

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dutchmen Nicolaas Witsen (1641-1717) and Evert Ysbrants Ides (1657-1708) were the first people to write about the Sakha language. The Utrecht institute of linguistics continued this good old Dutch tradition of curiosity and open-mindedness by offering me a PhD scholarship and by supporting me in all kinds of ways through these long years.

First of all, I want to express my gratitude towards my supervisor Eric Reuland. Over the years, he has come to symbolize the epitome of patience and wisdom for me. It is only because Eric generously shared his knowledge during our countless, lengthy discussions that I was able to formulate the ideas I formulated and reach the conclusions I reached. He taught me how to find simplicity out of clutter and thanks to that I was able to find my way through a perplexing welter of data that I was faced with in the very beginning. Eric contributed not only to the content of the dissertation. He literally made it possible that this work was brought to an end by not giving up on me when the dissertation came to a halt almost to the point of abandonment and by giving me extra time and freedom to develop my ideas further.

Discussions with Tanya Reinhart and Jan Don, particularly at the beginning stage of the project, were extremely helpful. Tanya's ability to navigate through an unknown sea of obscure data without sinking or running aground was amazing and instilled in me the hope that I would be able to put things in the dissertation in a coherent manner. Jan Don taught me how to approach morphology from different angles and how to be flexible yet hold one's ground amidst the various morphological theories.

I would also like to thank Jonathan Bobaljik, Bernard Comrie and Aafke Hulk for having supervised papers which I wrote at the initial stages of my PhD research after having followed their courses and Alec Marantz for helpful discussion during the course he taught in Utrecht at the LOT Summer School.

I am grateful to Marijana Marelj, Øystein Nilsen, Dimitra Papangeli and Mario van de Visser for helpful discussions. Very special thanks go to Edith Kaan and Øystein Nilsen for productive and interesting joint research. Edith's support and friendship cannot be thanked enough.

I want to thank the committee members Norbert Corver, Jan Don, Martin Everaert, Tanya Reinhart and Jaklin Kornfilt for taking time to read the dissertation on such a short notice.

Jaklin Kornfilt has been a tremendous source of inspiration for me. I want to take this opportunity to thank her for her unfailing support and encouragement. I also want to thank her and Shigeru Miyagawa for giving me an opportunity to present a paper at the workshop on Altaic languages held at MIT in May 2001.

This project would have never been completed without all the extra support, administrative and financial, that I received from the institute. The amount of gratitude I feel towards the institute for giving me extra time and help to complete the dissertation can hardly be put into words. I want to thank Martin Everaert, Keetje van den Heuvel, Esther Kraak and Maaïke Schoorlemmer for all their help.

This dissertation would not be possible without benefiting from the work done and being done in Yakutsk at the Institute of Humanities by (among others) V.N. Ivanov, P.A. Sleptsov, E.I.Korkina and at the Faculty of Sakha language and literature by (among others) **N.K. Antonov**, G.G. Filippov, I.P. Vinokurov, I.E. Alekseev, S.D. Eginova, G.G. Levin, M.D. Nogovitsyna. I want to thank these people for supporting and believing in me, for generously sharing their knowledge and for being so open-minded and receptive to a different way of doing linguistics. I especially want to thank my father I.P. Vinokurov for all his advice and help with the data though I can never thank him enough for that. Without his help this dissertation would not have been possible.

I also want to thank my undergraduate curator Nikonova Avgusta Fedorovna and my supervisor during the Master's program Anders Holmberg for all the support and encouragement I received from them. I want to express my gratitude to Anders Holmberg and my other teachers at the Tromsø Institute of Linguistics – Tarald Taraldsen, Ove Lorentz, Øystein Nilsen, Anna-Lena Wiklund, Patrick Bye – for introducing me to the world of generative linguistics.

Finally, I thank my parents and dedicate this thesis to them.