REPORT ON THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AUSTROASIATIC LINGUISTICS (ICAAL9), LUND UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN, NOVEMBER 18–19, 2021

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Report on ICAAL9

The 9th International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics (ICAAL9) was hosted by the Centre for Language and Literature, Lund University in Sweden on November 18–19, 2021. It was convened by Nicole Kruspe and Niclas Burenhult. Thanks to their hard work, the entire conference ran very smoothly. The conference was held entirely online, and no fee was charged. This made possible the attendance of participants who would otherwise not have been able to attend due to travel restrictions or for financial reasons. The conference included 17 presentations, given by scholars from China, India, Vietnam, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. In total, more than 70 participants attended the conference.

The conference opened with a keynote talk by Professor Asifa Majid from the University of York, entitled *Aslian olfactory language in typological perspective*. She presented data from different languages and showed that olfaction is not equally richly encoded across languages: while in languages such as English, many odor percepts are impossible to convey, Aslian languages not only have a rich lexicon pertaining to olfaction, but they also have specific properties in this domain that are potentially unique to this family and distinguish them from other languages that also have a rich olfactory lexicon.

The first session with regular presentations – there were no parallel sessions during the entire conference, which enabled participants to attend all the presentations – was dedicated to historical comparative linguistics: Paul Sidwell presented a classification of the Nicobarese languages, based on a computational phylogenetic experiment, and in the following talk, Paul Sidwell and Mark Alves presented a new phylogenetic analysis of Vietic languages. In the second session after the (European) lunch break, Kumari Mamta presented a typology of Austroasiatic numeral systems, Phan Luong Hung talked about numeral classifiers in Austroasiatic languages of Vietnam, and finally, Gregory Anderson and colleagues discussed Sora (Munda) in its South Asian areal context, arguing for a more nuanced and temporally stratified understanding of the contact history of Sora.

The third and last session of the day featured a diachronic and areal typological presentation by Tobias Weber on flagging in Austroasiatic languages, followed by a presentation by Mathias Jenny and colleagues on verbal categories in Htanaw (Palaungic) in areal perspective, and finally, Mai Chi Nguyen and Jaeshil Kim proposed in their talk that the different functions of the Vietnamese particle *thì* is the result of multi-directional grammaticalization.

The second day started with two presentations on historical phonology: first, Yan Liu, Yang Xiaoping and Liu Xirui presented a synchronic analysis and historical comparison of syllabic /r/ in De'ang (Palaungic), and second, Ryan Gehrmann presented evidence for the common origins of rime glottalization in Vietic, Bolyu, Bugan and Mang. In the third talk of this session, Wei Han presented a classification of different types of personal pronouns in Mangjing Awa (Palaungic).

The following session was dedicated to cultural and sociolinguistic topics: Nguyen Thu Quynh, Duong Thu Hang and Bui Linh Hue talked about the sociolinguistic situation of Arem (Vietic) as an endangered language, Nguyen Ngoc Binh presented a study on Vietnamese cooking terms, and Mark Alves presented methods to investigate the etymology of sociocultural words in Southeast Asian languages with a focus on Austroasiatic languages.

The last session of the day – and therefore also of the conference – contained a presentation on kinship morphology in Southern Khmer by Tran Thanh Bao Phan and Thuy Thanh Tuong Bui and one on kinship terms in Asuri (Munda) by Raunak Roy and S. Arulmozi. Finally, Paul Sidwell and Mathias Jenny organized a panel on the future of Austroasiatic studies, which was followed by the business meeting.

Overall, ICAAL9 was a highly successful meeting, offering much opportunity to present and discuss new data, analyses and approaches, and stimulating new research in many different subfields of Austroasiatic linguistics, consolidating and further developing Austroasiatic studies and continuing the successes achieved in previous ICAAL meetings.

A History of ICAAL and Related Publications

The history of ICAAL meetings goes back almost five decades: the first ICAAL was held at the University of Hawaiʻi in Honolulu in 1973, with proceedings being published in 1976 in two volumes entitled *Austroasiatic Studies* (edited by Philip N. Jenner, Laurence C. Thompson and Stanley Starosta) in *Oceanic Linguistics*. The Second International Conference on Austroasiatic Linguistics, abbreviated SICAL, was organized by the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore in 1978. After a long pause of nearly three decades, a working group of invited participants met in 2006 for the "ICAL 3 Pilot Picnic" [sic] with the goal of reinvigorating the movement. In November 2007, the (regular) ICAAL3 meeting was held at the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute in Pune; 32 scholars attended. Proceedings were published in 2010 by the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, edited by K. S. Nagaraja and Kashyap Mankodi.

Since then, ICAAL meetings have been held regularly, approximately every two years: ICAAL4 took place at the Salaya campus of Mahidol University, Thailand in October 2009. This meeting saw a record number of 92 official participants from a wide range of Asian countries and also some Western countries, delivering 70 papers. Another ICAAL meeting was scheduled for November 2011, also to be held at Mahidol University, but had to be canceled due to flooding in central Thailand at that time. ICAAL5 was finally held at the Australian National University in September 2013 in coordination with the 19th Himalayan Languages Symposium. ICAAL6 was jointly organized by the National Language Institute, Royal Academy of Cambodia and the Center for Khmer Studies and supported by SIL and UNESCO in Siem Reap in July 2015. At the business meeting of that conference it was decided to reduce the frequency of full ICAAL meetings and to establish an "Austroasiatic Working Group", a network of scholars to meet occasionally with the aim of producing programmatically focused output outside the regular ICAAL meetings. A first workshop within that framework on *Austroasiatic Syntax in Areal and Diachronic Perspective* was held in 2016 at the Myanmar Center of Chiang Mai University, with financial support of the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany, and the University of Zürich, convened by Mathias Jenny and Paul Sidwell. The proceedings of this workshop were published as a volume by Brill in 2020, edited by Mathias Jenny, Paul Sidwell and Mark Alves. A second workshop was planned for August 2020 to be held at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India, with sessions on Austroasiatic word order and on typological features of Austroasiatic languages of India. However, due to the pandemic, this workshop could not take place.

ICAAL7 was held at the University of Kiel, Germany from September 29 to October 1, 2017. The proceedings of ICAAL7 were published in 2018 as a special publication in JSEALS. At the business meeting the ICAAL Continuity Group was set up with the goal of managing and facilitating regular ICAAL meetings. The members are volunteers and are subject to recall or election at every full ICAAL business meeting. Currently, the members are Paul Sidwell (chair), Tobias Weber (secretary), Hiram Ring (publications), Nicole Kruspe, Mathias Jenny, John Peterson, Gregory Anderson and Ryan Gehrmann. ICAAL8 was hosted by the Myanmar Center of Chiang Mai University in August 2019. The proceedings of that meeting will again be published as a special publication in JSEALS.

Thus, the past twenty years have seen a substantial increase in Austroasiatic meetings, interaction and collaboration of scholars, and also of research output in the form of publications. Apart from the already mentioned proceedings of conferences and workshops, this includes several language descriptions such as Kruspe's 2004 *A Grammar of Semelai*, Burenhult's 2005 *A Grammar of Jahai*, Jenny's 2005 *The Verb System of Mon*, Alves' 2006 *A Grammar of Pacoh*, and Peterson's 2011 *A Grammar of Kharia*. Furthermore, historical comparative studies regained momentum, boosted by the posthumous publication of Shorto's *Mon-Khmer Comparative Dictionary* in 2006, overseen by Paul Sidwell. In 2015, The *Handbook of Austroasiatic*

Languages was published by Brill, edited by Mathias Jenny and Paul Sidwell. It consists of two volumes: the chapters of the first cover more general topics such as typology and historical comparative classification and reconstruction, while the chapters of the second are grammar sketches on individual Austroasiatic languages with a focus on non-Munda languages, since Munda languages have already been covered in the publication of *The Munda Languages*, edited by Gregory Anderson and published by Routledge in 2007.

The Future of ICAAL

The panel which was organized by Paul Sidwell and Mathias Jenny and held immediately after the regular presentations on the second day at ICAAL9 had the aim of safeguarding and discussing the future of Austroasiatic studies. Some of the topics discussed in that panel were formalized in the subsequent business meeting. It was decided that proceedings of ICAAL meetings should continue to be special publications in JSEALS. Now that the *Mon-Khmer Studies Journal*, the only previous journal dedicated to Austroasiatic studies, has become defunct, JSEALS can also serve as a platform for the publications of other Austroasiatic research output that has not been presented at ICAAL meetings. Furthermore, the main repository for Austroasiatic language data is RWAAI (Repository and Workspace for Austroasiatic Intangible Heritage), hosted by Lund University. Researchers seeking to use or contribute can contact Nicole Kruspe.

The panel and business meeting also addressed the next ICAAL meeting: since uncertainties due to the pandemic persist, it was decided that ICAAL10 should also be a virtual meeting, to be organized by Gregory Anderson and colleagues at the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages in November 2022. The exact dates and the call for papers will be announced later this year. Ideas for workshops can also be discussed at ICAAL10. Furthermore, combined proceedings covering both ICAAL9 and ICAAL10 are planned – again as a special publication in JSEALS. Information on the coordination and documentation of linguistic projects concerning Austroasiatic languages, including ICAAL meetings, can be found on the following website: https://sites.google.com/site/icaalprojects.