

Geographical names research

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Research into geographical names: Why?

- Collection and standardization of geographical names as encouraged by the UN primarily take place in the context of national base mapping programs.
- Existing names are taken from :
 - ◆ existing maps
 - ◆ consultation of local authorities
 - ◆ field work
 - ◆ (possibly) investigation into written sources

Research into geographical names: Why?

- New names for existing or new objects may be coined by the same national authorities authorized to standardize them, or proposed by local or regional authorities and submitted for approval.
- In most cases, no specific need for research other than simple data acquisition will be felt, and standardization is just an instrumental act of government.
- So where does names research come in?

Research into geographical names: Why?

- The following considerations may give rise to a request for specific names research:
 1. Different names or different writings of the same name are recorded for the same object.
 2. The relationship between a name, its language and the meaning it conserves (both original and acquired) is unclear.
 3. The exact relationship between name and object is unclear.
 4. A decision must be made whether a generic term should be included in the standardized name.

Fields of toponymic research

- Research should be done both before the collection or verification of names in the field and during the office treatment, when contradictory data may emerge and decisions must be made.
- As toponyms are not the subject of one single discipline, the knowledge required needs to be derived from different fields of research:
 1. History
 2. Language geography
 3. Linguistics, ethno-linguistics and cultural anthropology

Historical research

- Historical research into geographical names can be carried out by studying both cartographic and literary sources.
- Not many parts of the world remain that have never been mapped before, at least some of the names to be assessed must have appeared on maps before.
- Example: historical research into geographical names in Indonesia.

Historical research: Indonesia

- In parts of Indonesia, predecessors of base map series were produced by the Dutch authorities in colonial times.
- Named objects of some importance that survived into the present time most probably appeared on earlier small scale maps, some of which might date back into Dutch East India Company times.
- Differences in names and in the writing of names in historical documents may be explained in different ways.

Historical research: Indonesia

- Historical name changes may be explained by:
 1. the emergence and disappearance of Dutch authority and influence (Dutch names, Dutch transcription of native names)
 - Batavia → Djakarta (1942/1950)
 - Buitenzorg → Bogor (1949)
 - Bandar Aceh Darussalam → Koetaradja (1874)
 - Koetaradja → Kotaradja
 - Kotaradja → Banda Aceh (1962)
 - Numbai → Hollandia (1910)
 - Hollandia → Kota Baru (1962)

Historical research: Indonesia

2. political changes and changes in policy internally

- Makassar → Ujung Pandang (1971)
- Ujung Pandang → Makassar (1999)
- Kota Baru → Sukarnopura (1963)
- Sukarnopura → Djajapura (1968)
- Jayapura → Port Numbay (2010) ?

Historical research: Indonesia

3. official spelling changes in recent times

- Soerabaja (Ejaan Van Ophuijsen 1901)
→ Surabaja (Ejaan Republik 1947)
- Surabaja
→ Surabaya (Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan 1974)
- Djakarta (Ejaan Republik 1947)
→ Jakarta (Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan 1974)
- Djajapura (Ejaan Republik 1947)
→ Jayapura (Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan 1974)

Historical research: Indonesia

4. replacement of regional language forms by Malay or Indonesian orthography or v.v.
 - Manarou (Bantik language) → Manado (Manado Malay)
 - Takingeun (Gayo or Aceh language?) → Takengon
 - Belitung (Bahasa Indonesia) → Belitong (Malay)

Historical research: Indonesia

5. in some documented cases, popular sentiment motivated by historical events or episodes supposed to contaminate a name, or give it a bad connotation
- Sidokare → Sidoardjo (28 May 1859)
 - Karangasem → Amlapura (after the 1963 Gunung Agung eruption)

or any other reasons that might be clarified by historical research.

Historical research: Indonesia

- An exceptionally rich cartographic source currently available on the internet is the map collection of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT):
<http://www.kit.nl/kit/Colonial-maps>

Historical digitized maps of the Netherlands East-Indies, Suriname, Dutch Antilles (ca. 1850 - 1950)

Catalogue search

The catalogue enables you to find all digital historical maps by title, author or keyword. Use the [advanced search](#) for more search options.

Term:

[\[SEARCH\]](#)

[\[?\]](#)

Location search

Search the entire historical map collection for geographical locations, such as towns, villages, rivers, mountains etc.

Name:

Match all words

Country:



[\[SEARCH\]](#)

[\[?\]](#)

KIT has digitized its remarkable historical map collection and made it available online.

One of the largest collections of maps of the former Dutch colonies is thereby accessible via Internet for scientists, cartographers and other interested parties in the Netherlands and abroad.

[> Background of the project](#)

Name Match all words

Country

16 results, shown 1 - 16

Score	Name	Category	Area	LAT	LON
78	Banggai	POPULATED PLACE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°4'00"S	120°2'00"E
78	Banggai	POPULATED PLACE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	4°52'10"S	122°43'18"E
78	Banggai	POPULATED PLACE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°35'13"S	123°29'56"E
48	Kabupaten Banggai	ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°0'00"S	123°0'00"E
48	Kepulauan Banggai	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°39'43"S	123°10'42"E
48	Kepulauan Banggai	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	2°7'41"S	123°14'02"E
48	Kepulauan Banggai	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°17'06"S	123°36'02"E
48	Pulau Banggai	ISLAND	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°37'43"S	123°33'53"E
48	Pulau-pulau Banggai	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°39'43"S	123°10'42"E
48	Selat Banggai	STRAIT	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°50'29"S	123°51'37"E
46	Daerah Tingkat II Banggai	ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°0'00"S	123°0'00"E
19	Banggai-archipel	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°39'43"S	123°10'42"E
19	Banggai-eilanden	ISLANDS	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°39'43"S	123°10'42"E
19	Banggaiba	POPULATED PLACE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°30'00"S	119°42'00"E
19	Banggaikoro	POPULATED PLACE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°30'00"S	119°42'00"E
18	Danau Banggaiba	LAKE	Sulawesi (Celebes)	1°42'00"S	119°37'00"E

Kepulauan Banggai (Sulawesi (Celebes)), ISLANDS

Type: 

Move mouse over map to expand on the right side of the screen

[06166-31-B](#)

Scale:1:200000

Type: topographic maps

Year: 1940

[Catalogue](#)



[09249](#)

Scale:1:200000

Type: nautical charts

Year: 1930

[Catalogue](#)



[05432-37](#)

Scale:1:500000

Type: topographic maps

Year: 1946

[Catalogue](#)



[05432-38](#)

Scale:1:500000

Type: topographic maps

Year: 1945

[Catalogue](#)



[08914](#)

Scale:1:500000

Type: nautical charts

Year: 1936

[Catalogue](#)



[09035-1](#)

Scale:1:500000

Type: nautical charts

Year: 1933

[Catalogue](#)



[09038](#)

Scale:1:1000000

Type: nautical charts

Year: 1920

[Catalogue](#)



[09037](#)

Scale:1:1000000

Type: nautical charts

Year: 1922

[Catalogue](#)



[05661](#)

Scale:1:1000000

Type: thematic maps

Year: 1935

[Catalogue](#)



[06225](#)

Scale:1:1000000

Type: topographic maps

Year: 1935

[Catalogue](#)



[06164](#)

Scale:1:1250000

Type: thematic maps

Year: 1913

[Catalogue](#)



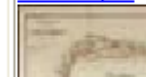
[06159](#)

Scale:1:1250000

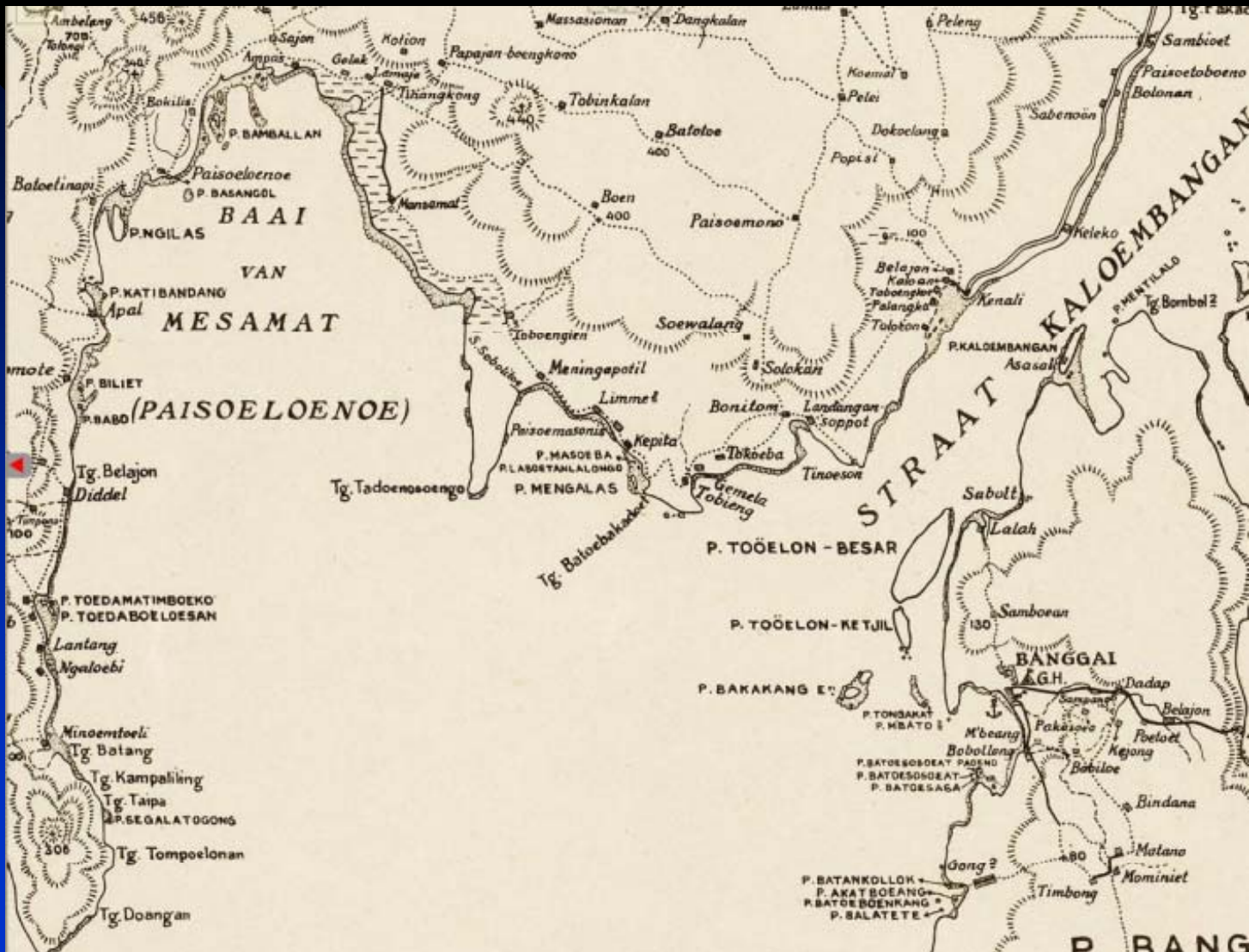
Type: topographic maps

Year: 1927

[Catalogue](#)



Kepulauan Banggai in 1940



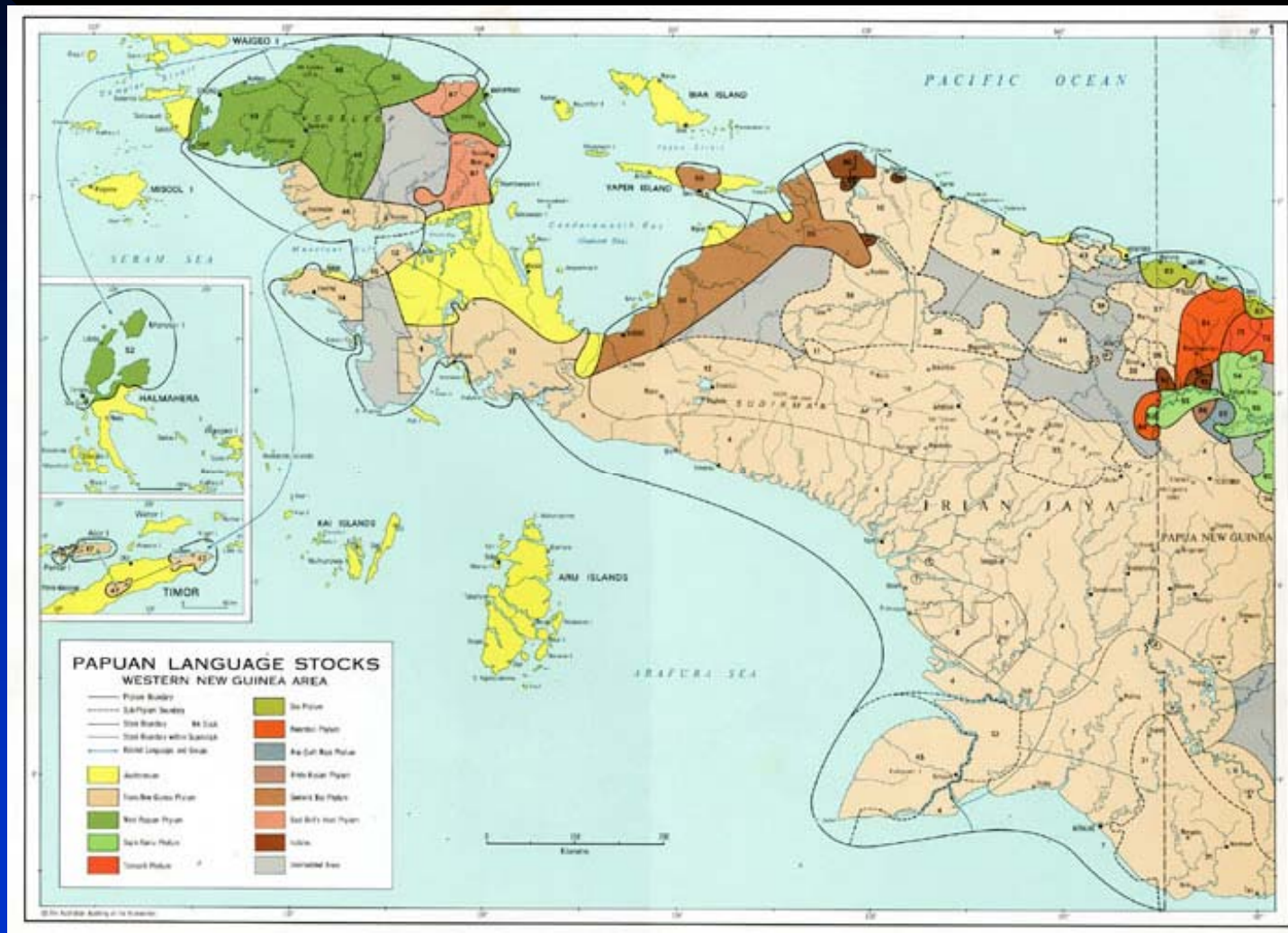
Language geography

- In multilingual countries like Indonesia and most other South-East Asian nations, any field collection of names should be preceded or accompanied by language-geographical research of the area under survey.
- To safeguard the preservation of cultural heritage contained in the names, standardization decisions should be supported by an understanding of the cultural-linguistic context to which the names belong.

Language geography

- Based on a language-geographical map, glossaries may be prepared containing generic terms, frequently occurring adjectives, cardinal directions etc.
- Language-geographical maps have been collected and published on the Ethnologue website of SIL International:
http://www.ethnologue.com/country_index.asp
- The website also provides summary information per language about aspects like population, geographical distribution of speakers, and classification.

Language geography



Linguistics, ethnolinguistics and cultural anthropology

- Once it has been defined what language the names in a certain area have sprung from *and* whether this is still the language of the resident population using the names on a daily base, **knowledge about the language** in question becomes indispensable to judge the correct writing of the names.

Linguistics, ethnolinguistics and cultural anthropology

- Generic elements still in use as such should be written according to the orthographic rules of the language, **duplication of generic terms should be avoided**. Examples:
 - Batang Hari instead of Sungai Batang Hari
 - Ci Liwung (or Ciliwung?) instead of Sungai Ciliwung
- **Grammatical rules**, for instance for forming plurals or adjective endings, should be respected. Where such specific knowledge is not readily available, this might not be easily done.

Importance of knowledge of language and society: Javanese

- An anecdote from colonial times shows during toponymic survey:
- The Javanese language, like neighbouring Sundanese and Balinese, uses different registers in conversation depending on the relative social position of the interlocutors. They differ both in grammar and in vocabulary:
 - *Ngoko*: 'common/neutral talk'
 - *Krãmå*: 'polite talk'

Importance of knowledge of language and society: Javanese

- The Netherlands Indies Topographic Service had ruled in its guidelines that the *ngoko* forms would end up on the map.
- Geographical names too would be affected, insofar as they contained elements of which a distinctive *krãmå* form would exist.

Importance of knowledge of language and society: Javanese

- Non-Javanese surveyors (who, as representatives of the Government, would be addressed in respectful *krãmå* by Javanese villagers) are reported to have brought home several *krãmå* forms not recognized as such.

Importance of knowledge of language and society

- A more purely linguistic aspect worthwhile to be studied when recording names from oral sources is the **phonology** of a language: which distinctive sounds are meaningful differences (phonemes) and which are not.
- **Phonemes** should be noted to safeguard the information contained in the pronounced name, even if the current standard of roman writing cannot be represented.

Importance of knowledge of language and society: Javanese

- Example: Javanese

- 'd' and 't' both can be retroflex or dental
- 'e' can be voiced or voiceless
- 'o' can be open or closed
(the latter being a variant of the a-phoneme)

Encountered in fieldwork area: Bokoharjo