

# Topographical Deixis:

The Slideshow  
Based on an article by:  
Mark W. Post

Topographical Deixis in Trans-Himalayan (Sino-Tibetan) Languages

Presented by:  
Tenzing Briggs & Eleanor Herman



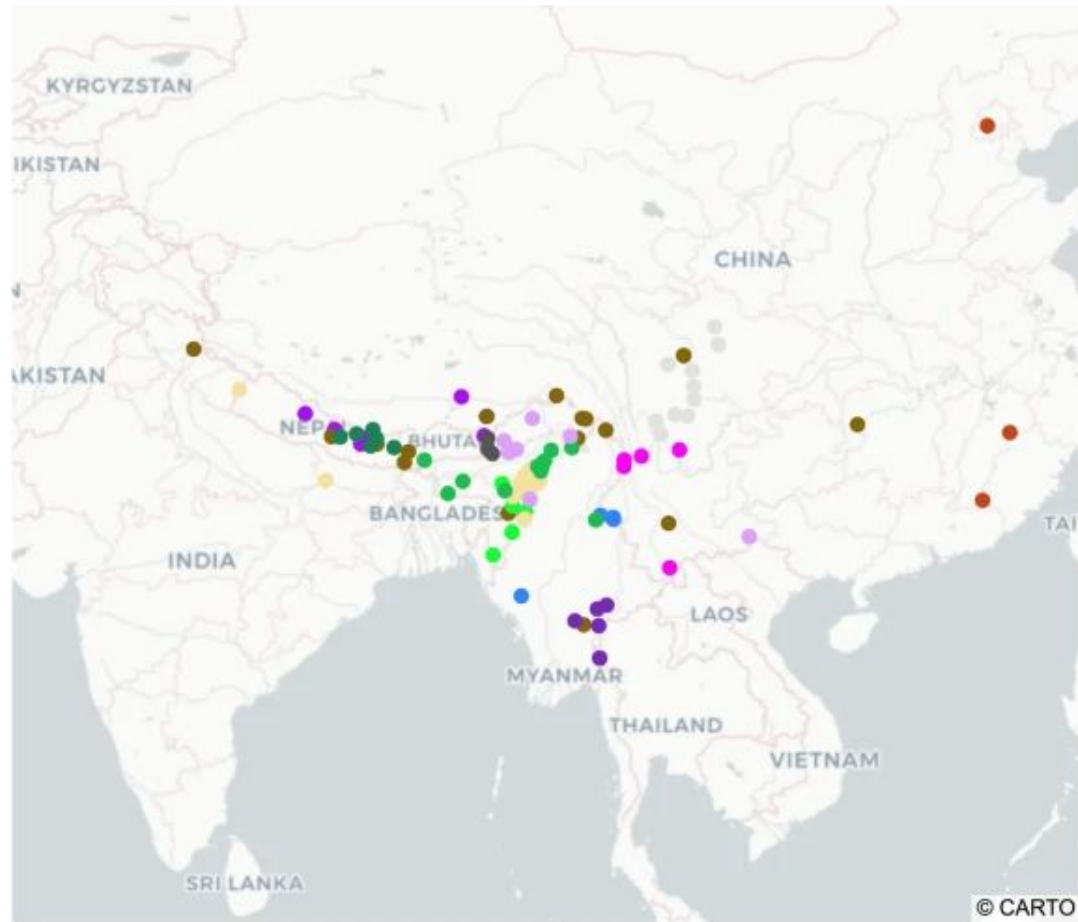


# Article Overview

- Introduction
- TD
- Topographical deixis in Trans-Himalayan languages
  - Previous descriptions
  - Lexico-grammatical domains
  - Semantic domains
- The distribution of topographical deixis in Trans-Himalayan languages
  - Methods and organization
  - Results
  - Discussion

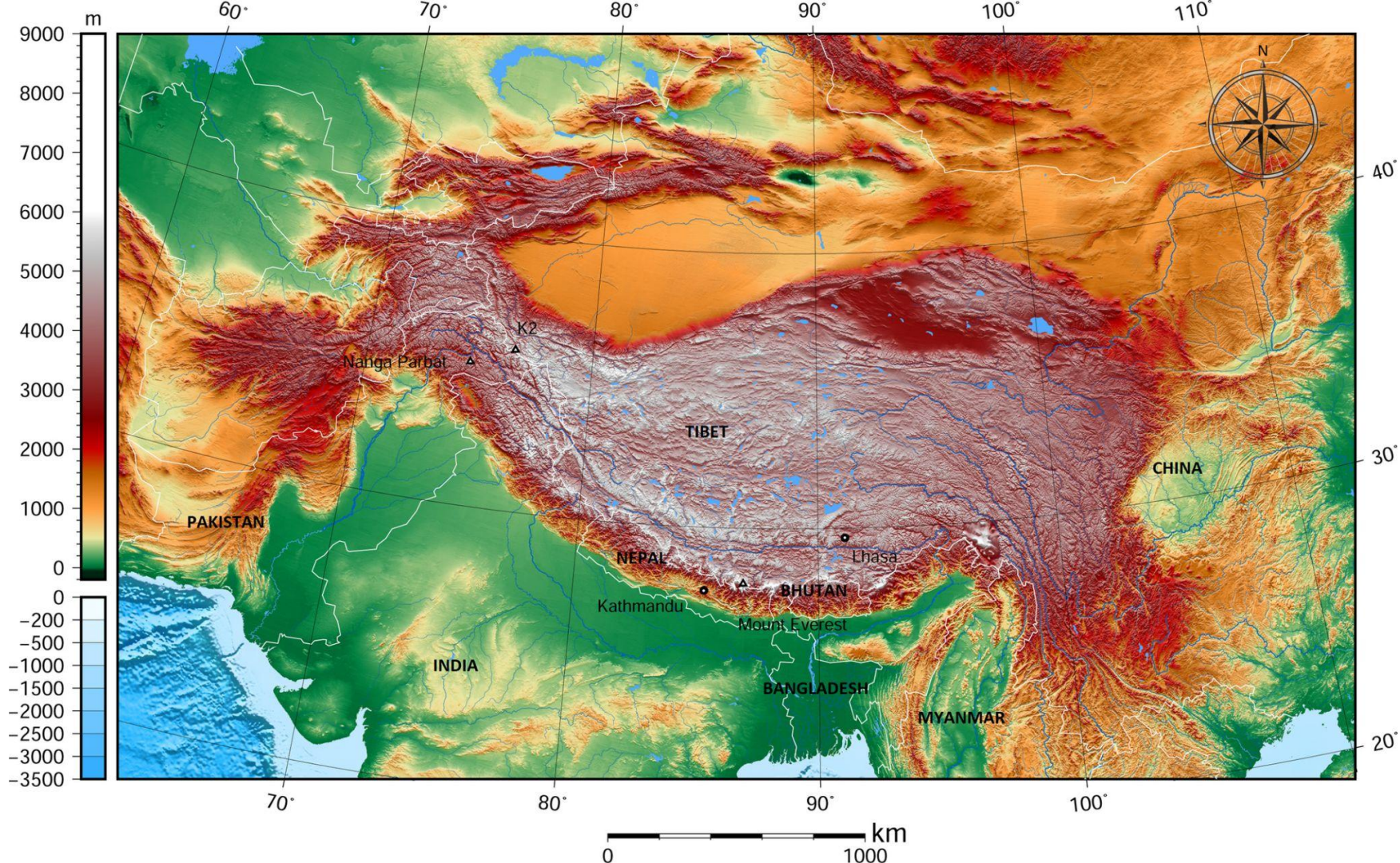
# Glossary of Geography

- Kiranti
- Bodish  
(Himalayish)
- Qiangic  
(rGyalrong)
- Burmish  
(Lolo-Burmese)
- Macro-Tani



## Clade

- Bodish
- Burmish
- Isolates
- Karenic
- Kho-Bwa
- Kiranti
- Kuki-karbi
- Naga
- Qiangic
- Sal
- Sinitic
- Tani
- Yi





# What is Topographical Deixis (TD)?

- Spatial-environmental deixis
- Shifting reference on inclined (topographically-anchored) plane of reference
- Most often:
  - Upward
  - Downward
  - On the same level



## The Thesis/The Goal

- Paper tries to compare different languages within family & tries to find cross-linguistic trends
- “The primary goal of this paper is therefore to provide a benchmark account of [TD] from a pan-Trans-Himalayan perspective, to the maximum extent possible on the basis of existing descriptions”
- “Also contributes to cross-linguistic typologies of spatial deictic systems and their environmental-interactional motivations more generally”

# Example: Galo

(1)    ḡôk tôk<sup>a</sup> ʔêj<sup>i</sup> gò lâaj<sup>i</sup> takèe!

ḡó-kè

tokè

ʔeǰi=go

làa-jǰi-tà(a)=kée

1.SG-GEN

DST . ABL . UP

clothing=IND

take-APPL.BEN-IPTV.MOT=HORT.POL

'Go get me my shawl **from up there!** (LN, GL05\_ToopoGonv\_0001)<sup>3</sup>

- SG = subject
- Tokè =
  - genitive + ablative pronoun component
  - distal upward-sloping component
- Galo
  - Macro-Tani
  - NE Indian Himalayas



## **Non-Sino-Tibetan Languages with TD**

- Papua New Guinea/Madang
- Pama-Nyugans/Dyribal (Aboriginal Australian group)
- Mayan languages
- Southeast Tepehuan/Uto-Aztecan languages
- Languages of Caucasus
- Trans-New Guinea



**Table 1.** Demonstratives in Tauya (MacDonald 1990: 102), as presented in Diessel (2014: 124)

Feature	Form	Meaning
UPWARD+PROXIMAL	<i>pise-me</i>	'up here'
UPWARD+DISTAL	<i>pise-ʔe</i>	'up there'
DOWNWARD+PROXIMAL	<i>tofe-me</i>	'down here'
DOWNWARD+DISTAL	<i>tofe-ʔe</i>	'down there'

**Table 2.** Demonstratives in Dyirbal (Dixon 1972: 48), as presented in Diessel (2014: 124)

Feature	Form	Meaning
DOWNHILL+PROXIMAL	-bayɟi	'short distance downhill'
DOWNHILL+MEDIAL	-bayɟa	'medium distance downhill'
DOWNHILL+DISTAL	-bayɟu	'long distance downhill'
UPHILL+PROXIMAL	-dayi	'short distance uphill'
UPHILL+MEDIAL	-daya	'medium distance uphill'
UPHILL+DISTAL	-dayu	'long distance uphill'
DOWNRIVER+MEDIAL	-balbala	'medium distance downriver'
DOWNRIVER+DISTAL	-balbulu	'long distance downriver'
UPRIVER+MEDIAL	-dawala	'medium distance upriver'
UPRIVER+DISTAL	-dawulu	'long distance upriver'
ACROSS THE RIVER	-guya	'across the river'



# Study of Conventionalized Paradigms

- Evidence for closed classes of terms
  - For simple demonstratives
  - For relational markers
  - Tables 1 and 2
- Key idea:
  - TD cases that show systematic organization
  - Difference between TD classes
    - Directional prefixes/suffixes/relational markers
    - Demonstratives



## Previous Research and Descriptions

- Significant TD research for Sino-Tibetan
  - Himalayish
  - rGyalronig & Qiangic
  - Lolo-Burmese
  - Macro-Tani
- Incomplete information
- TD prominence



# Previous Research and Descriptions

- Terms coined by others
  - 'Vertical dimension'
  - 'Geomorphic mapping'
  - 'Environmental space' deixis
  - 'Altitudinal case'
  - 'Vertical case'
  - 'Vertical verbs'
  - 'Geomorphic orientational system'
- Reasoning behind TD
  - Contrast between topography and altitude/verticality



# Lexico-Grammatical Domains

- TD across grammatical domains
- Four main domains
  - Simple demonstratives
  - Relational demonstratives (i.e. adverbs)
  - Relational adpositions
  - Motion verbs / directional verb modifiers (e.g. affixes)
- Evidence for TD as “unified cognitive paradigm”
  - Shared sensitivity to context
  - Example: Eastern Tani lingual shift



## Simple Demonstratives

- Found in wide range
  - Lolo-Burmese
  - East- & Macro-Tani
  - East Bodish
- TD restricted to distal



# Simple Demonstratives

**Table 3.** Simple demonstratives in Lahu (Lolo-Burmese, Matisoff 1973: 51)

Form	Meaning
<i>chò</i>	PRX
<i>nô</i>	DST.UP
<i>mô</i>	DST.DOWN
<i>ô</i>	DST.SLEV
<i>cô</i>	HDST.SLEV



# Simple Demonstratives

**Table 4.** Simple demonstratives in Kurtöp (East Bodish, Hyslop 2017: 161)

Form	Meaning
<i>wo</i>	PRX
<i>wozi</i>	PRX <sup>7</sup>
<i>woye</i>	DST.UP
<i>wome</i>	DST.DOWN
<i>wudi</i>	DST.SLEV



# Simple Demonstratives

**Table 5.** Simple demonstratives in Tangam (Macro-Tani, Post [2017](#): 78)

Form	Meaning
<i>hii</i>	PRX
<i>dee</i>	MED
<i>tello</i>	DST.UP
<i>bello</i>	DST.DOWN
<i>ello</i>	DST.SLEV



# Relational Demonstratives (Adverbs)

- Example: an adverb form that modifies another word

(2) to=na khim

UP=ART

house

'the (specific) house up there' (Belhare (Kiranti), Bickel 2001: 227)

(3) to=kha khim

UP=N<sup>8</sup>

house

'a (any) house up there' (Belhare (Kiranti), Bickel 2001: 227)

# Relational Adpositions (Markers)



Both Macro-Tani and Kiranti have the following markers:

- **Locative**
  - “of, relating to, or being a grammatical case that denotes the place where someone or something is present or the place where an event occurs” (Merriam Webster)
- **Allative**
  - “denoting motion to or toward” (Merriam Webster)
- **Ablative**
  - “being a grammatical case that typically marks a person, place, or thing from which someone or something else is separated or the source from which someone or something comes, and is also frequently used to indicate the cause of an event or condition or the instrument by which an action is accomplished” (Merriam Webster)
- **Genitive**
  - “of, relating to, or being a grammatical case (see case entry 1 sense 3a) that typically marks a person or thing that possesses someone or something else or the source from which someone or something comes”
  - “expressing a relationship that in some inflected languages is often marked by a genitive case —used especially of English prepositional phrases introduced by *of*” (Merriam Webster)
- **Semblative**
  - ‘like that’ (Post 239)

# Relational Adpositions (Markers)



**Table 6.** Locative suffixes in Bantawa (Kiranti, Doornenbal 2009: 84)

Form	Meaning
<i>-da</i>	LOC
<i>-du</i>	LOC.UP
<i>-yu</i>	LOC.DOWN
<i>-ya</i>	LOC.SLEV

**Table 7.** Locative demonstrative postpositions in Galo (Macro-Tani, Post 2007: 361)

Form	Meaning
<i>hogò</i>	SPRX.LOC
<i>ogò</i>	APRX.LOC
<i>tolò</i>	DST.SLEV.UP
<i>bolò</i>	DST.SLEV.DOWN
<i>aló</i>	DST.SLEV.LOC



# Motion Verbs and Directional Modifiers

**Table 8.** Topographical-deictic **andative** motion verbs in Yakkha (Kiranti, Schackow 2015: 200)

- Specific **andative** (going) verbs by TD position

Form	Meaning
<i>keʔ</i>	'come up'
<i>uks ~ uŋ</i>	'come down'
<i>ap</i>	'come on the same level'

**Table 9.** Topographical-deictic motion verbs in Galo (Macro-Tani, Post 2011)

Form	Meaning
<i>càa-</i>	'move up'
<i>ìi-</i>	'move down'
<i>áa-</i>	'move on the same level'



# Motion Verbs and Directional Modifiers

- Lolo-Burmese: modifying functions
  - Lahu *tâʔ* ‘go up; ascend’
  - *dû tâʔ* ‘dig upwards’
  - *yàʔ* ‘go down; descend’
  - *pu yàʔ* ‘roll down’
- Galo: predicate derivations

**Table 10.** Topographical-deictic predicate derivations in Galo (Macro-Tani, Post 2011)

Form	Meaning
<i>-càa</i>	‘UPHILL’
<i>-lòo</i>	‘DOWNHILL’
<i>-áa</i>	‘ACROSS (ON THE SAME LEVEL)’



# Semantic Domains

- Semantic association
- Semantic differences to topography vs altitude
- Sino-Tibetan languages have different sentences

(4) tudûu tokèe!

tú-**dúu**-tó=kèe

kick-**VERTICALLY.UP**-IPTV.ODIR=HORT.POL

'Kick (the ball) **upward (vertically)**, such that it comes back down again!'

(Galo, Macro-Tani; data from Ili Riba)

(5) tucâa tokèe!

tú-**câa**-tó=kèe

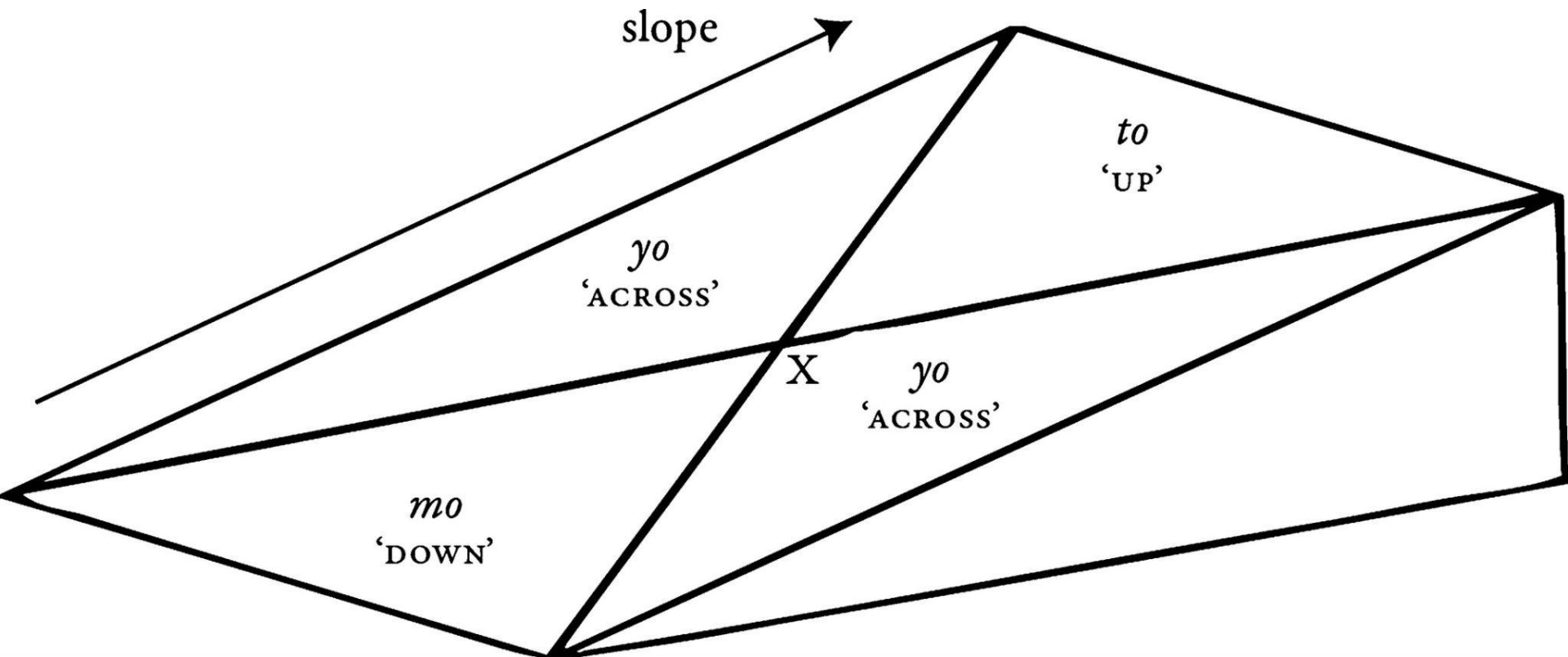
kick-**UPHILL**-IPTV.ODIR=HORT.POL

'Kick (the ball) **upward (uphill)**, such that it reaches a goal located higher than the place of speaking!'

(Galo, Macro-Tani; data from Ili Riba)



# Semantic Domains





# Semantic Domains

- Association with topography and riverine orientation
- Multiple usage across different contexts
  - contexts are cognitively associated
- Association sensitive to geography

**Table 11.** An unusual 5-way distinction among Tamar Khole Limbu directionals (Michailovsky 2015: 115)

Meaning	Form
UPHILL/UPSTREAM	<i>tho</i>
OVERHEAD/VERTICALLY UP	<i>than</i>
DOWNHILL/DOWNSTREAM	<i>yo</i>
UNDER/VERTICALLY DOWN	<i>mu</i>
ACROSS/SAME LEVEL	<i>na</i>



## Semantic Domains

- Similar association with topography and cardinal directions

**Table 12.** Syncretism among topographical-deictic meanings cross-cutting grammatical categories in Galo (Macro-Tani, Post [2011](#))

Meaning	DEM	DEM.POSP	V	PDER
upward/upstream/northward	<i>tèə</i>	<i>tolò</i>	<i>càa-</i>	<i>-càa</i>
downward/downstream/southward	<i>bèə</i>	<i>bolò</i>	<i>ìi-</i>	<i>-lòo</i>
same level/not along river course (?) <sup>9</sup> /east or west	<i>áa</i>	<i>aló</i>	<i>áa-</i>	<i>-áa</i>

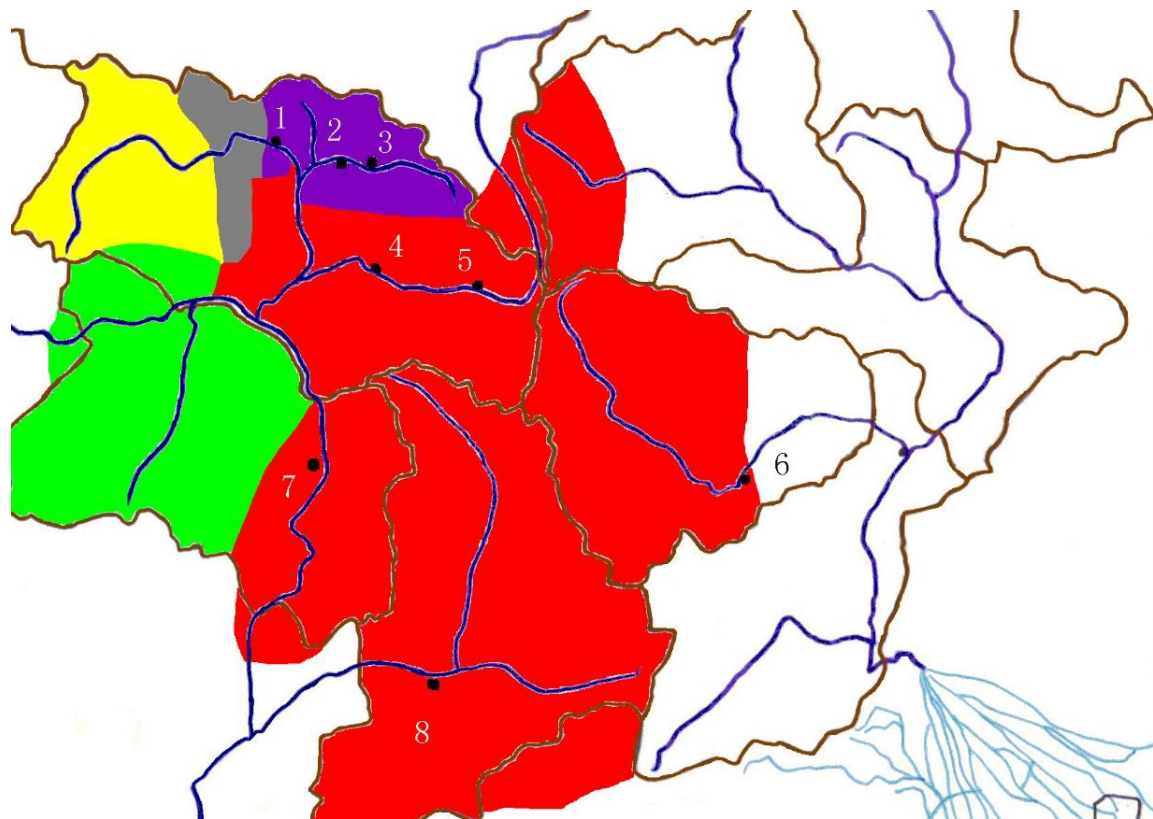


# Semantic Domains

- Independent forms
- Evidence of language evolving with topography
  - Shared spelling in eastward and upward

**Table 13.** Directional prefixes in Japhug rGyalrong (Jacques 2004: 358–60)

Direction	Japhug
upward	<i>tr-</i>
downward	<i>pw-</i>
upstream	<i>lr-</i>
downstream	<i>thw-</i>
eastward	<i>kr-</i>
westward	<i>nw-</i>
without direction	<i>jr-</i>



- 1 gDong-brgyad 龙尔甲
- 2 gSar-rdzong 沙尔宗
- 3 Da-tshang 大藏
- 4 'Bar-khams /Cog-tse 马尔康/卓牙
- 5 So-mang 梭磨
- 6 bKra-gshis-gling 理县
- 7 Chu-chen 金川
- 8 bTsan-lha 小金
- 9 Chengdu 成都

- rgyalrong oriental
- japhug
- tshobdun
- zbu
- lavrong
- Fleuve
- Frontière de district



# Methods and Organization

- Focused on demonstratives
- Issues in discovering TD in non-demonstratives
  - Example comparison:
    - I went to the Blue Mountains last weekend
    - I went up to the Blue Mountains last weekend
    - NOT I ascended to the Blue Mountains last weekend
  - Galo
    - Distinct verbs
    - Sentence 3 grammatical
  - Other languages
    - Might use TD more as adverbs

“Given these facts, unless one has a fairly detailed understanding of the distribution, frequency, and contexts of use of a given motion verb or directional modifier, as well as some understanding of its semantic and grammatical relationships to forms in the same or other classes, it would not appear safe to equate the simple presence of a pair of verbs or directional modifiers with upward or downward semantics in a given Trans-Himalayan language with the instantiation of topographical deixis.”



# Methods and Organization

- Demonstratives better for TD discovery
  - “Closed-class paradigms”
  - High in frequency
  - Prominent patterns
- Limited descriptions

**Table 14.** Simple demonstratives in Kera'a (Idu) (Kera'a-Tawră, Pulu 1978: 15)

Form	Meaning given by the author	Gloss
<i>eca-hruji</i>	'They, these'	(S)PRX
<i>aya-hruji</i>	'They, those'	MED OR APRX
<i>amaya-hruji</i>	'They, those (down)'	DST.DOWN
<i>atuya-hruji</i>	'They, those (up)'	DST.UP
<i>ahiya-hruji</i>	'They, those (level distance)'	DST.SLEV

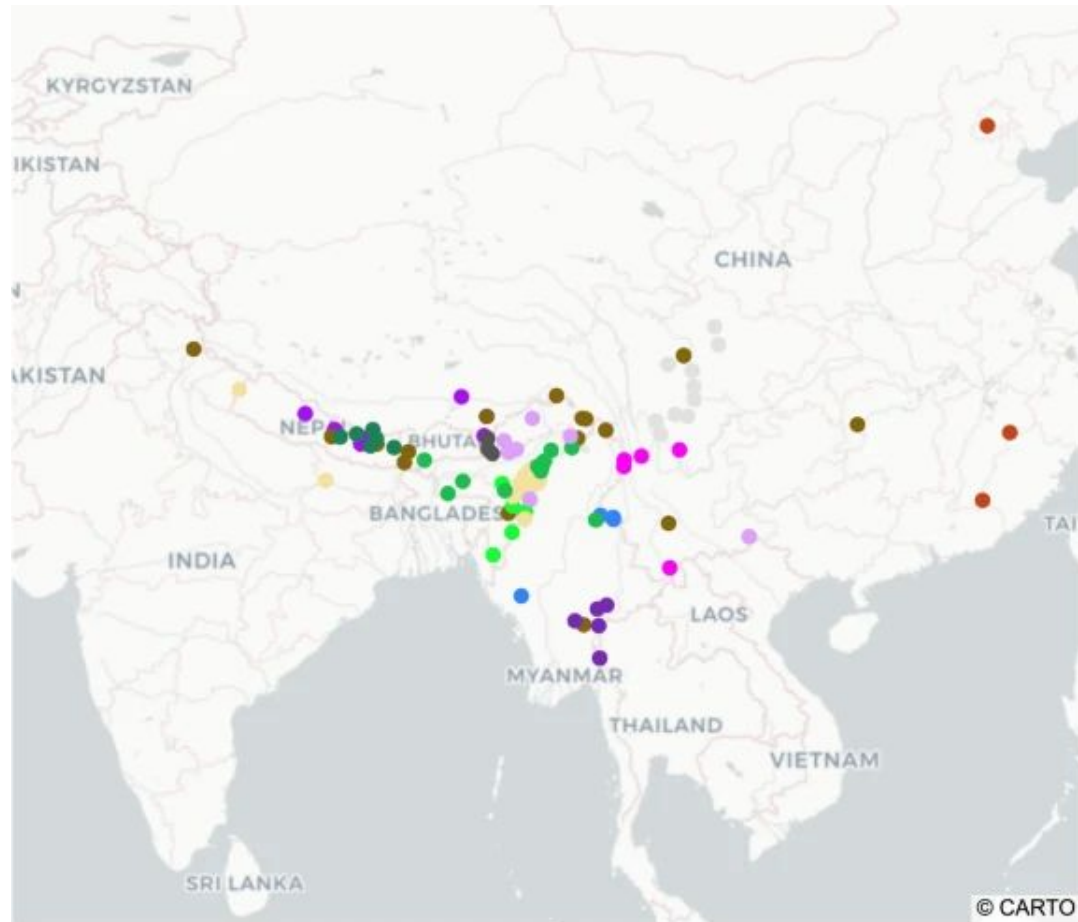


# Methods and Organization: Practical Measures

- Ignored proximate/medial forms
- Four different Trans-Himalayan classification schemes
  - van Driem “fallen leaves” method
    - Identifying phylogenetic units through empirical evidence in literature
  - Hammarström et al. , Matisoff, and Bradley methods
    - Progressive finding of higher-level macro-groups
    - Each identifies more and more of related words

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## Clade

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- Sal
- Sinitic
- Tani
- Yi



## Results & Discussion

- General results
  - Survey of 92 languages
- General trend
  - All three TD
  - none at all



# Results & Discussion

- *Bodic (or West Himalayish languages)*
  - Mixed results; 3 out of 5 Tibetic languages had all three, 2 had no evidence; Nepal region languages had clear TD;
- *Himalayish and Dhimalish (or Nepal +bordering regions)*
  - All Kiranti languages had clear TD
- *Mijic, Hrusish, and Kho-Bwa (or Northeast India + bordering regions)*
  - Some had little literature descriptions. TD absent in some.
- *Macro-Tani, Kera'a-Tawrã (Digarish), Kman-Meyor (Midzuish) and Nung*
  - Languages spoken in the area stretching Northeast India to northern Myanmar/southwest China. Majority had very clear downward/upward forms, but not same level. Some had little literature descriptions.



# Results & Discussion

- rGyalrongic-Qiangic and Naic
  - Southwestern China languages. Verb prefixes are closely analogous to Kiranti, Tani, Lolo-Burmese. Notable for a different connection between riverine orientation and upward/downward.
- Lolo-Burmese
  - Southwestern China, northern Thailand and Laos, and in Myanmar. TD clearly represented.
- Karenic
  - Eastern Myanmar, western Thailand languages. No TD whatsoever, although a large system of directional suffixes.



# Results & Discussion

- *Mruic*
  - Eastern Bangladesh and Myanmar languages. Directional prefixes, but does not have obvious TD.
- *Bodo-Garo, Jingpho-Asakian and Northern Naga*
  - From west-Northeast India through Assam state to Indo-Myanmar, northern Myanmar, and southwest China
  - Garo has a clear TD. Jingpho does not. Northern Naga lacked data
- *Kuki-Chin*
  - south-Northeast India, Indo-Myanmar border, and Bangladesh. A researcher reconstructed Proto-Kuki-Chin TD for uphill/downhill, and another found same level TD. Directionals tend to be expressed as verb prefixes.



# Results & Discussion

- *Ao, Angami-Pochuri, Tangkhulic, Meithei and Karbi*
  - No TD
- *Sinitic*
  - No TD
- *Gongduk, Raji-Raute, Lhokpu, Pyu, and Zeme*
  - Not enough data.



## The Paper's Conclusion

“[TD], as indicated by demonstrative systems and/or comparable closed-class systems or likely cognate forms, is a pervasive feature of Trans-Himalayan languages, found in every major branch”



# Connections to What We've Learned

- Universal Grammatical
  - Innate Component of humans; provides the baseline for all human languages and all languages are grown from it
- Morphemes
  - Lil' word is used to show the topographical deixis
- Suffixes
  - Topographical deixis is usually a suffix on a verb form
- Dialects
  - Dialects & languages reflect the underlying grammars and lexicons of their speakers (Fromkin et al 270)
    - Macro-Tani (Galo) & Home/Uphill different than all others
  - Differences in grammatical rules
  - Lexical choices -> Language evolving to topography
- Evolution of Language in General!!!!!!
  - Different Language groups



# **Questions & Answers?**



# Sources & Outline

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