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In the languages of Tanna (Vanuatu), the verbal prefixes marking first person inclusive and third person nonsingular subject are homophonous, both being *k-* in all five languages. This paper seeks to explain this homophony and shows that while they had different origins in Proto-Southern Vanuatu, subsequent sound changes have brought about a phonemic merger. However, the situation in one of these languages, Kwamera, shows that this homophony is not total, and illustrates possible historical developments. Finally, a parallel is drawn with a similar development in Nese (Malakula).

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

The Southern Vanuatu subgroup of Southern Oceanic consists of the non-Polynesian languages of the Tafea Province of Vanuatu (see, e.g., Lynch 2001). These belong to three apparently coordinate branches:

i. The Erromangan subgroup, consisting of Erromangan (sometimes called Sye) and the moribund Ura, spoken on Erromango; three or more other Erromangan languages have died out within the last century or so.
ii. The Tanna subgroup, consisting of North Tanna, Whitesands, Lenakel, Southwest Tanna, and Kwamera.
iii. Anejom̃, the sole language of Aneityum.

The closest relatives of these languages are probably the non-Polynesian languages of New Caledonia.

The languages of the Tanna subgroup have a number of ranks of prefixes which may occur before verbs (see §2.1). However, the person-of-subject prefixes marking first person inclusive nonsingular and third person nonsingular are homophonous in four of the five Tanna languages; for example:[2]

(1) LENAKEL

k-əm-ar-auŋən	**1INC**-PAST-PL-eat.INTR	'**we (inc. pl.)** ate'
	3NONSG-PAST-PL-eat.INTR	'**they (pl.)** ate'

1 Thanks to Lamont Lindstrom for assistance with Kwamera data, and to him, Julie Barbour, Elizabeth Pearce and an anonymous reviewer for comments on an earlier draft.

I use the term "person-of-subject" prefixes, rather than (say) subject-indexing prefixes, deliberately: these prefixes mark *only* person, not number, which is marked by a quite separate set of prefixes in a different slot (see (2) below and the associated discussion).

2 There is only partial homophony in the fifth language, Kwamera, which I will deal with in section 3.

Morphological abbreviations not found in the Leipzig Glossing Rules, or which might need some clarification, are: CONC, concurrent aspect; ES, echo-subject; EXC, exclusive; INC, inclusive; INTR, intransitive; NOM, nominaliser; Q, interrogative; SEQ, sequential aspect; TL, trial.

Abbreviations of language names are: ANJ, Anejom̃; ERO, Erromangan; KWM, Kwamera; LEN, Lenakel; NTN, North Tanna; SWT, Southwest Tanna; WSN, Whitesands. Protolanguage abbreviations are: POC, Proto-Oceanic; PSOC, Proto-Southern Oceanic; PSV, Proto-Southern Vanuatu; PER, Proto-Erromangan; PTN, Proto-Tanna.

SOUTHWEST TANNA

k-əm-s-aan	**1INC**-PAST-PL-eat.TR	'**we (inc. pl.)** ate it'
	3NONSG-PAST-PL-eat.TR	'**they (pl.)** ate it'

This syncretism is cross-linguistically quite unusual (e.g., Baerman et al. 2005:59–61),[3] given the highly contrastive semantics of these markers. This paper explores the historical origins of these two markers, and traces their development to two quite different earlier forms. In section 2, I supply basic background data necessary for an understanding of the proposals I will be making: a detailed description of the behaviour of person-of-subject markers in §2.1; a discussion of the origin and form of the focal pronouns in §2.2, since I will be suggesting that some person prefixes are abbreviated forms of these pronouns; and an account of the phonological development of POC *k and *g in §2.3, since the person-of-subject prefixes I am interested in were velar-initial. Section 3 discusses in turn the development of the 1INC and 3NONSG markers, and then in §3.3 I try to account for the allomorphy in Kwamera. Section 4 concludes, though there is a postscript in section 5, briefly detailing a similar syncretism in Nese, a Malakula language.

2. BASIC DATA

In this section, I present a general outline of the morphological structure of verbs in Tanna languages and then the set of person-of-subject prefixes.

2.1 Person-of-subject markers

The Tanna languages have virtually identical morphosyntactic features insofar as verbal prefixation is concerned, and with almost no exceptions the morphemes marking each morphosemantic category are cognate.[4] I list in (2) the verbal prefixes in Lenakel (Lynch 1978); I will not elaborate here on the forms of these prefixes in other languages (though see Lynch 2001:148 for details), except for the person-of-subject markers, which I will discuss in subsequent sections of this paper.

(2) LENAKEL

Intentional	**Future**	**Person-of-subject**	**TAM/Negation**	**Continuous**	**Interrogative**	**Number-of-subject**
na- INT	t- FUT	k- 1INC	ak- CONC	am- CONT	etu- Q	Ø- SG
		i- 1 EXC	əm- PAST			u-/ia- DU
		n- 2	n- PERF			hal-/hai- TL
		r- 3SG	ep- SEQ			ar-/ai- PL
		k- 3NONSG	əs- NEG1			
		m- ES[5]				

3 I am grateful to Elizabeth Pearce for this reference. See also, however, section 5 for a very brief discussion of a similar phenomenon in Nese, a language of Malakula.

4 There are also a few verbal suffixes, but these are not of interest to the current discussion.

5 See Lynch (1983) for a discussion on the role of the echo-subject prefix. I will not be dealing with that in this paper, and it is mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

Points to note briefly here are: (i) the number-of-subject allomorphs separated by a slash are phonologically conditioned by the initial segment(s) of the verb root; (ii) NEG1 is the first part of a discontinuous morpheme marking negation, with the second part being a suffix: for example, Lenakel *i-əs-ar-auŋən-aan* (1EXC.NONSG-NEG1-eat.INTR-NEG2) 'we (exc.pl) didn't eat';[6] and (iii) the position of the number-of-subject prefixes varies from language to language.—while the order given in (2) is also found in North Tanna and Whitesands, in Southwest Tanna the number prefix occurs between the continuous and interrogative prefixes, while in Kwamera it occurs in between person and TAM prefixes.

A verb normally *requires* only person- and number-of-subject and TAM/negation marker. However, person prefixes are omitted in the imperative, though number prefixes still occur; for example:

(3) LENAKEL

Ø-kən!	ar-kən!
SG-eat.TR	PL-eat.TR
'Eat it!'	'(All of you) eat it!'

SOUTHWEST TANNA

Ø-alel!	am-u-alel!
SG-stand	CONT-DU-stand
'Stand (up)!'	'Keep on standing, you two!'

On the other hand, an impersonal construction—which has been identified in four of the five Tanna languages (and probably occurs in North Tanna as well, though I have no data to support this)—has no nominal subject, and a clause with an impersonal verb is often translated into English as a passive without agent. In this construction, the 3NONSG marker *k-* is used without any number marker (though number-marking is otherwise obligatory). Examples:

(4) LENAKEL

K-os	ilau	k-avən	k-avən	k-renəm	ilau.
3NONSG-take	they.DU	3NONSG-go	3NONSG-go	3NONSG-bury	they.DU

'(Someone) took the two of them and went and buried them.' (Lynch 1978:58)

(5) WHITESANDS

K-afən	raha-n	n-eepət-ien.
3NONSG-give	POSS-3SG	NOM-big-NOM

'He will be given his grade.' (Hammond 2009:69)

(6) SOUTHWEST TANNA

Nai	k-əmn-əlai	ienpəŋ.
tree	3NONSG-PASt-cut	night

'The tree was cut down during the night.' (Lynch 1982:20)

(7) KWAMERA

K-osi	pukah	nah.

6 Southwest Tanna and Kwamera do not use affixes to mark negation, but rather use a negative lexical verb followed by the nominalised form of the verb being negated: e.g., Kwamera *iak-apwah n-arai-ien* (1EXC-negative NOM1-cut-NOM2) 'I didn't cut it'.

3NONSG-kill pig that
'Someone killed the pig.', 'The pig was killed.' (Lindstrom and Lynch 1994:27)

In discussing the origins of the Tanna subject-markers, I will refer to data from other Southern Vanuatu languages and from Proto-Oceanic (POC). Table 1 lists the subject-marking prefixes that have been reconstructed for POC (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:67), as well as the forms found in the modern Southern Vanuatu languages (Lynch 2001:148ff.) The preverbal person-of-subject marking systems in Erromango and Aneityum are slightly different in nature from those of Tanna,[7] but the underlying forms of the markers can be relatively easily identified.

TABLE 1. SOUTHERN VANUATU PERSON-OF-SUBJECT MARKERS[8]

		Erromango		**Tanna**					**Aneityum**
	POC	ERO	URA	NTN	WSN	LEN	SWT	KWM	ANJ
1SG	*ku= *au=	ya-	yau-	i-	i-	i-	i-	iak-	ek
2SG	*ko=	ki-	k-	n-	n-	n-	n-	ik-	na
3SG	*(y)a=, *ña=, *i=	γ- (> Ø-)	γ- (> Ø-)	t-	t-	r-	l-	r-	et, y
1INC	*ta=	ko-	gu-	k-	k-	k-	k-	k-/s(a)-	ta
1EXC.NONSG	Ø	ka-	gim-	i-	i-	i-	i-	iak-	ekra
2NONSG	Ø	ki-	g(i)-	n-	n-	n-	n-	ik-	eka
3NONSG	*ra=	γ- (> Ø-)	γ- (> Ø-)	k-	k-	k-	k-	k-/ Ø-	era

Only Anejom̃ distinguishes all seven person-number categories. The languages of Erromango mark number elsewhere in the verbal complex: plural of all persons, and dual for first person only; 3SG and 3NONSG are formally identical. In addition, Erromangan 2SG and 2NONSG are identical, though they are distinguished in Ura. In the Tanna languages number—singular, dual, trial, and plural—is obligatorily marked elsewhere in the verbal complex, separate from the person markers. In addition to this, there is a number distinction (singular/nonsingular) in the third person subject markers. The markers of first and second person do not vary for number.

Coming to the main focus of this paper, the first person inclusive and third person nonsingular markers are formally identical in four of the Tanna languages. In the fifth, Kwamera, there is partial identity: *k-* is used for 1INC and 3NONSG in the dual number and also in the impersonal construction, while the other allomorph in each case is used in the trial and plural—*s(a-)* for 1INC and Ø- for 3NONSG (Lindstrom and Lynch 1994:10–12) . (Surface forms are given in parentheses where these differ from underlying forms.)[9]

7 The Anejom̃ forms given here are the aorist markers.

8 Only those POC forms that actually have reflexes in Tanna are listed here/

9 Thanks to Lamont Lindstrom for supplying the examples in (4).

(8) KWAMERA

Krau	k-rau-ata	Irau	k-rau-ata
we.INC.DU	1INC-DU-see	they.DU	3NONSG-DU-see
'We two saw it.'		'They two saw it.'	
Kətaha	s-ha-ata (> sata)	Iraha	Ø-ha-ata (> hata)
we.INC.PL	1INC-PL-see	they.PL	3NONSG-PL-see
'We (inc.) saw it.'		'They saw it.'	

2.2 Focal pronouns

In discussing the origins of some of these markers, I will need to talk about the forms of the focal pronouns, and so in table 2 below I list the focal pronouns as reconstructed for POC (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:67),[10] and those attested in the modern Southern Vanuatu languages (Lynch 2001:123–24.) Note that the nonsingular pronouns in Tanna and Aneityum are not free forms, but are followed by a number suffix (dual, trial, or plural).

TABLE 2. SOUTHERN VANUATU FOCAL PRONOUNS

		Erromango		**Tanna**					**Aneityum**
	POC	ERO	URA	NTN	WSN	LEN	SWT	KWM	ANJ
1SG	*[i]au	yau	yau	iio	iiou	io	iou	iou	añak
2SG	*[i]ko[e]	kik	ga	ik	ik	iik	iik	ik	aek
3SG	*ia	iyi	iyi	in	in	in	in	in	aen
1INC	*kita	koh	gis	kit-	kit-	kat-	kət-	kət-	akaj-
1EXC.NONSG	*kamami	kam	gim	itm-	itəm-	kam-	kəm-	kəm-	ajam-
2NONSG	*kamiu	kimi	ŋimi	itəm-	itəm^{w}-	kami-	kəmi-	kəmi-	ajou-
3NONSG	*[k]ira	iror	leil	il-	il-	il-	ili-	ir-	aar-

The 1EXC.NONSG and 2NONSG focal pronouns can be reconstructed to PSV as *gam(i) and *gami(u); the change of POC initial *k to *g in these pronouns in Southern Oceanic has been widely documented (Walsh 1982; Lynch and Ozanne-Rivierre 2001; Clark 2009:58). The 1INC pronoun *kita also shows this *k > *g change, but in addition shows that voicing/nasalisation had spread to the second consonant, with POC *t becoming PSV *d: *kita > *gida. While the consonants are clearly established as *g and *d in PSV, the vowels are less clear, since metathesis seems to have been taking place at about the time of the breakup of Proto-Southern Vanuatu:

10 Square brackets indicate that forms with and without the enclosed material can be reconstructed. Thus, for the second person singular, for example, *ikoe. *iko, *koe and *ko are all justifiable.

- the first vowel of the 1INC form seems to reflect *i in Ura, North Tanna and Whitesands, *a in Erromangan, Lenakel, and Anejom̃, and could reflect either *i or *a in Southwest Tanna and Kwamera;
- because of the "palatalised"[11] reflex of *d in Erromangan and Ura, the second vowel must have been *i in those languages;
- because of the absence of this palatalisation in the Tanna languages, the second vowel cannot have been *i, and was probably *a;
- in Anejom̃, *d > *j* irrespective of the following vowel, and so the second vowel could have been i or *a.

Thus the following reconstructions are suggested by each of the Southern Vanuatu languages; those in bold and underlined represent alternative possibilities, where two forms are possible antecedents for this particular language

(9) *gida NTN, WSN, **SWT**, **KWM**
*gadi ERO, URA, **ANJ**[12]
*gada **SWT**, **KWM**, **ANJ**

I will use the form PSV *gida ~ *gadi to refer to this set of reflexes, recognising that there must have been considerable PSV-internal variation (and even, as we shall see in §3.3, variation within the same language).

2.3 Velar correspondences

As can be seen from Table 1, the homophonous person-of-subject markers in the Tanna languages that I am interested are the 1INC and 3NONSG forms, both *k*-. In order to inform the discussion below, I will outline here the velar sound correspondences in Southern Vanuatu languages.[13]

TABLE 3. SOUTHERN VANUATU VELAR CORRESPONDENCES

POC	*g	*k (fortis?)	*k (lenis?)
PSV	*g	*k	*γ
PER	*g	*k	*γ
ERO	k-, -ŋk-, -ŋ	k-, -k-, -γ	k- / _i, γ elsewhere
URA	g-, -ŋk- /_C, -g- elsewhere, -k	k	γ-, -γ-, -Ø

11 Briefly, "palatalisation" is used in Oceanic studies to refer to the development of *t and *d before front vowels as palatal or alveolar sibilants and the like: *tʃ, ʃ, s* (often with a later change to *h*) and their voiced equivalents

12 The Erromangan and Ura forms appear to derive from PER *gədi, which comes from earlier *gadi: PER *ə has been reconstructed to account for the correspondence ERO *o*, URA *i* (Lynch 2001:90).

13 Table 3 includes the POC protophonemes "*k (fortis)" and "*k (lenis)". The distinction between fortis and lenis grades of certain POc consonants is discussed by Ross (1988:47–48). "Another phenomenon has confused the cross-over question, however, namely that many Oceanic languages display a second pair of grades beside the oral-/nasal-grade contrast. This other pair of grades I call 'fortis' grade and 'lenis' grade, since the process which gave rise to the contrast is one which Ultan (1 970), surveying consonant gradation, classes as 'lenition'. … The effect of lenition is to create a second reflex, in the first instance a voiced fricative, of each of the POC voiceless stops * p and *k" (Ross 1988:47).

PTN	*k	*k	*γ
NTN	k	k	Ø. ŋ
WSN	k	k	Ø. ŋ
LEN	k	k	Ø. k
SWT	k	k	Ø. k
KWM	k	k	Ø
ANJ	k	γ	γ

These correspondences are illustrated in some detail in Lynch (2001:30–39), and I will not clutter the text by giving details here, though some supporting data may be found in the appendix.

3. ORIGINS OF THE PERSON-OF-SUBJECT PREFIXES

The Anejom̃ 1INC and 3NONSG marker *ta* and *era* seem to derive quite regularly from the corresponding POC markers *ta= and *ra=, and will not concern us here.

3.1 The 1INC marker

I will suggest in this section that the 1INC markers in the languages of Erromango and Tanna derive ultimately from an abbreviated form of the focal pronoun. In (10) below,I repeat some information from preceding tables to illustrate this. The example shows focal pronouns and, in italics in brackets, the corresponding subject markers:

(10)		1INC	1EXC.NONSG	2NONSG
	POC	*kita	*ka[m]i, *kamami	*ka[m]u, *kamiu
	PSV	*gida ~ *gadi	*gam(i)	*gami(u)
	PER	*gəs	*g(a,i)m	*gimi(u)
	ERO	koh [*ko-*]	kam [*ka-]*	kimi [*ki-*]
	URA	gis [*gu-*]	gim [*gim-*]	ŋimi (< gimi) [*g(i)-*]

Apart from a regular vowel change in the Ura 1INC form and the irregular change of *g > *ŋ* in the second person pronoun form, the subject marker is he initial CV or CVC of the focal pronoun. These pronouns and the corresponding subject prefixes are clearly *g-initial. Lynch (2001:155) proposed that the 1INC form in Proto-Erromangan was *gV- (probably *go- or *gu-), and that it ultimately derived from the focal pronoun *gida ~ *gadi (with an idiosyncratic vowel change).

In Tanna, every language has *k-* (ignoring the allomorphy in Kwamera for the moment). As Table 3 shows, this could derive from either *kV- or *gV- in PSV. It makes sense to suggest that these forms are cognate with the Erromangan forms, that both derive from PSV *gV-, and that this in turn derives from the focal pronoun.

3.2 The 3NONSG marker

In Erromango, there is no number distinction in the third person. Anejom̃ and the Tanna languages do make a singular/nonsingular distinction in the third person. Given that the Erromangan and Tanna nonsingular forms are cognate, it would appear that the nonsingular form was generalised to the singular in Proto-Erromangan. In Proto-Erromangan, the underlying form of the 3NONSG prefix was PER *γ(V)-, which developed as Erromangan, Ura *γ*-. This is one of two regular reflexes of POc *k: I have suggested elsewhere that it reflects a lenis version of *k, with ERO, URA *k* reflecting fortis *k (see Table 3). The putative PSV ancestral form would thus have been *γ(V)- *Lynch 1982, 2001).

The Tanna languages all have *k*- marking third person nonsingular (again ignoring the allomorphy in Kwamera), and this suggests PTN *k(V)-. Now we saw above that *k* in the Tanna languages derives from POC *g and fortis *k in all languages, and also from lenis *k in Lenakel and Southwest Tanna. This marker could derive quite regularly from a form *k(V)- in PSV, but I will suggest in the next section that it derives *irregularly* from a PSV form *γ(V)-; that is, it is cognate with the Erromangan forms.

Before I do that, I should make some remarks regarding the origin of this prefix. I suggested above that the 1INC marker derived from an abbreviated from of the focal pronoun, PSV *gida ~ *gadi being abbreviated as *gV-. And I also noted that, at least in the Erromangan languages, the 1EXC.NONSG and 2NONSG prefixes are also obviously derivable from the corresponding focal pronouns (though at what stage in the development of the Southern Vanuatu languages this derivation occurred is less clear). However, the only similar source for the 3NONSG prefix that I can suggest is that it is an abbreviated form of the focal pronoun *[k]ira. The main drawback to this suggestion is that the *k of *[k]ira is not reflected in any Tanna language, or indeed in any Southern Vanuatu language, in the focal pronoun. It may be, though, that the form was initially *kira, that a shortened form of this was co-opted as the subject prefix, and then the *k was dropped from the focal pronoun.

3.3 Allomorphy in Kwamera

The discussion so far suggests that the two markers under discussion were basically distinct at the PSV level, but came to be homophonous in Tanna languages because of a phonological merger:

(11)

	1INC	3NONSG
PSV	*gV-	*kV- or *γV-
PER	*gV-	*γV-
PTN	*kV-	*kV- or *γV-
Tanna languages	k-	k-

Recall, however, that each of these markers has two allomorphs in Kwamera, as follows:

(12)

KWAMERA	1INC	3NONSG
dual	k-	k-
trial and plural	s(a)-	Ø-

This is important as far as the current discussion is concerned. It suggests that, at some stage in the history of the Tanna languages, the two markers under consideration—1INC and 3NONSG—must have been formally distinct, and that their homophony is a more recent development.

3.3.1 The 3NONSG marker

A possible explanation for the allomorphy in the 3NONSG form is this. If the PTN form was indeed *γV-, or fluctuated between *k(V)- and *γV-, then the regular Kwamera reflex would be Ø-, and this is what we get in the trial and plural. However, imperatives in all Tanna languages are marked with Ø-: that is, no subject marking occurs. Thus, in the 1INC dual, Ø- plus the dual marker *rau-* would either be homophonous with a dual imperative, or would give an *r*-initial verb which would probably be interpreted at first hearing as being in the third person singular, since *r-* is the 3SG marker. To avoid this misinterpretation, the variant with *k-* was used to mark the person-of-subject. (This, of course, begs the question of why Ø- was used in the trial and plural, since such verbs could also be interpreted as imperatives.)

In addition, if the allomorph Ø- occurred in this context in Kwamera, then it would be difficult to distinguish an impersonal construction from a singular imperative: if (7) above, *k-osi pukah nah* 'Someone killed the pig'. were in fact *Ø-osi pukah nah*, for example, the immediate interpretation would likely be 'Kill the pig!'. So Kwamera *k-* has a disambiguating function here.

Now if the PTN 3NONSG marker was *γV-, then the Lenakel and Southwest Tanna reflexes *k-* present no problems: they are regular reflexes of *γ anyway. We thus only need to account for why the North Tanna and Whitesands markers are *k-* rather than Ø- (or *ŋ-*): disambiguation is also a likely (partial) explanation. What all of this suggests that there may have been some fluctuation between *k(V)- and *γV- '3NONSG' in Proto-Tanna, that *γ did not develop as a fricative but either lenited to Ø or strengthened to *k,* and that there was a tendency for strengthening to occur so as to avoid misinterpretations of 3NONSG verbs as imperatives.

3.3.2 The 1INC marker

I suggested above that the 1INC marker derived from PSV *g(V)-, which in turn is an abbreviated form of the corresponding focal pronoun *gida ~ *gadi. All languages other than Kwamera show invariant *k-*, but Kwamera has *k-* in the dual and *s(a)-* in the trial and plural. A possible origin of the latter is the *second* syllable of the focal pronoun: alveolar stops palatalised before *i. Now with *t, both *s* and *h* occur as reflexes before *i; the latter is more frequent, but *s* occurs in forms like PSOC*tikon (< POC *tokon) 'walk with a stick' > *k-a/skən* 'walking-stick' (where / separates cognate from non-cognate material), or PSOC *mateli 'big' > *asori*.[14] Unfortunately, I have only one possible example of *di in Kwamera: *kadik 'black biting ant' > *m^{w}i/ahi*, where *m^{w}i* means 'mosquito'. A possible development, however, is:

(13) *gadi-DU-VERB > **ga- DU-VERB > *k-* DU-VERB
*gadi-TL/PL-VERB > **di- TL/PL-VERB > *s-* TL/PL-VERB

I think this explains the facts. However, I have no explanation at all for *why* the second syllable rather than the first was used in the trial and plural.

4. CONCLUSION

The homophony of the two markers in the Tanna languages under discussion here is accidental. They have different origins: one derives from PSV *g(V)- which is an abbreviated form of the 1INC focal pronoun, the other from PSV *γ(V)-, which just might possibly be an abbreviated form of the 3NONSG focal pronoun.

14 Lamont Lindstrom (pers. comm., 24 April, 2020) notes that /s/ ~ /h/ variation occurs in Kwamera, with some speakers switching from /s/ to /h/ in some lexical items.

Subsequent sound changes have led to *g and * γ merging as *k* in Tanna languages, though the allomorphy in Kwamera shows that the markers are still not completely homophonous.

How speakers deal with this homophony is not clear. I suspect context plays a very large part in disambiguation, as does the use of subject pronouns as in the Kwamera examples in (8): subject pronouns are normally not present in regular clauses, and are normally only used for emphasis,[15] but in these two persons I suspect they are rather more frequent in non-emphatic clauses.

5. POSTSCRIPT: SIMILAR SYNCRETISM IN NESE

Elizabeth Pearce has drawn my attention to a similar phenomenon in Nese, a moribund language spoken in northwest Malakula (see Pearce 2012:217)—something which I recall noticing fifteen years ago or so but must have forgotten about in the interim. Nese also has preverbal prefixes marking person-of-subject, and in Nese the 1INC and 3NONSG are formally identical. Crowley (2006:67) gives the two forms as *rri-*, while Takau's much more comprehensiove treatment of Nese gives them as *rrV-* (Takau 2016:218): *V* represents a vowel harmonising with the first vowel of the root, and *rr* represents a trill (as opposed to a flap *r*).

The explanation is similar in nature to that given for the Tanna languages: a merger of two protophonemes. In Nese, POC *d and *r both merge, as *rr* (Lynch 2019): 1INC *rrV-* seems to derive from an abbreviated form of the focal pronoun *gida, while 3NONSG *rrV-* derives from the subject-marker *ra-.

APPENDIX. VELAR SOUND CORRESPONDENCES

I present here some data illustrating the velar sound correspondences discussed in §2.3 (see details in Table 3). Protoforms marked simply with an asterisk are POC; forms from other protolanguages are so labelled. POC reconstructions come from the various volumes by Ross, Pawley and Osmond (see references), PNCV from Clark (2009), and PSOC reconstructions are my own.

1. POC *g

Some reflexes of POC or PSOC forms containing *g in the Erromangan languages and Anejom̃ are given in (i), while Tanna examples are in (ii):

(i)	ERO	URA	ANJ
PSOC *igo[e] 'you sg.'	ki/k	ga	a/ek
*gomu 'hold in mouth'	a/ŋkmi	a/ŋmu	a/kum^{w}
PSOC *garai 'flying-fox'	na/ŋkraiu/ŋlai	ne/krai	
*baga 'banyan'	n/paŋ	bogu	n/pak
*-gu 'my'	-ŋ	-k	-k
PSOC *baig(a,e) 'turban shell'	ne/mpoŋ	—	—

15 Thus in Lenakel, for example, *i-em-vən* (1EXC-PAST-go) expresses non-emphatic 'I went'. The use of the focal pronoun subject emphasises it: *io i-em-vən* (I 1EXC-PAST-go) means something like '*I* went', 'it was me who went'.

(ii)	NTN	WSN	LEN	SWT	KWM
PSOC *igo[e] ‘you SG’	ik	ik	iik	iik	ik
*gomu ‘put in mouth’	—	—	a/kum^{w}	—	a/k^{w}m^{w}i
PSOC *garai ‘flying-fox’	kəi	kəi	kəl	kil/avən	kiri
*baga ‘banyan’	—	na/pək	ne/oək	—	nə/pek
*-gu ‘my’	-k	-k	-k	-k	-k
PSV *gam(i) ‘1EXC.NONSG’	—	—	kam-	kəm-	kəm-

2. POC *k

Example (iii) shows forms containing POC or PSOC *k in the Erromangan languages and Anejom̃:

(iii)	ERO	URA	ANJ
*keli ‘dig	o/ɣəl-	o/ɣli	a/ɣjii
*kita ‘see’	o/ɣhi	o/ɣsi	e/ɣet
*tasik ‘sea’	n/toɣ	de	—
*kani ‘eat’	eni	eni	ɣiñ
*toka ‘stay’	e/te	e/ra	e/teɣ
*kayu ‘tree’	n/ei	n/i	n/ɣai
*b(o,u)kas(i) ‘pig’	no/mpɣahi	u/mɣas	pikaθ (*k* for expected *ɣ*)
PSV *biku- ‘tail/[16]	novlai-mpɣo-	nevli-mɣe-	n/iɣe-

One set of Tanna reflexes,may derive from POC lenis *k, Proto-Tanna *ɣ: it was regularly lost in Kwamera; in the other languages, it was often lost, but was retained in certain phonological contexts (which I will not detail here), as *ŋ* in North Tanna and Whitesands and as *k* in Lenakel and Southwest Tanna):

(iv)	NTN	WSN	LEN	SWT	KWM
*keli ‘dig	il	el	il	kəl	eri
*tasik ‘sea’	dehi	nə/tehi	tehe	tahik	təsi
*kani ‘eat’	un	on	kŋn	aan	ani
*toka ‘stay’	a/təŋ	a/təŋ	a/rək	a/lə	a/ra
*manuk ‘bird’	meniŋ	menəŋ	menuk	mana	menu
*kayu ‘tree’	nə/ŋ	nə/ŋi	nə/k	n/ai	n/ei

The other set, which I suggested derived from fortis *k and attributed to Proto-Tanna *k, shows *k > *k* in all five languages:

(v)	NTN	WSN	LEN	SWT	KWM
*kalo ‘spider’	ma/kəl	ma/kali	ma/kal	m^{w}a/kal	kam/kəri
PSOC *tikon ‘crutch’	k-a/skən	k-a/skən	k-a/skən	k-a/skən	k-a/skən
*b(o,u)kas(i) ‘pig’	pukəs	pukah	pukas	pukah	pukah
PSV *biku- ‘tail’	nə/bikə	nə/pikə	nə/pikə	nə/pikou	nə/piki

16 Proto-Southern Vanuatu probably accreted an initial *b- to POc *ikuR., which is reflected in Erromango and Tanna, though not in Aneityum

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