

Going French, Going Tahitian: The Tahitianization of French Polynesia

1. Background on language endangerment and language death. Language endangerment and language death are no new concept to us. However, the crucial difference between language death past and present is the rate at which languages are disappearing. The phenomenon started accelerating around in the sixteenth century and has been picking up speed since then, now approaching warp speed.

Of the 6,800 languages spoken in the world today listed in the Ethnologue, 50 percent, perhaps more has limited to no documentation. Linguists such as Krauss (1992) estimates that more than 90% of the world's languages will not get to see the coming of the next century. The Ethnologue also suggests that as many as 20 percent of the world's languages are moribund (and even this seems to be a very conservative estimate), meaning that most of the good speakers are very old, and the children are no longer learning the language as their mother tongue. (Krauss 1992, Crystal 2000)

1.1 Classification of language endangerment. In order to determine whether a language is endangered or not, we first must decide what constitutes an endangered language. Wurm (1991) came up with a five-level classification, focusing on the weaker languages. I would like to present it here with the addition of two more levels, *viable* and *viable but small*:

viable languages: have population bases that are sufficiently large and thriving to mean that no threat to long-term survival is likely;

viable but small languages: have more than *c.*1,000 speakers, and are spoken in communities that are isolated or with a strong internal organization, and aware of the way their language is a marker of identity;

potentially endangered languages: are socially and economically disadvantaged, under heavy pressure from a larger language, and beginning to lose child speakers

endangered languages: have few or no children learning the language, and the youngest good speakers are young adults;

seriously endangered languages: have the youngest good speakers over the age 50 or older;

moribund languages: have only a handful of good speakers left, mostly very old;

extinct languages: have no speakers left.

(Crystal 2000:20-21, Wurm 1998)

Although there seem to be scholars that stress the number of speakers as a criteria for whether a language should be considered to be endangered or not, as listed above, number of speakers do not necessarily determine a language endangered or not. However, languages with a small number of speakers sure do imply that the language is more vulnerable to extinction in the case of a natural disaster, war, or an epidemic disease that could wipe out the entire speech community in a very short period of time.

1.2 Types of language endangerment. Language death can be either abrupt or gradual. In the case where a language dies abruptly, the cause is usually natural or unavoidable,

meaning some form of natural disaster or epidemic disease takes place. Such an event can easily wipe out languages with a relatively small number of speakers. Though not always effective (in fact this type of language shift usually backfires causing unification and strengthening individualism among the indigenous population resulting among many things in the urge to learn/speak their native tongue) and not necessarily abrupt, a forced language shift sometimes is identified as the cause of death.

Gradual death involves voluntary shifting of speakers of a language from the subordinate language to the dominant language usually over the course of several generations. In such a change the indigenous population usually starts out by being monolingual in their native tongue, but in a few generations, the younger generation becomes bilingual with a tendency to speak more in the dominant language, and finally a few generations later, the population becomes monolingual again, this time in the dominant language. There are cases where, although the language is dead, documentations of some form are left behind. In most cases however, even if there are people who remember parts of these documents, for example a religious text, they often do not understand the constituents of the text. Very rarely though, languages are resurrected from such documents left behind. Hebrew is one such extinct language resurrected from documents left behind.

2. French Polynesia. French Polynesia is a French overseas territory spread over one and a half million square miles of ocean in the eastern South Pacific about halfway between Australia and South America. Pape'ete on Tahiti in the Society Islands is where the territorial government is located. While the size of the country is roughly equal to the size of Europe, the total land area of the 118 islands and atolls is a mere 1,500 square miles. French Polynesia is made up of five island groups, namely the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands, the Austral Islands, the Tuamotu Archipelago, and the Gambier Islands.

3. Tahitian and French. Tahitian is one of the two official languages of the territory, the other one of course being French. The total population of French Polynesia is 270,485. According to the Ethnologue, data collected in the 1977 census showed that there are 117,000 speakers of Tahitian in French Polynesia, with an additional 7,000 in New Caledonia, 262 in New Zealand, and some more in Vanuatu, bringing the total to 125,000 in all countries.

3.1 Tahitian Back Then. Tahiti and French Polynesia became a French colony in 1884 and a French overseas territory in 1946. The number of first language speakers of French in French Polynesia is 15,338. Along with Tahitian, French is the country's official language. However, at the time Lavondès' article was published in 1971, education at all levels (primary and secondary) and all forms (public and private) was conducted in French. No Tahitian was taught in the public school system throughout French Polynesia. Furthermore, the use of the vernacular was forbidden in school both for students and teachers in class and during recreational times. Outside of the educational scene, French dominated everything from government, technical services, including agriculture and public works, justice, police, and other domains. In some of the domains, especially in the government and the court, there were certified interpreters for those occupying the

higher ranks, and local officials who acted as interpreters for the lower ranks. All published materials, for example government documents or newspapers (except for a small number of cases where a Tahitian translation accompanied the French text), were in French as well. The only domain Tahitian was regularly heard was at church services.

3.2 Tahitian Now. In the present day territory, more Tahitian usage is seen. Below, I will present the current day situation of the language in the government, education, media, and religion.

3.2.1 Government. At the government level is where the most change can be seen. For example, more notices and advertisements are done in Tahitian with French translation. Exams for government posts include a portion in Tahitian. While during the presidency of Gaston Flosse, there was some emphasis on promoting Tahitian, the effort was not as strong as that of Oscar Temaru, who is really pushing the use of Tahitian in the government and other areas.

3.2.2 Education. In terms of education, not much has improved. French is still the official language of instruction. However, speaking Tahitian is no longer prohibited in school. At the primary school level where the majority of local teachers teach, Tahitian is freely heard. Yet, there is no curriculum forcing students to learn Tahitian at the primary level. There are several immersion schools called Puna Reo, still in its primary stages, modeled after the Kohanga Reo of New Zealand and Punana Leo of Hawaii run privately. Since those running the Puna Reo were affiliated with Oscar Temaru, there is a possibility of a future funding. There are also discussions of ideas for a truly bilingual primary school curriculum.

At the college (middle school) and lycée (high school) level, Tahitian is still only learned as an elective. This is mainly due to the shortage of local teachers able to teach at those levels. Most of the teachers teaching at these levels are all French without any knowledge of Tahitian. The students do not seem quite enthused in learning Tahitian either, because they do not see a future in leaning Tahitian as opposed to what learning English, Spanish, or German can bring them. At the university level, however, the majority of the courses are taught in Tahitian.

3.2.3 Media. In current day Tahiti, there are two TV stations and over a dozen radio stations. Both the TV stations, RFO and TNTV, reserve fifteen minutes several times a day for news in Tahitian which is preceded by the same news done in French. There are occasional special programs produced and aired fully in Tahitian as well. As for the radio stations, the amount of Tahitian used depends on the station. There are stations that are conducted fully in French and use no Tahitian at all and there are stations that are almost completely done in Tahitian. Most stations, however, mix French and Tahitian.

3.2.4 Religion. Tahitian has always been strongest in the domain of religion. Not only are services conducted fully in Tahitian, but the administration of the church is done in Tahitian as well. However, this is only for the Protestants. For other religions on Tahiti,

less Tahitian is used and heard. For example, a Catholic service is more bilingual, or more French is heard at a Mormon service.

3.3 Is Tahitian Endangered? On the institutional level, Tahitian finally seems to be, or at least starting to living up to its status as an official language. Now that I have presented the current situation of the language, the question we must ask is whether Tahitian is still endangered or not.

After visiting and traveling around French Polynesia for a few months back in 1998, I noticed that I had no problem getting around by speaking Tahitian even in the remotest corner. Tahitian was being spoken at the individual level by different age groups. This meant that while at the institutional level the language was still considered endangered, at the individual level the language was flourishing and viable. However, I understand that today more and more youths are shifting to speaking French over Tahitian at the individual level. This indicates that while at the institutional level the language is becoming stable; at the individual level the language is becoming endangered. A situation such as this, I believe, still poses a threat to the survival of the language, because no matter how much emphasis is put on the usage of the language at the institutional level, if there are no speakers of the language at the individual level, the language is unable to survive. However, this is merely the situation on Tahiti. On the other islands in the Society group, Tahitian is still spoken by all age groups on a daily basis.

4. Tahitian and the other languages of French Polynesia. While French and Tahitian are both official languages in French Polynesia, they are not the only languages spoken in the country. There are five island groups in French Polynesia with each group having its own language, sometimes, more than one. The Ethnologue lists nine languages as being spoken in French Polynesia. Out of those nine, seven are indigenous languages to the region: Tahitian, North and South Marquesan, Mangarevan, Tuamotuan, Rapan, and Austral. While there are all these indigenous languages other than Tahitian spoken in the various archipelagoes found in French Polynesia, Tahitian as well, to varying extents is spoken in all of the archipelagoes found in the territory. Over the course of time since contact between the Europeans and the Polynesians of French Polynesia, there are two main events that have resulted in the predominance of Tahitian over the other indigenous languages: the introduction of Christianity and the introduction of the radio and TV.

Though Tahitian did influence some of its neighbors in the Society Islands and the Tuamotu Archipelago in pre-contact times, it was especially after the introduction of Christianity that Tahitian gained status as lingua franca of the territory. The missionaries chose Tahiti as the base to spread Christianity due to the size of the island and the large population. These missionaries then trained locals to spread Christianity to other parts of French Polynesia through the Bible translated into Tahitian.

While Christianity played a major role in the spread of Tahitian throughout the territory in the times that followed first contact with the Europeans, media in the form of radio and TV played an important role in the further spreading of Tahitian in recent times. Though

everything in this French territory is conducted in French, a few hours per day was allocated for radio broadcasting and TV in the Tahitian language. For those who longed to listen to something other than French, the two hours per day from 5:00p.m. to 7:00p.m. was a perfect time to tune into the radio to listen to the program delivered in Tahitian. More recently, several thirty-minute portions per day are dedicated to a Tahitian version of the news on TV, as well as a few shows done in Tahitian.

As a result of the post-contact Tahitian predominance in the territory, the surrounding languages and cultures have been influenced by Tahitian to a certain extent, in some cases, more than the French influence. In the sections that follow, I would like to present the current state of each of the indigenous languages of the territory, other than Tahitian.

4.1 Marquesan. The Marquesas Islands is a group of 12 high islands of volcanic origin, located 1400 km northeast of Tahiti. The Marquesan language can be divided into two language groups, the northern group consisting of Nuku Hiva, 'Ua Huka, and 'Ua Pou, and the southern group consisting of Hiva 'Oa, Fatu Hiva, and Tahuata. Some scholars consider the two mere dialects, while others classify the two as distinct languages. There are 8,712 people (1996) living in the Marquesas Islands. The number of speakers listed in the Ethnologue for the languages are 3,400 speakers (1981) for North Marquesan and 2,100 speakers (1981) for South Marquesan.

There are several dictionaries compiled for the Marquesan language. However, there are no dictionaries that treat North and South Marquesan individually, and the differences are merely noted as dialectal. Of all the available sources on Marquesan, Dordillon's *Grammaire et Dictionnaire de la langue des Iles Marquises* (1931 and 1932) perhaps includes the most entries for the language. Marquesan is probably the best studied language within French Polynesia behind Tahitian. Furthermore, out of all the indigenous languages spoken in French Polynesia, Marquesan (both North and South) is probably the least influenced by Tahitian. Borrowed lexical items in the Marquesan languages are not as numerous as in some of the other languages of the territory, and not so many speak Tahitian fluently, if not at all. Among the various reasons that can be cited for why Tahitian is not as wide-spread in the Marquesas, geography and demography can be named as probable reasons. In post-contact times, there has not been much interaction between Tahiti and the Marquesas in terms of communication or population movement from the Marquesas to Pape'ete.

Besides the limited contact between Tahiti and the Marquesas, religion can be cited as another reason for the little influence Tahitian had on Marquesan. While Tahiti and the rest of the Society Islands are mostly Protestant, the majority of the population in Marquesas is Catholic, and Protestants make up barely ten percent. As a result, Marquesan rather than Tahitian, which is the language the Protestants use in church service and daily life in other parts of the territory, is used in church service and daily life for those who are Catholics.

A third reason for the minimal use of Tahitian in the Marquesas is more linguistic than anything else. The people of the Marquesas are aware and threatened by how the

Tahitians dominate the minor official roles (e.g. auxiliary police, hospital attendants, farming advisors, and school teachers) within the Marquesan Islands. This imbalance fuels their desire to conserve and strengthen their cultural and linguistic heritage, lest the Tahitians and their language take over.

4.2 Mangarevan. The Gambier Islands are made up of 14 small mountainous islands closed on three sides by a semicircular barrier reef, the largest and most populated of which is Mangareva. The population of the Gambier Islands was listed as 1,087 (1996), and the number of speakers of Mangarevan (in the entire country) is 1,600 (1987).

There are a few dictionaries available for Mangarevan. However, none of these are as extensive as that compiled for Tahitian or Marquesan. The youth of today residing on the islands not only prefer speaking Tahitian even if they know how to speak Mangarevan, but are often times unable to pronounce place names of their own island group, for example the nasal *ng* which they pronounce as the voiced stop *g*. There are efforts to revive the language, and according to sources, one of the Puna Reo is located in Mangareva. What the reaction of the rest of the community towards the movement, however, I do not know.

4.3 Tuamotuan. The Tuamotu Archipelago consists of 78 coral atolls scattered over several hundred kilometers of Pacific Ocean, making them the world's largest chain of atolls stretching from the northwest to the southeast, 300 to 1600 km from Pape'ete. The total population of the archipelago is noted as being 14,876 (2002). The Ethnologue lists the total number of speakers of Tuamotuan as 14,400 (1987), which I assume the majority lives in Tahiti.

Through the works of Stimson and Marshall (1964), Tuamotuan, also known as Pa'umotu, is divided into seven dialect divisions. Their work, a compilation of lexicon from different dialects, along with a short word list by Tregear (1893), was the only thing akin to a dictionary, and no other extensive work on individual dialects (except for Reao (1982)) nor any other work on the language as a whole has been conducted.

The Tuamotu Archipelago, being a group of low-lying atolls, had to rely on its neighboring giant, Tahiti, for many resources unavailable to them since the prehistoric times. This resulted in their language and culture being altered significantly by the Tahitian influence that followed compared to the situation on the other island groups. This influence has continued on until the present day, and in fact, the influence is at its peak, with a lot of the dialect differences once seen being leveled out as a result of the Tuamotuan people using more Tahitian. However, the dialects spoken on Napuka and Reao seem to have had less influence from Tahitian than the others. Some scholars think that these two dialects are different enough from Tuamotuan that they should be considered separate languages (Audran 1919). Furthermore, the residents on those two atolls seem to be less proficient in Tahitian.

4.4 The Austral Islands. The Austral Islands is a group of five high islands, Raivavae, Rurutu, Tubuai, Rimatara, and Rapa. There also are two uninhabited atolls Maria (or Hull)

and the Marotiri Rocks (or Bass). The population of the Austral Islands was 6,563 in 1996.

4.4.1 Austral (Tubuai-Rurutu). Austral is spoken on all the inhabited islands in the Austral Islands except on Rapa, where the residents speak a separate language. The total number of speakers of this language listed by the Ethnologue is 8,000 speakers (1987). Each island in the Austral Islands (except Rapa, which is considered a separate language) has its own dialect which is inherently intelligible with one another. Unfortunately, just like in the case with the Tuamotuan language, the dialects of the Austral language is being leveled out as more and more Tahitian replaces the native lexicon, and moreover, as more people shift to speaking Tahitian, abandoning their dialect all together. The speakers of the Raivavae dialect, though, is said to be less bilingual, retaining the majority of its original pre-Tahitian lexicon. There are no known reference grammars or dictionaries of any type compiled for this language nor for any of the individual dialects, except for Stimson and Marshall's undated, unpublished typescript of the dictionary of the Ra'ivavaean Dialect kept at the Peabody Museum Library in Salem, Massachusetts. The only work available to date providing information on any of the dialects is a wordlist providing words collected on an expedition by the Reverend James L. Green in 1864 comparing the Tupuaian dialect with Tahitian and Rapan, and another wordlist compiled by the Reverend Albert Pearse from 1877 collected during his stay on Ra'iatea from 1870 to 1887 comparing Tahitian with the Austral dialects of Rurutu, Rimatara, and Raivavae. These two works are important, valuable pieces of work, not only because they are the only wordlist (besides a few lexical items found in the *Ethnology of Tubuai* (Aitken 1930)) that are available for the dialects, but also because it shows the extent of the influence Tahitian had over the Austral language since the time of Green and Pearse. The two wordlists, while providing an evident Tahitian influence on the lexicon, also show a number of items significantly different in form from that found in Tahitian. These lexical items, however, in the current day Austral language has been replaced with the Tahitian lexicon. The following are a few examples from Green's Tupua'ian and Pearse's Rurutuan, Rimataran, and Raevavaean wordlist:

	Tupuaian	Tahitian	gloss
1	oneone	repo, one	land, ground
2	vai, pape	vai, pape	water
3	rani	ra'i	sky
4	ra	ra, mahana	sun
5	hetu	fetu, fetia	star
6	hetu rere	pao	shooting star
7	hetu houroa	fetia ave	comet
8	mauna	moua	mountain
9	pofatu	ofai, papa	stone
10	paru	repo paruparu	mud
11	toa	aau	coral (reef)
12	aau	aau	reef
13	tai	miti, tei tua	sea
14	arira	area	channel between islands

15	pu	vahi tutauroa	harbour
16	vera	vera	warm
17	matani	matai	wind
18	toerau nia	parapu	wind S. W.
19	manini	patiri	thunder
20	poiriiri	mahu	fog
21	haiti roa	aiu	suckling child
22	tunane	tuaana	elder sister
23	mahara	manao	mind
24	mate	mate, poheraa	sickness
25	tuna	fai	ray

4.4.1.1 Tupuaian. In the data listed above, it is evident how much influence Tahitian has already exerted on the Austral language by the late 19th century. In regards to Tupuaian, even from the limited amount of data collected, it is evident how different the language recorded by Green was from the language known now. My friend from Tupua'i used to tell me when ever I asked about his language how there is no difference between Tahitian and Tupuaian. The main phonological difference between Green's Tupuaian and Tahitian is the shift from PPN *ng > n and the merger of *f and *s to h except in front of PPN *af where it becomes v in Tupuaian.

	Rurutuan	Rimataran	Raivavaean	Tahitian	gloss¹
1	enua	henua	henua	fenua	country
2	rai	rai, rani	rai, but rani 'cloud'	rai	sky
3	moua	mauna	maunga	moua	mountain
4	arava	arava	arava	aehaa	high sea
5	matai	matani	matangi	matai	wind
6	manu	manunu	manunu	patiri	thunder
7	mau	mahu	mahu	mahu	Fog
8	oa, taua	hoa, taua	mauranga	hoa, taua	friend
9	taata	tanata	tangata	taata	man
10	apopo	apopo	apopo	ananahi	tomorrow
11	upe	hupe	hupe	hau	dew
12	aaria	paparia	paparia	paparia	cheek
13	taria	tarina	taringa	taria	ear
14	maniao	maniao	maniao	maiuu	fingernail
15	aui	naau	aui	aau	guts
16	ua	humaha	huha	hufa	thigh
17	upea	upea	upea	upea	net
18	ana	hanana	hana	fana	bow
19	inu	henu	henu	hinu	oil
20	uero	hua	huero	huero	egg, seeds
21	oe	hoe	ohe	ohe, ofe	bamboo
22	pohe	pohe	pohe	pohe	to be sick

23	avae	avae	avae	avae	foot
24	unoa tane	hunoa tane	hunoa tane	hunoa tane	son-in-law
25	utu	utu	utu	utu	lips

4.4.1.2 Rurutuan, Rimataran, Raivavaean. Fischer (1996, 1999), who published both Green as well as Pearse's wordlist, suspects that the majority of the lexicon Pearse collected on Ra'ia'tea at the training institute established for island youths from the men from the Austral Islands might actually have been mere Tahitian words with the phonology altered (and sometimes with no alteration) to satisfy the native phonology of the informants. However, this just might be the result of heavy Tahitian influence even back in 1877 instead of any type of alteration. The main phonological difference between Tahitian and the three dialects are the shift-merger of PPN *f and *s to ' except in front of PPN *af where it becomes *v* in Rurutuan (which along with the shift-merger of *ng > ', makes it the language/dialect with the smallest phoneme inventory), PPN *ng > *n* and the merger of *f and *s to *h* except in front of PPN *af where it becomes *v* in Rimataran, and the retention of PPN *ng and the merger of *f and *s to *h* except in front of PPN *af where it becomes *v* in Raivavaean.

4.4.2 Rapan. Rapa, the most remote island in French Polynesia situated about 1,240 kilometers south of Pape'ete is the remains of a large volcano cone. The population of the island as well as the number of speakers of the language is 521 (1998). All the island's residents are fluent in Tahitian as well. Like the other language and dialects in the Austral Islands, there is no published grammar or dictionaries for Rapan. However, there are a couple wordlists available: one by Green (1864) and another by Stokes (1955). The language spoken on the island is different enough from the language spoken in the rest of the Austral Islands to be considered a separate language. The Rapan language spoken today is often labeled Neo-Rapan, a language heavily influenced by Tahitian to the point where it sounds almost as if it was a mere dialect of Tahitian. In comparison, Old Rapan, the Rapan language that was spoken before all the Tahitian influence, is believed by some scholars to have been a member of the Marquesic group. Whether this claim is valid or not is not my concern here. What the main issue here is the fact that just in less than a century, the language received such heavy influence from Tahitian that there were evident differences between the two lists. The extent of the influence was noted in Hanson (1970), who mentions how the language was nearly extinct in the 1960s. Evidence for the extent of Tahitian influence on Rapan can be provided by Green (1864), Stokes (1955), and finally through my own field notes from 1998 collected during my seven week stay on the island.

	Rapan (Green 1867)	Rapan (Stokes 1955)	Rapan (Rutter 1998)	Tahitian	gloss
1	ngatoro		patiri	patiri	thunder
2	kotai	kota'e	kota'e	vai, pape	water
3	pake	pake	pake, ra	ra, mahana	sun
4	kopana	ma'ina, marama	ma'ina, marama	avae, marama	moon
5	akaputa	a'apa'o		ha'apa'o	to take care

	maitaki				of
6		mou‘u		mau‘u	t.o. herb ¹
7	tao ‘fork’	tao, omore		omore	a pike
8	puoto	puoto	mata‘i	matai	wind
9	kauae		ta‘a	ta‘a	chin
10	‘a	‘a, ma‘a	‘ā, ma‘a	maha, ha	four
11		rea, rearea		rea	ginger ²
12		tuitui, tiairi		tiairi, tutui	candle nut tree ³
13	raa	amaa	ama‘a	amaa	green branch
14	e ao	anave		aho, anave	fishing line
15	uru	apiti ‘wind from NNE’		haapiti	wind NE
16		moe		mo‘e	to forget ⁴
17	maoake	maoae ‘ENE wind’		maoae	E wind
18		mataeinaa		mataeinaa	land division, clan ⁵
19	ara		puromu	ea, aratia, purumu	road, path
20	makea		mā	ma	clean
21	paraua	pe ‘ripe’	pē	pe	rotten
22	pakau		‘a‘ano	aano	wide
23	tukurima		pororima	pororima	elbow
24	peepee		fatata	fatata	near
25	kevenga		feti‘a	fetia, fetu	star
26	uruuru		huruhuru	huruhuru	feather
27	kau oomo			ahu oomo	shirt (men’s) ⁶
28	toki ofai ‘stone axe’ ⁷			ofai ‘stone’	
29	honu	‘onu	‘onu	honu	turtle
30	tohora	to‘ora		tohora	whale

In the data presented above, it is shown that some words has never been replaced with the Tahitian words (e.g. 2, 3), some have been replaced by the time Stokes recorded the language (e.g. 4, 5, 11, 13, 14, 15), and some lexical items have been replaced more recently (e.g. 8, 21). There are also situations where doublets existed at the time of Stoke’s recording (e.g. 7, 12). In some other cases, though Green’s list did not record the word, the Tahitian and the Proto-Polynesian evidence allows us to conclude that the

¹ PPN *mahuku ‘grass’

² PPN *renga ‘ginger’

³ PPN *tuitui ‘candlenut tree’

⁴ PPN *ngaro ‘forget’. *mo‘e* is a Tahitian innovation.

⁵ PCE *matakainanga ‘some social group, perhaps commoners inhabiting the same land division’

⁶ ‘o‘omo ‘to put clothes on’

⁷ Rapan term for ‘stone’ found in Green’s list is *koni*.

Rapan form is a Tahitian replacement (6, 11, 12, 16, 18). Furthermore, new phonemes seem to have entered the current day Rapan language as well, namely *f* and *h* (e.g. 24, 25, 26). Fischer (1996) mentions, though rare and limited at the time of Green's visit, how the Rapan language has already been influenced by Tahitian basing his argument on the existence of *h* as in examples 29 and 30. While there was evidence of Tahitian influence in Rapan at the time of Green's visit (e.g. 27, 28), the presence of *h* at the time of Green, I believe, does not constitute evidence for Tahitian influence, since if we look at examples 29 and 30 we will see that *h* found in Green's list are replaced with glottal stops in latter lists. Pre-Rapan **h* was probably still going through the process of becoming a glottal stop at the time of Green. However, as I have already mentioned *h* and *f* have been reintroduced into the language since.

5. Conclusion. In short, Tahitian is enjoying a type of revival at the institutional level, faring the best in the domains of government and media. In the domain of education, however, while there were some improvements, more is desperately needed especially in the college and lycée level. As for the domain of religion, the situation has never changed, and language usage remains the strongest.

At the individual level, however, the opposite of what is going on at the institutional level is being seen where more youths are turning to French and abandoning their Tahitian heritage. On the other islands in the Society group, Tahitian is being spoken by young and old alike.

Outside the Society Islands, where a number of other indigenous languages are spoken, Tahitian is being a threat to those languages either by completely replacing the language or slowly Tahitianizing the language. Marquesan, both North and South seem to be faring best against the advancement of the Tahitians, while in the Australs (except for Rapan), Tahitian seems to have almost completely run over the language.

¹ Gloss is my own. Not in the original.

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