

Kseniia Bolshakova

kse.haka@gmail.com

Santa Barbara, CA, USA

Instagram: [@haka.huruksut](#)

Telegram: [@kse_haka](#)

Language Proficiency: Dolgan & Russian (native), English, Sakha

Profile

Indigenous activist, writer, and researcher from the Russian Arctic whose work spans decolonial advocacy, environmental justice, endangered-language technology and revitalization, grassroots activism, and community knowledge.

Education

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| 2024–2025 | Santa Barbara City College , CA, USA (non-credit courses) |
| 2022–2025 | Moscow University for Industry and Finance “Synergy” , Russia
B.A. in IT Management in Business
Thesis: <i>Project Management for the Development of a Mobile Language Learning Application</i> |
| 2018–2022 | Institute of the Peoples of the North, Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University
B.A. in Indigenous Language Education (expelled for protesting Russia’s invasion of Ukraine) |
| 2011–2018 | Khatanga Indigenous Boarding School , Russia |

Recognition & Support

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| 2026 | IBBY–UNESCO
Remarkable Book for Young Readers in an Indigenous and Endangered Language.
IBBY–UNESCO Collection catalogue |
| 2025 | Nordic Culture Point
Grant for Translating an Indigenous Arctic novel into Northern Sámi, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian |
| 2025 | Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Assets for Artists Residency Fellowship |
| 2024 | Cultural Survival. Indigenous Youth Fellowship for Transmitting Indigenous Values by Creating Dolgan Literature |

Teaching & Research Experience

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|----------------|---|
| 2022 – present | Expert in Indigenous language documentation and Large Language Model (LLM) development
University of California, Santa Barbara, USA |
| 2024 | Research Assistant on Indigenous literatures
Department of East European, Eurasian & Russian Studies, Dartmouth College |
| 2024 | Teaching Assistant of Russian
Department of East European, Eurasian & Russian Studies, Dartmouth College |
| 2023 – 2024 | Linguistics Assistant for Kumandy language data coding
Department of Linguistics, Dartmouth College |
| 2023 | Teaching Assistant for Field Methods
Department of Linguistics, Dartmouth College |
| 2022 – 2024 | Product Manager for the Sakha language-learning mobile app <i>Sakhalyy</i>
Terra Indigenous-led NGO, Sakha Republic, Russia |
| 2023 | Research Assistant in data curation for a Chukchi mobile dictionary app
Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences |
| 2020 – 2021 | Language Consultant for the Dolgan-language strategy board game <i>Nomadic Camp</i>
Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences |

2020 – 2021 **Field Researcher** in Transbaikal Evenki research project
Institute of the Peoples of the North, Russia

Leadership & Membership

2026 – present **Member**, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)
2026 – present **Board member**, Journalism Award on the Russian Arctic and the North [Arctic Cloudberry](#)
2025 – present **Co-Founder & Board Member**, [Indigenous Resilience Foundation](#)
2024 – present **Member**, Drafting Committee for the revision of the
[Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights](#)
2024 – present **Co-Founder & Board Member**, [PEN: Languages of Russia](#)
2018 – present **Member**, Dolgan tribal community *Yjdyŋa*
2023 – 2025 **Focal Point** for Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia,
[UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus](#)
2023 – 2024 **Member**, Societas Linguistica Europaea
2023 **Head of the Delegation** for Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and
Transcaucasia, Biannual UN Global Indigenous Youth Forum
2018 – 2022 **Board Member**, Youth Council of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the
North, Siberia and the Far East
2018 – 2021 **Delegate**, Youth Forum of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the
Russian Federation “Russian North”

Publications & Literary Work

In press **Reindeer Caravan: Indigenous Writing from Siberia**
Co-edited anthology with a literary contribution, forthcoming from *Amherst College Press*
March 2026 **Buluus da irer / All the Frost Melts** (excerpts)
Published in Dolgan in the Sakha literary and socio-political magazine [Cholbon](#)
September 2025 **Battatar Kemim Kelle / Time to Carry the Burden**
Published in Dolgan and Russian by the Indigenous-led media *The Republic Speaks*
September 2025 **Todo o gelo derrete**
Published in Brazilian Portuguese in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 49(3)
July 2025 **Kønyl / Freedom**
Published in English, Dolgan, and Russian by *Words Without Borders* in *Fifty States, Many Languages: Writing from the US*
December 2024 **Rajden**
Published in Swedish in [Det icke-ryska Ryssland : ur de dekoloniala litteraturerna](#), ISBN 978-91-87605-65-9
December 2024 **Akko Hire / Akko's Earth**
Published in Dolgan and English in the collection *Arctic and Circumpolar Indigenous Futurisms*
December 2024 **How Climate Change is Leading to Language Shift in the Russian Arctic**
Published in English in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 48(4)
November 2024 **Belek / Gift**
Published in Dolgan and English by *Khallaan Ettige* in the collection of works on art, culture, and global phenomena *Külük*
October 2024 **I Didn't Let Myself Think About Death**
Published in Dolgan and English by *Beda Media*
September 2024 **Tundra. Reindeer. Spirits.**
Interview published in Russian by *Non-Moscow Talks*
June 2024 **Køs / Rajden**
Published in Dolgan, Swedish, and English by Swedish PEN in *The Non-Russian Russia: Decolonial Literatures*

- June 2024 **Dolgan Activist Addresses Colonization of Her Peoples in Debut Novel**
Published in English in *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 48(2)
- May 2024 **Buluus da irer / All the Frost Melts**
Published in Dolgan and Russian by printing house *Ofset*, ISBN 978-5-6051997-6-2
- May 2024 **How Else Did We End Up as Wandering Aliens on Our Own Land?**
Published in Dolgan and Russian by 7x7. *Horizontal Russia*
- May 2024 **"We Have Lost Our Tundra": A Dolgan Author Writes About Her Indigenous People**
Interview published in Russian by *Siberia.Realities* — *Radio Liberty*

Invited Talks & Public Events

- February 2027 **AATSEEL Conference, USA**
Panel discussion *Kseniia Bolshakova's "All the Frost Melts": Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Language, Culture, and Indigenous Experience in the Russian Arctic*
- November 2026 **Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Switzerland**
Panel discussion *Updated Pan-Arctic Species List Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge*
- November 2026 **ASEEES Annual Convention, USA**
Panel discussion *Postcolonial/Decolonial Aesthetics and Politics in Multilingual Post-Soviet Contexts*
- October 2026 **PEN Català, Spain**
Committee meeting *Revision of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*
- September 2026 **BIHAR International Congress, Spain**
Panel discussion *Ecological and Linguistic Perspectives for Community Sustainability*
- August 2026 **Indigenous Vision Forum, Germany**
Panel discussion *Linguistic Rights and Education*
- July 2026 **European Parliament, Belgium**
Participation at the Conference *Brussels Dialogue with Russian Pro-Democracy and Anti-War Actors*
- July 2026 **Stone Oven House Art Residency, Italy**
Public talk *From Roaming the Tundra to Migrating Through Languages*
- July 2026 **Giufà Bookstore & Literary Café, Italy**
Public talk *Forging a New Literary Tradition*
- July 2026 **Dante & Descartes Bookstore, Italy**
Public talk *Writing in Endangered Language: In Conversation with Eternity*
- May 2026 **University of California, San Diego, USA**
Guest lecture *Voices Across Borders: Language Activism in Russia and Beyond*
- April 2026 **University of New Hampshire, USA**
Public talk *Reindeer Trails and Written Tales: A Dolgan Voice Speaks* & Guest lecture *Continuity and Change in Dolgan Livelihood*
- April 2026 **California Slavic Colloquium, USA**
Public reading of excerpts from an upcoming novel on Russia's Indigenous boarding schools
- April 2026 **University of California, Santa Barbara, USA**
Guest lecture *Indigenous Experience in Creative Writing*
- February 2026 **Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA**
Guest lecture *Indigenous Literature and Language Activism*
- January 2026 **Nomadic Camp Video Podcast**
Kseniia Bolshakova on the Dolgans, Language, and Her Book
- December 2025 **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, USA**
Talk *The Role of Indigenous Literature in Contemporary Art* at the *Assets for Artists* residency
- December 2025 **University of Vigo, Spain**
Talk *Environmental Challenges and Injustice in the Russian Arctic* at the workshop *The Arctic Ocean and Its Futures from a Southern European Perspective*

- June 2025 **Sciences Po, France**
Talk *Social and Environmental Consequences of Permafrost Thaw for the Dolgans of the Taimyr Peninsula* at the conference *Back to Frozen Earth: Permafrost in Social Theory and Beyond*
- May 2025 **University of California, Santa Barbara, USA**
Guest lecture *Siberian Turkic Nations: Challenges and Survival*
- May 2025 **University of California, San Diego, USA**
Guest lecture *Voices Across Borders: Language Activism in Russia and Beyond*
- April 2025 **School of Experimental Writing**
Guest lecture *Decolonial Theories and Writing Practices*
- February 2025 **Indigenous of Russia Foundation**
Participation at the Indigenous Peoples Forum *Points of Contact*
- February 2025 **"In Our Own Words" Indigenous-led Writing Course**
Guest lecture *Blazing Literary Trails in an Indigenous Language*
- February 2025 **AATSEEL Conference, USA**
Public reading *An Evening of Contemporary Eastern European Literatures*
- January 2025 **Unbannable Library, USA**
Exhibition of the interactive book *Catching Reindeer*, illustrated by Ripley Whiteside
- January 2025 **Evening of Solidarity with Ukraine, USA**
Public talk *Ongoing Russian Colonization*
- December 2024 **University of California, Santa Barbara, USA**
Guest lecture *Matchstick for Survival: Indigenous Writing in the Russian Arctic*
- September 2024 **Banned Books Week, USA.** Exhibition of the interactive book *Catching Reindeer*, illustrated by Ripley Whiteside
- August 2024 **Free Buryatia Foundation**
[*Conversations on National Identity with Kseniia Bolshakova*](#)
- April 2024 **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, USA**
Book presentation of the novel *All the Frost Melts* & Panel discussion at the *Indigenous Media Zone*
- October 2023 **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Italy**
Report of the Regional Delegation at the *United Nations Global Indigenous Youth Forum*
- May 2023 **Languages Exchange & Hybrid Convening, Mexico**
Panel discussion *Strengthening and Revitalizing Our Languages Beyond Our Homes*
- May 2023 **Yurt Community Media**
Guest lecture [*How to Preserve a Native Language — Practices of Dolgans*](#)
- April 2023 **Dartmouth College, USA**
Guest lecture *Indigenous Peoples of Siberia in Today's Russia*
- April 2023 **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, USA**
Panel discussion *Language Revitalization Journey: Best Practices and Reflections*
- October 2022 **Baku International Book Fair**
[*Master class on the Dolgan language*](#)
- May 2022 **Saint Petersburg Book Salon on Palace Square, Russia**
Master class on Indigenous languages of Siberia