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A RE-EXAMINATION OF COOK'S GOGO-YIMIDJIR WORD LIST

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THE recent diachronic study of Gogo-Yimidjir by de Zwaan (1969a) has illustrated one more aspect of the contribution to the early knowledge of Australia made by Lieutenant James Cook and his associates as a result of their voyage along the east coast, the bi-centenary of which is being celebrated this year. Closer study of the data presented by de Zwaan and re-examination of other evidence do nothing to diminish the value of Cook's work, but do cast considerable doubt on some of de Zwaan's conclusions.

This re-examination of the data and conclusions is divided into four sections:

- (a) An examination of what sources are available;
- (b) study of the data as presented in these sources;
- (c) comparison of the word lists collected in 1770 with those collected in the 1890's and 1960's, with particular emphasis on the interpretation of the spelling in the early lists;
- (d) conclusions regarding phonological and other changes in Gogo-Yimidjir.

THE SOURCES

Comparison of some items in Cook's word-list (as quoted by de Zwaan) with the later versions of the same items suggested that there had been errors in the interpretation of Cook's hand-writing, presumably by Hawkesworth.¹ Such items are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Suspicious Items in Cook's Word List, Hawkesworth Edition

Item Number	Cook's List	Roth's List	de Zwaan's List
4	<i>melea</i>	<i>milka</i>	<i>milga</i>
11	<i>marigal</i>	<i>mangal</i>	<i>mangal</i>
15	<i>edamal</i>	<i>damal</i>	<i>damal</i>

It seemed very probable that Cook really wrote these items as *melca*, *mangal* and *edamal*. The decision was therefore made to investigate what other sources were available and to re-study de Zwaan's results, using the most reliable data.

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¹ The source used by both Roth and de Zwaan was Hawkesworth's edition of "Lieutenant Cook's Diary" (London, 1773). (N.B.—Hawkesworth, not Hawksworth as spelt by de Zwaan.)

It was found² that there are three early hand-written copies of Cook's Journal, on one or other of which all published versions are based: (1) a copy in Cook's own hand, held by the Australian National Library, Canberra; (2) a copy made by the clerk of the *Endeavour*, Richard Orton, which is now in the Mitchell Library, Sydney; and (3) a later copy, composite, in several hands.

In addition, there is another version of the word-list in the Journal of Sir Joseph Banks.³ He discusses (p. 136) the unreliability of the methods necessarily used to elicit the vocabulary, and states that, to overcome this drawback, "Myself and two or three more got from them as many words as we could, and having noted down those which we thought[t] from circumstances we were not mistaken in we compared our lists; those in which all the lists agreed, or rather were contradicted by none, we thought our selves morally certain not to be mistaken in. Of these my list chiefly consists . . ."

Photocopies of the relevant pages of the Cook and Orton versions were obtained, by courtesy of the libraries concerned. These are identical except in hand-writing; clearly, one is a copy of the other, and it is presumed that Cook's version is original. The Orton version has alterations in Cook's hand⁴ (but none in the word-list). Cook's word list is shown in Plates I and II.

Banks' list is quite different, and the list published by Hawkesworth is a composite of both, but omits some words from each.⁵

A further source of useful information is Roth (1901).⁶ In this work he not only quotes Cook's word-list and gives his own list for the same items, but also explains some of the discrepancies. Roth's source for Cook's list, like de Zwaan's, was the Hawkesworth edition, but there are puzzling discrepancies between some of the items as reported by Roth and by de Zwaan.

Some data of marginal interest are reported by Lanyon-Orgill (1961). This is a word-list in Bulponara, a language which is said (Schmidt, quoted by Lanyon-Orgill) to be related to Gogo-Yimidjir. It was spoken between Trinity Bay and Weary Bay, North Queensland.⁷ It was written in 1801 by a Midshipman Wright, and has a few items of interest in this case.

A useful reference on the spelling and pronunciation of English in the mid-eighteenth century is Holmberg's (1956) edition, with commentary, of the "Treatise on English Pronunciation", by James Douglas.

² Information from the introduction to the Library Board of South Australia's Facsimile Edition of Cook's Journal, edited by Wharton (1893).

³ Banks (1770), Vol. II, pp. 136-37. (Edited by J. C. Beaglehole.)

⁴ See Reed (1969), p. 14.

⁵ See footnote by the editor in Banks (1770), Vol. II, p. 137.

⁶ N.B., this is not referred to by de Zwaan, who quotes only unpublished manuscripts by Roth.

⁷ This language is probably the modern Koko-Bididji, or Bididji (Capell (1963), No. Y24). According to O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966), p. 53, this belongs to the same linguistic sub-group (Eastern Pama) as Gogo-Yimidjir.

followed by a low vowel can no longer be palatalized (items 7, 18, 27, 39). In view of doubt regarding the situation as of to-day (footnote 14), a further conclusion that a devoiced palatalized plosive, permissible before 1900 (see items 18, 19, 39, 54, 55) is no longer allowed, must remain tentative.

There are six cases (disregarding such doubtful items as 32 and 48) where the evidence seems to indicate another kind of change. In one of these cases (*bunu*, items 5-6) the change took place after 1900. Allowing for possible errors in others of these items, it seems reasonable to conclude tentatively that less than 10% of the 1770 vocabulary has been replaced at the present time by different lexemes. Further field work may clarify the situation.

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