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# Third Conference on the Endangered Languages of East Asia

Setting boundaries:  
how to (re-)draw the lines  
defining endangered  
languages

Keynote speaker

**Juha Janhunen**

University of Helsinki

Organizers

**Elia Dal Corso**

and **Elisabetta Ragagnin**

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**Plenary session***Why boundaries matter in linguistic taxonomy – with Eurasian examples*

Juha Janhunen – University of Helsinki

The talk will focus on the well-known dichotomy between horizontal (areal/synchronic) and vertical (genealogical/diachronic) approaches to comparative linguistics. Recently, in the description of the internal taxonomy of several language families all over the world, there has been a trend to replace the old vertical family-tree model with a less-structured horizontal model, also known as the “rake” or “comb” model. It is, however, unnecessary to view the horizontal and vertical approaches to linguistic taxonomy as mutually contradictory, as they simply complement each other, with each one illuminating a different aspect of linguistic diversity. To operate correctly with the family-tree model, we need to establish a difference between primary and secondary isoglosses, of which only the former can serve as a basis for a diachronically relevant taxonomy. The real problem in building family trees is not the model itself, but the fact that the taxonomically relevant primary isoglosses are often difficult to identify. This problem is the more obvious the less deep the chronological boundaries between the branches and individual idioms of a language family are. The illustrate this and related issues relevant data will be quoted from several language families of North, East, and Inner Asia.

## Discourse and information structure

*The “second accusative” in Miyako: its category and function*  
Aleksandra Jarosz – Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

South Ryukyuan languages have been reported (Koloskova 2007; Shimoji 2016; Topping 2019; Jarosz 2024) to display a kind of differential object marking, whereby some direct objects – expected to be marked for accusative or not marked at all – host a marker homophonous with the topic marker. That marker, whose function clearly contrasts with that of topic, may be provisionally referred to as “second accusative”. Occasionally, an accusative : “second accusative” variation in an otherwise identical clause is permitted, which confirms the paradigmatic relationship between these two direct object markers and their complementary distribution:

- (1)      urj-u:/a:                      zzi                      usum-i                      u-ti  
MES-ACC/ACC2                  insert.MDF                  crouch-CVB                  PROG-SEQ  
‘He would put it [the pepper] in [the tide pool], crouch and...’ (Kurima-Miyako;  
author’s fieldwork, 2019)

There is no consensus as to what causes this differential marking. Shimoji (2016) identifies the “second accusative” in Nagahama-Irabu (Miyako) as “partitive” and relates its use to the imperfective aspect and indefiniteness of the object, i.e. a reduced object prototypicality in the understanding of Hopper and Thompson (1980). Similarly, Koloskova (2007) connects the Hirara-Miyako “second accusative” with the “reduced affectedness” of the object, as well as, again, imperfectivity (non-telicity) of the predicate.

An analysis of 518 occurrences of marked accusative in Kurima-Miyako (Jarosz 2024: 239) has shown that while all three factors addressed in the previous studies – i.e. non-telicity and non-finiteness of the verb as well as indefiniteness/non-specificity of the object – factor in the choice of the “second accusative” over the “first accusative”, no single factor is sufficient to trigger the “second accusative” marking. Conversely, there are also no constraints banning the co-occurrence of the “second accusative” with any of the seemingly infelicitous parameters: 27% of its occurrences are with definite referents, 35% with telic predicates, and 26% in finite clauses. The most conspicuous feature of the Kurima “second accusative” may be its compatibility with nominal predicates, which account for almost a half (49%) of its occurrences.

The Kurima data is corroborated by the results of a 2024 follow-up study of Kawamitsu-Miyako. In (2), despite the predicate being finite and telic and the object definite and activated, both accusative markers are permitted.

- (2)      juz-nu                      tami-nu                      kudzara-nu-du                      tara-an  
supper-GEN                      sake-GEN                      plate-NOM-FOC                      suffice-NEG.NPST  
mnapi                      kudzaro-o/kudzara-a                      ka-ijuk-adi  
a.bit.more                      plate-ACC/plate-ACC2                      buy-RSL-INT  
‘We don’t have enough plates for supper. I’ll go buy some more.’

This lack of specific conditioning triggering the “second accusative” marking is also reflected in the frequent variation of both “accusatives”, like in (1). The choice of the “second accusative” over the “first” appears to be entirely context-based.

All this begets a question, which will also serve as the focus of this presentation: what is the function of the “second accusative” and should it be regarded as a case marker at all?

The study of Kurima and Kawamitsu as well as an analysis of the use of the “second accusative” in other Miyako topolects such as Hirara (Jarosz 2020) and Ikema shows that rather than representing a purely syntactic case, the Miyako “second accusative” is a transcategorial marker combining the functions of case (direct object, marking of Theme/Undergoer) and information structure marking. Its function in terms of information structure is defocusing, or backgrounding the object as the information already given and/or of diminished discursive relevance. For these reasons, the “second accusative” is paraphrased in Jarosz (2024) as the “accusative of background information”, and the dedicated label is “adumbrative” – a case marker which indicates a “shadowing” of the thus-marked argument.

Since givenness and being presupposed are two of prototypical properties of subjects as opposed to direct objects (Hyman 2008: 399), a motivation may arise to dedicate a special marking to objects which are characterized by these properties. Such a functional motivation may have factored in the origins of South Ryukyuan adumbrative marking.

#### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative accusative 2 (adumbrative)
ACC2	accusative 2 (adumbrative)
CVB	converb
FOC	focus
GEN	genitive
INT	intentional
MDF	modifier
MES	mesial
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
NPST	non-past
PROG	progressive
RSL	resultative
SEQ	sequential

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*Boundaries in discourse: bridging linkage in Buryat*  
Elena Skribnik – Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

Bridging linkage as a strategy of discourse/text cohesion and as means of demarcation of discourse segments has been described for many languages but only recently became a topic of typological research (see Guérin (ed.) 2019). Bridging linkage in Mongolic languages has not yet been sufficiently described: “The study of discursive properties of Mongolian is a potentially promising but still largely unexplored field” (Janhunen 2012: 289). Even with limited data, though, Mongolic presents a perfect example of one of the two major strategies, namely, summary linkage. While in *recapitulative* (or tail-head) *linkage*, part of, or the whole, final clause of the segment is repeated in the beginning of the following segment, in *summary linkage* a generic word is used. Such phenomena have in the past been discussed from a different point of view as “situation reference” or “hypostatization anaphora” (e.g. Fraurud 1992): a pronominal anaphora for referring to an event, a proposition or the like, described in the preceding discourse; demonstrative pronouns like ‘that’ or nouns with a very general meaning like ‘matter’ were named as its principal means.

In Mongolic languages, as well as in their Turkic contact languages in Southern Siberia such as Tuvan or Altai, this function is assigned to demonstrative verbs (aka pronominal verbs, pro-verbs), i.e. ‘having done.that’ instead of ‘after that’. In Buryat these verbs are *ii(ge)-* ‘to do/ behave like this’ (proximal) and *tii(ge)-* ‘to do/ behave like that’ (distal), e.g.: *Yüün deere iige-be-š?* (why V.DEM.PROX-PAST-2SG) ‘Why did you do it?’; *Bü tiige!* (NEG + V.DEM.DIST.IMP) ‘Don’t you do that!’. The third pronominal verb, the question verb *yaa-* ‘what to do? / how to behave?’ is practically absent in bridging linkage.

There are numerous definitions of what a discourse segment, or paragraph, is (see Guérin & Aiton 2019: 12–29); it seems these units can only be defined vaguely in linguistic terms as they belong to a different level (one primarily about content structuring in discourse/narratives, and only secondarily about linguistic means used for this purpose). Structurally, a typical discourse segment in Buryat is at least one chain of non-finite clauses rounded up by a single finite clause; semantically, it is a (more or less) separate building block of the discourse/narrative (i.e. seen as a separate episode by the speaker/narrator). Bridging linkage constructions (BLCs) in the beginning of the following unit mark boundaries between them, but simultaneously connect them; from among discourse functions listed by Guérin and Aiton (2019: 12–29), Buryat BLCs (a) support thematic continuity, (b) highlight important turning points or new events on the main event line, (c) express relationships between them, sequential and others, (d) enable reference tracking.

To fulfill these functions, Buryat BLCs employ a wide range of morphological means. They can take, with very few exceptions, practically every non-finite form from the rich inventory of (adverbial) connectors: converbial (about 25 forms), participial (about 10 forms) with case markers, postpositions, particles etc. (see Skribnik & Darzhaeva 2016).

To support reference tracking, Buryat BLCs employ possessive markers: the reflexive possessive marker *-(g)AA* in case of same-subjecthood, personal possessive markers in case of different-subjecthood. Thus, the BLC structure is as follows:

demonstrative verb root + (adverbial) connector + possessive marker

Examples: *iige-ter-ee* (V.DEM.PROX-CVB.TERM-REFL) ‘in the meantime,’ lit. ‘till (the same subject) does this’, *tii-bel-šni* (V.DEM.DIST-CVB.COND-POSS2SG) ‘if so, if you do/ behave like that’, *tii-xe-de-n* (V.DEM.DIST-PTCP.FUT-DLOC-POSS3) ‘at that time’, lit. ‘when (a different subject) does that’, *tiige-hen hoin-oo* (V.DEM.DIST-PTCP.PAST + POSTP-REFL) ‘after that’, lit. ‘after (the same subject) did that’ etc.

It must be noted that in bridging linkage mostly adverbial relations (temporal, causal, conditional etc.) are expressed; in the Buryat Corpus<sup>1</sup> there are only four examples of complement relations (*tii-xije-n' xül'ee-že* V.DEM.DIST-PTCP.FUT-ACC-POSS3 expect-CVB.IPF 'expecting this.to.happen') and one example with attributive relations (*tii-xe arga-n' ügy* V.DEM.DIST-PTCP.FUT method-POSS3 NEG 'There is no way to do it') between the paragraphs (cf. 1975 tokens of *tiixede* 'at that time' or 3897 tokens of *tiigeed* 'after doing.that').

An example of a BLC marking same-subject simultaneity between two episodes:

- (1) *Ger-ej \_\_\_\_\_ ezen übgen, [jamar nege jüümen tuxaj hanaa-gaa*  
house-GEN master old.man which one thing about thought-REFL  
*tabi-ža,] [jixel bodolgoto bolo-hon xeber-tej*  
worry-CVB.IPF very pensive become-PTCP.PAST look-PROPR  
*xire bol-oodle,] [gaaha-jaa aman-haa aba-ža,]*  
time become-CVB.PRF FOC pipe-REFL mouth-ABL take-CVB.IPF  
*[ural-aa üle medeg xüdelge-n] [huu-na.]*  
lip-REFL slightly move- CVB.MNR sit-PRES[3SG/PL]  
*Tii-xe zuur-aa [iige-že (bodo-hon*  
V.DEM.DIST-PTCP.FUT POSTP-REFL V.DEM.PROX-CVB.IPF think-PTCP.FUT  
*baj-gaa):] "Manajxaan Japon-oj xaan-da*  
AUX-PAST[3SG/PL] our Khan Japan-GEN Khan-DLOC  
*buligda-xa-n' geese gü?"*  
be.defeated-PTCP.FUT-POSS3 DP Q  
'The old master of the house has had a very pensive look for some time, as if (he) is worrying about something; (then) (he) takes his pipe from his mouth and sits moving his lips slightly. **All this time** (lit. while being like that, same subject) (he) probably thought something like this – "Will our Khan be defeated by the Khan of Japan?"'

In modern language such forms occur also between two finite clauses (probably as a contact influence from Russian); the most frequent, like *ii-geed* (V.DEM.PROX-CVB.PERV) 'right after doing this' and *tii-geed / t'eed* (V.DEM.DIST-CVB.PERV) 'after doing.that', are already listed in Buryat grammars as conjunctions (Sanzheev (ed.) 1962: 324, Bertagaev & Cydendambaev 1962: 207).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://web-corpora.net/BuryatCorpus/search/index.php?interface\\_language=en](http://web-corpora.net/BuryatCorpus/search/index.php?interface_language=en)



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## Languages in contact

*Boundaries in the linguistic landscape of Amdo (Qinghai province, Northwest China):  
hierarchies, officiality, and hybridity*

Giulia Cabras – Berlin Free University

With its history of intense language contact and current multilingualism and language assimilation, Amdo Tibet (Qinghai province, Northwest China) is particularly relevant for applying the concept of boundary.

In this sociolinguistic context, boundaries divide the languages of the areas according to official status, prestige, domains of usage, and social and cultural capital.

In this paper, I will discuss written material collected from the linguistic landscape of two areas in Qinghai: the provincial capital, Xining, which does not enjoy linguistic autonomy and, therefore, institutional bilingualism, and the autonomous county seat, Rongwo (Ch. Tongren). In particular, I will look at different kinds of signs we can encounter in urban areas, such as fixed institutional and commercial signs, but also non-fixed signs, such as A4 papers and stickers.

The notion of boundary will be applied in relation to:

- The presence (and/or absence) of Qinghai minority languages in space, their informative and symbolic meanings
- The use of standard and non-standard varieties (in particular for Chinese and Tibetan)
- Hybridization of Tibetan in Chinese-Tibetan bilingual signs

I show that urban space is a dimension in which firm boundaries are set both by language policies and top-down/bottom-up language ideologies. However, in some rare but still relevant cases, these boundaries are reversed by speakers' agency, economic opportunities, and the use of language as a symbolic tool to respond to a sense of cultural crisis.

*Creole or contact language? A TMA analysis of Yilan Creole*

Paul Ueda – The Ohio State University

Creoles are languages born of contact varieties typically in colonial settings. Chien and Sanada (2010) were the first to claim such a language existed in Yilan County, Taiwan. Yilan Creole, as they called it, is a mixture of Japanese and the indigenous Atayal language that emerged due to forced migration and contact during the Japanese colonial period of Taiwan in the early 20th Century (Chien & Sanada 2010; Qiu 2015). There remains a dearth of literature on the topic, as the core scholarship effectively requires a trilingual researcher in Japanese, Chinese, and English. Due to this lack of scholarship, there has only been an initial description of the TMA system in Yilan Creole completed by Qiu (2015) as part of a broader M.A. thesis that provides a linguistic sketch of the language. As such, the present project builds upon Qiu's framework to provide a strengthened analysis of the Yilan Creole TMA system as well as discuss the implications on the linguistic classification as a creole.

Qiu (2015:43-44) provided an initial description of the TMA system as consisting of 8 categories: Present, Past, Progressive, and Past Progressive, with each having a positive and negative form. However, further discussion of how these forms were derived was not included in the original discussion. Additionally, there was a great deal of unexplained variation in Qiu's system, as Qiu noted that information could appear either as a suffix or adverb. Based upon a reanalysis of the data, the present project asserts that there are instead six categories within the TMA system, provided in Table 1, the combination of which are governed by a hierarchy of ASPECT > MOOD > NEGATION > TENSE. This hierarchy governs how this information is expressed in Yilan Creole, as either a verb affix or conveyed through other means, such as an adverb, explaining the variation seen in Qiu's analysis.

Comparing with the Japanese and Atayal system of TMA marking, we find that Yilan Creole conforms to the principle of "one form – one meaning" that is stereotypical of creole languages. However, such findings also contradict the current mainstream findings in which creoles contain little bound morphology, a generalization based on the Atlantic Creoles (Migge 2003:79). As such, the present classification or declassification as a Creole is complicated, as it questions what the foundational traits of creole languages are, an issue that remains important in Creole Linguistics (Winford 2018).

*Table 1. Proposed TMA Markers in Yilan Creole*

Present	Past	Negation	Imperative	Progressive	Perfect
-ru	-ta Past Adv	-nai -ng	-le -tike	-teru	-te

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*North-Sakhalin Nivkh as a contact variety*  
Ekaterina Gruzdeva – Helsinki University

The Amuric language family comprises synchronically two distinct, though closely related languages, Nivkh and Nighvng, which may be further divided into several local varieties (Gruzdeva 2024). Nivkh is used both on the continent in the lower Amur area and on the Sakhalin Island, whereas Nighvng is spoken only on Sakhalin.

One of the most enigmatic Amuric idioms is represented by the North Sakhalin variety, which was spoken on the Schmidt Peninsula in the northernmost part of Sakhalin and on the north-western coast of the island (Panfilov 1968, Kreinovich 1980). This variety is usually considered as a part of the Nivkh dialectal group (Shiraishi 2006). It is on the verge of extinction and is one of the least studied variants of the Amuric languages. There are currently only two speakers of this variety, one of whom lives in the village of Nekrasovka and the other in the town of Okha on northern Sakhalin.

The North Sakhalin variety contains features of both Nivkh and Nighvng, but it also has idiosyncratic features of its own. In its lexical composition, this idiom is closer to Nivkh, which shares with Nighvng ca. 84 per cent of basic vocabulary, as defined by the Leipzig-Jakarta list. In the area of phonology, the North Sakhalin variety is characterised by *a* raising to *ə* in some lexical items (as in Nivkh), loss of final nasals in most lexical items (as in Nivkh), loss of final *n* in verb roots (as in Nivkh), preservation of final *n* in suffixes (as in Nighvng), preservation of final *ř* (as in Nighvng), and such idiosyncratic features as derhoticization of initial *ř*, devoicing of plosives, and depalatalization of final *c*. Personal and interrogative pronouns generally follow the Nighvng system, whereas some demonstratives are again idiosyncratic. Possessive constructions are built according to the Nivkh pattern, whereas negation makes use both of synthetical (as in Nighvng) and analytical (as in Nivkh) constructions.

The paper discusses various structural properties of North Sakhalin Nivkh and proposes a socio-historical scenario for the formation of this variety, which can be possibly seen as an instance of mixing of several closely related idioms. This process may have included several stages and constitutes one of the results of the Amuric language expansion (Gruzdeva 2022). The split of the Amuric protolanguage into Nivkh and Nighvng may have started ca. 1000 years ago in the area around Lake Kizi, from where the two languages expanded along two different routes and in two different directions. The northern route continued along the Amur basin and culminated in the formation of Nivkh, whereas the eastern route brought the language to Sakhalin Island via the Nevelskoy / Mamiya Strait, from where gradually transforming Nighvng continued to expand by river routes towards the south and north. It can be assumed that the North Sakhalin variety was formed during the subsequent expansion of Nivkh from the Amur estuary to Sakhalin and is the outcome of both substrate interference from one or more earlier local languages and contacts with Nighvng.

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*Typological profiling and contact of endangered languages in Temperate Asia: focusing on adjustable quantification and negation asymmetry*

Chingduang Yurayong – University of Helsinki / Mahidol University

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The increasing availability of data on endangered languages together with the application of distributional typology as an analytical tool (e.g. Bickel 2015) has significantly advanced studies on the linguistic complexity and diversity of Eastern Eurasia in recent years. From an areal perspective, previous studies have identified geographically consistent inclines or declines of typological tendencies from Siberia into Europe (e.g. Nichols 1992, Grünthal & Nichols 2016) and from East Asia into Southeast Asia (e.g. Hashimoto 1976, Yurayong & Sandman 2023). However, an area along the boundaries of Temperate Asia, being a watershed of the ancient Silk Roads from East Asia into Central Asia, has yet to undergo such investigation. This gap may be attributed to the fact that most languages spoken in Temperate Asia belong to the Altaic typological structure, assumed to be relatively homogeneous (cf. Janhunen 2023).

In this talk, we demonstrate considerable typological variation among Altaic languages spoken along the boundaries of Asia's temperate zone, particularly within smaller speech communities of endangered languages. To begin, we employ a quantitative method to analyse typological profiles, measuring distances among up to 50 datapoints. The data primarily include Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages, the majority of which are facing critical endangerment. The results reveal a deviation from the expected typological cline from east to west, as observed in Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages spoken around Manchuria and Gansu-Qinghai areas. To investigate further, we undertake a qualitative examination of two specific domains within grammar which lie between noun and verb phrase structures: 1) adjustable quantification and 2) negation asymmetry.

Firstly, we discuss quantification of entities and events, focusing on the latter which can be expressed by different grammatical elements. For instance, counted nouns (e.g. 'one/two/three time(s)') are more prevalent in Turkic and Mongolic languages towards the western regions. In the eastern areas, meanwhile, iterative numerals (e.g. 'once/twice/thrice') are commonly used in Mongolic and Tungusic languages, a phenomenon indicative of potential areal diffusion along the boundaries of Manchuria and Eastern Siberia. Interestingly, the use of verbal classifiers has been generalised in Gansu-Qinghai areas where Turkic and Mongolic languages have borrowed both lexically and structurally from Sinitic, such as Mangghuer *yi-zhuan mergu* [one-CLF.circle kowtow] 'kowtowing for one circuit' borrowed from Chinese 一 *yī* and 转 *zhuàn*.

Secondly, we examine asymmetry within negation systems across morphosyntactic contexts including nominal (Nom), non-finite verb (NFin), finite verb (Fin) and prohibitive (Proh) constructions. Again, the two boundary zones, Manchuria and Gansu-Qinghai, are illustrative scenarios of contact-induced changes. In Manchuria, Eastern Mongolic and Jurchenic Tungusic languages exhibit a shared alignment pattern Proh≠Fin=NFin=Nom, resulting from the extension of nominal negators (e.g. Buryat *-gui* and Manchu *-(a)kU*) into the context of non-finite and finite verbs. In Gansu-Qinghai, the Proto-Mongolic alignment pattern of Proh≠Fin=NFin≠Nom has been preserved in Southern Mongolic, maintaining two distinct negators: a postnominal negator *\*ügei*, and preverbal negators *\*ese* [PFV] and *\*ülü* [IPFV] which are obsolete in Eastern Mongolic. This archaism is likely due to reinforcement from neighbouring Sino-Tibetan languages, consistently using preverbal negators with tense-aspect distinction, such as Chinese 不 *bù* [FUT] vs. 没 *méi* [PST] and Tibetan *ma* [IPFV] vs. *m(y)i* [PFV].

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## Motion, proximity, and location

### *Contribution of South Siberian endangered Turkic languages to outlining and defining the language category of proximative*

Irina Nevskaya – Johann Wolfgang Goethe University

The category of Proximative (Heine / Kuteva 2002), also called Prospective (Comrie 1976), refers to an event already relevant to the speaker in the moment of speaking although it has not yet taken place. It is expressed by language means with the prototypical semantics ‘be going / about to do something’. It is grammaticalized to different degrees in individual languages.

This category is close to the category of Future that also refers to a possible subsequent event and is often defined in grammar descriptions and in typology as “immediate future” or the like (Bybee et al. 1994). Prototypical Proximative language means, however, can be combined with various TAM operators, also Future ones (X is/was/ will be/should be/could be/etc. about to do something) and can be rather seen as an actionality category (Johanson 2017). Nevertheless, it can be supposed that Proximative language means can be further grammaticalized as Future markers.

The category of Proximative/Prospective was established for Turkic languages primarily on the material of Siberian Turkic languages (Nevskaya 2005) and investigated further in Turkic, Iranian and some further languages in contact with them in (Korn, Nevskaya 2017). However, there are still many unsolved research questions connected with Proximative, in particular, its correlation with TAM categories.

In our talk, we will address this category on the material of a number of endangered South Siberian Turkic varieties – Chalkan, Shor, Teleut, Chulym, etc. The Siberian Turkic material was, on the one hand, instrumental for establishing this category in Turkic languages as a whole, and, on the other hand, put the question of drawing the borders between Proximative and Future. We will show the ongoing grammaticalization processes of proximative language means and formation of new TAM grammemes from them.

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*Stretching boundaries with deictics*

Elisabetta Ragagnin – Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Sayan Turkic – a cluster of closely related language varieties spoken in South Siberia and adjacent areas – shows a threefold set of so-called “pronominal verbs” displaying high functional load; e.g. Tuvan *minča-* ‘to behave like this/to do like this’, *inča-* ‘to behave like that/ to do like that’, and *kanča-* ‘to behave how/ to do how’. The first two, following Gruzdeva and Killian (2023), can be better defined as “processive qualitative demonstrative verbs”, whereas the last one represents an instance of interrogative verb (cf. Hagège 2008), functionally, however, related to the former category. Sayan Turkic pronominal verbs occur with both TAM and non-finite (converbial and participial) suffixes. Converbial forms occurring as linking/sentence adverbs are very widespread. While the relationship between the demonstratives and the interrogative pronoun with the corresponding pronominal verbs is unquestionable, the grammaticalization paths that led to the formation of such verbal forms are not straightforward. Pronominal verbs are formed, at least when viewed synchronically, from the oblique stems of demonstrative pronouns adding, synchronically, the suffix +*ǰA*: *bo* ‘this (one)’, *ol* ‘that (one)’ and the interrogative pronoun *kayī* ‘which (one)’ (*min-*, *in-* and *kan-*): *min-ǰa-* ‘to behave/do like this’, *in-ǰa-* ‘to behave/do like that’ and *kan-ǰa-* ‘to behave/do how?’.

Interestingly enough, Old Turkic (Manichaen, Buddhist and Christian sources) displays surprisingly close corresponding forms, confined, however, to the converbial forms *ančip* and *inčip* functionally representing linking/sentence adverbs. Clauson (1972: 173b) interprets these forms as crasis of *anča erip*. Erdal, on the other hand, analyses the form *ančip* as *an-ča* plus the converb suffix - (*X*)*p*, where *-ča* could be interpreted as the equative suffix or as a denominal verbal suffix homographic with the equative. If the latter, such a suffix would then have only a single occurrence in Old Turkic. Erdal (2004: 201) concludes that “An unusual necessity as the creation of a demonstrative conjunction can also have stretched morphology to an unusual feat.”

As for Mongolic – crucially important contact languages for Sayan Turkic – Modern Mongolic languages display a functionally similar and highly productive 3-fold set of pronominal verbs, whereas older stages of the language family display a more limited use (Janhunen 2012). In my talk, I will present and discuss data from various Sayan Turkic varieties.

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*“Go in the direction of the front facing side of my house”*: Yaeyaman frames of reference,  
seasonal terms, and their disuse among full, rusty, and new speakers in the language  
revitalization movement

Matthew Guay – Kyushu University

Separated from Taiwan to the west by the Kuroshio Current and from the rest of Okinawa to the east by the 250-kilometer Kerama gap, lies the Yaeyama Archipelago. Its language, one of six indigenous languages of the Ryukyus, is one of the most endangered of these Japanese sister languages and is expected to vanish in the following 30 years (Anderson 2019). As in many cases, the rapid pace of language shift remained relatively undetected by the heritage populations until the last 15 years when the last full speakers reached their 80s. The death of a spouse silences the use of the language in an entire village. Rusty speakers are suddenly thrust into important community roles as the only ones who can sing the songs correctly for the annual festivals. This has awakened a movement of language revitalization, but one of modest success that is still hampered by colonization of the mind (Fanon and Philcox 2004) and language accommodation (Marlow and Giles 2010), including dealing with the low-status view of the languages and their concepts in the minds of their keepers.

Yaeyaman also contains a very pronounced house-bounded orientation system that along with other ethnolinguistic systems, known as nonconformist concepts by Brenzinger (2006), are in even more danger of extinction than the language. This presentation will share my research documenting the unique Yaeyaman spatial reference system and how the terms alter depending on geographic level. I will then show how the house-bounded system linguistically impacts identity as the center of Yaeyaman society and explain the anthropological reasons behind the folk south facing uniform design. Additionally, I will show with examples from my field work how such a profound system avoided detection or publication by other linguists as a warning about overreliance on elicitation. Finally, another ethnolinguistic system, Yaeyaman seasonal terms, is defined before describing how both systems are replaced by Japanese modern concepts even among those rusty and new speakers attempting to learn the language.

I argue that in response to the low-status view held by speakers, which renders them unable to even call their words a language instead of a dialect publicly (Heinrich 2012) (Guay 2023), that these ethnolinguistic concepts unique to the island should be celebrated to help locals hold their language in higher esteem and develop more activist behavior critical to the survival of the language. I conclude describing a stamp rally event I have received funding from the Japanese government to hold this summer that involves only giving clues in the Yaeyaman orientation system.

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*Clusivity and beyond: a corpus-based study on 1PL forms in Evenki*

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The paper focuses on the clusivity opposition in Evenki (Northern Tungusic). The grammars of Evenki report two sets of 1PL markers, namely inclusive ('we, including the Addressee') vs. exclusive ('we, excluding the Addressee'). Clusivity is manifested in personal pronouns, nominal possessive affixes, verbal person-number subject indices<sup>2</sup>. Table 1 shows the paradigm of inclusive vs. exclusive forms, as it was described for the first time by Glafira Vasilevich (1948) for Standard Evenki (based on the Nepa dialect).

Table 1

	1PL.INCL	1PL.EXCL
personal pronoun	mit	bu: (mun-)
noun: possessives		
verb: set 2 (participles & past tense)	-t	-wun
verb: set 1 (aorist)	-p	-w

However, the real picture is much more complicated. Evenki is spoken in a very large territory throughout Siberia and the Russian Far East by small groups of nomadic reindeer-herders and is represented in a huge number of distinct dialects, which reveal a great variation in lexicon and grammar.

Clusivity is not an exception. Kazakevich (2018) focusing on personal pronouns claims that a) some Evenki dialects develop a more fine-grained opposition of the minimal vs. extended inclusive (*mit* 'me and you.SG' vs. *mut* 'me and you.PL'); b) in some others, the clusivity distinction, instead, disappears.

In this paper, I consider the use of different 1PL forms across several dialects based on corpus data. The data come from two corpora of Evenki: Däbritz & Gusev (2021) and Kazakevich et al. (2022). The main focus is on how stable the clusivity distinction is in different fragments of the paradigm (see Siewierska & Bakker 2005 on controversial cross-linguistic tendencies) and which of the 1PL forms tend to be expanded vs. lost.

Table 2 illustrates a restructuring of the clusivity opposition in the Barhahan Evenki dialect (Southern group). In Barhahan, both 1PL.INCL forms and 1PL.EXCL forms are attested through the whole paradigm. However, the frequency distributions between 1PL.INCL and 1PL.EXCL are totally different in different domains.

Table 2

	Barhahan dialect	
	1PL.INCL	1PL.EXCL
personal pronoun	6	195
noun: possessives	4	62
verb: set 2 (participles & past tense)	5	90
verb: set 1 (aorist)	611	6

<sup>2</sup> There are also two so-called 1PL imperatives – inclusive imperatives (or hortatives: 'let's do together') vs. exclusive ones ('let us do (without you) / we (exclusive) are planning to do'). They are not included in the study, as they are not fully parallel to each other either semantically or morphologically.

There is a split between the nominal vs. verbal domains. In nominal (and nominal-verbal) forms, 1PL.EXCL forms are much more frequent. This is not surprising, as we deal mostly with narratives, in which the exclusive context is indeed more prominent. However, in verbal forms, 1PL.INCL forms are strongly preferred. In this case, the semantic distinction between ‘inclusive’ vs. ‘exclusive’ is obscured, the morphological tendency comes to the fore instead, see ex. (1).

- (1) Barhahan Evenki (NNR4\_191X\_WhereBabiesComeFrom\_nar)  
**Bu**                    *gun-i-ynə-rə-p:*                    "Baka-ra-p!"  
 1PL.EXCL    say-EP-HAB-AOR-1PL.INCL find-AOR-1PL.INCL  
 ‘We said: "We have found (the answer)!"’ (‘exclusive’)

I will consider several cases when Evenki 1PL markers go beyond the clusivity distinction and discuss the data in areal and micro-diachronic perspectives.

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*The expression of translocational motion in Negidal: reassessing motion events typologies in the light of a Tungusic language*

Laurène Barbier – University Lumière Lyon 2, CNRS-DDL

The expression of Motion events has been the object of much research in both linguistics and cognitive sciences. Typologies were proposed (Talmy, 1985, 2000; Slobin, 2004) and were completed with the emergence of studies on languages which had not been the object of investigation in that field (Wälchli, 2001; Imbert, Grinevald, Sörös, 2011; Fortis & Vittrant, 2016). Research conducted on languages rarely described as part of studies on the expression of Motion events shed new light on our understanding of cross-linguistic variability in this domain and has led to reassessing typologies concerning spatial encoding devices attested in languages of the world.

Upper-Negidal is a moribund North-Tungusic language (Sunik, 1968) spoken in Far Eastern Siberia (Pakendorf & Aralova, 2018: 2). Despite a few grammatical sketches (Kolesnikova & Konstantinova, 1968; Cincius, 1982; Pevnov & Khasanova, 2006), Upper-Negidal remains underdescribed, especially in the domains of syntax and semantics. Hence, the aim of this presentation is twofold: to provide an exemplified description of Upper-Negidal spatial system and to investigate to which extent commonly used semantics categories in the conceptual domain of space apply to Tungusic languages. What are the encoding devices used in Upper-Negidal to encode motion events? How can available typologies of Motion events be used to describe its spatial system? What issues might arise with respect to commonly used terminology and categories?

To compile the inventory, I examine a corpus of 3500 utterances exhibiting translational spontaneous motion, from an archive of 206 narratives produced by 9 different speakers (Pakendorf & Aralova, 2017). Utterances are analysed following the coding manual elaborated by Slobin (2005), to single out spatial morphemes and define their semantics.

To encode translational spontaneous motion events, Upper-Negidal resorts to a diversity of devices in both the nominal and verbal domains. At the nominal level, it displays a developed case-marking system, to express categories of Path (Source, Goal, Median) (1 & 2, bold). Relational nouns and locative nouns are used as postpositions or adverbial markers to define motion (1, bold). At the verbal level, Negidal exhibits different types of verbs of motion encoding Path, manner and deixis. Additionally, verbal morphology is widely developed to express Motion events: a reflexive marker is attested; as well as aspectual markers, and an associated motion marker (1, underlined). Negidal also resorts to adverbial expressions, such as adverbial morphemes or adverbs to encode Motion events (1, framed). Ideophones, adverbial or predicative, also occur for that purpose (2, double underlined).

Preliminary results show that available typologies of Motion events are relevant to describe the spatial system in Upper-Negidal, especially Wälchli (2001), and its tripartite framework for encoding devices (verbal, adnominal and adverbial). It also shows their limits: for example, Upper-Negidal displays polysemous case markers and relational nouns which can appear in both adnominal and adverbial slots, which weakens the use of fixed categories and codes.

- |     |                         |                       |                 |                   |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| (1) | <i>olo-ma-t-na:-tea</i> | <b><i>ŋe:-ski</i></b> | <i>ə-ski</i>    | <i>əmjun-tiki</i> |
|     | fish-VR-TAM2-AM-        | <b>riverbank-</b>     | PROX-           | Amgun-ALL         |
|     | PST                     | <b>ADVB.ALL</b>       | <b>ADVB.ALL</b> |                   |

‘He came here to the Amgun to fish.’

(Pakendorf & Aralova, 2017, DIN\_shatun: 24)

- |     |                    |                              |
|-----|--------------------|------------------------------|
| (2) | <i>jaska-li=da</i> | <u><i>nakteare:</i></u>      |
|     | floor-PROL=ADD     | <u>hop.with.spread.wings</u> |

'Hopped along the floor with spread wings.'  
(Pakendorf & Aralova, 2017, APK\_1chindakan: 100)

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## Ainuic

### *Grammaticalization chains in Ainu: exploring the evolution of the auxiliary verb construction 'V1+V2aux'*

Tomomi Satō – Hokkaido University  
Anna Bugaeva – Tokyo University of Science

Ainu (isolate, moribund) comprises not only Hokkaido Ainu but also Sakhalin and Kuril varieties, associated with later spreads from Hokkaido: to southern Sakhalin by 1300 CE and to the Kurile Islands by 1500–1600 CE. Ainu is head-marking and incorporating, with verbs indexed for person and number. However, in a sequence of two verbs with the second encoding a modal meaning, there is a pressure to drop personal indexation on either V1 or V2 due to the economy principle at work. The original construction in (1) is the biclausal object complement construction, (2) is the clausal nominalization, in which V1 lacks verbal indexation, and (3) is the auxiliary verb construction, in which V2 lacks verbal indexation and functions only as a formal head; examples are from Hokkaido Ainu.

1. [yay-kotan-or-esina-**an** ka]NP **a-e-aykap** REFL-village-place-hide-4.S even/also 4.A-about.APPL-be.unable 'I was unable to hide my own village.' (N9306021YR)
2. [u-oyak un apkas ka]NP **a-eaykap**  
REC-other.place ALL walk even/also 4.A-about.APPL-be.unable  
'I was unable to walk around here and there.' (Nakagawa et al. 2016–2021: K8010291UP.434)
3. *nisap apkas-**an** ka e-aykap*  
immediately walk-4.S even/also about.APPL-be.unable  
'I was unable to walk immediately.' (M7908041UP)

Neither the indexation-losing strategy (2) nor (3) is unproblematic for Ainu. Like most head-marking languages, Ainu is considered 'extreme finite' (Givón 2009: 70). Thus, the omission of the transitive subject marker, especially, does not result in a well-formed nominalization (Satō 2008: 91; Bugaeva and Nakagawa 2013). On the other hand, losing indexation on the head (V2) in Ainu is not ideal either, given its head-marking nature.

Therefore, Ainu dialects are not uniform in their preferred constructions, although all three types are attested to some extent in each of them. While West Sakhalin Ainu retained the older complementation pattern (1) and uses nominalization as its preferred construction (2), with an emerging auxiliary verb construction (3) (Murasaki 1976: 58-59, 62-63; Murasaki 1979), Hokkaido (Satō 2008) and East Sakhalin Ainu (Piłsudski 1912) are more innovative. They show extensive use of the auxiliary verb construction (3), marginal use of nominalization (2), and residual use of the original complementation (1). Preferences within particular dialect groups may vary depending on the meaning of specific verbs (Dal Corso 2021: 114-116, 118); the more lexical V2 is, the more likely it is to retain indexation.

Moreover, Hokkaido Ainu, and also a poorly documented Kuril Ainu, show signs of further development when the auxiliary V2 incorporates a nominalized V1 and is likely to become reanalyzed as a suffix, as in *ku-asin-eskari* (1SG.S-go.out-stop) 'I stopped urinating' (*kasy neskari*: urinary retention), *sunke-[e]-askay* 'be good at lying' (*sun<sup>g</sup>kaskaj*: cheating) (KA; Dybowski 1893: 40, 61; Murayama 1971: 173, 219), or (4) below (HA). In this final stage of grammaticalization, the head-



marking requirement is once again fulfilled. The preceding stage (3) with the auxiliary verb may be seen as pseudo-incorporation, wherein the second verb still retains some level of syntactic independence.

4. *u-tura oka-e-askay-an*

REC-following exist.PL-about.APPL-be.able-4.S

'We are able to live together.' (M8608101UP)

Importantly, in Ainu, all four forms perform the same function and coexist as 'grammaticalization chains' exhibiting different stages of grammaticalization (Heine 1992). The evolution of the 'V1+V2aux' construction in Ainu corresponds to the broader historical process of clause fusion. This process involves transforming a biclausal structure into a monoclausal one, where the verb of the main clause becomes an auxiliary, and the verb of the subordinate clause becomes the primary verb (Harris & Campbell 1995: 172).

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*Non-reflexive reflexives? The conceptual domain of Sakhalin Ainu yay- and si-*  
Elia Dal Corso – Ca' Foscari University of Venice

This presentation discusses the semantics of the two Sakhalin Ainu prefixes *yay-* and *si-*, whose main function is to mark reflexivity. The difference between the two suffixes has been a debated topic since the beginning of Ainu studies and many revisions to Kindaichi's (1931) first interpretation of this difference have been proposed. Recently, Satō (2007) argued that the use of either *yay-* or *si-* depends on the (in)direct participation of the subject in the reflexive event, with the former prefix indicating that the subject is directly involved and the latter indicating that the subject participates only indirectly through the involvement of other people. This distinction is highlighted in causative constructions, in which *si-* can only function as patient or there co-referential with the causer subject but not with the causee (i.e. the participant directly involved in the event).

By building on previous research by Satō (2007) and Kobayashi (2008), which focus on Hokkaidō dialects, I provide an overview of the analogous uses of *yay-* and *si-* in Sakhalin dialects but also take into account a peculiar non-reflexive (i.e. valency-preserving) use of both prefixes attested with transitive and intransitive verbs. Eventually I argue that all attested uses of *yay-* and *si-* in Sakhalin Ainu fall within the domain of egophoricity, which I propose to be the conceptual category encoded by these prefixes. The presentation ends with a preliminary typological comment on reflexives in Sakhalin Ainu.

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*Boundaries set by assumptions of “authentic” speakers and “correct” language – discussing examples of Ainu*

Silja Ijas – Hokkaido University

Saana Santalahti – University of Helsinki

The Ainu language is an endangered language in the process of revitalisation and reclamation. During the past 150 years, Ainu language shift to Japanese has been hastened by the Japanese government's discriminatory policies, assimilatory education, and the Japanese settlers' negative and pejorative attitudes towards the Ainu and their language. While the overtly assimilatory legislation concerning Ainu has been replaced by more supportive ones since 1997, the language rights of Ainu as a group are not fulfilled even in the most recent law passed in 2019, and the ongoing revitalisation is in a state of stagnation. There is a lack of proficient language teachers, suitable teaching materials and places to use the language. Furthermore, non-linguistic issues related to discrimination and socio-economic disparity continue to hinder possibilities of Ainu participation in language education. There are no Ainu first language speakers left and revitalisation activities are thus driven by new speakers and in many cases not by Ainu themselves but ethnically Japanese linguists.

On top of practical issues and societal challenges, revitalisation and reclamation need to tackle previously prevalent narratives of Ainu as a “dying” or even a “dead” language (and people). Prior research has commonly emphasised the lack of Ainu speakers or the (near) extinct status of different Ainu varieties, as well as valorised the so-called “(lost) native speakers” and their language use, sometimes to the detriment of contemporary speakers and their linguistic resources.

In this presentation, we wish to discuss some examples of what we consider created boundaries between different kinds of speakers and language learners, as well as “correct” and “incorrect” (or even “decayed”) ways of using the language. Who counts as an “Ainu speaker”? Who are considered “experts” and what is considered “expertise”? What kind of Ainu is accepted as “authentic” or “correct”, and how can this be defined and by whom? How do these assumptions possibly affect language revitalisation and reclamation initiatives? Have they created unnecessary boundaries between people working for a common goal?

*A sociolinguistic analysis of humorous elements in Ainu language and culture*

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Fortunately, a substantial amount of data has been collected on the Ainu language, and on folklore and storytelling traditions of the Ainu culture, both by Ainu communities, Japanese institutions, as well as the international research community. Yet unfortunately, many important aspects remain to be thoroughly studied and addressed in the scientific manner they deserve, one example being humour. The main purpose of this paper is to give an overview of some of the sociolinguistic aspects of humour in Ainu language and culture based on available texts written down about the oral traditions of the Ainu people. Traditions, such as tales, songs, and proverbs, are very often inherently humorous, but humour in itself is seldom researched systematically within a sociolinguistics framework or from a viewpoint from humour studies. Borrowing from the framework sketched by Oring (2008) and (), this paper will try to ask the following questions; why and where does humour occur? Or even more ideally, how does humour function and what does it mean? While ritual humour unfortunately is difficult to observe or record at the present time, many aspects can be elucidated from already recorded texts, especially about the content of humour joking relationships. Traditionally joking relationships looks at the jokers, the victims, the actions, the intentions, and the results (Tallman 1974). By analyzing the Ainu texts we have available, a few distinct patterns become visible. Almost needless to say, there is a rich tradition of riddles and language play, enjoyed by children for the amusement of themselves or others, and one cannot fail to see the humorous aspects of the relationship between the Kamyu (spiritual beings in Ainu mythology, rendered as Kamui in romanized Japanese), with plenty of valuable lessons to learn from Ainu storytelling. Furthermore, perhaps maybe the most obvious instances of humour to be found, applies to comic stories about Penanpe and Pananpe (literally the upstream person and the downstream person), where the former person behaves properly, thus serving as the straight man, whereas the latter make cannot live up to the expectations, thus serving as the funny man. This duality and focus on interactional humour, shows some similarity to joke structure in adjacent cultures, thus serving as a valuable point of departure for comparative research.

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## Morphosyntax

### *Aspectual functional sequence in Nung Ven*

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This study examines the syntactic structure of Nung Ven (En), a Tai-Kadai language spoken in Vietnam, facing an imminent threat of endangerment. Despite prior research extensively exploring its phonological aspects (Edmondson, Nguyen, *et al* 1999, Edmondson 2011), a notable gap exists in comprehending its syntactic structure. Our investigation focuses on unraveling the aspectual and temporal functional sequence within Nung Ven, specifically as spoken in the Cẩ Tiểng hamlet, Nội Thôn commune, Hà Quảng district, Cao Bằng province.

Collaborating with three proficient native speakers—Hoang Van Ha (31 years old), Vuong The Khoa (38 years old), and Vuong Van Quyet (38 years old)—residing in Cẩ Tiểng hamlet, Nội Thôn commune, our research aims to illuminate the nuanced syntactic features of this underrepresented language.

Inspired by Nordlinger and Sadler's (2008) exploration of fundamental methodological challenges in linguistic research, specifically addressing the imposition of preconceived notions on linguistic categories and exploring issues related to tense and aspect in under-described languages, our scrutiny revolves around whether Nung Ven adheres to a typological perspective, particularly concerning tense and aspect. In contrast to a direct comparison with Indo-European languages, our analysis employs a *tertium comparationis* method, drawing from Humboldt (1829), Cinque (1999), and Wiltschko (2014). This method does not contrast Nung Ven (En) directly with Indo-European languages but introduces a third-party perspective—the universal functional sequence of functional categories, as proposed by Cinque (1999).

Our primary findings challenge linguistic categorizations, suggesting that apparent tense markers in Nung Ven—specifically *ɲɛŋ*<sup>232</sup> (present), *ɛ*<sup>232</sup> (future), and *cu*<sup>232</sup> (past)—are better interpreted as aspect markers denoting Durative, Prospective, and Inceptive aspects, respectively. Significantly, the non-obligatory nature of these markers adds complexity to Nung Ven's syntactic structure.

Furthermore, our investigation reveals that these three markers form part of an aspectual functional sequence in Nung Ven, proposed in both preverbal and postverbal domains:

- (1) Preverbal aspectual functional sequence: Habitual/Repetitive < Continuative < Durative/Prospective/Inceptive < Negation < V
- (2) Postverbal domain aspectual functional sequence: V < Completive I < Completive II

Importantly, this proposed sequence aligns with Cinque's hierarchy but introduces two distinct aspectual layers in the syntax, providing insights into the language's unique structural properties.

In conclusion, our study not only enhances our understanding of Nung Ven's syntactic structure but also offers methodological insights for analyzing underrepresented languages. Our nuanced exploration of the language's aspectual functional sequence lays a foundation for future research, emphasizing the importance of considering universal syntactic structures while appreciating the unique linguistic properties of individual languages.

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*Understanding symmetry in the negation of Odia and Sambalpuri*

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The paper examines the negative sentences of Odia and Sambalpuri predominantly grounding on the theory of symmetry in standard negation postulated by Miestamo (2005) and provides the typological classification of symmetric and asymmetric negation to the given structures in this research. The formal/standard variety of Odia spoken in the eastern part of Odisha and the Sambalpuri variety spoken in western Odisha are taken into account in the current study to investigate the extent to which both these varieties exhibit symmetry in negation following the descriptive method of linguistics. The data has been collected by interview method on field from the participants belonging to districts of eastern Odisha and western Odisha. The contradicting negation pattern of standard Odia and Sambalpuri in standard negation i.e., post verbal negation and pre-verbal negation respectively gives rise to manifestation of different structures of negative sentences as illustrated in 1(b) and 1(d).

Standard Odia:

1(a) ame Odisha dʒa-u-c-u  
 we.NOM.1PL Odisha go-PROG-AUX-1.PL  
 'We are going to Odisha.'

1(b) ame Odisha dʒa-u-n-u  
 we.NOM.1PL Odisha go-PROG-NEG-1.PL  
 'We are not going to Odisha.'

Sambalpuri:

1(c) ame Odisha dʒa-u-c-ẽ  
 we.NOM.1PL Odisha go-PROG-AUX-1.PL  
 'We are going to Odisha.'

1(d) ame Odisha naĩ dʒi-bar  
 we.NOM.1.PL Odisha NEG go-INF  
 'We are not going to Odisha.'

These structural variations in the negative paradigm seek morpho-syntactic analysis to understand whether the negation system of both the varieties is symmetric or asymmetric; or stands on a medial position exhibiting both natures. Symmetry is a comparatively untouched area of study in the context of South Asian languages and this comparative analysis of standard negation with respect to symmetry can unfold the distinctive linguistic properties and morpho-syntactic change in Odia and Sambalpuri.

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*Accounting for Ersu adjective forms under DM*

Ying Gong – Boston University

This study explores the morphology of gradable adjectives (GAs) in Ersu, an endangered language spoken in southwest China. Three classes of GAs are considered based on their form in positive constructions: (I) GAs occurring in the form of a prefixed monosyllabic root; (II) GAs involving a reduplicated root; and (III) GAs that involve an unreduplicated disyllabic root.

	Class I	Class II	Class III
	'thick (in diameter)'	'short'	'small'
positive (1)	<i>ya-bi</i>	<i>dzodzo</i>	<i>mala</i>
comparative (2)	<i>ya-bi</i>	<i>(ya-)dzodzo</i>	<i>(ya-)mala</i>
equative (3)	<i>pa-bi</i>	<i>pa-dzodzo</i>	<i>pa-mala</i>
degree question (4)	<i>pa-bi</i>	*	*
inchoative	<i>ŋə-bi</i>	<i>k<sup>h</sup>ə-dzo</i>	<i>na-mala</i>

- (1) siya tə-wo ya-bi/mala.  
peach this ya-big/small  
'This peach is big/small.'
- (2) siya tə-wo sepe tɕ<sup>h</sup>o ya-bi/mala.  
peach this plum SM ya-big/small  
'This peach is bigger/smaller than plums.'
- (3) siya sepe da pa-bi/mala.  
peach plum EQUA pa-big/small  
'The peach is as big/small as the plum.'
- (4) sepe ts<sup>h</sup>o pa-bi?  
plum WH pa-big  
'How big is the plum?'

Previous research by Zhang (2013) posits that *ya-* is the adjective-forming affix obligatorily attached to monosyllabic roots, while other GAs are inherently disyllabic (reduplicated or unpredictable). Several challenges remain: First, Class II roots remain unreduplicated in inchoatives, suggesting conditional reduplication. Second, Class I roots do not always occur with *ya-*, as in equatives and degree questions. Third, bare predicative forms are ambiguous between a positive and comparative interpretation, and *ya-* can be added additionally to Class II and III roots, yielding an 'even more' interpretation in comparatives. ("?#" indicates the sentence is dispreferred in the given context.)

- (5) a. sepe siya tɕ<sup>h</sup>o (ya-)mala.  
plum peach SM ya-small  
'Plums are (even) smaller than peaches.'
- b. Peaches are small, and *sepe siya tɕ<sup>h</sup>o ya-mala*.
- c. Peaches are small, and ?#*sepe siya tɕ<sup>h</sup>o mala*.

This study provides an analysis based on Distributed Morphology where adjectives are derived from a category-neutral root merging with the adjectival head *a*, which is c-commanded by a DegP.



It assumes that Deg carries two features [+/- comp] and [+/- eval], where comp stands for comparative, and eval standards for evaluative – a construction is evaluative if it makes reference to a degree that



exceeds a contextually specified standard (Rett, 2015). The head itself carries a feature [+/-F] which is determined by (the semantics of) the root. Roughly, positive relative GA roots are [+F].

Two vocabulary items can be inserted at the terminal node *a* as conditioned below (i.e., insert /ya-/ when *a* carries two or more features):

- (7) a.  $a \Leftrightarrow /ya-/ / \_\_\_\_\_ \{+\alpha, +\beta\}$   
 b.  $a \Leftrightarrow \emptyset / \text{elsewhere}$

The reduplication in Class II roots is accounted for via a readjustment rule:

- (8) reduplicate  $\sqrt{X} / a + \_\_ , X = dz\phi, \dots$

The results are shown as illustrated below:

(9)

	positive [+EVAL]	non-eval comp [+COMP]	eval comp [+COMP, +EVAL]	equative [-EVAL]	degq [-EVAL]
Class I [+F]	ya-bi	ya-bi	ya-bi	bi	bi
Class II & III [-F]	nini	nini	ya-nini	nini	n/a

Not only the GA paradigm in Ersu is thus successfully derived, it also correctly predicts the ambiguities among Ersu degree constructions. The derived form-meaning pairs can further undergo pragmatic competition, rendering desirable results in language use.

In conclusion, this study provides a DM account for Ersu GAs, which exhibit intriguing morphological properties. Unlike standard DM analyses, this analysis still refers to the semantic features (e.g. comp, eval), raising a broader question of formal and semantic alignment. This work opens avenues for further investigation of Ersu and related indigenous languages like Duoxu (Chirkova & Zhengkang, 2016)) and Lizu (Chirkova, 2019).

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## Phonetics and phonology

### *Is there stress in Udihe: prosodic structure of Udihe word*

Elena Perekhvalskaya – INALCO / CNRS (LLACAN)

The traditional understanding of the prosodic structure of Udihe words has centered around the concept of stress, it was asserted that a word typically contains two types of stress – a dynamic stress on the first syllable and a musical stress on the second. This perspective, rooted in experimental phonetic studies conducted by Lev R. Zinder, was echoed in works by linguists such as Evgeniy Shneider, Orest Sunik and Albina Girfanova. Irina Nikolaeva and Maria Tolskaya further articulated stress assignment rules : « the stress falls on the rightmost bimoraic vowel, otherwise the final vowel is stressed. Thus, stress on the final vowel is the default”.

Contrary to this prevailing view, the argument is posited that Udihe lacks stress in the conventional sense. The notion of stress in accent languages involves a systematic opposition between marked and unmarked syllables, serving various functions like culminative (rhythmic division of text), delimitative (indicating word boundaries), and distinctive (lexical unit differentiation). The prosodic characteristics of Udihe words, however, defy alignment with these functions.

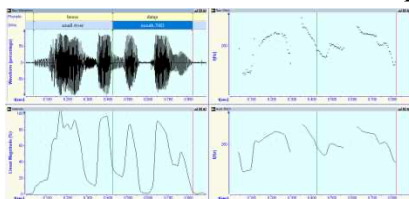
Vera Cincius’s observation adds nuance by asserting that the place of the stress depends on the number of syllables in the word: “Consider a two-syllable base like tada 'arrow'. When a one-syllable suffix is added, the musical stress shifts to the final syllable : tadaži (Instr.). However, in the case of a two-syllable suffix, the musical stress places on the second and final syllable, with no dynamic stress : tada.tigi (Direct.).

It is argued that the shown above prosodic pattern of Udihe is well described by the notion of a rhythmic foot, a prosodic unit measured in morae. Unlike traditional notion of stress, which encompass either intensity or pitch, the rhythmic foot in Udihe seems to prioritize moraic length: a foot may contain two or three morae. A foot cannot consist of one mora or of more than three morae; this explains the Cincius’s observation.

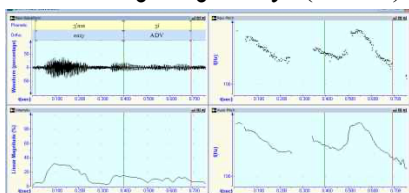
The isomorphism of foot length is a key feature of the prosodic system. Tri-moraic feet are pronounced faster than bi-moraic ones, contributing to the impression of variable speech tempo.

Exemples:

The sequence b’easa datani ‘source of the river’ is pronounced as [beasa dataŋ]: the last syllable is shortened and both feet become equal by the length.



The words ʒ’asaži ‘easy’ (adverb): one syllable is lenthened and becomes bi-moraic.



The situation of the endangerment of Udihe has repercussions for its prosodic structure, leading to a shift towards a stress pattern reminiscent of the dynamic stress of the Russian language.

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*Challenging phonological boundaries: a panchronic approach to phonation types in Malieng, a Vietic language of Vietnam*

Albert Badosa Roldós – Université Sorbonne Nouvelle / LACITO (CNRS)

While 20<sup>th</sup> century saw key advances in the understanding of tone and tonogenesis processes in Asian languages (Maspero 1912, Haudricourt 1954, Ferlus 1998), the understanding of phonation type features, independent to tone or entangled with it, still poses some problems when describing the phonological systems of Asian languages.

The past century also saw the development of ideas aiming at integrating cross-linguistic language change models and descriptions into a general model considering both synchronic and diachronic changes. Panchronic phonology is one of a such (Haudricourt 1940; Jacques 2011; Blevins 2020).

Phonological boundaries have already challenged the attempts on describing synchronically observable transitional phases within a linguistic change scenario. Such descriptions cannot be understood without a diachronic perspective. Hence the need for panchronic models to account for more suitable descriptions of not only language change but other linguistic phenomena, like the description of the tonal system of Tamang, a Himalayan Tibeto-Burman language, argues for (Mazaudon and Michaud 2008).

In the light of the phonological advances of the present century, there are still some missing links in historical phonology. When looking into transphonologisation issues –that is, the transformation of a phonemic feature into another one in order to keep the former distinction– one expects a straightforward phonemic-feature-to-phonemic-feature correlation. However, this is not always the case as there are still many irregular correspondences yet to be explained. Within the Vietic family, such irregularities are: the loss of presyllabic material within a monosyllabicisation process, irregular Vietic tonal correspondences (Ferlus 1999) or phonation type distinctions in Malieng, the present paper's topic of discussion.

Thus this presentation aims to providing a panchronic phonological description of phonation type in Malieng within the (Southern) Vietic branch context, and in relation to the tonal system of this Vietic language. Malieng speakers, like the Maleng Kri (a Vietic language close to Malieng) (Enfield and Diffloth 2009) have a folk linguistics terminology for the two-way phonation type distinction. However, the production and perception of phonation type distinctions point to many other phonetic and phonemic features involved. In this presentation, I argue that Malieng phonation type distinction is currently being transphonologised into two vocalic systems mainly via diphthongisation. Such parallel vocalic systems are characteristic of Southeast Asia. Hence a panchronic description is defended as the most suitable approach, both because of the need of considering a joint synchronic and diachronic description and also because of the need of considering similar language changes in other languages within the same linguistic area and beyond.

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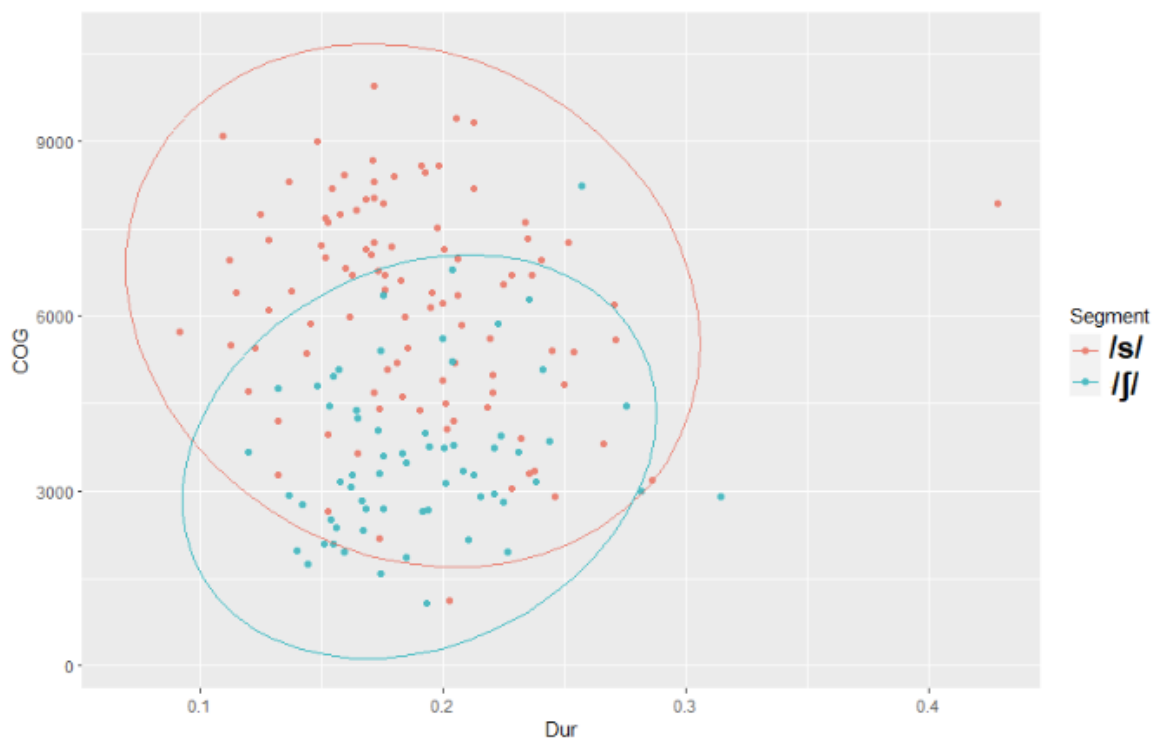
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*Sibilant phoneme boundaries in Yuexi Ersu*  
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This paper investigates the boundaries between sibilant phonemes of Yuexi Ersu, a critically-endangered Tibeto-Burman language in southern Sichuan, China. Previous studies report that alveolar sibilants /ts, tsh, s, dz, z/ are in free variation with retroflexes /tʂ, tʂh, ʂ, dzʂ, zʂ/ for Yuexi Ersu (Zhang 2013:70), while these two place distinctions are reported to be phonemic in Ganluo Ersu (Wang et al. 2019). Crucially, Zhang 2013 only cites evidence from syllables with /u/ and /o/ codas as evidence for free variation in sibilants.

This paper uses novel data from fieldwork in Yuexi, Sichuan in 2022 to demonstrate that the place distinctions in sibilants reported for Ganluo Ersu are in fact maintained in Yuexi Ersu ( $p < .001$ ). Four L1-Ersu speakers translated a vocabulary list of 115 items from Sichuanese Mandarin into Yuexi Ersu with three repetitions each, resulting in 650 sibilant tokens. These tokens were measured in Praat to extract Duration, Center of Gravity, and Skewness (Kendall & Fridland 2020), and coded for tone, vowel coda, position, speaker, and repetition. This paper employs spectral Center of Gravity (COG) as a proxy for sibilant place in absence of articulatory measurements (Johnson 2003:124; Egurtzegi & Carignan 2020; Yung-hsiang & Shih 2015).

Figure 1: Yuexi Ersu tokens of /s/ and /ʃ/, categorized by lexical item as reported by Wang et al. 2019 for Ganluo Ersu, plotted by duration and COG.



One significant effect on sibilants in Yuexi Ersu is that lexical low tone codas lower COG by 890Hz ( $p < .01$ ), which is a surprising finding given prior analyses of Mandarin sibilants found tone to have no effect on COG (Hauser 2023; Chiu et al. 2019), though relationships between F<sub>0</sub> and sibilant COG have been noted before (Niebuhr 2012). Additionally, word-medial position lowers COG by 540Hz, in line with previous research (Welby & Niebuhr 2019).

Although there is substantial overlap between categories (Figure 1), a linear regression model in R demonstrates that COG is significantly different for the sibilant place distinctions described as /s/~ʃ/ by Wang et al. 2019 and as /s~ʃ/ by Zhang 2013. On average, the COG of alveolar sibilant /s/ is 1500Hz higher than post-alveolar sibilant /ʃ~ʂ/ ( $p < .001$ ) for speakers of Yuexi Ersu. Furthermore, the back vowel codas significantly lower a sibilant's Center of Gravity (COG): /u/ lowers the COG by around 840Hz ( $p < .001$ ); /o/ by around 1900Hz ( $p < 0.001$ ); no significant difference is found for vowels /i e a i/. Thus, an /s/ token followed by an /o/ coda results in a COG comparable to the post-alveolar /ʃ~ʂ/ phoneme with a /i/ coda. These interactions lead us to revise Zhang 2013's analysis of free variation in sibilant place for Yuexi Ersu to positing two contrastive sibilant places, and a predictable backing effect from back vowel codas. This articulatory relationship between sibilant place and vowel backness is an instance of 'coronal retraction' (Flemming 2003), and offers an explanatory model to be tested with planned ultrasound research in 2024.

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### Miscellaneous

#### *Documentation of disappearance of the endangered Fuyu Kirghiz language in north-eastern China*

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Fuyu Kirghiz is a Turkic variety once spoken by nearly 800 people in Fuyu county, Heilongjiang province, northeast China (Tenishev 1966, Hu and Imart 1987, Karataev 2019). It had nearly 50 passive speakers and more than 20 semi-native speakers in 1986 when I did fieldwork on it (Cheng et al. 1997). In 2005, when we submitted a documentation of the language to the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, it had only 8 semi-native speakers. Now the language has lost its very last semi-native speakers and only retains a certain number of passive users. In this paper I will try to provide a rather detailed information about its discovery, first description, further research, and final disappearance. At the end I will suggest my view of the "documentation" of linguistic material of this language, which might be useful for the documentation of the Fuyu Kirghiz language and similar language varieties.

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*Puzzling boundaries in South Siberia: the case of Khakas tree names*

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Khakas is a rather archaic Turkic language spoken in South Siberia especially from the lexical point of view. It displays an intriguing mosaic of loanwords disclosing highly interesting past language contact situations.

Khakas has a large number of Mongolic loanwords (Rassadin 1980: 34-43) and had strong connection with several extinct Yeniseian languages, such as Kott, Arin, Pumpokol and the only surviving Ket language. There is a clear layer of Khakas loanwords in the Yeniseian languages, and it appears that most of Mongolic words in Yeniseian were borrowed through Khakas and its dialects (Khabtagaeva 2019).

From an etymological point of view, the Khakas language contains many words of unknown origin. The lecture presents some new etymological remarks on tree names. The terms show a heterogeneous picture: most of them are of common Turkic origin e.g. xazīŋ 'birch', sōt 'willow', tirek 'poplar', etc.) reflecting archaic phonetic features. A separate group includes borrowings from Mongolic e.g. čičirġan 'sea buckthorn', irġay 'acacia', xaraġay 'pine', etc.) and Russian (e.g. irkīt 'willow tree', tūp 'oak', etc.). A separate group consists of previously undiscussed words of Yeniseian origin (e.g. puyġan 'fir', paylaŋ 'cedar, Siberian pine', saŋis ~ saŋas 'viburnum', etc.).

Etymological analysis showed that almost all the names of evergreen trees, along with the Turkic ones, are of Yeniseian origin. It is interesting that the names of fruit-bearing bushes have either Turkic or Mongolic etymology. This fact suggests earlier Khakas-Yeniseian language contacts than, for example, with the Mongolic people. Through the etymology of tree names, not only linguistic, but also geographical and territorial contacts of the ancestors of the Khakas with other peoples are presented. The paper makes an attempt to show the uniqueness of the Khakas language among other Turkic languages through the presentation of plant names.

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*The impact of multilayered boundaries in Altay Kazakh*

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Altay Kazakhs settled in the western territories of present-day Mongolia from the Xinjiang area of China in the middle of the 19th century. Although the term Altay Kazakhs normally refers to groups of Kazakhs living both in Mongolia and China, in this paper it is used only for groups living in Mongolia. Altay Kazakhs follow the traditional lifestyle based on pastoral nomadism, herding sheep, camel, goat, horse, cattle. Their language is a special variety of Kazakh, and it thus belongs to the Kipchak subgroup of the Turkic languages spoken in Central Asia.

In nowadays Mongolia, Altay Kazakh is spoken mainly in western Mongolia's provinces of Bayan-Olgii and Khovd, where ethnic Kazakh represent the majority of the population. However, smaller Altay Kazakh-speaking communities are scattered across the central Mongolian provinces as well as the areas of Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet, Darkhan, Nalaikh district, and Shariin Gol.

For a long time, Altay Kazakhs lived in a condition of self-imposed isolation in the western provinces of the country, due to existing political regime and various infrastructural issues. Physical boundaries helped preserving the uniqueness of Altay Kazakh by limiting the contact with other languages. The situation began to change in the 1990s with the opening of Mongolia to the outside world, the advent of modern communication technologies, and the gradual improvement of road and air transportation.

The Altay Kazakh language is currently endangered due to bilingualism, language shift, internal migration, and lack of sufficient resources for language preservation. Although the level of endangerment is higher in small communities, the situation is serious even in the western provinces.

The physical boundaries are still protecting the language only in the remote and small villages in the in Bayan-Olgii province, but everywhere else, the language spoken by Altay Kazakhs is evolving into a mix of Altay Kazakh and Khalkha Mongolian.

However, while physical boundaries are of minor importance today, other types of boundaries such as social, political, and technological ones are affecting the evolution of language.

This presentation aims to examine the current situation of Altay Kazakh spoken in Mongolia and the impact of these multi-layered boundaries through the analysis of different patterns of code-switching.

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