Verbs of speaking in Nganasan: A corpus-based approach

Sándor Szeverényi[1] and Beáta Wagner-Nagy[2]

Abstract

The study aims at categorizing verbs of speaking and thinking in Nganasan. All verbs that can be associated with thinking and speaking are examined in the texts found in the annotated Nganasan Spoken Language Corpus (Brykina et al. 2018). The approach as a whole is rather formal and quantitative, primarily focusing on which verbs are involved in constructing report speech. It can be shown that in the Nganasan texts, several verbs express utterances, but according to their number of occurrences, *munu-* 'say' is the most common and most frequently used verb of speaking. According to the distribution in the corpus data, it seems that the overall number of verb-of-speaking is not high.

Keywords: Nganasan, verbs of speaking, corpus study

1 Introduction

Verbs referring to acts of verbal communication (*verba dicendi*) have already been studied in numerous languages (Zwicky 1971, Lehrer 1988; in Sinitic languagesd Chappell 2008; in Igbo Mmadike 2015; in Mishnaic Hebrew Shemesh 2002, among others), but this topic has not yet received much attention in the the literature concerning Samoyedic languages. According to Austin's description (1962: 92–132), an utterance is an activity which is composed of three actions: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Most studies that deal with verbs of speaking focus on illocutionary acts. However, the action as described above can include both locutionary and illocutionary acts.

A prototypical speaking event usually includes the following participants: the addresser (speaker), the addressee (hearer), the information, the topic (the thing or the person that the speech is about), and sometimes the instrument. These latter two participants are less prototypical.

The speaker is usually the subject of an active sentence in the nominative case, and its referent is human. The addressee is the indirect object of the clause and is usually expressed by a noun in a dative(-like) case or by an adpositional construction. The information is the direct object of the clause and, depending on the language, can be marked in one of several means, but it is usually in the accusative (or nominative case). Example (1) illustrates the prototypical speaking event.

(1) *Peter told the news to Julian.*

There are some verbs with which the addresser cannot transmit information to the addressee. To this group belong such verbs as 'speak' or verbs characterizing speech such as 'whisper' and the circumstances of speech production such as 'speak quickly'. These verbs emphasize the action and not the result like the verbs of the former group.

(2) *The director is speaking now about Julian.*

There are some important differences between the verbs of the two groups mentioned above. One of these is transitivity. The verb 'tell' in (1) is transitive, requires a direct object, and its indirect object acts as addressee, while the verb 'speak' in (2) is an intransitive verb and can have an indirect object, however, this can only be the topic (in this case, Julian), and not the addressee. With verbs like 'tell' and 'say', indirect and direct quotations can be introduced (see section 3 below). Introducing indirect quotations is not possible with verbs like 'speak'.

In this study we use a wider definition, thus we consider all verbs referring to any type of verbal behavior to be speaking verbs. Consequently, not only information verbs are examined, but also directives like 'ask', verbs expressing emotions like 'scold', etc.

It is not easy to set up a semantic system that describes the speech events in all their facets. The reason for this is that although "illocutionary force is an important aspect of constructing semantic classes, but the manner of speaking, means of communicating, conversational interactional, and textual sequencing are also important semantic notions are incorporated into verbs" (Lehrer 1988: 159).

The purpose of this study is to categorize verbs of speaking and of thinking in Nganasan based on corpus data. For this goal, we examine all verbs that can be associated with thinking and speaking. Our approach is rather formal and quantitative. It is not our goal to explore all illocutionary speech acts which are expressed by one of the speech verbs.

1.1 Nganasan: An overview

Nganasan belongs to the Samoyedic group of the Uralic languages and is spoken in Northern Siberia on the Taimyr Peninsula. Usually, two dialects of Nganasan, Avam and Vadeyev, are distinguished, even though they are mutually intelligible. Nganasan is an agglutinating language with a high degree of fusion and complex morphophonology. Verbs are inflected for tense and mood and agree in person and number with their subjects. There are three types of conjugation: subjective, so-called objective, and reflexive. If the clause has an object which is known from the context (but not necessarily expressed lexically), the verb agrees in number also with the object, thus it takes the verbal ending of the objective conjugation set (e.g. Helimski 1998, Wagner-Nagy 2019, among others). The mood system is very rich, there are twelve moods (including a developed system of evidential forms).

Nouns are inflected for number, case, and possessivity. There are three syntactic cases (Nominative, Accusative, and Genitive) and four local cases (Lative, Locative, Elative, and Prolative). The lative case expresses dative as well. Additionally, local and other meanings can be expressed by several postpositions. Nganasan is a nominative-accusative language, i.e. the subject of both the transitive and the intransitive clause is marked by the nominative case, while the direct object takes the accusative case. The word order is relatively free, i.e. partially depending on information structure, even though there is a tendency for unmarked sentences to have an SOV order.

1.2 Data used in this study

This study is corpus-based, however, other materials such as the Nganasan–Russian dictionary (Kosterkina et al. 2001) were also considered. The examples used here are taken from the extended version of the *Nganasan Spoken Language Corpus* (Brykina et al. 2018), which is based on of fieldwork materials collected by several scholars. The extended version of the corpus contains about 1,000 sentences more than the already published version. The corpus contains folklore texts, narratives (everyday stories, biographies, etc.), songs as well as spontaneous and stimulated conversations. The "oldest" transcription was collected by Prokofiev in 1933, while the most recent transcriptions are from 2019. The listing in (3) provides the basic figures of the extended corpus. Examples are coded as [XYZ_year_title of text_genre.number of the sentence], where XYZ refers to the speaker. In this study, we have adapted both the glosses and the translations. (For more about on the corpus, see Wagner-Nagy & Szeverényi 2015 or Wagner-Nagy et al. 2018.)

(3)   Number of utterances: 23,865
       Number of tokens: 155,245
       Number of types: 37,609
       Number of transcriptions: 188
       Number of speakers: 39

2 Verbs of speaking and thinking

There are 16 verbs expressing speaking which are listed in (4) below. The list is based on the data of the dictionary (Kosterkina et al. 2001), which was verified and extracted from the NSL corpus. Not only the verbs but the absolute numbers of their occurrences are also given. As can be seen, verbs like 'promise', 'allow', and performatives are missing, but that only means that they do not appear in the texts. Such verbs are not investigated here, because based on dictionary entries their usage is not specifiable. For example, Kostekina et. al (2001) gives two verbs with the meaning 'reply, answer': *ŋumsiðəsi* and *točəʔkəsa*. However, these do not occur in the corpus, so they are not considered further here.

Theoretically, it can be assumed that other verbs of speaking exist in the language, but their use is likely peripheral. The listing in (4) shows the verbs of speaking found in the dictionary and in the corpus.

(4)   List and statistics of verbs of speaking

lexeme	meaning	number of occurrences
mun(u)-	'say'	2,664
buə-	'speak'	247
ďebtu-	'tell'	159
kumun-	'what say'	84
laŋə-	'shout (out)'	36
ďurimi-	'converse, chat'	33
təľibti-	'ask'	30
hu͡aru-	'scold'	17
ďomtu-	'scold'	17
ŋaŋkərə-	'cry out, scream'	9
hiris-	'swear'	9
ŋumaʔsu-, ŋumi͡asi-	'speak in a low voice'	7
kira-	'shout, cry'	7
berkiti-	'scream'	6
ńenintu-	'whisper'	1

It can be stated at first glance that the most often used verbs are *munud'a* and *mununsa* 'say'. The difference between the two verbs is only aspectual, therefore they are treated here as one and the same verb. After that comes the verbs with the meaning 'tell' (*buəd'a*, *d'ebtud'a,* and *d'uriminsi),* however, they occur much less frequently. Furthermore, the occurrence of all other types is minimal and sporadic, this is the reason why it is not possible to describe them accurately. We divide the verbs of speaking into six semantic groups:

(1) Common verbs of speaking such as *munu- ~ mun-* 'say', *buə-* 'speak', *d'urimi-* 'talk' describes the act of speaking.

(2) Information verbs such as *d'ebtu-* 'tell', 'inform' refer to a quoted utterance or to the speech act.

(3) Directive verbs such as *kumun-* 'say what', *təl'ibti-* 'ask', 'order', 'request' are used to get the addressee to do something.

(4) Verbs of the volume of voice such as *ŋumaʔsu-*, *ŋumiasi-* 'speak in a low voice', *ńenintu-* 'whisper'. Such verbs usually express emotions as well, e.g. *huaru-* 'scold', *d'omtu-* 'scold', *hiris-* 'swear'.

(5) Verbs of the manner of speaking: *kira-* 'shout, clank', *berkiti-* 'scream', *laŋə-* 'shout (out)', *ŋaŋkərə-* 'cry out, scream'.

(6) Verbs of thinking that express only inner speech.

Comissive verbs such as 'promise', verbs expressing emotions, and verbs expressing evaluations do not occur in the corpus, therefore they are not considered here.

2.1 Common verbs of speaking

There are 3 verbs that belong to the group of the common verbs of speaking. These verbs, such as 'say' and 'speak', only refer to the act of speaking.

2.1.1 *mun(u)-* 'say'

The most frequently used information verbs are *mun-* and *munu-*, more than 90% of the speech verb occurrences include these two verbs. The difference between them is not semantic but only aspectual: *munsa* is a perfective verb (6a), while *munud'a* is imperfective. For this reason, semantically considered it is only one verb with the meaning 'say', 'tell'. The verb *munu-* takes the so-called subjective conjugation, there are no examples of it with objective conjugation endings. In its passive form, reflexive personal suffixes are applied. The main functions of the verb *munu-* are as follows:

(i) Marking of direct quotation: Most typically, it introduces direct quotation without a complementizer, as in (5), but it also can follow the quoted utterance or even interrupt it, as in (6).

(5)   *kou-ðu*   *munu-baŋhu:*   *hə-hə*   *ma-küə*
      sun-POSS3SG   say-REP.3SG   he-he   tent-EMPH

      ma-ŋalə-ndiʔ   *tə*   *čüü-ŋalə-baða-ŋ*   *tə-tə*
      tent-EMPH-LAT.PL   well   arrive-EMPH-INFER-2SG   well-well

      'The sun said: Ahah, you even got to these tents.'
      (KVB_97_Djuhode_nar.100)

(6)   *tə-tə,*   *tə*   *mənə*   *mütəmə-bü-tə*
      well-well   well   1SGPRO.ACC   put-COND-OBL.POSS2SG

      koni-ʔ *ńi-li-m*   *əhi,*   *tibijkĩa* *munu-ntu*
      go-CNG   NEG.AUX-DUB-1SG   perhaps   youth   say-CO.3SG

      "Well, if you send me, of course, I will go," the boy says.
      (JDH_000901_DolganChief_flkd.072)

It can introduce not only declarative utterances but sentences with an interrogative, imperative or epistemic modal predicate, for instance:

Question

(7)   *tə*   *munu-ntu:*   *maaďa* *ďorə-ŋu-ŋ,*   *maa-rə*
      well   say-CO.3SG   why   cry-INTER-2SG   what-POSS2SG

      kuniʔĩa *mej-ŋi-ʔʔ?*
      how   do-INTER-3SG.RFL

      'He says: Why are you crying, what happened?'
      (ChND_041213_Hibula_flkd.059)

Command, request

(8)   *təgətəti* *ŋamĩaj* *munu-ntu:*   *tə*   *təi-kəl-ŋəə!*
      then   other   say-CO.3SG   that   be.available-TEMP-IMP.3SG

      'Then, the other one says: Stop that!'
      (KH_960811_TwoWomen_flkd.012)

Exclamation, warning

(9)   *siti*   *munu-ntu:*   *siľiʔĩa-ðəu!*
      3SGPRO say-CO.3SG   I.do.not.know-EXCL

      'He says: I don't know!'
      (KNT_940903_KehyLuu_flkd.096)

It can also express a range of other types of speech act, such as prediction:

(10)   təti-rə   tahariaa   tuntɨ   munu-ntu
        that-POSS2SG   now   fox   say-CO.3SG
        ńa-tu   ďa: miŋ-gümü-ni?   tə?
        fellow-GEN.PL   all   we-EMPH-OBL.POSS1PL   you.know
        četua   kuə-ʔsutə-mu?   ńandi-tɨ.
        very   die-FUT-1PL   seem-CO.3SG
        'Well, the fox tells his friends: It seems we'll soon die for sure.'
        (KNT_960809_WildAnimals_flkd.038)

(ii) Expressing different types of speech acts such as answer (see 13), asking,
order, anger, or request. See examples above in (i).

(iii) Expressing thinking

(11)   suəbəsa əmtɨ   bikaa-ʔkü-tü   munu-ďüə-m: Ou,
        because this   river-DIM-POSS3SG   say-PST-1SG   EXCL
        tə   əmtɨ-rə   čerəľika-ʔku
        well   this-POSS2SG   contents-DIM.3SG
        ńi-siðə-mə   ŋonə-nə   bəuďə-ʔ,
        NEG.AUX-FUT-1SG>SG   self-OBL.POSS1SG   get.across-CNG
        bəu-ʔsutə-mə   ŋəndiai?.
        get.across-FUT-1SG>SG   probably
        'This river was so narrow, I thought I would get across it.'
        (MVL_080226_TwoHorses_flks.303)

The role and use of *munu-* is well illustrated in those examples where the
finite form of *munu-* as the main verb occurs with an infinitive form of a verb
expressing manner, speaking or another type of utterance, e.g. scaring as in
(12) and laughing as in (13).

(12)   ŋaďə-um   hiim-sɨ   munu-ntu:
        younger.sibling-SEL   get.afraid-INF   say-CO.1SG
        hiľi-ti-mə.
        be.afraid-CO-1SG>SG
        'The younger brother, frightened, said: I'm scared.'
        (SEN_061025_Moose_nar.010)

(13) *təti-rə*   *taharīaa*   *hiśi-ri-btīa-ďi*
      this-POSS2SG   now   laugh-CAUS-ATT-INF

      munu-ntu: ...
      say-CO.1SG
      'He smiles and answers: …'
      (ChND_080729_SevenNjote_flks.409)

Further verbs in infinitive before the finite form of *munu-* are 'speak', 'tell', 'sing', 'shout', 'speaking in Nganasan', 'think', 'shamanize', and 'be surprised'.

2.1.2 *buə-* 'speak'

According to Kosterkina et al. (2001: 25) the verb *buə-* has the following meaning: 'speak' (14a), 'tell' (14b), 'address', and 'promise'. This last meaning is not verified based on the corpus data, but the meaning 'talk' can be added (14c). The verb can be modified by an adverb of manner as in (14a-b). The most often used adverbial is *təniʔīa* 'so' as in (14b).

(14)
a.   *ďondalaku*   *buə-ŋu-ruʔ*   *basu-ďüəďəə-muʔ*
      low   speak-IMP-2PL   hunt-PTCP.PST-POSS1PL

      bəna-ʔa
      get.tired-CO.3SG
      'Speak quietly, our hunter is tired.'
      (PKK_71_Djajku_flkd.095)

b.   *baarbi-nə*   *ďa*   *təniʔīa* *buə-guə-m*
      chief-GEN.POSS1SG   ALL   so   speak-IMP.FUT-1SG
      'I will report it to my master like this.'
      (KNT_960809_WildAnimals_flkd.163)

c.   *miŋ*   *bələukə-tənu*   *naguľü-nüʔ*   *ŋomtü-śüə-muʔ*
      1PLPRO   balok-LOC   three-OBL.POSS1PL   sit-PST-1PL

      buə-ďüə-muʔ
      speak-PST-1PL
      'We three sat in the balok and talked.'
      (KES_050723_Predictions_nar.004)

Although *buə-* is a transitive verb, there are no occurrences of it with the verbal endings of the objective conjugation. The prototypical adjunct is not the direct object. The direct object only rarely appears, and when it does occur, it

is the interrogative pronoun *maa* 'what' (15), and the constituent is the topic of the speaking act. The instrument with which one can speak to someone, e.g. a telephone, can also appear as an adjunct, in this case, it is marked by the prolative, as in (16).

(15) *tə,*   *maa-kü-raa-j*   *buə-kə-tu*   *śiti*
      well   what-DIM-LIM-ACC.PL   speak-ITER-CO.3SG   two
      nɨ
      woman
      'Two women are talking about something.'
      (JDH_00_Njaakju_flkd.165)

(16) *buə-bsa-mənu*   *buə-tu-gəj.*
      speak-INSTR-PROL   speak-CO-3DU
      'They speak on the phone.'
      (JAB_060901_Chairman_nar.167)

This verb can be passivized, and passive forms express necessity (17a) and impersonality (17b).

(17)
a.   *ńerəbtüʔküʔ*   *tak*   *buə-ru-śüü-ʔ*   *luu-ðɨ*
      first   so   speak-PASS-PST-3SG.RFL   parka-POSS3SG
      kəhɨ   *ənti*   *kəhɨ*   *kuhu*   *i-śüə*
      partridge   sort.of   partridge.GEN   skin   be-PST.3SG
      'First, it has to be said that his clothes were made of partridge skin.'
      (KNT_940903_KehyLuu_flkd.076)

b.   *tahari͡aa*   *əməniə*   *počtə*   *ŋonəə*   *maa*
      now   this.ACC   mail   one.more   what.ACC
      buə-ru-hu͡aðu   *təndə*   *ńakələ-kuə-mi*
      speak-PASS-INFER.3SG   that.ACC   take-IMP.FUT-1DU
      'We talked about the mail, we'll take the mail.'
      (PED_080731_Competition_nar.275)

It is quite unusual for this verb to introduce a direct quotation, but there are some examples like this, as in (18).

(18)   *ŋuʔənə*   *ďali-təni*   *Ibula-ʔa*   *ŋaďa*
        one-GEN   day-LOC   Ibula-AUG.GEN   younger.sibling
        buə-gəl-tə-ki-ʔə: *tə*   *tənə*   *Ibula*   *i-śa*
        speak-TEMP-IPFV-RES-CO.3SG   well   2SGPRO   Ibula   be-INF
        hüə-tə   *ŋurəkuə-mimbi͡a-tɨ-ŋ*
        time-LAT   idle-HAB-PRS-2SG
        'Ibula's brother says one day: Ibula, you are idling about all the time.'
        (PKK_71_Ibula.011)

2.1.3 *ďurimi-* 'converse, chat'

This verb is often used in connection with a language, such as telling or talking in a language, as in (19a). It has also the meaning 'make a conversation, chat' – in this case, its argument is *nanu* 'with' as (19b) shows. It always occurs with the subjective conjugation suffixes, thus, the verb ending cannot refer to the object. That means that the object is always expressed lexically in the clause.

(19)

a.   *ďüri͡akə-ðə*   *śiəďə*   *ďurimi-tɨ.*
        Nenets-ADJ.ACC   language.ACC   converse-CO.3SG
        'She speaks Nenets.'
        (PKM_93_Njisyme_flk.194)

b.   *ouʔ,*   *ini͡ʔia͡ʔku-tu*   *nanu*   *ŋansə*
        EXCL   wife-GEN.POSS3SG   with   again
        ďurimi-nti-gəj.
        talk-CO-3DU
        'He talks to his wife.'
        (TKF_061105_FoxFosterling_flk.184)

2.2 The information verb *ďebtu-* 'tell'

With the help of the so-called information verb such as the verb 'tell', a transfer of information is described. There are two such verbs in Nganasan: *ďebtuďa* and *ďebtuðasa*. The verb *ďebtu-* means 'tell'. About 40% appear in the form *ďebtaða-*, in which the function of derivation suffix is not clear. The verb *ďebtu-* is a perfective verb, while *ďebtaða-* is imperfective, however, the suffix is not the regular imperfectivizer. Both verbs have a regular morphology, however, due to their nature, reflexive conjugation cannot be used. The verbs can take other derivative suffixes, such as the iterative or inchoative-resultative suffix (20a-b), mood, and tense markers (21a-b). A direct object may appear next to either verb, (21a) and (21b), but the objective conjugation can also refer to the object.

(20)

a.   *maa-raa-j*   *salïtu-gə-tu,*   *təni͡Ɂia*
        what-LIM-ACC.PL   babble-ITER-CO.3SG   so
       i-muə-ďəi-ču   *bəńďə-j*
       be-VN.PRF-NPST-ACC.PL. POSS3SG   all-ACC.PL
       ďebta-ða-gə-tu
       tell-DRV-ITER-CO.3SG
       'He just babbles and tells how it was with him.'
       (JSM_090809_ParentsAndUncles_nar.239)

b.   *ńaaďə-ðə*   *ďebtu-Ɂki-Ɂə-mə,*   *mɨəďi-rɨ͡aa- ďi.*
       Nganasan-ADJ   tell-RES-CO-1SG>SG   go.on.foot-LIM-INF
       'I'll tell you in Nganasan by walking (i.e., without a song).'
       (PKM_93_Njisyme_flk.003)

(21)

a.   ...   *tənə*   *təə*   *čühə-nɨ*
            2SGPRO this.GEN   time-ADV.LOC
       ďebta-ða-küü-čə,   *kuni͡Ɂia* *i-muə-ďəi-čə,*
       tell-DRV-IMP.FUT-2SG>PL   how   be-VN.PRF-NPST-PL.POSS2SG
       kuni͡Ɂia   *i-muə-ďəi-čə.*
       how   be-VN.PRF-NPST-PL.POSS2SG
       'Then go [to the town] and tell how it was with you.'
       (JSM_090809_ParentsAndUncles_nar.270)

b.   *ďebtu-baaðəi-ńə*   *ŋanabta-Ɂi-ńə.*
       tell-IRR-1SG>PL   forget-CO-1SG.RFL
       'I would have told you, but I forgot.'
       (KES-ChND_080725_Dialog2_conv.021 (KES))

The derived verb *ďebtaða-* may introduce a complement clause without a complementizer, as example (21b) demonstrates. There are no examples of such use of the verb *ďebtu-*.

2.3 Directive verbs

Directives convey an illocutionary force of requesting, suggesting, commanding, prohibiting, permitting, or requesting by the speaker. Based on the NSLC data, it seems that there are very few directive verbs in Nganasan. It seems that the lack of directive speech act verbs is a typical characteristic of Siberian languages. For instance, Kotorva & Nefedov (2021) showed that in another Siberian language, Ket, such speech act verbs as 'request' are missing.

However, it must be noted that speech acts have not been extensively studied in Samoyed languages, or in other Siberian languages.

Directives mostly appear in the following way: the predicate of the quoted clause can stand in the imperative mood (see example 8 above), as there is no directive speech act verb in the corpus (such as command). A special directive verb *kumunsa* usually appears in the interrogative mood (see 2.3.2 below).

2.3.1 *təʎibti-* 'ask'

The verb *təʎibtiśi* 'ask a question' is not used very frequently; there are only a few examples of its usage. Usually, this verb is used only to indicate that the speaker is going to ask someone a question. The addressee from whom the speaker expects the information is not obligatory to express lexically, but if it appears in the clause, it is always marked with the accusative (22). Otherwise, the verbal ending can indicate it, as in (23). It should be noted, however, that in this example the verbal ending refers to the complement clause, and the addressee is not expressed lexically. There is no example of the verbal ending referring to the addressee. The verb has a regular morphology, thus it can take mood and tense markers, but the reflexive conjugation cannot be used with this verb.

(22)   *təti   ŋamīaj   ńa-mtu   təʎibti-guj-či*
        that   other   fellow-ACC.POSS3SG   ask-DUR-CO.3SG
        'He asks him.'
        (TKF_990819_SomatuShaman_flkd.166)

(23)   *sɨlɨ   təʎibti-gü-ŋɨ-či*
        who   ask-DUR-INTER-3SG>PL
        'Who is asking them?'
        (TTD-ChND_080719_Dialog_conv.196)

The verb can introduce direct speech and also indirect speech (24), however, the latter is not typical. The subordinate clause does not contain a complementizer (25a), but it is either introduced by the question word or remains unmarked (25b).

(24)   *təti   ńinɨbtiʔīa   tuu-ʔə,   təbtə   kona-ʔa,*
        that   elder.brother   come-CO.3SG   also   go.away-CO.3SG
        təʎibti-ʔki-ʔə.   takəə   ńolhəðu-ra-ʔa-ŋ?
        ask-RES-CO.3SG   that.remote   release-PASS-CO-2SG
        'The elder brother came, she went [to him] and asked: What, did they let you go?' (JSM_090809_ParentsAndUncles_nar.029-030)

(25)

a.   *tənə*   *təl'ibti-gü-či-m*   *kundə*
     2SGPRO.ACC   ask-DUR-CO-1SG   how.long
     heðiti-ŋi-ŋ   *timinʲia*
     go-INTER-2SG   now
     'I am asking you how far you are going now.'
     (JDH_99_ThreeTents_flkd.100)

b.   *tə-tə*   *təl'ibti-kəə-rə*   *koni-ʔsitə*
     well-well   ask-ADM-2SG>SG   go.away-FUT.3SG
     i-huа̑
     be-REP.INTER.3SG
     'Well, ask him if he is going or not.'
     (JDH_000901_DolganChief_flkd.071)

As has been stated above, usually this verb does not introduce a report. For
this purpose, the verb *munud'a* is used. A segment of a conversation given in
(26) illustrates the interaction of the two verbs in discourse.

(26)   [TTD: *mil'isə təiču əmnʲi.* 'There is a policeman.]
ChND: *təndə-ʔə-mtɨ*   *ńi-hi͡aaðəə-m*   *təl'ibti-ʔ*
      that-AUG-ACC.POSS3SG   NEG.AUX-IRR-1SG   ask-CNG
      'I would ask him.'
ChND: *munu-baaðəə-m:*   *silɨ*   *ŋətə-ru-tuə?*
      say-IRR-1SG   who   find-PASS-PTCP.PRS
      'I would say: who was found?'
      (TTD-ChND_080719_Dialog_conv.122-124)

2.3.2 *kumun-* 'what say'

This verb is a special verb with the meaning 'say what, tell what'. The closely
related Nenets and Enets languages also have a corresponding verb with the
same meaning (cf. Mus 2020). It is a morphologically complex verb with the
verbal stem *mun-* 'say' and the ancient interrogative pronominal stem *ku-*. The
verb functions as the predicate of the clause and obligatorily takes the interro-
gative mood marker. A question is usually directed either to the future or to the
past. For this reason, the verb occurs most often in future or past tense form.
As for Nganasan, here the forms with the future marker predominate, as in
(27a-b), but the reportative interrogative also can appear, as in (28). No mood
marker can be attached to it. This verb cannot show object agreement, thus it
only agrees with the subject in person and number, as in (27a).

(27)

a.   *tə,*   *kumun-tə-ŋu-gəj*
      well   say.what-FUT-INTER-3DU
      'What can they say to it?'
      (ChND_080729_Mosquitos_flkd.161)

b.   *ŋuəlɨ*   *kumun-tə-ŋu-gəj*   *tərəďi*
      certainly   say.what-FUT-INTER-3DU   such.GEN
      ŋanaʔsan-ə   *ďa*
      person-EP.GEN   ALL
      'What could they say to such a man?'
      (ChNS_080214_Hibula_flkd.059)

Although the verb has a regular morphology, the use of the objective conjugation is not possible, and the use of the reflexive conjugation is restricted: it is used only with the passive verb form (28).

(28)   *təniʔia̯ kumu-lu-hu͡a-ðə*   *təniʔia̯ i-ču.*
        so   say.what-PASS-REP.INTER-3SG.RFL   SO   be-CO.3SG
        'As he said, it was like this.'
        (ChND_041212_Girl.flkd.130)

The verb has non-verbal forms (29a) and can be negated as well (29b).

(29)

a.   *təti*   *tiŋ*   *nanu-ntuʔ*   *kumun-tuə*
      that   2PLPRO.GEN   near-OBL.POSS2PL   say.what-PTCP.PRS
      buəðu *əməni* *mənə*   *ńolhəðu-ʔ*   *tə-gümü*
      word   here   1SGPRO   release-IMP.2SG   that-EMPH
      kumun-tuə
      say.what-PTCP.PRS
      'What does it mean in your language: Get away from me, set me free!'
      (JDH_00_Njaakju_flkd.053)

b.   *tə,*   *ńi-nti-gəj*   *kumuŋ-kəľiču-ʔ.*
      well   NEG.AUX-CO-3DU   what.say-EMPH-CNG
      'They don't say anything.'
      (ChNS_080214_Hibula_flkd.058)

As the examples above show, in most cases, neither the addresser nor the addressee are expressed lexically. However, if the addressee does appear, as in

(27b), it is marked with the allative postposition *ďa*. In this respect, this construction works in the same way as the other mental transfer (here information) verbs used in ditransitive constructions (cf. Wagner-Nagy 2019: 397–400). The addresser is usually not expressed overtly and only the verbal ending refers to it.

2.4 Manner-of-speaking verbs

Some verbs do not refer to or introduce an utterance but refer to the manner of the speaking (Zwicky 1971). Manner-of-speaking verbs most typically stand in their infinitive form, which is followed by an utterance verb, mostly the *munu-* 'say'. There are five such verbs, which are described in the following sections. The subject of these verbs is typically a human.

2.4.1 *kira-* 'shout, cry'

This verb occurs very seldom, there are only seven examples of its use in the corpus. This verb is most often used with the frequentative suffix *-r* or in a form *kiratu-*. This latter form is a derivative in which the status of the suffix *-tu* is not clear. In both cases, the verb is imperfective. The verb has two meanings, on the one hand, it means 'shout' (30a), but one speaker (MVL) uses this verb with the meaning 'cry' (30b).

(30)

a. *ouʔ   kaŋkə-güə   ńaagəi-ʔ   sili-čə-küə-muʔ*
    EXCL   when-EMPH   good-ADV   who-EMPH-EMPH-POSS1PL
    kira-məbtu-munu-ča-ðə: əiʔ   maa
    shout-DRV-AUD-CO-3SG.RFL   oh   what
    kuniʔia͡-j-ŋəu
    how-be-INTER.EXCL.3SG
    'And then one of us cried: What has happened?!'
    (KES_031115_Paris_nar.215)

b. *ńuə-gəi-či   tahaři͡aa   śiti   ńuə-ʔkü-tü*
    child-DU-PL.POSS3SG   now   two   child-DIM-POSS3SG
    ŋuəlɨ   əhɨ   taka-ʔku-ði
    certainly   perhaps that.remote-DIM-POSS3DU
    kira-r-kə-tu
    shout-FRQ-ITER-CO.3SG
    'Their children, two (children), of course, the little one, is crying.'
    (MVL_090807_Hungabtadja_flks.150)

This verb can introduce direct quotation, as the following example shows. The verb takes the verbal ending of the objective conjugation, which refers to the complement.

(31) *təti-rə*   *baritətu*   *ŋanuə*   *kira-tu-tu:*
      that-POSS2SG   with.all.one's.might   real   shout-CO-3SG>SG
      əj,   *binti?śi-əj,*   *tənə*   *taharĩaa*
      EXCL   wolverine-VOC   2SGPRO   now
      ńi-ŋi-ŋ   *taharĩaa*   *ńirśi-??*
      NEG.AUX-INTER-2SG   now   be.loathsome-CNG
      'And this one shouts with all its might: Oh, wolverine, aren't you
      loathsome?'
      (KNT_960809_WildAnimals_fkd.146)

2.4.2 *berkiti-* 'scream'

The verb is not often used, and it is recorded only in the speech of two speakers
(MVL and TAM). The examples suggest that this verb cannot refer to a direct
quotation, but it emphasizes the volume of speaking. Example (32b) illustrates
that the volume is the salient part of the meaning.

(32)

a.   *ŋaďa-tu*   *ńili-bśa*   *ŋətə-nantu-ďa*
      younger.sibling-GEN.POSS3SG   live-ACTN.ACC   examine-VOL-INF
      bəðürbiə   *kaďa-məni*   *berkiti-śi*   *hojka-?i-ðə.*
      corpse.GEN   near-PROL   scream-INF   run-CO-3SG.RFL
      'To see if his brother was alive, he started to run, shouting around the
      grave.'
      (TAM_6810_Djajku_flkd.026)

b.   *əə,*   *hursə-bi?ə-nə*   *čühə-ni,*
      yes   come.back-NMLZ-GEN.POSS1SG   time-ADV.LOC
      munu-bü-tə: *əmə*   *čühə-ni*
      say-COND-OBL.POSS2SG   this.GEN   time-ADV.LOC
      hursəki-?i-ðə   *ŋəndĩai?*   *ŋuantə*
      come.back-CO-3SG.RFL   probably   door-GEN.POSS2SG
      bĩari-məni   *ani?ə-məni*   *ďamu-?ua-rə*
      opening-PROL   big-ADV   voice-AUG-POSS2SG
      sojbu-ŋəə,   *berkiti-iŋhĩa-?.*
      sound-IMP.3SG   shout-HAB-IMP.2SG
      'When I come back when you think that it's time for me to come back,
      scream loudly so that I can hear your voice through the door.'
      (MVL_090807_Hungabtadja_flks.359–360)

2.4.3 *ďomtu-* 'scold'

The verb *ďomtu-* is a perfective verb. It can be followed by direct quotation, in this case, its argument is lative (*ďa),* that is, the same as in the case of the verb *munu-*:

(33)   *Ibula*   *ŋaďa*   *tuu-ʔə,*   *Ibula*
        Ibula.GEN   younger.sibling   come-CO.3SG   Ibula.GEN
        ďa   *ďomtu-ʔki-ʔə :*   *četu͡a*   *ńuə-mi*
        ALL   scold-RES-CO.3SG   very   child-ACC1DU
        saľi-ʔə-ŋ,   *maaďə-ðə-ŋ*   *bəðürbüə-ŋ*
        spoil-CO-2SG   what-ADJZ-2SG   corpse-2SG
        'Ibula's brother came and started to scold Ibula: You have spoiled our baby, what a devil you are!'
        (PKK_71_Ibula_flkd.056)

It seems that this verb has two meanings. One of them is when the speaker verbalizes his/her anger, like in example (33), or it refers to the state or relation of two (or more) persons, as in (34).

(34)   *ou,*   *ŋami͡aj-kəj*   *tahari͡aa*   *təti*   *śetəgəə-ti*
        EXCL   other-DU   now   that   chief-GEN.POSS3DU
        nanu,   *ľüəʔsaʔa,*   *ďomtu-mu-ʔə-gəj*   *i-bahu.*
        with   Russian.ACC   scold-MOM-CO-3DU   be-REP.3SG
        aśa   *i-mu-ntə*   *tənə*
        Dolgan   be-VN.IPF-OBL.POSS2SG   2SGPRO.ACC
        ďiðu-ʔki-ʔə-m.
        shoot-RES-CO-1SG
        'The other one quarreled with the chief (with the Russian). You are Dolgan, I will shoot you.'
        (MDN_97_War1_nar.035–036)

2.4.4 *ŋaŋkəri-* 'cry out'

This verb is relatively rare. Most of the examples have the personal endings of the reflexive conjugation. The verb is followed by a direct quotation. The reflexive conjugation is motivated by the fact that the verb is inherently inchoative-resultative. In the Samoyedic languages, inchoative verbs are conjugated reflexively. This is also true in Nganasan, even if this is not obligatory, as in Nenets.

(35)   [*təti Dʼajkürə ńiŋɨ čündümüdʼiə i hontəiʔ ŋiľiʔɨa śigiʔɨatə (hüčaʔa).*
        'Dyaiku jumped down and climbed into the Ogre's skirts.']

        ŋaŋkəri-ʔi-ðə: *iŋaa*   *iŋaa*
        cry.out-CO-3SG.RFL   hoo   hoo
        'He shouted out: hoo, hoo!'
        (ChZS_080212_Djajku_flkd.011–012)

Another example has a similar context: the current speaker enters the tent and
shouts – he is warning his mates and informs them that the storm has become
more dangerous.

(36)   *kəiŋü-śa*   *ńaagəi-ʔ*   *səü-čü*
        sing-INF   good-ADV   side-PL.ACC.POSS3SG
        kəmə-dʼa   *ŋaŋkərə-gə-ta-ðə:*   *koðu-tu*
        catch-INF   cry.out-ITER-CO.RFL-3SG.RFL   blizzard-POSS3SG
        təŋku-ŋə-iðə!
        be.strong-IMP-3SG.RFL
        'Holding tightly to the sides, he shouts: The blizzard shall get stronger!'
        (MACh_XX_Nenets_flkd.012)

Example (37) demonstrates that the addressee is marked with the allative
postposition *dʼa,* and this verb can introduce a question.

(37)   *təni-ðə*   *Igula*   *kačəmi-ʔə*   *čalbanae*
        there-ABL.ADV   Igula   see-CO.3SG   ??
        kampəti   *bəbə-dʼəə,*   *təniðə*   *ŋaŋkərə-śüðə*
        bonbon.GEN   place-ANT   there-ABL.ADV   cry.out-FUT.3SG
        ńini-ntɨ   *dʼa ...*
        elder.brother-GEN.POSS3SG   ALL
        'Then Igula saw a box of sweets and shouted to his brother …'
        (MACh_XX_Igula_flkd.65)

2.4.5 *laŋə-* 'shout, scream'

This verb is the most frequent verb with the meaning 'shout, scream'. It is an
intransitive-perfective verb. Its perfective aorist form introduces a quotation,
and the quoted utterance typically expresses anger, fear, fright, or command:

(38)   *tahariaa*   *laŋə-ʔki-ʔə:*   *ńükü-əj*
        now   shout-RES-CO.3SG   child-VOC
        ŋuə-ðə   *ŋojbuə-ʔtuə*   *laŋa-ki-ʔə,*   *ńükü-oj,*
        one-DST.ACC   head-PTCP.PRS   shout-RES-CO.3SG   child-VOC

> mənə   heli*ʔði-kə-əu-ŋ!*
> 1SGPRO.ACC   help-IMP-EXCL-2SG
> 'He shouted out: Boy - shouted the one-headed ogre - boy, help me!'
> (KNT_940903_KehyLuu_flkd.053)

Its imperfective form usually refers to shouting as a speech act event:

(39) śigiʔi-iŋi-ʔîa   tənɨ   laŋü-r-kə-təu,
      ogre-FEM.AUG   there   shout-FRQ-ITER-CO.EXCL.3SG
      laŋü-r-kə-tu.
      shout-FRQ-ITER-CO.3SG
      'The ogre screams and screams from the middle of the river.'
      (ChND_080729_Mosquitos_flkd.128)

2.5 Verbs of the volume of voice

2.5.1 ŋuma- 'speak in a low voice'
According to the corpus data, the exact meaning(s) of the verb is/are not clear:
'to speak calmly, quietly' or 'to speak in silence, whisper' or 'to mumble',
but that is clear that this verb can refer to an utterance or introduce/follow a
direct quotation.

(40)
a. nɨ-jkɨ-ʔîa-rə   ŋumaʔsu-tu
    woman-DRV-AUG-POSS2SG   speak.in.a.low.voice-CO.3SG
    ŋonəraa-tu   ŋuma-tu əiʔ   əiʔ
    oneself-POSS3SG   speak.in.a.low.voice-CO.3SG   oj
    kəmə-baa-m…
    catch-OPT-1SG
    'The woman says quietly to herself: If only I could catch…'
    (ChND_080729_SevenNjote_flks.037–039)

b. bəjkuə   ŋumîasi-či: miŋ
    old.man   speak.in.a.low.voice-CO.3SG   1PLPRO
    hii   horü-ʔ   ŋanasamuʔ…
    night.GEN   face-GEN.PL   person-POSS1PL
    'The old man says in a low voice: We are night-faced people.'
    (MVL_080225_Tanjdjaa_flks.045)

2.5.2 ńenintu- 'whisper'
There is only one occurrence in the corpus, which, however, shows well that
the verb highlights the way of the utterance, and not the act of speech itself.

In example (41) it appears in its infinitive form as an adverbial to the verb *munu-* 'say', introducing the quoted clause:

(41)   *taharia   kaŋgüčəküə   təti   kuraa   konə*
        now   when   that   cow.GEN   cub
        ńenintu-sa   munu-munu-ču   satərə-tu
        whisper-INF   say-AUD-POSS3SG   polar.fox-GEN.POSS3SG
        ďa: satərəə-j,   taańika   koni-ʔ!
        ALL   polar.fox-VOC   a.little.farther   go-IMP.2SG
        'After some time, the calf whispers audibly to the polar fox: Polar fox,
        go away from here!'
        (KNT_960809_WildAnimals_flkd.311)

2.6 Verbs of thinking

In some respects, inner utterance/speech verbs can differ from speaking verbs. From the examples taken from the corpus it can be concluded that the speaking verb *munuďa* can express inner speech, thus, it can be used with the meaning 'think, wonder'. However, there are some real thinking verbs as well, which are listed in (42).

(42)   **Verbs of thinking**

lexeme	meaning	number of occurrences
natəmunu-	'assume'	10
sińəri-	'think'	51
sińəruə-	'think about'	8
duməir-	'think'	2

The verb *natəmunu-* is a complex verb form that is the result of a lexicalization process. The first part, *natə* is the inflected *na* 'to; near' followed by the oblique form of the 2SG possessive suffix, and means 'to you'. The second part is the verb *munu-*. The verb *duməir-* is a Russian loanword with the frequentative suffix *-r*. As can be seen in (42), the verb *sińəri-* is the most frequently used verb of thinking, however, it occurs often in its infinitive form, as the modifier of the verb *munu-* (44), but of course, it can be inflected (43).

(43)   siti   ŋonə-raa-tu   sińəri-r-i   ou
        3SGPRO oneself-LIM-POSS3SG   think-FRQ-CO.3SG   EXCL
        əmi-čə   ŋəndïaiʔ   koli-nə   biə
        this-PL.POSS2SG probably   fish-GEN.POSS1SG   smell.ACC
        d'indi-ʔə-ʔ   hi-ntiə   koli
        hear-CO-3PL   get.warm-PTCP.PRS.ACC   fish.ACC
        'She thinks: They probably smell my fish, the boiled fish.'
        (ChND_080729_SevenNjote_flks.062)

(44)   sińəri-r-si   munu-ŋkə-tu   əm-kümü-rə
        think-FRQ-INF   say-ITER-CO.3SG this-EMPH-POSS2SG
        munu-d'üə: təʔ   tənə
        say-PST.3SG   you.know   2SGPRO.ACC
        kondu-ʔki-ʔə-m   ńemibtiʔia-ðə-nə   i-śa
        take.away-RES-CO-1SG   wife-DST-GEN.POSS1SG   be-INF
        'She thinks: He said that he would take me away and I would become
        his wife.'
        (ChND_080729_SevenNjote_flks.253)

The examples above show that this usually appears with a frequentative -r suffix.

3 Verbs of speaking in reported speech

We have dealt with the reported speech in several papers (Szeverényi &
Sipőcz 2019, 2020, and Wagner-Nagy 2019: 467ff.). Since Nganasan does
not syntactically link the quoted clause to the introductory verb, the nature of
the statement is not always clear, but in the case of other verbs, in addition to
mun-, other verbs can introduce direct speech.

In Nganasan, there is direct reported speech that is usually introduced by a
speaking verb. A direct quotation is applied also in personal narratives:

(45)   tahariabə   S'idorinə-mə   mun-u-ʔə
        now   Sidorina-POSS1SG   say-EP-CO.3SG
        d'atə-nə,   Ŋijkümü-mə: śüamu
        ALL-OBL.POSS1SG   Ngijkyumyu-POSS1SG   cousin
        əmti   merigiaiʔ   əmiʔia   ńiəd'ə-rə
        this.ACC   quickly   in.this.way   belt-POSS2SG
        sarə-ʔ.
        tie-IMP.2SG
        'Then Sidorina said to me: Nijkyumyu, my dear friend, fasten your
        seatbelt in that way.'
        (KES_031115_Paris_nar.049)

The reported utterance usually contains a verb of speaking, most often the verb *munu-* 'say', which can also follow the quoted sentence(s), however, an explicit speaking verb is not necessary. In narrative stories, intonation plays a very important role: a break is used to indicate that one of the characters will speak and the events are presented by the speaker from his point of view. Another common indicator of a change of viewpoint is the particle *ouʔ*.

The reported speech constructions that involve shifts of deictic elements are the result of Russian influence on Nganasan.

Another way of quotation is the use of the narrative/reportative evidential in the quotative function (see section 4). In such cases, it is clear from the context who the reporter is. It follows somewhat from this, and it seems that this evidential can also be used as quotative when the quotation is introduced by a verb of speaking, but the quoted speech consists of several sentences, in which case the speaker indicates that it is still part of the quotation.

4 Reportative evidential as a quotative

There is a special morphological suffix in Nganasan that could refer to an utterance. It is the so-called narrative evidential, a member of the evidential system. The basic function of the narrative evidential is to mark the source of the speaker's information as an indirect source. It can express hearsay or reportativity, but also it can be a marker of a direct quoted utterance. As has been mentioned in the Nganasan Grammar, "The speaker may refer to the narration of a certain person, but reportative can also be used to speak about events that are generally spoken about in the community. This mood is very often used, if a story is told about a certain person. In this case, the feeling of reality is enhanced by the usage of the mood. It must be noted, however, that tales and myths are told in the indicative and not in reportative mood. In a folklore text, the reportative mood appears, if the storyteller reports anything or the information comes from a specific person. During shamanic ceremonies, the shaman reports the information heard from gods in the renarrative to those present. Normally, the information source is not specified, but in some cases the specific person can be expressed. In this case, the reportative form semantically expresses the quotative …" (Wagner-Nagy 2019: 280). In the next example, a small group traveled together, one of them being the speaker. They were informed and led by their Russian guides, so in this situation, these leaders could be the source of the information:

(46)   *tahari͡abə*   *Maskvaa-tə*   *čüü-ʔə-muʔ.*
        now   Moscow-LAT   reach-CO-1PL
        S'er'em'enťevə-təni   *i-bahu-muʔ.*
        Sheremetyevo-LOC   be-REP-1PL
        'Now we landed in Moscow. They say it's Sheremetyevo.'
        (KES_031115_Paris_nar.052-053)

5 Conclusion and further plans

We can get a relative detailed picture of the Nganasan verbs of speaking based on the corpus data. This, of course, means that our findings refer to the corpus and do not necessarily reflect real language use. At the same time, we have several findings that address relevant and previously undiscussed phenomena.

In the Nganasan texts, several verbs express utterances, but according to their number of occurrences, *munu-* 'say' is the most common and most frequently used verb of speaking. According to the distribution in the corpus data, it seems that the number of verb-of-speaking is not high.

Our investigation could not confirm the presupposed hypothesis of the correlation between evidentiality vs. verbs of speaking and speech act verbs based on Nuckolls's (2018) paper on the Pastaza Quichua language. As Nuckolls writes, "[p]aradoxically, although PQ speakers make abundant use of represented discourse, their language is impoverished concerning illocutionary speech act verbs. Despite this impoverishment, speakers may express many kinds of illocutionary speech acts employing evidential markings, which, in certain contexts, and assisted by second person forms of pronouns and verbs, have speech act consequences involving major changes in people's understandings and alignments and re-alignments with each other" (Nuckolls 2018: 221; our emphasis). Furthermore, "[u]nlike many languages familiar to linguists, Pastaza Quichua is impoverished concerning illocutionary verbs. Verbs such as 'to warn', 'to announce', 'to proclaim', 'to threaten', 'to reassure', 'to insist', are just a sample of the many illocutionary speech act verbs that populate everyday English language discourse. By contrast, PQ verbs that involve speaking constitute an extremely small group" (Nuckolls 2018: 207; our emphasis). Nukckolls does not provide any further explanation for the lack of speech act verbs in Quichua, and does not explain what "extremely small" means, but as can be clearly read, she presupposes a correlation between the evidential system and the small number of verbs of speaking. Based on the corpus data, there is also the possibility in Nganasan that there are few speech act verbs in the language (this is confirmed by similar research in other Siberian languages, e.g. Ket, by Kotorova & Nefedov 2021). The question is whether the supposed correlation between the use/amount of utterance verbs and the reportative evidential can also be applied to Nganasan.

As the first step in this work, in this study, we have reviewed the Nganasan verbs of speaking and verbs of thinking, primarily focusing on which verbs are involved in constructing report speech. We have aimed to list the speech verbs, their corpus statistics, and to categorize them on the basis of the conclusions that the available corpus data allow, i.e. first of all, their meaning, occurrence in a reported speech, and arguments.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative	INFER	inferential
ACC	accusative	INTER	interrogative
ADM	admonitive	IRR	irrealis
ADV	adverbial suffix	ITER	iterative
ANT	anterior	LAT	lative
ATT	attenuative	LIM	limitative
AUD	auditive/senisitive	LOC	locative
AUG	augmentative	MOM	momentaneous/momentative
AUX	auxiliary	NAR	narrative
CAUS	causative	NEG	negation
CO	coaffix	OBL	oblique
conv	conversation	OPT	optative
DIM	diminutive	SG	singular
DRV	derivational suffix	PASS	passive
DST	destinative	PL	plural
DU	dual	POSS	possessive
DUR	durative	PRO	pronoun
EMPH	emphatic	PROL	prolative
EXCL	exclamative	PRS	present
FEM	feminin	PST	past
flkd	folklore ďurymy	PTCP	participle
flks	folklore śitəby	REP	reportative
FRQ	frequentative	RES	resultative
FUT	future	RFL	reflexive
GEN	genitive	SG	singular
HAB	habitual	TEMP	temporal
IMP	imperative	VN.IPF	imperfective verbal noun
INF	infinitive	VOC	vocative

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Sándor Szeverényi

Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Finnugor Nyelvtudományi Tanszék, Egyetem u. 2, 6722, Hungary

E-Mail: szevers@hung.u-szeged.hu,

Beáta Wagner-Nagy

Institut für Finnougristik/Uralistik, Überseering 35, Postfach #29, 22297 Hamburg

E-Mail: beata.wagner-nagy@uni-hamburg.de