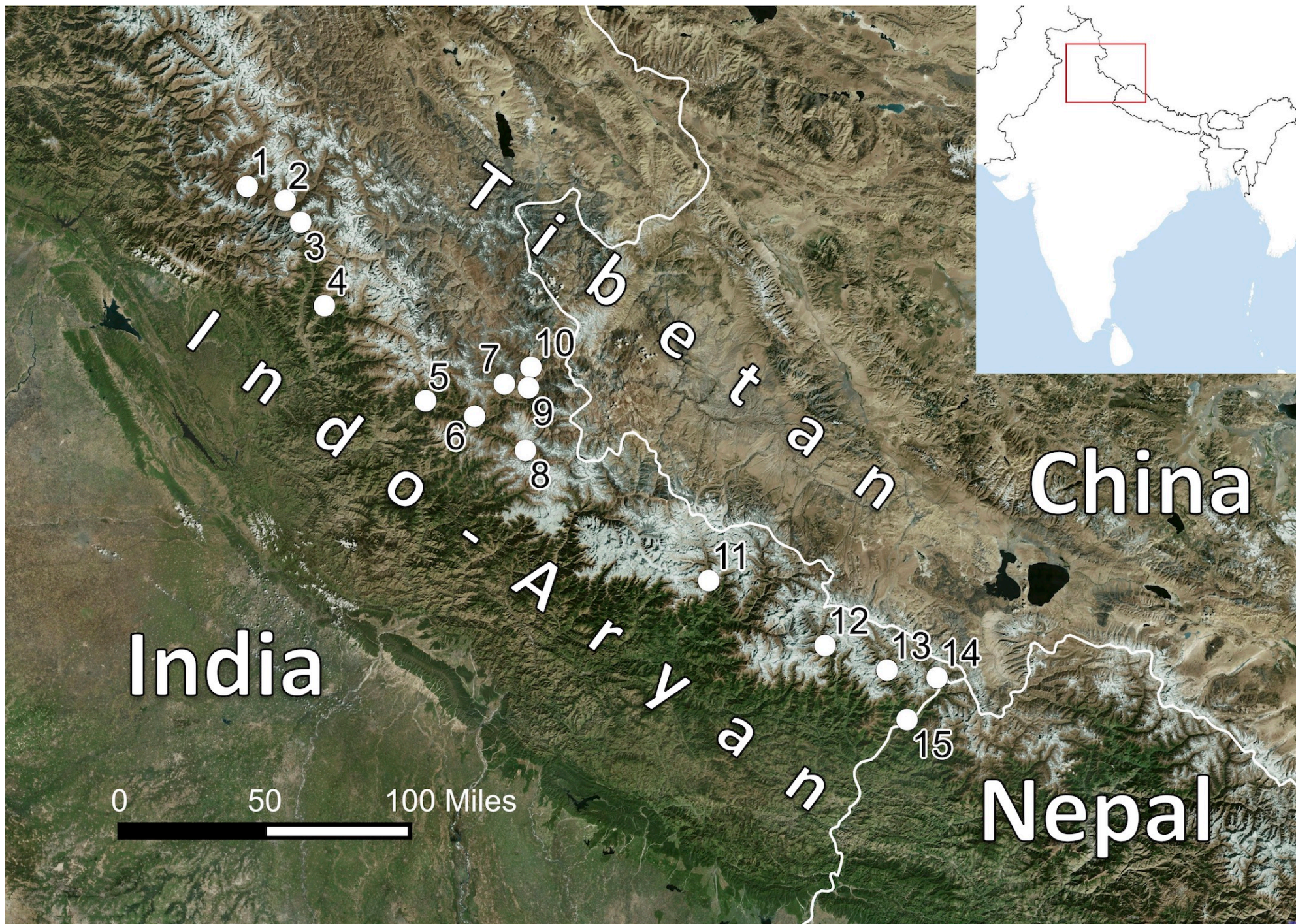# Transitivity markers in West Himalayish

ICSTLL 51, Kyoto University

Manuel Widmer, University of Zurich
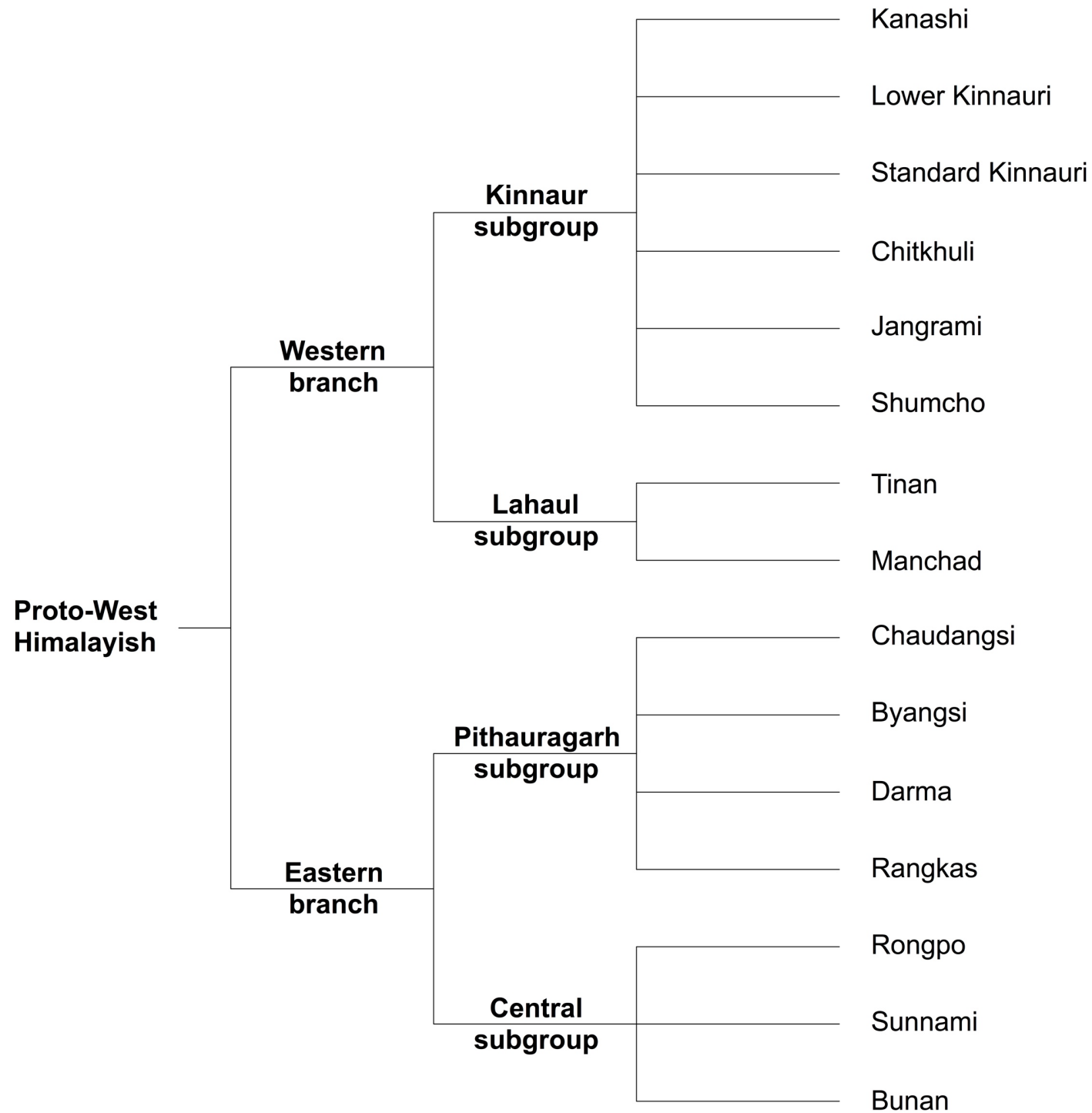
1 The West Himalayish languages

2 Classifying West Himalayish

Proto-West Himalayish

- Western branch
  - Kinnaur subgroup
    - Kanashi
    - Lower Kinnauri
    - Standard Kinnauri
    - Chitkhuli
    - Jangrami
    - Shumcho
  - Lahaul subgroup
    - Tinan
    - Manchad
- Eastern branch
  - Pithauragarh subgroup
    - Chaudangsi
    - Byangsi
    - Darma
    - Rangkas
  - Central subgroup
    - Rongpo
    - Sunnami
    - Bunan

(Widmer 2017)

3 Remarks on transitivity

Transitivity can be defined as a ...

- **Syntactic notion** → classification of verbs into "intransitive" and

   "transitive" based on number of core arguments

   (Dixon 2010)

- **Semantic notion** → classification of verbs into "intransitive" and

   "transitive" based on semantic properties

   (Hopper & Thompson 1980)

A working definition of transitivity

– For this talk, the term "transitivity" is used to refer to a grammatical category that is marked on verbs and classifies them into transitivity classes. This classification can either be based on syntactic or semantic properties.

– The labels "intransitive" and "transitive", in turn, will be used to refer to verbal transitivity classes.
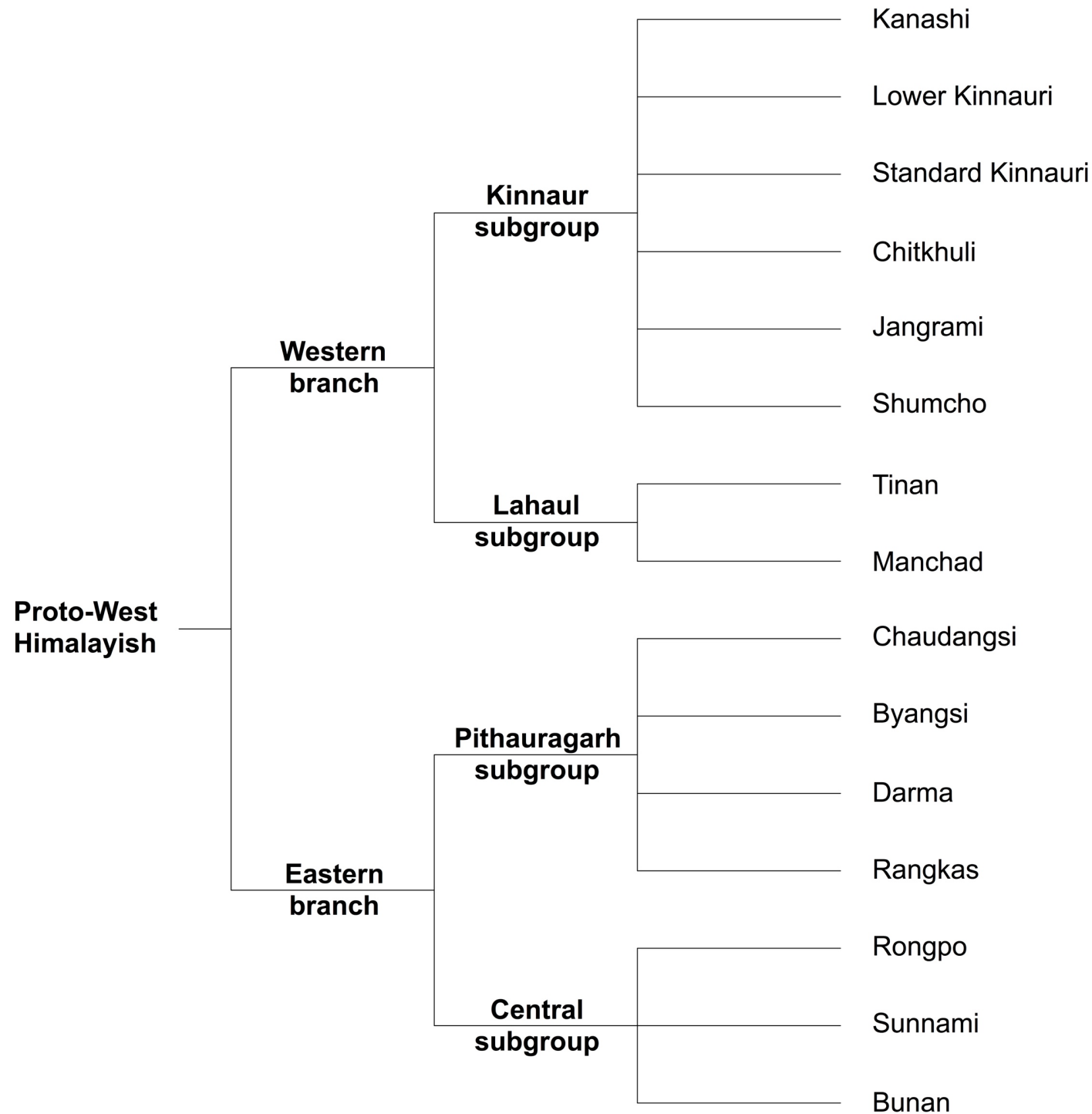
The term «valence»

– The term "valence" will be used to describe how many core arguments a verb has (irrespective of its transitivity class membership)

- one core argument: monovalent

- two core arguments: bivalent

- three core arguments: trivalent

plurivalent

4 Transitivity classes in Bunan

Kanashi

Lower Kinnauri

Standard Kinnauri

Chitkhuli

Jangrami

Shumcho

Kinnaur subgroup

Tinan

Manchad

Lahaul subgroup

Western branch

Chaudangsi

Byangsi

Darma

Rangkas

Pithauragarh subgroup

Rongpo

Sunnami

Bunan

Central subgroup

Eastern branch

Proto-West Himalayish

(Widmer 2017)

Transitivity classes in Bunan

(1)   a.   Intransitive class: *bjak-men* 'to hide'

*bjak-**k**-ek*

hide-**INTR**-PRS.EGO.SG

'I am hiding myself.' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

b.   Middle class: *lok-ɕ-um* 'to climb up'

*lok-**ɕ**-ek*

climb-**MID**-PRS.EGO.SG

'I am climbing up.' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

c.   Transitive class: *jok-tɕ-um* 'to buy'

*jok-**tɕ**-ek*

buy-**TR**-PRS.EGO.SG

'I am buying (something).' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

Functional motivation

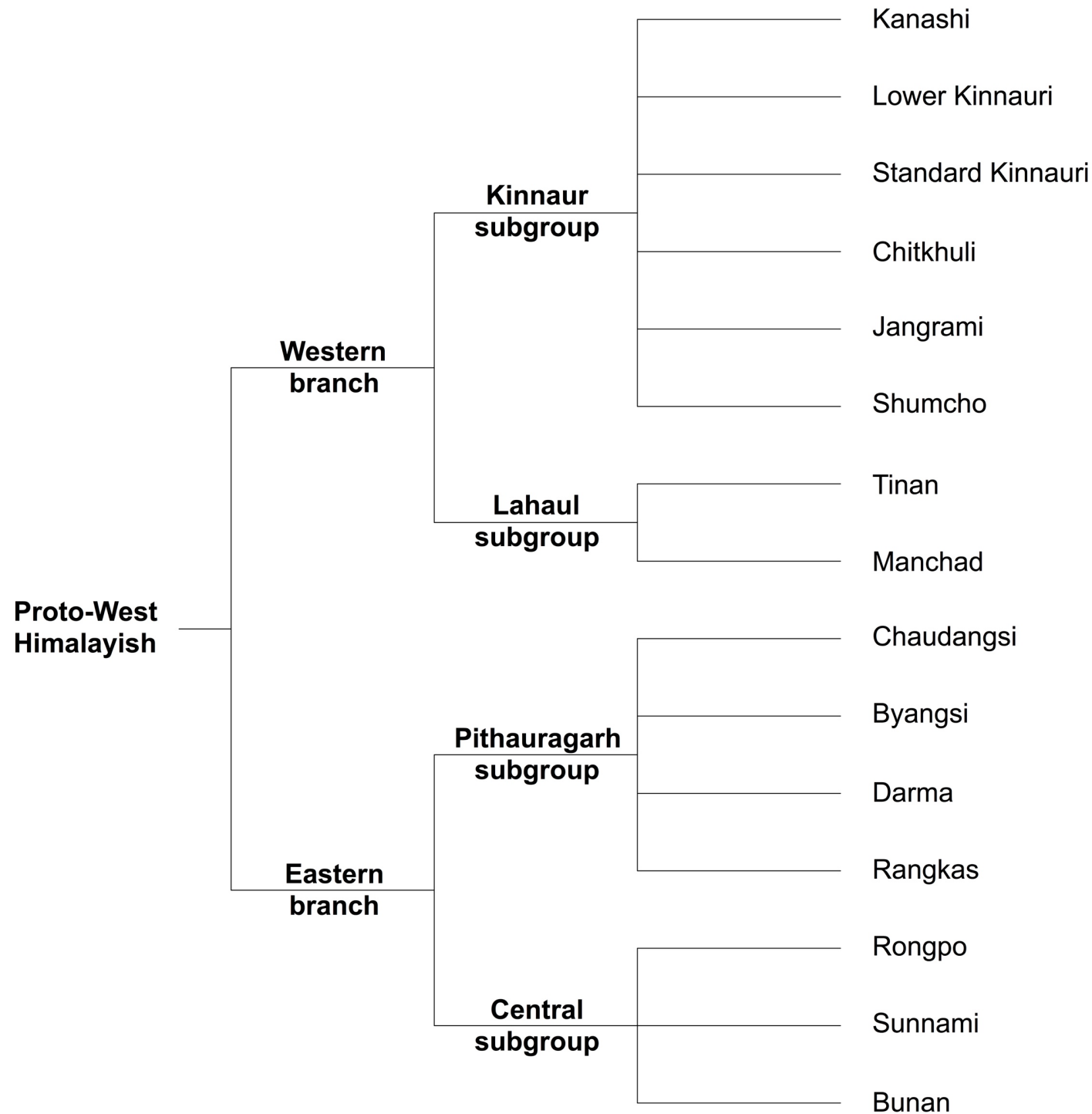|	Monovalent		Plurivalent		Total	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
TR	0	0	266	100	266	100
MID	43	82.7	9	17.3	52	100
INTR	124	79.5	32	20.5	156	100

Functional motivation

− **Intransitive class:** mostly monovalent verbs (e.g. *el-* 'go', *dat-* 'fall'), few plurivalent verbs that are frequently used with non-referential patient arguments (*dza-* 'eat', *pant-* 'spin')

− **Middle class:** monovalent and plurivalent verbs with "middle semantics" (Kemmer 1993) (e.g. *ɕit-* 'die', *dur-* 'compete')

− **Transitive class:** plurivalent verbs (e.g. *tup-* 'cut', *da-* 'give', *lwat-* 'forget')

4 Comparative perspective

Kanashi

Lower Kinnauri

Standard Kinnauri

Chitkhuli

Jangrami

Shumcho

Tinan

Manchad

Chaudangsi

Byangsi

Darma

Rangkas

Rongpo

Sunnami

Bunan

Kinnaur subgroup

Lahaul subgroup

Pithauragarh subgroup

Central subgroup

Western branch

Eastern branch

Proto-West Himalayish

(Widmer 2017)

The intransitive class in comparative perspective

	Bunan	Rongpo	Darma	Byangsi
1SG	*ra-**k**-ek* come-**INTR**-PRS.EGO.SG	*bwəl-**k**-əṅ* camp-**INTR**-PRS.1SG	*ra-**h**-i* come-**INTR**-PRS.1SG	*ra-**g**-ɛ* come-**INTR**-PRS.1SG
2SG	*ra-**k**-ana* come-**INTR**-PRS.2SG	*bwəl-**k**-ən* camp-**INTR**-PRS.2SG	*ra-**h**-en* come-**INTR**-PRS.2SG	*ra-**g**-ṇɔ* come-**INTR**-PRS.2SG
3SG	*ra-**k**-are* come-**INTR**-PRS.ALLO.SG	*bwəl-**k**-ən* camp-**INTR**-PRS.3SG	*ra-**ni*** come-**INTR**.PRS.3	*ra-**g**-an* come-**INTR**-PRS.3SG
1PL	*gwaŋ-**k**-ʰek* come.PL-**INTR**-PRS.EGO.PL	*bwəl-**k**-əni* camp-**INTR**-PRS.PL	*ra-**h**-en* come-**INTR**-PRS.1PL	*ra-**g**-ṇyɛ* come-**INTR**-PRS.1PL
2PL	*gwaŋ-**k**-ʰakni* come.PL-**INTR**-PRS.2PL	*bwəl-**k**-əni* camp-**INTR**-PRS.PL	*ra-**h**-en(i)* come-**INTR**-PRS.2PL	*ra-**g**-ṇi* come-**INTR**-PRS.2PL
3PL	*gwaŋ-**k**-ʰak* come.PL-**INTR**-PRS.ALLO.PL	*bwəl-**k**-əni* camp-**INTR**-PRS.PL	*ra-**ni*** come-**INTR**.PRS.3	*ra-**g**-ṇan* come-**INTR**-PRS.3PL

The transitive class in comparative perspective

	Bunan	Rongpo	Darma	Byangsi
1SG	*lik-**tɕ**-ek* do-**TR**-PRS.EGO.SG	*kaṭ-**c**-əṅ* cut-**TR**-PRS.1SG	*ga-**d**-i* do-**TR**-PRS.1SG	*šuŋ-**t**-ɔ* do-**TR**-PRS.1SG
2SG	*lik-**tɕ**-ana* do-**TR**-PRS.2SG	*kaṭ-**c**-ən* cut-**TR**-PRS.2SG	*ga-**d**-en* do-**TR**-PRS.2SG	*šuŋ-**t**-aṇɔ* do-**TR**-PRS.2SG
3SG	*lik-**tɕ**-are* do-**TR**-PRS.ALLO.SG	*kaṭ-**c**-ən* cut-**TR**-PRS.3SG	*ga-**d**-a* do-**TR**-PRS.3	*šuŋ-**t**-a* do-**TR**-PRS.3SG
1PL	*lik-**tɕ**-ʰek* do-**TR**-PRS.EGO.PL	*kaṭ-**c**-ini* cut-**TR**-PRS.PL	*ga-**d**-en* do-**TR**-PRS.1PL	*šuŋ-**t**-aṇye* do-**TR**-PRS.1PL
2PL	*lik-**tɕ**-ʰakni* do-**TR**-PRS.2PL	*kaṭ-**c**-ini* cut-**TR**-PRS.PL	*ga-**d**-en(i)* do-**TR**-PRS.2PL	*šuŋ-**t**-aṇi* do-**TR**-PRS.2PL
3PL	*lik-**tɕ**-ʰak* do-**TR**-PRS.ALLO.PL	*kaṭ-**c**-ini* cut-**TR**-PRS.PL	*ga-**d**-a* do-**TR**-PRS.3	*šuŋ-**t**-aṇan* do-**TR**-PRS.3SG

The middle class in comparative perspective

	Bunan	Rongpo	Darma	Byangsi
INTR	*el-**k**-ek* go-**INTR**-PRS.EGO.SG 'I am going.'	*bwəl-**k**-əṅ* camp-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am camping.'	*dee-**h**-i* go-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am going.'	*ra-**g**-ɛ* come-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am coming.'
MID	*su-**ɕ**-ek* wash-**MID**-PRS.EGO.SG 'I am washing myself.'	*kyaː-**s**-**k**-əṅ* hide-**MID**-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am hiding myself.'	*ur-**si**-**h**-i* wash-**MID**-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am washing myself.'	*ruŋ-**ši**-**g**-ɛ* listen-**MID**-**INTR**-PRS.1SG 'I am listening.'
TR	*su-**tɕ**-ek* wash-**TR**-PRS.EGO.SG 'I am washing (so.).'	*kaṭ-**c**-əṅ* cut-**TR**-PRS.1SG 'I am cutting (sth.).'	*ur-**d**-i* wash-**TR**-PRS.1SG 'I am washing (so.).'	*šuŋ-**t**-ɔ* do-**TR**-PRS.1SG 'I am doing (sth.).'

Bunan: *su-**ɕ**-ek*   ←   **su-**ɕ**-**k**-ek*

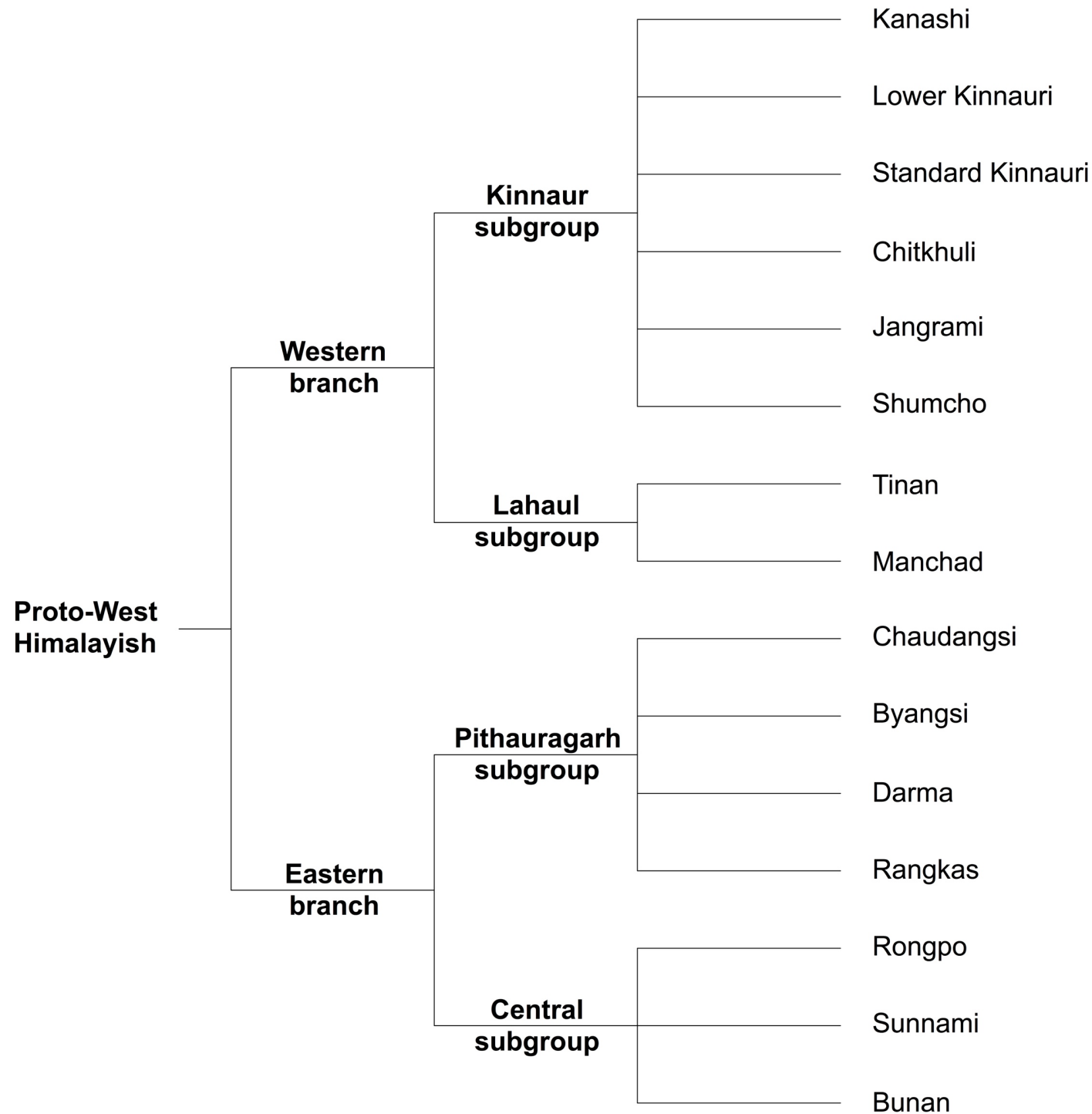   wash-**MID**-PRS.EGO   *wash-**MID**-**INTR**-PRS.EGO

Reconstruction

The reconstructed morphological template of the present tense construction in proto-eastern West Himalayish

VERB STEM – MIDDLE – TRANSITIVITY – TAME / AGREEMENT

5 The origins of transitivity markers in EWH

```
Proto-West
Himalayish
├── Western branch
│   ├── Kinnaur subgroup
│   │   ├── Kanashi
│   │   ├── Lower Kinnauri
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    │   ├── Byangsi
    │   ├── Darma
    │   └── Rangkas
    └── Central subgroup
        ├── Rongpo
        ├── Sunnami
        └── Bunan
```

(Widmer 2017)

Object agreement markers in Kinnauri

First / second person object agreement

a. *an-ʨ-o-k*

   wake.up-**1/2O**-FUT-1A.SG

   'I will wake you up.' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

b. *an-ʨ-o-na*

   wake.up-**1/2O**-FUT-2A.SG

   'You will wake me up.' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

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'You will wake me up.' (Widmer, fieldnotes)

Object agreement markers in Kinnauri

The Kinnauri object agreement marker *-tɕ-* is reminiscent of the Bunan / Rongpo transitivity marker *-tɕ-* both in terms of its function and its morphological position in the verb complex. It is thus probable that the two markers are related and that the transitivity marker developed from an object agreement marker. The question now is: Can we come up with a story that account for this functional reanalysis?

Transitivity marking in Rawang (LaPolla 2011)

a. Intransitive class: *shì=ē* 'die'

ngà	*rømnv̄ng-pè*	*gø̄*	*shì*	*bǿ-ì*
1SG	friend-MALE	also	die	PFV-**INTR**.PST

'My friend also died.' (LaPolla 2011: 637)

b. Transitive class: *yʾng-ó=ē* 'see'

rvshà-rì=í	*yʾng*	*bǿ-à*	*kvt*	…
monkey-PL=AGT	see	PFV-**TR**.PST	when	…

'When the monkeys saw (him), … .' (LaPolla 2011: 638)

Transitivity marking in Rawang (LaPolla 2011)

– Depending on the grammatical context, the marker *-ó-* either functions as an 3rd person object agreement marker or a marker of transitive predicates.

– This makes it plausible that there is a diachronic link between the functional domains of object marking and transitivity marking! But how could this reanalysis be explained?

The reanalysis

Object agreement markers can sometimes occur in contexts in which they do not serve the function of indexing to a specific object argument (e.g. in citation forms as is the case in Rawang). This opens up the possibility of a **metanalysis** (Croft 2001: 130), viz. the swapping of «contextual and inherent semantic values of a syntactic unit».

This scenario offers a plausible explanation for the origin of the transitive marker in EWH languages, but where does the intransitive marker come from? It is possible that this morpheme is the reflex of an old converb marker *-ka*, which ended up inside of an inflected form due to the univerbation of a formerly periphrastic verb form.

	Monovalent verbs	**Plurivalent verbs**
Stage 1	*V-ka + COP-SUBJ*	*V(-tɕ)-ka + COP-SUBJ*
	↓	↓
Stage 2	*V-k-SUBJ*	*V(-tɕ)-k-SUBJ*
	↓	↓
Stage 3	*V-k-SUBJ*	*V-**tɕ**-k-SUBJ*
	↓	↓
Stage 4	*V-**k**-SUBJ*	*V-**tɕ**-SUBJ*

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