

Chapter 1

Introduction

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This introduction briefly presents the Tungusic languages, discusses their classification from a meta-perspective, and outlines the contents of the eight individual contributions to this volume.

1 Tungusic languages

Tungusic (sometimes Manchu-Tungusic) is an endangered language family that encompasses approximately twenty languages located in Siberia and northern China (e.g., Janhunen 1996, 2005, 2012). These languages are distributed over an enormous area that ranges from the Yenisey River and Xinjiang in the west to the Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin in the east. They extend as far north as the Taimyr Peninsula and, for a brief period, could even be found in parts of Central and South China (e.g., Hölzl & Hölzl 2019b). Tungusic-speaking peoples played an important role in the history of Northeast and East Asia and were the founders of several large empires, such as the Jin (1115–1234) and Qing dynasties (1636–1912). Recent years have seen considerable interest in this language family. Tungusic linguistics is an extremely active field of study that produced hundreds of new studies in recent years (see, for example, the references listed in Hölzl 2021b). However, the field is also very fragmented with studies being written in several languages, from a wide range of scholarly traditions. Research on Tungusic languages has been published, among others, in Chinese, Czech, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Manchu,



Polish, and Russian. Many important contributions and entire languages have gone almost unnoticed because of language barriers or the limited availability of some publications. This volume is an attempt to bring researchers from different backgrounds together to provide an open-access publication in English that is freely available to all scholars in the field. The volume emphasizes the diachronic dimension of Tungusic, tracing the development of the language family from pre-history and the earliest attestations, but also includes synchronic descriptions. This introduction briefly introduces the Tungusic languages, presents some recently published and previously overlooked data, and summarizes the individual contributions.

2 Classification and terminology

Tungusic is a top-level language family. The branching structure is open to discussion (see, e.g., Whaley & Oskolskaya 2020 and references therein), but most accounts agree on four mid-level groupings. These are comparable to branches of Indo-European, such as Germanic, Italic, or Slavic, but there is no universally accepted terminology yet. Following Janhunen (2012), the groups are referred to as Ewenic, Udegheic, Nanaic, and Jurchenic. These terms, based on the languages Even (Ewen), Udihe (Udeghe), Nanai, and Jurchen, respectively, are also used in this introduction and the contribution by Hölzl (2022 [this volume]). They are also briefly addressed in Khabtagaeva (2022 [this volume]) and Robbeets & Oskolskaya (2022 [this volume]). Some of the terms are also used by other contributions in this volume (e.g., Czerwinski 2022 [this volume]; Robbeets & Oskolskaya 2022 [this volume]; Zikmundová 2022 [this volume]). Jurchenic (e.g., Janhunen 1996) and Nanaic (e.g., Georg 2004) already have a relatively long history. For Udegheic, Janhunen (e.g., 2015) sometimes uses the term Orochic, based on the closely related language Oroch instead of Udihe. Jurchenic is also referred to as Manchuric in Alonso de la Fuente (2010/11), Jang (2020), Khabtagaeva (2022 [this volume]), or Robbeets & Oskolskaya (2022 [this volume]), a name derived from the Manchu language. In the Japanese tradition, the groups are indicated with the help of Roman numerals from I to IV (e.g., Ikegami 1974; Kazama 2003) that will be used alongside Janhunen's terminology here.

Many alternative terminologies have been proposed. For instance, Ewenic is often called Northern Tungusic (e.g., Aralova & Pakendorf 2022 [this volume]; Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]) while this name is reserved by Janhunen for a proposed group that includes Udegheic and Ewenic. Furthermore, many Ewenic languages of China are spoken as far south as Nanaic or Udegheic. A hypothetical branch encompassing Udegheic and Nanaic is sometimes called Amuric (e.g.,

Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]). But following Janhunen (1996), Amuric is also often used as a label for varieties of Nivkh. Doerfer (1978: 5) also employs the terms Northern branch for Ewenic (showing a secondary split into a Northeastern and a Northwestern group) and Southern branch for Jurchenic, but Central Eastern group for Udegheic as well as Central Western group for Nanaic, illustrating that Udegheic and Nanaic are believed to belong to one branch. Southern Tungusic in turn is used by Janhunen for a group that consists of Nanaic and Jurchenic. Given that these terminologies presuppose specific classifications of Tungusic that are not accepted by all researchers, a more neutral terminology is needed. Such a terminology is proposed in Table 1.

Table 1: Theory-neutral terminology for the four Tungusic groups

Numbers	Names	Languages
I	Ewenic	Even (Ewen), Evenki (Ewenki) ...
II	Udegheic/Orochic	Udihe (Udeghe), Oroch, ...
III	Nanaic	Nanai, ...
IV	Jurchenic/Manchuric	Jurchen, Manchu, ...

While the four groups can be considered a common ground for most approaches, their internal classification and higher-level relations are a matter of ongoing debate. Within Ewenic, for instance, Negidal is assumed to be closely related to Evenki in Doerfer (1978) or Aralova & Pakendorf (2022 [this volume]), but to the language Even in Robbeets & Oskolskaya (2022 [this volume]). The internal classification of the entire Udegheic branch (e.g., Udihe, Oroch) is investigated in the contribution by Perekhval'skaya (2022 [this volume]), demonstrating a historical continuum, while Oroch problematically is not grouped with Udihe in Oskolskaya et al. (2022). The relationship of Ewenic languages as spoken in Russia (i.e., Even, Evenki, Negidal) is briefly addressed in Aralova & Pakendorf (2022 [this volume]) and Klyachko (2022 [this volume]). Evenki dialects situated around the Chinese-Russian border (particularly Khamnigan Evenki and Nercha Evenki) are discussed in Khabtagaeva (2022 [this volume]).

The internal structure and relationship of the four mid-level groups also face problems through family-internal language mixing. This can be illustrated with the language Kilen that is variously classified as Jurchenic (Oskolskaya et al. 2022, included into the category Hezhe), mixed but basically Nanaic (Hölzl 2022 [this volume]), Udegheic (Kazama 2003, referred to as Hezhe), or as “missing link” be-

tween Udegheic and Ewenic (Kazama 1998, referred to as Kilen or Hezhen).¹ Similar difficulties exist, among others, for Kur-Urmi Nanai (or Kili) and Ussuri (or Bikin) Nanai that are classified as mixed but basically Nanaic in Hölzl (2022 [this volume]), but as related to Jurchenic in Oskolskaya et al. (2022), whereas Kazama (2003) classifies Kili as Ewenic. There is no simple solution to these problems. Doerfer (1978: 4f.) attempted to solve such obstacles by assuming transitional varieties between the four subgroups. But they are perhaps best considered mixed languages (e.g., Janhunen 2012: 6) that are the result of complex secondary interactions and different types of admixture of the four groups around the confluence of the Amur, Sungari, and Ussuri rivers. Dialect mixture and language contact are universal problems of historical linguistics for which Tungusic languages might prove a valuable natural experiment for future studies (e.g., Epps et al. 2013; McMahon 2013).

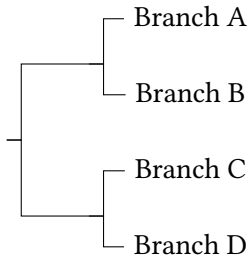
There is currently no generally agreed-upon higher-level classification of Tungusic. Logically speaking, four groups can stand in five types of relationships with each other (Table 2). Three of these represent cases of a twofold primary split, and the other two are cases of three- and fourfold splits, respectively. The exact age and internal diversity of the four groups are irrelevant for this purely topological approach.

Table 2: Logical possibilities for the classification of Tungusic

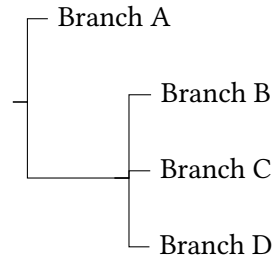
Primary split	Type	Topological schema	Possibilities
Twofold	Type 1	[A B] [C D]	3
	Type 2	A [B C D]	4
	Type 3	A [B [C D]]	12
Threefold	Type 4	[A B] C D	6
Fourfold	Type 5	A B C D	1

Altogether there are 26 logical possibilities for the topology of the Tungusic tree. Only a few of these have been proposed or are widely represented in the literature. For instance, a split into four separate branches (Type 5), sometimes attributed to Ikegami (1974), is not accepted by any current approach. Types 2 and 4 do not appear to be accepted either but remain theoretically possible.

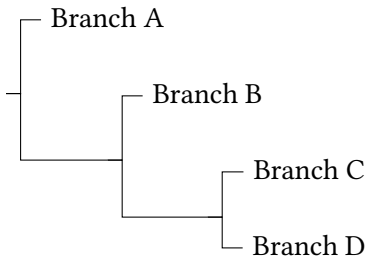
¹Due to the official classification, varieties of Kilen (Chinese *qileng* 奇楞, a mixed language) and Hezhen (Chinese *hezhen* 赫真, a form of southern Nanai) are classified as dialects of the Hezhe 赫哲 language in China (e.g., An 1986). This is similarly problematic as the term “Ewenke” for several Ewenic languages (see below and Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]).



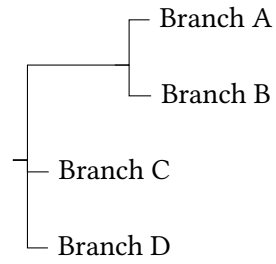
(a) Type 1



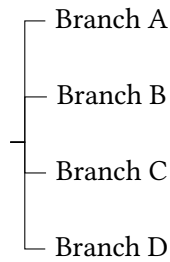
(b) Type 2



(c) Type 3



(d) Type 4



(e) Type 5

Figure 1: Possible topologies

Recent classifications only diverge from each other by few variables, two of which are included here. First, they differ with respect to the position of Udegheic that is either grouped with Ewenic or with Nanaic. Second, they disagree whether Jurchenic is the first branch to diverge from all other branches or is somehow related to Nanaic. Including only these two variables allows a meta-classification of Tungusic as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: A simplified meta-classification of Tungusic

	Jurchenic as first branch	Jurchenic related to Nanaic
Udegheic + Nanaic	A: IV [I [II III]]	B: I [IV [II III]]
Udegheic + Ewenic	C: IV [III [I II]]	D: [I II] [III IV]

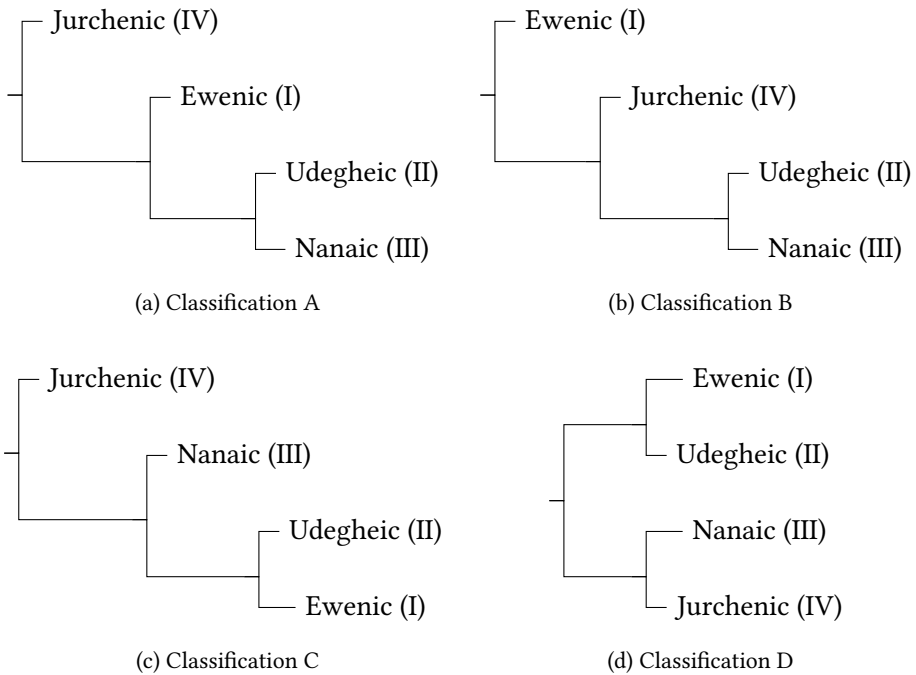


Figure 2: Recent classifications

Three of these represent cases of Type 3 (classifications A, B, C) and one of Type 1 (classification D). All four classifications agree on some points that are, however, explained differently. The well-known similarities between Nanaic and

Udegheic can theoretically be described by shared innovations (classifications A and B) or by convergence (classification D and perhaps C, e.g. Georg 2004; Alonso de la Fuente 2017: 112). The widely acknowledged differences between Jurchenic and the rest of Tungusic can be explained by an early branching (classifications A and C) or by different types of contact with non-Tungusic languages, such as Koreanic, Mongolic, Para-Mongolic, and Sinitic (classification D and perhaps B, e.g., Vovin 2006; Hölzl 2018a).

Some previous studies slightly disagree with the classification into four sub-groups. For instance, Vovin's (1993) tree resembles classification A but assumes that Even forms a separate branch after the split of Jurchenic and before the diversification of the rest of Tungusic. But Vovin (2009: 1103) later accepted classification D as proposed by Georg (2004). Most recent approaches can be categorized according to the meta-classification in Table 3. For example, Robbeets (2015) is a proponent of classification A while Doerfer (1978), although skeptical about tree diagrams, argues for classification B. Kazama (2003) and Pevnov (2017) follow classification C. Georg (2004), Janhunen (2012), and Hölzl (2022 [this volume]) accept classification D that groups Ewenic with Udegheic into a Northern and Nanaic with Jurchenic in a Southern Tungusic branch. Some approaches remain undecided or allow more than one possibility. For instance, Whaley & Oskolskaya (2020: 91) identified classification B as the most likely scenario with classification A also being supported by their study whereas Oskolskaya et al. (2022) tend towards classification D but leave the possibility for an early branching of Jurchenic open.

Whichever classification will eventually be supported by the most evidence, provided that the four groups and the tree model are accepted as a basis, it must be one of the 26 in Table 2 and probably one of the only four possibilities shown in Table 3. All previous classifications are likely to be the object of future revisions due to the development of new methodologies and in the light of newly available data.

3 Availability of new data

Tungusic linguistics has produced several outstanding works, such as the classical comparative dictionary by Cincius (1975/77) that can be considered a milestone in the field. However, it is by now over 45 years old and appeared just before new data became available on languages spoken in China starting from the end of the 1970s, not to mention that the Tungusic languages in Russia have also been increasingly well described over the last decades. Cincius (1975/77) represents only about half of the linguistic varieties (doculects) that are available

by now. It has been supplemented by newer comparative dictionaries, such as Kazama (2003), Doerfer & Knüppel (2004), or Chaoke (2014), but these do not cover all varieties either. A comprehensive review of all available data is beyond this brief introduction that limits itself to briefly presenting some new monographs on Ewenic languages in China from the last couple of years and some previously overlooked Jurchenic languages described during the 1980s.

A comprehensive classification of EWENIC necessarily includes varieties located in Russia (e.g., Arman, Even, Evenki, Negidal) and in China. Except for the dialects of Oroqen, which is called *Elunchun* 鄂伦春 in Chinese, Ewenic languages in China are collectively referred to as *Ewenke* 鄂温克, a cover term for various dialects of Solon and Evenki (e.g., Tsumagari 1992; Janhunen 1996; Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]). Several grammars and dictionaries of Ewenic languages spoken in China, many of which were previously underdescribed, have been published over the course of the last couple of years. Recent monographs include, but are not restricted to, two grammars and texts of “Aoluguya Ewenke” (Aoluguya/Yakut Evenki, Chaoke & Sirenbatu 2016; Hasibate’er 2016; Weng & Chaoke 2016), text collections and a grammar of “Tonggusi Ewenke” (Khamnigan/Tungus Evenki, Chaoke & Kajia 2016; Duo & Chaoke 2016), a comprehensive dictionary of “Elunchun” covering several Oroqen dialects (Han & Meng 2019), an extensive phonology of “Ewenke” (Huihe Solon, Wurigexiletu 2018), texts and a dictionary of “Arong Ewenke” (Chaoke & Kalina 2017), texts and a grammar of “Dula’er Ewenke” (Najia 2017; Chaoke & Najia 2020), a dictionary of “Nehe Ewenke” (Chaoke & Kajia 2017) etc. A detailed classification of the latter three varieties remains to be done. Chaoke (2017) is a comparative dictionary of Huihe Solon, Khamnigan/Tungus Evenki (“Morigele” dialect), and Aoluguya/Yakut Evenki.

Apart from some relics, Ewenic languages are unique among Tungusic in preserving an intervocalic *-g-, one common argument for classification B. Table 4 contains examples from the newly published sources. In some Ewenic languages, the -g- is realized as a fricative or approximant, e.g. Aoluguya Evenki [bæ:ʁɑ] ‘moon’ (Hasibate’er 2016), and in a few the -g- disappeared entirely, leading to the emergence of diphthongs and long vowels as in other Tungusic languages. This can be observed, among others, in one Khamnigan Evenki dialect (Urulyungui *tee-*, Borzya *tege-* ‘to sit’, Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]), in Oroqen, but also in the language referred to as “Arong Ewenke” that was recorded in Chabaqi 查巴奇 in Inner Mongolia (Chaoke & Kalina 2017). This language, tentatively classified as Solon in Hölzl (2022 [this volume]), also exhibits some features reminiscent of Solon dialects, such as the developments of geminates from consonant clusters. For instance, the cluster -rg- changed to -gg- in the word *iggə* ‘tail’ but is

preserved in *irgi* ‘brain’ (cf. Aoluguya Evenki *irgə* ~ *irgi* ‘tail’, *irgə* ‘brain’, Huihe Solon *iggi* ‘tail’, *iiggi* ‘brain’, Chaoke 2017). The dialects of Solon, Oroqen, and Evenki show an intricate pattern of family resemblances and interaction that is still incompletely understood (e.g., Whaley et al. 1999; Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]). This growing number of publications, although difficult to access for the wider public outside of China, represents important progress in the description of the dwindling dialectal diversity of Ewenic.

Table 4: Examples for intervocalic *-g-* in some Ewenic varieties of China (Chaoke 2017; Chaoke & Kajia 2017; Chaoke & Kalina 2017; Han & Meng 2019; Najia 2017)

Variety	fire	four	moon	summer	sun	to sit
Aoluguya Ewenke	togo	digin	beeg(a)	dʒoga	ʃigun	təgə-
Dula’er Ewenke	tog	digin	biaga	dʒogo	ʃigun	təgə-
Huihe Ewenke	tog	digin	beega	dʒog	ʃigun	təgə-
Morigele Ewenke	tog	digin	beega	dʒuga	ʃigun	təgə-
Nehe Ewenke	tog	digin	biag	dʒuag	ʃigun	təg-
Arong Ewenke	too	dijin	bia, be	dʒona	ʃiwən	təgə-
Oroqen (Elunchun)	t’ɔ	tijin	peja	dʒuwaa	ɕiwun	t’ə-

The JURCHENIC branch is of special importance for the history of Tungusic. If classifications A or C should be correct, Jurchenic represents the oldest branch of Tungusic. It is the largest branch in terms of speakers historically and currently. It has produced three distinct writing systems and by far contains the oldest and most numerous records among all Tungusic languages. Today, the last representative of Jurchenic with many speakers is Sibe (Xibe) that is increasingly well described in both its written (e.g., Sary 2017) and spoken forms (e.g., Jang 2020; Jang & Payne 2018; Zikmundová 2013). Despite being studied longest, Jurchenic is sometimes reduced to Jurchen, Manchu, and Sibe. However, Jurchen is a cover term for at least two different varieties (e.g., Kiyose 2000), Zikmundová (2022 [this volume]) points out dialectal differences within Sibe (see also Zheng 2019), and there is a large number of spoken Manchu dialects that were recorded in places such as Aihui (e.g., Shirokogoroff 1924; Wang 2005), Lalin (e.g., Mu 1986b; Ma 1997 [1988]; Wang 2001; Aixinjueluo 2014), Sanjiazi (e.g., Jin 1981; Enhebatu 1995; Kim et al. 2008; Dai 2012), Yanbian (e.g., Zhao 2000), or Yibuqi (e.g., Zhao 1989). In addition, there are at least three outlying Jurchenic varieties called Alchuka, Bala, and Kyakala that were already described in the 1980s but overlooked in comparative studies of Tungusic (Table 5). These three varieties are

probably extinct and have mostly been recorded by a scholar named Mu Yejun (also called Mu'ercha Yejun or Mu'ercha Anbulonga). To avoid confusion, Hölzl & Hölzl (2019a: 90) introduce the names “Chinese Kyakala” for the Jurchenic and “Russian Kyakala” for the Udegheic variety with that name (on which see Perekhval'skaya 2022 [this volume]). The descriptions suffer from inexact transcriptions, some typographic errors, and problematic analyses, but appear to be genuine. At least some of the data have been confirmed through independent recordings (see also Ma 1997 [1984], 1997 [1987], 1997 [1988], 1997 [1990]).

Table 5: Three outlying Jurchenic varieties

Variety	Main studies and sources
Alchuka	Mu 1981: 72; 1985; 1986a; 1986b; 1987; 1988a; Ikegami 1994; 1999: 321–343; Aixinjueluo 2014: <i>passim</i> ; Hölzl 2017, 2019, to appear
Bala	Mu 1984, 1987, 1988b; Ikegami 1999: 321–343; Li et al. 2018; Hölzl 2020, 2021a
Chinese Kyakala	Mu & Ma 1983; Mu'ercha & Mu'ercha 1983; Mu'ercha & Meng 1986; Mu 1987; Gu 2018; Hölzl 2018b; Hölzl & Hölzl 2019a

The term *Manchuric* (with an *r*) as a synonym for Jurchenic (Table 1) should not be confused with *Manchuic* (without the *r*) as used by Hölzl (2017) for one of three hypothetical subgroups of Jurchenic/Manchuric, the others being Alchukaic and Balaic. These have been tentatively proposed in analogy to Janhunen's (2012) Ulchaic subbranch of Nanaic that includes Uilta and Ulcha. *Manchuic* is a cover term for one variety of Jurchen described during Ming dynasty (Kane 1989), written Manchu (including written Sibe), and spoken Manchu dialects recorded in Northeastern (e.g., Aihui, Lalin/Jing, Sanjiazi, Yanbian, or Yibuqi Manchu) and Northwestern China (i.e., spoken Sibe). Following Zikmundová (2022 [this volume]), this last group of Manchurian and Jungarian spoken Manchu dialects that is closely related to the written language can be called Bannermen Manchu (*qiren manyu* 旗人满语 in Chinese).

Alchuka, Bala, and Chinese Kyakala, although all three are sometimes referred to as “Manchu”, do not seem to belong to Bannermen Manchu (e.g., Mu 1987; Hölzl 2017; Hölzl & Hölzl 2019a; Zikmundová 2022 [this volume]). They are characterized by several significant retentions and innovations in phonology, lexicon, and grammar. For instance, all three exhibit cases that lack the sound change $p > f$

found in written Manchu and all Manchu dialects, e.g. Alchuka *p'ut'ia-mei*, Bala *p'ut'ihiaŋ-mi*, Manchu *fuchihiya-mbi* ‘to cough’. Of the three languages, Alchuka and Kyakala could be more closely related, although the latter appears to show an additional substrate from Udegheic or perhaps Nanaic, e.g. the ocean spirit *taimu* 泰木 (Udihe *temu*, Nanai *temu*). Bala seems to be intricately connected to another Jurchen variety, but a comprehensive comparison and evaluation is still wanting (e.g., Kiyose 1977, 2000; Mu 1987). Both show a number of peculiarities that are otherwise rare or unattested in other Jurchenic languages, e.g. Bala *asəi*, Jurchen <asui> 阿隨 ‘NEG.EX’ (but Manchu *akū*). Bala has an additional admixture from at least one non-Jurchenic language, possibly Kilen (e.g., the word for ‘name’, Hölzl 2022 [this volume]). Alchuka, Bala, and Chinese Kyakala furthermore show influence from Bannermen Manchu or written Manchu as well as complex dialectal and sociolectal variation that remain to be investigated. Together, these three varieties illustrate that the Jurchenic branch of Tungusic is much more diverse and complex than many previous studies assumed. Alchuka, Bala, and Chinese Kyakala exhibit archaic features that are highly relevant for the prehistory of Tungusic and the reconstruction of Jurchen. Their significance cannot be emphasized enough and could be comparable to that of Chuvash and Khalaj among the Turkic languages.

4 Overview of this volume

This volume is based on a workshop held in 2018 at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE) in Tallinn. It includes studies presented at the workshop and a few newly submitted ones. Altogether, it contains eight contributions from ten different scholars and several different countries. All papers were reviewed by three to four people. The contributions cover all branches of Tungusic (Table 6), a wide range of linguistic features, and very different opinions concerning the classification, reconstruction, and cultural background of Tungusic. Some of the contributions are based on first-hand data collected during fieldwork, in some cases from the last speakers of a given language (see Aralova & Pakendorf 2022 [this volume] on Negidal; Czerwinski 2022 [this volume] on Uilta; Perekhval'skaya 2022 [this volume] on Udihe and Oroch).

In their contribution entitled *The causal-noncausal alternation in the Northern Tungusic languages of Russia*, Natalia Aralova and Brigitte Pakendorf investigate causative constructions in three endangered Northern Tungusic languages of the Ewenic branch – Even, Evenki, and Negidal. They look at morphological causative/non-causative alternations for 20 verbal meanings in the three

Table 6: An overview of the contributions in this volume

Tungusic languages	Studies in this volume
Ewenic	Aralova & Pakendorf; Khabtagaeva; Klyachko
Udegheic	Perekhval'skaya
Nanaic	Czerwinski
Jurchenic	Zikmundová
Pan-Tungusic	Hölzl; Robbeets & Oskolskaya

languages. For each meaning, the possibilities are marked causative, marked non-causative, equipollence (both alternations marked), or zero marking. They find that equipollence is the dominant strategy in Even and Negidal, whereas in Evenki the logical possibilities are more evenly distributed. This paper contributes significantly to ongoing theoretical discussions of the typology of voice and valence related constructions in the world's languages.

Based on data drawn from published sources spanning over 100 years and fieldwork among the last five speakers of the Nanaic language Uilta, **Patryk Czerwinski** presents a concise and typologically informed overview of the tense system. In his contribution entitled *Tense and insubordination in Uilta (Orok)*, he emphasizes the role of insubordination and verbalization in the emergence of finite verbal categories in all three temporal domains (past, present, future) and illustrates differences between the Northern and Southern dialects. The study is an important contribution in the grammatical description of this critically endangered language and substantially adds to our understanding of diachronic processes in the verbal domain of Tungusic that can also be applied to many other languages.

In *'What's your name?' in Tungusic and beyond*, **Andreas Hölzl** investigates what is referred to as the personal name question (PNQ). The study that is inspired by Frame Semantics and Construction Grammar presents a detailed cross-linguistic analysis of the PNQ that forms the basis of the analysis of the question in Tungusic languages. He identifies two main types that make use of an equational copula (Type A) and a speech act verb (Type B), respectively. Based on a global sample of about 50 languages, he describes several dimensions of variation, such as the use of different interrogatives, the marking of possession, politeness, the presence or absence of a copula, the valency of the speech act verb, etc. Including data from all Tungusic languages, he shows that the PNQ in Proto-Tungusic was of Type A and points out changes that have occurred in the individual languages through language contact.

The contribution by **Bayarma Khabtagaeva** entitled *On some shared and distinguishing features of Nercha and Khamnigan Evenki dialects* is an addition to the author's recent monograph (Khabtagaeva 2017). The study compares data of the probably extinct Nercha Evenki dialect (Castrén 1856) with modern data from Khamnigan Evenki obtained through fieldwork and some of the available literature (Janhunen 1991). It also includes comparative data from a wide range of other Tungusic languages. Through lexical and phonological similarities, she shows a close connection between the two varieties. For instance, she finds that the two varieties share the word *düčin* '40' of Mongolic origin that has a different form or is entirely absent in other Ewenic varieties. The study furthermore points out cases of lexical borrowing from different Mongolic languages, Russian, and Solon.

Placeholder words are items that speakers use to signal that they don't know or can't remember the correct word for something. Examples in English include "whatchamacallit" and "thingamajig". In *Functions of placeholder words in Evenki*, **Elena Klyachko** looks at placeholder words in terms of their morphological and syntactic behavior. In addition to providing valuable background information on Evenki varieties, including their morphological characteristics, Klyachko's study finds that placeholder words can substitute for items in almost any word class. As such they reflect the morphological character of the word they replace. A detailed discourse study of the use of placeholder words is included, showing that they have additional uses beyond the expected placeholder function. For example, they can be used as hesitation particles, and as discourse initiators.

Udihe is a highly endangered group of Tungusic varieties spoken in the Russian far east. Varieties of Udihe are famous for their multiple series of vowels, including short, long, laryngealized and sometimes pharyngealized sets. *From consonant to tone: Laryngealized and pharyngealized vowels in Udihe* by **Elena Perekhvatskaya** contains detailed discussion of the special political and sociolinguistic history of the various Udegheic varieties. Valuable spectrographic data from all recorded varieties, including data on allegro vs. full modes of pronunciation, forms the core of Perekhvatskaya's contribution. One major conclusion is that inter-variety variation in vowel inventories is explained on the basis of contrasting prosodic patterns.

In *Proto-Tungusic in time and space*, **Martine Robbeets** and **Sofia Oskolskaya** address some of the fundamental and important problems of Tungusic linguistics concerning the age, original location, and classification. They summarize and discuss the results of a recent Bayesian analysis of the Tungusic languages (Oskolskaya et al. 2022) that identifies a form of classification D as the most likely scenario but leaves the possibility of an early branching of Jurchenic open.

They assume a rough age of Proto-Tungusic at the beginning of the first millennium CE. Based on the modern distribution of the Tungusic languages and comparison with recent results from archaeology and genetic analyses of modern and prehistoric populations, they argue for a location of the Proto-Tungusic homeland somewhere around lake Khanka. They furthermore speculate that a hypothetical form of pre-Proto-Tungusic might have been spoken by incoming farmers that interacted with the distant ancestors of the modern Nivkh several millennia before Proto-Tungusic times.

With 20,000 or more native speakers, the Jurchenic language Sibe is the only modern Tungusic language that is not yet seriously endangered. There is a long-standing controversy over the ethnic identity of the Sibe people and the linguistic lineage of the Sibe language. Some, mostly linguists and outsiders to the culture, consider the spoken language to be a variety of Manchu. Others, in particular many Sibe speakers, consider the language and culture to be distinct from Manchu, arguing partly on the basis of a large number of words and concepts with clear origin in the Khorchin Mongol language. In her contribution, *Historical language contact between Sibe and Khorchin*, **Veronika Zikmundová** investigates several Mongolic features of Sibe and concludes that indeed Sibe is genetically closely related to Manchu, but that the Mongolic features can be explained on the basis of documented historical contact with Khorchin Mongol in the 15th and 16th centuries CE.

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