

Phonologically driven allomorphy in Nivkh transitive verbs

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Singular person pronouns in Nivkh (language isolate, Russia) delete their vowel and shorten to a phonologically bound form, i.e. clitic, when they appear as complement of transitive verbs. An exception to this rule arises when the host verb begins with a consonant cluster in which case the vowel is retained. While most previous works assume that this vowel is part of the pronoun, I will argue that it is part of the verb, providing support from the position of stress. What makes this interpretation possible is the so-called ‘pleonastic’ usage of pronominal prefix *i-*, which was first noted by Lev Shternberg in 1900. I will report on this usage of *i-* using information collected during recent fieldwork on Sakhalin.