

# Èven nominal evaluatives and the marking of definiteness

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► **To cite this version:**

Brigitte Pakendorf, Ija Krivoschapkina. Èven nominal evaluatives and the marking of definiteness. *Linguistic Typology*, De Gruyter, 2014, 18 (2), pp.289-331. 10.1515/lingty-2014-0012 . halshs-01178751

**HAL Id: halshs-01178751**

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Submitted on 19 Dec 2018

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**Èven nominal evaluatives and the marking  
of definiteness**

**Abstract:** Languages vary as to whether they overtly mark the referential status of noun phrases as well as the manner in which they do so. This article discusses a hitherto undescribed means of marking the (un)identifiability of referents found in Èven, a North Tungusic language spoken in Siberia. Narrative data from two geographically and linguistically divergent dialects show that in this language (in)definiteness is expressed with sets of diminutive and augmentative suffixes which are in complementary distribution. One member of each set occurs with identifiable referents and one member occurs with unidentifiable referents; the dialects differ with respect to possessive-marked nouns.

**Keywords:** augmentative, definiteness, diminutive, evaluative morphology, Èven, information structure, referent-tracking, syntax, Tungusic

DOI 10.1515/lingty-2014-0012

Received: 9 September 2013. Revised: 24 March 2014

## 1 Introduction

Languages vary as to whether they overtly mark the referential status of noun phrases (NPs) as well as the manner in which they do so. Whereas the languages of western Europe are well known to share the obligatory use of definite and indefinite articles to mark the identifiability of nominal referents (Haspelmath 1998: 274), many languages make do without such a grammatical category: in a sample of 566 languages, Dryer (2005: 154) codes 188 (33%) as lacking both an indefinite and a definite article. There is also crosslinguistic variation in the use of determiners: in some languages, the definite article is restricted to only a subset of the functions commonly associated with definite determiners, or the article marks a

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distinction not between identifiable and unidentifiable referents, but between specific and non-specific ones (Dryer 2007: 154, 156). Apart from articles and other determiners, (in)definiteness can be marked by means of differential case-marking, word order, verb agreement, or noun incorporation (Lyons 1999: 86–89, Creissels 2006: 138–139). Thus, in Turkish the accusative case is used only with definite direct objects (and certain indefinite pre-verbal direct objects; Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 156), and in Tadzjik the object-marking clitic =*ro* is attached only to referentially prominent (and mostly definite) direct objects (Comrie 1981: 168). In Mandarin Chinese, only definite and generic NPs can stand in pre-verbal position. In the Uralic languages, the subjective conjugation of verbs is used with intransitives and transitives with indefinite direct objects; when the direct object is definite, the objective conjugation is used. Similarly, in some Bantu languages verb agreement indicates the person and number of the subject, irrespective of its referential status, as well as definite, but not indefinite, direct objects (Lyons 1999: 86–88). In languages which permit noun incorporation, only non-referential nouns can be incorporated, again providing an indirect means of determining the referential status of the NP (Creissels 2006: 139).

In this article we discuss a crosslinguistically apparently unique means of marking the identifiability of nominal referents found in Èven, a North Tungusic language spoken in northeastern Siberia. As will be described in detail below, in Èven sets of augmentative and sets of diminutive suffixes function as (in)definiteness markers, with one member of each set occurring with definite NPs and the other with indefinite NPs. And yet, notwithstanding their function as markers of referentiality, the primary meaning of these optional suffixes is to denote the size of the referent or to possibly express attitudinal nuances.

In order to evaluate the extent to which these evaluatives are comparable to (in)definiteness markers in better described languages, the category of (in)definiteness will be briefly introduced in Section 2 before proceeding to a presentation of the Èven data in Section 3. Section 4 examines the role these optional suffixes play in tracking referents in discourse, and Section 5 discusses cases where there is a clash in “agreement” in (in)definiteness marking. The question of the origin of this rare means of marking the referential status of NPs is addressed with a brief survey of evaluative morphology in related and neighbouring languages in Section 6, and Section 7 concludes the article.

## 2 Identifiability and definiteness

The assumptions a speaker makes about the hearer’s ability to identify discourse referents belong to the domain of cognition and as such are presumably a univer-

sal feature of human communication. This cognitive category of (un)identifiability of referents is mapped overtly onto the grammatical category of definiteness in many, but not all, languages (Lambrecht 1994: 87, cf. Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 660). Thus, in those languages that have a category of definiteness, definitely-marked NPs provide an indication to the hearer that he should be able to identify the referent of the given noun phrase. However, there is no one-to-one correlation between the cognitive category of identifiability and the grammatical category of definiteness, leading to differences in the assignment of (in)definiteness to NPs in different languages (Lambrecht 1994: 79–87, Creissels 2006: 130).

Referents can be identifiable and thus marked as definite because they are inherently unique, such as ‘the sun’ or ‘the president’ of a specific country at a specific time, because they were previously mentioned in discourse (anaphoric identifiability), because they are identifiable in the immediate context of the speech act (situational identifiability), or through association with another referent in a certain semantic frame (associative identifiability). For instance, mentioning a bus or taxi in the context of public transport triggers the association of ‘driver’, since buses and taxis are known to have drivers, who can then be referred to for the first time with a definite NP (Creissels 2006: 129–130, cf. Dryer 2007: 153). The referents of 1st and 2nd person pronouns are uniquely identifiable and thus inherently definite. Similarly, proper nouns are used in contexts when the speaker assumes the hearer can identify the referent, so that they, too, are usually treated as definite NPs (Foley 2007: 411). The same holds for demonstratives (Lyons 1999: 107), since they indicate to the hearer that he is expected to be able to identify the referent (cf. Hawkins 1978: 156). Possessive-marked NPs, on the other hand, vary in whether they are treated as definite or indefinite. While in many languages possessive NPs are definite (e.g., English *Fred’s friend* = *the friend of Fred*), in others they can be either definite or indefinite, as seen in Italian *il mio libro* ‘my book’ vs. *un mio libro* ‘a book of mine’ (Lyons 1999: 23–24, 130–134).

Indefinite NPs, on the other hand, indicate to the hearer that the referent is not yet identifiable (e.g., Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 201). Most commonly, these are entities first introduced into discourse, which can be specific (referential) – i.e., when the referent is known to the speaker, but not yet to the hearer – or non-specific (non-referential), when the referent is known to neither speaker nor hearer. Since predicate NPs do not refer, but only characterize already identified referents, they are generally not coded as definite (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 200–201, Lambrecht 1994: 80). Generic NPs are non-specific, since they do not refer to individual entities; however, they can be regarded as referring to an entire class of entities which is in turn identifiable; as such, they can be coded as both definite or indefinite in many languages (Lambrecht 1994: 88, Creissels 2006: 131, Foley 2007: 412).

While Èven does not have obligatory articles that mark (in)definiteness such as those commonly found in western European languages, Mal'čukov (2008: 379–391) mentions several means by which the referential status of NPs in discourse can be expressed. On the one hand, as is crosslinguistically common, the use of certain lexemes can indicate that the nominal referent is unidentifiable or identifiable: indefinite pronouns clearly indicate the indefiniteness of the NP, a function which can also be performed by the numeral *omen* 'one', while the definiteness of the NP can be indicated with demonstratives. On the other hand, different syntactic means to express the referential status of NPs exist in Èven as well: as is common in other languages of Eurasia (cf. Fraurud 2001, Nikolaeva 2003), possessive marking can be used to indicate that a referent is identifiable, see (1a). Furthermore, plural number agreement of nouns and predicates after numerals higher than one is a means of signalling the prominence of discourse referents and their identifiability, with unidentifiable and/or non-prominent referents remaining in the singular (Mal'čukov 2008: 386–389), see (1b).

- (1) a. *ńan kəbala-ŋ-a-n      ńu:riđzi      bədu-ri-n      tara-w*  
 and bear-ALN-EP-POSS.3SG    exit-ANT.CVB    bring-PST-3SG    DIST-ACC  
*asi-w      đzu:-tki-n*  
 woman-ACC    house-ALL-POSS.3SG  
 'And the bear (lit., her bear) came out (of his den) and brought that woman to her home.' (Bystraja dialect, BP's field data: EPA\_cannibals\_019)
- b. *Ōla-du    mūlga-ri-tan    digen    bej-u*  
 Ōla-DAT    think-PST-3PL    four    man[SG]-ACC  
*hor-uken-ne-de-wur*  
 go-CAUS-INTENT-PURP-PRFL.PL  
 'On the Ōla (river) they decided to send four men (to search for the enemy).' (Mal'čukov 2008: 387 (original from Novikova 1980: 135); glossing and English translation ours)

Lastly, as will be described in detail in the remainder of this article, the Èven nominal evaluative suffixes express the identifiability or lack thereof of referents.

## 3 Diminutives and augmentatives in Èven

### 3.1 Introduction

Èven is a North Tungusic language spoken in a vast area of northeastern Siberia, from the Jana-Lena watershed in the west to the Chukotka and Kamchatka peninsulas in the east. It is dialectally highly fragmented, with 13 different dialects comprising several sub-dialects clustering in two groups (western vs. eastern; Burykin 2004: 85). Mutual intelligibility between peripheral dialects is low due to differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, and the lexicon. The data discussed here stem from two of the linguistically and geographically most distinct Èven dialects: the Lamunkhin dialect spoken in the village of Sebjan-Küöl and surrounding reindeer herding brigades in central Yakutia, which is the westernmost still viable dialect, and the Bystraja dialect spoken in two villages in central Kamchatka, which represents one of the easternmost dialects of Èven. Among the many salient differences between these two dialects is the loss of the 1st person plural inclusive/exclusive distinction in the Lamunkhin dialect, as can be seen when comparing examples (2f), (8a), and (12d) with (21b) and (23b).

Practically all Èven dialects are highly endangered or even moribund; the dialects included in this study are no exception. While the Lamunkhin dialect is currently still being passed on to children, the speech community is trilingual in Èven, the Turkic language Sakha (Yakut), and Russian, and Sakha is severely encroaching on Èven in public spheres of communication. The strong contact pressure of Sakha has led to noticeable changes in Lamunkhin Èven, the most striking of which are copied verbal paradigms (Pakendorf 2009, to appear). The Bystraja dialect is moribund, with no speakers younger than 40 years of age; here, the community is in the process of shifting to Russian, a shift which will be complete in at most 20 to 30 years, when the last elderly speakers of Èven have passed away.

Èven is described as having a fairly extensive complement of nominal evaluative suffixes: for example, Cincius (1947: 77–79) lists three augmentative suffixes (*-kA:jA*, *-ńqǰA*, and *-mkAr*)<sup>1</sup> and three diminutive suffixes (*-kAn*, *-čAn*, and *-jAkAn*), as well as a pejorative suffix *-mljA* with scornful or disdainful meaning. No dialect-

<sup>1</sup> Since in Èven suffixes undergo vowel harmony and consonant assimilation processes which can change the surface forms, morphemes in isolation are presented throughout in their underlying form, in which capital letters indicate phonemes that undergo changes, and capital A represents *a* or *e*. In the transcription adopted here, dotted vowels (*i̇*, *u̇*, *ȯ*) are those that harmonize with *a*, while undotted vowels (*i*, *u*, *o*) harmonize with *e*.

tal differences in the use of the evaluative suffixes are mentioned in descriptions (Cincius 1947: 77–79, Malchukov 1995: 11); however, the data of Cincius (1947) are biased towards eastern dialects. It is therefore not surprising that in the Bystraja dialect the augmentative suffixes are indeed found as described, and only minor differences exist for the diminutive morphemes (see Table 1). The suffix *-kAn* has lost its primary function of nominal diminutive and instead functions mostly as an intensifier in both the Lamunkhin and the Bystraja dialect (as can be seen in (7a) and (32a) for the Lamunkhin dialect); it will therefore not be discussed further in this article. In addition to *-čAn* and *-jAkAn*, the third diminutive found in the Bystraja dialect is *-kAkAn*. As to the suffix *-mljA* described by Cincius, this does not have a primarily pejorative meaning in the Bystraja dialect. Rather, it expresses a meaning of ‘former, previously used’, indicating age when referring to inanimates or non-humans, e.g., *mō:mī-mija* ‘old boat’ (< *mō:mī* ‘boat’), and a sense of ‘previous affiliation that does not hold anymore’ with respect to humans, e.g., *atīkam-mija-wu* ‘my former wife’ (< *atīkan* ‘old woman, wife’ with 1st person singular possessive suffix *-wu*) or *Tanja-mija* ‘the former Tanja’, where Tanja used to be an affinal family member but isn’t anymore.

In contrast, the nominal evaluative suffixes used in the Lamunkhin dialect differ from the descriptions: there are only two augmentative suffixes *-mAjA* and *-ñdʒA* and two diminutive suffixes *-k(A)kAn* and *-čAn* (see Table 1). The suffix *-mkAr* does occur, albeit only in archaic fixed expressions with a pejorative meaning when referring to inanimates, such as *čʒu-mkar* ‘old, decrepit house’ (< *čʒu*: ‘house’), or *abdū-mkar* ‘rags’ (< *abdū* ‘things, clothes’), and the opposite meaning of admiration or surprise concerning the size and strength of human referents, e.g., *ahī-mkar* ‘big, strong woman’ (< *ahī* ‘woman’). It is falling out of use even in these restricted functions and is known only to older speakers. The augmentative *-kA:jA*, the diminutive *-jAkAn*, and the evaluative suffix *-mljA* found in

**Table 1:** Nominal evaluative suffixes found in Èven

	Cincius (1947)	Bystraja (eastern dialect)	Lamunkhin (western dialect)
Augmentative	<i>-mkAr</i> <i>-ñdʒA</i> <i>-kA:jA</i>	<i>-mkAr</i> <i>-ñdʒA</i> <i>-kA:jA</i>	<i>-mAjA</i> <i>-ñdʒA</i>
Diminutive	<i>-kAn</i> <i>-čAn</i> <i>-jAkAn</i>	<i>-kAkAn</i> <i>-čAn</i> <i>-jAkAn</i>	<i>-k(A)kAn</i> <i>-čAn</i>
Other evaluative	<i>-mljA</i>	<i>-mljA</i>	( <i>-mkAr</i> )

eastern dialects are not used at all in the Lamunkhin dialect. In this article we focus on the functions of the specifically augmentative and diminutive suffixes occurring with nominal referents<sup>2</sup> and thus ignore the evaluative suffixes *-mljA* (Bystraja dialect) and *-mkAr* (Lamunkhin dialect).

According to Cincius' description, the different diminutive and augmentative suffixes convey different kinds of emotive meanings in addition to denoting the size of the referent, with the augmentatives expressing tenderness or respect, and the diminutives expressing tenderness, condescension, or contempt. However, closer inspection of the data reveals that the differences in use of the suffixes are in actual fact determined by the identifiability of the referent (cf. Mal'čukov 2008: 380–383), as will be discussed in detail below.

This article is based primarily on examples from spontaneous narratives collected by BP in six field trips between 2007 and 2012 (four to Sebjan-Küöl and two to Kamchatka). For the Lamunkhin dialect more than 600 nominal evaluative examples were analysed, while the corpus of the Bystraja dialect, which is approximately one third the size of that of the Lamunkhin dialect, furnished nearly 200 examples. These data are augmented with insights by IVK, who is a fluent native speaker of the Lamunkhin dialect. When examples are taken from the narrative corpus, they are marked with an abbreviation of the speaker's name plus the name of the narrative and the utterance number; examples that were furnished by IVK during discussion of the data are not further marked. Where necessary, the dialect that furnished the example is indicated by the abbreviation Lam for Lamunkhin and Bys for Bystraja.

## 3.2 Evaluative suffixes in the Lamunkhin dialect of Èven

### 3.2.1 General semantics

The diminutive and augmentative suffixes primarily denote the size of the referent (2a, b); with mass nouns, however, the diminutive denotes a small quantity (2c). They can occasionally express an attitudinal nuance of tenderness (2d) or disdain (2e); the augmentative suffixes can also express respect (2f). Note that the noun *atjkačan* 'little old woman' in (2e) is missing the expected accusative case marker.

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<sup>2</sup> These suffixes can also attach to quantifiers and adverbs with a slightly different meaning; such examples, however, are not discussed in this article.

- (2) a. *tarak dʒu:čan tik ačča*  
 DIST house-DIM now NEG  
 ‘That little house doesn’t exist anymore.’ (AXK\_Sebjan\_history\_1\_083)
- b. *bej-e-ńdže buolla ogi-nuk hekehen-če*  
 man-EP-AUG DP[Y] top-ADVB.ABL descend-PF.PTCP  
 ‘And the big man came down from above.’ (TVK\_pear\_story\_060)
- c. *upe:ńdže čaj-kakam=ńun ne:če . . .*  
 grandmother-AUG tea[R]-DIM.ACC=RESTR put-PF.PTCP  
 ‘My grandmother gave them (put) only a bit of tea . . .’ (AXK\_1930s\_058)
- d. *guđeje-kie-t, tar įahal-la-w ič-u-d-ni*  
 sweet-EMPH-INS DIST eyes-LOC-POSS.1SG see-DETRNS-NFUT-3SG  
*hawđi etiken, etiken ńan tar kuńa-čan*  
 old old.man old.man and DIST child-DIM  
 ‘Very sweet, I still see that before me, the old man and that little child.’  
 (ZAS\_naled\_081)
- e. *atįka-čan ere-w ineń-u e-č-u it-te*  
 old.woman-DIM PROX-ACC day-ACC NEG-PST-1SG see-NEG.CVB  
 ‘I didn’t see the old woman today.’ [referring to a colleague who isn’t really that old] (beseda\_NPZ\_1363)
- f. *tar abaga-ńdža-t įak bi-če, hama:n*  
 DIST grandfather-AUG-POSS.1PL what be-PF.PTCP shaman  
*bi-če*  
 be-PF.PTCP  
 ‘That grandfather of ours was what, was a shaman.’  
 (LAT\_family\_history\_011)

However, as mentioned above, these evaluative suffixes function not only to denote the size of the referent or to convey an attitudinal nuance; rather, they mark the referential status of noun phrases. This can most clearly be observed in narratives, where newly introduced referents occur with the augmentative *-mAjA* (3a) or the diminutive *-k(A)kAn* (4a), while they are marked with *-ńdža* (3b) or *-čAn* (4b) when they are mentioned again. Thus, in example (3), the big bear (referred to by the euphemism *abaga* ‘grandfather’) occurs with the augmentative suffix *-mAjA* when it is first mentioned in the narrative (3a) as well as when it is first referred to in an element of direct speech (see (36a)), while all subsequent overt references to the bear take the augmentative suffix *-ńdža* (3b).

- (3) a. *eješki ič-e-hnek-u, brosta abaga-maja*  
 downriver see-EP-LIM.COND.CVB-1SG simply[R] grandfather-AUG  
*em-e-d-de-n*  
 come-EP-PROG-NFUT-3SG  
 ‘I look downriver, and a big bear is coming.’ (MKK\_bear\_024)
- b. *emiske amm-ŭ-w it-tiđži tar abaga-ńđža*  
 suddenly[Y] father-ACC-POSS.1SG see-ANT.CVB DIST grandfather-AUG  
*buqlla brosta noňan-tađi-n her-re-n,*  
 DP[Y] simply[R] 3SG-ALL-POSS.3SG go-NFUT-3SG  
*aman-tađi-wu*  
 father-ALL-POSS.1SG  
 ‘Suddenly seeing my father that big bear went towards him, towards my father.’ (MKK\_bear\_042)

In example (4), which is taken from a “pear story” narrative (Chafe (ed.) 1980), a little boy who is one of the main protagonists is introduced with the diminutive *-k(A)kAn* (4a), but is later referred to again with the diminutive suffix *-čAn* (4b).

- (4) a. *velosiped-e-lken omołgo kuňa-kkan em-e-g-ge-ri-n*  
 bicycle[R]-EP-PROP boy child-DIM come-EP-PROG-HAB-PST-3SG  
 ‘... a little boy came on a bike.’ (Mitja\_pearstory\_03)
- b. *omołgo-čan šljapa-j tipke-nidži*  
 boy-DIM hat[R]-PRFL.SG drop-ANT.CVB  
*nanđi-hi-ssi-ča-la-n velosiped-a-n*  
 grab-LIM-CONAT-PF.PTCP-LOC-POSS.3SG bicycle[R]-EP-POSS.3SG  
*inja-duk hqr-ra-n*  
 stone-ABL get.caught-NFUT-3SG  
 ‘... when the little boy tried to grab his hat which he had dropped, his bike got caught on a stone.’ (Mitja\_pearstory\_06)

In the following, we will describe the different uses of the evaluative suffixes *-ńđža* and *-čAn*, which appear to attach to NPs with identifiable referents, and *-mAjA* and *-k(A)kAn*, which appear to occur on NPs with non-identifiable referents, in order to evaluate to what extent the functions of these suffixes coincide with (in)definiteness markers in better-described languages.

### 3.2.2 The use of *-ńđžA* and *-čAn* in Lamunkhin Èven

Both the augmentative suffix *-ńđžA* and the diminutive suffix *-čAn* can occur with referents that are inherently unique, such as ‘sun’ (5a, b), as well as with referents that are identifiable to the hearer, be that from anaphoric reference, as in (3b) and (4b), from the speech act situation, as in (6), or through association, as in (7). When referring to the stellar bodies as such, the augmentative *-ńđžA* or the diminutive *-čAn* are used, as in (5a) and (5b), which are modified from utterances occurring in narratives where *ńolten* ‘sun’ did not carry an evaluative suffix. In contrast, when describing the state of the stellar body at a given moment in time, or the light it diffuses, the augmentative *-mAjA* or the diminutive *-k(A)kAn* are appropriate, as shown by examples (5c, d).

- (5) a. *ńolte-ńđže ńahmĭ bayajĭ-t koje:t-če-le-n*  
 sun-AUG warm very[Y]-INS watch-PF.PTCP-LOC-POSS.3SG  
 ‘when the sun looked (i.e., was) very warm . . .’
- b. *ńolti-čen bŏlla i:-d-de-n*  
 sun-DIM DP[Y] enter-PROG-NFUT-3SG  
 ‘The sun however was setting . . .’
- c. *kollu:-kken ńolti-kken bi-h-ni, ta-ļĭ*  
 small.EMPH-DIM sun-DIM be-NFUT-3SG DIST-PROL  
*hor-e-đže:n-ne-p, aĭĭ*  
 go-EP-DUR-NFUT-1PL good  
 ‘There is a little sun (i.e., a little bit of sunshine), through that we go, good.’ (ZAS\_naled\_075)
- d. *ĭla:-maja hie-če*  
 moon-AUG appear-PF.PTCP  
 ‘A big moon appeared.’

Example (6a) is taken from a conversation that took place between four women at a tea table; one of the speakers noticed that she had eaten up one of the tidbits set out for their tea, an entity identifiable to all other participants in the tea party. As shown in (6b), the use of *-čAn* in (6a) is not (only) conditioned by its use with the demonstrative pronoun *erek* ‘this’, since the same situational identifiability would hold if she had eaten up the last chocolate, leading to the choice of *-čAn* on *hakalat* ‘chocolate’.

- (6) a. *er-čem man-na-m uručen bi . . .*  
 PROX-DIM.ACC finish-NFUT-1SG it.seems 1SG  
 ‘I finished this, it seems, . . .’ (beseda\_NPZ\_1140)

- b. *hakalat-čam*                      *man-na-m*  
 chocolate[R]-DIM.ACC finish-NFUT-1SG  
 ‘I’ve eaten up the chocolates.’

In (7a), ‘the girl’ has not been mentioned in the immediate discourse context; however, the hero’s wife has been mentioned, and it is known from the beginning of the tale that the hero’s wife is a young girl. Thus, the use of *-čAn* on ‘girl’ can here be explained by the association between the ‘wife’ and the ‘girl’. Similarly, as shown in (7b), in the context of modern transport with its association of buses and their drivers, the augmentative *-ńđžA* might be used on *voditel* ‘driver’, even if this person has not previously been mentioned.

- (7) a. *tačĭn*                      *go:n-če-le-n,*                      *asĭtka-ča-ka:n*                      *em-ńđžĭ, ...*  
 DIST.QUAL say-PF.PTCP-LOC-POSS.3SG girl-DIM-DIM.INTS come-ANT.CVB  
 ‘When he said like that, the girl came and ...’ (KKK\_Omcheni\_110)
- b. *awtobus-la*                      *tow-če-le-w,*                      *voditel-a-ńđžA*  
 bus[R]-LOC sit.down-PF.PTCP-LOC-POSS.1SG driver[R]-EP-AUG  
*kunĭ-rĭ-n*  
 shout-PST-3SG  
 ‘When I sat down in the bus, the big driver shouted (at me).’

In Lamunxhin Èven, the augmentative *-ńđžA* (8a) and the diminutive *-čAn* (8b) are used with possessive-marked NPs, irrespective of the identifiability of the referent. Use of *-mAjA* or *-k(A)kAn* with possessed NPs is ungrammatical, as seen in (8c) where ‘his big dog’ can only be expressed with *-ńđžA*, not *-mAjA*.

- (8) a. *tar*                      *ńĭn-a-ńđžA-t*                      *del[bi]*                      *gow-a-l-la-n*                      *omneken,*  
 PTL dog-EP-AUG-POSS.1PL very[Y] bark-EP-INCH-NFUT-3SG once  
*ńĭ:*                      *gerbe bi-hi-n*  
 who name be-PST-3SG  
 ‘Then once our big dog started barking, what was its name?’  
 (IVK\_memories\_018)
- b. *ĭlumĭ-čam-ĭ*                      *elbe-ńđžĭ*                      *đžeble-ń-ĭ*  
 yurt-DIM-PRFL.SG cover.yurt-ANT.CVB food-ALN-PRFL.SG  
*gen-ne-n,*                      *it-tek-e-n*                      *he:ruk-čen-ni*  
 look.for-INTENT-3SG see-COND.CVB-EP-3SG saddle.bag-DIM-POSS.3SG  
*kĭngakĭ,*  
 empty  
 ‘Having built his little yurt he went for his food and sees, his bag is empty, ...’ (ZAS\_Bochilikan\_etiken\_051)

- c. \**ŋin-maja-j*      *bol-le-n*      → *ŋin-a-ńđza-j*  
 dog-AUG-PRFL.SG    stroke-NFUT-3SG      dog-EP-AUG-PRFL.SG  
*bol-le-n*  
 stroke-NFUT-3SG  
 ‘He stroked his big dog.’

This formal constraint on the use of *-ńđza* and *-čAn*, but not *-mAjA* or *-k(A)kAn* with possessive-marked NPs can clearly be seen with the quantifier *bekeč* ‘all’. This root does not occur on its own, but only with frozen possessive suffixes: either the 3rd person singular possessive suffix *-n* (with an intervening epenthetic vowel; cf. (9a)); or the instrumental case-marked plural reflexive possessive suffix *-đzur* (surfacing as *-čur* after the final affricate of *bekeč*; (9b)). Although these possessive suffixes do not mark agreement with any possessor anymore, *bekečen* and *bekeččur* occur only with *-čen* (9c, d) in the Lamunkhin corpus, not *-keken*. The diminutive marking in *bekečče:n* and *bekečče:nđzur* expresses emphasis rather than diminution, further enhanced by the lengthening of this suffix.

- (9) a. *er*      *ere*      *gql-ɔ-t*      *ɔ:p-ča*      *bekeč-e-n*  
 PROX    PROX    firewood-EP-INS    make-MED-PF.PTCP    all-EP-POSS.3SG  
 ‘This is all made of wood.’ (KNK\_eksponat\_147)
- b. *tarit*    *stada-la*      *bekeč-čur*      *ńo:wre-p,*  
 then    herd[R]-LOC    all-INS.PRFL.PL    exit-HAB-1PL  
 ‘Then we all leave for the herd, ...’ (EAK\_reindeer\_herd\_052)
- c. *ile*      *tala*      *bekeč-če:n-dule-n*      *hor-ri-tne,*    *bi*    *bolla*  
 where    there    all-DIM-LOC-POSS.3SG    go-PST-3PL    1SG    DP[Y]  
*hun-dule*      *em-ne-m,*      *go:n-če*  
 2PL.OBL-LOC    come-NFUT-1SG    say-PF.PTCP  
 ‘... they went here-there, everywhere, but I came to you, he said.’  
 (AXK\_1930s\_084)
- d. *noŋartan*    *ha:wđi*    *đza:l-tan*      *butu:nnu*    *bekeč-če:n-đzur* ...  
 3PL      old      relative-PL-POSS.3PL    entirely[Y]    all-DIM-INS.PRFL.PL  
*ořolčĭ-mŋa-l*  
 herd.reindeer-AGNR-PL  
 ‘... their parents are all and completely reindeer herders.’  
 (stado#9\_learning\_olenevod\_006)

This special status of possessive-marked referents is formally marked in the Bystraja dialect, as described in Section 3.3; in the Lamunkhin dialect, it can lead to interesting clashes in evaluative “agreement”, as discussed in Section 5.

The referents of 1st and 2nd person pronouns are clearly identifiable in communicative situations. In Lamunkhin Èven, these can combine with the evaluative suffixes *-ńđžA* and *-čAn* (10a, b), but not with *-mAjA* or *-k(A)kAn*. However, these forms carry negative overtones and are therefore used only rarely and with care, in contexts that make it clear that no offense is intended; no 1st or 2nd person pronouns carrying evaluative suffixes occur in the narrative corpus. When used as anaphoric 3rd person pronouns, the demonstratives *tarak* ‘that’ and *erek* ‘this’ can also carry *-ńđžA* or *-čAn*, but not *-mAjA* or *-k(A)kAn*, as seen in (6a) and (10c).

- (10) a. *bi-čen ĩa-dųk ha-đđi-m*  
 1SG-DIM what-ABL know-FUT-1SG  
 ‘How would silly little me know that?’
- b. *hi-ńđže beje-s ęorod-tų hor-ri*  
 2SG-AUG self-POSS.2SG town-DAT go-IMP.2SG  
 ‘You’re big, go to town yourself!’
- c. *ere-ńđže-l ĩa-w ele [unclear] go:n-đđi-n*  
 PROX-AUG-PL what-ACC here say-FUT-3SG  
 ‘He’ll say “what are these (doing) here?”.’ (beseda\_IAS\_1624)

In Lamunkhin Èven, the vast majority (91%) of NPs modified by a demonstrative occur with *-ńđžA* and *-čAn*, as in (11a, b). However, there are five tokens in the corpus where a demonstrative modifies a noun carrying the diminutive *-k(A)kAn*, e.g., in (11c). These can probably be explained by a gradual loss of the referentiality distinction made by the evaluative suffixes, especially for speakers who use Sakha more than Èven in their everyday life. For instance, (11c) was said by a speaker who fairly consistently used only the diminutive suffix *-k(A)kAn* throughout his narration of the pear story, irrespective of the identifiability of the referents, indicating that in his case this suffix is becoming the default diminutive.

- (11) a. *tar listok-a-ńđža-w đđi:w-gere-če-l, ...*  
 DIST sheet[R]-EP-AUG-ACC cut.finely-HAB-PF.PTCP-PL  
 ‘They used to cut that big sheet (of tobacco) ...’  
 (AXK\_Sebjan\_history\_1\_056)
- b. *bi: bųllaya ĩamı erek čųkųča:-čan tar ĩiat-tųk*  
 1SG DP[Y] why PROX bird-DIM DIST willow-ABL  
*deg-e-l-le-n go:-niken it-ne-mi*  
 fly-EP-INCH-NFUT-3SG say-SIM.CVB see-INTENT-COND.CVB  
*hor-re-m*  
 go-NFUT-1SG

‘I went to look thinking “why did that bird fly up out of that bush”.’  
(MKK\_nastavlenie\_010)

- c. *tar her-e-d-dek-e-n tar ilan kuṇa-kka-hal*  
PTL GO-EP-PROG-COND.CVB-EP-3SG DIST three child-DIM-PL  
*ki:ke-riḏḏi ṇa:t-ta*  
whistle-ANT.CVB call-NFUT.3PL  
‘When he rode like that, those three little kids whistled and called him.’  
(INK\_pearstory\_18)

The referents of proper nouns are generally identifiable in a speech act situation, and in Lamunkhin Èven names occur with *-ṇḏḏA* and *-čAn* (12a, b); use of *-mAjA* or *-k(A)kAn* is ungrammatical. Related to the inherently definite status of proper nouns is the use of *-ṇḏḏA* and *-čAn* to derive names of animals or places, as illustrated in (12c, d).

- (12) a. *taraw tat-tiḏḏi Hargi-ṇḏḏa-ṇun ṇan*  
DIST-ACC learn-ANT.CVB Sargylana-AUG-COM and  
*taw-gara-m*  
gather-HAB.NFUT-1SG  
‘having learnt that, I also gather (wood) with Sargy(lana)’  
(beseda\_NPZ\_1555) (\**Hargi-maja-ṇun* would be ungrammatical)
- b. *Edik-čen ama-mdah-ij oṛoḃuna he:ḏḏen-gere-n*  
Edik-DIM father-SML-PRFL.SG exactly[R] dance-HAB.NFUT-3SG  
‘Little Edik dances exactly like his father.’ (beseda\_NPZ\_0611)
- c. *ere Ewgenij ṇoḡuhut-a-n, Buwdi-ṇḏḏa gerbe*  
PROX Evgenij lead.reindeer-EP-POSS.3SG piebald-AUG name  
‘This is Evgenij’s lead reindeer, it’s called Buwdindja (lit., big piebald one).’ (SEN\_comment\_video\_004)
- d. *tar hoṭaran-duḷi mut ja-la ih-kara-ra-p, orikit-le*  
DIST road-PROL 1PL what-LOC reach-HAB-NFUT-1PL camp-LOC  
*Toṇek-čen gerbe tor-re*  
forest.type-DIM name place-LOC  
‘Along that road we reach the camp, in a place called Tongekchen (forest with tall trees).’ (EAK\_reindeer\_herd\_016-017)

The addressee is clearly identifiable in a speech act situation, and in Lamunkhin Èven vocatives occur with *-čAn* (13a, b) or *-ṇḏḏA* (13c); *-k(A)kAn* or *-mAjA* in such situations would not be possible. However, given that the evaluative suffixes can carry pejorative overtones, such forms might be perceived as offensive and they are used infrequently in direct address.

- (13) a. *ha:mat-ti-čan* *asitkan*, *jak* *hebđžeñ-e-s*  
 laugh-IMPF.PTCP-DIM girl what be.funny-EXCL-POSS.2SG  
 ‘... laughing girl, how funny you are ...’ (AAK\_headmistress\_009)
- b. *čipipi*, *čipipi*, *kuŋa-čan*, *hi*: *amahni* *Omčeni-čen*  
 cheep cheep child-DIM 2SG father.POSS.2SG Omcheni-DIM  
*diliki* *o:n-ŋikan*, *hiŋerken* *o:n-ŋikan*  
 ermine become-SIM.CVB mouse become-SIM.CVB  
*em-e-d-de-n*, *go:n-(ni)*  
 come-EP-PROG-NFUT-3SG say-3SG  
 ‘“Cheep cheep little child, your father Omcheni is coming, turning into an ermine, turning into a mouse”, it said.’ (KKK\_Omcheni\_076)
- c. *no:n-ŋđže*, *em-ni* *ele*  
 younger.sibling-AUG come-IMP.2SG here  
 ‘Sister/brother, come here.’

An interesting use of the augmentative *-ŋđžA* and the diminutive *-čAn* that further demonstrates how their use is linked to the identifiability of the referent is when kinship terms that refer to specific people serve as the base, in the absence of any possessive marking. Normally, kinship terms in Èven do not occur without possessive marking (14a) except where they occur as part of names (14b). However, with *-ŋđžA* and *-čAn* kinship terms can occur without possessive marking if the person referred to in this way is identifiable by all speech act participants, as in (14c, d); see (2c) and (33) for further examples. In (14c) the setting of the narrative makes it clear that it is the speaker’s grandmother who is pouring tea, whereas (14d) demonstrates that the person referred to in this way need not be related to the speaker. Here, the fate of a coat made of marmot fur was being discussed; it had belonged to a little girl known to all the participants in the conversation, and the marmots whose fur it was made of had been killed by that girl’s grandfather.

- (14) a. *bi*: *upe:w* *emie*, *amm-u*  
 1SG grandmother-POSS.1SG also[Y] father-POSS.1SG  
*eñen-ni* *emie* *udaganka*  
 mother-POSS.3SG also[Y] female.shaman  
 ‘My grandmother too, my father’s mother, was a shaman, ...’  
 (LAT\_family\_history\_220)
- b. *upe*: *Duña*, [...] *Bötr gerbe etiken* *bi-hi-n*  
 grandmother Dunja Petr name old.man be-PST-3SG  
 ‘... granny Dunja, and old man Peter was there.’ (IVK\_memories\_038)

- c. *upe:ńǵe*                      *hiwkeŋke:n* [...] *čaj-ı*  
 grandmother-AUG quietly tea-ACC  
*oŋke-č-e-l-če*  
 pour-RES-EP-INCH-PF.PTCP  
 ‘... (my) grandmother quietly started pouring tea.’ (AXK\_1930s\_055)
- d. *abaga-ńǵa*                      [...] *ma:daŋ-a-n*  
 grandfather-AUG kill-PST.PTCP-EP-POSS.3SG  
 ‘... that which (her) grandfather had killed’ (beseda\_NPZ\_1153)

### 3.2.3 The use of *-mAjA* and *-k(A)kAn* in Lamunkhin Éven

As to the augmentative suffix *-mAjA* and the diminutive suffix *-k(A)kAn*, these occur with referents that are newly introduced into the discourse and thus not (yet) identifiable by the hearer, as was demonstrated above (3a, 4a). They also occur with NPs that are modified by indefinite pronouns (15a) and with indefinite pronouns themselves (15b).

- (15) a. *tala*    *ıak=kıl*                      *ńo:batı-kkan*, *ımujak*    *bi-h-ni*                      *ǵı:*  
 there what=INDEF white-DIM    snot    be-NFUT-3SG AFF  
 ‘There’s something white and small, there is snot, right.’  
 (ZAS\_jubki\_Aniwrin\_098)
- b. *ıa-maja-l=gıl*                      *digen*    *bo:del-ǵur*                      *oŋkam*  
 what-AUG-PL=INDEF four leg(s)-INS.PRFL.PL mountain.ACC  
*oǵı-d-da*  
 go.up-PROG-NFUT.3PL  
 ‘Something big was climbing up the mountain on four legs.’  
 (IVK\_memories\_095)

They occur with both specific (16a) and non-specific (16b) indefinites: the two mountain rams in (16a) are clearly identifiable to the speaker, since they were shot and eaten; the chickens referred to in (16b), on the other hand, are non-specific, since the narrative tells about a raid on a chicken farm, and the addressee of the element of direct speech was exhorted to steal any one of the many chickens running around.

- (16) a. *tar*    *ajukaja*                      *it-tek-u*,                      *ǵo:r*    *anan-maja-l*  
 PTL suddenly[Y] see-COND.CVB-1SG two ram-AUG-PL  
*togač-a-d-da*  
 lie-EP-PROG-NFUT.3PL

‘Then suddenly I see, two big mountain sheep rams are lying . . .’  
(IVK\_memories\_151)

- b. *kuru:ssa-kkam ga-riđži ečin, em-đži-nni=de*  
chicken-DIM.ACC take-ANT.CVB PROX.QUAL come-FUT-2SG=PTL  
*đžeb-đži-p*  
eat-FUT-1PL  
‘You will take a little chicken and come and we will eat that.’  
(AVZ\_indjuk\_internat\_018)

Generic referents can occur with either *-mAjA/-k(A)kAn* or with *-ňđžA/-čAn*, depending on whether they refer to individual, though unspecified, entities (17a) or whether they refer to the entire class of entities (17b). In (17b), the speaker is singling out specific species of animals that her grandmother had to eat during the war rather than referring to individual creatures. Thus, it would be possible to find both *abagamaja* and *abagaňđža* as a legend under the photo of a bear; in the first case, the reading would be ‘a big (individual) bear’, in the latter ‘the big bear (as a species)’. Given the evaluative meaning of these suffixes, however, it is rather uncommon to use them when referring to classes/species of entities rather than individuals. Note that in (17a) the first NP *abaga-maja-l=da* is lacking the ablative case governed by *ŋe:l-* ‘be afraid’.

- (17) a. *abaga-maja-l=da ŋe:l-i-l-gere-p*  
grandfather-AUG-PL=PTL be.afraid-EP-INCH-HAB.NFUT-1PL  
*abaga-maja-l-đuk=ta derihin-đžig-gere-re-p kuŋa*  
grandfather-AUG-PL-ABL=PTL run.off-PROG HAB-NFUT-1PL child  
*o:-ňikan*  
become-SIM.CVB  
‘And we were afraid of bears, and we ran away from bears when (I) was a child.’ (SKK\_life\_029)
- b. *ođuka-čam iđin ma:-ňikan*  
mountain.mouse-DIM.ACC et.cetera[Y] kill-SIM.CVB  
*đžeb-gere-če-l, nete:ki-čem iđin*  
eat-HAB-PF.PTCP-PL flying.squirrel-DIM.ACC et.cetera[Y]  
‘They killed and ate mountain mice and flying squirrels and such.’  
(LAT\_family\_history\_273, 277)

Furthermore, *-mAjA* and *-k(A)kAn* occur with predicative NPs (18a, b) – these, as is well known, do not refer, but describe an already identified referent (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 200–201, Lambrecht 1994: 80). Thus, (18a) is taken from a narrative where the speaker talks about her brother – the referent of the predicate

NP (the omitted subject NP ‘he’) is of course clearly identifiable to both speaker and hearer.

- (18) a. *tariṭ hoḥ mergeč-keken kuṇa-kakan bi-hi-n*  
 then very clever-DIM child-DIM be-PST-3SG  
 ‘And (he) was a very clever little child.’ (ZAS\_sibling\_017)
- b. *Reks gerbe ṛin bi-hi-n, hepeku-meje hoṭoḳu-maja ṛin-maja*  
 Rex name dog be-PST-3SG shaggy-AUG red-AUG dog-AUG  
 ‘Its name was Rex, it was a big shaggy red dog.’ (IVK\_memories\_019)

Table 2, which summarizes the use of the nominal evaluative suffixes of Lamunkhin Èven in the narrative corpus, demonstrates that *-ṛiḏʒA/-čAn* and *-mAjA/-k(A)kAn* are to a large extent in complementary distribution. The augmentative *-ṛiḏʒA* and the diminutive *-čAn* occur with NPs whose referents are expected to be identifiable by the hearer, either because they are unique (such as stellar

**Table 2:** Co-occurrence of evaluative suffixes in the Lamunkhin Èven narrative corpus. The numbers show the number of examples of each category identified in the narrative corpus. Of the 100 possessive-marked NPs with *-čAn*, 51 are the obligatorily possessed quantifier *bekeč-*, and of the proper nouns occurring with *-čAn* and *-ṛiḏʒA*, three and nine, respectively, derive names.

	DIM	AUG	DIM	AUG	
Occur with:	<i>-čAn</i>	<i>-ṛiḏʒA</i>	<i>-k(A)kAn</i>	<i>-mAjA</i>	English
NP with unique referent	(2)	–	–	–	<i>the</i>
NP with anaphorically identifiable referent	48	18	11	–	<i>the</i>
NP with situationally identifiable referent	4	1	–	–	<i>the</i>
NP with associatively identifiable referent	9	1	1	–	<i>the</i>
Possessive-marked NP	100	19	–	–	<i>the/∅</i>
Pronouns/pronominal demonstratives	6	5	–	–	<i>∅</i>
NP modified by demonstrative	34	12	5	–	<i>∅</i>
Proper nouns	30	31	–	–	<i>∅</i>
Vocatives	3	2	–	–	<i>∅</i>
Specific kin	–	11	–	–	not relevant
NP with newly introduced referent	2	–	81	28	<i>a</i>
(NP modified by) indefinite pronoun	–	–	3	6	<i>∅</i>
Specific indefinite NP	2	–	75	30	<i>a</i>
Non-specific indefinite NP	–	–	9	4	<i>a</i>
Generic NP	3	1	8	3	<i>the/a/∅</i>
Predicative NP	1	1	80	48	<i>a</i>
Total	242	102	189	85	

bodies, proper nouns, 1st and 2nd person pronouns) or because they were previously introduced into the discourse, are identifiable within the speech act situation, or via association with some other entity. The augmentative *-mAjA* and the diminutive *-k(A)kAn*, on the other hand, occur with NPs whose referents are introduced into the discourse for the first time and with NPs modified by indefinite pronouns (irrespective of whether these NPs are specific or non-specific), as well as with generic NPs and with predicate nominals. These evaluatives are thus strikingly similar in function to the English definite and indefinite articles (Table 2), with the exception that the English articles do not co-occur with pronouns, demonstratives, or proper nouns, nor are they used in vocatives.

Note that in the table each example is classified as belonging to only one category, even though not all categories are mutually exclusive. For example, even though most NPs modified by demonstratives are identifiable, anaphorically identifiable NPs that are modified by demonstratives are counted only among the NPs modified by demonstratives; in contrast, situationally identifiable NPs that are modified by demonstratives (four of the five tokens) are counted only among the situationally identifiable NPs. Newly introduced referents modified by an indefinite pronoun are counted only among the NPs modified by indefinite pronouns. However, the two categories of NPs with newly introduced referents and NPs with indefinite pronouns are additionally sub-categorized into those with specific indefinite and non-specific indefinite reference. Thus, the number of examples of diminutives/augmentatives with newly introduced referents and indefinite pronouns is equal to the number of examples with specific and non-specific indefinite reference, and the number of examples with specific and non-specific reference is not included in the total; their frequency is therefore indicated in italics. The two examples of a noun marked with *-čAn* included in brackets in the table are interpretable as an attempt at designating what the speaker assumed would be a uniquely identifiable referent (see (2e) for one of the examples); however, this attempt failed, since her hearers didn't know who she meant so that she had to specify.

As can be seen from Table 2, there are several cases (indicated in bold) where the use of an evaluative suffix is unexpected given the system described above; these concern especially the suffix *-k(A)kAn*, which occurs eleven times with anaphorically identifiable NPs and five times with NPs that are modified by a demonstrative. However, 12 of the 21 (57%) unexpected examples were produced by speakers who are clearly weak speakers of Èven, as opposed to only five (24%) of the unexpected examples produced by clearly dominant Èven speakers (four examples were uttered by speakers whose linguistic dominance in Èven is hard to judge, though it is probably on the weak side). It would therefore rather appear to be the case that these unexpected occurrences represent speech errors – as men-

tioned above, the diminutive suffix *-k(A)kAn* appears to have become the default for at least one speaker (see (11c) and discussion thereof).

It is notable that diminutive suffixes occur more than twice as frequently in the corpus as augmentatives. This can probably be explained by the fact that in the corpus the augmentatives appear to have a more neutral function of mere size description, whereas the diminutives often carry an additional affectionate or pejorative meaning, i.e., they are used with more referents. Furthermore, the suffixes that occur with identifiable referents (*-čAn* and *-ńđžA*) are more frequent than those that occur with unidentifiable referents (*-k(A)kAn* and *-mAjA*). This can be explained by the narrative nature of the corpus – referents are generally introduced only once, taking the suffixes *-k(A)kAn* or *-mAjA*, but are then referred to repeatedly throughout the narrative with the suffixes *-čAn* or *-ńđžA* (see Section 4 on the use of the evaluative suffixes in tracking referents in discourse).

With respect to the co-occurrence of the suffixes with different types rather than tokens, the diminutive suffix *-čAn* occurs with 78 different types of nominals, of which 44 (i.e., 56%) are hapax legomena. The most frequent occurrences are with the obligatorily possessed quantifier *bekeč-* (51 tokens), where the suffix adds an intensive meaning (see (9c, d) and discussion thereof), followed by 28 tokens of *kunja* ‘child’, 15 tokens of *omolgo* ‘boy’, 13 tokens of *asatkan/ahikkan* ‘girl’, and seven tokens of *kotlen* ‘small’. Furthermore, it occurs with names 28 times. The augmentative suffix *-ńđžA* occurs with 53 different types of nominals, 35 of which (i.e., 66%) are hapax legomena. The most frequent occurrences are with *abaga* ‘grandfather/bear’ (21 tokens) and *upe:* ‘grandmother’ (9 tokens). Similarly to the diminutive suffix *-čAn*, *-ńđžA* also frequently occurs with names (20 tokens).

The diminutive suffix *-k(A)kAn* occurs with 86 different types, 56 of which (65%) are single tokens. The nominals most frequently occurring with this suffix are *kotlen* ‘small’ (33 tokens), *kunja* ‘child’ (28 tokens), and *omolgo* ‘boy’ (9 tokens). Lastly, the augmentative suffix *-mAjA* occurs with 48 different types of nominals, among which are 33 hapax legomena (69%); the most frequently occurring types are *egđžen* ‘big’ with 18 tokens, the interrogative pronoun *iak* ‘what’ (which functions as a hesitative marker) with 7 tokens, and *abaga* ‘grandfather/bear’ with 5 tokens. The high proportion of nominal types that occur only once with the different evaluative suffixes – well over 60% – provides evidence for the productivity of these morphemes. Furthermore, it is clear that they are often rather redundant from a semantic perspective, as seen by the fact that the diminutives frequently occur with the adjective ‘small’, while the augmentative *-mAjA* frequently occurs with the adjective ‘big’.

A similar system can be found in the Bystraja dialect of Èven, as will be demonstrated in the following. To facilitate reference, the evaluative suffixes that

occur with NPs with identifiable referents will be labelled “definite” and the suffixes that occur with unidentifiable referents will be termed “indefinite” in the rest of this article.

### 3.3 Evaluative suffixes in the Bystraja dialect of Èven

As mentioned in Section 3.1, the system of evaluative marking in the Bystraja dialect of Kamchatka differs from that of the Lamunkhin dialect described so far, since there are three augmentative and three diminutive suffixes. There is thus no one-to-one match between identifiable/unidentifiable referents and evaluative suffixes; instead, as summarized in Table 3, possessive-marked referents occur with a separate suffix not used for either identifiable or unidentifiable referents. As can be seen by comparing Table 3 with Table 2, these suffixes are identical to those that in the Lamunkhin dialect occur in definite contexts as well as with possessive-marked nouns, namely *-ńđʒA* and *-čAn*.

As in the Lamunkhin dialect, the use of the evaluative suffixes to indicate the identifiability of the referent is best seen in narratives, where referents are first introduced into the discourse with the indefinite evaluative suffixes *-kAkAn* or *-mkAr* (19a, 20a), while at repeated mention they carry the definite evaluative suffixes *-jAkAn* or *-kA:jA* (19b, 20b).

- (19) a. *nan kųŋa-kakan,      ńari-kakan      velosiped-e-č*  
 and child-DIM.INDEF boy-DIM.INDEF bicycle[R]-EP-INS  
*em-ni-n*  
 come-PST-3SG  
 ‘And a child, a boy, came on his bicycle . . .’ (PMB\_pear\_story04)
- b. *nan ič-i-sni-n                  urip                  ńari-jakan,*  
 and see-EP-LIM.PST-3SG AFOREMENTIONED boy-DIM.DEF  
*đʒorm-į-ča*  
 steal-EP-PF.PTCP  
 ‘And the boy looked, the one who had stolen (the pears).’  
 (PMB\_pear\_story10)

**Table 3:** Marking of referential status with evaluative suffixes in Bystraja Èven

	Augmentative	Diminutive
Indefinite	<i>-mkAr</i>	<i>-kAkAn</i>
Definite	<i>-kA:jA</i>	<i>-jAkAn</i>
Possessive-marked	<i>-ńđʒA</i>	<i>-čAn</i>

- (20) a. ... *bej-e-mker* [...] *me:n tur-e-ŋ-ne-ji*  
 man-EP-AUG.INDEF self earth-EP-ALN-LOC-PRFL.SG  
*kõč* [...] *čak-a-d-d-ŋ* *tewte-ŋ-ge-ji*  
 probably gather-EP-PROG-PST-3SG berries-ALN-DES-PRFL.SG  
 ‘... a man, probably on his own land, was picking berries ...’  
 (RMS\_pear\_story01)
- b. *bej-keje* *ňan tačŋn tar čak-ŋdžŋ* *ňan*  
 man-AUG.DEF and DIST.QUAL PTL gather-ANT.CVB and  
*nel-le-ji,* *ew-ri-n tar tōkaran-dulŋ*  
 apron-LOC-PRFL.SG descend-PST-3SG DIST ladder-PROL  
 ‘And the man picked (pears) in that way, in his apron, and he went down  
 that ladder.’ (RMS\_pear\_story17)

Table 4, which is structured in the same way as Table 2 to facilitate comparison, summarizes the occurrence of the different evaluative suffixes in the Bystraja narrative corpus. While there is no significant difference in the relative frequencies of the indefinite vs. definite (incl. possessive-marked) evaluatives between the Lamunkhin and the Bystraja dialects, in the Bystraja corpus pronouns, proper

**Table 4:** Co-occurrence of evaluative suffixes in the Bystraja Èven narrative corpus

	DIM	AUG	DIM	AUG	DIM	AUG
Occur with:	-jAkAn	-kA:jA	-kAkAn	-mkAr	-čAn	-ŋdžA
NP with unique referent	–	–	–	–	–	–
NP with anaphorically identifiable referent	16	12	5	1	2	–
NP with situationally identifiable referent	2	1	–	–	–	–
NP with associatively identifiable referent	1	–	–	1	–	–
Possessive-marked NP	–	–	–	–	30	17
Pronouns/pronom. demonstratives	–	–	–	–	–	–
NP modified by demonstrative	5	8	–	–	1	–
Proper nouns	–	–	–	–	–	–
Vocatives	–	–	–	–	–	–
Specific kin	–	–	–	–	–	–
NP with newly introduced referent	–	–	30	22	3	–
(NP modified by) indefinite pronoun	–	–	1	1	–	–
Specific indefinite NP	–	–	29	22	3	–
Non-specific indefinite NP	–	–	2	1	–	–
Generic NP	–	–	2	–	2	–
Predicative NP	–	–	12	10	1	–
Total	24	21	50	35	39	17

nouns, and vocatives do not occur with any evaluative suffixes, nor do evaluatives appear to be used to refer to specific kin (though see (27b) for a possible example). To what extent these gaps are due to the smaller size of the Bystraja corpus rather than representing true functional differences between the dialects remains to be investigated.<sup>3</sup>

As was found for the Lamunkhin dialect, in the Bystraja dialect the majority of types occurring with the evaluative suffixes are hapax legomena. Thus, among the diminutive-marked nominals, 18 of 26 (69%) types which carry *-čAn* are single tokens, six of 11 types carrying *-jAkAn* (55%), and 24 out of 37 types co-occurring with *-kAkAn* (65%). Also in a similar manner to what was described for Lamunkhin Èven above, the definite diminutive *-jAkAn* and the indefinite diminutive *-kAkAn* frequently occur with nominals denoting children (*kunja/kunjakan* ‘child’ and *narj* ‘boy’) or ‘small’ (*kučuken/kučuleken*). As for the augmentative-marked nominals, 8 of the 11 (73%) types carrying *-ńđA* are hapax legomena, as are 6 out of 10 types co-occurring with *-kAjA* and 14 out of 17 types of *-mkAr* (82%). Thus, even though the total number of tokens found in the corpus is relatively small, it is clear that in the Bystraja dialect these suffixes are still fully productive. The suffix *-mkAr* occurs ten times with the adjective *egđžen* ‘big’, whereas *-ńđA* occurs five times with the obligatorily possessed quantifying noun *čele-* (see (28c) and discussion below).

As can be seen in Table 4, the data are quite consistent with regards to the functions of the augmentatives, but there are several occurrences of the diminutive suffixes *-kAkAn* and *-čAn* that do not fit the classification presented in Table 3 (indicated in bold in Table 4). The suffix *-ńđA* always occurs with possessive-marked NPs, irrespective of whether their referents are identifiable to the hearer or not (21a, b), and the definite augmentative *-kAjA* is always used with NPs that are modified by a demonstrative (22a) or with referents that are identifiable – either from previous mention (20b) or from the situation (22b). Thus, (22b) refers to a specific place characterized by a big rock en route between two reindeer herders’ camps, and is not interpreted as meaning that the speaker simply passed a big rock on his way.

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<sup>3</sup> During further interlinearization of a conversation between two friends while the manuscript was in re-review, some proper nouns with the definite evaluative suffixes *-čAn* and *-kAjA* were indeed found, e.g., *Mikulej-čen* [Nikolaj-DIM.DEF] and *Dželene-keje-ylı* [Lena-AUG.DEF-COM]. This indicates that the differences are most probably largely due to the size difference of the corpora. [Note added in proof.]

- (21) a. *muke ureč̣in-ni đ̣ʒu:r=ke tar*  
 posterior similar-POSS.3SG two=PTL DIST  
*daram-a-ńđ̣a-l-ni tar*  
 thigh-EP-AUG.POSS-PL-POSS.3SG PTL  
*ič-u-d-đ̣o:t-te tar*  
 see-DETRNS-PROG-GNR-NFUT.3PL DIST  
 ‘Like a backside, its two big thighs, right, can be seen there.’  
 (GAS\_tabun\_122)
- b. *mun đ̣ʒu:-la-wun tarakam aṭikan*  
 1PL.EX.OBL house-LOC-POSS.1PL.EX in.those.days old.woman  
*bi-ši-n, babuške-ńđ̣e-wu*  
 be-PST-3SG grandmother[R]-AUG.POSS-POSS.1SG  
 ‘In our house in those days lived an old woman, my big grandmother.’  
 (EIA\_leaving\_Twajan\_018)
- (22) a. *nõnan ɔ:-d-ḍi-n=ka ɔtar-kaja-w tara-w*  
 3SG make-PROG-PST-3SG=PTL road-AUG.DEF-ACC DIST-ACC  
 ‘... he was building that big (rail)road.’ (NAT\_BAM\_006)
- b. *un-u iřanũ-riđ̣i bi ere-w Teliliwut-u ɲu:neč̣*  
 2PL.OBL-ACC see.off-ANT.CVB 1SG PROX-ACC Teliliwut-ACC straight  
*nek-e-sni-wu đ̣ʒol-kaja-li*  
 do-EP-LIM.PST-1SG stone-AUG.DEF-PROL  
 ‘After I saw you off, I went through Teliliwut by the big rock.’  
 (AAS\_tabun\_2\_021 from Natalia Aralova’s field data)

The indefinite augmentative *-mkAr* is generally used when a referent is newly introduced into the discourse (20a, 23a) and with predicate nominals (23b), with only two exceptions.

- (23) a. *ĩamĩ samaljot-a-mkar li:dva*  
 why airplane[R]-EP-AUG.INDEF LI.2[R]  
*deg-e-wa:č̣-i-l-e-d-de-n-e=si*  
 fly-EP-GNR-EP-INCH-EP-PROG-NFUT-3SG-EP=PTL  
 ‘Suddenly a big plane, a LI-2, started to fly.’ (EIA\_food\_from\_sky\_004)
- b. *mut=tit=te olenovod-a-l-ti ureč̣in*  
 1PL.IN=PTL=PTL reindeer.herder[R]-EP-PL-POSS.1PL.IN similar  
*ɔromņa-l=ta tač̣in=da nogleņe:-mker-e-l*  
 reindeer.herder-PL=PTL DIST.QUAL=PTL shaggy-AUG.INDEF-EP-PL  
 ‘Just like our reindeer herders, just as shaggy, . . .’ (RME\_Yakutia\_086)

As for the diminutive suffixes, overall the data from the spontaneous narratives fit the schema summarized in Table 3 quite well, although as can be seen in Table 4 there are some discrepancies. The definite diminutive suffix *-jAkAn* consistently occurs with identifiable NPs – whether these be identifiable through previous mention (19b), within the situation (24a), or by association (24b) – as well as with NPs modified by a demonstrative (24c), which of course are generally also identifiable from the situation or because they have been mentioned before.

- (24) a. *erek doska-jakan ušir=e, ...*  
 PROX board[R]-DIM.DEF ancient=EMPH  
 ‘This little board is very old ...’ (pointing to a board in a museum exhibit) (AEI\_museum\_028)
- b. *gjakj=kke bi-si-ten nan inin-e-đi-l-li-ten ...*  
 various=PTL be-PST-3PL and laugh-EP-PROG-INCH-PST-3PL  
*munnuka-jakan inin-ni-n=teken ireptu, amŋa-n*  
 hare-DIM.DEF laugh-PST-3SG=PTL even mouth-POSS.3SG  
*erro:čin ɔ:-đi-n*  
 PROX.QUAL become-PST-3SG  
 ‘Various (creatures) were there and started to laugh. [...] And the little hare laughed so much that his mouth became like this.’  
 (GAS\_tabun\_184, 194)
- c. *nan etu-đe:n-niđsur nɔ:wat-tu ik(utič)*  
 and guard-DUR-ANT.CVB.PL run.away-GNR-1PL.EX right.away  
*eme-we:t-tu kɔŋaka-jakar-ba tawur*  
 leave-GNR-1PL.EX child-DIM.DEF-PL-ACC DIST  
 ‘We looked after (them) and then ran off, leaving those little kids.’  
 (EIA\_leaving\_Twajan\_047)

In 90% of the 50 occurrences of the indefinite diminutive suffix *-kAkAn* it occurs in contexts where the referent of the NP is unidentifiable: when the referent is first mentioned (19a, 25a), with predicate nominals (25b), or with NPs that are modified by indefinite pronouns (25c). Note that the suffix *-čen* in *đeđečen* in (25b) is unexpected without possessive-marking, as will be discussed below.

- (25) a. *vot adin, umen etike-keken ɔla:p-ti-n, ...*  
 here[R] one[R] one old.man-DIM.INDEF remain-PST-3SG  
 ‘One old man is left, ...’ (EGA\_memeded\_Managič\_147)

- b. *ranše to bojkij-kakan=e: bi-si-n*  
 previously[R] that[R] resolute[R]-DIM.INDEF=EMPH be-PST-3SG  
*tarak đedđe-čen*  
 DIST uncle[R]-DIM  
 ‘He used to be resolute and active, that Djedjechen.’  
 (NFI\_memeded\_Managič\_153)
- c. *ňan ĩak=uč kũŋa-kakan tũrkĩ-da-d-da-n*  
 and what=INDEF child-DIM.INDEF sled-VR-PROG-NFUT-3SG  
*velosiped-kakan-du*  
 bicycle[R]-DIM.INDEF-DAT  
 ‘And some boy rides a little bike.’ (EIA\_pear\_story04)

And yet, as seen in Table 4, there are several examples where the referent of the NP is identifiable and where therefore the definite diminutive suffix *-jAkAn* would be expected instead of the indefinite diminutive *-kAkAn*. For instance, in (26) the fox carrying the indefinite diminutive *-kakan* is the protagonist of the fairy tale and is quite well known to the hearer at this point in the story.

- (26) *nan ulĩča-kakan gĩrka-n đũl-le, it-te-n muŋnũka-r-ba*  
 and fox-DIM.INDEF walk-3SG front-LOC see-NFUT-3SG hare-PL-ACC  
 ‘The fox goes forward, sees the hares.’ (RME\_fox\_wolf\_035 from Natalia Aralova’s field data)

Whether this is a sign that the system is starting to break down in the current situation of language attrition, or whether other factors play a role cannot be determined at this point, although it should be noted that all the unexpected examples come from narratives of fluent speakers of Èven.

All the possessive-marked NPs that occur with a diminutive suffix carry *-čAn*, and 77% of the 39 tokens of this suffix in the narrative corpus occur with possessive-marked NPs (27a). However, in several examples this suffix occurs without possessive-marking, as in (25b) and (27b, c). In addition, the word *bõnga* ‘mountain sheep’ occurs three times with the diminutive suffix (*bõngačan*) and twice without. This might be a sign that it is lexicalizing in analogy with other terms for animals that carry a frozen diminutive suffix, such as *ulĩčan* ‘fox’ and *čũkačan* ‘bird’.

- (27) a. *tarakam ñĩn-ča-r-bũn bi-si-ten, . . .*  
 in.those.days dog-DIM.POSS-PL-POSS.1PL.EX be-PST-3PL  
 ‘At that time we had dogs, . . .’ (ANS\_Managic\_054 from Natalia Aralova’s field data)

- b. *a*      *bej-ǰʒi*                      *ǰʒeǰʒe-č-en-dule*                      *ɨak*    *ɨlkan*  
 but[R]    self-INS.PRFL.SG    uncle[R]-DIM.POSS-LOC    what    true  
*oɾoč-ɨ-l, . . .*  
 Oroch-EP-PL  
 ‘And the uncle himself wasn’t a real Even, . . .’ (AEI\_museum\_012)
- c. *tabič*    *škola:-tki*                      *taŋ-na-rɨ-wu*,                      *umen*    *bej-keken*  
 again    school[R]-ALL    read-INTENT-PST-1SG    one    man-DIM.INDEF  
*urke-č-en*                      *min-u*                      *ɲa:l-du-wu*                      *epkeni*  
 boy-DIM.POSS    1SG.OBL-ACC    hand-DAT-POSS.1SG    catch.NFUT.3SG  
*elge-de-ji*  
 lead-PURP.CVB-PRFL.SG  
 ‘Then I went to school, and a boy took me by the hand to lead me.’  
 (VIA\_childhood\_57)

It is not entirely clear whether *-čAn* in examples like (25b) and (27b), of which there are four in the corpus, might be serving to derive names, as is common in the Lamunxhin dialect for this suffix (see Section 3.2.2 and (12d)), or perhaps referring to specific kin, as is also found for this suffix in the Lamunxhin dialect. For instance, our primary consultant in Kamchatka had interpreted example (27b) as referring to the speaker’s uncle. The suffix *-č-en* in *urke-č-en* ‘boy’ in (27c), on the other hand, conveys an attitudinal meaning of naughtiness, ‘little hooligan’; this same nuance is achieved by attaching *-čan* to the unpossessed noun *asatkan* ‘girl’, i.e., *asatkačan* ‘naughty little girl’. Thus, these examples might be an indication that the suffix *-čAn* is not restricted in use to occurring with possessive-marked NPs, but that it has slightly broader functions. However, this cannot yet be asserted with certainty.

As was found for the Lamunxhin dialect, the use of *-ńǰʒA* and *-čAn* with possessive-marked NPs is conditioned by purely formal possessive-marking, as demonstrated by its use in a designative case-marked NP with a clearly unidentifiable referent (29) as well as with the quantifier *čele* ‘all’ (28c). Like *bekeč* in the Lamunxhin dialect, this quantifier, which was probably copied from Russian *celoe* ‘whole’, occurs only with possessive marking, either the 3rd person singular possessive suffix as in (28a) or the instrumental case-marked reflexive possessive suffixes *-ǰʒi* (singular) and *-ǰʒur* (plural) as in (28b). In the Bystraja corpus, this quantifier occurs only with the possessive augmentative suffix *-ńǰʒA* (28c) to add emphasis; use of this item with *-mkAr* or *-k(A)kAn* is ungrammatical.

- (28) a. *čele-w-e-n*                      *mut-keč-in*    *tore-r*  
 all-ACC-EP-POSS.3SG    1PL.IN-SML    speak-NFUT.3PL  
 ‘Everything they say like us.’ (RME\_Yakutia067)

- b. *tar akm-ŭ eken-ni=de, potom noŋan=da*  
 PTL father-POSS.1SG mother-POSS.3SG=PTL then[R] 3SG=PTL  
*nu:ŋil-ni, čele-đzur*  
 younger.sibling-PL-POSS.3SG all-INS.PRFL.PL  
*čajčaba-đi-wa:t-ta*  
 Koryak-VR-GNR-NFUT.3PL  
 ‘My father’s mother, and her younger siblings, all spoke Koryak.’  
 (EPA\_historical17)
- c. *talī rybalka-d-đzo:t-te čele-ńđže-đzur,*  
 there fishing.camp[R]-PROG-GNR-NFUT.3PL all-AUG.POSS-INS.PRFL.PL  
*umekič aj-ŋ-č bel-met-niken bi-si-ten*  
 very good-EP-INS help-REC-SIM.CVB be-PST-3PL  
 ‘There all fished, they lived helping each other.’ (VIA\_childhood\_11)

As for (29), the nominal *gīakī* ‘various, different (things)’ of course has inherently unidentifiable referents; however, in Èven, the designative case obligatorily takes possessive marking to indicate the beneficiary of the object. In the example, various small things are prepared by the speaker and his family for themselves, as indicated by the plural reflexive possessive suffix *-wūr* on the nominal *gīakīŋčan*. Similarly, if they prepared various big things for themselves, the speaker could have said *gīakī-ńđža-ga-wūr* with the augmentative suffix *-ńđža*. In contrast, if he had simply said that they prepared various things, without specifying for whom they were doing this, the form would be *gīakī-kakam* or *gīakī-mkar-ŭ*, i.e., with the indefinite diminutive suffix *-kAKAn* or the indefinite augmentative suffix *-mkAr*, followed by the accusative case marker to indicate the direct object status of the nominal. This demonstrates that it is the reflexive possessive suffix *-wūr* which conditions the use of the diminutive suffix *-čan* in (29).

- (29) *em-niđzur nan aktja:br-la poka*  
 come-ANT.CVB.PL and October[R]-LOC until[R]  
*gīakī-ŋ-čan-ga-wūr kim-e-d-đzo:t-tu*  
 various-ALN-DIM.POSS-DES-PRFL.PL prepare-EP-PROG-GNR-1PL.EX  
 ‘When we come in October we prepare different things for ourselves.’  
 (ANS\_Managic\_033 from Natalia Aralova’s field data)

In sum, the narrative data for the Bystraja dialect demonstrate that here, too, the definite and indefinite evaluative suffixes function in a very similar way to markers of (in)definiteness in other languages. This system of (in)definiteness marking with evaluative suffixes has previously been briefly described by Mal’čukov (2008: 380–383) for “supradialectal normative Èven” (Mal’čukov 2008:

4); since this publication might not be accessible to all readers, we here briefly outline its main tenets. Mal'čukov suggests that the evaluative semantics of the diminutive and augmentative suffixes are neutralized when they function as markers of (in)definiteness, thus explaining why previous authors had interpreted the semantics of the Èven evaluative suffixes in various – often contradictory – ways. Among the diminutive suffixes with a definite meaning Mal'čukov counts the suffixes *-kAn* and *-jAkAn*, basing himself on the fact that in the Okhotsk dialects *-kAn* frequently designates the hero of narratives; the suffix *-kAkAn*, in contrast, has an indefinite meaning. Among the augmentatives, *-ńǫǫA* and *-kAjA* express definiteness – with *-ńǫǫA* frequently occurring with names and *-kAjA* often occurring in conjunction with demonstratives – whereas *-mkAr* always occurs with indefinite or non-referential NPs; this latter cannot co-occur with possessive suffixes. In discourse, *-mkAr* occurs only at first mention, while later references to the same NPs can carry *-ńǫǫA* or *-kAjA*.

Given the suffixes discussed by Mal'čukov, it would appear that his data stem from eastern Èven dialects. This can be seen from the presence of the augmentatives *-kAjA* and *-mkAr* and the diminutive suffix *-jAkAn*, which in our data occur only in the Bystraja dialect (an eastern lect) and not the Lamunkhin dialect (which belongs to the western group). In contrast to our analysis, Mal'čukov interprets the suffix *-kAn* as a definite diminutive. While this suffix occurs in both the Lamunkhin and the Bystraja dialect, we here excluded it from the discussion because it does not participate in the system of (in)definiteness marking in these dialects; rather, it has to a large degree lost its primary diminutive meaning and developed extended meanings of intensification/specification and also attenuation. Whether in the dialects on which Mal'čukov's analysis is based the three augmentatives *-mkAr*, *-kAjA*, and *-ńǫǫA* and the three diminutives *-kAkAn*, *-kAn*, and *-jAkAn* show the same functional split as they do in the Bystraja dialect, with one suffix restricted to possessive-marked NPs, is hard to judge given his very brief discussion of these data.

While the data discussed here clearly demonstrate that the augmentative and diminutive suffixes in Èven play a role in signalling the identifiability of nominal referents, they are not obligatory markers of (in)definiteness. Their primary function is to denote the size of the referent and to convey attitudinal nuances, and it is up to the speaker whether she considers a given referent to be of noteworthy size. Such a restriction of overt marking of (in)definiteness to certain syntactic contexts is typologically quite common. As mentioned in Section 1, there are several languages in which the distinction between definite and indefinite NPs is restricted to direct objects. In the Uralic languages, this is achieved via the difference between the subjective conjugation, which is used with intransitive verbs and transitive verbs with indefinite direct object, and the objective conjugation,

which is used with transitive verbs with definite direct object. In the Turkic languages, the distinction is made via differential object marking, with definite direct objects taking accusative case marking and indefinite direct objects remaining unmarked. In other languages, the overt marking of definiteness is conditioned by the internal structure of the NP. For example, the Baltic, Slavic, and Germanic languages historically made a distinction between a definite and indefinite adjective declension, which has been lost in many languages or of which only vestiges remain (such as in Serbo-Croat or Lithuanian; Lyons 1999: 82–83). In Latvian, however, this system is still fully functional. Here, bare nouns are indeterminate with respect to the identifiability of the referent, and explicit marking of (in)definiteness can only be achieved when nouns are modified by an adjective. Adjectives have two forms, an indefinite and a definite one (called “short” and “long” by Mathiassen 1997: 57–62):

- (30) a. *koks*                    ‘tree; a tree; the tree’  
       b. *liels koks*        ‘a big tree’  
       c. *lielais koks*    ‘the big tree’ (Lyons 1999: 84)

The indefinite forms of adjectives are used when the referent of the noun is not identifiable, e.g., at first introduction, as well as in predicative use, while the definite forms of adjectives are used when the referent of the noun is identifiable, be that from prior mention or from the situation. Furthermore, similar to the definite (and possessive) evaluatives in Èven they are obligatory with demonstratives, possessives, proper nouns, and vocatives (Mathiassen 1997: 60–62). Thus, the Èven system of (in)definiteness marking is functionally quite comparable to that found in Latvian and other Balto-Slavic languages, with the marking of definiteness conditioned by the presence of a modifier – adjectives in the Balto-Slavic languages, evaluative suffixes in Èven.

One might nevertheless ask what the purpose of such a system is – why signal to the hearer that he is expected to be able to identify the referent of an NP in only a small minority of cases, and only when the referent is of a particular size, or when one wants to convey an added emotional overtone? As will be shown next, even though use of the evaluative suffixes is optional, they nevertheless appear to play a role in the tracking of discourse referents in narratives.

## 4 The use of evaluatives to track discourse referents in narratives

In order to investigate the role of these suffixes in keeping track of discourse referents, we quantified the frequency with which NPs in narratives carry evaluative suffixes. For this, we chose maximally cohesive narratives, i.e., narratives which deal with the same referents throughout: pear stories, fairy tales, as well as a personal narrative that described an encounter with a big bear (from which examples (3a), (3b), and (36a) are taken). We based our choice not only on the topic of the narratives, but also on the number of evaluative-marked NPs they contain – for example, in fairy tales collected in the Bystraja district most references to the protagonists are via overt NPs without any evaluative marking, so that we did not include them in our analysis. From the Lamunkhin dialect, we chose four pear stories, one fairy tale, and the personal narrative about the bear; from the Bystraja dialect, we chose only three pear stories. We then identified the means by which each character was referred to in the course of the narrative: as an overt NP carrying an evaluative suffix, as an overt NP without any evaluative marking, as a pronoun, or by a zero argument (i.e., indicated only through subject agreement marking on the verb).

Table 5 shows the frequency with which referents are expressed by these different means. In the Lamunkhin narratives, we distinguished between “major, important characters” and “minor, unimportant characters”. For example, characters who play an important role in the pear story are a pear farmer, a boy who steals the farmer’s pears, a girl who causes the boy to fall, and three boys who help the pear stealer; a minor role is played by a man who leads a goat past the pear-picking farmer. It was not possible to make such a distinction in the Bystraja narratives, since in two out of the three pear stories the minor character is not mentioned at all.

Even though unimportant characters in the Lamunkhin narratives are mentioned far less than important ones, as befits the minor roles they play in the stories, the table shows a striking difference in the occurrence of overt NPs with

**Table 5:** Occurrence of different types of arguments in narratives

	No overt argument	Pronoun	Overt NP	
			Evaluative	No evaluative
Lamunkhin: Major characters (235 tokens)	39.6%	3.8%	40.9%	15.7%
Lamunkhin: Minor characters (32 tokens)	43.8%	12.5%	3.1%	40.6%
Bystraja: Major characters (81 tokens)	48.1%	7.4%	35.8%	8.6%

evaluative suffixes between these two categories: a good two and a half times more overt NPs carry an evaluative suffix than overt NPs without an evaluative suffix in the category of major characters; in contrast, overt NPs without evaluative suffixes are thirteen times more frequent than those carrying an evaluative suffix in the category of unimportant characters. Similarly, in the Bystraja narratives, four times more overt NPs referring to major characters carry an evaluative suffix than do not. These data thus provide a clear indication that the evaluative suffixes are used to signal to the hearer whether an NP has a referent that he should be able to identify or not, especially when such identification helps him to follow the storyline. The following sequence, taken from a pear story, illustrates this function well:

- (31) a. *tabič-ì=sì nan bej-ke:je e-t=te=tit*  
 then-EP=PTL and man-AUG.DEF NEG-PST=PTL=PTL  
*unu-r nan ìlač-ì-d-dìđđì nan=da*  
 understand-NEG.CVB and stand-EP-PROG-ANT.CVB and=PTL  
*uge-ski ožči-ri-n . . .*  
 top-ADVB.ALL go.up-PST-3SG  
 ‘The man didn’t understand anything, stood awhile and then climbed up again . . .’ (PMB\_pear\_story21)
- b. *tabit nan tarkanunda unte bej, bej-e-mker,*  
 then and at.this.time other man man-EP-AUG.INDEF  
*koza-η-i elge-d-di-n*  
 goat[R]-ALN-PRFL.SG lead-PROG-PST-3SG  
 ‘And then a different man, a big man, led his goat.’ (PMB\_pear\_story22)  
 [. . .]
- c. *tabič-ì=sì unte=de bej-e-mker em-ni-n tadu*  
 then-EP=PTL other=PTL man-EP-AUG.INDEF come-PST-3SG there  
*ìlač-ì-d-dì-n, nan tože ur-ri-n*  
 stand-EP-PROG-PST-3SG and also[R] go-PST-3SG  
*me:n=de đžu-di*  
 self=PTL house-DAT.PRFL.SG  
 ‘And then another man came and stood there and also left about his own business.’ (PMB\_pear\_story24)
- d. *bej-ke:je=sì unet čak-a-d-dì-n*  
 man-AUG.DEF=PTL still gather-EP-PROG-PST-3SG  
*gruša-η-ì*  
 pear[R]-ALN-PRFL.SG  
 ‘The man was still picking pears . . .’ (PMB\_pear\_story25)

In this sequence, the first and last sentence refer to the pear farmer – a character who by the end of the narrative is quite familiar to the hearer. Both times, the noun *bej* ‘man’ referring to him is marked with the definite augmentative suffix *-ke:je*. In the intervening sentences, two further men are described – one leading a goat, the other not doing anything specific (and who does not actually appear in the little film). Both of these, who are mentioned for the first time, are marked with the indefinite augmentative suffix *-mker*, indicating to the hearer that these are different men from the aforementioned pear farmer, and that they are as yet unfamiliar to him.

We have thus been able to show that, in addition to denoting the size of referents or to making an attitudinal statement, nominal augmentative and diminutive suffixes in both the Lamunkhin and the Bystraja dialect of Èven play an important role in signalling the referential status of characters in discourse. Before turning to the question of the origin of this system, we discuss occasional clashes between semantic and formal constraints on definiteness marking that occur in the Lamunkhin dialect and that are avoided in the Bystraja dialect with the help of the specialized possessive evaluative suffixes *-ńđA* and *-čAn*.

## 5 Clashes between semantic and formal constraints on definiteness marking

Not unexpectedly, when both modifiers and nouns carry evaluative suffixes, these are expected to agree in (in)definiteness. That is, if the referent is identifiable, both modifier and noun should carry the definite evaluative suffix (32a, c), whereas both should carry the indefinite evaluative suffix if the referent is not (yet) identifiable (32b, d; see also (5c) and (18a, b)); co-occurrence of an indefinite and a definite evaluative suffix are ungrammatical (32e).

- (32) a. *oɔŋga-ča-ka:n*                      *ńurma-řıđji*                      *hıat*  
 boy-DIM.DEF-DIM.INTS    sneak.up-ANT.CVB    willow  
*amar-gıda-dıku-n*                      *tıhan-ča,*                      *kotle-čen*  
 behind-SIDE-ABL-POSS.3SG    hop-PF.PTCP    small-DIM.DEF  
*asatka-čam*                      *ńurit-tuku-n*                      *nařtı-hın-ča*  
 girl-DIM.DEF.ACC    hair-ABL-POSS.3SG    grab-LIM-PF.PTCP  
 ‘The little boy snuck up and jumped out from behind the bushes and grabbed the small girl by her hair.’ (Lam\_KKK\_Omcheni\_045)

- b. *I:čče egčgen=e: ɔka:t umekič ɯ:nta ɔ:n tadu*  
 Icha big=EMPH river very deep how there  
*it-čo:t-te-m=teken ɔlla-mkar-a-l egčge-mker-e-l*  
 see-GNR-NFUT-1SG=RESTR fish-AUG.INDEF-EP-PL big-AUG.INDEF-EP-PL  
 ‘The Icha is a very big and deep river, all that I can see (is that) there are big fish . . .’ (Bys\_NAT\_blue\_eyes\_006)
- c. *egčge-ńčže paločka-ńčža*  
 big-AUG.DEF stick[R]-AUG.DEF  
 ‘the big stick’
- d. *egčge-meje paločka-maja*  
 big-AUG.INDEF stick[R]-AUG.INDEF  
 ‘a big stick’
- e. \**egčge-ńčže paločka-maja*  
 big-AUG.DEF stick[R]-AUG.INDEF

The obligatoriness of use of the definite evaluatives *-ńčža* and *-čAn* with possessive-marked nouns in the Lamunkhin dialect, even when their referents are as yet unidentifiable, can lead to clashes in marking between the modifier (carrying the semantically determined indefinite evaluative suffix) and the noun (carrying the formally determined definite evaluative suffix), as shown in the following example (33). The old kettle is mentioned for the first time; it is thus unidentifiable to the hearer, resulting in the indefinite diminutive suffix *-k(A)kAn* on the adjective *irbe:t* ‘old’ (which surfaces as *irbe:k-* under influence of the following diminutive suffix). The noun *čajnik* ‘kettle’ however, carries the reflexive possessive suffix *-i* and thus carries the definite diminutive suffix *-čAn* (with the final *-n* of this suffix surfacing as *-m* under the influence of the following reflexive possessive suffix), notwithstanding the fact that the kettle is not identifiable. Note the use of *-ńčže* on the unpossessed kinship term *upe:* ‘grandmother’ referring to a specific person, as discussed in Section 3.2.2, see (14c, d).

- (33) *upe:-ńčže hiwkeŋken ečiken irbe:k-keken*  
 grandmother-AUG.DEF quietly PROX.QUAL old-DIM.INDEF  
*čajnik-čAm-i ɔlda:n-du ne:-če, . . .*  
 teapot[R]-DIM.DEF-PRFL.SG hook.for.kettle-DAT put-PF.PTCP  
 ‘My grandmother quietly put her old teapot on the hook for the kettle . . .’  
 (Lam\_AXK\_1930s\_044)

In (34) the speaker describes the first view she had of a reindeer herders’ camp: a tent with smoke coming out of the stovepipe. As can be seen in the example, the tent and the smoke are both not yet identifiable; however, the first occur-

rence of *ha:nj̄n* ‘smoke’ carries the 3rd person singular possessive suffix *-ni*, and therefore occurs with the definite diminutive suffix *-čAn*; the repetition in contrast carries the indefinite diminutive *-k(A)kAn*, like the noun *balatka* ‘tent’.

- (34) *tala apk̄it eč̄in ič̄-u-d-ni, balatka-kkan*  
 there ravine PROX.QUAL see-DETRNS-NFUT-3SG tent[R]-DIM.INDEF  
*č̄ge eč̄iken, ha:nj̄n-čan-nj̄. Tr̄uba-duk*  
 PTL[Y] PROX.QUAL smoke-DIM.DEF-POSS.3SG pipe[R]-ABL  
*ha:nj̄n-kakan . . .*  
 smoke-DIM.INDEF

‘. . . there a ravine can be seen like this, a small tent, a bit of smoke. Out of the stovepipe a bit of smoke . . .’ (Lam\_ZAS\_naled\_78/79)

This kind of clash between the semantic requirement of indefinite evaluative marking when referents are not identifiable and the formal requirement of definite evaluative marking for possessive-marked nouns that exists in the Lamunkhin dialect is avoided in the Bystraja dialect through the existence of the special evaluative suffixes for possessive-marked nouns that are neutral with respect to the identifiability of the referent, as seen in the following examples. In (35b), the possessive marking on *č̄q̄oŋi-ńč̄a-n* ‘big gall’ refers to *k̄q̄balan* ‘bear’, which was previously mentioned but omitted here.

- (35) a. *nan traktor ŋen-nič̄zi egč̄ge-mker eč̄in umekič̄*  
 and tractor[R] go-ANT.CVB big-AUG.INDEF PROX.QUAL very  
*plug-e-ńč̄ge-n (bi-si-n)*  
 plow[R]-EP-AUG.POSS-POSS.3SG be-PST-3SG  
 ‘And the tractor came and had such a very big plough.’  
 (Bys\_EIA\_first\_tractor\_040)
- b. *min meme-wu bi-si-n*  
 1SG.OBL mama-POSS.1SG be-PST-3SG  
*č̄q̄o-ŋ-i-ńč̄a-n egč̄ge:mker, . . .*  
 gall.juice-ALN-EP-AUG.POSS-POSS.3SG big-AUG.INDEF  
 ‘My mother had a big (bear’s) gall, . . .’ (Bys\_VIA\_childhood\_16)

A similar clash can occur between the formal constraint of demonstratives having to carry definite evaluative suffixes and the semantic constraint of NPs with unidentifiable referents taking indefinite evaluative suffixes, as seen in the following example (36a). In this element of direct speech taken from the same narrative that furnished examples (3a) and (3b), the speaker is pointing out the big bear to her sister for the first time and thus uses the indefinite augmentative

suffix *-mAjA* on the euphemism for ‘bear’, *abaga*. The distal demonstrative here has a spatial deictic function; it carries an augmentative suffix to denote the size of the bear. That the augmentative on *tara* refers to the size of the bear and does not indicate a large distance between it and the speaker is shown by the fact that if someone wanted to point out that a very small dog was coming, they might use the diminutive suffix *-čAn* on the demonstrative (36b). While the bear is mentioned to the sister for the first time, demonstratives can only serve as the base for the definite evaluative suffixes, thus leading to this mismatch between the definite augmentative *-ńđZA* on the demonstrative and the indefinite augmentative *-mAjA* on the noun. These mismatches are reminiscent of the morphologically definite but syntactically indefinite French example discussed by Lambrecht (1994: 92) – *Il est entré la fille d’un roi* ‘There entered the daughter of a king’ – except that here we have morphologically definite and semantically indefinite NPs.

- (36) a. *“Kačq:, tara-ńđza abaga-maja*  
 Katja.VOC DIST-AUG.DEF grandfather-AUG.INDEF  
*em-e-d-de-n”, go:-ne-m*  
 come-EP-PROG-NFUT-3SG say-NFUT-1SG  
 ‘“Katja, over there a big bear is coming”, I said.’ (Lam\_MKK\_bear\_026)
- b. *tar-čan ńin-kakan em-e-d-de-n*  
 DIST-DIM.DEF dog-DIM.INDEF come-EP-PROG-NFUT-3SG  
 ‘Over there a little dog is coming.’

To the best of our knowledge, this use of evaluative suffixes to mark the referential status of NPs has not yet been described for languages other than Èven. Given the crosslinguistic singularity of such a system of definiteness marking, it is interesting to know how it might have arisen, a question we turn to now.

## 6 Evaluative suffixes in other Tungusic and neighbouring languages

A system of using evaluative suffixes to mark the identifiability of the referent as described here for Èven has to our knowledge not yet been observed in other languages. In Siberia, (in)definiteness is known to be marked via differential object marking (e.g., in Sakha) or via verbal agreement (e.g., in the Uralic languages, which distinguish between a subjective and an objective conjugation); use of evaluative suffixes with this function is not known. Nevertheless, information

from other Tungusic languages as well as from unrelated neighbouring languages might provide some indication of the provenance of this feature in Èven. This brief survey is based on more or less detailed descriptions of Èven's relatives, the North Tungusic languages Evenki, Oroqen, and Negidal and the South Tungusic languages Udihe, Nanai, Oroč, and Orok, as well as the neighbouring languages Yukaghir, Sakha (Yakut), and Koryak. Of course, basing such an investigation merely on descriptions runs the risk of missing distinctions that are present in the languages, but which were simply overlooked by the authors – as shown by Cinčius' description of different attitudinal nuances, rather than the marking of definiteness, conveyed by the Èven evaluative suffixes mentioned in Section 3.1. Thus, this brief overview can only be considered a first step towards a possible diachronic explanation which would need to be corroborated with evidence from discourse data.

It can be stated from the outset that Èven stands alone in having an elaborate system of evaluative suffixes that mark both the identifiability and the unidentifiability of referents, as can be deduced from the fact that most of the languages to which it is genealogically related or with which it is in contact have at most one diminutive and one augmentative suffix. Thus, these languages lack pairs of suffixes of which one could occur with definite NPs while the other one could occur with indefinite NPs. For instance, Kolyma and Tundra Yukaghir, the sole remaining representatives of a language family that was formerly widely distributed over areas now inhabited by Èvens (Wurm 1996: 969), have only one diminutive suffix (*-die*) and one augmentative suffix (*-tEge*; Maslova 2003a: 128–130, 2003b: 48–49). A further contact language, Koryak (Chukotko-Kamchatkan), is also described as having only one diminutive suffix denoting the small size of the referent as well as expressing tenderness and one augmentative suffix denoting the large size of the referent; a third evaluative suffix conveys a negative attitude towards the referent (Žukova 1972: 78–79). In contrast, the Turkic language Sakha (Yakut), which is the primary contact language for the Lamunkhin dialect of Èven (as well as several other Èven dialects spoken in the territory of Yakutia; Malchukov 2006), does have two diminutive suffixes, albeit no augmentative suffix. However, the two nominal diminutive suffixes (*-čAn* and *-kAn*) were most likely copied from Evenki (Ubrjatova 2006: 258–259), and there is no evidence for any difference in their occurrence depending on the referential status of the noun phrase. Nevertheless, it is possible that the evaluative suffixes in these languages function as indirect markers of referentiality by co-occurring specifically with identifiable NPs; further investigation of their use in discourse is required to confirm this hypothesis.

Turning to Èven's relatives, the South Tungusic languages lack an augmentative (Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001: 149–169, Avrorin 1959: 108–116, Avrorin &

Boldyrev 2001: 72–74, Petrova 1967: 32–34), so that only the diminutive can be reconstructed to the Tungusic languages of Siberia. This pattern fits well with the fact that crosslinguistically diminutives are more common than augmentatives (Bakema & Geeraerts 2004: 1046). The form of the diminutive suffix and its productivity varies among the South Tungusic languages: in Udihe, the diminutive suffix *-zigʷa* is highly productive, while in Oroch the diminutive *-tA* is highly infrequent; in Nanai and Oroč the form is *-kAn*. The North Tungusic languages Oroqen, Negidal, and Evenki have different complements of evaluatives: Oroqen is described as having only one augmentative suffix (*-mñA*) with a core meaning of augmentation when used with nouns and intensification when used with adjectives, and one diminutive suffix (*-kAn*) which has typical diminutive functions of indicating small size or conveying endearment (Whaley & Li 1998). In Negidal, the evaluative suffixes *-kA:jA* (augmentative) and *-kkAn* (diminutive) appear to have been copied from Èven (Xasanova & Pevnov 2003: 252); Cincius (1982: 21) mentions a further augmentative suffix, *-ñđžA*, without specifying any difference in usage. This, too, was most probably copied from Èven. The descriptions of (standard) Evenki – the closest linguistic relative of Èven – differ somewhat in the account they give of nominal evaluative suffixes: Boldyrev (2007: 103) and Nedjalkov (1997: 298) list several evaluative suffixes with only very brief descriptions, while Bulatova & Grenoble (1999: 48–51) provide a somewhat more elaborate discussion supported by more examples. Boldyrev and Nedjalkov both mention an augmentative suffix *-pčane* that describes an “excessive” size, e.g., *đžu-pčane* ‘enormous yurt’, *asi-pčane* ‘a very tall (and/or stout) woman’, which is not listed among the evaluative suffixes in Bulatova & Grenoble (1999). Nedjalkov mentions a further augmentative suffix *-kAkun*, e.g., *mo:ty-kakun* ‘a very big elk’; however, according to Bulatova & Grenoble (1999: 48) this primarily conveys different emotive nuances, especially pity or affection, e.g., *si-kekun e-te-nni tere-re* [2SG-*kAkun* NEG-FUT-2SG endure-NEG.CVB] ‘you can’t take it, poor thing’, or *aja-kakun dolboni* [good-*kAkun* night] ‘a wonderful night’. As for diminutives, all three descriptions agree in postulating a diminutive suffix *-kA(:)n* which carries positive emotional overtones, e.g., *tolgoki-kan* ‘little sled’, *hawal-đža-ri-ka:n* [work-IMP-PTCP-DIM] ‘the working one (affectionate)’. Boldyrev and Nedjalkov also list a diminutive suffix *-čAn* with pejorative meaning, which again is not found among the suffixes described by Bulatova & Grenoble. Most of the examples provided for the use of *-čAn* have clearly negative translations, e.g., *atyka-čan* ‘wicked old woman’ (< *atykan* ‘old woman’), or *đžu-čan* ‘little house (with a shade of scorn)’. Nevertheless, it is interesting that this suffix appears to also derive names of animals, e.g., *bagda-čan* ‘name of a reindeer’ (< *bagda* ‘white’) – a function also carried by *-čAn* in the Lamunxhin dialect of Èven, as illustrated above for the derivation of a place name (12d).

The only suffix that emerges in both the South and North Tungusic branch of the family – albeit not in all languages – is the diminutive suffix *-kAn*, which is found in Nanai and Oroč as well as Oroqen, Evenki, and Èven. This is therefore the only suffix that is plausibly inherited in the languages that have it, with the other diminutive suffixes *-čAn* (found in both Evenki and Èven), *-k(A)kAn* (found only in Èven), and *-jAkAn* (restricted to eastern Èven dialects) having developed from it. As mentioned in Section 3.1, in the Lamunkhin and Bystraja dialects of Èven, *-kAn* has lost its primary diminutive meaning and has developed extended functions of intensification/specification as well as attenuation – functions which Jurafsky (1996: 542–543) has shown to be diachronically late semantic developments of diminutives. This, too, speaks for the old age of the suffix *-kAn* in Èven.

This brief survey thus corroborates that the Èven system of marking both indefiniteness and definiteness of NPs with evaluative suffixes is a language-internal innovation. It is not implausible that it developed from a system in which evaluative suffixes were used to indicate only the identifiability of referents – similar to the use of possessive suffixes in these languages (see Section 2 and (1a)). This would accord well with the suggestion that evaluative morphology is used more often in situations of “familiarity and intimacy” between the “speaker and the various components of the speech situation” that are furthermore characterized by empathy (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 148, Bakema & Geeraerts 2004: 1050). To confirm this proposal it will be necessary to investigate the use of evaluatives in narratives in other Tungusic languages to determine whether the evaluative suffixes occur specifically with identifiable referents – an investigation that is beyond the scope of this study. However, based on the sparse available comparative data we can speculate that the Èven system developed out of the use of the diminutive suffix *-kAn* to mark definite NPs, and that this system was reinforced by the development of additional diminutives (*-jAkAn*, *-k(A)kAn*) that strengthened the system by overtly marking the distinction between definite and indefinite NPs. This system was then transferred to the augmentative suffixes once these developed in the language.

## 7 Conclusions

We have demonstrated in this article that the nominal evaluative suffixes in Èven are used to mark the referential status of NPs, functioning in a very similar manner to (in)definite articles in the languages of Europe. Nevertheless, their primary function is to indicate that a referent is of particularly large or small size, or

to convey an emotional overtone of endearment, disdain, or respect. They are optional, and the speaker's intentions play a large role in whether or not to use them. Thus, while overall major characters of narratives are frequently marked with evaluative suffixes, as discussed in Section 4, this varies from speaker to speaker. For example, in one Lamunkhin fairy tale the protagonist, a cheeky fox, is introduced into the story with the indefinite diminutive *-k(A)kAn*, but all subsequent occurrences of 'fox' as an overt NP (16 in all) remain unmarked. Only at the very end of the story, when this particular fox is one of several foxes, is it reintroduced with the indefinite diminutive suffix and then referred to with the definite diminutive *-čAn*, clearly to indicate its special status among all the other foxes. Similarly, as mentioned in Section 4, in the Bystraja fairy tales the protagonists are generally referred to with plain overt NPs without any evaluative marking.

This elaborate system appears to be an Èven innovation, since it is not found in any related or neighbouring unrelated language. This innovation must have taken place after the split of Èven from its sister languages Evenki, Oroqen, and Negidal, but before the breakup of the Èven dialects, i.e., at a fairly early stage of the language's development. This system of (in)definiteness marking appears to be quite stable, as witnessed by the fact that it has been retained in two very distinct Èven dialects irrespective of the replacement of the forms used to mark the distinction (see Tables 2 and 4) and irrespective of strong contact pressure from languages that do not mark (in)definiteness in this way. Thus, Sakha is exerting noticeable pressure on the Lamunkhin dialect, and the Bystraja dialect is under the influence of Russian, a language well known to lack a grammatical category of definiteness. Nevertheless, as shown by narrative data from speakers of the Lamunkhin dialect who use Sakha more than Èven in their daily life, it is possible that this unique distinction between indefinite and definite evaluative suffixes will get lost if this strong contact pressure continues, even if the Èven language itself should survive.

**Acknowledgements:** Preliminary versions of this article were presented at the workshop on "Semantic and Typological Perspectives on Definites" at Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf, Germany, the 87th annual meeting of the LSA, Boston, USA, and the 3rd Transalpine Typology Meeting at the University of Zurich, Switzerland; we thank the audiences for their feedback, and most especially Ija Seržant. We are furthermore very grateful to Denis Creissels and Andrej Malchukov as well as two anonymous reviewers for pertinent comments. Of course, any errors of interpretation remain ours. Generous financial support by the Volkswagen Foundation (DoBeS grant "Dialectal and cultural diversity among Èvens in Siberia") and the Max Planck Society (MPRG on Comparative Population Linguistics) is gratefully acknowledged. We thank the Institute for Humanitarian

Studies and Indigenous People of the North (IGIIPMNS) in Yakutsk for assistance with fieldwork logistics, and the communities of Sebjan-Küöl and the Bystraja district for their hospitality. Thanks are also due to Natalia Aralova for access to her field data.

**Abbreviations:** 1/2/3 = 1st/2nd/3rd person; ABL = ablative; ACC = accusative; ADVB = adverbial; AFF = affirmative particle; AGNR = agent nominalizer; ALL = allative; ALN = alienable; ANT = anterior; AUG = augmentative; CAUS = causative; COM = comitative; CONAT = conative; COND = conditional; CVB = converb; DAT = dative; DEF = definite; DES = designative; DETRNS = detransitivizer; DIM = diminutive; DIST = distal demonstrative; DP = discourse particle; DUR = durative; EMPH = emphatic; EP = epenthetic vowel; EX = exclusive; EXCL = exclamative; FUT = future; GNR = generic; HAB = habitual; IMP = imperative; IMPF = imperfect; IN = inclusive; INCH = inchoative; INDEF = indefinite; INS = instrumental; INTENT = intentional; INTS = intensive; LIM = limitative; LOC = locative; MED = medio-passive; NEG = negative; NFUT = non-future; OBL = oblique (stem); PF = perfect; PL = plural; POSS = possessive; PRFL = reflexive-possessive; PROG = progressive; PROL = prolative; PROP = proprietive; PROX = proximal demonstrative; PST = past; PTCP = participle; PTL = particle; PURP = purposive; QUAL = qualitative; R = Russian copy; REC = reciprocal; RES = resultative; RESTR = restrictive; SG = singular; SIM = simultaneous; SML = similative; VOC = vocative; VR = verbalizer; Y = Sakha (Yakut) copy.

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