



Pacific languages

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Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC)

I acknowledge and pay respect to the original owners of the land I work on, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation

More than 1,000 of
the world's
languages are in the
Pacific

Ocean to land ratio of 300:1

Ocean size ~179 million sq km

~25,000 islands

Languages: non-Austronesian ('Papuan' – 60,000 years)

Austronesian (4,000 years)



Toukelau Takau speaking in Nafsan, Oceanic language, Efate, Vanuatu

<https://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/NT5/items/TokelauThatch>

‘Papuan’ (non-Austronesian) languages

Mian [[mpt](#)] PNG

Unnamed speaker recorded by Sebastian Fedden

<https://admin-catalog.paradisec.org.au/repository/SF1/010>



Time depth

First occupation around 50,000 BCE

- Probably '*Papuan*' languages

Austronesian migration (Lapita)

- Homeland origin in Taiwan, migration south beginning around 3,500 BP

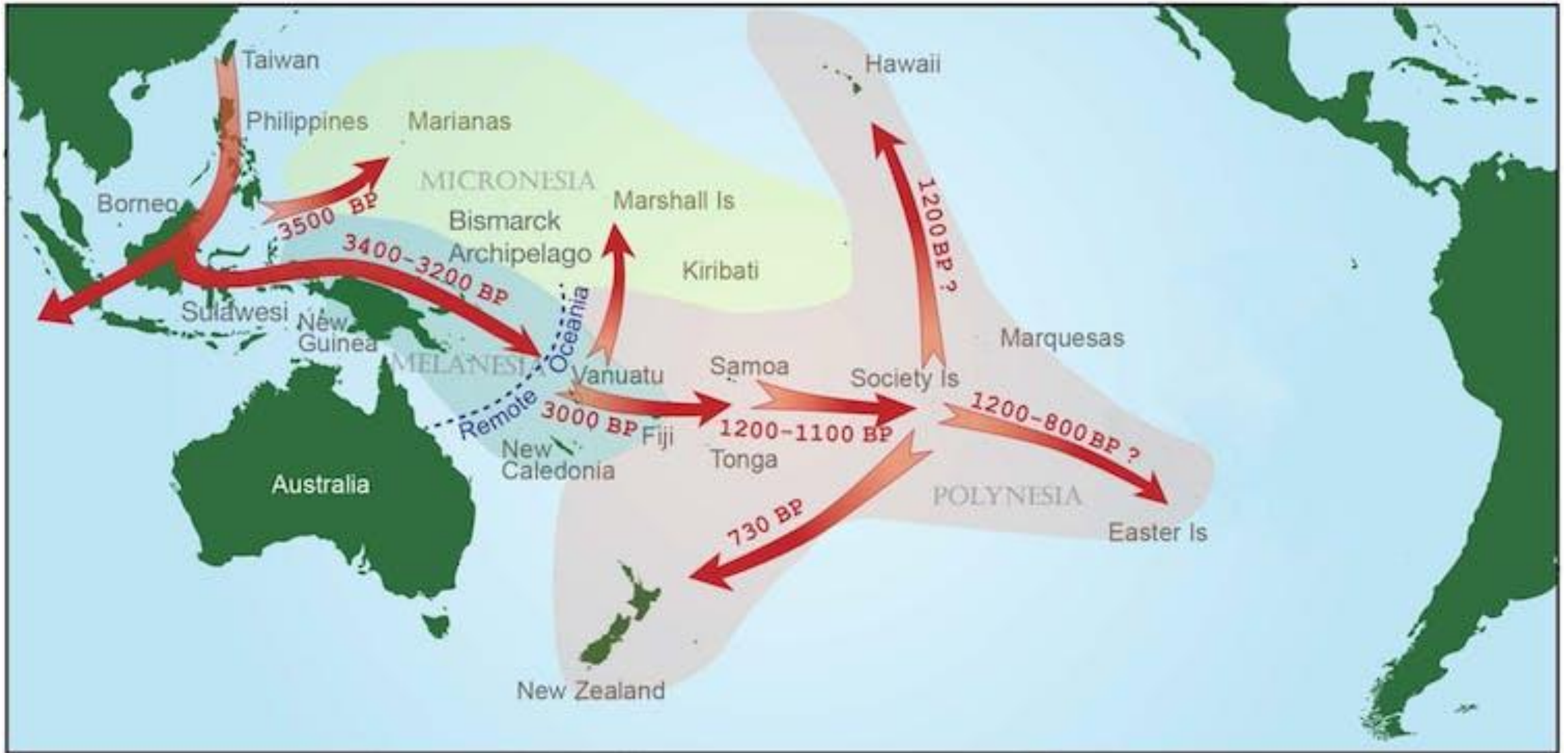
Depopulation in nineteenth century,
disease, blackbirding.

Pidgin languages developed in Melanesia



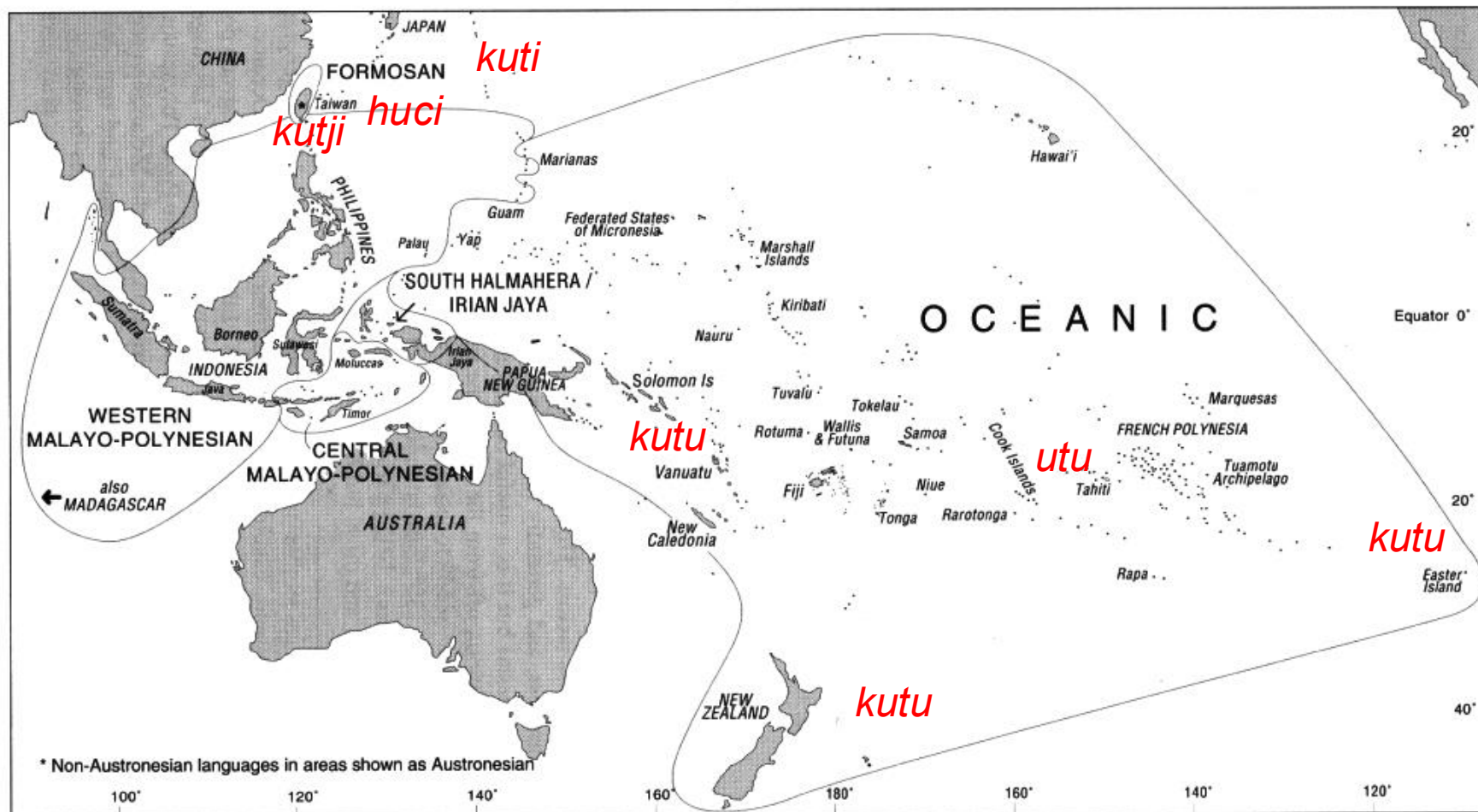
Teouma site, Lapita cemetery

Movement of Austronesian people



Austronesian languages





MAP 1.1 THE AUSTRONESIAN FAMILY AND MAJOR AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGE GROUPS

Map p. 3 from Lynch, J., Ross, M. and Crowley, T. 2002. *The Oceanic Languages*. Richmond UK

Louse: Papora (Taiwan) *huci*, Thao (Taiwan) *kuti*, Bunun (Taiwan) *kuti*, Paiwan (Taiwan) *kutji*, Puyuma (Taiwan) *kuti*, Mele (Vanuatu) *kutu*, Rapanui (Easter Island) *kutu*, Maori *kutu*

Three creoles developed as lingua francas in Melanesia

Bislama
Solomons Pijin
Tok Pisin



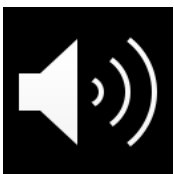
Melanesian languages



38 Polynesian languages



Largest Polynesian languages, by number of speakers, are
Tahitian, Samoan, Tongan, Māori, and Hawaiian



Rarotongan

<https://admin-catalog.paradisec.org.au/repository/RE1/RARA3>

French Polynesia

http://alex.francois.online.fr/AF-LAFP_e.htm#a



The role of the languages



Most are still used as everyday means of communication

But many are under threat from urbanisation and the impact of English, French, and national languages

Varying roles in schools/government depending on the country

Phonological notes

Avava (Malakula)

	Labiovelar	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	ṁ	m	n	ŋ	
Voiced stops	ḃ	b	d	g	
Voiceless stops	ḗ	p	t	k	
Fricatives	ṽ	v	s		h
Voiced trills		B	D		
Lateral			l		
Rhotic			r		
Glides	w		y		

Interesting features

Demonstratives, e.g., Roviana

	Near Speaker	Near addressee	Distant from both
SG	hie	isa	hoi
PL	hire	isara	hiroi

	Bound pronouns					
	Subject Realis Pro- clitic (RS)	Subject Irrealis Pro- clitic (IRR)	Subject Perfect Pro- clitic (PS)	Object (O)	Oblique Object (OBL)	Direct Poss (DP)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou	-k
2sg	ku=	ṗa=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok	-m
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes	-n
1d. (in)	ta=	tak=	takai=			
1d. (ex)	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
2d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

Subjects

Objects

	Bound pronouns					
	Subject Realis Pro- clitic (RS)	Subject Irrealis Pro- clitic (IRR)	Subject Perfect Pro- clitic (PS)	Object (O)	Oblique Object (OBL)	Direct Poss (DP)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou	-k
2sg	ku=	ṗa=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok	-m
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-ø / -n	-wes	-n
1d. (in)	ta=	tak=	takai=			
1d. (ex)	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
2d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

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3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

Realis

Irrealis

	Bound pronouns					
	Subject Realis Pro- clitic (RS)	Subject Irrealis Pro- clitic (IRR)	Subject Perfect Pro- clitic (PS)	Object (O)	Oblique Object (OBL)	Direct Poss (DP)
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2d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

Realis

Irrealis

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1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

Inclusive / exclusive

We (not you)

We (including you)

We (two)

You (two)

They (two)

	Bound pronouns					
	Subject Realis Pro- clitic (RS)	Subject Irrealis Pro- clitic (IRR)	Subject Perfect Pro- clitic (PS)	Object (O)	Oblique Object (OBL)	Direct Poss (DP)
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3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

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1d. (in)	ta=	tak=	takai=			
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2d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=			
3d.	ra=	rak=	rakai=/ rai=			
1p. (in)	tu=	tuk=	tu=/ tui=/ (tukoi=)	-kit	-kit	-kit
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	ru=/ (rukui=)	(TS)-r	-wer	-r

Mood in pronouns – Nafsan

Inclusive / exclusive

We (not you)

We (including you)

We (two)

You (two)

They (two)

Interesting features

Some languages, e.g. Taiof (Autonomous Region of Bougainville) have gender marking in nouns, 4 classes

- 1 – most common nouns
- 2 – plants, objects made of wood, non-count nouns
- 3 – personal names, kinship nouns
- 4 – place-names

All noun phrases begin with an article which indicates the gender of the noun

Possession

Longgu (Solomon Islands)

Alienable or indirect possession

- Tia ngaia 'his/her mother'
- Mama ngaia 'his/her father'
- vua ngaia 'his/her grandparent / grandchild'
- sa'i ngaia 'his sister's child/his/her mother's brother'

Inalienable or direct possession (personal possession, part/whole)

- Zata-na 'his/her name'
- Nun-na 'his/her shadow'
- Walu-na 'his/her voice'
- Tatala-na 'his/her footprint'
- Anoa-na 'his/her ancestor's spirit'

Possession

Tape (Malakula)

- edible, chewable, drinkable, general

Lamen (Central Vanuatu, near Epi island)

- general, edible and some others, drinkable and some domestic items

Sakao (Santo)

- food, inhabitants of a place; drink; shadows, vomit; smells; indispensable possessions, parts of wholes, canoes; general

Anejom̃

- food; drink and 'wet' foods (mangoes, watermelons); items from which juice is sucked (sugarcane, breasts); land, villages, gardens etc.; passive, incl. kinterms; general

General features of Pacific languages

- Typically SVO (some OVS)
- Often the S and O are a prefix/suffix/clitic and are required, and can co-occur with coreferential NP
- Temporal complexity, is it tense, is it aspect?
- Transitivity issues, valence-increasing/ decreasing operations
- Serial verbs
- Directional systems (inland/to the sea, up/down, to wind directions)
- Numerals – decimal, quinary
- Clause chaining

Directionals

ra *ko-qisu-me* *kavia* *kuda*
I 1SG:REAL-carry-hither some coconut
'I have brought some coconuts.'

göi *ma-zo-la* *Susuka*
s/he 3SG:IRR-walk-thither Susuka
'S/he is going to Susuka village.'

Babatana (Choiseul):

Verbs and transitivity

Verb combinations, serial verbs, can be very productive

Hit-kill, Get-come, Get-go, Tell-come, Smell-know, See-know

Roviana

Totoso **ene nuguru la** ghami ...

when walk enter go we:EXC

‘When we walked in ...’

Verb pairs in Nafsan (*nuclear-layer serial verbs*)

<i>le</i>	to look	+ <i>tae</i> to know	<i>letae</i>	to recognise by seeing
<i>mro</i>	to think		<i>mrotae</i>	to recognise
<i>nrog</i>	to feel, smell		<i>nrogtae</i>	to recognise by smelling
<i>kis</i>	to pinch	+ <i>ṗrai</i> to break	<i>kisṗrai</i>	to pinch-break
<i>mas</i>	to cut		<i>masṗrai</i>	to cut in pieces
<i>sak</i>	to climb		<i>sakṗrai</i>	to climb and break
<i>kul</i>	to blanket	+ <i>kor</i> to cover,	<i>kulkor</i>	to cover with a blanket
<i>kus</i>	to hide	to block	<i>kuskor</i>	to cover-hide
<i>lao</i>	to stand up		<i>laokor</i>	to obstruct
<i>pai</i>	to lie in wait		<i>paikor</i>	to hide in wait for game
<i>pal</i>	to be empty		<i>palkor</i>	to mourn
<i>sra</i>	to hang(?)		<i>srakor</i>	to hide
<i>suek</i>	to put wood in a fire		<i>suekor</i>	to smoke
<i>kam</i>	to step	+ <i>ṗor</i> to break	<i>kamṗor</i>	to step on and break
<i>lao</i>	to leave		<i>laoṗor</i>	to leave and break
<i>ṗor</i>	to break		<i>ṗorṗor</i>	to break everything
<i>prei</i>	to wash	+ <i>tao</i> to leave	<i>preitao</i>	to wash clothes
<i>ṁol</i>	to squeeze		<i>ṁoltao</i>	to rinse clothes
<i>naonao</i>	to scrape vegetables		<i>naonaotao</i>	to clean vegetables
<i>ser</i>	to sweep		<i>sertao</i>	to sweep and clean
<i>sur</i>	to weed		<i>surtao</i>	to weed and clean
<i>wat</i>	to hit	+ <i>sraf</i> to miss	<i>watsraf</i>	to hit at but miss
<i>ṗi</i>	to kick		<i>ṗisraf</i>	to kick at but miss

Verbs and transitivity

How do you know a verb has more than one part? Test: bipartite negation, wraps around the verb

Ni-ro-kan *vis-tei* *ouh.*
 1SG:DIST.FUT-NEG1-eat try-NEG2 yam
 'I will not try to eat the yam.' (Paamese)

Ki-ro-va-tei *ki-hol?*
2SG:IRR-NEG1-go-NEG2 2SG:IRR-dance
'Won't you go dancing?' (Paamese)

Clause chain

A series of clauses in which one or more is deficient in TMA marking.

In Nafsan, which is an SVO language, the latter kind of clause chaining does occur. The feature distinguishing clause chains from other clause linkage types in South Efate is the absence of subject marking on sequential or chained clauses.

A=pan tai lop,	Ø= mai , a=preg-ptak-ki,	Ø=tai-ptak-ki.
1sgRS=go cut bamboo	Ø=come 1sgRS=make-ready-TR	Ø=cut-ready-TR

I go and cut bamboo, come, I make it ready, cut it ready.

Académie marquisienne.



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Recherche...



Atea
Moh
sont
jours



**Bonjour !
Bienvenue !**
Bienvenue sur le site de l'Académie marquisienne qui vous présente ici ses membres, ses missions et ses publications.



Kāòha nui ! Mave mai !
Eiā te tohua niutavavā o te Haè tuhuka èo ènana ; i èià, e koàka te ite o ai te tau tuhuka me tītahi mou tautua atii me te nuiia o ta âtou hana.

utuia te tau tumutekao o
i tohua niutavavā ma
o Nuku Hiva vāana i te
hei a te Haè tuhuka èo
a. Atiā à, na te mou
ka èo ènana tikitahi e
ite i to âtou motu me
aatoitoi i ta âtou patu
oto o to âtou iho èo.
parler de Nuku Hiva,
que membre recourt au
se présenter et rédiger

Te tekao a te upoko hakatee
Le mot du directeur

A map of the Vanuatu archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, showing numerous islands and reefs. The islands are marked with colored pins (yellow, red, green, purple) and labeled with their names. The labels are arranged vertically, following the main chain of islands from north to south. The background is a satellite-style image of the ocean with visible bathymetry.

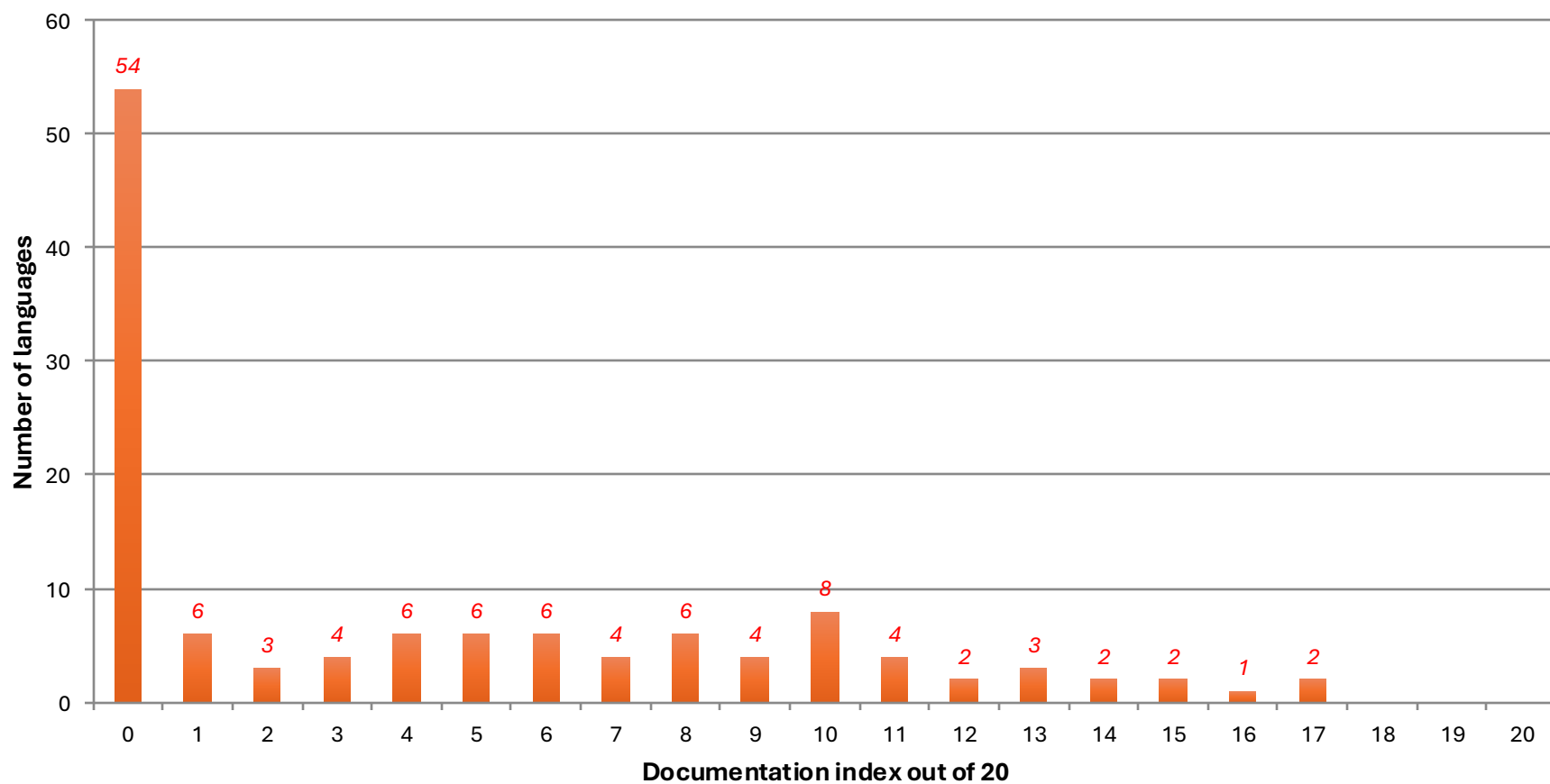
Labels (from north to south):

- Lo-Toga
- Dorig
- Penantsiro
- Mavea
- North-East Ambae
- Neverver
- Daakaka
- Nahavaq
- Bierebo
- South Efate
- Mele-Fila
- Utaha
- Lenakel
- North Tanna
- Kwamera
- Anejom

Labels (from north to south):

- Vures
- Mwotlap
- Mwesen
- Lakon
- Koro
- Nume
- Mwerlap
- Qlrat
- Ambae
- Apma
- Narango
- Raga
- Maskelynes
- South-East Ambrym
- Axambo
- Namakura
- Nakanamanga
- Tasiko
- Eton
- Sie
- Ura
- Ifo
- Sorung
- Southwest Tanna

Documentation index, Vanuatu languages (early 2000s)



123 languages: Grammar 1-5, Lexicon 1-5, Texts 1-5, Media corpus 1-5

Académie pa'umotu

🌐 1 langue ▾

Article [Discussion](#)

Lire [Modifier](#) [Modifier le code](#) [Voir l'historique](#) [Outils](#) ▾



Cet article est une **ébauche** concernant une **langue** et la **Polynésie française**.

Vous pouvez partager vos connaissances en l’améliorant ([comment ?](#)) selon les recommandations des [projets correspondants](#).

L’**Académie pa'umotu** (en **paumotu** : *Kāruru vānaga*, « la case de la connaissance, de la parole ») est une **académie** locale créée le 23 décembre 2008 par arrêté du [Conseil des ministres](#) de la **Polynésie française**¹, sur proposition de l'association *Te Reo o te Tuamotu* (qui regroupait depuis 2000 les militants de la reconnaissance de la culture spécifique de cet archipel).

Présentation [[modifier](#) | [modifier le code](#)]

Elle comprend 14 académiciens pour les sept aires linguistiques différentes de l'archipel (Tapuhoa, Maragai, Mihiroa, Vahitu, Fagatau, Parata, Napuka). Elle devait être opérationnelle à la fin du premier trimestre 2009 (commission *ad hoc* du 10 février 2009) mais n'a été désignée qu'en juillet 2010.

Objectifs [[modifier](#) | [modifier le code](#)]

Selon Jean Kape, président de l'académie, le paumotu est une **langue en danger** : pour la sauver de l’extinction, il faut d’abord codifier la langue, notamment fixer l’orthographe, pour ensuite rédiger un dictionnaire et une grammaire².

La mission de l'académie est de

- « sauvegarder et d’enrichir la langue, et notamment de codifier le vocabulaire, la grammaire et l’orthographe ;
- d’en étudier les origines, l’évolution et la parenté avec d’autres langues du Pacifique ;
- de favoriser la publication d’ouvrages rédigés en langue pa’umotu ;



'IA ORA NA ! ... BIENVENUE !

L'Académie Tahitienne est heureuse de vous accueillir sur son site

Rechercher dans le dictionnaire



POLICES DE CARACTÈRES TAHITIENNES

Afin de profiter pleinement de la richesse typographique de la langue polynésienne, nous vous proposons de télécharger les différentes polices tahitiennes adaptées.

EN SAVOIR PLUS

Ā

EDITORIAL

Comme d'autres institutions et organismes du Territoire, l'Académie Tahitienne - Fare Vāna'a est **heureuse de vous accueillir** sur son site internet : www.farevanaa.pf

Depuis sa création en 1972, l'Académie Tahitienne - Fare Vāna'a s'est attachée à répondre à sa mission, à savoir : **la conservation et la promotion de la langue tahitienne**, soutenue en cela par les gouvernements successifs.

Depuis, les moyens modernes de communication par Internet offrent à tous ceux et à toutes celles qui s'intéressent à notre langue et à son développement, **une panoplie d'ouvrages pensés et écrits par des polynésiens**.

Nous vous invitons à découvrir notre patrimoine linguistique

UN MOT DU DICTIONNAIRE

FA'AFĀNAU

v.a. Assister une femme en travail, faire le travail d'une sage-femme. Nā vai i fa'afānau i terā vahine ? : Qui a fait accoucher cette femme ? Engendrer. 'O ta'u Tamaiti 'oe, ina'uanei 'oe i fa'afānauhia ai e au ? (Sal. 2/7). FA'AFĀNAU TAMA : Donner une descendance. 'Ia pohe te hō'ē ta'ata 'aore e tamari'i, e fa'aipoipo te teina i tāna vahine ra, e fa'afānau tama i te tamari'i nā te t...

[la suite >>](#)



813 collections

470,891 files

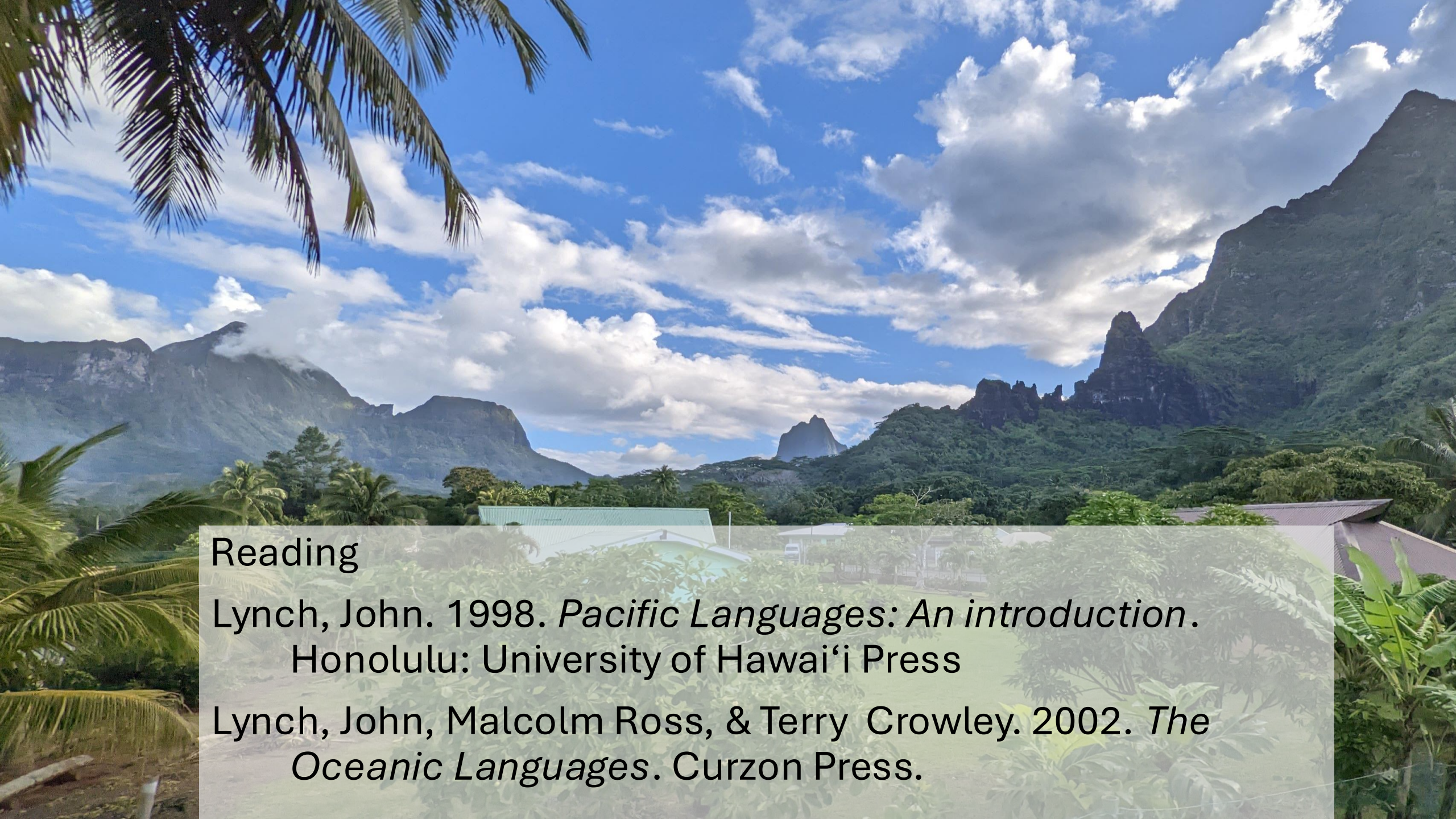
3,880 hours (video)

297 terabytes

February 2026







Reading

Lynch, John. 1998. *Pacific Languages: An introduction*.
Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

Lynch, John, Malcolm Ross, & Terry Crowley. 2002. *The Oceanic Languages*. Curzon Press.

Thanks to:



Australian Research Council DP0450342, DP0984419,
FT140100214, CE140100041, LE220100010



ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR
THE DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE



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