



Focus Case beyond Austronesian: An Analysis of Yukaghir

Olga Zamaraeva
and Emily Bender
University of Washington

Yukaghir (yux)



< 400 speakers total (2002)

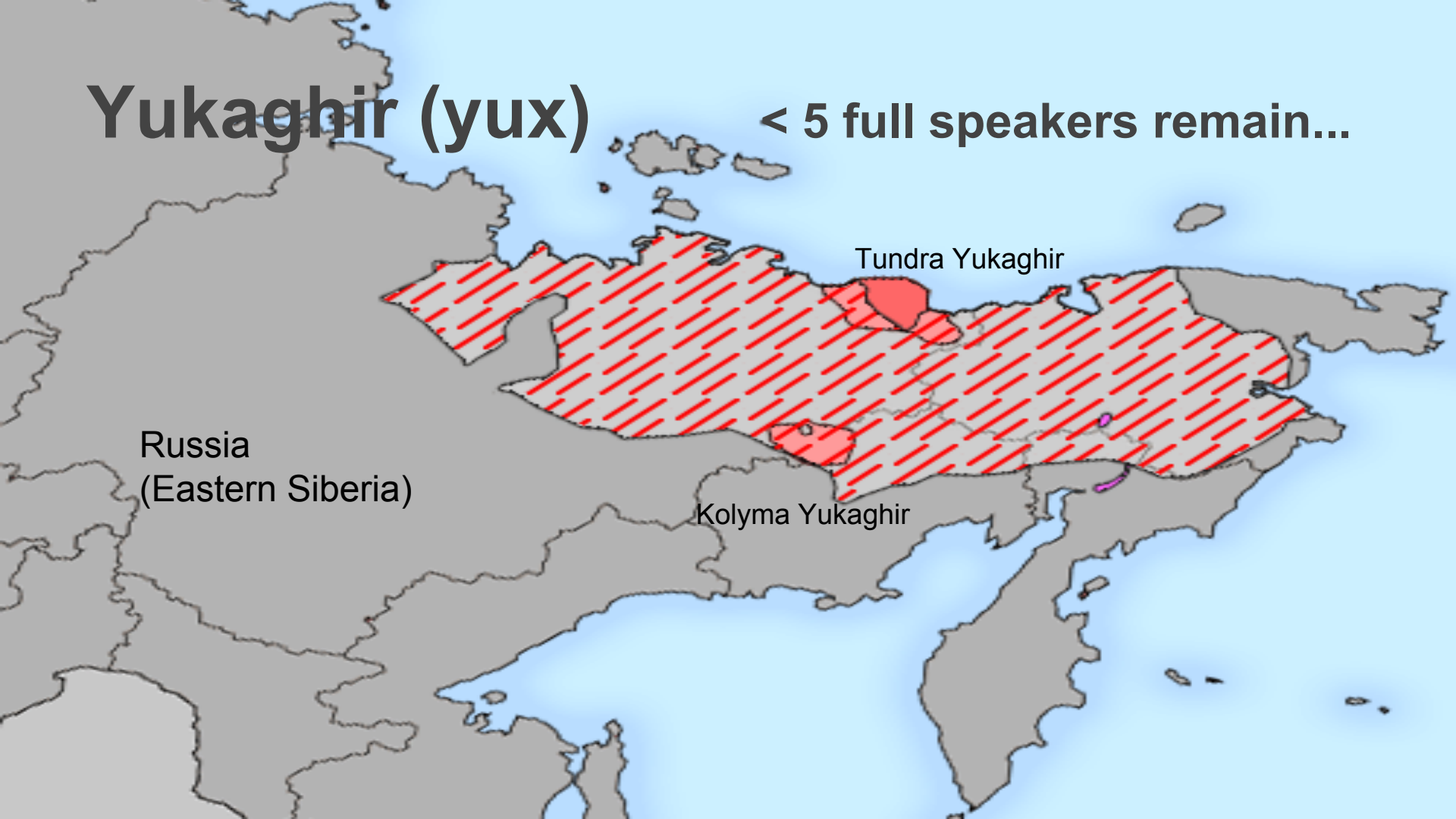
Tundra (North) and Kolyma (South)

- Grammatically very close

< 5 full speakers (2009)...

Yukaghir (yux)

< 5 full speakers remain...



Russia
(Eastern Siberia)

Tundra Yukaghir

Kolyma Yukaghir

Acknowledgements

Dr. Elena Maslova (U of Bielefeld)

A Grammar of Kolyma Yukagir (2002)

Andrew Troelsen

a CLMS student who was my partner in the course
project

Yukaghir grammar stats

Choices: 699 lines (32 lexical rules for the PC of interest)

Testsuite: 175 sentences (90 ungrammatical)

Coverage: 75.3%

Overgeneration: 4.4%

Yukaghir grammar phenomena

Basic word order

Future/Non-Future

Argument optionality

Agreement (person)

Adjectival verb form

Aspect (some)

Stand-alone predicates (some)

Embedded clauses (some, with massive overgeneration)

Information Structure (Focus)

... and Case

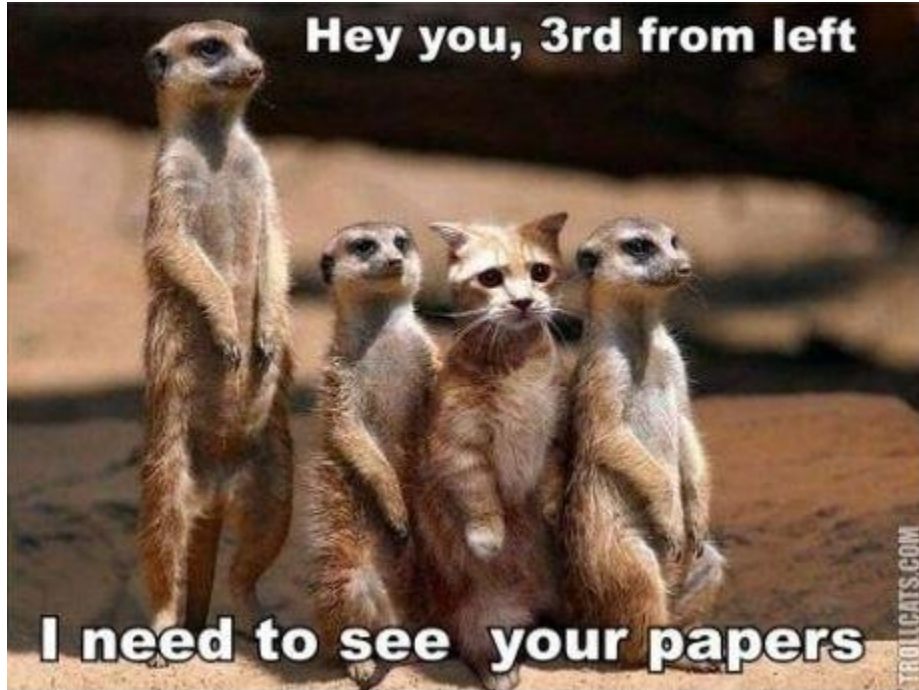
Case in Yukaghir

- (1) tāt touke-lek jede-l
CA dog-PRED appear-SF
'Then a dog appeared.' [yux] (Maslova, 2003:9)
- (2) met ejre-je
I.NOM walk-1SG
'I walked.' [yux]

Case in Yukaghir

- (3) met tolow kudede
I.NOM deer.NOM kill.1SG
'I killed a deer.' [yux] (Maslova, 2003:10)
- (4) met tet-ul juø
I.NOM you-NFO see.1SG
'I saw you.' [yux] (Maslova, 2003:10)
- (5) tudel tolow-le kudde-m
he.NOM deer-INSTR kill-3SG
'He killed a deer.' [yux] (Maslova, 2003:10)
- (6) tudel met kønme-gele juø-m
he.NOM my friend-ACC see-3SG
'He saw my friend.' [yux] (Maslova, 2003:10)

Focus Case option in the Matrix



Drellishak (2009):

Odd-one-out (Austronesian)

Focus Case option in the Matrix

▼ TR-OF (verb-pc3_lrt13)

x **Lexical Rule Type 13:**

Name: TR-OF

Supertypes: TR (verb-pc3_lrt12) ▼

Features:

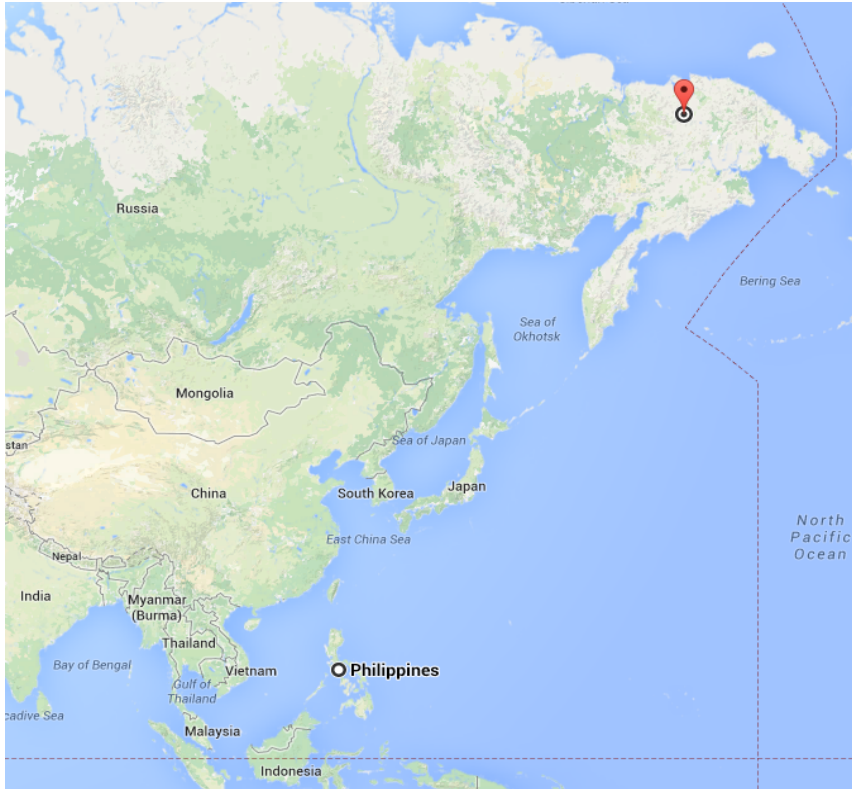
x Name: argument structure ▼ Value: transitive (Nominative-Predicative) ▼ Specified on:
the verb ▼

x Name: OPT ▼ Value: minus ▼ Specified on: the object NP ▼

Feature structure example (Case)

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{intr-sf-lex-rule} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \left\langle \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{OPT} \quad - \\ \text{CASE} \quad \textit{pre} \end{array} \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{DTR} \quad \textit{tense-lex-rule} \end{array} \right]$$
$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{tr-nf-12per-lex-rule} \\ \text{ARG-ST} \quad \left\langle \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{CASE} \quad \textit{nom} \\ \text{PER} \quad \textit{non-3rd} \end{array} \right], \left[\text{CASE} \quad \textit{nfo} \right] \right\rangle \\ \text{DTR} \quad \textit{tense-lex-rule} \end{array} \right]$$

Yukaghir and Tagalog



Differences:

In Yukaghir: Focus marking is not required for every clause (unlike Tagalog)

Similarities:

Is grammatical: no marking = zero marking

... There are also other languages in the world (Dogon, Africa) with similar focus case features