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STANDARDIZED ALPHABETS FOR MALAITAN LANGUAGES

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0. INTRODUCTION

The history of alphabet design in Malaita, and the Solomon Islands in general, has been one of independent development and fragmentation. Alphabet design in one language was often done without consideration of alphabets used in neighboring related languages. Furthermore, alphabets for a new publication have often been chosen without reference to literature already produced in that language. The result is a present day situation in which there are a number of competing alphabets for a single language. In the Kwara'ae language (see section 4.3.7), for instance, the ng sound as in the English word sing has been represented no less than five different ways in existing publications--ng, *h*, *n̄*, *n̄*, and *n*. In the neighboring language Kwaio (see section 4.3.9), it has been represented in a sixth way--*ŋ*.

There is an obvious need for standardized alphabets in Malaitan languages. In this paper, a standardized alphabet for each Malaitan language is proposed. The first section of the paper presents some advantages of standardized alphabets as they relate to primary education, the printing process, the extendability of literature into neighboring language groups, and the ultimate goal of regional and national unity. In the second section, four possible aims in developing an alphabet and the interrelationships of these aims are discussed. These are illustrated by examples from the Malaitan languages. The discussion is nevertheless a general one and the principles could be applied to languages in any region of the Solomon Islands. In section three, I summarize the discussion of section two by proposing a priority of aims in developing standardized alphabets. In the fourth and final section of the paper, the proposed standardized alphabets for Malaitan languages are presented. It is hoped that writers, translators, educators, and publishers will refer to this paper and use it as a basis of discussion for developing more acceptable standardized alphabets, or begin to use the proposed alphabets in future literature for Malaitan languages.

My interest in preparing this paper was aroused in a panel discussion on the topic of "Guidelines for the setting of a standardized spelling system for the Solomon Islands Languages". The panel was organized by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and held on 25 August 1977. The paper results from field work on Malaita during July and August 1977. During this period I worked mainly with the Kwara'ae Translation Committee to help them standardize their alphabet and draw up a standard spelling list (see Simons forthcoming b). In addition to work on Kwara'ae I collected word lists from all the north Malaitan languages and am engaged in a study of language relations in north Malaita (see Simons forthcoming a). This project was sponsored by the Translation Committee of the Solomon Islands Christian Association.

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1. WHY STANDARDIZE?

The standardization of alphabets for all Malaitan languages, or any other such regional group of Solomon Island languages, offers many advantages against only one disadvantage. The disadvantage is that for some languages, adopting a standard will mean changing some of the conventions of the past. This may meet opposition when literature users are asked to abandon the spelling conventions to which they have become attached through many years of use. It is also expensive to reprint old literature using a new alphabet.

However, the advantages of standardization far outnumber the disadvantages. In the area of primary school education, the development of curricula for different vernaculars is simplified if those vernaculars follow the same spelling conventions. The training of primary school teachers is much easier if all will be teaching in vernaculars that use alphabets from the same standardized system. This would also facilitate a teacher's transfer of teaching skill from one vernacular to a second vernacular. The task of developing an alphabet for a previously unwritten language is simplified if there is a standardized spelling system which sets guidelines for any new alphabet. The process of printing the literature will also benefit from a single spelling standard if the same personnel are to be involved in the checking and publishing of literature for more than one language.

All of the above advantages affect the few people who are involved in the preparation, teaching, or printing of literature. The greatest advantage affects all those who will be users of the literature. This advantage is the one of extendability. That is, when standardized alphabets are used for neighboring languages, the readership of a single piece of literature may extend well beyond the borders of that language group. In a recent language survey of north Malaita (see Simons forthcoming a), we found that every north Malaitan language is generally well understood by speakers of the languages with which it shares a border. This means that literature written in one language could be understood by people from the bordering language groups. If standardized spelling systems are used for all north Malaitan languages, a person who already reads his own language could pick up literature from a bordering language group and immediately read it. Thus, when standardized alphabets are employed, the readership for

any language's literature automatically extends beyond the borders of that language. The benefits of extendability could be used advantageously in primary education, for instance, where literature from surrounding languages could be included in the curriculum for a given language.

Finally, standardized alphabets, through the outworkings of the principle of extendability, may contribute to regional and even national unity. The English spelling system is sharply criticized for its inconsistencies. Nevertheless, it has scored a great triumph in uniting the many different dialects of a vast speech community, dialects which often are not even mutually intelligible. John Nist (1966) in his essay "In Defense of English Spelling" discusses this point:

English spelling minimizes dialect and regional differences within the English language on a world-wide scale. . . . Today the three major forms of Modern English --British, American, and Commonwealth--are very nearly identical on the printed page; a great source of the linguistic unity and cultural solidarity of Anglo-Saxon civilization.

Standardized spelling systems may help to achieve the same thing in the Solomon Islands.

2. POSSIBLE AIMS IN DEVELOPING AN ALPHABET

When designing an alphabet there are a number of aims which one must keep in mind, and as we shall see, these aims are often in opposition. Thus it is necessary to rank the aims in terms of priorities in order to make decisions. In this section, four aims which are thought to be particularly relevant to the problem of standardizing alphabets for Malaitan languages are discussed. For discussions of other aims and principles of designing spelling systems see Gudschinsky 1970 and 1973, Powlison 1968, Simons (in press), and Smalley 1964.

The discussion of aims in developing an alphabet is divided into two main headings. The first two aims are relevant to producing literature to be read by the native speaker. When one strives for standardization and the extension of literature into neighboring language groups, two additional aims must be considered. Finally, the interrelations of the four aims are discussed. In section three, I summarize this section by proposing a priority of aims in developing standardized alphabets. When the individual aims are in opposition, such a system of priorities is necessary in order to guide decision making.

2.1 When producing literature for the native speaker

2.1.1 Conformity to the national language

In the interest of national unity and national education programs, it is best when the alphabets of an individual vernacular language conforms to the spelling conventions of the national language. This conformity facilitates the reader's interchange between the national language and his own vernacular. It also contributes to the feeling of national unity as discussed in the final paragraph of section 1.

In the Solomon Islands, English is the national language. Therefore, conformity to English spelling conventions should be the goal where possible. For example, in Sa'a and Ulawa a q has been used to represent a labialized p sound, that is /p^w/. - The spelling pw is to be preferred because q in English represents a kw sound.

Another way in which the national language requires conformity is in the area of printing and typewriting. In designing an alphabet for a vernacular language, one is limited by the characters available on the typewriters in common use in the country. Thus it is often necessary to use a sequence of two letters to represent a single sound in the vernacular language. This must be done because there is no suitable single character available in the alphabet of the national language.

2.1.2 Conformity to the native speaker's intuition

An alphabet must also conform to the native speaker's intuition about his language if it is going to be accepted and used by him. In general, this means that each significant sound in the language's sound system (each "phoneme") should be represented by a unique symbol in the alphabet, and only these sounds should be represented. Ideally this means one unique letter for each sound, or phoneme. The Nggela man reacts against the spelling Nggela and prefers Gela for the name of his island. This is because the initial consonant in this word is a single indivisible unit in his sound system, even though there is a nasal sound which precedes the g sound in the pronunciation. But as he would tell you, the first letter in the word is simply g, it's not ng plus g.

In looking again at the example from Sa'a and Ulawa of q used to represent a pw, it is not hard to understand why the q was chosen. This sound is a single indivisible unit in the language and thus it best conforms to the native speaker's intuition when a single letter is used to represent the sound. Since p is already a distinct sound in the language, another single letter from the English alphabet was chosen.

2.2 When extending literature to the non-native speaker

When literature is produced with the goal of being used beyond the borders of the language group itself, two different approaches to standardization can be taken. Both approaches are meant to aid the non-native speaker. In the first approach, the differences between the sound systems of the languages are highlighted in order to aid the outsider's pronunciation of the language. In the second approach, the regular correspondences between the sound systems of the languages are highlighted in order to aid the outsider's understanding through the recognition of words with the same meaning in his own language.

2.2.1 Highlighting sound differences to aid pronunciation

In developing a standardized alphabet for a region, or for the nation, one can choose to highlight the differences in the way words are pronounced in all the languages involved. The resulting spelling system will help the reader to correctly pronounce words from any given language. This approach emphasizes the non-native speaker's production of the correct pronunciation.

Such a standardized spelling system for all the languages of the Solomon Islands has been devised by Brian Hackman in "A Guide to the Spelling and Pronunciation of Place Names in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate" (1968). This spelling system was developed in order to establish a standard method for spelling place names on maps. Dr. Hackman has devised a very exact system of representing all the sounds that occur in Solomon Islands languages. In keeping with the aim of conformity to the national language, all letters are taken from the English alphabet and the pronunciations conform to English usage as much as possible. This approach of highlighting sound differences by assigning a different symbol to each possible sound is particularly appropriate for maps since maps are most widely used by people outside their own home territory. The correct pronunciation of place names is essential for proper communication in foreign territory.

2.2.2 Highlighting sound correspondences to aid understanding

In developing standardized alphabets for a region, one can choose to highlight the regular correspondences between the sound systems of all the languages involved. The resulting spelling system will help the reader to correctly recognize and understand words from languages other than his own. This

approach emphasizes the non-native speaker's production of the correct meaning.

In north Malaita the sound systems of all the languages are the same in one respect: they all have four voiced stops, b, d, g, and gw. However, at the pronunciation, or "phonetic", level the languages are different. In To'ambaita, Mbaelelea, Mbaenggu, and Fataleka, these four stops are pronounced with prenasalization--mb, nd, ngg, nggw. In the saltwater languages (Langalanga, Lau, and Gula'ala), they are pronounced with no prenasalization--b, d, g, and gw. In the remaining languages, the prenasalization is weak or variable (see map 2 in Hackman 1968). In spite of these differences in pronunciation, the sound systems are the same at the "phonemic" level--the level of significant sound units which the native speaker perceives. The languages which have the pronunciations mb, nd, ngg, and nggw do not also have b, d, g, and gw as a different series of consonants. They have only the prenasalized stops and these correspond to, or are equivalent to, the b, d, g, and gw of the saltwater languages. The following words from the languages illustrate this. The words are written following the system devised by Hackman (1968) in order to emphasize the differences in pronunciation.

HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENCES

	<u>blood</u>	<u>moon</u>	<u>intestines</u>	<u>head</u>
Langalanga	' <u>abu</u>	ma <u>da</u> ma	o <u>ga</u>	g <u>wau</u>
Lau	' <u>abu</u>	ma <u>da</u> ma	o <u>ga</u>	g <u>wau</u>
To'ambaita	' <u>ambu</u>	ma <u>nda</u> ma	o <u>ngga</u>	ngg <u>wau</u>
Fataleka	' <u>ambu</u>	ma <u>nda</u> ma	o <u>ngga</u>	ngg <u>wau</u>

By emphasizing the differences in pronunciation in the above examples, we tend to obscure the fact that all the words in a single column are the same word with the same meaning. If, on the other hand, we choose to emphasize that the prenasalized stops in one group of languages correspond to the unprenasalized stops in the other group of languages, we will use only b, d, g, and gw to represent them in the standardized alphabets. The standardized alphabets will clearly show that the words are the same. This will aid the non-native speaker in his recognition of words and help him to understand the proper meaning of the text he reads.

HIGHLIGHTING THE CORRESPONDENCES

	<u>blood</u>	<u>moon</u>	<u>intestines</u>	<u>head</u>
Langalanga	' <u>a</u> bu	ma <u>d</u> ama	o <u>g</u> a	<u>g</u> wau
Lau	' <u>a</u> bu	ma <u>d</u> ama	o <u>g</u> a	<u>g</u> wau
To'ambaita	' <u>a</u> bu	ma <u>d</u> ama	o <u>g</u> a	<u>g</u> wau
Fataleka	' <u>a</u> bu	ma <u>d</u> ama	o <u>g</u> a	<u>g</u> wau

The above two sets of examples illustrate the different emphases of the two approaches. The approach of highlighting the differences emphasizes the non-native speaker's production of the correct pronunciation, though it may hinder his recognition and production of the correct meaning. The approach of highlighting the correspondences emphasizes the non-native speaker's recognition of words and his production of the correct meaning, though it may hinder his production of the correct pronunciation.

There are further examples in north Malaitan languages where highlighting the sound correspondences between languages, rather than strictly observing the pronunciations, can lead to greater understanding between languages. In Kwara'ae there is a variation between the f sound and the h sound. That is, some speakers pronounce an f where others pronounce an h. The h pronunciation is far more common in normal speech and thus recent Kwara'ae publications have used the h symbol instead of f. However, if we compare the Kwara'ae words containing h to the same words in the surrounding languages, we find that all the neighboring languages have an f. In the following examples, note that the Kwara'ae words in the first line have h where the other languages have f.

HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENCES

	<u>hair, feather</u>	<u>to fly</u>	<u>stone</u>	<u>eat</u>
Kwara'ae	i <u>h</u> u	lo <u>h</u> o	<u>h</u> au	<u>h</u> anga
Langalanga	i <u>f</u> u	lo <u>f</u> o	<u>f</u> au	<u>f</u> ana
Kwaio	i <u>f</u> u	lo <u>f</u> o	<u>f</u> ou	<u>f</u> anga
Fataleka	i <u>f</u> u	lo <u>f</u> o	<u>f</u> au	<u>f</u> anga
To'ambaita	i <u>f</u> u	lo <u>f</u> o	<u>f</u> au	<u>f</u> anga

The next set of examples shows that in determining which of the variants--h or f--to follow in producing a standardized alphabet for Kwara'ae, selecting the f highlights the correspondences between all north Malaitan languages. It would aid the Kwara'ae reader's recognition of words in non-Kwara'ae literature, and the non-Kwara'ae reader's recognition of words in Kwara'ae literature. For a fuller discussion of other reasons for selecting f over h see Simons (forthcoming b).

HIGHLIGHTING THE CORRESPONDENCES

	<u>hair, feather</u>	<u>to fly</u>	<u>stone</u>	<u>eat</u>
Kwara'ae	ifu	lofo	fau	fanga
Langalanga	ifu	lofo	fau	fana
Kwaio	ifu	lofo	fou	fanga
Fataleka	ifu	lofo	fau	fanga
To'ambaita	ifu	lofo	fau	fanga

A similar situation exists with w and ngw. In Kwara'ae and To'ambaita, ngw is pronounced. In northern Lau ngw is pronounced, while w is pronounced in southern Lau in the same words (Fox 1974:205). The remaining languages have w. The following table gives five words beginning with this sound. Spellings which highlight differences are shown first, followed by spellings which highlight correspondences.

HIGHLIGHTING THE DIFFERENCES

	<u>dance</u>	<u>snake, worm</u>	<u>Malaita</u>	<u>man, person</u>	<u>easy</u>
Kwara'ae	ngwa'e	ngwangwa	ngwala	ngwae	ngwaluda
Kwaio	wa'e	wā		wane	
Fataleka		wawae		wane	
To'ambaita	ngwa'e	ngwa		ngwane	ngwaluda
Lau (north)	ngwae	ngwā	ngwala	ngwae, ngwane	ngwaluda
Lau (south)	wae	wā	wala	wae, wane	waluda

HIGHLIGHTING THE CORRESPONDENCES

	<u>dance</u>	<u>snake, worm</u>	<u>Malaita</u>	<u>man, person</u>	<u>easy</u>
Kwara'ae	<u>wa'e</u>	<u>wawa</u>	<u>wala</u>	<u>wae</u>	<u>waluda</u>
Kwaio	<u>wa'e</u>	<u>wā</u>		<u>wane</u>	
Fataleka		<u>wawae</u>		<u>wane</u>	
To'ambaita	<u>wa'e</u>	<u>wa</u>		<u>wane</u>	<u>waluda</u>
Lau	<u>wae</u>	<u>wā</u>	<u>wala</u>	<u>wae, wane</u>	<u>waluda</u>

The aim of conformity to the national language can also be approached via the aim of highlighting the correspondences. This is done by observing rural pronunciations of English root words in the Pijin vocabulary. Such an investigation will demonstrate the points of correspondence between the sound system of the national language and the sound system of the vernaculars. In rural Kwara'ae Pijin (that is, among Kwara'ae speakers whose Pijin pronunciation has not been directly influenced by proper English pronunciation), the Pijin f derived from English f, is pronounced h. Thus faea 'fire' is pronounced haea, and fulimap 'to fill' is pronounced hulimap. Likewise, Pijin w, derived from English w, is pronounced ngw in rural Kwara'ae Pijin. Thus woa 'war' is pronounced ngwoa, and wata 'water' is pronounced ngwata. These examples give evidence that Kwara'ae h corresponds to the f in the English sound system, and that Kwara'ae ngw corresponds to English w. Thus, the use of f and w in a standardized alphabet for Kwara'ae would conform to the national language by highlighting the correspondences between the vernacular and the national language.

2.3 The interrelations of the four aims

If the four aims discussed above were applied independently to a particular alphabet problem, they would yield four different alphabets. This is because the aims are often in conflict with one another. Therefore it is necessary to study the interrelations of the aims and rank them by a system of priorities which is in keeping with the overall goal of devising standardized alphabets for the region. The alphabets which are finally devised must be compromises between the various aims. In this section the interrelationship of the aims is discussed. In section 3 a proposed priority of aims is given.

The aim of highlighting the differences to aid pronunciation appears to be at greatest variance with the other aims and of the lowest priority. We have already seen the conflict between conformity to the native speaker's intuition and highlighting pronunciation differences with regard to symbolizing the prenasalization of b, d, and g in the alphabet. The system of highlighting pronunciation differences introduces distinctions into the alphabet which help the non-native speaker, but are unnecessary, distracting, and counter-intuitive for the native speaker (for example, mb, nd, and ngg for b, d, and g; ch for d in Sa'a; dj for d in Ulawa; see Hackman 1968). The primary use of literature is by the native speakers, and only secondarily by outsiders. Thus conformity to the native speaker's intuition should have priority over assisting the non-native speaker in his pronunciation.

Highlighting the sound differences to aid pronunciation is also at variance with highlighting sound correspondences to aid understanding. The aim of highlighting differences seeks to aid the outsider's production of the correct pronunciation, though it may hinder recognition of the word and production of the correct meaning. The aim of highlighting correspondences seeks to aid the outsider's recognition of words and production of the correct meaning, though it may hinder production of the correct pronunciation. Since the primary use of written literature is not an oral one, but rather is the transfer of information from the written page to the mind of the reader, the aim of highlighting correspondences to aid understanding is more in keeping with the aims of producing vernacular literature.

There is a conflict between conformity to the native speaker's intuition and conformity to the national language. This happens at the point where the national language runs out of unique symbols for representing the sounds of the vernacular language. The conflict concerns the intuition that a single sound in the language should be represented by a single letter in the alphabet. When the national language has no more single letters which correspond in pronunciation value to the vernacular sound which must be represented, there are three alternatives: (1) use a single letter which doesn't correspond in pronunciation (eg. use q to represent pw), (2) modify an already used single letter by using a diacritic mark (eg. n̄, n̄, m̄) or (3) use a sequence of two letters--a digraph--to represent the sound (eg. ng, th). At the level of determining what sounds should be distinguished in the spelling system, and which should not, the native speaker's intuition must not be compromised. But at the secondary level of deciding what symbol will be used to represent the sounds that occur, conformity to the national language should take precedence over the intuition that one sound should be represented by one symbol. In fact, as speakers of the vernacular come into increased

contact with the national language, their intuitions concerning their vernacular are likely to change in the direction of the national language. Phillips (1973) documents in great detail how the spelling system for a Papua New Guinea language had to be changed to conform more closely to English spelling conventions, because the speakers of the language who had learned to speak and read English perceived their language differently than those who were illiterate. Pike (1947:209) discusses this same problem and suggests that when familiarity with the national language alters a people's perception of their language, loan words can be incorporated into the vernacular in order to legitimate the changes in the analysis of the sound system.

Experience has thus shown that conformity to spelling conventions in the national language is often a wise choice in that it anticipates the trend for the future. An example from Kwara'ae can be cited. The Kwara'ae Translation Committee which is determining a standardized orthography for Kwara'ae has recently decided that the velar nasal sound should be represented by ng, even though in previous Kwara'ae publications it has been represented by a single letter--n̄, n, ñ, ʌ--and it was previously taught in schools that it should be written n̄ or n. One reason for deciding in favor of ng was that young people who have been educated in English, use ng rather than n̄ or n whenever they write the language. In the future, as citizens become more involved in national life and the national language, it is more likely that they will prefer a vernacular spelling system that conforms to English spelling conventions than a spelling system which adheres to old traditional conventions that were established without any regard to national or regional standardization.

A final conflict involves the aim of highlighting sound correspondences to aid understanding. To do so often conflicts with the aim of conformity to the national language and the native speaker's intuition. For instance, where the north Malaitan languages have a b, 'Are'are has a p in corresponding words. Thus, north Malaitan bani 'wall' and 'Are'are pani; north Malaitan bebe 'butterfly' and 'Are'are pepe; north Malaitan bina 'hornbill' and 'Are'are pina. In order to highlight correspondences, the 'Are'are p could be written as b in these words. However, this would introduce a conflict with the national language because the 'Are'are symbol b would not be pronounced as b is in the national language but as p which also occurs in the national language. As another example, 'Are'are has no ng sound. Whenever a word has ng in north Malaitan languages, the corresponding 'Are'are word will have simply n. However, n in north Malaita also corresponds to 'Are'are n.

For example,

	<u>spit</u>	<u>ear</u>	<u>eat</u>	<u>coconut</u>	<u>sand</u>
North Malaita	<u>ng</u> isu	al <u>ng</u> a	f <u>ng</u> a	<u>n</u> iu	<u>o</u> e
'Are'are	<u>n</u> isu	ari <u>n</u> a	ha <u>n</u> a	<u>n</u> iu	<u>o</u> e

If 'Are'are n's corresponding to north Malaita ng's were also written as ng in order to highlight the correspondences, the resulting spelling system would be in conflict with the 'Are'are speaker's intuition about the language for it would represent the same sound, n, in two different ways, sometimes as n and soemtimes as ng. Therefore, 'Are'are should not use ng to highlight correspondences with north Malaita languages.

3. PROPOSED PRIORITY OF AIMS IN DEVELOPING STANDARDIZED ALPHABETS

The preceding discussion of possible aims in alphabet design is summarized here in terms of four points:

(1) In determining what the sound system of the vernacular language is--that is, what sound units must be represented in the alphabet--conformity to the native speaker's intuition has the highest priority. Vernacular literature is produced primarily for use by the native speakers and therefore the alphabet must reflect their own perception of the sound system.

(2) In determining which symbols should be used to represent the sounds in a vernacular sound system, conformity to the national language should have priority over the intuition that one sound should be represented uniquely by one symbol only. As discussed in section 2.3, this kind of intuition is likely to change in favor of digraphs used in the national language as people have greater contact with the national language. Although adoption of digraphs like ng, pw, and mw may meet opposition at first from older individuals who are accustomed to using n, q, and m, it anticipates an inevitable future trend and should be very beneficial in the interest of regional, even national, standardization and unity.

(3) Where the intuition of the native speaker permits it, highlighting sound correspondences should have priority over conformity to the national language. That is, a regional standardization aimed at aiding recognition of similar words across language boundaries should have priority over a national standardization based on conformity of pronunciation to the national language. Thus in Kwara'ae, f and h are variant pronunciations of the same sound unit and the intuition of the native speaker would allow either representation. Although h is used with far greater frequency, the symbolization f is to be preferred in literature because that is the pronunciation used in all the surrounding language groups.

(4) Where observance of the above three points means that differences in pronunciation across languages will be represented the same, or regular sound correspondences will be written differently, these pronunciation differences and correspondences can be set forth in the introductory pages of a vernacular publication. A key to pronunciation would help the non-native speaker to correctly pronounce the words of the language. A key to sound correspondences would help the non-native speaker to recognize words with the same meaning as in his own language and would thus help him to better understand the text. In a key to pronunciation, each of the symbols used in the alphabet (including digraphs) would be listed with the proper pronunciation value for each symbol given in a standardized phonetic system such as devised by Hackman (1968). Such pronunciation keys are given with all the standardized alphabets presented in section 4. In a key to sound correspondences, the correspondences between the sounds of the particular language and all other languages in the region would be listed. Thus in the key for a Kwara'ae publication, the 'Are'are reader would be told that Kwara'ae b's correspond to p's in his language, and Kwara'ae ng's correspond to n's. Sound correspondences have been set out by Levy and Smith (1969), but without supporting examples. In Simons (forthcoming a), the sound correspondences between Malaitan languages will be presented with examples of each correspondence. Keys to sound correspondences for future vernacular literature and education programs can be made from the data which will be given there.

4. STANDARDIZED ALPHABETS FOR MALAITAN LANGUAGES

In this section a standardized alphabet for each of the Malaitan languages is proposed. (I regret that Dorio is not included; I have not yet been able to get any information on that language.) The alphabets are presented without further discussion and justification. It is hoped that the discussion in sections 2 and 3 will suffice. It must be understood that the proposed alphabets are an ideal and that more work with the languages and their speakers may suggest changes in the proposed scheme. One symbol that may be especially prone to revision is the w. Native speakers may prefer to see it written ngw when that is the actual pronunciation. The present standardization using w only is based on the aim of highlighting sound correspondences, but conformity to native speaker intuition may dictate changes.

Along with the proposed alphabet for each language, a key to the proper pronunciation for each symbol in the alphabet is given. The pronunciations are written using the phonetic spelling system developed by Hackman (1968) for use on maps.

After the standardized alphabet and the key to pronunciation are presented, the conventions used in previously published literature are reviewed. The literature is referred to by an English name, such as Book of Common Prayer, New Testament, or hymnbook. An approximate date of publication is also given. For more detailed publication information on these items the reader is referred to Publications in Solomon Island Vernaculars by Linda Simons (forthcoming). I use the abbreviation COM to refer both to the old Melanesian Mission and the current Church of Melanesia. SSEC refers to both the South Seas Evangelical Church and the South Seas Evangelical Mission.

The data on which the proposed alphabets are based have come from many sources. The primary data have been the literature which is already published in the languages. Where a dictionary in the language has been produced, it was most helpful. Another source of data was my own field work on Malaita during July and August of 1977 (see Introduction). Where no literature has been published, the wordlist I collected comprised my only data. Some information on proper pronunciation in the languages was drawn from Hackman (1968).

Before proceeding to the presentation of alphabets it is necessary to explain some descriptive conventions. In the discussion, the following descriptions are used for special characters and diacritics.

Description	Symbol used
macron (on vowels)	<u>a</u>
grave accent (on vowels)	`a
glottal stop	ʔ
normal-n	n
underlined-n	<u>n</u>
italic-n	<i>n</i>
bar-n	<u>n</u>
tilde-n	~n
eng	ŋ

4.1 The vowels

All Malaitan languages have the five vowels a, e, i, o, and u. Their pronunciations correspond in all languages and there have been no inconsistencies or problems in past literature. The only problems that have arisen concern lengthened vowels. A discussion of this problem is given in the following paragraphs. I recommend that lengthened vowels be marked by placing a macron over the vowel symbol. The vowels in the proposed standardized alphabets for all Malaitan languages are then:

Alphabet:	a	e	i	o	u	<u>a</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>u</u>
Pronunciation:	a	e	i	o	u	aa	ee	ii	oo	uu

It appears that lengthened vowels as distinct from normal vowels occur in all the Malaitan languages. Thus in Lau, Kwaio, and To'ambaita the word for 'and' is ma while the word for 'eye' has a lengthened, or drawn out, final vowel and can be written as maa or ma. All existing Malaita dictionaries point out the distinction between normal and lengthened vowels and distinguish lengthened vowels in the dictionary entries. Keesing (1975) for Kwaio, Ivens (1929) for Sa'a and Ulawa, and Deck (1933) in his Kwara'ae grammar use a doubled vowel to represent a lengthened vowel. Fox (1974) for Lau, Waterston (1924) for To'ambaita, and Geerts (1970) for 'Are'are use a macron to indicate a lengthened vowel.

The following examples show that normal and lengthened vowels serve to distinguish words with different meanings.

Lau (from Fox 1974)

ari	'to call out; to carry a burden'		
āri	'to tie up strongly and firmly'		
bula	'to turn'	fufu	'to swell; sharpen'
būla	'keel of a canoe'	fūfū	'spider, spider web'
koko	'old and feeble'	nini	'shrub sp.; thin sliver'
kokō	'grandparent, grandchild'	ninī	'a pair'
kōkō	'don't, a children's word'	kikī	'tuberculosis'
		kikī	'rat'

'Are'are (from Geerts 1970)

aro	'green coconut for drinking'	asia	'forbid, make taboo'
āro	'taro'	āsia	'to dig, burrow'
hea	'to excrete'	kiki	'tuberculosis'
hēa	'to rust'	kikī	'rat'
o'a	'tree sp.'	uhi	'large swelling on body'
ō'a	'hole in a tree'	ūhi	'yam'

There are three alternatives that could be followed with respect to the lengthened vowels: (1) ignore them and symbolize them all as a single vowel, (2) represent them as a double vowel, or (3) represent them by placing a macron over the vowel. The first and second alternatives have been widespread through the existing literature.

David Gegeo, a Kwara'ae man who is presently compiling a dictionary of Kwara'ae, has pointed out (personal communication) that the alternative of using a double vowel to represent a lengthened vowel is not a good one. This is because double vowels do exist as distinct from lengthened vowels. For instance, the Kwara'ae word for 'knee' uruuru consists of the root uru pronounced twice. Since uru begins with the same vowel that it ends with, when the root is doubled the double vowel uu occurs in the middle. This is not a lengthened u, rather it is two normal u's in succession. Gegeo points out that in such a case of a true double vowel, a Kwara'ae

person will always write a double vowel for he perceives it as two units. In the case of the lengthened vowel, however, it is perceived as one unit and a native speaker often writes it as a single vowel. In order to avoid this confusion between lengthened vowels and double vowels, Gegeo uses the macron to mark lengthened vowels and two vowels to represent double vowels.

Writing the lengthened vowels as double vowels has another disadvantage. It may result in words with rather odd spellings. For instance,

Language	With macrons	With double vowels	Meaning
'Are'are	hā'āa	haa'aaa	'carry around the neck'
'Are'are	māea	maaea	'holy, sacred'
'Are'are	ōreōre	ooreoore	'good-bye'
'Are'are	tō'ōtō	too'ootoo	'shallow'
Lau	ābaāba	aabaaaba	'to go out, of tide'
Lau	fāabu	faaaabu	'forbid, make taboo'
Lau	fāōni	faooni	'to make ineffective'

In a recent To'ambaita translation of portions of the Book of Common Prayer (197?), the lengthened vowels are marked with a grave accent over the vowel, eg. à. The grave accent in general practice is used to mark stress or pitch. Length here is related to stress in that a lengthened vowel in a normally unstressed position tends to be stressed. However, length is not the same as stress. This is shown in the following Kwara'ae examples provided by David Gegeo (personal communication). In Kwara'ae, primary stress generally falls on the penultimate (second to last) syllable. Thus all of the following words are stressed on their first syllable.

falo 'crossbeam'

fālo 'new'

ga'a 'to laugh'

gā'a 'a tear (in a cloth)'

abu 'stop!'

ābu 'sacred'

To mark the lengthened vowel with a stress mark (grave accent) is misleading in these cases, for the non-lengthened vowels in the same position in the word (see the first word of each pair) are also stressed. The macron is also preferred to the accent in that it appears on a standard English typewriter (the hyphen is used) while the accent does not.

It appears that the best solution with regard to conforming to the intuition of the native speaker is the third alternative--to mark lengthened vowels with a macron over the vowel symbol. This alternative meets with opposition from the goal of conforming to spelling conventions of the national language, since the national language uses no macrons or similar diacritics. This is no doubt one good reason why double vowels have been used for lengthened vowels in past publications. As we have seen, however, the double vowel representation is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, in particular the confusion with true double vowels. Using the macron appears to best fulfill the primary aim of conforming to the native speaker's intuition. If the pressure for conformity to the national language is too great to permit the use of macrons in vernacular literature, the first alternative presented above might be better than the second--that is, represent all lengthened vowels simply as normal vowels. This is an area which will require further investigation by those who will be producing vernacular literature. Any future writers and translators should study the existing dictionaries in order to come to a proper understanding of the differences between normal vowels, lengthened vowels, and double vowels.

4.2 The glottal stop

The glottal stop, also referred to as the "catch" or the "Melanesian catch", occurs in all Malaitan languages and is symbolized by the apostrophe (') in the proposed standardized alphabets. Phonetically it represents the complete interruption of the air stream by closure of the vocal cords.

The glottal stop is a true consonant in these languages and deserves special consideration here because it has been so widely misunderstood and misused in past vernacular literature. That the glottal stop is a significant sound unit, or "phoneme", in the Malaitan languages is shown by the following pairs of words in which the glottal stop is the only sound which serves to distinguish the two words and their different meanings. The examples given below, from just the two languages To'ambaita and 'Are'are, are representative of the situation found throughout Malaita. In the following words, the glottal stop occurring in the middle of the word is illustrated.

To'ambaita (from Waterston 1924)

foa	'ashes'	gwau	'head'
fo'a	'pray'	gwa'u	'empty'
maua	'a large fish'	nai	'white (of pigs etc.)'
ma'ua	'fear, fright'	na'i	'this'
sua	'defiled'	thao	'sago palm'
su'a	'fresh-water prawn'	tha'o	'a scented flower'

'Are'are (from Geerts 1970)

hai	'four'	kua	'fowl'
ha'i	'together, with'	ku'a	'luck, fortune'
mau	'stiff'	pou	'a corpse'
ma'u	'to be afraid'	po'u	'a log'
rio	'see, look'	sio	'to take'
ri'o	'to hang oneself'	si'o	'bewitch'

The following pairs of words show the glottal stop occurring as the first sound in the word,

To'ambaita (from Waterston 1924)

afoa	'beg with deceit'	asi	'sea, ocean'
'afoa	'wrap up'	'asi	'to fall'
ilia	'do, cause'	oko	'powder for blackening teeth'
'ilia	'dig'	'oko	'a vine'
ono	'six'	ulu	'three'
'ono	'sit'	'ulu	'bad (of fruit)'

'Are'are (from Geerts 1970)

apa	'wing'	ara	'to bud, bear fruit'
'apa	'shore'	'ara	'to group'
erea	'to plunder, ravage'	iro	'an oyster'
'erea	'to turn round'	'iro	'a joke'
oni	'coconut cream'	unu	'a shell fish'
'oni	'stay, remain'	'unu	'a lizard'

Countless more examples could be found from To'ambaita and 'Are'are as well as the other Malaita languages. All this evidence shows that the glottal stop is a true consonant in the sound system of these languages and should thus be always represented in the alphabet.

The reason for omitting the glottal stops in the past is clear enough. It does not occur as a phoneme in the national language and so in an attempt to conform to the spelling system of the national language, the glottal stop was omitted from vernacular texts. This is a case, however, where the native speaker's intuition about the sound system must have priority over conforming to the national language (see point 1 of section 3) and glottal stop must be represented in the alphabet. To omit the glottal stops in a vernacular text is analogous to omitting all the k's, for example, from an English text.

Only the dictionaries have been consistent about including the glottal stop wherever it occurs. The Kwara'ae New Testament (1961) and the Kwaio Sermon on the Mount (1975) are the only published literature that approaches a proper and consistent use of the glottal stop. Many publications have marked the glottal stop only when it occurs in the middle of words, or only between like vowels, while totally ignoring it at the beginning of words. The above examples show that even this approach is far from satisfactory. Most publications, however, have totally omitted the glottal stop. For the sake of producing vernacular literature in the future, writers and translators should be made to study the existing dictionaries so that they can learn the proper use of the glottal stop and consistently represent it in all of its occurrences.

4.3 The consonants

4.3.1 Lau

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Lau are the following:

Alphabet:	b	d	f	g	gw	h	k	kw	l	m	n	ng	r	s	t	w	'
Pronunciation:	b	d	f	g	gw	h	k	kw	l	m	n	ng	r	s	t	ngw	'
						s										w	

The h is pronounced as h by the saltwater people, but as s by some of the mainland Lau. The w is pronounced as ngw by the northern Lau and as simply w by southern Lau (Fox 1974:205).

Other alphabets have differed in a number of ways. The Lau Dictionary by Fox (1974) uses no h. The speakers he learned the language from used g instead. The New Testament (1926) uses q for kw, m for w, n̄ for ng, and omits the glottal stop. The Prayer Book (1912) and Catechism (1938) published by the COM use italic-n for ng, q for kw, italic-n followed by w for w, and omit the glottal stop. A Catholic liturgy book (1958) uses ngw for w and omits the glottal stop. The Sermon on the Mount (1975) published by the Bible Society also uses ngw for w and omits the glottal stop. The Good News for You, Book One, (1977) also published by the Bible Society, uses the same alphabet as the proposed standard. It differs only in that the glottal stop is generally omitted. The differences are thus summarized:

Proposed standard:	h	kw	ng	w	'
Dictionary (1974)	s	kw	ng	w	'
New Testament (1927)	h	q	n̄	m̄	omitted
COM (1912, 1938)	h	q	<i>n</i>	<i>kw</i>	omitted
Catholic (1958)	h	kw	ng	ngw	omitted
Sermon on Mount (1975)	h	kw	ng	ngw	omitted
Good News (1977)	h	kw	ng	w	' (generally omitted)

4.3.2 To'ambaita

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for To'ambaita are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t th w '

Pronunciation: mb nd f ngg nggw k kw l m n ng r s t th ngw '

Other alphabets used for To'ambaita show differences from this in only three phonemes--ng, w, and '. The Malu'u Dictionary (Waterston 1924) and Bible Society publications of the New Testament (1923), Genesis, Psalms, and Nehemiah (1951) use underlined-n for ng. The SSEC Question Book (1932) and hymnbook (1939), and a COM translation of portions of the Book of Common Prayer (197?) use italic-n for ng and italic-n followed by w for w. Concerning the

glottal stop, the dictionary includes it in every occurrence, the Bible portions drop glottal stops except where leaving them in serves to distinguish words that would be spelled the same if they were omitted, and the SSEC and COM publications omit them altogether. The differences are thus:

Proposed standard:	ng	w	'	
Dictionary (1924)	<u>n</u>	w	'	
Bible portions (1923, 1951)	<u>n</u>	w	'	(included only to distinguish otherwise identical words)
COM (197?)	<i>n</i>	<i>hw</i>	omitted	
SSEC (1932, 1939)	<i>n</i>	<i>hw</i>	omitted	

4.3.3 Mbaelelea

The standardized alphabet for Mbaelelea is equivalent to the To'ambaita alphabet. I am aware of no literature printed in the Mbaelelea language. In the churches, Mbaelelea people have used To'ambaita and Lau publications.

4.3.4 Mbaenggu

The standardized alphabet for Mbaenggu is equivalent to the Fataleka alphabet. I am aware of no literature printed in the Mbaenggu language. In the churches, Mbaenggu people have used To'ambaita and Lau publications.

4.3.5 Fataleka

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Fataleka are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t w '

Pronunciation: mb nd f ngg nggw k kw l m n ng r s t w '

The COM has produced a prayerbook and hymnbook in the Fataleka language, but I have not yet been able to see copies.

4.3.6 Gula'ala

Gula'ala is the name of the saltwater language spoken on the islands of Kwai and Ngongosila on the east side of Kwara'ae. Although this language is not shown on the Languages of the Solomon Islands map (Hackman 1975), it is sufficiently different from all the neighboring languages to be listed by itself. The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Gula'ala are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t w '

Pronunciation: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t w '

The only literature produced in the Gula'ala language is a hymnbook (1977). It differs from the proposed standard alphabet by using underlined-n for ng and by using the glottal stop only in the middle of words. Initial glottal stops are omitted. That is,

Proposed standard: ng '

Hymnbook (1977) n ' (omitted in word initial position)

4.3.7 Kwara'ae

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Kwara'ae are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t w '

Pronunciation: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng r s t ngw '
mb nd h ngg nggw

The prenasalization of the voiced stops b, d, g, and gw is variable. Some Kwara'ae speakers do not prenasalize them at all. For some speakers, the prenasalization is almost imperceptible at the beginning of words but strong in the middle of words. The f is generally pronounced as h in normal speech. However, Kwara'ae people in general feel that f is the proper pronunciation and that h is a colloquial pronunciation. Thus in careful speech and singing, f is often heard.

Many things have been published in the Kwara'ae language with many spelling conventions. The differences from the proposed standard involve f, ng, w, and '. The SSEC Question Book (193?) uses italic-n for ng and omits the glottal stop. The SSEC hymnbook (193?) uses italic-n for ng and uses the glottal stop, though its use is not consistent. The COM hymnbook (1951) uses italic-n for ng, italic-n followed by w for w, and omits the glottal stop. The Kwara'ae New Testament (1961) uses underlined-n for ng. A Catholic worship book (197?) uses ngw for w and uses the glottal stop, but inconsistently. A recent COM liturgy (197?) uses h for f, tilde-n for ng, tilde-n followed by w for w, and omits initial glottal stops. The Easter Story selection published recently by the Bible Society (1974) uses h for f, bar-n for ng, bar-n followed by w for w, and omits initial glottal stops. That is,

Proposed standard:	f	ng	w	'
Question Book (193?)	f	<i>n</i>	w	omitted
SSEC hymnbook (193?)	f	<i>n</i>	w	' (inconsistent)
COM hymnbook (1951)	f	<i>n</i>	<i>nw</i>	omitted
New Testament (1961)	f	<u>n</u>	w	'
Catholic worship (197?)	f	ng	ngw	' (inconsistent)
COM liturgy (197?)	h	<u>n</u>	<u>nw</u>	' (omitted initially)
Easter Story (1974)	h	<u>n</u>	<u>nw</u>	' (omitted initially)

Another vexing problem in Kwara'ae is the problem of metathesis. In normal speech, the Kwara'ae speaker metathesizes, or swaps, the final consonant and vowel of each word. Thus ngali 'nut' is pronounced ngail in normal speech, and Aoke 'Auki' is pronounced Aoek. When such a metathesis would result in a double vowel in the middle of a word, it reduces to a single vowel. Thus kini 'woman' is pronounced kin in normal speech, not *kiin. Both the metathesized form (eg. ngail) and the unmetathesized, or underlying, form (eg. ngali) are known and used by Kwara'ae speakers. The metathesized form is used in normal speech and the unmetathesized form is used in careful speech and singing. The unmetathesized form is the underlying and original form as is evidenced by the fact that it is the form of the word that is spoken in all the surrounding languages. The final two publications in the above list have written the language in the metathesized form, while all the prior publications used the underlying forms. These recent

publications have met with some adverse reaction and it appears that a return to writing the underlying, unmetathesized forms would be best. Since this is the form of the word spoken in all the neighboring languages, writing the underlying form is also advantageous in light of the standardization aim of highlighting correspondences between languages in order to aid understanding across languages. A fuller discussion of Kwara'ae metathesis and additional reasons for writing the underlying forms can be found in Simons (forthcoming b).

4.3.8 Langalanga

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Langalanga are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n r s t w '

Pronunciation: b d f g gw k kw l m n r s t w '

The Langalanga language is unique among the north Malaitan languages in that it has lost the ng sound. Words with ng in neighboring languages have n in Langalanga. Similarly, words with n in the neighboring languages have l in Langalanga.

The only literature published in the Langalanga language is a Catholic catechism (1950). It differs from the proposed standardized alphabet in using q for g, qw for gw, and omitting the glottal stop. It also uses the grave accent (`) and the circumflex (^) over vowels, but I do not know what they represent.

Proposed standard: g gw '

Catechism (1950) q qw omitted

4.3.9 Kwaio

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Kwaio are the following:

Alphabet: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng ngw (r) s t w '

Pronunciation: b d f g gw k kw l m n ng ngw r s t w '

 mb nd ngg nggw x xw r

The information on the sound system of Kwaio and the pronunciation of the phonemes is taken from the Kwaio Dictionary (Keesing 1975). The voiced stops b, d, g, and gw are pronounced with no prenasalization or very slight prenasalization at the beginning of words. The prenasalization is strong in the middle of words. The x and xw sounds are not included in the phonetic alphabet system of Hackman (1968). The x represents a voiceless velar fricative. It is the voiceless (that is, the vocal cords do not vibrate when pronouncing the sound) counterpart of Hackman's gh, the so-called "Melanesian g". The x and xw variants of k and kw are most common in east Kwaio, while k and kw are most common in west Kwaio. The l sound is pronounced as l preceding a, e, and o; it is pronounced as r preceding i and u. Kwaio is the only Malaitan language that distinguishes between w and ngw. The ngw occurs only in the middle of words, and w occurs mostly at the beginning of words but also occurs in the middle. All the other languages have one or the other and it is suggested that all use the representation w in order to highlight the sound correspondence between the languages.

The Kwaio Dictionary (Keesing 1975) differs from the proposed standardized alphabet in that it uses the eng symbol, ŋ, for ng. The Sermon on the Mount (1975) published by the Bible Society agrees in all points. The SSEC Question Book (193?) omits the glottal stop and uses tilde-n for ng. A Catholic service book (196?) differs in using q for g, qw for gw, and omitting the glottal stop.

An additional alphabet problem for Kwaio remains. This concerns l and r. Keesing makes a correct phonemic analysis when he shows that l occurs only before a, e, and o and that r occurs only before i and u. Therefore, l and r are conditioned variants of one sound unit, or phoneme, and ideally should both be represented by the same letter of the alphabet. This is what Keesing does; he uses only the letter l in the Kwaio Dictionary (1975). However, all the other publications in the Kwaio language use both the l symbol (always preceding only a, e, or o) and the r symbol (always preceding only i or u). It appears that contact with the national language and neighboring Malaitan languages

may be causing the Kwaio people to perceive l and r as different units, even though in their own language they are variants of the same phoneme, or sound unit. (See the discussion of contact with the national language changing the native speaker's perception of his own language in section 2.3 of this paper.) In the interest of conformity to the national language and regional standardization, as well as to the possibly changing perception of native speakers, it may be best to use both l and r in the Kwaio alphabet. Further study among Kwaio literates will be required in order to clear up this question. In the mean time, I enclose the r symbol in the proposed alphabet within parentheses.

The differences between the proposed standardized alphabet and the alphabets used in existing literature are the following:

Proposed standard:	g	gw	l	ng	ngw	(r)	'
Dictionary (1975)	g	gw	l	ŋ	ŋ ^w	l	'
Sermon on Mount (1975)	g	gw	l	ng	?	r	'
Question book (193?)	g	gw	l	ñ	?	r	omitted
Catholic (196?)	q	qw	l	ng	?	r	omitted

The ngw is quite rare. I was unable to find examples of it in the items listed with a question mark.

4.3.10 'Are'are

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for 'Are'are are the following:

Alphabet:	h	k	m	n	p	r	s	t	w	'
Pronunciation:	h	k	m	n	p	r	s	t	w	'
						l				

Father Geerts, in the 'Are'are Dictionary (1970), notes that the r and l sounds are interchangeable. In some areas l is used, while in others the r is used. He feels that r is more common and should be used (1970:iii).

Existing 'Are'are publications differ only with respect to w and the glottal stop. The 'Are'are Dictionary (1970) agrees in every point. The SSEC Question Book (193?) and hymnbook (193?) omit the glottal stop. A Catholic worship book (1957) uses v for w and omits the glottal stop. A more recent edition (1976) of the same book omits the glottal only. A book of Bible portions (196?) uses the glottal stop inconsistently.

Proposed standard:	w	'
Dictionary (1970)	w	'
SSEC (193?)	w	omitted
Catholic (1957)	v	omitted
Catholic (1976)	w	omitted
Bible portions (196?)	w	' (inconsistent)

4.3.11 Sa'a and Ulawa

The consonants in the proposed standardized alphabet for Sa'a (or South Malaita) and Ulawa are the following:

Alphabet:	d	h	k	l	m	mw	n	ng	p	pw	r	s	t	w	'
Pronunciation:	ch	h	k	l	m	mw	n	ng	p	pw	r	s	t	w	'
	dj														
	d														

Information concerning the pronunciation of d is from Hackman (1968:2). In Sa'a, d is pronounced as ch while in Ulawa it is pronounced as dj. Hackman describes the dj sound as "a retroflex sound, pronounced like ch but with the tip of the tongue curling up and back into the palate." He goes on to say that many young people tend to pronounce it now as d. Using the symbol d to represent this sound in Sa'a and Ulawa highlights the sound correspondences between them and the other Malaitan languages. In words where the north Malaitan languages have d, Sa'a and Ulawa also have d.

The proposed standardized alphabet agrees in every respect with the alphabet used in A Dictionary of the language of Sa'a and Ulawa (Ivens 1929). The alphabet used in the Ulawa Book of Common Prayer (1962) differs only in that it omits the glottal stop. All other publications in these languages including the Sa'a Book of Common

Prayer (1960), the Sa'a New Testament (1927), the Ulawa New Testament (1927, 1970), and the South Malaita Question Book (1931) use q for pw, italic-m for mw, italic-n for ng, and they omit the glottal stop.

Proposed standard:	mw	ng	pw	'
Dictionary (1929)	mw	ng	pw	'
Ulawa Prayer Book (1962)	mw	ng	pw	omitted
Others			q	omitted

4.4 Summary table of standardized alphabets showing letters that occur in each language

	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>g</u>	<u>gw</u>	<u>h</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>kw</u>	<u>l</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>mw</u>
Lau	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw	h	i	k	kw	l	m	
To'ambaita	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Mbaelelea	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Mbaenggu	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Fataleka	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Gula'ala	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Kwara'ae	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Langalanga	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
Kwaio	a	b	d	e	f	g	gw		i	k	kw	l	m	
'Are'are	a			e				h	i	k			m	
Sa'a	a		d	e				h	i	k		l	m	mw
Ulawa	a		d	e				h	i	k		l	m	mw

	<u>n</u>	<u>ng</u>	<u>ngw</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>pw</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>th</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>w</u>	<u>'</u>
Lau	n	ng		o			r	s	t		u	w	'
To'ambaita	n	ng		o			r	s	t	th	u	w	'
Mbaelelea	n	ng		o			r	s	t	th	u	w	'
Mbaenggu	n	ng		o			r	s	t		u	w	'
Fataleka	n	ng		o			r	s	t		u	w	'
Gula'ala	n	ng		o			r	s	t		u	w	'
Kwara'ae	n	ng		o			r	s	t		u	w	'
Langalanga	n			o			r	s	t		u	w	'
Kwaio	n	ng	ngw	o			(r)	s	t		u	w	'
'Are'are	n			o	p		r	s	t		u	w	'
Sa'a	n	ng		o	p	pw	r	s	t		u	w	'
Ulawā	n	ng		o	p	pw	r	s	t		u	w	'

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