

'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 Bauic *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* \angle **nanoa* \angle **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 *večeř* '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 sequence **p* \rightarrow **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* (\rightarrow **(a)nVnapi*) 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.² 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 excrescent 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.

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.³ 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".⁴ 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.
4. Preliminary version of Conference paper, p.58.

REFERENCES:

- Cashmore, Christine, In press. "Some Proto-Eastern Oceanic Reconstructions with reflexes in Southeast Solomon Island languages." *Oceanic Linguistics*.
- Pawley, Andrew. In press. "On the internal relationships of Eastern Oceanic Languages." *Conference on Oceanic Prehistory, Fiji, August 1969.*