Directional Tendencies in Object Naming

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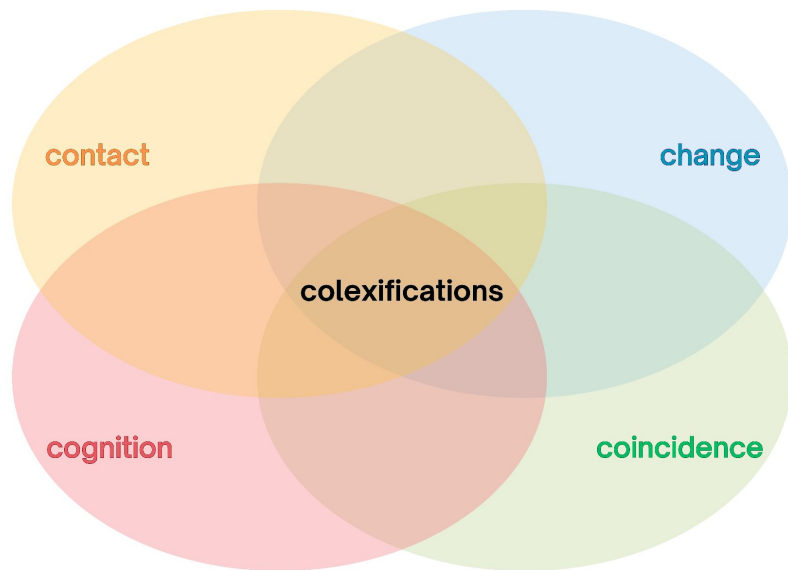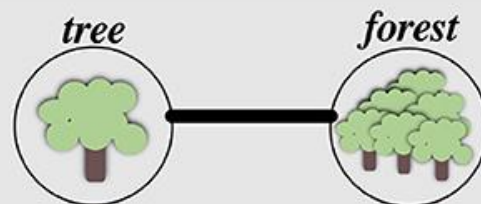
Agenda

Colexifications

The same lexical form is used for two different concepts in at least two genealogically unrelated languages (François 2008).
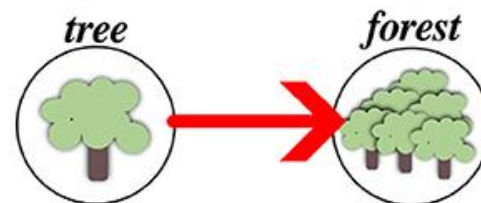
The analysis is based on cross-linguistic data.

contact

change

colexifications

cognition

coincidence

Colexification Types

① Yaqui "tree":   [dʒ u j a]
   Yaqui "forest": [dʒ u j a]

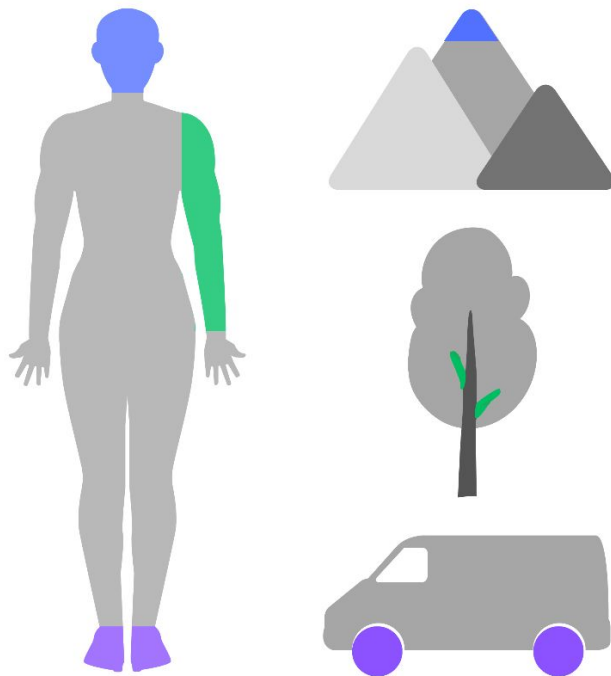② Guìlín "tree":   [ɕ y ²¹]
   Guìlín "forest": [ɕ y ²¹ l i ŋ ²²]

List (2023): *Frontiers in Psychology*
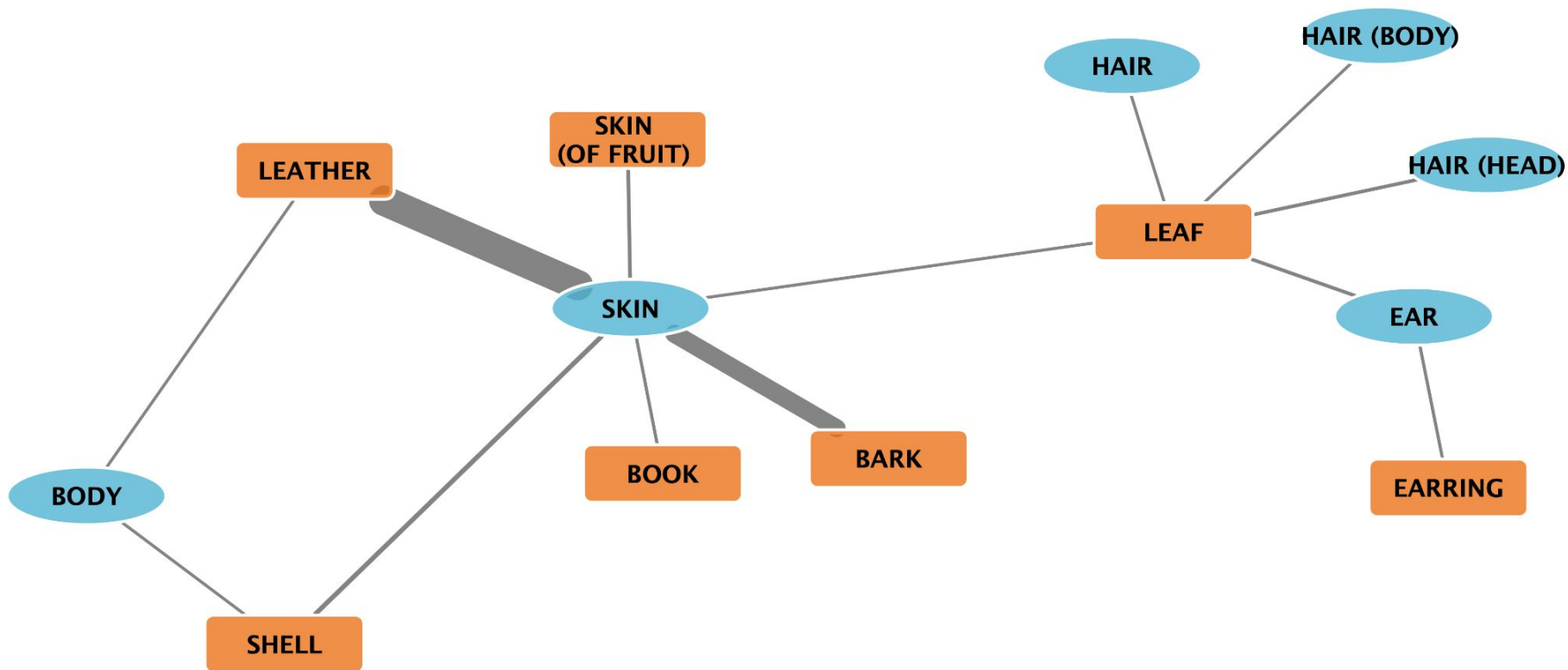
Body-Object Colexifications

Exploration of the relation between the human body and objects across languages

Investigation of full colexifications

78 body-object colexifications occurring across 396 language varieties

Tjuka (2024): *Linguistic Typology*

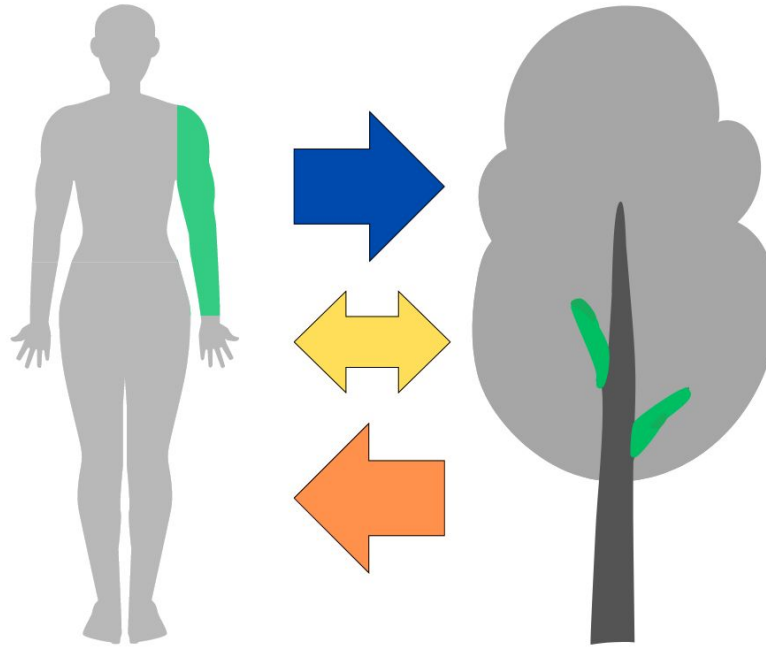Tjuka (2024): *Linguistic Typology*

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Question

In which direction does the development of colexifications go?

Tjuka & List (forthcoming):
Yearbook of the German
Cog. Ling. Assoc.

?

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Materials & Methods

Seed list: 100 body-object colexifications from Tjuka (2024)

Target: Weighted directed network from List (2023)

Overlap: 39 body-object colexifications

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Results

Body	Direction	Object	➡️	⬅️	Total
EAR	→	EARRING	66	2	68
SKIN	→	BARK	42	6	48
NECK	→	COLLAR	44	0	44
TONGUE	→	FLAME	29	0	29
WAIST	→	BELT	24	5	29
INTESTINES	↔	SAUSAGE	13	14	27
TESTICLES	←	EGG	2	24	26
FOOT	→	SHOE	24	0	24
SKIN	→	LEATHER	18	6	24
SKULL	←	TOP	0	14	14
LIP	→	EDGE	3	9	12
SHOULDER BLADE	←	SPADE	0	12	12
FOOT	→	WHEEL	11	0	11
TESTICLES	←	FRUIT	0	10	10
TESTICLES	←	SEED	0	10	10
HEAD	→	TOP	6	3	9
BACK	→	ROOF	8	0	8
SHOULDE RBLADE	←	OAR	0	8	8
SHOULDER BLADE	←	PADDLE	0	8	8
KIDNEY	←	SEED	0	7	7
MOUTH	→	DOOR	5	2	7
NOSE	→	CAPE	7	0	7
BODY	→	TREE TRUNK	6	0	6
EYE	→	SEED	4	2	6
BLOOD VESSEL	←	ROOT	0	5	5
HEAD	→	ROOF	5	0	5

Results

- ○ 21 colexifications show a directional tendency from body to object

- ○ 16 colexifications show a directional tendency from object to body

- ○ 2 colexifications show no directional tendency

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Results

- ○ Examples EAR-EARRING

  - ○ *kula-pepeiao* lit. 'gold-ear' in Hawaiian (Austronesian)

  - ○ *sau faliŋa* lit. 'king ear' in Rotuman (Austronesian)

- ○ Example SKIN-BARK

  - ○ *ror kulun* lit. 'tree/wood skin' in Kalamang (West Bomberai)

- ○ Examples NECK-COLLAR

  - ○ *sɨpluw tõr̃* lit. 'neck cloth' in Mansi (Uralic)

  - ○ *ynĩ teʔ* lit. 'neck clothing' in Chatino (Otomanguean)

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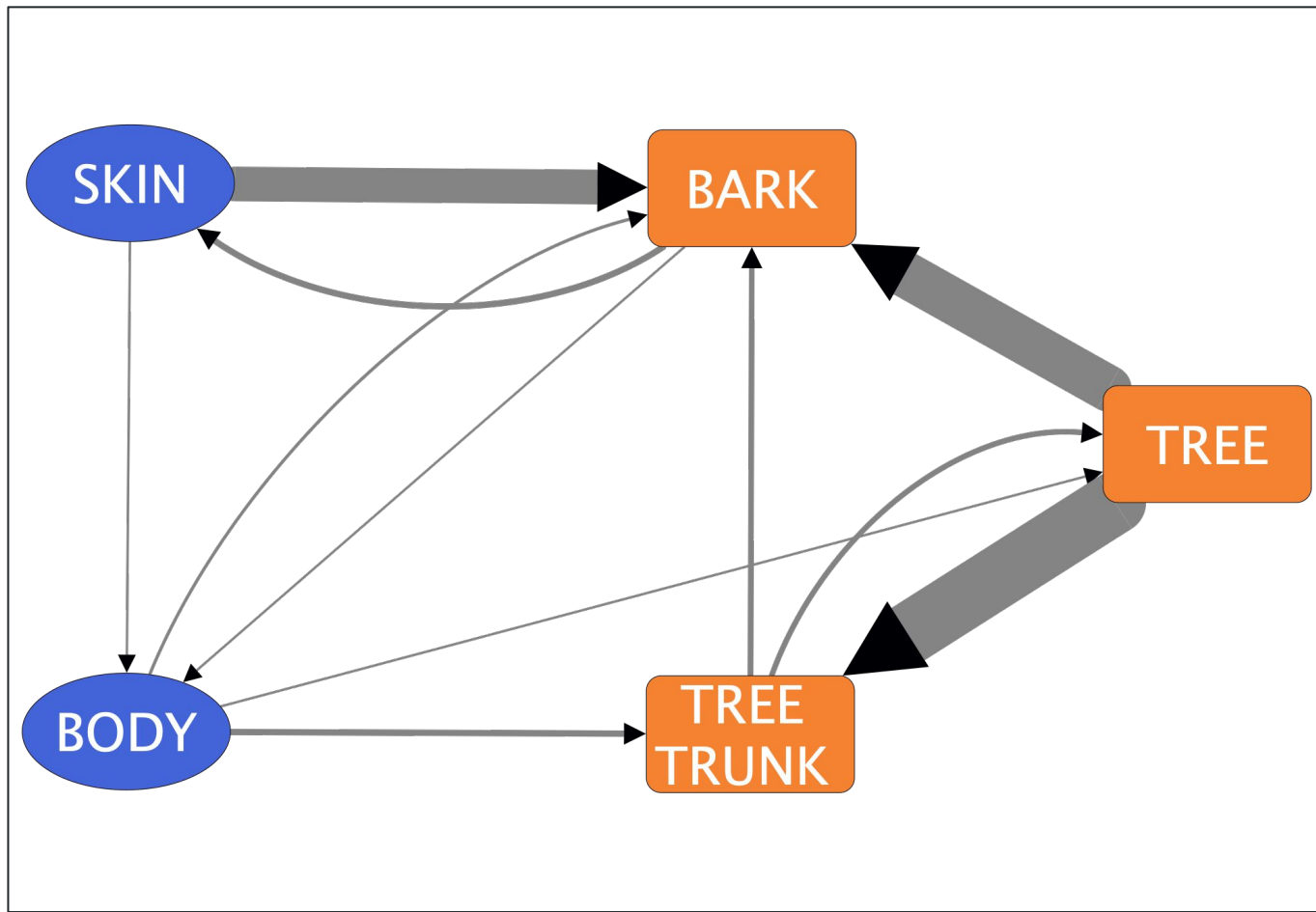
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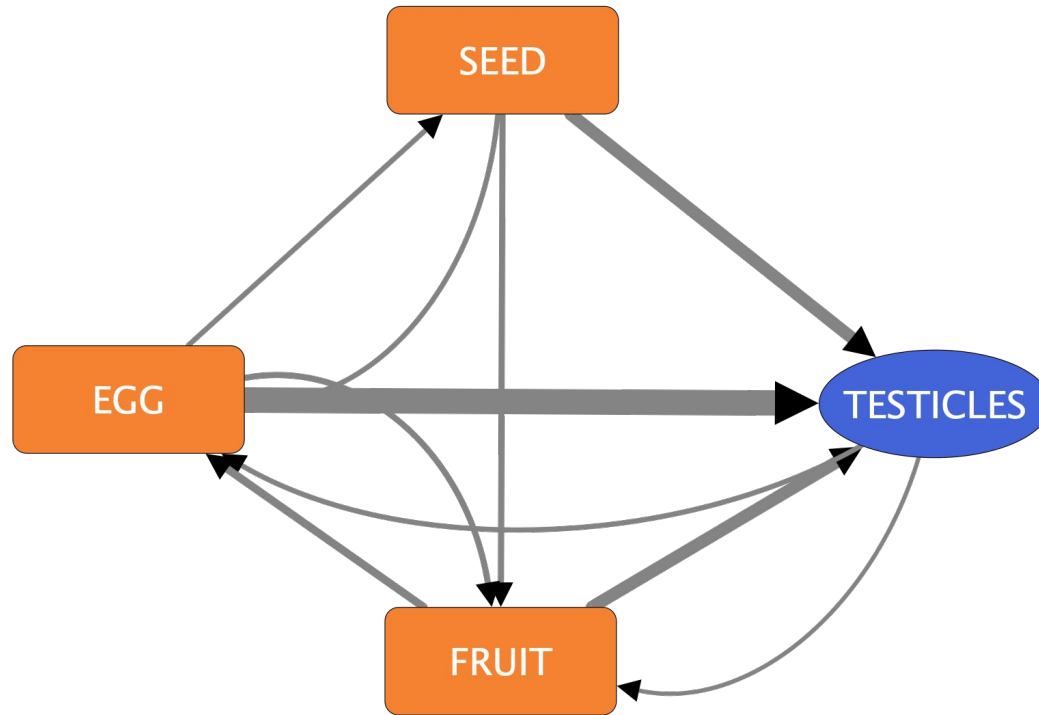
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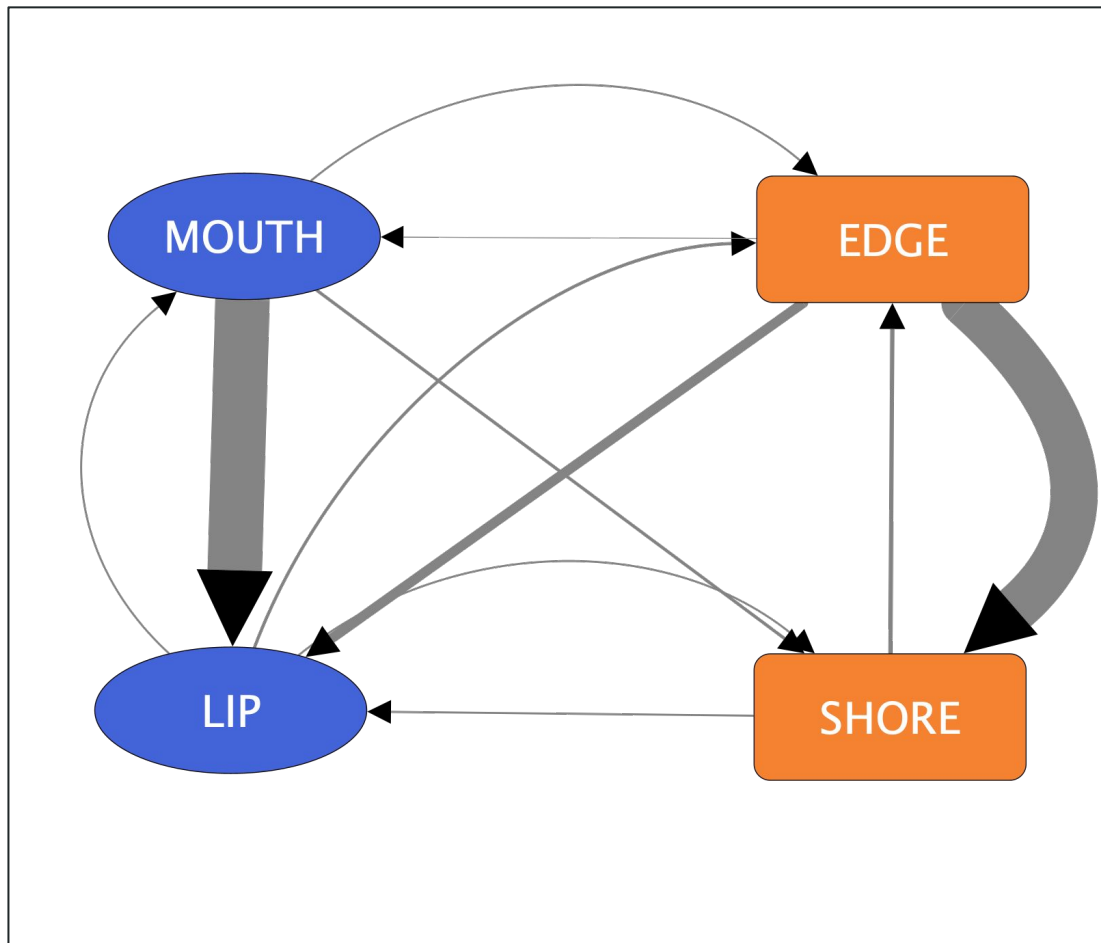
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Conclusions

The domain of the human body serves as the source for the target domain of everyday objects.

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The present study illustrates the synergies that result from the combination of data and methods.

Outlook

- Conduct targeted data collection

- Examine regularities in semantic changes with Database of Semantic Shifts (https://datsemshift.ru/)

- Correlate psycholinguistic measures with Cross-Linguistic Database of Norms, Ratings, and Relations for Words and Concepts (https://norare.clld.org/)

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Cog. Ling. Assoc.

Thank you

Tjuka, Annika & Johann-Mattis List. 2024. Partial Colexifications Reveal Directional Tendencies in Object Naming. *PsyArXiv*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/hc3j5