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The North Bahnaric Clade: A computational approach

Computational methods for the evolutionary history of languages represent a new tool for the historical comparativist. These approaches have become more widely known after the ground-breaking work by Gray & Atkinson (2003) that produced a monophyletic solution to the IE family corresponding to the work of classical comparative linguistics but able to compute values for the split times and probabilities of the subgroups.

The present study applies these phylogenetic methods to the fairly well-defined North Bahnaric subgroup of Mon-Khmer languages. Results show a predicted clustering of certain NB languages such as Jeh and Halang, as well as Todrah and Modrah and Bonam and Monam, but the place of Rengao and the newly included Kachok present cases that invite discussion on the interplay between computational method and empirical data.