

## PART I.

## THE LANGUAGES OF TORRES STRAITS.

## INTRODUCTION.

## THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGES.

NEITHER Captain Cook, who passed through Endeavour Straits in 1770, and saw natives at Possession Island, nor Captain Edwards, who discovered "Murray's Islands" in the 'Pandora,' and was wrecked there on the reef on August 29th, 1791, left accounts of the natives or their languages<sup>1</sup>. The first to describe them was Matthew Flinders, who served under Captains Bligh and Portlock in the ships 'Providence' and 'Assistance' in 1792. These discovered Darnley and Nepean, and most of the Western Islands of Torres Straits. At the Nepean Islands they were visited by canoes from Darnley. Flinders states that "The Indians clapped upon their heads, and exclaimed *Whou! whou! whoo!* repeatedly with much vehemence; at the same time, they held out arrows and other weapons, and asked for *toore-toore!* by which they meant iron<sup>2</sup>." Bampton and Alt, who visited the islands in the 'Hormuzeer and Chesterfield' in 1793 only recorded the one word *Wamvax* as the native name of Darnley Island<sup>3</sup>. When Flinders revisited the Murray Islands on October 29th, 1802, between forty and fifty 'Indians' came off in three canoes, "holding up cocoanuts, joints of bamboo filled with water, plantains, bows and arrows, and vociferating *toore! toore!* and *mammoose!*"<sup>4</sup> In July, 1822, the ship 'Richmond' anchored for some days off the Murray Islands, and the crew had considerable intercourse with the natives. The Surgeon, Mr T. B. Wilson, took some interest in the language and compiled a vocabulary, but on a second visit to Torres Straits in the 'Governor Ready' in 1829, the ship was wrecked on the reef near Half-way Island, and his vocabulary was lost. Writing with regard to it he says, "I obtained a pretty large vocabulary, comprehending the various parts of the body, and also all other objects within sight. I presented them with one copy, with their own language in one column, and the English in the other, which I told them to show to any other strangers who might hereafter pay them a visit. The other copy, as already mentioned, was unfortunately lost, and I can only call to mind the following

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hawkesworth, *Voyages*, London, 1773, III. p. 615, quoted by Flinders, *op. cit. infra*, I. p. xv, and Geo. Hamilton, *A Voyage round the World in H.M. Frigate Pandora*, Berwick, 1793.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, London, 1814, I. p. xxii. These words as now spelled are *wao*, yes, and *turik*, iron.

<sup>3</sup> Flinders, *op. cit.* I. p. xxxvii. The native name of Darnley Is. is *Erub*. I am ignorant of the meaning of *Wamvax*. Lewis (*op. cit. infra*) says it was not known to the natives.

<sup>4</sup> Flinders, *op. cit.* II. p. 109. *Mammoosee* is the word (*mammus*) now applied to a head man, and means 'red hair.' It suggests that one of the voyagers was red-haired. Capt. King, however, states (*op. cit. infra*, p. 3) the word *mammoosee* or probably *maboosee* means a 'mess of yams.' At Darnley Lewis found two men named Mam-moose and Ag-ghe.

few words:—*warēka*, or *warēga*, 'peace' or 'welcome'; *mabouse*, 'come to us'; *puta*, *puta*—I could not satisfactorily make out the signification of this word, but imagined it meant—'no danger,' or, 'don't be afraid'; *torre*, 'iron'; *casse*, 'give'; *girgir*, 'the sun'; *kimiar*, 'men'; *koskerail*, 'women'; *Madiēa*, *Oucāra*, *Wamaia*, *Wagēra*, proper names of men<sup>1</sup>."

In 1834 the ship 'Charles Eaton' was wrecked in Torres Straits, and Captain C. M. Lewis was sent in search of the survivors. Two accounts of the wreck and rescue, those by W. E. Brockett<sup>2</sup> and T. Wemyss<sup>3</sup>, contain only a few Murray Island words in the text, but a third account compiled from Captain Lewis's Journal by Captain P. P. King<sup>4</sup> contains a vocabulary obtained from John Ireland, one of two survivors of the wreck, who had lived for two years on Murray Island. This vocabulary contained 532 English words or phrases with native equivalents, 13 names of islands, 7 numerical terms, and 40 names of parts of the body<sup>5</sup>. The list is interesting as it seems to show signs of an alteration in the pronunciation of words, though allowance must be made for the illiteracy of its sailor author. Some examples of *ng*, *v*, *th*, *f*, *sh*, occur in the following words as given in Lewis's account, but are not now found in the language: *debellang*, sweet; *vell-caabe*, good temper; *vea*, star, sand; *verrer*, hunger; *verrem*, boy; *thag*, hand; *ithpay*, feeling; *emmerouth*, old; *cur-ri-ther*, leap; *feik gil-ge-re*, to-day; *pheim*, dream; *pheik*, this; *moosh*, hair. These words are now: *debe lag*, good taste; *werkab*, happy; *wer*, star, sand; *werer*, hungry; *werem*, boy; *tag*, hand; *ekpi*, touch; *emeret*, old; *koreder*, run; *peik gerger*, this day; *peim*, dream; *peik*, this; *mus*, hair.

In the years 1842–1846 Captain F. P. Blackwood in H.M.S. 'Fly' carried out an extensive survey along the N.E. coast of Australia, Torres Straits, and the adjacent portion of New Guinea. J. B. Jukes, the naturalist to the expedition, published an account in 1847<sup>6</sup>, and in an appendix gives a vocabulary of about 800 words of the language of Darnley and Murray Islands (called by him Erroob and Maer). This was collected chiefly by Mr Millery, the clerk of the 'Fly' and to it was added Lewis's vocabulary of Murray Islands, referred to above<sup>7</sup>, a collection of words from Masseed (i.e. Masig),

<sup>1</sup> T. B. Wilson, *Narrative of a Voyage round the World*, London, 1835. With reference to the signification of these words, *mabouse*, *puta*, *torre*, *girgir*, *kimiar*, *koskerail* are the modern words, *ma baos*, you come out (imperative); *paud*, peace; *turik*, iron; *gerger*, sun; *kimiar*, male; *kosker*, woman. The last word has very strangely the plural termination *ail*, which properly belongs to the language of the Western tribe and is not used in Murray Island. The proper word for 'give' is *ikuar*, but *casse* is probably *kase*, 'me perhaps,' said by a native eager for a gift. *Warēka* may be for *Wa ike*, You (are) here.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Brockett, *Narrative of a Voyage from Sydney to Torres Straits in search of the Survivors of the 'Charles Eaton'*, Sydney, 1836.

<sup>3</sup> T. Wemyss, *Narrative of the Melancholy Shipwreck of the Ship 'Charles Eaton'*, Stockton and London, 1837.

<sup>4</sup> Phillip P. King, Capt. R.N., *A Voyage to Torres Straits in search of the Survivors of the Ship 'Charles Eaton,' which was wrecked upon the Barrier Reefs in the month of August, 1834, in H.M. Colonial Schooner 'Isabella,' C. M. Lewis, Commander, arranged from the Journal and Log Book of the Commander, Sydney, 1837.*

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 65–83, Vocabulary of the Murray and Darnley Islanders.

<sup>6</sup> J. B. Jukes, *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. 'Fly,'* London, 1847.

<sup>7</sup> This seems to have been an independent vocabulary obtained from the sailor John Ireland. Jukes expressly states (Vol. II. p. 274) that "the copy from which ours was taken was procured by Mr Evans from Captain Ashmore of Sydney, who lent it us for transcription. I subsequently arranged it on the same plan as our own without altering any of the words." This is however not the orthography in Lewis's account as given by Capt. King. For example, *ta-age* or *ta-ag*, *il-kep*, *aib-kay*, *tet-te-ar*, *coup-or* or *koo-pore*, *pell* or *pey-la*, which are given for 'hand,' 'eye,' 'middle finger,' 'leg,' 'navel,' 'ears' by King, are as printed by Jukes, *taag* or *tawg*, *illcap*, *abekay*, *taerter*, *koupore*, *pell* or *peel*.

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two short lists from Cape York, and another from Port Lihou in Prince of Wales' Island<sup>1</sup>. The general affinities of the languages were discussed in another appendix by Dr R. G. Latham<sup>2</sup>.

A further survey of North Eastern Australia and Torres Straits was made in 1846-1850 by Captain Owen Stanley in H.M.S. 'Rattlesnake.' An account of the voyage was published in 1852 by the naturalist John Macgillivray<sup>3</sup>. In an appendix he gives two sets of vocabularies. The first exhibits the languages spoken in the neighbourhood of Cape York, viz. Kowrarega (Muralag, Prince of Wales' Island) and Gudang (Mainland at Cape York)<sup>4</sup>. The second illustrates the languages of South Eastern New Guinea and the Louisiades. The Kowrarega (i.e. Kauralag of Muralag or Prince of Wales' Island) vocabulary contained about 820 words. It was almost entirely derived from the communications of Mrs Thompson (Gi'om), a white woman who had been held in captivity by the islanders for more than four years<sup>5</sup>. Nearly all the words procured from her were afterwards verified, but Mrs Thompson's want of education prevented her from giving Mr Macgillivray anything but a superficial idea of the structure of the language.

An appendix to Macgillivray's work by Dr R. G. Latham contains a discussion of the vocabularies, chiefly referring to the structure of the Kowrarega as related to Australian languages, and a comparison of words with those of Australia and New Guinea<sup>6</sup>. Crawford also commented on the vocabularies of Jukes and Macgillivray<sup>7</sup>.

In 1841, J. Lort Stokes in the 'Beagle' visited Murray Island. He gives the word for 'iron' as *toolic*<sup>8</sup>. The latter form of the word was first given by Lewis.

In 1871 the New Guinea mission of the London Missionary Society was commenced by the visit of the Revs. S. MacFarlane and A. W. Murray in the 'Surprise.' They left Lifu on the 31st May, 1870, and landed Gucheng, the first teacher, a native of Lifu, on Darnley Island in the Eastern part of the Straits on July 1st, 1871. They afterwards placed teachers on (Tutu) Warrior Island, and Tauan in the West, and visited the Mainland of New Guinea. Mataika, a teacher from Darnley, first visited Murray in 1872. The first mission literature was a sheet of lessons first used at Darnley on Sunday, August 24th, 1873. In his account of the founding of the mission, the Rev. A. W. Murray gives in an appendix some vocabularies of native words. Among them are those of: (1) Torres Straits and adjacent coast of New Guinea; (2) Murray Islands, Darnley Island and Stephen's Island only<sup>9</sup>. These, apart from some few mistakes

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 274-314. Comparative Vocabulary of the Languages of some parts of Torres Straits.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 313-320. "On the general affinities of the Languages of the Oceanic Blacks," by R. G. Latham, M.D. This was also published in: R. G. Latham, *Essays chiefly Philological and Ethnographical*, London, 1860, pp. 217-222.

<sup>3</sup> J. Macgillivray, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Rattlesnake'*, London, 1852.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 277-316. Comparative Vocabulary of two of the Languages of the neighbourhood of Cape York.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 330-354. "Remarks on the Vocabularies of the Voyage of the 'Rattlesnake,'" by R. G. Latham, M.D. Published also in: *Opuscula, Essays chiefly Philological and Ethnographical*, London, 1860, pp. 223-241.

<sup>7</sup> J. Crawford, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Malay Language*, London, 1852, pp. 174-176.

<sup>8</sup> J. Lort Stokes, *Discoveries in Australia*, London, 1846, p. 257.

<sup>9</sup> Rev. A. W. Murray, *Forty Years' Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea*, London, 1876, Appendix.

in meanings, suggest some changes in pronunciation since they were written. The nasalization of *b* and *d* as is seen in *kamba*, *kembile*, and *andut* for *kaba* (banana), *kebile* (small) and *adud* (bad). *Wandrai* also is written in error for 'you two.' The Murray pronouns are very incorrectly given<sup>1</sup>.

In September, 1872, the Rev. W. Gill visited the islands of Torres Straits and the Mainland of New Guinea. His account contains a few words of the island languages<sup>2</sup>.

The first book in a Torres Straits language was printed in 1876 by Rev. S. MacFarlane<sup>3</sup>. Some Erub and Tauan vocabularies by the same, collected about this time, were afterwards printed in part by Dr Codrington<sup>4</sup> and fully by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge<sup>5</sup>.

Mr O. C. Stone in the account of a visit to New Guinea in 1876<sup>6</sup>, gives, among other vocabularies, those of the languages of "Machik" (i.e. Yorke Island in the Western Group) and of Erub (Darnley Island). It does not appear that Stone visited the islands.

In 1875-1877 Signor L. M. D'Albertis visited Torres Straits and the Fly River. His account contains, among others, a vocabulary of 38 words used in Yorke Island, Torres Straits<sup>7</sup>.

In 1882 Herr Grube made a re-arrangement of the Murray and Darnley Island vocabularies of Jukes and Stone, without adding to a knowledge of the structure of the languages<sup>8</sup>. Curr's work on the 'Australian Race'<sup>9</sup> and the Annual Report on British New Guinea for 1889-1890<sup>10</sup> also contained vocabularies of the Western language.

In spite, however, of the large number of vocabularies, the grammatical structure of the two languages of Torres Straits was very little known. Macgillivray's notes on the 'Kowrarega' (i.e. Muralag)<sup>11</sup> with Latham's remarks<sup>12</sup> represented the grammar of the Western language, and a single example in Codrington's 'Melanesian Languages'<sup>13</sup> indicated the cases of a Murray Island noun. Grube's so-called 'Grammatische Notizen' in the work of Gabelentz and Meyer is merely a summary of affixes with no meanings assigned to them<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> An indication of the amount of intercourse with white men is to be found in the Rev. A. W. Murray's remark that a native was found who could speak broken English.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. W. Gill, *Life in the Southern Isles*, London, 1876; p. 225, Torres Straits numerals, pp. 209, 214, 215, words.

<sup>3</sup> *First Lesson Book from Darnley Island, Torres Straits*, Sydney, 1876.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesian Languages*, Oxford, 1885, p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> *British New Guinea Vocabularies*, London, 1889, pp. 18-26.

<sup>6</sup> O. C. Stone, *A Few Months in New Guinea*, London, 1880, pp. 248-252.

<sup>7</sup> L. M. D'Albertis, *New Guinea: what I did and what I saw there*, London, 1880, II. pp. 387-388. Also in Italian edition, *Alla Nuova Guinea*, p. 567.

<sup>8</sup> "Die Sprache von Errüb und Maer," pp. 511-536 of *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Melanesischen, Mikronesischen und Papuanischen Sprachen*, von Georg v. d. Gabelentz und Adolf B. Meyer, Leipzig, 1882.

<sup>9</sup> E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, Melbourne and London, 1886-1887, pp. 684-685. "Warrior Island, Torres Straits," by Arthur Onslow.

<sup>10</sup> *Annual Report on British New Guinea from 1st July, 1889, to 30th June, 1890, with appendices*, Brisbane, 1890.

<sup>11</sup> *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Rattlesnake'*, II. pp. 277-313.

<sup>12</sup> In Macgillivray's *Narrative*, pp. 313-320, and *Opuscula*, p. 217-222.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. R. H. Codrington, *Melanesian Languages*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 511, "Wörterverzeichnis und Grammatische Notizen von Herrn Grube bearbeitet."

## INTRODUCTION.

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During Dr Haddon's first visit to Torres Straits in 1888 he collected all the material possible (both printed and manuscript)<sup>1</sup> which was likely to illustrate the language. About the same time, I had commenced an analysis of the Murray and Saibai Gospels printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society<sup>2</sup>. The result of collaboration was a joint Study which embodied the whole of the existing knowledge of the languages of Torres Straits and gave for the first time clear indications of their grammatical structure. This Study was read briefly before the Royal Irish Academy in 1891 and printed at length in the Proceedings for 1893 and 1897<sup>3</sup>. In 1892 Dr A. Graf von Schulenburg also published an analysis of the Murray Island Gospels<sup>4</sup>. In this no reference was made to other material, and much of the grammar is purely conjectural.

During my visit to Torres Straits with the Cambridge Expedition in 1898 I devoted my attention chiefly to the structure of the languages. The former grammars (based on translations of the Gospels) had left many expressions to be elucidated and explained. In both Mabuiag and Miriam also, I found that the language of the translation was in many respects much inferior to the language as ordinarily used by the older natives. This was especially the case in the Murray Islands, where the language had been for some years used and taught by white men. The difficulties had been simplified, or as my informant Pasi described the process, "they cut it short."

The grammars now given, based upon oral communications and phrases taken down from native dictation, must therefore be regarded as superseding all that was formerly written on the structure of the languages. The vocabularies have also been corrected and extended. It is extremely unlikely that any white man will ever learn the language for the purpose of oral communication with the natives, nearly all of whom have more or less acquaintance with English.

<sup>1</sup> A list of this material will be found in *A Study of the Languages of Torres Straits*, i. pp. 467-471 and ii. pp. 365-367.

<sup>2</sup> An account of these Gospels will be found in the sections on Literature.

<sup>3</sup> S. H. Ray and A. C. Haddon, "A Study of the Languages of Torres Straits" in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 3rd Ser., Vol. ii. pp. 463-616 and Vol. iv. pp. 119-373.

<sup>4</sup> A. Graf von Schulenberg, *Grammatik, Vocabularium und Sprachproben der Sprache von Murray Island*, Leipzig, 1892.



## A GRAMMAR OF THE LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY THE WESTERN ISLANDERS OF TORRES STRAITS.

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### 1. Dialects.

In the speech of the Western Islanders of the Straits we may distinguish four dialects, presenting slight variations in pronunciation and vocabulary and corresponding to the main divisions of the people. These dialects are those of the Saibalgal in the islands of Saibai, Boigu, and Dauan, of the Gumulgal (called Maluigal in Saibai) in Mabuiag and Badu, of the Kulkalgal in Tutu, Yam, Nagi and Masig, and of the Kaiwalgal or Kauralgal in Muralag and Moa. These names are the collective plurals of the personal nouns Saibalaig, Gumulaig, Kulkalaig, Kaiwalaig or Kauralaig formed by the suffixes *lai* and *g*<sup>1</sup>, from Saibai, the name of the island, Gumu, the place of Kwoiam in Mabuiag, Kulka, the redness of dawn (the Kulkalgal being the easternmost division), and Kaiwa (in the dialect itself Kara or Kaura) an island (the Kaiwalgal being islanders as distinguished from the natives of the Australian Mainland).

Besides these main divisions the inhabitants of each island have their own distinctive name formed by adding *lai-g* for the singular, and *lg-al* for the plural, to the name of the island, as e.g. Badulaig, a Badu person, Badulgal, the Badu folk.

The islanders call the Australian Mainlanders Iadaigal, i.e. chatterers or talkers. This name is the plural of Iadaig, derived from *ia*, talk, by the suffixes *dai* (equivalent to *lai*) and *g*. Another name is Gudau-garkazil, people of the mouth, i.e. mouth of the Jardine River, C. York. By the Tutu they are also called Agel, the plural of Age.

The islanders of the East (Murray, Darnley, and Stephen's Islands) are called collectively, by those of the West, the Mirimal or Maiemal, those of Darnley Island alone being the Yarubligal. These words are the plurals of Mirim<sup>2</sup> or Maiem, the former being for Miriam, the name given by the Eastern Islanders to themselves, and the latter their characteristic salutation. The term Miriam may possibly be the same as *Mer-em*, for Mer. Murray Island is called Moie, and Darnley Iibu.

The natives of New Guinea are called by various names. Those of Parem are Gobib-il, those of Kiwai, Kopam-il or Kiwai-lgal, those of Mawata, Moata-lgal, those of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Grammar, p. 16 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that Mirim may be the Muralag pronunciation of *maiem*.

Port Moresby, Hanuabada-lgal. Another name given in Mabuiaġ was Gebaubil, explained as being probably the name of the first visitor from New Guinea. A Muralag name for New Guinea bushmen was Kobe-ligal, i.e. Black people.

White men are Markai-l, from *markai*, the impersonator of a dead person in the death dances (cf. Vol. v. p. 253), or Tururubil. The latter name is unexplained. South Sea Islanders are Salmilal, said to be a mispronunciation of South Sea, and Chinamen were called by my informant Koikutal ialbupal uruil, long-haired animals.

This grammar is in the Mabuiaġ dialect and is based principally upon material derived from Tom (Noboa), a native of the island. Help was also given by Ned (Waria) and Peter (Papi), of the same island. The Tutu examples were obtained from Maino, the Saibai from Jack (Assai) and the Muralag from Wallaby (Painauda). Some examples in Mabuiaġ have been taken from Waria's manuscript, and there has been an occasional reference to the translation of the Gospels. Examples from the latter are enclosed in square brackets.

The authorities thus represented the four dialects which are referred to in the following pages by the names of the Islands, Mabuiaġ, Tutu, Saibai, and Muralag.

The language seemed to be of simple construction, especially so when compared with those of the Eastern Islanders of the Straits and the Papuans of New Guinea.

## 2. Phonology.

1. ALPHABET. *Vowels*.—*a* as in *father*; *ǎ* as in *at*; *e* as *a* in *date*; *ě* as in *let*; *i* as *ee* in *feet*; *ĩ* as in *it*; *o* as in *own*; *ǒ* as in *on*; *ò* as *aw* in *saw*; *u* as *oo* in *soon*; *ũ* as in *up*. In Saibai *ö* as in German, or in English *o* in *word*. The quantities of the vowels are not as a rule marked. In monosyllables and the accented syllables of other words they are usually long. As finals they are extremely short and very often elided.

There are several indefinite vowel sounds which have no separate character. These appear to vary at the caprice of the speaker, and are even used by the same speaker at different times. The first of these sounds varies from *ǎ* to *ǒ* and *ũ*, and words are spelled indifferently with any one of these letters, as e.g. *Augǎd* or *Augǒd*, *mǎgi* or *mǒgi* or *mũgi*, *dǎngal* or *dǒngal*, *patai* or *potai*, etc. In the early Saibai books this vowel was printed *ö*, which is also used in Lifuan and represents the sound of the German *ö*. Another indefinite vowel varies from *ō* to *ū* and words are spelled indifferently with either letter, as e.g. *Gōmu* or *Gūmu*, *tōbud* or *tūbud*.

*Diphthongs*.—*ai* as in *aisle*; *au* as *ow* in *cow*; *ei* as *ay* in *may*; *oi* as in *noise*; *ui* same as *oi*.

The last represents the indefinite vowel *ō* or *ū* in combination with the vowel *i*. From a similar cause *ai* and *oi* are often interchanged.

In Muralag the *a* in *ai* is so greatly lengthened, that the sound becomes *ari*.

*Consonants*.—*k*, *g*; *t*, *d*; *p*, *b*; *w*; *s*, *z*; *r*, *l*; *m*, *n*, *ng*. These are in Mabuiaġ sounded as in English, *ng* being the *ng* in *sing*.

There is some confusion between the voiceless and voiced consonants, *k* and *g* being often written for each other. Similarly *t* and *d*, *p* and *b*, *s* and *z* are often interchanged.

*W* is very vocalic and is commonly confused with *u*. In the native writing, and gospels, *w* and *u* are used indiscriminately.

In Saibai *p* is sometimes nearly *f* as in *fan*, and *z* is often palatal *j* as in *jam*. My informant, Jack (Assai), named the letter *z*, *jěd*.

In Muralag *s* and *z* are both more palatal than in the other dialects, *s* being very nearly *ch* as in *chin*, and *z* becoming *dz* as in *adze*.

Some speakers confuse *ng* with *m*, *mapa* for *ngapa*, hither; *muk-baltai*, cross over water, for *nguki-baltai*.

*Compound Consonants*.—The only compound consonants are *kw* as *qu* in *quite*, and *gw* as in *cog-wheel*. These are usually written *ku* and *gu*, and always so in the native MS. and Gospels.

In the early Saibai Translation of S. Mark's Gospel<sup>1</sup>, *t*, *p*, and *d* are often combined with *r* as *tr*, *pr*, *dr*. These were due to the Lifuan translator's own pronunciation of these letters. The natives do not use them.

2. SYLLABLES. A syllable ends either in a vowel or one of the consonants *r*, *m*, or *n*. In all the dialects the indefinite vowels when final are often elided but not so often in Saibai and Muralag as in Mabuiag and Tud. In Muralag they are often represented by *i*. In compound words the final vowel of the first component is nearly always elided, e.g. *gud-wai* for *gudu-wai*, loose; *kuik-aimai* from *kuiku*; *dan-adai*, from *dana*.

Elision of a vowel in the middle of a word is not so common. Examples are *klak* for *kalak*, a spear; *aimdin* for *aimadin*, made.

The elision of a consonant occurs in the Mabuiag termination *i* for Saibai *zi*. In *garka*, male, and *ipika*, female, the syllable *zi* is elided but reappears in the plurals *garkazil* and *ipikazil*. So also an elided diphthong *ai* in Mabuiag, as in *danal*, eyed, appears in the derivative *danalaig*, but disappears again in the plural of the latter word, *danalgal*.

3. PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING OF INTRODUCED WORDS. The Western Islanders of the Straits have little difficulty in pronouncing English words and when these have been introduced they are spelled phonetically, as e.g. *măni*, *Mei*, *paip*, *taual*, *taim*, *spūn*, *stor*. Tom of Mabuiag pronounced *f* for *p*, in *fin* and *rofe*, for *pin* and *rope*, but correctly pronounced *ship*, *plenty*, *ripe*, and *stop*. *Rich* was pronounced *rish*, and *church* became *churt*. Slight changes are sometimes made, e.g. *paita*, pint.

In the Scripture translations, Hebrew and Greek words have been introduced with modified pronunciation due to the media by which they reached the languages of the Straits. As a rule such words have come from the original through Tahitian, Samoan, and Lifuan into Saibai or Mabuiag. A good example is the Greek *ἄρτος*, which becomes in Tahitian and Samoan, *areto*, owing to the Polynesian difficulty in pronouncing a closed syllable, although there is properly no *r* in Samoan. In Lifuan and in Torres Straits there would be no difficulty in pronouncing *ἄρτος*, but the modified form *areto* is that used in both these languages. So also *satauro* from *σταυρός*, *luko* from *λύκος*, *alase* from *ἄλς*, *ekalesia* from *ἐκκλησία*, *karite* from *κριθή*<sup>2</sup>.

In Scriptural Proper Names the language of the Western Islanders now follows the Samoan spelling. In the earlier Saibai version the Lifu spelling was used.

4. SOUND INTERCHANGES. Apart from the uncertain vowel pronunciation which has been already noticed, there are a few interchanges of sounds which are characteristic

<sup>1</sup> See specimen in the section on Literature of the Western Islanders.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. other examples in the List of Introduced words.



of dialect, but are limited each to a single grammatical feature. The dative termination *ka* of Mabuiag and Tutu becomes *pa* in Muralag and Saibai, though *k* does not in any other case change with *p*. Similarly the pronoun *ni* with its plural *nita* in Mabuiag, Tutu and Muralag are always *ngi* and *ngita* in Saibai. In the dative and ablative forms of the plural pronouns and proper nouns *n* of Mabuiag, Tud, and Muralag becomes *l* in Saibai. The verbal termination *i* in Mabuiag, becomes *iz* in the other dialects. The *pw* of Muralag sometimes represents *p* of the other dialects. The following examples illustrate these changes.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Mabuiag.</i>	<i>Tutu.</i>	<i>Muralag.</i>	<i>Saibai.</i>
upward	kadaka	kadaka	kadaipa	kadaipa
for a man	mabaegka	mabaegka	mabaegpa	mabaegöpa
thou	ni	ni	ni	ngi
you	nita	nita	nita	ngita
for you (plur.)	nitamunika	nitamunika	nitamunipa	ngitamulpa
through them (plur.)	tanamunngu	tanemunngu	tanamununguzi	tanamulngu
say	muli	muliz	muliz	muliz
there	nupai	nupai	nupwai	nupai
pearl shell	mai	mai	mari	mai

### 3. Word-building.

The language of the Western Islanders of Torres Straits is in the agglutinate stage, the significant roots and modifying particles being clearly distinguishable. The particles have no meaning when separated from the root word.

1. ROOTS. *Form.*—With respect to their form Roots may be:

1. *Monosyllabic*, as e.g. *u*, sound of wind; *ai*, food; *ni*, thou; *za*, thing; *gul*, canoe; *dan*, eye; *mud*, house; *pal*, pair.

2. *Dissyllabic*, as e.g. *ia*, speech; *asi*, going with; *ipi*, female; *kula*, stone; *muli*, open, speak; *dimur*, finger; *burum*, pig.

*Meaning.*—With respect to signification Roots may be classified as:

1. *Nominal*: Names of persons, places, or things, as e.g. *Waria*, a man's name; *Waiben*, Thursday Island; *mud*, house; *gul*, canoe.

2. *Verbal*: Expressing actions, conditions or qualities, as e.g. *muli*, speaking; *imi*, seeing; *ikai*, being glad; *kerket*, smarting; *kapu*, good; *wati*, bad.

3. *Demonstrative*: Pointing to positions in space and time, *i*, here; *si*, there; *kada*, up; *mulu*, down; *ngai*, the speaker, I; *na*, a large thing referred to, she, this, that; *keda*, thus, so; *ada*, outside; *mui*, inside.

4. *Expletive and Exclamatory*. *gar*, *wa*, *de*, *au*, *e*.

*Use.*—Roots in their unchanged form may be used to form sentences, e.g. *Ngai muli*, I say; *na koi ikai*, she (is) very glad; *ni nga?* who (are) you?

2. PARTICLES. *Form.*—With respect to form, the simple particles are always monosyllabic, as *ka*, *nga*, *zi*. But particles may be added to other particles to form compounds, as e.g. *zi-nga* in *imai-zi-nga*, a thing seen; *laig* in *dana-lai-g*, a person having eyes.

Particles may be abbreviated as *l* for *lai* in *l-g-al*; *dana-l-g-al*, persons having eyes.

*Meaning.*—With respect to signification, Particles may be classified as Radical, Functional, or Qualitative.

1. *Radical*: indicating a modified meaning of the Root.

(a) Transferring words from one class to another, as e.g. *l, zi*, changing noun or verb to adjective, as in *danal*, eyed, from *dan*, eye, *imaizi*, seeing from *imi*, see.

(b) Indicating a difference between words of the same class derived from the same root, as e.g. *g* denoting a person, *nga*, denoting a thing, in *imaizi-g*, a person who sees, *imaizinga*, a thing seen, from *imi*, see.

2. *Functional*: expressing the relationship of words to the other words in the sentence, *u*, of, *ka*, to or for, *ngu* from, as in *muda-u*, of a house; *muda-ka*, to a house; *muda-ngu*, from a house.

3. *Qualitative*: expressing the inherent qualities of a word of any given class, as e.g. in verbs, *mi* indicating plurality; *din*, distant action; *gi*, negation; *au*, interrogation.

*Identity of particles.* It is important to notice that in Mabuiag the particles used with the verbal roots are often identical in form with those added to nouns, and in native thought are probably also of identical meaning.

Compare:

*muda-ka*, to or for the house, with *imai-ka*, sees, present and future tense, i.e. directed towards seeing.

*muda-nu*, in the house, with *ima-nu*, has seen, sees now, i.e. is *in the act* of seeing.

*muda-ngu*, from the house, with *imai-ngul*, saw yesterday, i.e. has departed from seeing.

*muda-u*, of, belonging to a house, with *ima-u*, imperative, see! i.e. get or possess seeing.

*muda-d*, like a house, with *ima-d*, repeatedly see.

*muda-nge*, having become a house, with *iman-nge*, saw then.

With respect to position, the particles in Mabuiag and its cognate dialects are always suffixed<sup>1</sup>.

There are a few apparent exceptions used with verbs, as e.g. *pa*, indicating motion away, as in *pa-uzari*, depart; *bal*, across or aside, as in *bal-tai*, turn aside; *kid*, in another direction, as in *kid-tai*, invert. Comparison, however, with other verbal expressions shows that these are roots, of which the separate use is comparatively rare, or even obsolete. *Vide* Compound Verbs.

3. COMPOUND WORDS. These will be discussed under the various classes to which they belong.

#### 4. Classes of Words.

The structure of the Mabuiag language may be most conveniently studied by considering the following eight classes of words: 1. Demonstratives. 2. Adjectives. 3. Nouns. 4. Pronouns. 5. Verbs. 6. Adverbs. 7. Connectors. 8. Exclamations. 9. Numerals.

#### 5. Demonstrative Words and Particles.

The Demonstrative Words and Particles in the Mabuiag language are extremely numerous. In various combinations they become equivalent to Demonstrative Adjectives, Personal and

<sup>1</sup> In this respect the language of the Western Islanders of the Straits agrees with those of Australia and is remarkably unlike that of the Eastern people. In the latter, prefixes and suffixes are both used.

Demonstrative Pronouns, and Adverbs of Place, Time, and Direction. They may also be used as Verbal stems. The intimate connection between words of this class renders it convenient to discuss them in the same section. The Personal Pronouns, however, are reserved for another Chapter.

1. SIMPLE FORMS. The following table shows the signification of the various simple particles.

1. *Indicating size or gender*: Large or female things, *na*; Small or male things, *nu*.
2. *Indicating number*: Singular, *na*, *nu*; Dual, *pal*; Plural, *ta*.
3. *Indicating position*: Proximity in front *i*, Proximity behind, *kai*; Removal, *se*; Distance, *pi*.
4. *Indicating motion*: Towards speaker, *ngapa*; Towards another, *ka*, *pa*; Motion from, *ngu*, *zi*, *ki*.
5. *Indicating direction*: Windward, *pai*; Leeward, *pau*, *pun*; Upward, *kada*; Downward, *mulu*; Across, *bal*; Below, under, *gu*.
6. *Adjectival*: *-b*.
7. *Indicating visibility*: *wa*.

2. ADJECTIVAL DEMONSTRATIVES. These are used to point out a person or object and are generally equivalent to the adjectives this, that, or yonder.

The forms found are the following:

*Singular*. Large or female things: *ina*, this; *sena*, that; *pina*, yonder.

„ Small or male things: *inu*, this; *senu*, that; *pinu*, yonder.

*Dual*. *ipal*, these two; *sepal*, those two; *pipal*, yonder two.

*Plural*. *ita*, these; *seta*, those; *pita*, those yonder.

These forms are used after the noun and are predicative: *mabaeg ina*, this man, or the man (who is here); *kula sena*, that stone; *wati kuikul ita*, bad heads these; *mura zapul seta*, all those things. Before the noun they require the suffix *-b* or *bi* (Tutu and Muralag).

*Singular*. *inab*, *inub*; *senab*, *senub*; *pinab*, *pinub*. Tutu, *pinaupa*.

*Dual*. *ipalab*; *sepalab*; *pipalab*. Tutu, *pipalaupa*.

*Plural*. *itab*; *setab*; *pitab*. Tutu, *pitaupa*.

Examples: *Senabi kula*, that stone; *inab mabaeg*, this man; *setab zapul ngau aimzinga*, those things I have done.

*Na* and *nu* are sometimes found without the limiting particles and may then be loosely translated 'the.'

When the person or object indicated is moving towards, or away from, the speaker, *ngapa*, i.e. me-ward (cf. Pron.) or *ka* is added to the forms for 'that' and 'yonder.'

Examples: *Mabaeg pinungapa*, yonder man coming hither; *mabaegal pitangapa*, yonder men coming hither; *mabaeg senungapa*, that man coming hither.

*Pinuka ngapa*, yonder towards me; *ipika palongapa*, those two women coming hither.

In Muralag and Saibai *pa* is used instead of *ka*.

3. NOMINAL AND PRONOMINAL DEMONSTRATIVES. The forms *ina*, *inu*, etc. may be used with the noun termination *-nga*. They then become equivalent to nouns with the meanings 'this one,' 'that one,' etc. Or, the simple form may be used by itself as a noun or pronoun meaning 'the place, here, there, or yonder.' When so used it may