

Complexification/simplification in gender emergence, loss and expansion

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Stockholm WS on “Grammatical Gender and Linguistic Complexity”
Stockholm, 20.11.2015–21-11-2015

- To investigate the complexity of gender *dynamically*:

- To investigate the complexity of gender *dynamically*:
 - ① By exploring patterns of gender emergence, loss and expansion cross-linguistically
 - ② By investigating how these developments intersect with language ecology.

Background

The puzzle



Gender is a cluster phenomenon [...], a minority feature worldwide whose tokens mostly cluster in adjacent or nearby languages (Nichols 2003: 300).

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Gender [...] is a puzzle: most of its tokens are the result of inheritance, and even those need outside help to survive; it is easier to explain its loss than its rise (Nichols 2003: 303).

Hypotheses and assumptions



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Gender loss: simplification

Gender emergence: complexification



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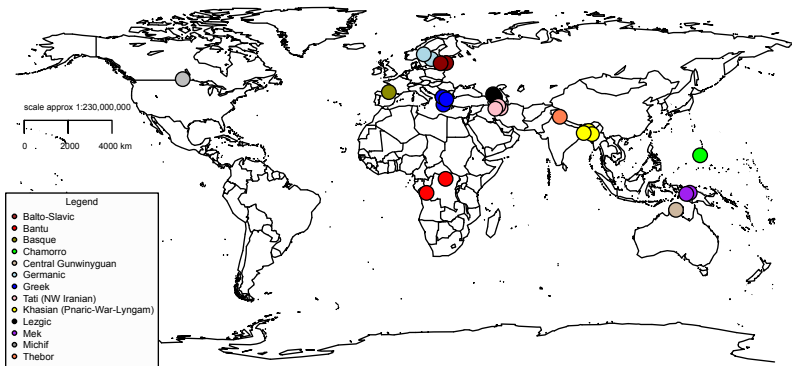
⇒ Data:

- collected through a questionnaire as well as descriptive resources.

The sample

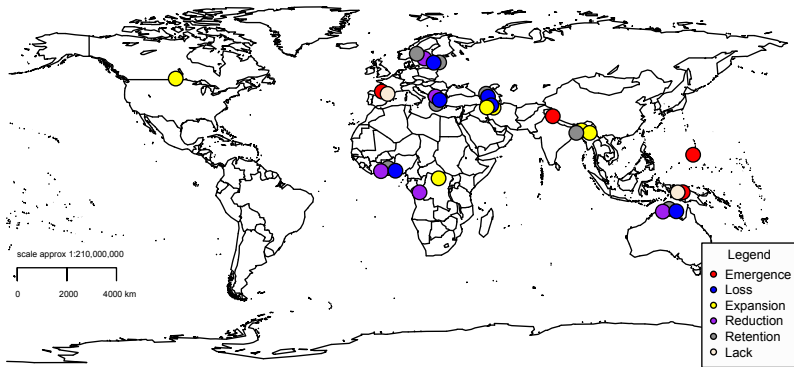
12 sets/pairs; 24 lngs.

The language sample



The evolutionary dynamics of gender systems: overview

Emergence, loss, reduction, expansion, retention lack of gender



Gender loss

Crosslinguistic regularities in gender loss



Crosslinguistic regularities in gender loss

Phenomenon

Languages

*Innovations in the gender agreement system
involve/start from agreement targets
far away from nouns
(e.g., personal pronouns, verbs).*



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Kinshasa Lingala, Pharasiot Greek,
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The most innovative agreement targets index new types of gender-like distinctions, often based on animacy.



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Other	Kelasi, Standard Swedish, Udi



Gender loss: some examples

The Asia Minor dialects of Greek (Greek Greece; Karatsareas 2014)



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(1) Argyróupolis Pontic

i **pórta** (...) móno ímoson
DEF.F.SG door.F.SG (...) only half.N.SG
óran **estéknen** **anixtón**
hour.F.SG stay.PST.3SG open.N.SG

'The door would stay open for only half an hour'.

(2) Standard Greek

i **pórta** móno misí óra
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émene **anixtí**
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'The door stayed open for only half an hour.'



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CRITERIA RESTRICTED BY ANIMACY AND TYPE OF
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'The door would stay open for only half an hour'.

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- (3) Phrasiot

férinke **adzíno** i
bring.PST.3.SG DEM.DIST.N.SG DEF.F.SG
néka xortáre
woman.F.SG herb.PL

'that woman used to bring herbs.'

- (4) Standard Greek

ecíni i **jinéka**
DEM.DIST.F.SG DEF.F.SG woman.F.SG

'that woman'



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- (4) Standard Greek

- (5) Axó Cappadocian
- t spitçú ta ndix(u)s
DEF.SG.GEN house.SG.GN DEF.PL wall.PL
xtizména
built.PL
- (6) Standard Greek
- i tíçi ine xtixméni
DEF.M.PL wall.M.PL be.PRS.3PL built.M.PL ■
■
■
- 'the walls are built'



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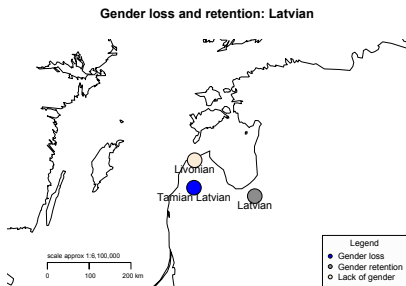
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- (5) Axó Cappadocian
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DEF
xti
bui
- NEUTER AGREEMENT GENERALIZED TO ALL NOUNS,
IRRESPECTIVE OF ANIMACY AND TYPE OF TARGET:
COMPLETE LOSS OF GENDER**

(6) Standard Greek

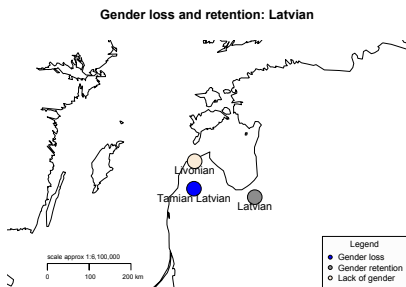
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Tamian Latvian (Balto-Slavic, Latvia; Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001)



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Stage 1: Loss of agreement with **personal and demonstrative pronouns**

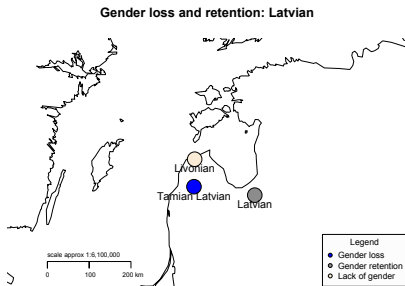
Stage 2: Loss of agreement with **predicative adjectives and predicative participles**

Stage 3: Loss of agreement with **attributive adjectives**

Stage 4: Loss of **gender-based nominal inflectional class.**

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Stage 1: Loss of agreement with **personal and demonstrative pronouns**

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Stage 3: Loss of agreement with **attributive adjectives**

Stage 4: Loss of **gender-based nominal inflectional class.**

- A diachronic and synchronic cline.
- Pronouns develop a gender-like distinction of their own, based on animacy.

Gender emergence

Patterns of gender emergence attested in the sample

Type of gender emergence	Languages
Contact-induced	Chamoro (Chamorro), Lekeitio Basque (Basque), Shumcho (Tibeto-Burman)
Language-internal development	Nalca (Mek)



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Main characteristics

- Minimal and non-systematic gender agreement: Chamorro, Lekeitio Basque, Nalca, Shumcho
- Adnominal modifiers as gender agreement targets: Chamorro, Lekeitio Basque, Shumcho
- NP markers as agreement targets: Nalca
- Marginal gender agreement in the verbal domain: Lekeitio Basque.



Contact-induced gender emergence: Chamorro

(Austronesian, Northern Marian Islands; Stolz 2012)



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- Sex-based gender distinctions on adnominal modifiers as a result of borrowing of nouns and adjectives from Spanish.



Contact-induced gender emergence: Chamorro

(Austronesian, Northern Marian Islands; Stolz 2012)

- Sex-based gender distinctions on adnominal modifiers as a result of borrowing of nouns and adjectives from Spanish.
- Feminine vs. Non-Feminine type of opposition:
 - Modifiers in *-a* = the NP-referent is a female entity
 - Modifiers in *-o/-u* = the NP-referent is a male or an inanimate entity.



Chamorro

(Austronesian, Northern Marian Islands; Stolz 2012)

(7) Chamorro Feminine Gender (Stolz 2012: 123)

Ma-nobena-na-ye i **mi-milagros-a** na **Bithen.**
PASS-novena-RED-REF DEF abound-miraculous-F LINK Virgin

'A novena is being conducted for the abundantly miraculous Virgin.'



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(8) Chamorro Non-Feminine Gender (Stolz 2012: 125)

desde antitites na tiempo esta gof **bunit-u** na **siuda** i
since RED:before LINK time already very nice-NF LINK town DEF
ya Hagåtña.
TN Hagåtña

'A very long time ago, Hagåtña was a very pretty town already.'



Language-internal development of gender: Nalca

(Mek, Indonesia; Wälchli & Svärd 2015; Erik Svärd, p.c.)



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- Strong connection between gender marking, proper names and nominalizations.
- Gender agreement:
 - Agreement target: NP markers that cumulate the expression of *gender*, *case* and *deixis*
 - Gender agreement sensitive to syntactic properties of NPs (*switching on and off of gender*)



The emergence of gender in Nalca

(Svärd 2015; Wälchli & Svärd in preparation)



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- The Nalca gender markers have cognates in the other Mek languages.
- Nalca has innovated *functions* not *forms*.



Gender expansion

When gender systems expand

Type gender expansion

Languages

Increase in the number of agreement targets

Eshtehardi (Northwestern Iranian),
Kafteij (Northwestern Iranian),
Khasi (Pnaric), Pnar (Pnaric)

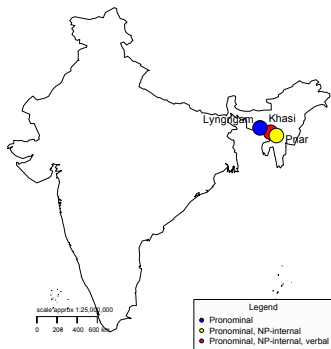
Two coexisting systems
gender systems
(depending on type of target)

Michif (Mixed language)

Increase in number of targets: “Khasian”

(Pnaric-War-Lyngngam)

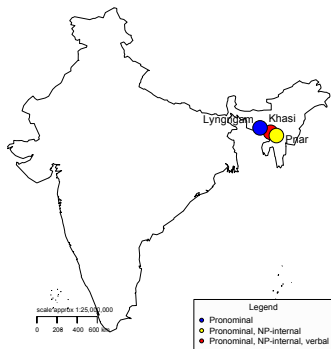
Expansion of gender agreement targets: Khasian (Pnaric-War-Lyngngam)



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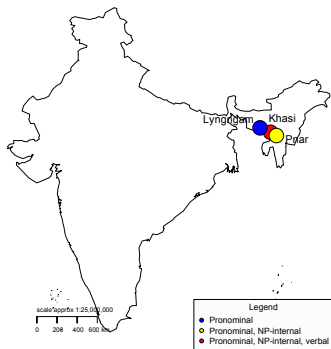
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- Gender distinctions on 2nd and 3rd pronouns: an innovation within a few Austrasiatic lngs
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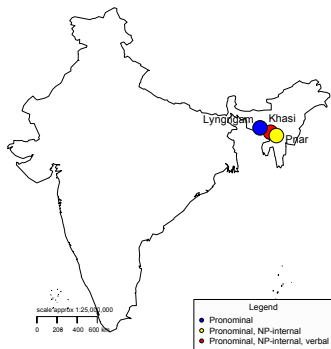
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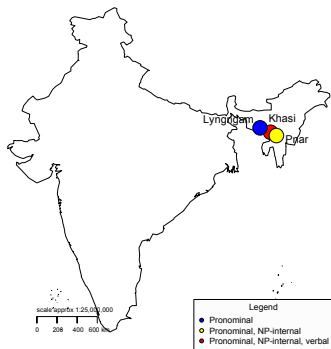
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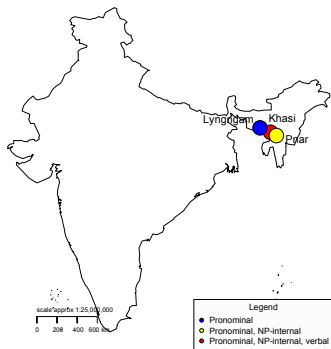
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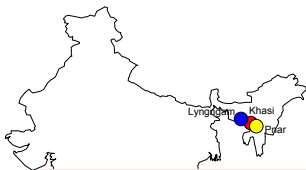
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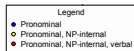
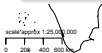
Gender expansion in “Khasian”

(Pnaric-War-Lyngngam)

Expansion of gender agreement targets: Khasian (Pnaric-War-Lyngngam)



- Gender expansion occurs in the demographically stronger varieties (Pnar, Khasi).



Gender development (Daladier 2011; p.c.):

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Khasi, Lyngngam, Pnar.
- Deictic bases develop from gendered personal pronouns:

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Two coexisting gender systems: Michif



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la žyma: ki:a ja:w-e:w ã pči pulã
DAFS mare PST-have-TA.3→3^I IAMS little foal

‘The mare had a foal.’



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- Noun-phrase gender (Masculine vs. Feminine, based on French) and verb-phrase gender (Animate vs. Inanimate, based on Cree).
- The emergence of this *unique* type of expanded gender system can be understood only within the *unique* contact dynamics that characterize the origin of Michif as a mixed language.

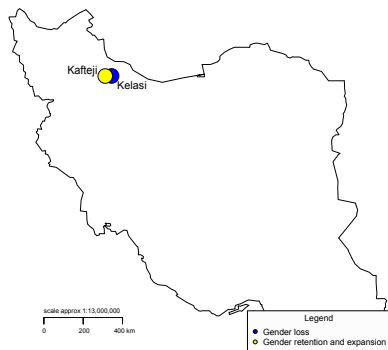


Gender loss and expansion within 12 km!

Kafteji and Kelasi

(North Western Iranian, Iran; Stilo to appear; p.c.)

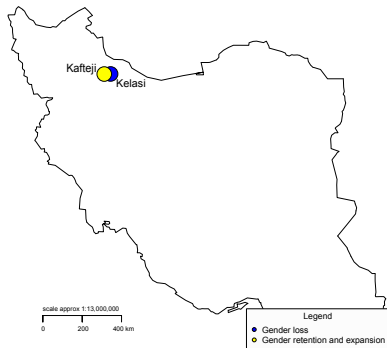
Gender loss, retention, expansion: Tati (NW Iranian)



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Gender loss, retention, expansion: Tati (NW Iranian)



(10) Kafteji Feminine Gender

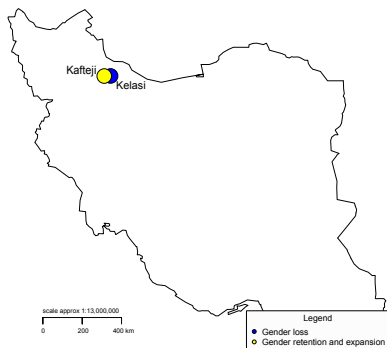
ám-æ æmáed-ə dé-t-æ
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'This (or 'she') is not Ahmahd's
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Kafteji and Kelasi

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Grammatical gender in the area

- A robust feature within Tati. But: ~ 40% Tati lngs lost gender.
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- Complete mutual intelligibility.
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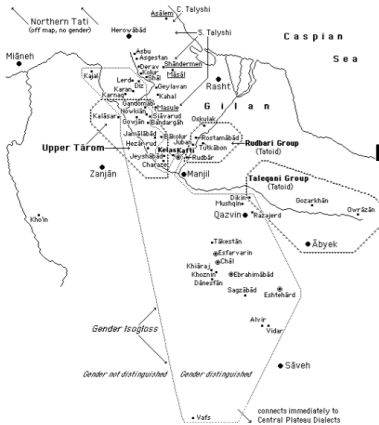


Figure 1: Gender isoglosses within Tati (Northwestern Iranian)

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- Expansion and loss as language-internal developments.

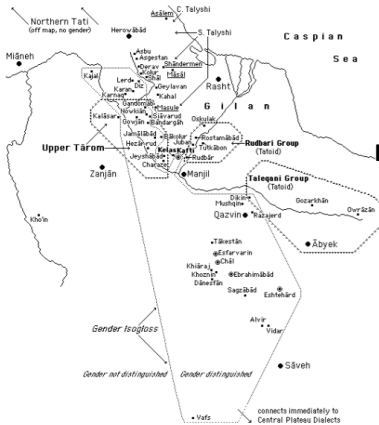


Figure 1: Gender isoglosses within Tati (Northwestern Iranian)

Loss/emergence/expansion of gender and language
ecology

Type of change

Conspiring factors (internal and external)



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Discussion

Hypotheses

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Gender emergence: complexification



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- **Call for discussion:** tools and methods for large-scale crosslinguistic research on language ecology and its implications for grammatical typology and the study of linguistic complexity.



Thank you!

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