

FURTHER CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF ENGGANESE,

BY O.L. HELFRICH

In the *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (*Magazine for Indonesian Language, Country, and Peoples studies*), Volume XXXIV (page 539 et seq.), a “Proeve van eene Maleisch-Nederlandsch-Engganeesch Woordenlijst (*Test of a Malay-Dutch-Engganese Glossary*)”, compiled by Mr. J. A. J. C. Pieters and myself, was published.

Because in our research we were dependent on a Malay, as an interpreter, who was not sufficiently fluent in the Engganese language, and on a single Engganese, who understood and spoke only a little Malay, while this research was moreover made more difficult because the Engganese speaks quickly and swallows many a word, it was to be expected that the collected material could not lay claim to accuracy. I therefore attribute it to these factors that the efforts of various travellers to compile a glossary have led to such divergent results.<sup>1</sup>

That circumstance prompted me to review the glossaries on the inspection trips that I, as Resident of Bengkoelen, made to the Enggano archipelago. I also verified the “Proeve” in its entirety, with the help of the chiefs of Poelaw Doewa and Karakoewa, who, because they are counted among the most developed Engganese and are sufficiently acquainted with Malay, seemed to me to be the most suitable for the work.

Footnote 1: Compare the word lists of: von Roenberg, van der Straaten & Severijn and Francis, included in the contribution of Dr. A. C. Oudemans Jzn.: „Engano (west of Sumatra), its history, inhabitants and products” in *Tijdschrift v. h. Kon. Ned. Aardr. Gen.* (*Tijdschrift van het Koninkrijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap = Journal of the Royal Dutch Geographic Society*), Division of more extensive articles 1889, page 126 and following; by J. Walland, published in the *Tijdschrift voor Ind. T. L, en Volkenkunde*, Volume XIV, 1864, page 116 et seq., and by E. Modigliani, included in his work “L'Isola delle Donne. Viaggio ad Engano”, p. 266 and following.

My intention to go into more detail on the language, which would enable me to make grammatical notes and to collect several literary products, which could form a sound basis for a scientific research to be set up by linguists, however, I could not follow. The time which, in connection with my busy work, I could devote to a stay on the archipelago, was too short for this. Unfortunately, said heads could not sufficiently inform me, because they had too little understanding of grammar.

The hereby presented glossary — Engganese-Dutch — with its appendices is to be regarded as a revised, improved and supplemented copy of the above quoted “Proeve”.

The riddles, which, in my belief, are not original, but have been taken over from the foreigners, were partly (numbers 1 to 96) communicated to me by the above-mentioned heads, besides recorded by *Johannes*, the Batak minister (pandita) of the “Rheinische Missions Gesellschaft (*Rhenish Missionary Society*)”.

The stories (numbers 1 to 7), the interlinear Malay translation and the notes are also written by him. Although I expressly requested *Johannes* to provide the texts as complete with grammatical notes as possible, he did not comply with my request; apparently he was unable to do so.

I have taken over what has been delivered by him *unaltered*.

The stories 10 to 15 were written in Malay by the then Overseer on Enggano, the late *Radhen Moestapha*.

I tried to give the most faithful translation of both the riddles and the stories.

In the "Proeve" attention was already drawn to the fact that dialect differences can be observed in the language. One dialect belongs to the western landscapes, the other is specific to the eastern landscapes. Since, as is known, the number of souls of the native population has decreased alarmingly, so that many a landscape has become depopulated, at least according to communication from the chiefs, the division between the population must have ceased to exist for years and, as a consequence thereof, the dialects are spoken mixed together.

The words placed in parentheses in the list are less commonly used than the corresponding ones which precede them.

Contrary to what I made known about the spelling and pronunciation in the "Proeve", I note that the *i* sound in Engganese is clear and has now been rendered by me as *ie*. The *è* is sometimes heard as *e* in "bed" (*bɛt*), then again as *i* between the *i* in "ik" (*ik*) and the clear *i*. The swallowed *k* is represented by *q*, which seems more rational to me than to indicate it with *k*<sup>2</sup>.

From the above it may appear that much is still lacking in the work done on and in the knowledge of Engganese. Because it is now convincingly established that the native population will become extinct in the near future, I think it is urgently necessary to make a serious study of the language as soon as possible, to correct errors and to fill in gaps. May those who come into contact with the people through their work, and are therefore primarily designated for that work, devote their energies to it.