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# Understanding English Grammar Linguistic Problem of the Month – July 2011

## Samoan

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The Samoan language is spoken by 38,700 people in American Samoa and 153,000 in Western Samoa, an independent country. About 162,000 more live in New Zealand, Hawaii, Fiji and on the West Coast of mainland USA. Samoan is a Polynesian language. Malayo-Polynesian languages extend from Easter Island (part of Chile) in the east, all the way to Madagascar off the coast of Africa in the West. Then from Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the south to Hawaii. This extreme geographical dispersion is because the ancient Malayo-Polynesians were great ocean sailors. They were masters of the tides, winds and currents, and evidence of their travels can be found throughout the Pacific region. The word "Polynesian" means "many islands."

Here are some Samoan sentences and their translations into English (Hint: there is nothing in Samoan that corresponds to "the" in English):

1. 'Ua lafi le pua'a.                      The pig hid.
2. 'Ua tutuli e tagata maile.              The people chased away the dogs.
3. 'Ua pupu'e e le pusi 'isumu.          The cat caught the mice.
4. 'Ua pu'e e le tama le pusi.            The boy caught the cat.
5. 'Ua fefefe teine.                        The girls got scared.
6. 'Ua fasi e tama le 'isumu.            The boys killed the mouse.

A. Translate from Samoan into English:

'Ua fefe le pusi.

'Ua tuli e 'isumu le pusi.

B. Translate from English into Samoan:

The boys hid.

The mice caught the dog.

The girl killed the pigs.