

## Chapter 4

# ‘What’s your name?’ in Tungusic and beyond

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This study investigates questions about personal names, i.e. questions corresponding to *What’s your name?* in English. This potentially universal type of question is referred to as the personal name question (PNQ). The study sketches the typological variation found in the PNQ from a cross-linguistic perspective and analyzes the synchronic typology and diachronic development of the PNQ in Tungusic, a small but important language family spoken in Northeast Asia.

Cross-linguistically, two main types of PNQs are attested. Type A is an equational copula sentence (e.g., *What is your name?*) while Type B contains a speech act verb (e.g., *What are you called?*). Tungusic shows a tendency for Type A but, because of contact languages such as Mongolian and Russian, also has instances of Type B. One of several other dimensions of variation among the world’s languages is the kind of interrogative used in PNQs. Tungusic languages originally used an interrogative meaning ‘who’ (literally *Who is your name?*). The use of ‘what’ in several languages located in the south and of ‘how’ in many languages in the north can be attributed to influence from Chinese, Russian, and other languages.

Historical accounts of Tungusic are usually restricted to individual items (e.g., \**si* ‘you (SG)’, \**gärbü* ‘name’, \**njii* ‘who’, e.g. Benzing 1956), but rarely are larger expressions reconstructed to Proto-Tungusic. This study shows that the Proto-Tungusic PNQ as one idiom can be plausibly reconstructed as \**si(n-i) gärbü-si njii?* ‘2SG.(OBLGEN) name-2SG.POSS who’. Most deviations in modern languages can be explained by contact with surrounding languages.

**Keywords:** personal name question, typology, Tungusic, reconstruction, frames, construction grammar



## 1 Introduction

FAUST: What is thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES: A question small, it seems,  
For one whose mind the Word so so much despises;  
Who, scorning all external gleams,  
The depths of being only prizes.  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 2018 [1808])

This study investigates what will be referred to as the *personal name question* (PNQ), i.e. a question about the name of a person, more specifically of an addressee (or second person), such as *What's your name?* in English. Almost every natural language seems to have a conventional way of expressing this question. But despite being a question that occurs in textbooks of many languages, there has been surprisingly little cross-linguistic research on this topic. Even *The Oxford handbook of names and naming* (Hough 2016) only devotes a brief section to this topic (Van Langendonck & Van de Velde 2016: 26). Not many grammatical descriptions mention PNQs and even fewer address it as a topic in its own right. There are some noticeable exceptions, such as Mushin (1995: 8, 19), who noted that Australian languages often employ a personal interrogative meaning 'who' in questions about names. Blust (2013: 509f.) made a similar observation about Austronesian languages. The following examples, therefore, literally mean 'Who is your name?' (see also Hölzl 2014; Gil 2018).<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Yankunytjatjara (Pama-Nyungan; Mushin 1995: 19)  
*nyuntu ini ngana-nya?*  
2SG.NOM name who-NOM.NAME
- (2) Ngaju Dayak (Austronesian; Blust 2013: 510)  
*eweh ara-m?*  
who name-2SG.POSS

Many other languages, such as Aymara spoken in southern Peru or Badaga in India, behave like English and use an interrogative with the meaning 'what' instead.

- (3) Muylaq' Aymara (Aymaran; Coler 2014: 402)  
*¿kuna suti-ni-v-rak(i)-ta-st(i)?*  
what name-ATT-COP.V-AD-2SIM-Q

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout the paper, examples without translation can be translated into English as 'What is your name?' or as an answer thereto.

- (4) Badaga (Dravidian; Balakrishnan 1999: 214)  
*ninna hesaru e:na?*  
 2SG.GEN name what

Some languages, such as Tok Pisin spoken in Papua New Guinea or Wulai Atayal on Taiwan, allow the use of both ‘who’ and ‘what’.

- (5) Tok Pisin (English-based creole; Wurm & Mühlhäusler 1985: 345)  
*husat/wanem nem bilong yu?*  
 who/what name GEN 2SG
- (6) Wulai Atayal (Austronesian; Huang 1996: 293: 293)  
*ima?/nalu? lalu?=su??*  
 who/what name=2SG.POSS

This variation is also addressed in Idiatov (2007: 61–94, *passim*), who, among other things, investigated “NAME-questions” in a large sample of languages. This kind of question is broadly defined, however, and not restricted to the question about personal names. According to Idiatov (2007: 47), the question is based on “non-prototypical combinations of values” because it combines the features THING, IDENTIFICATION, and PROPER NAME (as an expected answer). Prototypical combinations, on the contrary, are said to be PERSON, IDENTIFICATION, PROPER NAME for ‘who’ (e.g., *Who are you? I’m Mike.*) and THING, CLASSIFICATION, and COMMON NOUN for ‘what’ (e.g., *What is this? This is a book.*). Following Idiatov (2007), the fact that some languages like Aymara use ‘what’ and others, such as Ngaju Dayak, ‘who’ in questions about names is a result of the non-prototypical combination of these features that allows both choices. An alternative explanation of the variation, among other things based on the ambiguous nature of the concept NAME itself, will be proposed in this study. The use of other interrogatives, such as *jak* ‘how’ in Polish (asking about the MANNER), is argued to be an “avoidance strategy” (Idiatov 2007: 61). This is a feature common in, but not restricted to, European languages.

- (7) Polish (Indo-European)  
*Jak masz na imię?*  
 how have.2SG.PRS.IND on name
- (8) Manam (Austronesian; Lichtenberk 1983: 406)  
*ará-m bá?ara?*  
 name-2SG.POSS how

For some reason, the focus of previous studies has been on the choice of the interrogative in the PNQ. Apart from Idiatov (2007: 63–67), few studies address morphosyntactic patterns on how questions about names are expressed cross-linguistically. But the PNQ also varies on many other dimensions, including the marking of possession, politeness, the presence or absence of a copula, the valency of the speech act verb and many more. These typological features of the PNQ are addressed in §2.

The underlying theoretical background of this study is loosely based on a general form of Frame Semantics and Construction Grammar, especially as it can be applied to historical and areal phenomena (e.g., Fillmore 1985; Langacker 2008; Hilpert & Östman 2014; Trousdale 2014; Lefebvre 2015; Hölzl 2018b). Construction Grammar is built on the idea that the lexicon and the grammar of a language are not clearly distinct, but form a continuum of constructions of different size and complexity. Crucially, idioms and fixed expressions, including the PNQ, are considered constructions in their own right. Construction Grammar allows for partial analyzability and different levels of schematicity. In English, for instance, *What's your name?* is not only a conventional expression, but is at the same time analyzable as an instantiation of more abstract constructions, including *what's X*, where X refers to an open slot. The questions *What's this?* and *What's the problem?* are other instantiations of this partially schematic construction.

This study investigates the personal name question in the Tungusic language family, which allows a detailed analysis of the individual constructions involved in the expression of the question. Tungusic is a small language family of up to twenty different languages spoken in Northeast Asia, especially eastern Russia and northern China. Data from all attested Tungusic languages are included in the study. Its internal classification is a matter of dispute, but four different subgroups can unmistakably be identified. Following Janhunen (2012b), these will be referred to as Ewenic, Udegheic, Nanaic, and Jurchenic. According to one view (e.g., Georg 2004; Janhunen 2012b), the former two together form the Northern Tungusic languages while the latter can be referred to as Southern Tungusic (Table 1). The discussion of the Tungusic PNQ in §4 is divided into subsections on each of the four subgroups. Tungusic is an especially rewarding language family for this study due to the relatively high variability of the personal name question, especially in terms of the interrogative used.

Previous diachronic accounts of Tungusic languages usually focused on phonological, morphological, and lexical aspects (e.g., Benzing 1956; Doerfer 1978 among many others), but have rarely addressed larger expressions. However, similar to lexical items, it is possible to identify COGNATE CONSTRUCTIONS in

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Table 1: Possible classification of the Tungusic languages (e.g., Georg 2004; Janhunen 2012b); \*languages with highly mixed affiliation

Branch	Subbranch	Languages
Northern Tungusic	Ewenic	Arman, Even (Ewen), Evenki (Ewenki), Oroqen, Solon, Negidal, ...
	Udegheic/ Orochic	Oroch, Udihe (Udeghe), ...
Southern Tungusic	Nanaic	Kilen*, Kili*, Nanai, Samar, Ulcha, Uilta, Ussuri Nanai, ...
	Jurchenic/ Manchuric	Alchuka, Bala, Jurchen A, Jurchen B, Kyakala, written Manchu, spoken Manchu (e.g., Sibe), ...

related languages and, therefore, to reconstruct larger constructions to proto-languages (e.g., Barðdal 2013). A superficial survey of the personal name question in several Romance languages can illustrate this concept.

- (9) a. French Comment t’appelles-tu?  
 b. Italian Come ti chiami?  
 c. Portuguese Como te chamas?  
 d. Romanian Cum te cheamă?  
 e. Spanish ¿Cómo te llamas?

Of the five languages mentioned, all can make use of a similar construction with the same elements, e.g. the interrogative *come* ‘how’ in initial position, followed by the personal pronoun *ti* ‘2SG.OBL’, and an inflected second person singular present indicative form of the verb *chiamare* ‘to call’ in Italian (see also 27). Only French has a different verb (*appeler*). Apart from phonological differences, there are also differences in the verbal morphology (e.g., an enclitic personal pronoun *tu* in French, see also 19). Nevertheless, the overall similarity suggests that earlier stages of Romance also had a construction out of which the constructions in the individual languages might have developed.<sup>2</sup> Changes in the Tungusic PNQ construction and how it can be reconstructed to the proto-language will be addressed in §4 and §5.

<sup>2</sup>A proofreader pointed out that Brazilian Portuguese also has an innovative construction: *Como você se chama?*

This paper has five sections, including this introduction. §2 sketches a typology of the personal name question from a cross-linguistic perspective. §3 introduces the semantic background of the question from a frame semantic point of view. §4 addresses the expression of the question in Tungusic languages. §4.1 discusses the second person forms and the genitive, §4.2 gives an overview of the word for ‘name’, and §4.3 to §4.6 investigate the PNQ in the four subbranches of Tungusic. The discussion in §5 reconstructs the PNQ to Proto-Tungusic (§5.1) gives some conclusions (§5.2).

## **2 The personal name question from a cross-linguistic perspective**

Personal names are probably a universal or near-universal property of human cultures. An exception could be the Matsigenka in Peru, where “personal names are of little significance” (Johnson 2003: 10). A similar case can be observed in Venezuela, which also illustrates culture-specific functions of personal names:

The Panare, for example, have five personal names for men and seven for women. They are all based on physical characteristics, like ‘big eyes’, ‘cutie’, ‘big one’, ‘lopsided one’ etc. Individuals are more likely to be referred to by kinship and locality, e.g., grandfather of Camana (a place), child of sister, brother (anyone in one’s male peer group), etc. Also, people have different ‘names’ throughout their lifetime. Before about age three, children are just known as ‘baby’. When it looks like they are going to survive, they are given a childhood name. Then when they come of age (ready to marry) they get their adult name. They may also have a Spanish-based name if they are baptised. But none of these ‘names’ are really used all that much as names in the way Europeans use names. Maybe the Christian names come closest. [...] If you ask a Panare person ‘What is your name?’ (in Spanish) you would only get their Christian name in response. (Thomas E. Payne, p.c. 2020)

To my knowledge all Tungusic cultures have personal names. As a rule, Russian and Chinese naming practices can also be found among speakers of Tungusic languages today. Culture-specific details, such as the use of derogatory names among the Manchus (Alonso de la Fuente 2012/2014) or the reference to rivers for the self-identification among the Evenki (Lavrillier 2006), seem to play no significant role for the expression of the PNQ among Tungusic languages. A discussion of specific meanings or functions of names goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

The PNQ could also be a universal or near-universal property, but is expressed differently from language to languages. Cross-linguistically, however, only a limited number of different constructional types is attested (e.g., Idiatov 2007: 63–67). This section gives a brief overview of the typological variation attested in the expression of the PNQ emphasizing those aspects that are relevant for the classification of Tungusic (see also Idiatov 2007 and Gil 2018).

The question ‘What is your name?’ is part of a question-answer sequence, such as in the following well-known Russian dialogue of the explorer Vladimir Arsen’ev with his later friend Dersu Uzala, a member of the Tungusic-speaking Nanai people.

- (10) *Tebja kak zovut? Sprosil ja neznakomca.*  
*Dersu Uzala, otvečal on.*  
 “What is your name?” I asked the stranger.  
 “Dersu Uzala,” he answered. (Arsen’ev 1921, 2016 [1921]: 18)

More specifically, the sequence consists of a content question with an interrogative, in this case Russian *kak* ‘how’ (see also 26), that is taken up again in the elliptic answer in the form of a personal name, i.e. *Dersu Uzala*.

Pragmatically speaking, there are, of course, many different ways of achieving the same overall meaning as a PNQ, for instance by using an imperative form of a speech act verb (e.g., Schulze 2007: 254). The following is an example from the Tungusic language Evenki (similar to *State your name!*).

- (11) Evenki (Nedjalkov 1997: 148)  
*si.n-ngi-ve gerbi-ve mi.ne-ve gu:-kel!*  
 2SG.OBL-GEN-ACC name-ACC 1SG.OBL-ACC say-2SG.IMP  
 ‘Tell me your name!’

In certain contexts, even the word *Name!* alone could already be sufficient.

But not only is this much less polite than a question, but cross-linguistically it also is not the usual way of putting the question. CONVENTIONALITY is key in the investigation of the personal name question. While every language is certainly capable of asking for the name of a person, the universal tentatively proposed here is that almost every language might have a conventional way of expressing it.

In some languages, such as German, there are several different ways of putting the question. As in Evenki, an imperative of a speech act verb can be used in certain contexts, for instance when giving vent to one’s impatience.

(12) German

*Sag mir (schon) dein-en Name-n!*  
say.IMP.SG 1SG.DAT already 2SG.GEN-M.SG.ACC name-M.SG.ACC  
'Tell me your name (already)!'

Given a certain context, it is also possible to jokingly ask whether somebody actually has a name. Because we know that (in our culture) everybody has a name, we draw the conclusion, by means of pragmatic inference and the intention of being informative, that the appropriate answer to the question is the specific name rather than the answer yes.

(13) German

*Have du ein-en Name-n?*  
have.2SG.PRS.IND 2SG a-M.SG.ACC name-M.SG.ACC  
'Do you have a name?'

However, German has two more conventional ways of expressing the question (14) that in most situations would be preferred to the stylistically marked ones above.

(14) German

- a. *Was/Wie ist dein Name?*  
what/how is 2SG.GEN.M.SG.NOM name.M.SG.NOM
- b. *Wie heiß-t du?*  
how be.called-2SG.PRS.IND 2SG

Conventionality could theoretically be measured by text frequency, but, given that there are no large corpora for Tungusic languages, this method is inapplicable. Most texts that are available to me only contain the question too few times (if at all) to allow any conclusions. The pragmatic approach followed in this study is mostly impressionistic. It is based on the information available in grammar books, dictionaries, some texts, and the information from experts on individual languages.

Cross-linguistically, there are two main ways of expressing this special type of content question that correspond to the two most conventional expressions in German above (14). Consider the following examples from Mandarin and their English translation:



(15) Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan)

- a. [nǐ de míngzi] shì shénme?  
 2SG ATTR name COP what  
 'What is your name?'  
 b. nǐ jiào [shénme (míngzi)]?  
 2SG call what (name)  
 'What are you called?'

Both examples are directed at a second person and contain an interrogative. Example (15a) is a copula construction that equates 'your name' (the copula subject) with the interrogative (the copula complement, Dixon 2010) while example (15b) contains a speech act verb. These two types of constructions will be referred to as TYPE A and TYPE B, respectively.

Both patterns have several subtypes. Type A, for instance, can take at least two different forms in which the interrogative is either used as an argument of its own (your name = what, see 16) or as an attribute of the noun meaning 'name' (you = what name, see 17). These will be referred to as TYPE A.1 and TYPE A.2.

(16) Jammu/Kashmir Burushaski (Burushaski; Munshi 2006: 148)

[um-e gu-yik] besen ðila?  
 2SG-GEN 2SG.POSS-name what be.PRS.3SG[ABST]

(17) Sanjiazi Manchu (Tungusic; Dai 2012: 239)

'ci ['ai 'kəvə]?  
 2SG what name

Both types of the personal name question refer to a SECOND PERSON. In many languages, this is overtly marked by a personal pronoun (both types), a possessive marker that also encodes person (especially Type A, see 18), or verbal agreement (especially Type B, see 19).

(18) Nungon (Trans-New Guinea; Sarvasy 2017: 469: 469)

gok maa-ya numa?  
 2SG name-2SG.POSS who

(19) French (Indo-European)

Comment t'=appelles=tu?  
 how 2SG.OBL=call.2SG.PRS.IND=2SG

In languages with egophoricity, second person can also be encoded indirectly with the help of the *anticipation rule* (Tournadre & LaPolla 2014: 245). In such languages, an egophoric marker usually refers to a first person, but in questions can also refer to a second person because the perspective of the addressee is taken.

- (20) Karlong Mongghul (Khitano-Mongolic; Faehndrich 2007: 114)

*ʈɛi-ni nara ja:n-i?*

2SG-GEN name what-EGO

- (21) Wutun (Sino-Tibetan; Sandman 2016: 295)

*ni-de minze-li ma sho-yek?*

2SG-ATTR name-LOC what say-EGO

Among Tungusic languages, only Sibe has been claimed to possess some sort of grammaticalized egophoric system (Li 1984), but to my knowledge, this does not include any marking that would be relevant for the PNQ.

Both types of PNQs usually contain an **interrogative**. A potential exception to this generalization is the language Wari' spoken in Brazil that uses demonstratives instead. Jahai appears to make use of a polar question that also lacks an interrogative (see also Gil 2018).

- (22) Wari' (Chapacuran; Everett & Kern 2007: 40)

*cain' cain' ne wixi-um ne?*

that.N.DIST that.N.DIST 3N name-2S REC.PST

- (23) Jahai (Austroasiatic; Schebesta & Blagden 1928: 808, 821)

*ha kenmo' pai?*

Q name you

Literally: 'Your name?'

For Tungusic, only examples with interrogatives are attested. As seen in the Introduction, the kind of interrogative in the name question also differs from language to language. Cross-linguistically, the two most common categories of interrogatives to be found in this question are **THING** (*what*, e.g. English) and **PERSON** (*who*, e.g. Tigre, Pazih), both of which are attested among Tungusic languages.

- (24) Tigre (Afroasiatic; Elias 2014: 227)

*man tu səmetka?*

who COP.3SG.M name.2SG.POSS.M

Literally: 'Who is your name?'

(25) Pazih (Austronesian; Li & Tsuchida 2001: 44, 46)

*ima langat pai siw?*

who name Q 2SG.NOM

This variation certainly has several causes, only some of which can be addressed here. In most Tungusic languages, the use of a given interrogative can be explained with language contact. But this does not explain why different interrogatives can be used in the first place.

Table 2 sketches what can be assumed to be some prototypical features of the two interrogatives from a cross-linguistic perspective, although there are language-specific boundaries (based on Nau 1999: 148; Croft 2003: 130; Idiatov 2007: 18).

Table 2: Tentative prototypical combinations of features for ‘who’ and ‘what’. What is referred to as “word class” is not identical to Idiatov’s (2007) feature “expected answer” that is assumed to be “proper name” for ‘who’. Instead, this refers to the word class of the interrogative itself.

	PERSON ( <i>who</i> )		THING ( <i>what</i> )
referentiality	identification		classification
animacy	human	animate	inanimate
word class	pronoun	proper name	common noun

The frequent use of ‘who’ in PNQs might be explained by the fact that it is a question about an identification of a specific person (*Who are you? I’m Bill.*), but not a classification (*What is that? That is an airplane.*). The two other features are located on well-known typological scales, i.e. pronoun > proper name > common noun and human > animate > inanimate. Perhaps because a PNQ asks about a proper name that is located in the middle of the first of these two scales, ‘who’ (often an interrogative pronoun) and ‘what’ (often an interrogative noun) can both be used. Another factor for the variation might be the ambiguous nature of the concept NAME itself. First, some languages, such as Great Andamanese, treat a name as if it was a body part (Abbi 2013: 80). Second, a name can also be metaphorically conceptualized as a THING that can be possessed (e.g., *I have a book/name, my book/name*). Third, a name can also metonymically stand for the PERSON itself (e.g., *I am Mike*). The first interpretation might allow both ‘who’ and ‘what’ (animate entity), the second favors the use of ‘what’ (inanimate entity), the last of ‘who’ (human being). This represents a slight difference with respect to Idiatov’s (2007: 47) account that assumes that a name generally is a type of THING.

The use of a MANNER (*how*) or other interrogative, such as *come* in Italian or *comment* in French, is less frequent and can possibly be explained with avoidance (Idiatov 2007: 61). This seems to be relatively frequent in southern, central and eastern Europe, but can also be found in other languages (e.g., Gil 2018).

- (26) Russian (Indo-European)  
*Kak tebja zovut?*  
how 2SG.ACC call.3PL.PRS.IND  
Literally: ‘How do they call you?’

- (27) Italian (Indo-European)  
*Come ti chiami?*  
how 2SG.OBL call-2SG.PRS.IND  
Literally: ‘How do you call (yourself)?’

As will be shown in §4, many Tungusic languages appear to have calqued the use of a MANNER interrogative on the basis of Russian, i.e. the European pattern spread towards the East.

An interrogative in both types of PNQs may be FOCUSED. Cross-linguistically, there are different means of focusing an interrogative. A strategy common, for instance, in Japonic languages is the use of a morphosyntactic marker.

- (28) Tarama Miyako (Japonic; Aoi 2015: 417)  
*naa=ju=ba nuu=ti=ga iiga?*  
name=ACC=TOP what=QUOT=FOC say=q

Except for, perhaps, Uilta, this is not attested in the Tungusic PNQs. Another way of focusing the interrogative is through fronting, also called (full) *wh-movement*, as in English. In Northeast Asia, few languages exhibit this syntactic phenomenon. An indication of fronting is the comparison of the PNQ with its answer. If the personal name appears in the same position as the interrogative (i.e., *in situ*), there is no fronting involved.

- (29) English  
a. *What* is [your name]?  
b. [My name] is *Anna*.
- (30) Mandarin  
a. [nǐ de míngzi] shì shénme?  
2SG ATTR name COP what

- b. [wǒ de míngzi] shì ānnà.  
 1SG ATTR name COP PN

Northern Tungusic languages are among the very few exceptions with occasional sentence-initial interrogatives in Northeast Asia (Dryer 2013; Hölzl 2018a). Ewenic languages also exhibit other focus positions that are more central for the PNQ. Some Tungusic languages have adopted the European pattern through Russian.

Type A, and sometimes Type B also, contains a DUMMY noun meaning ‘name’. Obviously, there is no generalization on what phonological form this noun has cross-linguistically. It is necessary to distinguish between chance resemblance, a common inheritance, and mutual contact. German *Name* and English *name*, for instance, are similar due to a common Germanic origin. The similarity to Uralic, e.g. Finnish *nimi*, can perhaps best be explained by Indo-European influence (e.g., Anthony 2007: 95). In many other cases, similarities between individual words, such as Persian *nām*, Kurux *na:me*, Japanese *namae*, or Papuan Malay *nama*, is probably the result of chance.

- (31) Papuan Malay (Austronesian; Kluge 2017: 623)  
*kam pu nama siapa-siapa?*  
 2PL POSS name who~PL  
 ‘What are your names?’

In a few languages, the dummy noun can fuse with other elements. For instance, in the Austronesian language Kilivila, the dummy noun *yaga* ‘name’ (Senft 1986: 420) fused with an interrogative to form the complex stem *amyaga-* ‘what is the name of’ (Senft 1986: 187), which is the basis of the PNQ *amyagam?* that contains a possessive marker *-m* ‘2SG.POSS’ (Senft 1986: 52).

Interrogatives are often reinforced with other elements, such as basic nouns, e.g. Italian *che cosa* ‘what thing > what’ (e.g., Diessel 2003; Hölzl 2018a). Tok Pisin *wanem* ‘what’ seen in (5) is a contraction of English *what* and *name* (Wurm & Mühlhäusler 1985: 210). This reinforcement suggests that the concept NAME is considered, at least by the speakers of this language, a very basic category equivalent to THING.

Depending on the grammar of the individual languages, the dummy noun can belong to a certain class (e.g., animacy, gender, noun class). For instance, it has male gender in German and in the following construction in the Sepik language Abau. In the South American language Panare, it is marked for inanimateness and invisibility.

- (32) Abau (Sepik; Lock 2011: 227)  
*hwon-o uru po-ho?*  
2SG-GEN name Q-GL.M
- (33) Panare (Cariban; Payne & Payne 2013: 66)  
*sinka mën a-yiche?*  
how IN.INVISIBLE 2-name

In Tungusic, there is no such classification of the dummy noun.

Some languages have more than one dummy that can enter the question. In Standard Korean, for instance, there is a distinction between neutral *ilum* and honorific *sengham* (Song 2005: 95).

- (34) Korean (Koreanic; Sohn 1999: 418)
- a. *ilum i mwe yey-yo?*  
name NOM what be-POL
- b. *sengham i ettehkey toy-sey-yo?*  
name.HON NOM how become-HON-POL  
Literally: ‘How does your name become?’

In this language, the two nouns are part of different constructions. Example (34a) is said to a child or teenager and (34b) is the honorific version. Individual Tungusic languages only have one dummy noun.

An additional distinction in Type A is whether languages make use of an overt COPULA or not. While some languages, such as Sumerian (35), require an overt copula, others, such as Kurux (36) and many Tungusic languages, do not.

- (35) Sumerian (Black 2007: 21)  
*aba-m mu-zu?*  
what-3SG.COP name-2SG.POSS
- (36) Kurux (Dravidian; Kobayashi & Tirkey 2017: 242)  
*ning-hay ender na:me?*  
2SG-GEN what name

In Type A languages, there is an additional POSSESSIVE RELATIONSHIP, which, depending on the language, can be dependent-marked (e.g., Mongsen Ao, 37), head-marked (e.g., Teiwa, 38), double marked (e.g., Turkish, 39), or unmarked (e.g., Nihali, 40).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The PNQ in Mongsen Ao can also be expressed with ‘what’.

- (37) Mongsen Ao (Sino-Tibetan; Coupe 2007: 99)

*nə tə-niŋ sá páʔ?*  
2SG.POSS RL-name who

- (38) Teiwa (Trans-New Guinea; Klamer 2010: 239)

*ha-yit amidan?*  
2SG.POSS-name what

- (39) Turkish (Turkic)

*sen-in ad-in ne?*  
2SG-GEN name-2SG.POSS what

- (40) Nihali (Nagaraja 2014: 116)

*ne jumu na:n?*  
2SG name what

All four types are attested in Tungusic.

In those languages that have POSSESSIVE CLASSIFICATION, there is an additional distinction that refers to the class of the word for 'name'. In Mongsen Ao, for example, the "relational prefix" *tə-* that is seen in (37) is usually found on body parts and kinship terms (Coupe 2007: 84). In Mandarin, *míngzi* 'name' belongs to the set of nouns that is obligatorily possessed with a genitive marker *de*. This marker can be absent with kinship terms. A language that makes a distinction into several different possessive classes is Great Andamanese.

- (41) Great Andamanese (Abbi 2013: 181, 270)

*ŋ=er=liu a=fyu bi?*  
2SG=CL2=name CL1=who COP

In this language, the word *liu* 'name' takes the class 2 possessive marker *er=* ~ *er=* (Abbi 2013: 80, 140, 161) that otherwise attaches to "major body parts that pertain to the 'head', 'brain', 'neck', 'face', 'arms', 'thigh', 'calf', 'knee' and 'bones.'" (Abbi 2013: 141). In addition, the personal interrogative has the class 1 possessive marker *a-* also found on words referring to the mouth and kinship terms, such as mother. As will be shown below, the Tungusic possessive classification marker cannot enter the PNQ.

In Type B constructions, there is variance in the type of SPEECH ACT VERB that is involved. Apart from the language-specific semantics, the most important variation concerns the valency of the verb. In German, *heißen* 'to be called' is an intransitive verb and *nennen* 'to call' is a transitive verb. In Mandarin, *jiào* is an ambitransitive verb that can be either intransitive or transitive (Table 3).

Table 3: Valency of speech act verbs in German and Mandarin. In German, the transitive or causative use of *heißen* is archaic.

	Intransitive (+ NAME)	Transitive (+ NAME)
German	heißen	-
	-	nennen
Mandarin	jiào	jiào

- (42) a. Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan)  
*wǒ jiào ānnà.*  
 1SG call PN  
 ‘I am called Anna.’ (intransitive)
- b. *tā jiào wǒ ānnà.*  
 3SG call 1SG PN  
 ‘(S)he calls me Anna.’ (transitive)

English requires a passive, a reflexive, or a third person plural dummy agent in order to use the verb to call as an intransitive verb, e.g. *he is called Joe*, *he calls himself Joe*, *they call him Joe*. A reflexive or a passive of a speech act verb are also possible in German.

- (43) German (Indo-European)  
*Wie nenn-st du dich?*  
 how call-2SG.PRS.IND 2SG 2SG.REFL  
 Literally: ‘How do you call yourself?’<sup>4</sup>
- (44) German (Indo-European)  
*Wie wirst du genannt?*  
 how get.2SG.PRS.IND 2SG called  
 Literally: ‘How are you called?’

An impersonal construction is also attested in other languages with Type B constructions.

- (45) Beng (Mande; Paperno 2014: 17)  
*ouo mi si po?*  
 3PL.HAB.AFF 2SG call.L what  
 Literally: ‘What do they call you?’

<sup>4</sup>This is identical to the original of the question in the quotation from Goethe above.



Changing of valency, reflexives or impersonals are not attested in the few cases of Type B constructions in Tungusic.

POLITENESS is a dimension of variation that plays a larger or smaller role for both types of PNQs depending on the language. In German, there is a two-way politeness distinction that affects the choice of the pronoun and, consequently, the verbal ending. Instead of the usual *du* 'you (SG)', the polite pronoun *Sie* 'you (SG.POL)' is used. Both have suppletive case forms.

- (46) German (Indo-European)  
*Wie heiß-en* *Sie?*  
 how be.called-2SG.PRS.IND.POL 2SG.POL
- (47) German (Indo-European)  
*Was/Wie ist Ihr* *Name?*  
 what/how is 2SG.POL.GEN.SG.M.NOM name.SG.M.NOM

While German makes use of the same two constructions, there are languages that change the whole construction according to the politeness register. Two such languages that had contact with Tungusic languages are Korean (see above) and Mandarin. Mandarin, apart from the other expressions mentioned throughout this section has the following honorific form that is based on a different pattern.

- (48) Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan)  
*nín guì xìng?*  
 2SG.HON honorable surname

In Koreanic languages, apart from the use of a different construction seen above, there is also a distinction in the question marker.

- (49) Soviet Korean (Koreanic; King 1987: 253, 269, slightly adjusted)
- a. *irimi misi-ge-ja?*  
 name what-thing-Q.PLAIN
  - b. *irimi misi-ge-mdu?*  
 name what-thing-Q.POL

Politeness could also have led to some exceptions from the proposed universal that all languages have a conventionalized way of expressing the PNQ. Jiaomuzu Gyalrong in China, for instance, tends "to avoid direct address", including questions about names. However, even in this language it is possible to ask a PNQ in a polite way:

(50) Jiaomuzu Gyalrong (Sino-Tibetan; Prins 2017: 343)

*nənʃo t<sup>hi</sup> tə-rɲu-n ko?*

2SG what 2-be.called-2SG ANX

‘Please, do tell me what is your name?’

Overall, Tungusic languages have few grammaticalized expressions for politeness.<sup>5</sup>

### 3 The personal name frame

The semantic side of a construction, like that of a lexical item, can be represented by what is often referred to as a frame (e.g., Fillmore 1985). This section introduces the *personal name frame* (PNF) that could be the basis for the personal name question. This frame can be illustrated with dialogues from the Tungusic language Sibe.

(51) Sibe (Jin 1993: 3)

a. **tʃunfu/Chunfu:**

*ci χodz=na?*

2SG good=Q

‘How are you?’

b. *nənə-m mi.n-j bəji-v bəji-d əmdan taqə-vi-ki.*

first-CVB.IPFV 1SG.OBL-GEN self-ACC self-DAT once know-CAUS-DES

‘First, let me introduce myself.’

c. *mi.n-b tʃunfu ʃi-m.*

1SG.OBL-ACC PN say-IPFV

‘My name is Chunfu.’

d. **tʃaŋmiŋ/Changming:**

*ci.n-b taqə-m mutu-xuŋ bi ursun bailə-m.*

2SG.OBL-ACC know-CVB.IPFV can-PTCP.PFV 1SG very rejoice-IPFV

‘I am very happy to meet you.’

e. *mi.n-j gəvə-v tʃaŋmiŋ ʃi-m.*

1SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC PN say-IPFV

‘My name is Changming.’

---

<sup>5</sup>While some Koreanic question markers that show politeness distinctions were possibly borrowed by the Jurchenic branch of Tungusic (Hölzl 2018a: 213), their exact function in Jurchenic still remains unclear.

While this brief dialogue does not contain the personal name question, it is arguably located in a very similar type of situation. While the direct question about the name is avoided by Chunfu, Changming, by means of pragmatic inference, draws the conclusion that, given Chunfu's introduction, it is appropriate to say one's own name in response. In a similar albeit more direct way, one can add a truncated question at the end of one's own introduction:

- (52) Sibe (Jin Ning 1993: 3)  
*mi.n-j gəvə-v sarasu ʃi-m. ɕi ni?*  
 1SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC PN say-IPFV 2SG Q  
 'My name is Sarasu. What's yours?'

As another example consider the following dialogue:

- (53) Sibe (Jin 1993: 4)
- a. **dzalušan/Zhalušan:**  
*ɕi mi.n-d əmdan taqə-və-Ø!*  
 2SG 1SG.OBL-DAT once know-CAUS-IMP  
 'Would you introduce me to him please?'
- b. **bəkdəsu/Bekdesu:**  
*bi so.n-j dzu nanə-v əmdan taqə-vi-ki.*  
 1SG 2PL.OBL-GEN two person-ACC once know-CAUS-DES  
 'Allow me to introduce you.'
- c. *ər əmkən=ni goɕiŋa si-m [...]*  
 this one=3SG.POSS PN say-IPFV  
 'This is Gosinga.'

In this case, the situation involves not two, but three persons. Apart from the two people making the acquaintance (Zhalusan and Gosinga), there is a third mediating person (Bekdesu).

All three situations above are based on the common background knowledge that everybody has a name. The same is obviously true for the personal name question. But this is only part of the larger personal name frame that contains several subevents and roles tentatively listed in Table 4.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The list presented in Table 4 is probably not exhaustive and the individual subevents could be slightly different depending on the cultural background. For instance, in some societies names can also be removed from a person (e.g., Moutu 2013: 147). Apart from giving, a name can evolve through a process known as onymization (Van Langendonck & Van de Velde 2016: 33). Future studies will have to revise the personal name frame accordingly.

Table 4: The personal name frame and its subparts. The dummy noun meaning ‘name’ is not listed, but is optionally present in all subevents (based on Hölzl 2014)

	Subevents	Roles
1	GIVING A NAME	NAMEE, NAME, NAMER
2	HAVING A NAME	POSSESSOR, NAME
3	ACQUAINTING	
3a	2 persons: ASKING, TELLING	ASKER, ADDRESSEE, NAME
3b	3 persons: INTRODUCING	INTRODUCER, PERSON A, PERSON B, NAMES
4	KNOWING A NAME (common ground)	KNOWER, KNOWN, NAME
5	CALLING BY NAME	CALLER, CALLED, NAME

First, most people do not usually chose their names on their own, but are given the name by somebody else, such as their parents. In this case, there are three different roles, the person giving the name (NAMER), the personal name given (NAME), and the person being named (NAMEE). There are culture- and language-specific conventions and examples for each of these subevents. In this case, this could be a baptism, the acceptance of a new name during a religious initiation, or the change of one’s own name in court.

Second, everybody has or owns a name. Here the roles are the person having the name (POSSESSOR), and the name (NAME). Cross-linguistically, this frame is usually expressed with possessive relationships, e.g. *her name* (attributive possession), *she has a beautiful name* (predicative possession). But because a name is not a concrete and tangible object, these expressions are based on an underlying conceptual metaphor that IDEAS ARE OBJECTS (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 124f.). This can also be seen in other expressions, e.g. *my plan* or *to have a plan*.<sup>7</sup> A culture-specific case can be found among the Iatmul in Papua New Guinea who “believe that there is a mystical connection between a name and its bearer” (Moutu 2013: 147).

Third, there are at least two subevents for making the acquaintance of a person that correspond to the two dialogues from Sibe above. These include either

<sup>7</sup>In addition, the conceptual metonymies that the NAME STANDS FOR A PERSON and that the FACE STANDS FOR A PERSON are often combined with this, e.g. in a passport. For instance, when looking at a photo of a person’s face it is possible to say *This is Sam*.

two persons (three roles: ASKER, ADDRESSEE, NAME) or three persons (four roles: INTRODUCER, PERSON A, PERSON B, NAMES).

Fourth, after giving a name or after having made the acquaintance of a person, one has the knowledge of that person's name. This subevent has three roles, the person knowing the name (KNOWER), the person whose name is known (KNOWN), and the name (NAME). Knowing other people's names is part of the common ground. Forgetting somebody's name can lead to severe social awkwardness. Depending on the society, a certain amount of control can for instance be associated with knowing a person's name.

Fifth, when knowing a person's name, one (the CALLER) can refer to that person (CALLED) by his or her name (NAME), either in a direct address (vocative) or in the third person. The name theoretically identifies the exact individual. Depending on the type of naming in a given culture, namesakes can lead to more or less problems (see Moutu 2013: 145ff. for an extreme example). Conversely, one person can have several different names. In certain cases, uttering a specific name can be a taboo.

The PNQ is part of the acquainting subevent, more specifically subevent 3a, but is based on several aspects of the personal name frame. Questions of Type A combine 3a with subevent 2 (HAVING A NAME), and Type B with subevent 5 (CALLING BY NAME). There is a mapping of the roles of the two combined subevents (Table 5). In addition to the roles, the three subevents also contain semantic relations not specified above that can be indicated as ASK (a type of question), CALL (a form of speech act), and HAVE (a possessive relationship), respectively.

Table 5: Combinations of subevents and roles in the two main PNQ types

Type	Subevent 1	Subevent 2	Combined Roles/Relations
Type A	ACQUAINTING (2 persons)	HAVING A NAME	ASKER = $\emptyset$ , ADDRESSEE = POSSESSOR NAME = NAME ASK + HAVE
Type B	ACQUAINTING (2 persons)	CALLING BY NAME	ASKER = CALLER ADDRESSEE = CALLED NAME = NAME ASK + CALL

Using Langacker's (2008: 66) terminology, one could say that different PNQs highlight or *profile* different aspects of the underlying frame that functions as a base. For instance, even though Type B does not necessarily refer to subevent 2 (HAVING A NAME), a speaker must still be aware of it in order to ask the question in the first place.

## 4 'What's your name?' in Tungusic

The question 'What is your name?' has been recorded for the majority of the Tungusic languages and in a considerable number of dialects. To the best of my knowledge, the PNQ is not documented in Arman, Bala, Lalin/Jing Manchu, the two Jurchen varieties, and Kili (Kur-Urmi Nanai). However, for all these languages, similar constructions or at least individual words, such as 'name' are attested. Only for Chinese Kyakala there is no information on the PNQ at all.

As expected, Tungusic languages show a certain amount of variation in how they express the question. Nevertheless, all constructions exhibit a cognate of the Tungusic word for 'name'. This word functions as some kind of *anchor* around which all PNQs are built. One example with the optional Mongolic word apart, no other word for 'name' is attested in these constructions. This lexical item is addressed in §4.2.

### 4.1 Second person pronoun and genitive

All Tungusic languages preserve cognates of Proto-Tungusic \**si* 'you (SG)' (e.g., Benzing 1956: 109). There are some well-known phonological changes, such as *s* > *ɕ* before *i* in some Jurchenic varieties, or *s* > *h* in some Even dialects. The PERSONAL PRONOUN can often be absent and is less central for the personal name question. Apart from Jurchenic, Tungusic languages also employ a grammaticalized version of this personal pronoun as possessive marker as in the following example from Ulcha (54) (see Ikegami 1985 for details):

- (54) Ulcha (Angina 1993: 3)  
*si(ə) ɡəɮbu-si            ŋɡuj?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS who

In Proto-Tungusic, the personal pronoun \**si* has an oblique form \**si.n-*, for example for the genitive \**si.n-i*. The presence of the *-n-* in oblique forms is a phenomenon found throughout the pronominal system of Tungusic and neighbouring languages, such as Mongolic. The genitive is retained, for example, in written

Manchu *si.n-i* '2SG.OBL-GEN' and *suwe.n-i* '2PL.OBL-GEN'. In some languages the genitive *-i* changed to *-u* in the plural pronouns due to a progressive vowel assimilation, e.g. Uilta *si.n-i* 'your (SG)', but *su.n-u* 'your (PL)' (Tsumagari 2009b: 7). In a few languages, for example in Even (*hi.n*) and Bala (*ci.n*), the oblique form was retained in genitive function, although the genitive itself was lost. In several other languages, such as Udihe, the genitive was functionally lost, but still functions as a stem for the possessive forms, e.g. *si.n-i-ŋi* 'yours (SG)', *su.ñ-u-ŋu* 'yours (PL)' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 336). In some languages, possessive forms of this sort developed a meaning similar to a genitive (e.g., 11), which led to a probably erroneous reconstruction of the genitive in Benzing (1956: 79).

## 4.2 The Tungusic word for 'name'

Traditionally, the Tungusic word for 'name' is reconstructed as *\*gärbü* (Benzing 1956: 49). While this reconstruction is reasonably robust, it is slightly misleading as the reconstructed *\*ä* must actually have been pronounced as schwa [ə], as in the majority of the modern languages. Janhunen (1991: 40), perhaps based on Khamnigan Evenki *gärbii*, reconstructs Tungusic *\*gerbüü* with a long vowel in the second syllable. While a long vowel can also be found in other Evenki dialects, for example Sakhalin Evenki *gärbī* (Bulatova & Cotrozzi 2004) or Nercha Evenki *gärbī* (Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume]), this seems to be an innovation rather than a retention. Cognates of *\*gärbü* 'name' are collected, among others, in Schmidt (1923a,b, 1928a,b), Benzing (1956: 49), Cincius (1975/77: 180f.), Lie (1978: 143), Kazama (2003: 68), Doerfer & Knüppel (2004: 336), or Chaoke (2014c: 300f.).

The earliest recordings of Tungusic are in Jurchen, which is a cover term for at least two different varieties that, for lack of better terms and in analogy to similar cases such as Tocharian, can be called Jurchen A (*\*gebu* 革卜, Kiyose 1977) and Jurchen B (*\*gebu* 革不, Kane 1989). The word recorded for these two varieties of Jurchen are identical to written Manchu *gebu*, which is attested from the 17th century onward (e.g., Norman 2013). Apart from Jurchen and Manchu, some of the oldest records of the word for 'name' have been made for Evenki and Even. For instance, at the beginning of the 18th century Witsen (1705: 654) mentioned Evenki *gerbisch* 'your name', which can be analyzed as *gerbi-f* 'name-2SG.POSS'. Pallas (1786, 1789: 169) listed *gorbi*/горби for Evenki dialects and *gerbi-n*"/гербинъ for Even. A form *garbi-n* was recorded in 1808 by Koshewin (von Klaproth 1817: 224). To mention but some more examples, the word has been recorded as *gärbī* or *garbi-n* in 1810 by Spassky (Castrén 1856: 107, 128). Schiefner already correctly equated Evenki *gärbī* with Manchu *gebu* (see Castrén 1856: x). Two of the earliest recordings of the word in Nanai (specifically the Ussuri dialect) in the 19th

century are *gerbi*/repби or *gerbu*/repбy (Brylkin" 1861) and *gorbi-ni* (Venukoff 1862; Alonso de la Fuente 2011: 20). The Nanai form *gerbú* listed in the dictionary by Grube (1900) was also collected around the middle of the 19th century. For many other languages, data are only available from the 20th century onward.

The reconstructed \**ü* in \**gärbü* 'name' underwent a regular sound change to *i* in Northern Tungusic languages (Ewenic and Udegheic) and to *u* in Southern Tungusic (Nanaic and Jurchenic), e.g. Oroqen *gərbi*, Oroch *gəbbi*, but Nanai *gərbu*, Manchu *gebu*. The same sound change can be seen in the interrogative \**ŋüi* 'who', e.g. Oroqen *nii*, Oroch *n'ii*, but Nanai *uj* (Uilta *ŋui*), Manchu *we* (see also Hölzl 2018a: 314). Only Even (*gərbə*), Arman (*gerbu*, *gurbu*), and one recording of Oroqen or Solon (*gerbu* in Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 1) might represent special cases in Northern Tungusic. However, other recordings of Oroqen and Solon as well as the Even form *gerbi-* recorded by Pallas (1786, 1789: 169) contain the expected *i* (cf. also Arman *ŋii* and Even *ŋi(i)* 'who'). Apart from that, there have been several language-specific developments. The *r* has been, probably regularly, lost in Jurchenic (e.g., Lalin/Jing Manchu *gəbu*) and changed to *l* in several languages around the lower Amur, including Uilta (*gəlbū*), Ulcha (*gəlbū*), and Lower Negidal (*gölbi* [gəlbɪ], Schmidt 1923a: 18, *gilbi* with additional regressive vowel assimilation, Khasanova & Pevnov 2003: 7). The *l* is already attested in data collected at the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. Uilta *gylbó-ni/gylbú(-ni)*, Ulcha *gýlbū* in Piłsudski (Majewicz 2011: 258, 817) and Ulcha *gölbu* [gəlbɪ] in Schmidt (1923b: 251). The consonant cluster \**rb*, possibly via \**lb*, developed into a cluster *db* in Upper Negidal (*gədbi*, Natalia Aralova p.c. 2019), *gb* in Bikin Udihe (*gegbi*), and into the geminate *bb* in Oroch (*gəbbi*). Huihe Solon *gəbbi* also has a geminate, but other Solon dialects preserve the consonant cluster *-rb-*, e.g. Ongkor Solon *gerbi* (Aalto 1977: 63). These are mostly regular changes with parallels, for example, in the cluster \**lb* as in Proto-Tungusic \**dolba* 'night', e.g. Manchu *dobó(-ri)*, Bikin Udihe *dogbo*, Oroch *dobbo* etc. (Benzing 1956: 46; Kazama 2003: 50; Doerfer & Knüppel 2004: 234).<sup>8</sup> In a few recordings, an epenthetic vowel seems to have been inserted (either by the speakers themselves or the researchers) to avoid the consonant cluster (e.g., Oroqen or Solon *geribé* in Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 1, Uilta *geribu* in Nakanome 1928: 52). The consonant cluster as such is preserved in several Ewenic (e.g., Evenki *gərbi*) and Nanaic languages (e.g., Samar *gərbu* [gərbɪ], Schmidt 1923a). In Jurchenic, the final vowel was sometimes lost and the *b* underwent regular intervocalic spirantization in several Manchu dialects

<sup>8</sup>Some languages show a slightly different pattern for \**lb*. For instance, one subgroup of Jurchenic preserved a reflex of the *l*, i.e. Bala *dəlbə* (Mu 1987: 17), Jurchen A 多羅斡 [duo luo wo] (Kiyose 1977: 101), etc.



both in Dzungaria (e.g., Sibe *gəv(ə)*) and Manchuria (e.g., Aihui Manchu *gəvo* ~ *govo*, Yibuqi Manchu *kowə*, Shenyang Manchu *gef(u)*, Sanjiazhi Manchu *gəwu*). Alchuka represents a special case not only in Jurchenic, but in all of Tungusic due its occasional loss of the initial consonant, i.e. *?əwə* (Mu 1986: 14). While the word has also been recorded as *gəbu* (Mu 1987: 14), the form *?əwə* is not necessarily an error (although the *ə* is potentially a misprint for *g*). The language is known to have lost word initial consonants and exhibited a certain amount of internal variation that is poorly understood. Similar variation is known from other dialects, such as that from Sanjiazhi. As opposed to the form *gəwu* in Kim et al. (2008) that was collected in 2005/06, Enhebatu (1995) in 1961 recorded the form *gur:bu* instead. While some of the discrepancies are probably a mere byproduct of the transcription (e.g., *ur* instead of *ə*), there are certainly also actual differences in the forms, for example the presence or absence of spirantization. For Chinese Kyakala, no cognate of the word for ‘name’ appears to have been recorded (Hölzl 2018c; Hölzl & Hölzl 2019).

Some languages, in addition to the autochthonous reflex of *\*gärbü*, have borrowed the Manchu word, but with a special semantics (e.g., Benzing 1956: 18, 49; Alonso de la Fuente 2011: 27; Khabtagaeva 2022 [this volume], Table 6). This led to doublets, such as Udihe *gegbi* ‘name’ vs. *gebu* ‘honor’ (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001). The latter word must represent a borrowing because an intervocalic *b* is otherwise only retained in Jurchenic (e.g., Benzing 1956: 34).

Table 6: Manchu *gebu* ‘name’ in other Tungusic languages

Language	Name	Source
Kili	<i>gəbu</i>	Sunik 1958: 170
Nanai	<i>gəbu</i>	Benzing 1956: 18
Oroch	<i>gəbu</i>	Avrorin & Lebedeva 1978: 175
Udihe	<i>gebu</i>	Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 930
Ulcha	<i>gəbu</i>	Benzing 1956: 18
Ussuri Nanai	<i>gəbə</i>	Sem 1976: 150

The Manchu borrowing in other Tungusic languages usually has a slightly different meaning, such as ‘honor’, which makes it less important for the purposes of this study. A similar doublet can be found, for instance, in Kili (Kur-Urmi Nanai), i.e. *gərbi* ‘name’ (Sunik 1958: 116) vs. *gəbu* ‘honor, authority, respect’ (Sunik 1958: 170). But in this case, both forms are a borrowing from another language. Apart from Kili, also Bala, Kilen, and Ussuri Nanai must have borrowed

the word for ‘name’ from a Northern Tungusic and more exactly an Ewenic language. For Bala, this was misinterpreted by Mu (1988: 17) as an autochthonous development. But clearly, the words are from a form similar or identical to Evenki (see Table 7). If these were not borrowings, in all four languages the final vowel should be an *u* as in Manchu *gebu* or Nanai *gərbu*.<sup>9</sup> Brylkin” (1861: 12) recorded both *gerbi* (borrowed) and *gerbu* (autochthonous) among the Ussuri Nanai.

Table 7: The Ewenic word for ‘name’ (e.g., Evenki *gərbi*) in Southern Tungusic

Language	Name	Source
Bala	<i>gərbi</i>	Mu 1987: 14
Kilen	<i>gerbi</i>	Dong 2016: 337
	<i>gərbi</i>	An 1986: 96
Kili	<i>gərbi</i>	Kazama 2003: 68
	<i>gərbi</i>	Sunik 1958: 116
Ussuri Nanai	<i>gərb’i</i>	Sem 1976: 150
	<i>gorbi-ni</i>	Venukoff 1862
	<i>gerbi</i>	Brylkin” 1861: 12

In many languages, \**gärbü* is the basis for the derivation of verbs, e.g. Manchu *gebu-le-* ‘to name, to call by name’, Uilta *gəlbulle-* ‘to give a name to’, Udihe *gegbi-si-* ‘to call’, Evenki *gerbi-te-* ‘to be named’ etc., but these are not often encountered in the personal name question.

Among Tungusic languages, only Jurchenic has a gender-like distinction. Even in Jurchenic, this is restricted to a few nouns that show an ablaut phenomenon, e.g. Manchu *haha* ‘man’, *hehe* ‘woman’. The Manchu word *gebu* ‘name’ does not belong to this set of nouns.

All branches of Tungusic except for Jurchenic have a limited system of possessive classification, making use of what is usually referred to as alienable possessive marker, e.g. Udihe *-ŋi*, Uilta *-ŋu* etc. For instance, the noun *dili* ‘head’ in Udihe can be used with and without *-ŋi* (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 135). The word for ‘name’ does not belong to the set of nouns that can be marked with the suffix, i.e. it is probably not conceptualized as alienable.

<sup>9</sup>Additionally, the *r* would perhaps have to be absent in the Bala form as in Manchu *gebu*, although Bala is more conservative than Manchu in this particular feature, e.g. Bala *bardi-*, Manchu *banji-* ‘to live’, Bala *dördi-*, Manchu *donji-* ‘to hear’ (Mu 1987, slightly corrected).

## 4.3 Ewenic

The question is known from all Ewenic languages, with the exception of Arman. Almost all Ewenic examples below are copula sentences (Type A). In Even, two different patterns are attested, but both contain the same interrogative meaning 'who'. Consider the following two question-answer sequences:

(55) Eastern Even (Beryozovka; Kim 2011: 189, corrected)

- a. *hi ŋi gərbə-s?*  
2SG who name-2SG.POSS
- b. *mi.n gərbə-w garpək.*  
1SG.OBL.GEN name-1SG.POSS PN

(56) Lamunkhin Even (Natalia Aralova p.c. 2019)

- a. *hi gərbə-s ɲi:?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS who
- b. *bi gərbə-w taisiya.*  
1SG name-1SG.POSS PN

In both examples, the question makes use of the nominative form of the personal pronoun. In Lamunkhin Even, not even the answer exhibits the genitive. Notably, only the interrogative, but not the personal name of the answer can stand before the word for 'name'. Because the person is already marked on the head noun, the personal pronoun can be absent in Even and, as will be seen, in several other Tungusic languages.

Given the overall similarity of Arman to Even, the question might have been very similar as well. The individual elements of the Even examples above have the following form in Arman: *ši* '2SG', *ɲi* 'who', *gerbu*, *gurbu* 'name, title etc.', *-s/-SI/-čI* '-2SG.POSS' (Doerfer & Knüppel 2013: 28, 133, 138, 228, 302f., transcription slightly changed). Consequently, the question might have been something like \**ši ɲi gerbu-s?* or \**ši gerbu-s ɲi?* (constructed). However, only the following example with a verb derived from *gerbu* is attested in the material available to me:

- (57) Arman (Doerfer & Knüppel 2013: 30, transcription slightly changed)  
*təməj̄i tək gerbuutte kamčidalal'ji.*  
therefore now call.NFUT[3PL] PN  
'Therefore, they now call themselves Kamchadals.'

The same possibility of the interrogative to precede or follow the word for ‘name’ as in Even is also observed in Evenki. The following example from the Sakhalin dialect has the interrogative after the word for ‘name’ (the same can be found in Konstantinova 1964: 41). As early as the 19th century an example with a preposed interrogative has been recorded.

- (58) Sakhalin Evenki (Bulatova & Cotrozzi 2004: 58)

*gərbi-s            ɲi?*  
name-2SG.POSS who

- (59) Viljuj Evenki (Maak” 1859: xviii; Schiefner 1878: 144)

*ni    gərbi-s?*  
who name-2SG.POSS

The absence of the personal pronoun (*si* in Maak” 1859: xix, *sī* in Bulatova & Cotrozzi 2004: 58) is also attested in Even.

- (60) Even (Idiatov 2007: 307)

*gerbe-s            ɲi?*  
name-2SG.POSS who

- (61) Even (Benzing 1955: 176)

*ɲi    gərbə-s?*  
who name-2SG.POSS

This can also be observed in other Evenki recordings, such as the following example from the Eastern dialect:

- (62) Eastern Evenki (Makarova 1999: 16)

- a. *ɲi:    gərbi-s?*  
    who name-2SG.POSS
- b. *bi:    gərbi-v            ando.*  
    1SG name-1SG.POSS PN

Similar to Even above, the interrogative stands in a focus position before the dummy noun while the personal name in the answer follows. Seemingly, the same asymmetry of the question and the answer has also been recorded for Aoluguya Evenki in China.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>The analysis by Hasibate’er (2016: 278) is *cini*, i.e. *ci.n-i* ‘2SG.OBL-GEN’, which leads to an example without interrogative, which is unlikely.

(63) Aoluguya Evenki (Hasibate'er 2016: 278)

- a. *ci ni gərbi-ci?*  
2SG who name-2SG.POSS
- b. *bi gərbi-w mərə.*  
1SG name-1SG.POSS PN

By comparing Even and Evenki dialects with the close relative Oroqen in China, a very similar pattern with the interrogative in second position can sometimes be observed.

(64) Evenki (Boldyrev 2000: 134)

- si ŋi gərbi-s?*  
2SG who name-2SG.POSS

(65) Oroqen (Chaoke 2014a: 8)

- shi ni gerbi-shi?*  
2SG who name-2SG.POSS

This suggests a relatively high age of this phenomenon among Ewenic languages.

All examples given so far contain a cognate of the Tungusic interrogative \**ŋüi* 'who'. The same interrogative can also be found in the personal name question of some Udegheic and Nanaic varieties, but not in Jurchenic. Apart from Even and Evenki, many Ewenic languages also employ different interrogatives. In most Solon dialects, \**ŋüi* has been replaced by a selective interrogative meaning 'which (one)' that is also found in the personal name question.

(66) Huihe Solon (Tsumagari 2009a: 15)

- si.n-ii gebbi-si aawu?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name-2SG.POSS who

This latter construction has an exact parallel in the following Dagur example, although the use of the nominative *ši*: 'you (SG)' is also possible.

(67) Tacheng Dagur (Khitano-Mongolic; Yu et al. 2008: 173)

- šin nər-šin anja?*  
2SG.OBL.GEN name-2SG.POSS who

Both Solon and Dagur have an innovative personal interrogative that replaced Tungusic \**ŋüi* 'who' and Mongolic \**ken* 'who', respectively. This innovation in Solon appears to have later spread to Oroqen. This interrogative is already attested in the recordings by Ivanovskiy from the end of the 19th century that are usually taken to represent Solon (e.g., Lie 1978).

- (68) Butkha Solon (Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 1)<sup>11</sup>  
*geribé agó?*  
name who

Unlike Huihe Solon, however, no geminate can be found in the word *geribé* ‘name’. In fact, Ivanovskiy mentions three additional expressions, all of which appear to be closer to Oroqen than Solon:

- (69) “Manegir” (Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 1)
- a. *šl.n-i gerbu ní?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name who
  - b. *ni gerbu bí-či?*  
who name COP-?PRS
  - c. *jému gerbi-čí?*  
which name-POSS

Notably, two of the examples still have a cognate of \**ηüi* ‘who’ that shows the same syntactic behavior as in Even and Evenki. Alternatively, *neré* ‘name’ is said to be used in (69a), which is the Mongolic word (see examples 20, 67, 73, 119, 125).

Examples (69a) and (69b) are also similar to Even and Evenki, although they appear to lack a possessive marker. The second example is one of the few examples among Tungusic languages that has an overt copula in a Type A construction. A copula is also present in a more recent example from Oroqen that shares the absence of the possessive marker as well as the interrogative of the last example (69c) from Ivanovskiy.

- (70) Xunke Oroqen (Zhang, Yanchang, Li Bing, et al. 1989: 141)  
*ci: jEma gərbi bi-ci-ni?*  
2SG which name COP-PRS-3SG

Phonological differences apart, the following two Oroqen sentences are identical to (69c) (see also 106 from Kilen). Some Ewenic languages, such as Oroqen, use the comitative or possessive suffix instead of the second person possessive marker. These are sometimes difficult to differentiate.

- (71) Gankui Oroqen (Sa 1981: 51)<sup>12</sup>  
*yam gerbi-qi?*  
which name-POSS

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<sup>11</sup>What is tentatively transcribed as *-g-* here remains partly unclear.

<sup>12</sup>The <q> in this transcription is based on the Chinese Pinyin system, where it stands for [tɕʰ].

- (72) Shengli Oroqen (Han & Meng 1993: 303)

*jeema kərpi-tʃi?*  
which name-POSS

Ivanovskiy (1982 [1894]: 3) mentions two Dagur examples, one of which contains a selective interrogative that might have influenced the choice and position of the interrogative in Oroqen, although the two are probably not etymologically related.

- (73) Dagur (Khitano-Mongolic; Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 3)

*si jamár neré?*  
2SG which name

The same interrogative as in Oroqen is also found in an example from Negidal, albeit in a different syntactic position. This is not the same variation as observed for *ŋüi* 'who', however, because this selective interrogative has an attributive function if preceding the dummy noun. In other words, we are dealing with a Type A.1 construction in Negidal (74), but with a Type A.2 construction in Oroqen (69c, 70, 71, 72).

- (74) Lower Negidal (Kazama 2002: 80)

*sii gilbi-si eema?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS which

Oroqen and Evenki dialects in China also make use of a THING interrogative, potentially influenced by languages such as Manchu or Chinese. The following two examples likewise are instances of Type A.1 (75) and Type A.2 (76), respectively:

- (75) Khamnigan Evenki (Tsumagari 1992: 96)

*ər-nii gərbii ikun?*  
this-GEN name what  
'What is the name of this?'

- (76) Khamnigan Evenki (Chaoke & Kajia 2016: 9)

*su ikon gərbii-tsi wee?*  
2PL what name-POSS CQ

The use of the interrogative *ikun* in (75) might be due to the fact that it does not refer to the name of a person.

One Solon dialect employs *oni* 'how', which might be due to Russian influence (see 26). Given that this interrogative cannot be used attributively, the example contains fronting as in other Ewenic languages.

(77) Arong Solon (Chaoke & Kalina 2017: 17)

*fi oni gəbbi-fe?*  
2SG how name-POSS

The use of MANNER interrogatives is more common in Udegheic and Nanaic but can also be observed in one recording of Negidal. In the following examples, the interrogative *o:n* either stands in the unexpected sentence-initial position even before the personal pronoun or in the same position as the proper name in the answer.

(78) Upper Negidal (Natalia Aralova p.c. 2019)

- a. *o:n si gədbi-s?*  
how 2SG name-2SG.POSS
- b. *si gədbi-s o:n?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS how
- c. *bi gədbi-β Antonina*  
1SG name-1SG.POSS PN

The sentence-initial position of the interrogative in front of the pronoun, which is otherwise unattested in the PNQ in Tungusic, is clearly due to Russian influence and is a typical European feature (Dryer 2013).

Oroqen and Solon have been more strongly influenced by Mongolic languages than most other Ewenic language. In both languages, there is an alternative Type B construction that is often found in answers to the personal name question. The Type A.2 construction, as in Jurchenic, lacks the genitive in Oroqen.

(79) Nanmu Oroqen (Chaoke 2007: 140, corrected)

- a. *fi ikon gərbi-tfe?*  
2SG what name-POSS
- b. *mi.ŋi gərbi-wi tumbutfə gunən.*  
1SG.OBL.GEN name-1SG.POSS PN say.3SG

(80) Solon (Chaoke et al. 2014: 8)

- a. *shi.n-i gebbi-shi awu?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name-2SG.POSS who
- b. *mi.n-i gebbi-wi ... gənəŋ.*  
1SG.OBL-GEN name-1SG.POSS (PN) say.3SG



This construction appears to be impossible in the PNQ with the transitive verb *gun-* ‘to say’ in Evenki and other Ewenic languages. Another Type B construction, although calqued from Russian, is found in Negidal. Similar to the Arman example above, the verb is derived from the word *gədbi* ‘name’.

- (81) Upper Negidal (Natalia Aralova p.c. 2019)  
*mi.nə-βə gədbittəə Ton’a*  
 1SG.OBL-ACC call.NFUT[3PL] PN

Ivanovskiy (1982 [1894]) recorded an answer without a speech act verb.

- (82) “Manegir” (Ivanovskiy 1982 [1894]: 1)  
*mi.n-í gerbú ...*  
 1SG.OBL-GEN name (PN)

Although ellipsis cannot be ruled out, this might be additional evidence that the Type B construction is a recent innovation in these languages.

#### 4.4 Udegheic

For both Oroch and Udihe several different expressions have been recorded. Except for the following Type B example, Udegheic makes use of copula sentences. Example (83a) from Udihe seems to be entirely based on Russian while the answer (83b) is similar to Ewenic languages and represents the original Tungusic construction.

- (83) Udihe (Tsumagari 2011: 81, 85)  
 a. *si.n-awa ono gegbi-si-ti?*  
 2SG.OBL-ACC how name-V-3PL  
 b. *bii gegbi-i Tausima.*  
 1SG name-1SG.POSS PN

Some of the oldest examples for Udegheic have been recorded around 1900 by Brailovski. Schmidt corrected the sentences, but misinterpreted *ni* ‘who’ in (84) as a possessive marker. It is an interrogative that derives from \**ŋüi* instead.

- (84) Oroch (Bochi river; Schmidt 1928a: 20, from Brailovski, corrected)  
*si gabi ni?*  
 2SG name who

- (85) ? Udihe (Samarga river; Schmidt 1928a, from Brailovski, corrected)  
*si gabi jav?*  
2SG name what
- (86) Udihe (Nakhtu river; Schmidt 1928a, from Brailovski, corrected)  
*si gagbi jau?*  
2SG name what

It is unclear whether the last example (86) might contain a fused second person possessive marker *-(h)i* (< \**-si*) as in the following modern examples from the Khor and Bikin dialects (see also Perekhval'skaya 2022 [this volume], on intervocalic *s* and its reflexes in Udegheic):

- (87) Khor Udihe (Elena Perekhval'skaya, p.c. 2019)  
*si gəgbi-hi j'əu?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS what
- (88) Bikin Udihe (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 804)  
*si gegbi-i j'eu?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS what

The use of a personal interrogative (Udihe *ni(i)*, Oroch *n'ii*) seems to be much more restricted than in Ewenic and Nanaic. Apart from *j'ə-u* 'what' (*ja-v* and *ja-u* in Brailovski), which is cognate with Oroqen *i-kon*, and Khamnigan Evenki *i-kun* or *i-kon* above, Udihe can also employ *ono* (< \**oni*) 'how' in the same construction.

- (89) Udihe (Tsumagari 2006: 6)  
*sii gegbi-i ono?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS how

Oroch also uses a cognate of this interrogative. In the following example, there is an additional overt copula that is not usually found in the Udihe examples (see §4.5 on Nanaic). As in Ewenic, the personal pronoun can be absent.

- (90) Oroch (Avrorin & Lebedeva 1978: 175)  
*gəbbi-si ɔn'i bi?*  
name-2SG.POSS how COP

While Oroch also has a construction without a copula, according to one author a different interrogative meaning 'how' can be employed.

- (91) Oroch (Lopatin 1957, corrected)  
*si gabɯ-si yavanká/yanká?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS how

In sum, the Udegheic PNQ shows a strong tendency for Type A and more specifically Type A.1. As opposed to Ewenic, Type A.2 is not attested and one Type B construction in Udihe can be plausibly explained by Russian influence. Apart from this example, fronting of the interrogative is absent in the Udegheic PNQ.

#### 4.5 Nanaic

Brylkin<sup>13</sup> (1861) very early recorded the following question among the Ussuri Nanai:

- (92) Ussuri Nanai (Brylkin<sup>13</sup> 1861: 21)<sup>13</sup>  
*gerbi-si xamaca?*  
 name-2SG.POSS which

This interrogative (*χamača* 'which (one)') in Sem 1976: 62) is not attested in any other Tungusic PNQ. The question appears to be otherwise unattested for Kili<sup>14</sup> and Ussuri Nanai. But for both languages similar constructions have been recorded.

- (93) Kili (Sunik 1958: 116, 122, shortened)  
*asi-ni gərbi-ni*  
 woman-3SG.POSS name-3SG.POSS  
 'the name of his wife'

This example from Kili also suggests that a Type A construction might have been used. A PNQ in the third person is attested for Ussuri Nanai.

- (94) Ussuri Nanai (Sem 1976: 38)  
*s'i am'i-s'i gərb'i-n'i χar χala-n'i χar?*  
 2SG father-2SG.POSS name-3SG.POSS what clan-3SG.POSS what  
 'What's your father's name and what's his surname?'

A similar case, but with a personal interrogative borrowed from Northern Tungusic can be found in Kilen.

<sup>13</sup>The Russian translation was *kak nazyvaetsja?* 'How is (it) called?'

<sup>14</sup>For convenience, Kili and Kilen are discussed in this subsection, but they exhibit many features from other Tungusic languages.

- (95) Kilen (Dong 2016: 49, slightly modified)<sup>15</sup>  
*xi hale ni, gerbi ni?*  
2SG clan who name who

According to Schmidt (1928b: 241), northern Nanai (Samar) has similar questions without a possessive marker, but in the reverse order, perhaps based on Manchu influence. The questions about the clan name in all three languages probably represent cultural influence from Manchu and seem to contain the loanword *hala* ‘clan’.<sup>16</sup>

- (96) Samar (Schmidt 1928b: 241)  
a. *xai gōrbu?*  
what name  
b. *xai xala?*  
what clan

The personal name question in Ussuri Nanai might have been \**s’i gərb’i-s’i χar?* (constructed) as in the following Nanai example. In Nanai, however, both *xaj* ‘what’ and *uj* ‘who’ can be employed (Ussuri Nanai *ui*):

- (97) Nanai (Avrorin 1959: 274)  
*si gərbu-si xaj/uj?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS what/who

The latter example has an exact equivalence in Ulcha.

- (98) Ulcha (Schmidt 1923b: 235)  
*si gölbu-si uji?*  
2SG name-2SG.POSS who

Nanai has several different possibilities of expressing the question. Apart from the construction above, there is one influenced by Russian making use of a MANNER interrogative.

- (99) Nanai (Ko & Yurn 2011: 151)  
*swə gərbu-su xo:ni bi?*  
2PL name-2PL.POSS how COP  
‘What is your (SG.POL) name?’

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<sup>15</sup><x> stands for [ç].

<sup>16</sup>Ewenic languages of Manchuria also have similar expressions, e.g. Oroqen *shi ikun kal?* ‘What is your surname?’ (Chaoke 2014a: 9).

An almost identical example with a copula is found in Ulcha.

- (100) Ulcha (Angina 1993: 3)  
*si.n                    gəɮbu-si                    xon bi-ni?*  
 2SG.OBL.GEN name-2SG.POSS how COP-3SG

In answers, Nanai has more or less the same construction as in Ewenic and Udegheic with the personal name following the word for ‘name’:

- (101) Nanai (Ko & Yurn 2011: 151)  
*mi gəɮbu-i                    tanja.*  
 1SG name-1SG.POSS PN  
 ‘My name is Tanja.’

Uilta is special among Nanaic languages in showing a regular content question marker that is unattested in the rest of Tungusic and might be a Nivkh borrowing (Hözl 2018a: 39, 302–305).

- (102) Uilta (Nakanome 1928: 52; Ikegami 1997: 67)  
 a. *sî.n-i                    geribu-si                    hai=ga?*  
    2SG.OBL-GEN name-2SG.POSS what=CQ  
 b. *si.n-i                    gəɮbu-si                    xai=gaa?*  
    2SG.OBL-GEN name-2SG.POSS what=CQ

In another recording, an example from Uilta uses a personal interrogative. This suggests that the same synchronic variation as in Nanai might be present. The genitive is obligatory in the southern dialect but absent in the northern (Patryk Czerwinski, p.c. 2020).

- (103) Uilta (Ozolinja 2001: 72)  
*si gəɮbu-si                    ηui=γə?*  
 2SG name-2SG.POSS who=CQ

But all three examples share the special question marker =KA(A) that is only attested in Uilta. This question marker is also found in the following example that contains the interrogative *xooni* ‘how’ (cognate of Solon *oni*, Negidal *o:n*, Udihe *ono*, Oroch *ōn’i*, Nanai *xo:ni*, and Ulcha *xon* above).

- (104) Uilta (Patryk Czerwinski, p.c. 2019)  
*xooni=ka naa gəɮbu-ni?*  
 how=CQ INTERJ name-3SG.POSS  
 ‘But what’s its name?’

As in Negidal, the sentence-initial position of the interrogative is probably based on Russian.

In Kilen, another special case in Nanaic, one example has been recorded that differs in its interrogative from all the other Tungusic languages. Semantically, however, *yanemi* is a MANNER interrogative and might have been directly or indirectly influenced by Russian. The stem *ya-* ‘what, which’ is cognate with Oroqen *i(-kon)*, Udihe *j’ə(-u)* etc. The combination of the dummy noun with the speech act verb also suggests some Chinese influence.

- (105) Kilen (Dong 2016: 37)<sup>17</sup>  
*xn gerbi-xi ya-ne-mi hudarewye?*  
2SG.OBL.GEN name-2SG.POSS what-V-CVB.IPFV call

Another Kilen example has an equivalent in Oroqen (§4.3). In fact, not only the dummy noun *gerbi*, but also the interrogative *yama* is from Ewenic.

- (106) Kilen (Chaoke 2014b: 8)  
*shi yama gerbi-shi?*  
2SG which name-2SG.POSS

Nanaic, like Ewenic and Udegheic, has a tendency for Type A.1. Isolated Type A.2 constructions in Samar and Kilen are most likely based on Jurchenic or Ewenic influence. Similar to Ewenic, the genitive is only occasionally attested in the PNQ. Fronting is almost entirely absent and based on the Russian pattern.

#### 4.6 Jurchenic

Although the person is not marked on the head noun, the personal pronoun can also be absent in Jurchenic languages. According to one source, Manchu can make use of a personal interrogative *we* ‘who’.

- (107) Manchu (Avrorin 2000: 113)  
*si.n-i gebu ?we?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name who

However, this appears to be a mistake, perhaps based on the author’s knowledge of Nanai, as all other sources invariably give the interrogative *ai* ‘what’ instead. This interrogative is cognate with the Nanaic form encountered above, e.g. Uilta *xai*. In Sibe, an optional question marker can attach at the end of the PNQ.

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<sup>17</sup>*xn* with initial [ç-] goes back to *si.n-i*.

- (108) Sibe (Sameng et al. 2010: 447)<sup>18</sup>  
*xi.n-ĩ*      *gev*    *ai=ye?*  
 2SG.OBL-GEN name what=Q

Apart from the universal use of this interrogative, Manchu dialects seemingly show the same variation as the Ewenic languages. The interrogative can precede or follow the noun, the personal pronoun can be absent, and it can take a genitive if the interrogative is postposed. But Jurchenic has a tendency for preposed interrogatives.

- (109) Yibuqi Manchu (Zhao 1989: 127)  
*εi*    *kowə?*  
 what name
- (110) Aihui Manchu (Wang 2005: 208)  
*ci*    *ε*    *gəvo?*  
 2SG what name
- (111) Sanjiazi Manchu (Enhebatu 1995: 39)  
*ci*    *ai*    *gu:bu?*  
 2SG what name

Furthermore, these are Type A.2 constructions in which the interrogative stands attributively to the dummy noun. There is no fronting as in Ewenic.

Manchu in Yanbian close to the North Korean border is only preserved in some isolated words and expressions among which there is the following:<sup>19</sup>

- (112) Yanbian Manchu (Zhao 2000: 19)  
*ai*    *hala*    (*keci*)?  
 what surname ?  
 'What's your surname (clan name)?'

While the same expression *ai hala* is also attested in classical Manchu (e.g., Hauer 2007: 217), the *Qingwen Qimeng*, one of the most influential descriptions of Manchu, also contains the following example with reversed word order:

<sup>18</sup>In this example, <x> also stands for [ç].

<sup>19</sup>The meaning of *keci* is not clear. It could theoretically correspond to Manchu *se-ci* 'say-CVB.COND', but this is problematic on phonological grounds. It could also correspond to Manchu *o-ci* 'become-CVB.COND', which can be a topic marker. Alchuka is known to have an occasional initial *k-* in this word, i.e. (*k*)*ɔ-* (Mu 1986). A connection to Mongolian *g(e)-* 'to say' is unlikely.

- (113) Manchu (Wuge & Cheng 1730: vol. 2; Wylie 1855: 82)  
*hala ai?*  
surname what

According to the same source, questions about personal names have the same structure with the interrogative following the noun.

- (114) Manchu (Wuge & Cheng 1730: vol. 2; Wylie 1855: 82)  
*gebu ai?*  
name what

According to Veronika Zikmundová (p.c., 2019), this postposed position of the interrogative is impossible in spoken Sibe. As seen above, it is also not very common in other Manchu dialects.

One special example that contains two copies of the word for ‘name’ (written Manchu *gebu*) is attested for Sanjiazi Manchu.

- (115) Sanjiazi Manchu (Enhebatu 1995: 39)  
*cin gur:bu [ai gur:bu]?*  
2SG.OBL.GEN name what name

In a similar example from Sibe that is strongly influenced by the written language, the noun *nalma* ‘person’ (written Manchu *niyalma*) can occur twice. In this case, ‘what name’ seems to function as an attribute to ‘person’.

- (116) Sibe (Kałużyński 1977: 23)  
*ere nalma [ai gebu nalma]?*  
this person what name person  
‘What is this person’s name?’

The sentence thus literally means ‘A what-named person is this person?’

A major difference of Jurchenic with respect to most other Tungusic languages is the widespread use of questions of Type B. An occasional affricatization of *s* (Manchu *se-* ‘to say’) seen in the following Sibe example is also attested in other Jurchenic varieties (see also Chaoke 2014e: 8).

- (117) Sibe (Chaoke 2006: 206)  
*si.n-i gəvə-v ai dzi-m?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC what say-IPFV

In the following parallel from written Manchu the optional accusative has been added.



- (118) Manchu (He 2009: 21)  
*si.n-i gebu(-be) ai se-mpi?*  
 2SG.OBL-GEN name(-ACC) what say-IPFV

Vovin (2006: 259) argues that Manchu *se-* is a Koreanic loanword. Admittedly, *se-* is unattested outside of Jurchenic and has all the hallmarks of being a borrowing. But Manchu *se-* has almost exactly the same range of functions as Mongolian *g(e)-* 'to say' (Janhunen 2012a: 283–285). On phonological grounds it cannot be a direct borrowing from Mongolian, but the underlying construction in the PNQ is almost identical to the one in Jurchenic. Consider the following answer to a PNQ.

- (119) Mongolian (Janhunen 2012a: 283)  
*mi.n-ii ner-iig delger+maa ge-deg.*  
 1SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC PN say-PTCP.HAB  
 'My name is Delgerma.'

This parallel with the same word order and the same functional elements suggests that the Jurchenic PNQ has been calqued from Mongolian, but the similarities of the verbs go beyond this construction.

In both languages, this intransitive (+ NAME) speech act verb here has a lexical function but is otherwise frequently used in grammatical functions, for example as a quotative. Depending on how the quotative is embedded into the sentence, it can have different forms that have parallels in both languages. For example, Mongolian *ge-deg* 'say-PTCP.HAB', functionally corresponds to Manchu *se-re* 'say-PTCP.IPFV' and can function as an attribute to a following noun or can take case markers. Mongolian *g-e.j* 'say-CVB.IPFV' functionally corresponds to Manchu *se-me* 'say-CVB.IPFV' and is used adverbially (e.g., Janhunen 2012a: 283). While these parallels cannot rule out a potential Koreanic origin of the Jurchenic verb, they nevertheless illustrate a much more intimate connection with Mongolic.

For instance, *se-* does not have the function of a speech act verb, but that of a quotative in the following example that contains the main verb *hūla-* 'to call'.

- (120) Manchu (Schluessel 2014)  
*[si.n-i gebu-be ai] se.me hūla-mpi?*  
 2SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC what QUOT call-IPFV

In the following construction, the same verb is used, but without quotative.

- (121) Sanjiazi Manchu (Kim et al. 2008: 161)  
*si aj gəwu xola-m?*  
 2SG what name call-IPFV

In the former sentence, the entire part *sini gebu-be ai* is embedded by means of the quotative *se.me*. In the latter example, the question is not embedded. This example is most likely based on the Chinese construction (e.g., 15b) but it also resembles the Solon and Oroqen answers in §4.3.

While the PNQ is unknown in Bala, the words *ci* ‘you (SG)’, *cin* ‘your (SG)’, *garbi* ‘name’, and perhaps *a(i)-* ‘what’ are all attested (Mu 1987: 14, 25, 31). As seen above, the word *garbi* is of Northern Tungusic origin and must have been transmitted through a form of southern Nanai, such as Kilen.

The sentence is not attested in Alchuka and Lalin/Jing Manchu either. However, a similar construction in the third person has the following form:

- (122) Alchuka (Mu 1986: 14)  
*tʼə.rə-i ?əwə intʼuki.*  
that-GEN name PN  
‘His name is Yentugi.’

- (123) Lalin Manchu (Aixinjueluo 1987: 14)  
*te.re-i gebu yintuhi.*  
that-GEN name PN  
‘His name is Yentugi.’

As seen before, the dummy noun was also recorded as *gəbu* for Alchuka. The cognate of written Manchu *ai* ‘what’ has the form (*k*)*ai* or *ei* in Alchuka and *ai* in Lalin/Jing Manchu. Written Manchu *si* ‘you (SG)’ and *sin-i* ‘your (SG)’ correspond to Alchuka *ci/cin-i* and Lalin/Jing Manchu *si/sin-i*. Written Manchu *se-* ‘to say’ has the form *tsʼə-* in Alchuka and *se-* in Lalin/Jing Manchu (Mu 1986; Aixinjueluo 1987).

The earliest recordings of Tungusic are in Jurchen, but to the best of my knowledge the sentence is not attested in these materials either. In Jurchen B, the second person pronoun is attested as \**ši* 失, the genitive as \**-i* 亦, and the word ‘name’ as \**gebu* 革不 (Kane 1989: 270, 272, 356). In Jurchen A, the second person pronoun apparently is not attested, but the equivalences of Manchu *min-i* ‘my’ and *gebu* ‘name’ have the forms \**min-i* 密你 and \**gebu* 革卜, respectively (Kiyose 1977: 138, 140, 145). It is likely that a comparable range of different constructions as in modern varieties of Manchu might have been present in these languages.

Jurchenic has several examples of all three types of constructions, Type A.1, Type A.2, and Type B. As seen above, Tungusic has otherwise few cases of A.2 and even fewer of Type B. Jurchenic is also the only subbranch of Tungusic that does not use the personal interrogative in the PNQ. The speech act verb *se-* found in Type B constructions is also unattested in other Tungusic languages. Jurchenic

lost head-marked possession and has extended the scope of the genitive to elements other than the speech act participants. All of these features can best be explained by an unusually strong impact from other languages, such as Khitano-Mongolic and perhaps Koreanic (e.g., Vovin 2006), rather than with an early branching of Jurchenic (e.g., Kazama 2003). As has been shown, the Jurchenic Type B construction is clearly a calque from Mongolian.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 The (re)construction in Proto-Tungusic

A personal name question must have already existed in Proto-Tungusic. The only element that all Tungusic languages without exception have in common in the PNQ is a cognate of the word *\*gärbü* ‘name’. The second person pronoun *\*si*, which also functions as a possessive marker *\*-si* in languages outside of Jurchenic, can be absent in some constructions, but is also attested in all Tungusic languages. The genitive form can be reconstructed as *\*si.n-i*.

The interrogative is the element of the question that exhibits the most variation. However, apart from Jurchenic, all three other subbranches of Tungusic have at least some examples with a cognate of the interrogative *\*ŋüi* ‘who’. No other interrogative has such a wide distribution in the PNQs of Tungusic. Instances of *\*Kooni* ‘how’ are also found in Ewenic, Udegheic, and Nanaic, but this widespread usage can be more plausibly explained with Russian influence all over the northern half of the Tungusic-speaking areas. The use of Tungusic *\*Kai*<sup>20</sup> in both Nanaic (e.g., Uilta *xai*) and Jurchenic (e.g., Manchu *ai*) could indicate that this is a Southern Tungusic innovation, although it is much more pervasive in Jurchenic than in Nanaic and likely due to language contact. Other interrogatives, such as *\*ja-* ‘which’, can only be found in very few languages (e.g., Oroqen *i(-kon)*, Udihe *j’e(-u)*).

The use of ‘who’ in the North and of ‘what’ in the South is part of a general areal division between languages around Siberia and Mongolia on the one hand and the surrounding languages (e.g., parts of Europe, China, Japan) on the other (e.g., Idiatov 2007; Gil 2018). Proto-Tungusic most likely was part of an area with ‘who’ and due to contact with Chinese and other languages changed its typological profile in the South. The increasing use of ‘how’ in the North is based on the Russian construction that represents a pattern found in many European languages.

<sup>20</sup>Given the uncertainty of the initial, the abstract label *\*K-* is used in this reconstruction (e.g., Hölzl to appear).

Table 8: Overview of the interrogatives used in the Tungusic PNQs, including dialects and historical data mentioned in the discussion

Language	*ŋüi 'who'	*Kai 'what'	*ja- 'which'	*Kooni 'how'	other
Arman	?	?	?	?	?
Even	+	–	–	–	–
Evenki	+	–	+	–	–
Oroqen	+	–	+	–	which (one)
Solon	–	–	–	+	which (one)
Negidal	?	–	–	+	which (one)
Oroch	+	–	?+	+	how
Udihe	–	–	+	+	–
Kilen	+	?	?	?	how, which (one)
Kili	?	?	?	?	?
Nanai	+	+	–	+	–
Samar	?	+	?	?	?
Ulcha	+	–	–	+	–
Uilta	+	+	–	+	–
U. Nanai	–	+	–	–	which (one)
Alchuka	?	?	?	?	?
Bala	?	?	?	?	?
Jurchen A	?	?	?	?	?
Jurchen B	?	?	?	?	?
Kyakala	?	?	?	?	?
sp. Manchu	–	+	–	–	–
sp. Sibe	–	+	–	–	–
w. Manchu	?–	+	–	–	–

The reconstruction of the Proto-Tungusic PNQ depends on the internal classification of Tungusic. If Jurchenic is considered the oldest branch of the language family (e.g., Kazama 2003), the presence of a second person possessive marker could well be a later innovation in the non-Jurchenic branch. But Jurchenic preserves some traces of the personal markers that must have been present earlier. For instance, Doerfer (1978: 7) observed that ordinal numerals in some Tungusic languages are ultimately derived from what appears to be a third person plural possessive marker (Table 9). The possessive form is preserved, for example, in Udihe, e.g. *neŋu-ti* 'their younger sibling' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 107). In Udihe, a case marker can occasionally precede the ordinal marker, which might be a relic of its origin as a possessive marker, e.g. *nada* 'seven', *nadä-ma-ti* 'seventh (ACC)' (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 424). The syllable *\*ti* that is still recorded as such in Alchuka regularly changed to *ci* in Manchu (e.g., *nadan*, *nada-ci*).

Table 9: Ordinal markers in Alchuka (Mu 1986), and Manchu, Kilen (Zhang, Yanchang, Zhang Xi, et al. 1989), and Udihe (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001)

Language	three	third	-3PL.POSS
Alchuka	ila(-n)	ila-t'i	-
Manchu	ila-n	ila-ci	-
Kilen	ila-n	ila-n-tin	-ti
Udihe	ila	ile-n-ti	-ti

This strongly speaks in favor of head-marking (e.g., head-marked possession) being present in Proto-Tungusic.

Given the presence of Type A constructions throughout the entire language family, Proto-Tungusic must have been of the same type (Table 10). Type B is restricted to few examples, most of which can be found in Jurchenic. For instance, as seen before, the typical Jurchenic question containing a speech act verb (Manchu *se-*) is clearly calqued from the Mongolian pattern (§4.6). Apart from the use of a personal interrogative, the construction is almost a perfect match.

- (124) Sibe (Zikmundová 2013: 138)<sup>21</sup>  
*šin*            *gəvə-f*    *ai*    *zə-mie?*  
 2SG.OBL.GEN name-ACC what say-IPFV

<sup>21</sup>Sibe *šin* goes back to *si.n-i* '2SG.OBL-GEN'. Jurchenic also has sentence-final content question marking that is, however, not usually attested in the PNQs.

- (125) Mongolian (elicited in May 2019)  
*či.n-ii          ner-iig      xen ge-deg=ve?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name-ACC who say-PTCP.HAB=CQ

Content question marking as in this Mongolian example is a feature absent from most Tungusic languages (Hölzl 2018a: 286–312). In those languages that have this feature, such as Jurchenic languages, Khamnigan Evenki, or Uilta, this is clearly an innovation. Consequently, Proto-Tungusic most likely did not have content question marking either. All Type B constructions can plausibly be explained with language contact.

In conclusion, the most likely reconstruction for the proto-Tungusic personal name question is perhaps the following Type A, more specifically Type A.1, construction with an optional pronoun and an optional genitive.<sup>22</sup>

- (126) Proto-Tungusic  
*\*(si(n-i))      gärbü-si      ŋüi?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name-2SG.POSS who

All four subbranches of Tungusic have direct descendants of this construction, such as the following from Even (with optional pronoun *hi* ‘2SG’, *hin* ‘2SG.OBL(.GEN)’) and Manchu.

- (127) Even (Doerfer et al. 1980: 304, modified transcription)  
*gerbe-s          ŋüi?*  
name-2SG.POSS who
- (128) Manchu (Haenisch 1961: 73)  
*si.n-i          gebu ai?*  
2SG.OBL-GEN name what

Some languages, such as Manchu, have introduced a new interrogative into the construction, replacing the original *\*ŋüi*. Jurchenic has generally lost the possessive marker *\*-si*, at the same time generalizing the genitive.

One can suspect that the Tungusic construction above was based on a more schematic construction that has the following form, X being a pronoun, Y a possessive ending, and Z a proper name or the interrogative *\*ŋüi*: *\*(X(n-i)) gärbü-Y Z*. The genitive might have been restricted to first and second person pronouns. Only Jurchenic has third person pronouns that can take a genitive (singular *i.n-i*, plural *ce.n-i* in Manchu) and it remains an open question whether this represents

<sup>22</sup>Very similar constructions to this one reconstructed to Tungusic can be found in some surrounding languages. These cannot be addressed here for reasons of space (see, e.g., 39).

4 'What's your name?' in Tungusic and beyond

Table 10: The type of PNQs in Tungusic languages

Language	Type A (copula)	Type B (speech act verb)
Arman	?	?
Even	+	-
Evenki	+	-
Oroqen	+	-
Solon	+	-
Negidal	+	-
Oroch	+	-
Udihe	+	+
Kilen	+	+
Kili	?+	?
Nanai	+	-
Samar	+	-
Ulcha	+	-
Uilta	+	-
U. Nanai	+	-
Alchuka	?+	?
Bala	?	?
Jurchen A	?	?
Jurchen B	?	?
Kyakala	?	?
sp. Manchu	+	+
sp. Sibe	+	+
w. Manchu	+	+

a Proto-Tungusic pattern that was replaced everywhere else or is also an innovation in Jurchenic (e.g., Zikmundová 2022 [this volume]). The use of the genitive on elements other than the pronouns is probably a Jurchenic innovation that later spread to a few other Tungusic languages.

- (129) Manchu (Aixinjueluo 1987: 14)  
*te.re-i gebu yentugi.*  
that-GEN name PN

Another instantiation of the schematic construction can be observed in the following answer from Even.

- (130) Even (Doerfer et al. 1980: 304)  
*m̄.n gerbe-w Anna.*  
1SG.OBL(.GEN) name-1SG.POSS PN

The preposed interrogative as in the following Aoluguya Evenki example (Type A.1) appears to be restricted to Ewenic (found in Even, Evenki, Oroqen, and Solon in §4.3).

- (131) Aoluguya Evenki (Chaoke & Sirenbatu 2016: 1)  
*fi [ni] gərbi-tfi*  
2SG who name-POSS

This also illustrates another innovation in parts of Ewenic, which is the use of the comitative or possessive suffix (*gərbi-tfi* ‘with/having a name’), replacing the second person possessive marker in the PNQ (*gərbi-fi* ‘your name’, Chaoke & Sirenbatu 2016: 5).

Seemingly similar expressions in Jurchenic (see 17 and §4.6) cannot be based on the same construction because the interrogative (Manchu *ai*) functions as an attribute to the dummy noun (Manchu *gebu*) (Type A.2).

- (132) Manchu (Sanjiazi; Chaoke 2014d: 8)  
*shi [ayi gewe]?*  
2SG what name

The personal interrogative in Evenki cannot, however, stand attributively to a noun (Nedjalkov 1997: 215). The interrogative, therefore, must be interpreted as an argument of its own that stands in some sort of focus position that is specific to Ewenic. In Evenki, interrogatives often are sentence-initial, but there is another construction: “Much more rarely, they appear in the second position after the subject or the object of the question in cases when these components are stressed.” (Nedjalkov 1997: 7f.) This must be considered an early innovation of Ewenic languages.



## 5.2 Conclusion: Construction and frame

This study has investigated a potentially universal property of human language, the personal name question (PNQ, 'What's your name?'). While the focus was on Tungusic languages, several typological dimensions of variation were discussed from a global perspective. Cross-linguistically, there are two main types of PNQs that contain an equational copula (Type A) and a speech act verb (Type B), respectively. Tungusic languages show a tendency for Type A, although the Jurchenic subbranch due to language contact also has many instances of Type B. On the basis of the PNQ in the individual Tungusic languages, the PNQ in Proto-Tungusic has been reconstructed as an instance of Type A. This reconstruction lacks a copula but contains a personal interrogative \**ŋüi* 'who', an optional personal pronoun \**si* 'you (SG)' (oblique \**si.n-*) with optional genitive \**-i*, and a dummy noun \**gärbü* 'name' that functions as a host for head-marked possessive affixes. The basis for the apparent split between head-marking on the one hand and double marking on the other remains unclear for now.

Generally, personal name questions can be said to be semantically based on what has been called the personal name frame (§3) that has several subevents, each with its individual roles. The Tungusic Type A construction highlights or profiles the subevents of HAVING A NAME and ACQUAINTING. The whole expression is the result of a complex interaction of the individual frames and constructions (Figure 1).

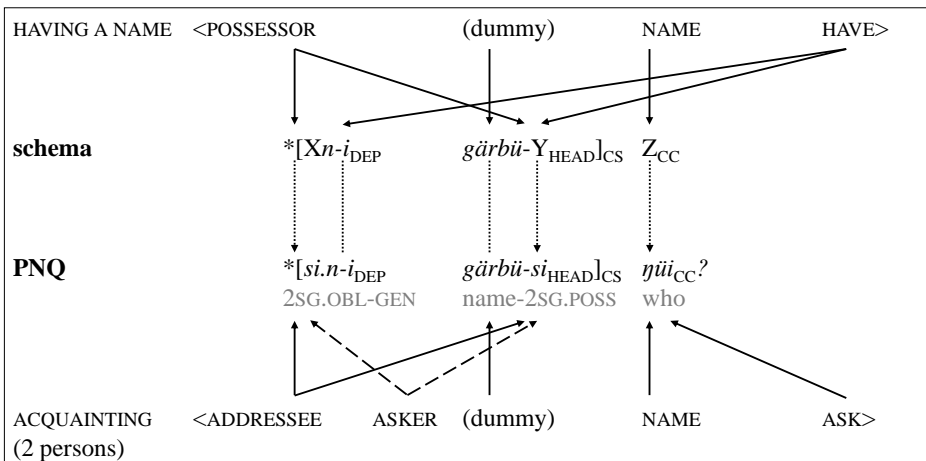


Figure 1: The interaction of frames and constructions in the Proto-Tungusic PNQ (figure created by the author)

In the schematic construction, X is an open slot for a pronoun, Y for a possessive ending corresponding to X, and Z for a proper name or the interrogative \**ηüi*. CS and CC stand for copula subject and copula complement, respectively (Dixon 2010). The dummy noun \**gärbü* ‘name’ is head and the personal pronoun \**si* ‘you (SG)’ is the dependent. Dotted lines indicate that a given element is identical in the schematic and in the specific construction, e.g. the genitive remains \**-i*. Dotted arrows show the filling of an open slot with a certain element, e.g. of X with the pronoun \**si* ‘you (SG)’. Arrows from the frames to the constructions indicate the place of realization of roles and relations. In some cases, multiple realization is possible, e.g. of the possessor as both the personal pronoun and possessive affix. Finally, dashed arrows are used for roles and relations that are only indirectly coded in the construction. In this example, the role of the person asking is only indirectly represented by the second person elements. The interrogative force of the question, here tentatively indicated with the semantic relation ASK, has no overt morphosyntactic expression but is indirectly encoded in the interrogative and perhaps a special intonation contour that is difficult to reconstruct given the scarcity of data from modern languages.

## Abbreviations

PNQ stands for *personal name question* and PNF for *personal name frame*. Abbreviations follow the general convention. Special grammatical abbreviations include:

ABST	abstract, non-concrete (cf. Munshi 2006)	GL	general topic (Lock 2011)
ANX	anxiousness (Prins 2017)	L	low tone form (Paperno 2014)
CQ	content question marker	SIM	simple (unmarked) tense (Coler 2014)

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