

Views of East Asia from the East: nuanced approaches to language family relationships from an 'Austronesian' perspective

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Abstract

There are ten currently extant language families in Eastern Asia; of these, all but two, Austronesian and Japonic, have a long history on mainland Asia. This statement is no highly controversial, but depends on views about high-level classification of the different (sub-) families. Hypotheses for higher-level groupings of the languages are legion, and depend as much on the methodological preferences of individual linguists as they do on data from the languages concerned. In this talk I take a fractal approach to language relatedness in Austronesian, examining the consequences of applying a polydimensional methodology, examining different lines of evidences independently and not seeking congruence. Having shown the results of the methodology, we examine some of the data, and questions, of language relatedness in East Asia.
