T R A N S E U R A S I A N   L I N G U I S T I C S

Critical Concepts in Linguistics

VOLUME I   HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE DEBATE

INTRODUCTION

A truly "critical" concept in linguistics

There are numerous ways in which the theme of this series, "Transeurasian linguistics" can be viewed as a "critical" concept in linguistics. The field of historical comparative Transeurasian linguistics has certainly produced a variety of scholarly writings and emendations in the sense probably envisaged by the publisher of this series, but its current condition is also "critical" in the sense that it involves danger of death. In addition to numerous individual Transeurasian languages that are currently facing extinction due to the impact of Chinese or Russian, the comparative study of the language grouping as such is also critically endangered. In comparison to Indo-European Studies, where hundreds, maybe thousands of scholars are addressing the historical connections between the languages concerned, the situation for the Transeurasian languages is less favorable. Whereas the field is abounding with challenges still open for research, many scholars are currently struggling to gather the necessary support to pursue their Transeurasian interest and invest their time and energy in solving the big questions.

Third, "critical" may also refer to the fact that studies on historical connections between the Transeurasian languages continue to generate evidence and counter-evidence, involving evaluation and criticism to such an extent that to the outsider the situation may even appear to be "critical" in the fourth sense, notably in a state of crisis.

Nevertheless, Transeurasian linguistics is also "critical" in a positive sense: it is a crucial area of diachronic linguistics, which can play an important role in developing our methods of language classification and historical linguistic theory in general. Since the nature and the characteristics of the Transeurasian languages provide a very specific set of circumstances, different from the Indo-European languages, comparison yields results that are inconsistent with the evidence in support of Indo-European, but may nevertheless indicate genealogical relatedness. As such, historical comparison of the Transeurasian languages may lead to new insights in theoretical issues such as, for instance, the weight of morphosyntactic evidence vis-à-vis phonological evidence, the significance of shared paradigms and the distinction between borrowing and inheritance.

Inventory of the Transeurasian languages

The term "Transeurasian" refers to a large group of geographically adjacent languages, stretching from the Pacific in the East to the Baltic and the Mediterranean in the West, that include up to five different linguistic families: Japonic, Koreanic, Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic (Johanson & Robbeets 2010: 1–2). It is distinguished from the more traditional term "Altaic", which can be reserved for the linguistic grouping consisting of Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic languages only. Figure 1 is a map of the Transeurasian languages, indicating a selection of the main languages.

Figure 1: Map of the Transeurasian languages (generated with WALS tool)

The Turkic language family consists of about 40 closely related Turkic languages and dialects spoken over a wide area of the Eurasian continent, including some parts of Europe, Asia Minor, Central Asia and Siberia. The homeland of the Turkic family is thought to be in present-day East Mongolia. The earliest clearly documented stage is the language of the Eastern Old Turkic inscriptions of eight century AD in Mongolia's Orkhon valley. For an overview of the history and classification of the Turkic languages, I refer to Johanson (1998). A detailed classification is complicated by mutual influences across groups of Turkic speakers, but there is a clear binary division between Western Turkic and Eastern Turkic. As Chuvash is the only surviving representative of Western Turkic, all other contemporary Turkic languages go back to the Eastern Turkic branch. With the exception of Khalaj spoken in central Iran, the Eastern Turkic languages are spread over 4 branches: (1) southwestern Oghuz Turkic including among others Turkish, Azerbaijani, Gagauz, Turkmen, Khorasani Turkic, Qashqay and Afshar; (2) northwestern Kipchak Turkic including among others Crimean Tatar, Kumyk, Karachay-Balkar, Karaim, Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Karakalpak and Nogai; (3) southeastern Uighur Turkic including among others Uzbek, Uighur along with different Eastern Turki dialects and (4) northeastern Siberian Turkic including among others Yakut, Dolgan, Tuvan, Tofa, Shor, Khakas and Altay Turkic.

The Mongolic language family consists of about 12 closely related languages, extending over Central and Northeast Asia. All contemporary Mongolic languages can be traced back to the language spoken by Chinggis Khan, the founder of the Mongol empire (1206-1368). Consequently the homeland of the Mongolic family was the tribal territory of Chinggis Khan in eastern Mongolia, between the Onon and the Kerülen rivers. The earliest documented stage is Middle Mongolian, the most renown text being the 'Secret History of the Mongols', originally compiled in the mid thirteenth century, but preserved in a modified seventeenth-century copy. For an overview of the classification of the Mongolic languages, I refer to Binnick (1987) and Nugteren (1997). A detailed classification is complicated by subsequent waves of linguistic assimilation due to nomadic lifestyles, but there appears to be a division between a central and a peripheral branch. The Central Mongolic languages include among others Dagur, Khalkha, Buriat, Ordos, Kamnigan, Oirat and Kalmuck, whereas the Peripheral Mongolic languages include among others Moghol, Shira-Yughur, Monguor,

Dongxian and Bao'an. Proto-Mongolic, the language ancestral to the contemporary Mongolic languages is thought to have split from Proto-Khitanic in the second century AD. Among the Khitanic languages are the now-extinct languages of the Tabgach of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-550) and the Khitan of the Liao dynasty (916-1125). The ultimate homeland of the ancestor of Mongolic and Khitanic people was probably situated in southern Manchuria, which was also the place where the Khitanic people originally lived.

The Tungusic family comprises about 14 languages distributed over Manchuria and Siberia. The homeland of the Tungusic family is probably situated in a compact region comprising the eastern half of Southern Manchuria (Liaodong) and parts of North Korea. The internal classification of the family has been subject to two different interpretations, depending on the question whether the Manchuric branch was the first to split off or not. For an overview of the classification of the Tungusic languages, I refer to Whaley et al. (1999). The Manchuric languages include Sibe and Manchu as well as Jurchen, the now extinct language of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234). Since written materials in Jurchen are only partially deciphered, the earliest well documented stage is Manchu, the official language of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Among the Northern Tungusic languages we find among others Evenki, Oroqen, Negidal, Solon, Even and Arman, among the Southern Tungusic languages we find Nanai, Kili, Olcha, Orok, Udehe and Oroch.

Leaving the question aside whether the language of Chejudo Island should be regarded as a language rather than a dialect, there is only a single Korean language today. However, this has not always been the case. Various Koreanic languages once coexisted with Japanic languages on the Korean peninsula. Among the now-extinct Koreanic languages we find the languages of Paekche, Kaya and Silla. Their coexistence was discontinued when Japanic relocated to the Japanese Islands in the first millennium BC and when the Silla expansion unified the languages of the Korean Peninsula from the seventh century AD onwards. The linguistic homogeneity of the Korean Peninsula as we know it today is thus relatively recent. The homeland of the Korean language family is traditionally situated in the Silla kingdom in the southeastern part of the peninsula, but the speakers of Korean probably migrated to that location from southern Manchuria in the north. Some fragments of writing go back to the period before the linguistic unification of the peninsula in 668, but a a systematic and accurate documentation of the Korean language started only with the Hangŭl texts in the fifteenth century. See Lee & Ramsey (2011) for a history and classification of the Koreanic languages.

We can distinguish between Japanic languages on the one hand and Japonic languages on the other. The term "Japanic" is used by Janhunen (1996: 77-78, 80-81) in reference to the historical varieties of the Japanese language spoken on the Korean Peninsula in addition to those spoken on the Japanese Islands. By contrast, the label "Japonic", coined by Serafim (1999), is restricted to the insular variety, the language family composed of Mainland Japanese and the Ryukyuan languages. It is generally agreed that the Japonic languages entered the Japanese islands via the southern tip of the Korean peninsula in the first millennium BC, with the ancestral speakers settling in northern Kyushu and eventually spreading to the rest of the Japanese Islands. Although the speakers of Mainland Japanese probably left in the late first millennium BC, the ancestor of the languages now spoken in the Ryukyuan Islands is thought to have remained in northeastern Kyushu until around 900 AD. Ryukyuan can be divided into a northern group, including the mutually intelligible Amami and Okinawa dialects, and a southern group called Sakishima, including the mutually unintelligible languages of Miyako, Yaeyama and Yonaguni (Pellard 2015). The earliest clearly documented stage of Japonic is Old Japanese, dating back to the eight century. Evidence for the presence of other Japanic languages on the Korean peninsula is provided by a small corpus of toponyms recorded in the Korean historical source *Samguk Sagi* ('Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms' 1145). Although there is no agreement among linguistic scholarship whether these toponyms represent the language spoken on the former territory of Koguryo, there is a relative consensus to take them as an indication that a Japanic language was once spoken on the Korean peninsula.

Transeurasian: what's in a name?

The Transeurasian languages form a vast linguistic continuum that crosses the physical boundaries between Europe and Asia. Contrary to the tradition to refer to these languages as "Altaic languages," Johanson and Robbeets (2010: 1-2) coined the term "Transeurasian" to refer to this large grouping. In spite of the long-standing alternative available in the linguistic literature, I have adopted the new term in this collection for several reasons.

First, the new name avoids confusion between the different uses of the term "Altaic". In this collection, De Rachewiltz, Rybatzki, Ramstedt, Clauson, Sinor, Doerfer, Poppe, Tekin, Baskakov, Róna-Tas, Nevskaya, Nichols, Hamp and Clark use "Altaic" as the collective name for the languages belonging to the Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic language families, whereas Schönig restricts the term to the Turkic and Mongolic families. In contrast, Miller, Street, Comrie, Bomhard, Norman, Hattori, Ko, Whitman, Joseph, Murayama, Starostin S., Kortlandt, Vovin, Itabashi, Finch, Blažek, Starostin G. and Dybo use "Altaic" in its broadest sense, i.e. covering all five families, regardless of whether they accept or reject the genealogical affinity of these languages. Finally, Georg, Michalove, Manaster Ramer, Sidwell, Martin, Janhunen and Unger prefer to use specifications such as "Core Altaic" or "Micro-Altaic" to refer to the Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic languages, while they occasionally use "Macro-Altaic" for the expanded grouping. To avoid ambiguity, the title of this collection bears the name "Transeurasian" as a cover term in the expanded sense.

Second, the suffix *-ic* in "Altaic" implies affinity in the same way as it does in "Germanic", "Semitic", or "Austro-Asiatic". A number of contributors to this collection, i.e. Ramstedt, Poppe, Baskakov, Hamp, Tekin, Hattori, Murayama, Miller, Street, Itabashi, Starostin S., Dybo, Blažek, Bomhard, Michalove, Manaster Ramer, Norman, Finch, Kortlandt, Robbeets and Starostin G. accept the Transeurasian unity, whereas others, i.e. De Rachewiltz, Martin, Comrie, Róna-Tas, Clark, Johanson, Nevskaya, Sidwell, Whitman, Ko, Joseph, Pakendorf and Rybatzki adopt a neutral but still skeptical attitude and yet others, i.e. Clauson, Sinor, Doerfer, Janhunen, Unger, Nichols, Georg, Schönig and Vovin reject it. *Faute de mieux*, even the opponents of the hypothesis that the Transeurasian languages are genealogically related use "Altaic" as geographical and typological cover term. Defining "Transeurasian" as a group of geographically adjacent languages that share a significant number of linguistic properties, does not presuppose a genealogical relationship and hence the term is more neutral for linguists who do not subscribe to the hypothesis of Transeurasian affiliation.

Moreover, replacing the term "Altaic" by "Transeurasian" may also reduce the strong and counterproductive polarization between "Pro-Altaists" and "Anti-Altaists". The labeling of positions brings battle-field rhetoric to the debate, as witnessed by expressions in this collection such as "anti-Altaic attacks" (Ramer et al. 1998: 89; this collection xx) and "the anti-Altaic camp " (Miller 1991: 308 n.20; this collection xx). Abandoning identifications with either pole of the Altaic scale may attenuate the hostile tone that marks some of the debate.

Finally, the term "Altaic" is not only rejected because of the suffix *-ic*, but also because of its root. Similarly to the case of "Uralic", the root refers to a mountain range that is thought to have dominated the original homeland of the ancestral speech community. However, both critics and supporters of a genealogical unity would agree that the reference to the Altai mountains as a homeland does not keep pace with developments in interdisciplinary research. In one of his contributions to this collection, Janhunen (2003: 294-296, this collection xx) makes it clear that the original speech communities of Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Korean, and Japanese must have been situated in a rather compact area comprising the Korean Pensinsula, southern Manchuria and present day southeastern Mongolia. Given the observation that the linguistically more diversified core region often corresponds to the homeland of the language family, the most suitable candidate for a Transeurasian homeland

—assuming that genealogical unity would indeed be the case— is the region of southern Manchuria. Interestingly, Ramstedt (1924: 8; this collection xx), the alleged founder of Transeurasian linguistics already pointed to Mongolia or Manchuria as the Altaic homeland.

As a result, the designation "Transeurasian" is gradually gaining acceptance in the field. This is witnessed by the recent application of the term in the title of symposia, research projects and publications. Therefore, I have chosen to use the term in the title of this collection.

Different classificational models.

As can be understood from the first volume in this collection, the question of whether the Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Koreanic and Japanic languages descend from a single common ancestor has been the topic of a longstanding debate. The controversy is not primarily fueled by a shortage of linguistic similarities, but by the difficulty of accounting for them: are all shared forms generated by borrowing or are some of them residues of inheritance? Opponents of the affiliation hypothesis admit that the Transeurasian languages indeed share a large amount of common elements and features in phonology, morphosyntax and lexicon, but they maintain that these are better accounted for by an interplay of borrowing, universal principles in linguistic structuring and coincidence than by common descent. As such, they believe that it is meaningful to study the Transeurasian languages together as a grouping, be it as a linguistic area or a structural type rather than a genealogical unit. Supporters of the affiliation hypothesis admit that the Transeurasian languages have been subject to extensive mutual contact throughout their histories, but they maintain that not all similarities are the result of borrowing, universals or chance. They argue that there is a limited core of similarities for which the linguistically most sensible explanation is inheritance. However, even if the supporters basically agree about the unity of the Transeurasian family, they do not necessarily coincide on the ways in which the different branches should be separated. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the different models of classification available in Transeurasian literature. It can be noted that the following classifications are adapted from the original ones suggested by the respective scholars. To enhance comparability most representations are simplified, for instance by leaving out the sub-branching of the individual proto-families, by omitting designations for intermediate stages and by turning the trees in the horizontal direction.

Although Ramstedt (1912: 3) mentioned "im mongolisch-türkischen", i.e. common Mongolo-Turkic, it seems that he used this designation as a synonym of the Altaic unity. When he added Tungusic and Korean data to his comparative grammar (Ramstedt 1952/1957), he did not establish any intermediate stages and the four families seem to make up four separate branches of Altaic. However, when discussing the relationship with Japanese, Ramstedt (1924: 8; this collection xx) pictured Japanese as a sister rather than a daughter language of proto-Altaic. Hence we can deduce a classification as the one given in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Classification of the Transeurasian languages derived from Ramstedt's hypothesis
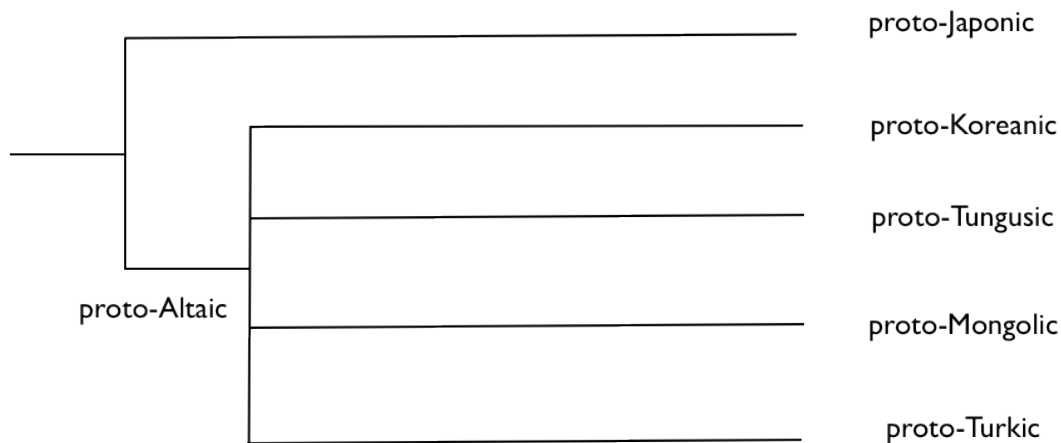
Poppe (1965: 147) proposed a tree in which the Mongolo-Tungusic branch represents a separate unit, which taken together with a separate Turkic branch, forms a common Turko-Mongolo-Tungusic stage. Although he included Korean as a separate branch of Altaic in his initial scheme, he later remarked that "Korean is a language only partly belonging to the field of Altaic studies" (Poppe 1975: 172; this collection xx). What he probably had in mind is that Korean is either a non-Altaic language on an Altaic substratum or else, a language that has separated from the Altaic unity at a very early stage; see Poppe (1960: 153): "Wenn das Koreanische mehr als nur ein altaisches Substrat besitzt und wirklich eine altaische Sprache ist, so muss angenommen werden dass es sich von der altaischen Ursprache ganz zuerst losgetrennt haben muss." As for the position of Japanese, he had more confidence in a genealogical relationship with Altaic: "… there is no doubt that Japanese is related to the whole Altaic group, not going back to the same immediate ancestor as the languages mentioned here but maybe, proto-Japanese and proto-Altaic go back to a common ancestor" (Poppe 1975: 180; this collection xx). This leads to the classification represented in Figure 3, in which the possibility of an Altaic substratum in Korean is indicated with a dotted line.

Figure 3: Classification of the Transeurasian languages derived from Poppe's hypothesis
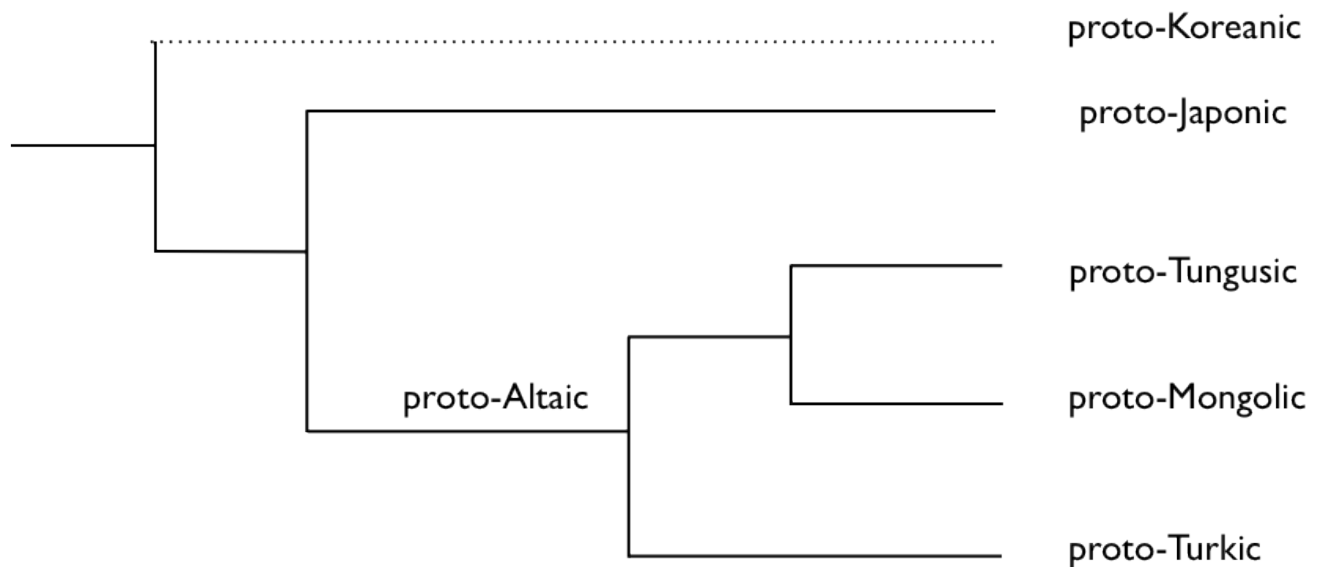
In his review of Poppe (1960), Street (1962: 95) suggested a different configuration for the Japanese and Korean branches, speculating about a Japano-Koreanic branch, which

eventually taken together with Ainu, would be related as an ancestral sister of proto-Altaic. My simplification of Street's revision of Poppe's classification is given in Figure 4. The dotted line with the question marks represents Street's uncertainty about the inclusion of Japanese and Ainu.

Figure 4: Classification of the Transeurasian languages derived from Street's revision
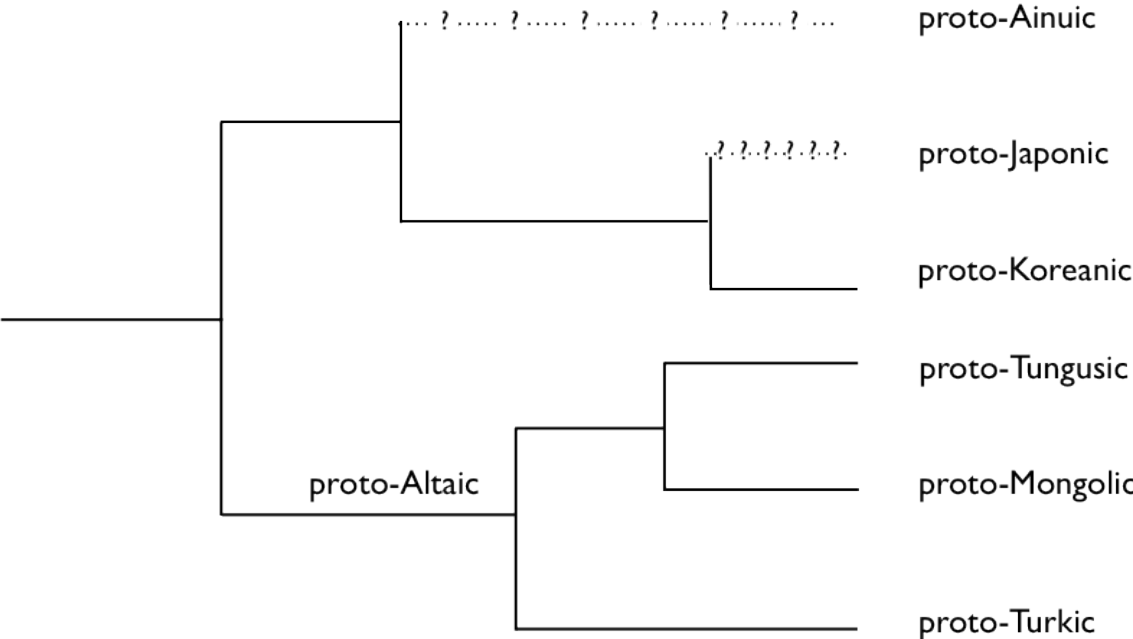

Although Miller (1971: 44) isolated Turkic as a separate branch in line with the Poppe-Street classification, he proposed an intermediate stage shared between Tungusic, Korean and Japanese. This subbranch recalls the suggestion made by Unger and the Altaic panel (1990: 481; this collection xx) to limit the reconstructions to a "Macro-Tungusic" family, consisting of Tungusic, Koreanic and Japanic languages only. However, unlike Unger's proposal, Miller conceives the position occupied by the Ryukyuan languages as independent from Mainland Japanese. A simplified representation of Miller's scheme is given in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Classification of the Transeurasian languages derived from Miller's hypothesis
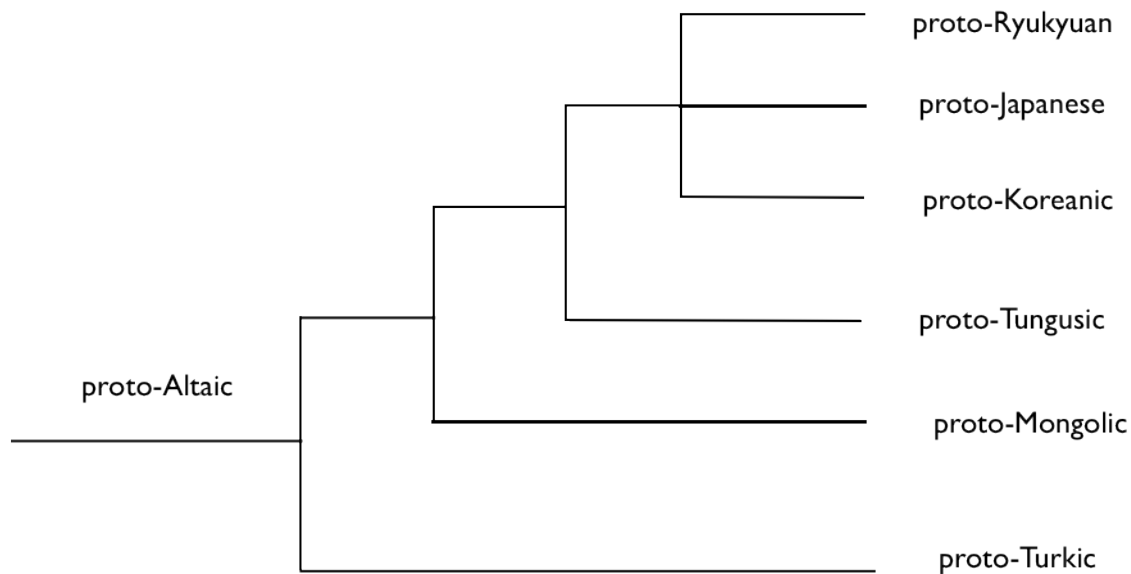
In line with an earlier proposal by Vladimircov (1929: 44-47), Baskakov (1981: 14) grouped Mongolic together with Turkic, rather than with Tungusic as in Poppe and Street's view. As such, he divided the Altaic family into three branches: Turco-Mongolic, Tungusic and Japano-Koreanic. An adapted representation of his classification is given in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Classification of the Transeurasian languages derived from Baskokov's hypothesis
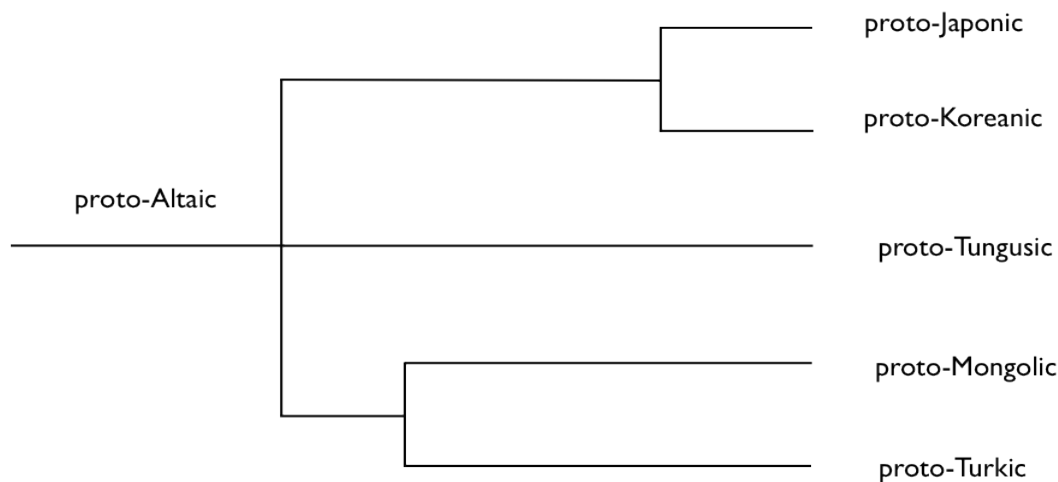
Baskakov's conception lives on in the views of the Moscow school, represented by Starostin and his colleagues. Starostin et al. (2003: 236) conceived Altaic as consisting of three principal groups: Turko-Mongolic, Tungusic and Japano-Koreanic. However, contrary to Baskokov's dating, the two subbranches Turko-Mongolic and Japano-Koreanic are thought to have split around the same time in the fourth millennium BC.

  Blažek & Schwarz (2014: 90) alter Starostin's classification by adding an early binary split between Turko-Mongolic on the one hand and Tunguso-Japano-Koreanic on the other, but their lexicostatistic datings largely confirm the estimations made by Starostin and his team. An adapted representation of their classification is given in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Classification of the Transeurasian languages adapted from Blažek & Schwarz's scheme
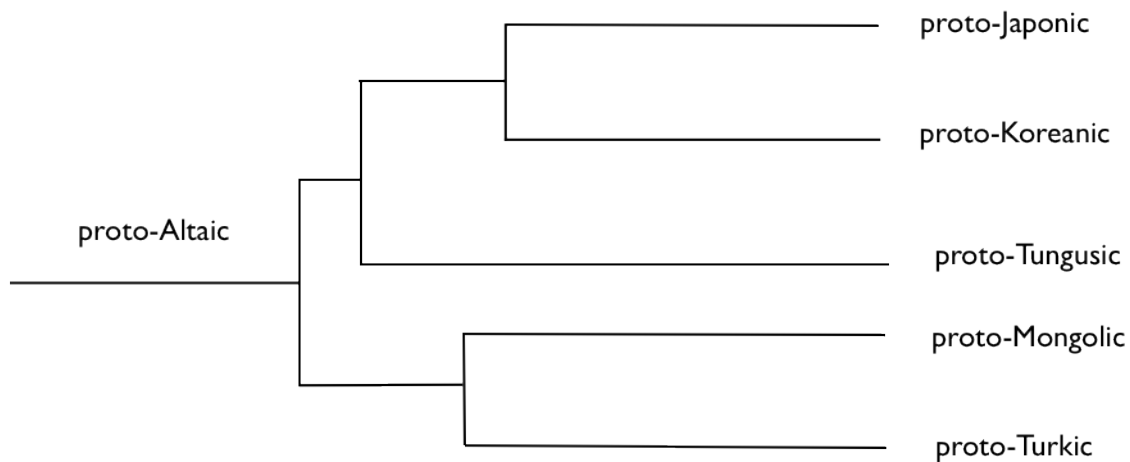
Finally, revisiting lexical and morphological evidence, Robbeets (2015: 506) reaches the classification represented in Figure 8. Indicating a close relationship between Mongolic and Tungusic, her scheme basically confirms the Poppe-Street classification, with the provision that Japano-Koreanic forms a common stage and that Ainuic is not regarded as a member of the family. It can be noted that Janhunen (2013: 26; this collection xx), in spite of his rejecting the Transeurasian affiliation hypothesis, leaves room for a very early genealogical relationship between Tungusic and Mongolic in view of specific morphological elements shared between both languages.

Figure 8: Robbeets' classification of the Transeurasian languages
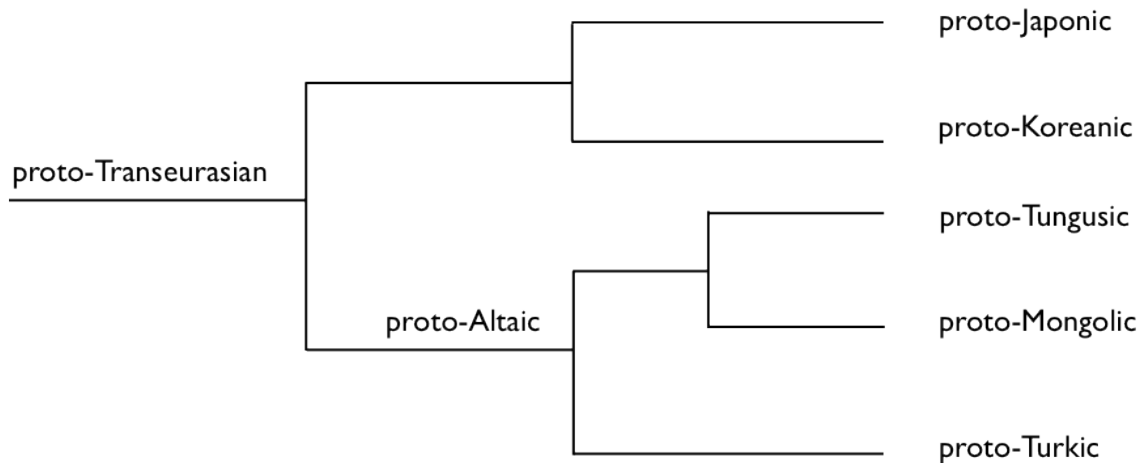
Given the different classificational models, the reader should be aware of the fact that even if the proponents of Transeurasian affiliation agree on the affinity of the languages concerned, they have different concepts with regard to the taxonomy of the family. It is a sign of the healthy state of the Transeurasian debate that it continues to generate discussion about the internal organization of the alleged family as well as about the relative importance of areal and genealogical factors. As discussions about linguistic affinity are open-ended by their very nature, the present collection has obviously no intention to close the debate on Transeurasian affinity and classification, but it rather intends to stimulate future discussion by providing an overview of the wealth of opinions.

Organization of this collection

This four-volume collection is an attempt to assemble the most important scholarly writings concerning the historical relationship between the Transeurasian languages. Whereas the introductory volume will document the development of the debate in a historical context, the focus of this collection is meant to be on providing an overview of the current trends and core-issues that dominate the Transeurasian field today. Apart from Poppe's "Introduction to Altaic linguistics" published in 1965 and mainly restricted to the comparison of Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic as it stood in the middle of the 20th century, no up-to-date, large-scope, English-language introduction to Transeurasian linguistics is available in the literature. Therefore, I hope that a reference source like the one attempted here can fill a gap in the literature.

A number of conditions set by the publisher of this collection have led to limitations in selecting suitable articles. First, there is the requirement that articles should be originally written in the English language. Especially in the earlier days, the bulk of Transeurasian literature was written in German or Russian and a good number of works appeared in French, Hungarian, Turkish, Japanese or Korean. As a result, I was not able to include publications by some influential scholars such as Benzing, Ligeti and Cincius since these authors did not write in English. One exception to the English-language rule was made for Doerfer's article "Ist das Japanische mit den altaischen Sprachen verwandt?" because it is at the core of the debate about the relationship between Japanese and Altaic and it has evoked a number of replies in English, which cannot be well understood without representing the basic German text.

Second, even if this collection was allowed to reach a considerable size, there was nonetheless a restriction on the available space. Therefore, preference was given to concise articles on general issues over detailed studies of individual etymologies or specific subproblems. Obviously it was not possible to reprint entire monographs, but in some cases a single book chapter has been chosen.

Since the contemporary debates have focussed on the inclusion of Japonic and Koreanic in the Transeurasian area/family, particular attention will be paid to the position of these languages. Another reason to direct our attention particularly at these peripheral groups is that they offer the best chance of resolving the key question whether all shared forms across the Transeurasian languages are generated by borrowing or whether some are the residues of inheritance. In the past, each of the three continental families and the two insular families maintained high-contact relationships amongst themselves. If a number of shared elements are found between low-contact groups, including, for instance, Japonic and Turkic, borrowing can be ruled out with high probabilty. Starting from a hypothesis that includes low-contact languages therefore increases our chances to resolve the longstanding copy-cognate question.

Admitted that debate concerning the scope and nature of the connections between the Transeurasian languages is versatile and complex, some major themes have nevertheless emerged. They center around the obstacles that have prevented us to formulate a conclusive answer to the Transeurasian question so far: the regularity of sound correspondence, the alleged lack of common morphology and the distinction between borrowing and inheritance. These topics form the organizational skeleton of this volume. In what follows I will give an overview of each individual volume, summarizing the overall themes and questions, and indicating the interconnections.

Volume I: History and status of the debate

The first volume tries to inventory the obstacles and solutions as they presented themselves in the course of the history of the debate. Although the first observations about linguistic similarities between specific Transeurasian languages —Mongolic and Turkic in particular— go back to publications by European orientalists in the late 18th century, the true foundations of the field were laid in the beginning of the 20th century by the Finnish Mongolist Ramstedt. The first volume will briefly document the historical development of

the debate from the beginning of the 20th century up to the late nineties, portraying successive cycles of genealogical and areal approaches. While, until the late sixties, the field focussed on the comparison of Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic, on the one side, and of Korean and Japanese, on the other, in the seventies, scholarly interest in the overall comparison of these languages increased. Volume I sets in with four recently written outlines on the historical development of the field and then brings together a dozen of trendsetting contributions by Transeurasian scholarship in the past.

This collection opens with an up-to-date sketch of the history of the Transeurasian debate by De Rachewiltz and Rybatzki. The authors agree that there are elements shared by the languages concerned, but they both have different views with regard to the motivation of the similarities by Transeurasian affiliation, one being cautiously positive, the other cautiously negative. Difference of opinion is also traceable in the second article, in which Manaster Ramer, Michalove and Sidwell declare to accept the relatedness of the Transeurasian languages while Georg rejects it. The paper clearly defines the obstacles that stand in the way of reaching a conclusive answer to the Transeurasian question, notably basic vocabulary, personal pronouns, phonological correspondences, borrowing, common morphology and consistency with the Indo-European evidence. The following article by Miller further expands the outline of the history of the debate, evaluating the considerable body of Transeurasian literature that has appeared since the early beginnings of the field. Finally, Johanson closes the general outline with an impressionistic survey of the ups and down of Transeurasian linguistics, indicating how proposals of genealogical relationship have gone through alternating periods of ascent and descent, "being presented, accepted, criticized, rejected, declared dead and resurrected."

Ramstedt is usually considered the founder of Transeurasian linguistics because he established a modern linguistic framework for Transeurasian comparison, supported by regular sound correspondences and morphological cognates. His contribution to this collection, which dates back to 1924, is indicative of the first, cautious steps towards including Japanese in Transeurasian linguistic theory.

It was not until 1956 that substantial criticism to the results of Ramstedt's work was raised by Clauson. Clauson (1962: xii) has often been ridiculed because he naïvely questioned the genealogical relationship between the Turkic and Mongolic languages on the basis of his failure to understand Middle Mongolian texts in spite of his command of Turkic. However, the selected article shows that Clauson had also a more reasonable argument for his doubts, namely that the Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic languages in his view did not share a sufficient amount of basic vocabulary.

A new stage in Transeurasian linguistics was represented by the publication of Miller's (1971) monograph "Japanese and the other Altaic languages" in which he tried to materially substantiate Ramstedt's and Poppe's (1960) earlier proposals about the inclusion of Japanese and Korean in the Transeurasian family. Rather than including a chapter from this book, I have chosen to reproduce its most influential reviews. Understandably, the book was well received by proponents of Transeurasian affiliation as becomes clear from Poppe's (1975) overview in this collection, but it was also sharply criticized, among others in the replies by Doerfer (1974, 1976), Street (1981) and Unger (1990) selected for this collection.

When Doerfer replied to Miller, he was finishing a monumental work about Turkic and Mongolic loanwords in Iranian (Doerfer 1963-1975), which in reality was a major refutation of the etymologies present in Transeurasian literature at that time. As such, he explained all similarities between Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic languages by borrowing. Given the lack of a clear contact history between either of these languages and Japanese, he could not but attribute the similarities between Japanese and Altaic to mere coincidence, concluding that "Will man die japanisch-altaische Verwandtschaft beweisen, wird man schon etwas mehr arbeiten müssen." (Doerfer 1974: 142; this collection xx).

In the course of his career, Street, who originally cooperated with Miller on a monograph "Altaic elements in Old Japanese" (Street & Miller 1975), became increasingly pessimistic about the possibility of convincing the academic community that Japanese is related to the Altaic family. The selected contribution, which is often overlooked as it appeared in a journal

that is hard to obtain, motivates the reason for his despair. Among others, he regards the sound correspondences as unpersuasive because in Japanese they involve mainly mergers and losses as a result of the fact that Japanese is phonologically much more simple than the other Transeurasian languages. Besides, in line with Doerfer, he points to the possibility that a number of the similarities between Japanese and Altaic are purely coincidental.

Finally, the Transeurasian hypothesis was declared "premature" by Unger in a summary report of an Altaic panel held at a conference in Stanford and included here. The panel, consisting of Martin, Whitman, Austerlitz, Clark and Unger himself urged other researchers to focus instead on "Macro-Tungusic", a family consisting of Japanic, Koreanic and Tungusic languages.

However, just at a time when Transeurasian linguistics had reached a new low, the work of Starostin (1991) and his team (Starostin et al. 2003) resurrected the confidence in the Transeurasian unity, accumulating a body of evidence that was far more impressive in quantity and rich in empirical material than the number and scope of etymologies proposed by Poppe (1960) and Miller (1971). Since Starostin (1991) is written in Russian and Starostin et al. (2003) concerns an etymological dictionary, it is not possible to reproduce parts here, but I selected the evaluations made by Comrie (1993) and Martin (1996) to provide a balanced impression of how the 1991 publication was received by the academic community. Both scholars remained skeptical regarding the establishment of a Transeurasian family, but they believed that Starostin and his team had set a considerable step forward. Comrie identified the remaining obstacles as the distinction between genuine cognates and loans, the lack of shared morphology, the subjective evaluation of previous etymological proposals and the often flawed regularity of sound correspondence. Martin agreed with this criticism and further specified suprasegmental phonology, vowel system and verbal morphology as the areas on which future comparative research should be focussed. The concluding line of his 1996 monograph articulated a certain humor and caution, which is still very applicable to Transeurasian linguistics: "This year there will be no Nobel Prize in comparative Altaic." (Martin 1996; 63; this collection xx).

Volume II: Phonology
The second volume deals with phonological comparison, including consonantal, vocalic and suprasegmental correspondences. A relatively recent development in the reconstruction of the Transeurasian consonant system is the Moscow School proposal to review the classical Ramstedt-Poppe reconstruction of a dual contrast between voiced and voiceless obstruents. Inspired by a theory of the Nostraticist Illič-Svityč (1963, 1964), they instead posit a three fold consonantism based on the distinctions voiced, voiceless and aspirated (Starostin 1991, Starostin et al. 2003). Their proposal was welcomed in the general sketch of proto-Transeurasian phonology by Bomhard (2014), which is selected to open the second volume. However, it was rejected in the following contribution by Norman (2009), expressing confidence in the fact that ultimately the phonological reconstruction of Ramstedt and Poppe will be largely vindicated, an observation also made in Robbeets (2005: 374-375).

The expansion of the Transeurasian sound system depends critically on a radical theory about the reconstruction of initial voiced consonants in proto-Turkic and it is also a consequence of the rather permissive accumulation of etymologies in Starostin's 2003 dictionary, particularly seeking to integrate the Japanese and Korean cognates proposed by Martin (1966). In spite of its early appearance and its restriction to Japanese and Korean data, I have selected Martin's article for this volume because it constitutes a breakthrough in the historical comparison of both languages, providing the first solid foundation of regular sound correspondences.

Leaving the obstruents aside, the reconstruction of the proto-Transeurasian consonant system has been excessively concentrated on the alleged four fold liquid distinction. Even if the prominence of this issue may be undeserved, I have included as much as seven articles on this topic. As the present collection should be representative of the trends in Transeurasian linguistics, the question of whether as an editor I agree with the direction the debate has

chosen to take is largely irrelevant. The crucial point here is that Eastern Turkic shows a dual correspondence to the liquids r and l of Chuvash, Mongolic, Tungusic and Korean: Eastern Turkic r and z can both correspond to r elsewhere, while Eastern Turkic l and $š$ can both correspond to l elsewhere. Proponents of the Transeurasian unity, such as Ramstedt (1957), Poppe (1965) as well as Tekin (1986) in this collection, usually claimed that Eastern Turkic z and $š$ represent an innovation and reconstruct proto-Turkic and proto-Transeurasian $*r_2$ and $*l_2$, while critics, such as Doerfer (1963: 98-100) argued that Eastern Turkic z and $š$ reflect the original situation in proto-Turkic. Later, in the articles included in this collection, Doerfer (1984, 1988) changed his mind, returning to Ramstedt's and Poppe's classical solution for reasons of Turkic internal reconstruction. Treating the four liquids in coherence with the nasals, Hamp (1971) used expectations about symmetry of phonological features to determine the phonetic values of proto-Transeurasian $*r_2/ *l_2$. Miller (1975) is included in this collection because it was an attempt to find independent evidence from Japanese for the dual contrasts between proto-Transeurasian $*r_1 / *l_1$ and $*r_2/ *l_2$.

However, there is also a third possible solution to the liquid dilemma, notably a liquid cluster origin of Eastern Turkic z and $š$, a suggestion originally made by Pritsak (1964) and taken up by Street (1980, 1985) in this collection. Street (1980) observed that many instances of Eastern Turkic $š$ correspond to forms in other Tungusic and Mongolic languages containing a cluster of l plus another consonant and in 1985 he proposed Japanese reflexes in support of his hypothesis.

If the reconstruction of the Transeurasian consonant system leaves room for improvement, the vowel system proposed for proto-Transeurasian presents even more problems. One of the current issues is the question whether (i) vowel harmony should be reconstructed to proto-Transeurasian, an opinion articulated by Hattori (1982) in this collection, but criticized by Starostin et al. (2003) or; (ii) whether it is an areal feature connecting a number of languages in Northeast Asia as suggested here by Janhunen (1981); or (iii) whether there is room for both genealogical and areal factors, as implied in Ko, Whitman and Joseph's (2014) contribution to this collection.

Although Japanese is usually regarded as the exception to the proto-typically Transeurasian feature of vowel harmony, Hattori pointed to vestiges of vowel harmony in Old Japanese. In contrast to Hattori's reconstruction of original palatal harmony in proto-Transeurasian and Janhunen's view that Korean, Mongolic and Tungusic reflect original palatal harmony, Ko, Whitman and Joseph recently argued that the original vowel harmony in most Transeurasian languages was in fact based on the opposition between the advanced vs. retracted position of the tongue root, rather than on a palatal contrast. Under this scenario, it is plausible that Turkic shifted to a palatal harmony system and that the retracted tongue root system got distorted in Japanese, due to areal influences at the periphery of the Transeurasian family: contact with Uralic palatal harmony in the West and with non-harmonic Chinese in the east. Janhunen and Ko et al. agree that Paleosiberian languages in the region such as Chukchi and Nivkh can be described as having vestiges of similar vowel harmony systems. As such, it might be possible to view the Transeurasian unit as the source of spreading retracted tongue root harmony through the region, with the Tungusic languages as so-called "vectors of diffusion".

As far as suprasegmental correlations are concerned, there have been attempts to relate the accent systems of Japanese and Korean to either vowel length or voicing distinctions in the other Transeurasian languages. I have included an unpublished paper read at a conference in Tokyo in 1983, in which Murayama proposed that long and short vowels in Altaic basically correspond to initial high and low pitch in proto-Japonic. One decade later, the correspondence was revisited by Starostin (1993): he confirmed the basic correspondence between Turkic long vowels and proto-Japonic high initial pitch, but he regarded Mongolic long vowels as secondary and found that Tungusic long vowels never correspond with Turkic long vowels. In the same year, Kortlandt (1993) drew the attention to a general correspondence between Japanese and Korean high and low initial pitch and he was the first to propose a correlation between proto-Japonic initial pitch and voicing distinction in the Transeurasian languages: initial high pitch in Japanese reflects voiceless initials in Altaic,

while initial low pitch in Japanese reflects voiced initials in Altaic. Unnoticed, Vovin (1995) drew on Kortlandt's findings about the correlation between initial pitch and voicing distinction, proposing a serious body of etymologies in support of the alleged correspondences. Ultimately, the different proposals about suprasegmental correlations may well be reconcilable, for instance along the lines proposed in Table 1, see also Robbeets 2015: 132-134.

Table 1: Possible model for the integration of the proposed suprasegmental correspondences between Japanese and the Transeurasian languages

Altaic	voiced initial	voiceless initial
short V (CVCV) register A/ register B	pJ low initial pitch (B) Tungusic short V Turkic short V	pJ high initial pitch (A) Tungusic short V Turkic short V
long V (CV́:CV) register A	pJ high initial pitch (A) Tungusic short V Turkic long V	pJ high initial pitch (A) Tungusic short V Turkic long V
long V (CV:CV) register B	pJ low initial pitch (B) Tungusic long V Turkic short V	pJ low initial pitch (B) Tungusic long V Turkic short V

Volume III: Morphosyntax

The third volume deals with morphosyntactic comparison, including pronominal paradigms, verbal morphology and nominal morphology. Since the beginnings of the historical comparative study of the Transeurasian languages, the emphasis has always been on phonological and lexical research. The relative paucity of existing literature on morphosyntax contrasts sharply with the stress on the importance of evidence from paradigmatic morphology in historical comparative linguistics. However, in the last decade, I have been personally involved in a collaborative attempt to fuel morphological research through the organization of several symposia, the edition of various volumes and the publication of a monograph on this topic. Volume III will deal with these and other recent advances in morphosyntactic research.

Due to a number of structural reasons such as for instance lack or recent grammaticalization of person agreement on the verb and agglutinative typology, the comparison of the Transeurasian languages yields fewer paradigmatic evidence and shared irregularities than is the case for the Indo-European languages. The category of personal pronouns, however, appears to be an exception because it is possible to find correspondences here that are both paradigmatic and idiosyncratic in nature. This observation led Baskakov (1971) to the assumption that the correlations between the personal and possessive pronouns in the Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic languages must reflect a common ancestral system. However, Róna-Tas (1986) warned for an over-enthusiastic genealogical interpretation of the evidence because there are other possible explanations for the similarities observed such as universal principles in linguistic structuring, borrowing and coincidental convergence. For instance, he pointed out that the inclusive-exclusive distinction is unlikely to reflect an

ancestral feature but rather a secondary development due to areal influence. In her contribution to this collection, Nevskaya (2010) carefully described the exact scope of similarities with regard to inclusivity and exclusivity, concluding that both areal and genealogical factors could explain the structural parallelism.

As far as the coincidence in form of the Transeurasian pronouns is concerned, Nichols (2012), Janhunen (2013) and Vovin (2013) tried to attribute them to non-genealogical motivations. Nichols observed that pronominal paradigms with first person *m* and second person *t, s*, etc. are much more common in northern Eurasia than elsewhere in the world. This phenomenon is partly explained by the assumption that m-T opposition represents a universal attractor state, i.e. a state that is easier to enter than to leave. Janhunen argued that the pronominal systems of Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic have become phonologically more similar than they originally were due to internal developments that have been triggered by an interplay of contact and coincidence. Finally, Vovin regarded the pronominal correlations as mere "inter-'Altaic' loans" and turned the evidence from the personal pronouns in Japanese and Korean down as cases of superficial chance resemblance.

Although the field of contemporary Transeurasian linguistics was practically founded with the posthumous publication of Ramstedt's (1952) study of nominal and verbal morphology, few linguists followed in his footsteps. The publication of the first part *"Vergleichende Lautlehre"* of Poppe's (1960) *"Vergleichende Grammatik der altaischen Sprachen"* was intended to precede a second part on comparative morphology, but unfortunately the comparative phonology was the only volume to appear. Even if Poppe (1972; this collection), Nasilov (1978), Kormušin (1984) and Tekin (1995; this collection) took up verb morphology, similar to Ramstedt's *"Formenlehre"*, none of these contributions took Japanese data into account.

This situation changed with Miller's (1982) comparative study of verb derivational suffixes, which is included in this collection. Vovin (2001) continued along these lines, proposing etymologies for about fifteen derivational and inflectional suffixes. It may come as a surprise that his 2001 study focussed exclusively on Japanese, Korean and Tungusic, whereas a similar sketch of comparative verb morphology appeared in his 1998 state-of-the-art, also providing Turkic and Mongolic cognates for these etymologies. However, Vovin's reduction of scope was probably indicative of his gradually changing positions in the Transeurasian debate from extremely optimistic to equally pessimistic. On the verge between verb derivation and inflection, there are some comparative studies of negative suffixes such as Miller (1985) and Robbeets (2015). In an attempt to gather evidence from verb inflection, Robbeets (2014) advanced Transeurasian cognates for the basic inflected forms of Japanese grammar. Taking into account internal cohesion between ordered cognate sets, shared ideosyncrasies and relationships of grammatical patterning, she concluded that the correlations in verb inflections seem to reflect a certain paradigmaticity.

With regard to comparative studies of nominal morphology, I have included two relatively early studies by Poppe: one from 1952 on plurality and the other from 1977 on case. As these studies pay no attention to Japanese and Korean, I have supplemented them with Martin's (1990) morphological comparison of case in Japanese and Korean and Miller's (1993) addition of Japanese and Korean cognates to Poppe's (1977) reconstructions. It is remarkable that Miller leaves the doctoral dissertation on Transeurasian case systems, defended in the 1987 by his student Itabashi, unmentioned. That the historical comparison of case is an attractive theme for doctoral research is shown by the appearance of another dissertation on this topic by Gruntov in 2002. Finally, I have also included Finch (1999) comparative sketch of the case system.

Volume IV: Stability and borrowability
The final volume will be concerned with interpretation of the common elements presented in Volume II and III as cognates, borrowings, universally principled parallels or coincidental look-alikes. Most scholars would probably agree that the Transeurasian languages have a

good number of lexical, phonological an morphosyntactic elements and typological features in common. However, the question whether all similarities should be accounted for by language contact or whether some are the residue of a common ancestor is probably the most debated issue in the field. Therefore, this collection will conclude with a series of recent articles discussing the stability and borrowability of the observed similarities.

Stability refers to the likelihood of an item to be inherited; it is the tendency to resist both internal attrition and external influence rather successfully. Borrowability has to do with externally motivated change only; it refers to the likelihood of an item to be affected by borrowing. The assumption is that a linguistic element is more likely to be borrowed, if it is borrowed more frequently in cross-linguistic sampling.

One way of testing the stability of the evidence is through the concept of basic vocabulary. The strength of this argument mainly lies in the fact that words with basic meanings tend to resist borrowing more successfully than random lexical items. For this purpose, one may use a closed basic vocabulary list such as the Swadesh 100 list (Swadesh 1955) or the recently updated Leipzig-Jakarta list (Tadmor et al. 2010). Else, one can focus on semantic fields that cross-linguistically show a relatively low proportion of loanwords. Tadmor et al. (2010: 232) confirmed the traditional view that semantic fields with relatively culture-free meanings, such as words relating to spatial relations and body parts are less likely to be borrowed. Therefore, I intended to include two articles investigating semantic fields with a relatively low borrowability, notably Manaster Ramer et al.'s 1997a study on body part terms and Itabashi's 1993 contribution on spatial relations. Unfortunately, Manaster Ramer and his team did not grant us permission to publish the article in question, so that only Itabashi's study remains.

In the past linguists have argued that numerals should be reckoned among the more culture-free parts of the vocabulary as well. However, empirical findings can show that this faith in numerals is misplaced. Among the most striking examples of languages where nearly the entire numeral system has been borrowed we find Japanese and Korean, both having extensively borrowed numerals from Chinese. In order to demonstrate the long and persistent tradition of comparing numerals across the Transeurasian languages, I included three articles on this topic, namely Miller 1969, Hamp 1970 and Blažek 1999.[1]

It is generally agreed that nouns are less stable than verbs, that content words are less stable than function words and that nominal morphology is less stable than verbal morphology. As a result, bound verbal morphology is even more stable than the most basic lexicon. Hence, as Johanson pointed out in his 1999 contribution, there is a certain consensus among Transeurasian scholars — critics and supporters alike – that an investigation of common verb morphology could substantially contribute to the perennial affiliation question. Indeed, in this collection this course of action is recommended by numerous scholars, among others by Georg et al. (1998: 84-85; this collection xx), Johanson (2010: 15-17), Doerfer (1974: 128; this collection xx), Comrie (1993: 830; this collection xx), Martin (1996: 62; this collection xx), Robbeets (2014: 197-198; this collection xx), Vovin (2005: 73; this collection xx) and Starostin et al. (2003; this collection xx).

The inclusion of Janhunen (2012) in this collection, however, should temper our enthusiasm. It concerns a special type of convergence by which languages in contact adjust to make their native bound morphemes more similar to each other in form and function. As such, Janhunen warned against the illusion of genealogical relationship that non-borrowed non-cognate bound morphemes could create. In response to this warning, Robbeets (2012) developed a number of guidelines for the distinction between the effects of contact and inheritance in shared morphology, which she applied to the verb morphology shared by the Transeurasian languages. Unger further put the importance of morphological evidence in the establishment of genealogical relatedness into perspective and rejected Vovin's 2008 proposal that all similarities between Japanese and Korean, including grammatical

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[1] Unfortunately, the authors of Manaster Ramer et al. 1997b did not grant us permission to publish their article on numerals.

morphemes, are not inherited from a common ancestor but are copied by Japanese from Korean in early historical times.

Even if we recognize a certain residue of genealogical relatedness, we should not close our eyes for the massive amount of borrowing that has marked the historical relationship between the Transeurasian languages. In many cases the loans have a binary setting in common: they typically go from a model language into a recipient language. For this collection I have chosen some articles that illustrate binary contact relationships, such as the mutual contacts between Turkic and Mongolic described by Clark (1980) and Doerfer (1993) and the contacts involving Tungusic languages discussed by Pakendorf (2009) and Janhunen (2013). For historical contacts between Japanese and Korean, I refer to Vovin (2008). The massive impact of these contacts becomes clear from Pakendorf's contribution demonstrating that even entire paradigms have been borrowed between Siberian Turkic and Northern Tungusic languages. Occasionally borrowings may also progress into a third or fourth recipient language, eventually spreading as Wanderwörter among numerous languages and families. Most non-genealogical approaches of the Transeurasian unity prefer to explain the similarities by a continuum of areal interaction. As such, Janhunen (2009) argued that the ancestral communities of the individual Transeurasian languages filled a geographically compact region in prehistorical times, which triggered intensive mutual interaction.

This collection closes with a daring proclamation of the end of the Transeurasian debate by Vovin (2005), who ultimately tried to settle the debate by attributing all similarities between the languages concerned to non-genealogical motivations. The lengthy reply by Dybo and Starostin (2008), however, provided an indication of the contrary: the Transeurasian debate is still very much alive. The ongoing discussions indicate that the vast yet often overlooked region of North and East Asia has yet to unveil many of its discoverable linguistic secrets.

Conclusion

As will already be clear, the historical comparative study of the Transeurasian languages is a topic with a long and stormy history, but it also enjoys an interactive present and —provided our continuing common efforts— awaits a promising future. In this collection, I have tried to highlight Transeurasian linguistics, as a steadily growing field, generating recurrent cycles of evidence and counter-evidence. Despite its size I am acutely aware of many issues and interesting ideas or hypotheses that did not find their way into this volume. Nevertheless, I hope that a researcher who is familiar with the publications collected here, will have acquired an insight in the ongoing scholarly debates and questions that remain open. One thing that the publication of this collection in an authoritative series like "Critical Concepts in Linguistics" makes clear is that the Transeurasian affiliation question, at times ignored or even ridiculed in academic circles, is no longer on a sidetrack. The Transeurasian debate continues: feel free to join!

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