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Contact-induced change in Dolgan : an investigation into the role of linguistic data for the reconstruction of a people's (pre)history

Stapert, E.L.

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Author: Stapert, Eugénie

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the habitual aspect in Dolgan is investigated. On the basis of spoken text corpora for Dolgan and Sakha, I will show that in Dolgan a) the frequency of use of the habitual participle is significantly higher than in Sakha; b) the habitual participle is used predominantly with a verbal function; and c) the nominal function is, counter to grammatical descriptions, virtually absent. The second part of the chapter focuses on the cause of these differences, and the possibility of both language-internal and language-external explanations will be considered. While no definite conclusions can be reached at this stage due to gaps in the data, hypotheses are formulated that uncover important areas for future research.

In this cross-linguistic analysis of habitual aspect, I have used semantic rather than morphosyntactic criteria for what is considered habitual aspect. According to Comrie

[a]spect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the situation.
(Comrie 1976: 5)

This sets it apart from tense, which is “grammaticalised location in time” (Comrie [1985] 2000: 9). Habitual aspect in particular is defined as:

A situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of the whole period. (Comrie 1976: 27)

Although tense and aspect are independent categories, it appears from cross-linguistic study that overt marking of habitual aspect is associated much more with the past tense than with the present (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994). This tendency is explained by the idea that habitual aspect “may be one of the basic or default aspectual readings of the present tense” (ibid.: 151), and may therefore often not be overtly expressed in such contexts.

Habitual aspect should not be confused with iterative aspect, which is the “successive occurrence of several instances of the given situation” (Comrie 1976: 27). As Comrie points out, iterativity does not imply habituality or the other way round. The repetition of an event does not necessarily give it a habitual character, as in *the lecturer stood up, coughed five times, and said...* (Comrie 1976: 27) and habitual events do not necessarily involve iterativity as in *Simon used to believe in ghosts* (ibid.). However, habituality and iterativity may be combined in one event as in, for example, *before he started his lecture, the lecturer used to cough five times*. In this sentence, the *five times* encodes the iterativity of the event of coughing, whereas *used to* indicates its habituality. However, as will be clear from the preceding examples, the two categories are independent of each other. In the remainder of this chapter I will consider habitual aspect only.

6.2 HABITUAL IN DOLGAN AND SAKHA AND THEIR POSITION AMONG OTHER TURKIC LANGUAGES

Within the Turkic language family, the habitual aspect is expressed in a variety of ways. In Dolgan and Sakha, it is formed with the suffix *-A:ččI* followed by predicative person marking that agrees with the subject¹.

¹ In Sakha, *-A:ččI* also occurs in the function of agent nominaliser (e.g. *kömölöh-öiččü* [*kömölös--A:ččI*, *help-HAB*] ‘helper’). See section 6.3.2 for discussion.

DOLGAN

- (6.1) *ol kördük (...) emte-n-e:čči-ler ke*
 DEM similar (...) cure-RFL-HAB-PRED.3PL PRT
 ‘This is how they tend to cure.’ (IMA: 44)

SAKHA

- (6.2) *ɖʒoŋ-ŋo kömölöh-ö:ččü-bün [...] daja:rka-lar-ga inax*
 people-DAT help-HAB-PRED.1SG [...] milker-PL-DAT cow
torbos ejin kömölöh-ö:ččü-bün tard-ih-a:čči-bin,
 calf etc. help-HAB-PRED.1SG pull-RECP-HAB-PRED.1SG
ah-a-t-ih-a:čči-bin.
 food-VBLZR-CAUS-RECP-HAB-PRED.1SG
 ‘I help people, I help the milkers (with the) cows and calves and so on, I
 tend to help pull, I help feed.’ (adapted from XLE: 188)

In the past tense, the habitual participle is unmarked for person, and subject agreement is expressed on the auxiliary verb *e-* ‘to be’ by means of a possessive suffix.

DOLGAN

- (6.3) *hohuj-a-bin, küččügüj kihi ke,*
 be.frightened-SIM.CV-PRED.1SG small person PRT
kuttan-a:čči e-ti-m buo
 be.scared-HAB be-PST-POSS.1SG PRT
 ‘I was frightened, I was small you see, I was always afraid.’ (TJP: 14)

SAKHA

- (6.4) *Üččügej bayajı buol-a:čči e-t-e*
 good very AUX-HAB be-PST-POSS.3SG
 ‘It was very good.’ (XKM: 095)

This encoding strategy is unique within the language family. In other Turkic languages, the habitual function is expressed by means of different suffixes. For example, in Old Uygur and Qarakhanid the habitual participle in *-gAn* is used to express this meaning². According to Erdal, the suffix *-gAn* was obsolescent in Old

² In other Turkic languages such as Khakas and Kyrgyz this suffix is used to form the past tense.

Turkic³, but became more and more productive over time. In many modern Turkic languages it nowadays occurs as a participle and in the formation of action nouns (Erdal 2004: 156, 290, Erdal 1991: 387).

In Khakas the present habitual is formed with the suffix *-Advr/-idVr*, as can be seen in example 6.5, and which has its origins in the converbal forms ending in *-A* or *-i* respectively, followed by the auxiliary *tur-*. The past is formed with the suffix *-žarj*.

KHAKAS

- (6.5) *kem-nejer čooxt-an-za-ŋ ol kIr-edIr*
 who-CIR speak-RFL-COND-2 he enter-HAB.PRS

‘Whoever you might be talking about he always shows up.’

(adapted from Anderson 1998: 40)

In Turkish the habitual function is fulfilled by the aorist suffix *-(V)r*. Kornfilt describes it as the “general present tense [which] expresses habitual actions and general events, thus coming close to a universal tense” (Kornfilt 1997: 336).

TURKISH

- (6.6) *Hasan her sabah kahvaltı ed-er*
 Hasan every morning breakfast do-AOR

‘Hasan has breakfast every morning.’

(Kornfilt 1997: 336)

In Kyrgyz and its close relative Altay⁴ the suffix *-U:čU* (mostly occurring as *-čU*) is found (Somfai Kara 2003: 32, 43, Kałużyński 1995). These suffixes function as agent nominalisers, as well as habitual participles in Kyrgyz (Somfai Kara 2003: 43).

³ However, Erdal mentions that even in late Old Turkic there is evidence that this verb form was used as a participle (Erdal 2004: 156).

⁴ According to Johanson’s classification of Turkic languages, the classification of Kyrgyz is ambiguous. It may be classified as belonging to the southern subbranch of the northeastern group, to which Altay also belongs, but recent changes have made it more similar to Kazakh, which is part of the southern subbranch of the northwestern group. Therefore, some scholars classify it within that group (Johanson 1998: 83).

KYRGYZ

(6.7) **kel-(ü:)-čü (ele)**
 come-HAB be-PASS

'He used to come.'

(Somfai Kara 2003: 43)

The functional and formal similarity with *-A:ččI* makes relatedness of these two suffixes a tempting hypothesis. However, Kałużyński (1995), after Ramstedt, argues against this, saying that *-U:-čU* can be traced back to a combination of the Turkic suffixes *-yg+čy*, in which case the sound correspondences with Sakha *A:* do not fit. According to Kałużyński, the sound combination *-yg* normally corresponds to *-i:* or *-iä* in Sakha, and not to *-A:*.

As can be seen from this brief overview, Dolgan and Sakha are exceptional within the Turkic language family in using the participle *-A:ččI* to express habitual aspect. The next section will show that related forms of this suffix are found in a few other languages of the northeastern branch of the Turkic family. However, their use remains restricted to the nominal realm, in particular to the function of agent nominaliser, and in none of them has it acquired the function of a habitual aspect.

6.3 THE HABITUAL IN *-A:ččI*

6.3.1 THE ORIGIN OF *-A:ččI*

According to Korkina (1970: 220) and Kałużyński (1995: 101), citing Ramstedt (1952), the suffix *-A:ččI* is found only in Tuvan, Khakas, Altaic and Sakha; that is, only in the north-eastern branch of the Turkic language family. In all these languages the suffix is used as an agent nominaliser, as in Khakas *ojnāči* 'player' from the verb stem *ojnā* 'to play' (Kałużyński 1995: 101).

Speculations about the origin of the *-A:ččI* suffix are rather divergent and not always equally convincing. For example, in Korkina's overview on the origin of the suffix she cites Böhlingk's (1851: §722) suggestion that *-A:ččI* may have come from the agent noun in *-I:*, whereas Khitrov (1858: 121) proposes a relation to the Sakha converb in *-n*, which would have subsequently been exchanged for the suffix *-ččI*. His motivations for this unusual replacement, or the origins of *-ččI* itself, are not further specified. Finally Korkina (1970: 225) refers to Radloff (1908: 50) who, conversely, relates *-A:ččI* to the converb in *-A*. Korkina herself puts forward that

the meaning of generality and permanency attributed to the habitual participle in Sakha can be considered a more intense variant of the meaning conveyed by the present participle in *-Ar*, which motivates her hypothesis that *-A:ččI* may have its origin in a combination of the present participle suffix *-Ar* combined with the nominaliser suffix *-čI*. Its allomorph *-A:ččIk* she traces back to the Russian agent nominaliser suffix *-sh'ik*. However, she leaves the reason for the variation, as well as for the connection with the Russian suffix, unexplained. Ubryatova (1985: 184) objects to this analysis in her description of the habitual participle for Dolgan, arguing that the relation with the present participle is not proven. She prefers to reconstruct the form as a combination of the Turkic suffixes **-gač* and **-či*, for reasons that are not entirely clear. Remarkably, she suggests a different origin for *-A:ččIk*, even though she acknowledges it as just a phonetic variant of *-A:ččI*. This in itself being rather unusual reasoning, she reconstructs the origin of *-A:ččIk* as a combination of **-gač* and **-erjik* without further clarification.

These language-internal explanations are rather opaque due to their divergent character and an often inapparent correspondence between the current form and its hypothesised components. In contrast, Kałużyński (1995), after Ramstedt, offers a language-external, and more plausible, explanation. It appears that the nominal use of a suffix with a very similar form, *-yači*, is also found in Mongolic languages, including Kalmykian, Mongol proper (including Khalkha), and Written Mongol, which leads Kałużyński, again following Ramstedt's argumentation, to the conclusion that the suffix must have been copied from Mongolic into the Turkic language family. They argue that *-A:ččI* has its origins in Proto-Mongolic **xA.ci*, which was the marker of the agentive participle (Janhunen 2003: 21). Poppe mentions a related suffix in his grammar of Written Mongolian, where he describes the function of *-yači* as "...to form nouns designating names of vocations" (Poppe 1991). According to this scenario, this function, along with the form, has been copied into the Turkic languages Tuvan, Khakas and Altaic and Sakha, in which the suffix is found in that function today. This explanation seems probable, considering the fact that many of the Turkic languages in which the suffix is found are spoken in the area bordering present-day Mongolia and it is known from history that this area was dominated by Mongolic-speaking people for a long time.⁵ Since in this account the correspondence in form as well as in

⁵ Although it is hard to give exact dates, contact between speakers of Mongolic and Turkic languages goes back to the second half of the first millennium AD. It intensified in the 11th and 12th centuries when certain Mongolic tribes fled north to avoid internal conflicts and it is assumed that they arrived

meaning is more transparent than for the available language-internal explanations, the idea that *-A:ččI* has its origin in Mongolic languages is more likely.

6.3.2 USE OF *-A:ččI* IN DOLGAN AND SAKHA

In contrast to the other north-east Turkic languages, in which the forms related to *-A:ččI* have the function of an agent nominaliser, in Sakha and Dolgan its use is predominantly verbal. This tendency is particularly pronounced in spoken Dolgan, where the nominal use seems to be completely absent.

Despite the overwhelming percentage of verbal use that emerged from a frequency count of the spoken Sakha corpus (see section 6.3.3.4) most of the literature on Sakha focuses on the nominal and adjectival use of the participle in *-A:ččI*. Böhlingk ([1851] 1997: §722) writes that “[t]he verbal noun in *-A:ččI* only ever occurs as an agent noun and is used adjectivally in combination with a noun, and as a noun”⁶. A similar view is held by Kharitonov (1947), as well as by Khitrov (1858: 121) and Poppe (1926: 67) as cited by Korkina (1970: 220), who all highlight the nominal aspect of the participle, reflected in descriptions such as ‘verbal noun’ or ‘agent noun’. Indeed, this is how the participle can be used in contemporary Sakha, as can be seen in example 6.8. The adjectival use is illustrated in example 6.9.

at the area around Lake Baykal, where they may have met the Turkic-speaking Sakha. A subsequent peak was during the Mongol Empire in the 13th and 14th centuries, when more Mongolic clans are supposed to have entered the area of Lake Baykal to escape from the power of Chinggis Khan (Pakendorf 2007: 22-23).

⁶ “Das Verbalnomen auf *-аччы* ist immer nur Nomen agentis und wird sowohl adjectivisch in Verbindung mit einem Substantivum, als auch substantivisch gebraucht.” O. Böhlingk (1851: § 722 (English translation mine).

SAKHA

- (6.8) *dze mama-bar ha:maj tireχ buol-an χa:l-l-īm,*
 Well mother-DAT.1SG the.most support AUX-SQ.CV remain-PST-POSS.1SG
kömölöh-ö:ččü, (...) buol-an χa:l-l-īm.
 help-HAB (...) AUX-SQ.CV remain-PST-POSS.1SG
 ‘Well I remained my mother’s biggest support, I remained her helper.’
 (ARR: 031)

- (6.9) *Ol tojon halaj-a:ččī kihieχ aya-bar*
 that chief lead-HAB person.DAT father-DAT.1SG
ki:l-ler-el-ler bu kibi-ler-in bandzüt-tar.
 enter-CAUS-PRS.PTC-PL this person-PL-ACC.3SG bandit-PL
 ‘They brought the bandits to my father’s house, since he was the chief, the
 leading person.’
 (MAN: 174)

It was only with Ubryatova’s work on Dolgan that the habitual participle was recognised as the basis of a separate verb paradigm expressing the habitual ‘mood’ in either present or past tense, and since then this view has been widely accepted for both Dolgan and Sakha (Ubryatova, cited by Korkina (1970: 221)). While in the Russian literature on Dolgan and Sakha the habitual is defined as a modal category, I prefer for the remainder of this discussion to classify it as aspect instead, following Comrie’s definition that aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation. An example for both present and past is given in 6.10 and 6.11.

DOLGAN

- (6.10) *On-tu-gun bieχ kü:l-e:ččī-bin ile*
 that-DER-ACC.2SG always laugh-HAB-PRED.1SG really
 ‘I always really laugh at that.’
 (LKS: 227)
- (6.11) *ol kördük kihi köh-ö hildz-a:ččī e-ti-bit*
 that similar human migrate-SIM.CV go-HAB be-PST-1PL
 ‘That is how we used to migrate.’
 (PPK: 40)

Judging from various grammars, most of the formal and functional properties of the participle seem to be shared between Dolgan and Sakha. However, the comparison also suggests certain differences. Formally, these include differences

in the allomorphy of the suffix, as well as differences in negation strategy. Functionally, the verbal use of the participle seems more widespread in Dolgan than in Sakha. In the remainder of this chapter I will focus on the following questions: a) do the patterns described in the grammars match with my own corpus data; b) are there more differences between Dolgan and Sakha than previously described; and c) what is the most probable scenario to explain these differences?

6.3.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DOLGAN AND SAKHA

6.3.3.1 *-A:ččl* vs. *-A:ččlk*

As was mentioned above, Korkina's account of the verbal system in Sakha describes two variants of the habitual participle suffix, *-A:ččl* and *-A:ččlk*. Although *-A:ččlk* is mentioned in Ubryatova's description of Dolgan, it is doubtful to what extent this allomorph really is part of the Dolgan language. In my Dolgan corpus of spoken texts (16,250 words) there are 227 instances of the habitual participle, but there is not a single instance of *-A:ččlk* among them. Moreover, while this allomorph is recognised by Ubryatova, it is not mentioned in the later grammar of Dolgan by Artemyev (2001). Most importantly, on explicit inquiry about this suffix, Dolgan speakers say it is not part of their language. This gives the impression that Dolgan is different from Sakha in this respect. However, a fair comparison requires an investigation of the oral corpus for contemporary Sakha, and surprisingly this also did not yield any instances of *-A:ččlk*. Whether this result is due to a recent change in both languages, or whether *-A:ččlk* has always been marginal and its absence in both corpora is due to chance is impossible to determine without further detailed historical research. However, the data are sufficient to show that the grammars are not always a reliable guide to contemporary spoken language, and that ostensible differences between Dolgan and Sakha on paper may not prove significant upon closer investigation of spoken corpora.

6.3.3.2 NEGATION

According to the literature (e.g. Korkina 1970: 223) the habitual in Sakha can be negated by adding possessive person marking (agreeing with the subject) to the

habitual participle, followed by the unmarked negation noun *huoχ* (6.12). Alternatively this can be done by adding the invariable third person possessive marking to the participle, followed by the predicative person-marked negation noun *huoχ* agreeing with the subject (6.13):

SAKHA

(6.12) *Min bar-a:čči-m huoχ*
 1SG go-HAB-POSS.1SG NEG

(6.13) *Min bar-a:čči-ta huoχ-pun*
 1SG go-HAB-POSS.3SG NEG-PRED.1SG

'I usually don't go.'

(Korkina 1970: 223-24)

The same strategies are mentioned for Dolgan in Artemyev (2001: 201), but in the spoken corpora for both Dolgan and Sakha I only find instances of the second type. However, it is worth mentioning that the Sakha narratives displaying this negation construction were narrated by speakers of the Olenek district in the north of the Sakha Republic, which borders on the area where Dolgan is spoken. Therefore it is possible that only part of the linguistic variation in Sakha is reflected in the data, in particular the variants that are very similar to Dolgan. To confidently make a statement about the possible absence of the first negation strategy in Sakha, one would need a more complete picture of habitual negation in several dialects of Sakha, including the ones geographically remote from the Dolgan-speaking area.

6.3.3.3 VERBAL, NOMINAL AND ADJECTIVAL USE

According to the grammars, participles in Dolgan and Sakha may be verbal, nominal and adjectival in character, but the frequency of these usages is quite different across the languages. This has been noted previously; Ubryatova defines the Dolgan habitual participle primarily as the basis for the verbal paradigm of the habitual 'mood', with a possible usage as a noun or adjective, whereas in Sakha the nominal use is particularly frequent (Ubryatova 1985:182, 183). This implies that in Dolgan the verbal use is expected to be dominant, and in Sakha the nominal use. This pattern was confirmed and reinforced by current speakers of Dolgan, who

6.3.3.4 FREQUENCY OF USE

In order to compare the use of the habitual across Dolgan and Sakha, a Filemaker database was created, and all instances of the habitual participle in the spoken text corpora of Dolgan and Sakha were coded for the following formal and semantic properties: case marking, person marking (possessive or predicative), location of the person marking (on participle, auxiliary or negation word), person, tense, polarity and semantic function.

Participles that show case marking or are used in subject or object position in the sentence were identified as nominal. In theory, such forms could also have a predicative function in complement clauses, in which case they could be classified as verbal, but in my corpus I had no such instances and thus the classification is unambiguous. Participles without case or person marking that occur as modifiers of a noun were defined as adjectival. This is in accordance with the general shape of adjectives in Dolgan and Sakha, which never take agreement marking. Participles with predicative suffixes that occur in sentence-final position were classified as verbal. Potential ambiguity between unmarked nominals, adjectives and third person singular verbs, which are also unmarked, was resolved by context and the predominantly sentence-final position of verbs.

I compared the Dolgan and Sakha corpora with respect to the overall frequency of habitual participles in general, as well as their use as members of the individual word classes of verb, noun and adjective, respectively. The overall frequency was determined as the percentage of habituals over the total number of words in the corpus. This measure only makes sense because of the high comparability of the Dolgan and Sakha corpus with respect to text genre and mode of transcription. Both corpora consist of mostly life stories (as opposed to e.g. procedural texts or folk tales that could be different in vocabulary or structure), and the mode of transcription of the Dolgan texts was matched deliberately to the style used for Sakha in order to facilitate comparison. Therefore, this measure is justified.

The analysis shows that there are significant differences between the languages both in the overall frequency of habituals and in the word classes. The results are summarised in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below.

Table 6.1: Frequency distribution for habitual participle in Dolgan and Sakha

Language	No of words in corpus	No. of habituals	% of total no. of words
DOLGAN	16,250	227	1.4
SAKHA	29,417	72	0.2

Table 6.1 shows that the overall proportion of habituals in the Dolgan corpus is considerably higher than in Sakha. In the Dolgan corpus 1.4% of all words (227 instances) are a habitual participle, whereas in Sakha this is only 0.2% (or 72 instances). A chi-square test for homogeneity of the two distributions is highly significant ($p < 0.0001$, $df = 1$), demonstrating that the difference between the proportions of habitual participles in the two languages is unlikely to have occurred by chance. This quantifies the statement made in the grammar of Dolgan that this participle is more common in Dolgan than in Sakha (Ubryatova 1985: 184).

Table 6.2 focuses on the occurrence of the habitual participle as part of different word classes, and here too the observed differences are highly unlikely to be due to chance alone.

Table 6.2: Comparison of habitual participle and its word class in Dolgan and Sakha

Language	No. of habituals	% Verb.	% Noun	% Adj.
DOLGAN	227	99.1	0	0.9
SAKHA	72	72.9	25.7	1.4

First, a chi-square test indicates that the category of 'habitual participle' across Dolgan and Sakha is significantly different, in other words, the distribution of verbal, nominal and adjectival use within this category is non-homogeneous across the two languages ($p < 0.0001$, $df = 2$). Further investigation into which factors are the cause of this significant difference confirms what can be read from Table 6.2 with the naked eye: a Fisher exact test comparing the different uses across the two languages shows that the verbal, as well as nominal, use of the participle is significantly different ($p < 0.0001$, $df = 1$). The verbal use in Dolgan is significantly higher, whereas the nominal use is significantly lower than in Sakha ($p < 0.0001$, $df = 1$). The difference in adjectival use is not significant ($p = 0.55$, $df = 1$).

These results match the statement that in Dolgan the verbal use of the habitual participle is very common (Ubryatova 1985: 184), whereas in Sakha it

conversation, the participle in *-A:ččī* is constructed here in a similar way to how it occurs spontaneously in Sakha texts, as was presented earlier and is repeated below in (6.19).

SAKHA

- (6.19) *dže mama-bar ha:maj tireχ buol-an*
 well mother-DAT the.most support AUX-SQ.CV
χa:l-l-īm, kōmölöh-ö:ččü (...) buol-an χa:l-l-īm.
 remain-PST-POSS.1SG help-HAB (...) AUX-SQ.CV remain-PST-POSS.1SG
 ‘Well I remained my mother’s biggest support, I remained her helper.’
 (ARR: 031)

Although this form does occur in written Dolgan texts, the more common way to express agent nouns in Dolgan speech is to use it attributively in combination with the word *kihi* ‘person’, or *oyo* ‘child’, by which it acquires a modifying rather than a substantival function⁷:

DOLGAN

- (6.20) *mas abirat-a:ččī oyo kel-bit*
 wood chop-HAB child come-PST.PTC
 ‘The boy who helped you with the wood has arrived.’ (Elicited)

While example 6.20 is intended to illustrate how agent nouns can be expressed in Dolgan, it also serves as a good example of the changing face of the participle. Depending on the interpretation, *abirat-a:ččī* ‘chop-HAB’ can either be read as an adjective modifying *oyo* ‘child’, leading to the translation ‘the wood-chopping child’, or as the predicate of a relative clause, as is reflected in the translation of the example above. Moreover, if this were a Sakha example, *oyo* ‘child’ could be omitted, giving *abirata:ččī* the interpretation of an agent noun meaning ‘wood chopper’. While this would change the meaning of the sentence in that it does not specify for the young age of the woodchopper, it is correct from a grammatical point of view.

⁷ It needs to be mentioned here that another common way to encode agent nouns is through the attachment of the suffix *-Sīt*, which is not a derived verb form but a proper agent nominaliser only used for this purpose, e.g. *taba-hīt* [reindeer -AG.NLZR] ‘reindeer herder’.

This example illustrates the idea introduced in section 6.3.3.3 that the boundaries between word classes in Dolgan and Sakha can be fluid. While some languages may have a clear-cut distinction between nouns, verbs and adjectives, examples like the above suggest that for Dolgan and Sakha this division may be a linguistic construct for analysis rather than a reality. Nevertheless it can be shown on the basis of the more objective criteria, such as case marking, position in the sentence, and potential for modification, that the nominal use of the habitual participle in Dolgan is very marginal.

Summarising, we can say that the habitual participle displays three main differences between Dolgan and Sakha: 1) an increase in its overall frequency, 2) an expansion of the verbal use within the aspectual verb paradigm 3) the disappearance of nominal use

6.4 PROBING THE CAUSE OF THESE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DOLGAN AND SAKHA

6.4.1 LANGUAGE-INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS

Finding an explanation of these differences between Dolgan and Sakha, language-internal as well as language-external factors should be considered. With respect to the first, it is worth remembering the idea mentioned in section 6.1 that the habitual aspect and present tense are tightly interconnected. If this is true, one could imagine that the contiguity of these two grammatical categories led to a fading boundary between the domains of use of the habitual and non-habitual present tense, and that speakers of Dolgan/Sakha began to use the habitual form in a wider context. Instead of using forms in *-A:ččl* only with a clearly habitual meaning, they employed it also to describe less obviously habitual actions, for which Sakha would use the non-habitual present tense, thus extending its domain of application, and potentially its frequency. These semantics could then have spread to other tenses (e.g. past) as well.

Plausible as this language internal account may be, it leaves unexplained why the frequent use of *-A:ččl* remains restricted to the Taimyr Peninsula and why the participle is no longer used as an agent nominaliser. Since we know that Dolgan history is characterised by intense contact with Tungusic people and their languages, influence from these languages on the development of these features should be taken in to account as well.

6.4.2 LANGUAGE-EXTERNAL MOTIVATIONS

6.4.2.1 MORPHOSYNTACTIC PROPERTIES OF HABITUAL IN TUNGUSIC LANGUAGES

Like the Turkic language family, the Tungusic languages do not have one single way to encode habitual aspect, but display an array of morphological devices to express this category. According to the literature, there is no single reconstructable Tungusic suffix or structure expressing habitual aspect, from which the constructions in today's languages could all be derived. The only reconstructed form mentioned in Benzing (1956: 1067 (119)) is **-wā.či*, which he labels as a marker of iterative aspect, and which is reflected in the North Tungusic languages Even and Negidal as *-WE:č* and *-vāč*, respectively, with the modified function of habitual aspect.

In Evenki, the language with which Dolgan has been in closest contact, habitual aspect can be expressed in two ways: by a participial construction employing the habitual participle in *-vki* and an auxiliary verb *bi-* 'to be' or by means of the suffix *-ηnA*. While both constructions are mentioned in the literature on Evenki (e.g. Nedjalkov 1997: 247, Bulatova & Grenoble 1999: 32, 40, Boldyrev 2007: 669-670) it is not clear from these sources what the difference in meaning or context of use between them actually is. For example, Boldyrev (2007: 669) describes the habitual aspect with *-ηnA* (in his words the 'present habitual tense')⁸ as reflecting "a repetitive, habitual, typical action, presented in the wider understanding of the present tense, and not connected with the moment of speech"⁹. He goes on to say that it "correlates with the habitual participle This participle ... represents the action in which the grammatical subject is involved as its characteristic, and is normally expressed predicatively"¹⁰. Thus it seems that both habitual structures share the property of representing an action as 'typical' or 'characteristic' of the grammatical subject, regardless of tense or moment of speech, which is a fairly common meaning of habitual aspect cross-linguistically (Dahl 1985: 100). Nedjalkov does not specify a difference in meaning either, except

⁸ Болдырев (2007: 669): "Настоящее обычное время." (translation mine).

⁹ Болдырев (2007: 669): "Это время выражает повторяющееся, обычное, типичное действие, представленное в широком плане настоящего времени, не связанного с моментом речи." (translation mine).

¹⁰ Болдырев (2007: 669-670): "Настоящее обычное время коррелирует с причастием обычным (...). Это причастие (...) обозначает присущее грамматическому субъекту действие как признак (...) выражаемый обычно предикативно." (translation mine).

that he adds the possible reading of *-vki* constructions as ‘potential’ and ‘probable’ (Nedjalkov 1997: resp. 236, 266). However, from a corpus of Evenki folklore texts it appears that the habitual in *-ŋnA* also has connections with the potential reading, especially the negative potential. Neither Boldyrev nor Nedjalkov make explicit what the ‘correlation’ between the two habitual constructions involves exactly, and their comparison is too brief to confidently disregard the possibility of any differences in meaning or in pragmatic use. However, since data from the grammars are currently the only available source, I will assume for now that semantic differences play a minor role and that the difference between the two habituals is primarily a matter of form and dialect choice.

The Evenki habitual in *-ŋnA* is an aspectual suffix that can be attached to any verb stem and is followed by tense and person marking:

EVENKI

- (6.21) *bu enin-du-ver bele-ŋne-re-v*
 we mother-DAT-REFL.POSS help-HAB-NONFUT-1PLEXCL
 ‘We usually help our mother.’ (adapted from Nedjalkov 1997: 247)

In contrast, the habitual aspect formed with *-vki* is an analytical construction formed with the participle, and optionally followed by a form of the auxiliary *bi-* ‘to be’ to form a full predicate.

EVENKI

- (6.22) *Nungan tangi-vki bi-si-n*
 she read-HAB be-PRS-3SG
 ‘She usually reads books.’ (Nedjalkov 1997: 236)

As was mentioned above, examples like 6.22 can also have the potential reading ‘she can read’ and what Nedjalkov calls the ‘universal tense’, which could correspond to what Boldyrev calls ‘tenseless’, indicating that the focus is not on the moment of speech, but rather on the habituality of the action, which, as we have just seen, was said to be the meaning encoded by the suffix *-ŋnA*. Neither construction matches the morphological structure of the habitual in Dolgan perfectly. The *-vki* construction matches Dolgan in that it is a habitual participle, but differs in that it is exclusively analytical (see example 6.22), whereas the habitual in Dolgan is formed synthetically, at least in the present tense (see example 6.10). The mirror image applies to the *-ŋnA* construction, which is

synthetic, like Dolgan, but which is not a participle. With respect to the nominal use of the habitual participle, this is possible in Evenki, but rare (see section 6.4.2.2).

In Even there are two suffixes encoding the habitual aspect, *-WE:Ā* and *-Gr(E)* (Malchukov 1995: 15, Benzing 1955: 42, 43). Both suffixes are attached to the verb stem, and can be followed by tense and person markers, as in examples 6.23 and 6.24 (Pakendorf, fielddata).

EVEN

- (6.23) *Eñeñe* ***te:leŋ-e-d-dzo:t-te-n*** *ti:tel* *bi-si-ten*
 grandmother tell-EP-PROG-GNR-NONFUT-3SG long.ago be-PST-POSS.3PL
oŋoĉ-ĭ-l-dula-da-ka *bej-u* *dzeb-mege-r.*
 Oroch-EP-PL-LOC=PRT=EMPH man-ACC eat-NLZR-PL
 ‘My grandmother used to tell that a long time ago amongst the Evens there were cannibals.’ (EPA: 003)

- (6.24) *Bi* *džugani-du* *čumrabortnitsaj* ***gurgewči-wre-re-m*** (...)
 1SG summer-DAT yurt.worker.INST.R work-HAB-NONFUT-1SG (...)
 ‘In summer I work as a yurt worker (...)’ (RDA: 019)

The meaning of *-WE:Ā* is described in Cincius (1952) as “... an action which is carried out habitually under certain conditions”¹¹. Malchukov, on the other hand, classifies the suffix as iterative, but with an “usitative-habitual meaning” (Malchukov 1995: 15). Cincius’ description of *-Gr(E)* is that “the action was carried out not once”¹², which is confirmed by Malchukov, who adds that it primarily refers to events in the past (Malchukov 1995: 15). However, recent findings seem to indicate that the difference between the two suffixes is not so much in their semantics as it is in their geographical distribution (Pakendorf, pers. comm.): *-WE:Ā* is very common in the Even dialect of Kamchatka, whereas *-Gr(E)* is most commonly found in the western dialect of Sebjan-Küöl.

Negidal also employs two strategies to express habitual aspect, however, they differ from each other in structure. On the one hand, there is the aspectual suffix *-vāč*, related to *-WE:Ā* in Even, and on the other hand, there is a participle

¹¹ Цинциус (1952: 742): “Означает, что речь идёт о действии, обычно совершающемся при тех или иных условиях.”

¹² Цинциус (1952: 742): “Означает, что действие совершалось не раз.”

construction using a habitual participle in *-vki*, even though in Benzing's (1956: 142) and Sunik's (1962: 228) comparative overviews this participle is only associated with Evenki. From the very brief description (Cincius 1982: 23) it is impossible to tell whether or not the two constructions differ in meaning.

The southern Tungusic languages also show variation when it comes to the encoding of habitual aspect. In Udighe, the habitual is expressed only analytically by the impersonal present participle followed by the auxiliary *bi-* 'to be', which takes the person and tense marking. In the present tense this auxiliary verb is optional and is "typically (...) omitted" (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 218).

UDIGHE

- (6.25) *nua-ni wakca-i*
 he-3SG hunt-PRS.PTC
 'He usually hunts.' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 218)

Alternatively, the present habitual can be formed with the impersonal form of the auxiliary verb, in which case the content verb occasionally takes person marking instead of the auxiliary. These constructions are fully interchangeable:

UDIGHE

- (6.26) *nua-ni wakca-i bie*
 he-3SG hunt-PRS.PTC be.PRS.HAB
 'He usually hunts.' (adapted from Nikolaeva & Tolskaya: 218)

In the past and future tenses, the copula is always present (except in the negative forms) and takes tense and person marking (6.27). In a few marginal examples person marking is attached to the auxiliary verb as well as to the participle (6.28).

UDIGHE

- (6.27) *wakca-i bi-si-mi*
 hunt-PRS.PTC be-PST-1SG
 'I used to hunt.' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya: 219)

- (6.28) *ag'a zugdii wo-isi-ni bu belesi-u bi-s'e-u*
 brother house.RFL make-PC-3SG we help-1PL.EXCL be-PF-1PL.EXCL
 'When my brother built a house, we helped him.' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya: 219)

In Nanai, the aspect of “duration, multiplication and permanency”¹³, is expressed by the suffixes *-či*, *-vači*, *-si*, and *-so*, the choice of which seems to be determined by semantic properties of the verb stem (Avrorin 1961: 45-46). Of these suffixes, *-vači* and its phonological variant *-veči* can be recognised from the North Tungusic languages Even and Negidal and from Avrorin’s description it seems that this suffix occurs predominantly with verb stems denoting motion, as in *iveči* [*i-veči-*, enter-HAB ‘to enter often’]. Although verb stems with which the suffixes occur may be put in very rough semantic categories, semantic differences between these suffixes themselves are not specified in the description of Nanai. Furthermore, Nanai employs the impersonal present/future participle, extended with the suffix *-ni*, to express the “habituality of an action” (Avrorin 1961: 91)

NANAI

(6.29) *adim-ba* *kiutel-di* ***va-o-ri-ni***
 beluga-ACC hook-INST kill-?-PRS.PTC-HAB
 ‘They catch beluga with a fishhook.’ (Avrorin 1961: 91, glossing mine)

This overview has shown that a formally marked category of habitual aspect is common in the Tungusic language family, but that the strategies to express this grammatical category are not homogeneous. An overview of the strategies discussed above is given in Table 6.3 below.

While the synthetic Proto-Tungusic **-wā.či* is reflected in Even, Negidal and Nanai, an additional analytical strategy is used in Evenki, Negidal and Nanai. Evenki also displays a synthetic strategy that is not related to the Proto-Tungusic suffix. The choice of strategy does not seem to correlate with a particular branch (northern or southern) of the Tungusic language family.

¹³ Avrorin (1961: 45): “Вид длительности, многократности и постоянства.”

Table 6.3: Encoding of habitual events in a number of Tungusic languages

Branch	Language	Analytic	Synthetic
Proto-Tungusic			*-wā.či
North Tungusic	Even		-WE.č
			-Gr(E)
	Negidal	HAB.PTC -vki + bi 'to be'	-vāč
	Evenki	HAB.PTC -vki + bi- 'to be'	-ŋna-
South Tungusic	Udighe	PRS.PTC -i + bi- 'to be'	
	Nanai		-vači
			-či
		-si	
			-so

To tie this back to the observed differences between Dolgan and Sakha, it can be concluded that there is no direct match between Dolgan and the Tungusic languages as far as the construction is concerned. However, they do behave identically with respect to the purely verbal use of the participle. While in Sakha the habitual participle is used as an agent nominaliser, this is not possible in Dolgan and the Tungusic languages Evenki and Negidal.

6.4.2.2 FREQUENCY OF HABITUAL ASPECT IN TUNGUSIC LANGUAGES

Even and Udighe

For the comparison of frequencies of habituals between Dolgan and Tungusic languages the best available source was a corpus of Even texts. This is the only Tungusic language for which a spoken text corpus is available and which is comparable in size, text genre and annotation style to the corpora used for Dolgan and Sakha. Although Even and Evenki are different languages, they are closely related to each other, and therefore an investigation of this language may still provide useful insights with respect to the use of habituals. The corpus (collected and transcribed by Brigitte Pakendorf) contains spoken texts from two Even dialects, the eastern Even dialect of Kamchatka and the western dialect of Sebjan Küöl. For both dialects the two habitual suffixes -WE:č and -Gr(E) were counted. The results are presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4. Frequency distribution of habituals in two dialects of Even

Dialect	No. of words	-WE:č̣		-Gr(E)		Total	
		Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
Kamchatka	21,700	521	2.4	11	0.05	532	2.5
Sebjan Küöl	42,000	216	0.5	1000	2.4	1216	2.9

The frequency of the two suffixes is indicated in absolute numbers as well as in percentage of the total number of words in the corpus. Apart from the fact that the use of the two suffixes is clearly geographically conditioned (-WE:č̣ is found in Kamchatka and -Gr(E) almost exclusively in Sebjan Küöl¹⁴), the overall frequency of habituals in the two dialects is comparable (2.5% in Kamchatka and 2.9% in Sebjan Küöl), but much higher than in Dolgan (1.4%) and Sakha (0.2%).

A very preliminary survey of Udighe texts (Southern Tungusic) shows a similar pattern. The mini-corpus used for this impressionistic overview is based on glossed texts at the back of the descriptive grammar of Udighe (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001). In this collection of 1,700 words, 47 instances of habitual aspect were encountered, which is 2.8% of the total number of words. While the corpus is very small and the reliability of these numbers is questionable as a representation of the language as a whole, the similarity of this percentage to the data from Even is striking, and may indicate that in the Tungusic family a frequent usage of habituals is common.

Evenki

For Evenki no spoken text corpus was available at the time this research was conducted, which is equivalent to Dolgan, Sakha and Even in size and genre. However, as a best alternative, a survey of Evenki folkore texts was used to get a first impression. The study of this material revealed an interesting diversity in the use of habituals across different Evenki dialects and it is worth discussing the findings in this context. It needs to be emphasised that the findings cannot be

¹⁴ Although -WE:č̣ is found in the dialect of Sebjan Küöl, it should be mentioned that its use is lexically determined, and is restricted to certain verbs, especially *bi-* 'be', whereas -Gr(E) can occur with any verb (Pakendorf, pers. comm.).

more than impressionistic due to their nature, and the outcomes need to be investigated in more detail once an annotated spoken corpus becomes available. The hypotheses formulated on the basis of this survey are primarily postulated to define useful directions for future research rather than to answer questions with certainty.

The corpus (18,247 words) contained folklore texts from three different dialects of Evenki, the Symskij and Ilimpijskij dialects and the dialect of Podkamennaya Tunguska. The Ilimpijskij dialect borders Dolgan geographically, while the dialects of Podkamennaya Tunguska and Symskij are spoken further south and west from the Dolgan-speaking area. The texts were coded for the habitual constructions introduced in section 6.4.2.1, the participle construction in *-vki* and the synthetic form in *-ɲA*¹⁵. For all three dialects, I computed the frequency of their occurrence as a percentage of the total number of words, the results of which are summarised in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5. Overall frequency of habitual mood in Evenki

Dialect	No. of words	No. of habituals	% of all words
Ilimp.	1,501	26	1.73
PKT	5,746	46	0.80
Syms	8,000	51	0.64

The first observation from Table 6.5 is that Evenki is not a homogeneous unit when it comes to the frequency of habituals across the different dialects. This impression is confirmed by a chi-square test comparing the three distributions ($p < 0.0001$, $df = 2$). The Ilimpijskij dialect shows the highest ratio of habituals taken over the total number of words (1.73%), followed at some distance by the dialects of Podkamennaya Tunguska (0.8%) and the Symskij dialect (0.64%). A Fisher exact test comparing the frequencies for every possible pair of dialects identifies the Ilimpijskij dialect as the cause of this non-homogeneous picture. The Ilimpijskij dialect is significantly different from the other two dialects (Ilimp. vs. PKT: $p = 0.003$, Ilimp. vs. Syms.: $p < 0.00011$), whereas the frequency difference between the dialect of Podkamennaya Tunguska and the Symskij dialect is not significant ($p = 0.30$).

¹⁵ Thanks to Jana Neuwirt for the coding work.

Comparison of the Evenki dialects with Dolgan and Sakha shows that all language pairs are significantly different in their use of habituais, except the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki and its geographical neighbour Dolgan. This outcome is represented in Table 6.6, in which the boldly printed p-value of 0.31 is not significant.

Table 6.6. P-values for comparison of habitual frequency between Evenki dialects, Dolgan and Sakha

	Ilimpijskij	PKT	Syms
Dolgan	p = 0.31	p = 0.0004	p < 0.0001
Sakha	p < 0.0001	p < 0.0001	p < 0.0001

The impression of similarity between the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki and Dolgan is strengthened when we look at the strategy that is used to express habitual aspect. In contrast to the other two Evenki dialects, the Ilimpijskij dialect uses predominantly the habitual participle to express habitual meaning, and as we know this is also the case in Dolgan. Table 6.7 summarises the distribution of the two strategies in the Evenki dialects.

Table 6.7. Frequency of habitual on *-vki* and *-ŋnA* in Evenki dialects

Dialect	No. of words	<i>-ŋnA</i>	% of all words	<i>-vki</i>	% of all words
Ilimp.	1,501	5	0.33	21	1.38
PKT	5,746	19	0.33	27	0.45
Syms	8,000	50	0.63	1	0.01

With respect to the suffix *-ŋnA* there is no significant difference in frequency of use across the three dialects, The construction with *-vki* establishes variation ranging from virtually absent in the Symskij dialect (0.01%) to 0.45% in the dialect of Podkamennaya Tunguska and a significantly different percentage of 1.38% in the Ilimpijskij dialect (p < 0.001 for a Fisher exact test).

Apart from frequency, the habitual participle in *-vki* shows similarity to the Dolgan use of the participle in *-A:ččī* in other respects. While it can occur with attributive, nominal and predicative function, as exemplified in sentences 6.30, 6.31, 6.32, Nedjalkov notes in his grammar that the overwhelming majority of cases is predicative (adapted from Nedjalkov 1997: 268).

EVENKI

(6.30) *Havali-vki beje suru-re-n.*
 work-HAB man go.away-NONFUT-3SG
 ‘The man who usually works went away.’

(6.31) *Aičimni bumu-d’e-vki-ve aj-ra-n.*
 doctor be.ill-IMPV-HAB-DEF.ACC cure-NONFUT-3SG
 ‘The doctor healed the person who was often ill.’

(6.32) *Nujan tangi-vki bi-si-n*
 he read-HAB be-PRS.3SG
 ‘He usually reads’ or ‘He can read.’ (adapted from Nedjalkov 1997: 236)

In the same grammar, he mentions that the attributive participle has a very restricted use (Nedjalkov 1997: 276), and as a noun, the habitual participle does not occur as an agent nominaliser, which is the main nominal function of the habitual in Sakha, but is of questionable status in Dolgan (see Section 6.3.3.3). This is confirmed by the results from the Evenki text corpus, where *-vki* occurs only with a verbal function. Thus, the predominantly verbal employment of the participle in the Ilimpijskij dialect corresponds to the way it is used in Dolgan.

The fact that the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki behaves significantly different from its genealogically related neighbouring dialects, in combination with the similarity in frequency to its unrelated neighbour Dolgan, makes the idea that the deviating pattern in Evenki is due to contact tempting. However, the data have shown that both the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki and Dolgan deviate from their closest relatives. If the abovementioned similarity was motivated by contact, then linguistic data alone are not enough to establish the source and recipient language, and thus the direction of change.

6.5 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

Thus the data presented here have sketched the following picture. Dolgan and Sakha differ in their use of habitual aspect in overall frequency (1.4% in Dolgan vs. 0.2% in Sakha) and with respect to its character. In Dolgan the habitual participle is used almost exclusively in a verbal way, while in Sakha the nominal use is also

relatively common. The nominal use in Dolgan is so rare in spontaneous speech that the nominal status of the participle can be questioned. At the same time, the Evenki data also display dialectal variation, whereby the Ilimpijskij dialect differs significantly from the other two, and shows an overall frequency of habituals that is comparable to Dolgan. To facilitate interpretation, the frequencies for Evenki as well as for the other dialects and languages are repeated in the table below.

Table 6.8. Frequency of habituals per dialect and per language

Family	Language	Dialect	% of HAB/ dialect	% of HAB/language
Turkic	Sakha		0.2	0.2
	Dolgan		1.4	1.4
Tungusic	Evenki	Ilimp.	1.7	0.8
		PKT	0.8	
		Syms.	0.6	
	Even	Kamch.	2.5	2.7
		SK	2.9	
	Udighe		2.8	2.8

This similarity between two unrelated languages, Dolgan and the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki, which at the same time differ from their respective sister languages, leads to the idea that the observed similarity in the frequent use of the habitual aspect could be an areal feature motivated by contact. Given the history of the Dolgans and Evenks on the Taimyr Peninsula, this is certainly not unthinkable.

However, even if contact did play a role, the question remains which language accommodated to which? As we have seen, the linguistic data alone are not sufficient to answer this question. The high frequency of habitual aspect in Tungusic languages and the low frequency in Sakha stimulates the thought that Dolgan adapted to the Tungusic pattern. However, the data from Evenki complicate this picture. The divergence in frequency across the Evenki dialects makes it hard to determine which of the dialect frequencies represents 'typical Evenki', if there is such a thing. The average frequency of habituals varies from 0.6% to 1.7% and it is unclear which proportion best represents the language use of the average Evenki speaker.

On the one hand, the high frequency observed in the Ilimpijskij dialect could be a remnant of a typical Tungusic pattern, which would be compatible with the high frequencies recorded for Even and Udighe. In that case, the high percentage

in Dolgan could have emerged as an accommodation to Evenki, most probably brought about by Evenki speakers who shifted to Dolgan/Sakha. The low frequency in the other two dialects could be attributed to contact of these dialects with Turkic languages, in particular Sakha, where use of habitual is low. On the other hand, the low frequency in the Symskij dialect and the dialect of Podkamennaya Tunguska could represent the Evenki standard. In this case the speakers of the Ilimpijskij dialect would have accommodated to Dolgan, in which the frequent use of habituals would have developed language-internally.

Despite all caveats, the former scenario seems more likely for a number of reasons. First, at the moment we have no plausible justification for a purely language-internal account. Support for such an account would come from historical information about Dolgan, which would allow us to track the use of the habitual participle through time. Alternatively, a language-internal account would be attractive if a similar phenomenon were observed in other Sakha dialects outside of the contact area, or if the neighbouring languages did not have habitual aspect. However, none of these conditions apply to Dolgan. We have no historical material from Dolgan older than from the 1920's, which is long after the period of intense contact with the Evenks, the frequent occurrence of habituals is only observed in Dolgan, and habitual aspect is a prominent category in Tungusic languages, including Evenki. Therefore, the possibility of language external-motivation needs to be taken seriously.

Second, historical records mention Evenks shifting to Dolgan, rather than the other way round (although the opposite direction did of course occasionally occur as well). Finally, within language contact theory the transfer of frequency patterns is associated primarily with situations of language shift. While this is not an indisputable law, this tendency supports the idea that in the case of contact-induced change, speakers of Dolgan accommodated to Evenki rather than the other way round. More specifically, the described phenomenon could be classified as *frequential copying* (Johanson 1992: 175, 2002a: 13, 109, 2002b: 292) which means that

frequency patterns peculiar to model code units [source language units in the terminology used in this thesis, E.S.] are copied onto units of the basic code [or recipient language, E.S.] so that the latter undergo an increase or a decrease in frequency of occurrence. (Johanson 2002b: 292)

In Heine and Kuteva's words, "increased frequency of use is the driving force in establishing new use patterns" (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 47), during which a 'minor use pattern' in the recipient language expands to become a 'major use pattern' due to contact with a source language, which is a common phenomenon in contact situations cross-linguistically (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 44).

But even if we accept Evenki as the source language and Dolgan as the recipient language for the transfer of this frequency pattern, there is still the question with respect to the underlying process of the transfer. Dolgan speakers may have adopted the pattern of a commonly-used habitual into their language through the process of borrowing, or it may have appeared as a result of imposition by Evenki speakers who shifted to Dolgan and projected this pattern onto their target language. Since copying of morphosyntactic patterns is mostly associated with scenarios of language shift and imposition (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 50, Van Coetsem 2000: 58, 59), and since we know from historical and genetic sources (Dolgikh 1963, Whitten et al. in preparation) that there must have been considerable number of Evenks who intermarried with the Dolgans and adopted their language (see Sections 2.3.2.3 and 2.6), the most realistic assumption is that the increase in use of habituals was introduced into Dolgan by speakers of Evenki who shifted to Dolgan. It is possible to imagine that a significant number of Evenki-speaking people, who were learning Dolgan, found in the Dolgan suffix *-A:ččI* a semantic equivalent to their own habitual suffixes *-vki* and *-ɲna*. Imperfect learning by the first generation and the presumed large number of Evenks that mixed and intermarried with the Dolgans, may have provided an excellent context for the new pattern to spread. According to Hickey (2010), this scenario is rather common in situations of language shift. He writes that

[w]hen shifting to another language, temporarily or permanently, adults expect the same grammatical distinctions in the target which they know from their native language. To this end they search for equivalents in the target language to categories they are familiar with. This process is an unconscious one and persists even with speakers who have considerable target language proficiency. If the categories of the outset language are semantically motivated then the search to find an equivalent in the target is all the more obvious. (Hickey 2010: 155)

The fact that contact with Mongolic had already led to the marginal use of the participle in *-A:ččI* as a verb in other Turkic languages, including Sakha before it spread to the far north, may have facilitated this process.

As an alternative explanation one could consider the possibility that neither Dolgan nor Evenki was the source of this change, but that it happened as a result of contact with an external third language, with which both Dolgan and Evenki were in contact. The most obvious candidates for such a scenario would be the Samoyedic languages Nganasan or Enets, which are spoken in the area as well. However, this possibility must be dispelled. First, although these Samoyedic languages have aspectual suffixes to express iterativity or durativity, they do not have a specific category for habitual aspect. Second, although the Samoyedic people have inhabited the Taimyr Peninsula the longest and their languages must have been widespread in the area, they lived relatively isolated from other ethnolinguistic groups, and interaction with other groups was infrequent when compared to the life-style of the trading Dolgans (see Chapter 2). Thus the relatively low intensity of contact, the absence of sociolinguistic dominance and the non-prominent use of habituais make the possibility of Nganasan as the source language of the changes in Dolgan and Evenki very implausible.

To summarise, it has been shown that Dolgan and Sakha differ significantly with respect to the use of the habitual participle. This applies to its overall frequency as well as to its use as an agent nominaliser. On the basis of the available data it is not possible to explain this difference conclusively, either as language-internal or as motivated by contact. However, the frequent use of habituais in Tungusic languages, the similarity between Dolgan and the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki and the history of contact between Dolgans and Evenks on the Taimyr foreshadow fruitful research in this domain for the future.

For this, more annotated text corpora are needed, in particular for spoken Evenki and for other Turkic languages. In addition, more detailed semantic analysis of the exact connotations and contexts of use for the different habitual suffixes in Evenki, as well as across Dolgan and Evenki would be helpful to determine the degree of overlap between the two languages. Nonetheless, the data enable us to quantify differences that have been mentioned anecdotally in descriptions of Dolgan and Sakha, and the first impressionistic results from this comparative corpus study generate hypotheses as to the cause of these differences. Finally, this study proves the importance of corpus studies in the investigation of synchronic variation and diachronic change, since they provide crucial information that cannot be acquired from grammars alone.

