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A Sketch of Solon Grammar

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Abstract: The present paper is intended as a grammatical sketch of Solon, a Tungusic language spoken in northern Inner Mongolia, China. The first section is a brief introduction including an explanation for dialects and previous literatures. The second section is devoted to phonology and the third to morphological description. In the fourth section, various types of noun phrase and sentence structure are illustrated. Finally, issues of lexical borrowing are briefly touched upon. Though the present sketch is far from a full grammatical description, it might be of some use for those who wish to get some general idea of this minority language.

The first version of this sketch was contributed to a chapter of the Tungusic volume of grammatical description series. For some reason the volume has not appeared for several years, so that I will publish my chapter (with minor revisions) separately here with the permission of the volume editor Alexander Vovin.

1. Introduction

Solon is spoken by the majority of the Ewenki (Chi. *Ewenke*) people in Hulun Buir city in northern Inner Mongolia, China. Their official center is the Ewenki Autonomous Banner, just south of Hailar district. Some speakers live also in the Nonni basin of Heilongjiang province. Their official name *Ewenke* (from their self-designation *ewe*ŋ*kii*) comprises three groups which are rather different both in their languages and in their historical backgrounds. Thus, according to the Chinese terminology, the Ewenki people are subdivided into: (1) the Solon Ewenki (Chi. *Suolun Ewenke*), (2) the Tungus Ewenki (*Tonggusi Ewenke*), and (3) the Yakut Ewenki (*Yakute Ewenke*). Of these three, the Solon group accounts for 90 per cent of the total population of some 29000 Ewenkis (1992). In Chinese usage, the "Ewenki language" (*Ewenke-yu*) practically means the language of the Solon group, while the languages of the other two groups are regarded as the dialects of the former. According to the generally accepted linguistic classification of Tungusic, however, the language of the Solon group should be regarded as a separate language (i.e. Solon), not as a dialect of Siberian Ewenki (Rus. *Evenk*) as the name implies. On the other hand, so-called "Tungus Ewenki" (aka Khamnigan Ewenki) and "Yakut Ewenki" (aka Oluguya Ewenki), together with the language of the "Orochen" (*Elunchun*) which is another officially recognized Tungusic minority in China, can be identified

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as dialects of Ewenki proper (see Janhunen 1991 and Tsumagari 1992, 1997b).

The origin of the name "Solon" is not clear enough, but some scholars regard it as related to a Tungusic word meaning "upstream" (e.g. Cincius 1997). The number of speakers of Solon is estimated at some 15000 (cf. Hu et al. 1988), most of whom also speak Chinese, (some variety of) Mongolian, and sometimes Dagur as well. The Solon language has no written form, and they usually employ Chinese and/or Mongolian (formerly also Manchu) as a written language.

The first noteworthy collection of Solon words is found in Ivanovskij (1894). Kaluzynski (1971) and Aalto (1976, 1977) are based on the lexical materials collected in the early 20th century by F. V. Muromski and G. J. Ramstedt respectively. The first grammatical description with a lexicon (2000 items) and texts was published by Poppe (1931), which has practically been the only reliable and available source for a long time. Cincius (1997) is her posthumous publication on the outline of Solon grammar. Since 1980s Chinese scholars have made much contribution to the study of the Solon language. Among them, Chaoke is a native Solon (*Ewenke*) linguist who has published many papers and books on Solon (most titles are listed in Chaoke 2003). He is a co-author of the Solon volume of the grammatical sketch series of minority languages in China (Hu & Chaoke 1986) and a collection of folklore texts with Mongolian translation (Chaoke et al. 1988). With the collaboration of Japanese linguists, he made a collection of basic sentences with Japanese translation (Chaoke, Tsumagari & Kazama 1991) and a grammatical sketch with conversational sentences (Chaoke & Nakajima 2005). He also published a substantial volume of classified vocabulary (Chaoke 1991, over 4300 items), for which a Solon index with English equivalents was prepared by the present author (Tsumagari ed. 1993). Chaoke has also published a more detailed grammar (Chaoke 1995) and a comprehensive morphophonological study (Chaoke 2003). A Solon-Chinese dictionary (over 17000 entry words) is now available as a result of the collaboration of local talents (Dorji ed. 1998). As a comparative vocabulary of "dialects" of Chinese Ewenki (*Ewenke-yu*), including Solon and two above-mentioned varieties of Ewenki proper, see Chaoke & Tsumagari (1995). Recently, S. Kazama prepared two collections of folktale text in collaboration with a Solon speaker (Kazama & Tuoya 2007, 2008).

These published materials are of course valuable sources for the study of Solon, but some of them seem to be lacking in full exactitude and consistency both in phonological analysis and in grammatical description. It is particularly regrettable that the above-mentioned Chinese works have generally paid little attention to the previous foreign literatures. The present sketch intends to provide a new outline, based on both Russian and Chinese descriptions (especially Poppe 1931, Hu & Chaoke 1986, and Chaoke 1995) with necessary modification derived from author's own observation and interpretation.

2. Phonology

In the following description, we basically keep the Solon inherent phonology in mind: in recent loanwords, especially from Chinese, some exceptions will appear.

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2.1 Consonant phonemes and consonant assimilation

We recognize the following seventeen consonant phonemes in Solon: *p t k b d g m n ŋ c* [tʃ] *j* [dʒ] *s x l r w y* [j]. Though *ʃ* is added as a separate phoneme in some descriptions (e.g. Chaoke 1995, cf. also Kazama & Tuoya 2007:3), it may be interpreted as an allophone of *s* before *i ɛ*. Moreover, it is possible that *c* is another allophone of *s*, but tentatively distinguished here. Any consonants except *ŋ* and *r* may appear in word-initial position. The phonological distinction between *ŋ* and *n* in word-final position, as admitted in Chaoke (1991, 1995), is dubious: we employ *n* in this position, which is often realized as nasalization of the preceding vowel. One of the characteristic phenomena in Solon phonotactics is regressive assimilation (either full or partial) found widely in two adjacent consonants, not only diachronically but in synchronic process as well: e.g. *rg/bg>gg*, *rk/bk>kk*, *lt/kt>tt*, *rd/gd>dd*, *kc/sc/bc>tc*, *nb/ŋb>mb* etc.

2.2 Vowel phonemes and vowel harmony

There are eight vowel phonemes in Solon: rounded *o* [ɔ] *ö* [o] *u* [ʊ] *ü* [u] and unrounded *a e* [ə] *i ɛ* [e～ɛ]. Each vowel can occur not only singly (as a short vowel) but also as a long vowel: for the transcription of the latter, two identical vowels are employed here. The vowel *ɛ* usually occurs as a long vowel *ɛɛ*.

The vowels are divided as follows in view of vowel harmony:

close	*e*	*ö*	*ü*
		neutral	*i* *ɛ*
open	*a*	*o*	*u*

As a rule, the close vowels do not coexist with the open ones in a word, and vice versa. Neutral vowels can occur with either of them. According to the stem-vowels, most of suffixes and endings show a vowel-alternation either in two-way *a～e/u～ü* or maximally in six-way *a～e～o～ö～u～ü*. In the description below, suffixes and endings will generally be referred in the representative form with *a* or *u*. The vowel harmony rule is, however, not so strictly applied and the close vowels may sometimes appear after the open ones.

2.3 Syllable structure

The syllable structure is generally represented as (C)V(V)(C), where the parenthesized elements are optional. Any consonant may occur in syllable-initial or syllable-final position. Thus, as far as phonological level is concerned, any consonant cluster occurs neither word-initially nor finally, though, as a result of the vowel reduction mentioned below, a final cluster occasionally occurs phonetically.

2.4 Accent and vowel reduction

Usually the vowel of the first syllable is stressed and pronounced clearly, while the short vowel on and after the second syllable tends to be reduced and sometimes dropped in casual speech.

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A high pitch, on the other hand, falls either on the last syllable (if the syllable contains VV or final C) or on the penultimate syllable (otherwise). If we admit the pitch pattern of a word as such, we can partly resort to it, in its turn, to decide the phonological shape of a word.

3. Morphology

3.0 Morphological process

Morphological process in Solon is basically suffix-agglutinative: e.g. *xaxraa-sül-nii-s* (Poppe 1931:117) [chicken-PL-GEN-2S] 'of your chickens'. However, the regressive assimilation mentioned above often causes an alternation of the stem-final consonant: *xeŋger-dü* > *xeŋged-dü* [chest-DAT] 'to the chest', *is-caa* > *it-caa* [reach-PAST] '(has) reached'. The treatment for such a stem alternation is a problem in morphophonology in Solon. In the transcription below, we basically keep the original stem form since the alternation is mostly optional and automatically determined by surface phonetic rules. In some cases, however, we must admit an alternative stem as a result of dropping a stem-final consonant: *jüüg-dü* > (*jüüd-dü* >) *jüü-dü* [house-DAT] 'to the house'

3.1 Noun

3.11 Declension

Solon has a case system consisting of some thirteen cases including the unmarked nominative form which, in turn, serves for the stem of oblique cases. As one of the characteristic peculiarities common to the Tungusic languages in China (cf. Tsumagari 1996, 1997a), there is an established genitive in Solon. Besides the vowel harmony alternation, some case-endings have allomorphs according to the stem-final phonemic structure (-V#/-C#). The following is an example of the paradigm of *beye* 'man' and *morin* 'horse' (modified from Hu & Chaoke 1986: 22–23):

Nominative	*beye*	*morin*
Genitive	*beye-nii*	*morin-ii*
Accusative	*beye-we*	*morin-ba*
Indefinite Accusative	*beye-ye*	*morin-a*
Dative	*beye-dü*	*morin-du*
Locative	*beye-lee*	*morin-dulaa*
Directive	*beye-txii*	*morin-tixii*
Prolative	*beye-lii*	*morin-dulii*
Ablative	*beye-düxi*	*morin-duxi*
Elative	*beye-giiji*	*morin-giiji*
Delative	*beye-leexi*	*morin-dulaaxi*
Instrumental	*beye-ji*	*morin-ji*
Comitative	*beye-gilii*	*morin-gilii*

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The indefinite accusative ("partitive" in Poppe 1931:113), as in other Tungusic languages which have the same case, is generally recognized as the case for indefinite object. There is, however, room for further investigation on the precise function of this case (cf. Kazama 1997). For example, it is not clear enough what is the difference from the unmarked (nominative) object.

The ablative is the case for a starting point or a standard of comparison. The elative implies 'from the direction of something' and the delative (the term employed in Poppe 1931:114) seems to mean something like 'from the area or side of something'. A systematic explanation for the distinction among the three also remains to be made.

Another problematic case is the comitative. There is a newly introduced form *-tɛɛ* from Mongolian, which has nearly the same function with the comitative proper and seems to be partially replacing it. The relation between the two, together with the comitative usage of the instrumental case, needs further consideration.

3.12 Personal endings

The nominative form and the other case forms can be followed by one of the following personal endings which indicate the person and number of possessor:

	SG	PL
1st	*-bi* [*-beye*～*-weye*]	*-mun*～*-mün* (EXCL)
		-t(i) (INCL)
2nd	*-s(i)* (～C-*ci*)	*-sun*～*-sün* (～C-*cun*～*-cün*)
3rd	*-nin(i)* [*-ni*]	(the same as SG)
Reflexive	[*-bi*～*-wi*]	[*-beli*～*-weli*]

The forms in square brackets are for oblique cases. The reflexive forms, meaning 'one's own' (SG or PL), indicate that the possessor(s) is/are the same with the subject of the sentence. In the reflexive paradigm, the unmarked (nominative) form with the reflexive ending functions as a direct object, not as a subject. The same is the case with the 1S oblique ending: the form in *-beye*～*-weye* without any case marking is employed as a direct object. The third person accusative takes the form of *-waa-ni*～*-wee-ni* etc. Note that the third person usually has no distinction in number both in nominal and verbal morphology.

In possessive forms, most of the other Tungusic languages make an obligatory distinction between inalienable and alienable possession: the latter is marked by a peculiar suffix added before the personal ending: e.g. Ewenki *dili-w* 'my (own) head'/*dili-ŋi-w* 'the head (of a hunted animal etc.) belonging to me'. In Solon, however, we find neither such distinction nor the suffix. Instead, there is a tendency that an alienable possessee is remained unmarked (without personal marking), only preceded by a genitive possessor: e.g. *min-ii jaxa* 'my baggage', *min-ii bitig* 'my book'.

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3.13 Plural suffix

Plurality is represented by the suffix *-sal* etc., which can be attached to the stems (optionally with the final *n* omission) meaning human, animals, and inanimate things as well: *omolɛɛ-sal* 'grandsons', *xolɛɛ-sal* (<*xolɛɛn*) 'snakes', *jolo-sol* 'stones'.

In general, the use of plural forms is somewhat emphatic, and the unmarked form is also employed to refer to plural entities, especially when preceded by a numeral or a quantitative adjective: *ilan üte* 'three sons', *baraan xonin* 'many sheep'.

There is another kind of suffix *-sɛɛn* which is added either to place names or to personal names (or kinship nouns), and means 'those who live somewhere' and 'someone's family, someone and others' respectively: *imin-sɛɛn* 'those who live in Imin', *ülji-sɛɛn* 'the Uljis'.

The independent noun *ulur* (or *olor*?) 'people, fellows' is sometimes employed to express plurality of human nouns: *sawi ulur* 'students'.

3.2 Pronoun

3.21 Personal pronouns

	SG		PL
1st	*bii*	[*min-*, ACC *minewe*]	*büü* [*mün-*, ACC *münewe*] (EXCL) *miti* (INCL)
2nd	*sii*	[*sin-*, ACC *sinewe*]	*süü* [*sün-*, ACC *sünewe*]

The personal pronouns, except for the 1P inclusive form, are inflected on the basis of the alternative stems given in square brackets. The case-endings are basically the same as nouns, but actual occurrence of several cases is much restricted. The accusative forms are somewhat irregular as shown above. For the third person, demonstrative pronouns *eri*/*tari* 'this/that' and their plural forms *ersel*/*tarsal*～*taccil* 'these/those', *elür*/*talur* (<*eri*/*tari ulur*) 'these/those people' etc. are usually employed. Only rarely is used the original third person pronoun *nugan* (PL *nugan-sal*), which may express politeness to the referent.

3.22 Reflexive pronoun

The form *meeni* 'oneself' is used for both numbers. It is inflected with the stem *meen-* plus a case-ending which is followed by the singular reflexive-ending: e.g. DAT *meen-dü-wi*, INS *meen-ji-wi*, but ACC *meen-bi* (with no case-marking). By reduplication, *meeni meeni* means 'each' (cf. Ma. *meni meni*～*meimeni* 'id.').

3.23 Demonstrative pronouns

The forms *eri* 'this' and *tari* 'that' are used both independently and attributively. In some case forms, they have reduced stems: e.g. DAT *e-dü*/*ta-du*, LOC *e-lee*/*ta-laa* etc. There are several derivative forms: *eyye*/*tayya* 'this/that (with a contemptuous tone)', *ennegen*/*tannagan* 'like this/that (attributively)', *ettü*/*tattu* 'in this/that way' etc.

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3.24 Interrogative pronouns

There are following interrogative pronouns: *ii, oxon* 'what'; *aawu, nii* 'who'; *iir, iggii* 'which'; *ooxi, adi* 'how many, how much'.

Some case forms and derivative forms of these pronouns serve as interrogative adverbs: *ooxidu* 'when', *iilee* 'where', *iittii* 'how' etc. Among other interrogative adverbs are: *yoodon* 'why, how', *oondii* 'what kind of'.

3.3 Adjective

3.31 Conversion

Adjectives show no inflection for themselves but are often converted into nouns, thus taking number, case and personal markings: e.g. *nisüxün-sel-we-ni* (Hu & Chaoke 1986:41) [small-PL-ACC-3] 'the small ones (ACC)'. Either by conversion or by adding the instrumental case-ending, adjectives may function as an adverb: *sii ayaxan/ayaxan-ji aasin-caa-si-gii?* [you good/good-INS sleep-PAST-2S-Q] 'Did you sleep well?'

3.32 Derivation

One of the productive denominal adjective suffixes is *-si*, which derives an adjective with the meaning of 'having/with —', sometimes with a semantic change: *mügün* 'money'> *mügün-si* 'having money, rich', *antan* 'taste'> *anta(n)-si* 'tasteful, delicious, sweet', *naalla* 'hand'> *naalla-si* 'crafty'.

By adding various suffixes to an adjective, intensities or other semantic differences may be expressed: *aya* 'good', *aya-xan* 'rather good, healthy', *aya-xaya* 'almost good', *aya-kkan* 'very good'.

3.33 Reduplication

To express emphatic meaning, a characteristic partial reduplication is employed, which is almost the same with the Mongolic and Turkic patterns and also found in other Tungusic in China but not in Russian Tungusic (Tsumagari 1996): *ab aya* 'very good', *xob xonnorin* 'coal-black', *nem nemikkün* 'very thin'.

Another type of reduplication combined with suffixation is found in color adjectives (Hu & Chaoke 1986:40–41): *siŋarin* 'yellow'> *siŋa siŋa-ljaxun* 'deep yellow', *ularin* 'red'> *ula ulari-ljaxun* 'deep red'.

3.4 Numeral

3.41 Cardinal

1 *emün*	2 *jüür*	3 *ilan*	4 *digin*	5 *toŋa*
6 *niŋün*	7 *nadan*	8 *jaxun*	9 *yegin*	10 *jaan*

11 *jaan emün*	12 *jaan jüür*	20 *orin*	30 *gotin*
40 *dexi*	50 *toŋŋɛɛ*	60 *niŋüŋŋɛɛ*	70 *nadaŋŋɛɛ*
80 *jaxuŋŋɛɛ*	90 *yereen*	100 *namaaji*	200 *jüür namaaji*

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1,000 *(emün) miŋgan* 10,000 *(emün) tümün*

The numerals 20, 30, 40 and 90, as well as 1000 and 10000, are borrowings from Manchu or Mongolian: cf. Ma. *orin*, Mo. *χorin* '20'; Ma. *γusin*, Mo. *γucin* '30'; Ma. *dexi* '40'; Mo. *yiren* '90'; Ma. Mo. *miŋgan* '1000'; Ma. *tumen*, Mo. *tümen* '10000'. Instead of the suffix *-ŋŋɛɛ* from 50 to 80, another form in *-rnii* (*toŋarnii, niŋürnii* etc.) is adopted in Poppe (1931:107).

3.42 Derivative numerals

Ordinal numerals are derived from cardinals by adding the suffix *-si* (or *-ci*) with the stem-final consonant dropped: *emü-si, jüü-si, ila-si, digi-si, toŋa-si, niŋü-si, nada-si, jaxu-si, yegi-si, jaa-si*. For the 'first' and 'second', suppletive forms from Manchu are also adopted: *üjü* 'first' (<Ma. *uju* 'id.<head'), *jai* 'second' (<Ma. *jai* 'id.<next').

Among other derivational suffixes which are added to cardinal stems (with final consonant omission) are: Iterative *-raa* (*digi-ree* 'four times'; also analytically *digin mudan*), Collective *-nnɛɛ* (*ila-nnɛɛ* 'three (persons) together', but *jüür-ii/jüür-nɛɛ* 'two (persons) together'), Distributive *-tal* (*emü-tel* 'one each'), Restrictive *-xxan* (*jüü-xxen* 'only two') etc. (cf. Hu & Chaoke 1986:42–45).

3.5 Verb

3.51 Derivation

Verb stems can be extended by adding various derivational suffixes which serve to change voice or aspectual and other meanings of the primary stem. Among productive suffixes are: Passive *-wu*～*-guu* (*jawa-wu-* 'to be held'), Causative *-xaan* (*eme-xeen-* 'to make someone come'), Reciprocal *-ldi, -maasi* (*jawa-ldi-* 'to grasp each other', *taa-maasi-* 'to pull each other'), Progressive *-ji* (*imanda-ji-* 'to be snowing'), Purposive *-naa* (*jawa-naa-* 'to go to catch'), Regressive *-rgi* (*eme-rgi-* 'to come back'), Optative *-muun* (*jeb-müün-* 'to want to eat') etc. (cf. Hu & Chaoke 1986:60–64).

3.52 Conjugation

Verbs are inflected by adding various verb-endings which are divided into four groups according to their functions: (1) imperative endings, (2) final (finite) endings, (3) participle (verbal-noun) endings, and (4) converb endings. Most of these endings may further be combined with a personal ending, which is sometimes fused with the former, resulting a personal-conjugational complex. Some typical endings of each group are given below as a person-number paradigm.

3.53 Imperative forms

Imperative forms include not only the second person forms, but also those for the first person (meaning volition or invitation) and for the third person ('Let him/them do!'). There is a tense distinction between present and future, the latter implying a postponed realization ('Do later on!' etc.).

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Present imperative forms

	SG	PL
1st	*-gati/-kti*	*-gati-mun* (EXCL)
		-gaari (INCL)
2nd	*-xa*	*-xa-ldun*
3rd	*-gini*	(the same as SG)

Future imperative forms

	SG	PL
1st	*-duuni*	*-daa-mun* (EXCL)
		-daa-weli (INCL)
2nd	*-daa-wi*	*-daa-sun*
3rd	*-daa-ni*	(the same as SG)

3.54 Final forms

Present indicative forms for *jawa-* 'to hold':

	SG	PL
1st	*jawa-mi*	*jawa-mun* (EXCL)
		jawa-tti (INCL)
2nd	*jawa-ndi*	*jawa-sun*
3rd	*jawa-ran*	(the same as SG)

If the verb-stem ends in *n*, a slight modification including a link-vowel *a*～*e* appears: e.g. *aasin-* 'to sleep', 1S *aasin-ami*, 1P.EXCL *aasin-amun*, 1P.INCL *aasin-ati*, 2S *aasin-andi*, 2P *aasin-asun*, 3 (SG/PL) *aasin-an*.

3.55 Participle forms

Present	*-r, -ra* ～ *-da*
Future	*-jigaa*
Past	V*-saa* ～ C*-caa*

Generally, participle forms have three syntactically different functions: (1) an attribute of a noun (see 4.14 below); (2) a verbal-noun, which may take a case-ending (see 4.27); and (3) a predicate, which is frequently used in both future and past tense. Each ending may take a personal marker which is partially the same with nominal possessive marker, but with no 3rd person marking: 1S *-w* (～*-uu* combined with preceding *aa*), 1P.EXCL *-mun*, 1P.INCL *-ti*, 2S *-si*, 2P *-sun*.

3.56 Converb forms

Converb is a modifier of the main verb of complex sentences (see 4.27 below). Some converbs require personal marking of the doer, which is generally different from that of the main verb.

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Other converbs, which take no personal ending, usually share the same subject with the main verb.

Coordinative converb *-mi*: Simultaneous action by the same doer(s); '(with) —-ing'. Also as an infinitive, representing some complement of the main verb.

Subordinative converb *-kci* ～ *-cci*: Preceding action by the same doer(s); 'after —-ing'.

Perfective converb *-taan(i)*: Perfect preceding action by the same doer(s); 'after finishing —'.

Durative converb *-gii*: Continued or repeated action by the same doer(s), often employed repeatedly; 'after/while —-ing many times'.

Conditional converb *-kki*: Imperfect conditional action by a different doer(s) marked by a personal ending; 'if, when —'.

Successive converb *-jixi, -jixaa*: Preceding action by a different doer(s) marked by a personal ending; 'just after, as soon as —'.

Some particles originate from a converb form of *bi-* 'to be' or *oo-* 'to become, to do'. As conjunctive particles, the subordinative converb of each verb is employed: *exin oocci axin* 'elder sister and elder brother'; *imin doo-nii müü-nin aruxxun bicci antasi*. (Hu & Chaoke 1986:100) [Imin river-GEN water-3 clear PT sweet] 'The water of Imin river is clear and sweet.' A topic particle *bikki(wi)* 'as for' comes from the conditional converb of *bi-* often with a reflexive marker: *tari doo-nii gebbi-nin bikkiwi imin doo gün-en*. (Chaoke 1995:112) [that river-GEN name-3 TOP Imin river say-PRES] 'The name of the river is called Imin river.'

3.57 Auxiliary verbs

Some verbs may be employed as an auxiliary after some conjugational forms of another (semantically main) verb, thus expressing analytically various aspectual, modal and other meanings (cf. Poppe 1931:121–123).

The verb *bi-* 'to be' has wide range of auxiliary use. For instance, a past form followed by *bi-see* [be-PAST] refers "remote past": *üli-cee bi-see*. [go-PAST be-PAST] '(He) has already gone.' With a future form, subjunctive meaning is expressed: *ga-jiguu bi-see*. [take-FUT.1S be-PAST] 'I might have taken.' With a coordinative converb, durative or imperfect aspect is implied: *aasi-mi bi-see*. [sleep-COOR be-PAST] '(He) was (still) sleeping.'

The verb *oo-* 'to become' preceded by a coordinative converb means possibility, permission or obligation according to the context: *ebbesi-mi oo-dan*. [swim-COOR become-PRES] '(It is) possible/permitted/expected to swim.' The verb *nee-* 'to lay, keep', used as an auxiliary after a subordinative converb, adds a perfective or resultative meaning: *xorii-cci nee-see*. [arrest-SUB lay-PAST] '(They) have arrested (him).', *ommo-cci nee-süü*. [forget-SUB lay-PAST.1S] 'I have forgotten.' A benefactive meaning is expressed by the verb *büü-* 'to give' with a coordinative converb: *irda-mi büü-xe*. [comb-COOR give-IMP.2S] (also as a contracted form *irda-mbuux*; Poppe 1931:123) 'Comb my hair for me!' The verb *isi-* 'to see' has an auxiliary meaning 'to try'

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after a coordinative converb: *ji-mi isi-xe*. [eat-COOR see-IMP.2S] 'Try to eat!'.

4. Syntax

4.1 NP structure

The head noun of noun phrases is always preceded by any kind of modifier.

4.11 Adjective + Noun

Usually, adjective has no inflection (unless nominalized) and shows no agreement with head noun in number, case or person: *aya xonin* 'good sheep', *aya xonin-sal* (PL), *aya xonin-ba* (ACC), *aya xonin-bi* (1S 'my good sheep').

4.12 Numeral + Noun

As mentioned above, a numeral will preferably be followed by an unmarked form of noun rather than a plural form (see 3.13). No case-agreement is found between a numeral and a noun, as often found in other Tungusic languages.

4.13 Genitive + Noun

In possessive construction, a possessor noun or a personal pronoun usually takes the genitive form, while a possessed noun may take the corresponding personal suffix: *sin-ii aawun-si* [you-GEN hat-2S] 'your hat', *xonin-ii nanda-waa-ni* [sheep-GEN skin-ACC-3] 'sheep skin (ACC)'. In Solon, however, the personal possessive marker is not obligatory but often omissible, especially in less intimate relation between possessor and possessee (cf. 3.12 above). On the contrary, the construction with unmarked possessor followed by marked possessee (**xonin üldü-nin* [sheep meat-3] or its case form, e.g. **xonin üldü-düxi-ni* [sheep meat-ABL-3]) rarely occurs in Solon. In other Tungusic languages, which generally lack genitive in their noun case system, such a head-marking construction is inevitably adopted: cf. Uilta *ulaa ulise-ni* [reindeer meat-3SG] 'reindeer meat'.

Occasionally, the third person ending *-nin* (for nominative case) seems to function virtually as a subject/topic marker in a sentence: *üxür-nii üldü-nin xonin-ii üldü-düxi antasi*. (Hu & Chaoke 1986:28) [cattle-GEN meat-3 sheep-GEN meat-ABL delicious] 'Beef is more delicious than mutton.' Note that the oblique phrase *xonin-ii üldü-düxi* has no personal marking though the same relation is expressed with double-marking in the subject phrase. Note also that the marker *-nin* sometimes seems to play the role of a nominalizer: *boŋgon-nin aya* [big-3 good] 'The big one is good.'

4.14 Relative clause + Noun

A participle form followed by a head noun functions as a relative clause. In this usage, the participle usually requires no personal marking. Some nominal arguments other than subject and object may also be relativized as long as their semantic relation is traceable from the

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context:

tiinüg eme-see beye [yesterday come-PAST man] 'the man who came yesterday'.
suu/sun-ii waa-ra xonin [you.NOM/you-GEN kill-PRES sheep] 'the sheep you kill'.
nantun-du nini-r teggü [Nantun-DAT go-PRES road] 'the way to Nantun'.
tarigan xadi-r erin [field reap-PRES time] 'the time when one reaps a field'.

4.2 Sentence structure

Sentences basically have the SOV type of word-order. The predicate, usually placed on the sentence-final position, can make a full sentence even by itself. The following is not so much a formal syntactic analysis as a rough illustration of Solon sentences with minimum practical classification. Most of the sentences are derived from Hu & Chaoke 1986 (abbreviated as HC below), Chaoke 1995 (abbr. C), and Chaoke, Tsumagari & Kazama 1991 (abbr. CTK).

4.21 Nominal/Adjectival sentences

No copula or predicative personal marking is needed in present indicative sentences:

(1) *bii malsin.*
[I stock.farmer]
'I am a stock farmer.'
(2) *bii malsin bi-süü.*
[I stock.farmer be-PAST.1S]
'I was a stock farmer.'
(3) *eri jüü arakkun.*
[this house clean]
'This house is clean.'
(4) *eri jüü arakkun bi-see.*
[this house clean be-PAST]
'This house was clean.'
(5) *eri inig mandii exüddi.*
[this day very hot]
'It is very hot today.'

Sometimes with the subject/topic marker *si* (<Chi. *shi*) and/or the emphatic declarative particle *sinje*:

(6) *tiinüg dolob üttüli-see morin si eri sinje.* (C 225)
[yesterday night run.away-PAST horse TOP this PT]
'The horse which ran away last night is this.'

4.22 Existential/Possessive sentences

Possession is represented either as an existential sentence with *bi-* 'to be, exist' or by a possessive adjective suffix *-si* 'having, with'. The form in *-si* can also modify another noun:

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(7) *sire-nii oroon-du-ni bitig bi-si-n.*
[desk-GEN surface-DAT-3 book be-PRES-3]
'There is a book on the desk.'
(8) *min-dü jüür exin bi-si-n.*
[me-DAT two elder.sister be-PRES-3]
'I have two elder sisters.'
(9) *tari ilan üte-si.*
[he three son-POS]
'He has three sons.'
(10) *morin-si beye*
[horse-POS man]
'a man who has/is riding on a horse'

4.23 Negative sentences

Negation is primarily expressed by the negative verb *e-* 'do not' with the participle form *-ra* of negated verb:

(11) *bii emün naan e-si-m saa-ra.* (CTK 12)
[I one yet not-PRES-1S know-PRES]
'I don't understand anything.'
(12) *tari beye e-see nini-re.*
[that man not-PAST go-PRES]
'He didn't go.'

For the negation of nominal/adjectival sentences, an adjective *öntö* 'different, not' or *aasin* 'no' is employed:

(13) *eri min-ii morin öntö.*
[this me-GEN horse not]
'This is not my horse.'
(14) *sin-ii jinji-saa-si negeen amakkun öntö.* (C 190)
[you-GEN talk-PAST-2S alike easy not]
'It is not so easy as you said.'
(15) *gaga-nii jüü-nin e-düxi goro aasin.* (C 223)
[elder.brother-GEN house-3 this-ABL far no]
'My brother's house is not far from here.'

The latter *aasin* is also used to express nonexistence, with which the preceding noun (nonexistent) occasionally takes the indefinite accusative case or also in *-la*, which may tentatively be called abessive, found in the same construction of some other Tungusic:

(16) *beye aasin jüüg-dü ii-mi e-si-n oo-do.* (C 222)
[man no house-DAT enter-COOR not-PRES-3 become-PRES]

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'It is not allowed to enter a house where no one stays.'

(17) *eri üxür-nin üge-ye aasin*. (HC 118)
[this ox-3 horn-INAC no]
'This ox has no horns.'

(18) *baita-ja/-la aasin*.
[matter-INAC/-ABES no]
'No problems.'

Prohibition is expressed by the (irregular) imperative form of the negative verb:

(19) *e-ji soŋo-ro*.
[not-IMP.2S cry-PRES]
'Don't cry.'

Another expression which practically means prohibition makes use of the negation of the verb *oo-* 'to become, fit', just found in (16) above.

There is a negative adverb *ünege* 'not yet', which is followed by the negated verb in the participle form *-ra*.

(20) *ünege eme-re*. (HC 90)
[not.yet come-PRES]
'(He) has not come yet.'

4.24 Interrogative sentences

The interrogative clitic *-gii* is added to the end of yes-no questions, with which a rising intonation is usually accompanied. In answer, the interjection word *en/oo/oon* etc. may be headed for affirmative answer, and *öntö/aasin* for negative:

(21) *eri üxür aya-gii?*
[this ox good-Q]
'Is this ox good?'

(22) *eri bitig sin-ii-gii?*
[this book you-GEN-Q]
'Is this book yours?'

(23a) *oon, min-ii*.
[yes me-GEN]
'Yes, (it is) mine.'

(23b) *öntö, eri sin-ii*.
[no this you-GEN]
'No, (it is not mine but) yours.'

For confirmation of a statement, a sentence-final particle *baa* (<Chi. *ba*) is occasionally employed:

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(24) *tari üli-see baa?* (HC 107)
[he go-PAST PT]
'He went, didn't he?'

For wh-questions, no interrogative marking is needed except for some emphatic particles:
(25) *eri si oxon yeeme?* (CTK 72)
[this TOP what PT]
'What is this?'
(26) *sin-ii gebbi-si aawu?* (CTK 13)
[you-GEN name-2S who]
'What is your name?'
(27) *sii üilee tegeji-ndi?* (CTK 12)
[you where live-PRES.2S]
'Where do you live?'
(28) *beejin jakka ooxi goro bi-si-n?* (CTK 10)
[Beijing up.to how far be-PRES-3]
'How far is it to Beijing?'

4.25 Comparative sentences

Adjectives and adverbs have no grammatical degree of comparison. The compared object takes the ablative case:
(29) *eri üxür morin-duxi sampal*. (HC 40)
[this ox horse-ABL agile]
'This ox is agile than a horse.'
(30) *eri inig tüniig negeen tannagan exüddi öntö*. (CTK 45)
[this day yesterday alike such hot not]
'Today is not so hot as yesterday.'

Superlative meaning is expressed by adding the adverb *miin/miinti* 'most':
(31) *iggü-nin miin aya?* (CTK 37)
[which-3 most good]
'Which is the best?'

The following idiomatic expression makes use of a "nominalized" adjective:
(32) *talar aya-nii aya-waa-ni ga-mi gürün-dü-wi büü-see*. (C 211)
[they good-GEN good-ACC-3 take-COOR country-DAT-REF give-PAST]
'They chose the best of the bests and offered it to their country.'

4.26 Passive/Causative sentences

Passive and causative sentences are expressed morphologically by adding a suffix to a verb-

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stem respectively (for several verbal derivational suffixes, see 3.51 above). As a rule, the agent in passive sentence takes the dative case, while in causative the agent (causee) is marked by the accusative or instrumental case. The sentence (39) is an example of a passive-causative combination:

(33) *bii e-dü munda-wu-suu*. (HC 62)
[I this-DAT hit-PASS-PAST.1S]
'I was hit by him.'

(34) *xonin tüülge-dü jawa-wu-saa*. (HC 26)
[sheep wolf-DAT capture-PASS-PAST]
'A sheep was captured by a wolf.'

(35) *aba min-ewe teggen-e xööl-xeen-see*. (HC 61)
[father me-ACC cart-INAC put-CAUS-PAST]
'Father made me put the cart (to a horse).'

(36) *bii unaaji-wi esüüde-xeen-emi*. (HC 62)
[I sister-REF clean-CAUS-PRES.1S]
'I make my sister clean (the room).'

(37) *sii tari-ji bitig-wi eeri-xeen-ke*. (C 80)
[you him-INS book-REF read-CAUS-IMP.2S]
'Make him read your book!'

(38) *sün-ii mojaan-ji oo-xoon-coo addar-sun mandii nandaxan*. (C 80)
[you-GEN craftsman-INS make-CAUS-PAST box-2P very beautiful]
'The box you had the craftsman make is very beautiful.'

(39) *tari min-ewe munda-wu-xaan-caa*. (C 81)
[he me-ACC hit-PASS-CAUS-PAST]
'He let me be hit.' (=He made someone hit me.)

4.27 Complex sentences

Sentences with various converbs; note that the converbs with personal marking (42, 43) have a different subject from that of main verbs:

(40) *bii moolaa-taani beyüsi-geti*. (HC 82)
[I make.firewood-PERF go.hunting-IMP.1S]
'Having finished making firewood, I will go hunting.'

(41) *tari arxi imi-gii imi-gii sotto-soo*. (HC 83)
[he liquor drink-DUR drink-DUR get.drunk-PAST]
'He drank and drank and got drunk.'

(42) *sii üli-kki-si, bii üli-mi*. (HC 79)
[you go-COND-2S I go-PRES.1S]
'If you go, I will go.'

(43) *bii uxxe-dü ii-jixee-weye, batu min-ewe tan-saa*. (HC 80)
[I door-DAT enter-SUC-1S Batu me-ACC notice-PAST]

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'As soon as I entered the door, Batu noticed me.'

Participle forms can make a noun clause and function as a sentence element with some case ending. The dative forms are used adverbially to express time, reason etc.:

(44) *sin-ii jinji-saa-wa-si saa-suu*. (C 194)
[you-GEN talk-PAST-ACC-2S know-PAST.1S]
'I understood what you said.'

(45) *morin iigü-r-dü-wi aya-ji xise-xe*. (C 195)
[horse ride-PRES-DAT-REF good-INS be.careful-IMP.2S]
'When you ride a horse, be careful enough!'

(46) *sin-ii eme-see-dü-si büü addaji-mun*. (CTK 21)
[you-GEN come-PAST-DAT-2S we be.glad-PRES.1P.EXCL]
'We are glad that you came.'

Concessive meaning is expressed by a clitic *-xat* 'yet' or a particle *jaarin* 'though':

(47) *iittü jinji-saa-xat asir aasin*. (CTK 63)
[how talk-PAST-yet merit no]
'Whatever (one) says, it is no use.'

(48) *ooxi jogo-soo jaarin, bü-see beye daxii e-jigee iinigge-r xün*. (CTK 69)
[how grieve-PAST though die-PAST man again not-FUT revive-PRES PT]
'No matter how (you) grieve, a dead person will never revive again.'

Quotational sentences make use of *güŋken* 'saying' or some other forms of the verb *gün-* 'to say':

(49) *kinoo isi-mi güŋken joonji-mi*. (CTK 53)
[movie see-PRES.1S saying think-PRES.1S]
'I think that I will watch a movie.'

(50) *tari sin-ewe daŋga-ya e-ji imi-ra günji-ren*. (HC 144)
[he you-ACC tobacco-INAC not-IMP.2S drink-PRES say-PRES]
'He says that you should not smoke.'

Note that the sense subject of indirect speech is in accusative case in (50) above.

5. Lexical influences from surrounding languages

5.1 Loanwords

There are many Chinese loanwords: *soŋko* 'window', *xooco* 'train', *dɛɛnsi* 'television', *gaŋbii* 'pen', *liibɛɛ* 'week' etc. Not only nominals, but also other parts of speech are borrowed: an adverb *maaʃan* 'promptly', an interjection *wei* 'hi, hello', or even grammatical particles like *si* (a subject/topic marker; see 4.21 above) and *baa* (an sentence-final marker; (24)). Chinese

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words may function as verbs with a verb-formative suffix: *gaŋbii-da-* 'to use a pen, to write with a pen'.

From Mongolian: *ajil* 'work', *bitig* 'book', *aduun* 'herd of horses', *amidral* 'life' etc. As a grammatical element, the Mongolian comitative case-ending *-tai* is introduced to the Solon case system as a quasi-comitative form in *-tɛɛ*: *ninixin-tɛɛ-wi* [dog-COM-REF] 'with one's own dog'. Another widely used Mongolian word is *yeeme* either as an expletive noun 'thing' or a sentence-final particle (25). Since many Mongolian words have their counterparts in Dagur, which is another influential Mongolic language among Solon people, it is often difficult to decide which the direct source of borrowing is. Such words as *xaxraa* 'chicken' and *düsee* 'wall' may safely be attributed to Dagur.

Russian was another source of borrowings: *kinoo* 'movie', *xarandaa* 'pencil', *xileeb* 'bread', *doottor* 'doctor', *mɛɛter* 'meter' etc.

From Manchu, besides some numerals (see 3.41, 3.42), the names of month are employed: *anɛɛ bɛɛ* 'January', *unsun bɛɛ* 'November', *jurgun bɛɛ* 'December' (<Ma. *aniya biya* lit.'year month', *omʃon biya*, *jorgon biya* respectively). Among other Manchu words are: *sew* 'teacher' (<Ma. *sefu* <Chi. *shifu*), *baita* 'matter, business', *mudan* 'time(s)' (cf. 3.42).

5.2 Loan translation

Chinese lexical influence is also manifest in the presence of compounds and phrases based on loan translation: *sel teggü* 'railway' (lit.'iron road'; Chi. *tielu*), *doligu gürün* 'China' (lit.'central country'; Chi. *zhongguo*), *daŋga taan-* 'to smoke' (lit. 'to pull tobacco'; Chi. *chouyan*), *dɛɛŋxo munda-* 'to make a telephone call' (lit. 'to hit telephone', Chi. *da dianhua*). Some of these may actually be based on the Mongolian or Dagur equivalents.

A more syntactic influence is found in so-called correlative sentences in which an interrogative pronoun or adverb is repeated correlatively: *ooxi gada-kki-si ooxi büü-kti*. (Chaoke, Tsumagari & Kazama 1991:26) [how.much take-COND-2S how.much give-IMP.1S] 'How much you need, so much I will give you.' (cf. Chi. *yao duoshao gei duoshao*).

Abbreviations for glosses and languages

ABES abessive, **ABL** ablative case, **ACC** accusative case, **CAUS** causative, **Chi.** Chinese, **COM** comitative case, **COND** conditional converb, **COOR** coordinative converb, **DAT** dative case, **DUR** durative converb, **EXCL** exclusive, **FUT** future, **GEN** genitive case, **IMP** imperative, **INAC** indefinite accusative case, **INCL** inclusive, **INS** instrumental case, **LOC** locative case, **Ma.** Manchu (written), **Mo.** Mongolian (written), **NOM** nominative case, **PASS** passive, **PAST** past participle, **PERF** perfective converb, **PL** plural, **POS** possessive, **PRES** present participle, **PT** particle, **Q** interrogative clitic, **REF** reflexive possessive, **Rus.** Russian, **SG** singular, **SUB** subordinative converb, **SUC** successive converb, **TOP** topic particle; **1S** 1st person singular, **2S** 2nd person singular, **1P** 1st person plural, **2P** 2nd person plural, **3** 3rd person.

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ソロン語の文法概略

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本稿は中国・内蒙古自治区北部のツングース系少数民族言語ソロン語について、文法事項を中心に概略したものである。ソロン語の話者は中国ではエウェンキ族（鄂温克　*Ewenke*）に分類され、その言語もエウェンキ語と呼ばれている。しかしながらツングース諸語の分類上、ロシア・東部シベリアから極東に広く分布するエウェンキー語（Ewenki, Evenki）とは（同系ではあるが）一般に別言語と位置づけられている。ソロン語についてはロシア人を含む西洋人の先駆的な研究に続き、1980 年代以後、中国人研究者による記述研究がなされてきたが、残念ながら両者の研究成果が十分に統合されているとは言えないのが現状である。こうした状況を踏まえ、本稿ではロシア・中国双方の先行文献に基づきながら、筆者自身の観察と解釈を加えて、この言語の音韻・形態・統語上の特徴を概略し、若干の語彙に関する問題にも触れる。

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