# Verbal negation in Ulch:

# The limits of instability

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# 0. Introduction: the Ulch language

- Ulch ~ Ulchi ~ Ulcha (ulc)
- Southern Tungusic (Nanaic languages)
- Russia:
  - Khabarovsk Krai, Ulchsky district.
- Endangered:
  - 154 speakers (Census 2010 – overestimated);
  - not younger than 55-60 years old;
  - all bilingual with Russian;
  - very restricted use, cf. Gerasimova (2002); Kazama (2010); Sumbatova, Gusev (2016).

# 0. Introduction: the Ulch language
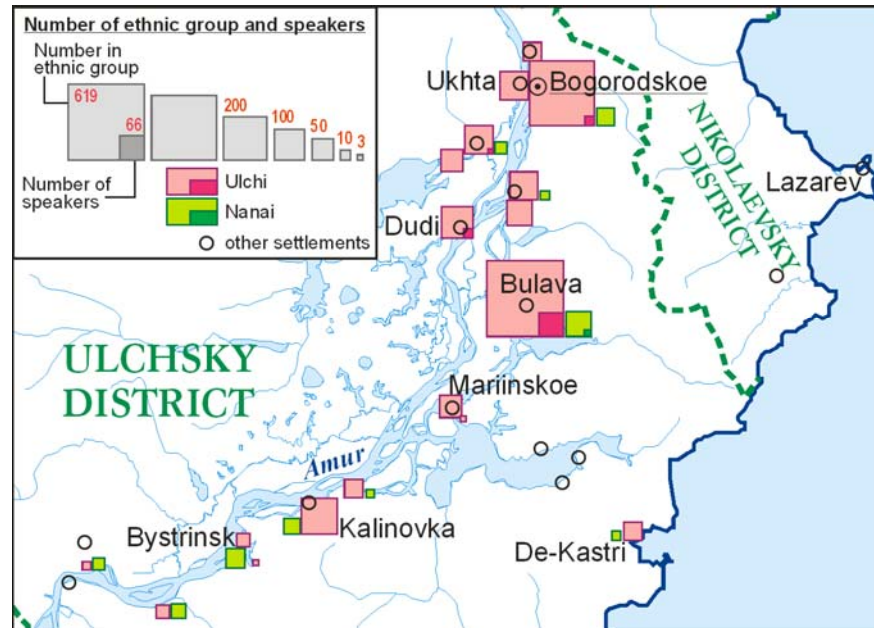


- Under-described:
  - brief grammatical sketches in Petrova (1936); Sunik (1985); Kazama (2010).
- An ongoing documentation project (with focus on language shift):
  - 3 fieldtrips: 2017 - 2018.

# 0. Introduction: Negation in Tungusic languages

- Cf. a crosslinguistically oriented overview in Hölzl (2015).

- **Northern type**:

– Uralic-type negative auxiliary verb constructions

NEG.AUX + CONNEG (=the dedicated nonfinite form)

Cf. Miestamo et al. (2015) on Uralic systems.

- **Southern type**:

– frozen items (particles and affixes) which go back to the same negative verb.

- **The Ulch system**:

– somewhere in between…

# 0. Introduction: Negation in Tungusic languages

- NORTHERN: Evenki, (Nedjalkov 1997: 96)
  - *ə-pst + conneg

(1) *Beyetken e-che-n girki-l-nun-mi suru-mu-re*

boy neg.aux-pst-3sg friend-pl-com-refl go.away-vol-conneg

*'The boy did not want to go with his friends'*

- SOUTHERN: Nanai, (our field data)
  - *əčiə* (pst.neg) < *ə-pst*

(2) *Bajan mapa xaj-wa=da əčiə wā-ra*

rich oldman what-acc=emph neg.pst kill-conneg

*'The rich oldman kill no animals (lit. nothing)'.*

# 0. Introduction: Negation in Tungusic languages

- Southern Tungusic (including Ulch):
  - quite rich negation systems;
  - very heterogeneous systems (negators with different degree of grammaticalization in different parts of paradigm);
  - very unstable systems;
  - a great variation across languages / dialects.

# 0. Introduction: Data. Questions

- **The data of Ulch:**
  - texts of different time periods: early XX-early XXI:
    - Petrova 1936 (10 short texts, 1930s);
    - Sunik 1985 (19 texts, 2753 cl.,1960s);
    - Sem's collection (1 h., 1970s);
    - Kalinina et al.'s collection (16 h., 2005-2009);
    - Oskolskaya & Stoynova's collection (6,5 h., 2017-2018).
  - elicitation (2017-2018).
- **In focus: instability in negation system**
  - resulting from non-uniform restructuring of the former system with the negative auxiliary verb;
  - recent innovations resulting from language shift.

# 0. Introduction: Structure of presentation

An overview of the Ulch negation system (Section 1);

Comparative data on other Southern Tungusic varieties (Section 2);

Grammaticalization paths (Section 3);

Recent contact-induced innovations (Section 4).

# 1. Negation in Ulch

- Asymmetric (Miestamo 2005):
  - no one-to-one correspondence between (some) negative vs. affirmative forms:

  *jaja-xa-nị ~ jaja-m kəwə-ni* 'sang ~ didn't sing'

  sing-pst-3sg ~ sing-cvb.sim NE-3sg

  - no one-to-one correspondence between negative vs. affirmative paradigms:

  3 or more past tense negative forms ~ one affirmative form (**NB not vice versa**)

# 1. Negation in Ulch

- Two sources of grammaticalization:
  - the negative auxiliary verb *ə-;
  - the negative existential *kəwə* ('there is no').

- In focus: verbal negation
  - included: standard negation; imperatives (prohibitives); some non-finite forms;
  - not included: negation in non-verbal predications (existential, possessive).

# 1. Negation in Ulch

| MEANING | FORM(S) | EXAMPLE | AFFIRM |
|---|---|---|---|
| PST | cvb.sim *kəwə-*(pers), *əŋdə* conneg do-pst, *əčəl* conneg-(pers) and oths | *wəm kəwəni*, *əŋdə wəndə taxanị̣*, *əčəl wəndəni* 'did not say' | synthetic pst |
| PRS | V-conneg-prs.neg-pers | *wəndəsini* 'does not say' | synthetic prs1, prs2 |
| FUT | =prs, *əŋdə* conneg do-fut1, *əŋəs* conneg | *əŋdə wəndə tịla=ma* 'he will not say', *əŋəs wəndə* 'you will not say' | synthetic fut1, fut2 |
| IMP | *əӡi* conneg-(pl) | *əӡi wəndə* | synthetic imp |
| COND | *əŋdə* conneg do-sbjv | *əŋdə wəndə tamča* 'would not say' | synthetic cond |

# 2. Ulch vs. other Southern Tungusic varieties

| ULCH | Kur-Urmi (Sunik 1958) | Amur (Naikhin) Nanai (Avrorin 1961) | Bikin Nanai (Sem 1976) | Uilta (Petrova 1967) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **prohibitive conneg** *əǯi* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **synthetic prs** | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| **cvb.sim** *kəwə* | Yes | Marginal | No | No |
| **pst/prs** *kəwə* | Yes | No | No | No |
| *əčəl*-**forms 'not yet'** | ? | Default | ? | Default |
| *əŋdə*-**forms** | No | No (similar constructions with *əm*) | No | No |
| **reduplication-construction** | ? | No | ? | ? |

# 2. Ulch vs. other Southern Tungusic varieties

- No clear correlation with areal and genetic factors:
  - Kur-Urmi: a very similar system (why?);
  - Uilta (the closest sister of Ulch): the most dissimilar one.
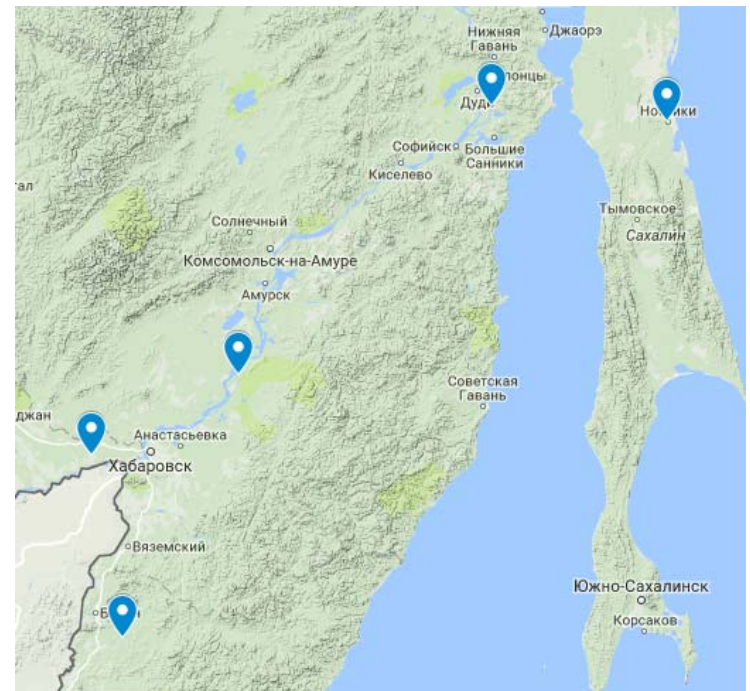
# 3. Grammaticalization paths

- Markers that go back to *ə- (NEG.AUX):
  - an overview (3.1);
  - not-yet constructions with *əčəl* (3.2);
  - future negative construction with *əŋəs* (3.3).
- Markers that go back to *kəwə* (negative existential) (3.3):
  - cvb.sim *kəwə*;
  - prs / pst *kəwə*.

# 3.1. Markers that go back to NEG.AUX

| MARKER | EXAMPLE | STATUS | <*ə- (NEG.AUX) |
|---|---|---|---|
| V-conneg-(*ə)-prs.neg | *wəndəsini* 'does not say' | AFFIX | <*ə-PRS |
| *əč(i)ə~əčəl* | *əčəl wəndəni* 'did not say' | PTCL | <*ə-PST |
| *əǯ(i)* | *əǯi wəndə* 'don't say' | PTCL | <*ə-IMP |
| *əŋdə* | *əŋdə wəndə taxanį* 'did not say' | PTCL | ???<*ə-CVB.NSIM |
| *Əŋəs* | *əŋəs wəndə* '(you) will say' | PTCL/AUX | <*ə-FUT |

# 3.2. Grammaticalization: *əčəl*

- **Two not-yet constructions:**
  - 1) CONNEG-construction *əčəl* conneg-(pers)

*əčəl taun-da-nị* 'has not read yet'
not.yet read-conneg-3sg

  - 2) PRS-construction *əčəl* prs

*əčəl taun-dị-nị* 'has not read yet'
not.yet read-prs-3sg

(1) *Gə, tị andaxa-sal əčəl pərg-ə-t biskə*
well that guest-pl neg try-conneg-3pl probably
*'Well, these guests have not tried yet'. (txt, Sunik 1985)*

(2) *tị ŋənə-mdị, χagdụ-m=ban əčəl ịs-ị-n*
so go-cvb.dur.sg house-3sg=to not.yet reach-prs-3sg
*'So they are going and going and they haven't reached home yet'.
(txt, Sunik 1985)*

# 3.2. Grammaticalization: *əčəl*

- **CONNEG-construction:**
  - is mentioned in Petrova (1936); Sunik (1985) (as a past tense negator);
  - is attested in other Southern Tungusic (a default past tense negator in Naikhin Nanai and in Uilta);
  - **< past tense AUX.NEG-construction**.

- **PRS-construction:**
  - is not mentioned in existing descriptions;
  - is however used in texts, including those of Sunik (1985);
  - CONNEG-construction 22 uses vs. PRS-construction 5 uses;
  - **< ???; no direct pathway from AUX.NEG-construction.**

# 3.2. Grammaticalization: CONNEG-construction

- A probable path:

**AUX.NEG-PST + CONNEG >**

**> frozen item 'not yet' + CONNEG**

- Proposed for other Nanaic varieties (Avrorin 1961; Petrova 1967).

- Problems:
  - *l*-ending, optional personal markers on CONNEG-forms.

*əčəl bu-də-i* 'I have not died yet'

<*ə-čə-l bu-də-i

aux.neg-pst-3pl die-conneg-1sg

- To skip details:
  - evidently not a recent process.

# 3.2. Grammaticalization: PRS-construction

- It cannot be traced directly to the same AUX.NEG-construction:

  – CONNEG, not PRS is expected.

- A probable path:

  – 1 step: *ə*-PST + CONNEG > *əčəl* + CONNEG

  – 2 step: (*əčəl* > not-yet frozen item); a symmetric not-yet construction emerges:

  prs ~ *əčəl* prs

- But what is the reason to develop one more not-yet construction?

# 3.2. Grammaticalization: PRS-construction

- One more clarification: why two constructions?
  - 3 of 5 examples are in dependent clauses

*xəsə-i əčəli tuk-i-du-ni* 'until my words fall out'

word-1sg not.yet fall-prs-dat-3sg (txt, Sunik 1985)

- Hypothesis:
  - PRS-construction in non-finite dependent clauses > in finite main clauses.

- The reason:
  - a lacune in paradigm: how to express 'until V'?
  - CONNEG-form is not available for case-marking (=cannot be used in dependent clauses);
  - PRS-form is available; a good candidate.

# 3.3. Grammaticalization: *əŋəs*

- A future negative construction with *əŋəs*:
  - a recent trace of the former auxiliary verb construction (untypical of Southern Tungusic l-s).
- It is not mentioned in Petrova (1936) and Sunik (1985), but it is attested in their texts:

*halda əŋəsi puco-ro* 'you'll never jump!'

never neg.fut jump-conneg (txt, Petrova 1936)

- *əŋəs(i)* = ə-fut-2sg (a clear future form in modern Ulch)
- However on this stage it cannot be considered as a full verb form:
  - only 2sg, no other person-number forms attested.

# 3.4. Grammaticalization: *kəwə*

- A dedicated negative existential *kəwə* 'there is no'

*ručka=da kəwə, karandaš=da kəwə*

pen=emph ne, pencil=emph ne

'there is no pen, there is no pencil' (txt)

- Cf. Croft (1991); Veselinova (2013; 2014; 2016) … on NE>SN.

# 2.4. Grammaticalization: *kəwə*

- Two types of such constructions in Ulch:
  - **Type 1**: CVB.SIM *kəwə*-PERS (ASYM)

*jaja-m kəwə-ni* 'didn't sing'

sing-cvb.sim NE-3sg

  - **Type 2**: PRS / PST *kəwə* (SYM)

*jaja-xa-nị kəwə 'didn't sing'*

sing-pst-3sg NE

*jaj-ị-nị kəwə 'doesn't sing'*

sing-prs-3sg NE

# 2.4. Grammaticalization: *kəwə*

- **Type 1**: CVB.SIM *kəwə*-PERS
  - a default past negator;
  - is mentioned in Petrova 1936; Sunik 1985;
  - *kəwə* is marked by person-number affixes (and by special markers in dependent clauses).
- **Type 2**: PRS / PST *kəwə*
  - is not mentioned in previous descriptions, however attested in texts;
  - semantics: emphatic (≈'after all');
  - seems to be quite recent;
  - *kəwə* acts as a frozen item with no inflection morphology.
- Possible grammaticalization paths: for further discussion.

# 2.4. Grammaticalization: *kəwə*

- PRS *kəwə*:

*nat mimbə tunč-i-n=də kəwə*

3pl 1sg.acc touch-prs-3sg=emph ne

'{There are lot's of animals here. I'm not afraid of them}, they will not touch me!' (txt)

- PST *kəwə*:

*uj=də pansa-xa-n=də kəwə nambat*

who=emph ask-pst-3sg ne 3pl.acc

'Nobody asked them!' (txt)'

# 4. Recent contact-influenced innovations

- Expected tendencies:
  - more similarity to Russian
    - a symmetric system
    - the same negative proclitic *ne* all over the paradigm

*pišet ~ ne pišet* 'writes ~ does not write'

write.prs ~ neg write.prs

  - more transparency;
  - more regularity;
  - less redundancy;
  - less number of grammatical oppositions.
  Cf. e.g. Sasse 2001 on language shift.

# 4. Recent contact-influenced innovations

- Some innovations attested in modern data:

  – seem to be the result of language shift.


- Russian-type prohibitives (4.1)
- Loss of *əŋdə*-forms (4.2)

# 4.1. Recent innovations: Russian-type prohibitives

- The "old construction":

bū-ru ~ əǯ bū-rə

give-imp ~ proh give-conneg

'give ~ don't give!'

 – elder, more competent speakers;

 – the same as in other Southern Tungusic I-s;

 – diachronically transparent:

  - < AUX.NEG-imp CONNEG.

# 4.1. Recent innovations: Russian-type prohibitives

- The "new construction":

bū-ru ~ əǯ bū-ru

give-imp ~ proh give-imp

'give ~ don't give!'

 – younger, less competent speakers;
 – the same structure as in Russian:

davaj ~ ne davaj

give.imp ~ neg give.imp

'give ~ don't give!'

 – no possible diachronic path directly from AUX.NEG-construction.

# 4.2. Recent innovations: loss of *əŋdə*-constructions

- The negator *əŋdə* < ?\**ə*-cvb.nsim
- 1) negative converb

*əŋdə* CONNEG

- 2) a series of analytic negative constructions:

*əŋdə* CONNEG ta-

- the auxiliary *ta-* ('do'-) is marked by -TAM-pers

- Before shift (Petrova 1936; Sunik 1985):
  - PST-form – default
  - more peripheral forms (fut, purp, cond, hort, juss)

  *əŋdə aora* 'without sleeping' CVB

  *əŋdə aora taxaṇị* 'slept' PST

  *əŋdə aora ṭịla=ma* 'will sleep' FUT1

# 4.2. Recent innovations: loss of *əŋdə*-constructions

- Data from modern (semi)-speakers
- CVB-form: *əŋdə* CONNEG ~ *əŋdə* CVB.NSIM
  - reanalysis CONNEG ~ CVB.NSIM (very similar forms, probably with the same diachronic source)
- PST-form: > very marginal, emphatic
  - no uses in texts
    - Petrova 1936 – yes (2 of 5 pstneg-forms);
    - Sunik 1985 – no;
    - our texts – no;
  - still recognized by speakers (estimated as emphatic).

- More peripheral forms (elicitation):
  - *əŋdə* CONNEG *ta-* > *əŋdə* AFFIRM

# 4.2. Recent innovations: loss of *əŋdə*-constructions

- The old system: asymmetric, complex

*jaja-ǯi-ni ~ əŋdə jaja ta-ǯi-ni* 'let him sing ~ let him not sing'
sing-juss-3sg ~ neg sing.conneg do-juss-3sg

- The new system: asymmetric > symmetric

*jaja-ǯi-ni ~ əŋdə jaja-ǯi-ni* 'let him sing ~ let him not sing'
sing-juss-3sg ~ neg sing-juss-3sg

- Supported by:
  - direct Russian influence (*əŋdə* ~ Rus. *ne*);
  - a general simplification tendency;
  - reanalysis of negative CVB-construction.

# 4. Concluding remarks

- The Ulch negation system:
  - quite rich, heterogeneous, asymmetric.
- The main point:
  - diachronic instability of such systems.
- The case of Ulch:
  - "old" instability:
    - results from non-uniform restructuring of AUX.NEG-system;
  - recent contact-induced instability;
  - the same tendencies:
    - **asymmetry > symmetry between forms**;
    - symmetry > asymmetry within the paradigm.