

Forest Nenets dataset

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1 Basic facts

Consonant and vowel inventories (Egorov 2023)

i	ĩ	u	ũ
e	ě	o	õ
æ	ǣ	a	ǎ
	°		

p	p′	t	ć	k	k′	ʔ
m	m′	n	ń	ŋ	ŋ′	
		s	ś	x	x′	
		λ	λ′			
w	w′	l	l′			
			d′~j			

/°/ = schwa, /λ/ = voiceless lateral fricative ([ɬ]), acute accents denote palatalisation, short vowels are marked with a breve (long /a/ – short /ǎ/).

2 Data

For more detailed descriptions of the phonology of Forest Nenets, see Burkova (2022) or Salminen (2007) (both are on [the reading list](#)). This dataset uses a slightly modified version of Tapani Salminen’s practical transcription; the difference is that I mark palatalisation with acute accents.

2.1 Vowel quantity

Vowels can be long (i e æ u o a) and short (ĩ ě ǣ ũ õ ǎ °).

- (1) a. wĩŋ ‘tundra’
b. wiŋkǎt° ‘tundra.EL.SG’ (Salminen 2007)

- » What positions can/cannot long vowels occur in?
- » Salminen (2007) considers long vowels unmarked and the short vowels marked, which is “understandably a conventional and perhaps controversial decision”. Why is this interpretation still accepted despite being controversial?

2.2 Stress

Unstressed long vowels are shortened automatically, so this shortening is not reflected in the transcription.

(2) Basic illustration

- a. 'čońa 'fox'
- b. 'čońaŋ 'fox.GEN.SG'
- c. čo'ńan° 'fox.DAT.SG'
- d. 'čońa,măna 'fox.PROL.SG' (Salminen 2007)

(3) o/u alternation

- a. 'ŋănu 'boat'
- b. ŋă'noj° 'boat.POSS.1SG'
- c. 'ŋănuta 'boat.POSS.3SG' (Salminen 2007)

(4) Guess the stress

- a. wejaqku 'dog'
- b. wejaqkoj° 'dog.POSS.1SG'
- c. wejaqkota 'dog.POSS.3SG' (Salminen 2007)

» Formulate the stress rule in Forest Nenets based on the provided data. Sounds familiar?

» What causes the o/u alternation?

» Where does stress fall in the three forms in example (4)?

2.3 Schwa

“Schwa” is only rarely phonetically realised as an over-short vowel [ə̃] and can only be found in unstressed syllables (Burkova 2022).

(5) Surface realisation of schwa is not always as a vowel

- a. tāmna [tamna] 'more'
- b. tem'na [te:m:na] 'deer.PROL.SG'
- c. pom'na [po:m:na] 'among' (Egorov 2023)

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References

- Burkova, Svetlana. 2022. Nenets. In Marianne Bakró-Nagy, Johanna Laakso & Elena Skribnik (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Uralic languages*, 674–708. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Egorov, Il'ja. 2023. Fonologija lesnogo neneckogo jazyka [Forest Nenets Phonology]. Talk at the Forest Nenets fieldwork group seminar.
- Salminen, Tapani. 2007. Notes on Forest Nenets phonology. In Jussi Ylikoski & Ante Aikio (eds.), *Sámit, sánit, sátnehámit. riepmočála pekka sammallahtii miessemánu 21. beaivve 2007. suomalais-ugrilaisen seuran toimituksia = mémoires de la société finno-ougrienne*, vol. 253, 349–372. Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura.