

On Reconstructing the Morphosyntax of Proto-Northern Luzon

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Abstract

The subgroup of Philippine languages here called Northern Luzon (earlier descriptions called it Cordilleran), is slowly becoming better understood as new descriptions of its constituent languages are being published. This paper draws on the material that is now available to reconstruct various features of the morphosyntax of the parent of the group, Proto-Northern Luzon. Evidence for the unity of the group will first be examined, noting that there is little phonological evidence to unite the family, although the largest group of languages within the family, those which comprise what has been called Meso-Cordilleran does share certain phonological innovations. There is however a fairly substantial body of exclusively-shared lexical innovations which have been claimed to be reconstructible to Proto-Northern Luzon. The general typological features of clausal constructions, both transitive and intransitive, as well as non-verbal, found throughout Northern Luzon will be considered to be reconstructible to the parent language. Two major sections of the paper will deal with the reconstruction of the case relations of NP complements of these clause types, one dealing with pronominal exponents of NPs and the other dealing with nominal specifiers, sometimes referred to in the literature as determiners. A bottom-up approach to reconstruction will be utilized, moving from reconstruction of the lower-level groupings to the parent, Proto-Northern Luzon, but a top-down approach will also be integrated, especially when dealing with various, commonly-occurring grammaticalization processes.