

AREAL TYPOLOGY AND SYNTACTIC CHANGE

In the present study I make specific claims about the borrowing of structural categories and the impact of such borrowings on structural typology. I argue that certain linguistic strategies for clause combining are readily borrowed and that massive borrowing of these categories can result in structural change so extensive/significant that the result is typological shift. Eurasia has long been identified as a particular type of language typology. Early typological studies [1] identified correlations between verb-final word order, postpositions, relative clause before the noun, and, significantly for the present study, subordinate clause before the main verb. Subsequent studies have shown that these correlations are statistically significant only in Eurasia, suggesting that Eurasia is itself a zone for areal typology [2]. Siberia is an important part of that zone, and the indigenous languages of Siberia, are OV (namely the Mongolic, Tungusic and Turkic languages, Chukchi, Itelmen, Nivkh, and Yukaghir, as well as the Eskaleut languages). In the present paper I argue that the Siberian languages are undergoing typological shift as a result of contact with Russian, a change which began prior to language attrition which is now well underway for many if not all of the indigenous languages with small numbers of speakers.

Key words: *language contact, borrowing, grammatical categories, clause-linkage, Tungusic languages, Siberia.*

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Relevant to this discussion are two known processes associated with language contact. Two different processes can be distinguished in this regard: *borrowing* (which is in turn often connected to language maintenance); and *interference* (which is related to language shift) [3–5]. Ross [6] adds borrowing in cases of shift and interference in cases of maintenance to this list. This categorization is useful only if we can distinguish these processes; in fact it is often difficult with bilingual speakers to determine if the use of a particular form from Language Y when speaking Language X is a borrowing, a code shift (meaning that

the speaker has briefly changed codes and is speaking Y not X), or if there is interference from Y and the speaker cannot produce the form in X. Space limitations prevent full discussion of these issues. Here I focus on an increase in borrowing of both pattern and phonetic material from a time when there were monolingual speakers of Evenki (a Tungusic Siberian language, see below) to the present day, when speakers are bilingual and language attrition is widespread.

The answer to how languages are restructured is closely linked to the issue of *borrowability*. Matras argues that certain categories are more readily borrowed than others [7], something which is often explained by structural constraints [8]. Even though general consensus is that, under the right circumstances, anything can be borrowed [3], some categories require more intensive contact than others. In fact there are three different explanations for differences in borrowability: (1) borrowability is related to the relative intensity of language contact (the more intense the contact, the more likely borrowing); (2) the outcome of language contact is determined in part by differences and similarities in the structures of the languages in contact; and (3) borrowability is dependent on semantic-pragmatic and other structural properties of the categories under consideration. In practice, these factors intersect.

There is good reason to begin answering these questions by focusing on the level of the clause and clause-combining strategies. Within studies of borrowability, it has been shown that coordinating conjunctions and subordinating strategies are easily borrowed [7, 9]. Matras argues that, cross-linguistically, connectors stand out in this regard; they are readily borrowed and generally follow a borrowability hierarchy for connectors [7, 9, 10]:

but > or > and.

This states that the borrowing of *and* implies the borrowing of both *or* and *but*. This hierarchy has been shown to hold for a large number of languages. Thus we find examples where all three conjunctions (*but*, *or*, *and*) are borrowed, such as Domari, Otomi, Guarani, Kildin Saami, Western Neo-Aramaic; languages in which only two (*but*, *or*) are borrowed: Tasawq, Purepecha, Vietnamese, Rumungro, K'abeena, Likpe [7, p. 54]. There are a few exceptions. For example, in Macedonian Turkish, *i* “and” and *ili* “or” have been borrowed from Macedonian, but the word *ama* “but” is still of Turkic origin, so that the hierarchy is violated. Notably, the Turkish word *ama* “but” has been borrowed into Macedonian [7, p. 54].

More importantly for our purposes, however, is the fact that the borrowing of connectors often proceeds hand-in-hand with changes in subordinating strategies. For example, Matras notes that converbal morphology in Macedonian Turkish has been replaced by grammaticalized conjunctions and finite verb forms. At the same time, the language has maintained strong morphological agglutination. He considers this to be “a small, yet not insignificant step in the direction of a typological drift. On this basis, we might conclude that typological drift begins at the clause level” [7, p. 41]. If Matras is correct, then we can expect to find other signs of initial typological drift at the level of the clause.

Such drift is widespread in the indigenous languages of Siberia, a situation which is magnified by the fact that the changes are coupled with language loss, making it difficult to determine whether we are in fact witnessing changes in the typological structure of the languages in question, or rather imperfect acquisition, under influence of Russian. In the latter case, the language could be seen as being in a transitional state, but not a transitional state from SOV to SVO typology, rather in a state from language X (the indigenous language) to language Y (Russian). The argument here is based largely on Evenki data. That said, it is relevant for other languages of the North in contact with Russian. Evenki, a Tungusic language spoken by perhaps 9000 people in Siberia today. The ethnic population of Evenki is much larger (an estimated 45,000 in 2001), living throughout much of Siberia. The language is still robustly spoken in Sakha, Yakutia and in the Amur Region, and in scattered villages elsewhere, including in the region of the former Evenki Autonomous District, part of the present-day Krasnoyarsk Region.

There are some difficulties in fully reconstructing Evenki clause-combining strategies prior to extensive contact and shift. Earlier documentation of Evenki consists of grammars, dictionaries, and text collections; the overwhelming majority of texts which would give full evidence of these structures are not spontaneous conversation but are published as folklore texts.

Although they are published in Evenki, they are edited texts, not transcripts. They were recorded from fully fluent, often monolingual speakers, but show evidence of some editing to make them into polished narratives. (They do not contain false starts, hesitations, and other features typical of unscripted, spontaneous speech.) Still, they show syntax which is consistent with both typological and areal expectations. For the purposes of this study, the issue centers around determining when finite clauses represent independent sentences, and when they are strung together as a single sentence. Specifically, from the standpoint of a linguist, it is impossible to tell if a comma represents an intonation contour consistent with continuation, or if it is just an orthographic convention. That said, we can be reasonably certain that prior to extensive shift, Evenki clause-combining was characterized by the following types: (1) parataxis; (2) coordination using primarily a conjunctive particle, not a conjunctive adverb; (3) the use of nominalizations and converbial forms which preceded the finite verb of the clause. Examples (1)–(3) illustrate parataxis. In (1), there are two finite verb forms (in this case negatives *əʃə:n jɪ:rə*, *əʃə:n bu:rə*: “didn’t open, didn’t give”), with no connector; in (2) we find a string of three finite verbs: *əmə:rən* “came”, *urumuldən* “shortened”, *urumuldən* “shortened”.

(1) *ŋinakin* *əʃə:n* *jɪ:rə* *əʃə:n*
 dog NEG-3SG open NEG-3SG
kulus-pa *bu:rə*:
 key-ACC give
 “The dog didn’t open [the door], didn’t give the key” [11, p. 322–3].

(2) *Bə:rəmən* *əmə-rə-n*, *əriksə-n*
 time come-PST-3SG breath-3SG
urumul-də-n, *ŋo:nim* *dʒal-i-n*
 shorten-NFUT-3SG long thought-EPV-3SG
urumul-də-n.
 shorten-NFUT-3SG

“The time had come, her breath shortened, her long thoughts shortened” [11, p. 46].

There is no apparent upper limit for the number of finite verbs which can be joined paratactically, but there are seldom more than three in the folklore texts.

Historically, some constructions used coordination. By far the most frequent device is the coordinating particle, *-dV*, which is a clitic and attaches to the first of the conjoined phrases. (The vowel of the particle is determined by the usual rules of vowel harmony.) Use of this particle is attested in folklore and in my field recordings, as in (3), although it is more frequent in the folklore texts:

(3) {in response to the question: How many children do you have?}
V živyx *umuko:n* *huna:dʒ-m-da*
 Alive one daughter-1SG.POSS-PRT

omo:lgi-m
son-1SG.POSS

“I have one daughter and one son alive” [Iengra, Sakha/Yakutia, 1998].

Another device is the use of connectors described as temporal adverbs, most frequently *ta:duk* “then” [12]. Text counts provide some indication of how frequently such connectors were used. An example is provided by the long folktale (from which example (2) was taken). It was recorded in 1966 from a speaker born in 1908 who is described as not knowing Russian [11]. It consists of 466 sentences, with a total of 42 adverbs used as coordinators: *ta:duk* “then” is used 25 times, and *tarit* “therefore” 17 times. Example (4) shows a typical instance:

(4) *ər omolgi, tyma:tna ərɔkə:n*
this boy morning early
ili-ksa, tuksa-tʃa, ta:duk kirəktə-βə
get.up-CVB.ANT run-PST woodpecker-ACC
βa:-ksa: ən:n-dulə-βi tuksa:-βna then
kill-CVB.ANT mother-LOC-REFL run-CVB.SIML
əmuβ-tʃa:
bring-PST

“Early the next morning this boy got up and ran (out); then, having killed a woodpecker, he brought it back to his mother, while running” [11, p. 46].

This illustrates a characteristic use of *ta:duk*: it is consistently used in folklore texts of this time period at the beginning of a new sentence or clause. The punctuation here suggests that this is one long sentence, but the punctuation is clearly an orthographic decision on the part of the editors. It follows a finite verb form, and the folklore texts of this time period consistently show verb-final (OV) word order. The distribution is very clear: it occurs after a clause/sentence boundary, marked by a finite verb, and links it with the upcoming clause/sentence. It is impossible to tell from the texts if punctuation is orthographic or stylistic, or if it represents intonational contours. In other words, we cannot say with certainty that.

In more recent recordings, such as my fieldwork beginning in the late 1990s, *ta:duk* is often used to join two sentences, and is found alongside Russian conjunctions, such as *i* “and” and *potom i* “then”, as in the following example recorded in Iengra (Sakha/Yakutia) in 1998, where sentence-final, falling intonation is indicated by a period (.):

(5) **Potom** *ilan anyani:-βa təgə-t-ty-n.*
then three years-ACC sit-DUR-PST-3SG.
Ta:duk *ju:-tʃə:-n*
then leave-PST-3SG

“**Then** he sat [was in prison] for three years. **Then** he got out”.

This accurately suggests that Russian conjunctions are used in Evenki. In fact, they have been attested as early as the 1960s according to Konstantinova’s descriptive grammar [12, p. 250], as seen in her example (6):

(6) *Hurkə:kə:r so:t ɔərurə i so:t*
boy-PL very tire-NFUT and very
dʒəmulə
eat-A.INGR-NFUT

“The boys were very tired and got very hungry” [12, p. 250].

This supports Matras’s claim that conjunctions are easily borrowed, inasmuch as Konstantiva [12] worked with the language at a time when it was still fluently spoken by monolingual speakers. To what extent the introduction of conjunctions represents a syntactic change is questionable. On the one hand, it can be argued that the use of conjunctions represents a change in syntax, from parataxis to coordination. On the other, Johannessen [13] argues that conjunctions are easily borrowed because such languages are best described as having asyndetic coordination. The syntax already has a position for conjunctions, i.e., they are not conjunctionless but rather have zero conjunctions. In this analysis, the use of coordinators does not represent a change, but just the filling of an already existing slot. However, it is clear that historically the Tungusic languages, including Evenki, did not use conjunctions to conjoin noun phrases [12, 14, 15]. This is a relatively new usage, illustrated in (7), recorded in Tura in (2008), where *taduk* conjoins two NPs:

(7) *Omolgitsa:n dʒulədu: ɲənədzərən, taduk*
boy in front go-A.IMP-3SG and
ɲinakin, taduk ʃərəpaxa
dog and turtle

“The boy goes in front, and then the dog and the turtle”.

Here it functions as a conjunction, with its diachronic meaning of a temporal adverb clearly bleached, even more so than in examples (4) and (5). This is a case of structural borrowing, without borrowing of phonetic material.

The phonetic material is also borrowed and use of Russian conjunctions is widespread in Siberian and other languages in contact with Russian. Nikolaeva and Tolskaya [14] describe Udihe as using not only the particle *-dV*, but also Russian *i*, *a*, and *no*. As early as 1922, Bogoras noted the use of *i*, *daj* and *potom* in Itel’men [16]. In Turkic languages, the Russian conjunctions *i*, *a*, *to*, *nu to* are attested in Karaim [17]; *ili... ili*, *no*, *kogda* in Shor [18]; *ili*, *no* (and subordinating conjunctions *čto*, *čtoby*, *potomu što*) in Tatar [19]; and *i*, *ili*, *a*, *tak*, and *a tak* in Uzbek [20]. This list of languages could easily be expanded.

Syntactic change is unambiguous in the use of interrogative pronouns as subordinators, a strategy not native to Evenki but common in Russian (and other Indo-European languages). In her study of Evenki syntax, Kolesnikova [15, p. 19] notes that the structure of Evenki subordinate sentences is affected by Russian, with an observable increase in the use of in-

terrogative pronouns as subordinators, such as *aŋe*, *aŋi* “which” *i:du:* “where”, *i:lə:* “where to”, *o:ki:n* “when”, *o:n* “how”. She adds that this change is found not only in Evenki, but in all Tungusic languages, seen in (8):

(8) *Alagu:βdzaril* *ala:tfərə* ***o:ki:n***
 Pupils wait **when**
alagu:mni: *klassu-la:* *i:dzən*
 teachers class-LOC enter
 “Pupils wait for teachers to enter the class” [14, p. 19].

This was published in the 1960s, prior to extensive shift and attrition, when there were still monolingual Evenki speakers.

Now, with shift well underway, similar examples are frequent, as in (9), from Iengra, Sakha/Yakutia, 1999:

(9) *Huna:tkan-mi:* *ele* *doždalasʹ* ***o:ki:n***
 girl-REFL hardly waited **when**
huru-βru:
 go-PFT
 “His girlfriend could hardly wait until they would go”.

This example illustrates another frequent phenomenon in modern Evenki conversation: code-switching with Russian. In fact, such code-switching is so prevalent that it is difficult to determine in certain cases whether the speaker is speaking Evenki (with Russian borrowings), is code-switching into Russian, or is experiencing interference from Russian. Consider (10):

(10) (Иенгра, Саха, 1998; 53 лет. женщина)
 1 *goro:* ***o:ki:n*** *is-tʃana:β* *tar*
 far until reach-FUT-1SG there
 2 ***noka do poščlka*** *is-tʃana:β*
 until to village reach-FUT-1SG

3 ***noka*** *Ljuda-βa* *baka-dzina:β*
 until Ljuda-ACC find-FUT-1SG
 “It was far until I would get there, until I would reach the village, until I would find Ljuda”.

The first line shows a calque of the Russian syntax, while the next two lines use Russian directly. The use of *poka/o:ki:n* as a connective is consistent throughout this excerpt but it is hard to determine whether this is a case of borrowing, code-switching or interference; if a borrowing, it represents a change in the Evenki strategies for clause combining. It does show a loss of converbs in clause combining (or at least the absence of their use), not discussed here due to space limitations, but well documented in Evenki grammatical descriptions [11, 15].

Conclusion

The syntax of coordination and subordination is undergoing change due to Russian influence. Although historically Evenki used few coordinating conjunctions, the use of Russian coordinators such as *i*, *a*, *no*, *potom* is widespread, as is the use of what historically in Evenki were temporal adverbs, such as *ta:duk* “then”. At present, there is a difference in how far these changes have spread. In contrast, changes in subordinating strategies are sporadic, not regular, in the sense that not all speakers use the same strategies in predictable ways. More specifically, some use native Evenki (Tungusic) strategies for subordination, some use borrowed structures, either borrowing subordinating adverbs/pronouns/interrogatives from Russian, or calquing the construction, using Evenki interrogative pronouns as subordinators. In general there is a trend away from the use of non-finite subordinate verb forms toward the use of finite verb forms in subordinate clauses, again on a Russian (or Indo-European) model.

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Grenoble L. A., PhD Linguistics, Professor Department of Linguistics.

The University of Chicago.

1130 East 59th Street, Chicago, IL, USA, 60637.

E-mail: grenoble@uchicago.edu

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Л. А. Гренобль

АРЕАЛЬНАЯ ТИПОЛОГИЯ И ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ СИНТАКСИСА

Рассматривается процесс заимствования грамматических категорий и эффект подобного заимствования на структурную типологию. Некоторые стратегии образования сложных предложений могут легко заимствоваться, в то время как масштабные заимствования таких грамматических категорий могут приводить к структурным изменениям такой степени, что результатом их может явиться типологический сдвиг всей системы. На примере синтаксиса сложного предложения в тунгусских языках иллюстрируется, что языки Сибири подвергаются масштабному воздействию русского языка, результатом которого является типологический сдвиг.

Ключевые слова: *ареальная типология, языковые контакты, заимствования, грамматические категории, сложные предложения, тунгусские языки, Сибирь.*

Университет Чикаго.

1130 Ист 59 Стрит, Чикаго, США, 60637.

E-mail: grenoble@uchicago.edu