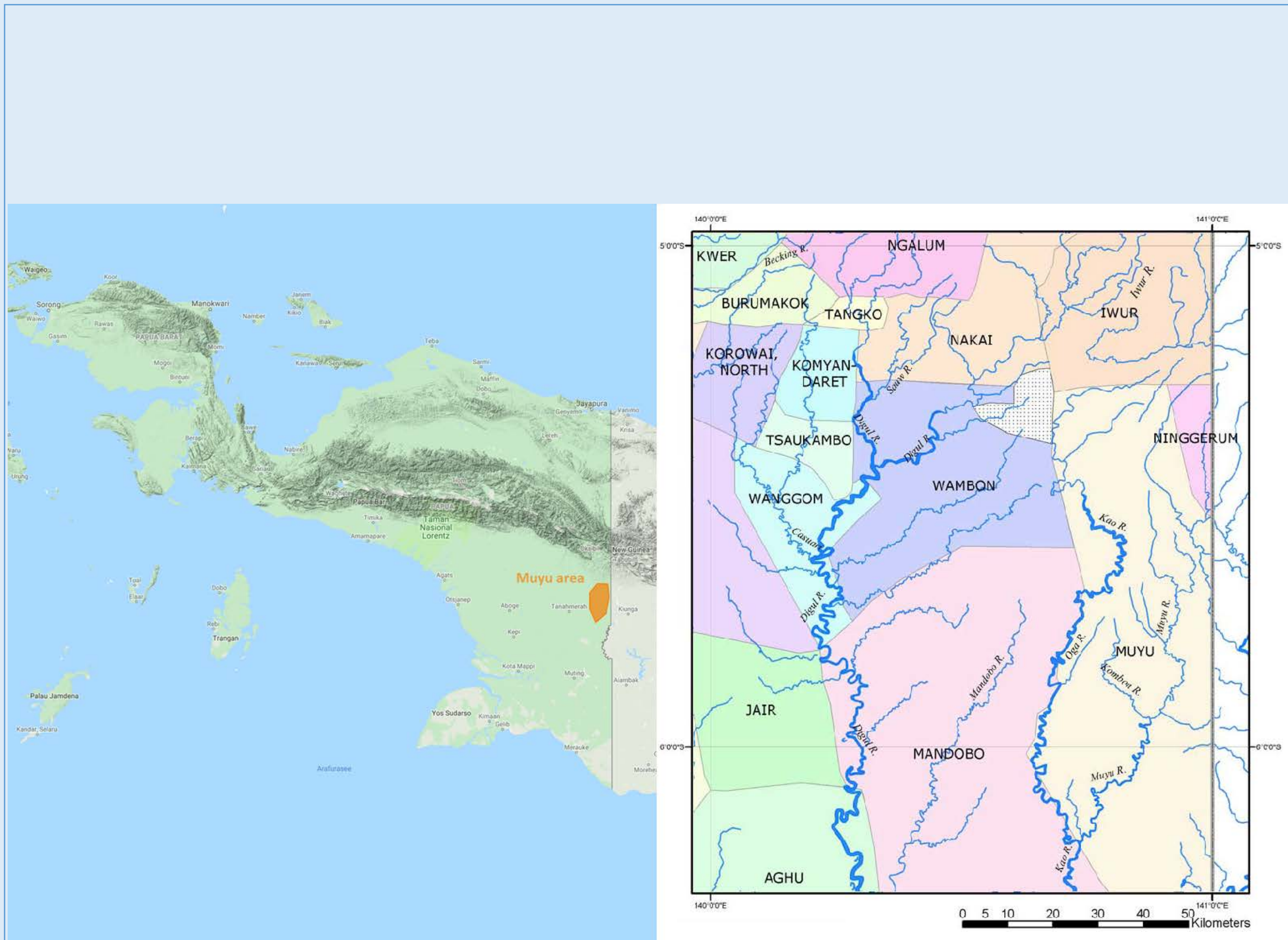


# First Data of Muyu

## a lowland Ok language of New Guinea

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Muyu language area (based on Ethnologue 14<sup>th</sup> edition)

## Language Profile

**Speakers:** perhaps 2.000

**Names:** Muyu, Moyu, Kati, Yonggom, Ninggerum, North Muyu, South Muyu

**Codes:** kti, kts

**Genealogy:** TNG -> Ok -> Lowland Ok -> North Muyu, South Muyu

**Location:** Papua province, Indonesia. Spoken in ~50 villages along the Kao and Mui river

**Endangerment:** Speakers older than 40 years, no transmission to younger generation (L1=Indonesian)

**Dialectal situation:** Speakers are aware of 9 dialects for which they claim mutual intelligibility.

### Basics in verbal morphology

Muyu is a head-marking language. Morphology is mainly on the verb. Core arguments are indicated **via pronominal affixes** which agree **in number, person and gender**. Subject suffixes are part of every finite verb. Transitive verbs, however, differ in wether and where object affixes may occur.

### Verbs without object affix

Amaladik kili mon-ime.  
cross new buy-2pl.Imp  
*‘Buy that new cross!’ (to several people)*

Alim ne ambip yitbon mangg-a-den.  
banyan.tree 1sg house in.front.of plant-1sg.S-PFV  
*‘I planted a banyan tree in front of my house.’*

### Verbs with object prefix

Yi go Pieter yom Hermina yom **yen**-ban-ip-ten.  
3pl PTC P. CON H. CON **Pl.O**-hit-3pl.S-PFV  
*‘They hit Peter and Hermina.’ (Past)*

Maria go John **an**-dali yamo kem-od-un.  
M. PTC J. **3sg.M.O**-chase.away always HAB-DUR-3sg.F.S  
*‘Maria is always chasing away John.’*

Paradigm: *nen*- (1sg), *ten*- (2sg), *an*- (3sg.M), *wen*- (3sg.F), *yen*- (Pl)

### Verbs with object suffix

Kon.kaduk odo tana-tana yobotkop nam-od-ip ko kene-**y**-od-ip.  
Woman.man this child~Pl ball play-DUR-3pl.S PTC see-**Pl.O**-DUR-3pl.S  
*‘This people are watching kids playing soccer.’*

Lukas ko ne ni-**d**-o-den  
Lukas PTC 1sg catch-**1sg.O**-3sg.S-PFV  
*‘Lukas caught me.’*

Paradigm: *-ngg* (2/3sg), *-y* (Pl), *-d* (1sg)

### Discussion

Object agreement on verbs is unevenly distributed. The bulk of verbs do not seem to take any affix at all, whereas verbs with object suffixes are moderate in number. Verbs with object prefixes are a small closed group only **attested for 3 verbs** yet. This is in accordance with findings from other TNG languages. Suter (2012) is able to reconstruct proto-forms for the Finisterre-Huon stock, finding that all but one documented language have a closed class with one to two dozen verbs and similar lexical meanings. Healey (1964) gives examples for several Mountain Ok languages. Fedden (2011) finds 7 verbs with object prefixes in Mian (Mountain Ok). Based on this work, I expect to find up to about a dozen of these verbs in Muyu. While most of the previous work only mention the existence of this ‚residual class‘, I am eager to find an explanation why these few verbs behave so differently.



### Literature

Healey, A. 1964. The Ok Language Family in New Guinea. [Diss. ANU]  
Suter, E. 2012. Verbs with pronominal object prefixes in Finisterre-Huon Languages. *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia*. Special Issue. 23-59.  
Fedden, S. 2011. *A grammar of Mian*. Vol. 55. Walter de Gruyter.