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

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CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 DRAWING THE STRANDS TOGETHER

The previous chapters have presented a number of differences between Dolgan and Sakha that most probably arose through contact with Evenki on the one hand and with Russian on the other. Based on a comparison of Dolgan with other Turkic and Tungusic languages, as well as on the fact that Dolgan history is characterised by frequent contact with other ethnic groups, it was argued that these differences represent changes in Dolgan rather than in Sakha. The survey of the contact-induced changes, as well as the underlying processes shows a heterogeneous picture. Changes were described for the lexicon, morphology and morphosyntax of Dolgan, and some were associated with the process of borrowing, others with imposition and again for others both processes seemed to have played a role.

So far, the primary focus has been on the identification of individual contact-induced changes and on their analysis in terms of social and historical factors. However, in the quest for insights into which role contact-induced linguistic change can play in the reconstruction of a people's prehistory, it is necessary to extend our scope beyond a simple inventory of changes. For this purpose, we need

to zoom out from the individual differences and view the contact situation as a whole, including not only the linguistic information, but also material from socio-historical, ethnographic and genetic sources. Only by embedding the linguistic changes in this context, can we properly evaluate their significance.

Both socio-historical information and theories of language contact provide indispensible clues for understanding contact-induced changes as well as for reconstructing the social setting in which they may have occurred. However, the conclusions drawn on the basis of this information alone remain tentative. To be sure, the correlations between contact-induced changes and social settings that have been proposed in different theories of language contact are based on cross-linguistic generalisations over a wide variety of case studies and therefore carry a high probabilistic value. However, contact linguists themselves recognise that these generalisations are anything but absolute. There are simply too many variables in a contact situation to predict the linguistic outcome. The same holds for socio-historical information. As was pointed out in Section 2.4.2, it is impossible to acquire a complete picture of all the social factors that have played a role in the linguistic outcomes of a contact situation, because historical reports may be skewed by the writer's intentions or obligations, by limited access to the communities in question, or by chance. Therefore, on the basis of these two kinds of data, we can only deduce likely scenarios in which the changes occurred.

The only kind of information that is not influenced by peoples' opinions and intentions is our genetic material. As explained in Chapter 2, haplogroup frequencies for mtDNA and the Y-chromosome combined with data on haplotype sharing can provide information about a population's prehistory along the maternal and the paternal lines respectively. Although genetic data cannot remove all ambiguities either, they do provide a more objective basis for the reconstruction of a people's prehistory and allow us to formulate hypotheses about shared ancestry and patterns of migration with more certainty. Recognising the fact that it is the contact situation as a whole, including socio-historical, ethnographic, linguistic and genetic data that must be considered for the most meaningful interpretation of the language data, this discussion will explore the data per contact setting rather than per linguistic domain.

After a schematic summary of the main lines of thought that were developed in the individual chapters, the contact situation between Dolgans and Evenks, and between Dolgans and Russians, are discussed separately. For both settings, I will summarise the contact-induced linguistic changes in lexicon, morphology and

syntax, and I will interpret them within the socio-historical context (such as status of the languages in contact, the attitudes of the communities in contact, the sizes of the communities, etc.) and link them to the genetic data.

9.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Table 9.1 presents a schematic overview of the contact-induced changes in Dolgan. They are sorted by contact language on the one hand and linguistic domain on the other, as well as by the underlying processes of transfer. In addition to the two concrete contact languages Evenki and Russian, lingua franca is added as an explanation for those changes that probably arose as a result of the ancestor language of Dolgan as a means of intergroup communication. Crucially the explanations are not mutually exclusive, and changes can occur in more than one column, allowing for multicausality. This summary is a brief reminder of the investigated contact-induced changes and their associated processes and is meant as a mnemonic during the detailed discussion of each contact situation.

Table 9.1. Summary of contact-induced changes in lexical, morphological and syntactic domains

	EVENKI		RUSSIAN		LINGUA FRANCA
	Borrowing	Imposition	Borrowing	Imposition	
Lex.	• cultural terms • non-cultural terms	• semantic structure of kinship terms	• cultural terms • non-cultural terms • conjunctions		
Morph.		• regularisation - verb *e-* - unstable noun stems			• regularisation - verb *e-* - unstable noun stems
Synt.		• increased frequency of habitual use of *onton*	• word order • coordination strategies subordination strategies	• word order • coordination strategies subordination strategies	• parataxis • morph.synt. simplification

9.3 CONTACT WITH EVENKS

9.3.1 LINGUISTIC CHANGES

This research has shown that the contact with the Evenks has not just led to changes in the culture of the Turkic people who moved to the north, but has also had a linguistic impact and accounts for a significant subset of the differences between Dolgan and Sakha that we witness today. Most directly, this influence can be seen in full copies of lexical items for cultural as well as some non-cultural items, where form and meaning are copied wholesale from Evenki into Dolgan. More indirectly it can be seen in structural changes, such as the semantic restructuring of kinship terminology, the frequent use of the habitual mood in Dolgan, and the morphosyntactic properties and frequency of the coordinating element *onton* 'and then'. In addition it was argued that the regularisation of the inflectional paradigms for *e-* 'to be' and of unstable noun stems could be attributed to a large number of L2 learners and the function of Dolgan as a language of intergroup communication. Based on the available socio-historical information on the relations between the native populations of the Taimyr Peninsula between the 17th and 20th centuries, and on insights from language contact theory, complemented by a certain amount of common sense, the identified changes were associated with the linguistic processes of borrowing and imposition (Van Coetsem 1995, 2000). While the changes cover a variety of linguistic domains, they have one characteristic in common: apart from the lexical copies that most probably were introduced into Dolgan through the process of borrowing, all other differences are structural changes associated primarily with the process of imposition. This of course does not exclude the possibility that at speaker level some of the changes developed as a result of more than one process: depending on individual differences in the language dominance of the speakers, the same linguistic variant could be brought about through the processes of borrowing and imposition in different individuals. However, the conclusions about the paramount linguistic process are based on generalisations that emerge from social and historical facts, which allow us to formulate hypotheses about the linguistic balance in the majority of bilingual at community level.

As described in Chapter 2, the ancestor language of Dolgan (referred to as Dolgan/Sakha) was the lingua franca on the Taimyr Peninsula in the 18th and 19th centuries and was used for intergroup communication for about two hundred years. This social dominance of Dolgan/Sakha in this region is a compelling

reason to assume that in this contact situation the non-Turkic-speaking populations would learn Dolgan/Sakha, rather than the other way round. This would have produced a considerable number of L2 speakers of Dolgan/Sakha, which is in turn associated with structural changes and the process of imposition (see Sections 3.1.3.3 and 3.1.4.1).

Lexicon

Evenki influence on the Dolgan lexicon materialises as full lexical copies, and as copies of semantic structure. Lexical copies from Evenki are not restricted to particular semantic fields, but are distributed across the entire lexicon. The overall number of lexical copies is not very high (22.5% of all lexical replacements and only 3.7% of all lexical differences between Dolgan and Sakha), but their distribution across a wide range of semantic fields points to a contact situation that went beyond the adoption of only cultural features and was not confined to the transition to a lifestyle of reindeer herding (even though many copies are indeed related to these practices).

The semantic changes that took place in the semantic fields of 'the body' and 'kinship' lend more credence to this idea, since all but one of the changes in terms related to 'the body' were such that the modified meaning matches the semantic pattern of Evenki. Despite this striking similarity, a language-internal explanation could not be excluded completely, since most semantic changes followed pathways that are common in language-internal change as well. Quite possibly these are instances of language change where multiple motivations conspired towards one linguistic outcome.

In contrast, the match in the semantic structure of kinship terms in Dolgan and Evenki is too striking and too particular to be caused by language-internal change. First, the matches in meaning are exact, and second, the change is not restricted to independent lexical items, but applies to an entire set of interrelated concepts, revealing that the entire system of kinship terms is affected. To recapitulate, it was found that Dolgan speakers label the concepts BROTHER/SISTER, UNCLE/AUNT and FATHER-IN-LAW/MOTHER-IN-LAW with lexical forms that match those in Sakha, but their meaning is allocated according to the Evenki system of kinship terms. The nature of the changes themselves, as well as the socio-historical information on the relation between the Dolgans and the Evenks between the 17th and 19th centuries (see Chapter 2) unite towards an

explanation of this phenomenon in terms of imposition of semantic structures from Evenki onto lexical forms of Sakha origin.

First, structural change, including changes in semantic structure, is typically associated with imposition, a correlation made on the basis of cognitive principles of L2 learning (see Section 3.1.3. for details) and confirmed by data from research on contact-induced change. However, there are more, and perhaps more compelling, reasons to arrive at the conclusion that the Evenki-speaking population, and not the speakers of Dolgan/Sakha, initiated these changes and projected the semantic structure of their mother tongue onto their L2 (Dolgan/Sakha). In addition to the fact that structural features of a speaker's L1 show through most persistently in his L2 as a result of cognitive learning principles, the nature of the semantic domain in which these particular structural changes took place also favours a scenario of imposition. Kinship terminology is a semantic domain for which there is a particularly tight connection between linguistic labelling and actual social structure. Kinship terms are not simple denotations of individuals, but they reflect the underlying social system of family relationships within a community. In that case, a scenario of borrowing becomes highly unlikely. It would mean that the combination of Evenki semantic (and social) structure with Sakha terms that we observe in Dolgan came about through L1 (and dominant) Sakha speakers who adopted the Evenki social, and consequently semantic, structure through borrowing, and matched this new structure onto their native terminology. While the adoption of a different social system would perhaps be possible in a situation of intense long-term cultural contact and high social and cultural pressure, it would be implausible that this happened without extensive borrowing of linguistic substance in this semantic domain.

More realistic is a scenario in which groups of Evenks joined the community along the Khatanga Trading Way, bringing with them their own customs, traditions and social structures. Dolgikh's table of marriages (see Section 2.3.2.3) showed that a considerable number of Evenks intermarried with the Turkic speaking Dolgan, and probably adopted Dolgan/Sakha as their L2. Other Evenks acquired Dolgan/Sakha as an L2 because of its use as a lingua franca. This setting supported a constantly renewed stream of L2 learners, who, importantly, did not (have to) abandon their own culture, but only used Dolgan/Sakha forms to label their own concepts. Some of these Evenk groups eventually shifted to Dolgan/Sakha due to the wide functional domain of this language, as well as its

perceived prestige. To apply this to the semantic change of kinship terms, one may assume that despite the linguistic adaptation to the Sakha, these Evenks did not adapt their own social structures during this process. They maintained their traditional social structure, but had to use Sakha terms to express these relations. This meant that through interlingual identification they had to find a match between their native Evenki terms and their closest equivalent in Sakha. In certain cases this match between the Evenki and the Sakha terms was perfect, but in other cases the semantic overlap was only partial, leading to differences in denotation of the Sakha term between L1 speakers and L2 speakers. Assuming a relatively large number of mixed Sakha-Evenk families, as well as of L2 Dolgan/Sakha-speaking Evenks, this 'foreigner' version of Dolgan/Sakha gradually became common use among the L1 speakers of Sakha as well, thus becoming the established way of using kinship terminology within this variety.

However, the most compelling reason to attribute this semantic change to imposition is the genetic confirmation of the intense contact between Dolgans and Evenks. The high proportion of Tungusic related haplogroups in today's Dolgan population indicates that an influx of Tungusic genetic material into the Dolgan community was certainly not exceptional and thus that marriages between Evenks and Dolgan/Sakha people were common. The fact that the Dolgans speak a Turkic language today implies that many Tungusic speakers must have gone through a stage of learning Dolgan/Sakha as a second language, endorsing the idea of imposition as an explanation for the semantic change. A similar scenario can also be seen to account for other contact-induced changes in Dolgan.

Regularisation

The discussion of regularisation patterns in the paradigm of *e-* 'to be' as well as in the inflectional paradigm of unstable noun stems concluded with the remark that it is not possible to make a rigid distinction between processes of L1 and L2 acquisition as an explanation of this development. Regularisation of paradigms is a common phenomenon in both domains, as a result of general mechanisms of human learning, and unless there are languages without any L2 learners the two processes cannot be rigorously separated. However, there are reasons to assume that in this particular case the explanation for the observed regularisation requires a component of L2 learning, and hence of contact. The main reason for this assumption is the geographical distribution of the regularised variety. Although not all existing Sakha dialects could be sampled for comparison, only

Dolgan, which is spoken in an area of contact (and which linguistically appears equally close to Sakha as Sakha dialects are to each other), displays this tendency towards regularisation.

One may object that the Dolgan-speaking area is not the only area where Sakha-speaking communities were in frequent contact with other ethnic groups, and that there are many examples of Sakha groups maintaining close relations with Tungusic-speaking groups (Evenks, Evens) where this regularisation did not occur. However, in these situations there is no genetic evidence of admixture between Sakha and Evenks, showing that these contact situations were fundamentally different from the one on the Taimyr Peninsula (Pakendorf pers. comm.). In addition, as rightly pointed out by Thomason (2010) one should not aspire to explain why changes did *not* occur in some communities, while they did occur in others. Rather one should aim at explaining the changes that *have* occurred in order to get better insights into the range of possible contact scenarios and their linguistic outcomes. For these reasons, the absence of regularisation in contact situations of Dolgan's closest relative Sakha does not at all demote L2 learning as a relevant explanation for the present change in Dolgan. Thus, the argument of geographical distribution and the clear genetic evidence of contact between Dolgans and Evenks are supported by the overall picture of differences between Dolgan and Sakha which is now emerging, and which reveals more examples of structural changes typically associated with L2 learning.

Habitual

One of these changes is the significant difference in the use of the habitual participle in Dolgan and Sakha. Frequency analyses of text corpora of Dolgan, Sakha and Even, as well as initial data from three Evenki dialects and Udighe, showed an interesting pattern: languages belonging to the same language family displayed significant frequency differences in their use of the habitual participle, while this difference disappeared between languages belonging to different families, but spoken in adjacent areas. In other words, there were significant differences between Dolgan and Sakha, and between the Evenki dialects, but not between Dolgan and the Ilimpijskij dialect of Evenki, which is spoken on the edge of the Dolgan-speaking area. While this could plausibly be argued to point to an areal phenomenon, it does not give an indication as to which languages behave 'typically' for the language family, and which languages have changed. Comparison with Tungusic Udighe and Even showed that the habitual in these

languages is used even more frequently than in the Evenki dialects, which would suggest that the change occurred in Dolgan, rendering it more similar to the Tungusic pattern.

Research on frequency comparisons using text-based corpora in studies of language contact is still in its infancy and more corpus data are needed to verify these hypotheses in the future. However, these preliminary results, in combination with the other structural changes and the socio-historical information about the area, support the conclusion that this may be one more structural change motivated by contact.

Coordinative element onton

This social setting also provides the perfect conditions for the development of the final set of differences between Dolgan and Sakha associated with Evenki influence: the frequent use of *onton* 'and then' to link coordinate sentences and the potential role of this element in the absence of *uonna* 'and'. In Chapter 8 two explanations were suggested for this overwhelming use of *onton*. The first was entirely language-internal and relied on the functional overlap between *onton* and *uonna* that could have rendered one of the two elements redundant, and could have eventually led to the loss of *uonna* in Dolgan discourse. However, this would not explain the complete absence of this element in the Dolgan language material available to me. The alternative explanation for this difference suggested influence from Evenki in the same way as described for the semantic restructuring of kinship terms, the difference being that this is not a content word but a function word. In a similar fashion to the semantic restructuring of kinship terms, it was suggested that L1 speakers of Evenki projected the semantic and functional properties of the Evenki coordinator *taduk* 'and then' onto the Dolgan/Sakha element *onton* 'and then' through interlingual identification, which was stimulated by the identical morphological structure of the two elements and their partial functional overlap. This would explain the difference in use of *onton* between modern Dolgan and Sakha (inter- as well as intraclausal use in Dolgan as opposed to merely interclausal coordination in Sakha), as well as the complete absence of *uonna* in Dolgan: rather than assuming that it gradually lost territory, in which case some kind of record, relic in fixed expressions or perhaps recognition by Dolgan people would be expected, it may simply never have been present in the L2 variety of Dolgan/Sakha that came to dominate the area.

9.3.1.1 A NOTE ON PHONETICS

Due to fundamentally different methodological requirements, an in-depth investigation of phonological, phonetic and intonational differences between Dolgan and Sakha was not included in the current study. However, since theories of language contact predict that changes in these domains are typically twinned with changes in syntax (Tomason and Kaufman 1988: 50) a brief overview of the literature on this topic, complemented by my own observations, is in order. This brief description deals with the allophonic variation of [s] and [h], [k] and [q] as well as [g] and [ʁ], and with the less strict adherence to the rules of vowel harmony in Dolgan. Since here the focus is on the phonetic realisation of the phonemes, IPA symbols are used for their representation. The correspondence between the transcription symbols used elsewhere in this thesis and the IPA symbols can be found in the reference information. To understand how the phonetic differences fit into the sound system, the consonant and vowel inventories for Dolgan and Sakha are presented in Tables 9.2 and 9.3. The square brackets indicate that this sound has an allophone.

Table 9.2: Consonant inventory of Dolgan and Sakha

	Labial	*Alveodental*	*Palatal*	*Velar*	*Uvular*	*Glottal*
plosive	b, p	d, t	dʲ	g, k	[q]	
fricative		s			[ʁ]	h
affricate			[dʒ], tʃ			
nasal	m	n	ɲ	ŋ		
glide			j			
liquid		r, l				

Table 9.3: Vowel inventory in Dolgan and Sakha

	Monophthongs				Diphthongs	
	low		*high*			
	Unrounded	*rounded*	*unrounded*	*rounded*	*unrounded*	*rounded*
back	a, aː	o, oː	ɯ, ɯː	u, uː	ɯa	uo
front	e, eː	ø, øː	i, iː	y, yː	ie	yø

Allophones [s] and [h]: allophonic variation between [s] and [h] is common in both Dolgan and Sakha, as in *saːs* and *haːs* ‘spring’. Since the variant with [s] is represented in Sakha orthography, and the variant with [h] in Dolgan

orthography, this seems an established difference between the languages. However, in fact it is confined to the orthographic domain, since in spoken language Sakha and Dolgan speakers mostly use [h]. Nonetheless, there could be a difference in the explanation of the use of [h]. The replacement of [s] by [h] has been ascribed to substrate influence from Evenki in the literature for both languages, since the distribution of the allophones matches the distribution of the same allophones in the Evenki dialects they were in contact with (Ubryatova 1985: 32). However, on the basis of historical word lists of Sakha, in combination with historical and genetic data, Pakendorf argues that for most dialects of Sakha a language internal motivation is a more likely explanation (Pakendorf 2007: 93). However, for Dolgan she concludes that an external explanation cannot be excluded.

Allophones [k] and [q]: These velar and uvular sounds also occur as allophones in both Dolgan and Sakha. However there are differences with respect to the details of their phonetic realisation and their distribution. In Dolgan [k] and [q] are both plosives, whereby [k] is velar and [q] is uvular (Stachowski 1999: 17). In Sakha [q] is more aspirated and is therefore sometimes classified as a uvular fricative [χ] (Stachowski and Menz 1998: 418). According to my own observation, the realisation of this uvular sound in Sakha varies across speakers, some producing a more plosive, others a more fricative uvular. As far as the distribution is concerned, in both languages [q] occurs before and after low back vowels (/o/ and /a/), as in *χa:r* 'snow' and *hoγotoχ* 'single'. However, in Sakha this allophone is also used after low front vowels, whereas in Dolgan [k] is used in this environment (*beleχ* vs. *belek* 'present'). Ubryatova notes that the Dolgan distribution becomes more frequent also in the northwestern dialects of Sakha in a similar fashion to the difference in variation between [s] and [h].

As a motivation for this difference it is worth noting that the allophone [q] is absent in Evenki. The correlation between decreased use of this allophone in Dolgan and the northwestern dialects of Sakha, and increased intensity of contact as we know it from historical records suggests that substrate influence from Evenki should be considered as an explanation for this difference in distribution.

[g] and [ɤ]: Like its voiceless counterpart, the voiced velar plosive /g/ also has two allophones: a uvular voiced approximant [ɤ] and a voiced velar plosive [g]. Both in Dolgan and Sakha, [ɤ] is used between low back vowels as in *aγa* 'father' and *oγo* 'child'. However, in Sakha it is also found before and after low vowels and between low front vowels, whereas in Dolgan, [g] is used in these environments

(cf. Sakha *beɣehe* and Dolgan *begehe* 'yesterday'). According to Ubryatova, the limited use of [ʁ] in Dolgan could be due to influence from Evenki, in which this allophone is used in the same phonological environment as in Dolgan (Bulatova and Grenoble 1999: 5).

The final difference concerns the rules of vowel harmony. In principle, both languages apply rules of vowel harmony on two dimensions: a) back vs. front; and b) rounded vs. unrounded. This means that words contain either only back or only front vowels (resp. *balïk* 'fish', *ijedes* 'face') and that these vowels are either all rounded or unrounded (resp. *törüt* 'ancestor', *ijedes* 'face'). This applies to word roots, as well as between roots and suffixes. The only exception to this rule are high rounded vowels (/u/ and /y/), which are followed by unrounded vowels when they are low (i.e. /a/ and /e/, instead of /o/ and /ø/). For example, rounded *munnu* 'nose' gets the unrounded suffix *-ta* in *munnu-ta* [nose-POSS.3SG] 'his nose' and not **munnu-to* as would be expected in a consistent system of labial vowel harmony.

While this rule applies almost without exception in Sakha, Dolgan allows for more variation. Within lexical roots, inconsistencies are mostly found in copies from Evenki (e.g. *bugdi* 'spotted' *gedalun* 'dragon fly') or from Russian (e.g. *abiet* 'lunch', *ha:sturuga* 'snow groove'), but also Turkic words with compound etymology in some cases do not conform to the system of vowel harmony, e.g. *harsierda* 'morning', which contains the elements *harsïn* 'tomorrow' and *erde* 'early' is in Dolgan pronounced with a front diphthong, whereas in Sakha it is pronounced [*sarsuarda*] or [*harsuarda*], following the rules of back-front vowel harmony. Across morphological boundaries, primarily non-native lexical items are affected, as can be seen from the comparison of Dolgan and Sakha inflection of the word *hiliep/kiliep* (> Russ. *xleb*) 'bread', which is inflected with a back vowel in Dolgan but with a front vowel in Sakha.

DOLGAN

(9.1)	*min*	***dnevnip-par***	*huruj-uom*
	1SG	diary.R-DAT.1SG	write-FUT.1SG
	'I will write in my diary.'		(IMA: sound file)

SAKHA:

(9.2)	*oloχ-χo*	*ti-edd-en*	***kiliep-ten***	***kiliep-ke***	*ti-edd-en*
	life-DAT	reach -CAUS-SQ.CV	bread.R-ABL	bread.R-DAT	reach -CAUS-SQ.CV
	'You live from bread to bread.'				(REX: 248)

The looser rules of vowel harmony in Dolgan have been described by other Dolgan specialists (e.g. Artemyev 2001: 49, Ubryatova 1985: 21), and Ubryatova goes so far as to say that in Dolgan "the law of vowel harmony... is no longer an obligatory regularity" (Ubryatova 1985: 21). While this is in my opinion an exaggeration, considering the productive application of vowel harmony in native words in Dolgan, my Dolgan language material shows that the situation is different for non-native elements since back-front vowel harmony barely applies to these lexical items.

While the current intense contact with Russian (and consequent attrition) may seem an obvious explanation for this difference, it loses pertinence when we recall that Ubryatova's data were collected in the 1930's. At this time, Dolgan could still be convincingly called the dominant language on the Taimyr and it is unlikely that rules of the Russian sound system would have affected Dolgan at this stage. Alternatively, substrate influence from Evenki could be part of the explanation. In this language, vowel harmony is not conditioned by a distinction between front and back vowels as in Dolgan and Sakha, but by a distinction between high and low vowels instead (Bulatova and Grenoble 1999: 4). Mid and low vowels, except neutral schwa (i.e. /e:/, /a/, /a:/ /o/, /o:/), combine with suffixes containing the vowel /a/. High vowels (/i/ and /u/ and their long varieties) do not conform to vowel harmony and combine with suffixes containing the neutral /ə/ or the low vowel /a/. The choice between these two variants is conditioned by a historical merger and is not transparent from a synchronic point of view (Bulatova and Grenoble 1999: 4).

Now while learning Sakha as their L2, it is possible that Evenks quickly picked up on the distinction between low and high vowels, since these are meaningful categories in Evenki as well, whereas they may have paid less attention to the division between front and back vowels which is so important in Turkic. The widespread use of the low vowel in Evenki suffixes (as opposed to neutral /ə/, and high vowels) may have rendered the low variant the default form. As a result, this form and its combinatorial properties may have been projected onto this L2 variety of Sakha: it became used with back and front vowels, which is what we see in the inflection of the non-native lexical items in modern Dolgan.

The question remains why this less stringent application of vowel harmony applies to foreign items in particular. While this needs to be investigated in depth, a possible explanation is that initially the inflected forms of these foreign items did not occur in the native language input. In contrast to native items, their

inflected forms were not stored as a single phonological unit in the brain, and inflectional rules had to be applied productively. Since the roots of some of these foreign items have an unusual form with respect to rules of vowel harmony as well, it is likely that in such cases the default (i.e. low vowel) form of the suffix was taken as the default solution.

9.3.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE LINGUISTIC DATA WITHIN LANGUAGE CONTACT THEORY AND GENETICS

9.3.2.1 CONTACT BEFORE ARRIVAL ON THE TAIMYR

The genetic profile of the current Dolgan population shows a varied pattern. As was discussed in Chapter 2 they share a large amount of their mtDNA with other populations, in particular with the Taimyr Evenks and the Yakut-speaking Evenks of the Olenek district (see Section 2.6.2 for more details). It was shown that the measure for population difference (the Fst value) is so low that these populations can be said to share a single genepool in the maternal line. While mtDNA sequences are shared all across Siberia, the Dolgans, Taimyr Evenks and Yakut-speaking Evenks share more than any other pair of populations in Siberia. Thus, while we cannot draw any definite conclusions concerning the interactions between specific pairs of populations, the extremely high frequency of sharing between these groups on the Taimyr Peninsula and its neighbouring regions does indicate a considerable amount of gene flow in the maternal line, which could be due to recent common ancestry, to intermarriage or to both.

The Y-chromosome reveals a more distinctive pattern. Compared to neighbouring populations, the haplogroup complement of the Dolgans is more differentiated, and includes haplogroups that appear to come from different sources in roughly equal proportions. The STR analysis of haplotypes showed that haplogroup N3 was shared with the Sakha, and haplogroup C has its origins in the Evenk population. For haplogroup N2, the third main component of the Dolgan genetic material, the origins could not be established unambiguously since identical STR sequences were found in comparable numbers of Samoyedic and Tungusic individuals. Accepted reasoning is that if the sharing of haplogroups goes back to a common ancestor, it is unlikely that individuals today will still share the exact same STR haplotype on the Y-chromosome, whereas this is plausible in a scenario of more recent contact. Therefore it is most likely that the mixed pattern

in the paternal line is the result of more recent admixture. Thus, the genetic results provide some crucial insights into the history of the Dolgans, including the rough time period of their formation as a separate ethnic group.

Contact settings between Tungusic and Turkic groups become relevant for the formation of the Dolgan people from the moment Evenk and Sakha clans began to populate the area around the Lena and Vilyuy rivers. While we know that the first Sakha people arrived at the Lena River in the 13th century (see Section 2.3.2.2) we do not know exactly when the contact setting with the Tungusic clans began to take shape. However, it was an established situation by 1638 when the Russian officials registered both Turkic Sakha and Tungusic Dolgan clans in this region. Importantly, at that time both groups recognised the same Sakha headman. While the fact that two ethnolinguistically different groups were ruled by only one headman is interesting in itself, this fact must be attributed additional significance in the light of the presumed Evenki-Sakha bilingualism in the Dolgan people.

Dolgikh, who traced back as many of the various 'components' of today's Dolgan population as he could, reaches the same conclusion in his detective-like work 'The origin of the Dolgans'. He confirms that the Tungusic Dolgan clan, which constitutes an important proportion of today's Dolgan population, inhabited the area around the Lena and Vilyuy Rivers in the 17th century. If this clan, and the Dolgan clan mentioned by Ubryatova (see Section 2.4.1) are the same, then we can infer that this Tungusic Dolgan clan lived in the Lena and Vilyuy area in close vicinity to the Sakha people and acknowledged the Sakha headman.

Despite the fact that we know little about the exact nature of the relations between different indigenous groups themselves, including their use of, and attitude towards, other languages, there are indications that the beginning of the 17th century may have been the seminal moment for incipient bilingualism within this Dolgan clan. If Dolgikh's interpretation is correct, it was the Tungusic clans who adopted Sakha as a second language rather than the other way round. He attributes this skewed balance to numerical dominance of the Sakha in this ethnically mixed area of the Lena and Vilyuy as well as the Olenek basin. He says that,

> We also know that towards the end of the 17th century on the Olenek River the Yakuts might have even outnumbered the different Evenk clans. Therefore it is

> very probable, that among the Dolgans knowledge of the Sakha language was widespread.[1]

The fact that Dolgikh sees a causal relation between the large number of Sakha people and bilingualism in the Evenk community illustrates that these two ethnic groups were not indifferent towards each other, and that their presence in the same area was not restricted to pure coexistence. He makes this explicit when he explains a sudden increase in members of the Dolgan clan between 1678 and 1761 by the possibility that Sakha people merged with the Tungusic Dolgan population (Dolgikh 1963: 110). What exactly he has in mind when he talks about 'merging' is unclear. He does not specify his ideas as to whether the Sakha settled among the Tungusic Dolgans, or that there was also frequent intermarriage between the two groups. However, either scenario of admixture would result in the shared haplotypes in the mtDNA as well as the Y-chromosome that we see in the Dolgan population today. If it is true that the Tungusic Dolgan clan was ruled by a Sakha headman in these years, it is possible that the Sakha had not only a numerically, but also a socially dominant position, which in turn would be further justification for the more powerful position of Sakha in the community.

While there were obviously individual bilingual speakers among the Sakha as well, the more widespread bilingualism in the group of Dolgans, motivated by the numerical and social dominance of the Sakha, would have had primarily a linguistic impact on the version of Sakha spoken by the Dolgans as a second language. Since in all likelihood these Dolgans were initially all dominant in Evenki, the linguistic consequence that presumably appeared first is structural variation in the target language (Sakha) due to imposition. This is perfectly compatible with the Evenki-induced changes that we see in modern Dolgan. The characteristic use of the habitual participle, the use of *onton* in clause combining, as well as regularisation and reanalysis could well have their origins in this social setting. Also the changes in the semantic structure of kinship terms are sensibly explained within this configuration. However, since contact between Turkic and Tungusic-speaking groups became much more intense once they had migrated to the Taimyr Peninsula, it is most likely that the majority of these changes became established in this contact variety of Sakha from the 18th century onwards.

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[1] Мы знаем также, что к концу XVII в. на Оленеке якутов было едва ли не больше, чем эвенков разных родов. Поэтому вполне вероятно, что знание якутского языка у долган было широко распространено. (Dolgikh 1963: 110, translation mine).

After this initial period of contact between Dolgans and Sakha in the Vilyuy and Lena basins during the first decades of the 17th century, during which some initial bilingualism may have developed, we know that these groups retreated further to the north. Since one of their purposes was to dodge the Russian tax collectors, it is no surprise that we have no explicit information about how they lived through these years, and how much contact there was with other groups. After all, it was the tax collectors who provided what sparse information we have on the indigenous populations of Siberia in the 17th century. However, if the situation reconstructed above is correct, and the group of Dolgans that arrived on the Taimyr Peninsula in the late 17th century were the same people (and their offspring) as the potentially bilingual group of Dolgans, one can be confident that the linguistic variation that was initiated during the first period of contact was maintained throughout these years. This inference is based on the assumption that the years of 'retreat' to the upper regions of the Vilyuy and Olenek Rivers which occurred between 1655 and 1678 (Dolgikh 1963: 108), were spent in relative isolation, removed from large groups of L1 Sakha speakers that would have levelled out the Evenki influence in the Dolgans' variety of Sakha.

9.3.2.2 CONTACT ON THE TAIMYR

Contact with other ethnic groups resumed after arrival on the Taimyr Peninsula, and intensified after the appearance of the Russians. The arrival of Russian explorers, merchants, and their accompanying personnel in arctic Siberia generated not only new contact settings between themselves and the native Siberian people, but also enhanced the contact between indigenous peoples. The main catalyst for this increase in interethnic socialisation was the Khatanga Trading Way. This corridor of permanent trading stations traversed the Peninsula from west to east and connected places as well as people in a more conspicuous way than the nomadic routes of the Tungusic and Samoyedic people had done so far. The trading activities acted as a magnet for people from different ethnic groups.

As we know, the Dolgans became the main protagonists in this way of life. While today the term refers to a clearly defined and seemingly homogeneous ethnolinguistic group, Dolgikh's analysis shows that their ethnic origins are convoluted and comprise more ethnic groups than the Tungusic Dolgan clan and

groups of Sakha that came from the Lena and Vilyuy. His investigation shows that at least the Tungusic Dongot, Edyan and Karanto clans, Turkic Sakha from the Tundra (Olenek region) as well as Russian tundra peasants make up a substantial part of today's Dolgan population. This means that the initial contact between the Dolgan clan and Sakha in more eastern regions was complemented by cultural and linguistic influence from other groups.

Armed with this knowledge, we may ask the question why of all these different groups it was the name of the Dolgan clan unified with the Sakha language that became the main markers of the people leading this life of reindeer herding and trade. Since we just concluded that a clan with both characteristics potentially existed before arriving on the Taimyr, the idea that the establishment of their name signifies their leading position is tempting. However, the history of the Dolgan people shows clearly that we must take extreme care in relying on labels alone. Nevertheless, even if today the name 'Dolgan' denotes a population with a wider range of ethnic origins than just one Tungusic clan, the fact that this name was chosen to represent a large proportion of the Taimyr's native population whereas the other clan names have fallen almost into oblivion (e.g. Dongot, Karanto), may carry historical significance that goes beyond mere political decision-making.

One possible explanation is that the Khatanga Trading Way and the Dolgan clan appeared almost simultaneously on the Taimyr Peninsula. Disconnected from their homeland, one could imagine that their position as 'newcomers', who were not yet as established in this territory, as were some of the other Tungusic and the Samoyedic groups, made them more open and keen to engage in a new lifestyle and occupy this new niche. While people with other ethnic backgrounds surely took part in these activities as well, their established routine and traditional ways may explain why they identified with this way of life to a lesser extent.

The situation with the Sakha is more complicated. First, the Sakha from the Olenek area were, like the Dolgans, newcomers to this region, and had arrived in the basins of the Kheta and Khatanga by the end of the 17th century (Dolgikh 1963: 117). In fact, they were one of the first 'immigrants' in this area who had headed this way because of a famine in 1681 - 1682 resulting from a change in migration routes of the wild reindeer in the Olenek area. Driven by hunger, these Sakha groups set off with their dog sleighs in the direction of the Kheta and Khatanga rivers in the hope of finding food. On arrival they probably met the abovementioned Tungusic Dolgan and other Sakha groups who came from the

Lena and Vilyuy area. So if the above reasoning makes sense, the Sakha would have been equally suited to engage actively in, and become associated with, this position. Second, since the modern Dolgans are linguistically so closely related to the Sakha, how can we be sure that it was not in fact the Sakha who engaged mainly in the trade, and adopted a Tungusic name, rather than a Tungusic group that had shifted language?

While trying to solve this question, the confusing history of nomenclature in the Dolgan people described in Chapter 2 does not exactly help matters. However, the genetic profile of the current Dolgan population and the linguistic characteristics that set them apart from the Sakha provide more reliable cues, and from their combination crystallises a picture that allows space for both events. The following paragraphs will elucidate how.

If the present Dolgan population were predominantly Sakha who adopted, or were given, a Tungusic name, we would expect their genetic material to consist primarily of haplogroups associated with the Sakha population. Since traditional Sakha communities are patrilocal, this would mean that a high proportion of haplogroup N3 would be expected. With respect to the mtDNA we would not expect any clear patterns, since exogamy is widespread, and women would have come from different ethnic groups. While the mtDNA of the Dolgans is mixed as expected[2], the Y-chromosomal haplogroup distribution does not evidently group the Dolgans with the Sakha. In fact, the picture looks highly mixed. While the Dolgans share about 40% of their genetic profile in the paternal line with the Sakha, nearly 30% and up to 49% is potentially of Tungusic origin, depending on whether haplogroup N2 in the Dolgans (which is associated with Tungusic and Samoyedic populations) has Tungusic or Samoyedic origins. Thus, to say that the Dolgans are Sakha people who were given a different name would not account for the amount of Tungusic admixture that is clearly represented in their genetic profile. The same issue arises when we classify them as Tungusic, because this leaves the 40% of Sakha-related genetic material unexplained.

The linguistic picture leads to the same conclusion. While Evenki influence is not overwhelming, we find lexical copies, as well as structural changes in lexicon, morphology, syntax and potentially phonetics. While the lexical copies may have

[2] And even more than expected, since the Dolgans share an extremely high amount of mtDNA sequences with the Taimyr Evenks and Yakut-speaking Evenks. The fact that there is more sharing between these groups than there is between Dolgans and Sakha indicates that Evenki women were incorporated into the Dolgan population.

been introduced by dominant Sakha-speakers through the process of borrowing, the structural changes were most probably initiated by Evenks who acquired Sakha as their second language. L2-speakers of Sakha. Most information about the social setting in which this may have occurred can be inferred from the changes in semantic structure of kinship terminology.

Here, one can imagine that during the acquisition process, the Tungusic Dolgans quickly acquired the Sakha lexical forms for kinship relations that matched kinship categories in their own social system. However, in cases where the semantic match between the Evenki and the Sakha word was not perfect, these distinctions may not have been picked up so easily, particularly when distinctions in the L2 system are more fine-grained than those in the L1. In such cases the semantic structure of the L1 (Evenki) was projected onto the lexical forms of the L2 (Sakha). It is worth mentioning that for all but one of the semantic changes in the kinship terms it is the terms used from a male perspective that have become established in today's Dolgan. For example, the Sakha terms for older sister were *edʒij* from a male perspective and *aγas* from the perspective of a woman. In modern Dolgan, *edʒij* has the meaning of older sister of both a man and a woman, indicating that only the lexical item that was originally used for men was adopted into the Dolgan version of Sakha. While the absence of a distinction between the male and female perspectives itself can be attributed to Evenki since it does not make such a distinction and expresses both perspectives by a single term, there is no linguistic reason why *edʒij* should be favoured over *aγas*. Rather an explanation in social terms is needed.

Any inferences must remain tentative and are proposed with extreme caution, but this tendency could have arisen in a situation where Evenki-speaking women married Sakha-speaking men rather than the other way round. Through hearing their Sakha-speaking husbands refer to family members, Evenki-speaking women would have adopted these terms to refer to their own relatives as well. Since these Evenki-dominant members of the Dolgan community were not used to a distinction between male and female perspectives in their own language, they may not have been on the lookout for these extra terms, and this may have resulted in the merger of the male and female perspectives, using the terms typically used by male speakers.

In the absence of numerically large Sakha-dominant groups, the bilingual members of the Dolgan community would have transmitted their Evenki-inspired version of Sakha to the next generation, and what was linguistic variation in the

first generation of bilinguals may have started to take root and become established as new linguistic conventions. The hypothesis that a large part of the bilingual population consisted of Dolgan women who married Sakha men would be compatible with this scenario. Since in this culture it is the women who mainly take care of the children and spend most time with them, they play a crucial part in the early language development of their children. If a significant proportion of the women spoke Sakha as a second language, then this language variety quite plausibly was transmitted to their children as well. Thus, the genetic, linguistic and historical information all indicate that Evenks, who shifted their language, but also Sakha, who shifted their ethnic identity, played an important role in the shaping of the ethnolinguistic group that carries the name Dolgan today.

Contact between Tungusic and Turkic groups in the past, as well as a certain degree of bilingualism in the Dolgan clan, may have enhanced contact between the Sakha and Dolgan once again, and enhanced the use of the Sakha language as a means of interethnic communication. Once they had established themselves along the Khatanga Trading Way, their prevalence in this niche would have stimulated other ethnic groups to conform to their norms and use Sakha as the language for trade and interethnic contact, including other Tungusic groups and Russians. This may have accelerated the emergence of second language speakers and explain how Sakha acquired its status as a lingua franca. Those who completely identified with this new socio-economic community of Sakha and Dolgans around the Khatanga trading way most probably merged with the prevailing population and would eventually shift to Sakha, with inherent linguistic consequences.

The genetic profile of the Dolgans confirms Dolgikh's analysis that it must have been relatively large numbers of Tungusic people who made this choice. This would have reinforced the contact-induced variation due to imposition that had been initiated during the Turkic-Tungusic contact in the mid 17th century, as well as introduced new variation. On the other hand, the considerable number of native Sakha speakers for whom this was a contact situation of language maintenance, would have modified their language by copying lexical forms from Evenki, with emphasis on, but not restricted to, unfamiliar concepts such as terms for reindeer herding, which was new to them.

While Russian tundra peasants also took part in the process of Dolganisation, their genetic and linguistic impact at this stage seems limited. The following section will show that the changes due to contact with Russians are the result of the recent Russian dominance in the Siberian arctic.

9.3.3 SUMMARY

The above discussion has illustrated the multifaceted character of the relationship between Evenks and Sakha, which are shown to be the two primary ancestors of modern Dolgans. For a correct understanding of their complex history with its large gaps in documentation, a division must be made between the contact setting during the initial period of contact before arrival on the Taimyr and the situation that obtained after they had reached the far north.

In the first setting (1638 and earlier) Tungusic Dolgans and Turkic Sakha lived on the Lena and Vilyuy rivers. Facilitated by the fact that the Sakha were numerically and socially dominant, part of the Sakha population incorporated members of the Tungusic Dolgan clan, which may have led to incipient, but probably limited, bilingualism in the Dolgan clan. After several decennia of relative isolation in the upper reaches of the Vilyuy River, this clan reached the Taimyr Peninsula by the end of the 17th century. The significant number of second language speakers that developed there would have been responsible for structural (and possibly phonetic) variation in their version of the Sakha language. During these years, bilingualism increased as a result of intermarriage and the role of Sakha as a lingua franca, and initial variation in the use of Sakha by L2 speakers may have become established as new linguistic conventions, leading to a characteristic version or dialect of Sakha that was to become Dolgan. At the same time, the first Russian colonisers had appeared on the Taimyr and were in need of transport and other services. Dislocated from their homeland and potentially in need of material goods, the Dolgans may have been more susceptible to the newly created 'jobs' along the Khatanga Trading Way than other indigenous populations, and so may have become the main representatives of this lifestyle. Since the Sakha from the Olenek region were in a comparable position, they may have joined the Dolgans, thus leading to a second encounter between Dolgans and Sakha. If we are correct in assuming that at least part of the Dolgan population had already some command of Sakha at that time, the choice for Sakha as an intergroup language would make perfect sense. Its status as a lingua franca in turn would have lead to a further increase in the number of second language speakers, who left their traces in the structural change that the language underwent (e.g. kinship terms, regularisation, simplification of clause combining). Since most second language learners were probably Evenks (Edyan, Dongot, Karanto), it is no surprise to find increasing substrate influence as a result of imposition from Evenki. Russian

substrate influence is presumably negligible at this stage, for reasons to be discussed below.

9.4 CONTACT WITH RUSSIANS

The linguistic differences between Dolgan and Sakha that have developed, and are currently developing, as a result of contact with Russians do not serve so much to disentangle issues concerning Dolgan prehistory as they inform about on-going processes of language change. Although contact between Dolgans and Russians existed from the moment the Russians arrived on the Taimyr, it seems that the first contact in pre-Soviet times was too sporadic to lead to any of the structural variation on the Dolgan language as described in this thesis.

Since we know that the activities around the Khatanga Trading Way were predominantly 'managed' by Dolgans or Dolgan/Sakha-speaking people, we can be certain that contact between Russians and these groups commenced at this time. However, apart from certain lexical copies for unknown concepts such as 'bread' and 'sugar', items that were introduced by the Russians to win the goodwill of the native population and that later became important trade items, the intensity of contact and thus the level of bilingualism was too low during this time to have any significant linguistic impact. In addition, we have no evidence that the Russian language enjoyed any particularly high status at the time, thus excluding the possibility that its influence may have been extensive despite low intensity of contact. These hypotheses are confirmed by the genetic profile of the Dolgans. STR-analysis has shown that Russian admixture is unmistakable, and thus confirms Dolgikh's idea that intermarriage between Russians and Dolgans took place, but its proportion in the Dolgan population is not large. The haplogroups of European origin account for less than 10% of the Dolgan Y-chromosomal genepool. For a correct representation of the contact situation between Dolgans and Russians before the establishment of the Soviet Union, it seems sensible to recognise a division within the group of early Russians on the Taimyr between temporary visitors, including mainly governmental officials, merchants and their personnel, and the permanent inhabitants also known as the tundra peasants. While the first group probably knew very little Dolgan and would for that reason be unlikely to leave any Russian traces in the Dolgan language, the second group almost completely merged with the Dolgans, and since we have no indication that

their numbers were particularly high, any significant influence from second language learning is implausible.

With respect to the presence of Russian Y-chromosomal haplogroups in the Dolgans, they probably appeared through marriages between tundra peasants and Dolgan women. While the temporary visitors may have also occasionally had physical contact with indigenous women, for obvious reasons we have no exact information to what extent this was common practice, which makes it hard to estimate the share of these Russian visitors in the current Y-chromosomal profile of the Dolgan population. This situation of relatively low-intensity contact between Dolgans and Russians changed dramatically in the 20th century with the establishment of the Soviet regime, when indigenous peoples were forced to give up their autonomy and become part of Russian society. Russian became an obligatory means of communication with anyone in powerful positions, which was a practical incentive to acquire this language. Within two or three generations, the balance of bilingualism in Dolgan society changed from predominantly monolingual and certainly dominant in Dolgan, through a stage of balanced bilingualism, to the current situation in which Russian is dominant for the majority of children and for some is even their only actively used language. It is during this time of intense contact between Dolgan(s) and Russian(s) that the Russian-induced changes emerged in Dolgan. The next section summarises the Russian-induced changes discussed in this thesis, after which they will be positioned within their socio-historical context.

9.4.1 LINGUISTIC CHANGES

Lexicon

Russian copies are widespread in Dolgan as well as in Sakha. However, since the investigation of Russian copies was based on the restricted set of lexical items from the Loanword Typology List, and since the knowledge of vocabulary varies considerably across individuals, it is hard to give a realistic estimate as to how Dolgan and Sakha differ with respect to the overall percentage of Russian copies in their lexicon (i.e. beyond the meanings in the Loanword Typology List. Nonetheless, we can say with confidence that they are not restricted to a particular semantic domain, since they include cultural as well as non-cultural items. As mentioned above, many Russian lexical items entered the Dolgan

language as a corollary of new concepts that the Russians first introduced to the indigenous people, but there are also cases where Russian lexical items are used for phenomena that are entirely disconnected from Russian presence, such as *kumar* 'mosquito' (Russian *komar*) and *namuluox* 'swamp' (Russian *navalok*).

A more useful way to look at the Russian copies is to categorise them according to the different social settings in which they were introduced into the Dolgan language. These social settings can be seen to correspond temporally to the pre-Soviet period, the Soviet period and the post-Soviet period. During the pre-Soviet period, contact between Dolgans and Russians was predominantly a relation of trade. Previously unknown objects and activities were introduced to the Dolgan people, and entered the life, as well as the language, of the indigenous population as complete units of form and meaning. At this stage, Dolgan/Sakha was the dominant language in the Dolgan community, and even beyond, as a lingua franca, so therefore these Russian lexical items are rightly classified as copies transferred into Dolgan through processes of borrowing. These early copies are characterised by phonological adaptation to the Dolgan/Sakha sound system, and often refer to foreign cultural items and activities.

In the Soviet period, many Dolgans had to become, and became, bilingual in Russian. The working environment of adults and obligatory boarding schools for children were all in Russian. Nonetheless, for many people Dolgan, which now was recognised as a separate language, still remained the dominant language, but the social and cultural values adhered to in their traditional way of life were gradually overruled by the ones approved of by Russian society. The lexical items introduced during this time period are therefore also the result of borrowing, but they cover a wider range of semantic fields. Since the level of bilingualism was increasing and people had a better knowledge of Russian, these words are less phonologically integrated than the copies from the early years of contact.

After the forced settlement and obligatory education at the end of the 1970's, the Russian language gained more and more territory. Children were in a Russian-speaking environment from very early on, often not seeing their Dolgan-speaking parents for months at a time. This has led to the current linguistic situation where most children are dominant in Russian, many even monolingual. These children still have some passive knowledge of Dolgan and can partly understand their parents and grandparents when they converse in Dolgan, but they cannot actively use the language. The only exceptions are the easternmost villages of Syndassko and Sopochnoe, where Dolgan is still the default language in everyday life for

adults as well as for children. However, with the exception of a few very old speakers, everyone is perfectly bilingual in Russian, in particular the children. Although the lexical changes from this period do not necessarily look different from the ones introduced during the Soviet period, except that they are even less phonologically integrated into the Dolgan sound system, the underlying process is different. Since the latest additions to the lexicon are introduced by a generation whose dominant language is Russian, the appropriate process to describe these changes is imposition and not borrowing.

Word order

A similar division between different time periods was proposed to explain the higher flexibility in word order, in particular the frequent occurrence of SVO sentences in Dolgan when compared to Sakha. Since we do not have pre-Soviet Dolgan texts that could prove that SVO sentences were less frequent before intensification of Russian contact, we have to be careful not to draw too definite conclusions about the time this variation began to occur. The fact that this word order is found in all age groups could lead to the impression that the increased use of SVO order has nothing to do with contact and is a purely language-internal development, based on the cognitive 'heaviness' principle that makes people want to move longer constituents towards the end of the sentence. However, the clear correlation between the occurrence of these constructions and the vicinity of Russian-speaking centres and intensity of contact shows that Russian influence at least reinforces, if not causes, this variation.

While age does not influence the frequency of use SVO construction in Dolgan speech, it does influence the identification of the linguistic process underlying this variation at the level of the bilingual individual. As for the lexical changes, it was argued that on the level of the individual, the variation in word order is also best explained in terms of multiple processes, because there are differences in linguistic dominance between different age groups. All recorded speakers grew up in a bilingual environment. However, the oldest generation (>70 years) is dominant in Dolgan, whereas the majority of the two youngest generations (< 40 years) is dominant in Russian. Therefore, the increased use of Russian SVO word order was proposed to be the result of borrowing in a situation of intense contact for speakers in the first age category, and of imposition due to dominance of Russian in the second, for whom Dolgan sometimes even appears as an L2.

The age group between 70 and 40 is hard to allocate to either of these categories, because of its high amount of internal variation. They grew up in the period between 1940 and 1970, which was the transition period from a society in which Dolgan was the dominant language to a society in which Russian took this role. Since this process did not progress at the same rate for every village and every individual, there were individual differences in linguistic dominance depending on where they grew up, their parents' attitude, as well as their own aspirations. Therefore I assume that within this group the same linguistic outcome (i.e. word order variation) must be explained as structural borrowing in the Dolgan-dominant Dolgans but as imposition in those whose dominant language had already become Russian. The development of this variation in general may have been facilitated by the fact that the change from SOV to SVO is also a commonly occurring language-internal change as well.

Clause combining

The changes in clause combining can be explained in a similar fashion. The introduction of Russian coordinating and subordinating conjunctions into the Dolgan language, and the syntactic consequence of rendering the position of the conjuncts in the sentence more flexible, were explained through a process of borrowing for the speakers who are dominant in Dolgan (roughly >70 years), whereas this change was attributed to imposition in the younger, Russian-dominant generation (<40 years). For the same reasons as were given for word order change above, the generation in-between shows too much individual variation to be classified into one of these categories in a sensible way. The same multicausal explanation was proposed for the pseudo-coordinate construction with *gïtta* 'with', although the marginality of use of this construction, as well as its occurrence in the speech of people who use Russian every day, favour an explanation in terms of imposition.

The reduction of morphosyntactically complex constructions and the smaller selection of frequently used coordinators were associated with on-going language attrition and with the use of Sakha as a lingua franca (see Section 9.5 for details). Through the rapid spread of Russian and the gradual deactivation of Dolgan in bilingual speakers, certain details of the latter language are lost and not passed on to the next generation. This more constrained variety of Dolgan is then acquired and becomes established as the new norm in the community.

While simplification is a common process in language attrition and therefore a plausible explanation for the phenomena observed in Dolgan, the preference for paratactic syntactic constructions over morphosyntactically complex ones could also be due to the function of Dolgan as a lingua franca. Its function as an intergroup language would have favoured a more transparent structure and avoidance of morphosyntactically complex, irregular or idiosyncratic constructions. This may have led to the development of a communication style characterised by shorter sentences and less convoluted syntactic constructions. These changes may have been initiated by second language learners themselves (Evenks and Russians learning the language) through simplifying and overgeneralising during the language learning process, but they also may have been stimulated or perhaps reinforced by native Sakha/Dolgan speakers in an attempt to accomodate to the linguistic abilities of non-native speakers (i.e. foreigner talk).

9.4.2 INTERPRETATION OF CHANGES USING LANGUAGE CONTACT THEORY, SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND GENETIC INFORMATION

In addition to lexical copies from Russian, there are significant structural differences between Dolgan and Sakha that developed as a result of contact with Russians. As for the contact setting with the Evenks, the main process underlying these structural changes was identified as imposition due to language shift. However, an important difference between the two situations concerns the direction of the shift and the agents of change. In the contact setting with the Evenks it was the Evenks who shifted towards Dolgan and imposed structures from their dominant L1 (Evenki) onto their L2 (Dolgan). In contrast, in the Russian contact setting it is the Dolgans *themselves* who cause change to their traditional language. The on-going shift to Russian in the Dolgan community induces the Dolgans to impose structures from their new dominant language (Russian) onto their non-dominant language (Dolgan). Since Russian dominance can only be safely assumed in the youngest one or two generations, the structural changes described in this thesis must have come about only recently. The fact that SVO word order and Russian-inspired clause combining structures are used by people of all ages does not contradict this hypothesis. It was shown that at the level of the individual speaker the same linguistic result can be explained by different

linguistic processes. Taking into account the internal heterogeneity of the current Dolgan speech community, a subdivision was made between Dolgan-dominant and Russian-dominant speakers, which typically correlates with age. This is the result of the language shift that is swiftly progressing through the Dolgan community, and which leads to a population that diverges with respect to their linguistic dominance, depending on the social setting (and the time) in which they grew up.

The oldest age group (> 70) can be confidently said to be dominant in Dolgan, which is also their L1, whereas Russian is their non-dominant L2. On the other hand, the youngest age group (< 40 years) is dominant in Russian, which is also typically their L1 (with the exception of children in Syndassko and Sopochnoe), whereas Dolgan is their non-dominant language. It needs to be mentioned that for the older people within this age group Dolgan may still be their L1, since they used this language with their parents during their pre-school years. However, the social environment of Russian schooling and a society that has been increasingly dominated by Russian culture and language engendered constant activation of Russian (and deactivation of Dolgan), which over time rendered Russian the dominant language, whereas Dolgan has become a distant second. The age group in-between shows too much internal variation to be classified in either category.

While the structural changes were probably initiated by members of the youngest age group through the process of imposition, it was argued that the older, Dolgan-dominant generation came to the same linguistic results through the process of borrowing. After all, both age groups found themselves in a situation of intense cultural and linguistic contact with Russians, and the constant exposure of the older generation to the Russian language, as well as to the language variety of the younger generation, may well have had its impact on the grammar of this age group too.

The idea that it is the Dolgans themselves who are fostering this variation and not Russians who learn Dolgan as a second language is clearly supported by socio-historical as well as genetic results. First, we have no historical evidence that during the last century there was a significant number of Russians who learned the Dolgan language, so therefore linguistic changes imposed by Russians can be excluded. As pointed out in the previous section, the genetic profile of the Dolgans also does not present any reason to doubt this conclusion. While some genetic material associated with the Russian population is present in the Dolgan paternal genepool, its proportion is too small to make the idea of a language shift an appealing one.

A parallel development underlying the on-going changes in Dolgan is language attrition. The constant activation of Russian and deactivation of Dolgan in the bilingual population reduces the linguistic variety of actively used forms and constructions and causes certain details of Dolgan to fall into disuse. The generally meagre exposure to Dolgan of the children today does not regenerate the latent language properties in this group and is leading to the loosening of certain grammatical rules and thus to even more loss of linguistic detail in the next generation. An example of this was the less frequent use of morphosyntactically complex relative clauses in Dolgan and the inter- and sometimes even intrapersonal morphological variation in these constructions when they were elicited. However, this applies equally to the lexical domain.

Despite Thomason's advice to concentrate on the presence rather than the absence of contact-induced changes, the question arises why these structural changes are present in Dolgan, but not in Sakha. Russian influence extends all across Siberia and is by no means limited to the Taimyr Peninsula, but clearly not all communities respond in the same way. While explanations must remain speculative, a brief exposition of some social and historical differences between the relation of the Russians with the Sakha on the one hand and with the Dolgans on the other, may help to understand the course of developments.

One very practical reason could be that the Russians simply did not reach every corner of the vast territory inhabited by the Sakha, especially the remote rural areas (Pakendorf p.c.). While in the initial stages of Russian contact the Sakha inhabited a much smaller area in central Yakutia, between the rivers Lena, Aldan and Amga (Dolgikh 1960: 377), by the time the Soviets started their large-scale transformations they had spread out over a vast area of more than 3,000,000 km² (Safronov 2000: 11). The remoteness and inaccessibility of the Siberian taiga and tundra may have made it hard for the Russian government to effectively transform society in these regions (Ivanov: 370). This is of course not to imply that this job was easy on the Taimyr. On the contrary, some places may be even harder to reach due to the harsh climate. Nonetheless the Taimyr, which is today an area of 879,000 km², is considerably smaller than the Sakha Republic, and the populated areas were mainly concentrated along the rivers.

However, more important factors may include the attitude of the population towards the Russians and contrasts in lifestyle and mode of subsistence before and after their arrival. While these factors are mainly socio-historical, they influence the relation between the indigenous population and the Russians and may well

have had repercussions on language, and language attitude. As far as lifestyle is concerned, the Sakha traditionally had a semi-settled pastoralist mode of subsistence, with predominantly stationary dwellings, one for summer and one for winter. While the arrival of the Russians and the creation of planned villages (‘*poselkovaniye*’) forced them to live in a different kind of house, become more fixed to one place and to live in a more densely populated setting than they were used to, they could continue their traditional occupation of pastoralism and hay-making in much the same way as they had done before. The Dolgans, on the other hand, used to lead a predominantly nomadic life as reindeer herders and traders, without permanent settlement. While a camp would often consist of more than one family, especially in the summer, the settlements would always be temporary for two weeks at the most, after which they would move to new pastures for the reindeer herd. For the Dolgans, the transition to permanent settlement would not only have meant a change in house type and population density, but also a major change in lifestyle (nomadic to settled) and mode of subsistence and occupation (reindeer herding to working on a kolkhoz). While reindeer brigades continued to exist, most people were involved in work on the kolkhoz and in the village. Importantly, these changes made the Dolgans highly dependent on the Russians. The concept of village life and the new professions were unknown to them so interaction with the Russians and proficiency in the Russian language was crucial to acquire the new ways. Education in Russian and a prohibition to speak their native tongue of course enhanced this trend. The increased dependency on the Russians in combination with a strong everyday confirmation that knowledge of Russian was essential to get on in the new lifestyle, may have contributed to a general attitude associating the Russian language with progress and usefulness, whereas Dolgan became more and more associated with communication in small circles and traditional settings.

Finally, contact with the Russians has played an important role in the formation of the Dolgans as a separate ethnolinguistic group. As traders along the Khatanga Trading Way, interaction with the Russians seems to have been an integrated aspect of Dolgan life, which may have made their community more open towards the increasing Russian influence than the Sakha communities.

9.4.3 SUMMARY

The analysis of Russian-induced differences between Dolgan and Sakha has demonstrated that the observed morphosyntactic variation began to develop parallel to the emergence of Russian-Dolgan bilingualism in the Dolgan speech community. This trend intensified most strikingly during the second half of the 20th century and is still continuing, foreshadowing a complete shift to Russian within the next few generations if no active measures are taken. Considering the fact that the growing dominance of Russian in the Dolgan speech community is paralleled by an increasing deactivation of Dolgan, imposition of Russian featores onto Dolgan is accompanied by signs of language attrition.

9.5 THE USE OF DOLGAN/SAKHA AS A LINGUA FRANCA

Throughout the above discussion, the use of Dolgan/Sakha as a lingua franca has been mentioned repeatedly as an additional explanation for the nature and the geographical distribution of certain differences between modern Dolgan and Sakha. It was associated in particular with regularisation and with the observed preference for paratactic structures over relative clauses to express complex propositions, as well as with the morphological simplification of relative clauses, if they occur. It is important to point out from the beginning that there is considerable overlap between a scenario of shift and a situation where the recipient language is used as a lingua franca, and that probably no clear distinction can be made as far as the cognitive processes of the individual L2 learner are concerned. In both situations the novel use of the recipient language is initiated by L2 speakers, and therefore it is primarily driven by principles of second language learning (see Section 3.1.3). Nevertheless, there are a number of fundamental differences, mostly of a sociolinguistic nature, which is why the use as a lingua franca deserves its dedicated space.

First, in contrast to a shift situation it may not be possible to identify a single source language for the linguistic differences that set a lingua franca apart from its L1 variety. One characteristic of a lingua franca is its use between peoples with various linguistic backgrounds, and they may all bring in features from their L1. Thus, while the lingua franca itself is unambiguously the recipient language, the diverse origins of lingua franca speakers make it impossible to single out one

source language for the changes. In the case of Dolgan, the L2 speakers were predominantly Evenks, but also Russians and Samoyedic people (Nenets, Enets and Nganasan) participated in the trade along the Khatanga Trading Way, albeit to a lesser extent. Since the aim of a lingua franca is to facilitate communication among speakers from different linguistic backgrounds, one can imagine that structures which are very specific to a speaker's L1 will not so easily become established as a feature of the lingua franca. If speaker A with dominant language L1A imposes a feature on the lingua franca that is uncommon in the area and cross-linguistically marked, it may not be easily interpreted by speaker B with dominant language L1B, in which this feature is not present, and may therefore not take root in the lingua franca. On the other hand, imposed features that are common in the area, or that are commonly observed in L2 learning (such as regularisation) are more likely to become accepted by the lingua franca-using community. Therefore, features in a lingua franca that do not match a specific source language, and that are common in second language acquisition are plausible candidates for an explanation in terms of intergroup communication.

To apply this to Dolgan, the abovementioned regularised forms and morphosyntactic simplification do not match any language specific structures of Evenki, Russian or Samoyedic languages, and can not be traced back to a particular source language. Rather these changes developed as a result of general language learning principles, and may therefore be attributed to the function of Dolgan/Sakha as a lingua franca. This does of course not exclude the possibility that Evenki speakers played an important part in the rise of these changes, especially when bearing in mind that the majority of L2 learners probably consisted of Evenks, but these data in isolation do not provide direct evidence and so this development should not be limited to this group.

Second, a lingua franca is not only used as a means of communication between L1 speakers and L2 speakers, as is the case in a typical contact situation, but also among L2 speakers themselves. In trading situations, Dolgan/Sakha was used between Sakha people and other groups, but also among these other groups themselves, none of which were L1 speakers of Dolgan/Sakha[3]. This suggests that in this setting, input from L1 speakers may have been sparse, or even absent, at times, leaving more room for the development and establishment of innovative use by L2 speakers.

[3] Of course Taimyr Pidgin also fulfilled this function, but its use seems to have been much more restricted, and was limited mainly to communication between Dolgans and Nganasans.

Finally, there is reason to assume that in intergroup communication not only L2 speakers but also L1 speakers make modifications to the standard variety of their language, thus contributing to a new language variety themselves. Since an easily understandable message is beneficial for everyone, a socially empathic L1 speaker may use the most transparent and iconic ways to get the message across (see foreigner talk, mentioned in Section 9.4.1). While this fact does not account for regularisation (even for the most empathic native speakers it would go too far to eliminate irregularities in inflectional paradigms to accommodate to L2 speakers), it does explain the predominance of shorter and morphosyntactically less complex structures in Dolgan when compared to Sakha.

In this context it needs to be mentioned that the Taimyr was not the only region where Sakha was used as a lingua franca. According to Wurm (1996: 971), this phenomenon was rather widespread in other parts of Siberia as well. Therefore one may ask why on the Taimyr, and not so much in other areas, the contact variety became accepted among L2 as well as L1 speakers, resulting in the language called Dolgan today. While explanations must remain speculative, an important difference between the situation on the Taimyr and other contact settings of Sakha is the substantial amount of genetic admixture between L1 speakers (Sakha) and L2 speakers (mostly Evenks) of Sakha. If in most other contact situations the use of Sakha was restricted to the domain of trade and intergroup communication, the common interethnic marriages on the Taimyr, reflected by this admixture, brought the lingua franca variety to peoples homes as well. This transfer of the lingua franca into the domestic sphere probably highlighted the need for a common language even more and may have facilitated language shift. Since Dolgan/Sakha was the lingua franca anyway, the most likely direction of shift in these mixed families was for Evenks to shift to Dolgan/Sakha rather than the other way around.

Thus the combination of Dolgan/Sakha as a lingua franca (associated with generalisations and morphosyntactic simplification), with the fact that most of the shifting people were Evenks (associated with generalisations and with changes directly mirroring Evenki structures), provides a plausible framework in which to view the range of observed differences between Dolgan and Sakha.

9.6 Conclusion

By recognising the linguistic and demographic variation within the community under consideration, this study confirms the importance of multicausality for explanations of contact-induced change. It shows how one linguistic outcome can develop as a result of multiple linguistic processes depending on group-internal differences in linguistic dominance within the bilingual population as well as on the function of the language in the sociolinguistic landscape. It also shows that, contrary to what some scholars propose (cf. Lucas 2012), a person's L1 need not necessarily coincide with his dominant language. Although many Dolgans who grew up in the 1950's and 1960's learned Dolgan as their L1 from their parents, many of them are now dominant in Russian, and admit that they are forgetting their native tongue.

In contrast to the contact situation between Dolgans and Evenks, which belongs to the past, the contact setting with Russians is still on-going and thus provides a real-time study of a contact situation for which social details are still available. Therefore it is an important contribution to the collection of case studies that is needed to gain insights into correlations between social settings and their linguistic outcomes, and can thus contribute to the further development of language contact theory, as well as test existing theories.