The Automated Similarity Judgment Program

The First Conference on ASJP and Language Prehistory (ALP-I)

The ALP-I, organized by Søren Wichmann (MPI-EVA) and Cecil H. Brown (Northern Illinois University), will take place at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Leipzig), September 17-19, 2010.

Preliminary Programme

download programme [pdf]

Friday, 17 September	
13:30 - 13:40	Cecil H. Brown & Søren Wichmann *Welcome and introduction*
13:40 - 14:25	George Starostin *Automated vs. manual lexicostatistics: the mutual benefits* [pdf]
14:25 - 15:10	Valery Solovyev *The problem of interpretation of phylogenetic ASJP-trees* [pdf]
15:10 - 15:55	Søren Wichmann *Patterns of migration from early prehistory to the present* [pdf]
15:55 - 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 - 17:00	Cecil H. Brown & Eric W. Holman *Comparing ASJP approaches to automated classification: Correspondence-based and lexical-based Trees for Mayan* [pdf]
17:00 - 17:45	Harald Hammarström *World-wide assessment of AJSP-families* [pdf]
19:30	**Dinner** Stelzenhaus (Weißenfelser Straße 65)
Saturday, 18 September	
9:00 - 9:45	Kirill Babaev *Niger-Congo language macrofamily: ASJP vs. current genealogical classifications* [pdf]
9:45 - 10:30	Benjamin Elugbe

	West Benue-Congo
10:30 - 10:50	Coffee Break
10:50 - 11:35	Robert Ratliffe *Arabic*
11:35 - 12:20	Robert Mailhammer *Subgrouping Indo-European: A fresh perspective* [pdf]
12:20 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 14:15	Tapani Salminen *Uralic* [pdf]
14:15 - 15:00	Zarina Molochieva & Alena Witzlack-Makarevich *Languages of the Caucasus* [pdf]
15:00 - 15:45	Paul Sidwell *Austro-Asiatic, with special attention to Bahnaric, Katuic, and Palaungic* [pdf]
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 16:45	Uri Tadmor *Western Austronesian with special reference to Malayic*
16:45 - 17:30	Anvita Abbi & Pramod Kumar *In search of language contact between Jarawa and Aka-Bea: The languages of South Andaman* [pdf]
Sunday, 19 September	
10:00 - 10:45	Jane Hill *Subgrouping in Uto-Aztecan* [pdf]
10:45 - 11:30	David Beck *Salishan* [pdf]
11:30 - 12:15	Olga Krasnoukhova & Loretta O'Connor *Comparison of structural features and lexical data: A case study in the classification of North American Indian languages* [pdf]
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 14:00	Willem Adelaar *Quechuan* [pdf]
14:00 - 14:45	Sérgio Meira *Cariban & Tupian*
14:45 - 15:00	Coffee Break
15:00 - 15:45	Frank Seifart & Juan Alvaro Echeverri *Towards a re-evalution of the Boran-Witotoan family* [pdf]
15:45 - 16:30	Harald Hammarström & Pieter Muysken *ASJP results for South America: A critical assessment* [pdf]
16:30 - 17:00	Final Discussion & Planning Session

Original call for papers

Confirmed invited speakers:

- Willem Adelaar (Leiden University of): Quechuan
- David Beck (University of Alberta): Salishan
- Benjamin Elugbe (University of Ibadan): West Benue-Congo
- Jane Hill (The University of Arizona): Uto-Aztecan
- Robert Mailhammer (Katholische Universität Eichstätt Ingolstadt): TBA
- Tapani Salminen (University of Helsinki): Uralic
- Frank Seifart (MPI-EVA, Leipzig): Boran/Witotoan
- Paul Sidwell (The Australian National University): Austroasiatic
- George Starostin (Russian State University): Manual vs. automatic lexicostatistics: the mutual benefits

The purpose of this conference is to engage historical linguists in interpreting automated lexicostatistical classifications of individual language families and evaluating them against classifications produced through the application of the comparative method of historical linguistics. The classifications in question are those produced by the Automated Similarity Judgment Project (ASJP).

The anticipated outcome for this project is a series of published volumes including papers on as many individual language families as possible, discussing how ASJP classifications contribute to reconstructing the pre-histories of those families. Before their hardcopy publication, early versions of the papers will be published online. This will be facilitated in part through a series of annual conferences at MPI-EVA, Leipzig, where ALP-I is the first. The conferences will address both theoretical perspectives on different aspects of automated lexicostatistics, including phylogenetic methods and methods of assessing their performance, as well as empirical questions regarding the evaluation of ASJP classifications of individual genealogical language groups.

A few working papers have already been prepared which can be used as models for ALP participants. These are papers by Cecil H. Brown on Mayan, Mark Donohue on Skou, and Matthias Urban on Pomoan and Iroquoian, which can be accessed here.

Scholars contributing to ALP will be presented with all available ASJP data pertinent to a given group of languages as well as a corresponding automated classification. While the ASJP database presently covers a little over one half of the world's languages, most contributors will discover that some languages of their target families are nonetheless not included, and will be asked to supply 40-referent word lists for missing languages. These additional lists will be processed by ASJP, resulting in more complete automated classifications for contributors' target families.

ALP participants should expect active engagement in discussions with the ALP directors and be prepared to see their contributions undergo several revisions as the database expands. Final hardcopy publication cannot be expected before 2012, but will certainly be a reality by 2014. While this is a long ripening process, the outcomes are expected to have a correspondingly greater impact since they will appear as parts of a basic handbook of the classification of the world's languages. This handbook will be the first ever to present a consistent application of a single, objective classification method to all or close to all the world's languages. In addition to this result, alternative views on classifications of individual families will be included, increasing the handbook's value as a reference tool.

A brief summary of the ASJP method for measuring distances among languages is provided in Holman et al. (2008a), a manuscript version of which can be accessed here. Potential ALP contributors not familiar with ASJP methods will profit from the description in this short paper. A more extensive presentation is found in Holman

et al. (2008b), a prepublication of which is available here. Additionally, contributors will want to review how their target languages configure within the ASJP World Language Tree of Lexical Similarity (Müller et al. 2009), the current version of which can be accessed here.

References

Holman, Eric W., Søren Wichmann, Cecil H. Brown, Viveka Velupillai, André Müller, and Dik Bakker. 2008a. Advances in automated language classification. In Arppe, Antti, Kaius Sinnemäki and Urpu Nikanne (eds), *Quantitative Investigations in Theoretical Linguistics*, 40-43. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Holman, Eric W., Søren Wichmann, Cecil H. Brown, Viveka Velupillai, André Müller, and Dik Bakker. 2008b. Explorations in automated lexicostatistics. *Folia Linguistica* 42.2: 331-354.

Müller, André, Viveka Velupillai, Søren Wichmann, Cecil H. Brown, Pamela Brown, Eric W. Holman, Dik Bakker, Oleg Belyaev, Dmitri Egorov, Robert Mailhammer, Anthony Grant, and Kofi Yakpo. 2009. ASJP World Language Tree of Lexical Similarity: Version 2 (April 2009).