

5 Signs of/on Power, Power on/of Signs: Language-Based Tourism, Linguistic Landscapes and Onomastics on Norfolk Island

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Ani Norfuk Ailen es wan gud said f'wan hohladi.
Norfolk Island is a great place for a holiday, isn't it?
(*The Norfolk Islander*, 20 May 2008)

Arriving

When one arrives by plane at Norfolk Island International Airport the sign above the baggage collection carousel appears in both Norf'k and English: 'Welkam tu Norf'k Ailen / Welcome to Norfolk Island'. One is immediately made aware of the diglossic language situation on the island and the two languages' struggle for linguistic space within the onomastic environment, or *onomasto-sphere*. Ronström (2009: 179) has posed an island as 'a linguistic archipelago, a world of words'. While the Norfolk archipelago does contain many words, many (micro-)worlds and many names, the way these names and their influence are played out within the historical and social fabric of daily life is far from understood. This chapter attempts to reconcile several of these social and linguistic matters through a methodology of linguistic landscapes (LL). It employs various approaches to understanding the power of names and how LL can contribute to an understanding of factors involved in the revival of minority and endangered languages. Our approach builds on previous LL research in that we consider an amalgamated corpus of business names and toponyms in both physical and cultural landscapes.

The linguistic focus of this chapter is concerned with a new function of Norf'k, the endangered language spoken by the descendants of the HMS *Bounty* mutineers, and its role in redefining not only the role of language and

tourism but also how the power differential between Norf'k and English has been transformed and mediated through LL and signage production and presentation. The new instrumental function of Norf'k in the LL is a value-enhancing tool for Norfolk tourism of great economic significance. The language of Norfolk tourism offers an important contribution to broadening the appeal of the language to younger islanders and, consequently, signifies an important element in Norf'k language revival and language empowerment.

The tourism promotion of Norfolk Island commonly presents the island as a South Seas paradise with pristine ocean views, coconut palms – which do not actually bear fruit because the climate is not tropical enough – and lazy days in the sunshine among rolling hills and roaming cows. Norfolk Island is one of the many small Pacific islands whose main sources of income are tourism and islanders living away, typically in Australia and New Zealand, who send some of their income back to the island. Up to the commencement of the Second World War, the economy of Norfolk Island, the easternmost part of the Commonwealth of Australia, was described as 'subsistence affluence'. Working on one's own land was sufficient to give one a comfortable life, with sufficient time for *hilis*, a feeling of being pleasantly unenergetic, especially after relaxing for a short while. Local produce could be supplemented with fish and seafood and there was enough livestock on the island to satisfy the local demand for meat. There were few visitors, mainly the occasional passengers of cruise ships who called on Norfolk, and a small number of visitors who were attracted by the island's natural beauty, the absence of motor cars, the pleasant climate and the hospitality of its inhabitants. Local publications narrate stories of work and leisure time (e.g. Wiseman, 1977) and remind us sentimentally of the days that were on Norfolk Island. Marrington (1981) develops our imagination of what Norfolk was like in the years before television, cars and, most importantly, tourism. While some of these recollections concern the role of language, place names and the naming of the landscape in general, none addresses any of the functions of language as a tourist drawcard, nor the character of the Norf'k–English spectrum in the hundreds of street, business and house signs which pepper the green island setting.

Until the 1960s most Norfolk Islanders were bilingual, speaking English with outsiders, in official and religious contexts and at the school, and Norf'k among themselves in familiar and informal settings and in some work situations such as fishing or gardening. Not only was Norf'k powerless *vis-à-vis* English, but the Australian administration also applied a number of measures to assimilate the islanders and to eliminate the use of Norf'k. Still, the language survived and is now experiencing a kind of renaissance. Its constantly increasing use in the tourism industry demonstrates how a language that was once despised and hidden from outsiders is now proudly displayed to the world. Norf'k has been socially, politically and toponymically transformed from being a powerless, stigmatised language to a strong

cultural marker and delineator of insider identity and, in some domains, a language of power and influence. It is in these marginal spheres, liminal realms and edges emphasised by methods such as those of a LL analysis that minority languages like Norf'k can show starkly their strengths and weaknesses.

This is not the place to provide details relating language ideology, language and identity, and language and landscape to Norfolk place naming. The interested reader is referred to Nash's (2013) analysis of Norfolk/Norf'k toponymy. We concern ourselves with how a reading of Norfolk's representations of language, power and signs within a study of the LL is related to contemporary work on the mediation of language, toponymy, tourism and cultural relations in Australia (e.g. [Clark, 2009](#); [Kostanski, 2011](#)) and work on language, power and the role of the history of naming in inscribing linguistic representation in contested multilingual landscapes (e.g. [Azaryahu, 1996](#); [Berg & Vuolteenaho, 2009](#); [Rose-Redwood *et al.*, 2010](#)). Among the burgeoning amount of work relating contemporary onomastics and the LL, Tan's (2011) analysis of 'mixed signals' and the role of language policy in how signs are represented in Singapore and Diver's (2011) work on the minority Occitan language in France are particularly relevant: names exist within often changeable and dynamic milieus, present as onomastic and reified linguistic formulations in political and cultural edge space.

While these borderlines are generally posed as being physical, LL studies have also focused on more abstract domains, such as the semiotic realm within minority language situations (e.g. [Hornsby & Vigers, 2012](#)) and the role of names, onomastics and marketing in the branding and trade-marking of products and business ([Tufi & Blackwood, 2010](#)). In addition to Kallen's (2009) analysis of tourism and linguistic representation in Ireland, Dray's (2010) consideration of ideological struggles in the language-contact situation in Jamaica, and Piller's (2010) 'making space and identity through travel' arguments, we derive a theoretical framework which builds on and incorporates tourism-research-based applications of the LL as well as tackling a deeper ecological reading of signs, language ideologies and contestation integral to an ecological interpretation of the language of tourism on Norfolk Island. Our position also builds on tourism and toponymy research and how place names can come to be commodified and even consumed as souvenirs and within acts of tourism as performance ([Light, 2014](#)).

The Linguistic Landscape or 'Langscape' of Norfolk Island

Mainland Australia does not have an official language. Norf'k and English are both official on Norfolk Island. Norf'k, also known as the Pitkern-Norf'k language, arose on Pitcairn Island as a consequence of the mutiny on



Figure 5.1 The slogan ‘home of the bounty folk’ as featured on a shopping bag, c. 2004

the *Bounty*. The descendants on Norfolk are known as ‘the *Bounty* folk’, as one shopping bag expresses it (see Figure 5.1). This story is well known among the Australian visitors of the ‘builder generation’ (people born from about 1925 to 1946) and indeed worldwide among those educated before the 1960s. Few younger visitors know this fascinating story, and the culture and language that resulted from it are no longer the attraction they once were.

About 800 inhabitants, roughly 50% of the island’s permanent population, still speak Norf’k, although relatively few are proficient in its traditional broad form, which was brought from Pitcairn Island in 1856 and spoken in the early years on Norfolk. Norf’k is to a large extent an esoteric insider language, which was seldom heard by visitors and which was regarded by the administration, education sector and even some of its speakers as a burden rather than an asset; Norf’k was a linguistic hindrance, a negative rather than a positive tool of linguistic power. The invisibility and powerless nature of Norf’k extended to official maps and signage, or lack thereof: because the language was marginalised, few visitors would ever become aware of the existence of the numerous unofficial place names which coexist alongside the more obvious and transparent official place names within the toponymosphere and the LL (Nash, 2013). The names did not and many still do not exist on official maps or in signage. It was not until around the 1980s that the language started to feature in the island’s newspapers or public signs. This has changed dramatically over the last 20 years, in part as a response to the perceived expectations of visitors to the island (tourists enjoy seeing Norf’k in the LL) and in part as a consequence of the Pitcairn descendants, who now strongly assert their cultural and

linguistic presence and identity on the physical and cultural landscape. The presence or absence of Norf'k in the 'landscape' of Norfolk – how language appears in the landscape – is important for assessing the ethno-linguistic vitality of the language in relation to the superordinate Standard Australian English. This assessment should also help reach a better understanding of why Norf'k speakers have named places and things in the way they have and why different populations have embraced or shunned the use of such onomastic behaviour.

Over the last two generations the importance of Norf'k as a language of everyday communication has lessened considerably, although its use as a marker of separate identity has increased (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2006). To be a marker of identity is an insufficient basis for language revival, and younger non-speakers and semi-speakers require instrumental and, in particular, economic incentives as well. The promotion of language as an instrument for strengthening the flailing tourism industry of Norfolk Island has become one of the factors that sustain the ongoing language revival. This process of language revival exists not only as a power play within the toponymic LL, as signs and placenames, but also within the onomastics and discourse of tourism. The pertinent examples of *Bounty*-inspired articles and the appearance of Norf'k on postcards, tea towels and other souvenirs are the most prominent within this sphere.

A Short History of Norfolk Tourism

The beginning of Norfolk tourism was modest. In 1922, there were 38 visitors recorded; there were 793 in 1929 and 1450 visitors in 1933. By 1960 the communal centre of the island, Burnt Pine, was sprawling with businesses and guesthouses catering for tourists. From this time many of these tourist facilities contributed to the evolving onomasto-scape of personal names attached to places and made sense of in terms of the (tourist) function they served.

To understand the island's tourism potential, it is necessary to comment briefly on its history. Between 1788 and 1855 the island featured two penal settlements, the second settlement leaving behind a number of significant Georgian buildings and the ruins of the prisons, which are now listed as a World Heritage Site (see Figure 5.2). The penal colony was a place of enormous human suffering and despair and, like other penal sites, thanatourism – a tourism focused on heritage atrocity and death (Best, 2007) – plays a significant role.

In 1856, after the penal colony was abandoned and the island again became uninhabited, what is labelled as Norfolk's third settlement began. A number of the descendants of the mutiny of the *Bounty*, who had outgrown the resources of Pitcairn Island, were relocated to Norfolk Island and given generous land grants. They brought with them their mixed



Figure 5.2 World Heritage Site sign. Photograph by Peter Mühlhäusler, 2011

Tahitian–West Indian–English culture and language, Pitkern–Norf’k, and they still make up about 50% of the island’s permanent population of 1800, a fairly large number, considering the island measures only 5 by 8 kilometres. The tangible heritage of the Pitcairn descendants is relatively restricted, is generally held in private hands and is not a major attraction for tourists.

Tourism, unsurprisingly, centred around the island’s natural assets, particularly its unique flora and fauna, featuring a large range of endemic species, such as the Norfolk pine, and the remnants of the penal settlement. Norfolk was marketed variably as the Madeira of the Pacific, a natural paradise (see Mühlhäusler & Stratford, 1999) or a former hellhole turned into paradise. Until a generation ago the story of the mutiny on the *Bounty* and the British–Tahitian South Seas utopia on Pitcairn Island was part of the canon of standard cultural knowledge in most Western countries. Best-sellers such as Nordhoff and Hall’s *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1932) and their *Pitcairn’s Island* (1934), which have been republished in numerous editions and several languages, helped to keep the memory of the mutiny alive, as did five movies. Since then this story has gradually faded from public awareness and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the descendants of

the *Bounty* mutineers to capitalise on it. The sparse information given about the history of the Pitcairn descendants in promotional brochures and visitor maps appears to be insufficient to attract the interest of younger visitors. While some Norfolk street names (e.g. *Edward Young Road*, *John Adams Road* and *Bligh Court*) remembering the *Bounty* story and family names relevant to Pitcairn and the *Bounty* do exist in the linguistic landscape as possible educational tools, much of the *Bounty*'s story in relation to Pitcairn and Norfolk continues to be ill-understood by visitors.

Being exotic, unique and different from mainland Australia and New Zealand, which provide the bulk of visitors, remains the main selling point. Given the absence of a casino or night-life, and the significant cost of travelling to Norfolk Island (a flight to and a week's accommodation on Norfolk Island can cost Australians about \$2500, while holidays in Bali or Vietnam can be had for \$1000), there are two main groups of visitors: young couples who want to get away from it all and affluent older couples. Or, as it is expressed locally, 'the newly-weds and nearly-deads'. Eco-tourism and cultural tourism, in spite of impressive efforts, still have not reached their potential.

Domains of Norf'k in the Tourism Industry: Language and Power Relations

Visitors typically stay for one week and spend most of their time on the numerous bus tours, fishing, hiking and shopping. Typical events staged for tourists include progressive dinners, nature walks, a 'Night as a Convict' tour, visits to the World Heritage Site around Kingston, fishing and boating, and theatre performances, such as re-enactments of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. While several tour operators offer a cultural tour, with the exception of a small number of 'boutique' tours, their cultural and language content rarely goes beyond superficial information and after a week visitors are left with little understanding of the culture of the islanders.

There are two layers of language use on Norfolk: the non-transparent layer comprises esoteric usages in the private domain; and the transparent layer is generally seen in the public domain, in tourism and the speaking and use of 'instant Norf'k' (Laycock, 1989). The domains where Norf'k is used have significantly changed over its history. Norf'k was previously an oral language used in the private domain and restricted exclusively to the Pitcairn descendants. Its oral use in the family, traditional industries and in the playground has decreased over the last 50 years while its presence in the only school on the island, at public events, on the radio, in the Legislative Assembly and in print has increased. Whereas in the past Norf'k was hidden from visitors, it is now promoted in a number of tourism contexts, although in a limited form only; the linguistic power differential has shifted. One

element of this shift has been mediated through naming, in particular in how names are staged, formulated and presented in the LL.

Present-day tourists will encounter a small number of written phrases and a few emblematic spoken words. What the use of Norf'k in the tourism industry emphasises is how the un-esoteric, symbolic and transparent use of Norf'k is open to outsider purview, while the more esoteric and substantial aspects of Norf'k's cultural weight are rarely shown to outsiders. 'Tourist Norf'k' as a language type within a certain domain is, then, a kind of digestible linguistic package, which can be presented and even sold to tourists, literally through books and postcards, and metaphorically through appearance in signs. In some instances, translation is used to help tourists get the message, as in the 2014 promotional material of the Baunti Escapes tour company, because the presented Norf'k orthography would be baffling to most English readers:

*Dubaagen gat wan said said...
Daun orn'sehn nor s'fulap f' tuu mach salan en em wortas es kristl kliya.
Dubaagen noe mor. Norf'k Ailen es aa said.*

Imagine a place where...
The beaches were uncrowded and the water crystal clear.
Imagine no more.
Norfolk is that place.

The language of tourism conveys how language can become disconnected from its original domains of use and become a shiftable and flexible instrument for use in other varying domains. In this sense, Norf'k's 'domain loss' (i.e. reduced use at home) has meant 'domain gain' through the opening of other venues. Again, the linguistic, onomastic and LL power has shifted, revealing, mediating and attempting to reconcile tensions between public and private, insider and outsider, and ultimately what-where Norf'k is and what-where English is.

Recent tourist branding repositioned Norfolk Island from a geographic identity to a destination identity based on experience. Part of this experience is 'a local language blending of Old English seafaring and Tahitian and a telephone directory listed by nicknames' (Prideaux & Watson, 2010: 34). In another brochure, from 2006, the Norf'k language is described as 'a singsong mix of Georgian English and Tahitian that is one of the rarest in the world'. Still, it is not clear whether tourists react positively to how idiosyncratic Norf'k appears in the LL and how difficult to read it appears to be for an English speaker. 'Whataway Yorlye' (see Figure 5.3) in Norf'k means 'How are you?' and is often spelled *wut-a-wey* or *watawieh*. It is the most common Norf'k term learnt by outsiders when coming to Norfolk and is the quint-essential Norf'k expression, used especially in the tourism industry. It is

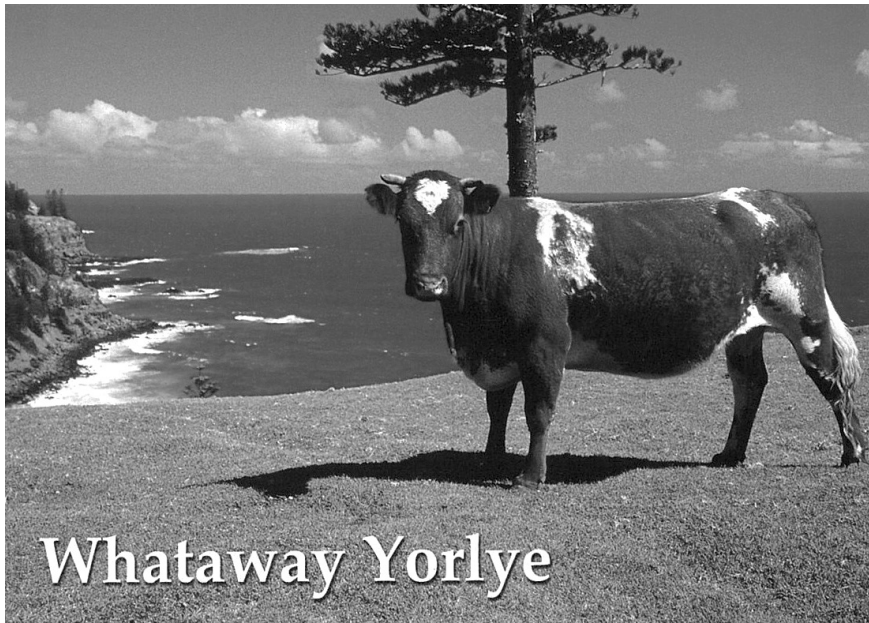


Figure 5.3 ‘Whataway Yorlye’ (How are you all?) postcard, c. 2005

also the name of a clothes designer, which exclaims on its sign ‘*Se meke et orn Norfolk Island*’ (It’s made on Norfolk Island) (see Figure 5.4).

In the absence of funding for producing public road signs, the local language is promoted in print. The official use of Norf’k in tourism is also exemplified in the message on the departure card: ‘*All yorlye kum back see uklan soon*’, which is given without any English translation (You all please come back and see us [the Norfolk Islanders] soon). Norf’k is also used by bodies other than Norfolk Tourism. The entrances to the Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Garden propose ‘*Yorlye cum look orn*’ (You all please come and take/have a look), while signs in Norf’k have recently been put up in the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area (KAVHA), including the use of ‘*klohset*’ (toilet) in one of their properties (see Figure 5.5). Their principal information brochure is bilingual and bilingual signage is ~~also~~ found at the Norfolk Museum.

By the end of 2004, the Norf’k language had been made co-official with English, and serious work began on a number of projects in a cooperative research partnership between the University of Adelaide and the Norfolk Island Government to meet the following aims: to increase the visibility of the language through dual language signage and interpretive materials for the KAVHA area and other culturally significant locations; to promote



Figure 5.4 Sign for the Wutaway Designs clothes store. 'It's made on Norfolk Island!' Photograph by Joshua Nash, 2007



Figure 5.5 *Klohset* (closet, toilet) sign at the KAVHA. Photograph by Peter Mühlhäusler, 2011



Faasfain 'Salan Bai Dems Nikniem

Fast find a person by their nickname

A		D			
Aemi	22789	Dar Bizziebee	22296	Golla (Jnr)	22443
B		Deej	22247	Golla (Snr)	22474
Bash	22488	Derms	22473	George	22496
Bear	22760	Devil	22125	Glover	22496
Bebs	22261	Diddles	22487	Gotti	22445
Beef	24631	Dids	22287	Gran	22448
Bella	22472	Diesel	22476	Griffo	22800
Biddi	22217	Diesel (Finch)	24121	Grin	22872
Bing	22882	Doby	22428	Gumboots	22448
Blitti	22442	Doodus	22715	Gumby	22422
Bonnet	22388	Mobile	80448	Mobile	80417
Boo	22447	Doosy	22448	H	
Booda	22889	Drake	22261	Hess	22888
Bookie	22882	Drill	22188	Honey	22178
Boonie	22817	Duck	22448	Honkey-Dorey	22800
Boot	22285	Dude	80282	Hook	22494
Barry	22882	Dussa	24188	Hose	22818
Mobile	80214	F		Huggy	22178
Boy	22447	Father	22744	Hussein	22184
Bubby	22388	Mobile	80288	I	
Bugs	24779	Feathers	22388	Ikey	22828
Bunt	22797	Mobile	80288	J	
C		Fishy	22442	Jacko	22252
Cane Toad	22228	Fla	22422	Jap	22888
Carrots	22448	Fletch	22442	Junny	22448
Cat	22878	Foxy	22708	K	
Chilla	22228	Foxy - Snr	22424	Kik Kik	22258
China	22448	Frenzy	22222	Kik	22288
Chinny	22441	Mobile	80422	Kissard	22218
Cocky	22228	Freshie	22424	Kitha	22771
Coon	22224	G		Knuckles	22441
Cookie	22224	Gags	22242	Koota	22448
Mobile	80408	Garnet	22714		
Cowboy	24952	Goldie	22424		
Crocket	22447	Goof	22672		
Crowbar	24241	Mobile	80288		
Culla	22242				

Figure 5.6 An extract from the Norfolk Island telephone directory (2005) showing nickname listings

expertise and exhibition resources in Norfolk culture and language at the Museum; and to develop products for linguistic and cultural tourism. As we have suggested, while these incentives to promote Norf'k and the culture of the Pitcairn descendants through placing language in the LL within the power and economic domains of tourism, what is not clear is whether the tension between how language appears and how people want language to appear is reconciled by tourism itself or the discourse of tourism.



Figure 5.7 'Werken dar shep' (working the ship) miniature stamp sheet, issued in 2004. Artwork by Tracy Yager

In 2008, the Government declared the 'Year of the Norfolk Language' and this was reported in the *Norfolk Window*, a publication catering for visitors and edited by the head of the Norfolk Island Tourism Association. The use of the language in tourism is meant to meet a number of objectives: to create greater awareness among other islanders of the value of this formerly denigrated language; to emphasise the uniqueness of the island; to create tourism products that can add value to the tourism industry; and to provide employment opportunities for speakers of the Norf'k language. This is likely to provide an important factor in language revival. The first two points relate to the awareness and appreciation of components of language revival and manifest themselves through public signage and use of the language in the telephone directory, especially the use of nicknames (see Figure 5.6), phone cards, shops, stamps (see Figure 5.7), departure cards, advertisements and names of places.

Since Mühlhäusler started linguistic fieldwork on Norfolk Island in 1997, there has been a significant increase in the visibility of the language, including in the names of businesses catering primarily for tourists:

Aata Orn Tours with Arthur Evans

A pun: *aata* means 'to admire'. It is probably derived from the anthroponym *Arthur*.

Aatuti Art

Aatuti is a small black reef fish.

Jes Himi

‘Just you and me’: *himi* is a dual pronoun.

Iwii Paradis

‘Little paradise’.

Eldoo Hire Cars

Eldoo, ‘it is possible, affordable, can be done’.

Se Moosa Bus¹

The name of a mobile food stall, a pun on English *bus* and the Norf’k word *bus*, ‘to burst’. The name literally means ‘I’m [here](#) to burst’.

Big Suff

The name of a surf shop, playing on the ambiguity of this phrase in Norf’k, which means both ‘big waves’ and ‘important person’.

What must be remembered regarding the reality of this increase in physical exposure in and of Norf’k in the cultural landscape and LL is the concomitant reality that, over time, less Norf’k is being spoken by the Norfolk Islanders. While this former language of defiance and insiderhood, which suffered major setbacks to its linguistic health in the last century, is seemingly making a comeback on the onomastic and LL front through the domain of tourism, this public exposure has occurred and is occurring in parallel to a marked decrease in the intergenerational transmission of (spoken) Norf’k. The reasons for this decrease are complex. The way Norf’k is spelled is one of these.

Spelling and Representing Norf’k

As yet there is no official spelling of Norf’k and tourists will encounter a fair bit of variation. The marketing of products and signs feature a spelling similar to English: Norf’k² is spelled as an ‘eye dialect’, as in ‘*Yorlye cum look orn*’. Using a phonemic spelling radically distances the language from English. Tourists are left to ponder the meaning of untranslated captions such as ‘*watawieh?*’ (how are you?), ‘*nobata said*’ (no better place [to be]) and ‘*soe hatiih!*’ (so here you go!) in the current official guide given to the new arrivals at the airport.

Until the last decades of the 20th century Norf’k had been an oral language. Its increasing use in written documents has created difficulties that are yet to be resolved, although having an agreed writing system sufficiently different from English could give the language more social power. The spelling issue is ongoing because it is not only a technical matter

concerning linguistics and orthography but also a social and psychological question involving cultural allegiances and history (some choose not to write in particular ways because they do not like those who devised particular writing systems). What is worth considering are the relative merits of several writing systems, and how these compare to other, more ad hoc methods of representing the language in the landscape. Buffett and Laycock's (1988) system has met with a fair degree of resistance in the community. Many feel it is 'not the language they are speaking' and that Palmer's (1986) system and other suggestions put forward by other community members are more realistic and easier to use. The outcome of the spelling debate will be influenced by numerous external constraints, including the dominant role of English in the lives of most islanders and the desirability of the written form to be easily accessible to visitors. As such, the role and mode of appearance

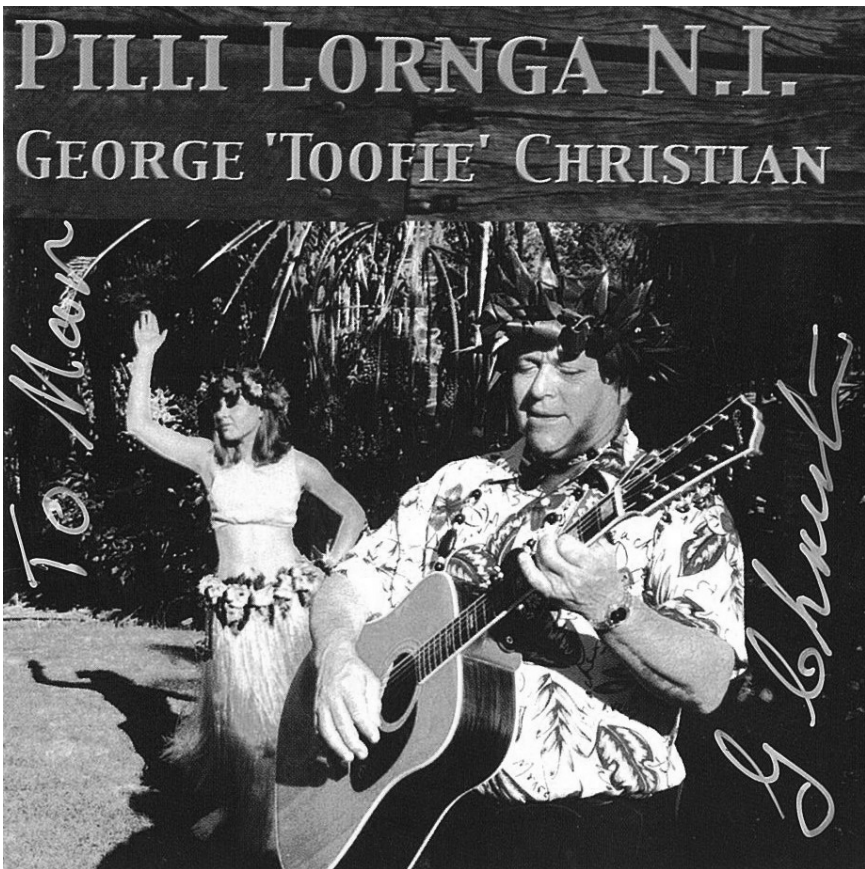


Figure 5.8 *Pilli Lornga N.I.* ('Stuck on N.I.') CD cover, 2001



Figure 5.9 Entrance sign for A Walk in the Wild (*Atrip ina Stik* nature walk) showing other uses of Norf’k (*Kamiindefe* for ‘Entrance’). Photograph by Peter Mühlhäusler, 2006

of Norf’k in the LL is as much influenced by local judgement as it is by externally driven economic and power matters.

In spite of the continued use of different spelling conventions, the written language is increasingly used to enhance products and events. Examples include:

- (1) CD covers (Figure 5.8), T-shirts and teatowels with Norf’k words;
- (2) the Wonderland Night Walk offered by local poet Archie Bigg, featuring a walk through a forest illuminated by thousands of Christmas lights, tableaux of typical Norfolk Island scenes and recitations of poetry partly in Norf’k;
- (3) nature walk signage (Figure 5.9);
- (4) a brief language lesson as part of the Norfolk Culture Tours and the appearance of Norf’k in tourism brochures;
- (5) postcards featuring a Norf’k message (Figure 5.3);
- (6) the bilingual version of the tourism brochure for KAVHA (Norf’k and English);
- (7) signs in Norf’k, including several official street names and names of guesthouses, businesses and private homes;
- (8) bilingual menus, featuring the Norf’k names of traditional island dishes (these are becoming more common).

There are moves underway for language courses for mainlanders and visitors, as well as other projects. While all these developments would seem positive, making Norf’k a tourist attraction is not without problems. The

informal development of linguistic tourism products to date has contributed to the tension between authenticity and accessibility in language. Tourists clearly are attracted by the exotic nature of the language and its romantic history (it is variably characterised as combining Old English, Ancient Tahitian, Low German, West Country dialects and Welsh, although these claims do not stand up to scrutiny). The Norfolk Air in-flight magazine states:

What makes Norfolk Island Unique...

Norfolk is home to one of the world's rarest languages, with around 1000 locals speaking a Pitcairn-Norfolk dialect – a strange but fun mix of sing-song Tahitian and West Country English – a relic of the *Bounty* mutineers who hid on remote Pitcairn Island with their Tahitian wives. Their descendants later brought the hybrid language to Norfolk. (*Norfolk-Bound*, 2002: 3)

The fact that Norf'k is related to English makes it accessible and visitors are led to believe that it can be mastered with little effort; they are encouraged to speak it during the cultural tour and one of the two guides to the language is called *Speak Norfolk Today* (Buffett & Laycock, 1988). What they do not realise is that the variety they are familiarised with is known as 'Instant Norf'k' (Laycock, 1989), an easy-to-master variety markedly different and distinct from the broad variety of the language generally spoken by older Pitcairn descendants.

Is the Writing on the Wall or the Sign?

Norfolk Island is a small, isolated island where a severely endangered language is spoken. The linguistic situation is unique and provides an excellent case study in LL and onomastic representation. The insular 'onomastic laboratory' and its manifestation in the LL exists with(in) current processes of language revival, the revival of an official language of Australia and its territories. The movement, change and evolution of Norf'k 'the language of defiance' to Norf'k 'the language of tourism' demonstrate how power relations form a part of the language's history. We have attempted to run with an argument emphasising how a LL and onomasto-spherical analysis cannot necessarily solve any of these power-related issues but can definitely bring them to bear. Norfolk's diglossic speech community, bilingual LL and vibrant history are encapsulated within a nexus of dichotomous liminalities and contradictions: English versus Norf'k, public versus private, mainland versus island, power versus powerlessness, insider versus outsider and present realities versus past ideals.

The Norf'k language is affected by many global forces and at present Norfolk Island's economic survival is dependent on continuing tourism.



amendments
okay here?

Because tourism results in increased environmental load on this small and sensitive locale in the South Pacific, one of the challenges is to ensure that tourism does not severely compromise the natural and cultural ecology of the island, but rather becomes a resource for further language and culture revival. The development of cultural tourism focused on the Pitcairn descendants is a relatively recent phenomenon, but it is becoming an important part of ~~the~~ Norfolk tourism offerings. Norf'k language and Norfolk culture are at the heart of these new offerings.

We have illustrated that language tourism has frequently promoted a distorted view of Norf'k and has been used as an exotic background against which mainstream tourism takes place. It is not known what percentage of tourists would like to acquire a deeper understanding of the language and devote some of their time on the island to learning it and about its history. Whatever the case, language-based tourism products need to be tourism-friendly, as does the way Norf'k is represented in the physical and the written LL; it has to be able to be easily read by English readers. Failing this, the position of Norf'k as a language of soft or hard power will remain unclear. We speculate such a failing will again relegate Norf'k to a secondary role within Norfolk Island's tourism language and tourism LL. How this process and possible standardisation will occur awaits to be seen.

What seems easier and more realistic is to improve the quality of information about the language in mainstream contexts, to develop language-focused experiences that enhance the quality of the tourist stay, and to promote and train experts in showcasing the language and culture. Language certainly has been promoted to the centre of the discussion on Norfolk Island. In February 2014, the Infrastructure and Business Development Committee of the Legislative Assembly stated in its quarterly report:

Cultural identity is an essential component of the Norfolk Island community and is of particular value to tourism. Any programs or facilities which aid in the promotion, teaching and display of the island culture should be encouraged. (Norfolk Island Government, press release, 12 February 2014)

A strong case has now been made that Norf'k is a much greater potential asset for tourism, and vice versa, than has been recognised by previous tourism managers on Norfolk Island. To maximise this asset and the positive externalities it can create requires both financial investment and a well thought-out strategy both for tourism and for language and culture revival. Norfolk's LL is but one outlet for these possibilities that will hopefully become reality.

Note

- (1) *Bus* and *buss* are both acceptable spellings of this word in Norf'k.

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