# SOME LUDIC ASPECTS OF TIMUGON MURUT

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## BACKGROUND

At the 38th Congress of ANZAAS (the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science) held in Hobart, Tasmania in August 1965, my friend and colleague Don Laycock presented a paper entitled "Back and fill: a cross-linguistic look at ludlings", in which he defined a 'ludling' as:

> the result of a transformation or of a series of trans-
> formations acting regularly on an ordinary language text,
> with the intent of altering the form but not the content
> of the original message for concealment or comic effect.

In subsequent writings on the same topic, Laycock (e.g. 1972) has maintained this definition virtually unchanged and has also admirably persisted in using the (admittedly 'barbarous') term ludling.

It was during a field-trip in Sabah some six months later, when Laycock's paper had already been shunted into the non-active section of my memory, that I first entered the Timugon Murut word kalos in my word-file as an unexplained variant of kalo *no, not*. There it remained for several years, until a survey of root-structures revealed the existence of other synonymous pairs of the kalo/kalos type, differing only in the presence or absence of a final consonant. Further investigation showed that these pairs represented the simplest of several ways in which speakers of Timugon Murut deliberately 'play' with the phonological shape of words for various purposes. In previous articles (Prentice 1974 and 1981) I have described other types of specialised linguistic usage in the Timugon Murut language as used in song and ritual. However, those usages are based almost entirely on regular lexical substitution and are therefore intrinsically different from phenomena of the ludling type, which form the topic of this paper.

The ways in which the investigation of such ludlings can contribute to the task of linguistic analysis have already been so lucidly described, both by Laycock (1972:4) and by Sherzer (1976:31-34), that any further justification of the study of play language would be superfluous here. Suffice it therefore to quote Laycock's observation:

> The study of ludlings is not just a linguistic side-issue.
> Ludlings give valuable information on the native-speaker's
> intuition as to what constitutes a syllable, a vowel, a
> consonant, a consonant cluster, a word, or a suprasegmental.

PHONOLOGY

Before embarking on the description of the four types of play language so
far known in Timugon Murut, it is necessary to explain some aspects of the
phonological system of the ordinary language, especially those which are relevant
to, or contrast with, phonological features of the various play language outputs.

1.    The phoneme inventory of Timugon Murut contains 4 vowels and 16 consonants:
/a i o u b d g j k l m n ŋ ñ p s t w y ʔ/.  In the orthography used here, /ŋ ñ ʔ/
are spelt ng, ny, q respectively.  With the exception of /d/ (to be discussed
below), all other phonemes are spelt as written above.

2.    The voiced stops b, /d/, g are fricativised to [ƀ, r, ɡ] respectively
following a vowel, w, y or q, regardless of any intervening word boundary.
Because of the presence of numerous loanwords (mostly from Malaysian) containing
the segments [d] or [r], in which the pronunciation of those segments remains
unaffected, /d/ appears to be in the process of splitting into /d/ and /r/.
Oppositions such as [karaʔ] *think* and [adaʔ] *there is/are* (from Malaysian ada)
are commonplace, and literate members of Timugon society consistently write d or
r according to pronunciation.  For these reasons, /d/ is spelt d only word medially
following a consonant (i.e. in the cluster nd) and in loanwords; elsewhere it is
spelt r.

3.    The segments j and ny never occur word finally, while q occurs only word
finally.  The semivowel w does not occur adjacent to u; nor does y occur adjacent
to i.

4.    All four vowels occur freely in word-final syllables.  In penultimate
syllables, o (which reflects Proto-Austronesian *e) only occurs when the final
syllable also contains o.  In all syllables preceding the penultimate, the
opposition between o and a is neutralised, o occurring when the immediately
following syllable contains o, a occurring elsewhere.

5.    Consonant clusters are restricted to word-medial position and may consist
only of a nasal + obstruent (i.e. mb, nd, ngg, nj, ngk, mp, ns and nt).  Further,
only one such cluster is permissible in a given word.  There are no geminate
consonants.

6.    Although each vowel in a word constitutes the nucleus of an emic syllable,
two adjacent vowels are usually pronounced as a single syllable nucleus, even
when separated by a word boundary.  If the two vowels are identical, they coalesce
into a single long vowel.  If they consist of a high vowel (i or u) and a non-high
vowel (a or o) in either order, the high member of the sequence is non-syllabic.
If both vowels are high, the first is non-syllabic.  Two non-high vowels are
always separated by a word-boundary.  Nevertheless, they are realised as a single
long vowel, either [a:] or [ɔ:], according to the rule stated in 4. above.  Thus
the sentence aniin no aku ra owoy ra umo-no *He will give me some rattan in the
field* is pronounced [a'ni:n na:ku 'rɔ:wŏy 'raɥmɔnɔ].

7.    With a few exceptions, word stress falls predictably on the penultimate
syllable.  If the nucleus of that syllable is a member of a vowel sequence, the
stress falls on the resulting long vowel, or on the syllabic member of the
sequence.

8.    With the exception of some clitic pronouns and particles, all Timugon words
consist of at least two emic syllables.  The canonical shape of the word can be
represented by the following formula:

$$(C_X)V_X(N) \ldots (C_1)V_1(N)(C_2)V_2(C_3)$$

in which C = consonant, V = vowel, N = nasal consonant homorganic with following C, () = optionality, and ... = potentially infinite recurrence of preceding elements (with the proviso that N may only occur once).

## WORD-CLASSES

A distinction is made in this paper between 'full words', which are always disyllabic or longer and always carry word stress, and 'particles', which are frequently monosyllabic and almost always unstressed.  Such particles consist of post-nominal deictics and possessive pronouns, pre-nominal case-markers, post-verbal modifiers and post-verbal subject and/or agent pronouns.  The operation of play language mechanisms in Timugon Murut is usually confined to full words, although a sequence of particles is often treated as a full word unit.

Henceforth the terms 'play language' and 'ordinary language' will be abbreviated as PL and OL respectively.  Sample sentences will usually be cited in the order: OL form, word-for-word English translation, PL form, free English translation.

## PL 1: ADDITION OF FINAL CONSONANT

In the simplest form of Timugon PL, of which one instance was cited at the beginning of this paper, a consonant is added to any full word ending in a vowel, w or y.  This play language is used in narrative when quoting the words of a character in a story, and in conversation when citing third parties or when affectionately mocking one's interlocutor.  With one exception, the added consonant is always a phonetic continuant with a length about twice that of an OL word-final consonant.  The operation is shown in the following rule, in which x = the added consonant:

$$\#\ldots(C_2)V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \#\ldots(C_2)V_2(C_3)x{:}\# \; // \; C_3 = w, y, zero$$

The identity of the added consonant is determined by the speaker's conception of the personality of the individual being quoted.  Thus addition of -ss marks the speech of persons with a foreign (non-Timugon) accent, of rough, arrogant characters (and 'baddies' in folk-tales), and of women when cited by men, whereas -ll is used for children, stupid or dumb people, and men being quoted by women, -bb (i.e. [b:]) for old, toothless people, -rr for men quoted by women, and -t (the only non-continuant) for deaf people.

Of the following examples of PL 1, 1 and 2 are taken from recordings of stories, while 3 is an exchange between two men.

1.  (OL)  kalo!  soroy  aku  raiti
    *no       remain I    here*

    (PL)  kalo-ss!  soroy-ss  aku  raiti-ss
    *No!        I'll stay here!*

(Arrogant young man refusing advice to avoid possible danger by sleeping elsewhere)

2.   (OL)   kua!  sanggilan  kow?
              *why   when        you*

     (PL)   kua-ll!  sanggilan  kow-ll?
              *Well!    When did you arrive?*

(Rather slow-witted man addressing guest who has been in his house for seven days)

3.   A speaking:

     (OL)   mongoy  kow  kia  ra  kaday?
              *go      you* mod  pt  *shop*

     (PL)   mongoy-bb  kow  kia-bb  ra  kaday-bb?
              *Are you going shopping?*

     B speaking:

     (OL)   iow!  mambali  aku  ra  lungun!
              *yes   buy      I*   pt  *coffin*

     (PL)   iow-bb!  mambali-bb  aku-bb  ra  lungun!
              *Yes!      I'm going to buy a coffin!*

(Exchange between two middle-aged men, lifelong friends and neighbours. Although they are approximately the same age, B has a shock of grey hair and appears older than A, a fact which forms the basis of much bantering between them. Here A gently pokes fun at B, who is passing his house, by using the -bb suffix. B retorts by playing along with the joke.)

The same PL mechanism is also used to characterise the speech of individual members of the community, without any of the connotations referred to above. There appears to be general agreement in the community as a whole about which characterisation is allotted to a particular individual, although how this comes about is far from clear. Thus the speech of Jimin (my principal Timugon Murut teacher and adoptive father), that of Kasuab (one of his sons), and my own speech are quoted (or mocked) by other Timugon speakers with -ll. Similarly, the speech of Jimin's brother-in-law Sani is marked by -ss, that of a female cousin by -rr, and that of Sarijinjang, a distant kinswoman, by -bb. Certain suffixed consonants appear to be used only for this type of individual speech marking. They include -nn, -ngng and -zz, of which the last is completely absent from OL, even as a phone.

It is evident that this PL, which is variously named ragu oss 'S-language', ragu obb 'B-language' etc., depending on the consonant used, barely falls within Laycock's definition of a ludling, since its purpose is certainly not concealment. Even comic effect is clearly a secondary feature, although 'dramatic effect' (in its broadest sense) would describe the purpose of PL 1 more accurately. This PL is perhaps more easily compared with certain techniques used by raconteurs in English, such as adoption of a quavering falsetto for the speech of old people, or replacement of s by sh for the speech of drunkards.

## PL 2: ADDITION OF FINAL SYLLABLE

In the first type of PL 2, called ragu al 'al-language', the sequence -al is suffixed to all full words and some disyllabic clitics:

$$\#...(C_2)V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \#...(C_2)V_2(C_3)al\#$$

Example:

4. (OL)  mongoy  aku  ra  kaday
         *go*      *I*   *pt*  *shop*

   (PL)  mongoyal  akual  ra  kadayal
         *I'm going shopping.*

The second type of PL 2 is known as ragu in 'in-language' and consists of the suffixation of -in to all full words and to some particles. The suffix takes the form -qin following a vowel or semivowel:

$$\#...(C_2)V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \#...(C_2)V_2(C_3)qin\# \\ \#...(C_2)V_2(C_3)in\# \end{bmatrix} // \begin{bmatrix} C_3 = w, y, zero \\ elsewhere \end{bmatrix}$$

Examples:

5. (OL)  manginum  aku  ra  inasi
         *drink*     *I*   *pt*  *rice-beer*

   (PL)  manginumin  akuqin  ra  inasiqin
         *I drink rice-beer*

6. (OL)  okow  mongoy  mangkuot  ri  Amay
         *you*  *go*      *ask*       *pt*  *Dad*

   (PL)  okowqin  mongoyqin  mangkuotin  riqin  Amayqin
         *You go and ask Dad*

It will be noted that example 6 contains one of the very few instances in the data of a monosyllabic particle participating alone in a PL operation (ri → riqin).

The two types of PL 2, as well as the remaining PL's discussed below, are employed for different purposes and in different circumstances from PL 1. Whereas the latter is used by all sections of the community in order to lend extra colour or flavour to an utterance, the former are used only by adolescents talking informally among themselves. No other age group appears to use these PL's: pre-adolescent children have not yet learnt them, while adult members of the community seem to forget them with remarkable speed and thoroughness, even to the extent of denying the existence of any such 'play languages' or 'secret languages'. Adolescents in Timugon society enjoy numerous opportunities for being together as a separate group (e.g. during communal festivities, while guarding or harvesting the rice-crop, and while bathing, washing clothes or fetching water at the river-side), usually out of sight and sound of their elders. On such occasions they make use of PL's 2-4 whenever someone who is not a member of their group comes within earshot, in order to conceal the purport of their words from the intruder (but not from each other), a purpose fulfilled with especial effectiveness by PL 3 and PL 4 (q.v. below).

## PL 3: ELISION OF FINAL SYLLABLE

In this PL, termed ragu satangaq 'half-language' or ragu nu Pilipin 'Philippines language', the final -V(C) of every full word and of some disyllabic particles is deleted. The initial C of the final syllable is only deleted when it forms the second member of a nasal + obstruent cluster:

A.   $\#(C_x)V_x(N)...(C_1)V_1(C_2)V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \#(C_x)V_x(N)...(C_1)V_1(C_2)\#$

B.   $\#(C_x)V_x...(C_1)V_1NC_2V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \#(C_x)V_x...(C_1)V_1N\#$

Examples:

7.  (OL)  sanggilan  ulian    mu?
         *when          go home  you*

    (PL)  sanggil  uli  mu?
         *When are you going home?*

8.  (OL)  kua  panulis  kow  ra  giti?
         *why  write     you  pt  here*

    (PL)  ku  panul  ko  ra  git?
         *Why are you writing here?*

9.  (OL)  napajaq    sansam-ti        ra  usiq
         *too much  vegetable-this  pt  salt*

         napaj  san-ti  ra  us
         *These vegetables have got too much salt in them!*

10. (OL)  mapanday  kow  kia  mindagu  ra  ragu      nu  Pilipin?
         *able      you  mod  speak     pt  language  pt  Philippines*

    (PL)  mapan  ko  ki  mindag  ra  rag  nu  Pilip?
         *Can you speak the Philippines language?*

(NOTE: A possible explanation for the apparently irregular change of monosyllabic kow to ko is to be found in the description of PL 4 below.)

The application of the mechanisms of PL 3 has a number of logical consequences for the phonology of the output. One is that q does not occur at all, since it is restricted to word-final position in the OL. Another is that j occurs finally as well as in other positions (see the treatment of napajaq in 9.). Presumably the same is true of the much rarer segment ny, though there are no examples in the data. Other less predictable distinguishing features of PL 3 are that the word stress is retained on the nucleus of the original penultimate syllable, and that the rule governing fricativisation of voiced stops does not apply. That is to say, all /b/ and /g/ phonemes, and some /d/ phonemes, are exempted from the rule and are pronounced as plosives. These features are illustrated below, where example 10 is repeated, first in the phonemic OL version, then in the phonetic OL version and finally in the phonetic PL version. The same process is repeated for a further example, supplemented by literal and free English translations.

10. (OL: phonemic)  /mapanday kow kia mindagu da dagu nu pilipin?

    (OL: phonetic)  [ma'pandæy kow kĭa mɨn'dagu ra 'ragu nu 'pilipɨn]

    (PL: phonetic)  [ma'pan ko ki mɨndag da 'rag nu 'pilip]

11. (OL: phonemic) /kua didun-ti, magiloŋ kow ni  raki?/
                   *why  you-here  look     you  mod I*

    (OL: phonetic) [ˈkᵘa riˈrunti, maˈgilɔŋ kow ni ˈrakɨ?]

    (PL: phonetic) [ˈku ˈdirti, maˈgil ko ni ˈrak]
                   *What's up with you, why are you looking at me?*

The changes brought about by the PL 3 mechanisms, particularly the prevalence
of voice plosives and word stress on final syllables, produce an effect that is
markedly non-Timugon and indeed reminiscent of a Philippines language.  It is not
clear, however, whether the name ragu nu Pilipin refers to this resemblance or to
the geographical centre from which this PL has spread, or is believed by its users
to have spread.  As far as can be ascertained, similar PL's are reported only for
Javanese among the Austronesian languages.  Laycock (1972), for example, mentions
a Javanese PL in which the initial syllable is deleted, such that piŋgir *edge* and
dilaten *lick* become gir and laten respectively.  Sherzer (1976:28), on the other
hand, reports a Javanese PL in which:

> ...every syllable of every word except the initial one is
> deleted.  Furthermore, every syllable in the play language
> output must be closed; this is done by retaining the initial
> consonant of the second syllable of the source word, if needed.

However, Sherzer gives only one example of this PL, a sentence consisting of three
disyllabic words: aku arep luŋo *I am going to go*, which yields ak ar luŋ. It is
therefore not clear whether the mechanism involved is in fact deletion of all
syllables except the first, as maintained by Sherzer, or deletion of the last
syllable only, since with disyllabic words the results are indistinguishable.
The former seems unlikely in a language in which the morphology relies so heavily
on prefixation and infixation, processes which result in many identical initial
syllables.  If the latter is the case, then this Javanese PL is identical with the
Timugon PL 3.

Timugon-speakers of the younger generation being almost all bilingual in
Timugon and Malay, they frequently use colloquial Sabah Malay among themselves,
especially in non-traditional environments (e.g. at school, on the football field,
etc.), and often apply PL 3 to that language also.

Examples:

12. (OL) saya tidaq mauq
         *I    not  wish*

    (PL) say tid ma
         *I don't want to!*

13. (OL) kau ini  tambirang
         *you this boastful*

    (PL) ka in tambir
         *You're such a big-head*

14. (OL) kau pigi di sana ka?
         *you go   pt there pt*

    (PL) ka pig di san ka?
         *Are you going over there?*

15. (OL) di mana  kau mandi nanti?
         *pt where you bathe (future)*

    (PL) di man ka man nan?
         *Where are you going to have your
         bath?*

It is not known whether the same PL is in use among the small group of
native Malay-speakers in Sabah (who are ethnically Brunei Malays).

## PL 4: TRANSPOSITION OF FINAL SYLLABLE

The fourth and most complex PL, which the Timugon call ragu tabalik 'backwards language', is formed basically by removing the final syllable to initial position in the word.  It is perhaps the most widely attested PL in the Austronesian area:  it is discussed for example by Evans (1923:276-277) for Malay and by Garcia (1933) and Conklin (1956) for Tagalog.  Blust (1980:45) writes:

> The existence of systems of speech disguise designated by forms of the root *balik 'reverse' both in Western Indonesia and in the Philippines argues for a similar tradition of some antiquity in the Austronesian world.

Here too it is necessary to sound a note of warning concerning the over-reliance on data consisting of words of less than three syllables which has vitiated some descriptions of this type of PL.  Such words cannot be used alone as test-cases to distinguish between on the one hand strict syllable inversion (in which the words 'Timugon Murut' would become 'Gonmuti Rutmu'), and on the other hand syllable transposition, either of the initial syllable to the end of the word ('Mugonti Rutmu'), or of the final syllable to the beginning of the word ('Gontimu Rutmu').

In order to convert an OL word into PL 4, the following ordered rules must be applied to all full words:

(i)   Words with initial vowels are treated as though beginning with q:

$$\#V\ldots \rightarrow \#qV\ldots$$

(ii)   When the initial consonant of the final syllable is m, n or ng (there are no examples in the data of ny in the same environment), it is treated as geminate. This rule is also applied optionally when that consonant is a semivowel (w or y), and sporadically when it is r:

$$\ldots C_2V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \ldots C_2C_2V_2(C_3)\# \ // \ C_2 = m, n, ng, w, y, r$$

(iii)   Two adjacent vowels anywhere in the word are treated as though separated by a semivowel or a glottal stop.  The segment which is inserted between the two vowels is w when the first is u and the second is not u;  y when the first is i and the second is not i; and q in all other environments:

$$V_1V_2 \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} V_1wV_2 \\ V_1yV_2 \\ V_1qV_2 \end{bmatrix} \ // \ \begin{bmatrix} V_1 = u, \ V_2 \neq u \\ V_1 = i, \ V_2 \neq i \\ \text{elsewhere} \end{bmatrix}$$

(iv)   The final $-(C)V(C)$ of the word is moved to initial position:

$$\#(C_x)V_x(N)\ldots(C_1)V_1(N)(C_2)V_2(C_3)\# \rightarrow \#(C_2)V_2(C_3)(C_x)V_x(N)\ldots(C_1)V_1(N)\#$$

(v)   Any resulting sequence of q are reduced to a single q:

$$qq \rightarrow q$$

As in OL, word stress in PL 4 is predictable, though the rule for its placement is somewhat different.  In PL 4, stress falls on the final syllable of trisyllabic words and on the penultimate syllable of other words.

Step-by-step application of the rules listed above is shown in the following selected words, followed in turn by sample sentences.

|        | *no, not* |        | *sniff, kiss* |        | *able*    |        | *beard*   |
|--------|-----------|--------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| OL     | kalo      | OL     | alok          | OL     | mapanday  | OL     | jangut    |
| (iv)   | loka      | (i)    | qalok         | (iv)   | daymapan  | (ii)   | jangngut  |
| PL     | ['lɔka]   | (iv)   | lokqa         | PL     | [dæyma'pan] | (iv) | ngutjang  |
|        |           | PL     | ['lɔk?a]      |        |           | PL     | ['ŋʉtjaŋ] |

|        | *bird*    |        | *fish*        |        | *match (for fire)* |    | *black*   |
|--------|-----------|--------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| OL     | susuit    | OL     | papait        | OL     | pandirip  | OL     | maitom    |
| (iii)  | susuwit   | (iii)  | papaqit       | (ii)   | pandirrip | (iii)  | maqitom   |
| (iv)   | witsusu   | (iv)   | qitpapa       | (iv)   | rippandir | (iv)   | tommaqi   |
| PL     | [wɨtsu'su]| PL     | [?ɨtpa'pa]    | PL     | [rɨp:an'dɨr] | PL  | [tɔm:a'?i]|

|        | *stay*    |        | *soul*        |        | *fragrant* |       | *look!*   |
|--------|-----------|--------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| OL     | mayan     | OL     | ambiluo       | OL     | maangiq   | OL     | ilaiq     |
| (ii)   | ma(y)yan  | (i)    | qambiluo      | (ii)   | maangngiq | (i)    | qilaiq    |
| (iv)   | yanma(y)  | (iii)  | qambiluwo     | (iii)  | maqangngiq| (iii)  | qilaqiq   |
| PL     | ['yanma], | (iv)   | woqambilu     | (iv)   | ngiqmaqang| (iv)   | qiqqila   |
|        | ['yanmæy] | PL     | [wɔ?am'bilu]  | PL     | [ŋɨ?ma'?aŋ]| (v)   | qiqila    |
|        |           |        |               |        |           | PL     | [?i?i'la] |

**Examples:**

16. (OL)  maitom  kakagaq  abuk  ri  Joon
    *black   very     hair  pt  John*

    (PL)  tommaqi  gaqkaka  bukqa  ri  Qonjo
    *John's hair is very dark.*

17. (OL)  manginum  kow  kia  ra  inasi?
    *drink     you  mod  pt  rice-beer*

    (PL)  nummangin  kia  kow  ra  siqina?
    *Are you drinking rice-beer?*

18. (OL)  mapanday  kow  kia  ra  ragu      tabalik?
    *able      you  mod  pt  language  backwards*

    (PL)  daymapan  qowko  yaki  ra  gura  liktaba?
    *Do you know the backwards language?*

19. (OL)  ilaiq  karabaw-no  mongkotop!
    *look   buffalo-the  graze*

    (PL)  qiqila  bawkara  noqin  topmongko!
    *Look at that buffalo grazing!*
    (a derogatory comment on a companion's eating habits)

Several irregularities are to be noted in examples 16-19.  For example, the sequence of postverbal clitics kow (pronoun) and kia (interrogative modifier) occurs in both 17 and 18, but is treated differently.  In 17 the order of the two clitics is simply reversed, a regular procedure in this PL when both are mono-syllabic, but unusual when one of the clitics is disyllabic (as kia).  In 18 kow and kia are separately subjected to the PL 4 mechanism, which in the case of kia yields a regular form yaki.  In the case of kow, however, the appearance of qowko can be explained as resting on an analysis of kow as a disyllabic *koow.  The same explanation would also clarify the conversion of kow to ko in PL 3 (above).

Similarly the form noqin for ⁻no in 18 must be derived from ino, the full form of the deictic which is in normal use in many Murut dialects but in Timugon occurs only in formal speech and letter writing.

## CONCLUSION

As has already been stated, play languages can offer valuable insights into the structure of a language at various levels.  The data presented here provides support for a number of analytical standpoints, e.g. that nasal + obstruent clusters such as mp, nt, etc., are not to be regarded as unit phonemes, and that phonetic single long vowels do in fact represent two emic syllables (even though opposing analyses are perfectly viable or even unavoidable for certain other languages).  On the other hand, a play language can also raise some interesting questions and function as a signpost towards problems that need solving. Why, for instance, are word-medial nasal consonants treated as geminate in PL 4?  Is one justified in trying to find a historical reason by hypothesising that this feature represents a generalisation of the gemination which affected word-medial consonants in many Western Indonesian languages when following *e?  Or is it simply that Timugon speakers feel that such nasal consonants straddle the syllable boundary and belong to two syllables simultaneously?

Up to the present, regrettably few linguists have even noticed play languages, still fewer have written about them, and only a handful have seriously attempted to incorporate them (or the information they provide) into a wide-based linguistic analysis.

As far as the Austronesian area is concerned, more extensive information on the distribution and nature of play languages may even permit an eventual reconstruction of a particular PL strategy, providing similarly valuable insights into the structure of an ancestral language.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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