

## NEW LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE FOR THE AUSTRIC HYPOTHESIS

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This paper reexamines some of the claims that have been made in support of the Austric hypothesis in an attempt to respond to scholars who, in recent years, have expressed their skepticism about the hypothesis. In particular, evidence for the claim that Proto-Austroasiatic was probably ergative, with formal case-marking similar to that proposed for Proto-Austronesian is examined. The first person Genitive pronouns in both families have long been known to be cognate. This paper shows that Nominative enclitic pronouns were also probably cognate. In addition, evidence is produced for the reconstruction of two common morphemes widely distributed throughout the families, which, probably because of their distinct paths of grammaticalization have not previously been reconstructed. The paper also discusses the extensive work of L.V. Hayes in reconstructing lexical items for Proto-Austroasiatic and Proto-Austric.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, especially since the publication of Diffloth (1994) and Reid (1994), in which the Austric hypothesis was re-examined, several prominent scholars have admitted in print that the evidence that had been presented seemed to confirm the hypothesis that the Austronesian (AN) and the Austroasiatic (AA) languages are genetically related (Higham 1994, Blust 1995, 1996). Although there have been no papers published since 1994 presenting counter evidence or arguments against the hypothesis, a number of scholars have expressed their reservations in other forums, particularly on one or another of the electronic Newsgroups. In the first section of this paper I shall address some of the issues that have been raised by those scholars who are skeptical of the relationship. I shall restate some of the facts that, I believe, argue for a genetic relationship and in later sections will introduce further evidence, both morphological and syntactic, that I believe strengthens the claim that the two great families are indeed genetically related. Section 3 will deal specifically with the claim that Proto-AA was probably a morphologically ergative language with case-marking similar in several respects to what is found in AN languages. Section 4 provides evidence for the reconstruction of two grammatical morphemes that have a wide distribution in Austroasiatic and Austronesian languages, while section 5 provides a brief overview of recent studies of lexical comparison between the two families.

## 2. THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

It has been noted before that scientists in the natural sciences fall naturally into two classes, the splitters and the joiners, and that in some sense linguists involved in comparative-historical studies can be categorized in the same way. It is not just in one's philosophy of how to reconstruct the phonological system of a proto-language that this dichotomy becomes apparent, it is also in the type of evidence that is required in order to determine that a genetic relationship really exists between two languages or groups of languages. Thus, Mark Hale wrote: "An assertion that any such family (Austic) has been demonstrated to exist by the normal canons of the comparative method is absurd, given the published material on the subject. Indeed, the reconstruction of Austroasiatic itself is still very tentative – if indeed it existed, which I personally seriously doubt" (HistLing Newsgroup, 27 Mar 1997).<sup>1</sup>

If by "the normal canons of the comparative method" Hale means the establishing of sets of recurrent sound correspondences between the languages or families in question and the reconstruction of a body of proto-forms for the hypothetical proto-language from which they descended, then perhaps he is right, although I will return to this question again below, but other types of evidence for a genetic relationship cannot be ignored.

What constitutes compelling evidence is the primary issue. Obviously what is convincing to some people is hardly convincing to others. David Stampe in a subsequent posting to the same newsgroup, found the evidence that I presented to the CAMAC<sup>2</sup> conference for the Austic hypothesis (Reid 1994) "worth hearing, but not compelling" (HistLing Newsgroup, 1 Apr 1997).

Various claims about who does or who does not support the Austic hypothesis have appeared, for example, Stampe claims in the same posting, "[W]ith the exception of L.V. Hayes, who has separately published lexical arguments for Austic, I know of no comparative AA scholar who regards the relationship of AA and AN as established". To which I felt compelled to respond, "I think that David Stampe's inclusion of Gérard Diffloth as among the scholars present at the CAMAC conference among those who do not endorse a genetic relationship between AA and AN languages is perhaps misleading. Although not widely enthusiastic about the strength of the lexical evidence that had been accrued at that time, he makes it clear in his published paper in *Oceanic Linguistics* 33 (1994),

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<sup>1</sup> A similar view was expressed by Paul Sidwell in a talk he gave at the Koreo-Japonic Circle in Honolulu in 1996 on the possible relationship of Ainu with Mon-Khmer.

<sup>2</sup> Conference on Asia-Mainland/Austronesian Connections, Honolulu, May 10-13, 1993, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

that what there is, is convincing and that he finds other explanations for the morphological evidence for the relationship, such as coincidence or borrowing, to be unacceptable.”

The skepticism that exists cannot be ignored. The evidence that has been accrued to date is heavily dependent on the claim that there is a body of (primarily) verbal morphology which has equivalent form and function in Austroasiatic languages and in Austronesian languages. As Diffloth says, “it is the evident agreement in the morphology, that argues for a genetic, and against a contact relationship between the two families” (1994: 312). Similarly, after a careful examination of the published lexical material on Nicobarese in the course of preparing the chapter on these languages for his forthcoming book on Austroasiatic, Diffloth wrote to me, “... I find very little An vocabulary that would indicate ancient or prolonged contacts between Nicobarese and An. All I find is about a dozen-plus words of obvious Malay origin, fairly recent borrowings... so the idea of a not so recent transfer of morphology by contact with An seems not very likely.” (Diffloth pers. comm. 4/27/97)

But this claim (i.e., that there is a body of morphology which has equivalent form and function in Austroasiatic languages and in Austronesian languages) has been challenged on a number of fronts. First, is the morphology that has been cited as evidence really equivalent, i.e., do the forms and functions really agree? Secondly, if they do, is a genetic hypothesis the only explanation? Starosta (pers. comm.), for example, has noted that the morphological features that I have cited from Nicobarese in support of Austric are “much more clearly Austronesian than the other features that have been cited in support of the Austric hypothesis in mainland Mon-Khmer languages, but these features look like Malayo-Polynesian features to me, rather than what I have reconstructed at the higher levels in the AN tree.”

Specifically, Starosta is referring to the affixes \*mu-/<um> and \*-a, which could not possibly be Austric, if as he claims (Starosta 1995), they were only innovated in Formosa at some point after the dissolution of Proto-Austronesian (PAN). The alternative hypothesis is that Nicobarese (and by extension the other AA languages that have one or the other of these affixes) could only have acquired them by contact with a Malayo-Polynesian language, or, as has also been suggested, they are only coincidentally similar. But even if Starosta is wrong about the evolution of AN morphology, and if the forms in question really are reconstructable to PAN, there is still the question of whether or not the functions of the affixes are equivalent. I will claim that they really are, that the functions of these affixes overlap to a large extent between the two families. The following

section briefly examines the functions of reflexes of the \**<um>*<sup>3</sup> affix. At issue here is whether or not Nicobarese *<um>* which functions as a causative affix, is relatable to affixes of the same shape in AN languages.

## 2.1 The functions of \**<um>* in AA and AN

As with many other grammatical morphemes whose functions change as the syntax of the language changes, *mu-/<um>* is no exception. Derivational morphemes especially, which \**<um>* surely was, have a tendency to develop distinctive functions depending on the class of the root to which they are attached. They may even cease to be functional, and remain as frozen affixes, with only shadowy memories of their original functions left to haunt the meaning of the word. In trying to determine whether similar forms across language families are the same or different, an excellent heuristic is to see how their various functions have developed within a single language or language family. If a set of (historically) related functions can be shown to exist in one language family, one must assume that even if only a subset of those functions occurs associated with the same form in another language family, then the forms cannot be considered to be only coincidentally related. They are either that way because of genetic inheritance or because of contact. To illustrate the point, it is instructive to note the way the affix \**<um>* has developed in some Austronesian languages. Bontok, a Central Cordilleran language of the Philippines, is typical. It contains each of the functions discussed in the following paragraph, as well as others which are not so widely found.

In AN languages, reflexes of PAN \**<um>* typically mark a verb as intransitive. Such verbs require, 1. a single nominal complement, the Nominative Patient actor of the verb, such as verbs of motion and body function – *come, go, defecate, urinate*, etc. as in (1a-f) below, as well as ‘inchoative’ forms of so-called ‘adjectival verbs’ – *become big, become fat*, etc., as in (1g-i); or, 2. in addition to the Nominative complement, a nominal complement carrying a Genitive or Locative case form expressing an indefinite or partitive semantic object, as in (1j-l) below. In some languages, there are additional semantic implications when *<um>* occurs with certain verbs. One of these is causative, in which the Nominative is the ‘causative Patient’ of the state expressed by the root, as in (2a-e) below. Many languages, including Bontok, also allow each of these verbs to occur as a derived agentive nominal. Thus (1a) may mean, as a verb ‘to come’, or as a noun, ‘one who comes, comer’. In Bontok, the last set, although potentially verbal, typically occur as nouns.

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<sup>3</sup> Some AN languages show the prefix *mu-*, others the infix *<um>*. Comments on the nature of this alternation are found in Reid (1994: 329).

(1) Bontok (Guinaang)<sup>4</sup>

a. ʔ<um>áli	‘come’	g. ŋ<um>ayáŋʔa	‘become red’
b. ʔ<um>áy	‘go’	h. t<um>abá	‘become fat’
c. t<um>ákdəg	‘stand’	i. d<um>akól	‘become big’
d. p<um>atuŋ	‘sit’	j. k<um>án	‘eat part of’
e. t<um>aʔi	‘defecate’	k. ʔ<um>inúm	‘drink part of’
f. ʔ<um>ísbu	‘urinate’	l. g<um>əgəd	‘slice part of’

- (2) a. s<um>káw ‘that (e.g., rain) which chills (causes one to become *na-skáw* ‘chilled’)  
 b. s<um>akít ‘that which sickens (causes one to become *ma-sakít* ‘sick’)  
 c. s<um>pəg ‘that which causes one to become *na-spəg* ‘tired of eating s.t.’  
 d. s<um>úkag ‘that which causes one to become *na-súkag* ‘dizzy’  
 e. b<um>láy ‘that which makes one *na-bláy* ‘tired’”

It has been suggested that the latter function, that of ‘causative Patient’ of an intransitive verb and its corresponding nominal form is restricted only to AN languages outside of Formosa, but it may be inferred from the forms for ‘bear’ in several Formosan languages, such as Thao *cumay*, that this function was present also at earlier stages of the family. I consider this form to be probably an euphemism created from the monosyllabic PAN root \*cay ‘die’ with an infix causative \*<um>, meaning literally ‘that which causes one to die’, i.e., ‘killer’.

The fact, then, that Nicobarese <um> functions as a causative, is not justification for considering these AA and AN affixes to be only coincidentally related. In addition, the fact that the same function can be shown to have probably existed at a point in the development of Austronesian prior to the dispersal of the Extra-Formosan languages, argues against a back-migration of one of these languages as the source of the form in AA languages.

As for the Nicobarese *-a* ‘objective nominalizer’, Diffloth (pers. comm.) considers that the form must be reconstructed for Proto-Nicobarese. He believes that it cannot be a borrowing from some intrusive Malayo-Polynesian group (or from itinerant Austronesian seafarers who passed the Nicobar shores on their way to trade in places farther west). Its antiquity can be seen from the fact that in Nicobarese this suffix has a series of alternant forms with initial consonants which have developed (somewhat like the Proto-Polynesian \*-Cia suffix), from stem final consonants which were protected from final erosion by the presence of the suffix.

<sup>4</sup> All Bontok examples in this paper are either taken from Reid (1976), or from the author’s fieldnotes.

### 3. EVIDENCE FOR PROTO-AUSTROASIATIC ERGATIVITY

In Reid (1994), the claim was made that although today Nancowry Nicobarese is probably a VOS accusative language, there seems to be clear evidence that at an earlier stage in its history it was probably ergative. I would like to review that evidence because I think it is relevant to the claim that Austroasiatic and Austronesian are genetically related. I want to make clear at this point though, that what is at issue here is not simply whether Proto-Austroasiatic and Proto-Austronesian were both ergative languages, that in itself would be merely an interesting typological fact. The really important evidence however would be in being able to demonstrate that the two proto-languages not only had similar actancy<sup>5</sup> systems, but that the morphological case-marking systems of the two proto-languages were either the same or similar. This is a pretty tall order, given that most of the Austroasiatic languages have lost all evidence of case-marking in the noun phrase, and the reconstruction of the syntax of Proto-Austronesian is being challenged. However although I do not think we will get close to demonstrating the equivalence of the two systems, I think that the comparisons that are available provide another step in the inexorable progress to providing proof of the genetic relationship of the two families.

Before we look at the forms of the languages in question, I should make clear what it is that I mean by ergativity. This term has been widely abused in recent linguistic literature, being applied to a wide range of different phenomena. Moreover, its characterization in the well-known SAO “basic theory” is incapable of capturing a number of cross-linguistic generalizations. I am convinced that if we wish to make real progress in either the typological study of syntactic systems, or in the use of syntactic data to demonstrate genetic relationships, we must move beyond the often subjective, translation-oriented functionalism that is at the heart of much linguistic analysis today and utilize a constrained formal theory that can provide us with truly comparable, motivated analyses across languages and language families.

The theory that I choose to use is Lexicase dependency grammar, primarily because it is lexicalist, and lexical items are the fodder of the comparativist, and also because it is monostratal, avoiding the excessive power of multistratal theories and the need to postulate levels of abstract structure for proto-languages whose surface structures are themselves the hypothetical objects of our reconstruction. But if we are going to talk about ergativity, there are a few basic things that we need to know about the theory.

Lexicase claims that all sentences, intransitive as well as transitive, require a

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<sup>5</sup> The term “actancy” is used to indicate accusativity and ergativity as proposed by Lazard (1997).

complement which carries the Patient case relation. A transitive sentence requires one additional complement to carry the Agent case relation. An ergative language is one in which the Patient case relation is always marked as Nominative. In such a system, the complement that is the Agent of a transitive sentence is marked in most ergative Austronesian languages with a Genitive case form or with a case form that can be shown to have developed from the Genitive. It is Genitive because it is typically identical to the form of the possessor<sup>6</sup> dependent of the Head of a noun phrase.

Now, having said all that, let us review the facts about Nancowry Nicobarese case-marking, and then we will look at other Austroasiatic languages that have remnants of case marking.

### 3.1 Evidence for Pre-Nancowry ergativity

Nancowry has a set of short Genitive (Gen) pronouns that can be used to mark the possessor of a noun, as in (3). (All examples from Radhakrishnan 1970, my analyses.)

- (3) ʔám cẽ  
 dog Gen.1s  
 'my dog'

In sentences that are clearly intransitive, Nancowry uses a different set of pronouns to mark the Nominative (Nom), as in (4-5).

- (4) yóʔ rúk ʔincẽ  
 want come Nom.1s  
 'I want to come.'
- (5) rián ʔincẽ  
 run Nom.1s  
 'I am running.'

These pronouns have the same base as the Genitive set, but have an initial element that can be identified as a Nominative case marker. In Nancowry, the form (probably a Determiner) that precedes the head of a Nominative noun phrases is *ʔin* as in (6) below, sometimes cliticized as =*n* on the preceding word, if that word ends in a vowel, as in (7-8).

- (6) puáh caltãc ʔin pãc  
 eat.meat frog Nom snake  
 'The snake eats frog.'

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<sup>6</sup> In Lexicase, this is the Correspondent case relation.

- (7) nína=n      kuán    cǎ̃  
 this =Nom    son      1s.Gen  
 'This is my son.'
- (8) kalóʔ    nɔt    cǎ̃      =n      kamalóʔ  
 steal    pig    1s.Gen =Nom    thief  
 'The thief stole my pig.'

Pronouns that appear to be morphologically marked as Nominative, are in fact no longer Nominative. In sentences that are transitive with two pronominal complements, both pronouns carry the same morphological marking, as in (9), and it is word order alone that marks the forms as either Nominative or Accusative (Acc). The presence of what was formerly a morphologically marked Nominative pronoun to express the Patient of a transitive sentence is clearly one remnant of an earlier ergative system.

- (9) ciáw    inʔǎn    inmǎ̃  
 call    Acc.3s    Nom.2s  
 'You call to him (his name).'

Imperative transitive constructions with missing Agents also appear to be remnants of an earlier ergative system, in that their pronominal Patients, although now Accusative, still carry the earlier frozen Nominative morphology (10-11).

- (10) yúʔ-si    inʔǎn    ta-ŋáŋé  
 put-down    Acc.3s    Lcv-that  
 'Put him (or her) farther away there.'
- (11) sǎm-ŋa    inʔǎn    t-inǎ̃h  
 send-away    Acc.3s    Lcv-this.here  
 'Send him (or her) (who is not near).'

Nancowry has a third set of pronouns that adds a prefixal element, *t-*, to the form which was originally Nominative. This prefix can be identified as a prevocalic form of the Locative (Lcv) case form *ta*, compare (12-13).

- (12) ciáw    t-inʔǎn    inmǎ̃  
 call    Lcv-3s    Nom.2s  
 'You call to him (to come).'
- (13) ʔuksák    ta    ʔuál    riák  
 stand    Lcv    in    water  
 '(Someone) is standing in the water.'

Another residue of the earlier ergative system is found in sentences such (14-



15) below. Nancowry allows grammatical subjects of some (now) intransitive constructions which have either pronominal or nominal Locative complements to immediately follow the verb. In this environment, the form of the subject pronoun is not the one which carries the old Nominative morphology, as one might expect, but is identical to the Genitive form, as in (3) repeated below as (16). These sentences have apparently developed from earlier transitive constructions with Genitive Agents and Nominative Patients. With the switch to accusativity, the earlier Nominative Patient was marked as a Locative, and the earlier Genitive was reinterpreted as the variant of the Nominative immediately following a verb.

(14) héw cẽ            t-inʔən    na cím  
       see Nom.1s Lcv-3s    Lig cry  
       ‘I see him crying.’

(15) yuáŋa héw cẽ        ta        ʔám  
       past see Nom.1s Lcv    dog  
       ‘I saw the dog.’ (Lit. ‘I looked at the dog.’)

(16) ʔám cẽ  
       dog Gen.1s  
       ‘my dog’

In Reid (1994), I drew attention to the fact that in Austronesian ergative languages, it is the Genitive set that occurs as the Agent of transitive sentences. In Nancowry, it was also the Genitive set that formerly marked the Agent of transitive sentences. Not only so, but the Genitive first person singular form is clearly a cognate of the Austronesian Genitive first person singular form. Compare Nancowry Nicobarese *cẽ*, Car Nicobarese *cu*, PAN \*i-ku/ni-ku (Blust 1977: 6). Note that the palatalization of the initial Nicobarese consonant implies an earlier high front vowel preceding it. In Reid (1979b), I claimed that the alternation reconstructed by Blust was also present in the forms that marked Genitive full noun phrases, and was determined (as Blust had noted for the pronouns) by whether the form followed a consonant or a vowel.

#### 4. OLD MORPHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN AUSTROASIATIC LANGUAGES

We move now to consideration of old morphological elements in other languages of the AA family that appear to be cognate with identical forms in the AN family. The languages to be considered are Taoih, Ruc, Brôu, and Pacóh. These languages are spoken in north Vietnam and Laos, and are some of the most northerly of the Austroasiatic languages.

### 4.1 Case-marked pronouns in AA languages

In this section, I examine the case-marking of pronouns in some of the mainland AA languages. Where such elements still remain in AA languages, they appear to correspond in both form and function to those which are reconstructable to PAN. I claim that the initial vowel, \*a, of first-person Nominative pronouns in PAN was a nominative marker, distinguishing these forms from genitively-marked first person forms, and that the same distinction is apparently reflected in some of the AA languages.

#### 4.1.1 Evidence of ergative case-marking in Taoih<sup>7</sup>

Taoih, an East Katuic language, has recently been the subject of a brief article by the Russian linguist, Nina Solntseva (1996b). She notes that Taoih “retains blocks of old morphological elements, but they are not productive. There are case paradigms in the system of personal pronouns (the nouns do not possess such a paradigm)” (*ibid.* p.32). She also notes that some of the case marking also occurs on demonstratives and interrogative pronouns. Table 1 reproduces Solntseva’s (1996b: 34) chart of Taoih personal pronouns.

TABLE 1. TAOIH PRONOUNS

	1S	1P	2S	2P	3S	3P
INITIAL	a-ku ~ a-kǎu	mu-hɛ ~ he	a-me ~ a-maj	i-pɛ	ʔo ~ a-dɔ	a-pɛ
GENITIVE	əŋ-ku ~ əŋ-kǎu	əŋ-hɛ	əŋ-me ~ əŋ-ma ~ əm-maj ~ əm-me		əŋ-ʔo ~ əŋ-dɔ	əŋ-ʔo a-pɛ ~ əŋ-do a-pɛ ~ əŋ-ŋaj
DATIVE	a-ku ~ a-kǎu	a-hɛ	am-me ~ am-maj		a-ʔo ~ a-dɔ	a-ʔo a-pɛ ~ a-ŋaj
LOCATIVE		i-hɛ	i-me ~ i-maj		i-dɔ	i-ŋaj

Explaining her use of the term “Initial” as a case name, Solntseva states, “I call *a-* a marker of the initial case and not a marker of the Nominative case because the pronouns with *a-* can be used either as subjects or objects.” (*ibid.* p.35). She notes,

<sup>7</sup> Otherwise known as Ta’oih, Ta-oaih, Ta-ði, Ta-oy, Tau Oi, Ta Hoi, and Kantua (Grimes, 1988: 615 and R. Watson 1964: 136).

however, that the forms are used systematically. “A pronoun in the initial case form may not be used as an attribute or in a locative function.” (*ibid.* p.35). But this is not the whole story. She also reveals that “there are many less-used constructions where the subject of the sentence has the Genitive case form; such constructions exist in Taoih alongside the more frequently used constructions where the subject has the initial case form. The use of pronouns as subject in the Genitive case always correlates with verb predicates of special meanings (existential, inactive), which might be the result of the split-ergativity nature of Taoih in its previous states of evolution.” (*ibid.* p.35). Solntseva also notes the similarity in form between some of the pronouns in the Austroasiatic languages and those in the Kadai and Austronesian languages. In Solntceva (1992), she also discusses the case-marking of pronouns in Southeast Asian languages.

Unfortunately there is no discussion of transitivity in Taoih, nor any sentential data to examine, so at this stage, although the forms appear to reflect an earlier stage of ergativity, the nature of the present-day Taoih actancy system cannot be determined.

Nevertheless we are again looking at a system that was apparently ergative at some stage in its history, a system in which the pronominal Agent of transitive sentences was marked with a Genitive form. The first person singular basic form was the familiar *ku*, but in this case prefixed with a Genitive marking *əŋ-*. It is tempting to see in this form a possible cognate of PAN \*ni, as a result of the same syncope (and assimilation) processes that Blust (1977: 5) describes for the development of POC \*ŋku ‘1s’ from PAN \*ni-ku, especially when one considers the Genitive pronouns in Pacóh, a language closely related to Taoih (S. Watson, 1964: 81 and R. Watson, 1964: 136). In this language only the Genitive pronouns have an initial nasal segment, as shown in Table 2 (taken from S. Watson 1964: 85). S. Watson however claims that this nasal prefix is “a bound allomorph of the morpheme *ân* which functions as a connective meaning ‘who’ or ‘that which’.” (S. Watson 1964: 96) The form *ân* also occurs in Brôu, where it is glossed as both a Genitive preposition, and a 3s. pronoun. I discuss Pacóh and Brôu *ân* in Section 4.3.2 below.

TABLE 2. PACÓH GENITIVE PRONOUNS

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
1	ncu/nday	nháng	nghe
2	mmay	ndo inha	ndo ipe
3	ndo	ndo anha	ndo ape/nngai

#### 4.1.2 The case-marking of first person Nominative pronouns

The distinction between Nominative and Genitive forms, as relics of an old ergative system is not the only area of similarity between the Taoih and Austronesian systems. Solntseva's "initial case", must have been originally Nominative, marking the Patients (grammatical subjects) of intransitive sentences as well as transitive. In Taoih, the form of the first person singular form is *a-ku*. The form that has been reconstructed for the Nominative<sup>8</sup> first person singular pronoun in PAN is \*i-aku. However, there is evidence from both Formosan and Philippine languages that forms with the pre-clitic \*i, were not themselves Nominative, but functioned in sentence initial positions as Predicates or as Topics. These were free pronouns. They would have been in complementary distribution with forms that did not have the pre-clitic \*i. Forms such as \*-aku (without the pre-clitic \*i) were either Nominative enclitics, or agreement suffixes on the verb (in intransitive sentences). It is the initial *a-* vowel of the first singular Nominative enclitic which distinguishes this form from the corresponding Genitive *ku*, and which must therefore be a remnant of an earlier Nominative case marker.

Another set of pronouns<sup>9</sup> has also been reconstructed for PAN. These are the three first person forms which carry an \*-ən suffix, reflected in Tagalog as *akin* 'mine', *amin* 'ours (ex.)', and *atin* 'ours (in.)'. Blust states, "... to date the only meaning that can securely be attributed to \*a(N)ken, ['1s'] on the Austronesian level is that of absolute possession" (Blust 1977: 12). However, given the same subgrouping criteria that Blust used, it is possible to infer that these forms functioned originally, not as 'absolute possessives', but as the pronominal base of Nominative Patients of ergative transitive constructions. They were free forms and were case-marked. This is their function in Seediq, Paiwan, Yami, Ivatan, the Cordilleran languages of the northern Philippines, the Manobo languages, and in Murut. Their development as 'absolute possessives' probably resulted from their potential for being case-marked as Genitive and then occurring in Predicate or Topic positions as possessive nouns.

The first person singular base was \*akən, showing the same original vowel as the Nominative enclitic \*aku. The first person plural exclusive form \*amən, appears to be related to the Nominative enclitic \*kami, but with initial \*a- rather than \*ka-. The first person inclusive form appears in Paiwan as *itjen*, with an initial *i* vowel, which Blust assumes must have been the original vowel in PAN

<sup>8</sup> Blust states, "...we can assume that the initial vowel in \*i-aku,...functioned to mark some grammatical relationship (probably nominative) for personal nominals." (Blust, 1977: 7)

<sup>9</sup> These forms were probably not pronouns, but non-pronominal nouns, just as their English counterparts are.

because it corresponds to the vowel in the Nominative enclitic form \*kita. In all the other languages in which this form occurs (Blust's Malayo-Polynesian), the initial vowel is *a*-. Blust chooses to consider this a case of paradigmatic levelling in Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, and reconstructs PAN \*itən. I suggest an alternative reconstruction, PAN \*atən, with paradigmatic levelling occurring in Paiwan. All these reconstructed first person forms, shown in the shaded boxes of Table 3 carried the old Nominative case-marking that corresponds to that found in Taoih.

TABLE 3. FIRST PERSON PAN PRONOUNS

	NOMINATIVE TRANSITIVE	Reid	NOMINATIVE INTRANSITIVE	GENITIVE
1S	*akən	*akən	*aku	*iku/*niku
1PE	*amən	*amən	*kami	*imi/*nimi
1PI	*itən	*atən	*kita	*ita/*nita

### 4.1.3 Case-marking in Ruc

Ruc is a conservative, minor Vietic language that has retained much of the Proto-Vietic morphology that has been lost in other Vietic languages. Some interrogative pronouns in Ruc are still case-marked. In Vietnamese, which has lost case-marking, the form for 'who' is *ai* /aj<sup>1</sup>/. In Ruc, there are two forms, *a?aj* and *pa?aj*. The first, with an *a*- prefix, is Nominative. The second, with a *pa*- prefix, is Dative, as in (17a-b).

(17) Ruc<sup>10</sup> (Nguy-n, 1993: 133)<sup>11</sup>

a. a?aj<sup>1</sup> avi<sup>2</sup> kataj<sup>1</sup> tu<sup>1</sup> ni<sup>1</sup>  
 a?aj avi kataj tu ni  
 who bring banana back-to here  
 'Who brought the bananas back here?'

b. mi<sup>1</sup> cho<sup>1</sup> kataj<sup>1</sup> pa?aj<sup>1</sup>  
 mi cə kataj pa?aj  
 2ps give banana to-who  
 'To whom did you give the bananas?'

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Mark Alves for providing me with this Ruc data.

<sup>11</sup> The first lines are the original Vietnamese transcription, with tones 1 through 4 in superscript. The second lines are IPA equivalents. The English translations are based on the Vietnamese translations.

Ruc Dative pronouns (Solntseva 1996a) are of particular interest because the form with which they are case-marked is *pa-*, a directional morpheme, apparent cognates of which occur widely in Austronesian languages, and which will be discussed in the following section. It should be noted that the morpheme under consideration here is not the ubiquitous *pa-* ‘causative’, although the two forms may ultimately be related to each other.

## 4.2. Austroasiatic and Austro-Tai \*pa ‘go’

In 1985, I presented a paper at the 18<sup>th</sup> Sino-Tibetan Conference in Bangkok which attempted to reconstruct some morphology for Proto-Austro-Tai (Reid 1985). To my knowledge, the proceedings of that conference were never published, so I would like to present here once again the evidence for the reconstruction of PAT \*pa ‘go’, since it, and its probable cognates in AA languages, add one additional piece of evidence for the Austric hypothesis.

### 4.2.1 Proto-Austro-Tai \*pa ‘go’

Li (1977) reconstructs Proto-Tai \*pəi [A1] ‘go’, reflected in Siamese, Lungchow and Po-ai as *pai*, or *pay*. The evidence suggests that this form developed from a PAT \*pa to which a now frozen, enclitic, Locative case-marking preposition \*-i had become attached. I claimed that in Thai, the well-known form *pay* ‘to go’, was probably historically morphologically complex. Central to the recognition of the frozen locative marker, is the reconstruction of a new Proto-Austro-Tai (PAT) reconstruction, \*pa ‘go’. Evidence for this is discussed in the following section.

#### 4.2.1.1 Thai evidence for PAT \*pa ‘go’

Evidence for Proto-Tai \*pa, without a final, is found not only in Colloquial Thai *pa* ‘Let’s go!’, but also in a number of Tai languages which reflect a corresponding form, reconstructed by Li with a voiced initial, Proto-Tai \*ba [A2] ‘bring, take’ (Siamese *phaa*, Tay *pa*, Po-ai *pa* [C2]). In discussing consonant alternation in Proto-Tai, Li states, “[I]t would imply that there was an alternation of voiced and voiceless initial consonants in Proto-Tai and that the alternation was perhaps a morphological process by means of which words could be formed” (Li 1977: 39).

#### 4.2.1.2 Austronesian evidence for PAT \*pa ‘go’

Evidence from both Formosan and Philippine languages also suggests a very

early \*pa ‘go’. For PAN, it is possible to reconstruct a post-verbal adverb \*pa ‘moreover, still, yet’, grammaticalized in Kavalan (Taiwan) as a verb-final future suffix, as in (18).

- (18) Kavalan (Zeitoun, 1997: 327)  
 pukun -an -ku -pa sunis [pukunaka sunis]  
 beat -P/LF-1S.GEN-will child  
 ‘I will beat the child.’

In the Philippines, reflexes of PAN \*pa ‘moreover, still, yet’ occur as a post-verbal enclitic adverb in Kapampangan, Tagalog and other Central Philippine languages, as well as in the Manobo languages. This form probably developed from its earlier verbal category by the typical grammaticalization process by which verbs become adverbs, a process seen also in Thai, where the verb *pay* ‘go’ has become an adverb with the meaning ‘excessive, too’. In the northern languages of the Philippines, PAN \*pa is also usually reflected as *pay*, as in (19), although it is possible that the final -y in this form was not an enclitic Locative preposition, as was suggested above for Thai, but was a Nominative preposition of the same shape (cf. Reid 1979a), e.g.,

- (19) Inibaloi (Ballard *et al.*, 1971: 110)  
 Ima **pay** (i) sawal ni epat ta akew...  
 there still Nom over.ten by four lig day  
 ‘There are still (funerals that last) fourteen days...’

In both Formosan languages and other western Austronesian languages, there is a homophonous form *pa-*, which is a prefix deriving directional verbs or adverbs from locative nouns. This form must also be considered to be an old grammaticalization of PAT \*pa ‘go’ and should be reconstructed for PAN. Its reflex in Mantauran Rukai is *po-*, as in (20).

- (20) Mantauran (Zeitoun, 1997: 329)  
 amo-a -|ao ma|a vavoy **po-** valjo  
 will-go-Nom.1s take wild.pig back<sup>12</sup>- village  
 ‘I will go (and) take the wild pig back home.’

It is reflected in Ilokano (as well as in Tagalog and many other Philippine languages) as *pa-* ‘go’.

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<sup>12</sup> Zeitoun glosses *po-* in this sentence as though it were a causative prefix.

- (21) Ilokano  
n- ag- **pa**-Baguio ni Juan  
past-ntrn- go-Baguio Nom Juan  
'Juan went to Baguio.'

In Tagalog, it may also combine with a Locative preposition *sa* to form a derivational prefix *pasa-* meaning 'to go to',<sup>13</sup> as in (22).

- (22) Tagalog (Panganiban, 1972: 705)  
**pasa**-Maynilà si Maria  
'Mary is going/will go to Manila.'

Similarly, *pa-* derived directional verbs in a number of Philippine languages no doubt also have the same source (23-24).

- (23) Tagalog  
**pa**-taás  
go-up  
'upward'

- (24) Ilokano  
**pa**-ngáto  
go-up  
'upward'

It may also be possible to associate PAn \*panaw 'go' (Tagalog *panaw* [pa:naw] and Ilokano *papán*, etc.) with the proposed reconstruction. It is possible that this form was originally morphologically complex, consisting of a monosyllabic verb \*pa and a clitic demonstrative \*-naw 'there'. Ilokano *papán* appears to be based on an elided form of \*panaw, with the first syllable being a reduplication to reconstitute a disyllabic root. The form *pan* is found in Bontok, but grammaticalized as a post-verbal adverb, meaning 'over much, excessive, go beyond'.

#### 4.2.2 Austroasiatic cognates of PAT \*pa 'go'

In addition to the Dative marked pronouns in Ruc (see section 4.1.3), we find apparent cognates of PAT \*pa 'go' in Brôu and in Pacôh. Brôu, a West Katuic language, has a Locative preposition *pa* (25).

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<sup>13</sup> This form possibly developed from an earlier *papunta sa Maynilà* (Note: *punta* 'go') 'go towards Manila'.



- (25) Brôu (C. Miller, 1964: 72)  
 alic cha doui **pa** ki ...  
 pig eat rice Lcv there  
 ‘The pigs eating rice there...’

The form also appears as the initial element in Brôu *pauŋ* ‘to go, stay’, as well as in Brôu locative adverbs, such as *pauŋg* ‘above, on’. Pacóh (literally ‘Lcv-mountain’) has a verb *póc* [pok] ‘to go’, which is clearly cognate with Brôu *pauŋ* ‘to go, stay’.

Although, case-marking has been lost before non-pronominal nouns in most Mon-Khmer languages, there is still some evidence that older forms of the language were, in fact morphologically case-marked. Hayes (1992: 168) notes that Pacóh has “possessive forms with *i*, as in *alép* and *ilép* (possessive form) ‘sister-in-law’, which might suggest that the vocalic particles also served as case marker.” It is possible to infer that \*a was the Nominative case form and \*i the Genitive case form for both pronominal and non-pronominal nouns in older forms of the language.

### 4.3 A new Austroasiatic and Austronesian demonstrative

There is another grammatical morpheme which has a wide distribution throughout both the Austroasiatic and Austronesian language families, and which has not, to my knowledge, been reconstructed for either language family. However there seems to me to be indisputable evidence that the form must be reconstructed for Austronesian, for Munda, and for Mon-Khmer. This is \*ən ‘demonstrative’. I label the form simply by its word class. It must have been a demonstrative noun, possibly carrying the feature [-spkr], because of the way it has been grammaticalized in the daughter languages.

#### 4.3.1 Evidence from the Munda languages

Among the Munda languages, \*ən is reflected in Sora as a definite suffix, -ən. In Ho, a Santali language, it is a demonstrative.

#### 4.3.2 Evidence from Mon-Khmer languages

In the Mon-Khmer languages, Brôu has a Genitive<sup>14</sup> preposition *ân* [ən] (J. Miller, 1964: 55), a form which is possibly cognate with the nasal prefix occurring on Genitive pronouns in Taoih, which was discussed in section 4.1.1 above. There

<sup>14</sup> Labeled by J. Miller as a “possessive” preposition.

are two other words in Brôu with the same form, *ân* 'he, she, it', and *ân* 'junction between a Head and a Modifier expression' (C. Miller, 1964: 73). The latter two forms would seem to be related, and are probably ultimately related also to the Genitive form. In Pacôh, the same form is described as "a connective meaning 'who' or 'that which'" (S. Watson, 1964: 96). In Nancowry Nicobarese, *ən* is a third person, singular, human pronoun (Radhakrishnan, 1971: 92), while in Car Nicobarese it is a Nominative determiner (Braine 1970).

#### 4.3.3 Evidence from Austronesian languages

In Austronesian languages, such as Toba Batak, Siocon Subanon and Tausug \**ən* is reflected as a demonstrative (26-28).

(26) Toba Batak (\**ə* > *o*) (Van der Tuuk, 1971: 220)

- a. **on** 'this'
- b. di-**on** 'at'

(27) Siocon Subanon (\**ə* > *o*) (Reid, 1971b: 39)

- di-**on** 'there, near hearer'

(28) Tausug (\**ə* > *u*) (Hassan, Ashley and Ashley, 1994: 522)

- ya-**un** 'that (relatively equidistant from speaker and hearer)'

In Ilokano, \**ən* is reflected as =*en*, a post-verbal clitic adverb, marking completive aspect. It occurs in its full form following a consonant, but the vowel is elided following a vowel. This is also its function in Ifugaw, and in Manobo languages (29-31).

(29) Ilokano

- a. napan=**en**    ni    Juan  
left    =*cmpl* Nom John  
'John left already.'

- b. nangan-kami=**n**  
ate    -we    =*cmpl*  
'We (ex.) ate already.'

(30) Ifugaw (\**ə* > *o*) (Lambrecht, 1978: 383 "affix *on* reinforcing the action of a ...verb... is the equivalent of the Ilokano affixed *en*, but is seldom used by the Ifugaw.")

- mumbanggad=**on**  
return            =*cmpl*  
'He (she) is surely returning.'

(31) Western Bukidnon Manobo (Longacre, 1968: 146, 183)

- a. edhimetayan dey=**en** sikiyu  
would-kill we =cml you  
'We would kill you.'
- b. kunaan ku ke egkeulug key=**en**  
thought I fall we =cml  
'I thought we were going to fall.'

In some of the Central Cordilleran languages of the northern Philippines, \*ən is reflected, as in Brôu, as a 'ligature', that is, a preposition which introduces certain modifiers of nominal heads within a noun phrase (32).

(31) Kalinga (\*ə > o) (Gieser, 1963: 60 "/qon/ serves to link two constituents one of which is always attributive to the other.")

- a. boloy **qon** piyaqon-mi  
house lig like -we  
'house that we like'
- b. qosaqan=a qissa pon naqiddan si qilang **qon** lakay  
one = lig not given Acc meat lig old.man  
'one old man who was not given a share of meat'

In other Central Cordilleran languages, reflexes of \*ən occur as a complementizer, that is, it introduces structures that modify verbal heads. These structures are quite specific. In Bontok and Balangaw, it introduces either direct quotation complements, as in (33-34) below, or a complement in what have been referred to as a 'recurrent action' (Reid 1971a) sentence, a function it also has in Ifugaw, as in (35-37).

(33) Bontok

- kinwáni-na=?ə**n** ?ən-takú =t  
said -he=Prep go -we.incl=cml  
'He said, 'Let's go already.'''

(34) Balangaw (Shetler 1976)

- ekat-ni **en** umale-ani  
said-we lig come-we  
'We thought we would come.'

(35) Bontok (Reid 1971a)

- mawákas=**ən** ?umáli  
next.day =Prep come  
'Every day he comes.'

- (36) Balangaw (Shetler 1976)  
ah wakas=**en** ummudan  
tomorrow= lig rain  
'Every day it rains.'
- (37) Ifugaw (Longacre 1968)  
nabigat =**on** nunhugal  
morning= lig gamble  
'Every morning he gambled.'

In Bontok, \***ən** has also developed as a conjunction within a noun phrase, when the conjoined heads are groups of people (38).

- (38) Bontok (Reid 1971a)  
baballu =**ʔən** mamaggit, ʔamamʔa =**ʔən** ʔininʔa  
young.men=Conj young.women married.men=Conj married.women  
'young men and young women, married men and married women'

If we knew enough about the paths of grammaticization that the form has gone through in the daughter languages, we might even be able to show that it is the ultimate source of the \*-**ən** suffix on transitive verbs, and of the \*-**ən** suffix on pronominal Nominative Patients discussed above.

## 5. LEXICON

None of the evidence discussed above is going to be convincing of a genetic relationship to those who look only for bodies of vocabulary, especially so-called basic vocabulary, reconstructed for the proto-language on the basis of sets of recurrent sound correspondences. So the question arises, why, if AA and AN are genetically related, are there so few reconstructable basic lexical items for the parent family? Is it because they are simply not there, as a result of the great time depth since separation, or is it because they are there but unrecognized because of the operation of sound shifts that have obscured their presence? There are two facts that need to be considered. If Austroasiatic and Austro-Tai separated from Austric, the time depth of the two families must be the same. That is, if Austric split into two groups say in the fifth millennium BC, then the Austroasiatic and Austro-Tai families are both around 7,000 year old. How come then it has been reasonably easy to build a well supported base of reconstructions (at least for Proto-Austronesian) but very difficult to do so for Proto-Austroasiatic? The answer seems to be that if we knew more about the diachronic phonology of Austroasiatic languages we would be able to reconstruct for that family almost as

much as has been reconstructed for the early stages of Austronesian.

Now, there have been four papers written in recent years (Hayes 1992, 1996, 1997, and To appear) that have attempted to deal with this problem. Since 1983, Hayes, operating on the assumption that the cognates are there but are unrecognized, has been systematically compiling sets of comparanda, forms that are phonetically and semantically similar between the two families, with the hope of discovering among these sets, a body of what might turn out to be true cognates. He claims to have over a thousand such sets. In the first of the series of articles, he states, "... the cause of the Austric lexical problem has never been an absence of comparable data, but a lack of insight into the historical dynamics of AA and their role in concealing lexical and sound correspondence." (Hayes, 1992: 154)

Hayes notes that, "the lack of a formal PAA reconstruction seriously hampers any effort to compare rigorously AA and AT, and the internal comparison prerequisite to that reconstruction poses in and of itself a challenge equally great to that posed by the probatory problems of the Austric hypothesis" (Hayes, 1992: 157). So, in his first paper he attempted to identify some of the phonological processes that have taken place since the dispersal of Austroasiatic languages, and to reconstruct a PAA sound system, somewhat more complex than the system reconstructed for PAA by Pinnow some 40 years ago (1959: 427). Hayes reconstructs a 6-vowel system, \*/i, e, ə, a, u, o/, and a consonant system as shown in Table 4 (Hayes, 1992: 163, as modified in Hayes 1997).

**TABLE 4. PROTO-AUSTROASIATIC CONSONANTS.**

p	t	c	k	q	ʔ
b	d	j	g	G	
	s		x		h
	z		ɣ	R	
	l		ɭ		
w	y				
m	n	ɲ	ŋ	[N]	

In Hayes (1996 and 1997), he discusses in detail the development of what he calls consonant mutation in the early stages of Austroasiatic, giving evidence for four phonological changes that apparently affected spirants between PAA and PMK. These are all natural changes, palatalization, spirantization, assimilation, and final consonant devoicing. The conditions that brought about these changes are sometimes apparent, but sometimes need to be inferred, as Hayes notes,

“[W]here palatalized reflexes of ancient non-palatal consonants occur, but no high front vowel or palatal glide is reflected in the modern form, it is inferred that an \*i or \*y once existed contiguously to the ancient segment, but has subsequently transformed to another vowel or been lost... In many cases, the ancient high vowel was probably an affix” (Hayes, 1997: 9).

In his most recent paper (Hayes To appear),<sup>15</sup> he tackles the task of identifying cognate sets and reconstructing a list of basic vocabulary for PAA. He utilizes Blust’s (1993) reconstruction of basic PMP vocabulary as a reference base in his search for potential AA cognates. In order to minimize the possibility of borrowing from Chamic he also compares, where possible, Proto-Chamic cognates for the PMP forms. His statistical analysis of the results revealed that “potential AA correspondents were found for just over two thirds of the PMP reconstructions. However when only AA correspondences with representative forms in both AA subfamilies are considered, the degree of correspondence falls dramatically to about two fifths (40.5%)” (Hayes, To appear: 29).

Hayes is under no illusion that such figures are surprisingly high. He recognizes that, “the methodological approach used in discovering AA correspondents has obviously and significantly skewed the degree of correspondence in favor of the proposition that Austroasiatic and Austronesian are genetically related” (Hayes, To appear: 29). Although aiming for close phonological and semantic matches between potential cognates, it is obvious that in a number of cases he has treated as potential cognates forms that are only remotely related semantically. Furthermore, although he has attempted to be rigorous in applying the sound correspondences to what he perceives to be the root of the word, there is usually extraneous phonemic material, which he treats as affixal, introducing the likelihood that in a number of cases he has treated as cognates forms that are unrelated except for the fact that they have a single syllable in common.

This is not the time or place to provide a full appraisal of Hayes’ work, suffice to say that the argument that Austronesian and Austroasiatic languages cannot be genetically related because there is no body of shared cognates in the area of basic vocabulary can no longer carry any weight. Hayes’ work, although widely criticized in the past, must now be reevaluated and its implications taken seriously.

## 6. CONCLUSION

There will still be those who will try to find alternative explanations for the material that has been presented here. The possibility that coincidence has played

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<sup>15</sup> I wish to express my thanks to L.V. Hayes for providing me with copies of his most recent papers and allowing me to quote from them.

a role in the comparisons is only remote. More serious consideration must be given to proposed explanations that claim that the families are not (immediately) genetically related but have been in contact with each other in the remote past. We already know that contact between Chamic and languages that were in geographical proximity to Chamic resulted in mutual borrowing. But some would claim that prior to this, there must have been a back-migration of some early Malayo-Polynesian group, which resulted in a stratum of Austronesian borrowed forms. This, in effect, is raising again the Benedictine ‘extinct proto-language’ explanation for the comparable forms between the two language families, because there are no Austronesian languages known to exist on the mainland at this time. There are clear difficulties in espousing this contact hypothesis, because if it occurred, it must have taken place prior to the dispersal of Proto-Austroasiatic. There appear to be comparable forms not only with the Mon-Khmer languages but also with Khasi and the Munda languages far to the west, and as we have seen, with Nicobarese, in the south. Time-depth considerations alone would seem to rule out this hypothesis.

The cumulative weight of evidence, I believe, is sufficient that we need no longer cautiously refer to this family with the sobriquet “Austric Hypothesis”. For some of us, anyway, Austric is one superfamily for which finally the evidence is persuasive and the hypothesis has been confirmed.

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