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Dolgan

Chris Lasse Däbritz

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□ **Chris Lasse Däbritz**

Hamburg University, Germany

Dolgan

Abstract

This paper describes the main characteristics of Dolgan illustrating them by a piece of natural speech recorded in 2008. Dolgan is the northernmost Turkic language, spoken by several thousand people on the Taimyr Peninsula and in adjacent areas. This paper shows that Dolgan, though being closely related to Sakha (Yakut), exhibits several unique traits, some being inherited and some being (contact-induced) innovations. The latter include, among others, the formal reanalysis of relational nouns, the frequent predicative use of the habitual, a comparably high share of (S)V0 word order patterns, a large stratum of lexical code-copies from Evenki and the reorganisation of the system of kinship terms following the Evenki model.

Key words: Dolgan, Sakha, sociolinguistics, language documentation, contact-induced change, natural language

Dolgan dili

Öz

Bu makale, Dolgancanın temel özelliklerini 2008 yılında kaydedilmiş olan doğal bir konuşma üzerinden betimlemektedir. Taymyr yarımadasında ve komşu bölgelerde birkaç bin kişi tarafından konuşulan Dolganca, coğrafi olarak en kuzeydeki Türk dilidir. Makale, Dolgancanın, Sakaca (Yakutça) ile yakın akraba olmasına rağmen, bazıları kalıtsal, bazıları ise (başka dillerle temas kaynaklı) yenilikler olmak üzere benzersiz özellikler sergilediğini göstermektedir. Söz konusu yenilikler arasında, ad tamlamalarının biçimsel olarak yeniden analiz edilmiş olması, süreklilik/alışılmışlık kategorisinin sıkça yüklemsele kullanılıyor olması, özne-fiil-nesne şeklindeki söz diziminin oransal olarak daha sıklıkla tercihi, Evenki dilinden kopyalanmış sözcüklerin dilde büyük bir katman oluşturmuş olması ve akrabalık terimi sisteminin Evenki dili modelinde yeniden düzenlenmiş olması sayılabilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Dolganca, Sakaca, toplumdilbilim, dil belgelenmesi, başka dillerle temas kaynaklı değişimler, doğal dil

The Dolgan language and its speakers

Dolgan is a Northern Siberian Turkic language spoken on the Taimyr Peninsula and in adjacent areas in the extreme north of the Russian Federation. Administratively, the speakers of Dolgan are settled mainly in the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets District of the Krasnoyarsk Territory and in the Anabar National (Dolgan-Evenki) District of the Republic of Sakha. Together with its closest linguistic relative, Sakha (Yakut), Dolgan forms the Northern Siberian group of the Northeastern branch of the Turkic language family. According to the latest Russian census of 2020, 3,757 people speak Dolgan in everyday life (3,642 in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, 80 in the Republic of Sakha, 35 elsewhere in Russia). Notably, the number of Dolgan speakers has almost increased fourfold since the Russian census in 2010, when 1,054 people were said to speak Dolgan. Although this seems to

The ethnonym *Dolgan* is of Tungusic origin, designating one of the clans from which the Dolgan people arose (see below). It literally means ‘people of the middle reaches’ and is composed of the stem *dul-* ‘middle’ and the demonym-forming suffix *-gan*. The Dolgans themselves use this ethnonym rarely; it occurs primarily in official contexts and written language (Däbritz 2022: 7). Instead, the Dolgans call themselves *haka* ~ *hakalar* – undoubtedly cognate to *saxa* used by the Sakha people as self-denomination – and *tia* ~ *tia kihitä* ‘(person of the) forest-tundra’. One group of Dolgans, which lived until the 1930s in the area of what is today Norilsk, called themselves *tägä*, again being of Tungusic origin and simply meaning ‘tribe, clan, people’. See a more detailed discussion of the ethnonyms in Däbritz (2022: 6–7).

The literal meaning of the ethnonym *Dolgan* points to the origin of the Dolgans since the river meant by this denomination is not any river on the Taimyr Peninsula but the Lena River in Eastern Siberia. It can be assumed that the Dolgan and Sakha (Yakut) ancestors had their homeland in Southern Siberia, from which they moved northeastwards during the 13th and 16th centuries. Within this period, they had intensive contact with Mongolic-speaking people, visible in a broad layer of Mongolic code copies in both Dolgan and Sakha. In the first half of the 17th century, Russian colonists reached the Lena basin, from which both Sakha/Dolgan and Tungusic-speaking Evenki people fled northwestwards. Although no solid historiographic sources are available for this period, it seems reasonable to assume that those people developed a fair amount of bilingualism, or even trilingualism, during their migration. In the 18th century, both Dolgan/Sakha and Evenki people were listed in tax books on the Taimyr Peninsula, which was not wholly uninhabited then either. There were the Samoyedic-speaking Nganasan, Tundra Enets, and Tundra Nenets, as well as Russian traders called “Tundra Peasants”. The latter had erected a chain of trade bases across the Taimyr Peninsula, which was essential for the Dolgan ethnogenesis. Both Dolgan/Sakha and Evenki people became increasingly engaged in trade, which led to the formation of a social milieu called “Dolgan”, and the ingroup language of this milieu was Sakha with a notable Evenki substrate. Roughly speaking, this variety was the predecessor of today’s Dolgan. Finally, it is worth noting that a significant number of Taimyr Evenks shifted to Dolgan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The ethnogenesis of the Dolgans and the development of the Dolgan language are amply described by Dolgich (1963), Stapert (2013) and Däbritz (2022).

The closest linguistic relative of Dolgan is unsurprisingly Sakha (Yakut), with which it shares many inherited and innovative features. As a tendency, the languages are mutually intelligible, presupposing the speakers’ willingness to understand each other; in older research, Dolgan was even treated as a dialect of Sakha. The most salient feature distinguishing Dolgan from Standard Sakha is, without doubt, the development of word-initial *h-*, e.g. Dolgan *hulus* ‘star’ vs Standard Sakha *sulus* ‘id.’. This development has clear parallels in Northern Evenki dialects, and it seems plausible to account for it as a joint innovation of Northern Evenki and Dolgan. However, it should be noted that the change *s- > h-* is also present in many Sakha dialects, so the picture is more complex and not yet fully understood (see Pakendorf 2008 for a detailed discussion).

Dolgan forms a dialect continuum, which can be divided into Upper/Upriver Dolgan and Lower/Downriver Dolgan. Mutual intelligibility between the dialects is never compromised; as a tendency, the Lower/Downriver dialect is closer to Sakha. Besides these dialects, there is Anabar Dolgan spoken in the Anabar National (Dolgan-Evenki) District of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which can be regarded as a transitional variety between Dolgan and Sakha.

From the very beginning of its existence, Dolgan has had close contact with Evenki, which has led to an ample layer of Evenki code copies in Dolgan. Dolgan-Evenki bilingualism or even Dolgan-Evenki-Russian trilingualism was frequent on the Taimyr Peninsula before Soviet times. In contrast, there was only superficial language contact between Samoyeds and Dolgans, which can be explained by their different periods of nomadising, leading to the fact that they hardly met each other in the vast tundra. Only in early Soviet times, Dolgan-Nganasan bilingualism became relevant to some extent, but only in specific settlements, mainly Voločanka and Ust’-Avam. Nowadays, indigenous bilingualism has lost its importance entirely, being replaced by Russian-

Dolgan bilingualism, whereby among younger generations, Russian tends to be the first and more vital language. In the easternmost settlements, also Dolgan-Sakha bilingualism can be observed.

Language documentation, circumstances of the recording. The speaker

From a worldwide perspective, Dolgan is comparatively well documented and described. During Soviet times, the fieldwork of Boris O. Dolgich, Prokopij E. Efremov, Andrej A. Popov and Elizaveta I. Ubrjatova led to the documentation of valuable language material, which is still partly unpublished. Elizaveta I. Ubrjatova additionally compiled the first systematic description of Dolgan, more precisely, of the vanished Norilsk variety. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, foreign scholars became more engaged in the documentation and description of Dolgan, most prominently Marek Stachowski, Eugénie Stapert, and Florian Siegl. Starting in 2016, the long-term research project INEL (Grammars, Corpora and Language Technology for Northern Eurasian Languages)¹ collected archived Dolgan language materials and transferred them into a digital corpus. In 2019, the first version of the corpus was published, followed by the second version in 2022. The corpus is accessible under open-access conditions² and is described in Däbritz (2020a, 2020b). The following annotated text is the first part of the transcription *SoLK_2008_Life_nar*, which is included in the corpus.

It was recorded by Eugénie Stapert on her first fieldwork trip to the Taimyr Peninsula in 2008. There, she spent roughly one month in Voločanka, which is located approximately 350 kilometres northeast of Dudinka, the capital of the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets District (coordinates 94.539288, 70.976515; see also Map 1 above). Voločanka is a mixed Dolgan-Nganasan settlement. In 2008, Stapert found only a few proficient speakers of Dolgan, all over 60 years old. Instead, almost all ethnic Dolgans were dominant in Russian. This sociolinguistic situation can be partly explained by the geographical closeness of Dudinka and Voločanka, the latter being the administrative centre of the Taimyr Peninsula during Soviet times. See Stapert (2013: 14–20) for a concise description of the fieldwork circumstances.

The speaker is Larisa Konstantinova Sotnikova, a woman born in 1946 in Voločanka who attended primary school education there. After school, her life led her to various locations on the Taimyr Peninsula and beyond (Chatanga, Dudinka, Igarka) before she returned to Voločanka, where she worked as an educator in kindergarten. She was fluently proficient in Dolgan, although spontaneous code-switches (e.g. sentence (10)) and ad hoc insertions of Russian lexical material (e.g. sentences (4), (12)) can be observed. Russian code copies are not consistently adapted to the Dolgan phonotactics in her variety of Dolgan, e.g. *škuola* ‘school’ in sentence (2), where a word-initial consonant cluster would be expected to be resolved, as, e.g. *uskuola*; in turn, the first-syllable diphthong reflects Russian stress, as usual in Russian copies (Däbritz 2022: Ch. 11.2.2).

Annotated text with audio

LINK: [Dolgan Audio](#)

The annotated text is presented as follows. The first line shows the utterance written in a broad Turcological transcription, being phonetic rather than phonological, e.g. *toyo* ‘why’ for /togo/ in (15). Moreover, the text is broken in words and morphemes, for which the interlinear glossing is provided in the second line. Generally, the transcription follows the principles developed by Johanson (2021). The representation of speech disfluencies, extra-linguistic sounds etc., follows Arkhipov’s (2020) principles, developed for the INEL project. The interlinear glossing again follows Johanson (2021), but is augmented by some items from the *Leipzig Glossing Rules* and Däbritz (2022). Finally, the third line provides a free English translation.

¹ <https://www.slm.uni-hamburg.de/inel/projekt.html>, last access: 2023-01-17.

² <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.11165>.

1. *Min törö:büt-üm Valačanka-ya, t̄:h̄čča togus*
 1SG be.born-POST-1SG Voločanka-DAT/LOC thousand.R nine
h̄:s tüörd-üön alt-is j̄l-ga, h̄:r̄bä hätt-is-tä:χ
 hundred four-ten six-ORD year-DAT/LOC twenty seven-ORD-PROPR
ap̄rel-ga.
 april.R-DAT/LOC
 ‘I was born in Voločanka in the year 1946, the twenty-seventh of April.’
2. *Hättä j̄l-la:k bar-bit-īm škuola-ya ämiä h-ol*
 seven year-PROPR go-POST-1SG school.R-DAT/LOC also EMPH-that
Valačanka-ya.
 Voločanka-DAT/LOC
 ‘With seven years, I entered school also in Voločanka.’
3. *Valačanka-but oččogo ä-t-ä, Duđinskij rayon*
 Voločanka-POSS1PL then COP-TERM-3SG Dudinka.ADJ.R district.R
buol-taχ, Ust-Avamskij rayon ä-t-ä.
 be(come)-NEG.POST.3SG Ust-Avam.ADJ.R district.R COP-TERM-3SG
 ‘Our Voločanka was then, it was not the Dudinka district, it was the Ust-Avam district.’
4. *Načevoy k̄la:s-ka maŋnay il-li-lar.*
 zero.ADJ.R class.R-DAT/LOC at.first take-TERM-3PL
 ‘They took [me] first in the preparatory class.’
5. *Oččoyo, öjd-ü:bün, amattan bi:r da nu:čča*
 then remember-INTRA-1SG at.all one EMPH Russian
t̄l-in bil-bät ä-ti-m.
 word-POSS3SG.ACC know-NEG.INTRA COP-TERM-1SG
 ‘Back then, I remember, I did not know a single word of Russian at all.’

6. *Sa:đik-ka* *hiłji-bat* *ä-ti-m,* *srazu*
 kindergarten.R-DAT/LOC walk-NEG.INTRA COP-TERM-1SG immediately.R
škuola-ya *bar-bit-ım.*
 school.R-DAT/LOC go-POST-1SG
 ‘I was not going to kindergarten, I immediately entered school.’
7. *Öjd-ü:-bün,* *mañnaygi* *učitel-im,* *Anna Grigořyevna,*
 remember-INTRA-1SG first teacher.R-POSS1SG Anna Grigorevna
köllör-ör *řisunak-tar-ı* *daska:-ya,* *onton d-i:r:*
 show-INTRA.3SG drawing.R-PL-ACC blackboard.R-DAT/LOC and say-INTRA.3SG
 ‘I remember, my first teacher, Anna Grigorevna, is showing drawings on the blackboard, and she says:’
8. [in Russian]: *“Eta vědro.”* <Это ведро.>
 “‘This is a bucket.’”
9. *A* *min* *tur-a* *äkkirä:-ti-m,* *i* *d-i:-bin:*
 but.R 1SG stand(.up)-A.CONV jump-TERM-1SG and.R say-INTRA-1SG
“Holur, ogo-lor, holur!”
 bucket child-PL bucket
 ‘But I jumped up, and I say: “A bucket, guys, a bucket!”’
10. [in Russian]: *“Holur” pa-nařemu vědro že.* <Һолуур» по-нашemu ведро же.>
 “‘Holuur’ means ‘bucket’ for us, after all.’
11. *Oččo* *buolla* *tug-u* *da* *bil-bät* *ä-ti-m.*
 so.much EMPH what-ACC INDEF know-NEG.INTRA COP-TERM-1SG
 ‘So much, I did not know anything.’
12. *Onton* ((COUGH)) *bihigi* *(ät-)* *(huru-)* *huru-ll-ar* *ä-ti-bit*
 then 1PL say- write- write-PASS-INTRA COP-TERM-1PL
Saxa *natsanalnas-pit.*
 Sakha nationality.R-POSS1PL
 ‘Then we were registered as Sakha (Yakuts), our nationality.’

13. *Onton, etat sam, bäh-is kila:s-piti-gar tiy-bip-piti-gär*
 then FILLER.R five-ORD class.R-POSS1PL-DAT/LOC reach-POST-POSS1PL-DAT/LOC
dalgan buol-lu-but.
 Dolgan be(come)-TERM-1PL
 ‘Then, whatchamacallit, when we reached the fifth class, we became Dolgans.’
14. *O-nu iyip-pip-pit učitel’-biti-ttan:*
 that-ACC ask-POST-1PL teacher.R-POSS1PL-ABL
 ‘There we asked our teacher.’
15. *Toyo bihigi Dalgan buol-bup-put-uj, bihigi že Saḡa*
 why 1PL Dolgan be(come)-POST-1PL-Q 1PL EMPH.R Sakha
ä-ti-bit?
 COP-TERM-1PL
 ‘“Why did we become Dolgans, we were Sakha [people], though?”’
16. [Linguist asks:] *A ḡahan, ḡahan?*
 but.R when when
 ‘And when, when [was it]?’
17. *Ta:k iti ä-t-ä gd’e=ta biäh-uon üh-üs-tä:ḡ*
 so.R that COP-TERM-3SG somewhere.R five-ten three-ORD-PROPR
ḡil-lar-ga bihila:k.
 year-PL-DAT/LOC apparently
 ‘Well, that was probably in about the year [19]53.’
18. *fä ontan eta, urut ab’ižatsa-la:-čči ä-ti-bit,*
 well then this.R earlier be.offended.R-VBZ-HAB COP-TERM-1PL
küyḡan-a:čči ä-ti-bit.
 get.angry-HAB COP-TERM-1PL
 ‘Well, and then, earlier, we used to be offended, to become angry.’
19. *Nu:čča oyo-lor-o haḡar-daḡ-tariḡa "saḡa barana,*
 Russian child-PL-POSS3SG say-HYP-3PL Sakha INTRJ

saxa badana" bihigi-ni abar-d-a:čči ä-ti-lärä.
 Sakha INTRJ 1PL-ACC be.annoyed-CAUS-HAB COP-TERM-3PL

‘When the Russian children said "Sakha barana, Sakha badana", they used to tease us.’

20. *Učitel'-tan iyit-a-bit: "Toyo ol korduk buol-bup-put-uj*
 teacher-ABL ask-INTRA-1PL why that similar be(come)-POST-1PL-Q
Dalga:t-tar?"
 Dolgan-PL

‘We ask the teacher: "Why did we become Dolgans like that?"’

21. *Onno d-i:r buo: "Saxa, iti Yakut-tar ayay, aha,*
 there say-INTRA.3SG EMPH Sakha that Yakut-PL only aha
Yakut omug-a.
 Yakut people-POSS3SG

‘And she says: "Sakha, that is only the Yakuts, aha, the Yakut people.’

22. *A Dalga:t-tar ähigi patamušta Dalga:n-nar hir-däri-gär*
 and.R Dolgan-PL 2PL because.R Dolgan-PL place-POSS3PL-DAT/LOC
törö:bük-küt, ol ihin Dalga:n buol-uok-kut.
 be.born-POST-2PL that for Dolgan be(come)-PRO-2PL

‘And you are Dolgans because you were born on the earth of the Dolgans; therefore, you become Dolgan.’

23. *Ör-dük dalgažit'el'i", d-i:r nu:čča-li:, "ör-dük ähigi*
 long-ADV long.liver.R.PL say-INTRA.3SG Russian-SIM long-ADV 2PL
kärgät-tär-git olor-but-tara bu hir-gä".
 family-PL-POSS2PL live-POST-3PL this land-DAT/LOC

‘So for a long time, long-livers", she says in Russian, "for a long time, your ancestors were living on this land"’

24. *fä onton alta uon üh-üs jil-ga agis k'la:h-ï*
 well then six ten three-ORD year-DAT/LOC eight class.R-ACC
büt-tü-m, t'exn'ikum-ŋa ki:r-di-m Dud'inka-ya.
 finish-TERM-1SG technical.college.R-DAT/LOC enter-TERM-1SG Dudinka-DAT/LOC

‘Well then, in the year of [19]63, I finished the eighth grade and entered the technical school in Dudinka.’

25. *Maŋnay bar-bit-im kimiä-kä, uč'ital-ga, Igarka-ya.*
 at.first go-POST-1SG who-DAT/LOC teacher.R-DAT/LOC Igarka-DAT/LOC
 'First, I went to what-is-it-called, to [study for] teacher, in Igarka.'
26. *Hoyotoχ kī:s ä-ti-m buo kărgät-tăr-bä-r,*
 single girl COP-TERM-1SG EMPH parents-PL-POSS1SG-DAT/LOC
kʰahan da ginilăr-tăn araχ-pataχ ä-ti-m.
 when INDEF 3PL-ABL separate-NEG.POST COP-TERM-1SG
 'I was the single daughter of my parents, I had never been separated from them before.'
27. *Ekzam'en zdavay-da:-ti-m.*
 exam.R give.R-VBZ-TERM-1SG
 'I passed the exam.'
28. *Ol gïn-an baran taluon biär-di-lär, (or-)*
 that make-CONV after coupon.R give-TERM-3PL
orum-mutu-gar bari-ka:n-in biär-di-lär, taluon
 bed-POSS1PL-DAT/LOC all-INTS-POSS3SG.ACC give-TERM-3PL coupon.R
as-piti-gar biär-bit-tără.
 food-POSS1PL-DAT/LOC give-POST-3PL
 'Then they gave [me] coupons, they gave everything for our bed, they gave coupons for our food.'
29. *A min dogot-tor-um bäsälä-rg-i:l-lär kiähä.*
 and.R 1SG friend-PL-POSS1SG funny.R-VBZ-INTRA-3PL in.the.evening
 'And my friends have fun in the evening.'
30. *A min, kărgät-tăr-bin čünküj-äm-min, huorgan-inan*
 and.R 1SG parents-PL-POSS1SG.ACC be.sad-CONV-1SG blanket-INSTR
hap-t-an baran it-i: hit-a:čči-bin.
 cover-REFL-CONV after cry-A.CONV LIE.AUX-HAB-1SG
 'But I was missing my parents, covering myself with a blanket and crying.'
31. *Otton kör-ö-bün, iti, büp-püt (kim-när-i) kim-närä ä-t-ä*
 then see-INTRA-1SG that stop-POST who-PL-ACC who-POSS3PL COP-TERM-3SG

bank'et-tara, gul'ay oŋor-but ä-ti-lärä.

banquet.R-POSS3PL walk.R make-POST COP-TERM-3PL

'Once I look, ehm, their thing, their banquet had already ended, and they went out to party.'

32. *O-lor bar-al-lar parahuok-kʰa, Ha:taŋga, allara:gi*
 that-PL go-INTRA-3PL steamer.R-DAT/LOC Chatanga downriver-ADJ
kirgüt-tar, Dud'inika kirgüt-tar-ın gitta, ü:hä:gi-lär-i gitta.
 girl-PL Dudinka girl-PL-POSS3SG.ACC with upriver-ADJ-PL-ACC with

'They go to the steamer, the Chatanga lowland girls with the Dudinka girls, those from upriver.'

33. *Min ginilär-i gitta ata:r-s-an bar-dī-m, kʰarčī-ta*
 1SG 3PL-ACC with accompany-COOP-CONV go-TERM-1SG money-POSS3SG
da huoχ, kim, iti dokum'enta-ta, paspar-a da
 EMPH NEG.EX who that document.R-POSS3SG passport.R-POSS3SG EMPH
huoχ bar-dī-m.

NEG.EX go-TERM-1SG

'I began to accompany them, I went without any money, without what-is-it-called, I went without documents or passport.'

34. *Ol gin-an baran kömölös-püt buol-an baran utuy-an*
 that make-CONV after help-POST be(come)-CONV after sleep-CONV
kʰa:l-bīt-īm.

STAY.AUX-POST-1SG

'After that, pretending that I was helping, I fell asleep.'

35. *A ginilär bäsälä-rg-i:l-lär kim-nä:g-i gitta, matros-tar-ī*
 but.R 3PL funny.R-VBZ-INTRA-3PL who-PROPR-ACC with seaman.R-PL-ACC
gitta gul'ay-d-ī:l-lar.
 with walk.R-VBZ-INTRA-3PL

'And they are having fun and go out with those, ehm, seamen.'

36. *Dud'inika-ya (huga-) hugah-ī:l-larin attī-ti-gar*
 Dudinka-DAT/LOC close come.closer-INTRA-POSS3PL.ACC side-POSS3SG-DAT/LOC

- ayay, jüllä:-ti-lär min utuy-a hit-ar-bin.
 only notice-TERM-3PL 1SG sleep-A.CONV lie-INTRA-POSS1SG.ACC
 ‘Only when approaching Dudinka they noticed that I was sleeping.’
37. Ara; hütär-iäx-tärä diä-n.
 oh.dear lose-PRO-3PL say-CONV
 ‘Oh dear, thinking they would lose [me].’
38. A min tuoy-a da, bil’et-a da, tuoy-a
 and.R 1SG what-POSS3SG INDEF ticket.R-POSS3SG EMPH what-POSS3SG
 da, huox-pun.
 INDEF NEG.EX-1SG
 ‘And I had nothing, no ticket, nothing.’
39. jä onno (diä-t-) (käpsät-ti-lär) ((CHATTER IN RUSSIAN)).
 well there say-TERM chat-TERM-3PL
 ‘Well, there they say, chat (...).’
40. jä (on-) ulaḡan dogot-tor-um käpsät-ti-lär, hann-i-la:k-tar-ï
 well that big friend-PL-POSS1SG chat-TERM-3PL recently-PROPR-PL-ACC
 gïtta, d-i:l-lär:
 with say-INTRA-3PL
 ‘Well, my big friends chatted, with the ones from recently, they say.’
41. “Bu oyo tuoy-a da huox mi:m-mit-ä (ḡan-) ḡajdaḡ
 this child what-POSS3SG INDEF NEG.EX mount-POST-3SG how
 ämä i:t-iḡ kïtil-ga, hä; Dud’in-ka-ya.
 INDEF release-IMP.2PL shore-DAT/LOC AFF Dudinka-DAT/LOC
 ‘“This child has boarded without everything, let her somehow to the shore, in Dudinka”.’
42. jä ol tūs-tū-m ginilär-i gïtta.
 well that go.down-TERM-1SG 3PL-ACC with
 ‘Well, then I descended together with them.’

43. *Ol tüh-än baram-mîn, kak jejo zvali, Miḡaylava Maṛiya bila.*
 that go.down-CONV after-1SG (RUSSIAN CODE-SWITCH)
 ‘After descending, what was she called, Maria Michaylova it was.’
44. *Kärgät-tär-ä Dudinka-ya jiä-län-är ä-ti-lär,*
 parents-PL-POSS3SG Dudinka-DAT/LOC house-VBZ-INTRA COP-TERM-3PL
onno il-t-ä.
 there bring-POST-3SG
 ‘Her parents had a house in Dudinka, she brought [me] there.’
45. *Ol ilf-än baran, kim, bilet (biär-), ä:, kærçi*
 that bring-CONV after who ticket.R give eh money
biär-d-ä.
 give-TERM-3SG
 ‘And after taking me there, she gave me a ticket, eh, money.’
46. *Harsijji-tin min puor-ka bar-an baram-mîn*
 next.morning-POSS3SG.ACC 1SG port.R-DAT/LOC go-CONV after-1SG
olor-o-bun.
 sit.down-INTRA-1SG
 ‘The next morning, I go to the port and sit down.’
47. *Jiä-bä-r köt-örü kür-ü:bün buo.*
 house-POSS1SG-DAT/LOC fly-CONV.PURP escape-INTRA-1SG EMPH
 ‘To fly home, I escape.’
48. *Jä ol olor-o-bun, ah-ir kærçi-ta huox-pun.*
 well that sit-INTRA-1SG eat-INTRA money-POSS3SG NEG.EX-1SG
 ‘Well, I sit there, I have no money for food.’
49. *Kak raz iti bihiättärä spartsmet-tar-bit käl-bit*
 how.R time.R that our.PL sportsman.R-PL-POSS1PL come-POST
ä-ti-lärä.
 COP-TERM-3PL
 ‘Just our ehm, sportsmen had arrived.’

50. (O-) o-lor käl-äl-lär, i miniä-χä kxarči ägäl-äl-lär.
that that-PL come-INTRA-3PL and.R 1SG-DAT/LOC money bring-INTRA-3PL
'They come and bring me money.'
51. I bihigi-ni d-i:l-lär buo: "Ani köt-üök-küt".
and.R 1PL-ACC say-INTRA-3PL EMPH now fly-PRO-2PL
'And they said to us: "You will fly now".'
52. Ol (utuy-) utuy-an kxɑ:l-bit-īm, ah-iaχ-pin
that sleep sleep-CONV STAY.AUX-POST-1SG eat-PRO-POSS1SG.ACC
bagar-a-bin.
want-INTRA-1SG
'I fell asleep, I want to eat.'
53. Ol utuy-an kɑ:s-pip-pä-r kör-ö-bün.
that sleep-CONV THROW.AUX-POST-POSS1SG-DAT/LOC look-INTRA-1SG
'So, when waking up, I look.'
54. "Kxanna ba:r-ij" munna d-i:l-lär, "Papo:va Larisa Kanstantinavna,
where EX-Q here say-INTRA-3PL Larisa Konstantinovna Popova
onno Valačanka-ttan oyo?"
there Voločanka-ABL child
'They say: "Where is Larisa Konstantinovna Popova, that child from Voločanka?"'
55. Kör-ö-bün kim ((COUGH)) minigi-n körd-ü:l-lär äbit,
see-INTRA-1SG who 1SG-ACC search-INTRA-3PL EVID
hütär-bit-tär.
lose-POST-3PL
'I see [that] they are looking for me, they lost me.'
56. Oruoziš biär-bit-tär, körd-ü:l-lär.
tracing.R give-POST-3PL search-INTRA-3PL
'They had started an investigation, they are searching.'
57. Igarka-ttan bil-äl-lär, što go:rad-i bil-bäp-pin,
Igarka-ABL know-INTRA-3PL that.R town.R-ACC know-NEG.INTRA-1SG

tug-u da, Duđinka-ya hañar-bit-tar.
 what-ACC INDEF Dudinka-DAT/LOC speak-POST-3PL

‘From Igarka, they know that I don’t know the city, nothing, and they told it to Dudinka.’

58. *I kak raz ol, kim, (garano) tojon-o Bo:ġin,*
 and.R how.R time.R that who lord-POSS3SG Bolin
ilir-tä huox ä-t-ä frantavik, on-tu-ŋ
 hand-POSS3SG NEG.EX COP-TERM-3SG warfighter.R that-POSS3SG-POSS2SG
(körd-) käl-bit mašina-nnan körd-ü.
 search come-POST car.R-INSTR search-A.CONV

‘And just at that time, ehm, the chief Bolin, a front-line soldier missing one hand, came searching, having come by car.’

59. *I (min-), i minigi-n d-i:l-lär: “Bu utuy-a*
 and.R 1SG and.R 1SG-ACC say-INTRA-3PL this sleep-A.CONV
hit-ar, uhugun-nar”.
 LIE.AUX-INTRA.3SG wake.up-CAUS.IMP.2SG

‘And I, they say to me: “Here she’s sleeping, wake her up”.’

60. *“Da, da.”*
 yes.R yes.R
 “‘Yes, yes”’.

61. *“Bar-iaχ”, d-i:r.*
 go-IMP.1DU say-INTRA.3SG
 “‘Let us two go”, he said.’

62. *Il-t-ä töttörü guorak-kxa.*
 bring-POST-3SG back town.R-DAT/LOC
 ‘And he brought [me] back to the city.’

63. *Ol iġ-än baran “aha:-bit-in?”.³*
 that bring-CONV after eat-POST-2SG
 ‘After having taken me [he asked]: “Have you eaten?”’

³ The speaker says indeed *-in* instead of expected *-iŋ*.

64. *Ha:t-a-biñ, “hä=ä:” d-i:-bin.*
 be.ashamed-INTRA-1SG yes say-INTRA-1SG
 ‘I am embarrassed and say: “Yes!”’
65. *Kör-ör äni bäyä-tä, jüll-ü:r buo.*
 see-INTRA.3SG apparently self-POSS3SG notice-INTRA.3SG EMPH
 ‘He sees it himself and understands it.’
66. *Kimiä-χä, ol šekretarša-ti-gar zvañit-t-ï:r.*
 who-DAT/LOC that female.secretary.R-POSS3SG-DAT/LOC call.R-VBZ-INTRA.3SG
 ‘He calls the ehm, secretary.’
67. *“Ägäl-iñ munna ikki stakxan kofe-ta, tüört pıražok-ta.”*
 bring-IMP.2PL hither two glass.R coffee-PT four pastry.R-PT
 “‘Bring here two cups of coffee and four pastries.’”
68. *Ägäl-l-ä on-tu-η.*
 bring-TERM-3SG that-POSS3SG-POSS2SG
 ‘And she brought it.’
69. *Onton d-ï:r buo: “Aha:”*
 then say-INTRA.3SG EMPH eat.IMP.2SG
 ‘So then he says: “Eat!”’
70. *Min biäχ ha:t-a-biñ, taχs-an kxal-bit.*
 1SG always.R be.ashamed-INTRA-1SG go.out-CONV STAY.AUX-POST.3SG
 ‘I am still ashamed, then he left.’
71. *Taχsi-bit-iñ känninä, dälbi aha:-χta:-ti-m diä-n*
 go.out-POST-POSS3SG.GEN after enough eat-EMOT-TERM-1SG say-CONV
d-i:-bin.
 say-INTRA-1SG
 ‘After he had left, poor me ate a lot.’
72. *Onton ki:r-d-ä: “Malades, jä, χaytaχ änigi-n*
 then enter-TERM-3SG well.done.R well how 2SG-ACC

gïn-iaχ-pit-ij?

make-PRO-1PL-Q

‘Then he came in: “Well done, well, what are we going to do with you?”

73. *Míliciya-ya biär-iaχ-pit du?*

police.R-DAT/LOC give-PRO-1PL Q

‘Are we going to give [you] to the police?’

74. *Ílí že”, d-i:-d-i: gïn-ar, “munna ki:r-ia-η*

or.R EMPH.R say-A.CONV-say-A.CONV make-INTRA.3SG hither enter-PRO-2SG

oččoyo üörän-ä?”

then learn-A.CONV

‘Or’, he says, “are you coming to study here?”

75. *Min d-i:-bin: “jiä-bä-r bayar-a-bin.”*

1SG say-INTRA-1SG house-POSS1SG-DAT/LOC want-INTRA-1SG

‘I say: “I want [to go] home.”’

76. *“jiä-η kəydiät da kür-üö huoy-a.*

house-POSS2SG whereto INDEF escape-PRO NEG-3SG

‘“Your home is not going to run away.’

77. *A, a to kərgät-tär-gä-r hanar-iaχ-pin*

and.R and.R otherwise.R parents-PL-POSS2SG-DAT/LOC speak-PRO-POSS1SG.ACC

da kä”, d-i:-d-i: gïn-ar, “(kərgät-tär-gi-)

EMPH well say-A.CONV-say-A.CONV make-INTRA.3SG parents-PL-POSS2SG

(vaabš-) naabarost hana:rg-iaχ-tara”.

at.all.R on.contrary.R worry-PRO-3PL

‘And otherwise, I will [have to] tell your parents”, he says, “ehm, your parents will worry”’

78. *Onton ämiä minigi-n diä-t-ä: “Bar-iaχ”.*

then again 1SG-ACC say-TERM-3SG go-IMP.1DU

‘Then again, he said to me: “Let [us two] go”’

Specific characteristics of Dolgan

Sound system

Vowel system

Dolgan exhibits a typical Turkic vowel system, which includes the eight vowels *i, i, u, ü, a, ä, o, ö*. In Russian loanwords, the mid-open *e* also occurs, e.g. in *ekzam'en* 'exam' (27). The inherited vowels differentiate the parameters [±front], [±high] and [±round]. Like Sakha, but unlike most other Turkic languages, Dolgan has retained phonemic vowel length, e.g. *bar-* 'to go' vs *ba:r* 'existing'. Additionally, there are the four diphthongs *ia, iä, uo* and *üö*. The latter three have developed from the Pre-Dolgan-Sakha long vowels **ä:, *o:, *ö:*, and all can be traced back to contractions due to the intervocalic loss of consonants. *iä* exclusively goes back to contractions. Whether the high vowels *i, i, u, ü* have near-high, lax allophones in non-first syllables in Dolgan, as described for other Turkic languages (Johanson 2021: 292–293), cannot be answered at the moment and awaits acoustic-phonetic studies.

Consonant types

The consonant system of Dolgan is moderately complex, including the following 17 consonant phonemes: *p, b, t, d, ʃ, k, g* (plosives), *m, n, ŋ, ŋ* (nasals), *č* (affricate), *s, h* (fricatives), *r* (vibrant), *l* (lateral) and *y* (approximant). The number of affricates and fricatives is relatively low compared to other Turkic languages. The plosives show a voice opposition, namely voiceless *p, t* and *k* versus voiced *b, d* and *g*. Functionally, the fricatives *s* and *h* behave likewise, though *h* is voiceless from a synchronic point of view. Note that there is no voiceless counterpart to the palatal plosive *ʃ*, nor a voiced counterpart to the affricate *č*, so these two consonants can also be regarded as functional counterparts. The velar plosives *k* and *g* vary in their phonetic realisation in an allophonic manner. Following the back-low vowels *a* and *o*, they tend to be realised as [kʰ] ~ [χ] ~ [k̠] and [g] ~ [ɣ], respectively. Note that also idiolectal variation plays a role; the speaker of the text above strongly prefers [kʰ] ~ [χ] and [ɣ], e.g. *hoɣotoχ* 'single' (26). Note that this variation is not marked in Dolgan orthography.

Phonotactics and morphonology

The most common syllable type in Dolgan is (C)V(C), so the nucleus is, without exception, vocalic. The onset and the coda can be filled with a consonant but need not be. Consonant clusters are strictly prohibited in the syllable onset; in copied words, consonant clusters tend to be dissolved by inserting a prothetic or epenthetic vowel (*k'ila:s* 'class' ← Russian *klass* 'id.' (4)). In the case of fully bilingual speakers, as in the recording displayed above, this pattern varies to some extent, e.g. *stakʰan* 'glass' ← Russian *stakan* 'id.' (67). In the syllable coda, the consonant clusters *-rt* and *-lt* are allowed, but only in the word-final position. When these consonant clusters occur in word-internal position, their second component is omitted, e.g. in *puor-ka* 'port.R-DAT/LOC' (46), which is composed of *puort* (← Russian *port*) and the dative-locative case suffix {+GA⁴}.

Like almost all Turkic languages, Dolgan has progressive vowel harmony, active in both stems and suffixes. The harmony is both palatal-velar and labial-illabial, so suffixes containing a vowel exhibit a four-fold alternation of low {A⁴} and high {I⁴}, respectively. Palatal-velar harmony acts consistently, so either velar or palatal vowels occur in a word. Labial-illabial harmony always works in the case of low vowels. Still, it is not entirely active in the case of high vowels. After *u* and *ü*, the {A⁴} alternation is reduced to an {A²} alternation, e.g. *huru-ll-ar* (write-PASS-INTRA) 'be(ing) written' instead of **hurullor* (12) and *hü:rbä* 'twenty' instead of **hü:rbö* (1). The diphthongs also participate in vowel harmony and behave like high vowels, so their first component is decisive. Consequently, after *uo* and *üö*, the {A⁴} alternation is again reduced to an {A²} alternation, e.g. *huorgan-inan* (blanket-INSTR) instead of **huorgan-inon* (30).

As for the consonants, the plosives *p* and *k ~ kʰ ~ χ* are voiced in intervocalic position, e.g. *tuoy-a* (what-POSS3SG) ← *tuox* 'what' (38). A similar process under the same condition is debuccalisation

of $s > h$, e.g. *biähuon* ‘fifty’ ← *biäs* ‘five’ + *uon* ‘ten’ (17). At morpheme boundaries, Dolgan exhibits many progressive and regressive consonant assimilations, which are more manifold than in other Turkic languages outside the Northeastern branch. As a case in point, the plural marker {+DA⁴r} has not fewer than 16 allomorphs since the initial consonant can be *l* (after vowels and *l*), *t* (after voiceless consonants), *d* (after voiced non-nasal consonants) and *n* (after nasal consonants), e.g. *ogo-lor* (child-PL) (9), *Yakut-tar* (Yakut-PL) (21), *Dalga:n-nar* (Dolgan-PL) (22).

Morphology

Nominal morphology

The singular is unmarked, and the plural marker is {+DA⁴r}. There are a few irregularities in plural marking, which can historically be explained by code copying from Mongolic. Many stems that end with *-n* and *-r* either show the expected plural suffix {+nA⁴r} and {+dA⁴r}, respectively, or both the stem-final and the suffix-initial consonant turn into *t*, e.g. *dogot-tor-um* (friend-PL-POSS1SG) ← *dogor* ‘friend’ (29). There are no strict rules for this assimilation, and there is a lot of variation even in the speech of an individual speaker within one and the same sentence, e.g. *dalga:t-tar* vs *dalga:n-nar* (Dolgan-PL) (22). This pattern is not restricted to inherited words and old copies from Mongolic, but also very young copies from Russian exhibit it, e.g. *spartsmet-tar-bit* (sportsman-PL-POSS1PL) ← *spartsmen* ‘sportsman’ ⇐ Russian *sportsmen* ‘id.’ (49). In this context, the peculiar plural form *kirgüt-tar* (girl-PL) ← *kis* ‘girl’ (32) is worth comment. It is diachronically a suppletive plural form since the plural stem goes back to **kirkün* ‘female slave; concubine; maidservant’ (ĖSTYa VI 2000: 238–239), again showing the assimilation described above. Finally, the interrogative pronoun *kim* ‘who’ has the expected plural form *kim-när* (who-PL) but also the unexpected form *kim-nä:χ*, whereby the latter part must be analysed as the propriative suffix {+DA⁴K} from a synchronic point of view.

The case system includes eight cases, where the merger of the dative and locative cases is notable from a functional point of view, e.g. *Dud’inka-ya* (Dudinka-DAT/LOC) ‘to Dudinka’ (36) vs ‘in Dudinka’ (24). Formally, the dative-locative case suffix {+GA⁴} is the successor of the CT dative case suffix *{+KA}, whereas the CT locative case suffix, *{+DA}, is reanalysed as the partitive case suffix, {+DA⁴}, in Dolgan. Apart from the exceptions mentioned, case and number inflexion are regular and perfectly agglutinative.

For possession, there are some fused forms, most prominently the third-person genitive/accusative form {+(t)I⁴n}, e.g. *til-in* (word-POSS3SG.ACC) (5). In the context of nominal possessive forms, the Dolgan relational nouns deserve a short mention. As typical for both Turkic and Siberian languages, Dolgan can express spatial relationships not only with case suffixes and postpositions but also with so-called relational nouns like *ilin* ‘front’ or *ürüt* ‘surface, upper part’. They stand between lexical nouns and postpositions but behave morphologically like the former since they form regular noun phrases with the noun they are combined with, e.g. *jä ürd-ü-gär* (house surface-POSS3SG-DAT/LOC) ‘on top of the house’. Many relational nouns have unstable stems, which exhibit vowel syncope or metathesis when inflected, e.g. in the example just named, *ürd-* ← *ürüt*. The form *ürd-ü-gär* is expected from the morphonological rules of Dolgan, but there are also forms like *att-ti-gar* (side-POSS3SG-DAT/LOC) ‘beneath X’ (36) instead of morphonologically expected **att-i-gar* ← *atin* ‘other, *side⁴’. Seemingly, the oblique third-person singular forms like *att-i* (side-POSS3SG) are reanalysed in Dolgan as the lexicon form. This phenomenon is a good indicator to distinguish Dolgan from Sakha; see Stapert (2013: 176–188) and Däbritz (2022: Ch. 3.1.3) for more detailed discussion.

Adjectives behave almost entirely like nouns from a morphological point of view, but they are only inflected when the head of a noun phrase. As an adjunct, they are never inflected; in other words, there is no agreement within the noun phrase. Adjectives can be primary lexical items or formed

⁴ The meaning ‘side’ of the bare noun is synchronically not attested in Dolgan, but can be inferred from a comparative point of view and the inflected forms.

by derivational suffixes. From a comparative point of view, it is notable that Dolgan – like other Northeastern Turkic languages – does not have a dedicated caritive suffix but makes use of the construction ⟨nominal-POSS3SG NEG.EX⟩, e.g. *kʷarči-ta huok* ⟨money-POSS3SG NEG.EX⟩ ‘without money’ (33).

The pronominal system of Dolgan shows many common Turkic traits but also some peculiarities. Like Sakha, the third-person personal pronouns are not homonymous to the distal demonstrative *ol* but are *gini* and *ginilär* (35), which are cognate to the reflexive pronouns in other branches of Turkic, e.g. Turkish *kändi* (Johanson 2021: 520). The Dolgan reflexive and emphatic pronoun is *bäyä-*, which is a Mongolic copy, cf. Khalkha Mongolian *bijə*. In Dolgan, the pronoun does not appear as a bare stem but is always inflected with possessive suffixes cross-referring its antecedent, e.g. *Kör-ör äni bäyä-tä* ⟨see-INTRA.3SG apparently self-POSS3SG⟩ ‘he himself sees it, apparently’ (65). Furthermore, reduplicated *bäyä bäyä* is used as a reciprocal pronoun in Dolgan. Following a Taimyr pattern with parallels in the Samoyedic languages Nganasan and Enets, reciprocity can also be expressed by the reduplicated noun *dogor* ‘friend’, e.g. *dogor dogor höbülä-s-ti-bit* ⟨friend friend agree-RECP-TERM-1PL⟩ ‘we agreed with each other’ (Däbritz 2022: 80–81).

Verbal morphology

The Dolgan verb is a complex domain in which inherited Turkic features are interwoven with Mongolic substrate and areal Siberian components. Dolgan verbs can be clustered into three groups according to their stem-final vowel and their behaviour when suffixed.

1. Verbs ending with a consonant. This group is most regular from a morphological point of view. Apart from the predictable morphonological processes, both the stem and the attached suffixes remain unaltered, e.g. *iyit-a-bit* ⟨ask-INTRA-1PL⟩ ‘we ask’ ← *iyit-* ‘to ask’ (20), *biär-di-lär* ⟨give-TERM-3PL⟩ ‘they gave’ ← *biär-* ‘to give’ (28).

2. Verbs ending with the approximant *y*. This group behaves like the first group regarding inflexion, e.g. *utuy-a* ⟨sleep-A.CONV⟩ ‘sleeping’ ← *utuy-* ‘to sleep’ (36). In contrast, when consonant-initial derivational suffixes are added, the stem-final *-y* is deleted, e.g. *a:n ari-lli-bit-a* ⟨door open-MID-POST-3SG⟩ ‘the door opened’ ← *ariy-* ‘to open’ (Däbritz 2022: 533).

3. Verbs ending with a long low vowel (*a:*, *ä:*, *o:*, *ö:*) or diphthong, whereby only *diä-* ‘to say’ and *hiä-* ‘to eat’ exhibit the latter. Depending on the dominance of the suffix added, the stem-final vowel and diphthong can be deleted but need not, e.g. *kür-ür-bün* ⟨escape-INTRA-1SG⟩ ‘I escape’ ← *kürä:-* ‘to escape’ (47), but *kürä:-bit* ⟨escape-POST.3SG⟩ ‘X escaped’ or *kürä:-čči* ⟨escape-HAB⟩ ‘X (usually) escapes’. See Károly (2009) for similar and transferable processes in Sakha.

Grammatical categories expressed by the Dolgan verb are person, number, tense-aspect, mood, and evidentiality. Tense and aspect cannot be separated from each other, as usual in Turkic. Apart from the common intraterminal, terminal and postterminal forms, two Dolgan tense-aspect items deserve a closer mention. First, the very frequent habitual $\{-(A^4):ččI^4\}$ is a Mongolic code copy present only in Dolgan and Sakha. Following Stapert (2013: Ch. 6), the form is more frequent in Dolgan than in Sakha and exhibits both formal and functional differences. As for the latter, the most peculiar feature is that the item is used to express habitual actions, e.g. *abar-d-a:čči ä-ti-lärä* ⟨be.annoyed-CAUS-HAB COP-TERM-3PL⟩ ‘they used to tease us’ (19), but it can also be used as a mere narrative tense-aspect form, e.g. *it-ï: hit-a:čči-bin* ⟨cry-A.CONV LIE.AUX-HAB-1SG⟩ ‘[But I was missing my parents, covering myself with a blanket] and crying’ (30). Second, Dolgan exhibits an abessive tense-aspect form (a.k.a cunctative, participium nondum facti) formed by the A-converb and the particle *ilik* ‘not yet’, which expresses actions not yet performed, e.g. *töl-ü: ilik-pin* ⟨pay-A.CONV not.yet-1SG⟩ ‘I have not paid yet’ (Däbritz 2022: 257).

Dolgan has a typical Siberian rather than a Turkic system of mood and modality, exhibiting thirteen moods, which express epistemic, deontic and desiderative modality, e.g. the hypothetical

mood formed with {-DA⁴K}, *Nu:čča ogo-lor-o haŋar-daχ-tarīna* (Russian child-PL-POSS3SG speak-HYP-3PL) ‘when/if the Russian children say [...]’ (19). Additionally, there are two imperatives and one potential-admonitive mood, expressing illocution rather than true modality. The imperative paradigm surprises inasmuch there are two first-person non-singular forms. Däbritz (2019) could show that the crucial difference between them is number, i.e. dual vs plural, which might be a distinctive feature against Sakha, for which mostly a clusivity distinction is assumed. Cf. *bar-iaχ* (go-IMP.1DU) ‘let us two go’ (61, 78), where the context shows that the speaker addresses exactly two persons – himself and his interlocutor.

Finally, Dolgan has some formal means to express evidentiality, but the system is relatively simple compared to surrounding Siberian languages. There is only one dedicated evidential item, namely the inferential “{-DA⁴K} + AGR.POSS-suffixes”, e.g. *kütüöp-püt buol-lag-iŋ* (son.in.law-POSS1PL be(come)-INFR-2SG) ‘you are apparently our son-in-law’ (Däbritz 2022: 296). Otherwise, some tense-aspect forms express evidentiality concomitantly, most prominently the postterminal {-BI⁴T} with the AGR.PRON-suffixes. Additionally, the third-person singular postterminal form of the copula *ä-* has developed into an evidential particle. The following example can display both phenomena: *Minigi-n körd-ü:l-lär äbit, hütär-bit-tär* (1SG-ACC search-INTRA-3PL EVID lose-POST-3PL) ‘they are searching me apparently, they have lost me apparently’ (55).

Syntactic and pragmatic features

The syntax of Dolgan is dominated by head-final structures, with SVO word order patterns significantly more frequent than in Sakha and other Turkic languages (Stapert 2013: Ch. 7). The core arguments of the clause follow a nominative-accusative pattern, with P-arguments exhibiting threefold differential object marking: nominative vs accusative vs partitive case. Whereas nominative vs accusative is mainly a question of specificity, the partitive case points to actions not completed at the moment of speech. Therefore, partitive-marked objects are closely connected to the imperative mood and prospective tense-aspect, e.g. *Āgäl-iŋ munna ikki stak^xan kofe-ta* (bring-IMP.2PL here two glass coffee-PT) ‘bring two glasses of coffee here’ (67). The recipient in ditransitive clauses is dative-marked, and speech verbs followed by direct speech can function as applicatives, so the recipient is accusative-marked, e.g. *I bihigi-ni d-i:l-lär buo [...]* (and 1PL-ACC say-INTRA-3PL EMPH) ‘and they say to us [...]’ (51). In non-verbal predication, it is worth noting that the existential nominals *ba:r* and *huoχ* have spread to locative predication, e.g. *Ohok ann-i-gar ba:r-bin* (stove bottom-POSS3SG-DAT/LOC EX-1SG) ‘I am under the stove’ (Däbritz 2022: 367). Possessive predication exhibits a companion schema or *with*-possessive, formed with the propriative suffix {+DA⁴:K} in affirmative clauses and with caritive adjectives in negative clauses, e.g. *K^xarči-la:χ-pin* (money-PROPR-1SG) ‘I have money’ and *K^xarči-ta huoχ-pun* (money-POSS3SG NEG.EX-1SG) ‘I have no money’ (48).

Complex clauses are formed by juxtaposition or non-finite verb forms in subordinate clauses. Conjunctions are rarely used and copied from Russian, if applicable. However, conjunctive coordination can be expressed by the demonstrative adverb *onton* ‘then’ ← *on-ton* (that-ABL), which is formed after the Evenki model *taduk* ← *ta-duk* (that-ABL), e.g. [...] *onton d-i:r* (and say-INTRA.3SG) ‘[...] and she says’ (7).

Regarding pragmatics, word order permutations serve information-structural purposes. The clause-initial position is reserved for topics, and the preverbal position is for focussed elements. As an areal feature, second-person and third-person possessive suffixes can serve reference-tracking purposes. Here, the suffixes can be attached to nouns and also to demonstrative pronouns, which yields “double” possessive inflection in the latter case, e.g. *on-tu-ŋ* (that-POSS3SG-POSS2SG) (58, 68). Finally, the interrogative pronoun *kim* ‘who’ and its verbalisation *kimnä:-* serve as placeholder items, used when the speaker is in search of a word and strives to keep the speech going on, e.g. *Maŋnay bar-bit-im kimiä-kä, uč’ital-ga, Igarka-ya* (at.first go-POST-1SG who-DAT/LOC teacher-DAT/LOC Igarka-DAT/LOC) ‘First, I went to what-is-it-called, to [study for] teacher, in Igarka’ (25).

Lexicon

The Dolgan core lexicon exhibits mostly inherited items such as *karak* ‘eye’, *bir* ‘one’ or *hiä* ‘to eat’. Besides the Turkic items, there are three important layers of copied words: Mongolic, Evenki and Russian. The Mongolic copies are mostly shared with Sakha because they were copied in Pre-Dolgan-Sakha times. Some belong to the core lexicon (*kärgän* ‘family, parents’, *dogor* ‘friend’), whereas others are connected with administration or social structure (*toyon* ‘master; chief’, *ülä* ‘work’). The Evenki copies are frequently a distinctive feature of Dolgan against Sakha. Semantically, they are often connected with reindeer-herding and the way of life of the semi-nomadic Evenki, e.g. *ugučak* ‘riding reindeer’, *gädärä*: ‘leather scraper’ or *ma:bit* ~ *ma:mit* ‘lasso’. Additionally, the Dolgan system of kinship was restructured following an Evenki model. As a case in point, all younger siblings are called *balis* in Dolgan – similarly to Evenki *nəkun* – whereas Sakha *balis* designates only younger sisters but not younger brothers (Stapert 2013: 136–144; Däbritz 2022: Ch. 11.1.2). The Russian copies can be categorised in various layers, which differ both formally and semantically. Older copies are, as a rule, phonetically integrated into the Dolgan sound system (*kiliäp* ‘bread’ ← *chleb*, *tī:hīčča* ‘1000’ ← *tysjača*, *löčüök* ‘deacon’ ← *d’jačok*). In contrast, younger copies show more variation (*uskuola* ~ *škuola* ~ *škola* ‘school’ ← *škola*). In the latter case, code copies often cannot be clearly distinguished from spontaneous code-switches, e.g. *srazu* ‘immediately’ in the sentence (6). Semantically, older Russian copies are connected with trade, administration and Christian religion, whereas younger Russian copies mainly designate cultural realia of the 20th and 21st centuries. Whereas Mongolic and Tungusic copies, as well as Russian nominals, are morphologically not integrated into Dolgan, Russian copied verbs are suffixed without exception with the verbaliser {-LA⁴}, e.g. *zvañit-t-ī:r* (call.R-VBZ-INTRA.3SG) (66).

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About the author

Chris Lasse Däbritz, born in Germany, is a research fellow at the Institute of Finno-Ugric/Uralic Studies of the University of Hamburg. He studied Slavic and Finno-Ugric/Uralic linguistics at the universities of Hamburg, Göttingen, and Helsinki. In 2020, he obtained a PhD in General Linguistics, with his thesis devoted to information structural patterns in Northwestern Siberian languages, including Dolgan. In 2022, he published a corpus-based descriptive grammar of Dolgan. Currently, he leads a DFG-funded research project on the typology and information structure of locative and existential predications in languages of the Ob-Yenisei area. His research interests include Siberian languages, linguistic typology, non-verbal predication, and information structure.