

# Gagana Sāmoa

## — Orthography Guidelines

# Acknowledgements

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We apologise for any errors or omissions that may remain despite our best efforts and urge readers to bring any issues to our attention by contacting us at [languages@mpp.govt.nz](mailto:languages@mpp.govt.nz).

## Suggested Citation

When citing the gagana Sāmoa orthography guidelines, you may wish to use the following convention:

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Linguistic classification of gagana Sāmoa	5
Timeline of key texts on gagana Sāmoa	5
<b>Section 1 – Dialects and registers</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Tautala lelei and tautala leaga</i>	6
<i>Gagana Fa'aaloalo</i>	7
<b>Section 2 – Vowels and consonants</b>	<b>7</b>
Alphabet	7
Vowels	8
Consonants	9
<b>Section 3 – Word division</b>	<b>9</b>
Affixes	9
Compound words	11
Loanwords and word creation	11
<b>Section 4 – Capitalisation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>16</b>

# Introduction

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Due to a range of historical and contemporary factors including migration, population growth, and climate change, there is a growing number of tagata Sāmoa in the diaspora. The future of gagana Sāmoa in New Zealand, and indeed other languages of the Pacific, is uncertain, and it is for this reason that the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in collaboration with Pacific communities across the motu and abroad, published the Pacific Languages Strategy 2022-2032. The Strategy, in line with current research on language policy and planning, highlighted *corpus*<sup>1</sup> as a key element of successful language revitalisation, and it is in this context that these orthography guidelines have been developed.

These guidelines outline what the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in consultation with language experts, consider to be best practice for writing gagana Sāmoa *in New Zealand*. They are intended as an accessible and easy-to-reference guide that we hope will be useful to beginners and experts alike. They are part of a series, which also includes guidelines on Niuean, Tokelauan, Cook Islands Māori, and Tongan.

These guidelines were developed using widely accepted conventions and literature on the orthography of gagana Sāmoa to promote accessibility, consistency, and clarity of meaning and pronunciation, especially for language learners in New Zealand. Given this, there may be instances where the advice in this publication contradicts that of other authoritative texts. For example, there are mixed opinions around marking vowel length in gagana Sāmoa – while some authorities support macrons under certain circumstances only, this document recommends they always be used where long vowels are present.

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples recommends George Pratt's *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language, with English and Samoan vocabulary*<sup>2</sup> and George Milner's *Samoan Dictionary*<sup>3</sup> as primary references for checking how words should be spelled. The former is publicly accessible to view digitally as part of the New Zealand Electronic Text Collection at [www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-PraDict.html](http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-PraDict.html), while the latter is unfortunately only available in print. Many of the examples used in these guidelines come from these documents.

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<sup>1</sup> *Corpus* refers to the creation and maintenance of a language's oral and written resources e.g., dictionaries, grammars, orthography guidelines, and pronunciation guides.

<sup>2</sup> Pratt 1893

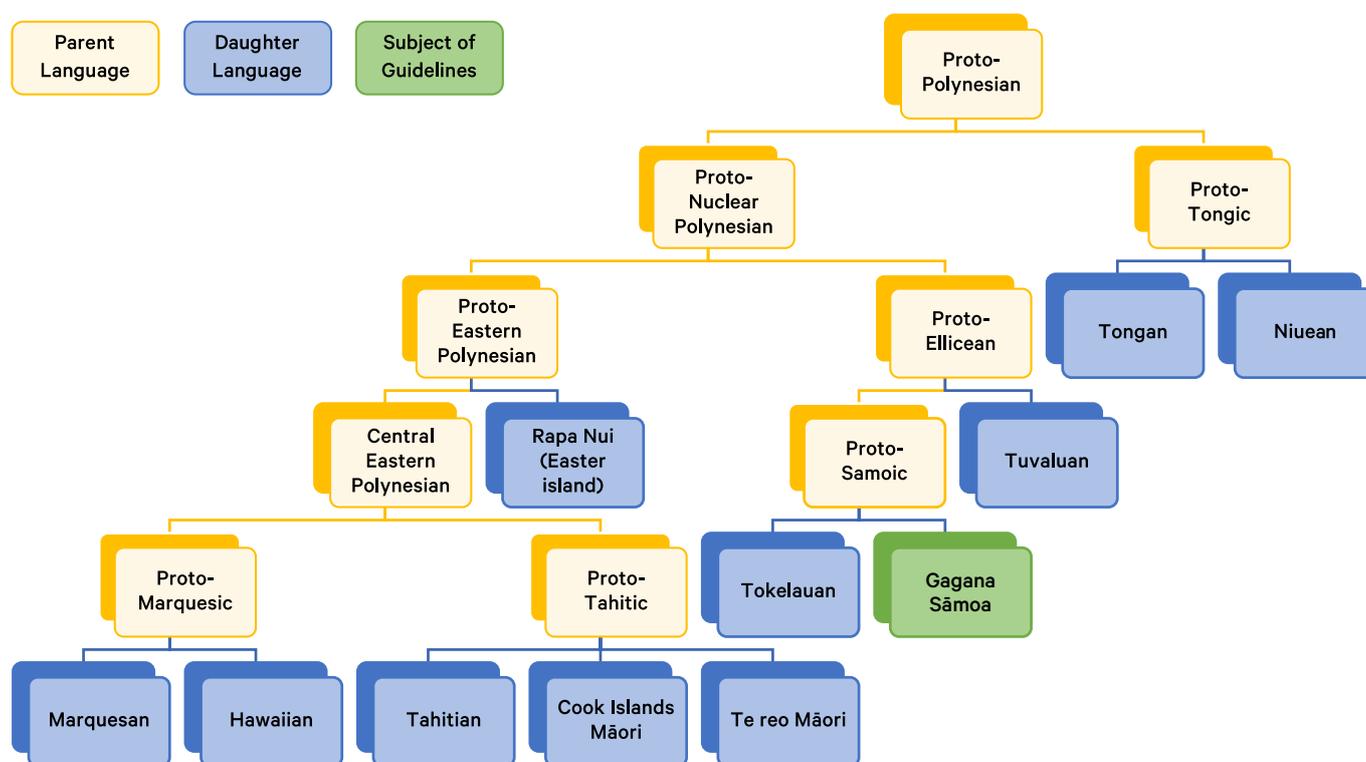
<sup>3</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]

## Linguistic classification of gagana Sāmoa

Gagana Sāmoa is a Polynesian language that belongs to the eponymous Samoic subgroup alongside Tokelauan. Gagana Sāmoa has had a strong influence on other Polynesian languages over time, due to the economic and religious connections between the islands prior to and during the 19th and 20th centuries. This influence can be seen morphologically (as in many loanwords, such as Tokelauan *akalava* ‘scorpion’ from Samoan *akarava*), orthographically (as in the /ŋ/ phoneme being represented with /g/ in Niuean and Tokelauan, rather than /ng/ as in other Polynesian languages), and grammatically.

A visual representation of the Polynesian language family tree is included for reference with an accompanying legend below. Note the diagram is not exhaustive, and that many other languages not included are also part of the Polynesian language family.

**Figure 1** – Polynesian Language Family Tree



## Timeline of key texts on gagana Sāmoa

There are several texts of historical and linguistic significance written on and in gagana Sāmoa that these guidelines draw on directly – many descriptions from Pratt’s *Grammar and Dictionary of the Sāmoan Language* and Milner’s *Samoan Dictionary*, for example, are referenced throughout.

Conversely, other texts merely contextualise the journey of the written language since the publication of Horatio Hale’s *Ethnography and Philology of the Pacific* nearly 200 years ago. All mark important inflection points in the history and study of written gagana Sāmoa. These key texts are detailed in Appendix 1, noting the timeline is not exhaustive.

# Section 1 – Registers

## *Tautala lelei* and *tautala leaga*

Gagana Sāmoa has two registers that are distinguished by the pronunciation of certain consonants. *Tautala lelei* (so-called ‘t-style’, ‘formal Samoan’, or ‘good speech’) features /t/, /ʎ/, and /n/ sounds where *tautala leaga* (‘k-style’, ‘colloquial Samoan’, or ‘bad speech’) instead utilises /k/, /l/, and /ŋ/. Note these alternations are not entirely systematic – /t/, /ʎ/, and /n/ are not always replaced by /k/, /l/, and /ŋ/ respectively. The substitution of /l/ in *tautala leaga*, for example, only occurs after /a/, /o/, and /u/, or before /i/. Further, *tautala leaga* is not reflected in writing, as “colloquial pronunciation is ignored by conventional orthography”.<sup>4</sup>

### (1) Differences between *tautala lelei* and *tautala leaga* in gagana Sāmoa<sup>5</sup>

TAUTALA LELEI / T-STYLE (SPELLED AND PRONOUNCED)	TAUTALA LEAGA / K-STYLE (PRONOUNCED ONLY)	MEANING
<i>tama</i>	<i>kama</i>	‘child, boy’
<i>numera</i>	<i>gumela</i>	‘number’
<i>ana</i>	<i>aga</i>	‘cave’

Some experts theorise *tautala lelei* was the original register of pre-missionary Samoa, ultimately elevated to prestige status through its use in Church settings. Under this view, *tautala leaga* is speculated to have been developed by missionaries as a less prestigious alternative through which traditional Samoan rituals and practices could be relegated to informality. Others consider that origins of *tautala leaga* were purely practical, stemming from the introduction of letters and sounds gagana Sāmoa did not originally have but required to convey new vocabulary, especially religious terminology.

In practice, *tautala lelei* is reserved for formal speeches, church, and other religious settings, while *tautala leaga* is used in all other contexts, including traditional cultural ceremonies. As the formal register, *tautala lelei* should always be used when writing gagana Sāmoa, except potentially when corresponding casually with friends or family via text or message.

<sup>4</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: xv

<sup>5</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 238, 158, 19

## Gagana fa'aaloalo

“There is a large number of words used to chiefs and strangers; and to use any other when addressing such is equivalent to an insult. These words are never used by a chief speaking of himself. The chiefs’ language is not confined to chiefs but is also used in courtesy to any strangers.”<sup>6</sup>

A defining characteristic of gagana Sāmoa is *gagana fa'aaloalo*, sometimes referred to as ‘chiefly language’ or ‘dignified language’. This historically and culturally important form of the language combines prose, classical terms, and different vocabulary into a distinct register reserved for *tūlāfale* (‘orator chiefs’). While these components are generally woven together only by orators in the act of *failāuga* (‘speechmaking’), specific terms and vocabulary associated with *gagana fa'aaloalo* are used by everyone to confer respect to individuals of high status such as chiefs, government officials, and clergy. *Gagana fa'aaloalo* is also invoked while praying. It is therefore uncommon for entire conversations to be held in *gagana fa'aaloalo*, whether by orators or ordinary people. Rather, it is generally realised through using a different word to express a specific idea, thus signalling respect to the addressee:

### (2) Examples of gagana fa'aaloalo<sup>7</sup>

NORMAL FORM	POLITE FORM	MEANING
<i>fale</i>	<i>maota</i>	‘house’ (for <i>ali'i</i> ‘high chiefs’ and <i>faifeau</i> ‘ministers’)
	<i>laoa</i>	‘house’ (for <i>tūlāfale</i> oratory chiefs)
<i>maile</i>	<i>ta'ifau</i>	‘dog’
<i>nofo</i>	<i>alaala</i>	‘to sit’
<i>inu</i>	<i>taumafa</i>	‘to drink’

# Section 2 – Vowels and consonants

## Alphabet

Gagana Sāmoa is written with an alphabet of seventeen letters. Note all future references to ‘the alphabet’ relate to (3).

### (3) Gagana Sāmoa alphabet<sup>8</sup>

a, e, i, o, u, f, g, l, m, n, p, s, t, v, h, k, r

The last three consonants /h/, /k/, and /r/ were added to the alphabet to accommodate certain biblical names and foreign terms.

The inverted comma or *koma liliu* (‘) represents the glottal stop. It is treated as a consonant by speakers despite not technically being included as such in the alphabet.

<sup>6</sup> Pratt 1862 [1984]: 39

<sup>7</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 56, 132, 121, 230, 157, 6, 86, 257

<sup>8</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: xv-xvi

## Vowels

Like most Polynesian languages, gagana Sāmoa has five basic vowels.

### (4) Vowels in gagana Sāmoa<sup>9</sup>

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

These vowels come in two distinct types – **short** and **long** – and can be combined to create diphthongs.

- **Short** vowels are unmarked – a, e, i, o, u
- **Long** vowels are marked with a macron – ā, ē, ī, ō, ū
- Diphthongs, which combine two vowels and are pronounced as one syllable, are unmarked sequences – ae, ai, ao, au, etc.,

Marking vowel length with macrons in gagana Sāmoa is still debated in official circles. While “mainstream curricula in New Zealand and Hawai’i” support the “strong need for the written form of Samoan to be accurate and consistent”, macrons have been “excluded from written Samoan by policies of the Department of Education of [...] Sāmoa, thus producing generations of heritage speakers who do not view [them] as significant symbols in Samoan orthography”.<sup>10</sup> Generally speaking, support for and against consistent macron use is divided along diaspora and home country lines respectively.

The Gagana Sāmoa Language Guidelines published by the Ministry of Education suggest that new learners reading texts where macrons are consistently used will “increase their knowledge, skills, and communicative competencies in gagana Sāmoa” and, in doing so, “become increasingly able to interpret the meaning of words from their contexts to read texts written without macrons”.<sup>11</sup>

### (5) Contrastive word set<sup>12</sup>

VOWEL TYPE	WORD/SPELLING	MEANING
<b>Short</b>	<i>toto</i>	‘blood’
<b>Long</b>	<i>totō</i>	‘to plant’
<b>Short</b>	<i>tala</i>	‘story’
<b>Long</b>	<i>talā</i>	‘dollar’

While these guidelines agree it is important for learners to understand the written language both with and without macrons, their main purpose remains promoting accessibility, consistency, and clarity of meaning and pronunciation for speakers in New Zealand, many of whom are second language learners. This being the case, these guidelines take the view that macrons should always be used where appropriate.

<sup>9</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: xxvi

<sup>10</sup> Tualaulelei, Mayer, and Hunkin 2015: 184

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Education 2009: 13

<sup>12</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 277

## Consonants

There are thirteen consonant sounds in gagana Sāmoa.

### (6) Consonants in gagana Sāmoa<sup>13</sup>

	BILABIAL	LABIO-DENTAL		ALVEOLAR/ DENTAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
STOP/PLOSIVE	p			t	k	ʔ
FRICATIVE		f	v	s		h
NASAL	m			n	ŋ	
LATERAL					l	
APPROXIMANT					ɻ	

All consonant sounds in gagana Sāmoa are represented in spelling as they are in the above table, with the following exceptions:

- /ʔ/ is represented as a single inverted comma (‘)
- /ŋ/ is represented as /g/
- /ɻ/ is represented as /r/

# Section 3 – Word Division

## Affixes

Gagana Sāmoa has three types of affixes: prefixes, suffixes, and circumfixes. Reduplication is not considered a type of affix by these guidelines. Affixes are *directly attached to the root words they modify*. The exception to this is where there are directional particles, which can split verbs from their suffixes. In such cases the directional particle and suffix are combined into a new word that is written separately from the root verb. More detail on this phenomenon is provided in the dedicated *Suffixes* section below.

## Prefixes

Gagana Sāmoa utilises a range of prefixes. Some examples are described in the table below:

### (7) Prefixes<sup>14</sup>

PREFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>fa'a-</i>	Many functions, including denoting ‘to cause’ or ‘in the manner of’.	<i>fa'a + pua'a</i> ‘pig, swine’ = <i>fa'apua'a</i> ‘piggish’
<i>ma-</i>	Many functions, including denoting actions that occur spontaneously or by accident.	<i>ma + sae</i> ‘tear’ = <i>masae</i> ‘[to become] torn’
<i>ta'i-</i>	Denotes distribution.	<i>ta'i + lua</i> ‘two’ = <i>ta'ilua</i> ‘two each, two at a time’

<sup>13</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: xv

<sup>14</sup> Pratt 1862 [1984]: 8, 9 and Milner 1966 [1976]: 54

## Suffixes

Gagana Sāmoa has many suffixes also, some of which are listed in the table below:

### (8) Suffixes<sup>15</sup>

SUFFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
-ga	Combines with verbs to form related nouns.	<i>tōfā</i> 'to sleep' + <i>ga</i> = <i>tōfaga</i> 'sleeping-place, bed'
-a	Combines with nouns to form related adjectives.	' <i>ele'ele</i> 'dirt' + <i>a</i> = ' <i>ele'elea</i> 'dirty'
-gōfie	Denotes an action that is done easily or willingly.	<i>fai</i> 'to do' + <i>gōfie</i> = <i>faigōfie</i> 'to be easy to do'

Suffixes in gagana Sāmoa attach directly to the root words they modify except where directional particles are present. In these cases, suffixes attach to the directional particle instead of the root word. Take the following sentence meaning 'the complete disappearance of the dog' for example:

### (9) Suffix attachment in sentences with directional particles<sup>16</sup>

' <i>o le</i> 'the'	<i>leiloa</i> 'disappear'	<i>atuga</i> '(away from speaker)'	<i>lava</i> 'complete'	<i>lēnā</i> '(that)'	<i>o</i> 'of'	<i>le maile</i> 'the dog'
Definitive article	Verb	Directional particle + <b>Nominative suffix</b>	Adjective	Demonstrative particle	Preposition	Proper noun

In short, the -ga suffix (which turns the verb *leiloa* 'disappear' into a noun 'disappearance') is attached to the directional particle *atu* to form *atuga*, rather than to *leiloa* itself.

## Circumfixes

Gagana Sāmoa has one circumfix, *fe-* -*a'i* (though the latter component can be realised in a number of different ways e.g., -*fa'i*, -*la'i*, -*ma'i*, -*sa'i*, -*ta'i* etc.,) which is used to form reciprocal verbs.

### (13) Circumfixes<sup>17</sup>

CIRCUMFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>fe-</i> - <i>a'i</i>		<i>fe</i> + <i>au</i> 'flow on, roll on' + <i>a'i</i> = <i>feaua'i</i> 'to take turns doing something'
<i>fe-</i> - <i>fa'i</i>		<i>fe</i> + ' <i>alo'alo</i> 'refrain from' + <i>fa'i</i> = <i>fe'alo'alofa'i</i> 'to evade, make excuses'
<i>fe-</i> - <i>la'i</i>	Forms plural, reciprocal verbs	<i>fe</i> + <i>tau</i> 'look straight at' + <i>la'i</i> = <i>fetaula'i</i> 'to join, converge'
<i>fe-</i> - <i>ma'i</i>		<i>fe</i> + <i>lagolago</i> 'to support' + <i>ma'i</i> = <i>felagolagoma'i</i> 'to lean on each other'
<i>fe-</i> - <i>sa'i</i>		<i>fe</i> + <i>lava</i> 'cross' + <i>sa'i</i> = <i>felavasa'i</i> 'to cross each other (as roads)'
<i>fe-</i> - <i>ta'i</i>		<i>fe</i> + <i>geno</i> 'wink' + <i>ta'i</i> = <i>fegenota'i</i> 'to wink at one and other'

<sup>15</sup> Pratt 1862 [1984]: 4, 8, 171

<sup>16</sup> Provided by a native speaker

<sup>17</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 29, 16, 249, 95, 103 and Pratt 1862 [1984]: 154

## Compound words

Orthographic convention around compound words in gagana Sāmoa is inconsistent. They are *generally* written as single words without spaces or hyphens, though there are many exceptions, sometimes even within a group of compounds formed from the same root word. For example, there is variation between the compounds formed from the noun *fale* ‘house’:

### (11) Compounds formed from *fale*<sup>18</sup>

WORD COMPONENTS		COMPOUND WORD
<b>Written as single words</b>		
<i>fale</i> + <i>ā'oga</i> ‘learning’	▶▶▶	<i>faleā'oga</i> ‘house of learning, school’
<i>fale</i> + <i>'ulu</i> ‘breadfruit’	▶▶▶	<i>fale'ulu</i> ‘house made from breadfruit tree wood’
<b>Written as separate words</b>		
<i>fale</i> + <i>fa'amasino</i> ‘to judge’	▶▶▶	<i>fale fa'amasino</i> ‘courthouse’
<i>fale</i> + <i>talimālō</i> ‘to host guests’	▶▶▶	<i>fale talimālō</i> ‘guesthouse, hotel’

In short, some compounds are spelled as one word while others are separated by spaces, and there is no way to determine which strategy is appropriate without consulting a dictionary or native speaker. This being the case, it is the position of these guidelines that established practice, verified by a reputable source (i.e., a dictionary or native speaker), should dictate how compounds are written in gagana Sāmoa.

## Loanwords and Word Creation

Gagana Sāmoa has many loanwords, many of them from English.

### (12) English loanwords in gagana Sāmoa<sup>19</sup>

ENGLISH		GAGANA SĀMOA
‘licence’	▶▶▶	<i>laisene</i>
‘lion’	▶▶▶	<i>leona/liona</i>
‘sugar’	▶▶▶	<i>suka</i>

While many of these loanwords have been integrated into gagana Sāmoa through transliteration, newer terms, especially those relating to science and technology, have to be intentionally incorporated into the language through word creation.

A number of strategies (including transliteration) can be employed to support word creation. These are outlined below:

<sup>18</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 57

<sup>19</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 95, 106, 108, 219

**(13) Word creation strategies<sup>20</sup>**

STRATEGY	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>Borrowing</i> <sup>21</sup>	The most basic strategy – simply use a word from another language as-is, same spelling, same pronunciation.	‘Chips’ as in <i>Fa’atau mai ni chips, fa’amolemole</i> ‘Please buy some chips’
<i>Transliteration</i>	Changing the spelling (and pronunciation) of a word in another language to conform to the spelling conventions in gagana Sāmoa.	‘Committee’ is realised as <i>komiti</i> ‘Silk’ is realised as <i>silika</i> ‘Rice’ is realised as <i>alaisa</i>
<i>Meaning Extension</i>	Extending the meaning of an existing word in gagana Sāmoa to encompass the meaning of a new word from another language.	The meaning of <i>uila</i> ‘lightning’ is extended to include ‘electricity’ The meaning of <i>fa’amalama</i> ‘to make clear’ is extended to include ‘window’.
<i>Phrase Formation</i>	Using a group of words in gagana Sāmoa to capture the meaning of a word from another language.	‘Winter’ is realised as <i>'o le tau mālūlū</i> , literally ‘the season that is cold’. ‘Wig’ is realised as <i>lauulu fa’apipi’i</i> , literally ‘hair that is made to stick’.
<i>Compounding</i>	Combining existing words in gagana Sāmoa to form new words.	‘Fund’ is realised as <i>fa’aputugātupe</i> , literally ‘to have made a heap/pile of money’. ‘Post office’ is realised as <i>falemeli</i> , literally ‘house of mail’.

The above strategies can be employed individually or combined with one another. For example, *falemeli* is a compound of *fale* ‘house’ and English transliteration *meli* ‘mail’.

The following factors should be considered (in the order they are presented) when determining which word creation strategy to employ:

- **Precedent** – If there is already an established word or phrase that conveys the meaning you are trying to capture, use it! Don’t create something new if there is no need to.
- **Language Status** – Think about how the word creation strategy might affect people’s view of the language. For example, don’t resort to borrowing or transliteration just because it’s easier, as this can send the message that gagana Sāmoa is insufficiently complex to capture meaning in the modern world.
- **Effectiveness** – How well does the new word or phrase capture the meaning of the original word, and how obvious would that meaning be at first glance?
- **Workability** – How efficient is the strategy? For example, while phrase formation might initially seem like the best way to capture meaning, if the phrase in question would be ten or more words long, it’s unlikely to catch on and be used widely and frequently as intended.

<sup>20</sup> Milner 1966 [1976]: 91, 210, 14, 297, 127, 248, 100, 194, 57

<sup>21</sup> Mosel 1994: 215, “In Samoan, the process of borrowing may be spontaneous or [...] monitored to varying degrees. In spontaneous borrowing, English words are [...] more or less pronounced as in English, but when they become part of the Samoan lexicon, especially when they are used in the written language, [they] are replaced by Samoan ones”

# Section 4 – Capitalisation

## Proper nouns

Proper nouns – including personal names, religious titles (i.e., Father, God etc.), days of the week, months of the year, place names, country names, demonyms, and language names – are subject to variable capitalisation in gagana Sāmoa. Guidance around what should be capitalised specifically is provided in the sections below.

## Personal names

All components of personal names – i.e., first names, any middle names, and surnames – are capitalised in gagana Sāmoa.

### (14) Personal names

GAGANA SĀMOA	ENGLISH
<i>Tofilau Eti Alesana</i>	Former Prime Minister of Samoa
<i>Iosefa Enari</i>	Opera Singer

## Religious titles

Religious titles are always capitalised in gagana Sāmoa. For example:

### (15) Religious titles

GAGANA SĀMOA	ENGLISH
<i>afioga Pātele Ioane</i>	‘Father John’
<i>susuga a le Fa’afeagaiga</i>	‘Reverend Minister’

References to the Christian God are always capitalised e.g., *la fa’amanuia le Atua i lou aso soifua* ‘may God bless you on your birthday’.

References to other deities, however, remain lower case e.g., *i tala o le vavau, sa tele atua o Sāmoa* ‘In Samoa’s myths and legends, there were many gods’.

## Ali’i titles

The *fa’amatai* chiefly system is central to the organisation of Samoan society. *Matai* (chiefs) are holders of titles, which signify hierarchal status, roles, and responsibilities within the extended family, village, district, and country.

There are two types of *matai*:

- *Ali’i* – the ‘high chief’ or ‘sitting chief’ of a village or family
- *Tūlāfale* – the ‘speaking chief’ or ‘orator chief’ who speaks on behalf of a village or family

The wives of *ali’i* are referred to as *faletua* and the wives of orators as *tausī*. Daughters of a *matai sa’o* (paramount chief), or the head of the women’s counsel in a family or village, are addressed in the same way as a high chief. Naming conventions are outlined in the table below:

TITLE TYPE	ADDRESS TERM	EXAMPLE
<i>Ali'i</i>	<i>afioga</i> (or <i>susuga</i> )	<i>Tālofa lau afioga Leota</i> 'Greetings high chief Leota'
<i>Tūlāfale</i>	<i>tōfā</i> or <i>fetalaiga</i>	<i>Tālofa lau fetalaiga Tiatia</i> 'Greetings orator Tiatia'
Wife of an <i>ali'i</i>	<i>faletua</i>	<i>Afio maia lau afioga Leota ma le faletua</i> 'Welcome, high chief Leota and your wife'
Wife of a <i>tūlāfale</i>	<i>tausi</i>	<i>Maliu maia lau tōfā Tiatia ma le tausī</i> 'Welcome, orator Tiatia and your wife'
Daughter of a <i>matai sa'o</i> (paramount chief)	<i>afioga</i>	<i>Afio maia lau afioga Fuatino</i> 'Welcome, Fuatino'
Other high-titled individuals e.g., Prime Ministers, Members of Parliament etc.	<i>afioga</i>	<i>Tālofa lau afioga a le Palemia</i> 'Greetings Prime Minister'
Community elders, teachers, government employees etc.	<i>susuga</i>	<i>Tālofa lau susuga a le faiā'oga Uili</i> 'Greetings teacher Uili'

## Days of the week

The days of the week are constructed by pairing Aso 'day' with certain other words. Both components are capitalised e.g., *Aso Gafua* 'Monday'.

### (16) Days of the week

GAGANA SĀMOA	ENGLISH
<i>Aso Gafua</i>	'Monday'
<i>Aso Lua</i>	'Tuesday'
<i>Aso Lulu</i>	'Wednesday'
<i>Aso Tofi</i>	'Thursday'
<i>Aso Faraile</i>	'Friday'
<i>Aso To'ona'i</i>	'Saturday'
<i>Aso Sā</i>	'Sunday'

## Months of the year

Sāmoa follows the Gregorian calendar with each month's name transliterated into gagana Sāmoa. All months are capitalised.

### (17) Months of the year

GAGANA SĀMOA	ENGLISH
<i>Ianuari</i>	'January'
<i>Fepuari</i>	'February'
<i>Mati</i>	'March'
<i>Aperila</i>	'April'
<i>Mē</i>	'May'
<i>lune</i>	'June'
<i>lulai</i>	'July'
<i>Aukuso</i>	'August'
<i>Sētema</i>	'September'
<i>'Oketopa</i>	'October'
<i>Novema</i>	'November'
<i>Tēsema</i>	'December'

## Place names

Place names, including geographic features, are generally separated by spaces with all words capitalised except prepositions. There may be exceptions to this, however, and digital maps do not always align with traditional maps. This being the case, traditional maps should be considered authoritative in the first instance. However, if you do not have access to traditional maps, or someone with knowledge of the place names contained therein, a digital resource such as Google Maps is acceptable – just be consistent, and reference sources where appropriate.

## Country names

Country names are separated by spaces with all words capitalised except grammatically necessary articles and prepositions.

## Demonyms

Demonyms are the words used to denote the inhabitants of a particular country, state, city, region etc. In English, demonyms are formed with a number of suffixes, most notably /-n/ or /-an/ e.g., Tongan, Niuean. In gagana Sāmoa, lowercase *tamāloa* ‘man’, *fafine* ‘woman’, or *tagata* ‘person’ is combined with the relevant country name:

## Language names

Language names are always formed with gagana (‘language [of]’) and the name of the country where the language originates (generally speaking). Gagana is only capitalised if it is at the beginning of a sentence, while the country name is always capitalised.

### (18) Place names

#### GAGANA SĀMOA

*Salelologa*

*Apolima Uta*

*Nua ma Se'etaga*

### (19) Country and continent names

#### GAGANA SĀMOA ENGLISH

*Niu Sila* ‘New Zealand’

*Aferika i Saute* ‘South Africa’

*Atu Kuki* ‘Cook Islands’

### (20) Demonyms

#### GAGANA SĀMOA ENGLISH

*tamāloa / fafine / tagata Niu Sila* ‘New Zealand man / woman / person’

*tamāloa / fafine / tagata Aferika i Saute* ‘South African man / woman / person’

*tamāloa / fafine / tagata Atu Kuki* ‘Cook Islands man / woman / person’

### (21) Language names

#### GAGANA SĀMOA ENGLISH

*gagana Sāmoa* Samoan language

*gagana Toga* Tongan language

*gagana Peretānia* English language

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 — Timeline of key texts on and in vagahau Niue

YEAR(S)	TEXT	SIGNIFICANCE
1846	Ethnography and Philology of the Pacific	Horatio Hale dedicates a portion of his 1846 treatise on the Pacific to the linguistic analysis of what were then viewed as “the Polynesian dialects”. While the document does not contain a specific section on gagana Sāmoa, it does cover the comparative grammar, orthography, and etymology of many Pacific languages (including gagana Sāmoa).
1862	<i>O le Tusi Paia</i> (Samoan Bible)	Though tracts of the New Testament were being printed in Sāmoa as early as 1839, the complete bible, <i>O le Tusi Paia</i> , was not published until 1862. Since then several new editions have been produced which, along with other religious materials such as prayer and hymn books, continue to be widely read and distributed today.
1862	A grammar and dictionary of the Sāmoan language, with English and Sāmoan vocabulary	The first comprehensive linguistic text on gagana Sāmoa was the <i>Grammar and Dictionary</i> compiled by George Pratt and published by the London Missionary Society in 1862. The document contained a detailed grammar of the language, a comprehensive vocabulary list, with English references, as well as supplementary content on <i>gagana fa'aaloalo</i> and Samoan Poetry. Pratt's work has since been revised numerous times, with the fourth and last edition totalling 653 pages at its publication in 1911.
1966	Samoa Dictionary (Samoan-English: English-Samoan)	Half a century after the fourth and final edition of Pratt's <i>Grammar and Dictionary</i> the Governments of Western and American Sāmoa commissioned distinguished linguist G. B. Milner to develop a new bilingual dictionary.  The subsequent <i>Samoa Dictionary</i> is a comprehensive account of the language that contains sections on grammar, pronunciation, and polite language, as well as a selection of Samoan proverbs. It also includes reference lists of useful vocabulary such as the days of the week, seasons, months, countries, given names, numbers, parts of the body, and colours. Having received several revisions and reprints, it remains an authoritative text on gagana Sāmoa to this day.
2009	<i>Ta'iala mo le Gagana Sāmoa</i> (The Gagana Sāmoa Guidelines)	A refresh of an earlier document published in 1996, the Ministry of Education's <i>Ta'iala mo le Gagana Sāmoa</i> is a curriculum guide designed to support the development of programmes for teaching and learning gagana Sāmoa in early childhood settings and schools in New Zealand.