Ös tilɪ (Middle and Upper Chulym dialects): Towards a comprehensive documentation

Gregory D. S. Anderson[+] & K. David Harrison[*1]
[+]University of Oregon, [*]Swarthmore College
Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages

0 Current status

This paper presents results from a July 2005 field expedition to document speakers of the Ös language of the Middle and Upper Chulym river basin. Native ethnonyms include *bistɪŋ kiʃɪler* ('our people') and *øs kiʃɪler* 'Ös people'. Exonyms include 1. *xakas*, 2. *jasatʃnije* (Russian 'tribute-payers'), 3. *tadar* 'Tatar'. The native designation for the language is almost always *øs til[ɪ] ~ øːs til[ɪ],* and less frequently *tadar til[ɪ]*.[2] The former, while indeed partially coinciding with the Turkic stem *øs* 'self' (albeit in this language always appearing in a possessed form such as *øzym, øzyŋ*, or *øzy*) is probably primarily derived from the native designation for the Chulym River, viz. *øːs* (and further upriver, *yːs*, whence the Russian designation *Ijus* for its southeastern tributary in northern Khakasia). We refer to the language herein as Ös or Ös tilɪ, in deference to established practice and stated preference within the native-speaker community. The Ethnologue (Gordon 2005) code is [CHU]. The language is critically endangered and moribund with probably fewer than 30 fluent speakers and an additional 20 to 30 semi-speakers remaining. The Middle Chulym dialect now has fewer than twenty speakers; the youngest is 54 years of age. Pending future field expeditions, we have no solid estimate for Upper Chulym dialect speakers. We found no evidence that any speakers remain of the Lower Chulym

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[2] Transcription conventions follow IPA usage. We transcribe nine Ös vowel phonemes: front [i y ø e æ] and back [ɯ u o a] and one allophone [ɪ].

variety (which is in fact rather different from the Middle and Upper Chulym varieties, showing more Siberian Tatar-like structures).

Ös speakers reside primarily in villages in Tomsk oblast' (Tegul'det, Novoshumylovo, Belij Jar, Ozjornoe) and neighboring Krasnojarsk kraj (Pasechnoe, Chindat, and Tjukhtet). Results of our 2003 expedition, including speaker demographics, were reported in Harrison and Anderson (2003). Prior to a linguistic Turkicization of the region, the area was formerly inhabited by various peoples speaking the Arin and Pumpokol languages of the Yeniseic family, a fact that is amply attested by the predominance of hydronyms in the region with clear Yeniseic origins, viz. Latat, Tegul'det, Kul', etc. It is at least possible that some of the characteristic features of Ös tilɪ might reflect this linguistic substratum, although this remains to be adequately demonstrated by future research.

1 Previous research

Our work builds upon a long tradition of research into the Ös people and their language. According to Dul'zon (1966: 446) the first Chulym forms to be mentioned come from a few toponyms in Russian documents of the 17th century. The Swedish explorer J. P. Falck visited the Chulym Turks during his Siberian expedition of 1768-1773 and reported on their demographics, material culture, subsistence lifeways, and traditions such as the lunar calendar. In his posthumously published account, Falck (1785-1786, edited by J. G. Giorgi, pp. 554-557) wrote:

> *"Die Jurten sind kleine tatarische, meistens kubische hütten, aus einer Stube, mit der Tatarischen breiten Banke, Kamin, eingemauerten Grapen, und Fensterlöchern mit Quappenhäuten überspannt, oder auch mit eingesetzen Eise. Solche Eisfenster nennen sie Ulugi Siderno."*
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> *"Die Tschulymer schlafen auf Birkenrinde und decken sich mit ihern Kleidern zu. Kinder packen sie in Rindekörbe und umschütten sie mit zerriebenen olmigen Holz..."*
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> *"Ihr erstes Gewerbe ist die Fischerei[3], die sie in den Flüssen und Seen das ganze Jahr treiben. Hiernächst beschäftigen sie sich des Winters sehr mit der Jagd. Viele haben auch einen kleinen Ackerbau und nur wenige besitzen einige Kühe und Schaafe."*[4]

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[3] Fischerei [sic]

[4] *"The yurts are small Tatar-style, mostly cubical huts, with one room, with the Tatar-style broad bench...and window-holes covered with burbot skin, or made with inset ice. These ice-windows are called Ulugi Siderno."*

"...The Chulym sleep on birch bark and cover themselves with their clothes. They pack their children into bark baskets and pack ground olmigen wood around them."

The first significant collection of lexical materials date to Messerschmidt's journal from the early 18th century, a significant portion of which were published on pages 224-226 of Klaproth's (1823) *Asia Polyglotta*. Lexical materials also may be found in the *Linguarum totis orbis vocabularia comparativa* [Comparative vocabulary of the languages of the whole world] commissioned by Catherine the Great and appearing in 1789 under the editorship of P. Pallas. Some 150 words and 60 expressions appeared in the anonymously authored *Jazyk chulymskix inorodtsev* [Language of Chulym Aborigines] from the annals of the Tomsk *Gubernija* of 1858. Radloff visited the Chulym in 1863 and published an excerpt from an epic tale in the Lower Chulym variety "Taska Mattyr" in the second volume of his text samples of [Siberian] Turkic languages (1868: 689-705). He added some brief phonological and lexical materials in his *Opyt slovarja tjurkskikh narechij* [An attempt at a dictionary of Turkic dialects] (1882-1899) and *Phonetik der nördlichen Türksprachen* from (1882).

A modest amount of Ös data appears in Katanov's 1903 study of Tuvan and in Malov's 1909 field report. The scholar A. P. Dul'zon renewed the study of Ös in the 1940's and 1950's, undertaking field expeditions to the Chulym region, and producing a range of short works (cf. Dul'zon 1952a, 1952b, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1966, 1973). His student R. M. Birjukovich produced some studies in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. 1972, 1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1979a, 1979b, 1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1997, Serebrennikov and Birjukovich 1984); these are based both on her own field notes as well as on Dul'zon's field notes. A couple of brief texts were published by Abdurakhmanov (1970) with Russian translations but no interlinear glossing or grammatical analysis in the obscure Tomsk-based journal *Jazyki i Toponimija Sibiri*. Except for one very brief article in German (Pritsak 1959) and the extremely limited amount of Ös data in Radloff (1882), no language data were previously accessible to non-Russian speakers prior to Harrison and Anderson (2003) and Anderson and Harrison (2004a). Ethnological and historical research has been conducted by Lvova (1972, 1978), Novokshonov (1995), Krivonogov (1998) and others.

In addition to the publications mentioned above, the Siberian Languages Laboratory in Tomsk has ca. 700 pages of unpublished field notes taken by R. A. Pechjorskaja, R. A. Boni, R. M. Birjukovich and A. P. Dul'zon. These are found in four and a half field notebooks and several thousand index cards dating back 60 years, containing individual lexical items and phrases of the Middle, and Upper Chulym dialects of Ös (although the two dialects are not differentiated in the notebooks, a careful inspection of the materials reveals this to be the case). These have been kept locked away in the lab for over thirty years. There were originally seven such notebooks; two of Dul'zon's original field notebooks have vanished. One

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"Their first industry is fishery, that they practice in the rivers and lakes the year round. In the winters they do hunting. Some have little gardens and only a few have cows or sheep."

of the notebooks (mainly dedicated to Nganasan, a Northern Samoyedic language spoken in the Tajmyr district of Krasnojarsk Kraj) contains four Ös texts of varying lengths, two traditional tales (one long and one short) and two brief instructive tales. A further two of the notebooks are dedicated to lexical materials, elicited from Russian, which contain in them a considerable number of Russian loan words (e.g. for many cultural items of Russian provenience). These were gathered in Pasechnoe, Krasnojarsk Kraj and seem to reflect an Upper Chulym variety. The two remaining volumes have approximately forty additional pages of texts, approximately 900 elicited sentences, two hundred forty pages of additional lexical materials organized according to the alphabetical order of the Russian originals and approximately two hundred fifty pages of specialized lexical lists, e.g. plant names, animal names, trees, etc. collected in Tegul'det and Pasechnoe. The total number of speakers consulted in producing these materials is fewer than 10, and mainly reflect the speech of four informants, all now deceased, representing both the Middle and Upper Chulym varieties of Ös. These valuable legacy materials have been digitized and are currently being analyzed under the auspices of our ongoing documentation project of Ös (for more on this see below).

The Russian ethnographer Krivonogov may have some recordings of Ös language materials collected during his ethnographic expedition of the early 1990s, and there is mention of audio recordings done by Tomsk scholars, but their current whereabouts are unknown to researchers in Tomsk and abroad. The list of field notebooks, file cards with lexical materials, etc., unpublished but housed in Tomsk is listed in Il'jashenko et al. (1998).

2 Necessary and sufficient documentation

Despite the aforementioned body of work, Ös (Chulym Turkic) remains only minimally documented in terms of contemporary standards for documentation (Himmelman 1998, Woodbury 2003), and also minimally described. As Filtchenko (2001) points out, not only is Chulym Turkic one of the most endangered Turkic languages (possibly second only to Karaim), but it is also underdocumented:

> *"In terms of documentation, Chulym Turkic is also one of the least studied Turkic languages; apart from casual collections of scattered data which have been included in some Turkological reference works, the serious study of Chulym Turkic in its own right began only after the World War II. However, a dictionary of any kind is still nonexistent for Chulym Turkic which greatly impedes the study of this dwindling and, in view of its demonstrable early contacts with now extinct members of the Yenissejan language family also a really important language. The number of published texts remains also very small."*

Our current documentation builds upon all previous work, whether published or unpublished, professional or amateur. A good deal of unpublished data from the 1970s is archived in Tomsk (Il'jashenko et al. 1998) and provides a valuable comparative dimension to the work. In light of the accelerated changes that moribund and obsolescent languages may undergo—for example changes observed in

Tofa—(Harrison and Anderson forthcoming-a, -b, Anderson and Harrison forthcoming), it has been fruitful to compare the previous studies with the current state of the language. But we cannot rest upon legacy data. Virtually no spontaneous Ös speech has been recorded prior to our recent field expeditions and the set of morphological and syntactic features that can be gleaned from either the elicited sentences in the field books or the two traditional tales[5] and other brief textual materials is quite limited. A full, multi-media documentation must be undertaken while remaining speakers are available. New paradigms are emerging in documentary linguistics (Himmelman 1998, Woodbury 2003) that call for the fullest possible collection and long-term archiving of multi-media annotated materials and metadata, not simply written notes or scholarly articles.

3 New findings from expedition to the Chulym, July 2005

We report here a sample of the range and quality of data we were able to collect on an expedition in June-July 2005 to the villages of Beliy Jar, Novoshumylovo, Tegul'det, and Ozjornoe. We made video and audio recordings of five fluent speakers and two semi-speakers. We interviewed an additional two fluent speakers. We made a total of 8 hours of video and 10 hours of audio recordings and 150 pages of handwritten transcriptions and field notes, all with associated metadata for archiving. We also collected, translated and annotated 15 texts written by a native speaker, as described in section 4. Our findings give an emerging picture of dialect differences between the so-called Middle and Upper Chulym varieties of Ös, both phonological and morpho-lexical differences (3.1), features of these two speech varieties reflecting possible obsolescence effects due to the advanced moribund state of the language (3.2), a very brief discussion of the presence of micro-variation even on the idiolectal level of a type that is not uncommonly found in severely endangered languages (3.3), and finally some brief comments on the influence of the socially dominant Russian language on the structure of the contemporary Ös language (3.4).

3.1 Dialect differences

A range of phonological, morphological and lexical differences may be readily observed between speakers of the Middle Chulym dialect of Ös, and those hailing from the Upper Chulym dialect regions. During our field expeditions in 2003 and 2005, we recorded six speakers of the Middle Chulym dialect of Ös and two speakers of the Upper Chulym dialect, some now deceased. Due to significant inter- and intra-speaker variation, and the fact that the two Upper dialect speakers have lived for many years in the Middle dialect speech community, it is not possible to conclusively claim that the attested differences are solely indicative of a dialect isogloss. Nonetheless, we present a sample of the differences here.

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[5] Albeit these texts are clearly an invaluable source as this genre of traditional tales now appears to be extinct.

3.1.1 Phonological differences

A range of phonological differences has emerged in our field corpus between the so-called Middle Chulym and Upper Chulym varieties of Ös. These emerged during an elicitation of a Swadesh-type word list with two speakers, each representing a different dialect area, but both currently living in the tiny village of Ozjornoe (total population is under forty). A selection of these is offered in (1)-(5) below.

(1)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	[ʃ]	[tʃ]	
	ʃoʃqa	*tʃoʃqa*	‘pig’
	iʃ	*itʃ*	‘drink!’
	ʃaruɯ	*tʃaruɯ*	‘back’
	qeʃ	*qætʃ*	‘child’
	paʃlama	*patʃtulama*	‘dirty’

(2)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	[ʃ]	[s]	
	ʃij	*sij*	‘write!’
	tuʃpa-zɯ	*tuspa-zɯ*	‘knee’-3

(3)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	[b]	[m]	
	bojnum	*mojnum*	‘neck’-1
	bunzun	*munzun*	‘that one’-3.ACC

(4)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	[ɲ]	[tʃ] ~ [ʃ]	
	ɲaa	*tʃaa*	‘new’
	ɲaaɣɯ	*tʃaaɣɯ*	‘jaw’-3
	ɲøme	*ʃøme*	‘thing’

(5)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	[m]	[p] ~ [b]	
	mø:re	*pø:re~ bø:re*	‘wolf’

With respect to the *b : m* and *m : p/b* and *ɲ : ʃ/tʃ* correspondences, it appears that there is a certain degree of regularity, although of a type that is not necessarily what might be ‘expected’. The Middle Chulym variety of Ös shows a distant nasal assimilation with the palatal but not with the labial series to a following nasal, while the Upper Chulym variety shows just the opposite; contrast the forms in (3) and (4). The labial-initial forms have the nasal sound triggering the distant assimilation still present, but the first two palatal-initial forms have lost the nasal sound that triggered the nasal

assimilation process: etymological (but not synchronic) *-*ŋ*- is regularly lost in intervocalic position, leaving a long vowel (the nasal that triggers the nasal assimilation in the palatal forms does remain in the final example in (4)). On the other hand, the word for 'wolf' has an unexpected nasal-initial in Middle Chulym that is lacking in the Upper Chulym variety. Regarding the *ʃ : s* correspondence, the Upper Chulym variety shows a more Khakas-like structure; note that the so-called Xyzyl (Kyzyl) variety of Khakas is spoken in the region just to the south of Upper Chulym region (currently separated by Russian speaking populations).

Certain phonological processes appear to be different, though there is also variation within dialects and speakers. These include velar elision,

(6)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	tʃa-a	*tʃaɣ-ɯ*	'fat'-3

final vowel epenthesis,[6]

(7)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	tur-ubulu	*tur-ubul*	'stand'-PRES
	ajd-ubululu	*ajd-ubul*	'say'-PRES
	bil-ɪbɪlɪ	*bil-ɪbɪl*	'know'-PRES

and diphthongization.

(8)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym
	sooq ~ su^{w}aq	*sooq*

3.1.2 Morphological differences

The following morphological differences have been observed in our field corpus. Upper Chulym dialect of Ös speakers show an atypical category of plural *possessor* marking with nouns encoding 2nd plural and 3rd plural possessors. This characteristic feature is lacking in the variety favored by speakers of the Middle Chulym dialect of Ös. Not only is a specifically plural possessor form unusual for Altai-Sayan Turkic

[6] While from a diachronic perspective it is possible that the longer variants actually reflect the second syllable of the originally bi-syllabic auxiliary, deriving as this present tense formation does in Ös from an auxiliary construction in **-Ip olur*, attested to varying degrees in a range of other Altai-Sayan Turkic languages (Anderson 2004b), from a synchronic perspective it is not possible to know whether this is a quasi-archaic retention or an innovation of a process of final-vowel epenthesis. Given the small pool of speakers of both varieties, it is not clear that this issue can even really be resolved satisfactorily.

languages, the form itself is also of an unusual or marked type. It appears to have a fixed low round vowel segment [o] in an otherwise plural-looking morphemic shape, regardless of the quality of the preceding vowel; this vowel triggers a back and round harmony pattern to spread the general (second or third) person possessive marker that follows.

(9)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	qaraɣ-ɯ	*qaraq-tor-u*	'their eye' (singular)
		~ qaraq-lor-u	eye-PL:POSS-3

Note that for plural forms of possessa, the special plural possessor element does not appear and the forms are thus ambiguous to whether they refer to a plural possessor of a plural possessum, or to a singular possessor of a plural possessum.

(10)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	qaraq-tar-ɯ	*qaraq-tar-ɯ*	'their eyes' (plural) or 'his eyes'
			eye-PL-3

Another morphological feature that shows variation between the Middle and Upper Chulym dialects of Ös is the instrumental suffix/enclitic. In fact, one of the variants of the Upper Chulym variety appears to reflect the putative proto-form of the instrumental underlying all the variants of this element found in Altai-Sayan Turkic languages in general, and those of the complex dialect continua of Khakas in particular as reconstructed and discussed in Anderson (2003; 2004a, and forthcoming).

(11)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	-[b]lA	*-bɪlæŋ*	'with', 'by means of'

3.1.3 Lexical differences

Lexical differences (including some that are actually phonological) were observed and also pointed out to us by the speakers themselves, who are sensitive to such dialect differences.

(12)	Middle Chulym	Upper Chulym	
	tuɣba-m	*bija-m*	'(elder) sister'-1
	æptʃi	*æpʃɪ*	'wife'
	moɣalaq	*qatʃqɯ*	'bear'
	tudun	*ʃon*	'clothing'
	kœcærɪ	*ton*	'old' (of a person)
	ʃaŋ, ɲaa	*tʃaa*	'new'

With regards to the element meaning 'bear', the Middle Chulym form is of currently unknown origin, while the Upper Chulym *qatʃqɯ* literally means 'devil, evil spirit', a

euphemism word of a type commonly found designating bears across many languages of Central Siberia.

3.2 Obsolesence effects

As we collected our corpus of texts and observed (and participated in) the spontaneous conversations of our consultants, it became clear to us that certain features that had been reported in the previous literature on Ös were not appearing. Thus, it seems that certain 'expected' features of the language have either been lost or are extremely rare. These may in fact reflect the general moribundity of the language and the concomitant loss or reduction of certain features that this particular sociolinguistic state commonly entails. Such features include the use of the common Turkic –DI past and the unaccomplished aspectual formation.

In the case of the –DI past, one elderly female speaker of the Upper Chulym variety of Ös produced one token of a verb form with this suffix, viz. *di-di-m* 'I said' [say-REC.PST-1]. Other speakers in elicitation and consultation sessions explicitly reject such forms even in the context of the two features that seem to favor its use in other Turkic languages of the region (cf. Anderson 1998, Anderson and Harrison 1999, Anderson and Harrison in preparation, Anderson 2005 for Khakas, Tuvan, Tofa, and Abakan Khakas respectively), that is, recent past action with a first singular subject (this is in fact the exact context that the above mentioned speaker spontaneously produced the one token attested so far in our field corpus). Given the textual frequency of the –GAn past in comparison to the –DI past in many Altai-Sayan Turkic languages, it is perhaps not overly surprising that in the speech of the final generation speakers of the moribund Ös language, the latter element has been replaced in its usual functional contexts by the former.

With respect to the unaccomplished aspect affix, this too was acknowledged and produced under elicitation by exactly one male speaker of the Middle Chulym variety of Ös. When prompted by a Russian token, he produced the following forms:

(13) *mæn uz-alaq-um* — *sæn jeʃo uzu-ba-a-ŋ*
I sleep-UNACMPL-1 — I still/yet sleep-NEG-PST-2
'I haven't slept yet' — 'you haven't slept yet'
(GDSA p. 24; 118) — (GDSA p. 94)

It is interesting to note that this unaccomplished element seems to have been already nearly lost when the systematic study of the language began in the mid-20th century; almost exactly the same two variants occurred in Dul'zon's (1960) description of the verbal system of Middle Chulym.

(14) *men uz-a:lak-ɨm* — *men iʃo uzu-ba-a-m*
I sleep-UNACMPL-1 — I yet sleep-NEG-PST-1
'I haven't slept yet' — 'I haven't slept yet'
(Dul'zon 1960: 121) — (Dul'zon 1960: 121)

The loss of this relatively marked grammatical feature occurs in other threatened or high-contact speech varieties of Altai-Sayan Turkic, *viz*. the variety of Khakas spoken in Russian-dominated Abakan as described in Anderson (2005, chapter 4).

(15) a. Abakan Khakas

olɣan-nɨɣ	*jeʃo*	*ojna-ba-an*	*pol-ɣan-nɨɣ*	*futbol*
boy-PL	(R)yet	play-NEG-PST	AUX-PST-PL	soccer

'the boys haven't played soccer yet'

b. Abakan Khakas

min	*jeʃo*	*toos-pa-a-m*	*poz-ɨm-nɨŋ*	*toɣɨz-ɨm-nɨ*
I	still/yet	finish-NEG-PST-1	self-1-GEN	work-1-ACC

'I haven't finished my work yet'

Another possible obsolescence feature attested in our field corpus on Ös is the apparent over generalization of the third singular possessive form in combination with overt possessors of other person/number combinations. Such examples as the following occur relatively frequently in our corpus, with *ton-u* instead of the expected **ton-uŋ*.

(16)

Ljovuʃka,	*seŋ*	*ton-u*	*purzaj*	*køj-ybs-qan*
Lyovushka	you:GEN	coat-3	completely	burn-PRF-PST

'Lyovushka, your coat has burned up completely.'[7] (GDSA 58)

3.3 Micro-variation

In the speech of a single speaker, examples of velar deletion or non-deletion, variants of case markers, distant nasal assimilation, *b* ~ *m*, etc. may be attested. This kind of micro-variation, even on the idiolectal level, is commonly attested in moribund languages like Ös.

(17)

a.	*bojnum*	~ *mojnum*	'neck'-1
b.	*siler-ge*	~ *siler-ga*	'you.PL'-DAT

3.4 Code mixing and Russian loans

Russian influence is abundant in Ös, as evidenced in semantic and syntactic calques, loanwords, code-mixing and code-switching. The following are examples of loanwords or code-mixing. Words of Russian origin and their translations are underlined. As is commonly the case in languages, adverbs, discourse particles, and elements of various functions deriving from Russian that occur at the clause periphery

[7] Note the switch of harmony pattern from front to back in *køj-ybs-kan*, possibly triggered by the now lost vowel of the perfective suffix, which etymologically is [*ɯ] (Anderson 2004b) or alternatively, by the emergence of back vocalism in suffixes as a possible new default.

freely pepper the spontaneous speech of Ös speakers (page numbers in parentheses reference our field notebook).

(18) *paluuq tʃiige na primer* 'To eat fish, for example' (KDH p. 53)
sæŋ jeʃo uzubaːŋ 'You haven't slept yet?' (KDH p. 54)
a mæn amda tʃʲo 'What (will) I (do) now?' (KDH p. 64)
gabaf sæ ajdup ili qajduɣ 'Is your name Gabov, or what?' (KDH p. 64)
qartooʃqa kroʃɪt ʃoʃqalarga 'Crush potatoes for pigs.' (KDH p. 64)
ol ajdubul mæn snaju 'He said, I know' (KDH p. 16)
nuutʃɪktermm 'My grandchildren.' (KDH p. 30)
nuutʃrɣm 'My grandchild.' (KDH p. 30)

The syntax of Ös also frequently displays canonically Russian word order:

(19) *mæn bil-ɪbɪl-ɪm ineeɣ-ɪ-n sa-arga*
I know-PRES-1 cow-3-ACC[8] milk-INF
'I know how to milk a cow.' (KDH 21)

(20) *mæn itpek kees-tɪr-ɪm tʃidɪɣ piʒek=læŋ*
I bread cut-PRES-1 sharp knife=INS
'I cut bread with a sharp knife.' (KDH 28)

(21) *pis-ter kel-ge-bɪs sler-ge*
we-PL come-PST-1PL you.PL-DAT
'we came to you' (GDSA 25)

4. An Emergent Ös orthography

We have previously reported (Anderson & Harrison 2004b, Harrison and Anderson 2003, 2005) on the emergence of a native Ös orthography, including details of how it was later abandoned under pressure from local Russians. A selection of the text of this story, which has accompanying video and metadata to be archived in the Endangered Languages Archive (www.hrelp.org/archive/), is offered below.

[8] Note the use of the third possessive accusative here in a non-possessed, non-definite context. Such overgeneralization of third possessive accusative forms is a characteristic feature of contemporary use. An understanding of the rules for the use of this element requires further research.

(22) The invention and abandonment of Ös writing (as told by V.M. Gabov, July 2003)

men *tajɣa-da* *ʧejit* *bol-ɣa-m*
I taiga-LOC young be-PST-1
'When I was young out in the taiga'

tajɣa-da *siree* *tsør-ej-m*
taiga-LOC always go-ASP-1
'I always used to go about in the taiga'

no *anda* *meeŋ* *qaɣas* *bol-ɣan*
(R)and[9] there 1:GEN paper be-PST
'And there I had some paper'

men *ærtæn* *jesli* *bar-za-m* *aaliʃ-ti-ige*
I morning (R)if go-COND-1 moose-VSF-INF
'In the morning if I would go moose hunting,'

no *nøøn[e]* *bol-za* *tav-arɣa* *iir-ge* *kæl-ze-m*
(R)and thing be-COND find-INF evening-DAT come-COND-1
'And if anything happened, when I returned in the evening'

tygæde *ʃija-a-m* *po* *qaɣas-qa* *ʃija-t-um* *nø-ny* *æt-ke-m*
always write-PST-1 that paper-DAT write-HAB-1 thing-ACC do-PST-1
I would always write, I would write what I did on that paper

ærtæn *øs* *saam* *andun* *men* *pajdaq* *anda* *ʃi-j* *bol-ɣa-m*
morning self (R)self from.there I much there write-CV AUX-PST-1
'in the morning I myself had written a lot there'

a *po* *kyd-ys-ke-m* *qaɣeez-in* *qazaq* *kiʒ-ee*
and that show-PRF-PST-1 paper-3:ACC Russian person-DAT
'and I showed it, the paper, to a Russian person'

a *ol* *ajd-ubul* *nø-ny* *munaar* *ʃij-ip* *sal-ɣa-ŋ*
and s/he say-PRES thing-ACC to.here write-CV AUX-PST-2
'and he said, what's that thing you have written here?

a *men* *anu* *no* *aŋdun* *køre-p* *sal-ɣa-m*
and I it-ACC (R)DISC 3:ABL throw-CV AUX-PST-1

[9] (R) denotes a Russian loanword.

‘So I threw it away’

a *ʃij-ba-a-m* *anzon-da*
(R)and write-NEG-PST-1 afterwards-EMPH
‘And since then I haven’t written (anything).’

men *sybyr* *no* *tuŋna-ɻ* *pa-ɣa-m*
I bad (R)DISC hear-CV AUX-PST-1
After I heard that bad thing:

anduun sen *ʃij-ip-tur-zuŋ* *sen*
from.there you write-CV-EVID-2 you
“What have you written there”

tadar *til-le* *qaja* *ʃij-ik-tur*
Chulym language-INS why write-FUT-ASSRTV
Why would (you) write in Chulym?

men *anduun* *ʃij-ba-a-m*
I 3:ABL write-NEG-PST-1
‘After that I didn’t write (any more)’

anzon *køre-ɻ* *sal-ga-m* *po* *qaɣas-tu*
afterwards throw-CV AUX-PST-1 that paper-ACC
and threw away that paper.’

men *kyt-ys-ke* *moʒet* *siler-ge* *pol-ɣa-m*
I show-PRF-INF (R)maybe you.PL-DAT AUX-PST-1
‘Maybe I would have shown it to you,’

azu *tʃoɣul* *qajda* *tʃat* *qul-ɣan* *anda* *køre-ɻ* *sal-ɣa-m*
or NEG:COP where lie AUX-PST there throw-CV AUX-PST-1
‘But it doesn’t exist anymore; it’s still there where I threw it away.’

æmde *ʃij-ar* *tʃoɣ-um*
now write-P/F NEG-1
‘Now I don’t write’

men *siler-ga* *ajd-urga* *pol-ga-m* *anu*
I you-DAT tell-INF AUX-PST-1 it:ACC
I wanted to tell you this.

men *tygeedi* *øs* *til-ni* *qunaa-du-m*
I always Ös language-ACC love-HAB-1

‘I have always loved the Ös language’

tʃurtta-bul-mun *øs* *til-ni* *saad-ubul-mun*
live-PRES-1 Ös language-ACC speak-PRES-1
‘I live, and speak the Ös language’

øs *til-ni* *tʃaqʃu* *saad-ubul-mun*
Ös language-ACC beautiful speak-PRES-1
‘I speak the Ös language very well’

ii *idʒaa-m* *bol-gan* *toʒe* *ajt-qan-nar*
(R)and mother-1 be-PST (R)also say-PST-PL
‘And my mother also used to say’

ʃto *øs-tuŋ* *til-ni* *tadar* *til-ni* *saat-arga* *kerek*
(R)that Ös-GEN language-ACC Ös language-ACC speak-INF NEC
‘That it’s necessary to speak the language of the Ös, the Tatar (Ös) language’

qazaq *qazaq-tar-ga* *tadar* *tadar-lar-ga*
Russian Russian-PL-DAT Ös Ös-PL-DAT
‘Russian is for the Russians and Ös is for the Ös’[10]

We regret to say that some negative pressures against Ös orthography persist. These have taken the form of comments made by Russian academics and by Indigenous

[10] In the preceding text, many of the issues we discussed in the previous sections are made manifest but only briefly commented on here. For example, the speaker shows variation in forms, the dative form of the second plural pronoun may be *siler-ge* or *siler-ga*, the past tense form either shows spirantization of the velar to [ɣ] after [l] or not, there is a Khakas-like (Anderson 1998) zero allomorph of the *–p* converb (*tʃal kul-*), the negative present form (here with a first singular subject) shows the typical Ös (but somewhat unusual) structure *–Ar tʃoɣ-um*, and the form of the word ‘always’ may appear with a final [–e] or a final [–i], use of Russian discourse elements, complementizers, etc. With regards to variant pronunciations even in the speech of a single person, as mentioned above, hyper-micro-variation even on the idiolectal level is a characteristic of Ös, as it is of other moribund languages.

Siberian community representatives from Tomsk oblast' to the effect that since no scholar has bestowed a writing system upon the Chulym, they cannot be thought of as having a real writing system or *pis'mennost'*. We categorically reject this absurd and colonialist view on the legitimacy of indigenously created orthographic traditions, as do our Ös consultants.

Despite these pressures from within and without the community (and his statements to the contrary in the text above which was recorded in 2003), the inventor of the Ös orthography, V. M. Gabov, continues to use it enthusiastically and prolifically to record his own stories and those told by others. Since 2003, the author has made minor emendations to his writing system. Specifically, he decided to introduce two new symbols, {ҥ} for the velar nasal [ŋ] and {ғ} for the voiced velar fricative [ɣ]. It should be noted that this was Gabov's own decision and creation. He neither has familiarity with any other orthographic system of Turkic languages of the region (or other regions for that matter), nor did we suggest any such emendations.

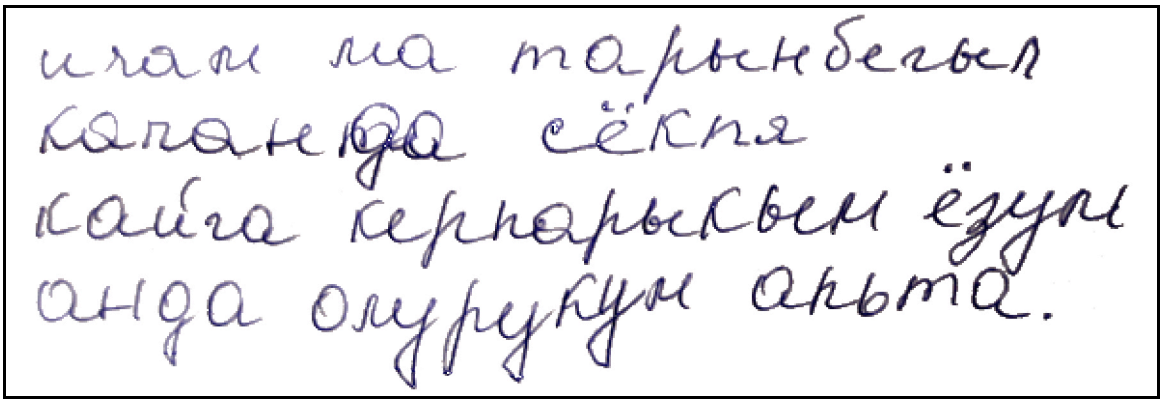
(23) пис ичабла чуртабыс чаҥ элда
we mother=INS live-PST-1PL new village-LOC
'I lived with (my) mother in new village' (KDH 45)

(24) пистя андағ алуу полгабыс
we-EMPH very stupid be-PST-1PL
'We were very stupid.' (KDH 45)

Our research goal as linguists is to observe the process of orthography emergence and to avoid influencing it. We believe that the organic emergence of this writing system—without interference from outsiders—will greatly increase the prestige of the language and enhance its viability. It will also provide a laboratory in which to examine the psychological reality of phenomena such as word boundaries, enclitics, vowel harmony, etc. We encouraged Gabov to write as much as possible. He has now produced more than a dozen texts of various genres, and we continue to observe the process of stabilization and standardization in his writings. We also field-tested the new orthography by asking speakers who had never seen it before to try reading it. The reception was positive, and the readers made suggestions directly to the author on how to improve it. We believe we have already witnessed the effect of the new orthography (and texts produced in it) on the relative prestige of the language.

4. 1 New texts and genres

Our field expedition resulted in a large quantity of newly written texts, some of them representing never before documented genres. We collected songs (*chastushkas*), biography, humorous stories, hunting tales, etc. These were primarily written down by hand by V. M. Gabov's using his own orthography, as shown in the following sample.



Chastushka "Mother don't scold' in V. M. Gabov's handwriting (July 2005)

The full text of the above is as follows:

(25) ичам ма тарынбегыл
качанда сёкпя
кайга керпарыкым ёзум
анда олурукум апьта

We provide a slightly more phonetically accurate transcription here, adding morpheme boundaries, interlinear glossing and translation.

(26) *idʒa-m* *ma* *tarun-be-ɣɪl*
mother-1 1:DAT be.angry-NEG-IMP
'Mother, don't ever be angry with me.'

qadʒan=da *søk-pæ*
ever=EMPH scold-NEG
'Don't ever scold (me).'

qajɣa *ker-par-uq-um* *øz-ym*
when grow.old-AUX-FUT-1 self-1
'When I grow old myself.'

anda *olur-uq-um* *æp-te*
there sit-FUT-1 house-LOC
'I will stay there at home.'

Another genre we collected was aphorisms, like this one written by V. Gabov (July 2005).

(27) *sæn* *tʃer-dɪn* *ʃuq-qa-ɣ*
you earth-ABL come.out-PST-2
'You came from the earth'

tʃɛr-ge *bar-uq-suŋ*
earth-DAT go-FUT-2
'and you will return to it'

saa *køpespe* *ʃij-ɪk* *sal-gan*
you:DAT as.many write-FUT AUX-PST
'As much as it would be written (for you)'

aan-uŋ *artuq* *tʃurta-b-uq-suŋ*
that-GEN extra live-NEG-FUT-2
'You won't live any more than that'

4.2 Some linguistic commentary on the chastushka and aphorism texts

Before turning to some of the sociolinguistic consequences of our current work among the last speakers of the moribund Ös language, let us briefly comment on the structure of the language of these two short texts. Line one of the song text (the chastushka) has a negative imperative verb, as does the second line. However, the verb in the first line has the archaic imperative marker in –GIl that harkens all the way back to Old Turkic (von Gabain 1974: 110). Thus, Ös, although divergent in many respects, shows extremely archaic features as well. That this element is optional is shown by its lack in the second sentence.

Other noteworthy features of the first two sentences include the disharmonic form for 'mother' *idʒam*, which appears in an obligatorily possessed form, even in its vocative function as here (cf. the body part and kin term forms cited in 3.1 above). Furthermore, the dative case of the first singular pronoun shows back vocalism and loss of the final nasal (and probable vowel lengthening), e.g. *maː*, possibly reflecting a lost **-ŋ-* (or perhaps **-ɣ-*). The final two sentences of the quatrain show Russian-type syntax with post-verbal elements. In addition, the characteristic and peculiar Ös future formation in –[C]IK is found in lines three and four, where C may show full assimilation (and consequent degemination, that is, its ultimate loss) or may reflect a voicing or nasal assimilation to a preceding stem (although both of the examples here are of the former type). Lastly the word 'when' in this text has the unexpected form *qajɣa*.

The second text, the aphorism, also exhibits a range of noteworthy and characteristic contemporary Ös grammatical features. The ablative case form in Ös has a high vowel (-DIn) as is found in certain Old Turkic texts (von Gabain 1974: 88-89) and various Middle Turkic languages as well (also in modern and Old Uighur), not a low vowel as in most other modern Altai-Sayan (and other) Turkic languages (except in lexicalized formations, cf. Tofa *munun* 'from here'). The second singular pronoun in line three of this text shows a similar development to that seen with the first person pronoun, namely a shift to back vocalism and an apparent loss of an original intervocalic velar, realized as *saː*. Also, both of the conjugationally determined variants of the second person subject marker are seen in the verbs in the first two sentences, viz. *–ŋ* and *–s/zIŋ*, respectively.

Another verb with the uniquely Ös future form is found in line two of the aphorism. In line four its corresponding negative form is attested with a fixed high round segment (*y*/*u*), which itself starts a new round harmony pattern, preceded by a consonantal allomorph of the common negative morpheme *–B[A]-*. Lastly, note the future form of the verb that is attested with a following auxiliary rather than a converb form–a feature also found in the moribund Tofa language as well (Harrison and Anderson forthcoming-a/b, Anderson and Harrison forthcoming), where it appears to represent an innovation (in Tofa with the emergent default auxiliary *ber-* 'give') in the speech of terminal generation speakers.

4.3 Floodgating, memory and dormancy

Spontaneous conversation in Ös is vanishingly rare, considering there is only one household where husband and wife both speak it natively (although the man has recently become fully deaf, rendering any further conversation somewhat untenable). There is one additional household where intergenerational speakers (father and daughter) live, but truth be told, even they rarely communicate together in their ancestral tongue. Speakers who are neighbors in the same village reported that they use it only infrequently for conversation. Part of our research method includes bringing speakers together to talk. We also trained one speaker in basic interviewing techniques, and agreed with him upon a list of topics of cultural relevance and ecological validity to the Ös. Topics included social history, ethnic identity and ethnonymy, oppression of the language, discrimination against the Ös in education and other spheres, language loss, hunting, medicinal praxis, religious praxis, shamanism, indigenous technologies (fishing nets, trapping, hunting and resource management).

By arranging and recording conversations on these topics, interviews conducted in this manner yielded a rich set of registers, genres, and grammatical forms, and considerably more enthusiasm from the speakers that elicitation sessions ever could. We provide a very brief sample of one such conversation here. The following segment of conversation is led by V.M. Gabov (VG), his interlocutors are A. Badeyeva (AB) and I. Skoblin (IS).

(28) An Ös conversation about the traditional calendar (July 2005).

1.	(VG)	*a*	*sæn*	*vot*	*mæn*	*sur-ga-am*
		and	you	(R)DEIC	I	ask-PAST-1
		and you, well I asked,				
2.	(VG)	*bis-tɪŋ*	*dil-læ*	*qajduɣ*	*vot*	
		we-GEN	language-INS	what	(R)DEIC	
		How is it in our language?				
3.	(VG)	*qazaq*	*dil-læ*	*aj*	*aj*	
		Russian	language-INS	month	month	
		'Month' in the Russian language?				

4. (IS) *bis-tɪŋ* *aj* *qajduɣ* *bo-or* *dylgy* *aj-ɯ* *pol-gan*
we-GEN month how be-P\F fox month-3 be-PST
How is our month? There was fox month.

5. (IS) *qajduɣ øs-yŋ bil-ɪp-sɪŋ* *qajduɣ aj* *bistɪŋ* *dil-læ* *aj*
which self-2 know-PRES:EVID-2 which m. we-GEN language-INS month
Which you yourself should know what months, month in our language.

6. (AB) *aj* *eh*
month DISC
Oh, month,

7. (IS) *qajduɣ* *dylgy* *aj-ɯ*
how fox month(-3)
how, fox month,

8. (AB) *dylgy* *aj-ɯ* *kyzyɣen* *aj-ɯ*
fox month-3 chipmunk month-3
fox month, chipmunk month,

9. (AB) *kyzyɣen* *aj-ɯ* *qarga* *aj-ɯ*
chipmunk month-3 raven month-3
chipmunk month, raven month

10. (IS) *køk* *køk* *aj-ɯ*
Green green month-3
Green, green month

11. (AB) *køk* *aj-ɯ* *eta* *maj* *mæn* *an-ɯ-n* *di-dir=mæn*
green month-3 (R)DEIC May I it-3-ACC say-EVID.PST-1
that's May, I said that, it seems.

12. (AB) *køk* *aj* *maj* *køk* *aj-ɯ* *æmdæ* *qajnar*
green month May green month-3 now where.to
May is green month Green month. What else?

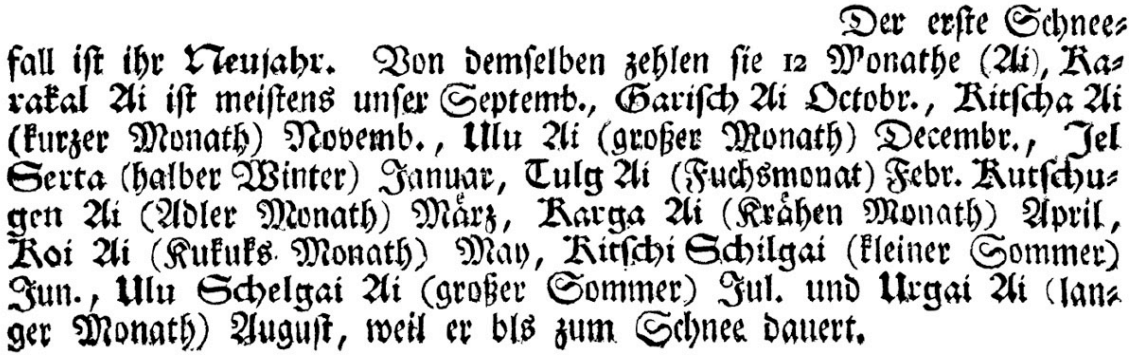
13. (AB) *partʃa* *aj-ɯ-n* *bil-ge-m* *dædæ-m* *ʒe* *bes*
some month-3-ACC know-PST-1 father-1 (R)EMPH (R)all
I knew some of the months, my father, (he knew them) all.

14. (IS) *bil-ge-m* *men* *toʒ*
know-PST-1 I (R)also
Me too, I used to know.

15. (AB) *bil-ge-m ej mæn und-up pa-ɣa-m*
know-PST-1 DISC I forget-CV AUX-PST-1
I knew them. Oh, I've forgotten them.

16. (VG) *und-up pa-ɣa-ŋnar bajdaq qanʲeʃna*
forget-CV AUX-PST-2PL much (R)of.course
You've forgotten a lot...of course.

Dialogues such as this offer a unique glimpse into Siberian prehistory, including remnants of traditional knowledge about a now all-but-vanished belief system and worldview. They illustrate both the scope of what has already been forgotten and what may yet be documented. It is interesting to compare the now only partially remembered Ös calendar system with the fuller one reported by Falck (1785-1786). The following is a facsimile of Falck's original account, in German.



Der erſte Schnee-
fall iſt ihr Neujahr. Von demſelben zehlen ſie 12 Monathe (Ai), Ka-
rakal Ai iſt meiſtens unſer Septemb., Gariſch Ai Octobr., Kitſcha Ai
(kurzer Monath) Novemb., Ulu Ai (großer Monath) Decembr., Jel
Serta (halber Winter) Januar, Tulg Ai (Fuchsmonat) Febr. Kutſchu-
gen Ai (Adler Monath) März, Karga Ai (Krähen Monath) April,
Koi Ai (Kukuks Monath) May, Kitſchi Schilgai (kleiner Sommer)
Jun., Ulu Schelgai Ai (großer Sommer) Jul. und Urgai Ai (lan-
ger Monath) Auguſt, weil er bis zum Schnee dauert.

As was typical of Siberian lunar calendars, the Ös had twelve months including one longer, flexible month that was synchronized with the first snowfall to reset the calendar:

The first snow-
fall is their New Year. From there they count 12 months (*Ai)*, *Karakal Ai* is essentially our September, *Garisch Ai* October, *Kitscha Ai* (shorter month) November, *Ulu Ai* (bigger month) December, *Jel Serta* (half winter) January, *Tulg Ai* (fox month) February, *Kutschugen Ai* (eagle month) March, *Karga Ai* (raven month) April, *Koi Ai* (cuckoo month) May, *Kitschi* Schilgai (smaller Summer) June, *Ulu Schelgai Ai* (bigger summer) July and *Urgai Ai* (longer month) August, which lasts until the snow falls.

A few brief comments can be made on this first-ever spontaneous conversation to be published in the moribund Ös language. First, on the content of the conversation: only four months are enumerated, but of these only two coincide in more or less the same form as the Falck text, viz. *dylgy aj[u]* and *karɣa aj[u]*. Rather than *koj aj* 'cuckoo month' as listed in Falck's text, speaker AB (a user of an

Upper Chulym mixed with a Middle Chulym dialect) has *køk aj* 'green month'–a designation known from other traditional Siberian calendrical systems. Furthermore, she used the term *kyzygen* 'chipmunk' not *Kutschugen* 'eagle' as listed in Falck. In this case, it could be a an actual dialectal phonological variant that has triggered this reinterpretation with [z] for expected [(d)ʒ], (cf. the variants listed in (2) above in voiced variants).

Other characteristic linguistic features of contemporary Ös are attested in this short text. For example, a shortened form of the evidential is seen in line five, realized as what appears to be a (historical) converb alone. No possessive form is found after the genitive of the first plural pronoun in lines two, four, and five. Finally, a range of Russian elements is found throughout the text, often, as mentioned previously, at clause periphery, as in lines one, two, eleven, thirteen, fourteen, and sixteen.

5. Ethics and mobilization of resources

Discussions among documentary linguists increasingly focus on the ethical dimension of the process, recognizing that linguists have responsibilities beyond data collection and publication of results. Within the scope of our ELDP-funded project to document Ös, we have earmarked resources for community language revitalization goals, dissemination of information in/about Ös to a broader audience, and the creation of a local, community-accessible archiving.

Community ownership of Chulym intellectual property is a primary consideration in all our work. Digital recordings housed at Tomsk remain under the auspices of the Chulym community itself, which will retain full ownership and copyright, and will grant permission (both individually and collectively) for any scholarly use or dissemination. Because the Chulym community itself is not yet connected to the Internet, we also produce and disseminate materials in alternative media (e.g., print, audio tape, VHS video tape) so that community members who wish to see and hear the language spoken may do so readily.

While we regard a full revitalization (Hinton 2001, Wurm 1998) unlikely, we have already taken measures to support projects that will enhance awareness of the language within the community and beyond. First, we arranged meetings at which two or more native speakers who do not normally have the opportunity to converse could do so. Separated by geography, nearly all remaining speakers of Ös lack regular opportunities to speak it. By arranging such meetings, we assisted in a process of floodgating, allowing speakers to call up from memory long dormant words and conversational skills.

Second, we have agreed at the request of members of the Ös council (and schoolteachers in the ethnically Ös-dominant village of Novoshumylovo) to produce an ABC primer and storybook using original stories collected from consultants, drawings by local children, and V. Gabov's orthography.

Third, to ensure long-term archiving, we have digitized and begun to transcribe and systematize legacy materials collected in the 1970s and written by hand in field notebooks. To provide a local repository readily available to the Ös community and to scholars, we purchased a state-of-the-art computer and peripherals (printer, scanner, external drive) for the Tomsk Laboratory of Languages of Siberian

Peoples. This equipment, funded by the ELDP grant, reflects the consensus among funding agencies that research projects should fund not just data collection, but also mobilization of resources for indigenous communities. The Ös community, located just a few hours by car from Tomsk, has been made aware of this resource and invited to access it.

Fourth, we will contribute a subset of our original field data to the Rosetta Project (www.rosettaproject.org). Any interested party may now find Ös data (in this case, a Swadesh list of the Middle and Upper Chulym dialects, with associated soundfiles) on the Internet, without waiting for future publication of our results. Much of course remains to be done. What we have outlined above merely represents the first steps in this direction.

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Abbreviations

1	First person	HAB	Habitual
2	Second person	IMP	Imperative
3	Third person	INF	Infinitive
ABL	Ablative	INS	Instrumental
ACC	Accusative	LOC	Locative
ASP	Aspectual	NEC	Necessitive mood
ASSRTV	Assertive	NEG	Negative
AUX	Auxiliary	P\F	Present/Future
COND	Conditional	PL	PLURAL
COP	Copula	PL:POSS	PLURAL POSSESSOR
CV	Converb	PRES	Present
DAT	Dative	PRF	Perfective
DEIC	Deictic	PST	Past
DISC	Discourse marker	(R)	Russian loanword or code-mixing
EMPH	Emphatic		
EVID	Evidential	REC	Recent
FUT	Future	UNACMPL	Unaccomplished
GEN	Genitive	VSF	Verb stem formant