

Appendix A: Fieldwork and methodology

This appendix describes how the fieldwork on Barguzin Buryat that is reported in this paper was conducted.

1 Background

The data reported in this paper were gathered in the village Baraghan, Kurumkan district, Republic of Buryatia, Russian Federation. The author of this paper was a member of a group of linguists who came to the village to work on various aspects of Barguzin Buryat in 2014-2018. I did preliminary work on clausal embedding in 2014-2017, but all the data present in this paper was either gathered or rechecked in 2018.

2 The sociolinguistic situation

Baraghan is a village with a population of ~1000 people. The sociolinguistic situation in Baraghan can be characterized as diglossia: most speakers speak both Barguzin Buryat and Russian fluently, with the former being used more in informal settings (e.g., at home, in stores), and the latter being used more in formal settings (e.g., at school).

3 Recruitment

In 2018 the data were gathered with 3 speakers that the author had previously closely worked with in 2014-2017. In 2014-2017, there were ~10 consultants working with the group of linguists. The recruitment of consultants was done through the governor of the village. The only conditions for being recruited were: (i) being an adult; (ii) being a native speaker of the language.

4 Conditions of elicitation

Language consultants participated in ~4 elicitation sessions (sometimes less) each day, each of which lasted 45 minutes. There were 15 minute breaks

between the sessions. The metalanguage that was used for conducting fieldwork was Russian.

The research presented in this paper was approved for an exemption protocol from the organization which is established to act as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the author's institution, and the consultants were asked to sign consent forms that comply with this protocol.

5 Methodology techniques

Data elicitation conformed both to the general principles for conducting fieldwork (Kibrik 1972; 2017) and to the standards for semantics fieldwork (Matthewson 2004; Bochnak & Matthewson 2015; 2020). Translations of elicited sentences were taken as 'clues', but not as objects of investigation (Matthewson 2004: 389-391). The main method of elicitation was felicity judgments with verbal presentation of the discourse. The discourse was usually presented in the metalanguage (Russian). Before evaluating a given sentence with respect to the context, a judgment of grammaticality was elicited to ensure that the sentence under consideration is indeed a possible sentence of Barguzin Buryat.

Sometimes when a sentence was judged as infelicitous, an additional judgment task was performed. Consultants were asked to compare the target sentence that was judged as infelicitous with a sentence that explicitly involved a contradiction (e.g., of the form '*The sun is shining, but the sun is not shining.*'): they were asked if the two sentences feel "bad, inappropriate" in the same way. This technique seemed to work quite well for identifying infelicities that arose due to the presence of a presupposition. While assertions containing a contradiction and sentences in which presuppositions contradict what is being asserted are not the same thing, they bear enough similarity that comparing them seemed like a good way to ensure that the observed infelicity is not due to an independent factor.

References

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