THREE WESTERN SCHOLARS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO FORMOSAN LINGUISTICS

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Introduction[1]

Out of the 24 or so Formosan languages known to have been spoken up to the twentieth century in Taiwan (Keta(n)galan, Taokas, Papora, Babuza, Favorlang, Hoanya, Siraya, Makattao, Taivoan, Kavalan, Pazeh, Thao, Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunun, Tsou, Saaroa, Kanakanavu, Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Amis, Seediq, Yami), nearly half (the first nine above-mentioned) are already extinct, and the others are declining rapidly.

The Formosan languages exhibit great variation that is not well understood to date, as Formosan linguistics research has long been neglected. Preliminary studies were made during the Japanese occupation (*cf.* Ogawa and Asai 1935). These laid the foundations for more detailed descriptions. They were followed by a series of descriptions on the synchronic and diachronic phonologies of the Formosan languages as well as discussions of their genetic classification. The two most prominent figures in the field in the 70's through the 90's were Paul Jen-kuei Li and Shigeru Tsuchida. In the past few years, a renewed surge of interest has caused an influx of studies that have been carried out within different theoretical orientations.

However, in this community-shared attempt to document the cultures and languages of the Formosan tribes, we are faced with two major contradictions. First, data collection remains a lone enterprise, whose results are usually not shared among the linguistic community. What is published is the product of fieldwork, that is, linguistic descriptions and analyses, and these might not always reflect all the subtleties of these languages. Second, due to practical reasons such as time constraints, difficulty in accessing the material at hand, pressure from academic institutions to publish theoretically relevant analyses, linguists working on the Formosan languages do usually not transcribe texts, edit dictionaries or carry in-depth research on a particular language but rather content themselves with recording unrelated sets of sentences. Our general working attitude has had two major and related consequences: (i) our understanding of the Formosan languages in terms of dialectal variation, grammatical changes, typological discrepancies etc. is still, to some extent, rather superficial; (ii) this renders more difficult comparative work on language internal and external subgrouping as well as reconstruction.

Until very recently, few grammars with a wide coverage of these languages had

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been written (*cf.* Asai 1953, Tung et al. 1964, Szakos 1994, Li 1973, Huang 1995, Teng 2007, Zeitoun in press); few data collections are available to date (*cf.* Li and Tsuchida 2002, Tsuchida 2003, Zeitoun and Lin 2003, Rau and Tung 2006, Cauquelin Forthcoming)[2] and while there are now more dictionaries in print than there used to be at the end of the XXth century (*cf.* Pecoraro 1977, Egerod 1978, Ferrell 1982, Fey 1986, Cauquelin 1991a, Li and Tsuchida 2001, 2006, Blust 2003), these hardly cover half of the Formosan languages.

Many Western scholars as well as missionaries have carried out research on the Formosan languages (see appendices 1 and 2). The short (and rather incomplete[3]) list given above reflects their productivity and their devoted efforts at collecting and describing these languages in a comprehensive manner. The goal of the present paper is to give a retrospective of the work of three scholars (Stanley Starosta, Josiane Cauquelin and R. Blust[4]) who, in my opinion, have had/have an influential impact on Formosan linguistics. I will add a few lines about what could be done in the future, as Formosan linguistics has now attracted a lot of "local" scholars and students.

2. Stanley Starosta
2.1 Background

Stanley Starosta was a professor at the Department of Linguistics, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for nearly thirty five years until his retirement in May 2002. He passed away soon after, on July 18, 2002. At the time, he had been scheduled to offer classes on Formosan languages and linguistics at the Summer LST Institute in Taiwan (July , 2002).

He first visited Taiwan in 1964 to study Chinese and since the very beginning he was very much involved in the study of the Formosan languages, as exemplified, for instance, by his review's of Tung's (1964) Tsou grammar (Starosta 1969). Blaine Erickson in his obituary[5] recounts:

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[2] Fortunately, technology now allows the digitalization and the dissemination of linguistic corpora on the world wide web and the past few years have witnessed the growth of different types of Language Archives on the Formosan languages, among others: (1) the *Formosan Language Archive* (http://formosan.sinica.edu.tw), (2) *Digital Archiving: Yami Language Documentation* (http://yamiproject.cs.pu.edu.tw/yami/yami_ch/ link.htm, (3) *NTU Corpus of Formosan Languages* (http://corpus.linguistics.ntu.edu.tw).

[3] I have not mentioned renowned scholars in the field working on second hand data, such as J. Wolff, Malcolm Ross or S. Adelaar, for instance.

4 Time and paper length constraints forbid me from presenting the work of all the western scholars and missionaries that have contributed by and far to the development of Formosan linguistics. I have chosen to put the emphasis on these three scholars because (i) I have, at some point, closely worked with them, (ii) their research – abundant and inspiring in terms of topic coverage and publications – is mostly based on first-hand data, (iii) the first two have not, in my opinion, receive the recognition that they deserve though they have/will influence(d) contemporary researchers and lead to new trends in Formosan linguistics.

[5] http://www.ling.hawaii.edu/faculty/stanley/erickson.html

'Professor Starosta spent extended periods doing research, teaching, and field work in East, Southeast, and South Asia, and Western Europe. His primary area of research was lexicase, a highly-constrained dependency grammar he developed. He also worked on natural language processing; morphological theory; and the synchronic analysis and historical reconstruction of languages of East, Southeast, and South Asia and the Pacific. An expert in Austronesian linguistics, he wrote countless papers and gave innumerable presentations on Formosan languages; much of his work was based on his own field work in Taiwan. In addition to his work on Proto-Austronesian, he also did research on the prehistory of other languages of E/SE/S Asia and the Pacific. Additionally, he had considerable expertise in Chinese languages, German, Japanese, and Thai. He devoted much of his effort to issues in syntactic theory, such as case relations, ergativity and transitivity, and focus. His morphological theory, also highly constrained, holds that words have no internal structure, and, in essence, that the only morphological rule is analogy.'

Over the years, Stanley Starosta established strong connections in Taiwan with scholars and students and shared durable friendships with a number of them. He taught classes at National Tsing Hua University (1988-1989, *cf.* Ho 1989) and at National Taiwan University (1996-1997). He also did fieldwork on a number of Formosan languages: Tsou, Saaroa, Rukai, Seediq, Saisiyat, Paiwan, Amis, Yami and Bunun. Last, but not least, he participated in many conferences organized, among others, by the Institute of History and Philology at Academia Sinica (including: the *International Symposium on Austronesian Cultures: Issues Relating to Taiwan*, Dec. 8-12, 1992, the *Conference on Austronesian Languages in Taiwan*, May 20-22, 1994, the *Fourth International Conferences on Chinese Languages and Linguistics*, July 18-20, 1994) as well as by the Institute of Linguistics (including the *Eighth International Conference on Austronesian Languages*, Dec. 28-30, 1997, the *Workshop on Nominalization in Formosan Languages*, Oct. 21-22, 2000, the *International Symposium on Austronesian Cultures: Issues Relating to Taiwan*, Dec. 8-11, 2001).

2.2 Research interests

Starosta's research was driven by one major goal: assess and reassess – whenever necessary – the theory he had put forward based on a variety of (Austronesian and non-Austronesian) languages. Thus, most of his theoretical assumptions and empirical analyses took root in the *lexicase* (*cf.* among others, Starosta 1988b-c and 1994) the development of which was the focal point of his professional career. At the end of his life, he also collaborated with Ford et al. (1997) and worked on *seamless morphology* (*cf.* Starosta 2003).

The papers he published on the Formosan languages cover a large number of

issues ranging from typology, focus, ergativity, subgrouping and morphosyntactic reconstruction.

In the following subsections, I review briefly his major theoretical assumptions and his contributions to Formosan languages and linguistics.

2.2.1 A bird's eyeview of lexicase

Starosta (1994) defined lexicase as a "type of European-style depency/valency grammar" which had evolved as a reaction against Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar, though it was said to be "generative"[6], i.e. 'formal' and 'explicit'. The name he gave to his theory (*cf.* lexicase) reflected Starosta's views of grammar: *lexi-* refers to the generalizations that can be made about the internal and external structure of a word and *-case* to the syntactic and the semantic relationships that exist between nouns and the words on which they depend. Grammatical representations are stated in terms of pairwise dependency relations between a dominant word (the regent) and a dependent word. Only five cases are recognized: PAT (Patient), AGT (Agent), LOC (Locative), MNS (Means), COR (Correspondent). Cases are associated with case relations (e.g. Nom (Nominative), Gen (Genitive), Loc (Locative), Inst (Instrumental) etc.). Starosta's basic and most fundamental assumptions were that:

- every verb has a PAT complement and every transitive verb has a AGT complement.

- PAT links to Nom in all intransitive clauses (whether the language is defined as accusative or ergative)

- actr (actor) links to PAT in an intransitive clause and AGT in a transitive clause

- In accusative languages, Nom links to actr, and in ergative languages, Nom links to PAT.

2.2.2 Starosta's contributions to Formosan languages and linguistics

Starosta's contributions to Formosan languages and linguistics are readily seen in two main areas, typology and historical linguistics.

Regarding his typological studies, he was the first (i) to compare synchronically and systematically the Formosan languages (*cf.* for instance Starosta 1974, 1988a) and (ii) to establish the ergativity of the Formosan languages (*cf.* Gibson and Starosta 1990, Starosta 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2004 as well as earlier papers mentioned in the references herein).

Regarding historical linguistics, his research interests were numerous, ranging

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[6] S. Starosta was against transformations and proned a one level of representation. In lexicase, there is no distinction between D-structure and S-structure, and f-structure from c-structure. He also made rid of empty categories and label nodes.

from the reconstruction of PAN morphemes (*cf.* Starosta et al. 1981, 1982, Starosta 1993, 1995a-b), the development of two closely interrelated phenomena, focus and nominalization (*cf.* Starosta et al. 1981, 1982, 1985, 1986, 2002a), the interrelationships of the Formosan languages (*cf.* Starosta 1990, 1995a, 1996, 2002b) to the phylogeny of the Austronesian language family (*cf.* Starosta 1995b)

His views on ergativity[7] have been very influential in the field, but while they are now nearly totally accepted, they are not always being credited in their own right (see section 2.3), and not always really understood (e.g., there is a tendency to mix up cases, cf. the use of the "accusative" case to discuss about ergative languages).

2.3 A note on Starosta's legacy

Though very provocative and controversial[8], Starosta's ideas have been very much influential and his thoughts, beyond doubt, have inspired all those who have been working on the morpho-syntax of the Formosan languages since the early 1990's.

However, despite his prominent leadership in the field and his scholarly contributions to our understanding of the Formosan languages, his work has tended to be ignored in recent years and is rarely cited or credited although it has laid the foundation of Formosan linguistics, at least on the morphosyntactic level; its influence can be seen in many analyses. Students having attended his classes sometimes omit to cite him properly (see Wang 2004, reviewed in Zeitoun 2005), and respected scholars in Taiwan and abroad have tended to forget his contributions to the field. To give but one example, S. Huang (2005), for instance, describes LF and I/BF constructions as a type of "applicatives", while this terminology appeared much earlier in Starosta's work (*cf.* for instance Starosta 2002a). Such omissions are rather surprising and all the more upsetting that most of his papers are accessible to the public (in press and on-line). Many appeared in volumes that were published in Taiwan, most notably by the Institute of History and Philology (*cf.* Starosta 1988, 1990, 1995a) and by the Institute of Linguistics (*cf.* Starosta 1997, 1999, 2002) at Academia Sinica. He also published many influential papers in journals abroad (e.g., *Language*, *cf.* Starosta 1969 and *Oceanic Linguistics*, *cf.* Starosta 1974) as well as conference proceedings, *Pacific Linguistics* (*cf.* Starosta et al. 1982, Starosta 1985, 1986)[9].

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[7] S. Starosta defined ergativity as followed: (i) morphologically, intransitive verbs (including pseudotransitives) in Formosan and Philippine languages are marked by *m-*, while transitive verbs are commonly suffixed by *-n*; (ii) syntactically, both nominative and genitive pronouns are used to refer to the actor (actr), but while nominative pronouns occur with intransitive verbs, genitive pronouns occur with transitive verbs; (iii) semantically, transitivity is associated with perfectivity (cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980).

[8] Lexicase seems never to have been recognized in the international linguistic circle.

[9] An anthology of his publications is in preparation (see Zeitoun To appear).

3. Josiane Cauquelin

3.1 Background and research interests

Josiane Cauquelin is both a sinologist – she spent two years in Mainland China (1975-1977), before coming to Taiwan (1978) – and an ethnologist. She is affiliated at the LASEMA – CNRS (Southeast Asia and Austronesian World Institute, part of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)

She has been working on different populations in Mainland China (Buyi, Zhuang, Lao), though her main research interests lie in the ethnographic study of the Puyuma society as well as of their cultural traditions.

Josiane Cauquelin started her investigation of the Puyuma society by spending a year (1983-1984) in Nanwang (Taitung county) though preliminary work started as earlier as 1978, when she first came to Taiwan. She published a book in 2004 on the Puyuma (Cauquelin 2004a), which represents the consecration of her twenty years of research and covers, in English, topics that were mostly published in French (see Cauquelin1995a-b, 2000a-b, 2004a).

During her first stay at Nanwang, she rapidly learnt the Puyuma language. She still speaks it fluently today. Her knowledge of the Puyuma language (Nanwang dialect) allowed her to write a Puyuma-French dictionary (Cauquelin 1991a) and a sketch of grammar (Cauquelin 1991b)[10]. At the same time, her research on the Puyuma society led her to further investigate their religious practices, and she has become, over the years, an internationally renowned expert on shamanism (Cauquelin 1995a-b, 2004a).

In 2004, J. Cauquelin agreed to collaborate to the *Academia Sinica Formosan Language Archive*, under my direction (*cf.* Zeitoun et al. 2003 and Zeitoun and Yu 2005). She also started to work on the linguistic and poetic aspects of the ritual texts she had collected in the eighties and nineties (*cf.* Cauquelin 2004b, 2006)[11]. We spent several months together in 2006 and 2007 working daily on the morphophonemic analysis of each ritual text. A monograph of about thirty texts has been submitted for publication at the Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica and is now under review (Cauquelin forthcoming).

3.2 Cauquelin's contributions to Formosan languages and ethnolinguistics

As mentioned above, Cauquelin's research has not just focussed on the Puyuma society. Her research represents an inspiring interdisciplinary work that provides

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[10] J. Cauquelin's was A. Haudricourt's student.

[11] In these more recent publications (*cf.* Cauquelin 2004b, 2006 and forthcoming), she has been combining ethnology to linguistics by outlining the different stylistic and linguistic processes (systematic doublings of synonyms, dyads, extensive use of metaphors, assonances borrowings, archaisms) that underline each of the invocations she has recorded.

detailed ethnographic studies which crucially take their roots in the Puyuma language. Her 2004 book (Cauquelin 2004a) illustrates this point. Each chapter introduces linguistic forms and proceeds from there, showing how, by investigating their semantic properties, they can serve as a basis for the ethnographic analysis on the traditional society and customs of the Puyuma. Without going into detail, let me just give a few examples. In each chapter, lexical items related to a certain topic are arranged through semantic fields. Whenever a term is given in the text, its word formation is decomposed or its etymology is given in an endnote. A few rituals and songs are provided as an illustration for Cauquelin's analysis and translated. Last, but not least, nearly all the captions of the drawings are given in Puyuma.

Regarding her work on shamanism, she has not just contended herself to describe the religious practices of the Puyuma. She has recorded, transcribed and translated ritual texts from both male and female officiants. These are now being totally forgotten by the Puyuma themselves. Cauquelin (Forthcoming) notes that "[i]n 1983, the villagers recognize with nostalgia they were about 30 shamans in the 1950's but only 19 left in 1983; in 1999, they were still about 12 shamans, all women, who were working daily. As of 2006, there were only two left and one of them admitted she could not perform certain practices, such as going into the *aulas* as she had not been taught to. Their role in the society is now closer to that of Chinese mediums."

Cauquelin's work surpasses in many ways what has been traditionally accomplished by ethnologists and linguists alike on the Formosan tribes and languages: to my knowledge, recordings of rituals with such a meticulous linguistic analysis are unheard of.

Linguists working on the Formosan languages have had a tendency to despise, for various reasons, ethnologists (and should I add: missionaries?) and while different institutions in Taiwan (e.g. the National Science Council) have been trying to stress out the importance of interdisciplinary research, linguists and ethnologists/anthropologists have tended to keep their work apart. Thirty years after Ferrell (1969), Cauquelin (Forthcoming) has succeeded in showing us linguists that we too often ignore what underlies language, i.e., culture, while proving to ethnologists that they cannot carry out any first-rate ethnographic studies without a certain understanding of the language spoken by the society their research focuses on.

4. Robert Blust
4.1 Background and research interests
I think it is not exaggerated to speak of Robert Blust as the most prominent and the most productive scholar in the Austronesian field. Over nearly forty years, he has published around 200 journal papers and 3 books (see Blust 1988, 2003 and To appear)

on numerous topics (phonology, morphology, reconstruction, subgrouping and language and culture) and has been editing a large Austronesian comparative dictionary (Blust 1995c).

He combines the qualities of both Stanley Starosta and Josiane Cauquelin: he is a linguist with a strong background in anthropology (he received a BA in Anthropology and a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa). He has worked first- and second-hand on numerous languages and has done fieldwork on 97 Austronesian languages spoken in Sarawak, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan. After several years abroad, as a post-doctorate in Australia (1976-1984) and as an Associate Professor in Leiden, Holland (1984-1987), he has been teaching at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa ever since 1987.

Like Stanley Starosta, he has established strong connections in Taiwan with scholars and students and has attended the same conferences (except for the 2000 Workshop). He spent two years in Taiwan, the first in 1994, as a researcher at the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica and the second in 2001-2002, as an invited professor at the Institute of Linguistics, at National Cheng-chi University. During his two stays, he did (more or less extensive) fieldwork on a number of languages, including Thao, Kavalan, Pazeh, Amis, Paiwan and Saisiyat. Asides from publications based on first-hand data collection (see among others Blust 1996, 1999a-b, 2006), R. Blust has published numerous papers on reconstruction, basing himself on the Formosan languages (*cf.* for instance, Blust 1977, 1993, 1995b, 2003a, 2006) and subgrouping (*cf.* his three best-known articles on this topic, Blust 1977, 1995a, 1999c). Most importantly, he is the author of the Thao-English dictionary, the most voluminous Formosan language dictionary (Blust 2003b).

4.2 Blust's contributions to Formosan languages and linguistics

Both in terms of quality and quantity, Blust's contributions to Formosan (and to Austronesian in general) languages and linguistics are unparalleled.

Regarding his subgrouping hypotheses, he was the first to show that (i) Thao belong to the Western plain tribes (Blust 1996), and that (ii) Amis subgroups with Basay-Kavalan and Siraya, forming altogether the East-Formosan language group (Blust 1999c)[12].

He has established standards – though perhaps rather complicated – for dictionary making (Blust 2003), and has worked on both phonological and more recently morphological reconstruction, *cf.* for instance his publications on paka- (Blust 1999b), the causative morphemes *pa-*, *pi-*, *pu-* (Blust 2003a) and on the

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[12] About simultaneously, Ho (1998) published an article whereby he also subgrouped Bunun with Kavalan, Amis and Siraya. These two authors seem not to have been aware of each other's (to some extent) similar hypotheses.

genitive case markers *na*, *ni*, *nu* (Blust 2005).

5. Future prospects

There are many things to learn from the work that has been carried out by western scholars in the past, and even more from the three whom I have briefly outlined the research in this paper.

What I find interesting is that each of these scholars do/did fieldwork completely differently and while their aims are/were also different, they all succeeded in showing us new paths in Formosan linguistics:

- S. Starosta did his interviews in Chinese. He would elicit sentences rather than collect texts but he was the first to highlight the importance of Formosan language typology;

- J. Cauquelin does her interviews in Puyuma. She collects texts and rituals as well as vocabulary and sentences; she was one of the first to demonstrate the importance of ethnolinguistics;

- R. Blust needs a translator to do fieldwork – which complicates the interview process – but is favored by the background he possesses on the Austronesian languages and the rich experience he has acquired through extensive fieldwork and rather concentrates on the lexicon. He was also one of the first to remind us (back in 1994 – during his first-year stay in Taiwan) of the importance of dictionary making.

These are three research areas which we need to go on developing. As we do so, it would be interesting to look in more detail at dialectal and generational variation from a morphosyntactic point of view. We know, for instance, that the Isbukun dialect spoken in Nantou and in Kaohsiung counties is slightly different, but none of us has ever tried to list out and analyze these differences. We also know that as these languages are facing extinction, they are not spoken the same by younger generations as they are by elders, but few if no analyses have been dedicated to such sociolinguistic issues.

What we can learn also from the work of these three scholars is that Formosan linguistics is not simply a matter of elucidating certain linguistic problems from the perspective of a particular theory[13]. It is also about relationships we establish with our informants, and the love that develops (or should develop) for the language(s) we are investigating. This is illustrated marvelously in the respective work of S. Starosta, J. Cauquelin and R. Blust. What I mean is that doing research on these endangered languages requires devotion for one's work, love for the language one investigates

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[13] I totally with Dixon (1997:144) when he states that: "The most important task in linguistics today – indeed, the only really important task – is to get out in the field and describe languages, while this can still be done. Self admiration in the looking glass of formalist theory can wait; that will always be possible."

and appreciation for the people one does fieldwork with. Unless there is love and enthusiasm, there will not be selfless endeavor to preserve and document these languages since most of the work that needs to be done at this stage is salvage research.

Appendix 1 List of western scholars having worked on the Formosan languages[14]

1.	Adelaar (1997, 1999, 2000, 2004a-b)	Siraya
2.	Aldridge (2002, 2004a-b)	Seediq
3.	Arnaud (1995)	Yami
4.	Blust (1996, 1998, 2003, 2005)	Thao, Amis, Paiwan, Kavalan, Saisiyat, Pazeh
5.	de Busser (Forthcoming)	Bunun (Takivatan)
6.	Cauquelin (1991a-b, 2006, to appear)	Puyuma (Nanwang)
7.	Egerod (1965a-b, 1966a-b, 1978)	Atayal
8.	Ferrell (1966, 1969, 1972, 1978, 1979a-b, 1982)	Paiwan
9.	Holmer (1996)	Seediq
10.	Radetzky (2004)	Saaroa
11.	Ross (1992, 1995, 2006), Ross and Teng (2005, 2006)	[Typology, historical linguistics] Puyuma
12.	Saillard (1995, 1998, 2000, 2004)	Rukai, Amis, Seediq
13.	Shelley (1978)	Rukai (Budai)
14.	Sprenger (1971)	Puyuma
15.	de Sulauze (Forthcoming)	Amis
16.	Starosta (references cited herein)	Tsou, Seediq, Amis, Saisiyat, Bunun
17.	Szakos (1994)	Tsou (Saaroa, Kanakanavu)
18.	Wright (1996, 1997)	Tsou
19.	Zeitoun (1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997a-b, 2000, 2001, 2002, in press among others)	Tsou, Rukai, Bunun, Saisiyat, Puyuma

Appendix 2 List of western missionaries having worked on the Formosan languages

1.	Bareights (1976a-b, 1987, 1990a-b, 1993a-b)	Amis
2.	Duris (1969a-b, 1970, 1987, 1988, 1990)	Amis, Bunun
3.	Egli (1990, 2002)	Paiwan
4.	Fey (1986)	Amis
5.	Flahutez (1970)	Amis
6.	Nevskij (1935)	Tsou
7.	Pourrias and Poinsot (2002 [1996])	Amis
8.	Pecoraro (1977, 1979)	Seediq
9	Weingartner (2002)	Atayal, Saisiyat

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[14] I have taken into account Li's (2007) list but have made some modifications to it, and added all the references cited herein.

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