



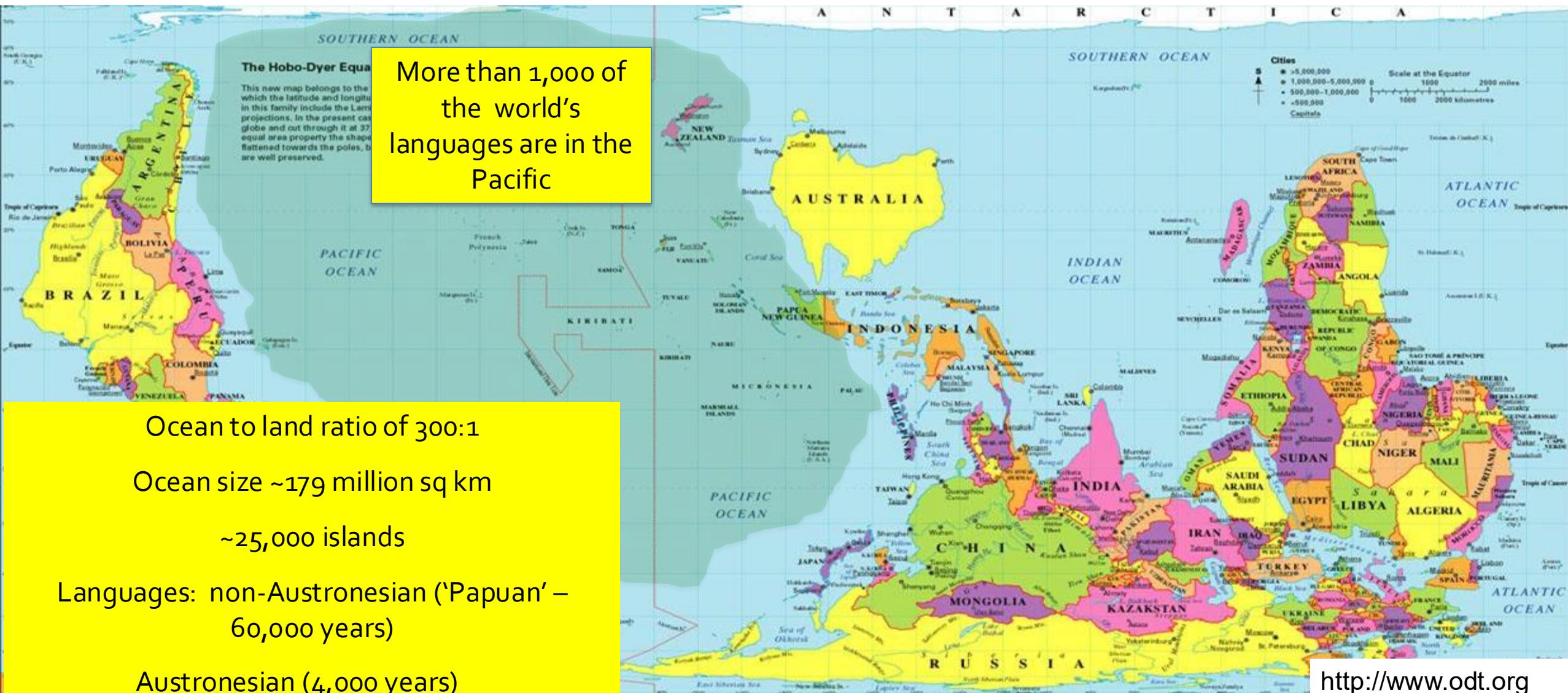
Pacific languages

Nick Thieberger

School of Languages and Linguistics, University of
Melbourne

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





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

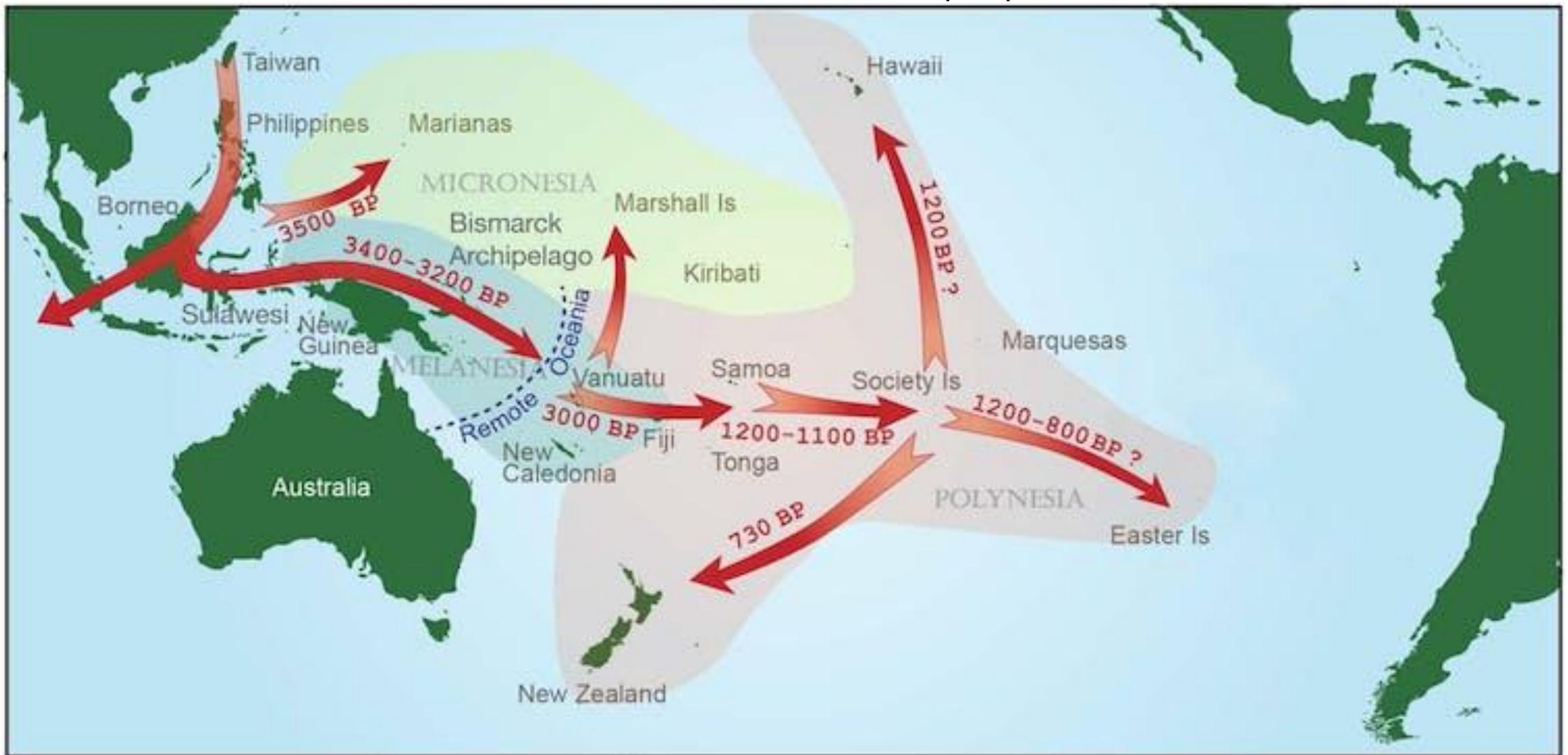
Depopulation in nineteenth century, disease, blackbirding.

Pidgin languages developed in Melanesia

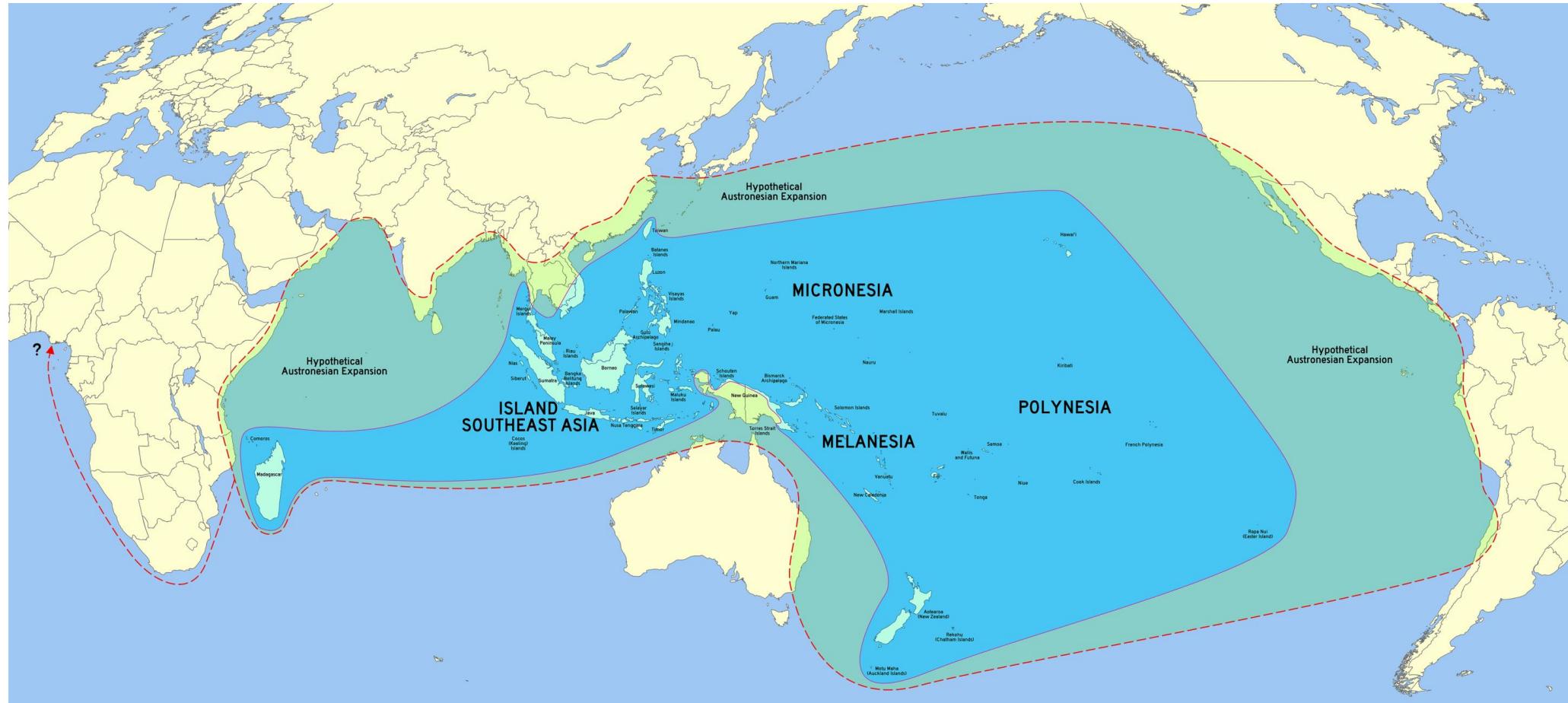


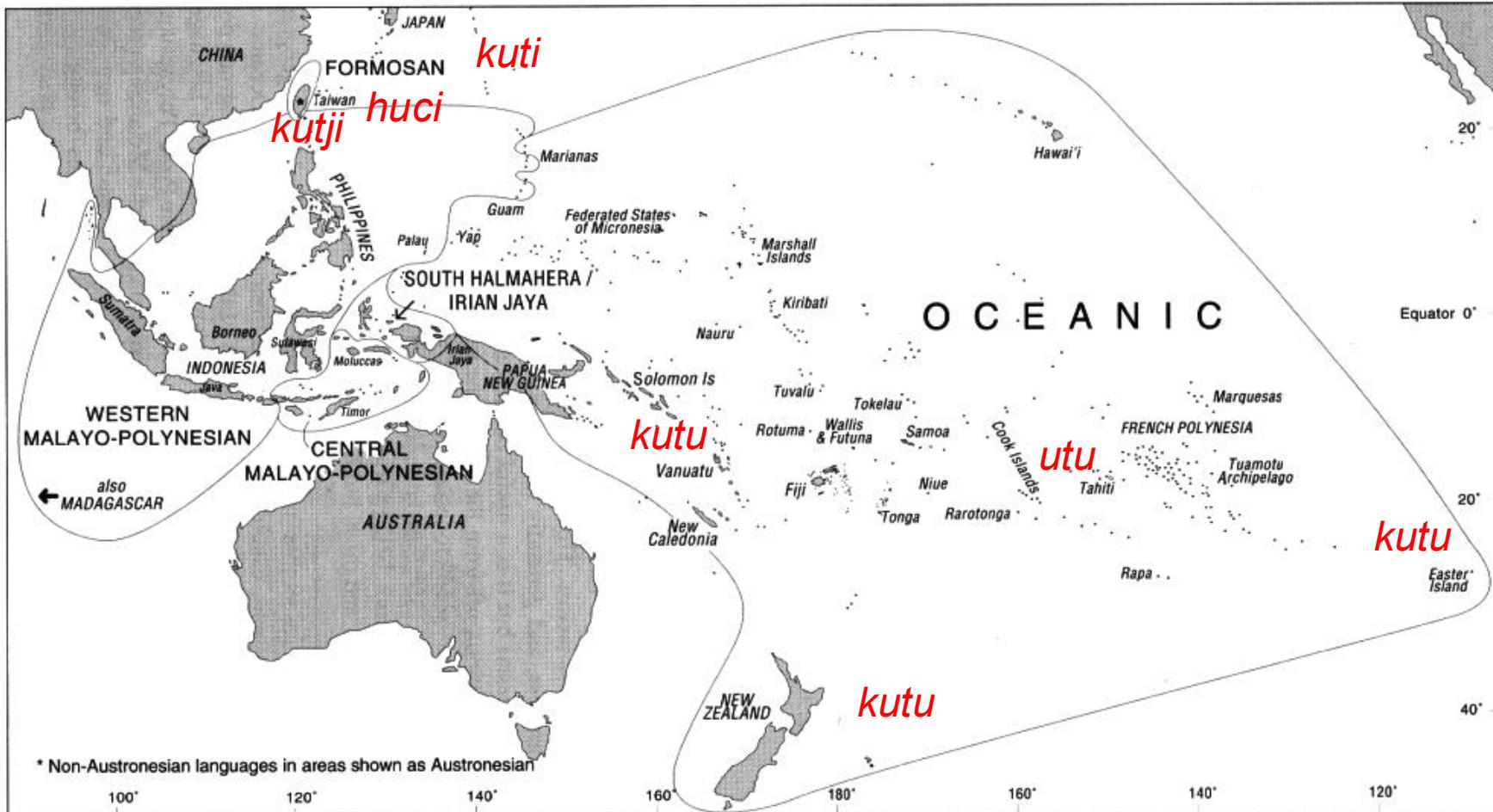
Teouma site, Lapita cemetery

Movement of Austronesian people



Austronesian languages



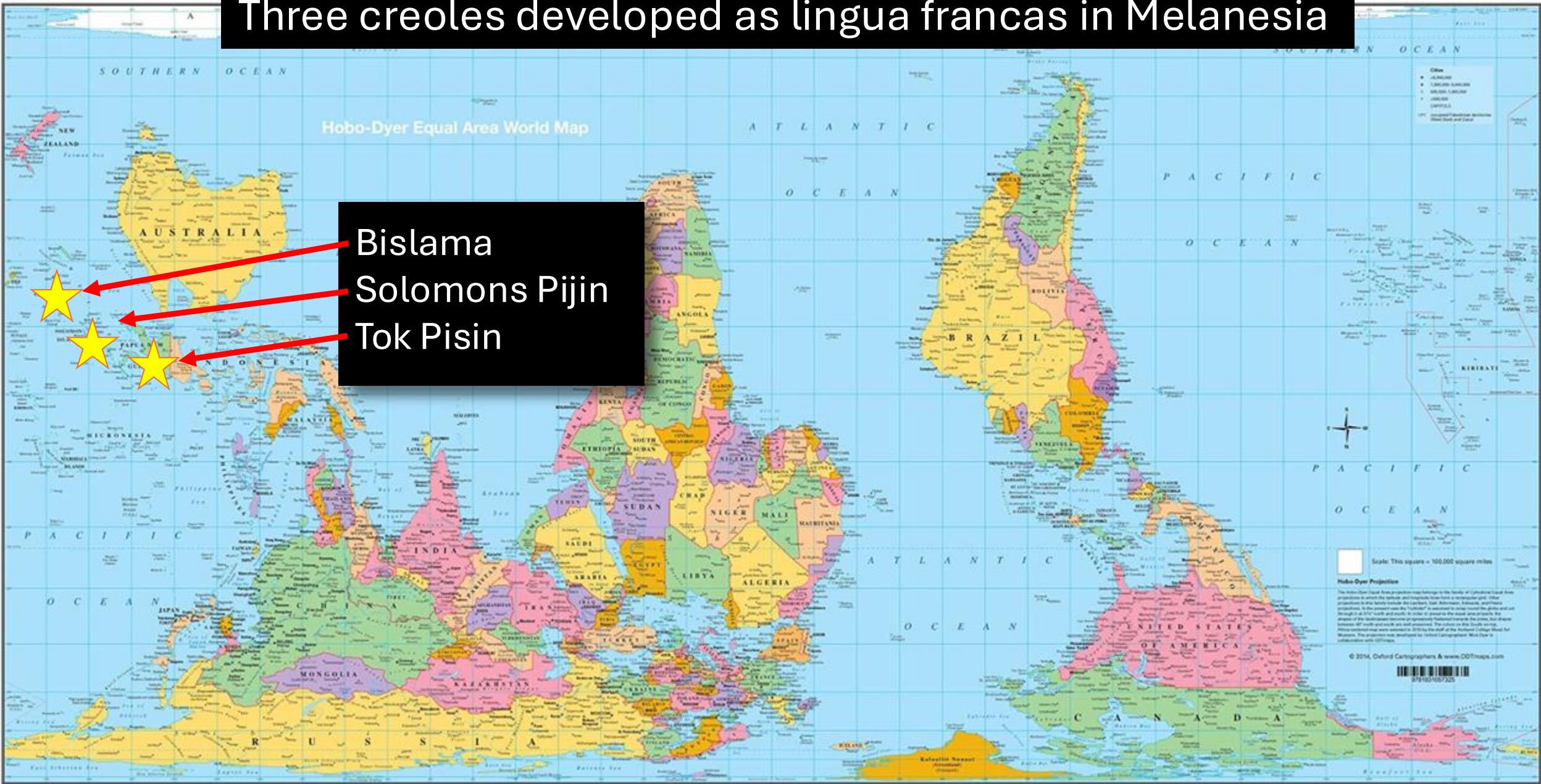


MAP 1.1 THE AUSTRONESIAN FAMILY AND MAJOR AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGE GROUPS

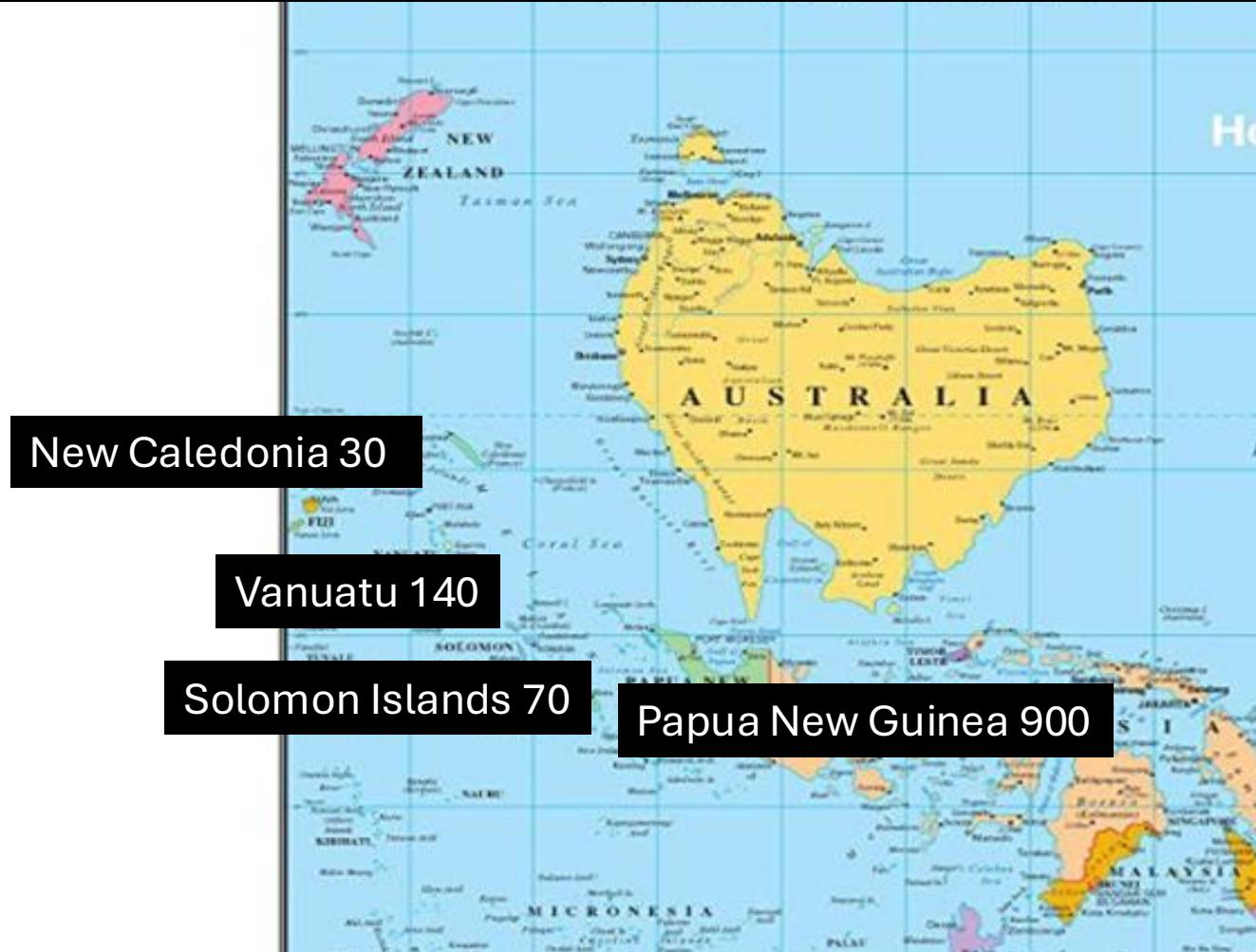
Map p. 3 from Lynch, J., Ross, M. and Crowley, T. 2002. *The Oceanic Languages*. Richmond UK

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



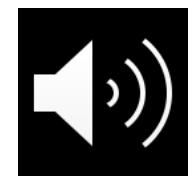
Melanesian languages



38 Polynesian languages



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



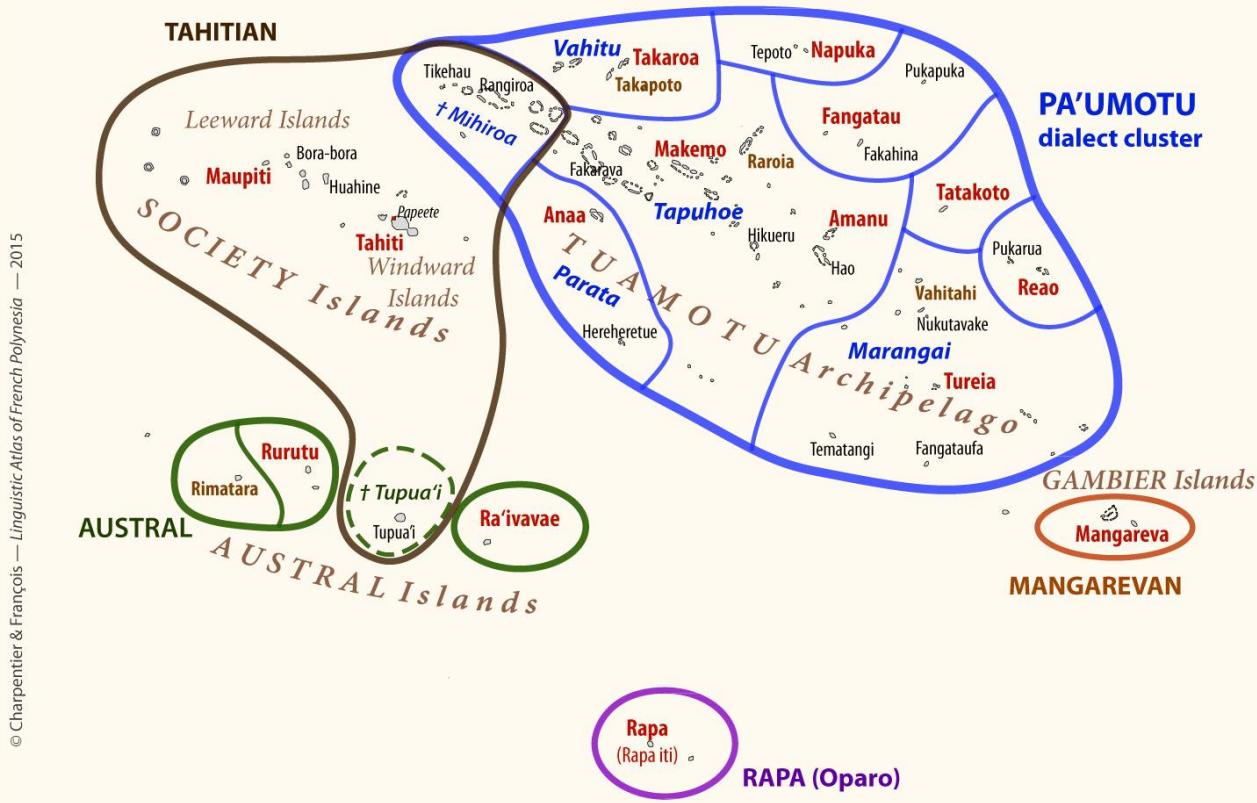
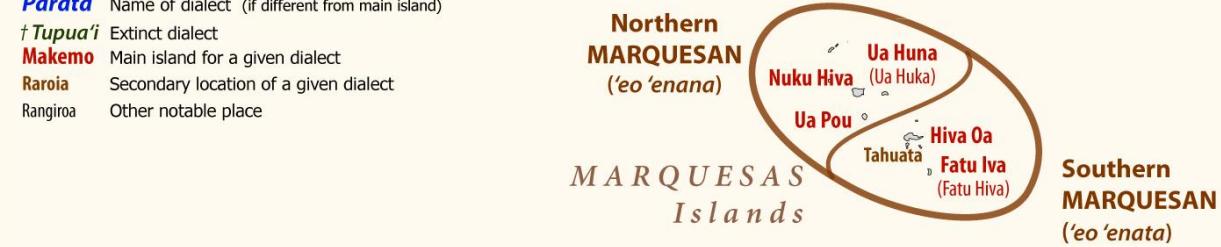
Rarotongan

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

French Polynesia

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

RAPA	Language or dialect cluster
Parata	Name of dialect (if different from main island)
† Tupua'i	Extinct dialect
Makemo	Main island for a given dialect
Raroia	Secondary location of a given dialect
Rangiroa	Other notable place



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	þ	b	d	g	
Voiceless stops	p̪	p	t	k	
Fricatives	v̪	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
2sg	ku=	̄a=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes
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
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom/ -m	-mam / -mom/ -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	rui=/ (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=	̄pa=	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=	rui=/ (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
2sg	ku=	̄pa=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes
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
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom / -m	-mam -mom / -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	rui=/ (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)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou
2sg	ku=	̄a=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes
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
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/koi=	-mam / -mom / -m	-mam / -mom / -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	rui=/ (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)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou	-k
2sg	ku=	̄a=	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=	rui=/ (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)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou
2sg	ku=	̄pa=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes
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
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom / -m	-mam -mom / -m
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	rui=/ (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)
1sg	a=	ka=	kai=	-wou	-wou
2sg	ku=	̄pa=	kui=	(TS)-k	-wok
3sg	i=	ke=	ki=	(TS)-∅ / -n	-wes
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
1p. (ex)	u=	ko=	ui=/ koi=	-mam / -mom / -m	-mam
2p.	u=	ko=	koi=	-mus	-mus
3p.	ru=	ruk=	rui=/ (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

Anejom̄

- 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

<i>ra</i>	<i>ko-qisu-me</i>	<i>kavia</i>	<i>kuda</i>
I	1SG:REAL-carry-hither	some	coconut
‘I have brought some coconuts.’			
<i>göi</i>	<i>ma-zo-la</i>	<i>Susuka</i>	
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>+̃prai</i>	to break	<i>kisp̄rai</i>	to pinch-break
<i>mas</i>	to cut			<i>mas̄prai</i>	to cut in pieces
<i>sak</i>	to climb			<i>sak̄prai</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>+̃por</i>	to break	<i>kamp̄or</i>	to step on and break
<i>lao</i>	to leave			<i>laop̄or</i>	to leave and break
<i>̃por</i>	to break			<i>̃por̄por</i>	to break everything
<i>prei</i>	to wash	<i>+tao</i>	to leave	<i>preitao</i>	to wash clothes
<i>̃mol</i>	to squeeze			<i>̃moltao</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>̃pi</i>	to kick			<i>̃pisraf</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,	\emptyset =mai, a=preg-ptak-ki,	\emptyset =tai-ptak-ki.
1sgRS=go cut bamboo	\emptyset =come 1sgRS=make-ready-TR	\emptyset =cut-ready-TR

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

Académie marquiseen.

Apuuaia Te Haëtuhuka Tau mautoko Tau hana Mou ponatekao Tau vaòniu Documents à
Accueil Présentation Membres Publications ▾ Dictionnaires ▾ Liens télécharger

Recherche...



Ataa
Moh
sont
jours



Bonjour !
Bienvenue !

Bienvenue sur le site de l'Académie marquiseen qui vous présente ici ses membres, ses missions et ses publications.

Kāoha nui ! Mave mai !

Eia te tohua niutavavā o te Haëtuhuka eo ènana ; i èià, e koaka te ite o ai te tau tuhuka me titahi mou tautua atii me te nuia o ta âtou hana.



Atua te tau tumutekao o te tohua niutavavā ma o Nuku Hiva vâna i te hei a te Haëtuhuka eo èa. Atià à, na te mouka eo ènana tikihai e ite i to âtou motu me aatoitoi i ta âtou patu o to âtou iho eo. Parler de Nuku Hiva, que membre recourt au se présenter et rédiger

Te tekao a te upoko hakatee
Le mot du directeur

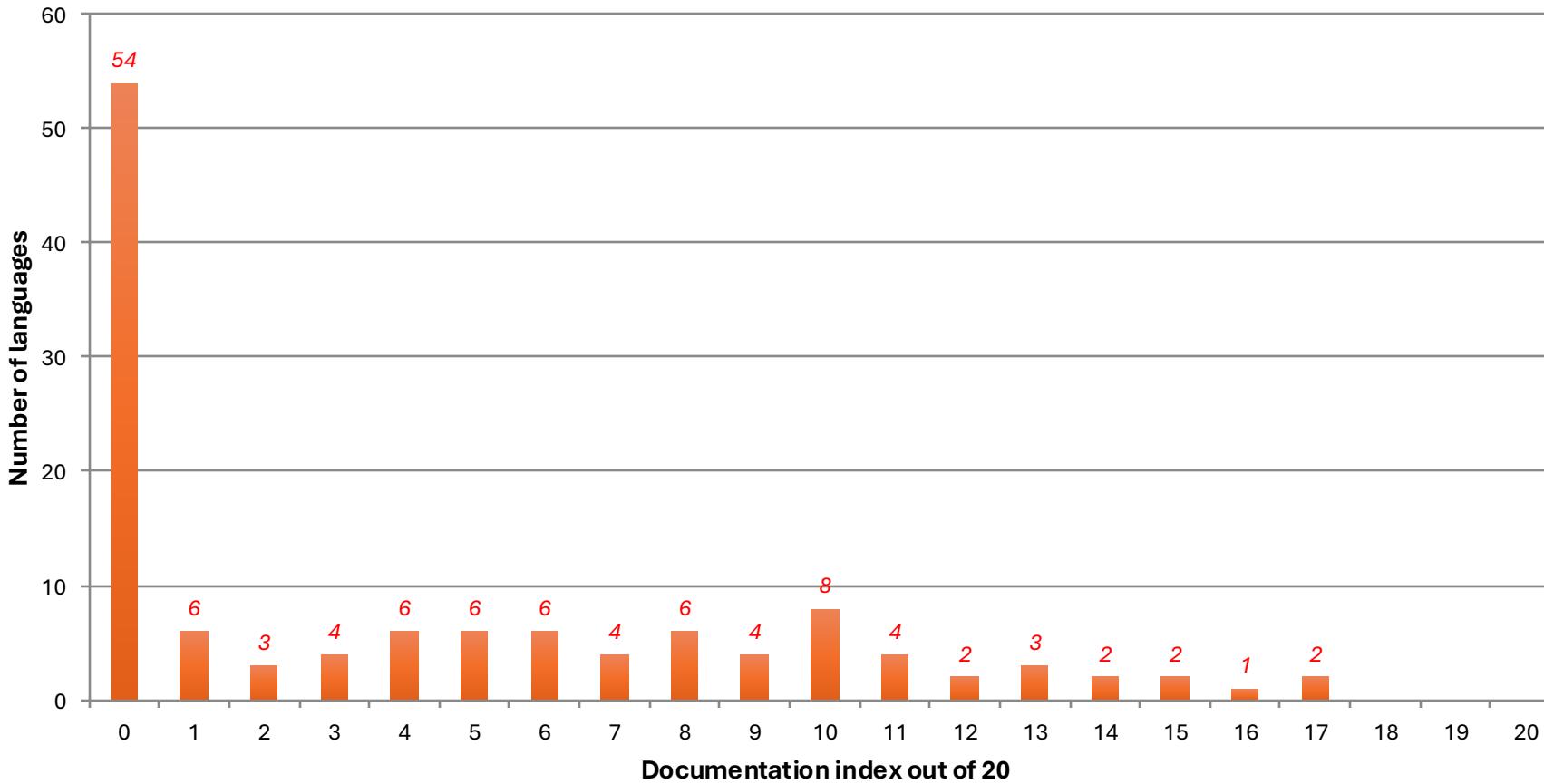
...

<https://www.academiemarquiseen.com/>

A map of the Tanna Island region showing various locations marked with colored dots (purple, yellow, green, red) and labeled with their names. The locations are:

- HIV
- Vures
- Mwotlap
- Lo-Toga
- Mwesen
- Lakon
- Dorig
- Koro
- Penantsiro
- Nume
- Mwerlap
- Mavea
- Araki
- Olrat
- North-East Ambae
- Neverver
- Apma
- Daakaka
- Naçando
- Raga
- Nahavaq
- Maskelynes
- South-East Ambrym
- Bierebgs
- Axamb
- Namakura
- Lelepa
- Nakanamanga
- Bieria
- Emae
- Tasiko
- Eton
- Mele-Fila
- Sie
- Utaha
- Ifo
- Jira
- Sorung
- Lenakel
- Southwest Tanna
- North Tanna
- Kwamera
- Anejom

Documentation index, Vanuatu languages (early 2000s)



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

Académie pa'umotu

文 A 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'Academie Tahitienne est heureuse de vous accueillir sur son site

Rechercher dans le dictionnaire

Saisir un mot

OK



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

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 ...

la suite >>



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

1,400 languages

813 collections

45,972 articles

470,891 files

19,680 hours (audio)

3,880 hours (video)

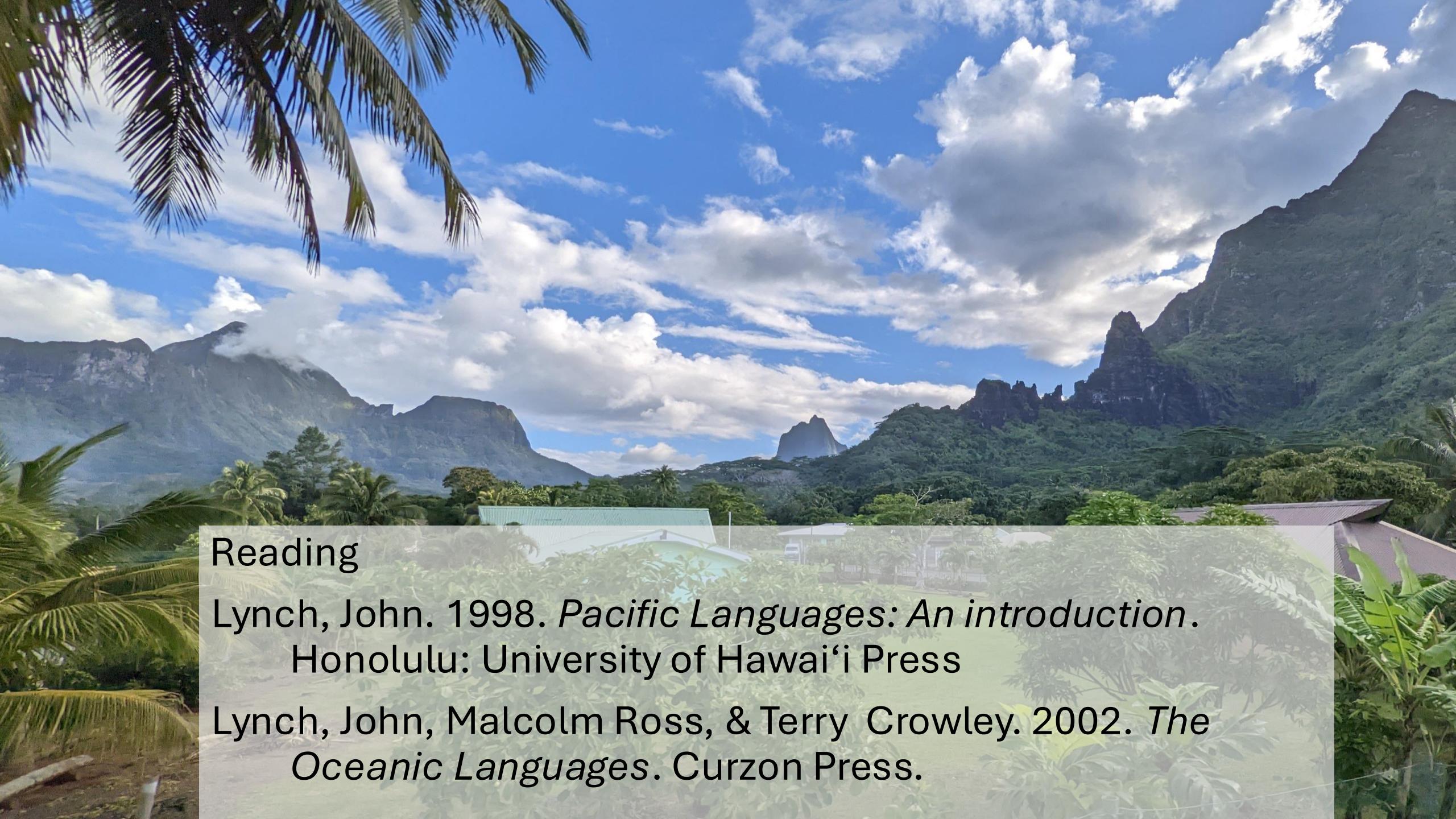
297 terabytes

February 2026



<http://catalog.paradisec.org.au>



The background image shows a panoramic view of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, palm trees are visible on the left. The middle ground features a dense forest of lush green trees. In the background, there are several majestic, rugged mountains covered in vegetation. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white and grey clouds.

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



Australian Research Data Commons



Language Data Commons of Australia