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The Department for Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia

NOVEMBER 2024



Greeting Students of **Tumbuh School Yogyakarta** at AAI

By Syukri Rizki

Exposure to the international arena of cultural exchange should be experienced in early ages. This is perhaps the concern of Tumbuh School Yogyakarta that, in cooperation with Stichting Hibiscus in the Netherlands, successfully organized a visit for their students to the Netherlands and Germany.

Established in 2005, the Tumbuh School highly upholds inclusivity, diversity, and tolerance. Against this backdrop, a visit to countries with different cultural backgrounds like Germany was deemed instrumental in shaping the students' global perspective.

In Hamburg, the students and the school staff under the lead of Kanjeng Pangeran Haryo Wironegoro initially arrived at the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) Hamburg on August 30, 2024. After several ceremonial remarks, the students performed the Javanese song "*Gundul-gundul Pacul*" accompanied by the Gamelan instrument. After that, they performed

a musical drama called "*Cah Dolanan*" in English that depicted various traditional games played by Indonesian kids. Among the invited guests were students of the Wichern Schule in Hamburg, who clearly enjoyed the performance.

Our Indonesian lecturer, Ms. Mirdayanti, briefly presented about our Department at the University of Hamburg to all the attendants. The students then visited the AAI after the series of events at the KJRI were over. At the AAI, Ms. Mirdayanti guided the students to look around the facilities in the building, detailed the academic activities of the department and Indonesian-related events being

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conducted lately, and handed them our department's information leaflets. Worth mentioning also is that some of our master's students and PhD candidates were present to greet the school students.

As a department that promotes Indonesian studies, we were delighted to welcome junior high school students of the Indonesian Tumbuh School at such a relatively young age who come to directly experience cultural differences outside their country. Hopefully, this series of visits in European countries will enrich their insights about how Indonesia has been perceived internationally abroad. •



Rescuing Engganese Language from the Brink of Extinction

By Syukri Rizki



As the winter semester 2024/2025 begins, our master's student Muhammad Dian Saputra (Putra) reflects on his experience from recent field research on Enggano island, Bengkulu.

Putra plans to investigate the program undertaken by the Bengkulu government in revitalizing the Engganese language, which is on the brink of extinction.

Putra observed that the Bengkulu Language Department merits the most credits for the revival attempts of the Engganese language. It held competitions such as storytelling, poetry writing and reciting, speech, short story writing, and singing traditional lullabies, targeting participants among youngsters who have been somewhat detached from using their native language. In two levels of formal education, elementary and junior high schools, the government prescribed that the Engganese subject be included. The teachers recruited for the subject are locals with a good command of the language, since

formal high education training for Engganese language teachers is not extant so far.

Moreover, the primary education introduced by Christian missionaries during the Dutch colonization is now seen as a significant driver for the Engganese language to flourish. The Engganese Bible translation published by the Indonesian Bible Society (LAI) in 2024 is regarded as promoting a correct spelling of the words. No wonder, school students would rely on the scripture whenever they need to look for a perceived correct spelling of certain words. Nonetheless, Putra opines that the uncontrolled influx of Indonesian loanwords slipping freely into the Engganese lexicon nowadays could deprive the language further from its 'purity.'

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Putra's participatory observation in Banjarsari, a village located on the most northern tip of the island, provided unforgettable experiences. He joined the locals harvesting cacao, banana, and coconuts, and even contributed to a community project by collecting coral stones and pebbles for a mosque construction. Putra's research resonates with the works of the late Prof. Hans Kähler – the then Director of the Seminar for Indonesian and South Sea Languages in the Department of Oriental Studies (AAI today) – on Engganese phonetics. Prof. Kähler's magnum opus, *Enggano-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, benefits later researchers who work to decelerate the language's demise. We cannot wait to see Putra revealing research findings from the data he gathered on the Enggano island. ●



Successful Exhibition Travels On

By Marion Struck-Garbe



Our exhibition 'Contemporary Art, Culture and Resistance in West Papua / Indonesia' is in high demand and has been reprinted to be shown elsewhere. This indeed is a small success story.

From beyond the University there is a lot of interest in the topic, especially by people who are concerned about Oceania and West Papua. Some did visit the AAI just to see the exhibition, like Oridek Ap - a Papuan residing in the Netherlands who immediately had the idea of showing it there. Because the exhibition Posters are available as PDF-files they can be easily sent to other places and this is what has happened: Thus, the exhibition was shown at the 'Museum Sofiahof' in Den Hague as part of an event called 'Roemah Papua'. The opening on 26th of April coincides with the anniversary of the death of the well-known Papuan cultural activist and musician Arnold Ap who



was shot in 1984 by police. The exhibition will travel through the Netherlands.

In addition, from November 28th onwards the exhibition will be presented at the 'Museum auf der Hardt' in Wuppertal which belongs to the Archives and Museums Foundation of the United Evangelical Mission. A German translation of the texts will be added. Further on, Watch Indonesia is also interested in showing it and the West Papua Network and Pacific Network are advertising it on their websites.

This is a big success for the SEA department and for the students who have developed and compiled the exhibition during 2023. I want to thank all of you: Wira Atmaja, Vylqi Okensyah, Happy Yulfarida Arini, Munthe Apriyanti M The, Astrid Martz, Hellen Kustanti, Laura Hirsch and Fachri Aidulsyah. You have done a great job. ●

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Thaiistik Post-doctoral Researcher as a Visiting Professor Abroad

By Volker Grabowsky, Silpsupa Jaengsaewang

From December 2023 to November 2024 Dr Silpsupa Jaengsaewang, a post-doctoral researcher and Principal Investigator (PI) in the field of Thai Studies at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), has been working as a Visiting Professor at Mahasarakham University (MSU), Thailand.



In the frame of the joint project by Universität Hamburg and Mahasarakham University titled "Palm-leaf Manuscript Preservation as a Social Collaboration Platform," she started her collaborative work with an online lecture on "Knowledge Management in Thai and Lao Manuscript Culture" for the semester class "Knowledge Management for Community and Social Development" at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In late July she travelled to Mahasarakham University to continue her Visiting Professor programme in August on-site.

In Mahasarakham she was cordially welcomed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prayook Srivilai, President of Mahasarakham University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nittaya Wannakit, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mr Thom Gatewongsa, Director of the Research Institute of Northeastern Art and Culture (RINAC), and other experts and colleagues.

There at the university she gave a lecture "From Stylus to Printer: The Dynamics of Religious Traditional Manuscripts in Laos." On 15 August 2024, the fourth international conference "Science and Culture: Globalization and Soft Power Challenges for Mekong



Regions" was convened at the university for which Professor Dr Volker Grabowsky, Head of Thai Studies Sections, Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia, Universität Hamburg, was invited to deliver a keynote lecture "Manuscript Cultures in the Tai World Revisited: The Venues into Studying the Diversity of Writing in Thailand, Laos and Beyond," while she presented a study "Manuscript Preservation as a Social Collaboration Platform." On 27 August 2024 the RINAC broadcasted her live seminar on the "Introduction to the Manuscript Culture Study" and phenomenally reached over 3000 views within two days. •



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Challenges of growing upon Humanities to become a Talent Acquisition Business Partner

By Hansa (Manakijksomboon) Stein

From 2018 to 2020, Hansa (Manakijksomboon) Stein enrolled in the Master's program of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia, majoring in Thaiistik studies, at Universität Hamburg.

Her master's thesis "The Chinese Society in Thailand through the Lens of 'Letters from Thailand'; a Novel by Botan: The Analysis and Personal Reflection" was an exploration of the intersection of literature and society, revealing the nuanced dynamics of Chinese-Thai communities.

Graduating from Universität Hamburg opened her doors to the professional world. Hansa began her career as a Thai researcher at Statista GmbH, a global business intelligence platform headquartered in Hamburg. Her work involved the analysis of Thai market trends providing insights that helped shape business strategies. This experience enriched her analytical and research capabilities and deepened her understanding of global business landscapes.

After Statista where she worked from August 2019 to August 2022, Hansa moved to Switzerland and entered the recruitment industry. At present, she works as a Talent Acquisition Business Partner at Hilti Group. Her role encompasses a wide range of responsibilities from strategizing recruitment efforts to sourcing and engaging top talent from around the globe.

Reflecting on her time at the Universität Hamburg's Southeast Asia Department, Hansa realizes that her academic journey was not solely about the curriculum. The diverse, international environment and supportive academic community fostered her personal and intellectual growth. Her peers and professors encouraged open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas, fostering a space where creativity and critical thinking flourished.

Beyond academics, Hansa traveled extensively across Europe, experiencing different cultures and broadening her horizons. Each journey taught her resilience and adaptability. The most valuable lesson she learned was that determination paves the way to success, a mindset that continues to guide her in her professional and personal life. •



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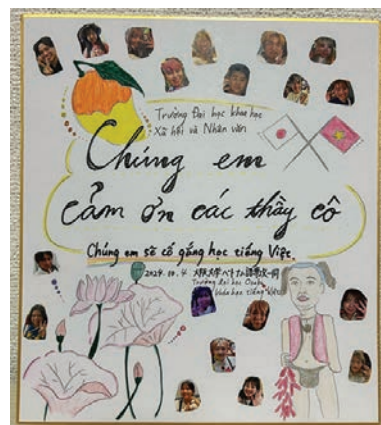
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MA student Mỹ Tiên reports on studying Vietnamese in Hanoi

By Thi My Tien Trieu

I was a Vietnamese language teacher in Vietnam and currently a Master's student at the *Asien-Afrika-Institut*, University of Hamburg.



Living in Hamburg for six months has been a truly meaningful experience, offering both personal and profound new perspectives. I have also made friends and studied with new people from all over the world in the vibrant multicultural environment of the University of Hamburg. However, what I find most valuable is the deep empathy I have gained for my former international students who came to Vietnam to study Vietnamese.

When I first arrived in Hamburg, I only knew a few German phrases like "Hallo", "Vielen Dank", and "Schönen Tag noch". Naturally, this presented many challenges as I adjusted my life here. But these difficulties actually motivated me to learn German. That is how I resonate well with students learning a foreign language in a foreign environment.

I would like to introduce to you the Center for Vietnamese Language and Culture (VLC), Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities, where I was working for almost two years before studying in Hamburg. I believe this is a great place for those who are planning to study Vietnamese in Hanoi, a city with a rich history and culture, which is over one thousand years old. My colleagues

are not only highly qualified teachers, but also true friends who are always ready to help you with visa procedures, accommodation, and, most importantly, support you to quickly integrate into the vibrant life of Hanoi.

I will clarify some additional information for those interested below.

As mentioned earlier, my colleagues are highly specialized teachers with many years of experience. The curriculum is designed based on well-regarded textbooks by renowned Vietnamese authors, such as Prof. Doan Thien Thuat and Dr. Nguyen Viet Huong. More critically, lessons and exercises are personalized to suit each learner's proficiency level. The courses in language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), specialized Vietnamese (academic, tourism, business, etc.), as well as preparatory classes for university and postgraduate studies are also offered. Classes are regularly organized according to demand, allowing students to choose between private classes (one teacher and one student), small group classes (2-7 students), or larger group classes (more than 8 students).

Additionally, the class organizes a variety of extracurricular activities and practical sessions for students, such as visiting traditional markets, attending cultural performances like Chèo, Xẩm, and Ca trù, practicing Vietnamese cooking, visiting traditional craft villages, and touring renowned museums and historical sites. I believe that these activities would be highly practical and effective in facilitating the acquisition of the Vietnamese language and culture, and, to be honest, they are consistently popular among students.

Additionally, VLC is currently privileged to be one of the very few institutions authorized to organize the Vietnamese language proficiency exam for foreigners. This will greatly assist those who need to prepare for and take the exam in order to obtain a Vietnamese language proficiency certificate.

Last but not least, here is the address of the center: Room 405, Building A, 336 Nguyen Trai, Thanh Xuan, Ha Noi. You can also contact the center via the email address cvlc.ushh@gmail.com or the website <https://cvlc.edu.vn> for any further answers.

I hope my sharing is helpful and reaches those who need it. •