

Ubriatova, Elizaveta Ivanovna (1907–1990)

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Elizaveta Ivanovna Ubriatova (Ubriatova) was born in Irkutsk (the Russian Federation) in 1907 and died in Novosibirsk in 1990. She was a Russian turcologist whose linguistic work should be seen in the broad context of Siberian Turkic languages. Ubriatova's most substantial contributions to scholarship were her books and papers devoted to the dialectology, syntax, history, phonetics, and so on of the Yakut (Sakha) language as well as problems involved in the co-existence of Turkic with noncognate languages in the vast territories of Siberia.

Ubriatova was educated at the University of Irkutsk, and a year after her graduation from the university she was offered the position of a teacher at a primary school in Taimyr (the Taimyr national region), beyond the polar circle. In a short period of time, Ubriatova became acquainted with the Dolgan language and the life of its bearers and developed an interest in Siberian Turkic languages. To master them, Ubriatova took up postgraduate courses at the Institute of Peoples of the North in Leningrad (present St. Petersburg). Under the guidance of Academician Malov, she received an M.A. for her thesis entitled 'The language of the Norilsk Dolgan' in 1940 and a Ph.D. for her thesis 'Complex subordinate sentences in the Yakut (Sakha) language' in 1950. In Ubriatova (1950), younger scholars found both a thorough theoretical orientation and a manual of analytical procedures for all kinds of complex subordinate sentences.

In comparative linguistics she was a strong defender of three periods in the interaction of the Yakut language with a series of other languages: (1) the period of the Yakut language formation with all specific features of its grammatical structure: during a long period, some ancient people who spoke a language of Orkhon inscriptions lived side by side with groups of people who spoke Mongolian and Tungusic (Tungus); (2) the time when Mongolian and Tungusic groups switched to Turkic: at the end of this period, two

dialects of Yakut (one retaining the unstressed *o* and another retaining the unstressed *a*) took shape; (3) the period of the Yakut language spreading beyond the boundaries of the territory between the Aldan and the Lena. Central to Ubriatova's thinking was the idea of similarity between Tofa (Karagas) and Tuvan (Tuvini), on the one hand, and Written Old Uyghur, on the other.

She was the first to point to Old Uyghur, from which attested grammatical features in the Turkic languages of South Siberia could be derived. The character of verb-forms occurring in Siberian Turkic languages made Ubriatova infer that there were three sources from which Turkic languages of Siberia had originated. The traces of Old Turkic languages – Orkhon-Turkic, Old Uyghur, and Kirghiz – occur in modern Turkic languages to a varied degree and may be assigned to different periods of time. The traces of later interaction overlap the earlier ones. One may assume that at first the Oghuz-Orkhon language was spread in the territory and a little later or simultaneously Old Uyghur began to extend its position and interact with the cognate Oghuz-Orkhon language.

As the character of verb-system in all modern Turkic languages in Siberia permits treating them as Kipchak, and as modern Kirghiz belongs to the same group, Ubriatova arrived at the conclusion that the source of Siberian Turkic languages' Kipchakization was Old Kirghiz.

Ubriatova received many honors, including the title of Honored Scientist of the Sakha Republic, Order of the Red Banner, two Badges of Honor and four medals. She has many disciples and followers where Turkic languages are studied and spoken.

See also: Turkic Languages.

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