

Questioning Eastern Malayo-Polynesian

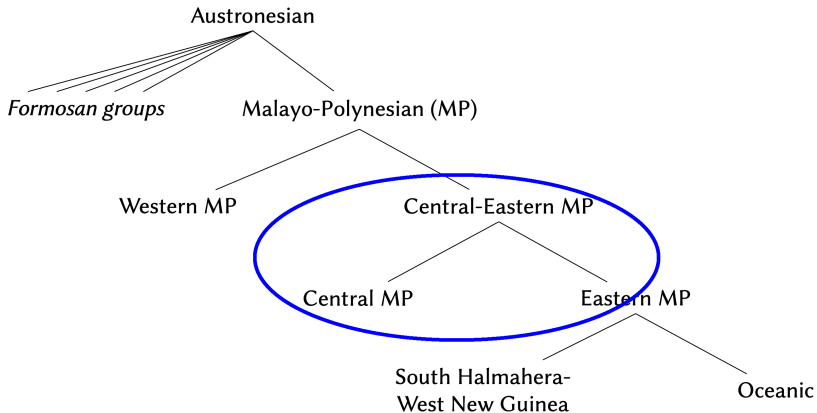
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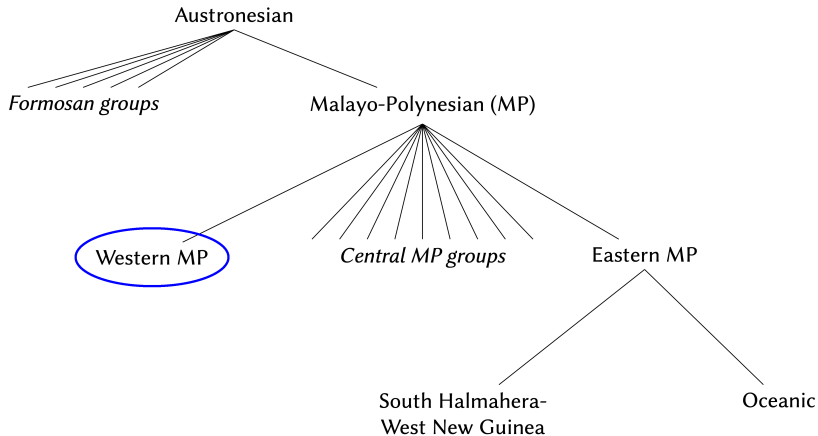
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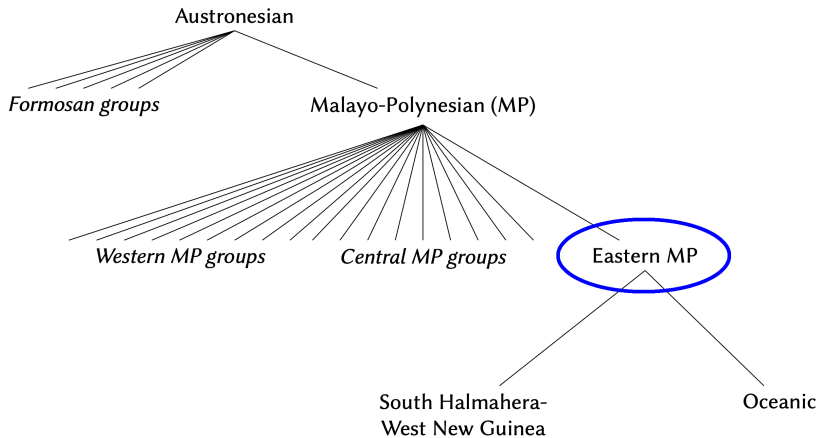
*Competing views on the structure of
Malayo-Polynesian*



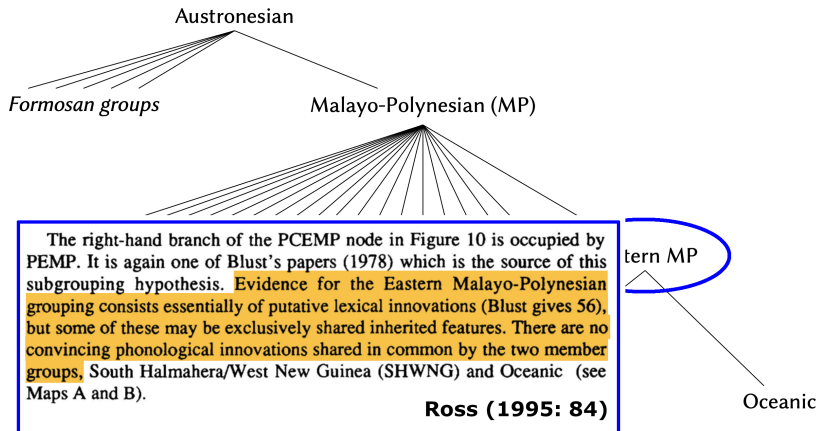
e.g. Blust (1977, 1978, 1983/84, 1993, 2009, 2013)



After Donohue & Grimes (2008)



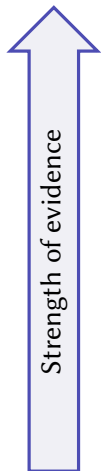
After Smith (2017)



After Smith (2017)

*Eastern Malayo-Polynesian:
A brief history*

What has value in subgrouping?



- ▶ Cognate paradigms
- ▶ Shared morphological idiosyncracies
- ▶ Regular sound correspondences
- ▶ Shared irregular sound change

- ▶ Lexical innovations
- ▶ Semantic innovations

See e.g. Campbell & Poser (2008)

EMP according to Blust (1978, 1983/84)

“In contrast to the relatively strong phonological evidence for a SHWNG subgroup, **there is little phonological evidence in support of an Eastern Malayo-Polynesian subgroup...** The existence of an Eastern Malayo-Polynesian subgroup thus cannot be based on the evidence of exclusively shared [regular] phonological innovations.” Blust (1978: 211-212)

EMP according to Blust (1978, 1983/84)

- Shared inalienable possessive paradigm? (van den Berg 2009)

	pSHWNG	pOc	pEMP	pMP
1SG	*-ku	*-gu	*-ku	*=ku
2SG	*-mu	*-mu	*-mu	*=mu
3SG	*-na	*-ña	*-ña	*=niya (2)
1PL.E	*-mam	*-ma[m]i	*-mami	*=mami, *=nami (2)
1PL.I	*-ta	*-da	*-ta	*=ta
2PL	*-miu	*-m[i]u	*-miu	*=ihu, *-mu-ihu
3PL	*-ri?	*-dra	?	*=da

Ross (2006)

EMP according to Blust (1978, 1983/84)

► Six formal innovations:*

	pEMP	
PAN *qinəp >	*qenəp	‘to lie down’
PAN *kali >	*keli	‘to dig’
PAN *Duyuy >	*dui	‘dugong’
PMP *be(s)uR >	*mosuR	‘satiated’
PMP *qa(s)u >	*kasu	‘smoke’
	*mutu	‘broken off, severed’

*“sporadic phonological changes, loss of morpheme boundaries, etc”

EMP according to Blust (1978, 1983/84)

- ▶ 50 lexical innovations, e.g.:

pEMP

*ayawan	‘ficus sp.’
*beke	‘defecate’
*boi/bui	‘smell, stench’
*budan	‘white’
*kanisu	‘to spit’
*kiñit	‘pinch’
*maiduŋ	‘evening, dusk’
*sala	‘sharp-pointed object’
*tawan	‘a tree: <i>Pometia pinnata</i> ’
*tobV	‘fishnet float’
*wataŋ	‘bring, carry, take’
*wa(q)ip	scoop or container for water

EMP according to Blust (1978, 1983/84)

► Four semantic innovations:

pEMP

*kakat-(i)	‘to peel with teeth’	< ‘to crush with teeth’
*lumut	‘green’	< ‘moss, algae’
*miRmiR	‘urinate’	< ‘moisten, spray’
*pa(ka)-salaq	‘punish’	< ?

EMP according to the ACD (Blust et al. 2023)

► One formal innovation:

	pEMP	
PAN *qinep	*qenep	‘to lie down’
PMP *kali	*keli	‘to dig up’
PMP *duyuy	*dui	‘dugong’
PMP *besuR	*mosuR	‘satiated’
PMP *qasu	*kasu	‘smoke’
	*mutu	‘broken off, severed’

EMP according to the ACD (Blust et al. 2023)

- ▶ 28 lexical innovations (Blust's original 50 – 35 + 13):

pEMP

- *babak strike, chip stone
- *beŋkeR defecate
- *kanisu to spit at (as an insult?)
- *maluRu shade
- *qayawan banyan, strangler fig
- *sala sharp-pointed object, possibly sea urchin
- *sua to stir
- *suak to backpaddle canoe
- *tinoni man, male
- *tuRi candlenut tree (*Aleurites moluccana*)
- *waip water container
- *wa(n)se divide

EMP according to the ACD (Blust et al. 2023)

► No semantic innovations:

pEMP

*kakat(i)	‘to peel with teeth’	← ‘to crush with teeth’
*lumut	‘green’	← ‘moss, algae’
*miRmiR	‘urinate’	← ‘moisten, spray’
*pa(ka)salaq	‘punish’	← ?

Summary

	Blust (1978, 1983/84)	ACD
Lexical innovations	50	28
Formal innovations	6	1
Semantic innovations	4	0

Assessing Eastern Malayo-Polynesian

Too few SHWNG cognates: 20/29

PEMP *qayawan banyan, strangler fig [↑](#)

SHWNG

Buli yawan banyan tree

OC

Chuukese aaw a tree: *Ficus carolinensis*. the bark is used as medicine against evil spirits; fruits and leaves used as medicine; roots used to flavor a special breadfruit pudding

Pohnpeian aiau banyan tree: *Ficus carolinensis*, used in the treatment of tetanus and as a hemostatic in menstruation

Titan yew banyan

Nauna kew banyan

Wogeo vaiawa banyan

Kairiru ayou ficus tree

Takia aiaw banyan

Gedaged aiau several species of the strangler fig (*Ficus*). They are considered to be the abode of spirits (= spirits of the dead)

Gitua aiowan kind of ficus with short leaf; sometimes chewed with bark in lieu of betel

Numbami aiyowana banyan

Rennellese ?aoa a tree, *Ficus benjamini* L.

Rotuman äeva banyan tree

Samoa e aitua le the (that) banyan-tree is haunted

Too few SHWNG cognates: 20/29

PEMP *mutu₂ broken off, cut off [↑](#)

SHWNG

Numfor **muk** broken; to come to an end, of questions/quarrels

OC

Hawaiian **muku** cut short, shortened; amputated; at an end, ceased; anything cut off short; short, brief, quick; broken section of a wave or crest; thirtieth night of the moon, when it has entirely disappeared

Tuvaluan **mutu** ended; incomplete; cut off

Samoaan **mutu** be cut off (as tree branches), truncated

Wayan **mudu** be cut off, amputated, severed, cut short; end, cease, conclude

Fijian **mudu ni lija** man given to a man who has had a finger joint chopped off in mourning for a dead chief (lit. 'cut off hand')

mudu cut off, ceased, ended

Tongan **mutu** cut off, amputate, make shorter by cutting a piece off

Rarotongan **mutu** to be at an end, to be parted, to end suddenly, to conclude or terminate finally, to cut short; to be cut, to be severed; cut off, severed; parted, ended

Maori **mutu** brought to an end, left off; cropped, having the end cut off, truncated, mutilated; cut short, bring to an end

Tolai **mut** fell trees, cut lumber, esp. to cut out a canoe

Too few SHWNG cognates: 20/29

PEMP ***molan** true, real, genuine ↕

SHWNG

Buli **molan** correct, real, genuine, true

OC

Arosi **mora** original, true, real; customary

Short forms: 14/29

PEMP *supi to peel, pare, as yams [ⓘ](#)**SHWNG****Buli** **suf** to peel, pare**n-cuf-**
i s/he is peeling it**Numfor** **suf** cut with a knife, of soft things, as the manufacture of little boats carved from soft wood, the peeling of yams, etc.**OC****Leipon** **suh** to peel yams**Sori** **sup** to peel yams**Bipi** **suh** to peel any fruit**Titan** **su-i** to peel yams**Nauna** **sup** to peel yams**Lou** **sup** to peel yams**Gedaged** **supi** to pare, peel (cut off thin slices)**Lakalai** **suvi** to peel taro**Gitua** **supi** cut up taro and similar food, only with small knife**Toqabaqita** **sufi-a** to shave, shave off (beard, hair as direct object)**Lau** **sufi** to shave with a razor, to cut hair

Short forms: 14/29

PEMP *upe end of tuber that is kept for planting ↑

SHWNG

Buli uf the young tip of a plant shoot

OC

Gitua uve sprout for planting

Bugotu ufe taro tops for planting

Motu uhe the end of the yam which is kept for planting; any seed for planting

Short forms: 14/29

PEMP ***sua**₂ to stir ↕

SHWNG

Numfor **su** to stir, of sago porridge

OC

Rotuman **sua** to stir (as in stirring milk)

Tongan **hua** food made from a mixture of (arrowroot starch), and coconut cream

Semantic latitude too wide: 8/29

PEMP *sala sharp-pointed object, possibly sea urchin [↑](#)

SHWNG

Numfor [sār](#) sharp

OC

Hawaiian [kala](#) surgeonfish; rough, as sharkskin

Nukuoro [dala](#) fin, spine (extending from a fish, etc.)

Tuvaluan [tala](#) fin, thorn; glans of penis

[tala-](#)
[tala](#) rough surfaced

Nggela [hala](#) an echinus, sea-egg

Molima [sa-sala](#) fishhook

Anuta [tara](#) barb (of a spear, fishhook, etc.)

Futunan [tala](#) spine, horn, dorsal fin

Niue [tala](#) a barb, prong

Tongan [tala](#) thorn, prickle, spike, barb or bristle

Rarotongan [tara](#) something that is sharp-pointed, such as a thorn, spike, or the points of horns, a barb of any kind; bristling, etc.

Semantic latitude too wide: 8/29

PEMP ***mawa** a cleft, space between two rocks ↕

SHWNG

Buli **mawa** roomy, spacious, as a house

OC

Arosi **mawa** a cleft, a space between two rocks

Potential onomatopoeia: 1/29

PEMP *babak₁ strike, chip stone [↑](#)

SHWNG

Arguni **baba** break one thing on another, chip a stone

OC

Nggela **papa** to chip; chips

Arosi **babak** break one thing on another, chip a stone

Fijian **baba** strike, smite the head with open hand

Tolai **papak** to peel off bark - also applied to peeling off lime, paint, etc.

Discussion

What remains for the skeptical historical linguist?

PEMP *kanisu to spit at (as an insult?) [↑](#)

SHWNG

Kurudu **kenisa** saliva

Serui-Laut **kunui** saliva

Wandamen **kanisu** saliva

OC

Seimat **kan i anuhu-** saliva

Mussau **kanusu** to spit

Marau₂ **nisu** to spit

Pak **kanuh** saliva; to spit

Kairiru **qVns** spit out at

Samasodu **ki-knisu** to spit

Motu **kanudi** to spit; spittle

kanudi-a to spit on

What remains for the skeptical historical linguist?

PEMP *kaRa member of the parrot family [↑](#)

SHWNG

Ansus [kara](#) cockatoo

Ambai [kara](#) cockatoo

POC *kaRa male Eclectus Parrot: Eclectus roratus [↑](#)

OC

Halia [kala-](#)
[kala](#) Eclectus Parrot

Lusi [kara](#) parrot

Kove [kaha](#) parrot

Roviana [kara](#) the general name for parrots

Kwaio [a-ʔala](#) male of king parrot (*Lariius roratus*), female is [ʔufoʔufo](#) (sexual dimorphism is extreme in this species)

'Āre'āre [ara](#) large green parrot, red under the wings

Arosi [kara](#) parrot

Wayan [ka-kā](#) (obsolescent) a bird, possibly the Collared Lory, *Phygis solitarius*, which informants say was present on Waya a generation ago but is no longer there

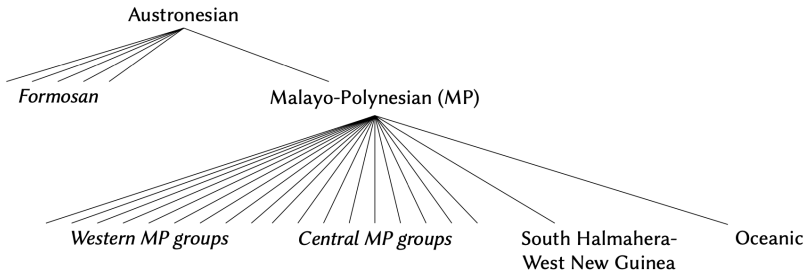
Fijian [kā](#) parrot

[ka-kā](#) several species of parrot: *Prospeia splendens*

What next for the EMP hypothesis?

- ▶ Can any of the currently dubious innovations be substantiated?
- ▶ Can new ones be identified?
- ▶ Incorporate data from recently documented SHWNG languages into ACD
- ▶ Reconstruct proto-SHWNG; compare with proto-Oceanic

What next for the EMP hypothesis?



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Thanks for listening!

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