Special Lecture | 特別講演会

Convergence of Kra-Dai languages toward Sinitic prototype



Speaker

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Date & Time
November 26 (Thu), 2026
16:05 – 17:35

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Venue
Room 208 (Gakusya 2F)
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

Zoom Participation
Pre-registration is required for Zoom participants. Please scan the QR code to register.

Free and open to the public.
No registration is required for on-site participation.

Abstract

The Kra-Dai languages, typologically considered, form a homogeneous family, with variations in phonology and grammar being more specific than systemic. Prototypically tonal, isolating, head-initial, and SVO, they align closely with traits observed in Sinitic languages, indicating a longstanding historical contact with Sinitic varieties. This lecture addresses the typological convergence, emphasizing the acquisition of Sinospheric features by Kra-Dai languages through prolonged contact with Sinitic varieties. Within the context of the Austro-Tai hypothesis, I explore how the historical interaction with Sinitic languages has precipitated profound typological shifts in Kra-Dai. The lecture offers a chronology of Sinicization of Kra-Dai and specifically investigates key phenomena that contribute to this linguistic convergence, including the shifts in word orders, the acquisition of numeral classifiers, emergence of aspiration contrast in stops, and tonogenesis. Adopting a variationist perspective, I explore the dynamic processes and contact scenarios that underpin the incorporation of Sinospheric features into Kra-Dai languages. Ultimately, this special lecture contributes to a comprehensive framework, shedding light on how sustained linguistic contact with Sinitic varieties has steered Kra-Dai languages towards a Sinospheric typology.

科研費 KAKENHI

Supported by JSPS Kakenhi (24K00062)
Co-organized by Research Project-B and Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

This poster was created with the assistance of ChatGPT-5.5.

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