



# Reconstructing a pre-Soviet contact with Russian: The case of Barhahan Evenki

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# Introduction

→ Language contact with Russian observed in the territory of Siberia in the Soviet and post-Soviet time is quite well-studied

- on Russian-Evenki contact, see, e.g., Grenoble (2000, 2010), Rudnitskaya (2019) among many others

→ **Earlier contacts still need investigation**

→ In this paper

- An attempt **to reconstruct the contact situation attested in the early XX century** among speakers of one Evenki dialect, based on **archival data**

→ **Barhahan Evenki**: not yet studied/identified variety

- A collection of texts by Konstantin Rychkov (1910s)
- Contains a lot of information on contact with neighbors, including the Selkups (“Ostyaks”), Siberian Tatars, and especially Russians

I will consider this **extralinguistic information and map it to the linguistic evidence of language contact** coming from the same texts

**Barhahan Evenki appears to have been highly influenced by Russian already in the 1910s, i.e. before the Soviet “russification”, affecting all the indigenous peoples of Siberia**

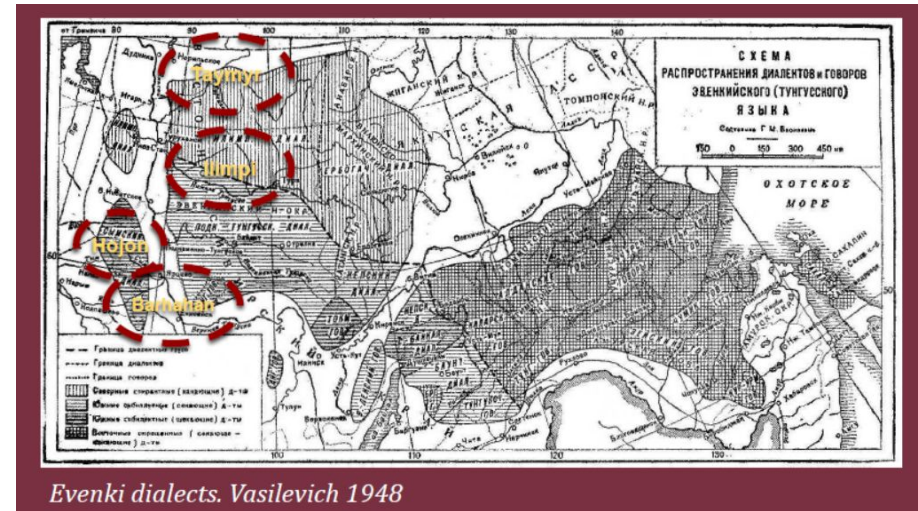
# Introduction: Rychkov's archive of Evenki texts

→ Manuscript texts in several Evenki dialects, 1341 pages (Arkhipov & Däbritz 2021: 48-50)

- collected in the 1905–1913 in 4 different places in Turukhanskiy Krai (Western Siberia)
- analyzed within the INEL project, University of Hamburg; PI: Prof. Dr. Beáta Wagner-Nagy: <http://inel.corpora.uni-hamburg.de>

→ Here in focus: texts in **Barhahan Evenki**

- the name 'Barhahan' is mentioned nowhere except for Rychkov's materials
- Southern group of dialects (close to Sym)
- was spoken in the territory from Yeniseysk to Krasnoyarsk along both banks of the Yenisei river (inhabited by Russians since the 17 cent.)
- text collection: mostly life-stories and personal narratives



# Introduction: Barhahan collection

The first impression: **Unexpected extreme “Russification”**

→ Feature 1 (extralinguistic)

- many texts describe intense interaction with the Russians

→ Feature 2 (linguistic)

- many Russian loanwords, including those in core vocabulary; multi-word code-switches; probable Russian influence in morphosyntax

Barhahan collection will be compared to

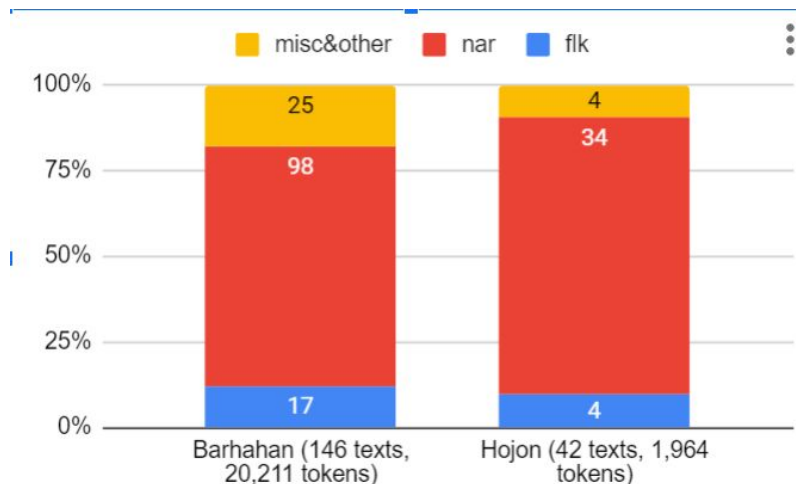
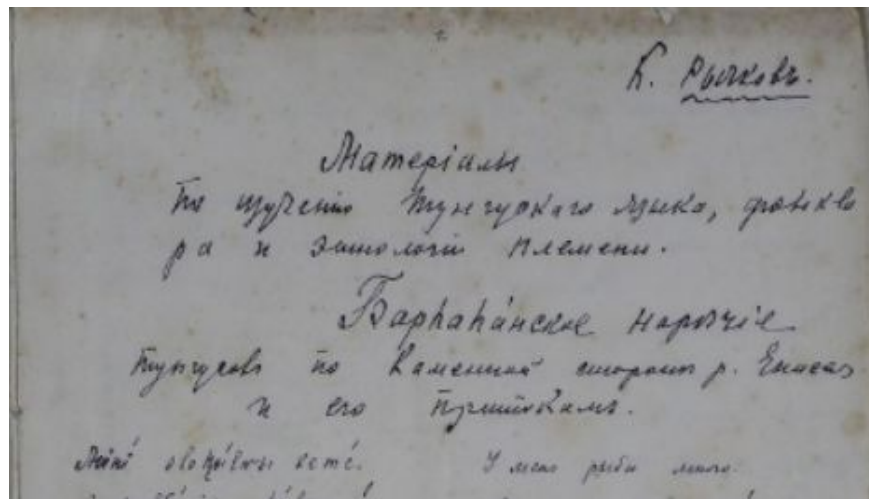
- **Rychkov’s Hojon collection** (the same period, the closest one in terms of area and dialect) – in detail
- other Rychkov’s collections
- modern Evenki texts (1990s-2010s)
  - INEL-corpus (Hamburg) <https://inel.corpora.uni-hamburg.de/EvenkiCorpus/> (Däbritz & Gusev 2021)
  - IL-corpus (Moscow) <https://gisly.net/corpus/> (Kazakevich et al.)

# Introduction: Data

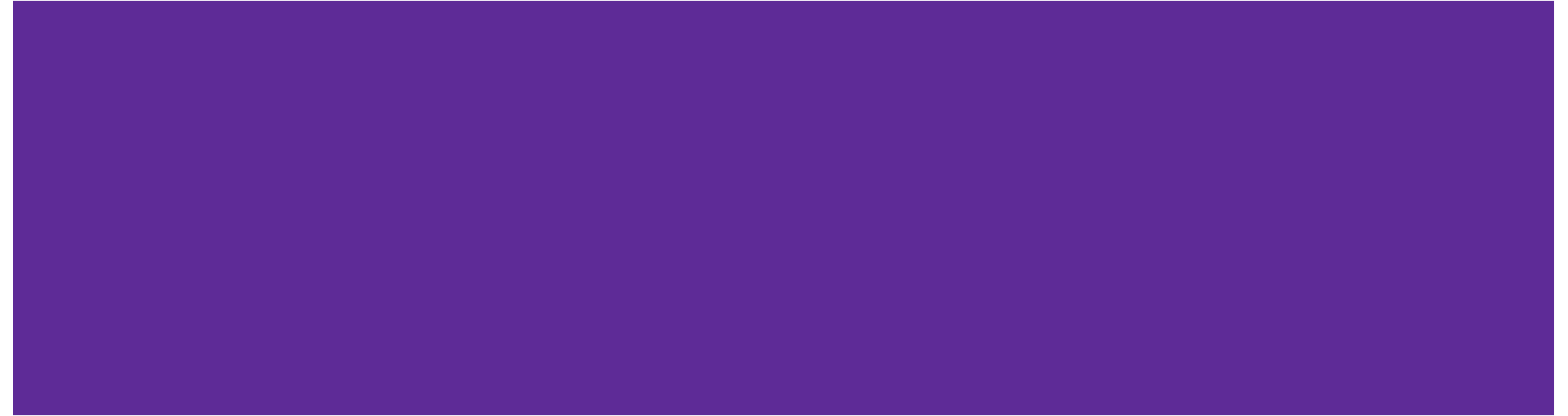
| Barhahan collection  |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| manuscr. pages (all) | 357    |
| tokens (glossed)     | 20,211 |
| sentences            | 4,330  |
| types                | 7,632  |

## Barhahan vs. Hojon

- comparable in terms of genre distribution
- NB Hojon collection (its glossed part) – very small



# **Barhahan Evenki speakers in contact with Russians**



# Rychkov's observations (1917; 1922)

- Southern Evenki groups are in more intense contact with Russians than Northern ones
- Russian influence is negative...

Въ общемъ тунгусы пошли уже по пути къ вымиранію отъ эпидемій и спиванія водкой со стороны всѣхъ русскихъ, проникающихъ въ ихъ стойбища. Самыя лучшія ихъ качества также измѣ-

“In general, the Tungus are on their way to extinction from epidemics and vodka-drinking caused by all those Russians who invade their settlements...”

# Evidence from texts

- Russians and their interaction with Evenki people is mentioned almost in every text
- This interaction is
  - **daily-based** (NB the Barhahan Evenkis spend much time in the town and in large villages; the Russians spend much time with the Barhahan Evenkis)
  - mosly (although not always!) **symmetric**
- For instance
  - a mixed group of Evenki and Russian women gather berries
  - a mixed group of Evenki and Russian men go hunting
  - Russians and Evenkis have a meal (drink tea) together
  - Russians and Evenkis drink vodka together
  - Russians and Evenkis play cards together
  - a Russian goes to visit an Evenki
  - an Evenki goes to visit a Russian
  - ...



## An example. Evidence for bilingualism

{Two women are alone in the chum, waiting for their husbands. They hear footsteps and conversation.} “She (one woman) says: “The Russians killed our husbands and are coming to kill us! I said: “Let's listen in secret! **Why don't they speak Evenki? They speak Russian!**” We go, we are standing together. It's dark, we can't see anything. We recognize the voices (of our husbands). **So they fooled around, they pretended to be Russians, they don't speak their language - they pretended to be Russians.**”

да ачинси да до аменаре  
хун - Теу да  
кеп - Да хун -  
ирина ва  
ванари  
гобраинаим!  
хенкемгаре еве-  
хенкемгаре?  
илинарим су  
импракункаун -  
ергаре. Махрим  
Ми и кебравака  
вградимгаре - емин манитуйои  
хенкемгаре - вградимгаре. Не -  
ногь пришли кудам муньл.  
Ми да аминрим. разворз.  
Да говорит: муньл маминь  
урли русак'е да несл уби  
хамь муньл!  
Говор: мойсом похрумасул!  
Черо не говорит по муньлери -  
по руски говорит.  
Идем - смоним ми кудам.  
Ин емно на черо не кудам. Чз -  
наем волса. Махь сдидам  
руски ми прикунимеб, не  
навоелу разворз вимит -  
руски ми прикунимеб. Со

# Barhahan vs. Hojon

|                      | Barhahan | Hojon |
|----------------------|----------|-------|
| mentions of Russians | 52       | 35    |
| per page             | 0,15     | 0,13  |
| N of pages           | 357      | 276   |

→ Comparable N of mentions in Barhahan and Hojon

→ However, they are very different

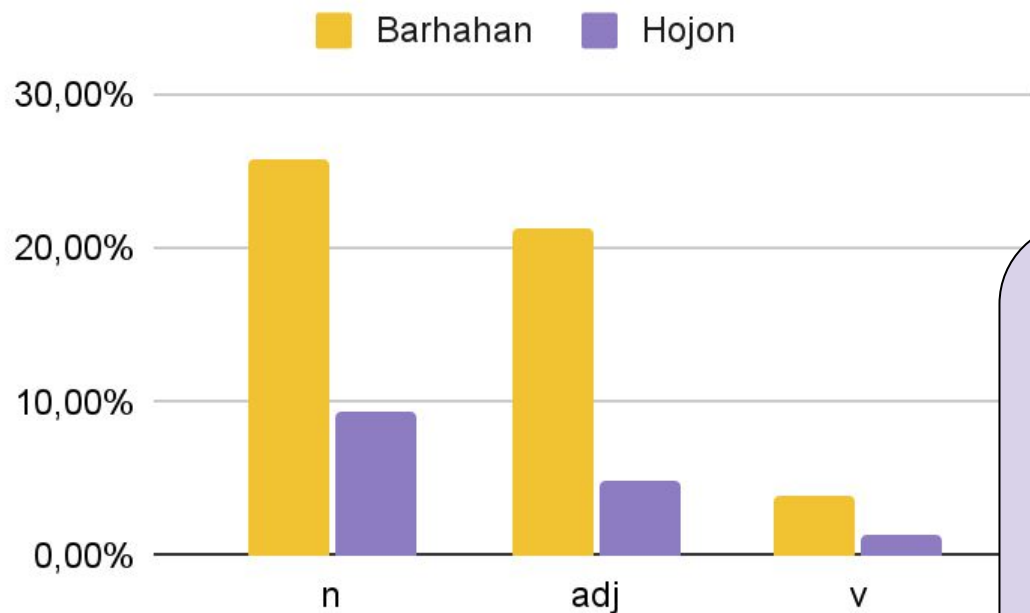
In contrast to Barhahan, in Hojon

- short and of same types: general suggestions about Russians (+ comparison); trade with Russians, overnight stay at a Russian's place, Russians heal Evenkis
- mostly asymmetric interaction
- sporadic contacts

# Russian influence in Lexicon



# 1. General distribution: Barhahan > Hojon



Type frequency

- % of Russian lexemes out of all lexemes of this PoS
- Proper names excluded

**Noun > Adj > Verb**

- in both collections

**% of Russian loans is higher in Barhahan**

- for all PoS

\* here and below: statistically significant, 2-tailed Fisher's exact test

## 2. Russian Proper names

Russian toponyms, names and nicknames of people, names of seasons/holidays, ...

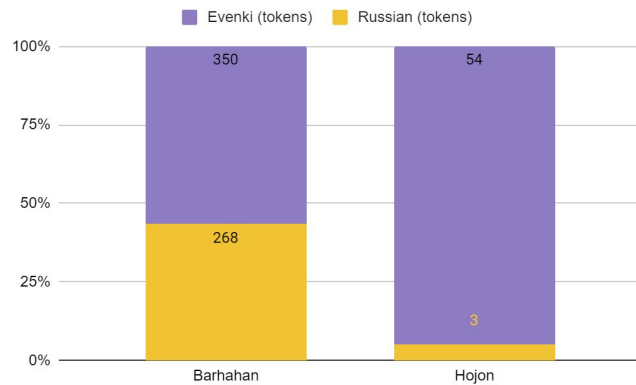
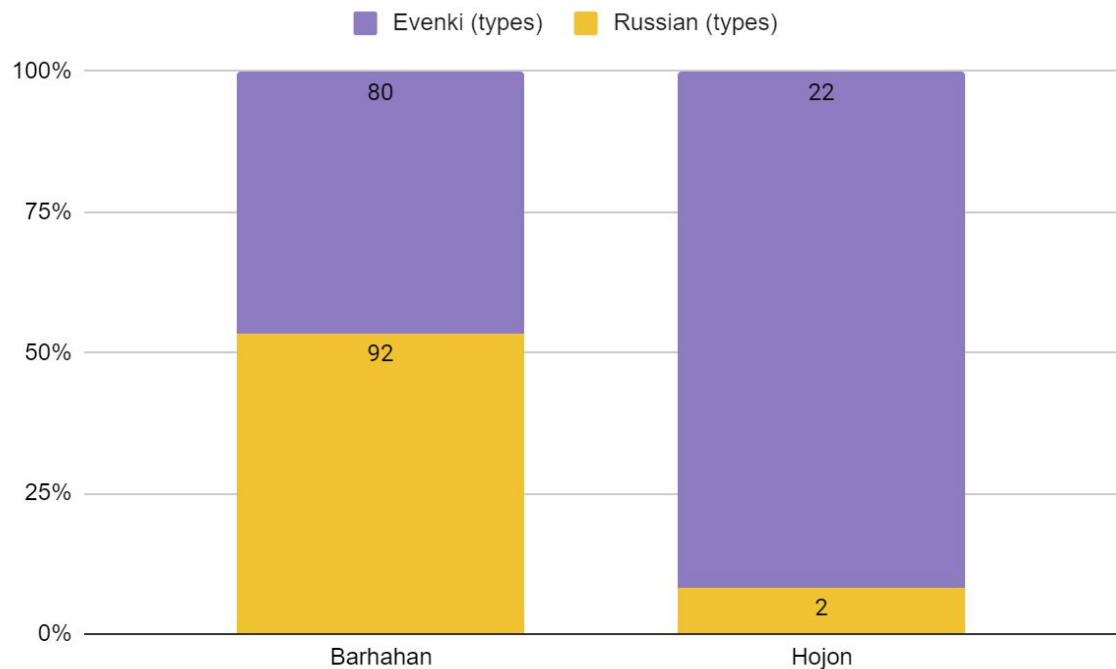
Russian names of people

- names of Russians
- names of Evenki people: sometimes, a parallel use of a Russian name and an Evenki one

(1) *da*      **Arsin-Sapkoj**-wa-n      *ga-ča-p*  
and.R      PN-ACC-3SG      take-PST-1PL  
'...And we took **Arshin-S-Shapkoj** with us.' [nickname of the Russian origin: lit. arshin (measure) with a cap; a Selkup, Russian name : Ivan]

(2) **Nikolaj** **Pompoti**-ni      *ənin busša-l-ə-n*  
PN      PN-ATTR      wife be.ill-INCH-AOR-3SG  
'The wife of **Nikolaj Pompoti** fell ill.' [Nikolaj – Rus, Pompoti – Evenki]

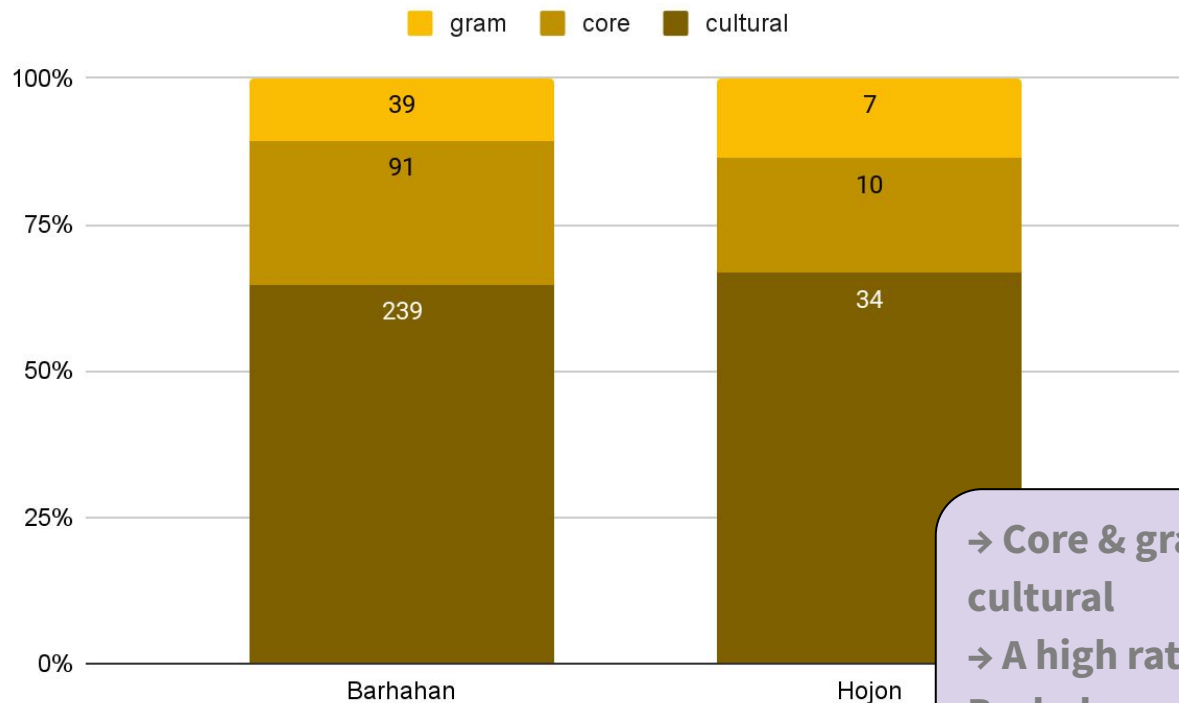
# Russian Proper names (people): Barhahan > Hojon



→ Russian names are much more frequent in Barhahan than in Hojon

### 3. Cultural vs. core vs. grammatical: Barhahan=Hojon

→ Corpus annotation of loanwords (modified)



- **cult:** *čalkow* ‘rouble’; *kresti* ‘baptize’;
- **core:** *žarko* ‘hot’, *hwošt* ‘tail’; *kipi* ‘boil’
- **gram:** *nada* ‘necessary’; *takoj* ‘such’; *kak* ‘how’

→ Core & gram: more informative than cultural

→ A high rate of core & gram both in Barhahan and Hojon

# Codeswitching





# Codeswitching

- Multiword Russian fragments & Russian inflected forms
- In modern audio-recordings
  - very widespread
- In other Rychkov's manuscripts
  - not attested
- In Rychkov's Barhahan collection
  - attested, although rare (14 occurrences)
  - **only in the contexts especially prone to code-switching**
  - NB probably, not all instances of codeswitching are consistently reflected in Rychkov's notes

# Codeswitching: Types and Examples

- frozen adverbials and discourse markers

*jej boɣu!* ‘by God!’; *čawo?* ‘what?’; *nu dak* ‘well’; *poslednij raz* ‘last time’

- inflected Russian verb as heads of Evenki clauses

*moɣu* ‘can.PRS.1SG’, *moyut* ‘can.PRS.3PL’ (cf. below on modals); *us’kajut* ‘call.animals.PRS.3PL’; *pominaj* ‘commemorate.IMP’

(1) Əwənkil us’kajut: “Tpruk! Tpruk! Təɣəkəl!”

‘The Evenkis call (dogs): “Tpruk! Tpruk! Sit down!”’

# Codeswitching: Types and Examples

→ The range of contexts cross-linguistically prone to code-switching

- Russian clauses in Reported Speech

(1) *Tar biržowaj ilitčaran — gunən: “Dawaj rub’!”*

‘This trader [a Russian] is standing there — he says: "Give me a ruble!"’

(2) *Čajtilmi — gund’an: “Jesli barini welit, da winoja gad’am!”*

When we [a mixed group of Russians and Evenkis] started to drink tea, he [an Evenki] said: "If the lady [an Evenki, narrator] commands it, then I'll take wine!"

- Russian clauses in the narrator’s side notes

(3) *Nuyan gund’arən: “Jej boy, d’umyət, naynira tali pisaliynərə!” Jəs’o božits’a!?*

She says: "By God, they simply put it down and shoot it!" And she lets herself swear!?

# Russian influence in Grammar: Material borrowing

1. Russian prepositions
2. Russian conjunctions
3. Russian modals

# Russian functional words: Barhahan vs. other texts

→ Barhahan is more similar to modern texts than to other early collections  
(in frequency, but not in structural properties – ?)

\* see additional slides for more detail

|                                      | Barhahan |   | Hojon    | other Rychkov's collections | Modern texts (IL & INEL corpora)   |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>prep</b>                          | sporadic | <i>na</i> 'on', <i>čerez</i> 'through'  | NA       | NA                          | sporadic: different prep's         |
| <b>coord <i>da</i> 'and', 'but'</b>  | frequent | <i>bid'to~budto</i> 'as if', <i>poka</i> 'until', <i>štobi</i> 'in order to', <i>kodə, əkakta</i> | frequent | frequent                    | rare ( <i>da</i> > <i>i</i> 'and') |
| <b>subord conj</b>                   | sporadic | (?) 'when', <i>ješli</i> 'if'   | NA       | NA                          | sporadic                           |
| <b>modal <i>nada</i> 'necessary'</b> | frequent | <i>nadobi</i> 'necessary.SUBJ', <i>puskaj~puš'aj</i> 'let', <i>dolžen</i>                         | NA       | attested                    | frequent                           |
| <b>other modal predicates</b>        | sporadic | 'must.3SG', <i>moyu</i> 'can.1SG', <i>moyut</i> 'can.3PL'   | NA       | NA                          | sporadic                           |

# Russian influence in Grammar: Pattern replication (?)

1. Converbs vs. finite forms
2. Postpositions: prepositive use
3. 2SG: Impersonal use
4. 'How' as a temporal subordinator

# 1. Converbs vs. finite forms

Clause-linkage in Russian

- mostly finite (+CONJ)

Clause-linkage in Evenki and other Tungusic

- many dedicated non-finite forms (converbs); very few conjunctions

# Converbs vs. finite forms

→ Expected outcomes of Russian influence

< converbs

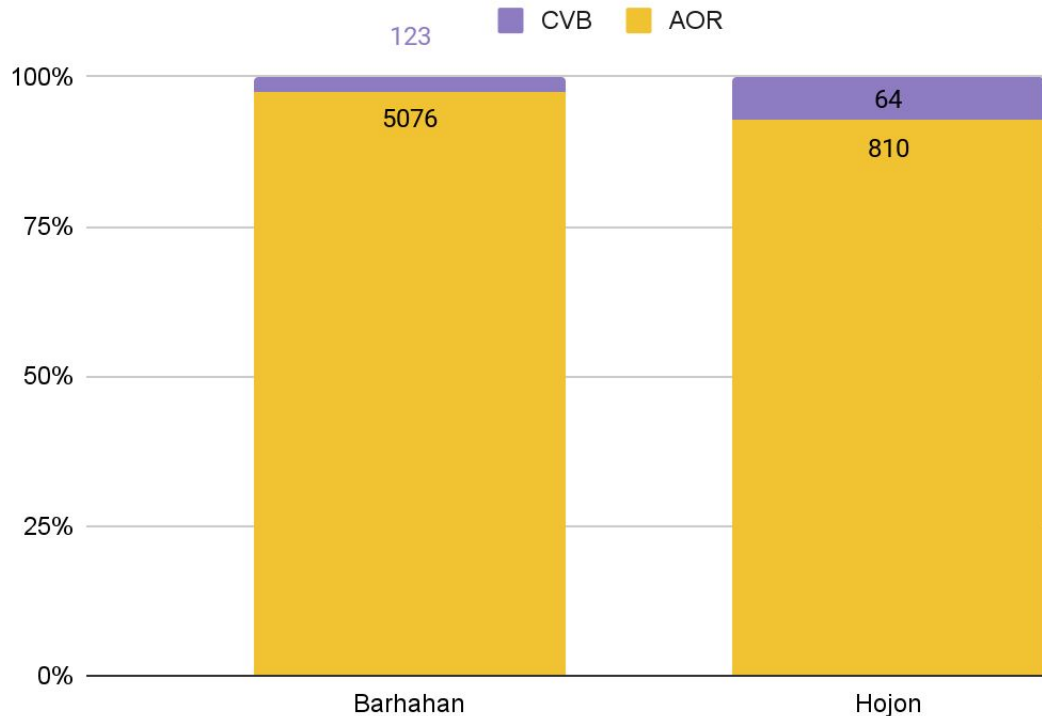
- (1) *Čajti-l-mi,* *gun-d'a-n*  
drink.tea.R-INCH-**CVB** say-IPFV.AOR-3SG  
'When we started drinking tea, he said...'

> finite forms

- (2) *Čajti-ra-n,* *d'aw-rə-n,* *təyət-ča-rə-n,* *gun-ə-n*  
drink.tea.R-**AOR**-3SG eat-**AOR**-3SG sit-IPFV-**AOR**-3SG say-AOR-3SG  
'He drank some tea, he ate, he sat for a while and he said...'



# Finite forms: Barhahan > Hojon



Converbs compared to AOR (the main finite form)

- CVB that do not compete with AOR (PURP etc.): excluded

\* see additional slides for a distribution of different converbs

→ A very low frequency of converbs in Barhahan

- significantly lower than in Hojon
- probably, reflects Russian influence on Barhahan

## 2. Postpositions: Prepositive use

\* see additional slides for more examples

→ Russian: prepositions

→ Evenki: postpositions; postpositive locational nouns

→ POSTP>PREP – Russian influence?

- *dagi(n)*: NOM + near-POSS

→ Prepositive use of postpositions might be supported by the Russian pattern

→ However, not enough data to prove it

(1) *Pompo-wa-n*      ***toyo dagi-n***      *na-d'a-rə*      **POSTPOSITIVE** (11)

head-ACC-3SG      **fire near-3SG**      put-IPFV-AOR.3SG

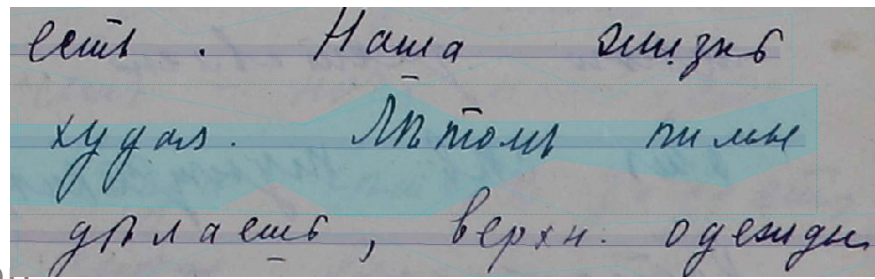
‘They put its (bear’s) head **close to the fire**...’

(2) *Dolboltono*      ***dagi-n toyo***      *təyət-č'a-rə-n*      *hurkaka-r* **PREPOSITIVE** (2)

at.night      **near-3SGfire**      sit-IPFV-AOR-3SG      boy-PL

‘In the evening, the boys sat **around the fire**...’

### 3. 2SG: Impersonal use



→ A secondary **impersonal** use of 2SG in Russian

- ‘anyone’, ‘me or anyone in my place’ (cf. Russian Grammar 1980(1): §1522)

→ Similar uses in the Barhahan Evenki collection

- (1) *D’uya-rak-i-n*                      *unta-l-a-n*                      *o-d’a-ni,*                      *hogita-jə*  
summer-CVB.COND-EP-3SG shoe-PL-ACC.INDEF-3SG      make-IPFV.AOR-**2SG**      coat-ACC.INDEF  
‘In summer, **one** makes shoes and outerwear.’ (lit. you make)
- (2) *Əmə-d’a-ni,*                      *d’u-ja-wi*                      *o-d’a-m*  
come-IPFV.AOR-**2SG**      yurt-ACC.INDEF-REFL.SG      make-IPFV.AOR-**1SG**  
‘I come and make a yurt’ (lit. you come and I make) – NB 2SG & 1SG in one sentence
- (3) *Tiyə-du*                      *na-d’a-ni,*                      *ta-li*                      *okun’mi-l*                      *o-yna-ra*  
cup-DAT/LOC      put-IPFV.AOR-**2SG**                      that-PROL      milk-PL                      make-HAB-AOR.**3PL**  
‘**One** puts pine nuts in a cup, then one makes milk (of them)’ – NB 2SG & 3PL in one sentence

# 2SG: Impersonal use

→ Barhahan collection

- **frequent:** 39% (91 out of 233 uses of 2SG)

→ Hojon collection

- not attested (but only 16 uses of 2SG)

→ Other Evenki varieties

- ??? needs further investigation

→ Impersonal use of 2SG in Barhahan might be copied from Russian (but might be an inherent feature of Barhahan Evenki)

# . 'How' as a temporal subordinator

→ The Russian *kak* 'how'

- can be used as a temporal subordinator ('when')

→ The Evenki *on(i)* 'how'

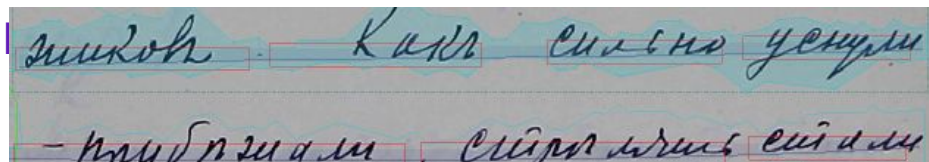
- has similar temporal uses in the Barhahan collection

(1) **On** šo-t' a-šn-ə,

**how** very-ADVZ sleep-INCEP-AOR.3PL

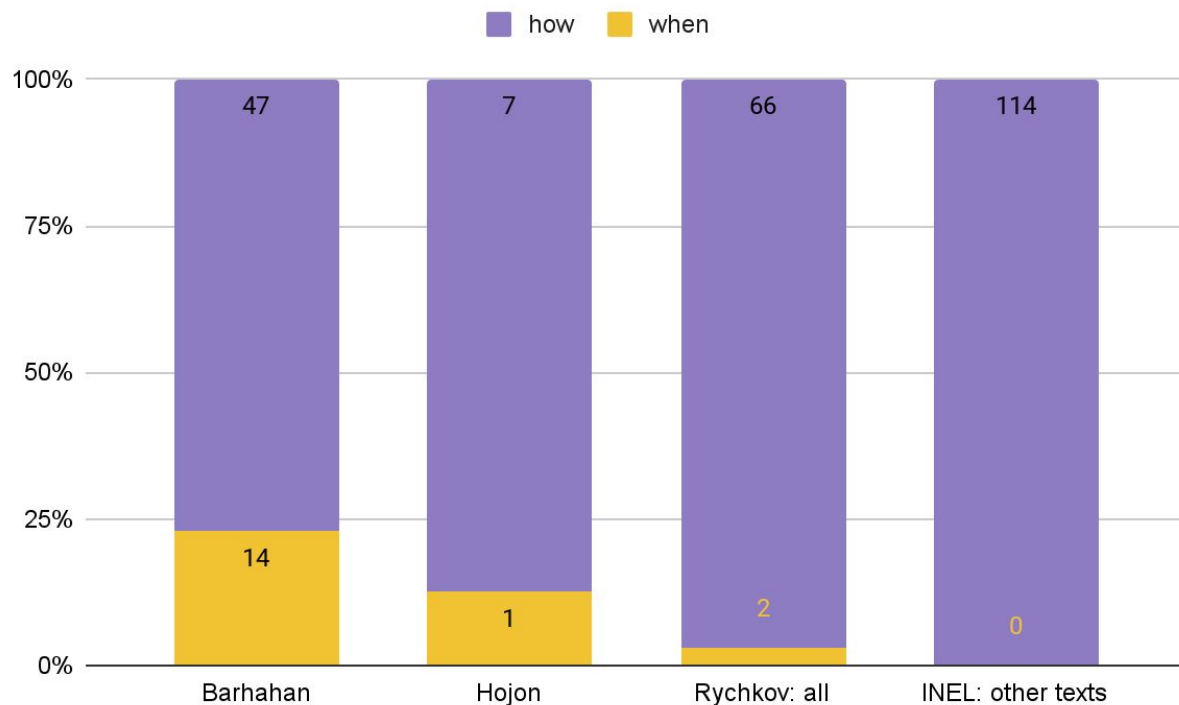
tukša-malča-ra, gana-či-l-ə

run-MOM-AOR.3PL shoot-IPFV-INCH-AOR.3PL



'**When** (lit. how) the men fell into a deep sleep, they came running and started shooting.'

# 'How-When' polysemy: A Barhahan feature (?)



'when'-uses of *on(i)*:

- frequent in Barhahan
- also rare instances in other Rychkov's collections
- no occurrences in other INEL texts

# Results



# Results

- Barhahan Evenki: Evidence of early Russian influence in lexicon and grammar
  - more extensive than in other texts of the same period
  - comparable to that attested in modern texts
- Agrees with what we can infer from the mentions of Russian-Evenki contact in the Barhahan text collection

|                       |                    | Barhahan   | Hojon      | other Rychkov's collections | Modern texts (IL & INEL corpora) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--|------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>lexicon</b>        | cultural           | frequent   | infrequent |                             |                                  |
|                       | proper names       | frequent   | infrequent |                             |                                  |
|                       | cultural~core~gram | no difference  |            |                             |                                  |
| <b>code-switching</b> |                    | attested   | NA         | NA                          | frequent                         |
| <b>grammar</b>        | material           | frequent   | infrequent | infrequent                  | frequent                         |
|                       | pattern (?)        | finite strategy, 2SG impersonal, how=when, prepositive postp | NA         |                             |                                  |



# Discussion

**Russian influence in lexicon** matches with extralinguistic information on contact extracted from the same text collection

- a trivial result (especially for cultural vocabulary): says more on this particular text collection than on the language itself?
- these texts describe Russian realities ~ many Russian loanwords
- culture ~ core loanwords: needs more precise annotation?

**Russian influence in grammar** matches with extralinguistic information on contact extracted from the same text collection

- a more reliable result
- on the other hand, contact features in grammar are harder to prove than those in lexicon

Extralinguistic information on language contact extracted from texts

- how to formalize and consistently compare to the linguistic information?

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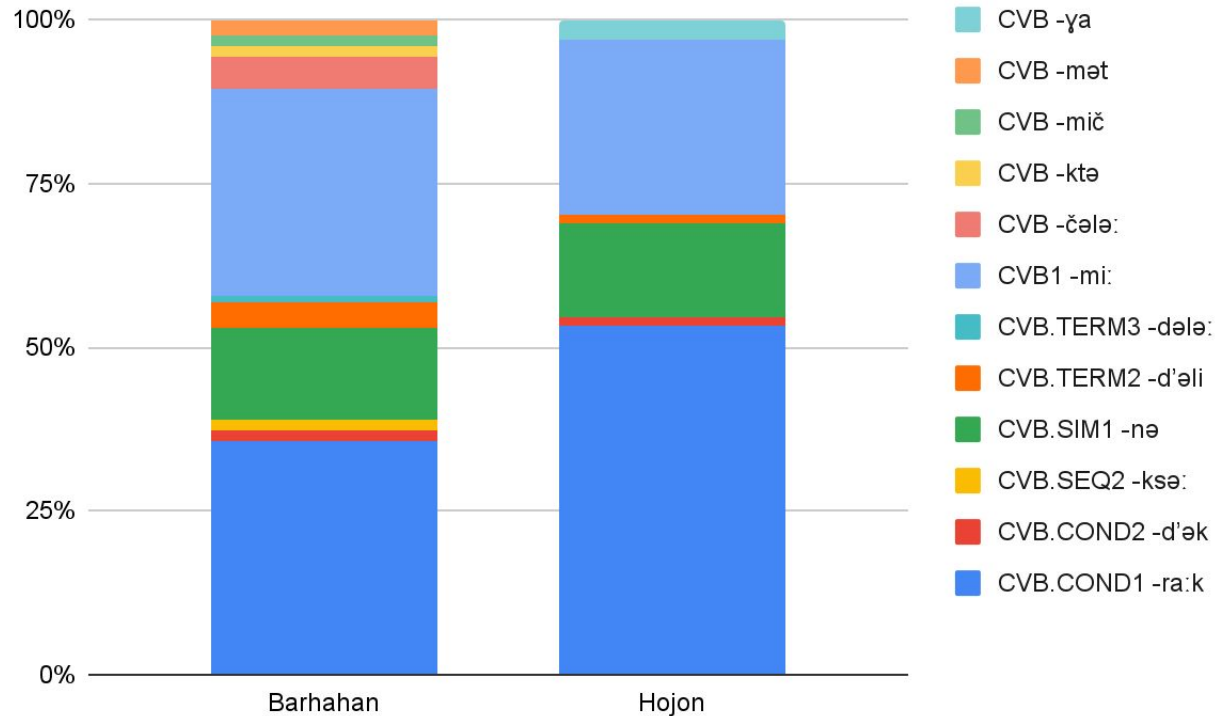
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**Additional slides**



# Additional. Converbs vs. Finite forms: Frequency distribution across different converbs



# Additional. Russian influence in Grammar: Material borrowing

1. Russian prepositions
2. Russian conjunctions
3. Russian modals

# 1. Russian prepositions

→ Russian *na* ‘on’ (3 uses) and *čerez* ‘over’ (3 uses)

**Pattern 1:** RusPREP + RusStem-SPAT.CASE (doubling)

- (1) **Na** **polka-du** tap-ča-w kaja-wə  
**on.R** **shelf.R-DAT/LOC** put-PST-1SG pan-ACC  
‘I put the pan **on a shelf**’

**Pattern 2:** RusPREP + EvenkiStem-SPAT.CASE (doubling)

- (2) “**Čərəs** gula-**li**” gund’an luča  
**over.R** hut-**PROL** say-IPFV.AOR-3SG Russian  
‘{The fire is} a hut down (from me)” – says the Russian.’ (NB secondary use attested in RUS)

**Pattern 3:** RusPREP copies the valency pattern of Evenki POSTP [ACC + bargimnak ‘over’] and/or that of Russian [*čerez* ‘over’ + ACC]

- (3) Gun-d’a-n: “**Čeres** Sičitiya-wə!”  
say-IPFV.AOR-3SG **over.R** Sichitinga-**ACC**  
He says: “(This happened) because of Sichitinga!” (NB secondary use of ‘over’ attested in RUS)

## 2. Russian conjunctions

→ Coordination: frequent

- da 'and', 'but' 565

→ Subordination: sporadic

- štobi 'in.order.to' 3
- kodə, əkakta (?) 'when' 2
- ješli 'if' 1
- bid'to, budto 'as if' 3
- poka 'until' 1

→ Hojon

- coordinative da 'and', 'but' - frequent; subordinators - NA

# Russian conjunctions: Morphosyntactic integration

## Example: Purposive *štobi* 'in.order.to'

→ Purpose clauses in Russian

- *čtoby* + SUBJ [**past tense form**] (Same-Subject) vs. *čtoby* + INF (Different-Subject)

→ Purpose clauses in Evenki

- CVB.PURP (in all dialects) vs. **SUBJ** (Barhahan)

- (1) Dilyukša-ja                      əmə-wu-m,                      d'ab-da-š  
tree.sap-ACC.INDEF    come-CAUS.AOR-1SG                      eat-**CVB.PURP**-2SG  
'I brought some pine tree sap for you to eat!'
- (2) Biržowaj                      hukti-wu-ptə-rə-n,                      rupi-n-ma-n                      ga-mča  
exchange.worker.R    run-PASS-DRV-AOR-3SG                      rouble.R-ALIEN-ACC-3SG                      take-**SUBJ**.3SG  
'The exchange worker trotted to get a rouble.'



# Russian conjunctions: Morphosyntactic integration

## Example: Purposive *štobi* 'in.order.to'

→ Purpose clauses with Russian *štobi*

**Pattern 1: CONJ + SUBJ** (similar to Barhahan: SUBJ without CONJ; similar to Russian: CONJ + 'SUBJ')

- (1) **štobi**            ow'os-pa ga-**mča**-l  
**in.order.to.R** oat.R    take-**SUBJ**-3PL  
'{He untied the sack} for them to take the oats.'

**Pattern 2: CONJ + AOR** (similar to Russian: CONJ + PST ['SUBJ'])

- (2) **štobi**            šayn'an bi-**ži**-n!  
**in.order.to.R** smoke    be-**AOR**-3SG  
'{Burn the fat} so that there is smoke!'

### 3. Russian modals (modal predicates)

|                                | N of uses | lexical verb       | in Russian              | Evenki counterpart |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>nada~nado</i> ‘necessary’   | 23        | CVB.PURP~INF (-mi) | INF~ ‘in order to’+SUBJ | no                 |
| <i>nadobi</i> ‘necessary.SUBJ’ | 1         | SUBJ               |                         | no (SUBJ)          |
| <i>dolžen</i> ‘must’           | 1         | AOR                | INF                     | no                 |
| <i>moyu</i> ‘can.1SG’          | 1         | CVB.PURP           |                         |                    |
| <i>moyut</i> ‘can.3SG’         | 1         | CVB.PURP           |                         |                    |
| <i>puskaj~puš’aj</i> ‘let’     | 4         | JUSS               | PRS                     | no (JUSS)          |

#### Lexical verb

- follows general patterns typical of Evenki modal predicates: CVB.PURP~-mi [but no clear counterparts in Evenki]
- does not follow a Russian pattern (partly: *nada*)
- *puskaj*, *nadoby* – doubling (the corresponding Evenki form has the same meaning without Russian modal)

