

Paul Sidwell (Australian National University)

Three Austroasiatic branches and the ASJP

Three reasonably complex 3 AA branches - Bahnaric, Katuic, and Palaungic - have been subject to comparative reconstruction to the extent that a reasonably confident account of their internal sub-branching can be discussed. Those results are compared to the most recent output of the ASJP World Language Tree of Lexical Similarity, and the similarities and differences analysed. It is evident that where the Automated Similarity Judgment method generates misleading results the causes can relate to areal factors; e.g. lexical divergence due to borrowing and/or sound changes. In some other cases languages have been restructured by sound changes that may be purely local in character or related to areal pressures. Additionally, some ASJP results are perhaps skewed by the selection of languages, which remains incomplete. Finally, some observations will be offered in respect of other branches of the AA and the current ASJP tree.