



**The interaction of  
person and number**  
*a typologist's perspective*

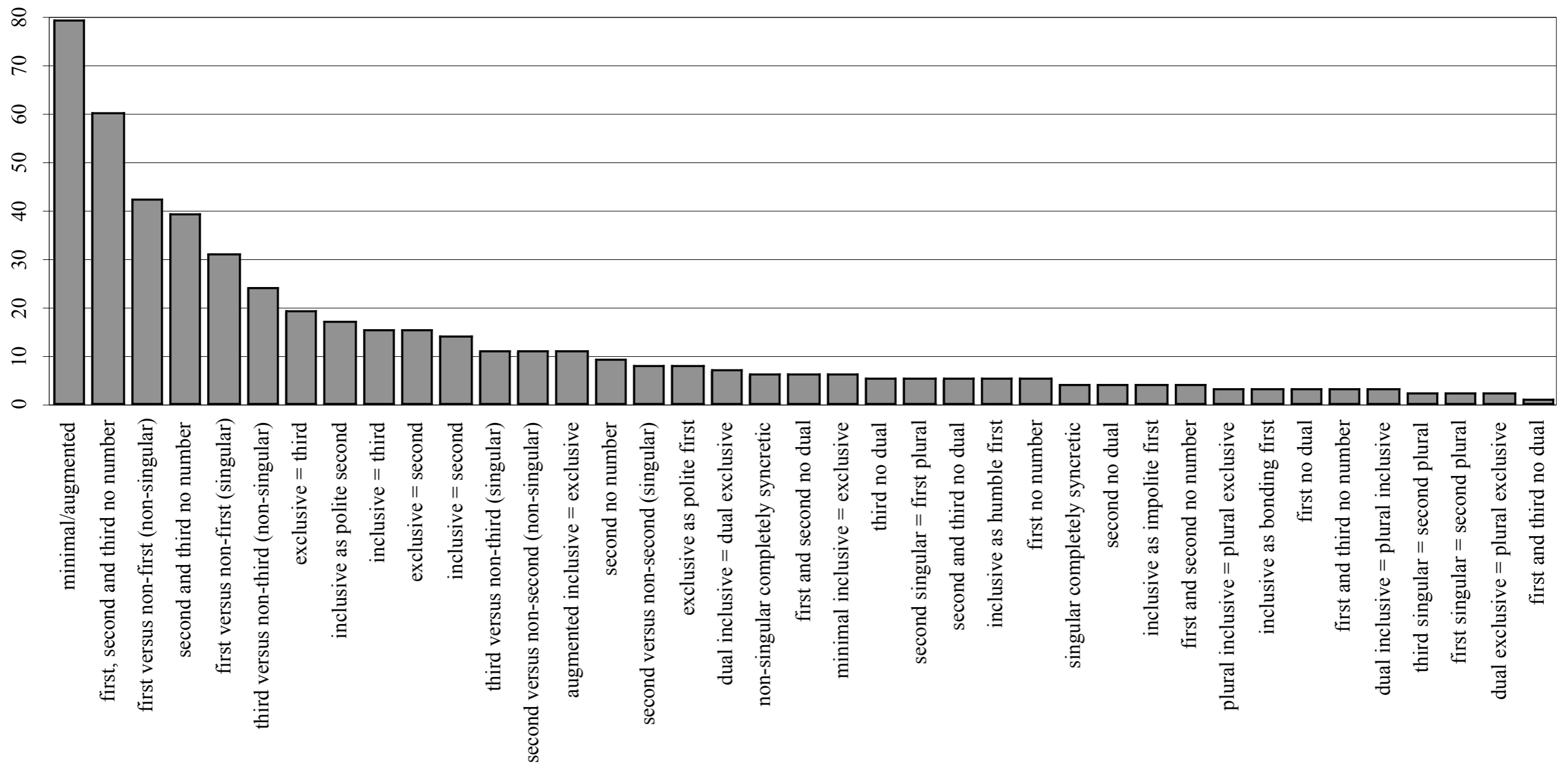
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# Object of theory / model



- Necessity to distinguish between
  - ▶ Language-particular arguments
  - ▶ World-wide cross-linguistic perspective
- Trade-off between number of languages and number of linguistic phenomena
  - ▶ not only practical problems
  - ▶ Language-particular arguments often idiosyncratic
- World-wide perspective
  - ▶ is to some extent necessarily 'rough'
  - ▶ needs to be probabilistic

# Continuous world-wide cline of variation

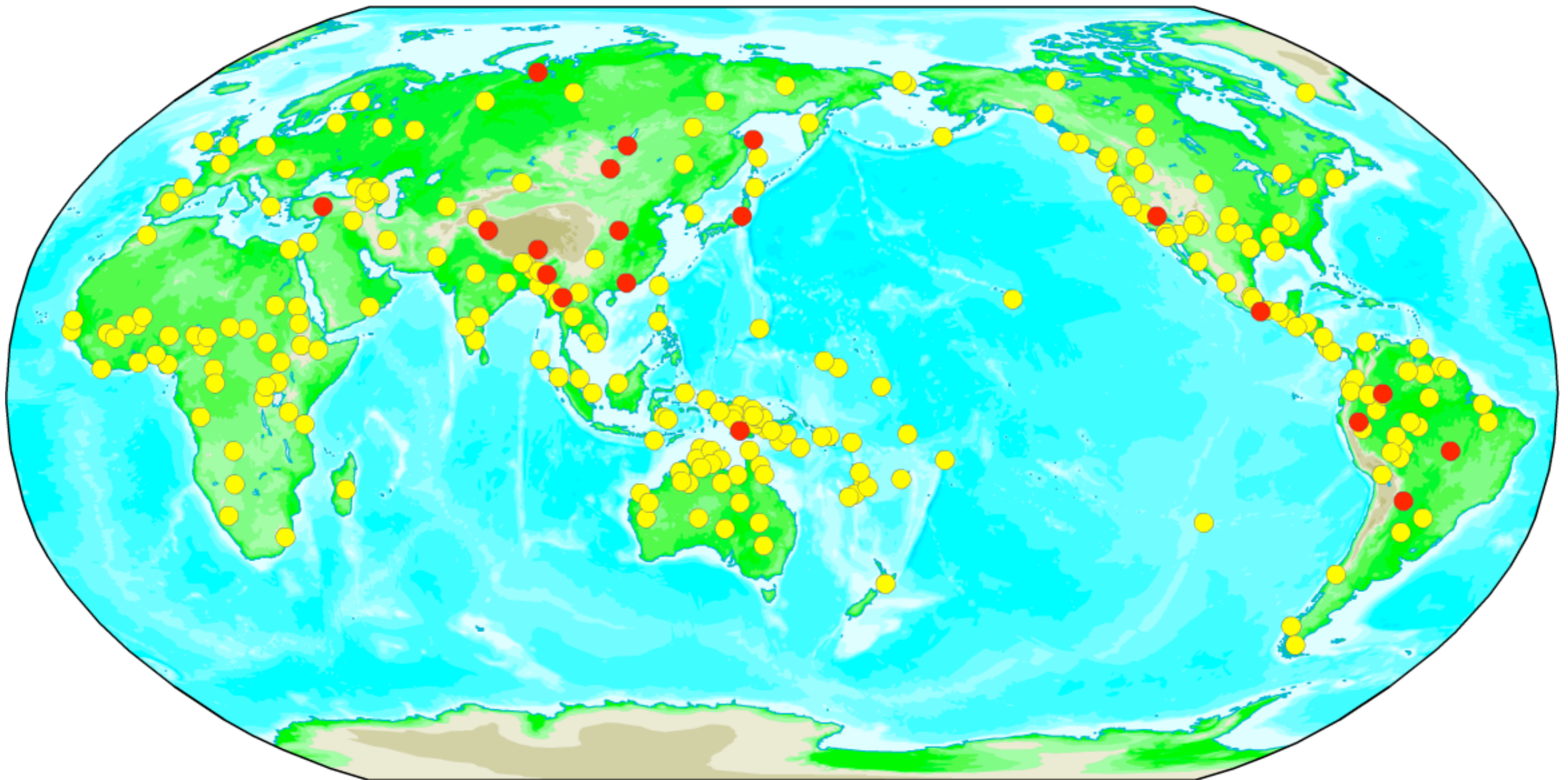


Cysouw, Michael (2005) 'What it means to be rare: the case of person marking',  
in Frajzyngier, Zygmunt, Adam Hodges, & David S. Rood (eds.), *Linguistic Diversity and Language Theories*. Amsterdam: Benjamins): 235-258.

# Is there a plural in the person domain ?

- There are of course person markers that refer to more than one person, but ...
- Semantic problem: 'we' and 'you-all' are not sets of the same kind
- Morphological problem: overlap with nominal plural is highly unusual

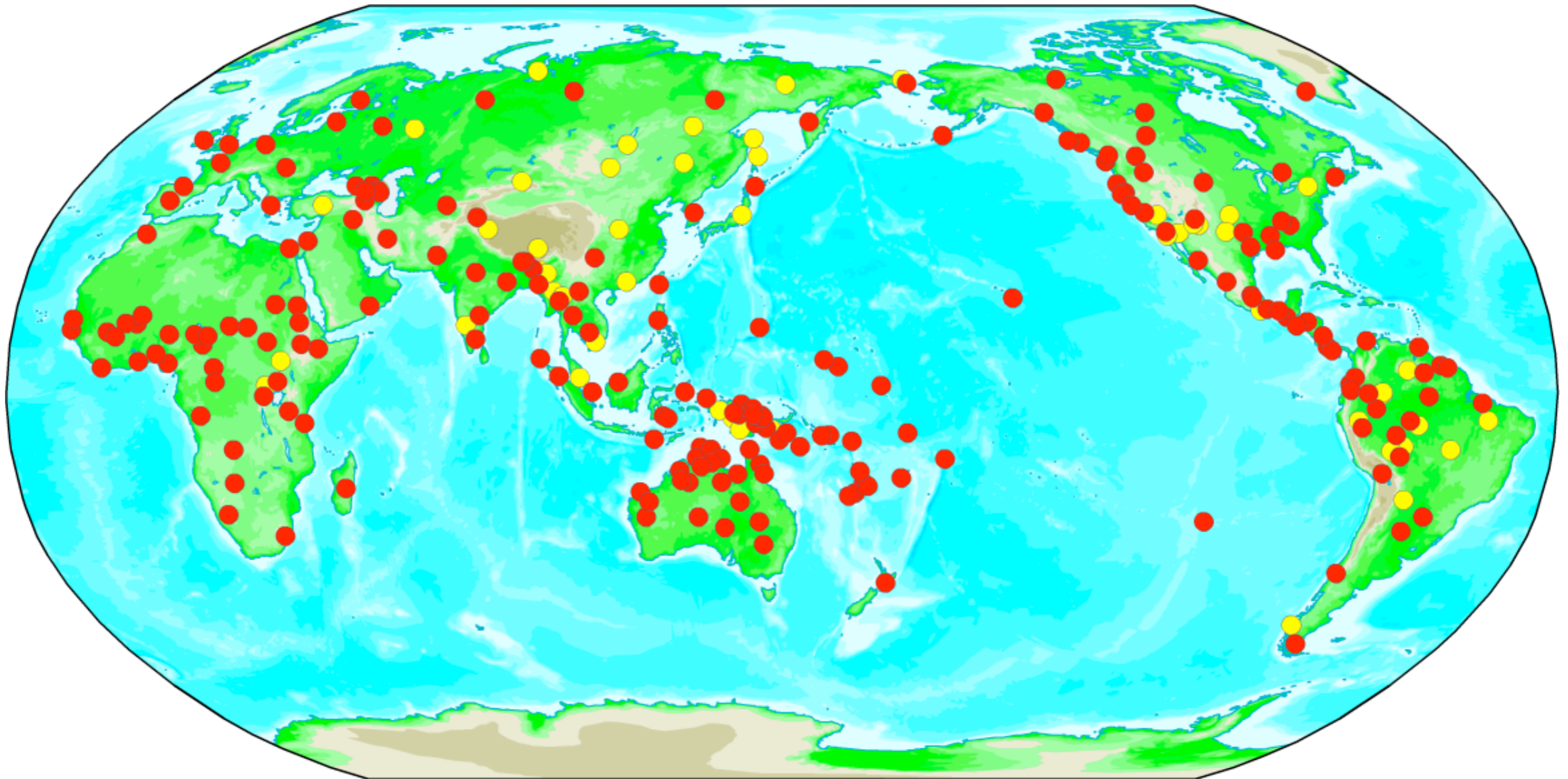
# Nominal plurals in independent pronouns



Daniel, Michael (2005) 'Plurality in independent personal pronouns',  
in Haspelmath, Martin, et al. (eds.), *World Atlas of Language Structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press): 146-149.



# Different stems for plural pronouns



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# Proposal from Cysouw (2001, 2003)

- Plurality in the domain of person marking is something different as in the nominal domain
- Categories like dual, trial, paucal seem to behave alike in both domains
- There are eight 'primitives' of person in singular and plural

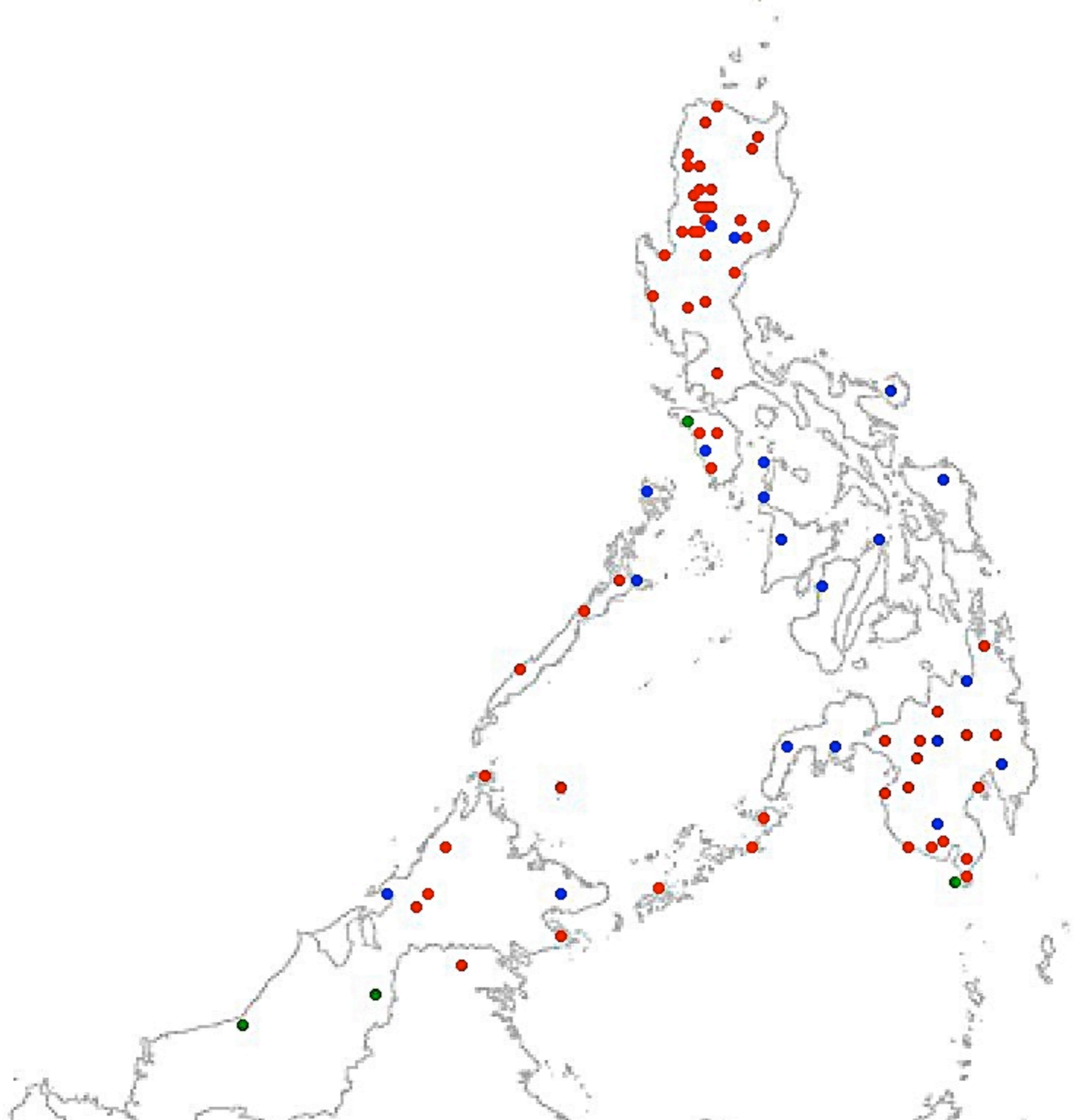
# The eighth primitives

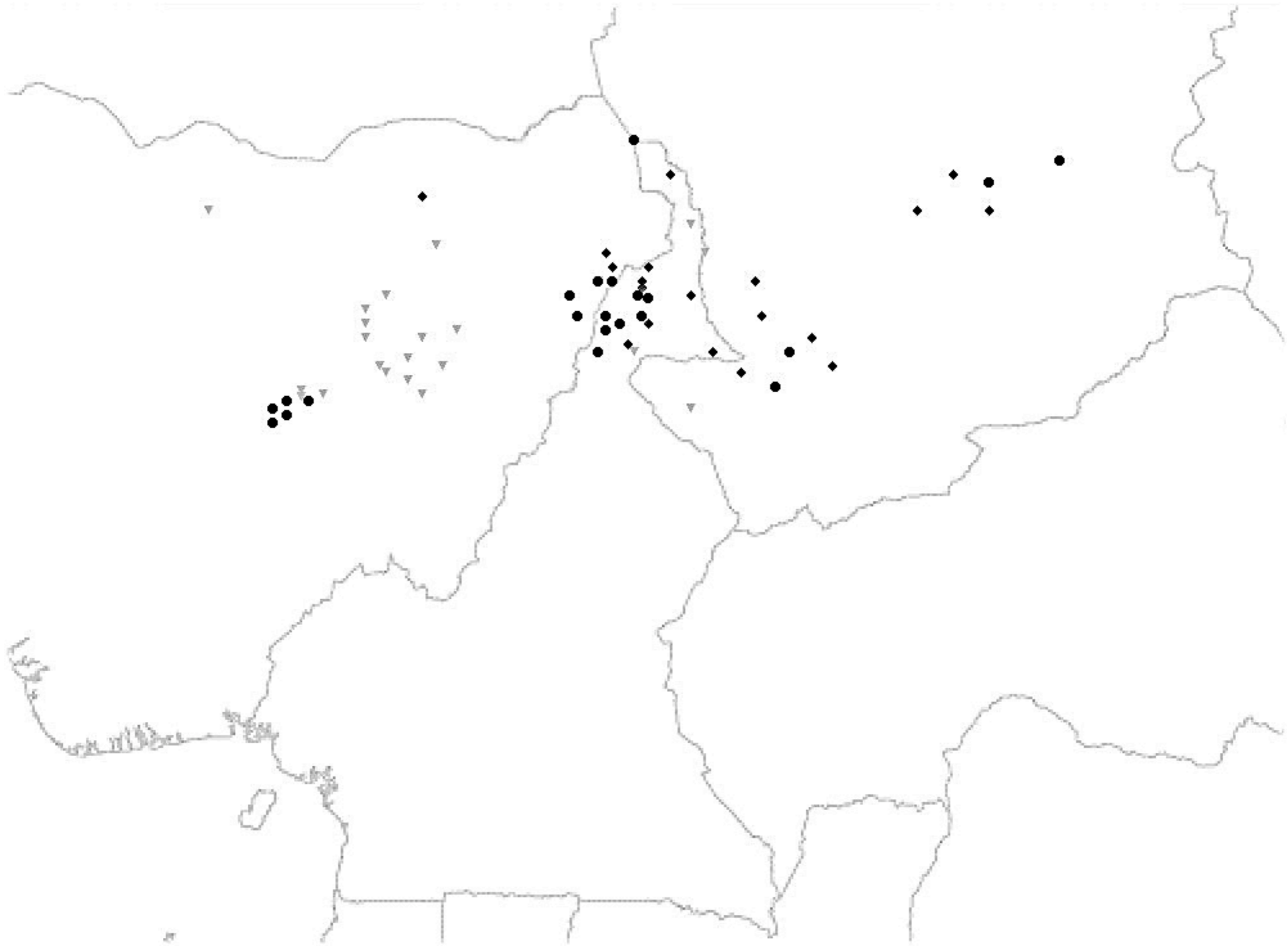
| Primitive             | Abbreviation |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| speaker               | 1            |
| addressee             | 2            |
| other                 | 3            |
| minimal inclusive     | 1+2          |
| augmented inclusive   | 1+2+3        |
| exclusive             | 1+3          |
| addressee with others | 2+3          |
| others                | 3+3          |



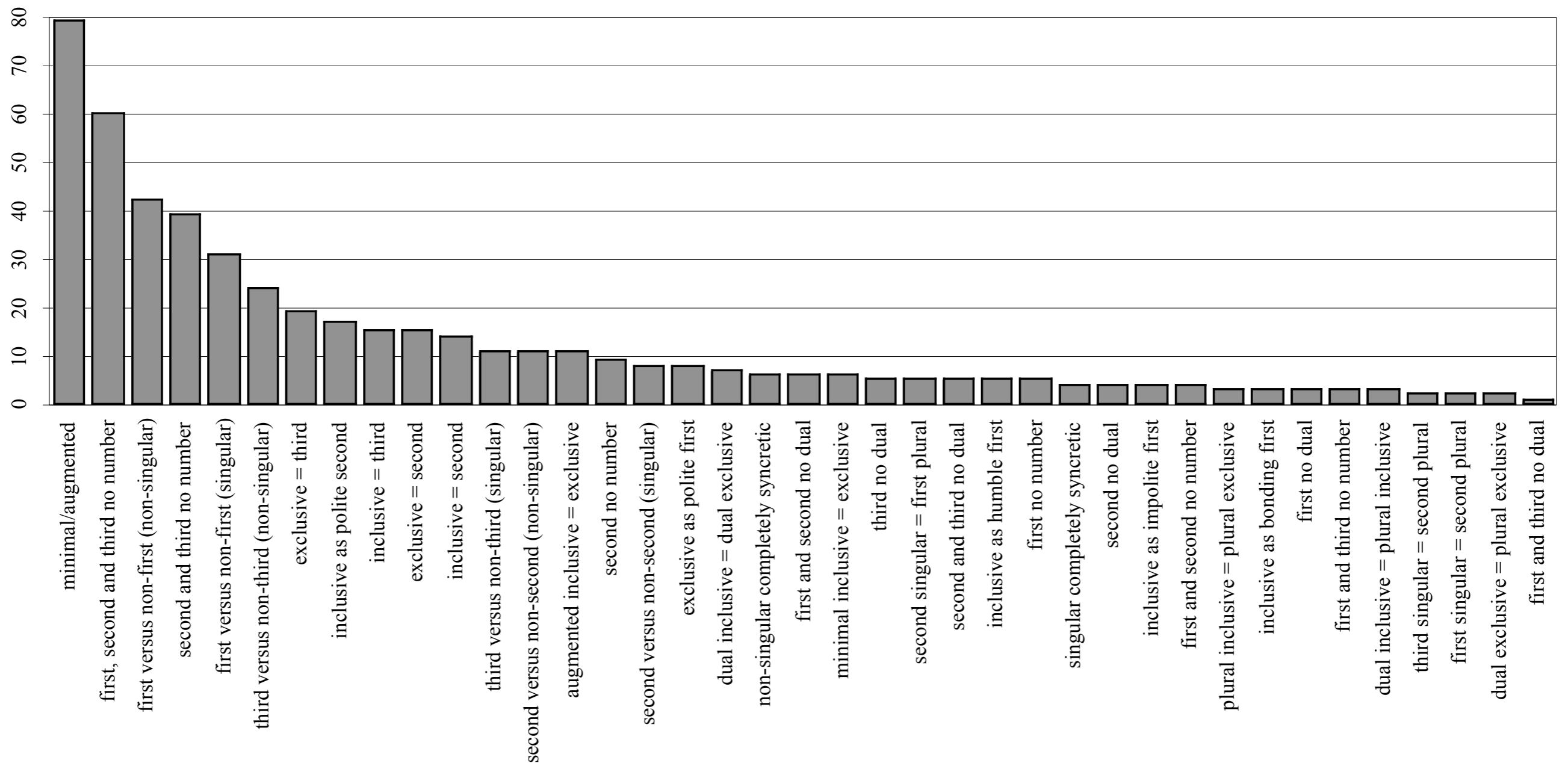
# Complete expression

- Austronesian
  - ▶ Philippine languages, Sulawesi
- Africa
  - ▶ Chadic, Banoid, Mande, Atlantic, Kordofanian
- America
  - ▶ Uto-Aztecan, Miwok, Chayahuita ...
- New Guinea
  - ▶ Mountain Koiali, Kemptuik, East Papuan
- Australia
  - ▶ non-Pama-Nyungan, Uradhi





# Continuous world-wide cline of variation



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# What counts as evidence?

- Similarity between markers within language
  - ▶ coding and behavior
- What kind of ***coding similarity*** counts?
  - ▶ submorphemic
  - ▶ morphemic
  - ▶ wordform
  - ▶ whole language
- What kind of ***markers*** are considered?
  - ▶ only special morphological status
  - ▶ only special functional status



# Inclusive + second ?

- Regularly found argumentation:  
“syncretism *inclusive + second*  
is parallel possibility to  
syncretism *inclusive + exclusive*”
- English-type ‘we’: first person perspective
- Algonquian prefixes: second person perspective

# Frequency

| Syncretism                      | Languages (Families) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Inclusive = Second person       | 14 (9)               |
| Exclusive = Second person       | 16 (7)               |
| Inclusive = Third person        | 15 (8)               |
| Exclusive = Third person        | 19 (7)               |
| Minimal inclusive = Exclusive   | 6 (5)                |
| Augmented inclusive = Exclusive | 11 (8)               |

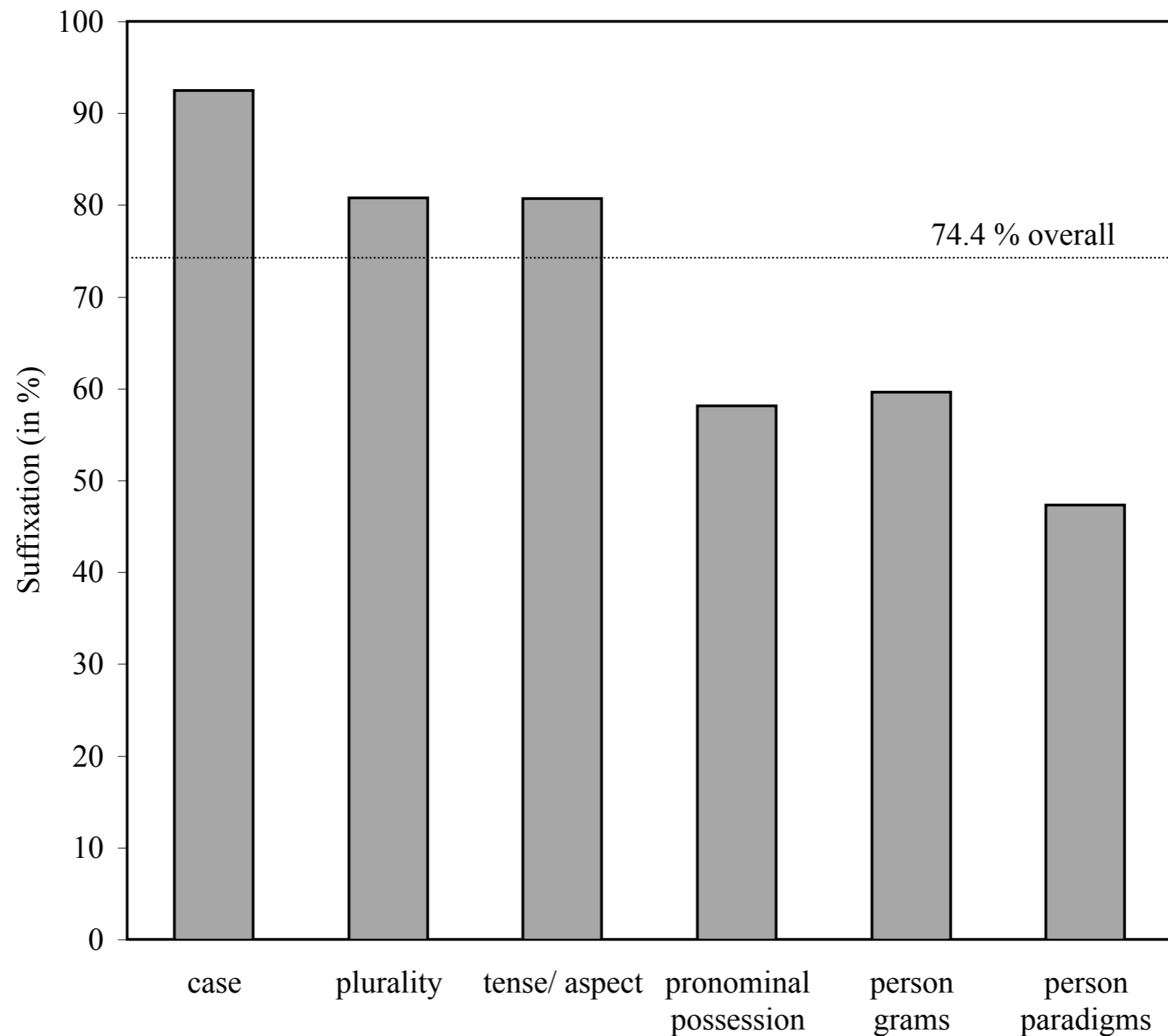
# Morphology

| Syncretism                      | Pronouns | Inflection |
|---------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Inclusive = Second person       | 2        | 13         |
| Exclusive = Second person       | 1        | 15         |
| Inclusive = Third person        | 1        | 15         |
| Exclusive = Third person        | 0        | 19         |
| Minimal inclusive = Exclusive   | 5        | 4          |
| Augmented inclusive = Exclusive | 7        | 9          |

# Same similarity found in whole language

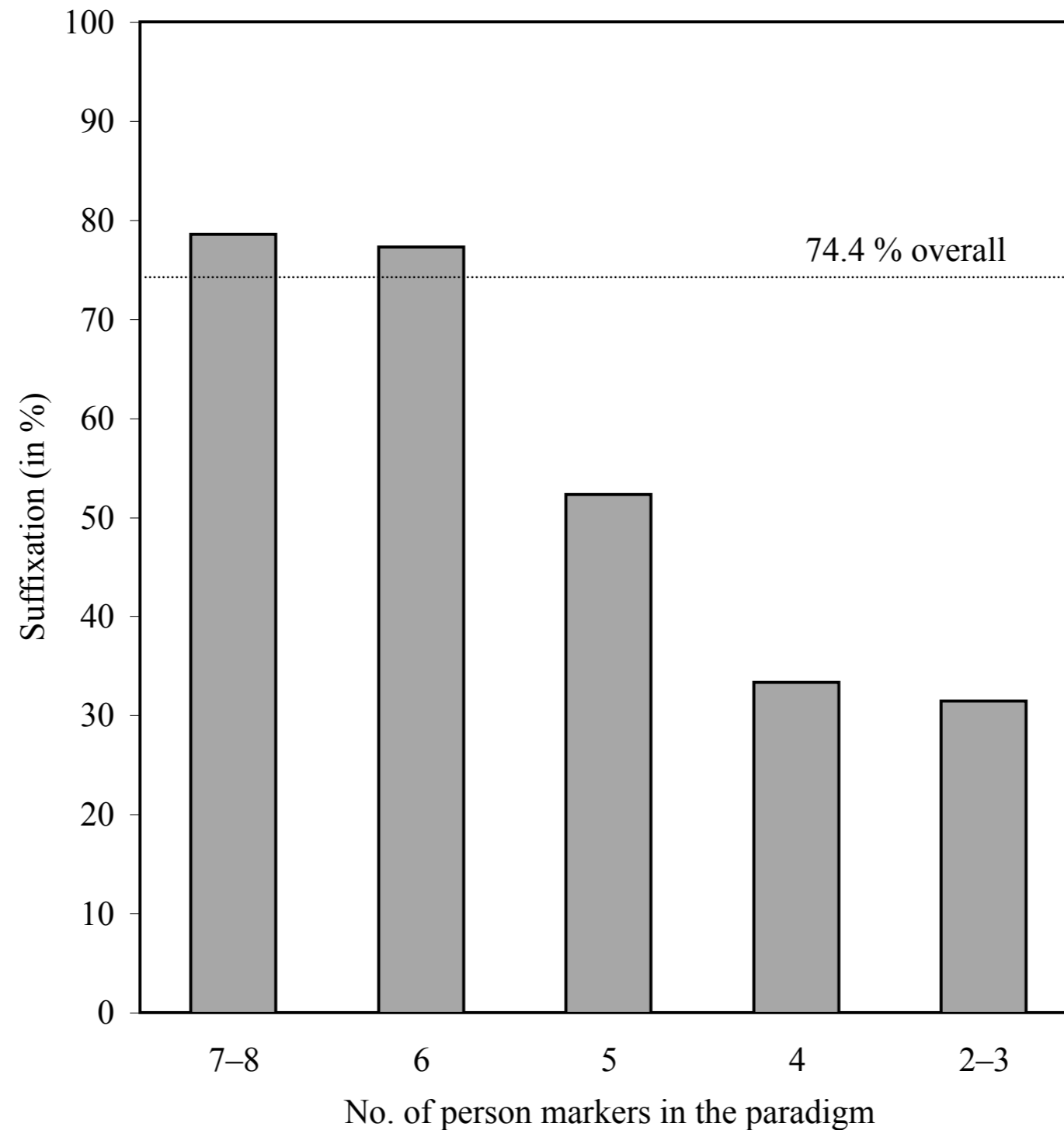
- “Conflation” (McGinnis 2005)
- Only few common confluations world-wide
  - ▶ minimal+augmented inclusive
  - ▶ inclusive+exclusive
  - ▶ maybe some singular-plural cases
- Various unusual cases
  - ▶ Burarra (augmented inclusive+exclusive)
  - ▶ Nehan (exclusive + second plural)
  - ▶ English (second singular + plural)

# Suffixation preference





# Prefixation preference



# Summary

- Strange things happen (all the time)
  - ▶ Everything is possible,  
but not everything is equally likely!
- Many factors are involved
  - ▶ what kind of similarity is used
  - ▶ what kind of markers are considered
- Comparative perspective needs consistently followed decisions
- World-wide probabilities of linguistic structures can be quite unexpected