'YESTERDAY' IN EASTERN OCEANIC TODAY

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Cashmore (in press) has reconstructed two PEOetyma for 'yesterday' *ananapi and .*
ananoRa. Pawley (Conference on Oceanic Prehistory, Fiji 1969) has discussed these at
same length on the basis of Baeic nanoa and Western Fijian (a)niavi. Pawley reconstructs
*nanoRa, remarking that PEO *R is regularly lost in Fijian, PN, Rotuman and some
Central and Northern New Hebrides languages; this reconstruction is surely justified.
I agree, too, that Nguna nanova / *nanoa / *nanoRa looks likely.

For niavi Pawley compares the PN forms reflected in Proto-Tongic *aneafi and
Proto-Nuclear *ananafi. Whether or not the further forms mentioned are directly related,
there are two original features which require explaining: the "unstable" initial a-, and
the vanishing medial -n-. It seems to me that there is a fairly clear analysis for this
word which at once explains these two discrepancies - or at least gives a basis for such an
explanation. We may suppose that a consonant has been lost in the middle of *aneafi,
a consonant which before its loss might by contamination have produced a doublet form.
*R could be just such a consonant, and the known etymon *Rapi 'evening, dusk' would be
an eminently reasonable base for our assumed formation; cf. Slavic večen 'evening',
vičera 'yesterday'. With the prefix of the past, we have then *anaRapi. Then either
by a pure cross with *nanoRa or else also by an assimilatory effect from the neighbouring
nasal, the doublet *ananapi was formed. (Of course, we cannot know just when in this
this sequence *p > *f).

The fact that *anaRapi, or its descendant, was in intimate competition or
association with *nanoRa is shown by the development of niavi etc., deprived of their
initial *a-. Furthermore, it seems clear that Lamalanga ninovi and Espiritu Santo nanovi
have also undergone contamination in the medial vowel as well as in the -n-. 1

Thus it seems clear, if we are to gain the advantage of explaining at all the
formation of *anaR/napi, that for some considerable time and in various dialects (but
especially in Fijian-PN), the two forms *nanoRa and *anaRapi (> *n/Vnapi) lived on
side-by-side, much as in English of many parts of the United States we find both morning
and the more analytic forenoon in use. On the other hand, *nanoRa is for the time being
an opaque simplex, an independent etymon, to me; something like -hui in aujourd'hui

1. Note also Es Bay of SS Philip & Jas. inovi, ES Nogogu pwanovi 'tomorrow'
which may ultimately be dissolved into its component parts. I find the presence of these
two locutions in the same (proto-) language in no wise surprising or disturbing.

I therefore do not see elements of this sort, when properly and carefully analysed
and assigned their chronological developmental place, as contributing a problem in
envisaging realistic live proto-languages of exactly the degree of uniformity to which we
assign grammars for living languages of a decent degree of dispersion.

Likewise ucu *isu and nicu 'nose' may be regarded somewhat as English milk and
melk, or help and holp, or across and acrost. The old variation kau or kai 'tree, wood'
reminds one of such things as English raise or rear. In American English one hears both
bought bread and the more old-fashioned boughten bread for bread that is not home-made.
Yet in the latter case the old-fashioned term was a neologism counter to Germanic
 participle formation.

I do not mean by this that we should shirk the job of explaining as fully as we can
the genesis and development of such variants as those that Pawley so usefully assembles
and discusses. In fact, I claim that the recognition of such variation is quite consonant
with normal observations of "average" languages for which we attempt to construct the
"purest" grammars we know. To call all languages "mixed" is of course to deprive the
term of useful meaning; everyone knows that all languages have (near) synonyms,
competing morphological details, optional syntaxes, and (mild) phonological variants -
the last especially usually of dialectal origin, i.e. borrowing (e.g. American English
get - git). Occasionally, very old dialect borrowing is reflected: e.g. cuss vs. curse.

I say instead that by allowing ourselves the luxury of prehistoric "mixed"
languages - a characteristic not yet defined accurately for any present-day observable
language - we risk overlooking the possibilities of resolving problems and of eliminating
by internal reasoning ex crescens multiplicities of form; we risk projecting onto an early
level the complexities and fragmentations that have developed in the interim, instead of
finding their likely solution and assigning them their proper chronological, geographical
and social place.

If such a procedure may not succeed in leading us to all the fullness of history,
it provides at any rate a more powerful heuristic than any alternative I know.

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2. I suppose such a distinction now nearly belongs in a museum.
I have attempted to solve the above little lexical problem by a reconstructive analysis that draws on the elements simultaneously present in the grammar, to the best of our knowledge; by what we may call internal reasoning. I do not mean by this to imply that there cannot also be elements that come in from the outside — borrowings from other languages or neighbouring related dialects — that serve to explicate the history of a language. But on principle (Occam's, in fact) we do not appeal to outside borrowing if we are able to find a plausible source within the earlier phases of the language. The principal advantage of that mode of proceeding is that it also gives us additional information regarding the earlier phase which we might otherwise have missed. For example, the above reasoning on *Rapi gives us a hint — to be sure, not a strong one — on the former presence of *R.

But of course there are borrowings also; we have never seen a language without them. And so far as it is possible we attempt to trace these to their source. There are cases, too, where a single original source cannot easily be identified; areas characterized by such unclear points of multiple radiation have been studied under the rubric of Sprachbunde. It is particularly in the context of Sprachbunde that we have become, over the last half-century or more, vividly aware of the fact that nearly any feature of a language may be borrowed, and over a surprisingly short period of time — perhaps a decade for a lexeme, a generation for a semantic feature, a century for a phonological rule or a morphological formation, a few centuries for the entire prosodic and intonation system and substantial rules of grammar, a millennium for major rules of grammar. These rough, impressionistic, and probably quite unrepresentative estimates are based on study of enclaves where the linguistic and settlement history can be fairly well known. These enclaves may give us somewhat accelerated figures by comparison with diffusion effects observed for large and stable language areas; but that is not important for the present argument.

It is therefore with some surprise that I find the belief imputed to me by Mr. Pawley that there is some incorruptible inner core of the language that will be genetically diagnostic. What is genetically diagnostic is simply the construction of a set of expressions linking in a plausible and simple way one grammar (of an observed language) with another (that of a proto). Of course, the correct placing of borrowings must enter into such a set of expressions. No reasonable linguist ever suggested "a classification that deliberately ignores everything outside the dominant component". I see little likelihood of haggling over a 50/50 split in sources; I have never yet seen a single loan
source approximate 50% of the grammar (whatever that means) where we have reasonably detailed knowledge of the area and its linguistic history.

In short I see no discrepancy between these matters of principle and what Dr. Pawley actually goes about and accomplishes in his really excellent paper on Eastern Oceanic. All such developments are accounted for fully by direct inheritance (including internal "analogies") and by borrowing (in any of the components of a language). What I object to is the introduction of a third, and otiose, notion of "mixing".

3. My own experience with such communities, on which I base the above estimates, is drawn largely from the Balkans, the Mediterranean, the Caucasus, and the Celtic countries.


REFERENCES:
