

Reconstructing Sino-Tibetan morphology

Outline

- Ancient morphology
- Directional prefixes
- Verb agreement

Ancient morphology

Ancient morphology

The *-s nominalizer

量 liáng ‘to measure’ < *liaŋ

ମୂଳ୍ୟ ‘to count’

量 liàng ‘a measure’ < *liaŋs

ମୂଲ୍ୟ ‘a number’

织 zhī ‘to weave’ < *tjək

ବସନ୍ତ ‘to weave’

织 zhì ‘woven goods’ < *tjəks

ବସନ୍ତ ‘web,
woven stuff’

Ancient morphology

Causative *s-

Tibetan

ཇog ‘return (intransitive)’

སlog ‘turn (transitive)’

Ancient morphology

Causative *s-

Boro

gab 'cry'

səgab 'make someone cry'

Ancient morphology

Causative *s-

独龙

*ip*⁵⁵ ‘sleep’

sə-ip ‘cause to sleep’

Ancient morphology

Causative *s-

藏语

ནྜସ· ‘sink’

ଡ୍ରେସ· ‘destroy’

载瓦语

nop ‘sink in mud’, *ŋop* ‘make s.t. get bogged in mud’

Ancient morphology

Causative *s-

别 píe ‘separate (intr.)’ < *bjät

别 pìe ‘distinguish’ < *pjät < *s-p < *s-b

- 墨 mò ‘ink’ < *mək
- 黑 hēi ‘black’ < *s-mək

Directional Prefixes

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Many Sino-Tibetan languages have directional prefixes

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Many Sino-Tibetan languages have directional prefixes

But we cannot reconstruct them, because they do not correspond across the branches

Directional Prefixes

Khroskyabs

næ-və	'go down'	下去
nb-və	'come down'	下来
o-və	'go upward'	上去
ø-və	'come up'	上来

Directional Prefixes

Daai Chin (Kuki-Chin, Myanmar)

va-sit 'go forward'

ju-sit 'go down'

jäng-sit 'go up'

Directional Prefixes

But these are different in every language:

Directional Prefixes

	上	下
Qiang 羌	tu-	ho-
Khroskyabs	o-	næ-
Daai Chin	jäng-	ju-
Mizo (Kuki-Chin)	hán-	zuk-

Directional Prefixes

But these are different in every language.

So we cannot reconstruct them for Sino-Tibetan

Verb agreement

Verb agreement – 1st person

嘉戎	jə-pi-ŋ	PAST-come-1SG	我来了
独龙	ta-ŋ	hear-1SG	我听见
景颇	wa r-iŋ	return CIS-1SG	我回来
Nocte	ka ¹ r-əŋ	go CIS-1SG	我来
Sunwar	pi-ŋa	come-1SG	我来
Rangpo	rha-ŋ	come-1SG	我来
Tedim	pài n-iŋ	go FUTURE-1SG	我要去
Meyor	ŋi-mi-ŋ	sleep-PRESENT-1SG	我睡

Verb agreement – 1st person

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Verb agreement

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羌支	西夏	-ŋa ²	-na ²		-ni ²		--	(*-w)
	羌	-a < -aŋ	-n	-i		-i	-tɕi	-w-
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	戎	-aŋ	tə-	-jə		tə- -ŋə	-(n)tɕə	-u
Kiranti	Camling	-u-ŋa	ta-	-i-ka	-i	ta- -i	-ci	(-u-)
	Thulung	-ŋu	-na	-ku	(-i)	Σ-ni	-tsi	-u
Newaric	Thangmi	-ŋa	-na	-i			--	-u
Central Himalayan	Sheshi Kham	-ŋ	-n	-i		-ci		-o
	Chepang	-ŋa	-naŋ	-i		-ci		-u
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Verb agreement

	Singular	Plural
1	-*ŋ(a)	*-i INC *-ka EXC
2	*-n(a)	*-ni

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