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An Oroch word-list lost and rediscovered: a critical edition of Tronson's 1859 pseudo-Nivkh vocabulary*

José Andrés Alonso de la Fuente
University of Barcelona
Jose.andres25@gmail.com

Abstract
J.M. Tronson believed that the language of the word-list which he collected in 1856 on the Lower Amur, and published twice in 1859 was Nivkh. Among contemporary scholars, only Roman Jakobson noted that the language of Tronson's word-list is not Nivkh, but Tungusic. Unfortunately, neither Jakobson nor other specialists have specified what language that might be. We confirm E.G. Ravenstein's unnoticed assertion of 1861 that the language is Oroch and, from this new perspective, we offer a critical edition of Tronson's pseudo-Nivkh word-list.
Keywords: Nivkh language, Tungusic languages, Oroch language, Historical and comparative linguistics, Critical edition (philology)

1. On the Oroch language and its history

The Oroch language is spoken in the Khabarovsk Krai, in far eastern Russia. According to the 2010 census, there are *c.* 600 individuals who declare themselves to be of Oroch ethnicity, and only eight individuals actively speak the language.

Although the Oroch people and their language have been known since 1781,[1] proper linguistic data did not emerge until the very end of the nineteenth century. Before P.P. Schmidt published his materials in 1927 (they were collected in

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1 The earliest known mention of the Oroch in Western sources comes from the French seaman and explorer Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse (1741–88?). In an annotation of July 1787, La Pérouse states that he met people who called themselves "Orotchys" around the then Bay of de Castries (until 1952, now Čixočëva Bay; La Pérouse 1797: 62 = 1807: 392). Schrenck (1881: 21–5) claimed that La Pérouse identified those people incorrectly, and that they are most likely Ulchas: it was necessary to wait half a century to correct this mistake. Šternberg (1933) was the first to remark that at the time of La Pérouse's visit only the Negidal, Oroch, Ainu and Nivkh lived in De Castries Bay. The Ulcha did not (and do not) live so far to the south (see discussion in Avrorin and Lebedeva 1966: 7–11). More importantly, we are also told by La Pérouse (1797: 70 = 1807: 400) that the chief surgeon Simon-Pierre Lavaux, who apparently had a talent for languages, managed to note some words. Unfortunately, Lavaux's word-list has not survived (Simonov 1998: 14).

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1908),[2] four sources containing Oroch data are generally acknowledged to have existed (see brief summaries in Gorcervskaja 1959: 22–3; Lar'kin 1964: 9–13; and Avrorin and Levedeva 1968: 191).

Two new sources should be added: Arsen'ev (2007) and Tronson (Tronson A). The former was published only recently after the painstaking editorial work of A. X. Girfanova and N.L. Suxačov. Arsen'ev's field notes contain mostly Udihe linguistic and ethnological data, but some Oroch words can also be found. The latter has come down to us hidden in the pages of the otherwise largely unremarkable *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of Coast of China; in H.M.S. Barracouta*, the recollections of a certain J.M. Tronson, a medical officer on board HMS *Barracouta*, published in 1859 in London. However, they were made public in a speech read before the Royal Asiatic Society on 15 April 1857 and published in 1859. A summary of known Oroch sources in given in Table 1.

Although Tronson's data has been known since 1861, the information has somehow been systematically ignored and assumed to contain Oroch materials. Tronson did not help matters as he misidentified the word-list as consisting of Nivkh.

Regrettably, the misidentification of Oroch linguistic materials has already occurred in the short history of this language. Lopatin's materials include glossaries in three languages: Oroch, Nanay (=Goldi) and, according to Lopatin, Ulcha. The Oroch–English glossary (or long list) is found on pp. 71–82, and the Ulcha–English glossary (or short list), on pp. 105–9. The latter consists mainly of Oroch, the correct identification being attributable to J. Benzing (1958 = Johanson and Schönig 1988: 53–9). Benzing (1958: 600–1) provides five phonetic diagnostic features as well as some morphological formations which clearly set Oroch apart from Ulcha.[3]

2 There was little discussion among Schmidt's contemporaries that his four Tungusic vocabularies were of the highest quality. For example, Šnejder (1936: 5) tells that of all the Udihe materials available, Schmidt's are the best. It is precisely because of their reliability that contemporary specialists should have no reason to complain about Schmidt's linguistic achievements. M. Alexander Castrén's (1856) Northern Ewenki grammatical treatise and Schmidt's vocabularies mark the beginning of scientific recordings of Tungusic languages (Castrén's materials were collected in the 1840s, but published in 1856; because of its reliability, Castrén's *Grundzüge* is unique among sources from the nineteenth century).

3 It remains a mystery how Lopatin failed to notice these features. Differences between the lists are minimal and there is a straightforward explanation for most of the discrepancies, none of which seem sufficient to justify the identification of two different dialects, let alone languages, e.g. (long list) *imasá* ~ *ämasá* vs. (short list) *imana*, both are glossed as 'snow', but the first is a noun, and the second is the verb form 'to snow'; wife appears as *asaní* vs. *asamé*, the first means 'his wife' (possessive +*ñi*), the second 'my wife' (possessive +*mi*); *akkắ* 'I am taking it easy; I am resting' vs. *akkắ* 'slow' (= *äkkä*, the former meaning is idiomatic, the later is literal); *boalá* vs. *boadjí* 'outside' (from *büa* ~ *baa* 'place'), the first contains locative +*la* ('on the outside'), the second, (fossilized) adverbial +*ji* ('from the outside'; cf. Avrorin and Boldyrev 2001: 329–32); *siktadá* vs. *syuiktá* 'skis' (= *süykta*), the first is a verb form with the productive denominal derivative suffix +*da*- (Avrorin and Boldyrev 2001: 266), as in *syukáda* 'with an axe' vs. *sukka* 'axe' (= *sukä*, the first form means 'to cut with an axe'), etc. Most cases involve

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Table 1. Summary of Oroch sources

Author	(Year of collection) Year of publication	Number of words	Observations
J.M. Tronson	(1854–56) 1859	45	Two versions of the same vocabulary (both published in 1859). The present study investigates them in detail.
S. Leontovič	(1894) 1896	*c.* 2,500	Data from a single informant, collected in the settlement of Datta near the Tumniñ river. It contains a grammatical sketch, with some conjugation and declension tables, and sample phrases (pp. 7–45) and a Russian–Oroch dictionary (pp. 46–147).
L. Ja. Shternberg	(1896) 1933	*c.* 500	Brief ethnological vocabulary (pp. 441–9). It is organized thematically: dwellings, clothing, art, tools, flora and fauna, religion, kinship terms, numerals, etc.
A. Protodiakonov	1888	*c.* 1,000	Russian–Oroch dictionary (pp. 1–40) with an appended glossary organized thematically: numerals, flora and fauna, body part names, names of the months, etc.
V.P. Margaritov	1888	*c.* 400	Comparative vocabulary list of Russian, Oroch, Udihe ("Oroch from the Ussuri river") and Manchu (pp. 47–54). Tungusic data were collected at various settlements. It also contains a five-item comparative vocabulary list, which includes Nanay, and nine sample sentences (pp. 55–6).
P.P. Schmidt	(1908) 1928	*c.* 1000	Collected in the Amur basin area from "two or three Oroches and Udihes and one Kyakar [. . .] for a short time". Schmidt's vocabulary (pp. 23–62) incorporates Leontovič, Protodiakonov, and Margaritov's materials, and includes comparisons with Udihe, Nanay, Ulcha ("Olcha"), Manchu and, less frequently, Mongol and Turkish.

Continued

Table 1. Continued

Author	(Year of collection) Year of publication	Number of words	Observations
V.K. Arsen'ev	(1908–09) 2007	*c.* 350	Oroch data scattered in a very extensive Russian-Udihe vocabulary (pp. 20–264).[4]
I. Lopatin	(1924) 1957	*c.* 800	Includes information on Nanay and "Ulcha" (see remarks below). Oroch data from various informants, collected in the Tumniñ river area. Lopatin's materials include texts (pp. 5–63), sample phrases (pp. 64–5), grammatical materials (66–70) and an Oroch–English vocabulary (pp. 71–82).
V.I. Cincius	(1928–29) 1949	—	Data from various Oroch and Udihe informants from Khabarovsk and the Tumniñ river area, at the time students of the Institute of the Peoples of the North (St. Petersburg). Grammatical sketch with conjugation and declension tables, and three texts (pp. 157–60)
V.A. Avrorin/ E.P. Lebedeva	(1959) 1978	*c.* 5,500	Data from numerous informants, collected across the entire Khabarovsk region. Texts (pp. 62–97) and an Oroch–Russian dictionary (pp. 156–259) with information on dialectal items.
Sh. Kazama	(1995) 1996	*c.* 600	Data from various informants, collected in the Tumniñ river area. Comparative vocabulary list of Oroch idiolects (pp. 5–24) with commentaries on individual items (pp. 25–41), and texts (pp. 42–113).
A.X. Girfanova	2007	*c.* 4,000	Regular bilingual dictionary for elementary school students

[4]The best way to consult Arsen'ev's Oroch data (see details below) is by looking at the index of Tungusic forms (pp. 266–427) where Oroch words are properly labelled.

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It is just as unfortunate that Oroch linguistic data are mistaken for Oroqen (Chinese 鄂伦春 *èlúnchūn*), which is in some instances seen as a highly aberrant variant of East Ewenki, and in others, an independent language (in both cases there is no discussion regarding its position as a member of the Northern Tungusic branch). This error originates in the somewhat confusing Russian terminology, according to which both ethnic groups are historically referred to by the name "Орo(н)чен/Орo(н)чён". For instance, Skurlatov includes a brief Russian–Oroqen glossary (Skurlatovъ 1899: 254–62 *sub* "Ороньчонскія слова"), which Clark (1981–82: 76 [94] = Clark and Walravens 2006: 149 [120]) described as "Russian–Oroch", though it clearly contains Oroqen data. "Orotchone", as in the title of Leontovič and Protodiakonov's Oroch dictionaries, is the name used by Sabir (1861: 78–83) to refer to the Oroqen.

2. The author: John M. Tronson

There is little information available concerning John Mortlock Tronson (1829/1830–1863). He passed RCS exams as naval surgeon, eventually becoming the acting assistant surgeon on HMS *Barracouta* (appointed 22 December 1852, see *The Navy List* 1853: 311) during its deployment to the Far East from 1854 to 1856. He is frequently mentioned with regard to military issues in the British press. According to his obituary, Tronson died in Sydney, Australia, at the age of 33. In a curious note, we are told (*The Medical Times and Gazette* 1863: 523, 525) that Tronson was thought to have passed away on HMS *Orpheus*, but in reality, as the note makes clear, he died at his residence.

As for his experiences on board HMS *Barracouta*, Tronson writes in the preface of his published travel recollections (London, 1859), that he visited "[...] various parts of the coast of China, the Japanese Islands, Kamtchatka, the coasts of Siberia and Tartary, and the island of Seghalien" in the years 1854, 1855 and 1856. By "the coasts of Siberia and Tartary" he is referring to the coastal regions of the Lower Amur, where he had the opportunity to meet local inhabitants.

There are linguistic remarks of the most diverse nature scattered throughout the book. Leaving aside the pseudo-Nivkh word-list, the rest of his remarks are not especially original or revealing.[5] Tronson collected specimens of Chinese, Japanese, Mongol and Manchu writing, which he later showed to various groups of natives in order to evaluate their proficiency in different languages. We are told, for example, that the Nivkhs did not recognize Chinese characters (p. 324), unlike the "Tartars", who seemed familiar with them (p. 308); he shows Manchu writing to Koreans too, but they did not understand

irrelevant phonemic fluctuations, e.g. *syugdasá* vs. *sukdosá* ~ *sugdata* 'fish', *nyúxta* vs. *nuktä* 'hair' (= *ñuktä*), *dyukí* vs. *djyukí* 'otter' (= *juku*), iká vs. iké 'ear-ring' (= *iikä*), etc.

5 For example, speaking of genealogical ties, Tronson comments: "Whether the Ghiliack language is a corruption of the Mongol, such as is spoken by the Tongoose and Yakutes, or belonging to the Tschudic tongue, as spoken by Finns, Samoyedes, Koriaks, and natives of the Kurile Islands, I am unable to determine". (Tronson A, 324–5 = Tronson B, 117).

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it. In spite of this, the Koreans requested copies of the Testaments in Japanese, which Tronson distributed among them under the petition of the Bishop of Victoria (p. 390).

There are also extensive annotations regarding various ethnographic aspects of the Nivkhs. Tronson read some of these observations before the Royal Asiatic Society in 1857 and they were published separately in 1859 together with what seems to be the same pseudo-Nivkh word-list.[6]

Be that as it may, Tronson's personal interest in ethnographic and linguistic matters, and the opportunity he had to deliver some of his observations to an educated audience, makes his failure to distinguish Nivkh from Oroch even more surprising.

3. The word-list

There are two versions of the pseudo-Nivkh word-list by J.M. Tronson, both published in 1859. The first appeared in his monograph (Tronson A), the second was appended to a brief scholarly paper on the Nivkh read before the Royal Asiatic Society in 1857 (Tronson B). Though the lists are virtually the same, they show some interesting discrepancies which are relevant to the linguistic analysis below.

For the correct identification of Tronson's materials, we are indebted to the German–English geographer Ernst G. Ravenstein (1834–1913), who, perhaps out of politeness, decided to pass over in silence Tronson's blatant mistake regarding the linguistic identification of his own materials. Ravenstein's identification of Tronson's data as Oroch was possible thanks to the many reference works he had at hand (everything that had been published at that time). The Oroch were already well known by that name. Ravenstein may have been informed *viva voce*, or perhaps he inferred that Tronson was in fact referring to the Oroch via the books and articles of La Pérouse, Schrenk or, more likely, Lieutenant M. Veniukof, who in 1858 explored the surroundings of the Usuri river. Veniukof, whose observations are extensively quoted by Ravenstein, had the opportunity to meet the Oroch and described their homeland in great detail (Ravenstein 1861: 234–59).

Excellent summaries of scholarly work on "Paleoasiatic" (that is, Kamchukotic, Yukaghir, Nivkh and Eskaleut) and Tungusic languages such as Vdovin (1954) or Gorcevskaja (1959), respectively, make no mention of Tronson: Vdovin perhaps knew that the language in Tronson's word-list is not Nivkh, whereas Gorcevskaja was perhaps unaware that it actually conceals Oroch linguistic data.

To the best of my knowledge, the first author after Ravenstein to notice that Tronson's word-list does not contain Nikvh data is R. Jakobson (1971[1957]: 74), who writes only that it is "[…] a list of Tungus words", without going into detail regarding the exact linguistic affiliation of the words.

6 He read a speech and published a paper on the "Coast Tartars" on 7 April 1858 (Tronson 1859c; curiously enough, in Tronson A he never uses the name "Coast Tartars" or "Eastern Tartars", but always refers to "Manchu Tartars"). He apparently did not collect any linguistic data from these Tartars.

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As for Tronson's surprising misidentification, the first clue that he is not on the right track may be his mistaken view of the difficulty of Nivkh: "Their language is simple, and easily acquired" (Tronson A 323–4) and "The language of the Ghilack is gutteral [sic], simple, and easily acquired" (Tronson B 117). As is well known, structurally speaking, Nivkh is the most complex language spoken in the Amur and Sakhalin regions. Even Šternberg, an accomplished linguist (at least a better one than Tronson), claimed that he was unsuccessful at mastering it after diligent study (Šternbergъ 1908: viii–ix). Šternberg also notes that the Nivkhs did not speak their own language when approaching their neighbours, as no one seemed to have a good grasp of it, including the Russians who frequented Nivkh areas – instead they used Oroch, Ulcha, Nanay, Ainu or Russian.

Furthermore, in spite of his ethnographic interests, Tronson also failed to identify Nivkh traditions correctly. The most notable example concerns burial customs, about which Tronson writes the following:

> Their mode of burial is unlike any other that I am acquainted with: the body is placed in a rude coffin made from a log of wood, in a manner similar to that adopted in making their canoes, and covered over with bark, bound round with osiers; it is then placed between the forked branches of a tree, out of the reach of any animal that might be attracted to the spot (Tronson A: 324, cf. Tronson B: 116–7).

This tradition, the so-called boat burial (also tree or aerial burial) is generally found among Tungus, not only in Sakhalin, but also in the Amur region and beyond. It has also been observed among the Yukaghir or the Yakut (see, for example, Lopatin 1960: 117–9; on Oroch customs more specifically: "They employed the common Tungus forms of burial: on platforms set on piles, earth burial, and burial in a coffin in a burial hut", Levin and Potapov 1964 [1956]: 758. Nivkhs prefer cremation and, more rarely, inhumation (Lopatin 1960: 120; on the Nivkh more specifically: "The burial rites of the Nivkhi differed sharply from those of the Tunguso-Manchurians of the Amur regions. The Nivkhi characteristically burned their dead, but they also buried them in the earth", Levin and Potapov 1964 [1956]: 779–80. Even Ravenstein contains a passage on this very same fact: "The body is first burnt on a funeral-pyre, and a small wooden house is erected over the carefully-gathered ashes" (p. 392). Note that inhumation may be secondary to both the Oroch and Nivkh, due to Christian influences.[7]

7 Some other observations are basically correct, but insufficient to distinguish the Nivkh from the Oroch. For example, when commenting on the bear cult, Tronson writes: "One of the Ghiliacks showed us a strong cage, in which he kept a young bear for some time, till [the animal] grew strong enough to scrape a hole large enough for his body to pass through under the cage, and by this means escaped to the woods" (Tronson A: 324 = Tronson B: 114). The bear cult is common across Sakhalin, hence it cannot be used as a diagnostic feature to identify a specific ethnic group (on the bear cult among the Oroch, see for example Levin and Potapov 1964 [1956]: 757: "The Orochi cult of the bear was similar to that of the Nivkhi and Ul'chi. It involved the rearing of a bear in a cage, [. . .]", Lar'kin 1964: 97–100).

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In spite of being surrounded by Tungusic groups, e.g. Oroch, Ulcha, Nanay, Udihe and even Orok in Sakhalin, the only time Tronson mentions them ("Tongoose") is on the very same page as the Nivkh word-list. Ironically, in Tronson B (118) he writes: "I have not been fortunate enough to meet with the Tongoose, though I visited some of their huts in the summer of 1855" and "I learned from a Russian officer, that the Tongoose, unlike the Ghilack, are cruel and treacherous".

4. Linguistic commentary on Tronson's word-lists

Linguistic data in Tronson A and Tronson B are organized and presented in two-column word-lists which are found on p. 325 and p. 119, respectively. Both word-lists contain 45 words: 35 regular lexical items and 1–10 numbers. Tronson writes: "I append a few words in the Ghilack tongue,[8] which I obtained in learning to converse with the people. They are very anxious to give the name of everything when asked, but could make very little progress in the acquisition of the English tongue" (Tronson B 117), therefore we are dealing with genuine, original linguistic data, if Tronson can be trusted.

Tronson A contains no special symbols, apart from the macron and the acute accent. Tronson B, however, contains umlaut in at least two instances (see below [1] and [26]) and grave accents instead of acute accents. Given the lack of special symbols in Tronson A, one can surmise that Tronson sought to follow closely English spelling conventions, so that casual readers could easily make sense of his annotations.

Generally speaking, although impressionistic and not always very consistent, nineteenth-century Oroch sources are very reliable and the only effort required on the specialist's behalf is to analyse carefully the transcription used by their authors, which is amateurish and always very close to the spelling conventions applied to their native language.[9] This is a common trait in Tungusic pre-scientific sources and, as the analysis below will show, both remarks (on reliability and transcriptional problems) hold true also for Tronson's word-lists. The overall impression is that Tronson B is more reliable than Tronson A. There are, however, five major discrepancies, see individual comments below for items [4, 7, 18, 26, 27].

8 He refers to them variously as Ghilack, Ghailack and Ghiliack (in Tronson A he sticks rather to the latter). He seems unaware of the regular ethnonym Nivkh.

9 To find a few idiosyncrasies is unavoidable: for instance, Šternberg's is an ethnographic vocabulary, rather than a list of regular words. Therefore, it cannot be directly compared with other word-lists containing more down-to-earth vocabulary. Since Oroch is on the verge of extinction, if not already dead, seeking out the appropriate explanations for some of those words may be a lost cause. Also, due to their etymological opacity, they may be better studied along with the complex and technical dictionary by Arsen'ev (2007: 429–54; we must bear in mind that many words are in fact Udihe and not Oroch!). As for the reliability of nineteenth-century Oroch sources, one example may be enough to illustrate how useful they may sometimes prove: Protodiakonov's *inakki* is perhaps a (clumsy) rendition of the characteristic pre-aspiration with which /k/ is realized after /a/ and /o/ (Avrorin and Boldyrev 2001: 30), perfectly captured by Šternberg's *inaxki* (446b), cf. Avrorin *inaki* [ina^{h}ki] (it should not be mistaken for geminates, as this feature co-occurs with them too, e.g. *okki* [o^{h}kki] 'bad, poor').

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Table 2 shows Tronson's 45 words set against the same words as found in other Oroch sources. Tronson A and B are reproduced when items are written differently. For the sake of comparison, modern forms of Oroch and Nivkh equivalents are also included.[10]

[2] Šternberg *meuci* (445a). This is a well-known *Kulturwort* which spread across Lower Amur and Sakhalin from Manchu *mioocan*/m'oucan/, which in turn comes from Chinese 鸟枪 *niǎoqiāng* 'shot gun, air gun' (Schmidt 1933: 370a, TMS 1.562–3, Doerfer [7057]),[11] cf. Udihe *niinka (m) m'aosá* 'Chinese handgun' (Arsen'ev 2007: 207–8, 434). As for the Nivkh form (← Tungusic, see Krejnovič 1955: 160), it is documented in Furet (1860: 109 <Miotché>, see also Grube 1892: 127 *sub* Flinte).

[4] Tronson B shows that <M> in Tronson A is a clerical error. In this case, as in others, it is impossible to assert whether the typographical error was committed by the publisher, or whether the publisher was dutifully transcribing an error committed by Tronson himself.

[6] Šternberg (1933: 441b) and Arsen'ev (2007: 431) collected and described the names of various subtypes of *untá* which vary in function and the skin they are made of. See illustration in Lar'kin (1964: 64)

[7] Tronson B shows the singular, regular form, whereas Tronson A may be a transcription of a very archaic formation containing the plural(izer, collective) ending *+l* ~ *+r* (see Benzing 1956: 75), cf. Solon *bäldiir*, lit. Ewen *böödŭl*, Arman *budäl*, etc. (TMS 1.118–9). Although there may be some relics in Southern Tungusic,[12] this is a proper Northern Tungusic formation, where the regular plural marker is *+l* (unlike in Oroch, where we only find *+sa*). Cincius (1949: 121–2) was the first scholar to notice some lexical parallels existing between (Okhotsk) Ewen and Oroch (sometimes Udihe too). Those, however, can be accounted for by assuming that they are the result of sharing a common Amurian culture. There is no

10 Present-day Nivkh, where <ï> stands for the high central vowel /ɨ/ (other notations include <y> or even <ə>), comes from Savel'eva and Taksami, where Amur [A] and East Sakhalin [ES] forms are clearly distinguished (on Nivkh dialects, see for example Krejnovič 1972, Gruzdeva 1998: 7, 11–2). Present-day Oroch comes from Avrorin and Lebedeva, where <æ> (= /æ/, see Avrorin and Boldyrev 2001: 17) has been replaced by <ë>. They provide very accurate phonetic transcriptions, whereas Girfanova shows the current orthographic practice, which hides some of the phonetic features of the language (e.g. /u ü/ = <y>, etc.).

11 Doerfer and Schmidt assumed that Manchu *mio-* instead of †nio- originates from the Chinese dialectal form †miǎoqiāng which I have been unable to track down. Be that as it may, the alternation /m'a-/ and /m'o-/ < *ña- and *ño- is a well-known phenomenon in Manchu that occurs in both borrowings and inherited lexicon. It seems to be triggered by the presence of any labial element (vowel or consonant) in the following syllable (Benzing 1958: 40).

12 Benzing (1958: 82) argues that Udihe *bägdilä anci* 'without legs = having no legs' (negative possessive construction) may contain the plural *+l* and the partitive or indefinite accusative of the parent language **+(y)ä*, though traditionally it is assumed that *+la* simply corresponds to the partitive case (Nikolaeva and Tolskaya 2001: 145–7, 838). Both interpretations may reflect the well-known diachrony vs. synchrony dichotomy and be ultimately correct. This is a thorny question which requires further study.

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Table 2. Comparative vocabulary list of Tronson's word-lists with other Oroch sources and Nivkh

#	Tronson			Leontovič	Protodiakonov	Margaritov	Schmidt	Avrorin / Lebedova (Girfanova)	(Amur) Nivkh
	A	B	English						
1	Gna-lāh	Gnä-lah	hand	*ŋala*	*ŋala*	*nalá*	*ŋalá*	*ŋaala*	*tïmk*
2	Mut-chāh		gun	*mjauca*	*m'euca*	*miocá*	*mjaucja*	*mëüca* (мяуча)	*meucu*
3	Ic-tāh		teeth	*ikta*	*iktä*	*iktá*	*iktö*	*iktä*	*ems*
4	Muck-shaw	Nuck-shaw	nose	*nikso*	*negso*	*nigcó*	*ñiksö*	*ŋikso*	*ux*
5	She-āh		ear	*sjo*	*se*	*se*	*sjo*	*së* (ce)	*(e)mla*
6	Ōontāh		shoes	*unta*	*unta*	*untá*	*untá*	*ünta*	*ki*
7	Bug-dhāl	Bugdhu	foot	*bagdï* ~ *bakdï*	*bïgdi*	*bukdï*	*bögdi*	*bägdi*	*ŋacχ*
8	Énock	E-nock	dog	*inaki*	*inakki*	*inake*	*inaki*[13]	*inaki*	A *qan* ES *qanŋ* (*mupïk*)
9	Nung-Yé	Nung Yèh	fish	—	—	—	—	—	
10	Sook-Jāh-sá	Sook-ia Sāh	salmon	*sukjasa* 'fish'	*sukdasa* 'fish'	*šukjaga* 'fish'	*sugdasa* ~ *sugdzjasa* 'fish'	*sügjasa* 'fish'	$c^{h}o$ 'fish'
11	Talkēē	Talkee	deer	*(oro*	*oro*	*oró*	*oro)*	—	A $c^{h}olŋi$ ES *tlaŋi*
12	Māh-pāh		bear	*mapa*	*mafa*	*mafa* ~ *mapa*	*mafa* ~ *mapa*	*mapa*	$q^{h}otr$
13	Nang-ngha	Nang Nghā[14]	God	*naŋña* 'heaven'	—	*ñagña* 'heaven'	*ñaŋña* 'heaven'	*ñaŋña* 'heaven'	*tlï* 'heaven', *kur* 'God'
14	Seoh	Sooh	sun	*sjau*	*siu*	*seú*	*siu*	*säu* (cy:)	$k^{h}eŋ$
15	Moo		water	*mu*	*mu*	*mú*	*mu*	*muu*	$c^{h}aχ$
16	Nā-Moo	Na-moo	sea	*namu*	*namu*	*namú*	*namu*	*naamü*	*qerq*
17	Ook-tah	Ook-tāh	grass	*okto*	—	*októ*	*okto*	*ookto*	$c^{h}ŋïr$
18	Wilem-ak-dhā	Wilem-ak-dha	A: cause B: canoe	*ulimagda*	—	*ulmagdá*	*ulimagda*	—	*mu*

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19	Thōh	Tho	fire	*to*	*to*	*tó*	—	*too*	*t^huɣr*
20	Hat-chu-āh		saucepan	—	—	—	—	*xacü(a)* ‘cauldron’	*uñs*
21	Jo-lōh	Io-loh	stone	*jolo*	*jolo*	*jolo*	*dzjolo*	*jolo*	*paχ*
22	Hum		lip	*xamu*	*xämu*	*xamú*	*xömu*	*xämu*	*ïvlïx*
23	House	Ouse	whiskers	*hausi* (науси)	—	*gayši* ‘chin’	*hausi* ‘the beard’	*xaüsi*	—
24	Ge		chin	—	—	—	—	*gëkaa* ~ *gyakaa*	*itï*
25	To-hoh		button	*toho* (Toho)	—	*togo*	*toxo*	*toxo*	*uɣs*
26	Quib-uk-Kā	Quil-ük-kā	beetle	*giluha* (Гилуна) ‘fly’	—	*giljuká* ‘fly’	*giluhö* ‘fly’	*giluwä* ~ *giluhä* (гилувэ) ‘fly’	A *p^her* ES *p^herŋ*
27	Gā-āk	Gawk	crow	*gaki*	*gaki*	*gak’*	—	*gaaki*	*ves*
28	Widhēē	Widhee	river	*uli* ‘(small) river’	*uli* ‘small river’	*ulí* ‘river’	*uli* ‘a river’	*uli* ‘big river’ *bya(ka)* (биака) ‘small river’	*i*
29	Tig-dhu	Tig Dhu	rain	*tïgda*	*tikdä*	*tikdá*	*tigdö*	*tigdä*	*lïx*
30	Dhu-way	Dhu Way	A: forest B: wood	*dua* ‘cape’	—	*duá* ‘cape’	*duö* ‘cape’	*duwä* ‘cape’	*knïk, křï* ‘cape’
31	Beagh		moon	*bä*	*be*	*bé*	*bja*	*bë* (бе)	*loŋ*
32	Nootch-Ka	Nootch-ka	child	(*xita*	*xitÿi*	*gitto*	*hitö*	*xitä*)	*oɣla*
33	Besagdh	Besaghdh	man	(*ñe*	*ñe*	*ñi*	*ñi* ~ *ñe*	*ñë* (не))	*ñivx*
34	Ah! Dhu-pih	Ah Dhu-pih	net	—	—	—	*aduli*	*adüli*	*k^he*
35	E-wak-thā	E Wak-tha	A: bark B: bark, tree	*iwakta*	—	*ïwaxtá*	*ivakta* ~ *ivaxta*	*iwakta*	*oɣm*

Continued

Table 2. Continued

#	Tronson			Leontovič	Protodiakonov	Margaritov	Schmidt	Avrorin / Lebedova (Girfanova)	(Amur) Nivkh
	A	B	English						
36	O-Mo-Ko	O Mo Ko	one	*(omo ~ omu*	*omu*	*umu ~ omu*	*omo ~ umu*	*omo)*	*ñin / ñen ~ ñiñ* ‘one’[15]
37	Dhu		two	*ju*	*jur*	*ju*	*dju*	*juu*	*men / mor*
38	E-Lā	E-lah	three	*ila*	*äla*	*ila*	*ilá*	*ila*	*t^haqr / t^hor*
39	Dhee		four	*dï*	*dïi*	*dï*	*dui*	*dii*	*nïr / nur*
40	Thungha	Thung-ha	five	*tuŋa*	*tuŋa*	*tuŋá*	*tuŋá*	*tüŋa*	*t^hor*
41	Nung-O	Nung O	six	*ñuŋu*	*nuŋu*	*ñuŋú*	*ñuŋú*	*ñuŋu*	*ŋax*
42	Nādhā	Nā-dha	seven	*nada*	*nada*	*nadá*	*nadá*	*nada*	*ŋamk*
43	Jah-pah	Ia-pah	eight	*jappu*	*jaxpu*	*jatu*[16]	*dzjaku*	*jappü*	*minr*
44	Hoo-Yū	Hoo-yu	nine	*xuyu*	*xuyu*	*xugó*	*xujú*	*xuyu*	*ñiñben*
45	Jāh	Iah	ten	*ja*	*ja*	*ja*	*dzja*	*jaa*	*mxo / mxoŋ ~ mxos*

Some of the items in Table 2 demand individual comments:

[13]In the collocation *waca inaki* ‘a bitch, a female dog’ (60a).

[14]As for the orthography of this word, there is a third version in the body of the text in Tronson B: “In Destination Bay, the god was in the resemblance of a man, and in order to witness the effect of its removal on the minds of the people, I pretended to remove it; they were indignant and horror stricken at my temerity, pointing to the heavens. They clasped their hands and bowed their heads saying, “Nang-Nha! Nang-Nha!” They gave me to understand, that if I removied it, sorrow and woe would be their portion in this world and in the next” (p. 114).

[15]Nivkh distinguishes numerals for people / for animals.

[16][43–44] in Margaritov are highly deviant forms. <g> in *xugó* ‘9’ may reflect the fortition of a (secondary) epenthetic element *-w-* between labial vowels, rather than a very archaizing pronounciation, cf. PT *hägün (though PT *-g- > Oroch Ø, perhaps remodelled on Amurian Ewenki = Literary Ewenki *yägin*). As for ‘8’, *-t-* may perhaps be better seen as the remnant of the cluster *-kt-*, which is documented only twice, namely in the collocation *japtu datki* = †japtü daakti ‘eight rows, layers’ (TMS 252a, cf. Ulcha *jakpündaktï* id.) and <dzjaktu> ‘eight’ (Schmidt 32a, collected by Brailovski near the Koppi river, see Map 2), the origin of which remains unclear.

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special reason why leg(s) would have to belong to that category. Notwithstanding this, cf. [33].

[9] This is most likely (a dialectal variation of?) Chinese 鯰鱼 *niányú* 'catfish' (already in Maak 1861: 194–5). Catfish (Nivkh *mupĭk*) are extremely common in the Amur region, and this may be the reason why it appears to be the regular word for fish (see below [10]).

[10] *sugjasa* is the regular word for fish.

[11] The regular word for deer is *oro*. Tronson's †talŋi bears an obvious resemblance to Sakhalin Nivkh *tlaŋi* ~ Amurian Nivkh *c^{h}olŋi* 'deer' (Grube 1892: 79, 124; Savel'eva and Taksami 1970: 451b). Nivkh *tlaŋi* seems to have a tendency to travel across the sea, as Austerlitz (1976), after proposing a convincing internal etymology, argues that the same word was loaned to Sakhalin Ainu, where it took the form *tunakai* 'reindeer', and from there, via Hokkaido, become a part of the Japanese vocabulary as トナカイ *tonakai*.[17] This word is recorded in two Santan (Ulcha) word-lists dating from 1882 and 1886, though linguistic data probably goes back to the Tokugawa period (Ikegami 1967: 37, 83). As for its presence in Oroch, we have to assume that the word spread westwards when the Nivkh visited the Lower Amur for trade. Such contacts are well documented (see Figure 1).

[13] *ñaŋña* means 'heaven, (visible, clear) sky'. The regular word for god, spirit is *änduri* (← Manchu *enduri* 'spirit, god, deity') or *büa* 'place, world; sky, weather; (superior) deity, spirit' (Avrorin and Lebedeva 1978: 168b; Šternberg 1908: 447a *sub* Religija). *ñ- is original (< PT *ñäŋñä, see TMS 1/653–4; Doerfer 2004: [8049]), therefore the fact that it has not been recorded by Tronson and Leontovič may be due to poor language skills or to an idiosyncrasy in the informant's speech (sporadic dissimilation?), cf. [41].

[18] The English translation 'canoe' (cf. Schmidt 1928: [61a] 'a large riverboat') in Tronson B is the correct one, 'cause' in Tronson A is obviously a typo. This is an obvious derivative of *uli* 'river', cf. [28]. Lar'kin (1964: 38–9), Šternberg *ulmagda* (444a) and Arsen'ev *ulimagda* (119).

[20] The same as Ulcha *xacoa* ~ *xacüa*, Orok *xacuga* (=? Ikegami 1997: 228 s.v. *xacuwa* 'water container'), Nanay *xacoxã*, and Kili *xacãã* ~

17 As for the specific possibility that Tronson was perhaps interviewing a Nivkh–Oroch bilingual or the like (note in Figure 1 that, although Ulcha separates Oroch- from Nivkh-speaking territories, contacts between the Oroch and the Nivkh are documented), there is simply a lack of evidence. Tronson's comment in Tronson A (325) that "they [the Nivkh] cannot pronounce the letter 'r'". (cf. Tronson B 117: "They experience much difficulty in the pronunciation of the letter *r*, changing it into *l*, as for instance in the word 'Russia', the Ghilack pronounces it 'Looshia'".), and although it is true that Nivkh has a rather particular set of *r*-sounds (<r> and <ř> are the orthographic conventions to render lenis (voiced) and fortis (voiceless) alveolar trills, traditionally described as fricatives given their participation in complex morphophonological alternations, <ř> having a distinctive preceding tap (see for example Shiraishi 2009: 185–6), it can hardly be proof of the inability to pronounce /r/. The same goes for Oroch (and other Tungusic languages), where sonorants /r/ ~ /l/ sometimes alternate without a clear pattern. This is, incidentally, the phenomenon which is described in Tronson B.

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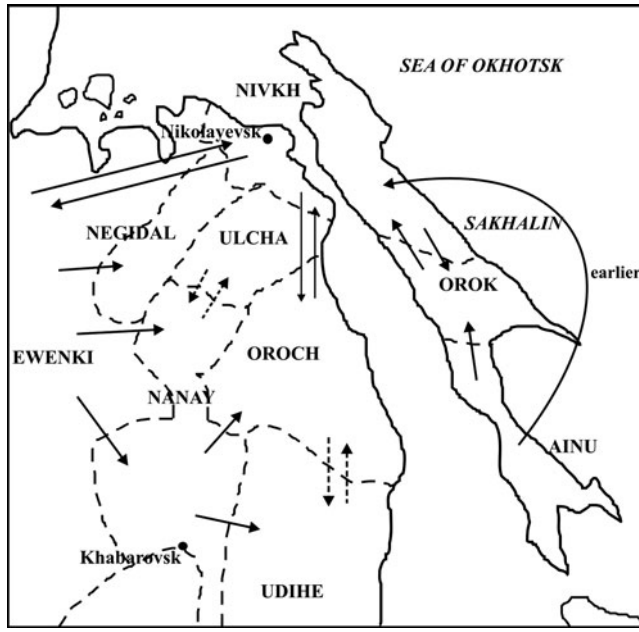


Figure 1. Linguistic interaction in the Lower Amur and Sakhalin (based on Wurm et al. 1996, vol. 1, map 108. Russian is not included.) Dotted arrows indicate "passive bilingualism")

xaoxoã. All of them mean '(hanging) cauldron' and go back to Manchu *hacuhan* 'a small cooking pot' (see TMS 2.464–5; the loss of *-k-, preserved in Manchu as *-h-*, is self-evident in Oroch, Kili *xacãã* and Ulcha). Šternberg's *xaoca* '(kitchen) utensils that may be used as plates' (443a) is certainly the same word. The vocalism in the first syllable in Kili and Šternberg's form has perhaps been remodelled on a Chinese word, e.g. 陶器 *táoqì* 'crockery' or 好吃 *hǎochī* 'nice, delicious'.

[23] The *h*-less form in Tronson B may have been a slip of the memory which stood corrected *a posteriori* in Tronson A, or simply a clerical error.

[24] Tronson seems to have recorded the Ulcha word *gïa* 'jaw(-bone)', which along with Nanay *geã* <гиан>, is characteristic for lacking the diminutive ending *+kaan, as in Lit. Ewenki *geekaan*, Solon *giixaa*, Kili *gïkã* or the proper Oroch form (< CT *gya(a)+kaan, see TMS 1.145b, Doerfer 2004: [3949]). *Sub* подбородок 'chin' and борода 'beard', Leontovič has *gug-gaxta* (48, 105), which is the same word as Protodiakonov *kukäxta* 'moustache' ~ *kukäxta* 'beard' (46) and *güggakta* 'beard, moustache' (Avrorin and Lebedeva 1978: 174b), cf. Udihe *budzjakta* 'the chin, the beard' in Schmidt (27b). Margaritov has *guaxtá* 'beard' ~ *guaktá* 'moustache' (47, 52 ← Udihe *guakta* 'beard, moustache').

[26] Tronson B has the correct form with <l> instead of the one with <B> in Tronson A, most likely a clerical error.

[30] Apart from 'cape, promontory (Russian мыс)', Avrorin and Lebedeva 1978: (179b) provide the additional meaning of 'the end of any long object,

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path or territory'. Cf. Avrorin and Lebedeva *xuwä* 'taiga, forest' (248a), Nivkh *pal* 'taiga, forest'. Margaritov *dïgí* 'forest' (49) and Schmidt *dihi* 'wood, forest' (30b) are perhaps the same as the adverbials *diixi* (Xadi) ~ *diisi* (Tumñin) 'uphill from the coast; up, upward(s); in the taiga; to the west' (Avrorin and Lebedeva 1978: 178b), from which it would be easy to gain the impression that the word actually means 'forest'.

[28] If this actually reflects *uli*, then <dh> (= *d*) remains unaccounted for.

[31] The retention of *-g in Auslaut is a consistent feature of Northern Tungusic, cf. Lit. Ewenki & Solon & Negidal *beega*, Lit. Ewen *bëëg*, Arman *beek*. In other words, the loss of *-g(-) characterizes Southern Tungusic, e.g. Ulcha *bee*, Orok *bee*, Udihe *beë*, Lit. Nanay *bea* <биа>, Manchu *biya* /bʸa/ (< PT *bya(a)ga, see TMS 1/78–9, Doerfer 2004: [1231]).

[32] Tronson himself did not know Russian. Therefore, he could have misheard the Russian word внучка 'granddaughter' or even perhaps one of the affective-diminutive suffixes -очка ~ -ушка, as in девочка '(little) girl' ~ девушка '(unmarried) girl', and assumed that this is actually the word for child.

[33] If Tronson's transcriptions render something like †bäsäg(d), there are potential matches in (Okhotsk) Ewen *bäysäg* 'group of people; family' and *bäysäc* 'snob, big-head' (both are derivates of *bäy* 'person' < PT *bäyä, see TMS 1.122–3, Doerfer 2004: [1415]),[18] which seems to lack exact parallels in other Tungusic languages. Moreover, PT *bäyä continues in Southern Tungusic with the meaning 'body, -self' and is barely present in derivative formations. <dh> (= *d* elsewhere) remains unaccounted for.

[34] Šternberg 1933 *aduli* (446a). Tronson B does not contain the awkward symbol <!>, which may be just a clerical error that occurred during the typesetting of the text.

[36] Most likely *ommoko ~ ämäkä, omokko ~ ämäkkä* 'only one' (TMS 2.271a, Avrorin and Lebedeva 215b, 257b), a form which contains the regular cardinal numeral *omo ~ omu* 'one' and the so-called restrictive suffix *+(k)ka* (Avrorin and Boldyrev 2001: 385–6). See also Lopatin *omokú* 'alone, single, solitary' (1957: 78b), cf. Ulcha *omokä(n-) ~ umukä(n-)* 'solitary, lone(ly)', etc.

[41] *ñ- is original (< PT *ñöŋön, see TMS 1.647–8, Doerfer 2004: [8115]), therefore the fact that it has not been recorded by Tronson and Protodiakonov may be due to an idiosyncrasy in the informant's speech (sequential analogy to *nada* '7'?), cf. [13].

If the linguistic analysis provided above is correct, Tronson's word-list contains a series of lexical items showing very clearly the effects of both language contact

18 The current distribution of Okhotsk Ewen and Arman may have been different at the turn of the nineteenth century, or even during the eighteenth century, reaching further into southern regions and inland, closer to the Yakut area (see Ikegami 2001[1981]: 331–2). Be that as it may, if there has been any direct contact between Ewen or Arman and the languages of the Amur area, it should be taken as an exceptional, rather than a common fact which occurred under special circumstances that we are unable to discern at this time.

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and historical evolution. Given the ethnic configuration of the Lower Amur region during the last centuries (see, for example, Janhunen 1996: 113–7; Khasanova 2000; Zgusta 2015: 104–4), it is rather natural to find one word from Ulcha ([24]), one from Nivkh ([11]), one from Russian ([32]), one from Manchu ([20]), and two Chinese words, one straight from Chinese ([9]) and another via Manchu ([2]). The Nivkh loan is, however, somewhat special, as it is documented in a Tungusic language for the first time.

Furthermore, there are at least three items which undeniably possess Northern Tungusic pedigree ([7, 31, 33]). These have never before been observed in Oroch. If anything, they only add to the evidence supporting the current view that sees Oroch as a (peripheral) Northern Tungusic language which has undergone some changes under the influence of Southern Tungusic, especially Nanay and Ulcha (Georg 2004). With this evidence at hand, it is possible to argue that Tronson is the only testimony confirming the presence of certain Northern Tungusic features in Oroch which were replaced under the influence of Southern Tungusic between the 1860s and the 1890s.

5. Conclusions

Tronson's 1859 word-list is the earliest testimony of the Oroch language. At first it was thought to contain Nivkh linguistic data due to the inability of Tronson to identify properly his own materials. Tronson's data, which is genuine, shows that Oroch has not changed very much since the mid-nineteenth century. And yet, in spite of its brevity, it offers some interesting hints on the history of Oroch in the form of Northern Tungusic features (lexical isoglosses) which disappeared by the time Leontovič, Margaritov or Protodiakonov had composed their vocabularies, i.e. the 1890s. This characteristic of Tronson's word-list lends some support to the classification of Oroch (along with Udihe) as a Northern Tungusic language heavily influenced by Southern Tungusic.

A reluctance to prepare pre-scientific sources for publication, where suitable linguistic (and philological) analysis is provided, regrettably remains a common stance in the domain of Tungusic, and generally speaking, north-east Asian linguistic studies. Tronson observed that "[i]f travellers who visit various parts of the world in surveying ships, would observe and learn a little more of the languages of the inhabitants, and make a vocabulary, no matter how small, they would render a great service to ethnological science" (Tronson B 117). Interpreting and analysing the data, "no matter how small", would also be important to all of us interested in the linguistics of this region of the world.

Appendix: Brief excursus on Oroch dialectology

Oroch is traditionally divided into three varieties (Avrorin and Lebedeva 1968: 208; Avrorin and Lebedeva 157; Doerfer 1978: 24, see Figure 2): Xadi, Tumñin or Central Oroch, and Amurian or Xungari Oroch (that is, Sungari, with *s-* > *x-*, an areal feature proper of languages in the Lower Amur area).

However, a closer inspection of the available materials (principally Avrorin and Lebedeva 158–259 and Kazama 5–35) reveals that we are actually dealing with two main dialects: Southern (or Xadi) and Northern (or Tumñin). The

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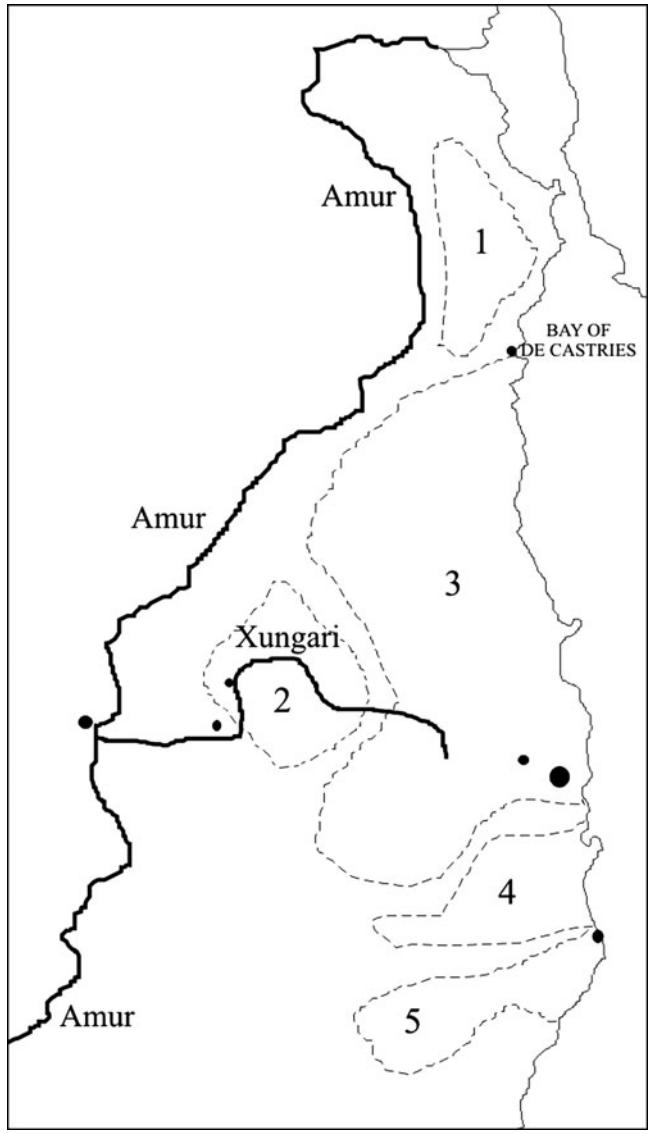


Figure 2. Historical settlements of the Oroch at the turn of the 20th century
Regions: 1. Amurian; 2. Xungarian; 3. Tumñin; 4. Xadi; 5. Koppi
Black dots indicate current settlements (adapted from Lar'kin 1964: 27)

Xungari dialect seems a lexically Nanaized variant of the latter, e.g. *guucä* 'pike (fish)' (< Nanay) or *laxa* 'catfish' (< Nanay < Nivkh, see Doerfer 1985: 199).[19] There is also a significant number of Xungari words whose origin is obscure or unknown, e.g. *ëugi-* 'to go inside home', *joomi* 'common rudd' (= Tumñin

19 A southern vs. northern division was already proposed by Lar'kin (1964: 14) on purely geographical grounds.

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tamta), *ŋokülë* 'Siberian weasel' (= Tumñin *cookci*, Xadi *cokcoki*), *xogo* 'squirrel' (= Tumñin *oloki*), etc.

As far as the southern vs. northern division is concerned, there are five diagnostic features (all of them phonetic) which correlate very well with the Udihe[20] vs. Nanay sphere of influence usually assumed for each of these Oroch dialects: Southern *-x-, xi-* (< *s-) & *si-* (< *p-), -C- (in polysyllabic words), -V*y, -k-*; vs. Northern *-s-, si-* (< *s-) & *xi-* (< *p-), -CC-, -V*y* ~ *-ë*, Ø, e.g. *siyä* vs. *xiyä* 'wound, cut' and *xippi* vs. *sippi* 'tight, narrow', *sapüki* vs. *sappüy* 'chopsticks', *timaki* vs. *timay* ~ *timë* 'tomorrow' (Kazama [173]), *tüŋay* vs. *tüŋë* 'fifth', etc.

Lexical particularities are less remarkable, e.g. *ikä* vs. *jari(n)* 'song', *ñüüca* vs. *päändä* 'grayling', *ayaktaküli* vs. *isuki* 'jay', etc. All dialects share a tendency to lose high vowels in the medial position and to change diphthongoids into long vowels. Such fluctuations are present in almost all Tungusic languages and may well go back to the parent language.

As for the presence of dialectal features in nineteenth-century Oroch sources, the evidence is scant. The vocabulary collected by the protopriest A. Protodiakonov is perhaps the only one in which we can observe some traces of non-Tumñin features, e.g. *jur* 'two' and *jaxpu* 'eight', cf. Xungari Oroch *jüri* (Avrorin / Lebedeva 184b, = Tumñin *juu*), Lit. Nanay *juär* and *jakpun*, Kilen (= Sungari Nanay) *juär(ä)* and *jafkü* (and Eastern Coast Amurian *juru* and *jakü(n)*, see Sem 1976: 49), Ulcha *jüäl* and *jakpu(n)*, from Proto-Tungusic *jöör and *japkon (Doerfer 2004: [3420, 3057]), respectively.

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20 There was a time when distinguishing Oroch from Udihe was not that simple a task. This is because the distance between Udihe and Oroch is, at first sight, rather subtle and the linguistic details were not worked out until recently. The most telling features setting apart Udihe and Oroch are the loss of intervocalic *-k- in the former and the presence of (secondary) geminates in the latter, e.g. *ina'i* vs. *inaki* 'dog' or *jakpu(n)* vs. *jappu(n)* 'eight'. See Kazama (2009) for further details. The closeness of the two languages was obvious to those who first encountered them in the Amur region, hence the common practice of using Oroch materials for the sake of (at that time, "intra-dialectal") comparison with Udihe. For instance, Brailovskij (1901: 412–30) contains five vocabularies: his, Nadarov's (1887: 163–5) and Margaritov's (47–54, third column "Ороческое съ р. Усури" = Udihe) *vis-à-vis* Protodiakonov and Leontovič's Oroch data.

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