

Standardizing an Informal Orthography

Problems in Orthography Development in the Solos Language

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Background: Solos Language

Austronesian Language

Buka Island in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville

15,000-20,000 speakers

About 19 core villages, 4-6 border villages

Probably two main dialects, but significant free variation

History

Mission schools from the 1920s

Informal Solos orthography as a transferred skill

Highly literate (in English) older generations

Church literature in the 1960s

Attempts at Literacy materials in the 1990s and beyond

ENA HAMAN GUE GOD

CATECHISMO KATOLIK

TE SOLOS

History

Mission schools

Informal Solos

Highly literate

Church literate

Attempts at L

I BUN TUTUN ERE

- A). O LOTU.
1. NA SA UIH KATOI DIA O LOTU?
O Lotu, enit e hatuk hatohioria te God, ba nit e singoria tenuh ba nit e hatonoria tenuh to Misa.
 2. O SOHIS O LOTU?
O mesoku o Lotu o man.
 3. O LOTU O MAN E NOI'DIA NA SA?
O Lotu o man e noi'dia o Lotu o Katolik.
 4. GA O LOTU E HOUNON?
Ga o Lotu e boboson.
 5. NA SA OPORE E MESOKUMENON O LOTU O MAN?
E God i mesoku, ba o Lotu tenu e mesoku hason.
 6. ESI HABUTI O LOTU O MAN?
Jesu Kristo, mu na Pean e God, eiouh habuti o Lotu o man.
 7. O VAREVAN KATOI'DI O LOTU O MAN E NOI'DIA NA SA?
O varevan katoi'di o Lotu o man e noi'dia o Katolik.
 8. I SON IRE "KATOLIK" E MATSIKONA TE SI?
I son ire "Katolik" e matsikona to na katun i nibapitema.

II

d beyond

HAHATANIA

5



COASTAL SOLOS

ALPHABET BOOK

O HAPITA

5



SOLOS

ALPHABET BOOK

3

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Current Situation

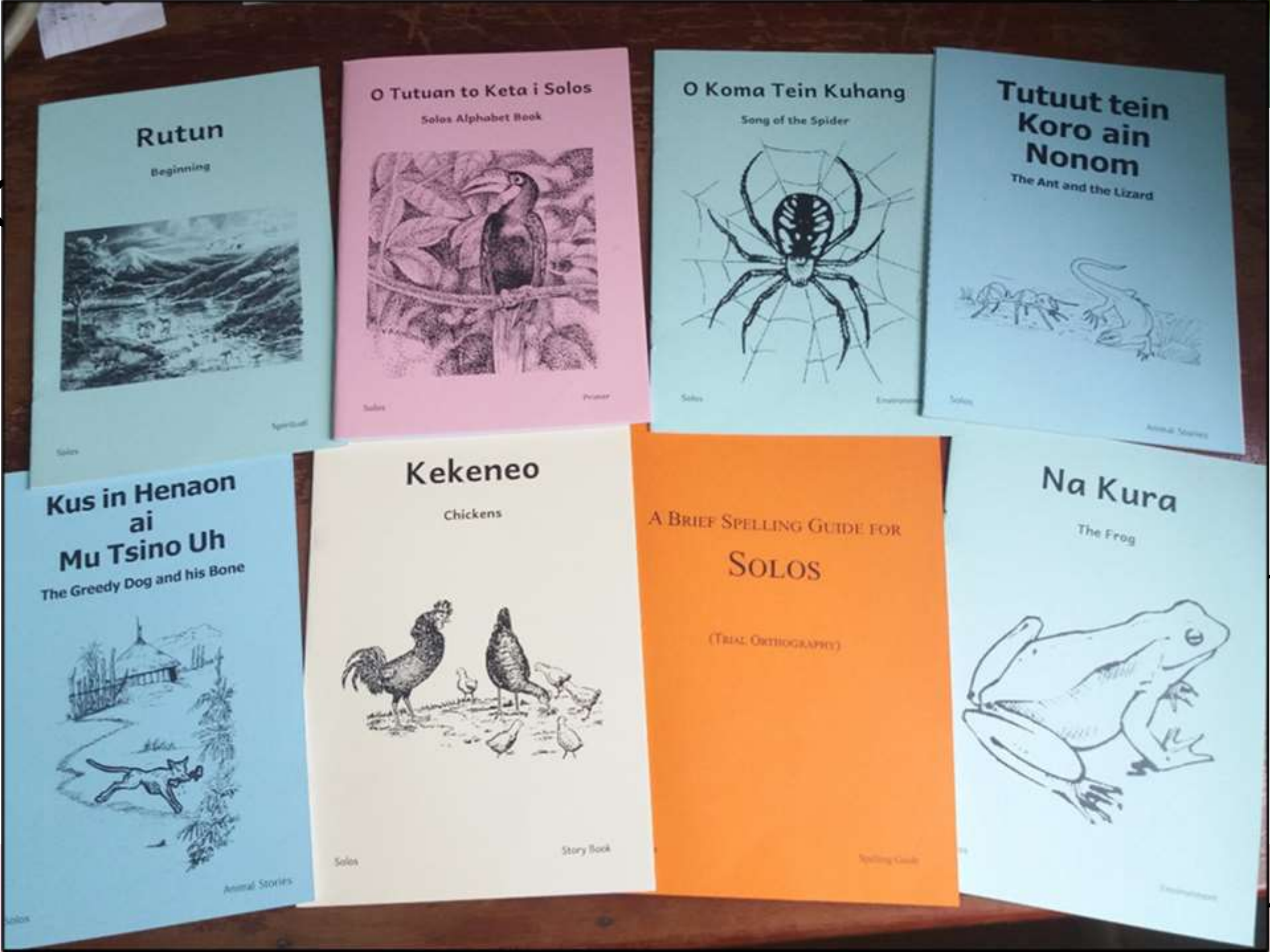
An outside advisor

The beginnings of literacy materials

A dialect survey in process

An informal orthography that varies from person to person, and location to location

A team producing materials in a trial orthography



nd

The Expected Problems in Orthography Development

Variations, both dialect-related and “free”

Word endings with variable nasals

taning vs. *tanim* ‘five’

Voicing on word-initial consonants

gukubei vs. *kukubei* ‘young girl’

Other word-initial changes

tinon vs. *tsinon* ‘man/male’

The Expected Problems in Orthography Development

Variations, both dialect-related and “free”

Word-final variations

kunuk vs. *kunup* ‘red’

Vowel variations

yan vs. *yen* ‘fish’

Syllable variations

mu.ni.a.sin vs. *mu.ni.sin* ‘brother, SS sibling’

Variations in borrowed words with non-Solos phonemes

tolala vs. *tonana* ‘white man’

The Expected Problems in Orthography Development

Every developing orthography could expect to meet these types of issues, even if they have never been written down before.

Potential Solutions: (Karan, in Cahill & Rice 2014)

- Avoid any rush to standardization

- Getting as many people to write as possible

- Having writers “write it like they say it” in their village

- Testing over time

The Problems Inherited from the Informal Orthography

Nearly a century of various patterns of writing

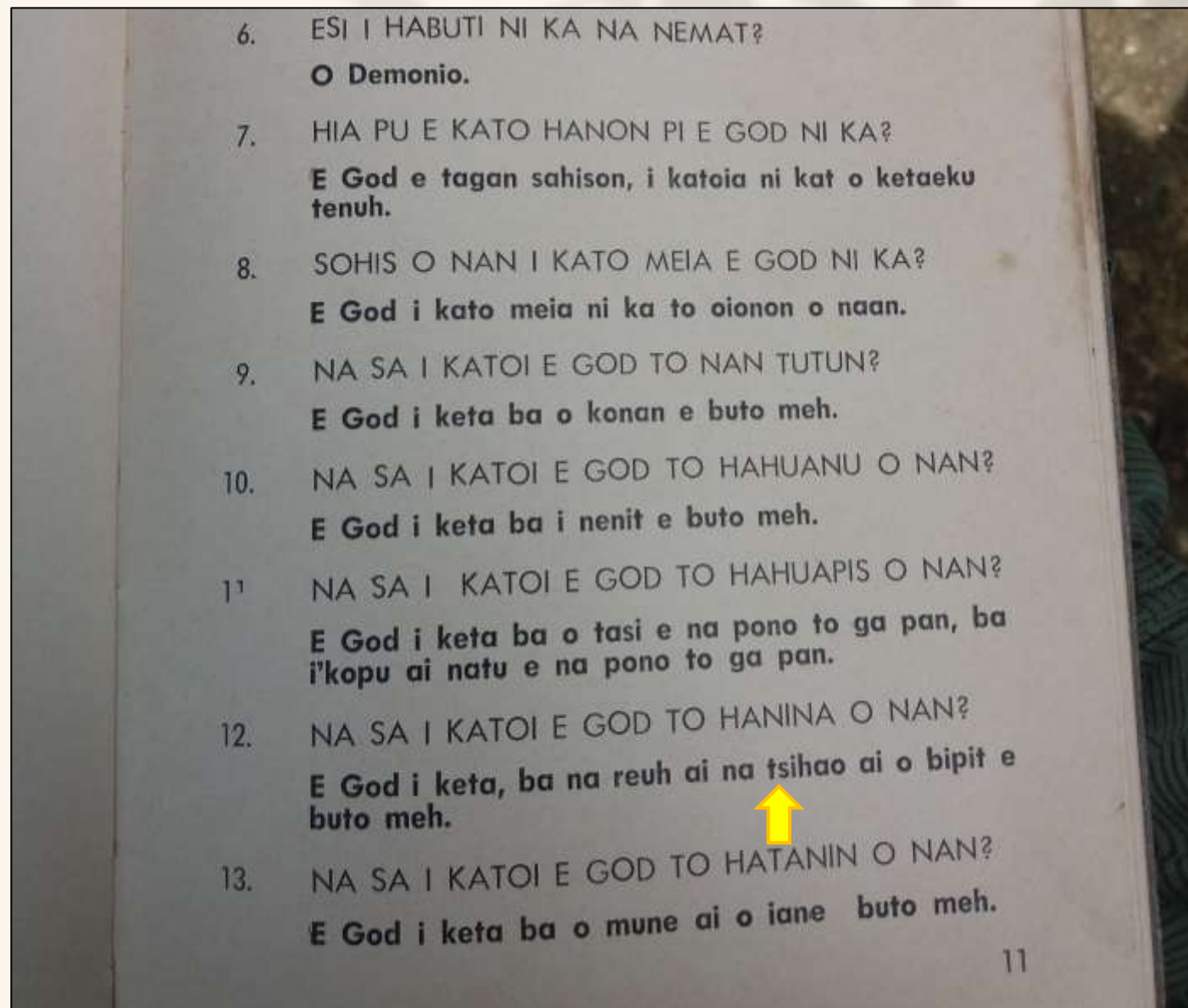
Much has been written, different styles and amounts of teaching, and very little published, so no standardization.

ts

Mostly spelled *ts*
Occasionally spelled *j*

Trial Orthography:

ts

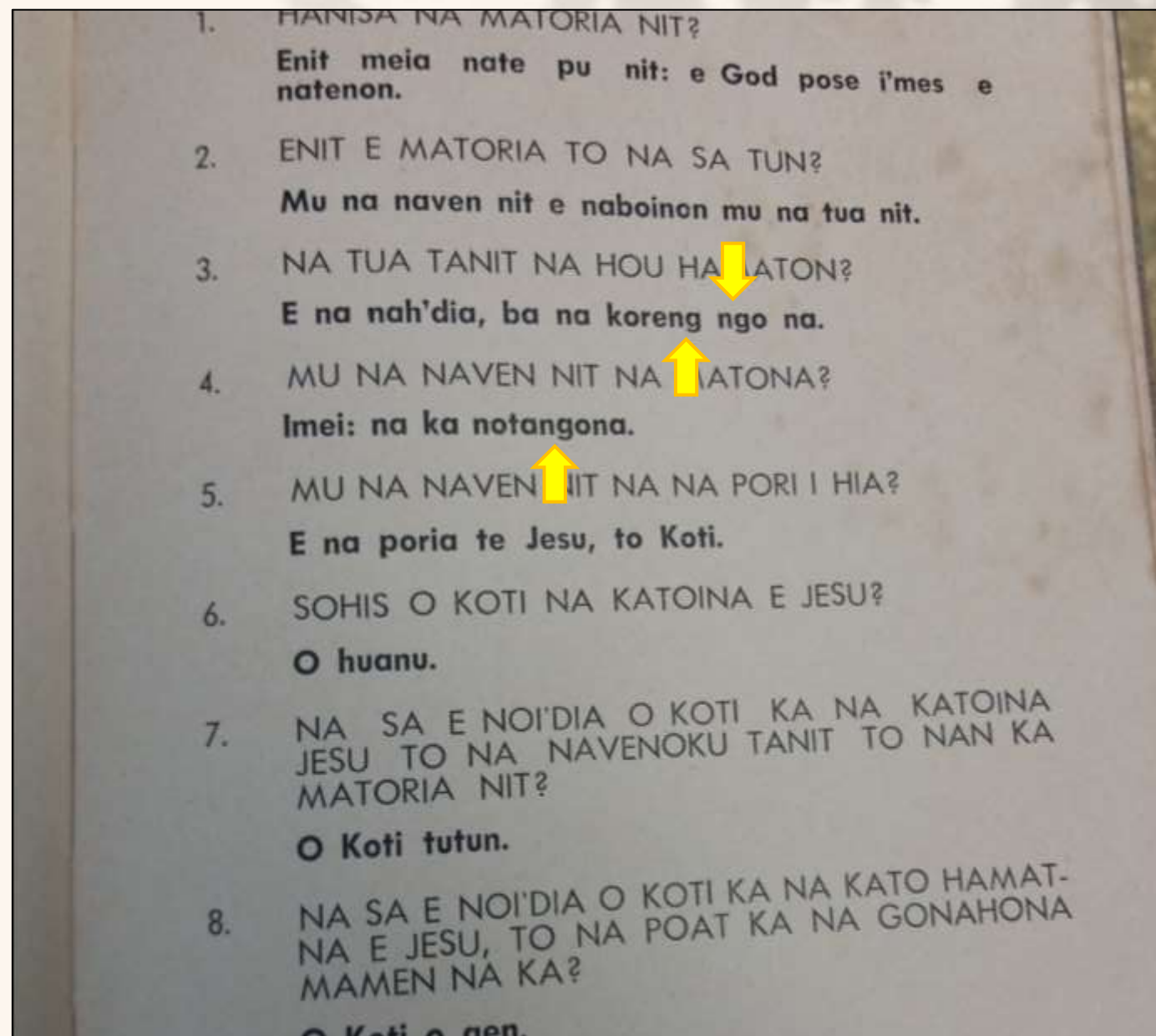


ŋ & g

ŋ is mostly spelled *ng*
Occasionally spelled *g*
If spelled *g*, then *g* is
spelled *q* (rare)

Tril Orthography:

ng & g

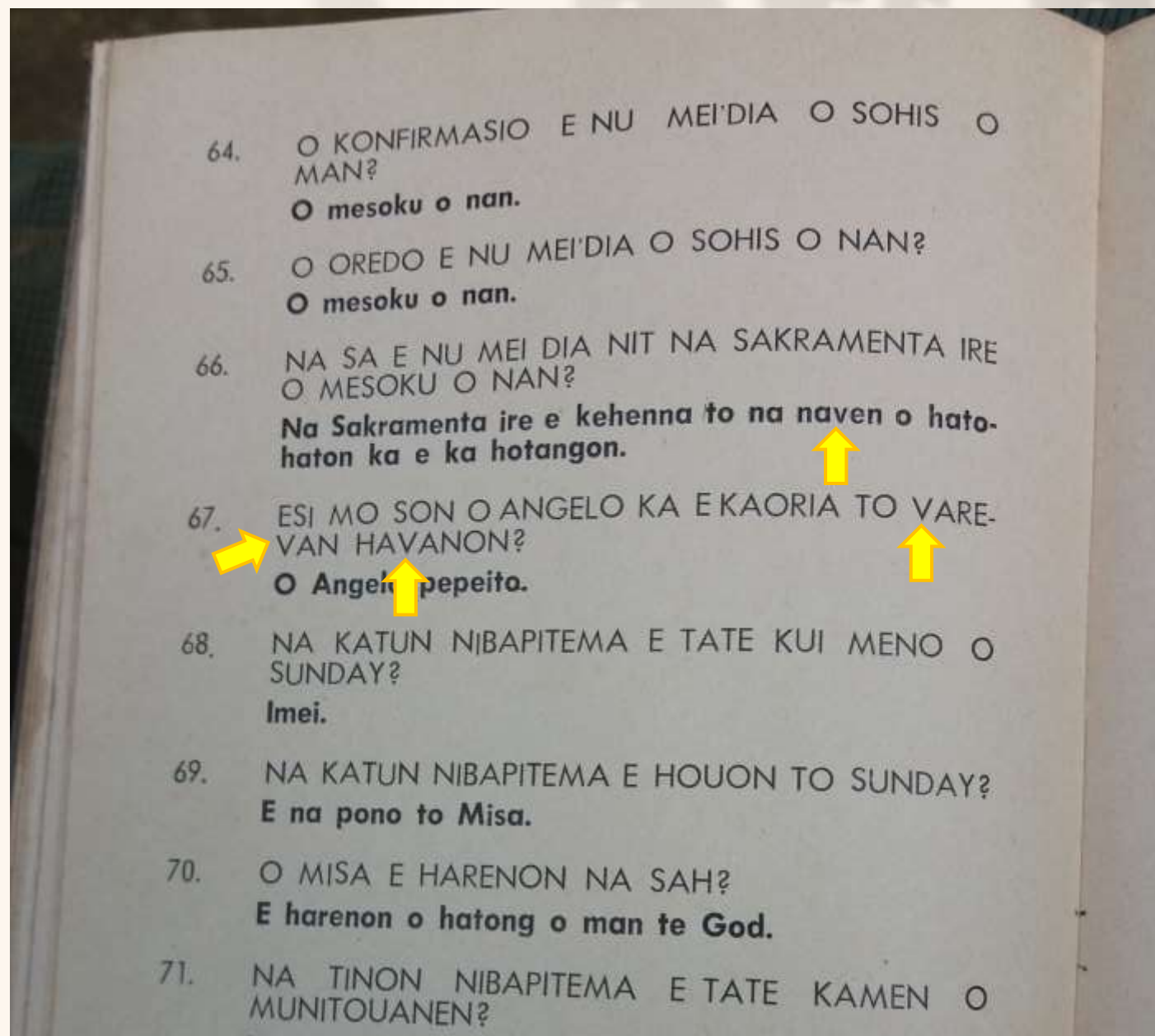


β

Mostly spelled *v*
Occasionally spelled *b*

Trial Orthography:

b



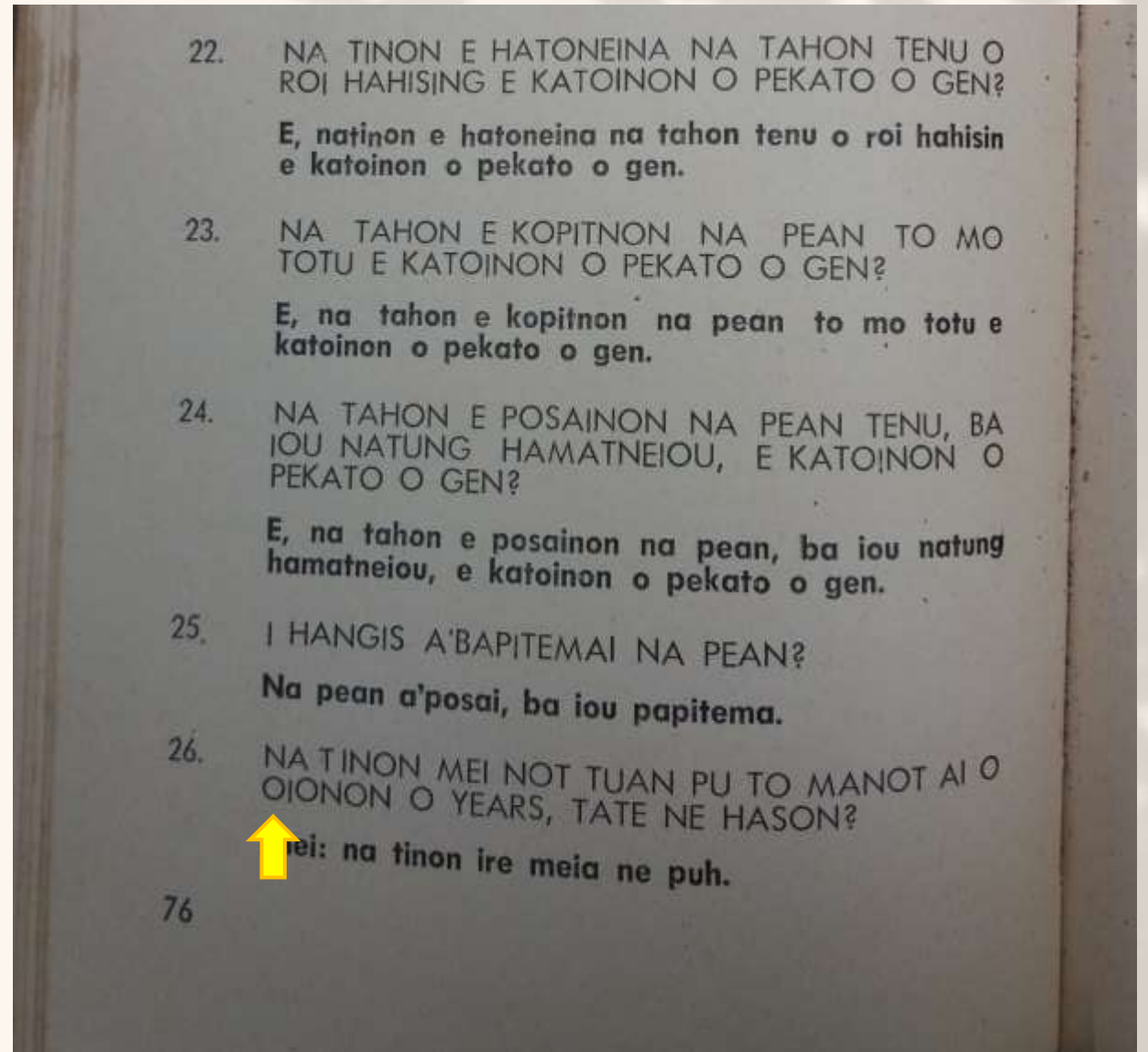
W

Mostly spelled *o* or *u*
Occasionally spelled *w*

Trial Orthography:

W

Only at word onset



y

Mostly spelled *i* or *e*
Occasionally spelled *y*

Trial Orthography:

y

Only at syllable onset

E na sounɡ poit omeh to nitagan tenuh, toa me
erangat povou to pan o toe ai yo mat.

E na haman gun i Spiritu Santo ↑ Notohi e hasonei
non o nitoa i na mea tei Tamen ai Napean. Oa
Notohi hengung mei ya i Tamen ai napean. E you
o ketaheisin mea to ↑ Propeta i manas. Ena haman ↑
gun o Eklesia Katolik Goagon. Ena haman gun Bi-
tema e numbinon na pekato ai ye na nanoi gun o
nitoe poit to pan dimat ai o nito ↑ toe natang mahut.
Amen.

OFFERTORY

P: O pitasan tamo God i nengit ai kopu ere e napohas
pomen tamo e iou bret e butona to sovot ai tou
kui to na katun. Bano birit maiou to bret to ni toetoe
notang.

All: O pitasan tamo God, opitasan notang.

P: O pita san tamo God i negit ai kopu ere e naponas
pomen tamo e iou wain e butona to nahenan wain
ai tou kui to na katun. bano birit ma iou te kua pori
↑ iou to ni toe notan.

All: O pitasan tamo God, opitasan notang.

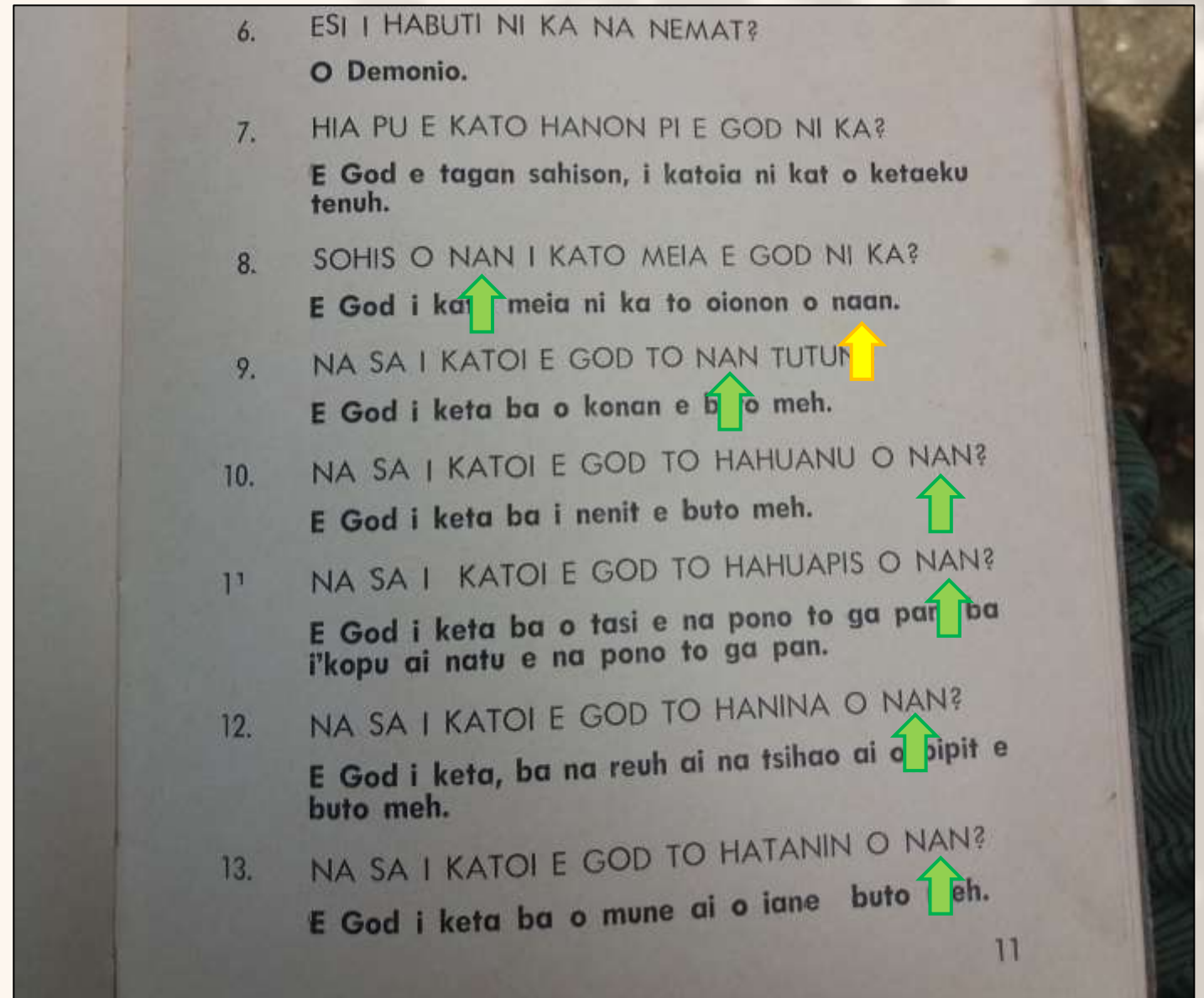
P: God i tamen, E men e hakoh honot i o men e men
toa kori pua men to na pekato.

aa, ee, ii,

oo, uu

Not consistently marked

Trial Orthography:
Only for specific words



eaο, oae,
iou

Mostly spelled *eo*, *oe*, or
ou

Trial Orthography:

eo, oe, ou


PETERO E HATENON MEIA TOPIU JESU.

Petero i harunduk mahuti e Jesu; na but tuna te i'pore i numa te Anas, te na tun pu nahen, te ka hengun mei o boys, nin korui'tara piu hia pu'a'pu.

Te i numa, i'mes na tahon na tun pu narehin tenu, te keta tun meiou: "Ai, eno has, ka hengun mea e Jesu i Galilea!" To varevan o para tara haovot tun e Petero, te Petero e hate tunina: "Imeia, mea nate pi na ka hate mo!"

Te ka hakosi tun to ga na tahon e tara pore iou, te tusavo tuniarun haroot piu erun, te keta tun: "Emu ma taran na katun iu re i ka hengun has mea Jesu i Nasaret!"—Petero i keta sae tun e hateina: "Imei koru, mea nate pi na na katun iu nen!"

Te ka hakosi sae tun to varevan i keta tuna te Petero: "E manon, eno has na katun koru te Jesu: mo ketao e hate tot ne men!" Te Petero i ketarisi tun: "Man koru pono iegit, mea nate pi na na katun i nen!"

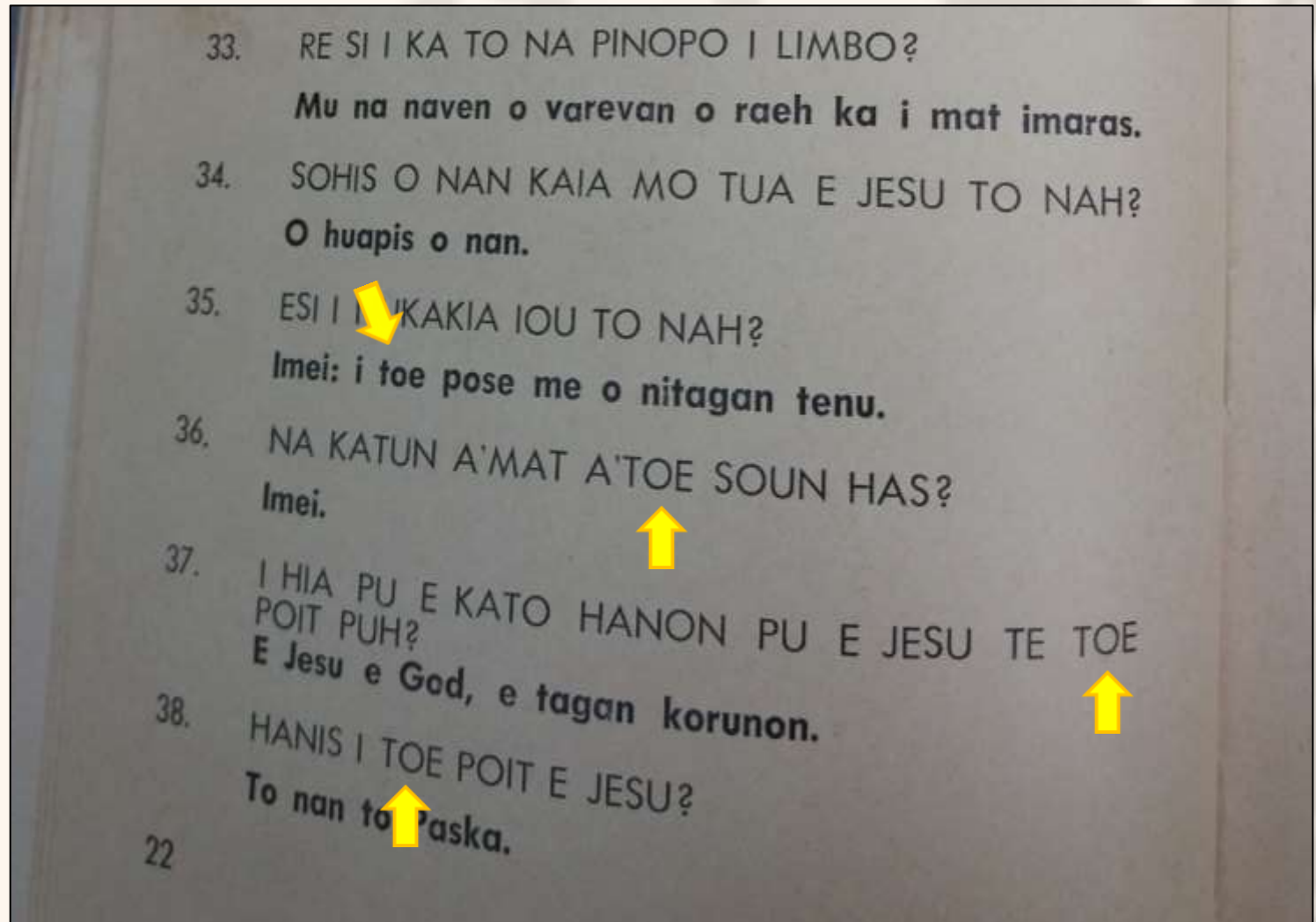
To na poat ka'keta me Petero, te kekeneo i nan tun. Te Jesu e habet tun pu te Petero totot  tuni o

eao, oae,
iou

Mostly spelled *eo*, *oe*, or
ou

Trial Orthography:

eo, oe, ou

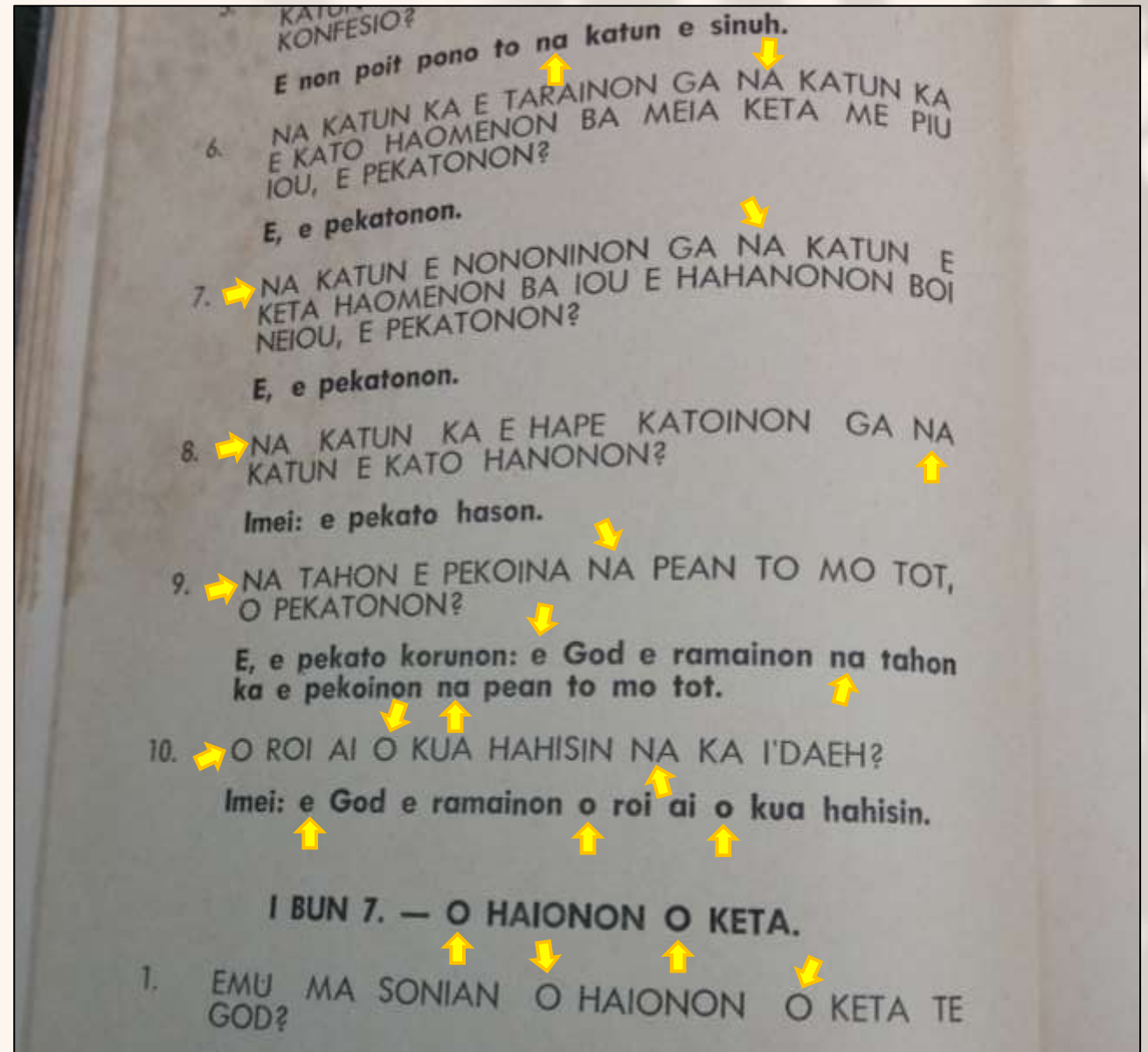


Articles

Inconsistently joined or
separated

Trial Orthography:

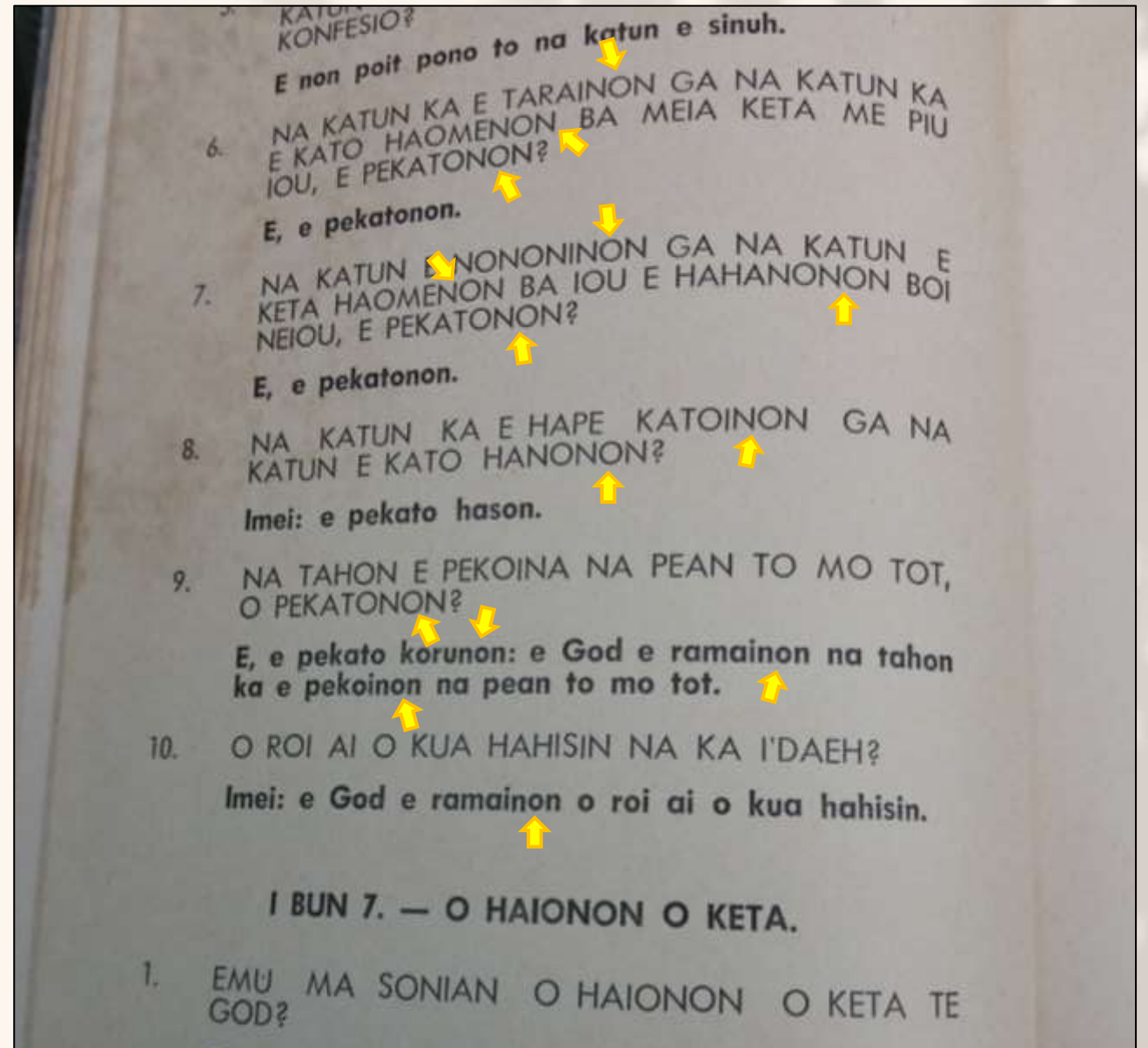
always
separate



Verb Phrase Clitic

Inconsistently joined or
separated

Trial Orthography:
always
separate

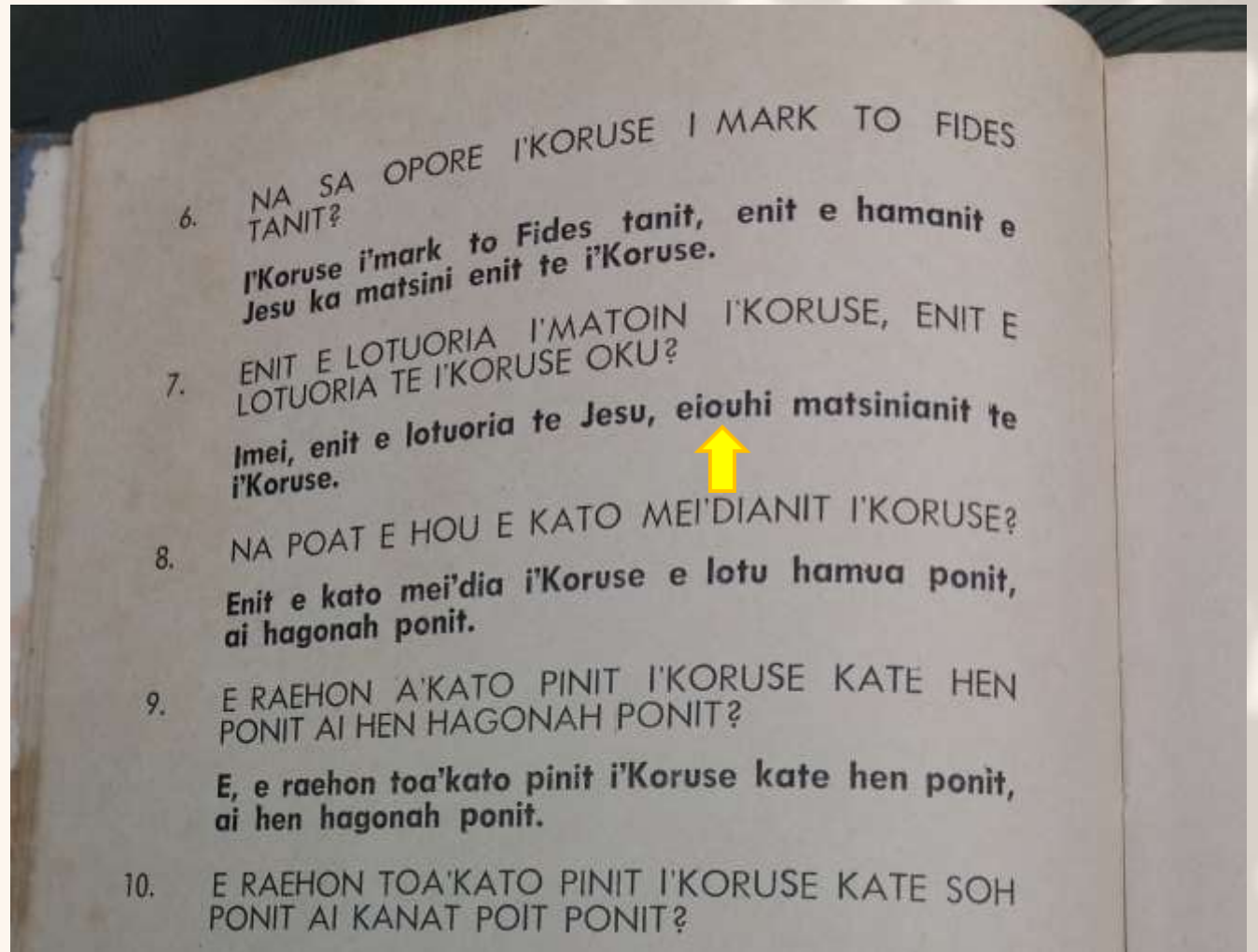


Single Vowel Markers

Inconsistently joined or
separated

Trial Orthography:

always
separate



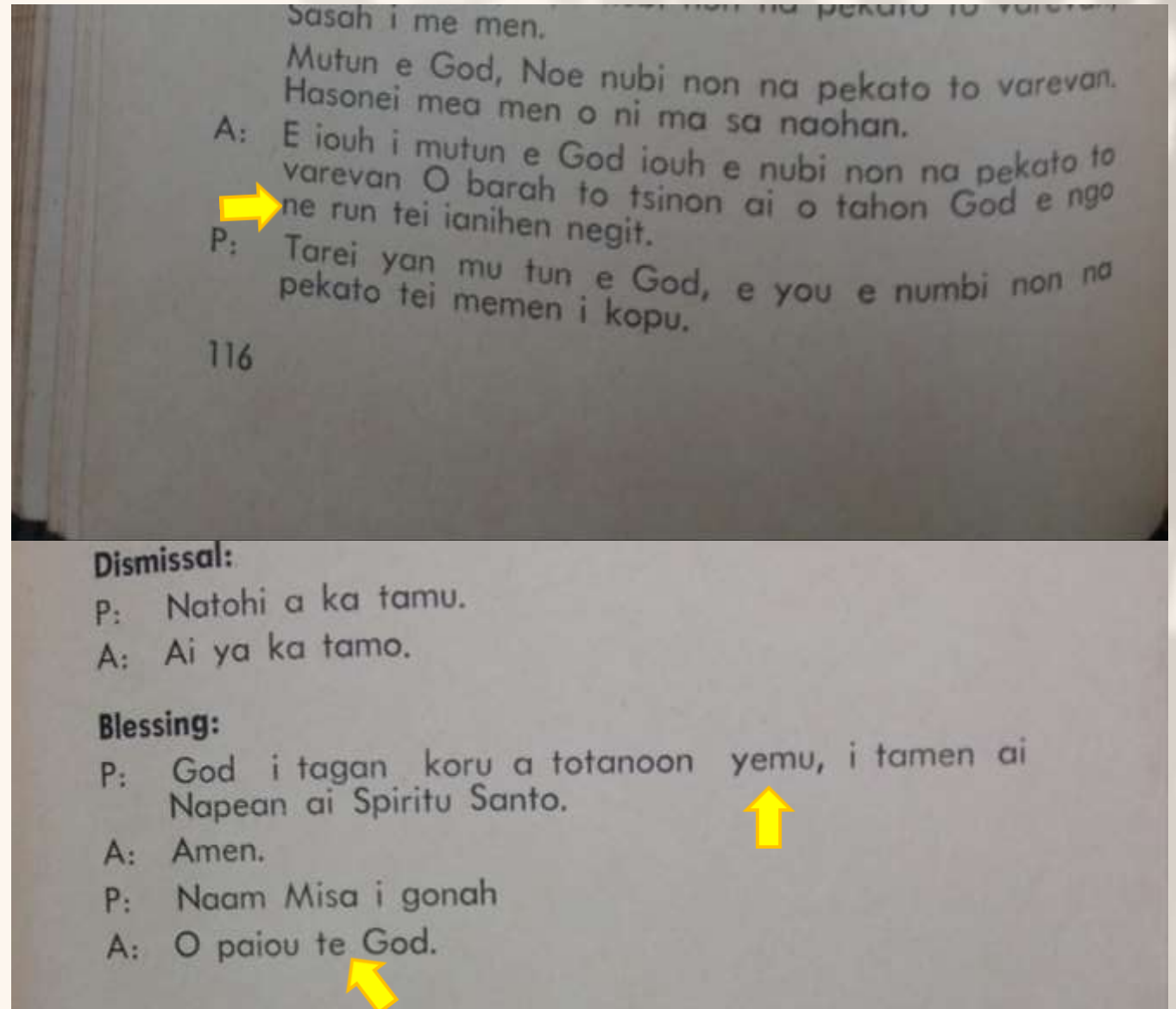
In the Trial Orthography: *e youh i*

Relators

Inconsistently joined or separated

Trial Orthography:

usually
separate,
but can be
contraction



Conclusions

We are planning to take the standardization process slowly.

The way Solos is written and used will remain in the hands of the Solos-speaking people.

An eventual goal is the whole Solos area being served by one body of literature.

Surprising degree of agreement between materials prepared in different parts of the language area and at different times.

There is no central authority on the Solos language, and the group is too big for easily arriving at consensus, so repeated testing is vital.

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Works in the Solos language (as used in this presentation)

The works listed in this section are organized by probable date of production/publication.

Unknown author/translator. *Ena Haman Gue God* (catechism). 1960s? Diocese of Bougainville? (extremely rare, no publication information in the book).

SIL-PNG & Local Contributors. *Hahatania 5 (Alphabet Book, Coastal)*. 1994. North Solomons Division of Education. (digital archives, SIL-PNG)

SIL-PNG & Local Contributors. *O Hapita 5 (Alphabet Book, Inland)*. 1994. North Solomons Division of Education. (digital archives, SIL-PNG)

Garubei, Usaiah Kakouk. *Na Kura* (The Frog). 2024. Trial Edition. SIL PNG.

Kakouk, Sotutu Garubei & Raphael Korus. *Kus in Henaon ai Mu Tsino Uh* (The Greedy Dog and His Bone). 2024. Revised Trial Edition. SIL PNG.

Pitt, LouiseAnne. *Rutun* (Beginning). 2024. Trial Edition. Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

Sesen, Timothy. *Kekeneo* (Chickens). 2024. Trial Edition. SIL PNG.

Sinta, Nathalie. *O Koma Tein Kuhang* (Song of the Spider). 2024. Trial Edition. SIL PNG.

Tavish, James, Joe Haon, & Remizius Kehali. *Tutuut tein Koro ain Nonom* (The Ant and the Lizard). 2024. Revised Trial Edition. SIL PNG.

Doyle, Larry. *O Tutuan to Keta i Solos* (Solos Alphabet Book). 2024. Trial Edition. SIL PNG.