

MAUNG GRAMMAR, TEXTS AND VOCABULARY

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MAUNG GRAMMAR

TEXTS AND VOCABULARY

by

A. CAPELL *and* H.E. HINCH



1970

MOUTON

THE HAGUE · PARIS

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FOREWORD

Maung is the language of Goulburn Island, North Australia. The present work represents the first presentation of the language at any length. The preliminary study was made by the first author during field work in North Australia in 1939 and again in 1942, together with shorter contacts over a number of periods in later years. It has also benefited by the work of missionaries in the area, including the Rev. S. Goldsmith, who probably made the first study of the language, but left only a few manuscript notes, and the Rev. L. Kentish, both of the Methodist Mission on the island. The latter also contributed to facilitate the author's study during his stay at Goulburn Island. Unfortunately Mr. Kentish was carried away by Japanese raiders during the Second World War and was lost.

The second author is a nursing sister at the Mission, who, after undergoing training at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Brisbane, carried on further study of the language. At my invitation Sister Hinch kindly agreed to collaborate with me on the production of the present volume. Much of the contribution, especially in the vocabulary, is hers, but she is not to be held responsible for my arrangement of the material, and in a few instances our interpretations have differed. The final decisions as to what was included are therefore mine, and Sister Hinch is not responsible for them, and least of all for any mistakes that have been made. I am very grateful to her for her collaboration, whereby the volume has been greatly improved and the vocabulary especially enlarged.

My thanks are due not only to the help of the late Rev. L. Kentish, but to others who have collaborated in the analysis from time to time, including Mr. G.N. (now Associate Professor) O'Grady, of Victoria University, Columbia, Canada. Some aboriginal informants have also materially assisted; special mention may be made of Mangiwa, who took part in the Summer Institute of Linguistics Workshop in Brisbane, in which much of the formalisation of the grammar was worked out. The bulk of the very strenuous work of typing and keeping my rather chaotic writings in order was done by my research assistant, Mrs. I. Wetherell, and without her constant care the work would probably not have been produced.

A. CAPELL

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H.E. HINCH

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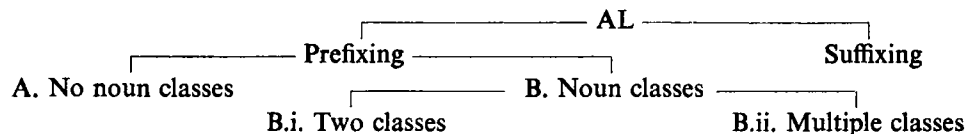
PART ONE
GRAMMAR

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. Maung is the language of the Goulburn Islands, off the north coast of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory of Australia. The language is closely related to Jiwadja, which occupies the northwestern corner of the opposite mainland. There is, however, one outstanding difference between the two: Maung has multiple classification of nouns, Jiwadja has no noun classes at all. In other points of structure the two languages resemble each other rather closely, as they do also in vocabulary. An outline study of Jiwadja structure appeared in *Oceania Linguistic Monograph*, No. 7, "Some Linguistic Types in Australia" by the present writer. No Jiwadja vocabulary, however, was included.

0.2. Australian languages are subdivisible into two main groups — those which signal grammatical meanings by suffixes only, and those which use prefixes also — none of the languages use prefixes only. The prefixing languages occupy parts of an area which stretches from the southern edge of the Northern Kimberley Division of Western Australia, across Arnhem Land and terminates at Groote Eylandt, in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Not all the languages of this area have noun-classes, but all except a very few use prefixes, and some are structurally very complicated. Quite recently several languages to the south of this area (in the Barkly Tablelands) have been found to possess a system of noun classification, using the same basic morphemes as those of Arnhem Land, but working by suffixes and not prefixes. The information, gathered by Professor Kenneth L. Hale in 1960, has not yet been published.

0.3. The Maung language, dealt with in the present volume, belongs to the multiple classifying subgroup of the prefixing languages. The following diagram represents a typological delineation of Australian languages (AL):



Jiwadja belongs to Group A., Maung to B.ii., but there is a body of vocabulary in common. If the lexical similarity seems to be less than the stress laid on it might imply, it must be remembered that the degree of vocabulary divergence from language to language is considerable in both groups of Australian languages, but amongst the prefixing languages in North and North-west Australia it is much larger than elsewhere. In fact, 8% to 11% agreement among these languages becomes noteworthy. The theoretically reconstructed 'Common Australian' element may reach nearly 90% in parts of the Western Desert area: see *Some Linguistic Types*, map opposite page 12. The percentage of general agreement (not Common Australian only) between Jiwadja and Maung, taken over a vocabulary of some 600 words, is roughly 33%. In the parallel cases of Yilngali and Djamindjung in the Victoria River area of the Northern Territory it is about 52%; in that of Ridarngo-Ngandi in the Roper River area it is 15%. These figures are surprisingly high in this area of maximum divergence.

0.4. Concerning the typological and actual morphological resemblances between Jiwadja and Maung, a comparison of the following pages with the corresponding section of the Jiwadja grammar in *Some Linguistic Types* will give the historical linguist food for thought in dealing with a continent where diachronic study is impossible because no early stage of any language has been recorded and where, as a result, all historical restoration must rest entirely upon internal comparison and reconstruction.

1. PHONEMICS

1.0. SOUND SYSTEM

The phonemic system of Maung is best described in terms of the twenty-three segmental phonemes tabulated below. There are also several contrastive intonation patterns.

CHART I

Segmental Phonemes of Maung

	<i>Bilabial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Retroflex</i>	<i>Palatodental</i>	<i>Velar</i>
Stops	b	d	ɖ	dj	g
Nasals	m	n	ɳ	nj	ŋ
Laterals		l	ɭ		
Vibrants		r	ɽ		
Fricatives					ɣ
Semi-vowels	w	ɹ		j	
	<i>Front</i>		<i>Central</i>		<i>Back</i>
High	i			ɔ	u
Mid		ɛ			
Low			a		

In addition there is an extra-systematic glottal stop phoneme which occurs only in exclamations.

The sound system presented in the above Table is that which is perfectly normal in the vast bulk of Australian languages and notes are needed on classes of sounds more than on individual sounds.

1.1. CONSONANTS

1.1.1. *Description*

(a) The plosive series phonemicised as /b/, /d/, /dj/, /ɖ/ and /g/ are voiceless lenes — what are called in the British system of description ‘devoiced’ plosives, i.e. they have the tension of lenes but not the voicing. Some Australian linguists prefer to transcribe them as /p/, /t/, /tj/ or /ty/, /t/ and /k/, and this is perfectly acceptable because the two series do not usually exist together in Australian languages, and certainly not in Maung. They achieve a certain degree of voicing intervocalically and after homorganic nasals, but this is never phonemic.

(b) The palatal series is here written in the form of digraphs partly for the sake of convenience, and partly because this form has been widely used in Australia over a long period and is generally understood by Australian linguists. They are, however, single sounds, phonemically [dʲ], [nʲ] and [lʲ] respectively. These sounds are called alveo-palatals because while the blade of the tongue makes contact with the front palate the tongue tip touches the lower front teeth — the normal formation of these sounds in the Australian languages. In Maung, however, there is a complication, noticed originally by Rev. Dr. C.M. Churchward when working in this area in 1946. He felt that *dj* and *nj* should be distinguished from *d-j* and *n-j* respectively. In his Mss. report he wrote: “In Maung at any rate, one must learn to distinguish between /ń/ and /nj/, and between /ń/ and /n/ before /j/ being alveolar. Note especially the following pronouns: /janad/ ‘he’; /injanad/ ‘she’; /anjanad/ and /adjanad/ ‘it’. This distinction between /ń/ and /nj/ (n + j) and between /d/ and /dj/ (d + j), which was obscured by the non-use of the letter /y/ appears not to have been noticed before”. That is to say, a distinction should be made between a palatal plosive or nasal, and the alveolar sound plus a following /j/.

One of the authors has also made a similar distinction, using [dj] and [nj] for the single sounds and [dy] and [ny] where two separate phonemes are involved. The distinction is important in the verbal forms: /gunjajan/ ‘you see her’ and /gunyajjan/ ‘he sees you’; /dy/, however, is an uncommon combination. On the other hand [addjanad] is right for ‘it’ (Class VI). The [dj] is the commoner, e.g., [gaddja] ‘let us go together’; [addjarag] ‘belongings’. Here /j/ will be used throughout.

(c) Retroflex plosive, nasal and lateral are common to many Australian languages.

(d) The varieties of *r* sound are: (1) rolled or flapped /r/; (2) fricative /r̥/ of Southern British ‘run’; (3) flapped retroflex voiced vibrant [ɽ] or /r̥/, e.g., [waɽwaɽaŋ] ‘wild apple tree’. This is not a submember of ɖ as in Gubabwiŋu, cf. [guwaɽu] ‘a woman’s name’, [guwaɽu] ‘place name’. [ɽ] occurs word medially only, intervocalically and in consonant clusters. It contrasts within the syllable with /r/, but no minimal pairs have been found; e.g., /waɽawaɽaŋ/ ‘a type of spear’, /waramuŋbig/ ‘woman’.

(e) The velar fricative /ɣ/ is phonemic. Only one minimal pair and several

analogous pairs have been recorded (1.1.2.[c]). Native speakers are insistent on its correct pronunciation where it is actually heard, and are not willing to have it treated as a free variant of /g/. Examples are: [ɣjab] ‘fish’ (Jiwadja /ja:b/); [ɲajiyi] ‘my teeth’ (Jiwadja do.). It does occur, however, in conditioned variation in [-ga] and [-ya], the suffix of movement towards the speaker: [gu-ma-nji-ya] ‘bring it here’; [ji-ni-ma-nj-ga] ‘he brought it here’.

(f) /g/ and /w/ show signs of conditioned alternation, as in Jiwadja. By many speakers /g/ before /u/ at the beginning of a word is sounded as /w/: ‘ground’: /gunag/ or /wunag/; ‘chest’ /gumbil/ or /wumbil/.

1.1.2. *Consonantal Phoneme Contrasts*

The phonemes posited are based on the following contrasts:

(a) The stops /b/, /d/, /ɖ/, /dʒ/ and /g/ contrast as follows:

<i>bababa</i>	‘sit’	<i>bul</i>	‘blunt’
<i>dabaga</i>	‘that (far distant)’	<i>dud</i>	‘a large amount’
<i>ɖabaɖab</i>	‘all broken up’	<i>dudʒ</i>	‘stand up’
<i>djabaga</i>	‘she (far distant)’	<i>djuga</i>	‘article (class II)’
<i>gababa</i>	‘over there’	<i>gula</i>	‘you are eating’
<i>maba</i>	‘do it’	<i>ɖubidj</i>	‘sensation’
<i>mada</i>	‘article (class V)’	<i>judi</i>	‘goanna type’
<i>maɖababa</i>	‘marriageable’	<i>muɖidj</i>	‘stingray type’
<i>madjar</i>	‘throat’	<i>nudʒiyi</i>	‘your tooth’
<i>maga</i>	‘that (class V)’	<i>nugiri</i>	‘you are hot’
<i>bab</i>	‘sit’	<i>djub</i>	‘splash’
<i>walmad</i>	‘rain’	<i>dud</i>	‘a large amount’
<i>baɖ</i>	‘pick it up’	<i>wuɖ</i>	‘small’
<i>badj</i>	‘pipe’	<i>ɖudj</i>	‘stand up’
<i>mag</i>	‘message stick’	<i>wug</i>	‘ant type’
<i>ɲudbinj</i>	‘I slept’		
<i>ɲuɖbinj</i>	‘I hurried’		
<i>ɲudʒbanj</i>	‘I licked myself’		
<i>ɲudbun</i>	‘I bend myself’		

(b) The nasals /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, /nj/ and /ŋ/ contrast as follows:

<i>ma</i>	‘do it’	<i>mulaɲ</i>	‘mouse’
<i>nawul</i>	‘hole’	<i>nudʒajig</i>	‘your bone’
<i>ɲja</i>	‘take it’	<i>ɲjunjug</i>	‘sacred’
<i>ɲa</i>	‘is that so?’	<i>ɲulam</i>	‘day’
<i>gumaɲun</i>	‘you were bringing it’	<i>wumi</i>	‘shellfish type’

<i>gunadbi</i>	'I have you (sg.)'	<i>guni</i>	'you give him'
<i>wuṇalaja</i>	'cry'	<i>muṇin</i>	'because'
<i>gunjadbi</i>	'you (sg.) have her'	<i>bunji</i>	'father (term of address)'
<i>guṇadbi</i>	'you (sg.) have it (class IV)'	<i>wuṇidjalg</i>	'ocean'
<i>mamam</i>	'mother's father'	<i>ḡurum</i>	'casuarina tree'
<i>gɔjan</i>	'you see him'	<i>guwun</i>	'you (sg.) are hitting him'
<i>maṇmaṇ</i>	'father's mother'	<i>gudjuṇ</i>	'white clay'
<i>jinimanj</i>	'he took'	<i>gubunj</i>	'canoe'
<i>jinimanj</i>	'he is able to take'	<i>guwuṇ</i>	'you hit him (past punct.)'
<i>ḡulamdju</i>	'just morning'	<i>ganmin</i>	'you are'
<i>wandji</i>	'head'	<i>maṇmaṇ</i>	'father's mother'
<i>wandja</i>	'hair type'	<i>ḡanjmala</i>	'I am eating it (class V)'
<i>djaṇdju</i>	'just a sacred site'	<i>maṇmaṇ</i>	'pant'

(c) The velar consonants /g/ and /ḡ/ contrast as follows:

<i>guniga</i>	'you carry it!'	<i>gigi</i>	'what? how?'
<i>guniya</i>	'you must give him'	<i>niyi</i>	'mother'
<i>baga</i>	'those men'	<i>jigiḡ</i>	'milk tree'
<i>bayab</i>	'float'	<i>jayiḡ</i>	'currant'
<i>waga</i>	'at that place'	<i>magagur</i>	'pelican'
<i>wayaj</i>	'flying squirrel'	<i>mayara</i>	'many (class V)'
<i>jinjalganj</i>	'she drowned'	<i>marga</i>	'want to'
<i>jinjalḡan</i>	'turtle'	<i>warya</i>	'flower'

(d) The liquids and laterals /r/, /r/, /ṛ/, /l/ and /ḡ/ contrast as follows:

<i>rabuṛabu</i>	'name of person'	<i>muṛu</i>	'grass type'
<i>rabi</i>	'file'	<i>muṛu</i>	'flying fox type'
<i>laḡa</i>	'sister (term of address)'	<i>wulubulu</i>	'mother's grand-mother'
<i>ḡama</i>	'spear type'	<i>muḡu</i>	'nose'
<i>waṛaruba</i>	'dugong hide'	<i>djuṛ</i>	'joke'
<i>waṛawaṛa</i>	'flutter'	<i>djuṛ</i>	'drop'
<i>waṛawara</i>	'tree type'		
<i>ḡala</i>	'mother's brother'	<i>bul</i>	'blunt, rounded'
<i>waḡawaḡa</i>	'young sprouts among mangroves'	<i>wuḡ</i>	'water hole'

(e) The alveolar, retroflexed stops and vibrants /ɾ/, /ɽ/, /d/ and /ḍ/ contrast as follows:

<i>guwarandi</i>	'cut it up'	<i>ɲalari</i>	'leg'
<i>nadžarawo</i>	'whirlwind'	<i>manjari</i>	'song'
<i>gajadajan</i>	'look after yourself'	<i>ɲiladi</i>	'I put it in'
<i>madjadabi</i>	'wild turkey'	<i>aɲbaɖi</i>	'expert'
<i>warwag</i>	'away from'	<i>warawara</i>	'flutter'
<i>warwaraɲ</i>	'wild apple'	<i>warawara</i>	'tree type'
<i>wadwadaba</i>	'hurry!'	<i>bada</i>	'those men'
<i>wadwadaba</i>	'bird type'	<i>maɖabada</i>	'marriageable'

(f) The semivowels and fricative /t/, /j/ and /ɣ/ contrast as follows:

<i>jiraba</i>	'song type'	<i>wuyara</i>	'many (class IV)'
<i>jijaɭmu</i>	'his spirit'	<i>wuragag</i>	'crow'
<i>jirara</i>	'many (class I)'	<i>wujaba</i>	'ant heap'
<i>miri</i>	'oar'	<i>gumiradbi</i>	'you are kneading it'
<i>jiji</i>	'yes'	<i>ɲawijabi</i>	'my hair'
<i>niyi</i>	'mother'	<i>guniyaba</i>	'you must give it to him'
<i>jiridjiridj</i>	'slippery'		
<i>jijiɣiba</i>	'his tooth'		
<i>jijijiyi</i>	'cockle heap'		

(g) The semivowel and consonants /w/, /t/ and /ɣ/ contrast as follows:

<i>muwaɲ</i>	'sun'	<i>wuwudj</i>	'urine'
<i>muɾan</i>	'it (class V) went'	<i>ruyu</i>	'bird species'
<i>guya</i>	'you give him'	<i>murɯ</i>	'grass type'
<i>wuwija</i>	'its (class IV) hair'		
<i>wuririg</i>	'a little drop'		
<i>wuyiba</i>	'mangrove worm'		

1.1.3. Consonantal Variants

(a) Stops.¹ The stop phonemes /b/, /dʒ/, /d/ and /ḍ/ tend to be voiced in the pre-stop position and voiceless in the post-stop and word final position. Following the nasals they are voiced, and elsewhere they freely vary between voiced and voiceless.

/g/ tends to be voiceless in both pre-stop and post-stop and word final positions, voiced after nasals, and voiced or voiceless elsewhere.

¹ An interdental stop [d̪] occurs in just three words, where it is in free variation with [d]: [baɖiɔ], [baɖiɔ] 'box', [muɖaraɔ], [mudaraɔ] 'pearlshell', [gaɖaɔ], [gadaɔ] 'carpenter's plane'.

(b) Nasals. In word initial position preceding /ε/, /ɨ/ tends to be fronted:

[ɨe]	/ɨe/	'I don't believe you!'
[ɨɛn]	/ɨɛn/	'I am shooting him'

(c) Semivowels. The /r/ phoneme is a non-syllabic retroflexed vocoid with approximately the same tongue position as the preceding vowel.

1.2. VOWELS

1.2.1. Description

The basic vowel phonemes are those given on the preceding Table (chart 1); the actual vowel sounds heard in most Australian languages are more numerous, and a Phonetic Table would take on the following shape:

CHART II

Phonetic Table of Australian Vowels

	<i>Front</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Back</i>
High			
Mid			
Low			

The symbols enclosed in ovals represent free variations; those in the triangles represent conditioned variants. The principles of conditioning operating in other areas of Australia are set out for the Western Desert language by W.H. Douglas in his *Introduction to the Western Desert Language* (*Oceania Linguistic Monograph*, No. 4, revised edition, University of Sydney, 1964), summarised and illustrated below. In general in Australia, the lax high front vowel varies freely between [ɪ] and [e]; the back vowel between [ʊ] and [o], and no semantic difference results.

In Maung, the situation is different and rather unusual. In the first place, the dropping of [ɪ] to [e] and [ʊ] to [o] is almost absent, or at the most, very rare. The presence of the phonemes [ε] and [ɔ] is probably influencing this limitation, and those half-open vowels occur only in a minority of Australian languages. In the second place the vowel [ä] is to be regarded as the fronting and raising of [a]; the [æ] which is usually in free variation with [ε] wherever the latter occurs, is not heard; again in all probability [æ] and [a] if both were present would pass beyond the margin of safety and produce