

On the Austronesian Dispersal to the Philippines

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Various proposals have appeared in the literature from linguists as well as from archaeologists and other scientists regarding the origin of the Austronesian peoples in the Philippines. This paper will review the various proposals, and focus on the linguistic evidence for Taiwan, in particular Eastern Taiwan, being the origin of the founding population of Austronesian speakers in the Philippines. It will provide new evidence, based on the paradigmatic structure of pronominal systems in Western Malayo-Polynesian languages, that early Austronesian movement into the Philippine was very dynamic, with movement through the Philippines and into Indonesia matching the so-called “express-train” model of expansion. This evidence is in conformity with other lexical and phonological evidence, as well as current archaeological evidence, that there must have been a dialect chain stretching from the northern Philippines into Eastern Indonesia and beyond probably within a few hundred years of the first settlement out of Taiwan.