Missionary translation in Efate

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Outline

• Two features of the language Nafsan do not occur in any of the neighbouring languages.
• Similarity to English words (\textit{kano}=cannot, \textit{if}=if), suggests they were introduced by missionary translators.
• What methods were used by those translators and what variety of English did they speak?
• How can words, introduced by a couple of outsiders, be adopted into a language?
Inglis, John. 1887. *In the New Hebrides; reminiscences of missionary life and work, especially on the island of Aneityum, from 1850 till 1877.*
The conditional -f

13:16 Ka fo brig tesa nigag ruk fo taos nasoksok intan; nat i=f fe tae nasoksok intan, ru=f fe tae tesa nigag.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

(Kenesis 1874)

i=f
3SG.RS=CND
The conditional -f

Me hopefully ntau faum if pi Namurien ni Atua, psawi

*But hopefully next year if God wills it, thanks*
(Erakor Village Facebook page 12/2014)

If uel kin ruf ptu ki reason gar kat action nen ruto-slati go iwi

*If they give a good reason for their action then it is good*
(Erakor Noticeboard Facebook page June 17 2015)
Namakir
pe/be … pe/be, and also peka … pe/be
Ko pe row Vil pe tok bikio, 2's COND go V. COND stay with me
'If you go to Vila you could stay with me.' (Sperlich p.248 of grammar and p.17 of revision supplement)

Nguna
In conditional and consequent sentences pe is added to the particle in both:
e pe maturu, e pe wo mauri, if he sleep, he will live;
te naata sikai e pe surata Bogi e pe tapila-gona, any man if he walk (in the) night he stumbles;
e pe tika, a pe noa ki mu asa, if it were not (so), I would have told you. (Ray :215).

Lelepa
Conditional clauses are introduced by an initial 'wan' (Lacrampe 2014: 406) No ‘f’.

Ura
Naqo
Naqo kam-agli nacava burbut k-abarvu ovon norgen.
if 2S0:PRES-MR:ig kava close 2S0:FIT-MR:break PL root
'If you dig the kava too close you will break the roots.' (Crowley 1999: 222)

Mele
if = tausia, nagusia (Clark 1998: 131)
Tausia t'rai roo-masa, sa kar te-noono mwasu kiinna naa.
If the tide goes out, you just stay here. (Clark 1975b: 4, 5)

Eton
Uses f in the same way as in Nafsan

Sye
No special morpheme, but a realis conditional reading applies to the use of the optative subject with a modified verb stem, and an irreals conditional reading applies to irreals conditional subjects and modified verb roots (Crowley 1998: 113)

How is the conditional expressed in languages around Nafsan?
‘to be unable’ *kano*

Boyfren neu a=*kano* trau daerek pan lek-a-ø.
boyfriend mine 1sgRS=can't just straight go look-TS-3sgO

*My boyfriend, I can't just go straight and look at him.* (066:90) (98003B, 1330.2406, 1334.2)

Iakn teläp ruk4 *kano* pakot nafet MinicipalityTAX

*Because many are unable to pay the Municipal tax* (Erakor Village Facebook page 2014)
To be unable *kano*

1864 – Nalag ni Efat – no use of *kano*
1864 – Nadus Iskei nig Fat– no use of *kano*
1868 – I bakelag berkati tok; A *kano* bakor wis.
  ‘He is really up on high; I can’t come to him’

1881 – Nawisien a nin i bi te nag Yeof i brig i; Komam ra *kano* nrik kik o ki tesa, ko te wi.

*The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.*

(Genesis 1881: 24:50)

1874 – Ken ki nrik Yeof kin, nanrogtesan nigneu i tob, kineu a *kano* selati.

*And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.*

(Genesis 1874: 4:13)
How is the concept of ‘to be unable to’ expressed in languages around Nafsan?

Namakir
Mar'isa 'cannot', 'should not', 'unable to'
Ni mar'isa ni loioh na-bitren na-tonenio bitin’ 1s cannot 1s swim ART-because ART-leg-my sore
‘I cannot/shouldn’t swim because my leg is sore’ (Sperlich p.307)

Nguna
Marisaa
E mari-saa euaua naga na-gorai ni na-toko-ana pota e ga laki pa-ki
it unable allow that female of village other she int, marry to
na-toko-ana rota village other
'It wouldn't allow a girl from one village to marry [someone from] another village.' (Schütz grammar p.6)

Mele
kanokaanoa (vi) be unable.
Au kanokaanoa ma kamosikea t'tama naa. I can't lift this child.

(Schütz Moyse-Faurie suggests this is innovated and probably borrowed from Nafsan)

Lelepa
Kano 'be unable'

Ura

Sye

In 1853 there were 250 Pango people in church (Steel 1880: 223).
### Presbyterian Missionaries to South Efate until 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missionary</th>
<th>Pango</th>
<th>Erakor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mose and Setefano</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>1846 (Eratap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sipi and Taavili (Murray 1863:236)</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mose and Setefano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rata, Simona, Tairi, Lealamanu, Sepania</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pikika and Kaviriri</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missionaries withdrawn</strong></td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>1854 (Eratap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamara, Teautoa and Toma (from Raratonga)</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Two from Aneityum&quot;</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.Morrison (died of consumption in Auckland in 1869)</td>
<td>1864-1867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ru and Kakita (from Raratonga)</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.Cosh</td>
<td>1866-1870</td>
<td>Late 1860s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natonga, then Tupatai (from Aneityum)</td>
<td>Late 1860s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.W.Mackenzie</td>
<td>1872-1912</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td></td>
<td>1879 (Bufa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
J.W.Mackenzie and Maggie Mackenzie 1903
http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll123/id/79573
Translations produced before 1900 in Nafsan


Kalsarap Namaf
Chief Samuel and Doctor Mackenzie

This first story is about the missionary Dr Mackenzie who had
written notes about customary knowledge, but then, as he was about
to return to Australia, had Chief Samuel take the papers and throw
them into the lagoon, as a symbolic way of destroying 'darkness' (the
traditional knowledge system of Erakor).

Natrauswen nig Samuel go Dokta Mackenzie.
Selwan ito nag keler pak Astrelia 1912.
Mis isos Samuel.
Inag, 'Pafan pa raru negaag mai
sokin e-slaor Elaknutu.
Go Samuel ipo pa raru nega
pan sak kin e-slaor Elaknutu.
Dokta Mackenzie inrik Samuel
kin nag, 'Kulek natus nen itu?
Paslati pan paai luk raru negaag.
Samuel ipo pa sol natus nen mis
inrin kin.

Samuel ipan slati pan paai luk
raru nega paipan inom go mis
ipao skin, 'Inom ko?' Samuel
inag, 'Or mis.' Mis, 'Pafa raru me

pafalus pak elau namos.' Samuel
ipa raru me mis iur euut pak
Elignairo pan me inrik Samuel

The story of Samuel and
Dr. Mackenzie.
When he was about to return to
Australia in 1912.
The missionary called Samuel.
He said, "You take your canoe
and go to that place Elaknutu!"
And Samuel got his canoe and
got to Elaknutu.

Dr. Mackenzie said to Samuel,
"You see these books? You take
them and fill your canoe."
Samuel carried the papers which
the missionary had told him
about.
Samuel carried them and filled
his canoe until it was finished
and the missionary asked him, "Is
it finished or not?" Samuel said to
him, "Yes mis." The missionary
said, "Take your canoe and
you paddle out to the ocean."
Samuel took the canoe and the
missionary ran along the shore to

kin nag,
'Selwan pafalus pan pakeka afsik
naruw patao nawes me natus
rukmaul pak ntau pan.'

Samuel itutki natus kailer.

Selwan pafalus mai sak eslaor
Elaknutu go mis ipan pa raru
nega me itap lek tete natus mau
go inrik Samuel kin nag, 'Pafa
raru negaag pan sak kin eslaor.'
Mis ipak esum nega pan go
Samuel ipo pa raru imai sak
Eslaorpur.

This is text 025.

Elignairo and he said to Samuel,
"When you have paddled you'll
see I raise my hand you put down
your paddle then throw all the
paper into the water."
Samuel threw in the paper and
went back.
When he paddled to shore at
Elaknutu the missionary came to
his canoe, but he didn't see any
paper and he said to Samuel,
"You take your canoe back
to land." The missionary went to
his house and Samuel went to
Eslaorpur.
The Christian Review of Sept 1867 says: "Mr Cosh has succeeded remarkably in learning the languages of Fate’ (Don 1918 : 19)

“old words picked out of the mire of pagan use and baptised into a new life.” (ibid)

“in every Island language equivalents can be found for every word in the Old and New Testaments” (Don 1918 : 39)

“Language is one of the things that heathen natives have not degenerated in.” (Don 1918 : 114)

“If ye get married, gang somewhere else an seek your hame - but don't come here to pine away in solitude and sickness” (Mackenzie, letter to his sister, in Denne 1991: 20)
It was not till Mr. and Mrs. Geddie had been five years on Aneityum, and we had been one, that he found out the native word for *perhaps*; and I think the missionaries were ten or a dozen years on Tahiti before they discovered some word that was equally common and equally important. (Inglis 1890 : 252-253)
“When the Dayspring returned from the colonies she brought with her a box of new hymn books which Mr. Morison had translated and the people [over] all anxious to be [xx] possessor’s of a copy of the new book. As James was for great want of hands to put up a [stove?] and cook-house and did not know where he was to get help he told the Erakor and Pango people that they were each to do a piece of work for him before they would get their books. The Erakor folk went into it with great spirit and the Pango people were stimulated by their example.

August 3rd 1868, Pango. Mrs Mackenzie to her sister Maggie
"The most important event of the year has been the placing of the New Testament in the Efatese language in the hands of the natives. Their contribution of arrowroot this year was upwards of 3000 lbs."

November 1889 J.W.Mackenzie report in Anon 1890
References


Don, Alexander. 1918. *Light in Dark Isles*. Dunedin: Foreign Missions Committee


Acknowledgments:
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