, including MIPNSF languages (Moseley 2010):

- Group 6 (extinct languages): Kerek, Aliutor, Chuvanese, and Soyot;
- Group 5 (critically endangered languages): Itelmen, Yukaghir, Aleut, Nivkh, Enets, Selkup, Negidal, Ulch, Orok (Ulta/Uilta), Udege, Oroch, Chulym-Turkic, Tofalar, and Saami.

Thus, four languages (10%) out of 40 languages of MIPNSF are classified as extinct and 14 languages (35%) as critically endangered.

Only three peoples of MIPNSF demonstrate relatively high rates of *proficiency in the language of their nationality* (over 30% of the people); these are the Nenets (43.8%), the Vepsians (39.8%), and the Teleuts (35.5%).

There is a general trend indicating that the numerical value of those who “name the language of their nationality as their native language” usually exceeds the numerical value of those who “speak the language of their nationality”. However, there are several exceptions from this trend: the Aleuts (16 people named the Aleut language as their mother tongue, but due to the possibility of indicating up to 3 languages in the census form 19 people revealed that they could speak it); the Veps (for 1,638 Aleut is a native language, but much more people – 2,362 – can speak it); the similar situation is typical of the Sami people, the Orochs, Chulyms, and Tofalars.

Out of 40 MIPNSF, for which there are data available for 1959–2010, or 51 years, only the Veps, Shors, and Eskimos demonstrate significant changes in the settlement structure. The rest of the peoples are characterized by a common half-century settled lifestyle.

For example, in 1959 virtually 94% of the Veps lived in the Republic of Karelia and the Leningrad region. In 2010, 94% of the Veps settled in 6 regions: the Republic of Karelia (57.7%), where “efforts are being made to revive this ethnic group”; the Leningrad Region (23.2%), where “Veps villages” are organized; the Vologda region

(7%); the Moscow city (4.6%); the Murmansk region (1.4%), and the Kemerovo region (0.8%).

We should highlight once again that from 1926 (the first All-Soviet Census) to 2010 the Veps witnessed the greatest fall in population among all 40 MIPNSF: from 32,784 in 1926 to 5,936 in 2010, or a 5.5 times decrease.

In 1959, 91.5% of the Shors settled on the territory of the Kemerovo region; in 2010 – 82.2% of them lived in the Kemerovo region, and 8.9% – in the Republic of Khakassia.

From the territory of their predominant residence – the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (95.8% in 1959), – Eskimos moved to the Magadan Region (1.9%), the Khabarovsk region (1.2%), and the Kamchatka region (0.8%).

The Mansi and the Nanai people with low levels of proficiency in the language of their nationality (6.8 and 6.6%, respectively) for 51 reporting years have not changed the territory of their residence – about 90% of their population have settled within one subject of the Russian Federation.

The area of MIPNSF residence is characterized by a low population density. For instance, as of January 1, 2020, the population density in Russia was about 8.57 inhabitants per square kilometre, whereas in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug it was 0.07 inhabitants, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug – 0.25 inhabitants per square kilometre, etc.

The proposed grouping of MIPNSF into 5 categories for developing a differentiated state and regional policy on language revitalization does not diminish the role and importance of the public in this issue. Language revitalization is a time-consuming process that involves several generations and requires active support from the state and local authorities. The crucial condition for successful language revitalization is the interest, enthusiasm and activity of the language community in language planning and language work. Revitalization is rooted in the family and the head of every individual, and its success depends on the consent of people to take responsibility and invest their personal strength in this process.

In 1992, the Committee of Ministers is the Council of Europe adopted The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. In 2001, Russia joined the countries that signed the Charter, but did not ratify it. The major reason behind it is that, according to the Charter, State Parties have to apply the provisions of Part II to all regional or

minority languages in their territories and to apply at least 35 paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among the provisions of Part III for the designated languages. Measures should be selected prior to the Charter is ratified. Part III of the Charter provides for the wide use of regional or minority languages in public life: in education ranging from pre-school to vocational training; in judicial authorities (criminal, civil and administrative); in administrative authorities and public services; in the media; etc.

Opportunities for improving Russian legislation on languages can be expanded through active introduction of international principles and norms.

In 2020, a number of amendments were introduced to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and in particular concerning indigenous peoples. According to Article 69, “The Russian Federation guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation. The state protects the cultural identity of all peoples and ethnic communities of the Russian Federation, guarantees the preservation of ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity.”

Table 1. MIPNSF in the 2010 General Russian Census who named the language of their nationality as their native language (over 35% of the ethnic group population)⁴

No.	People	Population growth, 2010 to 1959, %	Named the language of their nationality as their native language in the total number of the people, %	Can speak the language of their nationality in the total number of the people, %	Median age, years
Over 35% of the ethnic group name the language of their nationality as their native language					
<i>Positive dynamics in the population growth rates</i>					
80% of the people settle on the territory of one region in the Russian Federation					
1	Nganasans	+20	65	10.8	24.5
2	Chelkans	+38 (2010/2002)	55	24.3	31.2
3	Chukchis	+36	47	28.7	25.6
4	Enets	+15 (2010/1989)	45	15.9	27.8
5	Eskimos	+56	39	26.2	27.6
80% of the people settle on the territory of two regions in the Russian Federation					
6	Dolgans	+101	61	11.8	24.8
7	Nenets	+95	73	43.8	23.1
8	Khanty	+61	36	28.6	24.8

4 Compiled by the author using primary data of the censuses of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

<i>Negative dynamics in the population growth rates</i>					
80% of the people settle on the territory of one region in the Russian Federation					
9	Teleuts	-0,3 (2010/2002)	60	35.5	33.4
10	Shors	-14	35	20.4	33.3
80% of the people settle on the territory of two regions in the Russian Federation					
11	Selkups	-1	37	25.9	28.7

Table 2. MIPNSF in the 2010 General Russian Census who named the language of their nationality as their native language (less than 35% of the ethnic group population)⁵

No.	People	Population growth, 2010 to 1959, %	Named the language of their nationality as their native language in the total number of the people, %	Can speak the language of their nationality in the total number of the people, %	Median age, years
Less than 35% of the ethnic group name the language of their nationality as their native language					
<i>Positive dynamics in the population growth rates</i>					
80% of the people settle on the territory of one region in the Russian Federation					
1	Koryaks	+29	28	18.4	27.1
2	Mansi	+94	14	6.8	25.3
3	Nanais	+52	19	6.6	28.8
4	Sami	+1	17	16.9	31.6

5 Compiled by the author using primary data of the censuses of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

5	Tubalars	+26 (2010/2002)	22	10.7	33.2
6	Yukaghirs	+264	22	19.4	23.6
7	Negidals	+4 (2010/1970)	17	3.7	27.6
80% of the people settle on the territory of two regions in the Russian Federation					
<i>Positive dynamics in the population growth rates</i>					
8	Kets	+20	19	16.3	30.4
9	Udege	+7	12	5.5	31.1
<i>Negative dynamics in the population growth rates</i>					
10	Veps	-63	28	39.8	54.8
11	Kuman- dins	-7 (2010/2002)	24	18.0	40.8
80% of the people settle on the territory of three or more regions in the Russian Federation					
12	Evens	+148	25	21.9	25.5
13	Evenks	+54	15	11.4	25.4

Table 3. MIPNSF in the 2010 General Russian Census who named the Russian language as their native language (over 90% of the ethnic group population)⁶

No.	People	Population growth, 2010 to 1959, %	Can speak the language of their nationality in the total number of the people in the 2010 GRC, %	Median age, years
Over 90% of the ethnic group name the Russian language as their native language				
<i>Positive dynamics in the population growth rates</i>				
80% of the people settle on the territory of one region in the Russian Federation				
1	Aleuts	+21	3.9	34.1
2	Oroks	+65 (2010/1989)	3.4	29.1
3	Tofalars	+30	1.4	27.5
4	Ulchs	+35	5.1	28.4
80% of the people settle on the territory of two regions in the Russian Federation				
5	Nivkhs	+26	3.9	27.5
6	Itelmens	+191	1.8	30.4
<i>Negative dynamics in the population growth rates</i>				
80% of the people settle on the territory of two regions in the Russian Federation				
7	Orochs	-23	0.5	27.3
8	Chulymys	-46 (2010/2002)	4.8	33.7

⁶ Compiled by the author using primary data of the censuses of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

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