

KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY IN SHIFT:  
A LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY OF MULTILINGUAL NEWS MEDIA  
IN THE BURYAT TERRITORIES OF RUSSIA

by

Kathryn Elizabeth Graber

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Anthropology)  
in The University of Michigan  
2012

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Alaina M. Lemon, Chair  
Professor Judith T. Irvine  
Professor Sarah G. Thomason  
Associate Professor Barbra A. Meek

© Kathryn Elizabeth Graber

---

All rights reserved  
2012

## **Acknowledgments**

Over the years this project has been in progress, I have relied on the friendship, intelligence, collegiality, and goodwill of a great many remarkable people in the Russian Federation and the United States. In the Republic of Buryatia, Aga, and Ust'-Orda, I am indebted to the many individuals who made this project possible and added much beauty, wit, and joy to my life in the process. First and foremost, thanks are due to the journalists and research participants who gave of their limited time, and to the many wonderful people who have invited me into their homes and lives over the course of this project. While I cannot acknowledge research participants by name, I am especially grateful to those editors and department heads who distributed questionnaires and opened the doors of their institutions to me. Thanks to Alla Savelyeva and the Takhanov and Dugarzhapov families for their hospitality, especially to Samira for introducing me to Buryatia and to Darima for her brandy and good humor. Special thanks are due to my teacher of Buryat of many years, Tsymzhit Badmazhapovna Bazarova, for her unfailing patience with my endless questions.

Talented archivists and librarians made my forays into historical research a genuine delight. I am especially grateful to Zina Fëdorovna and Tat'iana Vankeeva at NARB, Liudmila Leonidovna Kushnarëva at BGU, Marina and Kolya at IMBiT/BNTs, and Norzhima Garmaevna Lubsanova at the National Library of the Republic of Buryatia. Ivan Timofeevich Afanas'ev was always ready with a smile and a stern

reminder to eat a full, hearty lunch. Valentina Gruzintseva in Moscow, Erzhen Khamaganova in Ulan-Ude, and Jargalma in Aginskoe made things happen when the gears of bureaucracy appeared stuck. Boris Zolkhoev made my 2009 research trip to Aga possible and went out of his way to give me the widest possible opportunities and best views of Lake Baikal, always with friendship and humor.

Traveling between academic worlds can be daunting, and I am very grateful to the dedicated scholars and colleagues who have always made me feel welcome in Ulan-Ude: Galina Aleksandrovna Dyrkheeva, Polina Purbuevna Dashinimaeva, Margarita Maksimovna Boronova, Irina Sergeevna Boldonova, Darima Dashievna Amogolonova, Tat'iana Dmitrievna Skrynnikova, Zhargal Ayakova, and Babasan Dorzhievich Tsyrenov, among others. I thank the late Jargal Namtarov, a gifted linguist and my first bagsha of the Buryat language, and Viktor Dashanimaev, photographer, ornithologist, and friend, whose enthusiasm for this project spurred me on but who did not live to see its completion. Andrei Bazarov kindly invited me on his Russian Academy of Sciences expedition in 2009 to study Buddhist textual practices in the eastern steppe districts. Nikolai Tsyrempilov has always been a consummate colleague and dear friend, and I continue to be inspired by Inga, Agvan, and Karina. I am deeply indebted to Jargal Badagarov for his transcription assistance and all-around phenomenal linguistic expertise, and to Natasha, Dugar, Rinchin, and Damdin for their friendship, laughter, and trips all hither and yon in the ill-fated Land Rover.

For support during research and writing in Russia and the U.S., I owe thanks to several institutions. Primary field research for this dissertation in 2008–09 was made possible by the International Dissertation Research Fellowship Program of the Social

Science Research Council (SSRC) with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, by the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad program of the U.S. Department of Education, and by a Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) under Grant No. 0819031. Additional field research in 2005 and 2011 was funded by Predissertation Training and Dissertation Support Fellowships from the Eurasia Program of the SSRC with funds provided by the U.S. Department of State under the Program for Research and Training on Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (Title VIII), and in 2007 by a Fulbright-Hays scholarship through the Eurasian Regional Language Program of the American Councils for International Education. Write-up was supported by an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and an SSRC Eurasia Program Dissertation Support Fellowship. At the University of Michigan, I would like to thank the Center for Russian and East European Studies, the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, and the Department of Anthropology for providing additional research and write-up funding, as well as other forms of support.

My interests in Russia and in linguistic anthropology began at the University of Chicago, an institution that happily indulged me in all manner of bizarre intellectual fancies. I thank Susan Gal, John Comaroff, and the late Kostas Kazazis for asking many of the questions that sparked my interest in this research, and for encouraging me to pursue graduate study. Noel Taylor introduced me to the Semeiskii music that first brought me to Buryatia a decade ago, and I have appreciated being part of the ever-amazing Golosa community over the years.

My committee members at the University of Michigan have taught me more than I can say, not only about analyzing linguistic and social practice, but about being a model teacher and colleague as well. I could not have asked for a more encouraging, insightful, and empowering advisor than Alaina Lemon. She has inspired me to be braver in both my fieldwork and my arguments, and impressed upon me the value of a solid pair of winter boots. I am grateful to Judy Irvine for pushing me to see the forest as well as the very bark of the trees, and to take nothing for granted. Sally Thomason's dauntingly capacious view has helped me find productive spaces in the interstices between linguistics and anthropology. Barb Meek always reads sensitively, introduces new angles and provocations, and manages to say whatever I was trying to say better.

This project also benefited greatly from seminars and conversations with Webb Keane, Susan Philips, Stuart Kirsch, Matt Hull, Conrad Kottak, and Zeynep Gürsel. I owe many "aha!" moments of discovery to Bruce Mannheim. Bill Rosenberg was a wonderful mentor in Russian and East European Studies. I thank Bill and Doug Northrop for guidance on working with Soviet historical documents and negotiating the contradictory disciplinary conventions of anthropology and history. Mark Sicoli, Jonathan Larson, and Josh Reno went out of their way to provide mentorship early in my graduate adventures, for which I was most grateful. Brook Hefright and Jeremy Johnson were treasured long-distance colleagues during fieldwork. I was fortunate to be part of the supportive and collegial cohort of 2004 at Michigan, among whom I would especially like to thank my constant classmates, Anna Babel, Elizabeth Falconi, Jennifer Hall, and Sarah Hillewaert, for many good discussions.

I have also been fortunate to find a circle of colleagues outside the University of Michigan who share my interest in Buryatia and with whom I have traded many insights reflected in these pages, including Eleanor Peers, Joe Long, Sayana Namsaraeva, Tatiana Tchoudakova, Anya Bernstein, Kathy Metzko, Elizabeth Sweet, and Luis Ortiz-Echevarria. Justine Buck Quijada was a generous and supportive fellow fieldworker during my preliminary research in 2005. I am grateful to Jesse Murray for her friendship, guidance on archival research, and assistance in helping to maintain perspective during fieldwork in 2008–09. Carolyn Kremers was an inspiring travel partner and friend. At Indiana University, Melissa and Janis Chakars, Tristra Newyear Yeager, and Brooke Swafford provided an unbelievable Buryatist community. I am grateful to the Department of Anthropology at IU for visiting status and to György Kara, Dick Bauman, Ilana Gershon, and Dan Suslak for making IU a welcoming place to write up.

At different stages, grant proposals, research plans, and draft chapters for this dissertation benefited from the careful attention of Laura Brown, Emily Hein, Perry Sherouse, Jesse Murray, Jessica Robbins, Zhanara Nauruzbayeva, Conrad Kottak and participants in his 2007 methods seminar, participants in the 2010–11 SSRC Eurasia Dissertation Support fellowship workshops, and participants in the spring 2010 and spring 2011 Linguistic Anthropology Laboratory at the University of Michigan. I thank Alex Golub, Susanne Unger, Suzanne Wertheim, and Charles Briggs for insightful comments on conference papers that became early drafts of Chapters 2, 3, and 7. Part of Chapter 3 is forthcoming in *Language & Communication* (Graber in press). Karl Swinehart, Robert Moore, and two anonymous reviewers provided comments on this manuscript that proved useful for the dissertation as a whole. Throughout the writing

process, I have been profoundly grateful to my fellow comrades for the radical acquisition and circulation of knowledge, Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar and Emily McKee, who have fueled me with friendship, moral encouragement, and ice cream treats from the Chocolate Moose—not to mention consistently excellent editorial advice.

Behind any long project is a lot of heartache and love, and I thank everyone who ameliorated the former and heaped on the latter. Laurie Marx made grad school more enjoyable. Laura, Jeremy, Lizzy, Em and Tim, Jess and Mateusz, the Lowen family, and Susanne and Joanne the rabbit all hosted me at one point or another on trips back to Ann Arbor. Jess, Jonathan, Dan, and Lori got me through the final months of *Life in a Chair*. And I could not have asked for a more supportive family. Thanks to Ann, Adriann, Gavin, and Sasha for their patience in my final days of writing, and to Karen, Bill, Lena, Barbara, and Dick for their cheers from afar. I thank my parents, Robert and Rose Graber, for changing all the pronouns from “he” to “she” in *Little Raccoon and the Thing in the Pool* and making me believe I could do anything I set out to do. Finally, I thank my best friend and constant confidant, travel companion, editor, wordsmith, and intellectual partner in crime, Richard Nance, for whom my gratitude is surpassed only by my love.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	ii
List of Figures .....	x
List of Appendices .....	xi
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	xii
Abstract .....	xiv
Note on Transliteration, Transcription, and Translation Conventions .....	xvii
<b>CHAPTER 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
“Why don’t you know your own language?” .....	1
Knowledge and authority in and through language .....	4
Shift and sentiment .....	8
A linguistic ethnography of multilingual news media .....	11
Methodology and data collection .....	16
Organization of the chapters to come .....	26
<b>CHAPTER 2. Nationality, Territory, Language: Locating “Buryatia” and Buryat in the World .....</b>	<b>30</b>
The Buryat territories of the Russian Federation .....	31
Ethnonational autonomy .....	38
Between Europe and Asia: “bridges” and “brotherhood” on the Russian- Mongolian border .....	41
Buryat-Russian language shift and multilingualism in Buryatia .....	45
Language policy, linguistic rights, and institutional sites of language work .....	51
Chronic crisis and the quest to live a “normal” life .....	57
Conclusion .....	61
<b>CHAPTER 3. Media and the Buryat Language Public: The Shifting Roles of Minority-Language News .....</b>	<b>62</b>
News media in Buryatia .....	66
(Minority-language) media and (minority-language) publics .....	79
Empowering a nascent Buryat nation: the pre-Revolutionary period (–1917) .....	83
Informing the populace via elites: the early Soviet period (1918–1929) .....	89
Creating a direct line of communication between citizen and State .....	97
Performing Soviet ideals, making Soviet subjects: Stalinism and the post-war period (1930–1959) .....	103
From parallel public to subpublic: the late Soviet period (1960–1985) .....	109
Revitalizing the nation and teaching a new generation: glasnost’ and the post-Soviet years (1986–present) .....	114
Conclusion .....	120

<b>CHAPTER 4. From Kiosk to Kitchen (and Back Again): Written Standards, O/Aural Realities, and the Production of Linguistic Knowledge</b> .....	<b>122</b>
Dialects, mixed forms, and other colloquialisms: different ways of being	
“ <i>razgovornyi</i> ” (‘conversational’) .....	128
Standard Literary Buryat as a register and range of resources .....	147
Repertoires and resources in media production .....	155
Conclusion .....	163
<b>CHAPTER 5. A Medium both Quotidian and “Transcendent”: Newspapers and Print Journalism</b> .....	<b>165</b>
From Archiving to <i>Zurkhai</i> : how newspapers are read and used .....	169
The language of newspapers .....	179
Readers’ responses .....	190
Bearing the standard: practices and ideologies of print journalists .....	196
The material qualities of print .....	206
Literary labor and the social status of minority-language journalism .....	210
Conclusion .....	216
<b>CHAPTER 6. “Closer to Life”: Orality and Anxiety on the Radio</b> .....	<b>218</b>
Listening practices and the role of radio in Buryat society .....	222
The language of radio .....	228
Listeners’ responses .....	238
Ephemerality, pedagogy, script: practices and ideologies of radio journalists .....	241
The interview: language attrition, oral performance, and the problem of shame ..	245
Institutional anxieties over speech and the written word .....	251
Conclusion .....	256
<b>CHAPTER 7. Face, Speed, and the Language of Infectious Disease: Performing Buryat on Television</b> .....	<b>258</b>
Watching television in Buryatia .....	260
The language of television .....	267
Viewers’ responses .....	276
Increasing speed and comprehension: practices and ideologies of television	
journalists .....	280
“ <i>Litso i golos</i> ”: Face and voice in news performance .....	290
Producing a Buryat-Russian television story .....	295
Conclusion .....	305
<b>CHAPTER 8. Chronotopes of Shift: Language Ideologies across ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Media</b> .....	<b>307</b>
Remediation and media ideologies .....	309
Language ideologies across media platforms .....	313
Bator, between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media .....	317
Conclusion .....	321
<b>CHAPTER 9. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>323</b>
Appendices .....	339
Works Cited .....	380

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1. A village in eastern Buryatia, 2009, and an apartment complex in Ulan-Ude, 2007.....	24
Figure 2.1. Buryat territories of the Russian Federation in 2011.....	31
Figure 3.1. A notice announces the death of Lenin and calls a day of mourning on January 26, 1924.....	92
Figure 3.2. An instructional booklet published by the Buryat Cooperative Union, 1924.....	92
Figure 3.3. Buddhist lamas are portrayed conducting a burial ritual and giving a blessing with texts in <u>Buriat-Mongolun Ünen</u> .....	102
Figure 3.4. An artist imagines an ideal Soviet socialist future in <u>Buriat-Mongolun Ünen</u> .....	103
Figure 3.5. Workers of the Karl Marx collective farm of Zakamenskii district are photographed reading <u>Buriat-Mongoloi Ünen</u> .....	105
Figure 4.1. Administrative districts of the Republic of Buryatia in 2011.....	130
Figure 5.1. Some of the diverse ways newspapers are used as a material in daily life ..	177
Figure 5.2. Newspaper offices of Aginskoe’s <i>Aginskaia Pravda</i> and <u>Tolon</u> and Khorinsk’s <i>Udinskaia nov’</i> , 2009.....	182
Figure 5.3. Ulan-Ude’s main newspaper office building, 2008.....	211
Figure 6.1. A kitchen in Ulan-Ude with a working <i>radio tochka</i> , 2009.....	225
Figure 6.2. Two radio stations, 2009.....	243
Figure 6.3. Preparing to record a radio interview at the radio complex of BGTRK, Ulan-Ude, 2009.....	247
Figure 6.4. A transcript of the “Sunny Buryatia” radio program, 1970.....	254
Figure 7.1. Television complex of BGTRK, Ulan-Ude, 2009.....	281

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A. Timeline of Buryat Media History .....	339
Appendix B. List of Media Reviewed .....	343
Appendix C. Media Samples .....	351
Appendix D. Survey Instrument for Journalists in Bilingual Workplaces .....	372
Appendix E. Focus Group Script .....	376
Appendix F. Interview Topics and Sample Questions .....	377

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABAO	Aga Buryat Autonomous Okrug [ <i>Aginskii Buriatskii Avtonomnyi Okrug</i> ]
BASSR	Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
BGTRK	State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Buryatia”
BGU	Buryat State University [ <i>Buriatskii gosudarstvennyi universitet</i> ]
BMASSR	Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
BMNP	Buryat-Mongol People’s Party [ <i>Buriat-Mongol Narodnaia Partiiia</i> ]
BNTs	Buryat Scientific Center [ <i>Buriatskii nauchnyi tsentr</i> ]
ChGTRK	State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Chita”
Fed.	Federation (“Russian Federation”)
GTRK	State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company [ <i>Gosudarstvennaia televizionnaia i radioveshchatel’naia kompaniia</i> ]
IGTRK	State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Irkutsk”
Komsomol	Communist Union of Youth [ <i>Kommunisticheskii soiuz molodëzhi</i> ]; VLKSM
KPSS	Communist Party of the Soviet Union [ <i>Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuzia</i> ]
MPR	Mongolian People’s Republic
NARB	National Archives of the Republic of Buryatia
Obkom	Oblast Committee [ <i>Oblastnoi komitet</i> ] (e.g., Buryat Obkom of the KPSS, the highest authority of the Communist Party within the republic)
RB	Republic of Buryatia [ <i>Respublika Buriatiia, Buriad Respublika</i> ]
RF	Russian Federation [ <i>Rossiiskaia Federatsiia</i> ]
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [ <i>Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika</i> ]
SMI	<i>sredstva massovoi informatsii</i> , literally ‘the means of mass information,’ ‘mass media’
SO RAN	Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences [ <i>Sibirskoe otdelenie Rossiiskoi akademii nauk</i> ]
stengazeta	<i>stennaia gazeta</i> , a single-sided newspaper designed to be posted on a wall
UOBAO	Ust’-Orda Buryat Autonomous Okrug
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [ <i>Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, SSSR</i> ]
UU	Ulan-Ude
VARK	All-Buryat Association for the Development of Culture [ <i>Vseburiatskaia assotsiatsiia razvitiia kul’tury</i> ]
VLKSM	All-Union Leninist Communist Union of Youth [ <i>Vsesoiuznyi leninskii kommunisticheskii soiuz molodëzhi</i> ]; Komsomol
VSGAKI	East-Siberian State Academy of Culture and Arts [ <i>Vostochno-Sibirskaia gosudarstvennaia akademiia kul’tury i iskusstv</i> ]

B.	Buryat
<i>f.</i>	feminine
lit.	literally
<i>m.</i>	masculine
<i>pl.</i>	plural
R.	Russian
<i>razg.</i>	<i>razgovornyi</i> ; a colloquial, spoken, or conversational form
SLB	standard literary Buryat
<i>t.</i>	<i>tu</i> -form of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person (informal)
<i>ust.</i>	<i>ustnaia rech'</i> ; a form from the spoken language
<i>V.</i>	<i>Vous</i> -form of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person (formal)
<i>var.</i>	variant

## ABSTRACT

How might institutional projects to improve the status of minority languages and publics have unintended and contradictory consequences? This dissertation examines media and language practices in order to illuminate the everyday sociocultural processes by which the value of knowledge is figured. It focuses on news media institutions in the Buryat territories, a multilingual region of southeastern Siberia, to advance two main arguments. First, as language shift in this region has progressed, media in the once-dominant native language, Buryat, have taken on an increasingly symbolic (rather than informational or referential) social role, with content becoming more culturally circumscribed. Second, although media institutions position themselves—and are locally interpreted—as monolithic arbiters of linguistic authority, encapsulated in a strong Buryat literary standard, they in fact manifest great diversity in ideology and praxis, shaped by the material demands of specific mediums. This situation presents an indexical disjuncture between the authority granted to individuals and their actual linguistic practices, unevenly extending the imprimatur of institutional authority over practices that would not otherwise be interpreted as ‘standard.’

The study interweaves archival, ethnographic, and sociolinguistic data, drawing on 19 months of multi-sited field research conducted between 2005 and 2011 in the Buryat territories of the Russian Federation. Generations of speakers in this region have been shifting from Buryat to Russian, while experiencing rapid transformations in

demography, economy, and lifestyle. By focusing on the heavily ideologized and authoritative domain of news media, this dissertation illustrates how linguistic and cultural knowledge and authority are renegotiated in the context of dramatic changes that are experienced not only as language shift, but as profound sociocultural shift as well. In particular, it describes instances of insecurity, shame, and other emotional responses in interactions to show how possessing such knowledge and authority in this context becomes a *moral* concern.

An additional contribution of the dissertation is methodological. The study integrates production data from newsrooms with consumption/reception data from audiences and formal linguistic analyses of texts and transcripts, employing a novel holistic approach to elucidate how the language used and manufactured in institutional settings circulates from and into other domains of daily life.

\* \* \*

ХЭЛЭНЭЙ БОЛОН АХЫ БАЙДАЛАЙ ШЭЛЖЭЛТЭДЭХИ МЭДЭЛГЭ БОЛОН  
ЗАСАГЛАЛ: РОССИИН ФЕДЕРАЦИЙН БУРЯАД НЮТАГУУДТА ОЛОНДО  
МЭДЭЭСЭЛ ТАРААДАГ ХЭРЭГСЭЛНҮҮДЭЙ ХЭЛЭ ШЭНЖЭЛЭЛЭЙ  
УГСААТАНАЙ ЗҮЙ

Кэтрин Элизабет Гребер

Мичиганай Университет, Америкын Холбоото Штадууд

Олондо мэдээсэл тараадаг хэрэгсэлнүүдэй эмхи зургаанууд Россиин Федерацийн буряад нютагуудта хэлэнэй контакт хүтэлдэг, тэдэ буряад хэлэнэй хэрэглэлгэдэ нүлөөлдэг гэжэ энэ диссертаци соо шэнжэлэгдэнхэй. Архивай, этнографическа, социалингвистическэ мэдээнүүдые гүрэлсэжэ, диссертаци 2005 онһоо 2011 он

болотор 19 нарын туршада Буряад Республикада, Усть-Ордын ба Агын тойрогуудта шэнжэлгэ хэжэ суглуулһан мэдээсэлнүүдые хэрэглэжэ хэлэ шэнжэлэлэй угсаатанай зүй үзэл бодолдо үндэһэлэн бэшэгдээ. Тус нютагуудта элдэб социокультурна нүхэсэлнүүдһээ дулдыдажа, буряад-ород билингвизмһээ ород монолингвизм болотор «шэлжэлтэдэхи» гараһан байна. Эмхи зургаанай нүлөөдэ, мэдээжэ, хүндэтэй олондо мэдээсэл тараадаг хэрэгсэлнүүдэй оло дахин гүнзэгыгөөр хэлсэлгэдэ анхаралаа ехээр хандуулжа, тус шэнжэлэлгэ эршэмтэй социокультурна хубилуулгын үедэ хэлэнэй болон ахы байдалай мэдэлгэ ба засаглал шэнээр хаража үзэлгыг харуулна.

## ЗНАНИЕ И АВТОРИТЕТ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ЯЗЫКОВОГО И КУЛЬТУРНОГО СДВИГА: ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭТНОГРАФИЯ МНОГОЯЗЫЧНЫХ СМИ НА БУРЯТСКИХ ТЕРРИТОРИЯХ РОССИИ

Кэтрин Элизабет Гребер  
Университет Мичигана, США

Диссертация посвящена актуальной теме управления языкового контакта учреждениями СМИ и их влияния на использование языков на бурятских территориях Российской Федерации. Вплетая архивные, этнографические, и социолингвистические данные, диссертация написана с точки зрения лингвистической антропологии на базе 19 месяцев мультирасположенного полевого исследования, проводимого за многократные периоды с 2005 до 2011 в Республике Бурятия, Усть-Орде и Аге, охватывая многоязычную область юго-восточной Сибири на русско-монгольской границе. На данных территориях языковой сдвиг от бурят-русского билингвизма к русскому монолингвизму происходит в зависимости от различных социокультурных факторов. Сосредотачивая научное внимание на институциональные факторы сдвига и на интенсивно идеологизированной и авторитетной области СМИ, это исследование иллюстрирует как лингвистическое и культурное знание и авторитет изменяются в контексте драматических социальных изменений.

## Note on Transliteration, Transcription, and Translation Conventions

Transliteration of both Russian and Buryat examples in this dissertation follows a modified version of the American Library Association–Library of Congress (ALA-LC) system for Cyrillic, except for those terms that already have well-known English spellings (e.g., “Buryat” [Р. бурят, В. буряад] and “Mayakovsky” [Маяковский]), for ease of pronunciation with recurring personal names (e.g., “Sayana” vs. “Saiana” [Саяна] and “Ayuur” vs. “Aiuur” [Аюур]), and for instances in which the original Buryat was already written in Latin script (e.g., “Baradiiin” and “Buriaad-Mongol Ynen”). The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is occasionally used in discussions of pronunciation. Original Cyrillic print is reproduced for written texts, such as online user comments and archival materials. Provided below is a guide to the transliteration system used herein, with a basic pronunciation guide in IPA comparing Russian and Buryat.<sup>1</sup>

Cyrillic	Russian pronunciation	Buryat pronunciation	herein
<b>Аа</b>	[a] or [ɑ]	[a] or [ɑ]	<b>Aa</b>
<b>Бб</b>	[b] or [bʰ], or devoiced to [p]	[β] or [b]	<b>Bb</b>
	Often expressed as [β] intervocalically in Buryat.		
<b>Вв</b>	[v] or [vʰ], or devoiced to [f]	[β] or [v]	<b>Vv</b>
	Sometimes transliterated as <i>b</i> from Mongolian.		
<b>Гг</b>	[g] or [gʰ]	[g] or [ɣ]	<b>Gg</b>
	Expressed as [ɣ] intervocalically in most dialects of Buryat. Sometimes transliterated as <i>k</i> in Mongolian.		

<sup>1</sup> Alternative Cyrillic-Latin transliteration systems for representing Buryat include Kara 1996:557, ISS (International Scholarly System) or ISO 9 for non-Slavic languages, BGN/PCGN (U.S. Board on Geographic Names/Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use) 1957/1964 for Russian and Mongolian, and the Eesti Keele Instituut’s 1998 *Latiniseeritud nimede hääldusjuhiseid*/Guide to the Pronunciation of Romanized Names system for Buryat.

Cyrillic	Russian pronunciation	Buryat pronunciation	herein
Дд	[d] or [dʲ], or devoiced to [t]	[d]	<b>Dd</b>
Ее	[jɛ] or [je]	[jɛ]	<b>Ee</b>
	Consonant palatalization is default preceding [ɛ] in Russian, but not in Buryat. Also transliterated as <i>ye</i> for Russian and <i>ye</i> or <i>yö</i> for Buryat and sometimes as <i>yi</i> or <i>yö</i> in Mongolian.		
Ёё	[jo] or [jə]	[jo] or [jə]	<b>Ёё</b>
Жж	[ž], [z], or [zʲ], or devoiced to [ʃ]	[ž], [dž], or [j]	<b>Zh zh</b>
	Sometimes transliterated in Buryat as <i>ǰ</i> or <i>j</i> . <i>ǰ</i> reflects native pronunciation in many dialects of Buryat, but this is not how most Buryats actually pronounce this Cyrillic letter now. When Buryat words are pronounced (and especially read) by bilinguals with Russian phonology, this is usually [ž].		
Зз	[z] or [zʲ], or devoiced to [s]	[z]	<b>Zz</b>
	Sometimes transliterated as <i>dz</i> , <i>ds</i> , or <i>j</i> in Mongolian.		
Ии	[i]	[i]	<b>Ii</b>
Йй	[j] offglide	[j] offglide	<b>Ii</b>
	Appears as the second element of a diphthong or lengthened [i] and in certain innovations like <i>йора</i> ('yoga'). Also transliterated as <i>i</i> or <i>i</i> (ALA-LC).		
Кк	[k] or [kʲ]	[k] or [g]	<b>Kk</b>
	Not a phoneme native to Buryat, but it appears in many Russian borrowings and has arguably become a borrowed phoneme.		
Лл	[l] or [lʲ]	[l]	<b>Ll</b>
Мм	[m] or [mʲ]	[m]	<b>Mm</b>
Нн	[n] or [nʲ]	[n] or [ŋ]	<b>Nn</b>
	Sometimes transliterated in Buryat and Mongolian as <i>ng</i> to reflect nasalization of preceding vowel.		
Оо	[o]	[o]	<b>Oo</b>
Өө		[ö]	<b>Öö</b>
	Sometimes transliterated as <i>o</i> , <i>ô</i> (ISO 9), or <i>ö</i> (ALA-LC).		
Пп	[p] or [pʲ]	[p]	<b>Pp</b>
Рр	[r] or [rʲ]	[r]	<b>Rr</b>
Сс	[s] or [sʲ]	[s]	<b>Ss</b>
Тт	[t] or [tʲ]	[t]	<b>Tt</b>
Уу	[u], [u̯], or unstressed to [ʊ]	[u] or [u̯]	<b>Uu</b>
Үү		[ü]	<b>Üü</b>
	Sometimes transliterated as <i>u</i> , <i>ù</i> (ISO 9), or <i>ü</i> (ALA-LC).		
Фф	[f] or [fʲ]	[f]	<b>Ff</b>
	Occurs in both Russian and Buryat only in foreign borrowings.		
Хх	[x] or [xʲ]	[x]	<b>Kh kh</b>
	Also transliterated as <i>h</i> in ISO 9 and as <i>h</i> and <i>x</i> in other systems for Buryat.		
Цц	[c]	[c]	<b>Ts ts</b>
	Also transliterated as <i>ṡ</i> (ALA-LC).		
Чч	[tʃ] or [tɕ]	[tʃ]	<b>Ch ch</b>
	Also transliterated as <i>č</i> in ISS.		

Cyrillic	Russian pronunciation	Buryat pronunciation	herein
Шш	[ʃ] or [ɕ]	[ʃ]	Sh sh
	Also transliterated as <i>š</i> in ISS.		
Щщ	[ʃʃ] or [ɕ]	[ʃʃ]	Shch shch
	Also transliterated as <i>š</i> in ISO 9 or <i>šč</i> in ISS.		
Ъъ	Russian “hard sign,” indicating non-palatalization of preceding consonant. Sometimes transliterated as a glottal stop in Buryat and Mongolian.		”
Ыы	[ɨ]	[eʲ] or [i:]	y
Ьь	Russian “soft sign,” indicating palatalization of preceding consonant.		,
Ээ	[ɛ] or [e]	[ɛ] or [e]	Ėė
	Also transliterated as <i>ě</i> in ISO 9.		
Юю	[ju] or [ɥ]	[ju] or [jü]	Iu iu
	Also transliterated as <i>ju</i> (ISS), <i>û</i> (ISO 9), <i>yu</i> (BGN/PCGN), or <i>ü</i> (ALA-LC). The vowel is rounded in Buryat when necessary according to the rules of vowel harmony.		
Яя	[ja]	[ja]	Ia ia
	Also transliterated as <i>ja</i> (ISS), <i>â</i> (ISO 9), <i>ya</i> (BGN/PCGN), or <i>ä</i> (ALA-LC).		
Hh		[h]	H h
	Also transliterated as <i>ĥ</i> (ALA-LC), <i>h</i> (ISO 9), or sometimes <i>ħ</i> or <i>ħ</i> . Buryat /h/ is often pronounced in Russian as [g] or [x].		

I have chosen the ALA-LC transliteration system because it is most widely used across the disciplines engaged in this dissertation, including anthropology, history, and media studies. From the perspective of descriptive linguistics, this solution is far from perfect: not only does the ALA-LC system present certain ambiguities in representing Russian, but also, it was originally developed for Slavic languages, and the pronunciation of some characters in Mongolic languages differs. This is especially true in the vowels, with *g* (R. [g] vs. B. [g] or intervocalic [ɣ]), and with *zh* (R. [ʒ] vs. B. [ʒ] or [dʒ]). Here, the three ‘extra’ letters of the Buryat alphabet, *Өө*, *Yγ*, and *Hh*, are represented as is standard in Mongolian linguistics, with *Öö*, *Üü*, and *Hh* respectively (see, e.g., Kara 1996:557). Spelling in Russian, Buryat, and Khalkha (Halh) Mongolian is based on the Cyrillic of standard orthography, except in those instances in which pronunciation deviates from standard spelling in a way that is socially meaningful for the example at

hand. Vowel length, for example, is reflected in the transcripts in Appendix C in order to show where speakers do and do not apply phonological nativization of Russian-origin terms. Periodic references to Ewenki (Evenki), for which a standard orthography is less well established, follow Vasilevich 1958.

Russian appears in *italics* and Buryat with underlining; when something is *both italicized and underlined*, it indicates that the form could be considered either Russian or Buryat in context. Periodic references to Mongolian are also underlined. In transcriptions, **boldface** indicates stress, and (.) and (..) mark pauses; **boldface** is also used for reference purposes in the discussion of media transcripts in Chapters 5–7. Material quoted from audio recordings, print sources, or in-situ notes are marked with double quotation marks; paraphrases and quotations that have been reconstructed based on scratch notes and memory do not appear in quotation marks. Most of the informal interactions described in this dissertation were not digitally recorded, while nearly all of the interviews and focus groups were; to distinguish between them, I have footnoted digitally recorded material with the year of record. I follow standard linguistic practice in reserving single quotation marks for glosses and using double quotation marks for all other purposes. Place names that do not already have common English-language versions are given in Buryat wherever possible, with one exception. When discussing dialects, I have chosen to use Russian adjectives over Buryat (e.g., “Khorinskii dialect”), which is consistent with the way Buryat speakers most often identify dialects and dialectal forms.

All translations into English are mine unless otherwise noted. Jargal Badagarov provided corrections to the media texts and transcripts analyzed in Chapters 5–7 and Appendix C. Any remaining errors are mine.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### **“Why don’t you know your own language?”**

The first time I heard this expression, it was uttered by an elderly babushka shaking her cane angrily at a young woman who stood in terrified silence, like a deer in headlights, holding a tray of meat dumplings. We were in a café in the Republic of Buryatia, Russia, and two babushki, speaking Buryat, had tried repeatedly to order these dumplings from the two young women behind the counter. The girls had understood the order, or at least part of it, but they answered in Russian, to which the babushki replied in Buryat, to which the girls responded in Russian... until the babushki began shaking their heads and “tsk”ing with increasing frustration, whereupon the girls fell mute. My friend Darima,<sup>1</sup> sitting opposite me at a creaky little table, did not want to get involved. She instinctively ducked her head, peeking over the top of her steaming mug of milky tea to watch. As the babushki’s voices grew louder, a hushed silence fell over the café, everyone’s attention trained on the frozen girls. They were practically in tears, eager to please their elders and running back and forth from the kitchen, but incapable of

---

<sup>1</sup> All personal names of living persons in this dissertation are pseudonyms, except where a person is acting in a public capacity (see below). I have replaced traditionally Buryat names with other Buryat names of the appropriate gender, and traditionally Russian names with other Russian names of the appropriate gender.

responding in Buryat. Finally, the girl holding the dumplings broke the silence by setting the tray down with a clatter, splashing some tea onto the vinyl tablecloth. The babushki began eating and chatting among themselves, and everyone returned to their own meals as though with a collective sigh of relief.

Later, I had to ask Darima about the tension in the room, and about her own apparent fear of being approached by the elderly women. This was early in my fieldwork, in 2005; I was thoroughly an outsider, and I did not yet understand how meat dumplings could elicit such terror.

Four years later, I was sitting with a television journalist, Sayana, as she reviewed recordings of an interview in Buryat to be edited for the evening news. There were a lot of “umm”s and pauses, and the man being interviewed looked uncomfortable. He switched frequently into Russian, eventually pointing to his friend and suggesting they interview him instead. Sayana sighed and tapped the screen with her pen, saying softly, “Why don’t you know your own language?”

What does it mean to “not know your own language”? In post-Soviet Russia, people often identify their own native language [*rodnoi iazyk*] as their heritage or ancestral language, which does not necessarily have anything to do with competence. Thus a person might identify her “native language” or “own language” [*svoi iazyk*] as Buryat based on her cultural or ethnic self-identification as a Buryat, without claiming active or passive knowledge of the language’s grammar or lexicon. As for “knowing” and “not knowing,” these are—as we will see—variable and shifting attributions. Darima claimed that she had no knowledge of Buryat, though I had witnessed her on many occasions carrying on bilingual conversations with her relatives, they speaking Buryat

and she responding in Russian. There are many people like Darima and the girls at the café, currently in their 20s and 30s, who have excellent passive competence in Buryat but cannot—or will not—speak. Others speak Buryat as a first language but are more or less illiterate in the literary standard, or (more rarely) control the literary standard but have little command of colloquial speech. There are still more who have little or no passive competence but excellent knowledge of the pragmatic uses to which Buryat, as a code, may be put. An onlooker in the café, for instance, might not understand what was being said in Buryat but understand that the babushki intensified their scolding by conducting it in Buryat, or that performing a toast in Buryat at a banquet demonstrates membership in a broader Buryat community. Such onlookers may be said to possess social or cultural knowledge of the indexical meanings of Buryat. One need not self-identify as a speaker of Buryat, in other words, to have some sort of knowledge *about* Buryat—or to be interpellated as a speaker.

This dissertation is about who counts as a speaker, who counts as a speaker worth listening to, and who has the right to ask. It is about the processes by which various expectations regarding the locations, uses, and meanings of linguistic practices are invested into persons such that asking a rhetorical question like “Why don’t you know your own language?” makes sense. At its broadest level, it is about how knowledge and authority are brokered in the context of dramatic social changes that are experienced not only as language shift, but as economic, social, and cultural shift as well.

In the chapters to come, I approach these questions by examining one of the most authoritative and ideologized institutions of linguistic action: news media. I analyze news media as a particular kind of knowledge institution that reflects and regulates ideologies

about language use and meaning. Interweaving archival, ethnographic, and sociolinguistic data, this study draws on 19 months of field research conducted over multiple periods from 2005 to 2011 in the Buryat territories, spanning a multilingual region of southeastern Siberia on the Russian-Mongolian border. Generations of speakers here have been shifting to Russian from Buryat, a native language closely related to standard (Khalkha) Mongolian, and the future of the language is far from clear.<sup>2</sup> Buryat has, however, a lively presence in the sphere of news media. I will argue that in this context, media institutions play a crucial role in managing language contact—not only by providing examples of minority language use, but also by regimenting indexical connections between linguistic action and social ways of being.

### **Knowledge and authority in and through language**

Sociocultural and linguistic anthropology has proffered various approaches to investigating how knowledge and authority are brokered in and through language. Some recent work, for instance, has built on ethnographies of ‘culture work’ in institutions such as museums, libraries, universities, and government ministries to consider knowledge practices as objects of anthropological study, proposing an “anthropology of knowledge” (e.g., Boyer 2005). Grounded in Michel Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and studies of power (especially Foucault 1980[1977]), the emergent anthropology of

---

<sup>2</sup> Buryat is a northern Mongolic language and is not genetically related to Russian. It in fact comprises a number of dialects, separated by various political borders, and is sometimes described as a dialect group or “macrolanguage” (see, e.g., Lewis 2009; Svantesson et al. 2005); as discussed further in the following chapters, its identification as a single, unified language owes much to the political struggles of the great powers surrounding it. On internal diversity within Buryat, see especially Chapter 4.

knowledge seeks to explain how apparently natural categories like data, facts, and expertise are discursively constructed.

Knowledge, and claims to it, are brokered on a daily basis not only through overt efforts like public oratory, classroom recitation, or expert witnessing, but also through everyday talk—what Jack Sidnell (2005) calls the means to “practical epistemology.” In linguistics, questions of knowledge claims (and, less often, philosophical questions of epistemology) have been approached through the syntactic and semantic study of evidentials. Reported speech will occupy a prominent position throughout this dissertation, but the grammatical encoding of claims to knowledge and authority is not exactly what I have in mind. I am interested here not in the forms of cultural knowledge embodied in language per se,<sup>3</sup> but rather in how knowledge or competence of a language is construed and brokered through certain institutional practices, and with what effects.

In particular, this dissertation examines how language ideologies provide frameworks for ascribing knowledge and claiming authority. Of the many definitions and treatments of language ideologies in circulation, I am especially beholden to three in my analysis. From Kathryn Woolard’s definition of language ideologies as “[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (1998a:3), I take a focus on representational practices and the intersection between ‘language’ and social persons (or personas, cf. Agha 2007). In analyzing this intersection and thinking about what constitutes ‘language’ and the important ‘stuff’ of social persons, I attend especially to moral and political

---

<sup>3</sup> This has been a focus of much work in language endangerment and revitalization, primarily as means for convincing the public that language loss constitutes a net loss of unique human knowledge. See, for example, K. David Harrison’s 2007 description of language death as the “erosion of human knowledge” and David Crystal’s appeals along the same lines (e.g., Crystal 2000).

positions, following Judith Irvine's definition of language ideology as "the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (1989:255).

I also follow Alan Rumsey in his emphasis on how language ideologies appear natural to speakers themselves, like "commonsense notions," although Rumsey's treatment of these notions as necessarily "shared" within a given social group implies more homogeneity than I found in my study of Buryat media practices (1990:346).<sup>4</sup> This, perhaps, is the greatest cultural power of language ideologies: how they "locate, interpret, and rationalize sociolinguistic complexity" (Irvine and Gal 2000:36) to make divisions and distinctions appear utterly 'natural' (see also Eagleton 1991; Fairclough 1989, 1995). Determining who counts as a 'speaker,' for example, depends at least as much on the ideological interplay of linguistic expertise and social circumstance as on ability to meet a linguist's criteria of grammatical production (French 2003; Hill and Hill 1986), but in common parlance, the category appears natural. Language ideologies provided the journalists and audiences in my study with naturalized frameworks for making sense of sociolinguistic complexity, ascribing knowledge and claiming authority, and rationalizing their own social positions vis-à-vis others.

This study also takes up concerns from the 'ethnography of speaking' tradition in its attention to how the indexical potentials of codes, voices, registers, genres, and styles are mobilized in order to claim authority (e.g, Kuipers 1990; Kulick 1992). Studies of ritualized oratory, in particular, have demonstrated communicative principles that will

---

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Asif Agha (1998) and Michael Silverstein (2003) have pointed out that stereotypes cannot be perfectly shared, irrespective of the size of a community. Language ideologies are always "partial, contestable and contested" (Hill and Mannheim 1992).

prove important in the chapters to come. Far from using a single authoritative voice, the journalists and other speakers I will describe draw on a number of available voices and stances, capitalizing on the complex positionings afforded by a multilingual environment.

The question, then, is when such multiple practices are construed as part of the same harmonious ideological system, and when they are in conflict. Much of the linguistic action described in this dissertation is not successful in claiming authority for a speaker, or in evincing knowledge according to the judgments of the targeted audience. Communicative failures and infelicities also abound when interpellations of speakers do not correspond to actual passive or active competence, such as between the babushki and café girls opening this chapter. Interactions within and around media are riddled with instances of what Barbra Meek has productively analyzed as “disjuncture”: “the everyday points of discontinuity and contradiction—between social or linguistic groups, within discourses, practices, or between them, even between indexical orders—that interrupt the flow of action, communication, or thought” (Meek 2010:x). By looking at these instances of conflict and difficulty, we can see the underlying assumptions and expectations that different actors have of what counts as acceptable linguistic production and who ‘counts’ as a knower of Buryat. Understanding how authority over language is questioned and refigured is also crucial to understanding language standardization projects, in that we need to account for not only how standards are created, maintained, and reformed, but also where they might fail or fall apart (Crowley 1989; Milroy 2001; Swagman 2011).

## **Shift and sentiment**

An elderly woman in the rural Tunka region asked me several years ago, in 2005, why her granddaughter did not speak Buryat. She leaned on a wooden fence, looking off into the blue-green mountains before turning her weathered face to me with a look of sadness. I did not have an answer.

In a sense, this dissertation is an attempt to answer her question, and the question asked by many elderly speakers of minority tongues elsewhere in post-Soviet Russia, based on an account of local language ideologies and their interplay with state-driven political forces. For reasons explored further in the next chapter, Buryat speakers like this woman have generally not taken up (or benefited from) the romantic rhetoric of language endangerment and death often marshaled in defense of minority language speakers elsewhere (cf. Errington 2003; Moore 2006). Yet the growing literatures on language shift, attrition, and obsolescence (e.g., Craig 1997; Dorian [ed.] 1989; Grenoble and Whaley [eds.] 1998; Grenoble and Whaley 2006; Nettle and Romaine 2000) have offered fertile ground for investigating Buryat-Russian shift in a broad comparative context, both in terms of the linguistic details of how shift progresses and in terms of the sociocultural factors that make those linguistic behaviors more or less likely.

The focus of many of my interlocutors in Buryatia was on lexical loss in Buryat-Russian shift, particularly in domains of the lexicon associated with traditional Buryat culture such as botanical terminology or specialized vocabulary from horseback riding and animal husbandry.<sup>5</sup> I also draw here, however, on our increasingly sophisticated and nuanced understandings of the linguistic details of language attrition—including not only

---

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5.

lexical loss, but also simplification, syntactic restructuring, and phonological change (Schmid 2011). Most broadly, the present study draws on and contributes to studies of multilingualism and language contact phenomena (e.g., Bakker 1997; Garrett 2000; Moore 1988; Myers-Scotton 1997, 2002; Queen 2001; Rickford and McWhorter 1997; Thomason 2001; Thomason and Kaufman 1988).<sup>6</sup> It belongs to a lineage of thought extending from M. M. Bakhtin (1981[1934-1935]) through the work of Jane and Kenneth Hill (1980, 1986) in recognizing the fundamental diversity of ways of speaking within a single ‘code.’ In particular, it takes up Hill and Hill’s recognition of multiple codes that may be more or less ‘open’ to the use of the dominant or matrix language within an ideologically dyadic relationship. Buryat-Russian language shift, when phrased thusly, might seem to involve only two codes, but on closer inspection, speakers, writers, listeners, and readers draw on resources from a wide array of codes along a spectrum between an idealized purist code of Buryat and an idealized purist code of Russian. Kathryn Woolard’s (1998b) observation that a single resource may simultaneously belong to two or more such codes has proved particularly useful for viewing the flexibility and creative play of multilingual speakers, and it is reflected in my analysis and transcription practices (see also Samuels 2004).

The speakers, listeners, writers, and readers described in this dissertation evince wide-ranging levels and types of competence—what we might call different degrees of knowledge. While sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have often noted the difficulty of determining who counts as a “speaker” during language attrition, the role of “semi-speaking” and the contradictions generated by degrees of knowledge in language

---

<sup>6</sup> This has also been termed “interference” or, more recently, “crosslinguistic influence” (CLI) (e.g., De Angelis and Dewaele 2011).

shift have rarely been thematized as such (though see Dorian 1977 for a notable exception). Studies of the sociocultural factors leading to language shift and obsolescence have focused on language choice as a means for managing social connections, networks, and social positioning, often analyzed in terms of the “prestige” afforded by alignment with a dominant social group (e.g., Bonner 1982; Gumperz 1982). Linguistic anthropological work in particular has demonstrated the remarkable importance of vectors of affiliation such as national and ethnic belonging (e.g., Errington 1998; Gal 1988) and gender (e.g., Cavanaugh 2006; Gal 1978; Kulick 1998; LeMaster 2006) in language choice, locating individual interactional choices within the context of broader economic, political, and sociocultural pressures.

Buryat-Russian language shift can be partially explained by similar macrosociological factors, discussed in the next chapter. There are also more subtle reasons, however, for the increasing incorporation of Russian into daily life in Buryatia. As Kulick points out in his study of language shift in Gapun, focusing exclusively on macrosociological pressures can “obscure the perspective from which” individuals actually act (1992:249; see also Tsitsipis 1998). Here I take my cue from recent work by Barbra Meek and Shaylih Muehlmann that takes seriously the varied emotions wrapped up in language shift and endangerment, especially where knowledge brokers inadvertently put the objects of their interest and affection in a disempowered and painful position (Meek 2007; Muehlmann 2008, in press).<sup>7</sup> The fear elicited by the Buryat-speaking babushki in the café above points to how questions of *knowing* can be intensely emotional, and throughout this dissertation, I will highlight the feelings of insecurity,

---

<sup>7</sup> Focusing on sentiment might be particularly useful in the former Soviet Union, where studies have long been dominated by macrosociological explanations and Cold War categories (Lemon 2008).

embarrassment, and shame that so often animate Buryat-language interactions. My hope is to reinsert some emotion into the process of language shift and what is experienced as cultural loss, to reflect the lived experiences of people undergoing it on a daily basis. How do people come to recognize and refigure the value of speaking—or not speaking—the language they call their own?

This dissertation examines institutions, and specifically media institutions, to illuminate these processes. It asks how “some representations of language are made to ‘stick,’” as Susan Gal puts it (1998:329), and how language contact and shift are effectively managed through the institutions of minority language news media. Looking only *within* media institutions at production processes, while interesting, would not have sufficed to illuminate the ‘sticking’ (or not sticking). Thus, in order to study these institutions in their fullest possible ethnographic context, I have employed a holistic approach to linguistic ethnography, which I describe in the next section.

### **A linguistic ethnography of multilingual news media**

News media provide rich fields for studying knowledge and authority because they function in many (though not all) societies as important sites of cultural reproduction—reproducing ideas, impressions, dichotomies, alterities, chronotopes, and indexical relationships. Like rituals, performances, and other types of public events, news media make available a repertoire of styles, genres, registers, and codes for use in other domains of daily life. They also ascribe values to these resources, thus helping to order audiences’ linguistic practices and social worlds.

Journalists give the institutional imprimatur of authority to impressions and vague ideas already circulating in society, “sedimenting” and “accrediting” social knowledge (Boyer 2000) and moving words firmly into the realm of mediatized discourse (Agha 2011, in press). They can reproduce and reinforce existing language ideologies not only through metalinguistic instruction, but also—and most commonly—‘by example.’ Debra Spitulnik has provided a nice example of this with her study of Radio Zambia’s allocation of broadcasting time to different languages. While subscribing to a “state ideology of ethnolinguistic egalitarianism” in its plurilingual broadcast model, the station nonetheless assigns different values to different languages in this process, which ultimately serves to “rationalize” the very sociolinguistic hierarchy ostensibly being undermined (Spitulnik 1998:182).

As members of a professional cadre of trusted knowledge workers, news journalists enjoy a particularly authoritative role in public discourse and in generating and maintaining language standards. In fact, their role is so authoritative that, despite theoretical recognition of intra-institutional diversity, it can be all too easy to ascribe to news media institutions a kind of monolithic unity, obscuring media discourse’s emergence out of many differently positioned voices and processes. Yet if we are to use media products as data in anthropology, it is crucially important that we understand the processes by which they are made—particularly whose voices are being represented, and why. Allan Bell (1991) and Colleen Cotter (2010) have both pointed out the analytical importance of teasing apart these processes for linguists and linguistic anthropologists. This represents a move to focus on the processes of media production, as opposed to the ultimate products of those processes (which are, after all, more readily available to

analysts). The linguistic functions of media have long interested sociolinguists and psychologists, who have done a number of linguistic analyses of media discourse (e.g. Fairclough 1995; Ferguson 1983; Fowler 1991; Goffman 1981a; van Dijk 1988). More recently, sociolinguists have followed Bell's early lead, increasingly turning attention to the discursive practices that shape news production (Bell and Garrett 1998; Carvalho 2008; Catenaccio et al 2011; Cotter 2011; Deacon et al. 1999; Perrin 2003; Philo 2007; Schröder 2007; Van Hout and Macgilchrist 2010).

By contrast, anthropologists have long favored audience and reception studies and popular genres (e.g., Abu-Lughod 2005; Friedman 2006; Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin [eds.]; Kosnick 2007) and have only recently turned in a serious way to studying news and journalism as such (Bird 2010)—though Mark Pedelty's 1995 study of war correspondents in El Salvador was a notable exception. The ethnographic studies that have emerged in the last decade (Bird [ed.] 2010; Boyer 2000, 2001, 2005; Hannerz 2002, 2004; Hasty 2005; Pedelty 1995; Peterson 2001, 2003; Ståhlberg 2002) have opened a new field of sociocultural study and have brought additional ethnographic rigor to the work of news sociologists, who pioneered the careful observation of production processes within news organizations in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Golding and Elliott 1979; Schlesinger 1987; Tuchman 1978).

Unfortunately, the anthropology of journalism has developed with little input from linguistic anthropologists, and with few sustained efforts to bring together linguistic and ethnographic analyses until Cotter's 2010 study of news practices in British and American newspaper offices (cf. Peterson 2001; Spitulnik 1996, 1998). This is regrettable, as there is much to be gained by bringing together formal linguistic analysis

and the ethnographic study of news practices and their social and linguistic effects among audiences. Linguistic analysis that also attends to journalists' social positioning allows a better understanding of how certain codes, dialects, or other linguistic forms become invested with authority. Moreover, by attending not only to the linguistic form and content of media, but also to surrounding discourses *about* language and media, we can observe the dynamic, reflexive relationship between, on the one hand, domains of media production and, on the other hand, the more general semiotic ideologies of the cultures within which those domains are embedded.

This dissertation marries these approaches—reception-based, production-based, sociolinguistic, and ethnographic—in a holistic linguistic ethnography of news media. This has the advantage not only of describing linguistic practices in media and describing ‘media effects,’ but also of linking these practices and effects to elucidate the total process of textual production, circulation, consumption, and re-production. Additionally, rich ethnographic description provides the context within which judgments are made as to who and what count as authoritative speakers and authoritative statements. By taking a linguistic ethnographic approach to news media, this dissertation thus addresses the mutually dependent relationship between linguistic and cultural authority, including both (1) how linguistic knowledge—competence in a language—affects credibility and authority in news reporting, and (2) how authority in other domains of sociocultural activity, such as news reporting or religious activity, impacts the linguistic authority that a person is granted.

Authority in the context of language shift often involves drawing on one or another period of time—most often periods of the past when the language falling out of

use was supposed to have been spoken better, or by more people. Indeed, speaking of language shift at all entails recognition that today's linguistic action has 'come from somewhere' and is 'going somewhere'—i.e., that it is inherently processual and temporally embedded. Studying knowledge and authority in the context of language shift thus requires, on my view, attending to history, and I take historical context and historical process very seriously in this dissertation. Drawing on both contemporary ethnographic data and archival materials, I aim to show how linguistic practices and ideologies in and of news media have changed over time (or not), as well as how current negotiations of linguistic and cultural authority draw on that past.

Twentieth-century Russia provides rich historical ground for this endeavor, in no small part because journalism enjoyed a privileged position in Soviet life. News media were heavily ideologized and contested, and the debates they inspired are visible in many detailed Communist party documents (Gorham 2003; Smith 1998; Wolfe 1997, 2005). Soviet media sociologists cared deeply about the propagandistic effects or 'uptake' of news media and conducted lengthy, detailed opinion surveys to measure it.<sup>8</sup> Late Soviet journalists and other media workers living through the post-Soviet transition have provided nuanced accounts of their work that add extra dimensions to what is visible in archives (Wolfe 1997, 2005; Yurchak 2006).<sup>9</sup> They also give us unique perspectives on the principles of Soviet journalism and the role of 'ideology' in journalism, discussed in Chapter 3.

---

<sup>8</sup> Some of the Soviet media surveys conducted in Buryatia are cited in Chapters 5–7. For an English-language account of Soviet media survey methodology, see Mickiewicz 1981:14–17.

<sup>9</sup> See also Dominic Boyer's work with post-socialist journalists of the former German Democratic Republic (Boyer 2001, 2005).

While these issues warrant greater study in Russian-language news media, I turn here to minority-language news media by focusing on one of Siberia's most widely spoken native languages. Siberia as a field awaits careful attention in linguistic anthropology; though it covers nearly 10% of the Earth's landmass and hosts remarkable cultural and linguistic diversity, political conditions and stereotypes have conspired to prevent the sustained research the region deserves (King 2006). I follow other ethnographers and historians of Siberia's ethnic minorities (e.g., Anderson 2000; Balzer 1981, 1999; Bloch 2003; Cruikshank and Argounova 2000; Grant 1993, 1995; Halemba 2006; Humphrey 1983, 1994a, 1999; King 2011; Quijada 2009; Slezkine 1996; Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Vitebsky 2005) in arguing that Soviet nation-building in Siberia encouraged particularly explicit associations between language, nation, and territory, which have had—and continue to have—powerful effects in ongoing language contact and shift. As the largest ethnic minority of Siberia, the Buryats have garnered enough attention—and have enough linguists within their native intelligentsia—to have documented Buryat and Buryat-Russian language contact phenomena in great detail. This makes the Buryat territories an ideal Siberian space in which to pursue historically grounded linguistic ethnography.

## **Methodology and data collection**

Field research for this dissertation was conducted over four periods, in June–August 2005, February–May 2007, September 2008–September 2009, and August 2011, totaling 19 months. The main research was conducted during 2008–09, and that should be

considered the primary historical moment of this research.<sup>10</sup> As described below, I collected archival, ethnographic, and sociolinguistic data on Buryat-Russian language use and on the development, production, and consumption of local media across a range of platforms, including print, radio, television, and “new”/digital media. During all four research periods, I was based in the Republic of Buryatia’s capital, Ulan-Ude, where I lived with host families, in private apartments, and briefly in Buryat State University’s dormitory. From this base, I conducted field research in the three principal Buryat territories, the Republic of Buryatia, Ust’-Orda, and Aga, described in detail in the following chapter. I traveled at different times to Ust’-Orda, Ol’khon (B. Oikhon), Baikal’sk, and Irkutsk (B. Ėrkhüü) in the west; to Aga and Chita (B. Shètè) in the east; and to many of the districts of the Republic of Buryatia, including Akha (R. *Okinskii raion*), Tünkhèn (R. *Tunkinskii raion*), Khabaanskha (R. *Kabanskii raion*), Ėbilgè (R. *Ivolginskii raion*), Sèlèngè<sup>11</sup> (R. *Selenginskii raion*), Tarbagatai (R. *Tarbagataiskii raion*), Khiaagta (R. *Kiakhtinskii raion*), Zagarai (R. *Zaigraevskii raion*), Pribaikal’sk (R. *Pribaikal’skii raion*), Bargazhan (R. *Barguzinskii raion*), Khèzhèngè (R. *Kizhinginskii raion*), Khori (R. *Khorinskii raion*), and Iaruuna (R. *Eravninskii raion*).<sup>12</sup>

During all periods of field research, I was a student of Buryat, and my role as a foreigner studying Buryat very much defined my social position in the field. In 2005, I began studying the standard literary language with tutors at Buryat State University through what is now the National Humanities Institute (NGI, then the Buryat Philological Department, or *burfil’fak*), which became one of my institutional homes during

---

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 9.

<sup>11</sup> Also Hèlèngè.

<sup>12</sup> See map and descriptions of territories in Chapter 2. A map of the Republic of Buryatia’s districts is provided in Chapter 4.

subsequent research. Additionally, I attended less formal classes through the Regional Union of Young Scholars, where Buryat was taught mainly for heritage speakers with emphasis on intergenerational communication (for people who wanted to be able to speak Buryat with their babushki, for example), workplace use of Buryat, and general language revitalization. Because of my own educational background and my ongoing education in Buryat, I had particularly good access to language elites: teachers, professors, linguists, performers, journalists, language activists, writers, and other cultural workers.

Also germane to my position in the field was the fact that I am neither Russian nor Buryat, and am not a native speaker of Russian or Buryat. Being a foreigner limited me in certain ways (besides the obvious linguistic ways): My own attempts to investigate media production and circulation in the border districts were limited by fluctuating border policies in the late 2000s, including periodic closings of the Russian-Mongolian land border and rules banning foreigners from areas within a designated number of kilometers from the border. However, I found that my novelty created many opportunities, and that my position as *neither* Buryat nor Russian provided many of my interlocutors with the sense that I was a neutral party. In one telling interaction, Aiurzhana, a woman in her 40s, stopped herself in the middle of a story about two Buryats and a Russian. She seemed to hesitate, then rushed on: “Well, I can tell you this, because you’re not **Russian** [*rusaskaia*].” She proceeded to make some unflattering remarks about her brethren in the ‘friendship of the peoples.’<sup>13</sup> By the same token, it was not uncommon for Russian acquaintances, especially those not clear on where my sympathies lay, to make strikingly racist comments to me about Buryats. Such comments were not usually mean-spirited but

---

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 2.

sufficed to reveal how deeply engrained racism is in Buryatia (or “*even* in Buryatia,” as many of my friends there would hold).

How I was interpreted in the field was especially instructive for understanding local conceptions of Buryatia’s—and Buryats’—place in the wider world and how issues of race and racism factored into it. I was not often taken to be American. Buryatia, relative to other parts of Russia, does not host many year-round foreign researchers, and there is a general, not unreasonable assumption that Americans and Western Europeans living in Ulan-Ude are missionaries.<sup>14</sup> I often passed for local, not necessarily because I looked or sounded Russian but because there was not a reasonable alternative explanation for me. When it was revealed that I was a foreigner, I was most often assumed to be French or from the Baltic (European and Russian-speaking, but not quite native). When it was revealed that I was *American*, the conversation often turned to Richard Gere, Julia Roberts, Steven Seagal, or someone else from the host of American celebrities who had become interested in Buddhism and would someday—it was avidly hoped—visit Buryatia. When my husband, a scholar of Buddhist studies, accompanied me to *datsans* and Buddhist events, people overheard us speaking English (or “foreign”) and automatically assumed that we were foreign pilgrims—sending them into ecstatic delight over the renown of their sacred spot, until I disabused them of it.

---

<sup>14</sup> A small number of foreign missionaries in Ulan-Ude during my research were also studying Buryat. Missionary activities regarding native-language education and media development, such as the Far East Broadcasting Company’s activities mentioned above, are a fascinating topic. Unfortunately, I did not find anyone willing to speak with me for research purposes after the Russian government outlawed active missionizing by members of “foreign religions” on Russian territory. This is not to say that foreign missionaries are not active; they have simply become circumspect. Many (perhaps *most*) of my research participants in Buryatia had been approached by American or European missionaries in one way or another, and I have personally been approached multiple times when mistaken for a Russian woman. The primary strategy, circa 2009, was to offer free English-language classes and lead slowly into discussions of Christian salvation.

Most important in all of this was race. After I gave two interviews in Buryat for local television, strangers approached me for months to tell me about the “big impression” [*bol'shoe vpechatlenie*] it had made to hear Buryat from a girl “of a European face” [*evropeiskogo litsa*]. My pointed nose,<sup>15</sup> crinkled eyes, and freckles became my most salient features, and they granted me great latitude in people’s estimate of my Buryat abilities (my competence was persistently overestimated, as we will see).<sup>16</sup> In the opening to this chapter, we saw that self-identification as a speaker and active linguistic competence do not necessarily match up. But often more important is the fact that how a person self-identifies and how he or she is interpellated do not match up. For the girls at the café, how they identified themselves was immaterial in the face of the babushki’s demands that they speak Buryat. Darima feared being interpellated as a speaker of Buryat by the demanding babushki, while I sat happily with my tea, free from any expectations of linguistic competence and blissfully unaware of the danger around me.

As both a student and researcher, keeping up on locally produced media was one of my most important daily methods. I reviewed locally produced media throughout fieldwork, collecting newspapers, magazines, and other print media, and recording and analyzing many television and radio programs. Trips to different newspaper kiosks around Ulan-Ude were part of my daily routine, and I came to know several kiosk workers. I also undertook a systematic media review in two parts: (1) a comprehensive

---

<sup>15</sup> Long, pointed European noses are the subject of racialized humor in Buryat. Russians are often derogatorily called “big-nosed” [*tomo khamartai* or *tomo nostoi*]. It is not harsh, and can even be a (slightly barbed) term of endearment for non-Buryats who are incorporated into Buryat families or villages. The first time I was referred to in this way, by my friend’s mother, my friend had to explain the joke. “But you’re very pretty,” she quickly assured me. “Only a **little** big-nosed.”

<sup>16</sup> See further discussion of “*litso*” in Chapter 7.

review of all (available) media produced in the Buryat territories during February 2009, in order to create a ‘snapshot’ of Buryat regional media, and (2) a careful review of *Unèn* and *Pravda* issues published in February 1929, 1949, 1969, 1979, 1989, 1999, and 2009. The collected issues from 1929–2009 comprise a unique historical corpus documenting Buryat language change (in literary standards) over 80 years.

While I often discussed current news media with my research participants and interlocutors in the field, some stories became particularly important. I sampled two stories each from radio, newspapers, and television, all from around the same time in February 2009, and elicited assessments from native speakers based on these same samples over and over again in the interviews, transcription sessions, and focus groups described below. These media samples, discussed in detail in Chapters 5–8, are available in Appendix C. They were selected to represent a range of genres.

Research involved comparisons along two different axes, each requiring a different methodological approach. First, in order to understand the historical relationship between media and language change, I compared Buryat media practices over time. Archival records provided evidence of past linguistic decisions in materials such as biographical documents, official policy statements, and—especially—Soviet-era editorial meeting notes from the Party organizations of the editorial collectives. The archives consulted for this project, in Moscow, Ulan-Ude, and Aginskoe, are listed in the Works Cited. I found particularly rich clusters of material on language policies, practices, and debates at *Buriat-Mongol’skaia Pravda* (in its many incarnations) and at the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Buryatia” (BGTRK)’s predecessor, the

Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BASSR)'s Television and Radio Broadcasting Committee.

Second, in order to establish the relationships between media language and everyday linguistic activity, I investigated how contemporary news media were used, approached, and discussed both inside and outside of newsrooms. Primary data for this included transcripts of speech events, media samples, and ethnographic descriptions of the contexts of their production and consumption, collected through participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviewing, and focus groups. I conducted both production and audience studies, as well as formal analyses of the language of media texts and transcripts, as one of the goals of this dissertation is to break down the analytical trichotomy between newsroom-based production studies, decontextualized media analyses, and audience/reception studies. Each chapter includes discussion of linguistic examples and data on both media producers and the uptake/response of their intended audiences.

In my production study, I interviewed journalists and conducted workplace observation at 16 different media institutions, shadowing reporters when possible and following the editing process. Interview topics and sample questions are provided in Appendix F. I also surveyed journalists working in bilingual workplaces. The survey, discussed especially in Chapter 4, was suggested by a television journalist based on his experience with earlier sociological studies. The survey instrument, provided in Appendix D, was designed with this background in mind. Additionally, I interviewed correspondents and retired journalists who had worked at these institutions and at an

additional four district and republic newspapers, bringing the total sample of local institutions represented in the production study to 20.

I should note that many of the interviews and conversations reported in this dissertation took place over libations such as cognac, beer, or vodka, and this was a particularly significant element of my interactions with journalists. Many of my interlocutors did *not* drink, but among those who did, drinking to excess was not uncommon. I turned my voice recorder off and ceased taking notes in these instances.

Protecting the anonymity of such public figures as journalists while meeting the citational demands of multiple kinds of data has presented special challenges, and I am grateful to a number of anthropologists, linguists, and historians for helping me formulate the following solutions. First, I refer to journalists in the aggregate and generalize wherever possible. So, for example, “radio journalist” refers to a journalist working at BGTRK in Ulan-Ude or at the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Chita” (ChGTRK)’s Aga affiliate, and “journalist in Aginskoe” refers to a journalist working at ChGTRK’s Aga television affiliate, ChGTRK’s Aga radio affiliate, *Aginskaia Pravda*, or Tolon. I do not provide the dates of interviews for the same reason: there has been considerable turnover in the staffs of the media institutions discussed here since the time of my research, and even between the beginning and end of my research, so omitting dates removes the risk of identification based on knowledge of consultants’ work histories. Second, several journalists discussed in this dissertation appear in both ethnographic material and in archival materials; in these cases, I have disaggregated the person into two separate individuals in order to properly cite archival materials while preserving ethnographic anonymity. Finally, the most pervasive problem has arisen from

the need to discuss journalists’ production of—and commentary on—their own published texts and broadcasts. While production and commentary go on behind closed doors, their results are fully public and are available in libraries, personal collections, and archives. In instances in which a pseudonymous interview, private data, or ‘offstage’ conversations must be linked with a publication or broadcast, I have withheld the exact date of publication or broadcast. None of this applies to situations in which journalists are speaking publicly in their official roles; in these cases, I provide both first and last names to indicate that it is a real name.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 1.1. A village in eastern Buryatia, 2009 (left) and an apartment complex in Ulan-Ude, 2007 (right).** Audience research was carried out in both rural and urban households.

The audience study consisted primarily of informal interviewing participant-observation within households: observing the media practices of friends and acquaintances, watching television with them, asking them about newspaper articles, looking through their stacks and newspaper clipping files, and generally discussing the news. I documented the circulation of newspapers, cassette tapes, text messaging, and other media through rural communities, as well as rural access to mobile phone service,

---

<sup>17</sup> The media transcripts and translations appearing in Appendix C include journalists’ and interviewees’ real names, because they are not linked to private data. The transcript in Chapter 7 is pseudonymous.

internet service, and television and radio broadcasts. Ultimately, I observed media practices and conducted informal interviews in approximately 60 households. Interview topics and sample questions are provided in Appendix F.

Households were not selected systematically, and because I relied heavily on invitations through personal networks, the sample was biased toward Buryat and Buryat-speaking families. The sample also included many more women than men, ultimately approximately 60–65% women to 35–40% men. The gender skewing was partly a result of my easier access to women in domestic contexts, but it also reflected the Russian Federation’s gender imbalance.<sup>18</sup> However, because I was able to conduct research in multiple districts, across rural and urban communities, and through multiple unrelated contacts, the sample was ultimately diverse in terms of other household demographic factors, such as educational level, income level, and size.

In order to document more systematically the kinds of audience responses I was hearing, I also conducted a series of audience focus groups in Ulan-Ude. Participants read newspaper articles, listened to radio clips, and watched television clips—the samples described above—then discussed the language use of the writers and speakers, as well as general issues of Buryat language and media politics. Both the household media observation and the focus groups successfully revealed and neatly documented systematic, differential language comprehension across media platforms and genres. The basic script used for focus groups is provided in Appendix E.

Finally, a note on how I defined “speaker” methodologically, and how I define it in this dissertation: As a category of analysis, “speakers” for my purposes may include

---

<sup>18</sup> In 2009, there were approximately 0.86 males to every female in general, and in the 65+ age category, only 0.46 males to every female (Rosstat 2009).

anyone who self-reports linguistic competence *or* demonstrates linguistic competence by judgment of fellow speakers. How such competence is socially ascribed and brokered is the subject of this dissertation. Locally, passive knowledge is only rarely considered knowledge of Buryat [*znanie*], and the term “speaker” reflects this by emphasizing active, productive use. As noted above, however, some Buryats report their “native language” [*rodnoi iazyk*] as Buryat despite having *no* active or passive competence, following a Soviet practice that made *rodnoi iazyk* equivalent to ‘national language,’ ‘heritage language,’ or ‘ancestral language.’ Such individuals are *not* referred to as “Buryat speakers” in this dissertation. Research materials were always carefully worded to distinguish between *rodnoi iazyk* and self-reported *znanie*, and between passive and active knowledge. Recruitment materials for the focus groups, for instance, did not require that participants be “native speakers;” I avoided words like “*rodnoi*” and “*nositel*” entirely and instead asked “*Vy ponimaete buriatskii iazyk?*” [Do you **understand** Buryat?], emphasizing passive rather than active knowledge in order to lessen the possibility that embarrassment and shame would prohibit people from taking part. All the participants reported some kind of ability to speak Buryat, though competence was, as we shall see, variable.

## **Organization of the chapters to come**

This dissertation is organized in two broad sections. Chapters in the first section (Chapters 2–4) examine how language and media function (or have functioned) in Buryatia and what they are (or have been) presumed to do—for speakers, listeners, politicians, activists, marriageable bachelors, and other actors. These chapters could be

read as an ethnographic, historical, and sociolinguistic introduction to media and language in the Buryat territories of Russia. The second section (Chapters 5–8) examines the language *in* and *of* media to focus more specifically on how journalists and institutions broker knowledge and authority in different media platforms.

Chapter 2 sets the ethnographic scene, locating conceptions of “Buryatia” and the Buryat language within time and space by detailing the region’s political and material circumstances and explaining the post-Soviet interrelationship of nationality, territory, and language. This chapter provides sociolinguistic context and background, describing Buryat-Russian language shift, multilingualism in Buryatia, and efforts to maintain and revitalize Buryat through language legislation and institutional ‘language work.’

Chapter 3 introduces the local media landscape and examines the changing roles of Buryat-language news media over a century of language shift, positioning minority-language news media development in the Lake Baikal region within the larger political projects of the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation. From a revolutionary manifesto in 1910 to a newsroom argument in 2009, the chapter proceeds chronologically to show how different actors have historically imagined—and repeatedly re-imagined—the goals and possibilities of minority-language news media vis-à-vis what I call a minority language public.

Chapter 4 lays out the linguistic resources available to Buryat speakers, and specifically to media personnel, and explains what is socially at stake in their use. I show that what counts as “Buryat” includes a number of more or less defined registers and repertoires, or socially meaningful collections of resources, to which speakers and listeners have differential access. In particular, speakers differentiate written standards

and the literary register from a diverse array of spoken resources, and they work to maintain this distinction.

Chapters 5–7 focus on the language of news media, exploring the linguistic practices and ideologies of and about media personnel. These chapters deal respectively with the different platforms in which Buryat news is produced and distributed—newspapers and print journalism, radio, and television,<sup>19</sup> separated in order to examine each platform’s particular sociocultural roles and characteristic linguistic features in detail. Each platform is illustrated through media samples, ethnographic descriptions of the contexts of production and consumption, audiences’ responses and interpretations of the language employed, and journalists’ metacommentary on their linguistic decisions. The sections of these chapters thus provide four different perspectives on media—and four different ways of encountering and analyzing language in media: (1) by looking at the ‘total role’ of media in society, gleaned from historical accounts, sociological surveys, and their use in daily life; (2) by examining media texts and transcripts, looking at the language used independently of its contexts of production and reception; (3) by observing audiences and eliciting self-reported responses from audiences, focusing on reception, consumption, or ‘uptake;’ and (4) by observing newsroom practices and eliciting self-reported explanations from journalists, focusing on production. I draw from all four approaches to examine the unique sociocultural positioning of each media platform. Chapter 5, on newspapers and print journalism, examines reading practices and the authority invested in literary labor and the written word. Chapter 6 examines radio, the introduction of orality into Buryat-language mass media, and attendant anxieties over

---

<sup>19</sup> A fourth possibility, digital/‘new’ media, has not yet emerged as an independent news platform in Buryatia. See Chapter 9.

linguistic standards, oral performance, and fixing speech in writing. Television is the topic of Chapter 7, which provides an especially detailed view of the production process, “face” and Goffmanian “face-work,” and the difficulties arising from an ever-shrinking pool of Buryat-language interviewees.

In Chapter 8, I broaden the scope to consider linguistic action in and around the media as a whole. Chapter 8 draws on the observations of Chapters 5–7 to compare linguistic practices and interpretations across coexisting media platforms. Differences in the management of reported speech, translation, and language contact in general are schematized and used to predict future developments in Buryat-language media. I argue that linguistic and cultural authority are negotiated differently in different news media platforms, with unique language ideologies proceeding from each medium’s material demands and specificities. The conclusion, Chapter 9, includes a reflective, reflexive postscript on the role of this study in ongoing language work in Buryatia. This chapter briefly summarizes the multiple loci of authority and diffused knowledge discussed in the preceding chapters, considers the implications of these findings, and suggests some possible avenues for future research, including the implications of digital media technologies for Buryat-language news media and language revitalization efforts.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Nationality, Territory, Language: Locating “Buryatia” and Buryat in the World**

This chapter describes the unique regions that Buryats have called home, the steppe, taiga, and industrial cities and towns around Lake Baikal. An initial section introduces the Russian Federation’s three principal Buryat territories, the Republic of Buryatia, Ust’-Orda, and Aga, the administrative status of which changed significantly over the course of research. I explain the peculiarities of the model of ethnonational autonomy that the Russian Federation has inherited—and seems now to be transitioning away from—and the ambivalent position of ethnic Buryats on the geographical and metaphorical border between Russia and Mongolia, Europe and Asia. This border, I argue, provides terms in which Buryats can experience, interpret, and discuss their cultural and linguistic assimilation, as well as articulate a place (or ideal future place) for Buryat ethnicity and the Buryat language within the world.

The middle sections of the chapter describe Buryat-Russian language shift, multilingualism in Buryatia, and efforts to maintain and revitalize Buryat through language legislation and institutional ‘language work.’ A final section briefly describes several interlocking ‘crises’—Russia’s demographic crisis, the global financial crisis, and the global crisis in journalism—that formed the backdrop of field research. I argue that

daily decision-making in early-21<sup>st</sup>-century Buryatia has been suffused with a historically specific desire to live a “normal” and quiet, peaceful life in the face of chronic crisis.



**Figure 2.1. Buryat territories of the Russian Federation in 2011.** Aga and Ust'-Orda were dissolved as autonomous administrative units in 2008, but they remain important to local conceptions of Buryat territory. (Map by the author; base layers from the Central Intelligence Agency, courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, and OpenStreetMap and contributors.)

## The Buryat territories of the Russian Federation

The largest and most powerful of the Buryat territories is the Republic of Buryatia, a semi-autonomous ethnic republic with its own state legislature (the People’s Khural)<sup>1</sup> and president, who was formerly elected and is now appointed by the President

<sup>1</sup> The “People’s Khural” (*Aradai Khural*, R. *Narodnyi Khural*) functions like a parliament or a Russian duma. In Tsarist Russia, local Buryat-Mongolian politics was organized around smaller such bodies called “steppe dumas.” The *khural*, however, can trace its roots back to 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century Mongol government, and the contemporary use of the term *khural* rather than *duma* is significant in

of the Russian Federation. Buryatia is undeniably beautiful, with a long coastline along Lake Baikal, the “blue pearl of Siberia,” and a varied landscape consisting of mixed taiga in the north, steppe in the south, and the jagged peaks of the Sayan Mountains rising straight out of a plain in the southeast. Its capital—and my research base—is Ulan-Ude, roughly comparable in size, population density, and industry to Wichita, Kansas.

Compared with other regions of Russia and with the federation as a whole, the Republic of Buryatia is markedly rural and poor. According to preliminary results of the 2010 census, the Russian Federation’s population is 72% urban and 28% rural, while the Republic of Buryatia is 58.4% urban and 41.6% rural (Rosstat 2011).<sup>2</sup> More than one third of the republic’s 1 million residents are officially registered as residents of Ulan-Ude (Burstat 2010). However, so many people disregard the cumbersome registration system and live in Ulan-Ude ‘illegally’ [*bez registratsii*] that the city’s population is probably much higher. Complicating the picture is the fluidity with which many residents—ethnic Buryats in particular—move seasonally between the city and the countryside through extended kinship networks. The city empties out in the brief Siberian summer, when children commonly spend their school holidays with relatives in the villages, and adults enjoy long vacations at dachas, relatives’ homes, or tourist camps on the shores of Lake Baikal. In the winter months, when the work year is at its peak, residents of Ulan-Ude offhandedly estimate the city’s size at as much as 450,000 or

---

signaling indigenous authority. The term is also used in Buddhist contexts in Buryatia and Mongolia to mean ‘religious services’—i.e., when a group of monks gathers to read texts and prayers. See the use of *khural* in Radio sample 1, Appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> Urban settlements include cities, towns, and settlements “of the city type” [*gorodskogo tipa*], which include Severobaikal’sk and some other district capitals. Of the other subjects of the Russian Federation that are more rural than Buryatia, it is notable that they are mainly ethnic republics located in the Northern Caucasus and Siberia: the Republics of Adygei, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkarsk, Karachaevo-Cherkessk, Kalmykia, Altai, and Tuva, and the Altaiskii, Krasnodarskii, and Stavropol’skii Krai.

500,000, which would make it home to about half of the republic's total population. The other half to two-thirds live in the republic's diverse districts (*raiony*), the contemporary descendants of pre-Soviet administrative districts based very loosely on Mongol tribal grounds (*aimags*).<sup>3</sup> The historical connection between tribe and territory is relevant for how linguistic diversity is understood in the contemporary period, because regional Buryat dialects are taken as indexical of both territorial and familial belonging.<sup>4</sup> Districts also represent important local media markets. Although there are many urban administrative centers in the districts, they are often spoken about in opposition to Ulan-Ude: things happen either “in the city” [*v gorode*] or “in the districts” [*v raionakh*], and the latter are figured as slightly wild places, poor, quiet, and slow, but also beautiful, “pure” [*chistyi*], and close to nature.

The Republic of Buryatia's economy is complex and transitional. The rural economy is based on small-scale animal husbandry, especially cows and sheep, and secondarily on crops like wheat.<sup>5</sup> Ulan-Ude was also an industrial powerhouse in the late Soviet period, and reminders of perestroika's failings can still be seen everywhere, from the dilapidated heating plants belching diesel smoke to the fields of broken glass and crumbled concrete surrounding the closed glass factory. In some of the households included in this study, workers and managers who had lost their jobs during perestroika in the late 1980s and in the economic chaos of 1991 had never found new employment, relying instead on meager state pensions and kinship networks to scrape by. The city's

---

<sup>3</sup> The word *aimag* enjoyed some resurgence in popularity over the years of my research, as a small reclamation of Buryat administrative terminology. In the archival materials reviewed, it was in general use (in both Buryat and Russian) through the 1950s and fell out of use sometime in the 1960s.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 4, which includes a map of the Republic of Buryatia's districts.

<sup>5</sup> Corn was also attempted in vast fields under Krushchev, but it failed, and the attempt is still the brunt of many local jokes today.

neighborhoods grew on the outskirts of the city around factories, leaving some—like that of the glass factory, Steklozavod, where I lived in 2007—desperately poor. Among the industries that survive are vast food, locomotive, and airplane manufacturing complexes that produce train cars, helicopters, pasta, and packaged meat for Russian and international markets. Until 1991, the airplane factory’s focus on military aircraft and radio technology meant that the entire city of Ulan-Ude was closed to foreigners, which seems to have produced a disproportionate sense of isolation during the Soviet period, and a disproportionate sense of freedom afterward.<sup>6</sup> There are also various mining operations for minerals and precious metals, which operate in an uneasy tension with new projects to capitalize on the region’s natural beauty. Recently Buryatia has invested its economic hopes into ecological and cultural tourism centered around Lake Baikal’s unique ecology, fishing and hunting, national parks, and shamanic and Buddhist practices that appear exotic to the wealthier residents of Russia’s western regions.<sup>7</sup>

It is possible to visit Ulan-Ude in the summer and stroll only the bustling, clean-swept streets of the central commercial district, sampling the sparkling fruits of Ulan-Ude’s emerging service and retail (not to mention credit) economies. This study, however, was sited across different urban neighborhoods, from Steklozavod to the city center and from high-rise apartments to humble wooden buildings without indoor plumbing. Many (though not all) of the journalists I describe in this dissertation belonged

---

<sup>6</sup> I have met middle-aged Buryats and Russians in Ulan-Ude who still remember when they met their first foreigner as a moment of excitement. On the other hand, inexperience with foreigners—and habitual distrust of them—led some to be more suspicious and standoffish than they might have been in Moscow, St. Petersburg, or Novosibirsk. On more than one occasion, I was suspected of being a spy.

<sup>7</sup> It must be added that Buryatia’s exoticism extends to the sex trade. Pornography businesses market Buryatia’s “Asian women” to western Russian men, and prostitution is a minor industry in Ulan-Ude and the rural summer resorts around Lake Baikal. This dynamic informed the 2009 syphilis stories described in Chapter 7.

to the intelligentsia and emergent middle class, their membership conspicuous in their centrally located apartments, “*biznes lanch*”es, and memberships in American-style gyms. But most of the city’s residents, including most members of the journalists’ audiences, could not take advantage of fancy coffee or chic vacations to Thailand, and were benefiting only peripherally, if at all, from the republic’s supposed economic progress.

Between 2005 and 2008—during research for this dissertation—two additional Buryat administrative territories, the Ust’-Orda Buryat Autonomous Okrug (B. Ust’-Ordyn Buriadaai okrug, R. *Ust’-Ordynskii Buriatskii avtonomnyi okrug*) to the west and the Aga Buryat Autonomous Okrug (B. Agyn Buriadaai okrug or toirog, R. *Aginskii Buriatskii avtonomnyi okrug*) to the east, were dissolved and absorbed into the surrounding Russian-dominated territories. Dissolution marked the controversial end of a long and interesting experiment in indigenous government, explained in the pages to come.

Geographical and cultural differences between Ust’-Orda and Aga synopsis the breadth and range of the Buryat territories. Ust’-Orda is mainly agricultural, with green, rolling hills and fertile soil. Traditionally home to western Buryat tribes including the Alar’, Bulagat, Èkhirit, and others mentioned in the coming chapters, Ust-Orda’s Buryat population adopted settled agriculture earlier than the Buryats east of Lake Baikal, trading round felt yurts, or gers,<sup>8</sup> for unique octagonal log dwellings with earthen roofs. Western Buryats converted to Russian Orthodoxy in greater numbers, and their cultural

---

<sup>8</sup> In modern Buryat, gèr refers to both this style of dwelling—a round felt yurt—and a house or home in general. Thus a Brezhnev-era apartment is as much a “gèr” as a yurt is. For this reason, I will employ the term “yurt” to refer to the traditional type of dwelling.

and linguistic Russification was both earlier and more extensive. Today, this history is salient in the Russian and Orthodox personal names that many Western Buryats possess, and in how linguistic knowledge is distributed (i.e., western Buryats are not expected to control Buryat well). Western Buryats also had less contact with Buddhist missionaries from the south and east in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, retaining instead more shamanic practices—although Buddhist datsans (‘temples’) certainly exist in Ust’-Orda.<sup>9</sup> One of the first ‘social facts’ that a visitor will be told about Buryats is that they are divided in these ways, west from east, and the division has taken on remarkable explanatory power in local self-conceptions.

By contrast, Aga is known among Buryats as an “ark” [*kovchëg*] of Buryat language and culture. Aga Buryats continued to practice pastoral nomadism for longer than their counterparts further west, with some families setting up winter and summer camps in addition to their ‘settled’ homes as late as the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> Aga is mostly dry steppe land, mixed with stretches of larch forest and scattered groves of pine and birch, and is bordered on the south by the Onon River, legendary birthplace of Chinggis Khan. A harsh continental climate closer to that of Mongolia makes it best suited to animal husbandry, including cows, sheep, and camels. Low mountains and hills in Aga are important in native shamanic and Buddhist practices, and the region is home to Buddhist monastic centers, such as Süügélëi (Tsugol) dasan and Agyn (Aginskii) datsan, that were

---

<sup>9</sup> A new datsan, an outpost of the prominent Ivolginsk datsan near Ulan-Ude, had just been established in Ust’-Ordynskoe when I returned to Buryatia in August 2011.

<sup>10</sup> I arrived at this date based on comments and personal oral histories from Aga Buryats who were born in the 1940s and 1950s. As a general rule, pastoral nomadism and the use of yurts ended in the 1930s with forced collectivization.

extremely powerful in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and are currently the focus of religious revitalization.

Both administrative territories were created in 1937 when the existing Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BMASSR) was cleaved into three separate territories. Each has an administrative capital, Ust'-Ordynskii and Aginskoe (almost exclusively referred to by their Russian names), of about 15,000 people.<sup>11</sup> From 1993 to 2008, the okrugs were federal subjects—direct subjects of the Russian Federation, autonomous from the surrounding administrative units of Irkutsk Oblast and Chita Oblast, respectively. As described in the following section, administrative restructuring that began under Putin and continued under Medvedev has de-privileged ethnic territories like Ust'-Orda and Aga. Ust'-Orda was officially merged with Irkutsk Oblast on January 1, 2008, according to a referendum held on April 16, 2006. Aga—a harder sell—was merged with Chita Oblast to form the new Zabaikal'skii Krai on March 1, 2008, according to a referendum held on March 11, 2007. Aga Buryat Okrug still technically exists, in a transitional state with “special status” [*osobyi status*], and Buryats in both regions retain this “special status” as well, with provisions for ongoing support for the preservation of Buryat language and culture. Culturally and in the geographic imaginations of the people described in this dissertation, Ust'-Orda and Aga remain Buryat territories. But their dissolution provoked heated discussion and no small amount of anxiety over the political future of the Republic of Buryatia (Graber and Long 2009).

---

<sup>11</sup> In the 2002 census, Ust'-Ordynskii had 14,335 registered residents and Aginskoe had 11,717. Due to a number of housing projects expanding Aginskoe, however, the settlement has grown so rapidly over the last several years that preliminary results of the 2010 census place its population now at 14,808. Ust'-Ordynskii has grown more slightly, to 14,900. (Rosstat 2011)

## Ethnonational autonomy

The Republic of Buryatia's political standing is based on a model of ethnonational autonomy inherited from early Soviet nationalities policy. Three aspects of this model are particularly important to understanding the current structural position of Buryats in Russia.

First, although words like *étnicheskii* ('ethnic') and *korennyi* ('indigenous') are used, the salient category of identity, affiliation, or allegiance based on cultural and linguistic criteria is nationality, or *natsional'nost'*.<sup>12</sup> Outside of the former Soviet Union, scholars often speak of native Siberian peoples in these terms—of Native Siberians implicitly analogous to Native Americans or First Nations peoples, or of indigenous peoples and speakers of indigenous languages. Within the Russian Federation, however, and for most of my interlocutors, the category at issue is *natsional'nost'*.

In the Soviet period, *natsional'nost'* was a basic demographic category deployed in many areas of daily life. It appeared on people's internal passports, census forms, and everyday bureaucratic paperwork like housing and school registrations. *Natsional'nost'* disappeared from Russia's internal passports in the early 1990s, but it remains so ubiquitous that when I conducted research in Buryatia in 2008–09, it was a piece of information that people would immediately offer about themselves, unsolicited. It is also

---

<sup>12</sup> Another important term in the past has been *inorodets*. During the Tsarist era, until roughly 1917, *inorodets* was the official title for Siberian peoples that we would now call indigenous. There are several difficulties with this term that prevented it from being taken up by Soviet planners in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and by native Siberians in the post-Soviet era. It literally means 'a person [–ets] of another [ino–] birth-line or genealogy [rod].' (For comparison, *inostranets* means 'a person from another country,' 'foreigner.')

The implication of 'other' here is 'non-Russian,' but more specifically, because the term was applied most consistently to Mongolic, Turkic, and Asian peoples inhabiting eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East, *inorodets* ended up meaning something like 'radically racially non-Russian' or 'Oriental.' It became racialized, in other words, and emphasized exclusion from the Russian ethnos.

important that *natsional'nost'* is self-reported, meaning that at the level of the individual, officially claiming membership in an ethnic minority requires only self-identification with a particular *natsional'nost'*.

Second, the main purpose of identifying indigenous Siberian peoples in the Soviet period was to whisk them away on the grand Marxist-Leninist modernizing adventure. Numerous scholars of indigeneity elsewhere in the world (e.g., Golub 2007; Muehlebach 2001; Nadasdy 2002; Povinelli 1998, 2002) have emphasized how the legalistic demands of colonial or Western powers have significantly shaped the identities of the indigenous groups that they have claimed to ‘discover’—and vice versa.<sup>13</sup> In the fledgling Soviet Union, native groups were elicited in terms of Lenin’s principle of national self-determination. While the initial identification of ethnic minorities was imagined as a process of discovery, classifying them as peoples (*narody*), nationalities (*natsional'nosti*), or nations (*natsii*) and formulating policy to help them ‘develop’ was an explicit attempt to incorporate outlying native populations into the Soviet telos (Grant 1993, 1995; Martin 2001; Slezkine 1996; Suny 1993, 1998). These distinctions still matter a great deal, and many people within Buryatia—including scholars—talk about development of nation and culture in terms of prescriptive ‘stages,’ from the more ‘primitive’ to the more ‘civilized.’<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> This emphasis may inadvertently undermine efforts to claim indigenous status based on natural ‘firstness’ or organic group identity. I have argued elsewhere that the existence of ‘a’ single, unified Buryat language and people is less a product of organic emergence than of the vicissitudes of border politics between China, Russia, and Mongolia (Graber in press; Graber and Murray n.d.). I stand by that claim, but I do want to remain cognizant of the fact that by emphasizing the discursive construction of ethnic and linguistic boundaries, we preclude certain claims that my interlocutors might like to make.

<sup>14</sup> The criteria of stages developed in Marxist-Leninism are indebted to Engels, and ultimately Lewis Henry Morgan. For more on these categories and their formulation, see Francine Hirsch’s (2005) excellent account of ethnography in the late Tsarist and early Soviet periods.

Third, the principle of ethnic autonomy has been written onto the landscape as territorial autonomy. Siberian peoples that were believed to be further developed on the cultural evolutionary timescale and closer to being full-fledged nations, like the Buryats, were granted Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics and oblasts, most of which became ethnic republics in the early 1990s. (One, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in the Far East, has remained an autonomous oblast.) Native peoples believed to be less developed, especially those living with lower population density in rural areas and the far north, were granted autonomous okrugs. Only four remain because, since the mid-2000s, federal policies in the Russian Federation have increasingly favored administrative centralization at the expense of territories previously based on the principle of ethnonational self-determination. This has meant the dissolution of several ethnic okrugs, including Aga and Ust'-Orda, and an official decoupling of indigenous citizenship from territory.<sup>15</sup>

In every case, considerable effort has been made on the part of former President and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his powerful ruling political party, *Edinaia Rossiia* (United Russia), to make the mergers appear as democratic as possible. Many mergers have been discussed and abandoned, at least temporarily, including a plan to merge the Republic of Buryatia with surrounding Russian-dominated territories. Those that have been successful have been voted on, at least nominally, as referendums in the affected territories. In Aga and Ust'-Orda, these referendums passed for complicated reasons, due in large part to Buryats' difficult, ambivalent position vis-à-vis Russia and Mongolia, Europe and Asia.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> In 1993, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and initial redrawing of internal lines, there were 89 federal subjects within the Russian Federation. Since March of 2008, there have been 83.

<sup>16</sup> There is a great deal of speculation and suspicion, though rarely open protest, surrounding these referendums. See Graber and Long 2009 on the mergers of the Buryat okrugs.

## **Between Europe and Asia: “bridges” and “brotherhood” on the Russian-Mongolian border**

In this dissertation, I use “Buryatia” to refer to the historically contiguous Buryat territories in general, and “Republic of Buryatia,” “Aga,” and “Ust’-Orda” to refer to the bounded political and administrative units.

During fieldwork, I experimented with using the terms “ethnic Buryatia” and “Buryat-Mongolia,” informally asking many of my friends and research participants what they thought of these alternate terms. Their varied responses demonstrate how the position of the Buryat territories in Russia—and vis-à-vis neighboring states—is thought of in Buryatia today. When I returned to Ulan-Ude in 2011, “ethnic Buryatia” had gained traction. However, I ultimately rejected this designation, at least for the time being, because it seemed to invite commentary on what regions would qualify as more or less “real” [*nastoiashchii*] or “ethnic” [*ètnicheskii*] based on their preservation of certain visible traditions. For many people, it seems that the term “*ètnicheskii*” has become inextricably linked to particular styles of furniture, painting, and filigreed jewelry marketed to European tourists and displayed for visiting anthropologists.<sup>17</sup>

The latter term, “Buryat-Mongolia,” sparked much discussion about the relationship of the contemporary Buryat territories to Russia and Mongolia. Some progressives and Buryat nationalists championed my use of this term, citing the pre-1937 borders and precedent in the popular work of nationalist historians like Sh. B. Chimitdorzhiev (e.g., 2004). The republic had been created as the “Buryat-Mongolian ASSR,” but the “Mongolian” had been removed from “Buryat-Mongolian” in 1958 as

---

<sup>17</sup> To wit: one woman in Aginskoe asked me whether it was even possible to conduct anthropological research in Ulan-Ude, given that “[Buryats there] have lost their ethnic traditions” and are “only Buryat by face [*litso*].”

tensions between the Soviet Union and China ramped up (which is why the language is called “Buryat,” rather than “Buryat-Mongolian,” today). Reintroducing the term would be a provocative way reclaiming Buryats’ historical, cultural, and linguistic connections to Mongolia.

Others, however, particularly older Buryat leaders, were very uncomfortable with it. This became clear in a conversation one afternoon at a café with a respected senior editor, Chingis, and his colleague Nima. We were speaking in Russian. I explained that I had been having difficulty deciding how to represent Buryatia in my work. What do you think of that term, I asked, “Buryat-Mongolia”? Chingis shifted uncomfortably in his seat and looked to Nima, who averted his eyes and pretended to study his napkin. “I...,” he started and stopped, then took a deep breath and began to speak slowly and emphatically. “I am a great advocate [*storonnik*] of the *druzhba narodov*.” The *druzhba narodov*, or friendship of the peoples, was a popular slogan of the Soviet period promoting interethnic brotherly love between all peoples [*narody*] of the Soviet Union. This concept took on special importance in the BMASSR and BASSR, and it remains a powerful principle in the Republic of Buryatia, as a point of local pride and as a deterrent to physical violence, if not latent racism. Among native Siberians, Buryats have long been held up as a darling “model minority” of the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and now Russian Federation, in part for their high education level, but principally for their pacifism, tolerance, and general embrace of the state’s changing political systems.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that Buryats are uniformly pacifistic assimilationists. To take one example, in late 2010 the Republic’s Narodnyi Khural rejected a suggested measure to rename the president something other than “president” (“governors” or “heads,” for instance), despite the support of the Russian Duma and the President of the Republic of Buryatia himself, V. V. Nagovitsyn. The Buryats’ reputation within Russia and the Soviet Union has been relative and stereotyped, often voiced in

While Chingis's statement can be cynically read as kowtowing to Russian political dominance or as a rote re-performance of Soviet propaganda, these interpretations elide the sincere faith that many Buryats (and other ethnic minorities of the Russian Federation) invest in the *druzhiba narodov*. For some, it is kitsch, but for others not. He implied that re-identifying Buryatia as Buryat-Mongolia would be not only a serious political statement, but also tantamount to abandoning a cherished principle of interethnic tolerance and cooperation. It is in recognition of this that I am not using the terms "Buryat-Mongolia" and "Buryat-Mongolian," though I think an excellent case could be made for their reintroduction.

The question is particularly significant because Buryats' cultural position in Russia vs. Mongolia is often conflated with their position in Europe vs. Asia. Buryats have long been figured as western Russians' (and other Europeans') point of access to Mongolia and China, as a "bridge" between Russia and its Orient.<sup>19</sup> Today, Buryats within the Russian Federation tend to approach Mongolia with profound ambivalence, envious of their independence and preservation of religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions but wary of the state's tenuous economy and of their own ability (or inability) to be taken as 'real Mongols' (see also Bernstein 2009). Mongolia is now poised at the cusp of an unprecedented economic boom providing coal, copper, and other mineral resources to feed China's rapidly expanding energy needs; during the period covered in

---

opposition to other ethnic minorities such as the stereotypically violent Chechens or the stereotypically benighted Chukchi.

<sup>19</sup> English Protestant missionaries, for instance, saw converting Buryats in the Novoselenginsk region as a step toward their ultimate goal of missionizing in China (Bawden 1985). On using Russian-speaking Buryats as a political and cultural "bridge," see Rupen 1964. The Russian-Mongolian border and its politics are further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

this dissertation, however, it was still known primarily as Russia’s poorer, wilder ‘brother’ to the south.

The Russian-Mongolian border provides terms in which Buryats can experience and discuss their cultural and linguistic assimilation. A Buryat friend, Tuyana, returning from Ulaanbaatar exemplified this. She echoed what I had heard so often before: that she had felt herself to be Asian until she spent time in Mongolia, whereupon she realized that “we’re Europeans” [*my evropeitsy*].<sup>20</sup> At the time, she explained this epiphany in terms of food choices, household cleaning products, and the social mores prevalent in night clubs, not in terms of language use. Years later, however, Tuyana forwarded me a video on youtube that showed how language choice and linguistic knowledge index the Russian-Mongolian and European-Asian borders—and, conversely, how these borders provide the discursive means by which language choice can become meaningfully indexical of social position. The video featured a small boy, perhaps two years old, gnawing the meat and fat off of a large animal bone with great gusto. Off screen an older woman, apparently his grandmother, giggled with delight, asking him repeatedly in Russian whether it was tasty (“*Vkusno?*”). The video was titled “a genuine Buryat” [*istinnyi buriat*].

Below the video, commenters gushed about his zest for meat: “What a man!”; “A good, black head!” (i.e., a good Mongol); “Go for it!”; “A real BURYAT!!!!!!”<sup>21</sup> But

---

<sup>20</sup> Usually my interlocutors described this epiphany following a period living or studying abroad in Mongolia or China, which are the most accessible locations for study abroad from Buryatia. One friend reported the same after a trip to Japan, where she desperately missed bread and potatoes and began to experience her Europeanness in their terms.

<sup>21</sup> [*muzhYk!!!*] [Khar tolgé! Uragsha!] [*Nastoiashchii BURIAT!!!!!! Krasavcheg*)] Comments were in Russian, Mongolian, Kalmyk, and Buryat. Kalmyk, Buryat, and Khalkha Mongol are not uniformly mutually intelligible, but are enough so that users in chats and public forums like youtube often comment on one another’s posts.

Tuyana referred to a comment, written in Russian, from “Horchiuзон,” whose profile stated that he lived in Mongolia:

Он не бурят и бабушка его не бурятка если они буряты то почему они говорят по русски АААА они обрусевшие монголы которые забыли свой язык и думают что они живут в Европе и совсем не монголы почти или немножко русские то есть европейцы

He’s not a Buryat and his babushka’s not a Buryat [f:] if they’re Buryats then why do they speak Russian АААА they’re Russified Mongols who forgot their language and think they live in Europe and are totally not Mongols almost or a little bit [ethnic] Russians that is Europeans

Tuyana’s link to the video arrived with a simple message (in English): “he is right it’s not buryad-mongolia )))”.

## **Buryat-Russian language shift and multilingualism in Buryatia**

Russians and Buryats have been in contact since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it is difficult to pinpoint when the language shift decried by this commenter began.<sup>22</sup> In the last All-Russian census for which there is data, in 2002, 368,807 people within the Russian Federation reported knowledge of Buryat (Rosstat 2004).<sup>23</sup> Speakers are concentrated in the Republic of Buryatia and neighboring Buryat territories, with

---

<sup>22</sup> The first documented direct contact between Russians and Buryats was a brief battle in 1628 or 1629 on the Angara River (Abaeva and Zhukovskaia 2004:39; Forsyth 1992:89; Montgomery 2005:62), but Russians had known about Buryats since at least 1609, when some Ket and Samoyeds—Yeniseian and Uralic speakers—living along tributaries of the Yenisei River informed would-be Russian protectors that they already paid tribute to the powerful nearby Buryats (Forsyth 1992:87). It is also likely that there were earlier economic and personal contacts between local Buryats and fur traders, fortune hunters, exiles, and escaped convicts from European Russia. For notes on such probable contacts, see Schorkowitz 2001a.

<sup>23</sup> By contrast, 445,175 people self-reported as ethnically Buryat in the same (2002) census. Language data from the 2010 census were not yet available at the time of writing. These numbers are almost certainly inflated, perhaps dramatically, because of the aforementioned practice of self-reporting one’s *rodnoi iazyk* as one’s heritage or ancestral language, regardless of actual competence. The census questionnaire in 2002 asked “Do you know the Russian language?” (Yes/No) and “What other languages do you know?” with three blank spaces to write in the names of additional languages and their corresponding codes.

additional communities over the border in northern Mongolia and in the Shènékhèn region of Inner Mongolia in the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>24</sup> This number makes it one of the major indigenous languages of North Asia,<sup>25</sup> but over the 400 years since Russian-Buryat contact, there has been slow language shift from Buryat to Russian—punctuated by fast periods of shift like what accompanied rapid urbanization and industrialization in the 1960s. This period in particular produced what is felt now as a generation gap between knowledgeable Buryat elders and their Russian-dominant children and grandchildren (see, e.g., Babuev 2001, 2006). Most ethnic Buryats in Russia are fully bilingual in Russian, or are monolingual speakers of Russian, and Buryat use has contracted so much over the past few generations that some linguists consider the language functionally endangered (e.g., Grenoble and Whaley 2006). In Aginskoe, the capital of Aga, Buryat is actively spoken on the street, and I have even had whole exchanges to buy shampoo or bread in which the speaker behind the counter initiated the interaction in Buryat and did *not* draw any metapragmatic attention to code choice or to the oddity that I spoke Buryat.<sup>26</sup> This, however, is the exception that proves the rule: the principal language of public life in Buryatia is overwhelmingly Russian. Russian is particularly dominant in Ulan-Ude and in urbanized administrative centers, including the district capitals of some otherwise Buryat-dominant districts, like Khorinsk.

---

<sup>24</sup> Compiling the most recent census data, Lewis (2009) arrives at a total speaker population of 498,707 across Mongolia, the Russian Federation, and the PRC.

<sup>25</sup> The only native language of Siberia with more self-reported speakers is Sakha/Yakut, with 456,288 in the 2002 census (Rosstat 2004).

<sup>26</sup> In a comparative study of language attitudes and Buryat language use in Ulan-Ude, rural Buryatia, Ust'-Orda, and Aga, only 2.4% of respondents in Ulan-Ude reported using Buryat at work and school, and no one in Ust'-Orda reported using it in this context. By contrast, 25.7% of respondents in Aga and 31.5% of respondents in rural Buryatia reported using Buryat at work and school. (Khilkhanova 2007:81) Though based only on self-reported data, these results reflect observable public Buryat use.

Many of the macrosociological reasons for Buryat-Russian language shift will be quite familiar. Culprits include occupation, migration, political coercion, and the economic and personal benefits made available to minority language speakers for shifting in a hierarchy controlled by speakers of the majority tongue. Knowledge of Buryat offers many personal, psychological, and even socioeconomic advantages,<sup>27</sup> but they are not immediately apparent to most outsiders. The general attitude toward Buryat (and Buryatia) among Russian young people outside the Buryat territories was reflected in the response of a young woman stamping passports at a border crossing in Irkutsk. I had just arrived on a flight from Beijing, populated mainly by Chinese and Russian businessmen, and the bored girl at the entry desk looked up with interest upon seeing my American passport. “What is your purpose in **Ulan-Ude**?” she asked, reading the address on my entry visa and smirking at the city listed. I was accustomed to this reaction, many well-meaning Russians in St. Petersburg and Moscow having protested, “But, Katya, that is in the **sticks!**” [*Éto v glushi!*] or “Siberia? You will surely die.” Traveling in other parts of Russia, I have had to convince museum workers and even border guards that Ulan-Ude is, in fact, a part of the Russian Federation and not a city in Mongolia or China. This woman was in Irkutsk, however, so her skepticism was aimed not at the Siberia she called home, but at the provincial cow-town across Lake Baikal. I responded that I was studying Buryat in Ulan-Ude. “**Buryat**?” she repeated, leaning forward with her eyebrows now sky-high. What **for**?” [*Buriatskii iazyk? Zachem?*]

Buryats living outside the Buryat territories, such as in the sizable ‘diasporas’ in Moscow and St. Petersburg, also face significant xenophobia. Racial hate crimes have

---

<sup>27</sup> See especially Chapter 4.

been perpetrated against Buryats based both on ignorant assumptions that they are foreigners, most often Chinese, and on generalized Slavic supremacism, even resulting in the murder of a young Buryat man on the streets of Moscow in 2007. The threat of racially motivated violence may not be assuaged by language choice, but, as one man who had been living in the St. Petersburg diaspora explained to me, speaking Russian on the street with a native accent could at least signal that one was a Russian citizen (“*rossiianin*,” as opposed to “*russkii*,” ‘ethnically Russian’).<sup>28</sup> Buryats living in Ulan-Ude are very much aware of the xenophobia rampant in other parts of Russia, and they often cite it as a reason to live in Buryatia, or to move back ‘home.’

While the long-term trend in this region has been shift from Buryat to Russian, it bears noting that there are pockets of stable bilingualism, and that these languages have long coexisted among others. In addition to the official languages of the Republic of Buryatia, Buryat and Russian, the Buryat territories host speakers of a wide variety of languages. Ukrainian, Armenian, and Azeri are particularly important among longstanding ‘internal immigrant’ populations in the republic, and Chinese speakers have been becoming more visible (or audible) with increasing immigration into Ulan-Ude and Aga.

These languages are outside the scope of this study, but Ewenki deserves special note as Buryatia’s second officially recognized “native” or “indigenous” language. Ewenki is a Tungusic language with approximately 29,000 speakers across Russia, Mongolia, and the PRC, and 7,584 reported in 2002 in the Russian Federation (Rosstat). The language once enjoyed official status in the Ewenk Autonomous Okrug (E. *Ėvedy*

---

<sup>28</sup> For a particularly nice discussion of the distinction between *rossiianin* and *russkii* and the trouble the translation “Russian” can cause in English, see Tishkov 1997:x.

*Avtomody Okrug*; R. *Ėvenkiiskii avtonomnyi okrug*) in nearby Krasnoyarsk Krai,<sup>29</sup> but the okrug was dissolved in 2007 according to a 2005 referendum, as part of the same process by which the Ust'-Orda and Aga Autonomous Okrugs were dissolved. Within Buryatia, Ewenki is mainly spoken in the northern districts of the Republic of Buryatia, around Baunt. Ewenki is not a language of state, and it does not have a large presence in Ulan-Ude. However, Buryat State University includes a department of Ewenki language and culture, and there are (small) provisions in the republic for Ewenki media. During my research, the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company "Buryatia" (BGTRK) employed a single Ewenki-speaking woman to produce a weekly cultural program.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to these languages of everyday use, many older residents of Buryatia have some knowledge of French or German as L2 languages learned in school or university, and rapidly growing numbers of younger residents study English. Spanish and Polish are increasingly popular languages to study, as is Japanese. Over the course of my research, a number of elementary schools in Ulan-Ude and neighboring districts introduced mandatory Chinese and English into their curricula. English is increasingly seen as a way to travel and to succeed in Mongolia, China, or Europe, as well as in Russia, while Chinese offers employment opportunities in the PRC or in Russia's booming oil, gas, and forestry industries.

These foreign languages (all of which are considered more foreign than, say, Armenian and other languages of the CIS) often offer neutral ground in the value-laden terrain between Russian and Buryat. English, in particular, has become the language of

---

<sup>29</sup> On the okrug, and on Russia's Ewenki/Evenki more generally, see Alexia Bloch's work, especially 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Broadcasts in Ewenki at BGTRK began in 1994, reportedly after years of requests for Ewenki-language programming (date recorded in BGTRK's museum).

cosmopolitanism. A Buryat writer offered a compelling example of this when he explained why he wanted to translate his book, an enormous, detailed mytho-historical study of Aga's Süügèl datsan, directly from Buryat into English. It was very important to him *not* to translate via Russian, he said, because it would corrupt his meaning, and because he had no interest in presenting his work to a Russian-speaking audience. He sought to reach beyond the Russian-speaking country in which he found himself to a cosmopolitan audience (and specifically to the Dalai Lama).

The ultimate impact of intensified foreign language study on Buryat language use is not yet clear. While one might imagine that Buryat language advocates would lament losing instructional hours to other languages,<sup>31</sup> I have rarely encountered this argument in Buryatia. Whether I asked explicitly or they brought it up independently, most journalists I spoke with advocated learning as many languages as possible. A group of newspaper journalists in Aga claimed that they had learned, from their children and younger relatives, that English and Buryat had much in common. For instance, they share the laryngeal /h/ [h], which Russian lacks (as I often pointed out myself to anyone who expressed surprise at my 'native' pronunciation of it). One of the reporters impersonated a child, pantomiming reading a line of the newspaper in front of her with a finger and finding a letter. "*Čto èto—[h]?*" [What is this—(h)?] she said, raising her eyebrows and emphasizing the laryngeal [h] sound hard so that everyone in the room laughed. "They are learning Buryat through English!" By the same token, some people hoped that Buryat college students would become interested in their "own" [*svoi*] language by first

---

<sup>31</sup> Buryat language education is addressed in Chapter 4.

becoming interested in Mongolian—a language potentially considered more fashionable by virtue of being foreign.

### **Language policy, linguistic rights, and institutional sites of language work**

Elsewhere in the world, language maintenance and revitalization efforts have been issues of indigenous rights (e.g., Dinwoodie 1998; Harnel 1997; Hornberger and King 1998; Niezen 2000; Weaver 2001). Indigenous rights are not, however, the primary framework in which Buryat leaders and activists have asserted their language rights.

The category of indigeneity has been mobilized differently—or not at all—by members of different Siberian nationalities in the post-Soviet era. In 2007, the Russian Federation abstained from the United Nations vote to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). The federal government has since unveiled some initiatives to the UN’s Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and some gains are being made by proactive smaller groups, especially in terms of natural resource management. But indigeneity is not a widely known concept in Siberia, and the criteria of recognition have not been clearly established within Russian law. Instead, current claims to land and mineral rights, as well as to financial resources supporting native-language education and mass media, are based on an idiosyncratic set of principles and categories established during the Tsarist and Soviet periods.

A point of hesitance for many Buryats is found in the fact that they bore the status of a powerful well-developed titular nationality during the Soviet period, classified higher than the “small-numbered peoples of the North” who have successfully claimed oil and mineral rights within the framework of indigenous rights. While the benefits of this status

are not lost on many Buryats, for some it is degrading to place themselves within the same sociocultural category as the Chukchi. They point to the Buryats' glorious Mongol past, as heroic warriors of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As a stranger once reminded me in passing, Chinggis Khan's mother was Buryat; "We Buryats were no forest tribe!"

Thus, despite international paradigms of indigeneity that might treat Buryats and Ewenki (for example) within the same framework, Buryats do not often identify with Ewenks on the basis of minority status. Language legislation and efforts at language maintenance and revitalization have been tied instead to the model of ethnonational autonomy described above, within which there is less immediate motivation for interregional cooperation. The historical emphasis on territorial autonomy and titular nationalities has generated a territorial view of linguistic rights that can exclude solidarity across regions. One interviewee, otherwise quite liberal in her political views, summarized her position like so: "Of course, it's nice for everyone to have materials in their own language [*rodnom iazyke, po-svoemu*]. The Ewenks have their own *okrug* [*svoi okrug*], where they can have their own newspapers and radio."<sup>32</sup> Similar arguments are made for Armenian, Ukrainian, Azeri, and other "national languages."

In principle, Buryat is granted extensive support within the republic by the constitution, which guarantees all peoples of the republic "the right to preservation of [their] native language [and] creation of the conditions for its study and development,"<sup>33</sup> and by provisions in the law "On the languages of the peoples of the Republic of Buryatia," enacted in 1992. All official documents, street names and other place names,

---

<sup>32</sup> This logic might reflect why Ewenki-language broadcasting was not supported within Buryatia during the Soviet period (see note above).

<sup>33</sup> "*Respublika Buriatiia garantiruet vsem ee narodam pravo na sokhranenie rodnogo iazyka, sozdanie uslovii dlia ego izucheniia i razvitiia.*" (Article 67)

and package labels of products manufactured in Buryatia are supposed to appear in Buryat as well as Russian. Some official building plaques do appear in two languages, government websites do have some content in Buryat (as well as English), and official announcements are made in Buryat as well as Russian (see Chapter 5 for an example from a newspaper). As Galina A. Dyrkheeva (2002) and other sociolinguists have pointed out, the law has simply not been fulfilled; Buryat does not function fully in the spheres of government, manufacturing, service, and trade.<sup>34</sup> Yet its symbolic importance should not be underestimated.

Among the more controversial—and symbolically important—language protections is a clause in the republic’s constitution requiring that the President of the Republic of Buryatia control Buryat.<sup>35</sup> In the early part of my fieldwork, in 2005 and 2007, this was not an issue. The elected president of the republic, Leonid Vasil’evich Potapov, was an ethnic Russian who grew up in a mostly Buryat village in Buryatia’s Baunt district. He reportedly spoke a northern dialect of Buryat natively and frequently intoned holiday greetings and the openings of speeches in Buryat, supposedly quite well.<sup>36</sup> However, a new president, Viacheslav Vladimirovich Nagovitsyn, was appointed by Putin in 2007 according to a controversial new policy that the heads of all federal subjects—including the presidents of semi-autonomous republics—would be appointed

---

<sup>34</sup> Among other provisions of the law that were apparently never fulfilled is the interesting promise to offer study in classical Mongolian script. Additional legislation to fulfill the law and begin a multi-year initiative for language “preservation and development” [*Sokhranenie i razvitie buriatskogo iazyka*] was enacted in August 2010.

<sup>35</sup> The exact wording is: “The President of the Republic of Buryatia should control the state languages of the Republic of Buryatia” [*Prezident Respubliki Buriatii dolzhen vladet’ gosudarstvennymi iazykami Respubliki Buriatii*]. (Article 70)

<sup>36</sup> I report here the opinions of some NGI teachers and miscellaneous listeners. I have not undertaken any specific study of Potapov’s speech; nor have I heard him say more than a brief introduction in Buryat.

by the federal executive branch. Nagovitsyn, in contrast with his predecessor, had no personal connection with Buryatia when he was appointed governor and had had no exposure to Buryat.

After some disagreement over the constitutionality of appointing a non-Buryat-speaker in light of the clause (and additional disagreement over the fairness of the clause itself), Nagovitsyn assumed the presidency and assured the people of Buryatia that he had begun taking language lessons in order to satisfy the constitutional requirement. A year and a half into his term, in 2009, he did not speak Buryat publicly beyond a few pained but symbolically important opening remarks and *pozhelaniia*. This did not appear to ‘count’ for anyone, and people did not seem wholly satisfied by his attempts. I often asked what would be enough to say that he ‘controlled’ [*vladeet*] the Buryat language: a second sentence? A whole speech? Speaking on television with a cattle-breeder in the countryside? One teacher replied that since he would always have an accent and it would never be “*rodnoi*,” he should learn that language “*do kontsa*,” ‘to completion,’ a common way of expressing fluency. I pointed out that it seemed like I need speak only a few words to be considered an excellent speaker; I had not learned Buryat “*do kontsa*” but was often praised as though I had, and I felt that my knowledge of Buryat [*znanie iazyka*] was routinely overstated. She seemed to consider this. “Well,” she said at last, “*dolzno byt’ zhelanie. Samoe glavnoe—eto zhelanie.*” Most people did not really answer my question at all, but shrugged, or sighed, or changed the subject. In an important sense, Nagovitsyn’s knowledge of Buryat was beside the point. The problem was that he was appointed from outside and evinced little excitement about his new post. It did not matter

to the political process whether Buryatia's residents liked him or not, so they appeared indifferent to his linguistic efforts for good reason.

While Potapov's and Nagovitsyn's language choices are symbolically powerful, the most visible symbol of state support for Buryat on a daily basis is Buryat-language media. Together, the afore-mentioned 1992 language law and its federal analogue from 1991, "On the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation," provide the legal framework for producing newspapers and radio and television broadcasting in Buryat.<sup>37</sup> State news organizations and some private media companies provide publications, broadcasts, and limited web services in Buryat. Most of the media produced in Buryat parallel media in Russian, meaning that a state radio station, for example, will have a Russian-language division and a Buryat-language division that may share material and stories. For a variety of reasons explored in the chapters to come, Buryat-language media are rarely exclusively in Buryat, instead combining a Buryat-language frame and Buryat-language material with words, phrases, and sometimes whole stories from Russian. Moreover, the workplaces within which Buryat-language media are produced and the homes, streets, and other environments in which they are consumed are also largely Russian-speaking. In other words, Buryat-language media are always already Russian-language as well. For this reason, the subject of this dissertation is *multilingual* news media, rather than exclusively Buryat-language, minority-language, or native-language media.

---

<sup>37</sup> Article 28 of the Republic of Buryatia's language law states that "broadcasts of republican radio and television will be realized in Buryat and Russian." Article 20 of the Russian Federation's 1991 language law allows for *SMI* in the subjects of the Russian Federation to be produced in any state language, but does not guarantee any particular support or protections.

Media institutions are intertwined with a number of other institutional sites of language work. Among the most influential such sites in Buryatia are the Buryat Scientific Center (BNTs) of the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SO RAN) and NGI, mentioned in the preceding chapter. BNTs trains graduate students and supports dedicated researchers, among them many sociolinguists, folklorists, lexicographers, and literature specialists who direct the course of Buryat linguistics. NGI trains undergraduate and graduate students in linguistics, language pedagogy, journalism, and Buryat culture, folklore, and literature; their faculty also engage actively in linguistic research and host academic conferences.

These institutions, along with linguistics programs at other local universities, have been integral to the development of Buryat descriptive linguistics. Their importance to my object of study lies less, however, in their descriptive role than in their prescriptive role, as they invest students with the (institutionally approved) linguistic expertise necessary to take up language and culture work in the wider Buryat language public. NGI and its predecessor in Irkutsk in particular have trained many of Buryatia's current native-language journalists, and NGI will no doubt be the main source for new native-language journalists in the years to come.<sup>38</sup> The prescriptive (and proscriptive) ability of these institutions depends on authority derived in large part *from* their descriptive work, and they are thus caught in the usual paradox of institutions of linguistic science: they document linguistic behavior while impacting that behavior in the process.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>39</sup> Taylor describes a similar paradox in the work of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: it “simply reports the facts” of linguistic behavior and yet is also “by far the most authoritative and influential normative influence on the behaviour of individual speakers and writers of English” (1990:22).

Other important institutional sites of language work include the Republic's Ministry of Education, which puts out pedagogical materials including books, posters, and innovative interactive CDs; the Buryat national boarding school [*internat*] in Ulan-Ude, which is supposed to provide full Buryat-language immersion; and the National Library of the Republic of Buryatia, which frequently hosts native-language events involving poets, symposia, and memorial services, in addition to Russian-language events like chess championships. Buryat language education and Buryat-medium education within primary schools have long been the target of public debate and angst, and several sociolinguistic studies have detailed the problems in this sphere (e.g., Bazheeva 2002; Dareeva 2007; Dyrkheeva 2002).

Buryatia's native-language media institutions are intimately connected to these other sites of language work, both in terms of extended social networks and in how journalists circulate, physically, between their offices and diffused places of daily reportage. To take just one historical example, Buryat-language broadcasting for children in the 1970s depended heavily—almost exclusively—on interviews with children at the Buryat national boarding school (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 22, p. 6). When change is felt in one such institution, it thus directly impacts other interlinked institutions and loci of language preservation and development, heightening the sense of crisis.

### **Chronic crisis and the quest to live a “normal” life**

In addition to the immediate political context outlined above, a number of broader ‘crises’ in Russian society formed the backdrop of my research in Buryatia in 2005–11 and significantly impacted the course of events for my research participants. By 2007,

Russia's death rate far exceeded the birth rate and the country was in the throes of what the state termed a "demographic crisis" [*demograficheskii krizis*], spurring initiatives to improve maternity leave, increase support to 'many-childreaned families,' and promote traditional marital and family values (Rivkin-Fish 2010).<sup>40</sup> 2008 was named the "Year of the Family," and much of my research took place among billboards and advertisements imploring men and women to stay together, have children, and live healthily. Just as these initiatives were getting underway, the world financial crisis of 2008–09 hit Russia hard, resulting in a steep fall for the Russian ruble and substantial "optimization" [*optimizatsiia*] and "rationalization" [*ratsionalizatsiia*] (lay-offs) in many sectors of the economy.<sup>41</sup> In Buryatia, strong kinship networks provide a sense of security: there is always access to milk, potatoes, and basic sustenance from village relatives. Moreover, people remembered far worse crises. Thus in terms of simple survival, the financial crisis, though technically deeper in Russia than in the United States, did not appear threatening or paradigm-shifting in the way it did to American commentators, and was more often a source of mirth. As both Buryats and Russians liked to joke to me, "Why worry? There's always a cow in the village!" However, the concatenation of financial and demographic crises produced some job anxiety and a subtle but noticeable re-emphasis on traditional gender norms. Because it is illegal in Russia to lay off a woman during her three-year maternity leave, some women—including at least three described in this dissertation—also began having children in order to protect their jobs.

---

<sup>40</sup> The problem itself was not new or surprising; Russia's demographic situation had been a topic of discussion for at least a decade, following sharp emigration in the early 1990s and a simultaneous dip in the birthrate. What was new was that by the mid-2000s, the country's political and economic situation had stabilized sufficiently that the federal government began investing state resources in fixing the problem.

<sup>41</sup> Construction and extraction jobs such as mining and oil-related work were particularly hard hit.

Most importantly for my purposes here, the financial crisis exacerbated the global crisis in journalism. With the rise of the “citizen journalist” and audiences increasingly turning to non-institutional sources for information exchange via digital media, news media institutions that operate on market-driven advertising- and subscription-based models (i.e., most global news organizations) have suffered sharp reductions in revenue. Most Buryat-language journalists were relatively protected from this development as state-subsidized employees. Even so, media institutions and the people who work (or worked) in them felt the pain of the joint crises. All of the offices in which I conducted research in 2008–09 experienced some kind of staff “reduction” [*sokrashchenie*, short for “*sokrashchenie kadrov*”]. Most of the conversations with media workers reported herein ranged at some point over financial coping strategies such as limiting print runs, reducing printing and production costs, or reducing staff, and job security was a primary concern for many of my interlocutors.

Residents of Buryatia have, however, become inured to a state of almost constant crisis—what Olga Shevchenko terms Russia’s state of “chronic crisis” (2009:3). Shevchenko refers to the late 1990s (a time that is still remembered in Buryatia as well for the devastating ruble devaluation of 1998), but her observations about the rhetorical “stability of the crisis metaphor” and its resulting ennui held a decade later as well (2009:35; cf. Ries 1997). For many of my interlocutors, the word conjured stress and “abnormal” (as opposed to the ever-elusive “*normal’nye*”) circumstances, but it also formed the only background against which everyday life could be experienced. “*Krizis, krizis*, there’s always a *krizis*,” one Buryat woman of about 50 sighed, throwing up her hands. Others took crisis humor a step further. Rocking along on the Trans-Siberian

Railroad between Moscow and Novosibirsk, a jovial woman handed me a round white pin, on which was printed in big red letters: “KRIZIS 2008-2009.”

Exhaustion with crisis leads many residents of Buryatia (and of Russia more generally) to place huge importance on living not only “*normal’no*,” but also in peace—or, as my friends and research participants often put it, to “*zhit’ spokoino*.” Many people in my study appeared willing to suffer various injustices in exchange for peace, regularity, and security, or to be left alone. It was, for example, one of the primary reasons cited to vote *for* a referendum to merge Aga with the surrounding Chita Oblast, among people who were strongly but quietly opposed to it (Graber and Long 2009). I heard similar opinions expressed, usually quietly, among journalists. When a decision, made in Moscow, was going to result in one local media institution losing some support for its minority-language activities, I asked one of its employees whether there had been any consultation. I probably seemed indignant. Where exactly had the decision been made? What reasons did they offer? He put forward his opinion very plainly. “It’s better,” he said seriously and forcefully, his voice lowered, “to be quiet and calm, and not draw attention. Then we are left alone.” I mention this here because it formed an important part of the backdrop of the social action I will describe in the chapters to come, informing many decisions and reactions that might otherwise have seemed fatalistic, cowardly, or apathetic. They have their own logic.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Melissa Chakars makes a similar observation in her dissertation (2008), also noting the importance Buryats place on living “*spokoino*” and arguing that rather than viewing Buryats simply as victims, we should attend to the advantages and benefits that Buryats have received for making conciliatory gestures.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has set the scene, emplacing “Buryatia” as a coherent set of otherwise disparate territories and the Buryat language within the world—and within the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The next chapter extends this question into the past, examining how Buryat-language news media have figured into past understandings of the Buryat territories, the Buryat people, and the Buryat language.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Media and the Buryat Language Public: The Shifting Roles of Minority-Language News**

One afternoon in the autumn of 2009, I sat sipping tea with a senior journalist I will call Bulat, and our conversation turned to death. Gazing pensively out the window at dry, yellow larch leaves swirling in the wind, Bulat confided that he doubted he had accomplished much in his life making Buryat-language media. Young people don't care, he said, and our language will be dead within two or three generations. He added that I should go find myself a Buryat husband (so that at least the *étнос*, or ethnobiological essence of the Buryats, would continue), teach our children English, and stop worrying about the news. It's not "news" [*novosti*] anyway, he said; it's "olds" [*starosti*], "only for an ancient people" [*tol'ko dlia starinnogo naroda*].

His dismissal of a life's work struck me as uncharacteristically fatalistic, and I chalked it up to his temporarily dark mood. But Bulat was giving voice to an open secret. In 2009, there were two major Buryat-language weeklies and several district newspapers that were printed in part or in full in Buryat, VESTI-Buryatia aired Buryat-language news daily on television and radio broadcasts (about 20 minutes each per day), and weekly cultural programs on television and radio (on BGTRK-television, BGTRK-radio, and Arig Us) amounted to another two to three hours of Buryat-language programming per

week.<sup>1</sup> But Bulat remembered the 1950s, when both of the Republic's major newspapers, *Buriat-Mongol'skii Komsomolets* and *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda*, ran duplicated [*dublirovannye*] versions in Russian and Buryat every day. And he remembered the heady days of Buryat nationalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when (he said) it seemed a Buryat-language television station was just around the corner.<sup>2</sup> Since Bulat began working in the 1960s, the audience for minority-language media in Buryatia has shrunk as language shift to Russian has progressed, and the future is indeed uncertain. Television and radio companies have difficulty finding young workers, and newspaper prose is beyond the ability of most urban youth. Widespread competence in Russian has obviated the need to use Buryat to give the latest price on potatoes or tomorrow's weather report. Faced with some of the hardest economic conditions in the Russian Federation, authorities periodically raise the familiar "inefficiency argument," suggesting that media should be produced in only one language, which would naturally be the one already most widely used: Russian.

Lest Buryat-language media appear obsolescent, however, it is worth considering whether a competent audience is necessary or sufficient for demand. Minority-language media may play roles besides distributing information. A public might include individuals who cannot understand the referential content of media but who nevertheless circulate it, and take something from it—and who might even be concerned about the past, present, and future of "their" language. (Consider, for example, the continuing salience of the Latin Mass.) Following early theorists of media (e.g., de Tönnies

---

<sup>1</sup> See complete list in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> There was never, however, a radio or television station dedicated solely to Buryat-language material.

2000[1922]), scholars tend to view mass media and society as dialectically co-constitutive, but journalists often emphasize one direction of influence or the other in their own appraisals of what they do. Bulat, for example, implies that a minority language public is a condition of possibility for his work as a journalist, with the survival of his own profession contingent on the continuation of a particular kind of society, a Buryat-speaking public—a public that he views as synonymous with an “ancient people.” But many of his younger colleagues emphasize the opposite direction of influence, thinking of themselves as linguistic and cultural activists working for the development of a new Buryat-speaking public. A single media institution, while it may look monolithic from outside, contains a dramatic diversity of opinion over the basic question of how minority-language media function—and are supposed to function—in a multilingual society.

This chapter begins to untangle this institutional diversity and its historical underpinnings by examining how the goals and ends of minority-language news in Buryatia have shifted over time, in the context of ongoing language shift. The first section describes the relationship of contemporary journalistic practice to Soviet journalism and introduces the landscape of news media in Buryatia as it exists today. Positioning contemporary news production and reception within Soviet and post-Soviet principles of journalism, I give particular attention to “ideology” as a category. This section also introduces media across the multiple scales of Buryatia’s media networks and markets: international, federal (“central”), regional (republics, oblasts, and krais), super-regional (Siberia), and local (districts, cities, and villages), as well as the focal publications and stations most central to this study.

From a revolutionary manifesto in 1910 to a newsroom argument in 2009, I then show how different actors have imagined the relationship between Buryat-language news and the people who are supposed to be using and/or producing it. Among the periods discussed, I would like to highlight here three distinct ways minority-language media have been conceptualized and developed in Buryatia, with distinct goals vis-à-vis imagined publics. First, when native activists perceived Buryats as a nascent nation, ready to develop national consciousness, they conceived of Buryat-language media as tools for discovering and producing national unity (*a nascent public*). Second, when out-group actors attempted to exert state control over Buryat territories via media and figured Buryats as a closed group to which they had only indirect access, they imagined minority-language media as means for reaching and inspiring a public that was *parallel to* that of dominant Russian-language media. Finally, when state control was no longer tenuous—and when linguistic and cultural assimilation had produced the largely Russian-dominant population that Bulat now laments—minority-language journalists began working to serve a subset of wider Buryat society, comprising integrated Buryats who periodically orient to a Buryat *subpublic*.

Because these different conceptualizations reflect a common progression of indigenous assimilation and language shift, they may be generalizable to other colonial contexts in which minority language publics are sites of political struggle and sociocultural change. While numerous studies of media and publics have theorized publics as inherently constructed, rather than *a priori*, categories, they have tended to take as their subject the imagined audiences of European or American media, or the development of Euro-American publics writ large (e.g., Barnett 2003; Coleman and Ross

2010; Habermas 1989[1962]; Landes 1988; Warner 2002). I hope that the Buryat case will inspire more critical attention to how models of mass communication and their component parts—categories like language, speaker, and audience—change when imported into new historical and cultural contexts. Looking historically at the shifting roles of minority language news reveals the (shifting) imagined relationship between ‘a’ language and ‘a’ public—whether that relationship is already established or still shimmering in the ether as an ideal yet to be realized.

### **News media in Buryatia**

Not all the media discussed in this dissertation are obviously ‘news.’ For instance, one of the most popular genres printed in local newspapers and broadcast on local television consists of personal historical accounts, usually chronicling Buryat families that suffered tragedy after tragedy over Russia’s tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> century. Music is a regular feature in radio programming, and throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, many of the pages of newspapers and minutes of radio broadcasting have been filled with literature. What is important ethnographically are all those mediated language practices that are *institutionalized* as news, and that are subsumed in Russian by the label *SMI*—*sredstva massovoi informatsii*, ‘the means of mass information,’ or ‘mass media.’

The history of news media in Buryatia has received careful attention from a number of historians and media sociologists within the Russian Federation. Indeed, a complete history could be pieced together through the detailed studies of D. Ts. Namzhilova (2001; covering 1862–1937), Buianto Tsydenovich Dondokov (1960;

covering 1918–1937), and E. A. Kuchmurukova (2002; covering the 1930s–1991).<sup>3</sup> Less attention has been given specifically to the issue of Buryat-language media, with the notable exception of Elena Nikolaevna Grosheva’s excellent history of Buryat-language book publishing (2008). This dissertation is not intended as a history of Buryat media; however, because there is not, as yet, any such study in English to recommend, I have provided historical footnotes wherever relevant and have included a timeline of Buryat media history in Appendix A. This chapter provides a historical overview of minority-language media in Buryatia, and archival material from the Soviet period is woven throughout the chapters.

Contemporary journalism in the Buryat territories bears a complex and often ambivalent relationship to Soviet journalism, for both journalists and their audiences. To be sure, ‘Soviet journalism’ was not static, although post-Soviet journalists and ex-journalists seeking to distance themselves from their earlier work sometimes speak of it as though it was. Principles of journalism and the role of the journalist in Soviet rhetoric changed considerably over time, and those shifts were very much reflected in the statements of local Buryat journalists. In 1939, a young reporter at *Buriat-Mongol’skaia Pravda*, the Republic of Buryatia’s flagship newspaper, echoed the literary emphasis of the time when he lamented that he did not feel himself sufficiently developed “as a **literary worker.**” [*Ia eshche slabo chuvstvuiu sebia kak **literaturnyi rabotnik***; emphasis

---

<sup>3</sup> See also N. A. Lavrovskii (1984; covering 1926–1936) on the development of print in a wider swath of Siberia. For an English-language source, see Melissa Cakars (Chakars)’s doctoral dissertation (2008), a study of Soviet modernization in Buryatia that includes material on the history and development of mass media in the Soviet period. B. B. Batuev (1972), B. V. Bazarov (1995, 2004–2005), and L. V. Kuras (1991) have also produced useful work on the history of Buryat media, although their focus was on media as *sources* of historical data, rather than as the objects of historical study themselves.

mine.] (NARB f. 930, op. 1, d. 5, p. 171) In 1959, by contrast, a radio and television director roundly criticized an editor for his irresponsibility and “political shortsightedness” [*blizorukost’*]: “An editor should be, before all else, a **politician**.” [*Redaktor dolzhen byt’ prezhdе vsego politikom*; emphasis mine.] (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, p. 58)<sup>4</sup> By 1982, the standards by which journalists were measured had shifted again, as reflected in a subsequent director’s succinct encouragement: “A good journalist is an **investigator**.” [*Khoroshii zhurnalist – eto issledovatel’*; emphasis mine.] (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 39, p. 38) He exhorted his staff to be harder and sharper in their reporting, and more critical of problems and injustices in the existing sociopolitical system.<sup>5</sup>

Investigative journalism was increasingly prized during the last decade of the Soviet Union—even before Gorbachev specifically encouraged it under *glasnost’* in the late 1980s, as the above quotation from 1982 shows. Nonetheless, even this period is sometimes conflated with the preceding decades and remembered, in the post-Soviet period, as redolent with “ideology” [*ideologiiа*]. Bayandalai, one of the retired journalists in my study, wrote off his entire career—more than three decades of labor—as “ideology.”<sup>6</sup> He said the word with venom, screwing up his normally pacific face. Here, contra the discussion of language ideologies in Chapter 1, the word retains connotations familiar from the Cold War, of a person—an “*ideolog*”—so committed to rote political

---

<sup>4</sup> The political scandal for which he was leveling this criticism is discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>5</sup> One might argue that because the 1939 and 1982 statements targeted reporters and ‘ordinary journalists’ while the 1959 statement targeted editors, I am comparing apples and oranges. All three statements do, however, represent the general journalistic anxieties of their times, and reflect a shift in emphasis from literary and creative labor, to political correction, to investigative journalism. Moreover, the first and third statements, which both target journalists in-general, show a movement toward investigative journalism that is sufficient in itself to demonstrate change over time.

<sup>6</sup> Interview recorded 2009.

principles propping up the state that he is blind to the truth.<sup>7</sup> Late in life, Bayandalai seemed to have found “ideology”’s cure in writing poetry and deepening his understanding of Buddhism, both of which he pursued with great passion.

Westernizers took a different approach. American and West German newspapers and “development” organizations were particularly active in training Russian and East/Central European journalists in the immediate postsocialist period.<sup>8</sup> Several of the newspaper editors described in this dissertation were invited at one point or another to conferences or development seminars in the United States, and additionally some administrative personnel took part in management seminars and “*trening*”s in Moscow and New York. Some of these measures succeeded, in the sense that the discourse of ‘Western’ 20<sup>th</sup>-century journalism could be found in circulation in Buryatia. Journalism textbooks in use at Buryat State University discussed familiar principles of reporting (objectivity, verifiability, protection of sources, and so on), and some of my interviewees referred to mass media as the “fourth branch of power” [*chetvërtaiia vetv’ vlasti*], i.e., the Fourth Estate. I did not find, however, that Buryat journalism actually instantiated the principles and ideals of journalism that were presumably intended by agents of democratic development. It had developed according to its own path. The only times I heard American ideals of journalism (such as independence) directly parroted in Russian were in connection with *Inform Polis*, a commercial newspaper explicitly founded on an American model. For his part, Bayandalai eschewed the Westernized post-Soviet

---

<sup>7</sup> This is indeed a common negative interpretation of Soviet news media among post-Soviet Russian audiences (see examples in Mickiewicz 2008).

<sup>8</sup> See Boyer (2000, 2001, 2005) on the “reeducation” of East German journalists.

journalism of the 1990s and 2000s as worthless as well, now simply driven by advertising, rather than “ideology,” into “trash and nonsense” [*erunda*].

In the contemporary period, studies of Buryatia’s mass media have tended to focus on their political influence and ‘message,’ drawing their models of communication from political science and sociology (e.g., Dagbaev 1995, 1999, 2004; Peers 2008). While I find these studies important and will draw on sociological survey research throughout this dissertation, my goals and approaches are different. I view media discourse not as the embodiment of discrete messages but as one species of social action, embedded in the complex cultural milieu of speakers, writers, cameramen, readers, viewers, listeners, etc. and dependent on the minutiae of everyday life. To this end, I aim to provide an account (however rough) of the total social life of mass media in daily life—that is, how media are produced, circulated, used, interpreted, and discarded or taken up on a daily basis.

Buryat-language media are consumed within multiple scales of media networks and markets, from the immediate city market within which advertisements for Ulan-Ude’s businesses are distributed to an international market of dubbed films and pirated music.<sup>9</sup> This provides an especially rich context for examining how minority-language media respond to and produce locality. If we think of media consumption in terms of *exposure*, it becomes necessary to consider the tremendous array of mediated images, sounds, and texts within the media landscape of Russia and Buryatia, as well as how it is differentiated and sorted by local audiences. Media available in Buryatia during the

---

<sup>9</sup> Most media are easy to classify in one or another market by identifying the point of origin and basic distribution—information that commercial media tend to display prominently in an effort to attract and maintain advertisers.

period covered here included print, radio, television, and digital media produced for global markets, Russian/federal markets, regional markets at the Siberian and republic levels, and local markets at the district, city, and village levels. A comprehensive list of the media reviewed in this study appears in Appendix B. Here, I will tease apart the different media markets and introduce those publications and stations that were particularly important or that are explicitly discussed in the chapters to follow.

### *International media*

Internationally circulating fashion magazines like Vogue, Cosmopolitan, and Shape shimmer in the windows of Ulan-Ude's newspaper kiosks with high price tags, and elderly pensioners spend afternoons watching Brazilian soap operas dubbed into Russian. Closer to home, Buryatia's position along Russia's southern border grants access to some transnational Asian media. World-band and satellite radios pick up stations from Mongolia and China, and cable packages in Ulan-Ude include CCTV, the national television network of neighboring China, which broadcasts news and cultural programming from Inner Mongolia.

Chinese television deserves special attention here, because its representations of life in Inner Mongolia bear on Buryat language preservation efforts. CCTV gives the impression that Mongolic languages and cultures have been well preserved in Inner Mongolia. The representations are not consonant with what most observers from outside China report, but CCTV has succeeded in giving many Buryat-speaking Buryats the sense that their language and culture might have fared better under Chinese colonization than under Russian colonization (or "integration," depending on how you look at it).

Anti-Chinese sentiment in Buryatia is significant and has increased over the 2000s, following an influx of undocumented Chinese workers and rising tensions over the lumber, oil, and natural gas flowing out to fuel China's growing economy. To judge from my interviewees' comments about CCTV, however, the broadcasts from Inner Mongolia succeed in ameliorating negative sentiment.

### ***Federal ("central") media***

Among publications produced at the federal or "central" [*tsentral'naia*] level, *Argumenty i Fakty* ('Arguments and Facts'), *Izvestiia* ('News'), and *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* ('Russian Newspaper') were particularly common newspapers in the households I visited. *Moia Sem'ia* ('My Family') was very popular with women across age demographics. The most-watched federal-level programming airs on Russia's *Pervyi Kanal* (henceforth "Channel 1") and *Vtoroi Kanal* (henceforth "Channel 2"). It is Rossiia, on Channel 1, that produces the bulk of the situational comedies, historical dramas, and national news that people watch and discuss on a daily basis. Additionally, some popular Russian sitcoms and soap operas run on local channels.

### ***Regional media: republics, oblasts, and kraia***

A few federal newspapers run local versions, much like the Russian versions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*. *MK v Buriatii* (*Moskovskii Komsomolets* in Buryatia), known for its back-page soft pornography (labeled "sex-shop" very classily in two scripts, as "SEX-III OII") is printed in Irkutsk for distribution in Buryatia. Most regional media, however, is produced locally.

One of the most important facts about mass media in the Buryat territories is that, at the regional level, the three primary Buryat territories are in separate media markets. What is called in Buryatia a “republic newspaper” [*respublikanskaia gazeta*] is mirrored in Ust’-Orda, Irkutsk Oblast as an oblast-level newspaper [*oblastnaia gazeta*] and in Aga, Zabaikal’skii Krai as a krai-level newspaper [*kraevaia gazeta*]. The Buryat capital cities (or ‘towns’) of Ulan-Ude, Ust’-Ordynskii, and Aginskoe are thus serviced by separate regional-level newspapers, whose news selection and distribution correspond to the boundaries of these regions much more closely than, say, the New York Times for New York state or the San Francisco Chronicle for California. Thus residents of the Zabaikal’skii Krai do not necessarily know what is occurring in Irkutsk Oblast. The situation extends to Buryat-language media in the three territories considered here. The Republic of Buryatia’s flagship Buryat-language newspaper, Buriaad Ünën, rarely covers events in Ust’-Orda, and Ust’-Orda’s flagship Buryat-language newspaper, Ust’-Ordyn Ünën, rarely covers events in Ulan-Ude. This situation—what Dyrkheeva has called the lack of a “unified information field” (2002:66)—has resulted in Buryats of the three territories being quite disconnected from one another’s news and linguistic practices. When I traveled to Ust’-Orda in 2009, for instance, journalists there peppered me with questions about their colleagues in Ulan-Ude and the state of the political merger in distant Aga. Information and linguistic practices travel, of course, through such circulations of *people* in face-to-face interactions, but Buryats are largely missing out on the possibilities of mass mediated communication to interlink Buryat linguistic practices in the three territories.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> On linguistic differences between western territories like Ust’-Orda and eastern territories like

Across demographics, Buryatia's most popular and successful commercial newspaper since the 1990s has been *Inform Polis*. Founded as an independent news venture on the model of an American newspaper, *Inform Polis* prides itself on investigative journalism and has positioned itself against the state, as a 'friend of the people' helping them to navigate a dizzying consumer market, changing public transportation routes, and the complexities of post-Soviet bureaucracy. The paper also runs beauty contests, extended advertisements, and local celebrity gossip, and has a reputation for printing unfounded rumors. Many of my research participants reported not liking it but reading it anyway because it is such an indispensable source of information for surviving daily life in Ulan-Ude. *Buriatia-7* (Buryatia-7, the weekly, government-run Russian-language counterpart to Buriad Ünen) runs financial, tax, and administrative news and was thus particularly popular among the men and businesspeople I spoke with.

The State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (GTRK) of the Russian Federation, possibly Russia's single most powerful broadcasting network, has regional affiliates "Irkutsk" (IGTRK), "Buryatia" (BGTRK), and "Chita" (ChGTRK), based in the cities of Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, and Chita, respectively. ChGTRK has a smaller affiliate in Aginskoe that produces local Buryat-language news. In the Republic of Buryatia, the most-watched republic-level programming included the locally produced programs on Channel 1 (BGTRK), the local channel *Tivikom*, and the local channel Arig Us. Arig Us is an example of very successful branding in Buryatia. The name, meaning 'clear water,' is Mongolian, based on Khalkha rather than Buryat, a difference that is immediately salient to Buryat speakers because Mongolian us ('water') vs. Buryat uhan ('water') is

---

Aga, see Chapter 4.

one of the best known and most discussed differences between Khalkha and Buryat. The same company owns a chain of convenience stores under the same name, with the same logo, drawing on a pun on “clear water” and “clear broadcasting,” as well as on romantic impressions of the rural Mongolian countryside as a clean, pure, healthy landscape.

### ***Super-regional media: Siberia***

Intervening between the republic level and the federal level are news programs designed for regional Siberian audiences. Radio Sibir’, for example, was a popular and well-advertised radio station in Aginskoe in spring 2009. But the most notable example of this is in the structure of television news programming on Channels One and Two. Their main news programs are broadcast in the evenings as “*Vremia*” (Time) and “VESTI” (NEWS)—by far the most watched and most influential news programs in the Russian Federation.<sup>11</sup> Regional stations like BGTRK and ChGTRK produce their own local news programs, such as “VESTI-Buryatia.” Additionally, they broadcast a short news program called “VESTI-Sibir’,” covering west and east Siberian cities like Novosibirsk, Omsk, Irkutsk, and occasionally Ulan-Ude.<sup>12</sup> Republic-, oblast- and krai-level affiliates send in candidate materials for these intermediate-level shows. In Buryatia, VESTI-Sibir’ runs only during the day, not during the prime news hour, but it serves to keep residents of Buryatia informed about and connected to cities that might otherwise seem quite distant.

---

<sup>11</sup> Taylor Nelson Sofres offers timely ratings at <http://www.tns-global.ru/rus/data/ratings/tv/index.wbp>, last accessed September 20, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Ulan-Ude does not often make the national news, but it does sometimes make the regional Siberian news on VESTI-Sibir’. In May 2009, for example, a story about serious forest fires around Ulan-Ude ran on VESTI-Sibir’.

In this way, national news programming draws on and reproduces a Siberian regional identity.

***The local level: districts, cities, and villages***

Access to the internet and to satellite radio and television may seem to get around these kinds of regional ties, tapping instead into a global media market. Undoubtedly, these digital media are great sources of exposure to multiple languages. Twenty-somethings previously instructed in the English of donated textbooks (sample sentence: “John went to Kuwait.”) suddenly have access to the conversational English of pirated American movies, free for download. Satellite television beams music videos in German and French into the gyms and “*fitnes kluby*” of Ulan-Ude and cafes of rural Aginskoe. No one in my research, however, used these resources to access the New York Times, CNN, or the BBC, and only a handful of times have I known anyone in Buryatia to pay attention to Al-Jazeera online. The (arguably) widening, globalizing scope of entertainment media does not, in other words, extend to news media.<sup>13</sup> News media are a domain in which local production and consumption will always have a place, and in which ‘globalization’ is more applicable in form (in converging aesthetics, for example) than in content.

District-level newspapers and city and village newspapers embody localism. It is fully possible for a well-connected resident of the southwestern district of Akha, for example, to open the newspaper and recognize every single person pictured and quoted within. (The young woman who demonstrated this for me expressed surprise when I

---

<sup>13</sup> Russians have also had plenty of access to English-language and global media in the past, regardless of any “iron curtain” (Lemon 2008).

expressed surprise.) Newspapers are more likely to do this than radio and television, perhaps because print media are easier, faster, and cheaper to produce on a small scale (see Chapters 5–8). Commercial television stations like Arig Us, however, produce substantial advertising that is relevant and meaningful only to residents of Ulan-Ude.

At the smallest, most local level, some institutions have continued the Soviet tradition of having newspapers—and sometimes radio and television—within factories, collective farms, and schools. Universities and schools are particularly active in this regard. Schools in several of the Republic of Buryatia’s districts publish children’s newspapers, mainly in Russian but with some Buryat-language material in the Khorinskii and Zakamenskii districts (Dorzhieva 2007). While interesting, and certainly related to the issues explored here, these ‘hyper-local’ media are outside the scope of this study.

### ***Focal media***

Among all of these media available in Ulan-Ude, a few publications and stations proved especially important for the study of Buryat-Russian language contact, and thus became the foci of this study.

At the time of my research, Buriaad Ünen and Tolon were the most substantial Buryat-language news publications being produced. Buriaad Ünen traces its origins to the founding of an early Bolshevik newspaper discussed further in this chapter, Shèné baidal, in 1921. Soon after, it became the flagship Buryat-language newspaper of the BMASSR and has survived, against the odds, to the present day, with remarkable institutional consistency. Currently, it is printed on-site by the Republic of Buryatia’s state publishing house, also called Buriaad Ünen, which also publishes cultural journals and occasional

books and pedagogical materials—not all in Buryat, but with Buryat language and culture as their focus. The press and this paper are state-run and state-funded, and the newspaper serves as an organ of the government, not a particular party as was the case in the Soviet era. (By contrast, its Russian-language equivalent, *Pravda Buriatii*, split into two collectives, *Buriatiia* taking up the role of government newspaper and *Pravda Buriatii* remaining an organ of the Communist Party.) Tolon [Ray of Light],<sup>14</sup> a large-format weekly based in Aginskoe, is a post-Soviet endeavor to solve the aforementioned lack of a “unified information field” by means of an “all-Buryat” newspaper. Tolon is interesting for this and for being a rare independent [*samostoiatel’no*] minority-language publication.

In radio and television, the stations running Buryat-language news and cultural programming were BGTRK, ChGTRK, and Arig Us. While they do not (yet) carry any Buryat-language news, Arig Us deserves mention here because they produce a popular Buryat-language cultural program, Müngèn sérgé (‘Silver Hitching-Post’). There have been some attempts to begin commercially funded Buryat-language television news programming, and at least one foreign evangelical Christian organization, the Far East Broadcasting Company, has attempted to found a Buryat-language radio station.<sup>15</sup> Most recently Tivikom, a private television company in Ulan-Ude, tried to establish a Buryat-

---

<sup>14</sup> ‘Ray of light’ or ‘sunbeam’ (*luch sveta*) was the translation offered to me in Russian by one of Tolon’s founders. A retired reporter and several other Buryat speakers offered the translations *blesk* (‘brilliance’ or ‘shine’) and *siianie* (‘radiance’).

<sup>15</sup> After my initial acquaintance with a volunteer of the Far East Broadcasting Company in 2007, I could not find anyone willing to talk further with me about it. The organization has established stations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Khabarovsk, Ussuriysk, and Ulaanbaatar. They have had a small ministry in Ulan-Ude since at least 2006, but in summer 2009 they had yet to obtain the staff necessary for the Buryat-language programming originally proposed.

language program.<sup>16</sup> The difficulty apparently faced in getting these interesting new projects off the ground is a reminder of how remarkable Buryatia's many long-running mass media are—not only in beginning at all, but also in surviving the many political and economic upheavals that have occurred in Buryatia and in Russia at large. These media institutions give the impression of rare continuity over time, even while their relationships to their reading, listening, and viewing publics has changed.

### **(Minority-language) media and (minority-language) publics**

A public, in my analysis, is a collection of people oriented, however temporarily, around a mutually perceived, shared social fact. Publics can be understood broadly as forms of political legitimation, conceived of and practiced in many variations across time and space (Gal and Woolard 2001). What is crucially important, however, is that they are constituted through mutual perception, consciousness, or, as Michael Warner (2002) has argued, *attention*. Describing the development of the “public” out of communicative practices in 17th– and 18th–century England and France, Jürgen Habermas (1989[1962]) underscored the importance of its members' mutual awareness of participation. In a minority language public, too, I would argue that the key criterion of membership is attention to the fact of belonging to a minority language public.

To be clear, this approach to publics differs from notions of the “public sphere” that figure prominently in studies of Soviet and post-Soviet media. In this field, critics of state socialist and post-socialist societies have deployed Habermas's focus on inter-class

---

<sup>16</sup> According to interviewees, Tivikom had gone so far as to audition anchors and recruit seasoned Buryat-language journalists before the project folded under murky circumstances.

conversation and diversity of opinions to argue that the “public sphere” never properly functioned in state socialist societies. This is a pillar of the argument that state socialist societies lacked (and desperately needed) civil society (e.g., Garnham 1992). In the post-Soviet period, this has encouraged scholars on both sides of the Cold War’s old curtains and walls to retrospectively interpret many cultural developments of the late Soviet period as incendiary, liberating attempts to build civil society. Cafes and literary circles, for example, have been analyzed as emergent forms of political protest on the basis of Habermas’s conception of the public sphere—despite the fact that participants “explicitly distanced themselves from dissident discourses or political protests” (Yurchak 2006:145, critiquing Zdravomyslova 1996). Media scholars including James Curran and Slavko Splichal have argued that Marxist-Leninist theories of state and media indeed oppose a radical democratic view of the public sphere—because, according to what Curran calls “old-style marxism,” “the liberal concept of the public sphere is a chimera, disguising the reality of bourgeois domination” (Curran 1991:36).<sup>17</sup> Discursive space, in other words, will always be controlled by the dominant class, and to think otherwise is to have already accepted its terms. Mass media, in this case, cannot develop an organic, inter-class conversation; they must rather be taken over by the proletariat and used for explicitly political ends, as a weapon to awaken the masses. The “public sphere” widely discussed in Euro-American liberal theory and media studies was never a *goal* of Soviet media, so searching for it in this study would be anachronistic at best. At worst, it risks

---

<sup>17</sup> As Curran (1991) notes, Marx himself never fully articulated a theory of the capitalist vs. socialist press. Marxist critiques of capitalist media have taken a number of forms. Splichal (1994) presents a detailed theoretical analysis of the transitional role of media in post-socialist East-Central Europe, which makes clear the dominant model of media in late state socialism.

recapitulating dichotomies of the Cold War that are better treated as objects of analysis than as means.<sup>18</sup>

Here, by contrast, I would like to leave the “sphere,” the “arena,” and the “forum” aside and draw attention instead to the reflexive and self-fulfilling nature of publics as co-imagined and co-constructed social entities. According to one of Warner’s elusive definitions, “the notion of a public enables a reflexivity in the circulation of texts among strangers who become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity” (Warner 2002:11–12).<sup>19</sup> This statement, while useful, gestures toward why it is difficult to operationalize publics without conflating them with ethnographically observable readers, listeners, viewers, or audiences. Warner goes on to underscore the impossibility of ever making the “metapragmatic work” of the daily making and remaking of publics fully explicit.<sup>20</sup> Yet the linguistic projects of states, from censuses to standardization efforts to literacy campaigns, routinely include a great deal of metalinguistic commentary and judgments as to the composition and nature of an existing or ideal public.<sup>21</sup> How

---

<sup>18</sup> Susan Gal and Kathryn Woolard have also suggested that treatments of the public sphere have been limited by Habermas’s emphasis on face-to-face interaction (2001). Linguists could contribute to media studies and social theory on this point, by attending to the significant differences between face-to-face interaction and mass-mediated language.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Lee (1997:321–346) makes a similar point, regarding the construction of a national American public (“we”) via the circulation of “we, the people.” See also Lee 2001.

<sup>20</sup> “[A]lthough the idea of a public can only work if it is rooted in the self-understanding of the participants, participants could not possibly understand themselves in the terms I have stated. Among other reasons, it seems that in order to address a public, one must forget or ignore the fictional nature of the entity one addresses. The idea of a public is motivating, not simply instrumental. It is constitutive of a social imaginary. The manner in which it is understood by participants is therefore not merely epiphenomenal, not mere variation on a form whose essence can be grasped independently.” [Warner 2002:12]

<sup>21</sup> Of the large linguistic anthropological literature demonstrating this, see especially Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Errington 1998, 2008; Irvine and Gal 2000; Johnson 2005. See also Anderson (1991) on census projects, and Hirsch (2005) on the use of ethnographic expertise (including linguistic categorizations) in Russian and Soviet censuses.

linguists, pedagogues, political theorists, and other knowledge brokers imagine publics can be excavated from discourses about mass media, particularly those about minority-language and multilingual media.

In multilingual contexts, discourses about media routinely involve debate over the allocation of material resources to media in different languages, and by extension to their various publics. Few exercises make more explicit the relative valuation of different codes in the local linguistic “marketplace” (Bourdieu 1991[1982]),<sup>22</sup> within which the very concept of a “minority language” or “linguistic minority” implies exclusion from a dominant mainstream national language (Heller 2007). Studies of minority-language media, largely based on Western Europe revitalization projects, often point out the difficulties of determining what counts as a “minority language,” as well as the related practical problem of determining who one’s audience for minority-language print, broadcasts, blogs, etc., might be (e.g., Cormack 2007). On this point, applied studies of minority-language media intersect with concerns over theoretical categories like tribe, nation, dialect, and language that have long troubled linguists and linguistic anthropologists (e.g., Haugen 1966; Hymes 1968).

These conceptual intersections are not often foregrounded, but the contemporary co-construction of “a language” as an object of study and “a language” as a medium of mass communication owes much to those brokers—nationalists, politicians, writers, editors, language activists, et al.—who move knowledge and ideas from scientific

---

<sup>22</sup> I will not extend Bourdieu’s metaphor, because I did not find it germane in this case, and I fear it risks conflating the *media markets* of states, republics, districts, and cities (outlined above) with linguistic values that do not necessarily correspond to those territorial contexts (see also Silverstein 1993). The idea of a linguistic marketplace is relevant, however, in the limited sense of differentially valuing discrete codes within a sociolinguistic hierarchy.

journals into the domain of mass consumption by deciding, for example, what counts as a Basque broadcast, or what political outcomes might follow from airing a television program in Welsh.<sup>23</sup> This chapter represents an attempt to explain how such knowledge brokers, harboring ever-changing conceptions of news media and their relationship to linguistic groups, have driven Buryat media development in pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russia.

### **Empowering a nascent Buryat nation: the pre-Revolutionary period (–1917)**

At the time of Russian contact in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>24</sup> Buryats (then paying tribute to Mongol khans) were identifiable as a number of northern Mongolic tribes with sophisticated, distinctive agricultural and military capabilities. Russian travelogues identified the “*braty*” or “*bratskie liudi*” as a large tribe of the Lake Baikal region, and the Russian state treated them administratively as a discrete native people (Abaeva and Zhukovskaia 2004:38–44).<sup>25</sup> But their status as “a” people with “a” language was

---

<sup>23</sup> Brigittine French (2003) and Susan Gal (2001) have similarly highlighted the movement of language ideologies through networks of elites, French regarding the role of linguistic expertise in Mayan language politics and Gal regarding the Hungarian uptake of western European scholars’ conceptions of national languages and their speakers. Gal also points to how such movement can be blocked: when popular Hungarian magazines publish exotic photographs from scholarly expeditions to Russia, Siberia, and Mongolia in search of evidence for the Finno-Ugric connection, the journalists disagree with scholars’ conclusions of linguistic kinship. “Unpatriotic opinions” and politically threatening views can be excised (Gal 2001:37), as we will see happen with many Buryat language elites.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>25</sup> On early political affairs between the Russian Empire and Buryats, see Chimitdorzhiev 2001a, 2001b; Forsyth 1992; Montgomery 2005; Schorkowitz 2001b; Zateev 2002; and the documents compiled in Rumiantsev and Okun’ 1960. In the post-Soviet period, local mainstream historians (e.g., Zateev) have tended to emphasize consensus and interethnic mixing in their interpretation of Russian colonization, continuing to focus on class as the basis of conflict, while foreign historians (e.g., Forsyth, Montgomery, and Schorkowitz) and Buryat nationalist historians (among whom

anything but clear. Over the course of Russian colonization, linguistic diversity was further complicated by substantial differences in literacy and in the degree of contact-induced change from Russian—thanks in large part to differential influence from missionaries in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. To simplify somewhat, Russian Orthodox missionaries and a smattering of Protestants concentrated their activities to the west of Lake Baikal, while Mongolian Buddhists from the Tibetan Mahāyāna tradition concentrated their efforts to the east.<sup>26</sup> By the early 1900s, a division had begun to take shape that would remain linguistically, culturally, and politically salient for decades to come. “Western” or “Irkutsk Buryats” had emerged as a distinct group characterized by Russian linguistic knowledge, Russian personal names, Russian habits and dress, and— from the perspective of many later Buryat nationalists—a deplorable lack of knowledge about Buddhism and their Mongolian brethren to the south, while “Eastern Buryats” were increasingly being educated by Buddhist monasteries and traveling lamas literate in classical Mongolian and Tibetan, culturally tying them more strongly to Mongolia.

From the perspective of imperial authorities in St. Petersburg, unifying the Buryat language and people presented the danger of nationalist insurrection, but the potential

---

Chimitdorzhiev is the prime example) have tended to focus on interethnic conflict and cultural assimilation and have described Russian acquisition of territories around Lake Baikal as a bloody conquest. Valerie Kivelson provides a semiotically rich analysis of the assimilation of Siberia by means of cartography, with reference to the Buryats (whom she cites as the “Bratsk people”) (2006:167, 195–196).

<sup>26</sup> There were other missionaries involved in textual production in the area, including some ill-fated English Protestants who ambitiously aimed to convert the Buryats and, from their central position in Inner Asia, open Inner Mongolia and ultimately China to Christianity. From 1834 until they were expelled in 1840–41, they printed and circulated Mongolian translations of portions of both the Old and New Testaments, targeting taishas and khambo-lamas, the educated elites of Buryat Buddhist temple complexes (Bawden 1985). (Some of these translations survive in the Republic of Buryatia in the rare books division of the National Library, including a copy of the 1840 Old Testament in vertical Mongolian script.) Buryat was not distinguished from Mongolian at this point as a discrete language, and in any event, their intended audience had been educated mainly in the classical literary language of Mongolian Buddhism.

benefits to state security outweighed this risk. While Russification drew imperial Buryat subjects ever westward, there was a countervailing urge (even among Russian scholars) to align Buryats with a pan-Mongolian world, pulling south and east. Treaties fixing the border between Russia and China notwithstanding,<sup>27</sup> cultural and linguistic contact threatened to tear the Lake Baikal region apart. Russia maintained only a tenuous grasp of its eastern borders, and cultural bifurcation among the Buryats was not in the state's interest because they served an important ambassadorial function, mediating and buffering relations between Russia, China, and Tibet (Andreyev 2003; Rupen 1964). Meanwhile, some Russian-educated Buryat elites were becoming increasingly agitated by Russification policies, and in the radically charged period following the Russian Revolution of 1905, this political dissatisfaction dovetailed with their growing interest in European theories of nationhood to create something like “national awareness” (Montgomery 2005:133).<sup>28</sup> It was in this context that scholars, missionaries, and political activists alike began to circulate language policy statements calling for greater unification of the Buryat language—and, by extension, “the Buryat people.”

---

<sup>27</sup> Diplomatic and trade relations between China and Russia were officially regulated by the Treaties of Nerchinsk (1689) and Kiakhta (1728). On the importance of these treaties from the Chinese perspective, see Barfield 1989.

<sup>28</sup> Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mèrgèn refer to “*pravosoznanie i samosoznanie*,” ‘right awareness and self-awareness’ (1910:1). Much evidence from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries points to the Buryat elites’ growing knowledge of—and identification with—national(ist) movements in Europe. For example, Tsybèn Zhamtsarano and Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, respectively a Buryat nationalist linguist and Russian ethnographer, both used the Austro-Hungarian empire as evidence that small nations could be preserved within a “multinational” framework (Klements 1907; Zhamtsarano 1907). Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mèrgèn specifically refer to the articles by Zhamtsarano and Klements (1910:34) and cite also the work of the Finno-Ugric Society, a scholastic society whose purpose was to study the linguistic, ethnographic, and related aspects of “all the peoples of Finnish origin” (1910:38).

One of the most interesting of these statements came in 1910 from a Buryat schoolteacher named Nikolai Amagaev and a young scholar-cum-nationalist-revolutionary named Élbek-Dorzhi Rinchino, writing under the pseudonym Alamzhi-Mèrgèn.<sup>29</sup> Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mèrgèn devised their own modified alphabet for Buryat,<sup>30</sup> which they advocated in a dual-language pamphlet designed to be accessible to both Russian and Mongolian readers. Most of the pamphlet was concerned not with phonemic representation, but rather with the logistics of language standardization and national awakening. Existing attempts at writing Buryat had failed, they said, because they could not bridge the wide gaps between dialects and writing systems. The orthographic reforms they proposed would “create the soil and conditions for the emergence of a new general-Mongolian<sup>31</sup> literary language” that would be widely used not only by well-educated elites, but also by the “masses” (1910:38). Who exactly constituted “the masses” was left vague, and it is not clear what they imagined the literacy rate of their potential readers to be. But it is clear that they recognized them as mostly illiterate, in contrast to the Buryat intelligentsia of Irkutsk and the educated lamas of eastern Buryatia. They lamented the lack of “institutions of enlightenment” that would teach and promote the use of a unified writing system for Buryat—in the absence of which various systems based on the Cyrillic, Latin, and vertical Mongolian scripts were

---

<sup>29</sup> Rinchino often used this pseudonym, a reference to the hero of a classical Buryat epic tale, for his poetry, folklore collections, and linguistic work. Given his apparent preference, I have chosen to retain his pseudonym here.

<sup>30</sup> Their alphabet is based on the script of Agvan Dorzhiev, a version of the Oirat “clear script” modified to be closer to Buryat pronunciation and more amenable to learning. For a fuller description of this—and of the various other scripts and alphabets that have been used for Buryat—see Kara 1972, 1996; Montgomery 2005.

<sup>31</sup> The word here is “*obshchemongol'skii*,” this is sometimes translated as “pan-Mongolian,” but I am translating it as “general-Mongolian” to avoid confusion with the political movement pan-Mongolism.

then in competition. They laid out what they saw as the main problems and argued that there was “only one possible way” forward: “through print” (1910:40).<sup>32</sup> Print, they said, was the medium in which the alphabet issue and, ultimately, the fate of the Buryat as a people would be most productively discussed and decided. It would also be a means of pedagogy, not just for literacy but for the subsequent “penetration of cultural achievements” from the intelligentsia into the “wide masses” of ordinary Buryats (1910:38). Specifically, they regretted that it was not possible to found a Mongol-Buryat<sup>33</sup> newspaper.

Their argument presaged both Benedict Anderson’s (1991) thesis that print media create the conditions for imagining national communities and Michael Silverstein’s (2000) observation that this process depends on standardized languages that are more co-constructed than discovered. Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mërgën would have agreed that media circulations are part and parcel of the language standardizing process, creating language communities while assuming them—because this is precisely what they wanted. What is remarkable about their pamphlet is the implicit distinction it makes between nations (which are, for them, discovered) and reading publics (which are created, through hard work and the right alphabet). It is taken for granted, in their text, that there is some sort of single, unified, essential body of people, an already-existing, perhaps even primordial ethnic group, “the” Buryat people (or Buryat *narod*). And yet, they do not claim to have discovered a single, unified language “out there in the world;” they rather

---

<sup>32</sup> “Print” [*pechat*] could also be translated here as “the press,” but it is more likely that at the time they were referring to print in general.

<sup>33</sup> The term “Mongol-Buryats” is idiosyncratic in this text; later this would be the “Buryat-Mongols,” and then simply the “Buryats.”

ask how they can make Mongol-Buryats consider themselves speakers of a single, unified language. They thus seek to craft a public, a set of interlinked strangers who will engage with ideas and information in a shared language with shared values, and thus become a good audience for further political enlightenment and transformative projects.

To the extent that Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mérgén sought to make this public coextensive with the already-existing *narod*, their project was classically nationalist. And it was a harbinger of things to come, in that the minority-language media that was ultimately developed in Buryatia (and described in this dissertation) was predicated on the principle of ethnonational autonomy detailed in Chapter 2. In 1910, however, it remained a dream. Despite some relaxation of media laws after the Revolution of 1905, minority-language newspapers were established only at the discretion of the imperial censor's office in St. Petersburg, which was generally hostile to native-language education and literacy efforts. The only attempt at a Buryat-language newspaper that we know of today was a bilingual tea trade publication called *Žizn' na vostochnoi okraine/Züün zügei baidal* (Life on the Eastern Frontier) that had been closed by state authorities in 1897 (Kim and Baldanov 1994).<sup>34</sup> While the Buryat intelligentsia was

---

<sup>34</sup> *Žizn' na vostochnoi okraine/Züün zügei baidal* (also sometimes cited as *Žizn' vostoka*) was founded by one of Buryatia's most fascinating and colorful characters, Petr Badmaev, best known as a doctor of Tibetan medicine to royalty in St. Petersburg. The newspaper published trade data and some sociopolitical commentary under the auspices of his company, P. A. Badmaev and Co., in Chita from 1895 to 1897, when censors apparently shut it down in response to a complaint from the governor of the Zabaikal oblast to the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia about the paper's political criticism (Kim and Baldanov 1994). This is usually considered a Russian-Mongolian newspaper (which is perhaps why little has been published about it among Buryat historians), but some prominent scholars (e.g., Kim and Baldanov) consider it distinctively Buryat. Why Badmaev was publishing his newspaper in a bilingual format is unclear, though it is likely that he had political reasons; he was concurrently involved with a national school for Buryats in St. Petersburg, which promoted Buryat-medium education and literacy before it was also shut down (Montgomery 2005; Rupen 1964). Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mérgén do not mention Badmaev's newspaper by name; however, their

increasingly vocal on issues of “national enlightenment,” it would be difficult to argue that there was anything like a national public in Buryatia. It was only shortly later, however, in the massive nation-building projects of the early Soviet period, that minority-language media emerged as a key state technology striving to make modern, rational publics out of native Siberians.

### **Informing the populace via elites: the early Soviet period (1918–1929)**

One of the first projects of the fledgling Soviet state was to establish newspapers in Russian and local vernaculars to promote Bolshevik ideology and provide information channels to the distant peripheries. This was especially important in eastern Siberia, where the Civil War continued in fits and starts well into the 1920s, and where the native populace, ignorant of the extraordinary benefits that were about to be bestowed upon them, needed some convincing. Bolshevik leaders based in the western Russian capitals grappled with the deceptively complex practical matter of distributing even the most basic information into the Buryat territories. To wit: the Aga Regional Historical Museum, in the important but remote regional capital of Aginskoe, houses a telegraph machine on which a local technician reportedly received news of the Revolution a full two weeks after the event.<sup>35</sup> Newspapers, cheaply and quickly produced on printing presses that were already widely available throughout the Russian empire, rapidly

---

suggestive side note, “[O]f course, it would be more expedient and more productive if it were possible to establish a Mongol-Buryat newspaper, but...” might well refer to his difficulties (1910:40).

<sup>35</sup> This fact is recorded in a plaque at the Aga Regional Historical Museum, observed March 2009. Historical documentation of media production and consumption during Russia’s Civil War is scant. On Ulan-Ude’s (then Verkhneudinsk’s) incorporation into international telegraphic systems in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Sanzhieva 2009.

emerged as the new state's preferred medium of mass communication. Bolshevik newspapers were locally printed in the regional capitals of Irkutsk, Chita, and Ulan-Ude (then Verkhneudinsk) and distributed to rural territories by horse and cart.

Faced with a largely illiterate population, new Bolshevik journalists in the 1910s–20s depended instead on well-placed native activists, such as schoolteachers, secularized lamas, and members of the Buryat intelligentsia, who would read state newspapers aloud for their local comrades. It is difficult to determine what the literacy rate in the Baikal region in the 1920s might have been. A significant number of Buryats had attended Russian Orthodox schools, some had attended native Buryat schools, and, perhaps most significantly for Buryat-language media, there were large monastic communities and traveling Buddhist monks that provided basic education to the children of semi-nomadic families. The 1897 All-Russian census and the 1926 All-Union census ostensibly gathered data on literacy among ethnic Buryats (Hirsch 2005; Troinitskii 1905),<sup>36</sup> but the reported results are difficult to trust.<sup>37</sup> By any account, however, a vanishingly small percentage of ethnic Buryats would have been able to read texts in either Buryat or Russian.

---

<sup>36</sup> In 1908, the Russian Geographic Society reported an official literacy rate (probably mainly in Russian, though it is unclear) among western Buryats of 5.2%, and among eastern Buryats of 8.4%. Based on a spot-check in eastern Buryat communities, however, they reported that 14% of lay (i.e., non-monastic) males appeared to be able to read and write fluently in classical Mongolian, and a remarkable 10% in Tibetan (Iurtsovskii 1923; Turachininov 1914). Later, Soviet linguists and historians downplayed the 1908 numbers, partly under pressure to exaggerate the victorious gains in literacy achieved among native Siberians under Soviet rule.

<sup>37</sup> Both censuses were methodologically suspect, especially in remote provinces (Hirsch 2005). As noted above, it is not always clear in what languages literacy was tested, or how. It has also been suggested that many eastern Buryats hid their own literacy in Mongolian from officials, fearing political repression (M. K. 1904; Montgomery 2005). In recent years, the pendulum of revisionist history has swung far in this direction, prompting occasional suggestions that *most* of the eastern Buryats were literate in the classical Mongolian script before the Soviet period. A joke to this effect circulates among some contemporary Buryat scholars: “Of course the Buryats were considered ‘illiterate’! They didn’t speak **Russian!**”

Faced with this low literacy rate, early Soviet leaders depended instead on well-placed native activists who would read state newspapers aloud for their local comrades in performances that were increasingly institutionalized. The earliest news published in Buryat therefore consisted mainly of illustrated announcements and instructions to be read aloud to illiterate herders. Some of these early materials introduced the iconography of the new state, the Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BMASSR), such as a notice announcing the death of Lenin with a line drawing of his famous profile flanked by lines of classical Mongolian script (Figure 3.1). Content in this case was directly translated from a Russian announcement, but it represents an important attempt to indigenize the image of Lenin and to forge a new socialist language in Buryat.<sup>38</sup> Other early news publications propagandized the benefits of new social programs and provided information on how to navigate the new Soviet bureaucracy. For example, a substantial 16-page informational pamphlet from the Buryat Cooperative Union (Figure 3.2) instructs its readers, in painstaking bureaucratic detail, how to form a cooperative and run meetings.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> The text contains, among other things, innovative expressions for ‘proletarian’ and ‘Bolshevik.’ Soviet style is further discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> I am indebted to Nikolai Tsyrempilov for his virtuosic on-the-fly translation of these materials; his observations inform my analysis here.



In addition to being informative, this pamphlet clearly raises Buryat to the status of an official language of business and administration (a feature of progressive Leninist language policy that would not last). Similarly, Buryat-language publications relied heavily on visual imagery of empowerment, most notably in the popular trope of a young man on horseback, dressed in a traditional Buryat *dëgël*<sup>40</sup> and hat and hoisting a Mongolian war banner.<sup>41</sup> The use of horses and the jubilant militarism of such images suggest that Bolshevik newspaper workers were targeting a youthful rural population of herders, possibly already stirred by the Civil War.<sup>42</sup> In images like that gracing the publication pictured in Figure 3.2, Buryat-language publications also began to instantiate the ideal of interethnic brotherly love that would become the “*druzhba narodov*,” or ‘friendship of the peoples.’<sup>43</sup>

Like Amagaev and Alamzhi Mërgën before them, the producers of these native-language texts did not expect their direct *readers* to be the unwashed masses, but they did want to reach that audience. If the Buryat *narod* appeared to them a nascent, waiting national body, ripe for revolutionary transformation, the problem for Bolshevik propagandists was one of access. Agitators-propagandists, in “*agitprop*” brigades of the Red Army, were deployed from Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Eastern Europe to the Soviet peripheries to pursue a broad strategy of winning over the people by winning over

---

<sup>40</sup> A *dëgël* is a long coat buttoned at the shoulder and cinched at the waist with a belt, typical of Mongolian dress. It is pictured in Figure 3.2, with a hat typical of Buryat men.

<sup>41</sup> The image described graced the masthead of *Shënë baidal*, an early Soviet newspaper discussed below. In some versions of the image, the man plays a European-style bugle or speaks into a long animal horn, his words visible in the air.

<sup>42</sup> See also “*Potomok Chingis Khana*” (‘Descendant of Chinggis Khan,’ also released as “Storm Over Asia”), a famous silent film from the era depicting the revolution in Mongolia. The lead actor, Valerii Ivanovich Inkizhinov (Inkijinov), was a western Buryat from Bokhan, in Irkutsk Oblast.

<sup>43</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2.

the local elite. They would train local political leaders, ‘converted’ Buddhist lamas, and especially teachers to become regional Bolsheviks and translate—both metaphorically and literally—new Soviet doctrine to their countrymen.

Early attempts at Buryat-language publishing, however, suffered from a dearth of expertise. There was not yet a professional cadre of Buryat-language journalists, so the first news texts were produced through translation. Üür [Dawn], often credited as the first Soviet newspaper in Buryat, consisted of articles written in Russian by a Bolshevik army propagandist, the Czech satirist Jaroslav Hašek (R. *Gashek*), that were then translated by his Buryat-literate coeditors.<sup>44</sup> Early informational publications like those pictured in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 were also translations from official Russian announcements.

Heavy reliance on translation effectively required newspaper workers to be conversant—and preferably literate—in both Russian and Buryat. But would-be propagandists encountered uneven willingness among Buryat-literate elites to join the new political establishment. Most of Buryatia’s activist intelligentsia (e.g., Rinchino, co-author of our 1910 manifesto) left for St. Petersburg or Mongolia or were otherwise occupied in revolutionary activities. Practical literary work in the early Soviet period thus fell to whoever was available and willing. Even without the demands of starting new publications, the basic translation needs of new political structures in the Baikal region’s capital cities, Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, and Chita, stretched these experts quite thin.

---

<sup>44</sup> Üür was published briefly in Irkutsk, where Hašek was briefly stationed, during 1920. No copies have been located in archives, but according to Hašek’s personal correspondence, he wrote the articles in Russian, and they were then translated by his Buryat co-editors, Dava Damdintyrenov and Ardan Markizov (Dondokov 1960; Montgomery 2005; Namzhilova 2001). Other Bolshevik minority-language newspapers of the era had the same title, including the first Romani newspapers; given that propagandists like Hašek had little knowledge of local cultures and were stationed only briefly on army duties, content was likely very standardized.

Beyond linguistic expertise, early Soviet journalists encountered practical technological problems peculiar to printing in multiple languages and scripts. Wartime paper shortages plagued early Buryat-language publications like *Üür* and limited their print runs. With the huge demands of Russian-language newspaper printing and a dearth of technological expertise,<sup>45</sup> newspapers in every language were poorly produced. Typesetting in the classical Mongolian script presented an additional conundrum, and prevented Buryat-language news publication on several occasions when Russian-dominant revolutionary authorities desperately wanted it.<sup>46</sup> This problem is exemplified in an early Buryat national newspaper, *Golos Buriat-Mongola* [Voice of the Buryat-Mongol], published in 1920 in Chita by the Revolutionary Central Committee of the Buryat-Mongols of the Far Eastern Republic (a short-lived state that served as a buffer between war-racked Soviet Russia and Japan during 1920–1922). *Golos Buriat-Mongola* published political news as well as articles about Buryat traditional law, land use, literature, and other academic topics by prominent Buryat scholars. Articles in *Golos* make clear that establishing a Buryat-language press was a major priority in the Far Eastern Republic (e.g., Garbatovskii 1920), and that *Golos* was meant to become the bilingual newspaper of an autonomous Buryat political region—though meanwhile it was published only in Russian. The editors announced in the first issue that they were “taking

---

<sup>45</sup> Exacerbating the lack of journalistic and technological expertise was the emigration of Siberian Jews. In the early 1900s, the newspapers of Verkhneudinsk (now Ulan-Ude) were run largely by members of the city’s sizable and well-positioned Jewish population. Many of these journalists were progressives active in the Revolution of 1905, in social-democratic politics, and in movements for national self-determination and public education. Ethnic Jews (identified as such according to Soviet practice) appear periodically in newspaper documents throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but most of the pre-Revolutionary personnel seem to have taken their leave of Buryatia’s journalism scene.

<sup>46</sup> Limited linotype sets for the Mongolian script were heavily used, resulting in terrible print quality in the 1920s. Letter sets had to be ordered from abroad (*Buriat-Mongol’skaia Pravda* 1928; see also Montgomery 2005 on technological difficulties of native-language print).

steps toward the organization of typesetting also in Buryat-Mongolian” (*Golos Buriat-Mongola* 1920), for which they had enlisted the help of some unnamed Mongolian typesetters (*Golos Buriat-Mongola* 1921). It was nearly a year before a Buryat-language newspaper did come out in the Far Eastern Republic, and this somewhat informally produced paper, *Shènè baidal* [A new life],<sup>47</sup> relied on the limited expertise of a 24-year-old Russian editor who was fluent in Buryat and Mongolian.<sup>48</sup>

Work grew technologically complicated again when the BMASSR officially introduced a new Latin script for Buryat in September 1926. The script change was part of a sweeping new ‘internationalist’ policy to Latinize the native Siberian languages and many of the smaller languages of the Soviet Union, thus making them more transparent to one another and to the ‘outside world,’ minimizing linguistic barriers (or so the logic went).<sup>49</sup> In practice, many literate Buryats probably continued writing in classical

---

<sup>47</sup> This title was also standardized across minority-language newspapers.

<sup>48</sup> The editor, Innokentii P. Malkov, was a well-known Mongolist (Namzhilova 2001) and an important proponent of minority-language publication. During the alphabet wars of the 1920s, he was one of the greatest champions for keeping the classical Mongolian script for Buryat (Montgomery 2005). In September 1923, *Shènè baidal* moved to Verkhneudinsk (now Ulan-Ude) from Chita to combine with *Pribaikal'skaia Pravda* [The Pribaikal Truth] and *Krasnyi Buriat-Mongol* [The Red Buryat-Mongol] to form the newly minted Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BMASSR)'s joint Russian- and Buryat-language news institution, *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda* [the Buryat-Mongolian Truth, or BMP]. BMP would publish the Russian-language newspaper *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda* and, on the basis of *Shènè baidal*, the Buryat-language newspaper *Buriat-Mongolun Unèn*. The first senior editor [*otvetstvennyi redaktor*] was G. Mulakov, who had previously edited *Krasnyi Buriat-Mongol*, a Russian-language newspaper published in Irkutsk and focusing on the concerns of western Buryats (Dondokov 1960; NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 245, protocol 1). Malkov continued working at *Buriat-Mongolun Unèn* as a translator (NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 625, protocol 8), contributor, and editor.

<sup>49</sup> In other parts of the Soviet Union, some languages with established literary traditions kept their pre-revolutionary scripts; Yiddish, Georgian, and Armenian, for example, continued to be written in Hebrew, Georgian, and Armenian scripts (Comrie 1996:782). The Mongolian script, however, was treated like Arabic and replaced. The motivation (or *one of* the motivations) might have been similar: to thwart both pan-Turkism and pan-Mongolianism, both serious political threats along the Soviet state's tenuous borders. A Latin alphabet was introduced in 1927 for Kalmyk, and in 1930 for Tuvan. Robert Rupen (1966) has interpreted the Tuvan Latinization in particular as an attempt to linguistically isolate the region from the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR), though the MPR also

Mongolian script (Shagdarov 1974), and the lag in implementing the change in media institutions was extreme: the first publications in the new Latin script appeared in 1931, *five years* after the official adoption.

### **Creating a direct line of communication between citizen and State**

In sum, the early Soviet state used Buryat-language media primarily to make information available to its distant peripheries, depending on local elites as intermediaries. Later Soviet historians and journalists would soundly criticize early efforts like *Golos Buriat-Mongola* for focusing too much energy on the intelligentsia (most of whom were condemned as “bourgeois nationalists” in the purges of the 1930s) and underappreciating the socially transformative power of native-language newspapers for the proletariat. Writing in 1960, B. Ts. Dondokov explains:

A study of archival materials, in part of the newspaper *Golos Buriat-Mongola* [...] shows that the leadership of the Revkom [Revolutionary Committee] and Buryat autonomous government of the DVR [Far Eastern Republic] [...] had a mistaken position on the issue of publishing national [Buryat] print, narrowly and vaguely defining its role. The task of a newspaper in the Buryat language, in their opinion, was reduced to only unifying the national intelligentsia and attracting them to activist work, [and to] acquainting the broad masses with the point of occurring events, current trends in contemporary political life, and examples of the literature and artwork of their own people and of others.[Dondokov 1960:36]

Only after some Communists joined the leadership of the Buryat autonomous government would, in Dondokov’s view, the proper direction be taken. The newspaper that was ultimately created, *Shênè baidal*, produced information that was “short [and] accessible for a semi-literate [*malogramotnyi*] peasant, based on local facts.” This makes

---

tried (and failed) to Latinize Mongolian in 1930-32. On Buryatia’s alphabet wars, see Arai 2006; Montgomery 2005.

the “agitation”—a major goal of Soviet socialist propaganda and journalism—  
“intelligible and understood.” (Dondokov 1960:37–38)

Dondokov’s appraisal reminds us that by the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century, Soviet socialism had re-imagined the relationship between news media and publics, within which local elites were only a stop-gap measure. While well-educated Buryat elites provided an initial point of access to ‘the masses,’ the ultimate goal of Soviet Buryat-language media was nothing less than creating a direct line of communication between the individual Buryat and the State. In this role, Buryat-language news media functioned as a transformative state technology. Going well beyond the ‘mere’ dissemination of information to existing elites, early Soviet newspapers emphasized their role as institutions of propaganda and enlightenment, and they sought to revolutionize textual practices.

State propagandists and journalists reworked the relationship between Buryat-language news and a Buryat language public through three major techniques of the early Soviet period: organizing proletarian correspondents, professionalizing new Buryat journalists, and encouraging literacy within the general populace. The first technique, organizing proletarian correspondents, was a response to the need to address, as the editors of *Zhurnalist* [Journalist] put it in 1923, “every stratum of the population using different formats, but in one communist language” (quoted in Smith 1998:38–39). Political agitators were particularly concerned to enact more direct connections between journalists and readers, so that the newspaper (and thereby the state) would not only be “intelligible” to “the people,” but also appear to emanate from them. This concern was by no means limited to Buryatia, or to minority-language news media. Newspapers

throughout the Soviet Union organized new cadres of worker correspondents (*rabkory*) and village correspondents (*sel'kory*), who would localize broader projects like agricultural collectivization by reporting on a single farm's milk production or tractor technology (Fitzpatrick 1994).<sup>50</sup> In addition to localizing and personalizing Soviet news, the *rabkory* and *sel'kory* served a linguistic purpose. These correspondents were introduced in order to forge a new “voice” between the ideological slogans of Bolshevism and the everyday vernacular of the peasantry. *Rabkory* and *sel'kory* were supposed to infuse newspapers with proletarian authenticity and the “language of the people” (Gorham 2003:126). In Buryatia, as elsewhere, forging this ‘new voice’ posed a difficult challenge to both the amateur journalists writing in a tenuously standardized minority language and the editors charged with translating and correcting their communiqués (e.g., NARB, f. 1, op. 1, d. 433, protocol 2).<sup>51</sup>

The second technique, professionalizing new Buryat journalists, was in part a response to the immediate need for Buryat-speaking experts to take a leadership role in organizing the *rabkory* and *sel'kory*. It became a priority of the state to build cadres fast and professionalize them into new ideals of Soviet journalism. Professionalizing specifically *Buryat* journalists was also, however, part of the broader movement of *korenizatsiia*, or “indigenization.” Often analyzed as ethnic particularism (Slezkine 1996) or affirmative action (Martin 2001), *korenizatsiia* followed Leninist and early Stalinist

---

<sup>50</sup> Another strategy was to open specialized newspapers for different segments of the population. Youth newspapers were a particularly popular means of building new Bolshevik cadres. Other early Buryat newspapers—in both Russian and Buryat—focused on animal husbandry.

<sup>51</sup> Official discussions about the working of *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda* in its early years highlight the difficulties of procuring materials from outside correspondents and political leaders. They were routinely requested to take a more active role in the newspaper and submit articles. (NARB, f. 1, op. 1, d. 433, protocol 2)

nationality policy, which explicitly emphasized local language development, suppression of “Great Russian chauvinism,” and the principle of national self-determination. As the state worked quickly to train new cadres in Soviet political ideology and basic journalism, they put special emphasis on minority populations.

Not all minorities, however, were emphasized equally. Particular efforts were made to support schools, textbooks, and newspapers for languages whose speakers already could be—or would conceivably soon be able to be—considered a viable, ‘nation’-like public.<sup>52</sup> Because they were identified by early ethnographers as having (among other things) complex tribal organization, a developed economy, some nascent national consciousness, and the beginnings of a standard written language, Buryats were supposed to be relatively far along the Marxist-Leninist developmental scale, compared to other native Siberians. This is, in large part, why Buryatia enjoyed semi-autonomous status within Russia as the Buryat(-Mongol) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and why the Buryats were the republic’s titular nationality. In Buryatia, the difference in status meant that other officially recognized native languages, most notably Ewenki, were de-prioritized in language planning, including in the sphere of media production—a decision with impacts still visible today.<sup>53</sup>

Beyond elevating Buryat over other native languages, *korenizatsiia* effectively changed the face of Buryat-language journalism by shifting emphasis for qualification from linguistic ability in Buryat to ethnic and gender identity. In the 1920s,

---

<sup>52</sup> See Hirsch 2005 for an excellent discussion of these decisions and the ideologies behind them.

<sup>53</sup> Ewenki (also called Tungus) appears in historical and contemporary discussions of media in the Republic of Buryatia only extremely rarely. Language resources for Ewenki in contemporary Buryatia include a department at Buryat State University and a brief weekly television program. See discussion in Chapter 2.

‘Buryatization’ (*oburiachivanie*) of state apparatuses like the newspapers primarily aimed to incorporate ethnic Buryats into the workforce. The Ministry of Culture aggressively recruited young Buryats, especially women, to work alongside the ethnic Russians and Jews who had been running Buryatia’s newspapers and to attend meetings, ideological training sessions, and professionalization seminars in distant Moscow.<sup>54</sup>

The third technique targeted what would become the audience for Buryatia’s freshly indigenized print. Regional newspapers like Ünën, the flagship Buryat-language version of *Pravda*,<sup>55</sup> were central in a broader campaign to create an active and politically empowered socialist populace through literacy. Posters, whose slogans were reproduced in newspapers, and insistent articles encouraged Buryats to take advantage of adult literacy classes. Literacy and enlightenment campaigns ran well into the 1950s in the form of “reading huts” and “red yurts” [*krasnye iurty*] sprinkled in rural areas throughout the BMASSR.<sup>56</sup> In the 1920s, however, even before the institutions of enlightenment were thoroughly established, would-be enlighteners worked to disparage existing forms

---

<sup>54</sup> *Korenizatsiia* was developed in Buryatia after mid-1924, when Mattvei Amagaev (not our Nikolai of above) declared, “In view of the fact that the period of the organizational construction of state apparatuses has finished, [we must] turn to the Buryaticization [*oburiachivanie*] of our state apparatuses, and also to the introduction of the Buryat language into clerical work” (NARB, f. 1, op. 1, d. 433, protocol 24). Already in 1923, Amagaev had advocated Buryat and Mongolian language classes for clerical workers, including ethnic Russians (NARB, f. 1, op. 1, d. 245, protocol 13). It is difficult to judge from archival records how much clerical work was conducted in Buryat. Even in Buryat-dominant institutions like the Buryat-language newspapers, most official party documents were required to be written in—or translated into—Russian in order to be legible to higher authorities outside the republic.

<sup>55</sup> The flagship newspapers of the BMASSR went through a series of name changes but always included “*Pravda*” and “Ünën” in their titles. Their contemporary descendents are *Pravda Buriatii* (now an organ of the regional Communist party), *Buriatiia* (an organ of the government), and Buriiaad Ünën (a state newspaper targeting ethnic Buryats, now published with some articles in Russian but most in Buryat). On the contemporary Buryat mediascape, see also Badmaeva 2004; Peers 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Reading huts and red yurts, run by specialists in agitation and propaganda (“agitprop”) and the Ministry of Culture, were in some ways ideological extensions of newspaper reading practices from the 1920s. Along with Houses of Culture, they functioned as the primary stations of enlightenment and political training for adults in Soviet Buryatia. (NARB, f. 955, op. 1, d. 507)

of authority that were incompatible with a Soviet ideal of proletarian empowerment. Ünën published cartoons ridiculing Buddhist lamas, who had functioned as textual intercessors for generations of illiterate Buryats. Books that had been worshipped as ritual objects were now remade into objects for direct use.<sup>57</sup> While the Buryat of the past accepted a blessing on the head from a text-as-ritual-artifact (Figure 3.3), the Buryat of the bright and glorious Soviet future would have in his (or her) own hands a book, and thus the means to drive a tractor or build a city (Figure 3.4). Through active engagement with state-produced texts, newly empowered Buryats would become rational, modern Soviet citizens both reflective and constitutive of state ideology.



**Figure 3.3. Buddhist lamas are portrayed conducting a burial ritual and giving a blessing with texts in Buriat-Mongolun Ünën.** Nos. 82(369), November 18, 1929 (left) and 64(351), 13 September, 1929 (right).

---

<sup>57</sup> In Mongolian and Buryat Buddhism, books such as copies of sūtra texts are routinely incorporated into household shrines and worshipped as extensions of the Buddha or local deities. (See Wallace 2010 for an analysis of Mongolian Buddhist book worship.) In both Buryatia and Mongolia, this practice was periodically targeted by “militant atheists” during the Soviet period but was never fully eradicated. In contemporary Buryatia, books successfully fulfill both types of roles, and publishing houses are experimenting with printing both European-style bound books and loose-leaf formats to mimic the Tibetan-style xylograph prints associated with Buryat Buddhism.



**Figure 3.4.** An artist imagines an ideal Soviet socialist future in Buriat-Mongolun Ünen. No. 67(354), September 24, 1929.

### **Performing Soviet ideals, making Soviet subjects: Stalinism and the post-war period (1930–1959)**

The 1930s through World War II and the immediate post-war years are often remembered for sinister political intrigue and Stalin’s famous cult of personality, but they also witnessed the more subtle—yet no less thoroughgoing—forging of a Soviet mode of daily living (Fitzpatrick 1999; Gronow 2004; Hellbeck 2006). It was a very important period for establishing a Soviet moral authority that would assimilate Buryats (and other national minorities) into a correct mode of being Soviet citizens. This enormous feat was accomplished largely through Buryat-language news media.

Buryats, like other citizens, were expected to perform their own commitment to communist principles via mass media, while the State performed its commitment to safeguarding ethnic equality via the very same means. Mass media and the arts—all

potential tools of propaganda—became a stage on which everyone played their part. News media publicized the artistic and industrial accomplishments of the Soviet Union and spread the imagery of Stalinism, patriotism, and socialist realism into borderlands like Buryatia, localizing what might otherwise seem distant through regional versions of *Pravda*. Meanwhile, radio developed from a short-wave amateur technology into a phenomenally successful Soviet-wide system of state-run studios. In Buryatia, state broadcasts began in 1931, and the republic’s radio service quickly became an integral part of the news media scene, particularly under Stalin’s direction in the 1940s–1950s.<sup>58</sup> Newspapers and radio emerged as the central tools of propaganda: they purveyed information that had been carefully selected for maximum social benefit, they did so regularly, and they were widely distributed.<sup>59</sup>

Newspapers became and remained a key indicator of “proper” public engagement. For a Soviet citizen, subscribing to the newspaper, sending letters, appearing in photographs like that of Figure 3.5, or simply being observed reading the newspaper could be an important public duty.<sup>60</sup> Alexei Yurchak (2006) has emphasized the importance of ritualistically citing official discourse, gleaned largely from party news. Workers at a collective farm visited by Caroline Humphrey in 1967 took tremendous pride in having their quota fulfillments and accomplishments detailed in the local newspaper; at the same time, they kept copies of central newspapers ‘locked in glass-

---

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 6 on radio.

<sup>59</sup> The relationship between radio and newspaper institutions has often been strained, not least because journalists have often worked simultaneously in both mediums. See notes on plagiarism cases in Chapter 6.

<sup>60</sup> Even in the late Soviet era, radio and television workers would refer to articles in *Pravda* with the implicit assumption that everyone present had read them. See, e.g., NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 26, p. 44 (1976).

fronted bookcases' in a library that 'appeared to be seldom frequented' (2001, p. 19). Even now in the post-Soviet period, some offices and households subscribe to the flagship Buryat-language newspaper, Buriaad Ünèn, despite having no one around who actually reads Buryat, simply because they feel they should.



**Figure 3.5. Workers of the Karl Marx collective farm of Zakamenskii district are photographed reading Buriat-Mongoloi Ünèn.** Published in the same newspaper, 21(5692), February 1, 1949.

Throughout the Soviet period, editors and officials paid assiduous attention to the number of letters their newspapers received and how they were handled. In Buryatia, the editorial boards of the Buryat- and Russian-language newspapers routinely compared not only the number of letters different departments received, but also the number of letters the respective newspapers received.<sup>61</sup> These numbers were taken to be direct, statistical

---

<sup>61</sup> Attention to the proper management and timely publication of letters, in addition to the number received, consumed much of the meetings of the party organizations of *Pravda* and Ünèn's editorial boards (NARB f. 930, f. 3843; see below for more specific citations).

evidence of the interest level and engagement of readers, tantamount to proof that media personnel were doing their jobs (or not doing their jobs, as was sometimes accused).<sup>62</sup>

In 1938, at the height of Stalin's purges, language policy in the Soviet Union was abruptly changed to privilege the Russian language in education, official documents, and party terminology.<sup>63</sup> In a series of orthographic reforms, state authorities in Moscow attempted to standardize Russian-origin borrowings in all the languages of the Soviet periphery, ridding news discourse of regionalisms and opening languages like Buryat to greater Russian influence (Graber 2009; Smith 1998). These reforms had a lasting impact on Buryat and are still readily visible in media today; we will see their traces in, for example, discrepancies between pronunciations of Russian-origin terms that admit Buryat phonological nativization and spellings that exclude them.<sup>64</sup> Paradoxically, what looked like a policy of Russification in the 1930s was accompanied by an intense effort to institutionalize equality between Buryat-speaking and Russian-speaking publics as part of one single, broader Soviet public. Assimilating the Buryat language public into a broader Soviet public thus involved two consequential processes, seemingly at odds: sublimating

---

<sup>62</sup> A higher party organization, the Committee of the Oblast (Obkom), would occasionally condemn both the Russian- and Buryat-language newspapers for inadequate work with readers' letters to the editors. These criticisms were taken very seriously. (See, e.g., NARB, f. 3843, op. 1, d. 19, p. 80 (1980); f. 3843, op. 1, d. 23, p. 12 (1982).) Letters were so important to editors' success that they were reportedly sometimes fabricated (Losev 1978, quoted in Humphrey 1989:159). See also Fitzpatrick 1999:164–189.

<sup>63</sup> Normalization of news discourse during this period was not limited to policies on the relationship between Russian and other Soviet languages. In 1941, a group of editors published a manual for newspaper personnel on appropriate party terminology in Russian, *The Language of the Newspaper [Jazyk gazety]* (Kondakov 1941). Later manuals and party textbooks also explained appropriate voicing, citation principles, and generally what should and should not be printed (e.g., Grebnev 1967).

<sup>64</sup> See discussion of vowel length in Chapter 6.

nationalism in favor of interethnic unity while putting Russian and Buryat on exactly even footing in separate-but-equal institutions.

By the end of the purges in Buryatia, “national” issues—including native-language education, national self-determination, and Buryat language purism—had been removed from the realm of debate. The Latin script and the internationalist ideals it had embodied died a quick death, and a Cyrillic alphabet was implemented for Buryat in 1939–40. Much of Buryatia’s intelligentsia, including early native-language media activists like Nikolai Amagaev and Rinchino, had been killed or exiled from the party under accusations of “bourgeois nationalism” or pan-Mongolism, or for coming from families who owned too many cattle to be trusted.<sup>65</sup> Buryat-language news media continued to publish cultural items like poems, but they increasingly stuck to standard Soviet topics glorifying the interconnectedness of peoples in a unitary Soviet culture. A. Abidiin’s poem “Raadio,” printed in Buriaad-Mongol Ynen<sup>66</sup> in 1939, exemplifies this new emphasis. Characters in Raadio ask who is speaking the wondrous political news of socialism and democracy emanating from radios on the street, in the community club, and in the brigade: “Who is that, where [is it] from? / It’s from Moscow!” They hear broadcasts from the North Pole about adventuring outward from the glaciers of Rudolf Island, and programs from Irkutsk showcasing piano music and the writings of Gorky, Pushkin, and Mayakovksy (Abidiin 1939). Native Buryat literature was encouraged in

---

<sup>65</sup> Amagaev was convicted for being a *kulak* (a wealthy farmer) and Rinchino for his nationalist activities and support of pan-Mongolism (Montgomery 2005). On pan-Mongolism and its linguistic effects, see the next chapter.

<sup>66</sup> Buryat-language media went through a series of script changes and was using a Latin script in the 1930s at the time of this poem’s publication. The spelling here reflects this script’s orthographic conventions; it is not a transliteration.

both Buryat- and Russian-language formats, and building a Soviet Buryat literature became a primary goal for cultural enlightenment in the republic. Like Abidiin's poem, this Buryat literature developed as a carefully controlled *Soviet* Buryat literature emphasizing Buryatia's position within the Soviet Union. Well into the 1970s, Buryat literary writers and editors worked under intense pressure to illustrate the 'friendship of the peoples' and the essential unity of the Soviet people (Chakars 2009).

At the same time, it was a priority to ensure that media be produced in equal parts in Russian and Buryat. Many newspapers were published as duplicated (*dublirivannye*) versions, meaning that the Russian and minority-language versions were as close to identical as possible. This was the cheapest, most efficient strategy for dual-language media production, because it basically meant having one editorial staff and one process of approval with a couple of extra translators. Even newspapers that were not perfect duplicates of one another carefully produced the same amount of text, approximated the same quality, ran similar stories, made heavy use of translation, and tried to share photographers and reporters. The duplicate system established an important norm for Buryat-language media production, and echoes of it continue today. As new media technologies were developed over the 1930s–1980s,<sup>67</sup> the same pattern was followed in radio and, later, television stations: equipment and translated scripts were frequently shared between Russian- and Buryat-language staff. When possible, the same individuals were interviewed in both Russian and Buryat.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> For brief histories of the development of radio and television in Buryatia, see their respective chapters, 6 and 7.

<sup>68</sup> Equipment, staff, material, and interviewees are still often shared between Russian- and Buryat-language publications and programs, in all of these media platforms. See Chapter 7 for a detailed ethnographic description of the dual production of Russian and Buryat television news stories.

The physical and topical similarity of the media put Russian and Buryat very visibly and self-consciously on equal footing. It also suggested that Russians and Buryats were actually members of one public, a *Soviet* public, with similar, if not identical, needs as an audience. Minority-language media were to provide equal access to identical information, and to perform the institutional equality of languages and their speakers.

### **From parallel public to subpublic: the late Soviet period (1960–1985)**

Over the next four decades, however, this role would change. The post-War period and an era of rapid industrialization and urbanization in Buryatia were accompanied by what was, in retrospect, dizzying language loss. Rural Buryats moved into the city and district capitals, which were already mostly Russian-speaking, disrupting intergenerational language acquisition. ‘Internal immigrants’ arrived en masse, especially from the poorest regions of Russia and Ukraine, to build new factories in Ulan-Ude, the gigantic Baikal’sk paper mill on Baikal’s southern shore, and the Baikal-Amur Railway in northern Buryatia. Buryat-medium education was slashed, and requirements for studying Buryat as a subject were slackened, ostensibly to accommodate the large new immigrant population. Official ideology stressed assimilation, with Buryat linguistics scholarship increasingly emphasizing the intermixing of all Soviet peoples [*narody*] and languages into a single Soviet people—and language.

Archival records of editorial meetings show that media producers during this time period were troubled by language attrition among their would-be audience members. As discussed further in Chapter 6, radio and television workers began to complain in the 1960s that they could not record quality interview materials due to a lack of competent

speakers.<sup>69</sup> Buryat-language newspapers saw a continuous decline in the number of letters they received, especially in contrast to the perpetually overflowing mailbox of Russian-language *Pravda*, and they began to worry about the advanced age of their staff.<sup>70</sup> To publicly raise the inefficiency argument and suggest a curtailing of Buryat-language production would have been anathema to Soviet ideology, thrusting the dissonance between the two-language policy and the actual results of “intermixing” initiatives uncomfortably to the fore.<sup>71</sup> But periodically throughout the 1960s–1980s, minority-language media personnel seem to have been subtly questioning their own *raison d’être*.

Yet in terms of the sheer quantity of material produced, the post-war period through the early 1980s was a kind of golden age for Buryat-language media. Where was all of that newsprint and airtime going? One possibility is that this was a late-Soviet institution simply going through the proverbial motions, for an audience of no one. But in fact, subscription and viewing rates appear to have remained high, even during intense language shift. And people cared: in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as media support structures disintegrated before people’s eyes, Buryat politicians, editors, and activists

---

<sup>69</sup> NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, p. 141 (1962); NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 20, p. 44 (1973); NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 22, p. 6 (1974); NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 34, pp. 3, 67 (1980). Difficulty with Buryat was not new; see Chapter 6.

<sup>70</sup> On the shrinking number of letters received by *Ünèn* see, for example, NARB, f. 3843, d. 1, pp. 8–14 (1969); f. 3843, op. 1, d. 3, p. 22 (1971); f. 3843, op. 1, d. 5, p. 92 (1973). In 1975, they see a small turnaround (NARB, f. 3843, op. 1, d. 8, p. 83), but it does not counter the general trend (NARB, f. 3843, op. 1, d. 17, p. 80 (1979). On the advancing age of Buryat-language newspaper journalists and their concern over finding new cadres, see NARB, f. 3843, op. 1, d. 17, p. 69 (1979).

<sup>71</sup> This dissonance—between a dualist policy on the one hand and suppressive, assimilationist policies on the other hand—suggests that language policy in the late Soviet period (at least in Buryatia) was fundamentally designed to quell nationalist sentiment.

within the renamed Republic of Buryatia fought successfully to save much of the Buryat-language television, radio, and press.

A more likely explanation for the paradox—and answer to the question of whether all these media were going—is that over the late Soviet period, minority-language media were taking on a new role in Buryat society. Media were shifting from serving more informational and state-symbolic roles to serving a more culturally-symbolic role. Television, radio, and newspaper staffs had increasingly differentiated content and even style, implicitly acknowledging (or imagining) the different interests and demands of a Buryat versus Russian audience. Buryat-language media personnel were faced with an audience that increasingly could—and did—go to Russian sources for their news, and while Russian- and Buryat-language institutions were not exactly in competition with one another because of guaranteed state support, the shift did encourage specialization. As media producers increasingly assumed a bilingual audience, a division of labor emerged between Russian and Buryat, according to which Russian functioned more as the language of international politics, economics, and “hard news,” while Buryat carried more “soft news,” including human interest stories, history, and “cultural” topics such as music, dance, poetry, and tradition.<sup>72</sup> Newspapers, radio, and television in Buryatia were functioning more and more like what Debra Spitulnik described at Radio Zambia circa 1990: institutions rationalizing both an ambitious state ideology of “ethnolinguistic egalitarianism” and its “opposite,” a sociolinguistic hierarchy (1998, p.

---

<sup>72</sup> Soviet Stage Romani was similarly institutionalized into a division of (meta)linguistic labor between codes, according to which it took on primarily nonreferential functions (Lemon 2000, 2002). It would be interesting to compare these and other instances of functional differentiation between Soviet minority codes and Russian with an eye toward what it meant for Russian—possibly a *hyper*-referential code in these language-ideological systems.

182). At the same time, a certain “historical poetics” emerged, especially in the literary work of newspapers, according to which Buryat-language articles evoked the space-time of a mythic, unchanging Buryat past (Bakhtin 1981). This is the compelling chronotope to which Bulat alluded in calling the news “*starosti*” (‘olds’), “only for an ancient people.”

By the end of the Soviet period, minority-language media was thus looking as if it addressed what Michael Warner (2002) has called a “subpublic” sharing interests in, and affiliations with, this “ancient people.” It was not a “counterpublic,” by Warner’s definition: Buryat-language media in these years were very much the product of Soviet institutions, and we would be hard-pressed to find much subversive in such media’s reception or consumption. Nor was this public parallel to a Russian-speaking public; despite the appearance of maintaining parallel media production and parallel audiences, neither journalists nor readers were under the illusion that Buryat-language media served a public that was “equal” in sociopolitical power. The minority public increasingly targeted by journalists was rather a subset of the general population, linked by interests like Buryat village life, agriculture, and dance; media circulations in a rapidly disappearing minority language; and distinctive discourses like the *druzhba narodov*—none of which *countered* the mainstream publics of Russian-language media, but supplemented and even supported them.

To the extent that Buryat “national” issues like native language use had been sidelined, language and media policy in the late Soviet period had successfully suppressed Buryat cultural difference while appearing to support native-language media. At present in the Republic of Buryatia, the entire Soviet period is often remembered for

this hypocrisy: Buryats young and old, now interested in cultural and linguistic revitalization, point to events of the 1960s to early 1980s as fundamentally repressive, hypocritical, and even traitorous, and as proof that Soviet policy was intentionally designed to stifle Buryat self-awareness (*samosoznanie*) and cultural identification. This puts journalists who worked through the 1989–1992 transition years in an awkward position.<sup>73</sup> Buryat-language journalists who worked in the late Soviet period sometimes dismiss their own (or each other's) entire careers as nothing more than “ideology” or “performance”—or, like Bulat, as time wasted on a disappearing people. But performance does not necessarily entail cynicism. It is all too easy, in retrospect, to dismiss the public display of communist fervor as insincere—as many older Russians do now as they reflect on their own actions in the late-Soviet era. Yet at some junctures, even journalists who carefully toed the party line reflect on the utter sincerity and “faith” that they felt in the late Soviet period.

Moreover, late-Soviet-era journalists and their audiences maintained a sort of tacit agreement that texts would include both a state-approved surface-level meaning and a “second meaning.” “Reading between the lines” and “looking below the surface” for multivalency became basic skills on which journalists and other writers depended (Gal 1995; Humphrey 1989; Pesmen 2000; Sinyavsky 1988). To the extent that freedom accompanied opacity, journalists working in minority languages possibly had more space between the lines. Dulma, who worked as a radio and newspaper reporter for a regional newspaper in the 1980s, echoed the sentiments of some of her age-mates in stressing that

---

<sup>73</sup> See Dominic Boyer's work on ideological transition among East German journalists over the same period (Boyer 2001, 2005).

Buryat-language media were never totally transparent to party higher-ups in Moscow and even in Ulan-Ude, who were monolingual in Russian. Even before *glasnost*, she said over tea, finger pointed in the air for emphasis and eyebrows raised, you could find a “unique Buryat voice” (*osobyi buriatskii golos*) in mass media if you knew how to read, watch, and listen.

### **Revitalizing the nation and teaching a new generation: glasnost’ and the post-Soviet years (1986–present)**

When *glasnost*’ burst onto the scene in 1986, it suddenly became incumbent upon journalists to reveal what was not working in the Soviet socialist system, i.e., what everyone had been thinking but had left unsaid (Wolfe 2005). In Buryatia, the “what” was apparently the national issues that had been sublimated over the past few decades. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw a reemergence of Buryat nationalism, with a rhetorical return to the nation-building days of the 1920s.<sup>74</sup>

A new goal for Buryat-language media emerged in this context: news media were now supposed to revitalize the nation by revitalizing the language. Both *Pravda* and Ünën began publishing mini-lessons on Buryat, featuring not only topics related to animal husbandry and village life (for which Buryat had long been a dominant language), but also topics related to urban life, such as how to shop for clothing and buy tram tickets. By all accounts, Buryat use in the cities at the time was minimal and even actively frowned upon by non-Buryats and Buryats alike as anti-social, nationalistic, and

---

<sup>74</sup> The Buryat nationalist movement of the late 1980s and post-Soviet period has been accompanied by strong religious revivals in Orthodoxy, shamanism, and Buddhism, which have been discussed in a number of recent works (Metzo 2008; Quijada 2009).

against the *druzhba narodov*, so these Buryat mini-lessons appeared in the newspaper as an implicit call to action.

Since 1991–92, the disintegration of Soviet institutions and the adoption of something like a market economy have generated few new forums for Buryat-language media, serving rather to intensify the “subpublic” specialization of minority-language media. The position of Buryat-language media in this brave new era is complicated by the evolving and often fraught relationship between traditional state-funded journalism on one hand and, on the other hand, a kind of crude market-driven journalism heavily dependent on corporate ties, barter, and *blat*, or “grease for the wheels,” sometimes unsympathetically translated as “bribery.”<sup>75</sup> This latter form of journalism is championed by no one but is necessitated by an increasing dependence on advertising revenues. “Independent” journalism is practically anathema in this context, and “independence” [*nezavisimost*] never proved a salient category for the Buryat-language journalists I surveyed and interviewed. This is not to say that anyone is satisfied with minority-language media’s dependent situation either. As outlined in Chapter 2, federal policy within the Russian Federation has shifted away from the idea of the multinational state toward federalism, and away from the principle of political autonomy based on ethnonational criteria. Language legislation in the Republic of Buryatia still provides for Buryat-language state media, at least nominally. But from what looked like a promising new era of native-language media in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the amount of time

---

<sup>75</sup> For ethnographically informed perspectives on *blat*, see especially Ledeneva 1998; Pesmen 2000; Ries 2002. While not the main focus of my research, the economics of journalism proved important for understanding workplace dynamics and the survival of particular journalists, departments, and institutions. This was especially true in the midst of the financial crisis of 2008–09, explained in Chapter 2. For an example of how barter and *blat* work in contemporary Buryat journalism, see Chapter 7.

dedicated to Buryat-language television and radio broadcasting has been slowly whittled away, and staffs reduced, producing no small amount of anxiety.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time, there is no immediate danger of Buryat-language news media being discontinued outright. The production of Buryat-language newspapers, radio programs, and nightly television news is absolutely central to Buryatia's self-image—and to their peaceable acceptance of federal Russian policies that increasingly downgrade Buryatia's status. The overwhelming majority of media personnel and audience members surveyed in my research argued that funding Buryat-language media is the responsibility of the state, and often expressed an unwillingness to even consider the possibility of alternative forms of funding (my examples of privately owned Spanish-language television stations, community radio stations, and grant-based American Indian media projects<sup>77</sup> were generally met with disbelief). The same conviction does not apply for funding other regional minority languages within the Republic of Buryatia, such as Armenian and Ewenki, which reflects the importance attached to Buryat as the titular language: its funding symbolically proves Buryats' national cultural autonomy. As noted above, there have been some attempts to begin commercially funded Buryat-language television news programming, as well as state-funded and Christian evangelical Buryat-language radio stations. Thus far, these projects have not come to fruition, but the fact that they have been attempted at all suggests that there is a real perceived market (whether of rubles or souls) for new media production in Buryat.

---

<sup>76</sup> The swiftest reductions have taken place around the 1998 ruble crisis and the financial crisis of 2008–09; at other times, reduction has been piecemeal, by literally only minutes at a time.

<sup>77</sup> This is not to say that American Indian media projects are not state-supported, simply that a system based on grant competitions is very different from permanently embedding minority-language journalists into media institutions. Cf. McLaughlin 1992.

The potential value generated by a Buryat-language broadcast lies not in its direct audience (i.e., those who actually actively consume it and comprehend it) but in its ability to tap into and motivate a larger, richer, younger, more urban and upwardly mobile public of cosmopolitan Buryats rediscovering their cultural, spiritual, and linguistic roots. The *direct* audience still exists, but has taken on a different kind of value. These are members of Buryat society who actively prefer to get their news in Buryat rather than Russian—primarily elderly Buryats, living in villages where eastern dialects more closely approximating the literary standard are spoken. Buryat-language journalists in Ulan-Ude are well aware that their audience is based in the villages, and they specifically target a rural population with much of their content. They also tend to value this audience highly, mainly for emotional and familial reasons. In the capitalist logic of the media market, however, the village audience, surviving largely outside the cash economy, is practically useless for generating ad revenue; its value is primarily symbolic.

In other words, if contemporary news media were exclusively or even mainly “about” conveying information, they would no longer be produced in Buryat. The inefficiency argument would have taken over years ago, perhaps in the 1970s. Instead, Buryat-language media are viable mainly as pedagogical tools, as symbols of national vitality, and as conduits of local culture. As we will see in the next chapter, knowing some Buryat, even if only a few words or a formulaic holiday toast, can be tremendously helpful in demonstrating self-identification and “*samosoznanie*.” In an important sense, Buryat words have become metonymic for Buryat culture, as encapsulated in publicly performable modes such as dance, song, and dress; they have been folklorized, especially from the perspective of urban dwellers, but for many rural audiences too. Media like the

evening television news, radio announcements, and weekly newspapers are less about the information conveyed than about presenting Buryat culture—as encapsulated in the Buryat language. One hundred years from Alamzhi-Mërgën’s manifesto, a newspaper in Buryat does not speak to the elites of a nascent Buryat nation, but rather demarcates a Buryat language public as a subset or sub-network within a larger, multilingual and increasingly Russian-speaking Buryat people.

Some journalists now actively work to expand the Buryat language public by educating members of the Buryat *narod* who might identify Buryat as their native language [*rodnoi iazyk*] on census forms but do not use it in daily life. When asked in interviews, questionnaires, and informal conversation about their primary goal, by far the most common response from Buryat-language journalists is language preservation [*sokhranenie*]. This response stands in notable contrast to that of Russian-language journalists, who generally report something about informing the populace. Also, the overwhelming majority of Buryat-language media workers come from backgrounds in native-language education, most having been trained as schoolteachers.<sup>78</sup> Minority-language media are seen by many as pedagogical means to language preservation and as, therefore, means to cultural preservation.

However, language elites in Buryatia are currently quite divided in their opinions of how Buryat-language media should develop, and of how different possible modes of Buryat should be used. These opinions, outlined in the following chapters, are largely informed by competing conceptions of the Buryat language public (both real and ideal).

---

<sup>78</sup> A journalism track was recently opened in Buryat State University’s National Humanities Institute (NGI), which might lessen local journalists’ emphasis on pedagogy in coming years.

At one end of the spectrum, stalwarts of the literary tradition tend to assume an older, established Buryat language public that is an emanation of the Buryat *narod* and should be taught its own roots in order to carry them forward. Advocates of purism not only actively avoid using new borrowings from Russian into Buryat, but also try to erase old Russianisms in Buryat by excavating even older words of Mongolian origin. At the other end of the spectrum, many television and radio workers see younger semi-speakers of Buryat as prospective members of a Buryat language public whom they must recruit, and they reach out to them by consciously incorporating more Russian words, phrases, transitions, phatics, and so on into their Buryat. Mixed forms, it is hoped, will encourage comprehension and put potential audience members at ease.<sup>79</sup>

The difference of opinion proceeds in part from the fact that television and radio workers broadcast interviews and therefore need “the public”—whatever it is, and however linguistically competent it may be—to talk back. Sayana, a television anchor, made this point vehemently after an argument with another journalist over the inclusion of a particularly Russian-heavy interview riddled with “umm”s and pauses. It was late afternoon, and they were co-editing a story to run in both Russian and Buryat, having gathered materials simultaneously in both languages in the morning. As usual, the Russian-speaking interviewees had given more relevant, fluent, and more extensive material than the Buryat-speaking interviewees. Sayana’s colleague despaired over the mistakes made by their interviewee and suggested either cutting the footage or doing a

---

<sup>79</sup> Some of the struggles between hybridists and purists in Buryat media mirror linguistic battles elsewhere (Friedman 2003a, 2003b; Hill and Hill 1986; Jaffe 1999). It should be noted, however, that the different approaches among journalists do not often provoke open conflict, as they are housed in separate institutions (of newspapers, television, etc.). On movement between them (and between language-ideological stances), see Chapter 8.

voiceover in “better” Buryat (both common solutions), but Sayana was adamant that it be kept. “What is worse?” she demanded of me later, rhetorically. “That they speak badly, or that they do not speak at all?”<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

As a century of minority-language media development in Buryatia has demonstrated, the relationship between news media and publics is neither static nor organic. It is subject to the tides of history and to the grand, transformative projects of enormous states. In this chapter, I have tried to introduce contemporary Buryat-language media and its role in Buryat society by foregrounding a reflexive understanding of publics and by recognizing the relationship between minority-language media and their public(s) as a historical product. While some scholars of minority-language media have assumed that they are always ‘about’ language maintenance and revitalization (e.g., Cormack 1998, cf. Browne 1996), I hope I have shown through this case that language maintenance and revitalization are not always primary, or even important, goals of minority-language media. Their presence does not necessarily stave off language shift (see, for instance, the 1960s in Buryatia), but doing so is not necessarily their purpose, either. Perhaps Buryat-Russian language shift would have been even more extreme over the 20<sup>th</sup> century *without* the development of Buryat-language media; there is, unfortunately, no way to know. What we do know is that at every stage of Buryat-

---

<sup>80</sup> Similarly, I have often been called upon to speak Buryat on-camera as an “example” for young Buryat semi-speakers, despite (or really because of) being an ethnic outsider. The arguments mounted in these cases for excusing aberrational Buryat speech have mirrored Sayana’s reasoning: it is better to speak poorly than not at all. Many Buryats who feel they have passive or partial competence disagree, however. See Chapters 6 and 7 for a fuller discussion of media interviewing practices and the role of pride and shame in interviewing.

language media development, attention to code and its symbolic functions has been paramount, the symbolic functions growing as language shift progresses. This suggests that a primary function of minority-language media is to provide sites in which to work out the changing sociocultural meanings of linguistic choices—slowing language shift, perhaps, but also renegotiating and redistributing knowledge and authority among persons and institutions within the *context of* shift. In the following chapter, I will begin explain this context by unpacking what is at stake in the use of a range of linguistic resources.

I hope that this chapter's emphasis on historical and institutional multiplicity has helped to explain the ambivalence and frustration of native-language journalists like Bulat and Sayana. For them, the ends of minority-language news media are not always clear, and they do not necessarily correspond to the stated goals of their institutions. This is perhaps especially the case within the cultural institutions of an embattled republic under conditions of language shift, when language becomes a hot-button item and a touchstone for larger questions of cultural survival. Would-be revitalizers work to articulate a strong relationship between informational minority-language media and a minority language public that can be mobilized by them. But because linguistic competence is in question, that public is a shifting target, its nature changing generation to generation and year to year.

## CHAPTER 4

### **From Kiosk to Kitchen (and Back Again): Written Standards, O/Aural Realities, and the Production of Linguistic Knowledge**

Masha squinted at the page, puzzling out the last few lines of a Buryat newspaper article that she was reading aloud. She reached the end and shook her head, sighing heavily. “Oh, it’s **totally** incomprehensible. **Totally!**” [*Oi, èto sovsem ne poniatno. Sovsem!*] Another participant in our focus group, Ayuur, looked swiftly up at Masha in disbelief. “Really? You don’t understand anything?” [*A da? Nichego ne ponimaesh’?*] He knew that Masha was fluent in Buryat, though they spoke only Russian with one another. They had just argued over the differences between their respective dialects, with Masha maintaining that the differences were extreme, and Ayuur maintaining that they were not. All native speakers, he had said, could “basically” understand the standard literary language. Now Masha was saying that she couldn’t grasp anything from an article that he understood “completely,” and he looked less surprised than skeptical. “Well,” said Masha, “maybe I understand... 10 or 20 percent. But no more.” [*Nu, ia mozhet byt’ ponimaiu protsentov... 10-20. A bol’she, net.*] She asked Ayuur about several specific words and passages. He tried to pick through an especially long participial phrase, finally

laughing and admitting that he hadn't understood everything either. "Let's say 90 percent." [*Skazhem 90 protsentov.*]<sup>1</sup>

Native speakers<sup>2</sup> of Buryat like Masha and Ayuur consistently report radically different comprehension of the written Buryat of newspapers, and very few speakers under the age of about 45 report understanding everything. I had been hearing about this phenomenon of incomprehensibility from native speakers of Buryat since 2005, and the series of focus groups I conducted in 2009 was designed to formally document and explore it. In the following pages, I will explain how Masha and Ayuur's exchange highlights for the analyst how several different factors—native dialect, literary standards, the desire to understand—impact a person's comprehension of what I will call Standard Literary Buryat (SLB).<sup>3</sup> In my experience, speakers of Buryat who grew up with exposure to conversational Buryat in their home, village, or neighborhood are highly aware—even hyperaware—of the multiple gaps between their native "razgovornye" or "conversational"<sup>4</sup> linguistic forms and the SLB that they encounter in institutions such as schools, libraries, or mass media. SLB is most notably different in being based on a single eastern dialect, the Khorinskii dialect, historically spoken by powerful steppe

---

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed transcript of the conversation from which this was adapted appears in Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> On the category of "native speaker," see Chapter 1. Masha reported speaking Buryat at home with her relatives and with some friends, and Ayuur reported himself as a "nositel' iazyka," having spoken "since childhood" [*s detstva*].

<sup>3</sup> This is a phrase of my own devising, for convenience in referring to what is actually, as we will see, a rather messy collection of linguistic resources. In Russophone scholarship, what I am calling "SLB" is generally referred to as the "literary Buryat language" [*literaturnyi buriatskii iazyk*], though this is unfortunately quite vague as to what constitutes "literaturnyi;" I am adding "Standard" to emphasize the role of institutions and standardization projects in fixing—or attempting to fix—the register as a code. See Shagdarov 1974 for a detailed historical account of the functional and stylistic differentiation of literary Buryat.

<sup>4</sup> I will use the Russian term throughout this dissertation, because, as explained below, it encompasses a greater range of forms and phenomena than "conversational" or "colloquial."

tribes. Its stalwarts also allow less contact-based influence from Russian, and even incorporate some Mongolic-origin borrowings to “erase” such influence.

The gaps are not new; there have been serious and consequential discrepancies between SLB and *razgovornye* Buryat repertoires<sup>5</sup> since standardization in the 1910s–30s. As the register of literature, institutional discourse, and inter-dialectal communication, SLB was created by analogy to literary Russian and the principle that nations should have literary standards, without any expectation that it would mimic everyday speech. However, the contrasts are particularly poignant for Buryat speakers at this moment in cultural and linguistic history. Ongoing language shift throughout the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods has manifested itself in an intergenerational shift from print literacy to solely oral comprehension. This phenomenon of functional restriction is not peculiar to Buryatia. It is found throughout post-Soviet Eurasia, where it is often expressed as the “kitchen language” problem (cf. Wertheim 2009). Speakers of languages that have undergone this kind of shift are supposed to speak in Russian in most domains of public life and in their “native” tongue only “in the kitchen,” a traditional center of family life and communication in Soviet-era housing. Linguistic bifurcation in these instances is not limited to a functional diglossic split between Russian and the native language; there is also supposed to be (and often *is*) bifurcation within the native language. Though a standardized form of the native language might exist in institutions

---

<sup>5</sup> Standard literary Buryat can be considered a more or less discrete register, and it certainly is institutionalized as such, but further analysis is needed to determine whether the other, less codified systems of linguistic features that are discussed in this chapter could safely (or productively) be called “registers.” My use of the term “repertoire” is meant to reflect the fact that Buryat is neither synonymous with its literary standard nor a total grab bag of linguistic resources. The linguistic resources that are identifiable as “Buryat” by speakers are at least partially organized and separable into different ways of speaking.

and in texts printed or speeches read for symbolic political purposes, people are supposed to speak the “real language” only at home.<sup>6</sup>

In Buryatia, Buryat speakers often explained this to me as the difference between what you can read “at the [newspaper] kiosk” [*v kioske*] and how people speak “for real, in the kitchen” [*po-nastoiashchemu, na kukhne*]. By invoking the kitchen in this way, they draw upon a longstanding binary opposition in socialist and post-socialist regions demarcating separate spaces (both physical and metaphorically projected) for “private” and “public” affairs (Gal and Kligman 2000; Lampland 1995; Lemon 2003; Platz 2003), and tap into a range of emotional associations contrasting inner life, sincerity, authenticity, and notions of home with stage-like public presentation.<sup>7</sup> At the level of code, what is available at the very public newspaper kiosk and what is “in the air” of the kitchen both count as Buryat, but the extent to which they are identified as such depends on context and on the actors involved. My own acquisition of Buryat, for example, was assessed radically differently in different instances. After my first appearance on Buryat-language television, I was praised for speaking “real Buryat” [*nastoiashchii buriatskii iazyk*] with many Buryat-origin forms that native speakers claimed not to know themselves. One of my older Buryat-speaking friends, Bairma, was particularly proud of my performance, because she felt she had played a part in it, and she delighted in all the “ancient words” I had learned at the university. A few months later, however, chatting

---

<sup>6</sup> Thus far, most scholarship on post-Soviet “kitchen languages” has discussed the phenomenon exclusively at the level of code (that is, native language X vs. Russian). See, however, Lemon 2002 on bifurcation along similar lines within Romani. Buryat has never been so demoted as Romani for referential functions, but it shows a strong division of metalinguistic labor between, on one hand, Russian and Buryat and, on the other hand, different repertoires of Buryat.

<sup>7</sup> The effects of these emotional associations are sometimes painfully evident in interview contexts, discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

over tea in her kitchen, she suddenly turned to her cousin Sèségma, visiting from their ancestral village, and switched from Russian into a rapid, colloquial Buryat that I could barely follow. They laughed heartily at a joke Bairma made, and she looked back at me, addressing me in her usual not-quite-native Russian. “Do you understand what I’m saying?” [*Ty ponimaesh’, chto ia govoriu?*] I answered honestly that I had caught only a few words, and did not get the joke. “Ha!” she exclaimed with satisfaction, thumping the table hard and making the teacups and jam jars rattle. “That’s because we speak real Buryat here! Sure, it’s not like... on the **stage**.” She swept her arm out grandly, as though on stage, to the merriment of her cousin. “It’s not like... in the **newspaper**.” She tapped a copy of Buriaad Ünèn that was sitting close at hand. “But it’s real Buryat, right?” For confirmation, she turned to Sèségma, who tried to nod seriously but was laughing so hard that tears had sprung to her eyes. “You should be learning **here**, in the kitchen! Ha ha! That’s where you’ll learn real Buryat!”

Kiosks and kitchens are thus discursively figured as opposing metaphorical social spaces for the (re)production of “real” or authentic linguistic knowledge. Their opposition, like the larger shift it represents, emphasizes not only a tension between institutionalized and non-institutionalized linguistic practice, but also a more general tension between written and spoken language, or between literary standards and oral/aural realities. Speakers like Masha feel a significant—sometimes insurmountable—gap between written and spoken Buryat, and this chapter will take that feeling very seriously. At the same time, these repertoires, like their contexts of use and reproduction, are not diametrically opposed. As the chapter title suggests, I would like to highlight the dialectic nature of linguistic knowledge production by considering kiosks and kitchens

not as discrete, bounded areas, but as social spaces through which multiple networks of writers, readers, announcers, listeners, anchors, viewers, interviewers, and interviewees are interlinked.<sup>8</sup> Calling Buryat a “kitchen language” is meant to downplay or dismiss its use as a literary standard, relegating it to a limited range of contexts and circumstances by drawing on the locally operable public/private distinction (Gal 2005). To take “kitchen language” as an analytic term would be to disregard the very real effects that what is said in the kitchen has—and especially what it has, in turn, on the language of the news available at kiosks. In this and the following chapters, I mean to attend to both contexts, as well as the powerful ideology that holds them in opposition.

The first two sections of this chapter outline a number of overlapping but socially distinctive linguistic repertoires that are available to Buryat speakers and for use in media, briefly explaining what is at stake in using them. The third section explains how these repertoires figure into the production of multilingual media in Buryatia, focusing on the sociolinguistic background and competence of minority-language journalists. I argue that the tension between written standards and spoken practices makes plausible a range of opinions about where (and in whom) linguistic competence is located. What counts as linguistic knowledge is thus shown to be fractured, unclear, and highly dependent on immediate social context.

---

<sup>8</sup> Gal argues that in Communist-era Eastern Europe, “notions of public and private were understood primarily as distinctions among different kinds of people,” as opposed to the metaphors of space on which U.S. notions of public and private draw (2005:24). I found notions of public and private space to be quite relevant in post-Soviet Buryatia, though this does not contradict Gal’s observations about pre-1989 Eastern Europe. It is also true that my interlocutors applied a public/private distinction to kinds of people as well, as (especially) to interactional contexts, whether defined spatially or in terms of the ‘kinds of people’ involved.

## **Dialects, mixed forms, and other colloquialisms: different ways of being “*razgovornyi*” (‘conversational’)**

A section dedicated to the low-status repertoires of a low-status code deserves a prefatory note about relative values. The registers, dialects, and multifarious resources of Buryat, like those of any code, are fully accessible only to (some) speakers of the code, among whom a different set of values may apply than those found in the broader multilingual society of which they are a part. For many residents of the Republic of Buryatia—perhaps even the majority—Buryat, as a code, is decidedly low-status. Valuation is generally more positive, however, among those who actually control Buryat and consider themselves part of a larger Buryat language public, as well as among Russian-dominant speakers who self-identify as ethnically Buryat or are interpellated as such. My own research was conducted primarily within networks of urban and rural Buryats who are very much part of a Buryat language public, and it is their valuation of Buryat repertoires that I describe here.

Within Buryat, deviation from the written standard can happen in multiple ways, but such deviation is often expressed or identified as simply “*razgovornyi*.” The term literally means ‘conversational’ or ‘colloquial,’ but it encompasses a range of linguistic forms that are only loosely unified in being somehow different from literary standards. Dialectal forms and the corresponding identification(s) of speakers are a case in point. Speakers from Aga and from the eastern steppe districts of the Republic of Buryatia, including Khorī (R. Khorinskii), Iaruuna (R. Eravninskii), Khèzhèngè (R. Kizhinginskii), Zagarai (R. Zaigraevskii), Mukhar-Shèbèr (R. Mukhorshibirskii), and Bèshüür (R. Bichurskii), are generally considered speakers of the Khorinskii dialect, and therefore of

the literary standard [*nositeli literaturnogo iazyka*].<sup>9</sup> (See Figure 4.1.) Contemporary dictionaries, when they include dialectisms at all, will often mark lexical deviation from SLB by specifying dialect.<sup>10</sup>

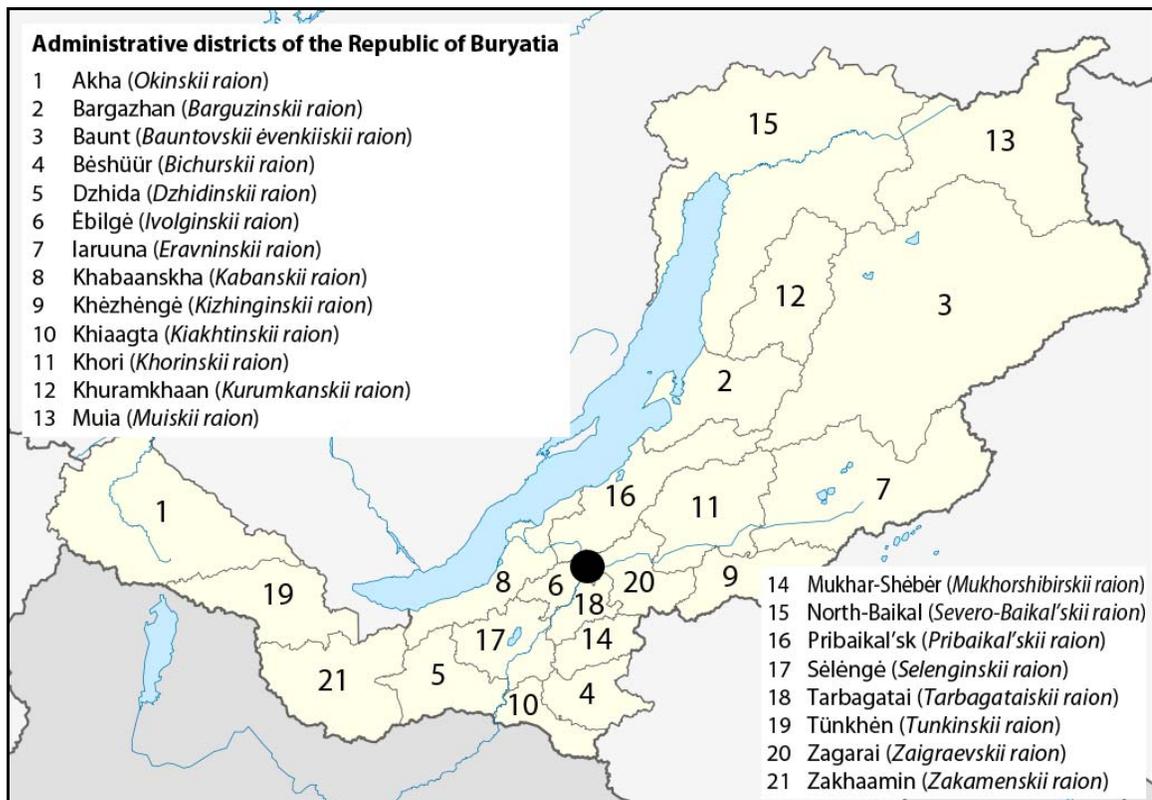
For example, a comprehensive electronic dictionary created by buryadxelen.org for the Republic of Buryatia Ministry of Education and Science (2006) catalogues several Buryat variants for Russian *lob* (‘forehead’), including dukha, sokho, magnai, and mangilai. Dukha, unmarked, is the variant that is standard in literary Buryat. Sokho has a separate entry listing it as used to mean (1) ‘forehead’ “in several dialects and rarely literary” and (2) ‘temple’ or ‘temples’ in Okinskii dialect. Magnai is recorded in a separate entry as *ust.*, belonging to the spoken language [*ustnaia rech*]; ‘oral speech’], to mean ‘forehead’ or ‘brow.’ The last item, mangilai, is marked as belong to western dialects, which a separate entry specifies as Èkhiritskii dialect. Finally, in a separate entry

---

<sup>9</sup> Khorinskii, Eravninskii, and Kizhinginskii are the three dialects best known to average speakers as the “literary language,” perhaps because such a large percentage of the Buryat cultural elite hails from these regions and Aga. The Aginskii and Mukhorshibirsko-Bichurskii dialects are sometimes separated from Khorinskii, especially anecdotally by speakers who point to lexical variation, but linguists tend to include most of the eastern dialects and sub-varieties within Khorinskii. Among linguists, there has been a striking amount of disagreement in Buryat dialectology. Makarova (2005) presents the current standard dialect division in her Buryat language textbook, published by the Ministry of Education and Science for use in state high schools and colleges. For other influential classifications of Buryat dialects, see Budaev 1978:24; Buraev 1988:21, 1996:14; Poppe 1933. A major revision of Budaev 1978, important to our purposes here, has been the identification of speech varieties found in the southwestern mountain regions (Okinskii, Tunkinskii, and Zakamenskii) with a western dialect of the Irkutsk Oblast, Alarskii, collectively as Khongodorskii dialect. Since the late 1980s, the “ethnic origin” [*ètnicheskoe proiskhozhdenie*] of the Khongodors from Buryat, Turkic (Uigur), or (according to an older theory) Mongolian roots has been hotly debated, with linguistic examples providing evidence of proposed historical migrations (Babuev 1997; Chimitdorzhiev 1996). “Firstness” in the Sayan mountains southwest of Lake Baikal matters a great deal to struggles over land use and mineral rights, and the Khongodor cultural identification has emerged in the past several years as a major new force in Buryat cultural politics.

<sup>10</sup> Most dialectisms do not appear in dictionaries at all, and alternate spellings are almost absent—including those that are most famous among speakers. For example, we do not find alternate pronunciations and spellings from southern dialects, such as samar (‘nut’) and solongo (‘rainbow’) in the Tsongol’skii and Sartul’skii dialects for hamar and holongo in literary Buryat. At NGI and BNTs, lexicographical debates focus less on these exclusions than on the appropriate balance of Russian influence versus (re?)introduction of Mongolian-origin lexical items.

for *dukha*, there is a rare distinction made between a Khorinskii usage, ‘forehead,’ and an Aginskii usage, ‘back of the head.’ Variants for ‘forehead’ are one of the more famous examples of Buryat dialectal variation, and when I informally elicited a person’s word (or words) for ‘forehead,’ it often sparked lengthy discussion of dialect differences.



**Figure 4.1. Administrative districts of the Republic of Buryatia in 2011.** This is *not* a dialect map, though district affiliations and dialects are often taken as indexical of each other. (Map by the author; base layer from Wikimedia Commons, public domain.)

Dialectal variation in Buryat is a popular topic, not only among linguists perched in urban institutions, but also among the speakers they study.<sup>11</sup> The aspect of variation most salient to people—or at least most available for metalinguistic comment—is lexical (Silverstein 1981), and so words like those for ‘forehead’ become discursive focal points

<sup>11</sup> The popularity of the topic is longstanding; Caroline Humphrey observed in the late Soviet period that when Buryats from different regions gathered, long discussions of dialectal variation sometimes ensued (1989:169).

for working out the indexical meanings of variation. Most people did not produce all four forms cited above, but they would often know two or three, one of which was almost always dukha. Among everyone except trained linguists, sokho, magnai, and mangilai were all deemed “local” [*mestnye*] or “dialectal” [*dialektnye*].

When a form is identified as “*dialektnyi*” informally like this, it most often means that it is from one of the non-literary (western or southern) Buryat dialects, like sokho or mangilai (the former from the mountainous southwestern Akha (R. Okinskii) district of the Republic of Buryatia, and the latter from the western Èkhirit-Bulagatskii district in Ust’-Orda). However, “*dialektnyi*” also sometimes means that the form is from one of the literary dialects but is not part of the literary standard (i.e., as recorded unmarked in dictionaries), like magnai. These items, neither dialectal nor literary as defined by linguists, are often described as belonging to the spoken language [*ustnaia rech’*], as in the dictionary entry. Yet in everyday metalinguistic discourse, *ustnaia rech’* is part of the larger “*razgovornyi*” ascription. To complicate matters further, variation between dialects is often conflated, within the concept of “*razgovornyi*,” with variation in Russian influence. In other words, while an utterance may be identified as “*razgovornyi*” based on dialectal differences in Buryat, it may also be identified as such based on relative use of Russian. Similarly, an individual’s speech can be identified as “*neliteraturnyi*” (non-literary) based on a Russian accent. “*Razgovornyi*” thus acts as a sort of catch-all category for a wide range of dialectal, contact-induced, and accentual deviation, while the definition of the standard is quite narrow.

The use of a literary standard in opposition to *razgovornye* forms might be understood to suggest a relationship of diglossia (Ferguson 1972[1959]; Fishman 1967).

This model has some advantages, but is ultimately inadequate for this situation. In sociolinguistic scholarship of the area, “diglossia” has sometimes been used to describe the functional relationship between Russian and Buryat currently adhering in the republic.<sup>12</sup> Insofar as Russian and Buryat are associated respectively with public, official domains and private, “cultural” domains, they indeed stand in a classically diglossic relationship to one another, but this observation does not get us very far. A more provocative application of a diglossic model might be to describe the relationship *within* Buryat, that is, between SLB and *razgovornye* forms. Here too, however, the theoretical payoff is minimal. While attending to the sociolinguistic hierarchy among varieties provides a useful starting point, a given linguistic feature can be evaluated differently in different contexts, and imbued with either (or both, per Woolard 1998) the values ascribed to the supposedly “high” variety or (/and) those ascribed to the supposedly “low” variety. Moreover, SLB and dialects might stand in a diglossic relationship to one another, but the variation among dialects precludes this being a neat opposition between two discrete codes.<sup>13</sup> This multiplicity belies a more general truth about linguistic possibility: most Buryats—and other residents of Buryatia—have far more than two options available to them in their interactions and linguistic production. I would argue that speakers work very hard to create and maintain a diglossic relationship between

---

<sup>12</sup> È. V. Khilkhanova (2009), for example, identifies the diglossic relationship between Russian and Buryat as a condition under which movement from familial, quotidian, or religious topics to official or workplace topics prompts codeswitching. This is closer to Fishman’s (1967) reformulation of diglossia to embrace multiple unrelated codes—not limiting diglossia to varieties of the “same language” as in Ferguson’s original 1959 study.

<sup>13</sup> Some classic cases of diglossia have been disputed along similar lines. See Schiffman (1993) on the collapsed diglossic hierarchy between Swiss German and standard German, Cochran (1997) on *triglossia* in Greek, Cody (2007) on the multiple registers of Tamil. Expanding diglossia to “heteroglossia” (Bakhtin 1981) might be a viable alternative approach in some cases, though this loses the hierarchical dimension that has provided the diglossia model with much of its usefulness and staying power.

discrete pools of linguistic resources, and this social fact should caution us against taking diglossia as a category of analysis, rather than as a category of practice. A more fruitful way of thinking about language choice will be to consider the range of resources that multilingual residents of Buryatia have available to them, which are structured—and restructured, daily—in a number of repertoires.

Among these, dialects are readily available, highly distinctive repertoires for social use. As noted in the preceding chapter, dialectal variation in “Buryat”—variously defined—has been extreme since the recognition of it as “a” dialect group or language. Astute Buryat speakers often note that, within living memory, using Russian as a separate lingua franca in Buryat regions has allowed internal geographic variation within Buryat to continue, and even increase. In this light, dialectal variation appears to be a negative phenomenon, a failure of the literary standard to function as a language of “the” Buryat nation. Geographically bound variation has, however, its benefits. Buryat dialects are very powerful repertoires, for a number of reasons following from the extraordinary cultural, social, and political importance of the local and regional affiliations that they index.

Many Buryats, particularly in older generations, describe a strong emotional connection to their toonto niutag, or ‘birthplace’ (lit. ‘the place where one’s afterbirth was buried’). Some members of Buryatia’s current 60+ generation were born in traditional felt yurts—including, for example, Bayandalai, the journalist-turned-Buddhist-poet introduced in Chapter 3. Thus a pastoral nomadic lifestyle that privileged the toonto niutag as an intimate, personal place of rest, return, and stability persists in living

memory.<sup>14</sup> In the late Soviet and post-Soviet periods, this lifestyle has been heavily romanticized, and it has recently become popular among some hip, urbanized youth to identify their hometowns and ancestral villages (rather than the birthing hospitals where most babies are actually born) as their toonto niutag. Birthplace is so important that Buryats living in diaspora in European Russia even occasionally relocate to Buryatia to have children in the “*rodina*” (‘homeland’ or ‘motherland,’ lit. ‘birthland’).

Dovetailing with this intensely felt personal connection with land are interpersonal connections to clan and *zemliachestvo*. A surprising number of Russian Buryats still know their clan or lineage affiliations, particularly if they are from one of the older, better known lineages such as the galzuud, or if their recent ancestors hail from the steppe regions of Aga, Iaruuna (Eravna), and Khori (Khorinsk). Reciting one’s genealogy through the male line, the *rodoslovnaia*, is an extremely important and prestigious ability, and genealogies are currently one of the most popular genres in newspapers, academic papers, and cultural shows like the annual all-Buryat Dangina-Gèsèr competition, a combination beauty pageant and variety show.<sup>15</sup> However, the practical strictures associated with clan and lineage affiliations, such as marriage rules, largely disappeared over the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> District affiliations, on the other hand, are still important—and have arguably grown in importance in the post-Soviet period with sharp migration into

---

<sup>14</sup> Attachment to toonto niutag seems to be especially strong among older Buryats from the steppe lands of eastern Buryatia and Aga, where pastoral nomadism was the dominant lifestyle until the late 1930s, and in some areas survived until the early 1950s. The forested, mountainous northern and southwestern regions have produced a somewhat different, though related set of emotional connections to land and landscape.

<sup>15</sup> See notes in Chapter 7 on the cultural role of the Dangina-Gèsèr competition, beauty pageants, and other stage competitions privileging the oral performance of Buryat cultural texts.

<sup>16</sup> Clan descent is still very important, however, in ascription of shamanic abilities, which are supposed to be largely hereditary.

cities. District affiliations loosely reflect historical tribal affiliations and apply to both families and individuals, based on a combination of birthplace and heredity. Masha and Ayuur, for example, identify respectively as *aginskaia* and *kizhinginskii*, based on their birthplaces, while Sèsègma identifies as *aginskaia* based on her heredity, despite having been born in a Russian factory town. Within the sprawling industrial capital of Ulan-Ude, these affiliations link up huge networks of village transplants, who have been migrating to the city seasonally or permanently over the past several decades.

*Zemliachestvo* connections become especially visible during Sagaalgaṅ, the Buryat Buddhist New Year, and the lunar month of Sagaan Har (the ‘White Month’), which usually begins in early February. Annually during this season, the members of a *zemliachestvo*—*zemliaki*, or niutagaarkhid (‘countrymen,’ lit. ‘those according to niutag’)<sup>17</sup>—gather for a holiday theatrical performance, Soviet-style awards ceremony, and celebratory banquet. These *zemliachestvo* gatherings provide a host of important opportunities: developing business connections, strengthening social ties, gaining public recognition, reaffirming regional identity and pride, and networking to find marriage partners.<sup>18</sup>

In this context, there are social and economic benefits to speaking the dialect(s) of your parents’ district(s). Dialect in Buryat is often identified as “niutag khèlèn,” literally ‘place language,’ meaning ‘the way we talk around here’—and there are few better ways

---

<sup>17</sup> Also niutagaikhid, ‘those of the niutag.’

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 6 and Radio Sample 1 in Appendix C for further discussion of rituals surrounding Sagaalgaṅ. See also Graber, N.d.

to evoke your roots in the niutag than to speak a few words of niutag khèlèn.<sup>19</sup> Linguistic knowledge of your ancestral village’s dialect suggests that even if you were raised mainly in Ulan-Ude or a Russian-speaking district capital, you probably spent significant time in the countryside with your grandparents or village relatives during your childhood and summers (a very common and valorized practice throughout the Buryat regions). As an adult, this knowledge shows not only your bloodlines and your irreproachable countryside background, but also your commitment to fostering traditional Buryat culture. Vasiliï, a well-heeled but romantically challenged Buryat man of about 30, makes a point of attending the annual *zemliachestvo* gatherings of both his mother and father, who come respectively from southern and western districts, to look for a wife. After striking out for the third year in a row in 2009, he complained bitterly to me that his relatives were hypocrites for encouraging him to pursue a university education in the city, but then favoring the “most country-hick” of all the village boys for marriage to the available girls.<sup>20</sup> He had learned only rudimentary “school Buryat” when required, and he felt quite sure that he was excluded from consideration because he could not perform linguistically at *zemliachestvo* events. His friends advised him to learn some nice traditional poetic wishes, üreèlnüüd (R. *pozhelaniia*), and, “for fuck’s sake,” just go spend a summer in the village learning “a few words, resting and picking flowers.”

---

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Russian speakers—including ethnic Russians—can mark their regional identity by using a few words of Buryat, usually greetings and daily expressions such as Sain baina! [Hello!], Sagaalganaar! [Happy Sagaalgan!], or hain daa [thank you].

<sup>20</sup> If Vasiliï’s interpretation is correct, it presents a provocative contrast to situations in which rural women speaking a lower-status language choose urban husbands who control mainly or exclusively the prestige code. Gal (1978) describes a structurally similar situation in which Hungarian(-speaking) women prefer urban husbands who speak German, the code of economic prestige and advancement, over the Hungarian-speaking men around them.

Vasilii may have been overstating the importance of linguistic competence to the exclusion of other factors, but his desire to fit in not only as a member of the *Buryat* community, but more specifically as a member of multiple *district* communities shows how dialectal variation can be socially and politically (not to mention romantically) meaningful. Crucially, dialect identification does not necessarily require knowledge of a whole system; as is evident from Vasilii's friends' advice, a few resources may be enough to index an entire repertoire.<sup>21</sup> For all the absence of a "unified information field" among Buryats,<sup>22</sup> the same famous few examples of dialectal differences are repeated and circulated over and over again, so that specific linguistic features of dialects become metonymic for entire districts. Aga, for example, is sometimes humorously cited as the place "where 'forehead' [dukha] means the opposite"—that is, where dukha refers not to 'forehead' as in SLB, but to the 'back of the head.' In one of the television samples in Chapter 7, a clinician uses the dialectal form zhorgoon for 'six' instead of SLB zurgaan, "proving" immediately to knowledgeable viewers that she is from the Tünkhèn (R. Tunkinskii) district.

Dialectal features perform another important geographic and political function in indexing relative nearness to Mongolia. Watching an evening Buryat-language news program, Dolgora, an older woman from a Buryat district of the Zabaikal'skii Krai, giggled with delight at the Khalkh Mongol pronunciation of a Buryat man being

---

<sup>21</sup> In multilingual and multidialectal situations, speakers often accommodate their interlocutors by means of a few dialectisms. See, for example, a case reported by Lemon in which speakers of two different Romani dialects meet: a Lovari woman accommodates her Russka-speaking guests by speaking in Russian with a few words of Russka, mostly modified from her native Lovari with Xeladytka phonology (Lemon 2000:106–107). Like Buryat dialect differences, Romani dialect differences are discussed by speakers in terms of a few salient and well-known examples (see Lemon 2000:239).

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3.

interviewed. She identified him as *aginskii* but concluded from his pronunciation of certain words that he must spend a lot of time in Mongolia. “It’s clear,” she said, nodding sagely, “that he feels himself to be Mongolian.” [*Iasno, chto on chuvstvovat’ sebia mongol’skim.*] I happened to know the man in question, and she was correct: He is from Aga, but he frequently travels back and forth between Ulaanbaatar and Ulan-Ude, appraises himself of recent historical scholarship emphasizing the Mongolic origins of Buryats,<sup>23</sup> identifies not as a “Buryat” but as a “Buryat-Mongol,” and indeed considers himself Mongolian in his personal and political leanings. More often, relative nearness to Mongolia does not refer so much to an individual’s physical and metaphysical travels across the border as to the historical geophysical location of the majority of a dialect’s speakers. In either case, these distinctions have no small geopolitical import. Speakers of the southern, more “Mongolian” of the Buryat dialects have periodically been considered dangerous for their mutual intelligibility with Khalkh—a prime example being during the pan-Mongolism scare of the 1930s.

As a political ideology, pan-Mongolism reflected—and reflects, in its modern incarnation—a broad desire to reunite the territories of the former Mongol Empire into a single contiguous nation-state. Some proponents have concentrated most explicitly on the concept of territorial reunification, including some combination of parts of the vast territory between the Caspian Sea and Lake Baikal.<sup>24</sup> More often, pan-Mongolists have

---

<sup>23</sup> Emphasis on the Mongolian origin of Buryat-Mongols and on the injustice of their political separation from Mongolia has been most pronounced in the voluminous scholarship of the prominent Buryat historian and general Mongolist Shirab Bodievich Chimitdorzhiev, much of which is referenced herein (see especially 2001a, 2004). As alluded to in Chapter 2, Chimitdorzhiev routinely uses the term “Buryat-Mongol.”

<sup>24</sup> At its largest, the territory would comprise contemporary Mongolia, Inner Mongolia in the People’s Republic of China, Buryatia and the Lake Baikal region in Russia, the Tibetan plateau, and the Kyrgyz steppe. The idea is that groups like the Buryats and Kalmyks of Russia and the Mongols of

stressed the reunification of Mongol peoples—variously conceptualized as Mongolic- or Mongolian-speaking, or as Mongolian based on cultural, historical, ethnic, or religious criteria.<sup>25</sup> From the Soviet perspective, pan-Mongolism was dangerous not so much because a united Mongolia would become powerful *in itself* as because (or to the extent that) a united Mongolia could expand into and alongside existing Soviet territories and then be allied with Chinese or Japanese interests. Soviet authorities instead hoped to use a smaller and more controllable Outer Mongolia as a friendly buffer state insulating Russia from China, and as a satellite from which to spread socialist interests in the Far East.<sup>26</sup> In the 1920s, the renowned Mongolist Nicholas Poppe and other scholars had recommended southern Buryat dialects as the basis for a new standard Buryat, scripted in Latin (Bazarova 2006; Montgomery 2005). But in the context of pan-Mongolism, these dialects suddenly became dangerous for precisely the same reason they had been recommended: they were intermediary between northern Buryats and southern Khalkhs. In 1936, the Buryat ASSR’s Supreme Soviet announced that it was changing the dialect basis for standard Buryat to Khorinskii, an eastern dialect that was not yet well described in the

---

China essentially constitute a diaspora from the Mongolian homeland, which is usually dated to the proposed time of linguistic divergence from proto-Mongolic, around the 12–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. On Old Mongolian and proto-Mongolic, see Svantesson et al. 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Religious constructions of pan-Mongolism are based on Buddhism. The primary cultural groups considered in pan-Mongolic constructions have been the Khalkhas of Outer Mongolia, the Kalmyks of the Russian and Kirgiz steppes, and the Buryats of Siberia; other groups like the Tibetans are sometimes included, depending on whether one is using language, ethnicity, or religion as the basis for identification. Pan-Mongolists have also at times concerned themselves with Mongolic groups in Inner Mongolia; however, as with Tibetans, sustained cooperative efforts with residents of these regions have been quite limited by Soviet and Chinese politics, as well as by language barriers.

<sup>26</sup> This was done on the model of buffer states in the infamous Great Game, when the British aimed to establish Tibet as a “strong and friendly” buffer state insulating India from Bolshevik Russia and China (Andreyev 2003).

academic literature.<sup>27</sup> The decision remains somewhat controversial: both linguists and non-academics in Buryatia periodically suggest that this move northward was made intentionally to exaggerate the distinction between standard Buryat and Khalkha Mongolian.<sup>28</sup> Linguistic debates of the era are often overshadowed by the decimation of the Buryat national intelligentsia, Buddhist monastic communities, and language elite in the purges. In the absence of clear historical evidence, it is not clear that Soviet authorities chose the Khorinskii dialect expressly to distance standard Buryat from standard Mongolian and thwart pan-Mongolism.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, however, it had the effect of doing just that, not only shifting the Buryat “homeland” north and away from the Mongolian border,<sup>30</sup> but also grounding it more firmly in the eastern steppe regions, away from western Buryats and the western Russian capital of Irkutsk.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed account of this decision, as well as the extensive debates surrounding reforms to the Mongolian script and subsequent Latinization in the 1920s and 1930s, see Bazarova 2006.

<sup>28</sup> This interpretation is supported by Robert Rupen, who wrote against Soviet historiography and asserted that the alphabet choices and standardization projects that took place in Kalmykia, Buryatia, and Tannu Tuva around 1930 “fixed and even exaggerated linguistic differences among the various Mongolian groups” in an explicit attempt to thwart pan-Mongolism (1966:46). It would be interesting to compare this case more fully with the choice of dialects in other standardization projects, such as the standardization of Portuguese and Macedonian.

<sup>29</sup> The decision might well have been motivated more by practical considerations: the Khori had historically inhabited a politically powerful region; much of the Buryat intelligentsia was composed of Khori; and in dealings with the Russians and Soviets, they had long been one of the most prominent Buryat tribes. For example, when Tsar Peter I received a diplomatic delegation from Baikal to secure nomadic land rights and protections along the Mongolian border, it was a group of Khori who came on behalf of the Buryats (Zhimbiev and Chimitdorzhiev 2000). For more on this delegation and on further political relations between Khori Buryats and the tsarist government, see Baldano 2003 and Mitypov 2003.

<sup>30</sup> The dialect change was accompanied by a flurry of interest in establishing the “ethnogenesis” of the Buryats as mediated primarily through the Khori. See Rumiantsev 1948 (cited in Rumiantsev 1962); Viatkina 1956; and their bibliographies.

<sup>31</sup> None of this means, however, that southern dialect speakers are uniformly considered dangerous; moreover, many speakers of SLB hail from southern and south-central districts. In fact, two of Buryatia’s greatest media luminaries are from southern districts: the long-time editor of Buriad Ünën is from the mountainous southwestern Tünkhèn (R. Tunka) district, and the editor of the government newspaper, *Buriatii*, is from the Sélèngè district.

Further evidence of the social importance of dialectal variation can be found very simply in its popularity as a topic of casual conversation (people *love* to talk about it, as noted above), and in the weight placed on it in native linguistics. Dialectology in the Baikal area has played a huge role in Buryat linguistics since 1961, when the eminent linguist Trofim Alekseevich Bertagaev urged greater comparative attention to Buryat and Mongolian dialects and opened a booming subdiscipline. Buryat dialects were extensively documented in the late Soviet period, and a good knowledge of dialectology is currently considered part of basic education at the National Humanities Institute (NGI), where students are required to complete a summer field practicum in dialect documentation.<sup>32</sup>

Returning from one of these field programs, two NGI students noted to me how difficult it had been for them to elicit dialectal data from village grannies [*babushki*]<sup>33</sup> who did not themselves distinguish between dialectal forms and another type of *razgovornye* resources, mixed Buryat-Russian forms. Lexical or grammatical use of Russian in speech otherwise framed as Buryat is often identified as “dialectal” by speakers not trained in linguistics. In a sense, this is a valid appellation, in that some dialects—most famously in western Buryatia around Irkutsk—have incorporated more Russian-origin lexical items and grammatical features, so that relative Russian influence marks dialectal variation. However, it also shows slippage in how dialectal forms and

---

<sup>32</sup> Dialectology boomed throughout the Soviet Union in the 1960s–1970s, with an emphasis on showing how varieties influenced one another in the ethnic and linguistic ‘intermixing’ discussed in the last chapter. With rapid industrialization and massive internal migration, there might have been a ‘salvage linguistics’ aspect to this as well.

<sup>33</sup> These students usually spoke Buryat with one another and occasionally with me, but they were speaking Russian in this instance—possibly using it as a distanced language for metalinguistic commentary on Buryat.

mixed forms are conceived of, and suggests that for some speakers, Russian-contact-induced forms and dialectal forms make up a kind of grab bag of *razgovornye* features or resources. This treatment of *razgovornye* resources represents the flipside of a purist ideology conflating all the linguistic “stuff” that is not part of the purist code (Hill and Hill 1986). By this (quite pervasive) logic, SLB is a bastion of pure—here meaning non-Russified—Buryat, struggling against rampant Russian influence coming from bilingual Buryat-Russian speakers who are increasingly shifting to Russian.

“Mixed language,” usually called *smeshannyyi iazyk*, can include subtle phonological features such as Russian prosody, shortened vowels, or Russian (and foreign) [k], when it is not nativized to [x]; syntax and morphology are also sometimes ‘mixed’ with the addition of Russian grammatical gender and adjectival endings to Buryat nouns (which otherwise lack grammatical gender). Most salient for speakers, however, are lexical borrowings, and this is usually what is meant when a person evaluates a stretch of discourse as “*smeshannyyi*.” Using such language can index several things about a speaker. Most obviously, mixed forms index the relative Russification of a speaker’s family, home district, or personal upbringing. Because Russian influence is so widespread, however, Russification is not always a remarkable fact; sometimes it is taken more as a given condition, albeit one to be struggled against. So mixed forms do not necessarily preclude a person from being judged a competent native speaker of Buryat. In fact, metalinguistic jokes ridiculing an extreme Russian-lexified that people often call “pidgin Buryat” suggest that this is the “real Buryat” Bairma had in mind when opposing her kitchen to the stage and the newspaper.<sup>34</sup> It is possible in many informal contexts to

---

<sup>34</sup> “Pidgin Buryat” integrates a fully Russian lexicon with Buryat syntax. Jokes employing it are funny because they overemphasize the Russification of Buryat in a way that is immediately

“speak Buryat” while using a huge number of Russian borrowings.<sup>35</sup> In fact, this was the form in which most of my Buryat-speaking research consultants—and teachers—conversed with me, especially as my knowledge of SLB grew and they attended less to my acquisition of “correct” [*pravil’nyi*], “pure” [*chisty*] Buryat. Whether our *smeshannyi* conversation could be labeled “Buryat” was often unclear to me, and I wanted to verify its status. I was hesitant, however, to discuss the Russianisms of our own conversations, because that particular metalinguistic discourse often prompted embarrassment. I seized instead upon opportunities to discuss “*smeshannyi iazyk*” in the language of strangers on television and in public spaces.

One evening on a crowded public minibus in Ulan-Ude, I overheard the following from a teenager, flouting Russian public transportation etiquette by talking loudly on his cell phone (which was, according to an urbanized friend, a “sure sign” that he had recently arrived from a village). He was engaged in a friendly conversation, apparently about two attractive girls that he and his interlocutor had recently met.

Ügy, *chego?* *Net!* [laughs] Ügy, shi *prosto norma:l’no khèlèèsh*... *No*.

Ügy, *chego?* *Net!* Ügy, shi *prosto norma:l’no khèl.èè.sh*... *No*.

NO *WHATgen* *NO* NO YOUsg *SIMPLY* NORMALLY SPEAK.past. *YES*<sup>36</sup>  
2<sup>nd</sup>persSg

**gloss:** ‘No, what the heck? No! [laughs] No, you just said it right... Yeah.’

---

recognizable and salient to speakers. See further discussion of “pidgin Buryat” and examples of how this tag is applied in Chapter 7. For similar Russian-lexified “pidgin” humor in another post-Soviet language, see Lemon 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Hill and Hill 1986; Urciuoli 1991.

<sup>36</sup> *No* is a Siberian dialectal form for ‘yes,’ possibly from the particle *nu* (‘well,’ ‘so’). Many Siberians know that it is a dialectal form and humorously call it “*sibirskii da*” [Siberian yes]. It is also often lampooned as *sibriak* speech by drawing out the vowel with rising intonation.

This utterance showcases both codeswitching (emphasizing Buryat negation, “Ügy,” with a codeswitch into Russian and the exclamation, “*Net!*,” followed by another Buryat negation and return to Buryat) and borrowing with phonological nativization (using Russian *prosto* and *normal’no* as adverbs in a Buryat grammatical construction). One of the most common means of nativizing new Russian borrowings is to apply Buryat vowel length, which is phonemic, to the stressed vowels of Russian-origin words. This practice is reflected above in the lengthened *a*: of *norma:lno*.<sup>37</sup> “*Prosto*” and “*normal’no*” are Russian words and do not appear in Buryat dictionaries, but they are easily borrowed into *razgovornye* repertoires of Buryat, as this teenager’s utterance shows. *Normal’no* literally means ‘normally’ or ‘like normal’ but is used colloquially to mean ‘correctly,’ ‘OK,’ or sometimes ‘well,’ as in the common expression “*zhit’ normal’no*,” to live like a normal person, i.e. without crisis or abnormality (see Chapter 2). To speak *normal’no* is to speak without glaring errors, and/or without committing social gaffes—i.e., to speak ‘as one might expect,’ such that there is no need for further comment. In this case, the speaker may have been referring to the form of his interlocutor’s speech, or to his evaluation of the girls.

Over the next few days, I repeated his beautifully bilingual sentence—*shì prosto norma:l’no khèlèèsh*—to several linguists and writers, carefully reproducing his Buryat pronunciation. “Well yeah, that’s how we talk” [*Nu da, tak govorum*], one poet chuckled. His companion, a Buryat language teacher, agreed. “It’s quotidian,<sup>38</sup> but...” [*Èto bytovoi*,

---

<sup>37</sup> This practice is also a common way of nativizing Russian personal names into Buryat; conversely, Buryat personal names can be pronounced “*po-russki*” [in Russian] by replacing Buryat vowel length with Russian stress. See Graber n.d. for additional examples of nativization through vowel lengthening in conversational Buryat.

<sup>38</sup> The register of English “quotidian” is a bit higher and more academic than Russian *bytovoi*, which is in common usage; it could also be translated as ‘everyday.’

*no...*] She raised her eyebrows and shoulders, sighing slightly and shaking her head:  
“...totally the real language” [...*sovsem nastoiashchii iazyk*].<sup>39</sup>

In short, codeswitching and rampant new borrowing from Russian can “count” as Buryat. Mixed forms may suggest that a person is a fine native speaker but is ignorant of SLB, meaning that she was probably educated mostly or entirely through Russian and did not have access to formal education in Buryat, or that she is a heritage speaker who does not use Buryat much in her adult life. Both situations are extremely common, though they do not always get a person “off the hook” for using mixed forms. This is partly because, more subtly, mixed forms can be taken as indication of a speaker’s lack of commitment to preserving the Buryat language and culture.

While these are all negatives within the contemporary Buryat cultural sphere, mixed forms are widely used anyway—including by language elites, like journalists, teachers, and stage performers—because they have other benefits. They are, first and foremost, more comprehensible to semi-speakers of Buryat, allowing framing of an interaction in Buryat without sacrificing intelligibility. Despite periodic attempts to ‘purify’ Buryat and purge Russianisms,<sup>40</sup> Buryat shows a great deal of Russian lexical influence, even in SLB, and it is not always feasible to reassert older Mongolian-origin forms or introduce neologisms. Television and radio workers, for example, consistently reject Buryat neologisms for Russian terminology in domains like medicine, science, and (to a lesser extent) government, as we will see in the following chapters. Mixed forms can be more approachable for semi-speakers of Buryat, allowing framing of an

---

<sup>39</sup> For other examples of language mixing in Buryat-Russian(-English) teenage speech, see Aiusheev 2009.

<sup>40</sup> See examples in the following chapters.

interaction in Buryat without risking alienating your interlocutor(s). The deleterious effects of *not* doing this can be seen in the next chapter. Some focus group participants were also put off by a radio anchor who used “big NGI words,”<sup>41</sup> identifying him as an arrogant member of the cultural elite. Russian codeswitches can likewise serve to distance, the most prevalent case being swearing, which is strongly prohibited by both Russian and Buryat code-internal language ideologies but seems to be more acceptable if a speaker switches from Buryat to Russian (or vice versa) to deliver the expletive.<sup>42</sup>

At least as often, however, code-switching offers classic opportunities for emphasis, humor, and familiarity. The loud-talking teenager emphasized his “no,” for instance, by using both Buryat and Russian. To the extent that mixed Russian-Buryat forms, like other *razgovornye* forms, are associated with private, domestic spaces (like kitchens), they can be used to demarcate a personal space in an otherwise formal event, indexing authenticity, genuineness, sincerity, or familiarity.<sup>43</sup> For example, formal awards ceremonies at *zemliachestvo* gatherings are usually carefully framed in formal, literary Buryat, but are often peppered with humorous Russian interjections from emcees that are made all the funnier because of the disjuncture between the poetic formality of SLB and a Russian familiarity. An emcee at a 2007 award ceremony for the Khèzhèngè *zemliachestvo* received a tremendous laugh when he interrupted his poetic, high-style Buryat-language presentation to merrily beckon an old friend to the stage in Russian.

---

<sup>41</sup> Focus group recorded 2009.

<sup>42</sup> See the discussion of official political style in Chapter 5 for additional potential uses of Russian-origin forms to index social distance.

<sup>43</sup> The domestic, private connotations of *razgovornye* forms mirror the connotations of code-switching and other ‘language mixing’ practices in other multilingual contexts (e.g., Urciuoli 1991). Mixed forms may authenticate a speaker by laying bare her willingness to individuate herself, identifying neither totally with SLB nor totally with Russian. See, for example, appraisals of broadcast interviewees in Chapters 6 and 7.

“*Ira!*” he cried, using the familiar nickname for Irina, her Russian first name. “*Idi siuda!*”  
[Come here!]

In sum, *razgovornye* forms of Buryat perform a number of discursive functions and can index a host of social positions: district affiliation, bloodlines, tribal or familial background, education level, or stance toward Buryat cultural preservation, as well as one’s relationship to whole nation-states. These forms include a vast array of dialectal and mixed Russian-Buryat resources, the identification and indexical values of which depend largely on context and on the position(s) and knowledge of speakers and their audiences. As I hope has become clear, these forms are only loosely organized into a series of ways of being *razgovornye*; as a class, they appear unified only in opposition to the much more tightly defined repertoire to which we now turn.

### **Standard Literary Buryat as a register and range of resources**

Standardizing Siberia’s native languages for mass media and propaganda was a priority of the early Soviet period, and today’s literary Buryat register bears many of the marks of concerted standardization: an official script (Cyrillic), a unitary dialect basis (Khorinskii), standard spellings recorded in dictionaries, and literary and cultural references derived from a robust native literature. The literary standard has been extensively described in dictionaries, grammars, textbooks, and monographs, and is supported by a substantial network of language elites working in scientific and educational institutions—including, most centrally, NGI at Buryat State University and BNTs at SO RAN. For all these reasons, Siberianists generally consider Buryat one of the strongest native Siberian languages, second only to Sakha/Yakut (Grenoble and Whaley

2006).<sup>44</sup> More subtly, literary Buryat occupies the ideological position targeted by institutional elites who derived their conception of a modern literary language [*sovremennyi literaturnyi buriatskii iazyk*] from their conception of literary Russian: a language of literature, education, and public life that would represent *the* language [*iaz'yk, khêlê(n)*] of the Buryat people.<sup>45</sup> In this respect, literary Buryat is ideologically convergent with literary Russian, though Russian's stylistic variation and corresponding functional domains have been much more extensively codified. Soviet ideals of literary standards have reached Amagaev and Alamzhi-Mêrgên's "masses" as well. A high judgment of SLB is not limited to elites, nor to those who command SLB well; Buryats from different socioeconomic and cultural classes of society proudly refer to "the literary language" as a crowning achievement of the Buryat *narod*.

In the post-Soviet period, SLB has been a dynamic register undergoing active renegotiation in a number of venues, including new venues, such as online native-language forums and social networking sites,<sup>46</sup> as well as 'crossover' activist projects in

---

<sup>44</sup> Strength is relative; Grenoble and Whaley (2006) also consider Buryat functionally endangered.

<sup>45</sup> Buryat philologists hold conflicting views, however, on when exactly the process of language standardization began, suggesting some variation in conceptions of "literary." During the Soviet period, standardization was officially said to have begun in the late 1930s after the dialect basis was decided—a date repeated in the compulsory prefaces gracing Soviet works of linguistics (see, e.g., Tsydendambaev 1972:3). More recently, Shagdarov (1993) has upended this by arguing (very reasonably) that standardization began in the 1920s with efforts to modify the vertical Mongolian script for Buryat; emphasizing textuality and mutual intelligibility, he points to the mass production of text for a national audience, mainly of course in the form of newspapers. Dorzhiev (1994), by contrast, has argued that literary Buryat should properly be understood as beginning with folklore, some oral markers of which are "above" the level of dialect (pan-dialectal) and therefore indicate that a literary standard was already being formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>46</sup> These forums are still dominated by a younger contingent of Buryat speakers, which directs the focus onto language learning and metalinguistic discussion in Russian. As the popularity and availability of computer-based communication (CMC) grows, it might emerge as a new text-based site for contestation of Buryat written standards. However, the growing popularity of posting video online from cell phones suggests that we could skip over written standards entirely and move to spoken forms in CMC. It is likely that SLB will remain the main written form of Buryat on the internet.

more traditional state institutions. The buryadxelen.org electronic project mentioned above, for example, included a list of recommended new neologisms to prevent the use of Russian (though not necessarily internationalisms) in 21<sup>st</sup>-century domains. A keyboard driver should now be denoted not as *klaviaturnyi draiver* but as tobsholuurai draiver, anything that was previously *elektronnyi* [electronic] should be sakhim, and *sponsor* [sponsor, advertiser] should now be èbèèn tèdkhègshè. While such projects do not approach the grandeur of language standardization efforts in the Soviet 1920s, they represent ongoing efforts to standardize Buryat in the face of new influences.

Despite this sustained, state-driven standardization, however, SLB has never fully emerged as a lingua franca. Dialects remain in wide use, and Russian continues to take over many of the functional domains for which a standardized Buryat was so carefully fashioned. Sociolinguist Galina Dyrkheeva has argued that the multidialectalism [*mnogodialektnost*'], “relatively weak” normativity, and “narrowness of the social basis” for the literary form of Buryat continue to hinder the development of Buryat national and cultural politics (Dyrkheeva 2002:156).<sup>47</sup> Failure of the written standard to function as a lingua franca between dialects is one of the most commonly cited reasons for ongoing language shift to Russian: Buryats who natively speak two divergent dialects will speak Russian together instead of trying in Buryat. This explanation points to a feedback loop in which the use of Russian enables avoidance of Buryat and the perpetuation of internal variation, which in turn encourages the use of Russian, and so on. This situation has structural analogues in cases elsewhere in which the absence of a lingua franca in the lower-status minority code encourages faster adoption of the dominant code. Harold

---

<sup>47</sup> See also Dyrkheeva 2003.

Schiffman (1993), for instance, has argued that many German-American communities shifted fully to English (as opposed to maintaining stable bi- or trilingualism) in part because they spoke multifarious unrecognized German dialects and lacked the more visible *Hochdeutsch* standard. German-American language maintenance efforts centered around the *Hochdeutsch* standard, a doomed enterprise that resulted in accidental English monolingualism when *Hochdeutsch* was replaced by English.

Russian could easily replace both SLB and the *razgovornye* repertoires laid out here in a similar way. It bears pointing out that this, however, is a large-scale, long-term possibility that does not take into account the micro-changes implicit in individual interactions. In particular, it does not take into account the role of *choice* and *effort* on the part of speakers. Cognizant of the importance of such effort, some Buryat-language journalists see their task as interrupting the feedback loop of variation and shift by providing the linguistic resources necessary “to at least try to speak Buryat together—to show what a unified information field [*edinoe informatsionnoe pole*] could be,” as one young newspaper reporter put it.<sup>48</sup> Thus, while SLB is seen by many as the exclusive province of institutional elites, the supposed elites themselves tend to see their role as pedagogical and inclusive, and the literary standard, in their view, is less a gold standard to be defended than an example to set.<sup>49</sup> Their attitude serves as a reminder that the standardizing process does not end with the publication of a grammar and dictionary. For all their apparent stasis, literary standards are constantly being renegotiated.

---

<sup>48</sup> See also comments in Chapter 5 regarding evaluations of effort.

<sup>49</sup> There are some notable exceptions to these views among workers in print media, particularly among newspaper journalists who write poetry or creative prose, or have literary aspirations.

Literacy, specifically institutionalized literacy education, is one of the primary domains in which standards are dynamically reproduced and renegotiated. In the contemporary education system, the norms and goals of Buryat language classes (i.e. classes in which Buryat is a subject, not the medium of education) are mostly set by university elites in Ulan-Ude, who not only set official benchmarks for the teaching of “Buryat as a state language” [*huriatskii iazyk kak gosudarstvennyi*]<sup>50</sup> but also teach the majority of teachers. The domains of linguistic education and mass media overlap to a remarkable extent in maintaining a language elite: the overwhelming majority of journalists working in Buryat-language media today have been trained at either NGI or its predecessors, departments of Buryat philology at Buryat State University and Irkutsk State University. Moreover, because NGI only recently instituted a journalism track within Buryat language education, the majority of currently practicing Buryat-language journalists were formally trained not as journalists but as schoolteachers and philologists. Pedagogy and language ideologies of the classroom therefore have an unusually direct impact on language ideologies of the newsroom.

Within the classroom, Standard Literary Buryat is the exclusive target of literacy education, and, simultaneously, there is a pervasive belief that one can acquire literacy in SLB exclusively within the classroom. In language classes, I have witnessed teachers make asides to students to clarify or correct some dialectal lexical difference (zhorgoon vs. zurgaan being a case in point). As a *medium* of education, many different repertoires

---

<sup>50</sup> “*Buriatskii iazyk kak gosudarstvennyi*” is a set phrase describing both state-required courses in Buryat for non-native speakers (i.e., education in Buryat as an official language, as opposed to education in Buryat as a native or heritage language) and a college concentration that is required for future public school teachers of Buryat. In 2008–09, the world financial crisis (and a serious dip in the Russian ruble) prompted many native-speaking Buryat students to enroll at NGI in this otherwise low-status and low-paid major, seeking job security.

of Buryat may be used. Because Russian is officially the medium of education in public schools (with the notable exception of the national boarding school in Ulan-Ude, which is supposed to provide Buryat-language immersion), the occasional use of Buryat is informal, cropping up when teachers and students share some competence in the same dialect. It thus tends not to be subject to the standard strictures. For instance, after a geology lesson that I observed being partly conducted in Buryat in a high school, the teacher apologized to me for what she called her “terrible” Buryat, which she contrasted with what she imagined I must be learning at BGU. “Oh well,” she laughed, “we’re not teaching Buryat here!” But there are not, to my knowledge, any textbooks in dialects; as a subject in public schools, Buryat is taught exclusively as SLB.

When native or heritage speakers like Masha claim to be illiterate in Buryat, they often attribute their illiteracy to late-Soviet and post-Soviet breakdowns in Buryat language education, particularly if they are members of the “lost generation,” currently in their 30s–40s, that missed out entirely on native language education. This is by far the most commonly cited reason for not understanding the SLB of newspapers, and is also sometimes invoked as a reason for not understanding radio and television speech. These explanations show just how strong the connection between formal education and SLB acquisition—both written and oral—is in the minds of Buryat speakers. Weak state support for literacy education in Buryat has been blamed variously on public apathy, Russocentric state ideology, a general lack of funds, and the personal commitments of local politicians. Regardless of its proximal and ultimate causes, the literacy breakdown has a disastrous psychological effect: in a conflation of the literary standard with the whole range of what usually counts as “Buryat,” native speakers see their collective

knowledge of SLB slipping away as their collective knowledge of *Buryat* slipping away—even though the standard was always tenuous.

In this context, the standard-bearers take on an even more elite role as the ark not only of a literary standard, but also of more general linguistic (and, by the usual extension, cultural) preservation. This role is taken very seriously by linguists at the primary institutions of linguistic and pedagogical training, NGI and BNTs.<sup>51</sup> Training their graduates for cultural work as educators, journalists, and performers, NGI instructors stress knowledge of regional history, the historical development of Buryat studies, and native Buryat literature, particularly from the Soviet period; competence in Buryat-Mongolian philology, linguistic documentation, and folklore studies (folkloristics); and mastery of Buryat as it is codified in pedagogical materials produced and published mainly by NGI. Above all, they emphasize reading and writing. Nonfiction report-style assignments are common, and the highest goal is to write “scientific” (*nauchnyi*, ‘academic’ or ‘scholarly’) prose in Buryat. Students are encouraged to write their final graduation papers in Buryat—a feat made all the more unusual and amazing because most of their secondary and higher education coursework, including classes at NGI, has been conducted in Russian. SLB is fundamentally thought of as a written register, and mastery of its oral forms—on stage and in radio programming, for example—is supposed to proceed from a solid foundation in writing. Thus, despite a historical emphasis on oral storytellers as the repositories of Buryat cultural wisdom (see,

---

<sup>51</sup> BNTs does not train undergraduates, but has large, active programs granting “candidate” degrees [*kandidatskaia stepen*'] and doctoral degrees. The former degree is closest to a masters degree in the American educational system, and the latter requires more labor and seniority than an American doctorate. Additionally, the faculty at BNTs guide students and teachers in many language-related disciplines across the Republic of Buryatia’s degree-granting colleges and universities, including BGU, VSGAKI, and the East-Siberian State Technological University (VSGTU).

e.g., Abaeva and Zhukovskaia), culture work in the contemporary period depends very heavily on institutionalized training in written registers.

The peculiarity of this training in the literary standard was particularly clear to me as a rare foreign student of Buryat—not only because my student status prompted continuous commentary about the vicissitudes of the literary language, dialects, bilingualism, the imminent death of Buryat, and so on, but also because I felt the gap that Masha feels, only in the opposite direction. Over the years that I studied Buryat at NGI, 2005–09, it became painfully clear to me that I was learning a purist literary standard that few speakers actually control. I was increasingly frustrated with my difficulty understanding—and making myself understood by—Buryat speakers who had not themselves been explicitly trained in SLB. However, comments from native speakers that this was somehow not “real” Buryat, or that it belonged only in limited domains, like Bairma’s comment about the newspaper and the stage, were exceptional; for the most part, native Buryat speakers were not only tolerant of what I felt was a weird and partial acquisition, but even actively encouraged it. When, at the apparent pinnacle of my NGI education, I wrote and delivered a short academic paper in Buryat, my friend Mèdègma asked to hear it. A dignified, opinionated woman of 62, Mèdègma is usually not hesitant to level criticism at younger women, and she had told me more than once while we were speaking Buryat that she didn’t know “what the hell” I was “trying to say.” I took a very deep breath before reading. Mèdègma closed her eyes, listened to the end, then quietly busied herself making tea while I awaited her appraisal. “Beautiful” [*goë*], she finally said. “*Goë, goë. Ekhè goë khèlèn.*” [Beautiful, beautiful. Very beautiful language.] She refused to identify any errors, deferred to the linguistic expertise of the “talented,

knowledgeable scholars” [bèrkhè, èrdèmtèi uchënye] at the university, and praised my teacher (whom she had never met) for teaching me excellent grammar and the “completely pure literary language, a beautiful language” [*sovsem chisty literaturnyi iazyk, goë khèlèn*]. Since I could *write* in Buryat, she said gravely, I must now know Buryat even better than she.

Mèdègma, like Bairma and many other proud speakers of Buryat, believed it only proper that a non-Buryat outsider should learn the literary standard, at least at first (later, Bairma said, I could find a Buryat husband and learn it “to completion” [*do kontsa*]). SLB is implicitly regarded as a fundamental achievement of the Buryat *narod* (‘people’), proof of their cultural advancement and the success of a native elite. As a repertoire to be drawn upon in daily life, SLB can index personal background with one of the eastern “literary” dialects, but more often it indexes the kinds of attributes indexed by literary standards in other native-language contexts: dignity, prestige, formal education, a commitment to preserving and developing native language and culture, and/or standing within local networks of culture workers. For certain speakers in certain contexts, however, SLB can also suggest a little too much of these things. Media personnel have to negotiate this complex and shifting indexical terrain as they decide, on a daily basis, how to represent themselves and their language.

### **Repertoires and resources in media production**

Media offices in ethnic Buryatia are bilingual spaces that require frequent switching between Russian and Buryat on the part of Buryat-language journalists. The degree of Russian versus Buryat use differs systematically by media platform, and by

type of work.<sup>52</sup> Some workplaces, such as the offices of the state publishing house, Buriaad Ünën, manage to maintain almost exclusively Buryat-language communication by employing Buryat-speaking secretarial staff and fostering interaction with the Buryat-dominant workers of Russian-language publications down the hall. Journalists in more Russian-dominated environments, such as the state television company's newsroom, employ a number of strategies to cordon off space for Buryat-only interactions. Even the most Buryat-intensive environments, however, require Russian for administrative purposes.<sup>53</sup> In addition, media personnel working in Buryat-language media control multiple repertoires of Buryat.

Buryat-language journalists almost universally have advanced knowledge of the literary standard from formal college-level education at NGI, its predecessor (BGU's department of Buryat philology), or this department's predecessor at Irkutsk State University in Irkutsk. A brief look at the educational background of working journalists will show just how strong this trend is. The number of staff journalists working throughout ethnic Buryatia is always in flux—particularly in times of economic crisis like that experienced in 2008–09—so I will refer here to a demographic snapshot. In August

---

<sup>52</sup> This is detailed in Chapters 5–8.

<sup>53</sup> The de facto dual language requirement for Buryat-language journalists (but not Russian-language journalists) stretches back to the founding of the Buryat-language press, discussed in Chapter 3. The administrative need to speak Russian *well* does not appear to have been uniform, however. Handwritten Buryat notes and partial translations in Soviet-era archival materials indicate that the editorial meeting notes of Buriaad Ünën and the Buryat-language radio and television divisions, which were required to be filed in Russian for the sake of transparency to higher non-Buryat-speaking organs, were translated after the fact by typists. Senior editors and writers noted in interviews in 2008–09 that writers with poor Russian skills (including themselves) were hired as recently as the 1960s. Today, Russian skills are required, though not necessarily skills in the literary and “publicist” [*publitsisticheskii*] styles required of Russian-language journalists. The ability to produce material in both Russian and Buryat is rare, even among the fluent native Russian speakers of today's Buryat population, and has become a hot commodity during the “optimization measures” and financial crisis of 2008–09 (see later chapters).

2009, I counted approximately 50 staff journalists working in bilingual offices in Ulan-Ude, Aga, and Ust'-Orda.<sup>54</sup> Of these, I had collected basic demographic information, including educational background, from voluntary surveys and interviews conducted over May-August 2009.<sup>55</sup> In August when I concluded this snapshot, I had education information on 36 working journalists—29 of whom were working primarily, if not exclusively, in Buryat-language media. Of those 29, 24 had been trained specifically in Buryat language pedagogy and/or philology, and an astounding 28 had come from the same department at Irkutsk State University and its institutional descendants within the Buryat State Pedagogical Institute and Buryat State University.<sup>56</sup> The only exception was a new Buryat-language intern, freshly hired at the state television company, with a background in theatre and the performing arts—a background common among young Russian-language television journalists and possibly a harbinger of things to come.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> The count of 50 includes journalists monolingual in Russian who worked in bilingual offices with Buryat departments, as well as bilingual Buryat-Russian journalists who produced most of their materials in Russian. I estimated that approximately 35 of 50 were regularly producing primarily Buryat-language media. Journalists tend to be hired to produce material in one language or the other, but in practice, there is a great deal of crossover—more often from Buryat-language journalists producing material in Russian than from Russian-language journalists producing material in Buryat, though there are some cases of the latter. Among newspaper workers, I did not include the dozens of occasional contributors who are not on staff, although I interviewed some of them in other contexts and analyzed many of their published materials.

<sup>55</sup> See Appendices D and F for the survey instrument and sample interview questions.

<sup>56</sup> Philological education in Buryat has slowly moved from Irkutsk to Ulan-Ude. Prior to 1990, Buryat language education was available at Buryat State Pedagogical Institute in a joint department [*fakul'tet*] of history and philology. One of the great institutional coups for Buryatia's nationalist movement in the late 1980s-early 1990s was establishing separate departments of history and Buryat philology at the re-titled Buryat State University in 1991–1992. In 2002, the department of Buryat philology became NGI, a semi-independent center within the larger university.

<sup>57</sup> The East-Siberian State Academy of Culture and the Arts (VSGAKI) has unique programs in traditional Buryat dance and music, which produce many revered Buryat culture workers for the Republic and foster a community of Buryat cultural activists. While linguistics and language pedagogy are not their main focus, language preservation has become a hot topic at VSGAKI, in the context of more general cultural awareness. VSGAKI is also a major source of news anchors, correspondents, and tech workers for local television companies; a number of VSGAKI graduates worked in Ulan-Ude's Russian-language radio and television broadcasting companies in 2008–09.

When compared with their Russian-producing colleagues, the Buryat-language journalists show a remarkably exclusive focus on native-language philology and pedagogy in their educational backgrounds. By contrast, Russian-language journalists had been trained primarily in journalism programs<sup>58</sup> and foreign language departments, not only in Irkutsk and Ulan-Ude, but also in cities as far-flung as St. Petersburg and Ekaterinburg. In interviews and surveys, Russian-language journalists also (predictably) appeared much more mobile and ambitious, placing less emphasis on their pedagogical and linguistic roles vis-à-vis Russian and more emphasis on informing the public, professionalism, expansion of commercial possibilities, and personal upward mobility into the media markets of Novosibirsk, St. Petersburg, and Moscow.

In addition to higher educational background, Buryat-language journalists tend to possess above-average knowledge of the literary standard on the basis of their native dialects. The majority of Buryat-language journalists included in the demographic snapshot—21 of 29, or 72%—hailed from the eastern steppe regions of Khèzhèngè, Iaruuna, Mukhar-Shèbèr, and Aga.<sup>59,60</sup> While birthplace does not always fully reflect a

---

Archival records show that theatrical and voice training have been common backgrounds among *Russian*-language journalists since at least the 1970s, but the same has not been true of Buryat-language journalists (NARB f. 914).

<sup>58</sup> A journalism track is available in BGU's department of Russian language and literature, and it is on this basis that NGI has recently established a journalism track for their own students.

<sup>59</sup> Of the remaining eight, six were from southwestern mountain districts, home of the Khongodorskii dialect (including Akha [R. Okinskii], Tünkhèn [R. Tunkinskii], and Zakhaamin [R. Zakamenskii] in the Republic of Buryatia). The other two were interesting regional outliers: one hailed from Kachuga in the Irkutsk Oblast, home of what is usually considered an Èkhiritskii or Èkhirit-Bulagatskii dialect; the other hailed from Sèlèngè (R. Selenginskii), home of a southern Mongol-Buryat dialect. A few additional Buryat-language journalists, not included in the demographic snapshot, work for their local district newspapers. Had they been included, the percentage of Buryat-language journalists hailing from the eastern steppe regions and southwestern mountain regions would have been even higher.

<sup>60</sup> It may seem odd that no one was from the Khori district, namesake of the Khorinskii dialect. Ironically, the Khori district has been subject to extreme Russification, particularly in the district

person's native dialect, it is an extremely strong indicator in Buryatia. Demographic data thus strongly suggest that the majority of Buryat-language journalists are already speakers of "literary" dialects before they begin their formal education.<sup>61</sup>

When I interviewed editors about hiring practices, no one denied that prospective candidates' native abilities in the Khorinskii dialect played a role—though everyone was quick to point out that final hiring decisions were determined by standardized competitions. Young workers from the rural steppe regions were simply more likely to be fluent Buryat speakers, and if they controlled one of the "literary dialects" natively, so much the better. One editor additionally suggested that the high incidence of journalists from a small number of regions was the "natural" [*estestvennyi*] result of recruiting journalists from outlying Buryat villages to work in Ulan-Ude. He noted the "strong connections" among Buryat families from the same district, referring obliquely to the widespread nepotism that is often angrily decried by non-Buryat workers of the Republic but is essential to the smooth functioning of Buryat kinship networks.<sup>62</sup> These connections, however, are not the main recruitment strategy for media institutions.

New journalists are recruited through periodic competitions (consisting of written examinations, in combination with additional requirements like screen tests for television) and by extending application invitations to specific candidates (usually at

---

capital of Khorinsk. Khorinsk is primarily Russian-speaking, and few Buryat culture workers in the Republic hail from the district.

<sup>61</sup> Anecdotally, the majority of NGI students are native speakers of literary dialects as well. Students sometimes comment on the disproportionately high percentage of NGI students from Khèzhèngè, a poor (though proud), sparsely populated district that is otherwise not particularly well-represented in Ulan-Ude's institutions of social prestige.

<sup>62</sup> Family connections are indeed extremely important for launching a career in journalism, though not only (or even mainly) because of classic nepotism. Journalists working in both Russian- and Buryat-language formats often report becoming interested in journalism through a parent, aunt or uncle, or other older family member; as a profession, it tends to run in families.

competing media institutions, NGI, or VSGAKI). The recruitment process reflects the priorities of media institutions. Ability in SLB, specifically in written prose, is at a premium in media offices—including in radio and television offices, because the initial scripting and editing phases are conducted in writing. Hiring decisions depend on some medium-specific criteria, most notably the quality of voice [*golos*] in radio and what is called “face” [*litso*] in television.<sup>63</sup> But many of the more technical skills and finer points of presentation were taught on the job, whereas writing skills were largely seen as already formed. While editors sometimes engaged in “teaching moments” regarding the texts of their junior coworkers, young journalists were supposed to already be decent writers. While this criterion applied across the board, it was all the more the case for Buryat-language journalists, whose standard register is more tenuous than that of Russian, and who are supposed to be (and *are*, in most cases) drawing on extensive experience with literary standards on the basis of both education and dialect background.

For all this emphasis on SLB, Buryat-language media personnel also control *razgovornye* repertoires. Like their Russian-language counterparts, they tend to have some command of different registers of Russian, such as “official,” “publicist,” or “academic” styles, by virtue of having attained a higher education primarily through Russian.<sup>64</sup> They did not necessarily grow up speaking colloquial Russian; in fact, many Buryat-speaking journalists report being monolingual in Buryat until starting school. But they have grown up in mixed Russian-Buryat environments, speaking with frequent code-switching, Russian borrowings both new and old, and various *smeshannyye* [mixed] forms.

---

<sup>63</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>64</sup> They do not, however, necessarily produce material in these styles, or feel comfortable using them; see footnote above.

Attending to how minority-language journalists use Russian and Buryat in their daily lives further complicates the linguistic picture. As adults, Buryat journalists based in Ulan-Ude and in the capital of Ust'-Orda find themselves living in Russian-language-dominant public environments, in which Buryat-language offices serve as rare linguistic oases.<sup>65</sup> At home, the “kitchen language” for many journalists is actually Russian. Buryat-language journalists working in Ulan-Ude report using Russian at home with their spouses, children, and grandchildren to a surprising extent. This admission came up in many of my interviews with journalists, teachers, and other language workers, among whom it caused a great deal of pain, dissembling, and sometimes humor. The irony of being a Buryat language worker with descendants monolingual in Russian was not lost on anyone, and I found myself repeatedly reassuring my interviewees that most of my other interviewees had lamented the same thing.<sup>66</sup> The phenomenon appears ascribable to three main factors: 1) linguistically mixed marriages in which Russian becomes the default, 2) ease of communication with children who spend most of their time in Russian-dominant environments, and 3) a widespread practice, mentioned above, of off-loading Buryat language acquisition onto grandparents and “country” [*derevenskie*] relatives living in ancestral villages, where children can spend their summers immersed in Buryat.<sup>67</sup> The net effect is that some Buryat-language journalists use Russian more than Buryat in their daily lives, bringing their daily linguistic experience closer to that of their audience.

---

<sup>65</sup> Journalists based in Aga, where it is possible to use Buryat in public life, have a different experience. They report higher use of Buryat at home and work, which is consonant with my observation.

<sup>66</sup> Shame is a formidable force in Buryat-Russian language shift. See Chapters 6 and 7 for examples of shame and embarrassment on the other side of the desk, among audience members and interviewees.

<sup>67</sup> For a similar practice in the Yukon, see Meek 2010.

Writing texts out with the aid of a dictionary can erase the Russian influence on one's journalistic prose, but sometimes unintended Russianisms emerge as "mistakes" [*oshibki*]. "Bèshè! [No!] *Oi*," one radio announcer exclaimed, switching from Buryat quickly back to Russian and forcefully stopping her handheld recorder. She was exasperated with her first attempt at a recording, when she had strayed from her text and tried to ad lib a passage. "Sometimes the Russian phrase just comes to mind first."

In other contexts, using mixed Russian-Buryat forms and other *razgovornye* resources can be quite intentional. These resources are crucial, in fact, to the daily work of media production. Collegial conversation in offices and in eliciting interviews requires knowledge of conversational repertoires for building rapport.<sup>68</sup> District affiliations in particular can work wonders for journalistic networking and access; since they are most easily indexed by using regional dialect, a dialectal repertoire can be an important work tool. Workers in radio and television formats also use their knowledge of dialectal differences to decide how to treat interviews. If an interviewee is likely to be incomprehensible to most viewers based on an unusual dialect, the interview will be cut (which is the only solution in radio), translated with running subtitles (an unusual solution for news, but not uncommon for cultural programs), or edited to show the original video with a new voiceover in clearer Buryat (a common solution in television broadcasting for all kinds of problems). At newspapers, editors and writers use their extensive knowledge of dialects to decide what to translate or gloss for readers. Finally, some media personnel use their knowledge of dialectal variation on a daily basis because they work in non-Khorinskii-speaking areas. Ust'-Orda's Buryat-language newspaper

---

<sup>68</sup> See later chapters, especially 7, on the use of Buryat and Russian in interviewing.

owes much to a woman from Akha (R. Okinskii) who arrived in the area with knowledge of her native dialect and SLB. Recognizing the difficulty that Ust'-Orda's Buryat speakers encounter with SLB, she learned the area's western Buryat dialect and makes a habit of collecting local words and phrases [*mestnye slova i frazy*], which she intentionally uses in her writing.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented a series of repertoires that are ideologically separated for use, on one hand, by average speakers in the home and with family (i.e., “in the kitchen”) and, on the other hand by well-educated elites in official domains of language production (i.e., for sale “at the kiosk”). There is an important distinction to be made between the persons involved in these ideologies and the social spaces within which they find themselves. As we saw in the preceding section, media personnel control—and routinely use—both SLB and *razgovornye* repertoires of Buryat, albeit with greater explicit emphasis on the written standards of SLB. The experience of journalists who produce praiseworthy literary Buryat prose at work and then speak in Russian and mixed Russian-Buryat repertoires at home suggests that the repertoires are “attached” less to persons than to contexts of use, though access to repertoires is distributed unevenly among persons. It also suggests that the widespread perception separating the language of the kiosk from that of the kitchen is shared to some extent by language elites.

---

<sup>69</sup> This practice has not come under the same fire encountered by the Sélèngè newspaper. The Sélèngè newspaper's dialect use apparently included much more comprehensive orthographic deviation from the literary standard. Ust'-Orda's press is also subject to different authorities, located now in Irkutsk.

What, then, is it to know Buryat? At the end of our focus group, Masha was visibly shaken, depressed by her newfound feeling that, as she put it, she had a “low-level knowledge” [*nizkii uroven' znanii*] of her native language. Another participant pointed out, by way of consolation, that even her own grandmother couldn't read Buriaad Ünën, and she had spoken only Buryat her entire life. They returned to the topic of dialect variation, continuing to speak Russian and further absolving Masha of any expectation to understand (or produce) SLB. Their deft consolation was a reminder that competence is relative—according to speaker, writer, listener, viewer, assessor, and to the goals of an interaction. What counts as knowledge of Buryat, as evidenced by written standards or by o/aural realities, is fractured, unclear, and highly dependent on immediate social context.

In the face of this uncertainty and complexity, audiences treat news media institutions as monolithic, unified conduits of linguistic knowledge, and assign to them ultimate linguistic authority. In particular, media personnel are supposed to be the arbiters and protectors of standard literary Buryat. However, as we might expect from the capacious multilingualism of journalists, the language of news media is considerably more complex than a kiosk/kitchen dichotomy suggests. Media institutions contain radically varying stances toward the “balance” between Russian and Buryat, and between SLB and *razgovornye* resources. In the next three chapters, examples from different formats of contemporary news journalism in Buryatia will show how the various linguistic resources outlined above are used across different platforms, and why, with what effects for speakers.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **A Medium both Quotidian and “Transcendent”: Newspapers and Print Journalism**

Newspapers are an integral part of daily life in Buryatia. During Siberia’s brief summer, their pages flutter down Ulan-Ude’s dusty streets, yellowing in the sun. Busy newspaper kiosks hum with social activity in every season, providing an array of central, regional, and local media and the little necessities of daily life: chewing gum, pens and pencils, Mongolian astrology guides, and prepaid cards for phone and internet service. Tacked to announcement boards in every village and town are articles singing the praises of a local citizen, or offering schedules of upcoming events. At home, newspapers are simply one of the materials of daily life, stacked on the kitchen table, or on a chair, or on the pull-out sofa bed that is a fixture of cramped Soviet-era apartments, waiting to be put to some new use or taken out with the trash.

A typical Buryat household holds a wealth of books and printed materials in multiple languages. Cabinets and shelving usually occupy at least one wall of the living room, stuffed with school books, notebooks, handwritten notes, and miscellaneous papers. Buddhist families sometimes also keep sacred texts and prayers for daily

practice.<sup>1</sup> When I dropped in on people, I spent a great deal of time paging through family photograph albums and scrapbooks. Yet the largest part of printed material circulating through people's daily lives proved to be in the form of newspapers.

When I asked one senior newspaper editor, Minzhur, what he found most fulfilling about the work that he clearly enjoyed, he pointed to the ubiquity of newspapers in people's daily lives. There could be no doubt, for him, that his work reached a wide audience, because he saw the newspapers stacked onto trucks and driven off for distribution. "But," he continued, "what is most wonderful [*chudesnyi*] about working in journalism is the possibility to **transcend** everyday thinking [*vyiti za predely bytovogo mysleniia*]." Minzhur was himself a poet, and given to grand, philosophical statements. He spoke at great length about the importance of the journalist's role in changing an individual's perspective and outlook. His greatest achievement, he said, were those moments "when a person comes to knowledge of something that he didn't know before... that helps him understand his situation, or himself, as a **person** [*kak chelovek*]." In other contexts, other newspaper editors and writers also used terms like "*prevoskhodnyi*" and "*vydaiushchiisia*"—"transcendent"—to describe their work and their potential effect on people.

While transcendence of daily life might not be a typical goal of news journalism, I would suggest that these editors and reporters opined this less as journalists than as *writers*. Dedication to literary labor turned out to be central to the self-conceptions of

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Buddhist households I visited on our Russian Academy of Sciences expedition in 2009, we unwrapped the sacred bundles stored in home shrines to find texts printed in Russian, Buryat, Mongolian, Tibetan, and occasionally Sanskrit. Buddhist readings kept for daily practice were usually in Russian or Cyrillic-scripted Buryat, although we also encountered an elderly woman in Iaruuna who demonstrated that she could read Mongolian script (an extremely rare skill) and kept daily readings in Mongolian-scripted Buryat on hand.

Buryat-language print journalists—more so than for the Russian-language journalists I interviewed, and more so than for journalists working in other mediums, despite the fact that writing is integral to all news media platforms. Print journalists working in Buryat were also the most likely to speak *about* language and linguistic principles, both with me and with one another in the course of daily routines. One of the key reasons for this special emphasis was intrinsic to their position: minority-language media, as opposed to mainstream media in the lingua franca, are always marked by linguistic insecurity, which foregrounds code and form (Woolard 2011). Like other minority-language media workers, Buryat-language journalists are constantly called upon to attend to code and to linguistic form, often over referential content, as a condition of their work. At the same time, print journalists were more predisposed than their colleagues in radio and television to worry over—and take pleasure in—the minutiae of language. They took language and linguistic issues seriously, and their status as literary standard-bearers seemed to imbue them with a great sense of linguistic responsibility.

Given this preoccupation, it seems appropriate to begin an investigation of the language of news media with an account of newspapers and print journalism. Chapter 4 laid out the array of linguistic registers and resources that are available for use, including among Buryat-language media producers and their audiences. This chapter and the following three focus on the linguistic practices of news media and examine how the language used in different news media platforms is evaluated by its practitioners and audiences. Chapters 5–7 address the three major platforms of news media: newspapers (Chapter 5), radio (Chapter 6), and television (Chapter 7). Each chapter includes samples of contemporary media, native-speaker assessments, and media personnel’s self-

commentary to reveal how different actors conceive of the linguistic possibilities and limitations of the platform at issue. Ethnographic descriptions of reading, listening, and viewing practices provide context for understanding how media fit into daily Buryat life. Chapter 8 discusses the incorporation of ‘new’ media into existing media landscapes and looks at the relationships between and among the platforms investigated.

In what follows, I first provide ethnographic context by looking at how newspapers are read and used in daily life. I then delve into the language of newspapers, drawing on formal analysis of two sample newspaper stories. The same samples were submitted to focus group participants and interviewees, whose assessments are reported and explained in the “Readers’ responses” section. Turning then to production, I draw on print journalists’ meta-commentary to examine several interconnected linguistic principles that motivate their decisions, revealing the practices and ideologies behind the language of newspapers. Among the most common commitments are beliefs in Buryat-language newspapers’ fulfillment of pedagogical and symbolic roles. This fulfillment is made possible, I argue, by material qualities of print like its availability, fixity, physicality, and durability, which are discussed in the next section. In particular, I examine how language is materialized and made visually accessible to audiences who otherwise do not claim knowledge of Buryat. A final section returns to those print journalists who believed in the power of words to “transcend” the quotidian—the *writers*, among whose ranks are many novelists, essayists, and poets like Minzhur. I discuss the social status of minority-language journalists in Buryatia and the central role of literary labor in that status. In the conclusion, I extend this discussion to briefly consider the multiple sources of newspapers’—and print journalists’—authority.

## From Archiving to Zurkhai: how newspapers are read and used

The newspaper kiosks featured in the last chapter are not the only way to purchase newspapers in Buryatia. Subscriptions to newspapers and journals can be ordered through the Russian postal service, reflecting print media's historical development alongside centralized telegraph networks, telecommunications, and “*sviazi*” (‘connections’) in general. A complex federal registration system ensures that all newspapers must apply for the “right” to distribute their publications; they are all, in this sense, official and government-approved. But the regional subscription system encumbers some cross-regional flows. For instance, a potential reader in the Republic of Buryatia in 2009 could subscribe through her local post office to any republic-level newspaper, any federal-level/“central” newspaper, or a limited number of “inter-regional” [*mezhhregional'nyie*] or Belarussian newspapers, but could not subscribe to Tolon, the “all-Buryat” Buryat-language newspaper published in Aginskoe (and, in fact, this newspaper was uncommon in the kiosks of Ulan-Ude).

Among the 29 republic-level newspapers available for subscription in the Republic of Buryatia in 2009, Buriaad Ünen was the central Buryat-language daily and the most important newspaper “for families that haven’t yet forgotten the Buryat language,” as one of my focus group participants put it.<sup>2</sup> Buriaad Ünen’s circulation rate had been growing in the years leading up to my research, from 23,000 in 1999 to 30,100 in 2008. This was unusual; other newspapers’ circulation rates had dropped, continuing a

---

<sup>2</sup> Several large-scale audience studies of readership have been undertaken in post-Soviet Buryatia, generating interesting data on the role of media in post-Soviet social change and the relative popularity of Ulan-Ude newspapers (e.g., Badmaeva 2002, 2004; Choiropov 1998; Osinskii, Bazarov, and Budaeva 2002). Unfortunately, these were mainly conducted before the Russian Federation required all publications to re-register, in the course of which many newspapers lost their registration, and therefore their right to distribution. This altered the media landscape such that it is difficult to use data from the 1990s.

decline since the late 1980s. We should not take this as direct evidence that fewer people were reading them, or that their importance had lagged. Sociologist Liudmila Badmaeva (2002) has argued that the importance of the press in Buryatia has actually *increased* over the post-Soviet period. Subscription and circulation rates have decreased, she contends, in response to economic hardship and climbing costs.

On the basis of ethnographic observation, I can report that individual readers do indeed share newspapers a great deal, and take advantage of copies stored in school or public libraries, though I am in no position to compare these practices with those before 2005. It is also possible that reading certain newspapers *did* taper off when reading them (and subscribing to them) had lost its performative power. As noted in Chapter 3, the performative meanings of newspaper reading became particularly important in post-war Soviet society. Newspaper discourse became a primary source for the intertextual citation central to Soviet political-ideological performance; letters to the editor took on enormous importance as evidence of an engaged and active citizenry working to build socialism. Sociologists and media institutions partnered to collect data on their readers, in order to assess the general effectiveness of mass media as social-political propaganda.<sup>3</sup>

Over the past twenty years, the performative aspects of reading newspapers publicly have no doubt changed and have probably become less important, because there is less to be gained (or lost). Over the course of research, I became acquainted with several Russians and Buryats who currently subscribed to Buriaad Ünen, Tolon, or Ust'-Ordyn Ünen for their offices or (less often) for their households but professed not to read

---

<sup>3</sup> Several sociological surveys of newspapers were undertaken in Buryatia in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Dobolova 1987; Lubsanov 1972; cf. Sosnovskaia 1981). In 1973, SO RAN and Büriaad Ünen partnered to propose an (unpublished, to my knowledge) survey-based study of the readership of Büriaad Ünen. In their study proposal, the research team referenced similar surveys on the readership of *Pravda Buriatii* (1968), *Vpered* (1969), and *Dolina Kizhingi* (1968). (IMBiT Inv. No. 2194)

it personally—or indeed, in a few cases, even to be capable of doing so. There is a sense, then, in which consumption of Buryat-language newspapers remains important for what it does and means beyond distributing information. In every instance, the subscriber explained feeling an obligation to financially or morally support Buryatia’s *Buryats* via the minority press. Yet this consumption was not necessarily for public display. This was not, in other words, conspicuous consumption of text; no one was concerned with being witnessed personally with newspaper in hand.

As further evidence that the public performance of reading has become less important, we might point to the remarkable lack of public reading in Buryatia. When compared with reading practices on the subways of New York, Moscow, or Beijing, or the buses of Ann Arbor, Michigan, there is very little newspaper reading on the trams and minibuses that make up Buryatia’s transportation network. People may stand around kiosks in the cold for long intervals, chatting, smoking, and stamping their feet to stay warm, but once they have bought newspapers, they rarely open them there on the street to read.

Domestic contexts are more central to local newspaper reading practices. The domestic scene is not exactly that of the solitary reader, silently glancing over stock market indices while he sips his morning coffee. Newspapers in Buryatia are in general much more shared, exchanged, and discussed in groups than this image allows. I observed a great deal of sharing and discussion, mainly around newspaper kiosks and in homes, and less often in workplaces, and I was part of various informal exchange networks (due in part to the unusual quantity of newspapers I purchased and read). Interviewees and focus group participants also reported discussing Buryat-language

newspapers with their parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, or other Buryat-speaking members of their households—less, it seems, as an overt attempt at language maintenance and revitalization than because Buryat-language newspapers are taken to instantiate Buryat national interests. Consider, for example, this comment from Sayan, a Buryat man from Iaruuna (R. Eravninskii) in his early 20s:

We have, like, in [our] family, yeah? (..) Well (..) every week, we [talk about] these weekly newspapers, basically in Buryat, like this [gestures toward Buriaad Üñen] (.) And everyone gathers, some after work, some after study, someone else after something-or-other, (.) we all gather as a **family**. (.) After dinner we sit down, we read, and we discuss—we have these, well let’s say, **debates**, or **discussions**. That is—what’s written, but [also] what is not— (.) **finished** being written, we could say.

Later in the same conversation, Sayan picked up a copy of Buriaad Üñen that was lying in front of him, pointing out interesting bits to me. One article reminded him of his aunt, another of his grandfather. Different items reminded him of conversations that he had had, which he began to recollect for me. It was clear that for Sayan, the newspaper was neither the carrier of a ‘message’ shipped from producer to receiver, nor a ‘sphere’ for debate in and of itself. It was rather one text among many fully integrated into his daily life, and the evocative medium through which he intertextually linked our conversation and its context to conversations and debates over politics and society that he had had in other contexts—namely, after-dinner gatherings at home.

That said, newspapers in Buryatia do serve as an important public medium by which to “publicize” [*obnarodovat*] one’s opinions, share personally meaningful information, and air complaints. Political parties favor them for election campaigning, publishing special single-sheet pre-election “*spetsgazety*” (*spetsial’nye gazety*, ‘special newspapers’) during election seasons. These were abundant in Ulan-Ude, for example, leading up to a March 2009 parliamentary election. In Buryat-oriented newspapers like

Buriaad Ünën and district newspapers, many of the articles are contributed not by full-time journalists but by historians, history students, sociologists, political scientists, and occasionally ethnographers or geographers. The most common topics of these are family history and the history of important local buildings and events that bear personal importance to the author. Sayan, for example, had written and published an article about his grandfather, who had served in World War II and in Japan. These kinds of stories are among the most popular items in local newspapers, and editors generally encourage them. Finally, letters to the editor and popular question-and-answer features serve to air readers' complaints. Yet since the height of obsession with letters to the editor in the late Soviet period, they have fallen in status, at least among the journalists who decide what to print. Newspaper journalists rarely discussed them with each other or with me, until I introduced the topic; one retired journalist boasted about the number of letters to the editor that his publication had received (and I was suitably impressed, having read enough archival meeting notes to understand what that meant), but the performative power of sending and receiving letters seemed to have diminished.

If the performative functions of reading and using newspapers have lessened, are informational functions now paramount? Perhaps, but to describe the newspaper's social role as simply informative would elide the more specific purposes for which readers turn to it as an information source. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, newspapers and their printing presses were the primary means by which bureaucratic information was made available, in the form of public announcements like the announcement of Lenin's death and cooperative instructions that we saw in Chapter 3. Other media formats now share the burden of disseminating public service announcements. As of 2009, for instance, both

Ulan-Ude and Aginskoe featured enormous digital screens on their main town squares. Ulan-Ude's screen mainly showed paid commercial advertisements, with some public service announcements warning against drunk driving. Aginskoe's screen continually played public service announcements warning against the use of narcotics, explaining where to find testing and treatment of tuberculosis, and advising citizens to protect their cell phones from thieves. Television and radio broadcasting likewise have taken over many of the informational roles once dominated by newspapers.

In this context of multiple media and information sources, I would argue that newspapers are not simply 'important' or 'unimportant,' but rather that readers go to newspapers for specific types of information. In March–April 2002, a group of researchers at IMBiT SO RAN conducted an audience survey with 1024 respondents, reported and analyzed in Badmaeva 2002, 2004. Respondents were asked about, among other things, their primary sources of information on the affairs of “structures of power” in the republic—the affairs of the president, for example, the government, regional administration, and so on. Newspapers emerged as the most used source in every category, surpassing even television as an information source.<sup>4</sup> Of course, there are many types of information besides political and administrative, but these results point to the special authority of newspapers in the spheres of politics, administration, and business. The study showed, for instance, that 59 percent of sampled businessmen reported reading republic-level newspapers (Badmaeva 2002:80). Similarly, *Buriatiia-7*, the weekly

---

<sup>4</sup> Badmaeva (2004) interprets her data somewhat differently, arguing that television was the most used source. This reading is due to the fact that she separates republic-level and district-level newspapers, opposing each equally to television (the possible news sources listed are republic-level newspapers, district-level newspapers, radio, television, neighbors and friends, co-workers, “I don't know anything,” first-hand experience, and assemblies). When republic- and district-level newspapers are combined, they surpass all of the other information sources.

newspaper of the government, showed up in many of the households I observed, where it was often pointed to as the best source for price and tax information.

Another crucial type of information that people mainly seek out in newspapers (as opposed to television or radio) is event scheduling. *Inform Polis*, for instance, owes much of its popularity to the fact that it runs the most comprehensive listings of religious services, films, theatrical performances, and television programming, and is the single best source for information on events in Ulan-Ude. Most republic-level, district-level, and city-level newspapers run television schedules, which are cited by some audience members as reason alone to buy the paper; they are also one of the most frequently shared parts of the paper. The importance of the television listings shows the interconnectedness of different media on a financial level: television stations depend on the newspapers for publicity, and the newspapers' circulation rates are kept up by the television stations.

Newspapers provide a related type of scheduling information in the tremendously popular zurkhaj, a horoscope based on Mongolian (Buddhist) astrology. Most newspapers that run the zurkhaj also run a Western-style astrological guide, which is locally referred to as “British,” but it is the zurkhaj that people report as a reason—sometimes the only reason—to buy the newspaper. Astrological guides have become popular throughout Russia in the 1990s–2000s (Shevchenko 2009),<sup>5</sup> and the zurkhaj fulfills their usual functions (prediction, hope, explanation for otherwise inexplicable daily phenomena) with an added patina of exoticism and cultural rediscovery. Several publications that do not otherwise emphasize their Buryatness run them, including *Pravda Buriatii*, the

---

<sup>5</sup> For a timely comparison of horoscopes in post-socialist Hungary, see Fehérváry 2007.

Russian-language newspaper of the Communist Party, and *Inform Polis*, which runs both a weekly British-style horoscope and a Monoglian-style zurkhaj.

These short-term, time-sensitive informational uses find their opposite in another popular use of newspapers in Buryatia: archiving. I refer not to the institutional practice of constructing official archives (though that, of course, is important too), but rather to the widespread everyday practice of keeping files of noteworthy newspaper clippings. Village elders in particular often keep archives of historical materials and clippings on relatives, local people, histories of local *datsans*, and so on, which they frequently exchange with one another and re-circulate. Extending the use of newspapers way beyond its original temporal context and the timeframe of the zurkhaj, they create mini-libraries of newspapers in village homes. In this way, newspapers may become part of a broader Buryat book culture venerating texts.<sup>6</sup> Newspaper clippings are *not* seen as sacred in and of themselves, their ‘transcendence’ limited instead to what Minzhur had in mind, but they can get caught up in those practices. For example, one village family possessed (or, more accurately, were the caretakers of) a venerated collection of sacred Buddhist texts, housed in a small building near their house. Mixed in with the books before which visitors could worship, arrayed in an elaborate display of silks, candles, cookies, and coins, were photographs of ancestors and family members, as well as newspaper clippings about the collection.

Finally, it bears noting that some of the uses to which Buryat-language newspapers are put do not require that a person actually read the newspaper. There is, first of all, the symbolic function of having the language textualized, made available in

---

<sup>6</sup> See notes on book culture in Chapter 3, especially on texts as ritual objects to be worshipped.



**Figure 5.1.** Some of the diverse ways newspapers are used as a material in daily life. Clockwise, from upper left: wrapping a sacred Buddhist text in *Buriad Ünën*, 2009; the covered windows of a converted train car, 2009; a cup for peanuts, crafted by a babushka selling them on the street, 2007; a page of *Buriad Ünën Dükherig*, lifted from an offering plate, 2009.

the visual channel for comment even by (non-)readers who otherwise have no access—a point to which we will return below. Secondly, the *substance* of newspaper is put to uses besides reading. They provide physical stuff that is kept in village homes and city apartments, tacked on office bulletin boards, and left on park benches to blow down the

streets. Ulan-Ude's archives contain many examples of old *stengazetas* (*stennye gazety*, poster-sized 'wall newspapers') that have been re-appropriated as writing paper, with long columns of Mongolian handwriting covering the blank side.<sup>7</sup> When I first began collecting newspapers in May 2007 in Ulan-Ude, the weekly edition of Buriaad Ünen, Dükhërig, was selling on the street for 6 rubles, then approximately \$0.25, and the slimmer every-other-daily was selling for 2.50 rubles, then about \$0.11. This made Buriaad Ünen one of the cheapest newspapers available. I never knew anyone to purchase a newspaper exclusively to acquire the material substance, but one of the older women I visited cited the usefulness of newspaper as justification for investing some of her meager pension in Buriaad Ünen and popular Russian tabloids at local kiosks. I asked how she used the tabloids after she and her nieces—all great acolytes of this genre—had read them. She used her cane to draw back a curtain hung under the sink, revealing a cardboard box full of tomatoes, each carefully wrapped in newspaper in the same style I had learned from one of the women I lived with. (If you store the tomatoes from your dacha in August in this manner, they will stay fresh until February's Sagaalgan season.)

Wrapping tomatoes, fish, and sausages, covering plates of offerings, lining the interior walls of home shrines, protecting houseplants, covering windows, and packaging snacks to sell on the street were all common everyday uses of newspaper as a material substance (Figure 5.1). In the homes of some devout Buddhist villagers, old copies of Buriaad Ünen even served as wrappings for religious texts, in place of the traditional silk and brocade.

---

<sup>7</sup> E.g., a copy of *Nabat* held at IMBiT, Inv. No. 356.

## The language of newspapers

Newspapers with Buryat-language material manage the relationship between Buryat and Russian in different ways. Both Burĭaad Ünen and Tolon have introduced policies to include Russian-language articles, comprising as much as one-third of the total content.<sup>8</sup> Editors at both newspapers see this as a necessary development for making *culturally* or *ethnically* Buryat-oriented content relevant and accessible to young Russian-dominant readers. Russian-language material is usually on topics considered relevant to a Russian-speaking audience, such as meetings of Orthodox Russians and Old Believers. Much of it is advice columns and book excerpts that are simply direct reprints from other Russian-language publications, not original Russian prose produced by newspaper staff or contributors. But not always. Historical material on Buryat families is also often printed in Russian. (See, for instance, the saved scrap of Burĭaad Ünen Dükhèrig pictured in Figure 5.1, which features a Russian-language article entitled “*Semeinaia saga Ubugunovykh*,” or ‘The family saga of the Ubugunovs.’) Neither newspaper openly advertises its Russian-language material, and Russian-language articles rarely (but occasionally) run on the front page. They are framed very much as Buryat-language newspapers, with administrative notes and contact information translated into Buryat, and Mongolian-scripted translations of the titles in the mastheads. I found that many people who were not already avid readers of these newspapers did not know that they included Russian-language content at all, although the news was welcome among the many Buryats who might be interested in “national questions” but feel excluded from the Buryat language public.

---

<sup>8</sup> This does not include the Russian-language content of television listings, which are naturally in Russian because the names of almost all programs and channels are Russian.

Several district newspapers also include Buryat-language material, according to a range of different models. Some have separate institutional structures for Buryat- and Russian-language publications, which might share material and be printed in the same printing house, but have separate staffs. The Khèzhèngè and Iaruuna newspapers are the best examples of this, each with a Russian-language weekly, *Dolina Kizhingi* and Iaruuna, and a smaller-format Buryat-language weekly (or monthly, in Iaruuna), Khèzhèngè and Iaruuna, respectively.<sup>9</sup> Ust'-Orda likewise has both the Russian-language *Panorama Okrug* and Buryat-language Ust'-Oryn Ünèn, which are housed together in the same newspaper building in Ust'-Ordynskii, and Aga's Tolon came out of the same model, with *Aginskaia Pravda* and (see Figure 5.2). This model follows that of 'duplicated' (*dublirovannye*) newspapers, but in every case, the Buryat-language publication is in a smaller format.

Other district newspapers intermix Russian and Buryat content in unified publications. Akha district, for instance, publishes its newspaper Akha primarily in Russian, but with a Buryat title and some Buryat articles, as well as occasional content in Soyot, a recently reconstructed language related to Tuvan and historically spoken in the Sayan Mountains.<sup>10</sup> *Ogni Kurumkana*, is almost exclusively in Russian but includes Buryat terms regarding Buddhist events and services, which are often glossed in Russian; similarly, *Barguzinskaia Pravda* includes Buryat-language greetings during Sagaalga.

---

<sup>9</sup> Khèzhèngè's newspapers are described by one of their journalists in a radio interview that appears in Radio Sample 2, Appendix C.

<sup>10</sup> Soyot ceased to be spoken sometime during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly as a result of Buryaticization. Following a resurgence of interest in Soyot culture and a campaign to have the ethnic group re-recognized as an indigenous minority of Russia, V. Rassadin reconstructed the language based on neighboring languages and a few surviving features. When I visited Akha in July 2009, a textbook for schoolchildren had just been published, and schools were preparing to reintroduce the language in the fall.

Finally, the Khori district newspaper *Udinskaia nov'*, in the semi-urban settlement of Khorinsk, has been operating for many years as a newspaper “in Buryat and in Russian” but has recently become exclusively Russian.

The change at *Udinskaia nov'* is illustrative of the powerful forces that language revitalization efforts must counter if they are to succeed. When I visited their offices (Figure 5.2) in July 2009, two of the journalists explained that their sole staff journalist writing in Buryat had switched to writing exclusively in Russian. It was “no longer necessary” to write in Buryat for Khorinsk’s population, because they had become “urban” [*gorodskie*], so “naturally” everyone could now read in Russian.<sup>11</sup> Upon learning that I was a student of Buryat, one of the journalists expressed some interest, and I asked (in Buryat) whether she spoke Buryat. “Of course!” she responded in Russian, almost indignantly. “Of course I speak Buryat. I am a Buryat (*f.*)!” [*Konechno! Konechno govoriu po-buriatski. Ia buriatka!*] This issue, it seemed, was unconnected to the question of whether or not writers in their offices would (or should) be writing in Buryat. The purpose of Buryat-language content had been informative more than symbolic; and it had been a means to the ultimate end of urbanization and integration, as expressed now in their ability to shift fully to Russian. Khorinsk’s urbanity is tenuous, which accounts in part for these journalists’ insistence. Before I left, they repeated that the people of Khorinsk were *gorodskie*. As though on cue, a small herd of goats wandered past the window.

---

<sup>11</sup> I did not speak with the senior editor at *Udinskaia nov'*, and I am not sure to what these journalists were expressing the viewpoint of the institution versus their own personal impressions.



**Figure 5.2.** Newspaper offices of Aginskoe’s *Aginskaia Pravda* and *Tolon* (left), and Khorinsk’s *Udinskaia nov’* (right), 2009.

Managing language contact also includes, of course, managing the use of Russian ‘within’ Buryat as well. Interestingly, the editors who stated their publications’ Russian-content policies kept the question of including Russian-language material—that is, fully Russian, Russian-framed articles—quite separate from the question of including Russian-origin terms and other contact features *within* material that is framed as Buryat. In initial conversation, a given article was usually assessed as simply “Russian” or “Buryat;” eliciting more nuanced interpretations usually required that I ask about specific forms or wait to observe a correction or controversy (which was methodologically more difficult with newspaper journalists than in radio and television, because they tend to work silently and alone). Readers’ and journalists’ interpretations are offered in the coming sections; here, let us turn to two samples to view the language of newspapers alone. These samples appear in full in Appendix C, in the order in which they were presented to research participants (radio, newspapers, and television, which is not the order in which they appear here and in subsequent chapters).

The first sample, drawn from the front page of a weekly edition of Burĭaad Ünen in 2009, is a translation into Buryat of a ritualized political statement by Nagovitsyn, the current President of the Republic of Buryatia. Given that this is not a journalist's reportage, it might seem a strange choice, but the President's remarks are some of the most visible pieces of Buryat prose in circulation, and there is reason to think that they are edited by journalists. The piece belongs to a political genre common in Russian-language newspapers throughout the Tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods, in which a leader directly addresses the populace to announce the enactment of a new law, call for wartime support, or acknowledge an important holiday or event. Burĭaad Ünen regularly runs these kinds of announcements from the office of the Republic of Buryatia's president as part of its role as an organ of the government. The President's remarks occupy a prominent position on the front page, along with official political news, coverage of important holidays and events, and occasionally unofficial announcements of particular value to the readership of Burĭaad Ünen, such as the visit of an important lama or shaman.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Nagovitsyn does not command Buryat by anyone's estimation, so there was no question that the text as it appeared was translated, and possibly authored, by someone else. According to current and former newspaper employees, the publishing collective usually receives announcements from the president's office in both original Russian and Buryat translations, though historically, translation services have frequently been shared by Burĭaad Ünen and governmental offices,<sup>12</sup> so a translation could originate in either institutional context. (The newspaper

---

<sup>12</sup> Governmental offices in Buryatia have been heavily dependent on journalists for translation services, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to make basic policy information available and more recently to

and president’s offices are housed in separate buildings, but are located only a short walk from one another, with a great deal of fluidity among workers.)

The statement begins with a ritualized greeting:

1	<b><u>KHÜNDÈTÈ NÜKHÈDÜÜD!</u></b>	<b>RESPECTED FRIENDS!</b>
2	<b><u>Èsègè oronoo</u></b> khamgaalagshyn	With warm friendship I wish <b>you (V.)</b> a
3	<u>üderöör Ta</u> бүгэдэниие khani khaluunaar	[happy] Day of the Defender of the
4	<u>amarshalnab!</u>	<b>Fatherland!</b>
5	<b><u>Aldar suugaar badaran manduulhan</u></b>	<b>Raised blazing with glory</b> , this holiday
6	<u>ènè haindèr bata bèkhi tүүkhyn ündèhètèi.</u>	has enduring historical roots. [...]

Two notable aspects of the statement as a whole are already clear in this opening. One is the use of stylistic features from a particular Russian register of official, ceremonial address, including the initial address ‘Respected friends!’ [Khündètè nүkhèdүүd!], a common form of address modeled on (Soviet) Russian *Uvazhaemye tovarishchi!* (‘Respected comrades!’), in line 1. Like the Russian expression, it is used in formal ceremonies and toasts and marks the genre of *pozhelaniia* (B. üreèlnүүд), ‘greetings,’ ‘wishes,’ or ‘blessings’. Here it frames the President’s words as both formal and welcoming; he is our host and our compatriot. Similarly, a convention of formal direct address in Russian is borrowed in the capitalization of formal/plural ‘You’ [Ta] in line 3 (also found in lines 21, 35, and 37 in the full text). Exclamation points further mark the style as one of ceremonial direct address.

Second is the use of terms and phrases drawn from Soviet propaganda, indicating that this statement embodies not only a celebratory Russian style, but more specifically, a Soviet style. The Buryat phrase in lines 5–6, “aldar suugaar badaran manduulhan.” is particular to Soviet propaganda: “aldar suu.” here and in line 8, refers to ‘glory’ (R.

---

comply with language legislation requiring official documents to be released in Buryat as well as Russian. Some of the earliest translators for Soviet documents were supplied by Buriaad Ünèn. There has always been only a small pool of institutionally qualified translation workers capable of producing text in standard literary Buryat.

*slava*), and manduulkha is often found in the formulaic expressions “ilaltyn tug manduulkha,” “lenin tug manduulkha,” ‘to raise the banner of victory,’ ‘to raise the banner of Lenin’ (R. *vodruzhat’ znamia pobedy/Lenina*). Similar is the formulaic invocation of Èsègè oron (‘Fatherland’) in line 2, which is repeated throughout the text along with Èkhè oron (‘Motherland’) in lines 32 and 38:

<p>30 [...] <u>Manai gürènéi ündèhèn</u>  31 <u>khuuliaar бүтэн бүрэн bailgye khamgaalna.</u>  32 <b>Èkhè oron</b>ingoo öörygöö khamgaalkha  33 <u>khüsè shadalyen’ bolon aiuulgüi baidalyen’</u>  34 <u>büri mühèn sakhina.</u>  35 <u>Ènèl üdèr Ta бүгэдэндэ ènhè amgalan</u>  36 <u>baidal, khamag iuumye hain tèeshèn’</u>  37 <u>bodozho, azhana amgalan azhahuukhyetnai.</u>  38 <b>Èkhè oron</b>ingoo khügzhèn halbarkhyn  39 <u>tula amzhaltanuudye khüsènéb!</u></p>	<p>According to the constitution, they defend the integrity of our state, [and] they exhaustively protect the self-defending forces [and] national security of the <b>Motherland</b>.  This very day I wish to you (<i>V.</i>) all a peaceful existence, meditating all things to the good side, [that] your (<i>V.</i>) lives be peaceful, [and] successes in the blossoming of the <b>Motherland!</b></p>
---	---

Understanding the topic of the president’s statement will help explain why there is so much Soviet style in a political statement published in 2009. Èsègè oronoo khamgaalagshyn üdèröör in lines 2–3 greets the reader in honor of the Day of the Defender of the Fatherland (R. *Den’ zashchitnika Otechestva*), formerly the Day of the Soviet Army and Navy, celebrated February 23 in the Russian Federation and several other post-Soviet territories.<sup>13</sup> It is roughly analogous to Veterans’ Day, but in Russia, the reference is less to military might in general or to veterans in general than to the sacrifices of WWII veterans, a small portion of Buryatia’s living population but one with tremendous emotional significance.<sup>14</sup> Èsègè oron is a direct translation of Russian

<sup>13</sup> From 1922 to 1949, this was the Day of the Red Army and Navy (*Den’ Krasnoi armii i Flota*); the name was changed to *Den’ Sovetskoi Armii i Voенno-Morskogo flota* in 1949 with the rechristening of the armed forces and was celebrated as such throughout the Soviet period.

<sup>14</sup> It is also unofficially celebrated as “Men’s Day” [*Den’ muzhchin*], the male counterpart to International Women’s Day, which is celebrated two weeks later on March 8. (Victory Day, May 9, prompts calls of “glory to masculinity” as well.) The president’s comments reflect the official veterans’ day meaning, as well as the unofficial celebration of masculinity.

*Otechestvo* (‘Fatherland’), a special term always used in remembrances of World War II and not very often outside this context. Èkhè oron (‘Motherland’) mirrors Èsègè oron (‘Fatherland’) above and is most commonly used to translate Russian *rodina*, or ‘native land,’ ‘land of birth or lineage,’ as in the common Russian expression “to love one’s motherland”: R. *liubit’ svoiu Rodinu*; B. Èkhè orondoo duratai baikha. Here, the text moves from repeated use of Èsègè oron, invoking the monumental Soviet sacrifice and ultimate victory of World War II, to Èkhè oron, a term more common in the contemporary period. The text thus invites the reader to participate in a chronotope spanning past Soviet victories and future Russian (*rossiiskii*) security.<sup>15</sup>

A very different topic is on display in Sample 2, part of a series of articles on Buddhist and shamanic traditions that Buriaad Ünèn ran in celebration of Sagaalgan. In this installment, the newspaper reports a conversation between journalists and a well-known Buryat shaman, who details the meanings of a number of animal totems of Buryat origin myths. Some of them are prominent figures of Buryat mythology that a Buryat audience could be expected to know, such as the Lord Bull or Lord Bull Papa (Bukha noën baabaie), the Blue Wolf (Bürtè shono), and the Swan (Khun shubuun), though readers might not know these traditional names.<sup>16</sup> Others, however, are more obscure:

15	– <u>Buriaad zon taban huldè tëmdègüüdtèi,</u>	–The Buryat people have five symbols, [or] <b>talismans (totem[s])</b> . In the first picture you ( <i>V.</i> ) see the <b>Lord Bull Papa</b> , son descended from Zailag tëngèri [and] totem of all people, holding high the original spirit of the Buryat people: the Sartuuls, Songools, and others. In the second picture is drawn the offering-
16	<b>hakhiuuhadtai (totem) iuum. TÜRÜÜSHYN</b>	
17	<u>zurag dèèrè buriaad zonoï, sartuul, songool,</u>	
18	<u>bucad ug garbalai hür huldye dèèshèn’</u>	
19	<u>ürgèdèg Bukha noën baabaie – Zailag</u>	
20	<u>tèngèriin khübüüe, bükhy zonoï</u>	
21	<u>hakhiuuhaniie kharanat. Khoërdokhi zurag</u>	
22	<u>dèèrè èkhirèdèi takhidag Èrèèn gutaar</u>	

<sup>15</sup> Additional examples of Soviet style and flowery, ceremonial style in this sample are noted in Appendix C.

<sup>16</sup> For explanations of these figures, see the notes in Appendix C.

23	<u>èségè (zagahan) zuraatai</u> , [...]	recipient of the Èkhirits, the <b>Variegated Burbot Father</b> (a fish). [...]
39	<u>Mongol aradai ègèèl ekhè shütöön bolodog</u>	What has become the greatest sacred place of the Mongol nation, <b>the palace of the Ol'khon Spirit of the Mountain on Ol'khon Island (Shaman's Rock)</b> , is shown in this picture, [...]
40	<u>Oikhon dèèrè (mys Shamanka) Oikhon</u>	
41	<u>buural baabain ordon ènè zurag dèèrè</u>	
42	<u>kharuulagdana</u> , [...]	

The “Variegated Burbot Father” of the Èkhirits, referenced in lines 22–23, is not a well-known figure in the pantheon of Buryat mythology. Here the writer gives a gloss in Buryat, “zagahan,” indicating that the Èreèn gutaar is a fish, or type of fish. (The fish referenced, the variegated burbot or *Lota lota*, is a freshwater member of the cod family native to Lake Baikal.) The writer may be repeating the shaman, but quotations are not particularly careful or verbatim elsewhere, so there is no reason to think that that a journalist would *not* simply add a gloss—or, by the same token, omit it if she thought it unnecessary. In fact, glossing in this manner is a common feature in Buryat-language newspapers like (but not limited to) Buriaad Ünen. Usually, however, the glosses are provided not in Buryat but in Russian. There are two examples in this passage: in line 16, the writer includes a gloss in Russian for the reader, explaining the term hakhiuuha(n) as “totem,”<sup>17</sup> and in lines 40–41, we see a sacred shamanic spot on Baikal’s Ol’khon Island glossed with the Russian name by which it is most famous, “*mys Shamanka*” (‘rock or promontory of the shaman’).

We have seen, through the samples presented, that newspaper prose is marked by its ability to instantiate ‘official,’ authoritative style and introduce unusual terminology like the names of sacred places and the variegated burbot. These features, however, are

---

<sup>17</sup> Other meanings include ‘amulet,’ ‘charm;’ it might refer to any sacred item into which the spirit or essence (and thereby the protective power) of a deity has been invested. This term also appears, coincidentally, in a Buddhist context in Radio Sample 1, with interesting differences in pronunciation and interpretation.

lexical. The third important feature of the language of newspapers that I would like to introduce here lies in syntax and morphology. The first sentence of the same sample exemplifies a characteristic feature of newspaper prose in its sheer length:

<p>2     <u>Shènè Komushkadaa</u> (<i>ul. Barnaulskaia</i>,  3     164 “a”) <u>öörüngöö bodoto gazar dèèrè</u>  4     <u>tübkhinëhèn</u> “Tèngèri” <b>gèhèn</b> böö  5     <u>shazhanai èmkhiin baishan haiakhan orozho</u>  6     <u>erèmsèèrèè</u>, <u>khanaarn’ dèèrè ülgègdèhèn</u>  7     <u>zuraguudye kharan, zhurnalistuudta</u>  8     <u>khöörèzhè</u> baihan tus èmkhiin türüülègshè,  9     <u>pedagogikyn èrdèméi kandidat, mèdèèzhè</u>  10    böö, “Buriaad ünèn-Dükhèrigèi”  11    <u>èmkhidkhèdèg</u> “Buriaadaï türüü khünüüd –  12    2007” <b>gèhèn</b> <i>konkursyn laureat</i> Bair  13    <u>Zhambalovich TSYRENDORZHIEVAI</u>  14    <u>tailbarinuudye shagnababdi.</u></p>	<p><b>We entered</b> the building of the shamanic organization <b>called</b> “Tèngèri,” <b>which has settled</b> in Shènè Komushka<sup>18</sup> (Barnaulskaia street, 164 “a”)<sup>19</sup> in its own concrete location,<sup>20</sup> and immediately <b>noticed</b> that its walls <b>were hung</b> with pictures. <b>Speaking</b> to journalists was the chairman of this organization, candidate of pedagogical science, well-known shaman, [and] laureate of the competition called “Best People of Buryatia – 2007” <b>organized</b> by <u>Buriaad ünèn-Dükhèrig</u>, Bair Zhambalovich TSYRENDORZHIEV, to whose observations <b>we listened</b>.</p>
---	---

Notice the long series of nested participial and gerundial phrases (most of which have relatively close parallels in English) leading up to a simple verb at the end, shagnababdi ‘we listened.’ The construction depends, like much newspaper prose, on elaborate participles and verbal adverbs, in boldface above. To appreciate the verb morphology, let us look more closely at the verbs in this passage:

<sup>18</sup> This place name is a partial translation of the Russian name of the settlement, *Novaia Komushka* (‘new komushka’), resulting in a hybrid of B. shènè (‘new’) and the Russian Siberianism *komushka*. Several interviewees automatically applied Buryat vowel length to the stressed first vowel of Komushka upon reading this aloud, despite the fact that length is not reflected in the orthography.

<sup>19</sup> Interviewees reading this street address, which appears in Russian format in the text, always shifted to Russian pronunciation and read “*ulitsa*” (‘street’) for the abbreviation “*ul.*” There are possible Buryat alternatives that the writer could have chosen here, such as üilsè (an older, more nativized borrowing from Russian *ulitsa*) or gudamzha. The former is much more common than the latter, but gudamzha also occasionally appears in print. The Buryat-language version of Iaruuna, Iaruuna/Eravna’s district-level newspaper, for instance, uses gudamzha in their published address. This, however, is extremely rare. Moreover, while gudamzha might seem like an ideal purist addition to SLB, some dictionaries and Buryat teachers consider it a “spoken” [*ustnaia*] form.

<sup>20</sup> “Tèngèri” had only recently received administratively official status as a registered religious organization and concretized themselves in a physical building.

<u>tübkhinë(khè)</u> ‘to settle’ <sup>21</sup>	+ <u>-hèn</u>	past participial suffix (PP)	>	<u>tübkhinëhèn</u> ‘having settled’
<u>gè(khè)</u> ‘to speak,’ ‘to be spoken of’	+ <u>-hèn</u>	past participial suffix (PP)	>	<u>gèhèn</u> ‘having been called’
<u>erè(khè)</u> ‘to come’	+ <u>-msèèr</u>	gerundial suffix ‘as soon as’	+ <u>-èè</u> simple past	> <u>erèmsèèrèè</u> ‘had only just come’
<u>ülgè(khè)</u> ‘to hang’	+ <u>-gdè-</u>	pass. infix	+ <u>-hèn</u> PP	> <u>ülgègdèhèn</u> ‘having been hung’
<u>khöörè(khè)</u> ‘to tell, speak’	+ <u>-zhè</u>	conjunctive gerundial suffix	>	<u>khöörèzhè</u> ‘...spoke [and therefore]...’
<u>èmkhid(è)(khè)</u> ‘to be organized’	+ <u>-dég</u>	repetitive/cont. participial suffix	>	<u>èmkhidkhèdég</u> ‘always being organized’
<u>shagna(kha)</u> ‘to listen’	+ <u>-(a)ba</u>	simple past	+ <u>-bdi</u>	> <u>shagnababdi</u> 3rdPersPl. ‘we listened’

Of particular note is the gerundial verb form in line 6, -msaar / -msoor / -msèèr / -msöör, meaning ‘only just’ or ‘as soon as.’ This form is very rare and characteristic of SLB; when I first learned it, it was with instructions to just write it down and recognize it, but not worry over *producing* it. It was useful, my instructor said, only if I was going to read a lot of newspapers.

Another exemplary participle in this article occurs further on:

53	“Tèngèridèn” <u>èmkhidkhègdèkhèè</u> baihan	[...we talked...] about religious ceremonies
54	<u>münöö üeyn mürgeñnüüd, èho gurimuud</u>	and traditional rites of this era <b>that will be</b>
55	<u>tukhai khöörèldèbèbdi, [...]</u>	<b>organized</b> at his “Tèngèri,” [...]

This participle is formed from èmkhidkhè(khè) (‘to organize’):

<u>èmkhidkhè(khè)</u>	+ <u>-gdè-</u>	+	<u>-khè</u>	+	<u>-èè</u>	>	<u>èmkhidkhègdèkhèè</u>
‘to organize’	passive infix		future part. suffix		dative possessive <sup>22</sup>		

<sup>21</sup> Buryat does not have a true infinitive; following convention, I provide the simple future tense form here.

<sup>22</sup> The dative case possessive suffix -èè is repeated from preceding “Tèngèridèn” (‘at his/its Tèngèri’). The ending vowel is reduced to a total of two è’s due to an orthographic rule that prohibits more than two.

This participle involved a choice, whether conscious or unconscious. From the active root verb émkhidkhèkhè (‘to organize’), there are multiple possible passive verbs meaning ‘to be organized’ from which to proceed: émkhid(khè), émkhidè(khè), and émkhidkhègdè(khè). Note that the writer chose the most complex of the three. An analogy in English might be choosing “orientate” over “orient,” or “utilize” over “use.”

This example brings us to an important point about the language of newspapers: the more complex verb morphology typically wins out. While all of the verb forms discussed here may occur in other contexts, they are particularly characteristic of SLB and newspaper prose. Newspaper writing (or perhaps newspaper writers) shows a much higher tolerance for complex syntactic constructions than other speech genres, including the radio and television language explored in the next two chapters. This complexity had a profound impact on readers’ experiences and their responses to these texts.

## **Readers’ responses**

In focus groups, I asked participants to read the samples aloud. Participants who reported being native speakers of the “literary dialects” of Buryat read fluidly, even poetically, and nativized some of the Russian-origin terms. The word “fotozuraguud” (‘photographs’) in line 46 of Sample 2, for instance, became [fo:tozuragu:d].<sup>23</sup> Others stumbled over words, some stopping entirely. One of the participles discussed above, émkhidkhègdèkhèè, proved a stumbling block for even the most fluent readers of literary Buryat. Like Masha, the stymied young reader in Chapter 4, many interviewees and focus

---

<sup>23</sup> Other Russian-origin terms, however, such as the street address at the beginning of the same sample, were read with Russian pronunciation. See notes in Appendix C.

group participants who reported speaking Buryat on a regular or semi-regular basis nonetheless had difficulty with newspaper prose. A common report was being able to understand the “general idea” [*smysl’ obshaia*] or topic [*tema*] but not specific words. “Welllll, I see *khraibryi* [brave],” one girl said carefully, biting her lip as she looked over the Defender of the Fatherland text and tried to make sense of it. “Zorigtoi.” (She recognized it, she said, because her cousin had recently had a little boy, and they had named him Zorigto on the advice of a lama in Aga—not because she had read it before.) At length, another participant explained that ilalta meant ‘victory’ (R. *pobeda*), and she understood the topic.

Dialects were by far the most common reason people reported not being able to understand SLB, including these texts. Speakers from the Khèzhèngè and Iaruuna districts had, on average, the least trouble, and speakers of other dialects tended to complain—or simply note with a shrug—that the newspaper text was “all Khorinskii.” But education mattered too; an interviewee from Dzhida, for instance, claimed that she had *not* spoken Buryat very often as a child but had studied it as a subject in school for seven years, giving her a better understanding of the literary language [*literaturnyi iazyk*] than the conversational [*razgovornyi*] Buryat she ascribed to her village friends at the technological university in Ulan-Ude. Comprehension of the newspaper samples depended, in sum, on a combination of dialect background and educational background.

This was consonant with what I had been informally told before conducting research to specifically investigate it. Upon being introduced to me, Buryat speakers would often immediately volunteer that they could not read the newspaper themselves, which they usually explained as the product of having never received formal education in

Buryat, and which they sometimes contrasted with their understanding of music, *rech* ('speech'), or the *razgovornyi iazyk* ('conversational language'). "I can't read," they would say simply, "because I didn't study it in school."

Given the absolutism of these claims, the particular features that presented difficulty were sometimes hard to parse out. A few, however, emerged as particularly cumbersome. First and foremost, readers complained about the "bookish style" [*knizhnyi stil*']. Participles like ëmkhidkhègdèkhèè appeared needlessly complex; getting to the end of this particular sentence, one girl muttered under her breath, "Oy, horror" [*Oi, uzhas*']. A student from NGI even pointed this out and criticized both this writer and the translator of Nagovitsyn's speech for using participles "*ne lovko*"—not deftly, adroitly, or well. Younger readers also had some difficulty with the Soviet style in the official/political genre; and almost everyone had difficulty with the shamanic terminology in the cultural/religious genre. Most of the focus group participants became deeply involved in discussion of the totems and clans described in the text on shamanism, leading into general discussion of religious revitalization, but it was frustrating to some too. "You'd only know this if you went to NGI!" cried one participant, pointing to her sister, who had performed on stage in Buryat cultural ensembles and "knew these kinds of things."

There was gray area, in these evaluations, between linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge—or conflation of them, in part or in whole. This was clear in the interaction between Masha and Ayuur introduced in Chapter 4, in which they were discussing the text on shamanic totems, Sample 2. Ayuur and the third speaker appearing here, Chimita, had completed more years of formal education in Buryat than Masha, and

Ayuur has already demonstrated by this point in the conversation that he takes pride in his broader cultural knowledge:

1	Masha:	<i>Oi, èto sovsem ne poniatno. Sovsem!</i>	Masha:	Oh, it's <b>totally</b> incomprehensible. <b>Totally!</b>
2	Ayuur:	<i>A da? Nichego ne ponimaesh'? No v printsipe vsë poniatno.</i>	Ayuur:	Really? You don't understand anything? But in principle it's all comprehensible.
3	M:	<i>Nu, ia mozhet byt' ponimaiu protsentov... 10-20. A bol'she, net. [reads] Chto znachit <u>khongoodor zonoï hür</u>?</i>	M:	Well, maybe I understand... 10 or 20 percent. But no more. [reads] What does <u>khongoodor zonoï hür</u> mean?
4	A:	<u>Hür huldë</u> , èto...	A:	<u>Hür huldë</u> , it's...
5	Chimita:	<i>Dukhovnyi... dukhovnaia...</i>	Chimita:	Spiritual (m.)... spiritual (f.)...
6	A:	<i>Aaa, da. I <u>khongoodor</u>, èto imia naroda—plemia <u>khongoodor</u>. Oni zhivut v... Saianakh. [to Kate:] Mozhet byt', vy slyshali o nikh?</i>	A:	Aah, yeah. And <u>khongoodor</u> , it's the name of a people—the tribe Khongoodor. They live in the Sayans. [to Kate:] Maybe you've heard of them?
7	Kate:	<i>Mm-hmm.</i>	Kate:	Mm-hmm.
8	M:	[to A and C:] <i>A vy ponimaete vse èti... aaa, shamanic terms?</i>	M:	[to A and C:] And you understand all these... aah, shamanic terms?
9	A:	<i>Nu, konechno.</i>	A:	Yeah, of course.
10	M:	[reads] <i>Èreën gutaar èsègè? ... <u>Bürtè shono?</u></i>	M:	[reads] <i>Èreën gutaar èsègè? ... <u>Bürtè shono?</u></i>
11	A:	<i>Èreën gutaar èsègè, èto <u>zagahan</u>. Tak napisano. (..) Tochno ne znaiu. No obshchii smysl ponil. Skazhem 90 protsentov.</i>	A:	<i>Èreën gutaar èsègè, it's <u>zagahan</u>. That's what's written. (..) I don't know exactly. But I understood the general idea. Let's say 90 percent.</i>

To be clear, the text that they are discussing is difficult, in that it includes both a lot of specialized shamanic terminology (though these are glossed) and long participial phrases characteristic of SLB. But Ayuur and Chimita approach it with confidence, even bravado, Ayuur claiming *total* knowledge and understanding in turn 2, which he must back off from after Masha tests it in turns 3 and 10. Chimita begins confidently to translate “khongoodor zonoï hür” (‘the spirit of the Khongoodor people’) in turn 5, but she never completes the thought, and it is not clear, in turn 6, that Ayuur is certain of the exact meaning either. He turns the subject slightly and appeals to me to enter the conversation

on the grounds of shared cultural knowledge, which I resist, while Masha forges ahead with her queries. In turn 9, Ayuur reemphasizes the totalizing nature of his knowledge: Masha has asked whether he and Chimita understand *all* [vse] of the terms in the article, and he answers yes—even adding an “of course” [konechno] that serves to worry Masha further that her knowledge is less than should be expected. Finally, in turn 11, we find that Ayuur’s knowledge cannot be *total*. In claiming to understand everything, he has accidentally claimed knowledge of the “Variegated Burbot Father” [Èreèn gutaar èsègè] and set himself a nearly impossible task.

In the end, Masha worried that she did not know Buryat, her “*rodnoi iazyk*,” sufficiently well, which was an emotionally trying experience. Ayuur, by contrast, seemed happy to persist in feeling that he had total linguistic knowledge but lacked experience with a few specialized cultural terms. Yet for both of them, their linguistic and cultural knowledge were—necessarily—incomplete. Reading the newspaper samples, more than listening to the radio or watching television, brought these gaps to the fore.

Despite these difficulties, the overwhelming majority of readers in focus groups and interviews did not engage in any second-guessing of the linguistic decisions of the newspaper writers. One NGI student, as mentioned, criticized the writers for some infelicitous participial phrases and clunky expressions. She was, however, a bit unusual: as a student at NGI, she was unusually confident in her literary Buryat and was aspiring to be a journalist herself, engaging with the texts almost as a critical co-worker rather than as a reader alone. There was also some second-guessing of *content*. In particular, some readers wanted more trenchant political and social analysis in Buryat-language newspapers like Buriaad Ünèn, and some did not like that this newspaper had recently

begun including full pages in Russian. They deferred, however, to the situational dilemma of Buryat-Russian language shift and to the wisdom of the newspaper's respected senior director, Ardan Angarkhaev. Buryat-language newspaper journalists were respected, it seemed, and generally held in high esteem by readers—not only because they possessed knowledge, but because they shared it through stable, enduring, prestigious literary institutions in which Buryats could take real pride.

Writing in Buryat and continuing to produce Buryat-language newspapers were not necessarily seen as *choices*; they seemed, at least as often, to be moral obligations. Nagovitsyn's speech was a case in point. "Why, if we all know Nagovitsyn does not control Buryat, did he choose to have this translated into Buryat? Why did the newspaper choose this difficult style?" I asked. But readers interpreted the code and style of the sample as a matter of *obligation*, not as a matter of choice. "Because he **has to**" [*potomu chto on dolzhen*] came one response, citing Buryat's status as a language of state. Another person suggested "political correctness." But most people responded with reference to interethnic relations, some citing the *druzhba narodov* or "brotherly love" [*bratskoe zadruzhestvo*]. "It was not only Russians who participated in the War," one of my focus group participants reminded me. "It was not just the [ethnically] Russian population [*russskoe naselenie*], but also many Buryats, and there are still some veterans living"—for whom, he argued, the president should write in Buryat and the newspaper should celebrate in Buryat. The observation extended from code choice to style choice (or obligation, as the case may be). "Of course," said one woman in her early 50s, "these words, Èsège oron ('Fatherland'), they have a very special meaning, especially for our

older veterans.” Calques of Russian phrases and a flowery, ceremonial prose style could not be quibbled over; the style was set.<sup>24</sup>

Writing in the late Soviet period, Caroline Humphrey showed how using bureaucratic Buryat, including the political terminology invented for Buryat in the early Soviet period and subsequent linguistic inventions to “buryaticize” it, took on unintended “pomposity” (1989:166).<sup>25</sup> The same could be said of bureaucratic Buryat today, or indeed of using the ‘official’ or bureaucratic register of any language outside its appropriate contexts. For some purposes, however, pomposity is exactly what is called for. The “gulf” that Humphrey points to between ‘official’ style and everyday speech serves important pragmatic functions in demarcating space, evoking specific chronotopes, and succinctly carving out a specific audience for direct address. Here, for instance, the Soviet style of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century Buryat evoked participation in a broader Soviet triumph and showed morally appropriate deference to those who achieved it. And on a daily basis, Buryat-language newspaper journalists work for something similar in expressly not embodying the language of everyday life, but rather, bearing the standard.

### **Bearing the standard: practices and ideologies of print journalists**

In this section, we turn to how print journalists talk about and understand what they do, excavating the principles that motivate their linguistic actions and exploring the roles they see themselves playing in and for Buryat language and culture. Print journalists, as we will see, worry over their role as standard-bearers and emphasize

---

<sup>24</sup> Focus group recorded 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Humphrey presumably referred to the use of such terminology specifically within spoken contexts, as opposed to language in general, but this is left vague.

linguistic and cultural “preservation” [*sokhranenie*] and “development” [*razvitie*, also ‘ontogeny’]. The latter part of this section examines how newspaper and print journalists see their work as involve two primary interlocking roles, symbolic and pedagogical.

Several implicit and explicit principles guide the linguistic actions of print journalists writing in Buryat. They are not shared by everyone, of course, but are discernible as general ways of thinking. I will categorize them here under two broad headings: (1) *Use Russian-origin forms as little as possible*, and (2) *Use dialectal forms as little as possible*.<sup>26</sup>

(1) *Use Russian-origin forms as little as possible*. This principle is evident in the use of neologisms, excavation and reintroduction of existing Buryat words, and treatment of reported speech. Neologisms, argued one former Buriaad Ünèn reporter, are good for the language and encourage pride among speakers. Newspaper journalists did not, in my experience, regularly invent their own neologisms, but they did appeal to their former teachers and linguists to suggest them. Print journalists and former print journalists have been prominently involved in the various attempts at creating a Buryat language academy on the model of the Académie Française.<sup>27</sup>

More often, they excavate and reintroduce existing Buryat words. Why say it in Russian, the logic goes, when there is a word in Buryat? The journalist who encouraged neologisms also encouraged the use of “sènkhir èkran” for ‘television,’ literally meaning ‘light blue screen,’ to replace Russian-origin *televideni*. Other journalists shook their head over this, arguing that because *èkran* also comes from Russian, it was not

---

<sup>26</sup> It is probably the case that a third such principle exists regarding other colloquialisms, spoken forms, and other *razgovornye* resources. I do not, however, have the data to support such a claim here; more research would be necessary.

<sup>27</sup> On similar efforts in the 1960s, see Shagdarov 1967.

demonstrably better, and possibly worse because at least *televideni* was an ‘internationalism.’<sup>28</sup> As sources for old terms, journalists rely on their friends, former teachers, spouses, or parents, and especially grandparents or other older relatives. This means that newspapers are a crucial site in which older spoken forms may enter the standard literary language, given the imprimatur of print. *Sênkhir ékran*, for instance, circulates in the spoken language; I have heard it from a number of older Aga Buryats. The main sources for excavating forms, however, are dictionaries, both Buryat and Mongolian (though the latter are used more like thesauruses or for jogging one’s memory than for finding original forms).

In effect, this produces a kind of loop between the institutions of linguistics, language education, and media. Lexicographers document newspaper usages, which language educators, in turn, teach their students, who become journalists and write the learned usages into print, which is turn documented by lexicographers. The same loop would exist, in principle, anywhere, but in the small world of Buryat-language affairs with only a handful of institutions, it is especially close, if not closed. One of the reasons it does not become utterly redundant and self-fulfilling is that all of the elites involved valorize ‘outside’ opinions from village babushki (remember the required dialect practicum mentioned in Chapter 4). Another reason is that Buryat has gone through so many unique stages of concerted language planning that there are now many diverse eras on which to draw.

In the post-Soviet period, newspaper journalists have reintroduced into SLB many Buryat words that had previously lost out to Russian alternatives. *Oiuutan* ‘student,’ for

---

<sup>28</sup> It was never clear to me why, for these individuals, *ékran* did not also count as an internationalism. On internationalisms, see Chapter 6.

example, had entirely lost out to *student* ‘student’ by the end of the Soviet period. Since the 1980s, however, *oiuutan* has been reintroduced into SLB and is now expected by default in print. Other forms co-exist. In a review of *Buriaad Ünen* in 2007, I found three forms for ‘in Soviet times,’ or, literally, ‘in the era of Soviet government’:

*sovetskè zasagai üedè*

*sovet zasagai üedè*

*züblèltè zasagai üedè*

*Sovetskè* and *sovet* are Buryat-nativized terms from Russian *sovetskii* (‘Soviet’). *Züblèltè* is a more obscure term that coexisted with *sovetskè* in the early 20th century but has more recently fallen out of favor—except, occasionally, in newsprint (cf. Budaev 1992; Humphrey 1989). One of the journalists for *Buriaad Ünen* that my interlocutors have repeatedly pointed to as using a particularly “difficult” style, “high style,” but also “very beautiful” style frequently uses the ‘more Buryat’ Buryat alternatives, such as “*züblèltè zasagai üedè*” for ‘in Soviet times’ or ‘in the Soviet era.’ She is, not surprisingly perhaps, a graduate of NGI and a careful student of Buryat linguistic history, and she makes these decisions quite carefully on the basis of a strong purist ideology.

Another daily practice in which the principle *use Russian-origin forms as little as possible* applies is in the treatment of interview material. It is a fact of Buryat-language journalism that the overwhelming majority of material is collected in Russian and translated by the journalist, either ‘on the fly’ or later in the conversion of notes into a prose story. In fact, reporters rarely even attempt to elicit quotations in Buryat. In my interviews, journalists reported that they collected most of their material in Russian, and shadowing reporters quickly confirmed that the reports were accurate. (This was even true in Aginskoe, where Buryat usage in public is generally more common.)

Given, then, that journalists *expect* to translate the ‘input’ of observed events and interviews into original prose, it almost goes without saying that they feel Russian usage in interviews or reported speech can and should be ‘cleaned up’ and made into fluent Buryat. No one found this even worth comment. When I was interviewed for Tolon and Ust’-Ordyn Ünen, the reporters seemed charmed that I even suggested that I be interviewed in Buryat. I reminded the reporters, in both cases, that I was not a native Russian speaker anyway; neither language was *easy* for me. But ultimately I gave in to the expectation that most people are dominant in Russian, and the fact that, as one of the reporters put it, it was basically the same to them. Indeed, as I spoke (in Russian), she recorded our conversation and jotted down notes in Buryat, repeating the elicitation method that I witnessed most often. In this very fast and diffused translation process, little effort is made to retain an individual’s ‘voice,’ though the style of the Russian will often be replicated in the Buryat. (Thus the official style of the political translation.) It is usually impossible to tell, from a finished product, what language or languages, registers, or conversational repertoires were employed in the reported utterances. We all become fluent speakers of SLB in the newspaper.

In all of these ways, newspaper journalists manage to pursue a purist ideology, expunging and replacing unwanted Russian influence and keeping further Russian influence at bay. At the same time, newspaper journalists leave many Russian borrowings alone. In lines 7–12 of Sample 2 above, note the many Russian-origin items: “*zhurnalist*” (‘journalist’), “*pedagogikyn*” (‘pedagogical’) “*kandidat*” (‘candidate’), and “*konkursyn laureat*” (‘laureate of the competition’). None of these has a widely accepted Buryat-origin alternative. When I asked about the use of *laureat* and *kandidat* in another article,

its writer replied that she and her editor agreed that they should always preserve people's official titles (*zvaniiia*). A “*konkursyn laureat*” (‘laureate of the competition’) could perhaps be translated using Buryat-origin terms for ‘competition’ and ‘winner,’ but the writers refer to a typically pan-post-Soviet-style competition with typically pan-post-Soviet-style awards, including certificates, flowers, tea kettles and other small household appliances, and the title of “laureate.” What is being referred to is not, in other words, experienced as particularly *Buryat*, and there is an important sense in which using Russian terms within a Buryat frame indexes participation in both Buryat culture and in a broader Russian (*rossiiskii*) cultural sphere at one and the same time.

We might interpret these, then, as bivalent forms that need not be attributed to a single code, but rather participate simultaneously in multiple linguistic and cultural systems (Woolard 1998). Notice also how allowing the text to remain interpretable as Russian may serve the strategic purpose of leaving it ‘othered’ and outside the (solely) Buryat frame. This is not, I think, the motivation in this particular case, but the possibility is an important reminder that Russian-origin features and forms are not necessarily ‘mistakes.’

(2) *Use dialectal forms as little as possible.* There is little doubt that Buryat-language media are more easily comprehended when they incorporate dialectal forms. But while employing such forms is a live possibility in the form of interviews on radio and television,<sup>29</sup> they are generally discouraged in newspapers.

One reason for this has to do with the relative lexical “base” [*baza*] of the Buryat language in the context of geographically uneven language shift. An example is found in

---

<sup>29</sup> See especially Television Sample 1, discussed in Chapter 7.

Ust'-Orda, where language shift is extreme: Buryat has all but left the streets and public life, few children are acquiring it, and few adults show interest in it. Those who speak it control a dialect that diverges strongly from the standard literary language and its basis, Khori. In this context, Dolgora, herself a speaker of a southwestern mountain dialect but educated in SLB, works as a Buryat-language journalist in the office of Ust'-Ordyn Ünen. She has learned the local dialect sufficiently to communicate, and, with a keen ear and natural interest in linguistics, she has thought a great deal about the relationship between dialects and the standard language. Dolgora is a language activist and would like to appeal to dialect speakers to encourage language revitalization. But, she argued, they could not publish the newspaper “only in dialect” because there “would not be enough words.” The remaining lexical store [*zapas*, ‘vocabulary’] is, in her view, insufficient to produce a Buryat-language paper—the implication being that it would be so Russified as to not ‘count’ as Buryat. Dolgora and her colleagues do use some words and phrases from the local dialect “for comprehension,” in hopes of easing the local readership into SLB and making it accessible to potential new learners. Their ultimate goal, however, would be integration into the larger Buryat language public via the literary language, “with some of their own local particularities” [*svoi mestnye osobennosti*].

Dialectal forms have also been unwelcome in print for political reasons. In an interesting experiment in the Sëlëngè (R. Selenginsk) district, south of Ulan-Ude, the district newspaper was published briefly in the local Selenginskii dialect, until officials in Ulan-Ude noticed and demanded they stop. Their demand reportedly hinged on an argument that the “Buryat language” that is covered in the Constitution of the Republic of

Buryatia is SLB, the literary standard, not miscellaneous, unstandardized dialects. But it was taken by journalists elsewhere as a symbolic statement against localism.<sup>30</sup>

While few journalists would argue against their own right to decide what to publish, most print journalists do—whether explicitly or implicitly—support the view that Buryat is best off with a strong, single literary standard. Some repeat something that I have heard often in Ulan-Ude’s language institutions: that the dialects should not be written at all. When the argument is elaborated, it is usually in appeal to the notion of a “living” [*zhivoi*] language and its proper attributes. Healthy linguistic variation should include, on this view, a *written* standard and *unwritten* speech [*rech*’], dialects, oral [*ustnye*] forms, etc. If the idealization of a post-Enlightenment national standard seems a bit intense (Silverstein 2010), it is perhaps because Buryatia’s political standing is less than secure—something that journalists are particularly well aware of.<sup>31</sup>

The principles and practices outlined here reflect, I would argue, the imperative that Buryat-language journalists feel to protect Buryat and Buryat’s development not just as the standard bearers of a language, but specifically as the standard bearers of a language under threat of shift. We may note that the goals of minority-language journalists are often markedly different from those of their majority-language counterparts. In contrast to the writers and editors of Russian-language newspapers in Buryatia, who tend to speak of their societal roles in terms of “enlightenment” and “informing the public,” the writers and editors of Buryat-language publications talk about

---

<sup>30</sup> This incident was independently reported to me by two former employees of the Sélèngè newspaper and a former resident of the district, none of whom were clear on the details.

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 2.

their role as being primarily one of linguistic and cultural “preservation” [*sokhranenie*] or “development” [*razvitie*].<sup>32</sup>

The offices of Buryat-language publications do tend to be important loci of Buryat language use. A visitor to Buriaad Ünen or Tolon will find staffs conversing and conducting their daily business primarily in Buryat. This is less true at the offices of smaller publications like Ust’-Ordyn Ünen, where the Buryat-dominant personnel are too outnumbered by Russian-dominant staff to sustain a predominantly Buryat-language environment, but even here, Buryat is incorporated into daily work routines. The use of Buryat in these white-collar office settings makes them unusual as workplaces and as institutions.

Yet what journalists have in mind is their influence over some reading audience. In conversations about this audience and its possible futures, it became clear that Buryat-language print journalists conceived of preservation and development as involving two interlocking roles for the newspaper: symbolic and pedagogical.

The increasingly symbolic role of newspapers in Buryat society, as well as newspaper workers’ embrace of this role, can be seen in the heavy emphasis on genres of history and culture across all Buryat newspapers, with less and less content in the “hard news” genres of politics, economics, investigative reporting, and social analysis. Both newspaper samples discussed in this chapter provide excellent examples of how Buryat-language newspaper prose fulfils the symbolic role: encoding ritualized political performance in Buryat, invoking a glorious past, teaching about Buryat origin myths, and explaining their meanings in shamanic practice. Sample 1 in particular points to the

---

<sup>32</sup> I draw here especially on the survey described in Chapter 4, which included journalists working primarily in the Russian language.

newspaper's role in demonstrating state support for Buryat culture. The bare fact that there *are* newspapers printed in Buryat is pointed to as evidence of state support. (This is legally mandated; see the overview of language legislation section in Chapter 2.)

The pedagogical role of newspapers is fulfilled in a wide array of initiatives. A high percentage of newspaper journalists—in both Russian and Buryat, but especially in Buryat—were trained as schoolteachers, and many of have imported novel ideas from that domain. Buryat-language newspapers run popular children's pages with games, puzzles, and stories focusing on language learning and cultural education. The popular, long-running “Toli” (‘Dictionary’) feature of Buriaad Ünën provides brief lessons in Buryat grammar or vocabulary. Russian-language newspapers have also occasionally provided lessons in Buryat for non-speakers; in the late 1980s, for instance, *Pravda Buriatii* began running a “Let's learn Buryat” [*Izuchaem buriatskii iazyk*] feature. There are also various attempts in Buryat-language newspapers to “re”-teach older Buryat terminology associated with pre-industrial ways of life. Buriaad Ünën runs features on horse and bridle terminology and the “horse culture” of the Buryat past, though many urban Buryats have never even been on a horse.<sup>33</sup> “Toli” exemplifies this reinscription. A typical example pulled at random from February 1999 teaches readers the detailed terminology for mast colors (gray, roan, mottled brown and white, etc.).<sup>34</sup>

An important side effect of journalists' emphasis on their pedagogical role is that they sometimes treat their readers as students rather than as equals, manifesting an arrogance that prevents sympathy and risks turning some readers away. In particular,

---

<sup>33</sup> Horses and horseback riding in urbanized parts of Buryatia have become hobbies and leisure pursuits, which are too expensive for most families.

<sup>34</sup> This example comes from Büriaad Ünën 13 (20073), February 4, 1999, p. 6.

there is a tendency among some print journalists, especially of the oldest generation, to ascribe younger readers' difficulty to a lack of desire, or to laziness. For example, when I reported Masha's 10% comprehension rate to Dugar, a Buryat-language newspaper reporter, shortly after our focus group, I expected him to lament the difficult participial phrases, or the nearly insurmountable distances between dialects of Buryat. Instead, he shrugged and said that she should try harder. That's the problem with our young people, he said. They don't try. Dugar believed that his existing audience consisted basically of older Buryats who already knew the language well. While he welcomed new readers, he did not seek them out or try to accommodate them; that, he thought, was the job of the student.

### **The material qualities of print**

Among news media, it is not only newspapers that fulfill symbolic and pedagogical roles, or whose journalists emphasize those roles. Radio and television can, after all, serve similar functions. Yet many newspaper journalists are convinced of their medium's centrality in language maintenance, control, 'development,' and revitalization. This section examines what might be unique about print media, and what might make it especially successful at fulfilling the symbolic and pedagogical roles that these journalists emphasize. As a starting point, I posit four material qualities of print that are especially relevant: availability, fixity, physicality, and durability.

**Availability** was referred to in the observations that opened this chapter regarding the ubiquity of newspapers in daily life. Newspapers are relatively cheap to produce, and

they have been around a long time, ongoing paper shortages notwithstanding.<sup>35</sup> Because newspapers are physical objects (see below), they can be passed from person to person, making them potentially more available for a longer period of time.

**Fixing** language into print enables repetition, crucial for language pedagogy. Both readers and writers in my study often highlighted the possibility of being able to read a text repeatedly for comprehension and learning. Newspapers escape the ephemerality that plagues radio and television broadcasting. The repeated viewing enabled by newspapers' fixity is also, not coincidentally, why they are the preferred medium for television schedules, horoscopes, and, to a lesser extent, weather reports. Glossing terms like "hakhiuuhad (*totem*)" is made possible by the print format, in part because it can be visualized and in part because the constraints of time, which are a central factor in television and radio broadcasting, are not at issue when a reader can choose to read, or not to read, at theoretically any point in time. The same term appears in radio broadcasts (see, for example, Radio Sample 1 in Appendix C) without any explanation.

In a more subtle sense, the fixity of print, the instantiation of a text in a fixed text-artifact (Silverstein and Urban 1996), gives readers confidence in the authority of the language. As Ayuur pointed out, "There are a few words that—if I saw them without context, I would need to look them up in a dictionary." But he is sure they are "real" words of Buryat, not mistakes, because they are *written down* in the newspaper. Editorial processes are strict across media platforms; in every case, articles or written announcers'

---

<sup>35</sup> Wartime paper shortages were mentioned in Chapter 3, but this difficulty continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. In 1938, the editors of *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda* were reprimanded by the Buryat Obkom to economize on paper by sticking to smaller formats (NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 3180, p. 58). In 2008–09, one of the most common topics that managing editors at both state-run and independent newspapers brought up in interviews was the expense of paper, which still outstrips ink and labor; printing is now often outsourced to large firms in Irkutsk and Chita.

scripts are drafted and then subjected to at least one round of revision. But audiences implicitly believed newspaper articles to have been subjected to more careful attention before release. Everything appearing in print, they generally assumed, had been “thought out” [*produmannyi*] in a way that the radio and television speech had not.

The importance of **physicality** to newspaper readers is summed up in the comment of one reader: “You can hold the language in your hands.” This quality is crucially absent with print media on the internet, which older and younger Buryats alike point to as a reason to keep producing newsprint. In another sense, the physicality of newspapers means that they have something in common with online media: they are extremely portable, especially as opposed to television and radio broadcasting. I refer here not to the portability of a physical radio—of course, a small transistor radio or mobile phone is very portable and functions well as a receiver—but rather to the ability of newspapers and internet-based media to travel beyond the range of a broadcasting tower. While the availability of television broadcasts depends on an antenna’s proximity to a tower, the newspaper travels as a tangible object, physically dissociable from its point of origin, making it a good candidate for linking Buryat territories that otherwise function as separate media markets. Finally, **durability** makes possible the archival function of newspapers, enabling libraries to build inexpensive, accessible collections<sup>36</sup> and village babushki to construct their personal archives.

While all of these qualities make newspapers particularly well suited to pedagogy, I would like to return briefly to the fixity of print in order to examine more closely how

---

<sup>36</sup> Accessible, that is, in terms of not requiring additional equipment to access the text. This becomes complicated as soon as a library or archive converts its newspapers to microform or microfiche and needs additional microform or microfiche readers, but Buryatia’s archival institutions use simple cardboard bindings.

print serves particular symbolic functions. One of the first linguistic facts that people often told me, as a foreigner, about Buryat was that it contained “three extra letters” [*tri dopolnitel'nye bukvy*]—ü, ö, and h, the former of which are often referred to in Russian as “*huriatskii /u/*” and “*huriatskii /o/*,” or “*/u/ huriatskii*” and “*/o/ huriatskii*.” The only bit of Buryat linguistic information more often repeated to me was the existence of extreme dialect diversity. “You know, there are three extra letters in Buryat!” “We write in Cyrillic, with the Russian alphabet, but with three extra letters...” At first, I interpreted the apparent interest that this fact held as a reflection of the teller’s pride in literacy—whether in his or her own education or in the collective national accomplishment of having a written, and standardized, literary form of Buryat. But a significant percentage of the people announcing it—including those announcing it with pride—did not themselves control Buryat.

The visual channel afforded by print media and internet platforms (and, albeit to a much lesser extent, television) makes Buryat accessible—in a limited way—to viewers who do not actively or even passively control the grammar and lexicon. You do not need to ‘know Buryat’ to identify Buryat on the written page. “*/u/ huriatskii*” seems accessible and transparent to Buryatia’s many non-knowers of Buryat, including both non-speaking ethnic ‘outsiders’ and the many people who self-identify as Buryat or are interpellated as such but do not control the language with which they are so persistently affiliated. Materializing the language in this way—not just in writing, but in glyphs that become metonyms for the total language, and emblems of the people who speak it—makes it available for comment and manipulation. It also grants greater authority to the Buryat code-as-symbol, and to the people who control it.

## **Literary labor and the status of minority-language journalism**

I have argued that Buryat-language newspaper journalists see themselves as standard bearers, teachers, and preservationists, creating newspaper prose that reflects their (language-) ideological commitment to a strong literary standard. The previous section outlined some ways in which the print medium fulfills special social functions among media, and how writing packages the language into a manipulable symbol. Yet we have not yet looked specifically at the “literary” aspect of the literary standard. In this final section, I turn to the authority granted to (and claimed by) print journalists by virtue of institutional position and ideological attachments to writing as a literary practice.

There are reasons within Buryat media institutions to not consider the work particularly artistic. Drudgery and meaningless story assignments are not-infrequent complaints, and there is not a great deal of creative control in the lower ranks. Authorship in newsrooms is famously dispersed, ultimate responsibility often lying with the institution rather than individual authors (Bell 1991; Cotter 2010). But Buryat journalists tend to think of themselves mainly as literary workers, not as technical workers or as cogs in a machine.

In part, this is because the material conditions of their workplace environment encourage it. Writing is a very solitary pursuit, even in busy news offices. In contrast with many of the European and American newsrooms that have been studied (Gans 1979; Gürsel 2010), Buryatia’s print news production takes place largely in individual offices down long hallways, each with a door that is often shut.<sup>37</sup> Because most post-Soviet media institutions inherited central Soviet media buildings and equipment, the production

---

<sup>37</sup> In the 1940s–50s, this meant that there was a lot of drinking on the job, behind closed doors.

of news is still geographically very centralized. The majority of Ulan-Ude's newspapers, for instance, are housed in a single building in the city center (Figure 5.3). But this serves mainly to collect the editors into one place; the daily (or weekly) news production process is spatially very dispersed, in that much of the text generated for a publication like *Buriad Ünën*, *Buriatia-7*, or *Inform Polis* is written off-site by correspondents, historians, letter writers, and government office workers.



**Figure 5.3. Ulan-Ude's main newspaper office building, 2008.** The building has since been renovated (see Chapter 9).

Buryat-language journalists are particularly inclined to think of themselves as literary writers due to the historical and structural peculiarities of minority-language journalism in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation. Journalism and literary production have long been intertwined in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, especially, I would argue, for minority-language writers. During the Soviet period, there was a great deal of cross-over between the pages of Buryatia's literary journals and newspapers. Cadres of young language specialists were trained to work both as journalists and as

literary translators, translating Gorky, Pushkin, and classics of Russian literature, which occupied much of newspapers' print space and radio stations' broadcasting time. Many of the members of the prestigious regional Writers' Union also worked as journalists. Most importantly, perhaps, the institutional structure of the centralized publishing house meant that books, newspapers, and literary journals were all published out of the same collective (e.g., *Pravda Buriatii/Buriiad Ünën*), such that there were very tight networks of "literary people" within a small ethnic republic like the Republic of Buryatia. The same, in fact, holds today, although more publishing houses and projects have appeared in Ulan-Ude, and self-publishing (*samizdat*) has become a very popular way to produce small collections of poetry and fiction. With the ongoing shift in Buryat-language newspapers from "hard" news to cultural topics, the connection between minority-language literature and minority-language journalism only stands to grow.

The political economy of newspaper journalism—and especially of minority-language journalism—in Russia also gives those who pursue a career in it a sense of higher purpose, or of idealism in the face of financial obstacle. Print journalism does not, after all, pay particularly well. In 2008–09, full-time reporters in Ulan-Ude and Aginskoe were paid between 6,000 and 12,000 rubles per month, which at the time was \$180–360 US, with the average hovering around 9,000–10,000 (\$270–300 US).<sup>38</sup> This is more than a new college graduate could expect to be paid as a rural Buryat-language schoolteacher, but it also provides less job security. And it is much less than she might make as, say, a

---

<sup>38</sup> I did not ask all of the journalists surveyed to report their salaries; these numbers are estimates based on interviews and informal conversations, in which money (and the lack thereof) often came up. The currency conversion that I provide here is based on the exchange rate in March 2009, when the ruble was low against the US dollar following the 2008–09 financial crisis; the purchasing power of these salaries might well have been higher. Consumer prices and salaries in Ulan-Ude and Aginskoe are (very) roughly comparable, Aginskoe being more affluent than most towns of its size.

manager in a local firm, with greater chance of long-term financial gain—but also with less chance of using Buryat. Indeed, two of the young newspaper journalists I interviewed were currently working in Buryat-language editorial collectives but were in the midst of earning degrees to begin careers in other fields that would not use their Buryat language skills. One young man had begun taking management and business classes in the evenings, aspiring to begin a business on Lake Baikal catering to German and Russian tourists. (Developing tourism, he argued, would further Buryat cultural preservation and encourage young people to learn Buryat, though he did not foresee using any Buryat in the company beyond, perhaps, a Buryat name.) Another man in his late 20s was in school to become a jurist, a popular field for steady employment in Russia at the time. He had a fiancée, he explained, and they wanted to start a family.

The implication here—that a career in newspaper journalism would not, over the long term, provide adequately for a family—helps to explain why print journalism in Buryatia is increasingly dominated by women. Senior reporters and editors, including nearly all of the current and retired newspaper editors described in this dissertation, tended to be men, in part perhaps due to strongly held local beliefs (among both Russians and Buryats) in men’s superior leadership abilities. But there were also some highly-placed women who had risen through the ranks of their institutions in the 1980s and 1990s, and women dominated the younger cadres of newspaper journalists. According to local gender expectations, men are very much figured as the “providers” within families, embodying a traditional male role that has, if anything, intensified over the past few years with Russia’s “demographic crisis” and rhetorical return to traditional family values. In this context, our aspiring jurist implies that something must be sacrificed (namely, a

man's ability to provide for his family) in order to pursue a career in journalism. Women, too, give something up to be journalists, in that privileging a career in writing (or at all) can be viewed as unfeminine. One ambitious woman in her mid-30s working at a large newspaper in Ulan-Ude ascribed her failure to find a husband to potential mates' fear of her work. They were scared off, she claimed, by her independence, intelligence, and self-confidence; she pointed to colleagues who were also unmarried, divorced, and/or childless. In fact, most of the female journalists I interviewed were married with children, but regardless of the veracity of her claims, it is important that she *felt* she had relinquished a possible future in order to pursue her career as a reporter. Newspaper employees thus sometimes shared with literary writers a sense of personal self-sacrifice to their work.

Additionally, much of the content printed in newspapers is produced by writers beyond those employees on the payrolls. Occasional contributors were not the focus of my research, but I knew some, and they were paid much less than full-time employees ("nickels and dimes" [*meloch*'], as one frequent correspondent put it), generally using the income to supplement that from another job or jobs. Scores of poets, short story writers, students, and historians and other academics also contributed material to newspapers for free, for various personal and professional reasons.

All of this points to there being reasons other than financial to pursue a career in Buryat-language journalism, or indeed to contribute material to the newspapers at all. When I asked about hopes, dreams, future plans, and employment satisfaction in interviews and surveys, newspaper writers most often cited the reasons laid out above: they liked contributing to language preservation, they said, or "developing our Buryat

language.” After these, however, they most often cited their love of ‘creative work’ (*tvorchestvo*). The number of newspaper journalists with literary aspirations, especially as compared with radio and television workers, was striking. I did not meet a single editor who did not also pursue some kind of creative writing—usually poetry, and sometimes novels or short stories. (Some identified *first* as poets, in fact, and only secondarily as journalists.) One staff reporter at a district newspaper was a lyricist for a regional ensemble. Bayandalai and Minzhur were typical, I found, in turning to creative writing upon retirement.

Literary labor may not be financially rewarded, but newspaper workers have standing in the Buryat community. Their prestige is found, in part, in the stable, enduring institutions they work for and the long local history of the minority-language journalist. As we saw in Chapter 3, the Buryat-language elite in Buryatia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was relatively small, and bilingual and bi-literate Buryats often worked as intercessors between state and society. Throughout the Soviet era, Buryat-language newspaper editors served political functions besides heading the newspaper/propaganda organs. They were frequently called upon to head other seemingly unrelated committees, judge contests, go on fact-finding missions (especially to Buryat-speaking regions), and provide trustworthy linguistic expertise.<sup>39</sup> In the contemporary period, journalists working in the “native language” marshal their institutional positions to pursue literary dreams, once again combining linguistic roles and staying at the forefront of the Buryat language elite.

---

<sup>39</sup> This was especially an issue in the 1930s, when party leaders became paranoid about the translations done by newspaper workers for the Buryat-language newspaper. In one example, a newspaper editor was called upon to validate a Buryat translation of an important Russian-language law regarding the use of land by collective farms. (NARB)

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the language of newspapers to examine how the most quotidian medium can also embody the most linguistic prestige and the most hope for “transcendence”—of daily life, if not of the Buryat language’s predicament. To summarize, newspaper prose almost definitionally embodies standard literary Buryat, characteristic features of which include complex syntactic and morphological structure, extensive use of participial and gerundial phrases, overcomplexificationism, and accommodation of ‘official’ styles. Comprehension is low, especially for speakers of non-literary dialects and people with less formal education in Buryat. Many readers find newspapers frustrating, inducing little anger or blame but much guilt, shame, and a feeling of involuntary detachment from their “native language.” In this sense, the gap between SLB and *razgovornye* forms appears to be actively increased by the current situation with newspapers, in that potential SLB readers do not have sufficient existing knowledge to read (or want to read), thereby missing the chance to gain further knowledge of the literary standard.

Newspaper journalists, however, have little immediate reason to accommodate these readers, invested as they are in a language ideology that privileges the strong, single national literary standard represented by SLB. Journalists in the print medium enjoy two primary sources of textual authority: (1) the authority of the written word, and (2) the authority of the institution that produced it. Both sources depend on long-standing institutional relationships between Buryat-language journalism and Buryat-language literature, and both appeal to tradition, age, establishment, stability, and longevity. The

linguistic knowledge and authority of newspaper and print journalists in this context is unassailable.

In the next chapter, we will see what happens when orality is added into the mix, with the introduction and development of radio and its attendant anxieties.

## CHAPTER 6

### “Closer to Life”: Orality and Anxiety on the Radio

In 1958, members of the Buryat ASSR’s Committee for Radio Broadcasting and Television held a sustained discussion about radio programming in the Buryat language. One discussant unleashed a litany of complaints. “Why,” he asked rhetorically, “aren’t [people in] the districts listening?” [*Pochemu ne slushaiut raiony?*] The broadcasts were of poor quality, he argued, and no one was producing enough original materials in Buryat-Mongolian. What was produced, he continued, was not “natural.” “Let the announcers’ texts be pure, but conversational speech(es) should be natural.” [*Pust’ budut chistymi diktorskie teksty, a razgovornye rechi dolzhny byt’ estestvennye.*] At length he tied the absence of “natural” speech in radio broadcasts to inappropriate use of the literary language and too much reliance on written texts, particularly written translations from Russian. Broadcasts, apparently, were showing too much influence from a journalistic literary style calqued from Russian in the (written) translation process.<sup>1</sup>

The targets of this wide-ranging critique, the editors of an array of Buryat-language radio programs, agreed that they were not reaching village audiences, that

---

<sup>1</sup> NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 4, p. 13. This discussion was held on January 13, 1958, shortly before the names “Buryat-Mongolia” and “Buryat-Mongolian” were abruptly amended to “Buryat.” The committee was titled the *Komitet po radioveshcheniiu i televideniiu pri Sovete Ministrov Buriatskoi ASSR* until 1971, when the order of “radio” and “television” was reversed to reflect the change in their relative importance. The longer discussion can be found in NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 4, pp. 1–13.

original materials were preferable to translated, *dublirovannyye* programs, and that there should be more broadcasts “in the native Buryat-Mongolian language” [*na rodnom b/m iazyke*].<sup>2</sup> Their problem was finding people who would—or could—produce this elusive speech. Hinting at underlying language attrition, the participants of this discussion expressed frustration with a phenomenon that would plague radio and television journalists into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: they could not find sufficient competent interviewees.

Another editor argued the same point in 1962, in different terms. He suggested re-orienting to village populations and increasing the number of broadcasts in Buryat on agriculture. This, he said, would bring them “closer to life” [*blizhe k zhizni*]—closer, that is, to the life of real people, and to the rural, agricultural life of the people who actually spoke Buryat (or so he imagined). (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, p. 141) In a larger sense, what he advocated was a way to fulfill radio’s potential to represent daily life and the “natural” oral language that seemed to elude him and his colleagues.

While the preceding chapter focused on written language and the unique authority of print journalism, this chapter examines the complex anxieties surrounding radio and the incorporation of orality into Buryat mass media. Radio, as we will see, is not the favored medium of contemporary Buryat-speaking audiences, and its impact on Buryat language and society has shrunk considerably from its apex. Its historical importance, however, was extraordinary, and examining Buryat-language radio’s trajectory can tell us much about the incorporation of new media into existing media landscapes, the relationship between written and oral language, and the vicissitudes of language shift and its attendant anxieties.

---

<sup>2</sup> NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 4, pp. 13.

When radio burst into Buryatia in 1931, expectations were high. Incorporating the oral/aural channel into mass media introduced the possibility of providing audiences with a greater sense that they were experiencing *unmediated*—or immediate—communication, psychologically linking larger, more far-flung groups of people and bringing urban and rural populations together. Centers of power would now be linked ‘directly’ to peripheries through individual voices that would appear unmediated. Colloquializing the language of media and bringing it closer to the ‘language of the proletariat’ must have seemed an inevitable outcome.

Yet with the push toward “natural” speech and the apparent immateriality and immediacy of radio came anxieties. One of the most important was anxiety over oral performance, gestured to in the editors’ complaints about not finding interviewees. Cajoling interviewees into coming to the microphone is a tricky business in any language, but it is particularly difficult in the context of rapid language shift and cultural ideals privileging perfect stage performance. Thus far in this dissertation, we have encountered Buryat speakers shamed by their inability to read the SLB of newspapers, but the limits of competence are tested in radio and television as well. In Buryat-Russian language shift, the problem of linguistic shame is connected to differential competence in reading, writing, and speech and to the rigid distinction discussed in Chapter 4, between *razgovornye* forms on one hand and purist literary standards on the other hand. The opposition that our critic advocated in 1958 between “pure” [*chistye*] announcers’ texts and “natural” [*estestvennye*] conversational speech [*razgovornye rechi*] points to anxiety over maintaining this distinction, despite the fact that much recorded interview speech was (and is) eliminated due to not meeting standards. In his era, the inherent ephemerality

of broadcasting produced anxiety over institutional memory and accountability. Within and between media institutions, fixing oral speech in the written word was required to document bureaucratic movements, determine authorship, and assign responsibility and blame.

These anxieties had apparently not been resolved in 1958, 27 years after radio's introduction into Buryatia; nor had they been resolved in 2008–09. The language of radio still occupies a middle ground—not always comfortably—between the literary standards more characteristic of print journalism and the *razgovornye* forms that have become more characteristic of television journalism. Journalists are still concerned to balance pedagogy and comprehension, purism and “natural” speech, and audiences are still not always sure what to make of it, or whether they want to ‘talk back.’

The first half of this chapter is primarily ethnographic and follows the organization of Chapters 5 and 7, examining listening practices and the (changing) role of radio in Buryat society, the language of radio, audiences' responses, and journalists' explanations and production practices. The second half of the chapter draws primarily on historical material to examine what happened with the introduction of radio and the mass production of mediated oral speech. I look specifically at the two principal anxieties introduced above: anxiety over oral performance, and institutional anxieties over speech and the written word. In a section on the former anxiety, I discuss the problem of procuring interviews in the context of language attrition, a phenomenon that many of my interviewees believed to be quite recent but which actually stretches back to at least the

1950s.<sup>3</sup> In the final section, I examine broadcast media's challenge to Soviet institutional practices, and how media institutions sought to combat it.

## **Listening practices and the role of radio in Buryat society**

Radio came into its own under Stalin, during the massive social upheaval of forced collectivization and sedentarization of Buryatia. What is termed in Russian the 'radiofication' [*radiofikatsiia*] of Buryatia began in 1931 with the mass introduction of the "radio *tochka*" or "radio point," a brilliant single-frequency radio made famous under high Stalinism. Until 1931, radio experimentation in Buryatia was limited to amateurs and ham radio operators, such as the members of the Society of Friends of Radio [*Obshchestva druzei radio*], organized in 1926. In 1929, local enthusiasts set up a small network of temporary translators on open squares in Ulan-Ude's city center, with a regular weekly broadcast schedule of 2 hours. By 1930, the first radio *tochkas* appeared in homes in the city, at which point local authorities were convinced of the feasibility of a permanent radio network. The BMASSR Obkom oversaw construction of the city's first permanent radio network, which had reached 700 radio *tochkas* by 1931.<sup>4</sup>

Once radiofication began, the network expanded with extraordinary speed. By 1935 the number of radio *tochkas* in the republic had quintupled, to 3500, and by the end of 1937, there were 5700 radio *tochkas*, 3500 of which were located in rural settlements

---

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter 7, this topic is extended in an ethnographic account of a contemporary television interview.

<sup>4</sup> BGTRK maintains a small museum, from which much of the historical information here comes. BGTRK and local media historians consider the date of their founding, and the beginning of Buryatia's radiofication, to be 1931.

and villages. By 1940, the number had nearly tripled again to 16,900.<sup>5</sup> In a 1938 report, the Obkom of the BMASSR boasted that it has successfully introduced both movie-viewing equipment and radio into all of the republic's collective farms (NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 3177, p. 5), though radiofication was not considered 'complete' until 1958 (ironically right before the introduction of television). The amount of broadcast time expanded rapidly as well, from approximately three hours in 1934 to nearly seven per day in 1938.<sup>6</sup> From an initial emphasis on rebroadcasts from Moscow, the local station quickly incorporated more locally produced, "national" [*natsional'nye*] materials, reaching 5 hours of original programming in Russian and Buryat by 1940.

Radiofication was a major Soviet accomplishment of the 1930s and a source of technological and cultural pride. In Buryatia, the new technology and its rapid spread into ubiquity were glorified in countless articles, propaganda films, and literary works like the Buryat-language "Raadio" poem quoted in Chapter 3.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this huge historical significance, radio in general, and Buryat-language radio in particular, boasts little audience now. It was by far the least-used source of news

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Initial broadcasts were longer, but the radio committee of the East-Siberian Krai curtailed programming from 4 hours and 10 minutes to 2 hours and 50 minutes in 1934, apparently due to a lack of musical material for local "national" programming. The museum curator cites records from the *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv* of the Buryat SSR (now NARB), f. 248, op. 13, d. 259, pp. 33 reverse–36, in which the committee states that the republic has only "70 melodies" in its repertoire, which they start repeating after 2 or 3 days. This problem was addressed in earnest after the disruption of WWII. In 1938, of six hours and 44 minutes, 4 hours and 17 minutes would be local programs, 45 minutes would be local programming, propaganda lectures, and paid advertising, and 1 hour and 42 minutes (less than one third) would be rebroadcasts from Moscow (TsGA BurSSR f. 248, op. 17, d. 31, pp. 1–2).

<sup>7</sup> In the decades intervening between radio's soaring popularity and its marginalization in the 2000s, a number of sociological surveys were undertaken in Buryatia to assess the efficacy of radio propaganda among its audience. See especially Balkhanov 1974; Golubev 1974, 1989.

as both reported and observed among audience study participants.<sup>8</sup> A handful of my acquaintances in their 20s and 30s listened to national stations, especially political and analytical news programming. But no one under 30 reported regularly listening to Buryat-language radio, and few people in this age category had any knowledge of what programs in Buryat were on, or when. Over the *longue durée*, the successful incorporation of television into Buryatia's mediascape no doubt deserves much of the blame for radio's shrinking audience. However, adopting new media is rarely, if ever, a simple matter of replacement.<sup>9</sup> There are a number of reasons that few of my interlocutors in early-21<sup>st</sup>-century Buryatia reported listening avidly to the radio, and we cannot discount the many people who *do* avidly listen.

The decline is due, in part, to the fact that the technology is out of fashion among audiences. During the late Soviet period, FM radio emerged as a parallel system with multiple stations, which entered into outright competition with state radio when they were privatized in 1991. The classic radio *tochka* has been slowly disappearing as the old radios break or are removed during kitchen remodels. When Katya and her husband Valerii were contemplating renovating their kitchen in 2007, I asked what they would do with the radio on the wall of their kitchen, which was going to be torn out during rewiring. Katya expressed no sadness, and Valerii did not think it could be reinstalled elsewhere. "And who would want it? That thing would be better in a museum!" Katya and Valerii actually did listen to the radio quite often, preferring the political and social

---

<sup>8</sup> This observation is consistent with the 2002 IMBiT study reported in Badmaeva 2004.

<sup>9</sup> This is discussed at greater length in Chapter 8.

analysis offered by central stations like Èkho Moskvyy (‘Echo of Moscow’).<sup>10</sup> They had no reason, however, to prefer the older Russian *tochka* technology (except, perhaps, nostalgia or their love of kitsch). Newer radios are manufactured largely in Japan, Korea, or China and lack Russia’s low FM band, which is necessary for receiving the state-run stations that broadcast Buryat-language radio.



**Figure 6.1. A kitchen in Ulan-Ude with a working *radio tochka*, 2009.**

In both the Republic of Buryatia and Aga, radio workers drastically overestimated their audiences based on an incorrect but pervasive assumption that everyone has access to radio. One woman in her 50s described the situation as though radiofication had just been completed. “Everyone in the village listens!” she said. Perhaps her own village relatives did keep radio *tochkas* in their kitchens; certainly, the media I found in the homes of journalists’ close relatives often reflected their personal involvement. Exactly

---

<sup>10</sup> Èkho Moskvyy is an independent radio station often noted for its trenchant criticism of the government and the status quo.

how many working radio *tochkas* remain in Buryatia, Russia, or the former Soviet Union is unknown. Of the households I observed, however, less than ½ had visible wall radios, and about 2/3 of the radios I asked about worked.

Another major reason that people report for not listening to radio is the difficulty of catching the intermittent Buryat-language broadcasts without careful advance planning. Radio listening practices (or non-practices) are similar to television viewing practices in this respect, and in both cases, it has huge ramifications for how both audiences and journalists interpret the linguistic potential of the medium. While it is possible to record radio programs on cassette decks or digital audio recorders, very few people do so. One 20-something laughed at my suggestion that this was even a possibility, and her boyfriend commented that he had tried once to record a radio program for his *babushka* by using the voice recorder function on his mobile phone, but it was so garbled it was useless. Some of BGTRK's musical programs circulate on the internet for free in digital mp3 format, and several people in my study pointed out these resources to me.<sup>11</sup> But recording and circulating mp3s over a long time span is less worthwhile for time-sensitive news programs.

Radio is therefore more of a background medium. It is what is on at your grandmother's house in the village or in your apartment if you still happen to have a working radio *tochka* or an old Soviet or Russian radio.<sup>12</sup> In the home in which I lived in 2007, for example, the radio in the kitchen was on constantly, from the Russian national

---

<sup>11</sup> Uploading and downloading radio recordings is *not* taken to be pirate activity by any of the people taking part. The typical logic is that the radio broadcasts are freely accessible.

<sup>12</sup> Russian radios with the proper low FM are still made by companies like Neiva, but they are surprisingly expensive and difficult to find, especially as compared to foreign-made stereo equipment with radio receivers included.

anthem opening the broadcast day at 6 a.m. to midnight, when it ended. The radio provided continuous background noise, and was only turned down when the family was having tea or eating or otherwise needed to be able to hear each other in the kitchen.<sup>13</sup> While not necessarily typical, this practice is an important reminder that the number of people exposed to Buryat-language radio probably far exceeds the number of people who report actively listening to it. Observation data thus serve as a powerful corrective to self-reporting. On the other hand, simple exposure may not be sufficient for media to impact language use; there is also the crucial matter of paying attention. In one case, an interviewee had reported *not* listening to specifically those Buryat-language programs that were on in the background while we cooked, later, in her parents' kitchen. I paused from chopping onions to point this out, and she marveled, laughing, that she must have heard it "100 times" but had never "turned [her] attention [*obrashchalas' vnimanie*] to the program." To this end, self-reported data about radio listening, which reflects not that to which a person is exposed, but that to which she pays attention, may trump observational data.

Demographically, the most important factors to observe about those people who *do* report listening routinely to the radio are age and rurality. While no one under 30 reported regularly seeking out radio, many reported that they listening to it by chance, if they "happened to catch [*lovit* ' ] it" while at the home of a relative—usually a grandmother or elderly aunt. A common refrain in response to my questions about specific radio programs and radio in general was "My babushka likes this." In the

---

<sup>13</sup> This experience gave me the impression that residents of Ulan-Ude listened to the radio constantly, which, upon further investigation in more households, turned out to be false. The family was a bit unusual in this regard.

Republic of Buryatia, BGTRK, which includes both programming produced in the republic and Radio Rossii, is far and away the most popular station; this also happens to be the primary radio source of Buryat-language programming.<sup>14</sup> Among the most popular Buryat-language and Buryat-themed programs were daily and weekly news programs, like the weekly show discussed below, and “*Stepnye melodii*” (“Steppe Melodies”), a beloved long-running musical program that airs archival material like early Soviet field recordings, as well as interviews with musicians, focusing on traditional Buryat music. These programs seemed to have cross-generational appeal. Other programs commanded the attention primarily of men and women over 50 and people who were either currently residing in villages and rural areas or had very recently moved to Ulan-Ude (labor migrants, for instance, and other people who seasonally circulated between villages and the city in kinship networks). The disproportionately rural audience in 2008–09 is quite the reverse of the situation in 1958, when editors asked why people in the districts were not listening and worried over how to appeal to them. In fact, in an interview in 2009, a seasoned radio and newspaper reporter mused the opposite: “I don’t know exactly why city people don’t listen.” [*Ne znaiu, tochno, pochemu ne slushaiut gorodskie.*] Part of the answer lies in the language of radio.

## **The language of radio**

The language of radio is characterized by reporters’ heavy use of SLB and native Buryat alternatives to Russian terms, by phonological nativization of those Russian

---

<sup>14</sup> There are also ham radio operators and small regional stations, which might sometimes broadcast in Buryat. The dominance of BGTRK was also apparent in the 2002 IMBiT study, as reported in Badmaeva 2004. Other popular stations, in 2002 as in 2008–09, included “*Russkoe radio*,” “*Evropa Plus*,” “*Pul’s radio*,” and “*Maiak*.”

borrowings that *are* used, and by a stark contrast between the prepared texts read by announcers and the *razgovornye* forms employed by interviewees. All of these features can be found in the two radio sample stories discussed here, detailed transcripts of which are provided in Appendix C. In Sample 1, a Buddhist lama (‘monk’) gives an informational interview about upcoming rituals at his local *datsans* for Sagaalgaṅ, the Buryat Buddhist New Year. In Sample 2, a decorated newspaper reporter is interviewed about his work in Khèzhèngè (R. Kizhinga) district. Both interviews are framed by an anchor and correspondents.

For a variety of reasons outlined below, standard literary Buryat is preferred by radio journalists. Like newspaper writers, radio journalists often employ native Buryat features over more common Russian or Russian-origin features. The purist choices that proved most salient to both audiences and journalists were, as in newspapers, lexical. There are some clear examples of such lexical choices in the reporter’s speech in Sample 2:

3	<u>Manai teleradiokompaniin</u>	<b>Correspondents</b> of our tele-radio company [...]
4	<b><u>surbalzhalagshad</u></b> [...]	
23	<u>Gèkhè zuura shagnalda khürtègshèdèi</u>	
24	<u>nègèn “Khèzhèngyn gol” soninoi</u>	
25	<u>zhurnalist Bato-Tsèrèn Dugaarov bolono.</u>	

The Buryat term used in line 4, surbalzhalagsha is an uncommon Mongolic-origin term for ‘correspondent’ used only in SLB, and rarely at that. *Korrespondent* is more common. In line 24, the same reporter chooses Buryat-origin sonin for ‘newspaper,’ over Russian-origin *gazetè* (R. *gazeta*). Both surbalzhalagsha and sonin are Mongolic-origin terms that have been excavated from linguistic history expressly to be substituted for more common Russian-origin alternatives.

A more subtle example of substitution is found in the reporter’s speech in the initial lines of Sample 1:

Reporter/host (Dashidondok Amogolonov):		
1	<u>Sagaalganaimnai</u> sariuun sharai üzëgdëzhè	The lovely face of <b>our Sagaalga</b> n has begun to become visible. Sagaalga services are going to begin at the datsans and dugans of ( <b>our</b> ) <b>Buryatia</b> from February 21.
2	<u>èkhilèè. Buriaad oronoimnai</u> dasan	
3	<u>duganguudta Sagaalgana</u> i khuralnuud	
4	<u>fevraliin</u> khorin nègènhèè èkhilkhèn’.	
5	<u>Dügzhüübè münöö fevraliin</u> khorin	The <u>dügzhüübè</u> this year will happen on February 23.
6	<u>gurbanda bolokho.</u>	

These lines are filled with terminology specific to Buryat cultural practices. Words like Sagaalga, datsan, dugan, and dügzhüübè are not replacements of Russian terms, but are so culturally specific that Russian is not relevant. Similarly, the lama goes on to employ highly specialized Buddhist terminology. Note, however, the reporter’s use in line 2 of “Buriaad oron,” literally ‘Buryat country’ or ‘Buryat nation(-state),’ which is sometimes used to refer to Buryatia instead of the official-administrative title “Buriaad Respublikè.”<sup>15</sup>

Subtle choices like this can have a powerful solidarity-building effect, adding to the sense of shared space and ‘specialness’ that is intrinsic to minority-language (or minority) media. Emphasizing this sense, the reporter frames this story with repeated use of the 1<sup>st</sup>-person plural possessive -mnai (‘our’), in lines 1 and 2. Possessives like -mnai often function in Buryat like definite articles, specifying the singularity of an object or event. Given that the speaker must choose from among personal pronouns, however, it is significant that it is “*our* Sagaalga” and “*our* Buryatia” (where definite articles are not necessary anyway). Such uses of ‘our’ for cultural events, Buryatia, and the Buryat

<sup>15</sup> They also have slightly different scope, with the former potentially including culturally or historically Buryat territories outside the republic.

language are so common in daily speech, offstage but especially on stage, that they are almost formulaic. In stage performances like recitations and lectures, as well as in media interviews, I have personally encountered difficulty referring to the “Buryat language” *without* saying “buriaad khèlèmnai,” ‘our Buryat language.’ When I brought up this problem with a friend, he commented that the problem was unique: because foreigners typically do not learn Buryat, all speakers can say “buriaad khèlèmnai.”<sup>16</sup>

In the context of Sagaalgaṅ, the same coextension may apply, insofar as most celebrants are Buryat (though not necessarily Buryat-speaking). However, referring to “our Sagaalgaṅ” and the “datsans and dugans of our Buryatia” also helps to emphasize Buryat ownership of, and investment in, this particular holiday. As I have argued elsewhere (Graber, N.d.), Sagaalgaṅ is one of the most visible, popular, and successful examples of how ethnonational tradition is being reclaimed (and, in the process, reconstructed) in post-Soviet Buryatia. A listener must have some familiarity with local Buddhist practices to make sense of the reporter’s introduction and the lama’s detailed explanation of rituals, but neither speaker assumes that listeners have a deep understanding of the rituals’ meanings. In my experience, most Buryats in Ulan-Ude observe at least some of the Buddhist rituals surrounding Sagaalgaṅ, even if they do not practice Buddhism in their daily lives in any other way during the year. I am acquainted with a number of self-proclaimed “non-believers” [*neveruiushchie*], practicing shamans, Orthodox believers, and even a few “*bezbozhniki*,” so-called “militant atheists” of the

---

<sup>16</sup> He did not, however, suggest that I say “buriaad khèlèmnai” myself. The distinction has less to do with second-language learning than with ethnicity. As suggested in earlier chapters, a Buryat adult could learn Buryat as a second language and refer to it as her “native language,” or as “our language.” While many of my Buryat hosts, friends, and acquaintances referred to me “our (*f.*) Buryat” [*nasha buriatka*] and “our girl” [*basagamnai*], these terms of endearment were endearing specifically because they played with what was, for my interlocutors, the incontrovertible fact of my non-Buryat ethnicity.

Soviet era, who nonetheless attend dügzhüübè, the fire purification ritual referenced here. This is not necessarily a matter of syncretic religious practice, because it is not necessarily a matter of religion; Sagaalgaṅ and its attendant Buddhist rituals have become so thoroughly invested in notions of Buryat *culture* that their observance is less indicative of religious beliefs per se than of desires to show respect for one's ancestors, carry on (or reclaim) family traditions, and engage in a collective affirmation of Buryatness.<sup>17</sup>

The orality of radio introduces additional possibilities for nativization, both in voice and phonology. While not representable in the transcripts, reporters like the announcer in Samples 1 and 2, Dashidondog Amogolonov, employ a poetic vocal style reminiscent of Buryat theatrical performance, which includes emphasis of prosodic contours and a musical, almost sing-song quality. Radio and television media also include many examples of native Buryat speakers switching, in the middle of Buryat-language speech, to native Russian phonology for personal names.<sup>18</sup> Both journalists and interviewees demonstrate a mixed phonological treatment of Russian and Buryat personal names, as well as recent borrowings. Pronunciation often follows spelling, even if the Cyrillic orthography does not reflect native Buryat pronunciation; thus personal names and words are sometimes phonologically russified via orthography. Radio announcers also, however, often pronounce names (including traditionally Russian names) and recent Russian borrowings with native Buryat phonology. This is primarily audible in the

---

<sup>17</sup> Dügzhüübè is also becoming popular with non-Buryat residents of Buryatia, but non-Buryats undertaking the purification ritual and ordering prayers at local datsans around Sagaalgaṅ tend more strongly to be Buddhist believers and practitioners (exclusive of participant-observing anthropologists).

<sup>18</sup> I thank Jargal Badagarov for first bringing my attention to this phenomenon.

application of vowel length and vowel harmony where they would not have existed in Russian. It comes up repeatedly in Sample 2:

8	<u>Bidèntèi sug khüèldèg <i>Alla Mal'tseva</i></u>	Our co-worker <b>Alla Mal'tseva</b> received the high title of Best Radio Journalist of the Year.
9	<u>zhèlèi èrkhim <i>radiozhurnalist gèhèn ündèr</i></u>	
10	<u>nèrè zèrgèdè khürtöö.</u>	Buryat state television journalist <b>Tatiana Vygotskaia</b> was named Best Television Journalist of the Year. [...]
11	<u>Buriaadai gürènéi <i>televideniin zhurnalist</i></u>	
12	<u><i>Tat'iana Vygotskaia</i> zhèlèi èrkhim</u>	
13	<u><i>telezhurnalist gèzhè nèrlègdèè.</i> [...]</u>	Also, <b>Irina Sandakova</b> , author of “Seven Days,” Buryat radio’s informational broadcast, won the Jaroslav Hašek award.
19	<u>Tiikhèdè Buriaadai radiogoi “Doloon</u>	
20	<u>khonog” gèhèn mèdèèsèlèi damzhuulgyn</u>	
21	<u><i>aavtor Irina Sandakova</i> Iaroslav</u>	
22	<u>Gashegai nèmèmhètè shanda khürtöö.</u>	
23	<u>Gèkhè zuura shagnalda khürtègshèdèi</u>	Among the laureates is a journalist of the “Khèzhèngyn gol” newspaper, <b>Bato-Tsèrèn Dugarov</b> .
24	<u>nègèn “Khèzhèngyn gol” soninoi</u>	
25	<u><i>zhurnalist Bato-Tsèrèn Dugaarov</i> bolono.</u>	

In this passage, the journalist pronounces the names “Alla Mal'tseva,” “Tatiana Vygotskaia,” and “Irina Sandakova,” in lines 8, 12, and 21, with Russian phonology, without lengthening the vowels as is sometimes done to achieve Buryat nativization. None is a traditionally Buryat name, which might motivate the Russian pronunciation. However, with “*aavtor*” (‘author’) in line 21, the announcer nativizes a recent Russian borrowing. He applies Buryat vowel length to the initial stressed vowel of the Russian word *avtor*, despite the word’s standard Buryat spelling, *avtor* (автор). Additionally, in line 25, he lengthens the second vowel of Dugarov’s (very common) Buryat last name, pronouncing it “*dugaarov*.” Stress in Russian and vowel length in Buryat are often analogized,<sup>19</sup> but stress in Buryat does not require vowel length. This name’s usual pronunciation in Buryat does not include a long vowel; the [a] is a short vowel, reflected

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Buryat speakers are not alone in recognizing Russian stress as native-language vowel length. Ewenki similarly has nativized many Russian borrowings by applying vowel length to stressed syllables. To take an example that appears in the next chapter, Russian *gorod* [ˈgorod] (‘city’ or ‘town’) has been nativized into Ewenki as *goorod* [go:rod], as in Buryat, although in both Ewenki and Buryat, standard spelling follows the Russian spelling “gorod” (город) required by 1930s orthographic reforms (like *avtor* автор). See the prefatory linguistic note on Buryat, as well as the discussion of Buryat phonological nativization of Russian terms in Chapter 4.

in the standard Buryat spelling, “Dugarov” (Дугаров). “Dugaarov” might thus constitute hypercorrection, an over-application of Buryat vowel length that ironically treats “Dugarov” like a Russian borrowing to be nativized. At the very least, the example demonstrates that although the announcer’s texts are read from prepared scripts, the orality of radio introduces additional phonological nativization.

A nuanced approach is also evident in the application of purism. Many lexical items, especially in certain technological lexical domains, do not have accepted Buryat-origin alternatives. Radio discourse, especially as compared with newspaper discourse, includes few neologisms designed to remedy this situation. See, for instance, the heavy use of terms like “zhurnalist,” “tele-,” and “radio” in the reporter’s speech in Sample 2:

<p>3 <u>Manai <b>teleradiokompaniin</b></u>  4 <u>surbalzhagalashad Respublikyn prezidentyn</u>  5 <u>shanda khürtèkhyn tülöö zhurnalistnuudai</u>  9 [...] <u>zhèlèi èrkhim <b>radiozhurnalist</b> gèhèn</u>  11 [...] <u>gürènei <b>televideniin zhurnalist</b></u>  12 [...] <u>zhèlèi èrkhim</u>  13 <u><b>telezhurnalist</b> [...]</u>  14 <u>Buriaad <b>respublikyn</b> araduudai khoodo</u>  15 <u>kharilsaa gurimshuulka khèrègtè üürgè</u>  16 <u>nülöö üzүүлhènei tülöö gèhèn <b>nominatsida</b></u>  17 <u>“Uulzalgin baiar” gèhèn <b>teledamzhuulga</b></u>  18 <u>baiguulhan zokhèokhy бүлэг èrkhimlèè.</u>  24 [...] <u>“Khèzhèngyn gol” soninoi <b>zhurnalist</b></u>  25 <u>Bato-Tsèrèn Dugaarov bolono.</u></p>	<p>Correspondents of our <b>tele-radio company</b> were once again selected to receive Republic presidential awards [...] [...] Best <b>Radio Journalist</b> of the Year [...] [...] state <b>television journalist</b> [...] Best <b>Television Journalist</b> of the Year [...] The creative team that established the <b>television broadcast</b> “The Joy of Meeting” won a nomination for its role in promoting good relations between the peoples of the Republic of Buryatia. [...] a <b>journalist</b> of the “Khèzhèngyn gol” newspaper, Bato-Tsèrèn Dugarov.</p>
--	--

While the reporter chose the uncommon surbalzhagalagsha and sonin in lines 4 and 24, note the use of Russian-origin teleradiokompani in the preceding line (3) and zhurnalist in the following line (5), as well as lines 9, 11, 13, and 24. This short text demonstrates the mixed use of common Russian-origin terms, Buryat grammatical nativization, and the rarer Mongolic substitutions more characteristic of purism.

By contrast, the newspaper journalist being interviewed in the same sample repeatedly uses *gazetè*, the more common Russian-origin alternative for ‘newspaper.’ This speaker works for *Khèzhèngè*, a Buryat-language district newspaper that also nearly always prints *sonin* over *gazetè*. Yet here, interestingly, he says *gazetè*, in lines 27, 33, 37, and 55:

26	<u>Manai “Khèzhèngyn gol” [loud bang in background] gèzhè <i>gazetèdè</i> olon zon</u>	Many people work at our “Khèzhèngè Valley” [loud bang in background]
27	<u>azhalladag. [...]</u>	<b>newspaper.</b> [...]
28	<u>“Khèzhèngè” <i>gazetèmnai</i> buriaad khèlèn</u>	The “ <i>Khèzhèngè</i> ” <b>newspaper</b> is published
33	<u>dèèrè gurban zuun tabin khèhègèèr</u>	in the Buryat language [with a print run of]
34	<u>garadag.</u>	350 copies.
35	<u>Orod khèlèn dèèrè “Dolina Kizhingi”</u>	And the “ <i>Dolina Kizhingi</i> ” <b>newspaper</b> is
36	<u><i>gazetèmnai</i> mianga taban zuun khèhègèèr</u>	published in the Russian language [with a
37	<u>garadag lè daa.</u>	print run of] 1500 copies.
38		
55	<u>Saashadaa <i>gazetèmnai</i> khododoo</u>	In the future, may <b>our newspaper</b> prosper,
56	<u>dèlgèrzhè, khun zonoo uiaruulzha iaazha.</u>	touch people’s hearts, [...]
	[...]	

This is but one example of how, in radio, interviewees’ speech introduces colloquialisms and *razgovornye* forms into the language of news media. While the speaker above controls a literary dialect, Kizhingskii, close to the Khori dialect basis of SLB, the lama interviewed in Sample 1 introduces a number of dialectisms, non-standard pronunciations, and “spoken” [*ustnye*] forms—in short, *razgovornye* resources.<sup>20</sup>

<b>Interviewee (Bayar lama):</b>		
12	<u>Khulgana zhèlèè üngèrgèkhédöö hüzègtèn</u>	With the passing of the Year of the Mouse,
13	<u>dasanaa erèzhè, zhèl soo khègdèhèn nügèl</u>	believers come to the datsan, having done
14	<u>iuumèè, nöökhì, sèbèrlèkhyn tülöö,</u>	sinful <b>things</b> in that year, <b>and so</b> , for
15	<u>üilyngöö üriie khuu haizharuulkhyn tülöö,</u>	purification, for the improvement of their
16	<u>sagaaruulkhyn tülöö dasanaa erèzhè,</u>	karma, for rectification, come to the datsan
17	<u>khuraldaa erèzhè mürgèdèg, burkhad</u>	and worship at the service, [and] appeal to
18	<u>sakhiiusadtaa khuu khandadag. [...]</u>	the deities. [...]
23	<u>Zhèlèè ugtakhyngaa urda tèè <b>lamanarnai</b></u>	Just before the greeting of the [new] year,
24	<u>sakhiiusadtaa balinaa bèldèdèg.</u>	<b>the lamas</b> prepare the <b>balins</b> [for
	[...]	consecration] to the protector-deities. [...]

<sup>20</sup> On these distinctions, see the section on “different ways of being ‘razgovornyi’” in Chapter 4.

<p>33 <u>Fevraliin</u> khorin khoërto iuhèn saghaa,  34 <u>üglöönèi</u>, Iamandaga, Gombo, Hama,  35 <u>Zhamsaran</u>, Shoizhol sakhiuusadaa  36 <u>khuranabdi</u>.  37 <u>Adislahan balin iuuméeè</u> khuu ürgènébdi.  38 <u>Tiigèéd sakhiuusadaa urizha</u>, <u>ürgèl mürgèl</u>  39 <u>khèzhè</u>, <u>nügèlöö namanshalzha</u>, <u>hainii</u>  40 <u>üreözhè</u>, <u>khuralaa khuranabdi</u>.  41 <u>Khorin gurbanda—fevraliin—iuhèn sagta</u>,  42 <u>üglöönèi</u>, akhiaad Iamandaga, [<i>someone</i>  43 <i>coughs in background</i>] <u>Gombo</u>, Hama,  44 <u>Zhamsaran</u>, Shoizhol sakhiuusadaa  45 <u>khuranabdi</u>. [...]  60 <u>Dügzhüübédémnai lamanuudnai</u>  61 <u>ariuudkhahan balin iuumè</u> Shoizhol  62 <u>sakhiuusandaa ürgèzhè</u>, <u>sor gargadag</u>.  63 <u>Sor gargakhadaa khuralaa khurazha</u>,  64 <u>Shoizhol sakhiuusandaa balin iuumè</u>  65 <u>ürgèzhè</u>, muu züg <u>rüügèè</u> soroingoo  66 <u>iuumè gargadag iuumè</u>. [...]</p>	<p>On February 22 from 9:00, in the morning, <b>we are doing</b> the Yamāntaka, Gombo, Lhamo, Zhamsaran, [and] Shoizhol protector-deity services. [And] we offer all of our blessed <b>balins</b>. Then we invite the protector-deities, do the offerings, proclaim our sins, give blessings, [and] <b>do the service</b>. On the 23rd—of February—at 9:00, in the morning, <b>we’ll be doing</b> once again the Yamāntaka, [<i>someone coughs in background</i>] Gombo, Lhamo, Zhamsaran, [and] Shoizhol protector-deity services. At the <u>dügzhüübè</u>, <b>the lamas</b> offer the purified <b>balins</b> to the Shoizhol protector-deity and take out the <u>sor</u>. <b>While we’re doing the service</b> we take out all the <u>sor</u>, offer the <b>balins</b> to the Shoizhol protector-deity, [and] bring out the <u>sor</u> itself <b>to</b><sup>21</sup> the bad direction.</p>
--	---

Colloquialisms here include nöökhi (‘so’; ‘and so’) in line 14, which is a colloquialism of the longer standard form ünöökhi. In line 60, he also uses a colloquial plural of “lama,” lamanuud, instead of the standard lamanar that he used above in line 23. Other *razgovornyi* resources that he uses repeatedly here are iuumè and the verb khurakha. The former, iuumè, means ‘thing’ in line 14, but it colloquially generalizes and pluralizes ritual objects in lines 37, 61, 64, and 66. The verb khurakha appears beginning in line 36 and continuing in lines 40, 45, and 63. This is a spoken (*ust.*) form for ‘conducting’ or ‘doing religious services,’ as in khural khurakha. Finally, we see a non-standard pronunciation in line 65, when the lama says rüügèè for ‘into,’ as opposed to standard Buryat ruugaa.

Both interviewees in the radio samples, the lama and the newspaper journalist, are typical of radio interviewees in using Buryat in their daily lives and work, and in deriving

<sup>21</sup> The lama says rüügèè here for ‘into’; standard Buryat is ruugaa.

cultural authority in Buryat society from sources beyond the immediate interview context. While their speech displays knowledge of SLB in some respects, however, the fact that they incorporate *razgovornye* features sets up a contrast between the speech of interviewers and interviewees.

Considering the linguistic and social positions and activities of these interviewees beyond the interactions excerpted here, I would argue that register choice in these instances depends on participant roles (Goffman 1981b) within the interview context rather than solely on individuals' competence (though of course competence in multiple registers is definitionally necessary for it to be a 'choice'). The Khèzhèngè journalist provides a particularly good example of this. As is clear from the newspaper prose that he regularly produces,<sup>22</sup> he controls SLB at the highest possible level—indeed, even serving as one of Buryatia's key arbiters of literary standards. Yet in the role of radio interviewee, he uses forms that diverge from those of his literary labor, including, in the excerpt above, not only *gazetè* but also short sentences; simple, repetitive verb forms (*azhalladag* ['work (continuously)'], *garadag* ['is published (continuously)'], and *garadag* again); and a colloquial form, *iaazha* following a verb, in line 56. To be clear, it is not the orality of the speech event per se that requires the use of the colloquial and *razgovornye* forms associated with everyday, 'offstage' conversation. The announcer and interviewing reporter are, after all, also speaking, but adhere more closely to literary standards and choose purist Buryat forms. We also cannot interpret any of the interviewee's speech as pragmatic mistakes or infelicities, as he is as well-versed as a person can be in the

---

<sup>22</sup> Several of his articles appeared in the media review described in Chapter 3 and Appendix B. His newspaper prose displayed many of the features and tendencies described in the preceding chapter, including complex verb morphology and purist lexical choices.

linguistic requirements of interviewers and interviewees. What determines the linguistic choices of this very multilingual speaker rather appears to be his immediate role as an interviewee. He could, presumably, have scripted a text in advance and subjected it to the same editorial process as a newspaper article or broadcaster's script, to be read on air. Instead, he meets a different expectation: that the interviewee will speak spontaneously and bear responsibility for bringing the broadcast "closer to life."<sup>23</sup>

### **Listeners' responses**

Focus group participants found the radio journalists and interviewees alike relatively difficult to understand, depending mainly on their own dialect background and competence in SLB. As with newspaper prose, there was a wide variety of responses and claims to comprehension. Everyone appeared to agree that Buryat-language radio was an authoritative source of "good" Buryat—not, in fact, far from the status of newspapers—but it proved difficult to tease apart the sources of that authority.

The lama was a case in point. Several focus group participants, as well as additional interviewees, commented that it was clear he was very fluent and used Buryat in his day-to-day work. "It's clear," one young man put it, "that he speaks the native language every day." [*Isno, chto on govorit kazhdyi den' na rodnom.*] Some listeners had trouble with his specialized lexicon, which they ascribed to their personal unfamiliarity with Buddhist practice and terminology. A linguist with dialect familiarity identified features in his vowels (such as the pronunciation [rū:gè:] of ruugaa) with the

---

<sup>23</sup> Within the broadcasts reviewed for this study, there were several similar cases in which journalists served as television and radio interviewees. In every case, their linguistic practices as interviewees were notably more *razgovornye* than their practices as writers and interviewers. For further analysis of participant roles in interview interactions, see the next chapter.

dialect of Ivolga. Non-linguists did not, however, identify his speech as dialectal or *razgovornyi*; it registered simply as difficult to understand.

One participant in a group of NGI students, Oyuuna, did point out that he sounded like he spoke a “not totally literary” [*ne sovsem literaturnyi*] dialect. “Well, he’s a **lama**,” another participant, Jargalma, replied a bit huffily. “Of course he knows what he’s doing and knows how to speak.” Oyuuna summarily changed the subject. The lama’s high position in a datsan affiliated with Ivolginskii datsan also impacted listeners’ interpretations. When I asked one focus group participant for his thoughts on the language used in this news story, he replied with what might seem a non sequitur: “Of course the lama is—I won’t deny—a rather—a pretty significant personage, probably. Well, above all, [he’s] in Ivolginskii datsan, yeah?, in the **center**—well, in the center of Buddhism **in general!**”<sup>24</sup>

It is likely that no one wanted to impugn a lama’s linguistic ability by placing the burden of intelligibility on him. They deflected it instead onto themselves. “It’s just hard for **me**,” Masha said by way of explaining why she could not understand his speech, “because I don’t go to the datsan very often.”<sup>25</sup> This is interesting because it suggests that the lama possesses linguistic authority because of his religious position, which trumps his deviation from the standard.

The Khèzhèngè newspaper reporter, Dugarov, proved easier for listeners to understand, thanks to his dialect background and informal choices. The first comment that most focus group participants and interviewees made about him was that he spoke a

---

<sup>24</sup> “*Lama konechno zhe—ne budu otritsat’—dovol’no takoi—zn—znachimoe litso, naverno. Nu, skoree vsego, v Ivolginskom datsane, da, v tsentre— vot, v tsentre buddizma voobshche!*” Focus group recorded 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Focus group recorded 2009.

“literary standard dialect” natively. Listeners from Khèzhèngè noticed this immediately—and most of them recognized his name, if not his voice, as that of a popular personage of the district. “It’s not hard,” said a young man from neighboring Iaruuna, “to guess that he’s a native speaker [*nositel’*] of the Khori Buryat language.” Other listeners appreciated that he spoke informally, in short sentences that incorporated some Russian. This made his speech accessible to listeners who did not command SLB, including speakers of non-literary dialects and semi-speakers. One embattled listener, who claimed to understand very little of what the other speakers said, expressed gratitude for the announcer’s reference to *zhurnalistuud* and Dugarov’s use of *gazetè*. At least, she said, she could understand “what the talk was about” [*o chëm idët rech’*].

The radio announcer and interviewing reporter were praised for their “beautiful,” “poetic,” formal Buryat, “like what they say on the stage”—meaning in Buryat-language formal events, such as at the theatre and in the ever-popular Buryat beauty contests. While none of my focus group participants pointed to any specific formal features, it is likely that their interpretation of poetic style derived from the journalists’ careful enunciation and the features noted above, an (over)emphasis on vowel length and on prosodic contours. But they were difficult to understand, especially for those listeners who had already had difficulty with newspaper prose.

Overall, comprehension of radio fell between that of newspapers and television. Like television discourse, radio discourse incorporates some Russian and *razgovornye* features, especially in the language of interviewees. Like newspaper discourse, however, radio makes heavy use of SLB. While they were in the minority, two focus group participants actually claimed that they found the SLB of radio *more* difficult to

understand than that of newspapers. Their difficulty proceeded from two crucial limitations of radio technology that complicate the application of a purist language ideology: the absence of the visual channel and the inherent ephemerality of broadcasting.

### **Ephemerality, pedagogy, script: practices and ideologies of radio journalists**

Early on, Buryat media producers grasped the uniqueness of radio as a medium, particularly its ephemerality. When a correspondent of the radio committee compared *Pravda Buriatii* and Buryat radio at a meeting in 1959, an editor objected vehemently that the newspaper and the radio were two different things. You can work with materials from the newspaper, he said, and rewrite them, but catch nothing from the radio. You can read the newspaper again and again, but by radio “they said it [once] and you’ll hear it no more” [*skazali i bol’she ne uslyshish’*]. (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 5, pp. 5–6)

In light of this awareness, one might expect that radio journalists in 2008–09 would place greatest emphasis on immediate comprehension. But in fact, they stressed cultural and linguistic preservation, as achievable through example and pedagogy. The radio workers I observed and interviewed acted primarily on purist impulses and were motivated by what we might call ‘activist conservatism.’ This was mainly expressed implicitly through linguistic choices like the phonological nativization outlined above, which may have been unconscious. The editorial correction that I observed targeted lexical items and, less often, syntax and enunciation; I never witnessed a discussion specifically about vowel length, though one radio worker reported being instructed by her

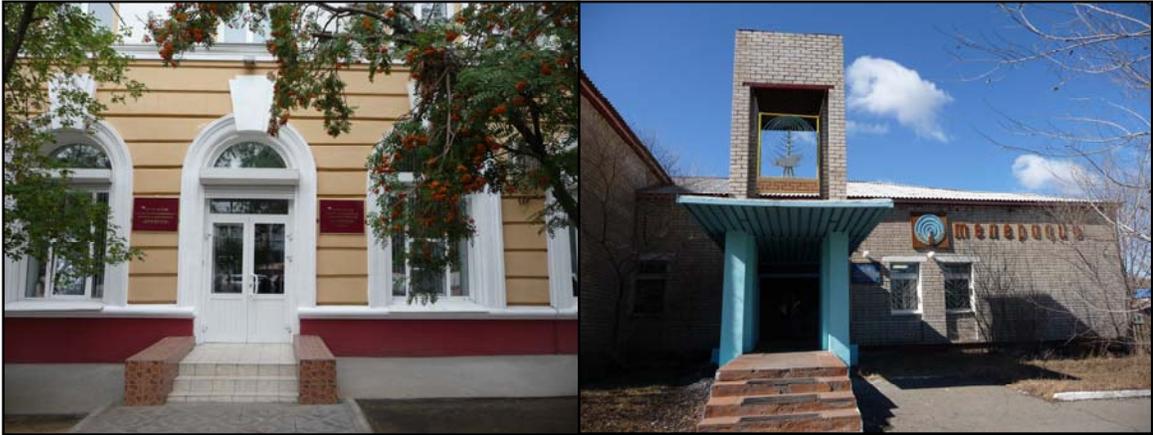
editor to use “Buryat pronunciation” for Russian words.<sup>26</sup> When called upon to attend consciously to their linguistic decisions, however, radio workers emphasized “preservation” [*sokhranenie*] as their main goal and cited instances in which they chose older Buryat terms over recent Russian borrowings. One editor summarized the (unformalized) language policy at her radio program like this: “literary Buryat, unless you can’t get around it.”<sup>27</sup>

In practice, Buryat language purism is balanced by selective internationalism and pragmatic approaches to the many things one “can’t get around.” Many of the terms noted above that lack (as yet) Buryat neologisms are deemed ‘internationalisms’ in the editor’s office, which both radio journalists and members of the erstwhile Buryat language academy consider preferable to creating hundreds of neologisms for an unwilling audience. Tele- and televidenie, radio, respublika, zhurnalist, and prezident are all arguably of international rather than *Russian* origin, and journalists stress such words’ Latin and Greek roots if called upon to justify their choices. The etymological principle is unevenly applied. The same logic that privileges *zhurnalist* should, after all, also privilege Russian *gazeta* as a Latin-derived ‘internationalism’ that entered Buryat from French by way of Russian. Yet radio journalists, like print journalists, are much more likely to choose the ‘pure’ Buryat sonin over gazetè. In this sense they practice etymological selectivity, drawing on linguistics scholarship and emphasizing the deep-history of words like “televidenie” rather than their more recent entry into Buryat through Russian.

---

<sup>26</sup> Interview recorded 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Interview recorded 2009.



**Figure 6.2. Two radio stations, 2009.** Left: the radio building of BGTRK, on the Square of the Soviets in Ulan-Ude. Right: the television and radio building of ChGTRK's Aga affiliate in Aginskoe.

The preservationist bent of Buryat-language radio institutions can be traced to the backgrounds of the journalists. Like print journalists, radio journalists tend to have backgrounds in Buryat-language education, and they stress their pedagogical role in media. The majority of the radio journalists I surveyed and interviewed in 2008–09 had been trained first as teachers, and had either begun their careers in print journalism and moved into radio or (less often) vice versa. For instance, the radio host featured in the radio samples, Dashidondok Amogolonov, graduated from Irkutsk State University and worked at Buriaad Ünèn before joining the radio station in 1992.

Linguistic choices like those detailed above also depend, crucially, on journalists' assumptions about their audience. They know that their audience is primarily rural and primarily older, and they target them with musical programming, history, literature, and human interest stories. Connected to the age and rurality of their listeners, they also (therefore) expect their audience to already command the literary language. This makes a difference not only in the decisions about how to script announcers' and correspondents' scripts, but also in how interview material is elicited.

The absence of the visual channel means the length and quality of material—i.e., recorded sound—is at a higher premium than in newspaper and television interviews. There is little ‘filler’ to be added, beyond the usual musical interludes, and you cannot distract the audience by intercutting long silences or awkward pauses with additional camera shots of trees. Due to this premium, combined with audience expectations, interviewees tend to be highly fluent speakers, generally in SLB. Both of the interviewees discussed above, for instance, used Buryat in their daily work and were considered “native speakers”—*nositeli*—by listeners. I was an instructive exception to this rule. The authors of Buryat-language programs were excited to interview me as an example of a foreigner’s interest in Buryat, to elicit pride in the language and, ultimately, to further the cause of language revitalization. (Also, I was a *willing* interviewee, which is itself quite rare.) The two radio interviews that I gave in Buryat during fieldwork were by far the longest and hardest interviews that I gave, across all media platforms. Producing sustained stretches of discourse requires both fluency in and comfort with Buryat, which is (increasingly) uncommon, for reasons discussed further below. As in TV, radio editors cannot add material to interviews; they can only cut. However, the absence of the visual channel means they can cut with greater impunity to produce more fluent Buryat speech. So, for example, the “umm”s, pauses, and mistakes in my interview for BGTRK were snipped to create “correct,” if stilted, stretches of fluent speech. The interview itself had been, however, remarkably difficult.

Buryat-language radio workers have developed some strategies for coping with the anxiety of producing new materials. First, they use archival materials extensively. This minimizes the need to collect new material, minimizes editing time, and maximizes

the use of their small (and shrinking) staff. It also has the interesting incidental effect of including older, “high-style” standard Buryat with less Russian influence than what is spoken today.

Second, journalists show great allegiance to script. The absence of camera means that it is possible to read everything. Announcers and correspondents script everything in advance for editing and approval anyway, but they also encourage interviewees to script materials ahead of time. My own interviews took place with the aid of brief notes, and the interviewers coached me—in Russian—between questions and answers in Buryat. This brings radio production closer to writing and written standards, despite some journalists’ goal of producing “natural” speech. It also makes it possible for even the most nervous semi-speaker of Buryat to ‘fake’ competence in the literary standard—provided he is a decent actor and willing to perform.

### **The interview: language attrition, oral performance, and the problem of shame**

The radio workers with whom I spoke talked about their “listeners” and their “audience” as though they were relatively confident about who it comprised, and their linguistic decisions suggested that they had a coherent image of audience as well. But it was not always clear (to me at least) what data or experience formed the basis for this image. Contemporary media sociologists in Buryatia have done some demographic survey-based audience studies (e.g., Badmaeva 2002, 2004), but most of the journalists I worked with were unaware of that data. They seemed instead to guess at their audience based on personal experience with social and kin networks. (And, as we have seen, they

were sometimes very wrong.) But journalists do have direct interaction with their audience—or potential or intended audience—on a daily basis through the interview.

As I hope has already become clear, *knowing or not knowing* Buryat can be an intensely emotional issue. The interview brings painfully to the fore those feelings of insecurity, embarrassment, and shame that so often animate public Buryat-language interactions. This is only a problem in radio and television, not print, because as we have seen, in print the reporter often translates on the fly from a Russian presentation, or after the fact. But the television and radio mediums depend on an interviewee producing partible streams of fluent discourse, and this task, compounded with the general nervousness that accompanies any recorded performance, proves quite onerous for both interviewer and interviewee. Radio workers have extreme difficulty eliciting interviews. Once they find a willing speaker, they often repeatedly interview the same person, over months or years, such that the pool of Buryat-language radio and television interviewees is actually quite small.<sup>28</sup> When a radio editor contacted me to solicit Buryat material for Sagaalgaṅ in January 2010, a few months after I had left the field, I realized that even I—neither a native speaker nor within 6,000 miles of Ulan-Ude—was on this ‘short list’ of viable interviewees. The editor contacted me in Russian and reassured me: I know you can do it!

---

<sup>28</sup> This is especially true of willing Buryat speakers in positions of power and in institutions on reporters’ beats. See Chapter 7 for some examples of repeat interviewees within medical institutions.



**Figure 6.3. Preparing to record a radio interview at the radio complex of BGTRK, Ulan-Ude, 2009.**

There was a tendency among my research participants to ascribe these difficulties to the present moment, and to remember Buryat media's past as a time when *all* Buryats were fully literate in the Standard Literary language *and* spoken varieties and were actively consuming Buryat-language media, so that the audience for Buryat-language media was coextensive with *Buryats*.

But in fact, the gap between journalistic expectations and the audience's competence—or willingness—to perform Buryat began as early as the late 1950s. Archival records from Buryatia's media institutions show that minority language journalists have spent the last 50 years increasingly plagued by the problem of getting their audience to talk back.

We see an early indication of this in 1959, when an editor at the Buryat radio and television company, Tsyren-Dorzhi Nomgoevich Dambaev, defended himself against the constant criticism that he was not producing enough original materials in Buryat.

Fulfilling work quotas was very important at this point in the Soviet Union, and in this case his superiors in the Committee for Radio Broadcasting wanted him to produce 50% of Buryat-language broadcasts based on original material, not the translations from Russian that were overwhelming the broadcasts:

Говорят, что я плохо работаю. Но меня интересует почему последние известия 50% должны состоять из оригинальных материалов на бурятском языке. Ведь ни один корреспондент наш не дает материалов, а я один не в состоянии это обеспечить. Тем более, что на предприятиях Улан-Удэ многие буряты не умеют сказать на родном языке.

They say that I work poorly.<sup>29</sup> But what interests me is why 50% of *Poslednie Izvestiia* should consist of original materials in the Buryat language. Really not one of our correspondents gives materials, and I am not in any condition to support it alone. What's more, in the institutions of Ulan-Ude many Buryats are not able to say [anything] in the native language.

(NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 5, p. 99)

He goes on to emphasize differences between news production and the production of cultural programming. Because it is so difficult to find material in Buryat in Ulan-Ude, the news correspondents would need to go out into villages and outlying areas where Buryat is more widely spoken to gather materials, but on a tight schedule with fast news production, this is not feasible.

The same urban/rural split was at issue in 1962 for the editor mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Ch-R. N. Namzhilov, when he emphasized the need to bring broadcasts “closer to life” [*blizhe k zhizni*] by focusing on the agricultural topics at issue

---

<sup>29</sup> Dambaev was routinely criticized for his moral failings as well as for his shortcomings in the studio—inadequacies that were intimately connected in the moral logic of the Soviet 1950s. Most recently, he had been issued an official reprimand [*vygovor*] by his party organization within the Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting (*Komitet po radioveshchaniiu i televideniiu*) for his part in swindling a local collective farm out of two bags of potatoes for the radio workers' collective. His colleagues connected his “scandalous” [*skandal'noe*] actions regarding the potatoes directly to his continuing failure to produce 50% original materials in Buryat, and he was, perhaps, still smarting from their condemnation here. (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 5, pp. 91–97)

for rural Buryats. In children's programming, he said, we should "orient to the rural children, who know the language well" and can therefore produce original materials. (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, p. 141)

"The difficulty for us," a Buryat television editor, S. Sh. Badmaev, would say again at a meeting in 1980, "is that few people appear in Buryat."<sup>30</sup> By this point, radio and television broadcasters were making more use of rural speakers and covering more localized Buryat topics like animal husbandry that were popular among rural viewers and listeners.<sup>31</sup> But they also continued to aspire to motivate an urban audience and to link rural Buryat life with centers of political and economic power in Ulan-Ude. At the same meeting, another editor, S. B. Bal'zhinimaev, observed that it would be good if people in leadership positions of the republic would come to the microphone more often "in the native language" [*na rodnom iazyke*]. (NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 34, p. 67)

Bal'zhinimaev had already observed, in 1975, that there were no leaders at the level of the republic's ministries or at the level of departments within the Obkom, the regional committee of the Communist Party, who could produce broadcast material in Buryat. They begged off, he reported, by saying that they did not know the native language [*rodnoi iazyk*]. Bal'zhinimaev asked a poignant question: "Who will we work with further?" [*S kem rabotat' budem dal'she?*] (NARB f. 914, op. 1., d. 24, p. 49)

When journalists did find interviewees among the republic's leaders and in the institutions of Ulan-Ude, they lamented the poor quality of many of these interviews. In

---

<sup>30</sup> "Трудность для нас это то, что на бурятском языке мало людей выступает." 4 March, 1980. (NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 34, p. 3)

<sup>31</sup> Badmaev, for example, cited coverage of the wintering of cattle and lambs (NARB, f. 914, op. 1, d. 34, p. 3).

an internal report produced for party higher-ups in 1973, we see this criticism of the Buryat-language editorial process:

Вы все хорошо помните выступление кандидата наук Базарова, который печально прославился тем, что с разрешения главного редактора вышел на экран без всякой подготовки и не мог правильно произнести даже одно слово. Что хотел сказать выступающий, не узнала даже выдающая группа. Все думали, что из скандального случая с Базаровым, редакция сделает необходимые выводы и ничего подобного не повториться по крайней мере в ближайшие сто лет. . .

You all remember well the performance of the candidate of sciences Bazarov, who sadly has become famous for when he went on air, with the permission of the editor-in-chief, without any preparation and could not properly pronounce even one word. What the presenter wanted to say, even the production team couldn't tell. Everyone thought that from the scandalous case with Bazarov, the editorial board would draw the necessary conclusions and nothing like this would be repeated for at least the next hundred years...

(NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 20, p. 44)

But then of course, the report goes on to say, they have done something equally stupid and allowed a Buryat theatre director to go on air and code-switch into poorly produced Russian. In part, this criticism is a matter of ritualistically denigrating the editorial staff, as was required during this period in Soviet organizational culture. The Russian-language editorial board was not subjected to this particular kind of criticism; there the linguistic criticisms tended to focus more on shortcomings in political ideology as manifested in linguistic style, because, I would argue, the broadcasts were more referentially transparent to party higher-ups who controlled these styles in Russian and tended to be Russian-language-dominant. Buryat-language media were constantly criticized from both within and without instead on the basis of code—i.e., not style choice, or register, but code, as in ‘Is Buryat being used or not?’ Judgments regarding style, accent, and register crept in sideways in the guise of quality statements like this indication that Buryatia’s public intellectuals were producing embarrassing Buryat interviews.

What I want to focus on here is the ascription of responsibility for poor Bazarov's communicative failure. For the author of this report, it is the fault not of Bazarov for being a shoddy speaker of Buryat, but rather of the editorial leadership for not having shielded Bazarov from making his infelicities public. Between interviewers and interviewees, this is the opposite of where fault is usually felt. It is embarrassed interviewees, after all, who squirm before the buzz of a microphone or the light of a camera. And it is the opposite of where fault is usually *placed*. Newspapers editors like Dugar, in Chapter 5, blame readers for not applying sufficient effort. But Bazarov is no common interviewee. The treatment of his case suggests that when an interviewee carried sufficient cultural authority, media personnel would happily collude to alleviate the stress and potential shame of producing less than stellar Buryat on the air.

### **Institutional anxieties over speech and the written word**

While interviews incited anxiety over oral performance within audiences and editorial collectives, other, subtler anxieties accompanied the incorporation of orality into mass media within institutions. How would those oral performances, and the processes of producing them, be institutionally recorded? For all radio's potential in actualizing "natural speech," oral forms of mass media encumbered certain institutional practices crucial to the functioning of Soviet media. The use of low FM on single-band radio *tochkas* had solved—at least temporarily—the problems of restricting and controlling access to radio broadcasts among audiences. But unresolved was the inherently ephemeral nature of broadcasting, which engendered anxiety over institutional memory and accountability.

In the late Soviet period, careful documentation of the editing process was paramount for media personnel concerned with the possible personal political repercussions of their decisions. The archival records of Buryatia's state newspapers and radio and television stations are littered with references to lapses of judgment among journalists. Some cases involved accusations of plagiarism, either of one journalist plagiarizing another's work or, just as often, of a journalist "selling" the same work to multiple institutions. There seems to have been a great deal of confusion over what exactly constituted plagiarism in these cases, particularly with the introduction of radio, and again with the introduction of television, and the subsequent sharing of workers and materials among them.<sup>32</sup>

In other instances, journalists lapsed in their political-ideological judgment. A particularly serious case was documented in 1962, when a radio composition lauding Stalin accidentally aired on Buryat-language radio. The composition told the story of Pavlik Morozov, a boy from a Russian village who had been murdered in 1932 by his own parents for informing on them—or so the official story went. His parents had been found guilty in an elaborate show trial, and over the 1930s to early 1950s, Pavlik became a star of Stalinist propaganda, teaching children the benefits of privileging allegiance to truth, Party, and Fatherland. His image was still in wide use in the 1960s, and the radio team in Buryatia was not sanctioned for airing a broadcast on Pavlik Morozov per se. However, the radio composition had been recorded shortly *before* Buryatia's radio production team became aware of Krushchev's famous "secret speech" in 1956, in which he lambasted Stalin's cult of personality and made a fast political retreat from Stalinism.

---

<sup>32</sup> These cases will be the subject of further research, discussed briefly in Chapter 9.

By 1962, when the offending recording was re-aired, Pavlik Morozov's story had been recast to expunge references to Stalin (Kelly 2005).<sup>33</sup> Members of the radio editorial collective took the mistake very seriously, calling it “totally unfit for broadcast” [*sovershenno negadnuiu dlia peredachi*] and “politically harmful” [*vrednaia*].<sup>34</sup> It was evidence, they said, of a lack of political involvement and attention pervading the editorial collective. Arguing for strong measures against one of the editors responsible for letting the broadcast air, the director of the committee, Innokentii Innokent'evich Boldogoev, emphasized that the program included moments in which Stalin was placed “on par with the great Lenin” [*nariadu s velikim Leninym*].<sup>35</sup>

Such cases often came before higher party officials, with potentially dire consequences for the accused parties. A journalist who knowingly violated ethical or political-ideological principles could receive one of a series of lesser or greater official sanctions, be expelled from the Party, and/or be fired, potentially resulting in financial hardship and “social death.”<sup>36</sup> A. B. Mangatkhanov, one of the editors ultimately blamed for the “Pavlik Morozov” snafu, narrowly escaped being fired from his position.<sup>37</sup> It was crucial in these instances to be able to trace the editorial process and assign blame to individuals, the ideology of collective authorship notwithstanding. Consequently (and somewhat ironically), editorial collectives took painstaking measures to record the

---

<sup>33</sup> On the various incarnations, interpretations, and uses of the Pavlik Morozov story, see also Druzhnikov 1997[1988]; Rosenberg 2000.

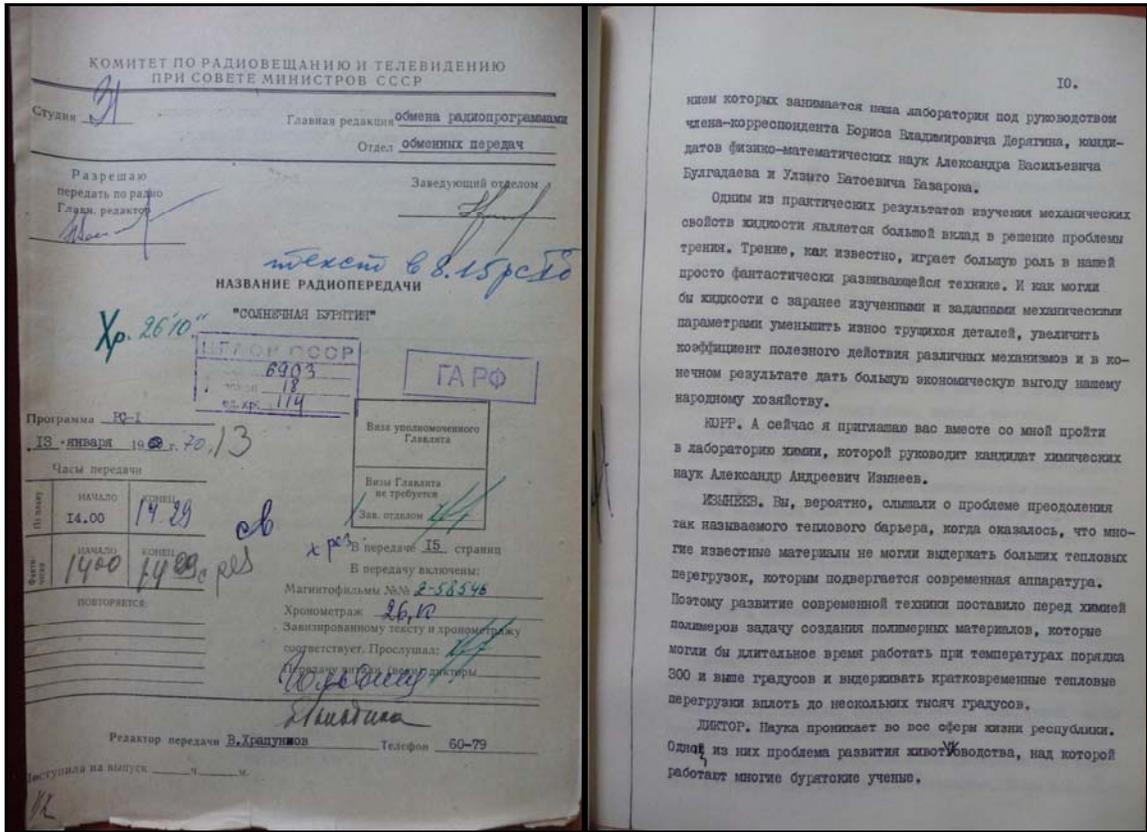
<sup>34</sup> NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, pp. 57, 88.

<sup>35</sup> NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, pp. 62 reverse.

<sup>36</sup> For a brief period during the purges in the late 1930s, it was also possible for a journalist to be deemed an “enemy of the people” [*vrag naroda*] and arrested for counterrevolutionary activities, but I refer above to the post-WWII period.

<sup>37</sup> The matter was kicked up to the Obkom, which censured two radio editors for the mistake. NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, pp. 62 reverse, 99. This episode is documented in NARB f. 914, op. 1, d. 8, pp. 57–118.

actions of individuals and, if there was a problem (such as, in the most frequent case, chronic workplace alcoholism), to demonstrate that others had attempted to redress it. Many interventions centered around moral issues, but the same principle of continuous self-documentation applied to the daily practices of scripting news stories.



**Figure 6.4.** A transcript of the “Sunny Buryatia” radio program, 1970. Prepared by the Buryat radio affiliate and reframed and broadcast by *Govorit Moskva*. The cover of the transcript (left) chronicles the broadcast and archiving of the document in Moscow. The text of the program (right) has been edited for cuts and for typos, each page individually signed. (GARF, f. 6903, op. 18, d. 114)

Journalists and administrative personnel produced elaborate transcripts recording the editorial process, both within media institutions and between them. Particularly detailed examples can be found in the transcripts generated in the process of an exchange between the Moscow office of the radio program *Govorit Moskva* [Moscow Speaking] and the local Buryat affiliate (Figure 6.4). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the

Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting's Department of Exchange kept assiduously marked transcripts of the hinterland programs that they re-broadcast on "*Govorit Moskva*," including some programs from Buryatia. The primary purpose of the exchange appears to have been to gather material from the USSR's distant provinces to showcase the various victories of Soviet power in transforming the rural masses, by redistributing region-internal representations as national self-manifestations. (In interviews, former journalists in Buryatia who had worked in news media institutions during the late Soviet period remembered the "*obmen*" as being decidedly one-sided, with the local offices sending tapes of radio and television programming to Moscow but not receiving material in return.) The content predictably covered new Buryat technology and education, the building of factories, the people's progression away from oppressive lamaism in the dark, smoky yurts of yore into the light of literacy, and so on. The 1970 broadcast whose transcript appear in Figure 6.4, "*Solnechnaia Buriatiia*" [Sunny Buryatia], began by extolling Buryatia's sunny weather and lovely nature and continued by detailing the accomplishments of the most recent Five-Year Plan.

With such politically safe content, the multiplicity of edits, notes, signatures, and stamps preserved on this single transcript is quite remarkable. This transcript records a single 29-minute spot, yet at least a dozen different pens have touched it.<sup>38</sup> Such an artifact was created by a bureaucratic-archival compulsion, compelling workers to document each stage in the journey of a single text onto the airwaves, despite the fact that the resulting object is likely only to sit in a box (Hull 2003). It is a text object that is far from being merely a textual instantiation of the audio broadcast, because it has accrued

---

<sup>38</sup> In part this is no doubt due to an editorial strategy of diffusing responsibility as much as possible.

the weight of being weighed, evaluated, and approved. The audio already existed; it had long since been recorded, and in a distant location. But its recontextualizations were still slippery, potentially dangerous events that needed to be fixed and subjected to an approval process, to prevent “politically harmful” mistakes like the “Pavlik Morozov” snafu. A striking detail of transcripts like this one is that the correctors routinely went to the trouble of correcting typos, as though the validity of the audio broadcast would depend on having an accurate textual record and proper punctuation. The transcripts thus speak broadly to the primacy of written texts in institutional contexts, but more specifically to a compulsion toward language standardization that would reconcile language use across domains of speech and writing, diminishing the possibilities for mis- and re-signification.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has moved forward and backward in time to examine Buryat radio’s instructive trajectory over the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. As we have seen, the incorporation of orality into Buryatia’s multilingual mass media was accompanied by a number of interrelated anxieties about linguistic standards, “natural” speech, language attrition, performance, and the ephemerality of broadcasting, some of which still animate radio production and consumption today. The next chapter moves on to the third major news media platform and examines “face” and participant roles in media interactions more closely by turning to television news.

I would argue that the introduction of television alleviated some of the pressure on radio workers to produce the “natural” language and programs “closer to life” that

eluded them in 1958. Many of the issues first faced by radio workers continued, however, with the incorporation of television—just as they continue today. In particular, radio workers forged standards and expectations for the linguistic practices of radio announcers/hosts, correspondents, reporters, and interviewees.

This regimenting role is a key function of media as knowledge institutions. Like letters to the editor in newspapers, interviews in audio formats constitute a crucial way in which non-journalists' voices are incorporated into news journalism and made available to media audiences. There are limits, however, to what ultimately enters mass-mediated linguistic practices. While it may be tempting to think of media producers and their audiences as linguistic co-producers, this risks downplaying the unequal role of journalists as authoritative arbiters of language. While minority language journalists do not simply model linguistic standards for acquiescent audiences, neither do audiences control *what* of their linguistic production will be subjected to scrutiny and ultimately considered 'fit to air'—other than by refusing the interview.

## CHAPTER 7

### Face, Speed, and the Language of Infectious Disease: Performing Buryat on Television

“It’s very difficult to translate ‘*sifilis*!’” the doctor cried. She was giving an interview in Buryat and having trouble finding sufficient words to describe the impending syphilis epidemic. “Ti:mě” [yes], agreed the interviewer, Dashi, patiently holding his microphone and waiting for another stretch of Buryat from his exasperated interviewee. Dashi knew all too well about the difficulties of discussing infectious disease on Buryat-language television. And he was accustomed to this ritual of daily television production: hunting down and coaxing Buryat material from interviewees who generally lived and worked in Russian-dominant contexts.

This chapter turns to television, the third major platform of Buryat-language news, to further examine the performance anxieties introduced in Chapter 6. The television medium introduces two concerns that complicate what we have seen of Buryat-language news media up to this point, motivating a different understanding of how language should be used. The first, “face” [*litso*], involves the ‘look’ or ‘image’ [*imidzh*] of news media and the journalists who produce them. Stage performance heavily influences the work of television journalists and how they manage “face” in media interactions.

The second concern central to television is speed—speed in the rate of production, in the rate of speech, and in the rate of comprehension. The time horizons of news media production and consumption have been important in the other media platforms as well, and radio producers should, at least in theory, be equally concerned with immediate comprehension. Radio production, however, depends heavily on archival materials and delivers less time-sensitive content, with the main Buryat-language programming covering whole weeks at a time, as opposed to the hours or days that Buryat-language television news covers. Moreover, as we saw in the last chapter, radio journalists expect their listeners to command standard literary Buryat. In television, ensuring fast production and immediate comprehension among a wider, more linguistically varied audience is paramount, with significant effects for the language used. Television allows more colloquial, dialect, and non-standard linguistic forms than what are found in print or radio, incorporating a greater range of *razgovornye* resources into the language of news media.

In what follows, the first four sections proceed as in Chapters 5 and 6: I provide a historical and ethnographic overview of television viewing practices in Buryatia, briefly analyze the language of television based on story samples, and examine viewers' responses to those samples before turning to the practices and ideologies of television journalists. The fifth section explores some of the issues raised above by examining how “face” and “voice” are ideologized in news performance. A final section provides a detailed ethnographic account of the production of a Buryat-Russian television story, tracing Dashi's interview with the doctor from the story assignment to what was ultimately broadcast.

## Watching television in Buryatia

Television grew up within radio stations in the 1950s and 1960s, to ultimately surpass radio in scope, reach, and popularity. The medium was particularly successful in interlinking center and periphery and in making audiences feel interconnected. In the most obvious sense, the immediacy and visuality of television link the interior space of a living room in rural Buryatia, cows lowing in the night outside, to the interior of a television studio in distant Moscow, surrounded by the flash and dash and hubbub of the metropole. In another sense, television interlinks viewers who already share the interior space of the living room, kitchen, bedroom, or work lounge, by fostering social practices of watching.

Television was a late Soviet phenomenon, and it bears noting that networks were developed and sets distributed throughout the populace 10–15 years later than in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Ulan-Ude's first television studio was officially opened in 1961,<sup>2</sup> and receiving towers (*retransliatory*) were built in the surrounding districts (such as Khabaanskha and Sélèngè) in the following year, when the first live reportage was

---

<sup>1</sup> It is not exactly clear why this was the case, but television sets saturated American households in the 1950s, jumping from 4 million to 46 million (Bower 1973:3), while in the Soviet Union a similar jump from 4.8 million to 55 million sets was achieved later, over the 15 years between 1960 and 1975 (Mickiewicz 1981, citing Kogan 1973:127 and *Narodnoe khoziaistvo* 1976:291). Ellen Mickiewicz has suggested that central Soviet authorities “were slow to grasp the potential of television to capture the attention of the population and therefore to function as an important instrument of persuasion,” also citing the spatial-territorial difficulties noted here (1988:3). It is also possible that the committees for radio broadcasting, tasked with developing television networks, were simply preoccupied with their radiofication project and lacked resources. As discussed in the preceding chapter, in outlying regions like Buryatia, radiofication was only complete in 1958, and concentrated radio development continued into the 1960s. Later advances in television technology were also somewhat slowly adopted into Buryatia. The first color broadcast appeared only in 1982, for instance, and the television station switched entirely to color broadcasting only in 1985 (versus 1972 in the United States). (Dates for Buryatia come from BGTRK's museum.)

<sup>2</sup> The date of the official opening is generally cited as June 16, 1961.

broadcast from Ulan-Ude's central square.<sup>3</sup> At this point, the development of regional television broadcasting proceeded separately from that of central television in Moscow, new studios in cities across the Soviet Union broadcasting only to the districts immediately surrounding them. The vast physical distances separating center and periphery became surmountable only with the advent of orbiting communications satellite technology, after which Soviet television broadcasting boomed. On October 14, 1967, Ulan-Ude's television station received its first image from central television, via a satellite called "Orbit"—a moment remembered later by a retired correspondent as "magic."<sup>4</sup> Continuous reception from Moscow soon followed.<sup>5,6</sup>

In 1971, Buryatia's Committee for Radio Broadcasting and Television was retitled the Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting, a change that reflected the Soviet state's new embrace of the potential of television. Between 1965 and 1970, the number of television sets in the Soviet Union more than doubled, and the television manufacturing industry remained in overdrive well into the 1970s (Mickiewicz 1988). Access rose from approximately 5% in 1960 to 93% in 1986, covering more than 86% of the Soviet Union's territory.<sup>7</sup> Despite and because of the centrality of the medium to the

---

<sup>3</sup> In fact, *all* of the reportage in these early years was live, because video recording became possible in the television studio only in 1970. Reporting from the street was, however, a 'first' in moving the site of reporting out of the physical television studio. The occasion, on November 7, 1962, was to celebrate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution.

<sup>4</sup> Interview recorded 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Exchange in the opposite direction, from Buryatia to Moscow, began two years later: the first broadcast prepared by Buryat television appeared on central television in June 1969. Buryatia's television workers, like radio workers, have long been particularly proud of their cultural programming and their many awards and good reception in other parts of the former Soviet Union.

<sup>6</sup> Historical information in this paragraph comes from BGTRK's museum.

<sup>7</sup> Mickiewicz 1988, citing Fedotova, Kapeliush, and Sazonov 1985:149 and *Sredstva massovoi informatsii i propagandy* 1984:3. Mickiewicz reports that the statistic of viewership (or "television saturation") was derived from sales of television sets, not observation in households (1988:227). It is

state's self-perpetuation, its development was constrained to discrete institutional contexts, such that *all* Buryat-language programming (for example) was created in a single television studio. Central programming initially consisted of only one channel, mirroring the development of radio *tochkas*, until a second channel was added in 1982 to create the binary system that exists to this day—then *Pervaia Vsesoiuznaia programma* (First All-Union Program) and *Vtoraia Vsesoiuznaia programma* (Second All-Union Program), now Channels One and Two.<sup>8</sup>

Channels One and Two continue to wield enormous power in post-Soviet Russian television, which privatization and the fracturing of the Russian television market have not greatly mitigated. In 1991, the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting (*Gosteleradio*) was reformed as the All-Union State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (GTRK). GTRK subsequently set up regional affiliates that were, like BGTRK (“Buryatia”), ChGTRK (“Chita”), and IGTRK (“Irkutsk”), continuations of regional Soviet committees based on the republics, oblasts, and krais of the former state.<sup>9</sup> Technically, BGTRK was the corporate recipient of Gosteleradio's assets in Buryatia and constituted a new institution, but journalists who lived through this period speak about it primarily as a renaming, followed by financial hardship; though many broadcast journalists decamped to new commercial ventures like Arig Us, some core staff remained, and the physical location and ‘look’ of state television remained constant. Like

---

probably therefore inflated, depending on how well statisticians accounted for distribution of sets between households and for discrepancies in sets' life expectancies.

<sup>8</sup> On ‘First Program’ and ‘Second Program,’ see Mickiewicz 1988. On Channels One and Two, see Mickiewicz 1999. Post-Soviet viewers' attitudes toward Soviet television, elicited in focus groups, are discussed in Mickiewicz 2008.

<sup>9</sup> BGTRK was formed out of the “Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting beneath the Soviet of the Ministries of the BASSR” in 1992. See Mickiewicz 1991, 1999 for discussion of GTRK's founding and its political context.

Buriaad Ünen, BGTRK-radio and BGTRK-television thus enjoy the weighty authority that comes from rare institutional continuity through periods of radical social change.

Today television is the favored medium of mass communication in audience surveys in Buryatia, across widely varying demographic groups (Badmaeva 2004), as well as among my research participants. Access is nearly total: At least one television was available in every single household I visited, and it was not uncommon for even a small apartment to have two or three. Commercially distributed satellite television, as alluded to in Chapter 2, has become popular across segments of Buryat society and can be found in many public environs, from middle- and upper-class gyms to rural cafes serving up milky tea and meat dumplings. Satellite television is mostly used, however, for its foreign-language programming and music videos, which distinguishes it from traditional broadcast television. In the landscape of broadcast television in Buryatia, news programming occupies the most prominent position for government authorities, commercial advertisers, media producers, and audiences alike—and has for a long time. This is consonant with Soviet and post-Soviet ratings across Russia: despite a common misperception, voiced persistently by journalists, pundits, and audiences alike, that post-Soviet audiences prefer non-analytical, non-informational entertainment, they in fact turn in the greatest numbers to news programs like *Vremia*, VESTI, and VESTI's regional broadcasts (Mickiewicz 2008:64). And this goes for both rural and urban audiences. Based on an extensive survey in the Republic of Buryatia in 2003, researchers at SO RAN found that news was the most 'attractive' [*privlekatel'nye*] genre of television programming for both rural and urban audiences.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> In this study, 82.9% of rural respondents and 81% of urban respondents reported finding news programming "attractive," as compared to (for example) 57.5% and 38.7% respectively for Russian

Questionnaires do not, unfortunately, reveal everything about how people watch and use television news on a daily basis. A particularly consequential material constraint of the television medium is, as for radio, its transience. Residents of Buryatia do not have significant access to television recording devices and services like those that have become popular in the United States over the past several years. When I purchased a digital recording device in Ulan-Ude in 2008, it was one of only two retail devices to be found in the city, and it was beyond the price range of most residents. Thus television remains a fundamentally transient medium.

This transience encourages simultaneous, social viewing, because one cannot ‘share’ the news with an interlocutor in a materially circulating format the way one might share a newspaper or a digital link to a video online. Television is often watched socially, especially in evening family gatherings after dinner and long weekend afternoons, and typically involves discussion. Focus group participants and interviewees spoke about gathering around the television, and this was one of the primary daily rituals in which I took part in the households where I lived and visited.

Even for single adults living alone or spending long periods of time alone, such as pensioners at home on frosty winter days, there are creative ways of making watching television into a social activity. I have ‘watched television’ with people while on the telephone, particularly during a few months in 2008–09 while I lived alone. Tsypelma, a retired schoolteacher, and Badma, a 53-year-old clerical worker in a minor government

---

serials, and 27.2% and 28.8% respectively for programming on art and culture (Randalov et al. 2004: 136–138). These results are particularly interesting in light of a common stereotype that rural viewers remain glued to their television sets to watch soap operas. In fact, Randalov et al.’s survey showed that while rural viewers reported watching more ‘entertainment’ television like soap operas, they preferred and watched news programming in numbers equal to or, in some categories, surpassing urban viewers.

office, frequently called in the evenings to tell me to turn on the television set to see something or other on the news, or to relate to me an event that was occurring on a movie or serial. They would call and ask me whether I could see the television set from where I stood with the phone, so that we could watch simultaneously.<sup>11</sup> Mikhail, also in his 50s, sometimes called later in the evening in order to watch television while drinking, thus avoiding being labeled an ‘alcoholic’ (at least in his own mind) by not drinking ‘alone.’ While I found his logic dubious, Mikhail shared with Badma and Tsypelma the assumption that as long as we were on the telephone, we essentially occupied the same physical space. We could prove our togetherness and demonstrate that we were having essentially one and the same experience by commenting on the televised events—mainly during commercial breaks, until later in Mikhail’s drinking sessions, when the distinction was lost.

Whether viewers are sitting together in physical space or communing via a telephone, watching television socially tends to involve a great deal of discussion, made possible in part by the musical interludes and commercial breaks. My experience of watching television and listening to the radio in Buryatia with other people has been that the former is much more conducive to discussion and sociability. With radio, it is more difficult to comment on something that just been said without missing the next comment, and it is more difficult to judge the end of a commercial break. Television, by contrast,

---

<sup>11</sup> Telephone calls from landline to landline within the same area code like this are free, a detail that matters a great deal with the increasing incorporation of expensive pay-as-you-go cell phones. Between 2005 (when I had a landline but no local cell phone) and 2011 (when I had no landline but a cell phone was practically a requirement), telephone etiquette in Ulan-Ude had subtly but noticeably changed, with a hardening distinction between the long, chatty social calls of landlines and the short, informational calls of cell phones.

encourages discussion. And while this theoretically applies to all television viewing contexts, I found it to be especially noteworthy of Buryat-language programming.

Though television is popular in Buryatia, there is very little programming in the Buryat language. It is especially important that the Buryat-language programs are not shown at times consonant with when families gather. Sayan aired a common complaint:

From time to time, we watch [Buryat-language television]. Well, we try to watch constantly. But there's so little on the air [*v éfire ochen' malo*]. Very little. The single biggest stretch is once a week, it's—our very favorite program, Burиаad oron. [...] This program—yeah, Burиаad oron—they show it once a week, and the time on air is limited, they show it for all of 20 minutes. It's really very little. It's possible to say that, of course, they try to stuff everything that's interesting into that 20 minutes. Of course it's not all—all stuffed in there; there's a lot that can't be included. And you don't—don't see everything. And in principle—even the times on air aren't convenient, frankly. [...] I recently watched it, yeah, with my aunt, and my aunt said to me—well, she said it really wasn't convenient [*ochen' ne udobno*], that at 5:00 they showed [it], 5:00 in the evening. Not everyone is with their family. [...] Well, after work—it would be better, if they showed it when everyone had gathered and could watch it.<sup>12</sup>

Sayan went on to say what many did: that VESTI news programming in Buryat suffered from the lack of broadcasting time. What he identified as too dry a reportage of facts, with too little commentary, he blamed on the extreme limitations of broadcast time for Buryat-language programming. “Of course,” he said, “there is not enough time.”<sup>13</sup> While many people roundly criticized Buryat-language news programming for its content, they were also quick to point out the time limitations that television journalists faced. Some interpreted the brevity of Buryat-language programming as self-perpetuating, in that there is insufficient time to spark interest *in* Buryat-language programming. Particularly lacking are programs oriented toward youth and children. Many of my interviewees and some focus group participants remembered with great

---

<sup>12</sup> Interview recorded 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

fondness a Buryat-language children's program that had been canceled before my fieldwork.<sup>14</sup>

In both my household observation and in the self-reporting of interviewees and focus group participants, the most popular programs were Buriaad oron and the daily evening news on VESTI-Buryatia. After I appeared on Arig Us's Münkhè zula, I discovered that this show was also surprisingly popular among people with no active control of Buryat. This show was unusual in offering Russian subtitles, an interesting experiment that was tremendously popular among my research participants, especially among semi-speakers, heritage speakers, and non-ethnic-Buryats with an interest in Buryat culture.

### **The language of television**

Two television story samples, drawn from an evening news broadcast of VESTI-Buryatia and transcribed in Appendix C, display the range of linguistic resources characteristic of this medium. Both samples are informational news stories announcing the development and availability of public services: in the first sample, we are told that a reanimation (cardio rehabilitation) department has recently opened within Ulan-Ude's main city hospital; in the second, we are informed about the services of a city employment agency, which the journalists contextualize within Russia's and Buryatia's ongoing financial crisis.

---

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing in fall 2011, the children's program Bambaakhai is broadcast on BGTRK twice a month in Russian and Buryat, depending on the topic and interviewees involved (usually mostly Russian).

The news anchor and correspondents in both samples use various features of SLB, immediately apparent in the opening sentence of Sample 1:

1	<u>Tiikhèdè üngèrhèn <b>doloon</b></u>	Also as a result of the past <b>week</b> , the <b>reanimation department of Municipal Hospital No. 1</b> was opened at a celebration in the Dèèdè-Ongostoi <sup>15</sup> suburb of Ulan-Ude. [...]	<i>/anchor, wearing simple black suit and striped tie, seated at desk in broadcast room/</i>
2	<u><b>khonogoi</b> èsèstè Ulaan-Üdè</u>		
3	<u>shadar Dèèdè-Ongostoido</u>		
4	<u><b>khotyn nègèdèkhi bol'nitsyn</b></u>		
5	<u><b>reanimatsionno tahag</b></u>		
6	<u>baiarai orshondo nèègdèè hèn. [...]</u>		

In lines 1–2, the anchor makes a purist choice by using a Buryat-origin expression for ‘week,’ doloon khonog, literally ‘seven 24-hour-periods,’ instead of the more common *nedeli*, borrowed from Russian *nedelia* (‘week’). He also uses some mixed forms that incorporate Buryat-origin terms where a speaker might otherwise default to Russian, using either nativization of the borrowing or a full code-switch. Two examples are especially noteworthy for the contrast they set up with other linguistic resources used elsewhere in the story (see below). In line 4, he expresses ‘Municipal Hospital No. 1’ as khotyn nègèdèkhi bol'nits(a), literally ‘first city hospital,’ mirroring Russian “*pervaia gorodskaiia bol'nitsa*.” Though bol'nits(a) (‘hospital’) is a straightforward borrowing from Russian and the word order mirrors Russian, khotyn nègèdèkhi (‘first of the city’) is Buryat. Similarly, the phrase in line 5, reanimatsionno tahag (‘reanimation department’), combines Russian-origin reanimatsionno with Buryat-origin tahag (‘department’).<sup>16</sup> ‘Reanimation’ has potential Buryat-origin translations, such as ami oruulga or makhabad amidryuulga, both attested in Russian-Buryat dictionaries. Here and throughout the story,

<sup>15</sup> This is the same place name we saw in Radio Sample 1; see discussion there.

<sup>16</sup> Similarly, throughout the story he uses a Buryat-origin term for ‘doctor,’ “èmshèn,” as opposed to the more common Russian-origin “vrach.” See Appendix C.

however, the journalist opts to nativize the Russian adjective *reanimatsionnyi*. When I asked one of his colleagues about this term later, she deemed it an ‘internationalism.’

Similarly, in lines 5–7 of Sample 2, the same anchor produces a complex, all-Buryat-origin expression for the journalists addressed at a press conference:

2	<u>Khün zoniie azhalaar</u>	Svetlana Zaitseva, director of	<i>/anchor, wearing simple black suit and striped tie, seated at desk in broadcast room/</i>
3	<u>khangalgyn respublikaanska</u>	the Republic’s Agency to	
4	<u>agentsvyn khütèlbèrilègshè</u>	Support the Population	
5	<u>Svetlana Zaitseva olondo</u>	through Employment, met	
6	<u>mèdèèsèl taraadag</u>	with <b>representatives of</b>	
7	<u>èmkhinüüdèi tülöölègshèdtèi</u>	<b>institutions of mass</b>	
8	<u>münöödèr uulzazha press-</u>	<b>information</b> today [and]	
9	<u>konferentsi ügèbè.</u>	gave a press conference. <sup>17</sup>	

The phrase here—“olondo mèdèèsèl taraadag èmkhinüüdèi tülöölègshèdtèi,” ‘with representatives of institutions/organizations of mass information’—is curious in its complexity, which I have tried to capture in my translation. Compare the use of “*zhurnalist*” in Radio Sample 2.<sup>18</sup>

When television journalists admit Russian-origin terms, they often nativize them phonologically, even (or especially) if they are new borrowings, often deviating from standard spelling.<sup>19</sup> There are several examples in Samples 1 and 2:

16	<u>Bükhy èriltènüüdtè taarama</u>	Appropriately civilized	<i>/city officials and doctors at patient’s bedside/</i>
17	<u>bolboson tükhèltèi</u>	<b>wards</b> meeting all	
18	<u>palaatanuud</u> , [...]	requirements [...]	
25	<u>Nèèlgyn èhololoi üedè</u>	At the time of the opening	<i>/mayor Aidaev speaking (Russian) at ceremony/</i>
26	<u>khotyn mèèr Gennadii</u>	ceremony, the <b>mayor</b> of the	
27	<u>Aidaev</u> [...]	city, Gennadii Aidaev [...]	

<sup>17</sup> The anchor uses “*press-konferentsi*” here, from English “press conference” via Russian “*press-konferentsiia*.” A Buryat translation would be possible here, but there is no widely accepted variant, and the term falls into the category of ‘internationalisms.’

<sup>18</sup> Focus group participants did not, however, seem to have any difficulty. Comprehension of this phrase may have been aided by the use of “*press-konferentsi*” at the end of the sentence.

<sup>19</sup> Recall that standard spelling of Russian-origin terms is based on Russian spelling, thanks to the 1930s orthographic reforms described briefly in Chapter 3.



While bringing features from literary Buryat and native Buryat pronunciation onto the screen is important, analyzing the speech of anchors and reporters gives us only half the story. Not all Buryat speech on the evening news is produced by language elites. Like radio—but unlike newspapers and other print—television introduces the possibility of having large amounts of media (and linguistic) production done by non-journalists, in the form of interviews. And in television as compared to radio, the interviewees are considerably less likely to fluently control SLB.

The sample stories under discussion here include two interviews, framed by the news anchor and correspondents. In the first, a woman in her late 30s or 40s gives a brief informational overview of the new hospital department:

45	<b><u>Manii peèrvè gorodskoi</u></b>	<b>In our Municipal Hospital</b>	<i>/interviewee, in white lab</i>
46	<b><u>bol'nitsada reanimatsionno</u></b>	<b>No. 1</b> a reanimation <sup>21</sup>	<i>coat, standing in hallway</i>
47	<b><u>otdeleni neègdèbè.</u></b>	<b>department</b> has been	<i>of clinic/</i>
48	<b><u>Zhorgoon koikomestètèi.</u></b> (.)	opened.	<b>title on screen:</b> Larisa
49	<b><u>Goorodoor vtornik, sreda,</u></b>	With <b>six</b> [hospital] beds.	Khaltanova, <b><u>Ulaan-Udyn</u></b>
50	<b><u>chetverg azhallanabdi.</u></b>	We work in the city <sup>22</sup> on	<b><u>1-dèkhi bol'nitsyn</u></b>
51	<i>Aa, zh– Zheleznodorozhnyi,</i>	Tuesday, Wednesday, [and]	<b><u>terapevticheskè tahagye</u></b>
52	<i>sovetskii raion...</i>	Thursday. <sup>23</sup>	<b><u>daagsha</u></b> [Director of the
53	<b><u>Manii otdelenidè shènè</u></b>	Uh, the Zh–	Therapeutic Department
54	<b><u>apparatura bii.</u></b>	Zheleznodorozhnyi [and]	at Ulan-Ude's Hospital
		Soviet Districts... <sup>24</sup>	No. 1]
		In <b>our department</b> there is	
		new equipment. <sup>25</sup>	

<sup>21</sup> Unlike the journalist in this story, this speaker does not nativize *reanimatsionn*– phonetically, though she does use the ending o, consonant with Buryat vowel harmony.

<sup>22</sup> She uses the more Russian resource for ‘city’ here, *gorod*, lengthening the stressed vowel of standard Buryat/(Russian) *gorod* to *goorod*, as opposed to Buryat-origin *khoto*. *Gorod* is a widely used Buryat resource; see discussion below of the syphilis story.

<sup>23</sup> This might be considered a full code-switch. But the days of the week are well-established borrowings from Russian, and very few Buryat speakers are aware of other possibilities for naming the days of a seven-day week (which include both the cosmologically derived Tibetan- and Mongolian-origin Buddhist system and a numbering system)

<sup>24</sup> The interviewee refers here to two of the three administrative districts of the city of Ulan-Ude, without Buryat phonological or morphological nativization. Both district names can be translated into Buryat, though this is rare. She trails off here and begins afresh spontaneously (this is not a film break).

This interview contains classic dialect features, identified immediately by one of my language consultants as characteristic of the southwestern Tükhèn (R. Tunkinskii) district. Manii ('our'), in lines 45 and 53, is a dialectism for standard first-person plural manai, and zhorgoon ('six'), in line 48, is a dialectism for standard Buryat zurgaan.

The interview also contains extensive Russian influence, in the form of some nativized borrowings, Russian-origin variants over Buryat-origin variants, and at least one full code-switch (in lines 51–52). The speaker's numbers, pronouns, verbs, and word order are recognizably Buryat, but her adjectives and nouns are almost exclusively Russian and Russian-origin. For example, the interviewee uses Russian-origin otdeleni ('department,' from R. *otdelenie*) in lines 47 and 53 instead of tahag, the Buryat-origin term favored by journalists and used throughout this story (in lines 5, 7, 11, 32, 43, and 64 and in the interviewee's title). Otdeleni is a modern but well-established borrowing into Buryat and appears in Buryat dictionaries.

In contrast to the expression for 'Municipal Hospital No. 1' in the anchor's speech above, note what this interviewee says in lines 45–46: peèrvè gorodskoi bol'nitsa. The two variants agree on bol'nitsa, but here the speaker uses Russian-origin adjectives to create a phrase that would be recognizable to a Russian speaker with no knowledge of Buryat. Pervè ('first'), or peèrvè as this speaker pronounces it here, is a Buryat nativization of Russian *pervyi* ('first'). It is a common borrowing in spoken Buryat but does not appear in dictionaries. *Gorodskoi* ('city,' 'municipal,' 'urban') is the kind of straightforward borrowing (or perhaps code-switch) characteristic of Russian-dominant

---

<sup>25</sup> There is no widely used alternative to Russian-origin apparatura.

bilingual speakers, complete with the full *-skii/-skoi* Russian adjectival ending.<sup>26</sup> It also does not appear in Buryat dictionaries, and it is difficult to classify “gorodskoi” as a Buryat resource.

The form “*gorodskoi*” (‘city,’ ‘municipal,’ ‘urban’) is particularly interesting, however, because she uses the Russian adjective and noun (*gorodskaiia bol’nitsa*, ‘city hospital’) but removes feminine gender from the adjective, instead using the masculine (Russian’s unmarked gender), which reflects Buryat’s lack of grammatical gender. Though I have conservatively marked “*gorodskoi*” as a Russian form in her speech, a good case could be made that the masculine/unmarked gender shows that it is a *Buryat* resource for this speaker, calling into question how we might, as analysts, categorize both her knowledge and the forms that she uses.

The second interview features less extensive Russian influence but other types of *razgovornye* features, namely colloquialisms and simplified syntax, as well as a targeted type of borrowing. A man in his mid-to-late 20s gives an editorial/opinion interview in an employment office:

49	<u>Azhalgüi khündeshég baina.</u>	It’s pretty hard to be unemployed.	<i>/interviewee, in coat and fur hat, standing at touch screen, chewing gum/</i>
50	<u>Münöö olon zon iigééd lé</u>	Now a lot of people are like	<b>title on screen:</b> Baatar
51	<u>azhal bédérzhè (..)</u>	looking for work (..)	Abiduev
52	<u>gèrtèè iigééd lé huunal daa.</u>	and like sitting at home.	<i>/smiles, looks directly at camera/</i>
53	<u>Tiigééd lé minii khèlèkhèdè</u>	But just speaking for myself,	<i>/turns toward screen/</i>
54	<u>öörööl khüündè azhal iigééd</u>	I’m really looking for a	
55	<u>kharazhail bainab, tozhe.</u>	particular kind of work, <b>too</b> .	<i>/gestures in emphasis/</i>
56	<u>Tiigééd baha azhal bolokho</u>	So then will there be work to	
57	<u>ium gü, ügy ium gü...</u>	do, or not?... <sup>27</sup>	
58	<u>tiigééd kharazha bainabdi.</u>	so we’re looking.	

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *respublikaanska* in the anchor’s speech above, which retains *-sk-* but drops the Russian *-oe* ending for Buryat *-a*.

65	<u>Udobno</u> kha ium daa, iigèéd	It's really <b>convenient</b> , how	/interviewee standing in same place/
66	<u>avtomat</u> dèèrè khadaa.	it's on the machine.	
67	<u>iigèéd</u> ööröö èndè erèéd.	Like especially just coming	/gestures toward screen with finger, mimicking using the touch screen/
68	<u>kharaad</u> lè iigèéd iabakhada...	here, just looking [and]	
69	(.)	going... (.)	
70	<u>No, udobno</u> gèkhè bainam.	<b>Yeah</b> , I find it <b>convenient</b> .	

This interviewee's speech immediately appears colloquial in tone compared to that of the anchor and reporter framing his interview. His sentences are short, and sometimes incomplete, and he repeatedly uses simple "baina"—"to be"—verbal constructions:

- (49) khündeshég baina 'it's pretty hard'  
(55) kharazhail bainab 'I'm (really/just) looking'  
(58) kharazha bainabdi 'we're looking'  
(70) gèkhè bainam 'I find it (...)'

This is entirely characteristic of spoken Buryat, and I have heard both a linguist and a performer who were to be interviewed specifically comment that they wanted to script their words in advance in order to *avoid* ending every sentence with "baina."<sup>28</sup>

In lines 50, 52, 65, and 68, the interviewee uses "iigèéd lè," a slangy colloquialism meaning 'really,' 'really and so,' or 'just exactly,' performing a phatic function much like contemporary American English 'like.' He also uses a colloquial way of saying 'yes' or 'yeah.' Russian *no*<sup>29</sup> is a colloquial Siberianism for 'yes.' Locally it is sometimes called, a bit humorously, "*sibirskii da*," 'the Siberian yes.' It is usually attributed to West Slavic influence, perhaps from Old Believers who migrated into the

<sup>27</sup> I.e., he comes to the office regularly and checks for employment opportunities at an automated kiosk in order to find out whether any work is available.

<sup>28</sup> By contrast, see the complex and varied verbal constructions used by the anchor and reporter in the full transcript, Appendix C.

<sup>29</sup> Not *no* in the usual Russian meaning of 'but,' and not *nu*. *No* and *nu* are used in similar pragmatic contexts for purposes beyond their strict meanings, such as in the transitional context in which this interviewee uses it, or as a phatic in conversation ("well... well... well," "yeah... yeah... yeah," "mm-hmm... mm-hmm... mm-hmm"). But these are distinct forms: the vowel is different, the intonation is different, and ultimately *nu* means 'well,' whereas *no* means 'yes.'

region during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. *No* is part of a class of borrowings that we first saw in Chapter 4, in the speech of a young man: adverbs, transitions, and discourse markers that are borrowed as set expressions from Russian. In Chapter 4, the Russian words borrowed were *prosto* ('simply') and *normal'no* ('normally,' 'OK'), and here, similarly, we have *tozhe* ('also,' 'too') in line 55, *udobno* ('convenient') in lines 65 and 70, and *no* ('yes,' a Siberianism) in line 70. All of these terms are common Russian borrowings that are characteristic of conversational Buryat, and that are *not* borrowed in order to fill lexical gaps in Buryat. To take one as an example, there is a common Buryat-origin term for 'convenient' with semantic range very similar to *udobno*, *zokhid*, and *udobno* does not appear in Russian-Buryat dictionaries, but it is characteristic of conversational Buryat. The interviewee lengthens the stressed vowel, nativizing it, on first use, but does not do so in line 70 when he uses it again.<sup>30</sup>

Sufficed to say that although television journalists allow more Russian influence into their texts than print or, arguably, radio journalists, they do not use *udobno*, *prosto*, or *no*. These are the kinds of features that are allowed into the language of news media via interviews—specifically, interviews with people who might not command Buryat well enough to give a sustained interview on the radio, but who can appear on screen and say *something* in Buryat. In sum, the language of television is characterized not only by the admission of more dialect features, colloquialisms, “mixed language,” and Russian use—i.e., *razgovornye* features—than what is admitted into other media platforms, but also by a stark contrast between the linguistic practices of journalists and those of their interviewees.

---

<sup>30</sup> It would be interesting to consider further why this particular class of features seems so susceptible to borrowing from Russian.

## Viewers' responses

In focus groups, viewers practically ignored the language of the journalists; which seemed to be essentially comprehensible and (therefore) not a topic of comment. They focused instead on the interviewees, to whom they responded with humor; some were critical and others kind, but all found something in their speech hilarious.

Viewers with linguistics education or experience with western dialects immediately identified the doctor's dialect as Tunkinskii (or, one suggested, "maybe Tunkinskii, maybe Okinskii"). This became, then, an invitation to reminisce about a trip to the Sayan Mountains of Tünkhèn, or about relatives and acquaintances who were connected to the region. Although the doctor exhibited multiple dialect features, identification hinged on a single word, zhorgoon 'six,' in line 48. This speaks to the phenomenon introduced in Chapter 4, in which a single word becomes indexical of an entire repertoire (in this case, the Tunkinskii dialect), the district in which it has historically been spoken (in this case, Tünkhèn), and that region's role as a nexus or node in social networks.

Viewers without linguistics education or experience with western dialects could not identify the doctor's dialect as Tunkinskii, but some knew all the same that it was "dialectal" [*dialektnyi*], "some sort of other dialect" [*kakoi-to drugoi dialekt*], or "*razgovornyi*." Others interpreted her "mixed" [*smeshanno*] language use as indicating that she was like many Buryat heritage speakers in understanding well but "speaking poorly" [*plokho razgovarivaet*] due to little practice. She was, according to one focus group participant, a "brilliant example" [*iarkii primer*'] of this phenomenon because she

made the “single most important mistake” [*samuiu glavnuiu oshibku*] of speaking in two languages, using both Russian and Buryat words, at once.

The interviewee in the employment office was similarly interpreted as showcasing “mixed language” and “how people really talk.” Viewers found him comical for multiple reasons. He appeared on screen in his winter outerwear, including an informal black coat and large fur hat. He appeared relaxed, chewing gum and chatting nonchalantly about being unemployed. “It’s pretty hard to be unemployed” [*Azhalgüi khündëshég baina*], he began, drawing chuckles from focus group participants.

His use of Russian “*udobno*,” nativized via vowel length or not, prompted viewers to shake their heads. He had, according to one participant, a “typical knowledge of the lexicon” [*tipichnoe znanie leksiki*]. As we saw above, he did not actually use a great deal of Russian—no nouns or adjectives like the doctor, for example, and what he did borrow was from a class from which *many* Buryat speakers borrow in colloquial speech. One linguist, upon seeing this clip, exclaimed that he spoke “just fine” [*normal’no*], and even “well” [*khorocho*]. What counts as “typical knowledge” is thus not necessarily just ‘Russian, not Buryat,’ but more specifically, *simple* Buryat with colloquial expressions that may or may not come from Russian (*jigëéd lë*, *udobno*). And “typical knowledge” might well be “just fine,” even from the perspective of a champion of literary standards, depending on the alternative.

This was not, however, the conclusion of most viewers. Taken together, the interviewees inspired mirth and head-shaking, and viewers found much to criticize in their speech. They were particularly critical of “mixing.” There is an argument, found in many quarters of Buryatia, that to speak Buryat with much of the lexicon borrowed from

Russian is tantamount to destroying *both* languages, and thus should be avoided, even if it means speaking only in Russian. Notably, no one in the focus groups advanced this argument. They instead were inclined to criticize the interviewees for not practicing Buryat enough, or for being lazy or apathetic, implying that purist—or *purer*—Buryat was potentially within the grasp of any heritage speaker. The interviewees’ speech prompted some viewers to give some locally famous examples of what is often called (humorously) “pidgin Buryat,” including a joke in which the entire lexicon is Russian and the entire grammar (and some phonology) is Buryat:

Кошка	стол	дээрэ	прыгнулаад,	кувшинтай	молоко	разливаадла.
<b><u>Kooshka</u></b>	<b><u>stol</u></b>	<b><u>dèèrè</u></b>	<b><u>prygnulaad,</u></b>	<b><u>kuvshintai</u></b>	<b><u>molokoo</u></b>	<b><u>razlivaadla.</u></b>
<i>ko:ška.Ø</i>	<i>stol.Ø</i>	<i>de:re</i>	<i>pryg.nu.l.a:d,</i>	<i>kuvšin.taj</i>	<i>moloko:Ø</i>	<i>razli.va:d.l.a.</i>
<i>CAT.Nom</i>	<i>TABLE.</i>	<i>ONTO</i>	<i>LEAP.Pf.Past.</i>	<i>PITCHER.</i>	<i>MILK.</i>	<i>SPILL.Impf.</i>
	<i>AccMasc</i>		<i>Fem/</i>	<i>Associative</i>	<i>AccNeut</i>	<i>SequGerund.</i>
			<i>SequGerund</i>			<i>Past.Fem</i>

‘The cat leapt onto the table, spilling the pitcher of milk.’<sup>31</sup>

The joke turns on a fundamental misrecognition on the part of the ‘typical Buryat speaker’ being voiced by the joker: she believes that she is speaking Buryat, when she is in fact speaking Russian. Without some understanding of the socially contingent nature of the categories ‘Buryat’ and ‘Russian,’ this makes no sense: the lexical items of the sentence are simply borrowings from Russian into Buryat, and the fact that they are phonologically nativized suggests that they are even *established* borrowings. It is just a

---

<sup>31</sup> This is not the form of the joke stated in the focus group; in that setting, a participant needed only to refer to *part* of the joke for the other members of the group to recognize her reference and understand her point. Elsewhere I will give a detailed, step-by-step explanation of the joke and discussion of its articulation with the ‘kitchen language’ phenomenon examined in Chapter 4. There is an important sense in which the whole joke is ‘Buryat’ and should all be underlined, but I have refrained from underlining it all in order to show the grammatical features and phonological nativizations that are specifically Buryat.

sentence of Buryat. The fact that Buryat speakers actually find it hilarious shows that borrowings are not, on some level, “just fine.” The joke, after all, is only funny if the teller and her audience share a feeling that words like “koshka” (‘cat,’ ‘kitty’) and “stol” (‘table’) aren’t *really* Buryat. While neither of the interviewees in the television story samples spoke fully Russian-lexified Buryat, they were guilty—for focus group participants—of the same kind of misrecognition as that of the speaker lampooned in the cat joke.<sup>32</sup> When the doctor refers to the state of affairs “*manii peêrvê gorodskoi bol’nitsada*” (‘in our Municipal Hospital No. 1’), using a Buryat pronoun (*manii*), Buryat phonology (*peêrvê*), and a Buryat locative case ending (*-da*) with Russian adjectives and nouns (*pervyi, gorodskoi, bol’nitsa*), she only *thinks* she is speaking Buryat; in fact, she is speaking Russian.

Viewers’ interpretation of the doctor and job-seeker as speakers of “pidgin Buryat” shows how the speech of interviewees appeared in stark contrast to the fluid SLB of the anchor and correspondents. Journalists, as usual in my audience study, appeared to be almost beyond reproach. Viewers did complain, however, about the speed. Television audiences, both within the focus groups and in daily life in general, sometimes noted that anchors and reporters like those featured in the above samples speak extremely fast, a point we will return to below. Native speakers of Buryat with high aural comprehension in other contexts did not usually spontaneously comment on this; in household viewings and informal discussions about television, the quick rate of speech came up only when I pointed it out. But the speed of television workers’ speech often proves difficult for new learners of Buryat. When it was at issue, the reasons given for it touched on the same

---

<sup>32</sup> I have not been able to determine where the popular tag “pidgin Buryat” came from, but it is widespread across different segments of Buryat society.

limitations of broadcast time that absolved television journalists of responsibility for content. For example, a friend of mine, a heritage speaker who has learned Buryat as an adult, joked that the Buryat-language anchors have to speak faster than their Russian-language counterparts, because they are given so much less airtime.

These difficulties aside, overall comprehension of the language of television was high among viewers—much higher than for radio or newspapers, regardless of the geographical origin and educational level of the viewer.<sup>33</sup> Television was also everyone's favorite medium, and the medium that they would most like to have access to online.

### **Increasing speed and comprehension: practices and ideologies of television journalists**

Observing workplace practices in television news production, primarily at BGTRK in 2009 (Figure 7.1), revealed various discrepancies between how audiences perceived and interpreted television news—and the linguistic decisions made therein—and how journalists actually produced the news and explained their own practices. For instance, although television news often comes across (indeed, strives to come across) as spontaneous and fresh, scripting and editing written texts is a central part of the production process. The fact that the speech of anchors and reporters is so much more linguistically complex than that of their interviewees is due not only to their competence, after all, but also to the fact that journalists script and pre-edit almost all of the speech that they ultimately broadcast.

---

<sup>33</sup> Some participants of the audience study, namely linguists and students of linguistics, did not show variable comprehension across platforms because they recognized all repertoires and resources being used (or reported such recognition). I am commenting here on those viewers for whom there was variation in comprehension across platforms.



**Figure 7.1. Television complex of BGTRK, Ulan-Ude, 2009.** The buildings date to the 1930s, though the complex and its equipment were updated in 1997.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of competence, television journalists, like print and radio journalists, hail primarily from districts where the ‘literary dialects’ are spoken. Many of them were trained at NGI and its institutional predecessors, often to be language teachers, and they tend to be highly educated in SLB. However, television journalism is distinguished by placing additional emphasis on “face,” “image,” and “personality” (often summarized as “*litso*”), which results in a slightly different pool of journalists. Compared to print and radio platforms, there are more non-NGI grads in the Buryat television sphere, and more people without specific linguistic or pedagogical training, because presentational style is at such a premium.

In addition to presentation and performance, discussed further below, Buryat-language television personnel place great emphasis on comprehension. This central concern motivates an (unformalized) principle according to which they make linguistic decisions. It can be paraphrased as follows: *Existing knowledge should be sufficient*. This principle is manifested in a number of ways. It means, first of all, that Russian is usable if

---

<sup>34</sup> Another dual-language television station that was part of this research, the Aginskii affiliate of ChGTRK, appears in the preceding chapter in Figure 6.2.

you can cite a source in-the-world. In contrast to conventional wisdom that holds institutional language elites as the ultimate arbiters of linguistic authority, television workers often take the preceding generation, specifically mothers and grandmothers, as linguistic authorities. Locating authority in older generations is, as discussed in earlier chapters, consonant with general Buryat language ideology. While it seems at first blush to encourage linguistic conservatism, it also paradoxically liberates the journalist from taking personal responsibility for contact-induced forms. It implies that you (the journalist) are not further degrading the language if your parents' generation was already incorporating Russian in this way.

A second manifestation of the principle that *existing knowledge should be sufficient* is found in the belief that it is not necessary to replace all instances of Russian lexical influence in Buryat by excavating older Mongolic terms. In contrast to print journalists, many of whom relied heavily on Buryat dictionaries, maintained active interest in linguistic history, and sometimes used Mongolian dictionaries almost like thesauruses, television journalists did not often have the time or inclination to consult dictionaries or linguistic treatises. In 2009, there was only one Buryat dictionary in the state TV station's newsroom, an old, outdated 'concise' edition missing some pages. They were much more likely to consult one another than look forms up.

Third, although there are occasional exceptions,<sup>35</sup> television workers generally avoid neologisms. An example of how and why appears below, in an account of producing a story for the evening news: An editor at the television station cuts a

---

<sup>35</sup> Possible neologisms appear in Television Samples 1 and 2, though in the first case it is not entirely clear that it is a new invention, and in the second case, it is a thoroughly accepted term long used in other institutional contexts. See Appendix C.

correspondent's proposed neologisms because they are too "twisted" and difficult to understand. This ideological stance against neologisms—and, in fact, the whole principle that *existing knowledge should be sufficient*—is derived in large part from the material constraints of television as a medium.

Television journalists specifically emphasize not only comprehension, but *immediate* comprehension, because of the format of the technology. The transience and fast rate of production and consumption are crucially important material conditions of television news. Television is characterized by rapid 'turnover,' from minute to minute within a broadcast, from hour to hour in its production, and from day to day in the salience of the news. In order to be instantaneously comprehensible to audiences, and to quickly produce "fresh" news, workers need to be able to use Russian-contact-induced forms that might, on more careful reflection, be excised from SLB. Some of my interlocutors at the television station found it curious that I was digital recording the news as it aired on television, because there was an implicit assumption that the material broadcast would be viewed only once by a given audience member. Recording cultural programs like BGTRK's "Burraad oron" and Arig Us's "Müngèn Sérge" made more sense to them, because those programs would be re-aired over weeks, months, or even years. But news was meant to be viewed once.<sup>36</sup>

The speed of television production also discourages strict adherence to literary standards because there is not a great deal of extra time for retakes or editing. News production is fast, with a great deal of spontaneity in scripting and recording (and much more than in radio). This was especially apparent in the context of tight deadlines for the

---

<sup>36</sup> This assumption has already changed in light of BGTRK's new policy of posting some broadcasts to youtube (see Chapter 8).

production of daily news programming. For BGTRK's evening VESTI-Buryatia program, for example, reporters had only a few working hours to cobble together materials for a 6:00 pm show. There was, therefore, a lot of spontaneity in what journalists scripted. They were generally open to conversational forms if those were what came to mind first. As noted above, the people working in the group environment of a newsroom also depended heavily on each other to come up with individual words, translations, and turns of phrase. A common refrain of Russian-language journalists as well as Buryat-language was "How would you say...?" [*Kak skazat'...*?], though Buryat-language workers directed greater attention to code in these questions than to, say, the stylistic nuances that Russian-language workers were more likely to ask about. Through this spontaneous consultation and the subsequent formal editing, the texts to be read are collectively produced, though ultimately they are instantiated in—and explicitly credited to—an individual's voice.<sup>37</sup>

Correspondents record their materials individually in a sound booth from scripts, but anchors go on live for the daily news because it is more efficient for production. Once they are in front of the camera, retakes are comparatively rare—due not only to impending deadlines, but also to constant pressure to consume as few resources (tape, digital recording space, the time of the videographer, technicians, etc.) as possible.<sup>38</sup> A television station is an extremely elaborated institution, each action performed with the aid of many people and a great deal of equipment. For all of these reasons, there is less

---

<sup>37</sup> For this reason, I refer in the examples to what "the anchor" or "the journalist" says, referring to specific, individualizable persons such as Bulat Tsybikov only with reference to phonetics or qualities of voice (which are arguably also co-produced, but not explicitly so).

<sup>38</sup> Television correspondents did not always have the ability to pre-record audio or video for broadcasts. It would be interesting to compare linguistic practices in the all-live period of Buryat television, prior to 1970, with practices following the advent of pre-recording.

text editing, on the whole, than in print and radio, and more spontaneity in linguistic practice.

An example of the linguistic effects of this fast production appears in Television Sample 2, in the same sentence examined above:

2	<u>Khün zoniie azhalaar</u>	Svetlana Zaitseva, director of	<i>/anchor, wearing simple</i>
3	<u>khangalgyn respublikaanska</u>	the Republic’s Agency to	<i>black suit and striped tie,</i>
4	<u>agentstvyñ khütèlbèrilègshè</u>	Support the Population	<i>seated at desk in</i>
5	<u>Svetlana Zaitseva [...]</u>	through Employment [...]	<i>broadcast room/</i>

In Russian, the employment agency is called the *Respublikanskoe agentstvo zaniatosti naseleniia*, lit. ‘the Republic agency of the employment of the population,’ or *Agentstvo zaniatosti* (‘employment agency’) for short. Officially, the Buryat title of this agency is Zoniie azhalaar<sup>39</sup> khangalgyn respublikyn agentstvo, as printed on their documents to comply with dual-language legislation. This is not radically different from the “Khün zoniie azhalaar khangalgyn respublikaanska agentstv–” used in this story: the broadcast version includes a slightly more complex variant for ‘population’ or ‘people,’ khün zon instead of zon, and a more Russified adjective, republikaanska (‘republican;’ note the *–skii* adjectival ending) instead of the simple Buryat genitive republikyn (‘of the republic’). But the discrepancy in ‘official’ titles points to how newsroom practices constitute a crucial point of slippage in (ongoing) language standardization. I did not witness the production of this particular translation, but I can offer a probable scenario based on similar cases that I did witness. Like many institutions in Buryatia, this agency

<sup>39</sup> The use of “azhal” (‘work’) throughout this news story and in the official title of the institution is noteworthy. Writing in the late Soviet period, Humphrey noted a preference for Russian-origin terms oboroto (‘work,’ from R. *rabota*) and shaban (‘shepherd,’ from R. *chaban*), over Buryat-origin azhal / khüdèlmèri and khon’shin (1989:167). This was immediately before a period of lexical purging, however; by 2009, the Buryat-origin terms were very much preferred in SLB, and often preferred in *razgovornye* repertoires. Note that it is not only the journalists who use “azhal” in Television Sample 2, but also the interviewee.

does not have a widely known Buryat name; it is often instead called simply by the Russian shorthand, “*agentstvo zaniatosti*.” In these circumstances, journalists at BGTRK usually make some effort to discover whether there is an ‘official’ version, usually (in my observation) by calling the relevant government office and/or checking the website. Most government websites do not, however, include full translations in Buryat, and the person on the other end of the line might not know the ‘official’ title either. Given tight deadlines (and an emphasis on comprehension over lasting, fixed form), television journalists move quickly to the conclusion that they should translate such titles themselves, usually calling upon whatever Buryat speakers might be in the room to confirm their translations. The result is multiple possible standards.

Another domain in which the speed of production discourages strict adherence to is in eliciting interview material. As in radio, securing interviews in Buryat is both paramount to producing news stories and extremely difficult to achieve. Elicitation has become a serious problem as language shift has progressed, and television journalists emphasize *that* a person speak Buryat on camera over *how* she speaks it. As we will see in the story production below, reporters have to work very hard to cajole potential interviewees into giving interviews in Buryat. As alluded to above, a linguist watching Television Samples 1 and 2 praised everyone for how well they spoke Buryat, journalists and interviewees alike, regardless of the quantity or gravity of their use of *razgovornye* forms. She had trained many of the journalists working in Ulan-Ude’s radio and television stations and understood the difficulty of elicitation and the importance of positive reinforcement.

There is a relatively short list of people who can and will give interviews in Buryat at institutions around the Republic of Buryatia, and television workers, like radio workers, tend to remember people and return to them.<sup>40</sup> The doctor from Tünkhèn, for example, was interviewed again later in 2009. And the potential interviewees that Dashi tried to convince for the syphilis story, described below, sighed heavily or giggled about how this was the third or fourth time they had been interviewed. When I appeared at a conference on endangered languages in Ulan-Ude in 2011, a television reporter who had previously interviewed me at BGTRK seized the opportunity to position me before a camera once again. This was an occasion on which I found myself to be the unwilling interviewee who needed cajoling.

Despite my reticence, giving a television interview as a semi-speaker is at least easier to navigate than giving a radio interview—and it is easier for the journalist to fashion the recording into something usable. The television medium makes possible certain strategies for preventing infelicities in oral performance. One can, for instance, fabricate the context of recording to appear spontaneous, while the interviewee actually reads from a prepared text. During one of the television interviews I gave in 2009, I colluded unwittingly in just such a project. I had not prepared well for this interview, instead jotting out a few phrases to jog my memory while speaking. When I stumbled and paused, thinking of what to say next and looking down, the interviewing correspondent whipped the piece of paper from my hand and expertly positioned it beside the lens of the video camera, so that I could read my notes while appearing to look straight into the

---

<sup>40</sup> The same is probably true in Ust'-Orda and Aga, but I have no data on which to base such a claim.

camera. Thus television is like in radio in that most of what the reporters say is carefully scripted and read from prepared texts, and some of what interviewees says is as well.

However, the visual channel provides some additional opportunities for excising interviewees' gaffs in television. Unlike interview material for radio, interview material for television can be intercut with long shots of trees, for example. At the video editing stage, an editor might dissociate the audio and visual tracks, displaying images of the interviewee speaking but with a correspondent's voiceover paraphrasing the missing interview—as is often done when a speaker important to the news story narrative does not speak Buryat or cannot be directly interviewed. Interviewees speaking Russian are often shown with a Buryat-language voiceover.<sup>41</sup> Notice that the net effect of these strategies is to make getting *extensive* or *quality* material in Buryat ultimately less important than getting *something*.

Creating even a short Buryat-language news story for the evening news consumes a great deal of resources and man-power. Television is a very expensive medium, especially as compared to newspapers and radio. This is one of the reasons that production is so fast—to consume fewer resources—and that there is so little broadcasting in Buryat. The expense also impacts the daily activities and social networking of television journalists, above and beyond their activities producing news. The GTRK stations that run Buryat-language news in the Republic of Buryatia and Aga are headquartered in Moscow and financed by both the state and local advertising.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> For example, see the treatment of Mayor Aidaev in Television Sample 1, Appendix C. He is displayed speaking (Russian) while the correspondent's voiceover gives us highlights from his speech.

<sup>42</sup> The financial workings of these institutions were not, unfortunately, something to which I had access during research. It would be very interesting to examine the economics of minority-language media in Russia in detail.

Advertising is thus a large part of daily work, in both formal and informal advertising systems. Formal advertising works more or less as we would expect in a media institution in the U.S.: an advertiser pays money to the station for a commercial, essentially purchasing minutes of airtime (though in Buryatia, the television crew can also be hired to make the commercial). However, advertising can be obtained without money moving directly from a company into the station budgets. In fact, a significant part of deciding what stories to cover, what grocery stores to feature, what store openings to attend, and so on depends on *blat*, an informal system of favors.

In one example of *blat* in action, a news spot advertising the work of a therapeutic resort outside of Ulan-Ude was traded for free use of the grounds for a holiday for the station workers. Both parties in this instance traded something of equal value: the advertiser estimated that he would have spent 3000 rubles (about 90 USD) per minute for an advertisement,<sup>43</sup> and the journalist estimated that it would cost at least this much to rent an event space; neither of them had cash, but they had services to exchange. Locally, the relationship between informational programming and commercial advertising is very fluid, and this did not present a moral dilemma for anyone concerned. In fact, the audience members I spoke with who had seen the story interpreted it (as they interpreted much advertising) as providing useful information, commenting that they were happy to know about such a lovely place to relax so close to Ulan-Ude.

In my experience, television workers know that their craft is very expensive, and are aware that they depend heavily on the graces of the state and decision-makers in Moscow (GTRK) for their survival. This is especially true of Buryat-language journalists,

---

<sup>43</sup> At the time, space on a billboard on a rural highway cost 9000 rubles.

who do not have very many options in television beyond BGTRK, ChGTRK, and Arig Us. This helps to make staff remarkably pliant on what would otherwise be very controversial decisions—about the number of Buryat-language staff, the number of minutes of Buryat-language broadcast time, general programming in Buryat, etc.<sup>44</sup> It also arguably encourages a more relaxed attitude toward linguistic standards and greater attention to the self-presentational aspects of news performance that are accessible to outside, non-Buryat-speaking audiences.

### **“*Litso i golos*”: Face and voice in news performance**

This section briefly examines two material qualities, “*litso*” (‘face’) and “*golos*” (‘voice’), that are ascribed to persons in media interactions, and that journalists work to manage. Television reporters, I would argue, possess authority on the basis of “face” and “voice” and their (stage-) performance abilities, as well as on the basis of being arbiters of what is ‘news.’

“Face” seems, at first blush, to be a matter of physical attractiveness. A middle-aged radio journalist once lamented to me that she would have liked to work in television, but for that, “*litso*” would have been necessary (implying that she did not herself have it). But the concern that television journalists evince over *litso*, and the ways in which they invoke it, suggests that it is about more than having a strong chin or a pretty haircut. A scandal involving Katya, a young television anchor, would be, she said, “harmful” [*vredno*] for her “*litso*” (here something closer to ‘persona’ or ‘image’), a term she used almost interchangeably with “*imidzh*” (‘image’). Sergei, a former theatre director who

---

<sup>44</sup> Other factors in this pliancy were discussed in Chapter 2.

worked for some years as a recruiter and audition-leader for Russian-language television, invoked an elusive “*litso* of the journalist” [*litso zhurnalista*] when he claimed that they had to reject many handsome young men and beautiful women who did not command the stage, had no personality, or had voices outside of normal range (too high-pitched, too low-pitched, too gravelly, etc.).

*Litso*, as a category, thus summarizes the many different aesthetic qualities by which a person’s appeal, position, and overall value is judged in (mediated) interactions. As is evident in Sergei’s comment, these qualities include aspects of a person’s voice. Thus while having a voice that is judged to be appealing and authoritative is an essential criterion for landing a job as a radio newscaster, I have chosen to treat the role of ‘voice’ in news performance here, rather than in the preceding chapter.

While *litso* is a native category, it has much in common with the “face” described by Goffman regarding Anglo-American interaction rituals in the 1960s. Goffman observed that “incidents”—that is, “events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face,” a category in which we might include Katya’s scandal—need to be managed by the party whose face has been threatened via what we called “face-work” (1967:12). “Face-work” presents an excellent model for examining how the authoritative persona of the journalist, instantiated in “*litso*,” is managed within and across interactional settings. While Goffman was attending to “face” in unmediated interactions, his basic observations apply here. Television reporting and interviewing is intended, after all, to simulate face-to-face interaction between the person on the screen and the viewer. Interviewees are encouraged to look slightly to the side of the camera, at a journalist positioned carefully near the lens, in order to invite the viewer at home to feel that he or

she is part of a spontaneous conversation. The ‘face’ of the television anchor or correspondent extends over all public performances, tying it to the professional role rather than to the context of a single interaction, and making the journalist appear ‘known’ in interactions beyond the screen. Interviewees and focus group participants immediately recognized the television anchors and journalists and commented on them, more so than on writers and radio journalists. “*Moi zemliak!*” [My countryman!] one young man from Iaruuna said proudly of Bulat Tsybikov, the anchor featured in the television samples.<sup>45</sup>

Youth, gender, and race are particularly important aspects of “*litso*” and ability to authoritatively perform news. While age in Buryat and Russian culture generally indexes authority, youth is prized in Buryatia’s (and Russia’s) television news, even among the senior anchors who are supposed to carry the greatest weight. Older women in television journalism are particularly rare. Soyolma, a female anchor of about 40, professed that she expected to leave television soon, because it was “for young people” and she felt that she was nearing the end of visible youth. She thought she might move to an administrative position or to another media platform.<sup>46</sup> In radio and newspaper institutions, senior women are considerably more common and successful, and in higher positions of authority.

Race matters very differently in local vs. federal/central media. The “face” of the central television news produced in Moscow is usually (though not always) white—or more specifically, Slavic. Into the late Soviet period, central television was dominated by Slavs, both in terms of who inhabited the anchor’s chair and in terms of what issues were

---

<sup>45</sup> Focus group recorded 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Interview recorded 2009.

reported, and that dominance seems to have continued.<sup>47</sup> It is conventional wisdom that Russian-language journalists in Buryatia who look Asian will have poor chances of pursuing a career in central television, echoing claims and rumors that Buryat actors and opera singers have been held back for the same reason. Ulan-Ude's television stations self-consciously employ anchors and correspondents with a wide range of locally recognizable racial markings, thus making the "face" of regional television that of the *druzhba narodov*—albeit with emphasis on the Russian and Buryat elements of that friendship over many other options, such as Armenian, Azerbaijani, etc. In Ulan-Ude, in sum, the authoritative presentation of Russian-language news does not appear to depend on any particular racial category. Buryat-language news, however, is only presented by anchors and correspondents who fit Buryat racial understandings, and the idea that it could be otherwise (e.g., with an Armenian anchor presenting Buryat-language stories) was interesting but unfathomable to the people I queried.

While youth, gender, and race are not qualities over which journalists have much control, there are other qualities of *litso* which they can work to develop. Oral and stage performance are highly prized in Russian and Buryat society, and there are a number of events that focus on Buryat-language stage performance. Competitions named for male and female heroes of Buryat folklore, Gèsèr and Dangina, bring together Buryats from across national borders to compete in categories borrowed from beauty contests but

---

<sup>47</sup> In a sample of late Soviet television news, Mickiewicz (1991) found that while Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians together made up about 70% of the total Soviet population, they comprised 84% of "newsmakers." She had argued earlier that the integrative, centralized Soviet television system eroded ethnic differences but also alienated audiences by failing to address "the particular concerns of ethnic life" (1988:208). As evidence of this impact (in the absence of reliable audience studies), Mickiewicz pointed to the 1986 riots in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan; protests in Azerbaijan in 1988 for an Armenian-language television channel; and demands in Moldavia to eradicate Russian-language television programming in favor of Moldavian (1988:208).

geared toward Buryat cultural traditions: traditional national costuming, talent (usually folk dance or folk song), recitation of Buryat-language cultural texts, and so on. These competitions are tremendously popular, presenting ‘Buryat culture’ is a discrete, consumable and performable package that audiences find very compelling (Buchanan). It is no coincidence that these competitions, as well as various beauty pageants, dance troupes, and musical ensembles are the training ground for many future television journalists. Most television journalists, in fact, have some background in stage performance, though Russian-language journalists are considerably more likely to have it than Buryat-language journalists (who tend to have been trained as teachers in greater numbers).

“Face” and “voice” are supposed to be highly developed, and television institutions pour resources into this. While I was conducting workplace research at the state television company (BGTRK), the company hired a voice teacher from VSGAKI to give on-site voice lessons (in Russian). Many of the junior correspondents and anchors availed themselves of the lessons, voluntarily relinquishing their lunch breaks in order to practice breathing exercises, voice warm-ups, and phrasing.

The teacher struggled valiantly to break her charges of their hyper-standard “newspeak” prosody, an interesting project but one that ultimately failed. In one exercise, participants brought in scripted texts and practiced, one by one, for the instructor. Each student began in the same way, scooping dramatically upward in pitch at the beginning of her text and speaking quickly and emphatically. The voice teacher interrupted and began the same text with less range in pitch, approximating the prosody of conversational speech and emphasizing the need for a measured pace and ongoing breath support. Each

time, however, the student began again with the same burst of energy and pitch at the beginning—useful for capturing the attention of the audience and imparting a sense of urgency, but frustrating for a teacher who was encouraging better diction and breath support.

The Buryat-language staff were notably absent from these lessons, presumably because they were conducted in and targeting Russian. But it was remarkable that the lessons were offered at all. Though financially strapped, the television company was willing to invest in job skills training for some of the finer points of oral presentation. This demonstrates the importance the institution placed in presenting not only a good face, but also a good voice.

### **Producing a Buryat-Russian television story**

While television journalists are specifically selected for qualities of “face” and “voice” and are trained in performance, their interviewees most often are not. Television interviewees suffer from some of the same performance anxiety that afflicted the girls in the Buryat café of Chapter 1, who could not produce Buryat on demand, and the would-be interviewees of the radio journalists in Chapter 6, who bemoaned their difficulties convincing people to come to the microphone in Buryat. Introducing a video camera only heightens that anxiety. This final ethnographic section examines the production of a news story about syphilis that aired on state television in 2009. In addition to the performance anxiety highlighted above, this story’s production revealed much about generic expectations of code choice and how and why Russian influence makes its way into Buryat-language news.

News coverage of the syphilis outbreak was not particularly extended or extreme; the events were approached with an air of daily journalistic routine and were reported mainly as a public service. It happened to be the story I was assigned one morning as an observer “intern” at BGTRK. *Inform Polis* had recently run a story about cases of syphilis showing up in a kindergarten, and one of the news department heads felt that it was the news team’s public duty to cover the syphilis outbreak immediately, to help prevent an epidemic. I accompanied a lead correspondent, Yanzhima, who was responsible for the Russian-language story, and a second correspondent, Dashi, who was responsible for the Buryat-language story.

Yanzhima was not pleased with this assignment. She was, in general, less enthusiastic about the public service dimension of her job and preferred to cover concerts, theatrical performances, and other cultural events. Today her boss had given her no choice of topic. She looked embarrassed as she told me where we were going: the dermatological and venereological clinic. The film crew cracked jokes about venereal diseases as they packed their equipment and themselves into a tiny Lada sedan, everyone professing to have *no idea* where the clinic was located and Yanzhima silently suffering.

When we arrived at the clinic, however, and saw how wondrously gross everything was, Yanzhima’s spirits lifted. The cameraman insisted that it was illegal for him to film the patients in the clinic,<sup>48</sup> so the crew had to settle for filming posters and the pages of a giant medical textbook depicting oozing sores, blistering rashes, and festering open wounds. These images were sufficient to elicit cries of titillated horror and “oh my

---

<sup>48</sup> There was some disagreement among BGTRK’s videographers regarding the ethics and legality of filming patients, and over whether it was necessary to obtain their explicit permission. For an example in which patients were filmed, see Appendix C, Television Sample 1.

god!”s [*bozhe moi*] from all of the editors and production crew members who worked on the footage over the course of the day, and Yanzhima would end the day satisfied that she had made a compelling story for the evening news.

Where Yanzhima had it easy, however, Dashi—who seemed to have accepted the assignment in stride—struggled. Narrative conventions of news stories demand that there be a “hero” [*geroi*] and preferably at least one supporting character, so the goal for an assignment like the syphilis story is two interviews—not an easy task. The senior male doctor who produced the main statistics and information about the syphilis epidemic gave a fine interview in Russian but would not give an interview in Buryat. Dashi assumed that the doctor might speak Buryat because phenotypically he *looked* Buryat. Racial guessing was the most common way radio and television reporters identified potential interviewees ‘in the field,’ but it did not always result in a good story. Even if the news team managed to record an interview with a person they identified phenotypically as Buryat, it might not yield sufficient usable material. In the situation reported at the beginning of Chapter 1, Sayana had made this mistake with the man of whom she asked “Why don’t you know your own language?” She had interpellated her subject as a potential Buryat speaker, and then, as a *failed* one. Her interviewee, in the midst of his stuttering, seemed to know it, and suffer from it.

In this case, the doctor summarily avoided such dangers. He would not say that he did *not* speak Buryat, simply that an interview in Buryat “won’t work out” [*ne poluchitsia*]. Dashi, who was usually quite persuasive in these situations, tried a couple of times before giving up.

At our next location, a laboratory on the outskirts of town, Dashi succeeding in convincing two middle-aged women, a doctor and a laboratory technician, to give interviews in Buryat, though only after extensive cajoling. They never spoke Buryat at work, they said. They feared their Buryat was too colloquial, and that they would forget the “right words.” I had witnessed hesitation with other potential interviewees—there is, after all, some element of nervousness with most interview situations, regardless of the language spoken—but the requirement to speak *Buryat* on camera seemed to create special fear.

Dashi began by speaking Buryat, like a warm-up to ease the transition. But the doctor resisted this frame, instead speaking Buryat only while the camera was trained on her and frequently switching back into Russian. When she hesitated or switched, Dashi would patiently lead her back into Buryat, suggesting the words or phrases she might be looking for. He stopped short of providing medical terminology and did not correct her on her use of Russian-origin terms like *vrach* (doctor) and *gazet* (newspaper), which have common Buryat-native alternatives but which, as we have seen, are also sometimes used by journalists in the role of interviewee.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes journalists do make such corrections with their interviewees, but things were difficult enough for this interviewee, and any correction would have risked further embarrassing her and shutting down the interview entirely. At one point she broke off in exasperation, switching into Russian: “It’s very difficult to translate ‘*sifilis*’!” [*Perevesti sifilis ochen’ tiazhelo!*] “Ti:mé” [yes], Dashi agreed, switching pointedly back into Buryat to complete the interview. When she appeared thoroughly exhausted and he thought he might have enough material to piece

---

<sup>49</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 6 of a newspaper journalist’s use of *gazetè* in a radio interview.

together a story, he thanked her and ended the interview. She looked both relieved and distraught. “Oy, I spoke so poorly!” she cried, in Russian. And Dashi relented and switched into Russian, assuring her that she had given him “very good material.”<sup>50</sup>

Back in the editing studio in the afternoon, Dashi tried to do what the doctor had noted was so difficult—to translate *sifilis*. In his first script, he produced inventive Buryat neologisms for ‘syphilis’ and ‘venereal disease,’ which were rejected by the head editor, Bator.<sup>51</sup> When I spoke with Bator in the evening, he explained that the neologisms felt “twisted” and unnecessarily difficult. While Bator believed strongly in the preservationist role of Buryat-language media, he did not believe that their audience would be able to understand these terms instantaneously—which was, in his view, a primary requirement in the television medium. Thus, while a newspaper editor might have included a Buryat neologism for ‘venereal disease,’ perhaps glossing it in Russian or Buryat or leaving it to the reader to decipher at her leisure, Bator returned Dashi’s draft script with it excised.<sup>52</sup>

Dashi recorded a revised script and pieced together bits of the women’s interviews to produce his evening broadcast, a portion of which appears here. (Russian-origin material appears in boldface, giving a quick visual indication of just how much of

---

<sup>50</sup> Anyone who has worked in or around radio or television journalism will recognize this as a little unusual; an editor usually does not need to use more than a small percentage of the original footage in a final cut. But this distinguishes minority-language journalism in situations of extreme language shift and where deeply felt shame and embarrassment over not producing the language correctly make it difficult to procure interviews. The inefficiency of Buryat-language interviewing is in tracking down the interviewee in the first place and then easing her into the minority-language news frame; once the interview is secured, most of the material recorded will end up on the air. In the dual-language radio and television broadcasts that I observed being produced, a much higher percentage of Buryat-language interview material made it to broadcast than the percentage of Russian-language interview material that made it to broadcast.

<sup>51</sup> Bator’s linguistic practices and authority among audiences are discussed at greater length in Chapter 8.

<sup>52</sup> He acted on different principles when he worked in other media platforms. Bator presents a particularly good case of how linguistic practices are constrained differently by different media, because he has worked in multiple platforms. See Chapter 8.

the speech in this broadcast was recognizably Russian.<sup>53</sup>) The broadcast began with images from the dermatological-venereological diseases clinic and the lab where testing for syphilis is done, over which was layered a voiceover from our correspondent, Dashi:

**Excerpt from story as aired**

<b>Reporter (Dashi), voiceover with images from first clinic:</b>			
1	<u>Arhanai bolon <b>venericheskè</b></u>	On the walls at the Ulan-Ude municipal medical clinics treating skin and <b>venereal</b> diseases are informational posters.	<i>/images of front door and sign of dermatological-venereological clinic/</i>
2	<u>übshèngüüdye argaldag</u>		
3	<u>Ulaan-Üdè khotodokhi</u>		
4	<u>èmnèlgèñüüdtè khatanuud</u>	Written there are slogans telling people to live well, [and] what they should not do.	<i>/poster entitled “the price of carelessness”/</i>
5	<u>dèèrè mèdèèsèlèi sambarnuud</u>		
6	<u>baina.</u>		
7	<u>Tèndèn’ hain azha huugty,</u>	In reading further, it is explained that there are as many as twenty-some <b>venereal</b> diseases occurring in nature.	<i>/images of hand-drawn informational posters and photographs of syphilis sores/</i>
8	<u>khünüüdtè haalta bü khègty</u>		
9	<u>gèhèn uriaa bèshèètéi.</u>		
10	<u>Saashan’ unshakhada</u>	There are slogans about protecting one’s body from these by being careful and treating each other with care.	<i>/flipping the pages of an “atlas” of infectious diseases, with the title page “sifilis” opening the book/</i>
11	<u><b>veneriicheskè</b> aiaar khori</u>		
12	<u>garan übshèngüüd baigalida</u>		
13	<u>bii ium baina gèzhè èlirnè.</u>	As we reach mid- <b>May</b> , with it getting somewhat warmer outside, doctors working at the Ulan-Ude municipal medical clinics treating skin and <b>venereal</b> diseases are getting this nearing situation out to the people, it not being possible to launch an informational campaign.	<i>/photograph in book of blistered nose/</i> <i>/photograph in book of infant covered in sores/</i> <i>/cut to lab technician in scrubs filling test tubes/</i> <i>/lab tech with test tubes/</i>
14	<u>Tèdènhèè bèèè khamgaalzha,</u>		
15	<u>bèè bèedèè ankharaltaigaar,</u>		
16	<u>narin niagta iabakha tukhai</u>		
17	<u>uriaanuud baina.</u>		
18	<u><b>Mai</b> hara khakhadlaba, gazaa</u>		
19	<u>huraggüi dulaarba, iimè</u>		
20	<u>orshon baidalda arhanai</u>		
21	<u>bolon <b>veneriicheskè</b></u>		
22	<u>übshèngüüdye argaldag</u>		
23	<u>Ulaan-Üdè khotodokhi</u>		
24	<u>èmnèlgèñüüdtè khüdèldèg</u>		
25	<u>èmshèd arad zondo garazha,</u>		
26	<u>oilguulamzhyn khüdèlmèri</u>		
27	<u>iabuulaagüidèn’ iaakha</u>		
28	<u>argagüi.</u>		
<b>Interviewee (doctor), standing in lab area:</b>			
29	<u>Zaluushuulai (.) dunda ekhè</u>	Really, this <b>infectious</b> disease is very widespread	<i><b>title on screen:</b> Ulaan-Üdè khotyn</i>
30	<u>taradag ènè (.) <b>infeksionno</b></u>		

<sup>53</sup> I have chosen to focus on lexical issues for the sake of simplicity, but there are also some grammatical constructions in this broadcast that look like consequences of Russian contact.

31	<u>übshèn bii gèeshè aab daa.</u>	among youth.	<b><i>kozhevdispantserèi</i></b>
32	<u>Dèlkhèi déèrè khorèod</u>	On the earth there number	<b><i>vrach</i></b> [Ulan-Ude
33	<u>übshèn gèzhè toosodog.</u>	about twenty diseases so	Municipal
34	<u>Tiigèéd tédèènéi khorondo</u>	called.	<b>Dermatological-</b>
35	<u>ekhè aiiultainiin' (.) <i>siifilis</i></u>	And among these, <b>syphilis</b> is	<b>Venereological Clinic</b>
36	<u>bolono.</u>	particularly dangerous.	<b>Doctor]</b>
37	<u>Tiigèéd èné harada manai</u>	Then [uh], I think that this	<i>/doctor stands in white</i>
38	<u>khèhèn azhal ekhè gèzhè bi</u>	month our work will be great.	<i>lab coat in front of glass</i>
39	<u>hananabi.</u>		<i>cabinet containing paper</i>
	[/film break/]	[/film break/]	<i>files/</i>
40	<u>Erèhèn zaluushuulsh'e,</u>	We will probably be	<i>/film break/</i>
41	<u>iamarsh'e erèhèn khünüüdye</u>	examining, looking at youth	
42	<u>üzèzhè kharazha, abakha</u>	who've arrived [from	<i>/looks to side of camera</i>
43	<u><i>analizuudyn'</i> abazha, (.)</u>	elsewhere], other people	<i>with eyes moving all over</i>
44	<u>übshèntèi baigaa haan'</u>	who've arrived [from	<i>room, apparently</i>
45	<u>übshèniien' argalzha, zaazha</u>	elsewhere], receiving	<i>thinking/</i>
46	<u>kharazha, kharuulzha khèlènè</u>	<b>analyses</b> to do, treating the	
47	<u>gèeshè aabzabdi daa.</u>	illnesses of the diseased,	
	[/film break/]	looking at—demonstrating—	<i>/film break/</i>
	[/film break/]	examination(s).	
48	<u>Bèèè déègüür tatazha abazha</u>	[/film break/]	
49	<u>hainaar iabakhyn tülöö, gèntè</u>	(If) your body starts intensely	
50	<u>bolohon uulzalganuudhaa</u>	dragging, declining, after	
51	<u>hüüldè <i>vrachuudta</i>...</u>	“suddenly happening	
52	<u>ènè tère iuumènéi boloo haa,</u>	meetings,” <sup>54</sup> to the <b>doctors</b> ...	
53	<u><i>vrachuudta</i> erèzhè üzüülègty</u>	if something like this	
54	<u>gèzhè khèlèdèg gèeshèbdi.</u>	happens, we are advising that	
55	<u><i>Televizorèersh</i> khèlènè</u>	you go to the <b>doctors</b> .	
56	<u>gèeshè aabzabdi daa, <i>gazet</i></u>	We are probably speaking on	
57	<u>iuumèdèsh'e</u>	your <b>television</b> , we have had	
58	<u>bèshègdèdègbdi.</u>	some <b>newspaper</b> items	
		published.	
<b>Reporter (Dashi), voiceover with images of lab interior and exterior:</b>			
59	<u><i>Steklozavod</i> huurinda</u>	Studies are based at the	<i>/close-up of samples and</i>
60	<u><i>kliniicheskè serologiin</i> talaar</u>	<b>clinical serological</b> place in	<i>testing equipment/</i>
61	<u>shèzhèlgènéüüd</u>	the neighborhood of	
62	<u>iabuulagdana.</u>	<b>Steklozavod.</b>	
<b>Interviewee (laboratory technician), seated behind test tubes in lab area:</b>			
63	<u><i>Serologicheskà</i></u>	We have a <b>serological</b>	<b><i>title on screen: Èmshèn</i></b>
64	<u><i>laboratoritoibdi.</i></u>	<b>laboratory.</b>	[Doctor] <sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> The expression “suddenly happening meetings” here, gèntè bolohon uulzalganuud, is a euphemism for casual sexual relations, calqued from R. *sluchainye sviazi* (‘chance encounters’).

<sup>55</sup> Èmshèn here is ‘general medical practitioner,’ contrasting with Russian-origin “vrach” in the title of the doctor interviewed above. Èmshèn could have been used in both cases. Note that in lines 25 and 63, ‘doctors’ are referred to as “èmshéd.” Here the use of “vrach” emphasizes that this is her official title, as opposed to a general description of her occupation.

65	<u>Khoër vrach, khoër laborant</u>	Working (we) are two	<i>/lab tech sits behind</i>
66	<u>khüdélzhè bainabdi.</u>	<b>doctors</b> (and) two	<i>samples in white lab coat,</i>
67	<u>Nègè registraator i... khoër</u>	<b>laboratory technicians.</b>	<i>addresses journalist off to</i>
68	<u>sant-, sanitar-(.)</u>	One <b>receptionist and...</b> two	<i>side/</i>
69	<u>sanitarkanuud.</u>	ai-, aid-, <b>aides.</b>	
70	<u>Tiigèéd... (.)</u>	And... (.)	
71	<u>iuun... (.)</u>	what... (.)	<i>/looks to side, thinking of</i>
72	<u>teè üder bükhëndè bi ènè</u>	well, every day I [do] this	<i>what to say next/</i>
73	<u>serologicheska [???] nöökhi</u>	<b>serological</b> [???] that very	
74	<u>tèrè venericheskè übshèn...</u>	<b>venereal</b> disease...	
75	<u>tèrè sifilis gèzhè übshènéi</u>	I have to do a lot of the	
76	<u>reaktsiia Vassermana</u>	<b>Wassermann reaction</b> of the	
77	<u>gèeshyen' olodogbi.</u>	disease called <b>syphilis.</b>	
78	<u>Tiigèéd IFA gèzhè analiz...</u>	Then the <b>analysis</b> called	
79	<u>imunno-fermentnyi analiz</u>	<b>IFA...</b>	
80	<u>gèzhè khèdègbdi.</u>	we do the <b>immunological</b>	
81	<u>Tiigèéd üder bükhëndè</u>	<b>fermentation analysis.</b>	
82	<u>khamag gorodhoo asardag lè</u>	Then every day, of course,	<i>/looks to samples and</i>
83	<u>daa.</u>	everything from the <b>city</b> is	<i>rushes forward, speaking</i>
84	<u>Dürbè-taban zuun analiz</u>	brought in.	<i>quickly/</i>
85	<u>khèdègbdi üdèrtè.</u>	We do four to five hundred	
86	<u>Tiigèéd khoër raion erèdèg.</u>	analyses in a day.	<i>/cut to gloved hands</i>
87	<u>Tarbagatai, Ivolga gèèd</u>	Then two <b>districts</b> arrive.	<i>dealing with samples/</i>
88	<u>Ivolgiïnska raion.</u>	Tarbagatai, Ivolga—er,	
		<b>Ivolginskii district.</b>	<i>/cut back to lab tech/</i>

This translation demonstrates the difference between the linguistic production of Dashi and the interviewees. Dashi speaks fluently with complex grammatical constructions, characteristic of the literary language, while the interviewees produce short sentences with syntactic repetition and avoid complex constructions. The doctor's interview, which was particularly difficult, was cobbled together from the short stretches of her discourse that Dashi found acceptable in the editing process, resulting in a series of film breaks and a rather disjointed feel in the broadcast.

Here, I want to focus on how Dashi and his interviewees managed Russian influence in their Buryat speech. Their speech is characterized by three different types of

contact phenomena from Russian: more nativized, older borrowings; less nativized, more recent borrowings; and full codeswitches.

In the first category, notice *mai* (‘May’) in line 18. Forms like this could be interpreted as Russian, but they have been fully incorporated into Buryat and do not have viable Buryat-origin alternatives. Also, like his colleagues, Dashi nativizes Russian-origin terms like *mai* and pronounces them with Buryat phonology—albeit inconsistently.

By contrast, note *gazel* (‘newspaper’) in line 56, *gorod* (‘city’) in line 82, and *vrach* (‘doctor’) in lines 51 and 53. These are relatively recent Russian borrowings with little nativization, although they get Buryat grammatical endings. For example, in line 82, the laboratory technician says *gorodhoo* for ‘from the city’ instead of Buryat *xotohoo* or Russian *ot goroda*.

***gorodhoo*** ‘from the city’

Compare:	Russian	<i>ot goroda</i>	(от города)
	Buryat	<b><i>xotohoo</i></b>	(хотоһоо)

These words denote common concepts and have common Buryat-origin alternatives—indeed, Dashi uses an established Buryat word, *èmsshèn*, for ‘doctor’ in line 25 and for ‘general medical professional’ in the title for the second interviewee in line 63. But Russian borrowings are nonetheless popular with Buryat-Russian bilinguals like the women interviewed here.<sup>56</sup> Other new borrowings, appearing in boldface here, denote specialized concepts peculiar to the medical topic—most originating in Greek or Latin, but borrowed from Russian into Buryat, and largely retaining Russian morphological features like the productive *-cheskii* adjectival ending that you see Buryatized as *-eska*

---

<sup>56</sup> In the screen title for the first interviewee, the editors used *vrach* instead of the standard-preferred *èmsshèn* because it was part of the interviewee’s official job title.

and *-eskè*, in accordance with Buryat vowel harmony, in lines 1, 11, 21, 60, 63, 73, and 74.<sup>57</sup> Terms like these are often nativized, sometimes quite self-consciously, by applying Buryat vowel length to the stressed syllables of Russian. So we have, in lines 11 and 21, Buryatized *veneri:cheskè* instead of the Russian *venericheskii*, and, in line 35, a heavily lengthened *si:filis* instead of Russian *sifilis*.<sup>58</sup>

	<i>veneri:cheskè</i>	<u>übshèn</u>	‘venereal disease’
Compare:	Russian	<i>venericheskaia bolezñ</i>	(венерическая болезнь)
	Buryat	?? <u>übshèn</u>	(??? үбшэн)

Using *veneri:cheskè* übshèn for ‘venereal disease’—with Buryatized Russian *venericheskii* and Buryat übshèn—was something of a compromise between the all-Buryat neologism favored by Dashi and the Russian favored by Bator. Übshèn is a common enough term in Buryat to be recognizable to the audience, and it was part of journalists’ regular pool of resources for stories in the medical genre.<sup>59</sup> As one of Dashi’s colleagues put it in reference to the lab tech, there was no sense in “stretching” the Buryat language for these purposes when the interviewees were going to speak “half in Russian” anyway. A few days after this story aired, another Buryat journalist with whom I was working pointed to the syphilis broadcast and a story on swine flu that aired around the same time as evidence of the difficulty of producing media in “the pure Buryat language” [*chistyï buriatskii iazyk*]. *iazyk*].

<sup>57</sup> See similar use of these endings in “sovetskè,” discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>58</sup> The fact that Buryat vowel length is inconsistently applied in this broadcast (compare, e.g., *venericheskè* in line 1 and *veneri:cheskè* in lines 11 and 21) reflects, I think, that these are new borrowings.

<sup>59</sup> In Newspaper Sample 1, for instance, anchor and reporter Bulat Tsybikov discusses heart disease as zürkhènéi übshèn in lines 29 and 60 and the ‘diseased’—or ‘patients’—as übshèntèi in lines 9 and 67.

## Conclusion

Language shift impedes journalists' realization of purism, but not equally so in different genres, and not equally in different media platforms. Using more Russian in this Buryat-language news story was, in a sense, over-determined by the confluence of the topical genre and the television platform. The medical and scientific terminology necessary for 'telling the story' of the syphilis outbreak presented a special challenge, first to the clinicians, and then to Dashi and Bator as they decided what to air. Struggling with an apparent conflict between presenting information and sticking to the all-Buryat purist symbolic form, they took recourse to generic linguistic expectations that figure Russian as the language of science and medicine. But their decisions also adhered to *medium*-centric linguistic expectations—that is, to the language ideologies demanded by the material qualities of television as a medium.

As we have seen, television journalists tend to emphasize securing interviews (of whatever linguistic quality) and ensuring instantaneous comprehension in what is an inherently fleeting medium. Emphasis on the qualities of face and voice, by drawing media personnel from backgrounds in performance and typecasting interviewees, further prioritizes the aesthetics of media over perfect adherence to literary standards. Together, these conditions encourage the incorporation of more contact features into Buryat and more *razgovornye* forms in general. The effects of this among audiences are significant. A television station is based on a much more elaborated institutional structure than a press, and it enjoys the credibility granted by the visual channel, but ultimately it nonetheless commands less linguistic authority among audience members. I would suggest, in conclusion, that the broader social authority of Buryat television derives less

from its *linguistic* authority than from the cultural value of performance ability and beliefs in the veracity of eyewitness news. How we might model and understand this authority vis-à-vis the other news sources in Buryatia's media landscape is the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 8

### **Chronotopes of Shift: Language Ideologies across ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Media**

This chapter draws on data and analyses presented in Chapters 5–7 on the language of news media, its production, and interpretation to briefly consider how linguistic and cultural authority are brokered across ‘old’ and ‘new’ media. Specifically, it explores the articulation of language ideologies with what we might call media ideologies in Buryatia, in order to explain the diversity of ideologies and practices described in the preceding chapters and examine how this diversity is interpreted by audiences.

Chapter 4 outlined the social effects of a wide range of linguistic repertoires and introduced a deeply felt binary dynamic between the informal speech associated with kitchens and the formal, literary language associated with news media. Within that binary, news media tend to be afforded a monolithic linguistic authority, despite the demonstrable diffuseness of linguistic competence and without reference to specific media practices. However, with a diverse field of coexisting media options, it is perhaps unsurprising that the apparent unity of linguistic practice ascribed to “the media” crumbles upon closer inspection. Chapters 5–7 outlined the different stances toward language use taken in newspapers, radio, and television—news media platforms that were

developed in Buryatia in different historical periods and now coexist as joint arbiters of linguistic and cultural authority. Far from embodying a monolithic ideal, the journalists and activists producing Buryat-language news harbor, evince, and act on varied and wide-ranging ideologies about language use and their role in society.

This chapter describes how this ideological diversity patterns across the dominant platforms of contemporary news journalism in Buryatia, including newspapers, radio, and television (and with reference to ‘new’/digital technologies). In the initial sections, I introduce the concepts of remediation and media ideologies as analytical frameworks and summarize the patterning of language ideologies, linguistic practices, and effects across platforms, generating a predictive model for linguistic phenomena within minority-language media under conditions of language shift. I then turn to the chronotopes of linguistic and cultural shift that are locally supposed to be embodied by different media platforms, and by the persons associated with them.

I will argue in this chapter that the material conditions of each technology determine, in part, the language ideologies ‘native’ to each medium. This has implications for how ideologies and agency are ascribed to persons, in the form of journalists, and to media institutions. The stances toward language use described here are held by individuals and invested within institutions, but they are fundamentally tied to particular platforms. In other words, the language of media is ultimately shaped and constrained less by the individual predilections of speakers than by the material demands of media and the institutionalized interactions that produce them. Yet audiences may not take heed of this. Viewers, listeners, and readers may *ascribe* to a journalist total personal

agency over language, assuming that she maintains conscious control over ideological stance, without any necessary correspondence to a journalist's actual practices.

This can be seen in how individual journalists' linguistic practices—and the ideologies governing them—shift as they move between platforms, and in how audiences interpret them. Some journalists specialize in a single media platform and spend an entire career in newspapers or radio, but the more common career trajectory of a Buryat-language journalist includes at least one shift between news media platforms, or simultaneous work in multiple offices. In the final section, I follow the career of Bator, a Buryat-language journalist who has worked in multiple platforms, to show how his linguistic practices and ideologies have changed as he has moved from one media platform to another, contra audience assumptions.

### **Remediation and media ideologies**

New media platforms sometimes eclipse old. Chapter 6 dealt with a particularly extreme case of this, in considering the parabolic trajectory of Buryat radio over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet while radio lost much of its relevance and audience to television, it has not been fully replaced. Romantic nostalgia for radio, conversion to online formats, and the fact that there are ongoing efforts to create *new* radio stations in Buryatia shows that radio retains social value in multiple ways. The adoption of new media is usually more complex than simple replacement (Carey and Elton 2010). New technologies are incorporated into social landscapes already loaded with mediated communication, settling

into semiotic position(s) in relation to existing technologies while also shifting the positions of those technologies.<sup>1</sup>

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have productively analyzed the process of adopting a historically newer medium via a historically prior medium as “remediation.” Drawing on examples from visual culture, they show how the visual aesthetics of digital media, such as the graphic user interface of personal computers, have refashioned and repurposed existing technologies such as photography. Photography, in its turn, remediated painting. This remediation, they argue, is characterized by a double logic encompassing at once a desire for immediacy and a drive toward hypermediacy. A webcam, for instance, promises a transparent (real-time, real-world) connection between its viewer and a distant place, while the complex, multi-framed page on which a webcam appears simultaneously underscores the mediated nature of the image.<sup>2</sup>

News media provide particularly extreme examples of the double logic Bolter and Grusin describe. On one hand, the authority of journalistic reporting depends heavily on giving the impression of unmediated access to events, through strategies like eyewitness accounts, live reporting, and the use of statistics and ‘hard’ data to discursively project objectivity. The progressive adoption of print journalism, radio, television, and interactive new media suggests that we strive not only toward faster, more instantaneous news production, but also toward a state of unmediated conversation between the

---

<sup>1</sup> There has been a wealth of scholarship and popular writing analyzing the coexistence of older and newer media platforms as “convergence culture,” following Henry Jenkins’s popular 2006 study.

<sup>2</sup> Bolter and Grusin do not claim that remediation and its two logics are “universal aesthetic truths,” but rather that they are historically and culturally contingent practices “of specific groups in specific times” (1999:21)—including “throughout the last several hundred years of Western visual representation” (1999:11). Insofar as Russian and Buryat journalism have their roots in media practices common to Europe and North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we may place them—if not all forms of journalism—within the same broad genealogy.

journalist or ‘average citizen on the street’ and the reader, listener, or viewer. In Russian journalism, a particularly popular genre is the “direct line” [*priamaia liniia*]<sup>3</sup>, in which a political leader such as a mayor, governor, or housing authority responds to the questions of constituents. Historical precedent for this kind of state-individual interaction can be traced to petitions and letters written to medieval tsars, which were written and answered in paternalistic terms of direct address. Newspapers and television now accomplish the same end by appearing to create a transparent public forum for immediate communication between the tops and bottoms of political hierarchies.

On the other hand, it is practically incumbent upon news media to remind readers, listeners, and viewers of their institutional authority by constantly pointing to the medium itself. These effects are achieved differently through different media. Newspaper mastheads and intermittent radio announcements remind us of the institutional source of writing and broadcasts; bylines remind us that these ‘facts’ are authored. At the beginning of Buryat radio and television broadcasts, the audience is commonly introduced into the institutional location of reporting or recording: “in the studio, Svetlana Zhigzhitova...” [*studii soo Svetlana Zhigzhitova...*]. In television reporting, a correspondent’s microphone is often thrust into the frame along with an interviewee, the network or station’s logo emblazoned on the side. Like journalists at NPR and Fox News, journalists at Buryatia’s television and radio stations encourage their audiences to “visit us” and “catch more of the latest news” at station websites, intertextually linking their broadcasts to other texts, videos, and soundclips, while foregrounding present and future mediation.

---

<sup>3</sup> In Russian, the ‘direct line’ is etymologically related to live broadcasting—literally, ‘direct air’ [*priamoi éfir*].

Whether an utterance is experienced as immediate or hypermediated—and how—can have profound effects for how linguistic practices are evaluated. This is but one of the many ways in which understandings and experiences of media articulate with understandings and experiences of language. Paul A. Prior and Julie A. Hengst (2010) have argued that “remediation” is essentially a (broad) kind of discourse practice, continually re-making both the discursive material being mediated and the medium through which it is freshly expressed. While Bolter and Grusin analyzed the historical progression of media adoption, Prior and Hengst abstract the process from time and use “semiotic remediation” to describe the process by which *coexisting* media from within an array of options are used in a “chain of media” or “chain of mediation” (2010:1). Yet their approach still relies on a notion of time, in that it is processual: “Remediation points to ways that activity is (re)mediated – not mediated anew in each act – through taking up the materials at hand, putting them to *present use*, and thereby producing altered conditions *for future action*” (2010:1, emphasis mine).

Drawing on work in linguistic anthropology on language ideologies, Ilana Gershon (2010a, 2010b) has also extended Bolter and Grusin’s observations and addressed remediation—as well as the more general principles of how we use, treat, and think about media technologies and channels—in terms of “media ideologies.” Attention to media ideologies, Gershon argues, “can sharpen a focus on how people understand both the communicative possibilities and the material limitations of a specific channel, and how they conceive of channels in general” (2010a:283).

Media ideologies are a counterpart to language ideologies, potentially drawing our attention to how assumptions about language may be authorized and reinforced (or

disrupted!) by the material specificities of a given medium. Laura Kunreuther (2010) has demonstrated this nicely with an example from Nepal, illustrating how an ideology of directness figures centrally in both a *language ideology* privileging the voice as a vehicle of democratic agency and a *media ideology* associated with FM radio. A narrative of self-recognition is reinforced through dual attention to developing one's voice as an expression of interior selfhood and the use of FM radio, a medium locally experienced as immediate, transparent, and direct.

### **Language ideologies across media platforms**

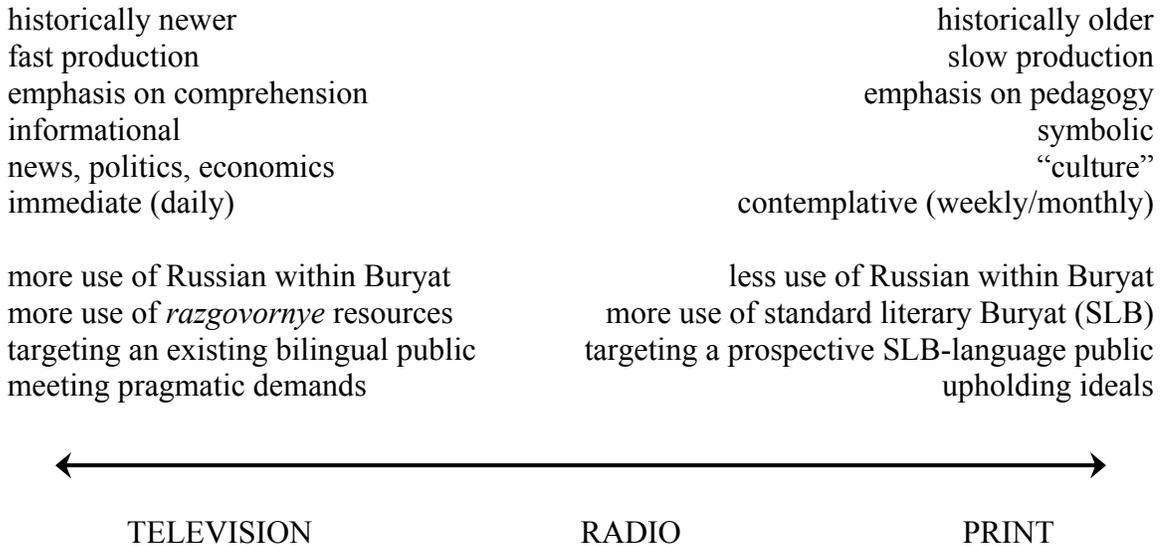
Language elites in Buryatia are, as we have seen, quite divided in their opinions of, and approach to, (re)producing linguistic and cultural knowledge through Buryat-language media. As initially suggested in Chapter 3 and demonstrated over the following chapters, Buryat-language journalists orient their linguistic practices toward a Buryat language public that is variously imagined. How they conceive of the make-up, abilities, and *ideal* competence of this public, and how they conceive of their own role vis-à-vis this public, determines in part their ideological stance and linguistic practices. In every case, however, their practices are fundamentally constrained by the material demands of their medium, shaping what journalists—and their institutions—are ultimately capable of.

Particularly important, in the context of language shift, is how media institutions negotiate the 'balance' between Russian and Buryat differently not only as between two codes, R and B, but also 'within' Buryat, through a range of overlapping repertoires. Newspaper writing, for instance, showed a much higher tolerance for complex syntactic constructions and included more neologisms, excavated Mongolic terms, culturally

specialized terminology, and features of SLB. Though writing was integral to all platforms, print journalists were particularly dedicated to literary labor. They were the most likely to offer metacommentary on language and linguistic principles, and the most predisposed to worry over—and take pleasure in—the minutiae of language. They took language and linguistic issues very seriously, and acted on a sense of responsibility for maintaining high (purist) literary standards—to the exclusion, sometimes, of some readers' comprehension. For many potential readers, this made approaching the language of newspapers a daunting task, and a painful reminder that their knowledge of Buryat was somehow insufficient or incomplete.

Overall comprehension was greater in radio and television, particularly television. Journalists in these platforms also took language standards seriously, but they were less likely to use neologisms, and more likely to accept some resources from outside of SLB. Television journalists in particular were more willing to modify language standards to meet practical demands, namely fast production and instantaneous comprehension. A crucial difference with print emerged with the historical development of radio, which introduced orality and the possibility of interviewing speakers in formats that could not be 'cleaned up' like the interviews recorded in newspaper articles. Interviews in both radio and television introduced new linguistic practices into the 'language of the media,' but the two platforms demanded different kinds of performance, and therefore different kinds of speakers. Radio placed a higher premium on solid stretches of recorded speech, thus selecting for highly fluent speakers who used features of SLB, while television placed a higher premium on speed and availability, selecting for less fluent speakers who used more dialectisms, colloquialisms, and Russian contact-induced features.

With this summary in mind, we can now schematize the different approaches within media platforms as follows:



What has emerged is a set of nested dichotomies between historically older and newer media platforms, senior and junior generations of media personnel, more conservative literary standards and more progressive conversational styles, and slower and faster modes of media production and consumption. Another way of putting this is that different media platforms reflect and drive language shift at different rates (and in different ways). Audiences expect to see and hear more purist Buryat in ‘old’ media and more advanced language shift in ‘new’ media.

The ends of this spectrum show the pervasive tension between written and spoken practices, as well as ‘old’ media beholden to written formats and ‘new’ media that, in their most popular forms, approach natural conversation. The differential use of repertoires across these media platforms reflects an existing tension, as felt by speakers like Masha who feel that they can get along fine “in the kitchen” but do not command

SLB. It also increases tension: Differential Russian influence across media platforms appears to be reinforcing and even widening a gap between written and spoken Buryat.

Note, however, that this is a *spectrum* that only generalizes the practices and ideologies at play in current media. Specific practices within different media platforms fall all across the spectrum. Cultural genres are popular on television, where they might be discussed using dialectal features. And newspapers target an existing bilingual public in that they publish large amounts of text (up to 1/3 of the newspaper at Buriaad Ünén) in Russian as well as Buryat. Within each medium, journalists adopt varied strategies for reaching different segments of the population and interpret their own role(s) as knowledge workers in different ways, sometimes focusing on maintaining language standards, sometimes targeting conversational ‘heritage’ speakers, and sometimes highlighting the pedagogical role of native language media in language revitalization efforts among youth.

Note also that, crucially, the dichotomies between (1) literary standards and oral/aural realities, (2) written and spoken language, and (3) SLB and dialects/Russian-mixed forms are not fully collapsible as analytic categories. What is remarkable is rather how people (both media personnel and their audiences) *work to* collapse them—how they work at keeping newspapers close to SLB, for example, or forgive rampant Russian use in otherwise Buryat-framed television interviews because “oh well, they’re just talking.”

This is a predictive model for linguistic phenomena within minority-language media under conditions of language shift. Progressive language shift produces a range of different types of audience: speakers of a full range of repertoires, speakers of colloquial forms or dialect who do not know literary standards, perhaps speakers of *only* the literary

standard, semi-speakers with incomplete knowledge of any one repertoire, people with passive comprehension. These audiences, I would argue, are necessarily targeted differently by different media platforms. For instance, a speaker with good oral comprehension but no literacy skills is not a viable target for a newspaper. If she has *low* literacy skills, she might be, depending on how the newspaper and its journalists interpret their pedagogical role. Yet Dugar, the newspaper journalist who blamed Masha for not “trying” to read, does not really target her as a potential audience member. And he need not worry overmuch, because Masha is targeted by other Buryat-language media, especially television. Within a media landscape, which platform targets which audience and fulfills which roles will be determined in large part by the material conditions of a given media platform. As new media technologies are developed and adopted, we can expect them to remediate existing minority-language media but target—and be taken up by—a slightly different audience within the wide range of potential readers, listeners, viewers, and users. How exactly the various forms of Buryat-language digital media currently being developed will be incorporated into the local media landscape largely remains to be seen (see Chapter 9), but at a minimum, we can predict some reshuffling of the goals and priorities of television, radio, and print producers.

### **Bator, between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media**

I argued above that audiences come to ‘old’ and ‘new’ media with the expectation that reflected in it will be the features of earlier or more advanced language shift. ‘Old’ and ‘new’ media become, in this way, indexical of ‘old’ and ‘new’ people, when the different generations of intergenerational language change are aligned with different

media platforms. The investment of youth in digital media, for instance, is often taken to be the natural result of historical change in media aligning with historical change in the language, or in people. Buryat-language radio similarly becomes thought of as the province of the elderly, therefore ‘naturally’ in SLB. At first glance, older media platforms such as newspapers appear to simply reflect the linguistic practices of a senior generation, while newer technologies such as texting and sharing video clips appear to simply reflect the linguistic practices of youth. Yet paying attention to the movement of journalists reveals a more complicated interplay among old and new media.

Overlapping personnel move between different platforms constantly. When they do, they generally adopt the ideologies and strategies of the platform they’ve moved into. Their display and use of linguistic knowledge changes, and their authority can as well—though at least as often, authority accrues within the individual (or his persona and “face”) as he moves between platforms, even as he embraces different principles of language use. This became clear in the movement of a senior, respected journalist whom I am going to call Bator.<sup>4</sup>

Bator’s linguistic authority became clear in an interaction one afternoon as I watched television with three research participants of different ages. A woman in her 40s, Darima, criticized a young television reporter for mixing too much Russian into his report. I asked whether she could give any specific examples. “Well I don’t know,” she said. “He just doesn’t speak in the literary language. He’s just—well, he’s young, and he just doesn’t speak really excellently [*otlichno*], not like, for example, ...” And here she named our hero. “Yeah, Bator!” one of the other people present, a younger man,

---

<sup>4</sup> This pseudonym is a popular Buryat name meaning ‘hero,’ which seems only appropriate given the way this man’s work and linguistic output were valorized.

exclaimed. “He speaks the literary Buryat language beautifully [*krasivo*]. You know, he worked for the newspaper for a long time. He knows all the ancient Buryat words and that’s how—and he speaks like that on television. He raises the level of the language.”

This assessment surprised me, because I had recently analyzed transcripts of some of Bator’s programming with my native-speaker assistants and we had found none of the “ancient words” that these viewers identified. In fact, Bator’s transcripts were markedly *less* purist than the transcripts of many of his junior colleagues. Moreover, I had recently been doing workplace observation and interviews at the television station where Bator worked, and I had discussed with him his editorial choices. Bator routinely excised neologisms and complex, bookish-sounding clauses from junior journalists’ scripts. It had been Bator, for instance, who excised Dashi’s inventive Buryat neologisms for ‘syphilis’ and ‘venereal disease’ in Chapter 7. He had suggested a compromise with the Russian word for ‘venereal,’ *venericheskii*, and the Buryat word for ‘disease,’ ҮБШЭН.

Bator, in other words, was making his decisions based not on an allegiance to an older form of media or to the form of media he had worked with earlier in his own life, but to what he saw as the demands of his current medium. He was in his 50s—older, for a male in Russia, and close to retirement. He had worked in media for 27 years at this point, through the Soviet to post-Soviet transition and in newspapers, television, and briefly in radio. He was somewhat unusual in having worked for so many years in media, but his movement between different print, radio, and television was entirely typical of Buryat-language journalists.

Journalists like Bator represent the agentive side of remediation, perhaps giving us insight into why a new medium gets interpreted in one way rather than another. He

decided what was appropriate or inappropriate linguistic practice in a new media platform ('disease' in Buryat, for instance, but 'venereal' in Russian), although from his perspective, these were not so much decisions of his own as practical requirements dictated by the medium. His linguistic practices and ideologies had changed as he moved from one media platform to another, as I confirmed by analyzing some of his work from the 1980s. His newspaper articles were written in high-style, standard literary Buryat, consistent with what he later claimed was the main purpose of newspaper language: to model the standard. Print journalists tend to see themselves as the bastions—and re-creators—of a pure Buryat language. They treat newspapers as pedagogical tools, texts to be turned to again and again and reviewed at a person's leisure, and this suited his university background in philology and pedagogy.

There is no question that his later authority proceeded largely from this early work—that he 'took it with him' after he'd left those earlier institutional contexts. But while Darima and her friend also ascribed to Bator a portable linguistic style or identity, something he would carry from one institutional context to another, and from one medium to another, he felt that linguistic practices were institutionally invested and medium-specific. He had abandoned the hyperstandard literary language of his youth when he left newspapers for television in middle age. The fact that he was successful in doing so helps to demonstrate, I would argue, that linguistic practices are shaped and constrained as much by the material demands of media platforms as by the individual predilections of persons.

Darima and her friend, who clearly thought otherwise, were patently wrong about Bator's linguistic decisions. But their interpretation was not simply an example of false

(linguistic) consciousness. They also revealed their own assumptions about how ‘old’ and ‘new’ media interrelate, and what they index about persons. Note the mismatch between their view of an iconic relationship between ‘old’ and ‘new’ media and ‘old’ and ‘new’ humans, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Bator’s actual practices over his own life trajectory of remediating Buryat. This should caution against taking for granted generational or age-based alignments with chronologically older and newer media forms. While, in the Buryat case, different media platforms are associated with more or less advanced language shift, this is less a function of the age of practitioners than of each medium’s material demands and specificities.

## **Conclusion**

Darima and her friend automatically granted Bator the authority of his prior institution and (mis)ascribed certain ideologies—and even practices—to him based on their own understanding of how generational and institutional memberships would impact his language use. This points to how institutions influence what counts as linguistic knowledge while obscuring their own agency and the agency of the objects they produce. In Chapter 7, we saw how the narrative requirements of news stories and the material conditions of the television medium demanded various interviews—from the doctors, the laboratory technician, and the job-seeker—that included a wide array of non-standard features. Airing the interviews extended the imprimatur of the television station’s institutional authority over practices that would not otherwise be considered ‘standard,’ or, in certain contexts, even ‘Buryat.’ Viewers, however, did not look to television’s

material demands or the institutional context when they leveled criticisms of the interviewees and searched for explanations for their speech.

## CHAPTER 9

### Conclusion

When I returned to Ulan-Ude in August 2011, the local media landscape had changed. Buriaad Ünen had a new managing director, and many of the journalists described in this dissertation had moved between institutions, retired, or left Ulan-Ude. As though to emphasize the change, the main newspaper office building, pictured in 2008 in Figure 5.3, was in the process of being renovated, a new skin of shiny peach- and white-colored tiles now hiding the fading blue paint so emblematic of Soviet institutional style. In place of the chipped stones that led to the front door in 2009 was a freshly tiled walkway with a bright flowerbed in full bloom.

Economically, things in Buryatia were looking up, and talk of the “crises” discussed in Chapter 2 had faded. People were genuinely benefiting from government initiatives to combat these crises, particularly initiatives to provide greater support to young families, encourage women to have more children, and resettle emigrants from Buryatia in its abandoned towns<sup>1</sup> to combat the “demographic crisis.”

And yet, the deeper institutional tensions, ideological conflicts, and bewildering disjunctures that have animated the preceding chapters were still alive and well. When

---

<sup>1</sup> For instance, in August 2011 the Republic of Buryatia announced a program to resettle former residents of Buryatia in empty housing in rural parts of Dzhida region, promising subsidies and employment assistance.

one of my language consultants suggested I write an abstract of this dissertation in Buryat, we encountered an unexpected problem in the very first line: there is no accepted term in Buryat for ‘language shift.’ We consulted dictionaries, and I scoured the library’s collection on Buryat linguistics. Finding nothing, I began to ask the sociolinguists I knew in Buryatia, carrying my abstract with me and whipping it out in conference rooms and chance meetings on the street. Surely there was some term for moving from place to place? Could we use a verb for over-wintering cattle or setting up summer camp? There was, of course, the usual additional difficulty that we were mainly speaking Russian, so I was asking not about ‘language shift,’ but about ‘*iazykovoï sdvig*.’ Would a hybrid Buryat-Russian form suffice, like “khèlènèi sdvig”? No one liked this idea. How about “shift”? I asked. Couldn’t that be an internationalism? Like “image” or “jeans”? No. My well-connected friend called his friend in Mongolia, who suggested “shèlzhèltèdèkhi.” What does that even mean? asked a skeptical sociolinguist. No one will recognize it, said another scholar from BNTs. Why is he always suggesting Mongolian terms? cried a third from NGI.

Eventually, the question became less about how to represent ‘language shift’ in Buryat in general than about what it would mean for *me* to represent it in Buryat. The choices before me all seemed laden with implications for ideological positioning between NGI and BNTs, between locating the seat of ‘Buryat’ in the deep history of the steppe and locating it in a dictionary, between resisting the object that I was trying to describe and admitting that it was extremely advanced. Perhaps, I suggested at one point, it would be most honest to write “*iazykovoï sdvig*”—in Russian. My interlocutor chuckled at the irony but argued vociferously against “giving up,” telling me it was important to set a

“good example.” Some of my colleagues were invested in how I would write ‘language shift’ because this would be the first usage. But would a lexicographer care what *I* wrote?

Ultimately, this work lies outside struggles to renegotiate linguistic knowledge and authority in Buryatia. I am a member of none of these institutions, but rather a (not disinterested) outside observer, liberated from many of the interpersonal and political concerns that shape what can be said about Buryat and Buryatia within Buryatia itself. It is not clear what authority my translation of ‘language shift’ or anything I write in Buryat will have (in recognition of which, I channeled the strategy of the time-pressed television journalist and just chose something). This work is too short to represent the full range of opinions, practices, ideologies, and approaches contained in the increasingly sophisticated field of Buryat linguistics and language politics, let alone cultural politics. But I have tried to consider every position and provide a fair account of how media broker the linguistic and cultural knowledge and authority that are so often at issue.

### **Knowledge and authority in shift**

This dissertation has sought to address three key questions in linguistic anthropology, organized around the categories of knowledge, authority, and shift: (1) Who counts as a speaker? (2) Who counts as a speaker worth listening to? (3) How might these evaluations change? To approach these questions, I have analyzed news media in the Buryat territories of Russia as a particular kind of knowledge institution that not only circulates linguistic forms, but also reflects and regulates ideologies about language use and meaning. By focusing on this heavily ideologized and authoritative domain of discursive practice, this dissertation illustrates how linguistic and cultural knowledge and

authority are renegotiated in the context of dramatic changes that are experienced not only as language shift, but as profound sociocultural shift as well.

Chapter 1 introduced the major themes of the dissertation and laid out a linguistic-ethnographic approach to news media, focusing on language ideologies. Chapters 2–4 provided contemporary and historical material on language and media in the Buryat territories, describing Buryat-Russian language shift, revitalization efforts, and local language institutions (Chapter 2), examining the changing roles of Buryat-language news media over the past century (Chapter 3), and laying out the linguistic resources available to speakers and explaining what is at stake in their use (Chapter 4). Chapters 5–7 focused on the language of news media, exploring the linguistic practices and ideologies of and about media personnel in newspapers (Chapter 5), radio (Chapter 6), and television (Chapter 7). Each platform was illustrated through media samples, ethnographic descriptions of the contexts of production and consumption, audiences' responses and interpretations of the language employed, and journalists' metacommentary on their linguistic decisions. Chapter 8 broadened the scope to consider linguistic action in and around the media as a whole, comparing linguistic practices and interpretations across coexisting media platforms.

In sum, the preceding chapters have provided a careful study of the relationship between minority-language media institutions, the media they produce, and the minority language publics they are intended to reach or serve. Based on this study, we can draw two primary conclusions. First, as language shift in this region has progressed, media in the once-dominant native language, Buryat, have taken on an increasingly symbolic (rather than informational or referential) role in daily life, with content becoming more

culturally circumscribed. This progression has highlighted in Chapter 3. This finding helps to explain a fundamental paradox: how minority languages and publics become and remain marginalized, despite and even *via* institutional projects to improve their status.

Second, although media institutions position themselves—and are locally interpreted—as monolithic arbiters of linguistic authority, they in fact manifest great diversity in ideology and praxis. The crux of their authority lies in (belief in) a strong literary standard. Standard Literary Buryat (SLB) is the most salient register for speakers and is held in careful opposition to colloquial, spoken, dialectal, and miscellaneous ‘non-standard’ linguistic practices, according to a powerful language ideology discussed at some length in Chapter 4. Despite the impression that media institutions instantiate SLB, media personnel harbor actually varied and wide-ranging ideologies about language use and the goals and effects of minority-language media, which assume patterns across different media platforms. I have argued that the ideologies and practices characteristic of each medium are shaped and constrained not by the personal predilections of individuals *per se*, but rather by the material demands of specific mediums.

These findings speak more generally to the institutional management of language and the nature of linguistic knowledge. Institutions are logical sites in which to search for authority to and over linguistic knowledge. But, as this dissertation shows, even the most apparently monolithic institutions harbor diverse ideologies. It also shows that language standardization is ongoing. SLB can be considered an established register, and its ongoing use and renegotiation in mass media is a form of enregisterment. However, the many other non-institutionalized repertoires and resources that media personnel and their interviewees draw on also show accretions of linguistic, cultural, political, and religious

authority—albeit flashing and temporary. These do not look like registers, but they could become resources for registers in the future, and in the present, they sort of confuse audience members. Who counts as a speaker and what counts as linguistic knowledge is fractured, unclear, and highly dependent on immediate social context (see especially Chapter 4). Yet, as demonstrated in Chapters 5–8, these evaluations vary in *systematic ways* across media platforms and genres.

These findings also help explain why language shift from Buryat to Russian continues, despite decades of state support for minority language media. Although maintaining distinctions between spoken and written repertoires serves important social functions and is culturally logical (see Chapter 4), the gap between spoken and written forms consistently undermines minority-language revitalization and maintenance efforts in multiple ways: by distancing the minority-language standard, by diffusing linguistic authority, by compartmentalizing linguistic knowledge, and by generating multiple possibilities for what it means to identify a person—including oneself—as a “speaker.” As we saw in Chapters 5–8, audiences tend to defer to journalists and institutions when they are speaking or writing within the media frame. Problematically for the audience, what they are deferring to is actually a wide range of practices. This situation presents an indexical disjuncture between the authority granted to individuals and their actual linguistic practices, unevenly extending the imprimatur of institutional authority over practices that would not otherwise be interpreted as ‘standard.’

## Sentiment in speaking

One of the goals of this dissertation has been to reveal the sentiments involved in language shift: why, in a word, people *care*. The preceding chapters have described instances of insecurity, shame, and other emotional responses in speaking (or not speaking) to show how possessing such knowledge and authority in the context of language shift becomes a *moral* concern.

The moral implications of preserving Buryat are visible in how linguistic knowledge of Buryat is attached to neighboring domains of cultural knowledge. This is illustrated by a typical encounter I had with a group of university students in Ulan-Ude in August 2011. A friend had asked me to speak to her class in Buryat about Mongolian studies in the United States, for the same reasons I had been interviewed for newspapers, radio, and television: to model interest and . (Isn't it true that Buryat is harder than other languages?) They peppered me with the same questions I had grown accustomed to answering from journalists and many other students before them—formulaic, but telling in how they constitute almost a script for the foreign guest. Did I like Buryatia? Had I been to Lake Baikal? Had I celebrated Sagaalgaṅ? Had I danced ėkhor, the traditional Buryat circle dance? We were working our way down the list of places and items emblematic of Buryatia and 'Buryatness.' Had I tried buuza? one of the students asked, referring to the steamed meat dumplings that our vexed babushki were trying to order in Chapter 1. Buuza (R. *pozy*), formed by working dough (usually by hand) around a mixture of onions, garlic, and minced mutton, beef, and/or horsemeat, are the Buryat

national dish.<sup>2</sup> Once we had established that, yes, I had dined on buuza many times and loved them very much, another student upped the ante: Could I *make* buuza? It happened that although I was no great cook, many kind women over the years had taken it upon themselves to teach me this central art, and I could answer honestly that, yes, I could make buuza. Afterward, one of the students told me that our meeting had inspired her to make buuza with her grandmother when she went home to her village for the holidays, adding with an embarrassed giggle that she might try to speak Buryat with her, too. She connected our meeting directly to intergenerational cultural transmission and preservation within her own family, and to her failings on this count thus far. At issue here is not the survival of the Buryat language, culture, people, or public *en masse*, but rather, her relationship with her grandmother.

In this sense, speaking Buryat has taken on a moral importance that is equated with the moral importance of ordering prayers for your relatives at the datsan, observing Sagaalgaṅ with friends and family,<sup>3</sup> or being able to make buuza with your aunt.

## **Methods and (minority-language) media**

A major contribution of the dissertation is methodological. It integrated ethnographic and archival data on media production with fine-grained, formal linguistic analysis of media texts and transcripts and ethnographic data on how the media studied

---

<sup>2</sup> Buryat buuza are generally smaller and leaner than their Mongolian counterparts, buuz. They are similar to Tibetan momo, Turkish and Central Asian manti, or Chinese jiaozi or filled baozi, but characterized by tight circular folds around the top opening. Buryat buuza chefs also tend to eschew pork and dog meat, which they identify as Chinese. The origin of these various dumpling forms and contents can, as a topic of conversation and debate, incite great passion, one's position vis-à-vis their relative deliciousness indicating allegiance to one or another theory of Eurasian cultural history.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion of Sagaalgaṅ, the Buryat Buddhist New Year, appeared in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

are read, watched, listened to, and otherwise used in daily life. Thus breaking down the trichotomy between newsroom-based production studies, decontextualized media analyses, and audience/reception studies, this study has employed a novel holistic approach to elucidate how the language used and manufactured in institutional settings circulates from and into other domains of daily life.

In moving between producers and consumers of media, the study has grappled with a classic problem in minority language media practice: how to define an audience, when both the language and its speakers are shifting targets. An ‘audience,’ after all, can be those who are targeted by media, or those who actually consume it, and these are often quite different subsections of the Buryat language public. Where does Masha, the distraught young woman of Chapters 4 and 5, fit with the growing ranks of Buryat semi-speakers into the Buryat-language media audience? There are several possibilities. If we define ‘audience’ as the set of consumers, Masha is not a member, in that she does not actively consume any Buryat-language media. If ‘consumption’ can include different types of exposure, however, the audience becomes broader and the concept more elastic. She occasionally overhears radio at her grandmother’s house, or discusses something on television with her aunt. You could also argue that she belongs to an indirect audience for Buryat-language newspapers in that she cannot comprehend them, but her enmeshment in Buryat-speaking social networks means that she is nonetheless exposed to the news, information, and cultural commentary circulating through them. And, perhaps most importantly, on the basis of her active control of the spoken language, she is interpellated as an audience member by some—but not all—journalists producing Buryat-language news. In this sense, the audience of Buryat-language media envisioned by journalists may

be coextensive, if not coterminous, with a broad Buryat language public, consisting of persons of widely varying active and passive linguistic competence, interlinked through kinship and social connections.

### **Directions for future research**

All of the media examined in this dissertation rely heavily on writing practices and on the investment of literary authorship into circulated texts, albeit in different ways. Underlying the practices described here is a set of interlocking language ideologies about authoring, translating, and reporting speech. It would be fascinating to explore these issues in (1) a legal context, (2) the ethics of Soviet and post-Soviet journalism, and/or (3) ideologies of intellectual and creative property in the former Soviet Union and ‘emerging markets.’ How are singular or collective “authors” invested in texts? How might authorship be differently ascribed in different media? These issues point toward how subjectivities are invested in texts and other forms of linguistic practice, and the role that institutions play in mediating that process of investment. A jumping-off point could be cases of plagiarism in radio and newspaper offices, which I collected during research for this dissertation.

Another avenue for future research might be attention. Paying attention is necessary for the creation (perhaps even the definition) of a public; a person does not orient around a social fact unless her attention has been drawn to it. To what extent (if at all) is ‘paying attention’ necessary for media to influence language change? How much is this a cognitive question, versus a question of ‘mind’ or a social question? How might studying attention shed light on salience and ascriptions of value?

Finally, future research will need to account for how minority-language news is being brought online—or not—and for the digital future of Buryat language revitalization efforts. The development and incorporation of ‘new’/digital media technologies, alluded to throughout this dissertation, has been uneven across different domains of daily life in Buryatia and across different segments of the population. Digital media were excluded from primary analysis in this research because they have not been institutionalized as an independent news media platform—and, in fact, there is good reason to believe that they will not be anytime soon, for the reasons outlined below. However, the implications of digital media development for language revitalization warrant much closer attention. When I began studying Buryat in 2005, my first tutor exhorted me to learn “correct Buryat” [*pravil’nyi buriatskii iazyk*] by reading the newspaper and talking to as many elderly people as possible. My primary sources on Buryat were a slim introductory volume for Russian speakers, Nicholas Poppe’s classic 1960 grammar, and an ever-growing stack of *Burjaad Ünën* weekly editions. The papers piled up in the corner of my little desk, their pages quickly yellowing in the sun, alongside two enormous, aging tomes—Tsydendambaev’s 1954 Russian-Buryat dictionary and Cheremisov’s 1973 Buryat-Russian dictionary, which seemed perpetually dusty despite the fact that I used them every day.

In a few short years, the options for learning, speaking, and writing Buryat have exploded with the development of new media technologies. Thanks to the efforts of digitally savvy language activists, Buryat enjoys a growing web presence,<sup>4</sup> and it is

---

<sup>4</sup> This has been facilitated by font support for Cyrillic and the “extra letters” of Buryat; however, activists have pointed to limitations of Buryat language encoding, and the republic’s government has officially targeted this as an area for improvement in Buryat language maintenance in coming years (*Ob utverzhdenii* 2010).

featured in video games and in the subtitles of Chinese and American films. The Republic of Buryatia's Ministry of Education and Science has developed and implemented an electronic textbook with a fully searchable Russian-Buryat and Buryat-Russian dictionary comprising several older print dictionaries, including Cheremisov's compilation. BGTRK, the state television company, has begun running a popular series of Buryat language lessons, which are available on youtube. In 2011, I can follow Buryat-language groups and web forums, stay in touch with Buryat friends via text messaging and on social networking sites like Facebook and *V Kontakte* (the Russian-language equivalent of Facebook), and keep up lively correspondence with acquaintances in Buryatia and the Buryat diaspora via email, skype, and a plethora of chat options.

The implications of these various digital communication technologies for Buryat-language journalism are not yet clear. No web- or mobile-based format yet rivals the three platforms of Buryat-language journalism (newspapers, radio, and television); online journalism is rather, as discussed below, supplemental to these more traditional news platforms. During 2008–09, journalists in Russia often asked me about the well-publicized 'crisis of print journalism' in the United States, and were aware of the technological revolution supposedly threatening their livelihood. But their own employment anxieties arose primarily from other quarters: political repression, the ongoing financial crisis, government takeovers of private media, or, of course, native language attrition.

The overwhelming majority of Buryat-language material online is in snippets of video and written in the comments on web fora and sites like youtube, such as in the example in Chapter 2. This kind of media is mainly produced by "real" Buryat speakers

on the “kitchen” model, meaning that it is non-institutionalized, and they are using *razgovornye* resources and repertoires, not SLB. However, much of the production is in writing, in the form of comments, which might suggest that spoken forms are being incorporated into written Buryat, further complicating and undermining the status of SLB users as a single locus of authority. On the other hand, the most authoritative and active commenters tend to be those with institutional connections beyond online fora,<sup>5</sup> so the extent to which this constitutes a real undermining of existing institutions of authority remains to be seen.

Thus far, news media have appeared online via the brick-and-mortar institutions in the Buryat territories that produce the traditional media. Many of the newspapers mentioned in this dissertation have online versions, either as fully developed websites with interactive links to articles (e.g., *Inform Polis*, Tolon) or as storage sites for pdf files (e.g., Khèzhèngè). Initiatives like digitizing Khèzhèngè seem to have come, however, from individual journalists with an interest in online media. For Buryat-language publications like Khèzhèngè and Buriaad Ünen that depend on state funding more than on advertising, it is not clear that there is much institutional incentive to develop an online presence.

Some local radio stations, most notably Radio Rossii and Radio Buriatii, can now be streamed live online. In 2008–09, there was also some interest among radio workers in producing podcasts to remain available on the television-radio company’s website.

Because they would be available continuously for replay, this would radically change the

---

<sup>5</sup> This is an impression based on my engagement with online media and my knowledge of those individuals whom I can track between online and offline communities. I have not (yet) undertaken a systematic study to follow commenters between their online and offline interactions.

nature of radio and the nature of Buryat-language radio, boosting its pedagogical role. The main goal of bringing radio online appeared to be to reach a younger audience. BGTRK has tried instead to reach this audience topically, through youth-oriented radio programming integrated with music, on themes like young student-parents and youth organizations. They use internet references to accomplish this, titling their youth program “*Molodëzh’ tochka ru*” (‘Youth dot ru,’ Молодежь.ру) in reference to Russian website format. Despite the attempt, however, people in their 20s in my study were not aware of the program. It airs only once per month, trying to capitalize on the supposed hipness of internet-based radio stations without instantiating any of the reasons for their success.

As noted in Chapter 7, television was the favored medium of my audience interviewees and focus group participants, and was what they would most like to have access to online. During my study, both Russian- and Buryat-language television journalists were interested in making material available online. The interest was partly out of fear for their jobs—not immediately, but long-term. While they were not feeling impinged upon by ‘citizen journalism’ and the ‘internet revolution’ directly, they were, as noted above, aware of what had been happening to traditional media in the U.S. and Europe with the rise of internet news. Some younger Buryat-language television journalists also saw the internet as a medium for language preservation and wanted to make video available online, as a repository for language study and as a way to get around the continuous reduction of Buryat-language broadcast time. BGTRK has converted their broadcast directly into an online service, such that it is possible to stream their shows on Rossiia 24, Rossiia’s 24-hour news service, and Channel One. However,

as with radio, what audiences have in mind is the ability to access specific shows at any point, so that it is not necessary to plan around broadcast times.

Through official channels, efforts to create such repositories of video are currently limited by technological and financial constraints (the main problem is bandwidth). There is also a lack of expertise. Of the journalists with whom I spoke about putting news media online, most evinced keen interest in the possibility but claimed to personally lack either time or knowledge of how to proceed. State television websites just post headlines—which is interesting as a way of television story practices converging with newspaper story practices, but is not what audiences would like. However, youtube and social networking sites like *V Kontakte* are taking on some Buryat-language video, and some of the more tech-savvy film and television workers in 2009 were looking into streaming television online.

Bringing television production online solves what has been its pedagogical limitation to date: its transience. In 2010, Bayar Zhigmitov, a news anchor and reporter for BGTRK, began a series of Buryat language lessons. They were wildly popular and garnered him an award as one of the year's "Best People of Buryatia" [*Lushchie liudi Buriatii*]. Zhigmitov had trained at NGI to be a schoolteacher, and he used his pedagogical skills to good effect: speaking slowly, using extensive repetition, employing visual aids. Like some other journalists at BGTRK, Zhigmitov has begun posting news broadcasts recorded in the state television studio, as well as these language lessons, as youtube videos. He also has his own blog, [zhigmitov.com](http://zhigmitov.com), where he posts Buryat-language materials prepared for BGTRK. His activities on youtube and his blog have depended, however, on his own personal interests, rather than institutional initiatives.

To summarize, news media online are slowly emerging, but their incorporation into Buryatia's multilingual media landscape has thus far been dependent primarily on the personal proclivities and initiatives of individual journalists, rather than systematic institutional projects. It is also worth noting that digital media and the internet are not the only sites of development or change within Buryatia's news media landscape. Because of the extreme expense of production and the already tenuous status of Buryat-language television (discussed in Chapter 7), recent efforts to create more all-Buryat media have been mostly focused in the cheaper third media platform, radio. FM is preferable to the low FM on which Buryat-language radio programming is currently broadcast because, as outlined in Chapter 6, the radio technology available in people's homes and workplaces, as well as on their cell phones and mobile devices, is increasingly FM. In this context, low FM reads like a Soviet throwback, nostalgic but inadequate for the imagined future of the Buryat language. When I returned to Buryatia in August 2011, parties in a wide range of cultural institutions—NGI, SO RAN, BGU, VARK, and the Ministry of Culture—were independently arguing for the development of an all-Buryat FM radio station. Who will speak on it, and who will listen, remains to be seen.

## APPENDIX A. Timeline of Buryat Media History

<b>1204 (approx.)</b>	Chinggis Khan orders a prisoner to adapt the Uighur script to the Mongol language
<b>1240 (approx.)</b>	Secret History of the Mongols initially composed
<b>1600s</b>	Mahāyāna (Yellow Hat, lamaist) Buddhism is introduced into the Mongolian plateau from Tibet, bringing Sanskrit and Tibetan influences and book culture
<b>1609</b>	First recorded Russian knowledge of Buryats
<b>1628/29</b>	First recorded encounter between western Buryats and Russians
<b>1689, 1727–28</b>	Nerchinsk and Kiakhta Treaties between Russian and China place Buryat lands under Russian control
<b>1700s</b>	Buddhist datsans and monasteries are founded in Buryatia, teaching classical Mongolian and Tibetan languages
<b>early 1800s</b>	Gusinoozersk and Tsongol datsans practice xylographic production, the first form of book printing in Buryatia <sup>1</sup>
<b>1840</b>	Russian Bible Society publishes Old Testament, translated into Mongolian by Protestant missionaries from London (in vertical Mongolian script) <sup>2</sup>
<b>1862</b>	First newspaper published on present-day territory of Buryatia, <i>Kiakhtinskii listok</i> ”, founded in the booming tea capital of Kiakhta, on the Russian-Chinese border
<b>1887</b>	Printing capabilities are found in 29 of 34 Buryat datsans, which have produced around 600 books and pamphlets in Tibetan and Mongolian <sup>3</sup>
<b>1880s+</b>	Russian-language newspapers published regularly in Irkutsk, Chita, and Kiakhta
<b>1895</b>	<u>Züün zügei baidal</u> ( <i>Zhizn’ vostoka</i> ), possibly the first Buryat-Russian bilingual newspaper, published in Chita
<b>1905</b>	Revolution of 1905 leads to relaxation of media laws <i>Zabaikal’skii rabochii</i> (‘Zabaikal’skii worker’), region’s first opposition newspaper, founded
<b>1917–1922</b>	Agvan Dorzhiev devises a Buryat alphabet in classical Mongolian script Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War
<b>June 1918</b>	<i>Pribaikal’skaia Pravda</i> is founded as flagship Russian-language newspaper for the new Bolshevik government in Buryatia

<sup>1</sup> While the technology might have existed in other datsans, it was confirmed in these two datsans in the correspondence of the general-baron P. L. Shilling. Initial xylographs were probably reproductions from Chinese and Mongolian boards brought into Buryatia from the south, i.e. not independently carved Buryat works. See E. N. Grosheva’s excellent history of Buryat-language book publishing (2008).

<sup>2</sup> This was the first of many Christian translations published by Protestant and Russian Orthodox missionaries. The translation was completed with the help of Khori Buryat speakers (Bawden 1985; Grosheva 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Based on a list compiled by Khambo-Lama D. Gomboev in 1887 (Grosheva 2008:21).

1920	<u>Üür</u> ('Dawn'), first Bolshevik Buryat-language newspaper, founded by Czech propagandist Jaroslav Hašek
1921–22	Two Buryat-Mongol autonomous regions formed within the short-lived Far Eastern Republic, in present-day Zabaikal'skii Krai, and the RSFSR
Dec. 20/1, 1921	<u>Shènè baidal</u> ('A New Life') founded in Chita for Buryats of the Far Eastern Republic
Jan. 14, 1922	<i>Krasnyi Buriat-Mongol</i> ('Red Buryat-Mongol') founded in Irkutsk
1923	Two Buryat-Mongol autonomous regions combined into new Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (BMASSR) within the RSFSR, with capital in Verkhneudinsk
Sept. 4, 1923	The Buryat-Mongol Publishing House ( <i>Buriat-Mongol'skoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo</i> ) is established
Oct. 10, 1923	First issue of <i>Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda</i> published from collective formed out of <i>Pribaikal'skaia Pravda</i> + <i>Krasnyi Buriat-Mongol</i>
1924–25	First issue of <u>Büriaad-Mongolun Ünèn</u> published as flagship Buryat-language newspaper for the new BMASSR, on basis of <u>Shènè baidal</u> <sup>4</sup>
March 1926	Buryat-language publications aimed at youth and rural Buryat herders are founded, including <u>Zaluu malshan</u> (R. <i>Molodoi skotovod</i> , 'The Young Herder'); <i>Skotovod i pakhar</i> ('Herder and Ploughman'); and <i>Buriat-Mongol'skii Komsomolets</i> , newspaper of the VLKSM (Komsomol) in Buryatia (to become <i>Molodëzh' Buriatii</i> , 'Youth of Buryatia')
September 1926	Radio development begins in Buryatia with the organization of the Society of Friends of Radio [ <i>Obshchestva družei radio</i> ]
1928	BMASSR officially introduces Latin script for Buryat; implementation lags
1930–34	Additional propaganda journals are begun in the Buryat language, including <u>Soëloi khubiskhal</u> ('Cultural Revolution') and <u>Èrdëm ba shazhan</u> ('Science and Religion'), intended to combat Buddhist and shamanic faiths while promoting 'proper' cultural development
1930	A number of district-level newspapers are founded in the Buryat territories, in both Russian and Buryat: <i>Barguzinskaia Pravda</i> in Barguzin, <u>Iaruuna</u> in Iaruuna, and <u>Khamtyn azhilchi</u> (R. <i>Kolkhoznik</i> , 'Collective Farmer,' to become <u>Agyn Ünèn</u> and <i>Aginskaia Pravda</i> ) in Aga
1931	The first radio <i>tochkas</i> are introduced into homes in Verkhneudinsk
1935–38	Latin alphabet for Buryat implemented in media institutions, with basis in Tsongol-Sartuul dialect
1936	Buryat state radio broadcasting network established
	Intensive 'radiofication' of Buryatia's villages and outlying districts
	Purges hit Buryatia and Mongolia; victims include Baraadin, Rinchino, Zhamtsarano, Amagaev, Agvan Dorzhiev, and thousands of lamas <sup>5</sup>
	Dialect basis for standard Buryat is shifted to Khori

<sup>4</sup> Büriaad Ünèn considers the date of founding to be the first issue of Shènè baidal.

<sup>5</sup> The "Pan-Mongolia" case against Petr Badmaev alone leads to the arrest, imprisonment, or execution of 6,267 people (Baabar and Kaplonski 1999; see also Andreyev 2003).

1937	Borders of the BMASSR are redrawn to divide Buryat territories into three separate pieces: Aga, Ust'-Orda, and what is now the RB Russian is decreed first language of USSR, beginning Russian-language emphasis in schools and a series of orthographic reforms in media
1938	Resolved to replace Buryat Latin alphabet with Cyrillic Some Buryat-language media institutions are retitled in Russian: Aga's collective <i>Khamtyn azhilchi</i> becomes <i>Aginskaia Pravda</i> There are 3 newspapers at the republic level and 16 at the district level
1939–40	Cyrillic alphabet is introduced for Buryat <sup>6</sup>
1943–44	Additional district-level newspapers are founded: <i>Dolina Kizhingi</i> for Khèzhèngè, <i>Ogni Kurumkana</i> for Kurumkan
1951	Cheremisov publishes major dictionary of standard (Khorì-based) Buryat
1954	Additional district-level newspapers are founded: <i>Ust'-Ordyn Ünèn</i>
1958	Moscow drops "Mongol" from "Buryat-Mongol;" BMASSR becomes BASSR, <i>Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda</i> becomes <i>Pravda Buriatii</i> , etc.
1961	Buryat state television broadcasting station founded
Late 1970s– early 1980s	Buryat 'national questions,' including language policy and language shift, begin to reappear in local media
Late 1980s	Gorbachev's <i>glasnost</i> ' policies encourage greater openness, transparency, and critical reporting

---

<sup>6</sup> In 1940-41, the Mongolian People's Republic also resolves to adopt a Cyrillic alphabet for Mongolian, apparently to distance the invading Japanese, but World War II delays implementation until 1946-50. There were some brief attempts to implement Mongolian Cyrillic in Inner Mongolia after its establishment in China, but China abolished its use in 1958. See Shagdarov 1974; Svantesson 1991.

<b>1988–90</b>	A period of intense Buryat nationalism <sup>7</sup> leads to some new Buryat-language initiatives: <i>Tolon</i> , an independent Buryat-language publication, spins out of Aga’s <i>Aginskaia Pravda</i> collective; Khèzhèngè is founded as a separate Buryat-language publication of the <i>Dolina Kizhingi</i> collective
<b>1990–92</b>	USSR dissolves and state institutions undergo major restructuring
<b>October 1990</b>	The Supreme Soviet of the BASSR proclaims Buryatia’s sovereignty
<b>January 1991</b>	<i>Buriat-Mongol’skaia Pravda</i> (BMP) separates into three post–Soviet entities: <i>Buriaad Ünèn</i> (Buryat-language organ of the new government), <i>Buriatiia</i> (Russian-language organ of the new government), and <i>Pravda Buriatii</i> (Russian-language organ of the Communist Party)
<b>1992</b>	Republic of Buryatia officially created Buryatia’s interim parliament signs Federation Treaty of Russia, on condition of ensuring the republic’s sovereignty
<b>Nov. 9, 1992</b>	<i>Inform Polis</i> founded; becomes Ulan-Ude’s largest commercial newspaper

---

<sup>7</sup> Among the most vocal and important organizations of Buryat nationalism during this time were the National Front for the Assistance of Perestroika, “Gèsèr,” and the Buryat-Mongol People’s Party [*Buriat-Mongol Narodnaia Partiia*], or BMNP. The main goals of this party, led by Mikhail Ochirov, were Buryat language revitalization, a reunification of Buryatia based on its pre-1937 borders, decentralization in favor of local government, and the establishment of a demilitarized zone in the Baikal region. In fall 1991, they championed seceding from the Russian Federation and joining Mongolia; an off-shoot, the Movement for National Unity led by Arkadii Tsybikov, went further and suggested unifying the Buryat territories of Russia, the Buryat territories of China, Tuva, Kalmykia, and Mongolia into a single state. These more radical national aspirations did not find wide support, even in republic-level politics, as Buryatia’s people apparently saw their economic and political future in Russia. See Muzaev 1999.

The main active descendants of this period’s political turmoil have been the Buryat National Congress (*Buriatskii Narodnyi Kongress*) and the All-Buryat Association for the Development of Culture (VARK). Both the Buryat National Congress and VARK remained important centers of Buryat nationalism, political foment, and language revitalization initiatives in the 2000s. During fieldwork for this dissertation in 2008–09, they had a reputation for embodying the aging ‘old guard’ of Buryat nationalism, but a major meeting in 2011 thrust the Buryat National Congress and VARK back into the forefront of a reenergized movement for Buryat cultural and linguistic rights, including more access to Buryat-language media.

## APPENDIX B. List of Media Reviewed<sup>8</sup>

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<b>TELEVISION</b>			
<u>Arig Us</u>	RB		2008–09
<u>Müngên sérgé</u> (B. cultural program with Russian subtitles)	RB	weekly	2009–09
Vostochnyi Èkspres (R. news)	RB	daily	2008–09
Ulan-Udè Instruktssiia (R. informational adversting)	RB	daily	2008–09
BGTRK [State Tele-Radio Company “Buryatia”], local station of Rossiia Channel 1; <a href="http://bgtrk.ru/">http://bgtrk.ru/</a>	RB		2008–09, 8/2011
<u>Buriiad oron</u> (B. cultural program)* <sup>9</sup>	RB	weekly	2008–09
<i>Dialog s Prezidentom</i> (R. direct line with V. Nagovitsyn)	RB	occasional	2/2009
<i>Dushoi soediniaia vremena</i> (R. historical program)*	RB		2008–09
<i>Molodëzh’ Buriatii</i> (R. youth program)	RB	weekly	2008–09
<u>Münkhè zula</u> (B. cultural/Buddhist program)	RB	weekly	2008–09
<i>Radost’ vstrechi</i> (R. human interest program reuniting loved ones)*	RB	weekly	2008–09
<u>Sagai suuriaan</u> (B. news and analysis)*	RB	weekly	2008–09
<i>Sport-tsentr: Olimpiiskii dnevnik Buriatii</i> (R. sports; “Olympic diary of Buryatia”)	RB	weekly	2/2009

<sup>8</sup> All media listed here were available in the Buryat territories during 2005–11. This list is not comprehensive; most notably, I am not listing the plethora of national television and radio shows aired on republic-level stations, focusing instead on lesser known programs produced in Buryatia. Much of the print media listed as “Russian Fed.” are also available in other parts of the former Soviet Union and in the Russophone diaspora. Information listed was current during fieldwork for this dissertation. \*Asterisked programs on BGTRK’s Channel 1 also aired on RIK VESTI 24, the 24-hour news channel of Rossiia.

<sup>9</sup> This program, like Sagai suuriaan and Taizan, is themed around Buryat culture but often includes materials that are partly or entirely in Russian. The same is true of *Ulgur*, the Ewenki cultural program.

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<u>Taizan</u> (B. theatrical program)	RB	weekly	2008–09
<u>Toli</u> (B. cultural program)	RB	weekly	2008–09
<i>Tvoi golos</i> (R. political program)	RB	occasional	2/2009
<i>Ulgur</i> (Ewenki cultural program)*	RB	weekly	2008–09
VESTI-Buryatia (B. version)*	RB	2x/day	2008–09
VESTI-Buryatia (R. version)*	RB	2x/day	2008–09
VESTI-Buryatia. <i>Sobytiia nedeli</i> (Events of the Week)*	RB	weekly	2008–09
VESTI-Buryatia. <i>Dezhurnaia chast'</i> (police report)	RB	weekly	2008–09
VESTI-Buryatia. <i>Utro Buriatii</i> (morning news digest)*	RB	8x/day	2008–09
VESTI-Sibir'	Siberia	daily	2008–09
VESTI	Russian Fed.	2x/day	2008–09
BGTRK [State Tele-Radio Company "Buryatia"], local station of Rossiia Channel 24; <a href="http://bgtrk.ru/">http://bgtrk.ru/</a>	RB		2008–09, 8/2011
<i>Afganistan moei pamiati</i> (R. historical program)	RB/Russian Fed.	occasional	2/2009
<i>Aktual'noe interv'iu</i> (R. interview program)	RB/Russian Fed.	occasional	1–2/2009
<i>Interv'iu Buriatiia</i> (R. interview program)	RB	occasional	1–2/2009
<i>Mir sviazi</i>	RB/Russian Fed.		2/2009
<i>Rodnik tepla</i>	RB/Russian Fed.	occasional	1–2/2009
<u>Sagaalgan</u> – 2009 (mixed musical program)	RB	occasional	2/2009
VESTI. <i>Interv'iu</i> (R. interview program)	RB/Russian Fed.	occasional	1–2/2009
VESTI. <i>Kul'tura</i> (R. arts program)	RB/Russian Fed.	1–2x/week	1–2/2009
VESTI. <i>Obzor pressy</i> (R. press review)	RB/Russian Fed.	weekly	1–2/2009
VESTI. <i>Priamaia liniia</i> (R. "Direct line")	RB/Russian Fed.	2x/day, 6 days/week	1–2/2009

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
VESTI. <i>Sport</i>	RB/Russian Fed.	2x/week	1–2/2009
ChGTRK [State Tele-Radio Company “Chita”] in Aginskoe, local station of Channel 1	Zabaikalskii Krai; Aga		2009
VESTI-Aginskii	Aga	daily	2009
IGTRK [State Tele-Radio Company “Irkutsk”]			2009
NTV	Russian Fed.		2005–11
<b>RADIO</b>			
BGTRK [State Tele-Radio Company “Buryatia”], local station of “Radio Rossii”; <a href="http://bgtrk.ru/">http://bgtrk.ru/</a>	RB		2–5/2009
<i>7 Dnei</i> (R. news and analysis; analogue of <i>Sagai amiskhal</i> )	RB	weekly	1–5/2009
<i>Aktual'noe interv'iu</i> (R.)	RB	weekly	1–3/2009
<i>Altargana</i> (R. literary program focusing on Buryat literature)	RB	weekly	1–3/2009
<i>Birakan</i>	RB		2–3/2009
<i>Budem zdorovy</i> (R. health program)	RB	weekly	1–5/2009
<i>Delovaia vstrecha</i> (R. business program)	RB	weekly	1–5/2009
<i>Èdirshuul</i> (R. program for schoolchildren)	RB	2x/month	1–3/2009
<i>Èkonomicheskii barometr</i> (R. business program)	RB	occasional	2008–09
<i>Èvrika</i> (R. program for schoolchildren)	RB		1–3/2009
<i>Gulamta</i> ( <i>Ochag</i> , “Hearth Fire,” B. program on B. traditions)	RB	2x/week	1–7/2009
<i>Korotkoi strokoi</i> (R. news program)	RB	daily	1–5/2009
<i>Mèndè amar, minii buriaad oron</i> (B. morning news and analysis program; analogue of <i>Utro Buriatii</i> )	RB	daily	1–5/2009
<i>Mir severa</i> (R. program on Severobaikal'sk)	RB	occasional	1–2/2009
<i>Muzykal'naia volna</i> (R. program on local music and musicians)	RB	weekly	2–5/2009

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<u>Nomyn khurdè</u> (B. program on Buddhism) <sup>10</sup>	RB	occasional	2008–09
<u>Or'ël – Verzhina</u> (B. and R. sports program)	RB	occasional	1–3/2009
<i>Parlamentskii vestnik</i> (R. and B. news from Narodnyi Khural)	RB	weekly	4–5/2009
<i>Piataia studiia</i> (R. interactive informational program)	RB	occasional	4–5/2009
<i>Respublikanskii novosti</i> (R. and B.)	RB	5x/day, 5 days/week	4–5/2009
<u>Sagai amiskhal</u> (B. news and analysis; analogue of <i>7 Dnei</i> )	RB	weekly	2–5/2009
<i>Slyshu pesni, skazki i legendy</i> (R. songs, stories, and legends)	RB	weekly	4–5/2009
<i>Stepnye melodii</i> (very popular B. program with cultural news and Buryat traditional music)	RB	weekly	1–5/2009
<u>Toonto niutag – Malaia rodina</u> (B. and R. program targeting rural/village audience)	RB	weekly	1–5/2009
<u>Türèl daida</u> (B. agricultural program)	RB	weekly	1–2/2009
<i>Utro Buriatii</i> (R. morning news and analysis program; analogue of <u>Mèndè amar, minii buriaad oron</u> )	RB	daily	1–5/2009
VESTI (B. and R. news)	RB	2x/day	1–7/2009
VESTI (R. national news)	Russian Fed.	2+x/day	1–7/2009
<i>Zemlia rodnaia</i> (“Native Land,” R. analogue of <u>Türèl daida</u> )	RB	weekly	1–2/2009

#### NEWSPAPERS AND PRINT MEDIA<sup>11</sup>

<i>Aginskaiia Pravda</i> (‘Aga Truth’)	okrug (Aga)		2/2009
<u>Akha</u>	district (Akha)		2/2009

<sup>10</sup> BGTRK also broadcasts a weekly Orthodox program hosted by local priests, *S nami Bog* (“God is with us”). Notably, one of Nomyn khurdè’s stated goals is to promote religious tolerance, not a stated goal of *S nami Bog*. This reflects a general imbalance in which programs depicting Buryat culture and traditions are supposed to promote multiculturalism and tolerance [*tolerantnost*] while programs depicting majority Russian culture and traditions are unmarked.

<sup>11</sup> Newspapers predating 2005 are held at NARB, IMBiT, and the National Library of the Republic of Buryatia. I focused this review on papers published in Ulan-Ude/Verkhneudinsk.

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<i>Amur</i>	Irkutsk region		1862
<i>Argumenty i Fakty</i>	Russian Fed.		2008–09
<u>Baigal</u> (Buryat literary journal)	RB		2005–09
<i>Baikal</i> (early Russian-language newspaper)	?		1897, 1903, 1905–06
<i>Barguzinskaia Pravda</i>	district (Barguzin)	2x/weekly; 1599 <sup>12</sup>	2–7/2009
<i>Biulleten</i> 's of trade, internal affairs, etc.	BMASSR	weekly	1921–27
<i>Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda</i> (Buryat-Mongolian Truth, R. version)			
<i>Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda</i>	BMASSR	daily (5– 6x/week); 31,000 in 1938 <sup>13</sup>	2/1929, 4/1930, 2/1939, 2/1949
<i>Pravda Buriatii</i> <sup>14</sup>	BASSR	daily (6x/week)	2/1959, 2/1969, 2/1979, 2/1989
<i>Pravda Buriatii</i>	RB	weekly; 6,000	2/2009
<i>Sem' Dnei</i> (cultural insert of BMP)	BMASSR		1920s?
<u>Buriaad Ünen</u> (Buryat-Mongolian Truth, B. version)			
<u>Buriat-Mongolyn Ünen</u> [Mongolian script]	BMASSR	daily (6x/week)	1924–25, 1929–30
<u>Buriaad-Mongol Ynen</u> [Latin script]	BMASSR	daily (6x/week); 10,000 in 1938 <sup>15</sup>	1–3/1939
<u>Buriat-Mongoloi Ünen</u> [Cyrillic script]	BMASSR	daily (5x/week)	1–3/1949

<sup>12</sup> As of 6 July 2009; this newspaper adjusts its ever-fluctuating print run on an issue-by-issue basis.

<sup>13</sup> NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 3180, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> The post-Soviet incarnation of *Pravda Buriatii*, below, did not remain a state newspaper but became the newspaper of the Communist Party. *Buriatiia* became the Russian-language newspaper of the government and Buriaad Ünen remained the Buryat-language analogue. Thus *Buriat-Mongol'skaia Pravda*'s institutional descendants are both *Buriatiia* and *Pravda Buriatii*.

<sup>15</sup> NARB f. 1, op. 1, d. 3180, p. 79.

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<u>Buriat Ünèn</u> [Cyrillic script]	BASSR	daily (6x/week)	1–7/1959
<u>Buriaad Ünèn</u> [Cyrillic script]	BASSR	daily (6x/week)	1968, 2/1969, 2/1979, 1– 6/1989
<u>Buriaad Ünèn</u> [Cyrillic script with Mongolian script in masthead]	RB	3x/week; 23,000 (1999)	1991, 1994, 1996, 2/1999, 2004
<u>Buriaad Ünèn: Dükhèrig</u> (Buryat Truth: Circle; B. language)	RB	weekly	2005, 2007–09
<u>Buriaad Ünèn</u> (B. language)	RB	daily (on off days of other BÜ pubs.); 30,100 (2008)	2005, 2007–09, 2011
<u>Buriaad Ünèn Biznes Olzo</u> (R. language)	RB	weekly	2/1999, 2/2009
<u>Buriaad Ünèn Sport Tamir</u> (R. language)	RB	weekly; 1000	2/2009
<i>Buriatiia</i> [Buryatia]			
<i>Buriatiia-7</i>	RB	weekly; 32,200	2008–09
<i>Buriatiia</i>	RB	5x/week	2008–09
Cosmopolitan (Russian edition)	Russian Fed.		
<i>Dal'ne-vostochnaia Pravda</i>	Far Eastern Republic	daily?	1920
<i>Dal'ne-vostochnaia Respublika</i>	Far Eastern Republic	4–6x/week	1920–21
<i>Dolina Kizhingi</i> (all Russian-language analogue of B. <i>Khèzhèngè</i> )	district (Khèzhèngè)	weekly	March– July 2009
<i>Golos Buriat-Mongola</i>	Far Eastern Republic		1920
<u>Iaruuna</u> (Buryat-language version)	district (Iaruuna)	monthly	2/2009
<u>Iaruuna</u> (Russian-language version)	district (Iaruuna)	2x/week; 1200	2/2009
<i>Inform Polis</i>	RB	weekly; 30,600 (March 2007)	2005–11
<i>Izvestiia</i>	Russian Fed.		2008–11

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<i>Karavan</i> (lifestyle magazine)	Russian Fed.		2005, 2007–09
<u>Khèzhèngè</u> (all Buryat-language analogue of R. <i>Dolina Kizhingi</i> )	district (Khèzhèngè)	weekly; 350	2–5/2009
<i>Kiakhtinskii listok</i>	Baikal region		1862
<i>Kolkhoznik</i>	Baikal region		
<i>Krasnoe Pribaikal'e</i>	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal		1920–21
<i>Krasnyi Buriat-Mongol</i>	Baikal region		1922–23
<i>MK v Buriatii</i> [ <i>Moskovskii Komsomolets</i> in Buryatia]	RB	weekly	2/2009
<i>Molodëzh' Buriatii</i> [Youth of Buryatia]	RB	weekly; 16,760–17,560 <sup>16</sup>	1989–90, 2/2009
<i>Molodoi Skotovod</i> (R. version of <u>Zaluu malshan</u> , The Young Herder)	BMASSR	3–4x/week	1926
<i>Moia Semia</i>	Russian Fed.		2005, 2007–09
<i>Nabat</i> (Red Russian-language stengazeta)	Irkutsk region	daily	1921
<i>Nomer Odin</i>		weekly	2008–09
<i>Ogni Kurumkana</i>	district (Khuramkhaan)	2x/week; 1000	2–5/2009
<i>Panorama Okruga</i> ('Panorama of the Orkug;' all Russian-language analogue to <u>Ust'-Ordyn Ünèn</u> )	okrug (Ust'-Orda)	1–2x/week; 3300	2–3/2009
<i>Pribaikal'e</i>	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal	3x/week	1906, 1919–21
<i>Pribaikal'skaia Pravda</i> (pro-Red)	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal	2–6x/week	1921–23
<i>Pribaikal'skaia Zhizn'</i> (pro-White)	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal	5–6x/week	1918–19, 1921
<i>Rossiiskaia Gazeta</i>	Russian Fed.		
<u>Tolon</u> ('Ray of Light;' Buryat-language with articles in Russian)	Aga/ "all-Buryat"	weekly	2008–09

<sup>16</sup> Internationally, *Moskovskii Komsomolets* had a circulation of 1,460,000–1,720,000.

publication/station and program	level of distribution	frequency and circulation	dates reviewed
<i>Udinskaia Nov'</i> (recently transitioned from printing some material in Buryat to only Russian)	district (Khorii)	weekly	2/2009
<u>Ugai Zam</u> ('Way of the Ancestors,' a political-historical scholarly newspaper; all Russian-language other than title)	RB?	occasional	2005–09
<i>Ulan-Ude Reklama</i> ('Ulan-Ude Advertisement')	Ulan-Ude		2005–11
<u>Ust'-Ordyn Ünën</u> ('Ust'-Orda Truth,' mostly in Buryat with some Russian articles, up to 1/4)	okrug (Ust'-Orda)	2–3x/month; 1200	2–4/2009
<i>Verkhneudinskii Listok</i>	Baikal region	2–3x/week	1905–06
<i>Vestnik Sovetov Pribaikal'ia</i>	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal		1918
<i>Vestnik</i>	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal	2x/week	1913–14
Vogue (Russian edition)	Russian Fed.		2005, 2007–09
<i>Vostochnoe obozrenie</i>	Irkutsk region		1902, 1905
<i>Vostochno-Sibirskaiia Pravda</i>	Irkutsk region		1951
<i>Zabaikal'skaia Mysl'</i>	Verkhneudinsk, east Baikal	3x/week	1915
<i>Zabaikal'skaia Nov'</i>	Chita region		1917
<u>Zaluu malshan</u> (B. version of <i>Molodoi skotovod</i> , The Young Herder)	BMASSR	3–4x/week	1926

## APPENDIX C. Media Samples

These samples were used for elicitation and analysis in focus groups and in many of the interviews described in this dissertation. (See especially Chapters 5–7.) To maximize comparability, they were all drawn from Buryat-language news media produced in Ulan-Ude around the same time, in February 2009. They were selected to represent a range of common topical genres and were always presented in the order in which they appear here.

**Radio Sample 1. Excerpt of “Sagai amiskhal” broadcast, story on Sagaalgaan preparations.** Aired February 21, ~9:10 a.m.

[musical introduction to “ <u>Sagai amiskhal</u> ”]		
<b>Reporter/host (Dashidondok Amogolonov):</b>		
1	<u>Sagaalganaimnai sariuun sharai üzëgdëzhë</u>	The lovely face of our Sagaalgaan has begun to become visible. Sagaalgaan services <sup>17</sup> are going to begin at the datsans and dugans <sup>18</sup> of (our) Buryatia from February 21. The <u>dügzhüübë</u> <sup>19</sup> this year will happen on February 23. Lama Bayar <sup>20</sup> explains how the Sagaalgaan services are going to proceed in Ulaan-Ude’s Dëëdë-Ongostoi <sup>21</sup> area at the Khambyn <sup>22</sup> khürëë monastic datsan, as well as the meaning [of the services].
2	<u>ëkhilëë. Buriaad oronoimnai dasan</u>	
3	<u>duganguudta Sagaalganai khuralnuud</u>	
4	<u>fevraliin khorin nëgënhëë ëkhilkhën’.</u>	
5	<u>Dügzhüübë münöö fevraliin khorin</u>	
6	<u>gurbanda bolokho.</u>	
7	<u>Ulaan-Üdë khotyn Dëëdë-Ongostoido</u>	
8	<u>orshondo Khambyn khürëë dasanda</u>	
9	<u>Sagaalganai khuralnuud iamar gurimaar</u>	
10	<u>üngërkhëb, mün tèrenei udkha tukhain’</u>	
11	<u>Baiar lama iigëzhë tailbarilna.</u>	

<sup>17</sup> The Buryat here, khuralnuud, refers to religious services; prayer readings. Literally ‘a gathering of monks,’ khural can also be used for other sorts of gatherings or the collective that gathers, such as in the title of the Buryat legislative body or for the innumerable meetings, conferences, symposia, and congressional sessions that characterized the Soviet period.

<sup>18</sup> Dugans are small Buddhist temples for worship, located within temple complexes called datsans (B. dasan, R. *datsan*). “Datsan” is used to refer to both the complexes and individual buildings within them, while dugans are typically smaller individual buildings for specific purposes. The terminology here is from Tibetan Buddhism via Mongolia.

<sup>19</sup> The dügzhüübë is a fire purification ritual conducted in the first days of Sagaalgaan.

<sup>20</sup> Lamas are Buddhist monks. Upon joining a community, they usually take first names, followed by “monk,” so this lama’s title is “Bayar lama.”

Interviewee (Bayar lama):		
12	<u>Khulgana zhèlèè üngèrgèkhédöö hüzhègtèn</u>	<p>With the passing of the Year of the Mouse,<sup>23</sup> believers come to the datsan, having done sinful things in that year, and so,<sup>24</sup> for purification, for the improvement of their karma, for rectification,<sup>25</sup> come to the datsan and worship at the service, [and] appeal to the deities.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>From February 21 at 5:00, in the evening, at Dèèdè-Ongostoi in the Sogshon datsan,<sup>27</sup> the service to bless the <u>balins</u><sup>28</sup> will be going on.</p> <p>Just before the greeting of the [new] year, the lamas prepare the <u>balins</u> [for consecration] to the protector-deities.</p> <p>The <u>balin</u> is an offering which is made of some fine roasted flour,<sup>29</sup> steamed,<sup>30</sup></p>
13	<u>dasanaa erèzhè, zhèl soo khègdèhèn nügèl</u>	
14	<u>iuumèè, nöökhì, sèbèrlèkhyn tülöö,</u>	
15	<u>üilyngöö ürìie khuu haizharuulkhyn tülöö,</u>	
16	<u>sagaaruulkhyn tülöö dasanaa erèzhè,</u>	
17	<u>khuraldaa erèzhè mürgèdèg, burkhad</u>	
18	<u>sakhiuusadtaa khuu khandadag.</u>	
19	<u>Fevraliin khorin nègènhèè taban saghaa,</u>	
20	<u>üdèshyn, Dèèdè-Ongostoimnai Sogshon</u>	
21	<u>dasanda balin adislalgyn khural bolokho</u>	
22	<u>gèèshè.</u>	
23	<u>Zhèlèè ugtakhynгаа urda tèè lamanarnai</u>	
24	<u>sakhiuusadtaa balinaa bèldèdèg.</u>	
25	<u>Balin gèèshèn' ürgèlöö haikhan shamar</u>	
26	<u>iuumè khuuraad, tohotoi ünzhègèteigöör,</u>	

<sup>21</sup> Dèèdè-Ongostoi is better known by its Russian name, *Verkhniaia Berèzovka*. This is the name of both a popular datsan and the town in which it is located, a growing settlement on the outskirts of Ulan-Ude.

<sup>22</sup> Genitive of Khamba / khambo, the highest position in a Mongolian Buddhist monastery; here also a reference to this datsan's affiliation with the Pandito Khambo lama or "High lama" of Buryat Buddhism, headquartered at a growing monastic complex in nearby Ivolginsk datsan. The current Khamba lama, Damba Aiusheev, is a controversial figure but has considerable religious and political clout, currently serving as official representative of Buddhism in Russia to the Kremlin.

<sup>23</sup> In February 2009, the Year of the Earth Mouse (khulgana) was ending and the Year of the Earth Ox (ükhèr) was beginning. The Year of the Mouse is analogous to the Year of the Rat elsewhere.

<sup>24</sup> The Buryat here, nöökhì, is a colloquialism of the longer form ünöökhì, 'as you all should well know.'

<sup>25</sup> 'To whiten,' 'to purify,' 'to make things right.'

<sup>26</sup> The Buryat here, burkhad sakhiuusad, refers to sacred items taken to iconically represent deities or instantiate their protection—e.g., statues, figurines, and two-dimensional images as well as talismans, amulets, and consecrated objects. Burkhad refers to a range of Buddhist deities, including buddhas, bodhisattvas, and protector-deities associated with Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism. Hakhiuuhan is a common Buryat term for the talismans and amulets that many lay Buddhists wear, but this lama uses the Mongolian pronunciation sakhiuusad, versus standard Buryat hakhiuuhad, suggesting that he learned the term in a Buddhist scholastic context. There is some slippage here between the items representing or instantiating deities and the deities themselves.

<sup>27</sup> Main hall for gatherings and religious services in a datsan complex.

<sup>28</sup> Balins are small figurines of dough, made specifically for Sagaalga, which are supposed to be physically rolled over the body to take on the sins, bad karma, and negative energy of the preceding year.

<sup>29</sup> The Buryat here, shamar, refers to roasted flour that is a popular addition to tea, usually with milk or cream in Buryatia and with salt and milk or butter in Mongolia.

<sup>30</sup> I.e., cooked on a stovetop without oil. Iuumè here is a generalizer, pluralizer, or indefinite marker.

27	<u>arban khangal sakhiusadtaa khamag</u>	mixed with [sweet cream] butter; we will
28	<u>haikhan balin ürgél ürgédègbdi.</u>	make all beautiful <u>balin</u> offerings to the
29	<u>Ènèèkhèn balin ürgélöö bidè khuu tэндè</u>	ten protector-deities. <sup>31</sup>
30	<u>huuzha adislanabdi.</u>	We all bless these <u>balin</u> offerings sitting
31	<u>Sakhiusanainгаа khuralainгаа urda тее</u>	right there.
32	<u>bèldènébdi.</u>	We prepare this before the consecration
33	<u>Fevraliin khorin khoërto iuhèn saghaa,</u>	ritual. <sup>32</sup>
34	<u>üglöönei, Iamandaga, Gombo, Hama,</u>	On February 22 from 9:00, in the morning,
35	<u>Zhamsaran, Shoizhol sakhiusadaa</u>	we are doing <sup>33</sup> the Yamāntaka, Gombo,
36	<u>khuranabdi.</u>	Lhamo, Zhamsaran, [and] Shoizhol <sup>34</sup>
37	<u>Adislahan balin iuumèèè khuu ürgénèbdi.</u>	protector-deity services.
38	<u>Tiigèèèd sakhiusadaa urizha, ürgél mürгél</u>	[And] we offer all of our blessed <u>balins</u> .
39	<u>khèzhè, nügèlöö namanshalzha, hainii</u>	Then we invite the protector-deities, do the
40	<u>üreözhè, khuralaa khuranabdi.</u>	offerings, proclaim our sins, give
41	<u>Khorin gurbanda—fevraliin—iuhèn sagta,</u>	blessings, [and] do the service.
42	<u>üglöönei, akhiaad Iamandaga, [someone</u>	On the 23rd—of February—at 9:00, in the
43	<u>coughs in background] Gombo, Hama,</u>	morning, we’ll be doing once again the
44	<u>Zhamsaran, Shoizhol sakhiusadaa</u>	Yamāntaka, [someone coughs in
45	<u>khuranabdi.</u>	background] Gombo, Lhamo, Zhamsaran,
46	<u>Üdèshyn zurgaan saghaa manai dügzhüübè</u>	[and] Shoizhol protector-deity services.
		From 6:00 in the evening our <u>dügzhüübè</u>

<sup>31</sup> This might be a reference to the Ten Protectors, or *Dharmapālas*, of Mongolian Buddhism. Khangal means both ‘provision’ or ‘protection’ and ‘nice smell,’ ‘scent,’ or ‘aroma.’

<sup>32</sup> This refers to a special khural, devoted to the protector-deities.

<sup>33</sup> The Buryat verb here and below in line 40 is khurakha, a spoken (*ust.*) form for ‘conducting religious services,’ as in khural khurakha. It has long been part of literary Buryat and was probably demoted to “*ustnaia*” status in dictionaries during the Soviet period for political reasons.

<sup>34</sup> These protector-deities have analogues in other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism: Iamandaga = Yamāntaka or Vajrabhairava, wrathful emanation of Mañjushrī; Gombo = Mahākāla, wrathful emanation of Avalokiteshvara or Chakrasamvara; Hama = Lhamo, Lord of Death; Zhamsaran = Begtse; Shoizhol = Choijil, Dharma King, protector of the dharma.

<sup>35</sup> The lama here addresses “zhindaguud,” a specialized Mongolian Buddhist term for people coming frequently to worship at the datsan, akin to parishioners. He refers obliquely to the fact that the datsans are so swamped with cars and people during dügzhüübè that some people miss the services entirely.

<sup>36</sup> The lama refers here to two fires, into which participants will throw their symbolic spiritual refuse—negative feelings, afflictions, sins, etc.—from the preceding year (sor). The fireplaces are sometimes brick or stone constructions, or sometimes are large haystacks that burn with a dramatic bonfire effect. More obliquely, he refers to a traditional Buryat spatial and philosophical organization according to which thoughts can be ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ corresponding with notions of psychological or spiritual purity in both Buddhism and shamanism. Two bonfires represent the negative energy and karma of the preceding year and the positive energy and karma of the coming year. Correspondingly, gers, mountains, buildings, and so on have a ‘good side’—baruun, ‘right,’ ‘the right-hand side,’ or ‘the west’—and a ‘bad side’—khoito, ‘the north.’

<sup>37</sup> He uses a colloquial plural of “lama” here, lamanuud, instead of standard lamanar that he used above in line 23.

<sup>38</sup> The lama says rüügèè here for ‘into’; standard Buryat is ruugaa.

47	<u>èkhildэг.</u>	begins.
48	<i>[sound of a creaky door opening and</i>	<i>[sound of a creaky door opening and</i>
49	<i>closing in background]</i>	<i>closing in background]</i>
50	<u>Zhindaguud, hüzègtèn èrtè erèè haa, hain</u>	It will be good if parishioners and
51	<u>baikha.</u>	believers arrive early. <sup>35</sup>
52	<u>Khoër talada sor gargadag tүүдэг baikha.</u>	At two sides there are fireplaces to burn
53	<u>Talkhaar béeè arshaad, sèbèrlèèd, tiishèn’</u>	the <u>sor</u> . <sup>36</sup>
54	<u>khaiadag tiimè khoërdokhi tүүдэг baikha.</u>	There is a second fireplace into which you
55	<u>Tiigèèd dügzhüübün үдэр zhindaguud</u>	will throw away the dough, having
56	<i>[...someone coughs...]</i> <u>suglardag, übshè</u>	cleansed [and] purified your body with it.
57	<u>khabshaiaa, zobohon zobolongoo, бүкhy</u>	Then the day of the <u>dүgzhüübè</u> the
58	<u>muuiaa orkhikhyn түлөө èнè khuralda</u>	parishioners <i>[...someone coughs...]</i> gather,
59	<u>erèdэг iuumè.</u>	arrive at this service in order to throw
60	<u>Dүgzhüübèdèmnai lamanuudnai</u>	away their diseases, suffering, and every
61	<u>ariuudkhahan balin iuumè Shoizhol</u>	kind of badness.
62	<u>sakhiuusandaa үргèzhè, sor gargadag.</u>	At the <u>dүgzhüübè</u> , the lamas offer the
63	<u>Sor gargakhadaa khuralaa khurazha,</u>	purified <u>balins</u> <sup>37</sup> to the Shoizhol protector-
64	<u>Shoizhol sakhiuusandaa balin iuumè</u>	deity and take out the <u>sor</u> .
65	<u>үргèzhè, muu зүг рүүгèè soroingoo iuumè</u>	While we’re doing the service we take out
66	<u>gargadag iuumè.</u>	all the <u>sor</u> , offer the <u>balins</u> to the Shoizhol
67	<u>Tiigèèd бүкhy arad zon, zhindag, hüzègtèn</u>	protector-deity, [and] bring out the <u>sor</u>
68	<u>èнè Dèèdè-Ongostoiingoo dasan erèèd</u>	itself to <sup>38</sup> the bad direction.
69	<u>mүргèdэг, zonoingoo khamag үйлè</u>	So all the people, parishioners, believers
70	<u>khèrègyen’ daazha abazha, iigèzhè</u>	having arrived at the Dèèdè-Ongostoi
71	<u>kharazha iabakhyn түлөө èнè Shoizhol</u>	datsan, worship, and we all appeal to this
72	<u>sakhiuusandaa khandanabdi.</u>	Shoizhol protector-deity, so that he takes
		on all their actions [and] watches over
		them.
[musical interlude and transition to next story]		

**Radio Sample 2. Excerpt of “Sagai amiskhal” broadcast, story on Khèzhèngé newspaper.** Aired February 21, ~9:10 a.m.

[musical interlude and transition]		
<b>Reporter/host (Dashidondok Amogolonov):</b>		
1	<u>“Sagai amiskhal” gèhèn damzhuulga</u>	On the air <sup>39</sup> is the broadcast “Spirit of the
2	<u>agaarai dolgindo. (.)</u>	Times.” (.)
3	<u>Manai teleradiokompaniin</u>	Correspondents <sup>40</sup> of our tele-radio
4	<u>surbalzhlagshad Respublikyn prezidentyn</u>	company were once again selected <sup>41</sup> to
5	<u>shanda khürtèkhyn tülöö zhurnalistnuudai</u>	receive Republic presidential awards at the
6	<u>khoërdokhi kharalgada dakhinaa</u>	second examination of journalists.
7	<u>èrkhimlèbè.</u>	
8	<u>Bidèntèi sug khüdèldèg Alla Mal’tseva</u>	Our co-worker Alla Mal’tseva <sup>42</sup> received
9	<u>zhèlèi èrkhim radiozhurnalist gèhèn ünder</u>	the high title of Best Radio Journalist of
10	<u>nèrè zèrgèdè khürtöö.</u>	the Year.
11	<u>Buriaadai gürenèi televideniin zhurnalist</u>	Buryat state television journalist Tatiana
12	<u>Tat’iana Vygotskaia zhèlèi èrkhim</u>	Vygotskaia <sup>43</sup> was named Best Television
13	<u>telezhurnalist gèzhè nèrlègdèè.</u>	Journalist of the Year.
14	<u>Buriaad respublikyn araduudai koorondo</u>	The creative team that established the
15	<u>kharilsaa gurimshuulka khèrègtè üürgè</u>	television broadcast “The Joy of
16	<u>nülöö üzүүлhènéi tülöö gèhèn nominatsida</u>	Meeting” <sup>44</sup> won a nomination for its role
17	<u>“Uulzalgin baiair” gèhèn teledamzhuulga</u>	in promoting good relations between the
18	<u>baiguulhan zokhèokhy бүлэг èrkhimlèè.</u>	peoples of the Republic of Buryatia.
19	<u>Tiikhèdè Buriaadai radiogoi “Doloon</u>	Also, <sup>45</sup> Irina Sandakova, author <sup>46</sup> of
20	<u>khonog” gèhèn mèdèèsèlèi damzhuulgyn</u>	“Seven Days,” Buryat radio’s
21	<u>aavtor Irina Sandakova Iaroslav Gashegai</u>	informational broadcast, won the Jaroslav
22	<u>nèmèmhètè shanda khürtöö.</u>	Hašek <sup>47</sup> award.
23	<u>Gèkhè zuura shagnalda khürtègshèdèi</u>	Among the laureates is a journalist of the
24	<u>nègèn “Khèzhèngyn gol” soninói</u>	“Khèzhèngyn gol” newspaper, Bato-
25	<u>zhurnalist Bato-Tsèrèn Dugaarov bolono.</u>	Tsèrèn Dugarov. <sup>48</sup>

<sup>39</sup> The Buryat here—agaarai dolgindo—is a very literal neologism for Russian *v èfire* (‘on the air’): ‘on the wave (dolgi[n]) of the air (agaar).’

<sup>40</sup> The Buryat term used here, surbalzhlagsha, is an uncommon Mongolic-origin term used only in SLB, and rarely at that. *Korrespondent* is more common. Note the use of Russian-origin *teleradiokompani* in the preceding line and *zhurnalist* in the following line, demonstrating mixed use of common Russian-origin terms, Buryat grammatical nativization, and the rarer Mongolic substitutions more characteristic of purism. See further discussion in Chapter 6.

<sup>41</sup> The verb here, èrkhimlèkhè, means that they were selected as the very best; they excel.

<sup>42</sup> The reporter pronounces her name with Russian phonology, without lengthening the vowels as is sometimes done to achieve Buryat nativization.

<sup>43</sup> This name receives the same treatment.

<sup>44</sup> This broadcast is more often spoken of with its Russian title, “*Radost’ vstrechi*.”

<sup>45</sup> The Buryat here, tiikhèdè, is a phatic conjunction used frequently in spoken Buryat to mean not only ‘also,’ but also ‘so,’ ‘well,’ or ‘and,’ linking statements. This is often used by radio and television journalists, particularly as a transition between stories (see Television Sample 1, below, for example) but is even more prevalent in everyday speech and in the speech of interviewees, as is especially clear in the transcript of the syphilis story in Chapter 7.

<b>Interviewee (Bato-Tsèrèn Dugarov):</b>		
26	<u>Manai “Khèzhèngyn gol”</u> [ <i>loud bang in background</i> ] <u>gèzhè gazetèdè olon zon</u>	<p>Many people work at our “Khèzhèngè Valley” [<i>loud bang in background</i>] newspaper.</p> <p>In all 15 persons.</p> <p>Four or five writers, [<i>loud bang in background, obscured voices</i>] at most.</p> <p>The “<u>Khèzhèngè</u>” newspaper is published in the Buryat language [with a print run of] 350 copies.</p> <p>And the “<i>Dolina Kizhingi</i>” newspaper is published in the Russian language [with a print run of] 1500 copies.</p> <p>Our editor is the talented young man Bayar Kimovich Shirapov.</p>
27	<u>azhalladag.</u>	
28	<u>Bükhydöo arban taban khun.</u>	
29	<u>Bèshèèshè zonuudnai dürbè taban khun.</u>	
30	[ <i>loud bang in background, obscured voices</i> ] <u>oroidool.</u>	
31	<u>“Khèzhèngè” gazetèmnai buriaad khèlèn</u>	
32	<u>dèèrè gurban zuun tabin khèhègèèr</u>	
33	<u>garadag.</u>	
34	<u>Orod khèlèn dèèrè “Dolina Kizhingi”</u>	
35	<u>gazetèmnai mianga taban zuun khèhègèèr</u>	
36	<u>garadag lè daa.</u>	
37	<u>Manai redaktor zaluu bèrkhé khübüün</u>	
38	<u>Baiar Kimovich Shirapov gèzhè.</u>	
39		
40		
<b>Reporter (unnamed):</b>		
41	<u>Ta khèdy zhèl ènè redaktsida azhallazha</u>	<p>How many years have you (<i>V.</i>) worked in this editorial collective?</p> <p>[Tell us] your opinion [<i>sound of door squeaking</i>] about journalism as a profession.</p>
42	<u>bainat?</u>	
43	<u>Zhurnalistyn mèrgèzhèl</u> [ <i>sound of door</i>	
44	<u>squeaking</u> ] <u>tukhai tanai hanamzha.</u>	
<b>Interviewee (Bato-Tsèrèn Dugarov):</b>		
45	<u>Bi</u> (.) [ <i>sounds of obscured voices, heels walking down a hallway in background</i> ]	<p>I (.) [<i>sounds of obscured voices, heels walking down a hallway in background</i>] having graduated from the Buryat pedagogical institute<sup>49</sup> worked two or three years as a teacher and after that (.) now 22 years I have worked as a journalist.</p> <p>So, I like this profession of journalism [<i>voices in background</i>] very much.</p>
46	<u>Buriaadai bagshyn institut düürgèèd khoër</u>	
47	<u>gurban zhèl bagshaar khüdelhènéi hüüldè</u>	
48	<u>(.) münöo khorin khoër zhèl soo</u>	
49	<u>zhurnalistaar khüdelzhè bainab.</u>	
50	<u>Tiigèèd namda ènè zhurnalistyn mèrgèzhèl</u>	
51	[ <i>voices in background</i> ] <u>ekhè</u>	
52	<u>haikhashaagdana.</u>	
53		

<sup>46</sup> The journalist nativizes Russian *avtor* (‘author’) here, applying Buryat vowel length to the initial vowel despite the word’s standard Buryat spelling, avtor (автор). He does not nativize the Russian-sounding name following.

<sup>47</sup> This award, surviving from the Soviet period, is named for the Czech propagandist who founded Buryatia’s first bilingual Bolshevik newspaper. For background, see Chapter 3.

<sup>48</sup> The journalist lengthens the stressed second vowel of Dugarov’s (very common) last name, pronouncing it [Duga:rov] rather than standard Buryat spelling and pronunciation “Dugarov.” This might constitute an over-application of Buryat vowel length.

<sup>49</sup> The Buryat pedagogical institute is most often referred to as the “*pedinstitut*” in both Russian and Buryat. Here the interviewee chooses an alternate (also common) form, Buriaadai bagshyn institut, combining the Buryat word for ‘teacher,’ bagsha, with Russian-origin *institut*.

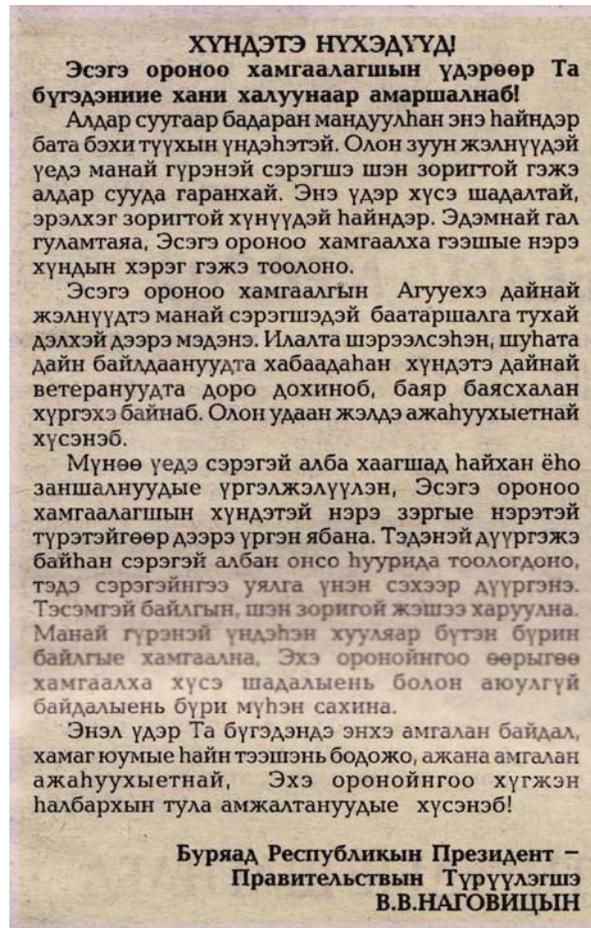
54	<u>Goë gèzhè hanadagbi.</u>	I consider it wonderful.
55	<u>Saashadaa gazetèmnai khododoo</u>	In the future, may our newspaper prosper,
56	<u>dèlgèrzhè, khun zonoo uiaruulzha iaazha,</u>	touch people's hearts, <sup>50</sup>
57	<u>khododoo bütèn büleèn.</u>	stay on good footing,
58	<u>müngè salingaar dutaldangüi, (.) bükhy</u>	not lack money, (.) [and] may all
59	<u>zhurnalistnuud azhaltai khododoo baig lè</u>	journalists always have work.
60	<u>gèzhè bi zakhikha bainab.</u>	
[musical interlude and transition to next story]		

---

<sup>50</sup> The interviewee uses a colloquial form here, iaazha following a verb, for emphasis.

**Newspaper Sample 1. A ritualized political statement, translated into Buryat from Russian.**

Buriaad Ünen, February 2009, p. 1.



1	<b><u>KHÜNDÉTÈ NÜKHÈDÜÜD!</u></b>	<b>RESPECTED FRIENDS!</b>
2	<b><u>Èsègè oronoo khamgaalagshyn</u></b>	<b>With warm friendship I wish you (V.) a</b>
3	<b><u>üderöör Ta бүгэдэниие khani khaluunaar</u></b>	<b>[happy] Day of the Defender of the</b>
4	<b><u>amarshalnab!</u></b>	<b>Fatherland!<sup>51</sup></b>
5	<b><u>Aldar suugaar badaran manduulhan ènè</u></b>	<b>Raised blazing with glory, this holiday</b>
6	<b><u>haindèr bata bèkhi tüükhyn ündèhètèi. Oлон</u></b>	<b>has enduring historical roots. It has [gone</b>
7	<b><u>zuun zhèlnüüdèi üedè manai gürènèi</u></b>	<b>down in glory] that in the course of many</b>
8	<b><u>sèrègshè shèn zorigtoi gèzhè aldar suuda</u></b>	<b>hundreds of years, our state soldier has been</b>

<sup>51</sup> Buryat oron is usually translated as *strana* (‘country’) in Russian, and like *strana* (and “country”) is also sometimes used to mean ‘nation-state’ or ‘territorial nation,’ as in references to the Republic of Buryatia as buriaad oron (see the use of “buriaad oron” in Radio Sample 1, above, and discussion in Chapter 6). With the focus on territory, oron can be distinguished from arad and arad zon (Russian *narod*, ‘people’ or ‘nation-type people’), aradai and arad zonoj (*narodnyi*, ‘people’s’ or ‘national’), natsa (*natsiia*, ‘true nation’), and gürèn (*gosudarstvo*, ‘state’). On Èsègè oron (‘Fatherland’), see Chapter 5.

9	<u>garankhai. Ènè üdèr khüsè shadaltai,</u>	<p>courageous. This day is the holiday of powerful<sup>52</sup>, brave individuals. They think that defending one’s hearth fire<sup>53</sup> [and] Fatherland is a matter of honor.</p> <p>[People] around the world know about the heroism of our soldiers in the years of the Great Fatherland War.<sup>54</sup></p> <p>To the respected war veterans who forged victory [and] participated in the bloody war battles, I bow deeply, [and] express my gratitude. I wish for you (<i>V.</i>) to live many long years.</p>	
10	<u>èrèlkhèg zorigtoi khünüüdèi haindèr.</u>		
11	<u>Èdèmnai gal gulamtaia, Èsègè oronoo</u>		
12	<u>khamgaalkha gèèshye nère khündyn khèrèg</u>		
13	<u>gèzhè toolono.</u>		
14	<u>Èsègè oronoo khamgaalgyn Agueekhè</u>		
15	<u>dainai zhèlnüüdtè manai sèrègshèdèi</u>		
16	<u>baatarshalga tukhai dèlkhèi dèèrè mèdènè.</u>		
17	<u>Ilalta shèrèèlsèhèn, shuhata dain</u>		
18	<u>baildaanuudta khabaadahan khündètè dainai</u>		
19	<u>veteranuudta dorò dokhinob, baiar</u>		
20	<u>baiaskhalan khürgèkhè bainab. Olon udaan</u>		
21	<u>zhèldè azhahuukhyetnai khüsèneb.</u>		
22	<u>Münö üedè sèrègèi alba khaagshad</u>		<p>Those performing military service in today’s era continue the excellent traditions, [and] they carry the respected title<sup>55</sup> of the Defender of the Fatherland high and in glory. Their fulfillment of military service is considered in a special place, [and] they are fulfilling their military duty with honor. They exemplify patience and bravery. According to the constitution, they defend the integrity of our state, [and] they exhaustively protect the self-defending forces [and] national security of the Motherland.<sup>56</sup></p>
23	<u>haikhan èho zanshalnuudye ürgèlzhèlülèn.</u>		
24	<u>Èsègè oronoo khamgaalagshyn khündètèi</u>		
25	<u>nère zèrgye nèrètèi türètèigöör dèèrè ürgèn</u>		
26	<u>iabana. Tèdènéi düürgèzhè baihan sèrègèi</u>		
27	<u>alban onso huurida toologdono, tètè</u>		
28	<u>sèrègèingèè uialga ünèn sèkhèèr düürgènè.</u>		
29	<u>Tèsèmgèi bailgyn, shèn zorigoi zhèshèè</u>		
30	<u>kharuulna. Manai gürènéi ündèhèn</u>		
31	<u>khuuliaar бүтэн бүрин bailgye khamgaalna.</u>		
32	<u>Èkhè oronooingoo öörygöo khamgaalkha</u>		
33	<u>khüsè shadalyen’ bolon aiuulgüi baidalyen’</u>		
34	<u>büri mühèn sakhina.</u>		

<sup>52</sup> The Buryat here, khüsè shadal, is used heavily on February 23 and May 9 for ‘strength,’ ‘might,’ and ‘power,’ in consonance with these holidays’ focus on military force and traditional masculinity. It appears below again in line 33. Another common word here is zorig, ‘courage’ or ‘bravery,’ in lines 8, 10, and 29.

<sup>53</sup> The reference to one’s gal gulamta, ‘hearth fire,’ carries special emotional significance in the Buryat cultural context. As a symbol of home, family, and cultural and linguistic continuity, the gal gulamta is used in the titles and imagery of popular Buryat culture-themed radio and television programs, as well as newspaper sections.

<sup>54</sup> Literally, ‘the Great war of the defender of the Fatherland,’ but Èsègè oronoo khamgaalgyn Agueekhè dain” is a set phrase for WWII, known in the Russian Federation as the Great Fatherland War (*Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina*).

<sup>55</sup> “Nère zèrgè,” literally ‘name rank,’ appears to have been created in the early Soviet period for Russian *zvanie*, ‘title.’ *Zvaniia* include not only job-related titles, but also a host of orders, ranks, and prizes awarded by various institutions and levels of government. Public recognition in the form of *zvaniia* was an important element of Soviet governmentality, and they have tremendous importance today as well, particularly among the veterans addressed in this statement.

<sup>56</sup> On Èkhè oron (‘Motherland’), see Chapter 5.

35	<u>Ènèl üdèr Ta bügèdèndè ènkhè amgalan</u>	This very day I wish to you ( <i>V.</i> ) all a peaceful existence, <sup>57</sup> meditating all things to the good side, [that] your ( <i>V.</i> ) lives be peaceful, [and] successes in the blossoming of the Motherland!
36	<u>baidal, khamag iuumye hain tèeshèn'</u>	
37	<u>bodozho, azhana amgalan azhahuukhyetnai,</u>	
38	<u>Èkhè oronoingoo khügzhèn halbarkhyn tula</u>	
39	<u>amzhaltanuudye khüsènéb!</u>	
40	<b><u>Buriaad Respublikyn Prezident –</u></b>	<b>President of the Republic of Buryatia and</b>
41	<b><u>Pravitel'stvyn Tüüülégshè</u></b>	
42	<b><u>V. V. NAGOVITSYN</u></b>	
		<b>V. V. NAGOVITSYN</b>

---

<sup>57</sup> The Buryat here for 'peace' or 'a peaceful life or existence,' "ènkhè amgalan baidal," is a bit flowery, with repetition in the 'paired words' ènkhè and amgalan. Similar features of flowery style continue in this paragraph with "azhana amgalan azhahuukh-" (also 'a peaceful life') in line 3.



Шэнэ Комушкадаа (ул. Барнаульская, 164 «а») өөрийн бодото газар дээр түбхинэн «Тэнгэри» гэнэн бөө шажанай эмхин байшан хаяхан орожо сэрмээрээ, ханаарнь дээрэ үлгэгдэн зурагууды харан, журналистнуудта хөөржэ байһан тус эмхин түрүүлэгшэ, педагогикын эрдэмэй кандидат, мэдээжэ бөө, «Буряад үнэн-Дүхэригэй» эмхидхэдэг «Буряадай түрүү хүнүүд – 2007» гэнэн конкурсын лауреат Баир Жамбалович ЦЫРЕНДОРЖИЕВАЙ тайлбаринууды шагнабабди.

- Буряад зон табан хүлдэ тэмдэгүүдтэй, хахюуһадтай (то-тем) юм. Түрүүшын зураг дээрэ буряад зоной, сартуул, сонгоол, бусад уг гарбалай хүр хүлды дээшэн үргэдэг Буха ноён баабайе – Зайлаг тэнгэрийн хүбүүе, бүхы зоной хахюуһание харанат. Хоёрдохи зураг дээрэ эхирэдэй тахидаг Эрээн гутаар эсэгэ (загаһан) зураатай. 3-дахи зураг дээрэ бөө зоной хахюуһан болодог бүргэдые харанат. Пэеы гэрэй, газар уһанай, нара харын холбоо баридаг бүргэд гээшэ. Харин дүрбэдэхи зураг дээрэ Хун шубуун хахюуһан хадаа хори буряадуудай, хонгоодор зоной хүр хүлдын тэмдэг болоно:

Хун шубуун гарбалтай,  
Хуһан модон сэргэтэй  
Хори буряад зон...  
гэлсэдэг ха юмбиди.

Табадахи зураг дээрэ монгол туургата арадай хахюуһан хүхэ мүнхэ тэнгэриһээ бууһан Бүртэ шоно болоно бшуу. Монгол арадай эгээл ехэ шүтөөн болодог Ойхон дээрэ (мыс Шаманка) Ойхон буурал баабайн ордон энэ зураг дээрэ харуулагдана, яхад, тува, хакас, алтай, буряад - бүхы Сибириин зоной нангин газар. Ехэ ордон хадаа байгаалин эгээл ехэ шүтөөниин болоно. Эдэ фото-зурагууд дээрэ бөө шажанай тайлганууд, ёһо гуримууд харуулагдана, - гэжэ һонирхолтойгоор хөөрэнэн Баир Жамбаловичтай ехэ зохид байдалтай кабинет соонь орожо, бөө шажан, Сагаан харын һайндэрые урдын

«Тэнгэри»



заншалаар хайшан гэжэ угтадаг байһан тухайнь, «Тэнгэриден» эмхидхэгдэхэ байһан мүнөө үеын мүргэлнүүд, ёһо гуримууд тухай хөөрэлдэбди, Сагаан харын амаршалга, Сагаалганай үрэл хүсэлыень уншагшадтаа дамжуулха болобди.

#### УРДАНАЙ ЗАНШАЛ УДХАТАЙ (Манай хөөрэлдөөн)

- Баир Жамбалович, арадай баялиг болохо урданай ёһо заншал, бөө шажан, тэрэ үеын Сагаалган тухай хөөржэ үгыт.

- Буряад хэлээ, ёһо заншалаа үри хүүгэдтээ үлөөхэ, өөһэдөө сахиха, үргэхэ, олондо ойлгуулха зорилготойгоор бидэ оролдоно гэшэбди. Бидэ үсөөхэн буряад зон хадаа баян соёлтой, буддын, бөө шажангуудтай, урдын түүхэ домогтой, ёһо заншалнуудтай, арадай баялигтай, һайн һанаа бодолтой хүнүүд болонобди гэжэ һанагдана. Ехэ шүтэжэ ябаһан зоной дунда һүүлэй үедэ ород яһатан олон болоо, энэ ехэ һайн тэмдэг.

Хатуу сагта, 70 жэлэй туршада шүтөөн, бурхадаа мартажа, 3-4 үе бурхан шажангүйгөөр үндэжэ, сэдхэл хатуу, хёморолтой хүмүүжээ. 2008 ондо 673 хүүгэд үншэрөө, байгша оной оройдоол январь харын туршада 12 үхибүүн

1	<b>“Tèngèri”...</b>	<b>“Tèngèri”...</b>
2	<u>Shènè Komushkadaa</u> ( <i>ul. Barnaulskaia</i> ,	We entered the building of the shamanic
3	<i>164 “a”</i> ) <u>öörýngöö bodoto gazar dèèrè</u>	organization called “Tèngèri,” which has
4	<u>tübkhinëhèn “Tèngèri” gèhèn böö shazhanai</u>	settled in Shènè Komushka <sup>58</sup> (Barnaulskaia
5	<u>èmkhiiin baishan haiakhan orozho</u>	street, 164 “a”) <sup>59</sup> in its own concrete
6	<u>erèmsèèrèè, khanaarn’ dèèrè ülgègdèhèn</u>	location, <sup>60</sup> and immediately noticed that its
7	<u>zuraguudye kharan, zhurnalistuudta</u>	walls were hung with pictures. Speaking to
8	<u>khöörèzhè baihan tus èmkhiin türüülègshè,</u>	journalists was the chairman of this
9	<u>pedagogikyn èrdèmèi kandidat, mèdèèzhè</u>	organization, candidate of pedagogical
10	<u>böö, “Buriiaad ünèn-Dükhèrigèi”</u>	science, well-known shaman, [and] laureate
11	<u>èmkhidkhèdèg “Buriiaadai türüü khünüüd –</u>	of the competition called “Best People of
12	<u>2007” gèhèn konkursyn laureat Bair</u>	Buryatia – 2007” organized by <u>Buriiaad</u>
13	<u>Zhambalovich TSYRENDORZHIEVAI</u>	<u>ünèn-Dükhèrig</u> , Bair Zhambalovich
14	<u>tailbarinuudye shagnababdi.</u>	TSYRENDORZHIEV, to whose
15	<u>– Buriiaad zon taban hüldè tèmdègüüdtèi,</u>	observations we listened.
16	<u>hakhiuuhadtai (totem) ium. Türüüshyn</u>	– <sup>61</sup> The Buryat people have five symbols,
17	<u>zurag dèèrè buriiaad zonoï, sartuul, songool,</u>	[or] talismans (totem[s]). <sup>62</sup> In the first
		picture you (V.) see the <b>Lord Bull Papa</b> , <sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> This place name is a partial translation of the Russian name of the settlement, *Novaia Komushka* (‘new komushka’), resulting in a hybrid of B. shènè (‘new’) and the Russian Siberianism *komushka*. Several interviewees automatically applied Buryat vowel length to the stressed first vowel of Komushka upon reading this aloud, despite the fact that length is not reflected in the orthography.

<sup>59</sup> Interviewees reading this street address, which appears in Russian format in the text, always shifted to Russian pronunciation and read “*ulitsa*” (‘street’) for the abbreviation “*ul.*” There are possible Buryat alternatives that the writer could have chosen here, such as üilsè (an older, more nativized borrowing from Russian *ulitsa*) or gudamzha. The former is much more common than the latter, but gudamzha also occasionally appears in print. The Buryat-language version of Iaruuna, Iaruuna/Eravna’s district-level newspaper, for instance, uses gudamzha in their published address. This, however, is extremely rare. Moreover, while gudamzha might seem like an ideal purist addition to SLB, some dictionaries and Buryat teachers consider it a “spoken” [*ustnaia*] form.

<sup>60</sup> “Tèngèri” had only recently received administratively official status as a registered religious organization and concretized themselves in a physical building.

<sup>61</sup> The punctuation for setting off direct reported speech, here and in line 47, as well as the style of quotation marks throughout, has been borrowed from Russian. Borrowing Russian punctuation was part and parcel of Cyrillicization in 1939–40; previously, Buryat was (usually) written with the punctuation of classical Mongolian and the short-term Latin experiment.

<sup>62</sup> Contrast hakhiuuhan (glossed here as ‘totem’) here and in line 21 with the same word, sakhiuusad, in the lama’s interview in Radio Sample 1, in which he pronounced with [s] rather than [h] and did not translate. On glossing here and below with the Variegated Burbot Father and Shaman’s Rock, see Chapter 5.

<sup>63</sup> Bukha noën, or Bukha Noion, the ‘Lord Bull,’ is a prominent figure in Buryat mythology, famously dark blue with yellow or golden horns. The “baabai” (‘father,’ ‘papa,’ ‘daddy’) is a reference to his mythical role as progenitor of the Bulagat and Èkhirit Buryats, the main lineages of Western Buryats. Gerasimova 1969 and Humphrey 1973 include detailed discussions of this myth.

<sup>64</sup> Tèngèri means ‘heaven’ or ‘sky’ and is also, not coincidentally, the name of the shamanic organization featured in this story. The term has enormous scope and can refer to ‘sky’ absent of any spiritual connotations as well.

18	<u>busad ug garbalai hür huldye deëshen'</u>	son descended from Zailag tengeri <sup>64</sup> [and]
19	<u>ürgedэг Bukha noën baabaie – Zailag</u>	totem of all people, holding high the
20	<u>tengeriin khübüüe, бүкhy zonoï</u>	original spirit <sup>65</sup> of the Buryat people: the
21	<u>hakhiuhaniie kharanat. Khoërdokhi zurag</u>	Sartuuls, Songools, <sup>66</sup> and others. In the
22	<u>deère êkhirèdei takhidag Èreën gutaar</u>	second picture is drawn the offering-
23	<u>èségè (zagahan) zuraatai. 3-dakhi zurag</u>	recipient of the Êkhirits, the <b>Variegated</b>
24	<u>deère böö zonoï hakhiuuhān bolodog</u>	<b>Burbot Father</b> (a fish). In the 3rd picture
25	<u>bürgèdye kharanat. Héey gèrèi, gazar</u>	you see what becomes the totem of
26	<u>uhanai, nara haryn kholboo baridag bürgèd</u>	shamans, <sup>67</sup> the <b>eagle</b> . Meaning that what
27	<u>gèeshè. Kharin durbèdèkhi zurag deère</u>	makes the connection of the felt ger, <sup>68</sup> of
28	<u>Khun shubuun hakhiuuhān khadaa khori</u>	earth and water, of sun and moon, is the
29	<u>buriaaduudai, khongoodor zonoï hür huldyn</u>	eagle. And in the fourth picture is the <b>Swan</b>
30	<u>tèmdèg bolono:</u>	totem, that is the symbol of the spirit of the
31	<u><b>Khun shubuun garbaltai,</b></u>	Khori Buryats and Khongoodor people:
32	<u><b>Khuhan modon sérgètèi</b></u>	<b>With the origin of the Swan,</b>
33	<u><b>Khori buriaad zon...</b></u>	<b>With the hitching-post of birch,</b>
34	<u>gèlsèdèg kha iumbibdi.</u>	<b>The Khori Buryat people...</b> <sup>69</sup>
35	<u>Tabadakhi zurag deère mongol tuurgata</u>	that is what we say.
36	<u>aradai hakhiuuhān khùkhè münkhè</u>	In the fifth picture is the totem of the
37	<u>tengerihèè buuhan Bürtè shono bolono</u>	nation of the Mongols with felt walls, <sup>70</sup> the
38	<u>bshuu.</u>	<b>Blue Wolf</b> <sup>71</sup> who descended from the
39	<u>Mongol aradai ègèèl ekhè shütöön bolodog</u>	eternal blue heaven. <sup>72</sup>
		What has become the greatest sacred place

<sup>65</sup> Ug garbal also means 'lineage' or 'descent group.' The matter at hand, however, is the personages and totemic animals of origin myths.

<sup>66</sup> Also "Tsartuul," "Tsongol."

<sup>67</sup> I.e., after a person becomes a shaman.

<sup>68</sup> Literally, the connection between the strip of felt and the ger.

<sup>69</sup> My translation cannot do justice to the poetry of these brief lines. Note the repetition in each line's initial consonant, a common poetic and mnemonic device in Buryat: Khun... Khuhan... Khori. The forceful punching of the first elements on short lines also emphasizes the semantic connection between them: Khun shubuun ('swan'), Khuhan modon ('birch tree,' 'birch wood'), Khori buriaad ('Khori Buryats'). Alliteration in Buryat is referred to as 'uniting the head,' tolgoi kholbokho. See also Humphrey 1973.

<sup>70</sup> I.e., Mongols dwelling in traditional felt yurts. This is a figurative way of distinguishing Mongols of Mongolia from Buryat(-Mongols), Kalmyks, and other Mongolic peoples who have long dwelled in wooden houses. To the extent that Mongols on both sides of the Russian-Mongolian border now live in apartment blocks, it could also be read as archaic, indexing the shaman's connection to a mythic past that exists outside of time.

<sup>71</sup> The "bürtè" of bürtè shono ('X wolf') is peculiar to this phrase. It does not exactly mean 'blue,' as I have translated it above, but the origin-wolf in question is usually referred to as "blue" or "blue-gray" in English. While bürtè appears to have left Buryat, senses of related words include 'inveterate' and 'hazy,' 'unclear.'

<sup>72</sup> The "eternal blue heaven" or "eternal blue sky" plays a central role in Mongolian mythology and political history.

<p>40 <u>Oikhon deèrè (mys Shamanka) Oikhon</u>  41 <u>buural baabain</u> ordon ènè zurag deèrè  42 <u>kharuulagdana, iakhad, tuva, khakas, altai,</u>  43 <u>buriaad – бүкhy Sibiriin zonoi nanging</u>  44 <u>gazar, Ekhè ordon khadaa baigaliin ègèèl</u>  45 <u>ekhè shütööniin’ bolono.</u></p> <p>46 <u>Èdè fotozuraguud deèrè böö shazhanai</u>  47 <u>tailganuud, èho gurimuud kharuulagdana, –</u>  48 <u>gèzhè honirkholtoigoor khöörèhèn Bair</u>  49 <u>Zhambalovichtai ekhè zokhid baidaltai</u>  50 <u>kabinet soon’ orozho, böö shazhan, Sagaan</u>  51 <u>haryn haindèrye urdyn zanshalaar khaishan</u>  52 <u>gèzhè ugtadag baihan tukhain’.</u>  53 <u>“Tèngèridèn” èmkhidkhègdèkhèè baihan</u>  54 <u>münöö üeyn mürgèlnüüd, èho gurimuud</u>  55 <u>tukhai khöörèldébèbdi, Sagaan haryn</u>  56 <u>amarshalga, Sagaalganai üreèl khüsélyen’</u>  57 <u>unshagshadtaa damzhuulkha bolobobdi.</u></p>	<p>of the Mongol nation, the palace of the <b>Ol’khon Spirit of the Mountain</b><sup>73</sup> on Ol’khon Island (Shaman’s Rock), is shown in this picture, Yakut [Sakha], Tuvan, Khakass, Altai, Buryat – it is a sacred place to every Siberian people, the Great palace is the greatest sacred place of Baikal.</p> <p>In these photographs<sup>74</sup> are shown shamanic tailgans,<sup>75</sup> traditional rites, – thus interestingly spoke Bair Zhambalovich, with whom we conversed, in his very comfortable office<sup>76</sup>, about shamanism, [about] how the holiday of the White Month<sup>77</sup> was traditionally met in the past, about religious ceremonies and traditional rites of this era that will be organized<sup>78</sup> at his “Tèngèri,” [and] we extended our White Month greeting and Sagaalgan wish[es] to readers.<sup>79</sup></p>
---	--

<sup>73</sup> Literally ‘hoary, gray-haired father.’

<sup>74</sup> Interviewees reading fotozuraguud lengthened the first vowel of foto, despite it not being lengthened in orthography. (This word did appear occasionally in Latin Buryat as footo before the shift to Cyrillic and orthographic reform to standardize the spelling of Russian-origin terms.)

<sup>75</sup> Rituals performed by shamans, usually involving some kind of offering or sacrifice (whether figurative or literal), spirit possession, and sometimes spirit flight.

<sup>76</sup> Interviewees read this word, “kabinet” (‘office’), with Russian phonology.

<sup>77</sup> Sagaan har (M. Tsagaan sar), literally ‘white lunar month’ or ‘white moon,’ runs the entire month of the Buryat Buddhist New Year; Sagaalgan is a single day, or for some a short stretch of days, marking the beginning of the month and including the holiday’s main rituals, feasting, and purification.

<sup>78</sup> On the participle here, èmkhidkhègdèkhèè, see Chapter 5.

<sup>79</sup> The expression here, khüsélyen’...damzhuulkha bolokho (‘to extend wishes’) is formal; compare with the simpler use of the verb khüsèkhè (‘to wish’) in Newspaper Sample 1, as in “...khüsènéb,” ‘I wish...’ The writer is here fulfilling a standard Buryat communicative requirement during the White Month: upon initially meeting a relative or acquaintance during the month—including face-to-face, on the telephone, or via email—both parties offer holiday greetings. Generally they are very formulaic and can be extremely brief, like “Sagaan haraar, Sagaalganaar!” (‘To the White Month, to Saaalgan!’); the importance is in remembering to do it to “start the year off right.” This practice extends to people who do not otherwise control Buryat, but it is markedly *Buryat*. It thus helps to re-circumscribe the Buryat public, while providing a way for individuals to claim or reemphasize their personal commitment to Buryat cultural traditions, and thus membership in that public.

**Television Sample 1. Excerpt of “VESTI-Buryatia” broadcast, story on medical clinic opening.**

Aired Monday, February 2, 2009, on the evening news.

[musical interlude and transition]			
<b>Anchor (Bulat Tsybikov):</b>			
1	<u>Tiikhèdè üngèrhèn doloon</u>	Also <sup>80</sup> as a result of the past week, the reanimation <sup>81</sup> department of Municipal Hospital No. 1 was opened at a celebration in the Dèèdè-Ongostoi <sup>82</sup> suburb of Ulan-Ude. From this very day the doctors of this department began to treat their first patients.	<i>/anchor, wearing simple black suit and striped tie, seated at desk in broadcast room/</i>
2	<u>khonogoi èsèstè Ulaan-Üdè</u>		
3	<u>shadar Dèèdè-Ongostoido</u>		
4	<u>khotyn nègèdèkhi bol'nitsyn</u>		
5	<u>reanimatsionno tahag baiarai</u>		
6	<u>orshondo nèègdèè hèn. (.)</u>		
7	<u>Tèrèl üdèrhöö tus tahagai</u>		
8	<u>èmshèd türüüshyn</u>		
9	<u>übshèntèniie argalzha</u>		
10	<u>èkhilbè.</u>		
<b>Reporter (Bulat Tsybikov), voiceover with video of clinic and surrounds:</b>			
11	<u>Reanimatsionno shènè tahag</u>	To open the new reanimation department, more than six million <sup>83</sup> rubles <sup>84</sup> were granted from municipal financing.	<i>/clinic exterior/</i>
12	<u>nèèkhè khèrègtè khotyn</u>		
13	<u>hanghaa zurgaan million</u>	Appropriately civilized <sup>85</sup> wards <sup>86</sup> meeting all requirements and the technological means to provide treatment <sup>87</sup> were purchased.	<i>/ambulance driving through snowy forest/</i>
14	<u>garan tükhèrig müngèn</u>		
15	<u>gargashalagdaa.</u>		
16	<u>Bükhy èriltènuüdtè taarama</u>		<i>/city officials and doctors at patient's bedside/<sup>82</sup></i>
17	<u>bolboson tükhèltèi</u>		
18	<u>palaatanuud.</u>		
19	<u>èmshèlgye onihozhoruulkha</u>		
20	<u>khèrègsèlnüüd khudaldagdan</u>		
21	<u>abtagdaa.</u>		
			<i>/patient in bed, with electrodes, equipment/</i>
			<i>/clinician examining</i>

<sup>80</sup> This story followed immediately on a story about another hospital opening, so tiikhèdè ('also') here refers to and extends the prior story.

<sup>81</sup> 'Reanimation' has potential Buryat-origin translations, such as ami oruulga or makhabad amidryuulga, both attested in Russian-Buryat dictionaries. Here, however, the journalist opts to nativize the Russian adjective *reanimatsionnyi*. When I asked one of his colleagues about this term later, she deemed it an 'internationalism.'

<sup>82</sup> This journalist tends to stretch length on the first syllable in this place name.

<sup>83</sup> There is a Buryat-origin alternative, saia, to Russian-origin *million*, but it is rarely used, even in print.

<sup>84</sup> An old Buryat- (and Mongolian-) origin form, tükhèrig müngèn (lit. 'silver money') is used here to refer to Russian rubles. This is consonant with common usage.

<sup>85</sup> Bolboson tükhèltèi; literally, 'with a civilized, cultured, or enlightened perspective.'

<sup>86</sup> The journalist nativizes Russian *palata* here by characteristically lengthening the stressed second vowel, saying palaatanuud instead of palatanuud (the latter reflecting standard Buryat orthography). See Chapter 7.

<sup>87</sup> The Buryat verb here, onihozhoruulkha ('to provide with technologies') does not appear in dictionaries. It appears to be a neologism, possibly created by the journalist, but recognizable in

22	<u>Mün tiikhèdè iishèè dèèdè</u>	And then highly qualified	<i>charts/</i>
23	<u>garai èmshèd urigdahan</u>	doctors <sup>88</sup> were invited here.	<i>/mayor Aidaev speaking</i>
24	<u>baina.</u>		<i>(Russian) at ceremony/</i>
25	<u>Nèèlgyn èhololoi üedè</u>	At the time of the opening	
26	<u>khotyn mèèr Gennadii</u>	ceremony, the mayor of the	
27	<u>Aidaev ügè abakhadaa gusha</u>	city, Gennadii Aidaev, gave a	
28	<u>düshè nahanai zaluu zon</u>	word [and] turned to three or	
29	<u>zürkhèni übshèndè oloor</u>	four young people suffering a	<i>/clinician seated with</i>
30	<u>nèrbègdèdèg bolonkhoi.</u>	great deal from heart disease,	<i>second patient in bed/</i>
31	<u>tiimèhèè reanimatsionno ènè</u>	observing (therefore) that the	<i>/medical apparatus</i>
32	<u>tahag baiguulga ton shukhala</u>	creation of this reanimation	<i>providing vital signs/</i>
33	<u>gèzhè tèmdèglèè.</u>	department is very	
		important. <sup>89</sup>	
34	<u>Haia bolotor zürkhèni übshè</u>	Until now there were 63	<i>/third patient in bed/</i>
35	<u>argalkha zharan gurban huuri</u>	spots <sup>90</sup> to treat heart disease	<i>/doctors walking down</i>
36	<u>Ulaan-Üdyn èmshèlgyn</u>	in Ulan-Ude's medical	<i>hallway/</i>
37	<u>gazarnuudta baigaa.</u>	establishments.	
38	<u>BSMP-dè bolon Vostochno</u>	At BSMP and in Vostochnyi	<i>/city officials and doctors</i>
39	<u>toskhonoi dürbèdèkhi</u>	Village's <sup>91</sup> Hospital No. 4.	<i>speaking in patient's</i>
40	<u>bol'nitsada.</u>		<i>room/</i>
41	<u>Tiin münöo Ulaan-Üdyn</u>	So now the new reanimation	<i>/official being interviewed</i>

context to viewers. It drew no particular attention or comment from focus group participants. I thank Jargal Badagarov for the translation.

<sup>88</sup> The phrase here, dèèdè garai èmshèd ('highly qualified doctors'), is entirely in Buryat, though there are common Russian-origin alternatives for both 'doctor' (R. *vrach* vs. B. èmshèn) and 'of high(er) qualification' (R. *vysshei kvalifikatsii* vs. B. dèèdè garai). See other uses of èmshèn vs. *vrach* in Chapter 7.

<sup>89</sup> Also 'pressing,' 'timely.'

<sup>90</sup> The Buryat here, huuri ('place,' 'spot'), refers to available spots for medical treatment (mirroring R. *mesto*).

<sup>91</sup> The village of Vostochnyi (from the Russian word for 'east') is an exurb of Ulan-Ude. Buryat toskhon ('village') is used to translate Russian *selenie*, *posëlok*, or *derevnia* and covers a variety of Russian demographic-administrative categories. There is a variety of options for dealing with local place names. Journalists do not always apply consistent policies, but there are principles of selection. Here, the journalist nativizes the Russian adjective *vostochnyi* by using the Buryat ending -o (on the same model, see reanimatsionno in this story in lines 5, 11, 31, and 43). Theoretically, *Vostochnyi* could be translated into Buryat, but journalists do not usually translate place names unless there is a common existing Buryat alternative (which may or may not be semantically related to Russian). So we have B. Dèèdè Ongostoï for R. *Verkhniaia Berëzovka*, but Russian-origin *Steklozavod*, hybrid Shènè Komushka, etc. Non-journalist interviewees more often switch fully into Russian. So the doctor refers, for instance, to "*Zheleznodorozhnyi raion*" ('Zheleznodorozhnyi district' or 'railway district') here in lines 51–52, and an interviewee refers to "*Ivolginskii raion*" ('Ivolga district') in the syphilis story.

<sup>92</sup> There was some disagreement among BGTRK's videographers regarding the ethics and legality of filming patients, and over whether it was necessary to obtain their explicit permission. This particular story included a large number of patients who had been put 'on display' for visiting officials. By contrast, the videographer of the syphilis story featured in Chapter 7 insisted that it was illegal for him to film patients.

42	<u>zakhirgaanai oroldolgoor</u>	department has been opened	(Russian)/
43	<u>reanimatsionno shènè tahag</u>	through the efforts of Ulan-	/pan over ambulance and
44	<u>neègdèbè gèèshè.</u>	Ude's administration.	clinic exterior/
<b>Interviewee (Larisa Khaltanova):</b>			
45	<u>Manii peèrvè gorodskoi</u>	In our <sup>93</sup> Municipal Hospital	/interviewee, in white lab
46	<u>bol'nitsada reanimatsionno</u>	No. 1 a reanimation	coat, standing in hallway
47	<u>otdeleni neègdèbè.</u>	department has been opened.	of clinic/
48	<u>Zhorgoon koikomestètèi. (.)</u>	With six <sup>94</sup> [hospital] beds.	<b>title on screen:</b> Larisa
49	<u>Goorodoor vtornik, sreda,</u>	We work in the city on	Khaltanova, <u>Ulaan-Udyn</u>
50	<u>chetverg azhallanabdi.</u>	Tuesday, Wednesday, [and]	<u>1-dèkhi bol'nitsyn</u>
51	<u>Aa, zh– Zheleznodorozhnyi,</u>	Thursday.	<u>terapevticheskè tahagye</u>
52	<u>sovetskii raion...</u>	Uh, the Zh–	<u>daagsha</u> [Director of the
53	<u>Manii otdelenidè shènè</u>	Zheleznodorozhnyi [and]	Therapeutic Department
54	<u>apparatura bii.</u>	Soviet Districts...	at Ulan-Ude's Hospital
		In our department there is	No. 1] <sup>96</sup>
		new equipment. <sup>95</sup>	
<b>Reporter (Bulat Tsybikov), voiceover with video of ceremony:</b>			
55	<u>Infarkt-miokardada</u>	Every year in Ulan-Ude are	/women at ceremony,
56	<u>nèrbègdèhèn taban zuun tabi</u>	counted more than 550 cases	standing outside clinic in
57	<u>garan ushar Ulaan-Üdèdè</u>	of myocardial infarction	fur coats and hats/
58	<u>zhèl büri büridkhègdèdèg.</u>	[heart attack].	/ambulance in forest/
59	<u>Üshöò tiikhèdè zürkhènèi</u>	Facts and figures <sup>97</sup> show that	/women/
60	<u>übshènhöò naha baragshadai</u>	the number who then die	/doctor at ceremony/
61	<u>too ègèèl olon gèzhè too</u>	from heart disease is really	
62	<u>barimtanuud kharuulna.</u>	quite high.	/4 men in large fur hats
63	<u>Ushar tiimèhèè neègdèhèn</u>	Thanks to this department	cutting ceremonial
64	<u>ènè tahagai ashaar, mün</u>	that has been opened for this	ribbon, to sound of
65	<u>èndèkhi arban naiman</u>	reason, [and] via the efforts	clapping/
66	<u>èmshèdèi oroldolgoor zürkhè</u>	of the 18 doctors located	/official speaking (in
67	<u>übshèntènèi too èrid üsöörkhè</u>	here, the number of people	Russian), smiling,
68	<u>zhèshèètèi.</u>	with heart disease should	partially audible/
		sharply decrease.	

<sup>93</sup> Manii ('our') is a dialectism for standard first-person plural manai. See Chapter 7.

<sup>94</sup> This is also a dialectism, for standard Buryat zurgaan. See Chapter 7.

<sup>95</sup> The interviewee ends on rising intonation, as though her speech continued but was cut off in the editing process.

<sup>96</sup> Individuals are generally identified by name and title on screen only when they give an interview in Buryat. In the many cases in which a speaker is *shown* speaking (and possibly paraphrased) but not interviewed directly—such as the mayor in lines 23–28 and the interviewee in lines 41–42, the speaker is not titled. Speakers are only placed fully in the participant role of interviewee, in other words, when they directly address the camera (and, via it, the home audience) in the target language.

<sup>97</sup> Literally, 'numbers and facts' (too barimtanuud).

**Television Sample 2. Excerpt of “VESTI-Buryatia” broadcast, story on employment agency.**

Aired Monday, February 2, 2009, on the evening news.

[musical interlude and transition]			
<b>Anchor (Bulat Tsybikov):</b>			
1	<u>Busad honinuud tukhai.</u>	In other news. <sup>98</sup>	<i>/anchor, wearing simple black suit and striped tie, seated at desk in broadcast room/</i>
2	<u>Khün zoniie azhalaar</u>	Svetlana Zaitseva, <sup>99</sup> director of the Republic’s Agency to Support the Population through Employment, <sup>100</sup> met with representatives of institutions of mass information today [and] gave a press conference.	
3	<u>khangalgyn respublikaanska</u>		
4	<u>agentstvin khütëlbërilëgshë</u>		
5	<u>Svetlana Zaitseva olondo</u>		
6	<u>mëdëësël taraadag</u>		
7	<u>ëmkinüüdei tülöölëgshëdtëi</u>		
8	<u>münöödër uulzazha press-</u>		
9	<u>konferentsi ügëbë.</u>		
<b>Reporter (Bayar Zhigmitov), voiceover with video from agency:</b>			
10	<u>Khoër mianga naiman ondo</u>	It was reported that in 2008, more than 58,000 people applied to the agency, [and] 31,000 of them became employed.	<i>/busy agency office interior with men and women in coats and hats waiting in line/</i>
11	<u>tabi naiman mianga garan</u>		
12	<u>khün ageñstsvëdë khandazha</u>		
13	<u>gushan nëgë mianganiin’</u>	Additionally, 36,000 people received support from the state.	<i>/man and woman looking at paperwork/</i>
14	<u>azhaltai boloo gëed</u>		
15	<u>mëdëësëgdëbë.</u>		
16	<u>Tiikhëdë gushan zurgaan</u>	According to today’s data, the unemployment <sup>101</sup> rate has reached 2 percent. <sup>102</sup>	<i>/man filling out form on corner of desk/</i>
17	<u>miangan khün gürenhöö</u>		
18	<u>tëdkhëmzhë abahan baina.</u>		
19	<u>Münöödërei baidalaar</u>		
20	<u>azhalgüishüülëi too khoër</u>		
21	<u>protsentë khürënkhei.</u>		

<sup>98</sup> This phrase—busad honinuud tukhai, lit. ‘about other news’—is a common way of transitioning between stories, much like “in other news...” in American English. As an idiom peculiar to the context of television news, we might expect this phrase in Buryat to circulate beyond television production in a way similar to how the phrase “in other news” is taken up in conversation and humor in the United States. “In other news...” points, intertextually, to the authority of newscasters, often to comic effect. I have not, however, witnessed any spontaneous reference to this expression outside of television.

<sup>99</sup> The anchor switches to Russian pronunciation here, and produces the name in a lower pitch, as though it were a parenthetical remark somehow set off from the main text. This journalist, Bulat Tsybikov, is quite consistent in pronouncing Russian names with Russian pronunciation and Buryat names with Buryat pronunciation.

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 7 for discussion of this agency’s title.

<sup>101</sup> Azhalgüishüülëi too is a modern neologism for ‘unemployment rate’ (lit. ‘the number of persons without work’), but, interestingly, not the one that was proposed in the 1960s (Shagdarov 1967). It is likely fully accepted into Buryat now, and it is certainly not a marker of ‘high’ institutional language—note that the interviewee also says “Azhalgüi khündëshëg baina” [It’s hard to be unemployed] in line 49. The fact that azhalgüishüülëi appears here suggests that this term is no longer such a ‘new’ neologism and has taken on some credibility in other institutional domains, because in general, television workers avoid neologisms. See Chapter 7.

22	<u>Uridshalagdahan</u>	Calculating forward [from	
23	<u>bagsaalgamzhaar haiayn üedè</u>	this], it is possible that the	<i>/shot of hand with pen,</i>
24	<u>azhalgüi arban taba mianga</u>	count included more than	<i>filling out documents/</i>
25	<u>garan khün büridkhêldè</u>	15,000 people who have	
26	<u>abtagdazha magad.</u>	recently become unemployed.	<i>/older man standing,</i>
27	<u>Ēnèn' urda zhêlêikhitèi</u>	In comparison with last year,	<i>looking at vacancies</i>
28	<u>zèrgèsüülkhêdè khoër dakhin</u>	this is two times greater.	<i>board/</i>
29	<u>ekhè baina.</u>		<i>/vacancies board/</i>
30	<u>Khoër mianga naiman onoi</u>	Specialists note that starting	<i>/men and woman</i>
31	<u>noiabr'haa êkhilzhè azhal</u>	from November of 2008,	<i>standing at board/</i>
32	<u>duradkhadag êmkhinüüd</u>	institutions offering work	
33	<u>üsöörööd orkhëo gèzhè</u>	have become few and far	
34	<u>mèrgèzhêltéd tèmeđglènè.</u>	between.	<i>/front desk crowded with</i>
35	<u>Ekhènkhidèè khara azhalda</u>	In large part, people are in	<i>women submitting</i>
36	<u>khünüüd dutaldana.</u>	need of blue-collar labor. <sup>103</sup>	<i>paperwork/</i>
37	<u>Ēkhènèr khündè bèedèè</u>	It is especially difficult to	<i>/close-up of women, a</i>
38	<u>taarama khüdelmèri olokhon'</u>	find work appropriate for a	<i>middle-aged woman in</i>
39	<u>ilangaiaa khèsüü.</u>	woman. <sup>104</sup>	<i>fur looking upset/</i>
40	<u>Kharin èrèshüül</u>	However, men—if they have	
41	<u>zalkhuuraagüil haa, ügy gèbèl</u>	not just been lazy, [and] if	<i>/men examining</i>
42	<u>azhal khüdelmèri goloogüil</u>	they have not interrupted	<i>vacancies board/</i>
43	<u>haa, azhalaar khangagdakha</u>	their employment—have the	<i>/two young people using</i>
44	<u>arga bolomzhotoi.</u>	possibility to be granted	<i>touch screen machine/</i>
		work.	
45	<u>Barilgashan, kharuulshan,</u>	Construction workers,	<i>/close-up of touch screen/</i>
46	<u>tomo tekhnikè iabuuldag</u>	security guards, [and]	
47	<u>khüdelmèrishèn khododoo</u>	workers in heavy industry <sup>105</sup>	<i>/office interior with line</i>

<sup>102</sup> The figure of 2% is a reference to ‘registered’ [*registriruemaia*] unemployment, as opposed to general employment, which in February 2009 was reported at 19.4% in the Republic of Buryatia (Getmanskii 2010). At the time, the Russian Federation was reeling from the global financial crisis of fall 2008, and the ruble had just fallen to an all-time low against the US dollar (it would bottom out two weeks after this story aired). In late January, concern over rising unemployment in Russia had reached a fever pitch when media outlets reported that unemployment among the “economically active population” would hit 7.7% (e.g., RIA Novosti 2009). As many of my friends and research participants pointed out, unemployment in Buryatia had been high for decades, and Buryatia was so poor relative to other parts of the country that it had less to lose in the ‘crisis.’ The topic was, however, in wide circulation, and local journalists reflected some of the anxiety that pervaded national and international media.

<sup>103</sup> The common Buryat expression used here, *khara azhal* (lit. ‘black work’), is likely a calque of the Russian expression for ‘blue-collar labor,’ *chërnaia rabota* (also lit. ‘black work’).

<sup>104</sup> I.e., to find work appropriate for the feminine physique (*bèe*, ‘body’). The labor market in Russia is very gender-segregated, with women working almost exclusively in white-collar jobs, medicine, education, and janitorial positions, and men dominating fields that are supposed to require physical strength and masculinity, such as security and heavy industry. Encouraging men to pursue gainful employment was a timely concern because the employment crisis coincided with the ‘Year of the Family’ and other governmental initiatives to raise the birth rate, which reinforced traditional gender norms.

<sup>105</sup> *Tomo tekhnikè*, lit. ‘big technology.’

48	<u>khèrègtèi baidag baina.</u>	are constantly in demand.	<i>of people waiting/</i>
<b>Interviewee (Baatar Abiduev):</b>			
49	<u>Azhalgüi khündeshég baina.</u>	It's pretty hard to be unemployed.	<i>/interviewee, in coat and fur hat, standing at touch screen, chewing gum/</i>
50	<u>Münöö olon zon iigèéd lè</u>	Now a lot of people are like looking for work (..)	<b>title on screen:</b> Baatar Abiduev
51	<u>azhal bédèrzhè (..)</u>		
52	<u>gèrtèè iigèéd lè huunal daa.</u>	and like sitting at home.	<i>/smiles, looks directly at camera/</i>
53	<u>Tiigèéd lè minii khèlèkhèdè</u>	But just speaking for myself,	<i>/turns toward screen/</i>
54	<u>öörööl khüündè azhal iigèéd</u>	I'm really looking for a particular kind of work, too.	<i>/gestures in emphasis/</i>
55	<u>kharazhail bainab, tozhe.</u>		
56	<u>Tiigèéd baha azhal bolokho</u>	So then will there be work to do, or not?... so we're looking. <sup>106</sup>	
57	<u>ium gü, ügy ium gü...</u>		
58	<u>tiigèéd kharazha bainabdi.</u>		
<b>Reporter (Bayar Zhigmitov):</b>			
59	<u>Münöö Ulaan-Üdè khotyn</u>	Now a person who has come to the Ulan-Ude municipal employment center can go to a special terminal [and] have the ability to find all the information of interest.	<i>/side view of machines/</i>
60	<u>azhalaar Khangalgyn түб</u>		<i>/hands, people using touch screens/</i>
61	<u>erèhèn khün tuskhai</u>		<i>/view of screen/</i>
62	<u>terminaalda oshozho.</u>		
63	<u>honirkhohon khamag</u>		
64	<u>mèdèèsèl olokho argatai.</u>		
<b>Interviewee (Baatar Abiduev):</b>			
65	<u>Udoobno kha ium daa, iigèéd</u>	It's really <sup>107</sup> convenient, how it's on the machine. <sup>108</sup>	<i>/interviewee standing in same place/</i>
66	<u>avtomat dèèrè khadaa.</u>		
67	<u>Iigèéd öörööl èndè erèéd.</u>	Like especially just coming here, just looking [and] going... (.)	<i>/gestures toward screen with finger, mimicking using the touch screen/</i>
68	<u>kharaad lè iigèéd iabakhada...</u>		
69	(.)		
70	<u>No, udobno gèkhè bainam.</u>	Yeah, I find it convenient.	
<b>Reporter (Bayar Zhigmitov):</b>			
71	<u>Rossiin Federatsiin</u>	By decree of the government of the Russian Federation, four federal programs should begin to be implemented.	<i>/crowd around vacancies board/</i>
72	<u>pravitel'stvyin togtooloor</u>		
73	<u>federal'na dürbèn</u>		<i>/man and woman at</i>
74	<u>programma bèelүүлэгдэжэ</u>		

<sup>106</sup> He refers to the automated touch screen machines that he is standing in front of, where searchers can browse job listings.

<sup>107</sup> The speaker collapses this emphatic phrase, kha ium daa, into a contraction, kham daa.

<sup>108</sup> The Russian term being borrowed for this purpose, *avtomat*, is the term for ATMs and other touch screen-based terminals scattered throughout banks, supermarkets, hotels, and shops. They have a growing presence in Ulan-Ude, where they are especially popular for paying for pay-as-you-go cell phone and internet services. The interviewee does not nativize this term by lengthening its stressed vowel, as he does with the older borrowing *udobno* ('convenient') above in line 65. See discussion of *udobno* in Chapter 7.

75	<u>èkhilkhè èhotoi.</u>		<i>counter/</i>
76	<u>Tèrènei bèelüülègdèzhè</u>		<i>/view from behind desk of</i>
77	<u>èkhilkhèdè azhalgüishüül</u>		<i>office workers/</i>
78	<u>niütyn khüdèlmèrinüüdtè</u>		<i>/women in heavy fur coats</i>
79	<u>tatagdakha.</u>	For the beginning of their implementation, unemployed people will be summoned to the [institutions of] social work.	<i>examining documents/</i>
80	<u>Ünsédöo olzyn khèrgè</u>		<i>/sign (in Russian)<sup>109</sup></i>
81	<u>èrkhilkhè gèzhè bodohon</u>	To those people who have thought about studying to suit [a new type of work],	<i>/bundled-up baby</i>
82	<u>zondo müngèn tuhalamzha,</u>	monetary assistance and a	<i>sleeping in stroller/</i>
83	<u>sübsiidi ügtèkhè zèrgètèi.</u>	subsidy should be given out.	<i>/wider shot with baby and adults in line/</i>
84	<u>Baiar Zhigmitov, Zhanchivyn</u>	Baiar Zhigmitov, Zanchivyn	<i>/people milling around</i>
85	<u>Amarzhargal, buriaad oronoi</u>	Amarzhargal, VESTI-	<i>office interior/</i>
86	<u>honinuud.</u>	Buryatia.	

---

<sup>7</sup> The sign informs applicants that if there is no available work for their skills or knowledge, there are free courses for retraining.

## APPENDIX D. Survey Instrument for Journalists in Bilingual Workplaces

Уважаемый друг!

Данная анкета предназначена для изучения использования различных языков в СМИ Бурятии. Ваша анонимность гарантируется; мы будем использовать псевдоним. Вся личная информация касающаяся Вас будет сохранена отдельно, доступ которой будет иметь только исследователь.

**Ваши ответы очень помогут нам в исследовании.**

1. Год рождения \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Место рождения (город/село, район) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Пол \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Национальность \_\_\_\_\_

5. Место обучения \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Специальность \_\_\_\_\_

7. Должность и звание \_\_\_\_\_

8. Как долго Вы работали журналистом? \_\_\_\_\_

Как Вы стали журналистом? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Где Вы больше всего хотели бы работать через 5 лет — в СМИ или где-то еще?

а) В СМИ \_\_\_\_\_

б) Где-нибудь в другом месте \_\_\_\_\_ Где? \_\_\_\_\_

в) Буду на пенсии/Не буду работать \_\_\_\_\_

г) Не знаю \_\_\_\_\_

д) Отказываюсь отвечать \_\_\_\_\_

Что Вам нравится в этой работе? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Что Вам не нравится? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Что Вы думаете о СМИ в Бурятии вообще? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Большое спасибо за помощь! информация о проекте для Вас:*

**научное исследование:** «Языковой контакт и местные СМИ в Юго-восточной Сибири»

**исследователь:** Кэтрин Грабер, докторант, Университет Мичигана (США)

**тел. в Улан-Удэ до 09.09.09:** 21-98-54 (дом.), +8 914-836-47-40 (сот.)

**адрес по электронной почте:** kate.graber@gmail.com

**контакты руководителя исследователя:** Профессор Алэйна Лэммон, amlemon@umich.edu

**контакты университета, отдел исследования:** University of Michigan Institutional Review Board, 540 East Liberty Street, Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, USA, +1 734 936 0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu

11. Вы лично предпочитаете какие газеты и передачи? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Что является главной целью вашей программы или ваших программ? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Родной язык или родные языки \_\_\_\_\_

14. Сколько лет Вы изучали бурятский язык? \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Где? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Какими формами бурятского и эвенкийского языков Вы владеете?

	Бурятский					Эвенкийский						
	(не владею)	(плохо)	←	→	(хорошо)	(не владею)	(плохо)	←	→	(хорошо)		
Понимаю	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Говорю	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Читаю	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
Пишу	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. На каком языке или каких языках Вы обычно говорили до поступления в школу? \_\_\_\_\_

18. На каком языке Вы обычно говорите дома? \_\_\_\_\_

19. На работе? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Что является главной целью бурят-язычных и эвенк-язычных СМИ в Бурятии? Какую роль такие СМИ играют в обществе? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Что бы Вы хотели добавить к своим ответам? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Этот проект также включает в себе интервью от бывших и настоящих журналистов. Если Вы можете участвовать в исследовании в форме интервью, пишите пожалуйста ваш номер телефона: \_\_\_\_\_

*Большое спасибо за помощь!*

**Translation:**<sup>110</sup>

Respected friend!

**This questionnaire is intended for academic research on the use of different languages in the mass media of Buryatia.** Your anonymity is guaranteed; we will use a pseudonym. Any personal information concerning you will be stored separately and will be available only to the researcher.

**Your responses will very much help our study.**

1. Year of birth \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Place of birth (city/village, district) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Gender \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of study \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Specialization \_\_\_\_\_

7. Position and title(s) \_\_\_\_\_

8. How long have you worked as a journalist? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you become a journalist? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Where would you most like to be working 5 years from now – in mass media or somewhere else?

a) in mass media \_\_\_\_\_

b) somewhere else \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

c) I will be on pension (retired)/I will not be working \_\_\_\_\_

d) I don't know \_\_\_\_\_

e) no answer \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like about this kind of work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you not like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What do you think of mass media in Buryatia in general? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Great thanks for your help! In case of questions, here is information about the project for you:*

**research title:** "Language Contact and Local Media in Southeastern Siberia"

**researcher:** Kathryn Graber, doctoral student, University of Michigan (USA)

**telephone** in Ulan Ude until September 9, 2009: 21-98-54 (home), +8 914-836-47-40 (cell)

**email address:** kate.graber@gmail.com

**contact information of the research adviser:** Professor Alaina Lemon, amlemon@umich.edu

**contact information of the university's Division of Research:** University of Michigan Institutional Review Board,  
540 East Liberty Street, Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, USA, +1 734 936 0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu

<sup>110</sup> This translation was not distributed; it was prepared only for reading convenience here.

11. What newspapers and broadcasts do you personally prefer? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is the main goal of your program or programs? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Native language or languages \_\_\_\_\_

14. How many years did you study the Buryat language? \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Where? \_\_\_\_\_

16. In what form do you control the Buryat and Evenk languages?

	Buryat					Evenk						
	(not at all)	(poorly) ←	→	(well)		(not at all)	(poorly) ←	→	(well)			
understand	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
speak	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
read	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
write	0	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. In what language or languages did you usually speak before starting school? \_\_\_\_\_

18. In what language do you usually speak at home? \_\_\_\_\_

19. At work? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is the main goal of Buryat-language and Evenk-language mass media in Buryatia? What role does such mass media play in society? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Is there anything you would like to add to your answers? \_\_\_\_\_

22. This project also includes interviews from former and current journalists. If you would be able to participate in this research in the form of an interview, please write your telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Great thanks for your help!*

## APPENDIX E. Focus Group Script

First, tell me please, do you ever read books, newspapers, or magazines in the Buryat language? Do you listen to the radio in Buryat or watch television shows?

Which ones?

Which newspapers or broadcasts do you prefer?

What do you think of Buryat-language mass media?

What are some of the difficulties or specificities of the language?

### 1. radio broadcast [radio samples, Appendix C]

First, we'll listen to a clip from a radio program in Buryat. Your task is to listen, and while we listen, think:

What's understandable, what's not understandable?

If something's not understandable, why?

What's visible or audible about the person who's speaking? That is:

What kind of person is he? (What type, what kind of character?)

Where is he from? (What kind of accent or dialect does he have?)

### 2. newspaper articles [newspaper samples, Appendix C]

Who is able to read this article for us, out loud?

What is it possible to say about this article?

What's understandable, what's not understandable?

If something's not understandable, why?

How might we compare these articles?

### 3. television broadcast [television samples, Appendix C]

How might we compare the language used in the radio broadcast, in the newspaper, and in the television broadcast?

What genres and topics do you prefer? Why?

What is the main purpose of Buryat-language mass media? What role do Buryat-language mass media play in society?

Do you think that Buryat-language mass media should be supported by the federal government? By local organs of power? By private companies?

Describe the future of Buryat-language mass media.

Is there anything that you would like to add?

Many thanks. If you have any additional commentary, questions, thoughts, and so on, please give me a call or write to me.

## APPENDIX F. Interview Topics and Sample Questions

First, a few very general demographic questions:

- In what year were you born? Where? (city, village, district)
- What nationality do you consider yourself?
- Where did you study? What was your major/specialization?
- Where do you live now? With whom?
- Where do you work? What is your position there?

### **[journalists and former journalists:]**

- Where do you work? / When you worked as a journalist, where did you work?
  - What is/was your position and title?
  - What are/were your exact duties? That is, what do/did you do in a normal day?
  - What do/did you like about this work? What do/did you not like?
- How did you become a journalist? In what year?
  - (How did you become a journalist here at this institution? In what year?)
  - Where did you study? What was your major/specialization?
  - If you didn't work as a journalist, what would you like to do/have done instead?

### **[journalists and former journalists:]**

- Tell me about the founding of your institution.
- What is/was the main goal of your show/station/publication?
- Who is/was your audience? Can you describe them?

A few questions about language:

- What language or languages do you control?
- What language or languages do you consider your native language [*rodnoi iazyk*] or languages?
- In what language did you usually speak in childhood—that is, before entering school?
- In what language do you usually speak at home now?
  - With your spouse?
  - With your parents?
  - With your children?

### **[interviewees with children:]**

- In your opinion, what languages should your children control?
- What languages are they studying/did they study in school?
- What languages *should* they be studying in school? Why?
- What language do you usually use on the street—for example, in the *marshrutka* (public transport) or in stores?
- In what language do/did you usually speak at work?
  - Does/did it seem to you that it is/was necessary to speak that language at work? Does/did everyone there speak in that language?

### **[journalists and former journalists:]**

- Do/did you write/publish/broadcast anything in the Buryat language?

Why or why not? (Is/was it a policy of the institution, or does/did it just happen that way? How did the editorial board decide?)

Do you like to read? Do you read for school, or work, or pleasure?  
Do you often read newspapers, books, magazines?  
Is there any particular newspaper that you often read and keep up on?  
Where do you buy or find books and magazines?

Do you like to watch television?  
Which channels and shows do you watch?  
Do you watch television by yourself, or with people? With whom?

Do you like to listen to the radio?  
Which stations and shows do you listen to?  
Do you like to listen to music?  
Do you ever buy CDs or cassette tapes?  
Where do you find the music that you like?

Do you use computers and the internet?  
What do you do on the internet? Do you use email, for example, or play games?  
Where do you use the internet?  
When you use the internet, what kinds of sites do you go to?  
Are they in Russian?  
Do you ever type in Buryat or visit Buryat-language chat rooms?

**[in homes:]** May I see your cell phone/computer/television/radio *tochka*?  
May I look through these books/magazines/this stack of newspapers?

**[Buryat speakers, journalists and former journalists:]**  
What kinds of newspapers and broadcasts do you personally prefer?  
Do you ever read books, newspapers, or magazines in the Buryat language?  
Which ones?  
Do you listen to the radio in Buryat or watch television shows?  
Which shows?  
Can you understand it all? Why or why not?  
Do you ever listen to Buryat-language music? Where did you find recordings?

**[showing samples of current media:]**  
Have you seen this? Or anything like it? Where?  
What do you think of it?  
Can you (read and) understand this?  
What does the language sound like?  
Can you tell me anything about the writer/speaker?

**[journalists and former journalists:]**  
Has/did your institution ever produced/produce anything like this?  
Did you personally ever write/broadcast anything like this?

Languages in mass media are sometimes ‘mixed’ [*smeshivaiutsia*]. What do you think about that?

(In your lifetime, the balance between broadcasts and articles in Buryat and in Russian has changed. Why?)

**[journalists and former journalists:]**

Can you explain your institution’s language policy or decision-making process?

What do you think about mass media in Buryatia/Aga/Ust’-Orda in general?

**[journalists and former journalists:]**

What are the difficulties or specificities of journalism in Buryatia/Aga/Ust’-Orda?

What kind of media are most popular here right now?

(What genres, topics, etc.? Why?)

What is the main purpose of Buryat-language mass media?

What role do Buryat-language mass media play in society?

Do you think that Buryat-language mass media should be supported by the federal government? By local organs of power? By private companies?

**[journalists and former journalists:]**

What do you personally think your role in society is?

(In Russian [*rossiiskoe*] society? In Buryat society?)

**[journalists and former journalists:]**

Describe the future of your newspaper/station/channel/show.

(What do you imagine will happen, and what do you hope for?)

Describe the future of mass media in Buryatia/Aga/Ust’-Orda in general.

(What do you imagine will happen, and what do you hope for?)

Is there anything you would like to add?

## Works Cited

### Archives

NARB. Fonds 1, 914, 930, 955, 3843, and newspaper collection. National Archives of the Republic of Buryatia, Ulan-Ude, Russian Federation.

OPP IMBiT. Inv. No. 356, MI-557, MI-723. Archives of the Institut mongolovedeniia, buddologii, i tibetovedeniia Buriatskogo nauchnogo tsentra Sibirskogo Otdeleniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk [Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies of the Buryat Scientific Centre, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences], Ulan-Ude, Russian Federation.

### Legislation

*O iazykakh narodov Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Zakon RF ot 25 oktiabria 1991 g. N 1807-I.*  
*O iazykakh narodov Respubliki Buriatiia. Zakona Respubliki Buriatiia ot 10.06.1992 g. No. 221-XII.*

*Ob utverzhdenii Gosudarstvennoi programmy Respubliki Buriatiia "Sokhranenie i razvitie buriatskogo iazyka" na 2011-2014 gody. ot 2 avgusta 2010 g. No. 312, 2010.*

*Respublika Buriatiia Konstitutsiia* [Constitution of the Republic of Buryatia], 1996.

Abaeva, L. L., and N. L. Zhukovskaia

2004 Buriaty [The Buryats]. Moscow: Nauka (Russian Academy of Sciences).

Abidiin, A.

1939 Raadio [Radio]. Buriad-Mongol Ynen, January 1, No. 1(2638).

Abu-Lughod, Lila

2005 Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Agha, Asif

1998 Stereotypes and registers of honorific language. *Language in Society* 27:151–194.

2007 Language and Social Relations. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

2011 Meet mediatization. *Language & Communication* 31(3):163–170.

In press Mediatized projects at State peripheries. *Language & Communication*, [doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2011.08.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2011.08.002).

- Aiusheev, B. B.  
 2009 Studencheskii sleng v usloviakh dviuazychiia (na primere vuzov g. Ulan-Ude). [Student slang in conditions of bilingualism (examples from the colleges of Ulan-Ude).] *In* Buriatskii iazyk v polikul'turnom prostranstve (sotsiologvoistoricheskoe issledovanie). G. A. Dyrkheeva, N. B. Darzhaeva, Ts. Ts. Bal'zhinimaeva, et al., eds. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN. Pp. 130–159.
- Amagaev, N., and Alamzhi-Mérgèn  
 1910 Novyi mongolo-buriatskii alfavit. St. Petersburg: The Imperial Academy of Sciences.
- Anderson, Benedict  
 1991 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.
- Anderson, David  
 2000 *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: The Number One Reindeer Brigade*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Andreyev, Alexandre  
 2003 *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918–1930s*. Leiden: Brill.
- ARAI, Yukiyasu  
 2006 Integration and Separation of 'Language': Language Policies of Mongolian Peoples in the USSR and Mongolia, 1920–1940. *In* *Slavic Eurasian Studies*, Slavic Research Center (Hokkaido University, Sapporo) 10: Reconstruction and Interaction of Slavic Eurasia and Its Neighboring Worlds. Pp. 309–334.
- Baabar, Bat-Erdeniin, and Christopher Kaplonski  
 1999 *Twentieth Century Mongolia*. Cambridge: White Horse Press.
- Babuev, S. D.  
 1997 Gipotezy o proiskhozhdenii khongodorov [Hypotheses about the origin of the Khongodors]. *In* *Mongolovednye issledovaniia*. (2 vols.) Sh. B. Chimitdorzhiev et al., eds. Pp. 81–83. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.  
 2001 Buriiaad khéléeé khüzhhöökhè tukhai. Buriiaad Ünén, December 6.  
 2006 O dal'neishikh perspektivakh razvitiia buriatskogo iazyka. *In* *Istoriia razvitiia buriatskogo iazyka*, ed. V. I. Rassadin and D. D. Dondokova, 131–134. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.
- Babushkin, S. M. 2004. *Buriatsko-russkii i russko-buriatskii slovar'*. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo OAO "Respublikanskaia tipografiia."
- Badmaeva, Liudmila Vladimirovna  
 2002 SMI i auditoriia: problemy privlekate'nosti. *In* *Obshchestvennoe mnenie zhitelei Buriatii na rubezhe vekov: materialy seminara*. B. Bazarov and I. Osinskii, eds. Pp. 134–158. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo VSGTU.  
 2004 Regional'nye SMI i auditoriia: osobennosti funktsionirovaniia v period transformatsii rossiiskogo obshchestva (na materialakh Respubliki Buriatii) [Regional mass media and audience: peculiarities of functioning in the period of the transformation of Russian society (based on materials of the Republic of Buryatia)]. Candidate dissertation, Ulan-Ude: East-Siberian State Technological University.

- Bakhtin, M. M.  
1981[1934–1935] *The Dialogic Imagination*. Michael Holquist, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakker, Peter  
1997 *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Metis*. Oxford University Press.
- Baldano, M. N.  
2003 *Arkhivnye materialy o poezdke khori-buriat k Tsariu Petru I. In Narody Buriatii v sostave Rossii: ot protivostoianiiia k soglasiuu (300 let Ukazu Petra I), part 4*. V. M. Alekseeva, et al., eds. Pp. 68–75. Ulan-Ude: Respublikanskaia tipografiia.
- Balkhanov, G. I.  
1974 *Ustnaia propaganda i ee effektivnost'*. Ulan-Ude.
- Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam  
1981 *Rituals of Gender Identity: Markers of Siberian Khanty Ethnicity, Status, and Belief*. *American Anthropologist* 83(4):850–867.  
1999 *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Barfield, Thomas J.  
1989 *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Barnett, C.  
2003 *Culture and Democracy: Media, Space and Representation*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Batuev, B. B.  
1972 *Gazety Vostochnoi Sibiri kak istochnik izucheniia istorii Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii. In Nauchnye biblioteki Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov, vol. 9*. Pp. 155–173. Novosibirsk.
- Bawden, Charles R.  
1985 *Shamans, Lamas and Evangelicals: The English Missionaries in Siberia*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bazarov, Boris V.  
1995 *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaiia zhizn' 1920–1950-kh gg. i razvitie literatury i iskusstva Buriatii*. Ulan-Ude.  
2004 *Panmongolizm: ot mifov k faktam (in 5 parts). Tainy Buriatii (proekt "Vostok Rossii")*. Ulan-Ude.
- Bazarova, V. V.  
2006 *Latinizatsiia buriat-mongol'skoi pis'mennosti v 1920–1930 gg.* Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'sko-poligraficheskii kompleks FGOU VPO VSGAKI.
- Bazheeva, T. P.  
2002 *Sotsial'nyi i iazykovoi aspekty formirovaniia rannego (detskogo) buriatsko-russkogo i russko-buriatskogo dviiazychiia*. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.
- Bell, Allan  
1991 *The Language of News Media*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Bell, Allan, and Peter Garrett (eds.)  
1998 *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell.

- Bernstein, Anya  
 2009 Pilgrims, Fieldworkers, and Secret Agents: Buryat Buddhologists and the History of an Eurasian Imaginary. *Inner Asia* 11(1):23–45.
- Bird, S. Elizabeth  
 2010 Introduction: The Anthropology of News and Journalism: Why Now? *In* *The Anthropology of News and Journalism*. S. Elizabeth Bird, ed. Pp. 1–18. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bird, S. Elizabeth (ed.)  
 2010 *The Anthropology of News and Journalism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bloch, Alexia  
 2003 *Red Ties and Residential Schools: Indigenous Siberians in a Post-Soviet State*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Blommaert, Jan, and Jef Verschueren  
 1998 The Role of Language in European Nationalist Ideologies. *In* *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, ed. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, 189–210. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin  
 1999 *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bonner, Donna M.  
 1982 Garifuna children's language shame: ethnic stereotypes, national affiliation, and transnational immigration as factors in language choice in southern Belize. *Language in Society* 30:81–96.
- Bourdieu, Pierre  
 1991[1982] *Language and Symbolic Power*. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bower, Robert T.  
 1973 *Television and the Public*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Boyer, Dominic  
 2000 On the Sedimentation and Accreditation of Social Knowledges of Difference: Mass Media, Journalism, and the Reproduction of East/West Alterities in Unified Germany. *Cultural Anthropology* 15(4):459–491.  
 2001 The Impact and Embodiment of Western Expertise in the Restructuring of the East German Media after 1990. *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 19(1):77–84.  
 2005 *Spirit and System: Media, Intellectuals, and the Dialectic in Modern German Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Browne, Donald  
 1996 *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples: A Voice of Our Own?* Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Budaev, Ts. B.  
 1978 *Leksika buriatskikh dialektov v sravnitel'no-istoricheskom osveshchenii*. [The lexicon of Buryat dialects in a comparative-historical light.] Novosibirsk: Nauka.  
 1992 *Buriatskie dialekty: opyt diakhronicheskogo issledovaniia*. Novosibirsk: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka" (SO RAN).

- Buraev, I. D.  
 1988 Osnovnye étapý issledovaniia buriatskikh dialektov i ikh klassifikatsiia. *In* Razvitie i vzaimodeistvie dialektov Pribaikal'ia. [Development and mutual influence of the dialects of Pribaikal.] L. D. Shagdarov, ed. Ulan-Ude: Buryat Institute of Social Sciences.  
 1996 Problemy klassifikatsii buriatskikh dialektov. [Problems of the classification of Buryat dialects.] *In* Problemy buriatskoi dialektologii. [Problems of Buryat dialectology.] V. I. Rassadin et al., eds. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.
- Burstat  
 2010 Chislennost' postoiannogo naseleniia po munitsipal'nym obrazovaniiam respubliki po sostoianiu na 1 ianvaria (1991–2010). GKS Rosstat.
- Buryadxelen.org  
 2006 Toli [Dictionary]. Part of an electronic textbook. Ulan-Ude: Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Buryatia.
- Carey, John, and Martin C. J. Elton  
 2010 When Media Are New: Understanding the Dynamics of New Media Adoption and Use. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Carvalho, Anabela  
 2008 Media(ted) discourse and society: rethinking the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Journalism Studies* 9(2):161–177.
- Catenaccio, P., C. Cotter, M. De Smedt, et al.  
 2011 Towards a linguistics of news production. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43(7):1843–1852.
- Cavanaugh, Jillian R.  
 2006 Little women and vital champions: gendered language shift in a northern Italian town. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16(2):194–210.
- Chakars, Melissa  
 2008 Being Buryat: Soviet Modernization in Buryatia. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University.  
 2009 Buryat Literature as a Political and Cultural Institution from the 1950s to the 1970s. *Inner Asia* 11(1):47–63.
- Chimitdorzhiev, Sh. B.  
 1996 Otkuda rodóm khongodory? [Whence by lineage the Khongodors?] *In* Mongolovednye issledovaniia [Mongolian studies], Vol. 1. Sh. B. Chimitdorzhiev et al., eds. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN. Pp. 62–66.  
 2001a Panmongolizm i ego opponenty na raznykh étapakh istorii. [Pan-Mongolism and its opponents in different periods of history.] *In* Buriatii: problemy regional'noi istorii i istoricheskogo obrazovaniia (1–2). T. E. Sanzhieva and A. D. Tsybiktarov, eds. Pp. 3–8. Ulan-Ude: Buryat State University.  
 2001b Khozhdenie Khori-Buriat k Sagaan Khanu (Belomu tsariu): Ocherki po istorii khori-buriat. Srednevekov'e i novoe vremia. Ulan-Ude.  
 2004 Kto my – Buriat-Mongoly? 2nd ed. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo (Kongress buriatskogo naroda).
- Choiropov, Ts. Ts.  
 1998 Obshchestvennye peremeny Buriatii v usloviakh transformatsii rossiiskogo obshchestva. Ulan-Ude: VSGTU.

- Cochran, Effie Papatzikou  
 1997 An instance of triglossia? Codeswitching as evidence for the present state of Greece's 'language question.' *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 126(1):33–62.
- Cody, Francis P.  
 2007 *Literacy as Enlightenment: Written Language, Activist Mediation, and the State in Rural Tamilnadu, India*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- Coleman, S., and K. Ross  
 2010 *The Media and the Public: "Them" and "Us" in Media Discourse*. Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Comrie, Bernard  
 1996 Script reform in and after the Soviet Union. *In The World's Writing Systems*. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, eds. Pp. 781–784. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cormack, Mike  
 1998 Minority language media in Western Europe: Preliminary considerations. *European Journal of Communication* 13(1):33–52.  
 2007 Introduction: Studying Minority Language Media. *In Minority Language Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies*. Mike Cormack and Niamh Hourigan, eds. Pp. 1–16. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cotter, Colleen  
 2010 *News Talk: Investigating the Language of Journalism*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.  
 2011 Diversity awareness and the role of language in cultural representations in news stories. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43(7):1843–1852.
- Cruikshank, Julie, and Tatiana Argounova  
 2000 Reinscribing Meaning: Memory and Indigenous Identity in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). *Arctic Anthropology* 37(1):96–119.
- Craig, Colette Grinevald  
 1997 Language contact and language degeneration. *In The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Florian Coulmas, ed. Pp. 257–270. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Crowley, Tony  
 1989 *Standard English and the Politics of Language*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Crystal, David  
 2000 *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Curran, James  
 1991 Rethinking the Media as a Public Sphere. *In Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the Public Sphere*. Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks, eds. Pp. 27–56. London: Routledge.
- Dagbaev, Èrdèm D.  
 1995 *Pressa i natsional'no-politicheskii protsess regiona*. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.  
 1999 *Stredstva massovoi informatsii i vlast'*. Ulan-Ude: BGU.

- 2004 Sredstva massovoi informatsii: dinamicheskie modeli politicheskoi kommunikatsii. Ulan-Ude: BGU.
- Dareeva, O. A.  
2007 Sotsiokul'turnyi podkhod k obucheniiu buriatskomu iazyku kak vtoromu. Ulan-Ude: BGU.
- Dashinimaeva, P. P., G. A. Dyrkheeva, Zh. B. Zhalsanova, and È. V. Khilkhanova  
2010 Buriatsko-russkii bilingvizm: psikholingvisticheskii aspekt. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.
- De Angelis, Gessica, and Jean-Marc Dewaele (eds.)  
2011 New Trends in Crosslinguistic Influence and Multilingualism Research. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Deacon, David, Natalie Fenton, and Alan Bryman  
1999 From inception to reception: the natural history of a news item. *Media, Culture & Society* 21(1):5–31.
- Demoskop Weekly  
2009 Selected data from the 1st Census of the Russian Empire, 1897. Naselenie i obshchestvo, Institute of Demography. Basic data by region available at [http://demoscope.ru/weekly/srp/rus\\_lan\\_97.php?reg=0](http://demoscope.ru/weekly/srp/rus_lan_97.php?reg=0).
- Derluguian, Georgi M.  
2005 Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dinwoodie, David  
1998 Authorizing voices: going public in an indigenous language. *Cultural Anthropology* 13:193–223.
- Dobolova, È. O.  
1987 Ideologicheskaiia deiatel'nost' i obshchestvennoe mnenie. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.
- Dondokov, B. Ts.  
1960 Vozniknovenie i razvitie partiino-sovetskoi pechati v Buriatii (1918–1937). Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.
- Dorian, Nancy  
1977 The problem of the semi-speaker in language death. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 12:23–32.  
1989 Introduction. *In Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death*. Nancy Dorian, ed. Pp. 1–10. Cambridge University Press.
- Dorian, Nancy, ed.  
1989 *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Contraction and Death*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dorzhiev, D. D.  
1994 Staroburiatskii iazyk. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut.
- Dorzheeva, L. B.  
2007 Detskaia pressa kak faktor formirovaniia grazhdanstvennosti shkol'nikov. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo Buriatskogo gosuniversiteta.

- Druzhnikov, Yuri  
 1997 *Informer 001: The Myth of Pavlik Morozov [Donoschik 001, ili Voznesenie Pavlika Morozova]*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Dyrkheeva, G. A.  
 2002 *Buriatskii iazyk v usloviakh dvuiazychiia: problemy funktsionirovaniia i perspektivy razvitiia [The Buryat language in the conditions of bilingualism: problems of functionality and perspectives of development]*. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.  
 2003 *Iazykovaia situatsiia i iazykovoie zakonodatel'stvo v Respublike Buriatii. [The language situation and language legislation in the Republic of Buryatia.] Series: Prava cheloveka i zakonodatel'stvo o iazykakh v sub'ektakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Human rights and legislation on languages in the subjects of the Russian Federation]*. Moscow: Russian University of the Friendship of the Peoples.
- Eagleton, Terry  
 1991 *Ideology*. London: Verso.
- Errington, Joseph  
 1998 Indonesian('s) Development: On the State of a Language of State. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 271–284. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 2003 Getting language rights: the rhetorics of language endangerment and loss. *American Anthropologist* 105(4):723–732.  
 2008 *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fairclough, Norman  
 1989 *Language and Power*. London and New York: Longman.  
 1995 *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fedotova, L., Ia. Kapeliush, and V. Sazonov  
 1985 *Televidenie v nebol'shom gorode. In Televidenie i zritel'*. E. S. Sabashnikova, ed. Moscow.
- Fehérváry, Krisztina  
 2007 Hungarian horoscopes as a genre of postsocialist transformation. *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 13(5):561–576.
- Ferguson, Charles A.  
 1972[1959] Diglossia. *In Language and Social Context*. Pier P. Giglioli, ed. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books. Pp. 232–251.  
 1983 Sports Announcer Talk: Syntactic Aspects of Register Variation. *Language in Society* 12(2):153–172.
- Fishman, Joshua  
 1967 Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23(2): 29–38.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila  
 1994 *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*. Oxford University Press, New York.

- 1999 *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Forsyth, James  
 1992 *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581–1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, Michel  
 1972 *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans. New York: Pantheon.  
 1980[1977] *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Fowler, R.  
 1991 *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Routledge, London.
- French, Brigittine  
 2003 The politics of Mayan linguistics in Guatemala: native speakers, expert analysis, and the nation." *Pragmatics* 13(4):483–498.
- Friedman, Sara L.  
 2006 *Watching Twin Bracelets in China: the role of spectatorship and identification in an ethnographic analysis of film reception*.
- Friedman, Victor  
 2003a Language in Macedonia as an identity construction site. *In When Languages Collide: Sociocultural and Geopolitical Implications of Language Conflict and Language Coexistence*. Brian Joseph, Johanna DeStafano, Neil Jacobs, and Ilse Lehiste, eds. Pp. 257–295. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.  
 2003b The Romani press in Macedonia: language and perspective. *In Ethnic Identities in Dynamic Perspective: Proceedings of the 2002 Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society*. Sheila Salo and Csaba Prónai, eds. Pp. 175–191. Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- Gal, Susan  
 1978 Peasant men can't get wives: language change and sex roles in a bilingual community. *Language in Society* 7:1–16.  
 1988 The political economy of code choice. *In Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Monica Heller, ed. Pp. 245–264. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.  
 1995 Language and the 'arts of resistance.' *Cultural Anthropology* 10(3):407–424.  
 1998 Multiplicity and contention among language ideologies: a commentary. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi Schieffelin, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 317–331. London: Oxford University Press.  
 2001 Linguistic theories and national images in nineteenth-century Hungary. *In Languages and Publics: The Making of Authority*. Susan Gal and Kathryn Woolard, eds. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing.  
 2005 Language ideologies compared: metaphors of public/private. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15:23–37.
- Gal, Susan, and Gail Kligman  
 2000 *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*. Princeton University Press.

- Gal, Susan, and Kathryn Woolard  
 2002 Constructing Languages and Publics: Authority and Representation. *In* Languages and Publics: The Making of Authority. Susan Gal and Kathryn Woolard, eds. Pp. 1–12. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Gans, Herbert J.  
 1979 *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Garbatovskii, Iu.  
 1920 Rodnaia pechat'. *Golos Buriat-Mongola*, December 24: 1.
- Garnham, Nicholas  
 1992 The Media and the Public Sphere. *In* *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Craig Calhoun, ed. Pp. 359–376. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Garrett, Paul  
 2000 "High" Kwéyòl: the emergence of a formal creole register in St. Lucia. *In* *Language Change and Language Contact in Pidgins and Creoles*. John McWhorter, ed. Pp. 63–101. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Gerasimova, K. M.  
 1969 Kul't obo kak dopolnitel'nyi material dlia izucheniia ètnicheskikh protsessov v Buriatii. *In* *Ètnograficheskii sbornik*. Vol. 5. Ulan-Ude: SO AN SSSR, Buriatskii filial.
- Gershon, Ilana  
 2010a Media Ideologies: An Introduction. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2):283–293.  
 2010b *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Getmanskii, Konstantin  
 2010 Prezident Buriatii: Situatsiia na rynke truda stabilizirovalas'. *Inform Polis*. November 18. <http://www.infpol.ru/news/670/48850.php>
- Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin (eds.)  
 2002 *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goffman, Erving  
 1967 *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.  
 1981a Radio Talk: A Study of the Ways of our Errors. *In* *Forms of Talk*. Pp. 197–330. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.  
 1981b Footing. *In* *Forms of Talk*. Pp. 124–157. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Golding, Peter, and Phillip Elliott  
 1979 *Making the News*. Harlow: Longman.
- Golos Buriat-Mongola  
 1920 Ot redaktsii. [From the editorial board.]. *Golos Buriat-Mongola*, December 24: 1.  
 1921. Ot redaktsii. [From the editorial board.]. *Golos Buriat-Mongola*, January 24: 1.

- Golub, Alex  
 2007 From agency to agents: forging landowner identities in Porgera. *In Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea: Anthropological Perspectives*. James Weiner and Katie Glaskin, eds. Pp. 73–96. Canberra: Australian National University E-Press.
- Golubev, E. A.  
 1974 Radio i ego auditoriia, (opyt konkretno-sotsiologicheskogo izucheniia auditorii radioslushatelei Buriatskoi ASSR). Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.  
 1989 Aktivizatsiia sotsial'noi roli radio: Na primere konkretno-sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniï v Buriatskoi ASSR. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.
- Gorham, Michael S.  
 2003 *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Graber, Kathryn  
 2008 Everything Old is New Again: Reclaiming Ethnonational Tradition in Post-Soviet Buryatia. M.A. thesis, Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Michigan.  
 2009 Pravila orfografii i vliianie russkogo iazyka na buriatskie SMI. *In Language as a National Attribute: Issues in the Preservation of Linguistic Diversity*. Proceedings. G. A. Dyrxeeva and B. D. Tsyrenov, eds. Pp. 305–315. Ulan-Ude: SO RAN.  
 In press Public Information: The Shifting Roles of Minority Language News Media in the Buryat Territories of Russia. *Language & Communication*, [doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2011.05.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2011.05.005).
- Graber, Kathryn, and Joseph Long  
 2009 The Dissolution of the Buryat Autonomous Okrugs in Siberia: Notes from the Field. *Inner Asia* 11(1):147–155.
- Graber, Kathryn, and Jesse Murray  
 N.d. Civilizing the Eastern Frontier... Or at Least Its Language: Orthodox Missionary Linguists and Their Vision for Buryat, 1860s–1930s. Unpublished ms.
- Grant, Bruce  
 1993 Siberia hot and cold: reconstructing the image of Siberian indigenous peoples. *In Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*. Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine, eds. Pp. 227–253. New York: St. Martin's Press.  
 1995 *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Grebnev, A.  
 1967 Kak delaetsia gazeta. Teoriia i praktika sovetskoi partiinoi pressy. Moscow: Department of Journalism and Literature, Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
- Grenoble, Lenore A., and Lindsay J. Whaley  
 2006 *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Grenoble, Lenore A., and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.)  
 1998 *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gronow, Jukka  
 2004 *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Grosheva, E. N.  
 2008 *Knigoizdanie na buriatskom iazyke (XIX–nachalo XXI vv.)*. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo OAO "Respublikanskaia tipografiia."
- Gumperz, John  
 1982 Social network and language shift. *In Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gürsel, Zeynep Devrim  
 2010 *U.S. Newsworld: The Rule of Text and Everyday Practices of Editing the World*. *In The Anthropology of News and Journalism*. S. Elizabeth Bird, ed. Pp. 35–53. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen  
 1989[1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Thomas Burger, trans. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Halemba, Agnieszka  
 2006 *The Telengits of Southern Siberia: Landscape, Religion and Knowledge in Motion*. London: Routledge.
- Hamel, Rainer Enrique  
 1997 Language conflict and language shift: a sociolinguistic framework for linguistic human rights. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 127:105–134.
- Hannerz, Ulf  
 2002 Among the foreign correspondents: reflections on anthropological styles and audiences. *Ethnos* 67(1):57–74.  
 2004 *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Harrison, K. David  
 2007 *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hasty, Jennifer  
 2005 *The Press and Political Culture in Ghana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Haugen, Einar  
 1966 Dialect, Language, Nation. *American Anthropologist* 68:922–935.
- Hellbeck, Jochen  
 2006 *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Heller, Monica  
 2007 *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*. 2nd edition. New York: Continuum International.

- Hill, Jane H.  
 1999 Syncretism. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1-2):244–246.
- Hill, Jane H., and Kenneth C. Hill  
 1980 Mixed grammar, purist grammar, and language attitudes in modern Nahuatl. *Language in Society* 9:321–348.  
 1986 *Speaking Mexicano: Dynamics of Syncretic Language in Central Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hill, Jane H., and Bruce Mannheim  
 1992 Language and Worldview. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:381–406.
- Hirsch, Francine  
 2005 *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hornberger, Nancy H., and Kendall A. King  
 1998 Authenticity and Unification in Quechua Language Planning. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 11(3):390–410.
- Hull, Matthew S.  
 2003 The file: agency, authority, and autography in an Islamabad bureaucracy. *Language & Communication* 23:287–314.
- Humphrey, Caroline  
 1973 Some Ritual Techniques in the Bull-Cult of the Buriat-Mongols. The Curl Lecture, 1973. *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. Pp. 15–28.  
 1983 *Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society, and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 1989 Janus-faced signs: the political language of a Soviet minority before *Glasnost*. *Sociological Review* 36:145–175.  
 1994a Shamanic Practices and the State in Northern Asia: Views from the Center and Periphery. *In Shamanism, History, and the State*. Pp. 191–225. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.  
 1994b Remembering an “Enemy”: The Bogd Khan in 20th-Century Mongolia. *In Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*. Rubie S. Watson, ed. Pp. 21–44. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press (University of Washington Press).  
 1999 *Marx Went Away—But Karl Stayed Behind*. Updated edition of *Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hymes, Dell  
 1968 Linguistic Problems in Defining the Concept of “Tribe.” *In Essays on the Problem of Tribe*. *Proceedings of the 1967 Annual Meeting, American Ethnological Society*. Seattle: American Ethnological Society and the University of Washington Press. Pp. 23–48.
- Irvine, Judith T.  
 1989 When talk isn’t cheap: language and political economy. *American Ethnologist* 16:248–267.

- Irvine, Judith, and Susan Gal  
 2000 Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation. *In Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Paul Kroskrity, ed. Pp. 35–83. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Iurtsovskii, N. S.  
 1923 Ocherki po istorii prosveshcheniia v Sibiri. *In Obschchii khod razvitiia shkol'nogo dela v Sibiri, 1703–1917 gg* [The general path of development of school affairs in Siberia, 1703–1917], Vol. 1. Novonikolaevsk: Sibirskoe oblastnoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo.
- Jaffe, Alexandra  
 1999 Ideologies in Action: Language Politics on Corsica. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Jenkins, Henry  
 2006 Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York: New York University Press.
- Johnson, Sally  
 2005 Spelling Trouble? Language, Ideology and the Reform of German Orthography. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Joseph, John E., and Talbot J. Taylor  
 1990 Introduction: Ideology, Science and Language. *In Ideologies of Language*. John E. Joseph and Talbot J. Taylor, eds. Pp. 1–6. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kara, György  
 1972 Knigi mongol'skikh kochevnikov. [Books of the Mongolian nomads.] Moscow: Nauka.  
 1996 Aramaic Scripts for Altaic Languages. *In The World's Writing Systems*. Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, eds. Pp. 536–558. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, Catriona  
 2005 Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero. London: Granta Books.
- Khilkhanova, Ėrzhen Vladimirovna  
 2007 Faktory kollektivnogo vybora iazyka i ètnokul'turnaia identichnost' u sovremennykh Buriat (diskurs-analiticheskii podkhod). Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'sko-poligraficheskii kompleks FGOU VPO VSGAKI.  
 2009 Faktory iazykovogo sdviga i sokhraneniia minoritarnykh iazykov: diskursnyi i sotsiolingvisticheskii analiz (na materiale iazykovoï situatsii v ètnicheskoi Buriatii). Doctoral dissertation, VSGAKI (Ulan-Ude and Barnaul).
- Kim, N., and S. Baldanov  
 1994 Buriad khèlèn deèrè garahan türüüshyn gazetè. [The first newspaper published in the Buryat language.] Buriad Ünèn, October 11.
- King, Alexander D.  
 2006 The Siberian studies manifesto. *Sibirica* 5(1):v–xv.  
 2011 Living with Koryak Traditions: Playing with Culture in Siberia. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- Kivelson, Valerie  
 2006 *Cartographies of Tsardom: The Land and its Meanings in Seventeenth-Century Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Klements, Dmitrii  
 1907 Pessimizm na buriatskoi pochve. [Pessimism on the Buryat soil.] *Sibirskie voprosy* 10:7–23.
- Kogan, L. N.  
 1973 Televidenie i dukhovnaia kul'tura sotsialisticheskogo obshchestva. *In* *Televizionnaia auditoriia: struktura, orientatsii, kul'turnaia aktivnost'*. Sverdlovsk.
- Kondakov, N. I. (ed.)  
 1941 *Iazyk gazety. Prakticheskoe posobie i spravocchnik dlia gazetnykh rabotnikov*. [The language of the newspaper: a practical manual and reference book for newspaper employees.] Central Cabinet of Editors at the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the VKPb. Moscow-Leningrad: Legprom.
- Kosnick, Kira  
 2007 *Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kuchmurukova, E. A.  
 2002 *Istoriia knigoizdaniia Buriatii (vtoraia polovina 1930-x–1991 gg.)*. Ulan-Ude: VSGAKI.
- Kuipers, Joel C.  
 1990 *Power in Performance: The Creation of Textual Authority in Weyewa Ritual Speech*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kulick, Don  
 1992 *Language Shift and Cultural Reproduction: Socialization, Self, and Syncretism in a Papua New Guinean Village*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 1998 Anger, gender, language shift, and the politics of revelation in a Papua New Guinean village. *In* *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 87–102. Oxford University Press.
- Kunreuther, Laura  
 2010 Transparent Media: Radio, Voice, and Ideologies of Directness in Postdemocratic Nepal. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2):334–351.
- Kuras, L. V.  
 1991 *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Vostochnoi Sibiri*. Ulan-Ude.
- Lampland, Martha  
 1995 *The Object of Labor: Commodification in Socialist Hungary*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Landes, Joan  
 1988 *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lavrovskii, N. A.  
 1984 *Pechat' i sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Sibiri (1926–1936 gg.)*. Tomsk.

- Ledeneva, Alena V.  
 1998 Russia's Economy of Favours: *Blat*, Networking and Informal Exchange. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Benjamin  
 1997 Talking Heads: Language, Metalanguage, and the Semiotics of Subjectivity. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  
 2001 Circulating the People. *In Languages and Publics: The Making of Authority*, ed. Susan Gal and Kathryn Woolard, 164–181. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing.
- LeMaster, Barbara  
 2006 Language contraction, revitalization, and Irish women. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16(2):211–228.
- Lemon, Alaina  
 2000 Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  
 2002 “Form” and “Function” in Soviet Stage Romani: Modeling Metapragmatics Through Performance Institutions. *Language in Society* 31:29–64.  
 2003 Talking Transit and Spectating Transition: The Moscow Metro. *In Altering States: Ethnographies of Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Daphne Berdahl, Matti Bunzl, and Martha Lampland, eds. University of Michigan Press. Pp. 14–39.  
 2008 Writing against the New ‘Cold War.’ *Anthropology News* 49(8):11–12.
- Lenin, V. I.  
 1902 V. Plan obshcherusskoi politicheskoi gazety. Chto delat'? Nabolevshie voprosy nashego dvizheniia. Stuttgart: Verlag von J. H. W. Dietz Nachfolger GmbH.
- Lewis, M. Paul (ed.)  
 2009 *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 16th edition. Dallas, TX: SIL International. Available at <http://www.ethnologue.com/>, accessed December 11, 2011.
- Losev, A.  
 1978 Pis'ma. Kontinent: Literaturnyi, obshchestvenno-politicheskii i religiozni zhurnal 16.
- Lubsanov, D. D.  
 1972 Aktual'nye problemy konkretno-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia dukhovnykh protsessov v Buriatii. *In Iz opyta konkretno-sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniia*. Pp. 3–19. Ulan-Ude.
- M. K.  
 1904 Iz istorii prosveshcheniia sibirskikh inorodtsev. [From the history of the enlightenment of the Siberian natives.] *Vestnik Evropy* 4:281–289.
- Makarova, O. G.  
 2005 Buriatskii iazyk: Intensivnyi kurs po razvitiu navykov ustnoi rechi. [The Buryat language: An intensive course for the development of oral speech skills.] Ulan-Ude: Bëlig (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Buryatia).

- Martin, Terry  
 2001 *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- McLaughlin, Daniel  
 1992 *When Literacy Empowers*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Meek, Barbra A.  
 2007 *Respecting the Language of Elders: Ideological Shift and Linguistic Discontinuity in a Northern Athapascan Community*. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17(1):23–43.  
 2010 *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan Community*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Metzo, Katherine  
 2008 *Shamanic Transformations: Buriat Shamans as Mediators of Multiple Worlds*. In *Religion, Morality, and Community in Post-Soviet Societies*. Mark D. Steinberg and Catherine Wanner, eds. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 215–245.
- Mickiewicz, Ellen (Propper)  
 1981 *Media and the Russian Public*. New York: Praeger Publishers.  
 1988 *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union*. New York: Oxford University Press.  
 1991 *Ethnicity and Soviet Television News*. *Columbia International Affairs Online*. Available at <http://www.ciaonet.org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/wps/mie02/>, accessed September 20, 2011.  
 1999 *Changing Channels: Television and the Struggle for Power in Russia*. Revised edition. Durham and London: Duke University Press.  
 2008 *Television, Power, and the Public in Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Milroy, James  
 2001 *Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization*. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5:530–555.
- Mitypov, V. G.  
 2003 *Tainaia chast' khorinskoi missii*. In *Narody Buriatii v sostave Rossii: ot protivostoianiia k soglasiuu (300 let Ukazu Petra I), part 4*. V. M. Alekseeva et al., eds. Pp. 31–38. Ulan-Ude: Respublikanskaia tipografiia.
- Montgomery, Robert W.  
 2005 *Late Tsarist and Early Soviet Nationality and Cultural Policy: The Buryats and Their Language*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Moore, Robert E.  
 1988 *Lexicalization versus lexical loss in Wasco-Wishram language obsolescence*. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 54(4):453–468.  
 2006 *Disappearing, Inc.: glimpsing the sublime in the politics of access to endangered languages*. *Language & Communication* 26(3-4):201–380.
- Muehlebach, Andrea M.  
 2001 *Making Place at the United Nations: An Anthropological Inquiry into the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations*. *Cultural Anthropology* 16(3):415–435.

- Muehlmann, Shaylih  
 2008 “Spread your ass cheeks”: And other things that should not be said in indigenous languages. *American Ethnologist* 35(1):34–48.  
 In press Von Humboldt’s parrot and the countdown of last speakers in the Colorado Delta. *Language & Communication*,  
[doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2011.05.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2011.05.001).
- Murphy, Patrick D.  
 2011 Locating Media Ethnography. *In* *The Handbook of Media Audiences*. Virginia Nightingale, ed. Pp. 380–401. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Muzaev, Timur  
 1999 Ètnicheskii separatizm v Rossii. Moscow: Izdatel’stvo OOO “Panorama.”
- Myers-Scotton, Carol  
 1997 Code-switching. *In* *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Florian Coulmas, ed. Pp. 217–237. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.  
 2002 Lexical borrowing, split (mixed) languages, and creole formation. *In* *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes*. Pp. 233–294. Oxford University Press.
- Nadasdy, Paul  
 2002 ‘Property’ and Aboriginal Land Claims in the Canadian Subarctic: Some Theoretical Considerations. *American Anthropologist* 104(1):247–261.
- Namzhilova, D. Ts.  
 2001 Periodicheskaia pechat’ Buriatii: istoriia stanovleniia i razvitiia (vtoraia polovina XIX veka – 1937 g.). [Periodicals in Buryatia: the history of their foundation and development (second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1937).] Ulan-Ude: VSGAKI.
- Narodnoe khoziaistvo v 1975  
 1976 Moscow.
- Nettle, Daniel, and Suzanne Romaine  
 2000 *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World’s Languages*. Oxford University Press.
- Niezen, Ronald  
 2000 Recognizing indigenism: Canadian unity and the International Movement of Indigenous Peoples. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41(1):119–148.
- Osinskii, I. I., B. V. Bazarov, and Ts. B. Budaeva (eds.)  
 2002 Obshchestvennoe mnenie zhitelei Buriatii na rubezhe vekov. Sbornik dokladov i soobshchenii regional’nogo seminaru. Ulan-Ude: VSGTU.
- Peers, Eleanor  
 2008 *Print, Power and Personhood: Newspapers and Ethnic Identity in East Siberia*. Doctoral dissertation, Cambridge University.
- Pedelty, Mark  
 1995 *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*. New York: Routledge.
- Perrin, Daniel  
 2003 Progression analysis (PA): investigating writing strategies at the workplace. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35:907–921.
- Pesmen, Dale  
 2000 *Russia and Soul: An Exploration*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

- Peterson, Mark Allen  
 2001 Getting to the story: unwriteable discourse and interpretive practice in American journalism. *Anthropological Quarterly* 74(4):201–211.  
 2003 *Anthropology and Mass Communication*. New York: Berghahn.
- Philo, Greg  
 2007 Can discourse analysis successfully explain the content of media and journalistic practice? *Journalism Studies* 8(2):175–196.
- Platz, Stephanie  
 2003 The Shape of National Time: Daily Life, History, and Identity during Armenia's Transition to Independence, 1991–1994. *In* *Altering States: Ethnographies of Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Daphne Berdahl, Matti Bunzl, and Martha Lampland, eds. Pp. 114–138. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Poppe, Nicholas (Nikolai)  
 1933 *Buriat-Mongol'skoe iazykoznanie*. [Buryat-Mongolian linguistic knowledge.] Leningrad: AN SSSR and Institute of Culture of the BMASSR.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A.  
 1998 The State of Shame: Australian Multiculturalism and the Crisis of Indigenous Citizenship. *Critical Inquiry* 24(2):575–610.  
 2002 *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Prior, Paul A., and Julie A. Hengst  
 2010 Introduction: Exploring Semiotic Remediation. *In* *Exploring Semiotic Remediation as Discourse Practice*. Paul A. Prior and Julie A. Hengst, eds. Pp. 1–23. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Queen, Robin  
 2001 Bilingual intonation patterns: evidence of language change from Turkish-German bilingual children. *Language in Society* 30(1):55–80.
- Quijada, Justine Buck  
 2009 *Opening the Roads: History and Religion in Post-Soviet Buryatia*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago.
- Randalov, Iu. B., V. B. Prokop'ev, E. V. Matveeva, S. P. Tatarova, V. G. Zhalsanova, and M. V. Maloshik  
 2004 *Kul'turnye protsessy v Respublike Buriatiia: otsenki v glazakh naseleniia (opyt sotsiologicheskogo izucheniia)*. Ulan-Ude: BNTs SO RAN.
- Rickford, John R., and John McWhorter  
 1997 Language contact and language generation: pidgins and creoles. *In* *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Florian Coulmas, ed. Pp. 238–256. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ries, Nancy  
 1997 *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.  
 2002 “Honest Bandits” and “Warped People”: Russian Narratives about Money, Corruption, and Moral Decay. *In* *Unstable Places: Everyday Lives in Contexts of Dramatic Political Change*. Carol J. Greenhouse, Elizabeth Mertz, and Kay B. Warren, eds. Pp. 276–315. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Rivkin-Fish, Michele  
 2010 Pronatalism, Gender Politics, and the Renewal of Family Support in Russia: Towards a Feminist Anthropology of 'Maternity Capital.' *Slavic Review* 69(3):701–724.
- Rosenberg, William G.  
 2000 Boy Hero 001: The Life and Legends of Pavlik Morozov (film review). *Slavic Review* 59(2):428–429.
- Rosstat, (Federal'naia sluzhba gosudarstvennoi statistiki)  
 2004 Vserossiiskaia perepis' naseleniia 2002 goda. Available at <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=11>, accessed May 11, 2011.  
 2009 Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossii – 2009 g. Available at [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/B09\\_16/IssWWW.exe/Stg/01-03.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/B09_16/IssWWW.exe/Stg/01-03.htm), accessed September 20, 2011.  
 2011 Chislennost' gorodskogo i sel'skogo naseleniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Available at <http://www.perepis-2010.ru/message-rosstat.php>, accessed September 23, 2011.
- Rumiantsev, G. N.  
 1962 Proiskhozhdenie khorinskikh buriat. E. M. Zalkind, ed. Ulan-Udè: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo.
- Rumiantsev, G. N., and S. B. Okun', eds.  
 1960 Sbornik materialov po istorii Buriatii. XVII vek. [Collection of materials on the history of Buryatia. 17<sup>th</sup> century.] Ulan-Ude: Buryat Institute of Social Sciences.
- Rumsey, Alan  
 1990. "Wording, Meaning and Linguistic Ideology." *American Anthropologist* 92: 346–361.
- Rupen, Robert  
 1964 *Mongols of the Twentieth Century*. (2 vols.) Bloomington: Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series.  
 1966 *The Mongolian People's Republic*. Jan F. Triska, ed. Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace.
- Samuels, David W.  
 2004 *Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Sanzhieva, T. E.  
 2009 Formirovanie sistemy sviazi g. Verkhneudinska (vtoraia polovina XIX – nachala XX v.). *In Vestnik Buriatskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 7:19–21. Ulan-Ude: Izdatel'stvo Buriatskogo gosuniversiteta.
- Schiffman, Harold F.  
 1993 The balance of power in multiglossic languages: implications for language shift. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 103:115–148.
- Schlesinger, Philip  
 1987 *Putting Reality Together*. 2nd edition. London: Methuen.
- Schmid, Monika S.  
 2011 *Language Attrition. Key Topics in Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

- Schorkowitz, Dittmar
- 2001a The Orthodox Church, Lamaism, and Shamanism. *In* *Of Religion and Empire: Missions, Conversions, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*. Robert P. Geraci and Michael Khodarkovsky, eds. Pp. 201–228. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- 2001b Staat und Nationalitäten in Rußland: Der Integrationsprozeß der Burjaten und Kalmücker, 1822–1925. *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa* 61. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Schröder, Kim Christian
- 2007 Media discourse analysis: researching cultural meanings from inception to reception. *Textual Cultures: Text, Contexts, Interpretation* 2(2):77–99.
- Shagdarov, L. D.
- 1967 Stanovlenie edinikh norm buriatskogo literaturnogo iazyka v sovetskuiu epokhu. Ulan-Ude: BION AN SSSR.
- 1974 Funktsional'no-stilisticheskaia differentsiatsiia buriatskogo literaturnogo iazyka. Ulan-Ude: AN SSSR, Buriatskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo.
- Shevchenko, Olga
- 2009 *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Sidnell, Jack
- 2005 *Talk and Practical Epistemology: The Social Life of Knowledge in a Caribbean Community*. John Benjamins.
- Silverstein, Michael
- 1993 Review. *Language and Symbolic Power*, by Pierre Bourdieu. John B. Thompson, ed. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, trans. *American Ethnologist* 20(3):648–649.
- 2000 Whorfianism and the Linguistic Imagination of Nationality. *In* *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Paul V. Kroskrity, ed. Pp. 85–138. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- 2003 Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication* 23:193–230.
- 2010 Society, polity and language community: An enlightenment trinity in anthropological perspective. *Journal of Language and Politics* 9(3):339–363.
- Silverstein, Michael, and Greg Urban
- 1996 The Natural History of Discourse. *In* *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, eds. Pp. 1–20. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sinyavsky, A.
- 1988 *Soviet Civilization: A Cultural History*. J. Turnbull, trans. New York: Arcade Publishing.
- Slezkine, Yuri
- 1996 The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism. *In* *Becoming National*. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 203–238.
- Smith, Michael G.
- 1998 *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917–1953*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Sosnovskaia, È. I.  
 1981 *Gazeta i nravstvennye osnovy truda (o vliianii pressy na moral'nyi faktor proizvodstva)*. Moscow: Mysl'.
- Spitulnik, Debra  
 1996 The Social Circulation of Media Discourse and the Mediation of Communities. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 6(2):161–187.  
 1998 Mediating Unity and Diversity: The Production of Language Ideologies in Zambian Broadcasting. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 163–188. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 2002 Mobile machines and fluid audiences: rethinking reception through Zambian radio culture. *In Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds. Pp. 337–354. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Splichal, Slavko  
 1994 *Media Beyond Socialism: Theory and Practice in East-Central Europe*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sredstva massovoi informatsii i propagandy  
 1984 Moscow.
- Ssorin-Chaikov, Nikolai  
 2003 *A Social Life of the State in Subarctic Siberia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ståhlberg, P.  
 2002 *Lucknow Daily: How a Hindi Newspaper Constructs Society*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor  
 1993 *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.  
 1998 *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Svantesson, Jan-Olof  
 1991 Tradition and reform in China's Minority languages. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1:70–88.
- Svantesson, Jan-Olof, Anna Tsendina, Anastasia Mukhanova Karlsson, and Vivan Franzén  
 2005 *The Phonology of Mongolian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swagman, Kirstin J.  
 2011 *Language Names and Norms in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- Taylor, Talbot J.  
 1990 Which Is to Be Master? The Institutionalization of Authority in the Science of Language. *In Ideologies of Language*. John E. Joseph and Talbot J. Taylor, eds. Pp. 9–26. London and New York: Routledge.
- Thomason, Sarah G.  
 2001 *Language Contact: An Introduction*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

- Thomason, Sarah Grey, and Terrence Kaufman  
 1988 *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tishkov, Valery  
 1997 *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*. London: Sage Publications.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand de  
 2000[1922] Public Opinion and ‘the’ Public Opinion. *In* Ferdinand Tönnies on Public Opinion: Selections and Analyses. Hanno Hardt and Slavko Splichal, eds. and trans. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Troinitskii, N. A. (ed.)  
 1905 *Pervaia Vseobshchaia perepis’ naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g.* [First Universal census of the Russian Empire of 1897.] (Data from Table 13: An account of the population according to native language.) St. Petersburg.
- Tsitsipis, Lukas  
 1998 *A Linguistic Anthropology of Praxis and Language Shift: Arvanitika (Albanian) and Greek in contact*. Oxford University Press.
- Tsydendambaev, Tsybikzhap Boboevich  
 1972 *Buriatskie istoricheskie khroniki i rodoslovye*. Ulan-Ude: Buriatskoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo.
- Tuchman, Gaye  
 1978 *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Turachininov, N. V.  
 1914 *Shkol’noe delo za Uralom*. [School affairs behind the Urals.] *In* Aziatskaia Rossiia [Asian Russia], Vol. I. G. V. Glinka and I. Tkhorinskii, eds. St. Petersburg: Pereselencheskoe upravlenie glavnago upravleniia zemleustroistva i zemledeliia.
- United Nations. 2007. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/en/declaration.html>, accessed September 20, 2011.
- Urciuoli, Bonnie  
 1991 The political topography of Spanish and English. *American Ethnologist* 18:295–310.
- van Dijk, Teun A.  
 1988 *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Van Hout, Tom, and Felicitas Macgilchrist  
 2010 Framing the news: an ethnographic view of business newswriting. *Text & Talk* 30(2):169–191.
- Vasilevich, Glafira Makar’evna  
 1958 *Évenkiisko-russkii slovar’*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo inostrannykh i natsional’nykh slovarei.
- Viatkina, K. V.  
 1956 *Buriaty*. *In* *Narody Sibiri: étnograficheskie ocherki*. M. G. Levin and L. P. Potapov, eds. Pp. 217–266. Moscow: AN SSSR (Institute of Ethnography).

- Vitebsky, Piers  
 2005 *The Reindeer People: Living with Animals and Spirits in Siberia*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Wallace, Vesna A.  
 2010 Texts as Deities: Mongols' Rituals of Worshipping Sūtras, and Rituals of Accomplishing Various Goals by Means of Sūtras. *In Tibetan Ritual*. José Ignacio Cabezón, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 207–224.
- Warner, Michael  
 2002 *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.
- Weaver, Hilary N.  
 2001 Indigenous identity: what is it, and who really has it? *American Indian Quarterly* 25(2):240–255.
- Wertheim, Suzanne  
 2003a Linguistic Purism, Language Shift and Contact-Induced Change in Tatar. University of California.  
 2003b Language ideologies and the 'purification' of post-Soviet Tatar. *Ab Imperio* 1: 347–369.  
 2009 Who's Using Who? The Fieldworker as Documenter and Tool of Language Revitalization. *Language & Communication* 29(3):271–285.
- Wolfe, Thomas C.  
 1997 *Imagining Journalism: Politics, Government and the Person in the Press in the Soviet Union and Russia, 1953–1993*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan.  
 2005 *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Woolard, Kathryn A.  
 1998a Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 3–50. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 1998b Simultaneity and bivalency as strategies in bilingualism. *The Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 8(1):3–29.  
 2011 When the linguistic medium is the message: the linguistics of political parody and politics of linguistic parody in Catalonia. Plenary address. *Language in the Media*, 6–8 June, University of Limerick, Ireland.
- Yurchak, Alexei  
 2006 *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zateev, V. I.  
 2002 *Russkie v Buriatii: istoriia i sovremennost'*. [Russians in Buryatia: history and the present.] Ulan-Ude: Buryat State University.
- Zdravomyslova, Elena  
 1996 *Kafe Saigon kak obshchestvennoe mesto*. *In Materials of the International Seminar "Civil Society in the European North."* St. Petersburg: Centre for Independent Social Research.

Zhamtsarano, Tsybën

1907 Narodnicheskoe dvizhenie buriat i ego kritik. [The populist movement of the Buryats and its critic.] *Sibirskie voprosy* 21:16–21, 23:17–20, 25:15–21.

Zhimbiev, Ts. A., and Sh. B. Chimitdorzhiev

2000 Poezdka delegatsii khori-buriat k Petru Pervomu v 1702–1703 gg. Ulan-Ude: Buriad Ünën.