

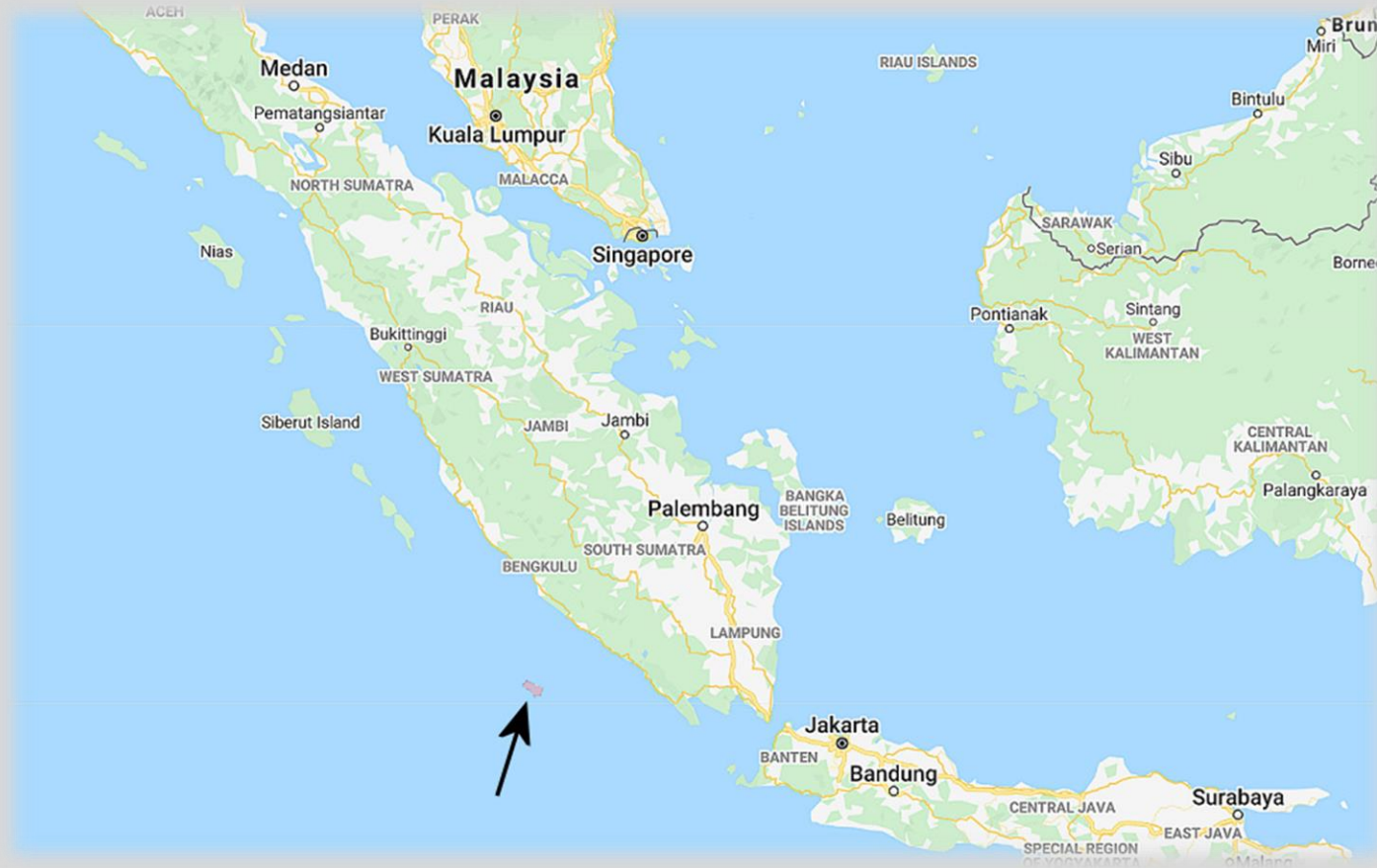
The Enggano Language

Nothofer's contribution to solving a linguistic puzzle

17 Dec 2021
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University of Newcastle

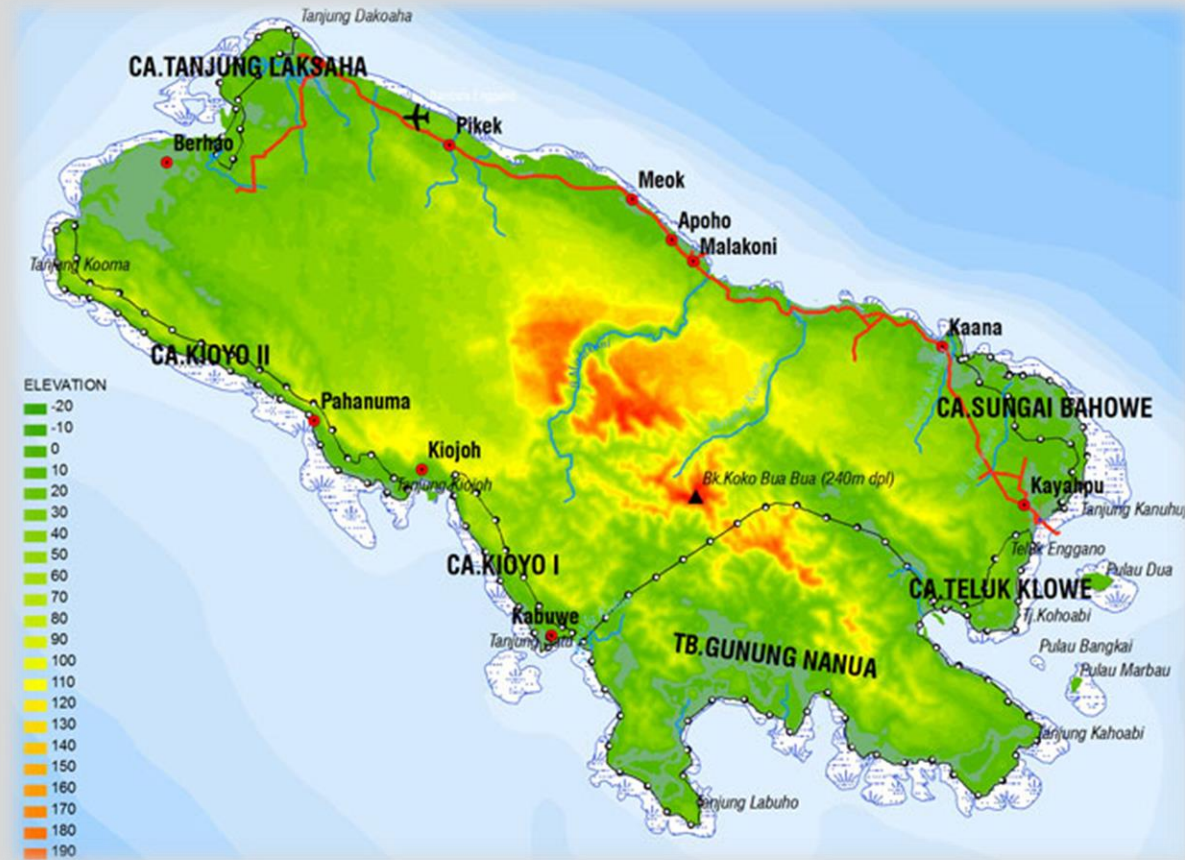
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“For linguists, Enggano is an intriguing puzzle: it has been claimed by some linguists to be a member of the Austronesian language family, like many other languages of the region, but by other linguists to be an isolate with no known relation to other languages.”

(Project [website](#) 2019-2021: Enggano in the Austronesian family: Historical and typological perspectives)

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“Enggano is a puzzle within Austronesian linguistics.”

(Butters 2021:25)

What is the puzzle?

- Linguists try to classify all languages according to their genetic affiliation (e.g. English is Indo-European, Indonesian is Austronesian, Chinese is Sino-Tibetan, etc.).
- This is done through a careful analysis of the lexicon, phonology and morphology.
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English	Russian	Hindi	Indo-European
<i>six</i>	<i>šest'</i> “six”	<i>chah</i> “six”	* <i>swéks</i>
<i>mouse</i>	<i>myš'</i> “mouse”	<i>mūs</i> “mouse”	* <i>múh₂s</i>
<i>bear</i> (v.)	<i>brémja</i> “burden”	<i>bharna</i> “to fill”	* <i>b^her-</i>
<i>snow</i>	<i>sneg</i> “snow”	<i>sneh</i> “affection”	* <i>snóyg^{whos}</i>

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Indonesian	Fijian	Enggano ¹	Austronesian
<i>lima</i> “five”	<i>lima</i>	<i>a'ri:b̄</i>	* <i>lima</i>
<i>telinga</i> “ear”	<i>daliga</i>	<i>kariç</i>	* <i>Calija</i>
<i>batu</i> “stone”	<i>vatu</i>	ϵ	* <i>batux</i>
<i>dengar</i> “hear”	<i>rono</i>	<i>kidə'hə:</i>	* <i>dəŋəR</i>

These words are taken from Nothofer's list (1986).

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<i>batu</i> “stone”	<i>vatu</i>	<i>ε</i>	* <i>batux</i>
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What is the puzzle?

- The real puzzle is that, for a long time, linguists haven't been able to determine which language family Enggano belongs to.
- Rosenberg (1878:217) argues for Enggano that “the language does not have the slightest resemblance with the idioms of the neighboring peoples, it is very poor in words, inharmonious and harsh”.
- Modigliani (1894) compared the Enggano people to the Nicobarese (Austroasiatic language family).
- For Lafeber (1922:24), the previous wordlists are insufficient to determine whether or not Enggano is a Malayo-Polynesian language.
- Kähler (1942/45:890) hypothesizes that Enggano is a “mixed” language of the original language and Sulawesi languages.
- Dyen (1965:53) uses lexicostatistics and counts a maximum of only 11% retention of Austronesian vocabulary, which is too low to state that it is indeed Austronesian.

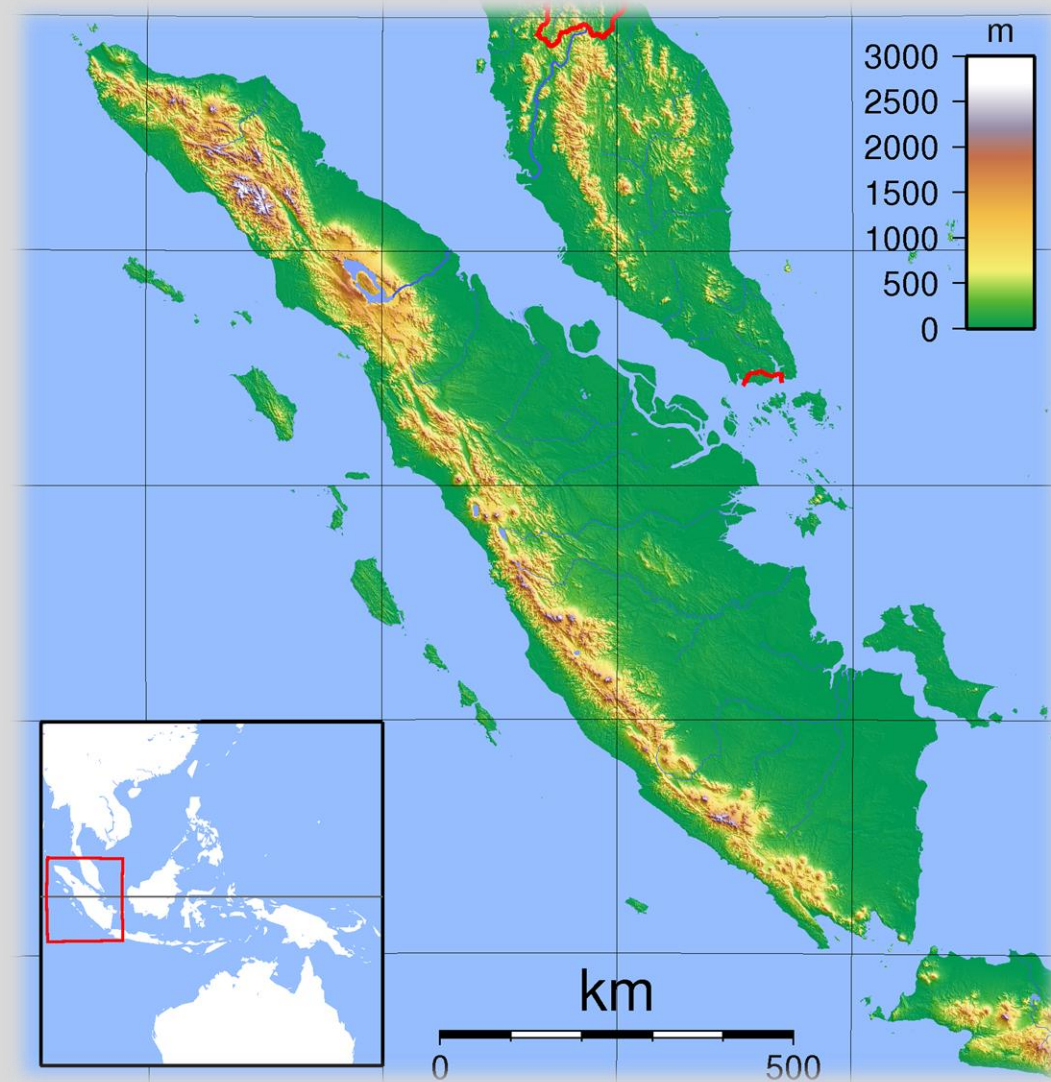
What is the puzzle?

- Capell (1982) states that Enggano is a “remnant of these pre-Austronesian languages, which does indeed have Austronesian loanwords, but which remains non-Austronesian”.
- Nothofer (1986) uses qualitative evidence to establish regular sound changes for Enggano.
- Schmidt (1988) builds on Nothofer’s material and agrees with Nothofer.
- Blench (2014) circulates a draft for comment and hypothesizes that “Engganese is underlyingly a forager language of unknown affiliation but presumably a descendant of the original language spoken by Pleistocene settlers.”
- Edwards (2015) and Smith (2017) confirm the regular sound changes established by Nothofer
- The most recent version of *Ethnologue* (Eberhard, Gary & Fennig 2021) lists Enggano as “unclassified”.
- Is Enggano an Austronesian language or is it not?

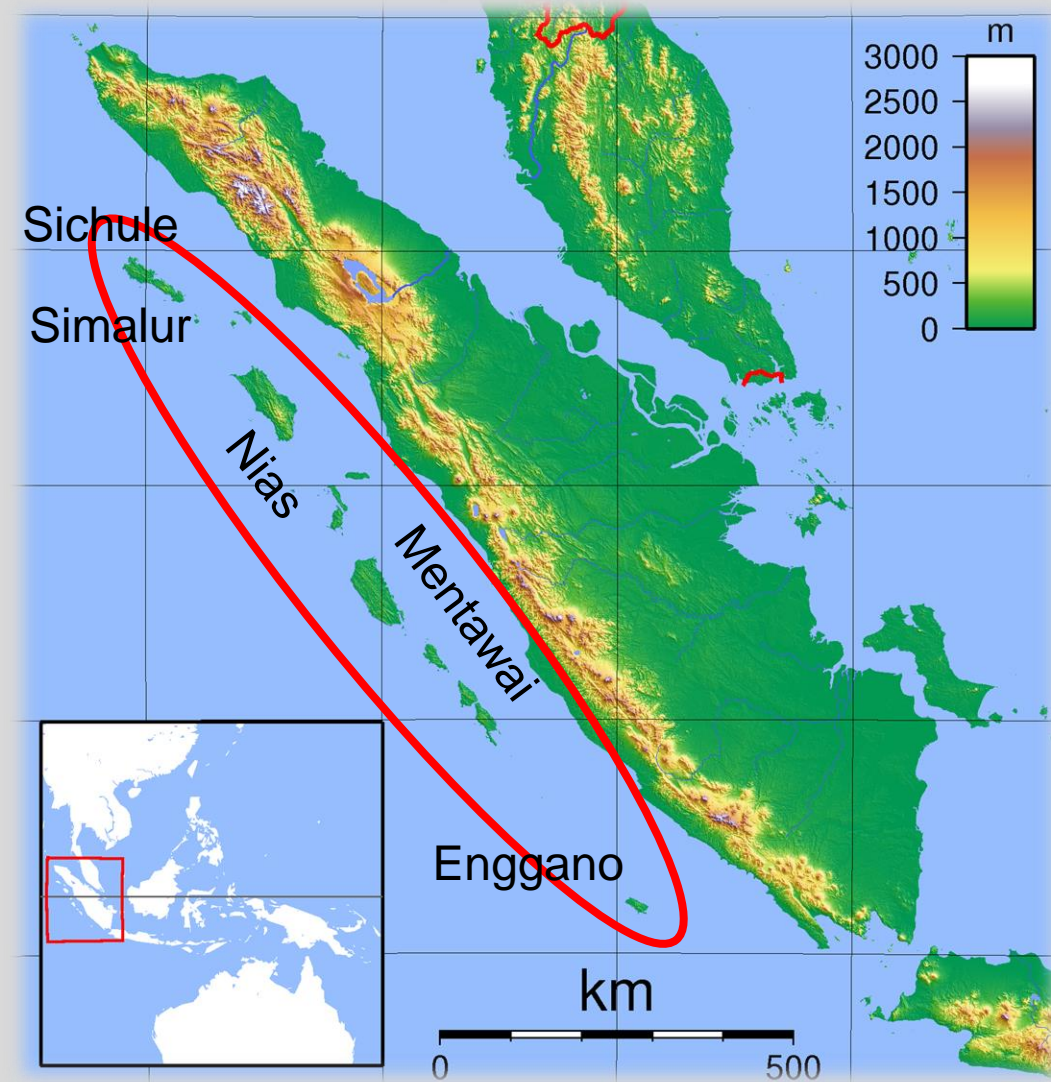
Nothofer's contribution

- In 1982 and 1984, Bernd Nothofer stayed six weeks in a longhouse on Siberut, Mentawai Islands and did fieldwork which was partially funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.
- In 1984, the “4th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics” took place in Suva, Fiji. Nothofer presented a paper entitled **The Barrier Island Languages in the Austronesian Language Family** in which he demonstrated regular sound correspondences between the languages belonging to a Barrier Island-Batak subgroup (Simalur, Sichule, Nias, Mentawai, Enggano, Toba-Batak).
- He drew on previously published material for Enggano, Nias, Sichule, Simalur and Mentawai and added to this his own fieldwork material on Mentawai.
- An article of his talk was published in 1986 in “FOCAL II: papers from the Fourth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics”.
- What did he do?

Nothofer's contribution



Nothofer's contribution



Nothofer's contribution

VOWEL AND DIPHTHONG SHIFTS							
PAN	SIMALUR	SICHULE	NIAS	MENTAWAI	ENGGANO	TOBA-BATAK	
1. *e	ə,ɪ	ə,ö,ɪ	ɪ		ʔ	o	
Examples:							
*telu	təlu,təlo	tölu	tɪlu	(telu)	ʔakoru	tolu	three
*(b)eli	bəli	bɪli	bɪli=ɪli		e-odi price	boli bride	buy
					(e)	price	
2. *e after *R	e						
Example:							
*Sa-ReZan	aeran	(ola)	(ora)	(orat)	e-hěä	(ardan)	ladder, staircase
3. *e before *j	o			o			
Example:							
*qunej	unog	(unɪ)	(hunɪ)	unou		(unok)	marrow
4. *-ay	ae	ae			ae		
Examples:							
*kuday	kudae		(kude, gude-gude)	(ore)	e-ʔorae		basket made of bamboo
*baday	badae	badae	(bade)				storm
VOWEL MERGERS							
1. *au		ɪu	ɪu	eu			
*eu		ɪu	ɪu	eu			
Examples:							
*Zauq	(dao)	a-dɪu	a-rɪu	a-reu		(dao)	far
*behew	(fo)	bɪu	bɪu	beu	(upau)	(bau)	smell
2. *a before *-k and *-ŋ		o	o				
*e before *-k and *-ŋ		o	o				
Examples:							
*anak		n-ono	n-ono		(e-ara)	(anak) son	child
*ma(n)yaŋ	(maeaŋ)	möëö	moyo	(maŋaŋ)			hawk
*qutek	(utaʔ)	uto	uto	(ute) head		(utok-utok)	brain, marrow
*lateŋ	(lalateŋ)	lato	lato	(lalatek)		latoŋ	stinging nettle
3. *a in the environment of o (> *a)		o	o				
*e in the environment of o (> *e)		o	o				

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*(b)eli	bəli	bɪli	bɪli=ɪli		e-odi <i>price</i>	boli <i>bride</i> price <i>buy</i>
2. *e after *R	e				ʔ	
Example:						
*Sa-ReZan	aeran	(ola)	(ora)	(orat)	e-hěã	(ardan) <i>ladder,</i> <i>staircase</i>
3. *e before *j	o			o		
Example:						
*qunej	unog	(unɪ)	(hunɪ)	unou		(unok) <i>marrow</i>
4. *-ay	ae	ae			ae	
Examples:						
*kuday	kudae		(kude, gude-gude)	(ore)	e-ʔorae	<i>basket made</i> <i>of bamboo</i> <i>storm</i>
*baday	badae	badae	(bade)			
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Examples:						
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Nothofer's contribution

PAN	Mentawai	Nias	Toba-Batak	Simalur	Enggano	Sichule
a	a	a,o	a	a	ᵐᵃ	a
i	i,e	i,e	i,e	i	ᵐᵃ	i,e
u	u,o	u,o	u,o	u	ᵐᵃ	u,o
ə	e,o	ɨ,o	o	ə,ɨ	ᵐᵃ,ᵐᵃ	ə,ö,ɨ
b	b-/m -b- -p	b- -v- -Ø	b- -b- -p	f- -f- -(b)	p- -p- -Ø	t-/f- -f- -Ø
d	r- -r- -t	d- -r- -Ø	d- -d- -t	d-/r- -d-/r- -(?)	? - ? - ?	c- -(?)- -(?)
Ø	r- -r- -t	d-/r- -r- -Ø	d- -d- -r	d-/r- -r- -r	d-/r- -d- -Ø	c-/l- -l- -n(?)
Z- -Z-	r	r	d	d- -r-	r- -d-	c- -l-
z- -z-	j	z	j	j- -j-	? - ?	? - ?
g	g- -(?)- -(?)	g- -g- -Ø	g- -g- -k	g- -g- -(?)	? - ?	? - -g-
-j- -j	-g- -u	-x- -Ø	-g- -k	-h-/x- -(g)/	-ç-/Ø-/h- -Ø	-x- -Ø
R	Ø	Ø	r	l/Ø	Ø	Ø
h	Ø	h-/Ø -h-/Ø- -Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
q	Ø	h-/Ø -h-/Ø- -Ø	Ø	Ø- -Ø- -(h)	h- -Ø- -Ø	c- -h-/Ø- -Ø
y- -y- -ay -əy -uy	(?)- -j- -e -ey -uy/-i	y- -y- -e -e -i	(?)- -Ø- -e -e -i	(?)- -e- -ae -ae -oe -(g)	(?)- -(?)- -ae -(?) -(?)	(?)- -e-/y-? -ae -e -i
k	k- -k- -?	?-/Ø- -?- -Ø	h- -h- -k	Ø-/k- -?-/-k-/Ø	?-/k-/Ø- -Ø- -Ø	-?- -Ø
c- -c-	s	s- -(?)-	s	s	? - ?	? - ?
l	l- -l- -lV	l- -l- -Ø	l	l	l-/r-/d- -l-/r-/d- -Ø	-l- -n(?)
r	r- -r- -rV	r- -r- -Ø	r	r	(?)- -d- -Ø	-l- -(?)
m	m- -m- -m/-p	m- -m- -Ø	m	m	b- -m-/b- -Ø	-m- -Ø
n	n- -n- -n/-t	n- -n- -Ø	n	n	(?) -d-/r- -Ø	-n- -Ø
ñ- -ñ-	(?)- -n-	n	n	n	-n- -Ø	(?) -n-
ŋ	ŋ- -ŋ- -ŋ/-k	ŋ- -ŋ- -Ø	ŋ	(?) -ŋ- -ŋ	(?) -h-/Ø- -(?)	-ŋ- -Ø
p	p- -p- -m/-p	f- -f- -Ø	p	Ø- -h-/x-/Ø- -(b)	p- -p-/b- -Ø	-f- -Ø
t	t- -t- -n/-t	t- -t- -Ø	t	t- -t- -(d)	k- -k- -Ø	-t- -Ø
T- -T-	t	t	t	t- -t-	? - ?	? - ?
s	s- -s- -Ø	s- -s- -Ø	s	s	k- -k- -Ø	-h-/Ø- -Ø
w- -w- -aw	b- -b- -au -ou -eu -eu	w- -w- -o/-ö	Ø- -Ø- -o	(?)- -w- -ao	b- -b- -(?)	-w- -i,ao (?)
-əw		-ö	-o	-(?)	-(?)	-(?)

Nothofer's contribution

- He discovered that Enggano has unusual sound changes for an Austronesian language:

**/t/ > /k/*

PAN **telu* > *ʔa-koru* “three” (also **/e/ > /o/* and **/l/ > /r/*)

**/s/ > /k/*

PAN **sijem* > *e-kiço* “ant” (also **/e/ > /o/* and **C# > Ø/*)

**/ŋ/ > /h/*

(no example given)

**/d/ > /r/*

PAN **kuday* > *ʔe-orae* “bamboo basket” (also **/d/ > /r/*)

**/j/, */R/, */h/, */q/, */k/ > Ø*

PAN **Rumaq* > *e-uba* “house” (also **/m/ > /b/*)

**C# > Ø*

PAN **xe(m)pat* > *a-opa* “four”

**/d/, */Z/, */g/, */y/, */c/, */T/ > ???*

PAN **Sa-ReZan* > *e-hěã* “staircase”

- Such a discovery is the jackpot in historical linguistics! But the correspondences couldn't be backed up with many examples (later criticized by Blench 2014).

Nothofer's contribution

- In early 1986, Bernd Nothofer (BN) went to Sumatra again and conducted interviews with 28yo Hamdani Ka'uno (HK) who was a native speaker of Enggano residing in Padang, funded by the DAAD.



[Listen](#)

BN: 24 Januari 86 Padang, bahasa Enggano, hari pertama. Baik, kalau 'satu' apa dalam bahasa Enggano?

HK: Kahai.

BN: Kita memajukan ini saja. Baik, kalau 'satu' apa dalam bahasa Enggano?

HK: Kahai ... kahai.

BN: Sekali lagi.

HK: Kahai, kahai.

BN: Nah itu? Gampang? Sulit? Terus nomor dua?

HK: Aruu.

BN: Sekali lagi.

HK: Aruu.

- Within three months, about 3500 Enggano words were collected!
- But what to do with these words?

Nothofer's contribution

117 tongkat <i>stock, Krücke</i>	yɔ'kɔbʔ	<i>koba</i> ^ɪ	eoʔoba
tongkat saya	yɔkɔbaʔ, yɔkɔbwə		
[kaki <i>Fuß</i> →	ea ^e (?)]		eae
118/9 cincin, gelang <i>Ring Armband</i>	karaʔyapʔ		ekada uʔapo
cincin saya	krapɪʔ <i>nasal?</i>		
120 tudung <i>Schleier, Decke</i> <i>Bedeckung</i>	yɔkɔpyur		kɔpɪ, eʔuru
tutup kepala			
121 kantong <i>Tasche</i>	ˆkatō (nicht ɔ)		
kantong saya	katōʔ		
122 binatang <i>Tier</i>	˚minatā		
b. saya (?)	mɪna'tā:wɛʔ <i>nasal</i>		
123 lalat <i>Fliege</i>	yūm		eūmō
lalat saya	yūmuʔ <i>nasal?</i>		
124 kutu <i>laus</i>	hyūk		ehūkū

Nothofer's contribution

- In 1992, Nothofer published a German article on loanwords in Enggano.
- First, he repeats his proposed sound laws:

Um ererbtes von entlehntem Material unterscheiden zu können, bedarf es der Feststellung der regelmäßigen Reflexe protoaustronesischer (PAN) Phoneme im Enggano (En.):

PAN i > En. ^(~)i, ^(~)e; PAN u > En. ^(~)ū, ^(~)ō; PAN a > En. ^(~)ā; PAN ə > ^(~)ə, ^(~)ɛ, ^(~)o, ^(~)e;
PAN -ay, -uy, -əy, -aw, -əw, -iw, > ∅; PAN p > En. p-, -p-, -∅; PAN b > En. p-, -p-, -∅; PAN t > k-, -k-, ∅; PAN d > En. ʔ; PAN D > En. d-/r-, -d-/r-, -∅; PAN Z-, -Z- > En. r- -d-; PAN c- -c- > En. ʔ; PAN z- -z- > En. ʔ; PAN -j- -j > En. -ç-/h-/∅- -∅; PAN s > En. k- -k- -∅; PAN R > En. ∅; PAN r > ʔ- -d-/r- -∅; PAN l > En. l-/r-/d- -l-/r-/d- -∅; PAN k > En. ʔ-/k-/∅- -∅- -∅; PAN g > ʔ; PAN h > En. ∅; PAN q > En. ∅; PAN y > En. ʔ; PAN w > En. b- -b- -∅; PAN m > En. b- -m-/b- -∅; PAN n > En. ʔ- -r-/d- -∅; PAN ñ- -ñ- > En. ʔ- -n-; PAN ŋ > ʔ- -h-/∅- -∅.

Nothofer's contribution

- Then he establishes regular correspondences to show whether a word was borrowed from Malay or from Minangkabau.
- Finally, he demonstrates that in many cases one can decide which of the two languages Enggano borrowed from.

*-ap > Ml. <i>-ap</i> , Mi. <i>-oʔ</i>	*sayap > Ml. <i>sayap</i> , Mi. <i>sayoʔ</i> 'Flügel'
*-əp > Ml. <i>-ap</i> , Mi. <i>-oʔ</i>	*harəp > Ml. <i>harap</i> , Mi. <i>haroʔ</i> 'hoffen'
*-up > Ml. <i>-up</i> , Mi. <i>-uyʔ</i>	*tutup > Ml. <i>tutup</i> , Mi. <i>tutuyʔ</i> 'schließen'
*-ip > Ml. <i>-ip</i> , Mi. <i>-iʔ</i>	*sisp > Ml. <i>sisip</i> , Mi. <i>sisiʔ</i> 'eindringen'
*-at > Ml. <i>-at</i> , Mi. <i>-eʔ</i>	*lompat > Ml. <i>lompat</i> , Mi. <i>lompeʔ</i> 'springen'
*-ət > Ml. <i>-at</i> , Mi. <i>-eʔ</i>	*sələt > Ml. <i>səlat</i> , Mi. <i>saleʔ</i> 'Durchfahrt'
*-ut > Ml. <i>-ut</i> , Mi. <i>-uyʔ</i>	*turut > Ml. <i>turut</i> , Mi. <i>turuyʔ</i> 'mitgehen'
*-it > Ml. <i>-it</i> , Mi. <i>-iʔ</i>	*səmpit > Ml. <i>səmpit</i> , Mi. <i>sampiʔ</i> 'eng'
*-as > Ml. <i>-as</i> , Mi. <i>-eh</i> :	*kalupas > Ml. <i>kəlupas</i> , Mi. <i>kalupeh</i> 'häuten'
*-əs > Ml. <i>-əs</i> , Mi. <i>-eh</i> :	*taləs > Ml. <i>talas</i> , Mi. <i>taleh</i> 'Rettich'
*-us > Ml. <i>-us</i> , Mi. <i>-uyh</i> :	*tənes > Ml. <i>tərus</i> , Mi. <i>taruyh</i> 'weiter'
*-is > Ml. <i>-is</i> , Mi. <i>-ih</i> :	*taŋis > Ml. <i>taŋis</i> , Mi. <i>taŋih</i> 'weinen'

- 5) Ml., Mi. *c- -c-* → En. *k-/t- -k/-t-*:
- Ml. *cərmin* → *kormi*: 'Spiegel'
Ml. *cəmpədaʔ* → *təpədaʔ* 'Brotbaumart'
Ml., Mi. *racun* → *nātūn* 'Gift'
Ml. *pacul* → *pakur* 'Hacke'
- 6) Ml., Mi. *b- -b-* → En. *b-/m- -b-*:
- Ml., Mi. *baju* → *bayu*: 'Jacke'
Ml., Mi. *binataŋ* → *minatā*: 'Tier'
Ml. *ləbih* → *kaʔ-dəbi* 'mehr'
Mi. *tobaiʔ* → *tobaiʔ* 'Reue'

Nothofer's contribution

- In 1994, Nothofer revives an earlier hypothesis by other scholars (Kähler ms., Willms 1955, Mahdi 1988) that the Barrier Islands languages and the Sulawesi languages display a close relationship of some form (be it through borrowings or genetic affiliation).
- He proposes a Paleo-Hesperonesian proto-language, which probably also includes Enggano (very little evidence for the latter is presented).

- (54) **isi* 'to like'
Barrier Islands: Mtw *mu-isi* 'to like'
Sulawesi: Mori *ehe* 'to like' (Willms 1955)
- (55) **tinaw* 'to dive, settle (of coffee)'
Barrier Islands: Mtw *sinou* 'to dive to the bottom', Eng *kino* 'to dive'
Sulawesi: Mak *ta[?]tinaw* 'to settle (of coffee)', Bug *ma[?]tinaw* 'to deposit' (Willms 1955)
- (56) **dukuq* 'to wrap'
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- He proposes a Paleo-Hesperonesian proto-language, which probably also includes Enggano (very little evidence for the latter is presented).
- In 2015, Owen Edwards provides further evidence for Nothofer's sound correspondences. He states that "Most of these correspondences [between PMP and Enggano] have already been noted by Nothofer (1986) and Schmidt (1988:34-35)."
- With the early contribution from Nothofer and the novel data from Edwards, we can now safely say that Enggano *is* an Austronesian language.

Nothofer's contribution

- In 2019, an international research project entitled “Enggano in the Austronesian family: Historical and typological perspectives” was formed at the University of Oxford with Mary Dalrymple, I Wayan Arka and Bernd Nothofer as the team’s principal investigators.
- The aim of the project is to compile a new dictionary of Enggano, to write a comprehensive grammar of Enggano, and to test various hypotheses for the “aberrance” of the Enggano lexicon.
- A preliminary offshoot of the project is Nothofer’s 2021 article on the history of the Enggano lexeme bakub ‘window’, which consists of *bak* ‘eye’ + *ub* ‘house’. It displays a nice introduction to the complex historical development of the Enggano sound system: *bak* < **maCa* ‘eye’, *ub* < **Rumaq* ‘house’
- In 2021, Bernd Nothofer invited Erik Zobel and me to join the project.
- We are very grateful for Nothofer’s dedication to Indonesian linguistics and to the Enggano language!

Nothofer's contribution

Mek em neah!

Terima kasih banyak!

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