

# Paradigm copying in Tungusic: The Lamunkhin dialect of Èven and beyond

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► **To cite this version:**

Brigitte Pakendorf. Paradigm copying in Tungusic: The Lamunkhin dialect of Èven and beyond. Paradigm Change. In the Transeurasian Languages and Beyond, pp.287-310, 2014. halshs-01179245

**HAL Id: halshs-01179245**

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Submitted on 16 Jul 2020

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This is a contribution from *Paradigm Change. In the Transeurasian languages and beyond*.  
Edited by Martine Robbeets and Walter Bisang.  
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## Paradigm copying in Tungusic

### The Lamunkhin dialect of Èven and beyond

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While it is generally acknowledged that shared correspondences in inflectional morphology provide solid evidence for a genealogical relationship between languages, inflectional paradigms are not immune to copying: two cases of verbal paradigms copied from the Turkic language Sakha (Yakut) into North Tungusic lects are known. In this paper I survey over 20 dialect descriptions of the North Tungusic languages Evenki and Èven in order to elucidate the factors that play a role in paradigm copying. I show that both intimate contact (intermarriage) and structural congruence are necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisites for such copying and argue that the decisive factor in the known cases of paradigms copied from Sakha is the specific structure of Sakha TAM morphology.

**Keywords:** Sakha (Yakut), Evenki, Èven, TAM, verbal paradigms

#### 1. Introduction

It is often felt that the demonstration that languages are genealogically related is particularly sound if cognates are established not only in the lexicon, but also in morphology, especially paradigmatic morphology:

Regularly corresponding phonemes in basic vocabulary and in basic grammatical formants (if typology permits, *preferably in paradigms*) are the goal [of a search for cognates, BP]. The affixal morphology searched should be largely inflectional, as derivational morphology is borrowed relatively easily... (Rankin 2003: 188, emphasis mine).

Thus, in a debate about the genealogical unity of the Transeurasian languages both Vovin, an opponent of this relationship, as well as Dybo and Starostin, its proponents, agree that regular *paradigmatic* correspondences in morphology are the

best means of proving the genealogical relationship of languages (Vovin 2005: 73; Dybo & Starostin 2008: 125).<sup>1</sup>

It is true that bound morphology is notoriously resistant to copying, with inflectional morphology being considered the least likely item of language to be copied (cf. Wilkins 1996: Table 14.2; Matras 2009: 153–165). In addition, verbal morphology appears more resistant than nominal morphology: many of the known examples of copied morphology come from the nominal domain (e.g. Heath 1978; Steinkrüger 2003; Seifart 2012; cf. also the overview in Gardani 2008: 82, 2012: 91), while instances of copied verbal morphology are rare and in general comprise only individual items, not entire paradigms. For instance, Meglenite Rumanian copied only the 1SG and 2SG present tense indicative forms from Bulgarian, not the entire paradigm of person-number forms (Gardani 2008: 67). One might therefore assume that correspondences in verbal paradigms would provide the most solid evidence for a genealogical relationship of languages. And yet, examples of copied paradigms are known, especially verbal paradigms copied from the Turkic language Sakha (Yakut) into some Tungusic lects (Myreeva 1964: 51; Pakendorf 2009, forthcoming). Furthermore, in a recent paper that analyzes cases of large-scale morphological copying, Seifart (2012: 475) has suggested that “[b]orrowing of paradigmatically and syntagmatically related grammatical morphemes is easier than borrowing of the same number of isolated grammatical morphemes”, a hypothesis he terms the “Principle of Morphosyntactic Subsystem Integrity” (PMSI). Taken together with the known cases of copied paradigms, the PMSI raises the question whether the copying of morphological paradigms might be more common than hitherto assumed. Need historical linguists worry that undetected instances of paradigm copying have occurred in linguistic prehistory that could confound their reconstructions of genealogical relationships?

In order to assess the likelihood that paradigm copying might be more frequent than previously assumed, I here explore the circumstances under which paradigm copying takes place, basing myself on a survey of dialects of the North Tungusic languages Èven and Evenki. The data concerning the copied paradigms in Lamunkhin Èven have been discussed in detail in Pakendorf (forthcoming); here, the analysis of the factors that influence whether paradigms are copied is refined and more weight is given to the role played by language-specific structural factors in the outcome of intimate language contact. In the following section, the two best-known cases of paradigm copying in North Tungusic dialects, Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven, are presented fairly briefly. Section 3 discusses the prerequisites for paradigm copying that emerge from the dialect survey, and Section 4

1. It should, however, be noted that Dybo and Starostin (2008) go on to provide examples where lexicon fares better than morphology in establishing the relationship of a language.

presents the specifics of Sakha TAM formation and argues that this is the crucial reason why paradigm copying took place in these contact situations. Section 5 concludes the paper by tying together the various strands of the argument.

## 2. Known paradigm copies: Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven

Although paradigm copying is cross-linguistically rare, two attested examples are found in North Tungusic dialects spoken in the Republic Sakha (Yakutia) in eastern Siberia. The first is Učur Evenki, a dialect of Evenki that used to be spoken in southern Yakutia on the Učur River, a tributary of the Aldan. The speech community was in intense contact with speakers of the dominant indigenous language Sakha (Yakut), and most Evenks had already shifted to Sakha by the early 1960s, when the dialect was described (Myreeva 1964: 6–8): only 25% of the inhabitants of one village, predominantly those working as reindeer herders or hunters, still knew Evenki, and in another village a mere 3.5% of the Evenk inhabitants still spoke their heritage language. By now this dialect, like many others included in the survey, is most probably extinct, and in what follows it is the “ethnographic present” that I use when referring to these dialects. This close contact with Sakha has led to noticeable changes in Učur Evenki, especially in its phonetics and lexicon, and most strikingly to the copying of the Sakha assertive-presumptive mood plus associated paradigm of subject agreement markers (Myreeva 1964: 51). Table 1 shows the Učur Evenki paradigm for *wa:*- ‘kill’ presented by Myreeva (ibid) in comparison with the constructed Sakha paradigm for *bar-* ‘go’. The latter verb was chosen in order to facilitate comparison of the suffixes, which undergo vowel harmony processes in both Sakha and Evenki.

As can be seen, the Sakha mood marker does not attach directly to the Evenki verb root, but follows upon the rhotic *-r-*. Myreeva suggests that this rhotic is the remnant of the Evenki non-future suffix *-rA*, i.e. she suggests that the Sakha mood and subject agreement suffixes were initially attached to Evenki non-future forms which eroded with time.

Table 1. Učur Evenki assertive-presumptive paradigm copied from Sakha.

	Sakha ‘go’	Učur Evenki ‘kill’
1SG	<i>bar-day-ìm</i>	<i>wa:-r.dayim</i>
2SG	<i>bar-day-iŋ</i>	<i>wa:-r.dayiŋ</i>
3SG	<i>bar-day-a</i>	<i>wa:-r.daya</i>
1PL	<i>bar-daχ-pit</i>	<i>wa:-r.dakput</i>
2PL	<i>bar-daχ-χit</i>	<i>wa:-r.dakkit</i>
3PL	<i>bar-daχ-tara</i>	<i>wa:-r.daktara</i>

In Sakha, the mood and subject agreement suffixes are clearly segmentable: the assertive-presumptive mood takes possessive suffixes to mark subject agreement, but with different subject agreement marking the mood suffix *-TAχ* also occurs in the conditional-temporal mood (see Section 4 below). Whether the mood and person suffixes are also segmentable in Učur Evenki, where neither the mood suffix nor the person suffixes occur in different paradigmatic contexts, is debatable (cf. Pakendorf: forthcoming, for similar considerations for Lamunkhin Èven). Therefore, the copied mood and subject agreement forms are presented as unanalyzable entities for both Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven (cf. Table 1 – 5). For ease of comparison, in the examples presenting the Sakha model forms and the North Tungusic copies ((1) – (6)), the Sakha morpheme boundaries and glosses have been adapted to be identical to those in the North Tungusic examples, notwithstanding their segmentability.

In Sakha, the assertive-presumptive mood can have both a presumptive meaning (1a) as well as a meaning of emphatic assertion (2a); this latter predominates in oral narratives (Pakendorf 2009: 90–91). Učur Evenki has copied the mood paradigm with both the presumptive (1b) as well as the assertive function (2b). Since the presumptive meaning is very rare in my Sakha corpus,<sup>2</sup> and hardly any examples with a presumptive (rather than assertive) meaning are found in the descriptions of this mood by Korkina (1970: 269–277) and Korkina et al. (1982: 341–343), it is unfortunately not possible to present the same person form with a presumptive meaning for Sakha (1a) and Učur Evenki (1b).

- (1) a. Sakha (IvaP\_317)  
*ula:t-taya di:?*  
 grow-ASS.3SG PTL  
 ‘She’s probably grown, right?’
- b. Učur Evenki<sup>3</sup> (Myreeva 1964: 51)  
*su: goro-li-r.dakkit*  
 2PL far-VR-ASS.2PL.Y  
 ‘You probably went far.’
- (2) a. Sakha (XatR\_260)  
*oyorduk olor-doxput di:*  
 like.that sit-ASS.1PL PTL  
 ‘Yes, we live like that.’

2. This narrative corpus comprising ~30,000 words, from which all Sakha examples are taken, was collected in various districts of the Republic Sakha (Yakutia) in 2002 and 2003 with financial assistance of the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Department of Linguistics of the MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig.

3. All examples taken from published descriptions have been glossed by me to the best of my abilities.

- b. Učur Evenki (Myreeva 1964: 51)  
*edu:-ty ehi:le anŋa-r.dakput, ile suru-điŋe-wun dolbo*  
 here-PTL now spend.night-ASS.1PL.Y where go-FUT-1PL night  
 ‘We’ll spend the night here, where should we go at night?’

Interestingly, the same assertive-presumptive mood with its associated subject agreement paradigm has been copied from Sakha into Lamunkhin Èven, the westernmost still viable dialect of Èven spoken in the village of Sebjan-Küöl in the Verkhoyansk mountain range in central Yakutia. This dialect is in intense contact with Sakha, as can be seen by the large number of lexical and morphological copies from Sakha (Pakendorf 2009, forthcoming). Table 2 presents the elicited Lamunkhin Èven assertive-presumptive paradigm for *ha:-* ‘know’ in comparison with the Sakha paradigm for *bar-* ‘go’. It should be noted that the 2SG and 2PL assertive-presumptive forms are elicited with difficulty, and no 2PL forms occur in my corpus of spoken Lamunkhin Èven comprising narratives and conversations and totaling over 50,000 words.<sup>4</sup> This can most probably be explained with the pragmatic force of this mood: given their strong assertive meaning, these forms would very rarely be used with respect to the addressee (Pakendorf: forthcoming).

As can be seen in the table, the Sakha mood forms are attached to the Lamunkhin Èven verb with the help of a connective glide; in this, the Lamunkhin Èven copies differ from those found in Učur Evenki, where the Sakha morphemes appear to have attached to the non-future form of the verb, as mentioned above. This is a clear indication that the paradigm was copied independently from Sakha into these two Tungusic dialects. In Lamunkhin Èven, this glide has the specific function of integrating copied Sakha verbal morphology – not just the assertive-presumptive mood, but also the present tense and a converb (Pakendorf 2009: 97–100, forthcoming).

Table 2. Lamunkhin Èven assertive-presumptive paradigm copied from Sakha.

	Sakha ‘go’	Lamunkhin Èven ‘know’
1SG	<i>bar-day-ìm</i>	<i>ha:-j-dagiṃ</i>
2SG	<i>bar-day-iṃ</i>	<i>ha:-j-dagiṃ</i>
3SG	<i>bar-day-a</i>	<i>ha:-j-daga</i>
1PL	<i>bar-daχ-pit</i>	<i>ha:-j-dakpit</i>
2PL	<i>bar-daχ-χit</i>	<i>ha:-j-dakkit</i>
3PL	<i>bar-daχ-tara</i>	<i>ha:-j-daktara</i>

4. This corpus was collected in 2008–2012 with the financial assistance of the Max Planck Society (via the MPRG on Comparative Population Linguistics) and the Volkswagen Foundation (via a DoBeS project on the cultural and dialectal diversity of Èven).

Another difference from Učur Evenki, which has copied both functions of the assertive-presumptive mood from Sakha, is that Lamunkhin Èven appears to have copied only the assertive (3b, c), and not the presumptive meaning.

- (3) a. Sakha (Efmy\_628)  
*onno buolla:na ü:m-müt ot inné gin-an ot-tu:*  
 there DP grow-PF.PTCP grass thus do-PF.CVB hay-VR.IPF.CVB  
*erjin-ni: kel-bit kel-lextere di:*  
 etc-VR.IPF.CVB come-PF.PTCP PFV-ASS.3PL PTL  
 ‘Now there grass grew, so therefore they came to work in the hay and other things, you see.’
- b. Lamunkhin Èven (IVK\_memories\_108)  
*tar tor-du naha: hõ:ja abaga bi-wre-n, te:mi*  
 DIST earth-DAT very.Y many grandfather be-HAB-3SG therefore  
*abaga gerbeč-e-j-dektere*  
 grandfather think-EP-CONN-ASS.3PL.Y  
 ‘In that place there are a lot of bears, that is why they thought they were bears.’
- c. Lamunkhin Èven (beseda\_RDA\_1157)  
 “*e-đi bo:-re” go:-j-dege=hni*  
 NEG-IMP.2SG give-NEG.CVB say-CONN-ASS.3SG.Y=AFFIRM  
 “‘don’t give it away’, she said, right’

In contrast to Učur Evenki, which appears to have copied only the assertive-presumptive mood paradigm from Sakha, Lamunkhin Èven has copied or is in the process of copying other mood forms from Sakha together with their associated subject agreement paradigms. These are the necessitative mood and the indicative present tense, which take Sakha predicative person suffixes, and the hypothetical mood, which takes possessive accusative case marked subject agreement suffixes. These have been discussed in detail in Pakendorf (forthcoming); here, I present only the forms and some examples. Table 3 presents the elicited necessitative paradigm for *ha:-* ‘to know’, while Table 4 and Table 5 present the underlying TAM-person forms for the present tense and hypothetical mood extracted from examples occurring in the oral corpus. Since only the forms attested in the corpus are included, there are some gaps in the latter tables.

As can be seen in Table 3, two variant 2PL subject agreement forms are found in the necessitative paradigm – one which contains the Lamunkhin Èven 2PL possessive suffix *-hnAn*, which was produced in elicitation by my primary consultant, and another which contains the Sakha 2PL suffix *-kIt* and which occurs twice in a spontaneous narrative. Furthermore, the 3PL form uses the Èven plural suffix *-L*



Table 3. Lamunkhin Èven necessitative paradigm copied from Sakha.

	Sakha 'go'	Lamunkhin Èven 'know'
1SG	<i>bar-iaχta:χ-pin</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:kp̄in</i>
2SG	<i>bar-iaχta:χ-χin</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:kk̄in</i>
3SG	<i>bar-iaχta:χ</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:k</i>
1PL	<i>bar-iaχta:χ-pit</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:kp̄it</i>
2PL	<i>bar-iaχta:χ-χit</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:kk̄ihman //</i> <i>ha:-jakta:kk̄it</i>
3PL	<i>bar-iaχta:χ-tar</i>	<i>ha:-jakta:k-a-l</i>

Table 4. Underlying forms of the Lamunkhin Èven present tense paradigm copied from Sakha (forms attested in oral corpus).

	Sakha	Lamunkhin Èven
1SG	<i>-A-BIn</i>	<i>-j-AbIn</i>
2SG	<i>-A-GIn</i>	<i>-j-AgIn</i>
3SG	<i>-Ar</i>	<i>-j-Ar</i>
1PL	<i>-A-BIt</i>	<i>-j-AbIt</i>
2PL	<i>-A-GIt</i>	
3PL	<i>-Ar-LAr (=AllAr)</i>	<i>-j-AllAr</i>

instead of the Sakha plural suffix *-LAr* (which after the mood suffix *-IAχtA:χ* surfaces as *-tAr*).

- (4) a. Sakha (MatX\_2\_120)  
*ij-ga ikki ere taba-nī hiex̄te:χχin*  
 month-DAT two only reindeer-ACC eat.NEC.2SG  
 'Per month you must (=are allowed to) eat only two reindeer.'
- b. Lamunkhin Èven (SPK\_oxota\_065)  
*k̄un̄i-n̄ikan omen tor-du īlgam-a-jakta:kk̄in*  
 scream-CVB one earth-DAT stand-EP-NEC.2SG.Y  
 'You have to stand screaming in one place (if a bear comes towards you).'
- (5) a. Sakha (PotP\_056)  
*u: bah-ab̄in bierme χoton-ugar [...] inax̄*  
 water ladle-PRS.1SG farm.R cattle.shed-DAT.3SG cow  
*ha:y-a tiej-eb̄in*  
 dung-POSS.3SG cart-PRS.1SG  
 'I draw water for the farm's cattle-shed, I cart the cows' dung.'

- b. Lamunkhin Èven (SPK\_oxota\_232)  
*e-če hor-re bi-hek-e-n, honte tor-le*  
 NEG-PF.PTCP go-NEG.CVB be-COND.CVB-EP-3SG other earth-LOC  
*tul-e-j-ebin*  
 set-EP-CONN-PRS.1SG.Y  
 ‘If it didn’t go (into the trap), I set (my trap) in a different place.’

**Table 5.** Underlying forms of the Lamunkhin Èven hypothetical mood paradigm copied from Sakha (forms attested in oral corpus).

	Sakha	Lamunkhin Èven
1SG	-IAχ-BIn (=IAχ-pIn)	-jAkpIn
2SG	-IAχ-GIn (=IAχ-χIn)	-jAkkIn
3SG	-IAχ-(t)In (=IAγ-In) // -IAN	-jA:gIn // -jAn
1PL	-IAχ-BItIn (=IAχ-pItIn)	
2PL	-IAχ-GItIn (=IAχ-χItIn)	
3PL	-IAχ-LArIn (=IAχ-tArIn)	-jAktArIn
IMPERSONAL	-IAχ-GA (=IAχ-χA)	-jAkkA

In both Sakha and Lamunkhin Èven, the hypothetical mood forms frequently occur with the modal particle *höp* to express possibility (6a, 6b) and *na:da* to express necessity (7a, 7b). *Höp* is a Sakha particle with a general meaning of ‘OK’; *na:da* is ultimately of Russian origin (the deontic particle *nado*), but may have entered Lamunkhin Èven via Sakha. Note that in (7b) the impersonal hypothetical form of the causative verb *ḍebuken-* ‘feed’ *ḍebukenijekke* is incorrect; the correct form would be *ḍebukejekke*.

- (6) a. Sakha (Pav\_90\_031)  
*onon ücügej-dik ḍol-lo:χ-tuk hiḍḍ-abin dien*  
 therefore good-ADVR luck-PROP-ADVR be-PRS.1SG say.CVB  
*et-ieχpin höp*  
 say-HYP.1SG PTL  
 ‘So I can say that I am well and happy.’
- b. Lamunkhin Èven (TPK\_family\_030)  
*ńan ıa-w gor-jokpün höp?*  
 and what-ACC say-HYP.1SG.Y PTL.Y  
 ‘What else can I say?’
- (7) a. Sakha (LukP\_240)  
*uonna üb-ü\_χačči-ni elbe-t-ieχχe, kirdḍayas-tar-i*  
 and money-ACC increase-CAUS-HYP.IMPERS old-PL-ACC

*bukatin kör-üöχχe na:da*

completely see-HYP.IMPERS PTL.R

‘And one has to increase the money, and one has to look after the old (people).’

b. Lamunkhin Èven (beseda\_LNZ\_1344)

*toğ-ʉ đeb-uken-i-jekke na:da ebit, go:-li?*

fire-ACC eat-CAUS-EP-HYP.IMPERS.Y PTL.R it.seems.Y say-IMP.2SG

‘one has to feed the fire, right?’

The verbal paradigms of Sakha origin in Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven have been discussed in previous publications (Malchukov 2006; Pakendorf 2009, forthcoming), but without any detailed analysis of the factors that may have led to their copying. This will be accomplished in the following section, where I survey other Evenki and Èven dialects to investigate what factors might have facilitated this rare and noteworthy copying of paradigms.

### 3. Factors facilitating paradigm copying: a survey of Evenki and Èven dialects

For this survey, I perused descriptions of 14 Evenki and seven Èven dialects (Vasilevič 1948; Romanova & Myreeva 1962, 1964; Sotavalta & Halén 1978; Lebedev 1978, 1982; Dutkin 1995; Bulatova 1999; Robbek 2007; Dutkin & Beljanskaja 2009) in addition to availing myself of my own field data from the eastern Èven dialect spoken in the Bystraja district of Kamchatka (cf. Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Map of Siberia created with the WALS Interactive Reference Tool (Bibiko 2005), and modified by Christian Fressard, DDL showing the location of the Evenki (black dots) and Èven (grey dots) dialects included in the survey. The two diamonds show the location of Učur Evenki (black diamond, more to the south) and Lamunkhin Èven (grey diamond, more to the north).

For none of the dialects other than Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven is there any evidence of copied paradigms. A possible explanation for this might be oversight or even deliberation on the side of the authors of the descriptive sketches: for instance, Vasilevič (1948: 265–270) does not mention the Sakha paradigm copied into the Evenki dialects of the Učur-Zeja rivers, even though her description includes Učur Evenki, which as shown above has copied the Sakha assertive-presumptive mood (Myreeva 1964: 51). Similarly, in a little sketch grammar of her native Lamunkhin dialect of Èven, Kuz'mina (2010) does not mention any of the copied Sakha verbal paradigms, even though the assertive-presumptive and necessitative are clearly established copies that are used by her mother, sister, and aunt, among many others. Her neglect to mention these copied paradigms might be an attempt to present this dialect as being 'purely Èven', since the heavy influence of Sakha it has undergone is derided by some Èven philologists.

However, if one takes a more positive view of the data and assumes that in general the descriptions are based on fieldwork of sufficient length to discover the existence of copied paradigms, and that overall they are not ideologically biased, the question arises why paradigm copying has taken place in two North Tungusic dialects that are spoken in relative proximity to each other, but not elsewhere. Some factors that might have played a role are discussed in what follows.

### 3.1 Degree of contact: Presence of lexical copies

One possible explanation for the restriction of the copied paradigms to Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven might be that these are the only Northern Tungusic dialects in close contact with Sakha. After all, only in situations of relatively intense contact would one expect morphemes to be copied (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 74–76; Matras 2009: 211–212). However, as a glance at Figure 2 shows, most of the Evenki and Èven dialects spoken in the neighborhood of Sakha have copied substantial amounts of lexemes from the latter, and the Tommot dialect of Evenki might even have copied a morpheme from Sakha, as will be briefly outlined here.

Myreeva (1962: 78) suggests that the potential form *-muhi* found in the Tommot dialect of Evenki (8c), which takes Evenki subject agreement suffixes, derives from the Sakha suffix *-I:hi(k)* which marks the 'assertive' mood<sup>5</sup> (Korkina 1970: 195–207). In Sakha, this mood form expresses a high degree of certainty that an

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5. Note that in descriptions of Sakha (Korkina 1970: 195–207, 262–285; Korkina et al. 1982: 327–329, 341–343), the mood formed by the suffix *-TAχ* plus possessive subject agreement marking, which I call the assertive-presumptive, is called the presumptive (предположительное наклонение), while the mood formed by *-I:hi* plus predicative person marking is called the assertive (утвердительное наклонение).



**Figure 2.** Map of Siberia created with the WALS Interactive Reference Tool (Bibiko 2005), and modified by Christian Fressard, DDL showing the presence (triangles) or absence (dots) of lexical copies from Sakha in Evenki (black symbols) and Èven (grey symbols) dialects. As in Figure 1, the two diamonds show the location of Učur Evenki (black diamond, more to the south) and Lamunkhin Èven (grey diamond, more to the north), which have both copied lexemes as well as morphemes.

event is possible (8a); it can furthermore express a decision of the speaker to perform an action (8b), and have a nuance of inevitability of an action or event (Korkina 1970: 204–205). This copied morpheme is also found in the Učur Evenki dialect (Myreeva 1964: 49–50), where it expresses both possibility and assertion (8d), taking native Evenki person agreement, as in the Tommot dialect. Malchukov (2006: 127) suggests that the initial nasal consonant in the suffix *-muhi-* is derived from the Evenki derivational suffix *-mu-* which expresses a wish to perform an action (Nedjalkov 1997: 267), in which case *-m.uhi-*, like *-r.day-* discussed above, would represent a hybrid morpheme.

- (8) a. Sakha (YmyE\_158)  
*oččoyo bar-ï:hi-gin*  
 in.that.case go-EPiST-PRED.2SG  
 ‘In that case you can go of course, ...’
- b. Sakha (MaLA\_089)  
*ehi:l hajin buotun ayijaχ oyo, bir ikki oyo*  
 next.year summer completely few child one two child  
*kel-ï:hik*  
 come-EPiST[3SG]  
 ‘I’ve decided that next year very few children will come, only one or two.’

- c. Tommot Evenki (Myreeva 1962: 78)  
*uluki-we wa:-m.uhi-n so: aja-t uđ̣a-kta-vki*  
 squirrel-ACC kill-EPIST.Y-3SG very good-INS track-MULT-HAB  
 ‘He can kill the squirrel, he tracks very well.’<sup>6</sup>
- d. Učur Evenki (Myreeva 1964: 50)  
*o:n=da su: đ̣u-du-hun e-m.uhi-m bi-he*  
 how=PTL 2PL house-DAT-POSS.2PL NEG-EPIST.Y-1SG be-NEG.CVB  
*bi: buya-la-vi muču-m.uhi-m*  
 1SG place-LOC-PRFL.SG return-EPIST.Y-1SG  
 ‘There is obviously no way that I will be able to live in your house, I will return to my country.’

So relatively close contact alone is obviously not the driving factor behind the paradigm copying that has taken place in Lamunkhin Èven and Učur Evenki, otherwise one might expect to find copied paradigms in Tommot Evenki as well. Of course, in contrast to copied morphology lexical copies are not necessarily a good measure of intensity of contact, as lexical items can be copied even in situations where the contact is not particularly intense. Indeed, as suggested by Ross (2003: 193) lexical copies are not necessarily indicators of language contact at all, since they can be transferred even when there is no bilingualism. For example, most, if not all, the indigenous languages of Siberia have copied at least some lexical items from Russian, since Russian culture has been the dominant force in the region for the past 400 years, and many new items and concepts were introduced via Russian. And yet, especially in the early period of contact, most of these lexemes were transferred in the absence of any large-scale knowledge of Russian. Thus, for only three dialects included in the survey, Nepa, Tokminsk-Verkholsk (see Section 3.2 and 3.3), and Tommot Evenki, is the large-scale copying of Russian lexemes explicitly mentioned.

### 3.2 Degree of contact: Inter-marriage

A different, and perhaps more pertinent, measure of intensity of contact is the existence of inter-marriage between two speech communities (cf. Gardani 2008: 88). Such mixed marriages would result in linguistically mixed households, and such intimate and intense contact might provide a more fertile basis for the copying of paradigms. However, as shown by the results of the North Tungusic dialect survey, this again cannot be the sole explanation. There are three North Tungusic

6. Although the translation of this example lacks any overt strong assertion, the form *-m.uhi* here appears to express the same degree of epistemic certainty as that described for the Sakha model exemplified in (8a).

dialects for which there is evidence of intermarriage between members of different speech communities: Lamunkhin Ėven, Učur Evenki and Nepa Evenki. In the village of Sebjan-Küöl, where Lamunkhin Ėven is spoken, there are several households with one Sakha and one Ėven parent (own observation), and molecular anthropological analyses indicate that this intimate contact extends back several generations (Duggan et al. 2013). For the Učur Evenki dialect, Myreeva (1964: 6–8) explicitly describes the high level of contact which has resulted in a number of marriages between Sakha and Evenks and in the acculturation of the Evenks to the Sakha. So both dialects that exhibit paradigm copies are spoken in communities with linguistically mixed households, in good agreement with expectations. The third dialect, however, does not fit the hypothesis: this is the Nepa dialect of Evenki, which is spoken not in the vicinity of Sakha, but by Evenks who live in settlements along the Lower Tunguska and Čona rivers together with Russians. Vasilevič (1948: 153) explicitly mentions the existence of marriages between Russians and Evenks who speak this dialect. However, she does not mention any resulting influence of Russian on this Evenki dialect, other than a large amount of Russian lexical copies. This demonstrates that intimate contact alone cannot be the only factor leading to paradigm copying. Rather, as will be shown with data from yet another Evenki dialect, structural congruence between the languages plays an important role in the outcome of contact (cf. Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 72).

### 3.3 Structural congruence between lects in contact

While Vasilevič (1948: 89–104) does not explicitly mention mixed marriages in her description of the Tokminsk-Verkholsk dialects of Evenki, she does stress the close contact between Evenks, Buryats, and Russians, with most Evenks being settled in Russian villages at the time of her fieldwork in the mid-1920s. This close contact has led to the transfer of a large amount of Russian lexical copies; furthermore, Vasilevič states that a ‘jargon’ of simplified Russian and Evenki hybrid constructions has emerged: “In the Evenk language a distinctive jargon has been developed for communication with the local Russians, in which Russian words and native words are introduced in changed form” (Vasilevič 1948: 103–104, translation mine).<sup>7</sup>

A further result of this close Evenki-Russian contact is the replacement of the Evenki necessitative paradigm with a mixed Russian-Evenki construction in the Tokminsk dialect. The common Evenki necessitative mood is formed with the mood marker *-ŋA:t* and the possessive paradigm of subject agreement marking

7. В эвенкийском языке для общения с местными русскими выработался своеобразный жаргон, в который введены русские слова и слова своего языка в измененных формах.

(9a); in the Tokminsk dialect, this has been replaced by an analytic construction consisting of the Evenki imperative and the deontic particle *na:de* copied from Russian (9b, c).

- (9) a. Tommot Evenki (Myreeva 1962: 77)  
*o:ŋa:t-i-w*                      *o:ŋa:t-i-hun*  
 make-NEC-EP-POSS.1SG      make-NEC-EP-POSS.2PL  
 ‘I have to make’                  ‘you[pl] have to make’
- b. Tokminsk Evenki (Vasilevič 1948: 99)  
*ahän-keł*      *na:de*  
 sleep?-IMP.2SG PTL.R  
 ‘I have to sleep’
- c. *ŋene-keł*      *na:de*  
 go-IMP.2SG PTL.R  
 ‘he has to go’

As can be seen from the 1SG and 3SG translations of the examples, which contrast with the 2SG imperative form of the suffix *-kał*, this construction appears to be invariant. Of course, this is not the only case of copying of the Russian deontic particle into an indigenous Siberian lect: as was seen above (7a, b), this has also been copied into Sakha and possibly Lamunkhin Èven. However, what makes the Tokminsk Evenki case so interesting is the fact that the Russian-Evenki hybrid construction has entirely replaced the native Evenki necessitative construction. This is therefore similar to the replacement of the native Èven necessitative construction with the Sakha necessitative mood forms in Lamunkhin Èven, and it has occurred in a situation of intense contact between Evenks and Russians. However, it is arguably the lack of structural congruence between Evenki, a verb-final agglutinative language with numerous tense, aspect, mood, voice and other verbal suffixes, and Russian, a rather more fusional language with flexible word order and relatively little verbal morphology, that has prevented the copying of verbal paradigms.

Thus, the results of the survey have shown that both mixed marriages and structural congruence appear to be necessary but not sufficient conditions for the copying of paradigms (cf. Pakendorf: forthcoming). This implies that if the conditions are right, paradigm copying can well be expected to take place, and that it should not be disregarded entirely in historical linguistics. And yet, surely this cannot be the entire story: if intimate contact (i.e. mixed marriages) and structural congruence – both of which occur quite frequently in situations of language contact – were indeed the only prerequisites for paradigm copying to take place, then there would be far more examples of such copies than the three that are known so far: Učur Evenki, Lamunkhin Èven and Copper Island Aleut, which all



copied verbal inflectional paradigms.<sup>8</sup> There thus have to be further factors at play, and as will be outlined in the following section, it is arguably the very specific structure of Sakha TAM morphology that can explain why two thirds of the known cases of paradigm copying involve Sakha as a model language.

#### 4. Sakha TAM morphology and its role in paradigm copying

As has been mentioned in passing in Section 2, Sakha makes use of different paradigms of subject agreement suffixes in different TAM forms, some of which were already illustrated above. Table 6 summarizes the underlying forms of the three subject agreement paradigms copied into Lamunkhin Èven in addition to the person markers occurring in the conditional-temporal mood. The ‘predicative’ paradigm marks nominal predicates; it also occurs in the indicative present tense and the necessitative mood, among others, as illustrated in Section 2 (4a, 5a). The ‘possessive’ paradigm marks the possessor on nouns and occurs in the indicative past and future tense as well as with the assertive-presumptive mood that was presented above (1a, 2a, 3a). Various case-marked possessive suffixes mark agreement with the subject of subordinate clauses; the accusative-marked possessive paradigm included in Table 6 occurs with the hypothetical mood, as illustrated above (6a). The ‘conditional’ paradigm is restricted to the conditional-temporal mood.

In the Northern Tungusic languages, there are also different subject agreement paradigms that combine with different TAM forms (see Table 7 for the standard Èven forms as an example).

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8. Copper Island Aleut is, of course, considered a mixed language, and as such one might prefer not to speak of ‘copying’ (since one could consider it the descendant of both component languages). However, although Copper Island Aleut contains many Russian words, the basic lexicon is to a large extent Aleut, as is the majority of its morphology, with the exception of the finite verb morphology and pronouns to mark subject agreement, which are Russian (Thomason 1997: 457–461). It is thus possible to say that Copper Island Aleut arose through the copying of Russian finite verb paradigms into Aleut, comparable to the copying of Sakha verb paradigms into Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven. This contrasts with Gurindji Kriol, another mixed language, which consists of elements of the Pama-Nyungan language Gurindji and the English-lexifier creole used in Australia. In Gurindji Kriol the entire Gurindji case paradigm is used together with the Kriol verb frame (Meakins 2011: 59); nevertheless, it would be difficult to say that this represents a case of copying of the Gurindji case paradigm, since Gurindji Kriol is “a language which is lexically and structurally very mixed” (Meakins 2011: 67). It is therefore impossible to determine whether the Gurindji case paradigm was copied into Kriol or the Kriol verb frame copied into Gurindji.

Table 6. Sakha subject agreement paradigms.

	Predicative	Possessive	Poss.-Accusative	Conditional
1SG	-BlIn	-(I)m	-BlIn	-pInA
2SG	-GIn	-(I)ŋ	-GIn	-χInA
3SG	(zero)	-(t)A	-(t)In	-InA
1PL	-BlIt	-BlIt	-BlItIn	-pItInA
2PL	-GIt	-GIt	-GItIn	-χItInA
3PL	-LAr	-LArA	-LArIn	-tArInA

Table 7. Èven subject agreement paradigms.

	verbal	possessive I	possessive II
1SG	-m	-W	-W
2SG	-nrI	-s(I)	-s(I)
3SG	-n(I)	-n(I)	-n(I)
1PL.INCL	-p	-t(I)	-l-t(I)
1PL.EXCL	-R(U)	-WUn	-l-bUn
2PL	-s	-sAn	-l-sAn
3PL	-r	-tAn	-l

In Èven, the ‘verbal’ paradigm, which is restricted to occurring with verbs, occurs in the indicative non-future (10a) and future tense, for example, while the ‘possessive I’ paradigm, which also marks the possessor on nouns, occurs in the simple past tense (10b) or the indigenous Èven necessitative mood. The ‘possessive II’ paradigm, which occurs in the subjunctive mood (10c), among others, consists of the possessive subject agreement suffixes with the addition of the nominal plural suffixes in the plural (Table 7). A similar distinction between ‘verbal’ and ‘possessive’ subject agreement paradigms is found in Evenki (Nedjalkov 1997: 259–261). Note that in Lamunkhin Èven, as in other Èven dialects spoken in the vicinity of Sakha (e.g. the Allaikha dialect, Dutkin 1995: 46), the distinction between 1PL inclusive and exclusive has been lost.

- (10) a. Lamunkhin Èven, non-future (beseda\_NPZ\_1452)  
*hel turkì-ńđa-n bi-h-ni=hni, tara-w*  
 iron sled-AUG-POSS.3SG be-NFUT-3SG=AFFIRM DIST-ACC  
*ga-ra-p her-re-p*  
 take-NFUT-1PL go-NFUT-1PL  
 ‘there’s this iron sled, right, we took that and we set off’

- b. Lamunkhin Èven, simple past (TVK\_family\_039)  
*tarit tar amar-da-duku-n emie omen ja-w*  
 then DIST behind-side-ABL-POSS.3SG also.Y one what-ACC  
*ga-ri-t ...*  
 take-PST-POSS.1PL  
 ‘Then after that we again took one what (a kitten), ...’
- c. Lamunkhin Èven, subjunctive (LAT\_family\_history\_083a)  
*tarit tar Hemenep boŋla bi: abiga-w “oŋo-m*  
 then DIST Semenov DP.Y 1SG grandfather-POSS.1SG reindeer-ACC  
*ga-mča-l-ti, Buluŋ-nula töhö oŋon*  
 take-SBJV-PL-POSS.1PL Bulun-LOC how.much.Y reindeer  
*bi-h-ni” go:n-če*  
 be-NFUT-3SG say-PF.PTCP  
 ‘As for this Semenov, he said (to) my grandfather, “We would like to take/get domestic reindeer, how many domestic reindeer are there in the Bulun district?”’

Given this variation in subject agreement marking in Evenki and Èven, one might expect that speakers of North Tungusic dialects would be able to distinguish the different subject agreement paradigms in use in Sakha and to separate them from the mood suffixes; one would therefore actually expect that in a contact situation they might copy mood suffixes but add their own person markers, as has happened in Učur and Tommot Evenki with the Sakha ‘assertive’ mood discussed above (cf. (8b-d)). Instead, speakers of Lamunkhin Èven and Učur Evenki have not copied simply the TAM suffix, but have copied the entire TAM-person paradigm from Sakha. The explanation for this lies in the structure of Sakha TAM formation: the crux of the matter is that there are few TAM suffixes with a dedicated meaning; rather, TAM forms result from a combination of polyfunctional suffixes (e.g. different participles, but also others like the ‘modal’ suffix that occurs in the assertive-presumptive and conditional mood, see below) with different subject agreement suffixes. It is the combination of a polyfunctional ‘TAM’ suffix with a specific subject agreement paradigm that results in a specific TAM reading. For example, the combination of the future participle *-IAχ* with the possessive subject agreement paradigm results in the indicative future tense (11a), whereas the future participle plus the possessive-accusative paradigm results in the hypothetical mood (11b) also illustrated in Section 2.

- (11) a. Sakha, indicative future tense (RaxA\_234)  
*biligin kör-üöy-ün, χa:rtiška-larin da kör-üöŋ ...*  
 now see-FUTPT-POSS.2SG photo.R-ACC.3PL PTL see-FUT.2SG  
 ‘Now you will see, you’ll see their photos, ...’

(11b) Sakha, hypothetical mood (MatX\_2\_035)

*bu oyo-lor-uŋ tanaŋ-tarın ku:r-d-uoχ-χun*  
 PROX child-PL-POSS.2SG clothes-ACC.3PL dry-CAUS-FUTPT-ACC.2SG  
*na:da ...*  
 PTL.R

‘Now you have to dry your children’s clothes, ...’

While the surface forms of the future participle look different in (11a) and (11b), this is solely due to consonant assimilation and vowel harmony processes: the fricative voices before vowels (in both (11a) and (12a)), which shows the suffix *-TAχ*), and the different vowels of the verb roots condition different vowels in the suffixes. Note that in (11a) *körüöŋ* is the more frequently used short form of the 2SG future indicative, which results from the elision of the intervocalic voiced fricative.

Similarly, the suffix *-TAχ* occurs in two mood forms: in combination with the possessive subject agreement paradigm it results in the assertive-presumptive mood (12a) copied into Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven; with the conditional subject agreement suffixes it forms the conditional-temporal mood (12b). Note that in examples (1) to (3), which illustrated only the assertive-presumptive mood, this suffix was glossed ASS (assertive), while in (12), which illustrates its occurrence in two different mood forms, I gloss it MDL (modal).

(12) a. Sakha, assertive-presumptive mood (IvaP\_080)

*ɕe h-onnuk oloy-u büt-er-en bu olor-doy-um*  
 PTL EMPH-like.that life-ACC end-CAUS-CVB PROX sit-MDL-POSS.1SG  
 ‘Well, so I’m living my life out.’

b. Sakha, conditional-temporal mood (RaxA\_175)

*čej-di: olor-dox-puna vızov-ka idɕɕ-eller...*  
 tea.R-VR.IPF.CVB sit-MDL-COND.1SG call.R-DAT take.away-PRS.3PL  
 ‘When I sit drinking tea, they call me away...’

The past participle *-BIt* combines with the possessive subject agreement paradigm to form a distant past tense with a witnessed evidential reading (13a), while with the predicative paradigm it forms a distant past with a hearsay evidential reading (13b).

(13) a. Sakha, distant witnessed past (IvaP\_088)

*ɕje-bin manna orujuoŋ-ŋa il-bit-tara [...]*  
 house-ACC.1SG here district.R-DAT take-PSTPT-POSS.3PL  
*detsat gın-iaχta:χ-tar*  
 kindergarten.R do-NEC-3PL

‘They took my house here in the district, [...] they are supposed to make a kindergarten.’

- b. Sakha, distant non-witnessed past (RaxA\_135)
- |                       |                   |             |                    |               |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <i>ol</i>             | <i>öj-ö</i>       | <i>huoχ</i> | <i>hit-tay-ina</i> | <i>pilien</i> |
| that                  | mind-POSS.3SG     | NEG         | lie-MDL-COND.3SG   | captivity.R   |
| <i>il-bit-tar,</i>    | <i>niemes-ter</i> |             |                    |               |
| take- <b>PSTPT-PL</b> | German.R-PL       |             |                    |               |
- ‘When he was lying there unconscious, the Germans took him prisoner.’

Thus, it is not possible to copy solely a mood suffix from Sakha and to combine that with native subject agreement suffixes – it is only the combination of a Sakha ‘TAM’ suffix (which frequently isn’t even that, but is just a participle) with a specific set of Sakha person suffixes that gives a particular TAM reading. This explains why two of the known cases of copied verbal paradigms in Siberia involve Sakha as a donor language.

## 5. Conclusions

To recapitulate, the assertive-presumptive mood with the associated possessive subject agreement paradigm was copied from Sakha into two North Tungusic dialects, Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven, and three more mood and subject agreement paradigms have been or are being copied into Lamunkhin Èven. Given the cross-linguistic rarity of this phenomenon, this represents a striking amount of paradigm copying, and the question naturally arises: why? Why do we find this concentration of copied paradigms involving Sakha as a model language and North Tungusic lects as recipients, and why was one and the same mood copied into both lects?

As was demonstrated in this paper, several linguistic and extra-linguistic factors need to come together for paradigm copying to take place. On the one hand, the contact needs to be intense and intimate – as was shown by the survey described above, linguistically mixed marriages appear to be a necessary, albeit not sufficient prerequisite for paradigm copying to take place (Section 3.2). In this context, it is worth pointing out that the contact situation that led to the development of the mixed language Copper Island Aleut, which is the result of the copying of verbal tense and subject agreement paradigms from Russian into Aleut, also involved intermarriage between speakers of two different languages (Thomason 1997). A further factor that plays a role is the duration of the contact situation: Učur Evenki copied only one mood paradigm from Sakha, while Lamunkhin Èven has copied two paradigms and is in the process of copying two more. Učur Evenki was already nearly extinct in 1960, when Romanova and Myreeva undertook their

dialectal survey, while Lamunkhin Èven is still viable and being passed on to children. There has thus been more time for Lamunkhin Èven to copy paradigms from Sakha than Učur Evenki had. This difference in survival of the two dialects might well be tied to the level of sociocultural assimilation of the Tungusic speakers to their Sakha neighbours: by 1960 the speakers of Učur Evenki had largely given up their traditional subsistence based on nomadic reindeer herding and hunting and had adopted the settled cattle and horse pastoralism of their Sakha neighbours. In contrast, the speakers of Lamunkhin Èven still practise nomadic reindeer herding (organized in professional brigades), and even though many families now live in the village year round, most retain ties to reindeer herders and own private reindeer, and many spend the summer months with a reindeer herd.

Among the linguistic factors that play a role is the nature of the copied paradigms, which in Lamunkhin Èven and Učur Evenki involve markers of modality: it is well known that these (especially obligation and necessity) are cross-linguistically prone to copying (Matras 2007: 45). This can also be seen in the Tokminsk dialect of Evenki discussed in Section 3.3, where the native Evenki necessitative paradigm has been replaced by mixed Russian-Evenki constructions (10b, c). Furthermore, as argued by Backus and Verschik (2012: 140), pragmatically salient forms are copied more easily, and the assertive function of the Sakha assertive-presumptive mood is pragmatically highly salient, occurring in high frequency in contexts of strong assertion and emphasis (cf. Pakendorf 2009: 91). Thus, it is the pragmatic salience of the assertive-presumptive mood that can explain why this particular form was copied independently into two different North Tungusic dialects; and it is cross-linguistically commonly copied mood forms of obligation and necessity that have additionally been copied into Lamunkhin Èven. In addition, paradigm copying is facilitated by the structural congruence of the languages in contact, as discussed in Section 3.3. However, that this is not an absolute prerequisite is demonstrated by Copper Island Aleut, which resulted from contact between two structurally very different languages indeed.

Lastly, as has been argued here, language-specific factors play an important role: were it not for the specific structure of Sakha TAM forms, where the particular tense or mood reading results only through the presence of a specific set of subject agreement markers, speakers of Učur Evenki and Lamunkhin Èven could have simply copied the desired TAM suffix and added their native person markers to it. Instead, the desired mood is obtained only through the combination of polyfunctional suffix with specific person markers, so that the subject agreement paradigms enter the recipient language together with the “mood” suffixes. Thus, it is perhaps no coincidence that three of the four moods (being) copied from Sakha into Lamunkhin Èven (the assertive mood, the indicative present tense, and the hypothetical mood) contain ‘TAM’ suffixes that are polyfunctional, thus acquiring

their specific meaning only in combination with the subject agreement paradigms. In contrast, the ‘assertive’ suffix *-I:hi(k)*, which appears to have been copied from Sakha into both Tommot and Učur Evenki ((8c-d); see above), where it takes native Evenki subject agreement marking, is monofunctional in Sakha, i.e. it carries its epistemic meaning of certainty and decision by itself and does not need to be combined with a particular subject agreement paradigm to achieve this.

To return to the question posed in the introduction of this paper, namely whether historical linguists need to worry that undetected instances of paradigm copying have occurred in linguistic prehistory, the answer provided by the dialect survey undertaken here is an unequivocal ‘no’. While intermarriage and structural congruence, which are presumably fairly common features of language contact situations, clearly play a role in facilitating paradigm copying, these are not the driving force. Rather, it is the very specific characteristics of Sakha TAM marking that are arguably the most important factor behind the paradigm copying found in Tungusic lects – and the combination of intense intimate contact, structural congruence, and language-specific aspects of morphology in which particular TAM readings are achieved only in paradigmatic combinations of morphemes can surely be assumed to be cross-linguistically very rare indeed.

## Abbreviations

ABL	ablative	EXCL	exclusive
ACC	accusative	FUT	future
ADVR	adverbializer	FUTPT	future participle
AFFIRM	affirmative	HAB	habitual
ASS	assertive	HYP	hypothetical
AUG	augmentative	IMP	imperative
CAUS	causative	IMPERS	impersonal
COND	conditional	INCL	inclusive
CONN	connective glide	INS	instrumental
CVB	converb	IPF	imperfect
DAT	dative	LOC	locative
DIST	distal demonstrative	MDL	modal
DP	discourse particle	MULT	multiplicative
EMPH	emphatic	NEC	necessitative
EP	epenthetic vowel	NEG	negative
EPIST	epistemic	NFUT	non-future

PART	part	PST	past
PF	perfect	PSTPT	past participle
PFV	perfective	PTCP	participle
PL	plural	PTL	particle
POSS	possessive	R	Russian copy
PRED	predicative	SBJV	subjunctive
PRFL	reflexive possessive	SG	singular
PROP	proprietary	VR	verbalizer
PROX	proximal demonstrative	Y	Sakha copy
PRS	present		

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