

# Orientation Serial Verbs and the Proto-Sogeram Verb Phrase

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# Outline

- Sogeram languages
- Sogeram verb serialization
- Orientation SVCs
- Correspondences
  - Phonology
  - Semantic scope
  - Prosody
- Arbitrariness
- Conclusion

# The Sogeram languages

**Intro** • SVCs • Orientation • Form • Scope • Prosody • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# The Sogeram family

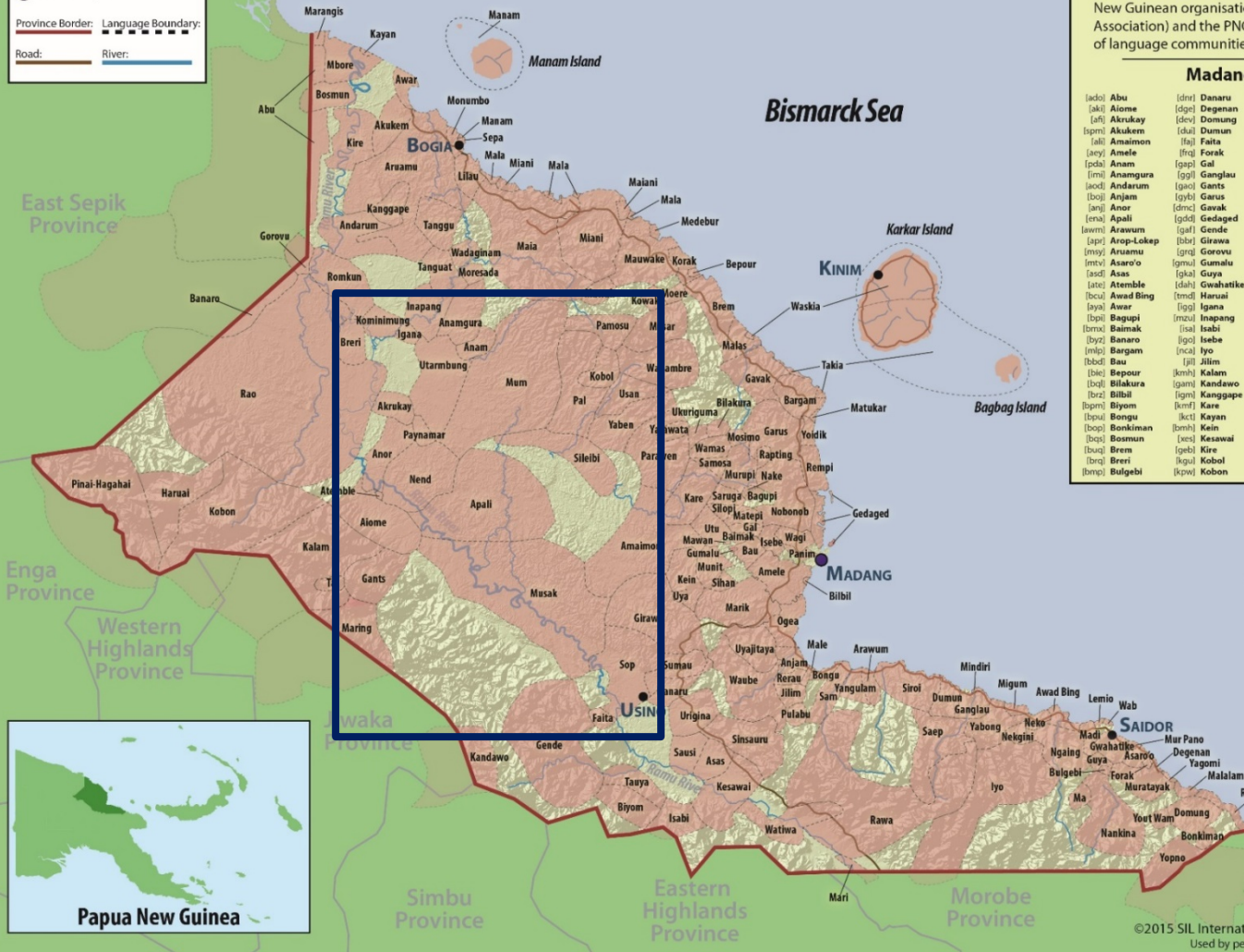
- Ten languages (Daniels 2016, 2017)
- Trans New Guinea family (Pawley 2005, Ross 2005, Pawley & Hammarström 2017)
  - Madang branch (Z'graggen 1975, 1980, Daniels 2010, 2015)
- Between 8 (Mand, Kursav) and 3,000 (Mum, Gants) speakers
- 2,500 to 3,000 years old?

**Legend**

- Town
- Province Capital
- Province Border
- - - Language Boundary
- Road
- River



# Madang Province Language Map



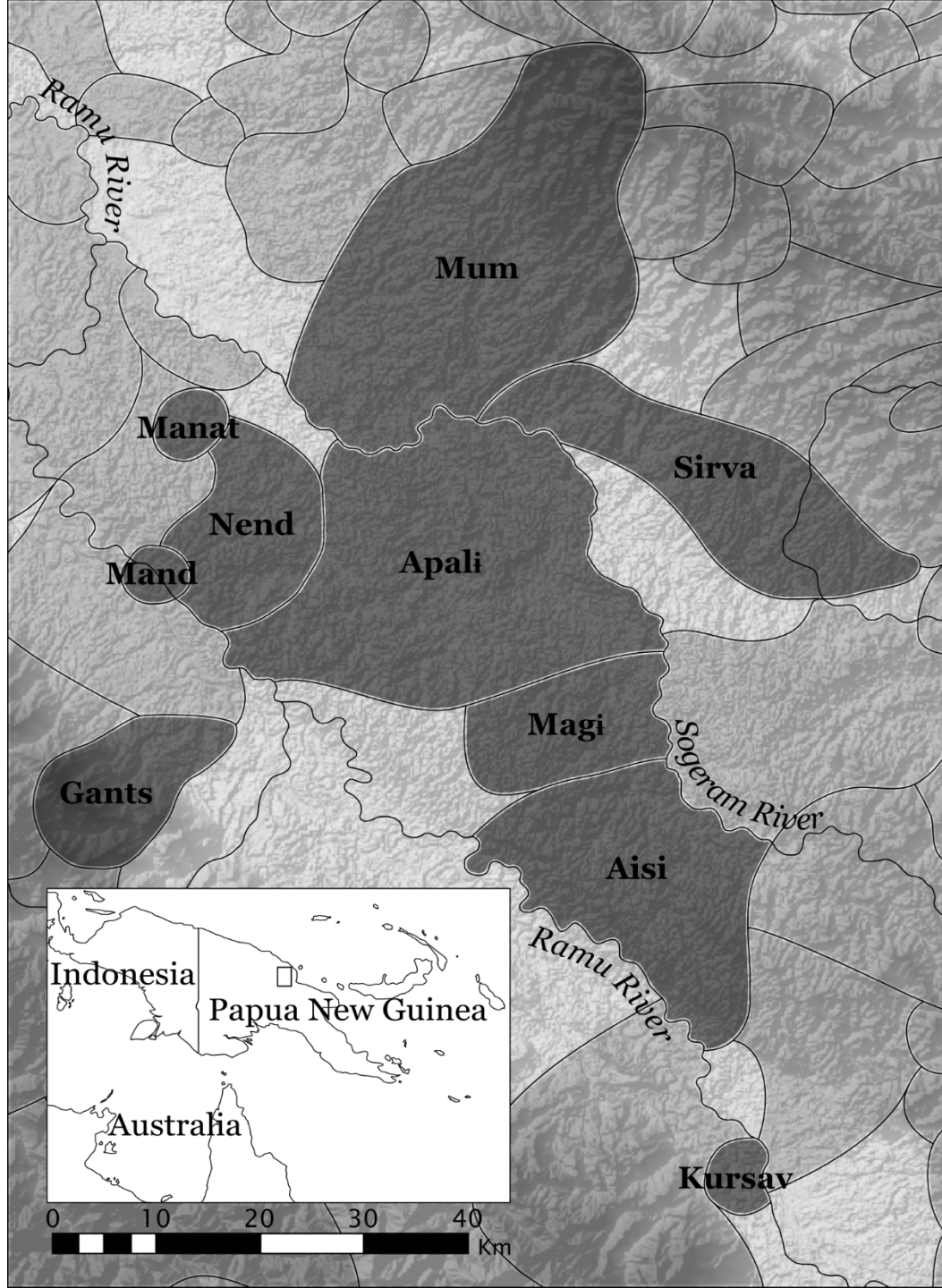
## SIL & BTA in Papua New Guinea

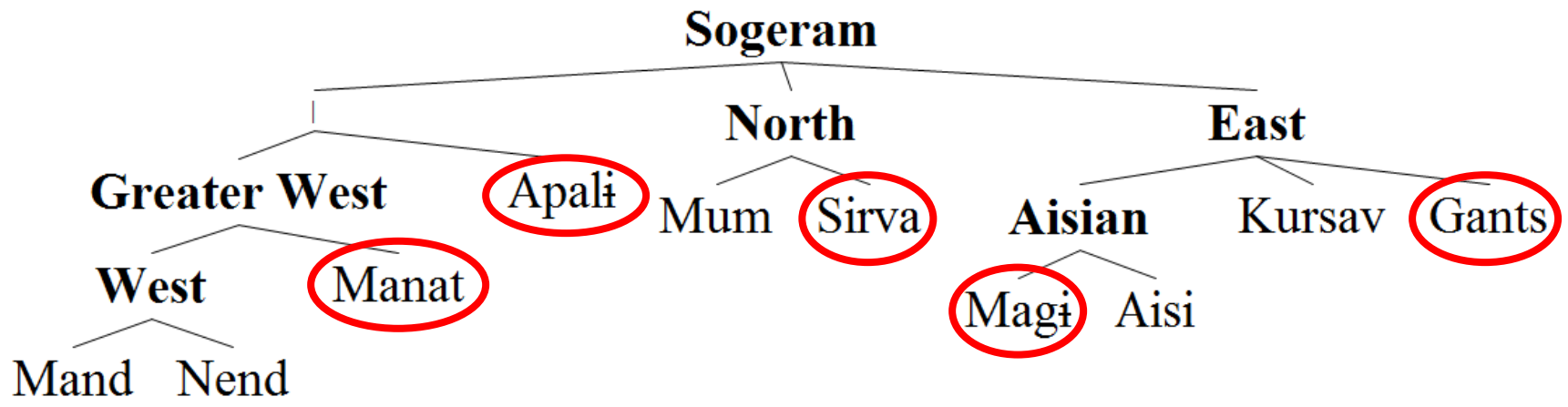
SIL-PNG is a nonprofit organisation that works with indigenous languages in literacy, language development, language documentation and translation (including health, educational and church materials). SIL-PNG partners with local communities, Papua New Guinean organisations (like the PNG Bible Translation Association) and the PNG Government to help meet the felt needs of language communities.

### Madang Province Languages

[adl] Abu	[dnr] Danaru	[xol] Kominimung	[axx] Muratayak	[snz] Sinsauru
[aki] Aiome	[dge] Degenan	[koz] Korak	[ssd] Siroi	[swr] Suroi
[ah] Akrukay	[dev] Domung	[xow] Kowaki	[mms] Musak	[lww] Sep
[spm] Akukom	[dul] Dumun	[lel] Lemo	[mms] Musar	[scl] Sumau
[ali] Amalimon	[fal] Fala	[lll] Lilau	[nkk] Nake	[taw] Tai
[ayc] Amele	[frq] Forak	[myn] Ma	[nrk] Nankina	[tbc] Takia
[pda] Anam	[gag] Gal	[grg] Gadi	[nkg] Nekgini	[tgu] Tanggu
[iml] Anamgura	[ggl] Ganglau	[sks] Mala	[nec] Neko	[tbs] Tanguat
[aod] Andarum	[gao] Gants	[trh] Malani	[anh] Nend	[tya] Tuya
[boj] Anjam	[gyb] Garus	[mml] Malalamai	[gnf] Ngaing	[ukg] Ukuriguma
[anj] Anor	[dnc] Gavak	[mml] Malalamai	[gaw] Nobonob	[urg] Urigina
[ena] Apali	[gdg] Gedaged	[mks] Malas	[ori] Oga	[usn] Usan
[awm] Arawum	[gaf] Gende	[mdc] Male	[abw] Pal	[omn] Utarnbung
[lpr] Arop-Lokep	[lbr] Girawa	[mva] Manam	[hib] Pamosu	[utu] Utu
[myj] Anuamu	[grg] Gorovu	[wax] Marangis	[pan] Panim	[usu] Uya
[asa] Asaro	[gms] Gumalu	[hob] Mari	[prw] Parawen	[tck] Uyajitaya
[asd] Asas	[gka] Guya	[dad] Marik	[pwr] Paynamar	[wab] Wab
[ate] Ateble	[dah] Gwahatke	[mbw] Maring	[prn] Pinal-Hagahal	[wdg] Wadaginam
[bcu] Awad Bing	[mdt] Harsai	[mqe] Matepi	[pup] Palubu	[tad] Wagi
[byz] Asar	[lga] Igana	[mtk] Matukar	[rao] Rao	[wms] Wamas
[bpi] Bagupi	[mzu] Inapang	[mhl] Mauwaka	[prt] Raptig	[wnb] Wanambre
[brx] Baimak	[isa] Isabi	[mji] Mawak	[rwo] Rawa	[wsk] Waskia
[buz] Banaro	[lgo] Isebe	[mzr] Mawan	[mro] Ronji	[wti] Watiwa
[bip] Bargam	[lca] Mbore	[lga] Mbore	[rro] Reruo	[wub] Waube
[bbd] Bau	[jil] Jilim	[mjm] Medebur	[rmk] Romkun	[ybn] Yaben
[ble] Bepour	[kmh] Kalam	[pla] Miani	[rok] Ronji	[ybo] Yabong
[lqj] Bilakura	[gam] Kandawo	[lhm] Bilakura	[irok] Ronji	[ygm] Yagomi
[buz] Bilbil	[lga] Kangape	[imp] Mindiri	[sps] Saep	[yng] Yangulam
[bpm] Biyom	[kmf] Kare	[mre] Moore	[swm] Samosa	[ywr] Yarawata
[bpn] Bongu	[kct] Kayan	[mxk] Monumbo	[sra] Saruga	[ydk] Yodik
[bop] Bonkiman	[bmh] Kein	[mxk] Moresada	[sai] Sausi	[yur] Yopno
[bop] Bosum	[kcs] Kesawai	[mqe] Mosimo	[lpe] Sepa	[yww] Yout Wam
[buq] Brem	[lge] Kire	[kpa] Mum	[siv] Sihan	
[brq] Breri	[lgu] Kobol	[mrc] Munit	[sbl] Silelbi	
[bmg] Bulgebi	[kpw] Kobon	[tkv] Mur Pano	[xsp] Silopi	

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# Verb serialization in Proto-Sogeram

Intro • **SVCs** • Orientation • Form • Scope • Prosody • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# Proto-Sogeram serial verbs

- It is possible to reconstruct a few SVCs to Proto-Sogeram
- These all shared the same form
  - A series of uninflected verbs
  - The final verb had all the morphology
  - The verbs all had the same subject
    - (Except in the causative SVC)

Gants

*Node*    *yak*        *aba*    *gw-ek.*  
woman    1SG.OBJ    *speak*    *give-3SG.IPST*

‘My wife told me.’

# Proto-Sogeram serial verbs

- Aspectual SVCs
  - The last verb could have aspectual meaning

Gants

*Node*    *God*    *kia*            *miŋa*    *kid-ek.*

woman    God    speech    get    **walk-3SG.IPST**

‘The woman holds (i.e., follows) God’s talk.’

# Proto-Sogeram serial verbs

- Manner SVCs
  - The first verb expressed the manner of the second

Kursav

*Va-da ka-ka guro, midim aba*  
say-SS MD-TOP speech before **speak**  
***u-b-ua.***

**3SG.OBJ-give-1SG.NFUT**

‘I said that and I told him this stuff before.’

# Proto-Sogeram serial verbs

- Causative SVCs
  - The first verb caused the second

Manat

*Ñaṅña tak ai-n = a, mihra-n*  
food only come-2/3.SS = LNK take.much-2/3.SS

*igu-ña-md = a.*

**give-eat-2SG.IMP = EXCL**

‘Please come take all this food and give it out.’

# Proto-Sogeram serial verbs

- SVCs were not limited to two verbs; they could be combined
- $V_{\text{MANNER}} V_{\text{LEXICAL}} V_{\text{ASPECTUAL}}$  :

Kursav

*Itu kra ne kevi-d-o.*

tobacco **burn consume throw-HAB-3PL**

‘They used to smoke tobacco.’

# Orientation serial verbs

Intro • SVCs • **Orientation** • Form • Scope • Prosody • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# Orientation serial verbs

- The first verb is intransitive
  - Usually a verb of posture or motion
  - It orients the subject towards the rest of the action
- In other SVCs, all verbs are adjacent
- In orientation SVCs, the first verb precedes objects and adjuncts

Gants

*Aŋa asiko miŋa-m-ek.*

*go ginger get-FPST-3SG*

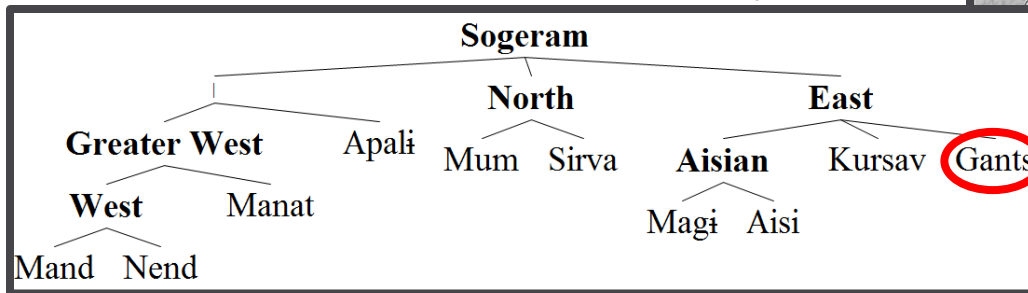
‘He went and got ginger.’

# Orientation serial verbs

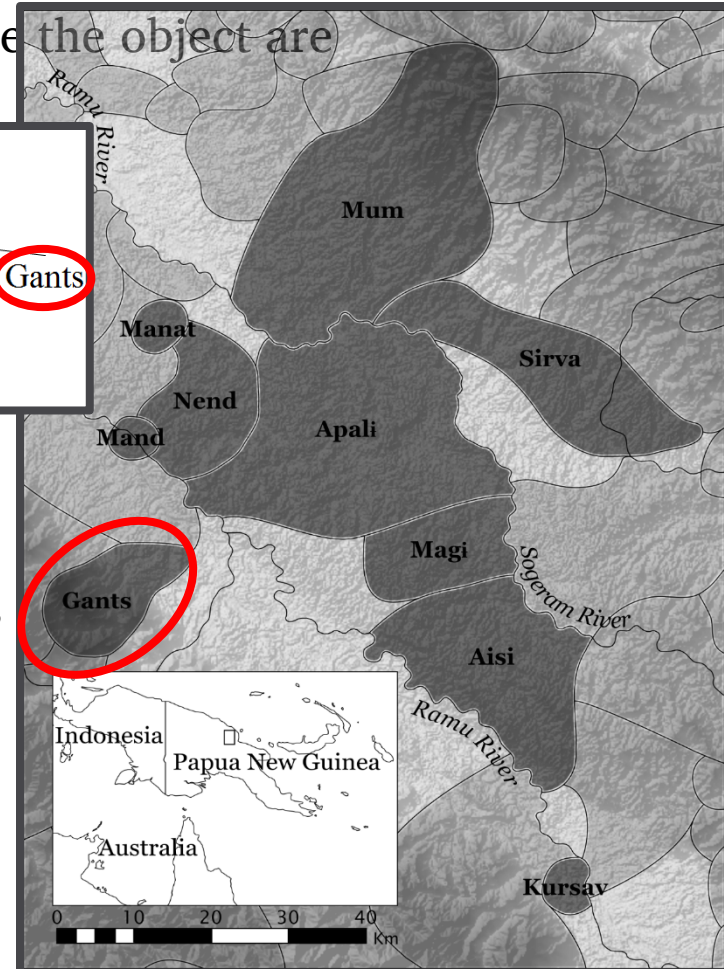
- Something similar to the Gants construction existed in Proto-Sogeram
- We'll look at reflexes in
  - Gants
  - Sirva
  - Magi
  - Apali
  - Manat

# Gants orientation verbs

- In Gants, serial verbs that precede the object are interpreted intransitively



Ya **aba** node miŋa-da ...  
 1SG **speak** woman get-SS  
 ‘I talked and I got my wife, and ...’



# Gants orientation verbs

- The most common verbs in this position are motion verbs

*Aya asiko koimo go-da bir aŋa-m-ek.*

**come** ginger SPEC give-SS TOP go-FPST-3SG

‘He came and gave her some ginger and left.’

*Yako kokoda tai mañ taka-da ...*

**go.up** up.there tree seed remove-SS

‘He went up and was picking fruit up there and ...’

# Gants orientation verbs

- Having an overt object is not a requirement for verbs to have this interpretation

Gants

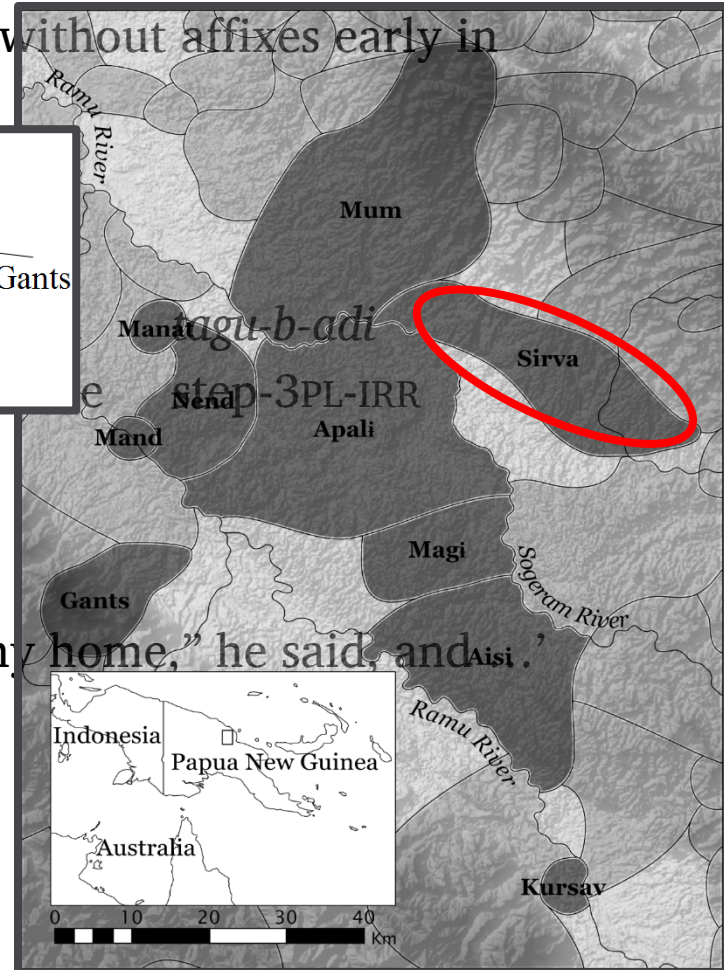
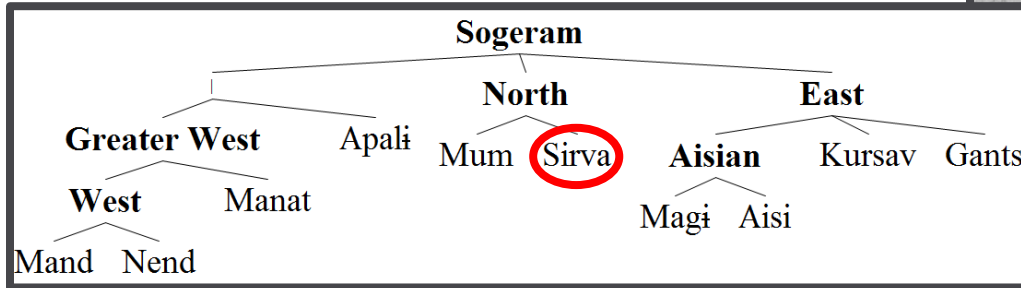
*Pusket* **ana** *miġ-re-re ...*

cat **go** sleep-DS.SIM-3SG

‘While the cat went and slept ...’

# Sirva motion verbs

- In Sirva, motion verbs can occur without affixes early in the clause, before the object



*v-ra ...*

say-SS

“Trouble may come and mess up my home,” he said, and Aisi.

# Sirva motion verbs

- There can be multiple motion verbs

Sirva

*Be kav kida pi puza, tik = iñ hasa*  
3SG just walk come shaft piece = LI FOC

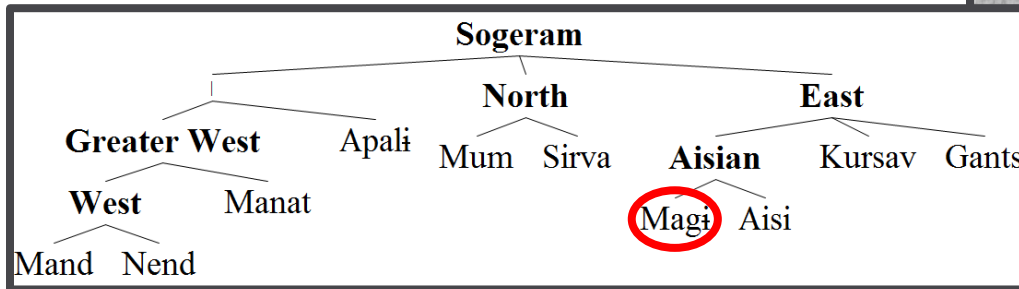
*gu-rub-ii ...*

give-PL-3.DS

‘They used to just walk over and offer just a spear shaft, and ...’

# Magi serial verbs

- All Magi SVCs consist of an unaffixed verb preceding any objects or adjuncts

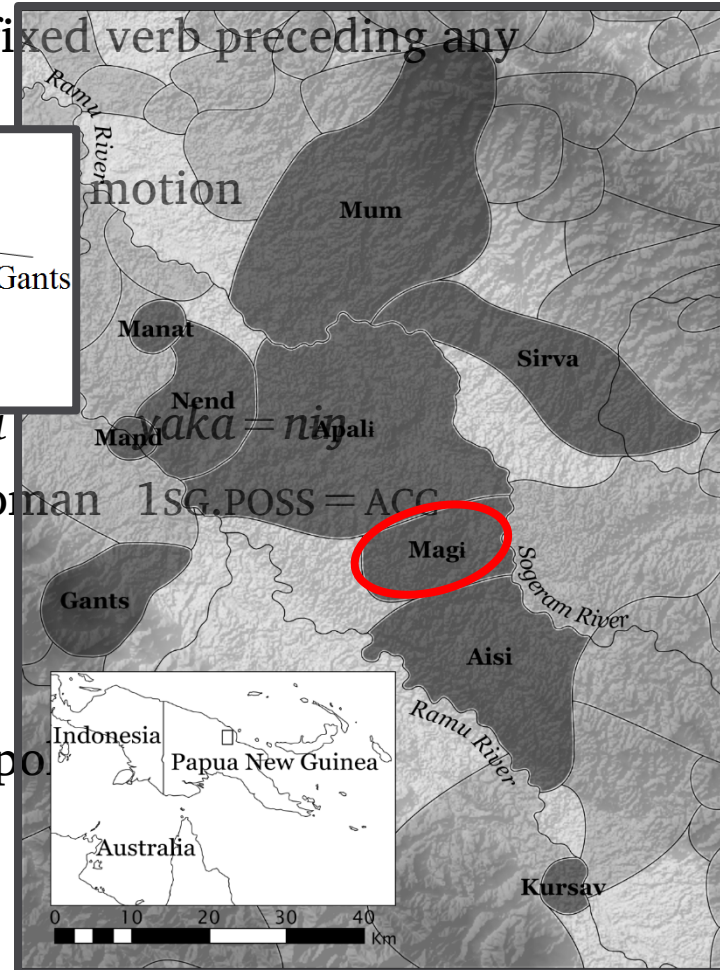


*Kundɩ* *kɪpɩ* *Sandɛ* *ga*, *abɩ*  
 morning **get.up** Sunday TOP woman 1SG.POSS = ACC

*ab-is-in*.

speak-FPST-1SG

'I got up on Sunday morning and spoke.'



# Magi serial verbs

- Here's a motion verb:

Magi

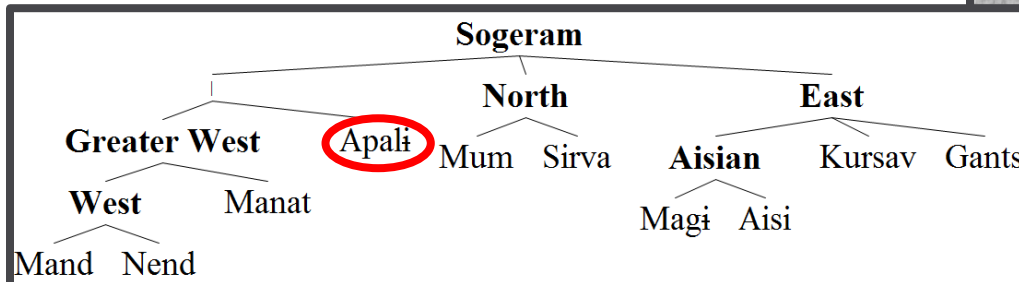
*Maban*   *mugu,*   *ka-niŋ*   *kiti*   *kiti ...*

Mawan   **go.down**   MD-LOC   stay.SS   stay.SS

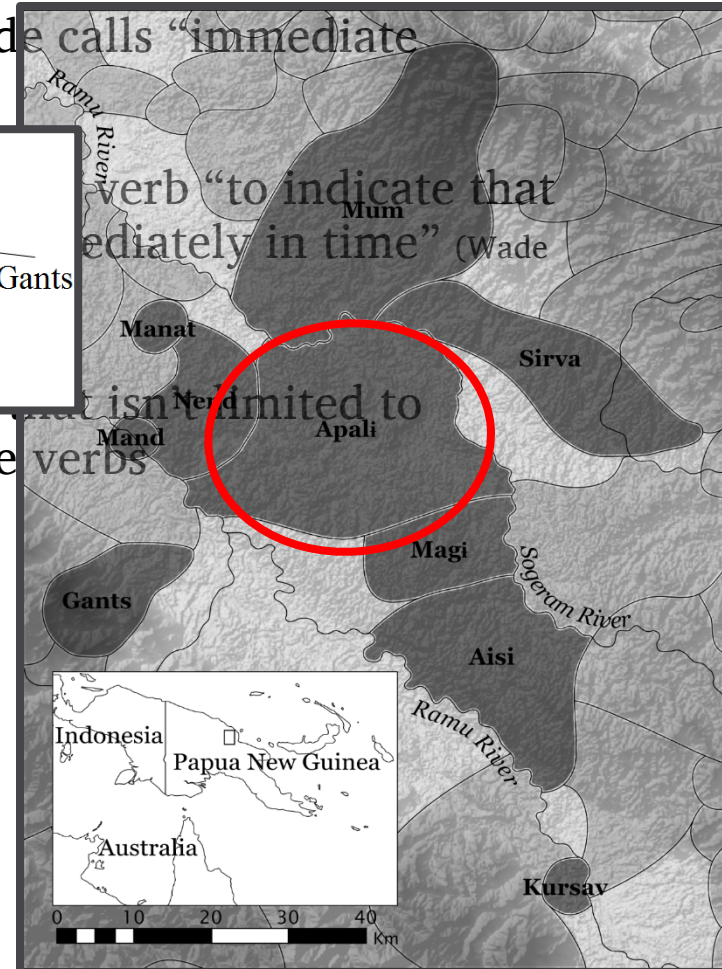
‘I went down to Mawan and stayed there and ...’

# Apali immediate sequential

- Apali has a construction that Wade calls “immediate sequential same subject” (1989: 70)



This is a productive construction that isn't limited to motion verbs, or even intransitive verbs



# Apali immediate sequential

Apali

<i>Kīlī</i>	<i>ihā</i>	<i>hulīn</i>	<i>ihā</i>	<i>lahā</i>	<i>hulīn</i>	<i>hivī</i>
tree	cut	plant.type	cut	tear	plant.type	LI

*hah-avi-la-lī.*

tie-PL-HAB-3.FPST

‘They cut a tree, break down *hulīn* plants and tie it with them.’

(Wade n.d.)

# Apali immediate sequential

- But motion verbs *are* very frequent in this construction

Apali

*Iaku*    *vaŋaŋ*        *vi-ci ...*

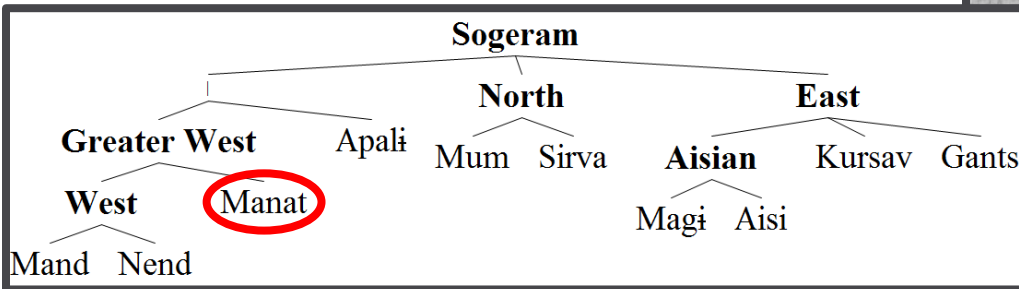
**go.up**    string.bag    get-3SG.DS

‘She got up and got the string bag and ...’

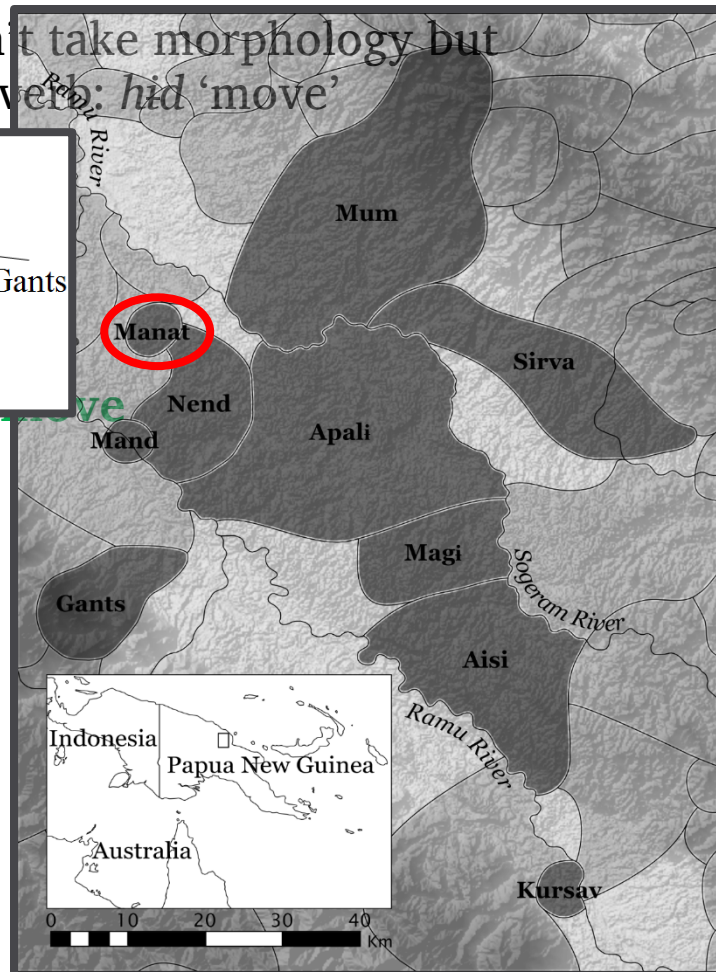
(Wade n.d.)

# Manat quasi-verb *hid*

- Manat has a particle which doesn't take morphology but which can predicate much like a verb: *hid* 'move'



‘He said that, left, and went away.’



# Manat quasi-verb *hid*

- *Hid* can also occur in a verbal clause and add motion semantics

Manat

<i>Hid</i>	<i>nadi</i>	<i>añiŋa</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>ini-n</i>
<b>move</b>	woman	two	LOC	ND-ACC

*gu-r-m-id.*

give-HAB-PST-3SG.HIS

‘He used to go give it to the two women.’

# Manat quasi-verb *hid*

- It can also take some limited verbal morphology, such as the reduplicative nominalizing suffix

Manat

*Ini-ba hid~ihid rih-id ar-ura-ma-g.*

ND-LOC **move~NMLZ** do-3SG.IPST say-PL-PST-3.FAR

“She’s wandering around here,” they said.’

# Summary

- In several languages, bare verbs (or verb-like particles) can occur before the object
- They are often intransitive, usually verbs of motion, and they orient the subject with respect to the activity in the rest of the clause

# Summary

- Gants: [V<sub>INTR</sub> (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Magi: [V<sub>INTR</sub> (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Sirva: [V<sub>MOTION</sub> (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Apali: [V (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Manat: [*hid* (OBJ) V-INFL]

# Phonological correspondence

Intro • SVCs • Orientation • **Form** • Scope • Prosody • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# Phonological correspondence

- The orientation SVCs in Apali, Magi, and Gants also share a phonological correspondence
- Some Proto-Sogeram verbs had a different stem shape when they bore suffixes vs when they didn't
- The un-suffixed form always adds a stem-final \*a

# Phonological correspondence

- Gants *ai-* ‘come’ is *aya* when serialized
  - From Proto-Sogeram \**aya* and \**fai-*

Gants

**Aya** *nil epra miŋa-da = n ...*

**come** *nail buy get-SS = LNK*

‘I came and bought nails and ...’

# Phonological correspondence

- The regular Magi reflex of final \*a is /i/
  - Here's *miti* 'leave', from Proto-Sogeram \*mita

Magi

*Yi panda **miti** yakite-s-in.*

1SG one **leave** come.up-FPST-1SG.IPST

'I alone left and came up (here).'

# Phonological correspondence

- *Migua* in Apali is from Proto-Sogeram \*migwa ~ \*migw-

Apali

***Migua***    *hehilaŋ*    *lifi-ci* ...

**go.down**    fish            do-3SG.DS

‘It went down, became a fish and ...’

(Wade n.d.)

# Phonological correspondence

- Gants: [V-*a* (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Magi: [V-*i* (OBJ) V-INFL]
- Apali: [V-*a* (OBJ) V-INFL]

# Semantic scope

Intro • SVCs • Orientation • Form • **Scope** • Prosody • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# Semantic scope

- Some verbal operators do not have scope over both verbs in this construction
- We'll look at negation and illocutionary force

# Scope of negation

- The unaffixed verb can have a different negation value in Gants

Gants

*Tri aklok ca ma ga-da aba-m-ek.*

three o'clock **stay** NEG perceive-SS speak-FPST-3SG

‘He stayed (until) three o’clock and didn’t see (him) and spoke.’

# Scope of negation

- The unaffixed verb can have a different negation value in Apali

Apali

*Iga ma suhu-i.*

**see** NEG defecate-3SG.IPST

‘She saw it and did not defecate.’

(Wade 1989: 72)

# Scope of negation

- The unaffixed verb can have a different negation value in Apali

Apali

***M-ega***    *suhu-i*.

**NEG-see**    defecate-3SG.IPST

‘She did not see it and (so) defecated.’

(Wade 1989: 72)

# Scope of illocutionary force

- The unaffixed verb seems like it can have a different illocutionary force in Gants

Gants

*Sikasika tago miŋa kineb kenin yak ko*  
debris step get house inside 1SG.OBJ DEF  
*ma ai-p-raŋ.*

NEG come-IMP-2PL

‘Don’t track dirt inside my house!’

# Scope of illocutionary force

- The unaffixed verb can have a different illocutionary force in Apali

Apali

*Iga* *suhu-minaŋ.*

*see* defecate-2SG.PROH

‘You see it and don’t you defecate.’

(Wade 1989: 71)

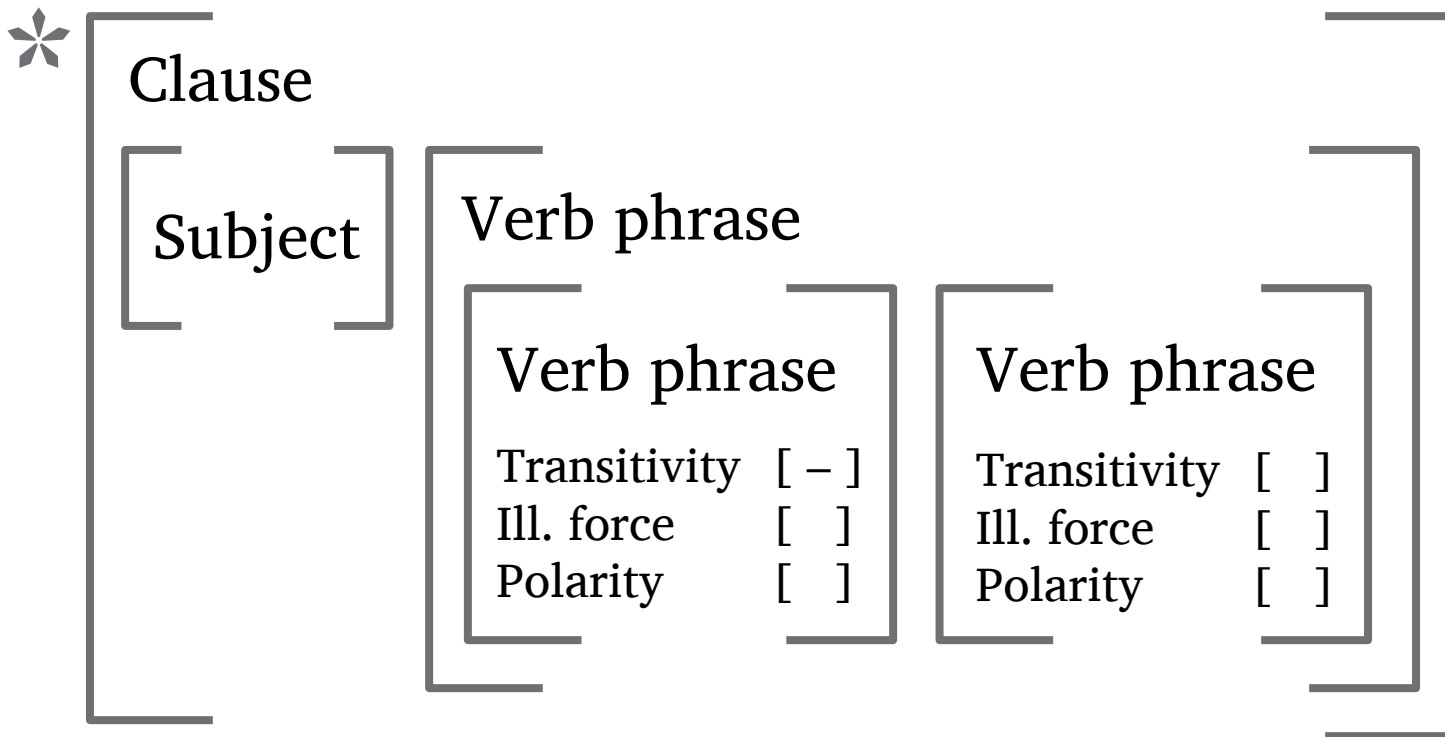
# Scope of verbal operators

- Manat *hid* can predicate on its own, so it can have its own values for polarity and illocutionary force

# Summary

- These serialized verbs have the same subject
- They don't share objects
- They can differ in polarity and illocutionary force
- I analyze them as coordinated verb phrases within a single clause
  - This doesn't gel with everyone's definition of serial verb (e.g. Aikhenvald 2006)
  - But it's a useful definition for the Sogeram data

# Summary



# Prosodic evidence

Intro • SVCs • Orientation • Form • Scope • **Prosody** • Arbitrariness • Conclusion

# Prosodic evidence

- There is some suggestive prosodic evidence from Manat
  - But it's only from Manat, so it's not conclusive
- Manat lost final \*a from prosodic units (Daniels & Brooks to appear)
  - It did not lose it word-finally
- The quasi-verb *hid* is descended from Proto-Sogeram \*kida 'walk'
  - \*k > h word-initially is a regular sound change
  - \*a > Ø suggests this word used to be at the right edge of a prosodic unit

# Prosodic evidence

Manat

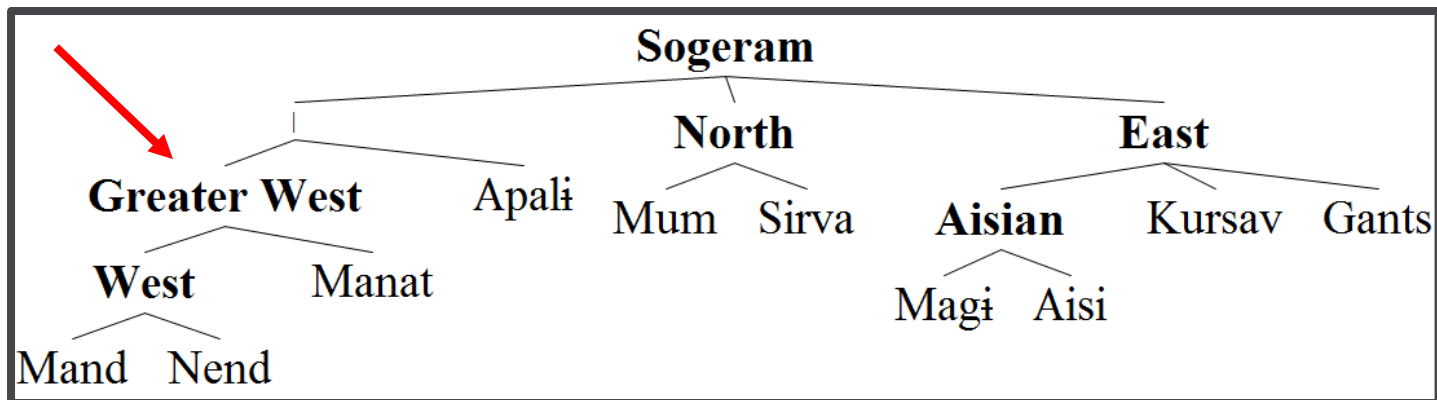
*Akai hid mikiñ kai migu-ma-g.*

okay **move** fishing.net LOC go.down-PST-3SG.FAR

‘Okay, he went down into the fishing net.’

# Prosodic evidence

- If we assume that prosodic structure aligns at least partially with syntactic structure
  - And that's not a trivial assumption
- Then we can interpret this as additional evidence that the first verb was at the right edge of a syntactic constituent
  - This is compatible with the “coordinated verb phrases” analysis
- This structure would have been in place at the Proto-Greater West Sogeram stage, when \*a was lost



# Arbitrariness and reconstruction

Intro • SVCs • Orientation • Form • Scope • Prosody • **Arbitrariness** • Conclusion

# Arbitrariness

- There is a problem with this scenario
- Comparative reconstruction relies on a certain degree of diachronic stability
- This stability is ensured by the arbitrary nature of linguistic signs
- When signs are not arbitrary, they change, or fail to change, in unpredictable ways

# Arbitrariness

- Proto-Oceanic \*kokorako ‘chicken’
  - “A pattern of consonants occurs which could represent [Proto-Oceanic] \**k-k-r-k*, though the vowels are not consistent and one or other of the consonants may not appear. ... \**k* in this term is never lenited (to *ɣ*, *ʔ* etc) in the many languages where this is a regular change.” (Clark 2011:284)
- When the shape of the sign is motivated, that motivation can interfere with transmission



Figure 6.1 *Gallus gallus*, Red Jungle Fowl

# Arbitrariness

- This has not always been appreciated
- Some say arbitrariness is only required for the establishment of genetic relatedness, and is therefore only necessary in lexical reconstruction
  - “... the demand for an arbitrary link between form and meaning is unwarranted in syntactic reconstruction.” (Barðdal & Smitherman 2013: 27)
- Others misunderstand the relevance of arbitrariness by contrasting it with non-compositionality, instead of iconicity (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2012: 367)

# Arbitrariness

- **But there is iconicity in syntax!** (Croft 2008; Haiman 1980, 1983, 1985, 2008; Newmeyer 1992, 1998)
  - This has diachronic consequences
- We need to be concerned about two kinds
- Forms go closer together if their meanings go closer together
  - This has been called ‘conceptual distance’ (Haiman 1983); ‘iconicity of distance’ (Newmeyer 1992, Croft 2008); ‘iconicity of contiguity’ (Haspelmath 2008a, b)
- Syntactic structure resembles event structure
  - This has been called ‘iconicity of sequence’ (Haiman 1980, Haspelmath 2008a; cf. Greenberg 1966: 103)

# Arbitrariness

- Both kinds of iconicity interact with orientation SVCs
- Iconicity of sequence
  - Applies less when V1 is a posture verb
  - If V1 is a motion verb it would be expected to come first
- Iconicity of distance
  - Orientation verbs occur next to the subject, which is their only argument
  - If they occurred after the object, with other verbs, this would also separate the transitive verb from its object

# Arbitrariness

- Proto-Sogeram could have had:

\*[S OBJ **V<sub>INTR</sub>** V<sub>TR</sub>]

- And then reshaped that because of iconicity
- How can we safeguard against this in our reconstructions?
  - I have three ideas

# Proposals

- 1. Incorporate iconicity as a directional tendency in our methodology
  - Directionality is crucial to comparative reconstruction
  - But iconicity has seldom been considered as a possible motivating factor
- 2. Reconstruct syntactic constructions that contain arbitrary material
  - This can be phonological material
    - Like the final *a~i* correspondence
  - Or arbitrary sequences of non-phonological signs
- 3. Be humbler when you're dealing with potentially iconic structures

# Conclusion

Intro • SVCs • Orientation • Form • Scope • Prosody • Arbitrariness • **Conclusion**

# Conclusion

- Proto-Sogeram probably had a serial verb construction



\*[V<sub>ORIENTATION</sub> VP]

## Clause

- But the existence of this construction in multiple daughter languages could also be the result of parallel development motivated by iconicity

- We should recognize this possibility and treat this reconstruction as less secure

Transitivity	[ - ]
Ill. force	[ ]
Polarity	[ ]

Transitivity	[ ]
Ill. force	[ ]
Polarity	[ ]

**Thank you!**



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