

# Loanword Strata in Rotuman

by Hans Schmidt

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## LOANWORD STRATA IN ROTUMAN

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### 1. *Introduction*

Rotuma is a small island in the South Pacific.<sup>1</sup> It lies roughly at the crossroads of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Politically, the island forms part of the Republic of Fiji; though the closest Fijian island, Cikobia, is about 465 km distant (Woodhall 1987:1). The island is accessible from Suva, the capital of Fiji, by a two-day boat trip or in two hours by plane. In contrast to its Northern neighbor Tuvalu, Rotuma is not a coral atoll but a so called 'high' island of volcanic origin (Pleistocene), its surface area is 46 km<sup>2</sup> and its soil is very fertile.

Rotuma has a population of approximately 2,700 inhabitants who live in twenty villages scattered along the coast. This constitutes the highest population density (59 per km<sup>2</sup>) for all Fijian islands (Walsh 1982:20), although three quarters of the Rotumans have left their home island for the urban areas of Fiji or overseas. Many of these Fiji-Rotumans have never been on Rotuma or at most for a brief Christmas holiday.

In contrast to its small number of speakers, Rotuman has featured frequently in works of general and comparative linguistics.<sup>2</sup> What makes Rotuman so interesting in the eyes of linguists? Its productive metathesis. "This language has provoked Oceanic linguists into doing some of their best work. Its wonderfully intricate morphophonology has teased phonological theorists, and the challenge of trying to work out Rotuman's historical position and development has had some important spin-offs for Oceanic historical

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<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations will be used in this paper: Eng. (English), EFu. (East Futunan), E'Uv. (East 'Uvean), Fij. (Fijian), Haw. (Hawai'ian), Niuaf. (Niuafu'ou), NPn. (Nuclear Polynesian), Niuat. (Niuatoputapu), Outl. (Outlier), PAn. (Proto-Austronesian), PCP (Proto-Central-Pacific), PEO (Proto-Eastern Oceanic), (PFij. (Proto-Fijian), PMP (Proto-Malayo-Polynesian), POc. (Proto-Oceanic), Sam. (Samoan), St. (Standard), Tik. (Tikopia), Tong. (Tongan), Tuv. (Tuvalu), WPn. (West Polynesian).

linguistics. Rotuman has been the *agent provocateur* in two of the foundation studies of the modern period of Oceanic comparative linguistics, those of Grace (1959) and Biggs (1965)” (Pawley 1996:86).

Rotuman, Fijian, and the Polynesian languages form the Central Pacific subgroup of Oceanic, which itself is a major subgroup of the Austronesian language family.

It has been known for a long time that the Rotuman lexicon contains many loanwords from other languages. “Their dialect is a mixture of Polynesian words, very much corrupted, with those of some other language, unlike any which has been elsewhere found” (Hale, quoted in Bleek 1858:33).

Codrington (1885:402) put it similarly: “The language can by no means be classed with those of the eastern Pacific [i.e. Polynesia], but must be ranked as Melanesian”, whereas Kern (1887:564) was convinced that “Rotuman was obviously a Polynesian dialect in spite of Codrington’s claim.”<sup>3</sup>

Churchward described the composition of the Rotuman lexicon like a cook book author: “The present Rotuman language appears to be the result of a fusion of several earlier languages. The writer’s opinion is that it shows two Polynesian strata, a Melanesian stratum which antedates them both, a slight admixture of Micronesian and some important elements which are peculiarly Rotuman and which it seems reasonable to ascribe to an earlier language still, which we shall henceforth refer to as the aboriginal substratum” (Churchward 1938:80).

Aside from lexical forms and a few derivational affixes, one case of borrowing can be noted at the level of phonology: a new phonological segment (/f/) was imported as part of many Polynesian loanwords. Later it fell together with Rot. [θ] as /f/. Some new phonological rules were incorporated as well as some new meanings for existing items through calquing or the extension of meanings (e.g., *mālu* meant originally “shadow” and later also “picture, photo, film”; cf. Table 1).

Let’s dig and uncover the layers, like archaeologists, starting with the most recent ones. Rotuma has been in contact with westerners for over two hundred years. Loanwords from European languages (mainly English) and Fijian are the most recent arrivals and easy to identify. This does not apply to earlier loans. What loanwords signify has probably been transferred from one culture into another (Geraghty 1995a:7). From the semantic fields of the loanwords we can infer in what areas Rotumans felt a need or desire for foreign terms, and with which language groups they were in contact.

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<sup>3</sup> Father L. Soubeyran, for many years missionary on the island, thought that Rotuman was a Polynesian language with a number of Chinese words (Neyret 1976: II,125).

## 2. *Loans from English*

### 2.1 *English or Pidgin English*

Comparing widespread borrowings in Pacific languages, Crowley (1993:156–161) collated a “South Seas Jargon cultural vocabulary”; three quarters of it are present in the corpus of loanwords in Rotuman. In more detail, of the non-French borrowings in languages of New Caledonia, 70% are also found in Rotuman. Rotuman likewise contains

- 55% of the non-French borrowings in East 'Uvean and East Futunan,
- 58% of the probable early borrowings in Pacific languages spoken in anglophone areas,
- 66% of the typical loanwords in South Pacific languages from the period of South Seas Jargon and
- 73% of the cultural vocabulary of the South Seas Jargon (Crowley 1993:140–161).

This is further confirmation of the view that Rotuma was an integral part of communication in the Pacific, and that English words borrowed by Rotumans during the nineteenth century came primarily from the South Seas Jargon or Pacific Pidgin English.

### 2.2 *The phonology of English loans*

Almost every content word in Rotuman has two forms, a citation or long form (Churchward’s “complete phase”) and a short form (“incomplete phase”) derived from it mainly by metathesis. All the loanwords incorporated into Rotuman except the most recent ones were changed somewhat to fit the rules of Rotuman phonology. Source words with a final vowel were usually regarded as suitable long forms in Rotuman, and a new short form had to be created.

| English source form | Rotuman citation form | → Short form | Pronunciation |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| coffee              | <i>kofi</i>           | <i>köf</i>   | [kœf]         |
| paper               | <i>pepa</i>           | <i>peap</i>  | [pyap]        |
| pussy-cat           | <i>pusi</i>           | <i>püs</i>   | [püs]         |
| sugar               | <i>suka</i>           | <i>suak</i>  | [swøk]        |
| steamer             | <i>tima</i>           | <i>tiam</i>  | [työm]        |

Table 1: Loanwords incorporated as citation forms

It is not easy to recognise the source words by looking at the short forms alone. If people wanted the short form to show a close resemblance to the source word as well, then the final vowel of a loanword had to be stressed in

order to make it immune to this morphological change: /paté/ or *patē* < Eng. *putty*, /moné/ = *monē* < Eng. *money*. Often an English source word ending in a closed syllable looked more similar to a short form, and a long form had to be created later, usually by adding an echo vowel.

| English source word | Rotuman short form | → Citation form |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <i>half</i>         | <i>haf</i>         | <i>hafa</i>     |
| <i>hook</i>         | <i>huk</i>         | <i>huku</i>     |
| <i>melon</i>        | <i>meren</i>       | <i>merene</i>   |
| <i>bean</i>         | <i>pin</i>         | <i>pini</i>     |
| <i>ball</i>         | <i>por</i>         | <i>poro</i>     |

Table 2: Echo vowels in final position of loanwords

| English source word | Rotuman short form                 | Rotuman citation form                |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| horse               | <i>həs</i> [həs]                   | <i>həsʉ</i> [həsʉ]                   |
| doctor              | <i>tək ta</i> <sup>4</sup> [təkta] | <i>təkʉ</i> [təkʉ]                   |
| Christmas           | <i>kesmas</i> [kesmæs]             | <i>kesməsʉ</i> [kesməsʉ]             |
| nurse               | <i>nas</i> [næs]                   | <i>nəsʉ</i> [nəsʉ]                   |
| shirt               | <i>söt</i> [sət]                   | <i>sotʉ</i> [sotʉ]                   |
| tapioca             | <i>tapiok</i> [ta'pyok]            | <i>tapiko</i> <sup>5</sup> [ta'piko] |
| whip                | <i>uef</i> [wəf]                   | <i>ufe</i> [ʉfe]                     |
| wharf               | <i>uəf</i> [wəf]                   | <i>ufa</i> [ʉfa]                     |
| watch               | <i>uəj</i> [wətʃ]                  | <i>uja</i> [ʉtʃa]                    |

Table 3: Loanwords incorporated as short forms<sup>6</sup>

But not always: *e* is the most frequently chosen final (non-echo) vowel, occurring in a third of the cases, followed by *i* (28%), *u* (14%) and *o* (8%). Alveolar consonants seem to be followed by front vowels, *r* is only followed by *o*. After *k* and *m* we usually find *u*; see Table 3.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The final syllable of this English word was regarded by the Rotumans as a postposed article.

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Geraghty (1994:933) used this form in the wrong order of development to illustrate his rule of Rotuman metathesis, *tapiko* > *tapiok*.

<sup>6</sup> Four directly inherited words also had their citation forms created later: *gou-a* < *gou* "I", *'äe-a* < *'äe* "you" (sg.), *sei-a* < *sei* "who", *tei-a* < *tei* "where". Churchward (1940:159) assumed correctly that here the final *-a* was suffixed later to make them look similar to the other pronouns.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the added vowels in Tongan and Standard Fijian: "Previous studies of the shapes of loanwords ... have shown that the choice of added vowels is not arbitrary, but is dependent primarily on the phonetic nature of the preceding consonant and secondarily on the surrounding stressed vowels. In both Tongan and Fijian, although *i* and *e* account for the majority of the added vowels, with a particular reinforcement of *i* after dentals, there is also a tendency for *u* to occur after labials, *a* after *k*, and *o* after *l*" (Schütz 1976:82).

Sometimes the vowel or diphthong in the last syllable was equated with secondary vowels resulting from Rotuman metathesis and the long form postulated accordingly, though it may not resemble the source word closely.

### 3. *Contacts with neighboring languages*

#### 3.1 *The Age of Discovery*

At first sight one might assume that Rotuma was a lonely island in the vast ocean. But numerous borrowings from Polynesian languages are proof that its inhabitants were at times in close contact with their neighbors.

| Rotuman          | Tongan          | Samoan              | Fijian                     | English                    |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>esu</i>       | <i>lesi</i>     | <i>esi</i>          | <i>weleti</i> <sup>8</sup> | papaya                     |
| <i>koti</i>      | <i>kote</i>     | ( <i>peleue</i> )   | <i>kote</i>                | coat                       |
| <i>laku</i>      | <i>loka</i>     | <i>loka</i>         | <i>loka</i>                | lock                       |
| <i>manua</i>     | <i>manuao</i>   | ( <i>va'a-tau</i> ) | <i>manuā</i>               | man o' war                 |
| <i>maporo</i>    | <i>māpele</i>   | <i>mapu</i>         | <i>māvolo</i>              | marble                     |
| <i>mōr jāene</i> | <i>siaina</i>   | <i>siaina</i>       | <i>tiaina</i>              | orange (lit.: china)       |
| <i>pakete</i>    | ( <i>kane</i> ) | <i>pakete</i>       | <i>vōkete</i>              | bucket                     |
| <i>pō</i>        | <i>pō</i>       | <i>pō</i>           | <i>pō, vō</i>              | chamber-pot                |
| <i>pusi</i>      | <i>pusi</i>     | <i>pusi</i>         | <i>vusi</i>                | pussy-cat                  |
| <i>selō</i>      | —               | —                   | <i>sēlō</i>                | sail ho!                   |
| <i>soti</i>      | <i>sote</i>     | ( <i>'ofutino</i> ) | <i>sote</i>                | shirt                      |
| <i>tagkirī</i>   | <i>tagakalī</i> | <i>tagikerī</i>     | <i>daqarī</i>              | dungaree                   |
| <i>takivai</i>   | <i>takaivai</i> | <i>ta('aivai</i>    | <i>takāwai</i>             | hoop-iron                  |
| <i>tepele</i>    | <i>tēpile</i>   | ( <i>laulau</i> )   | <i>tēpele</i>              | table                      |
| <i>tipota</i>    | <i>tīpota</i>   | <i>tīpoti</i>       | <i>tīvote</i>              | teapot                     |
| <i>ver'ō</i>     | <i>felekō</i>   | —                   | <i>velekō</i>              | steel(-blade) <sup>9</sup> |

Table 4: Early borrowings via neighboring languages from English

Even before Rotuma was ‘discovered’ in 1791, the islanders had heard of the ‘white man’. Many English words did not reach Fijian or Rotuman directly but via an intermediary, often Tongan. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Mariner was told by the Tongan nobleman Kau Moala that they, the Tongans, had shown the Rotumans iron and taught them how to make use of it (Martin 1817;I:399; Gardiner 1898:404).<sup>10</sup> “It was the Tongans, not Europeans, who were the bearers of the names of the many novelties from

<sup>8</sup> Langdon (1975) derived this word from the name of the ship *General Wellesley*, which brought the first pawpaws into the Central Pacific in the second half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>9</sup> From Dutch *bijleken* “small axe” (Geraghty & Tent 1997).

<sup>10</sup> The Hawaiians also knew iron and nails before the arrival of the first whites; it had been carried onto their shores with driftwood (Cook 1784:264, Fornander 1880, 2:168–169, Schütz 1978:40, fn. 5). Spanish galleons had been sailing regularly since the sixteenth century between Manila and Peru.

beyond the horizon. Some were borrowings from English (Table 4) while others were Tongan coinages or loans from other Pacific languages” in Standard Fijian (Geraghty 1989:380), e.g., Rot. *papalagi* and St.Fij. *pālagi* < Tong. *papālagi* “European, white man”; Rot. *ruru si’u* and St.Fij. *lūlulu* < Tong. *lulululu* “shake hands”, Rot. (‘)*ukalele* and St.Fij. *ukalele* < Haw. *ukulele*. I might add Rot. *ukamea* “button” and Sam. *u’amea* “metal” < Tong. *ukamea* “iron”.

Many of the early borrowings are not in common usage any longer. But the Central Pacific languages did not borrow in a unified way from English or Tongan, as the examples in Table 5 show.

| Rotuman                      | Tongan             | Samoan             | Standard Fijian   | Gloss         |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>’ahāi</i>                 | <i>(vaka)</i>      | <i>(va’a)</i>      | <i>(waqa)</i>     | ship (“ahoy”) |
| <i>Mānrē</i>                 | <i>Mōnite</i>      | <i>(Aso gafua)</i> | <i>Moniti</i>     | Monday        |
| <i>pitete</i>                | <i>pateta</i>      | <i>pateta</i>      | <i>pateta</i>     | potato        |
| <i>poatkau</i>               | <i>pulu māsimā</i> | <i>pīsupo</i>      | <i>bulumakau</i>  | corned beef   |
| <i>pota</i>                  | <i>kopa</i>        | <i>’apa-memea</i>  | <i>kava</i>       | sheet metal   |
| <i>Rānrāni</i> <sup>11</sup> | <i>Pilitania</i>   | <i>Peletania</i>   | <i>Bolatagane</i> | Britain       |

Table 5: Differences in borrowing by Central Pacific languages

### 3.2 *The period of the Christian Mission*

Most Rotumans and Fijians nowadays belong to the Methodist church. Its missionaries settled first on Tonga and learnt Tongan as their first Central Pacific language. Later Tongan lay preachers were sent to the surrounding islands to pave the way for white missionaries. In 1839 the London Missionary Society sent a handful of Samoans to Rotuma, two years later Tongans and finally Fijians (Wood 1978). Murray (1888) suspected after visiting Rotuma in April 1845: “It is very likely that many of them may have learned to read from Tongan and Fijian books, and may have acquired a considerable knowledge of these languages from teachers from these groups who had been stationed among them.”

The Catholic church had close connections with Wallis and Futuna. In 1853, the French missionary was driven into exile on Futuna for a few years and he took a few dozen converts with him. Thus Christian first names and the first borrowings in the areas of religion and education were adopted from these languages.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> There is a rare variant *Pertania* with the same meaning.

<sup>12</sup> “Much of the early work of the mission [in Fiji and also Rotuma] was carried out by Tongan catechists. So many early borrowings connected with religion and education are from

### 3.3 *Fijian as a source of loanwords*

The Fijian influence on Rotuma is more recent than the Polynesian one. After discovery by the Europeans, Rotuma became connected more closely with Fiji with regard to administration, churches, and the economy.<sup>13</sup> Since 1854 the Methodist mission employed Fijian catechists on Rotuma.<sup>14</sup>

In 1881 Rotuma was incorporated into the Colony of Fiji. “Because of its close administrative and economic ties with Fiji over the last century, the Rotuman speech community has added a layer of recent borrowings from Fijian; these are mainly in the domain of what might be called ‘modern culture’ but not entirely so” (Pawley 1979:33f).

Recent borrowings were facilitated by the gradual migration of two thirds of the Rotumans to the urban areas of Fiji, and today they are well versed in the local languages. On top of that the island and its administration, churches, and media are an integral part of the Republic of Fiji. On the other hand, only a few loanwords have entered Fijian from Rotuman: *fara* “parade”, *tāroro* “fermented coconut sauce”, *apei* “fine mat”, *fekei* “pudding” (Geraghty, p.c.). In some Fijian dialects, *lotuma* is the term for “coconut grater”.<sup>15</sup>

## 4. *Borrowings from Polynesian languages*

By far the largest set of loanwords in Rotuman came from Polynesian languages. Their large number poses the “classic problem to distinguish which of two groups of words is inherited and which is borrowed from a related language” (Dyen 1956:83) and led authors such as Kern (1887:564) to assume that the Rotuman language belonged to the Polynesian family.

Rotuman and the neighboring languages have gone through different sound changes since their common ancestor language split up. This becomes obvious when we look at the doublets in Table 6,<sup>16</sup> which reflect roots found in loanwords as well as non-borrowed words (cf. also Biggs 1965:390).

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Tongan, or from English via Tongan; [...] Most, however, are ultimately of English origin” (Geraghty 1989:383).

<sup>13</sup> Biggs (1965:411) saw no evidence for a Fijian dialect to have had a major influence on Rotuman before the arrival of the Europeans.

<sup>14</sup> In some early Christian pamphlets, Rotuman [θ] was spelt «c» as in Fijian.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the word *lotuma* in East Futunan, East 'Uvean, Tongan as the term for a taro or yam species. It is conceivable that the Tongans propagated these types and their names.

<sup>16</sup> Milner (1963) noted that doublets often resulted from a large influx of loanwords, also amongst dialects, especially in the region of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, “where extensive cultural and lexical interpenetration can readily be seen to have followed in the wake of both peaceful and warlike contacts.”



| Inherited word            | Gloss                | Borrowing            | Gloss                          | PCP root             |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>afu</i>                | row, line            | <b>'at-motu</b>      | island (group)                 | * <i>?atu</i>        |
| <i>a'(a)-</i>             | causative prefix     | <i>fak(a)-</i>       | causative prefix               | * <i>vaka-</i>       |
| <i>faliga</i>             | ear                  | <b>matua-taliga</b>  | hammer-head                    | * <i>taliga</i>      |
| <i>fapu-i</i>             | mark as taboo        | <b>tapu-aki</b>      | bless                          | * <i>tabu</i>        |
| <i>fa'i</i>               | fetch water          | <i>taki</i>          | serve kava                     | * <i>taki</i>        |
| <i>fea, fe-fe'a</i>       | pale, light          | <i>-tea</i>          | whitish                        | * <i>tea</i>         |
| <i>fiu</i>                | sail away            | <i>titiu</i>         | sail (v)                       | * <i>vi(?u)</i>      |
| <i>fo'a</i>               | land                 | <i>toka</i>          | quiet, still                   | * <i>toka</i>        |
| <i>fui</i>                | necklace             | <i>tui</i>           | bind together                  | * <i>tui</i>         |
| <i>fuli</i>               | deaf                 | <i>tuli</i>          | ear wax                        | * <i>tuli</i>        |
| <i>funu</i>               | cook                 | <b>kai-tunu</b>      | picnic                         | * <i>tunu</i>        |
| <i>gao-gao</i>            | empty, deserted      | <i>mao</i>           | vanish                         |                      |
| <i>hafu</i>               | stone                | <b>fat-manava</b>    | heart                          | * <i>vatu</i>        |
| <i>hagota</i>             | fish (v.)            | <i>figoti</i>        | set fish traps                 | * <i>vagoda</i>      |
| <i>hāle</i>               | part of roof         | <b>tau-fāre</b>      | broom                          | * <i>vale</i>        |
| <i>hata</i>               | shelf                | <i>fat-fata</i>      | elevated bed                   | * <i>vada</i>        |
| <i>hegu</i> <sup>17</sup> | sneeze               | <i>fagfagu</i>       | nose flute                     | * <i>vag(ou)n-</i>   |
| <i>henu</i> <sup>18</sup> | coconut fibre        | <i>penuku</i>        | coconut fibre                  | * <i>penu(?)(iu)</i> |
| <i>hō</i>                 | wring                | <i>fō</i>            | mob up                         | * <i>vō</i>          |
| <i>hohoa</i>              | stink                | <i>poa</i>           | emit smell                     | PPn. * <i>poa</i>    |
| <i>hola</i>               | spread out           | <i>fora</i>          | tell                           | * <i>vola</i>        |
| <i>huli</i>               | turn round           | <i>furi</i>          | turn, shift                    | * <i>vuli</i>        |
| <i>i'a</i>                | fish (n.)            | <b>kau-ika</b>       | shoal of fish                  | * <i>ika</i>         |
| <i>jaliga</i>             | gutter               | <i>sa-sari</i>       | drip, flow                     | PEO * <i>sali</i>    |
| <i>jio</i>                | bottom               | <i>ifo</i>           | hang down                      | * <i>civo</i>        |
| <b>jī'ura</b>             | red dracaena         | <b>tar-kura</b>      | red taro                       | * <i>kura</i>        |
| <i>lagi</i>               | wind                 | <i>ragragi</i>       | windy                          | * <i>lagi</i>        |
| <i>lolo</i>               | coconut milk,<br>oil | <b>tāh-roro</b>      | fermented<br>coconut meat      | * <i>lolo</i>        |
| <i>sasi</i>               | sea(water), salt     | <b>tāh-roro</b>      | idem                           | * <i>tasi</i>        |
| <i>läe</i>                | sail (n.)            | <b>lū sam-rā</b>     | rope of sail                   | * <i>laya</i>        |
| <i>no-nojo</i>            | correct              | <i>to-tonu</i>       | correct                        | * <i>donu</i>        |
| <i>pofo</i>               | small elevation      | <b>ut-poto</b>       | short rafter                   | * <i>boto</i>        |
| <i>ramu</i>               | mosquito             | <b>ta-namu</b>       | mosquito net                   | * <i>ñamu</i>        |
| <i>rir'i</i>              | small (pl.)          | <i>(faua) liliki</i> | part of roof                   | * <i>riki</i>        |
| <i>sasi</i>               | sea(water), salt     | <b>tau-tei</b>       | fishing captain                | * <i>tasi</i>        |
| <i>soa'läe</i>            | tube fish            | <i>sokra'a</i>       | swordfish                      | * <i>sakula(y)a</i>  |
| <b>ua-sä'e</b>            | (of tide) rise       | <i>hua</i>           | wash away                      | * <i>ua</i>          |
| <i>valu</i>               | wave                 | <b>sū-garu</b>       | waterlogged                    | * <i>g'alu</i>       |
| <i>'ā</i>                 | eat                  | <b>kai-tunu</b>      | picnic                         | * <i>kai</i>         |
| <i>'ono</i>               | feel strain          | <i>kokono</i>        | worry                          | * <i>koño</i>        |
| <i>'ufu</i>               | head louse           | <b>vān-kutu</b>      | push fingernails<br>into skull | * <i>kutu</i>        |

Table 6: Doublets<sup>19</sup><sup>17</sup> Raising from \*a to e before Cu is irregular.<sup>18</sup> With unexplained loss of final syllable.

Thanks are due to George Grace and Bruce Biggs for the systematic identification of the indigenous lexicon as opposed to loanwords. Grace (1959:16f) gave a couple of sound correspondences of Rotuman with Polynesian languages (see Table 7) as markers of borrowings: *f*, *ʔ*, *t* instead of *h*, *Ø*, *ʃ* in Rotuman, which correspond to Proto-Polynesian *\*f*, *\*ʔ*, *\*t*. The Polynesian *\*l* corresponds to *l* and *r* in Rotuman, where *r* is said to be the reflex in loanwords, especially when Fijian shows *l* in the same word (Grace 1959:16).

#### 4.1 *Direct and indirect inheritance*

Starting from the hypotheses that (i) the non-English loanwords in Rotuman originate from neighboring languages, and that (ii) Rotuman and these neighboring languages descend from a common proto-language, Biggs (1965) called the indigenous items of the lexicon “directly inherited” and the borrowed ones “indirectly inherited”, because they can ultimately also be traced back to the common proto-language, albeit via another language: “I propose to speak of directly and indirectly inherited words rather than inherited and loanwords in order to emphasise that *all* of the words with etymologies were once part of a language ancestral to Rotuman from a collateral related language after undergoing changes other than those which affected forms which had remained continuously in the Rotuman line” (Biggs 1965:390).

Biggs was able to extend the existing<sup>20</sup> list of criterial phonemes used to identify directly inherited word stems in Rotuman somewhat (1965:391, 412) and labelled the following reflexes of the Proto-East-Oceanic correspondences as diagnostic of direct inheritance: *h* < PEO*\*p*, *f* < *\*(n)t*-, *t* < *\*nd*, *ʔ* < *\*k*, *Ø* < *\*ʔ*, and *r* < *\*d*. The following reflexes in turn were said to be characteristic of indirectly inherited word stems: *f* < *\*p*, *t* < *\*(n)t*, *k* < *\*k*, *r* < *\*l* and *\*r*, *ʔ* < *\*ʔ* and *h/Ø* < *\*(n)s*.

Biggs (1965:389) had also claimed that “... no diagnostic member of one set co-occurs with diagnostic members of the other set”; although, e.g., *f* < *\*t* (direct) and *k* < *\*k* (indirect) can occur in one word: *kukufi* “net for casting”, related to PNP *\*kukuti* “handnet for fishing”; *kifo* “fish species *Siganus*” next to PPN. *\*kito*; or *h* < *\*p* (direct) and *ʔ* < *\*ʔ* (indirect) in *'uhi*<sup>21</sup> “yams” < POc. *\*qupi* (cf. Pawley 1979:42).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the pair *säke* “jut out” and *häke* “turn aside” < POc. *\*nsake*.

<sup>20</sup> Without mentioning Codrington’s and Grace’s ground-breaking work, Pawley (1979:33) stated: “Only since 1965 has it been possible to determine, for as much as half of the morphemes of Rotuman, whether they are borrowed from Polynesian or not.”

<sup>21</sup> In this case we have an “intrusive glottal stop”.

Our knowledge of the sound correspondences within Proto-East-Oceanic and Proto-Central-Polynesian has since been greatly enhanced as shown below in Table 7 (after Geraghty 1986, 1990:54; Pawley 1996:89):

There is no single phoneme in Rotuman which could serve as evidence whether a word is borrowed or directly inherited, for all occur in both strata. Even though /j/ is not part of the phoneme inventory of any Polynesian language, its occurrence in a root is no guarantee that the item was not borrowed: *fak-peje* “recite history of kava” < PNP \**pese* “sing”.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the following words with *j* (contracted from *s + t*) are borrowed as well: *majau*<sup>23</sup> < Sam. *mātaisau* “craftsman, carpenter”, *majila* < Tong. *masitala* (via \**mais + tala*?); cf. St.Fij. *masiulatoa* “tree species”.

If a word contains two of the above criterial phonemes, or if it contains one and has cognates in other languages for comparison, we can safely identify it as either directly or indirectly inherited. This applies to roughly half of the Rotuman lexicon (Pawley 1979:33). Loanwords can be recognised as such if they entered the language after the consonant changes typical for Rotuman were completed (except \**t* > [θ] > *f* which was still in progress in the nineteenth century).

#### 4.2 *Several Polynesian strata in Rotuman*

Churchward (1938:79–88, 1940:159) had discovered two different Polynesian strata in Rotuman, an early one from Samoa and a later one from Tonga. He assigned about four dozen examples to them, unfortunately without giving his rationale behind it. His groupings were often, but not always, correct. He incorrectly regarded the directly inherited forms *āfe* “liver”, *-afu* “towards”, *hefu* “star”, *huli* “turn something round”, *rako* “learn”, *riri’i* “small (PL)”, *roa* “long”, *sasi* “ocean”, *sunu* “hot”, *ufa* “inland”, *vāve* “quick”, and *’ona* “bitter” as Polynesian loanwords. On the other hand, he thought that the loanwords *fesi’a* “hate”, *mane’a* “play”, *mā’usu* “grass”, *piko* “lazy”, and *’inosa* “marry” were directly inherited, and that *kainaga* “kinship, relation” was a Melanesian instead of a Polynesian borrowing (cf. Pawley 1996:86).

Biggs (1965:411f) recognized two different strata of Polynesian loanwords in Rotuman as well. He identified their source as either (i) Samoa-Futuna or (ii) Tonga-’Uvea-Niuafou. He identified the two strata by the different reflexes of some phoneme correspondences which are almost identical with the differences between Tongan and Samoan. By using the same method he could show furthermore that other Polynesian islands had been

<sup>22</sup> Trouillet (MS.) wrote that this kind of recitation was brought to Rotuma together with kava.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *masau* in a Christian booklet (“Bureaki ....”) from 1850.

settled several times such as the Outliers Rennell and Anuta in the Solomon Islands and Rurutu in the Austral archipelago (Biggs 1980:115).

According to Biggs (1965:412) an item was borrowed from the language of Tonga, 'Uvea, or Niuafou if it contained an *h* (< PEO *\*(n)s*) or *ʔ* (< PEO *\*ʔ*). But if the reflex of PEO *\*(n)s* is Rot. *s* or  $\emptyset$ , the borrowing originated from Samoa or Futuna. I summarize this in Tables 7 and 8 (expanded from Biggs 1965:389, 412).

|                  |   |   |     |   |   |   |       |     |                |
|------------------|---|---|-----|---|---|---|-------|-----|----------------|
| Rotuman direct   | h | f | t   | l | ʔ | ∅ | s     | j   | v              |
| Rotuman indirect | f | t | r   | r | k | ʔ | h,s,∅ | t,s | g              |
| PPolynesian      | f | t | r,l | l | k | ʔ | h,s   | t,s | g              |
| PFijian          | v | t | dr  | l | k | ∅ | c,z   | s   | g <sup>w</sup> |
| PCen.Pacific     | v | t | dr  | l | k | ʔ | c,z   | j   | g <sup>w</sup> |
| PEast Oceanic    | p | t | nd  | l | k | ʔ | s,ns  | j   | m <sup>w</sup> |

Table 7: Criterial phonemes for directly and indirectly inherited words. For the boxed segments, see Table 8.

|  | r | k  | ʔ               | h, s | h, ∅ |
|--|---|----|-----------------|------|------|
| Rot. indir.<Tong., E'Uv., Niuaf.         | ∅ | k  | ʔ               | h    | h    |
| Rotuman indirect < Sam., EFut.           | r | k? | ∅               | s    | ∅    |
| PPolynesian                              | r | k  | ʔ               | s    | h    |
| Tongan                                   | ∅ | k  | ʔ               | h    | h    |
| Samoan                                   | l | ʔ  | ∅               | s    | ∅    |
| E.'Uvean direct                          | l | k  | ʔ <sup>24</sup> | h    | ∅    |
| E.'Uvean indirect < Tongan <sup>25</sup> | ∅ | k  | ʔ               | h    | h    |
| Anutan direct                            | r | k  | ∅               |      | ∅    |
| Anutan indirect < E.'Uvean <sup>26</sup> | ∅ | k  | ∅               |      | ∅    |

Table 8: Criterial phonemes serving to distinguish the sources of Polynesian borrowings in Rotuman

Why didn't Biggs call all differences between Samoan and Tongan criterial phonemes, i.e. also the reflexes of PPn. *\*k* in Sam. *ʔ* and Tong. *k* and of PPn. *\*r* in Sam. *l* and Tong.  $\emptyset$ ? For one thing, Biggs (1965:385) had found

<sup>24</sup> "Elbert (1953) ... surmised, correctly, that his sources were in error in their marking of East 'Uvean glottal stop, which is always retained as such in East 'Uvean and is not sometimes lost, as dictionary sources would indicate" (Biggs 1980:117). The Tongic languages are not the only ones in the Central Pacific to have preserved Proto East Oceanic *\*ʔ*, and so *\*ʔ* must also be reconstructed for Proto Nuclear Polynesian.

<sup>25</sup> Following Biggs (1980:125).

<sup>26</sup> Following Biggs (1980:125).

no indirect reflexes of *\*k* as *ʔ* in Rotuman (e.g., in *'oti* and *'atfara*, see Section 4.4), and also the relationship of Rot. *r* and *l* to PPn. *\*r*, *\*l* was not clear at that time. Both liquids, PPn. *\*r* and *\*l*, were borrowed as Rot. *r*.

Also many Polynesian loanwords in Samoa-Futuna have *r* instead of *l* (Geraghty 1983:102, 1989; Schütz 1978). Polynesian loanwords with *l* are rare in Rotuman (they constitute just 6% of all borrowings containing a liquid). The occurrence of *l* in comparison to *r* increases to 20% in words which do contain no criterial phonemes, and whose origin thus cannot be determined unequivocally as direct or indirect. Should the loanwords with *l* be exceptions, then the occurrence of *l* could also constitute a criterion for identification of directly inherited roots. Biggs (1965:412) tended to regard words with *l* as directly inherited, whereas I take Rot. *r*, when it corresponds to St.Fij. *l* and Pn. *l/* to be an indication of borrowing (cf. Grace 1959:16).

### 4.3 Borrowings from Tongic

The languages of Tonga and Niue make up the Tongic group. A few sound changes set them apart from the other Polynesian languages; though the Nuclear Polynesian language of (East) 'Uvea is another source for Tongic loanwords because it has borrowed more than half of its lexicon from Tongan (Biggs 1980:123) or shows even 85% agreement in its lexicon with Tongan (Elbert 1953). Biggs stated two criteria for loanwords from Tongic: Rot. *h* < Tong. *h* and Rot. *ʔ* < Tong. *ʔ*.

#### 4.3.1 Rot. *h* and Tong. *h*

4.3.1.1 Rot. *h* < Tong. *h* (< PPn. *\*s*). Loanwords with Rot. *h* < Tong. *h* are: *hako* “climb (tree)” < Tong. *hako* “(tree) high”, *hanono* < Tong. *hahano* “ponder” (cf. E'Uv. *hahanu* “complain”), *he'aki* < Tong. *he'aki* “call out” (E'Uv. *heaki*), *hiki* < Tong. *hiki* “die (euph.)”, *lelhea* (by assimilation from *\*telhea*) “sea slug” < Tong. *telehea*, *täh-roro* “coconut meat fermented in salt water” < Tong. *tahi* “sea water” (E'Uv. *tai*) + *lolo* “coconut cream”; perhaps also *hua* “(sea) wash away” < Tong. *hu'a* (E'Uv. *huhu'a*, Sam. *sua*) “(tide) rise”.

4.3.1.2 Rot. *h* < Tong., E'Uv. *h* (< PPn. *\*h*). The case is simple for loanwords with *h* < Tong. *h*, which reflects PPn. *\*h*, since it was deleted in Nuclear Polynesian languages: *fihu* < Tong., E'Uv. *fihu* (cf. Tik. *fiu*) “fine mat”.

4.3.1.3 Rot. *h* < Tong., E'Uv. *h* (< PPn. *\*h* or *\*s*). The following words were borrowed from Tongan or East 'Uvean (which in turn had borrowed massively from Tongan): *ahiohio* < Tong. *'ahiohio* or E'Uv. *'āhiohio* (Sam. *āsiosio*) “whirlwind”, *haha-i* < Tong., E'Uv. *haha* (Sam. *sasa*) “thrash”, *he* < Tong.,

E'Uv. *he* “indefinite article”, *hiki* < Tong., E'Uv. *hiki* (Sam. *si'i*) “lift”, *hiko* < Tong., E'Uv. *hiko* (EFu. *siko*) “juggle”, *hoi* < Tong., E'Uv. *hoi* (Sam. *soi*) “bitter yam”, *huni* < Tong. *huni* “shrub *Phaleria*” or E'Uv. *huni* “shrub *Drymi-spermum burnett*” (Sam. *sun*), *maho'a* “yam species” < Tong. *māhoa'a* or E'Uv. *maho'a* “arrow root *Tacca*” (Sam. *ufi-masoā*), *puh-raki* “bubble” < Tong., E'Uv. *puhi* “blow”, *tohi* < Tong., E'Uv. *tohi* “mark”.

4.3.1.4 *Rot. h* < E'Uv. *h* (< PPn. \**s* or \**h*). In four instances of Rot. *h* I was unable to find a corresponding source word with *h* in Tongan, but there was one in E'Uv.: *hahau* “weave” < E'Uv. *hahau* “crossed, interlaced”, *ha'a* < E'Uv. *ha'a* (EFu. *sa'a*, Sam. *sā*) “taboo; bad”, *ha'u* < E'Uv. *ha'u* (Tong. *a'u*, Sam. *sau*) “reach”, *naha'u* < E'Uv. *nahau* “spear thrower”, *tepuhi*<sup>27</sup> < E'Uv. *puhi* (Sam. *pusi*) “moray eel”.

4.3.2 *Rot. s* and *Tong. h*. But in over three quarters of the loanwords with Rot. *s*, it corresponds to Tong. or E'Uv. *h*. Pawley (1979:9) expected a loanword “from TON [Tongan], NIU [Niufo'ou], or (if within the last three or four centuries) EUV [East 'Uvean]” to show an *h* instead of an *s*.<sup>28</sup> But there are cases where other factors indicate that it is indeed a loan from a Tongic source, either because another criterial phoneme such as *ʔ* < Tong. *ʔ* is present, or because the closest phonetic and semantic resemblance is with Tongan, because there are no source words in non-Tongic languages, or, in case of PPn. \**h*, because the reflex was  $\emptyset$  in Nuclear Polynesian languages.<sup>29</sup>

The variation in the reflexes in loanwords (*s* or *h*, *r* or *l*) may be due to the fact that not all borrowings entered the language at the same time (cf. Schütz 1970 and Crowley 1993:121). The realization of Tong., E'Uv. *h* as *s* in Rotuman may be an example of ‘etymological borrowing’: Samoans borrowed Tong. *hamala* “hammer” (< Eng.) as *sāmala*, because they were aware that Tong. *h* corresponded to *s* in their language (Geraghty 1983:102). I assume a similar case for the Rotumans.

If this kind of borrowing happened in Samoan at the time of the first European contacts, I take it as an indication that etymological borrowings are more recent than the others—since people need to be well acquainted with the language they borrow from (and the sound correspondences with their

<sup>27</sup> With fossilized Polynesian article *te*.

<sup>28</sup> “According to the usual assumptions, Proto Polynesian \**h* should yield Rotuman *h* or zero in a Polynesian loan (*h* if a Tongic language is the source, zero if a Nuclear Polynesian language)” (Pawley 1979:31, 1996:107f.).

<sup>29</sup> “The correspondences of Tongan *h* in Rotuman are not established with certainty. It is ... probable that Rotuman *s* (or possibly Rotuman *j*) corresponds regularly with Tongan *h* where Samoan shows loss” (Grace 1959:16).

own). This means for Rotuman that loanwords with Rot. *h* < Tong., E'Uv. *h* were borrowed earlier into Rotuman than those with *s* < Tong., E'Uv. *h*. Geraghty (1995a:10) believed the opposite to be true for Fijian borrowings in Tongan, since the Tongans were at an earlier date (before the eighteenth century) “more aware of regular correspondences between Tongan and Fijian”.

| Rotuman  | Tongan            | East 'Uvean         | Samoa                          | Gloss                             |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. <i>s</i> < Tong., <i>h</i> (< PPn. * <i>s</i> )       |                   |                     |                                |                                   |
| <i>a'soko</i>  | <i>faka-hoko</i>  | <i>fakahoko</i>     | —                              | carry out                         |
| <i>Fatafesi</i>  | <i>Fatafahi</i>   | —                   | —                              | (chiefly title)                   |
| <i>fesi</i>  | <i>fehi</i>       | —                   | Tik. <i>fesi</i> <sup>30</sup> | tree species <i>Intsia bijuga</i> |
| <i>fesi'a</i>  | <i>fehi-'a</i>    | <i>fehia, fesia</i> | <i>ve-vesi</i>                 | hate                              |
| <i>filo-si</i>   | <i>filo-hi</i>    | <i>filohi</i>       | <i>filo</i>                    | bind together                     |
| <i>kekesi</i>  | <i>kekeho</i>     | ( <i>kahi</i> )     | ( <i>'asi</i> )                | shell fish sp.                    |
| <i>masaglei</i>  | <i>māhaga lei</i> | <i>māhaga</i>       | <i>māsaga</i>                  | mixed twin                        |
| <i>sa'a-</i>   | <i>ha'a-</i>      | ( <i>ha'a</i> )     | <i>sā</i>                      | group                             |
| <i>soro</i>  | <i>holo</i>       | —                   | —                              | walk back and forth               |
| <i>sorofa</i>  | <i>holofa</i>     | <i>holofa</i>       | —                              | extend branches                   |
| <i>soro'i'āk mafa</i>                                    | <i>mata-olo'i</i> | —                   | —                              | young shark (lit.: rub eyes)      |
| <i>sosa'a</i>  | <i>hoha'a</i>     | <i>hoha'a</i>       | <i>soesā</i>                   | shudder                           |
| <i>sū</i>  | <i>hūhū</i>       | <i>hūhū</i>         | —                              | soaked                            |
| <i>sukuni</i>  | <i>hunuki</i>     | <i>hunuki</i>       | —                              | piece                             |
| <i>sūsloki</i>   | <i>hihiloku</i>   | <i>hihiloku</i>     | —                              | remove meat from green coconut    |
| <i>su'i</i>  | <i>hu'i</i>       | <i>hu'i</i>         | <i>sui</i>                     | dilute                            |
| <i>'inosa</i>  | <i>'unoho</i>     | —                   | —                              | married couple                    |
| b. <i>s</i> < Tong., E'Uv. <i>h</i> (< PPn. * <i>h</i> ) |                   |                     |                                |                                   |
| <i>kā'asa</i> <sup>31</sup>                              | <i>kou'ahe</i>    | <i>kau'ahe</i>      | <i>'auvae</i>                  | cheek, jaw bone                   |
| <i>sigoa</i>   | <i>higoa</i>      | <i>higoa</i>        | <i>igoa</i>                    | name(sake)                        |
| <i>soge</i>  | <i>hoge</i>       | <i>hoge</i>         | <i>oge</i>                     | starve                            |

Table 9: Loanwords with *s* < Tong. *h* (< PPn. \**s* or \**h*)

4.3.3. The second piece of evidence for borrowings from Tongic is the reflex of PPn. \**r*. It was lost in Tongan and Niuafou'ou, but preserved in Nuclear Polynesian languages. That is why the following loanwords probably come from Tongan: *faniki* “sea urchin” < Tong., E'Uv. *vana*<sup>32</sup> “sea urchin”+ *iki* “small” (< PPn. \*(*ri*)*riki*), *koa* < Tong., E'Uv. *koa* (Sam. '*ola*) “dregs”, *ō* “go

<sup>30</sup> PPn. \**fes* > Sam., EFu. *ves* (Biggs MS.).

<sup>31</sup> *kā'asa* < *ka'u* + *asa* < PPn. \**kauqahe* “cheek, chin, jawbone” (-a < -e is irregular).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *fan-kina* “sea urchin *Echinus*” and the directly inherited *vāevāe* “black sea urchin” < PCP \**waña* “sea urchin”.

(PL)” < Tong., E’Uv.  $\bar{o}$  (< PPn. \* $r\bar{o}$ ) and  $\bar{u}$  “shelter, rest” < Tong., E’Uv.  $\bar{u}$  (< PPn. \* $ruru$ , St.Fij.  $r\bar{u}\bar{u}$ ).

4.3.4. The third marker for borrowings from Tongic is  $\int$ , since Tongan is one of the few Oceanic languages to preserve original \* $q$  as  $\int$ . This phoneme can, at least in intervocalic position, be regarded as a marker of Tongan loans.

| Rotuman          | Tongan                | E. ’Uvean            | Samoan            | Gloss          |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>fakvä’e</i>   | <i>fakava’e</i>       | <i>fakava’e</i>      | <i>fa’avae</i>    | lay foundation |
| <i>fa’u</i>      | <i>fa’u</i>           | <i>fa’u</i>          | <i>fau</i>        | bind           |
| <i>fita’a</i>    | <i>fite-fita’a</i>    | <i>fita’a</i>        | <i>fita</i>       | tiresome       |
| <i>huag fo’e</i> | <i>loto-fo’i</i>      | -                    | .                 | timid          |
| <i>fo’ou</i>     | <i>fo’ou</i>          | <i>fo’ou</i>         | <i>fou</i>        | new            |
| <i>itu’u</i>     | <i>eitu’u</i> “piece“ | <i>eitu’u</i> “part“ | <i>itü</i> “side“ | district       |
| <i>u’e</i>       | <i>ue’i</i>           | <i>ue(i)</i>         | -                 | exert          |

Table 10: Loanwords with  $\int$  < Tong., E’Uv., EFu.  $\int$   
( $\emptyset$  in most Nuclear Polynesian languages)

4.3.5. Tongan shows two further sound changes compared to PPn., which are reflected only in a few loans in Rotuman.

4.3.5.1 *Tong. t > s /\_\_i*. The first is the palatalization of  $t$  before  $i$ . In the first writings on Tongan 200 years ago, Cook and William Anderson, de la Billardiere, and Mariner spelt «chi», «ji», or «tshi» [tʃi] for /ti/ which is nowadays pronounced [si]. The palatalization of PPn. \* $t$  before  $i$  is common in Western Polynesia and the Lau dialects of Fiji and most advanced in Tongan, Niufo’ouan and East ’Uvean. According to Tsukamoto (1994:36) this process began in East ’Uvean rather than in Tongan where it started around the turn of the nineteenth century.

Rot. *jipera* [tʃipera] < Tong. *sipela* is a sole witness of the interim stage of the Tongan sound change still preserved in a loanword; *masi*<sub>4</sub> < Tong. *masi* is a recent borrowing whereas the other examples show the original sound pattern.<sup>33</sup>

4.3.5.2. The second phonological innovation of Tongan did not affect the loanwords, I think: This was the partial regressive assimilation of /a/ before

<sup>33</sup> “Alongside Rot. *futi* “banana” we find Tong. *fusi* [!] EFu., Sam. *futi* “banana” < PAn. \**pun(t)u*. The presence of Rot. *f* marks this as a borrowing. However, the presence of Rot. *t*, rather than Rot. *s* or *j*, seems to point to Samoan as a somewhat more likely source than any of the other languages. There are several examples of this correspondence” (Grace 1959:17).



high vowels.<sup>34</sup> Only *mounu* “bait” resembles the assimilated forms in Tongan, but it might as well be spelt *māunu* and pronounced almost the same way.

| Rotuman                                      | Tongan            | E. 'Uvean       | Samoan                     | St.Fijian       | Gloss                     |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| a. Rot. <i>t</i> < PPn. <i>t</i> (Tong. [s]) |                   |                 |                            |                 |                           |
| <i>tiäre</i> <sup>35</sup>                   | <i>siale</i>      | <i>siale</i>    | <i>tiale</i>               | <i>tiale</i>    | gardenia                  |
| <i>tifa</i>                                  | <i>sifa</i>       | <i>sifa</i>     | <i>tifa</i>                | <i>civa</i>     | oyster                    |
| <i>tiftifi</i>                               | <i>sifisifi</i>   | —               | <i>tiftifi</i>             | <i>tivitivi</i> | butterflyfish             |
| <i>tika</i>                                  | <i>sika</i>       | <i>sika</i>     | <i>tagā-ti'a</i>           | <i>tiqa</i>     | dart throwing             |
| <i>timu</i>                                  | <i>jimu</i>       | <i>simu</i>     | <i>timu</i>                | —               | rain                      |
| <i>tinanamu</i>                              | <i>sina-amanu</i> | <i>sigamanu</i> | —                          | <i>tina-</i>    | mother animal             |
| <i>tinrau</i>                                | <i>sinilau</i>    | —               | (Maori<br><i>tinirau</i> ) | —               | legendary prince          |
| <i>tipa</i>                                  | <i>sipa</i>       | <i>sipa</i>     | <i>tipa</i>                | ( <i>cepa</i> ) | stagger                   |
| b. Rot. <i>j</i> < Tong. [t] (today [s])     |                   |                 |                            |                 |                           |
| <i>jipera</i>                                | <i>sipela</i>     | —               | <i>sipela</i>              | <i>sipela</i>   | spelling                  |
| c. Rot. <i>s</i> < Tong. <i>s</i>            |                   |                 |                            |                 |                           |
| <i>masi</i>                                  | <i>masi</i>       | <i>masi</i>     | <i>mati</i>                | —               | tree species <i>Ficus</i> |

Table 11: Loanwords with Rot. or NPn. *t* and Tong. *s*

| Rotuman          | Tongan                | East 'Uvean  | Samoan          | Gloss                             |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>karkaru</i>   | <i>kolukalu</i>       |              | <i>kalukalu</i> | jellyfish                         |
| <i>matua'rau</i> | <i>motulau</i>        |              | <i>matūlau</i>  | fish species<br><i>Parupeneus</i> |
| <i>mounu</i>     | <i>mounu</i>          | <i>mounu</i> | <i>māunu</i>    | bait                              |
| <i>telua</i>     | <i>luo</i>            | <i>luo</i>   | <i>lua</i>      | hole (in ground)                  |
| <i>'aitu</i>     | <i>'eitu-matupu'a</i> |              | <i>aitu</i>     | God                               |
| <i>'atua</i>     | <i>'otua</i>          |              | <i>'atua</i>    | ghost                             |

Table 12: Loanwords without Tongan ablaut *o~e < \*a*

| Rotuman        | St.Fijian      | Tongan                     | Gloss              |
|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>puaka</i>   | <i>vuaka</i>   | <i>puaka</i>               | pig                |
| <i>talanoa</i> | <i>talanoa</i> | <i>talanoa</i>             | tale               |
| <i>tano'a</i>  | <i>tānoa</i>   | <i>tānoa</i>               | carved kava bowl   |
| <i>votea</i>   | <i>vōtea</i>   | <i>pōtea</i> <sup>36</sup> | coconut oil lotion |

Table 13: Tongan loanwords in Rotuman and Fijian from prehistoric times (after Geraghty 1989:380,383 and Codrington 1885:86)

<sup>34</sup> “This type of assimilation is not common in Niue and Niuafu'ou, even less so in 'Uvea and very rare in Futuna” (Tsukamoto 1994:34). In Anutan there are some loanwords with *o* from PPn. *\*a* which is otherwise restricted to Tongic languages (Biggs 1980:121).

<sup>35</sup> Spelt *tiere* by Churchward.

<sup>36</sup> Perhaps from Spanish *botella* “bottle” (Langdon 1975).

The Tongan words in Table 12 were written by Mariner (1827) still in their unassimilated form. Thus we can conclude that assimilation must have happened later and that Tongan loanwords had entered Rotuman before this process (Tsukamoto 1994:34).

Tongic borrowings in Central Pacific languages can be assigned to three periods: (i) the so-called prehistoric period (see Table 13); (ii) the early or pre-Christian era, also the time of the first contacts with Europeans (see Table 4); and (iii) the early mission era with catechists from Tonga.

#### 4.4 Borrowings from other Polynesian languages

Biggs gave Rot. *s* or  $\emptyset$  from PPn. *\*h* < PEO *\*(n)s* as indicators of Samoic<sup>37</sup> loans in Rotuman. PPn. *\*s* and *\*h* merged in Tongan as *h*, in the Nuclear Polynesian languages *\*h* was lost and *\*s* preserved. Biggs listed Rot. *s* < PPn. *\*h* as another criterial phoneme, but from the foregoing it can be seen that Rot. *s* also occurs in loanwords from Tongic.

##### 4.4.1 Rot. $\emptyset$ < PPn. *\*h*. See Table 14.

| Rotuman                    | Samoan              | East 'Uvean      | Tongan          | Gloss     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| <i>aga</i>                 | <i>aga</i>          | <i>aga</i>       | <i>haga</i>     | facing    |
| <i>aga</i>                 | <i>aga</i>          | <i>haga</i>      | <i>haga</i>     | span      |
| <i>agai</i>                | —                   | <i>agai</i>      | <i>hagai</i>    | opposite  |
| <i>fui</i>                 | <i>fui</i>          | <i>fuhi</i>      | <i>fuhi</i>     | cluster   |
| <i>ifo</i>                 | <i>ifo</i>          | <i>ifo, hifo</i> | <i>hifo</i>     | downwards |
| <i>väe</i> <sup>38</sup>   | <i>vae</i>          | <i>vae, vahe</i> | <i>vahe</i>     | divide    |
| <i>'omoe</i> <sup>39</sup> | (EFu. <i>omoe</i> ) | <i>omoe</i>      | <i>'ohomohe</i> | supper    |

Table 14: Rot.  $\emptyset$  < Sam.  $\emptyset$  (PPn. *\*h*, Tong. *h*)

4.4.2 Rot. *r* < PNP *\*l* (< PPn. *\*r*). There are further clues for borrowings from Samoic or Nuclear Polynesian languages, e.g., the reflex of PPn. *\*r* as Rot. *r*.

As this proto-phoneme disappeared in Tongan and was preserved in Nuclear Polynesian languages (for instance in Sam. as *l*), it can be taken as a sign that any item containing it was borrowed from a Nuclear Polynesian language.

<sup>37</sup> This includes all Polynesian and Tongic languages except the Eastern Polynesian languages.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Grace (1959:16): "There are ... cases [of borrowing in Rotuman] where Tongan seems not to be the most likely source. E.g. Rot. *väe*, Sam., EFu. *vae*, Tong. *vahe* "to divide". ... It is possible that this is a shared retention." Cf. Rot. *vajäe* "make one's way through undergrowth".

<sup>39</sup> Cf. directly inherited *mose* "sleep" (St.Fij. *moce*, Tong. *mohe*, Sam. *moe*). "Rotuman *mose* is unlikely to be a borrowing from Polynesian. In a borrowing from Samoan or any other Nuclear Polynesian language except 'Uvean, we would expect to find Rotuman *\*\*moe*" (Pawley 1996:99).

| Rotuman            | Samoan                   | East 'Uvean       | Tongan          | Gloss                       |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>farkai</i>      | (Tuv. <i>fala kati</i> ) | <i>fā</i>         | <i>fā</i>       | pandanus spec.              |
| <i>firo</i>        | <i>filo</i>              | <i>fio</i>        | <i>fio</i>      | mix                         |
| <i>mauri</i>       | <i>mauli</i>             | <i>ma'uli</i>     | <i>mo'ui</i>    | live; soul                  |
| <i>muri</i>        | <i>muli</i>              | <i>muli</i>       | <i>mui</i>      | behind                      |
| <i>muri</i>        | <i>muli</i>              | <i>mui</i>        | <i>mui</i>      | (of plant, animal)<br>young |
| <i>poraki</i>      | <i>polo-a'i</i>          | <i>poapoaki</i>   | <i>pō-poaki</i> | order                       |
| <i>rō</i>          | <i>lō</i>                | <i>o</i>          | <i>ō</i>        | fish spec. <i>Siganus</i>   |
| <i>tak-firi</i>    | <i>fili</i>              | <i>fī</i>         | <i>fī</i>       | plait                       |
| <i>tiro</i>        | <i>tilo-tilo</i>         | <i>sio</i>        | <i>sio</i>      | gaze                        |
| <i>tarau</i>       | <i>selau</i>             | <i>te-au</i>      | <i>te-au</i>    | hundred                     |
| <i>tu'rua</i>      | —                        | —                 | <i>tu'oua</i>   | fine mat                    |
| <i>tu'rua pogi</i> | <i>tūlua o pō</i>        | <i>tu'ulua po</i> | <i>tu'ua-pō</i> | midnight                    |
| <i>'ariki</i>      | <i>ali'i</i>             | <i>'aliki</i>     | <i>'eiki</i>    | chief                       |

Table 15: Loanwords with Rot. *r* < PNP \**l* (Tong.  $\emptyset$ , PPn. \**r*)

4.4.3. A third sound change is peculiar to Samoan, setting it apart from all other west Polynesian languages except Luangiua: PCP, PPn., PNP \**k* >  $\text{ʔ}$ .<sup>40</sup> Biggs had found no loanwords in Rot. which contained this sound change. I spotted three loanwords with Rot.  $\text{ʔ}$  < Sam.  $\text{ʔ}$ : one is *'oti* < Sam. *'oti* “goat”, which in turn was borrowed from Tong. *kosi* (originally \**koti*, according to Cain (1986:131)) and ultimately from English. It is therefore much more recent than the other borrowings from Samoan or Nuclear Polynesian. The sound change of PNP \**k* >  $\text{ʔ}$  in Samoan had been completed before Captain Cook had brought the first goats to the Central Pacific on his third voyage, and before William Anderson collected his Samoan wordlist in 1777 (Hovdhaugen 1986:316). The other two loans are *mata'u* “take care” < Sam. *mata'u* (cf. Niue *matakutaku* and St.Fij. *mataku*-) “be afraid” and *'at-fara*<sup>41</sup> “bride’s basket” < Sam. *'ato* (cf. Tong., St.Fij. *kato*, Rot. (direct) *'afo*) “basket”.

4.4.4. Furthermore I would like to present some loanwords whose phonetic, morphological, or semantic agreement with their Samoan equivalents is so convincing that I regard Samoan as their donor language, although there are no criterial phonemes present.

<sup>40</sup> The same criterion is used in Gilbertese to identify Samoan loanwords: certain words can only be borrowed from Samoan because they reflect PPn. \**k* as  $\emptyset$ . This is typical for a language without phonemic glottal stop when it borrows from another language with glottal stop, e.g., Gilb. -ura “red” < Sam. *'ula*, Gilb. *ie* “sail” < Sam. *'ie*” (Geraghty 1994b:243).

<sup>41</sup> With *fara* “beg”.

| Rotuman            | Samoan                                   | Tongan                                | Gloss  |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>arag rima</i>   | <i>alagālima</i>                         | <i>alaga</i> “thigh“                  | front leg  |
| <i>esu</i>         | <i>esi</i>                               | <i>lesi</i>                           | pawpaw   |
| <i>fatmanava</i>   | <i>fatu-manava</i>                       | —                                     | heart <sup>42</sup>                                      |
| <i>feturi</i>      | <i>tau-fetuli</i> (E’Uv. <i>fetuli</i> ) | <i>tuli</i>                           | chase, hunt  |
| <i>foa</i>         | <i>foa-ga</i>                            | <i>fu’o-fu’a-ga</i>                   | grater   |
| <i>mamrava</i>     | <i>māmālava</i>                          | <i>mā’ama’alava</i>                   | tree sp.   |
| <i>manāi</i>       | <i>manai</i> (< Eng.)                    | <i>mana</i>                           | manna  |
| <i>mānsina</i>     | <i>manusina</i>                          | —                                     | white sea bird   |
| <i>parisamo</i>    | <i>palusami</i>                          | —                                     | dish made of taro leaves,<br>coconut oil, and salt water |
| <i>rau sersere</i> | <i>lauselesele</i>                       | <i>mahele-hele</i>                    | grass species  |
| <i>sope</i>        | <i>sope</i>                              | <i>tope</i> (St.Fij.<br><i>tobe</i> ) | strand of hair   |
| <i>ture-i</i>      | <i>tūle-i</i>                            | <i>tule-kina</i>                      | push   |

Table 16: Loanwords from Samoan

4.4.5. The same reasoning applies to the assumption that the words displayed in Table 17 (below) were borrowed from one of the neighboring Nuclear Polynesian languages:<sup>43</sup>

The source languages of about half of the Polynesian loanwords in Rotuman can be identified. Approximately 35% seem to have been borrowed directly from Tongan or indirectly via East ’Uvea or North Futuna, which were heavily influenced by Tongan themselves. About 15% come from Nuclear Polynesian languages, mainly Samoan.<sup>44</sup>

Many Polynesian loanwords in Rotuman cannot be assigned to a specific source language. It is possible that they entered Rotuman at a time when the Polynesian languages had not yet diversified to the stage where they are at present, or that they were borrowed from a Polynesian language which does not exist any more. Geraghty (1994a:70) suspected something similar for Polynesian loans in Kiribati: “There are suggestions (e.g., *pareaka*, *paretama*, *tapiro*) of loans from a Polynesian source that is no longer extant.”

<sup>42</sup> Sam. *fatu-manava*, the source word, is morphologically analysable as *fatu* “stone“ + *mānava* “breath“, but *fatmanava* in Rotuman is not. Here PCP \**fatu* has become *hāfu*, and \**manava* > *māeva*.

<sup>43</sup> Other loanwords from Nuclear Polynesian languages are *kapui*, *kasa*, *ko’iro*, *kohmū*, *kukū*, *kumu*, *manatu*, *mane’a*, *manoko*, *marai*, *marō*, *moi*, *muna*, *nekneke*, *ota*, *pati*, *poa*, *popore*, *poraki*, *potpotu*, *puakvai*, *repu*, *tiro*, *togi*, *vak’atua*, *veve*, *’auma’i*, *’ufa*.

<sup>44</sup> Only two originate from an East Polynesian language: *perehū* “turkey” and *piriki* “outhouse” were borrowed in 1827 when two ships of the Hawaiian nobleman Boki stopped in Rotuma and brought the first turkey there (Trouillet MS.).

| Loanword           | WPn. source word                         | Meaning                    | PPn. etymon                                    |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| <i>apei-'āki</i>   | EFu. <i>apāpai</i>                       | carry on hands             | * ( <i>sh</i> ) <i>apai</i>                    |
| <i>fau</i>         | EFu. <i>fau</i>                          | cheek                      | Sam. <i>'alā-fau</i> ,<br>Tuv. <i>kalā-fau</i> |
| <i>fürmaria</i>    | EFu. <i>fulufulumalie</i>                | comfortable                | * <i>mālie</i>                                 |
| <i>ifiifi</i>      | EFu. <i>ifiifi</i>                       | kidney                     | —  |
| <i>mami</i>        | EFu. <i>mami</i>                         | sweet                      | Sam.Outl. <i>mami</i>                          |
| <i>niu 'el'ele</i> | EFu. <i>niu fa'ele'ele</i>               | short coconut palm species | <i>niu</i>                                     |
| <i>ota</i>         | EFu. <i>'ota</i>                         | sago palm                  | PNP * <i>ʔota</i>                              |
| <i>rau 'ifi</i>    | EFu. <i>lau ifi</i>                      | beg pardon                 | * <i>lau + ifi</i>                             |
| <i>sauragi</i>     | EFu. <i>saulagi</i>                      | grass species              | —  |
| <i>savini</i>      | EFu. <i>savini(vini)</i>                 | blow                       | * <i>sawini</i>                                |
| <i>teaptepa</i>    | EFu. <i>tepatēpa</i>                     | flat; board                | —  |
| <i>tutuki</i>      | EFu. <i>tutuki</i>                       | oppose                     | —  |
| <i>veni</i>        | EFu. <i>veni</i>                         | white yam                  | —  |
| <i>ʔi</i>          | EFu. <i>ʔi</i>                           | yes                        | (POc. * <i>io</i> )                            |
| <i>sa'aga</i>      | EFu. <i>sa'aga</i> , E'Uv. <i>ha'agā</i> | warrior's grave            | —  |
| <i>ha'a</i>        | E'Uv. <i>ha'a</i>                        | taboo                      | * <i>saʔa</i>                                  |
| <i>karposi</i>     | E'Uv. <i>kalāpuhi</i> <sup>45</sup>      | Acalypha                   | * <i>kalaʔapusi</i>                            |
| <i>toro</i>        | E'Uv. <i>tolo-huhu</i> <sup>46</sup>     | swallow                    | * <i>folo</i>                                  |
| <i>vainiu</i>      | E'Uv. <i>vainiu</i>                      | implore                    | —  |
| <i>aftea</i>       | Tik. <i>afatea</i>                       | tree sp. <i>Neonauclea</i> | PNP * <i>ʔafa-tea</i>                          |
| <i>kanapu</i>      | Tuv. <i>kanapu</i>                       | seabird species            | PSam.Outl. * <i>kanapu</i>                     |
| <i>mata</i>        | Tuv. <i>mata kaukau</i>                  | wet                        | ( <i>mara</i> “fermented food”)                |
| <i>seke</i>        | Tuv. <i>seke</i>                         | walk                       | —  |
| <i>totoro</i>      | Tuv. <i>tolotolo</i>                     | bush species               | —  |

Table 17: Loanwords from various West Polynesian sources (except Tongan and Samoan)

## 5 *Extent and semantic fields of borrowing*

After looking at the form and origin of the Polynesian loanwords, let us assess their share of the overall lexicon and their semantic domains.

### 5.1 *The extent of borrowing*

It has been well known for a long time that Rotuman contained very many borrowings. “There is every reason to suppose that many words and perhaps forms of expression have been in recent times derived from Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji” (Codrington 1885:402).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Tong. *kala-kala'āpusi*.

<sup>46</sup> The whole expression means in East Futunan: “pagan remedy which consists in taking the milk (*huhu*) from a woman, etc.” (Burrows 1937:93).

Gardiner's (1898:501) following statement might also relate to the large number of loanwords: "It was suggested by several of the old men that the change of the [Rotuman] language was due to the coming of the Niufo'ou people to the island."

The proportion of the loanwords varies for different parts of the lexicon. Pawley (1979:33) reckoned that Polynesian borrowings accounted for about 40% of the Rotuman lexicon and Biggs, 43% (1965:413). This is a huge figure, but still less than in English, "about half of its lexicon is borrowed from French. But if one only considers the 'basic vocabulary' of the language, the proportion sinks down to 6%" (Crowley 1987:191). A Brown University statistic study showed that all of the 100 most frequently used words in English are directly inherited, and that of the next 100 high-frequency words, 83% were still directly inherited, so there were only 17 loanwords among the 200 most frequent words (McManis 1987:292; Weinreich 1977:79).

A similar situation can be assumed for Rotuman. The proportion of borrowings decreases by more than 50% if you only consider the basic vocabulary: Biggs (1965:412) adapted the 200-word list by M. Swadesh and counted just 18% borrowings in the Rotuman basic vocabulary. Whereas Grace (1967) and Pawley (1979:33) were convinced that "Rotuman has demonstrably replaced the most basic part of its vocabulary at a faster rate than such conservative Oceanic languages as Standard Fijian and Mota".

## 5.2 *Semantic fields of the loanwords*

"The need to name new things, persons, localities and concepts is apparently a universal cause of lexical innovation. By picking out those lexical innovations which are loanwords, the linguist can contribute his share in the effort to show what one language community has learnt from another" (Weinreich 1977:79f). Some of them were loanwords in the strict sense of the word.

Almost all words which Rotumans today call old-fashioned and those which were labelled obsolete or obsolescent in the dictionary of 1940 are loanwords. It is not surprising that they are becoming obsolete, for they relate to the pre-European society or the era of sailing schooners.

5.2.1 *Semantic fields of Pidgin loanwords.* The early borrowings from Pidgin English may be classified according to the following semantic fields: 26%: tools, materials, weapons; 24%: imported food stuffs; 21%: sea travel, whaling; 19%: (barter) trade, money, units of weight and measurement; 5%: western clothing; 5%: pastimes, etc.

These six semantic fields reflect the great interest of the Rotumans in foreign objects and concepts and the area where they came in touch with the Western world. They traded water and food against iron tools and other Western goods with visiting ships. Islanders who went away on foreign ships as crew-members brought back new goods and words used in their workplace and other Pacific ports. Later borrowings belong to other domains such as the Christian religion, formal education, colonial administration, etc.<sup>47</sup>

As Geraghty (1989) had demonstrated for Fijian, Rotuman also contains English loanwords which did not enter the language directly from (Pidgin)-English but through neighboring languages as intermediaries (see Table 4). These include (i) terms for new objects which Rotumans first saw on neighboring islands, or which they managed to obtain from Polynesians, and (ii) many religious terms introduced by catechists from Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, who were the first resident missionaries around the middle of the nineteenth century.

Nowadays the adoption of new techniques and devices, the contact with other language groups in Fiji, and the use of English as a medium of instruction in the island schools lets the number of borrowings rise quickly. It can happen that borrowings complement or drive out existing words with the same meaning. Seebold (1981:195) called this “luxury borrowing”, Clark (1982) spoke of “unnecessary borrowings”. See Table 18.

*5.2.2 Semantic fields of Polynesian loanwords in Melanesia and Micronesia.* Which words have other languages borrowed from Polynesian languages? In what semantic fields can they be grouped? These matters have been resolved for Oceanic languages in Melanesia and Micronesia extensively; the more distantly related languages are, the more conspicuous are loanwords.

Clark (1994:121) grouped Polynesian loanwords in non-Polynesian languages of Melanesia into nine semantic categories: (1) general: grammatical elements, personal pronouns (cf. Ross 1988:12), terms for time and place, “to do”, “thing”, “way”, etc., logical terms; (2) the body: parts of the body, bodily conditions and processes (life and health, disease, respiration, eating, excretion, sex); (3) description: non-specialized physical states and properties (size, shape, color, texture, temperature, etc.); (4) action: non-specialized verbs of motion, manipulation, and change; (5) the cosmos: sea and land, sky and weather; (6) people: emotion and perception, thought, language, music and

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<sup>47</sup> It was similar in Fiji: “In this pre-missionary era we see the Fijian vocabulary increasing naturally using both native and foreign material. Loans from English that probably date from this period include [...] *vinivō* “dress” (< *pinafore*), [...] *bisikete* < *biscuit*, *kaloko* < *clock*, *paipo* < *pipe*, *vōkete* < *bucket*, [...] and *selō* < *sail ho!*” Geraghty (1989:383).

dance, social relations, politics, kinship, war, ethnicity; (7) material: artifacts, states and activities specifically involving them; (8) flora: food plants, trees, shrubs, vines, etc.; (9) fauna: domesticates, birds, fish, insects, other creatures.

| a. Inherited                 | Borrowed             | Source language      | Gloss            |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>aga</i>                   | <i>söv</i>           | English              | serve            |
| <i>helava</i>                | <i>nais</i>          | English              | nice             |
| <i>ipu</i>                   | <i>kapa</i>          | English              | cup              |
| <i>iu, furi</i>              | <i>jen</i>           | English              | change           |
| <i>mālu</i>                  | <i>vitiō</i>         | English              | video            |
| <i>mālu</i>                  | <i>filimi</i>        | English              | film             |
| <i>se'e, palag as ta</i>     | <i>is</i>            | English              | east             |
| <i>sio, soloag as ta</i>     | <i>ues</i>           | English              | west             |
| <i>reprepe</i>               | <i>slāke</i>         | English              | slack            |
| <i>sagmatā</i>               | <i>lāvini (obs.)</i> | English              | eleven           |
| <i>sagmarua</i>              | <i>tuele</i>         | English              | twelve           |
| <i>'āi sunu</i>              | <i>jelese</i>        | English              | chillies         |
| <i>'āpe</i>                  | <i>repene</i>        | English              | ribbon           |
| <i>'oro</i>                  | <i>hagkeje</i>       | English              | handkerchief     |
| <i>fūmarāe</i> <sup>48</sup> | <i>tū'rarā</i>       | Standard Fijian      | parish secretary |
| <i>kunei</i>                 | <i>'oti</i>          | Samoan <sup>49</sup> | goat             |

  

| b. Old borrowing | Source language | Recent borrowings      | Gloss           |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>kiria</i>     | EFu., E'Uv.     | <i>lepera</i> [< Sam.] | leprosy         |
| <i>maktā</i>     | Tong.           | <i>siligi</i>          | sling           |
| <i>saitō</i>     | Sam.            | <i>uiti</i> (1928)     | wheat           |
| <i>to'a</i>      | Tong.           | <i>jampini</i>         | champion        |
| <i>uaealesi</i>  | Eng.            | <i>ritiō</i>           | wireless, radio |

Table 18.a–b: Examples of 'unnecessary borrowings'<sup>50</sup>

“The Austronesian languages near Polynesian Outliers have borrowed not only Polynesian terms for the sea and sailing, but also words associated with kava drinking and artefacts made from coconut fronds” (Dutton 1994:198).

“There are a number of ... items of material culture which seem to have been borrowed into Southern Vanuatu languages from Polynesian sources, including terms for kava, bow and arrow, mat, platform or bed, rafters, tattoos

<sup>48</sup> Loan translation from Fijian.

<sup>49</sup> This in turn is a borrowing of Tong. *kosi*, spelt *cochi* by Mariner (Martin 1817, II) via original *koti* from Eng. *goat* (Hovdhaugen 1986:315). By the time Captain Cook introduced the first goats to the Central Pacific in 1777, to Tonga (Beaglehole 1966:134, 155), the sound change of PPn. \*k > Sam. ? must have been completed.

<sup>50</sup> Unnecessary borrowings also came from Central Pacific languages (see Section 4 and especially Table 6).



and the dog. The culture-hero *Mauitiktiki* has also been adopted” (Lynch 1994:298). “Polynesian loanwords in the languages of the Eastern Outer Islands (Solomons) relate to cultural objects, many of which are associated with the ocean, habitation, the animals, mostly birds and fish. A few were terms for natural phenomena and body parts” (Wurm 1969:74). Fauna and flora are also the main area of the Polynesian borrowings in Iaa in New Caledonia, according to Ozanne-Rivierre (1994:542).

One third of the Polynesian loanwords in Kiribati (north of Rotuma) pertain to “island technology—shipbuilding and navigation, fishing, agriculture, house construction, clothing, and medicine. The next largest semantically-delimited set ... fall[s] in a domain that might be broadly termed “social”—interpersonal relations, storytelling and oratory, dance, and religion. Some ten items, not all equally secure as borrowings, refer to body parts, bodily functions, or personal hygiene” (Harrison 1994:339).

In Fijian, Tongan borrowings are found in many semantic fields including “ceremonial dress, cosmetics, sickness and cure, tapa manufacture, house building, games, flora, abuse, and the introduced fields of church, education, and horses” (Geraghty 1983:190f.).

*5.2.3 Semantic fields of Polynesian loanwords in Rotuman.* I would arrange Polynesian loanwords in Rotuman dating from the pre-colonial period into the following semantic fields: (a) language of respect, chiefly titles, proper names, place names; (a) government, society, religion, ceremonies, kava ceremony; (c) material culture, decoration, house-building, games, war, seafaring, fishing; (d) fish names, other marine creatures, sea birds, other birds, other animals, plants (those used by people as well as weeds); (e) food preparation, perception, parts and functions of the body, disease; (f) human qualities, physical activity, sensing, environment, colors, reckoning of time, counting, properties of objects.

*5.2.3.1.* What conclusion can we draw from this list? Often the borrowed items are the ones to be expected. They refer to newly introduced concepts and objects; in flora and fauna rather to the edible or useful species than to weeds or other taxa. But there are also quite a few unnecessary borrowings, items which had an indigenous name before. The Rotumans had inherited all the terms for the natural environment, the material and spiritual culture which was initially shared by the people who later separated into Rotumans, Fijians and Polynesians. But why did they borrow foreign terms for well-known concepts such as domestic animals (*puaka* “pig”), useful plants (*fesi* “hardwood tree

*Intsia bijuga*”, *’ifi*<sup>51</sup> “tree species *Inocarpus*”, etc.), edible animals (*kanapu*, *tävāke* two species of sea bird)? Codrington (1885:86) offered an explanation: “Pig .... A word no doubt recently imported, and probably taking the place of the old word, is *puaka*, ... which appears in Nengone, and Rotuma, and as *vuaka* in Fiji. It is not likely that there were no pigs in Fiji before the word *vuaka* was used there. It is more probable that the Tongans brought over their pigs, which were valued and called by the Tongan name, and the name of the newer and *fashionable* kind of pig superseded the old one”. Indeed, language has a lot in common with fashion.

In Fijian there are also apparently unnecessary loanwords: “Interestingly, some words which may well be Tongan loans have to do with pig-keeping: *poka* “(of pig) barren”, *vākafa* “kind of means of tying pig”, and—surprisingly, since they were always present in Fiji—*puaka* “pig”, St.Fij. *vuaka*” (Geraghty 1983:190f, 1989:380).

The Rotumans must have accorded great prestige to the loanwords.<sup>52</sup> Later the Tongans had lost that prestige: “Many of the Lotumese say, “Tonga man no know, all same Lotumah man. All a same.” (Rev. J. Short in a letter of 25 November 1844).

5.2.3.2. The proportion of loanwords is negligible in certain areas of the lexicon, but extraordinarily large in others such as chiefly titles and terms relating to centralized government and stratified society.

It is remarkable that all respectful words used in the presence of chiefs are of Polynesian origin,<sup>53</sup> though they were borrowed from the ordinary register of the source language and rarely the chiefly language.<sup>54</sup> I suppose that they were part of the expressions (foreigner talk?) which were or had to be used when talking to the conquerors from Niuafou’ou or Tonga;<sup>55</sup> later they had become accepted and were likewise used when speaking to their successors, the newly developed class of indigenous dignitaries.

<sup>51</sup> With intrusive glottal stop (Geraghty 1986).

<sup>52</sup> It is fitting that the title of the highest chief of the island, *Maraf*, is derived from *Ma’afu*, the name of the leader of the invasion from Niuafou’ou (or from EFu. *Malafu*).

<sup>53</sup> Only three expressions of the language of respect (*’ojoga* “death bed (of a chief)”, *’umefe* “chief (fig.)” and *tiamouga* “greeting to a King or a chiefly turtle”) are not borrowed.

<sup>54</sup> Aside from the Polynesian languages, so-called chiefly languages only exist in Fijian and Rotuman and the Loyalty islands (Lifu and Maré), (Blixen 1993:14) and on Pohnpei (Micronesia).

<sup>55</sup> Similarly Milner (1961:298): “Terms of respect might originally have been loanwords which subsequently acquired either more or less stylistic prestige than the equivalent native words.”

| Polite register lexeme | Meaning                          | Colloquial equivalent | ± Direct | Distinct meaning  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| <i>apei</i> (fig.)     | district                         | <i>itu'u</i>          | –        |                   |
| <i>ati</i>             | adopt boy to raise as chief      | <i>putu</i>           | –        | bring up (child)  |
| <i>a'ita</i>           | eat                              | <i>'ātē</i>           | +        |                   |
| <i>a'u'ua</i> (fig.)   | pass away                        | <i>ala</i>            |          |                   |
| <i>fak(f)iti</i>       | give a chiefly title to          | <i>nā asa</i>         |          |                   |
| <i>fakperperu</i>      | whisper                          | <i>musu</i>           | –        |                   |
| <i>farao tapuaki</i>   | former king                      | –                     |          |                   |
| <i>fono</i>            | chief's meal after kava          | <i>'ātē</i>           | +        | eat               |
| <i>fei</i>             | container                        | <i>kokona</i>         |          |                   |
| <i>hān gata</i>        | lady                             | <i>hāni</i>           | +        | woman             |
| <i>hua</i>             | ( <i>sau</i> only) die           | <i>ala</i>            |          |                   |
| <i>kalogo</i>          | greet (chiefs)                   | <i>noa'ia</i>         |          | greeting          |
| <i>lā</i>              | child of high chief              | <i>le'e</i>           | +        | child             |
| <i>mafau</i>           | right (side)                     | <i>'atmai</i>         | –        |                   |
| <i>mala</i>            | red girdle used by high chiefs   | <i>titi</i>           | –        | girdle            |
| <i>mariā'</i>          | bravo, well done                 |                       |          |                   |
| <i>māru</i>            | go past                          | <i>siri</i>           |          |                   |
| <i>meriaki</i>         | move on, resume                  | <i>'u'aki</i>         |          |                   |
| <i>nofo'a</i>          | chief {fig.}                     | <i>'umefe</i>         | +        |                   |
| <i>pāre, 'ojo</i>      | (chief) die                      | <i>ala</i>            |          |                   |
| <i>rere</i>            | (chief's) eyes                   | <i>mafa</i>           | +        |                   |
| <i>rere</i>            | (chief's) decision, will         | <i>a'hāe</i>          |          | think, decide     |
| <i>taktakāi</i>        | kilt of chief                    | <i>uha</i>            |          | kilt              |
| <i>tatau</i>           | chief's bedroom                  | <i>roki</i>           | –        | sleeping quarters |
| <i>tē 'eita</i>        | chief's food                     | <i>tēla'ā</i>         | +        | food (not meat)   |
| <i>tokagsau</i>        | town where king lives            | —                     |          |                   |
| <i>to'naki</i>         | King's personal attendants       | —                     |          |                   |
| <i>tū'toga</i>         | taboo food, grown for chief only | —                     |          |                   |
| <i>usia'a-fua</i>      | announce                         | <i>fāega</i>          |          | speak             |
| <i>vāisala</i>         | pudding type for chiefs only     | <i>fekei</i>          | –        | pudding           |
| <i>'ariki</i>          | chief                            | <i>gagaja</i>         |          |                   |
| <i>'aumā'i</i>         | defend or protect or shelter     | <i>pāre</i>           | –        |                   |
| <i>'ō, 'o</i>          | yes (to a chief)                 | <i>'ī</i>             | –        |                   |

Table 19: Borrowings in the Rotuman language of respect

In the column headed  $\pm$ direct in Table 19, I have indicated whether the equivalent in the colloquial language is directly inherited (+) or not (–). Open spaces indicate ambiguity.

Four words of the language of respect are borrowed from the chiefly registers of west Polynesian languages: *a'-soisoifua* “favorable” < Tong., E'Uv. *hoihoifua* or Sam. *soifua*; *fiongaro* “chief's wish” < Tong., E'Uv. *finagalo* or Sam. *finagalo*; *mariu-* “walk” < E'Uv., Sam. *maliu*; *taumafa* “present, gift” < Tong., E'Uv., Sam. *taumafa*), as are also three ordinary words, *ala* “die” <

Tong. *hala*, *kakau* “bathe” < E’Uv. *kakau* or Sam. *’au’au*, *’inoso* “marry” < Tong. *’unoho*.

5.2.3.3. It seems that the terminology of certain semantic fields was completely borrowed, like the polite register.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand it is surprising that in other fields directly inherited as well as borrowed words were used for important terms. In South Vanuatu and in Rotuman the word for “paddle, oar” is directly inherited, but the verb “to paddle” is a Polynesian loanword (Lynch 1994:296f).

Two thirds of the Rotuman terms relating to seafaring are borrowed. In the following paragraphs, I list all nautical terms (proto-forms cited from Pawley & Pawley 1993),<sup>57</sup> according to their origin, the directly inherited ones (21%) or borrowed ones (63%) plus those whose origin cannot be stated without doubt (16%).

Indirect. *fakasua* “tack”, *fakniua* “boat shed”, *fono* “wall pieces of canoe”, *forau* “sea voyage” (< PPn. *\*f(ao)lau* < PCP *\*v(ao)lau* < POc. *\*palau(r)*), *fua* “fleet”, *karia* “large outrigger canoe”, *katea* “canoe as distinguished from outrigger” (< Tong. *katea* “hull of canoe” < POc. *\*katae* “free side of canoe opposite the outrigger”), *kauvaka* “ship’s crew”, *kavei* “compass point”, *kiata* “outrigger boom” (< PPn. *\*kiato* < POc. *\*kiajo*), *kiat rot* “back of seat in canoe” (McGregor MS:2.12) (< PPn. *\*loto* “inside”), *lū samrā* “corner rope of sail” (< *sama* + Tong. *lā*), *marä’e* “seat of helmsman at stern” (McGregor MS:2.12), *peau* “wave”, *pipi* “tree species *Atuna racemosa*; glue made from its fruit was used to caulk boats”, *puka* = *purou* “bow and stern pieces” (McGregor MS: 2.12), *samtutuki* “double canoe”, *sēlō’aki* “greeting (sighting of ship) by shouting ‘Sail ho!’”, *taf’aga* “large canoe”, *takāi* “rib supports of canoe” (McGregor MS:2.12), *tāri* “outrigger support” (McGregor MS:2.12: *tarei* [tari]? “cord which holds the outrigger spring down to the outrigger”), *tatā* “bailer (for large canoes)” (< PPn. *\*tataa*), *taumua* “bow of canoe” (< PPn. *\*tau-muʔa* “bow, front deck” < POc., PCP *\*muqa-* “bow”), *taumuri* “stern” (< PPn. *\*tau-muli* “stern, aft” < POc. *\*muri-* “back side, stern”), *taurani* “row boat”, *tautei* “fishing captain” (< PPn. *\*tau-ta(h)i* < POc. *\*tau-tasi(k)* “experienced fisherman or sailor”), *tävāne* “small canoe”, *titii* “sail”, *Toga* “southeast, Tonga”, *toko* “punt” (< PCP *\*toko* < POc. *\*tokon*),

<sup>56</sup> Blixen (1969) recognized possible Polynesian influences in the so-called ‘high language’ of Pohnpei (Geraghty 1994b:245). Simons (1982:187) thought “the use of honorific vocabulary with respected men” could be reconstructed for POc.

<sup>57</sup> Of the reconstructions listed, 56% are not reflected in Rotuman, 17% are Polynesian loanwords, and only 11% are directly inherited.

*tope* “row quickly”, *tuku* (*läe*) “let down (sail)” (< PCP \**tuku laya*), *’ahai* “ship (< Eng. *ahoy*)”, *’artovaka* “captain”, *’epa* “mat” (< POc. \**qeba* “mat, mat sail”)

Direct. *fau* “cover” (< PCP \**tau* “cover of bow and stern”, *fa’o* “tack”, *fiu* “sail away secretly”, *foro* “body of boat”, *fua* “keel” (cf. PPn. \**tuʔa* “backbone, backside”), *hata* “roof; shelf” (< PCP \**vata* < POc. \**patar* “platform (e.g., on top of hull)”), *hose* “paddle” (< PCP \**voze* < POc. \**pose* “paddle”), *hös uli* “steering oar”, *isu* “nose; projection” (< POc. \**ijuŋ* “nose; projecting board at bow with carved figure”), *läe* “sail” (< PCP \**laya* < POc. \**layaR*), *mafi* “tide”, *nuju* “mouth; washboard”, *sava* “passage through reef” (< POc. \**sawaŋ*), *üläe* “figure-head of large canoe (*taf’aga*)” (perhaps < PCP \**ʔulu-* “head, hair” + \**laya* “sail”), *uli* “steer” (< PCP \**ʔuli* < POc. \**quliŋ*), *valu* “wave”

Ambiguous. *anu* “bail out” (cf. PMP \**aŋsu*), *favi* “anchor” (cf. PPn. \**tau* < POc. \**jau(q)*), *hi’a* “outrigger boom” (cf. *kiato*), *liu* “jibe”, *lagoni* “(ship) rise; canoe roller” (< PCP \**lago(ni)* “support, roller under canoe”), *manu* “seat in canoe or boat”, *man keu heta* “seat next to helmsman”, *moa* “toothlike projections at stern of large canoes”, *pap ne ’ahai* “deck of boat (made of boards)” (< PCP \**ba(bv)a* < PMP \**papan* “plank of boat”), *pou* “mast” and *tē pou rua* “two-masted ship” (McGregor MS.b:12), *raurara* “the center *fono*, which is laid on the completed *fua* first” (McGregor ms. 2:12), *roa* “top planks, put on top of *fono* to complete the sides of the boat” (McGregor ms. 2:12), *sama* “outrigger” (< PCP \**zama* < POc. \**saman*), *sua* “paddle, row” (< PCP \**sua* < POc. \**sua(C)* “row”), *sua* “tack about” (< PCP \**sua* or Tong. *hua*), *susu* “pair of raised knobs or rests on hull” (McGregor ms. 2:12), *vaka* “boat” (< PCP, POc. \**waga* “large sailing boat”), *’o’ora* “large canoe for fishing”.

In view of the large share of loanwords in this special part of the lexicon, which was certainly not completely preserved after two hundred years of contact with western shipping, it is safe to assume that the words of unknown origin may also be borrowings to a large extent: *liu* “jibe” < PPn. \**liu* “turn”, *moa* “toothlike projections at stern of large canoes” < PNP \**moa* “notches at ends of canoe”, *pou* “mast” < PPn. \**pou*, *sama* “outrigger” < PPn. \**hama*, *vaka* “boat” < PPn. \**waka*, etc.

Lynch (1994:296-299) gave a fitting explanation for the large numbers of Polynesian loanwords in South Vanuatu languages in the field of maritime technology. The early inhabitants discovered a very fertile island with plenty of shellfish in the lagoon, and there was no need to travel by sea any longer. Since the words for mast and sail, etc. are borrowed, it might be that the earlier inhabitants had canoes without mast and sail, or that they did not use them outside the reef until the Polynesian colonizers of the neighboring islands

West-Futuna and Aniwa re-introduced these technologies. Their language is the source of a large part of contemporary maritime vocabulary.

Some terms related to seafaring are borrowed in Tongan, too, obviously from a Nuclear Polynesian source language: *foefoelua* “paddle and sail at the same time” (Sam. *foe* “oar” + *lua* “two” as opposed to Tong. *fohe* and *ua*), *ama* “windward or outrigger side of canoe” (Sam. *ama*, Tong. *hama* “outrigger”), *fanua* “shore (seen from canoe)” (Sam. *fanua*, Tong. *fonua* “land”), etc. (Tsukamoto 1994:58).

5.2.3.4. Sometimes oral history holds the clue. It is said that houses on Rotuma were of a rectangular shape until the Tongans introduced the technique of rounded apses (*äf tqli*). Bow and arrow (*loloki*, *fana*, *kasa*) are said to have come with Maori warriors. The culture hero *Tonu'av* brought fowl (*moa* and *'ufa*) from the underworld.

Many expressions linked to the kava complex, which is so typical of Polynesia, are borrowed or look like it. In the centre of the Rotuman kava ceremony is the recital (*fakpeje*) which tells how the kava plant came from *Hihifo* (Tongan for “west”) to Rotuma.

5.2.3.5. Finally, I think it is remarkable that Oceanic languages often borrowed the same terms from Polynesian languages. Geraghty (1994b) listed Polynesian loanwords in New Caledonia, the Loyalty islands, Vanuatu, and Micronesia. Half of them were also borrowings in Rotuman. Lynch (1994) gave a list of Polynesian loanwords in the languages of South Vanuatu, 38% of which were also borrowed into Rotuman.

I claim that it is more likely that a Rotuman word is borrowed from a Polynesian language if it belonged to certain semantic fields (such as warfare, sea travel, hierarchical social structure, kava ceremony, etc.), or if the same term is also borrowed in other languages.

In Table 20, I have compared Polynesian loanwords in the Micronesian language of Kiribati (after Geraghty 1994a, Harrison 1994, and Sabatier 1971) with their counterparts in Rotuman which are not immediately recognizable as borrowings.

## 6. **Conclusion**

### 6.1 *Lexical change in Rotuman*

Lexical change in Rotuman has been of such dimensions as to make it incomprehensible to its neighbors. “The distinguishable directly inherited elements provide a sizeable corpus to work with for subgrouping, but it is

| Rotuman                      | Gloss                                       | Loanword in Kiribati | Gloss                    |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>aga</i>                   | custom                                      | <i>aga</i>           | manner                   |
| <i>asoa</i>                  | help; pair                                  | <i>toa</i>           | partner                  |
| <i>au</i>                    | current                                     | <i>au</i>            | drift                    |
| <i>kamakama</i>              | rock crab                                   | <i>kamakama</i>      | crustacean               |
| <i>kirikiri</i>              | gravel                                      | <i>kirikiri</i>      | gravel                   |
| <i>lelei</i>                 | good <sup>58</sup>                          | <i>reirei</i>        | good                     |
| <i>ar-mea</i>                | bird sp. with red feathers                  | <i>mea(mea)</i>      | red                      |
| <i>mao-a'a</i>               | (of rain) ease off                          | <i>mao</i>           | (of rain) ease off       |
| <i>mara</i>                  | (of fruit) overripe                         | <i>mara</i>          | soft                     |
| <i>mauri</i>                 | live  | <i>mauri</i>         | bye                      |
| <i>moa</i>                   | chicken                                     | <i>moa</i>           | chicken                  |
| <i>mori</i>                  | orange                                      | <i>mori</i>          | overripe fruit           |
| <i>papa</i>                  | floor made of boards                        | <i>rau-baba</i>      | board                    |
| <i>pou</i>                   | mast, rafter                                | <i>bou</i>           | construction             |
| <i>pupui</i>                 | floor                                       | <i>buibui</i>        | dividing screen          |
| <i>pure</i>                  | cowrie                                      | <i>bure</i>          | cowrie                   |
| <i>raga</i>                  | <i>Curcuma longa</i> (raw material for dye) | <i>renga</i>         | red, pink                |
| <i>rogrogo</i>               | story                                       | <i>rongorongono</i>  | story                    |
| <i>roki</i> <sup>59</sup>    | inside end of house                         | <i>roki</i>          | dividing screen          |
| <i>sigoa</i>                 | namesake                                    | <i>igoa</i>          | namesake                 |
| <i>tāh-oro</i>               | coconut meat fermented in salt water        | <i>oro</i>           | pandanus or coconut milk |
| <i>tamimi</i> <sup>60</sup>  | bladder                                     | <i>mim</i>           | urinate                  |
| <i>telua</i> <sup>61</sup>   | hole in ground                              | <i>rua</i>           | hole in ground           |
| <i>ura</i>                   | lobster                                     | <i>ura</i>           | lobster                  |
| <i>vaka</i>                  | boat  | <i>aka</i>           | boat                     |
| <i>'atakoa</i> <sup>62</sup> | all   | <i>katoa</i>         | all                      |

Table 20: Polynesian borrowings in Kiribati and their correspondences in Rotuman

severely diminished in comparison, say, with the directly inherited morpheme stock of Standard Fijian—roughly on the order of a third of the Fijian total” (Pawley 1979:33).

Biggs (1965:412) was able to determine the etymologies of 58 out of 200 basic words in Rotuman; of these, one fifth (15) were of Polynesian origin. If he counted 28 basic words with *l* as directly inherited, he would have 83<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *l* is often a criterial phoneme of directly inherited words.

<sup>59</sup> Green & Pawley (1998:57) and Osmond (1998:139) regarded this as a direct reflex of POC \**logi* “partition, partitioned area”.

<sup>60</sup> From *taga* + *mimi* “bag + urine”.

<sup>61</sup> Again, *l* might be an indication of a directly inherited root, but the fossilized Polynesian article *te-* marks it as a borrowing.

<sup>62</sup> Cp. *kato'a* “hundred fish”.

<sup>63</sup> I only counted 58 – 15 + 28 = 71 words.

words with diagnostic reflexes in the whole 200-word list, out of which only 18% were borrowed.

One third of the 328 etymologies which Biggs (1965:412) gave for Rotuman could not be allocated without doubt. 56% of the remaining two thirds were directly inherited and 44% borrowed. The basic vocabulary contains fewer borrowings than the rest of the lexicon<sup>64</sup> which confirms my counting. The Rotuman lexicon can be separated into layers as shown in Table 21.

|  | 200 basic words |         | General lexicon |         |
|--|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|  | Biggs           | Schmidt | Biggs           | Schmidt |
| Directly inherited roots   | 30%             | 38%     | 38%             | 25%     |
| Polynesian loanwords (at least 10% of them are Tongan, 5% non-Tongan, the rest cannot be determined yet) | 8%              | 6%      | 29%             | 34%     |
| Not yet possible to determine whether directly or indirectly inherited                                   | 28%             | 20%     | 33%             | 15%     |
| Roots without cognates in related languages  | 59%             | 36%     |                 | 26%     |
| Total number of lexemes  | 200             | 200     | 328             | 3100    |

Table 21: The origin of the Rotuman lexicon

Earlier authors gave reasons for the speed of the language change in Rotuman: “Although Rotuman cannot be classed as an aberrant Oceanic language ..., it has demonstrably replaced the most basic part of its vocabulary at a faster rate than such conservative Oceanic languages as Standard Fijian and Mota” (Grace 1967). “Heavy borrowing from Polynesian and an apparently faster than average rate of change in the most stable items of the test list has made satisfactory lexicostatistical classification of Rotuman difficult” (Pawley 1972:130).

Pawley & Ross (1995:61) listed nine reasons for the *likelihood to innovate* the lexicon, five of which may have applied to Rotuman:

- (a) the very small size of the language community, resulting from the political structure, emigration or the like;
- (b) taboo to use words which are wholly or partly homophonous with names of deceased ancestors or chiefs;
- (c) cultural changes arising within the language community;
- (d) cultural changes arising through contact with the outside world;
- (e) phonological changes creating problematic (ambiguous) word shapes.

<sup>64</sup> Quite similar to English, where almost one half of the lexicon consists of French loanwords, but only 6% of the basic vocabulary (Crowley 1987:191).



Concerning (a) Ross (p.c.) and Mahdi (1988:57) considered the isolation of small speech communities to be one of the decisive factors leading to an exceptionally high innovation or low retention rate of basic vocabulary. In Rotuman increased contact with Polynesians led to massive *lexical changes*, while during the preceding era of isolation quite far-reaching *sound changes* had taken place instead.

As for (b), some Rotuman terms were replaced by new coinages, especially in kinship terminology. Only two Rotuman kinship terms, *ma'piga* "grandchild, grandparent" and *sasiga* "younger relative of same sex and same generation", are directly inherited, while, e.g., the words for father and mother are morphologically complex ("male elder", "female elder"). The inherited reflexes of the respective PCP terms were presumably replaced by word taboo. Some lexical changes in other areas might also have been caused by cultural taboos (cf. Simons 1982), but not to the same extent as in Tahiti.

Concerning (d), by far the most changes are due to the disproportionate import of loanwords (cf. Codrington 1885:408, Gardiner 1898:501). In that respect, Rotuma is comparable to Norman England (Thomason & Kaufman 1988:120), where the indigenous population borrowed extensively from the language of a small group of conquerors. Or the Outlier West 'Uvea where a small group of immigrants founded a Polynesian colony by marrying local (Melanesian) women and taking up their customs, but having their descendants speak the Polynesian language (Hollyman 1959:362).

## 6.2 *Polynesian influences on Rotuman*

A strong influence of west Polynesian languages is detectable in Rotuman, especially its lexicon. This is due to several centuries of intensive contact.

### 6.2.1 *Where did it take place?* Mainly on Rotuma itself. While other Central Pacific languages like Fijian and Tongan influenced each other and borrowed from each other, the direction of influence between Rotuman and other languages, mainly west Polynesian languages, was one-way. Green (1981:149) believed that "Rotuman initially maintained its contacts with the geographically closest western Fijian dialects" after the island was settled. But then a long period of isolation ensued in which the Rotuman language developed its many idiosyncrasies rendering it completely unintelligible for speakers of its closest related languages. Only after contact with Westerners were the islanders able to visit islands further away.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Hale met chief Tokaniua and his spokesman in Tongatapu in April 1840, waiting for a ship

6.2.2 *From whom?* Which Polynesian language did the Rotumans borrow from? Etymologies give Tongan and East 'Uvean (after it had become heavily influenced by Tongan) as the main sources next to Samoan and unidentifiable Polynesian or Nuclear Polynesian sources. According to legend, the first Polynesian immigration ('founding') came from Samoa. More than seventeen generations ago there was another wave of immigration, or rather invasion, and temporary occupation of the island by Tongans coming from Niufo'ou. About that time, the neighboring islands were also incorporated into the Tongan empire.

6.2.3 *Why?* Some visitors came on purpose, others drifted to Rotuma or were washed ashore. Some came as colonizers, others with more peaceful intentions. Woodford (1916:28) suggested that Tongans had used Rotuma as a stopover: "We know that Tongan piratical expeditions were also in the habit of visiting the Ellice [Tuvalu] group. They probably used Rotuma as a resting-place and point of departure for further voyages."<sup>66</sup>

I think the same rationale can be applied to earlier visitors. The first Polynesians to have had an influence on Rotuman were the same people who ventured out to discover and settle Tuvalu and the other Polynesian Outliers. "We may well assume that today's remaining population [on the Polynesian Outlier of Takuu] are descendants of a Polynesian tribe which probably came from Samoa, and had used the islands of Rotuma and Tikopia as stopovers" (Parkinson 1907:518).

Rotuma is situated right en route from West Polynesia to Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Outliers in Melanesia and Micronesia with hundreds of miles of open sea in between. Levison, Ward & Webb (1973) let computers simulate drift voyages in the Central Pacific, and their results showed that 'Uvea, Futuna, Rotuma, and Tuvalu were the most probable points of departure for settling the Polynesian Outliers. Most of the time of the year the direction of the currents and winds in the Central Pacific is from Southeast to Northwest. Since the Polynesian Outliers lie to the west of Polynesia, it is quite possible that accidental voyages have ended up there. There have been immigrations from various islands to the Outliers, perhaps even planned voyages back and forth. Accounts from the last two centuries show that there have been many

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to take them back to Rotuma. Oral traditions mention trade with Vaitupu (Tuvalu), 360 miles (675 km) to the north.

<sup>66</sup> "The Tongans were the great travellers of the western Pacific. They certainly had two-way contact with Kiribati, over 2,000 km away" (Geraghty 1989:380).

more trips from East to West than vice-versa (Denning 1963:129). This scenario contrasts with the first planned settlement of triangle Polynesia.

Another hint for Samoan as a donor language is the presence of Polynesian loanwords in Kiribati, the language of the Micronesian archipelago north of Tuvalu. Harrison (1994:336f) and Geraghty (1994b:243) deduced from their form that their source languages were largely Nuclear Polynesian ones like Samoan or Tuvaluan. “The most obvious sources of Polynesian borrowings into Gilbertese are the geographically adjacent Samoic-Outlier languages or their immediate antecedents. And, indeed, in all but a very small number of cases the likely items are found in Samoic languages and appear in Gilbertese in a form suggestive of the phonology of Samoic languages. There are, however, a small number of non-Samoic items in Gilbertese” (Harrison 1994:336). “With the exception of Tuvaluan, there is little evidence pointing to particular Samoic-Outlier languages as sources for Gilbertese items” (Harrison 1994:337). According to Maude (1963) Kiribati has had contact with Polynesians for over six hundred years. Centuries later the Tongans also reached the Outliers and Kiribati.

6.2.4 *When?* The Nuclear Polynesian visitors to Rotuma cannot be dated by genealogical reckoning any more; their leaders have become mythical founder heroes. Their influence began after the split-up of Proto-Polynesian (into Tongic and Nuclear Polynesian) and around the time the Outliers and Tuvalu were settled: in the second millennium A.D. (Kirch 1984:237, Garanger 1972:134).

Churchward (1938:79–88 and 1940:159) had discovered two different Polynesian strata in Rotuman: “an early one from Samoa ... perhaps in the fifteenth century, then another influx of Polynesians from Tonga ... early in the eighteenth century” (Churchward 1938:80).

Thus the non-Tongic Polynesian imports in Rotuman are taken to be older than the Tongic loans and were borrowed at a time when some sound changes in colloquial Samoan had not yet been completed (such as  $*k > ʔ$ ,  $*n > ŋ$ ,  $*t > k$ ). Secondly, the later Tongic loanwords were copied by the Rotumans after Niuafou had switched from speaking a Nuclear Polynesian to a Tongic language. The neighboring island of Niuaotupapu had completed this switch from Nuclear Polynesian to a Tongic language in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries.

Linguistically, the Outliers have their closest ties with Samoa and with islands west of there, including East Futuna and Tuvalu (which may be a kind of large Polynesian Outlier in Micronesia itself). However, at a more general level, it may be worth

noting that the primary language link is with Samoa, which may suggest an earlier phase of a wider West Polynesian contact sphere prior to the situation at the time of contact, when Tonga appeared to dominate foreign affairs and to influence the language of some neighbors and sometimes even to overlay an early influence by Samoan. (Irwin 1992:188).

6.2.5 *What kind of influence did Polynesians have on Rotuma(n)?* From the meanings of the loanwords we may deduce that they brought many new objects or better varieties of them to the island. We know that the Tongans had superior navigation skills and warfare techniques. Rotumans copied many other concepts from them and adopted (voluntarily?) aspects of their political and social organization: the division of the island into districts, the institution of a king and his court, the separation between commoners and titled chiefs (though titles are bestowed by families and districts and not inherited as in Tonga or Fiji), the introduction of taxes and fines, a village meeting place, a

| Approx. date                         | Source language   | Semantic fields   | Era                                    |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| From 1880s onwards                   | Eng.  | Christian religion, formal education, administration, modern technology   | Post-colonial and colonial             |
|                                      | St.Fij.   | Christian religion, Fijian food, Fijian fauna   |  |
| Mid 19th c.                          | Sam., Tong.   | Christian religion, Christian names, education  | Mission                                |
| End of 18th to mid 19th c.           | Pidgin English  | Sea travel, tools, materials, weapons, imported food-stuffs, (barter) trade, money, units of weight and measurement, clothing | Whaling                                |
| From 16th c. to beginning of 19th c. | E.'Uvean (after its language had been Tonganized), Niuaf. and Tong.                       | Social stratification, chiefly language, chiefly titles   | Tongan empire, invasion from Niuaf'o'u |
| From 13th c. onwards                 | One or several Nuclear Polynesian languages (specific source cannot always be identified) | Sailing, canoe construction   | Settlement of Polynesian outliers      |

Table 22: Foreign influence on Rotuman

council of elders, the kava ceremony, the belief in gods like *Tagroa* (*Tangaloa*), and the fear of spirits. This is quite similar to other non-Polynesian languages in Melanesia (see section 5.2).

The Polynesians did not necessarily introduce completely new ideas or things, but such that came to be accepted (see Table 18). This, Clark (1982a:140) argued is a consequence of the kind of relations between both

groups of speakers: “Any borrowing beyond the semantic sphere of ‘cultural novelties’ could take place only in a situation where the donor language was socially dominant over the receptor.”

I envisage the prehistoric development of Rotuman in several stages, whose approximate dates are listed in Table 22.

- (a) After the initial settlement, Rotuman was still part of the Central Pacific dialect chain. The dialects most closely related to it had stayed behind in Northwest Vanualevu.
- (b) The development of many idiosyncrasies, esp. sound changes, in relative isolation caused by geographic distance and neglect of outside contacts.
- (c) The first wave of Polynesian borrowings, triggered by immigration or multiple visits of speakers of Nuclear Polynesian languages, who presumably also settled the Polynesian Outliers.
- (d) A second wave of Polynesian borrowings, triggered by conquest and temporary occupation of the island by Tongans.

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