



# The Far-Southern Sinitic languages

from the points of view of the Sinitic language family and the  
Mainland Southeast Asia linguistic area

L'ÉCOLE  
DES HAUTES  
ÉTUDES EN  
SCIENCES SOCIALES

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# Sino-Tibetan family:

- Sinitic
  - a.k.a. ‘Chinese dialects’
- Bodish
  - e.g. Tibetan languages
- Lolo-Burmese
  - e.g. Burmese
- many others...



(‘*Tibeto-Burman*’: *languages other than Sinitic*)

# Sinitic languages



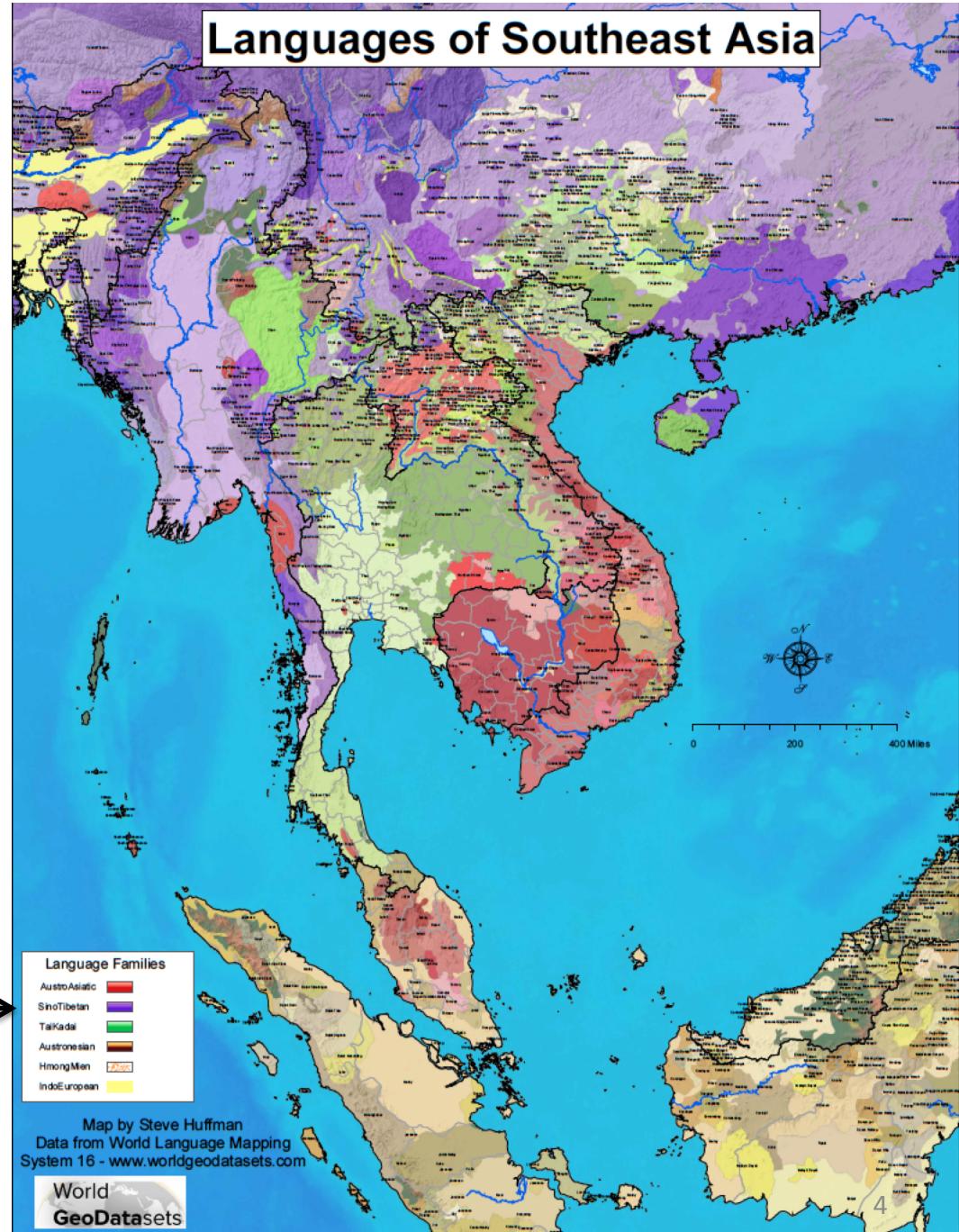
(Ten main ‘dialect groups’ in the  
Language Atlas of China;  
Würm and Lǐ et. al 1988)

Würm, S.A. et al (eds.). 1988. *Language Atlas of China*. Hong Kong, Longman

## Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA): (e.g. Enfield 2005, Comrie 2008)

- Little affixation
- Words tend to be short, often monosyllabic/ sesquisyllabic
- Tonal and/or phonational contrasts
- Restricted inventory of coda
- SVO and strongly left-headed
- [...]

Austro-Asiatic  
Sino-Tibetan  
Kra-Dai (Tai-Kadai)  
Austronesian  
Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao)  
Indo-European



## Vietnamese

1. tôi thăm nhà bạn

I visit house friend

'I visit friend's house'

## Thai

2. รถ ญี่ปุ่น กิน น้ำมัน ไม่  
มาก

rót Yîipùn kin námmán mài mâak

car Japan eat gasoline NEG much

'Japanese cars do not consume a  
lot of gasoline'



## THE SINITIC LANGUAGES

### Sinitic languages:

- Little affixation
- Words tend to be short, often monosyllabic
- Tonal contrasts
- Restricted inventory of coda
- SVO and **strongly right-headed**
- [...]

## Northern Zhuang

### SVO order

3. *de gai byaek youhcaiq gai noh*  
3SG sell vegetable as:well sell meat  
'S/he sells vegetable and sells meat.' (Wéi and Qín 2006: 198)

### Head noun left of most modifiers

4. *go oij [duz vaiz gou caij laemx henz roen] haenx raek lo*  
CL sugar\_cane CL buffalo 1SG step fall side road that break FP  
'The sugar cane that my buffalo trempled on the side of the road snapped.'  
(Wéi and Qín 2006: 251)

## Standard Cantonese

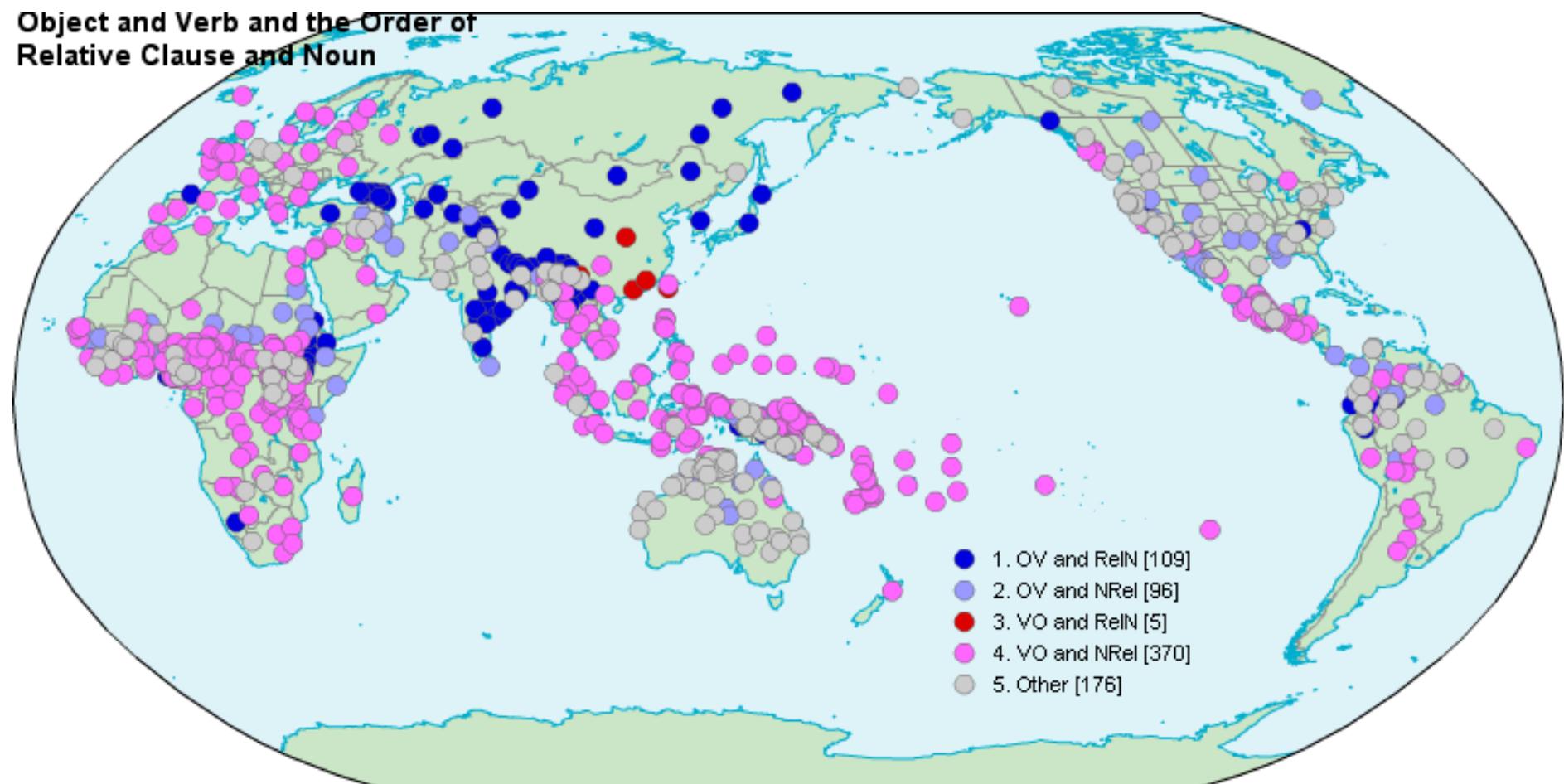
### SVO order

5. 佢 賣 菜 又 賣 肉  
*k<sup>h</sup>ey<sup>l3</sup> mai<sup>22</sup> tʃ<sup>h</sup>ɔi<sup>33</sup> jeu<sup>22</sup> mai<sup>22</sup> juk<sup>2</sup>*  
3SG sell vegetable as:well sell meat  
'S/he sells vegetable and sells meat.'

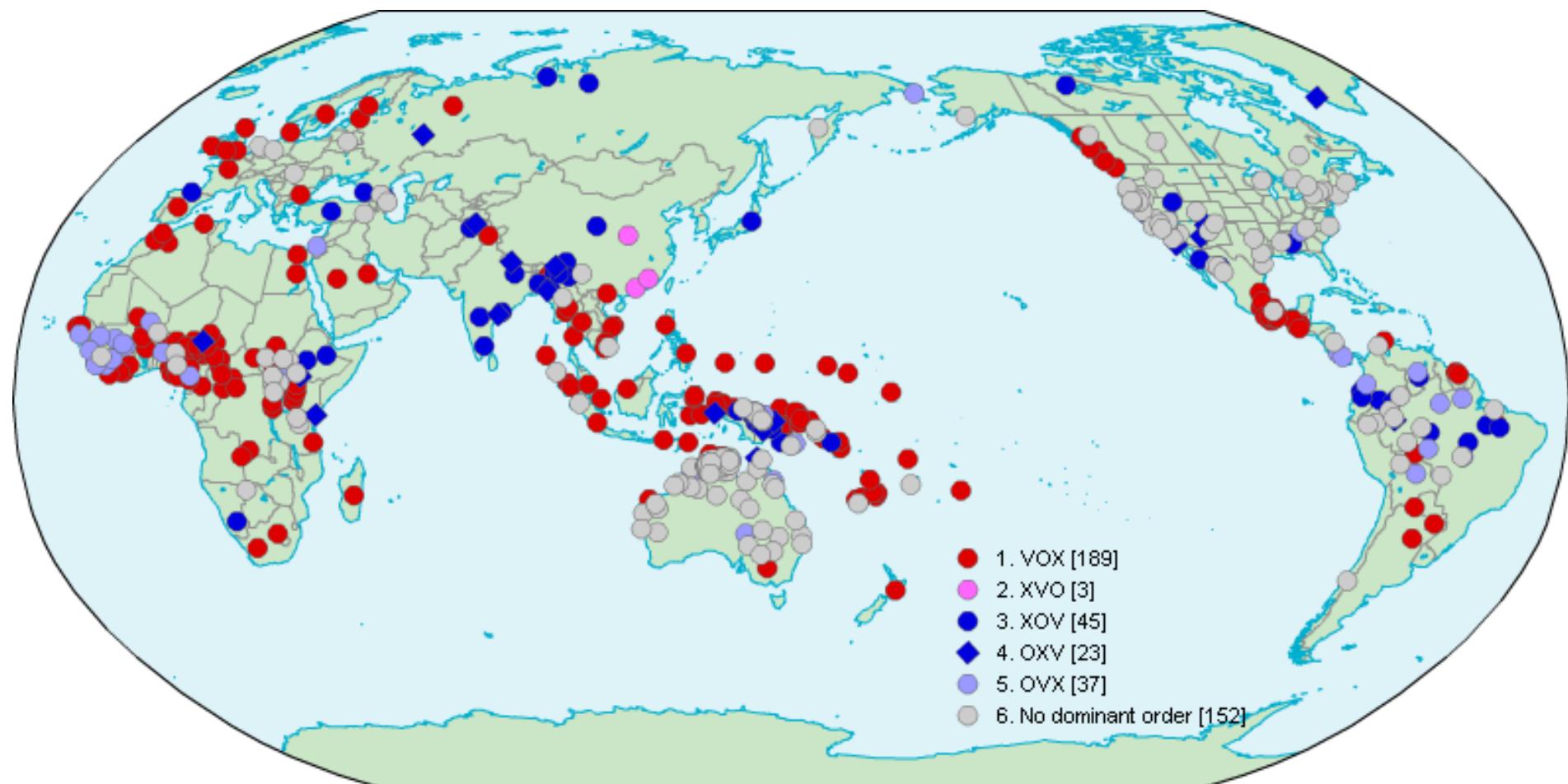
### Head noun right of modifiers

6. 我 隻 牛 嘸 路 邊 踩 枝 嘎 碌 蔗 斷咗  
*[ŋɔ<sup>l3</sup> tsek<sup>3</sup> ɿeu<sup>11</sup> hei<sup>25</sup> lou<sup>22</sup> pin<sup>55</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ai<sup>25</sup> lem<sup>33</sup>] kɔ<sup>25</sup> luk<sup>5</sup> tsɛ<sup>33</sup> t<sup>h</sup>yn<sup>24</sup>-tsɔ<sup>25</sup>*  
1SG CL bovine at road side step fall DEM CL cane break-PFV  
'The sugar cane that my buffalo trempled on the side of the road broke.'

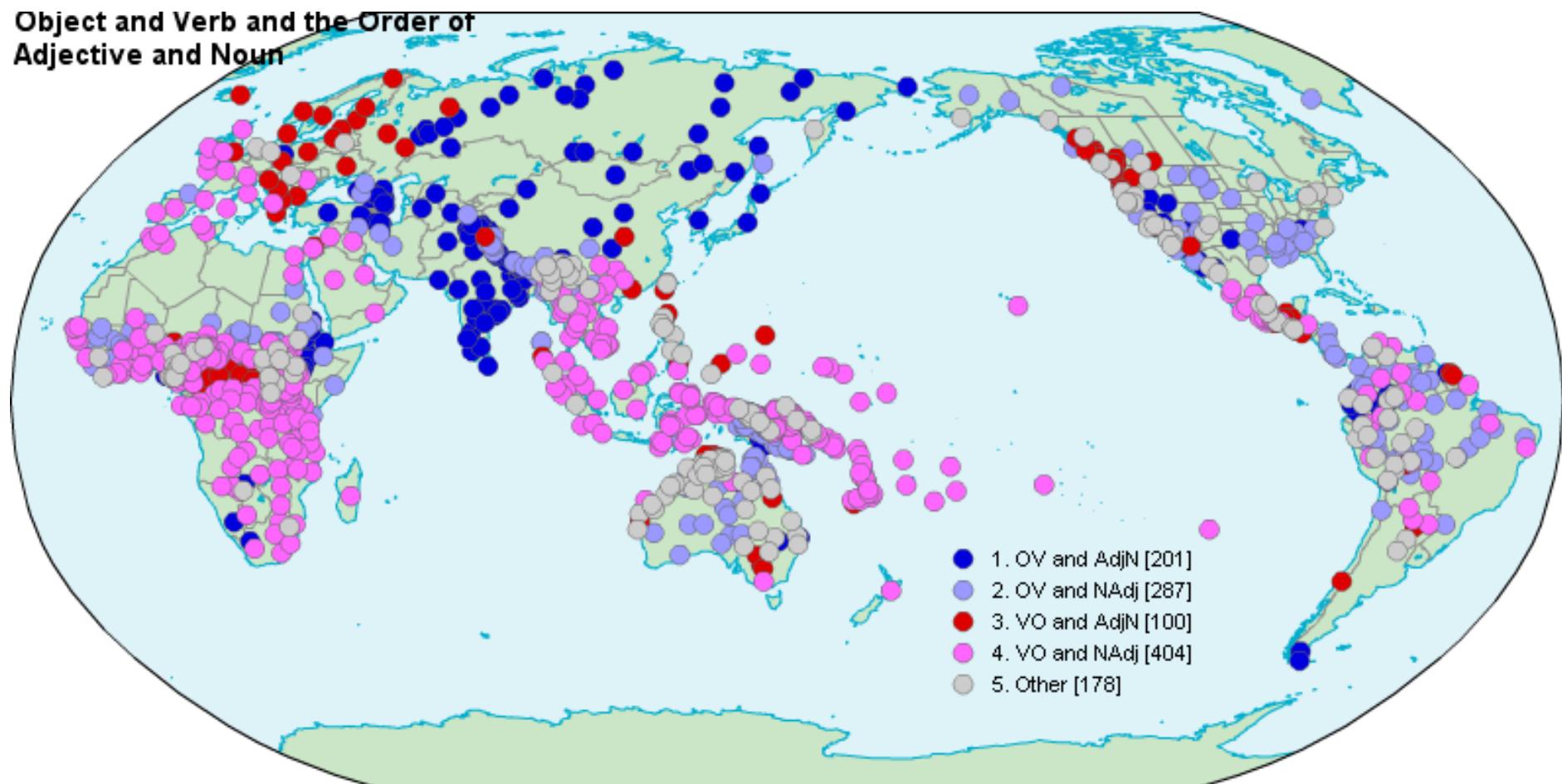
Feature 97A: Relationship between the Order of Object and Verb and the Order of Adjective and Noun  
by Matthew S. Dryer



Feature 84A: Order of Object, Oblique, and Verb  
by Matthew S. Dryer (with Orin D. Gensler )



Feature 97A: Relationship between the Order of Object and Verb and the Order of Adjective and Noun by Matthew S. Dryer





## THE SINITIC LANGUAGES

### Sinitic languages:

- Little affixation
- Words tend to be short, often monosyllabic
- Tonal contrasts
- Restricted inventory of coda
- SVO and **strongly right-headed**  
(very rare traits:)
  - VO and Rel N
  - XVO
- [...]

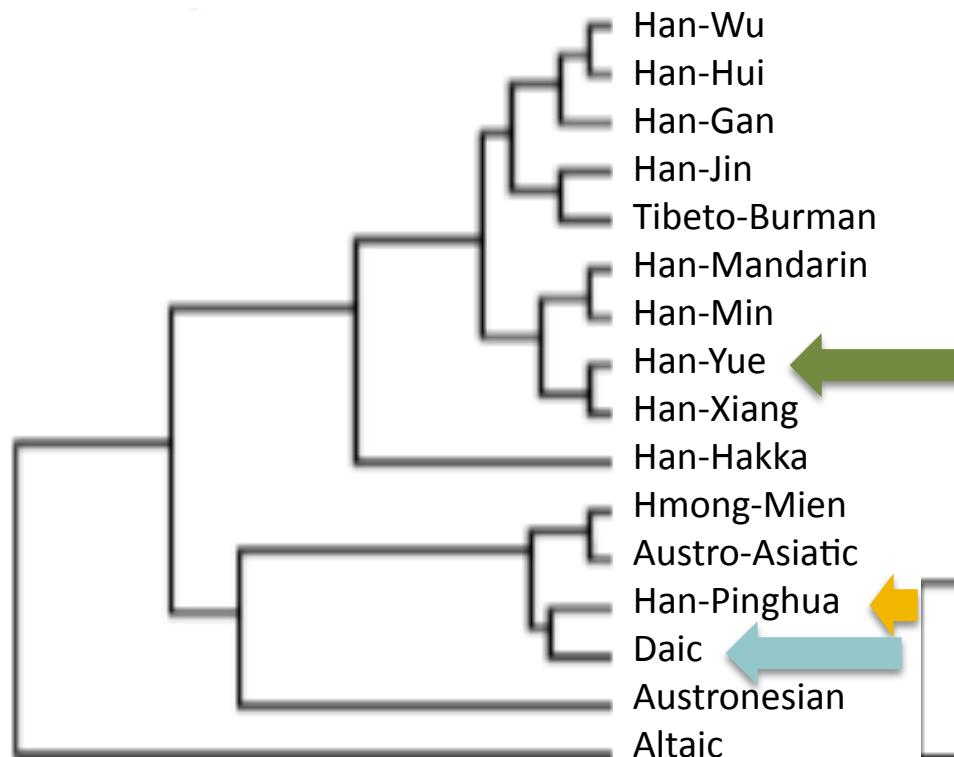
# How the Far-Southern Sinitic languages is typologically closer to the core of MSEA

- Influence from Southern non-Sinitic languages:

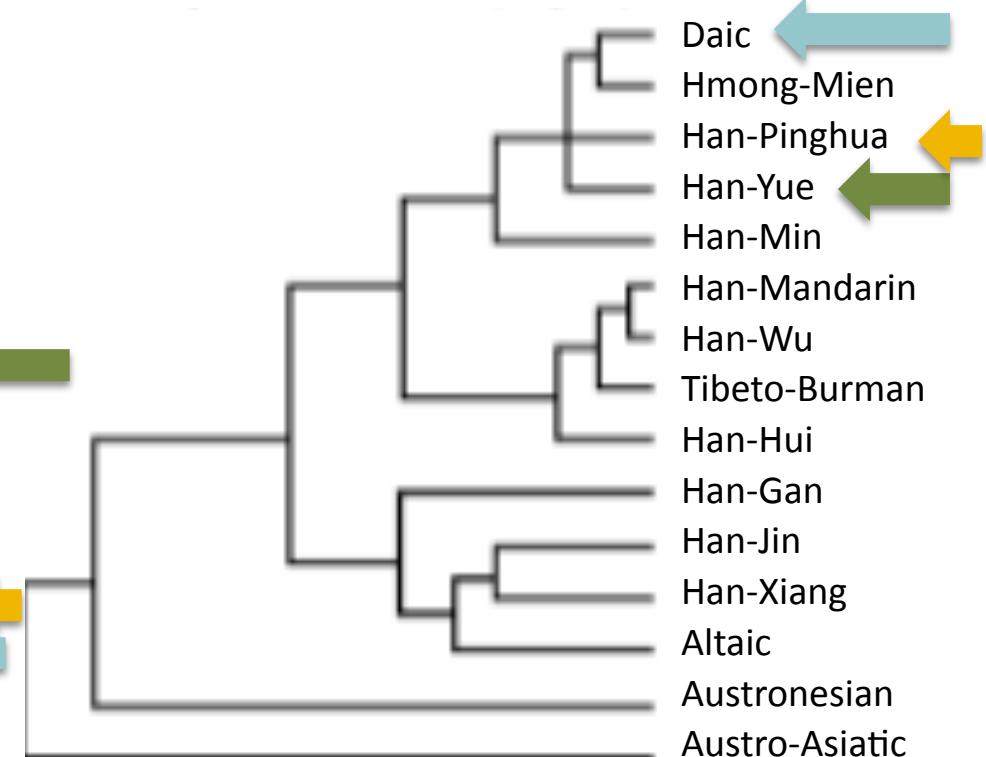
# Genetics

- Gan, Pan et al. 2008 dendogram clustering of Han Chinese branches and other East Asian phyla:

**A** Dendrogram of Y chromosome haplogroups



**B** Dendrogram of mtDNA haplogroups



Gan, Rui-Jing, Shang-Ling Pan, Laura F. Mustavich, Zhen-Dong Qin, Xiao-Yun Cai, Ji Qian, Cheng-Wu Liu, Jun-Hua Peng, Shi-Lin Li, Jie-Shun Xu, Li Jin, Hui Li, and The Genographic Consortium. 2008. Pinghua Population as an Exception of Han Chinese's Coherent Genetic Structure. *Journal of Human Genetics* 53: 303–313.

# How the Far-Southern Sinitic languages is typologically closer to the core of MSEA

- Influence from Southern non-Sinitic languages, c.f. Tai-substratum in Cantonese (e.g. Bauer 1996)
  - vowel length distinction, which influenced the development of tones;
  - 10% of basic vocabulary from Tai;
  - similar grammaticalisation pathways, e.g. ‘give’ for passive, permissive causative, benefactive.

Bauer, Robert S. 1996. Identifying the Tai Substratum in Cantonese. In *Pan-Asiatic Linguistics. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium on Languages and Linguistics V: 1806–1844*. Bangkok: Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development, Mahidol University.

# Nanning Pinghua ‘give’

həi<sup>25</sup> (usually written as 系)

(in other accents of Nanning Pinghua:  
e.g. həm<sup>25</sup>, həi<sup>55</sup>)

Zhuang loan, or at least Zhuang-influenced:

Northern Zhuang *hawj* /hau<sup>55</sup>/ ‘give’  
(Proto-Tai hau<sup>C</sup> ‘give’)

# Nanning Pinghua Benefactive/ Malefactive Constructions

VERB \_\_\_\_ [BEN/MAL<sub>GIVE</sub> \_\_\_\_ ]

Benefactive:

7. 你 乖 我 就 親 一 嘴 系 你。  
*nəi<sup>13</sup> kʷai<sup>53</sup> ɿa<sup>13</sup> tʃəu<sup>22</sup> tʃʰen<sup>53</sup> et<sup>3</sup> tʃui<sup>33</sup> hei<sup>25</sup> nəi<sup>13</sup>*  
2SG obedient 1SG then kiss one CLF:lip BEN 2SG  
'If you are obedient, I will kiss you.'

# Nanning Pinghua Benefactive/ Malefactive Constructions

VERB \_\_\_\_ [BEN/MAL<sub>GIVE</sub> \_\_\_\_ ]

Malefactive:

8. 你 咪 惹 我 噗!  
*nəi<sup>13</sup> mei<sup>55</sup> jɛ<sup>13</sup> ŋa<sup>13</sup> wɔ<sup>25</sup>!*  
2SG NEG;IMP provoke 1sg WARNING

我 生氣 就 山 一 巴 掌 系 你。  
*ŋa<sup>13</sup> tɛŋ<sup>53</sup> həi<sup>25</sup> tʃəu<sup>22</sup> kʰəm<sup>33</sup> et<sup>3</sup> pa<sup>53</sup> tʃεŋ<sup>33</sup> hei<sup>25</sup> nəi<sup>13</sup>*  
1SG angry then slap one CLF palm MAL 2SG

‘Do not provoke me! If I get angry I will slap you in the face.’

## VERB \_\_\_\_ [BEN/MAL<sub>GIVE</sub> \_\_\_\_ ]

Jingxi Southern Zhuang

9.      *kin<sup>1</sup>        kau<sup>3</sup>    kwai<sup>5</sup> ne:u<sup>2</sup>,*  
consume   rice   fast   er  
*ji<sup>3</sup>t<sup>h</sup>e:m<sup>1</sup>   ηo<sup>5</sup>    lui<sup>5</sup>   na:η<sup>1</sup>   hɔ:i<sup>3</sup>   ni<sup>5</sup>*  
awhile   1SG   wash   body   BEN   2SG  
'Eat up. Later on I will bathe you.' (Qin 2011: 91)
10.     *te<sup>1</sup>        na<sup>5</sup>        kən<sup>2</sup>,*  
3SG   scold   people  
*ni<sup>5</sup>        ta:p<sup>7</sup>   te:t<sup>7</sup>   ma:t<sup>7</sup>   ne:u<sup>2</sup>    hɔ:i<sup>1</sup>   te<sup>1</sup>.*  
2SG   hit   palm CL       one      MAL   3SG  
'If s/he scolds someone, you slap him/her.' (Qin 2011: 92)

# How the Far-Southern Sinitic languages is typologically closer to the core of MSEA

- Influence from Southern non-Sinitic languages, c.f. Tai-substratum in Cantonese (e.g. Bauer 1996)
  - vowel length distinction, which influenced the development of tones;
  - 10% of basic vocabulary from Tai;
  - similar grammaticalisation pathways, e.g. ‘give’ for passive, permissive causative, benefactive;
  - some left-headed structures :
    - some noun compounds: 魚生 *jyu4 saang1* (fish raw) ‘raw fish dish’, 菜乾 *coi3 gon1* (vegetable dry) ‘dried vegetable’;
    - some adverbs:

## Standard Mandarin

11. 你 先 吃 吧 多 吃 一點  
*nǐ xiān chī ba duō chī yídiǎn*  
2SG first eat FP more eat a:bit  
'Eat first. Eat a bit more.'

## Standard Cantonese

12. 打 多 兩 行 字  
*ta<sup>25</sup> tɔ<sup>55</sup> lœŋ<sup>13</sup> hɔŋ<sup>11</sup> tsî<sup>22</sup>*  
hit more two line word  
'Type two more lines.'

13. 我 行 先 啦。  
*ŋɔ<sup>13</sup> hɔŋ<sup>11</sup> sin<sup>55</sup> la<sup>33</sup>*  
1SG go first cos  
'I am going now.'

## Northern Zhuang

14. *gou bae gong.*

1SG go first

‘I am going now.’

15. *gou gwn vanj haeux dem.*

1SG eat bowl rice in\_addition

‘I eat another bowl of rice.’ (Wéi and Qín 2006: 208)

# How the Far-Southern Sinitic languages is typologically closer to the core of MSEA

- Influence from Southern non-Sinitic languages, c.f. Tai-substratum in Cantonese (e.g. Bauer 1996)
  - vowel length distinction, which influenced the development of tones;
  - 10% of basic vocabulary from Tai;
  - similar grammaticalisation pathways, e.g. ‘give’ for passive, permissive causative, benefactive;
  - some left-headed structures.
- Not/ Less participated in innovations that occurred in other Sinitic languages.

# Word order of obliques

Pre-Archaic Chinese

16. 呼 多 犬 网 鹿 于 簇  
*hū duō quǎn wǎng lù yú nóng*  
order numerous dog.officer net deer at Nong  
'Call upon the many dog-officers to net deer at Nong.'  
(Djamouri, Paul, and Whitman 2007: 3; *Jiágǔwén Héjí* 10976 recto.)

Lao

17. *phen1 lin5 phaj4 juu1 talaat5*  
3POL play cards be.at market  
'She is playing cards at the market.' (Enfield 2007: 390)

Djamouri, Redouane, Waltraud Paul, and John Whitman. 2007. Reconstructing VO constituent order for Proto-Sino-Tibetan. Paper presented at The 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Historical Linguistics. Université du Québec à Montréal.

Enfield, N. J. 2007. *A Grammar of Lao*. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

## Jīxī Huī

18. 我 看 電影 是 電影園 (裏)

$a^{55}$   $k^h\tilde{a}^{324>35}$   $t^h\tilde{e}^{223}i\tilde{a}^{55}$   $se^{55}$   $t^h\tilde{e}^{223}ia^{55>53}y\tilde{e}^{223}$  (*ni*)

1SG see film at cinema (in)

‘I watched a film in the cinema.’

19. 爾 ○ 柴 (是) 哪○ 啊?

$\tilde{o}^{55}$   $tsop^{32>35}$   $sa^{32}$  ( $se^{55}$ )  $na^{55>53}xa^{324}$   $a?$

2SG chop firewood at where Q

‘Where do/did you chop firewood?’

*Sinitic languages became less tolerant of having post-verbal constituents.*

## Nánníng Pínghuà

20. 我 太早 住 屋頭 看了 一 出 戲

$\eta a^{13}$   $tai^{22}tʃau^{33}$   $tʃəi^{22}$   $uk^3təu^{11}$   $han^{25}-lə^{33}$   $et^3$   $tʃ^hət^3 hər^{25}$

1SG just:now at home watch-PFV one CLF film

‘I watched a film at home just now.’

Map A2



(nearly the same as the four zones in Chappell 2012)

Chappell, Hilary. 2012. The role of language contact and hybridization in Sinitic languages.

Paper presented at the Fourth International Conference on Sinology. Taipei: Academia Sinica.

## Cantonese

21. 我 今日 去 台北  
*ŋɔ<sup>25</sup> kem<sup>55</sup>jet<sup>2</sup> hɔy<sup>33</sup> t<sup>h</sup>ɔi<sup>11</sup>pək<sup>5</sup>*  
1SG today go Taipei  
'I am going to Taipei today.'

## Fúqīng Eastern Mín

22. 我 今晏 去 北京  
*ŋua<sup>32</sup> kin<sup>53</sup>naŋ<sup>21</sup> kʰyɔ<sup>21</sup> peŋ<sup>3</sup>kiŋ<sup>53</sup>*  
1SG today go Beijing  
'I am going to Beijing today.'

## Jīxī Huī

23. 到 縢溪 去  
*tə<sup>324</sup> tseP<sup>32>35</sup> tɕʰi<sup>21</sup> kʰe<sup>324</sup>*  
to Jīxī go  
'Going to Jīxī.'

## Xiānghuà

24. 你 到 何○ 去?  
*nɿ<sup>25</sup> tau<sup>33</sup> uo<sup>13</sup> nɿ<sup>41</sup> kʰəu<sup>33</sup>?*  
2SG to where go  
'Where are you going?'

## Fùyáng Wú (Northern Wú)

25. 我 今朝 (到) 上海 去  
*iɣ ɿkɪntsɔ ('tɔ) zɔŋhɛ tɕʰi*  
1SG today to Shanghai go  
'I am going to Shanghai today.' (It is more common to omit 'tɔ 'to'.)

# Object marking construction

Standard Mandarin

26. 關上 門 了

*guān-shàng mén le*

close-up door COS

‘(Someone) locked the door’

("關上門了" on Google: 1,690,000 results; accessed 3 Nov 2012)

27. 把 門 關上 了

*bǎ mén guān-shàng le.*

OM door close-up COS

‘(Someone) locked the door.’

("把門關上了" on Google: 1,970,000 results; accessed 3 Nov 2012)

## Standard Cantonese

28. 門咗 門

*san<sup>55</sup>-tsɔ<sup>25</sup>* *mun<sup>11</sup>*

close-PFV door

‘(Someone) closed the door(s).’ or ‘They (shops etc.) are closed.’

(Google search of the string "門咗門": 11,000 results; 3 Nov 2012)

29. 門咗 [度/ 道] 門

*san<sup>55</sup>-tsɔ<sup>25</sup>* *[tou<sup>22</sup>/ tou<sup>22</sup>]* *mun<sup>11</sup>*

close-PFV CLF CLF door

‘(Someone) closed the door.’

(Google search of the string "門咗度門": 1,410 results; "門咗道門": 277 results; 3 Nov 2012)

30. ? 將 (度/ 道) 門 門

*tsœŋ<sup>55</sup>* *(tou<sup>22</sup>/ tou<sup>22</sup>)* *mun<sup>11</sup>* *san<sup>55</sup>*

OM CLF CLF door close

(Google search of the string "將門門": 0 results; "將度門門": 9 results, "將道門門": 3 results; 3 Nov 2012)

## Fùyáng Wú

31. 伊 ○ 我 打  
*hi k<sup>h</sup>əʔ iŋ* 'tæ̝  
3SG OM 1SG hit  
'S/he hit me.'

## Taiwanese Southern Mǐn

32. *goan<sup>2</sup> kia<sup>n2</sup> ka<sup>7</sup> goa<sup>2</sup> chim<sup>1</sup>*  
1SG:GEN son OM 1SG kiss  
'My son kissed me.' (Lee 2009: 480)

## Hǎinán Mǐn, a.k.a. Hainanese

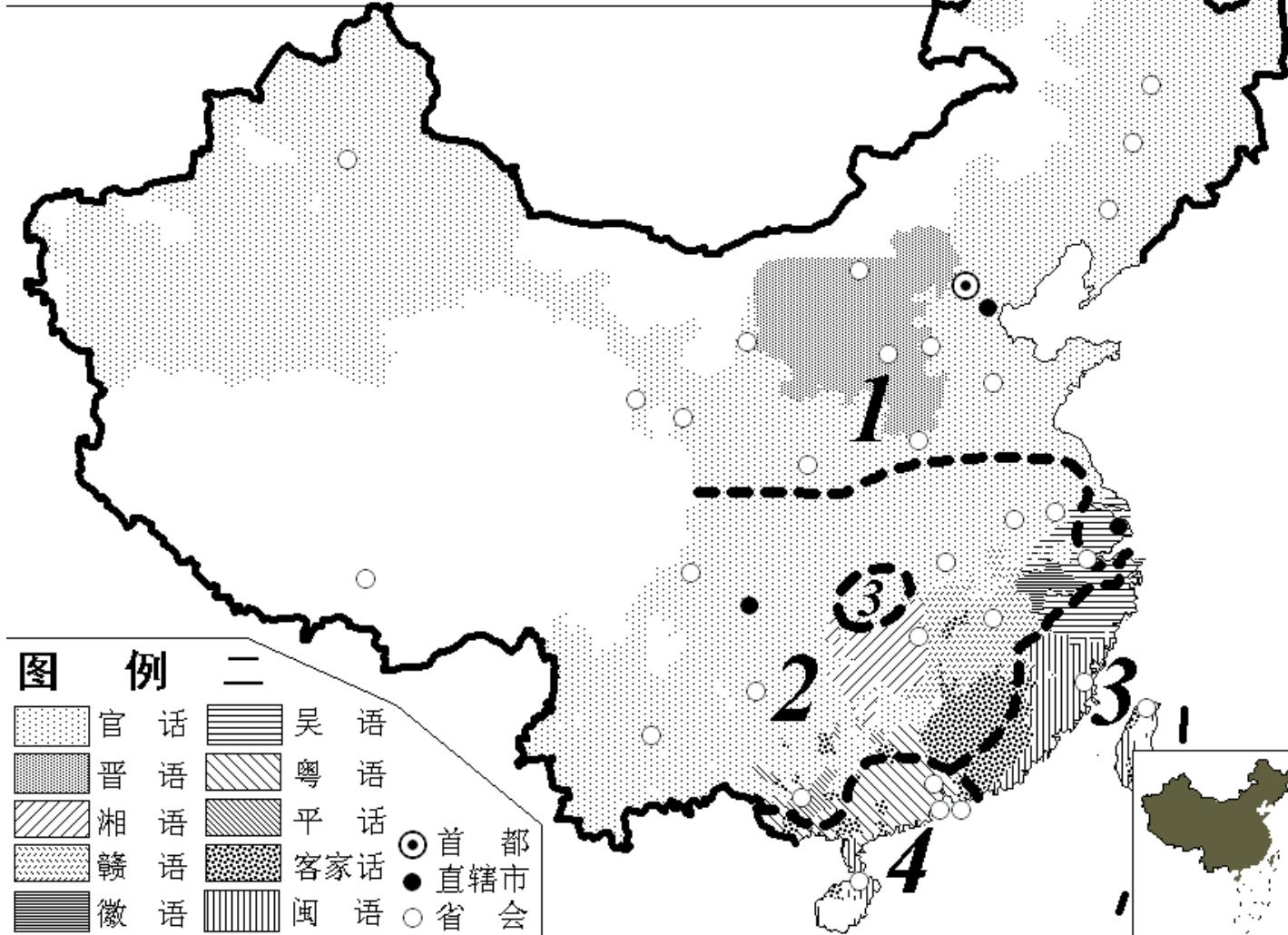
33. *i<sup>44</sup> soi<sup>21</sup> gua<sup>21</sup>*  
3SG kiss 1SG  
'He kissed me.' (Lee 2009: 480))

**图 1** 北方区: 把[-动], 拿义动词

**例 2** 中部过渡区: 给予义/帮助义动词为主, 拿义动词为次要来源

**3** 东南区: 伴随格“共”等; 湖北、湖南“跟”的小岛

**— 4** 南方区: OV 式或拿义动词组成的连动式



Chappell, Hilary. in press. Pan-Sinitic object markers: morphology and syntax. In Guangshun Cao, Hilary Chapple, Redouane Djamousi, and Thekla Wiebusch (eds.). *Breaking Down the Barriers: Interdisciplinary Studies in Chinese Linguistics and Beyond*. Taipei: Academia Sinica.

based on Chappell (in press)

# Conclusion

- Sinitic languages are relatives of Tibeto-Burman languages. However, typologically, the Sinitic languages are more like a mix of MSEA languages (SVO) and North Asian languages (strong right-headedness);
- The Far-Southern Sinitic languages are typologically relatively close to the core of MSEA:
  - stronger areal influence from non-Sinitic languages;
  - they have participated less in many ‘strange’ innovations that happened in other Sinitic languages.

# Acknowledgement

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council, under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013): ERC Advanced Grant agreement No. 230388: 'The hybrid syntactic typology of Sinitic languages' (2009-2013); and partial funding from Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research Vici grant 'Scent and culture'.



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