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Fourth Conference on the Endangered Languages of East Asia

On(c)e and (for) all

Keynote speakers

Elena Skribnik

Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

Hans Nugteren

Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities
in Lower Saxony

Organizers

Elia Dal Corso

and **Elisabetta Ragagnin**

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Plenary session 1*Uralic languages of Siberia: Expression of singularity and entirety*

Elena Skribnik – Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

In this talk I will give an overview of different linguistic means of expressing the concepts of singularity and entirety in Siberian Uralic languages. All languages under consideration are endangered; many are extinct, though leaving some substrate traces in the languages that supplanted them, like South Siberian Turkic.

Both concepts chosen as topics of the CELEA-2026 conference, units and wholes, are finely nuanced in Uralic languages semantically and formally on several levels – lexical, morphological, and syntactical. For instance, the inflectional category of number has three values, including also dual; the plurality concept is extended by “collective duals” (a special treatment of natural pairs, expressed morphosyntactically), and collective plurals, expressed both syntactically and derivationally (often as a result of grammaticalization). Selectives, i.e. forms that single out one member of a group, can also be distinguished along these lines – there are selectives from a pair (as lexical markers and syntactic constructions) and selectives from a group with a larger number of members (as syntactic constructions with possessive suffixes). The picture is completed by singulatives (lexical and derivational means of singling out one unit from a mass).

This overview will also briefly present some other aspects of singularity/entirety concepts in Siberian Uralic and corresponding substrate features in South Siberian Turkic.

Plenary session 2*Innovations in counting in Amdo and beyond*

Hans Nugteren – Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Lower Saxony

After summarizing the differences and similarities between the Turkic and Mongolic numeral systems, the presentation will deal with the innovations in the numerals of the Turkic and Mongolic languages of the Amdo Sprachbund in the Chinese Provinces Qinghai and Gansu (Salar, Western Yugur, Eastern Yugur, Mongghul, Mangghuer, Baoan, Kangjia, and Dongxiang).

This includes the creation of new compound numerals for the tens, borrowing of foreign numerals, and mostly analytical solutions for the specialized numeral categories such as ordinal numbers, collectives and distributives.

In several languages of the region, the numeral 'one' has developed the additional functions of both a postposed indefinite article and a modal particle.

Phonology and ideophones

Register as a once and for all phonological upheaval. Evidence from the phonology of Kha Phong, an endangered and underdescribed Vietic language

Albert Badosa Roldós – Univerzitet u Beogradu / LACITO

Ta Thanh Tan – Hanoi National University Of Education / Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

Tran Quang Minh – Fudan University

This presentation aims to presenting register as a major upheaval of the phonological system of affected languages. Register has been described as a phenomenon entailing changes in many different phonetic cues: the transphonologisation of former consonant material, with the vanishing of initial consonants being compensated mainly with changes in vowel quality, among others, and changes in final consonants being compensated mainly with changes in pitch contour, among others (Brunelle and Kirby 2016). These changes may lead to a complete phonological restructuring of the language. This phenomenon will be exemplified with data from Kha Phong, in comparison with other Vietic languages. This Southern Vietic language is an example of how intertwined these changes in phonetic cues may result.

This presentation will also serve as a preliminary phonological description of the Kha Phong language, from a panchronic point of view (Haudricourt 1940; Jacques 2011; Blevins 2020) and backed with phonetic analyses. The Kha Phong language belongs to the Southern branch of the Vietic languages, a branch characterised for its conservativeness vis-à-vis the Northern branch (where Vietnamese is included), characterised by intense and long influences from Sinitic languages.

While a number of papers have been published addressing the classification and a simple description of the Kha Phong community and language (Nguyễn 1978, Nguyễn 1979, Trần 1996, Nguyễn 1999), its phonology has only been discussed in unpublished manuscripts. This paper introduces a new phonological analysis of Kha Phong, different from what has been suggested in the unpublished manuscripts, in light of recent studies on other Southern Vietic languages (Tạ 2023 for Rục and Arem; Badosa Roldós 2025 for Malieng), studies on neighbouring related languages such as Maleng Kri (Enfield and Diffloth 2009) and new data collected directly by the authors of this paper in August 2024. The panchronic approach—a combined synchronic and diachronic account—will be used to explain will put the register phenomenon at the centre, addressing the complex transphonologisation processes derived from registrogenesis and tonogenesis processes undergone by Kha Phong and other Vietic languages. These changes triggered by register can irreversibly affect the phonological structure of a given language in, which is the case of Kha Phong and neighbouring Malieng (Badosa 2025).

The phonetic analyses will be carried out on the first-hand data we collected in August 2024 using professional equipment in the only Kha Phong village in Vietnam, in the province of Hà Tĩnh, inhabited by some 120 people. A special phonology-oriented word list was designed before and during the fieldtrip and was elicited with Kha Phong native speakers. Minimal and near-minimal pairs, together with examples for each of the phonological categories, conform the word list. The phonetic analyses will mainly show how small differences in vowel quality are one of the main cues for the phonological distinguishing of register contrasts, as well as supporting out analysis of 4 tonation categories for the Kha Phong language.

Kha Phong shows (i) another possible path for both tonogenesis and registrogenesis, two processes widely attested in the area (Brunelle and Kirby 2016, Brunelle and Tạ 2021), (ii) another possible combination of both processes in a fairly conservative Austroasiatic language, opening the field for new interpretations and historical explorations not only in the Vietic branch (Ferlus 1998, Ferlus 1999), but also in the whole Mainland Southeast Asia linguistic area, and (iii) helps seeing register as a once and for all momentum that may completely and irreversibly change the phonological system of a language.

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Two ways of 'drawing in language': A comparison of Amami & Ishigaki ideophones

Madoka Hammine – University of Denver

Bonnie McLean – Uppsala University

Martha Tsutsui – University of California, Santa Barbara

Ideophones, “an open lexical class of marked words that depict sensory imagery” (Dingemanse 2019), are a distinctive areal feature of many East Asian languages (e.g. Diffloth 1972; Williams 2014; Dingemanse 2019, 2023; Akita 2017; Diffloth 1976). They are known for their unique semiotics, as they employ a distinct, analog mode of representation (depiction) more common in gesture and other multimodal forms of communication than in language (Dingemanse 2019; Ferrara and Hodge 2018; Hodge and Ferrara 2022; Kita 1997; Diffloth 1979, 1972). As lexicalized depictions, ideophones are built from phonosemantic ‘units’, but perceived holistically. They can be thought of as a form of drawing in language; when we look at a drawing, we do not notice the individual strokes but perceive only the whole image. However, beneath the surface there are rules that govern how these whole images emerge from composite strokes (Cohn 2012, 2018).

Since they are depictions it is often assumed that ideophones, like drawings, can be understood by anyone. However, recent evidence suggests that—for both ideophones and drawings—this is not the case (e.g. Dingemanse et al. 2016; Cohn 2020). The interpretation of ideophones is subject to cultural variation and may require more language specific experience than previously assumed (e.g. Iida and Akita 2024; Akita and Imai 2022). In this study, we compare and contrast different styles of ‘drawing in language’ through phonological and semantic analysis of ideophones in two languages from the Ryukyuan archipelago: Amami (Northern Ryukyuan) and Ishigaki (Yaeyama/Southern Ryukyuan). Ideophones in these languages exhibit unique phonological and semantic patterns, distinct from those of standard Japanese ideophones. By exploring ideophones in two distinct Ruyukyuan varieties, this paper sheds light on typological diversity and ongoing processes of language endangerment, as there has been little comparative work examining how island communities structure and use ideophones within rapidly shifting linguistic ecologies, beyond McLean (2019, 2021) and Tokunaga (2013).

This paper draws on elicitation, annotated narrative corpora sessions, and spontaneous speech recordings conducted between 2024 and 2026. We identify structural properties that define ideophones in each variety and evaluate their typological and diachronic status under conditions of advanced language endangerment.

Phonologically, Amami ideophones exhibit highly regular reduplicative templates (e.g. CVCV -CVCV, e.g. *biri biri* to depict the softness of an extremely ripe fruit), mora augmentation, and vowel alternation systems (e.g. *dzabu-dzabu* ‘heavy sloshing’ or *hago-hago* ‘a feeling of deep unsettlement or hatred’). These ideophones can express and encode intensity, duration, and boundedness. Consonantal inventories in ideophones include marked segments and clusters absent from the non-ideophonic lexicon, suggesting an expressive phonology that licenses otherwise restricted phonotactic patterns (Diffloth 1979; Zwicky and Pullum 1987). Ishigaki ideophones also show highly regular reduplicative patterns, but with a different phonology from Amami ideophones (e.g. *raashii-raashii* to depict the state of being arrogant, or *pjoosi-pjoosi* to depict the sound of a flute).

Sociolinguistically, younger semi-speakers in both communities exhibit phonological simplification, loss of reduplicative productivity, and semantic generalization, indicating that ideophones constitute a vulnerable lexical class in the context of language shift (see also Childs 1996). On the other hand, some forms are increasingly popular and commonly heard as part of the we-code in the islands. We suggest these ideophones may act as a code to express islander identities even in younger speakers (e.g. Gillig 2018). These patterns provide evidence for a broader typology of ideophone attrition, wherein expressive morphology destabilizes earlier than core lexicon (Flaksman 2020).

The study sheds light on how expressive phonology and sensory semantics diverge across the Ryukyus, what these structures reveal about ideophone typology under language endangerment, and how ideophones encode embodied experience in ways highly sensitive to ecological and cultural context. It also offers insight into how expressive lexical classes evolve under language shift and how sensory semantics are shaped by local ecology and cultural practice. The findings underscore the urgency of documenting ideophones, which are often among the earliest lexical categories to erode, whose preservation is essential for understanding the expressive dimensions of Ryukyuan languages.

Areal linguistics

A microtypology of numeral derivation: Numeral derivatives in Tungusic

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The paper deals with ordinal numerals in Tungusic languages. In all Tungusic, there are morphological devices that derive ordinal numerals from cardinal numerals (cf. Ulcha: *umu(n)* ‘one’ – *umu-j* ‘first’). Another option attested in some Tungusic is to use ‘suppletive’ ordinal numerals, which are not derived from cardinal numerals (Nanai: *əmu(n)* ‘one’ vs. *boŋgo* ‘first’).

The paper discusses the distribution of morphological vs. suppletive ordinal numerals across Tungusic (see on this topic cross-linguistically: Stolz & Veselinova 2013; in particular families/areas: e.g., Stolz & Robbers 2016; Suchard 2025). The study is based mostly on data of grammars and dictionaries; textual data are used as an additional data-source if available.

The following main trends are observed (see preliminary results in Tables 1–3; the sample is to be expanded with more fine-grained dialectal data):

1. Suppletive – morphological: ‘first’ > ‘second’ > other

1a) Suppletive forms are restricted to ‘first’ and ‘second’, the other ordinal numerals are regularly derived from cardinals. In some languages, the meanings ‘first’ and/or ‘second’ are expressed exclusively by suppletive forms (see Udihe), while in some others, one or several suppletive forms compete with morphological ones (see Oroch).

1b) ‘First’ is suppletive in more languages than ‘second’.

1c) If in a language, ‘second’ is suppletive, then ‘first’ is also suppletive. Cf. Even, in which the implication works in a weaker form: suppletive forms are available for both ‘second’ and ‘first’, but for ‘second’ this is the only option, while for ‘first’ a morphological form is also attested.

2. Lexical sources of suppletive forms match genealogical groupings

Several lexical sources are attested for the suppletive ‘first’ (‘going ahead’, ‘front’, ‘best, main’, ‘head’) and ‘second’ (‘other’, ‘one of the pair’, ‘again’). Their distribution across languages corresponds to their genealogical distribution, although with exceptions (cf. *uju* ‘first’ in Solon (Ewenic), presumably borrowed from neighbouring Jurchenic).

Table 1. ‘First’ across Tungusic

FIRST	morph.	n’o:-ADJVZ ‘going ahead’	ʒ’ulə:- ‘front’	boŋgo ‘first, best’	uʒ’u- ‘head’
Written Manchu	(əmuči)			boŋgo	uʒ’u, uʒ’ui
Sibe					ujui
Udihe		n’oxo			
Oroch	omoŋi	n’o:ki~n’aukæ			
Nanai			(ʒ’uluj)	boŋgo	
Ulcha	umuj~omoj			(boŋgo)	
Bikin	əmuči			boŋgo	
Kur-Urmi	əmučǎ		ʒulə	(boŋgu)	
Uilta	ge:dʒe				
Even	emni-POSS	n’ogarp			

Evenki (Poligus)		n'ogu:~n'owu:			
Negidal	ōmo-POSS	n'oyu-POSS			
Oroqen	umunki				
Solon	emusī, emun dugeer				uju

* (...) – marginally attested

** Branches of the Tungusic family: purple – Jurchenic, green – Orochic, red – Nanaic, blue – Ewenic

Table 2. 'Second' across Tungusic

SECOND	morph.	ge: 'other'	gagda 'one of the pair'	žai 'again'
Written Manchu	(žuači)			žai, žaingē
Sibe				jai, jači
Udihe			gagda	
Oroch	žu:wi: etc.			
Nanai	žuəjə~žuəjəčiə			
Ulcha	d'uəj			
Bikin	žu:či			
Kur-Urmi	žuučš			
Uilta	du:jə			
Even		ge:-(POSS)		
Evenki (Poligus)		ge:, ge:pti		
Negidal	žul-POSS	ge:-POSS		
Oroqen	juurki			
Solon	juusi, juur dugeer			jai

Table 3. Morphological vs. suppletive forms of 'first' and 'second'

MORPHOLOGICAL vs. SUPPLETIVE	FIRST	SECOND
Written Manchu	suppl(~morph)	suppl(~morph)
Sibe	suppl	suppl
Udihe	suppl	suppl
Oroch	morph~suppl	morph
Nanai	suppl	morph
Ulcha	morph(~suppl)	morph
Bikin	morph~suppl	morph
Kur-Urmi	morph~suppl	morph
Uilta	morph	morph
Even	morph~suppl	suppl

Evenki (Poligus)	suppl	suppl
Negidal	morph~suppl	morph~suppl
Oroqen	morph	morph
Solon	morph~suppl	morph~suppl

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Turkic numeral classifiers in a comparative and typological perspective

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Numeral classifiers are used in numeral classifier constructions consisting of a numeral, a numeral classifier and a specified noun (= a head noun). The main aim of using numeral classifiers in such constructions is providing additional information on their head nouns, such as their natural shape, animacy, size, measurements, etc. They can be used without their head nouns if the context ensures a clear identification of the latter. Numeral classifiers can belong to two major types: sortal and mensural ones (Aikhenvald 2000). Sortal classifiers individuate the kind of the entity they identify, the mensural classifiers, on the opposite, “provide information about the properties of a noun and the arrangements in which it may occur, or how it is measured” (Aikhenvald 2021: 3). Sortal classifiers usually appear with countable nouns.

Turkic numeral classifiers are treated as common nouns in most traditional grammars. However, classifier constructions have special grammatical features that differentiate them from other types of noun phrases containing two substantives. The classifier construction “Numeral or quantity term + Numeral classifier + Noun” does not have agreement between the numeral, the numeral classifier, and the head noun while nouns, not belonging to the group of numeral classifiers, normally form possessive constructions: with possessive markers on the head nouns only (Turkish okul kapı- sı <school door-POSS3> ‘a school door’), or on both: the first noun gets a genitive case marker while the second one a possessive suffix co-referential with the first noun (Turkish okul-un kapı-sı <school- GEN door-POSS3> ‘the door of this (specific) school’).

Turkic numeral classifiers haven’t been sufficiently studied yet. Only some Turkic grammars treat them as separate word classes (e.g. Geng 1989; Zhang 2004; Nevskaya 2017). Johanson (2021: 540) claimed the existence of numeral classifiers in Turkic. Waterson (1966) and Beckwith (1998) investigated Uzbek numeral classifiers; Lewis (1975: 80), Schroeder (1996: 96–98) and Schaaik (1999) Turkish ones, (Majzina 2017) Altay ones. (Jumabay et al. 2022) describes Kazakh classifiers while Shor ones remain unstudied.

Systems of numeral classifiers in individual Turkic languages have developed during a long time. They differ in their composition and inventory, and manifest various morphological, semantic and syntactic peculiarities. We will describe Turkic numeral classifiers primarily using the example of Shor, an endangered South Siberian Turkic language, and South Kipchak Kazakh (taking into consideration its varieties spoken in Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia), in comparative and typological perspectives.

The Kazakhs and Shors are Turkic peoples having common roots of their traditional cultures and languages. At the same time, they have been separated for centuries geographically and have undergone different linguistic influences (cf. the Russian influence on Shor and Republican Kazakh, the Chinese one on Kazakh spoken in China and the Mongolian one on spoken in Mongolia). We aim at delineating both common and language specific features, especially those induced by external influences, both in the inventories of numeral classifiers and in their morphological, semantic and syntactic peculiarities, this contributing to the structural and areal typology of this category.

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Encoding 'all' and totality in Kazakh

Raima Auyeskhan – Ca' Foscari University of Venice

This paper investigates how totality and collectivity are encoded in both Standard Kazakh and the Altai Kazakh spoken in Mongolia. It focuses on expressions such as *bäri* 'all' and *barliq* 'all', as well as *tutas* 'whole' and other lexical items. The analysis also considers distributive and quantificational constructions to explore how the concept of 'entirety' is conveyed in the absence of obligatory plural marking. These lexical expressions in Kazakh will be compared with Mongolic languages within a broader typological perspective on number and quantification. It argues that totality can be expressed through a combination of lexical choices, syntactic structures, and discourse-pragmatic strategies.

Egophoricity

Egophoricity and tense in Eastern Yugur non-verbal predication

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Eastern Yugur is an endangered Mongolic language of the Amdo Sprachbund whose Non-Verbal Predication (NVP) system remains under-explored in existing descriptions (Junast 1981; Bulchulu & Jalsan 1991; Nugteren 2003; Sechenchogt 2024). Adopting the recent typological framework of Creissels et al. (2026), this paper draws on new fieldwork data to present a systematic account of Eastern Yugur NVPs, integrating morphosyntactic, formal, and functional perspectives. In relation to the Conference theme of singularity and entirety, the Eastern Yugur system is particularly noteworthy in that it encodes a structural **singularization** of epistemic authority across NVPs and clause types.

The encoding of NVPs relies on two sets of predicative markers, conditioned by functional type. The default series (*we ~ be; wai ~ bai*) is employed for inclusion, identity, and plain-locational predications. By contrast, inverse-locational, existential, and plain-possessive constructions typically utilize a dedicated series (*bi ~ bain*), though certain interchangeability is attested. A parallel distinction (*pushə ~ ugui*) is observed in negation. The distribution of these marker sets is sensitive to **egophoricity**—an areal feature shared with neighboring languages—where epistemic authority is anchored to a privileged speech-act participant. Egophoric marking singles out “the one” participant who holds primary commitment to the truth of the proposition, encoding participant-centered singularity that interacts with predication type and clause polarity.

Another central property of the Eastern Yugur NVP system concerns temporal reference. This paper examines the contrast between the default non-future paradigm and constructions yielding retrospective interpretations, which involve the auxiliary *su-*. These constructions also display egophoric alignment, surfacing as *su wa* in egophoric contexts and *su-j-wai* in non-egophoric ones in declarative clauses, where *-j-* is a converb. Crucially, both patterns are negated by the non-verbal negator *pushə* rather than the verbal one, a diagnostic that aligns these *su-* constructions with the NVP system despite the verb-like characteristics of *su-*. I will also briefly touch on future reference in Eastern Yugur NVPs, though this is not the main focus of the study.

By detailing these intersections of functional categorization, egophoricity, and tense, this research provides a vital descriptive record for an endangered system and contributes to the broader typology of NVP systems in East Asia.

Appendix:

1. Inclusion predication: egophoric vs. allophoric

(1). bu malchi we.

1SG herdsman COP.EGO

‘I’m a herdsman.’

(2). chi malchi wai.

2SG herdsman COP.ALLO

‘You’re a herdsman.’

2. Egophoricity reversal in interrogatives

(3). chi malchi u?

2SG herdsman Q

‘Are you a herdsman?’

(4). bu malchi wam-u?

1SG herdsman COP.ALLO-Q

‘Am I a herdsman?’

3. Inverse-locational predication

(5). bu bi, chi bain, Medog bain.

1SG COP.EGO 2SG COP.ALLO Medog COP.ALLO

‘There’re me, you, and Medog.’

(6). ger-də kun ugui wai.

home-LOC human ILP.NEG1 COP.ALLO

‘There’s no one at home.’

4. Retrospective reference

(7). urda bu malchi su wa.

before 1SG herdsman AUX COP.EGO

‘I was a herdsman before.’

(8). urda chi malchi su-j-wai.

before 2SG herdsman AUX-CVB-COP.ALLO

‘You were a herdsman before.’

(9). urda chi malchi pushə su-j-wai.

before 2SG herdsman NEG AUX-CVB-COP.ALLO

‘You were not a herdsman before.’

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Adapting Indigenous units to a regional whole: The egophoric-sensory-factual system in Lamo
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Lamo is an endangered under-documented non-Tibetic Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the eastern Xizang Autonomous Region, China. While geographically embedded in the Khams Tibetan area, Lamo does not belong to the Tibetic branch, as it lacks shared phonological innovations, regular core lexical and grammatical correspondences with Classical Tibetan (Tournadre, 2014; Tournadre & Suzuki, 2022). Instead, Lamo has been proposed to belong to the Qiangic subgroup (Suzuki et al., 2018; Suzuki & Nyima, 2021; Zhao, 2024), a group characterized by distinct shared typological features (Sun, 2001). This study provides the first systematic description of egophoric-sensory-factual system in Lamo based on firsthand fieldwork data collected in sTobs.'Bar Town in 2025, exploring how a specific **minority** language interacts with the dominant Khams **Sprachbund**.

Table 1 Copulative and existential verbs comparison

	COP.EGO	COP.SENS	COP.FACT	E.EGO	E.SENS	E.FACT
Lamo	ŋo	nasi	tɕhy	khu	ni	kʰutɕhy
Khams	<i>yin</i>		<i>red</i>	<i>yod</i>	<i>'gi</i>	<i>yod.red</i>
Ü-Tsang	<i>yin</i>		<i>red</i>	<i>yod</i>	<i>'dug</i>	<i>yod.red</i>

First, as shown in Table 1, Lamo copulative and existential verbs show no etymological correspondence to Classical Tibetan roots, yet the paradigm of Egophoric-Sensory-Factual opposition aligns with the Tibetic tripartite model (See Tournadre (2017), Tournadre & LaPolla (2014)). The egophoric is marked by **ŋo** (COPULATIVE, ŋá gégi **ŋo** “*I am a teacher.*”) and **khu** (EXISTENTIAL, ŋá nóno na **khu** “*I have two kids.*”), contrasting with the sensory forms **nasi** (kê tɕʰajê **nasi** “*This is tea.*”)/**ni** (teá=lə teí **ni** “*There is water on the road.*”) and factual forms **tɕhy** (kê gégi **tɕhy** “*He is a teacher.*”)/**kʰutɕhy** (kə=lə dzy amó **kʰutɕhy** “*He has a lot of money.*”).

Table 2 Paradigm of controllable verbs in Lamo (partial)

	HAB	FUT	PST	PROG
EGO	Σ-zo / Σ-zəŋo	Σ-lo (?<ləŋo)	DIR-Σ-zo (?<zəŋo)	Σ-ji-khu
			NEG: DIR-Σ-mə-ŋi	
		<i>Σ-gi.yin</i>	<i>Σ-pa.yin</i>	<i>Σ-gi.yod</i>
VIS			DIR-Σ-si	Σ-ji-ni
			<i>Σ-song</i>	<i>Σ-gi.'dug</i>
FACT	Σ-tɕhy	Σ-tɕhy	DIR-Σ-tɕhy	Σ-ji-kʰutɕhy
		<i>Σ-gi.red</i>	<i>Σ-pa.red</i>	<i>Σ-gi.yod.red</i>

Secondly, Table 2 demonstrates that the Lamo system for controllable verbs has adopted the Tibetic morphosyntactic rule of “auxiliary selection”: (1) **Copula-based** auxiliaries are selected for HABITUAL, FUTURE and PAST, mirroring the Tibetic use of *yin-red*; (2) **Existential-based** auxiliaries are recruited for PROGRESSIVE, parallel to the Tibetic *yod- 'dug*.

Regarding uncontrollable verbs, the sensory marker occurs with endopathic verbs to express internal feelings (e.g., du zə-si “*I’m hungry.*”), a feature widely attested in the Qiangic and Tibetic languages. This marker is incompatible with non-first person, where an inferential marker is required.

This study is the first comprehensive description of the egophoric-sensory-factual system of the endangered Lamo language, providing a concrete contact-induced change instance based on “pattern

borrowing” (Matras & Sakel, 2007) [also cf. Chirkova (2010, 2012) for Southern Qiangic] or “grammatical replication” (Heine & Kuteva, 2005). It illustrates a **divergence in the extension of change**, where the grammatical paradigm “**WHOLE**” has converged with the regional model, while the lexical forms “**UNITS**” have remained resistant to borrowing. This case exemplifies how minority languages may prioritize areal convergence in their structural logic to align with a dominant Sprachbund, while retaining their indigenous lexical shell.

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Language change and attitudes

Individual variation during the revitalization process and language attitudes among Kalmyk-Oirat speakers

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Language revitalization aims to increase the number of speakers; however, it also brings new challenges. Speakers with passive competence begin to use the language, while other non-competent individuals acquire it through learning. These so-called new speakers learn the language through school curricula, courses, or self-study (O'Rourke et al. 2015: 1). In many revitalizing communities, the speech of new speakers displays particular features, such as lexical restrictions and contact-induced changes. The speech of new speakers is often highly variable (Rodríguez-Ordóñez et al. 2022), which leads to an increase in intra-community variation.

This paper examines individual linguistic features of young Kalmyk speakers, including new speakers, as well as language attitudes within the community. It asks whether individual variants contribute to the emergence of a plurality of norms within the speech community. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in the Kalmyk-Oirat community in the Republic of Kalmykia (Russia). The data include sociolinguistic interviews with young speakers and so-called “traditional speakers,” Kalmyk texts produced by young speakers, and online communication among them.

Young speakers use an in-group communicative variety characterized by numerous contact-induced features from the dominant language, Russian, as well as lexical innovations resulting from contact with Oirat speakers from Mongolia. One example is the avoidance by young Kalmyk speakers of the word *xanžanav* ‘thank-PROG-PRS-1SG ‘thank you’ because of its connotations among Mongolian and Chinese Oirats, and its replacement with the form *bajərlžanav* joy-PROG-PRS-1SG, which shares the same root as the Khalkha word for ‘thank you’.

Young new speakers often encounter ambivalent or even negative attitudes. Kalmyk that is heavily influenced by Russian is sometimes labeled *baldər*. The word *baldər* usually refers to people of mixed ancestry, such as those from Kalmyk-Russian marriages, implying someone who is ‘not purely Kalmyk’; figuratively, it is also used to describe a “mixed” language. Although this mixed Kalmyk does not appear to constitute a stable linguistic variety, it functions as a marker of identity. Its performative use among younger speakers creates a form of transgressive language that asserts linguistic rights and legitimizes a plurality of norms within the speech community.

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Beyond languages and speakers: Expanding the language attitudes framework to institutions and events in minoritized language contexts

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Traditional language attitudes research focuses on attitudes toward languages (objects) and speakers (people). While general attitude theory recognizes that attitudes can, in addition to objects and people, be directed toward institutions and events (Ajzen 2005), language attitudes research has largely failed to incorporate these dimensions. This narrow scope is particularly problematic for minoritized languages, where institutional dynamics and historical events might greatly shape community engagement with the language.

This paper argues for a fundamental expansion of the language attitudes framework. Drawing on interview data from 15 Ainu collaborators in Biratori, Hokkaido (collected March 2024–January 2025), it demonstrates that attitudes toward language-related institutions and events are as significant as attitudes toward the speakers and language itself in revitalization of minoritized endangered languages. When asked about their relationship with the Ainu language, collaborators spontaneously discussed: (1) institutions—including language policy systems, educational approaches, and researcher-community power hierarchies—and (2) events—ranging from macro-level legislative changes (the 1997 Ainu Culture Promotion Act, the 2020 Upopoy opening) to micro-level personal realizations (discovering that everyday words or placenames are Ainu, not Japanese; changing relationship with the language after starting to learn it with a different method).

These findings show that using a minoritized language is never simply a matter of willingness to be a member of a group or benefit from linguistic knowledge. Rather, complex power dynamics and institutionalized practices also shape language use. Collaborators expressed frustration with exclusion from language policy decision-making, ambivalence about non-Ainu researchers positioned as authorities over “correct” usage, and negative experiences with grammar-focused teaching methods. Simultaneously, they described transformative personal events—moments of linguistic realization—that reshaped their language attitudes.

This expanded framework notes that the research on language attitudes conducted thus far examines discrete units of languages and speakers while missing the whole ecological system of language attitudes. For minoritized languages like Ainu, the “whole” picture emerges only when we examine attitudes toward the full range of elements: languages, speakers, institutions, and events. This theoretical expansion has practical implications because while successful revitalization requires addressing language attitudes, it needs to be done holistically, that is, also examining and attending to attitudes toward language-related social institutions and historical events, not merely promoting positive feelings toward the speakers and language itself.

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One language and multiple scripts? A preliminary case study of orthography choices in Ainu textbooks

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Ainu is the ancestral language of the indigenous Ainu people. Currently, Ainu is not used as a first language, and the contemporary speakers are either elders, who have learnt some Ainu in their childhood, or new speakers. There are numerous initiatives aiming for language revitalisation and reclamation, such as conducting language classes and creating learning material. Ainu does not have a standardised variety or orthography, and language learning motivation is often connected with the desire to learn the local dialect or that used by one's ancestors (Kitahara 2019). While Ainu is generally viewed as a single language, the approach taken by Ainu themselves as well as linguists is often focused on individual dialects.

The Ainu historically lived in an area where four orthographies meet: the Japanese kana syllabary, Chinese logographic characters, Russian Cyrillic alphabet, and the Latin alphabet imported by the European travellers. It is often emphasised that Ainu is a language with no writing system of its own – or even that it continues to be a non-written language. However, historically Ainu has been written to different extent with all of the scripts mentioned above. While early Ainu documents from the 1700s favoured hiragana and the Cyrillic alphabet (see Majewicz 2022; Satō 2022), contemporary script choice mainly varies between katakana and the Latin alphabet, and typically comes down to personal preference. As having multiple scripts for one language is often deemed impractical, there have been suggestions to standardise Ainu writing. The creation of a standardised orthography was first publicly discussed amongst the Ainu in the early 1990s during the editorial meetings of a planned textbook (*A=kor itak*) to be used in local Ainu language classes (Nakagawa 1995: 61). However, no standard was created, and the textbook ended up featuring both katakana and the Latin alphabet.

As we will demonstrate in this presentation, despite having no standardised orthography or even an agreed-on script, written Ainu is not a case of “anything goes”, and texts generally follow numerous widely shared writing conventions often stemming from those used by well-known publications or linguists. Therefore, it could be argued that Ainu already has a “standard” way of writing.

As a part of this discussion, we will introduce and compare preliminary observations of the writing conventions appearing in the following (Hokkaido) Ainu language textbooks from the 1980s to 2020s:

- ❖ *Ainugo nyūmon* (‘Introduction to the Ainu Language’) by Tamura Suzuko published in 1983 (Saru dialect)
- ❖ *Ainu ukoyso-itak. Ainugo kaiwa irasuto jiten* (‘Ainu discussion: An illustrated Ainu conversational dictionary’) by Chiri Mutsumi & Takao Yokoyama published in 1988 (Horobetsu dialect)
- ❖ *A=kor itak* (‘Our language’) by Hokkaido Utari Association published in 1994 (multiple dialects)
- ❖ New Express *Ainugo* (‘New Express Ainu’) by Nakagawa Hiroshi published in 2013 [2018] (Saru dialect)
- ❖ *Kodomo to Manabu Ainugo* (‘Learning Ainu with Children’) by Takiguchi Yumi published in 2021 (Kushiro dialect)

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Semantic change and sociolinguistics

Semantic change in the Ryukyuan body part lexicon

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Synchronic variation across related languages is the result of historical change in their ancestors. Just as words can change their form, they can also change their meaning. While semantic change is often seen as irregular and unpredictable, cross-linguistic work shows that parts of the lexicon develop in a limited number of predictable ways. The best-known example is basic colour terminology (Berlin & Kay 1969; Kay et al. 2009), but ‘natural tendencies’ of semantic change have also been observed in words for body parts (Wilkins 1981; 1996). Despite its importance for embodied theories of meaning, there have been relatively few in-depth studies on semantic variation and change in the body part domain.

This study presents a database of semantic correspondences across the Ryukyuan languages, using the comparative vocabulary list by Wilkins (1996, p. 284), which comprises 75 items chosen based on recurring changes across various language families. Data sources were various linguistic atlases, dialect dictionaries, individual dialect reports, and own fieldwork. Following Wilkins’ (1981; 1996) approach, each semantic correspondence is classified along two factors: (1) whether the meanings belong to the same semantic field (i.e., within the body parts domain; called *intrafield* changes) or to different fields (*interfield* changes); and (2) whether the meanings are associated through contiguity (*metonymic* changes) or similarity (metaphorical *changes*). This classification produces four types of semantic correspondence, shown below with attested examples:

	Metonymy	Metaphor
Intrafield	FOOT ↔ LEG <i>pisa</i> ‘foot’ (Miyako) <i>hisa</i> ‘leg’ (Okinawa)	ELBOW ↔ KNEE <i>hidzi</i> ‘elbow’ (all) <i>pidzi</i> ‘knee’ (Yaeyama)
Interfield	TO BEND → JOINT <i>maga(r)-</i> ‘to bend’ (all) <i>makai</i> ‘bowl’ (all) <i>magari</i> ‘knee’ (Amami) <i>kanamai</i> ‘head’ (Miyako)	BOWL → HEAD

One question the study aims to answer is whether some *specific* semantic changes occur more often than others. Wilkins (1981; 1996) mainly focused on the *presence* of each semantic change, which leaves the question *how frequent* they are unanswered. The database will also inform us whether some *types* of semantic change occur more often than others. For example, Wilkins (1981; 1996) proposed that words for parts change to mean wholes, but not the other way around. Special attention will be given to polylexemic expressions in this respect, which are often indicative of (ongoing) semantic change (see Urban 2011). For example, one of the correspondence sets goes from polylexemic to monolexemic in Ryukyuan: *pan=nu pisa* ‘instep’ (Yaeyama) → *pisa* ‘foot’ (Miyako) → *hisa* ‘leg’ (Okinawa). More broadly, it appears that metonymic changes are more common than metaphorical changes, and that intrafield changes are more common than interfield changes, but Wilkins (1981; 1996) found that the exact numbers differ across language families. Are the same tendencies found in the Ryukyuan data?

The compilation of the database contributes both to the systematic study of Ryukyuan, while at the same time putting Ryukyuan into a cross-linguistic perspective. Studying semantic change in various language families increases our understanding of cross-linguistic regularity in general, furthering our knowledge of the possibilities and limits of language.

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From minimal units to the whole: Two pathways to totality in languages of China

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A phenomenon observed in several languages and dialects spoken within China is that elements originally denoting minimal units—such as ‘one’ or markers of minimal events such as verbal classifiers—can be extended to express totality and exhaustivity, yielding meanings equivalent to ‘all’. That is, expressions referring to the smallest conceivable unit may come to encode totalizing or exhaustive scope over individuals, events, or situations. This paper investigates this phenomenon with a focus on data from Hunan Sinitic varieties (Old Xiang Chinese and Southern Hunan vernaculars), the Oujiang subgroup of Wu Chinese, and selected Hmong–Mien languages spoken within China, where such unit-based totalizing uses are systematically attested.

The first pathway is the extension of *yī* ‘one’ from numeral to exhaustive or universal scope. Archaic Chinese (11th-3rd c. BCE, according to Peyraube 1996) already uses *yī* beyond counting with totalizing interpretations. In these early texts, *yī* occurs in constructions that quantify over domains such as states, groups, or events, yielding readings equivalent to ‘the entire’ or ‘all’ (e.g. *yì-guó* 一國 ‘the whole country’; *yuàn bǐ sǐzhě yì sǎ zhī* 愿比死者一洒之 ‘[willing] to wash away all [the shame] for the deceased’). These patterns indicate that unit-based expressions of totality form part of the long-standing conceptual resources of Chinese rather than being late grammatical innovations.

The productivity of this strategy continues into Modern and Contemporary Standard Chinese, where expressions involving *yī* ‘one’ similarly convey distributed or totalizing readings (e.g. *yí-dì shuǐ* 一 地 水 ‘the entire floor is wet’). Comparable extensions of ‘one’ to totality are also attested in certain Hmong–Mien languages in China, such as the Zengcheng dialect of the She language*: The following two examples show the lexical use of *i24* ‘one’ in a classifier phrase in (1) and the extended meaning of ‘all’ in (2) in adverbial function.

- (1) *muŋ54 paŋ11/pi11* *ntuŋ54 fun22* *i24=ntaŋ22* *kaŋ24khu55*
 you COMPR him tall one=NCL head
 You are a head taller than him.

- (2) *tsha24ka55nte54* *i24* *tsuŋ11khe24* *nta33*
 everyone all.one hungry SFP
 ‘Everyone was hungry.’

The second pathway for ‘one’ is attested primarily in Hunan Sinitic varieties and Oujiang Wu where it combines with forms such as the verbal classifiers (VCL) *i24-xa11*(*tsɿ*) 一 下 (子), cognates with Mandarin *yì-xià* 一 下 ‘one-VCL’, as in the Changsha dialect in (3). These further develop into scope adverbs, as in (4), which encodes the exhaustive coverage of a situation through minimal or bounded events:

- (3) *khan55* *i24=xa11*
 look one=VCL
 ‘have a look’
- (4) *tchia24* *ie33* *tchia24 tsa13* *xa11* *iau55pu24tə24*
 eat smell eat tea all.VCL NEG.mod
 ‘Neither smoking nor drinking tea is acceptable.’

In these varieties, *xià*-constructions typically quantify over alternatives, conditions, or events, yielding interpretations like universal quantification.

Crucially, the paper argues that both pathways are grounded in a shared semantic mechanism: a scalar or proportional asymmetry whereby a minimal unit in the topic domain licenses exhaustive scope in the predicate domain.

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Which Tuvan for Mongolia? Voices from the taiga and the question of a standard

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This paper examines the strategies currently employed in Mongolia to render the Sayan Turkic varieties of Bayan-Ölgii and Khövsgöl in written form, all of which rely on a single orthographic system grounded in the norms of standard Tuvan.

Language description

The numeric system of Tsharza Rma

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This study describes the numeric system of the Tsharza Rma, a previously undescribed variety, spoken by fewer than 1,000 people in Heishui County, Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China. While there are descriptions of numeric systems in closely related Macro-Rgyalrongic languages (e.g., Zhang 2014, Jacques 2017, Drolma & Daudey 2021), there has yet to be a systematic study on the numeric system in Tsharza Rma. This study of the numeric system includes basic numerals, classifiers, quantifiers, and schema for larger numerals. In addition, we explore how singularity, duality, and plurality are expressed in the pronominal system.

As in other varieties of Rma, the cardinal numeral system is a basic decimal system (LaPolla & Huang 2003). Numerals from one to nine take an obligatory classifier. The form *huxdju* 'ten' is independent from the formative *-su*, which is used to form increments of ten, as in the word *xsib-su* 'three-ten (thirty)'. The expression of higher numerals involve Written Tibetan and Chinese loans (i.e. *stuxn tsux* 'thousand' < Written Tibetan *stong* 'one thousand', and *bwaxn* 'ten thousand' < Mandarin Chinese *wàn* 'idem'.)

Beyond numeral formation, we also explore larger constructions involving numbers and classifiers. A 'one-CLF' construction denotes a single unit, whereas reduplication of this construction linked by *nə* yields a collective or total interpretation. For example, *ax-qux* 'one household' vs. *ax-qux nə ax-qux* 'one household by one household (i.e., all households)'.

We also explore expression of singularity, duality and plurality within the pronoun system and its relation to the basic numbers. For example, the root of the first person dual inclusive pronoun forms include the basic numeral 'two'. Reflexive pronouns are formed via reduplication such as *ʔax* '1SG' vs. *ʔax=ʔax* '1SG.REFL'.

We compared these systems to existing descriptions in other documented varieties. This description contributes to the existing typology of numeric systems in Eastern Trans-Himalayan languages. It is especially important since there is a shift towards using Chinese numerals in younger generations.

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A typology of the Kra numeral systems
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The Kra languages constitute one branch of the Kra-Dai (or Tai-Kadai) language family spoken in Southeast Asia (Ostapirat 2000). It includes several small and highly endangered languages, such as Gelao, Buyang, or Pubiao (Qabiao), scattered across Guizhou, Yunnan, and Guangxi provinces in China as well as northern Vietnam. Previous research has shown that these languages preserve numeral systems that have close similarities to Austronesian languages (e.g., Smith 2021). Furthermore, they exhibit features that are interesting from a typological perspective (e.g., 110 being expressed as 100 + 1 rather than 100 + 10). But despite their relevance for comparative research, numeral systems in Kra languages have not yet been studied systematically. What is missing is a broader, cross-linguistic perspective that takes into account all of the dialectal and structural diversity currently available. To address this issue, this talk starts from a typological perspective, considering recent research on numeral systems in the languages of the world (e.g., Comrie 2022).

The investigation is based on an extensive collection of numeral systems from over 50 doculects. The data are taken from a variety of different sources, including published materials taken from grammar books, extensive handwritten fieldnotes (mostly by the renowned scholar Zhang Jimin) that are now in my personal possession, and from fieldwork (conducted in Dagouchang in 2025). A few datapoints are taken from the *Numeral Systems of the World's Languages* database that contains data from otherwise undocumented varieties like En.¹

Preliminary results show that Kra languages typically exhibit decimal systems and have uniform Num-Clf-N order for numeral phrases. However, there is considerable variation in the details that goes beyond phonological changes, the replacement of some numerals, or the borrowing of Chinese numerals (e.g., 0, 1000, 10000).

For instance, while Kra languages typically exhibit Base-Digit order for numerals from 11 to 19 (e.g., Sanchong Gelao *pie*⁵³ *sɿ*⁵³ '10 + 1'), a few Gelao varieties exhibit the opposite order, which also includes an atypical numeral-internal use of a classifier (e.g., Dafang Gelao [*sɿ*⁵⁵ *li*³⁵] *εε*¹³ '1 CLF + 10'). Some Gelao varieties also make use of numeral classifiers for counting (e.g., Qinglong Gelao *sɿ*³³ *laŋ*⁵⁵ '1', *sa*⁵⁵ *laŋ*⁵⁵ '2', ...), while this is not encountered in most other Kra languages. Pubiao seems unique in exhibiting a prefix *mə*³³ on numerals from 6 to 9 (e.g., *mə*³³*nam*⁵³ '6'). This was previously interpreted as a remnant of the numeral *mə*³³ '5' (Liang et al. 2007: 31, 45). More plausibly, however, this can be analyzed as a cardinal marking with typological parallels in Austronesian languages (e.g., Saaroa, Leti, Hawaiian). There is also language-internal variation, some languages showing up to three synonyms for one number that differ in the morphosyntactic distribution (e.g., Zunyi Gelao *zɿ*⁴² '1' but [*la*⁴² *kvei*²¹] *zɿ*⁴² '11', i.e. '[1 x 10] + 1'). Finally, some varieties exhibit formal changes (e.g., in vowels or tones) when basic numerals are combined to more complex expressions.

The talk concludes by sketching potential avenues for further research, especially concerning prospects for a more extensive comparison with Austronesian languages.

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¹ <https://lingweb.eva.mpg.de/channumerals/>

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'One' and 'all' in Budai Rukai: Individuation and additivity

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This paper contributes to the discussion of 'one' and 'all' by examining their corresponding expressions in Budai Rukai, an endangered Formosan (Austronesian) language spoken in Taiwan. In Budai Rukai, 'one' is expressed by the free morpheme *vaeva* 'one', whereas 'all' is realized through a range of composite forms built on the bound form *-elre* 'gather; together; all'. Focusing on their basic semantic properties, namely individuation and additivity, this paper speaks to the ways in which minority languages encode units and wholes across both nominal and verbal morphology.

Data drawn from both published sources and fieldnotes show that the primary distinction between the two lies in the fact that only *vaeva* can function as a numeral in noun phrases (see (1)). Nevertheless, the two share important properties. Both can undergo reduplication, yielding distinct semantic effects: reduplication derives a property-denoting expression from *vaeva*, shifting the meaning from 'one' to 'being single', and a relational descriptor from *-elre*, shifting the meaning from 'together' to 'companion' (see (2)). Reduplication is also a productive means of forming progressive and iterative constructions.

1. wa-eleme ku vaeva ku tamaku lukakaiya ka lasu.
NFUT-finish DET one DET cigarette everyday DET guy
'The guy finishes one cigarette every day.' (fieldnotes)
2. vae~vaeva ka lasu kadrwa ku ta-elr~elre.
REDP~one DET guy NEG DET HUM-REDP~together
'The guy is single, having no human companion.' (ILRDF)

Vaeva appears in verbal complexes marked by light action verbs, as in *ngu-vaeva* 'take-one' and *tu-vaeva* 'do-one'. When reduplicated, the resulting forms yield an iterative interpretation, as exemplified by (3), where counting proceeds distributively, with each individual orange counted one after another.

3. ngu-va~vaeva asipi kay valrantuku.
take-REDP~one count DEM orange
'When counting the oranges, do it one by one.' (ILRDF)

In contrast to *vaeva* 'one', *-elre* appears in composite forms that are typically associated with a part-whole relationship. Some forms appear to be lexicalized, e.g., *makana-elre* 'all' in (4), while others consist of identifiable verbal prefixes, as exemplified by (5). These prefixes can be grouped into several types, including: (i) the reflexive *ngi-*, (ii) light action verbs (e.g., *ngu-* 'take', *tu-* 'do') and (iii) the causative marker *pa-*, appearing in forms such as *ngi-elre* 'combine', *ngu-elre* 'go with all', *pa-elre* 'include; incorporate', and *pa-tu-elre* 'make it all; include all'. While the composite forms involve a totality, they differ in whether they reference a group of entities as a whole, as in (4), or encode aggregative actions applied to the group, as in (5).

4. la kalrakaw kay la-valalake makana-elre.
COMP energetic DEM PL-children MAKANA-all
'All children are energetic.' (ILRDF)
5. ta kilibake pa-tu-elre ki la-waudriwdripi.
1.PL care CAUS-do-all DET PL-animal
'We take care of all animals.' (ILRDF)

Building on the notions of individuation and additivity encoded by *vaeva* and *-elre*, this paper shows that reduplication and affixation have effects similar to those of verbalization and aspectual shifts, giving rise to an array of forms with distinct semantic effects, including property formation, distributivity, aggregation, and exhaustivity, ultimately shaping the interpretation of event structure.

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One and all in the Khamnigan language: Formal expression and semantic distinction

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The presentation is devoted to the concepts of singularity and entirety expressed by quantifiers ‘one’ and ‘all’ in Khamnigan — an underdocumented Mongolic minority language widespread on the compact territory of Russia, Mongolia and China. The idiom addressed in this talk is the Onon Khamnigan variety which is primarily widespread in Zabaykalsky region of Russia in the districts of Kyra, Aksha and Duldurga. The Onon Khamnigan was previously documented by Tsyben Zhamtsarano (1911), Dashinima Damdinov (1962, 1967, 1968, 1975, 1982, 1988, 1995, 2002, 2016) with Ekaterina Sundueva (2015), Ilya Gruntov (2005), Dina Sundueva (2010), and others. After D. Damdinov’s fieldwork conducted in the 1960s, there did not exist any new documented materials of the Onon Khamnigan. From 2022 till nowadays, the documentation work was continued by Arzhaana Syuryun and Viacheslav Ivanov who collected about 163 hours of language materials which include stories, dialogues, grammatical and vocabulary questionnaires.

The research material includes 19 Swadesh-lists of basic vocabulary which includes 100 items + 10 additional items collected in 2022–2025 as well as two Khamnigan dictionaries: the manuscript of the dictionary of Kurulga variety of the Onon Khamnigan (Sarieva, 2024) and the Khamnigan-Russian dictionary (Damdinov, Sundueva, 2015).

The notion of the entirety can be expressed in Onon Khamnigan by several items: *bultu* (~*bulta*~*bolta*), *хu.*, *bukui* (~*buki.*), *bukuli*, and *baran*. The notion of singularity is expressed by only two quantifiers: *nege* and *gantsa*. The authors intend to reveal the peculiarities of each item in detail in their presentation.

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Morphosyntax

On the non-prototypical singular-plural number system in nDrapa

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The present study investigates the singular-plural system in nDrapa (Tibeto-Burman; ISO 639-3: zhb), which is a severely endangered Qiangic language spoken in western China (see Huang 1990; Gong 2007; Shirai 2007, 2009, 2022; Huang 2020, 2022, 2023a). nDrapa possesses a plural morpheme *-ze*, which can attach to both animate (cf. 1a) and inanimate nouns. Moreover, it can attach to both countable and uncountable nouns, as seen in (1b) and (1c). An uncountable noun marked with the plural morpheme expresses a large amount of quantity according to Huang (2023a).

- (1) a. Animate
 $s^h u i^{55} - z e^{33}$ / $k^h \vartheta^{24} - z e^{33}$
 person-PL dog-PL
 ‘people/dogs’
- b. Inanimate (countable)
 $n d z i^{55} - z e^{33}$ / $z e^{24} w \vartheta^{33} - z e^{33}$
 wood-PL quilted.hat-PL
 ‘woods/quilted hats’
- c. Inanimate (uncountable)
 $t \vartheta^{24} - z e^{33}$ / $\eta i^{24} - z e^{33}$
 water-PL milk-PL
 ‘(a large quantity of) water/(a large quantity of) milk’ (Huang 2023a: 174)

Demonstratives in nDrapa also have plural forms, reflected by the morpheme *-ze*. Interestingly, plural demonstratives in nDrapa cannot combine with plural nominals as in (2a-b), whereas in general, plural demonstratives usually agree with plural nouns in languages such as English (2c).

- (2) a. $\{k \vartheta^{33} z e^{53} / (*k \vartheta^{33} z e^{55})\}$ $p^h i^{33} g \vartheta^{55} - z e^{33}$
 PROX.SG PROX.PL apple-PL
 ‘these apples’
- b. $\{k u^{33} t e o^{55} z e^{33} / (*k u^{33} t e o^{55} z e^{33})\}$ $s^h u i^{55} - m b \vartheta^{33} z e^{33} - z e^{33}$
 MED.SG MED.PL person-DEF-PL
 $g \vartheta^{33} g \vartheta^{55}$ $t^h u m^{33} t^h u m^{55}$ $t i^{33}$ $z e^{33}$.
 very tall TI COP:GNO
 ‘Those people are very tall.’
- c. $\{these / (*this)\}$ apples

Furthermore, nDrapa is a classifier language. Numeral classifiers occur in a position following the head noun. Plural demonstratives in nDrapa cannot co-occur with numeral classifiers either, even when the numeral is larger than *one*, as seen in (3).

- (3) $\{k \vartheta^{33} z e^{53} / (*k \vartheta^{33} z e^{55})\}$ $\epsilon^h o^{33} d u^{53}$ $n \epsilon^{33} - t e y^{53}$ $\eta a^{55} - z e^{33}$ $z e^{33}$.
 PROX.SG PROX.PL umbrella two-CL 1SG-POSS COP:GNO
 ‘These two umbrellas are mine.’

The above pattern suggests that demonstratives initially establish a close relation with the head noun before the resulting NP is combined with numeral classifiers. We argue that this follows straightforwardly if demonstratives in nDrapa first combine with the head noun, specifically at Spec NP, and that numeral classifiers serve as modifiers of NP: [NP [NP [Spec DEM] N] [Adjunct-CIP [Spec NUM] CL]]. Given that generally there is no agreement between Spec of XP and an XP-level adjunct, no agreement relationship can be established between the plural demonstrative and the plural feature associated with Num head. The demonstrative at Spec NP cannot agree with the plural morpheme *-ze* either as the plural morpheme merges in a position even higher than the entire DP headed by the definite marker *mbə³³zə³³*: [XP [DP [NP [Spec DEM] N] D-*mbə³³zə³³*] PL-*ze⁵⁵*], as in (3b).

In our study, we will also discuss another Qiangic variety, western Minyag, which illustrates an opposite pattern compared to nDrapa. In western Minyag, demonstratives must take the plural form when combined with plural nominals. We argue that the contrast between (2) and (4) arises because western Minyag is a language with an agreement system on person and number whereas nDrapa does not employ such a system.

(4) a. *ʔe³³tsi⁵⁵ p^{h33}ko⁵⁵-nə³³
 this.SG apple-PL
 Intended: ('these apples) (Huang 2023b: 149)

b. ʔe³³nə⁵⁵ khə³³nbə⁵³-nə³³
 this.PL peach-PL
 'these peaches.' (Huang 2023b: 150)

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Plurality and unitization in Dongxiang: Evidence for a transitional nominal system under Chinese contact

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This paper examines the coexistence of plural marking and classifier systems in Dongxiang, a Mongolic language spoken in northwestern China. Dongxiang has been in long-standing and intensive contact with Linxia Chinese, a Northwestern “atypical” variety characterized by an optional general plural marker and a fully developed numeral classifier system. Such sustained contact has profoundly reshaped Dongxiang’s nominal number and unitization strategies, which this study aims to document and analyze. Typological research commonly assumes a tendency for languages to employ either obligatory grammatical plural marking or obligatory numeral classifiers, given that sortal classifiers are often functionally analogous to plural markers (Aikhenvald 2000). In canonical classifier languages such as Chinese, plurality is not obligatorily marked on the noun, and plural markers typically do not co-occur with classifiers within the same nominal construction. Instead, these systems are understood as alternative strategies for encoding number and individuation (Tang & Her 2019). Within this framework, the Mongolic language family represents the opposite typological profile, relying on morphological plural marking rather than classifiers.

Against this background, Dongxiang presents a case of typological hybridity. Using a diachronic and comparative approach, I trace the evolution of nominal marking in Dongxiang from its inherited Mongolic system to its present state. Historical and comparative evidence suggests that Dongxiang once possessed a limited but categorial plural-marking system typical of Mongolic languages, involving multiple plural marker forms with semantic constraints (*-la*, *-sila*, *-xie*, *-tang*). I then show that this inherited system is currently undergoing erosion. The formerly differentiated plural markers are being replaced by a generalized plural suffix *-la* whose distribution increasingly mirrors that of the Linxia plural marker *-men* [ʃ], used with animated and unanimated nouns. At the same time, plurality is frequently left unmarked, especially in contexts where reference to a ‘whole’ or a mass interpretation is pragmatically salient.

Concurrently, contact with Chinese has also triggered the emergence of a singular-marking strategy in Dongxiang, possibly modelled on the Chinese [one + general classifier *ge* 个] construction. This pattern is calqued using the Dongxiang numeral *nie* ‘one’, e.g. *in hhe nie mutun* ‘that (one) tree’, and signals individuation rather than numerical contrast.

Alongside the simplification of plural morphology, Dongxiang has developed a productive system for expressing unitization through the borrowing and grammaticalization of Chinese classifiers (e.g. *ganzi*, *qiao*, *qiaozi*, *aman*, *matu*, *kozi*, *lazi*, *fu*, *ge*, *pian*, *zuo*, *dong*, *zhang*). These classifiers serve to individuate nominal referents and encode units in numeral constructions. Their emergence introduces a functional distinction between ‘units’ and ‘wholes’ that partially overlaps with, but does not supplant, plural marking. Consequently, contemporary Dongxiang displays a double-marking system in which plural suffixes and classifiers coexist in a largely complementary distribution.

The resulting system is one of double marking, in which plural suffixes and classifiers coexist in a largely complementary distribution. This coexistence challenges the strong interpretation of the mutual exclusivity hypothesis (Greenberg-Sanches-Slobin generalization), and the argument of a possible cohabitation of plural markers and classifier systems if mutually exclusive. Rather than constituting a stable typological counterexample, Dongxiang appears to represent a dynamic transitional stage shaped by sustained language contact.

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'One' in many places: Numeral classifiers and scope in Koho (Di Linh, Vietnam)

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Koho (South Bahnaric, Austroasiatic) is a minority language of Vietnam's Central Highlands whose nominal syntax is shaped by numeral classifiers and noun-final operators (Aikhenvald, 2000; Bisang, 1999; Simpson, 2005). This paper presents new homeland data from a Di Linh (Lâm Đồng) speaker, collected through a targeted elicitation questionnaire on noun-phrase (NP) ordering (compounds, adjectives, possession, gender marking, quantification, demonstratives, and relative clauses). In line with CELEA4's "units and wholes" theme, we examine how numeral-classifier morphology turns entities into countable "ones" (Aikhenvald, 2000; Gil, 2013; Her et al., 2022) and how NP-final markers package these units into larger, well-delimited nominal "wholes" in discourse, within a Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) areal setting (Enfield, 2005; Enfield & Comrie, 2015).

The data confirm a head-initial NP in which most modifiers follow the head noun: N+adjective ('house red'), N+N compounds ('house wood'), and N+relative clause—patterns consistent with well-known DP/NP architectures discussed for Southeast Asian languages (Simpson, 2005). Gender markers show asymmetric positioning (pre-nominal with animals but post-nominal with plants and some human titles), aligning with broader discussions of noun-categorization devices across languages (Aikhenvald, 2019). Most importantly for NP architecture, the proximal demonstrative *do* 'this' is consistently NP-final and can scope over increasingly complex constituents, including classifier phrases, adjectives, and relative clauses, e.g. *sờ biách tờ lil anh yạ do* 'this green piece of bag that I carry'. This strict right-edge placement provides a diagnostic for constituent boundaries in complex NPs, comparable in spirit to scope/structure diagnostics used in classifier-language DP research (Cheng & Sybesma, 1999; Simpson, 2005; Wu & Bodomo, 2009).

Our main contribution concerns the syntax of counting. Olsen's (2014) description of Koho-Sre classifies the language as QNTF-CLF-N and highlights an ongoing replacement of specialized classifiers by three highly general ones. The Di Linh data instead show (i) productive specialized classifiers and even stacked classifiers (e.g., 'ten CLF CLF ant'), and (ii) multiple syntactic placements for numeral-classifier material, a type of variation widely attested in numeral-classifier systems in East and Southeast Asia (Aikhenvald, 2000; Bisang, 1999; Bisang & Wu, 2017; Gil, 2013; Her et al., 2022). First, canonical enumeration uses a prenominal numeral+classifier sequence, consistent with basic typological expectations for classifier languages (Aikhenvald, 2000; Gil, 2013):

- (1) *pe nom gai cih*
 three CLF CLF pencil
 'three pencils'

Second, classifiers can "float" to a postverbal quantificational position, yielding N-NUM-CLF order with cardinal interpretation (not ordinal). Postverbal quantification and the broader flexibility of quantifier-classifier material are well-documented in MSEA and East Asian classifier languages (Bisang, 1999; Bisang & Wu, 2017):

- (2) *anh ploi plai tạp tê jót nai*
 1SG buy mango ten CLF.FRUIT
 'I bought ten mangoes.'

Third, an identificational counting construction combines a pronoun with numeral+classifier to encode small "wholes" such as pairs, a strategy that fits cross-linguistic perspectives on classifiers as noun-categorization/individuation devices (Aikhenvald, 2000, 2019):

- (3) hi dê bal náh
 1PL two CLF
 ‘the two of us / we two’

Finally, we document a split in adnominal possession that aligns with “part–whole” relations: inalienable relations are expressed by simple juxtaposition (‘tail dog’, ‘father I’), whereas alienable possession is marked by NP-final dê ‘of’ (‘bag 3 GEN’) (Olsen, 2014). Taken together, these findings refine the typological profile of Koho nominal grammar by showing that unitizing morphology can surface both NP-internally and clause-externally, while demonstratives and genitives remain anchored at the right edge as markers of whole-NP scope. We discuss implications for typologies of numeral-classifier placement (Aikhenvald, 2000; Bisang, 1999; Gil, 2013; Her et al., 2022; Tang & Her, 2019) and for dialectal change within Koho in a contact-intense MSEA setting (Enfield, 2005; Enfield & Comrie, 2015), with brief comparative remarks to Vietnamese classifier syntax where relevant (Simpson & Ngo, 2018).

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Numerals in Khitan: A typological and areal perspective

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Numerals of the first ten are one of the best explored lexical sections in Khitan. Firstly, the cardinals for 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and the ordinals for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 were given a reading (see Kane, 2009: 143–144). In the last two decades research focused on the remnant numerals of the first ten (see Wu & Bao, 2025: 17–18). Upon deciphering the readings of numerals, research has drawn attention on their similarity with Mongolic numerals.

Two underexplored fields are the historical development of Khitan numerals and their typology. This paper deals with the typology of the Khitan numeral system in a comparative perspective to numeral systems in Mongolic, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungusic.

Mongolic, Turkic and Manchu-Tungusic distinguish several types of numerals including: cardinals, ordinals, and distributives (in all families), collectives (in Mongolic and Turkic), and multiplicatives (in Mongolic and Manchu-Tungusic). Like nouns, numerals can take case suffixes. Lastly, there are indications of further—no more productive—derivational suffixes in some forms, e.g. MM *qu-nan* [three-DER] ‘three year old (male animal)’ (Rybatzki, 2003: 70), and Ma. *em-hun* [one-DER] ‘sole, alone’ (Vovin, 2024: 120).

Khitan has cardinals and ordinals. Besides that, it has a suffix <d.h> *-taq*, e.g. <is.d.h> *is-taq* [nine-DER] ‘at (the age of) nine’ (*Dilie* 5-31). Like nouns, numerals can take case suffixes, e.g. <jur.en> *ʃur-en* [two-GEN] ‘of two (people)’ (110 times in CWJ corpus, see CWJ 1825-1826), as well as possessive suffixes, e.g. <ci.ur.eñ.en> *ʃ^hur-ep-en* [two-ORD.F-PX3] ‘his second (name)’ (21 times in CWJ corpus, see CWJ 1894). Further underexplored derivatives are present as well, e.g. <ñ.em.s.g> *je-msek* [one-DER] ‘unity? united?’ (4 times in CWJ corpus, see CWJ 1969), cf. Peng (2023) and Batdorj (2025); <jur.i> *ʃur-i* [two-ADJZ?] or [two-ACC?] ‘twofold? double?’ or ‘the two (accusative)?’ (*Renxian* 22-29). This paper aims to survey the morphological processes observable in Khitan numerals, and compare them to those in Mongolic, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungusic.

Abbreviations:

Grammar

ACC – accusative

ADJZ – adjectivizer

DER – derivational suffix

GEN – genitive

PX3 – 3rd person possessive suffix

Primary Sources

Dilie – Epitaph of Yelü Dilie*Renxian* – Epitaph of Yelü Renxian

Secondary Sources

CWJ – Chinggeltei & Wu & Jiruhe (2017)

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Singularity and plurality in Dagur: A comparison with Middle Mongolian

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Dagur language, the geographically eastern-most Mongolic language spoken in Inner Mongolia by around 130,000 speakers (Yamada 2020), has retained a substantial set of features reaching back to the Middle Mongolian variety (Godziński 1985), the predecessor of the Mongolic languages (Janhunen 2003), even though it also shares some features with Solon, a Tungusic language. Given these numerous resemblances, the beginnings of linguistic research on the Dagur language and its varieties were essentially influenced by the debate of a potential affiliation of this language to the Tungusic language family (Poppe 1930). Today, the belonging of this language to the Mongolian language family is still under discussion (Yamada 2020).

While Manchu writing system for recording Dagur was used during the C'ing dynasty (1636-1912) (Yamada 2020), the attempts to write down Dagur in Cyrillic and Latin script essentially emerged in the 20th century. Despite no unified writing system, the Dagur language oral literature, which includes vivid tales from the agricultural society from the northeast of China especially from the middle of the 20th century (Martin 1961; Todaeva), has been playing an important role in the documentation of this language. The author of this paper analysed the morphological features of singular and plural nouns and pronouns in the Dagur language on the basis of a corpus which includes works written down in the Manchu, Cyrillic and Latin scripts.

The author of this paper attempts to answer the following question: Which morphological features of singular and plural of nouns and pronouns do Dagur and Middle Mongolian share in the light of the analysed text corpora. Similarly to the Middle Mongolian language, Dagur numerals functioning as modifiers and preceding a noun take the “-n” form. Another similarity can be found in the morphology of personal pronouns which do not take plural markers neither in Dagur, nor in Middle Mongolian. A further resemblance refers to the structure of ordinal numbers, distributives and collective forms in both languages. However, unusually for Mongolic languages, Dagur language includes a systematic plural marker -sul/-sel (and -dul in Xinjiang Dagur variety) attached to nouns. In contrast, the Middle Mongolian variety seldomly did use plural markers for nouns, while this group included such forms as -s, -nar, -(u/ü)d, -nugud and others, in a relatively limited semantic contexts.

The author carried out the comparison of morphological features of Dagur singular and plural nouns and pronouns against the Middle Mongolian characteristics mainly on the basis of the epic work *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Ligeti 1971) written down in Middle Mongolian, which abounds in vivid stories illustrating the life of Chinggis Khan, from his childhood to his conquests, focusing both on the stories of a prominent individual and collective actions of the Mongols.

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Fusion or archaism? The unique accusative-genitive suffix in peripheral Mongolic languages
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This study explores the diachronic dynamics of case morphology in peripheral Mongolic languages (Eastern Yugur, Dongxiang, Monguor, and Bao'an) in comparison to Modern Mongolian and 13th-century attested forms. These minoritized languages of East Asia exhibit a striking morphological trait: the formal identity of the accusative and genitive cases, both expressed by a single suffix. This "unity" of form stands in sharp contrast to the "plurality" of markers found in Modern Standard Mongolian.

Addressing "On(c)e and (for) all": A Typological Perspective

In line with the conference theme "On(c)e and (for) all," this paper challenges the notion of linear, irreversible language change. The core of the analysis investigates whether this single suffix represents:

1. A "Once and for all" Simplification: A late analogical fusion (syncretism) where phonetic proximity led to the collapse of two distinct categories into one.
2. A Circular Archaism: A reminiscence of an earlier stage of Proto-Mongolic where the distinction was not yet fully established, supported by 13th-century sources occasionally showing a single morpheme for both functions.
3. An Areal Influence (The Salar Hypothesis): This study suggests that what appears to be a modern simplification might actually be the result of contact-induced change from the Salar language (a Turkic language of the region). Salar exhibits this specific syncretic phenomenon and was spoken in the area prior to the arrival of Mongolic speakers, suggesting a structural alignment through long-term proximity.

The paper argues that the linguistic evolution of these peripheral varieties does not follow a straight line from "simple" to "complex." Instead, it demonstrates a circularity in grammaticalization: the "one" (the unique suffix) might be both the starting point and the result of the process—whether through internal preservation or external pressure.

Through a typological lens, this study contributes to the conference's exploration of "units and wholes" by analyzing how a single morphological unit can encompass the entirety of adnominal and adverbial object relations. It proves that in the history of Mongolic languages, morphological differentiation is not always a "once and for all" achievement, but a fluid state shaped by history, geography, and inter-ethnic contact.

From two to one: Paratactic clause chaining as a source of complex predicates in Ainuic

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Ainuic (isolate) is indigenous to the Japanese archipelago. It was gradually pushed northward from Honshu to Hokkaido by c. 1000 CE, to southern Sakhalin by c. 1300 CE, and to the Kurils by c. 1500–1600 CE. This process corresponds to the major dialectal diversification into Hokkaido (HA), Sakhalin (SA), and Kuril (KA) dialect groups. HA is further subdivided into Southwestern and Northeastern varieties; the latter is closer to KA.

To express aspect (progressive etc.) Ainuic uses complex predicates consisting of a lexical verb and a verb of existence or motion encoding particular aspectual meanings. In most dialects, both verbs are marked for person-number and are linked by various conjunctions (1). However, recently discovered materials on KA, the most poorly documented Ainu variety, reveal that it does not employ conjunctions in aspectual complex predicates and that the second (functional) verb lacks personal marking (2a). In HA and SA, aspect is predominantly marked by the conjunction-based strategy (1), (3a), (4a); however, in Northeastern HA (4b) and SA (3b) (Dal Corso 2021: 110), chained conjunction-less aspectual constructions with both verbs marked for person are also attested. Occasionally, in SA only, personal marking on the second verb is dropped (3c), as in KA, cf. (2a). Finally, though to a different extent, Ainu dialects show V-V compounds, in which the erstwhile two verbs become one (2c, 4c).

To summarize, depending on the dialect, aspectual complex predicates in Ainuic are formed either with conjunctions linking two finite verbs (1), (3a), (4a), or without conjunctions (2a, b), (3b), (4b), in which case the second verb gradually loses personal marking (2a), (3c) and can even merge with the first verb (2c), (4c). I suggest that both strategies originate in paratactic clause chaining (3b), (4b), which is residually retained everywhere except in Southwestern HA. The conjunction-less strategy, which is typically found in KA (2) and occasionally in SA (3b,c), is more archaic. The conjunction strategy, by contrast, appears to have been reinforced later in Hokkaido (1), (4a)—after parts of Ainuic had migrated to Sakhalin and the Kurils—presumably through language contact with Japanese, which has structurally similar complex predicates in *-te* (Bugaeva 2018).

As noted by Givón (2015: 39), “syntactic constructions arose diachronically from flat paratactic configurations through... syntacticization... A diachronically mature language uses both, with the pre-grammatical mode continuously replenishing eroded syntactic constructions.” This is precisely what we observe in Ainuic, where residually retained paratactic clause chaining serves as a source for two distinct grammaticalization strategies, with and without conjunctions.

- (1) *ku-inuye kor k-an siri un. Southwestern HA*
 1SG.S-carve and 1SG-exist.SG VIS.EVID FIN
 ‘I’m carving.’ (progressive) (Tamura 1979: 23)
- (2) a. *ku-cis an KA*
 1SG.S-cry exist.SG ‘I am crying.’ (progressive) (Voznesensky#819)
- b. *cup rikin ek*
 sun descend.SG come.SG
 ‘The sun is going down.’ (speaker-oriented/completive) (Voznesensky#1387)
- c. *ku-ani-ek*
 1SG.A-hold.SG-come.SG
 ‘I brought it.’ (Voznesensky#810)
- (3) a. *‘an-e-‘u-ko-nupur-a-hci kusu ‘okay-anahc[i]-hi ne SA*
 4S-APPL-REC-APPL-have.spirit-0-3PO PRG-4S.HON-PK COP
 ‘We have been enjoying ourselves.’ (progressive) (Dal Corso 2021: 169)
- b. *nean henk[e]-uta cep_-koyki-hci ‘okay-a-hci*
 that old.man-COLL fish-catch-3PS PRG-0-3PS

Number in Itelmen nouns
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Itelmen (Chukotko-Kamchatkan) is an indigenous and critically endangered language spoken on the Kamchatka Peninsula in the Russian Far East. This paper provides a descriptive account of nominal number marking in Itelmen, focusing on the formal expression of singular, plural, and collective categories, and discusses their typological implications. Based on published descriptions and available examples, the study aims to clarify how number distinctions are encoded morphologically and how they interact with agreement patterns in adjectives and verbs.

Itelmen nouns exhibit a three-way number distinction: singular, plural, and collective. Plural marking is primarily realized by the suffix $-\lambda(n)$, which attaches to nouns with various absolutive singular endings ($-\emptyset$, $-m$, $-n$, $-\eta$, $-c$) (Georg & Volodin 1999: 64). Regular singular–plural correspondences are illustrated by pairs such as *kist*- \emptyset ‘house’ vs. *kist-e λ n* ‘houses’ and *t χ tu*- m ‘boat’ vs. *t χ tu*- λ n ‘boats’. Importantly, the plural marker $-\lambda(n)$ is not restricted to nouns: it also appears consistently on adjectives and verbs, indicating that plural number is a pervasive grammatical feature across word classes. This cross-categorical consistency aligns Itelmen with languages in which number agreement is morphologically transparent and structurally integrated.

Beyond this regular pattern, several classes of nouns display non-canonical singular forms. One such class includes nouns whose singular ends in $-l\eta n$ or $-mi\eta$ (Georg & Volodin 1999: 67). These forms typically denote a single item that is conceptually part of a natural set, as seen in *alacika-l η n* ‘festive a summer shoe made of reindeer suede (sg.)’ or *jajp λ -l η n* ‘hoof (sg.)’, with regular plural forms in $-\lambda n$. Certain nouns, such as *jaal η n* ‘moon’, lack a plural form altogether, suggesting lexical restrictions on number opposition.

Another noteworthy pattern involves reduplication. Several nouns employ reduplicated stems in forms glossed as singular, e.g. *lx α mlx α m*, *k α pk α p*, *k’ α mk’ α m* (Volodin 1976, Bobaljik 2006), while their plurals are marked by $-\lambda n$ on a reduced base. However, reduplication is also productive in verb and adjective roots to form abstract nouns (e.g. *pa η opa η* ‘(falling) snow’, *cu ϕ cu ϕ* ‘rain’, *om λ om* ‘warmth’). This raises the possibility that reduplicated nominal forms may not strictly encode singular number but rather denote abstract or generic concepts, a hypothesis with broader typological relevance.

Collective in Itelmen is formed by the suffix $-al$ and is especially common with plant nouns, such as *ic’-al* ‘birch grove’ and *sis-al* ‘grassland’. Collectives are also attested with non-plant nouns, including *c’ α mzanl-al* ‘a crowd of people’ and *η ej η -al* ‘mountain range’. Collectives frequently occur in the locative case and tend to control singular agreement on adjectives and verbs, despite their semantically plural reference. This mismatch between semantic plurality and grammatical agreement contributes to typological discussions of collective nouns and number agreement.

Finally, the paper notes methodological challenges arising from conversational speech, where the glottal stop $-\lambda$ marking plural is often phonetically weak. In such cases, number distinctions must be inferred from agreement morphology on adjectives or verbs. Overall, the Itelmen data contribute to a more nuanced understanding of number systems that combine regular plural marking, lexically conditioned singular forms, reduplication, and a collective category.

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Menna(-gi), me:-bi, tende-tendera, tetsu-tetsu, tori-tsutsu...: *Expressions of distributivity and totalisation in Hachijō*

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The Hachijō language (simply called *Shima-kotoba*, ‘island speech’, by its native speakers) is an endangered minority language of Japan, traditionally spoken in the southern half of the Izu Archipelago, roughly 250 km south-east of Tokyo. Although it was for a long time considered a dialect of Japanese, the current dominant view is to consider it an independent language (YAMADA, 2010; IANNUCCI, 2019), possibly belonging to the Eastern branch of the Japonic family (KUPCHIK, 2011: 7-9). Being gradually replaced by Tokyo Japanese, it is now critically endangered, and was included in 2009 in the UNESCO’s *Atlas of the World’s Languages in danger*, alongside Ainu and six of the Ryukyuan languages (MOSELEY et al., 2009).

Although Hachijō is well known for its phonological, lexical and morphological archaisms, which can often be traced back to Old Japanese, or sometimes even Proto-Japonic (KANEDA, 2001: 159-168), its syntax and formal semantics remain understudied to this day. For instance, although it was long noted that Hachijō features highly divergent lexical items related to totalisation and distributivity (such as the nominal/quantifier *menna* ‘all’, the numeral compound *te-tsu* ‘one’; or the circumstantial suffix *-(na)gi*); their syntactic behaviour has, for the most part, never been studied before.

Thus, this presentation aims at exploring the lexical and syntactic strategies for expressing distributivity in Hachijō, mostly comparing three phenomena:

- the use of ‘floating quantifiers’ (often reinforced by circumstantial suffixes)
- the use of reduplication
- the use of bound suffixes within the noun phrase

In this perspective, particular attention will be given to the diachrony of those phenomena and the morphemes they rely on, both in comparison with OJ (and especially Eastern Old Japanese), and within the broader context of Proto-Japonic reconstruction.

By analyzing the Hachijō distributive system, this presentation will hope to challenge the ‘Standard-centric’ view of Japonic historical syntax, and provide data for linguists interested in typology, the Japonic family, or the syntactic encoding of quantification.

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Quinary system and reduplication: The two diachronic layers of native Japonic numerals
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Native numerals in Japonic topolects are exceedingly consistent, with reflexes of numbers 1–10 uniformly found throughout the family, in Mainland and Ryukyuan alike. All can be unequivocally reconstructed in Proto-Japonic, forming a mostly prototypical decimal system (PJ; Table 1).

value	Old Japanese	Naze (Amami)	Hirara (Miyako)	PJ
'1'	pitə	tʰi:	psiti: ~ psiti ~ ti:	*pitəw ~ *təw
'2'	puta	tʰa:	futa: ~ futa ~ ta:	*puta ~ *ta
'3'	mi	mi:	mi: ~ mi:	*mis
'4'	jə	ju:	ju:	*jə(m)b > *jəv
'5'	itu	ʔitsi	itsi	*itu
'6'	mu	mo:	mm ~ mu: ~ muju	*mur /*muj
'7'	nana	nana	nana	*nana
'8'	ja	ja:	ja:	*ja(n)g > *jaɾ
'9'	kəkənə	kunu	kukunu	*kəkə(nə)
'10'	təwo	tu:	tu:	*təwo

Table 1. Proto-Japonic numerals
(sources: NINJAL 1963; Hirayama 1992–93; Vovin 2020)

It has also been observed since as early as 17th century (cf. the overview in Yasuda 2015: 38 ff.) that some of Japonic numerals – '1' and '2', '3' and '6', '4' and '8' – form morphological pairs in which one numerical value seems to be encoded by one vowel, whereas another vowel encodes its multiplication by two. Shiratori (1937: 2) labeled this the “reduplication system”. A different type of reduplication is observed in the indivisible numbers '7' and '9', which are respectively constituted by the reduplicated syllables *na and *kə.

Equally notable, however, is the vowel alternation in the second syllable of the polysyllabic forms accompanying the syllable-initial *t: *pitəw '1' : *puta '2', *itu '5'. The alternating syllables seem to be forming a quinary system which apparently preceded the decimal system. The reduplication system may have combined with some of the original quinary numerals, namely '1', '2' and '5', to constitute complex forms. This resulted in a hybrid two-layer system (Table 2), with the morphemes *təw, *ta and *tu pointing at an older iteration of PJ, Archi-Proto-Japonic (APJ).

value	APJ	PJ
'1'	*təw	*pi-təw
'2'	*ta	*pu-ta
'3'	*mis	*mis
'4'	*jə(m)b	*jəv
'5'	*tu	*i-tu

Table 2. APJ and PJ numerals 1–5

This two-layer hypothesis provides several insights into the diachrony of Japonic numerals. Crucially, the component *o in '10' *təwo can be abstracted as generically indicating the place value of 'tens', a clipping of the morpheme *so in the lexemes expressing 'tens' in Old Japanese and some Ryukyuan languages (Table 3). Thus, PJ '10' *təwo < *təw '1' + *so 'tens'.

value	Old Japanese	Hirara-Miyako	PJ
'30'	miso (Vovin 2020: 342)	misu (Nevskiy 2025: 351)	*mis-so > *miso
'40'	jəsə (Vovin 2020: 342)	jusu (Nevskiy 2025: 231)	*jəv-so > *jəso
'80'	jaso (Vovin 2020: 343)	ja:su (Nevskiy 2025: 205)	*jaɻ-so > *jaso

Table 3. Proto-Japonic tens

The reconstruction of APJ '1' as *təw also explains the variant reflexes of 'one' in Proto-Ryukyuan (Thorpe 1983: 314), with two possible patterns of handling the reflex of *w after Japonic ceased to permit syllable-final consonants: *pitəw > *pitə or *pitəw > *pite.

The two-layer hypothesis has important consequences for etymologizing Japonic numerals. It establishes more straightforward links with Peninsular Japonic (such as *tək 'ten', Vovin 2017) and potentially connects these numerals to an extra-Japonic source. By showing the transition from quinary to decimal, which is a cross-linguistically common phenomenon (cf. e.g. Gvozdanović 1999), it also expands the overall understanding of the Japonic numeral morphology and semantics, contextualizing Japonic numerals within general typology.

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