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Encountering Aboriginal languages: Studies in the history of Australian linguistics

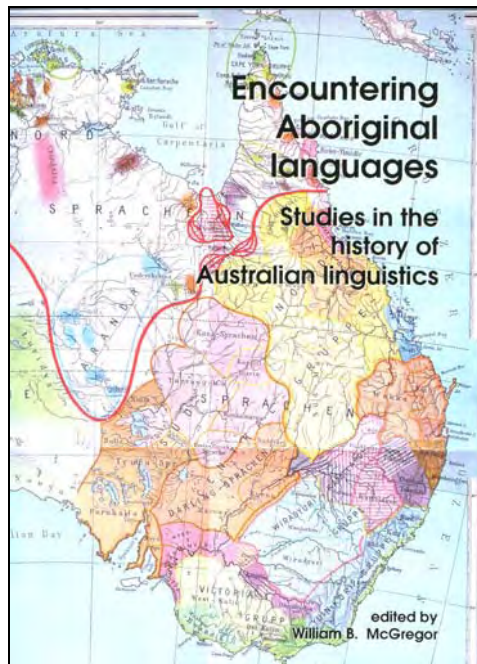
edited by William B. McGregor

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This edited volume represents the first book-length study of the history of research on Australian Aboriginal languages, and collects together 18 original papers on a wide variety of topics, spanning the period from first settlement to the present day.

The introduction sets the scene for the book by presenting an overview of the history of histories of research on the languages of Australia, and identifying some of the major issues in Aboriginal linguistic historiography as well as directions for future investigations. Part 1 presents three detailed investigations of the history of work on particular languages and regions. The eight papers of Part 2 study and re-evaluate the contributions of particular individuals, most of who are somewhat marginal or have been marginalised in Aboriginal linguistics. Part 3 consists of six studies specific linguistic topics: sign language research, language revival, pidgins and creoles, fieldwork, Fr. Schmidt's work on personal pronouns, and the discovery that Australia was a multilingual continent.

Overall, the volume presents two major challenges to Australianist orthodoxy. First, the papers challenge the typically anachronistic approaches to the history of Aboriginal linguistics, and reveal the need to examine previous research in the context of their times — and the advantages of doing so to contemporary understanding and language documentation. Second, the widespread presumption that the period 1910-1960 represented the “dark ages” of Aboriginal linguistics, characterised by virtually no linguistic work, is refuted by a number of studies in the present volume.

*Encountering Aboriginal languages:
studies in the history of Australian linguistics*

edited by

William B. McGregor

Pacific Linguistics 591

Pacific Linguistics is a publisher specialising in grammars and linguistic descriptions, dictionaries and other materials on languages of the Pacific, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor, southeast and south Asia, and Australia.

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This book contains photographs of, and mentions the names of, some now deceased Aboriginal people. Readers should be aware that in some communities seeing photographs and/or hearing the names of dead people may cause distress, especially to close relatives. Before using this book in Aboriginal communities, the reader should determine the wishes of senior members and take their advice on safeguards.

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Preface

This volume, like so many edited volumes, has an all too lengthy history, much longer than either the contributors or the editor would have wished. Its initial impetus traces back to the *Fourth International Workshop on Australian Linguistics: History of research on Australian languages*, held in Aarhus University on 24–25 June 2002. Six of the papers in this volume were presented at that workshop, namely those presented in Chapters 1–3, 5, 8, and 17. This represents all of the contributions to the workshop dealing with the historical topic, with a single exception, my own paper on the work of Frs Hermann Nekeš and Ernest Worms, which appeared in a reconstituted form in the editorial introduction to their magnum opus, *Australian languages* (2006, Mouton de Gruyter).

The workshop participants agreed that it would be a good idea to publish an edited volume containing these contributions; the conference organiser, myself, was duly dubbed in as editor. However, it was also felt that these six contributions needed to be augmented by additional papers in order to expand the treatment in depth and comprehensiveness. In particular, one of the major gaps was felt to be the lack of contributions by Aboriginal people themselves. Regrettably, despite attempts to obtain such contributions, none eventuated; this is acknowledged as one of the main weaknesses of the present volume.

It of course took time to solicit and receive additional contributions, and it took some three years before revised versions of all of the contributions were received, and an initial draft of the entire work took shape. (Regrettably, not all solicited papers were forthcoming, leaving gaps that I would rather have seen plugged—see also my ‘Introduction’.) Editorial intervention turned this draft into a more coherent work, and in January 2006 a version of the book was submitted to *Pacific Linguistics* for evaluation.

I was fortunate to receive the referee reports during a two month period as visiting scholar in the Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, in mid-2006. This greatly facilitated initial publication negotiations and planning. I thank John Bowden, general editor of *Pacific Linguistics*, and Julie Manley, for their prompt, cheerful, and helpful responses to my endless queries concerning formatting and other editorial matters. For their insightful and useful comments on the manuscript thanks also go to the ‘anonymous’ referees, whose identity (as is so often the case) could hardly remain concealed, thanks to intertextuality, Hilary Carey and Peter Sutton. All of the contributors have benefited greatly from their advice. Many other people contributed significantly to the book; they are identified in the individual contributions, as are photograph credits. Last but not least, thanks go to Margaret Blake, whose copy-editor’s eye caught all too many inconsistencies, stylistic infelicities, and omissions before it was too late.

William B. McGregor
Århus, December 2007

Abbreviations and conventions

Language names are given as far as possible in the preferred modern spellings, where known. This is usually the form employed by literate speakers of the language, or accepted/preferred by the community of its speakers, owners or their descendants. Otherwise, the spelling is either according to the AIATSIS standard (as per the Indigenous Languages Database (2002)—a revised version of which will soon be accessible online as AustLang, at <http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/>), the standard recommended by a language centre, or to the most widely accepted spelling employed in the literature. In some cases, however, it is not possible to reliably identify languages referred to in earlier literature, and in these cases the spelling of the sources has been retained.

Throughout standard conventions are employed: cited words are given in italics, except when given specifically in phonetic, phonemic, or graphemic form, where the standard brackets [], //, and <>, respectively, are used. Any other abbreviations or conventions are explained in the individual contributions.

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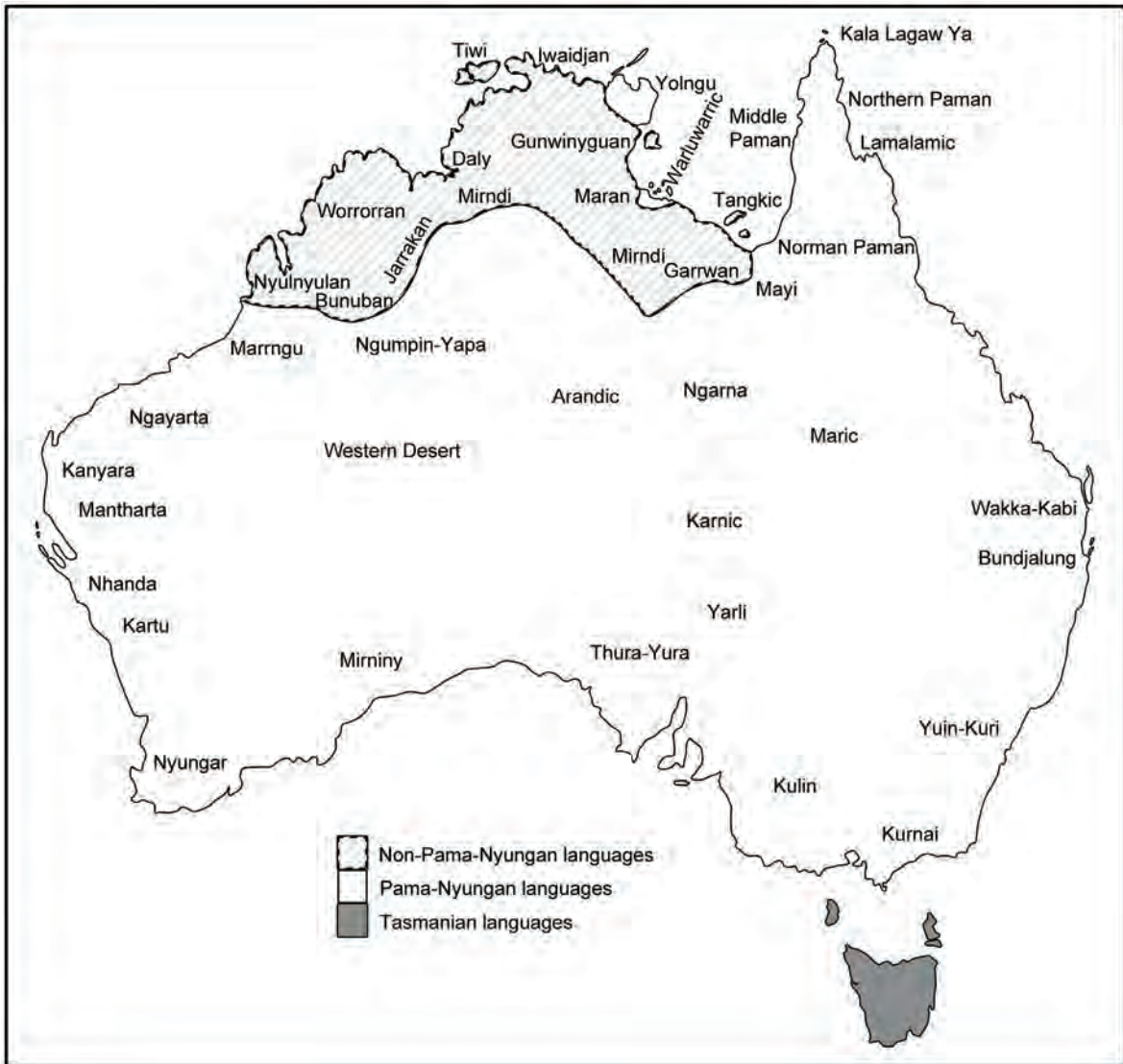
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Map 1: Some Australian language families and genetic groups

1 *Introduction*

WILLIAM B. MCGREGOR¹

1. Preliminary remarks

In Australianist linguistics the main motivations for delving into the past have been not so much to understand the ideas and conceptualisations of past investigators as to utilise and evaluate the language data they recorded. Even the few works devoted to the history of the subject have tended to address it predominantly from the perspective of the usefulness and relevance of previous work to today's concerns, anachronistically evaluating the contributions of past scholars in terms of modern knowledge. Little serious attempt has been made to reconstruct the thought of earlier times, arguably the primary goal of the history of science (Graffi 2001:2), or to understand the work of previous investigators within their social and intellectual milieus. As Hans Aarsleff has put it:

The task of gaining the proper depth of historical perspective within a given period can only be satisfied by seeking to recapture all relevant contemporary knowledge without reference to or misguidance by the later accumulations of scholarly opinion and assignment of influences, which are far too often and too easily accorded the status of unquestioned doctrine. (Aarsleff 1967:10)

The primary motivation of this book is to redress this lacuna and attempt to reconstruct the linguistic thought of earlier times, and of investigators of the traditional languages of Australia. Thus each of the following seventeen papers that make it up attempts to understand thought about Australian Aboriginal languages from previous times as more or less coherent conceptual systems, as much as possible situated in their socio-cultural and intellectual contexts. Each rejects anachronistic projection of today's ideas and narrow focus on what is immediately relevant to us today. At the same time the papers aim to present both honest and critical attempts to understand and appraise the work of past investigators; nothing is served by excessively uncritical and laudatory evaluations that skim over the surface of past investigations. To do so would be as unscholarly as taking the opposite approach—unfortunately all too common in Australian linguistics and, until very recently, anthropology—of anachronistic dismissal.

1 I am grateful to the participants of the *Fourth International Workshop on Australian Linguistics: History of research on Australian languages* for comments, to Hilary Carey for copies of published and unpublished articles, to her, Harold Koch, Jane Simpson, and Peter Sutton for comments on a previous draft, and especially to Russell McGregor for a detailed discussion and critique of an earlier draft of this paper and for suggesting additional references. The final responsibility for any inadequacies, of course, lies with myself.

Aside from the scholarly reasons for doing research on the history of ideas about Aboriginal languages, some personal considerations might also be mentioned. Much documentary research is sheer drudgery, at least for me, and not nearly as exciting as doing fieldwork. But it can be punctuated by the occasional sudden realisation of the point of a piece of writing, an understanding of what the writer is really on about, or the sudden appearance of a key example. Thus, after hours of poring over terse and inexplicit—if not incomprehensible—passages in Nekes and Worms *Australian languages* (Nekes and Worms 1953), I have occasionally had a sudden insight into what they were trying to say. On other occasions, perusing this and other early documents (such as Tachon's 1895 grammar of Nyulnyul) I have been surprised by the unexpected appearance of examples of grammatical phenomena poorly represented in my own Nyulnyulan corpora.

Before getting down to business, it may be worth correcting the common misconception that it was members of James Cook's 1770 party who were the first Europeans to record words of an Australian Aboriginal language. In fact, the first confirmed attestation of an identifiable word of an Aboriginal language dates to almost a century earlier than Cook, and from the opposite side of the continent. The privateer William Dampier, who was careening his ship somewhere on the northern end of the Dampier Land peninsular in 1688, mentions in his journal that when some local Aborigines approached the ship threateningly, the ship's drum was sounded, at which they 'ran away as fast as they could drive, crying "Gurri, gurri" deep in the throat' (as quoted in O'Grady 1971:782, citing from Stroven and Day 1949:588, quoting in turn from Dampier 1697). As Toby Metcalfe has observed, this is most likely the Bardi word *ngaarri*, the term for a malevolent spirit (Metcalfe 1979:197). There is no evidence that Dampier or his crew made any serious attempts to record words of the language he encountered, so Cook's party still retains the title of first to attempt systematic elicitation and recording of words, as opposed to incidental observation.

This introductory piece is organised as follows. First, section 2 presents a historically and thematically oriented overview of histories of Australian Aboriginal linguistics, providing a backdrop for the book. Following this in section 3 the papers making up the book are overviewed, and their major themes identified. Section 4 concludes with a brief summary, and identifies additional themes of interest to the study of the history of Australianist linguistics and directions for future research.

2. A history of histories of research into Australian languages

To date, rather little has been written on the historiography of Australian Aboriginal linguistics. One might say that the subject has barely been born, though it has at least been conceived. There are no major monographs on the topic, or on any subtopic, such as exist on the history of linguistic ideas (such as Robins 1984), or of specific domains such as syntax, phonology, and morphology. The few extant works are either sections or chapters of books, or separate articles published in journals. Virtually all were published after 1960, when Australian Aboriginal linguistics came to age (see Table 1.1 below).

It is far beyond the scope of the present introductory chapter to present a comprehensive and/or revisionist history of research into Australian languages; indeed, it is the purpose of the entire book to lay the groundwork for such an enterprise. Rather, I have a more modest goal in mind, namely to overview existing histories of research on Australian Aboriginal languages, and attempt to put them into something of a historical, or perhaps more accurately chronological, perspective.

Four major types of work are relevant: (a) national and regional histories of research that cover the entire continent or significant regions throughout the whole time period; (b) local histories of research on particular languages; (c) personal histories; and (d) histories of particular linguistic topics or themes. We discuss these types in order in the following subsections.

2.1 National and regional histories

2.1.1 Overview

The first historical account of Australian Aboriginal linguistic research I am aware of is contained in pages xi–xv of John Fraser’s introduction to Threlkeld (1892). Over half of this account is a biography of Threlkeld, with a list of his published and unpublished works on Awabakal.² The remaining two pages single out a few of the main figures from the nineteenth century: George Grey, W.H.I. Bleek, L. Threlkeld, Horatio Hale, William Watson, James Günther, C.G. Teichelmann, C.W. Schürmann, and W. Ridley. (A number of nineteenth century investigators are omitted from this list, who made a significant contribution.) The contribution of these individuals is mentioned, but not evaluated or discussed in any depth. Over half a century later Arthur Capell mentions (1956), in less than a page of typescript, around a score of individuals he considered to have made a significant contribution to the field until that time. Again critical evaluation is entirely absent.

The first treatment that really deserves the label of a history is a ten page discussion dating to the mid-1960s, O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:2–13). O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin characterise the work of the first century of colonisation as uneven in quantity and quality—a handful of works are singled out as good, including Horatio Hale’s grammars of two New South Wales languages (1846). Works from this time is characterised as ‘pre-phonemic’: they were typically phonemically under-differentiated.³ In particular, O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966) remarks on the failure of many observers to distinguish retroflex from apical stops and nasals, and major inconsistencies in the usage of vowel symbols such as *u*, especially by speakers of English. A notable omission from this history is Threlkeld’s Awabakal grammar (1834, 1892).

According to O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966) research in the subsequent century was punctuated by three eras of survey-type research. Edward Curr ushered in, in their view, the first era of survey linguistics, with the publication in 1886 of his four volume work comprising 120 item lists in nearly 500 language varieties.⁴ O’Grady saw this as a precursor of the third survey period, characterised by lexicostatistical investigations, that began in the mid-1950s (O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966:8). The second period began in the late 1930s with the extensive survey work of Arthur Capell on northern Australian languages, in which, by contrast, lexicon played second fiddle to grammar.

The research in between these survey eras is not treated in detail. Some descriptive research is referred to, but not examined critically. It is observed that the fifty year period fol-

2 Over a page of this short biography is wasted on a digression into the early history of the Threlkeld family in England.

3 Prephonemic is not a particularly apt label since it was not until another eighty or ninety years—during which time many changes occurred in the shape of Australianist linguistics—that the notion of phoneme took root in Australian linguistics (see McGregor 2006a; Moore, this volume).

4 This was not the first such general survey. Also mentioned by O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:5) is Brough Smyth’s survey of Victorian languages (Smyth 1878), which they refer to as a ‘quantitatively impressive but qualitatively appalling account of the languages of Victoria’. There were others as well.

lowing Curr's work saw the appearance of Wilhelm Schmidt's and Alfred Kroeber's classifications of Australian languages (Schmidt 1919; Kroeber 1923). And following the beginning of the second survey era, from about 1940 to the mid-1960s, a dozen or so individuals are singled out as having contributed to the continued work on Australian languages, mostly anthropologists but also linguists, including (among others): Ronald M. Trudinger, Ursula McConnel, Ronald and Catherine Berndt, William and Lynette Oates, Theodor G.H. Strehlow, Luise Hercus, Wilf Douglas, Stephen Wurm, and Ken Hale. (All of these individuals are mentioned at one point or another in the following pages and chapters.)

According to O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:8), the bulk of descriptive work on Australian languages was done by Australians, whilst the bulk of the genetic and typological work was done by non-Australians, who had no direct primary knowledge of the languages. O'Grady considers a 1962 conference held in Indiana University as the first attempt at combining the two groups of scholars and their research directions (O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966:9). This conference seems to have focussed on the problem of low cognate densities; it was considered that something special was going on in Aboriginal Australia, with its 'family-like languages' and language families with extremely low cognate densities. Traditional multilingualism was mooted as a possible explanation. This 1962 conference also appears to have heralded the lexicostatistical period of the 1960s, initiated by O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966). The treatment accorded to this conference amounts to almost a third of O'Grady's historical survey.

Half a dozen years later came what perhaps remains the most comprehensive work published to date, Arthur Capell's piece published in volume 8 of Sebeok's *Current trends in linguistics* (Capell 1970). Capell distinguishes two major periods, the **pre-scientific period** from 1770 to about 1930, and the subsequent **scientific period**.⁵ Capell apparently saw little overlap between the periods in the sense that prior to 1930 no work was fully 'scientific', although a few missionary linguists (e.g. L.E. Threlkeld) stood out as exceptionally good, as did the occasional academic investigator (e.g. Horatio Hale, and Sidney Ray). Even Wilhelm Schmidt's work was not regarded by Capell as entirely scientific—'at least semi-scientific', he avers—since it was based on unreliable materials, and because Schmidt brought along with him a number of presuppositions.⁶

Crucial to Capell's historical scheme is the notion of 'scientific', which he assumed means being 'complete freedom from presuppositions' (Capell 1970:676). This conception of science was at one time relatively standard, though it was already obsolete in the philosophy of science by the time of Capell's piece was published.

1930 or thereabouts was crucial in Capell's opinion for basically the same reasons that Elkin singled it out as a turning point in his history of Aboriginal anthropology (Elkin 1963).

5 Capell's scheme (as pointed out to me by Russell McGregor, pers.comm.) seems somewhat reminiscent of the periods A.P. Elkin identified in the history of Aboriginal anthropology. Thus Elkin (1963:3) distinguished four overlapping phases: incidental anthropology (1788–1870s); compiling and collating (1870–1900); fortuitous individual projects (1870s–mid 1920s); and organised scientific research (post 1925). The first three of these correspond well to Capell's pre-scientific period, the last to his scientific period. Elkin mentions linguistic work here and there throughout his story, citing the contributions of a few individuals. Elkin (1963) cannot be regarded as a history of Aboriginal linguistics, however. (Other histories of Australian Aboriginal studies exist—e.g. Berndt and Berndt (1992:533–549)—but are also left out of the present account for the same reason.)

6 A slightly more positive evaluation was expressed in Capell (1956:1), where Schmidt's work is referred to as 'excellent, painstaking and thorough to a degree'—followed by the qualifications just mentioned. Capell goes on to say that Schmidt's work on pronouns in Australian language is 'the better of the two and of permanent value' (see also Schweiger, this volume).

It was about then that institutionally-based research began, firstly with the establishment of the chair of anthropology in the University of Sydney in 1926, and Elkin's appointment to it in 1933, which led soon after to the appointment of Arthur Capell (1902–1986) in the same department. The establishment of the journal *Oceania* (founded in 1930) which in its early years published a considerable amount of linguistics, and was one of the very few outlets for articles on Australian languages, was also a relevant factor. It was also about the same time that detailed grammatical descriptions began to appear; Capell considered T.G.H. Strehlow's grammar of Arrernte (1944) to have been 'the first full scale grammatical account of an Australian language'. Although not published until the mid-1940s, typescript versions had been available during the 1930s (Capell 1970:676; see also Moore, this volume).

Capell's history is a valuable consolidation and compilation of the works up to the late 1960s, though it is of course now very dated. This is not just because the past thirty or so years have seen a veritable explosion of research on Australian languages, but also because of historical documents that have since come to light. Significant amongst these is William Dawes' work on the Sydney language (1790), unearthed in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1972. Furthermore, since Capell's article a number of institutions have arisen that focus on Aboriginal languages, the School of Australian Linguistics (1974), subsequently incorporated into Batchelor College, the Institute for Aboriginal Development, and a number of Aboriginal controlled language centres (see Amery and Gale, this volume).

Capell's history contains a number of lacunae and contestable claims, as might be expected of a work of its temporal and geographical scope. Thus Daisy Bates's work as a collector of words across the continent goes unmentioned, and the only comment on her work concerns her 1914 publication on the languages of the south-west (Bates 1914). Gerhardt Laves is dismissed in a few words (pp.681–682), principally on the grounds that he published almost nothing. Capell also largely disregards the role of Adelaide institutionally-based research, with the expeditions under the auspices of the Board for Anthropological Research, and the South Australian Museum and the University of Adelaide that date to about the same time that insitutionalised research in Sydney began (see Monaghan, this volume); as well as this, there was the Adelaide school of linguistics (see Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume; Monaghan, this volume; and Moore, this volume). This omission is presumably a relic of the rivalry between Adelaide and Sydney for Rockefeller Foundation funding the foundation chair in anthropology, ultimately won by Sydney, just as the cavalier treatment of Laves may reflect the old rivalry between A.P. Elkin and his predecessor in the chair of anthropology in Sydney University, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown.

The year after Capell's history Stephen A. Wurm's *Languages of Australia and Tasmania* (Wurm 1972) appeared. An entire chapter of this book, amounting to some 16 pages, is devoted to the history of research; in general it can be characterised as less critical than Capell's account. Wurm distinguishes three periods, as follows.

The first period, beginning in 1790 and extending to the 1920s 'is chiefly characterised by the collection of wordlists in a great variety of languages and the compilation of very short, sketchy descriptions of a considerable number of languages largely following a set pattern of description on the basis of Latin grammar' (Wurm 1972:13). Wurm mentions many of the most significant players in the field, including the wordlist collectors, the describers of particular languages, and the classifiers. Of the classifiers, Schmidt and Kroeber are singled out as most notable. Wurm evaluates the contribution of Kroeber more positively than the contribution of Schmidt, in that it was Kroeber who perceived the overall unity of the languages of the continent—a contentious hypothesis, yet to be convincingly demonstrated.

The second period began with the appearance in the 1930s of Arthur Capell on the scene, and extended to the early 1960s. Wurm identifies three crucial characteristics of this phase: surveying and detailed study of the northern languages; strong focus on structural and typological features; and recognition of overall unity. It was in this phase that special varieties such as mother-in-law varieties, and secret initiate varieties were accorded careful attention. Alf Sommerfelt's notorious attempt to link Arrernte language and culture, and his construal of both as 'primitive' (see especially Sommerfelt 1938) is mentioned completely uncritically (see Wilkins 1989; Alpher 1994 for critiques). Also during this period a number of more detailed studies of particular languages were undertaken, resulting in grammatical descriptions and dictionaries, and a few text collections. Wurm remarks that very little of the work of this period was ever published.

The third period is linked to the establishment of the Australian branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1961 (though SIL courses had been taught in Australia since 1950—Oates 2003:29) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) in 1964. Both institutions provided an impetus to linguistic research.

The third period is characterised by considerable diversity in linguistic interests (Wurm 1972:22): establishment of lexicostatistical investigations; beginning of detailed comparative-historical investigations; demonstration that some aberrant languages were linked to other Australian languages; in-depth investigations of a number of languages resulting in grammatical descriptions and dictionaries; large-scale surveys, sometimes revealing languages thought to be dead; utilisation of amateurs in collection of data; archiving of recorded materials in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies; study of special characteristics of the languages; understanding of linguistic prehistory, and interdisciplinary projects with prehistorians; and publication of results of the research. Although this period was only a little over a decade old at the time this paper appeared, many more researchers already figured in it than in the previous periods, and it accounts for over half of the chapter.

Two of the three general surveys of Australian languages published in the early 1980s, Dixon (1980) and Blake (1981), also contain discussions of the history of study of Aboriginal languages; the third, Yallop (1982), says nothing.

Dixon (1980:8–17, 20–21) provides a short account of the history of ideas about Australian languages, the bulk of which (all but one page) deals with the pre-1910 period. This does not purport to be a detailed history of research on Australian languages, and nor is it, many details and personages being omitted.

The previously discussed histories acknowledge the relevance of certain external factors—anthropological and linguistic theories, governmental policy and institutional changes—to research on Aboriginal languages. Dixon goes a step further, explicitly linking (Dixon 1980:12) interest in Aboriginal languages and cultures with external socio-political and ideological factors; indeed, he suggests a correlation between this interest and the general level of treatment of Aboriginal people. Thus he suggests that the first few years of each new colony was characterised by considerable interest in the languages and cultures, which rapidly gave way to apathy as the colonies consolidated and expanded.⁷ Then in about 1875, with the virtual cessation of expansion in most regions and rise of social Darwinism, came notions that Aborigines would inevitably soon die out, and that they should be treated in a kindly fashion—'soothe the pillow of the dying race', as Daisy Bates put it. This marked the appear-

7 What Dixon fails to take into account is the fact that (as various other commentators have observed) this early interest was in a large part borne by the necessity of communicating with the indigenous population, and declined as the indigenous population declined and learnt English.

ance of amateur anthropologists, who were usually also avid word collectors. The subsequent thirty or so years until about 1910 he refers to as the ‘golden age’ of amateur anthropologists and linguists.⁸

In general Dixon projects a more positive evaluation of the work of the last decades of the nineteenth century into the first decade of the twentieth than does Capell, who dismisses most of it on the grounds of the manner much of the material was gathered (via questionnaires sent to people at the colonial frontiers) and because it was often used to support theories of origins. Dixon’s evaluation of the work of Fr Wilhelm Schmidt is also considerably more positive than Capell’s.

The period from 1910 to 1960 Dixon (1980:16) refers to as the ‘dark ages’ of Aboriginal policy, which was accompanied by ‘virtually no linguistic work’. Only Arthur Capell, he avers, was active during this period, which he dismisses in a paragraph. This period was characterised by widespread popular belief in a single Aboriginal language, and other than Capell’s work Dixon mentions only the popular word books that began to appear in the 1930s (citing Kenyon 1930). This characterisation of these five decades has since been widely accepted by Australianists, and for this reason alone it is important to assess its validity. There are two grounds on which it can be criticised. First, as a number of contributions to this book attest, a good deal was actually going on in Australianist linguistics at the time, and Arthur Capell was by no stretch of the imagination alone (see especially Monaghan, this volume; Moore, this volume; Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume; see also McGregor 2005, 2007; Nekes and Worms 2006). Second, the characterisation of the period as ‘dark ages’ of Aboriginal policy is not substantiated by any discussion of the policies of the times, which were by no means static during the half-century. Indeed, the period was marked by major shifts of policy and attitudes towards Aborigines, especially after World War II (R. McGregor 1997, Russell McGregor, pers.comm.; Rowse 1998, 2005). In the absence of any characterisation of the policies of the period it is impossible to evaluate the suggested link to the linguistics of the era.

Dixon (1980:16) puts the beginning of serious intensive research to the years post-1960, heralded by Capell’s *A new approach to Australian linguistics* (Capell 1956). The major institutional event he considers to have been the establishment of the first department of linguistics in an Australian university, Monash University, in 1965 (Dixon 1980:17). A number of linguistics departments emerged in the following decade or so, as did the first publication outlets in Australia specifically oriented to linguistics. The first was *Pacific Linguistics*, devoted to papers and books on languages of the Pacific region; its first books on Australian languages were published in 1967.⁹ A bit over a decade later came the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (1981). Interest in Australian languages gradually intensified, and by the mid-1970s the standard of description of Australian languages began for the first time to measure up to world standards.¹⁰

Barry Blake’s history (1981:73–75) is much shorter, and effectively adopts a four period model, though the author does not actually speak of periods. Blake distinguishes the research

8 Here Dixon’s account bears strong resemblance to Elkin’s: Elkin characterised anthropological work up to about 1870 as primarily motivated by practical needs of interaction with Aborigines (Elkin 1963:5), while the subsequent thirty or forty years—his compiling and collating phase—was heavily influenced by anthropological theories.

9 In fact, the first publication attributed to *Pacific Linguistics* appears under the imprint of Linguistic Circle of Canberra Publications. This is a short piece of just 12 pages by Stephen Wurm on the role of language in the assimilation of Aborigines (Wurm 1963).

10 See Walsh (1979) for a comprehensive account of the work carried out during the 1970s, revealing the wide diversity of interests.

of the nineteenth century as amateur, characterising it primarily as recording of vocabularies, and the occasional brief grammar; he also remarks on the poor quality of the phonetic representation. E.M. Curr's work (1886) is singled out as one of the major achievements of the century. The early twentieth century was characterised by a falling off in investigations, which did not reverse until the late 1930s with the work of Arthur Capell. The subsequent two decades saw a gradual increase in linguist research. The early 1960s marked the beginning of a fourth period, with the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, and the explosion of linguistic investigations.

Two pages of the first volume of *Handbook of Australian languages*, co-edited by Barry Blake and Robert Dixon (Dixon and Blake 1979:4–5), sketch a history that closely resembles the story presented in more detail in the previous two works, with a few minor differences in foci. They speak of an early period of collecting vocabularies, culminating in Curr's four volume work; a few sketches of particular languages appeared in this period. Then came the lull in the first decades of the twentieth century, especially from 1912 to 1930. The 1930s saw the appearance of Arthur Capell and his surveys, and Theodor G.H. Strehlow's work. As usual, the late 1950s and early 1960s is taken to be the watershed, with the beginning of extensive regional surveys and in-depth studies of particular languages; the role of academic institutions is highlighted. A new element in the story is the observation that the first decade or so following 1960 saw a considerable increase in quantity of research that was not always matched by a similar increase in quality.

A revision of this story appears in the fourth volume of the *Handbook* published some twelve years later (Dixon and Blake 1991); here the story is expanded to almost double its previous size, and includes mention of more players in the game. Most similar to Capell's previously discussed history (1970), two periods are identified, albeit with an intervening hiatus of some two decades. The first period, an amateur period, ran from 1770 to about 1910, and was characterised entirely by educated amateurs whose work was phonetically poor. From the mid 1840s to the late 1870s, as Dixon and Blake, virtually no research was undertaken on Aboriginal languages. Characteristic of the work of the first period were methodologically unsound attempts at showing links to languages of other continents. The second period, the professional period, ran from 1930 to the present, with a gathering of momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. Compared to most other global histories, this one focusses more on what the authors consider to be significant linguistic characteristics or innovations—Capell's notion of 'common Australian' and his prefixing-suffixing typology; and the 1960s lexicostatistics of O'Grady, Wurm, and Hale.

Two survey monographs have appeared to date in the third millennium, one dealing with the entire continent (Dixon 2002), the other focussing on the Kimberley (McGregor 2004).¹¹ Surprisingly given the immense amount of research done on Australian languages since 1980, the apparent changes in Dixon's views of the history (as represented in the introductions to the *Handbooks*), and the numerous active Australianists who began in the post-1980 era, Dixon avers that his history of the study of Australian languages has 'dated very little' since his 1980 book (Dixon 2002:xxvi). *Australian languages* contains no discussion of the history of research on the languages, or ideas about them.

McGregor (2004:14–21) identifies three broad and overlapping phases of work on Kimberley languages. The phases can be summarised as follows. (The discussion is restricted

11 This work might also be treated in the next section under the heading of *Local histories*. However, in terms of its organisation, and the fact that it deals with a rather large region that is home to a considerable number of languages, it fits more with national than local histories.

to Kimberley languages, and ignores the contribution of linguists to the description of other languages.)

First was an early phase that extended from the late nineteenth century until about 1929, and was characterised primarily by the work of amateurs with little or no linguistic training. In this period, dominated by the collection of wordlists, Fr Alphonse Tachon's grammar of Nyulnyul (1895) stands out, as do the recordings of Fr Bischofs in 1910 (see McGregor 1998, 2000), and Yngve Laurell's recordings on Sunday Island (see Boström, this volume).

Immediately following this was an intermediate phase, running from about 1930 to 1959; this was characterised by increasingly competent and trained investigators, and the appearance of the first academic investigators, A.P. Elkin, Gerhardt Laves, and Arthur Capell. Strangely, the early years of this phase did not herald the appearance of detailed grammars; though noteworthy are Love's sketch grammars of Worrorra (Love 1931–1932, 1934, 1938), and brief grammatical sketches by Arthur Capell. The period might be reasonably characterised as survey-oriented. Notable surveys from the time include Capell's report on his 1938–1939 field trip through the Kimberley and Arnhem Land (Capell 1940), and Nekes and Worms' *Australian languages* (Nekes and Worms 1953, an edited version of which appeared in print some fifty-three years later, Nekes and Worms 2006).

Finally, McGregor (2004) identifies a modern phase—extending from 1960 to the present—characterised by the dominance of academically trained investigators. It is in this period that the first detailed grammars appeared, and interest in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics began to become manifest. Missionary linguists also appear in increasing numbers, and have more linguistic training than before.

2.1.2 *Summing up*

Table 1.1 presents in summary form the periods identified in each of the histories we have discussed, with the exception of the derivative one in Dixon and Blake (1979). One qualification that should be added is that it is not always possible to identify temporal periods in O'Grady's history (O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966).

It is clear from this tabulation that there is widespread agreement that 1930 and 1960—give or take a few years—represented major watersheds in the development of Australian Aboriginal linguistics. Assumption of a three period model seems to be reasonable, and I adopt it in the remainder of the paper, referring to the periods as the first, second, and third periods; so also do a number of contributions in this book. It should be noted however that in identifying periods there is no implication of major paradigm shifts in the Kuhnian sense (Kuhn 1970); see also Newton (1987) and McGregor (2006a). None of the histories identify radical changes in linguistic thought or theory from one period to the next, as allegedly happened in linguistic theory with the publication of Noam Chomsky's first book (Chomsky 1957). The boundaries are generally taken (rightly, it seems to me) to be fuzzy: new ideas and approaches were adopted gradually, making their appearance in one period, and slowly becoming accepted as standard by the early years of the next period.

Figure 1.1 provides a rude measure of the linguistic activity of each decade from 1770 to 2000. The exponential increase in publications post-1960 emerges clearly from this representation, and the increase is continuing, with 861 publications in the first five years of the new millennium. If this continues until the end of the decade, the figure will overreach the maximum value shown on the graph.

The second period is not revealed in this graph, partly perhaps because much of the work from that time was not published, but perhaps primarily because the period was characterised qualitatively as a transitional period, rather than quantitatively in terms of raw numbers of

Table 1.1: Comparison of the main accounts of the history of research on Australian languages

Date	O’Grady <i>et al.</i> (1966)	Capell (1970)	Wurm (1972)	Dixon (1980)	Blake (1981)	Dixon & Blake (1991)	McGregor (2004)
1788				1788–1792 Keen interest in Aboriginal languages and cultures			Nothing significant on Kimberley languages
1800	1788–1880s Prephonemic research, with difficulties in identification of some phonemic segments; a few grammars	1788–1930 Pre-scientific period—a few notable grammars by missionary linguists, and a small contribution by academics; a few word-collectors	1770–c.1930 First period—dominated by amateurs; primarily collection of wordlists; a few grammars usually on the Latin model	mid-1790s–mid-1840s Early years of each new colony characterised by keen interest in Aboriginal languages; this stopped in a few years	1770–1900 Primarily work by amateurs, mainly collection of wordlists; a very few sketch grammars	1770–c.1910 amateur period—educated amateurs, phonetically poor; often sought links with languages outside of Australia	
1840							
1870							
1880	mid-1880s onwards First survey era—collections of c. 100 item wordlists on continental basis			1880–1910 Golden age of amateur anthropologists and linguists; mainly collection of vocabularies; a few short sketch grammars			1880s up to c.1929 Early phase—dominated by amateurs; primarily short wordlists; a few sketch grammars

Date	O'Grady <i>et al.</i> (1966)	Capell (1970)	Wurm (1972)	Dixon (1980)	Blake (1981)	Dixon & Blake (1991)	McGregor (2004)
1890							
1900	1890s–1930 Further descriptive work, and first major attempts at classification of the languages				1900–c.1930 Fall-off of work on Australian languages		
1910						Nothing	
1920							
1930	late-1930s to 1960s Second survey era inaugurated by Capell's surveys of northern Australia		1930s–early 1960s Second period—appearance of first professionals, primarily survey work with a focus on northern languages; beginning of description of marked registers, and appearance of a few detailed studies of particular languages (university of northern Australia)				
1940	mid-1940s to 1960s Further grammatical investigations	post-1930 Scientific period—institutional backing (universities, AIAS, SIL)	1930s–early 1960s Second period—appearance of first professionals, primarily survey work with a focus on northern languages; beginning of description of marked registers, and appearance of a few detailed studies of particular languages (university of northern Australia)	1910–1960s Dark ages of Aboriginal policy, and virtually no linguistic work	1930s–1960 Beginning of first professional investigations, and gradual increase in number of these investigators	post-1930s professional period—appearance of professional linguists on the scene, with new ideas; gathering of momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. Beginning of institutional backing	c.1930–1959 Intermediate phase—appearance of better trained investigators, primarily survey work
1960		post-1961 Third period—under impetus of AIAS and SIL an explosion of number of investigators and diversity of topics	late 1950s onwards Serious and extensive work, and the beginning of institutional backing	late 1950s onwards Serious and extensive work, and the beginning of institutional backing	post-1960s Explosion in number of linguists and of research on Australian languages, with the establishment of AIAS		post-1959 Modern phase—greater professionalisation, first appearance of detailed grammars

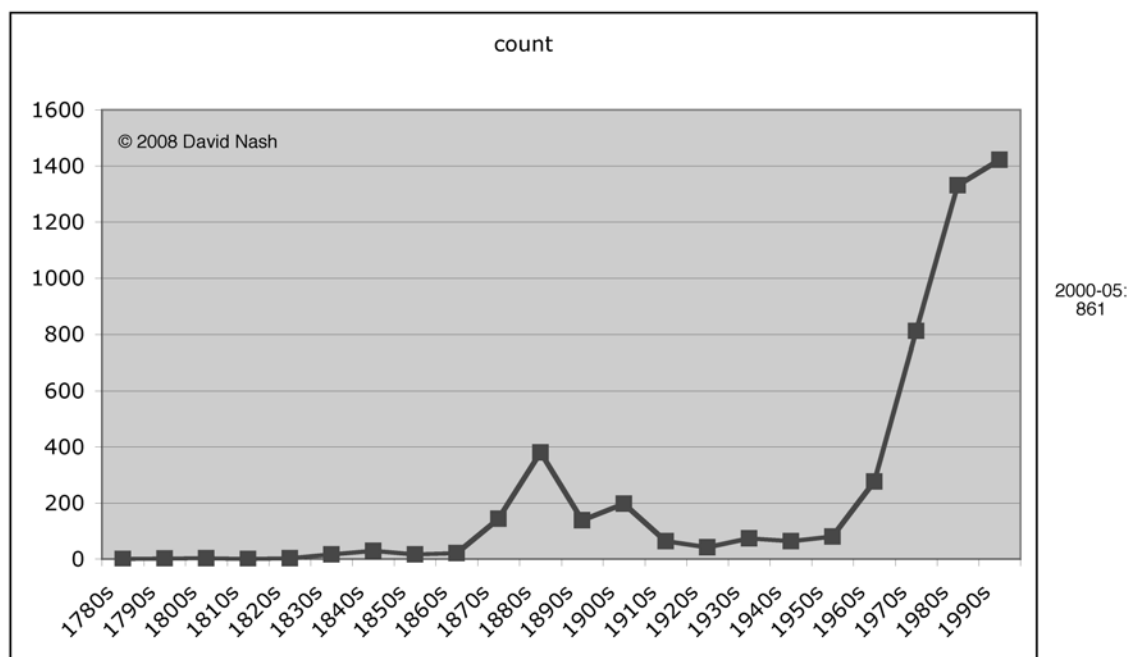


Figure 1.1: Decadal counts of publication year of items in Carrington and Triffitt (1999). Courtesy David Nash (<http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/OzBib-stats.html> Accessed 21 January 2008)

publications. Nevertheless, it will be seen that each of the post-1910 decades saw about double the number of publications as the decades between 1790 and 1870. The significant increases in publications from the 1870s to the 1900s may be partly due to the way the counts were performed: individual chapters in surveys such as Curr (1886) being counted as separate publications. This might perhaps argue for recognition of subperiods within the first period (see also next section).

2.1.3 Additional remark

To wind up this section, mention might be made of two works concerned more generally with attitudes towards, and ideas about, Australian Aboriginal languages; both treat scholarly work as well as popular beliefs. The first is Peter Newton's unpublished MA thesis, 'More than one language, more than one culture: scholarly and popular ideas about Australian Aboriginal languages from early times until 1860' (Newton 1987). The temporal scope of this work thus falls into the first period of research on Australian Aboriginal languages (see §2.1.2). Like other writers on the topic, Newton identifies periods in the development of the subject: a first period, 1770–1824, in which raw material was spasmodically collected and left largely unanalysed; and a second period, 1825–1845, in which the first basic grammatical descriptions were compiled.

Newton (1987:348–349) sees 1860 as a 'watershed, marking the transition in Australian language studies from philology to the more specific science of linguistics'. Simpson (1992), however, argues that a school grammar tradition was centred in Adelaide in the period 1840–1846 that produced materials at least as good as anything else published in the nineteenth century.

Newton (1987) presents a detailed historical account of recorded information on Australian Aboriginal languages, beginning with pre-settlement times, with contacts with Asia and

with the first European voyagers. He also discusses in considerable depth the contribution of the first colonists, missionaries, explorers and naturalists, settlers, and officials and others working under the state governments, such as protectors of Aborigines, and government sponsored missionaries. He also traces the effects of Darwin's ideas on scholarly and popular ideas about Aboriginal languages.

As Newton (1987) rightly observes, the surveys mentioned previously in §2.1.1 are more chronological overviews than histories, and deal quite inadequately with the earliest treatments of Australian languages. Among other things, they typically make little attempt to come to any understanding of the goals and methodologies of the earlier researchers, and evaluate them purely from the perspective of the present. Nor do they show any real attempt to understand these investigators as human beings living lives in social milieus very different from those of the modern academic linguist. Probably this reflects, as Newton observes, a lack of genuine interest in the history of the subject—a situation that fortunately appears to be changing.

In the second of these general works, Barry Alpher (1994) also distinguishes periods in the history of research on Australian languages. He puts the beginning of the modern period of descriptive studies at about 1960, marked by the appearance of Douglas (1964 [1957]) and Lowe (1960). These he considers to be the first works to really 'crack' the code of Australian languages. Prior to these treatments, research on Australian Aboriginal languages was principally the work of amateurs, sometimes gifted, punctuated by the occasional professional such as Gerhardt Laves.

2.2 Local histories

At least since the beginning of the 1970s grammars of Australian languages have generally included brief discussion of previous research on the language, usually in a section of the introductory chapter. Examples include Tsunoda's grammar of Jaru (Tsunoda 1981:18–21); Wilkins' grammar of Mparntwe Arrernte (Wilkins 1989:14–20); McGregor's grammar of Gooniyandi (McGregor 1990:28–30); Dench's grammars of Martuthunira and Yingkarta (Dench 1995:20–21, 1998:8–9); Harvey's grammar of Gaagudju (2002:5–6); Patz's grammar of Kuku Yalanji (2002:8–10); Sharp's grammar of Nyangumarta (2004:31–34); Evans' grammars of Kayardild and Bininj Gun-wok (Evans 1995:48–50, 2003b:69–71); and Kite and Wurm's grammar of Duunjdjawan (2004:12–16). Less commonly, this section appears in an appendix to the grammar, as in Dixon's grammars of Dyirbal and Yidiny (Dixon 1972: 365–367, 1977:508–512).

In most cases these pieces amount to just a few pages, and do not purport to be historiographical works; rather, their purpose is manifestly to provide a backdrop for the modern grammar. In these brief pieces we find reference to previous investigators of the language, and their works. Time is generally the primary organising principle, and for this reason these excursions could be considered to be histories—or at least chronologies. But they are always more than mere chronologies: there are always evaluative remarks on the merits or demerits of the earlier works, as seen from the perspective of contemporary linguistics (e.g. whether the author adopted a Latinate model, whether phonemes or morphemes were recognised as descriptive units), and particularly from the perspective of the description of the particular language it is embedded in. Typically one finds remarks on the accuracy of the transcriptions; how good the work in question is as a piece of linguistics; and how useful it is to us today. They are, that is, generally more evaluative than the global histories discussed in §2.1.

These local histories do not attempt to locate the previous research in the context of linguistics and other relevant disciplines of the day—and they are not always free of anachro-

nisms—nor do they provide the story of any investigator’s life and work. And unlike the global histories, they do not usually distinguish periods or phases in the research. There are occasional exceptions: for instance, Terrill (1998) distinguishes two periods of research on Biri. The first, from the 1860s to the 1940s, was characterised by wordlists gathered mainly by amateurs (but towards the end of the period also including some gathered by Gerhardt Laves and Norman Tindale). The second period, dating from 1966, is dominated by trained linguists.

Sketches such as these account for almost all histories of research on particular languages. Few independent publications, either articles or books, treat such perhaps specialised and esoteric topics.¹² One of the few exceptions is Tamsin Donaldson’s ‘Hearing the first Australians’ (Donaldson 1985), which discusses research on two languages of western New South Wales, Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri. Like most local histories this one does not explicitly identify periods, although a number are easily discerned in the text: the earliest wordlists recorded by explorers in the first decades of the nineteenth century; the missionary wordlists and grammars of the 1830s and 1840s; then after some decades of hiatus, the ‘language collectors’ of the late nineteenth century (including E. Curr and R.H. Mathews) who gathered words from a wide range of languages including Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri; and finally (after another hiatus of more than fifty years, during which just the odd word or two was collected) the beginning of serious work by trained linguists. The latter period, unfortunately, is barely touched upon. The regional focus of this piece permits a more comprehensive and detailed coverage of the topic than is possible for the global histories discussed in §2.1, which are roughly comparable in length. Donaldson also attempts to situate ideas about, and research on, the languages in their intellectual climates. Another exception is Simpson’s 1992 article on the Adelaide school grammar tradition from the mid-nineteenth century, mentioned in the previous section.

One wonders to what extent local and national histories are homologous: to what extent are national tendencies and traditions replicated in local ones, and how are both situated in respect to goings-on in linguistics in the rest of the world?

2.3 Personal histories: the contribution of individual scholars

A fairly diverse array of works can be assigned to this category, of more or less relevance to the history of research on Australian languages. These include biographies and biographical sketches, scholarly editions of the works of particular individuals, as well as works of a more directly historical nature. On the whole, the material in these categories constitutes secondary data for historical studies more than historical investigations per se. In what follows I cast a rather narrow net, and attempt to give an idea of the range of relevant material, rather than provide a comprehensive listing.

Relatively short biographies of linguists and others who have made a contribution to the study of Australian languages can be found in festschrifts and obituaries. Among the former one could mention the biographical sketch of Luise Hercus by Isobel White (1990), my biography of Howard Coate (1996a), and Wurm’s (1997) and Tryon and Walsh’s (1997) biographical notes on Geoffrey O’Grady. Worth singling out is Tamsin Donaldson’s ‘Patakirra-paraaypuwan in western New South Wales’ (Donaldson 1990), which presents recollections of Luise Hercus as fieldworker in western New South Wales by three Ngiyampaa people

12 This is not exclusively the fault of Australianist linguists. Books and journals have to be sold, and the reality is that the market for publications treating exotic languages—to say nothing of the history of their documentation—is severely limited (and is arguably believed by many editors and publishers to be even more limited than it really is).

Hercus worked with, Mamie King, Eliza Kennedy, and Muriel Harris. Somewhat similar is Helen Harper's overview (2007) of the legacy of Terry Crowley's work on the languages of Cape York Peninsula, which compiles and presents the views of descendants of the speakers Crowley worked with in 1975.

Examples of works of the second category are Arthur Capell's obituary of Ernest A. Worms (1964), Arthur Holmer's obituary of Nils Holmer (1994), David Nash's obituary of Gerhardt Laves (1993), obituaries of Stephen Wurm (Hercus *et al.* 2001; Pawley 2002), and numerous obituaries of Ken Hale (Dixon 2004; Everett *et al.* 2002; Keyser 2003; Laughren 2001; Nash 2001b; Yengoyan 2003) and Terry Crowley (Evans 2005; Lynch 2005; Siegel 2005; Walsh 2005). Works such as these, as one would expect, tend to focus on details of personal life-history, the individual's experiences in and away from the field, and tend to lack somewhat in terms of depth of discussion and critical appraisal of their linguistic work.

Other article-length pieces are scattered widely throughout journals and edited books (see below). Among these one might mention the brief edited transcript of an interview with Arthur Capell on his work on Australian languages (Newton 1982), an evaluation of T.G.H. Strehlow's writing of Arrernte (Breen 2004), and examinations of R.H. Mathews' ethnographic and linguistic research (Thomas 2004, forthcoming).

Longer, book-length treatments exist of the lives and work of just a few Australianist linguists.¹³ Schurmann (1987) is a biography of Clamor Schürmann that affords interesting insights into Schürmann's interaction with Aborigines of south eastern South Australia, and learning the language. McNally (1981) and Hill (2002) are biographies of the controversial T. G.H. Strehlow (1908–1978). While in some ways more critical than the shorter pieces just referred to, their treatment of Strehlow's linguistics is quite shallow; see Moore, this volume for a detailed appraisal of Strehlow's linguistic research. Moreover, Barry Hill has a tendency to beat-up the controversy surrounding T.G.H. Strehlow, and allows himself a considerable degree of poetic licence in his presentation and interpretation of the evidence; Hill (2002) is thus a less than reliable secondary source. T.G.H. Strehlow's autobiographical *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (1969), while dealing with the final days of his father's life, provides fascinating insights into the author, his early life, his relationships with Arrernte people, and his aspirations to become a linguist. Dixon's well-known *Searching for Aboriginal languages: memoirs of a field worker* (1983, reissued in 1989 by Chicago University Press) is a popularised autobiographical account of R.M.W. Dixon's entry to the field of Australian Aboriginal linguistics, and his fieldwork on the languages of the rainforests of north Queensland.

One should also mention in this context James R.B. Love's *Stone age bushmen of today* (1936). In this book Love—a gifted amateur linguist, who wrote the first grammatical description of Worrorra (see §2.1.1; McGregor 1986)—presents a popular ethnography of the Worrorra woven into an account of his experiences as a missionary at Kunmunya mission. As the story unfolds one gets a clear picture of Love as a human being, and his relationships with the Worrorra people; language plays a fairly prominent role in the account, and one chapter deals with his experiences in learning Worrorra (Love 1936:41–50). Moira Burgess's BA (Hons.) thesis (1986) presents an evaluation of Love's contribution to Aboriginal anthropology and linguistics, focussing on his thirteen years at Kunmunya, 1927–1940. Burgess is not a linguist, and her evaluation of Love's linguistic work is largely based on opinions of contemporary and modern linguists. While this evaluation is rather restricted from the linguistic

13 Peter Newton's BA (Hons.) thesis (1979) presents an evaluation of Arthur Capell's work on Oceanic languages. Originally, he says, it had been intended to include Capell's Australian work as well. A draft was apparently written, but was not included in the final thesis, and has unfortunately not since appeared. The annotated bibliography at the end of the thesis, however, includes Capell's writings on Australian as well as Oceanic languages.

perspective, Burgess is successful in contextualising Love's work in its times, in relating it to missionary and academic linguistics of the 1930s and 1940s.

David Trudinger's exemplary PhD thesis *Converting salvation: protestant missionaries in Central Australia, 1930s–1940s* (Trudinger 2004) also deals with the work of J.R.B. Love, though it focuses on his period at Ernabella (Central Australia), 1941–1946. This work is concerned more with the discourse and praxis of missionaries in Central Australia in the 1930s and 1940s than with the linguistic or ethnographic contribution of the missionaries. Nevertheless, it provides some fascinating insights into Love's thought on language and culture, as well as that of other missionaries, including Ronald M. Trudinger, who published the first grammatical sketch of a Western Desert variety (Trudinger 1943).¹⁴ One of the especially interesting aspects of this thesis is the insights it provides into Love's and Trudinger's attitudes to the use of the traditional language in relation to the conflicting discourses of missionising, evangelisation, and modernisation (Trudinger 2004:286–289).

The recent festschrift *Forty years on: Ken Hale and Australian languages* (Simpson *et al.* 2001) is unusual in the extent to which Ken Hale's contribution permeates the papers. Indeed, the book is almost as much an examination of Hale's influence on Australian Aboriginal linguistics since 1959 and on linguistic theory generally as a festschrift. Hale's support of Aboriginal participation in linguistic research (see Hale 1965) is also dealt with (Green and Turpin 2001; Yengoyan 2001; Granites and Laughren 2001), as is his encouragement of speakers to maintain their languages. Aside from the expected bibliography of Hale's writings (Nash 2001a), there are papers treating aspects of Hale's fieldwork (e.g. S. Hale 2001 (Sara Hale's reminiscences of Hale's first fieldtrip to Australia); Green 2001 (an edited version of an interview with Ken Hale on the same fieldtrip); O'Grady 2001 (Geoff O'Grady's reflections on their renown 1960 fieldtrip); Nash and O'Grady 2001 (cataloguing the vocabularies gathered in the 1960 joint fieldtrip); Wurm 2001 (Stephen Wurm's reminiscences of working on Mornington Island with Hale); contextualisation of Hale's work in the situation of Australian Aboriginal linguistics (e.g. Sharpe 2001); appreciations of Hale as a person and scholar (including Yengoyan 2001; Sutton 2001); and further investigations based on Hale's corpora (e.g. Koch 2001). Three contributions in this book deal with issues in the history of Aboriginal language education, in which Hale played a role. Hoogenraad (2001) gives a critical historical overview of bilingual education in Central Australia. Black and Breen (2001) provides an overview of the history of the School of Australian Linguistics. And Sharp and Thieberger (2001) outline the history of Wangka Maya, the Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, Port Hedland.

Edited versions and collections of the scholarly works of particular individuals are also relevant, though for Australianist linguistics these number considerably fewer than for anthropologists, and are sometimes lacking in terms of the contextualisation they provide. Thus the recent reissue of James R.B. Love's MA thesis (1934) on Worrorra grammar (Love 2000) is no more than a reprint.¹⁵ Lacking an appraisal of Love's work, and with virtually no editorial intervention in the text, this does a considerable disservice to an important and insightful missionary grammar from the second period of research on Australian languages (see §2.1 above). Niel Gunson's scholarly edition of the published works of Lancelot Threlkeld

14 It seems that J.R.B. Love had already prepared a 'rudimentary grammar and vocabulary' of the language (Trudinger 2004:269; see also Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume:94), which may have served as a foundation or model for Trudinger's sketch.

15 In the early 1990s I began to prepare a critical edition of Love's MA thesis, intended initially for my festschrift for Howard Coate (McGregor 1996b). However, it was not completed in time to meet the deadline for the festschrift, and remains in manuscript form, in a half-finished state.

(Gunson 1974) is considerably better in providing contextualising information. However, it includes only Threlkeld's ethnographic writings, not his linguistic works. In press as of the time of making the final revisions to this introductory piece is Martin Thomas' edition of a selection of R.H. Mathews' voluminous ethnographic and linguistic publications and correspondence (Thomas 2007). This work provides an appraisal and interpretation of Mathews' work, as well as a biography.

The present author recently completed the major enterprise of revising and editing Frs. Hermann Nekes and Ernest Worms' monumental *Australian languages* (1953) for publication as a book. This work originally appeared in microfilm form, as the tenth volume in the series *Micro-Bibliotheca Anthropos*, and is not easily accessible. The main value of this major achievement of missionary linguistics of the second period (see §2.1) lies in the documentation it provides of a number of now moribund Nyulnyulan languages, as well as a scattering of languages from elsewhere on the continent. From today's perspective it is of considerably less value as a piece of language description. The revision of the book, Nekes and Worms (2006), can be regarded as documentation of their language documentation and description, and an appraisal of the contribution of the two priests (see further McGregor 2007). It contains an editorial introduction that outlines the lives and achievements of the authors and attempts to place their work in its historical context; it also attempts to understand the authors' guiding ideas about language and society. In these senses it is in part a work on the history of ideas. The remainder of the book consists of a revision of the authors' text of Parts I and V, their grammatical description and sample texts. The editor attempts to be level-handed in his treatment of the work, being neither dismissive nor eulogistic; he does not shy away from criticism where it is due, nor from giving credit where it is due. McGregor (2005) deals specifically with the dictionaries of Parts II to IV (see also next section).

Aside from hard-copy publication, mention may be made of web sites as repositories of information on Australianists. A notable example is the Gerhardt Laves site (<http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves>) managed by David Nash. This site presents biographical information on Laves, as well as indication of the range and depth of his corpora, excerpts from his written notes, the use made of his materials by modern scholars, and so forth. Also informative is the Norman B. Tindale site (http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/archives/hdms/aa338/338_tindale.htm), managed by the South Australian Museum; this provides detailed biographical information on Tindale, and detailed descriptions of the contents of the archive of Tindale's materials, which include short vocabularies of nearly 150 language varieties. Less informative is the homepage of the Strehlow Research Centre (<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/museums/strehlow/index.html>), though it does provide some idea of the holdings in the extensive Strehlow archive.

2.4 Historical treatments of particular themes

Four themes in Australian Aboriginal languages and linguistics have received treatment in article-length or longer historical pieces: language documentation by Aboriginal people, missionary linguistics, lexicography, and language classification.¹⁶ These, and other themes are of course dealt with in national, regional, local, and personal histories. Here I restrict attention to contributions focussing on the topics, occasionally mentioning shorter and non-specific treatments where they provide information useful for contextualising the more detailed studies, especially where they express historical notions widespread in the Australianist community.

¹⁶ The history of the emergence and use of the notion of the phoneme in Australian Aboriginal linguistics is discussed in a conference presentation, as yet unpublished (McGregor 2006a).

Oates (1990) is one of the few works documenting research by Aboriginal people on their languages: in this case, the recordings by two men, Jimmie Barker (1900–1972) and Norman Baird (c.1891–1961), of their traditional languages, Muruwari and Kuku Yalanji. In contrast with the personal histories discussed in the previous section, little is said about the lives of these men (though see Mathews 1968 for a biography of Jimmie Barker), and the focus is on the nature and quality of the documentation they provided. Much of the article consists of a discussion of Baird's orthography. Barker and Baird were acquaintances of Lynette Oates; other Aboriginal people have also initiated language documentation projects with the intention of preserving their languages, and the stories of these attempts need to be told.

The history of lexicographical investigations of Australian languages, principally the history of the compilation of wordlists and dictionaries, is the subject of just two articles. The first is O'Grady (1971), which deals with work up to the late 1960s. O'Grady gives a detailed overview of the lexical work done during the period since first contact, and discusses the content and organisation of some representative works; he also remarks on some aspects of Australian languages that posed problems for early lexicographers, including phonetic and phonemic distinctions, as well as grammatical (the type of grammatical information to include) and semantic (identification of the range of referents and senses of lexemes and specification of definitions) issues. O'Grady (1971) distinguishes between wordlists (consisting of less than 1,000 items) and dictionaries (with more than 1,000 lexical entries), and remarks that just 8 had been published up to the late 1960s, including Australia and Torres Strait Islands. Of these, half appeared in the nineteenth century, the other half in the twentieth. O'Grady also remarks he was aware of forty-eight unpublished dictionaries, all produced during the twentieth century. An interesting suggestion is the idea that a motivation for interest in gathering wordlists in the nineteenth century—often by amateurs with fairly limited contact with the languages—was the widespread interest in the origins of Australian Aborigines (O'Grady 1971:780). O'Grady also remarks on one aspect of Ken Hale's fieldwork methodology relevant to lexicographers, namely the solicitation of sentences illustrating prompt lexemes, which often resulted in the appearance of new lexemes.

O'Grady considers the late 1930s as a turning point, the beginning of a new era in Australian linguistics (1971:783). This was inaugurated by Arthur Capell's first field investigations of languages of the Kimberley and Arnhem Land. Capell compiled relatively extensive dictionaries of some of these languages, though unfortunately none have ever been published.

A quarter of a century passed before the appearance of the next publication on this topic, Goddard and Thieberger (1997), which updates the story by treating the period from 1968 to 1993. Cliff Goddard and Nick Thieberger identify the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, in the middle of which period O'Grady's article appeared, as something of a turning point in Aboriginal linguistics. It saw changes in the universities (especially the emergence of departments of linguistics), in society, and in policies concerning Aborigines, that led to increasing interest in the compilation of dictionaries (understood as consisting of more than 2,000 entries, with detailed semantic information). Lexicographic work, that is, came to be motivated not just for academic and strictly documentary purposes, but also for practical purposes including education. It was not until the 1990s, however, that such dictionaries were published in reasonable numbers: of the seventeen dictionaries they list for the post-1968 period, fully eleven (65%) appeared in the 1990s—dating to the first four years of the decade. (This of course reflects lexicographic research beginning in the 1980s or earlier.) Goddard and Thieberger (1997) discuss various issues in lexicographical practice, updating the discussion provided in O'Grady (1971). These include orthography (moving beyond the ideal of phonemic orthographies presumed by O'Grady 1971), organisation, and definitional practices.

Three other developments from this period are worth remarking on. One was the advent of the personal computer, and resulting in the computerisation of the field, which (among other things) greatly facilitated production of dictionaries from data files (Goddard and Thieberger 1997:181–185). Another was the increasing role of Aboriginal people in compiling dictionaries and writing definitions (Goddard and Thieberger 1997:181). A third was the emergence in the early 1960s of institutions supporting linguistic work of all types financially and/or logistically (see pp.6, 8 above).

While neither article identifies periods in the history of lexicographical research on Australian languages, it is worth observing that the two turning points identified—the late 1930s (O’Grady 1971) and the late 1960s to early 1970s (Goddard and Thieberger 1997)—correspond reasonably well with the beginnings of the second and third periods identified in §2.1. Lexicography perhaps followed the same trends in development as Australian Aboriginal linguistics generally, though it lagged behind by about a decade.

Another work dealing with the topic is McGregor (2005), which deals specifically with the lexicographic research of Frs. Hermann Nekes and Ernest Worms, who collaborated in the 1930s and 1940s on investigations of Kimberley languages (see previous section). A substantial—not to say perhaps the most valuable from today’s perspective—portion of their magnum opus (775 of the 1067 pages—almost three-quarters of the work) is lexicographical in nature; the grammatical description fills a paltry 160 pages.¹⁷ This article attempts to situate the author’s wordlists in the historical context, and evaluate their contribution to the documentation of Australian languages.

Historical information on the classification of Australian languages can be found in some of the general works mentioned in §2.1. Thus O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:6, 8–13), Wurm (1972:23, 96), and Dixon (1980:20–22, 220–228) contain a few remarks on earlier attempts at classification, as does Alpher (1994). These can, however, hardly be called histories of attempts at classification. Nor can the similarly brief pieces appearing in articles and books presenting classifications of Australian languages, such as Wurm (1971), and Evans (2003a). The third section of Capell’s history of research on Australian Aboriginal languages, ‘Research into language classification and linguistic history’ (Capell 1970:700–715) is a somewhat more comprehensive piece, organised thematically according to type of classification.

The most comprehensive treatment is Koch (2004), which focuses on the methodologies employed for establishing genetic groupings more than on the proposed groupings. It is restricted to twentieth century classifications, focussing on four approaches, discussing them in detail and evaluating them: Fr Wilhelm Schmidt’s classification (1919), the first major attempt at classifying the languages of the continent; Arthur Capell’s typological classification (mooted in his first article on Australian languages, Capell 1937, though the scheme underwent changes over time); the lexicostatistical classification of the 1960s (e.g. O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966); and finally R.M.W. Dixon’s views on classification (e.g. Dixon 1980, 2002).

Remarks on missionary linguists and linguistics are scattered throughout the Australianist literature, in the brief histories of work on particular languages published in grammars and

¹⁷ This is doubtless in part a reflection of the importance the authors ascribed to words, which they regarded as occupying a central place in both language and cultures. Not only did they see words as the centrepiece of grammar, but they adopted a fairly radical Whorfian stance according to which words serve as carriers of crucial cultural information and values, and that study of the relationships amongst near synonyms and homophones would reveal important aspects of Aboriginal modes of thinking. They also considered that the study of words—as per O’Grady’s above comment—would provide information about the prehistory of Aboriginal occupation of Australia.

other biographical works, and in the national histories. However, Carey (2004) is one of the few publications to date that deals specifically with missionary linguistics in Australia. This paper is also unusual in being one of the few contributions to the history of the subject written by a professional historian rather than by a linguist. Dealing with Australianist missionary linguistics from the early to mid-nineteenth century, it situates missionary linguistics in the social and intellectual background of the time, as well as in relation to other work on Australian languages, to the situations of the languages and their speakers, and to missionary linguistics generally. As Hilary Carey observes, for some now moribund languages of eastern Australia missionary grammars represent the most primary if not best documentation. Carey remarks on the consistent failure of missionaries to both document languages, and preserve them—despite in some instances efforts or ideals to the contrary—and suggests some possible reasons (see also Trudinger 2004). She also comments on the treatment of missionary linguistics by linguists and other academic investigators, ranging from dismissal to denigration. Few indeed are the accounts that give missionary linguistics the advantage of a fair and even-handed scholarly appraisal.

Although a number of missionary linguists figure in Carey's story, the article pays particular attention to the work of one rightly famous missionary linguist, Lancelot Threlkeld, who wrote what is widely regarded as one of the best nineteenth century descriptions of an Australian language (Threlkeld 1834). Threlkeld is notable for setting a standard for missionary linguistics, and the creative descriptive approach he adopted, the extent to which he grappled with descriptive difficulties posed by Awabakal. We lack a comparable treatment of missionary linguistics post-1850.

Another important work on the missionary contribution to knowledge about Australian languages is the previously mentioned unpublished MA thesis by Peter Newton, which devotes two full chapters to missions from 1788 to 1860, i.e. roughly the same time period as dealt with by Carey (Newton 1987:131–218). Newton's treatment is somewhat more comprehensive than Carey's, dealing with virtually all missions and missionaries of the period, regardless of how minor their contribution, and their social and linguistic backgrounds.

Heidi-Marie Kneebone's recent PhD thesis, *The language of the chosen few* (2005) also stresses the significance of the contribution of missionaries. She treats in detail the documentation and description of Diyari by Lutheran missionaries at Hermannsburg mission, South Australia, from 1867 to 1880. Among other things, Kneebone discusses a number of previously unexamined primary sources, including the first grammatical description of the language and early examples of Indigenous writing. Like most others working in this domain, Kneebone is also motivated by practical considerations, in particular to make the contribution of the early missionaries accessible to descendants of Diyari speakers.

Other than these detailed treatments, which focus on missionary linguistics of the nineteenth century, one finds a few articles outlining the contributions of particular missionaries—e.g. McGregor (2000) mentioned above. McGregor (2006b) treats missionary linguistics in the Kimberley region generally, which began in 1890. Also relevant to the topic of missionary linguistics is Lynette Oates brief history of the involvement of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (Oates 1999), and her book-length hagiography of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Australia (Oates 2003). And John Harris' (1990) overview of two centuries of missionary work in Australia contains a good deal on work by missionaries on Aboriginal languages, in particular, on translation.

3. The papers in this volume

Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the contributions to the volume, and depicts the time frame each treats.

The papers are divided into three thematic parts. Part 1 consists of three contributions dealing with the history of research on particular languages or regions. In the first paper Peter Austin treats research on the now moribund northern New South Wales language Gamilaraay. In the second paper Claire Bovern documents research on two closely related Nyulnyulan varieties, Bardi (highly endangered) and Jawi (effectively extinct). Research on these languages shows some unusual features. For Gamilaraay, as Austin observes, little research was done during the twentieth century by professional linguists, most investigations having been carried out by amateurs during the nineteenth century. By contrast, Bardi is notable for the number of professional linguists who worked on it from the late 1920s; yet no reference grammar has yet appeared (although Bovern is currently in the process of preparing one). Both Austin and Bovern describe the efforts in recent years by Gamilaraay and Bardi people to document and revive their languages.

The third paper in Part 1, by Jane Simpson, Rob Amery and Mary-Anne Gale, documents in detail the close to two centuries of research on South Australian languages. Their history agrees well with the three period model proposed in §2.1.3, and the period 1930 to 1950 emerges as an active one in documentation of South Australian languages. Detailed treatment is provided of a range of topics, both descriptive and applied, and the article concludes with a discussion of current research, commenting on indigenous and community directed research, and directions for future research.

The ten papers of Part 2 focus on the contributions of particular individuals. The first paper, by Mathias Boström, documents the contribution of the Swedish ethnographer Yngve Laurell, who, in 1910, compiled brief wordlists of a few Kimberley languages, and made some of the earliest sound recordings, including a recording of a brief conversation. Boström situates Laurell's work in the context of Swedish and international ethnography and academic concerns, and explores Laurell's representation and construal of Aborigines as revealed by his writings and ethnographic collections.

Luise Hercus' contribution is an autobiographical account of her entry into the Australianist field in the early 1960s, and her work on moribund languages of the south-east of the continent. She provides a passionate account of the fieldwork situation in the region in those days, when Aboriginal languages were more widely denigrated by whites, and Aboriginal people made to feel ashamed of them. Hercus concludes with comments on recording of songs, and their linguistic and anthropological significance in language endangerment situations, not to say their status amongst last speakers as significant cultural artefacts.

Harold Koch's contribution treats the work of R.H. Mathews, who, at the turn of the twentieth century, recorded and published basic information on many languages, mainly from the east and south east of the continent. Koch discusses the general schema Mathews' descriptions follow, the tension between the data and the traditional system of grammatical description, and the strategies Mathews adopted to deal with problematic data that did not fit the mould.

William McGregor and Matti Miestamo discuss the work of Nils M. Holmer, the only linguist from a Scandinavian country to do first-hand research on an Australian language. Holmer's fieldwork centred on the eastern part of the continent, where he gathered basic information on some thirty different language varieties from the Torres Strait Islands to the north coast of New South Wales (NSW), many now moribund. McGregor and Miestamo dis-

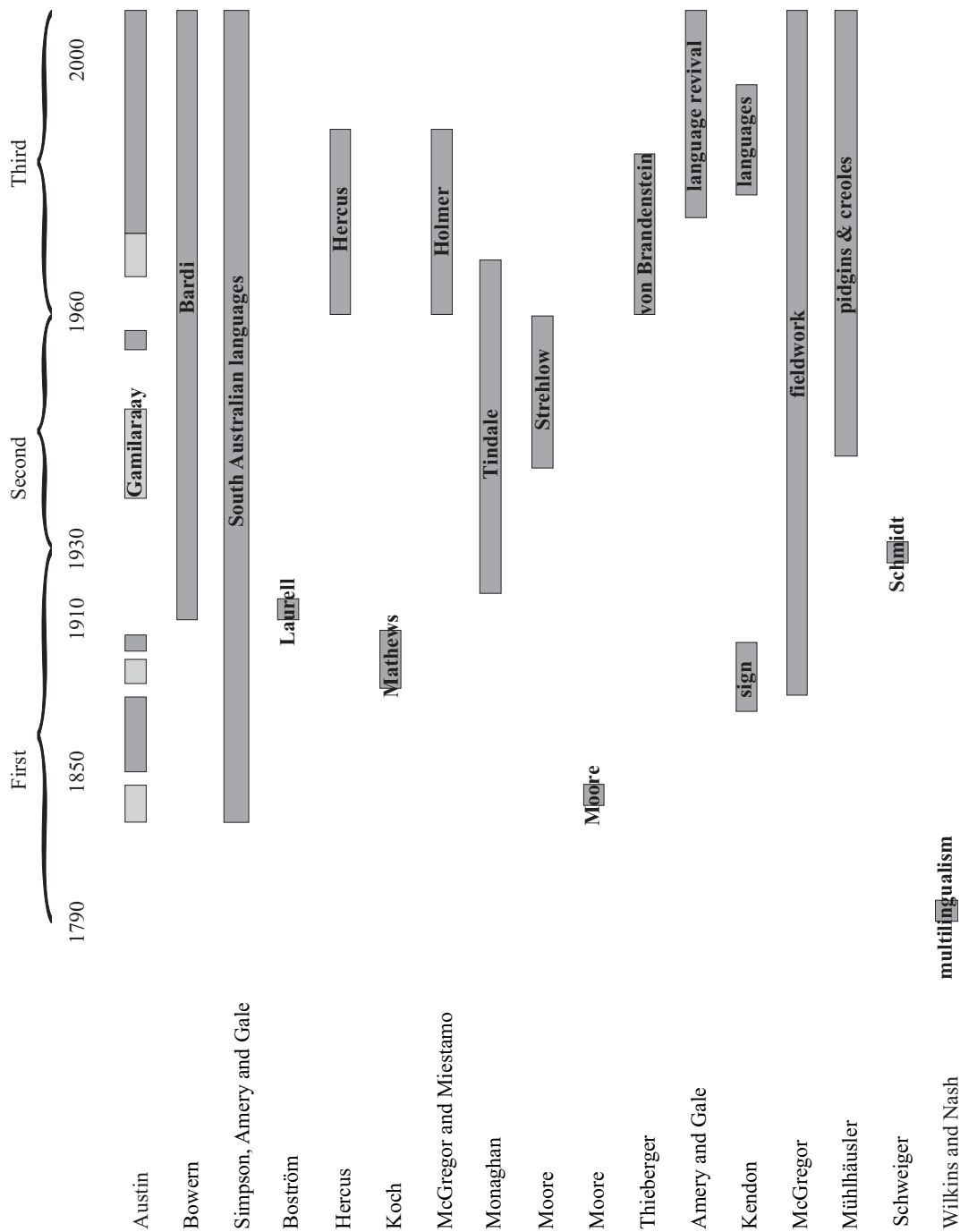


Figure 1.2: Time periods covered by the contributions to this book

cuss Holmer's published works, and conclude that the main value lies in their documentation of some now highly endangered languages.

Paul Monaghan treats Norman Tindale's contribution to the documentation of Pitjantjatjara. From his first fieldtrip in the early 1920s, Tindale gathered vocabularies of the languages he came into contact with, primarily for the purpose of tribal identification and validation. His Pitjantjatjara vocabulary, based mainly on his own primary sources from the early 1930s, comprises almost three thousand headwords, representing ten different varieties of the Western Desert language. Monaghan links Tindale's research with the then dominant discourses of racial purity and corruption, the most relevant aspect of which was the equation of racial with linguistic purity.

The next two papers are by David Moore, and deal respectively with T.G.H. Strehlow, and George F. Moore's 1842 *A descriptive vocabulary of the language in common use amongst the natives of Western Australia*. Despite the fact that T.G.H. Strehlow published in 1944 what was then one of the most comprehensive grammars of an Australia language, his grammar of Arrernte (Strehlow 1944), his contribution has in recent years been either ignored or denigrated. Moore attempts to set the record straight by reassessing Strehlow's contribution fairly, while not being eulogistic, and eschewing anachronistic interpretations. Moore suggests that some aspects of Strehlow's grammatical description were motivated by a wish to show that the language was a fully functional one, in no way inferior to European languages, in a bid to counter dominant views of the day. Another important aspect of Strehlow's work was his focus on the collection of texts, in particular of song texts, on which he published a major work (Strehlow 1971). Moore (1842) is one of just four dictionaries (according to O'Grady 1971—see §2.4 above) of an Australian language to be published in the nineteenth century. This work is described in detail in David Moore's second contribution, which also discusses its formation as a collaborative enterprise involving various investigators who contributed throughout the 1830s.

The final paper in Part 2, by Nick Thieberger, deals with the work of the maverick Carl von Brandenstein. Just a few years younger than Nils Holmer (see above), von Brandenstein began working on Australian languages at the beginning of the modern period, when he was over fifty years of age; for the next thirty years he worked on languages of the southern half of Western Australia. Thieberger suggests that many aspects of von Brandenstein's approach fit better with nineteenth century linguistics than with modern linguistics, and tells an instructive story of some of von Brandenstein's conflicts with the linguistic establishment, and his courage and stubbornness to continue regardless of the fashion of the times.

The six papers of Part 3 deal with the history of particular topics in Australianist linguistics. Together they deal with a fair range of time periods, regions, languages, and themes. This part begins with a paper by Rob Amery and Mary-Anne Gale on the history of language revival in Australia. Amery and Gale provide a comprehensive overview of formal revival efforts for moribund languages of the eastern states, and document official policies relating to language revival, as well as the efforts of community and region-based institutions that have arisen since the 1980s. Three programs are discussed as case studies: Gumbaynggir revival on the north coast of NSW; Kurna reclamation in Adelaide; and Ngarrindjeri revival in southern South Australia.

In the next paper Adam Kendon treats the history of investigation of sign languages in Australia, updating and expanding the history in his monograph (Kendon 1988). He traces observations on Australian Aboriginal sign languages from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Significant is the work done around the turn of the twentieth century by W.E. Roth, A. W. Howitt, Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen. From then until about 1970 only brief treat-

ments of sign languages appeared; in modern times Kendon himself emerges as the main player in the field.

In the third paper McGregor attempts to piece together the story of fieldwork on languages of the Kimberley, covering the period from initial colonisation in the late nineteenth century to the present. This article identifies changes to fieldwork as a social practice; methodological changes in fieldwork practices—in particular in the character of elicitation—with the increasing professionalisation of the field; and technological changes and their affects on fieldwork practice.

Peter Mühlhäusler tells the story of research into pidgins and creoles in Australia. He observes that comprehensive descriptions of Australian varieties only began to appear after 1970; this he attributes to concerns of linguistic purity (see previous remarks on Monaghan's article). Investigations of pidgins and creoles intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, with descriptive, sociolinguistic, and educational work being undertaken; this research compares favourably with contemporary research elsewhere in the world. Things have continued relatively unchanged into the present decade, studies of pidgins and creoles remaining fairly marginal to mainstream Australian Aboriginal linguistics.

Fritz Schweiger's contribution deals with Fr Wilhelm Schmidt's monograph on personal pronouns, *Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen*, published in the same year as *Die Gliederung der australischen Sprachen*. Schweiger gives a detailed account of the contents of *Die Personalpronomina*, focussing on Schmidt's criteria for classification. Schmidt also remarked on regularities in the construction of pronominal forms, touched on regularities in the structure of case forms, and recognised the importance of borrowing. Interestingly, despite grouping Cape York languages with languages of Arnhem Land and the Kimberley, Schmidt perceived that the pronominal forms of Cape York languages are reminiscent of the southern languages.

The final paper, by Davids Wilkins and Nash, deals with the findings of an early expedition that was universally regarded as a failure. This was expedition into the Sydney hinterland in 1791 led by Governor Phillip. Although it did not achieve the anticipated geographical findings, encounters with Aborigines led to important new understandings of the language situation. In particular, it became evident that the continent was home to a number of mutually unintelligible languages, and that many individuals were multilingual. Other important linguistic and ethnographic observations were also made during the course of this expedition, that are drawn out and discussed by Wilkins and Nash.

To conclude this overview, three general observations are in order. First, as already remarked, the period from about 1930 to 1960 is accorded relatively good coverage in this book, and the widespread belief that it was a period of virtually no activity in Aboriginal linguistics (see §2.1.1 above) is amply refuted. Second, a significant feature of the papers is the attention they pay to detail: they focus on particular investigators, languages, or topics, and deal with them in depth. Third, it is not just the work of most notable or dominant linguists of the eras that is dealt with, but the contribution of rank-and-file Australianists, and the non-conformists. In fact, it might reasonably be objected that the word *just* should be excised from the previous sentence: the institutionally and intellectually dominant figures from each period are mentioned only in passing in this book. I have two responses to potential criticisms arising from this. To begin with, someone has to write the piece, and if (as was in fact the case) no contribution was forthcoming, an editor is left with the options of either curtailing the project altogether or for the foreseeable future, or proceeding with what is available. I have opted for the latter course in the firm belief that the stories of the dominant figures are

not **that** important. For another thing, in case of living individuals I would argue that a suitably dispassionate history is impossible.

4. Conclusion

In this introductory chapter I have attempted to sketch an overview of works treating the history of Australian Aboriginal linguistics. This provides a context for the contributions in the present book, a number of which present new stories, or new appraisals of old stories. Some cherished views about the history of the field have been shown to be false, or at least highly dubious.

Australianist linguists have tended, like linguists generally, to show somewhat less interest in the history of their subject than have their anthropologist and archaeologist colleagues. The same goes for historians and biographers, who, with few exceptions, have rarely chosen linguists or linguistics as subjects of their investigations.¹⁸ As revealed by the contributions to this book, there are signs of change, that linguists are beginning to see the relevance of the history of their subject beyond the mere contextualisation of their own work. And historians are also beginning to show interest in the history of Aboriginal linguistics. This book attempts to take an initial step in meeting the challenge of developing a ‘planned linguistic historiography in Australia’ (Newton 1987:7).

Much, of course, remains to be done. To wind up the paper I make a few suggestions concerning prospects for the historiography of Australianist linguistics, remarking on what I consider to be some of the most important themes demanding attention. This list does not pretend to be complete.

Most obviously, there is much scope for in-depth historical investigations of research on particular languages, and by particular individuals, only a small selection of which are treated or even mentioned in this volume. We also need to know more about the linguistic theories and traditions investigators worked in, and how these shaped the study of Aboriginal languages, including the recording of primary information; vice versa, the impact of description of the Australian languages on linguistic theories needs to be explored. The two dominant traditions of the second period need thorough treatment, the Sydney and Adelaide schools; although the latter is touched on in the papers by Simpson, Amery and Gale, Monaghan, and Moore in this volume, we are a long way from understanding either school, or the relations between them.

The context of Australianist linguistics demands much more attention, including its links with international developments in linguistics, with Aboriginal and international anthropology, archaeology, history, and history and philosophy of science (including linguistics). Also important is the development of a theorised historical account of Australian Aboriginal linguistics, that adequately links the subject to dominant social ideologies and politics, including colonialism and post-colonialism and their discourses (see e.g. Errington 2001; Zwartjes and Hovdhaugen 2004, 2005). Except for the works by a few historians (e.g. Jones 1996, 2000; Carey 2004; Trudinger 2004) the relation between colonialism and linguistic thought has barely been touched upon in histories of Australian Aboriginal linguistics.

The role of organisations devoted to Aboriginal issues such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the School

¹⁸ The reasons are not clear to me. It cannot be simply because the subject matter of anthropology and archaeology is less abstruse (a perusal of recent journal articles would seem to suggest otherwise); and after all, there are innumerable histories—many popular—of the most abstruse subject of all, mathematics.

of Australian Linguistics, and the many language centres now in existence, needs to be explored critically.

The content and methods of Australian Aboriginal linguistics also demand attention. There is a need to know more about how phenomena such as grammatical relations, pronominal categories, pronominal affixes, compound verb constructions, complex sentence constructions, and ergativity have been dealt with over time, and how and why notions such as the phoneme and morpheme became entrenched in the beginning of the third period of research, but failed to do so in the second period. Perhaps more interesting than the history of lexicographical research remarked on in §2.4 is the history of semantic studies of Aboriginal languages. While we have some works treating the history of classifications of Aboriginal languages, these are language-internal, and fail to draw much on wider notions of the human prehistory of the continent, and how the latter ideas impact on the construal of the linguistic past.

The rise and development of ethical considerations remains to be investigated in Australianist linguistics, and in relation to Australian Aboriginal studies generally. And finally, as hinted at various points above, the role of speakers of Aboriginal languages in the development of Australian Aboriginal linguistics has barely been touched upon; nor do we have a good idea of Aboriginal views of research on their languages, or how these views have changed over time.

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Part 1:
Investigations of particular
languages and regions

2 *The Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) language, northern New South Wales—a brief history of research*

PETER K. AUSTIN¹

1. Introduction

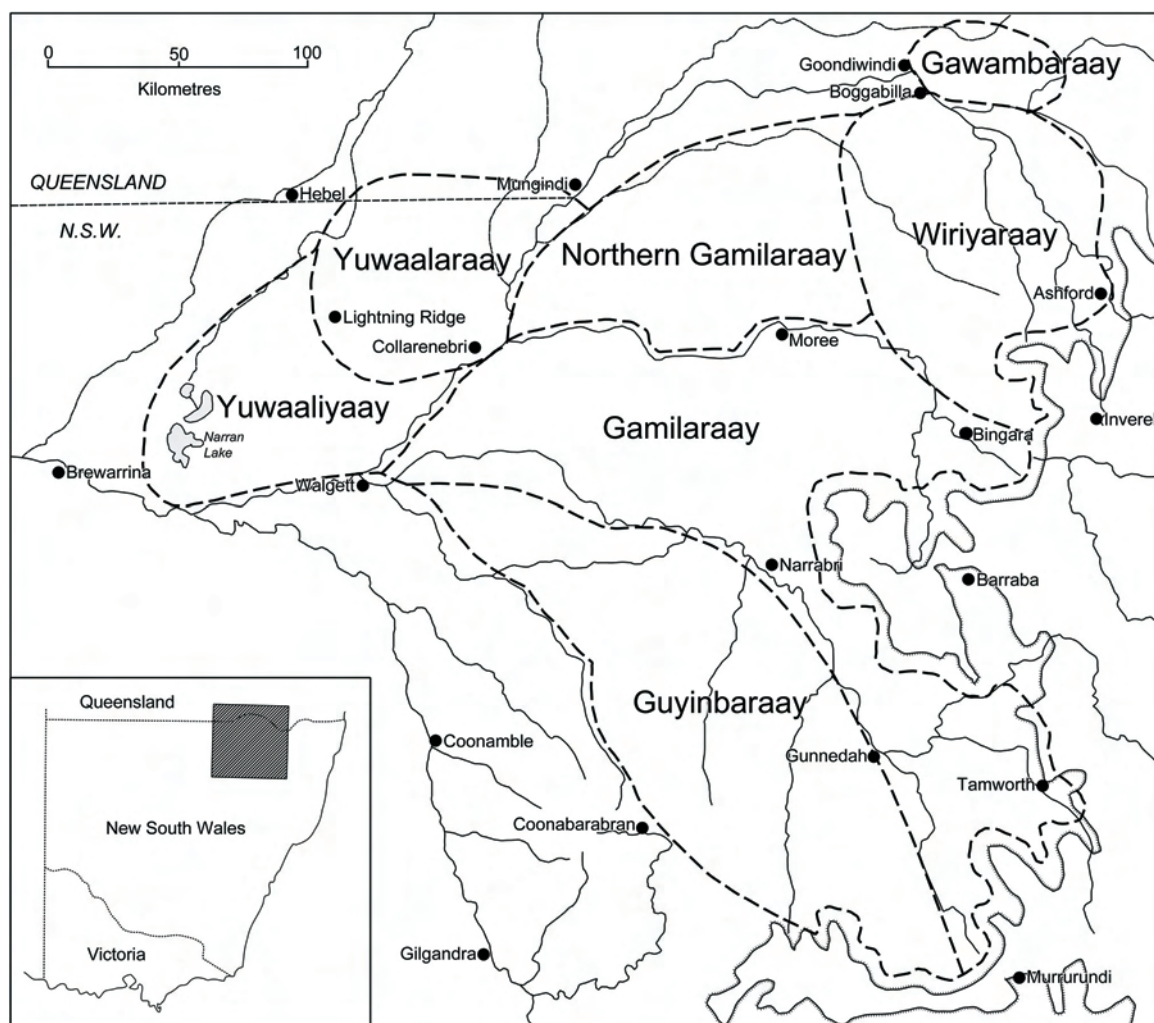
This chapter is an outline of the history of the research on the Gamilaraay language of northern New South Wales, with a focus on some of the major figures who have contributed to its documentation. Gamilaraay, spelled ‘Kamilaroi’ in earlier works, is well-known from anthropological literature dating back to Fison and Howitt (1880) and Howitt (1904);² today it has a vibrant language revitalisation programme and is being reintroduced to children and adults in northern New South Wales after a period of disuse.

This chapter is not intended as a comprehensive statement covering all the available source materials but is meant to give an overview of the main directions of work that has been and is being done. Gamilaraay is quite closely related to the neighbouring languages Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay (see Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980; Austin 1997), and on occasion I will refer to Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay, especially in the context of language revival efforts that treat them as a joint entity.

Gamilaraay is unusual among Australian languages in that although there is a considerable amount of 19th century data available on the language in various forms, there is little that was recorded by professional linguists in the 20th century (we have a good deal more on Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay, however), yet it was one of the first indigenous languages to make an appearance on the World Wide Web and it has an extremely active language revival move-

1 I owe a debt of thanks to all the Gamilaraay people who assisted me with the study of the language over the past thirty-odd years, to R.M.W. Dixon and the late Stephen A. Wurm for access to their unpublished field materials, to John Giacon for discussion of recent events, especially the language and cultural revival, and to Bill McGregor for detailed and helpful comments on an earlier draft. Most of the work on this paper was completed while I was a Humboldt Forschungspreisträger at Johann Goethe University, Frankfurt; I thank the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung for their support and Jost Gippert and Bernd Nothofer for sponsoring my research at Frankfurt. I dedicate this paper to the memory to the late Terry Crowley, fellow student, co-author, colleague and friend. The world has lost a great linguist and exceptional person with his untimely death.

2 A search of the Mura library catalogue of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies reveals 1005 records for ‘Kamilaroi’.



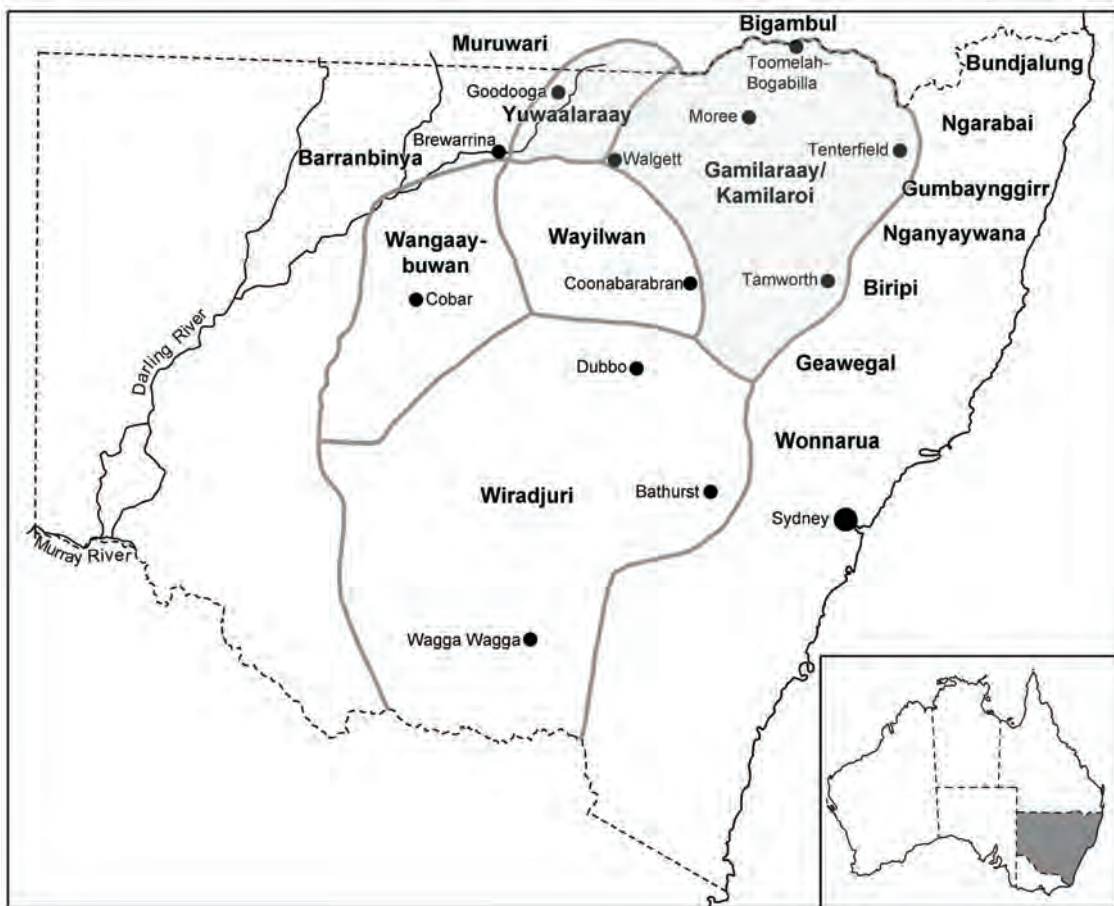
Map 2.1: Languages and dialects in northern New South Wales (after Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980)

ment that has been working on linguistic and cultural revival since 1995. Currently there are language courses at preschool, primary and tertiary (adult education, university) levels in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay, and an increasing flow of publications, both paper and electronic. The revival movement has certainly changed the status and perception of the language in northern New South Wales, among both Aborigines and non-Aborigines, and there is some evidence that the revival movement has been successful in increasing the use of at least some aspects of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay language.

1.1 Location and background

The Gamilaraay language was traditionally spoken over a vast area of north-central New South Wales when Europeans began colonising Australia. Gamilaraay country extended west of the Great Dividing Range, apparently from as far south as near the current town of Murrurundi and the Page River, to the areas where are now located Tamworth, Narrabri, Moree, Boggabilla, Mungindi, Collarenebri, Walgett and Gunnedah. The major water-courses in this area are the Peel, Namoi and Darling Rivers.

There is good evidence for dialect variation in both vocabulary and grammatical structure throughout this region, but the available materials are too scant to establish the variation in de-



Map 2.2: The languages neighbouring Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay (redrawn from Giacomini 2001:6, adapted from Horton 1994)

tail. On the basis of some of this material, Austin, Williams and Wurm (1980) identify dialects, which they situate as in Map 2.1.

Austin, Williams and Wurm (1980:170) present the following cognate percentages for shared vocabulary on a 200 item basic word list:

Gamilaraay		
73%	Yuwaalaraay	
63%	80%	Yuwaalayaay

The languages spoken to the south and south-west of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay are Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa (known in two dialect forms, Wayilwan and Wangaaybuwan—see Donaldson 1980:1–2). They are relatively closely related and Austin (1997) presents reconstructions of their phonological histories, together with reconstructed lexicon. Map 2.2 shows the locations of neighbouring languages.

1.2 Early records—1830 to 1930

The earliest records we have of Gamilaraay date from February 1832 when the explorer Major Thomas Mitchell collected some basic vocabulary. Mitchell wrote in his journal (1839: 108):

[n]one of the names, which we had written down from Barber's statements, seemed at all familiar to their ears; but Mr White obtained a vocabulary, which shewed that their language was nearly the same as that of the aborigines at Wallamoul; the only difference being the addition of na to each noun, as 'namil' for 'mil', the eye etc.³

The location given by Mitchell is 29 degrees south and he says (*loc cit.*) '[t]heir name for the river was understood to be "Karaula"'. This appears to be a reference to the Macintyre River at about Mungindi. On Mitchell's map 'Wallamoul' is a short distance upstream on the Peel River from where Tamworth is now situated. Mitchell recorded just a handful of vocabulary items in his diary (Volume 2, pp. 377-384).

Following this we have a list of thirty three words for the 'Peel River language' given by Horatio Hale in his report on Aboriginal languages for the Wilkes expedition (Hale 1846).⁴ This material appears similar to Mitchell's vocabulary.

In 1852 William Ridley came to the area as a Presbyterian missionary and began to learn the language. His contributions to its documentation are described in detail below. Ridley's materials were reprinted later by Reverend Charles Greenway, in his own name without attribution. Gamilaraay vocabularies from Barrabra, Boggabri, Moree, Namoi, and Nundle appear in the collection of Curr (1886) (Bench of Magistrates 1886a, 1886b, 1886c, 1886d, 1886e; Ridley 1886b); these are mostly of peripheral interest, but do show some evidence of possible regional variation.

There are a number of amateur sources from around this time collected by local settlers, including Colin McMaster (McMaster 1890, 1890-1898) and a woman known only as Mrs Milson (Milson n.d. [1840?]). The latter is an extensive vocabulary of some 1,000 items, short sentences, and songs. Most of it is transcribed according to English spelling conventions and is rather difficult to make sense of.

The next major source from the turn of the century is the infamous R.H. Mathews (see p.44 below and Koch, this volume).

1.3 Reverend William Ridley

William Ridley was born on 14 September 1819 at Hartford End, Essex, England (Blair 1881; Johns 1934; Serle 1949). He graduated B.A. from Kings College, University of London in 1842, and in 1850 was brought by Dr Lang, a leading Sydney churchman, to Australia. He was appointed Professor of Greek, Latin and Hebrew at the Australian College and ordained a Presbyterian minister. From 1852 to 1856 he served as a missionary to the Gamilaraay and neighbouring groups in northern New South Wales, and then from 1856-1858 was minister at Portland Bay, Brisbane. In 1861 he returned to Sydney. According to (Blair 1881:502):

the care of his family caused him to relinquish this occupation and to come to Sydney, where he became connected with the 'Empire' newspaper, and continued on that journal until its discontinuance[.]

3 Unfortunately, Mitchell seems to be confusing *mil* 'eye' with *ngamili* 'to see' in this quotation. He gives no other examples of the process.

4 Hale (1846:493) presents material he labels as 'Kamilaroi' which is actually Awabakal obtained from the missionary Lancelot Threlkeld.

Ridley seems to have acquired a reasonable knowledge of the Gamilaraay language—Blair (1881) says: ‘Ridley was a man of extraordinary attainments as a linguist, and as a singularly pure and upright character’—and published a number of books and articles about it, including a vocabulary and bible story translations. Most of his main publications were written well after he had completed his missionary activities in northern New South Wales in 1856. The early publications were:

1855 ‘On the Kamilaroi language of Australia’, in *Transactions of the Philological Society*. This consists of paradigms, grammar notes, 27 words (Ridley 1855).

1856 ‘On the Kamilaroi Tribe of Australians and their Dialect’, in *Journal of Ethnological Society of London*. This contains words, short sentences, and bible translations (Ridley 1856a).

In the latter Ridley notes: ‘the following are my first essays towards expressing gospel truths in Kamilaroi: they need long and careful revision ... But this is quite enough of a learner’s uncertain guesses to be tedious’. Interestingly Ridley used <z> in these works for the dorso-velar nasal; in later work he used a turned <G> to represent this sound.

Also in 1856 Ridley published *Gurre Kamilaroi or Kamilaroi Sayings*, a vocabulary of the language with translations of Christian religious materials (Ridley 1856b).⁵ Interestingly, a draft handwritten grammar of Gamilaraay, perhaps compiled by Ridley himself, is to be found in the back of a copy of *Gurre Kamilaroi* held in the Australian National Library, Canberra.

Ten years later, a comparative work (Ridley 1866) appeared, with information on the languages of northern New South Wales and the Brisbane region. According to Serle (1949): ‘He spent a few weeks among the aborigines in 1871 endeavouring to increase his knowledge of their languages and traditions, and in 1875 published a revised and enlarged edition of the 1866 volume under the title “Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages”’ (i.e. Ridley 1875).

In the early 1870s Ridley contributed to Aboriginal languages vocabulary collections of the time, including Taplin’s (Ridley 1871), and in 1872 published a report on Australian languages in *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* (Ridley 1872-1873). His materials were reprinted in later collections (Ridley 1886a, 1886b, 1889, 1892).

Ridley’s major work was *Kamilaroi and other Australian languages* published by the Government Printer in 1875, a sumptuous volume that includes his Gamilaraay vocabulary, sketch grammar and bible stories, as well as notes on a range of other languages. In 1877 at the age of 58 Ridley began to study Chinese and became responsible for the Chinese mission in Sydney. He died a year later on 26 September 1878.

Ridley’s materials were republished in *Science of Man* without acknowledgement by Rev. C. Greenway in 1910 (a copy of Ridley 1875 with minor changes), and 1911 (bible translations similar to Ridley 1856).

As a language recorder Ridley showed a number of remarkable characteristics. He was the first author in Australia to write the velar nasal with engma ŋ (printed as a turned uppercase G in his books), and he was relatively consistent in his use of orthographic <a> for the low vowel and <u> for the high back vowel (certainly compared to other collectors of the time, and even later, especially R.H. Mathews (see p.44 below)). He also marked vowels with a

5 A facsimile is available from Project Gutenberg at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/16811>. The material was reprinted by Fraser (1892) as Appendix F to Threlkeld’s Awabakal material; unfortunately Fraser replaced Ridley’s macron over vowels with an acute accent mark and his engma symbol with an over-dotted <g>, in the process introducing a number of errors (the appendix is available online at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/archives/chrp/threlkeld/11alappendixf.pdf>).

macron, which one might be tempted to think codes for vowel length; however, it has a more complex distribution. Gamilaraay has a phonemic contrast between long and short vowels which applies in all syllables. Primary stress falls on the first long vowel of a word, if there is one, otherwise on the first vowel. Secondary stress falls on odd-numbered syllables to the left and right of the primary stress. In Ridley's work, a vowel with a macron in syllables later than the first is generally a long vowel, however in the first syllable the macron marks both long vowels and stressed short vowels. It appears that Ridley's macron is rather a marker of stress than vowel length, although there are many inconsistent usages. Consider these examples for words beginning with :

Table 2.1: Ridley's use of macron

Type	Syllable	Stress	Ridley	Modern sources	Gloss	
Correct, macron = long vowel	non-initial	Y	<i>bukāndi</i>	<i>bagaandi</i>	sister-my	
			<i>bundār</i>	<i>bandaar</i>	kangaroo	
			<i>birrā</i>	<i>birraa</i>	k.o. grub	
			<i>berū</i>	<i>biruu</i>	far	
			<i>burīn</i>	<i>burriin</i>	shield	
			<i>birridūl</i>	<i>birraydjuul</i>	small boy	
				<i>bundāne</i>	<i>bundaanhi</i>	fall-past
		both	Y	<i>bābī</i>	<i>baabiy</i>	sleep-nonfuture
	Incorrect, macron ≠ long vowel	initial, no long vowels	Y	<i>bībil</i>	<i>bibil</i>	box tree
				<i>pūndi</i>	<i>bundi</i>	club
<i>būra</i>				<i>bura</i>	bone	
<i>būrul</i>				<i>burrul</i>	big	
<i>būralgha</i>				<i>buralga</i>	broilga	
		initial, 2 nd long	N	<i>būlui</i>	<i>buluuy</i>	dark
		non-initial, no long, <u> for /a/ in 1 st	N	<i>bullawhākūr</i>	<i>balawagur</i>	k.o. lizard
				<i>pumbūl</i>	<i>bambul</i>	native orange
		both, no long	N	<i>bālūn</i>	<i>balun</i>	dead
				<i>būmāle</i>	<i>bumali</i>	hit-fut

Type	Syllable	Stress	Ridley	Modern sources	Gloss
	both, 2 nd long	N	<i>pārī</i> <i>būlār</i>	<i>baraay</i> <i>bulaarr</i>	jump-nonfuture two
Incorrect, no macron long V	monosyllable long vowel		<i>bhan</i>	<i>baan</i>	mistletoe
	2 nd long		<i>pīlar</i>	<i>bilaarr</i>	spear
	3 rd long		<i>burula</i>	<i>burrulaa</i>	many
Incorrect, no macron long diphthong	initial		<i>baiame</i>	<i>baayama</i>	God
	non-initial		<i>būkhai</i>	<i>bagaay</i>	creek
Vr for length	non-initial		<i>pullar</i>	<i>balaa</i>	white

Ridley also sometimes uses orthographic <u> for phonemic /a/, often before a doubled medial consonant or a nasal plus stop sequence as in:

Table 2.2: Ridley’s use of <u> for /a/

Syllable	Long V	Medial C?			
initial syllable	N	double	<i>buk-kulla</i>	<i>bagala</i>	leopardwood tree
			<i>butta</i>	<i>badha</i>	bitter
			<i>burrān</i>	<i>barrān</i>	boomerang
	Y, later syllable	NC	<i>pumbūl</i>	<i>bambal</i>	native orange tree
		double	<i>pullar</i>	<i>balaa</i>	white
		NC	<i>bundār</i>	<i>bandaar</i>	kangaroo
non-initial syllable			<i>punagai</i>	<i>banagaay</i>	run-nonfuture
		double	<i>buk-kulla</i>	<i>bagala</i>	leopardwood tree

Ridley’s grammatical notes reveal that he understood that Gamilaraay had a complex case system, with a separate form for transitive subject of nouns (later to be called ‘ergative’ case). He worked out the pronoun paradigms, but the verbs seem to have eluded him completely as he simply lists groups of forms for individual verbs. He does not seem to have realised that there are four verb conjugations, however he was not alone in this. It was not until Williams’ work on Yuwaalaraay in the 1970s (see below) that we gained a proper account of the verb

conjugational system. Ridley's understanding of the syntax of the language seems to have been rudimentary.

1.4 R.H. Mathews

Mathews was a surveyor and amateur linguist-anthropologist who travelled widely through eastern Australia and recorded a great deal of information from local Aboriginal people (see Koch, this volume). He published extensively, producing about 200 journal articles (some being different versions of the same data, or translations into other languages), mostly very brief and of variable reliability. His main publications on Gamilaraay and Yuwaalayaay are Mathews (1902, 1903). Additionally, Mathews original notes for northern New South Wales languages have been preserved (copies are held at AIATSIS) and it is possible to compare his notes with the published materials. Mathews' data on Gamilaraay-Yuwaalayaay is primarily of value for the vocabulary he included, some of which differs from other available sources.⁶

2. First professional materials—1930 to 1950

Following the period of collection by amateurs and missionaries from 1835 to 1905, there is almost nothing recorded on north-west New South Wales languages until the first professional researchers enter the region in the 1930s. Here we find the linguist Gerhardt Laves and the anthropologists Radcliffe-Brown, Norman B. Tindale and Marie Reay. In addition Ernest Worms collected some lexical and sentence data.

In January 1930,⁷ the American linguist Gerhardt Laves (see David Nash's website at <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves/>) worked with George Murray (Laves papers, p. 1399) recording kinship terms in Gamilaraay and Ada Murray at Angledool recording Yuwaalayaay vocabulary and kinship terms (p. 1392). Laves materials are phonetically accurate but unfortunately very brief for the languages of this region, compared to his extensive research materials from Western Australia, for example.

Also in January 1930 A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, who was Professor of Anthropology at Sydney University, carried out brief fieldwork in northern New South Wales working with Charlie Button, George Clarke and Lucy Doyle (see his field notebook E1) mostly recording kinship terms and the names of totems, along with a little vocabulary and sentence material.⁸ Radcliffe-Brown attempted to transcribe phonetically but his work is relatively unreliable, especially in the light of what we know from later researchers.

A more significant contribution was made by Norman Tindale who was an anthropologist associated with the South Australian Museum undertaking research on Australian languages across the continent (see Monaghan, this volume). In June 1938 Tindale recorded Gamilaraay kinship data from Harry Doolan (see photograph in Tindale 1976:18), with additional details on Collarenebri variations from George Murray (the same consultant Laves had inter-

6 Mathews appears to have had a fascination with body part terminology, especially genitalia and sexual terminology. Thus where Ridley (1875) gives the word <gatabal> with a gloss 'wonderful!' Mathews (1903) has <kuttabal> 'the sound of friction during intercourse'.

7 There is a letter by Laves sent from Collarenebri on 26 January 1930 to Fay Cooper-Cole of the Anthropology Department, University of Chicago held in the Laves correspondence files, University of Chicago, Regenstein Library, Department of Special Collections. I am grateful to David Nash for bringing this to my attention (see <http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves/letters.html>).

8 It is possible that Radcliffe-Brown was travelling with Laves and that these notes were taken in Collarenebri also.

viewed earlier). This material appears in Tindale NSW Notebook p.39ff, and Kinship sheet 53.

Tindale collected some vocabulary and a short text on Emu and Turkey in Gamilaraay with English translation from Harry Doolan. This was published as Austin and Tindale (1986) with attempted phonemicisation and analysis by Austin. Tindale's phonetic representation is relatively accurate.

In the 1940s Marie Reay did a sociological study of the contemporary Aboriginal community in Moree (Reay 1949). She makes a number of comments on language use and the replacement of Gamilaraay by English, but did not publish anything in the form of linguistic documentation. She apparently wrote a report on her visit to Moree as a manuscript dated 1965, however I have not been able to locate this.

Father Ernest Worms did some fieldwork on both Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay in 1943 and 1944 in western New South Wales and southern Queensland.⁹ Part III of Nekeš and Worms *Australian Languages* (see McGregor 2005) has 65 entries in Gamilaraay and 79 in Yuwaalayaay, along with some example sentences.

3. After 1950

From the 1950s until the present there has been some attention paid to the study of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay both by professional linguists and by the Aboriginal community themselves, especially from around 1980 onwards. Today there is a strong language revival program based in schools in the north-west of New South Wales.

The only extensive work done on Gamilaraay by a professional linguist which includes phonetic transcription, morphological and syntactic data and magnetic tape recording dates from 1955 when the late Stephen A. Wurm visited the north-west of New South Wales. Wurm is reported to have collected some materials on Gamilaraay at Moree with Burt Draper (see below), but his main data comes from Boggabilla with Peter Lang, apparently the last fluent speaker of the language. Wurm's materials, which he kindly passed to me in 1975, consist of twenty-two double-sided sheets (i.e. 44 pages) of fieldnotes and approximately 12 minutes of tape recording, made on a Phillips reel-to-reel recorder. The fieldnotes (a copy of which has been deposited with the AIATSIS, Canberra) are in phonetic transcription, with glosses in shorthand. In 1975 Wurm made a tape recording for me reading out the glosses and I combined a transcription of this with a copy of his original phonetic transcription to produce a clean copy of his notes. I subsequently attempted to phonemicise Wurm's materials on the basis of my own later fieldwork, analysis of the source materials outlined above, and comparisons with the description of Yuwaalayaay given in Williams (1980).

In 1961 at the research conference that resulted in the founding of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Wurm summarised the results of research carried out in New South Wales up till that time. This was published in the form of a table (Wurm 1963:137):

9 I am grateful to William McGregor for bringing the Worms materials to my attention.

Table 2.3: Reorganised data from Wurm 1963
‘Linguistic research accomplished in two areas’

Language	Gamilaroi	Jualjai	Juwalairai
Rank	3	3	3
Speakers			
– fair to good knowledge	2	2	2
– incomplete knowledge	4	4	3
Vocabulary	2	4	2
Structure	2	2	2
Recordings (minutes)	12	15	15

In the key to the table the following translations of these figures are given (Wurm 1963: 138):

Ranking of Languages

3. a few, mostly old, individuals can still speak the language more or less fluently.

Number of Speakers

2. under 5

3. 5–10

4. 10–50

Vocabulary. Lexical information secured to date

2. approximately 500 items

4. over 1,000

Structure

2. a fair amount of information is available on main structure features

As this table indicates, Wurm’s materials on the language he calls Jualjai (which corresponds to the Yuwaalayaay of Williams 1980) are more extensive than those he collected for Gamilaraay. In 1975–1976 Corinne Williams and I made clean copies of all Wurm’s Yuwaalayaay fieldnotes and transcription of the glosses that he recorded on tape for us—this material has been deposited at AIATSIS.

Capell (1963:Area D, p. 5) gives the following information in his listing for Gamilaraay:

Recent study has been done by SAW [i.e. Stephen Wurm] who lists as informants the following:-

Peter (Herb) Lang,	95 years	Boggabilla
Ted Murphy,	72	Walgett
Bingi (Fred) Pitt,	76	Moree
Billy Troutman,	80	Mungindi
Mrs. (H)ynch,	70	Moree

Leslie Mundi	70	Collarenebri
Robert Mundi	70	Collarenebri
Charlie Kennedy,	70	Walgett
Jack McPherson,	70	Dalby
Jack Hill,	75	Bollon
Billy Dutton	80	Bourke-Wanaaring-Engonnia

Wurm (1963:138) commented on the data in the tables in his paper (including the material I have presented in Table 2.3 above) as follows:

As can be seen from these tables, detailed information can at present still be obtained for most of the languages listed in the two tables if linguists are given the time and opportunity to undertake the necessary lengthy fieldwork.

Capell (1963:5) makes similar comments in respect of Gamilaraay:

The speakers are mostly elderly but possess considerable knowledge. SAW has recorded some 300–500 items and a fair amount of structural information, along with 12 minutes of tape recording. Up to 50 speakers have been located. *Gamilaroi* is one of a number of related dialects in NW N.S.W. and a comparative study of the whole series of dialects might well be made.

Unfortunately the time and opportunity seem not to have arisen for Wurm since he never again visited the area, nor wrote up any of the materials he collected. It was sixteen years before another professional linguist took an interest in the Gamilaraay language and by that time the remaining fluent speakers were all deceased.

Wurm apparently used as the model for his work Capell (1945) (also published as a separate book). He was trained as a Turkologist and his phonetic transcription is very detailed and accurate. In lexical elicitation he recorded primary and secondary stress along with narrow transcription of vowel height and colour, and labialisation and palatalisation of consonants. He did not record interdental nasals and transcribed interdental stops with the dental fricative symbol <ð>. His grammatical elicitation covered most aspects of the nominal, pronominal and verbal morphology. Wurm contributed information on Gamilaraay to O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966) and collaborated with Hale and O’Grady on their seminal study of Australian language classification (O’Grady, Wurm and Hale 1966). He later wrote a general book on Aboriginal languages (Wurm 1972) but because of commitments elsewhere, especially in Papua New Guinea, he did not pursue Australian Aboriginal work as one of his main research fields. To him however we do owe records of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay from some of the very last fluent speakers.

In 1967 a relative of R.H. Mathews, Janet Mathews (and under her guidance Harry Hall, an Aboriginal man from New South Wales), began recording Gamilaraay vocabulary with Bill Reid (Bourke), Burt Graves (Sydney), Ivy (‘Granny’) Green (Walgett), and Charlie Dodd (Lightning Ridge) (AIATSIS Archive tapes A1236, 1237, 1180, 1946, 1995). Mathews was not trained as a linguist but was a keen and interested amateur. She did not transcribe her tapes but they serve as a useful source of vocabulary data. Williams was able to use some of the extensive materials collected by Mathews on Yuwaalaraay as part of the source materials for her grammar. John Giacon has subsequently transcribed all of Mathews’ tapes and typed his transcripts up as word processor files. Janet Mathews also recorded Leila Orcher (see below) at Boggabilla in June 1976, after I had interviewed her.

In the late 1960s John Gordon, an amateur musicologist, also recorded some Gamilaraay corroboree and dance songs (AIATSIS Archive tapes A1176, 1177, 1178, 1219, 1220) but since he provided no transcription or analysis of the recordings, they are very difficult to use.

In November 1971 R.M.W. Dixon spent a few days at Moree and Boggabilla when his car broke down on his way from Canberra to Cairns, interviewing possible consultants for Gamilaraay (see Dixon 1984). According to his fieldnotes, Dixon found that ‘no one remembers more than a few words’. Dixon was able to collect data from the following people:

Moree

1. Tom Binge (born at Boomi Aboriginal station in about 1900)
2. Charlie White (or Dubby Paine, born at Narrabri in 1897)
3. Glen Cutmore (born at Terry Hie Hie in about 1900)
4. Arthur Davey

Boggabilla

5. Leila Orcher
6. Ron McIntosh (born about 1901)

Together these people were able to recollect about 150 vocabulary items but no morphology or syntax. Dixon lodged recordings of the first two consultants at AIATSIS Canberra (AIATSIS Archive tape 2615).

My involvement with research on Gamilaraay began in May 1972 when as a second-year undergraduate student I visited Moree and Boggabilla for three days to try to collect any available language data (my family lived in Tamworth and I was able to take an excursion to Moree and Boggabilla with the help of staff from the regional medical service based in Tamworth). Dixon passed his fieldnotes of 1971 to me and urged me to follow them up. I located a number of rememberers, that is, people who could recall fragments about the language from having heard and used it in their youth. I was able to collect vocabulary material from the following people, some of whom had also recorded materials with Dixon the previous year:

Moree

1. Arthur Pitt (born Moree approximately 1896) whose father had spoken Gamilaraay fluently but who only remembered vocabulary.
2. Burt Draper (born about 1896, estimated by Wurm (in Capell 1963) to have been born in 1893) who had been one of Wurm’s consultants seventeen years earlier and who also knew some Wayilwan vocabulary.
3. Mrs. Draper (born about 1897), originally from the New England region who knew some Gamilaraay vocabulary but mixed in Yugumbal words. Chris Court (Sydney University, Linguistics department) had interviewed her at Tingha in the 1960s and obtained some vocabulary items which are clearly Gamilaraay, again mixed with words from other languages.

Boggabilla

4. Leila Orcher
5. Ron McIntosh

On my return to Canberra I wrote an essay entitled ‘The Kamilaroi language’ for Dixon’s inaugural Australian Linguistics course at ANU. The two Boggabilla consultants, Leila Orcher and Ron McIntosh, provided most of the material used in the essay and clearly had the most extensive knowledge of what survived of the Aboriginal language formerly spoken in the area.

In December 1973 I again visited Moree and Boggabilla, this time spending about a week in the area and tape-recording all the material available. As well as seeing the consultants I had worked with before for a second time I also spoke to:

Moree

6. Mary Brown, who was Arthur Pitt's sister. Her knowledge of the language was extremely limited but she did provide some material to fill in gaps.
7. Grace Munro
8. Charlie French
9. Malcolm Green

Boggabilla

10. Hannah Duncan, who proved to be the most proficient of all the consultants interviewed. She had by far the greatest vocabulary (about 200 items) and could remember simple sentences that she had heard her parents and grandparents using when she was growing up. An example is *yuulngin ngay ginyi, dhalaa dhuwarr* 'I'm hungry, where is the bread?'. Mrs Duncan was not able to analyse these or use her other vocabulary in a productive way (so for example, *yuulngin* consists of *yuul* 'vegetable food' plus the derivational suffix *-ngin* 'lacking', and although she knew *gali* 'water' she did not recognise *galingin* 'thirsty'). She also sang a corroboree song in Gamilaraay.

Tamworth

11. Florence Munro (born about 1900) was from the New England region and mixed Gamilaraay words with words from languages of that area.

While visiting the Toomelah Mission station at Boggabilla I was informed by the manager that Darrel Tryon of the ANU had visited the area some years before but had only stayed for a day or two and 'couldn't find anything'. Tryon (pers.comm.) reports that he collected no data.

At the beginning of 1974, then, the situation was that eleven consultants had been interviewed, about one hour's tape recording had been made and the data stood at 212 cross-checked vocabulary items and half a dozen sentences. I deposited a copy of my fieldnotes and tapes with AIATSIS. It seemed that the prospects of any further data being collected, or morphological or syntactic material becoming available, were very small.

In January 1975 I again visited the Gamilaraay consultants, this time taking a copy of Wurm's 1955 fieldtape with me. I played the tape to Arthur Pitt, Burt Draper, Leila Orcher, Hannah Duncan and Ron McIntosh. Hannah Duncan and Ron McIntosh remembered watching Peter Lang and Stephen Wurm making the recording, and were able to show me the place where it had been made. They listened to the tape with great interest. Although they (and the other people I interviewed) were able to pick out odd vocabulary items that they recognised, no-one could understand what Peter Lang had told Wurm twenty years before. Clearly, all that remained of Gamilaraay were the two hundred odd words remembered by the last handful of elderly Gamilaraay descendants, without any knowledge of the grammatical system.

In 1975 I moved my focus of attention to South Australian languages and began my PhD research on Diyari and Thirrarri (eventually published as Austin 1981 and various journal articles). It seemed that little more could be done on Gamilaraay, although I continued to collect and analyse the older materials and made up a card file of vocabulary data, incorporating everything that I had been able to put together. In 1976 I hand-wrote an incomplete sketch grammatical statement setting out what I was able to recover of the grammar from Wurm's notes and the older sources. In 1978 I spent a year in Western Australia and started work on

languages of the Gascoyne-Ashburton region, then at the end of 1978 I left Australia for three years as a post-doctoral researcher in the United States.

4 Corinne Williams and Yuwaalaraay

In 1976 Corinne Williams, then a fourth-year undergraduate student, undertook fieldwork on Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay with two remaining speakers, Fred Reece and Dodd. These two men were fluent, but rusty, speakers and Williams was able to elicit a range of grammatical materials and some brief texts from them. She also looked at Wurm's data on these languages, and the tapes of Janet Mathews. She wrote a short descriptive grammar as her BA Honours thesis, and then did another brief fieldtrip towards the end of 1976 with the late Terry Crowley to collect further materials. The revised version of her thesis was published in 1980 (Williams 1980). Williams did not do any further work on the languages, and left linguistics shortly afterwards.

What materials we have of a grammatical nature on Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay are mainly due to Williams' work. It is possible that further research could be done with both her tapes and those of Janet Mathews, and John Giacon (see below) has made some moves in this direction.

5 A revival of interest—1980s and 1990s

In 1981 I returned to Australia and started a major multi-language bilingual dictionaries project focussed on the Gascoyne-Ashburton languages (Austin 1983), but including files on Diyari and Gamilaraay. These were originally in plain ASCII file format, later converted to a database management system, and even later exported as RTF files for formatting and printing with Microsoft Word. I published a paper in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (Austin 1986) outlining the sociolinguistic situation in northern New South Wales and discussing apparent changes that had occurred as a result of the obsolescence of the languages. In March 1989 I had my Gamilaraay grammar sketch typed up as a Word file.

In the mid 1980s the late William Wentworth, who had a long standing interest in Aboriginal languages and cultures, lobbied for the provision of funds for a dictionary of Australian Aboriginal languages. This led to a Bicentennial grant from the office of Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Robert Tickner which was awarded in 1988 to AIATSIS. Under this funding David Nash and Jane Simpson were employed for a "National Lexicography Project" where they set up an electronic vocabulary collection that was later to become known as ASEDA, the Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive (see <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/aseda/hist/index.html>). In 1991 Nick Thieberger took up a Visiting Research Fellowship at AIATSIS, expanded ASEDA's activities, and set up a competitive funding scheme for the publication of a range of dictionaries in book form. Under a grant from this scheme I published a short bilingual dictionary of Gamilaraay with English finderlist (Austin 1992). This was followed by a larger reference dictionary that included all the lexical data I had available at the time (Austin 1993). Both dictionaries went through several printings and were widely distributed; orders for them continue to be received.

In 1995 David Nathan and I collaborated on preparing a hypertext version of the reference dictionary which Nathan took to a number of north-west Aboriginal community meetings for consultation and feedback (I was living in Hong Kong at the time); this was officially launched and published on the World Wide Web in Moree in March 1996. The web dictio-

nary has been extremely popular and has received thousands of ‘hits’, as well as wide publicity. The web dictionary is fully hypertextual and captures relations between forms within the dictionary as links; in addition, in the revised version developed by Nathan and myself in 1998 there is a finderlist and thesaurus that are linked to headwords in the main dictionary (see Appendix for screen shots of the web dictionary). A revised and expanded version of the web dictionary is in preparation, adding further ethnographic and pictorial information, as well as details about sentence structure and grammar of the example sentences included in the main dictionary (screen shots of this new version can also be found in the Appendix).

The revival of interest in Gamilaraay from 1990 onwards was fuelled by the involvement of two other important figures: Bill Reid and John Giacon.

5.1 Bill Reid

William (‘Bill’) Reid was born on 23rd January 1917 on the Cuttabri Aboriginal reserve near Wee Waa, NSW, of Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) descent. He had a lifelong interest in Aboriginal language and culture and in about 1990 he was able to see this come to fruition. After retiring to Tamworth in the 1980s, Bill moved back to Bourke in 1989 and began study of the Gamilaraay language. He had been interviewed about the language by Janet Mathews in June 1968 (AIATSIS archive tapes 1236–7), and she had supplied him with copies of 19th and early 20th century materials collected by Ridley and Mathews (see above). Using this information and his memories of hearing the language as a child (Bill’s uncle by marriage was Harry Doolan, who had acted as a consultant for N.B. Tindale and Gerhardt Laves in the 1930s), Bill developed his own spelling system and began typing up a wordlist and language lessons. In July 1991 he visited the AIATSIS library to collect further information, and was able to listen to and comment on his 1968 recordings with Institute staff, including Tamsin Donaldson. He was told of the existence of my draft *Dictionary of Gamilaraay* and immediately wrote to me, generously sending me copies of his materials and a tape-recording. We were able to meet in Sydney in December 1991 to check and correct the dictionary entries, and the following year I presented Bill with copies of Austin (1992). In March 1993 Bill was invited to open the *Paper and Talk* workshop on the use of 19th century sources held at AIATSIS (Thieberger 1995; the paper by Austin and Crowley in that volume includes some Gamilaraay materials). He gave an opening speech in Gamilaraay and told the attendees about the address he had recently given in the language at the funeral in Bourke of Professor Fred Hollows. Using his press contacts in northern New South Wales Bill was able to widely advertise the publication of Austin (1992, 1993) that led to larger than expected sales of the dictionaries. Bill Reid died in November 1993.

5.2 John Giacon

Brother John Giacon began linguistic work in Walgett in 1994, supported by the Catholic Education Office, the Christian Brothers and St Joseph’s Primary School. His main collaborator has been Ted Fields, an elder of the Walgett community, who is a rememberer of Yuwaalaraay vocabulary (see Ash, Giacon and Lissarrague 2003:4 for some of his life history information). Giacon has been one of the driving forces associated with the revival of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay languages, and has been the author of a number of textbook materials for the language. He began teaching language at Walgett TAFE College to adult learners, and then was instrumental in organising the introduction of preschool and primary school programs in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay as a Language Other Than English. His BA Honours thesis (Giacon 2001) is a study of new word formation, but also includes a large

amount of background material. He is now doing a PhD at the Australian National University, working on issues in language development for Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay.

Giacon has been responsible for copying and typing into computer files much of the earlier manuscript and tape-recorded documentation, and he has produced an extensive collection of primary documentation in digital form (available on CD-ROM). With Anna Ash and Amanda Lissarrague he worked on a FileMaker Pro database dictionary incorporating all the known materials, and together they published a full reference dictionary of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay (Ash, Giacon and Lissarrague 2003). In 2002 an illustrated wordlist and audio CD of 100 words entitled *Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay Guwaaldanha Ngiyani* (We are speaking Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay) was published in northern New South Wales with his assistance. Also in 2002 Marianne Betts and John Giacon published a high school textbook called *Yaama Maliyaa* (Hello Friend) that was used for a 100-hour Language other Than English (LOTE) course taught at Walgett High School. In 2003 the Yuwaalaraay language Programme based in Walgett produced a book and CD called *Yugal Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay Songs*, most of which are translations into the local languages of well-known English and Australian songs.

There can be no doubt that Giacon has been responsible for galvanising interest in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay language in northern New South Wales and particularly opening up opportunities for Aboriginal people to access resources and structures in ways that they have not been able to do previously. A network of people interested in language has been set up, and annual conferences have been held in the past several years (Walgett, Goodooga, Collarenebri, Tamworth). It appears that the revival movement now has sufficient momen-

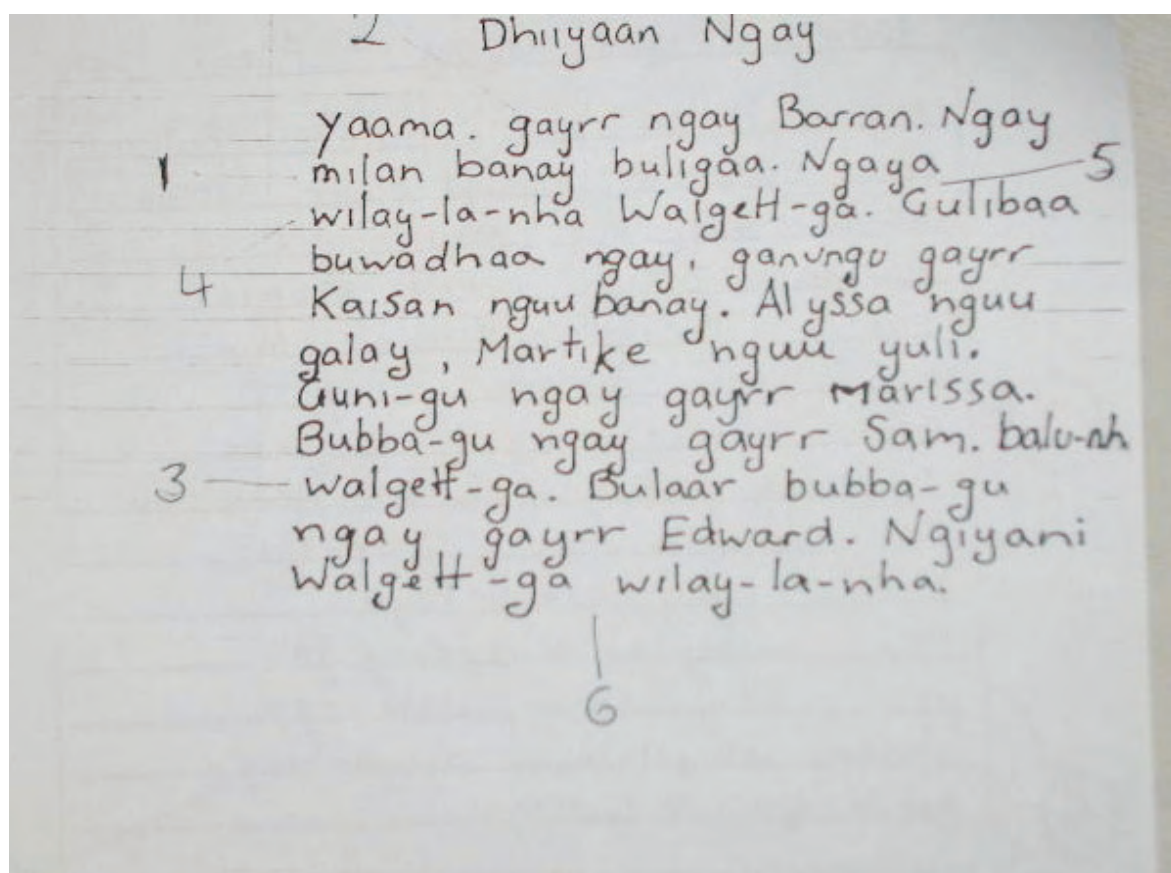


Plate 2.1: Primary school student composition in Gamilaraay (courtesy Anna Ash)

tum that it will see continued publication and extension of education efforts well into the future.

In 2004 the Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay group received a major boost with the introduction of an Aboriginal Languages course for high school students by the New South Wales state government. This has given the language a new status in the eyes both of the Aboriginal and the local white community. The provision of government funds from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, as well as continuing support from the Catholic Schools Office, has also assisted with materials development. In 2006 the Language Programme produced *Gaay Garay Dhadhin Gamilaraay & Yuwaalaraay Picture Dictionary*, and *Guwaabal—Yuwaalaraay & Gamilaraay Stories*, a CD-ROM of stories read by Giacon. Chandler and Giacon 2006 *Dhiirrala Gamilaraay!* is a resource book for language teachers and includes a CD-ROM of resources for use in the classroom. Currently Giacon is working with David Nathan to develop a ‘singing dictionary’ that is a multimedia tool for accessing all the song and text materials in the language intended for use by teachers and learners.

In January 2007 John Giacon taught a Gamilaraay Summer School at the University of Sydney which was attended by 15 students from throughout the metropolitan area. The language has thus moved beyond its homeland to be embraced by interested Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people more broadly.

6. Conclusions

After a long period of neglect and loss of linguistic knowledge, the Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay people of northern New South Wales, in collaboration with linguist scholars, are recapturing their language heritage and revitalising it. The language is now well represented on the World Wide Web, and has an strong reactivation programme with wide community and governmental support. Despite lack of funds and infrastructure support, progress is being made to re-establish language and cultural knowledge for the future. The recent outpouring of reference books, practical school materials, teacher’s resources, and CD-ROMs means that Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay now has a wealth of documentary and educational materials, all of which are professionally designed and produced. The language is now heard on ceremonial and official occasions, used in greetings and welcoming speeches, as well as in school classes where children sing songs and write compositions in it (as Plate 2.1). Whether it spreads to other domains and functions of use remains to be seen in the future.

Appendix: Web Dictionary

The Gamilaraay dictionary was the first fully hypertext bilingual dictionary on the world wide web. The dictionary presentation is emblematic as it uses the colours of the Aboriginal flag with a black background and red and yellow text. There are three panels:

- the main dictionary is on the left (with hyperlinks in red—bold, italics and indentation are employed as in a paper dictionary);
- English wordlist access via the initial letter of the English finderlist item is on top left, while thesaurus access via broad semantic groupings is bottom left;
- an unchanging menu bar at the bottom which enables easy access to all parts of the dictionary, as well as to the explanatory front matter

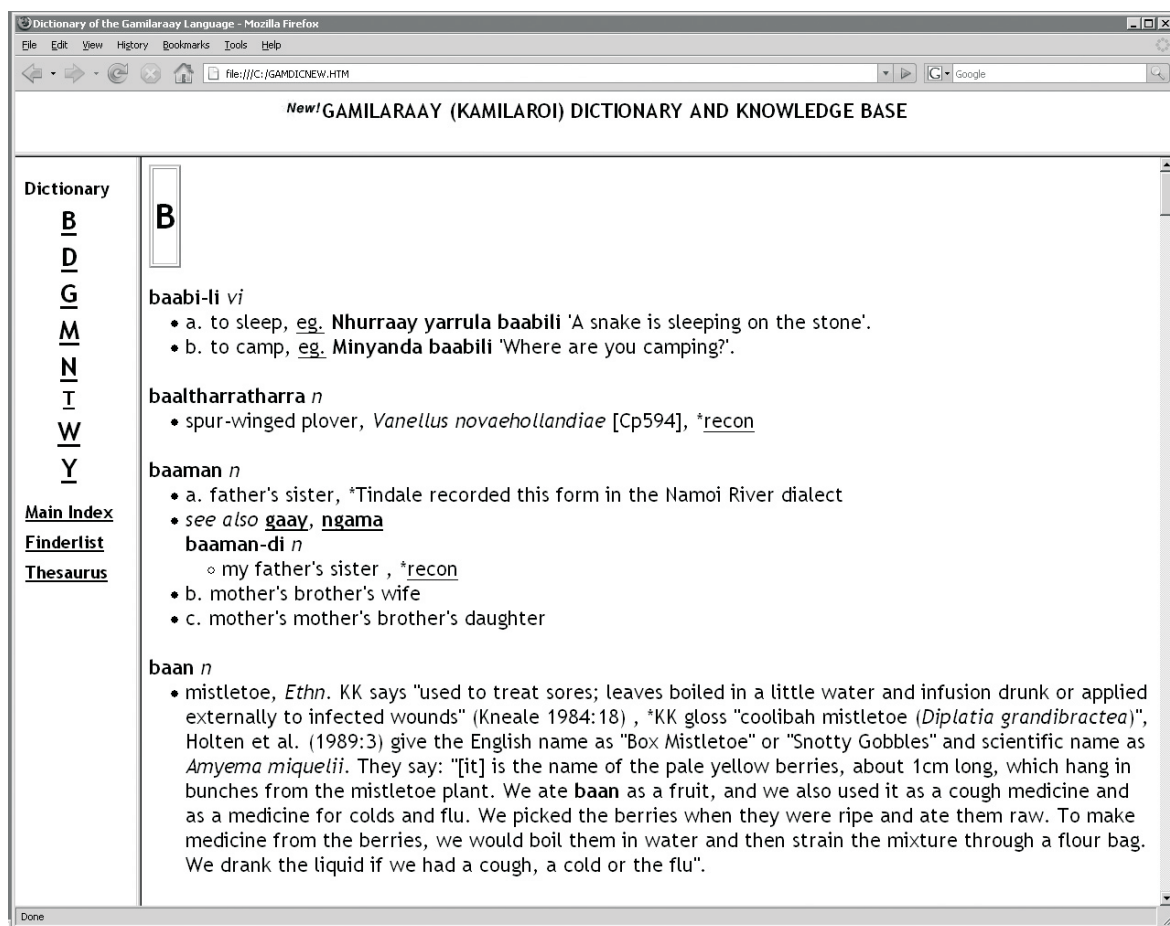


Plate 2.2: Revised Gamilaraay web dictionary

A revised version of the dictionary is currently being prepared with further added information, including pictures and grammatical explanations. The screen shots in Plates 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate this new version.

Plate 2.2 is a shot of the main dictionary window; the major difference from the earlier version is the added information on ethnographic usage of the plant *baan* ‘mistletoe’ and the hyperlinks for the example sentences (accessed by clicking on *eg.*).

Clicking on the example hyperlink begins the possibility for the user to explore sentence and word structure. This is illustrated in Plate 2.3. The sentence example (top right) is presented with word-by-word gloss and grammatical function label annotations. If the user clicks on highlighted Gamilaraay words this opens a window where their morphological structure is explained (middle right window for the item *baabili*). Any metalanguage used in these explanations is linked to a definitions file which includes explanation and further examples (bottom right window for *future*). There is also access to the grammatical function labels attached to each sentence, with explanation and exemplification (top left window for *subject* in this example). In the following picture arrows indicate the hypertext pathways that the user may choose to follow. Note that these pathways are *available* for exploration but the user is not *forced* to negotiate them, in contrast to much technical linguistic literature that presents, for example, full morpheme by morpheme glosses and abbreviated grammatical labels.

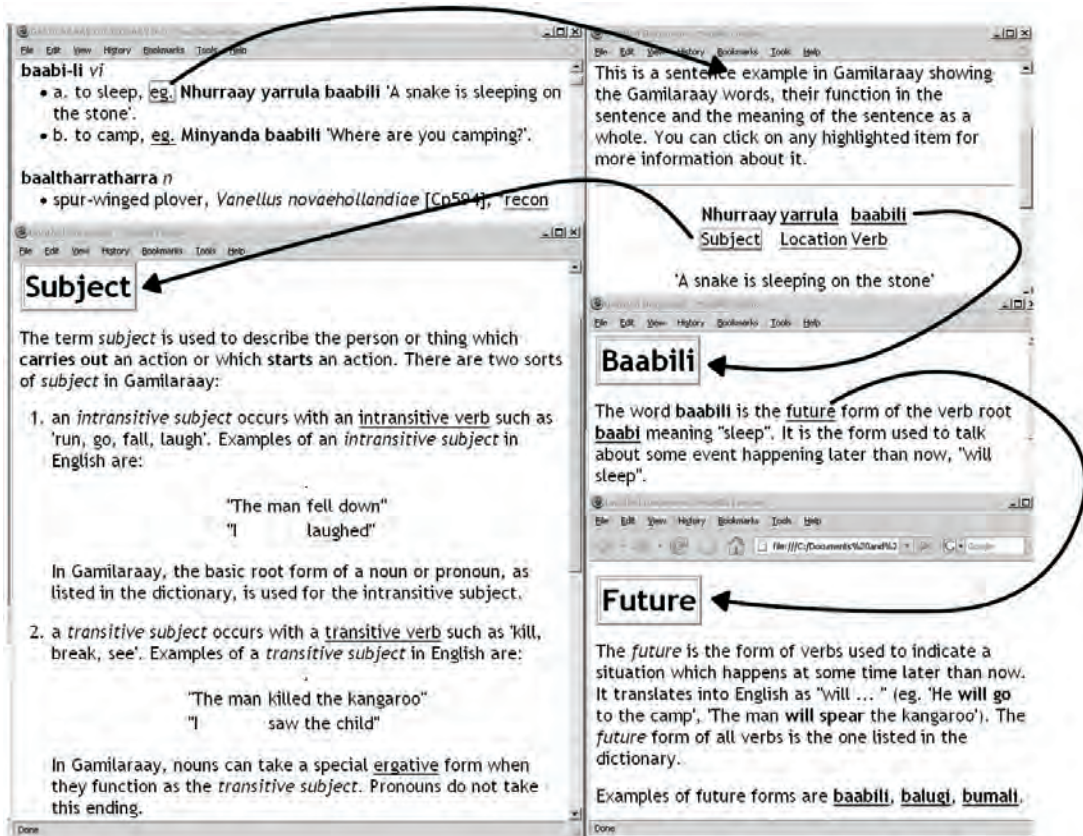


Plate 2.3: Web dictionary example sentence hyperlinks

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3 *History of research on Bardi and Jawi*

CLAIRE BOWERN¹

1. Introduction

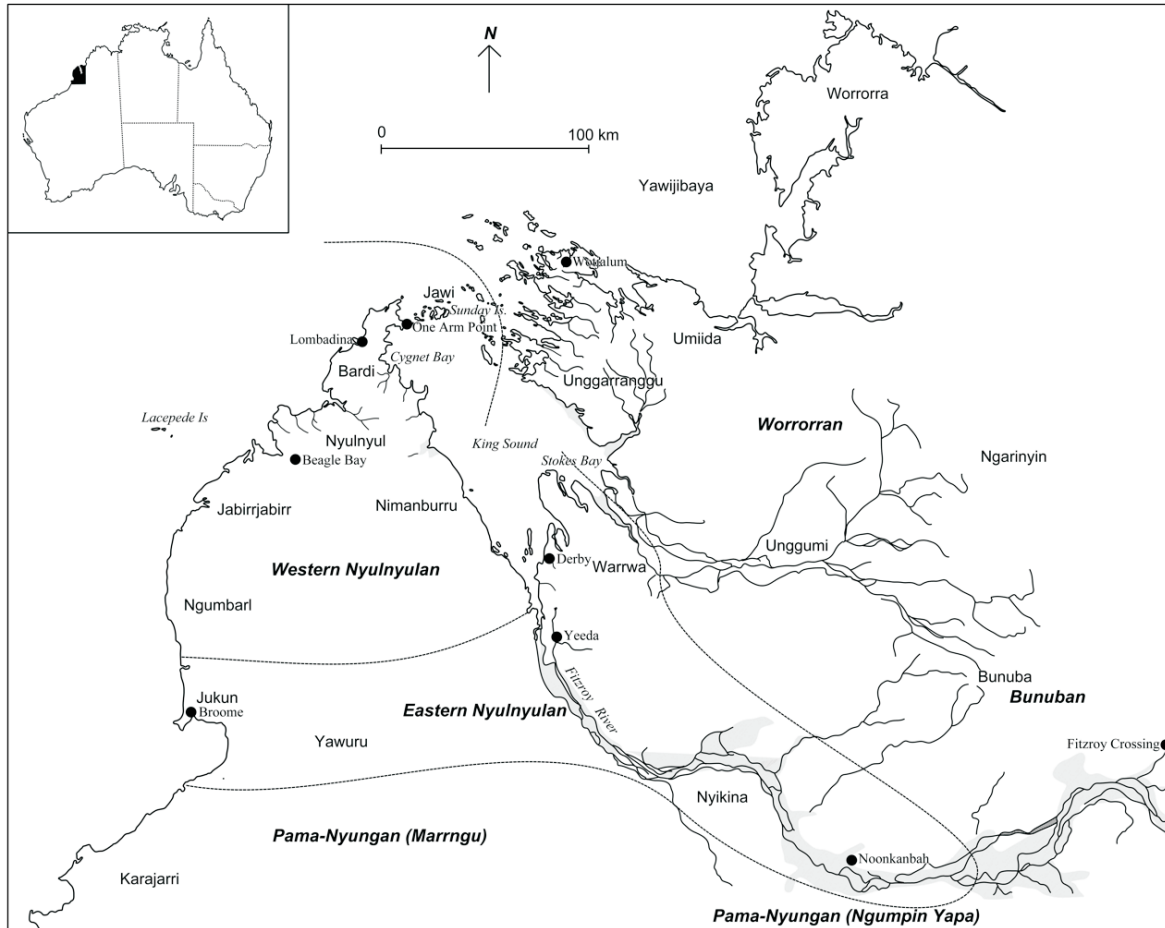
The northern Australian languages Bardi and Jawi have a history of documentation going back almost a hundred years. The research tradition is extensive and includes linguists, anthropologists, missionaries, members of the Western Australian Department of Education, and Bardi and Jawi people themselves.

In this paper I explore some of the issues involved in doing fieldwork on Bardi and Jawi, including how such issues have changed since the first work on language documentation around 100 years ago and how previous research shapes current efforts. I examine what has been accomplished (from whose point of view), with a summary of materials on Bardi and Jawi and their relation to each other. I make some comments on the role of the community in language documentation and give some thoughts on how future work could proceed. While the circumstances are specific to Bardi, the issues discussed have more general application, and are potentially relevant to many communities whose languages are under threat.

2. The languages

Bardi and Jawi are mutually intelligible dialects of the northernmost language of the Nyulnyulan family. The family is the south-westernmost group of non-Pama-Nyungan lan-

¹ This is a revised and expanded version of a talk given at the Fourth International Workshop on Australian Languages at University of Aarhus, June 2002. I would like to thank Bill McGregor and the other members of the workshop for useful feedback. Many thanks also to the One Arm Point community for their hospitality, and especially Bessie Ejai, Jessie Sampi, and the late Nancy Isaac for their help and encouragement. I have checked the contents of this paper for acceptability by the Bardi community with Nancy Isaac and Bessie Ejai, although I alone am responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation. I am aware that not everyone may agree with my characterisation of the current linguistic situation at One Arm Point; moreover, since the first draft of this paper was written, five of the speakers most active in language work have passed away, and thus the situation has probably already changed. Note that this paper contains the names of Bardi speakers who have now passed away, and while I have permission to write the names down, speaking these names aloud in the presence of close relatives may cause offence. My Bardi research has been supported by two grants from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (G2001/6505 and G2003/6761) and by the Endangered Languages Foundation (2003–2004).



Map 3.1: Languages of Dampier Land and Western Kimberley

guages and is bordered to the south and south-east by the Marrngu and Ngumpin-Yapa sub-groups of Pama-Nyungan, to the east by Bunuban, and to the north-east by Worroran languages (see Map 3.1).

Bardi traditional country is the area at the tip of the Dampier Peninsula, a two hundred and fifty kilometre long peninsula north of Broome. The peninsula is roughly triangular and narrows from its base to a flat point at Cape Leveque, and a further arm juts off the peninsula to the east of Cape Leveque for about twenty kilometres. From the point begins a chain of islands (including Sunday Island), which crosses the entrance of King Sound. Bardi people inhabited the mainland area north of a line drawn between Pender Bay and Cunningham Point, and the islands closest to the tip of the Dampier Peninsula (the two largest being *Jayirri* and *Jalan*), while Jawi was spoken on Sunday Island and the islands further east and north.

The languages which make up the Nyulnyulan family are quite similar typologically. They have complex verbal morphology, including prefixal agreement for subjects and suffixal agreement for direct objects, oblique objects and possessors. There is also extensive case marking.

Bardi and Jawi show few differences and the dialects have merged over the last thirty years, so that the only substantive differences now are the use of a few lexical items, and different preferences for the omission and retention of final vowels. There is evidence from the earliest sources of Jawi, however, that differences used to be more substantial, with Jawi exhibiting a different third person past agreement form and further lexical differentiation. (For a

summary of the differences, particularly in relation to verb morphology, see further Bower 2004.)

All Nyulnyulan languages are now either extinct or severely endangered. Bardi is one of the “healthier” languages in the region, but even this language has no speakers under forty, and probably under thirty full speakers.

2.1 Distribution of Bardi dialects

In describing the linguistic situation at the top of the Dampier Peninsula it is helpful to make a three-way distinction between *Bardi*, *Bard* and *Jawi*. *Jawi*, as noted above, was the language of the Islanders, especially Sunday Island (*Iwany*) and the *Mayala* Islands to the east and north-east. *Bardi* was the variety spoken on the eastern side of the Dampier Peninsula (around the area of the present-day One Arm Point community), as well as the islands between the mainland and Sunday Island, to the extent that these islands supported permanent habitation. The people living on the northern and western side of the Peninsula, however, seem to have spoken a slightly different dialect, now called *Bard* and centred around Lombadina community. As the name suggests, this dialect was characterised by the regular loss of final vowels (a feature shared with Nyulnyul, the Nyulnyulan language spoken immediately to the south). There is little recorded information for *Bard*; *Bardi*, the eastern dialect, is the one which took over the speech of Sunday Island and is that recorded in the published Bardi dictionary (Aklif 1999).

The dialectal divisions correlated with the land tenure and marriage systems. From what we can see, the Eastern dialect (*Bardi*) corresponds to the *Baanarad*, *Ardiyol* and *Iinalabooloo* areas, *Bard*, the western dialect, to the *Goolarrgoon* and *Goorrbalagoon/Olonggon* (Pender Bay) areas, and *Jawi* to the *Iwany* area. The isoglosses also correspond fairly closely to known patterns of social association. For example, speakers of the western dialect seem to have been culturally more closely connected to the Nyulnyul- and Yawuru-speaking areas to the south, while *Bardi* and *Jawi* speakers had many ties with groups to the east. (For more information on Bardi area names and the linguistics of the Bardi land tenure system, see Bower forthcoming.)

2.2 Settlement history

The Dampier Peninsula was first permanently colonised by European missionaries towards the end of the 19th century. The missions seem to have been set up partly as a response to race relations between Aborigines and pastoralists further inland. The first mission was set up at Goodenough Bay in about 1885 by Fr McNab, but was soon abandoned. The Beagle Bay Mission (in Nyulnyul country) was founded about five years later. The Lombardina mission was established in 1896,² and the Sunday Island Mission in 1899 (Durack 1969:130).

The Sunday Island mission was founded by the former pearler Sidney Hadley and his business partner Harry Hunter (Durack 1969:130–131), who ran a small fleet of pearling luggers from a base at Boolgin (just east of Cape Leveque). The mission was at first independent of any particular church organisation, although later it became affiliated with the United Aborigines Mission. During the 1930s, the Sunday Island lugger also supplied the Port George IV (later Kunmunya) Mission further to the north-east. Sunday Island was evacuated during World War II, and the residents were briefly moved to Watjolum and Lombadina (Nancy Isaac, pers.comm. 2001). Durack (1969) and Keneally *et al.* (1996) provide information

2 This mission site was abandoned in 1905 and refounded in 1913.

about this period; Nancy Isaac has also shared her memories of this time (and stories from her parents) as part of the Bardi oral history project.

The Sunday Island mission was eventually dismantled and abandoned in about 1962. The children went to school in Derby, and their parents followed them there. The elders mostly went to Lombadina. For some time after that many Bardi people lived on the marshy area on the outskirts of Derby, before an excision from the Lombadina pastoral lease was granted and the first families moved to One Arm Point towards the end of 1972 and founded the community. One Arm Point now has a population of about 400 people, and includes a store, clinic and workshop, as well as a school to year ten. The joint communities of Lombadina and Djarrindjin are rather larger. While Bardi people now live all through the Kimberley, from Broome to Halls Creek and beyond, most Bardi people live north of Beagle Bay in one of the communities, or on one of the outstations.

3. Bardi and Jawi documentation

Bardi is the best documented and described Nyulnyulan language (indeed, one of the best described languages of the region), although almost all the material is unpublished. Materials date back to 1910, with Bird's *Some remarks on the grammatical construction of the Chowie language, as spoken by the Buccaneer Islanders, North-Western Australia*. Gerhardt Laves (see Bowers 2003a, forthcoming) collected extensive notes on Bardi in the late 1920s, including several hundred pages of texts in Bardi, and a few stories in Jawi. Hermann Nekes and Ernest Worms published detailed notes on the Nyulnyulan languages totalling more than 1000 pages (Nekes and Worms 1953). Howard Coate worked on Bardi and neighbouring Worroran languages in the 1950s and 1960s.³ C.D. (Toby) Metcalfe completed his PhD on a generative/transformational analysis of Bardi verb morphology in 1974; it was published as Metcalfe (1975). He also compiled a dictionary of around 3500 items. The dictionary is unpublished and the non-restricted entries have been incorporated into Bowers (2003b).

Gedda Aklif collected extensive materials between 1990 and 1993; an eighteen hundred-word dictionary was also published (Aklif 1999). Aklif's texts were compiled, edited and put in book form for the One Arm Point school in 1999. There are sound recordings of Bardi dating back to 1911 (recorded on wax cylinders by Yngve Laurell; see Boström, this volume). In addition to using previously collected materials, I have made three field trips to One Arm Point to work with Bardi speakers, totalling about nine months in the area between 1999 and 2003, and work is ongoing.

The following sections give information about the type of material recorded, its accuracy, the principal Bardi consultants who provided the data (where known), and how much material was recorded. It is given in approximate chronological order by collector. Listed are all the major sources of Bardi data, and most of the minor sources. I have included all this information in order to illustrate the changes in documentation practices over the last hundred years. It is rare in Australia that we find such regular linguistic 'sampling', and it is useful to study it in its entirety.

3 Almost all Coate's materials have been destroyed. One notebook survives, held by the Kimberley Language Resource Centre. AIATSIS also holds a tape of Jawi elicitation and a short story, recorded from the Bardi-Jawi man Tygan. Metcalfe transcribed a series of mythological stories originally recorded by Coate and they are part of Metcalfe's restricted collection.

3.1 Early missionary work from Lombadina/Western areas

Fr Duncan McNab reportedly translated materials into Bardi at Swan Point while living there in 1885, building up trust with local people to establish a mission (Durack 1969:28–31). According to Durack, he worked primarily with a boy called ‘Knife’. The materials have not survived and no one seems to remember the nickname *Knife* these days.⁴

3.2 Sunday Island: Bird, Hadley and Bates

William Bird, a school-teacher on the Sunday Island mission, published a wordlist and a few sentences (Bird 1910, 1915) in ‘Chowie’ (i.e. Jawi). The material is very poorly transcribed and its chief worth is that it shows that there were Bardi or Jawi people on Sunday Island in 1910. It would be largely uninterpretable without much more phonologically reliable later sources. The version in Bates’ ‘Native vocabularies’ also has some short sentences (Bates n.d.). We do not know who provided the data.

Joseph Bradshaw wrote down a basic Bardi wordlist which is published in Mathew (1899). If anything it is even less reliable than the Hadley/Bird/Bates material, and is shorter.

3.3 Yngve Laurell

Yngve Laurell made some wax cylinder recordings in 1911, including songs and a short conversation. The material was recorded in the context of an anthropological/entomological expedition with Dr Eric Mjöberg.

The songs on the cylinders include *ilma* and *loodin*.⁵ They are recognised by their style but no longer known. There was also a lullaby which the late Nancy Isaac remembered from her childhood. The conversation is a joke about some Bardi people who got ‘lost’ on Sunday Island (the implication being that the man and woman who went off together and got lost did so deliberately). The tape also includes songs which are not identified as Bardi song styles. Some are said to be mainland song styles (either Yawuru or Nyikina) while others are not identified for certain but are thought to belong to Worrorran-speaking groups such as Yawijibaya and Gunin/Kwini. This tape is very important for senior Bardi community members as a prestige item, because one of the first audio-recordings of an Aboriginal language is theirs, and someone came all the way around the world to make it.

3.4 The Laves corpus

In contrast to the other early materials in Bardi from the pre-World War II period, the Laves corpus is a major collection of accurately recorded textual data; it also includes some elicitation of paradigms.

Laves was a student of Edward Sapir, and following his doctoral work came to Australia with the object of beginning a descriptive tradition. He was in Australia from 1929 to 1931 and worked on six languages in detail: Bardi and Karajarri in the north-west, Gumbaynggir and Nganyaywana in New South Wales, Kurin (Goreng) in southern Western Australia, and Matngele and Ngan’gityemerri in the Northern Territory.

4 Note, however, that the acceptance of Registration of the Bardi/Jawi Native Title claim includes a list of Bardi/Jawi ancestors whose descendants comprise the Native Title claimants, and this includes the name *Nayp*, which could be an Aboriginal English pronunciation of ‘Knife’.

5 *Ilma* are public ceremonial song cycles (the same word is used for the dance paraphernalia), accompanied by boomerangs or clapsticks. *Loodin* songs may be unaccompanied and are made up by men to commemorate unusual or quirky events.

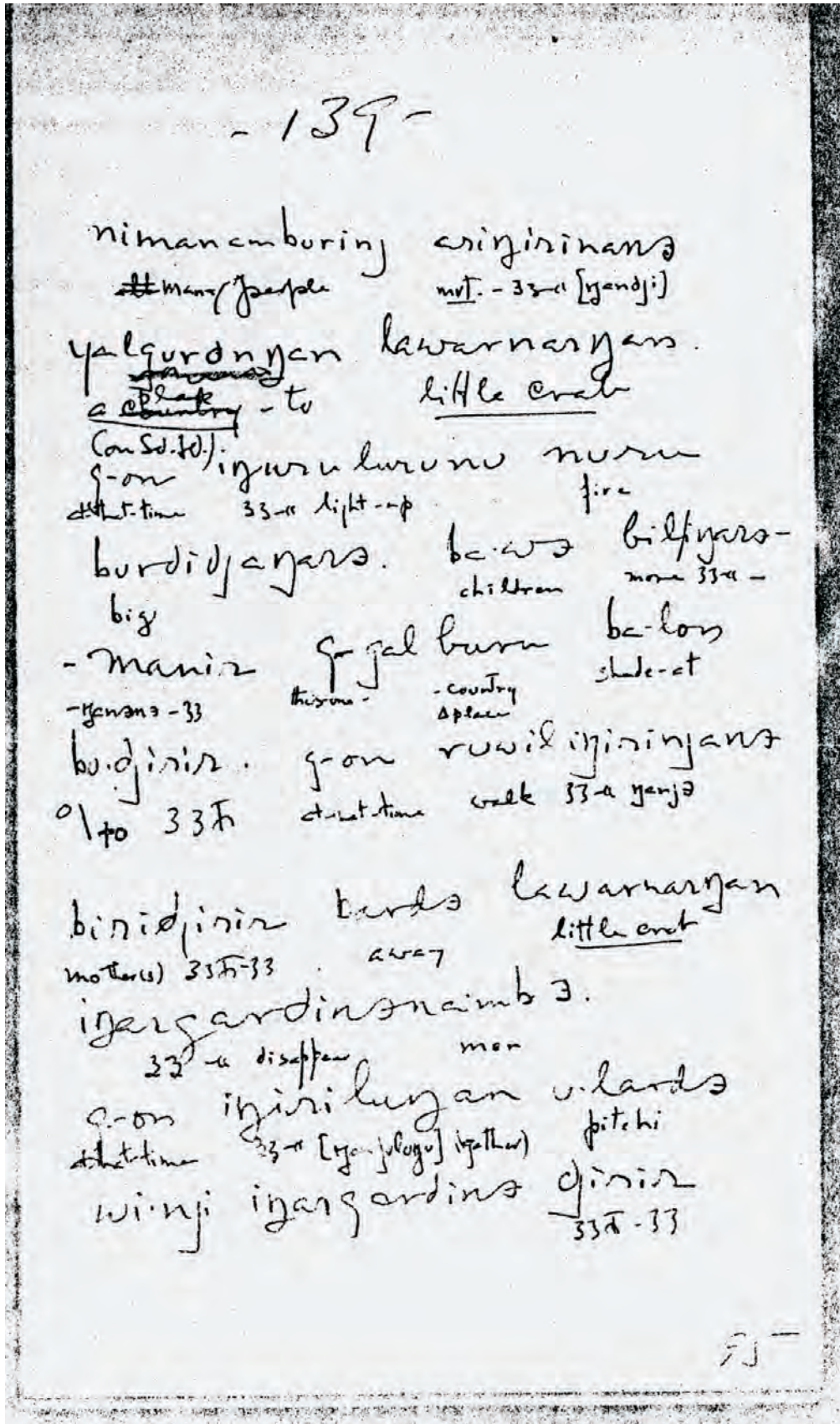


Plate 3.1: Sample page of Laves' notebooks

Laves spent about four months on Sunday Island and a short period of time at the nearby Bardi communities of Cape Leveque/Boolgin and Lombadina). He wrote down stories from several different Bardi and Jawi men, including the parents and grandparents of the people who have contributed most intensively to the current Bardi oral history project and dictionary. Laves' corpus contains over 100 texts from three dialects, with cultural and grammatical information totalling more than 1,000 manuscript pages. The texts cover many different subject areas, from jokes to mythological stories to recent history to (a few) instructional narratives. The collection also contains a few short texts in Nyikina (another Nyulnyulan language) and in the Northern Kimberley languages Worrorra and Ngarinyin.

The texts fall into five broad subject areas:

- traditional law and proper behaviour, and the appropriate punishments for breaking traditional law;
- ceremonial practices and terminology, including summaries of gender-restricted ceremonies (not further discussed here);
- explanatory texts about traditional ceremonies (often in English);
- dreamtime (mythological) narratives;
- social history narratives.

All but five of the texts are accompanied by a résumé in English. The texts are glossed in English and annotated with Laves' own shorthand symbols. Not all words are glossed, and some of the Bardi words are glossed by their Karajarri equivalents. There are also occasional notes in German. A sample page is given in Plate 3.1. There are notes throughout the texts dated 1932, showing that Laves went back through his Bardi materials after the field trip, however he never worked on them in detail (or indeed, published anything on Australian languages beyond two brief articles: Laves 1929a, 1929b). There are also references to vocabulary slips which are not part of the current collection.

The linguistic quality of the materials is quite impressive, especially compared to contemporary materials. He accurately records vowel length differences (e.g. *a'mba* 'man'), fairly reliably transcribes palatal nasals, laterals, and the distinction between nasal + stop clusters involving apical *n* + velar *g* as opposed to velar *ŋ* and *g*. His transcriptions of retroflex consonants, however, vary greatly from other sources (e.g. *iirdanngurru* 'night-time'; Aklif (1999) *iidanngoorroo*, where <oo> = /u/). Laves also makes a distinction between *rd* and *d̥*, i.e. a cluster versus a retroflex stop. However, the distinction is not recorded systematically and was not reflected in the speech of modern speakers in the words for which Laves recorded it.⁶ Laves overgeneralises the transcription of retroflexion. I suspect that this is a consequence of mishearing the tongue retraction that is associated with back vowels. Alternatively, the differences could be a reflection of a sound change.

Laves' text collection is especially valuable because it includes data on more than one dialect of Bardi. Laves' Jawi texts are our only source of extended grammatical information on this dialect from a time when there was some chance of it not being completely swamped by mainland Bardi. These texts are also extremely valuable for those people who identify as Jawi. They are able to identify the dialectal differences in the texts, although such variants have not been used for over fifty years (Jimmy Ejai, pers.comm. September 2003). For example, the word for 'road' in Jawi is *mayirri*, compared to Bardi *morr* < **mayurri*. Jawi has a purposive use of the allative *-an* (*-ngan* in Bardi); compare Jawi *biilan* with Bardi *biilingan* (both meaning 'for fighting'). There is some evidence for a sound change in Jawi where

6 I found limited evidence for a distinction in my Bardi work between retroflex segments and clusters involving *r+d* and *r+l*, but not in the same words as Laves.

intervocalic /ŋ/ has gone to zero. Jimmy Ejai made the comment that it was wonderful to hear that way [i.e. Jawi] of talking again, and tapes of me reading aloud the Jawi stories in the Laves collection were hot property among the One Arm Point elders!

Laves' materials fall outside the current of research into Australian languages and Bardi—he was trained in the Americanist descriptive tradition (see below) and his practices are quite different from other Australian researchers working during the same period. Two features stand out in particular. First, he uses narrative texts as the primary data for language work, from very early on in the descriptive process. He did a little elicitation (particularly of verb paradigms), but almost all data come from the text corpus. Second is his acknowledgment of the speakers from whom his information comes. Some biographic information for speakers was also recorded. This is rare in the early materials. Nekes and Worms (1953) list the people they worked with, but we do not know anything about them, nor how much information each contributed. We do not have even that information for work by Bates, Capell and Elkin.

3.5 Nekes and Worms (1953)

Hermann Nekes and Ernest A. Worms, as part of their monumental *Australian Languages*, include extensive lexical, morphological and grammatical information for Bardi. In an appendix they include a few mythological texts and songs. The work of Nekes and Worms is the subject of McGregor (2006) so my comments will be limited to Bardi.

The transcription in Nekes and Worms (1953) is reasonable, but not as good as Laves'. It is unsystematic and inconsistent when it comes to the two rhotic phonemes (a trill and a glide; in the Bardi orthography they are represented by *rr* and *r* respectively). They are largely silent on the retroflex versus alveolar distinction. Their grammatical analysis is suspect at times, mostly because of their deficient data (e.g. making generalisations on the basis of mis-transcribed items). Some specific instances are discussed in Bowers (2004:120–124), for example their analysis of the reflexive/reciprocal marker in Western Nyulnyulan as *-jin*, occurring following the tense/aspect suffix *-n*. An example they give for Jabirrabirr is *ma-ma-djalen-djen* (infinitive-reflexive-SEE.CONT-reflexive). In fact the morpheme division should be *ma-ma-jali-nyji-n* or *ma-ma-jal-inyj-in* (infinitive-reflexive-SEE-reflexive-continuous).

Another flaw in the data in Nekes and Worms (1953) is their attribution of various forms to the wrong language. Nekes and Worms' technique for gathering cross-linguistic data was to hold meetings with representatives from each language, and to go around the table asking for the equivalents in each speaker's first language. Since many Aboriginal people of the Dampier Land area were multilingual, this has led to words being said to be part of the lexicon of a particular language, when in fact they are not. One example is the section term *banaka*, which is said to be a Bardi word. This is rather unlikely, however, since Bardi people did not use the section system.

Nekes and Worms (1953) make some historical speculations, including some remarks on sound change in Bardi. The only points on which they are totally reliable are on the obvious lenitions and cluster reductions.

Worms is also the author of many anthropological articles about ceremonies and cultural practices. Much of this information, however, is gender-restricted. In particular he gives extensive information about men's initiation ceremonies. Much of his published work on Bardi culture heroes and ceremonies involves restricted knowledge in at least part of the paper. These days the One Arm Point community is adamant that such information should not be published. Some people feel it is dangerous in the wrong hands (for example, that young women might read it and be harmed, since there are stories of women becoming paralysed after viewing men's ceremonies). Others feel that it is a betrayal of trust, and that the commu-

nity itself should have sole discretion in who has access to restricted knowledge. For this reason, I am not providing references to the relevant articles, nor discussing what they contain.

It is very easy to blame researchers of Worms' period for not respecting 'community wishes' regarding gender restriction of such knowledge, but it is very unclear what the community's wishes would have been at the time, or how clear it was made to Worms that such materials are not to be discussed in front of women (and it is possible that Worms considered his academic audience exclusively male).

3.6 Anthony Peile, Arthur Capell, Nora Kerr and Norman Tindale

Peile worked on the more southerly Western Nyulnyulan languages Jabirrabirri and Nimanburu. He also recorded a tape of place names and medicinal plant usage in Bardi from George Warrb, a Bardi man from Lombadina. The tapes appear to have been made in 1966, although this is uncertain. The tapes are mostly of excellent quality. The places are given in order around the coastline so it is possible to give an approximate location to the place names which are not recorded on maps and are no longer remembered by speakers.

Capell collected information on several Nyulnyulan languages, including Bardi. I have no information in the dates he visited Bardi country, nor who he worked with or which community he visited. Work has been published (Capell 1940, 1956) and manuscripts and fieldnotes, including several hundred vocabulary slips, are archived at the library of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

During this period, Nora Kerr collected vocabulary lists from Jawi, Bardi, Nimanburru, Jabirrabirri, Ngumbarl, Yawuru, Nyikina, Warrwa and Karajarri. Apart from Karajarri, all the languages are Nyulnyulan languages. Her work cannot be quoted, however. The Bardi data overlaps with other recorded materials, however the Jawi and Nimanburru records are very valuable, since there are so few other records.

Norman Tindale recorded a vocabulary in Ba:d or Baada in August 1953; the words are a mixture of Bard and Bardi (that is, from both the western and eastern portions of the Dampier Peninsula). Tindale recorded the vocabulary as part of the an expedition organised jointly with the University of Adelaide and the University of California, Los Angeles. Vocabularies from the area appear to include not only Bardi, but also Ngumbarl, Jukun, Nimanburu and Nyulnyul. From the information available it is not clear exactly where the Bardi materials were recorded, however from Tindale's 1952–1954 itinerary it is clear he visited several stations up the Dampier Peninsula.⁷

3.7 Wilfrid Douglas

Douglas was a missionary on Sunday Island in the mid-1940s. With Douglas' work with Bardi we see a shift in focus from simply recording the language to teaching language and promoting literacy. The booklet *Word gems from Iwany* (Douglas 1992; first written in the 1940s) is a good illustration of this. It contains basic vocabulary, a series of cartoon illustrations of common activities with labels of words and activities in Bardi, and some biblical materials. The audience is clearly Bardi people, not outsiders.

Douglas also began a Bible translation project. He wrote down the Lord's Prayer in Bardi, and transcribed and translated a 'message from Lennie Lennard to his people', in which Mr Lennard tells Bardi people about Christianity and why he thinks it is important to be a Christian. It may seem surprising that such a project only began 45 years after the founding of the

⁷ Information from <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/orig/tindale/HDMS/tindaletribes/baada.htm>, accessed January 2007.

mission, and it is revealing of the dynamic between ‘language workers’ and ‘missionaries’ in the Sunday Island (and later One Arm Point) community. Throughout the history of work on Bardi, Douglas seems to have been the only missionary resident in the community to undertake detailed language work,⁸ and unlike at Beagle Bay and Mowanjium, all the major documentation has been completed by transitory linguists.

Douglas also started recorded materials with an eye towards increasing indigenous literacy. Thus with Douglas’ *Word gems* and associated missionary materials we see a subtle but real change in the relationship between speaker and recorder. From Douglas onward, most materials are made at least partly with the Bardi community in mind, or with the community as a stake-holder in the outcome of the research.

3.8 C.D. ‘Toby’ Metcalfe

C.D. Metcalfe began making recordings of Bardi towards the end of 1970 as part of research towards a PhD at the Australian National University. In the course of writing his PhD (published as Metcalfe 1975), he compiled a 3500-word draft dictionary (Metcalfe n.d.) and a series of lengthy narratives on various topics, some of which were published in Hercus and Sutton (1986). Metcalfe’s PhD thesis was a formal analysis of Bardi verb morphology within the then current *Aspects*-version of Generative Grammar.⁹ Metcalfe also made extensive recordings and documentation of the stories surrounding gender-restricted initiation.

The usefulness of Metcalfe’s data well outweighs any shortcomings. Vowel length contrasts and retroflexion are underdifferentiated, and the morphological analysis of the verb system cannot be correct (as discussed in Bowers 2004:§4.3.1). More importantly, however, he recorded a great deal of cultural and linguistic information, much of which is now no longer practised within the community. His recordings of ceremonial information are extensive and sensitive, and the narratives are clear and an excellent source of data. Most of the extant male speech recordings were made by Metcalfe, from the late Billy Ah Choo and Tudor Ejai. This is particularly important because men and women have different story-telling styles, and most of the later researchers and recorders of Bardi have been women working with other women.

Metcalfe has a special place in Bardi description. He is said by the old people at One Arm Point to be the person who ‘put the nouns and verbs in the Bardi language’. That is, he is viewed as the person who made Bardi into a ‘real’ language by revealing its complexities and structure. He is still highly respected and is largely responsible for the good reception that linguists get at One Arm Point from the old people.

Metcalfe also seems to have started the ‘one on one’ linguistic research tradition at One Arm Point. Previous researchers who spent any time there worked with many people, or in small groups. Toby worked primarily with the late Tudor Ejai and this style of working has continued, and is the expected way of working at One Arm Point.

8 Hadley was initiated but never learnt the language, according to Robin Hunter (pers.comm. 2003). The only other exception is Howard Coate, who only spent a few years on the Sunday Island mission, and whose primary interest was Worroran rather than Nyulnyulan languages.

9 Incidentally, Metcalfe (1975:166) contains the first discussion of the pronominal argument hypothesis in Generative Grammar. This hypothesis, that the agreement affixes on the verb saturate theta roles and are the arguments themselves, rather than true agreement markers, is usually attributed to Jelinek (1984).

3.9 Gedda Aklif

Little work seems to have been done on Bardi between Metcalfe's fieldwork (1970–1974) and Aklif's first trip to One Arm Point in 1990. This lacuna in research overlaps with a period of steep decline in the regular use of Bardi, although at the same time Bardi people succeeded in refounding the Sunday Island community from Derby to One Arm Point and gained a greater degree of independence and self-determination than they had had since European settlement.

Unlike all the other previous work on Bardi, Aklif's project was initiated by Bardi people from within the community. Aklif responded to a request from the late David Wiggan, who put a request in the FATSIL (Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages) newsletter in 1989 for a teacher-linguist to come to One Arm Point to record cultural information, compile a dictionary and, eventually, write a learner's grammar. Wiggan's concern was to make a textual record of public traditional stories, place names, and cultural practices which he felt were being seriously eroded by an increasingly European lifestyle. Another theme that emerges from discussions about the reasons for inviting a linguist to One Arm Point is the relationship between language and identity. Being able to speak the Bardi language is seen by the older generation as a critical aspect of having a Bardi identity. Thus the documentation project is not fuelled only by loss of linguistic heritage, but by a sense of community loss.

Aklif spent a great deal of time at One Arm Point between 1990 and 1993 and worked intensively with five people (David Wiggan, until his death in October 1990, Bessie Ejai, Jessie Sampi, Nancy Isaac and Lena Stumpagee). She also spent time with other community members, especially from the Angus and Wiggan groups. The main product of this work is the approximately 1800 word Ardiyooloon Bardi dictionary, published as Aklif (1999). The dictionary also includes five maps, with approximately 300 place names. The inclusion of place names in a dictionary is a departure from the European lexicographic tradition, and Aklif (1999) is one of few dictionaries of an Australian language to make place names a feature of the work by including not only a toponyms section in the dictionary, but also extensive site information and maps. The dictionary itself contains many examples of encyclopaedic information and language use. The last pages of the dictionary contain a grammar sketch, which gives information on nominal cases and how to inflect verbs. In addition to the dictionary, Aklif transcribed and translated about thirty texts of different lengths, most of which are traditional mythological stories. Her unpublished notes fill many hundreds of pages. Her notes show a concern for phonologically accurate transcription (her recordings are by far the most consistent and accurate of all the transcribed work on Bardi).

Aklif was also heavily involved in creating language materials for the One Arm Point School, especially at primary level, and in consulting widely within the Bardi Community about language policy, such as orthography.

3.10 Kimberley Language Resource Centre

The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) was set up in 1986 and has worked on the promotion of Indigenous languages in the Kimberley region and the relationship between linguists and communities.

The KLRC and Aklif worked on various smaller publications, such as an alphabet book for teaching Bardi spelling and school materials. They have also sponsored language workshops, including one in 1990 which decided the community orthography, and more recently one on dictionary usage. The KLRC also published the Bardi dictionary, and have supported

my work at One Arm Point. Bessie Ejai has been on the KLRC executive committee for many years.

3.11 Edith Nicolas

Edith Nicolas completed a PhD thesis on comparing the verbal classification systems of Bardi and Bunuba (Nicolas 1998, 2000). She spent about 4 months on fieldwork at One Arm Point and worked mostly with Nancy Isaac and Bessie Ejai.

Nicolas also worked on a draft learner's guide for the One Arm Point School. It contains a series of lessons aimed at teaching orthography, basic case usage, and verb inflection. The learner's guide has a set of short stories and activities for younger learners. It also aims to introduce some linguistic terminology (such as intransitive, transitive, and ergative). The learner's guide has the dual audience of (white) teachers coming to the One Arm Point School and confronting an Aboriginal language for the first time, and for the Bardi teachers with passive knowledge of the language to learn some linguistics and to utilise their language knowledge more actively. It had the further aim of helping all teachers with planning for Bardi language lessons.

Unfortunately, the guide has very inconsistent transcription. Moreover, many words are spelled differently from their spelling in the Bardi dictionary, leading to a comment from one of the teachers that this makes it very difficult to use, since they are not sure whether the change in spelling is significant and represents a different word (e.g. *iidool* 'pandanus palm', *idool* 'murex shell') or a different spelling convention (for example, *mingal* and *minkal*, both 'you visit', as in *nyirroogoordoo minkal* 'how are you?'). The learner's guide is, however, an important recognition of the needs of the teachers in the language program and it provides a way to include the all teachers in the language lessons. The learner's guide has existed in a few copies at One Arm Point School for the last five years and there appear to be no plans to make it more widely available.

3.12 One Arm Point School

The teachers and teacher aides in the One Arm Point School have also created their own materials for lessons. Bardi lessons are usually half an hour per week in the lower grades. Bessie Ejai, Nancy Isaac and Jessie Sampi have been working as language specialists at One Arm Point School. Maureen Hunter, Dorothy Davy, Rodney Maher and Violette Carter are Bardi teacher aides at the School and all have been active in creating materials for classes.

There is a solid program for the younger kids but there has been little curriculum development at the upper levels, with the result that for the third/fourth grade and higher, those language classes tend to be conducted largely in English and focus on Bardi culture, unless a language specialist is present.

3.13 Claire Bowers

I have been working on Bardi since 1999, and have spent a total of nine months in the community spread over the last five years. My work was initiated by Gedda Aklif, who asked for someone to produce a book of texts from the stories she had transcribed as part of the dictionary project (which Colleen Hattersley and I completed). After that initial book (circulated within the Bardi community as *Bardi Jawal* in 1999) I was invited back to continue work on an oral history project. I have worked closely with Bessie Ejai, the late Nancy Isaac and Jessie Sampi, and to a lesser extent with Jimmy Ejai, the late Maggie Davey and the late Katie W.

Drysdale. My dissertation research (Bown 2004) has also involved the Bardi language, but that work has been rather incidental to the language work that I have been doing directly with Bardi speakers, as it involves theoretical syntax and historical linguistics. That is, while speakers expressed support for the work and gave permission for Bardi recordings to be used in theoretical research, they themselves had little interest in the work.¹⁰

The oral history project was initiated by the elders as a documentation and stock-taking (and also publicisation) project. The initial aim was to publish a selection of the stories, since the elders feel it is important to show that Bardi is a rich and fully developed language just as good as French or German and they feel that their views are not represented in records of Kimberley history (Bown field tape 37). More generally the purpose was to put down on paper and on tape Bardi knowledge that is not being passed on to the younger generation. There is some bitterness amongst the old people that younger Bardi people use exclusively English in conversation.

Recording for the oral history project was informal, taking place at the houses of the storytellers. Stories have been recorded on minidisc and transferred to CD and tape for archiving, transcription and for copies for project and community members. The subject matter has focused on stories about the Mission times, reminiscences from the time when Bardi people lived on the Mission on Sunday Island. We have also recorded many mythological and traditional stories. Another focal area of recording has been procedural texts and vernacular definitions, where the speaker is given a prompt word (such as *borroo* ‘kangaroo’ or *ilma* ‘public ceremonial song’) and asked to describe it to someone who has never heard of it. These texts will be of interest not only for their value as cultural history but also for use in the One Arm Point School’s Bardi literacy program.

We have transcribed and checked approximately a quarter of the stories recorded on tape, however, this is not so urgent as making a permanent audio record of the stories. There are younger people in the community who can help with transcription and translation over the next few years, but there are very few storytellers. So far we have produced a 255-page book of stories for internal community use (Bown 2002).

The oral history project has produced other language spin-offs. One has been the research for my PhD dissertation, which makes use of existing materials as well as the texts collected as part of the oral history project. The second outcome is a supplement to the published Bardi dictionary. It contains approximately 1800 items (as many as the original dictionary), including an extra 250 place names. The supplement sources are the texts collected from the oral history project as well as lexical items from texts in the older materials discussed in §3.2ff above, including Nekes and Worms (1953) and Metcalfe’s dictionary draft. Further outcomes to be completed as time permits include an interactive CD-ROM map, a talking wordlist and a further book of transcribed stories. A reference grammar is forthcoming in the Mouton Grammar Library series and a learner’s guide to accompany the dictionary, written in conjunction with linguistics students at Rice University, is in the final stages of preparation.

There are a few points to make on how my research is different from much of the other research on Bardi and Jawi. The oral history project is really the first work on Bardi to make extensive use of all previous research on Bardi and Jawi—it is noticeable that most researchers (apart from Aklif, who had access to much of Metcalfe’s material) have operated as though the previously recorded materials did not exist. Thus there is a lot of repetition in the older materials, extensive recordings of basic vocabulary but comparatively little in the way of

10 Some viewed it as a *quid pro quo* for language materials; that is, there was a recognition that my being about to continue work on community resources for Bardi depended on my finding grant funding and getting a job, which in turn depended to a certain extent on publications of interest to linguists and tenure committees.

more advanced work. Secondly, Aklif's and my work are the only projects whose outcomes are entirely governed by the wishes of the Bardi community. This is not to say that other projects were conducted without community consent or approval—far from it. But they were the only recording projects where the form of the project was initiated by and determined by Bardi people themselves.

3.14 Non-linguists recording language

The previous sections have all described language recording by linguists; however, there have been other researchers working on Bardi with different aims.

Alice Moyle's collection of songs and song texts represents the only major source of well-transcribed song language. She spent ten days at Lombadina in June 1963, and recorded music and cultural information from several Bardi speakers, including George Warrb, Lockie Bin Sali and Dyamberiel. Moyle recorded mostly *loodin* and *ilma* songs. These are public song styles, which may be sung by both men and women. She recorded the song, sung at least once, and also the spoken words where possible. Moyle also made extensive recordings of the *Mangali* and *Oolooloong* (circumcision and subincision) cycles, along with explanations.¹¹ Some song transcriptions appear in the sleeve notes to the LP *Music of the Kimberley* (they were not reproduced in the booklet which accompanied the CD release). AIATSIS holds transcriptions of the tapes of Bardi music made by Jill Stubington.

Many anthropologists have worked with Bardi people, both at Sunday Island and One Arm Point. Several have worked on Aboriginal religion, including Worms (see §3.5), A.P. Elkin¹² (1932, 1945), Capell and Elkin (1937) and Helmut Petri (e.g. Petri 1938–1940, 1948, 1950). The publication of gender-restricted material has caused considerable resentment towards anthropologists within the Bardi community. It is a salutary reminder that the behaviour of researchers can still have an effect on research possibilities, even fifty or more years later.

A further complication has been the Bardi Native Title claim. It was a long process, with almost 11 years from the initial registration test until the delivery of the findings. The claim brought up many issues, not least in relation to the collection of evidence for the claim versus the collection of data for academic and descriptive purposes, the use to which such data is put, and what control the community has over the people who collect it. The methods of evidence collection for a Native Title claim overlap to a great extent with linguistic fieldwork: they involve not only informal interviews but also site mapping and toponyms, the collection of mythology, and more general elicitation. However, the evidence for a Native Title claim is collected under rather different suppositions. For example, written evidence is *sub judice* until the conclusion of the claim. This has been interpreted by some as a type of restriction analogous to the restriction of cultural information by gender, yet the restriction has been put in place by a body that has no status in the culture. Furthermore, the distinction between written information and oral information seems artificial to many Bardi people. That is, it seems to be artificial that the records written down by a consultant anthropologist become “restricted” when the same information is common knowledge within the community. For example, in the course of the Bardi native title claim extensive genealogies were elicited and recorded. These documents are now unavailable for consultation until the resolution of the claim, and this fact has added to feelings of disempowerment among the people who provided the information.

11 Moyle (1974) records that she was accorded the status of a ‘boss woman’ in order to record these songs. A boss woman would know enough details of the ceremonies to keep the younger women out of trouble.

12 Elkin also published several accounts of restricted information.

One woman thought it bizarre that in order to get a written copy of her family tree she had to tell me all the information again.

Other anthropologists have worked on Bardi resource management over the last thirty years. For example, Moya Smith and Kim Akerman both worked at Lombadina and One Arm Point in the late 1970s and 1980s, focussing on plant use and indigenous technology. Smith and Kalotas (1985) is a list of Bardi plant names and their uses (utilised in the compilation of Kenneally *et al.* 1996). Smith also transcribed *Gardiman Jawal* (the story of *Gardiman*, a children's book published as Paddy and Paddy 1988). Akerman's work (e.g. Akerman 1975, Akerman and Stanton 1994) has been more on technology, for example on raft manufacture and fish traps. Their work is important for a documentation and revitalisation project because of the detailed descriptions of technical terms.

3.15 Current Bardi community members

The most important repository of information on Bardi is, of course, the speakers of the language themselves. None of the previously mentioned materials would have been recorded without the Bardi elders who have been so active in looking after researchers and working with them.

Four women (Bessie Ejai, the late Nancy Isaac, Jessie Sampi and the late Lena Stumpagee) have been involved with language work for the last fifteen years. Before that, Bessie's husband, the late Tudor Ejai, worked with Toby Metcalfe in the 1970s, and Nancy and Jessie's father and grandfather, Henry Wiggan and Agoomoo, worked with Gerhardt Laves in the late 1920s. Other members of Bessie Ejai's family, including her brother-in-law, Jimmy, and sister, Maggie Davey, have volunteered their time and knowledge to check the Laves corpus and to record information. Recording has involved discussion of photographs, bush plants, traditional medicine, and place names, as well as the more traditional aspects of linguistic work such as story-telling, elicitation, and semantic analysis.

Rosie Bin Sali recorded stories from her parents and family in 1986, but I have only had access to summaries of the stories written in English. I do not know if there are recordings in Bardi. Maureen Angus also made some recordings.

Roy Wiggan, Nancy Isaac's younger brother, has worked with a gallery to create a set of dance paraphernalia items (*ilma*); part of the documentation includes a public version of the stories which go with the *ilma* and some discussion in Bardi. A CD (*Bardi Ilma*) and DVD are available for sale.

Members of the Davey family have also been active in preserving language, culture and song.

4. Analysis of the previous research

4.1 Summary of types of materials

In §3 I summarised the history of research on Bardi. Here I give an analysis of the types of materials now available and what is lacking.

Firstly, the existing materials are very good for basic language teaching, such as answers to questions like 'What's this called in Bardi? What is it used for?' Aklif made sure that there were plenty of school materials and I continued making short books for the school, procedural texts, and similar literacy aids. The results of previous research are being synthesised into a reference grammar, and the basic vocabulary of the language is well-covered. The Bardi dictionary and supplement together contain approximately 4,000 lemmas, with new

words appearing in every text. The Bardi school teachers have continued to ensure that there are adequate projects for school lessons.

Place names records are also well in hand—we are reaching the limit of traditional knowledge without the funds to take the people who are still strong out on field trips to visit the sites and place people in context to gain access to latent knowledge (that is, visiting the places allows people to recall more than remembering out of context). We also need to check the locations of named places with a GPS. Tidal range in this area is such that the published maps don't show all the named rocks that are only uncovered at low tide and the naval charts of the area are not very accurate. The smallest-scale maps are 1:50,000, which is still too small to differentiate many of the places which Bardi names.

Oral history narrative recording is in reasonably good shape too, especially with the Laves corpus, Metcalfe's sacred recordings and the Bardi oral history project. We have a corpus of more than forty hours of taped texts, as well as a hundred texts from Laves, about thirty-five from Aklif and about fifteen from Metcalfe, which also have audio preserved. (This is in addition to Aklif's and my elicited data and the example sentences recorded by Aklif for the dictionary project.) The narratives cover most text genres, from procedural texts to traditional stories, from jokes to social history, and from personal narratives and opinions to retellings of biblical stories.

Taped Bardi texts are in plentiful supply—the tapes from field trips by Aklif, Metcalfe and Bown are at One Arm Point school. My tapes are digitised at archive quality and could form the basis of a multimedia project at some point. I have also digitised many of Aklif's tapes as a first stage towards a multimedia cultural CD.

We are in real need of idiomatic conversational Bardi data. I have an hour of conversations recorded in two separate sittings but the only other conversation recorded is Laurell's from 1911! Bardi is seldom used these days outside ceremonial contexts, and there is very little intergenerational use, so the opportunities for recording and observing simply do not arise very often.¹³

We know quite a lot about Bardi syntax, not only from elicitation by Metcalfe, Aklif and myself but also from what can be gleaned from the textual corpus. Both Aklif and I have done considerable work on complex predication and clause structure, in particular.

I have the beginnings of a corpus of code-switching in stories; one speaker who was fluent in Bardi would sometimes switch into English in story-telling. When we transcribed the stories the English was edited out at the request of the speaker and the transcriber, so there are now several texts with code-switching, and the Bardi equivalents translated back into Bardi. This is, however, of much more interest to me than to the community, and is a low priority for future research.

4.2 Research contexts

Some comments on the type of research, its priorities and the context within a wider setting have been made already.

A noticeable feature of almost all the work was that it was done briefly, in the context of wider surveys (cf. the work of Moyle, part of a survey of Northern Australian music, and Laves, for whom Bardi was one of six languages worked on intensively). The work after

13 I don't think this was because people were reluctant to talk Bardi in front of me, although there were a few times when this was the case. All casual observation by me involved conversations where English predominated, except amongst the oldest Bardi people, where Bardi predominated but English was also used. It is possible that the biggest factor which prevented naturalistic conversational recording was the expectation of how language-recording sessions should be run.

1970, although concentrated towards Bardi, was also done largely by outsiders without a longstanding commitment to the community. Apart from Douglas, none of the superintendents in charge of the Sunday Island Mission seem to have shown much interest in the language, and this separation of powers between linguists and missionaries continues today. This situation is quite different from some other communities, such as Beagle Bay, where some of the missionaries also practised linguistic research and a few encouraged the translation of liturgical materials into Nyulnyul.¹⁴

Another point to note is the small number of Bardi people working on their own language. Apart from the recordings made by Angus and Bin Sali, almost all the writing and recording has been done by people from outside the community. This is no doubt a function of the fact that literacy is rare in Bardi and until recently much of the documentation was not accessible to Bardi speakers, because little was housed at One Arm Point apart from the school materials.

Thirdly, the amount of duplication in the materials is very unfortunate. After nearly 100 years of lexical research, we have only recorded 4,000 lemmas! This is half the size of Zorc's (1986) compilation of Yolŋu Matha sources. There is little record of the semantic range of many words in the dictionary. For example, if a word arises in a text in a different meaning from the dictionary definition, it is very unclear whether one is an error, or the word is polysemous. There has been duplication and reduplication of effort as each visitor to the community has recorded the same set of basic lexical items.

Finally, from the earliest records, there has been a strong focus on written materials as a way to document the language. This is unsurprising—it is true for almost all language documentation projects. However, it is a particularly weak point when it comes to Bardi, since very few Bardi people read and write the language. Thus most of the materials are not accessible to Bardi people. The situation is rather different from the one which Terrill (2002), for example, describes for the Solomon Islands, where despite overall low levels of literacy, books have high prestige value. The extent to which the low levels of literacy and the high levels needed to learn Bardi through the media in which it is currently presented are integrated will be a major factor in determining the success of any future language projects. However, this is less of a problem than we would have if there were no materials at all.

4.3 Points of differentiation between the sources

4.3.1 Phonological differences

There are some differences between the sources, some of which are matters of analysis, others which are perhaps omissions in the phoneme inventory. The major differences are summarised below:

- Laves seems to regard [ny] as a cluster, not as a palatal nasal [ɲ] (unlike Metcalfe 1971; Aklif 1999; Bower 2004; and Nicolas 1998); likewise, he analyses most instances of *r*+apical obstruent as a cluster (unlike Metcalfe, Aklif and Nicolas, who analyse it as a retroflex stop, and unlike Bower, who recognises (on the basis of spectrograms and auditory differences) *r*+*n*, *r*+*l* and *r*+*d* sequences as being distinct from /ɲ/, /l/ and /d/).
- Nicolas seems to recognise in her transcriptions more instances of the phoneme /e/, which others phonemicise as reduced instances of the phonemes /a/ or /i/, or sometimes /u/, e.g. *ngay*, *ngayoo* 'I', transcribed by Nicolas (1998) as *ngaye*. Laves regularly tran-

14 Although Bill McGregor points out to me that some missionaries at Beagle Bay also actively resisted the use of Nyulnyul.

- scribes schwa but his transcriptions are not intended to be phonemic. Laves' use of schwa corresponds to the shortening of post-tonic /a/, and occasionally /i/.
- Bowers transcribes some words with long vowels in unstressed syllables, where Metcalfe, Aklif and Nicolas have short vowels (e.g. *birri(i)* 'mother'; *nalaarrad* turtle egg').
 - Nicolas does not recognise a difference between *n+g* and *ŋ+g*, which other researchers do. It is not certain whether she does not write the difference or whether she does not think that *ŋ* and *n* contrast in this position.
 - Aklif and Bowers recognise allophonic voiceless vowels, but they are not recorded in other sources.

4.3.2 Syntactic and morphological differences

Overall there are relatively few differences between the sources when it comes to morphology; dialectal differences are mostly in vocabulary and in the presence or absence of final vowels. Some of Laves' different vocabulary items seem largely to involve different derived forms of the same root, e.g. *ngoorriji* 'tomorrow', recorded in Laves as *ngurridjidjadi*.¹⁵ A thorough summary of the differences in analyses of Bardi verb morphology can be found in Bowers (2004, ch. 4).

Some other differences are probably artefacts of analysis rather than real differences in the data. For example, Laves writes the preverb and inflecting verb as a single unit, while Aklif, Metcalfe, Nicolas and Bowers treat preverbs as separate words which may optionally cliticise to their inflecting verb. A further difference involves the subordinating clitic *b(a)*, which appears following the first word of the clause and is used to mark relative clauses, as well as some temporal clauses. Metcalfe treats *b(a)* as proclitic on the following verb. Laves treats it as a prefix, and gives it a separate line in paradigms, e.g. *innyana : binnyana*. Aklif and Bowers treat it as a second position clitic which is normally enclitic (that is, it attaches to the end of the first word of the clause); however it is resyllabified and pronounced as proclitic to the following word when the previous word ends in a consonant and the initial syllable of the following word is onsetless. A summary of these treatments is given below:

string:	<i>yoorr b ingarramana</i>	'when they came down...' (literally came.down WHEN 3-PAST-PLURAL-'put'-REM.PAST)
Laves' analysis	<i>Yurr bingarramana</i>	<i>bingarramana</i> is a form of the verb <i>ingarramana</i>
Metcalfe's analysis	<i>Yurr b+ingarramana</i>	<i>b+</i> is proclitic
Aklif/Bowers	<i>Yurr+b ingarramana</i> > <i>Yurr b+ingarramana</i>	<i>b(a)</i> is normally enclitic but can be resyllabified.

Further evidence for Aklif's and my position comes from the appearance of *+b* or *+ba* in contexts other than the phonological environment mentioned above. It so happens, however, that most examples with *+b* involve a complex verb in first position in the clause.

¹⁵ Nancy Isaac gave a possibility *ngoorrijarri* 'for tomorrow'—'they bin leave himself for tomorrow', i.e., they postponed fighting each other until tomorrow. However, this word is not recorded elsewhere.

There are also some morphological differences between Nicolas, Bower and Aklif. For example, the allative of the word *marnany* ‘reef’ is recorded in three different ways. The underlying form is *marnany-ngan*. The form is given as *marnanyan* in Nicolas’ work, with deletion of the initial nasal of the suffix. Aklif posits a rule of nasal reversal and gives as an example *marnangnyan*, whereas I only ever was able to elicit the expected form, *marnanyngan* (IPA /maŋaŋŋan/). It is impossible to tell whether one or more of these forms is a mistake, or whether they are variants for different speakers, or whether there has been a recent regularisation of an earlier rule.

A further example is the third person singular present of the verb *-(a)rli-* ‘eat’, which is *inarli* in Nicolas’ work, but an irregular form *irli* in Aklif (1999), which was confirmed by my research.

The Laves corpus shows some interesting and systematic differences which are yet to be fully described. For example, the clause chaining particles in the corpus are *ginyinggon* and *ranana*; the former is frequent in modern Bardi but the latter is only used as an adverb (a reduplicated form of *raana* ‘straightaway’). Some differences are discussed in Bower (2005).

4.4 Summary

As with any large data collection, there are points of variation, some overlap, and a considerable amount of uncertainty. Taken together the materials now cover all the major areas of documentation and the results of the research will continue to be useful to linguists and the Bardi community for some time to come. The largest gap in the record is conversational genres; we have little record of the language in use, although we do have some information on patterns of language use from the way that Bardi people use English (for example, a tendency not to ask direct questions).

5. Community relations and reactions to language work and linguists

In this final section I provide some comments on the place of language work within the One Arm Point community, the perception of linguists and their role for this language, some of the problems, and some ways these problems might be overcome.

5.1 Who is working with linguists?

The first interesting point to note about linguist-community interaction is that even in the earliest sources where the speaker is identified, members of only one family have been the primary contact between linguists and the Bardi community. The Wiggan family at One Arm Point and Sunday Island are heavily involved in language work throughout the history of research: Aklif, Nicolas and I worked with the late Nancy Isaac (née Wiggan), while Aklif and I worked with Jessie Sampi (née Wiggan), Mrs Isaac’s younger sister, and Katie W. Drysdale, their mother. Aklif and Metcalfe worked with the late David Wiggan, Mrs Drysdale’s son; Roy Wiggan (another brother) has released a CD of *Bardi Ilma*, and with his brother Tom Wiggan made a raft for Sydney’s maritime museum. Laves worked with the late Henry Wiggan, the father of the above (known as ‘Little Wiggan’); Agamoo, his father; and Binjarra, Nancy Isaac’s *aloorr* or grandmother’s husband. The other main language workers have been Bessie Ejai and her husband Tudor Ejai; Mrs Ejai is related to the Wiggans through the late Billy Ah Choo, who has special ceremonial/spiritual relations with Henry Wiggan. Bessie Ejai worked with Nicolas, Aklif and me, and is the main language expert at the One

Arm Point school; her husband Tudor was Toby Metcalfe's main consultant, but Metcalfe also worked with Billy Ah Choo and (to a lesser extent) with David Wiggan.

Very importantly, however, the Bardi people working with linguists are *not* the same people as those working on language programs at the school. The school program has been run for many years now by Violette Carter, a member of the Davey/Hunter group, and Maureen Hunter. Moreover, most of the anthropological research has been done with members of the Davey, Hunter, and Angus families.

5.2 Who is the language recording for?

Most researchers on Bardi are not explicit about the intended audience or recipients of the results of their research, but we can make some inferences. Laves was recording in part to start a description tradition in Australia, to 'get the data out there', for example. His primary audience was obviously not the Bardi community itself. Later projects (such as Aklif's and mine) have been 'community'-targeted ones, while Metcalfe and Nicolas were working towards dissertations.

Linguists and funding agencies have tended in recent years to see results of language work in community terms;¹⁶ that is, that the work is aimed at providing useful materials for Bardi people. It is not at all clear to me, however, that the Bardi community sees all the projects in that light. This creates problems with differing perceptions of the purpose of the materials, and it leads to frustration from linguists that the materials they record are not used by the whole community.

Here is an example. Different members of the Bardi community may have quite different views of the final results of a project, and the oral history project is a case in point. The instigators of the project (a group of Bardi elders from two families) were quite clear that they wished the results to be published in a book and widely distributed, so that their stories would be read both outside their own community and by Bardi people living away from the Dampier Peninsula. The intended audience included students at boarding school in Katherine, Darwin and Esperance, and white people, so that they could see that Bardi is a complex and proper language. Towards the end of the project, however, several younger (and politically powerful) community members vetoed publication of the stories on the grounds that it was exploitative and potentially revealed secret knowledge. Since the terms of my grant required me to take community consensus into account, we could not go ahead with publication, and copies of the manuscript were distributed only within One Arm Point and to a few families in Derby.

Who should have the final say in such matters? If I had been working on an English oral history project rather than a Bardi one, decisions regarding publication would have rested entirely with the storytellers and the recorders. If I had been a journalist rather than a linguist, the same would have applied, with less of a requirement to take community opinions into account. The guidelines that say that community consensus is necessary for publication are designed to protect community interests and to make sure that all stakeholders are appropriately consulted before Indigenous language materials are widely distributed. The language may be 'owned' by the community as a whole, but stories, songs, and ideas are also the properties of individuals (in practice if not in law). By requiring full community consent, we have implemented this requirement with no clear definition of who constitute the 'community' in ques-

16 Compare, for example, AIATSIS's funding guidelines, available at http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/5796/Information_Guide_2007.pdf Accessed December 2006.

tion.¹⁷ Moreover, the requirement for community-wide consent runs counter to traditional Australian Indigenous views of management of knowledge. For example, decisions of sharing traditional ceremonial knowledge would never be a matter for the ‘community’ as a whole, but for those with the most knowledge.

5.3 The role of the Community School

The One Arm Point School has a very important role to play in future language work. Many Bardi people have told me how the language is still being learnt by children because it is taught in school. There is a widespread perception that Bardi language revitalisation will be effected through school lessons as much as (if not more so than) through family-internal efforts.

Guidelines exist in the Western Australian state curriculum for LOTE (Languages Other Than English) units involving an Aboriginal language, but these are very general guidelines and need considerable adaptation to make them appropriate for sea people (they were designed with the desert communities in mind, since that is where language use is strongest). There are also problems with language assessment. Assessment is completed by means of ‘Student Outcome Statements’ or SOS, which list a set of skills which pupils should acquire in particular class levels. The assessment criteria are written in very confusing admin-speak; the class teachers received training from the state government in interpreting the SOS and using them, but the Bardi teachers didn’t, and there is no one to integrate existing class materials with the plans and skills assessment. Thus while linguists such as Aklif and myself have helped to create a variety of language resources which could be used in the school language programs, there is no framework for using them within the curriculum. There are also many resources for beginning learners and advanced speakers and readers, but nothing in between. Work on remedying this situation is ongoing.

5.4 Community relations with linguists

The oldest generation,¹⁸ who grew up on the Sunday Island Mission and who still speak the language fluently and remember their grandparents talking about life before the missionaries, are usually happy to work with linguists, especially with the involvement of other elderly community members. There is a concern that the traditional stories and practices will no longer be known. Many younger people, however, do not think it is a good thing for an outsider to work on their language. I am not sure exactly why (the reasons are probably different from person to person and I can think of many reasons that are probably applicable to different extents); by and large, they have some passive knowledge of the language but do not speak it. They are felt to make fun of the old people for talking Bardi:

Barnanggarmarr boonyja Bardi ingirrin, arra irrhoongoon ngaanka Baardingan mangankan. Gardo nganngan irramanmoordoo gayarnga jirr ngaanka. Baarding ngaanka nganngan arramanjirr. Irrgamanmoord namarda nganan irrjarrmin.

17 An instance of this was brought to my attention recently by an old lady in Arnhem Land who had participated in a community consultation for land management. The people who had organised the meeting had invited representatives of all ages from the clan groups in the community, and all were invited to give their opinion. The lady was concerned that some invitees had no right under traditional law to make decisions regarding that land, yet their opinion was given equal weight in the decision process. In this case the ‘community’ as defined by the white people who called the meeting was broader than the Indigenous view.

18 This section is based entirely on my experiences at One Arm Point in 2001 and 2003; they are my impressions only and are not asserted as ‘fact’ and I apologise in advance if I offend anyone at One Arm Point.

‘Nowadays everyone is called Bardi. They don’t know how to talk the Bardi language. They still talk to us in English, while we talk to them in Bardi. They just laugh at us (without answering back).’ (D. Wiggan, *Life on Sunday Island*, ll 25–27, in Aklif 1990–1994)

These community members run the Council and are the major ‘interface’ between whites, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission officials, and the rest of the Community, an instance of the well-known problem that those who traditionally have high status in the community are not recognised by whites and feel shut out. All of these feelings are relevant for linguists working on Bardi.

6. Conclusions

Bardi is at stage 7.5–8 on Fishman’s (1991) scale of language endangerment—it is only used by a few old people in limited contexts. However, there are many people with some passive knowledge of the language, and many people with a very good passive knowledge (for example, they could help in transcribing texts), and some of these people are young. (See also Evans 2001 for problems in determining how many active speakers of a language there actually are.) There is generally little enthusiasm for the language from anyone under 60 (exceptions mentioned above); the language is seen as ‘old hat’ or as tying people to a stone-age stereotype, and generally not seen as a valuable cultural item, except as a resource to be exploited, for story books can be sold to tourists, just as carved trochus shell and other ‘traditional’ items can.

There are many tensions between many different groups at One Arm Point (as in many depressed areas with high alcoholism and high unemployment) and language is not a priority for anyone except the old people. Therefore, I would argue that the usual methods that linguists employ in such situations—for example, promoting community interest, beginning school programs, promoting adult education and literacy, for example—are not appropriate for this community, and may even make things worse. Such measures are likely to exacerbate tensions over the role of language in the community, rather than ameliorate them, especially if they are seen to be introduced by someone from outside the community.

Good quality, well-recorded raw and analysed materials should be a priority; language revitalisation and more basic programs can wait; there is enough of such materials to be going on with. I know this is heresy in recent terms, which stresses whole community involvement, materials the community can use, and so on (cf. Amery 2000); however, the community as a whole simply isn’t interested (but it might be in the future; for a similar view see McGregor 2004), and we have a very circumscribed time-frame in which to collect complex data. This should not be seen as an admission of defeat, as this sort of language work frequently is. Reyhner (1999), for example, labels much work of this kind a relegation of the language to museum status. I argue, rather, that it is a recognition that the language is complex, priceless to its speakers and worth taking a lot of trouble over.

Another question which arises is the publication versus dissemination of language materials. One can create a documentation of a language without publishing the results widely. Therefore one way to proceed in such cases might be to have community-driven documentation projects with local dissemination of results (rather than more general publication). However, the production of final reports such as this have the potential to affect the linguist’s career (since promotion and tenure is measured in part by dissemination of results).

We need a better understanding of the role that Bardi will play in the linguistic ecology of the community. Will it only be used for ceremonial purposes initiation ceremonies? Will it be

used as an ‘in-language’ for community identification? Will some words be integrated into everyday use, in the school, without the expectation of fluency in the language? Currently there seems to be an expectation that kids can become fluent in the language on the basis of school language classes alone.

The school program would benefit greatly from a more structured curriculum and a plan to integrate the existing but under-utilised materials into the program. Perhaps the most important improvement would be to de-emphasise reading and writing within the curriculum and exploit the students’ (in some cases considerable) passive knowledge of the language.

The future for Bardi is not very stable, with only a small number of fluent speakers and increasing community instability. The language has not been acquired by children for more than 50 years and there is little likelihood that this situation will change. Many different projects have been carried out on Bardi over the last century, and as priorities of linguists, speakers and community has changed, so have the type of materials collected. Thus there is a solid foundation for a revitalisation project, should Bardi speakers be interested in the future.

In summary, then, in the history of research on Bardi we have seen many types of recording, with many different motives, ranging from survey data to doctoral dissertations to community-led projects. Several later projects have had the aim of synthesising the results of earlier research and making them more accessible to the Bardi community. However, throughout the history of research it has been quite unclear who the Bardi community really is, and whether the whole community must be in agreement before major language research is undertaken. We have seen that One Arm Point, like any other community, is comprised of individuals with different ideas about who should have access to their language and what parts of their culture should be made more accessible. We have also seen that the current situation actually favours those who control the access of outsiders to the community and those who have Western political power, rather than those who would have traditionally decided who would have access to different types of traditional knowledge. The difference in views roughly corresponds to a split between those who (one the one hand) speak Bardi fluently, have been active in language description, and wish to see the language have greater exposure and publicity, versus (on the other) those who are worried about exploitation. Currently there appears to be little interest in a revitalisation program, but if future interest arises, there is a solid base of materials from which to start. We have also examined some of the variables which affect relations between an external linguist and the community, and we have seen how the actions of previous linguists can lay the path for good receptions for later researchers.

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4 *I could have saved you linguists a lot of time and trouble: 180 years of research and documentation of South Australia's Indigenous languages, 1826–2006*

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It's sad I never had a chance to learn to read and write, because I could have written all this down for you folks and saved you a lot of trouble. (May Wilton, Adnyamathanha woman, early 1970s, talking to the linguists Luise Hercus and Isobel White, cited in Hercus and White 1973b:49)

1. Introduction

In Western Australia (WA) in 1826 a man 'from the continent opposite Kangaroo Island' taught some words of his language to Joseph Gaimard, a zoologist who accompanied Jules Dumont d'Urville on his voyage to Australia (Dumont d'Urville and Rosenman 1987:34). The man's name is unrecorded; his English name was probably Harry (Amery 1998). The words that he provided were published as 'Vocabulaire de la langue des habitans du Golfe Saint Vincent' (Gaimard 1830–1834), and are clearly Kurna words, from the language of the Adelaide Plains, bordering Gulf St Vincent. They are the first words recorded in print of a language spoken in what became South Australia (SA) ten years later.

How Harry came to be living on an island in King George Sound (now Albany), at a sealers' camp, we are unsure, but we do know that he arrived in the region in 1825, along with Sally, a Kurna woman, on two sealing ships (Amery 1998:55). Abduction of Aboriginal people by the sealers in the early 1800s was a common occurrence, as their hunting skills were needed in the sealing camps. The women were targeted by the sealers in search of female companions, and were often brutally treated.

Kangaroo Island, off the tip of Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, became a sanctuary for the sealers, who abducted Kurna and Ramindjeri women from the mainland, knowing

1 We thank Gavan Breen, Bill Edwards, Cliff Goddard, Luise Hercus, John McEntee, Bill McGregor, David Moore, Guy Tunstill, Greg Wilson and two anonymous referees for discussion and helpful comments on earlier drafts, and for saving us from some bad mistakes.

they could not easily escape their island prison (Clarke 1996, 1998). Thus linguistic communities were established, and sealers learnt some of the local Indigenous languages spoken by their captives, who in turn learnt some English. And so, when the first colonists arrived at Holdfast Bay on the mainland in 1836, to establish the official colony of South Australia, there were already Europeans in the area with some knowledge of the local Indigenous languages.

The first colonists encountered an Indigenous language ecology, characterised by stable multilingualism, where neighbouring groups knew each other's languages, even though people's lives had already been badly disturbed by the many deaths from the epidemics raging in from the east.² Through participation in ceremonies and trade, individuals came to acquire elements of more languages. Multilingualism was the norm, particularly because in many areas marriage systems were exogamous, with clan groups marrying into other clan groups, each with their own distinct language or dialect. English would have been viewed by the local Indigenous people as yet another language to learn among their repertoire.

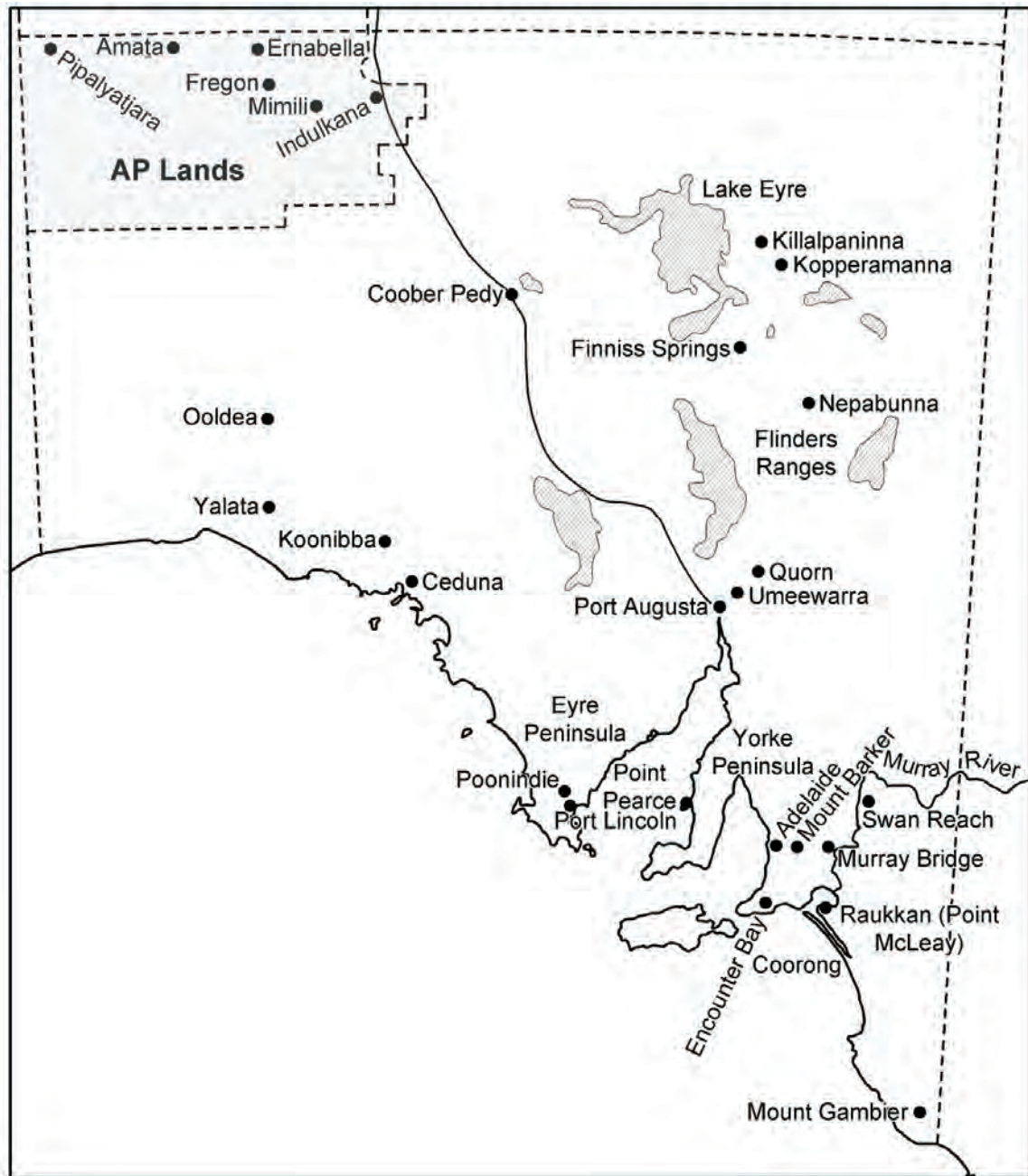
Although there is no evidence that Indigenous lingua francas existed in Australia before colonisation, an English-based contact language developed among the sealers and whalers, which incorporated words from Tasmanian, New South Wales and local Indigenous languages (Dineen and Mühlhäusler 1996; Simpson 1996; Foster *et al.* 2003). Indigenous people who had lived in the sealing camps were later sought as interpreters for the colonists, as were the sealers themselves.

At the time of colonisation, some forty to fifty languages were spoken in the country that became South Australia. These languages are related, but they can be divided into five major groups. In the west and northwest of the state, there are several varieties of the Western Desert languages, including Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Antikirinya and Kukata. These languages are mostly mutually intelligible with the Western Desert varieties that are spoken across the border in the Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA).

The second group are the Thura-Yura languages (Kuyani, Adnyamathanha, Barngarla, Nao, Kurna, Narungga, Nukunu, Ngadjuri, and the closely related Wirangu), which extend northeast from the Adelaide Plains to the Flinders Ranges in the mid-north of the state, and west to the Nullarbor Plain. The third group are the Karnic languages, which include among others Arabana, Wangkangurru, Diyari (also spelt Dieri and Dieyerie), Yarluyandi, Pirlatapa and Yandruwandha, all in the northeast of the state. The Thura-Yura languages are related more closely to the Karnic languages than they are to Western Desert languages to the northwest. The fourth group are the Yarli languages in the east and north-east of the state, which include Malyangapa, Wadikali and Yardliyawara (Hercus and Austin 2004). Finally, the languages of the south east and the Riverland are actually linguistically more closely allied with the languages of New South Wales and Victoria than other languages of South Australia. Their exact genetic relations remain to be analysed. In fact, there is a major linguistic divide in South Australia running along the Mount Lofty Ranges. Kurna on the Adelaide Plains shows a greater affinity with Noongar (Nyungar) in the southwest of WA than it does with the neighbouring Ngarrindjeri languages from the Lower Murray and Coorong region. The

2 Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840:34) provide evidence of smallpox, or a disease leaving similar marks, in the Adelaide area around 1830:

Nguya, s. pustule; the disease of smallpox from which the aborigines suffered before the Colony was founded. They universally assert that it came from the east, or the Murray tribes, so that it is not at all improbable that the disease was at first brought among the natives by European settlers on the eastern coast. They have not suffered from it for some years; but about a decennium ago it was, according to their statement, universal; when it diminished their numbers considerably, and on many left the marks of its ravages, to be seen at this day.



Map 4.1: South Australia, showing places referred to in the text

Ngarrindjeri (also Narrinyeri) languages are a group of closely related dialects whose names often include *-kald* meaning ‘language’. Among them are Ramindjeri, Yalalde, Tanganekald and Potawolin (Berndt *et al* 1993).

Two remaining languages belong in other language subgroups that cross the state borders: Mirniny, which straddles the WA–SA border on the Nullarbor Plain, is more closely related linguistically to languages in WA. Southern Arrernte in the far north of the state straddles the SA–NT border, and is in the Arandic subgroup of languages of Central Australia.

Although linguists categorise languages and dialects according to linguistic commonalities, and Indigenous people may do this too, the social and cultural ties between groups are more important to Indigenous people than linguistic similarities and differences. Through

trade and ceremonial dealings different Indigenous groups came together, and learnt to speak and understand each other's languages. One such important ceremonial tie was the Urumbula song cycle which links the Nukunu of Port Augusta with the Arrernte of the Alice Springs region and other language groups all the way up to the Gulf of Carpentaria (Hercus 1992:13–15).

In SA, most of the multilingual Indigenous societies of pre-colonial days have become societies in which varieties of English are the main codes in use. The onslaught of colonisation, particularly in the coastal and fertile areas of the state resulted in rapid Indigenous population decline and severe language loss. These losses were due primarily to introduced diseases, dispersal and relocation of peoples away from their country, a series of repressive policies, practices and attitudes, and the rise of English as the language of government, business and education. Some people may have deliberately withheld their languages from the younger generations, perhaps believing that learning English would help the children cope with the new world (better access to education and work, less chance of being taken away by welfare agencies), or perhaps because they thought that withholding knowledge would protect it from exploitation by outsiders (see O'Brien, 1990: 110). The result has been the loss of most of South Australia's Indigenous languages as primary vehicles of communication. Only varieties of the Western Desert language (Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya) in the north-west are still being learned by children as everyday languages. Another handful of languages still have native speakers or semi-speakers, including Adnyamathanha, Arabana, Kukata and Wirangu.

For the remaining languages, most people only remember individual words and perhaps a few phrases, although they often use words from Indigenous languages when talking English. Languages in this category include Ngarrindjeri, and its many dialects, and Narungga. For other languages, such as Kaurna, very little is remembered from the early days. However, attempts are now being made to revive languages across the state (see Amery and Gale, this volume), and nine languages are currently being taught in school programs. Much of this language teaching and revival work is possible because of the language documentation that has occurred over the last 180 years of colonisation.

Below, we discuss the history of the documentation of South Australia's languages, focusing on nineteenth century and early twentieth century work and provide some insights into the nature of these records. After providing a chronological overview, we address the topics of: collection of vocabularies, analysis of sound systems, writing of grammars, collection of texts, interpreting and translation work, and finally sociolinguistic work. We identify strengths and weaknesses in the historical records under each of these categories, and conclude by discussing directions for further work and research.

2. Chronological overview of the last 180 years

The documentation of South Australia's Indigenous languages has been patchy. Some surprisingly sophisticated work was carried out at the time of colonisation by Lutheran missionaries with a firm grounding in classical languages, particularly by Christian Gottlob Teichelmann (1807-1888)³ (Kneebone 2005a),⁴ Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann (1815–1893) (Schur-

3 Library catalogues for Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) have incorrectly written his name as 'Gottlieb'. Lee Kersten (e-mail 15 January 2007) confirms that Teichelmann signed his name with 'Gottlob'.

4 Birth and death dates are given where readily available. Unless otherwise noted they are from the Australian Dictionary of Biography (<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/>), or the catalogue of the Library of the University of Adelaide.

mann 1987:208, 255), and Heinrich Meyer (1813–1862), on Kurna, Barngarla and Ngarrindjeri (Gale 2005). Since the development of linguistics as a modern discipline in the mid twentieth century, intensive research has been carried out by linguists, beginning with Geoffrey O’Grady’s work with Leslie Moore and other speakers at Ooldea in 1959 on Wirangu, Mirniny and Kukata (O’Grady 1959), and in 1965 with the start of Luise Hercus’s work recording threatened languages. Cliff Goddard, Paul Eckert, Heather Bowe, David Rose and others have been able to work with first language speakers of the strong languages Pitjantjatjara, Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara to produce good quality dictionaries and other language materials. But sadly modern linguistics arrived too late for proper documentation of the majority of South Australia’s Indigenous languages. Appendix 1 provides a chronological summary of language work conducted in SA; this work is discussed in more detail below.

2.1 Early nineteenth century

For most of the first settlers in Adelaide, Kurna speakers were the first Indigenous people they encountered. The initial interest of settlers and government workers in recording the language have left us with more than twenty wordlists of Kurna (Amery 2000). The first vocabulary to be published in South Australia was by William Williams of the Colonial Store Department (Williams 1839). It was reprinted in the *South Australian Colonist* in 1840, prefaced with the remark:

The utility to the colonists of a knowledge of the language is obvious; but we doubt whether it will reward any attempts to reduce it to a grammatical form, and we could venture to recommend that the English language be taught to the natives, as the easiest and best means of promoting their civilization.

Despite the emphasis on the use of English, government authorities did acknowledge the value of learning some of the local languages. Thus in the first few years of the colony, the Protectors of Aborigines followed official instructions from England to learn something of the local languages in order to carry out their duties (Jones 1996, 2000b).⁵ However, the language of administration was English, and the learning of local Indigenous languages by missionaries and colonists was viewed as a means to an end—and that was to civilise the ‘natives’.

In 1838 the second colonial governor, George Gawler (1795–1869), addressed Aborigines in Adelaide, concluding with the instruction ‘Learn to speak English’, which was then interpreted into Kurna by the Protector of Aborigines, William Wyatt (1804–1886) (Rendell 1967, Foster and Mühlhäusler 1996). Gawler was exceptional for his time in having his speeches addressed to the Kurna people translated into the local language, and in also promoting the use of existing Indigenous place-names, instead of bestowing new European-derived names (Hawker 1975:41). But even then, when Indigenous languages were still thriving, there was no question of giving them official status. Justice was administered in English, even to Aborigines who did not understand the proceedings, unless a judge protested and requested an interpreter.⁶

5 ‘It is exceedingly desirable that the protector should as soon as possible, learn the language of the natives, so as to be able to freely and familiarly converse with them.’ [Glenelg, Duties of Protector of Aborigines January 1838]

6 On January 21 1843 Matthew Moorhouse, the Protector of Aborigines wrote that: ‘His Honor the Judge refuses to have natives put upon their trial unless an interpreter who will engage to translate the main facts of the evidence to the accused, can be produced’ (Moorhouse 1840–1857).

The first missionaries to the Aborigines of South Australia, Clamor Schürmann and Christian Teichelmann, travelled to the new colony in 1838 on the same ship as Governor Gawler. During their journey they discussed their plans with Gawler to learn the local language and to instruct their charges in their own tongue (Schurmann 1987). On arrival, they subsequently learned the Kurna language, and translated the Ten Commandments and some hymns into Kurna.

In 1839 they began teaching at Piltawodli in the Native Location School for Kurna children, and with the help of a Kurna man, Ityamaitpinna, taught the children to read and write in their language (Foster 1990; Gale 1992; Hunt 1971; Scrimgeour 2007). The German missionaries were soon ridiculed by some of the colonists:

Some of the well-meaning gentlemen who have taken upon themselves to instruct their dark brethren, on finding a total absence of words in the language to express new ideas, have actually introduced them from the Greek and Hebrew, thus adding one absurdity to another. Surely coining a barbarous jargon like this for the mere sake of perpetuating a dialect limited to a few hundred square miles of country is ridiculous in the extreme; more especially when it is the rising generation who attend the schools, and who, by and by would greatly feel the want of a common language in their intercourse with the settlers. (R.G. Thomas, quoted in Wilkinson 1848:364)

They also faced opposition in their school work from Gawler's successor, Governor George Grey (1812–1898) (see Moore, this volume-a). Paradoxically, despite his interest in collecting vocabulary lists from Indigenous groups and his support for the missionaries in their linguistic work, Governor Grey insisted on only English being taught in the local Aboriginal school. In 1845 the Native Location School at Piltawodli was closed, and the children were moved into the English-only Native School Establishment on Kintore Avenue, which was also attended by the students from the 'Big Murray Tribe' who spoke a different language.

After spending some time learning the language of Encounter Bay, south of Adelaide, Clamor Schürmann moved to Eyre Peninsula, and started to learn and document the local Barngarla language. He soon started a school, where he again provided instruction in the local language. At the same time, another classically trained Lutheran missionary, Heinrich Meyer, had arrived in the colony and moved to Encounter Bay, near Victor Harbor. There he began learning the local Ramindjeri language, the south-westernmost dialect of the group of languages now known as Ngarrindjeri.⁷ He too was a skilled language worker, so began documenting the language, and before long opened a school where he provided instruction in the local language. The three missionaries also worked closely with the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse (1813–1876) (Anonymous 1974). He was an English doctor, who wrote a description of Ngaiawang, a Lower Murray language (spoken upstream from Ngarrindjeri).

This early linguistic work was much assisted by several things. First, by virtue of their work, they had long-term friendly access to the people whose languages they wanted to document. Second, they were well acquainted with other languages, Latin, Greek and German,

7 Meyer (1846) later referred to this 'tribe' as the 'Encounter Bay' or 'Raminjerar' (plural form for 'Ramindjeri') who spoke a dialect of the same language spoken by others of the 'Lower Banks of the Murray'. Taplin (1879a, 1879b) spelt it 'Raminyeri'. Today the preferred spelling is Ramindjeri. Taplin (1879a, 1879b) referred to the collective group of all the 'tribes' of the Lower Murray and Lakes region as the 'Narrinyeri' (cf. Meyer 1843 *narr-inyeri* 'Australian native; mankind'). The preferred spelling today is Ngarrindjeri. This may relate to the Yaraldi clan name Ngararindjera, 'from the place-name Ngararang (Narrung Station)' (Berndt *et al.* 1993:308).

and Teichelmann at least was familiar with Hebrew.⁸ Third, they worked collaboratively and built on previous language work by Lancelot Threlkeld (1788–1859), on the Awabakal language spoken north of Sydney (Threlkeld 1834), and Grey’s work on Noongar in Western Australia (Grey 1840).⁹ They had the active interest and support of two successive governors, George Gawler and George Grey. Having worked on Noongar (see Moore, this volume-a), Grey was interested in the origin of Australian languages and was keen to make the study of Australian languages efficient. He was also an avid book collector, who requested the publication of Moorhouse’s and Meyer’s wordlists and grammars, paid for the publication of Schürmann’s Barnjarla wordlist and grammar, and finally solicited Teichelmann’s revised 1857 dictionary of Kaurna (Simpson 1992).

Finally, these early language documenters were concerned about the authenticity of what they wrote. Meyer notes that he reviewed all the words in the dictionary twice ‘with different natives, so that the meaning assigned to the words may be relied upon as correct’ (Meyer 1843:vii). In 1858 Teichelmann writes of his work: ‘my phrases, all of which are written down from the mouth of the Aborigines, none [were] formed by myself’ (Teichelmann 1858).

Despite this concern for accuracy, the early language documenters do not seem to have regarded their language work as a collaborative effort with Aboriginal people. They comment on the difficulty of learning the languages (what they mean by ‘unfavourable situation’ is not clear):

all information must be gleaned from casual and trivial conversation. To this must be added, the uncommon rapidity, abbreviation, and carelessness with which the Aborigines speak; their extreme reluctance for a long time, to inform the inquirer; their natural inability to answer grammatical questions; together with their unfavourable situation for the study of the language. (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:v)

They generally do not name their consultants, although at the back of Teichelmann and Schürmann’s grammar are examples of sentences spoken by named people, Mullawirraburka ‘King John’ (c. 1811–1845) (Gara 1998), and Kadlitpinna ‘Captain Jack’. Moorhouse says that he obtained his material with ‘the aid of an interpreter who knows the Adelaide and Murray dialects’ (Moorhouse 1846:v), but does not name him. The other grammars and vocabularies do not give the names of their teachers, although Schürmann’s diaries list the names of many Aboriginal people who he met and talked with in Adelaide, Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln.

Unfortunately their mission ventures, language work and schools soon ceased, largely due to lack of funds and the demise of the groups they were serving. The linguistic legacy of these capable people is five substantial wordlists in the respective Indigenous languages (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840; Meyer 1843; Schürmann 1844; Moorhouse 1846; Teichelmann 1857), and some remarkably insightful grammars.

2.2 Mid to late nineteenth century

By 1858 Christian Teichelmann, who had continued to work on Kaurna after Schürmann moved to Port Lincoln, declared that the Kaurna had ‘ceased to be’, and his work on the language also ceased—although not before producing in manuscript revised notes on the verb, and a bigger dictionary (Letter to George Grey, 18 January 1858). By this time a number of

8 Teichelmann compares Kaurna with Hebrew in the lack of relative pronouns (entry for *nga*, Teichelmann 1857).

9 However, they were also concerned to correct misapprehensions about Aboriginal languages lacking a regular grammatical system—Schürmann (1844:v) comments on this with respect to George Fletcher Moore’s vocabulary (Moore 1842; and see also Moore, this volume-a).

Kaurna had been moved to Poonindie mission, established in 1850 north of Port Lincoln. As their population declined, colonists in the city of Adelaide had much less to do with local Aborigines, and were therefore less often confronted with the need to make themselves understood. From this period on, any new missions that were established were placed in the more remote areas of South Australia, particularly on land considered less arable. George Taplin (1831–1879) (Jenkin 1976, 1979) established the Point McLeay mission on Lake Alexandrina in 1859, and began documenting further dialects of the Ngarrindjeri language, largely building on Meyer's work (Taplin 1879a, 1879b). He also translated parts of the Bible into the Yarlalde dialect (Taplin 1864a, 1878). He was particularly helped in his linguistic work by James Ngunaitponi (ca. 1832–1907), a speaker of the Potawolin dialect of Ngarrindjeri (Berndt *et al.* 1993), and father of David Unaipon (1872–1967) (Jones 1990), one of the first Indigenous writers to publish work in his own language.

In 1866 Lutheran missionaries established Killalpaninna mission in the north-east of SA, leading to serious work on Diyari, a Karnic language. Several missionaries worked on Diyari, supported by the South Australian Lutheran community and the Hermannsburg Mission Institute of Hanover. They began with Ernst Homann and Wilhelm Koch (Stevens 1994; Kneebone and Rathjen 1996:31–32; Kneebone 2005b). Successive missionaries built on the work of their predecessors. Johannes Flierl (1858–1947) drew on Homann and Koch (Flierl 1879), and his own work was used by Carl Schoknecht (1841–1905) (Schoknecht and Schoknecht 1997; Schoknecht 1873, ca. 1873). The missionaries were diligent and skilled language workers in their analysis of Diyari, and provided extensive documentation of the language, particularly vocabulary, as well as scriptural translations and rich observations on the ethnography of speaking. This work culminated in the massive thirteen volume work (Reuther 1981) of Johann (J.G.) Reuther (1861–1914), as well as the work of several others, such as Otto Siebert (Siebert 1896–1901). The extraordinary map of 2,468 place-names in arid north-eastern South Australia prepared by Henry Hillier (1875–1958) also comes out of this mission (Hillier 1904); it has been discussed and reproduced in part in Jones (2002).

In 1877 Hermannsburg mission was established in the NT by missionaries moving on from Killalpaninna, which led to major work on Western Arrarnta (or Aranda)¹⁰—one of the Arandic languages. After work on Diyari, Carl Strehlow (1871–1922), the father of the renowned linguist and anthropologist Theodor (T.G.H.) Strehlow (1908–1978) (Moore, this volume-b), produced much work in Western Arrarnta, including ethnography (Strehlow *et al.* 1907–1913), a dictionary (Strehlow n.d.) (about 223 pages of typescript), and translations of scriptures and other religious material (Strehlow 1904, 1925). In general the Lutherans were aware of each other's work, and built on each other's knowledge.

The missionaries, however, were not the only language enthusiasts working on Indigenous languages. One such enthusiast was Christina (Mrs James) Smith (ca. 1809–1893) (McGillivray 2005) whose book on the Buwandik (or Booandik) language of the Mount Gambier region was published in 1880 (Smith 1880). It contains language material from her son Duncan Stewart (1833–1913) who had learned the language as a teenager, and who was appointed as an interpreter in the south-east in 1853 (Blake 2003). While Mrs Smith corresponded with the ethnographer Alfred Howitt (1830–1908), there is little evidence that she and her son made use of previous linguistic work.

The late nineteenth century also saw the reprinting of earlier material (e.g. Stephens 1889), and the collection of anthologies of language material, both nationally (Curr 1886–1887) and locally. The results of Taplin's 48 question survey on 'Aboriginal Folklore', and aspects of the languages spoken by South Australian Aborigines, were published in 1879

10 It was then spelt Aranda, and is now spelt two ways: Eastern Arrernte and Western Arrarnta.

(Taplin 1879b). In the same year James Dominick Woods published an anthology of material on South Australian languages (Woods 1879) which included Taplin's work on the 'Narrinyeri' and the police trooper Samuel Gason's work on the 'Dieyerie Tribe', and reprinted earlier material (e.g. William Wyatt's material on 'The Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes' and ethnographic work by Schürmann and Meyer).

2.3 Early twentieth century

The early twentieth century saw the start of serious survey work by researchers, beginning with Daisy Bates (1859–1951), who did major ethnographic survey work in western South Australia (Bates 1985). These vocabularies are only now beginning to receive proper attention (Nash 2002). A hallmark of Daisy Bates' work was her careful attention to naming the Indigenous consultants she worked with, and the place with which they were associated. Bates started the first large-scale investigation of Mirniny, on the west coast (which forms a dialect chain with languages in southern Western Australia), and Western Desert languages, spoken in the northwest and west of the state. In 1901 a mission was set up at Koonibba on the West Coast, and later the Reverend August Hoff (1886–1971) recorded vocabularies there, although they remained unpublished until 2004 (Hoff and Hoff 2004).

Another researcher of this period was John McConnell Black (1855–1951) (Andrew and Clissold 1986), a botanist who prepared short wordlists of Kaurna, Narungga, Nukunu, Ngarrindjeri, Kukata and Wirangu (Black 1917, 1920). He seems to have been one of the first researchers to apply modern phonetic transcription techniques to Australian languages, identifying retroflex and some interdental consonant sounds, as well as a wide range of phonetic vowels.

The use of phonetic transcription in recording Indigenous languages was further promoted by John Aloysius FitzHerbert (1892–1970), Professor of Classics at the University of Adelaide, who established a Language Committee in 1930–1931 (see further Monaghan, this volume). The committee included the geologist and explorer Charles Chewings (1859–1937), (who compiled and translated Carl Strehlow's Aranda vocabulary in collaboration with FitzHerbert), and the South Australian Museum representative, Norman B. Tindale (1900–1993) (Jones 1993, 1995). They designed a phonetic system based on that of the International Phonetic Association (IPA), but using symbols that were easy to read and reproduce, given the availability of printer's type in South Australia. For example they italicised or made bold the different vowel symbols <a>, <i>, <e>, <o> and <u> to represent the variation in different vowel sounds, and as with the IPA, they used the colon symbol <:> to mark length for both consonants and vowels. The committee's choices were also influenced by the desire to preserve 'legibility for general workers, who may desire to obtain a readable account, without concerning themselves with the finer shades of pronunciation.' (Tindale 1935:262). One missed opportunity was the chance to learn from Gerhardt Laves (1906–1993), a student of Edward Sapir, who briefly met with members of the Language Committee in 1931 (Nash 2001a), but whose knowledge of Sapir's phonemic analysis and fieldwork techniques appear to have made no impact on their work.

The committee's work had several important outcomes. FitzHerbert encouraged the young Theodor (T.G.H.) Strehlow to work on Arrernte (Western Arrarnta) and helped him obtain funding, leading to his MA thesis on the phonetics and grammar of Arrernte, which was later published (Strehlow 1944) (see Moore, this volume-b). Several members were also associated with the Board for Anthropological Research, which conducted several field trips with teams of scientists and ethnographers to document information about Aborigines in SA and the NT. They produced careful documentation, including correct identifications of names

for plants and animals, ways of writing kin-terms, and colour terms, as well as recordings of songs from Koonibba, Macumba, Alice Springs, Hermannsburg by the musicologist E. Harold Davies (1867–1947) (Davies 1927, 1932;¹¹ Ellis 1981). But perhaps the most important linguistic result was the survey work of Norman Tindale, an entomologist by profession, who recorded vocabularies from many Aboriginal groups (Nash 2003; South Australian Museum n.d.; Tindale 1938–1963), including many South Australian languages, as part of survey work for the South Australian Museum. Tindale’s survey of what was known of the language, land and culture of the speakers (Tindale 1974) remains an important reference work. (See Monaghan, this volume for a fuller assessment of Tindale’s contribution.)

With the rise of anthropology as a discipline, and with support from the South Australian Museum, several anthropologists documented language as part of their work. Charles P. Mountford (1890–1977) (Jones 2000a) documented some Ngadjuri and Adnyamathanha. Important language documentation was done by Ronald M. Berndt (1916–1990) (Stanton 1990) and his wife Catherine H. Berndt (1918–1994) (Stanton 1994). Ronald Berndt received informal linguistic training from FitzHerbert, and both Berndts later learned more formally from the linguist Arthur Capell (Berndt *et al.* 1993:10). In 1939 Berndt, then honorary ethnologist at the South Australian Museum, went on his first anthropological fieldtrip, to Murray Bridge, where he started documenting Ngarrindjeri people’s lives and practices, working in particular with Albert Karloan (1864–1943), but also with Pinkie Mack (ca. 1869–1954) and Mark Thalrum Wilson (ca. 1868–1940).¹² Catherine Berndt later worked with them too, and their work resulted in the posthumous publication *A world that was* (Berndt *et al.* 1993). This volume contains a large collection of texts and songs, glossed interlinearly, parts of which have been analysed linguistically (Cerin 1994; Bannister 2004). Berndt documented fragments of other languages, including Western Desert varieties. Unsurprisingly the documentation is often weighted towards his anthropological interests, for example the vocabulary of Ngadjuri (Berndt and Vogelsang 1941) contains the words for ‘adam’s apple’, and the parts of a fire drill, but not the word for ‘foot’ or ‘leg’.

A significant event, in terms of language use, was the Presbyterian Church’s decision to set up Ernabella Mission in 1937 in the far north-west for the Pitjantjatjara people. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Dr Charles Duguid (1884–1986),¹³ insisted on a mission policy of respecting the language, and an expectation that all mission staff would learn Pitjantjatjara. This resulted in a concerted effort by various mission staff to document the language, in particular the Reverend J.R.B. Love (1889–1947) (Love 1986) and Ronald M. Trudinger (Love n.d. ca. 1938; Trudinger 1943; Love 1951), to translate the Bible and to produce practical language resources (Gale 1997; Nicholls forthcoming). Other missions were set up in Pitjantjatjara country with the same approach.

2.4 Late twentieth century work—post World War II

After World War II, the discipline of linguistics began to take shape. At the Anthropology Department of the University of Sydney, the first Australian linguist to receive a doctorate in linguistics, Arthur Capell (1902–1986) (Walsh 1987), was appointed Reader in Oceanic Linguistics in 1949. He encouraged linguists to work on Australian languages, including his stu-

11 In the 1990s, Luise Hercus played back the Davies recordings to people linked to Koonibba, and identified the language of several of the songs (Hercus n.d.e).

12 Biographical information from Berndt *et al.* (1993) and Horton *et al.* (1994).

13 Biographical note attached to MS 5068 Papers of Charles Duguid (1884–1986) in the National Library of Australia. <http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/5068.html#bio> Accessed 14 January 2007.

dents, the South Australian Geoffrey O'Grady (Tryon and Walsh 1997), and Wilfred Douglas (1917–2004) (Glass 2004), who in 1955 published the first work on the phonology of an Australian language (the Western Desert language spoken at Ooldea) (Douglas 1955). Incidentally he appears to have been the first person to give the name 'Western Desert language' to the varieties spoken over much of central and western Australia (Cliff Goddard, pers.comm. to Jane Simpson 2004).¹⁴ In 1954 Capell was joined by Stephen Wurm (1922–2001) (Hercus *et al.* 2001), who had received his doctorate from the University of Vienna (Laycock 1987). Wurm carried out salvage work on many languages, and, in 1957, worked on the Yarli language Malyangapa (Wurm 1957/1976). Among the people who Capell encouraged was Kenneth Hale (1934–2001) (Nash 2001b), who had been trained in anthropological linguistics at Indiana University. Hale and O'Grady went on a field-trip together in 1960 during which they recorded Lower Arrernte from Tom Bagot, Wangkangurru from Mick McLean (who later worked with Luise Hercus), Antikirinya from Barney Lennon, Diyari from Joe Shaw, Nukunu from Gilbert Bramfield, Wirangu from Mrs Harry Miller, Mirniny from Pom Pom, Adnyamathanha from Malcom McKenzie, and 78 words of Barngarla from Harry Crawford [Croft] (Nash and O'Grady 2001). Not long after, from 1966 to 1967, Bernhard Schebeck, who was trained at the Sorbonne, worked with the Adnyamathanha, especially Andrew Coulthard (d. 1970), and published an important collection of texts with a sketch grammar (Schebeck 1974).

In 1956 Capell and Wurm founded the series *Oceania Linguistic Monographs* to publish linguistic work on languages of Australia and the Pacific. The first monograph in the series was written by Capell (1956) on Australian languages, and the clarity and interest of his hypotheses helped linguists to see the languages they were working on in a wider perspective. In this monograph he also re-examined earlier material on Ngarrindjeri, using material from discussions with Ronald Berndt. He encouraged Colin Yallop's reconstruction work on Ngarrindjeri in the light of Luise Hercus' and Catherine Ellis' later recordings (Yallop 1975). The fourth monograph was a grammar of the Western Desert language by Wilfrid Douglas (Douglas 1957/1958).

In Adelaide, T.G.H. Strehlow was appointed senior research fellow in Australian Linguistics at the University of Adelaide in 1946 (Hill 2002).¹⁵ From his department in the 1960s, the linguist Luise Hercus (White 1990), who had obtained first-class honours in both Romance languages and Oriental Studies (Sanskrit and Prakrit) at Oxford University, made several trips together with the ethnomusicologist Catherine Ellis (1935–1996) (Kartomi 1997) and later the anthropologist Isobel White (1912–1998) (McBryde 1997) and others in Ellis' Group Project on Andagarinja (Antikirinya) Women (Barwick 1996). They documented music, songs, myths, places and language for a number of groups. The combination of skills al-

14 An anonymous referee points out that the term 'Western Desert' was used for this region as early as 1936 (Tindale and Cleland 1936), and draws our attention to H.H. Finlayson's recognition of commonalities between people in the region:

The word Luritja, [...], is an Arunta one, meaning 'stranger', and though the term is now also used in a more restricted sense for a group of people in the Western MacDonnell and James ranges, who are the immediate western neighbours of the Aruntas, it is here employed in a general way for all the 'desert' people who extend west of the Larapinta Country, over a vast territory, reaching almost to the Western Australian coastal belts. In that part of this area now under consideration, the bulk of the aboriginal population speak of themselves as Pitchenturras. Other names are used to distinguish other small groups; but all appear to be racially homogenous, and speak with little modification a common Wongapitcha tongue. (Finlayson 1945 [1935]:58–59)

15 Dates from <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/former/> Accessed 22 December 2006.

lowed for more informed fieldwork, and the fact that they were all women helped them document women's songs and rituals. Luise Hercus continued the work, which has resulted in grammars of Arabana (Hercus 1994) and Wirangu (Hercus 1999), salvage work on Nukunu (Hercus 1992), the last recording of Pirlatapa from Fred Johnson (Hercus in Austin 1990), and field notes on other languages including Yardliyawara, Malyangapa and Kuyani (Hercus n.d.b, n.d.c, n.d.d). During this period, the South Australian State Library started producing facsimiles of early works on South Australian languages, such as the works of Meyer, Teichelmann and Schürmann, which were to prove useful to later researchers.

The establishment of a department of linguistics at Monash University in Victoria in 1965 led to John Platt's work on Kukata (Platt 1972) and Wirangu, and also to the documentary linguistics work of Gavan Breen, who carried out salvage work on languages in the north-east such as Ngamini and Yandruwandha (Breen 1976, 2004a, 2004b).

When Robert (R.M.W.) Dixon took up a chair in linguistics at the Australian National University (ANU) in 1970, he and Luise Hercus, (by then teaching Sanskrit at ANU), encouraged several students to carry out work on South Australian languages. This resulted in Maryalyce McDonald's work on the Ngarrindjeri dialect Yaralde, (McDonald 2002), Peter Austin's grammar of Diyari (Austin 1981), Cliff Goddard's work on Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1985, 1996) and Dorothy Tunbridge's popular books on aspects of Adnyamathanha culture (Tunbridge 1988; Tunbridge *et al.* 1988). Dixon's keenness to fill gaps in the knowledge of Indigenous languages across the country resulted in his unearthing important works on South Australian languages, such as the manuscript dictionary of Kurna (Teichelmann 1857), found in South Africa among George Grey's collection of papers.

Work by other linguists includes studies of Pitjantjatjara grammar (Bowe 1990; Rose 2001), and other work on Western Desert languages undertaken in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, as well as Barry Blake and his students' work on the languages of Victoria and South Australia, (Blake 2003; Horgen 2004). Adnyamathanha vocabulary has been documented through the long-term collaboration between the Adnyamathanha speakers May Wilton (nee Demell, ca.1897, 1899–07 April 1978), Pearl McKenzie (nee Wilton 10 June 1922–01 October 1996) and John McKenzie (23 September 1918–October 1986),¹⁶ and the pastoralist John McEntee (McEntee 1976; McEntee, McKenzie and McKenzie 1986; McEntee and McKenzie 1988, 1992). Major work has arisen from efforts to make language materials accessible to speakers, and is discussed in §8. Recent work by Peter Mühlhäusler, his students and colleagues at the University of Adelaide is discussed in §10.1.

Below we discuss in more detail six different aspects of language work: collecting wordlists and vocabularies, analysing sound systems, writing grammars, collecting and analysing texts, interpreting and translation work and sociolinguistic work.

3. Collecting wordlists and vocabularies

South Australia has languages at all points on the spectrum of documentation, ranging from none to extensive. One lost language is Peramangk, the language of the group of people that lived between the Kurna and the Ngarrindjeri people, along the southern Mount Lofty Ranges, and referred to in colonial records as the 'Mount Barker tribe'. Although no words were recorded specifically from this group, Tindale assembled a short card file under their name, now held at the South Australian Museum. Inspection suggests that they are all words from speakers of neighbouring languages used in reference to the Peramangk people, or placenames from that portion of the map thought to be Peramangk territory. It seems none of

¹⁶ Biographical details from John McEntee, e-mail to Jane Simpson 17 January 2007.

the Peramangk words originated from the mouths of Peramangk people themselves.¹⁷ At the other end of the spectrum is Pitjantjatjara, which is still spoken and learnt by children today, and for which there is a comprehensive modern dictionary that has gone into several editions (Goddard 1996). The remainder of the state's languages lie somewhere between these two extremes.

3.1 The first wordlists

The first extant wordlist of a South Australian language, Gaimard's wordlist, of 168 words was the product of deliberate linguistic research (Amery 1998). He compiled a volume of wordlists from across the Pacific, New Guinea and Eastern Indonesia, together with three Australian languages. Gaimard came with a well-formed agenda which included trying to elicit a word for 'God' and numerals including 10 and 20. These concepts are often hard to translate into Indigenous languages. Not surprisingly, he obtained some strange results for Kurna. He transcribed the word for 'God' as *meïo?*, which is probably *meyu*, the Kurna word for 'man', although his question mark indicates he was uncertain of this. His recording of *tenndo* for 'dix', 'ten', is perhaps a borrowing from English, though it may be the Kurna word *tindo* 'sun, day, time, clock'. Another Kurna wordlist was recorded on Flinders Island in Tasmania in 1837 by George Augustus Robinson (1791–1866), or possibly his son Charles, from a Kurna woman kidnapped by sealers from the southern Fleurieu Peninsula some years earlier. This wordlist has only recently been identified as Kurna (Amery 1996).

Most early wordlists tended to reflect the interests of their collectors. The early Kurna wordlists (Amery 2000) include a number of specialised wordlists. William A. Cawthorne (Cawthorne 1926) specialised in terms for artefacts, illustrating them and recording several otherwise unrecorded terms. Edward Stephens recorded 36 terms for birds, which he attached to specimens that were sent to London (Stephens 1838). Some wordlists complemented the work of others. For instance, Louis Piesse (Piesse 1840) noticed some gaps in William Williams' (1839) Kurna wordlist and compiled a list of additional terms, mostly place-names and terms for fauna, using Williams' style of hyphenated and Anglicised spellings. The most extensive vocabularies collected in SA in the very early colonial period were those collected by the three German missionaries Schürmann, Teichelmann and Meyer. Schürmann and Teichelmann published a Kurna vocabulary of about 2,000 words, along with a sketch grammar, in 1840. Teichelmann continued to work on the language, sending a more extensive vocabulary to George Grey in South Africa in 1857. All together, some 3,000 to 3,500 Kurna words were documented. Schürmann published a vocabulary of about 3,000 words in Barngarla in 1844 (Schürmann 1844). Meyer published a wordlist of about 1800 words, in 1843, along with a detailed grammar which includes further words and grammatical affixes of Ramindjeri in a large number of example phrases and sentences (Meyer 1843).

It is also fortunate that Schürmann, Teichelmann and Meyer were trained in philology. Their records, whilst not perfect, were considerably better than most other nineteenth century observers. Some areas of vocabulary, such as body parts and verbs of speaking in Kurna were well documented, as shown by terms such as *pillupilluna* 'the ensiform cartilage', *meya* 'anterior fontanelle', *yärtpandi* 'seems to express speaking the language and pronouncing the words in their full form without the usual, customary and therefore necessary abbreviations and contractions', and *perkendi* 'to crepitate; make a noise, sound etc. (of birds hatching from the egg; of a boil bursting and pus coming out)'. For Ramindjeri, Meyer recorded many

17 Even the name 'Peramangk' is probably a Yaralde label for these people which includes the Yaralde locative suffix *-angk*. This term bears some similarity to the Tanganekald label 'Peramama'. In Kurna the name given for these people may have been Mari Meyunna 'east people' (Schurmann 1987).

verbs, particularly describing specific cultural practices, such as *kenmin* ‘putting coals together for roasting on a fire’; *gaiyuwun* ‘making an incision’; *kerun* ‘catching fish with a net’ and *dāmin* ‘placing a dead body in a tree’. Another area covered comprehensively by Meyer were the many words for fish and shellfish species with at least 30 terms recorded, which doubtless reflects the staple diet of the Ramindjeri people. This contrasts with the lack of fish species terms recorded in Kurna.

Other reasonably comprehensive wordlists compiled for languages in this early period included Moorhouse, Scott’s and Weatherstone’s wordlists for Ngaiawang (Moorhouse 1846; Scott n.d.; Weatherstone 1843). Then later in the nineteenth century, the English to Ngarrindjeri (Narrinyeri) wordlist of the missionary George Taplin, who worked with speakers of the southern dialects of Ngarrindjeri, at Point McLeay mission, was published (Taplin 1879a). The German missionaries working with the Diyari people (also spelt Dieri and Dieyerie) produced comprehensive wordlists (Kneebone and Rathjen 1996; Reuther 1981; Schoknecht 1873).

3.2 Recent documentation of vocabulary

In the twentieth century, the Western Desert language Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara is the only South Australian language to have a good published dictionary (Goddard 1987, 1992a, 1996). However, there are substantial unpublished or self-published vocabularies for several other languages: Tanganekald, the southernmost dialect of Ngarrindjeri, and possibly closer to a separate language (Tindale n.d.); Adnyamathanha in the mid north in the Flinders Ranges region (McEntee and McKenzie 1992; Schebeck 2000); Arabana to the north of Adnyamathanha but south of Diyari (Hercus n.d.a) and Wirangu on the west coast (Hercus 1999). A number of these wordlists have been made available for communities working on these languages, particularly in schools.

The following table summarises the current extent and variation of vocabulary documentation for the different languages of SA. More contemporary lists, compiled from old sources, have not been included.

Table 4.1: Wordlists of South Australian languages

Language	Size of vocabulary	Main sources
Adnyamathanha	2,529 head entries	Schebeck (2000)
Antikirinya	several hundred words	See Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara. Douglas (n.d.)
Arabana–Wangkanguru	2,485 entries	Hercus (n.d.a)
Lower Arrernte	over 2,000 entries	Breen (forthcoming)
Barngarla	2,779	Schürmann (1844)
Bunganditj/Boandik	~ 500	Smith (1880)
Diyari	4,183 head entries	Reuther (1981) ^a
Kurna	3,000–3,500	Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) Teichelmann (1857, 1858)
Kukata	uncertain	Platt (1972)

Language	Size of vocabulary	Main sources
Kuyani	uncertain	Hercus (n.d.b)
Malyangapa-Wadigali	281	Hercus (n.d.c)
Mirniny	509	O'Grady (n.d.)
Narungga	several hundred historically attested words	Black (1920), Johnson (1930–1931) Kühn and Fowler (1887), Wanganeen <i>et al.</i> (2006), Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (2006).
Nawu	13 definite forms	Schürmann (1844) ^b
Ngarrindjeri (Narrinyeri) & Ramindjeri	1000 1769 100 108 27 580 ^c	Taplin (1879a) Meyer (1843) Black (1917) Black (1920) Johnson <i>et al.</i> (1986) Yallop (1975) ^d
Ngadjuri	343	Berndt and Vogelsang (1941)
Ngamini	several hundred words	Breen (1967)
Ngaiawang	1293 369	Moorhouse (1846) Scott (n.d.)
Nukunu	428	Hercus (1992)
Peramangk	nil (possibly a few)	Tindale
Pirlatapa	less than 100	Reuther (1981), Schoknecht (1947), Hercus fieldtape NS22 in Austin (1990)
Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara	ca. 3,000 head entries	Goddard (1992a, 1996)
Wirangu	? entries 84 kB	Hercus (n.d.g)
Yandruwandha	ca. 1750 head entries	Breen (2004b)
Yardliyawara	97	W.M. Green in Curr (1886–1887)
Yarluyandi	850	Hercus (n.d.f)

^a See Kneebone (2005b) for an assessment of the early Diyari sources.

^b Nawu sources are assessed in Hercus and Simpson (2001).

^c About a third of the words cited by Yallop came from James Kartinyeri. The remainder are drawn from Taplin.

- ^d Many additional Ngarrindjeri words are included in the oral texts recorded in Berndt *et al.* (1993), and McDonald (2002) which draws on the unpublished materials of Catherine Ellis and Luise Hercus who worked with speakers in 1963–1964 such as James Brooksie Kartinyeri.

3.3 Neologisms and borrowings

Most attempts to document wordlists in languages have focussed on words in the traditional language, rather than on words that have been adopted into the language from English. Thus Hercus' Nukunu vocabulary (Hercus 1992) has no English borrowings, since it was compiled to retrieve what was still known of the traditional language at a time when the language was no longer actively spoken. Linguists have mostly documented terms used traditionally, rather than the everyday language of the present time, which would conceivably contain many English borrowings and possibly code-mixing.

The early recorders include a handful of English borrowings. Teichelmann and Schürmann list one form *mutyerta* 'clothing' as a borrowing—from 'my shirt'; other borrowings appear in their example sentences and phraseology section, including *monni* and *mani* 'money', *tammeaku* 'hatchet' (from 'tommyhawk'), *bukketti* 'bucket', and *paper* 'letter'. Thus there were probably many more English words used in Kurna in the 1830s and 1840s than existing documentation reveals. Whilst few borrowings appear in the Kurna vocabularies, in excess of 100 terms for new concepts, including semantic extensions, derivations, compounds and reduplicated forms, were documented (Amery 1993). A similar approach was adopted by Meyer for Ramindjeri, Schürmann for Barngarla and Moorhouse for Ngaiawang with examples such as: Barngarla *bokirri* 'anything to rest the feet upon, shoe', Ramindjeri, *turninyeri* 'shoe, boot' (from 'foot' + 'belonging to'), Ngaiawang *tudngarru* 'that which belongs to the foot, shoe', Barngarla *katta* 'club, gun', Ramindjeri *pandappure* 'gun, musket' (found also in Kurna as *parndapure* 'ball, bullet, gun' possibly involving Kurna *pure* 'stone' and *parnda* 'limestone'), Ramindjeri *ngarro-watyeri* 'ship' (from 'manufactured wood' + *-waityeri* 'full of'), Barngarla *warri-yoko* 'ship' (from 'wind' + *yoko* not attested in Barngarla, but attested as 'ship' in Kurna). Probably the presence of these terms reflects the lexicographers' intent to make the dictionaries useful for communication.

Although the avoidance of borrowings and neologisms is common in contemporary dictionaries, some English borrowings do appear in the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara dictionary (Goddard 1996), for example *aapa* 'part' (from English 'half'), *rituwana* 'red' (from English 'red one'), *kiripitji* 'grapes', *kita* 'guitar; rock music, rock concert', *kilina* 'clean' and *kilinananyi* 'to clean' (with a verbaliser). However, it seems that only a small fraction of English borrowings in Pitjantjatjara, all of which have been regularly used over a long period of time, actually appear in the dictionary. For instance *raitamilani* 'to write' does not appear, though it is frequently used in contemporary Pitjantjatjara.

4. Analysing sound systems

The German speaking missionaries used <i>, <u>, and <a> for high front, high back and low vowels respectively, as is normal in German. However, at the start Teichelmann and Schürmann felt the need to justify the decision, perhaps because they met some resistance from Matthew Moorhouse, Protector of Aborigines.¹⁸ They did so by referring first to the

18 Schürmann wrote in his diary: 'I was extremely pleased that he [Governor George Gawler] informed the Protector [Moorhouse] that the English style of writing could not be applied to the language of the natives, because its variations confused not only the aborigines, but would also leave five out of six Europeans in doubt as to the correct pronunciation.' (Schürmann 1838–1853).

practical reason (avoiding confusion), and then by pointing to Threlkeld's use of the same system. Meyer and Schürmann used the same system in their grammars. In a paper printed in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, their patron, George Grey, argued for this orthography to be used generally, even though it differed from what he had used for Noongar (Grey 1845). Moorhouse then used this system in his own vocabulary, and refers to this argument when justifying his spelling conventions:

The orthography here adopted is that which has been recommended by the Royal Geographical Society, and in which most of the Polynesian and New Holland languages are recorded. (Moorhouse 1846:vii)

Elsewhere, he and the missionaries argued for the practical usefulness of their chosen spelling system:

The system of education that has hitherto been adopted has been almost entirely carried on in the native language. The advantage of this plan over the English is, that the characters used for spelling native words have a fixed and invariable sound, and that the children, according to an undeviating rule, in a short time spell and pronounce the word. (Report upon the state of education amongst the Aborigines, 03 March 1843, cited by Hunt 1971:39.)

All the early recorders, however, tended to make further height distinctions, sometimes writing /u/ and /i/ as <o> and <e>,¹⁹ most often word-finally, or preceding retroflex consonants. They also often wrote diphthongs for high front and low vowels preceding lamino-palatal consonants. Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840:3) recognised the word-final alternation in Kurna:

If a word end in *o*, and an affix or termination is added, then *o* regularly is changed into *u*; if in *e*, then *e* is changed into *i*.

Meyer built on Teichelmann and Schürmann's initial work, and described the phonetics of Ramindjeri in more detail. He systematically recorded phonetic alternations in vowels and consonants, and proposed regular phonological rules, to account for alternations such as elision or change of stem-final vowels before a following affix.

Places of articulation of consonants provided more problems. Retroflex consonants were noted as though they were merely a variant of the corresponding alveolar consonant. In Kurna, for example Teichelmann and Schürman noted (without comment on articulation):

It is necessary to mention a few letters which are frequently changed or omitted, even amongst one and the same tribe [...]
R is changed with *l* or *d*; as *kurlana*, *kullana*; *garla*, *gadla*; *murla*, *mulla*.
R omitted before *n*; as, *marnkutye*, *mankutye*; *marngandi*, *mangandi*; *nurnti*, *nunti*.
R before *t*, changed into *t*; as, *ngartendi*, *ngattendi*; *narta*, *natta*. (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:3)

Lamino-dental consonants were not recognised in the early published grammars, although occasional words were written with <th>, which probably represents a lamino-dental stop or fricative. Later, Taplin also recognised interdental in Ngarrindjeri (McDonald 2002). Moorhouse makes a distinction word-initially between <dl>, <l> and <ll> which presumably reflects a contrast between initial lateral consonants, although exactly what the contrast is is not clear.

Problems with determining manner of articulation arose with voicing. Voicing is distinctive in English, French and German. It is not distinctive word-initially in the Thura Yura languages, although there is an apparent voicing alternation following the stressed syllable,

19 McDonald (1977, 2002) argues that Yarlalde (Ngarrindjeri) does in fact have a five vowel system.

probably depending on whether the stressed vowel is long or not. Early recorders attempted to find voicing distinctions. However Teichelmann and Schürmann recognised that something was going on in Kurna: ‘*B* is confounded with *p*; *d* with *t*; and *g* with *k*.’ (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:3). Meyer added the suggestion that ‘an intermediate sound’ might be used, and provided a rule for a voicing alternation in Ramindjeri:

‘*D*,’ ‘*g*,’ and ‘*b*’ become ‘*t*,’ ‘*k*,’ and ‘*p*’ before an affix commencing with a vowel, as, *yarnde*, *spear*; *yarnt-il*, *by (a) spear*. (Meyer 1843:12)

Problems also arose with the rhotic sounds—the Thura Yura languages generally have three, distinguished by place and manner. Teichelmann and Schürmann recognised at least two sounds, but did not systematically mark the difference orthographically between the rhotics:

r sometimes sounds as *r* in English, sometimes rather softer, as *birri*, *marra*, *gurltendi*, &c. (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:1).

R has generally the same power as in English, but sometimes it has a very capricious sound which it is difficult to imitate. To approach the native pronunciation, put the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth and then pronounce *r* dwelling some time upon it (Schürmann 1844:1).

5. Writing grammars

Australian languages presented unexpected analytical problems to the early missionaries and language recorders, who were all coming fresh from European languages. But a willingness to consider new solutions to describing these problems is seen in the four early grammars of South Australian languages (Meyer 1843; Moorhouse 1846; Schürmann 1844; Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840).

5.1 Noun morphology

In terms of noun morphology, the ergative-absolutive case system is the most striking difference between Australian languages and the European languages with which the grammarians were familiar. Following Threlkeld (1834), Teichelmann and Schürmann called the ergative ‘active’, and linked the active case to ‘active, or transitive’ verbs. Schürmann and Moorhouse both contrasted ‘active nominative’ with ‘nominative’, which Schürmann at least linked to verb class, defining active verbs as those that have active nominative subjects. Teichelmann and Schürmann also called the ergative ‘ablative’, a usage Meyer chose for Ramindjeri. Meyer has a careful discussion of the reasons for his choice (1843:12, 38–42).

5.2 Verb morphology

In terms of verb morphology, all authors examined verbs from different angles. They each looked at verbs in two ways, classifying verb stems, and classifying the tense, mood and aspect forms of verbs. They each divided verb stems into different verb ‘genera’ (Teichelmann and Schürmann), ‘conjugations’ (Schürmann) or kinds (Moorhouse). They all recognised the importance of the basic division between transitive and intransitive verbs, and recognised verbs derived from these types. The similarity of the categories they chose, and the ways in which they defined those categories show how they built on each other’s understandings, and their knowledge of the categories of classical grammar. (See Appendix 3.)

Meyer diverged from the others in his analysis of the verbs, partly as a result of a peculiar case-assigning property of Ramindjeri middle verbs. He noticed that many verbs had two forms, which seem to express similar meanings (Meyer 1843:38).

- (1) a. *Ngāte-yan lakk-in*
‘I spear him’
b. *Ngāp-il lagg-l-in* <sic>
‘I spear him’
- (2) a. *Korn-il lakk-in mām-*
‘The man spears the fish’
b. *Korne laggel-in mām-il*
‘The man spears the fish’

Meyer glosses (2a) as ‘There is a spearing the fish by the man’, and (2b) as ‘The man spearing is with the fish’. He gives a detailed analysis of the alternation, which in some ways prefigures the antipassive analysis of modern grammarians (McDonald 1977, 2002; Bannister 2004). Following Threlkeld (1834), he proposes grouping those apparent verbs, which take nominative subjects, with nouns and adjectives (which would also have nominative subjects), as ‘participles or adjectives’. He goes beyond Threlkeld in proposing that those apparent verbs which take ergative subjects are ‘verbal substantives, or gerunds, or the mere names of the actions, without reference to anything else, like the Greek infinitive with the article’ (Meyer 1843:40). Finally he allows that some verbs which take either nominative or ergative subjects can be compared with English words ending in *-ing*, i.e. they act sometimes as participles and sometimes as gerunds.

What drives him to this analysis is that when the verb ‘spear’ has the *-el* affix, if the thing speared appears at all, it often has a case-marker homophonous with the ergative, as in (2b). This ending *-il* can appear in sentences with intransitive verbs to denote the cause of an event, e.g.

- (3) *Wīr-in-ap yarnt-il*²⁰
sick-am-I spear-from
‘I am sick from a spear wound’

In order to provide a uniform account of the functions of the case suffix *-il* and the pronoun *ngāte*, Meyer proposes that the common function is Ablative, and thus that in (1a) and (2a) the sentences are actually like passives, the agent being expressed with the Ablative.

The others did not adopt Meyer’s proposal specifically, although Moorhouse writes that: ‘The English passive voice is not expressed by an inflection of the verb, but the application of the active nominative case’ (Moorhouse 1846:24). There is an indirect allusion to the participle analysis in Teichelmann when he writes:

Whether you look upon the verb as a primitive verb, or whether you consider it as a verbal noun matters very little, the only difference I have observed is, that considering it as a verbal noun it assists you some times materially to ascertain the real meaning of the verb.
(Teichelmann 1858)

The second way of looking at verbs concerns the tense, mood and aspect system of the languages. The authors have clearly recognised important categories in Pama-Nyungan languages, such as the use of special endings for negative imperatives, the optative, the use of a

20 *-ap* is the nominative form of the first person singular pronoun, distinct from the accusative *-an* and the ergative *-at*.

non-past tense, and irrealis endings, as shown in Appendix 4. A third angle concerns person-number agreement. Teichelmann and Schürmann have what look like bound pronouns as part of verb endings for particular Kaurna and Barngarla tense, aspect and mood combinations, although they do recognise that pronouns can be attached to verbs. Meyer distinguishes bound pronouns quite clearly for Ramindjeri, and this is adopted by Moorhouse for Ngaiawang. Meyer writes:

The verb undergoes no change on account of number and person, which are expressed by the subject of the proposition. The pronouns separable and inseparable stand before or are affixed to the verb or some other word in the sentence ... (Meyer 1843:43)

5.3 Word order

The four early grammarians all had some acquaintance with Latin, which has fairly free word order. Since three of them were German speakers, it is probable that this made it easy for them to recognise that information structure, rather than grammatical function was a major determinant of word order. However, only Teichelmann and Schürmann explicitly comment on this:

A general rule is, that that part of a sentence which is of more importance in the idea of the speaker, and upon which he will draw the attention of the hearer, is put first; therefore, also, the accusative is put before the verb [...] (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840: 24)

5.4 Classifying languages—historical origins

Perhaps owing to George Grey's enthusiasm (Grey 1845),²¹ the relationship of languages in Australia was a topic of interest to several of the early grammarians. Teichelmann and Schürmann led the way by saying that their experience supported Grey's and Threlkeld's conjecture 'that all the Australian languages are derived from one root' (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:vi). They also suggest that the Adelaide language is more similar to those in the west than to the east. Schürmann asserts that the languages from New South Wales to Swan River 'constitute only one language' (Schürmann 1844:v). Moorhouse takes issue with the strong claim that they are one language, but agrees with the claim of ultimate relatedness:

The term 'dialect' is scarcely applicable to the languages of New Holland. They differ in root more than the English, French, and German languages differ from each other. Not one-twentieth part of the words agree in root; and yet there is evidence sufficient to satisfy any one that they belong to one family, and had their origin from one common source. (Moorhouse 1846:vi)

In the early twentieth century the first large-scale systematic classification of Australian languages appeared, compiled by a Viennese linguist, Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954), based on a careful reading of the sources (Schmidt 1919). While some of the materials he used have been superseded or found to be unreliable (Dixon 1980:15), many of his proposed groupings have held up, including, with some modifications, his recognition of language groups in South Australia. Since then Schmidt's proposals have been refined, first in the large-scale

21 For example, Moorhouse wrote a letter to George Grey in 1843 in which he makes a detailed comparison of grammatical points in Grey's description of the Swan River language with the Adelaide and Encounter Bay languages (Moorhouse 1843). The reason he gives for writing the letter is:

These points are important to us, who are in contact with the Adelaide dialect, for if the observation[s] contained in the Grammar of Western Australia are found, upon extended investigation, to be correct there is a wider difference in the principles of the language than we imagine[d] to exist.

surveys of O'Grady *et al.* (1966), Oates and Oates (1970), and Dixon (1980), and the maps in Wurm *et al.* (1981), and then in detailed reconstruction work on individual families: in South Australia the Karnic languages (Austin 1990; Bower 2001), the Thura Yura languages (Simpson and Hercus 2004), and the Yarli languages (Hercus and Austin 2004).

6. Collecting texts and analysing discourse

Few South Australian languages are supported by an extensive body of recorded texts. Some early observers, especially those who compiled grammars, recorded illustrative sentences in the languages they were studying. Notable amongst these are hundreds of examples of phrases and sentences recorded in Kurna (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840; Teichelmann 1857), Barngarla (Schürmann 1844), and Ramindjeri (Meyer 1843). However, very few longer texts were recorded. The missionary Samuel Klose preserved letters in Kurna, including ones that were sent to Germany in 1843 by two Kurna boys, Pitpauwe and Wailtye (see Amery 2000:99–100), a short note penned in 1845 by a young girl, Itya Maii, preserved in Grey's collection in South Africa (see Amery 2000:100), and an earlier protest letter/petition housed in the SA State Library. In the early years of the twentieth century, Diyari people wrote letters to missionaries in Diyari, and perhaps to each other, over a period of 60 years (Austin 1986; Gale 1997:62–64).

Perhaps the first Dreaming narrative to be recorded in the vernacular was the Monana story of just 33 words in Kurna, told by Kadlitpinna ('Captain Jack'). It was recorded by William Wyatt probably between 1837 and 1839, but only published in 1879 (Woods 1879: 25). Similarly, Taplin recorded a short version (42 words) of the Pelican and Magpie story in Ngarrindjeri, which was later published (Taplin 1879a:39), as well as a song (Taplin 1879b: 39). In 1924 David Unaipon published with the help of the Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA) a booklet of his writings which included a short poem 'Ngarrindjeri saying' in Ngarrindjeri and English.

Of note is the writing down as well as dictation of Diyari 'legends' by Dintibana Kinjmilana (Sam) in the early 1930s for the ethnographer and doctor Henry Kenneth (H.K.) Fry (1886–1959) (Fry 1937:271; Austin 1986:178; Gale 1997:64–65), and the recording of the Waiyungari (Waijungari) story, as told by Frank Blackmoor and written down by an unknown young literate Ngarrindjeri man in 1934 (Tindale 1935).

As mentioned earlier, Ronald and Catherine Berndt recorded a large collection of texts in Ngarrindjeri, a total of 163 between 1939 and 1942 (Berndt *et al.* 1993).²² These are supplied with an 'interlinear translation', though there is no morphemic analysis and the interlinear glosses supplied are inconsistent, with the same word being glossed in different ways. For instance, in the first Ngarrindjeri text *a* is glossed variously as 'those', 'that' and 'and', whilst numerous other Ngarrindjeri words (and suffixes), including *an*, *itjuk*, *itjan*, *itjanin*, *itjanan*, *itji*, *il*, *ila*, *i-ana*, *ina* and *ku-inyi*, are all glossed simply as 'that' (Berndt *et al.* 1993: 332–333). However, *-il* is the 3rd person ergative bound pronoun suffix, as well as an ergative nominal suffix (Cerin 1994). Norman Tindale also recorded a number of texts in Ngarrindjeri and other South Australian languages in his journals. Some of these have been published, but like the Berndts' work, they need thorough linguistic analysis (see Monaghan 2003, and this volume).

With the establishment of linguistics as a discipline of study in the modern era, efforts were made by field linguists to record and analyse long texts, wherever this was still possible.

²² Many of these texts are ethnographic explanations to the Berndts of different cultural traditions of the Ngarrindjeri, while others are Dreaming narratives or 'myths'.

This work could not have been done without the willing and selfless involvement of their language teachers. Such a man was Andrew Coulthard, to whose memory Bernhard Schebeck dedicated the first major volume of Adnyamathanha texts, writing that Coulthard ‘was guided by the idea that soon the day will come where the Adnyamathanha children can be taught their language at school, just as they are taught English’ (Schebeck 1973:x). This book consists of thirteen Adnyamathanha texts collected in the late 1960s with good interlinear translations and comprehensive grammatical notes.

Similarly, Mick McLean Irinjili (1888–1977) (Horton *et al.* 1994), Tim Strangways, Topsy McLean, Arthur McLean and others taught Luise Hercus Arabana and Wangkangurru. Texts from them, collected from 1965 onwards, are published in her grammar (Hercus 1994:297–318) and in *Aboriginal History* (Hercus 1977, 1981), and further volumes of texts of traditional myths and songs, with maps and photographs by Vlad Potezny and others, are archived at the South Australian Museum, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Strehlow Research Centre. The Diyari speaker Ben Murray (Parlku-nguyu-thangkayiwarna) (1893–1994) (Hercus 1995) and Peter Austin published eighteen Diyari texts (Murray and Austin 1981, 1986a, 1986b; Austin 1981; Austin, Hercus and Jones 1988). Bennie Kerwin (c.1890–1976)²³ provided Gavan Breen with texts in Yandruwandha (Hercus and Sutton 1986; Breen 1990, 2004b). Annie Coulthard (Yadandhanha) (1908–1986)²⁴ among others provided Adnyamathanha texts to Dorothy Tunbridge. They remain unpublished, although English translations have been published (Tunbridge *et al.* 1988).

Many spoken texts in Western Desert languages have been recorded and transcribed. Andy Tjilari, Jacky Tjupuru, Billy Punytjunku, Nganyintja, Charlie Ilyatjari, Kukika, Anmanari and others provided Pitjantjatjara texts to Bill Edwards (Puntjunyku 1971; Tjilari 1971a, 1971b; Tjupuru and Edwards 1994; Edwards 1994). Yami Lester and his father Kanytji, Murika, Tommy Tjampu, William Wangkati and Pompe Everard provided the eleven analysed texts given in Cliff Goddard’s (1985) Yankunytjatjara grammar, and thirty five texts appear in Goddard and Kalotas’s book on Yankunytjatjara plant use (Goddard and Kalotas 1985, 2002). Heather Bowe compiled Pitjantjatjara children’s stories (Bowe 1986). Scattered through David Rose’s grammar of Pitjantjatjara (Rose 2001) are about ten transcribed spoken texts, one attributed to Nganyintja, and as an appendix Rose gives a transcription of Ivan Baker’s account of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights movement (Baker 2001). Numerous oral texts have been archived by Ernabella’s Video and Television service (EVTV) and Ara Irititja, an electronic archive of historical material compiled by John Dallwitz, Ron Lister and others (Social History Unit of the Pitjantjatjara Council 2005). Additional Western Desert texts also appear in language learning course materials and vernacular materials produced for the bilingual programs operating in Pitjantjatjara schools. Anangu started recording, transcribing and translating texts when studying through the Anangu Tertiary Education Programme (AnTEP) (begun at Ernabella in 1984). A significant product of the school bilingual education era was the production of secular vernacular material that goes beyond scriptural translations, and educational functions; examples include the Pitjantjatjara story-writing competition (Goddard 1994), and a community newspaper that flourished at Amata in the mid 1980s, because it was meeting a significant social function in the community (Goddard 1990a; McConvell 1989).

23 Biographical information from Horton *et al.* (1994).

24 Biographical information from Horton *et al.* (1994).

7. Sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking

As well as providing grammars and dictionaries, several of the early writers documented ways in which Aboriginal people used language. In 1846, for example, both Schürmann and Meyer published ethnographic accounts in which they documented various speech practices, including naming bestowal, avoidance, and enchantments (Meyer 1846; Schürmann 1846). Meyer's booklet is particularly rich in descriptions of ceremonies and songs of the Ramindjeri, including the observation that 'the songs are frequently in a different language, taken from some different tribes' (Meyer 1846:13). He gives a myth of the origin of the languages, which features the Ramindjerar as the first speakers, then the speakers of the languages to the east, and finally the speakers of the languages to the north (Meyer 1846:14).

Schürmann makes many interesting observations about the Barnjarla, about what were considered insults, how the dead were alluded to, multilingual conversations, and generally about how Aboriginal people interacted with each other:

All grown-up men are perfectly equal; and this is so well understood, that none ever attempt to assume any command over their fellows, but whatever wishes they may entertain with regard to the conduct and actions of others, they must be expressed in the shape of entreaty or persuasion. (Schürmann 1846:12)

Schürmann was one of the first observers to document the use of sign language in Australia (see Kendon, this volume).

Few studies of the ethnography of speaking, as such, have been conducted in SA, and most of these are in relation to the north west of the state, including studies on Pitjantjatjara (Goddard 1992b; Liberman 1982, 1985; Naessan 2000) as well as Naessan's current study of language use at Coober Pedy (Naessan, in progress) and the northwest and Yuhiko Fujiwara's sociolinguistic study of language use in Port Augusta (Fujiwara, in progress). Langlois' study of teenage Pitjantjatjara (albeit in the Northern Territory) is an important first in understanding language change (Langlois 2004). The *Desert Schools* project (NLLIA 1996) whilst focused on the use of English, does discuss the linguistic ecology of northwest communities in some detail. The state-wide language needs survey conducted for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in 2001–2002 (McConvell *et al.* 2002) contains many sociolinguistic observations. Schebeck, Hercus and White have worked on Adnyamathanha kinship and its realisation in the grammar of the language (Hercus and White 1973a, 1973b; Schebeck 1973). Several papers on Indigenous placenames in South Australia have also appeared (Hercus *et al.* 2002). Other studies in relation to language revival (see Amery and Gale, this volume) necessarily make many observations about the use of Aboriginal languages in contemporary society.

In recent years there have been studies of the new languages that developed from first contact onwards (see Mühlhäusler, this volume), from the development of pidgins (Foster *et al.* 2003; Simpson 1996; Monaghan 1998) to the rise of 'Nunga English' (the dialect of English spoken by Nungas, who include Aboriginal people of Ngarrindjeri, Kurna and Narungga descent, among others). Peter Sutton investigated the retention of post-vocalic /r/ in a variety of this dialect (Sutton 1989). A vocabulary of Nunga English has been compiled by Philip Clarke (Clarke 1994), and Gregory Wilson has carried out a sociolinguistic study (Wilson 1995).

8. Language and education

In the 1960s people such as the Reverend W. H. (Bill) Edwards and the Reverend James (Jim) Downing, working in the Aboriginal communities in the north of South Australia, became aware of the need to provide training for Indigenous people and to teach non-Indigenous Australians the Indigenous languages. They produced materials such as vocabularies for health workers (Downing 1968). Edwards argued vigorously in favour of bilingual education (Edwards 1967). In 1969 the Uniting Church's establishment of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs led to a range of language work on Central Australian languages including Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara.

This work owed a great deal to Downing, the first director, and his colleague, the Yankunytjatjara man Yami Lester. With Greg Wilson, they started the training of Indigenous people, pioneering interpreter and translator training in 1979. They developed the teaching of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara to Europeans, and they encouraged the production of language materials accessible to speakers, including Learners' Guides (e.g. Goddard 1981). They encouraged grammatical and lexicographic work, such as Goddard's work. Since then, IAD has become the major publisher of dictionaries of Australian languages, including the first pocket dictionary of an Australian language (Goddard general ed. 1997).

Increasingly, community language projects are acknowledging the significant role that linguists have played in the past in documenting their languages, and are now calling on linguists to help them interpret and expand on the language materials now resurfacing from the archives. These materials are now proving to be invaluable as communities strive to revive or maintain their languages for future generations.

One of the hubs of this community language work has been schools. There has been a growing interest shown by schools in the teaching of Indigenous languages, particularly in schools with high Indigenous student populations. With the Commonwealth initiative in the late 1980s to introduce compulsory second language learning in schools, Indigenous parents started to demand their children be given the opportunity to learn their own languages, rather than those of overseas countries. The aim for SA schools was for every student to study a second language, at some stage during their compulsory schooling, by 1995 (Lo Bianco 1987).

However, at the instigation of some Anangu community members, the state-run bilingual programmes in the schools on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands were closed down in 1990 in favour of English-medium programmes. A swan-song publication was the Pitjantjatjara Language Curriculum (Brown and EDSA 1990). Not until 14 years later were support materials once again published for L1 Pitjantjatjara language education on the APY Lands (e.g. Brumby *et al.* 2005) (Guy Tunstill e-mail to Jane Simpson, 16 January 2007). The closure of the bilingual program was greeted enthusiastically by proponents of English literacy based approaches such as 'Two Way Schooling' (Rose 2001). However, some Pitjantjatjara language work continued in the classroom, particularly at Fregon, through the Anangu teachers, many of whom (75 by the end of 2004) had studied in AnTEP, which included units that involved Pitjantjatjara language and literacy.²⁵ But by 2006 some Anangu educators, alarmed at the continuing poor education levels of their children despite the English-medium programmes, were calling for a return to bilingual, bicultural education: 'We want an education that helps us strengthen our identity, not weaken it.' (Katrina Tjitayi, cited in Eickelkamp 2006).

In the 1980s, the southward movement of Anangu families led to the teaching of Pitjantjatjara in Port Augusta, with Chris Warren's help, and in Adelaide with Greg Wilson's help. L2

25 AnTEP, University of South Australia, <http://www.unisa.edu.au/antep/> Accessed 17 January 2007.

programmes for Pitjantjatjara in schools off the APY Lands have been supported through regular curriculum development since then. The demand for language maintenance and revival programs led to the teaching of Arabana and Adnyamathanha in Port Augusta (again with Chris Warren's help) and Adnyamathanha at Nepabunna (with Dorothy Tunbridge's help). Further south, work began on the production of language learning kits by Brian Kirke for both the Ngarrindjeri and Narungga languages (Kirke *et al.*, ca. 1986, 1988). In 1999 there were 39 sites offering 49 Aboriginal language programs to 2,000 students. By 2004 there were 54 sites offering 64 Aboriginal language programs to 4,326 students with over 100 teaching team members. By 2004, 6% of South Australian state schools were offering Aboriginal language programs (SA Department of Education and Children's Services statistics compiled by Guy Tunstill and Greg Wilson, pers.comm. 2005). There is increasing demand for curriculum materials to be written and for resources to be produced to teach these languages, as well as a demand for trained teachers to teach them.

9. Interpreting and translation work

9.1 Interpreting

When the colony of South Australia was established, the sealers and their Aboriginal women had already learnt enough of each others' languages to act as interpreters, with their knowledge of Kurna, Ramindjeri (spoken to the south of Kurna country) and English. For example, at the trial of two sailors charged with theft in 1837, the sealer George Cooper was engaged to interpret for the Aboriginal plaintiffs (Amery 2000:52).

The early Protectors were expected to learn and document the local Indigenous language(s) and were also expected to make use of Indigenous interpreters:

You are recommended to endeavour to attach one or two of the most docile and intelligent of the natives particularly to your person, who should habitually accompany you in your excursions. ... Your interpreter will explain to them that the laws protecting the whites extend also to them, and he should make it his business to assist you, who are appointed to be their guardian, in preventing any aggression or outrage being committed by the settlers upon their persons, property or rights, and when committed, in bringing the perpetrators to justice. ... (Robert Gouger, Colonial Secretary in *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 12 August 1837:1)

Efforts were made to use Indigenous languages in the justice system, but often unsuccessfully. Thus in 1849 Matthew Moorhouse, then the Protector of Aborigines, put on record his objections to the convictions of four Barngarla men, based on admissions they had allegedly made to a police officer:

Corporal Geharty spoke professedly in the native tongue and a very unsatisfactory speaking it was to anyone acquainted with the language—a substantive was used for a verb and a possessive for a personal pronoun ... I would with seriousness say they [the Aboriginal defendants] could not understand such broken phraseology and yet the Corporal gave in evidence what he considered to be the answers to his broken unintelligible questions. Mr Schürmann said in court that the natives could not understand the phrases. (Letter to the Colonial Secretary 08 October 1849, Moorhouse 1840–1857:242–244)

The skills of Aboriginal interpreters were well recognised by the colonists, and consequently they were often called in to interpret: 'One of them who has lived with Wallend, the chief sealer on the island, speaks a little English and understands more so he is a good interpreter' (Woodforde 1836–1837: October 1836). Others among the Kurna and Ngarrindjeri with similar language skills included Encounter Bay Bob, Peter, Pangki Pangki and Charley.

They were mostly called upon to deal with disputes and court cases. But the need for interpreters and translators within Adelaide itself quickly dissipated as the local Kaurna population rapidly declined and the remaining Kaurna learned English.

On the frontier, however, the skills of Aboriginal interpreters were much needed and still sought. Unfortunately, recognition of the importance of using Aboriginal interpreters didn't last. English soon became the only language of the justice system, resulting in questionable outcomes.

The establishment of interpreter training at IAD, as mentioned in section 8, helped increase the number of trained interpreters, but it was still difficult to get institutions to recognise the importance of using them. Even as late as the 1970s and 1980s many Indigenous patients with serious illnesses were evacuated from the north of SA, and from the Northern Territory, to Adelaide, but without any provision for interpreting. This reduced the chances of effective treatment (Donald Simpson, pers.comm. to J. Simpson).

The services of interpreters of Western Desert languages are still needed and called upon, primarily within health and the law courts. For the period 2002–2003 the two Adelaide-based Pitjantjatjara interpreters, Mona Tur and Bill Edwards, were called upon on 180 separate occasions by the three major hospitals in Adelaide and dozens of times by the courts (Bill Edwards, pers.comm.). However, only once was an interpreter called upon by the South Australian Police during this period (based on Interpreting and Translation Centre (ITC) figures).

Only a little has been written about interpreting issues in South Australian contexts (Edwards 1984, 1990; Liberman 1978, 1981). But much of what has been written about interpreting in Central Australia is relevant in northern South Australia (Goldflam 1995). There is still a large unmet demand for interpreters in SA, and no training programs are in place to impart the skills to younger interpreters, apart from those available in Alice Springs. Furthermore, there is a need for intensive language development and discussion of complex medical and legal concepts in order to work out how these might be adequately explained in Indigenous languages. This will entail the development of new terminology and finding metaphors and explanations that make sense within an Anangu cultural framework.

9.2 Translation work

Within days of the arrival of George Gawler in November 1838, the first translation into a South Australian language appeared in print. Gawler's speech to the assembled Indigenous peoples in Adelaide was translated by the then Protector William Wyatt, and published in *The Register*. In May 1840, another of Gawler's speeches was published on the occasion of the Queen's Birthday celebrations, along with Schürmann's translation of the Ten Commandments. Other religious texts, including hymns, prayers, and Bible stories, were translated into Kaurna between 1840 and 1843, although only the hymns seem to have survived.

In the following years, other missionaries working in more remote parts of the colony/state conducted religious translation work in a variety of Indigenous languages. These included the Reverend George Taplin's work on Ngarrindjeri at Point McLeay mission, Flierl, Reuther and Carl Strehlow's work on Diyari at Killalpaninna mission in the north, and the translation of the Lord's Prayer into Ngaiawang. Intensive Bible translation work in Pitjantjatjara began at Ernabella in 1941. A translation undertaken by J.R.B. Love, Ronald Trudinger and 'several Aboriginal co-translators' of the Gospel of St Mark was published by the Bible Society in 1949 and a New Testament was published in 1969. Paul and Ann Eckert,

working with a team of Anangu co-translators,²⁶ have undertaken a complete translation of the New Testament and major portions of the Old Testament into Pitjantjatjara (Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project 2002). This work is summarised in Appendix 2; and is further discussed in Gale (1997).

Some translation work was also conducted within schools in an effort to increase the amount of reading material in Pitjantjatjara available to students in bilingual education programs in the north west of the state between 1940 and the early 1990s. This was particularly the case in the 1980s when bilingual education was at its peak in Northern Territory schools, and staff in bilingual programs cooperated with each other in sharing resources in an effort to 'flood their schools with literature' in the hope of inspiring children to read.

One notable translation into Pitjantjatjara is *Alitjinyi ngura tjukurtjarangka: Alitji in the Dreamtime*, a translation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* undertaken by Nancy Sheppard and Yanyi Baker and illustrated by B.S. Sewell. It was first published in 1975, and was later republished in 1992 as a picture book with new illustrations by Donna Leslie (Sheppard 1975, 1992). This is probably the first translation into an Aboriginal language of a literary classic (see Gale 1997:109). Since Carroll's original makes heavy use of English language play and puns, the translation was an especially demanding task for the translators. Sheppard and Baker incorporated many cultural adaptations in the translation, with the White Rabbit with gloves and fan becoming a Kangaroo with dilly-bag and digging stick, etc. Gale notes that 'an attempt is made in the Pitjantjatjara translation to incorporate the same language play and use of puns that are typical of Carroll's English original' (Gale 1997:109), an intellectually challenging exercise.

Despite the pronouncements of early colonial administrations, there have been surprisingly few official translations undertaken. State and Commonwealth legislation have never been translated into a South Australian language, although the titles for the Maralinga Tjarutja and Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku land grants under the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act were translated (Edwards 1984, 1988). Even the most basic information sheets or brochures promoting government services have seldom been produced in Indigenous languages, despite appearing in a range of migrant languages.

10. Current directions in language work

10.1 Research through universities

The first Indigenous language to be taught at a university in Australia was Pitjantjatjara at the University of Adelaide (e.g. the lecture notes and tapes prepared in 1968 by Wilfrid Douglas and Henk Siliakus). Since 1975, it has been taught in the institutions which have become the University of South Australia. Ngitji Ngitji Mona Tur has been teaching the course along with Bill Edwards for many years, and she is probably the first Indigenous tertiary-level language teacher in Australia. After the retirement of T.G.H. Strehlow from the University of Adelaide in 1974, most research on South Australian languages was conducted by linguists from interstate, except for the continuing language work in the north of South Australia, and work associated with Catherine Ellis at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music which she co-founded at the University of Adelaide (and incidentally where Tur studied ethnomusicology).

26 Including Raymond Tjilya, Peter Nyangu, Ewin Cooper, Douglas Baker, Roderick Munti, Alec Minutjukur, Graham Kulyuru, Mile Williams, Roy O'Toole, Anmanari Alice, Kanytjupayi Armstrong, Margaret Dagg, Muyuru O'Toole, Tjunkaya Tapaya, and Imuna Kenta.

Not until 1993 did this change, with the appointment of Peter Mühlhäusler to the chair of linguistics at Adelaide University. Mühlhäusler had a background in pidgins and creoles and was formulating his ideas about language ecology and ecological approaches to linguistic research (Mühlhäusler 1996). He set about attracting postgraduate students to work on South Australian languages with a particular focus on early German mission records. In the thirteen years since the establishment of the Linguistics Discipline at Adelaide University 16 projects on or related to South Australian languages have been undertaken, either as honours, masters or doctoral research. They cover a wide range of topics and a wide spread of languages. While some lexical and grammatical documentation of traditional languages is being done (Guy Tunstill on Adnyamathanha), there is a move to newer areas such as language reclamation (Amery 2000; Watts 2003), reconstructing aspects of traditional languages from historical sources (Kneebone 2005b; Houston 1999; Robins 2003), language contact and contact languages (Naessan 2000; Monaghan 2003), and language attitudes (Sapinsky 1997).

Additional research has been carried out by researchers in Adelaide on Koeler's Kurna wordlist (Koeler 1842; Amery and Mühlhäusler 2006), South Australian Pidgin (Foster *et al.* 2003), and ecological factors in language revival (Mühlhäusler *et al.* 2004). There is now a community of linguistic researchers in Adelaide with links across the three universities and good cross-disciplinary links to the South Australian Museum, and scholars of history, anthropology, environmental studies and other disciplines.

The close relationship between school programs and linguistic research, beginning with the early work of Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) and continued through the bilingual programs on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, continues today. Greg Wilson worked at Pukatja (Ernabella) school from 1975, and in 1979 began development of the Institute for Aboriginal Development's Interpreter Training Program. In 1981 from an Education Department base in Adelaide, he supported school programs on the Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara Lands, and then in 1986 began teaching Pitjantjatjara between five Adelaide schools, which led to him publishing second-language Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara teaching courses/programs. He went on to study linguistics through the University of New England, writing a thesis on Nunga English (Wilson 1995). Subsequently he shifted over to a position coordinating Aboriginal language programs in schools across South Australia. As part of that job, he is researching Arabana, working with Luise Hercus's materials together with members of the Arabana community, in particular with the late Laurie Stuart (1912–2005),²⁷ Jean Wood, Millie Warren, Pauline Thompson, Syd Strangways, and the late Rex Stuart. Together, they have produced a comprehensive teaching framework R-10 (12) on Arabana, an associated CD and teachers' guide (Wilson and DECS 2004, 2005). Wilson has recently commenced working on Diyari.

Meanwhile, Guy Tunstill, who had studied ethnomusicology and Pitjantjatjara music under Catherine Ellis, moved into language teaching, and taught Pitjantjatjara at Alberton Primary School in the mid-1990s for four years before taking up the job as Aboriginal Languages Project Officer alongside Greg Wilson. Tunstill is now researching Adnyamathanha, combining his Adnyamathanha curriculum-writing job for schools with doctoral study at the University of Adelaide. Tunstill is working closely with Bernhard Schebeck and building on his earlier work, as well as with Lil Neville and Buck McKenzie, and a wider group of Adnyamathanha people, which has also resulted in a comprehensive teaching framework R-10, CD and teacher's guide (Tunstill and DECS 2004, 2005).

27 Luise Hercus, e-mail to Simpson, 09 January 2007.

Amery's linguistic work on Kurna grew out of his work with Kurna Plains School. His longitudinal study (Amery 2000) on the Kurna reclamation movement is the first of its kind. (See Amery and Gale, this volume.)

Gale, having previously investigated the history of writing in Aboriginal languages (Gale 1992, 1997), and published Dreaming narratives (Gale 2000), is now working with a cluster of schools in Murray Bridge running Ngarrindjeri language programs. She is currently compiling a Ngarrindjeri dictionary, writing a pedagogical grammar, a Ngarrindjeri language curriculum and preparing teaching materials.

Linguists have produced a range of materials and resources to support the teaching of Indigenous languages in schools and the community. In addition to dictionaries, grammars, translations and curricula, other resources have been produced ranging from language courses (Amery *et al.* 1997; Kirke 1984), pedagogical grammars and learner's guides (Eckert and Hudson 1988; Goddard 1993) to songbooks (Schultz *et al.* 1999).

10.2 Indigenous linguists

More Indigenous people are working on their families' languages. At first, formal language and linguistics study was mostly undertaken through the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) (now the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Northern Territory), or through the Pitjantjatjara courses first at the University of Adelaide, and later the University of South Australia. In 1984 Patrick McConvell ran an SAL linguistics/vernacular literacy course for Pitjantjatjara speakers at Ernabella (Black and Breen 2001), and in the 1980s two groups of Ngarrindjeri students went to Batchelor, some to work with Steve Johnson (1944–1990) (Evans 1992) at SAL.

Since the 1980s, other Indigenous people have undertaken Kurna language study at the University of Adelaide, as well as formal linguistics study, both interstate and in Adelaide (Dennis O'Brien, grandson of the Kurna Elder Lewis O'Brien, undertook undergraduate linguistics study at the University of Adelaide, and Rebecca Bear-Wingfield started work on Kukata there). Many have been involved in research projects. Dennis O'Brien, Trent Wanganeen, Vincent (Jack) Buckskin, and Jamie Goldsmith have been working with Amery on Kurna research projects at the direction of the Kurna Warra Pintyandi group, led by Lewis O'Brien and Alice Rigney. Dorothy French, along with Syd Sparrow, Sharon Gollan, Howie Sumner, Maria Lane and Kizze Rankine (Ngarrindjeri staff members at the University of South Australia) have been working with Gale to provide Ngarrindjeri language materials in an understandable form to the community.

Lester-Irabinna Rigney and Simone Ulalka Tur at Yunggoorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research, Flinders University, have worked alongside linguists in various projects, especially for the Needs Survey (McConvell *et al.* 2002). Rigney has taken a strong advocacy role for Indigenous languages and has a particular interest in language rights (Rigney 2003). Other Indigenous people have gained linguistic skills to varying extents through participation in language revival workshops or through engaging in collaborative work with linguists. However, many more training opportunities are needed, as was evident in the Needs Survey (McConvell *et al.* 2002).

10.3 Community-based language projects

Aside from the work done in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands through the schools, the church, and the Institute for Aboriginal Development, the Commonwealth Government has begun to fund language work. The National Aboriginal Languages Program (NALP) provided Com-

monwealth government funding for the first time for community-based language projects from 1987 to 1990. In 1989–1990 the Ngarrindjeri, Narungga, and Kurna languages project was funded through this program to employ Kathryn Gale, who had worked as a teacher linguist in NT schools and in the bilingual education program at Ernabella, and Rob Amery, who had previously done linguistic research in the Northern Territory to work with local Nungas, including Josie Agius, Nelson Varcoe and Liz Rigney.

In 1993, Yaitya Warra Wodli (YWW), the South Australian Indigenous language centre, was established to distribute funds from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to community groups proposing language projects across SA. Community projects funded by YWW have sometimes engaged or invited linguists to work with them. In 2001, for example, the Narungga Languages Project administered by the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (NAPA) engaged a linguist, Christina Eira, to assess and compile the extant Narungga material making it accessible for language reconstruction (Wanganeen *et al.* 2006; Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association 2006).

In 2005, the Commonwealth Government funding arrangements for work on Indigenous languages shifted to the Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). DCITA funds obtained by researchers at the University of Adelaide have been used to: compile a guide to South Australian Aboriginal language resources, support further work on Wirangu, document language histories, survey attitudes to language maintenance and revival, undertake a cost-benefit analysis of Kurna language reclamation following on from previous work by Mühlhäusler and Damania (2004), work on Meyer's Encounter Bay materials and Koeler's Kurna wordlist. Current projects include the development of Kukata teaching materials, recording of Ngarrindjeri Elders to produce an electronic and written alphabet book and picture dictionary, a Kurna learner's guide, database of Kurna requests, Ngadjuri picture dictionary, Antikirinya picture dictionary, a training program for Ngarrindjeri language teachers and an Indigenous languages conference. Further funds will be sought to produce Kurna radio programs in collaboration with Radio Adelaide and to produce a series of greeting cards in Kurna. A Ngarrindjeri learner's guide will be produced by Mary-Anne Gale and Dorothy French with DCITA funds obtained by the University of South Australia.

11. Directions for future language work

Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara continue to be spoken by children, and must be counted as some of the 'strongest' Indigenous languages in Australia. As such, they provide scope for deep semantic and syntactic studies of the kind only possible when native speakers are involved. A start has been made on this with Goddard's investigation of emotions and semantic primitives in these languages (Goddard 1990b, 1991a, 1991b).

Elsewhere, there is diminishing scope for basic linguistic description of SA languages, although urgent work is still needed to record the last rememberers of Kukata and Mirniny on the west coast. The focus of research is shifting from linguistic description to applied areas including language teaching in the education sector and language revival. There is significant interest from Indigenous communities in language revival and there is much room for linguistic research in this emerging field (see Amery and Gale, this volume). There is a need for good dictionaries, pedagogical grammars and other language learning materials. There is also a need for intensive language development and language planning in these contexts (see Amery 2001).

Sociolinguistic studies have been relatively rare in SA, as mentioned earlier, and, along with language change are fruitful areas for further research. What is the impact of English on South Australia's remaining languages, in terms of phonology, vocabulary, syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics and the sociology of language? Those of us working on Aboriginal language revival and Indigenous language teaching in the education sector are aware of some of this influence and language change; however no detailed investigations have yet been undertaken. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, interpreting and translation is a much under-researched area. There is a need to investigate communication issues in Indigenous health and for further studies of language and the law and languages in the media. These are not simply topics of academic interest. They are issues of life and death and quality of life for many Indigenous peoples, be they speakers of traditional languages or Aboriginal English.

12. Conclusion

The documentation of South Australia's languages began before colonisation in 1836. Then there was a flurry of activity in the early years of the colony when a knowledge of Indigenous languages was a valuable and sought after commodity. However, this interest soon waned as Indigenous peoples learned English and linguistic groups diminished rapidly, largely as a result of introduced diseases. Unfortunately modern linguistic description and recording techniques arrived too late for good documentation of the majority of South Australia's Indigenous languages. As a result, detailed knowledge of many languages has been lost forever.

Several people stand out in the history of linguistic research in South Australia. The missionaries Teichelmann, Schürmann and Meyer, as well as the Protector Moorhouse, were exemplary for their pioneering efforts in documenting Kurna, Barngarla, Ramindjeri and Ngaiawang, and for producing the first grammars of South Australian languages. Their work laid the foundation for others. Reuther, building on the Diyari language work of the earlier Hermannsburg Mission Institute missionaries, compiled perhaps the largest vocabulary of a South Australian language, and also carried out fairly extensive comparative work with neighbouring languages in the Lake Eyre region, giving us some knowledge of a number of otherwise little known languages. Norman Tindale assembled extensive vocabularies and some texts of numerous languages from across the state (and interstate), but little grammatical analysis. Luise Hercus (this volume) applied modern linguistic description to a range of languages in varying states of attrition. Had she not done so, our knowledge of South Australian languages would be much diminished. The Reverend Jim Downing, the Reverend Bill Edwards and Yami Lester were pioneers in establishing applied linguistic work which has not only helped document Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara and keep them strong, but has led the way for speakers of many languages to gain access to material in their languages. Peter Mühlhäusler at the University of Adelaide has inspired postgraduate students to study South Australian Indigenous languages and language issues.

There have been periods of activity when much linguistic work has been produced and periods of relative inactivity. Of course the most productive work came out of intensive times spent by skilled recorders working with fluent speakers of the language. Such comprehensive linguistic documentation required the cooperation of speakers, as well as an understanding of anthropology, ethnomusicology and the physical world on the part of the recorder. Although most early observers primarily collected wordlists, we are fortunate that some missionaries and a few others compiled grammars, and recorded example sentences to illustrate different points of grammar. Some even moved to the next stage of their evangelical work of translating portions of the Scriptures.

By contrast, contemporary linguistic reclamation work, which draws on these early historical materials, requires a knowledge of history, philology, orthographic conventions, handwriting and foreign languages (especially German in South Australia). Locating early sources is a tedious, time-consuming and often hit-and-miss exercise. But again, success is achieved in such language revival activities by working in happy collaboration with the Indigenous owners of the languages being revived.

The nature of linguistic work in SA has changed over the years, just as the science of linguistics has developed and diversified, and as our understanding and knowledge of language and language function deepen. By necessity, work being conducted on Indigenous languages has also had to change in response to the changes in the status of Indigenous languages. The flurry of documentation by recorders, before languages were lost, has now enabled work to intensify on language reclamation. But most importantly, those working on Indigenous languages today are taking direction from the Indigenous owners of the languages, and are responding to demands for help from the community and schools. The future of language work in SA is one of cooperative collaboration between all interested people.

Appendix 1: Timeline on SA Indigenous languages and key events

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1826	First known recording of a South Australian language, at King George Sound (Albany), WA.	Sealers living with Aborigines learn and use Aboriginal languages, including Kurna.
1833	First words published of a South Australian language (Gaimard 1830–34).	
1836		British officially invade Kurna land, Adelaide Plains.
1838		Governor's speech urging Aborigines to speak English is translated into Kurna.
1839		C. Teichelmann and C. Schürmann start a school for Aborigines in Adelaide adopting bilingual principles.
1840	First substantial grammar and vocabulary of Kurna published, by the authors (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840).	Publication of the translation of the Ten Commandments in Kurna (<i>South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register</i> , Friday May 26 1840).
1843	First substantial grammar and vocabulary of Ramindjeri published in Adelaide (Meyer 1843).	Klose sends Kurna translations of six German hymns back to Germany.

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1844	First substantial grammar and vocabulary of Barngarla published in Adelaide by George Dehane (Schürmann 1844).	Governor George Grey revokes the bilingual education policy in favour of English-only education for Aboriginal children.
1845	Hypothesis published on the relatedness of South Australian languages to other Australian languages (Grey 1845).	Indigenous children forcibly relocated to an English-only school, from Piltawodli, a bilingual school. Within weeks Klose observes children using English amongst themselves. Grey forbids Teichelmann from preaching in Kaurna.
1846	First substantial vocabulary and grammatical notes of Ngaiawang published in Adelaide (Moorhouse 1846).	
1850		Poonindie Mission founded near Port Lincoln on Barngarla land, bringing Aborigines together whose only common language was English (Brock and Kartinyeri 1989).
1859		Point McLeay Mission founded near Lake Alexandrina on Ngarrindjeri land (Jenkin 1979).
1864	First publication of Bible selections in Ngarrindjeri (Taplin 1864a), perhaps the first publication of part of the Bible in an Indigenous Australian language.	
1866–1915	Missionaries at Killalpaninna document Diyari (Homann, Schoknecht, Flierl, Siebert, Reuther, Carl Strehlow, Reidel).	Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna Missions founded near Cooper's Creek on Diyari land. Killalpaninna adopts bilingual and then trilingual education policy (Stevens 1994).
1867–1868		Point Pearce Mission founded on Yorke Peninsula on Narungga land (Hill and Hill 1975).
1878	Publication of Ngarrindjeri grammar (Taplin 1878).	
1879	George Taplin and J.D. Woods publish edited collections of material on South Australian languages (Taplin 1879b; Woods 1879).	

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1880	First vocabulary and grammatical notes on Buwandik published (Smith 1880).	
1887	Edward Curr published a compilation of small vocabularies of Australian languages (Curr 1886–1887).	
1897		Publication of the Diyari Bible (Reuther and Strehlow 1897).
1901		Koonibba mission founded near Denial Bay on Wirangu land (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia 1926).
1917–1920	John Black publishes vocabularies of South Australian languages using modified phonetic alphabet.	
1918–1993	Norman Tindale starts documenting Australian languages and customs based in the South Australian Museum.	
1918	Daisy Bates starts documenting languages of the west, initially based at Ooldea in Kukata, Ngalia, Wirangu and Mirniny country.	
1920	C. Hoff becomes superintendent of Koonibba mission and records some West Coast language material.	
1924		David Unaipon, a Ngarrindjeri man, publishes <i>Ngarrindjeri Legends</i> (Unaipon 1927).
1926	Founding of the Board for Anthropological Research, South Australia (Tindale 1974)	
1930–1931	Language Committee at Adelaide University (instigated by J.A. FitzHerbert) promoted phonetic transcription of Aboriginal languages.	
1932		By 1932 the United Aborigines' Mission had missionaries at Swan Reach, Ooldea, Finniss Springs, Nepabunna and Quorn (Kwan 1987).

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1935– 1937	Tindale publishes wordlists, texts and notes on Kurna, Ngadjuri, Yaralde and Narrunga.	
1937		Umeewarra Mission and Davenport Station founded near Port Augusta in Nukunu and Barngarla country.
1937		Ernabella Mission founded. Bilingual principles adopted in the school. Followed by similar schools at Amata, Fregon, Indulkana, Mimili and Pipalyatjara on Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara land.
1938– 1939	Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition led by Tindale and Joseph Birdsell	
1939	Ronald Berndt starts documenting Ngarrindjeri (Yaralde) life and language, later with Catherine Berndt's help (Berndt <i>et al.</i> 1993).	
1943	Ronald Trudinger publishes the first grammar of Pitjantjatjara (Trudinger 1943)	
1946	T.G.H. Strehlow becomes Senior Research Fellow in Australian Linguistics at the University of Adelaide.	
1947	Schoknecht's grammar of Diyari is translated (Schoknecht 1947).	
1954		Yalata Aboriginal Reserve proclaimed in Wirangu country.
1955	Wilfrid Douglas publishes the first article on the phonology of an Australian language (Western Desert) (Douglas 1955)	
1956		Country of the Kukata and their neighbours contaminated with radioactive waste.
1965–	Luise Hercus starts documenting South Australian languages.	

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1966		Pitjantjatjara language course introduced in the University of Adelaide. Moved to Torrens College of Advanced Education. Still taught at the University of South Australia.
1969		South Australian Education Department agreed to educate children in remote Aboriginal communities.
1972	First published sketch grammar of Kukata (Platt 1972).	
1974	First published text collection and grammatical notes on Adnyamathanha (Schebeck 1974).	
1980–1981	First published grammar of Diyari (Austin 1981).	March 1981: Passage of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act (SA) (Edwards 1988, Baker 2001). First Pitjantjatjara programs taught in Port Augusta schools.
1984		Beginning of the Anangu Teacher Education Program (AnTEP) to train Indigenous students living in the north-west of South Australia as teachers (Underwood 2002). First test transmission of EVTV, TV broadcasting by Pitjantjatjara from Ernabella (PY Media 2004). By 1984 the S.A. Ethnic Affairs Commission is providing interpreting services in indigenous languages. (Erricos L. Neophytou pers.comm. to Jane Simpson 06 February 2004)
1985	First published grammar of Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1985).	Kurna Plains school founded for Aboriginal children living in Adelaide. In 1986 Alice Rigney, a Kurna/Narunga woman is appointed as Principal.
1985–1986		Ngarrindjeri people go to the School of Australian Linguistics, Batchelor, Northern Territory to study linguistics.
ca. 1986	Ngarrindjeri Learner's Kit produced. (Kirke <i>et al.</i> ca. 1986)	

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
1987	First published dictionary of Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1987), revised in 1992 and 1996 (Goddard 1992a, 1996).	
1988	First modern learners' guide to Pitjantjatjara published (Eckert and Hudson 1988).	
1988	Narunga Learner's Kit produced (Kirke <i>et al.</i> 1988).	
1990		The Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara Education Committee recommends moving away from bilingual education to an English-only approach (Rose 2001:5; Gray and Cowey 2000).
1990		Songwriters' workshop, Tandanya. 33 songs written in Ngarrindjeri, Narunga and Kurna and songbook produced (Ngarrindjeri Narrunga and Kurna Languages Project 1990).
1994	First published grammar of Arabana (Hercus 1994).	Kurna, Pitjantjatjara and Antikirinya among the first Indigenous languages to be taught in accredited programs at senior secondary level in Australian schools.
1996	First pocket dictionary of an Indigenous Australian language published (of Pitjantjatjara) (Goddard 1996)	Publication of Australian Indigenous Languages Framework for teaching Indigenous language in secondary schools (SSABSA 1996).
1997		Kurna linguistics course introduced at the University of Adelaide.
1999	First published grammar of Wirangu (Hercus 1999).	
2000		First published study of reclamation of an Australian language (Kurna) (Amery 2000).
2002	Publication of the New Testament and part of the Old Testament in Pitjantjatjara (Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project 2002)	

Year	Documentation ^a	Use of Indigenous languages
2004– 2006	<p>Publication of the Hoff vocabularies from the West Coast (Hoff 2004). Publication of the Yandruwandha grammar, texts and dictionary (Breen 2004a, b)</p> <p>Publication of Narungga material (Wanganeen <i>et al.</i> 2006; Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association 2006)</p>	SA Government Interpreting and Translating Centre offered interpreting in Antikirinya, Arrernte, Luritja and Pitjantjatjara, and translating only in Pitjantjatjara. ^b

a Sources for this timeline also include Kwan's useful timelines (Kwan 1987).

b <http://www.translate.sa.gov.au/interpret.htm> Viewed 22 December 2006.

Appendix 2: Nineteenth century religious translations in SA Indigenous languages

Date	Language	Translation	By Whom	Publication
1840	Kaurna	Ten Commandments	C.G. Teichelmann & C.W. Schürmann	<i>The Register</i> , Adelaide, May 1840
1839– 1843	Kaurna	6 German Hymns	2 by C.W. Schürmann 4 by C.G. Teichelmann	Included in a letter sent to Germany by S. Klose 1843.
	Possibly Ngaiawang	Lord's Prayer		
1864	Yaraldi (Ngarrindjeri)	Bible extracts	G. Taplin	<i>Tungarar Jehovald: Yarildewallin: extracts from the Holy Scriptures</i> . Bible Society Adelaide.
1864	Yaraldi (Ngarrindjeri)	Lessons, hymns and prayers	G. Taplin	Aborigines' Friends Association, Adelaide.
1880	Diyari	Catechism and portions of the New Testament	J. Flierl	<i>Christianieli ngujangujara-pepa Dieri jaurani</i> . Adelaide.

Date	Language	Translation	By Whom	Publication
1897	Diyari	First complete New Testament	J.G. Reuther and C. Strehlow	<i>Testamenta marra.</i> <i>Jesuni Christuni</i> <i>ngantjani jaura</i> <i>ninaia</i> <i>karitjamalkana</i> <i>wonti Dieri</i> <i>Jaurani.</i> Tanun- da.

Appendix 3. Verb classes

Kaurna 1840	Kaurna 1857	Ramindjeri 1843	Barngarla 1844	Ngaiawang 1846
neuter, intransitive	neuter, intransitive	neuter, intransitive	simple verb: neuter	‘neuter, intransitive, or those which describe the state or condition of a subject; or an action which has no effect on any external object’
active, transitive	active, transitive	active, transitive	simple verb: active	‘Active or transitive, or those which describe an act which passes from an agent to some external object’
causative and permissive	causative and permissive, formed by the active verb <i>wappendi</i>		causative	‘causative 1 st , those which require personal effort to produce the effect on the object; or 2 nd which cause an agent to produce the effect’

Kaurna 1840	Kaurna 1857	Ramindjeri 1843	Barngarla 1844	Ngaiawang 1846
inchoative 'which denote that a person or object is about to exist in a new form or condition, or at least, under other circumstances'	inchoative verbs, formed of nouns & adjectives			inchoative, 'which denote that a subject is about to change its nature, or exist in a new form'
?reflective? ending in <i>-rendi</i>	reflexive, reciprocal, medial, passive verbs, formed by the termination <i>-rendi</i> .	participle	'medial and reciprocal conjugation, signifying that the action, expressed by the verb has no relation to any particular object or that it is performed by two or more parties reciprocally'	reflective and reciprocal
reduplicative	intensive or iterative verbs, formed by redoubling the root of the verb		intensity	
	continuative verbs, formed by the termination <i>-lyarnendi</i>		continuative	continuative.. 'which denote that the action is still going on'

Kaurna 1840	Kaurna 1857	Ramindjeri 1843	Barngarla 1844	Ngaiawang 1846
	‘verba spontanea’ <i>biltendi</i> , to cut off; <i>biltilaendi</i> , to fly off (as sparks) by itself			
				Verb+ <i>nturrutu</i> [not glossed]

Appendix 4: On verbal categories

Kaurna 1840	Ramindjeri 1843	Barngarla 1844	Ngaiawang 1846
Mood			
Subjunctive	Subjunctive, for, that may Subjunctive nega- tive, for not, that may not	Subjunctive ‘I might/ would go’	Conditional or subjunc- tive
Imperative	Imperative [‘root in- finitive’]	Imperative	Imperative
Prohibitive	Prohibitive		prohibitive, imperative with a negative
Under ‘Infinitive mood’ is given an ending de- noting inten- tion	Necessity or strong inclination	Intensive future ‘the person is willing or resolved to do something’	
Optative	Optative as respects the speaker Optative as respects the subject of the verb	Optative and impera- tive	Optative
Negative optative (preventative)			Preventative or negative optative
Conditional, po- tential	Conditional		Conditional

Kaurna 1840	Ramindjeri 1843	Barngarla 1844	Ngaiawang 1846
Infinitive mood see ‘intention’, and another ending denot- ing ‘what a person presup- posed or be- lieved to be the case’			Infinitive
Indicative		Indicative	
Tense			
Present	Present	Present and future	Present
Preterite/Aorist	Preterite (remote time)	Imperfect or preterite ‘relates to past events’	Imperfect and perfect aorist—one form for neuter verbs, separate for active verbs
Future	Future		
Aspect			
Perfect	Perfect	Perfect ‘when speak- ing of an action as completed’	Perfect aorist (active verbs) ‘struck, or have struck’
	Imperfect	handwritten notes: Pluperfect	
Participles			
		gerund (various forms) of active and neuter verb	past participle
possible passive participle	participle	participle—only given for neuter verb	

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Part 2:
Investigations of the contributions of
particular individuals

5 *Contextualising Yngve Laurell's Australian collections, 1910–1911*

MATHIAS BOSTRÖM¹

1. Introduction

In September 2004, under international media coverage, three Aboriginal leaders from the Kimberleys arrived in Sweden to bring back the human remains that were smuggled out of Australia by members of the Swedish Scientific Expedition to Australia in 1911. Less attention was given to the repatriation some years earlier of copies of the sound recordings from the same expedition, made by the ethnographer Yngve Laurell. Whereas the human remains will be reburied in the area they were robbed from and hopefully left in peace hereafter, the recordings have been put to use after their return to Australia. They have been auditioned at least twice (Koch 2000; Bower 2001) and have attracted interest from linguists and ethnomusicologists, as well as serving as a source of pride among the descendants of one of the communities among whom Laurell recorded (Boström 2003; Bower, this volume).

Due to the new interest in the Swedish Expedition, and as most of the original sources concerning Yngve Laurell's Australian collection are in Sweden (and in Swedish), in this article I would like to present and discuss parts of the collections that might be of interest to linguists and ethnomusicologists. The focus will not be linguistic, though, as it is not my area of expertise; much of the assessment of the linguistic material has been left to more competent scholars. Instead, Laurell's collection will be viewed from a perspective of anthropology of science, and the expedition and its results will be presented in relation to the conditions and preconceptions that framed Laurell's work. The sources Laurell created during his Australian fieldwork probably tell us more about the collector and the contemporaneous discourses on anthropology and the Australian Aborigines, than about the Aboriginal communities Laurell got in contact with.

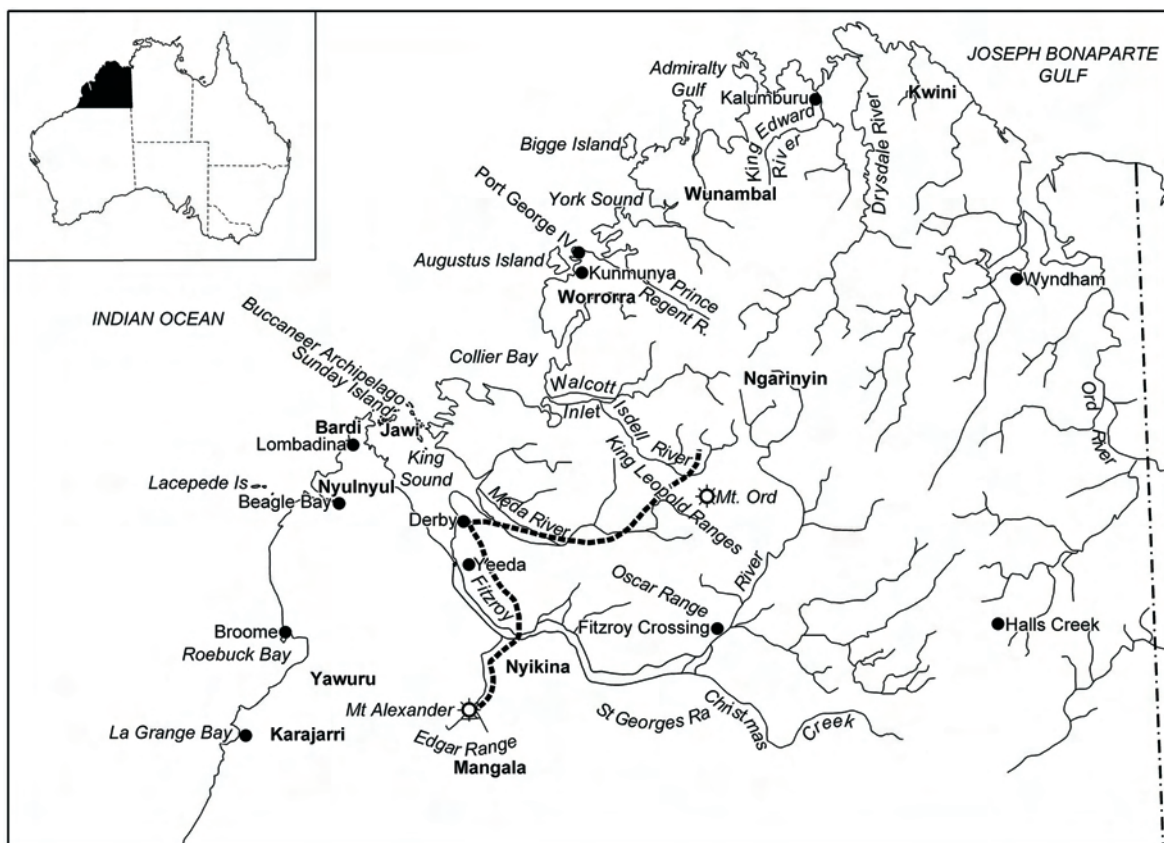
For better source criticism, I believe that the study should not only focus on the making of all the material under scrutiny, but also take into account what happened before and after. The French anthropologist of science Bruno Latour (1999) has suggested a useful model for understanding how, in practice, research activities are part of society. Relevant activities can be understood as communication and exchange within five intertwined loops of interaction,

¹ An earlier draft of this article was presented as a paper at the Fourth International Workshop on Australian Linguistics at the University of Aarhus, June 2002. Many thanks to professor William McGregor for inviting me and all the help, and to Claire Bower for sharing with me her transcriptions and research on Bardi.

called by Latour: *instruments* (i.e. the creation of sources, the methods used, and the places where they are accessible); *colleagues* (the degree of institutionalisation and professionalisation around the research topic); *allies* (who funds the research and under what conditions); *public representation* (how the research topic is communicated to and received by a general public); and *links and knots* (how the other loops come together in the analysis and presentations). Interactions in different loops demand different skills—they might be seen as partly different discourses—and together they affect the conditions and outcomes of any research process.²

2. Yngve Laurell and the background of the expedition

Yngve Laurell (1882–1975) was not among the famous ethnographers in Sweden in the first half of the 20th century; the interest in his work is a quite recent phenomenon (see below). The ‘lack of fame’ was likely due to the fact that Laurell never published any books or scholarly articles based on his fieldwork, which of course negatively affected his career. The main written sources for this article are instead Laurell’s irregularly kept and sometimes randomly arranged field notebooks (1910–11 a–d) and an unfinished draft of a report (Laurell 1913d), today in the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. During the expedition, and a couple of years after (as a way of attracting funding for a new expedition), Laurell wrote a series of pop-



Map 5.1: Route of Laurell’s travels in the Kimberley

2 The point Latour (1999) wants to make about how research should be understood in practise is that we need to get away from the notion that it is a central core, with the activities in the other loops of interaction as a surrounding context.

ular articles for Swedish daily newspapers (Laurell 1910, 1911a–b, 1913a–c), and there are also articles written by journalists when the expedition had returned home and the collections been displayed (e.g. ‘Tedwill’ 1911, 1912; ‘S-m K.’ 1912). I have presented Laurell and his recordings earlier (Boström 2001) and the Swedish Scientific Expedition to Australia is discussed in more depth by the anthropologist Claes Hallgren (2003).³ Full references will be found in my doctoral dissertation, to be published in 2008.

With the intention of following in his father's footsteps and becoming a priest, Yngve Laurell originally started theological studies at Uppsala University in 1903, but later changed to biology. Beginning in 1909 he was employed at the Ethnographic Department (also called the Museum of Ethnography) at the Museum of Natural History in Stockholm, where he worked from 1909 to 1915 and from 1919 to 1920. In 1910 Laurell was sent to Germany to buy phonograph cylinders from the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv in order to develop the forms of culture display at the museum, and to learn the cylinder recording technique used by the archive for field recordings (in that order of importance). The Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv, under the comparative musicologist E. M. von Hornbostel's direction, was a world-leading institution for the study and preservation of cylinder recordings of traditional music from all over the world (see Simon 2000). The Museum of National History in Stockholm planned a biological expedition to Western Australia in the autumn of 1910, and a close friend of Laurell's, the ornithologist Rudolf Söderberg, would participate. The Ethnographic Department was also interested in sending an ethnographer, and with two thirds of the necessary funding covered by private contributors and the rest at his own expense, Laurell was able to join the expedition. He had previous fieldwork experience from collecting traditional fiddle tunes in Sweden, but this was Laurell's first international fieldwork.

3. The expedition

After two months' travel by sea, the Swedish Scientific Expedition to Australia arrived in Freemantle. The expedition was led by the zoologist Eric Mjöberg (who also collected ethnographica and human remains), and apart from Laurell and Söderberg also consisted of the taxidermist Cyrus Widell.

The Kimberley area was chosen because neither the Aboriginal groups nor the wildlife had been subject to a detailed study, as far as the expedition members were aware. Yngve Laurell describes in the report draft that his task during the expedition was to try to get ‘as representative, and for the Australian stone age culture as illuminating an ethnographic collection as possible’ (Laurell 1913d:2).⁴ Consequently, Laurell devoted his time to several groups in the Kimberleys, instead of concentrating his fieldwork on a single Aboriginal group. The ethnographic results, in a wider cultural sense, would have been more complete had he done differently, Laurell admits, but the priority on creating collections of material culture motivated his design, as the Kimberley Aboriginal groups used relatively few artifacts in comparison to other groups in Australia, according to him (Laurell 1913d:2). Laurell's field work illustrates a conflict between an earlier ethnographic practice, focused on collections of material culture collected during expeditions that covered large areas, and more professional (functionalistic) fieldworking ethnographers that spend the time among a single community in order to try to describe their culture as completely as possible.

3 Hallgren was instrumental in the repatriation of the human remains from the Swedish expedition.

4 All quotations are translated from the Swedish by the author, unless otherwise stated.

The expedition started in Derby in October 1910 and traveled south (see Map 5.1 for the expedition's travels). Due to the varying foci of the expedition's members (recent and fossil flora, fauna and ethnography), and also personal conflicts, they separated at an early stage. In accordance with the dominating contemporaneous view that the most ethnographically valuable and interesting cultures were the ones 'unspoiled' by Western civilisation, Laurell wanted contact with Aboriginal groups that had had as little contact as possible with white settlers. (On the other hand, only somewhat westernised persons of the indigenous population could serve as informants, due to language and cultural barriers, see below.)

Laurell and Söderberg left Mjöberg and Widell and they went in the direction of Mt. Alexander. Already in Derby and on the way to and from the mountain, Laurell started his work through contacts with people Laurell called the 'Niggene' (Nyikina), from the area around Fitzroy River, at this time working for white settlers. Close to Mt. Alexander, Laurell and Söderberg settled at Mowla Downs sheep station, where they stayed for five weeks and Laurell studied the 'Mangula' (Mangala). During this part of the expedition Laurell made a small word collection in the Mangala and Nyikina languages, which together with some of his other collections will be treated in the next section. When the wet season was approaching, they returned to Derby because 'the indigenous people would move out into the deserts and it's impossible to follow them there' (Laurell 1913d:3).

On 14 January 1911, the two Swedes reached Sunday Island in the Buccaneer Archipelago outside Derby. Laurell and Söderberg stayed for two months with Sidney Hadley who had run a school and a missionary station on the island since 1899. Yngve Laurell studied the ca. 120 inhabitants living on two islands. This was the only time in the Kimberleys that Laurell used the cylinder phonograph; ten recordings were made.

At the end of March, Laurell started a long journey eastward from Derby, over the King Leopold Ranges to Isdell River and Mt. Barnett. He employed two white men as guides, a gold digger and a kangaroo hunter, and two Aboriginal boys of mixed decent to take care of animals and packing. By mid-May they had reached Isdell River and followed it to the Philip Ranges. At Mt. Barnett and Barnett River they set up camp for three weeks. Laurell collected among what he called the *Boorooro* people (perhaps Worrorra),⁵ and, with the help of a couple of policemen stationed in the area, Laurell managed to round up more of the indigenous population, this time what he called the *Obagooma* (Oobagooma is the name of a cattle station in the area, taken from the Unggarrangu name of the area where the station is located). The groups were not on friendly terms with each other, but in exchange for gifts the latter group gave up their nomadic life for a couple of weeks to camp close to Laurell's quarter. Word lists of the language spoken by each group were made.

At the end of June, at the time to return, Laurell heard of another gathering of Aborigines around Isdell Downs station, which was on his way back. The members of his small expedition lived at the station and Laurell visited the Aborigines for about a week.

All the participants of the Swedish expedition got back together in Broome and then sailed westward around the continent to Brisbane, which they reached after a couple of stops. They stayed in Queensland for a few weeks of excursions, before returning to Sweden. During the stay in Queensland Yngve Laurell made collections and cylinder recordings in the Barambah Reservation (Cherbourg) outside Brisbane.

5 Laurell writes in one of his field notebooks that 'the natives along Isdell River and in the Philip and Packlore Ranges and around Mt Barnett goes under the name Boorooro' (Laurell 1910–11c:100).

4. The collections

Back in Sweden, Yngve Laurell presented the Ethnographic Museum with a collection of about 1,200 ethnographic objects, some human remains, about 300 photographic plates and 17 phonograph cylinders (Laurell 1913d:6 f.). The total collection over the Aboriginal cultures was larger; Laurell's notebooks, for example, remained his private property (they were given to the museum in 1983 by relatives).

4.1. Mangala and Nyikina word lists

This small word list is dated 28 November 1910, and is recorded in shaky handwriting, suggesting it was made on horseback while talking to one or several unidentified informant(s) who traveled with the expedition. The list seems to consist of words describing what the company saw along the way—birds, horses, etc.—with their correspondences in the Mangala (*Mangula*) and Nyikina (*Njigana*) languages (Laurell 1910–11c:9).

4.2. Mt. Barnett word lists

In the Mt. Barnett area Laurell made his largest linguistic collections. One of the notebooks contains two word lists: one under the ambitious title 'Dictionary over the language of the Mount Barnett tribe', consisting of less than 50 words, and a second titled 'Mt. Barnett dialect

botten	- amalla	döf	- ^{bulbuduma} beanga
brant	- dudda-dagna	efter (brum)	- ballän
bröder	- ngarradi	egg (vå-kny)	- angär
bryta	- buggen - bundja	sko	- käboma
bränn (sig)	- njägodammi	ald	- windjagon
bröst	- manda	er	- bundädinga
bröstvorta	- ngamun & H	enögt	- ngarrambul
bröst. (kvinns)	- bullären	fader	- ngallingi
buske	- burdaidi	fälla	- ngarouvan
böja	- baggowaren	fina	- djsj
dag	- datbona	fet	- manumbara
die	- raba - godjba	finger	- naironungo
djäfvel	- ägulla	fjamma	- djämman
djup	- siendgatta wida	fisk	- djamarinmura
dohton	- wäjtba märr	fiska	- djallugin
dricha	- kpäjtba	fjäder (föt)	- djangal
droppe	- jirgel	fjätt	- waja
dröm	- wool	fjäril	
duon	- worinji	flat (ölen)	
dalis	- burdyli	flicen	
död	- ^{ngaron-awami} ngarawan	flintskallig	
löda	- arolja		

Plate 5.1: Second page from Laurell's field notebook 1910–1911b

after Djavaleli', which is more extensive (Laurell 1910–1911b).⁶ Concerning the former Laurell writes in another of his field notebooks that he started the list on 23 May 1911, with the 'Boorooroo' couple 'Mickey' and 'Mary'. Laurell had engaged them as guides to Mt. Barnett, and they began the list after he had cut their hair and 'Mary' had done Laurell's laundry in return (Laurell 1910–1911d). Laurell also collected the lyrics to three songs—without translation—from Mickey (Laurell 1910–1911c:53).

The linguistic material after the single 'Obagooma' informant Djavaleli consists of about 200 words and basic phrases (see Plate 5.1 for a sample page). The language is most likely Ngarinyin (Claire Bower, pers.comm. 23 February 2003; Bill McGregor, pers.comm. 6 January 2006): although only a fraction of the words have been positively identified, among these are lexemes exclusive to Ngarinyin; none appear to be exclusive to any other nearby language (Worrorra, Ungarrangu, or Umiida). Some illustrative examples are: <amalla> 'bottom' (actually 'buttocks'), <mandå> 'breast' (presumably *mandu* 'belly'), <ngamun> 'nipple' (actually 'breast, milk'), <mindjal> 'lips', and <ngádji> 'mother'.

Laurell also made notes about the sign language he came into contact with in the area (Laurell 1910–1911d), and planned to devote a chapter of his report to this subject. Plate 5.2 shows a sample page.

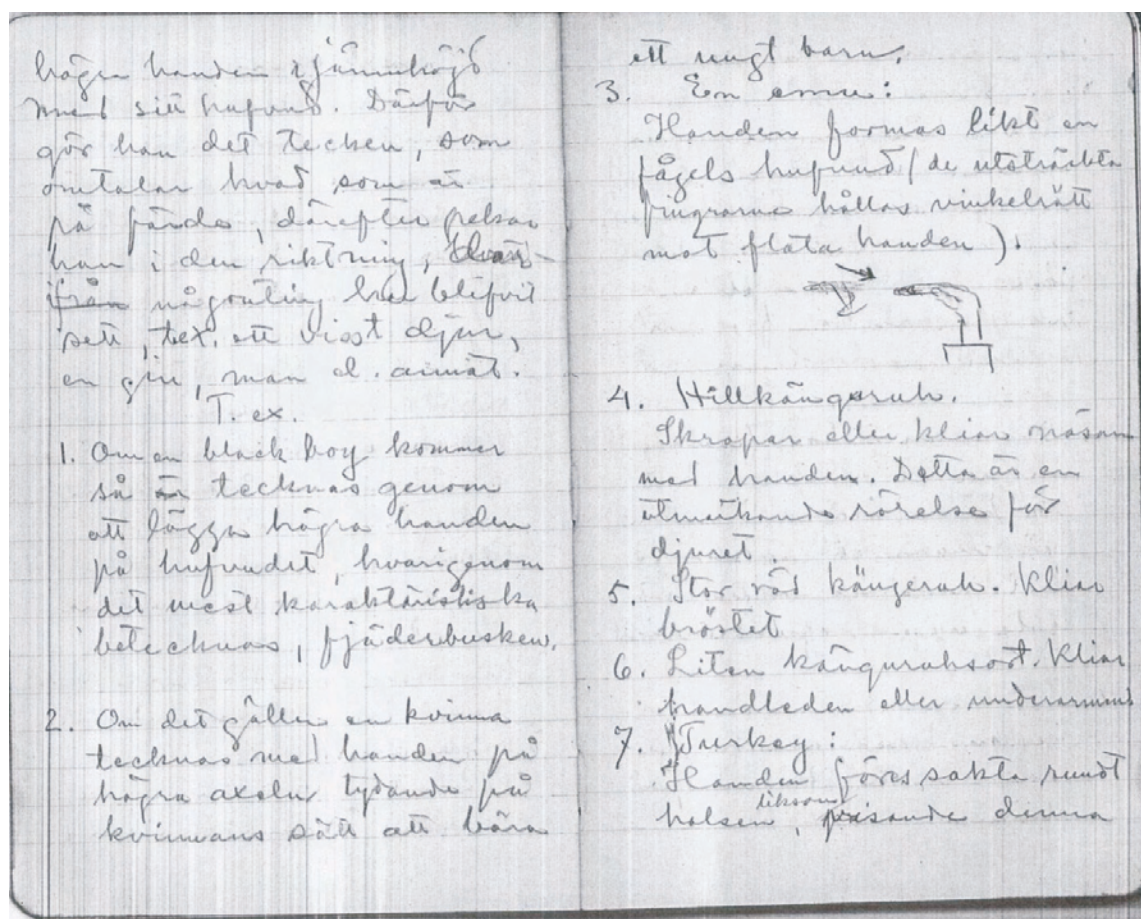


Plate 5.2: Page from Laurell's field notebook 1910-1911d, describing conventional gestures used in the Mt. Barnett area

6 The only other information in the note books about Laurell's informant was his height. Laurell measured 14 of the 'Boorooroo' and Djavaleli was 1.69 m tall (Laurell 1910–11b:no pagination, 1913d:8).

Translation of text of Plate 5.2

Signs with hand movements:

If a native wants to communicate with another without speaking or shouting, he can do that by means of hand movements. To get his friend's attention he makes a waving movement to and fro with the right hand at head height. Therefore [sic] he makes the sign that tells what is happening, and then points in the direction where something has been seen, e.g. a certain animal, a 'gin', man or other.

E.g.

1. If a 'black boy' is coming, this is shown by putting one's right hand on one's head, thus representing the most characteristic [aspect], the plume.
2. If it concerns a woman, one's hand is put on one's right shoulder, indicating the female way of carrying a small child.
3. An emu: One's hand is formed like a bird's head (the outstretched fingers are held at a right angle to the palm). [See drawing]
4. Hill kangaroo. Scratches one's nose with one's hand. This is a movement indicative of the animal.
5. Large red kangaroo. Scratches one's chest.
6. Small variety of kangaroo. Scratches one's wrist or forearm.
7. Turkey. One's hand is moved slowly around the neck, as if showing this bird's white band around its neck.

For the word lists, the source of which is not known, Laurell copied a single list of Swedish words (in alphabetical order) in his notebook twice—although the list used for 'Boorooroo' was not completed in Swedish. He then wrote in the equivalents in the target languages, but in neither case did he manage to fill in all of them.

It is easy to tell that Laurell was not trained a linguist, and that making language collections were not among his prioritised tasks during the expedition. Laurell's word lists are mostly written in Swedish orthography, sometimes with alternative spellings in English and accent marks. Had Laurell been a trained linguist he would very likely have used the Swedish dialect alphabet, which was used by e.g. Gerhard Lindblom in British East Africa (Kenya) and Bernard Karlgren in China at the same time as Laurell's expedition to Australia (see e.g. Lindblom 1914; Karlgren 1915). J.A. Lundell created the dialect alphabet in 1878 for the very active Swedish dialect and folk culture movement at the universities towards the end of the 19th century. As an active participant in this movement, Laurell must have come into contact with the dialect alphabet earlier during his work with folk music (mentioned above). That he nevertheless did not use it highlights his lack of linguistic training and interest.

Nor did the design of the fieldwork allow Laurell to develop more in-depth language skills with which to communicate with the Aboriginal informants. The problem is acknowledged in the report draft:

Due to my short stays among the respective tribes, I could of course not even get close to learning their languages, and as no reliable interpreter was to be found, I was in my contacts with the natives restricted to a 'pidgin English', a 'language' which, as everyone knows, is highly limited and especially useless for more detailed research (Laurell 1913d:20).

Still, reflecting an earlier approach to ethnography as the collection of 'Wörter und Sachen', Laurell planned to include word lists in his report, according to the draft.

4.3. Sunday Island cylinder recordings

It is not known if Laurell knew about the word lists from Sunday Island that were collected and published by W.H. Bird, a schoolteacher on the island, starting in 1910, but from this location there are no word lists in Laurell's notebooks. Lyrics to a couple of songs were taken down, but no translations (Laurell 1910–1911c:105). It is uncertain whether the lyrics are the same songs as he recorded on some of the ten phonograph cylinders.⁷ Yngve Laurell was the first one to make audio recordings of Bardi, and among the first to make ethnographic cylinder recordings in Australia.

From Laurell's perspective, with the focus on creating an 'illuminating' collection (cf. above), I believe it is reasonable to assume that he wanted recordings that would work in the contexts he anticipated: ethnographic exhibitions, (popular) lectures, and musicological research, which will be discussed below. The recordings also reflect this, consisting mostly of performances focused around music, performed by groups of singing men, women and children, sometimes accompanied by clap-sticks or boomerangs. One of Laurell's characterisations of the Aboriginal groups he came into contact with was that they were constantly humming and singing (1913d:17), but none of the more informal music-making was recorded. Apart from the recordings, Laurell also took notes on Sunday Island about how new songs were composed, and music performed; information that seems to be in accordance with contemporary knowledge about traditional Aboriginal music in Kimberley (cf. Barwick 1998).⁸

Laurell simply labeled the recorded songs 'choir', with the exception of one 'Dance song'. The term simultaneously invited comparisons to the Western music culture, but also reflected his lack of knowledge about the contents and meanings of the songs. That there are no announcements of the contents of the recordings—which together with the reference tone was customary procedure according to the instructions from the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv—also strengthens the conclusion that Laurell had limited knowledge about what he recorded. The auditions in 2000 and 2001 showed that the songs are mostly *ilma* or *loodin* songs, i.e. public corroboree genres (Koch 2000; Bower 2001, this volume; cf. Bower 2003), but also examples of songs in Worroran languages, reflecting the exchange between island and mainland Aboriginal groups. More esoteric musical genres would likely have been kept away from Laurell.

One cylinder from Sunday Island stands out from the other: children singing 'God Save the King' followed by a conversation in Bardi.⁹ The 'conversation between two natives', which is all the content information Laurell wrote on the cylinder box, was a single sample to illustrate how the indigenous language sounded. Had Laurell had a stronger linguistic focus, he probably would have made more language recordings, as e.g. Lindblom did in Africa (cf. above). The conversation was transcribed in 2001 by Claire Bower with the help of Nancy Isaac and Jessie Sampi. The recording of the Commonwealth anthem will be discussed in section 6.

7 The original cylinders are today in the Swedish National Archive for Sound and Moving Images (Statens ljud- och bildarkiv, SLBA) and their accession numbers are V78–0330, 0336–0338, 0342–0345, 0349, 0350. Laurell made copies of some of the recordings, see §5.

8 For example, Laurell writes (1910–1911c:54, 62, 105) that to get new songs singers went out into the bush for a couple of days, where the songs came to them in dreams. Songs were performed by men and women, with rhythmic accompaniment by clap sticks and boomerangs (men) or handclapping on thighs (women); but only the men danced.

9 SLBA V78–0343.

According to the dates on the cylinder boxes (in many cases the only source), Laurell started using the phonograph quite late during his stay on Sunday Island. He and Söderberg arrived in mid-January, but not until 22 February did Laurell use the apparatus. The first month was spent getting acquainted with people and surroundings. Laurell took a lot of photographs from the beginning of his stay, according to his notebooks, but the cylinder phonograph demanded a more active participation from the Aborigines, and therefore he probably needed to be more accepted among them before using it. Normally Laurell only recorded a couple of cylinders per day, and I assume that they were all made at the mission station; the last recordings were at least made there ('S-m K.' 1912).

Laurell unfortunately did not write a lot about his recordings. For 22 and 23 February he wrote in one of his notebooks: 'The natives sang four songs in my phonograph. They seemed highly astounded, when the apparatus after a short while after the recording repeated the singing. The records came out better than expected' (Laurell 1910–1911c:34). The mimetic faculty of recording technology was a source of amazement, wonder or disbelief (more or less) everywhere it was introduced (see Brady 1999), and this was no exception. When listening to the recordings today, the musical performances do not seem affected by nervousness. Judging from the first recording, Laurell had to show how to make recordings by playing a couple of tunes into the recording horn that were likely replayed afterwards. This performance was then reciprocated by a group of men who sang, according to the later auditions, a public corroboree song (*ilma*). A couple of days later Laurell wrote: 'Got two new records, sung by eight men of the Sunday Island tribe', which gives us a hint about the size of the ensembles that gathered around the recording horn. The earlier note about the recordings' quality being 'better than expected' probably reflects an insecurity about the recording range of the acoustical recording technology that did not use microphones or any electronic ways of amplification. Instructions usually advised that the performers should be almost in physical contact with the recording horn, which of course was difficult with an eight-man choir!

Laurell does not identify the performers on the recordings. In the notebooks he writes the names of several of his informants, but not in connection with the recordings. When Laurell got back to Sweden he presented the speech recordings as made by 'two political leaders' ('S-m K.' 1912). If this information is correct, at least one of the performers might be Kaori, whom Laurell also portrayed with his camera and called the 'King of Sunday Island' (Laurell 1910–1911a).

4.4. Barambah Reservation recordings

The last six phonograph cylinders were possibly all recorded at Barambah Reservation (Cherbourg) in Queensland at the end of Laurell's stay in Australia.¹⁰ His notebooks unfortunately lack information about his travels in Queensland, but Laurell made collections of material culture at Barambah Reservation and three of the cylinder boxes have this name on them. These recordings also lack announcements but have a general description of the contents of the lyrics: 'Ghost song', 'Fiddle [?] song', 'Waterhole with a snake'. Two of the recorded cylinders have other geographical contents: two songs by 'a Cooktown native' and 'Singing for rain in Clarmont and Alpha'.¹¹ The recordings are all by male groups, apart from another recording with children singing 'God Save the King' plus a 'Rainbow song'.

10 SLBA V78–0331, 0334, 0335, 0339, 0351, 0352.

11 SLBA V78–0331, 0335.

5. Laurell and the collections in Sweden and beyond

After Yngve Laurell's return to Sweden, his work with the Australian collections was directed towards several of the loops of interaction identified by Latour: getting reimbursed for his personal expenses and finding funding for a new expedition (allies), arranging exhibitions and popular lectures (public representation), and finally cataloguing and analysing his collections for the museum and his report. Apart from a dozen private contributors, Laurell had paid more than a third himself for his participation in the expedition. The director of the Museum of Ethnography addressed the Swedish Parliament to cover half of Laurell's expenses, the rest Laurell would accept as his personal contribution. Scientific expeditions were a prestigious activity for the participants as well as the nation,¹² and the expedition adventures as well as the media interest and possibilities to become famous were very likely worth economic sacrifices.

Parts of Laurell's collections were displayed at the Museum in 1912. Judging from the reviews in the press, the exhibition displayed a wax model of an Aboriginal man dressed for battle, photographs and artifacts displayed symmetrically according to type, in a fashion that invited comparison. The visitors also had the opportunity to listen to copies of some of Laurell's cylinder recordings: songs, 'God Save the King' and the speech cylinder. The press was enthusiastic about the use of the cylinder phonograph for exhibition purposes.

Through phonograph we then got to listen to many-voiced song by Kimberley men, probably the national anthem. It was more quaint than melodic. A dialogue between two political leaders was no less entertaining. These savages really have surprisingly sonorous voices. Especially touching was a band of young cannibal boys' 'God Save the King', sung in unison. This idea of the cylinder phonograph as a museum tool we consider very successful ('Tedwill' 1912).

Laurell also toured in Sweden with popular lectures on the last theme, 'One year among cannibals in Australia', but without phonograph illustrations (Boström 2001).¹³

Regarding research and publications, Yngve Laurell did not publish anything apart from some newspaper articles, as mentioned above. I believe the main reason is that Laurell, once back in Sweden, realised that his material about the Aboriginal cultures would not suffice for either a scholarly publication, or perhaps even for a popular account of his travels. He wanted to return to collect more material, this time with a motion picture camera among his equipment, but the two applications from 1913 and 1914 did not manage to attract the necessary funding (Boström 2001:129). In contrast, Eric Mjöberg's financial situation and connections were better; he returned within six months to Australia on a second expedition, this time also covering ethnography himself (and also shooting film). When Mjöberg got back to Sweden again he published two popular accounts of his expeditions (Mjöberg 1915, 1918) and founded a series in which studies based on his zoological collections were published.

Whereas the institutionalisation and professionalisation was highly developed in the natural sciences in Sweden, it was different for ethnography: it was not a separate discipline, but a part of geography, and due to Sweden's lack of colonies not a prioritised field as in other countries with empire ambitions. Laurell's generation was the first to eventually succeed into making ethnography a separate academic discipline, with the afore mentioned Lindblom being the first to publish an ethnographic doctoral dissertation in 1916. His linguistic and

12 Perhaps best illustrated by the Swedish geographer and explorer Sven Hedin, who was the last person to be knighted in Sweden (1902).

13 On the notion of cannibalism among Australian Aboriginals, see e.g. Hallgren (2003).

ethnographic materials were more extensive than Laurell's, and as they worked together at the Museum, it must have been obvious to the latter that his collections were not comparable.

Laurell never got to the 'Song and dance' chapter in his unfinished report, so it is hard to know how he planned to use the recordings for research purposes. That Laurell at least had the ambition to transcribe his cylinders in some way is reflected in the reply to a letter from von Hornbostel in 1920. The director of Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv asked for copies of Laurell's cylinders, which he had been promised already in the early 1910s, but was told that Laurell first wanted to transcribe them. In the end, one of Laurell's Sunday Island cylinders was sent in 1921, as a substitute for a broken phonograph disc that the Museum had borrowed from Berlin. There it now constitutes the modest collection 'Laurell Australien' (Ziegler 2000), but seems not to have been used in the archive's research.

With the outbreak of World War I, Laurell realised he was stuck in Sweden and he went back to collecting Swedish folk music, this time with the cylinder phonograph. Yngve Laurell is most famous in Sweden today for these cylinder recordings, made from 1914 to 1920, later released on LP as well as CD. After the war Laurell went on a new ethnographic expedition, this time to China, where he stayed until 1947, working as an antiques dealer in Beijing and later as a professor of ethnography in Shanghai (Boström 2001).

Laurell's Australian cylinders came to light again at the end of the 1960s, when the cylinder collections of the Museum were deposited in what is now the Swedish National Archive for Sound and Moving Images (Statens ljud- och bildarkiv), and transferred to tape. But it was not until the International Council for Traditional Music's world conference in Canberra in 1995 that the existence of the recordings was brought to the attention of Australian scholars and copies of Laurell's cylinders were later repatriated to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIASTIS collection LAURELL_Y01). The new access in Australia to the copies of Laurell's recordings has been an important prerequisite for their new use.

6. Views and representations

6.1. Laurell's view of the Australian Aboriginal

For the assessment of the collections it is important to look at Laurell's views of the Australian Aboriginal and the way he represented them through his collections. To begin with the former, I have already mentioned Laurell's problems of communication with the Aboriginal informants, and the title of his popular lectures. In the Swedish anthropologist Claes Hallgren's book about the Swedish expedition, he portrays Mjöberg and Laurell as representatives of two different approaches to the Australian Aborigines: Mjöberg as Darwinist and Laurell as almost a cultural relativist (Hallgren 2003). Hallgren did not have access to Laurell's own writings apart from the report, and according to my judgment of the material I would say that Laurell expresses a complex and sometimes contradictory view. I also believe that the variation in tone in the presentations to a certain degree can be explained by their belonging to different loops in Latour's model, different discourses with different conventions and expectations.

Laurell writes that he was sometimes afraid of the Aborigines, and he shared and explicitly expressed the commonly held view in Western academia as well as popular discourses of the Australian Aborigines as cannibals, but on the other hand, he had himself no problems with committing grave-robbing. Laurell always lived outside of the Aboriginal camps, generally at the stations among the white people, and it is unlikely that he did participant observation,

or necessarily would have been welcomed. He understood the mistrust and sometimes hostility from Aboriginal groups towards white people, based on the ways the former were treated (e.g. Laurell 1911a). A chapter of the report was planned to deal with this issue.

Yngve Laurell's most fundamental criticism of the Western views of Aborigines concerned their mental faculties. Although he shared the physical anthropological view of the Aboriginal physical features as 'primitive', Laurell had seen for himself that the children on Sunday Island were good at learning.

During my stay on Sunday Island I had several times the chance to see, how successfully the missionary school there taught subjects like the English language, mathematics, singing and drawing, and I never heard the teacher complain about the natives' aptitude for studies, although at times for their diligence (Laurell 1913d:18).

Laurell also collected children's drawings and planned to include in his report a sample of a child's writing in English from the Beagle Bay mission as examples of the Aboriginal children's equal level of development in relation to white. He was well aware of the difficulty of mastering an Aboriginal language, and saw that as a problem in judging other cultures:

Few primitive people have been as underestimated as the Australians considering their intellectual talents. It is said that the natives' languages are extremely scarce on abstract and general concepts, but the truth about this is probably difficult to prove, as few, if any, have completely mastered an Australian language (Laurell 1913d:18).



Plate 5.3: Laurell among Aborigines in Mt Barnett area during a staged corroboree, 1911. Photograph courtesy Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.

The Aborigines' complex social structures, vast numbers of myths, proverbs and songs were for Laurell indicators of well-developed intelligence. In conclusion, he states: 'This will be enough said about the natives' intellectual capacities to completely refute the, in Australia, often heard words: "They haven't got the slightest bit of sense"' (Laurell 1913d:19, quotation in English).

Like the ethnographers of the early 20th century, Laurell wanted to study 'authentic', 'uncontaminated' Aboriginal cultures, but how could he possibly contact and communicate with such a community during the limited time of the expedition? There was also a widely held, darwinistically inspired view that indigenous cultures would not survive in contact with the more 'developed' Western culture. For all these reasons, Laurell praised Hadley's work on Sunday Island, because he had tried to 'keep a robust tribe of pure bred Australian natives, which as race seemingly are doomed to rapid extinction'. Hadley let the Aborigines live their 'free, natural life, in which he intervened as little as possible, at the same time as he, through appropriate supervision and sensible care, in every way seeks to enhance their welfare' (Laurell 1913d:4). Laurell does not seem to have known that Hadley had started his career in the area with a pearling enterprise in which Aboriginal people were used as forced labour (e-mail to the author from William McGregor, 18 April 2001).

The cultural distance, and the imagined disappearance of Aboriginal culture, was also a reason not to consider repatriation of collections, e.g. photographs and recordings. Instead Laurell made contacts with Australian museums in order to exchange duplicate collections, a kind of currency among ethnographic museums.



Plate 5.4: A photo from the mission on Sunday Island.
Photograph courtesy of Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.

6.2. Laurell's representation of Aboriginal culture

Concerning the representation of Aboriginal cultures, I would like to try a couple of concepts from the field of visual anthropology, which also have bearing on other ethnographic representations. Kolodny, quoted in Edwards (1992), has proposed three aspects of how culture was represented in early ethnographic photography: *romantic* (an idealistic approach that tries to represent the noble or savage Other), *realistic* (tries to represent culture in a fact-like positivistic way), and *documentary* (where the representation is made to express a political critique of one's own culture). These approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive and often are combined in varying degrees in a representation of a culture. They can also change over time, so that later users may identify other aspects than the makers. From this perspective, Laurell's word lists appear to be unskilled and perhaps not very ambitious attempts to make *realistic* representations of some of the languages he encountered, but still considered good enough to be included as an appendix in the planned report. The cylinder recordings are in this sense more *realistic*, as they are mechanical representations with initial reference tones, but at the same time they reflect a *romantic* choice of a traditional repertory and the vernacular language; there are no recordings of the 'pidgin English' with which Laurell communicated with the Aborigines. At the same time, the limitations of cylinder phonograph technology created very special arranged performance situations far from the 'fly on the wall' ideal. The exception is the two recordings of 'God Save the King', which I would say were made as *documentary* recordings. Judging from Laurell's views of Aboriginal mental faculties, the recordings were probably intended to illustrate the learning capabilities of Aborigines. But the general public in Sweden, and probably the academics interested in ethnography as well, was not ready or interested in these new perspectives on the Australian Aborigines, but rather to have their prejudices confirmed, and interpreted the recordings in such a way. As a way to make his fieldwork more attractive to lecture audiences, museum visitors, the media, the scientific community and possibly future expedition sponsors, it was more strategic for Laurell to play on conceptions of a 'stone age' culture spiced with the titillating idea of cannibalism.

Whereas Laurell at least chose a recording for the exhibition that could be interpreted otherwise, the photographic representations in newspapers and the exhibition all belonged to the *romantic* category, depicting situations sometimes arranged by Laurell for better photographing conditions (see Plate 5.3). There are also more *realistic* depictions of the way everyday life looked around the stations, but they were not used in exhibitions and publications (Plate 5.4).

7. Summary

By looking at Yngve Laurell's linguistic and musical collections in the wider contexts of which he was a part, it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of their making, as I have tried to sketch in this article. Laurell's ethnographic collections from Australia in 1910–1911 show the work of a diligent but inexperienced ethnographer on his first fieldwork expedition in another culture. Making word lists and cylinder recordings of music and speech was part of an attempt to create as complete a representation of the cultures as possible, of which the music collection was closer to Laurell's own personal background and interests. The qualitative understanding of a foreign culture—where language skills are of great importance—simultaneously stood in conflict with the quantitative ideals of museum ethnography, where expeditions covered large areas in a relatively short time to make collections. Laurell must have

realised when he got back to Sweden that he had made the wrong prioritisations for a budding ethnographer at the time of ethnography's professionalisation, and his work with the collections was never finished.

Nevertheless, Yngve Laurell developed in Australia a, for the time, rather uncommon sympathy for Aboriginal cultures. At least his cylinder recordings of music and speech have started to, and I believe should, give him a rightful place in the history of the documentation of Australian Aboriginal cultures. He was unfortunately not able to finish any publications based on his fieldwork. Today, it is up to us to continue the research.

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6 *Listening to the last speakers*

LUISE HERCUS

1. The beginning

In late 1961 a neighbour in our outer Melbourne suburb asked me whether I would take part in a scheme to give holidays to country Aboriginal children—we would each look after two children and have joint expeditions to the zoo and a play, and just let them have fun. That is how I discovered that there was an old lady on the reserve where these children came from who could ‘swear like mad’ in ‘a language’ and she ‘could go on for a long time without stopping.’ I plucked up courage to see her when we took the children back. The swearing was not in a local language but she set me on the trail of an elderly man in Echuca, Stanley Day, who could speak what turned out to be Wembawemba. I wrote to Dr Capell in Sydney for a reading list. He replied immediately, and with enthusiasm, telling me that nothing had been done since R.H. Mathews’s work in 1902—and by then it was 1962. Actually this information was not quite accurate because there was a little known work by A.C. Stone, the baker at Lake Boga, who at the turn of the century had written down with great care what he had learnt, and had published this in 1911. Dr Capell’s letter roused me from my Sanskrit studies, and overnight I became one of those crazy people who, as Gavan Breen (1990:67) describes, ‘go to extraordinary lengths to scratch up the last shreds of information on almost dead languages that are never going to repay them with world-shattering new theoretical discoveries’.

2. ‘They are making it up’

Being infected by this craze has the wonderful effect that one becomes oblivious to difficulties and criticisms and hardly notices straight disdain. This was lucky, because 1962 was still in a truly dark age as far as the study of remnant Aboriginal languages was concerned, though this age was drawing to a close. In that half-century since Stone’s paper of 1911 some important work on Aboriginal languages had been done in areas of greater conservation. This is described in detail by Capell (1971). To mention just a few of the authors: in Central Australia such work was done by T.G.H. Strehlow (1944) (see Moore, this volume), by Smythe (1949) in NSW, by Nekes and Worms (1953) primarily on Dampier Land languages, and by Arthur Capell in the far north. By the late fifties several brilliant linguists, Ken Hale and Geoffrey O’Grady, in particular were doing vital initial work over large areas of Australia; Stephen Wurm was working on remnant languages in NSW and Queensland, as was Nils Holmer (see

McGregor and Miestamo, this volume), while W.H. Douglas was working in the Western Desert.

Even in Victoria there was beginning to be some interest and prestige in working with Aboriginal people in remote and romantic places: this was largely inspired by the anthropologist Donald Thomson at Melbourne University. Nevertheless this interest and prestige certainly did not extend to work in Victoria, and certainly not to activities like finding people with some knowledge who lived in the less well-to-do parts of inner Melbourne, in the Benevolent Home in Bendigo, or for that matter on the outskirts of Orbost or Dimboola, or just over the border, on the rubbish tip at Dareton in NSW. I was able to work away quietly, and had lots of support from my family and from the sociologist Alan West. He had been engaged in a Government survey of the Aboriginal population of Victoria, and he knew the location of most of the elderly people, *and* the most appropriate ways of getting in touch with them. In 1963 I managed to get a grant from the newly formed Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies to pay for some fieldwork expenses. Despite recommendations from two senior language experts, Dr J. Smit (Dutch) and Dr R.G. de Bray (Slavonic Languages), the University of Melbourne refused to administer this grant. The Institute fortunately was willing to administer it directly, and I was able to continue my fieldwork. Practically everywhere I went, in Gippsland, on the Murray and in western Victoria there were well-meaning people, who in many cases had actually helped the Aboriginal community, but who all had the idea that any tradi-



Plate 6.1: Nancy Egan (Wembawemba) with her younger children Valerie and Paul, and granddaughter Patsy revisiting Framlingham Settlement near Warrnambool in western Victoria, where she went as a young bride, away from Wembawemba country: ‘When I lived for years down at Framlingham I used to cry because I felt so lonely for the old people speaking in the language.’

(Photo taken in 1952, made available by her daughter, the late Valerie Mitchell)

tional knowledge had long disappeared. If I was told anything, the Aboriginal people ‘were making it all up’, and I was being taken in by fabrication and just ‘gibberish’. This attitude proved to be the most difficult hurdle to overcome, because it made possible speakers even more shy and diffident than they were in any case. There was no point in even trying to argue that a language is a most complicated system which it is practically impossible to invent, and moreover that the things I was being told corresponded to material that had been written down nearly a century earlier, material hidden away in rare books and not easily accessible journals as for instance work by R.H. Mathews in the *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* (1903) or *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* (1904).

Many Aboriginal people had their confidence totally undermined by the general denigration of their language, and it took a long time to persuade them to say anything. Nancy Egan became a personal friend and turned out to be probably the best speaker of Wembawemba. At first, however, she would hide behind her door every time I went to Echuca to see her, and get her daughter to come out and say ‘I’m sorry, but mum is out today’ or ‘I am sorry, but mum is sick today’. She ultimately relented when she realised that nobody was going to laugh at her, or regard what she said as nonsense. A very aged lady, Priscilla McCrae of Mooroopna, who knew some Yorta Yorta vocabulary, reacted in a similar fashion—she in the end simply felt sorry for me when she saw that I had walked over two miles all the way from Shepparton carrying a heavy tape-recorder.

The most difficult situations were those where one could only interview Aboriginal people in the presence of the manager of a reserve, as in the case of Lake Tyers. Laurie Moffatt was among the people there I particularly wanted to see. He was a confident man, and knew quite well that whatever he said the manager would regard as just rubbish, but he ignored that and slowly pronounced Ganai words that he knew. It did not take long for the manager to get bored and go away, and then the atmosphere changed, and the interview ended most happily with Laurie singing a song that Lake Tyers people had made about a boat coming down the river at harvest time. Fortunately there were also others in whom the denigration of the language had sparked defiance. Walter Sampson of Moulamein, much-loved ‘Uncle Boom-boom’ to many, had not long before his death begun to organise a lunch-party in the biggest Italian cafe in Deniliquin where only Wembawemba was to be spoken: ‘We will show those Italians that we have got our own language too!—they go round speaking theirs all the time, so why shouldn’t we!’¹ There were others too who recognised the importance of their language: at the instigation of people from Delegate, who remembered vocabulary in a southern form of Ngarigu, we had a ‘language barbecue’ at Orbost. During this they recorded all the words they could think of, reminding each other and recalling items that they had not been able to remember individually. Mrs Jackson Stuart, who lived in Swan Hill, had written down a quite lengthy vocabulary of the Werkaia language from Western Victoria. She was not ashamed of the language: she could see how endangered it was. The author Alan Marshall had been to see her earlier and had—unlike so many—encouraged her to proceed with this. She was particularly anxious that nothing should be forgotten, in honour of her distinguished father, Archibald Pepper, a Werkaia man of the Pelican Dreaming from Lake Albacutya.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the idea ‘they are making it all up’. Of all the many speakers who throughout the sixties and seventies contributed what remained of their languages, none ever simply invented anything—even if they felt desperate, realising how much they might have forgotten. If someone was not sure, he would say so: ‘don’t put that one down because it mightn’t be right’ or ‘I’ll think about it and tell you next time’. Far from inventing things the most accomplished ‘last speakers’ went to the opposite extreme—they

1 Similar comments were made to Tamsin Donaldson by Ngiyampaa speakers (Donaldson 1985:134).

were real sticklers for accuracy. These were speakers I was privileged to meet when I had started working beyond the boundaries of Victoria, beginning in late 1963. George Dutton, *Kalpili*, the last fluent speaker of Pantyikali and of Malyangapa in Western New South Wales, was the most exacting taskmaster, he would be furious if something was put down wrong or misinterpreted—to him that was a serious offence against the traditions that he cared for so much. ‘She’ll do, mate’ just would not do with him at all, nor with other ‘last speakers’. He was justifiably proud and conscious of his position as the most knowledgeable person—and that was already the situation way back in 1938 when Tindale spoke to him as his main informant (Tindale MS 1938-9). If I had attempted to ask anyone else in Wilcannia about these languages, it would have been considered an unforgivable insult.

The idea that ‘they are making it up’ is however not always totally mistaken, particularly since the eighties when there began to be some prestige attached to Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal people would not be human if there were not instances of persons trying to make out they know more than they do. The people involved are generally not ‘last speakers’: they tend to be people who have recent political interests. Only a few months ago I heard a speech in Arabana illustrating this. The speech was almost identical to another example quoted by Nick Evans (2001:257) from a totally different area in far-away Arnhem Land. The Arabana speech, like that from Arnhem Land, was patterned on just one verbless clause:

- (1) *antha pantu-nganha, antha maka-nganha, antha thirka-nganha, antha*
 I saltlake-from I fire-from I fire:pit-from I
wadlhu-nganha
 land-from
 ‘I belong to the saltlakes, I belong to the fire, I belong to the fire pits, I belong to the land’



Plate 6.2: By the rubbish dump at Dareton—Gladys Smith, though overburdened, kindly teaching Luise Hercus some Paakantyi vocabulary in late 1963. She died not long after and the children were removed, with tragic results.

The object in the front is a Butoba tape-recorder: it was heavy and used 12 size D batteries, but it was a breeze compared to what preceded it.



Plate 6.3: George Dutton *Kalpili*, Wilcannia 1967. He hated linguistic errors and resented investigators who asked him to say ‘I have one, two, three or many dogs, you have one, two, three or many dogs etc.’ in any of the many languages of the N.W. Corner country of NSW that he knew so well. With his death in 1968 several languages became extinct.

The main difference is that here we have permutations in vocabulary, whereas the Arnhem Land example had permutations in word order. The Arnhem Land speaker in Nick Evans’ translation was saying ‘This (is) my country! Country (this) is mine! My country (is) this!’ In both cases the speakers were spinning out to the maximum what they knew, what they were saying however is grammatically perfectly correct.

There are, sadly enough, isolated examples of people—and we cannot classify them as ‘last speakers’—who simply do not know a language and hide behind a veil of secrecy. Phrases like ‘the N-gamani elders told me that-’, or ‘we were talking in Kuyaani-’ are real give-aways. Anyone who pronounces the initial velar nasal of Ngamani as an apical nasal followed by a velar stop, and anyone who pronounces Kuyani with the accent and a length on the second syllable, is most unlikely to have ever heard a traditional person uttering these language/people names.

Today no one would claim that Aboriginal languages are ‘just made up’, but there is still a lingering idea that they are somehow inferior, even among people who are to some extent familiar with Aboriginal culture. A much respected woman of South African origin spoke with me quite recently, about the LOTE (Languages Other Than English) program for children in a

remote area school. ‘I’ll teach them the Afrikaans language, and they will also learn some of the Aboriginal dialect’: she considered ‘dialect’ to be something inferior to ‘language’ or was perhaps just following the popular use of the term ‘dialect’ as ‘a non-standardised form of speech’. I protested that Wangkangurru was an Aboriginal language in its own right—and only just managed to stop myself from saying ‘but people say Afrikaans is a dialect of Dutch’. Diffidence about the language still lingers: a very knowledgeable Paakantyi ‘last speaker’ not too long ago (referring to the use of postpositions) insisted that ‘in Paakantyi we put it the wrong way round’ and no amount of persuasion could convince her that languages differ and that there is no right or wrong way.

3. ‘You should have come before’

In South Australia and in Birdsville I was lucky to be able to work from 1965 on with first language speakers of Arabana and Wangkangurru. In Victoria in 1962 I had heard practically the whole gamut of ‘last speakers’, except fluent and first language speakers. For some areas, e.g. Gippsland, the ‘last speakers’ remembered only words, for North-Western Victoria they remembered words and phrases, and three Wembawemba people and one Mathimathi man could still communicate in sentences. They all shared one aim, to record as much as possible so that at least something of their language should be known in the future.

People were only too ready to admit that they simply did not know. Far from making up something to answer a question they blamed both the circumstances and themselves: ‘you should have come before, when my mum was still alive, she could talk the language right through’. ‘My granny could talk, and she tried to teach me, but now I am so sorry I never took any interest’. Stan Day and his sister Nancy Egan recalled their mother Maria Day and two other old ladies, Esther Charles and Aggie Sampson all sitting on the verandah of the hospital in Deniliquin talking in Wembawemba all day long. Sadly no linguists were around to take any interest in this, and so the last chance of recording first language speakers for a Victorian language had gone. Only Esther Charles was still alive when I first got to Deniliquin, but she was desperately ill and died shortly afterwards.

It was the famous Uralic expert B. Collinder who, on a visit to Melbourne most depressed me: ‘Madam, I am afraid you are simply too late’. He was right of course, as far as understanding the structure of a language was concerned in those areas where we only had vocabulary. But the words that could be recorded open a much wider horizon, they tell us something of the phonology, and they help considerably towards the interpretation of the extensive data written down during the nineteenth century.

From this angle a **‘last speaker’ is someone with language—knowledge that is still linked to a tradition of speakers of the past**, and who is thereby an independent witness, independent of secondary information, even if his knowledge only extends to a limited vocabulary.

4. A gradual decline

The idea that ‘they are making it all up’ is closely linked with the notion that languages are totally lost the moment that the last first-language speaker has died and that after that one is ‘simply too late’. Whatever is left is ‘corrupted’ and not worthy of study. This to some extent may account for the lack of interest in Victorian and neighbouring NSW languages in the period between 1911 and 1962. The international surge of interest in contemporary develop-

ments and in socio-linguistics, and the rising concern with languages in contact coincided with the revival of interest in Aboriginal languages in the late fifties and sixties. Linguists began to realise that even speakers with lesser knowledge can contribute to the understanding of language and that language loss and decline in itself is worthy of study. As it turned out my work on Victorian languages was part of this newer view.

In eastern and Southern Australia language loss has been fairly rapid: the children of people who could still speak in sentences often have only a very scanty knowledge, and within another generation the language can disappear. But there are areas of greater conservation where one can see a more gradual process of decline after the death of the first language speakers, as for instance in **Arabana** in northern South Australia.

The way the decline occurs is intimately linked to the structural characteristics of the language. This has been discussed in some detail for some eastern Australian languages by P. Austin (1986). In the case of Arabana some losses are what one might expect: rare verb-forms are no longer recognised and indeed no longer accepted as being correct, such as for instance the obligatory verb-form derived with *-lima*: *pirda-lima* '(he) has got to be killed'.

Switch reference marking is no longer observed, and all dependent sentences are treated as same-subject sentences.

The replacement of Arabana constructions by English syntax is quite insidious and speakers have no idea it is happening. This can be seen in descriptive verbless sentences when inalienable possession is involved:

- (2) *antha mara madlanthi*
 I hand bad
 'My hand is sore.'

is now replaced by

- (3) *anthunha mara madlanthi*
 my hand bad
 'My hand is sore.'

The original construction however is maintained in (4). This is because *yarri-pudlu* is now analysed as a unit, as an ordinary adjective meaning 'deaf'. (For a similar situation in Aranda, see Breen in Evans 2001:278.)

- (4) *uka yarri pudlu*
 he ear defective
 'He is deaf.'

Some aspects of Arabana language decline are interesting sociologically. Arabana as recorded from first language speakers had four forms of the first person plural pronoun:

<i>arni</i>	we (exclusive)
<i>arniri</i>	we inclusive

and two special kinship forms

<i>arnakara</i>	we, father and children
<i>arnanthara</i>	we mother and children

Of these, only the last survives. Those who today are the best Arabana speakers all lived on Finnis Springs Station, in an environment where the men were constantly out on station work, so 'we, mother and children' would have been the most commonly used form of the pronoun. There is now nothing jarring about the universal use of this term, because the sys-

tem of matrilineal moieties that lay behind it has also been lost. This has also led to a simplification of the system of kinship terminology.

Missionary influence—or just the desire to adhere to niceties—also left an impact. The word *unthu* ‘tail’ is no longer used, one is accused of ‘swearing’ if one utters it, as it also has another anatomical meaning. A word *thila* is now used: it is quite evidently derived from English and does not even adhere to the phonological rules of Arabana, but it is now regarded as an Arabana word.

People constantly use the Central Australian Pidgin words *kuya* and *wiya* for ‘girl’ and ‘boy’ instead of the traditional *mankarra* and *thutirla*. A surprising feature is that people now no longer say *arayi* ‘yes’, but utter an assenting *mmm* instead. These and many other features have come to light, particularly in the course of the work of Greg Wilson (pers.comm.) in establishing a school course for Arabana (Wilson 2005), with the constant difficulty of reconciling the older traditional form of the language with what is now regarded as correct.

Younger generation Arabana people show more drastic symptoms of language decline:

- the verb stem is used without tense markers;
- case-marking even for the most commonly known cases, the ergative and the locative, are omitted;
- the nominative is used for the ergative even in singular personal pronouns.

In effect the language is gradually shifting to English with Arabana words thrown in.

One can follow a process of decline too in the case of **Paakantyi**, from the Darling River. Here the symptoms are somewhat different. Paakantyi had a complex system of pronoun subject and object incorporation into the verbal word, following the tense marker, as in these examples:

- (5) *yarlatalingka*
yarla-t-ali-ngka
 beat-FUT-we:two-them
 ‘We two will beat them’; i.e. ‘We two will win.’
- (6) *ngiingk(a)-impa*
ngiingk-impa
 sit-you:NOM
 ‘You are sitting down’

These days the most normal way of saying this is to use the participle in *-ana*, which does not take the bound subject marker. It could take an object marker, though this is now usually omitted, and it is not marked for tense. A free form of the pronoun is now used. The two sentences quoted above are now rendered as:

- (7) *yarlaana ngali*
yarla-ana ngali
 beat-ing we:two
 ‘We two are beating (them)’
- (8) *ngiingkaana ngimpa*
ngingka-ana ngimpa
 sitt-ing you
 ‘You are sitting down’

The case system is also under stress, and the ablative gets used for the locative—on a regular basis in the case of one ‘last speaker’. Why this should be is not clear, possibly because the ablative has the very distinctive form *-ndu*, while the locative just ends in *-na*.

The use of possessive markers with inalienable possession as with parts of the body was obligatory in Paakantyi and there is no major clash with English in this respect. So the present-day Paakantyi ‘last speakers’ unlike Arabana people have not made major changes here: they still say *marayi* ‘my hand’, *marabama* ‘your hand’. Studies on language decline are well known from other parts of Australia, notably Schmidt (1985) for Dyirbal, and Lee (1987) for Tiwi, and the work of P. Austin (1986). Another example is Richards (2001).

Rude words and familiar expressions survive with remarkable and heart-warming persistence. Along with Judith Littleton, an archaeologist working in Wembawemba country, I had been asked to visit Swan Hill. We had been invited by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the ‘last speakers’. This was a social visit, but, alas, it was clear that absolutely no one remembered even the simplest, most common words, like ‘eating’ or ‘water’ or ‘fire’. Before leaving I asked whether we should out of politeness call on a particular local Aboriginal spokesperson. ‘I wouldn’t bother’ said a great-granddaughter in her early forties, and she laughed ‘he is just a *kuni-mum*’. I had never heard that compound noun before, but knew the components only too well: *kuni* is Wembawemba for ‘shit’ and *mum* is ‘bottom’ and the compound means ‘a child that is not yet toilet-trained’. The term wasn’t being used crudely: it was



Plate 6.4: Maudie Naylor Akawilyika, the last and final speaker of several languages. Birdsville, 1969.

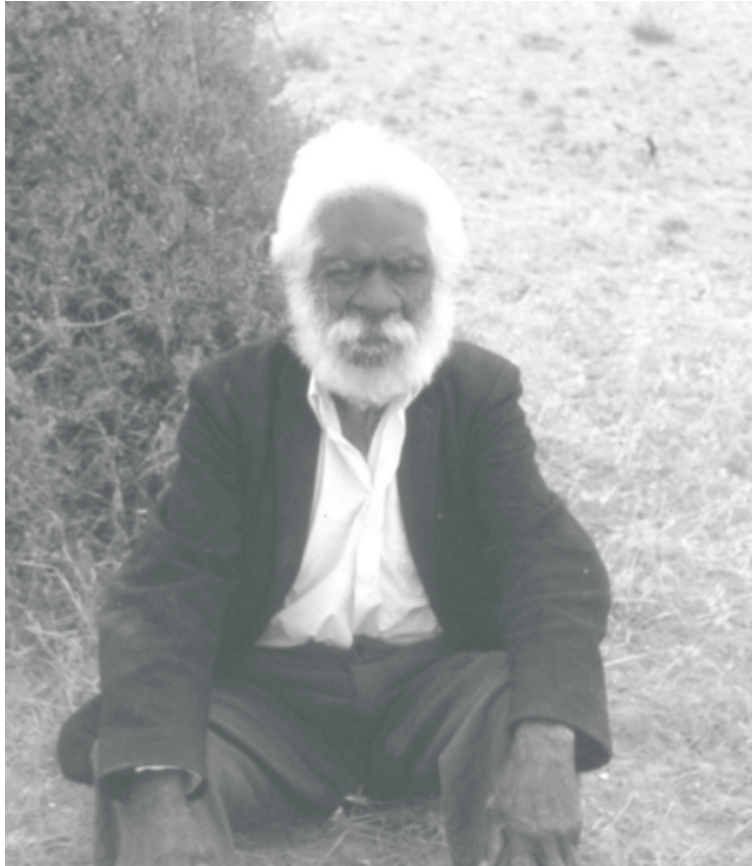


Plate 6.5: Jack Long. Last and final speaker of Mathimathi. Pt Pearce, SA 1973
About 1935 Peter Bonney, his old childhood companion and droving mate, stayed for some time at Point Pearce, working on the dam and in the stone quarry. This was the last time that Jack Long spoke his own language with a native speaker, but the language was always on his mind.

used as a most colourful expression to describe ‘a callow youth who has a great opinion of himself’.

5. ‘The last and final speakers’

There are sadly many instances where a ‘last speaker’ is not succeeded by a lesser speaker, nor even by a great-granddaughter who remembers words like *kuni-mum*, and the language simply disappears. This happens when the ‘last speaker’ has been isolated from the rest of the community and has no opportunity to pass on information. Jack Long (Mathimathi) lived on the Point Pearce reserve in South Australia, far away from his area of origin around Balranald in NSW. His relatives had tried to bring him back, but he was distressed as everything had changed: all his friends and in fact all his generation had died. He was happy to return to Pt Pearce where he knew everyone and was called ‘Old Matey’. One of the greatest linguistic tragedies is that such a sudden end befell many languages in western Queensland. This was on account of the government policy—which continued into the fifties—of moving people and particularly young mothers and children ‘for the sake of the education of the children’ away from their areas to distant reserves near the coast, or to Palm Island. People there were from different language backgrounds, and the new generation would grow up hearing those other languages and not that of their grandparents.



Plate 6.6: Alice Oldfield, last speaker of Kuyani
 After years of speaking only Arabana, she suddenly announced ‘And now I’ll teach you my language, Kuyani.’

There were some very special persons who were ‘last speaker’ for more than one language, these were linguistically very gifted people, particularly interested in language, who had taken the trouble to learn other languages when they had the opportunity. They were amazing in the way they managed to keep massive data compartmentalised and hardly ever got confused.

Maudie Naylor *Akawilyika* of Birdsville was Wangkangurru and that was her preferred language, but she also knew Yaluyandi, Ngamani, Yawarawarka and Mithaka. Gavan Breen and I ‘shared’ her between us, with Gavan working on Ngamani, Yawarawarka and Mithaka. With her death Ngamani became completely extinct, Yaluyandi was left with only one other Wangkangurru person having passive knowledge, and Mithaka had just one other speaker who has since died, without handing down his knowledge. Those languages completely disappeared, because people never seem to pass on anything of their second, third fourth and fifth language to their descendants—moreover these are usually languages from neighboring areas and there is no local speaker base for them. So Ngamani and Mithaka simply crashed without a living tradition.

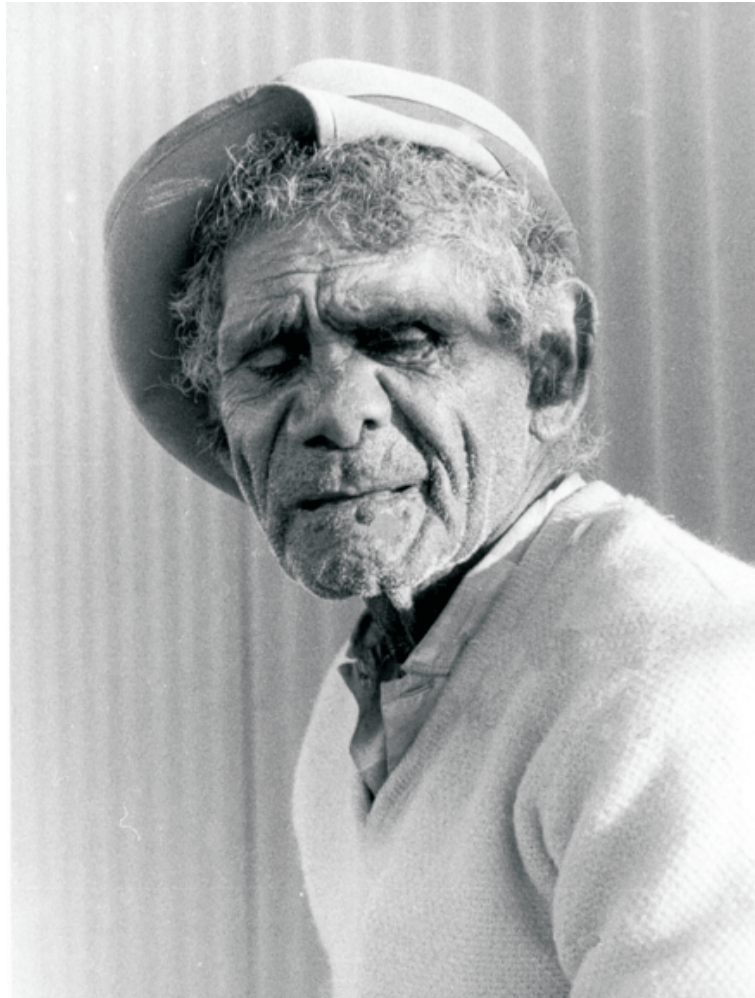


Plate 6.7: Gilbert Bramfield, the last to recall a sizeable Nukunu vocabulary, Pt Germain Jan 1970. He was a proud final speaker: ‘My uncle Frank, he was like the king of the tribe and I learnt from him. The others were too young’.

George Dutton, as mentioned above, was a fluent speaker of Malyangapa and last and final speaker of Pantyikali, a Paakantyi dialect from the far northwest of New South Wales (Hercus 1982:10, 1993:11). He was also fluent in other languages of the NSW ‘Corner Country’, Wilyakali, Wangkumara, Yandruwandha and Karlali: but for the last four he was not ‘last and final speaker’. With his death Pantyikali became extinct, and Wilyakali soon followed.

Hannah Quayle’s preferred language was Malyangapa, and her children learnt some of this, but she did not hand on her second language, Paaruntyi, the Paakantyi dialect from the Paroo River, and so this became extinct with her death.

This means that even when a ‘last and final speaker’ is fluent, if it is their second or lesser language, there is very little chance that it will be passed on: there will be a total crash, not a gradual decline.

6. Listening to the last singers

It soon became obvious that the ‘last speakers’ were usually also the last singers in a language. This is what particularly worried these older people: they hoped to pass on something

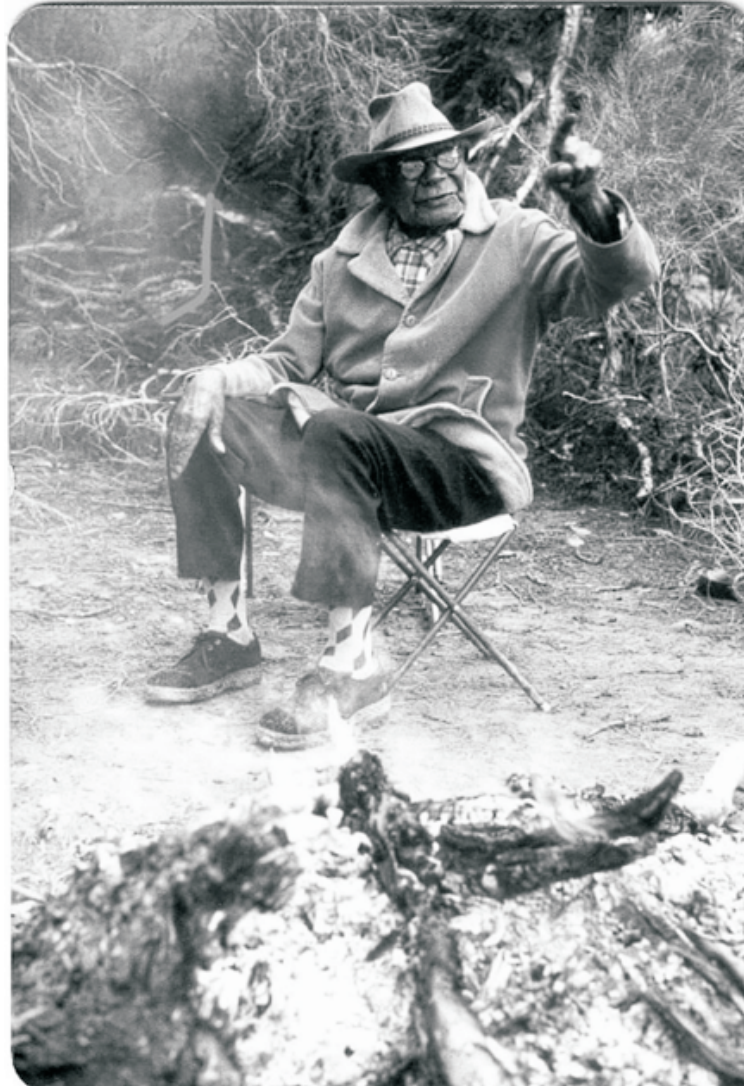


Plate 6.8: Mick McLean *Irinanyi* makes a point, Dalhousie, 1976. He was a first-language speaker of Wangkangurru and the last singer of many song-cycles.



Plate 6.9: Linda Crombie makes a point (Alton Downs, November 2003). She is the last first-language speaker of Wangkangurru and the last fully fluent speaker of the language. She is also the only person to have some knowledge of Yaluyandi.

of the language to their descendants, but there was no way they could pass on their songs to the next generation who were devoted to ‘country and western’ music, and still less to grandchildren who were listening to the latest ‘(h)its’ on the radio. To the older generation the songs and oral traditions were what mattered most.² At the end of my first recording, in March 1962, Stan Day of Echuca, the very first speaker of an Aboriginal language I ever heard, said to me: ‘and now I will sing you a real Wembawemba song. I learnt it from my grandfather.’ To him and to other ‘last speakers’ language and song were inseparable, and a song was something very special. People wanted the songs and traditions to be recorded for the future: they somehow felt that this was the voice of their culture. This opinion was not shared by some senior academics: mixing disciplines was amateurish, and songs were to be left strictly to the ethnomusicologists. In the late sixties, when I had been recording songs for some time, I received a letter saying that my fieldwork grant from the then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) would not be renewed unless I stopped recording songs—but fortunately no one ever mentioned this again. The linguistic explanations of the Wembawemba songs were most enlightening: they contained features of the language that were no longer in use, and one contained words from another language—as is of course so often the case. One song incorporated traditional beliefs dealing with trials of the spirit after death. Two songs retained memories of the ‘gender totems’ which are known to have existed in Victoria: one of these made fun of the women’s bird, while the other poured praise on the men’s bird (Hercus 1969, 1986:62).

Some people were so anxious to record songs that it was hard to get them to do language work. The most difficult was Barney Coffin, who used to start off with: ‘I first want to sing the Train Song’—this was his favourite. His version of it was endlessly repetitive, moreover it was in Adnyamathanha, from the Flinders Ranges, a language which still had a number of good speakers. He was definitely the ‘last and final speaker’ of Yardliyawara from the east of the Flinders Ranges. He lived away from his country in Broken Hill and had no family there, and the language disappeared with his death. But it was still those songs—in his case mainly non-traditional—he especially wanted to have recorded.

Because of the emphasis placed on this by the ‘last speakers’, I came to concentrate on songs and oral literature as much as on the language, recording and getting the linguistic analysis of long song cycles in Arabana and Wangkangurru in particular. The songs of the ‘final last speakers’ are most moving: they represent the most cherished part of the voice of the past.

Appendix

Brief list of the languages on which some data was collected by Luise Hercus

Victorian Languages 1962–1976: speakers ranging from those able to speak in sentences (Wembawemba and Mathimathi) to those who could recall a limited vocabulary (e.g. Gippsland and Yorta Yorta)

Paakantyi (NSW) late 1963 onwards (till 1969 there were two first language speakers, one for Pantyikali, George Dutton, and one for Southern Paakantyi, Jack Johnson)

Yaralde (SA) 1965 with James Kartinyeri who could still form sentences. He died that year.

2 I had from the beginning wanted to let speakers talk as they wished—in rebellion against a great work well known to me from my Sanskrit studies, Grierson’s *Linguistic survey of India*, where the text for every language is a translation of the parable of The Prodigal Son.

- Wangkangurru** (SA and Queensland) 1965 onwards. First language speakers Mick McLean, Maudie Naylor and last first language speaker, Linda Crombie.
- Arabana** (SA) 1965 onwards. First language speaker, Tim Strangways, December 1969. There is still one relatively fluent speaker, Jean Wood.
- Nukunu** (SA) 1965–1970, mainly Gilbert Bramfield who knew vocabulary
- Pangkarla** (SA) 1965–1973, only limited vocabulary
- Kuyani** (SA) 1966–1977, mainly Alice Oldfield who was a rapid and fluent first language speaker and would not slow down: she was blind and could not see the reactions of any person she was talking to.
- Malyangapa** NSW 1966–1974. At first there was one fluent speaker, George Dutton.
- Wangkumara** SW Queensland 1970–1991. Mainly work on mythology and songs: thorough language work has been done by J.G.Breen.
- Yardliyawara** (SA) 1968–1974. Barney Coffin was the only speaker, dec. 1973
- Yaluyandi** (SA), 1969 onwards. The last fluent speaker, Maudie Naylor, died in 1981.
- Wirangu** (SA) 1993–1997. Two speakers, Doreen and Gladys Miller.

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7 *R.H. Mathews' schema for the description of Australian languages*

HAROLD KOCH¹

1. Introduction

R.H. Mathews was responsible for the primary documentation available to us for a considerable number of languages of south-eastern Australia, in particular those of Victoria (and the border areas of South Australia) and New South Wales (and some languages across the border in Queensland).² His work is therefore in demand, not only by linguists trying to present a consolidated account of particular languages (e.g. Blake 2003a, 2003b), but also by members of Aboriginal communities who are seeking to recover the language of their heritage. His descriptions, however, are not easy to understand. His work could be more easily accessible, I maintain, if we can become aware of the logic of his descriptions. I will try to show that Mathews' descriptions follow a consistent schema—albeit one that is considerably different from the formats and frameworks used by more modern linguists (e.g. Capell 1962; O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966; Holmer 1983; Dixon and Blake's handbook (1979–2000), not to mention international projects such as the *Lingua Descriptive Series*).³ Mathews' schema has to be understood with reference to the framework of Traditional Grammar that was current in the nineteenth century. Note that I use the term *schema* to refer to Mathews' specific format and terminology for describing Aboriginal languages and the term *framework* for the broader approach (including concepts, terminology and method of description) that he shared with other scholars of his era.

Mathews' basic biography is here summarised, drawn largely from McBryde (1974). Robert Hamilton Mathews was born in Narellan N.S.W. in 1841, lived from 1850 on his father's property near Goulburn, qualified as a Licensed Surveyor in 1870, worked as a surveyor especially in far west New South Wales and New England, lived at Singleton from 1880 and in Parramatta from 1889 until his death in 1918. In addition to surveying he served as a Justice of the Peace and as a coroner. His work put him in contact with Aboriginal people

1 I am grateful to Jutta Besold, Luise Hercus, Isabel McBryde, Bill McGregor, Martin Thomas, and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments in the preparation of this paper.

2 For a recent classification of Victorian languages, see Blake and Reid (1998).

3 The one Australian language described according to this schema is Mangarayi (Merlan 1982).

across a large area of south-eastern Australia. He used these contacts to gather information on the material culture, art, customs, social organisation, and languages of his Aboriginal friends. In the 1890s he retired from full-time surveying and devoted the next decade or more of his life to writing up his findings on these topics in a great many papers, presenting them to learned societies (such as the Royal Society of NSW and the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland), and publishing them in Australian and overseas journals—seeking thereby to be recognised as an authority on Aboriginal life. Although he corresponded with other amateurs interested in Aboriginal studies, such as Rev. John Mathew and Daisy Bates, Mathews was never accepted into the clique of anthropologists centred on Spencer, Howitt, and Fison.⁴ For commentary on his ethnographic work see further McBryde (1974); Elkin (1975–1976); and Thomas (2004).

I shall quote three linguists' judgements regarding Mathews' work on Aboriginal languages.

About the turn of the century, contributions were made by R. H. Mathews, whose work covered a large part of the continent, even if it left much to be desired in thoroughness; but he is to be thanked for preserving much that is difficult and often impossible to get today, and he did pay attention to grammar. (Capell 1956:1)

In his fuller history of research on Australian languages Capell (1971:661) comments at greater length on Mathews' work, praising him for his 'industry and conscientiousness' in spite of his lack of training in linguistics, finding his phonetics 'not nearly so good as those of Ridley and Hale', describing his 'immense number of papers' as giving 'basic grammatical information and vocabulary in a great number of languages, many of which appear to be extinct today', but regretting his lack of illustrative text materials.

R.M.W. Dixon, in his overview of Australian languages, also cites the importance of Mathews' work, while highlighting problems with its use.

R. H. Mathews ... produced short grammatical sketches and word lists for dozens of languages from the south-east; in many cases Mathews' material is virtually the only data on tongues that are now extinct. Unfortunately, Mathews tended to doctor and normalise his notes for publication, so that recourse must be had to the original field notes. (Dixon 1980:15)

Diana Eades is one linguist for whose linguistic descriptions Mathews provides the fullest data.

Mathews' contribution to the study of the grammar of *Dharawal* and *Dhurga* is also very important. His grammars are the only first-hand grammars written on these two languages ... However, Mathews' grammars are rather brief and do not contain many details ... Mathews understood and explained quite well such grammatical points as the nominative-ergative and inclusive-exclusive distinctions. However, as one would expect from grammars written at the turn of the century, he expected an Indo-European type grammar and has created categories not strictly applicable to *Dharawal* and *Dhurga*, such as adjective and third person pronoun. (Eades 1976:10)

Eades analyses Mathews' adjectives as modifying nouns and his free third person pronouns as demonstratives. We shall see below further examples of categories created on the basis of European grammar.

Mathews' own stated view of the significance of his work has to do with the preservation of knowledge

[I have] fulfilled the gratifying duty of preserving a record of the grammatical elements of the aboriginal languages of Victoria ... (Mathews 1902b:96)

4 See for example Prentis (1998:ch.5).

and the provision of a base for further study.

Now ... that I have overcome the initial difficulties of laying down the elements of the grammar of the several languages, it will be comparatively easy for any future investigator to extend and improve the work I have begun. (Mathews 1902b:96)

He also thought his work might prove of value for the enterprise we now call historical-comparative linguistics, the study of language relationships and history.

This paper claims to enlarge, in some degree, the circle of Australian ethnology. Exhibiting the general structure of any native tongue must be valuable to philologists, in enabling them to compare our aboriginal languages with each other, and also with those of the people of Polynesia and the East Indian Archipelago, whence the primitive inhabitants of this Continent are supposed by several writers to have come ... (Mathews 1901b: 127–28)

Mathews liked to emphasise (a) his independence—the fact that he obtained all his data from the lips of Aboriginal people in their camps;⁵ (b) the difficulty involved in ensuring accuracy; and (c) grammatical features that he considered himself the first to have described. Among the latter are: the inclusive vs. exclusive distinction in 1st Person non-singular pronouns, the Trial number in Victorian languages, the wide use of Person-Number inflection on a great many parts of speech in the languages of his 'Thurrawal' type, the double marking of possession in some languages (e.g. 'of the man his boomerang'), and the inflection of personal pronouns for Tense in Kūrñū.⁶

It is not my intention to assess the accuracy of Mathews' phonetic transcriptions, comment on the discrepancies between his notebooks and published articles, or evaluate the grammatical analyses of particular languages. These are topics which are typically discussed by linguists working on the individual languages for which Mathews provides the primary information.

Mathews' linguistic descriptions consist of three parts: Orthography, Grammar (not always labelled as such), and Vocabulary. For some languages (e.g. Ngarrugu) he published just the vocabulary, for others (e.g. Dyirringañ) only the Grammar. Some descriptions are only a few pages long; others are much longer, but the structure is the same. Not all descriptions include the section on Orthography. In some cases the Vocabulary is separated from the rest of the description, occurring later in an article dealing with several languages, or published in a separate article. In fact, Mathews' language descriptions are something of a bibliographer's nightmare, since the relevant language is often not indicated in the title of the article. In the Appendix I give a table of his language descriptions, ordered chronologically by year of publication, then within the same year alphabetically by journal name, then within the same article by page numbers—separating descriptions of (orthography and) grammar from his vocabularies.

In this paper I will concentrate on Mathews' system of grammatical description. However, I will first describe briefly his approach to vocabulary and orthography/phonology.

5 Except for those papers which he acknowledged were based on other people's primary data, as is explained in the Appendix.

6 In the body of this chapter I follow Mathews' own spelling of language names. For the modern versions of the names, see Table 7.24 in the Appendix.

2. Vocabulary

Most of Mathews' vocabularies are of single languages. Sometimes, however, he gives parallel vocabularies in two languages (e.g. Kamilaroi and Thurrawal, Yualeai and Yota-Yota). The articles also include lists of 'mystic vocabulary', which was used in circumstances surrounding the initiation of young men. The size of vocabularies is usually indicated. Table 7.24 in the Appendix gives the approximate figures that Mathews himself gives for each vocabulary. These range from 150 (Wuddyāwūrru) to about 450 words (Kamilaroi, Thurrawal), although those collected by correspondents may be as low as 103 (the Western Desert dialect spoken at Erlistoun). The 'mystic' vocabularies contain at best about forty words.

Regardless of their size, the vocabularies are always organised by semantic domain, with the corresponding English term given first. These domains are the same, although their headings vary somewhat.⁷ Mathews explains his procedure thus:

I have given the English in the first column, and have grouped together words of the same character as the human body, inanimate natural objects, different animals, and also adjectives and verbs. The Thurrawal equivalents of the Kamilaroi are supplied in the third column to facilitate comparison in both languages. (1903b:275)

Table 7.1 gives his basic schema for describing vocabulary, using the slightly varying headings he provides. In some descriptions a number of categories are collapsed. Some languages include extra categories (Adverbs only in Thoorga and Western Australian languages, Numerals only in Arranda). Note that the vocabularies normally include only nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Other word classes—personal pronouns, interrogatives, demonstratives, 'adverbs' of all kinds, conjunctions, interjections, and numerals—are included in the Grammar. One difficulty in using the verbs cited in his vocabularies is that they typically include an (unexplained) inflectional suffix, which may mark different categories for different verbs.

Table 7.1: Mathews' lexical categories

Family terms	
The family	
(unlabelled)	
Parts of the body	
Parts of the human body	
The human body	
Inanimate objects	
Inanimate objects in nature	
Inanimate natural objects	
Inanimate nature	
Natural objects	
Natural surroundings	
Animals (of all kinds)	
	Mammals/Animals: mammals
	Birds/Animals: birds
	Fishes/Animals: fishes

⁷ Similar standard wordlists organised by semantic domain are given by Capell (1945), Sutton and Walsh (1979), and in the language descriptions in Dixon and Blake (1979–2000).

	Fishes and Reptiles
	Reptiles/Animals: reptiles
	Invertebrates/Insects/Animals: invertebrates
Trees and plants	
	Trees
	Plants
Weapons	
Weapons, etc.	
Weapons, utensils, etc.	
Weapons, ornaments, etc.	
Weapons and Manufactures	
Implements, etc.	
Implements, utensils, etc.	
Adjectives	
Verbs	
Adverbs	
Numerals	

3. Orthography

That part of Mathews' description which is usually headed 'Orthography' is referred to in some papers as either a 'system of spelling' or a 'method of spelling'. His source is acknowledged: 'The system of orthoepy adopted is that of the circular issued by the Royal Geographical Society, London' (Mathews 1901b:129).⁸ The main features of this system are that only letters of the English alphabet are to be used (including digraphs such as *ch*, *th*, *ng*, *au*), vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian and consonants as in English, every letter is to be pronounced and there are to be no redundant letters, and the acute accent mark is to be used to denote the stressed syllable. The section on orthography in Mathews' papers, if present, is usually one or two pages in length. Each article gives essentially the same information, except that the examples are always taken from the language under description.

The sounds of the languages are indicated by means of the letters of the English alphabet: he lists in alphabetical order first 14 consonants—b, d, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, w, y—and then five vowels—a, e, i, o, u. The words are said to be spelled phonetically and the letters are claimed to have the same value as in English, with a few qualifications.

The only un-English symbol Mathews uses for consonants is 'the Spanish *ñ*', which he uses syllable-finally in place of *ny*. He claims to use final *h* for a 'guttural, resembling *ch* in the German word *joch*' (Mathews 1901d:141), but this is hardly used in his descriptions. He acknowledges a predominantly un-English sound for his *r*: 'R has a rough trilled sound, as in *hurrah!*' (Mathews 1901d:141). Mathews seems not to have been aware of the approximant rhotic (which is like that of English); perhaps he attributed this sound to English influence if

⁸ This pamphlet is reproduced in pages 3–5 and 8–10 of *Western Australia* (1901), which is a brochure issued by the Minister of Lands, where it is titled 'Circular issued by the Royal Geographical Society: Orthography of geographical names ... 1891'.

he ever heard it. He seems to regard the velar nasal in its word-initial position as an un-English sound:

Ng at the beginning of a word, as in *ngee* = yes, has a peculiar sound, which can be got very closely by putting *oo* before it, as *oong-ee*, and articulating it quickly as one syllable. At the end of a word or syllable it has substantially the sound of *ng* in our word *sing*. (Mathews 1901d:141)⁹

He uses *g* only for the ‘hard’ sound, i.e. a stop as in *goat* and never for the affricate sound of *cage* or *bridge*. On the other hand he does recognise a sound that has ‘nearly the sound of *j* or *ch*’ (Mathews 1902b:76–77), which he represents by the digraphs *ty* or *dy*. He emphasises that word-finally this is ‘sounded as one letter’ (*ibid.*), or, otherwise described, ‘is pronounced nearly as *tch* in *watch* or *hitch*, omitting the final hissing sound’ (Mathews 1903h:53). He has marginal use for *ch*: ‘*Ch*, which seldom occurs, is pronounced as in *church*’ (Mathews 1902d:50). These descriptions indicate that Mathews was aware of a palatal sound which varies between an affricate and a stop, and for which he used a digraph *ty* or *dy*, with *y* signalling the palatal articulation. For some languages he further recognises a palatal lateral.

Y, followed by a vowel, is attached to several consonants, as *dya*, *lyi*, *tyu*, etc. and is pronounced in one syllable, the initial sound of the *d*, *l*, *t*, as the case may require, being retained. (Mathews 1903b:260)

He also uses *ny* syllable-initially for a sound which he represents word-finally as *ñ*.

Mathews recognises another class of sounds that have no exact English equivalent and for which he uses similar digraphic representation. His *dh* is said (*passim*) to be pronounced nearly as *th* in *that* but with a slight sound of *d* preceding it; this seems to indicate a dental affricate articulation. He also uses *nh* for a sound described as having nearly the sound of *th* in *that* but with an initial sound of *n*; this would be what we now describe as a lamino-dental nasal. Mathews’ use of *h* and *y* as distinguishing features for dental and palatal sounds is as close as he comes to recognising ‘classes’ of consonants based on place of articulation.

Mathews’ system suggests that he notes the duration of consonants. He claims that where there is a double consonant, each letter is distinctly enunciated. It is likely, however, that his doubling may often reflect rather the shortness of the preceding vowel, following the principles of English spelling. In one description he relates consonant length to pre-stopping.

Where double *l* occurs, it often closely resembles *dl*; thus *thallu*, straight, could be spelt *thadlu*. The same thing happens with double *n*; thus, the word *wunna*, a boomerang, could be pronounced *wudna*. (Baddyeri, Mathews 1905:56)

He does not indicate whether his ‘double consonants’ contrast with single consonants. In fact he has no explicit notion of contrast. His awareness of the absence of contrast, however, can be concluded from statements such as these:

T is interchangeable with *d*, *p* with *b* and *g* with *k* in most words where these letters are employed. (Mathews 1901d:141)

B has an intermediate pronunciation between its proper sonant sound and the surd sound of *p*. The two letters are practically interchangeable. (Baddyeri, Mathews 1905:55)

Nevertheless he uses a phonetic rather than a phonemic notation, writing these sounds with the voicing feature that he hears, while observing that the difference does not seem to be important to the speakers.

9 In quotations from Mathews’ papers I consistently put cited words in italics even if Mathews himself did not. I also add morpheme boundaries (-) and clitic boundaries (=) in places to facilitate the interpretation of his examples. Mathews did not separate words into their components. Sometimes the boundaries are not clear because of morphophonemic adjustments.

If we display Mathews' consonant transcription system on a modern table organised by place and manner of articulation, we get the display shown in Table 7.2. The main differences from modern phonological systems are (a) the omission of a retroflex place of articulation—which in any case is lacking in many south-eastern languages; (b) the lack of an approximant rhotic; and (c) the dubious presence of a velar (his 'guttural') fricative.

Table 7.2: Mathews' consonants according to place and manner features

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Vd/vl stops	<i>b, p</i>	<i>dh, th</i>	<i>d, t</i>	<i>j, dy, ty</i>	<i>g, k</i>
Fricatives					<i>h</i>
Nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>nh</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ny/ñ</i>	<i>ng</i>
Laterals			<i>l</i>	<i>ly</i>	
Trill			<i>r</i>		
Approximants	<i>w</i>			<i>y</i>	

It is certain that some of his languages (e.g. Kūrñū and Baddyeri) did indeed have retroflex consonants. This is hinted at in the following description:

In several native words, an indistinct sound of *r* seems to come before some consonants. Thus, it is difficult to distinguish between *ngurl-pa* and *ngul-pa*. (Baddyeri, Mathews 1905:56)

The Baddyeri vocabulary includes a considerable number of words containing *rl*, *rn*, and *rd*, such as *wirli* 'hole', *dhurna* 'mud', *warta* 'shin'. Similarly Kūrñū has words such as *thurlta* 'kangaroo', *karnkali* 'girl', *ngurta* 'you plural'.

For vowels Mathews used only the five letters of the English alphabet, but these are supplemented by diacritics, doubled letters and other vowel sequences to increase the number of vowel values that are represented orthographically. Unmarked vowels are said to have the usual value of English short vowels—presumably the sounds of *pin*, *pen*, *pan*, *pond*, *pun*. Sometimes *u* is used for the last sound. He further mentions a 'thick or dull sound of *i*' (Mathews 1901d:141) that is hard to distinguish from his short *a* and *u*. I take this to be a high-ish central schwa-type vowel in unstressed syllables. Mathews' short vowel notations would thus correspond to the values shown on Table 7.3. Note the absence of a high back rounded vowel—presumably because he regarded it as a long sound in English.

Table 7.3: Mathews' spelling of short vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	<i>i</i>	<i>(i)</i>	
Mid	<i>e</i>		
Low	<i>a</i>	<i>u/ǔ</i>	<i>o</i>

Vowels having the sound of English long vowels are indicated by either double vowel letters or a diacritic. The sounds of *feel* and *moon* are spelled with double vowels as in English. Other long vowels are represented by means of a circumflex diacritic: 'â as in *father* or *far*, ê

as in *bear*, *ô* as in *pole* or *vote*, and sometimes *û* instead of *oo*. It seems that Mathews allows that unmarked vowels (those given without a diacritic) may sometimes have the ‘long’ values; this is implied in his note that ‘in some cases the long sound of *a*, *e*, and *u* are indicated thus, *â*, *ê*, *û*.’ (Mathews 1902b:76). Presumably this is when the vowels occur in open syllables; thus the first *a* of *bana* would be interpreted as long (as in English *barn*), while that of *banna* or *banda* would have the ‘short’ value of English *ban*; a spelling like *bânda* would be necessary to signal the ‘long’ value in a closed syllable. For diphthongs Mathews also uses vowel combinations or another diacritic, the macron. Thus *ou* gives the diphthong of *loud*; *ī* renders the sound of *pie* or *kite*; and *ā* represents that of *fate*. These spelling conventions suggest a system for spelling long vowels and diphthongs as shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4: Mathews’ spelling of long vowels and diphthongs with English illustrative words

	Front long	Fronting diphthong	Central long	Backing diphthong	Back long
High	<i>ee feel</i>				<i>oo/û moon</i>
Mid	<i>ê bear</i>	<i>ā fate</i>			<i>ô pole, vote</i>
Low		<i>ī pie</i>	<i>ā far, father</i>	<i>ou loud</i>	

Mathews’ representation of ‘long’ vowels is the least satisfactory aspect of his orthography. The use of the same vowel symbols with and without diacritics is not the only awkward aspect of his system. A further complication is the fact that some descriptions use macrons instead of circumflexes to indicate the long value of *a*, *e*, *o*, *u* (Mathews 1903a:69–70, 1903g:250–251, 1903f:179–180, 1904e:56–57, 1907b:347–349). This leads to possible ambiguity with respect to <*ā*>, which could denote either a long vowel or a diphthong. Another complication is that at least one description (Thoorga, Mathews 1902d) renders the diphthongs of *kite* and *late* by means of *ī* and *ā* respectively, using the dieresis instead of the macron. It is conceivable that this alteration was made not by Mathews himself but by a typesetter or publisher.

Several overall observations concerning Mathews’ orthography and phonology can be made. He lacks the phonetic theory which classifies consonantal sounds by place and manner of articulation and vowels by features of tongue height, tongue backness, and lip rounding. He also lacks the twentieth-century concept of phonemes, which are established by contrast, and phonemic orthographies, which signal only the contrastive sounds, omitting the representation of non-distinctive variability such as Mathews noted between *p* and *b*, etc. In accordance with the recommendations made by the Royal Geographical Society for the representation of place names in exotic languages, Mathews attempted to represent sounds using the resources of the English alphabet; he supplemented these by using combinations of letters, diacritics, and explanatory notes to capture pronunciations which were perceptibly unlike those of English. Compared to many other nineteenth century recorders of Aboriginal languages, Mathews was fairly accurate in hearing the sounds of the languages.

4. Grammar in general

4.1 The background in Traditional Grammar

The grammatical framework used by Mathews seems to be based primarily on the system of Traditional Grammar that emerged from Greek and Roman grammarians, was further developed in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, Renaissance and subsequent centuries, and inherited into nineteenth-century Britain (see Robins 1967; Michael 1970). This is the system that underlay the pedagogy of not only Latin and Greek but also modern languages and English itself. Its basic framework can be seen most easily in nineteenth century textbooks of Latin and Greek that have been used into the twentieth century, such as B.L. Gildersleeve's *Latin Grammar* (Gildersleeve and Lodge 1963 [1867]) and William W. Goodwin's *A Greek grammar* (1896 [1892]). The kind of pedagogical grammar of English that might have informed Mathews's education in the 1840s and 1850s can be assumed to be not hugely different from what can be seen in Ussher (1967 [1785]), a school grammar 'designed particularly for the use of ladies' boarding schools'. A modern pedagogical presentation of Traditional Grammar is Bernard (1975).

Grammars written in this framework typically begin with the letters and their pronunciation, then describe the parts of speech one by one, indicating the inflectional properties or 'accidents' of each,¹⁰ describing where necessary the different inflectional classes (called 'declensions' of nouns and 'conjugations' of verbs), perhaps contain a section on word-formation, and finally present the syntax, showing how the inflectional categories (cases, tenses, moods, etc.) are used in sentences as well as describing the structure of complex sentences. Mathews' grammars are presumably described as presenting only the 'elements' of the language because they are largely confined to the letters, parts of speech, and their inflections, with no attempt at describing word-formation or syntax. Similarly his vocabularies only aim to give a sample of the lexicon rather than a full dictionary.

A fundamental organisational principle of descriptions written in the Traditional Grammar framework is the parts of speech, or word classes. There are many schemes of parts of speech.¹¹ A characteristic of these schemes is that authors are rarely explicit about the criteria used to establish them, using a mixture of semantic (notional), syntactic (order, co-occurrence, etc.) and inflectional features to define the word classes. The same applies to inflectional categories. The prestige of the classical languages leads to the use of traditional classifications which may not be justifiable for modern languages. For example, English nouns have Gender because Greek and Latin (as well as French and German) require it as a morphosyntactic category. Under Gender grammarians typically specify differences between male and female terminology, whether this is expressed by means of suffixes (e.g. *lion*, *lioness*), compounding (*cock-sparrow*, *hen-sparrow*), or separate lexemes (*boar*, *sow*). If it were not for the strength of tradition, these would be discussed under word-formation, if they were mentioned at all in the grammar; otherwise they might be considered only as part of lexicography.

The forms that express the 'accidents' or inflectional properties of a word are typically given in paradigms using a model word—for example Latin *amīcus* 'friend' for a Masculine 2nd declension noun, or *amō* 'love' for a 1st conjugation verb. If there are different inflectional classes within a given part of speech, these are ordered into declensions or conjugations and

10 I follow the practice of P.H. Matthews (1991) in using upper case in the names of morphosyntactic categories (e.g. Case and Tense) and properties (e.g. Genitive and Future).

11 Michael (1970) examines a large number of systems used by English scholars for grammars of Latin and English up until 1800.

each is illustrated by means of a paradigm. Whole words are usually given; i.e. words are not necessarily described in terms of separate stems and affixes. Descriptions are therefore word-based rather than morpheme-based. The description of modern languages may not even confine inflectional categories to what is expressed within the word: thus Ussher (1967 [1785]:8) can describe the Genitive Case of *king* as being either *king's* or *of a king* and the Potential Mood of *be* as *may/must/can be* (p.37). This reveals another aspect of Traditional Grammar descriptions: their categories may be based on translation equivalence with another language such as Latin rather than on relations (of contrast, complementarity, distribution, etc.) between words within the language itself, as in modern structuralist descriptions. We shall see that Mathews' grammatical descriptions follow an order of parts of speech; his parts of speech are largely assumed from European grammar and are based on translation from English; his inflectional categories follow those of European languages but are modified to some extent by the facts of the Australian languages; there are no clear criteria for establishing parts of speech or inflectional categories; and, as in other descriptions in the tradition, parts of speech may overlap.

4.2 Mathews' parts of speech

The major divisions in Mathews' grammatical descriptions involve parts of speech. Here his exposition follows a consistent order, as follows: Articles, Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Prepositions, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Interjections, Numerals. Sometimes Articles and the last three word classes are absent. Sometimes the order of Pronouns and Adjectives, or that of Prepositions and Adverbs, is reversed.

4.3 Mathews' typology

Mathews recognises two different types of linguistic structure among the languages of south-eastern Australia, which he labelled the 'Thurrawal' and the 'Kamilaroi' type respectively.

In 1901, I contributed ... a brief article on the Thurrawal, Gundungurra, and Dharruk languages, spoken by the aborigines of the south-east coast of New South Wales, in which I drew attention to several peculiarities of grammatical structure not previously reported in any Australian tongue. To the languages just mentioned I propose giving the name of the Thurrawal type ... On the present occasion, the Kamilaroi type of language will be dealt with, showing essential points of difference from the Thurrawal ... (Mathews 1903b:259)

The main difference between these two types seems to be the extent to which Person-Number values are indicated in parts of speech. In modern terminology these Person-Number inflections would be treated as enclitic pronouns. In the languages of south-eastern New South Wales, Victoria, and south-eastern South Australia (those of his Thurrawal type), subject-marking clitics occur on verbs, negative particles, interrogative and demonstrative words, etc. and possessive clitics mark the possessor Person-Number of possessed nouns and occur on his 'Prepositions'.

4.4 Mathews' treatment of Person and Number

Mathews obviously expected Person and Number distinctions to be expressed only in free personal pronouns and in verbs, and appears to be surprised to find them expressed on other parts of speech.

Another peculiarity ... is the inflection of almost every part of speech for number and person. Nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and adverbs, as well as verbs and pronouns, are all subject, more or less, to this inflection. (Mathews 1901a:2)

Among the native tribes of Victoria dealt with in this paper, inflection for person and number is not confined to the verbs and pronouns, but extends to many of the nouns, prepositions, adverbs and interjections, a peculiarity which was reported by me in certain aboriginal languages of New South Wales last year. (Mathews 1902b:72–72)

Apart from possessed nouns and the structurally related 'prepositions' (see §5.6. below), he gives examples of subject-markers occurring with words that function as predicates—especially adjectives and adverbs. Singular paradigms of predicative adverbs are given below in Tables 7.21 and 7.22.

The structure of his paradigms is unnecessarily complicated by his inclusion of clitics in the word. The presence of this extra Person-Number material after the inflectional suffixes makes it hard for the reader to identify the relevant Tense/Mood suffixes of verbs and the Case suffixes of nouns. They also suggest a category of inflection which does not really apply to the part of speech. As Blake notes with respect to the one Victorian language (Mathews' Dhauhurtwūrru),

Mathews ... shows these same clitic pronouns on verbs, giving the false impression that verbs inflect for person and number as in languages such as Greek or Latin. (Blake 2003b:36)

I suggest that Person-Number markers have been indicated as parts of words for three reasons: (a) Mathews expected the marking of Person-Number on verbs because this happens in most European languages; (b) the exponents of Person-Number in Australian languages were often cliticised to the verb, and Mathews treated clitics as suffixes; and (c) his data, consisting largely of short elicited sentences, did not give him sufficient examples to draw the generalisation that subject clitics attached to the first word or phrase of the clause, where this was the case, as in Dhauhurtwūrru (see Blake 2003b:30).

5. Grammar in detail

In what follows I shall follow Mathews' usual order of presentation, commenting on his practice and suggesting explanations for it from the grammatical tradition he was following, and pointing out in places how it differs from modern structuralist practice. For clarity of exposition, under each heading I shall first discuss the features common to most languages, and then add the special treatment given to languages of his 'Thurawal type', i.e. those that make heavy use of enclitic pronouns.

5.1 Articles

Under the heading Articles, if it is present, Mathews usually comments on the absence of equivalents of English *a* and *the*. This is a word class that he never uses.

There are no articles corresponding to our 'a' and 'the' in any Australian tongue with which I am acquainted. (Mathews 1901b:130).

Why, we might ask, does he include such a heading? I suggest that it was because this part of speech was given in the Traditional Grammar framework that he was using (although Latin lacks articles). Sometimes Mathews adds a comment on the nearest equivalent to English articles.

The place of the English article is supplied by various forms of the demonstratives representing ‘this’ and ‘that,’ which are declinable like the noun. If it be desired to definitely say that only one object is meant, the numeral, *wandho*, one, would be employed. (Mathews 1903c:64)

The adverbs ‘here’ and ‘there’ ... are treated as demonstratives, and are then substituted for the definite article. (Mathews 1907b:349)

The last confusing statement, which is repeated a number of times, is probably to be understood thus. Words translating English ‘here’ and ‘there’ are endingless Locative Case forms of the demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’ respectively. Mathews classes them as adverbs because that is how Traditional Grammar treats English *here* and *there*. Otherwise he is simply saying that demonstratives like ‘that’ are the closest parallel to the English definite article *the*.

5.2 Nouns

Nouns are discussed under three sub-headings which correspond to the inflectional categories used in Traditional Grammar for European languages: Number, Gender, and Case.

5.2.1 Number

Under Number, Mathews typically indicates that there are inflections for Singular, Dual, and Plural, and gives sample paradigms for words such as ‘man’, ‘kangaroo’, ‘boomerang’. For some Victorian languages he signals a Trial Number (Mathews 1902b, 1903c:64). He quotes whole words and usually does not explicitly isolate the suffixes which mark the Number values. He does, however, sometimes call attention to the fact that these suffixes differ according to the noun stem.

It will be observed that the dual and plural suffixes vary slightly in form, according to the termination of the noun. (Mathews 1901d:142)

This allomorphy is often flagged but not explicitly described. However, in some descriptions Mathews does isolate the suffixes.

Generally, the dual is formed by adding the termination *burra* to the word; the plural is formed by suffixing *burraga*. (Thoorga, Mathews 1902d:51)

He then quotes the forms displayed in Table 7.5. He explains the variants in terms of euphony.

... the suffixes are liable to variations which are apparently designed for the sake of a pleasing, easy pronunciation.

In the first example the name of the animal ends with a vowel, and the syllable is closed by the annexure of the letter *m*, which is then followed by the suffixes *burra* and *burraga* respectively ... In the second example the creature’s name concludes with *oo*, which is closely allied with *w* in sound, therefore the *b* is dropped from the beginning of the next syllable, and a *w* substituted for it ... In the third example, the name of the object terminates with *n*, and the suffix is added without modification. (Mathews 1902d:51–52)

Table 7.5: Thoorga Number inflections

	'opossum'	'kangaroo'	'boomerang'
Singular	<i>koongara</i>	<i>booroo</i>	<i>warangan</i>
Dual	<i>koongaramburra</i>	<i>booroowurra</i>	<i>waranganburra</i>
Plural	<i>koongaramburraga</i>	<i>booroowurraga</i>	<i>waranganburraga</i>

Regarding the Trial Number, Mathews notes that the suffix marking Trial 'is tacked on to the suffix of the plural' (Mathews 1902b:73–74).

The *trial* number, as existing in the native languages of Victoria, is different in character from that observed in some other countries. For example, in the New Hebrides the case-endings [*sic*] of the dual, trial and plural are independent, and vary from each other ... But among the Victorian tribes, the trial number is formed by adding another case-ending [*sic*] to that of the plural. (Mathews 1902b:73–74)

It will be apparent that the words *baiap* [in Wamba Wamba] or *kullik* [in other western Victorian languages] are merely superadded to the suffix of the plural. (Mathews 1903f: 189, of verb inflections)

He notes that this pattern has also been reported for Motu in New Guinea (*ibid.*). A structural analysis could use this as evidence that the Trial is a more specific and 'marked' subcategory of Plural. It is also possible that in some languages the 'Trial' consists of nothing more than the Plural form of the noun or pronoun followed by the numeral 'three'.

Mathews treats nouns as 'having number' even in languages, such as Kūmbainggeri (shown in Table 7.6), where there is no inflection but the noun is followed by separate words that mean 'two' or 'several'. Although he does not specify to which part of speech these number-markers belong, for some languages the same words are listed under Numerals, e.g. Kūmbainggeri (Mathews 1903e:324 'two' and 'several'). Number thus seems for Mathews to be a categorial notion that is expressed for nouns either by inflections or modifying numerals.

Table 7.6: Kūmbainggeri Number marking by separate words

Singular	<i>nungo</i>	one kangaroo
Dual	<i>nungo bulari</i>	a pair of kangaroos
Plural	<i>nungo umaka</i>	several kangaroos

5.2.2 Gender

The treatment of Gender seems odd to modern linguists, since most of the languages described by Mathews do not make gender distinctions that can be justified on structural grounds. Here we see clearly that Mathews takes a category provided by his framework of Traditional Grammar and asks how the distinctions described as Masculine and Feminine Gender in European languages are expressed in Australian languages. He typically gives sex-specific words for 'man' and 'woman', 'boy' and 'girl', etc. and animal terms such as Gundungurra *jerrawul* 'male possum' and *bâwa* 'female wallaroo' if they are available. He usually gives the terms for 'male' and 'female' (e.g. Gundungurra *goomban* and *dhoorook* re-

spectively) which can be used as modifiers of animal terms, noting that ‘these words take inflexion for number and case’ (Murawarri, Mathews 1903f:180), or ‘are inflected for number like other adjectives’ (Mathews 1901d:142). It thus appears that Mathews expects Gender, understood as male or female sex, to be relevant to some nouns and expressed either by the choice of lexeme or by separate adjectival modifiers. In agreement with others using the framework of Traditional Grammar, the fact that the exponents of nominal Gender were recognisable members of another part of speech was irrelevant.

5.2.3 Case

The cases are discussed using the order: subject cases (Nominative and Nominative-Agent or Causative), Possessive/Genitive, then the object case (Objective/Accusative), then Dative and Ablative. If Instrumental is given its position varies in Mathews’ sketches: it is placed before, between, or after Dative and Ablative. In one source an Objective Case is said to include the Accusative, Dative and Ablative forms (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901b:130). The maximal case system thus consists of seven cases. Example sentences are typically given to illustrate the use of each case.

By Nominative Mathews means the forms that express the subject function of a noun. He notes that there are ‘two forms of the nominative case’. One, the ‘simple nominative’, simply names an object or is used with an intransitive verb; here the noun is typically ‘unchanged’. ‘The second shows that the subject is doing some act’ (Mathews 1901d:143); it is used ‘when the noun is connected with a transitive verb’ (Mathews 1901b:131) and is called the Nominative-agent or Causative. In this usage the noun includes a suffix. This is what we now call the Ergative Case suffix. Mathews notes that ‘the agent suffix ... has euphonic changes according to the sound of the word it is attached to’ (Mathews 1901b:131). These suffixal variants are not usually explicitly described.

The Accusative Case is expressed by the same form as the (simple) Nominative and typically consists of the unmarked noun. Mathews’ examples show that he means the Accusative to express the object function of a noun.

For some languages he explicitly mentions an Instrumental Case, which may be formally identical with the Nominative-agent. ‘This case takes the same affix as the causative’ (Mathews 1903c:65). He sometimes describes the Instrumental Case as marking a ‘remote object’, as in *Ngaia burran-du kainggal bumi* ‘I with a boomerang a child beat’ (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:261). His discussion of objects gets confusing, however, in situations where the case frame of the verb in the Aboriginal language does not match that of its English translation equivalent. Here Mathews says that

an instrument is the direct object of the verb, as *Warrangan-dya wawarnang yerria=ngai* a boomerang at a crow threw I. (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901b:132)

Here a translation ‘hit the crow with the boomerang’ would better show how the cases are being used—the crow being the direct object and the boomerang being the instrument. The case frame is like that of English *shoot*. Examples such as this show that Mathews’ analysis is based on translation equivalence to English rather than on an analysis of relationships found internal to the data of the language.

Dative Case is illustrated with expressions such as *ngurra-oo* ‘to the camp’ (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901a), indicating goal of motion, as well as ‘[boomerang] for/belonging to thy father’ (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901b:133), indicating possession. Mathews’ Dative corresponds to modern cases labelled Allative, Purposive, Dative, or even Genitive.

Ablative Case is illustrated with expressions such as *ngura-in* '[runs] from the camp', '[makes a boomerang] from myrtle' (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901b:133). These are different senses but they are unified by their use of the same suffix in Thurrawal and the sharing of *from* in the corresponding English expressions.

The absence of a construction like the passive of European languages is sometimes mentioned, awkwardly, under the heading of Ablative, presumably because the Ablative Case in Latin is used to express the agent of a passive clause.

The sense of the ablative is often obtained by means of the accusative case, thus, instead of saying, 'The man was bitten by a snake,' a native says, a snake bit the man. (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901b:133)

The sense of the ablative is often obtained by means of the objective: '*Wuddungurr-a koongara buddhal*—the dog the opossum bit; that is, the opossum was bitten by the dog. (Thoorga, Mathews 1902d:53)

Apart from being totally misleading—surely it is rather the Nominative-agent Case which expresses the equivalent of English *by*-phrase—this wording implies that there is a universal but nevertheless European-like set of senses associated with each grammatical case.

A remarkable absence from Mathews' case inventory is the Locative, which modern studies have found to be universally present in Australian languages. How do we account for this oversight? I suggest that it occurred because Mathews was operating with a pre-existent inventory of case names, derived largely from Traditional Grammar, which did not include such a term—ultimately because the classical and Western European languages on which this framework was based did not have any case named Locative. (Actually the Locative is mentioned as a rare form in detailed grammars of Latin.)¹² Some Locative case forms may nevertheless be found in Mathews' data, among the pronominal 'with' forms or in expressions presented under the heading of Prepositions.

Under the Possessive or Genitive Case Mathews describes how possession is indicated. In languages of his 'Kamilaroi type' he simply gives a phrase, such as *murri-gu burran* 'man's boomerang', where Genitive is marked by a suffix *-gu* on the possessor noun. For languages of his 'Thurrawal type', however, his European-based system runs into difficulty; for in many languages of New South Wales and Victoria there is inflection not only for the possessor noun—as expressed in European languages by a Genitive/Possessive Case—but also for the possessed noun.

I was the first author to report this declension of the name of the possessor as well as that of the article possessed, among the languages of the aboriginal tribes of New South Wales, and also in those of Victoria. (Mathews 1903h:58)

Mathews notes that the suffixes indicating proprietor and property differ, e.g. in *yooingoolee warrangan-thoong* 'man's boomerang' (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901a:1). Moreover, the inflection on the possessed noun can include a whole paradigm of Person and Number markers: 'my', 'thy', 'his', 'our', etc.

Anything over which possession can be exercised is subject to inflection for number and person. (Victorian languages, Mathews 1902b:78)

12 'These six cases are the remains of a larger number. The Locative (answers where?), is akin to the Dative, and coincident with it in the 1st and 3d [sic] Declensions; in the 2d [sic] Declension it is lost in the Genitive; it is often blended with the Ablative in form, regularly in syntax.' (Gildersleeve and Lodge 1963 [1867]:12). The same grammar (p.18 in 'Notes on the Cases') gives a list of Locative forms that occur in classical and early Latin.

This Person-marking can follow the marking of the Number of possessed noun, as the examples in Table 7.7 show. Mathews expresses this formation as a sequence of suffixes.

If a couple or several articles be claimed, an infix is inserted between the noun root and the possessive suffix. (Tharumba, Mathews 1903h:59)

Table 7.7: Expression of Number and Possessor in Tharumba

Singular	<i>warrangandha</i>	boomerang my
Dual	<i>warranganburrandha</i>	boomerang both mine
Plural	<i>warranganburragandha</i>	boomerang several my

Further (unanalysed) examples from Thurrawal (Mathews 1901b:133) show that the Person-markers also occur after (or outside of) the Case inflection. This is clear from Table 7.8.

Table 7.8: Expression of Case and Possessor in Thurrawal

Mathews' gloss	Mathews' form	analysis	gloss
child my	<i>gujagadyen</i>	<i>gujaga-ø=dyen</i>	child-NOM=1Sg
for my child	<i>gujagangunandyen</i>	<i>gujaga-ngunan=dyen</i>	child-DAT=1Sg
with my child	<i>gujagandidyen</i>	<i>gujaga-ndi=dyen</i>	child-LOC=1Sg

In modern terms this is better expressed as a set of pronominal clitics occurring after the noun with its Number and Case inflection. That Mathews was not unaware of the pronominal nature of these possessor markers is shown by this statement:

Another way of expressing ownership [in addition to an accompanying possessor noun with a Genitive suffix] is to suffix an abridged form of a personal pronoun to the name of the thing claimed ... (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901a:1)

With such data involving double marking of possession, only the marking on the possessor should be called a Genitive Case. The marking, on the possessed noun, of the Person and Number of the possessor involves a completely different grammatical phenomenon—what Nichols (1986) has called a ‘head-marking’ strategy. A genitive case, on the other hand, represents instantiation of the ‘dependent-marking’ grammatical strategy, which is a characteristic of the European languages on which Traditional Grammar is based. Ideally Mathews should have either (a) set up a separate inflectional category of Person-Number for the description of nouns, if he considered the markers to be inflectional suffixes, or (b) described these Person-Number markers as ‘abbreviated pronouns’ (his equivalent of our modern clitics), in which case their description should have come under, or at least been cross-referenced to, his discussion of personal pronouns.

5.3 Adjectives

Mathews often mentioned that these inflect for Number and Case in agreement with the noun they qualify. He sometimes mentions that the suffixes of adjectives, like those of nouns, are subject to alterations that are dependent on the final sounds of the declined word

(Kūmbaingeri, Mathews 1903e:322). For some languages, such as Kamilaroi (Mathews 1903b:262), he gives sentences to illustrate the various Case inflections of adjectives.

There is often a comment on the syntactic positioning of adjectives, where it is noted that they follow the noun that they modify.

There is typically a comment about comparison of adjectives. This is surely because in European languages degree of comparison is an inflectional category of adjectives. Mathews shows that the normal way of expressing comparison is by juxtaposed clauses, such as 'That is good, that is bad'. An example is (1) is from Thurrawal (Mathews 1901b:134).

- (1) *Gurnung nhai—nuggung nham*
'bad this—good that'

Sometimes he mentions a form like Kūmbaingeri *dharruiunba* 'very good', beside *dharwi* 'good' (Mathews 1903e:322); this is his way of showing how 'the sense of the superlative' (Mathews 1903b:261) is expressed—the superlative being one of the degrees of comparison of European adjectives. Mathews also often mentions a comparison of equality, citing expressions such as *murruba numma—nugurrage murraba buma* 'good this—that other good also' (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:262) or 'This is heavy—that is heavy' (Mathews 1901d:144). Comparison is seen by such descriptions to be conceived of in notional rather than inflectional terms.

In addition to their function of modifying adjacent nouns, the predicative use of adjectives may also be described under the heading Adjectives.

When used as predicates, adjectives can be conjugated like intransitive verbs, by using the fitting particles [inflections]. There is a kind of auxiliary verb, *gille*, having the sense of 'to be' or 'to become,' which is used with such adjectives. (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:262)

Mathews then gives examples such as 'I am/was/will be/may become good'. For languages of the 'Thurrawal type', this 'conjugation' of adjectives may involve Person-Number marking on the adjective itself.

When used predicatively, as *yooroang* or *yoorwang*, he is strong, an adjective can be conjugated though all the tenses and moods of an intransitive verb. (Gundungurra, Mathews 1901d:145)

His illustrative paradigm of the Present Tense of 'be strong' is given in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9: Paradigm of Gundungurra Present Tense of 'be strong'

Singular	1	<i>yooroangga</i>
Singular	2	<i>yooroandyee</i>
Singular	3	<i>yooroang</i>
Dual	1Incl	<i>yooroanga</i>
Dual	1Excl	<i>yooroangaloong</i>
Dual	2	<i>yooroangboo</i>
Dual	3	<i>yooroangboola</i>

Plural	1Incl	<i>yooroanyun</i>
Plural	1Excl	<i>yooroanyulla</i>
Plural	2	<i>yooroanthoo</i>
Plural	3	<i>yooroanjimlang</i>

5.4 Pronouns

5.4.1 Personal pronouns

Mathews divides the Pronouns section of his grammar into personal pronouns (although not labelled as such), Interrogatives, and Demonstratives. The distinctions usually made among the personal pronouns are into three Persons and three Numbers (or four if there is a Trial Number). For a few languages there are separate Masculine and Feminine forms of the Third Person in the Singular only, e.g. Darkiñung (Mathews 1903b:272). Most languages show a distinction between Inclusive and Exclusive among the non-Singular numbers of the First Person. Although this is a feature not found in European languages, and therefore not discussed in Traditional Grammar, Mathews knew of it from descriptions of other languages in the Pacific.

This peculiarity has been observed in the dialects of many of the islands of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. (Mathews 1902a:101)

He gives the full set of forms usually for the Nominative Case, often for the Possessive Case, and sometimes also for the Accusative/Objective Case. He often mentions and sometimes gives examples of pronouns in other cases.

There are likewise forms of the pronouns meaning ‘for me,’ ‘from me,’ ‘with me,’ etc., which extend though all the persons and numbers. (Birdhawal, Mathews 1907b:352)

There are objective forms of the pronoun, signifying me, with me, towards me, from me, and so on. (Wamba Wamba, Mathews 1903f:186)

He does not always relate these forms explicitly to the cases described under Nouns; ‘from’ forms are obviously Ablatives, ‘towards’ forms would be Allative (Mathews’ Dative), ‘for’ forms may be Datives or Purposives, ‘with’ forms may indicate a Comitative Case,¹³ or perhaps are to be treated as examples of the Locative Case, which is otherwise missing from Mathews’ system of cases. For Gundungurra he gives the full set of ‘with’ forms (Mathews 1901d:144). In Mathews (1901b)—on Thurrawal, Gundungurra, and Dharuk—he describes pronominal ‘for’ forms as Datives and both ‘with’ and ‘from’ forms as Ablatives. It is not clear why these oblique cases are called ‘objective forms’—perhaps because they are formed on the stem of the Accusative forms, or perhaps because he tends to treat oblique cases as sub-varieties of the Objective.

For several languages Mathews mentions special pronominal forms in what we now call the Ergative case; typically, however, he does not label it as a Causative or Nominative Agent Case form.

Ngaia ... is used with an intransitive verb, as *ngai nganggi* I sit; but when a transitive verb is used, the pronoun is change to *ngatya*, as, *Ngatya bōnggi*, I beat. These rules apply to other persons and numbers. (Banbai, Mathews 1903g:258)

13 Ridley’s Kamilaroi grammar gives two accompaniment cases, *-kūnda* ‘with, i.e. remaining at rest with’ and *-ŋunda* or *-kāle* ‘going with’, as well as a Locative *-dā* ‘in’ (Ridley 1875:5).

An entire series of pronouns applies only to transitive verbs, while another series is used only with intransitive verbs. (Kürnū Mathews 1904a:135, translation by Mathilde de Hauteclouque, in Thomas 2007:181)

Mathews finds that in Kürnū personal pronouns additionally have the unprecedented characteristic of expressing Tense as well as transitivity distinctions.

... it can be seen in the table of pronouns that their form is modified to express the present, the past or the future. It will also be seen that the pronouns governed by transitive verbs differ from those used with intransitive verbs. (Kürnū Mathews 1904a:133, translation by Mathilde de Hauteclouque, in Thomas 2005)

A portion of his table is presented in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10: Kürnū subject pronouns expressing transitivity and Tense

		Present	Past	Future
Transitive	1Sg	<i>nguttu</i>	<i>wuttu</i>	<i>guttu</i>
	2Sg	<i>ngirndu</i>	<i>wirndu</i>	<i>girndu</i>
Intransitive	1Sg	<i>nguppa</i>	<i>wuppa</i>	<i>guppa</i>
	2Sg	<i>ngimba</i>	<i>wimba</i>	<i>gimba</i>

5.4.2 Clitic pronouns

In the discussion of pronouns Mathews sometimes refers to the presence of Nominative, Possessive, or Objective 'pronominal suffixes' that are attached to verbs and other parts of speech. The forms are given under the relevant part of speech. These bound Person-Number markers would be regarded as clitic pronouns in modern linguistic descriptions, and discussed in the section on Pronouns. For languages that use clitic pronouns extensively, Mathews sometimes comments on the relatively restricted uses of the free pronouns compared to the clitics.

These full forms of the pronouns are not much used, except in answer to a question, or assertively. If someone ask, 'Who is going hunting?' a man may answer, *Ngaiu*, 'I am,' ... If an inquiry be made, 'Whose food is this?' some one may reply, pointing to a certain individual, *Ngaianga*, 'his,' and so on. (Birdhawal, Mathews 1907b:351)

These full forms of the pronouns are used chiefly in answer to a question; for example, 'who is there?' could be replied to, '*yurwalluk*' (we, dual exclusive) ... In conversation the pronominal suffixes are used with the verbs, nouns, and other parts of speech ... (Tyattyalla, Mathews 1902b:81)

A number of languages of Victoria and New South Wales have personal pronouns whose structure can be seen to consist of an invariant stem to which the regular Person-Number endings (or clitics) are added. Examples are: 'Tyattyalla *yurw-*, Tyapwurru *bang-*, Thaguwurru *wa-*, Gundungurra and Ngunawal *gula-*. Mathews does not explicitly comment on this structure.

Mathews mentions the existence of many interrogative and demonstrative pronouns and their possible inflection for Number and Person (Kūmbainggeri, Mathews 1903e:323).

5.4.3 Interrogatives

Under Interrogatives Mathews gives the words for ‘who’ and ‘what’ in various case forms, especially ‘what for’ and ‘belonging to whom’. For a few languages, including Thurrawal (Mathews 1901b:141), he gives further case forms, as illustrative in Table 7.11. Dual and Plural forms are sometimes given as well. Illustrative sentences are occasionally provided.

Table 7.11: Case forms of Thurrawal interrogatives

	‘who’ Singular	‘what’
Nominative	<i>ngunnung</i>	<i>mingang</i>
Agent	<i>ngunnungga</i>	<i>mingangga</i>
Possessive	<i>ngunnunguli</i>	<i>minganguli</i>
Dative	<i>ngunnunggunhung</i>	<i>mingangunhung</i>
Ablative	<i>ngunnundin</i>	

Mathews claims that Thurrawal interrogatives may be ‘conjugated for number and person’; however, his examples, such as *ngunnun-ga=dhan* ‘who me (struck)’ (Mathews 1901b:141) rather indicate an Ergative-marked interrogative followed by a clitic object, with the verb understood.

Other interrogatives, such as ‘where’, ‘when’ and ‘how’, are listed under Adverbs rather than under Pronouns, in accordance with their classification in English grammar.

5.4.4 Demonstratives

Under Demonstratives Mathews typically gives words for ‘this’ and ‘that’ and mentions the existence of a number of forms that indicate relative distance (near, far) or position (in front of, behind, above, below) with respect to the speaker. He sometimes mentions the possibility of their inflection according to Number (Mathews 1902b:81) and even Person (Tyattyalla, Mathews 1902b:81; Murawarri, Mathews 1903f:184; Kūmbainggeri, Mathews 1903e:323)—the latter presumably when they are used predicatively (e.g. ‘I am here’). There is little mention of Case forms of demonstratives. It appears that the uninflected forms can be used in a locative sense—which because of their English translation equivalents Mathews classes as adverbs.

Demonstrative pronouns: This, *nyam*. That, *mumum*. These are frequently used as adverbs, and they mean here and there. (Banbai, Mathews 1903g:258)

The same point is made under Adverbs:

The adverbs ‘here’ and ‘there’ are often used as demonstrative pronouns, and have the same meaning as ‘this’ and ‘that.’ (Banbai, Mathews 1903g:258)

He also mentions that demonstratives can be used in a similar way to third person pronouns. For their use as the translation equivalent of European articles see above at §5.1. According to the Traditional Grammar approach, the article-like, adnominal usage should require them to be classed as demonstrative *adjectives*, while in their independent usage would be classed as demonstrative *pronouns*. Mathews seems to have overlooked this distinction in his classification of demonstratives under the rubric of Pronouns—a distinction that was made, however, in the Gundungurra grammar that he published jointly with Mary Everitt (see §6.1).

5.4.5 Indefinite Pronouns

These are rarely mentioned. For Kamilaroi (Mathews 1903b:264), however, he mentions Indefinite Pronouns, giving terms for 'a few', 'all', 'another'.

5.4.6 Relative pronouns

These are rarely mentioned. Nevertheless, the fact that Mathews sometimes commented on their absence suggests that this part of speech formed part of the universal framework that underlay his schema.

Relative pronouns have no place in this language. (Baddyeri, Mathews 1905:59)

... there are no well-defined relative pronouns, the sense of the relative being obtained indirectly. (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901a:2)

5.5 Verbs

Inflectional categories of verbs are the expected tenses and moods, but also Number and Person. Many south-eastern languages do occur with encliticised subject (and even object) pronouns. Since most European languages inflect verbs for subject Person-Number, Mathews seems to regard this as natural. Even in languages where verbs remain unaltered in all Persons and Numbers he cites verbs with a subject (first singular if he gives only one example). He explains that the desired Number and Person can be expressed by the corresponding pronouns, as shown in Table 7.12, where the Present form of the verb is preceded by 'I', 'you', and 'he'.

Table 7.12: Kūmbainggeri verbs with Singular subjects

<i>ngaia</i>	<i>ngaranggi</i>	I hear
<i>nginda</i>	<i>ngaranggi</i>	you hear
<i>ngurrung</i>	<i>ngaranggi</i>	he hears

Whole or partial (Person-Number) paradigms are given for Present, Past and Future Tenses in the Indicative Mood.

5.5.1 Tense

Mathews doesn't have a heading 'Tense', but his paradigms are labelled 'Present Tense', 'Past Tense', 'Future tense'. Where there are further tense distinctions, these are subsumed under the standard three tenses given by Traditional Grammar. For example, in Kamilaroi, there are no less than eight contrastive forms, other than the Present Tense form, that he treats as 'variations in the past and future tenses to express slight differences in the time' (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:264). The whole set for the verb 'beat' is given in Table 7.13, with Mathews' glosses, accompanied by the First Person Singular subject pronoun, which 'becomes *ngaiala* in the future tense' (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:265).

Table 7.13: Kamilaroi Tense forms

Present Tense	I beat	<i>Ngaia bumulda</i>
Past Tense	I beat just now	<i>Ngaia bumi</i>
	I beat this morning	<i>Ngaia bumulngên</i>
	I beat yesterday	<i>Ngaia bumulmyên</i>
	I beat some time since	<i>Ngaia bumullên</i>
	I beat long ago	<i>Ngaia bumullawillên</i>
Future Tense	I will beat presently	<i>Ngaiala bumulli</i>
	I will beat tomorrow	<i>Ngaiala bumullingê</i>
	I will beat at a future time	<i>Ngaiala bumullingurri</i>

5.5.2 Mood

The Moods other than Indicative that are illustrated are Imperative and Conditional. Imperative forms are typically given for different numbers of the subject (Singular, Dual, Plural, and even Trial). Some descriptions distinguish Tense within the Imperative Mood. Thus for Kamilaroi Mathews distinguishes (1903b:266) an Imperative Present form *bumulla* glossed ‘beat thou/you’ from an Imperative Future form *bumulli* glossed ‘let him/them beat’; the latter verbal form is identical to the first of his Indicative Future forms!

Under Conditional Mood are given forms that translate ‘perhaps I will VERB’. In many instances these consist of a verb which is inflected for the Future Tense and accompanied by a separate word that means ‘perhaps’. Here it is clear that Mathews’ category of Conditional is not motivated by a language-internal analysis of contrastive verb forms but rather by translation equivalence from an English phrase that he regards as expressing a category given by Traditional Grammar. It is curious that his Conditional does not rather express a ‘would’ meaning as in French. Perhaps he tried unsuccessfully to elicit this and had to settle for the nearest equivalent. For Kamilaroi he gives two different Tenses within the Conditional Mood—a Future translated ‘perhaps I will beat’ and a Past translated ‘I may have beaten’ (Mathews 1903b:266). The verb forms are identical to the first of his Future and Past Tense Indicative forms, but these are accompanied by extra particles. In some cases this accompanying word is mentioned under Adverbs with the meaning ‘perhaps’; e.g. Murawarri *wullawurri* (Mathews 1903f:183–84).

5.5.3 Voice

The basic verbal forms are sometimes classed within the Active Voice. A Middle Voice may be distinguished. Middle verb forms are typically glossed as reflexives, such as ‘I beat myself’. Within this Middle Voice, Indicative (Present, Past, and Future) and Imperative (positive and negative) forms may be distinguished. Mathews presumably got this ‘Middle’ terminology from the grammar of Classical Greek, where reflexive is one of the senses of the Middle Voice.

For some languages he has separate headings Reflexive and Reciprocal (e.g. Birdhawal, where the former is called Reflective). Reciprocal forms of the verb (‘beat one another’) are

sometimes mentioned without being classified into any more inclusive inflectional category such as Voice. In his grammar of Baddyeri, however, Reflexive and Reciprocal are called Moods! The reciprocal forms may be distinguished according to Tense. In modern descriptions Reciprocal and Reflexive would be included in the inflectional category of Voice, or among valence-changing derivational forms (see Payne 1997:198–203).

The absence of a Passive Voice is sometimes mentioned in the discussion of the verb (but also sometimes under the Ablative Case, as seen above in §5.2.3).

There is no special form for the passive voice. The sentence, 'a man was kicked by an emu,' would be expressed by the paraphrase, 'an emu kicked a man'. (Birdhawal, Mathews 1907b:353)

5.5.4 *Negative*

Mathews sometimes comments on the expression of Negative within the verb system. Examples are from Indicative or Imperative verb forms. This may be expressed inflectionally.

If a negative meaning be required, it is effected by means of an infix, *mooga*, between the verb-stem and the abbreviated pronoun. (Gundungurra, Mathews 1901d:146)

The forms he cites, the 1st Person Singular of the Present, Past and Future tenses of 'throw', *yerree-mooga-ma/ri/ni-ngga* show the structure Verb Stem-Negative-Tense-Person/Number, the marker of Negative being a first-order suffix. Sometimes so-called Negative forms are given among the verb paradigms, even if they are not expressed inflectionally; e.g. 'beat not' is *bowan takak* in Tyattyalla (Mathews 1902b:82) and *būngga wulla* in Murawarri (Mathews 1903f:183), where *takak* and *būngga* are the respective 2nd Person Singular Imperative forms.

5.5.5 *Other verb forms*

Further verbal forms are sometimes given without being classified into inflectional categories.

Various shades of meaning are obtained by modifications of the verb, and by additional words, of which the following are a few examples. (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:267)

Modern linguists could sort these extra forms into different categories. Some are what we would now call aspectual; for example, 'beat again', 'continue beating', 'beat first (before some event)', 'repetition or continuance of the action' (Birdhawal, Mathews 1907b:353). Some simply add temporal or manner adverbs such as 'for a long time' or 'hard'. Others may indicate valency increase ('beat on behalf of another'). Still others indicate the inherent number of the subject or theme; e.g. *babingillila* 'two sitting' vs. *babiabultha* 'several sitting' (Kamilaroi, Mathews 1903b:267).

5.5.6 *Subject marking on the verb*

As indicated in §4.4 above, Mathews treats Person-Number marking as an inflectional category of verbs. Nevertheless his description of subject-marking does sometimes show that he realises these markers are a kind of pronoun.

Verbs have singular, dual and plural numbers, the usual persons and tenses, and three principal moods, viz., indicative, imperative and conditional. The verb-stem and a contraction of the pronoun are incorporated, and the word thus formed is used in the conjugation. (Gundungurra, Mathews 1901d:145)

... number and person are shown by short pronominal suffixes to the stem of the verb. (Murawarri, Mathews 1903f:182)

These are illustrated in Table 7.14.

Table 7.14: Partial paradigm of Gundungurra ‘throw’ and Murawarri ‘beat’

Indicative Present	1Sg	<i>yeereemangga</i>	<i>bundhiyu</i>
	2Sg	<i>yeereemandyee</i>	<i>bundhindu</i>
	3Sg	<i>yeereemañ</i>	<i>bundhibu</i>
Indicative Past	1Sg	<i>yeereeringga</i>	<i>bundhiranyu</i>
	2sg	<i>yeereerindyee</i>	<i>bundhirandu</i>
	3Sg	<i>yeereering</i>	<i>bundhirabu</i>
Indicative Future	1Sg	<i>yeereeringga</i>	<i>būnggunyu</i>
	2Sg	<i>yeereerindyee</i>	<i>būnggundu</i>
	3Sg	<i>yeereeriñ</i>	<i>būnggubu</i>
Imperative	2Sg	<i>yeeree</i>	
	2Du	<i>yeereeou</i>	
	2Pl	<i>yeereeanhoor</i>	

Mathews describes a kind of mixed system in which only certain features of Person of Number are expressed inflectionally, while others are given by full pronouns; this is exemplified by the partial paradigm of Darkiñung ‘eat’ in Table 7.15.

The form of the verb remains constant throughout each tense, the person and number being shown by a suffixed particle in the singular, and by a fitting pronoun in the dual and plural ... The pronominal suffixes—*wah* or *bah*, *wi*, *noa* and *nonda*—given in the singular number of the present tense, are also used in the singular number of the past and future. (Darkiñung, Mathews 1903b:273)

Table 7.15: Enclitic vs. free pronouns in the Darkiñung paradigm of ‘eat’

No	Person	Present	Past	Future	Imperative
Sg	1	<i>bondalitti=wah</i>	<i>bondai=wah</i>	<i>bondamutti=wah</i>	
Sg	2	<i>bondalitti=wi</i>			<i>bonda=wi</i>
Sg	3M	<i>bondalitti=noa</i>			
Sg	3F	<i>bondalitti=nonda</i>			
Du	1Incl	<i>ngullia bondalitti</i>	<i>ngullia bondai</i>	<i>ngullia bondamutti</i>	
	2				<i>bonda bullabun</i>
Pl	1Incl	<i>ngeang bondalitti</i>	<i>ngeang bondai</i>	<i>ngeang bondamutti</i>	
	2				<i>bonda nyurabiñ</i>

This interpretation can be challenged. Sentence examples, such as (2) and (3) from Darkiñung (Mathews 1903b:271f), with boundaries and morphemic glosses added, show that the subject Person and Number are given only if there is no subject nominal elsewhere in the sentence. Thus there is no 3SG subject-marker in (2), where there is an overt subject 'possum'. This confirms that the singular 'suffixed particles' should be analysed as postposed clitic pronouns rather than inflectional suffixes of the verb.

- (2) *Girribill-a girrang bonda-litti.*
 possum-ERG leaves(ACC) eat-PRES
 'The opossum is eating leaves.'
- (3) *Barkan dutagur-birrang bunga-i=wa.*
 boomerang(ACC) myrtle-ABL make-PAST=1SG
 'A boomerang out of myrtle made I.'

Mathews likewise treats Imperative forms of the verb as showing inflection for the Number of the subject. Table 7.16 gives the Positive and Negative forms of the Imperative of 'beat' in Thaguwurru (Mathews 1902b:89). Here it can be seen that the subject-markers are attached to the negative particle rather than the verb. They appear rather to be clitics attached to the first word of the construction.

Table 7.16: Negative Imperative with subject-marking in Thaguwurru

	Positive Imperative	Negative Imperative
Singular	<i>tyilbak</i>	<i>ngabuk tyilbak</i>
Dual	<i>tyilbakwula</i>	<i>ngabukwula tyilbak</i>
Trial	<i>tyilbagubaiap</i>	<i>ngabugubaiap tyilbak</i>
Plural	<i>tyilbagu</i>	<i>ngabugu tyilbak</i>

Rather than regarding these markers as realisations of Person-Number inflections on various parts of speech, modern linguistic approaches would treat them as subject pronouns (i.e. words in their own right) which are merely dependent phonologically on the preceding word—in other words, enclitic pronouns. Such examples show that, in some languages at least, subject clitics may occur after sentence-initial words and are not necessarily attached to verbs. The structure of verbs would appear considerably simpler if Mathews had given verb inflection without the encumbrance of Person-Number markers.

5.5.7 Object marking on the verb

There are in Mathews' grammars a number of examples of object clitic pronouns, but full paradigms are rarely given. Mathews describes this as verbs agreeing in Person and Number with their objects.

The accusative pronouns, me, thee, him, etc., are not found separately, like the nominative and possessive, but consist wholly of the pronominal suffixes to verbs, nouns or other parts of speech, as in the following example [Table 7.17]. (Dhauhurtwürru, Mathews 1904e:59)

Table 7.17: Object Person marking in Dhauhurtwūrru (boundaries added)

1 st Person	(Someone) beats me	<i>burta=ngun</i>
2 nd Person	(Someone) beats thee	<i>burta=ngu</i>
3 rd Person	(Someone) beats him	<i>burta=nung</i>

The number of the verb agrees with the objective in the following phrases [Table 7.18]. (Thurrawal, Mathews 1901a:3)

Table 7.18: Object Number agreement in Thurrawal (boundaries added)

A squirrel struck I	<i>bunggoo bulmiangi</i>
A pair of squirrels struck I	<i>bunggoo-lally bulmianga=mboola</i>
Several squirrels struck I	<i>bunggoo-loala bulmiangi=ndhunnung</i>

There are instances of clitic pronouns marking what Mathews considered to be grammatical relations other than direct object. The description of these caused problems for him. For Thurrawal he says that the ‘[t]he dative case is ... indicated by the verbal suffix’ and that ‘[o]ther verbs contain an ablative meaning’, giving illustrations such as ‘gave to me’ and ‘took from me’ (Mathews 1901a:145–46); the pronominal clitics, however, are the same ones that are used to mark direct objects with other verbs.

5.6 Prepositions

There is always a heading for prepositions, even though it could be argued in modern terms that the Australian languages typically lack this word class. Mathews typically cites words that have later been called ‘locational qualifiers’ (e.g. Dixon 1980:282), which translate meanings such as: ‘above, below, in front of, behind, on this side of, on the other side of, between, through, around’. It is likely that, like locational qualifiers, these ‘prepositions’ co-occur with nouns in the Locative Case. This is hard to demonstrate, given that Mathews ignores this case. A likely example is in Darkiñung (Mathews 1903b:274), where ‘on top of’ and ‘on other side of’ the hill occur with *bulpoa*, which is presumably the Locative Case of ‘hill’ *burpo* given in the Vocabulary (p. 289)—an allomorph of the Ergative is also *-a* (see ‘possum’ in sentence (1)). Some of Mathews’ ‘prepositions’ look as if they themselves contain a (Locative) Case suffix; for example *-ngga* in Murawarri ‘behind’, ‘in the rear’, ‘inside’, ‘outside’, ‘beside’, ‘between’, ‘down’ (Mathews 1903f:184).

Under the heading of Prepositions Mathews sometimes says that prepositional meanings are indicated by other parts of speech, such as verbs.

Prepositions may ... consist of modifications of other parts of speech to give them a prepositional meaning. (Brabirrawulung, Mathews 1902b:96; no example is given).

A prepositional meaning is often obtained by a verb; thus instead of having a word for ‘up’ or ‘down,’ a native will say *Boomaningga*, up I will go; *woorāramuningga*, down I will go. (Gundungurra, Mathews 1901d:147)

Sometimes he even lists under Prepositions what are really verbs in the language; for example under Darkiñung prepositions he includes ‘to go over’ *kulliwai*, which is obviously the same word as ‘climb’ *kulliwai* listed under verbs in his vocabulary (Mathews 1903b:274,

281). This kind of description illustrates Mathews' dependence on English translation, as well as on the pedagogical tradition which treats Verb Particle constructions as involving the use of prepositions.

This kind of description shows that Mathews is starting with meaning, then looking for translation equivalents of European words, rather than doing a language-internal analysis. It is curious that he does not treat some of the case suffixes as 'expressing prepositional meanings', since they translate English prepositions 'to', 'from', 'with', 'of', etc. Presumably the reason they are treated rather as Case inflections is that this inflectional category was given in his implicit grammatical theory. From this we can conclude that his description was not based on a totally English grammatical framework, but rather on one informed by the whole set of languages (including Latin and Greek) that contributed to the European grammatical tradition.

For some languages, Mathews shows, prepositions 'admit of conjugation for number and person' (Mathews 1901d:147); he gives illustrative paradigms such as that shown on Table 7.19.

Table 7.19: Partial paradigm of inflected preposition in Tyattyalla (Mathews 1902b:84)

Singular	1 st Person	behind me	<i>walmengek</i>
	2 nd Person	behind thee	<i>walmengin</i>
	3 rd Person	behind him	<i>walmenguk</i>
Dual	1 st Person incl.	behind us, incl.	<i>walmengul</i>
	1 st Person excl.	behind us, excl.	<i>walmengulluk</i>
Trial	1 st Person incl.	behind us, incl.	<i>walmengangurrakullik</i>
	1 st Person excl.	behind us, excl.	<i>walmengandakullik</i>
Plural	1 st Person incl.	behind us, incl.	<i>walmengangurrak</i>
	1 st Person excl.	behind us, excl.	<i>walmengandak</i>

This phenomenon would probably have been unfamiliar from the point of view of Traditional Grammar—although it is found in the Celtic languages. The inflections that are used in such languages are the set of endings that otherwise mark possessors of nouns. Mathews does not explicitly point this out; nor does he draw from this the conclusion that such prepositions could be seen as a kind of nominal word class—the forms being literally 'my/your/his behind', etc.

5.7 Adverbs

Under this rubric Mathews includes a great many notions, all translating what would be classed as adverbs in the Traditional Grammar descriptions of English. Sometimes, as for Kamilaroi (Mathews 1903b:268), he puts them under notional headings as shown in Table 7.20.

Table 7.20: Notional groupings of adverbs

Time	now, tomorrow, long ago, by and bye, always, again, early morning
Affirmation and negation	yes, no, true, perhaps
Interrogation	where, when, how, how many
Place	here and there, yonder, near, far, outside
Quality	well, slowly, quickly
Quantity	plenty, a little
Number	once, several times, first, last, more, only

Sometimes it is said that ‘Adverbial meanings are sometimes conveyed by means of verbs, as *beetyballeemañ*, he (or it) goes out of sight’ (Gundungurra, Mathews 1901d:148). This can only mean that the meaning that is expressed by a verb in the Australian language would need to be translated into English by a combination of a verb and an adverb.

Predicate adverbs are said to be inflected for Person and Number of the subject (see §4.4 above). Table 7.21 shows Birdhawal examples that are given without comment under Adverbs (Mathews 1907b:353). Here it appears that we have a verbalising suffix, followed by an enclitic subject pronoun.

Table 7.21: Person and Number inflection on predicate adverbs in Birdhawal

<i>dhūnggo</i>	here
<i>dhūnggomanetch</i>	I am here
<i>dhūnggomangunna</i>	thou art here
<i>dhūnggomana</i>	he is here

Table 7.22 illustrates Person and Number marking on demonstrative and interrogative adverbs in Tyattyalla (Mathews 1902b:81, 83). The markers would probably be treated as enclitic subject pronouns in modern descriptions. Here *yuma* is the verb ‘be’, which is itself capable of bearing the subject inflections—cf. *dhalguk yuman/yumar/yuma* ‘good be 1SG/2SG/3SG’ (Mathews 1902b:81).

Table 7.22: Person and Number inflection on predicate adverbs in Tyattyalla

1 st Person	Here I am.	<i>Gimban yuma.</i>
2 nd Person	Here thou art	<i>Gimbar yuma.</i>
3 rd Person	Here he is.	<i>Gimba yuma.</i>

Singular	Where art thou?	<i>Windyar</i>
Dual	Where are you?	<i>Windyawul</i>
Trial	Where are you?	<i>Windyatkullik</i>
Plural	Where are you?	<i>Windyaty</i>

5.8 Conjunctions, Interjections and Exclamations

These are sometimes mentioned under Adverbs (Kūmbainggeri, Mathews 1903e:324); on the other hand, they often have their own headings.

5.8.1 Conjunctions

Under Conjunctions may be mentioned words translating 'and', 'or', 'because'. The absence or rarity of conjunctions is often commented on.

5.8.2 Interjections and Exclamations

Words given under this heading typically are followed by an exclamation mark. This suggests that the criteria used in classifying them included both their ability to constitute a whole utterance and the fact that they express an emotion. Both of these criteria were well known in Tradition Grammar (Michael 1970:76–81, 461–65). Sample glosses for Mathews' examples include: 'Halt!', 'take care!', 'look out!', 'Silence!', 'I don't know!', 'exclamation of surprise', 'exclamation of sorrow'. Absence of inflection does not seem to be a criterion, since Mathews' Interjections/Exclamations include words that are inflected for Number of subject and look like Imperatives of verbs—e.g. the Thurrawal forms shown in Table 7.23 (Mathews 1901a:4).

Table 7.23: Thurrawal Interjections/Exclamations showing subject number-marking

<i>gwak!</i>	look out you
<i>gwakawool!</i>	look out you two
<i>gwakanhoor!</i>	look out you all

In some traditional approaches neither inflection nor membership in another part of speech prevented a form from being an Interjection. For example, Ussher (1967 [1785]:88–89) describes interjections as 'unconnected words in a sentence that express some sudden emotion of the mind'. He mentions words which have this as their sole function, such as *Oh! Alas! Fy!*; but he also admits that 'many of the other parts of speech, when used to express any sudden passion of the mind, may become Interjections' and cites examples such as *Heavens! Amazing! Hark! Woe is me!* This kind of reasoning illustrates the fact that Traditional Grammarians did not necessarily regard the parts of speech as mutually exclusive and non-overlapping.

It is curious that Mathews typically included 'yes' and 'no' under Adverbs rather than Interjections, for which their stand-alone status might have qualified them. Apparently they lacked the expression of emotion which was criterial for Interjections.

5.9. Numerals

Numerals may be listed in a separate class. Here Mathews gives terms for some of: ‘one’, ‘two’, ‘three’, ‘several’, ‘many’. For some languages (e.g. Kūmbaingeri, Mathews 1903e: 324) the numerals ‘two’ and ‘several’ are the same forms that were earlier given as expressions of the Dual and Plural Number category of nouns.

5.10. Syntax

Mathews’ grammars do not have a separate section on syntax. Comments on word order are sometimes given under Adjectives—which are said to follow the noun they modify—or under Case, where the illustrative sentences typically show Subject Object Verb order. (This is so consistent that Capell (1970:667)¹⁴ questioned whether Mathews may have normalised word order in his examples.) Sometimes general comments on word order are given in an introductory overview on the language, as for Kogai, where he notes the order of constituents and the absence of changed order (as in English) for questions:

The usual arrangement of words in a sentence is to place the subject first—then the direct object—and lastly the verb. The indirect object often follows the verb. An adjective qualifying either the nominative or objective, follows its noun. Many assertive sentences can likewise be given an interrogative meaning by the tone of the speaker’s voice. (Mathews 1904f:29)

Agreement between adjectives and nouns is sometimes noted: ‘Adjectives...take the same inflections for number and case’ (Anēwan, Mathews 1903g:253). Sometimes he comments on the lack of agreement.

Sometimes the affix of the noun is omitted, sometimes that of the adjective; this rather being regulated by the euphony of the sentence. (Dhauhurtwūrru, Mathews 1904e:58)

It may be worth noting that grammars of the classical languages written in the framework of Traditional Grammar typically have separate sections on ‘Inflection’ or ‘Accidence’ (i.e. morphology) and Syntax, which is devoted to the uses of the Cases, Tenses, Moods, etc. Apart from a few illustrative sentences included with the presentation of his grammatical forms, Mathews’ grammatical sketches are largely confined to the former. I believe this shows that his conception that the ‘elements of the grammar’ (Mathews 1902b:96) consisted of the forms of the language, ordered according to their parts of speech and the respective inflectional categories of each of these, while syntax constituted an explanation of their uses, was consistent with the practice of grammars written in the framework of Traditional Grammar.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Mathews’ approach

Mathews’ approach to describing Australian languages was similar to that of other scholars of his time—in terms of trying to fit these languages into the descriptive framework that they learned as part of their education in classical and modern European languages, including English. This approach had the weakness of not having clear criteria for justifying linguistic categories. This stands in contrast to the approach of modern structuralist linguistics, where

¹⁴ ‘These so regularly present a strict and invariable subject-object-verb arrangement that one often wonders whether he deliberately standardised what he found to be a common fact, without allowing for local or stylistic variations.’

grammatical (and phonological) categories are established by language-internal relationships (of contrast, complementarity, distribution, etc.) between forms.

It cannot be said, however, that Mathews' description is wholly based on the extraneous, European grammar. On the one hand there is an assumption of universal parts of speech and quasi-universal categories for which each can be inflected (or at least specified, sometimes by independent words); on the other hand there is a readiness to find a lack of instantiation of some parts of speech (e.g. articles, conjunctions) or inflectional categories (comparative of adjectives, passive of verbs), and to create additional inflectional sub-categories when compelled by the data (e.g. Trial Number, Nominative-agent Case), and to recognise novel combinations of inflectional categories within parts of speech (e.g. Reciprocal inflection on verbs; Person-Number on possessed nouns, prepositions, (predicate) adjectives and adverbs; Tense on pronouns in Kūrnū).

The extent to which Mathews' descriptive format was unique to him, can, however, be discerned by a comparison of his general schema with the organisation of the Gundungurra description to which Mary Everitt was a contributor. In a jointly authored paper, Mathews and Everitt (1900), Mathews would obviously have written the sections on initiation ceremonies and probably social structure; it is fairly certain that his co-author was responsible for a large part, perhaps all, of the grammar. Everitt is known to have written up a description based on elicitation from Bessie Smith of La Perouse during 1900. Since this joint description of Gundungurra is Mathews' first linguistic publication, it is possible that Mathews got from Everitt the idea of how to write a grammatical description. She herself attributes her method to W.E. Roth.¹⁵

Mathews and Everitt's joint grammar differs from Mathews' schema in the order of parts of speech: Prepositions come directly after the discussion of noun Cases; Adverbs immediately follow Adjectives; Verbs are discussed last. There are differences in the classification of words into parts of speech: Numerals are a sub-variety of Adjectives; Demonstratives are classed as adjectives or pronouns according to whether or not they are accompanied by a noun; 'yes' and 'no' are given under Interjections rather than Adverbs. Under Prepositions are discussed not only the usual locationals such as 'behind', but also the translation equivalents of English 'for' (beneficial and purposive) and 'with' (instrumental). Under Adjectives there is explicit mention of how comparative and superlative uses are indicated, as well as the negative of adjectives. The inflectional categories of Number, Gender, and Case of nouns do not have separate headings. Extra sub-categories are given for some inflectional categories: 'among the cases there is mention of a Locative (marked by *-wā'ro*) and a Vocative (*mā bul'-lān!* 'Oh, woman!'); under verbs there is a Perfect Tense, Participles ('am/was beating'), a form expressing inclination ('would like to'), and nouns formed from verbs.

6.2 Prospects for further study

Mathews deserves further study. It would be nice to know more about his background in languages. What languages had he studied and for how many years?¹⁶ (McBryde 1974 mentions that he was taught partly by his father, who was a classicist.) What grammar books were in his library? To what extent was his schema influenced by other scholars describing Australian languages? Also desirable would be a better understanding of his field methods. Did he use

15 This information is from Besold (2003:2 and pers.comm. 04 July 2005). On Everitt see further comments in the Appendix.

16 According to Martin Thomas (pers.comm. 14 September 2005), Mathews probably had a reading but not writing knowledge of French and German. He had two articles translated for publication in each of these languages (Mathews 1903a, 1903e, 1904a, 1904d).

his schema when eliciting his data? Study of his notebooks suggests that he probably did (Jutta Besold, pers.comm. 04 July 2005). Did he return to his informants to check his data before he wrote it up for publication? How did his elicitation of verbs for the vocabularies differ from his methods of constructing inflectional verbal paradigms? From the study of individual language descriptions it might be possible to assess his consistency in applying his own principles (especially of spelling) to his data. How much syntax can be deduced from his descriptions? Also worth pursuing would be what views of genetic relations between languages are implicit in his descriptions.

We need careful philological study of Mathews' documentation of particular languages.¹⁷ This is necessary not only to clarify the discrepancies that have been noted by many scholars between his notes and his published accounts. But it can also reasonably be expected that from such close study it might be possible to reconstruct his *modus operandi* in eliciting, analysing and preparing for publication the immense amount of linguistic data which he uniquely obtained—to trace as it were the path that his data travelled from the lips of his informants to the printed page of his articles. It is hoped that, in the meantime, this study of his descriptive schema will at least enable users of his published language descriptions to understand the linguistic insights that he was trying to communicate, even though his general framework and specific format and terminology differ from those of modern approaches.

Appendix: Bibliography and Index of Mathews' linguistic publications

Explanatory notes

This aims to be a complete listing of Mathews' language descriptions.¹⁸ I have omitted articles which refer only to a small portion of the grammar or vocabulary. I include those grammatical descriptions which are ordered according to his schema (with the exception noted in §6.1 of the Mathews and Everitt paper), and those vocabularies which are ordered by his semantic domains (with the exception of Kitsha, which follows Curr's system). I have included descriptions which are based on other people's work; these languages are marked by an asterisk. The grammatical description of Gundungurra in his paper jointly authored by Mary Everitt is assumed to be written by Everitt.¹⁹ The descriptions of Arran'da and the Perth language are Mathews' re-workings of Kempe's 1890 and Charles Symmons' 1842 grammars respectively, with supplementary material from other sources. The vocabularies of Kitsha, the Lower Fitzroy River, the Lorigya tribe, and the Erlistoun (Laverton, Mount Margaret) tribe were collected on his behalf respectively by Halls Creek police officer W.J. Wilson, Yeeda Station manager A.E. Clifton, Hermannsburg missionary Carl Strehlow, and Kenneth Young of Duketon. Of the languages outside south-eastern Australia, only Chingalee

17 Such study is currently being undertaken by Jutta Besold for the languages of the south coast of New South Wales.

18 For complete details on all of Mathews' published works, including some which contain additional bits of language data, see Thomas (2005)—the results of a project which was completely independent of my study.

19 Mary Everitt is assumed by Martin Thomas (pers.comm. 14 September 2005) to be the subject of Walter Roth's note to Sir Baldwin Spencer:

A lady friend of mine, inspired with a little enthusiasm through the perusal of my grammar, took up the work and after a great deal of worry, time and labour got together a neat little paper on one of the N. S. W. dialects. The gentleman in question happening to hear of her work, expressed his great interest in it, and asked for its loan. He then read this lady's grammar as his own before one of the local Societies! (Roth 1903)

(Jingulu) and the Roebourne language (Ngarluma) are not stated to have their data supplied through intermediaries.

In all 34 papers are listed. These include 57 grammatical descriptions and 36 vocabularies, dealing with a total of 55 distinct languages or dialects.

In Table 7.24 the language descriptions are ordered chronologically by year of publication, then within the same year alphabetically by journal name, then within the same article by page numbers—with separate indications of grammatical descriptions and vocabularies. For each language name I give, in separate columns, the spelling used by Mathews and that of the AUSTLANG Indigenous Languages database. For vocabularies I give (under 'size') the approximate number of items according to Mathews' own report.

Abbreviations

AA	American Anthropologist
AAOJ	The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal
BSAP	Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris
JAI	Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland
JRS	Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales
MAG	Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
QGJ	Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Queensland
ZfE	Zeitschrift für Ethnologie

Mathews' publications

- Mathews, R.H. and M.M. Everitt, 1900, The organisation, language and initiation ceremonies of the Aborigines of the south-east coast of N.S. Wales. *JRS* 34:262–281.
- Mathews, R.H., 1901a, *Thurrawal grammar—part I*. Parramatta: Federal Printing Works.
- 1901b, The Thurrawal language. *JRS* 35:127–160.
- 1901c, Some Aboriginal tribes of Western Australia. *JRS* 35:217–222.
- 1901d, The Gundungurra language. *PAPS* 40:140–148.
- 1901e, Ethnological notes on the Aboriginal tribes of the Northern Territory. *QGJ* 16:69–90.
- 1902a, The Thoorga and other Australian languages. *AAOJ* 24:101–106.
- 1902b, The Aboriginal languages of Victoria. *JRS* 36:71–106.
- 1902c, Languages of some native tribes of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. *JRS* 36:135–190.
- 1902d, The Thoorga language. *QGJ* 17:49–73.
- 1903a, Le langage Wailwan. *BSAP* 5:69–81.

- 1903b, Languages of the Kamilaroi and other Aboriginal tribes of New South Wales. *JAI* 33:259–283.
- 1903c, Language of the Bungandity tribe, South Australia. *JRS* 37:59–74.
- 1903d, Notes on some native dialects of Victoria. *JRS* 37:243–253.
- 1903e, Das Kūmbainggeri, eine Eingeborenen-sprache von Neu-Süd-Wales. *MAG* 33:321–328.
- 1903f, Some Aboriginal languages of Queensland and Victoria. *PAPS* 42:179–188.
- 1903g, Languages of the New England Aborigines, New South Wales. *PAPS* 42:249–263.
- 1903h, The Murawarri and other Australian languages. *QGJ* 18:52–68.
- 1903i, Ethnological notes on the Aboriginal tribes of Western Australia. *QGJ* 19:45–72.
- 1904a, Langage des Kūrnū, tribu d’indigènes de la Nouvelle Galles du Sud, *BSAP* 5:433–439.
- 1904b, The Wiradyuri and other languages of New South Wales. *JAI* 34:224–305.
- 1904c, Ethnological notes on the Aboriginal tribes of New South Wales and Victoria. *JRS* 38:203–381.
- 1904d, Die Sprache des Tyeddyuwūrru-Stammes der Eingebornen von Victoria. *MAG* 33:321–328.
- 1904e, The native tribes of Victoria: their languages and customs. *PAPS* 43:54–70.
- 1904f, Language, organization and initiation ceremonies of the Kogai tribes, Queensland. *ZfE* 36:28–38.
- 1904g, Language of the Wuddyāwūrru tribe, Victoria. *ZfE* 36:729–734.
- 1905, Ethnological notes on the Aboriginal tribes of Queensland. *JRS* 20:49–75.
- 1907a, The Arran’da language, Central Australia. *PAPS* 46:322–339.
- 1907b, Language of the Birdhawal tribe, in Gippsland, Victoria. *PAPS* 46:346–359.
- 1907c, Languages of some tribes of Western Australia. *PAPS* 46:361–368.
- 1908, Vocabulary of the Ngarrugu tribe N.S.W. *JRS* 42:335–342.
- 1909, The Dhudhuroa language of Victoria. *AA* 11:278–284.
- 1910a, Language and sociology of the Kūmbainggeri tribe, New South Wales. *Report of the Twelfth Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*. 485–493.
- 1910b, Notes on some tribes of Western Australia. *QGJ* 25:119–136.

Table 7.24: List of Mathews’ language descriptions

year	pubn	vol	pp.	grammar	vocabulary	size	modern name ^a
1900	JRS	34	265–76	*Gundungurra			Gundungurra
1901a			1–5	Thurrawal			Dharawal
1901b	JRS	35	127–50	Thurrawal			Dharawal

year	pubn	vol	pp.	grammar	vocabulary	size	modern name ^a
1901b	JRS	35	151–55	Gundungurra			Gundungurra
1901b	JRS	35	155–57	Dharruk			Daruk
1901b	JRS	35	157–60		Dharruk	280	Daruk
1901c	JRS	35	220–22		*Kitsha	120	Kija
1901d	PAPS	40	140–48	Gundungurra			Gundungurra
1901e	QGJ	16	86–89		Chingalee	210	Jingulu/Djingili
1902a	AAOJ	24	101–05	Thoorga			Dhurga
1902b	JRS	36	77–84	Tyattyalla			Djadjala ^b
1902b	JRS	36	84–86	Tyapwurru & Wuddyā-wūrru			Djabwurrung/ Dyabwurrung & Watha-wurrung
1902b	JRS	36	86–90	Thaguwurru			Daungwurrung/ Taungurong
1902b	JRS	36	90–92	Woiwurru dialect			Woiwurrung
1902b	JRS	36	92–96	Brabirrawulung			Brabralung
1902b	JRS	36	96–106		Brabirrawulung	325	Brabralung
1902b	JRS	36	96–106		Tyattyalla	325	Djadjala
1902c	JRS	36	137–43	Yualeai			Yuwaaliyaay
1902c	JRS	36	143–45	Pikumbil			Bigambul
1902c	JRS	36	145–47	Kawambarai ^c			Gawambaray
1902c	JRS	36	147–54	Wongaibon			Wangaaybuwan
1902c	JRS	36	154–57	Kūrñū			Kurnu
1902c	JRS	36	157–60		mystic Kūrñū	27	Kurnu
1902c	JRS	36	157–60		mystic Kamilaroi	34	Gamilaraay
1902c	JRS	36	160–67	Dyirringañ			Djirringany
1902c	JRS	36	167–72	Yota-Yota			Yorta Yorta
1902c	JRS	36	172–75	Burêba			Baraba Baraba ^d
1902c	JRS	36	175–79		Kūrñū	220	Kurnu
1902c	JRS	36	179–90		Yualeai	365	Yuwaaliyaay
1902c	JRS	36	179–90		Yota-Yota	365	Yorta Yorta
1902d	QGJ	17	49–61	Thoorga			Dhurga

year	pubn	vol	pp.	grammar	vocabulary	size	modern name ^a
1902d	QGJ	17	67–73		Thoorga	490	Dhurga
1902d	QGJ	17	63–67	Yookumbill			Yugambal
1903a	BSAP	5	69–76	Wailwan			Wailwan
1903a	BSAP	5	76–78	Tyattyalla			Djadjala
1903a	BSAP	5	78–81		Wailwan	200	Wailwan
1903b	JAI	33	259–69	Kamilaroi			Gamilaraay
1903b	JAI	33	269–70		mystic Kamilaroi	42	Gamilaraay
1903b	JAI	33	270–75	Darkiñung			Darkinung
1903b	JAI	33	275–79		Kamilaroi	450	Gamilaraay
1903b	JAI	33	275–79		Thurrawal	450	Dharawal
1903b	JAI	33	280–81		Darkiñung	330	Darkinung
1903c	JRS	37	59–70	Bungandity			Bungandidj/ Buandig
1903c	JRS	37	70–74		Bungandity	245	Bungandidj/ Buandig
1903d	JRS	37	246–50	Lewurru dialect ^e			Lewurung
1903d	JRS	37	249–50	Buibatyalli ^f			Buibadjali
1903d	JRS	37	251–53	Yabula-Yabula			Yabula Yabula
1903e	MAG	33	321–24	Kumbainggeri			Gumbaynggir
1903e	MAG	33	324–28		Kūmbainggeri	300	Gumbaynggir
1903f	PAPS	42	180–84	Murawarri			Muruwari
1903f	PAPS	42	184–88	Wamba Wamba			Wadi Wadi ^g
1903g	PAPS	42	251–55	Anēwan			Nganyaywana ^h
1903g	PAPS	42	255–59	Banbai			Baanbay
1903g	PAPS	42	259–63		Anēwan	210	Nganyaywana
1903h	QGJ	18	54–57	Murawarri			Muruwari
1903h	QGJ	18	57	Burranbinya			Barranbinya
1903h	QGJ	18	58–61	Tharumba			Dharamba
1903h	QGJ	18	61–64	Wutyabullak			Wotjobaluk/ Wergaia
1903h	QGJ	18	65–68		Murawarri	270	Muruwari
1903i	QGJ	19	69–70		Roebourne district	155	Ngarluma ⁱ

year	pubn	vol	pp.	grammar	vocabulary	size	modern name ^a
1903i	QGJ	19	71–72		*Lower Fitzroy River	125	Nyikina ^j
1904a	BSAP	5	133–39	Kūrñū			Kurnu
1904b	JAI	34	286–91	Wiradyuri			Wiradjuri
1904b	JAI	34	291–94	Burreba-Burreba			Baraba Baraba
1904b	JAI	34	294–99	Ngunawal			Ngunawal
1904b	JAI	34	299–302		Wiradyuri	430	Wiradjuri
1904b	JAI	34	302–05		Ngunawal	290	Ngunawal
1904c	JRS	38	219–32	Ngeumba			Ngiyampaa
1904c	JRS	38	232–39	Thangatti			Dhanggatti
1904d	MAG	33	321–28	Tyeddyuwūrru			Djadja wurrung
1904e	PAPS	43	56–61	Dhauhurtwūrru			Gunditjmara (Dhauwurd-wurrung) ^k
1904e	PAPS	43	62–65		Dhauhurtwūrru	260	Gunditjmara (Dhauwurd-wurrung)
1904f	ZfE	36	28–32	Kogai			Gogai/Kogai
1904f	ZfE	36	34–38		Kogai	335	Gogai/Kogai
1904g	ZfE	36	729–32	Wuddyāwūrru			Wathawurrung
1904g	ZfE	36	732–34		Wuddyāwūrru	150	Wathawurrung
1905	JRS	20	55–60	Baddyeri			Badjiri
1905	JRS	20	60–65		Baddyeri	320	Badjiri
1907a	PAPS	46	322–36	*Arran'da			Arrernte
1907a	PAPS	46	336–39		*Arran'da	160	Arrernte
1907b	PAPS	46	346–54	Birdhawal			Bidawal
1907b	PAPS	46	354–57		Birdhawal	285	Bidawal
1907b	PAPS	46	357–59	Kurnai			Kurnai
1907c	PAPS	46	362–63	*Loritya			Luritja
1907c	PAPS	46	365–68		*Loritya	127	Luritja
1907c	PAPS	46	365–68		*Erlistoun	103	Wangkatha? ^l (Djalgandi)
1908	JRS	42	336–40		Ngarrugu		Ngarigo

year	pubn	vol	pp.	grammar	vocabulary	size	modern name ^a
1909	AA	11	278–80	Dhudhuroa			Dhuduroa/ Dhudhuruwa
1909	AA	11	280–84		Dhudhuroa	235	Dhuduroa/ Dhudhuruwa
1910a			485–88	Kūmbainggeri			Gumbaynggir
1910a			490–93		Kūmbainggeri	300	Gumbaynggir
1910b	QGJ	25	120–24	*Perth district			Nyungar
1910b	QGJ	25	124–27		*Perth district	220	Nyungar

^a Here I give the preferred spelling of language names as used in AUSTLANG Indigenous Languages database.

^b This language is treated as a dialect of Wergaia in Hercus (1969:111).

^c Dialect of Kamilaroi.

^d According to Hercus (1969:9), this language variety is very close to Wemba Wemba.

^e Mathews treats this as a dialect of Tyattyalla.

^f Also a dialect of Tyattyalla.

^g According to Hercus (1992:12–13), Mathews' Wamba Wamba is to be identified not with Wemba Wemba but with the Wadi Wadi, which a dialect of the Madhi Madhi language.

^h This is the spelling used by Crowley (1976).

ⁱ According to Thieberger (1993:124).

^j This identification is made in Stokes (1982:11).

^k This is a dialect, spelled Dhawutwurrū, of Blake's Warrnambool language (Blake 2003b: xiii, 5, 12). Gunditjmara is another name that has been used for this language.

^l This assignment, with question mark, is from Thieberger (1993:342).

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8 *Nils M. Holmer's research on Australian languages*

WILLIAM B. MCGREGOR AND MATTI MIESTAMO¹

1. Introduction

Nils Holmer is—as far as we are aware—the only linguist from a Nordic country to have had first-hand experience with Australian languages through fieldwork, although the Swedish ethnographer Yngve Laurell also recorded a little information on languages of the continent (see Boström, this volume). Holmer's interest in Australian languages was awakened at rather a late age, and when he appeared on the Australian scene he already had a long career in Celtic and Amerindian studies behind him. It is for his research in these fields that he is best known. His work on Australian languages is not very well known, either to general linguists or to Australianists, few of who have more than a vague notion of his contribution to the field. It is primarily to rectify the latter lacuna that we relate in this article the story of Nils Holmer's work on Australian languages.²

The paper is structured as follows. First, in section 2, we provide an outline biography of Nils Holmer. Following this, in section 3, we briefly discuss some features of the type of linguistics he practised, especially those aspects that shed light on his work on Australian languages. Section 4 presents a general overview of Holmer's fieldwork on Australian languages. Then in section 5 we focus on some specific aspects of his research. Section 6 provides a brief conclusion. An appendix winds up the paper with a list of Holmer's publications on Australian languages.

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- 1 We are grateful to Arthur Holmer for additional information on Nils Holmer's life, and for providing us with copies of correspondence with Arthur Capell, and of Nils Holmer's works which have been difficult to obtain in Denmark and Finland. Thanks also to members of the audience of our presentation of this paper at the *Fourth International Workshop on Australian Linguistics*, held in the Department of Linguistics, Aarhus University, 24–25 June 2002, for useful suggestions, and to Peter Sutton and Hilary Carey for useful comments on an earlier version.
 - 2 David Malouf's story 'The only speaker of his tongue' (Malouf 1985) is a fictional recount of the meeting of a Nordic linguist and the last speaker of a moribund Aboriginal language that rather nicely captures the feelings a linguist might experience at such a meeting. Presumably Nils Holmer served as the model for this piece. (We are grateful to Nick Evans for drawing our attention to this story.)

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2. Biographical information

Nils Magnus Holmer was born in 1904 in Gothenburg (Göteborg), and died in 1994 aged ninety. It seems that even as a child he was fascinated by languages, reading and remembering instructions in foreign languages on imported goods, and trying to decipher names of foreign ships in Gothenburg harbour.

At Lund University he began studying Russian, in which language he gained his BA in 1925. Following this, in 1928–1929, Holmer went to Prague to study Czech. However, he was soon attracted to Celtic languages, and in 1932 was awarded his Licentiate at Lund University on Irish. During 1935–1936, he undertook a field trip to Scotland where he worked on Argyllshire Gaelic. Then for the following two years, 1937–1938, he held the position of Todd Lecturer in the Irish Academy; he worked on Anrtim Irish during these years.

In 1938 and 1939 he participated in a fieldwork expedition in Scotland led by the well known Norwegian Celticist Carl Marstrand. Here also, his focus of interest was on dialectology. Subsequently, beginning in the early 1940s, Holmer published a number of monograph sketches of Irish and Gaelic dialects, including: Holmer (1940, 1942, 1957b, 1962a, 1962b, 1965a). His interests, however, went beyond dialectology to historical-comparative linguistics, on which he also published a number of articles.

Holmer returned to Sweden to take up a lecturing position in the University of Uppsala. Then, in 1949, he was appointed to the chair of comparative linguistics at Lund University, a position he held until his retirement in 1969.

Following World War II, Holmer's interest turned to America, although he still maintained an interest in Celtic languages, and returned to Ireland in 1946 to work on the Irish of County Claire. He took part in two expeditions to America with S. Henry Wassén, an ethnographer working for the Gothenburg Ethnographic Museum. The first was to Panama in 1947, where he worked on the Chibchan language Cuna; the second was to Colombia in 1955, where he worked on Chocó. From these expeditions a number of publications emerged, including not just grammatical descriptions (Holmer 1946, 1947a, 1963a) but also a number of interesting anthropological linguistic pieces, including some co-authored with S. Henry Wassén: text collections (Holmer 1947a, 1951; Holmer and Wassén 1953, 1958, 1963), an ethno-linguistic dictionary (Holmer 1952b), and a work on toponyms (Holmer 1964). Worth mentioning from Holmer's research on Cuna is his investigation of their picture-writing, which he argued does not represent the phonetics of the language (Holmer and Wassén 1953).

In 1948 Holmer turned to North America, where he began field investigations of two Amerindian languages, Seneca (Iroquoian), during a brief visit to the Allegheny Reservation in New York State, and Ojibway (Algonquian) in a visit to Walpole Island Indian Reservation in Ontario (Holmer 1949:4). The early 1950s saw the appearance of his first publications on these languages. Holmer (1952a, 1952c, 1953c, 1954) deal primarily with the grammatical structure of Seneca. Holmer (1954) is a sketch grammar of Seneca, while Holmer (1953b) is a sketch grammar of Ojibway.

Again Holmer's interests on the languages of North America were diverse, and included, in addition to grammatical description, typology, comparative linguistics, semantics (Holmer 1953a, 1953d, 1957a), and toponyms (Holmer 1948a, 1960, 1961).

Arthur Holmer sums up the influence of his father's investigations of Amerindian languages as follows: 'his contact with Amerindian languages was probably the most important single factor which influenced which direction his work was to take' (A. Holmer 1994).

Somewhere around the same time Nils Holmer began working on Basque. In the typological piece that first elaborated his ideas about prefixing vs. suffixing languages he was already using Basque as a primary example of a language of the former type (Holmer 1947b). His first

sabbatical after taking up his professorship in Lund, probably in 1951 or 1952, he spent working on Basque dialectology. And over the years he devoted long periods of time to fieldwork on the language, which was to become one of his major research interests. Ultimately he published a fair number of articles on the language, including Holmer (1950, 1970a, 1977, 1981a, 1981b, 1985).

It was not until 1964 that Holmer began fieldwork in Australia. His first experience was in the area between Newcastle and Kempsey on the north coast of New South Wales, when he undertook salvage investigations of Kutthung (Katthang, Gadang; AustLang recommends Worimi), Dungutti (Thangatti, Dangatti; Dhanggatti is the recommended spelling in AustLang), and Bundjalung (Bandjalang).³ This fieldtrip was financed by the then recently established Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) and by Swedish funds. He was sixty years of age at that time, a rather advanced age to begin fieldwork in a new country. The year after his retirement, Holmer returned to Australia for a second, rather longer stint of fieldwork, this time in Queensland.

It is perhaps worth mentioning at this point one thing Holmer did not do: he did not attend the conference on Australian languages convened by R.M.W. (Bob) Dixon, under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, in 1972. He was one of the very few linguists active in the Australian field who did not attend this event.

Nils Holmer was a contemporary of Arthur Capell (1902–1986), who had begun his investigations of Australian languages some thirty years previously. In many ways work of these two men was similar in character. Each undertook numerous fieldtrips in a variety of locations—Holmer in Ireland, Scotland, the Americas, and Australia, Capell in Australia and the Pacific region. And the publications of both men are more remarkable for the breadth of languages covered than the depth of description. In terms of raw numbers of fieldwork languages, Arthur Capell clearly came ahead of Nils Holmer; in terms of geographical and temporal variety, Holmer definitely came out ahead, partly because he was not averse to writing on languages using only secondary sources. Both men also showed a strong interest in typology, and its implications to historical and comparative linguistics, as we will see later.

Holmer's publications on Australian languages number only about ten, including both books and articles (see Appendix)—roughly 10% of his total output in terms of number of publications. Typical of Australianist linguists of late 1950s and early 1960s, his work was largely survey-like in nature, and the grammatical descriptions he produced fall into the 'sketch' category.

The other ninety or so publications of Nils M. Holmer deal with an impressive variety of languages: Celtic, Basque, Austronesian, Hittite, Sumerian and various languages from the Americas. These works include sketch grammars, typological comparisons, semantics, etymological and genetic investigations, and text collections. Many of these publications were based on data he collected himself in the field; however, he also wrote on a variety of topics in 'exotic' languages he had no first-hand experience of, including stress in Maori (Holmer 1966b), consonant alternations in Austronesian languages (Holmer 1965b), and a comparative-typological investigation of the Papuan language Kamoro (West Papua) (Holmer 1971a).

3 As far as possible we employ currently accepted spellings of language names, especially those recommended and used by speakers of the languages. However, not being specialists in languages of the eastern part of the continent we have had to rely on the literature available to us, and what we have been able to find on the web, where we have given priority to information from the AustLang site, <http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/>. Where we have been unable to find an accepted spelling we adopt the spelling used by Holmer. We also indicate Holmer's spelling on the first mention of each language name.

According to Hovdhaugen *et al.* (2000:476) Holmer is not particularly well known in Nordic linguistic circles, where if anything he is known for his studies of Celtic and Amerindian languages. However, he is one of the better known Nordic linguists internationally, one of his claims to fame being that he is one of the very few Nordic linguists to have had three articles published in *Language*. These are three short pieces dealing with Celtic: Holmer (1947c, 1947d, 1948b).

Given the minor role of fieldwork in the Nordic countries (with the exception of Finland) Holmer is perhaps most remarkable for being a competent fieldworker (Hovdhaugen *et al.* 2000:465), and more particularly one who worked on ‘exotic’ languages. Hovdhaugen *et al.* (2000:476) sum up his contribution as follows (see however §6 below):

The main significance of his studies today is the vast amount of data from dying languages and dialects that he saved for future generations, recording it so reliably that the data can still be used and trusted.

In international terms Nils M. Holmer can be described as a typical descriptive fieldwork-linguist of his time, engaging in scatter-gun investigations covering a considerable number of languages at a relatively shallow level. In the Nordic context, he was and remains, somewhat unusual for the depth and breadth of his interests in ‘exotic’ languages.

3. General conceptual framework of Nils Holmer’s linguistics

In the previous section we outlined the scope of Nils Holmer’s fieldwork, mentioning along the way various publications arising from his investigations. In this section we discuss some of the major theoretical and topical concerns in his research; we focus on those that provide a backdrop against which his Australian languages research can be better understood. We focus in particular on his notions of comparative linguistics and typology, which were for him, related domains.

One of Holmer’s first publications on Amerindian languages (Holmer 1949) was a comparative piece. Holmer believed that the—perhaps better **a**—comparative method could be applied to the Amerindian situation, despite the then-current negative opinion (as he saw it) of the notion among Amerindianists. It should not be a mechanical application of the results of the comparative method as developed in the context of Indo-European investigations, but rather that

learning from European scholars merely that a method is required, according to which every single detail is strictly handled with due regard for the laws of the language; then proceeding quite independently to work out such a method, suitable for the Amerindian languages, on the basis of an intensified study of the separate languages and dialects. (Holmer 1949:10)

This 1949 article, which explores possible contacts between Siouan and Algonquian languages, is thus not an application of the historical-comparative method as such, but is rather less tightly constrained. It admitted typological considerations into the picture, in particular, the contrast between prefixing languages and suffixing languages, which he perhaps first mooted in Holmer (1947b:31–38).⁴ Prefixing languages employ primarily prefixes, suffixes playing a secondary role; suffixing languages use suffixes (almost) exclusively, and prefixes play at best a secondary, derivative role. More importantly, Holmer considered the morphological means of expressing personal desinences to be crucial to the contrast: prefixing lan-

4 Holmer’s terms were the somewhat uncomfortable *prefix* languages and *suffix* languages; we retain the more usual designations.

guages primarily mark person of subjects and/or objects on verbs, and possessors on nouns, by prefixes; suffixing languages, by suffixes. Suffixing languages, according to this scheme, are on the whole less mixed in character than prefixing languages. He employed this parameter in a typological categorisation of North American languages into suffixing languages, which were restricted to parts of the Pacific coast and far north, and prefixing languages, which covered the bulk of the continent and included the Iroquoian, Siouan, and Algonquian languages (Holmer 1949:8–9, 1952a:21–23, 1956; see also Hovdhaugen *et al.* 2000:476).

This parameter is reminiscent of the typological parameter Arthur Capell had proposed some years previously (Capell 1940) for Australian languages, which also distinguished prefixing and suffixing languages. Holmer seems to have been unaware of Capell's previous work, and does not cite him. Interestingly, the relative geographical spread of the two types in Australia is the reverse of the distribution in America. Capell's construal of the contrast was also different (see §4.1 below).

Holmer explicitly denies that his typological classification is an attempt to group the families into a macro-family: despite the typological similarity, as he observes, the actual forms are too divergent. Nevertheless, he did interpret his typological scheme in temporal terms: the lesser morphological consistency of prefixing languages than suffixing languages indicates, he suggests, the greater time-depth of the former (Holmer 1949:9; see also Holmer 1956:21–22).

Holmer's aim was, rather, to demonstrate 'connection[s] between the Amerindian languages at large' (Holmer 1949:10), these connections not necessarily being genetic ones via retentions from a common ancestor, but being through 'direct contact' between the languages and their speakers—in other words, he is advocating a type of areal linguistics.⁵ Some two decades later he suggests more daringly that the analogies between prefixing languages in America and Australia are indicative of 'the existence of an ancient common structural system', apparently implying previous geographical proximity of the languages (Holmer 1970b: 69).

Holmer argued that languages are complex entities that show less consistent internal organisation than do biological units; indeed, he goes as far as to say 'all languages are mixed', indicating that he was by the late 1940s less than happy with the family tree model of comparative and historical linguistics. Nevertheless, different aspects of language show differences in terms of their propensity for change, and Holmer recognised that grammatical elements in general change more slowly than lexical items, and are more likely to be of a greater age than lexical items, especially items referring to material culture—and also numerals, kinterms, body part terms in the Amerindian context.

In Holmer (1949), twenty-five common roots are identified which are shared by Siouan and Algonquian languages. These he considers to represent not retentions from a common ancestor, but rather evidence of contact between the families at some early date, presumably at a proto-language time when they were located near the Atlantic seaboard (Holmer 1952a:

5 This is effectively what he also did in Holmer (1947b), where he proposed that the Ibero-Caucasian type, manifested by Basque and Caucasian languages, represents an archaic linguistic type that predates Indo-European and Semitic languages on the European continent. As we understand him, he was not proposing a genetic link between the former group of languages, but rather that shared typological features were indicative of prior geographical adjacency. He characterises this linguistic type in terms of six typological features: inflection of the final element only of an NP; ergative case marking; use of a combination of case suffixes and postpositions; use of prefixed vowels to specify relation between verb and participants; verb conjugation by prefixes, and remnantal prefixing of nominals; and nominal character of verbs. For the argument to work, of course, these features would need to be fairly resistant to change; they should also be typologically independent.

31).⁶ As we understand it, Holmer was also suggesting in that paper that similarities amongst the two families in terms of parallelisms in morphological structures also reflected contact at a great time depth, and thus that not only could languages in contact share forms through borrowing, but also more abstract grammatical patterns; this notion is quite widely accepted today.

4. Nils Holmer's fieldwork on Australian languages

As already mentioned, Nils Holmer's fieldwork on Australian languages began in the northern New South Wales region in 1964. What took him there? It is possible to reconstruct a partial story from correspondence from Arthur Capell (kindly made available to us by Arthur Holmer). It seems that sometime in 1962 he began corresponding with Arthur Capell about Australian languages, perhaps initially in relation to his first book on the languages, Holmer (1963b).⁷ The timing was fortuitous: the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (as it was then called) had been established the previous year, and Arthur Capell was on the linguistic advisory panel.⁸ Capell's letter of 23 July 1962 in fact raises the possibility of a student being interested in doing fieldwork; the next letter from Capell, dated 11 March the following year, makes it clear that by then Holmer had conveyed his intention of undertaking the fieldwork himself.

One gets the impression from Arthur Capell's 'History of research in Australian and Tasmanian languages' (1970:689–690) that Capell himself was instrumental in Holmer's decision to work on these languages: he remarks on his own knowledge of the precarious state of the languages, and the poor state of knowledge about them. In particular, it seems that he wanted to know whether the Kutthung language really showed such extreme simplicity as portrayed in earlier work by W.J. Enright (Enright 1900).

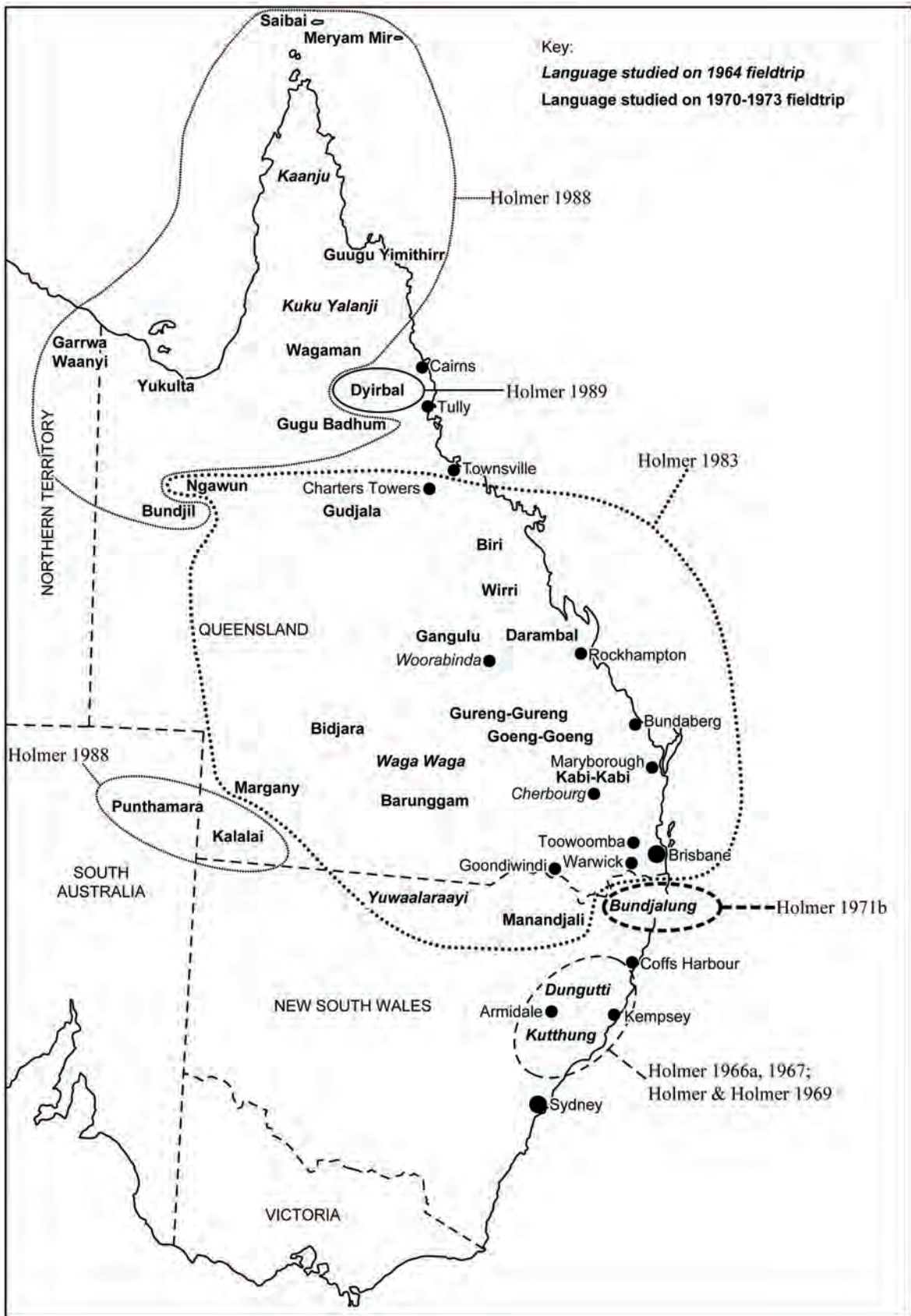
Correspondence between Capell and Holmer reveals that the decision was less one-sided. A letter dated 11 June 1963 indicates that Holmer may have expressed some preference for Kutthung and Dungutti and 'languages of a certain type'. This would presumably have been prefixing languages—in which case he must have been disappointed with the choice. Capell cautions about the probable difficulties in obtaining sufficient information on the languages. A following communication, dated 23 August 1963, indicates that although Capell's own preference (based on discussions with Stephen Wurm) was also for languages of the east coast of New South Wales, a more viable alternative would be western New South Wales. A letter from 8 October indicates that Holmer had agreed to this, and Capell encourages him to put in an application for funds. Nevertheless, Holmer did not go there, but went instead to the north coast of New South Wales.

During his first fieldtrip—which extended from January to August 1964—Nils Holmer worked mainly on two moribund languages, Kutthung and Dungutti. The region around Kempsey and Coffs Harbour was the focus of his fieldwork; however, because speakers were

6 Unfortunately, the forms are almost all monosyllabic, increasing the probability of accidental similarity. And when in Holmer (1952a:31) the Iroquoian languages are added the correspondences become so weakened that one could easily add English or Capell's Common Australian, and infer prehistoric contact.

7 The earliest letter we have access to from Arthur Capell is dated 23 July 1962, and makes clear that there was prior correspondence, perhaps going back some years.

8 Coincidentally, this was also about the same time that Michael A.K. Halliday was corresponding with Capell, in view of doing fieldwork on an Australian language himself. As it turned out, he was offered a position he very much wanted (Michael Halliday, pers.comm.), and negotiated to send a student in his place. Thus the appearance of R.M.W. Dixon on the Australian scene in 1963.



Map 8.1: Nils Holmer's fieldwork languages

scattered over a wide region, Holmer also travelled west to Armidale, and north into the Northern Rivers District and thence to southern Queensland, as far as about Murgon (north of Brisbane), in search of speakers. During these excursions he also made contact with speakers of other languages, and recorded some information on them. These languages include Bundjalung in the Northern Rivers District, and, near Murgon, two languages of the Cape York region Kaanju (Kantyu) and Kuku Yalanji (Gugu-Yalanji).

Six years later, Holmer returned to Australia. On this occasion, he went to Queensland, where, during a period of two and a half years between 1970 and 1973, he undertook a lengthy fieldtrip. In the course of this fieldtrip, he covered a large area of the state, working mainly on the coastal strip between Brisbane and Tully, and extending a hundred to two hundred kilometres inland. He worked on a considerable number of languages (Holmer 1983: vii), according to the availability of speakers. Thus, he found in the region speakers of various languages from other places, such as the Gulf region and Torres Strait Islands—including the Papuan language Meryam Mir (Mer). Again his fieldwork can be characterised as primarily salvage investigations.

It seems that Holmer's intention had originally been to work on the languages of the south coast on New South Wales during this fieldtrip, and that he had applied to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies for funds for a fieldtrip in 1969 (letter from Arthur Capell dated 26 October 1969). However, Capell was not in favour of this plan, though he does not specify an alternative location. A letter from Capell dated 18 May 1970 indicates that by then Holmer had decided on Queensland as his fieldwork site.

The range of Holmer's fieldwork languages is shown in Map 8.1, which also indicates the time of his investigations, to the extent we have been able to determine them. Also indicated are the subsequent publications dealing with the languages.

Nils Holmer does not explicitly discuss his field-methods in any of his publications. The only information we have is that standard elicitation procedures were employed, information was recorded in a notebook, and the fieldwork sessions were recorded on tape (Arthur Holmer, pers.comm.)—see Plate 8.1. It is clear, however, from remarks scattered throughout



Plate 8.1: Nils Holmer doing fieldwork in northern New South Wales in 1964. Photograph courtesy Arthur Holmer.

his publications that not every session was tape recorded, though it is not clear under what circumstances the machine was switched on. It seems that the (presumed) degree of control of the language by the interviewee was a consideration: only the better speakers were recorded, at least during the 1964 fieldtrip.⁹

The only comment to add to this is that ‘he was good at getting even reluctant informants to “open up”’ (Arthur Holmer, pers.comm.). This might seem a relatively minor consideration, but one must remember that things were not always as they are today. New South Wales and Queensland of the 1960s and 1970s were much more overtly racist places than they are today, and it is not surprising that many Aborigines might have experienced some compunctions against working closely with a white linguist (see also Hercus, this volume). Thus Capell says in relation to fieldwork in the coastal region of New South Wales that ‘... we were told by one “informant” that: “the language was not to be wasted on whitemen!”’ (letter from Arthur Capell to Nils Holmer, 23 August 1963).

5. Specific aspects of Holmer's investigations

Nils Holmer normally published rapidly after doing fieldwork on a language, generally within the space of just a few years, and not infrequently in the following year or so; only rarely did his publications begin emerging after a longer interval. He did, of course, return to some languages in subsequent publications. Generally speaking, the type of documentation he provided was a shortish sketch grammar of no more than a hundred or so pages, and a collection of texts. These were normally published as separate monographs. As a rule he also published a wordlist in the language, sometimes as a part of the grammatical sketch, sometimes as a separate monograph. This pattern was maintained in his first investigations of Australian languages, although his subsequent investigations tended to be rather less detailed, becoming, in the 1980s, effectively minimally-edited fieldnotes.

Aside from this, he often published separate articles or monographs of a more theoretical nature on specific topics arising from the descriptive investigations. Works of this type had, however, virtually dried up by the time of Holmer's Australian period. His monograph on Oceanic and Australian semantics (Holmer 1966c) was the only general work of this nature drawing on his Australian experiences, and this was from his earliest fieldtrips.

5.1 Holmer's *On the history and structure of the Australian languages*

Holmer's book on Australian languages (Holmer 1963b), was written before he ever came into direct contact with an Australian language—and indeed, according to O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:8–9), before he had even spoken with any experts in the field. Despite this, it is in many ways his best publication on Australian languages, and can be seen as a precursor to the general texts on Australian languages that appeared in the following decades, Wurm (1972), Vászolyi (1976), Dixon (1980), Blake (1981), and Yallop (1982). Nothing else of similar quality and accessibility was readily available at the time. There were, of course, Capell's *New approach* (1956) and Nekes and Worms' *Australian languages* (1953), and, from an earlier era, Wilhelm Schmidt's *Die Gliederung der australischen Sprachen* (1919a). But these were all research monographs, rather than overviews of the current state of knowledge.

9 What has happened to the field notebooks and tapes is uncertain; it seems that only a fraction are held in the archives of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Holmer (1963b) appeared at the dawn of the modern era of linguistic investigations of Australian languages, if not actually prior to the appearance of the first modern grammars, then at least largely without the advantage of their contribution. Almost all of the works he made reference to only indirectly (if at all) made use of the notions of the phoneme and morpheme. He seems to have been unaware of the SIL-inspired structuralist grammars employing these notions that had begun to appear in the 1950s, including Oates (1953), Moody (1954), and Douglas (1964 [1957]). The only structuralist work Holmer cites is Douglas' paper on the phonology of a Western Desert variety (Douglas 1955, dated wrongly in Holmer's bibliography as 1935), and he only became aware of Capell (1956) after completion of his text. Nevertheless, Holmer was able to pull the threads together into a consistent and basically correct structuralist story.

The book, which amounts to a little over a hundred pages in all, is organised into a dozen short chapters: introduction; tribes and languages; phonology; 'word structure' (see below); language types; prefixing languages; suffixing languages; morphology; semantics; place names; texts; and historical-comparative. Holmer stresses the non-uniqueness of Australian languages—that they do not display any unique peculiarities unattested elsewhere in the world—and in many places comments on structural correlations with languages from elsewhere in the world (Bantu, Dravidian, Caucasian, Amerindian, Indo-European, etc.). He employs a practical orthography that is roughly identical with widely used orthographies, the major deviation being his use of *r* for the apical tap/trill and *rr* for the retroflex continuant, apparently motivated by pattern congruity. He reserves diacritics for narrow transcriptions. The following are a few remarks on some of the more interesting features of this book in a historical context, organised chapter by chapter.

Chapter I is a brief introduction that outlines some of the work then available on Australian languages. Strehlow's grammar of Arrernte is singled out as the outstanding work (see Moore, this volume); Holmer also comments on the paucity of textual material. The question of whether the languages are primitive is raised, and some space is devoted to discussion of the notion. Holmer notes that there are two possible meanings for 'primitive': a subjective one involving value judgements, and an objective one free of such judgements. Holmer is aware of the dangers of using the term and says he will try to avoid it. Nevertheless, it comes up quite often in the book as well as in his later publications—though often in double quotes.

Chapter II presents some basic information on the status of 'tribes'—this vexed term goes unquestioned—in the contemporary context; there is some misinformation here concerning the significance and location of certain groups (largely resulting from the way they were portrayed in the literature). Holmer correctly observes that the name of the group and the name of the language is usually the same, and observes that often this is a word meaning 'man' or 'people'. Alternatively, the term may include in it a component element with this or a similar meaning (e.g. 'tribe', 'language', etc.). While this is true, it is not the only way groups and languages were named, and Holmer misconstrues a number of derivational affixes (e.g. *-burra* 'denizen of' (sometimes a comitative), and the widespread comitative marker *-jarri*) as nominals meaning 'man' or 'people'. The bulk of the chapter is taken up by a survey of the languages of the continent, beginning with a brief outline of two of the major classifications, Schmidt (1919a) and Capell (1937). The survey divides the languages into groups that are in most cases geographical, in accordance with the scheme presented in Salzner (1960).

An outline of Australian phonologies is presented in Chapter III. Holmer correctly identifies a number of recurrent phonological generalisations: the lack of a voicing contrast in stops; the recurrent five or six distinctive points of articulation shared by stops and nasals; the almost universal absence of sibilants and fricatives; the predominance of CV(C) syllables;

and typical initial stress. He also notes the correlation between interdental and palatals, manifested in cross-dialectal correspondences and differences in transcriptions by various authors. As for vowels, Holmer is less clear, implying that five vowel systems represent the usual number of distinct phonemes, with three vowel systems perhaps being the norm at one time. The problem here is partly due to inadequacies of the pre-phonemic sources, which frequently over-differentiate vowels. With regard to Arrernte, Holmer suggests initial epenthetic vowels—thus explaining stress on the second syllable of vowel-initial words. This idea leads him further astray, as we will soon see. Overall, however, Holmer's presentation of Australian phonologies is correct.

Chapter IV, dealing with 'word structure' is, in hindsight, the poorest chapter of the book. Despite the title, it does not deal with morphology, but with the phonological structure of roots. It is in fact a brief excursus into comparative linguistics, which identifies various apparent cognates in modern languages, proposing original root structures. Based primarily on forms cited in Schmidt (1919a), Holmer identifies a number of recurrent nominal and verbal root-forms, the bulk of which are plausible cognates. He concludes that these can be traced back to monosyllabic or disyllabic roots, with augments ('derivations') in some modern languages. He further suggests that these roots are defined in particular by two or three consonants that are distributed over two or three syllables. From there Holmer goes rather astray, proposing that the consonants themselves are the 'fundamental carriers of meaning', apparently invoking the possibility that something like the consonantal template specifications of roots in Semitic languages could be set up on a cross-linguistic basis in Australian languages. As a result, although he observes that Luritja *kulpa* 'return' is cognate with Arrernte *alp-* 'return', he interprets this as indicating *-lp-* as the significant consonants, presumably reflecting the proto-form. The Luritja form would then involve an augment. Thus he misses the process of initial loss in Arrernte, first recognised by Schmidt (1919b:49), and subsequently by Hale (1962). We find in this chapter some slippage between the synchronic and the diachronic.

In Chapter V Holmer presents his version of the by then well-established prefixing-suffixing typology for Australian languages, according to the distinction he had previously made for Amerindian languages (see above). He also observes that the relative dominance of the two types on the two continents is reversed. His definitions are effectively the same as those adopted by Nekes and Worms (1953), and concern the placement of the person and number markers on nominals and verbs.¹⁰ An unfortunate consequence of this definition is that a good number of Australian languages would be of either 'mixed' types or neither type. Like Nekes and Worms before him, Holmer fails to appreciate the significance of the way Capell set up the typology, with the distinction between languages with prefixes only (prefixing) and languages with both prefixes and suffixes (suffixing). Although this typology is explicated in detail in some works of Capell referred to by Holmer, this important aspect of Capell's thinking is not referred to at all.¹¹

As in the North American context, Holmer suggests that the prefixing languages represent the oldest strata of indigenous languages, spread not just over Australia, but also nearby islands such as Papua New Guinea. The suffixing languages are associated with a younger strata

10 Holmer's characterisation of the prefixing-suffixing contrast was refined somewhat over the dozen or so years following its first formulation. Thus in Holmer (1949:8–9, 1952a), the distinction was not pinned down so narrowly to the personal desinences, which appear in these earlier works more as diagnostic than defining features. Further refinements can be found in more general works such as Holmer (1956, 1969), which include other grammatical parameters.

11 Arthur Holmer remarks (pers. comm.) that Nils Holmer's motivation for doing this was that 'He was not trying to recreate a typology for Australia, but rather to place Australia into a typological context which he had already developed. ... He did not make his purpose particularly clear.'

tum. Holmer's approach is reminiscent of the approach to linguistic and demographic prehistory advocated by Johanna Nichols (Nichols 1992, 1997), though she uses a different and larger set of typological parameters, and the scenario she proposes is rather different to Holmer's. Later on, Holmer presents the background for his case in the following words: 'concrete vocabulary is, as a rule, much more exposed to the dynamic forces of linguistic evolution than are structural features' (p.96), apparently suggesting that shared structural features can take us back further in time than cognates.

The next two chapters, VI and VII, focus in turn on the Australian prefixing and suffixing languages. The discussion of prefixing languages is reasonable given the then state of knowledge of these languages. Holmer, tends to assign personal prefixes to single consonant forms, treating the following vowels as separate prefixes. It is not clear whether the latter are actually morphemes or just meaningless augments. We suspect this analysis is motivated by the observation that it is often just these consonants that remain unchanged by morphophonemic processes (see p.53). But in many cases a better solution is to treat the prefixes having a vowel in underlying form, the quality of which is affected by the operation of morphophonemic processes.

Holmer observes that many northern prefixing languages have noun classes, and goes on to reject language classifications according to the number and nature of these classes—seemingly here construing language classification as necessarily genetic (pp.54–55).¹²

The treatment of suffixing languages is less satisfactory than the prefixing ones, since they fit Holmer's prototype less well—few have pronominal suffixes to verbs let alone possessive pronominal suffixes to nominals. Failing to adequately appreciate the status of bound pronominals in Western Desert—despite Trudinger's (1943) very clear and succinct explanation—he ends up concluding that the 'suffixes' derive historically from prior prefixes to verbs (p.58). No explanation is offered for why the bound pronominals should go onto the end of a verb if it is the first word of a clause. Worse, from examples with reflexive enclitics attached to initial verbs, he concludes that the reflexive derives from reanalysis of a prefix to the following nominal. The inevitable conclusion is that Western Desert languages illustrate the case of suffixing languages deriving from an earlier prefixing language.

There is also some discussion of ergativity in this section,¹³ and Holmer correctly observes that ergative marking in some languages does not extend to all nominal types—not to pronominals in some languages; at the same time he does not notice that pronominals (along with certain other nominals) in some languages make a nominative-accusative distinction, and wrongly asserts that Australian languages are unusual in world terms in this regard (p. 60).

Without a doubt the most surprising idea in this chapter is the suggestion (p.59) that nouns and verbs display—or originally displayed (Holmer equivocates on this point)—little difference! Partly this is a consequence of a failure to notice derivational affixes, and partly due to the failure to understand the principles of bound pronominal attachment. Later on the fact that some case markers can be attached to verbs is used as evidence for the same point.¹⁴

12 This is a strange critique, since Holmer's interpretation of his own prefixing-suffixing typology is explicitly non-genetic, though he does consider it to have historical or at least temporal relevance.

13 Holmer uses, somewhat confusingly, the three terms agentive, active, and ergative in reference to this case form. He appears to be one of the first Australianists since Wilhelm Schmidt (1919a) to use the now accepted term *ergative*.

14 As Arthur Holmer observes (pers.comm.), this idea doubtless comes from Amerindian languages. He goes on to say that most probably Nils Holmer was primarily concerned with bound morphemes that ignore the distinction between nouns and verbs, attaching with equal facility to either—'bivalent' affixes in the terminology of Dixon (1976)—and thus grouping them into a single category. There is certainly some truth to the

Chapter VIII deals with some of the basic features of morphology; the discussion is quite detailed (it is one of the longest chapters in the book), and it is impossible to comment on every aspect of this treatment. Holmer observes that grammatical relations in both suffixing and (many) prefixing languages are marked by case-marking suffixes (which he equates with postpositions), never by prefixes. He correctly notices that in many languages the marker goes on just one word of a phrase—though he incorrectly states that it is necessarily the last word that it goes onto. There are a good number of languages (e.g. from eastern Australia) where every word is inflected, and he does not remark on these. Holmer also correctly observes that in many prefixing (and some suffixing) languages systems of verbal ‘agreement’ perform the same function.

He is also right in observing that the distinction between nouns and adjectives is ‘an artificial one’, that does not correspond to a category underlying ‘the Australian mind’. What Holmer has in mind here is clearly the contrast between etic and emic. And he elsewhere cautions against etic interpretations, and proposes that grammatical categories in Australian languages be addressed from the point of view of the languages themselves, and by doing this we might perceive underlying semantic unity. Clearly this is what he is attempting to do with his discussion of case categories (pp.65–66), though this is not very clearly stated.

Also in the morphology chapter is a discussion of classification by generics (‘classifying words’) which Holmer contrasts with noun class systems as another type of noun classification system. He also observes that these generics can grammaticalise into class markers, citing the Marrithiyel *mi-* vegetable class prefix which he suggests is likely to be cognate with the common term for vegetable food, *mayi*. Likewise, Holmer recognises the grammaticalisation of the widespread *bula* ‘two’ to a dual suffix in some languages, sometimes to a conjunction (in NPs), as in Arrernte and various other languages, thereafter to a comitative marker, and ultimately perhaps a locative suffix.

This chapter concludes, somewhat unexpectedly, with a discussion of word order. Holmer comments on its freedom, and on the predominance of SOV order in suffixing languages.

Missing from this chapter is detailed discussion of verb morphology as such, either in suffixing or prefixing languages. Some information is to be found scattered elsewhere in the book—for instance, verb agreement by prefixes or suffixes—but we do not get a coherent picture of verbal structure as a whole, or of typical verbal categories such as tense, mood and aspect. What we do get, however, is brief discussion of auxiliary verbs, serial verb constructions, switch-reference, and associated motion constructions in Central Australian languages—without these more recently devised terms, of course.

Chapter IX, a brief excursus into semantics, begins by expounding a somewhat Malinowskian view of semantics (although Malinowski goes unmentioned) that stresses the context-sensitivity of semantics. A given lexical item can (as in all languages) have different senses in different contexts of use, indicating their ambiguity. Holmer then goes on to suggest that Australian languages tend to resemble one another in terms of the range of those senses that are linked together by lexical items. In this regard they are semantically more similar to one another than they are to European languages; nevertheless, some of these semantic commonalities can be found elsewhere, e.g. in some Austronesian and Amerindian languages.

Holmer employs the structuralist notion of *semanteme*, construed as a grouping of senses under a single lexeme, to identify recurrent patterns in Australian language semantics. He

proposition that bound morphology in some Australian languages fails to respect this major category distinction. Indeed, in some languages it is impossible to characterise the two major word classes simply in terms of disjoint classes of morphemes they collocate with, as has sometimes been suggested; rather, it is necessary to characterise them in terms of recurrent patterns of differences in the collocate sets (e.g. McGregor 1990, 2004).

discusses various examples—including the well-known ‘fire’, ‘firewood’, ‘wood’ conflation—suggesting an underlying semantic unity. However, he rests content with mentioning the correspondences and alluding to possible links. He does not attempt to explicitly draw out general principles behind the correspondences, such as the source-product conflation (or polysemy), perhaps first identified as such by Geoffrey O’Grady (1960), or to show how the contextual senses derive from the more abstract inherent senses through the influence of context.

Chapter X is a brief discussion of toponyms, that seems to be based largely on Worms (1944). Holmer begins by suggesting that toponyms are often simply general names for the geographical feature type. Doubtless many, if not all, examples of this sort are cases of mistaken identity, when a term for a topographic feature was elicited instead of a toponym. He also mentions naming in accordance to some characteristic of the place such as animal or plant species endemic to the place, or that have totemic associations with it. Various other principles are mentioned, including the use of body part terminology, usually via some mythological connection with an ancestral being, and ‘sentence names’, i.e. names that describe events occurring at the place (e.g. Luritja *Warulutarban’gu* (his spelling) ‘(where) the rock wallaby entered into the water’). Holmer concludes with the rather puzzling, not to say highly dubious, statement:¹⁵

Names of the latter type [i.e. the sentence name type—WBM & MM], especially, tend to make it quite clear to us that the native Australian toponymy has not by far reached the official status of ‘geographical name’ or in any sense become fit for handy gazetteer entry, as it has among us. (Holmer 1963b:83)

Chapter XI, entitled ‘metasyntax’, concerns what comes after syntax in linguistic investigations, that is, what is actually said by people, rather than the ways things can be expressed. This domain is not rule-governed, Holmer avers, suggesting that it is entirely a matter of ‘chrestomathy’—one can do no more than collect instances and display them for purposes of edification. Thus he fails to make any generalisations concerning the structure of narratives. He gives a few examples of texts in Aboriginal languages: the emu and the bustard (Yuwaalaraayi (Yualeai, Jualrai)), the red kangaroo and the euro (Arrernte (Aranda)), and the goanna (Wandarrang (Wandarang)). What he provides are fairly literal word-by-word translations of sample texts into English, with the occasional word from the source language thrown in; the original source texts are not given. Holmer makes the point that the sort of mythological texts found in Australian cultures have rather different social roles than do their corresponding genres in English. He also discusses one instance of a text about the goanna (in Yangman (Jangman)) that is told in the first person—which he attempts to explain through the idea that the narrator would have enacted the myth in the ceremonial context.¹⁶

Chapter XII concludes the book with speculations on the history and migrations of Australian languages, and possible relationships to languages outside of the continent. He begins by mentioning the characteristic feature of mythology whereby the movements of ancestral beings are traced along long paths, and raises the question of interpreting these as indicating previous population movements. He concludes that more evidence is required. From there he

15 As Peter Sutton observes (pers.comm.), the Western Desert is unusual in the extent to which nonce-toponyms are used ‘that may vary between occasions and be typically descriptive in character, or where the same place may so often have a plurality of names depending on informant.’ Myers (1986) makes a similar observation in relation to the Pintupi, another Western Desert group. As Sutton goes on to remark, this variability may be indicative of recent occupation of the region.

16 More likely this is a reflection of the widely reported phenomenon in which an individual identifies themselves with their Dreaming.

goes on to mention some recurrent characteristics of Australian Aboriginal languages suggesting their underlying unity. These include: the widespread *ng* diagnostic of first person singular in both prefixing and suffixing languages; and case markers such as the genitive-dative *-ka*, the accusative *-nha*, and the purposive, dative, etc. *-gu ~ -ku*. He also remarks on some widespread lexical correspondences, giving half a dozen items from Capell's 'common Australian'. In this connection he observes that some of the cognate body part terms appear with inherent prefixes in prefixing languages.¹⁷

Holmer concludes by mentioning some lexical correspondences with languages of the Americas, and elsewhere. All are problematic, he recognises, and involve sporadic similarities (p.97). Equipped with his notion of the diachronic significance of the prefixing-suffixing typology, Holmer suggests as one scenario that the prefixing languages of northern Australia and Papua New Guinea region might represent the earliest tongues of the region.¹⁸ Just as the suffixing Austronesian languages took over in parts of the Papua New Guinea region, so might the suffixing languages of Australia have represented a migration subsequent to the migration of speakers of prefixing languages. They were subsequently forced further south on the Australian continent, consequent to a vigorous cultural growth in the northern prefixing languages.¹⁹ How this scenario fits with Holmer's expressed opinion of the unity of Australian languages is not clear.

To sum up, Holmer (1963b) is in many ways an interesting book for its time. Given that, at the time of writing, the author had no first-hand experience with Australian languages, one must conclude that he did a creditable job of understanding and interpreting the descriptions at his disposal. It is perhaps a pity that the book was not more widely known by the 1960s generation of Australianists. The book does, however, illustrate in some places how preconceptions can negatively influence analyses, and prevent one from seeing the situation in the most obvious terms. This does not greatly mar the book. Holmer's descriptive passages are generally quite reasonable, and usually display a good understanding and synthesis of those works available to him. It is primarily in his historical interpretations that he is led astray. But even there he throws out some interesting suggestions that bear a clear relation to ideas put forward a generation later by Johanna Nichols. One can also criticise Holmer for sometimes confusing (at least in his expression) the diachronic and the synchronic.

5.2 Holmer's first-hand investigations of Australian languages

5.2.1 Holmer's work on languages of northern New South Wales

From the fieldtrip Holmer undertook in 1964, three publications emerged treating Kutthung (also called Worimi) and Dungutti (Holmer 1966a, 1967; Holmer and Holmer 1969). Both of these languages are today classified as belonging to the Kuri subgroup of Yuin-Kuric, and are spoken in Eastern New South Wales (Map 8.1). Both were moribund at the time; Kutthung had just one fluent speaker (now deceased). Holmer describes the language situation as he found it in 1964:

17 Holmer cites examples from Schmidt (1919a) of 'eye' in the 'Ord River dialects', replicating an error of that source—the forms are actually Nyulnyulan.

18 He also makes the observation that the simplest assumption in archaeology need not always be the correct one: perhaps Australia was not populated from the north-west.

19 Holmer's conclusion is thus diametrically opposed to Nichols': she suggests that 'in the languages of the Australian desert and the New Guinea highlands we see reflected the structural type of the languages spoken by the first humans to set foot on ancient Sahul' (Nichols 1997:168).

The latter [i.e. the language rather than the culture—WBM & MM] many times seemed to be the last distinctive trait to be lost; the Aboriginal languages, even in this part of New South Wales, appeared to be still spoken—although to a large extent mixed with English—and old people would actually address the children in the native language (this was observed at Bellbrook), who would understand them, although they probably did not speak any other language than English. Native words were, of course, universally used in cases when outsiders were not supposed to understand. It was also easier to obtain such elements of the language as pertained to the local form of civilization, or rather ways of thinking, resulting in general difficulty to obtain native terms for any English term wanted at any particular moment (for instance in order to fill in a questionnaire, which latter therefore sometimes would get a rather monotonous appearance), whereas the richness of the native language consisted in the use of several words for one term in English. (Holmer 1966a:5)

Holmer worked with a number of speakers of the two languages, scattered over a rather wide region, and who displayed varying degrees of fluency. They were, according to Holmer, ‘detribalized’—unaware of traditional law and customs; all were bilingual, and presumably fluent speakers of Aboriginal English. Because of the socio-linguistic situation, there was heavy dialect mixture in their speech, which contributed to the difficulty of the fieldwork. Holmer lists ten principal informants for Kutthung, and seven for Dungutti. Two of the Kutthung speakers are singled out as most knowledgeable, Fred Bugg and Eddie Lobban (‘really “the last of the Kattang”’), along with three of the Dungutti speakers, Lenn Duckett, Doug Scott, and Lachlan Vale (Holmer 1966a:8). It seems that only these persons were tape recorded.

In *An attempt towards a comparative grammar of two Australian languages* (Holmer 1966a), Holmer presents structural descriptions of Kutthung and Dungutti.²⁰ Kutthung had been reported (Enright 1900) to be a very simple language in terms of morphology, and one of Holmer’s initial motives was to find out whether this really was the case (see above). His conclusion was that its simplicity had been overstated. Kutthung was indeed like the typical Pama-Nyungan language, showing tense-mood-aspect marking on verbs and case inflections on nominals; it differed little morphologically from Dungutti. Apparent simplicity could be attributed at least partly to language loss; moreover, in Holmer’s opinion, the languages had approached one another structurally due to contact. In the end, Kutthung and Dungutti are characterised as ‘simplified type of suffix languages’ (in the terminology of Holmer 1963b), or ‘the “Palaeo-Eurasian Suffix type”—formerly and still rather popularly referred to as the “agglutinative” type of languages’ (note 9, p.95). The comparative aspect promised in the title of the book goes largely unfulfilled, and is more or less left to the reader.

The phonologies of Kutthung and Dungutti are typical for Australian languages, with a single ‘devoiced’ series of plosives (p.12),²¹ six distinctive places of articulation for consonants (labial, dental, alveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar), and a three-vowel system (/a/, /i/, /u/); vowel length is stated to have some importance. The section on the structure of the word is actually phonotactics, as is the similarly titled section in Holmer (1963b). *Notes on historic phonology* (pp.28–32) is the only section where a comparative analysis is attempted; just a few isolated points are treated.

20 Nils Holmer apparently sent at least one preliminary draft of this work to Arthur Capell for comment. In a letter dated 20 September 1965, Capell suggests use of phonemic spelling (it seems from the content of the message that Holmer had been hesitating as to whether to use a phonetic or phonemic representation), as well as a few relatively minor comments.

21 This term (perhaps due originally to Hermann Nekes under the influence of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt’s (1907) phonetic text, and later approved by Arthur Capell) appears to denote a stop with zero voice onset time.

As just remarked, the two languages are said to have a single series of stop consonants. It appears that following short vowels 'stop sounds seem not only more clearly voiceless ..., but also somewhat lengthened' (Holmer 1966a:17). This is evidently allophonic conditioning. However, in Dungutti there are a small number of words where in this environment the stops are not realised by these voiceless and lengthened allophones. There are even a small number of minimal pairs. At this point the exposition becomes somewhat murky due to the author's failure to distinguish phonetic and phonemic representations by standard bracketing conventions; nor is the discussion helped by the absence of a tabulation of the phonemes and the orthographic symbols representing them. In the end Holmer opts for a geminate contrast, at least for the peripheral stops, and represents the geminates by the voiceless symbols, reserving the voiced symbols for the corresponding non-geminates.²²

This analysis is questionable. It seems from Holmer's exposition that, following a short vowel, the lengthened and unvoiced phones are the more common than the non-lengthened phones for peripheral stops, and the only variants of apical and laminal stops. This leads one to suspect that it is the short peripheral stops that are the odd man out, the marked members of the opposition, and thus that some other opposition than gemination (for example, tenseness), may be preferable analytically.

The structural analyses adopted in Holmer (1966a) are to a large extent reminiscent of Holmer (1966b); see also §5.3 below. Three word classes are identified: nominals, verbals and particles. There is no formal distinction between nouns and adjectives, nor between intransitive and transitive verbs. In Holmer (1966a), however, verbs and nominals are treated as distinct parts-of-speech, defined by simple morphological criteria. Particles include adverbs, postpositions, and subordinating conjunctions (the latter two are in fact suffixes); coordinating conjunctions do not exist. The languages have no personal inflections, but the verb does inflect for aspect. The case inflection on the noun is stated to be rudimentary and originally the case suffixes were postpositions. The case suffixes also appear on verbs, where they express modal meanings (Holmer 1966a:8). As is typical of Australian languages, the numeral system is minimal, with words for 'one', 'two', 'three, few', and 'many'. In general, Kutthung and Dungutti are stated to be typical Australian languages of the region.

Holmer suggests 'the notion of time does not properly exist in our sense among the Aborigines' and thus that it is inappropriate to talk of the grammatical category of tense in Australian languages. Richard See (1968:173) cites this notion approvingly, in relation to the Whorfian hypothesis, concluding that Holmer understood that the 'semantic correlates of verbal categories are primarily spatial rather than temporal'. Holmer does not, however, make a clear case for this, or explore the matter in detail.

His second publication on Kutthung and Dungutti, *An attempt towards a comparative grammar of two Australian languages, part II indices and vocabularies of Kattang and Thangatti* (Holmer 1967), consists of complete vocabularies of the materials gathered in 1964. These vocabularies also serve as an index to Holmer (1966a). The entries consist of the word in the Aboriginal language, possibly a reference to a section in Holmer (1966a), a translation of the term in English, possibly some examples, and, in some cases, the initials of the informant. At the end of the book is a list of errata and corrections to Holmer (1966a).

The third book, *Stories from two native tribes of Eastern Australia* (Holmer and Holmer 1969), which contains texts from Kutthung and Dungutti, was jointly authored by Nils Holmer and his wife Vanja E. Holmer, who was with him for a part of the fieldtrip. There are

22 The apical and palatal stops do not show this contrast; and since they are realised by lengthened 'devoiced' allophones Holmer opts to represent them by the voiceless symbols. This is not an entirely happy choice since it would seem to suggest these belong phonemically with the geminate peripheral rather than the ordinary peripherals.

20 Kutthung texts (16 in Kutthung with translations and 4 in English) and 12 Dungutti texts (11 in Dungutti with translations and 1 in English; plus one Dungutti text in English given separately in an appendix ‘as it seems to have no direct connection with the other material from the Thangatti tribe’). Comments are provided for the texts, and some references are made to Holmer (1966a). The aim in this book is to give ‘an idea of the morphology, syntax and “metasyntax” of these languages’ (p.8). There is no interlinear gloss line, and hardly any linguistic analysis, the comments being mostly about other things (mostly on the context where the text was told). The book is not very user-friendly, and to get anything out of the actual Kutthung and Dungutti texts, the two previously discussed publications must be consulted. This dramatically decreases the chances of the collection achieving its stated goals.

Overall, the main value of the three volumes is that they provide documentation (see Himmelmann 1998), if not comprehensive descriptions, of the two languages. Hale (1970) opines that the second volume is perhaps the most valuable for comparative purposes. In terms of actual comparative analysis beyond descriptive facts, their contribution is rather meagre. Richard See (1968:172) considers Holmer (1966a) to ‘reflect the level of analysis reached when data are organized after an initial period of field work’. Nevertheless, to situate it within the framework of descriptive work on Australian languages of the time, he goes on to say that ‘since the bulk of published material of the Australian languages is even more difficult to interpret, I would include this monograph with the handful that could be recommended to anyone interested in getting some idea of what the Australian languages are like’. Furthermore, Holmer manages to show that the languages are indeed closely related, even though earlier classifications treated them as belonging to different groups—see e.g. Schmidt (1919a:99) on Kutthung, and (1919a:124) on Dungutti.

Holmer did rather less fieldwork on Bundjalung (how much is impossible to divine from his publications). During his first fieldtrip of 1964, he worked with two speakers, Mrs Evelyn Ferguson and Mr Bill Turnbull, both of who lived at the time near Coffs Harbour. Both came from the vicinity of Coraki, and had lived as children at Doonoon, near Lismore. According to Holmer, there were no marked differences between their dialects, and both were fluent speakers of the language.

Holmer (1971b) is a fifty page sketch of Bundjalung, divided into three parts: a brief description of the grammar; a selection of texts; and a word list. The sketch grammar, which makes up just over half the work, covers the basics of phonology, morphology, and syntax. A few remarks on specific details of this book follow.

Comparison with other descriptions indicates that the short treatment of phonology is basically correct. Holmer correctly distinguishes just a dozen consonants—there is a single apical and a single laminal series, and just one rhotic—and three vowels with a length distinction. Holmer provides a quite reasonable discussion of the allophonic variation of the phonemes, remarking for instance on the fricative realisation of *b* and *g* in intervocalic position (see also Sharpe 1994:3).

Holmer distinguishes concrete words from particles, according to whether or not the word takes inflections. The former include nominals (nouns, adjectives, and numerals), articles, pronouns, and verbs; the latter include postpositions and connectives. The bulk of Part I is taken up with a discussion of the morphological potential of these items, with just a few remarks on word order.

The section on nominal morphology gives basic information on derivational suffixes,²³ and the allomorphy and usage of the seven cases Holmer identifies: nominative, ergative, ac-

23 The derivational suffixes are a mixed bag, including diminutives, a variety of nominalising suffixes (no glosses), as well as stem-final segments identified as suffixes by language-external comparison.

cusative, possessive/genitive, locative, ablative, and allative. One infers that a three-way case distinction is made for nominals with human reference (the accusative is stated as used only for human nominals (p.8)) and for pronouns (pp.10–11).²⁴ For other nominals, the distinction is two-way, ergative-absolutive (Holmer's nominative, which is unmarked or zero marked). (Remember that Holmer was writing before Silverstein's important paper on ergativity, Silverstein 1976.) Holmer states that it is difficult to precisely draw the line between postpositions and case suffixes, though it appears that the former may occur one per NP, while the latter must occur on every word of an NP. (Strangely, while noting their status as enclitics, he writes out most of the postpositions as separate words.)

The most unusual part-of-speech in the language according to Holmer's description is the category of articles, which is a group of four words/enclitics (their status seems unclear, and Holmer gives both possibilities) that mark the gender (masculine vs. feminine) and number (personal plural, or collective) of the preceding nominal, which is not declined for case. Insufficient information is provided to permit one to be certain what these words actually are, and what their functions might be.

Part II includes nine textlets, mostly of just a few sentences each. Included is a short conversational interaction, a song text, descriptions of everyday activities, and a myth. Again only free translations are provided, without interlinear glosses. Some comments are given on grammatical matters—for instance, it is remarked in connection with text 1 that the nominal *baigal* 'a man' occurs without the accusative suffix even though it serves as a direct object, indicating that the suffix is optional. This information, unfortunately, is not incorporated into the grammatical description itself.

Part III includes the entire set of words and morphemes collected in the field, amounting to roughly 700 items. Each entry refers to a section of the grammar, and provides a gloss (if it is a lexical word), or basic classificatory information (if a bound morpheme).

5.2.2 Holmer's work on Queensland languages

Results of Holmer's second fieldtrip to Queensland took rather longer than usual to appear, the first being published about twelve years after his return from the field, the second and third a further five and six years later. One further article—a copy of which we have been unable to obtain—probably deals with Meryam Mir and Saibai, which are also dealt with in Holmer (1988); this paper eventually saw the light of day in 1992 (Holmer 1992).

Overall, the publications resulting from the 1970–1973 fieldtrip are sketchier, descriptively weaker, and less insightful than those that emerged from the 1964 fieldtrip. They are clearly very much salvage studies, and are on the whole of less value than the three publications on Kutthung and Dungutti, which retain their worth because they have not been superseded. By contrast, many of the descriptions of Holmer's later publications were superseded before they even appeared, by publications based on post-1973 research.²⁵ For these reasons we provide sketchier treatment of these works, and rely more on the judgement of experts in the languages.

24 Something interesting seems to be going on in the pronouns, whereby 'the distinction of a **nominative** and an **ergative** tends to disappear' (p.10). It seems that the unmarked nominative of the first person singular is sometimes used instead of the ergative (p.11), though it is not stated what the situation is for the other pronouns—whether or not the ergative suffix is optionally omitted, or the ergative form extends to cover intransitive subjects.

25 This does not hold for all of the descriptions given in the later publications. For instance, it was not until the new millennium that a good modern sketch grammar of Darumbal (Darambal) appeared (Terrill 2002).



Plate 8.2: Nils Holmer on his second fieldtrip to Australia, Cherbourg, in 1970-1973.
Courtesy Arthur Holmer.

Holmer (1983) contains sketches of a number of languages of south east Queensland. The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with seven languages of what he refers to as the Wakka group of the south-eastern part of Queensland (Waka-Kabic in O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966:50): Waka Waka (Wakka-Wakka and Wuli-Wuli), Barunggam, Gooreng Gooreng (Goreng-Goreng), Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi-Kabi), and Butchulla (Batjala). Part II deals with seven languages spoken in a region a bit to the north and west of the Wakka languages, roughly in Central Queensland: Kungkari (Gunggari), Bidjara, Margany (Marganj), Gangulu, Wiri (Wirri), Biri, and Ngawun. These languages belong to what Holmer dubs the Gunggari group—Pama-Maric in O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966:51–52). Part III discusses four other languages not belonging to either group: Nunukul (Nunagal), Manandjali, Yuwaalaraay, and Darumbal.

Parts I and II begin with brief outlines of the main features of the two groups, with discussion of the geographical location and overall language situation, orthographic conventions, and brief remarks on shared phonological and morphological characteristics of the groups.

Basic outline descriptions of each language are given, ranging in length from just two to a little under fifty pages, depending on the amount of information Holmer was able to collect. Effectively the same structure is adopted for each description, including the descriptions of Part III: introductory remarks locating the language and providing some indication of the language situation, etc.; a list of informants providing some brief biographical information; a section on phonology; and a section on morphology. The phonological sections are a mixture of synchronic descriptions and diachronic proposals concerning the evolution of the modern systems. The morphological sections are, by contrast, principally synchronic descriptions that cover the major parts-of-speech and their morphological variations, as well as (in most cases) brief remarks on syntax (going under the heading of ‘construction’). There is a good deal of comparison between the languages (especially in Parts I and II) as regards their phonology and morphology, and the descriptions in many cases focus on the inter-language differences, thus reducing repetition. The resulting work does not, however, come across as a comparative pan-varietal grammar.

A consolidated wordlist is provided for each subgroup of the two groups, organised alphabetically according to headwords in one of the languages, specifically the language Holmer considered the most significant member of the group; lexemes from the other languages are included and distinguished by abbreviations. In Part III, a separate wordlist is provided for each language. Under each headword can be found information on part-of-speech membership and a basic gloss; additional information sometimes includes attested inflected forms, brief example phrases or clauses, and reference to the relevant section of the grammatical description in which discussion can be found. One perhaps useful feature of the work is that cited words and larger units are sourced by informant when not supported by independent evidence from other speakers. Unfortunately, no sample texts are provided for any language.

According to Terrill (1998:1), Biri, Wiri, and Gangulu are in a dialectal relationship with one another. As regards Holmer's work on these languages, Angela Terrill remarks that his phonological analysis was unusual in that he denied the existence of a distinct interdental series, which is clearly present in the languages (Terrill 1998:5–6). She also comments that his morphological analysis differs somewhat from that of another source on the languages, Beale (1974) (not cited in Holmer's reference list), although she does not discuss details of the differences.

Available information on the Gangulu dialect is quite meagre, especially the morphology (Terrill 1998:78). Holmer's records are amongst the most extensive, but unfortunately, Terrill cautions, due to the poor reliability of his studies of the other dialects, one cannot be certain how reliable his work on Gangulu is, especially since little supporting data is provided in Holmer (1983). Holmer suggests that there are two Gangulu dialects, A and B, though he does not substantiate the claim, or give a systematic description of the differences. He identifies five nominal cases, comitative, privative (two affixes), ergative, locative, and allative, which Terrill (1998:82) suggests is more likely to be a dative.

Holmer (1988) provides basic grammatical information on ten or so more Queensland languages not covered in the 1983 book: Meryam Mir; Saibai; Kuku Puyun (Gugu-Bujun), a dialect of Kuku Yalanji;²⁶ Kaanju; Kuku Yalanji (Koko-Yalandji); Guugu Yimidhirr; Yukulta (Gangulida); Bundjil; Waanyi; Garrwa; Bundhamara (Punthamara); and Galali. The eight chapters of this book, which range from five to about thirty pages, provide brief information on the location and provenance of the languages, the informants, phonology, and basic morphology. Each chapter also contains an alphabetically-organised word and morpheme list that specifies the part-of-speech category; a gloss; where relevant reference to a section of the grammatical sketch; and sometimes examples of usage. Various morphological forms of some words are given, sometimes under different headwords, sometimes under a single headword. Perhaps the lists represent the entirety of Holmer's lexical corpora, though this is not stated.

In her review of Holmer (1988), Luise Hercus (1991) is overall quite unimpressed, evaluating the book effectively as 'fieldnotes' that have not been checked against any other information available on the languages. The book, she says, 'is written as if in a vacuum', completely ignoring not only detailed investigations of the languages covered subsequent to Holmer's investigations of the early 1970s, but even Capell 1956! On a more positive note, she remarks that the sections on Bundhamara and Galali are more complete, that one 'can see some of Holmer's perspicacity as a linguist', and that Holmer's materials on these languages remain useful despite subsequent work.

Her conclusion is that 'It remains nevertheless open to doubt whether there is justification for an uncritical edition of any scholar's fieldnotes' (p. 180). Ultimately, this is at least as

26 We thank Peter Sutton for putting us straight on the identity of this language.

much a reflection on the publication policy of Pacific Linguistics at the time as it is on Holmer as an author. All of Holmer's later works would have benefited from serious editing and the inclusion of extensive commentary. The inclusion of facsimiles of his fieldnotes might have made them even more useful as historical documents.

Holmer remarks that during his 1970–1973 fieldtrip he went to Tully on the advice of Biri informants, who reported 'a language of the same type in the North-East along the coastline between Townsville and Cairns'. This turned out not to be the case, though Holmer did collect data on the languages he found, and presented it in Holmer (1989). These languages he refers to as follows (p.135): 'Murray Upper (*mariaba*); Tully (*gulɣaj*, *gurɣaj*, etc.). Also: *ɣumaj*, *ɣurmaj*, *muɣaj* (Tully; at Davidson); *d'irbal* (at Murray Upper); *giramaj* (at Cardwell).' In fact these are all dialects of Dyirbal (see below). In addition to the introduction listing the dialects and the main informants, the article is divided into sections on phonology and morphology; it also includes a vocabulary, which takes two thirds of the roughly thirty pages of the article. There is no bibliography (the article does not contain a single reference!). In the brief section on phonology, the phonemes are listed (three vowels and thirteen consonants), and a couple of phonetic processes are described. In the section on morphology, Holmer treats nominal derivation, declension, articles, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative-indefinite pronouns, verbal stems and derivation, as well as conjugation. In the vocabulary, the entries contain some morphological information, translations for lexical items and references to sections in the text for grammatical morphemes, examples in some cases, and often initials of informants.

Like many of Holmer's later publications on Australian languages, Holmer (1989) is sketchy and lacks in analytical depth. In a discussion note, Dixon (1992) criticises the article for not being very reliable and for completely ignoring previous work; in the same note he addresses a similar critique to Holmer (1983) and Holmer (1988). Despite the fact that Dixon's grammar of Dyirbal (Dixon 1972) was published 17 years before Holmer's article, Holmer does not mention it or any other work on the language. Holmer does not refer to 'the Tully dialects' as Dyirbal (though one of his dialects is called *d'irbal*). According to Dixon, the article was included as a chapter in the manuscript submitted to Pacific Linguistics which appeared as Holmer (1988). The chapter had been omitted then because it had many errors and contained nothing new to what had already been published on Dyirbal.²⁷ Nevertheless, Holmer published it as a separate paper the next year. Dixon points out some shortcomings in Holmer's analysis, and notes that the forms and meanings of words are often given erroneously. Dixon's critique seems fully justified. Dixon could, however, have indicated some places where Holmer does not go wrong, especially since he only takes up a couple of points in Holmer's analysis, and since few readers of *Studia Linguistica* are experts on Dyirbal.

5.3 Semantics

Semantics played an important role in Nils Holmer's thought, and in 1966 he published *Oceanic semantics (a study in the framing of concepts in the native languages of Australia and Oceania)* (Holmer 1966c). This is a study in comparative semantics, geographically encompassing the whole of Oceania (including Australia) as well as insular south east Asia, and including Austronesian, Papuan and Australian languages. Holmer's interest in comparative semantics can be traced as far back as the 1920s when he translated Turgenev's *Fathers and sons* (A. Holmer 1994). The difficulties he encountered in trying to find appropriate terms led him to a conclusion that permeated his subsequent work: 'The difference between speakers of

27 R.M.W. Dixon had been involved in this decision, being a referee for this chapter.

different languages is not only how they say things; it is also what they say.' (A. Holmer 1994:115). Holmer was thus from early on interested in how meaning categories differ across languages. This also hinges on what Holmer calls 'metasyntax' (see §5.1 above). In the introduction, Holmer introduces the term *semanteme*, but does not apply it in the actual analyses, and the approach is not explicitly that of structural semantics, which was strong at the time. The substance of the book is divided into three sections: *Morphological concepts and categories*, *Lexical concepts*, and *Phraseological points*, each of which is treated in turn below.

The first part, *Morphological concepts and categories*, discusses the semantics of grammatical categories, i.e. grammatical meaning, although mainly concentrating on the categories expressed morphologically. In the introduction Holmer notes that (linguistic) semantics is usually mostly concerned with the lexicon, but reminds the reader that the morphological concepts expressed by a language should receive equal attention. In this section Holmer treats various grammatical meanings, only some of which will be discussed here. As in Holmer (1963b) (see above), nouns and verbs are again stated to be poorly distinguished, this time in the whole of Oceania. Another surprising claim is that the notion of time is not a prominent feature of Australian languages, and TAM inflection is primarily aspectual rather than temporal. (Australian languages are said to show an analogy with older Indo-European languages, which thus share this feature attributed to primitive languages by Holmer, see below.) More significant is the observation that TAM inflections have a nominal origin.

Holmer observes, not entirely correctly, that neither Australian nor Austronesian languages use regular plural noun inflection; i.e. nouns are unspecified for number. The elaborate personal pronoun and demonstrative systems are also discussed, and it is noted that personal inflection is rudimentary. It is stated that case inflection is entirely local, that there is nothing corresponding to the three important non-local cases (nominative, genitive, accusative) of Indo-European and Semitic languages. (But see below on the existence of an agentive (ergative) and accusative case in various Australian languages.) A hint of the accusative system is, Holmer admits, found in pronouns in some Australian languages: 'Some Australian languages do have a case form corresponding to the Latin accusative in certain cases, but it is used in a rather limited way (possibly of persons only).' (p.67, note 24). The question of whether passive constructions exist is addressed, but antipassives are ignored. The non-distinction between indefinites and interrogatives is seen as a peculiarity, though from a modern typological perspective this is hardly surprising (see e.g. Mushin 1995; Haspelmath 1997).

At this point one wonders why Holmer uses Indo-European languages almost exclusively as his *tertium comparationis*. This is surprising given his expertise in a wide variety of languages, including Native American ones. The discussion of relative clauses and comparatives is also marred by an Indo-European perspective. Since the functions are not expressed morphologically, the categories do not exist for Holmer. He does discuss functional equivalents, but concludes that they are not really comparatives or relatives. As shown by Stassen (1985), the Standard Average European comparative construction is 'exotic'. Holmer is aware of its rarity. He does discuss functional equivalents, but concludes, in contrast to today's functionalist views, that these constructions are not really comparatives.

The second part, *Lexical concepts*, turns to lexical semantics. In this section Holmer discusses some lexical concepts and their uses and associations in the languages of Oceania. The idea behind the comparison is that 'certain associations of ideas are more direct and immediate in certain languages or linguistic areas and more indirect and more vaguely felt in some others' (Holmer 1966c:31). The difficulties of a systematic study of lexical meanings is acknowledged, and it is stated that the emphasis is on the facts discovered more than on defining a group of languages. In discussing the concept 'eye', Holmer makes the dubious remark

that in modern European languages its uses are mostly anatomical, but that more ‘primitive’ peoples extend its use to denote different non-anatomical concepts such as ‘sun’, ‘water hole’, etc. (see e.g. Austin, Ellis and Hercus 1976). The same ideas surface in the discussion of many other concepts, e.g. ‘arm’. In modern cognitive terms we would talk about metaphorical and metonymic uses, but in Holmer’s times these terms were not part of the linguist’s basic tool kit, though they were firmly entrenched in traditions of rhetoric and literary studies. Instead, Holmer uses the term ‘derived concept’ to refer to these extended uses, but notes that for the speakers these are single concepts.

From today’s perspective, equipped with the notion of embodiment, we would take the concrete anatomical uses as primary, at least diachronically. There is no discussion of diachrony, although the term ‘derived’ implies some kind of ordering between the different uses. In the discussion of ‘body’, it is noted that this concept also covers some aspects of the concept of ‘self’. These aspects could have been discussed in the section on grammatical meanings where similar meanings were taken up; seen from the modern perspective, this is interesting, since we now know more about the role of terms like ‘body’ in reflexive constructions. Kinship terminologies are discussed, and it is noted that they are not based on genealogy as in Europe, but rather on proximity. In connection with time and space, it is again noted that they are not differentiated as in Indo-European languages, and that there is no abstract term for time in Australian languages; time thus means little to the Aborigines. There is discussion of ideas that are distinguished in Europe but not in Australia, e.g. ‘do/make’ vs. ‘say’, ‘hear’ vs. ‘think’, but no mention of concepts distinguished in Australia but not in Europe. In general, the section on lexical concepts is little better than the one on grammatical meanings, but is less outdated, due largely to the fact that grammatical categories and their meanings have received a lot of attention in comparative and typological studies, while lexical typology still is in its infancy.

The third part, *Phraseological points*, concerns syntax. It treats issues such as auxiliary constructions, negation, possession, and connectives. In this section semantics moves somewhat to the background, and formal aspects gain ground. Negators are stated to be lexical items rather than unanalysable grammatical morphemes, but at least for the examples given from Australian languages, the etymologies cannot be shown. The connection of negation and irrealis, so common in Australian languages (see Miestamo 2005:192), is not mentioned. Holmer notes the absence of the verb ‘to have’—which is only partly true—and says the situation is ‘more or less as in Gaelic, Finnish or Russian still today’. Interestingly, in Holmer (1963b:76) we find that the absence of such a verb is a typical property of ‘primitive’ languages; see Stassen (2005) for the world-wide distribution of the different types of predicative possession. Somewhat daring is the claim about the connective *ka* being one of the most widely used particles in the world, especially well represented in America and Oceania, having a similar semantic range in all parts where it occurs. Some problems of understanding and translation are addressed in the end of the section, and here we come back to the original motivations of Holmer’s interest in semantics and language use. Separating ‘phraseology’ and morphological concepts is not a very good solution, and the organisation of the book would have been better with only two sections, *Grammatical concepts*, and *Lexical concepts*. Some topics would then have found their place more naturally.

One question to be addressed is whether Oceania constitutes a linguistic area in terms of semantics. After all, Holmer is engaged in a kind of areal semantics in this study, and briefly speculates on the role of language contacts.²⁸ Holmer finds many similarities (and few differ-

28 But recall that, as noted above, at least as far as lexical concepts are concerned, Holmer’s goals are in establishing facts rather than in defining a linguistic area.

ences) between Australia and the rest of Oceania (in practice Austronesian languages), especially as compared to European languages. But given Holmer's biased *tertium comparationis*, no conclusions can be drawn. Maybe the European languages are the 'exotic' ones, rather than Oceania forming a unified whole. As we know today, for many of the points discussed, this is indeed the case. This is further supported by the existence of similarities between Native American languages and languages of Oceania.

For Holmer, the similarities between the languages of Oceania and the Americas are evidence of their being remote marginal areas in linguistic evolution. Prehistoric contacts are mentioned as a possible source for the similarities (more space is devoted to this question in Holmer 1963b; see §5.1). The evolutionary perspective resurfaces at many points in the book. Holmer argues that no language is primitive in the sense that it be less effective as a tool of communication; rather languages are just different. Yet, despite his warnings against the use of the term 'primitive' (Holmer 1963b; see §5.1), Holmer uses it all too readily—as already seen, many properties found in Oceania are typical of 'primitive' languages for Holmer.

At some points Holmer shows Whorfian aspects in his thinking (albeit without reference to Whorf). For example in connection with cause and effect (p. 29) he doubts whether speakers can grasp the difference between English 'if' and 'after', as these are not distinguished in Oceania. In the conclusion to the book, Holmer dwells briefly on the idea that the conceptual structure of a language affects the myths and beliefs of the speakers.

As is evident from the preceding discussion, the role of Indo-European languages as the *tertium comparationis* is strong; thus the perspective is not typological in the modern sense. This is surprising, given Holmer's expertise in languages from diverse parts of the world, and renders the comparative semantic approach somewhat less interesting.

As to the languages dealt with, Austronesian and Australian languages are—understandably—much better represented than Papuan ones, and often the generalisations concerning Australian languages are based on the languages that Holmer has first-hand knowledge of, viz. Kutthung and Dungutti. Compared to the brief chapter on semantics in Holmer (1963b), written before Holmer had done any fieldwork in Australia, the database for Australian languages is better in the sense that he now has direct contact with the data. But it is also more biased.

6. Conclusion

Overall, reviews of Nils Holmer's descriptions of Australian languages were not wildly enthusiastic; indeed, they have sometimes bordered on the negative. Holmer's descriptions certainly do suffer from being brief—often skimpy—sketches lacking in analytical depth, as observed by reviewers. His work on Australian languages began at the cusp of the modern period of investigations, in the early 1960s (see McGregor, this volume). Within the Australianist tradition, his published research would seem to be not atypical of those times—it is not noticeably worse than the majority of grammatical sketches of the 1950s and early 1960s—as acknowledged even by negative reviewers such as Richard See. In terms of quality, it seems consistent with Holmer's earlier work on Amerindian languages. One criticism is that there is little evidence of development in the descriptions over the years. Holmer did not move with the times or keep up with the significant improvements in the quality of descriptive grammars of Australian languages that began in the 1960s and intensified in the 1970s.

Holmer's publications are not very user-friendly, reducing their documentary value. His grammatical descriptions suffer from an almost exclusively prose layout: tabulations and

graphic displays such as maps are rare, and examples are almost always embedded in the text without morpheme-by-morpheme glosses. This not only reduces their usefulness, but also imposes a heavy burden on the reader. On the other hand, the descriptions are not marred by dated theoretical approaches unimaginatively applied, accompanied by opaque symbolisation—a criticism that can be levelled at some descriptions from the same period, (e.g. O’Grady 1964; Coate and Oates 1970; Glass and Hackett 1970).

From today’s perspective, the main significance of Holmer’s work in Australia is in providing documentation for endangered languages, especially Dungutti and Kutthung,²⁹ but also some Queensland languages. We have seen that this documentation is not always as reliable as portrayed by Hovdhaugen *et al.* (2000:476) (see §2 above), particularly his late work. But this advises caution in using his corpora, rather than ignoring them.

Unlike the majority of his earlier publications, Holmer’s last works all took a considerable time to appear; and when they did appear, they did so in almost unedited form. This raises concerns about appropriate modes of dissemination of materials gathered during fieldwork on poorly documented and moribund languages, and in what form. To return to Luise Hercus’ criticism of Holmer (1988), is it better to have relatively easily available compilations of a scholar’s fieldnotes on such languages, even if uncritical, than for it to remain relatively inaccessible? Nils Holmer believed so. These days, electronic media offer an alternative way of facilitating access to relatively undoctored fieldnotes while acknowledging the substance of Hercus’ observation.

Finally, the general works (Holmer 1963b, 1966b), though now outdated, were significant for their times, and especially the former deserves to have been better known. Some of Holmer’s typological ideas also deserve to be more widely appreciated.

Appendix: Bibliography of Nils Holmer’s publications relevant to Australian languages

As the following bibliography reveals, Holmer’s list of publications on Australian languages is exceptional in the sense that he starts from the general works and ends with what are effectively fieldnotes, the mirror image of what one would normally do.

Holmer, Nils Magnus, 1963, *On the history and structure of the Australian languages*. Uppsala: Lundequist.

1966, *Oceanic semantics: a study in the framing of concepts in the native languages of Australia and Oceania*. Uppsala: Lundequist.

1966, *An attempt towards a comparative grammar of two Australian languages*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

1967, *An attempt towards a comparative grammar of two Australian languages. Part II: Indices and vocabulary of Kattang and Thangatti*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

1970, Traces of Australian-Amerindian morpheme categories in East Asia. In Stephen A. Wurm and Donald C. Laycock, eds, *Pacific Linguistic studies in honour of Arthur Capell*, 67–74. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

29 Recent events bear out this observation. It has been brought to our attention by Harold Koch (pers.comm., 22 March 2007) that a revised version of the Kattang texts in Holmer and Holmer (1969) was produced by Amanda Lissarrague in 2005 for the Many Rivers Aboriginal Language Centre, for the Kattang community. The texts are reproduced in the modern orthography, and morpheme divisions and glosses are added.

- 1971, *Notes on the Bandjalang dialect spoken at Coraki and Bungawalbin Creek, N.S.W.* Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.
- 1983, *Linguistic survey of south-eastern Queensland.* Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
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- 1992, Comparative notes on two Torres Strait languages. In Giancarlo Bolognesi and Ciro Santoro, eds, *Studi di linguistica e filologia. Volume 2: Charisteria Victori Pisani oblata.* Galatina: Congedo Editore.³⁰
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³⁰ Despite intensive searches of bibliographies, we have been unable to locate complete bibliographical information on some of Nils Holmer's publications. Here and in the *References* below we provide such details as we have been able to locate.

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- 1947c, On the origin of the Celtic preterit in -ss. *Language* 23:419–420.
- 1947d, Postvocalic s in Insular Celtic. *Language* 23:125–136.
- 1948a, *Indian place names in North America*. Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln.
- 1948b, Old Irish -icc, -ucci. *Language* 24:262–266.
- 1949, Lexical and morphological contacts between Siouan and Algonquian. *Lunds Universitets Årsskrift. N. F. Avd; 1* 45:3–36. Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup.

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9 *Norman B. Tindale and the Pitjantjatjara language*

PAUL MONAGHAN¹

All who have had to examine the accounts of new languages, or families of languages, published by missionaries or travellers, are aware how not only their theories, but their facts, have to be sifted, before they can be allowed to occupy even a temporary place in our handbooks, or before we should feel justified in rectifying accordingly the frontiers on the great map of the languages of mankind. (Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 1885 [1864])

1. Introduction

This paper examines the work of Norman B. Tindale (1900–1993) on Pitjantjatjara,² one of the major languages of Central Australia and contiguous regions. Tindale’s linguistic activities spanned a period of over 70 years, and were variously performed as an employee of the South Australian Museum, as a member of the University of Adelaide’s Board for Anthropological Research, and in his retirement. Much of his work is still poorly appreciated.

From the earliest days of his ethnological fieldwork, Tindale actively engaged in the collection of vocabularies. A significant result of his first major fieldwork in the Northern Territory in 1921–1922 was ‘a mass of vocabularies, comprising some 6,000 words in 9 languages’ (Tindale 1926). At the other end of the chronological scale, one of Tindale’s final projects was the production of a gazetteer of Aboriginal place names for the South East of South Australia (SE of SA), drawing heavily on original research during the 1930s. This project, funded by the Geographic Names Board of the South Australian Government, was incomplete at the time of Tindale’s death. Between these projects, and leaving his work with Pitjantjatjara and related speech varieties to one side, the following list provides an indication of the scope of his linguistic activities and interests:

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- 1 This paper is based on a chapter of my PhD thesis (Monaghan 2003), so I would like to acknowledge a debt to my supervisor Peter Mühlhäusler. I must also thank Petter Naessan and Jonathan Nicholls for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
 - 2 In this paper, the spelling of the names of the closely related speech varieties of the Western Desert language, *Pitjantjatjara*, *Yankunytjatjara*, and *Antikirinya*, generally follows Goddard (1996). Tindale most often writes: *Pitjandjara*, *Jangkundjara*, and *Antakirinja*, although his spellings vary in different contexts. Where Tindale’s spellings appear in the main text, they are given within scare quotes.

William B. McGregor, ed. *Encountering Aboriginal languages: studies in the history of Australian linguistics*, 251–272. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 2008.

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- Collected first hand and through correspondents: vocabularies, songs, and stories for languages in the SE of SA region (which, for Tindale, covered the area from the lower Flinders Ranges south and east to the New South Wales and Victorian borders).
- Played a role in the development of the Adelaide University Phonetic System for Australian languages (Tindale 1935).
- Created index card files containing thousands of vocabulary cards for use in mapping the distributional patterns of cultural and natural phenomena across Australia.
- Collected 110 parallel vocabularies during the Harvard and Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition 1938–1939, which covered the eastern and southern regions of Australia (Tindale 1938–1939). Tindale sought equivalents of approximately 170 English words in Aboriginal languages.
- Collected a further 30 parallel vocabularies during the University of California at Los Angeles and Adelaide University’s Anthropological Expedition to North West Australia during 1952–1954. (See Tindale 1938–1963 for these and the above parallel vocabularies.)
- Began grammatical sketches (based on elicited sentences) of languages such as Tanjane (SA), Tjapukai (Qld) and Wanjiwalku (NSW).
- More generally, collected a large corpus of texts from across Australia recording place-names, including songs, stories and crayon drawings of country.

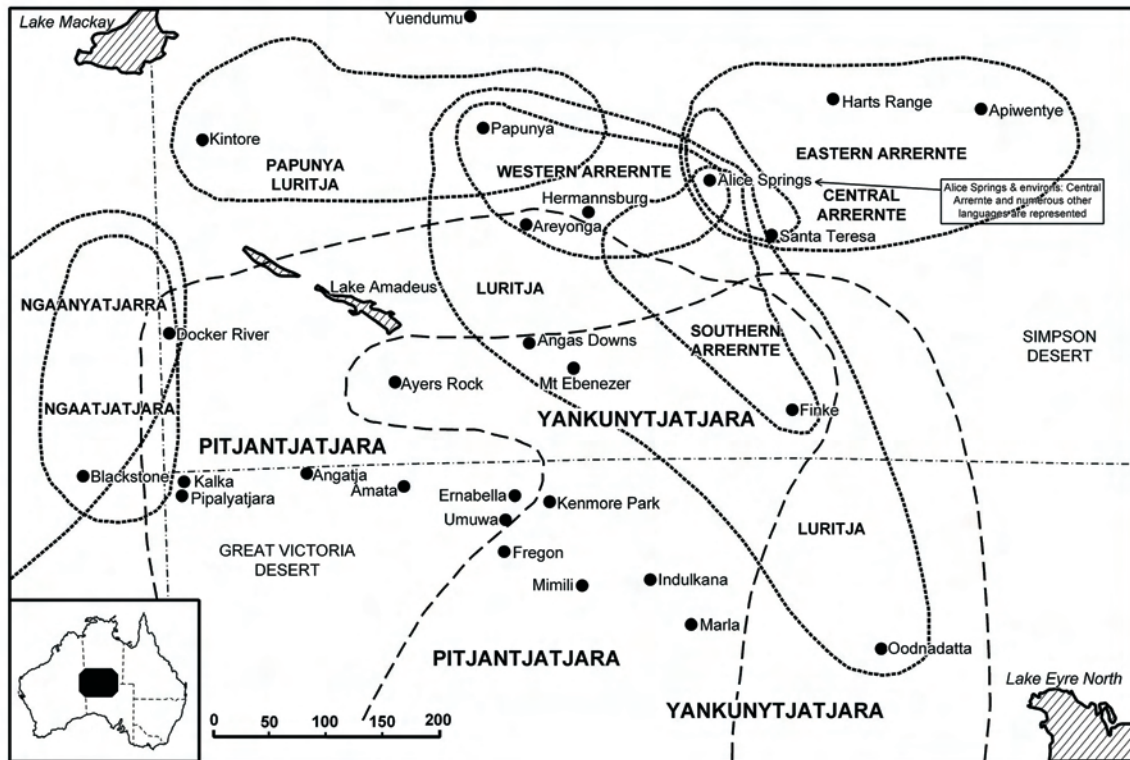
Tindale bequeathed much of his manuscript collection to the South Australian Museum (SAM). Research is currently underway by the present author in surveying and describing the linguistic contents of the Tindale collection at the SAM. This work will appear on the SAM’s Norman B. Tindale website,³ which is being developed primarily as a tool for Native title researchers. It is planned that as this work progresses, and a fuller picture of Tindale’s linguistic activities and products emerges, a detailed guide will be written.

Without doubt, Tindale is most widely known for his classic *Aboriginal tribes of Australia: their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits, and proper names*, and the accompanying tribal distribution map (Tindale 1974). Although this work has controversial aspects, most notably its definition of ‘tribe’,⁴ its representations of Aboriginal Australia still play an influential role in contemporary contexts such as those relating to Native title. Nicolas Peterson remarked in the 1970s that ‘there can be no Australianist who has not consulted the tribal map to localise a group of people’ (1976:10), and this comment rings equally true today. In a word, *Aboriginal tribes* is the culmination of decades of research in which Tindale attempted to establish the existence and accurate location of discrete tribes and tribal territories at the time of first contact. Essentially, it is a much expanded and revised version of an earlier work (Tindale 1940), which has been significant from a linguistic perspective for its role as a key resource for those producing linguistic surveys in Australia.⁵ Apart from *Aboriginal tribes*, and the linguistic endeavours outlined above, during his amazingly productive working life, Tindale also produced a large body of scientific data in the fields of ethnology, archaeology, geology, and entomology (summarised by Jones 1995).

3 <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au> and follow the links through ‘Archives’ to the collections page.

4 In Tindale’s major work, definitions of ‘tribe’ are offered in a number of places (1974:30–33, 115–117). Basic linguistic criteria include a distinct name and a distinct language or dialect.

5 The major surveys of Capell (1963), O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966), and Oates and Oates (1970), as well as the classificatory map produced by O’Grady, Wurm and Hale (1966), all rely in significant ways on Tindale’s 1940 map and catalogue of tribes, and reproduce aspects of it.



Map 9.1: ‘Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara and neighbouring dialects (approximate current distribution, after Hobson 1990)’ (cited in Goddard 1996:viii)

Tindale’s research on Pitjantjatjara occurred principally during the early 1930s. In many ways, the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara, the Language of the Natives of the Great Western Desert (with some words of the Pintubi, Ngalia, Kukatja, ŋa:dadjara, Wirongu, ŋaŋatadjara, Aranda, Janjundjadjara [sic] & Wordaka languages)* (Tindale 1937) represents the high point in his linguistic endeavours during this period. Described by one observer as ‘the first detailed vocabulary of the Pitjantjatjara language’ (Jones 1995:165), it certainly holds a significant place in the historical linguistic record of South and Central Australia. Upon considering the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* more closely, however, it soon becomes apparent that the manuscript poses a number of interpretational difficulties.⁶ Most notably, there are many references to dialects described by cardinal direction terms, such as: N dialect, NE dialect, E dialect, W dialect and SW. Without having recourse to the manuscript materials that led to the vocabulary’s construction, one would naturally assume that the many entries identified with particular dialects and listed as ‘P.’ relate to dialects of the Pitjantjatjara language. Such a reading, however, could well lead one into error. Unfortunately, Tindale fails to indicate clearly the criteria upon which such dialectal distinctions were made. Another ambiguous feature of the vocabulary is the near total absence of ‘Jangkundjadjara’ entries (less than 1% of the total headwords, see Table 9.1 below), a curious fact given the amount of research conducted by Tindale with Yankunytjatjara speakers, including his use of Yankunytjatjara-speaking interpreters while recording many of the words (see Map 9.1 for a recent account of the approximate distribution of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara speakers).

⁶ Only six copies of this manuscript were produced: two copies were lodged at the Barr Smith Library, one at the State Library of South Australia; one remained at the museum, one was provided to J.R.B Love and the other remained with Tindale (SAM AA 338/7/2/3). The copy discussed in this paper is lodged at the Barr Smith.

Tindale's public comments on his vocabulary-collecting activities are few. We know that vocabularies were collected for the purpose of tribal identification (1963:358) or validation (1974:45). Evidence for this is found in his parallel vocabularies collected during the Harvard and Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, 1938–1939 (Tindale 1938–1939). Yet, one may well ask, what is the status of the Pitjantjatjara work: was this too intended primarily for tribal identification or validation, or for some other purpose?

Of course, the question of interpretation is of more than strictly academic interest: in the current era of Native title, the shape and the contents of the historical linguistic record often becomes a matter of great importance. The common practice of taking decontextualised language records at face value becomes highly problematic.⁷ Other written representations may also prove problematic—an apposite example is the role of Tindale's 'Pitjandjara', 'Jangkundjara' and 'Antakirinja' tribal representations in the De Rose Hill (SA) Native title claim 1994–2006, where they contributed to an early point of dispute over the identity of the correct people to claim Native title (see Monaghan 2003; Map 9.2 reproduces Tindale's 1940 account of 'Pitjandjara', 'Jangkundjara' and 'Antakirinja' tribal distribution).

The primary aim of this paper, then, is to provide an account of Tindale's linguistic work on Pitjantjatjara and to illuminate the relationship between these linguistic activities and his representations of discrete tribal territories in the north-west of South Australia. In so doing,



Map 9.2: Section of Tindale's 1940 map of Australian tribal distribution

7 It is worth noting that the lack of historical evidence (or gaps in the historical record) has been used against claimants in Native title contexts—the Yorta Yorta Native title case provides a strong example of this. Heather Bowe points out that the expert linguist retained by the NSW Government, Bruce Sommer, in his initial report to the court 'focussed on the incompleteness of the language record as evidence of language death or morbidity' (2002:105).



Plate 9.1: Norman B. Tindale after the Mann Range Expedition, July 1933.
Photograph courtesy of the South Australian Museum.

some of his major influences and the contexts within which he worked will be sketched. By shedding light on these influences and contexts, it is hoped that a contribution will be made towards clearing up some of the interpretational problems surrounding aspects of Tindale's work, and at the same time suggest a way his materials may be better approached.

2. Tindale's linguistic influences

For many of the research scientists of the 1920s and 1930s, and indeed for much of society at large, Aborigines were seen as belonging to either one of two types—pure (living in their 'natural' state) or corrupted (through colonial contact).⁸ It would be difficult indeed to overestimate the influence of the discourse of purity and corruption, and the associated notion of racial decline through contact, on the thinking of the day. In South Australia, their effects can be seen perhaps most palpably in the setting up of the North West Aboriginal Reserve in 1921 (Mattingley and Hampton 1998:80), but they also appear in other aspects of Aboriginal administration (see, for example, Herbert Basedow's reports (1920, 1921a, 1921b) on his medical relief expeditions).

The discourse of purity and corruption can readily be detected in the work of the University of Adelaide's Board for Anthropological Research (BAR). Founded in 1926, the BAR conducted annual expeditions to remote locations, mainly in South and Central Australia, and was particularly concerned with blood-group analysis and the question of Aboriginal ecological adaptation.⁹ The early results of blood-group analysis were seen to provide strong sup-

8 The genesis of these notions in Australia can of course be traced back to the nineteenth century (see McGregor 1997).

9 For a more detailed history of the BAR and a discussion of these foci see Jones (1987, especially pp.77–79) and Anderson (2002:199–204).

port for the notion of a ‘pure Australian race’. Hence a desire for subjects who were seen to be ‘uncontaminated full-bloods’ directed the course of research to a large extent, influencing choices of location and people studied. In this way, certain groups were privileged over others and are thus better represented from a linguistic point of view in the historical record. As a general observation, it should be noted that in almost all the BAR research conducted during the 1930s, the taking of blood samples and physical measurements went hand in hand with the collection of vocabularies and other linguistic material, such as oral texts and crayon drawings on paper (upon which placenames were often recorded).

On considering the vocabularies collected by Tindale in the north-west of South Australia and contiguous areas while a BAR member, a concern for adaptation is revealed in a number of ways, such as a relatively high proportion of recordings of indigenous names for plants and other food sources, and a relatively high proportion of placenames. In the former case, the published results of the Warburton Range expedition of 1935 reveal that ‘the ethnologist [Tindale] recorded 595 words of a vocabulary of Ngada (ŋa:da), and during a survey of the food resources of the people obtained the native names of some 80 species of plants’ (Tindale 1935–1936:484).¹⁰ These words appear as ‘ŋa:dadjara’ in Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (1937). As for placenames, Tindale hoped that a sufficiently detailed study of placenames, along with other environmental constraints, would help to determine (and explain) the exact location of tribal boundaries, and thus tribal populations (see Monaghan 2003, chapter 2).

An inspection of Tindale’s field journals and related materials provides much support for the view that the concept of racial purity played a role in his thinking during the 1920s and 1930s. These include specific references to ‘uncontaminated natives’ (for example, Tindale 1922–1929:344), as well as numerous uses of ‘half-caste’ and related terminology. An illuminating example appears in a report of an encounter with a group from the North West Reserve in 1933. Tindale writes:

We have been very pleased with the help given us by the present group of natives whose home is the Western Mann Range & Tompkins & the sandhills to north & south. The naturalness of the womenfolk, their absence of mock modesty & their freedom of behaviour and of speech is very different from that of the natives near Ernabella. The group has had very little contact with Europeans; there are no halfcastes nor have there ever been any, so far as I can learn. (Tindale 1933a:467–469)

Clearly these people fit readily into the ‘uncontaminated’ category, and for Tindale and others of the BAR at this point in time they would have been suitable subjects for study.

The BAR’s major interest in researching the question of their subjects’ physical adaptation to their particular environments also appears to flow through to Tindale’s manuscript materials. This is most notable in his vocabularies (see below) and in his tribal distribution research that culminated in the maps of 1940 and 1974 (see Monaghan 2003, chapter 2). Apart from these examples, it is also possible to find an occasional comment in his field journals that appears to reflect the wider ‘genetic versus adaptation’ debate then current in anthropology; consider, for instance, Tindale’s musing when a number of ‘half-caste’ and ‘quarter-caste’ Afghan children come to his attention that they are ‘probably a very suitable strain for our desert conditions’ (1932:20).

¹⁰ A similar proportion of plant names was recorded by Tindale at Ooldea in the previous year (see Tindale 1934:248–269). Tindale later published an article on plants collected in the Mann and Musgrave Ranges in 1933 (Tindale 1941).

3. The Adelaide circle

In the early 1930s, there were a number of scholars and interested amateurs who, like Tindale, were actively engaged in linguistic work on Aboriginal languages, and who had links either directly or indirectly to the University of Adelaide. For the sake of convenience, I refer to this group as the ‘Adelaide circle’ (although in using this term it is not suggested that this group was formalised to the extent that those involved referred to themselves by this or any similar term). In the following discussion I draw attention to the types of linguistic activities pursued by the circle, primarily to suggest a range of likely influences flowing through to Tindale’s practices.

The principal figure in the Adelaide circle was John A. FitzHerbert, a scholar with a background in classical languages. FitzHerbert arrived at Adelaide in 1928 to take up an appointment to the chair of Classics and Comparative Philology at the university, having completed his MA at Cambridge, and having spent time lecturing in Greek at Edinburgh University (*Advertiser* 16 April 1970:10). He soon became actively involved with the BAR, but his contribution and influence was much wider than this, as will be established below.

We are fortunate in having available some documentary material that affords valuable insights into some of the linguistic attitudes and activities of the Adelaide circle. I will begin with FitzHerbert and two of his students, James R.B. Love and Theodor G.H. Strehlow, both of whom were working in MA programmes in the early 1930s (on the Worrorra and Arrernte languages, respectively). From two sources—a letter from FitzHerbert to Love suggesting a course of linguistic research, and a summary of letters from Strehlow to FitzHerbert, reporting on work done and proposing future work—a picture of the type of linguistics practised under FitzHerbert’s guidance emerges. FitzHerbert stresses to Love the importance of a proper study of phonetics, pointing out the problems in the past caused by the lack of a consistent phonetic system, and also points out the need to ‘deduce laws’ for conjugating verbs (Latin examples are used to illustrate this point). But most revealing is the following passage:

I understand that you are collecting a vocabulary of the language: naturally it is desirable to make this as complete as possible. And it would be very valuable if you could collect also words of neighbouring languages (indicating to which language each word belongs). If you can systematize the grammatical structure and syntax of the sentence, that will be most valuable. It is desirable to have a large collection of texts in the language—sentences, and, if possible, complete stories, and poems or songs. (FitzHerbert n.d.)

Here we find evidence of FitzHerbert’s interest in comparative philology, displayed in part by his request for the collection of ‘words of neighbouring languages’, but also more generally by the focus on text-based analysis, a staple of philological (and traditional grammatical) work. The collection of vocabularies and texts was, of course, a recommended ethnological practice and a basic component of the BAR’s linguistic activities. While it is likely that the collection of vocabularies and texts was encouraged by FitzHerbert, there is little evidence to suggest that other BAR members (apart from Strehlow) attempted fuller grammatical descriptions as suggested in the above quoted passage.¹¹

I come now to the notion of a pure dialect or language, which, although implicit in FitzHerbert’s advice to Love, is more explicit in Strehlow’s work on Arrernte and neighbouring speech varieties. While FitzHerbert’s summaries of Strehlow’s work on Arrernte in 1932 also reveal a particular interest in phonetics, Strehlow’s work at the time focuses on the language/dialect issue, illustrated by his concern with measuring the proportion of shared West-

¹¹ At Ooldea, the Berndts (1942–1945) pursued a similar strategy. Their research, however, was not part of a BAR expedition, and the degree to which earlier BAR associations may have been influential on this work is a question that has not been pursued.

ern Desert and Arrernte vocabulary for ‘native plants and animals’.¹² The notion of a pure dialect in Strehlow’s research is also reflected in the following note made by FitzHerbert:

It was his intention ... to spend the summer months near Hermannsburg and Alice Springs; there are a number of old natives near there who have come from distant parts of the Aranda territory and still keep their *original dialect pure*. (FitzHerbert c.1932, emphasis added)¹³

When it is considered that Strehlow wrote of his intentions after working for the BAR during the Mt Liebig expedition of 1932, it is tempting to read this comment through the discourse of purity and corruption described above. Indeed, in other contexts Strehlow does appear to think in a linguistic version of this discourse (compare his comments on pidgin English, 1947:xviii-xx). Thus, it seems that Strehlow, like the BAR scientists, was eager to work with ‘uncorrupted’ groups.

Of course, the notion of a pure dialect or language has a long history in the Western linguistic and grammatical tradition. It is based upon what Roy Harris calls the ‘classical fallacy’, a view in which classical languages as ‘models of perfection’ are privileged over corrupt and impoverished vernaculars such as French and Italian (1980:128–129). Later, of course, the vernaculars themselves came to be seen as pure (national) languages.¹⁴ On the basis of this evidence at least, the notion of a pure dialect is based upon a myth. This myth rests upon the notion that within a particular region there exists linguistic homogeneity, ‘a uniform system to which all speakers within that particular geographical circumscription have equal access’ (Harris 1998:92). Apart from the theoretical criticisms offered by Harris (which deserve more attention than I am able to offer here), research in the Western Desert has shown that no such state of affairs can be found.¹⁵

When tracing Tindale’s relationship with FitzHerbert, as well as to the Adelaide circle in general, the best place to start is with Tindale’s acknowledgement to FitzHerbert as his teacher in linguistics (1974:ix). From the early 1930s, Tindale worked on a number of projects under FitzHerbert’s guidance (with the added collaboration of Charles Chewings, a geologist with pastoral holdings in the Northern Territory). These include the development of the Adelaide University Phonetic System (Tindale 1935) and the compilation of an Arrernte vocabulary. FitzHerbert also assisted Tindale with his recording and transcribing of songs from the SE of SA sung by Clarence Long in the 1930s, and appears to have provided advice on the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (Tindale 1937). Tindale also enjoyed some correspondence with Ronald Trudinger,¹⁶ assisting the latter by providing cataloguing cards for vocabulary collecting purposes, and discussing matters relating to phonetics (see Tindale 1957:308–311). Tindale also corresponded with Love, with Tindale providing Love with a copy of his

12 FitzHerbert writes: ‘he [Strehlow] mentioned the close relation between many Aranda and Kukatja names for native plants and animals: of 300 names of animals 56% were common to both languages; of 220 names of plants over 67% were common’ (FitzHerbert c.1932).

13 Although the evidence presented in this passage is slightly ambiguous to the extent that it rests upon a point of interpretation—are these Strehlow’s quoted words or FitzHerbert’s?—it seems more likely from the context and from other aspects of Strehlow’s work reported in the note that the interpretations presented here are reasonably attributed to Strehlow.

14 On the notion of the purity of the French language, see Seuren (1998:64).

15 I am referring here specifically to the work of Miller (1971) and Hansen (1984). It might be objected that these researchers worked in post-contact contexts, but even if this is conceded, the force of the argument along theoretical lines is not significantly diminished.

16 Ronald Trudinger was a missionary at Ernabella from the 1940s. He published a short grammar of Pitjantjara (Trudinger 1943).

Vocabulary of Pitjandjara (1937) and Love providing Tindale with a copy of his *Vocabulary of the Wirrtjapakandja tribe* (1938), compiled at Ernabella.

A number of valuable insights into the ‘pre-FitzHerbert’ period of Tindale’s linguistic development are provided by Karen Walter (1988). Among Tindale’s most significant early anthropological influences, Walter cites the fourth edition of *Notes and queries on anthropology* (Freire-Marreco and Myres 1912) and Malinowski’s *Natives of Mailu* (reprinted in Young 1988); importantly, both volumes contain passages relating to linguistic methods in the field. *Notes and queries* provides the researcher with a wealth of advice on the types of vocabulary a researcher in the field should attempt to record, all the while making sure of efforts to learn the language in question. The guide also stresses, among other things, the importance of recording texts to enable later linguistic analysis. For these purposes, a copy of the Royal Geographical Society orthographic system is provided. Malinowski’s own fieldwork was also heavily influenced by *Notes and queries* (see Young 1988:25). Of interest to this discussion are a number of preliminary comments made by Malinowski about language in which he stresses the value of learning and using an indigenous language, takes a dim view of pidgin English, and also appears to operate with notions of linguistic purity (in Young 1988:108–111). Also notable is the fact that Malinowski (like Tindale) does not draw a phonetic/phonemic distinction. Apart from these textual influences, Walter provides the further insight that Tindale also received training in phonetic transcription from Edward Stirling and J.M. Black, both significant figures in Adelaide’s scientific community (Walter 1988:52).

Despite the range of Tindale’s linguistic activities, however, it seems that he was not considered by the BAR to be a linguist as such. When the BAR put forward a proposal for a handbook entitled ‘Handbook on Aborigines of Southern and Central Australia’, Tindale was pencilled in to contribute to chapters on a range of matters, including: tribal distribution, social organisation, and ‘culture, contact, and decay’. Notably, the chapter on language was to be contributed by FitzHerbert (University of Adelaide Archives, BAR minutes, 30 January 1941). When this work was first proposed, Strehlow and Love were to collaborate with FitzHerbert in providing linguistic contributions (University of Adelaide Archives, BAR minutes, 28 November 1940).

With all of this contextual background information in mind, we can now turn to Tindale’s work on ‘the Pitjandjara language’.

4. Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*

When we consider Tindale’s work as a whole, it is clear that Pitjantjatjara held a special interest for him, as indicated by the many published articles and manuscripts produced during a period of over 40 years (beginning in the early 1930s) devoted to cultural aspects of the ‘Pitjandjara tribe’. Some indication of what this ‘special interest’ constitutes is provided by Tindale’s comments to Theodor G.H. Strehlow in 1933 during the planning of the forthcoming BAR expedition, expressing his desire to come into contact with the *real* (that is, ‘uncontaminated’) Western Desert people (Tindale 1933b). The relative ‘purity’ of the Western Desert people, as perceived by Tindale and others of the BAR, was an obvious drawcard. In a letter to F.P. Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation in the United States, to whom Tindale appealed for funds for proposed research in 1936, one finds this spelled out. Tindale writes of the ‘nomadic Australian aborigines’:

These people are considered to be the most primitive beings living on the earth to-day, and in only one area, the Western Desert, do they still maintain, unaltered, their Old Stone Age type of culture. (Tindale 1936)

Elsewhere in this letter, Tindale proposes a thorough research programme to be conducted over a 10-year period, during which time anthropometric, ethnological and linguistic work would proceed before it was too late. In light of this, it is hardly surprising that Tindale devoted so much of his time and effort to producing the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. On the one hand the vocabulary is a *product* of research, an end in itself (or a useful record for others), but on the other it is also an important tool *for* research. So, if the major focus of Tindale's research at the time was intended to be the Western Desert, as this evidence indicates, then a detailed vocabulary of Western Desert speech varieties would be of invaluable assistance, not only for the collection of data, but also for their subsequent analysis (for example, the translation of oral texts). This is particularly so if communication barriers Tindale encountered with his interpreters in 1933 are taken into account (see Monaghan 2003, chapter 3). It is perhaps in connection to this that Tindale began a grammatical analysis of Pitjantjatjara in 1934. This was certainly an ambitious venture for one with limited linguistic training, and while the results amount only to variations on a small number of short sentences with translations, and a number of case endings that appear as headwords in the vocabulary proper, we may be safe in drawing the tentative conclusion that these actions signal Tindale's intention to 'reduce the language to order'. Despite not having much to show for his own efforts, Tindale maintained an interest in grammatical aspects of Pitjantjatjara, as seen in his correspondence with Love and Trudinger (who, as missionaries living at Ernabella, were both better qualified and better positioned to pursue this work), and in the many annotations made by Tindale to a copy of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* held at the SAM.¹⁷ Finally, on the point of Tindale's special interest in 'Pitjandjara', we need look no further than the main title of the 1937 vocabulary itself, *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara, the Language of the Natives of the Great Western Desert*, in which Tindale's interest is illustrated by his foregrounding of the term.

Most of the words compiled in Tindale's *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* were collected during BAR expeditions to Mt Liebig (1932), the Mann and Musgrave Ranges (1933), and the Warburton Ranges (1935), as well as during a visit made by Tindale to Ooldea in 1934, which was not part of an official BAR anthropological 'expedition'. Apart from this, Tindale draws on the published material of Daisy Bates (1918), Richard Helms (1896), and an unlocated manuscript recorded by Anthony Bolam to supplement his own recordings.¹⁸ Primary sources include:

- an original notebook entitled 'Pitjandjara Vocabulary' Tindale (1933c), taken to the Mann and Musgrave Ranges in 1933, and containing over 800 words;

17 References to this work are found in the Ooldea journal (1934:193, 201), and examples of basic sentences with English translations are found in associated supplementary papers (SAM AA338/2/31–32) as well as in a small booklet glued into the version of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* located in the SAM archives. From these sources it seems that Tindale understood something of the pronoun system and morphological aspects of Western Desert speech varieties, but there is little evidence to suggest that his attempts at grammatical analysis had proceeded very far past this point in 1937. The two most likely influences on this aspect of Tindale's linguistic activities are FitzHerbert and *Notes and queries*, although owing to a lack of direct evidence it is not possible to give a definitive account of the priority of these influences. Note that the SAM archives version of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* contains many annotations made between the years 1938–1966.

18 Anthony Bolam was the stationmaster at Ooldea for a number of years in the early 1920s, before leaving for Kingoonya, another station along the East-West line, in 1925. He appears to have enjoyed cordial relations with Aboriginal people visiting the soak, and through these contacts gathered a body of ethnological and zoological observations, many of which appear in his popular book *The trans-Australian wonderland* (1927 [1923]), which enjoyed a number of reprints.

- a wordlist entitled ‘Vocabulary Ooldea 1934’, appearing in a field journal (Tindale 1934:248–269), and consisting of approximately 400 words; and
- a manuscript entitled *Vocabulary of West-Central Australian Languages, Pitjandjara, Pintubi, Ngalia, Kukatja* (Tindale 1935), which is a compilation of Tindale’s Western Desert vocabularies up to, but not including, the vocabulary collected during the 1935 BAR expedition to the Warburton Range.

As the full title of the manuscript suggests, the vocabulary consists of words from ten languages.¹⁹ In total, the 138 pages contain approximately 2,950 headwords arranged (rather loosely at times) in alphabetical order. A typical entry includes a headword, a gloss and an abbreviation designating the word to one of the ten languages (see Table 9.1). Tindale’s decision to order the words in this way—that is, without dividing them into separate language sections—suggests that he may have been interested in drawing comparisons between them (perhaps following similar advice to that given by FitzHerbert to Love). However, attempts to make comparisons are often hampered by Tindale’s lax approach to the ordering of headwords. The most significant causes of disorder are Tindale’s non-phonemicised spellings and inconsistent filing.

In his recording practice, Tindale did not phonemicise spellings. Allophonic variations in Western Desert speech varieties that are often heard as variations between voiced and unvoiced stops by English speakers, for example, are represented in the spellings. Thus, if Tindale heard [b], he wrote , if he heard [p], he wrote <p>, without attempting to standardise to a Western Desert phonemic value.²⁰ Thus, words often appear in the vocabulary in dual form: for instance, <kulpi> and <kulbi> ‘cave’. This practice can cause inconvenience for the contemporary reader. Most entries appear in the Adelaide University Phonetic System (AUPS). This includes words drawn from other sources, such as the ‘Wirongu’ (Wirangu) entries drawn from Bates (1918) and those drawn from Bolam. The entries drawn from Helms (1896) remain in their original form, but their filing varies according to the general pattern stated above: for example, <barka Helms> is filed between <parari> and <parna> (Tindale 1937:77).

The headwords are not evenly distributed among the ten languages, as the breakdown in Table 9.1 shows:

Table 9.1: Approximate distribution of headwords to language in Tindale (1937)

Language	Percentage (approx.)
Pitjandjara	47
ɲa:dadjara	20
Wirongu	11.5
Pintubi	7.5
Kukatja	4.5

19 The use of the term ‘language’ in the following discussion follows Tindale’s usage.

20 The extent to which Tindale was aware of the concept of a distinctive sound or phoneme is unclear, as his preference seems to have been to record sounds as he heard them. In 1940 Trudinger wrote to Tindale with a number of suggestions for resolving the type of variation discussed here (in Tindale 1957:309). In response Tindale wrote: ‘I found myself being convinced that there was a definite difference in the “tj” and “dj” of words such as “Pitjandjara”’ (Tindale 1957:311).

Language	Percentage (approx.)
Ngalia	1
Narjatadjara	less than 1
Wordaka	less than 1
Aranda	less than 1
Jangkundjadjara	less than 1
Other	less than 1
Unassigned	7.5

The most notable result of this breakdown is the contrast between the high percentage of ‘Pitjandjara’ words and the low percentage of ‘Jangkundjadjara’ words (one headword). The former percentage supports the ‘special interest’ notion discussed above, while the reason for the latter percentage is a question that will be pursued below. The headwords under ‘other’ are four in total: two words are attributed to the ‘Eucla tribe’, and one each to ‘Pitjini [?]’ and ‘Cuc. W.A.’, although neither of these last two terms appear in Tindale (1974), so their status is uncertain. The vast majority of the ‘unassigned’ words are those drawn from Helms (1896), who did not record language names for the relevant vocabularies.

As for the headwords themselves, there is a high percentage of placenames, reflecting Tindale’s interest in tribal boundary work, migrations, and *tjukurpa* (‘Dreaming’ stories). There is also a high percentage of terms relating to flora and fauna, body parts and geographical features, which, as mentioned above, were important categories for BAR work, and most of which are recommended for collection by *Notes and queries*. Additionally, many terms relate to aspects of secret/sacred ceremonial activities that do not, as one would expect for reasons of cultural restrictions, appear in contemporary dictionaries such as Goddard (1996). And finally, there are many *walytja* or ‘kinship’ terms, also reflective of the ethnological focus of Tindale’s investigations. Many of these latter terms were published in Elkin (1938–1940:334) from information provided by Tindale.

5. Language and dialect

Although ultimately listed as ‘P.’ (Pitjantjatjara), there are about 30 entries in the vocabulary that are distinguished as being dialectal variants along quasi-geographical lines: the most common designations being to eastern and western dialects, although other entries are listed as relating to north-east, north-west and south-west dialects. Much of the ambiguity of such terms arises through the relative aspect of these designations. Consider, for instance, the following entries:

- (i) murundu a carpet snake N.E. dialect P. (1937:56)
(ii) piti (S.W.) = tjurkur (E. & N.W.) totem P. (1937:83)

Leaving to one side the theoretical problems associated with the existence of discrete dialects, in order to make any sense of these directional designations we need to know the point of reference, which unfortunately Tindale does not provide. From which point(s) is the NE, SW, E, or NW dialect located? The problem is compounded by the fact that Tindale failed to employ any means of keeping separate those entries recorded in 1933 (at and near the Mann

and Musgrave Ranges) and those recorded in 1934 (at Ooldea). In the case of the two examples given here, we can backtrack to Tindale (1933c) and discover that they were recorded at or near the Mann and Musgrave Ranges and not at Ooldea in 1934. While this dispels some ambiguity, there is still a long way to go. An interesting and more general finding from the backtracking process, however, is that most of the dialect distinctions for ‘P.’ entries were recorded in 1933; in fact, only three dialect distinctions were noted at Ooldea in 1934.²¹

Table 9.2 presents a list of eastern and western dialect entries. It should be noted, however, that Tindale’s stress diacritics are not reproduced, and neither is this list comprehensive: some forms have been omitted owing to cultural sensitivities.

Table 9.2: Eastern and Western dialect designations in Tindale (1937)²²

	Eastern dialect	Western dialect	Tindale’s gloss
1.	erewandja	—	pelican (p.5)
2.	katji, kadji	—	spear (p.21)
3.	lamalŋa = <i>keinika</i>	—	native cat (p.35)
4.	urara = <i>urlba</i>	—	grass tree (p.115)
5.	—	enondji, enontji	shrub ... = <i>undunu</i> (p.5)
6.	—	induda = <i>palja</i>	good (p.9)
7.	—	kularda	spear (p.28)
8.	—	mima, [=] <i>minma</i>	wife, woman (p.47)
9.	—	minunja	small boy (p.50)
10.	—	ŋokonpa	brain (p.66)
11.	—	pininu	younger ... [sibling] (p.81)
12.	—	puntu, [=] <i>wati</i>	man (p.88)
13.	—	tjumu [=] <i>tjukur</i>	dream time, totem (p.108)
14.	—	wapalpa [=] <i>tjukur</i>	totem (p.122)
15.	enondji	undunu	shrub (p.114)
16.	jurarupa, juralpa	koilpuru	tomato-like fruit, (p.137)
17.	kami	kapali	M’s and F’s mothers (p.16)
18.	kulu	njimu	head louse (p.29)
19.	mama	punari	father (p.86)

21 These distinctions are found under the headwords: ‘Inmurunjar’, ‘martaki’, and ‘papa inura’, see Tindale (1937:9, 44, 76).

22 Note that with some cross-referenced entries in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* one finds a degree of variation in the glosses provided by Tindale. For the sake of clarity I have provided the relevant page numbers for the entries listed in this table. Note also that some of Tindale’s glosses appear in abbreviated form.

	Eastern dialect	Western dialect	Tindale's gloss
20.	miŋul	puljantu	chewing tobacco (p.86)
21.	ŋintaka	polalji	perentie (p.66)
22.	ŋondjo	ŋundju	mother (p.68)
23.	palkun	palkunpa	transv[erse] chest keloids (p.75)
24.	tjitji	Itajara	little boy (p.105)

As an initial observation, note that there is a degree of inconsistency in how dialectal differences are indicated. In Table 9.2 there are three main categories: (i) numbers 1–4 are marked as eastern forms, (ii) 5–14 are marked as western forms, and (iii) 15–24 involve pairings of eastern and western forms. It should be noted, however, that many of the category (i) and (ii) forms are equated with another form (italicised above) whose status is not directly indicated. Taking 4, for example, while *urara* is given as an eastern form, the status of *urlba* is not given—is it a western form, an eastern synonym, or something else? The case of 2 (*katji*, *kadji*) is more straightforward as an equivalent western form is given at 7 (*kularda*).

Following from this, one can see that distinctions are made primarily on the basis of perceived differences of pronunciation or on lexical difference; although in a few cases where no contrasting form is offered, it is not clear on what basis the distinction is made (numbers 1, 9, 11).²³ I will discuss the first two of these categories below.

Examples of distinctions made on the basis of perceived pronunciation difference are relatively few, and include numbers 8 and 22. These differences appear to be relatively minor, with 8 perhaps reflecting a mishearing by Tindale rather than an actual difference recognised by *Anangu*.²⁴ Number 22 is a little more interesting because we would expect any east-west regional difference to be reflected in the lamino-palatal stop (represented by Tindale as <dj>) rather than vowel quality. This seems another example of a Tindale-imposed distinction.

In the case of lexical difference, one distinction (23) is owing to the *-pa* suffix, a stylistic feature associated with western speech varieties such as Pitjantjatjara (Goddard 1996:viii). It is possible that this reason also explains the distinction in 4 and the listing of 10 as a western dialect form. It is doubtful whether Tindale was aware of the grammatical status of this syllable at the time, however. A comparison of numbers 5 and 15 suggests that these two distinctions are more problematic, and in fact cancel each other out, so to speak. That is to say, they are common to both eastern and western dialects (or speech varieties). Backtracking to the original manuscript reveals that these entries were recorded on separate occasions—a possible explanation for the variation. It is also possible that Tindale created this distinction through problems of communication and his own preconceptions, or indeed that it is a recording error.²⁵ Having said this, a clear example of an important difference identified by Tindale

23 As more recent studies have shown (most notably Hansen 1984), there is a complex relationship between endo- and exolexicon in Western Desert areas. It is difficult to determine how Tindale would have attempted to distinguish between active and passive forms in the speech he encountered—if in fact he attempted to do so at all.

24 The term *Anangu* is used in this paper to refer to Aboriginal inhabitants of the north-west region of South Australia. See Goddard (1996:6–7) for a fuller description of the term's semantic range.

25 Unfortunately, it would lead us too far astray to pursue this interesting point. Even leaving aside the problem of the high level of synonymy in Western Desert speech varieties—as described by Hansen (1984), for example—of which Tindale would not have been aware, we still need to be suspicious of some of the distinc-

is the contrast between numbers 2 and 7. This is still recognised as an important distinction today—elderly *Anangu* will say that *katji* is Yankunytjatjara and *kulata* is Pitjantjatjara.

The previous point fits in with a reading of ‘eastern’ as Yankunytjatjara and ‘western’ as Pitjantjatjara. But is there any further evidence to support this proposition? There are a few examples in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* and the primary sources where a direct distinction is made between Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara forms. Consider the following examples:

- (iii) *mulajaṅu* (Jan) = *kanba* (P) a snake P. (1937:52)
- (iv) *tjila* (Pitj.) = *walkal* (Jank) poison bush ... P. (1937:101)

In a number of cases, there are also references to *either* Yankunytjatjara *or* Pitjantjatjara, as in the following:

- (v) *lamalṅa* (3 in Table 9.2) is given as ‘Yanḱ’ (1933c)
- (vi) *kularda* (6 in Table 9.2) is given as ‘W. dialect; Pitjinḱara’ (1933c)
- (vii) *kunba* is given as ‘Pitj.’, under ‘wanambi’ (1933c)
- (viii) *wakalbuka* is given as ‘Pitj.’ (1933c)

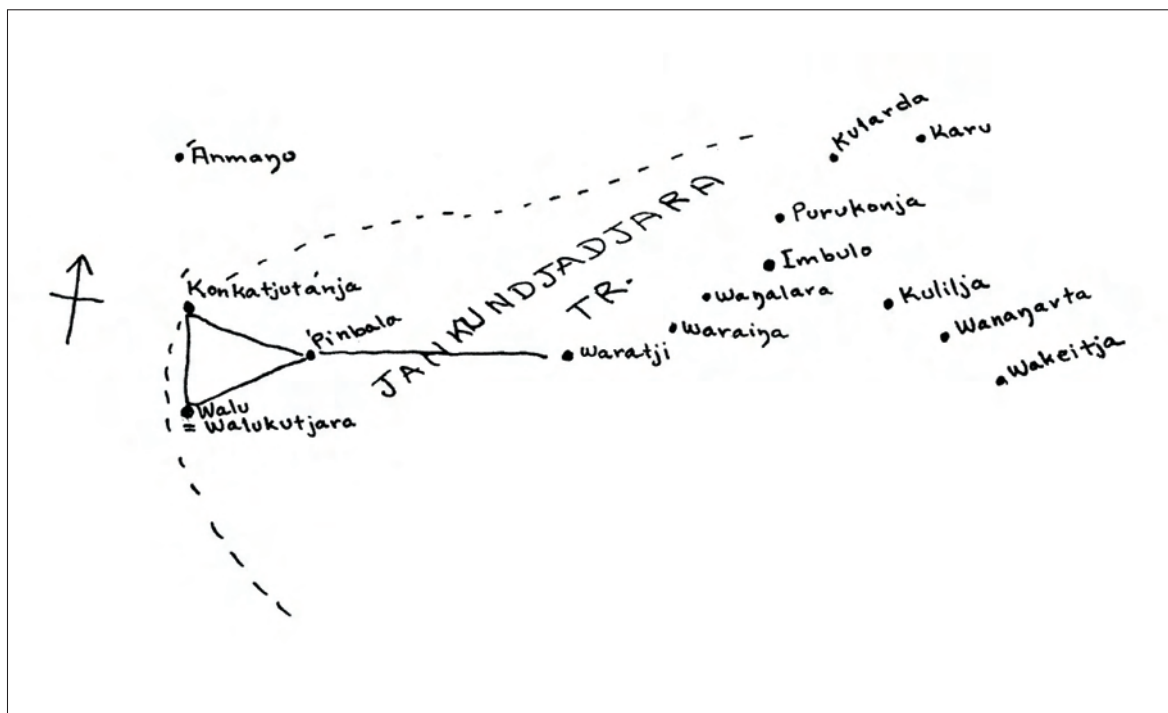
These examples present a mixed picture—(vii) and (viii) support the eastern = Yankunytjatjara, western = Pitjantjatjara reading, as they can be traced to Table 9.2; but (ix) and (x) remain slightly ambiguous.²⁶ More direct evidence to support the eastern = Yankunytjatjara, western = Pitjantjatjara reading as the general pattern appears in the case of 19, for which we are fortunate in having some further information. At one point during the 1933 Mann Range expedition, Tindale writes:

Mama is the eastern dialect [and] *punari* is *the correct Pitjandjara term*; our interpreters had to be watched for ‘errors’ like this which only became apparent when we began to speak to the people a little ourselves. (Tindale 1933a:162, emphasis added)

Notably, *punari* is listed as a western form in Table 9.2 (see 19), thus supporting the ‘Pitjandjara’ = western dialect reading, but also notice that the eastern dialect remains otherwise anonymous. Some light is thrown on the latter mystery by an article published in 1941, in which Tindale presents a list of plants collected during the 1933 Mann Range expedition. Tindale writes: ‘where names are given for plants in eastern and western dialects they refer respectively to the Jangkundjara and Pitjandjara tribes. In other cases the names are common to both groups’ (1941:8). Although examples are few, one does find ‘enondji (western dialect) = undunu (eastern dialect)’ for *Cassia eremophila* (1941:10) and ‘koilpuru (western dialect); jurarupa (eastern dialect)’ for *S. ellipticum* (1941:12, compare 16 in Table 9.2). The former case, as indicated already, is problematic (compare 5 and 15 in Table 9.2), but nevertheless this does not detract from the clarity of Tindale’s stated intentions. On the balance of the evidence presented so far, it seems safe to conclude that Yankunytjatjara is subsumed under the Pitjantjatjara banner (as the eastern dialect of this language) in Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*.

Tindale’s remarks in the above quoted passage concerning the ‘correct Pitjandjara term’ and having to watch for ‘errors’ require further comment, for they offer a great insight into Tindale’s assumptions about language. Obviously the frameworks he brings to these interactions were developed in advance, a result of notions of correct usage as taught by traditional grammar in schools and the associated myth of linguistic purity discussed above. Moreover, tions he puts forward. Thus number 9 looks suspiciously like a personal name. Some indication of Tindale’s preoccupations is given below.

26 The form ‘*kunba*’ in (ix) is cross-referenced under the variant form ‘*kanba*’ in Tindale (1933c). Note, however, that in Tindale (1937:15) under ‘*kanba*’ we do not find ‘Pitj.’, but ‘Eastern form = wanambi’ given as part of the gloss.



Map 9.3: Sketch map of a section of 'Jankundjadjara' territory (Tindale 1934:70)

one is tempted to see Tindale setting himself up as an authority by placing his own expectations and views above those of *Anangu*. Indeed, one is reminded of Leonard Bloomfield's notion of the linguist as expert (whose views are privileged over the intuitions of the lay speaker of a language; see Bloomfield 1944:49). When it is remembered that Tindale's interpreters in these interactions are Yankunytjatjara speakers, we can only draw the conclusion that, for Tindale, 'errors' in the elicitation process are eastern forms, with Pitjantjatjara being 'correct'. In this way, Tindale arguably reveals a concern with recording a 'pure' Pitjantjatjara vocabulary. The obvious barrier to this goal consists of the interpreters, with whom there exists some level of misunderstanding of the task at hand. Perhaps it is the notion of eliciting a vocabulary of a *discrete* language (or speech variety) that is the problem. There are obvious difficulties in communicating this expectation to interpreters and informants who have not had a Western education. Of course, Tindale was not alone in facing this problem. Tindale's BAR associate Charles Mountford encountered a similar situation in the Northern Territory. He writes:

There is one trap that an inexperienced person, who is keen on collecting vocabularies, might easily fall into, and that is, getting the wrong tribal word. [F]or instance, these people, Arunda, have found out that I know a certain amount of the Pitjendadjara which is one of the Aluridja group of languages. As each of natives knows his own, and that of the tribe next door, they are able to speak in Aluridja, and now, I notice they are using to me, many of the Pitjandadjara words. [S]hould I ask them the name of anything, I will get the Aluridja word, not the Aranda. (Mountford 1942:129–131)

Although Mountford appears to have worked on this occasion without the aid of an interpreter, the problem is nevertheless of a similar order to that confronting Tindale in 1933.²⁷

27 While this may have been a case of 'gratuitous concurrence' (Lieberman 1982), where responses to questions are formulated to please the enquirer, Mountford may also have been imposing his own preconceptions, particularly if we consider Strehlow's observation concerning the high percentage of shared Western Desert

From one perspective, the problem would not arise if the researcher was not concerned with standards of ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’ words, notions that are intricately bound up in the construction (or codification) of discrete languages.

The most perplexing question by far is still to be answered: why did Tindale go to so much trouble in making these distinctions just to collapse them later? The word entries listed in the ‘Ooldea Vocabulary’ (in Tindale 1934) appear as ‘P.’ (Pitjantjatjara) in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. This is surprising considering that Tindale’s work was predominantly with Yankunytjatjara speakers at Ooldea. Now it might be suggested that many Yankunytjatjara words are also Pitjantjatjara words (these being closely related speech varieties), and that Tindale simply preferred to deal with the latter category. But if one considers Tindale’s treatment of placenames in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, one can see that something more is happening. There are approximately one hundred placenames listed as ‘P.’ in the vocabulary, and many of them were recorded in 1934 at Ooldea. A significant proportion of these placenames (28) mark out a travelling route between Ooldea and the Everard Ranges (Tindale 1934:13–15). This is one of the *kapi* (water) routes Tindale amended to the Carruthers survey plan (Royal Geographical Society of South Australia c.1893).²⁸ The crucial point here is that, according to the tribal distribution data gathered at Ooldea in 1934, many of these places would appear within Yankunytjatjara boundaries. Some indication of this is provided by the sketch map (Map 9.3), which shows some of the placenames under discussion (note that Imbulo = Embulo in the list).²⁹ Given the great importance with which Tindale viewed placenames for his tribal distribution project (Monaghan 2003, chapter 2), this is an entirely unexpected finding. Not only does this practice seem to run counter to the main body of Tindale’s work (we cannot, for instance, use the tribal map to clarify this situation, see Map 9.2), it also runs counter to traditional *Anangu* perspectives on the relation of placenames to country, where it is held that placenames are derived from the *Tjukurpa* (‘Dreaming’) and as such are related to particular countries and speech varieties.

6. Conclusions

In this paper I have considered a particular set of Tindale’s linguistic activities against a contextual background provided by a number of intellectual concerns deeply rooted in Adelaide’s scientific community of the day: most notably, the scientific preoccupations of the Board for Anthropological Research and linguistic activities of the ‘Adelaide circle’. I have shown that in his work Tindale reveals a concern for reducing ‘Pitjandjara’ to order (although his progress in this matter remained limited), and at times also reveals a concern for linguistic purity, although there is a degree of inconsistency here with what appears to be a

and Arrernte vocabulary (as noted above). Of course, we know too few details about these interactions to move beyond speculation.

28 Tindale used the survey plan of John Carruthers (produced from extensive surveys in the north-west region in 1888–1892) as a template for many of the placenames recorded during the 1933 BAR expedition, and during the trip to Ooldea the following year. A section of this line of waters between the Everards and Ooldea runs through the left hand side of the table marked by ‘Note: Permanent Waters’ on the survey plan.

29 According to Tindale’s later definition, as shown on the 1940 map, the *kapi* route passes through Yankunytjatjara territory and then Kukata territory on the way to Ooldea. To be fair to Tindale, he had probably not settled on boundaries in 1934, but nevertheless one would still expect the places to be associated with Yankunytjatjara rather than Pitjantjatjara. It should also be noted that in 1934 Tindale gathered other tribal distribution information with regard to Yankunytjatjara territory (1934:143–149), but for the sake of space I will not discuss it here—it is sufficient to point out that it is consistent with the argument I am putting forward.

wider concern to promote 'Pitjandjara' as *the* language of the Western Desert. At a more practical level, some of the uncertainties surrounding Tindale's use of compass point terms in the making of dialect distinctions have been dispelled, and I have shown that Yankunytjatjara words often appear as eastern Pitjantjatjara dialect forms, or are simply listed as Pitjantjatjara. A lingering ambiguity, however, surrounds the question of why Tindale includes the category 'Jangkundjadjara' as a separate language in the vocabulary.

The most significant point to emerge from the discussion above is that the collection of vocabularies under the Pitjantjatjara banner appears to have proceeded *independently* of the tribal mapping project. This has been illustrated most clearly by Tindale's listing of Yankunytjatjara placenames as Pitjantjatjara in the vocabulary. From this it would appear that the vocabularies were collected for purposes other than tribal identification or validation (Tindale 1963, 1974). Moreover, it would appear, on this evidence at least, that Tindale's distinctions between Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara tribes, in linguistic terms, are superficial. That is, the tribes appear to have been determined by him at the level of nomenclature rather than any deeper level of linguistic analysis (a practice Tindale has been criticised for in the past in relation to other regions in Australia; see Sutton 1978:20–21).

A final point is that, with his *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, Tindale was engaged in a level of activity over and above that required for the mere purpose of tribal identification. Allow me to stress that, on the basis of the evidence presented in this paper, it seems that Tindale was engaged in language making (Harris 1980). Now this point leads directly to the issue of the shape and contents of the historical linguistic record. First and foremost, it highlights the potential dangers involved in taking such historical materials at face value, without examining the conditions leading to their construction within colonial/scientific discourses. As argued more fully in Monaghan (2003), a case can be made that there was no such thing as *the* Pitjantjatjara language until people like Tindale (and also notably Love and Trudinger) came along and started to codify or solidify a number of closely related speech varieties. In the case of Tindale's Pitjantjatjara material, this occurs, to a certain extent, at the expense of Yankunytjatjara and other closely related speech varieties.

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10 *T.G.H. Strehlow and the linguistic landscape of Australia 1930–1960*

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1. Introduction

The scope of this paper is to examine the linguistic research of Professor T.G.H Strehlow (1908–1978), who was one of the most active and influential researchers in the field of Australian Aboriginal studies from the 1930s to the 1970s. This will be seen particularly in his description of the Arrernte language of Central Australia. I will discuss Strehlow's *Aranda phonetics and grammar* (Strehlow 1944)—henceforth: *APG*—and also his other published and unpublished work and speeches. Throughout this paper I have used *Arrernte* as the spelling for the language group but have retained Strehlow's spelling *Aranda* for works which are specifically associated with him.

At the time of its publication in 1944, *APG* was regarded as a landmark work for two reasons. Firstly, *APG* was the first comprehensive grammar of an Australian language, and secondly because it was the first that was done by a person who claimed to have spoken an Aboriginal language from childhood. Similarly, Strehlow's work on a dictionary of Arrernte was regarded as the most comprehensive of its time.

Yet despite this, Strehlow and his contemporaries are not even mentioned in some recent accounts of Australian Aboriginal linguistics. A re-assessment of their work is necessary.

1.1 Research questions

This paper uses 'linguistic landmarks' from Strehlow's work to map the linguistic landscape of Australia from 1930–1960, which has been called the 'second period' of Australian linguistics according to my outline in §2.2 (see also McGregor, this volume). It is devoted to answering two questions:

1 First, thanks to my supervisors for Honours studies at the University of New England. Nick Reid helped me develop the topic and looked at early drafts, and Helen Fraser taught the 'History and Philosophy of Linguistics' unit which started off this work. Brett Baker has suggested useful areas to look into. The Strehlow Research Centre Staff in Alice Springs helped me tremendously with finding materials in the very extensive Strehlow Collection.



Plate 10.1: T.G.H. Strehlow's translation committee, 1948. Left to right: Strehlow, Conrad, Zacharias, Jakobus, Nathaniel, and Moses. Strehlow Collection Photograph 06050, courtesy Strehlow Research Centre.

- What methods did Strehlow use in his description of Arrernte?
- What do Strehlow's methods reveal about the linguistics of the second period in Australia?

The study of Australian linguistics is the study of people, funding, institutions, schools, textbooks, technology and theories. The focus of this paper will be on the linguistic landscape of Australia in the period 1930–1960 through Strehlow's work. I have found it necessary to describe events before and after this time so that this period of Australian linguistics can be seen in its historical situation. I have developed the paper chronologically because Strehlow's linguistics closely followed contemporary linguistic trends in Australia and Britain.

1.2 Doing historiography

A second aspect of this paper is the need to write the history of linguistics in Australia. In studying and researching the linguistics of Strehlow we develop an insight into the state of linguistic research in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century.

There is a trend in the field of historical writing about linguistics which has resulted in ahistorical and anachronistic views of the work of earlier linguists. This has been highlighted by Anderson (1985) and Beaugrande (1991). J.V. Neustupny, writing about Australian linguistic historiography, notes the lack of attention to 'meta-linguistics', the lack of understanding of the theory and methodology of the history of science, and the concern to 'Proffer explanations and judgements to support their own theories' (Neustupny 1991:195). Such a situation can be said to exist in the history of Australian linguistics at the present time.

1.3 The changing definition of *linguist*

To what extent was Strehlow a linguist? In general discussions about the work of Strehlow, it is now often assumed that Strehlow was not a linguist but primarily an anthropologist and a

collector of artefacts. John Mulvaney offers an alternative opinion in his paper ‘The purposes of a good translation’:

In the controversies which have swirled around Strehlow as an anthropologist, critics too often overlook the intellectual reality that he was foremost a linguist and a profound scholar of biblical and European literatures (Mulvaney 2004:84).

Others have been laudatory in their assessment of Strehlow. For example, Bruce Chatwin, the author of *The songlines*, wrote about Strehlow as if he had grown up speaking Arrernte as a first language (Shakespeare 1999:409). Two opposed views of Strehlow portray him as an individual only; either as a stubborn individual who refused to change, or else as someone who was uniquely able to speak about Aboriginal affairs to the exclusion of anyone else. I aim to show that Strehlow’s role as a linguist is consistent with historical and theoretical developments in our discipline. I hope to make a fair assessment of Strehlow’s linguistic work in a way that is neither laudatory nor dismissive. While comparing Strehlow’s work with current studies of Arandic languages, understanding Strehlow’s work according to the standards of his time is a necessary prerequisite for a better understanding of Australian linguistic history.

1.4 The importance of Arrernte

Strehlow’s work is important not only because it represents a detailed early description of an Australian Aboriginal language but also because the Arrernte language had wider significance and importance. The Arrernte people had been the focus of intense study since the late nineteenth century. They were seen as a remote and pristine tribe with few influences from Western society and therefore came to be seen as potentially interesting objects of study. As a previous researcher Herbert Basedow wrote, the Arrernte were ‘scientifically important people’ (Basedow 1925:xiv). Arrernte was one of the most studied Australian languages. Descriptions of Arrernte had been made by A.H. Kempe (1891), F. Gillen and W.B. Spencer (Spencer and Gillen 1899, 1927), R.H. Mathews (1907), and T.G.H. Strehlow’s father Carl Strehlow (1907).

Henson (1974) documents the degree to which nineteenth-century anthropologists wanted to understand the origin of speech by the study of non-Indo-European languages. They believed that rudimentary and primitive languages were evidence of humans at an earlier stage of development. Strehlow’s work contradicts the notion of a primitive language. His familiarity with Arrernte language and long period of fieldwork were instrumental in dispelling notions that some languages and cultures were ‘primitive’. Much of Strehlow’s method can be understood in terms of ‘adequacy in description’, an attempt to capture the richness and complexity of the language.

2. Early twentieth-century linguistics

At the time when Strehlow did his training there were no departments of linguistics in Australian universities. Strehlow’s training in philology was the main tool that he took to the analysis of the Arrernte language in 1932. Philip Jones has outlined the options for training in linguistics in the 1930s in his paper ‘A maverick and his mentors’ (Jones 2002:5). These were to study at either Oxford or Cambridge, or with Edward Sapir at Yale (Jones 2002:2). In this chapter I explore the development of linguistics in Britain and the United States of America and their influences upon Australian linguists. This will provide background for considering the main influences in Strehlow’s linguistics.

2.1 Aspects of early twentieth century linguistics

In the nineteenth century, the study of languages was dominated by philology, the historical study of literary languages, texts and written records (Crystal 1987:404). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, linguistics shifted from the study of classical languages to a new focus upon modern European languages as standard versions of these languages gained acceptance. Jespersen, writing in the early part of the twentieth century, claimed that the ‘feature of the science of language as conceived nowadays is its historical character’ (quoted in Firth 1957:217). The rise of structuralism is usually thought to begin with the publication of the lecture notes of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) which were published posthumously in 1916 (Saussure 1974 [1916]). Saussure emphasised the synchronic study of spoken languages as systems. The older discipline of philology persisted until the first third of the twentieth century (Koerner and Asher 1994:221), when it was finally displaced by structuralist linguistics. As linguists and social anthropologists began their study of the ‘exotic’ languages in North America, the synchronic study of language became extended to them. In the USA, the 1930s saw the development of descriptivism, the North American variety of structuralist linguistics. One theoretical outgrowth of American descriptive linguistics was the doctrine of linguistic relativity, which emphasised that each language was uniquely different. Linguistic relativity originated with Franz Boas (1858–1942) in his *Handbook of American Languages* (Boas 1911), although the term *linguistic relativity* was probably first used by Whorf (1956) according to Lee (1996:5). Linguistic relativity developed in response to the need to describe Indigenous languages with phonetic and grammatical structures that were very different from those of the familiar European languages.

The aim of Boas was to write grammars

without reference to the current classifications of Indo-European languages, which have helped to obscure the fundamental traits of American languages for so long a time (Stocking 1974:158).

This ‘idioglottal’ approach became a feature of American descriptive grammars that followed Boas (1911) and influenced Edward Sapir, Leonard Bloomfield, and subsequent researchers in the American structuralist tradition.

With the exception of two fieldworkers, American involvement in Australian linguistics of the second period was slight. Sapir’s theory had little impact in Australia in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1926, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown asked Sapir to come to Australia. Sapir was too busy for this task and sent his student Gerhardt Laves (1906–1993) instead. Laves researched Aboriginal languages in Australia from 1929 to 1931. Elkin refers to this situation in his preface to *APG*. Laves, a postgraduate student, received a grant from the then Australian National Research Council (ANRC), and was a potential link between Australia and American structuralist linguistics. This link was broken when Laves went back to the USA in 1931, taking his language data with him. Only after Laves’ death in 1993 did much of this material become available to researchers.

Another of the few direct connections to America in the 1930s was Ursula McConnel (1888–1957), who studied under Sapir from 1931–1934. Linguistics hadn’t yet become established as an autonomous science in the USA. This is one of the reasons why McConnel deferred to Strehlow and FitzHerbert in linguistic matters.

Thus we see that American linguistics had minimal impact on Australia until the 1960s. The more significant influence of Britain on Strehlow and his contemporaries will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 The influence of Britain on the development of Australian linguistics

Harris (1988) describes various schools of linguistics in Britain from 1915–1945. During this period the major British Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were teaching, respectively, philology and philosophical linguistics (the study of language in relation to philosophical concepts). British linguistics had direct links with philology and didn't arise as a branch of anthropology as in the United States. While a rigorous, autonomous and 'scientific' approach to linguistics developed in America, British structuralism made a less decisive break with the older discipline. Change was taking place at London University, which was not involved in the entrenched rivalry between the two older institutions.

The main concerns of British linguistics were dialectology and phonetics. Concern for the consistent representation of sounds led to the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), an international system which could represent all of the sounds that are found in the languages of the world. The IPA arose from the need for spelling reform and foreign language teaching. The difficulty with English spelling was the large number of possible spellings for the number of sounds that were represented. The use of special universal symbols meant less confusion with the values that the sounds had in different European languages.

A key figure in the development of the IPA was Daniel Jones of the Department of Phonetics at University College in London from 1921–1949. In British linguistics, phonetics remained far more important than phonology. The view which Jones held of the phoneme was that it represented a family of related sounds, rather than a distinctive and contrastive unit which later became the dominant understanding of the phoneme. For Jones, the phoneme had practical rather than theoretical value. The main purpose of phonology was to facilitate the learning of languages, the reform of spelling and the consistent orthographic representation of sounds.

Due to all these influences, the interests of Australian linguists mirrored those of Britain, and British influence on Australia was particularly strong in Adelaide. During the 1930s and 1940s Australian linguists were interested in the accurate transcription of sounds and adopted a view of the phoneme that was the same as that held by Jones.

2.3 Australian linguistic history

In this section I will begin to trace the development of Australian linguistics. I will attempt to describe the first two periods in Australian linguistic history. I have modified a time sequence developed by Arthur Capell (Capell 1971) and Stephen A. Wurm (Wurm 1972) for the history of Australian linguistics (see also McGregor, this volume).

During the first period of Australian linguistics, which runs from 1788 to 1930, missionaries, government officials and settlers compiled wordlists of Australian languages. Sounds were often compared with English sounds. Grammatical categories were described according to those that had been developed for classical languages.

I have adopted 1930 as the cut-off date inaugurating the second period of Australian linguistic description, which runs from 1930–1960. During this time, linguistics was developed along 'scientific' principles to record observable phenomena which could be tested experimentally. Most of the researchers in Australian languages had interests in other fields such as anthropology, religion and geology. A precursor to modern linguistics was studied in a few places, notably Adelaide and Sydney. Linguistics was part of the study of classics and comparative philology in Adelaide, and of anthropology in Sydney. Rivalry for funding between Adelaide University and Sydney University has been documented by Phillip Jones (1987)

and Nicolas Peterson (1990). Funding for a chair in anthropology was made available through the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA. Despite hard campaigning from Adelaide, Sydney won the bid, and Radcliffe-Brown was appointed to the first chair of Anthropology in Sydney in 1926. Adelaide University decided to undertake short multi-disciplinary expeditions with funding from the ANRC.

An important influence in the second period was Strehlow's supervisor John Aloysius FitzHerbert (1892–1970), who was Professor of Classics at Adelaide University from 1928 until his retirement in 1957. FitzHerbert chaired the Committee on Linguistics at Adelaide University, and compiled vocabularies of the Arrernte and Diyari languages. He was a recognised authority in the field of phonetics and was later to send linguistic advice to Strehlow, Ursula McConnel, James R.B. Love and Norman B. Tindale.

Several grammars of Australian languages were published in the journal *Oceania*, which combined linguistic and ethnographic concerns. *Oceania Linguistic Monographs* focused specifically upon the description of languages. What appears typical of this period in Australian linguistics is a tendency to compare Australian languages with modern European languages as well as classical languages. Grammars followed the traditional grammatical models but with an increasing awareness of the differences between Australian languages and the more familiar European languages. During the second period of Australian linguistics there was a struggle to find new and more appropriate ways to describe aspects of Australian languages that were different from those of traditional grammar.

2.4 A brief description of the Arrernte language

A brief description of the Arrernte language is necessary for an appreciation of the difficulty of Strehlow's task as most of Strehlow's efforts were applied to the study of Arrernte.

Arrernte is a member of the Arandic group, a subfamily of the Pama-Nyungan family of Australian languages. Strehlow included data from five Arrernte dialects in *APG*, but his work focused upon Western Arrernte.

There are a relatively high number of consonants in the Arrernte language (see Appendix 1). Six points of articulation are distinguished for stops and nasals: bilabial, lamino-dental, alveolar, retroflex, palatal, and velar. Estimates of the number of consonants in the Arrernte language vary depending upon dialect. The number also varies according to whether or not rounding is treated as a suprasegmental. If it is, the number of consonants ranges between the high twenties and thirty-three. If rounding is treated as a property of individual consonant phonemes, then the figure is 45–52. Arrernte has four vowel phonemes (Wilkins 1989:5).

The Arrernte language has a 'split case' system with ergative-absolutive case-marking for nominals and nominative-accusative case-marking for pronouns. Noun cases and verb tenses are marked by suffixes and Arrernte is regarded as a suffixing language (Yallop 1977:3). Case-marking on nominals means that word order is comparatively free. There are five core cases: ergative, nominative, accusative, dative, and possessive.

3. Strehlow's life and work

In this section I will provide background to Strehlow's life and work. I will explore the key reasons why he was uniquely placed to do linguistic work on the Arrernte language.

3.1 Strehlow's language acquisition

Theodor George Henry Strehlow was born at Hermannsburg Mission in 1908, the son of German Lutheran missionaries Carl and Frieda Strehlow. The Hermannsburg Mission was established by German Lutheran missionaries in 1877. Lutheran mission societies encouraged missionaries to learn Indigenous languages and language was central to their endeavour.

Carl Strehlow was particularly gifted at learning languages. He had already learnt the Diyari language when he worked at the Bethesda Mission (established in 1867) near Lake Eyre. Upon his transfer to Hermannsburg in 1894, he rapidly acquired facility in Arrernte. Background to Carl Strehlow's linguistics is treated by Walter Veit (Veit 2004) and John Strehlow (Strehlow 2004).

Bethesda and Hermannsburg missions both made extensive use of Aboriginal languages. At each mission, church services were conducted in the vernacular. Bethesda and Hermannsburg had trilingual schools. Lessons were taken in the local vernacular, German, and English.

Aboriginal societies were suppressed or destroyed in many parts of southern Australia. Although other missions had been established among Aboriginal people, they rarely survived for long. The Lutheran missions were unique and exceptional in Australia, a country where very few non-Indigenous inhabitants acquired even a few words of an Aboriginal language, as noted by Alpher (1994:102). The use of Indigenous languages and the survival of Hermannsburg has meant that language data from generations of speakers were recorded, a unique situation in Australia.

From the beginning of his life, T.G.H. Strehlow was influenced by the Lutheran missionary tradition of learning and using Indigenous languages. According to Gill, 'Strehlow makes much of his ability to speak and "to think" Arrernte in describing his field methods' (1998: 162).

The young Theodor was immersed in an Arrernte-speaking environment. The majority of people in the area spoke Arrernte as a first language. Strehlow grew up an only child amongst Arrernte-speaking children, learnt the language and claimed to have been fluent in it. Strehlow lived in this multilingual environment until the age of fourteen. His mother tongue was German, and he also spoke English. He learned Latin and Greek from his father. Thus he already understood a number of languages even before he undertook training at the University of Adelaide.

When Theodor Strehlow was confirmed in 1920, two Arrernte hymns were sung and the sermon was given in Arrernte by his father. His father was the respected *Ingkata* or ceremonial chief of Hermannsburg. Strehlow's teenage diary gives revealing insights about his facility with the language. He commonly used Arrernte words such as *ititja* 'mulga tree' and *nkulpa* 'pitjeri or native tobacco'. His diary shows that he was completely embedded in the Arrernte landscape and language as a child.

Apart from a break from 1910–1912, the Strehlow family lived at Hermannsburg from 1894 until 1922, when Theodor was 14. After his father's death, Strehlow lived with his mother in Adelaide. He completed his schooling at Immanuel College and went to Adelaide University.

Strehlow's task in describing the Arandic dialects was seen as an extension of the philology that had been a part of his undergraduate studies. He initially studied classics at Adelaide University under Sir Archibald Strong in 1928. It was after Strong's death in 1930 that he appears to have changed course to the study of philology and English literature.

The work of Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) was influential at this point in Strehlow's life especially *Language, its origin, development and character* (1922). According to Barry Hill, this was the book that Strehlow carried in his saddlebags in Central Australia (Hill 2002:402).

Jespersen was interested in modern European languages and represented an approach that was transitional between philology and structuralist linguistics.

Strehlow evidently had linguistic ability and this was recognised by his mentors at Adelaide. In a letter of recommendation on 14 January 1932, FitzHerbert wrote, 'His work showed a very high linguistic ability. Probably there is no-one else of similar linguistic ability and training who has spoken an Australian language from childhood'.

In 1930 FitzHerbert received a copy of an Arrernte vocabulary that had been compiled by Charles Chewings from earlier sources. He hoped that Strehlow's work on Arrernte sounds and grammar would complement the vocabulary. Strehlow's mentors thought that he could do better work than his predecessors because he had learned Arrernte in his childhood, whereas Spencer and other researchers had to rely upon Aboriginal English for their research.

During the 1930s many Aboriginal languages had few speakers left. Many linguists and anthropologists of the 1930s and 1940s were driven by the urge to record languages and cultures and had a 'salvage work' approach to linguistic description. A sense of urgency pervaded Strehlow's work. The need to salvage the Arrernte language before it disappeared was a major factor in Strehlow's decision to undertake fieldwork in 1932. In his diary of 25 March 1931 he records that 'we spent some time discussing the native sounds of the Aranda language and the Prof several times expressed his wish that a reliable book might be written on the language of that tribe before it became extinct'.

3.2 Strehlow's proficiency in the Arrernte language

Strehlow's acquisition of Arrernte has been treated almost mythologically by writers such as McNally (1981) and Hill (2002). Strehlow has often been written about as someone who 'knew the language as a native speaker'. I have earlier indicated that Strehlow must have had a considerable knowledge of Arrernte language and culture. But how apt are terms such as 'native speaker'?

Strehlow's mother tongue was German. He later acquired English and after moving to Adelaide, at the age of 14, increasingly identified with the English population of Adelaide. During the ten years he lived in Adelaide he had no contact with Arrernte speakers.

Probably much of Strehlow's Arrernte language acquisition occurred after he returned to Central Australia in 1932 at the age of twenty-four. He then had to learn the language used by adults rather than the language of children. He wrote to McCarthy at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies:

the kind of Aranda I learned at Hermannsburg during my boyhood days was the simple Western Aranda children's form of speech, something akin to the language spoken by white Australian children who have not yet learned to read or write. (Strehlow to McCarthy, 15 September 1970)

Another aspect of Strehlow's childhood knowledge of Arrernte is that he acquired this language at the Hermannsburg Mission. Kral (2001) has documented the extensive amount of literature that was translated into the Arrernte language by the Hermannsburg missionaries. Strehlow read translated Arrernte texts, which would presumably have been influenced by German, the language from which they were translated. Only as an adult was Strehlow able to learn Arrernte from people who had little contact with missions.

Sometimes the idea that Strehlow was a 'white Aranda' has been promoted by Aboriginal people. Often Aboriginal people can be generous in their description of outsiders and something other than 'fluent speaker of the language' is meant. It can also refer to those who have an affinity with Arrernte people and land. According to Strehlow's account in his novel *Jour-*

ney to horseshoe bend, one of the older women at the mission, Margaret, told Theodor ‘You are one of us. You belong to our people. You belong to the totem of the Twins of Ntarea, and you are a true Aranda’ (Strehlow 1969:68). Clearly, Hermannsburg was Strehlow’s conception site in the eyes of Arrernte people, which meant that he had a special affiliation to that land. This would have been significant for them, and would have given Strehlow special status in a society where a person’s rights depend upon their affiliation to land. However, this can’t be taken to mean that Strehlow was a native speaker of the language. I conclude that Strehlow’s claim to be a native speaker was exaggerated; see also Gill (1998:114).

4. Strehlow’s *Aranda Phonetics*

Strehlow’s *Aranda phonetics* of 1942 was one of the earliest descriptions of an Australian language using the symbols of the IPA.

From the perspective of our time, Strehlow’s work appears cluttered with unnecessary detail owing to his extensive use of diacritics, stress marks and phonetic characters in his orthography and his apparent ignorance of the phonemic principle. Compare the words in Table 10.1 showing examples from C. Strehlow (1908) in a pre-phonetic orthography, T.G.H. Strehlow’s transcription in *Aranda phonetics*, which represents a phonetic orthography, and the current phonemic Arrernte orthography:

Table 10.1: Comparison of words in three Arrernte orthographies

	C. Strehlow (1908)	T.G.H. Strehlow (1942)	Current orthography
‘today’	lata	ljáta	lyerte
‘tomorrow’	ingunta	injún̄ta	ingwenthe

In this section I will show that rather than being solely the inspiration of a single individual, *Aranda phonetics* was consistent with contemporary approaches in phonetic description.

4.1 The development of phonetics in Australia

Accurate phonetic transcription was the central concern for the theorists of the second period of Australian linguistics. Strehlow (1942) signalled the development of a more consistent approach to Arrernte sounds than was previously possible. The accurate identification of sounds and their consistent transcription was facilitated by Strehlow’s use of the IPA. As shown in more detail below, previous work on Arrernte had suffered from inaccurate identification and inconsistent representation of Arrernte sounds. Prior to the 1930s few of the orthographies for Australian languages were based upon the application of scientific method to the study of sounds. Previous researchers didn’t consistently differentiate palatal, dental or retroflex sounds, as noted by Alpher (1994). An exception was the work of John M. Black, who used the IPA and described sounds in terms of their place and manner of articulation and distinguished retroflexed and plain apical sounds (see Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume).

Lack of phonetic discrimination can be seen by comparing the transcriptions of the same words by C. Strehlow and T.G.H. Strehlow in Table 10.1. The sounds of the language were under-represented by the number of symbols that were used. This lack of discrimination led

some writers to claim that Arrernte had few sounds and was therefore an unsophisticated and primitive language.

The innovation of phonetics in the second period of Australian linguistics led to a greater capability for accuracy in the identification and transcription of a growing number of sounds. A key statement of FitzHerbert's position is 'As the analysis of the sounds becomes more exact the number of symbols will continually have to grow' (FitzHerbert 1947:133). The proliferation of symbols and diacritics in Strehlow's work reflects this position. FitzHerbert encouraged its use for the description of unrecorded languages when he wrote that 'the IPA is continually growing and developing as it is made to embrace more languages. For in most cases a new language will have some sounds that do not occur in other languages' (FitzHerbert 1947:133).

Strehlow was aware that some sounds in Arrernte are different from those of European languages. This is shown by his treatment of a sound that had been written inconsistently by Spencer: as <k> in *kakia* 'plum-tree', as <ch> in *ochirka* 'sun', and as <r> in *ereninna* 'carpet snake'. Strehlow speculates that Spencer had heard this sound as a velar fricative and written down <ch> as in German *buch*. Rather than identifying the sound with velar fricative [x] which is found in familiar European languages, Strehlow identified the sound as a pharyngeal liquid, a sound found in neither English nor German (*APG*, p.24). This phone would probably now be identified as a voiceless velar or uvular approximant close to IPA [ɰ] or [χ], represented in the current Arrernte orthography by <h> (see Appendix 1). Strehlow described sounds in terms of their point of articulation and type rather than only in terms of European sounds as Spencer had done. He compared Arrernte vowels to the cardinal vowels, using Daniel Jones' chart.

To some extent, Strehlow's representations were limited to the inventories of symbols that were available to him. Breen (2004:2) has noted the development of Strehlow's system of transcription: 'What Strehlow must have done was to spell words that he did not already know phonetically, and to spell words that he did know the way he knew them'. As Strehlow learned written Arrernte as a child, the orthography used by the Hermannsburg Mission influenced the way in which he wrote the language down when he returned to Central Australia in 1932. The existence of written Arrernte meant that Strehlow was initially using representations that were already established as can be seen in his handling of the lamino-dental lateral [ɭ]. He represented the sound as <ɭ> in his later work; see Appendix 1. Strehlow initially didn't distinguish the dental /lh/ in *lheme* 'going' from the alveolar /l/ in *leme* 'liver'. As [ɭ] is difficult to distinguish from [l], and was not represented on the IPA chart used by the language committee in Adelaide in the 1930s, it is not surprising that Strehlow didn't represent the sound in his earlier work.

Strehlow's concern for adequacy and accuracy in describing Arrernte sounds led him to over-represent the vowels, listing twenty-two vowels for Arrernte whereas current phonemic analyses indicate that Arrernte has four vowel phonemes (see §2.3.3 and Appendix 1). This difference highlights the differences between Strehlow's phonetics and phonemics which I will explore in the next sections.

4.2 The phonemic principle

As Gavan Breen has pointed out (2004:2), 'Strehlow's orthography was phonetic rather than phonemic. In it he appears not to be aware of the phonemic principle'. Breen also notes that by the time of *Songs of Central Australia* (1971) Strehlow was using the term *phoneme* in its modern linguistic sense of 'distinctive unit of sound'.

Often contrasts that are not significant in Arrernte were maintained in Strehlow's transcription. Although aware that [p] and [b] are not contrastive in Arrernte and that the bilabial stop is unaspirated, Strehlow continued to use both <p> and in transcription. He does consider the possibility that these sounds could be regarded as 'voiceless mediae' which are 'completely unvoiced' and are recorded in Jespersen (1932). Often Strehlow attributed this lack of differentiation as a 'slovenliness of pronunciation' on the part of speakers (Strehlow 1942:257). This attitude was not unusual at that time, e.g. Basedow (1925:402). One question at this point is the degree to which recognition of these sounds might have depended upon the works that the researcher read. Nekes (1938:141), for instance, finds the *consonans labialis sine voce* in the works of Wilhelm Schmidt and employs it in his description of Kimberley languages.

My contention is that the phonemic principle didn't become established in Australia until *after* Strehlow wrote *APG*, and even when it had gained general acceptance, it was not uniformly adopted by all writers. A fully-fledged phonemic principle may not have developed in Australia until American structuralist methods of phoneme analysis arrived in Australia in the 1950s.

While earlier linguists may have had intuitions about the phonology of languages and an incipient notion of the phoneme, W.H. Douglas was apparently one of the first Australian linguist to describe the phoneme as a distinctive entity in his description of the language of Ooldea (Douglas 1955). Geoffrey N. O'Grady claims that Douglas was the first Australian linguist to write phonemically, saying that Capell used more symbols than were necessary to represent the distinctive sounds of the language (Geoffrey O'Grady, pers.comm.). (O'Grady was Capell's personal assistant from 1956–1960 and familiar with Capell's system of transcription.) Douglas learned of the phoneme from Kenneth Pike (1912–1983) of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1950 (Wilfrid H. Douglas, pers.comm.).

The development of the phonemic principle in Australia was due to the extension of fieldwork methodology to Australian linguistic fieldworkers. Phonemic analysis developed with American structuralist linguistics and came to Australia with SIL and Pike's *Phonemics* (1975 [1947]). According to the linguist Lesley Hansen (pers.comm.), the beginning of phonemic analysis of Australian languages dates from the 1950s when Pike's textbook became available. Hymes and Fought (1981:159–160) acknowledge that 'Pike and Nida shaped a very great part of what linguists in the United States learned of practical work'.

4.3 Sapir's phonology

I will now discuss the reasons why phonemic theory didn't develop in Australia until the third period of Australian linguistics. Phoneticians and phonologists had different concerns, and this led to disagreements about how 'adequacy in description' might be achieved. Breen cites Sapir (1925) as an early example of writing about the phoneme:

Strehlow studied linguistics at the time when this principle was being formulated; an important paper by Edward Sapir on 'Sound Patterns in Language' appeared a few years before, in 1925. However, Strehlow seems to have never fully learnt the meaning of the phonemic principle. (Breen 2004:1)

There are explanations as to why Strehlow didn't make use of the phonemic principle in his work of the 1930s. The phonetic paradigm utilised universal symbols. Breen (2004:2) has noted that Strehlow used a universal system of transcription rather than a system that was unique to Arrernte. In a letter to Strehlow dated 20 June 1935 McConnel wrote, 'He (Sapir) wrote to me that it was advisable not to stick to his international system too closely in record-

ing languages which have sound values of their own'. This comment is revealing because it shows Sapir's concern to represent the unique system of sounds of every language.

As early as 1921 Sapir had hinted at the existence of the phoneme. 'The mere phonetic framework of speech does not constitute the inner fact of language' (Sapir 1921:43). An important development in the history of American structuralist phonology was the doctrine of linguistic relativity. Lee says that this 'represented the more restricted inner or ideal system which lies at the back of the purely objective system of sounds that is peculiar to a language' (Lee 1996:81).

But there is little in Sapir's 1925 paper which would help a linguist who was trying to identify distinctive sounds and arrive at a phonemic analysis of a language. The purpose of Sapir's paper was not to help linguists to identify 'distinctive units of speech' but to develop the notion that the sounds in a language are part of a *system* that is distinctive to the language, and has a mental and not a physical reality.

Phonemics neither developed as early nor was as widespread as might be supposed. In 1925 the dominant paradigm in American speech science was phonetic. Even within the American descriptivist tradition there was an aversion to using phonemic transcription. This is clearly shown in the work of Boas. Despite his knowledge of the phoneme, Boas didn't actually make use of phonemic transcriptions and advocated a phonetic approach to transcription throughout the 1920s and 30s during the time when the 'phonemic principle' was being formulated.

According to Anderson (1985:215), 'The paramount consideration for Boas is accuracy and completeness in recording, reinterpretation of phonetically recorded material in terms of which elements are distinctive is regarded as at best unnecessary and potentially a source of loss of information.' Phonetic representations became more detailed with the development of instrumental techniques of identifying and describing the physical properties of sounds. Sapir wrote 'Sound patterns in a language' because structure had become lost in a mass of phonetic detail (Mandelbaum 1949:45).

Sapir didn't fully elaborate the phonemic principle until his paper 'The psychological reality of the phoneme' (1933). Anderson notes that 'although it had become clear to most linguists by the 1920s that something besides careful phonetic observation was necessary in analyzing the sound systems of particular languages, there was no general agreement on what this might be' (Anderson 1985:91) and that there were 'a number of alternative conceptions (of the phoneme) converging on a consensus view by the late 1940s' (Anderson 1985:286). Sapir's conception of the phoneme is the one that later achieved dominance and was eventually adopted by Australian linguists only in the 1960s.

The failure of Sapir's phonology to transfer directly to the Australian field can be demonstrated from the experience of two of his students, Gerhardt Laves and Ursula McConnel. McConnel evidently corresponded with Sapir after studying at Yale in the 1930s and should have been aware of the phonemic principle, because that is the time when the principle was being more fully articulated. She was aware that voiced and unvoiced stops are phonemically equivalent in the Wik Mungkan language. In the above-mentioned letter to Strehlow dated 20 June 1935, McConnel wrote, 'Sapir's advice to me was to simplify as far as possible'. While she attempted to reduce the number of symbols used for Wik Mungkan to a minimum, McConnel was far from being unhesitatingly committed to the phonemic principle. She was actually most influenced by Adelaide linguistics of the second period, corresponding with FitzHerbert and Strehlow about phonetic conventions, acknowledging Strehlow's help in her *Wikmungan phonetics* (1945) which adopted 'as far as is practicable the international system used by Mr Strehlow for Aranda Phonetics'.

The full expansion of methodology was probably the most critical issue for the development of phonology in descriptive linguistics. Although Sapir discussed the phoneme, it was Bloomfield and his successors who developed the ways in which the principle was implemented in linguistic description. Although the two theorists were contemporaries and Sapir's influence extended through the 1930s and 1940s, the linguistic landscape of the USA in the 1940s was more favourable to the mechanistic and reductionist phonology which has been associated with Bloomfield and his successors. Sapir was eclipsed by Bloomfield as the field of linguistics became more professionalised and 'scientific'. Sapir was 'generally more interested in expanding the relation between the study of language and other domains than in the development of specifically linguistic methodology' (Anderson 1985:219). The dominance of Bloomfieldian phonology has been explained by linguistic historiographers Graffi (2001), Hymes and Fought (1981), and Robins (1979). For these reasons, the phonology that arrived in Australia owed more of its development to the 'post-Bloomfieldians' than to Sapir.

After McConnell and Laves there don't appear to have been strong links between Australian linguists and American linguistics until the 1950s, when American structuralist linguistics was introduced to Australia by the linguists of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Oates (2003:26) says that letters dated 10 January 1947 were sent to the London School of Oriental Languages (sic) and the SIL (Wycliffe Bible Translators) in the USA in order to teach linguistics to Australian missionaries. Dr Kenneth Pike responded and arrived in Australia in December 1949. Thus the Australian branch of SIL was established on an American rather than a British foundation.

4.4 Later developments in Australian phonology

Correspondence between Strehlow and Capell in the 1960s clearly shows that the issue of phonemic transcription wasn't resolved even in the early 1960s. Strehlow evidently had a disagreement with Capell over phonology in 1963. Apparently Capell wrote to Strehlow suggesting that he had discussed phonemes with Strehlow in the 1940s. In a letter to Capell, Strehlow countered that 'Your criticism of my phonetic spellings was expressed in phonetic terms, not, as you now put it, "on the phonemic level"' (Strehlow to Capell, 27 April 1963).

This may be a case of Capell's own inserting of ideas back into history, ideas that only gained general acceptance at a later date. As I have already indicated, the main source of theory for Strehlow, Capell and other linguists of the second period was Daniel Jones. As explained in §2.2, Jones held a different view of the phoneme than American writers and concentrated on the properties of sounds, not their distinctive characteristics. Capell also held the view of phoneme as a 'family of sounds', in common with other linguists of the second period in Australia. He didn't undertake phonemic analysis but advocated the use of IPA script to make as 'broad a transcription as possible', except where meanings needed to be distinguished. Here 'broad' can be understood to mean that the orthography represents only the fewest possible distinctions between sounds. Capell's approach was motivated by the needs of the orthography rather than by what was later understood as the 'phonemic principle'.

4.5 Paradigms in Australian speech science

The phonetic paradigm was a phase in the development of phonology and an important feature of the second stage in Australian linguistics. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will outline the main features of this paradigm.

As seen already, Australian languages were perceived to be dying out, and future researchers would need an accurate record of the language and its literature for future investigations.

Strehlow was primarily concerned with recording texts for posterity. Strehlow outlined his aims in his submission to the ANRC:

Thorough and accurate descriptions will be attempted for all sounds in all four dialects and a detailed comparison will be made between the Aranda sounds and those of European languages. It is hoped to have an account of the language which may be accurate enough to enable investigators of the future to have an intimate insight into the sounds and the pronunciations of a spoken Australian language' (Strehlow, submission to ANRC 1931).

Two related aspects of the above submission require comment: the focus upon the *sounds* of Arrernte and the *accuracy* of the transcription.

Strehlow's concern for future investigations into Arrernte led to him seeking to make as accurate a record of sounds as possible. In this context 'accurate' meant making a phonetic transcription, a full representation of the sounds that occurred, not only those that were distinctive. Phonetics was seen as a 'scientific' discipline because instruments could be used to make accurate measurements of sounds. The accurate measurement of sounds meant the differentiation of the greatest number of sounds and their representation with appropriate symbols.

Strehlow's use of diacritics to represent Arrernte sounds was an integral part of his concept of 'accuracy in transcription', in spite of the printing delays caused by their use. In their staff meeting of 21 May 1963, the Hermannsburg missionary personnel recommended that the diacritics be removed. Strehlow remained opposed to this, writing on 19 July 1963 to Phillip Scherer,

These diacritics are vitally important for the correct pronunciation of Aranda ... Since the younger aboriginal population is no longer being trained to learn the real myths and songs, whose learning once gave the Aranda adults their command over the full resources of the language, diacritics should be placed into all translated texts.

Another aspect of accuracy in transcription was the increasing use of technology such as the gramophone, X-ray photographs, and the kymograph. Linguists used an increasing amount of technology for the recording and description of sounds throughout the 1930s. Strehlow used a wire recorder which he borrowed from Adelaide University to obtain accurate records of speech. The main motivation for this was the accurate identification of sounds and the making of accurate recordings that could be used by future researchers. FitzHerbert hoped that instrumental techniques would 'enable a more exact determination to be made of certain sounds in some of the aboriginal languages' (FitzHerbert 1947:134).

5. Strehlow's *Aranda Grammar*

I will now account for some of the ways in which Strehlow described the grammar of Arrernte in his 1944 *Aranda grammar*. I will focus upon one construction in the language, comparing Strehlow's method of working with later developments. I describe characteristics of the grammatical paradigm within which Strehlow operated and compare this paradigm with those of later researchers of Australian languages showing that Strehlow's work is consistent with those of his contemporaries.

Strehlow (1944) stands between philology and structuralist linguistics and so, not surprisingly, we find a number of features of his description which belong to those of the earlier period. An example of this is his treatment of ergative case marking. Australian linguists tended to use the case systems developed for Latin and had difficulty in describing languages with ergative-absolutive morphology. Strehlow (1944) was content to describe the ergative case

as ‘Nominative II’. Writing shortly afterwards, Nekes and Worms (1953) used the word ‘agentive’, feeling that ‘nominative’ was misleading.

5.1 The development of grammar in Australia

Wilkins (1989:11–12) claims that Strehlow ‘does not employ many of the analytical practices already well known in linguistics by the 1940s’ without mentioning what those practices were or how they became available to isolated Australian linguists working in remote locations in the Australian outback. Just as the second period had its own distinctive phonetic paradigm of speech science, there are coherent aspects of the grammar of the second period of Australian linguistics.

One of the difficulties with Strehlow (1944) for the modern reader is that morphemes are not analysed individually (Wilkins 1989:11), but are presented only in categories that were taken from European languages. As with phonemics, the development in the theory of the morpheme also became established in Australia only with the extension of fieldwork methodology from the USA. There are, however, genuine difficulties in describing Arrernte morphology in morpheme-based approaches, as Koch (1990) documents for the closely related Kaytej language.

5.2 Comparisons with European languages

Linguists of the second period were aware that new terms and concepts were needed for the description of Australian languages. As Strehlow’s teacher FitzHerbert remarked (1947:132), ‘Mr JRB Love has shewn that for some NW Australian languages we need new terms for genders in addition to the old MF & N’. Strehlow grappled with aspects of Arrernte grammar that seemed alien to the European observer. In doing this he was not always successful (see Wilkins 1989:11). However, in those early stages it was inevitable that Australian languages were described in terms that were more appropriate for the description of European languages.

Strehlow’s description of Arrernte Grammar was clearly different from those made by American structuralists, who were influenced by linguistic relativity. A bifurcation is apparent between the two approaches.

Strehlow’s approach also contrasts markedly with that of the Norwegian linguist Alf Sommerfelt (1892–1965), who introduced structuralist linguistics into the Nordic countries. On the basis of an analysis of Arrernte from written sources, Sommerfelt claimed that it was a primitive language. Although familiar with the work of Sapir, Sommerfelt developed linguistic relativity in a way that was quite contrary to Sapir’s intentions. Alpher (1994:115) shows the degree to which Sommerfelt (1938) made spurious grammatical and semantic inferences about Arrernte. For example, Sommerfelt claimed that *name* ‘grass’ and *neme* ‘sit’ were etymologically related to each other because the two were conflated to *nama* in Carl Strehlow’s orthography. He went on to conclude that Arrernte did not distinguish nouns from verbs, and then also argued that there was also no category of ‘suffixes’ as distinct from either ‘nouns’ or ‘verbs’. He used this linguistic data as evidence that Arrernte was a ‘primitive’ language that made fewer distinctions than were made by European languages.

An important reason why *APG* was written was Strehlow’s wish to counter prevailing beliefs and to present Arrernte as a fully adequate language. That this is the avowed aim of the work is clear from Elkin’s introduction to *APG*. The way that Strehlow did this is by trying to find equivalent Arrernte forms for the grammatical forms of European languages. His ap-

proach may seem Eurocentric from the current perspective, but was actually based upon his desire to portray the complexity of the Arrernte language:

Some idea of the high complexity of an Australian aboriginal language is afforded by a study of the conjugational system in Aranda. The Aranda verb by means of agglutinating verbal suffixes and infixes can express no less than 95 tense forms, 4 voices and 3 numbers. (Strehlow 1947a:174)

In contrast with Sommerfelt, Strehlow did not regard the lack of some grammatical categories in Arrernte as evidence of a lack of mental capacity of speakers but rather a matter of ‘cultural non-necessity’, which required explanation and justification. Some categories seemed noticeably under-represented in Arrernte including numerals, abstract nouns and passives.

Strehlow claimed that the Arrernte language has two voices, active and reflexive. He made this division because he was unable to find distinct passive forms. His understanding of passives was taken from Jespersen (1922:167). Strehlow relates the idea that Arrernte had a ‘more concrete form of expression’ and doesn’t need passive forms (Strehlow 1944:110–111). The Arrernte ‘reflexive’ is used to express a meaning close to agentless passive in meaning as shown by the following example from Strehlow (1944:94):

- (1) *atūa erarpa tu-la-ka*
 man 3SG-NOM hit-Reflexive-PAST
 ‘The man hit himself.’

Limitations have been imposed upon the description of this morpheme by the use of the term ‘reflexive’ to describe it. (The lateral in this morpheme had not yet been identified as lamino-dental [l̥]—see §4.2). This polysemous morpheme can be used when the Subject of the sentence undergoes an action that it did not initiate. This goes beyond ‘reflexive’ in the sense of ‘do to self’. In studying the related morpheme in the related Alyawarr language I concluded that there is no unambiguous meaning for this suffix. Rather, it combines with various tense and aspect markers to achieve a range of meanings which correspond to reflexive, agentless passive and antipassive. It can emphasise verbal activity and lower sentence valency. Defocusing of the agent and reduced emphasis on the object/patient occurs with a corresponding emphasis on the activity. It is often associated with ‘unsuccessful outcome’, ‘lack of completion’ and ‘continuous action’ (Moore 2002:9). For example, the gloss in (1) could be rendered ‘the man had an accident’. Strehlow’s labeling of the morpheme as ‘reflexive’ led him to reify the meaning of the word reflexive and to miss understanding the range of uses of the category. There is detailed discussion of the variety of uses of this morpheme in Henderson and Dobson (1994:460).

5.3 Paradigms in *Australian Grammar*

I now describe aspects of Strehlow (1944) which were clearly influenced by the philological tradition and comment upon the main aspects of this grammatical paradigm. Strehlow’s linguistic approach often seems to have been formal and prescriptive rather than descriptive.

Strehlow shared the views of many philologists who were concerned to learn languages in order to understand the literature of a people. Hymes and Fought (1981:56) have noted the importance of the extension and ‘universalizing’ of philology to people and languages without philologies of their own. As late as 1947 Strehlow’s teacher FitzHerbert emphasised that a ‘thorough and instinctive knowledge of a language with its declensions, conjugations and syntax, is a necessary preliminary to collecting and studying its traditional literature and thought’ (FitzHerbert 1947:136).

Of primary importance for Strehlow and FitzHerbert was the study of traditional literature. Where no written texts exist, literature must be created. Thus Strehlow's primary goal was the collection of texts and their accurate transcription for future investigations. The transcription of texts was a dominant ethnographic procedure in the late nineteenth century (Sanjek 1990:197) and occupies an intermediate position between philology and descriptive linguistics of the twentieth century.

The Arrernte language was changing in the contact situation, and these changes were evident to Strehlow. The need to record texts was made more urgent by the belief that the older language is purer and that changes in the language are corruptions. It is evident that Strehlow set out to create a standard language by fixing or prescribing the standards by which Arrernte was spoken. He invariably worked with the Arrernte elders such as Moses Tjalkabota because they spoke the 'purer and less corrupted' language. This involved recording the language of the older men rather than investigating the language of the wider speech community:

I hope that opportunities will arise soon for testing this grammar on these original texts which have been noted down by actual dictation from the leading old men of each Aranda group; these original texts alone can be the final arbiters by whom the accuracy of my Grammar can be judged. (Strehlow 1942:71)

Strehlow concentrated upon songs, a restricted form of the language used only by initiated men. The classical tradition also focused upon the literary language of the elites rather than spoken language. Strehlow thought that a standard literary language would eventually become the spoken form through the influence of the Hermannsburg Mission. Words such as *alkaralkara* which originally meant 'shining, bright' would be adopted as the word for 'glory' by developing abstract nouns from adjectives (*APG*, p.87).

6. Changes in the linguistic landscape

As argued in §2, an understanding of trends in British linguistics from 1930–1960 is essential to understanding Australian linguistics of the second period. During the 1950s British linguistics moved beyond its earlier concern with phonetics to a concern with meaning. This came about with the founding in 1930 of the School of Oriental Studies, later the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). A form of structuralist linguistics was developed which became known as the London school.

Strehlow travelled to London by ship in 1949, returning to Australia in 1952 after a brief tour of Europe. He was a student at London University in 1950 and 1951, studying at the London School under John Rupert Firth (1890–1960), who had been appointed to the first chair in linguistics in Britain in 1944.

6.1 Characteristics of the London School under J.R. Firth

Like the North American descriptive tradition, the London School was motivated by the need to understand 'exotic' languages; in their case, languages of Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Both traditions were based on the Saussurean principles of synchronic and systemic analysis of language, and both used the inductive method. Both were also influenced by ethnography. In the case of Firth, this was the ethnographic tradition established by Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942).

Anderson (1985:169), Seuren (1998:168) and Henson (1974, *passim*) note the pragmatic character of British approaches to scientific linguistics. Henson (1974) has noted that there

was very little implementation of Firth's theory of semantics, probably the only notable work being T.F. Mitchell's (1957) 'The language of buying and selling in Cyrenaica: a situational statement'. The absence of useful generalisations and the lack of transferable field methods meant that Strehlow and others influenced by the London School tradition had difficulty in applying what they had learnt to the field situation.

There were some affinities between the London School and other schools of linguistics but the London School was isolated and insular until the 1960s. According to Palmer in the introduction to J.R. Firth's papers of 1952–1959, 'there was little contact with the American linguists of the forties and fifties' (Palmer 1968:2). Firth reacted negatively to the exclusion of meaning from the analysis of language which was characteristic of American structuralism, and had little time for their 'mechanical procedures'.

6.2 The influence of the London School upon Strehlow

Firth wanted Strehlow to re-write his work according to the approach of the London School. It is evident from reading Strehlow's London Diaries that he had sharp disagreements with his teachers in London and felt as though he had been treated as a 'colonial' who had little to contribute. In spite of these difficulties, Strehlow's approach to linguistics changed decisively. Strehlow came to adopt Firth's understanding of meaning as 'function in context', and became more interested in language in its social context. Strehlow learned the classification of sentence types in terms of their 'uses', such as 'narrative use' and 'conversational use'. He understood speech as having a variety of functions including building solidarity between speakers of a language, not only conveying information.

Strehlow's paper 'Man and language' (Strehlow 1967) is based extensively upon Firth's views (as expressed in particular in Firth 1957) that language and culture are inseparable, and a description of language must be function-based.

Firth's emphasis upon the exhaustive description of all aspects of a language resonated with Strehlow, who thought that researchers should familiarise themselves with the people whom they were studying (Gill 1998:115):

it is clear that there is, in fact, no easy short cut available for a linguist to take who wants to compile an adequate account of any language. Not only must he be familiar with all aspects of the psychology and institutions of the people whose language he is describing, but he must record also as large and complete a body of texts as he can—texts which illustrate, if possible, all types of situations that may confront a speaker of that language. (Strehlow 1956:4)

6.3 Strehlow's dictionary

London School influence can be seen in Strehlow's dictionary. Before Strehlow left Britain in 1951, Firth told him about the UNESCO conference that was being held in France. At the conference, guidelines were established for the compilation of dictionaries. Apparently these guidelines influenced Strehlow's dictionary work.

There were high expectations of the dictionary because more lexicographical work had been done in Arrernte than any other Australian language. Wurm (1972) predicted that this Dictionary would contain about 30,000 entries. In a letter to FitzHerbert dated 15 August 1952, Strehlow claimed that the dictionary would be the 'first complete Dictionary ever made of any Australian native language.'

Strehlow collected a large number of vocabulary items and draft files for the dictionary and also had a large number of entries carded and ready for publication. This work, dated 6 December 1957 and containing some 3160 entries, remains unpublished.

Strehlow distinguished transitive and intransitive verbs by the use of the first person transitive and intransitive first person singular pronouns in the headwords, respectively *ãthq* and *jijã*. This convention dates back at least as far as the work of R.H. Mathews.

One aspect of the dictionary is that entries beginning with different sounds, for instance *ɾ*, *ɽ* and *r*, are put together. The words are listed as though they followed English alphabetical order and as though the diacritical marks which distinguish each letter (representing dental, alveolar and retroflex) have no significance. This approach is in contrast with that of Boas (see also Hymes and Fought 1981:87, footnote 23).

6.4 The beginnings of the third period of Australian linguistics

The year 1960 is a convenient date for marking the third period of Australian linguistics (Capell 1971; Wurm 1972; see also McGregor, this volume). During the third period, linguistics attained the status of an autonomous science practised by professional linguists. The SIL, which had held its first school in Australia in 1951, established an Australian branch in 1961. In 1963 *Pacific Linguistics* was established as a specifically linguistic publishing concern. The first university department of linguistics was established at Monash in 1965; subsequently many others were created in Australian universities.

Strehlow was involved in the study of culture and texts, which had come to be seen by American structuralists as outside the scope of linguistics and in the domain of anthropology and literary criticism. This fed the perception that Strehlow was not a linguist. His formation as a linguist had occurred at an earlier period in history and he found himself embattled, and at odds with changes in the linguistic landscape that occurred during this period.

By the 1950s, Strehlow was operating within the structuralist paradigm, which suited him well because of his in-depth knowledge of one language and its dialects. The early 1960s saw the emergence of an interest in survey work, and lexicostatistical studies began to dominate Australian linguistics, especially in the work of Stephen Wurm, Geoffrey O'Grady and Ken Hale. Strehlow encouraged others to study languages in depth. Thus when Geoffrey N. O'Grady wrote to Strehlow seeking linguistic advice in the 1950s, Strehlow replied in terms that were 'very encouraging', with the comment 'let the sky be the limit' (O'Grady 2003, pers.comm.).

7. Conclusions

I have attempted to portray Strehlow's work in a way that is neither laudatory nor dismissive. Recent histories of Australian linguistics have ignored the contribution Strehlow, even to the extent that he has not been recognised as a linguist. The second period of linguistics seems to have been ignored almost completely by Australianists, in the familiar process whereby one generation denounces the work of the previous generation. The lack of historiographic research has meant that accepted views of the second period of Australian linguistics have been ahistorical and anachronistic.

Strehlow's work is representative of linguistic work of the second period of Australian linguistics, in which he was one of the dominant figures. Historically, Strehlow's work straddles that of the historical approach of nineteenth-century philology and twentieth-century structuralism.

The second period of linguistics in Australia forms a coherent paradigm in the Kuhnian sense (1962). Australian linguists of the second period were most influenced by linguistic trends in Britain, and this was particularly the case at Adelaide University. In the 1950s and 1960s linguistic research on Australian languages became influenced by American descriptivism, and what came to be regarded as ‘linguistics’. There has been a steady cumulative growth of linguistic theory in Australia where researchers have built upon the work of previous researchers rather than being inspired individually. The second period of linguistics was a necessary one for the development of the discipline. It was a time when essential questions about Australian languages were being asked, and the first serious attempts were being made to treat Australian languages comprehensively.

Strehlow was unique. His upbringing at Hermannsburg and his early immersion in the Arrernte language gave him a definite advantage over those who had previously attempted to describe Australian languages, although he overstated his competence as a speaker of Arrernte. Two aspects of Strehlow’s work stand out. One is his attention to detail, which motivated him to make accurate recordings, and to show Arrernte as a sophisticated language worthy of study. After *APG*, nobody could claim that Aboriginal people spoke languages without grammars and with few words. The second major theme of Strehlow’s work, reinforced by the London School, was his belief that a thorough knowledge of the entire culture of a people is necessary to an understanding of their language. A researcher must spend adequate time doing fieldwork; there are no ‘short-cuts’.

Appendix 1: Arrernte phonemes

Table 10.2: Consonants

	Bilabial	Velar	Apical Alveolar	Retroflex	Laminal post- Alveolar	Interdental
unvoiced	p^a	k	t	rt	ty	th
Stop	p	k	t	ɽ	tj	ɸ
voiced	b	g	d			
Pre-stopped	pm	kng			tny	tnh
Nasal	pm	kŋ			tnj	tɸ
Nasal	m	ng	n	rn	ny	nh
	m	ŋ	n	ɽ	nj	ɸ
Lateral			l	rl	ly	lh
			l	ɽ	lj	ɸ
Rhotic			rr			
			r			
Glide	w	h	r		y	
	w ɸ	ɸ	ɸ		j	

^a The symbols of the current standard orthography are above in bold; those from Strehlow’s *Aranda Phonetics* are below in plain type. Note that:

- When **e** follows a rounded consonant (written with a **w**), it will sound like a high back rounded vowel, [u] if there is a following consonant.
- When **e** follows a palatal consonant (written with a **y**), it will sound like a mid to high front vowel, ‘i’ if there is a following consonant.
- Otherwise (i.e. at the end of a word) it will sound like a /ə/ (schwa), or not be pronounced (especially in running speech).

Table 10.3: Vowels

Front	Mid		Back	
i ^a			w e	
i:			u:	
	i	y		
	ye	ẽ	ū	o:
e:		ě	e ə	ũ
e		ǎ		õ
		ạ̌		
ε				ɔ
			ɑ	ɔ:
a		a	ɑ, ɑ:	

^a The standard Arandic orthography is shown in bold and Strehlow’s *Aranda phonetics* is shown in plain type. This table is adapted from Hoogenraad (1988).

Appendix 2: A timeline of events in linguistics

Date	Events in Strehlow’s life	Events in Australian linguistics	British and American linguistics
1908	Theodor Strehlow born, Hermannsburg NT		
1911			Boas: <i>Handbook of American Indian languages</i>
1916			Saussure: <i>Cours</i>
1921			Sapir: <i>Language</i> Daniel Jones Professor of Phonetics at London

Date	Events in Strehlow's life	Events in Australian linguistics	British and American linguistics
1922	Leaves Hermannsburg Mission. Journey to Horseshoe Bend.		Jespersen: <i>Language</i>
1925		Radcliffe-Brown at Sydney until 1931 Elkin studies in London	Sapir at Chicago Sapir: <i>Sound patterns in a language</i>
1926		First chair of anthropology in Sydney; Radcliffe-Brown appointed	
1927		Spencer and Gillen: <i>The Arunta</i>	Jones: <i>Pronunciation of English</i>
1928	Studies classics at Adelaide	First ANRC expedition	
1929		Gerhardt Laves studies Australian languages until 1931	
1930	March: changes studies to English literature	<i>Oceania</i> journal established	SOAS established
1931	Strong dies	Raymond Firth at Sydney	Sapir at Yale; establishes Anthropology
1932	Completes Honours degree 4 May—begins field work		
1933			Bloomfield: <i>Language</i> Sapir: <i>The psychological reality of phonemes</i>
1934	Early drafts of <i>Aranda Phonetics</i> available	Elkin at Sydney University Anthropology	
1935		Capell studies in London	
1936	Patrol Officer, Jay Creek		
1938	Type-written version of Strehlow's grammar available	Capell: northern Australian field trip	
1940		Capell: publication of the results of northern Australian field trip	
1941	Called up for war service		J.R. Firth at SOAS
1942	<i>Aranda Phonetics</i> in <i>Oceania</i>		

Date	Events in Strehlow's life	Events in Australian linguistics	British and American linguistics
1944	<i>Aranda phonetics and grammar</i> published		J.R. Firth: first chair of General Linguistics in Great Britain
1947	<i>Aranda traditions</i> published Paper: <i>Anthropology and the study of languages</i> Appointed reader in Australian linguistics, Adelaide		Pike: <i>Phonemics</i>
1949	<i>The importance of language</i> (radio talk)		Jones retires
1950	London School, studies with J. R. Firth until 1951	Kenneth Pike visits Australia	
1951		First SIL summer school held near Melbourne	
1952	Visits Europe on speaking tour, returns to Australia		
1953		Nekes and Worms: <i>Australian languages</i>	
1955		Douglas uses phoneme analysis in language of Ooldea	
1956	<i>Aranda Bible translation</i> published	O'Grady goes to work with Capell	J.R. Firth retires
1957	<i>Are there any primitive languages?</i> (radio talk)		Chomsky: <i>Syntactic structures</i>
1959		Hale in Australia until 1961	
1961	Attends research conference for opening AIAS as adviser in linguistics	AIAS established Australian SIL established	
1962	Two papers: <i>Aboriginal Australia: languages and literature</i> <i>Aboriginal language, religion and society in Central Australia</i>		
1963		<i>Pacific Linguistics</i> established	
1964	Scherer working on <i>Aranda dictionary</i> until 1967		

Date	Events in Strehlow's life	Events in Australian linguistics	British and American linguistics
1965		First Australian Linguistics Department established at Monash	
1967	<i>Man and language</i> (address)		
1969	<i>Journey to Horseshoe Bend</i>		
1970	Professor of Australian Linguistics, Adelaide		
1971	<i>Songs of Central Australia</i>		
1973	Strehlow retires		
1974		The School of Australian Linguistics established in Darwin	
1977	Establishes Strehlow Research Foundation		
1978	Strehlow dies		

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11 *A history of the 1842 Descriptive Vocabulary*

DAVID CAMPBELL MOORE¹

1. Introduction

The Noongar (Nyungar) language of the southwest region of Western Australia has a large number of documenters compared with other Australian languages. The *Descriptive Vocabulary* was published by George Fletcher Moore in 1842 and built upon the earlier works of Lyon (1833) and Grey (1839, 1840). The purpose of this paper is to account for the formation of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* of the Noongar language, considering the various sources and the nature of their contributions. I will develop a chronology for the development of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* of the Noongar, listing significant dates. I will also identify sources for the *Descriptive Vocabulary* which will be useful in further research on this topic.

This paper is an attempt to gather some of the contemporary sources of knowledge in the hope that we will be able to understand the purpose and methods of the Western Australian researchers as well as some of the influences on their work.

This paper assesses the criticisms and comments upon the dictionary by both linguists and historians. We must consider the historical development of linguistics and the kinds of factors which influenced this development. This involves ‘external’ and non-linguistic factors, including what O’Grady (1971) refers to as ‘logistic’ factors. These factors are necessary to an understanding of what the early settlers of Western Australia had to contend with in describing a people, a language and a landscape which was alien to them. Sources for understanding this work are necessarily non-linguistic and include journals, diaries and newspapers.

There was growth and specialisation in many disciplines during the nineteenth century. I hope to show that those who were trained in classics, were in touch with major scientific organisations of their time and who had diverse interests were well positioned to undertake a major work of lexicography in the 1830s, and that these settlers made the maximum possible use of resources that were available in their time. Their output must be weighed against what materials they were able to access in one of Britain’s most remote colonies. I have made some comments about the German missionaries Christian G. Teichelmann and Clamor T. Schür-

1 I would like to acknowledge my aunt Jillian Moore, who has thoroughly searched the JS Batty Library in Perth for sources of early Western Australian history. I would also like to acknowledge Alan Dench (UWA) who provided me with information about the history of studies of the Noongar language.

mann, who published their work in 1840, as their work was not done in complete isolation from the work of the Western Australians.

1.1 Questions and issues

O'Grady (1971) notes that 'in the course of the development of linguistic science during the twentieth century, lexicographic work on the less prestigious languages of the world has been largely neglected' and that this is especially true of the two hundred Aboriginal languages of Australia. He considers that the *Descriptive Vocabulary* is one of only four dictionaries that were completed in the nineteenth century, and he lists 'linguistic' and 'logistic' reasons for this. He dates the work to 1884, in the second half of the nineteenth century. The dictionary was in fact published in 1842. The *Descriptive Vocabulary* was only later published together with Moore's *Diary of Ten Years* in 1884. The only dictionary first published in the second half of the nineteenth century meeting O'Grady's criteria was, according to O'Grady, Taplin (1878)—probably (1879a). According to O'Grady's criteria of one thousand lexical entries, the 1500-word vocabulary published by George Grey (1839, second edition 1840) also qualifies as a dictionary. This dictionary formed the basis for the *Descriptive Vocabulary* of 1842.

This paper questions current assumptions and puts forward some reasons why the *Descriptive Vocabulary* and other dictionaries were able to appear in such a short time after the settlement of Western Australia in 1829. O'Grady acknowledges that the *Descriptive Vocabulary* shows greater detail in its glosses than much of the work of a later date. Dixon *et al.* (1990:36) claim that the work of the Western Australians represents the best work that was done in a capital city. Simpson (1993:133) notes that after the 'burst of dictionary publishing encouraged by Grey in South Australia in the 1840s interest in publishing dictionaries declined.' This is evidently also the case in Western Australia. Rather than a uniform increase in accuracy in transcription and detail given in glosses, there was a decline in the quality of the linguistic description in Western Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. This state of affairs requires explanation.

1.2 Structure and outline

In the first part of this paper, I will make general comments upon the *Descriptive Vocabulary* informed by linguistic historiography.

Secondly, I consider the contributors and their respective contributions. I begin with O'Grady's work and take a closer look at the work of the lexicographers, working through the questions that O'Grady raises and attempting to provide answers for at least some of them.

Lastly, I consider some distinctive aspects of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. As O'Grady notes, there are practical aspects of the dictionary which can well be taken note of by scholars working in the field of lexicography today. I will focus upon the domain of birds to illustrate distinctive features of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*.

1.3 The *Descriptive Vocabulary* in linguistic historiography

As linguistics became a separate and distinct discipline during the twentieth century and its practitioners became increasingly concerned with being 'scientific', the scope of its inquiry narrowed.

When O'Grady wrote (1971) there were only eight published dictionaries representing all of the languages of Australia. He noted that most of the lexicographical work of that time remained unpublished. In the nineteenth century 'a much larger proportion of the wordlists and

dictionaries which were compiled eventually appeared in print' (O'Grady 1971:780). He claims that they were published because of 'an exaggerated notion of the importance of the lexicon in the study of a language.' This last comment involves the insertion of the standards of a later age into an earlier date in history, as though the writers were primarily focused upon the task of linguistic description according to the standards and goals of the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps we should now consider the factor just acknowledged: the number of dictionaries that were actually published in the period reflects the fact that lexicography became less important for the linguists of the third period of Australian linguistics (see McGregor, this volume) during the 'decade of grammar' in the 1970s (Goddard and Thieberger 1997:178). The motivations of the compilers are further discussed in §1.4.

In spite of its value to ethnography there has been hardly any recognition of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* within the tradition of history of linguistics in Australia. No mention of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* is made in Capell (1971) or Wurm (1972).

O'Grady blames high printing costs and the remoteness of intact Aboriginal languages as reasons why dictionaries remained unpublished in the third period of Australian linguistics. This was even more the case for the early period. As indicated in Bennett and Strauss (1998: 25) 'The cost of publishing in the colonies, when all the materials had to be imported, was exorbitant, and less than half of the items listed up to 1849 in Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia* (1941–86) had an Australian imprint'. Both Grey and Moore eventually published their works in London after lengthy sea voyages because of the high cost of publishing books in the colonies (see §3.8).

There is also the high cost of maintaining linguists in the field. O'Grady credits the early lexicographers with boundless enthusiasm for the task often motivated by missionary concerns. The lexicographers were, fortunately, not aware that their transcriptions were 'seriously marred by phonemic underdifferentiation, otherwise they would not have published'. As I will explain later, their transcriptions were principled, and they were guided by the best information available to them.

A question that is raised by O'Grady: were the physical conditions for linguists in the first period (see McGregor, this volume) any easier than in the third? Undoubtedly the lexicographers had good access to speakers of the language and were able to spend extended periods of time in contact with speakers of Australian languages. But it was hardly the case that they had 'a large amount of free time in which to pursue their lexicographic investigations'. Western Australia suffered the disadvantages of isolation, a small population and workforce, and was economically vulnerable until at least 1850. To quote from Glen McLaren, 'In contrast to Britain there was little re-orienting of research away from purely pragmatic and commercial' (McLaren 1996:55).

The Western Australians were motivated by the practical concerns of a frontier society. This is why many of the entries in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* mention the practical value to settlers of the referent and give practical information of the kind that would be useful for settlers and travellers in the bush. Below is an example of an entry which underlines the importance of bushcraft to the early Western Australian settlers:

Nanyt, s. Plectolophos; the white cockatoo with a lemon-coloured crest; the most easily tamed of any of the tribe. Where these birds are found, the traveller in the bush may generally rely upon finding water. (Moore 1884:50)

1.4 Motivations

In addition to the practical concerns noted above, the search for the origins of language and the belief that all of the Aboriginal languages were related was one of Grey's main concerns.

There was one linguistic concern, and that was to provide materials in previously undescribed languages. Another reason was to facilitate communication between Aboriginal people and settlers and to spread the knowledge of the gospel among Aboriginal people. Robert Menli Lyon (see §3.2) was progressive in his concern that the colonial authorities should understand Aboriginal languages and went so far as to say that ‘it is impossible—it is utter folly to attempt to govern any people without a knowledge of their language’ (Lyon 1833:52).

2. The formation of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*

2.1 Cooperation between researchers

One important factor in compiling the *Descriptive Vocabulary* was the cooperation between different researchers which enabled them to build on each other’s work. Where cooperative research has been the pattern, the result has been more detailed work and more refined and accurate description of the language.

The various correspondents involved in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* were situated in different parts of the south-west of Western Australia in areas that were representative of the language. They were in communication and were able to compare information gathered from a wide area.

Grey and Moore were already familiar with the Perth dialect of the language when they travelled to other parts of the colony. This enabled them to make comparisons with other Australian languages and dialects. For example, during Moore’s 1836 trip to Champion Bay (described in Grey’s Exploration journals of 1838–1839, Grey 1841:131), he was able to compare his knowledge of the Perth language with the language of Champion Bay (Geraldton).

2.2 History and philosophy of linguistics

Simpson (1993:123) compares the Oxford (New) English Dictionary with Teichelmann and Schürmann’s Kurna dictionary of 1840 and adds that this is perhaps not a fair comparison. Roy Harris mentions the importance of the development of dictionaries in Europe to the history of linguistics (Harris 1980:149). It is likely that the early vocabularies of Australia were influenced by the kinds of dictionaries which the researchers had encountered. Aarsleff (1967:5) describes the beginning of philology in Britain around 1830. The speculative etymologising of philosophical linguistics of the late eighteenth century had delayed the influence of the new philology from the Continent. In the nineteenth century the earlier approach associated with John Horne Tooke (1736–1812) gave way to the empirical study of national languages and the publication of dictionaries. The Philological Society was founded in London in 1842. A number of publications appeared in Britain in the framework of the new philology, including many Anglo-Saxon publications, Liddell and Scott’s *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell and Scott 1845), and the *New (Oxford) English Dictionary*, the first instalments of which were published in 1884.

George Grey belonged to the generation who were being influenced by the new developments in philology in Britain. He promoted and encouraged the publication of wordlists and dictionaries in South Australian languages (see Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume) such as those of Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840), Meyer (1843) and Schürmann (1844). Grey went to South Australia in March 1840 and took with him a copy of his vocabulary, which had been published in Perth (Grey 1839). The influence of Grey on the German missionaries is revealed in the following quote from C.W. Schürmann:

[Grey had] visited us, bringing some of his papers and encouraging us to print our dictionary before someone else did so. We accompanied him home and talked of many things concerning the natives (Schürmann 1987:101).

Later they showed their papers to Grey who approved of their work. Schürmann acknowledged Grey in his vocabulary of the Parnkalla language published in 1844 (Schürmann 1844).

Hay (1981:604) asserts that the early researchers in Western Australia were ‘amateur lexicographers’ and that ‘richly symbolic oral traditions of Aboriginal culture were not perceived by settlers’. Most lexicographers of the time were amateurs. The editor of the *New (Oxford) English Dictionary*, James Murray, was a teacher, bank clerk and amateur lexicographer when he took on the massive task of editing the dictionary. Also, Grey and Moore collected extensive stories, as I claim in §4.3.

In addition, the task of compiling a dictionary was closely tied with their professional responsibilities as can be seen in the individual profiles in section 3.

2.3 The role of classical languages

O’Grady is correct in his assertion that early researchers ‘brought a certain amount of linguistic insight derived from their studies of the languages of antiquity’ (O’Grady 1971:780).

Although the lexicographers spoke English as a first language, their knowledge of classical languages would surely have predisposed them towards recognising the need for the different values of sounds in a language. This raises the question of how much a writer’s knowledge of other languages influences their transcription even if those other languages are only literary languages. Lyon thought that his familiarity with Hebrew helped him to pronounce the velar nasal *ng*, which is not found at the beginning of English words,

I am afraid few of my readers will catch the proper pronunciation of the letters *ng*, when combined. No one but a Hebrew scholar can form any idea of the sound, which these characters are intended to convey. (Lyon 1833:56)

He also mentions that Noongar has ‘the ayin in perfection’ (referring to one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet), although he doesn’t identify this sound in Noongar words. In addition the compilers of the dictionary were educated and often had some prior interest and training in the classical languages. John Bussell later became a teacher of classical languages in Perth. The awareness of the differences between languages would have been critical in the appreciation and awareness of Australian languages with their different phonetic, grammatical and semantic systems.

2.4 The role of the Colonial Government

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* was a government-sponsored work that involved the governor and the governing elite of the Western Australian colony. The dictionary was not a work of isolated individuals with limited access to information. The involvement of government officials ensured that a lot of time was devoted to this work and that an experienced and capable staff was involved in the project.

George Grey was responsible for encouraging the development of three of the four detailed dictionaries of Australian languages that were published in the nineteenth century. One question is the degree to which Grey’s Noongar dictionary of 1839 might have influenced the dictionary of Teichelmann and Schürmann, which was published at the end of 1840.

While Grey had a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for the task, he admitted that he had hardly been in Western Australia long enough to make a careful study of the language. This task was left to settlers who were in long-term contact with Aboriginal language informants.

Moore (1884:376) recorded that whenever he was in Perth, he met with Governor Hutt and Mr Armstrong, the interpreter, to develop the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. By April 1839 they had completed the letter 'A'. Moore was in constant contact with many Aboriginal people: Weeip, Gear, and Tomghin. He reports (Moore 1884:379) that he was known as *warda gadak* or 'one having authority', the word being composed of a word *warda* with the addition of a suffix:

Warda, s.—Fame, renown, news, the recent track of any animal, such as the fresh particles of sand left by the opossum's claws on the bark when climbing up trees, which immediately show the natives that the animal is to be found there. (Moore 1884:73)

Ga-dak, a.—Never used except in composition; having; possessing- as *Warda gadak*; having fame; a man of renown or authority. (Moore 1884:27)

In May 1839 Grey returned from an expedition to the Kimberley region of Western Australia and was in contact with Moore. It was during this time that they may have discussed the publication of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*.

2.5 Additions and improvements

The 1842 work is not the inspiration of a single individual but consists of insights from different authors making a contribution throughout the 1830s and culminating in the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. The lexicographers made use of all the information that was available to them. Grey and Moore used the earlier work of Lyon, which they adjusted in various ways.

Lyon tended to etymologise and was prepared to change the spelling of a word in accordance with his etymology. Thus he spelled a word he said was pronounced *yoolangery* 'babe' as *goolangooree* because the word was 'derived from the same root' as *goolang* a 'youth or boy': 'but it is so evidently derived from the same root with the following words that I have ventured to retain what I conceive to be the proper orthography' (Lyon 1833:56).² He also includes the words *Goodjat* 'the name of the supreme' and *Moonak* 'the place where the Deity is more immediately supposed to display his presence; Heaven'. The *Descriptive Vocabulary* includes, more realistically, *Gudjyt* 'the sky' (Moore 1884:30) and *Monak* 'clear, fine, sunshiny weather' (Moore 1884:55). Lyon would have been educated through the late eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century. His interest in etymology and finding the original forms of the spelling of words may reflect the interests of linguistics in the late eighteenth century. Lyon's interest in orthoepy – which involved finding the original forms of the spelling of words and their correct pronunciation, and etymology—represents a typical concern of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The study of letters was a traditional part of grammar, including how letters are used to express sounds and form words and the prescriptive notion of whether they were 'correct' or not. Orthoepy was the precursor of phonetics, which would only develop later in the 19th century.

Lyon was a generation older than Grey and this may be why there are quite noticeable differences in their work. Grey (1841:216) referred to someone who published a vocabulary of the King George's Sound dialect with numerals going up to ten which has been 'largely quoted from by other writers'. Grey was dismissive of this work, saying that there were only

2 The *Descriptive Vocabulary* contains the word *yulangera* Moore (1884:83) which means 'a woman who is old and has had children', and *yulang-idi* which means 'fruitful, having had children'.

words for numerals up to four. The work Grey referred to could have been that of Lyon, which lists words for numbers up to ten.

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* contains few of the etymologising or speculative observations which typify Lyon's work. Lyon's explanation for the word *Widji Bandi* 'gun' was that the first word is based upon *Widji* 'emu' and meaning 'having the speed of an emu', and that the second word, *Bandi*, is onomatopoeic. Moore translates the second word as 'shank or leg' explaining the meaning as 'perhaps from the thin handle part of a gun stock resembling in its carving the rough grain of the skin of an emu's leg'.

Moore made some additions and changes to Grey's vocabulary (Grey 1839). He added a listing of English words with their Noongar equivalents to the existing 'Australian and English' section. Letters such as 'f' and 'v' which represent sounds that do not occur in Noongar were eliminated from the *Descriptive Vocabulary* of 1842.

Another change is the addition of the ergative case marked under *Ngadjul* 'I will' alongside *Ngad-jo* 'I' in the dictionary entries. These pronouns are not listed in Grey's table of pronouns (Grey 1840:xxi). Moore makes the distinction between nominative and ergative forms of the pronoun which would have resulted from a longer-term study of the language (although he didn't use these terms, which were only applied later to these categories). Ergative marking was also noticed by the South Australian researchers and Threlkeld in New South Wales.

He also added a lot more ethnographic information. Most of the bird names seem to have been added by Moore, as they are not present in Grey's vocabulary of 1840. This probably indicates that Moore had more opportunity to correlate the Noongar names with the list of Australian bird species which John Gould (1804–1881) was developing (Gould 1837–1838, 1840–1848).

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* was not published with a separate section on the grammar of the language. However, Charles Symmons (§3.5) published a grammatical description of Noongar in 1841.

2.6 The role of scientific organisations

In the discipline of lexicography, many fields were investigated and the challenge for the lexicographers was to record all of this information accurately. It was a project for those whose interests were diverse and who had sharp powers of observation. McLaren (1996:57) believes that 1830 marks a turning point in the development of science in Britain. This was still the age of the polymath, McLaren notes, before the professionalisation of the scientific disciplines.

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* was conceived during the 1830s, a decade in which there was an unparalleled increase in the growth of science and the establishment of learned societies in Britain and its colonies. The Royal Geographical society was founded in 1830 as the Geographical Society of London, becoming the Royal Geographical Society in 1856. Its main purpose was the development of the discipline of geography although inevitably in the early stages of development it covered many fields of investigation. Word lists of indigenous languages were published in the *Geographical Journal*.

One of the founding members of the society, Robert Brown, had been the botanist on Flinder's circumnavigation of Australia and took a keen interest in Western Australia. In the first volume of the journal, there were three articles about Western Australia, including one by Scott Nind (Nind 1831). Grey's expeditions of 1837–1838 were the first Australian expeditions backed by the society. According to Cameron (1980:46), the years 1842–1862 'coincided with the nadir of the Society's financial fortunes'. The initial interest in Australia

waned and few articles about Western Australia were published in the *Geographical Journal* after the 1830s. Moore read the *Transactions of the Geographical Society* (Moore 1884:143). Any literature that was available was seized upon by early settlers who did their best to inform themselves about a variety of subjects, especially as they perceived that they were ‘cut off from any participation in the progress of general literature and the advances of science’ (Moore 1884:285).

3. Sources for the *Descriptive Vocabulary*

3.1 Early wordlists

In this section I consider the different contributions of early settlers to the formation of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. One of the first descriptions of Western Australian Aboriginal life was that of Scott Nind, who spent time at King Georges Sound in Albany in the late 1820s. Nind’s descriptions included a word list of about 200 words, which was published in the first edition of the *Geographical Journal* (Nind 1831). Nind thought that the languages of Australia very different and that tribes two hundred miles apart would not be able to understand one another. This contrasts with the opinion of Grey, who argued for the ‘radical unity’ of all Australian languages. The French explorer Jules Dumont D’Urville also made word lists of words from the Albany region (1834).

The degree to which these early wordlists might have influenced the *Descriptive Vocabulary* is unclear. However, they were aware of the wordlist of David Collins (1756–1810) who was resident in Sydney and made a list of words from the Dharuk language (Collins 1804). They were also aware of the work of Lancelot Threlkeld (1788–1889), who published a grammar of the Awabakal language of New South Wales (Threlkeld 1834) and short wordlists (Moore 1884:ix).

I take Lyon’s articles in the *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* of 1833 to be the starting point for the dictionary. In the following subsections, I provide biographical information on each contributor, and outline their individual contributions to the *Descriptive Vocabulary*.

3.2 Robert Menli Lyon (b.1789)

Lyon arrived in Perth in 1829. He published his *Vocabulary of the language of Derbal* as four articles in the *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* in 1833, the journal’s first year of publication. Lyon’s word lists consist of about 500 words, listed under various semantic domains. Lyon left Western Australia in 1834.

Lyon used the English alphabet to write Noongar words, except that he found it necessary to ‘throw out every letter which was in the least allied to the letter s, recognising the lack of sibilant sounds in the language’, ‘The orthography cannot be accurately and finally fixed till we get such a knowledge of the language as will enable us to trace the different words to the proper roots whence they are derived’ (Lyon 1833:7). As mentioned above, Lyon saw his task as that of orthoepy, to get back to the original pronunciation, an aim derived from the Classics. The idea was to get back to the original and uncorrupted form of the language by removing impurities and accretions. Lyon had a particular interest in Hebrew and sought to relate the Noongar language to Hebrew, perhaps in the belief that all of the languages of the world had descended from Hebrew. Thus he thought that the ‘guttural’ *ayin* sound of Hebrew was present in the Noongar language, although the sibilant sounds such as *samech* and *shin* were absent. Lyon was also of the opinion that all Australian languages were one language.

3.3 The Bussell brothers

John, Charles, Vernon and Alfred Bussell arrived in Western Australia in 1829 and settled near what is now Bunbury. The entries marked ‘Vasse’ in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* were collected from the Vasse District, near the present town of Busselton. Charles Bussell compiled a list of 320 words from the region (Bleek 1858:38).

3.4 Francis Fraser Armstrong (1813–1897)

Francis Fraser Armstrong arrived with his family in Western Australia in 1829. He had extensive contact with Aboriginal people and became fluent in the Noongar language. Additionally, Armstrong ran the Mount Eliza Native School in Perth from about 1836 and also worked as the Government Interpreter. Armstrong wrote the ‘Manners and habits of the Aborigines of Western Australia from information collected by Mr F Armstrong’ (Armstrong 1987) and also contributed to a grammar of the language in 1841 (Symmons 1841). Armstrong also contributed a wordlist of the Perth Language to Curr (1886).

3.5 Charles Symmons (1804–1887)

Charles Symmons arrived in Western Australia in December 1839. He served as one of two ‘Native Protectors’, and wrote the ‘Grammatical introduction to the study of the Aboriginal language of Western Australia’ in 1841.

3.6 George Grey (1812–1898)

George Grey was an administrator and explorer who was called upon to govern in periods of crisis. He explored the coast of Western Australia from 1837, arriving in Perth in September 1838 and leaving in February to explore the northwest. He returned to Perth in June. He published his first vocabulary of the southwest language in Perth in 1839 and was appointed Resident Magistrate at King George’s Sound in August 1839. After visiting Adelaide in March, he sailed for England on 11 April 1840, and arrived in September of that year (Grey 1841: 139). He published the second edition of his vocabulary in England. He was called on to become the governor of South Australia in 1841.

Grey was a keen linguist and ethnographer, and was responsible for the growth of South Australian anthropology as a ‘distinct local variant’ (Jones 1987:71). He collected Maori legends in his time as governor of New Zealand. Before leaving New Zealand in 1854 he made a collection of Maori books and manuscripts which proved invaluable in the compilation of Williams’ Maori Dictionary (Williams 1997).

Grey (1841:208) argued for the ‘radical unity’ of the Aboriginal languages. He attempted to collect words from a ‘very extensive tract of country’. The names of body parts were problematical (Grey 1841:209), as Australian languages often segment the body differently from familiar European languages. For example, there may be no word for ‘arm’ but distinct words for ‘upper arm’ and ‘lower arm’. Grey was convinced that the mismatch led to the false conclusion being drawn that names from different parts of Australia were ‘radically different’. Grey made comparisons of words from Perth, King George’s Sound, Adelaide, Sydney, Endeavour River and Port Essington to attempt to find similarities between the dialects. Grey regretted that his dictionary was based upon a short period of research and therefore was not as comprehensive as he would have liked it to be. The practice of indicating dialects was already under way in Grey’s work of 1840. Four areas were marked: Guildford, the Murray,

King George's Sound and the Vasse. Where these were marked, it indicated that the word was local to that area, a dialectal variant.

Grey's *Journals of two expeditions of discovery in North-West and Western Australia during the years 1837, 38 and 39* (Grey 1841) contains a chapter on 'songs and poetry', and there are also texts written in Noongar and transcribed into English. Grey's appendices contain stories in Noongar translated into English. Tim Flannery credits Grey with recording Warrup's story, the first account of an expedition from an Aboriginal perspective (Flannery 1998:189). The works of Grey and other early researchers show a high degree of empathy with Aboriginal people. Hallam (1975:x) notes that from the 'empathy, detailed observation, learning and practical sense emerges a clear portrait of the South-west and its people'.

While the linguists of the third period have often commented upon Grey's interests in linguistic surveys and the comparison of languages—e.g. Dixon (1980:11)—there has never been much discussion of Grey's role as a compiler of dictionaries and a prolific bibliographer and documenter of Australian languages. Grey's interests in language documentation go beyond grammar to vocabulary, phrases, ethnology, literature, songs, spelling books and translations, as can be seen in his bibliography (Bleek 1858).

3.7 John Hutt (1795–1880)

John Hutt arrived in Western Australia in 1839 and served as governor of Western Australia from January until 1846. He became involved in helping to compile the dictionary not long after taking up this post.

3.8 George Fletcher Moore (1798–1886)

George Fletcher Moore hailed from Derry in Northern Ireland. He graduated with a B.A from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1820, and arrived in Western Australia in 1830. He left for England on family business 1841, and was able to get the *Descriptive Vocabulary* published in London, where he stayed until 1843. He returned permanently to Britain in 1852.

In early 1840 Moore went to the Geraldton region. There he attempted to speak in the language of the local people and wrote that 'their language differed materially from that of the people here, but many words were identical, or nearly so. I managed to make myself partly understood by them' (Grey 1841:124). Moore's experiences in the region of Champion Bay (now called Geraldton) were recorded in Grey's expedition journals as an 'Expedition to the Northward' (Grey 1841:124–137). Moore's experiences tended to confirm Grey's impression of the 'radical unity' of the Australian languages.

On 6 March 1841, Moore left for England. This trip had been planned for some time previously. On 23 October 1840, he wrote to his relatives, saying that

I think it is likely that I shall take with me to England the materials of a native and English dictionary, to get it published in London, as we cannot manage it here without great delay and expense. (Moore 1884:417)

He used the sea voyage to work on the manuscript. According to Moore (1884:ix), the vocabulary 'was put into my hands in a very crude state' by Governor Hutt. Moore used the Latin phrase *quorum pars magna fui* [among whom I was the greater part] although 'I was only one of the few parties connected with the former attempts.' It appears that Moore's role was that of editor of the manuscript. While in London he would have had access to the best sources of background information for the dictionary that existed at that time.

4. Features of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*

4.1 Detail

There are 1,952 entries in the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. It is thus comparable in size with Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840), which has some 1900 entries in the main dictionary, as well as some phrases. Taplin, whose work was published in the second half of the nineteenth century (Taplin 1879a), has a comparable number of entries.

O'Grady (1971:795) expresses a very high evaluation of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*: 'in one notable instance in Australia, a lexicographer has transcended the limitations of his time and has handed down to us, in the form of his dictionary, a wealth of information concerning the culture and environment of the people with whom he worked.' The level of detail and precision in the definitions was not exceeded in published dictionaries until well into the twentieth century.

4.2 Dialect marking

As O'Grady points out, dialects of the Noongar language were indicated in the descriptive vocabulary. These were King George's Sound (Albany), Vasse (Bunbury), Perth and the 'mountain dialect'. This enabled words to be identified with particular localities. Moore and Grey clearly regarded these as representing dialects of one language.

4.3 A source of ethnographic information

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* has contemporary relevance for those researching aspects of Aboriginal culture and society. Grey's interest in languages and local traditions was one of the main reasons for the development of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* and the subsequent dictionaries which were made of South Australian languages.

Moore's familiarity with Aboriginal traditions was facilitated by his knowledge of the language. In fact, a number of oral traditions are discussed in encyclopaedic entries by Moore in the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. An example is the following passage from the *Descriptive Vocabulary*:

Dedam, s. A name given to two stars, one male, the other female, of which the following story is told : Dedam the man speared Dedam the woman, because she let his brother's two children stray away. The children are represented by two small stars at some distance higher in the heavens. The spear is represented by two stars standing one on each side of the woman's body. (Moore 1884:19)

Another example of his detailed knowledge is the entry under *Bidjigurdu*, in which Moore recounts the legend of how Rottnest Island was originally joined to the mainland and subsequently separated by a fire. Moore also had a detailed knowledge of burial customs and the magical practices of *boyla* 'sorcery', to name just two domains.

Another example of Moore's detailed knowledge of local customs is the entry under *Waugal*, the Rainbow Serpent:

Waugal, s. An imaginary aquatic monster, residing in deep dark waters, and endowed with supernatural powers, which enable it to overpower and consume the natives (Moore 1884:72).

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* is the earliest source for much of this ethnographic information from the western side of Australia.

4.4 The domain of ‘birds’

The detailed number of particular domains within the dictionary, for example, the domain of birds, has been noted by O’Grady (1971:789). The Western Australian lexicographers took an interest in these domains, had sharp powers of observation and recorded what they heard from their informants. I would like to attempt to answer the question of why the *Descriptive Vocabulary* contains over 100 bird names.

The ornithologist John Gould visited the eastern part of Australia between 1838 and 1840. Gould decided to send his assistant John Gilbert (1812–1845) to the Swan River colony so that they could collect birds and mammals from different parts of the continent.

On 4 February 1839 Gilbert sailed from Launceston to Swan River Colony (Datta 1997: 116). Gilbert spent eleven months collecting specimens. His visit was fortuitous for the *Descriptive Vocabulary* because it enabled the lexicographers to use his extensive data gathered from the Western Australian coast. Gould’s lists of birds and mammals were an extremely valuable resource for the dictionary, and partially explain why the lexicographers were able to compile such detailed and comprehensive lists. They also collected specimens and information for Gilbert. Gould’s information on the ‘Ocellated Leipoa’ (current name: mallee-fowl) came from Armstrong, Moore and Aboriginal informants who were the first to describe its habits:

Ngow-o, s.—Colonial pheasant, nondescript? It scrapes together a large heap of earth or sand, perhaps two to feet high, and five to six feet in diameter, in which it deposits its eggs about a foot deep, which are left to be hatched by the sun. (Moore 1884:67)

Gould’s collections were published in seven volumes as *Birds of Australia* (Gould 1840–1848). It is possible that Moore may have been able to refer to earlier volumes of this work in London.

The lexicographer has to be aware of all of the domains that they are seeking to describe, and must know the whole range of referents in all domains covered in the dictionary. O’Grady (1971) observed that the lexicographers used an inductive approach. Most likely they were able to find the names of the most commonly occurring birds of Perth which they had observed. They may also have filled in the gaps in their knowledge by eliciting additional bird names from Noongar informants using Gould’s list as a guide.

Words from Gould’s lists of both birds and marsupials appear in the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. Gilbert took Gould’s list of the birds of the western coast to Hutt, which was included as Appendix D of (Grey 1841:415–421). Moore probably made use of this list because the names are very similar. Grey noted that this list was ‘the most perfect that has been published’ (Grey 1841:415). It represented the most up-to-date information then available on birds of Western Australia. In addition, Grey’s appendices contain much information about insects, reptiles and mammals that would have been useful in compiling the dictionary.

It was not only in the field of avian fauna that Moore obtained professional help. He seemed ready to avail himself of help from specialists in other fields. On page 334 of his diary he records his attempt to get one of the botanists from Perth on board the *Beagle* to undertake an expedition to the north. He often consulted with the German naturalist Ludwig Preiss (1811–1883) when the latter visited the Swan River Colony; Moore acknowledges Preiss under the entry ‘Mallowaur, *Acanthosaurus gibbosus*’ (Moore 1884:48). Clearly he appreciated the need for specialist involvement.

4.5 The comparison of wordlists

Dench (2000:66) lists the ‘identification of cognates’ as an issue in reconstitution of names for referents in Noongar. The lexicographers were working with the best information available about each referent. The identification of referents in the 1830s, when the *Descriptive Vocabulary* was being compiled, was hampered by incomplete data. There are gaps in Gould’s list. Some of the more common species had been identified and named, but there were species which were not named. Even with the best guides, the lexicographers were often restricted to descriptions that don’t match later common names. The identifications in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* were based upon the best available information.

Gould was adapting and changing the scientific names of birds at the time that the *Descriptive Vocabulary* was being written. For example, he decided to use the name *gerygone* for one genus of birds because the previous name *psilopus* was being used by entomologists as a name for some insects (footnote to Appendix D in Grey 1841:417). Not only have many of the scientific names changed since the 1840s, but so also have some of the common names. Thus some of the terms are now obsolete or obscure.

Moore provides Noongar names for eight duck species found in the southwest of Western Australia (see Table 11.1) out of a possible nine endemic species listed in Pizzey and Knight (1997):

Table 11.1: Names for duck species in the Descriptive Vocabulary

Noongar	Latin	Current name
<i>maranganna</i>	<i>Anser</i> (no species name)	duck, Australian wood
<i>barduguba</i>	<i>Rhynchaspis rhyncotis</i>	shoveler, Australasian
<i>ngwonana</i>	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	duck, black
<i>batu</i>	<i>Oxyura australis</i>	duck, blue-billed
<i>erruda</i>	<i>Nyroca australis</i>	duck, hardhead
<i>gaddara</i>	<i>Biziura lobata</i>	duck, musk
<i>wurbu</i>	<i>Malacorhynchus membranaceus</i>	duck, pink-eared
<i>guraga</i>	<i>Casarka tadornoides</i>	shelduck, Australian

Moore gives *ngwonana* for ‘grey duck’, the name of the bird which appeared in Gould’s early lists. In Pizzey and Knight’s *Field Guide* (1997), the black duck (*Anas superciliosa*) has the alternative names of *brown duck*, *grey duck* and *wild duck*. Only more recently did the name *black duck* become standard. The selection of one of the English common names for this duck is arbitrary. It could as easily be *grey* as *black*.

Noongar people often hunted for ducks. Thus, in Warrup’s short account, hunting ducks is mentioned twice. Grey mentions the importance of waterfowl to the Noongar people:

The various kinds of water-fowl with which the rivers and lagoons of Australia abound, afford a never-failing supply of food to the natives, and many are the arts to which they have recourse to entrap these wary birds. (Grey 1841:283)

We would need to ask whether a generic name for ‘duck’ has been attested for other languages and dialects. It is possible that other researchers have mis-identified the bird or assumed that there is a generic name for ‘duck’. This would be likely if only short word lists

were collected, containing only one name for ‘duck’. In a more basic word list such as that of Lyon (1833), the word is glossed as ‘a duck’, which could give the impression that this is the generic word. Lyon’s list only contains seventeen bird names, so more detailed information is not available. Curr’s 120-item list only contained two species of duck for each language and many informants have not included a name for ‘wood duck’. Moore doesn’t list a generic name for ‘duck’ although he includes other generic names such as the name *jida* for ‘small bird’. This name also refers to the ‘brown-tailed wren’, now called the yellow-rumped thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*).

A species list drawn from the *Descriptive Vocabulary* would need to be compared with Gould’s list (Grey 1841) to determine the number of species that had been described at that point in the history of Western Australia. Some species were not identified or represented as separate species at that time. Presumably there are more species of birds in the fertile and well-watered south-west of Western Australia than in arid parts of Australia. The problem with O’Grady’s (1971:789) proposal to study the number of bird species from an adjacent area for comparison with Moore’s list is that areas adjacent to the south-west are more arid than the south-west. Lower numbers of bird species exist in those regions and therefore it is likely that lower numbers of bird names exist in local languages for which the data are more complete. For example, seventy-three species are listed in Glass and Hackett (2003), while Green (1992) contains eighty names.

There are 152 entries in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* which can be correlated with over 100 actual bird species according to the information which I have been able to arrange in a database. Some of the additional number represent synonyms and words from other dialects such as the King George’s Sound dialect. The *Descriptive Vocabulary* thus apparently covers the majority of birds that would have names in the Noongar language.

A better way to explain this variety of bird names is to compare the number of birds in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* with the number of bird names in Gould’s list in Grey (1841), and to compare the two with a current list of birds living in the area. Gould’s list for the entire Western coast contains 172 bird names, excluding the ones from the north-west coast of Western Australia. This number includes birds from all habitats in the south-west of the state, and not only ones which would have lived in close proximity to the lexicographers.

Nor would it be likely that folk knowledge of birds and that the number of names for different birds would be much different for the south-west language than for other areas of Australia which are comparable in resources. It would be reasonable to assume that any Australian language would have at least fifty bird names. Folk taxonomies will not necessarily match those of ornithologists. Some birds are more distinctive or have more distinctive habits and are therefore more likely to acquire names than those which are of little or no interest. Some birds may be more prominent because they are part of the local mythology. Some birds may not have separate names because they have less distinctive characteristics. There may not be distinct names for the two species which have similar characteristics.

I have already mentioned that the glosses in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* are detailed and this helps the reader to identify birds for which names don’t appear or have changed. Detailed glosses and the marking of grammatical categories mean less confusion of the kind mentioned by Dench (2002:67) of glosses such as *bark*, can be understood as either ‘bark’ (of dog) or ‘bark’ (of tree).

For example compare the following words from the *Descriptive Vocabulary*:

Kannamit, s.—Hirundo. The swallow. Very like the English house-swallow. It builds in hollow trees, or sometimes now under the eaves of houses. (Moore 1884:40)

Gunidi, s.—The swallow, or passage of the throat. (Moore 1884:32)

Ngannow, v.—pres.par., Ngannowin past tense, Ngannaga, to eat, to swallow. (Moore 1884:65)

The lexicographers have marked most words to distinguish parts of speech, ‘s’ (substantive) and ‘v’ (verb). Latin names have been provided wherever possible.

In some cases, specific names have not been provided but it is possible to guess. For example Moore’s entry on page 30 goes:

Gugumit, s.—A small brown owl, the note of which resembles the cuckoo when heard at a distance. (Moore 1884:30)

It is most likely that Moore was referring to the boobook owl which is a small, brown owl species which has a call like that of the cuckoo which would have been familiar to Europeans calling out a sound like *boobook*, a word from the Sydney language Dharuk (Dixon *et al.* 1990:87). Moore has not provided a Latin name for this bird, as even this detail is uncertain in Gould’s list.

One indication of the lexicographer’s success is that they were able to obtain the names of a bird which migrates to the south-west in large numbers very occasionally during times of drought in the inland. For example, the *nol-yang* or black-tailed native hen, which arrived in Perth in plague proportions in 1836:

Nol-yang, s.—Gallinula, Nol-yang. These birds are not much known in Western Australia, although common in New South Wales. (Moore 1884:61)

It is quite likely that the *Nol-yang* would have migrated away from Perth soon after that time. The lexicographers were able to record the name of a bird that appeared for a limited period of time before migrating inland.

My conclusion is that the lexicographers managed to record the majority of the Noongar names for birds of the Perth area. The *Descriptive Vocabulary* refers to most of the bird species of the region and especially those that typically have names in the Noongar language.

4.6 Orthography

According to Dench (1994:62), very few researchers of the Noongar language provide phonetic keys to their transcriptions, making reconstitution of their work difficult. The lexicographers followed orthographic conventions. Grey identified the need for the use of a consistent orthography, believing that consistent transcription would show the essential unity of the Australian dialects:

Up until the present time we have had only very meagre vocabularies, collected by passing strangers, each of whom adopted his own system of orthography and the comparisons formed from such compilations must necessarily have been erroneous in the highest degree. (Grey 1840:215)

Dench (2000:63), among others, observes the importance of determining the ‘language of transcription’ in reconstitution of original forms from word-lists. O’Grady (1971:791) states that Salvado’s transcription of Noongar words ‘inspires confidence in the transcription of the vowels at least’ and that this ‘is not true of those who were literate in English: their ‘u’ often represents [a] but sometimes [u] it even turns out that on occasion [yu] is being symbolised. While ‘oo’ can be fairly safely taken as representing [u] there is no guarantee that his ‘u’ in some cases at least, does not also stand for [u].’

Dench (2000:63) suggests that those researchers from a northern British background would show less ambiguity in their transcription of [u]. Lyon and Armstrong were from Scotland, and Moore was from Northern Ireland, so this might be expected to be true of their tran-

scriptions. Lyon stated that orthographic <a> represented an unambiguous pronunciation: ‘it is pronounced in the manner usual on the continent of Europe and North Britain’ (Lyon 1833: 56).

Before 1842, writers tended to use English sound values in transcription. Grey in the preface to his work (1839:vii) says that his orthography is not systematic and that ‘it must be understood that the pronunciations of the vowels is as nearly as possible that which is given to them in the English language, only the final a of a word must always be pronounced broad’. The justification for using English sound values was so that the vocabulary could be readily used by English speakers. This concern was also expressed by Lyon who talks about the ‘facility which the sameness of character will afford to the English scholar in the acquisition of the language’.

In the *Geographical Journal*, English values were used for the consonants and continental sound values were used for the vowels. Teichelmann and Schürmann argued for a continental system (see Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume). In one of the articles published in the *Geographical Journal* of 1836, there is a brief guide to the use of letters and symbols which Moore used to devise the orthography for *Descriptive Vocabulary*. The vowels that were used apparently have continental values, that is to say, orthographic <u> symbolises [u]. Moore adopted the conventions of the *Geographical Journal* as he claims (1884:vi), and both he and Grey provide keys for understanding their spellings in consistent terms.

Both Grey and Moore used and <p> in transcription, but seemed to be aware that they were representing one and the same sound, and that this sound was not identical with the aspirated or voiced sounds found in English but something ‘intermediate’ between them. Grey comes close to the phonemic principle in recognising that Noongar has its own distinctive contrasts. He seems to have been aware that all of the plosives, at least, do not have English values.

One does not often encounter in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* what Dench (1994:59) calls the ‘subjective impression of similarity to particular English words.’ There is a reasonably high level of consistency in writing sounds. The lexicographers correctly transcribed the velar nasal, symbolised as <Ng> and gave this sound a separate entry, as distinct from <n>, the alveolar nasal.

5. Conclusions

A number of factors are pertinent to the development of the *Descriptive Vocabulary*. The rise of the ‘new philology’ in the first half of the nineteenth century stimulated new methods of lexicography based upon observation rather than the speculative etymologies of the late eighteenth century. There was a great interest in the compilation of wordlists and dictionaries during the 1830s in Britain. This was also a time of productive lexicographical work in Australia, particularly in Perth and Adelaide. The development of learned societies such as the Geographical Society broadcasted knowledge and scientific method throughout the colonies. More consistent transcription of sounds was made possible by guidelines in the *Geographical Journal*. Increased interest in natural history made the accurate identification of species possible.

The *Descriptive Vocabulary* represents, for its time, a comprehensive lexicon of Noongar dialects that was completed and published in 1842. It was a collaborative effort involving a number of early Western Australian settlers, who all lived in intimate contact with indigenous people. They also had a high degree of empathy with and interest in indigenous people.

The initial wordlist was compiled by R.M. Lyon in 1833. Grey and Moore made improvements in this list with the assistance of Armstrong, Symmons, and Hutt. Grey initially encouraged the preparation of the *Descriptive Vocabulary* and then went on to encourage and facilitate dictionaries of the languages of South Australia in his term as governor (1841–1845). Grey played an important role in the development of all of these dictionaries until his departure from Australia in 1845. The development of a large number of dictionaries in the 1840s has a lot to do with Grey’s enthusiasm and encouragement, as well as his familiarity with Aboriginal languages and lexicography.

However, Grey wasn’t a long-term resident of Western Australia, and encouraged Moore to publish the *Descriptive Vocabulary* in 1842. The high level of detail in the *Descriptive Vocabulary* indicates that Moore and the other compilers had a good knowledge of all of the domains included in the dictionary: social relationships, hunting and fishing, animals and birds, fire practices, artefacts, tools and weapons.

A more thorough examination needs to be made of the unpublished writings of Moore and Grey. More research should also be undertaken to establish the links between linguists in the nineteenth century and how their views were shaped by contemporary linguistic philosophy.

Appendix: A chronology of the Descriptive Vocabulary

Date	Event
1833 March–April	Lyon’s <i>Glance</i> published in Perth newspaper
1836 October	Armstrong’s <i>Manners and Habits</i> published in Perth newspaper
1839 May	Grey returns from expedition to the north
1839 December	Charles Symmons arrives in WA, appointed Native Protector
1839	The first edition of Grey’s <i>Vocabulary</i> published in Perth
1839 January	John Hutt becomes governor of Western Australia, begins work on the manuscript with Armstrong and Moore
1840 March	Grey visits Adelaide, talks with Teichelmann and Schürmann
1840 April	Grey sails for England, arrives September
1840 December	The second edition of Grey’s <i>Vocabulary</i> published in London
1841 March	Moore sails for London with <i>Vocabulary</i> manuscript
1841 October	Symmons’ <i>Grammatical introduction</i> published in Perth
1842	<i>Descriptive Vocabulary</i> published in London

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12 *Language is like a carpet. Carl Georg von Brandenstein and Australian languages*

NICK THIEBERGER¹

Born in 1909 in Hannover, Germany, Carl Georg Christoph Freiherr² von Brandenstein (Carl) entered the Australian linguistic scene in the 1960s with recordings and analysis of languages of Western Australia (WA), mainly from the Pilbara. Over the next thirty years he also recorded information about Ngadjumaya from the south-east of WA and Noongar in the south-west.³ His idiosyncratic style didn't help his reputation in a linguistic scene which became increasingly monocultural in its approach during his research career. He was never part of the mainstream of linguistics in Australia, but followed his own path, and has left a legacy of records of languages for which little else is known. He was always generous in providing material when requested, as much to champion his theories as to engage in academic openness.

Carl was a public intellectual,⁴ using his work to explore the complexity of Aboriginal culture through representing oral tradition and poetry and also supporting the rights of Aboriginal people in Western Australia, a state built on mining wealth and not known for its benevolence towards the original landowners. His book *Taruru* was co-authored with a journalist (Anthony Thomas) who wrote the introductory notes. In its presentation the book was clearly aimed at a broad readership, placing the analytical discussion in the endnotes that make up almost half of the book. Carl also provided interpretive notes for a new edition of the play *Brumby Innes*, written in the late 1920s by the communist author Katherine Susannah Prichard. She had used songs and words from 'Ngaala-warngga' (South Banyjima) in the play which was a provocative work exploring racism and inter-racial relationships, well be-

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2 The aristocratic title *Freiherr* seems to be best translated as 'Baron'.

3 I will use more commonly found versions of language names throughout this chapter, so rather than Carl's spelling of *Ngadjumaja* I will use *Ngadju* or *Ngadjumaya*, and *Noongar* rather than *Nyungar*.

4 The term applies to academics who grapple with issues of public importance in a style that engages the public at large, as used in the discussion of John Mulvaney's life in Bonyhady and Griffiths (1996:1).

fore these themes were being addressed more broadly in the community. In his contribution, Carl commented (1974b:104) on the beauty of the *tabi* poetry and of the skill of the performers ‘whose art is doomed to extinction if the short-sighted aim of integration into a “one culture, one language” uniformity is continued.’

There is much in Carl’s approach to the study of language that would have been more at home in the nineteenth century. His insistence on correlating each form with a separate meaning ignored or perhaps simply predated structuralist notions of free variation contrasted with meaningful difference (as in the allophonic/phonemic distinction). His desire to find an overarching proto-language that diffused around the world similarly reflects an earlier tradition in anthropology and philology. When I have asked his contemporaries about him, a story that recurs is his comparison of the world’s languages to a carpet in which the original pattern can only be discerned in the corners, under the furniture, while it has been effaced in the centre where most of the traffic apparently occurs. These corners of the world are his targets—the places where the pattern can still be discovered. Australia is thus a logical location for his effort, as he notes in regard to his interest in totemism (Brandenstein 1978:143): ‘The fifth continent was spared the historical upheavals most and therefore could preserve the social part of the totemic heritage the purest.’

Determined to show similarities between words in Australian languages and in Finno-Ugric (e.g. Brandenstein 1970e) as part of his grand vision of locating the first language, he recorded lexical correspondences on hundreds of filecards that fill metres of filing boxes. Further themes that recur in his work are: the meaning of sections in the system of kinship relations; phonosemantics, the meaning of sounds; and the influence of Portuguese on the Aboriginal people of coastal northern Western Australia. To make use of Carl’s work today, we need to set aside much of what was clearly for him the main motivation for doing the work.



Plate 12.1: Carl Georg Christoph Freiherr von Brandenstein

But, while these themes appear to portray Carl and his work in a nineteenth century frame, he was ahead of his time in providing timed references to audio files and a 45 rpm record with his book of narratives (Brandenstein 1970d). His interest in providing sufficient textual information so that others could access the data also resonates with more recent interest in language documentation (Woodbury 2003).⁵

His approach differed from the mainly utilitarian and structuralist view of language that predominated in Australian linguistics in the 1960s and 1970s (he characterised the linguistic establishment of the 1960s as being the ‘Sydney School’ (Brandenstein 1970f:80)), and he was concerned with portraying the poetic side of Aboriginal languages. He suggested that,

in a hunting society, not interested in material(istic) manifestation of its culture, the creative energy will naturally concentrate more on spirituality and lingomagic ... the effort to tackle the Australian Vocabulary by the mechanistic application of 100 or 1000-word lists à la Swadesh for computerizing (sic), might be in vain. (Brandenstein 1970f:93)

Accordingly, his work usually included a large number of texts and a lexicon as part of his description of a language. Reminiscing about his work thirty years earlier he wrote:

Scenes and thoughts galore from my fieldwork days came up and began to haunt me. I could not help comparing them with the present situation. Dictated by a rapidly dying-off older Aboriginal generation, still full of knowledge, I felt the need to obtain factual information about their Aboriginal ways before it was too late. So I collected material. Through all these early years my pulse beat: tex—tex—text—texts. (Brandenstein 1991)

After high school (Gymnasium) in Gera and Weimar, Carl went to study at Berlin University (1928–1934) where he trained as an orientalist and historian of religion. He then studied at Leipzig (1938–1939), where his PhD, granted in 1940, was a study of the iconography of Hittite gods (Brandenstein 1943). He worked at the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin from 1934–1938 and continued to publish in this area (Brandenstein 1934, 1937, 1939a, 1939b, 1939c, 1940). He learned in 1949 that his research material had been water-damaged in the Pergamon museum and was ruined. His hoped-for major research project (the German ‘habilitation’, a post-doctoral thesis), together with six years of work, had thus to be abandoned. The break with the old world was made easier by this loss, but on a later return visit to Germany he was to learn that the material had not been destroyed but was (he claimed) being used by others for their own benefit.

When World War II broke out, Carl became a corporal in the army and served in France and on the Russian front before going to Persia in 1941. There are several conflicting accounts of his activities at this time in his own papers, depending on the context for which they were being written. These variously have him acting as an interpreter, as a representative of a pharmaceutical company,⁶ or as an agent of the *Canaris Gruppe*, a counter-intelligence unit. The last is the most likely of the stories, and is supported by a marginal note in his record as an internee by the Australian intelligence authorities.⁷ In 1941 he was captured by the British in Basra and his wife, Ellen, returned to what was to become East Germany with their young daughter, Bettina. They were not to see each other again for some years and the marriage

5 ‘The texts are so chosen that any linguist should be able to find grammar-illustrating material in it for a solid grammar. I myself regard grammar writing as a waste when there is enough text material.’ (Carl Georg von Brandenstein to B. Agnew, Wangka Maya, 22 March 1992).

6 This was his story in a statement to the Australian authorities when they were determining his eligibility to stay in Australia (1/2/1946, National Archives series A367 C74240). He was listed as being a pharmacist in his Australian Internee Service and Casualty Form (National Archives MP1103/1: R36413).

7 The marginal note in one of Carl’s personnel files reads: ‘Very active Nazi and Secret Service agent’ (15 May 1946, National Archives series A1838 1451/2/47).

ended in divorce in 1954. Carl was interned as a prisoner of war in Australia, first at Loveday camp in South Australia and then, in 1945, at Tatura camp in Victoria. He says he passed the time in these camps with art and music,⁸ and by teaching Latin and Greek in the camp school (Brandenstein 1995:1).

There is little information about Carl's life immediately following the war and through the 1950s. After release from internment in 1946 in Melbourne, Carl's notes suggest he worked as a potter and spent some time in the studio of Arthur Boyd.⁹ Over the next fifteen years he worked as a farmhand and in high schools, and also in the Melbourne General Post Office on the afternoon shift, giving him time to pursue his studies in the daytime. At some point he says he visited Arnhem Land and taught pottery to local Aboriginal people, which triggered his interest in their languages. In his application for funds in 1964 he says he conducted field-work with Aranda in 1959 and with Western Desert languages in 1962 and 1963. No record of this work has yet been located. He also claimed to be instrumental in the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS, now AIATSIS) (Brandenstein 1995:1), but there is no mention of him in the substantial report of the first AIAS conference, published as Stanner and Shiels (1963), nor in the relevant chapter on 'Languages' by Stephen A. Wurm (1963:127) with a commentary by Arthur Capell (1963:149).

In the mid-1950s the German consulate allocated some lodgers to move into Carl's house. Carola Zanke, her husband Klaus and her son Christian all lived with Carl until Klaus and Christian were killed in a car accident in 1957. Carola continued living with Carl and in the early 1960s they drove their VW beetle from Melbourne via Perth, Ceylon, Bombay, Delhi, Kashmir, Iran, Greece, and on to Germany. They were married in 1962 and they moved to Wellington, New Zealand, where Carola was transferred by the German embassy. In June 1964 Carl received funding from the AIAS to work in Western Australia.¹⁰ He and Carola (his 'unpaid assistant') then left for the west in their VW on 14 July. Between 1964 and 1968 Carl and Carola spent 4–6 months annually in the Pilbara in a caravan with two dogs. At one point, Carola's adopted son Bjorn Stein also accompanied them, working on the 'Herbarium Stein' (Brandenstein 1966g). The rest of each year Carl had an office at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia. As an example of the hardships faced during this time, his field reports (listed below) include the following misadventures:

I got bitten by a snake at Millstream. Application of a tourniquet and intense sucking of the wound by my wife and strong coffee at the neighbouring farm must have prevented any ill effects except strong pain ... I stepped with my snakebitten foot into an iron rod and needed hospital attention. Car broke down 6 times with starter cable trouble.... Without the help of my wife I could not have continued.' (Brandenstein 1965f:1)

During the 1960s he was recording a number of languages but the main focus was on a publication of some sixty Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi texts with a glossary, titled *Narratives from the North-West of Western Australia* (Brandenstein 1970d). While at the time that Carl was doing this work there were still a number of speakers of both of these languages,¹¹ the subsequent generation would no longer use Ngarluma for most interactions, its place being taken by Yindjibarndi.

8 Photographs in the Australian War Memorial (e.g. 030250/17 and 030250/20) show Carl in the band at Tatura camp in March 1945.

9 My attempts to confirm this with several of Arthur Boyd's contemporaries were fruitless.

10 The salary was £2400 plus expenses.

11 See for example Capell (1971:140) who notes that 'They are among the languages still in daily use for a sizable number of Aboriginal people.'

Carl envisaged the publication of these texts as being the first of two parts; the second was to be a similar work ‘in the Njijapali language’ which was only produced in manuscript version and rejected by the AIAS. This rejection reflects a change in the AIAS from Capell’s view to a more narrowly focussed view of what constitutes linguistic enquiry.¹² The linguistic research committee at the AIAS had changed with the arrival in 1973 of R.M.W. Dixon as the new chair, bringing with him a confidence in the value of his own approach to the study of Australian languages,¹³ at the expense of other views, like Carl’s, that nevertheless resulted in recordings being made of otherwise little recorded or indeed unrecorded languages.

In the Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi texts and associated work (e.g. Brandenstein 1967d) Carl developed his notion of the Active/Passive Verbal Concept (AVC/PVC) corresponding to the more widely used terms Nominative/Accusative and Ergative/Absolutive. He observed that the group of languages that include Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi display the Active Verbal Concept and so differ from most other Australian languages. However, he suggested that Portuguese contact was responsible for the switch to a Nominative/Accusative system (Brandenstein 1967d:10), based on the presence of what could well be a Portuguese word (*tartaruga* for ‘turtle’) in Ngarluma, a coastal Pilbara language. But one turtle name does not provide the evidence of extensive Portuguese contact, which would have been needed for the group of local Aboriginal languages to develop away from the Ergative case marking they would formerly have borne. As an example of his approach, he went on to identify the change from PVC to AVC as ‘the result of a change to more individualistic thinking’ (Brandenstein 1967d:4) and went further to speculate that ‘growing interest in or actual trend back to PVC could be a lingopsychic indicator of a looming social reversion’ (Brandenstein 1967d:5), without giving examples of where this reversion might have been occurring. He interpreted the PVC as being an earlier form, present in all proto-languages, and pointed to Basque as a relic of the European PVC proto-language.

Brandenstein (1970e) lists 60 ‘north-west’ words which he claims derive from Portuguese. If we attempt to locate the same forms in other wordlists of Ngarluma (e.g. Hale 1985), or Yindjibarndi (e.g. Wordick 1982) we can find, with a generous interpretation of similarity, only 23 and, even then, there would need to be some explanation of semantic shifts that have taken place (e.g. Portuguese ‘angle’ to NW ‘elbow’), or of why he considered there to be a relationship at all (e.g. Portuguese *mortal*, NW *marlba*). Most importantly there are terms included in this list that are widespread in Australia. They are unlikely to have originated in the north-west and can only be regarded as coincidentally similar (e.g. Portuguese *mã*, NW *mara*).

12 Capell (1971:141–142) said these texts were, ‘A work of very great permanent value for all students of life in this part of Australia, and for students of literature as well. Continued over Australia, it would be a monumental work.’ Had Capell remained on the Linguistics Committee of the AIAS he would no doubt have supported the publication of the Nyiyaparli work as a second set of volumes. Indeed, Capell went on to observe that ‘Even when one does not agree with the linguistics involved, there is always something to discuss and something to think about in the ideas and analysis put forward by the author.’ One suspects that this ecumenical statement specifically targeted the narrower definition of linguistics that was subsequently to become dominant in Australia.

13 As an example of the direction in which Australian linguistics was heading, see Dixon’s comment concerning Australia in the early 1960s that ignores those working to record Australian languages, including Carl, a number of SIL teams, Howard Coate, and others continuing study outside the country like Ken Hale and Geoffrey O’Grady: ‘During my period in the field, there was just one other linguist at work—the Sanskrit scholar Luise Hercus.’ (Dixon 1983). It is clear from correspondence (e.g. CGVB to R.M.W. Dixon 6 March 1973, R.M.W. Dixon to CGVB 15 March 1973) that Dixon used Carl’s field materials for his comparative analysis, but the only reference to Carl in Dixon’s (1980) overview work is to von Brandenstein (1967d).

Carl was convinced that the Portuguese had established long-term settlements on the northern coast of WA, but none of the physical evidence he had mustered was able to be corroborated. His theory caught the public imagination, as such claims tend to do, and he received some publicity (e.g. Derriman 1990, 1992; Haynes 1993). He thought (Brandenstein 1972f, 1989:5) that spherical rocks near Depuch Island were cannonballs, but later admitted that they were local rock that could not have been used in cannons. He suggested (Brandenstein n.d.c) that stone housing in the east Kimberley could not have been made by Aboriginal people without outside influence, but the archaeological evidence suggests otherwise (O'Connor 1992). This paper on the Yawuji-bara/Yawuji-baia (Brandenstein n.d.c) is breathtaking in the way he builds supposition on speculation. After all, it is known that there has been contact from what is now Indonesia with the north coast of Australia for some hundreds of years (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:411), and it may be that evidence of Portuguese contact will be found, but the argumentation of Carl's papers is extremely unconvincing.

In his recording of Aboriginal languages he was determined to use a spelling system based on his view of the etymology of the word (in contrast with 'the current notation [which] ... seems to obscure etymology')¹⁴ with the result that the form of a word in his work can not be expected to be a phonemic representation. Further, he used voiced symbols, for example, to contrast their morphological position, thus voiced morpheme-medially but voiceless morpheme-initially, and suggested that 'Readers should find this combination only confusing if they are unwilling to get out of the rut of their rigid descriptive and—let us name it—dead-end training.'¹⁵ In his description of Ngadjumaja, he explicitly challenged the 'conformists' of Australianist linguistics with his 'geographical-etymological' and 'phonosemantic' approaches (for a critical discussion see McConvell 1983:193, 1985; Nash 1982:273). Phonosemes are, Carl maintained, elementary units (phones) which themselves bear a meaning (Brandenstein 1970f). Thus, for example, *k* is the phonoseme of 'aggression', *m* of 'finite distance' while *w* is 'infinite distance', all of which are displayed in several examples (suffixes or words) in this article. Carl suggested that these meanings were present not only within one language, but across all languages.

The value of the texts and vocabulary he presented is reduced by the need to decipher his etymological spelling system and they need to be read with caution. Nevertheless, the Ngadjumaya work includes an outline grammar, a set of eight texts with interlinear glosses, and a dictionary which attributes each headword to its source speaker. It has been possible to convert the spelling system of the Ngadjumaya material, reworked by the AIATSIS Dictionaries Project in 1994 and used by Wangkanyi Ngurra Tjurta,¹⁶ the Aboriginal language centre in Kalgoorlie in a project in 2004. As David Nash notes in a review: 'The author's idiosyncrasies do not prevent his work from being a useful reference' for Ngadjumaya (1982:274). Wangka Maya, the Aboriginal language centre in Port Hedland, has incorporated his material in popular editions of the Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi dictionary (Wangka Maya-Pilbara Language Centre 1990). Allison Kohn (1994) wrote a sketch grammar based on Brandenstein and Hale's work on Ngarluma and is working with the Nyiyaparli (Njijapali) material for her PhD dissertation.

On being challenged by an 'east-coast' colleague to deal first with 'facts' and then with his interpretation, Carl responded with the observation that phonological representation is an in-

14 AIATSIS MS5547.

15 Carl Georg von Brandenstein to R.M.W. Dixon, Linguistics Committee Chairman, AIAS, 6 March 1973.

16 The wordlist was converted into a practical, Western Desert type, orthography by the Aboriginal Dictionaries Project in the early 1990s and is locatable as item 552 in ASED A at AIATSIS. Some issues of correspondences between the practical orthography and the original remain.

terpretation derived by the analyst and so is not ‘fact’, but interpretation. ‘Metaphorically speaking, it produces “line conversions” from a photograph, being neither a photo nor a piece of art.’¹⁷ Carl’s tenacity, some might say stubbornness, led to several disputes with leading anthropologists and linguists of the day. The correspondence indicates that he felt isolated and, at times, besieged by an established order that he was not part of, but which he felt he pre-dated. His wife, constant companion and secretary, Carola, wrote (Carola von Brandenstein 1981:2) that he was ‘Always a lonely wolf and untamed by the service in the establishment, he never had a lobby and his contributions to the advancement of Australianistics have been swept under the carpet of “deliberate desinterest” (sic) more than once.’

By the early 1970s Carl was clearly frustrated by his reception in the linguistics community in Australia. Writing to the AIAS on hearing of the rejection of a manuscript for publication, Carl said that, ‘forces, ill-informed about my person and work and correspondingly ill-disposed towards my linguistic approach and, in addition, utterly intolerant of my “heresy”, have been omnipotent in the linguistic policy-making within the Institute.’¹⁸ In a similar vein, in the foreword to the Ngatjumaja book he says that he hopes that ‘even the conformist in matters of current linguistics will derive enough relevant information from the presentation of Ngadjumaja to appreciate ... the great achievement of the Aboriginal power of oral communication.’

In a review of the *Narratives from the North-West of Western Australia* (Brandenstein 1970g), Arthur Capell (one of the major Australian linguists of the time) notes ‘a feature which has not been included previously in the work published by the Institute [of Aboriginal Studies]: a 45 rpm record on which a few of the texts are published and issued with the volumes. This is a very commendable practice and one hopes it may occur again!’ (Capell 1971: 141) In fact, aside from Howard Coate’s inclusion of a tape in his analysis of prosody in Ngarinyin (Coate 1970), the practice of any publisher of Australianist grammars, texts or dictionaries providing audio documentation together with a collection of texts did not occur again until the 1990s (e.g. the audio cassettes in Read and Read 1991) and then became a greater possibility when computers provided the means for linking audio to text (e.g. the CD in Read and Read 1993). Carl said that in his opinion, ‘it is essential for a modern comprehensive linguistic work that a small record ... should be attached to each copy of the book.’¹⁹ Capell, writing a review of Carl’s funding application said,

The material presented is of the highest interest and shows much promise of providing a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the languages of this area. The presentation and theory behind it is often new and sometimes provocative, being concerned with classification and development as well as actual synchronic information. Some of it will provoke argument when published but is worthy of consideration.²⁰

Carl was fortunate to have benefited from Capell’s ecumenical and inclusive approach, and this was to change once Capell was no longer as influential with the main funding body, the AIAS and its Linguistic Research Committee.²¹ Another example of the recognition of

17 Carl Georg von Brandenstein to R.M.W. Dixon, Linguistics Committee Chairman, AIAS, 15 April 1973.

18 Carl Georg von Brandenstein letter to the Principal, AIAS, 20 November 1973.

19 Carl Georg von Brandenstein letter to publications editor at AIAS, 4 April 1970.

20 Capell 2 April 1965, AIATSIS Registry file 64/4.

21 An example of Carl’s sentiments are found in a letter to the new Chairman of the AIAS Linguistics Committee in which Carl says ‘In all seven years before you became chairman my work for the Institute was accepted by the chairman in charge ... with appreciation and friendly terms. The same appreciation has been expressed by colleagues from abroad, most of them your seniors. I was happy in my work because of the tolerant and democratic attitude of the Institute and its men in charge.’ And later he requests that the Chairman

the need for a variety of approaches is Ronald Berndt's letter to the Principal of the AIAS (22 February 1965) in which he notes that Carl is 'not structurally oriented and is philologically focussed ... this is not intended to detract from the valuable work he is presumably undertaking. There is a place for both kinds of person, and he is certainly enthusiastic and diligent in the collection of linguistic material.'

During the 1960s Carl was also recording songs of the Pilbara and published eighty song texts in *Taruru* (Brandenstein and Thomas 1974). This work presents the song texts with poetic translations to appeal to the European reader.²² More detailed notes on each song text include an interlinear gloss and explanation of the often necessarily obscure lyrics. His co-author, journalist Anthony Thomas, who wrote the introduction to *Taruru*, observes (pers. comm.) that Carl would carry his guitar to play music in exchange for that offered by his Aboriginal colleagues. Thomas recalls Carl's enthusiasm for publicising Aboriginal languages, but also remarks (pers. comm.) that Carl had a sense of paranoia, that he felt he was being conspired against, and that he thought his mail was being intercepted.

In several publications (Brandenstein 1970g, 1972c, 1977, 1978, 1982a), Carl presented his view that subsections (the divisions, one of which one is born into in many Aboriginal societies) represent cultural categories, in a set of oppositions of warm/cold, quick/slow, and round/flat. He also reconstructed a western section system (around Kariyarra in the west) that spread out to meet the subsection system in the east. While this linguistic reconstruction is not generally accepted, especially following McConvell's (1985a) convincing location of the origin of the subsection system in the Daly River region, the anthropological basis of the argument was better received. Reviews by Jorion (1983) and Yengoyan (1984) both praise Carl's book, the latter for its emphasis on cultural relativism which he suggests is a required antidote to structuralist universalism. While conceding that 'von Brandenstein's reconstructions of the ethnography are quite rash', Jorion (1983:794) nevertheless acknowledges the need for a diversity of opinions in the discipline, noting that, 'It is reassuring for our profession that a book of such an esoteric nature has found its way into print'. Similarly, Heath's (1984:467) review finds the relationship between subsections and temperaments to be 'plausible', and he goes on to recommend the book. McConvell's (1985b) critique of Carl's methods and argumentation is thoroughgoing and convincing, it takes the work seriously and addresses it point by point, noting (1985b:54–55) that he 'repeats many of the mistakes of nineteenth-century speculation and adds a few of his own.'

In 1969 Osmar White published a travelogue based in the Pilbara, in which he describes two Germans whom he names Dr Otto and Dr Gerda Brandenstein. Otto is an 'etymologist' and Gerda a social anthropologist, and their spoken English is stereotypically germanised (White 1969:148–149). Carl clearly took exception to this portrayal but responded with some humour in a letter to White in which he says:

Recently had I a look into the new book of yours *Under the Rainbow* and was very pleased in it my wife and me mentioned to find. Your description took my wife not fa-

speed up his 'unduly delayed publication' of the Nyiyaparli narratives 'for which conditions and arrangements had been approved by the Institute prior to your commencement of office.' (Carl Georg von Brandenstein to AIAS Linguistics Committee Chairman, 15 April 1973). In 1982, writing a preface to the Nyiyaparli narratives he notes 'the adverse, schoolmasterly attitude of the then Linguistic Chairman.' He later revealed one reason provided by the Chairman for rejection of the manuscript: one of the fifty stories may have 'imperilled national security' as it discusses 'a Woomera rocket sent off but getting only halfway, thereby, perhaps, saving some natives at Perceival Lake The objection being so ridiculous that I refused to leave it out.' (Carl Georg von Brandenstein to B. Agnew, Wangka Maya, 22 March 1992).

22 So successful was this that Carl discovered that Les Murray (1986) published several of these poems without Carl's knowledge.

vourably up, as she a genuine woman is and resents, a square woman called to be and I bald headed described to be [...] Also is it perhaps a bit unethical for a reputed writer who you to be like, and not very polite, personality names beyond recognition not to alter, nicht? [...] if you ever to Perth come, call you at our place for again a schnapps to drink. I promise you, not about the etymology of your work or anything else unpleasant to talk.

An application for funds from the AIAS in 1973 had failed, so the Brandensteins moved to Canberra in 1974 when Carl was 65. He attended the AIAS Biennial Conference which focussed on grammatical categories in Aboriginal languages (Dixon 1976), and from the mid-1970s to 1981 they were in Europe, living in Stubai, Austria, where Carola owned a house, and Carl taught at Innsbruck University. They also lived in Germany at Burg Brandenstein and in Carl's cousin's castle Girsberg, which had formerly also been the residence of Count Zeppelin (of dirigible fame).

Returning to Australia in 1982 and supported by grants from the DAAD²³ and the University of Basel, Carl and Carola bought a VW Kombi to travel across to Western Australia with all their possessions. Carola became ill in the late 1980s and required Carl's attention until her death in 1991. Carl then became senile in the late 1990s and was unable to care for himself. He was admitted into a nursing home in Albany in 1997 and passed away in January 2005.

In 1974 the AIAS Linguistic Research Officer noted in correspondence with Carl the arrival of copies of his diaries,²⁴ together with a query that the data on the southern languages (Ngatjumaya and Noongar in particular) was not included. Sadly, while his field recordings and notes up to the late 1960s are held at AIATSIS, the location of his subsequent fieldnotes dealing with Noongar and Ngadjumaya is still currently unknown.

The film maker Frank Rijavec recalls reintroducing Carl's recordings to the Aboriginal communities in Roebourne, Western Australia, during the course of making the film 'Exile and the Kingdom' (Rijavec *et al.* 1992) in the late 1980s:

The value of Carl's records, tapes and slides never strike you as much as when you have the privilege of seeing them reintroduced to the community where they were recorded. We got about 21 tapes out of AIATSIS—most of them Carl's—and played them back during 1989–1991 to the elders. Being in a room with them as the tapes played was an absolute joy and revelation. People clapped and sang along. It brought up a stream of memories about the singer or storyteller. They gave their versions of the stories or embellishments. I was able to follow up material that was uncovered from the tapes with particular elders who were contributing to the film. (Frank Rijavec, pers.comm.)

Carl was generous with his work, which has been acknowledged by others who have followed him in the Pilbara. For example, in several publications on languages of the region, Peter Austin and Alan Dench both credit him for sharing his material, and his recordings have been used by speakers of the languages he recorded or by their descendants.

Carl's contribution to Australianist linguistics has not only been the body of work he has left behind, including his publications, unpublished manuscripts, and twenty or so hours of field recordings and associated annotations for languages no longer spoken. He also reminds us that there are many ways to do linguistic work and of the value of pursuing our goals regardless of the fashion of the moment or the attempted dominating influence of particular individuals or funding bodies.

23 Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (German Academic Exchange Service).

24 Peter Sutton, AIAS Research Officer, Linguistics, letter 12 February 1974 (AIATSIS Registry 64/4).

Appendix: Bibliography of Carl Georg von Brandenstein

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- 1965c, Interim report [to A.I.A.S.] on field work in north-west Western Australia 15th July–15th August, 1965. Manuscript.
- 1965d, Interim report (3) [to AIAS] on fieldwork in north-west Western Australia, 15 August–15 September 1965. Manuscript.
- 1965e, Interim report (4) [to AIAS] on fieldwork in north-west Western Australia, 15 September–15 October 1965. Manuscript.
- 1965f, Interim report (5) [to AIAS] on fieldwork in north-west Western Australia, 15 October–18 November 1965. Manuscript.
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Part 3:
Investigations of particular topics

13 *But our language was just asleep: a history of language revival in Australia*

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1. Introduction

Contemporary language revival efforts in Australia emerged in the wave of social reform following the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972. This is considerably later than revival efforts in other parts of the world, such as Hebrew in the late nineteenth century, Cornish around 1900 and Irish from 1922, and, some years after, Maori from 1970. But this should not be at all surprising since it was not until after the 1967 referendum that Indigenous Australians were finally forwarded citizenship rights through commonwealth legislation. The initial focus of these new-found rights for Indigenous Australians was land; however, within a few years Indigenous peoples started to push for equal rights in other areas such as education and language. Some groups lobbied for education programs to maintain languages, which resulted in innovative commonwealth reforms to introduce bilingual education programs into pilot schools in the Northern Territory (NT) in 1973, where previously English-only programs were funded (see Gale 1990:113).² This move, together with the implementation of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) programs in mainstream schools in the south, inspired Aboriginal people to push for inclusion of their own languages in school programs, whether they be ‘strong’ or not so strong languages.

Whilst recognising that even the strongest languages, such as Warlpiri in the NT, or Pitjantjatjara in South Australia (SA) and the NT, might undergo a form of revival through expansion of domains of usage, this paper focuses primarily on the revival of those languages that are no longer being transmitted as a first language to the younger generation through natural means. Because of the colonial circumstances of language loss, the revival programs and

- 1 Our thanks to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (Annie Reynolds and Theresa Sainty) for contributing information about their programs at short notice. Thanks also to Margaret Sharpe, Michael Walsh, Jane Simpson, John Henderson, Alan Dench, Greg Wilson, Guy Tunstill, Lester Irabinna Rigney, Wallace McKittrick, Syd Sparrow, Dorothy French and members of Kaurna Warra Pintyandi for the help and information they provided.
- 2 On 16 April 1964, a House of Representatives Hansard reports Kim Beazley (Sr) seeking clarification of the fact ‘that Commonwealth assistance is not given in mission schools in the Northern Territory unless the medium of instruction is English’ (Edwards 1969:277–278).

William B. McGregor, ed. *Encountering Aboriginal languages: studies in the history of Australian linguistics*, 339–382. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 2008.

activities we discuss are primarily operating in the more heavily populated regions of southern and eastern Australia. However, there is some discussion of revival programs operating in the central and northern regions of Australia where efforts are being made to revive languages, such as Walmajarri, that have been replaced by Kriol among the younger generation.

Currently, language revival activities are widespread across the length and breadth of the country, and in both community-based and school-based programs. Aboriginal languages are also becoming more apparent in both the government and non-government sector, where they can be seen and heard in many media. Furthermore, previously 'forgotten' languages can now be heard at public functions, especially in major cities, as Aboriginal people demand that their prior ownership of their land be formally acknowledged through language. This paper reviews the history of language revival in Australia, beginning with the role linguists and linguistics have played in this movement. It then overviews the history of language advocacy and language policy for language revival, followed by a history of funding opportunities for language revival. The paper then reviews a number of community-based language revival initiatives and language revival in the education sector. Next, three case studies of language revival are discussed in three contrasting languages, demonstrating a range of language revival types, namely: Gumbaynggir (an example of language revitalisation), Kaurna (an example of language reclamation) and finally Ngarrindjeri (an example of language renewal). We conclude with a brief commentary on future directions for language revival in Australia.

2. Defining language revival and a brief overview

The working definition that is adopted in this paper for the process of *language revival* is when a language undergoes a resurgence following a period of decline, whereby measures are taken to extend its domains of usage and to increase the number of speakers, or even to reintroduce a language after it has ceased to be spoken.

Whilst formal initiatives to revive Indigenous languages in Australia may not have commenced until the late 1970s, there is ample evidence to suggest that various individuals and certain families tried their best to keep their languages and their traditions alive prior to this modern period of reform and respect for Aboriginal languages (see Hercus, this volume). This was even the case in long-settled large metropolitan areas such as Sydney (Dharuk Elder Colin Gale, pers.comm.). Possibly the first formal efforts of language revival activities in Australia were the school-based initiatives in New South Wales of: teaching Dharawal and Dhurga at Jervis Bay in 1976 (Nugent 1979b; Eades 1976), teaching Bundjalung in Lismore in 1977 (see Sharpe 1993) and the teaching of Awabakal in Newcastle in 1979 (see Heath 1982). These initiatives contrast with the language maintenance programs that began in more remote areas as early as 1940 at Ernabella mission school (in Pitjantjatjara) in the north-west of SA, and the bilingual programs that commenced in the Northern Territory in 1973 in schools at Milingimbi (in Gupapuyngu), Warruwi (in Maung) and Areyonga (in Pitjantjatjara). What makes the NSW initiatives language revival programs, and not maintenance efforts, was the fact that these languages were not strong and, in the case of Awabakal, had not been spoken by anyone for a very long time.

Michael Walsh (2003) tells us that there was initial pessimism among Aboriginal people towards language revitalisation in NSW, even though the link between language and identity was perceived to be of utmost importance. But this pessimism soon gave way to cautious optimism once people became aware of what had been documented in nineteenth century sources, and realised what was possible. Once language revival efforts were underway in other states, such as the Kaurna language in South Australia since 1990, groups in other parts

of NSW and other groups across southern Australia were inspired to revive their own languages. Walsh says of NSW that ‘a common reaction was: “we want our languages back!”’ (Walsh 2003:114).

Language revival activities are now widespread across all Australian states and territories. Although many programs have been short-lived, and dependent on short-term funding, some, such as Bundjalung and Gumbaynggir in NSW, Noongar (Nyungar) in southern Western Australia and Djabugay at Kuranda in Queensland, have managed to operate continuously over almost two decades since their inception. Whilst these early language revival efforts emerged at about the same time in various parts of the country, they arose independently of each other. They were generally localised responses to local needs. For instance, Margaret Sharpe, who had initiated Bundjalung programs in 1977, had no knowledge of other language revival efforts in NSW, SA, WA or Tasmania throughout the 1980s (Margaret Sharpe, pers. comm.).

One of the first occasions on which people were brought together to conference on language revival work, rather than language maintenance, was the *Paper and Talk* workshop organised by Nick Thieberger at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in early 1993 (Thieberger 1995). This workshop drew people from across NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, SA and WA. A number of linguists working in the area attended including Peter Austin, Terry Crowley, Tamsin Donaldson, Jaky Troy, Jane Simpson, Geraldine Triffitt, Nick Thieberger, and Rob Amery. Since then the Indigenous program at the biennial Australian Linguistics Institutes (ALIs) have provided a forum for sharing strategies and approaches. Timoti Karetu, the Maori Language Commissioner, was brought over as a plenary speaker at the 2002 ALI, and Amery taught a week-long course in Language Reclamation and the Formulaic Method for language revival. Several regional and state-wide workshops and conferences have been organised by John Giacon, Jaky Troy, and Michael Walsh in NSW. The Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) conference in Adelaide in 2004 featured a full-day program on Indigenous languages including a symposium on ‘Authenticity in Indigenous languages maintenance and revival’ and several presentations were given on local South Australian language revival initiatives.

Language revivalists have also engaged with the international endangered languages movement, especially in recent years, through visits to places like New Zealand, California and Hawai’i, and through participation in the Foundation of Endangered Languages conferences and the North American-based Stabilizing Indigenous Languages conferences. The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (June Oscar, Edgar Prince and Michelle Martin), Michael Walsh, Kevin Lowe and Rob Amery all presented at the conference in Berkeley in June 2004, whilst Kevin Lowe and Greg Wilson presented at the conference in Victoria in British Columbia, Canada in June 2005. A number of Indigenous people, educationists and linguists have developed close links with leading international figures in the field, and continue to contribute themselves to the international debate on language revival issues (Walsh 2005).

3. Defining the different types of language revival

At this point some further definitions and terms of reference are in order. The term *revival* itself has been used in many different ways, not to mention the other r-words including: *revitalisation*, *restoration*, *reclamation*, *renewal*, *resurrection*, *resuscitation*, *re-invigoration*, *reintroduction*, *regeneration* etc. The term *language revival* is generally used as a cover term that subsumes all these terms, but differs from *retrieval* and *salvage* which refer only to

documentation and recording for posterity. In practice, retrieval and revival often go hand in hand.

Language revival contexts vary enormously, depending on a number of factors, including: the amount of language knowledge remaining within the oral traditions of members of the community, the level of documentation of the language, the nature of systemic support (e.g. from education departments) and of course local Indigenous politics. There is the full spectrum of situations across Australia with the entire range of possibilities, which are outlined below. The labels used and the distinctions made below for the different types of *Language Revival* were initially developed for the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) in 1994. They are now the official terms adopted by the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) to describe their language program types operating in schools, namely: *language revitalisation*, *language renewal* and *language reclamation*.³ These terms were also adopted by McKay (1996).

Language revitalisation covers the 'strong' end of the continuum, and includes languages being revived such as Walmajarri in the Kimberley in WA, which is well situated with hundreds of older speakers and good documentation (Hudson 1978, 1990). This contrasts with other situations, such as Adnyamathanha in SA, where there is a mere handful of speakers remaining and less advanced language documentation. Despite the differences, we use the same term *language revitalisation* to describe both these language revival situations (see Amery 1998:35; SSABSA 1996). Note, however, that revitalisation is used in NSW as a cover term for all language revival activity (NSW Government 2004).

The term *language renewal* is used for revival activities in situations where there are no remaining fluent language speakers but there is still knowledge of many words and maybe some sentences. In language renewal contexts there may be a reluctance to draw on historical documentation, and the knowledge retained by the Elders is seen as a preferred point of reference and model for the language to be taught. Ngarrindjeri from the Lower Murray and Coorong region in South Australia is a good example of language renewal, whereby contemporary Ngarrindjeri language resource materials are clearly marked for what is still known by the Elders,⁴ compared to that taken from other written documentation. Elders are also urgently being recorded so that their voices can be put onto CDs for use in school language programs, and there is reticence to use sentence patterns that are not spoken by the Elders.

Finally there is *language reclamation* which encompasses efforts to revive languages from historical sources, in the absence of much active knowledge of the language within the community. Efforts to revive Kurna or Awabakal are especially good examples of language reclamation, with the main and unashamed source of reference being the old documentation sources rather than the memories of Elders.

Of course, revitalisation, renewal, and reclamation are points on a continuum and in many instances, efforts to revive a given language make use of methodologies used for both renewal and reclamation. Language awareness often precedes efforts to revive the language, whereby people familiarise themselves with the source material. Indeed many situations may never move beyond language awareness into efforts to learn and use the language.

3 In addition they have three other program types, including: *First Language Maintenance* (for strong languages such as Pitjantjatjara) and *Second Language* (for strong languages with second language learners) plus *Language Awareness* (whereby students are taught about a language, whether it be strong or less well known).

4 Any word that is known by Ngarrindjeri Elders is identified with an asterisk *.

4. A history of the linguist's role in language revival

4.1 The varying role of linguists

Linguists have played varying roles in language revival activities, largely in response to the different language situations they face. But of course numerous other factors are operable, not least the prior experience, skills, ideology and personal orientation of the linguist. In language revitalisation situations, the linguists' role might be to develop an orthography for the language, to document and analyse the language further, to assist in the writing of teaching materials, to share knowledge of other language revival movements, to advise on strategies and approaches to language revival that might work in these contexts, and to impart their skills through on-the-job training. Language immersion and Hinton's (1994, 2001) master-apprentice approach are especially suited to revitalisation contexts.

By contrast, in language reclamation contexts, the linguist's role is primarily to interpret the historical materials, to produce language resources, to check materials produced for accuracy of grammar and spelling, to impart linguistic skills, to design teaching programs, and, perhaps contentiously, to teach the language and to record words and texts as models of pronunciation. The linguist might well be asked, as in the Kaurua case, to produce translations of utterances, stories, songs, poems, speeches and texts to appear on signs, plaques and murals, etc.

Clearly the linguist's role in reclamation contexts is much more intrusive than in revitalisation or maintenance contexts, whereby first language speakers are the authority on the language and should model the language at all times. In reclamation contexts, the original source materials, in the absence of other information, are the ultimate authority. Due to their technical nature, the linguist often becomes the arbiter or authority on what is 'correct' or 'incorrect'. In practice, it is often hard to be certain as to what is 'correct', but the linguist brings certain skills to bear so that the best informed options and choices can be explored. In the development of new words, for instance, there are a number of options which should be explored and put before the community members so that they can make the final decision.

In language renewal contexts, whereby more of the language is remembered by the Elders, even though there are no fluent speakers, the role (if any) of a linguist can be a site of intense contestation. Who is or should be the authority on the language? And which version of the language is being renewed? Some language revival efforts have focused very much on what is still known and remembered by members of the community, paying scant regard to written records or linguistic analysis. Such efforts may focus on bringing Elders together to jog each others' memories, record what is known and attempt to teach this body of knowledge to younger community members. The aim in this case is to increase the usage of the language, but in a limited form. Some groups may reject input from linguists or any use of 'traditional' grammar altogether, preferring to use English word order and even spellings for their language.

4.2 Linguistics as the impetus for language revival

In many cases language revival work grew out of language retrieval. This is certainly true of Tamsin Donaldson's production of alphabet books in northwest NSW. Donaldson was introduced to the language situation in western NSW by linguist Luise Hercus, whose untiring efforts to salvage remnants of many languages across NSW, Victoria and South Australia sparked a lot of interest amongst Indigenous people. In 1982 Donaldson produced a Ngiyampaa alphabet book (Donaldson 1997:vii) followed by a range of languages including: Muruwari, Paakantji, Wangkamara, and Wiradjuri in 1985 (see Donaldson 1994). Revival of Bundjalung grew out of linguist Margaret Sharpe's efforts to document the language from



Plate 13.1: 1977 Bundjalung course in Lismore. Left to right: Lyle Roberts, the teacher; Margaret Sharpe; Marjorie Oakes; Klaas Woldring (fifth from right); Fletcher Roberts, nephew of Lyle Roberts (third from right). Photograph courtesy *Northern Star*, Lismore.

1965 onwards, and Sharpe then initiated teaching of a Bundjalung course in Lismore in 1977. To this day, the teaching of Bundjalung continues in various places in north-eastern NSW, including Koraki and Tabulum. Bundjalung later featured in Uncle Mick Walker's translation of Samuel Beckett's famous play, *Waiting for Godot*, which was performed in the Festival of the Dreaming in 1997 ('Festival's Bundjalung presentation a world first' *Voice of the Land* 1998, Volume 7:1–2).

Dharawal, and Dhurga language revival grew out of Diana Eades efforts at documentation of the languages in 1974–1975 (Eades 1976). The teaching program grew out of community-based curriculum developed with a grant from the Schools Commission's Innovation Scheme to teach Dharawal and Dhurga at Jervis Bay Primary School. The program drew on the advice of Diana Eades to develop a language unit, which was grammar-focussed with the express intent of giving children some appreciation of the complexity of Aboriginal languages. It then became apparent through the curriculum project that 'the community has a wider knowledge of the original language and that it is being recalled and recorded by their own efforts' (Nugent 1979a:41). Revival of Gumbaynggir (see §9.1), which commenced in June 1986, also drew on Eades' retrieval work, which had perhaps helped to rekindle interest in the language.

Similarly, initial attempts to revive Awabakal in NSW began with Perce Haslem teaching Awabakal; however, these initial efforts were cut short by Haslem's death in 1984. But initiatives to revive Awabakal have recently recommenced in Newcastle (Daryn McKenny pers. comm.). Efforts to reintroduce Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay have been re-invigorated by input from Brother John Giacon in 1995 (Giacon 1999; Giacon and Betts 1999) and Anna Ash more recently.

In Western Australia (WA) in the case of Noongar (Nyungar), a number of community members approached teacher Sandra Woollorton in 1986 about the possibility of introducing

Noongar language into the local school program in Bunbury. They sought funds from various sources. They then approached the linguist Alan Dench of the University of Western Australia (UWA), who had been working on a Noongar database. He provided some training for Noongar language worker Glenys Collard in basic phonetics and transcription. Dench retrieved suitable vocabulary from his database to send to the Noongar Language and Culture project in Bunbury (see Whitehurst 1992) and assisted in checking their transcriptions of tapes they had recorded (Alan Dench, pers.comm.). John Henderson at the UWA is now working with a team of Noongar researchers on the Laves Noongar material. Laves' 1931 linguistic fieldnotes require considerable interpretation, since they were not written with an external audience in mind. As such they employ unexplained idiosyncratic shorthand symbols (John Henderson, pers.comm.).

Revival of Djabugay (in north Queensland) grew from the fortuitous liaison between trained language teacher and anthropologist Michael Quinn and Djabugay Elder Roy Wanyirra Banning (Johnson 1994; DEET 1995; Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park website <http://www.tjapukai.com.au/language.html> Accessed 4 February 2004). The Djabugay program is particularly impressive in terms of the excellent language learning materials that have been produced (Quinn *et al.* 1992; Quinn, Banning and McLeod n.d.; Quinn McLeod and Banning n.d.; Banning *et al.* n.d.). Djabugay language revival has been closely associated with cultural revival and cultural tourism at Kuranda on the Atherton Tablelands, an extremely popular tourist destination (DEET 1995:6–7; Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park website).

In South Australia, linguist Brian Kirke commenced working with Ngarrindjeri in 1985 (see § 9.3) and in 1987 to revive Narungga from Yorke Peninsula. Seeing some of the successes of Kaurna language revival (see §9.2), the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association (NAPA), engaged the services of linguist Christine Eira in 2001. She worked closely with Narungga woman Tanya Wanganeen to develop a phonemic orthography and a range of language materials, including a grammar and dictionary (NAPA 2006a, 2006b; Wanganeen and Eira 2006). Also in 1987, Dorothy Tunbridge, whilst carrying out research towards her PhD, held language renewal workshops and, together with Elders, introduced Adnyamathanha into schools in the Flinders Ranges region. Adnyamathanha programs continue and have expanded with assistance from Guy Tunstill, who is also carrying out research as a PhD candidate.

In Victoria, Luise Hercus had carried out extensive salvage work in the 1960s, though it seems that early language programs ignored these sources. Eve Fesl discusses the beginnings of the Indigenous languages movement in Victoria as follows:

With the rising Aboriginal awareness and the value of Aboriginality they looked around for their languages, only they couldn't find them, and it was the Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (V.A.E.C.G.) which took the first steps in looking into the matter. About that time I graduated from Monash University. I was the first Aboriginal to graduate from the University in Linguistics, so I was asked to do a search for a Victorian language. I looked all over Victoria for two years to try and find some speakers and I couldn't find any.

I told the V.A.E.C.G. of this and of course we had the question raised of restoration. That is, restoration of some of the languages that had become extinct. This was debated for about eight months and we came to the conclusion that it was not right to try and restore a language because we would not know what changes might have taken place during the industrialization of the State. (Fesl 1982:48–49)

History has shown that Koories in Victoria have since tried to restore some of their 'extinct' languages. Linguist Heather Bowe, from Monash University, commenced working on

Yorta Yorta, and assisted its introduction into Worawa College in 1995.⁵ Ganai, DjaDja Wur-rung, Way Wurru, Dhundhuroa, Taungwurrung,⁶ and Wathawurrung (Bruce Pascoe, 'Wathawurrung Language Program' *VACL News*, Sept. 2000:1) are also being taught and learnt as spoken languages, including grammar and syntax even if only in a somewhat incomplete form. No doubt Eve Fesl herself would now be very supportive of these efforts to re-learn and restore Victorian languages. In May 2004 another Indigenous linguist, Jeanie Bell, took up a position with the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation of Languages ('New Faces at VACL. Jeanie Bell' *VACL News*, October 2004:3) to support language revival work.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) engaged Terry Crowley as a consultant in the 1980s and employed Leo Edwardsson, to check reconstructions, run workshops and provide in-house training for Palawa language workers Gaye Brown, Sally Clark, Theresa Sainty, and Jennifer Longley (TAC 1998:2) since 1994. In 2005 Amery and Gale were also engaged to run a four-day workshop for Palawa language workers Lutana Spotswood, Adam Urmston and others.

Whilst many Indigenous groups have involved linguists in various ways to assist in language revival, this is not always the case. Language programs have been initiated and taught by teachers and Indigenous peoples without linguistic assistance, or even in the absence of knowledge that such expertise exists. Eve Fesl observes:

The formation of the ALA [Aboriginal Languages Association, formed in 1981] catalysed Koorie interest in languages in urban as well as in rural areas. At first small amounts of money were made available from government sources, particularly from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, for a number of people to take the opportunity to attempt to revive or establish maintenance programs in their own languages. Unfortunately, only a few linguists with a knowledge of Australian languages were involved. However, as in specific Koorie issues, especially when money is available, many people jumped on the language bandwagon. Teachers without any linguistic training in languages, and some Koories who had no knowledge of their own languages, attempted to establish teaching programs. Some of them tended to believe that it is possible to teach students from recorded conversations and a few lexical items.

Most teachers wrote programs from an English standpoint and thus presented a corrupted language program to students. One teacher, who received a grant of what would be worth \$50,000 now, produced teaching booklets in a language called *Gidabal*. She pidginised the language; she translated the English word 'that' as 'gala' and used it in all examples where she thought the English word 'that' would be used. However, in *Bandjalang* 'gala' means '*that* person/object near the speaker but distant from the listener', 'mala' is used for '*that* person/object distant from both the speaker and the listener'. There are other forms for '*that*' referring to an object/person which is invisible because it has been removed and another for '*that* person/object which is invisible because it has not arrived'. Another form is used for '*that* which can be heard but not seen.' The teacher was a monolingual speaker of English and had no idea of ergativity (a form of grammar) or cases, both of which form the basis of syntax in *Gidabal*. (Fesl 1993: 164–165)

In many cases, not tapping into technical expertise is an attempt to keep control of the language, and to avoid outside interference and subsequent loss of funding,⁷ but in other cases they don't realise what linguistics can offer. Hosking *et al.* (2000:20–21) also briefly discuss this resistance to linguistics.

5 Yorta Yorta straddles the Murray River, whilst Worawa College is located at Healesville east of Melbourne. Yorta Yorta is the language of Hyllus Maris and her sisters who founded the school.

6 VACL Website <http://www.vaclang.org.au> Accessed 10 June 2005.

7 Language revival programs are often part of a wider political agenda such as native title.

4.3 Recognition of language revival by linguists

In the 1970s and 1980s, linguists themselves were generally very sceptical of any efforts to attempt to revive languages. But in the mid-late 1980s, linguists began writing about the possibilities of language revival in Australia. Steve Johnson, who had been working at the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) at Batchelor, NT with a small group of Ngarrindjeri from SA in 1985 wrote a short article titled 'The philosophy and politics of Aboriginal language maintenance' (Johnson 1987). Nick Thieberger (1988) completed an MA thesis on Aboriginal language maintenance in which he devoted some space (pp.48–49; 54–59) to discuss various types of language revival, though he was fairly pessimistic as to what might be achieved. He says of 'language resurrection' (or language reclamation in our terminology) that 'the aim of such courses cannot be expected to be more than an awareness of what some parts of the language were like' (Thieberger 1988:59).

A letter dated 27 April 1989, written by Brian and Helen Geytenbeek, field linguists with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) portrays views widely held at the time. We quote the passage at length:

ATTEMPTS TO REVIVE DYING LANGUAGES

We are very dubious about any attempts at the reviving of dying languages. We spent our first five years in that sort of situation in the 1960s. It didn't work. Some of the leaders were keen, but the rest of the people were just not interested. You can't force people to use a language if they don't want to use it. That may sound axiomatic, but it needs to be said, because many white people who want Aborigines to keep their languages (whether the Aborigines really want or not), put their head in the sand when it comes to this fact.

Likewise there are many Aboriginal people around Australia who would feel wistful about their dying language, but who do not understand the tremendous amount of work that they themselves must be prepared to put into trying to revive such a language. There is no shame in their not understanding this, of course. One learns by doing, and since they have never had the chance to do it before, they cannot be expected to realise how much effort they will have to put in. It merely means that those who do know must be honest with them, and warn them.

For many years now we have been talking to or hearing about or reading about Aboriginal people who think that somehow the Government or the School, or somebody else, can give their situation a 'quick fix'. They want someone else to teach their children their language. In our opinion this is quite ridiculous! If they themselves are not speaking their own language to their own children every day, in their own everyday activities, no amount of help from Government Departments or Schools or Linguists will bring their language back into daily use. The people need to be told that. It is a cold hard fact, and if they do not face it as a fact before they start on a 'revival' project, they may be very disappointed when it fails. We believe that trying [sic] to revive a dying language will be a complete waste of time and money unless the adults actively use the language themselves, and actively work at teaching the children. (Cited in Sharp and Thieberger 1992: 138)

No doubt they had in mind situations where there were still people knowledgeable of the language, though it was no longer in daily use. The Geytenbeeks had previous experience working with *Gidabal*, a dialect of *Bundjalung* in northeast NSW (Geytenbeek and Geytenbeek 1971).

At about the same time, the linguist Bob Dixon was also challenging the legitimacy of language revival activity, especially language reclamation, on linguistic grounds: 'languages at Stages 4 and 5 [i.e. with no living speakers] have no chance whatsoever of survival as a living, spoken tongue. They are just too far gone for there to be any known technique of linguistic resuscitation' (Dixon 1989:31).

By contrast, Annette Schmidt in her landmark study of the state of Indigenous languages at that time devoted nine pages to a discussion of language revival, but none of her 15 recommendations (Schmidt 1990:127–129) mention language revival specifically. The House of Representatives Standing Committee in 1992 dismissed language reclamation out of hand and was pessimistic about language revitalisation efforts:

As it is not possible to revive dead languages it is necessary to assist languages before they reach a severely threatened state. The committee acknowledges that many severely weakened languages do not have good prospects for survival as a comprehensive living language. (Commonwealth of Australia 1992:1)

By the mid–1990s, however, quite a change in discourse is evident with the DEET (1995) publication *Alive and Deadly*. The introduction begins with a quote from Indigenous linguist Jeanie Bell ‘our culture isn’t dead and our languages aren’t dead. Our languages have survived and they are very precious to us and very powerful’ (DEET 1995:1). Language revival is even foregrounded in the title and there is discussion of Yandruwandha, Kaurna, Palawa Karni, Yorta Yorta, Djabugay, and Wiradjuri programs and initiatives on equal terms with other ‘strong’ language programs. McKay (1996) also gives language revival a somewhat higher profile than previous publications. He chooses Gumbaynggir (north coast of NSW), and Yanyuwa and Garrwa (Borrooloola, NT) as two of his four case studies and also discusses briefly a range of other language revival situations (including Nunggubuyu, Djabugay, Kaurna, Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba). Again, discussion of language revival efforts is more or less on a par with his discussion of language maintenance. Amery’s PhD thesis on Kaurna language reclamation (Amery 1998, 2000) represents a significant milestone in the academic study of language revival in Australia. Increasingly language revival has been the subject of academic study (Amery 2001; Walsh 2001, 2003) and research (Mühlhäusler *et al.* 2004). Two honours theses have recently been written on language revival (Bennetts 2003; Watts 2003), and another PhD is in progress (Jutta Besold, who is working on languages from the South Coast of NSW).

Whilst many have become more open to the possibilities offered by language revival programs, Dixon maintains his opposition:

A language is a difficult thing to learn, other than as a young child, and requires application and concentration. There has to be a utilitarian reason for learning it, something more (to judge from recent experience) than ethnic pride.

It is also the case that no language—once it has ceased to be used in everyday life—has ever been revived. Mention is sometimes made of Hebrew as a putative counter-example to this statement. But Hebrew was always in use, both as a written medium (in books, journals and correspondence) and in religious services. It was augmented into the first language of a group—which did take unusual application and dedication—but this group had a political unity. Hebrew did not burst out as the minor language of a minority group, but as the official and prestige language of a nation. Only in these circumstances would such a resurgence be likely to happen. (Dixon 1997:111)

In contrast to Dixon’s views are those espoused in the *NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy* (NSW Government 2004:2) which states that: ‘there is no such thing as a “dead” or “extinct” language in NSW. Given adequate resources, Aboriginal languages can be revived’. Thus the discourse has changed to one of hope and optimism. It is clear from revival work in South Australia that so-called ‘dead’ or ‘extinct’ languages that have reasonable documentation can be revived as auxiliary languages to perform a range of social and political purposes (see sections 9.2 and 9.3). When the level of documentation is minimal, obviously less can be done.

5. The history of advocacy and policies for language revival

5.1 Indigenous language advocacy

In early 1981 a meeting of the newly formed Aboriginal Languages Association (ALA) was held at the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs. This inaugural meeting featured a presentation on the revival of Awabakal by John Heath (subsequently published as Heath 1982), and language revival was discussed as an issue for language planning in Indigenous Australia (Wafer 1982). At its third meeting in 1984, the ALA presented its Bill of Rights to the Australian Linguistics Society (Hobson 1984). The conference identified the need for a national survey to ‘identify and quantify the current crisis in Aboriginal and Islander language maintenance and revival’ and further to ‘determine the feasibility/desirability for a national Aboriginal/Islander language’ (Hobson 1984:33). A key person in ALA, and these early meetings on language rights for Indigenous people, was the Indigenous linguist and representative of the Butchulla people of southeast Queensland, Jeanie Bell.⁸ At the time, Jeanie Bell and Eve Fesl were two of a very few university-trained Indigenous linguists in Australia, and both played important advocacy roles in the linguistic scene in Australia.⁹

The Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL) grew out of the ALA, and was established in 1991 to perform an advocacy role for Indigenous languages and their speakers. It seeks to ‘promote the maintenance, retrieval and revival of Indigenous languages through the support of community based language programs’ (FATSIL Website). At its 2002 Annual General Meeting, FATSIL resolved to push for official recognition of Australia’s Indigenous languages and for the development of comprehensive language policies at state and federal levels. FATSIL commenced publishing *The Voice of the Land* in 1996; and since its fourth issue has included a regular feature article ‘Language of the Month’. The first of these was an article about Gumbaynggir, which featured poetry in the language by Emily Walker (‘Language of the Month’ *Voice of the Land* 1997, Volume 4:4–5).

More recently, Indigenous voices have argued strongly in support of all Indigenous languages, whatever their state. Lester Irabinna Rigney (2002), a Kurna man and academic from Flinders University in SA, has argued a language rights agenda within the framework of a national treaty. On the local level, Indigenous groups, such as the Kurna in Adelaide and Dharuk in Sydney, have pushed for official recognition of placenames. As a result, as of November 2001 the Torrens River, which flows through the heart of Adelaide, is now also officially Karrawirra Parri ‘redgum forest river’¹⁰ through South Australia’s dual-naming legislation, whilst Dawes Point under Sydney Harbour Bridge is now Tarra.

5.2 Indigenous language policy

As McKay (1996:11) points out, prior to the introduction of bilingual education programs in the Northern Territory in 1973, there was no official recognition of Australia’s Indigenous languages. Prior to that, any school programs or language maintenance activities were strictly

8 Bell was actually based in Alice Springs working at Yipirinya school in the early 1980s.

9 Other speakers of Australian languages, however, were undergoing training at IAD in translating and interpreting in the 1980s, or studying linguistics at the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) at Batchelor, south of Darwin.

10 Karrawirraparri ‘redgum forest river’ is one of the original names for the Torrens River (Teichelmann and Schürmann 1840:75). It has been officially adopted with a slightly revised spelling and separation of the river component to minimise mis-interpretation.

local responses to local situations. Language policy development in relation to Indigenous languages made no mention of language revival. Rather, the focus was on language maintenance, language preservation and bilingual education. The commonwealth document *Towards a national language policy* (Commonwealth Department of Education 1982:17–18) includes a brief discussion on ‘Issues relating to Aboriginal languages’ including the fragility of Indigenous languages, language documentation, Aboriginal languages in schools, language maintenance strategies, the possibility of one national Aboriginal language, literacy and language preservation. Whilst the word *reclamation* is used in this section, it is used in the context of documentation rather than active measures to revive Aboriginal languages. The same is true of *A national language policy*, the 1984 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts.

In Jo Lo Bianco’s (1987) *National policy on languages* there is no hint of consideration of language revival. In fact, in a section titled ‘The language needs of urban Aborigines unfamiliar with a traditional language’ the suggestion is made that:

Many urban Aborigines wish to become familiar with a traditional language. It is highly desirable that opportunities be made available for the teaching of accredited school courses and adult education programs in some Aboriginal languages and that components concerning Aboriginal languages and their cultural significance be designed and offered as part of Aboriginal studies courses. (Lo Bianco 1987:116)

This partly explains why in many cases the teaching of a viable language (most often Pitjantjatjara) preceded language revival initiatives in southern parts of Australia. The teaching of Pitjantjatjara preceded the introduction of local Nunga (Narrungga, Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri) languages in Adelaide in the mid–1980s. In Tasmania in the 1980s, Palawa (Indigenous Tasmanians) attempted to learn Pitjantjatjara by listening to tapes before turning to their own languages. In Victoria, Eve Fesl initially considered teaching Pitjantjatjara at Monash University, but this was quickly replaced by Bundjalung from the north coast of NSW in 1987, because a coastal language was thought to be more suited to the Victorian context (and a Bundjalung course had already been developed and taught by Margaret Sharpe). Then in 1995, Bundjalung was replaced by Ganai, the local Gippsland language (McKay 1996:150–151). Similarly, at Worawa College, Healesville, east of Melbourne, the teaching of Gupapuyŋu from Milingimbi in north east Arnhem Land preceded the introduction of Yorta Yorta in 1995.

The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Commonwealth of Australia 1991:19), which is still current, established the following goal in relation to Indigenous languages:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages should be maintained and developed where they are still transmitted. Other languages should be assisted in an appropriate way, for example, through recording. These activities should only occur where the speakers so desire and in consultation with their community, for the benefit of the descendants of their speakers and for the nation’s heritage.

As before, the discourse is one of language maintenance and preservation, viewing languages no longer actively spoken as relics. Government agencies, funding bodies and even Indigenous peoples pushed the interests of so-called ‘strong’ languages, even to the point of arguing for just one national Aboriginal language to be supported above all else in the early 1980s. But as some linguists began to argue strongly for funding and support of critically endangered languages, and as Indigenous people themselves realised the possibilities through language revival, even if no fluent speakers remained, things started to change at the community level.

According to the 2005 National Statement for Languages Education in Australian schools,¹¹ by 2003 there were 146 languages taught in both mainstream and non-mainstream settings, including: 103 languages being taught in schools and 69 being taught in out-of-school community settings. Of the 103 taught in schools, 68 were Indigenous languages. Although the document doesn't state this, we know there were also a number of Indigenous languages taught in out-of-school settings, such as Palawa Kani at Launceston in Tasmania,¹² which is intentionally only taught out-of-schools.

Gradually something of a mismatch has emerged between the national language policy and what is actually happening on the ground. Because Indigenous people at the grassroots have pushed for their own languages to be taught, local initiatives have gotten underway before there had been much public debate. The national policy on languages hasn't had time to catch up, despite the few voices promoting the virtues of language revival in national forums.

However, various states' education departments have developed language policies relating specifically to the teaching of languages in schools. The NSW Government has gone one major step further and developed a *NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy* in May 2004. This policy is said to be a 'cross-agency Policy, and as such, making progress towards these goals is the responsibility of all State Government agencies' (NSW Government 2004:6). Four agencies are identified as having primary responsibility for implementing the policy: (1) The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs; (2) The NSW Office of the Board of Studies; (3) The NSW Department of Education and Training; and (4) The NSW Department of Corrective Services in four main focus areas: (a) Language programs in Aboriginal communities; (b) Language programs in the educational system; (c) Language programs in gaols and detention centres; and (d) Aboriginal languages in the broader community. (NSW Government 2004: 5–6). In contrast with the national language policy, which makes no reference to language revival, the NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy is totally focussed on language revitalisation which 'is used in its generic sense, and covers activities such as language reclamation, revival, renewal, maintenance and awareness, unless specific reference is made to these activities' (NSW Government, 2004:2).

No other state has yet embraced a similar state-wide cross-agency policy, though several have language policies within education. In SA for example, the latest draft Languages Policy 2005–2010 by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), doesn't specifically address language revival, but it quotes the United Nations Declaration of Linguistic Rights, article 7: 'all languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development'. It goes on to state that 'DECS will support the learning of Australian Indigenous Languages', among nine others (DECS 2005:1).

Some states do have agreements between local Indigenous groups and councils on dual naming legislation in regards to Indigenous languages, but in others there are no such agreements. In Queensland, for instance, the *State of the Environment* report says 'there is no state policy on Indigenous languages, and support for them at a state level is low' (Queensland Government 2003:9–32).

11 This is a 17 page booklet produced by the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA 2005).

12 Alternate spellings found include Kani ~ Karni.

6. The history of funding for language revival

Initially there were no sources of funding designated specifically for language revival programs. Limited funding was procured, however, from a variety of sources in the mid 1980s, such as Aboriginal Affairs departments or one-off funding sources such as the South Australian Jubilee. Following the acceptance of Lo Bianco's (1987) national language policy report by the Commonwealth, the National Aboriginal Languages Program (NALP) program was established to fund local language projects based on project submissions. Schmidt (1990: 103) notes that 'approximately 40 to 45 per cent of the total [NALP] submissions were for revival projects from communities wishing to relearn their dying or dead languages'. Accordingly, some NALP funding found its way to language revival programs such as the Ngarrindjeri, Narrunga, and Kurna Languages Project in Adelaide and the Djabugay program in north Queensland.

Whilst national language policy and the discourse on Aboriginal languages ignored the possibility of language revival, the reality of the situation was that a significant proportion of commonwealth funding for Indigenous languages was going to supporting language revival. This funding was initially NALP money, and later called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Initiatives Program (ATSILIP). Some linguists took issue with this money going to language revival activities, including Bob Dixon who argued that:

Communities at Stages 4 and 5 [i.e. having no fluent speakers] cannot hope to regain their original language. They may wish to learn as much as they can about it, from old sources. This will help to enhance a sense of pride in tradition. But it is not language maintenance, and should not be funded from money earmarked for language maintenance. (Dixon 1989:32)

In practice, however, a significant portion of commonwealth funds (now perhaps around half the total funds) continues to flow to language revival projects. From 1999–2000 to 2001–2002 an additional \$9 million, under the Language Access Initiatives Program (LAIP), was allocated to Indigenous language programs which addressed the disruption of ancestral languages suffered by members of the Stolen Generations as a response to the *Bringing Them Home Report* (Commonwealth of Australia 1997).

In 2003–2004 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) allocated \$7.94 million, mostly for the Preservation of Indigenous Languages and Recordings (PILR). Recently ATSIS allocated further funding for work on 'Endangered Languages' with less than 20 speakers. This has funded, for instance, the Wirangu project producing language resources and making available previously unknown wordlists (such as *The Hoff Vocabularies*—Hoff and Hoff 2004) to the community in and around Ceduna on the far west coast of SA. Other projects funded though this money included activities in several languages in Victoria, despite there being no remaining fluent speakers of the languages concerned, including: Ganai, Yirruk-Tinnor, Wathaurong, and Waywuru/Dhudhuroa.

When distributed through ATSIC, most money went to state or regional language centres, who then allocated funds to individual projects. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, for example, supports other languages in Victoria besides those mentioned above, including: Daungwurrung and Wathawurrung (see 'Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages' *Voice of the Land*, April 2005:8–9). In SA, until 2005, all commonwealth monies went direct to the only language centre, Yaitya Warra Wodli, who then funded Indigenous bodies to work on community language projects.

With the abolition of ATSIC in 2004, commonwealth funding for language programs is now being channelled through the Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). Funding has been made available to a broader spectrum of recipients,

including universities. In SA, for example, DCITA funds have been allocated to the University of Adelaide to work specifically on Wirangu, Kukata, Antikirinya, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna language projects. No longer is the money restricted to community-controlled projects, and the education sector is now eligible.

It is not easy to establish exactly how much funding has been allocated specifically to language revival activities over time, since funding of these programs often comes from the same pool of funding as for language maintenance. Much of the funding for endangered languages has been allocated to recording and documentation, but typically retrieval goes hand in hand with revival often within the same funded project. Analysis of a listing of the 53 ATSIIC-funded projects for 2002–2003 (from Questions taken on notice: Additional Estimates Hearing 10 February 2003) reveals that the majority were working with languages undergoing revival. A number of these allocations were made to language centres which support a variety of programs types and different languages, so there is no way of obtaining an accurate breakdown of allocations that actually support language revival. According to the ATSIIS Annual Report 2003/04, over 150 languages across Australia had been supported by the PILR program. Knowing there are less than twenty strong languages remaining in Australia, we can assume the vast majority of these 150 languages are no longer transmitted naturally to younger generations, so would therefore involve language revival programs.

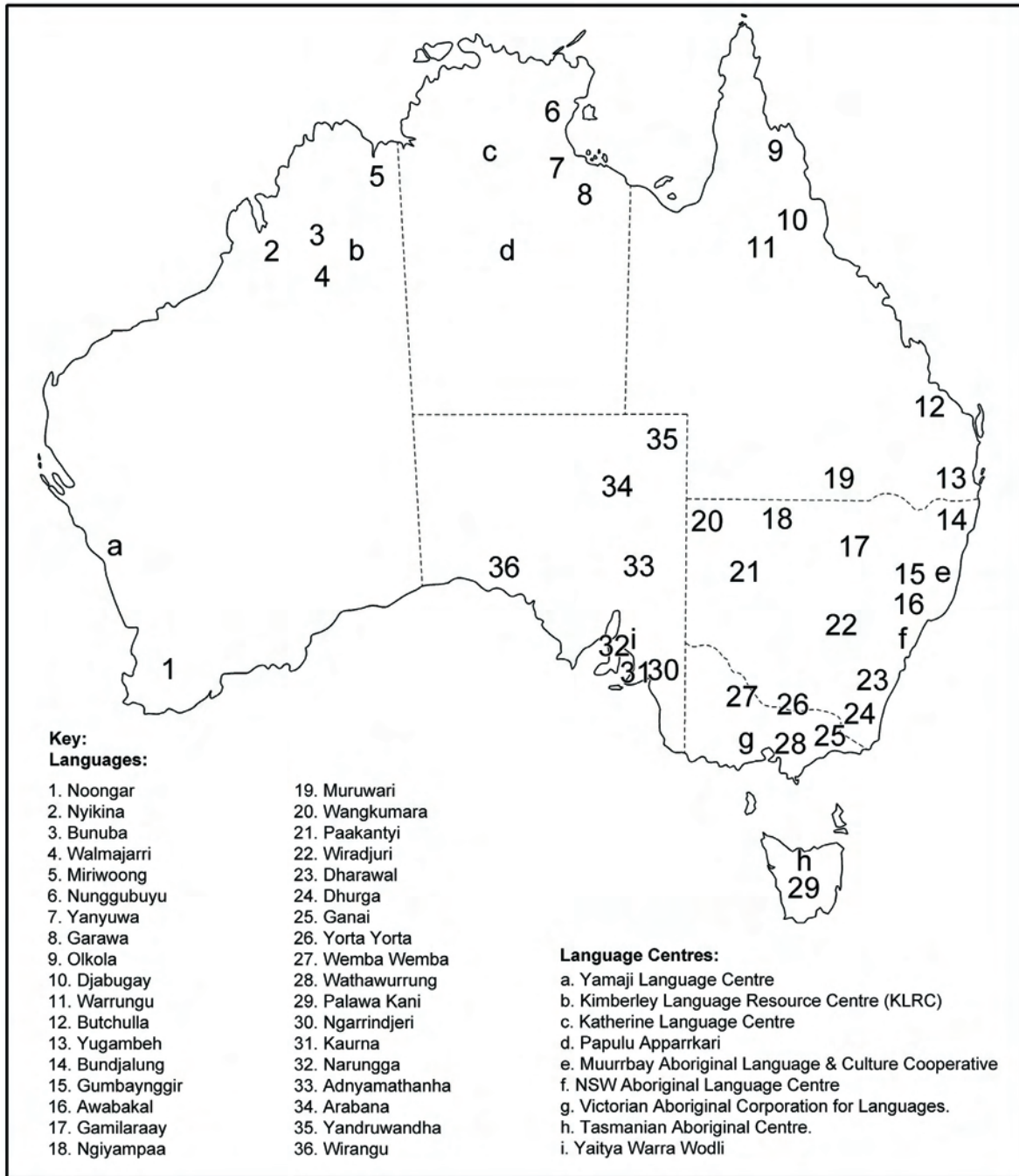
Funding for community language projects has risen from \$1 million per year in the late 1980s under NALP, to \$8.5 million per year under the MILR program through DCITA. During the years 1999–2002 an additional \$3 million per year was allocated under LAIP, in line with recommendations from the *Bringing Them Home Report*, and an additional \$3 million in 2003–2004 for the ‘Endangered Languages’ fund, to support the documentation of languages with less than 20 speakers.

In addition to funds allocated to community-based language programs discussed above, some additional funds are allocated through the education sector, though it is difficult to ascertain how much is allocated to the teaching of Aboriginal languages, let alone identifying how much funding supports language revival programs. In 1989 the Commonwealth and the states agreed to the Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP), renamed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. This policy was reaffirmed in 1995. In July 2000, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) issued a National Statement of principles and standards and an action framework for more culturally inclusive and educationally effective schooling for Australia’s Indigenous peoples in the 21st Century. Indigenous languages education is not a high priority within the AEP. Only a small proportion of AEP funding is used to teach Indigenous languages. By comparison, a much greater proportion is allocated to English literacy.

At the state level, in SA for instance, a line of funding was established in 1998 to support Indigenous language programs in schools, above and beyond normal staffing allocations. Accordingly \$137,000 per annum has been distributed through the Australian Languages Programs Initiatives (ALPI) program to schools. The majority of this funding is allocated to language revival programs.

Some small research grants have also been obtained through universities to support the development of language revival programs and small amounts are derived from a variety of other sources, including royalties, benevolent societies and a range of one-off funding opportunities,¹³ usually allocated to specific projects, such as a songbook. Needless to say, there is

13 The documentation of a number of endangered languages, such as Kayardild, Jawoyn, Yan-Nhangu and Ngamini, has been funded by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Program since its establishment at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University in 2002.



Map 13.1: Locations of some languages undergoing revival

often a sizable voluntary contribution of time and resources in most successful language revival programs, which reflects the passion and enthusiasm of language activists.

7. A history of community-based language revival

The Awabakal language program established in Newcastle in 1979 was probably the first community-based revival, with Perce Haslam teaching evening classes until his untimely death in 1984. Other programs, such as the revival of Gumbaynggir at Nambucca Heads in northern NSW, began as a community-based program, but later broadened to offer the lan-

guage in schools in the vicinity (see the case study in §9.1 below). In fact, it would be safe to say that all revival efforts that are taught within the school sector were originally community initiatives, whether they were initiated with the involvement of a linguist or not.

Major focal points for these community efforts have been community-run language centres. In more sparsely-settled northern, western and central parts of Australia, regional language centres have played a major role in facilitating and coordinating language maintenance and revival programs, largely because of their ability to attract funding, and their provision of services and expertise normally outside the reach of small communities. The first language centres to be established were in the Kimberley region of Western Australia (WA) in the 1980s: Mirima Dawang Woorlab-Gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWG) in Kununurra in 1982 (Newry and Palmer 2003:102) and the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) at Halls Creek in 1985. These two centres maximised the use of scarce resources across a range of languages and both employed linguists. Initially, the work conducted in these centres was more language maintenance and retrieval rather than revival work, and still today it is hard to separate these activities. When centres are established to support a range of languages, so too do they serve a range of language activities, including: the documentation and recording of stronger languages, the recording of what remains of weaker languages, archival research on severely threatened languages, lobbying and promotional activities, production of community newsletters in the languages, the development of language resources for teaching activities and the setting up of teaching programs etc.

By 1990 there were six language resource centres across the country, all of which were engaged in language maintenance activities, and possibly some revival work in the Papulu Apparr-Kari centre in Tennant Creek in the NT and the two language centres in the Kimberley.¹⁴ The other language centres were: the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs in NT, the Pilbara Language Centre (PLC) in Port Hedland in WA, and the North West Resource Centre at Ernabella in SA.¹⁵ The Hopevale Language Centre at Hopevale community in Queensland closed in 1989 due to lack of funding (see Schmidt 1990:57–58).

By 2005 there were some 21 Indigenous language centres across Australia, with at least one in each state. Some of these service just one or two languages, but most serve numerous languages across a region or even an entire state. The Katherine Language Centre (KLC) in the NT, for example, serves a large region covering a number of languages, and does both maintenance and revival work. The NSW language centre, established at Tranby College in Glebe, Sydney in 2002, supports many language programs across NSW, and as mentioned earlier, Victoria has a single language centre. SA also had just one centre up until 2006 with the closure of Yaitya Warra Wodli (YWW). Unlike all other language centres, YWW never employed a linguist after more than a decade of operation, and the centre served more as a store-house for language resources and as a distributor of funds. In Tasmania there is the one organisation, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), but there are three offices in: Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

As expected, the products and successes of language centres vary greatly. In 2001 MDWG language and culture centre in Kununurra produced a video that documented Gajirrawoong language and country. It is reported that ‘since the production of the video, many people have returned to visit the places highlighted in the film, and a young Gajirrawoong man is now fo-

14 Hudson and McConvell (1984:24) remark that there had been no requests for language revival in the Kimberley up until that time.

15 This Centre closed in the mid 1990s when bilingual education was phased out of the north west Anangu schools.

cusing solely on Gajirrawoong language in his work at the Language Centre.’ (Mirima Council n.d.). The KLRC has implemented a successful program at Fitzroy Crossing where the Senior Language Development Officer, has greatly increased her knowledge of her own severely-endangered language through a long association with project linguists:

Over time she has extended and developed her linguistic knowledge of Bunuba to a level that is influencing the content and teaching methods of her language lessons. There has been noticeable success over the last 5 years in raising the profile of Bunuba. Most significant is the use of Bunuba by the younger generation. (Mirima Council n.d.)

The types of project undertaken in language centres are inevitably driven by the skills of those employed and the needs of the languages concerned. In language revival situations, some languages are better documented than others, while many languages have very scant documentation and often of dubious quality (such as the Tasmanian languages). The threatened languages that have been left with quality written grammars and phonemically-spelt wordlists are usually the languages documented by Lutheran missionaries (the German missionaries from Dresden who came to SA in the early to mid nineteenth century, for example, had knowledge of classical languages and a determination to learn and document the local languages for Christianising purposes, see Gale 1990).

Not surprisingly, for those languages with few early records, further documentation of what is still remembered of the language is often the first priority for those attempting to revive their languages. Salvage or retrieval work is particularly urgent when the remaining knowledge is only with a few remaining Elders. When the Elders have knowledge of full sentences and texts in the language, recording is done onto audio and video tapes, as is the case at the MDWG Cultural Centre in WA. Even if there is no time or resources to transcribe these texts into a written form, there is still a certain urgency about getting the texts recorded in some form before they are lost forever. By contrast, in a language where only words and short phrases are known by the Elders, such as Ngarrindjeri in SA, work was undertaken in 2005 to 2006 to record the Elders saying the words straight onto a laptop computer, using the Audacity software (which is free on the Web). This digitised sound recording is being saved (as WAV files) so it can then be inserted into PowerPoint presentations or interactive CD-ROMs at a later date for use by the younger generation.

The complexity and sophistication of resource materials to support language revival activities has developed over the years, largely as a response to the escalating developments in technology. In many cases, the actual production of resource materials has become a crucial part of the revival activity itself, largely because those making the resources are retrieving and learning the language as they go. Initial production of materials consisted of basic language lessons (Sharpe 1993), alphabet books (see Donaldson 1994) and wordlists. Kirke commenced his language revival work in SA on Ngarrindjeri and Narungga with the development of language kits (Kirke 1987a, 1987b) consisting of wordlists, picture cards, flash cards and cartoon strips. Language kits were also produced within the first few years of Gumbaynggir revival in NSW (see the Ngarrindjeri and Gumbaynggir case studies below).

Kaurna language revival in SA began with the writing of songs and the publication of a songbook (Ngarrindjeri, Narrunga and Kaurna Languages Project, 1990) and an accompanying cassette tape,¹⁶ closely followed by some simple stories and wall charts of classroom commands such as *bilyabilyarti!* ‘Make less noise!, Settle down!’. In support of the Djabugay program in Queensland, Michael Quinn and Roy Banning produced a series of booklets, referred to earlier in §4.2, consisting of language learning lessons, games, stories and songs. The Noongar Language and Culture centre in Bunbury in WA produced a substantial 189

16 In 2003 this and the tape accompanying *Kaurna Paltinna* (Schultz *et al.* 1999) were re-mastered as CDs.

page language course (Wooltorton 1992). This comprised Part 1, consisting of nine units of work on 'Noongar Tradition', with plans to produce a second book Part 2 with an additional eleven units on 'Change and Noongar Today'. The contents of this planned second book are sketched out in the first (Wooltorton 1992:vi) though our enquiries seem to indicate that it was never published.

One early language revival project that warrants special mention is the production of the book *The Story of the Falling Star* produced by the Western Regional Aboriginal Land Council in Broken Hill in NSW (Jones *et al.* 1989). Whilst it was published in 1989, given the nature of the publication (see below) it must have been some years in the making. This book consists of a collage of photographs with the Paakantji Elder Elsie Jones telling the Falling Star story to members of her extended family. Whilst this story is told essentially in English, substantial amounts of Paakantji are included in naturalistic ways. Images of the characters in the Dreaming narrative have been drawn in, often superimposed on photographs of country. Speech balloons appear such that the ancestors are speaking Paakantji. Salient Paakantji terms are clearly explained within the English dialogue. For instance, one page (see Plate 13.2) features a group of people at a campsite under some trees saying *Parri yaamari thaltlayiki wiimpatja kulpaan thurlaka parlku!* 'Come and hear the bad news this blackfella's telling us!'¹⁷ Punritj, the main character in the story approaches saying *Minha parlku wathu?* 'What's he saying?' The English translations of the Paakantji dialogue appears at the bottom of the page.

The real strength of this resource is the way in which it includes so many Paakantji people—no less than 158 names of 'people who appear in the story' are listed in the back. It is an extremely well-produced book and no doubt it was expensive to print with glossy colour photographs throughout. Many funding bodies are acknowledged including the Aboriginal Arts Board, AIATSIS and dozens of Catholic orders, mostly from across NSW. This book is a good example of how the making of a product can be a language learning activity in itself. A very similar quality book was made in Tasmania by the Palawa (Indigenous Tasmanians) in 1999, entitled *Back to Tayaritja 1999*. It includes 54 Palawa Kani (Tasmanian language) words within the English text, which tells of a cultural trip back the Bass Strait Islands by a group of Palawa. This book is accompanied with a CD of the same text.

In 1992, the Dictionaries for Reconciliation Project provided funding for the production of a series of dictionaries from across Australia, including: Wemba Wemba from the Murray River in Victoria (Hercus 1992a), Nukunu from Port Pirie to Port Augusta in SA (Hercus 1992b) and Muruwari from the Brewarrina district of NSW (Oates 1992).¹⁸ These dictionaries now support language revival efforts in the respective languages. Several other good dictionaries have grown out of and further support language revival programs including: Gumbaynggir (MALCC 2001), and Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay (Ash *et al.* 2003). In SA a Narungga dictionary has just been published (NAPA 2006a) in both electronic (FileMaker Pro) and printed format. A similar Ngarrindjeri dictionary is being prepared. See the Ngarrindjeri case study below (§9.3).

In the mid-1990s some HyperCard resources began to be created to support the revival of certain languages. Nick Thieberger had demonstrated HyperCard stacks developed for Ojibwa in Canada by Randy Valentine, and developed his own stacks for Australian languages using stronger Western Australian languages (Thieberger 1994–1995). For Kurna in Adelaide, HyperCard stacks were created of a phoneme chart and words with linked sound

17 No page numbers appear in this publication.

18 This dictionary was written specifically for schools. It includes grammatical notes and illustrative sentences. The vocabulary is arranged by semantic domain and includes some illustrations.

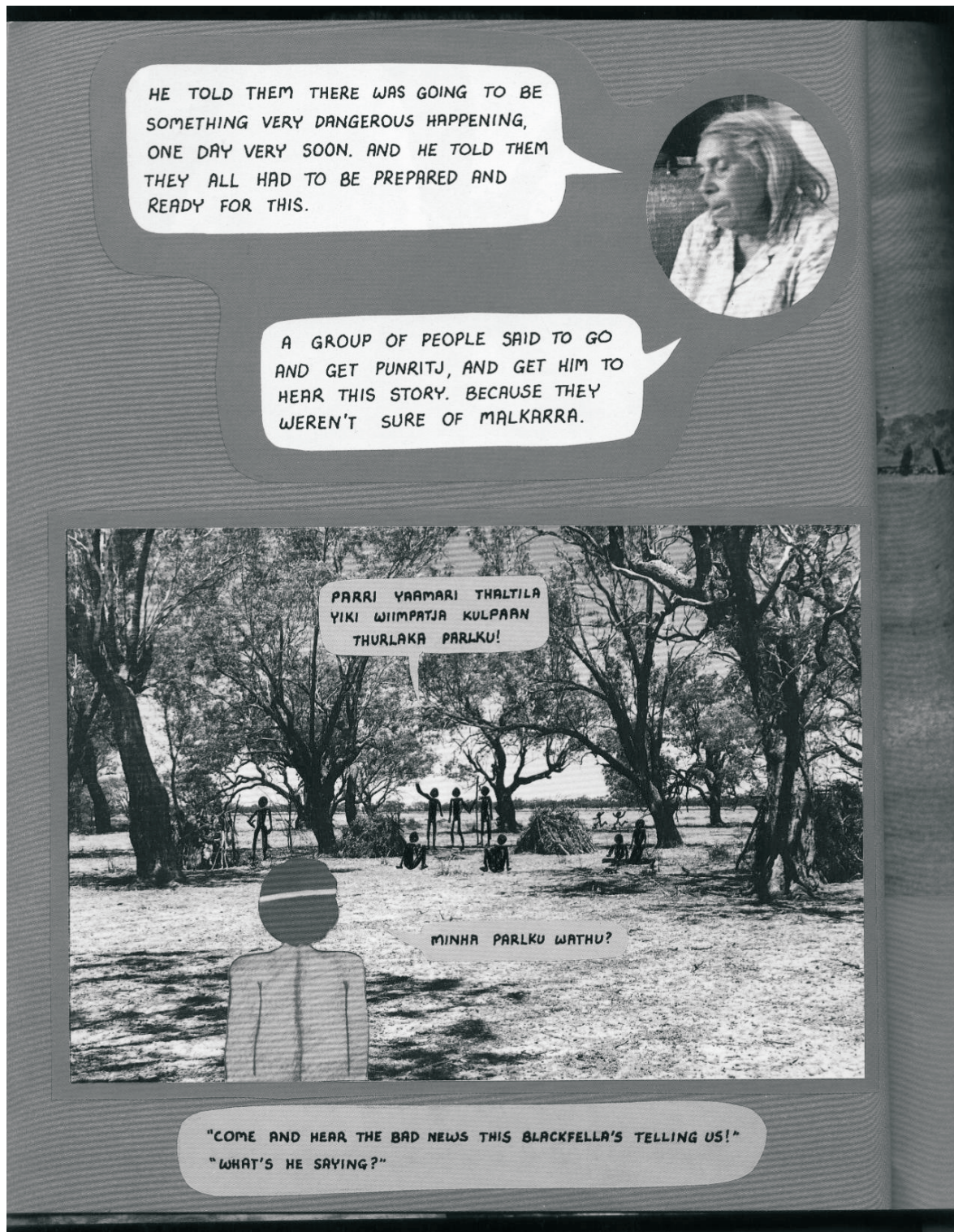


Plate 13.2: Page from *Falling Star*

files to illustrate the sounds and spellings, as well as a stack of ten illustrated sentences with multiple choice questions and answers (Amery and Varcoe 1994). The linguist David Nathan created a multimedia cartoon for several languages using HyperCard including Wirangu (Burgoyne and Nathan 1996) and Yandruwanda (Nathan *et al.* 1999).

In recent years more sophisticated resources have been produced. In 1998 the Canberra-based company 'Multilocus' worked with the Ngalangangpum School, Warlawurru Catholic School, Birlirr Ngawiyiwu Catholic School and the Aboriginal Student Support and Parents Awareness Program Committees for Turkey Creek, Red Hill and Kundat Jaru Communities to produce the 'Kimberley Language Program' CD-ROM for Kija and Jaru. Between 1998 and 2000, they worked with the Catholic Education office of Western Australia, Yakanarra Community School, Kururrunku Catholic Education Centre, John Pujajangka-Piyirn Catholic School and Wulungarra Community School to develop a 3 CD-ROM set called 'Learning Walmajarri'.¹⁹

Following the production of the first Walmajarri interactive CD-ROM in 1998, the Commonwealth allocated funds in the late 1990s for the Multimedia Languages Resource Project to develop interactive CD-ROMs in ten selected languages through Multilocus. These CD-ROM projects include a number of languages undergoing revival, such as Palawa Kani (Tasmania), Wathaurong (Melbourne, Victoria), Paakantji (Darling River, NSW), Arabana (NE South Australia), Adnyamathanha (Flinders Ranges, South Australia), Ngarinyman (Victoria River District, NT) and Olkola (Cape York, Queensland).

The KLRC in the Kimberley has produced CD-ROMs to support the learning of several languages being revived including Bunuba (KLRC 2000) and Nyikina (KLRC 2001). David Nathan has also produced several interactive CD-ROMs including Wanyjirra (Tsunoda and Nathan 2000–2002), Warrungu (Tsunoda and Nathan 2002), Paakantyi (Hercus and Nathan 2002) and Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay (Giacon and Nathan forthcoming). In 2001 *Nambur Ganai*, which claimed to be 'the first interactive language teaching CD-ROM in Australia' (*VACL News*, July 2002) was launched. The CD, produced by Doris Paton and Lynnette Dent is based on Lynnette Dent's efforts to teach the Ganai language of the Gippsland region, Victoria, over a five year period at Woolum Bellum (Koorie Open Door Education) KODE school in Morwell. A CD-ROM has also been recently produced for Gumbaynggir by Michael Donovan and Daryn McKenny, an Awabakal man, has recently set up a user-friendly Awabakal database.²⁰

Over the last 20 years or so as community-based language revival efforts have been tried, and many have taken root, the confidence and optimism of individuals to use language in ways they once never thought possible has grown. This increase in confidence builds a momentum of its own and when communities see what is possible with language they start pushing the boundaries and become even more adventurous.

8. A history of language revival in the education sector

Many of the most intensive and sustained language revival programs in Australia began within the school sector, or have been closely associated with education, beginning with the teaching of Bundjalung in 1977. This is especially the case in Victoria, SA and NSW. In WA and the NT most language revival activities are based within language centres, but these centres nonetheless work closely with schools. In Queensland the school system has been less supportive, failing for instance to adopt national curriculum developed for Indigenous languages at senior secondary level. In Tasmania, on the other hand, the language programs have been deliberately kept out of the school system, with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's (TAC's) policy being to keep the control and access to the language strictly within the Palawa

19 See <http://www.multilocus.com.au/portfolio/indigenoulanguage/index.htm> Accessed 22 June 2005.

20 See <http://mdonovan.cgpublisher.com/product/pub.31/prod.44>. Accessed 18 June 2005.

community. Nonetheless, the TAC is conducting its own language classes in Palawa Kani within the Palawa community.

When the first revival programs emerged, there were no support structures or designated funding within the education sector, and there was no policy in place to guide these programs. But over the last two decades, huge advances have been made in some states and territories in terms of policy, curriculum, funding arrangements and the implementation of programs.

8.1 Languages education policy

The *Northern Territory Policy on Languages Other Than English* (NT Department of Education 1988) adopts the following as its second principle: ‘Aboriginal and ethnic groups should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their languages and cultures’, and includes a section in the rationale on ‘Cultural Heritage and Identity.’ It made the observation (NTDE 1988:2–3) that ‘in many instances, Aboriginal cultures and languages are on the verge of disappearing completely. The need in this context, therefore, is not simply to assist in the maintenance of a cultural and linguistic heritage but to aid in preventing its extinction’. It is not clear, however, whether the policy includes language revival within its vision or not.

The current *Languages Policy* of South Australia (Education Department of SA, 1986) makes no mention of Indigenous languages, however the draft *DECS Language Policy* prepared in 2005 rectifies this oversight (DECS 2005). The 1986 policy stresses that ‘the central aim of all language teaching in our schools is the development of the learner’s ability to communicate fluently, accurately and appropriately in the chosen language’, a goal which some argue (see Amery 1992) is not necessarily foremost for many language revival programs, particularly in their early stages. Significantly, however, the cover of this language policy features Pitjantjatjara and Adnyamathanha (a language revitalisation program) in recognition that they were being taught when the policy was developed. By contrast, the *South Australian Languages Other Than English Plan 2000–2007* mentions Aboriginal languages, along with nine others, as languages identified for support by the Department (DETE 1998a:5).²¹

Support for Aboriginal languages in the education sector is actually written into state government policy in NSW, as mentioned earlier, in their 2004 *NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy* which refers explicitly to language revitalisation throughout. By contrast, Goal 17 of the national AEP policy mentioned earlier aims ‘to develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages.’ Whilst there is no mention of language revival within the policy, language revival programs in schools are supported to some extent by funding flowing on from this policy.

21 In SA, the Aboriginal Languages Standing Committee, established in 1997 worked to develop a set of protocols regarding ownership and copyright and staffing of Aboriginal languages programs.

8.2 Language curriculum development

A number of curriculum initiatives have been devised to accommodate and support the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools, including language revival. First amongst these was the *WA Framework for the teaching of Aboriginal languages in primary schools* (Ministry of Education WA 1992) developed by the linguist Joyce Hudson. This framework caters for urban, rural and remote contexts, and for children with varying levels of knowledge of Aboriginal languages, ranging from fluent speakers to no knowledge (Ministry of Education WA 1992:10).²²

The Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) project commenced in 1993 and culminated in a national framework that potentially accommodates the teaching of each and every Australian Indigenous language at senior secondary level. The diversity of language situations is accommodated through program types, which include language revival (and subtypes: language revitalisation, language renewal and language reclamation) and language awareness (SSABSA 1996). South Australia (SSABSA 2005) and Victoria (VCAA 2004) have each developed their own syllabus frameworks based on AILF. The Northern Territory uses South Australian curriculum at senior secondary level. The first accredited programs, which were taught in 1994, included an Antikirinya language revitalisation program at Oodnadatta and a Kurna language reclamation program in Adelaide at Elizabeth City High School and Elizabeth West Adult Campus in the northern metropolitan area. The Tasmanian policy of not teaching Tasmanian languages in schools was articulated by their representative Jimmy Everett at the first national steering committee meeting of the AILF project in 1993.

Scopes and Standards (or learning goals and expectations) have been developed for Australian Indigenous languages within the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) (DECS 2003) which specifically caters for language revival. In 2004, nine Aboriginal languages were taught to 4,326 students in 64 language programs in South Australian schools (DECS 2004). The majority of these languages and language programs are revival programs, though nearly half of the students (2,012) were enrolled in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara second language programs. Over the last five years, the number of language programs in South Australian schools has grown from 49 to 62 and from 2,000 to 4,326 learners between 1999 and 2004.

The development of comprehensive Teaching Frameworks for Adnyamathanha (Tunstall 2004) and Arabana (Wilson 2004) in SA have raised the bar in terms of quality and depth of curriculum materials for the support of the teaching of specific Indigenous languages in revival programs. These frameworks are 484 and 529 pages long respectively. They include teaching modules designed for primary, middle years and senior years, together with comprehensive background and linguistic notes, texts and references. They are designed as curriculum resources from which teachers can draw to formulate their own lesson plans. The NT has also developed its own Aboriginal languages curriculum statement for years Transition to 10, but makes use of South Australian curriculum at senior secondary level.

As a response to Recommendation 55 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the NSW Board of Studies undertook a study in 1991–1992 into the feasibility of teaching Aboriginal languages in NSW schools. Several years later, the *New South Wales Aboriginal Languages Interim Framework K–10* (NSW Board of Studies 1998) was published. At about the same time a comprehensive survey of the Aboriginal languages situation across

22 Gale and Graham (1991) had also produced several copies of a draft kit with strategies for language revival in a range of contexts similar to those distinguished in the WA Framework, though this document, being produced outside the system, had a very limited distribution.

NSW was undertaken in 1999 (Hosking *et al.* 2000). By then, seven Aboriginal languages were being taught across the state in twelve government schools (Hosking *et al.* 2000:16; see also NSW Board of Studies 2000). All of these were language revival programs. The Aboriginal languages syllabus continued to be refined with publication of the final version, downloadable from the web, being made available in 2003 (NSW Board of Studies 2003).

Victoria has also developed a syllabus for local Victorian Aboriginal languages entitled *LOTE Indigenous Languages of Victoria—Revival and Reclamation 2004–2008* (Victorian Curriculum Accrediting Authority 2004) which was introduced to Indigenous students across Victoria in 2004. Prior to that, it permitted the teaching of Yorta Yorta at Worawa College, Healesville, since 1995 by special arrangement.

These curriculum frameworks from across the country have in the main been developed by linguists, or in conjunction with linguists, specialising in Aboriginal languages. Indigenous linguists have driven or informed a number of these initiatives. Jeanie Bell, for example, designed the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) framework in north Queensland, and Jaky Troy developed the NSW Board of Studies framework.

9. Case studies of language revival programs

Each case of language revival has its own individual history and its own particular language ecology, which is shaped by many factors. Perhaps the most important of these are the state of the language (degree of language loss and level of documentation), the nature of the community associated with the language and its support for and involvement in language revival, and the aspirations, actions and leadership shown by individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Below we provide three contrasting studies of language revival movements. They deal with languages at very different points on the continuum of language loss and the associated communities are quite different. Nevertheless there are many similarities in the directions that these language movements have taken. These studies are illustrative of individual language histories and attempt to identify just some of the many factors involved.

9.1 A case study of Gumbaynggir language revival

The Gumbaynggir language movement, based at the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative on the north coast of NSW, is one of the more successful attempts to maintain and revive a severely threatened language. Gumbaynggir comes under the category of a language that has been revitalised (rather than renewed or reclaimed). The Gumbaynggir language movement, described and analysed in some detail in McKay (1996:45–54) and Walsh (2001), has taken root and operated over a long period—nearly three decades.

Linguist Diana Eades began fieldwork with remaining speakers in the early 1970s. She made the claim that: ‘There is no one alive today speaking Gumbaynggir as a first language. It is probably at least fifty years since it was an effective medium for communication among even a small group of people’ (Eades 1979:253), though she also noted that there was one person, Mr Harry ‘Tiger’ Buchanan—in his 80s at the time—who still had a fluent command of the language and ‘he would use the language for prayer and to talk to his dog’ (Walsh 2001:252). Eades’ assessments of the numbers of speakers of Gumbaynggir in the 1970s is somewhat at odds with later assessments. According to McKay (1996:46) ‘in early 1994, there were seven speakers known to the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative: a married couple in Grafton, two speakers in Yamba and one each in Armidale (since

deceased), Kempsey and Corindi'. In any case, Gumbaynggir was highly endangered with the handful of remaining speakers dispersed.

In June 1986 a group of Gumbaynggir people interested in sharing their language and culture met together in Kempsey. Of the six Elders in this group identified by McKay, only one, Maggie Morris (see below) was still living at the time of his report (McKay 1996:47) just eight years later. The formation of this Gumbaynggir Language and Culture Group was indeed timely.

In the light of the above, we can say with some certainty, that when language revitalisation initiatives in Gumbaynggir began in 1986, there were still people around who were able to speak the language, though just how fluent they were is a little uncertain, as they had had few opportunities to use the language in the preceding decades. McKay (1996:47) provides the following brief, but revealing language history of one individual:

Auntie Maggie Morris, now patron of the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative, was born in South West Rocks (north-east of Kempsey) of a Gumbaynggir mother and a Dhangadi father. She learned Gumbaynggir as a girl and remembers a time when older people regularly used it in the street, though young people were ashamed to use it then. As the older speakers died her language gradually fell into disuse but it started to come back to her once the Gumbaynggir Language and Culture Group began to meet in Kempsey from the middle of 1986. Even now she is sometimes surprised by a newly remembered word which resurfaces from the past in the flow of conversation.

By all accounts, the language movement was initiated and controlled by Gumbaynggir people themselves, though there has been significant involvement by Brother Steve Morelli from an early stage (since 1987). 'Brother Steve Morelli was a significant catalyst in bringing the group together and in helping them record their memories of language and culture' (McKay 1996:47).

There is a significant body of knowledge of the Gumbaynggir language still remaining within the community upon which to build. Furthermore, a body of tapes, Dreaming stories and videos complements the knowledge of living speakers.

The group produced their own account of achievements as of the end of 1988 within just two and a half years of their first meeting:

- We worked out a way of writing Gumbaynggir in a simple way.
- We collected Gumbaynggir language and memories from living speakers and from taped and written records.
- We provided language kits to Koories who wanted to learn language. They consist of tapes of fluent speakers with scripts and written explanations of grammar. These have been popular in Kempsey and Nambucca, as have been wordlists. They have been distributed free.
- We provided adult/family classes in Gumbaynggir language and culture once a week over the period of a school term. These were held in two centres: Kempsey (at the Regional Lands Council), and Nambucca (at the Aboriginal Pre-school)...
- We made a program for learning Gumbaynggir language and culture and tried it out in St Mary's School, Bowraville because it is a mainly Koori school and is in the Gumbaynggir area ...
- We interviewed and recorded experiences of our elders.
- We wrote a collection of Gumbaynggir dreaming stories and plays. Some of these were told to us, some were spoken onto tape-recordings and some were written down a long time ago... The stories are being edited and translated where needed. They are being illustrated by Sharon Smith.

Other areas where has been [sic] interest in language, have been Yamba (Della Walker working with school children) and Coffs Harbour (Rita Flynn—Non Aboriginal) work-

ing with local people and collecting words for a Gumbaynggir dictionary (Muurrbay 1994:3 cited in McKay 1996:48)

The Gumbaynggir dictionary (159 pages) was published locally in 1999 (MALCC 1999), and an updated edition was made available more widely two years later by AIATSIS (MALCC 2001). Other language learning materials have been developed. Furthermore, Walsh (pers.comm. 2004) has reported favourably on the current use of Gumbaynggir to conduct everyday conversations on his visits to the cooperative.

In 2002–2003, the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Cultural Cooperative was funded by ATSIC to ‘(1) run a tertiary language course (2) produce Gumbaynggir [sic] language text (3) run a language/cultural course for children’ (Question taken on notice Additional Estimates Hearing 10 February 2003). The Gumbaynggir revival movement is a prime example of a community initiative that refused to let its language go to sleep.

9.2 A case study of Kurna language reclamation

Attempts to reclaim and reintroduce the Kurna language during the 1990s have been documented in some detail (Amery 1998, 2000). We sketch the history of Kurna revival here in order to understand some of the forces at work over time. Kurna language reclamation is one of the more sustained and intensive attempts to reintroduce a ‘sleeping’ or so-called ‘dead’ language, unlike other long-standing language revival movements in Australia such as Bundjalung, Gumbaynggir, or Djabugay, where the language was still spoken. Kurna, the original language of the Adelaide Plains, was probably last used as an everyday language in the early 1860s. However, much later in 1919, Ivaritji (Amelia Taylor) was ‘discovered’ by Daisy Bates at Point Pearce Mission as a woman from the Adelaide Plains who would have grown up speaking Kurna as a first language, but towards the end of her life she appeared to remember little (see Gara 1990). Bates referred Ivaritji to John McConnell Black at the South Australian Museum. Black (1920) and Bates (1919) obtained only short wordlists from her prior to her death in 1929. There are no sound recordings of the language as it was traditionally spoken, but fortunately it was documented reasonably well in the mid-nineteenth century by German missionaries Christian Teichelmann and Clamor Schürmann. They recorded a vocabulary of some 3,000 words, wrote a sketch grammar and transcribed hundreds of phrases and sentences. In the main they recorded only those utterances and grammatical forms that they had actually heard. Though there are some shortcomings, their records are surprisingly good for the time in which they were working. Some of their definitions are remarkably elaborate and detailed and for many words they have documented a range of senses. They were reasonably consistent in their specification of vowels, but failed to recognise interdental consonants and did not adequately distinguish between the three rhotics or between retroflex and alveolar consonants.

For Kurna people the language is not ‘dead’. Rather it has lain dormant or has been ‘sleeping’ until recent efforts to ‘wake it up’ or revive it. These efforts began with the writing of songs (Ngarrindjeri, Narungga, and Kurna Languages Project 1990),²³ followed by short workshops.

Kurna language revival did not suddenly appear out of nowhere. There are a number of antecedents that should be considered. Pitjantjatjara had already been taught at tertiary level in Adelaide since 1968 (Edwards 1995:6). Around 1980, Pitjantjatjara programs began to be introduced into schools in Port Augusta and in the mid–1980s into several schools in

23 Whilst many of us were focussed on Ngarrindjeri and Narungga, Auntie Josie Agius insisted that we include Kurna songs.

Adelaide for Nunga students.²⁴ A number of Kurna adults, such as Georgina Williams, had spent time in the northwest and learnt some Pitjantjatjara through their participation in the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at Adelaide University, so they had some familiarity with Aboriginal languages that were still spoken fluently. Vince Branson speaks of his envy of the Pitjantjatjara being able to speak in their own language as he travelled on the same bus as several Anangu men.

As we have seen, in the mid-1980s revival programs in Ngarrindjeri, Narungga, and Adnyamathanha had been initiated, and in undertaking this work Brian Kirke had drawn on the Kurna sources for counterparts of Narungga words still known. At the same time Aboriginal Studies curriculum was being developed, and for Kurna, culminating in the publication of *The Kurna people* (EDSA 1989). This comprehensive curriculum resource included lists of Kurna words for animals, foods, artefacts and the like.

Alongside of this, Kurna people had been engaged in site protection work and in particular, research of the Tjilbruke Dreaming trail which extended from Warriparinga in the metropolitan area down the coast to Cape Jervis and back up to Brukunga. Georgina Williams, who was employed by the SA Museum in the 1980s worked at the direction of the Tjilbruke Track Committee. She first called for the revival of Kurna as a spoken language in the mid-1980s. Georgina and others had first been exposed to linguistics through the Aboriginal Community College, then in North Adelaide, and approached the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL) at Batchelor in 1985 for them to hold a course in Kurna linguistics. SAL was unable to fulfil this request, as Georgina was the only one then in a position to travel to Batchelor. A minimum of six students was needed.

Kurna Plains School, a small Aboriginal school at Elizabeth in the northern metropolitan area under the leadership of senior Kurna woman Alice Wallara Rigney, who was principal at the time, provided the opportunity for the introduction of Kurna. They made immediate use of Kurna songs and materials produced in workshops in the early 1990s. Kurna was introduced formally by Auntie Alice as the school language program at Kurna Plains School in 1992. This was followed in 1994 by a course within the Cultural Instructors and Tourism course at Tauondi and a senior secondary program for adolescents and adult re-entry students in the northern suburbs as one of the first pilot programs under the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) taught by Cherie Warrara Watkins and Nelson Varcoe. In 1996, a TAFE-level course was taught briefly to members of the Kurna community at Warriparinga, an important Kurna site on the Sturt River opposite Flinders University. A Kurna course was introduced at Adelaide University in 1997 and transferred to the University of South Australia in 2002, attracting between 15 and 30 students per year. Additional programs have been introduced to a number of other schools, such that by 2004, 680 students were enrolled in ten Kurna language programs in South Australian government schools (figures from Wilson and Tunstill 2004 plus additional enrolments at Adelaide High School commenced in semester 2). Nearly 40% of these learners were Indigenous students.

Since 1990, the Kurna language has gradually developed a profile within the wider community through its use in place-naming (Amery and Williams 2002), signage, interpretive displays, public art, exhibitions, welcome speeches, performance of songs, and on the world wide web. A base 10 number system has been developed (Amery 1996) and a range of neologisms, such as *warraityatti* ‘telephone’ (literally ‘voice sending thing’), have been added to the language. A series of Kurna language development workshops have been held to develop expressions suitable for use at home and in bringing up children (Amery and Gale

24 Nunga is the term of identity used for Aboriginal people of southern SA, including Ngarrindjeri, Narungga and Kurna people.



Plate 13.3: Kurna funeral protocols project, February 2005.

Features (left to right): Alice Wallara Rigney, Eddie Sansbury, Narelle Schultz, Rob Amery, Chester Schultz, Cherie Warrara Watkins, and Nelson Varcoe.

Photograph courtesy of Chester Schultz and Andy Voigt.

2000). Funeral protocols in Kurna language have been developed in the form of a booklet and CD-ROM so that tracks may be selected and played at funerals as required (Amery and Rigney 2006). To this end, the Lord's Prayer and several favourite hymns that are customarily sung at Nunga funerals in Adelaide and surrounding regions have been translated.

To date, Kurna language revival has been closely related to its use in schools and education programs and to its use in the public domain. Kurna speeches of welcome are now commonplace, almost established protocol, at most Indigenous events and some high profile public events in Adelaide, including the Adelaide Festival of Arts. Its use at home within Kurna families has been fairly limited, though some families have made a concerted attempt to learn and use Kurna vocabulary and basic expressions. Greetings, leave-takings, kinship terms and a few other expressions are now commonly used within the Kurna community, beyond those who have taken part in Kurna workshops or courses.

Whilst Kurna language reclamation was kicked off with NALP funding, it secured almost none of the federal funding (more than \$300,000 per annum) channelled through Yaitya Warra Wodli for community-based language programs. Rather some funding had been obtained through education channels to run teaching programs and background linguistic research was performed through a PhD with assistance of a scholarship. This was followed by several small university research grants and other small grants ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000. Kurna language reclamation efforts, have by necessity relied heavily on voluntary effort (see Amery and Mühlhäusler 2005 for further details). Since 2005, Kurna language reclamation has tapped into DCITA funding through Adelaide University.

Language reclamation programs are inherently dependent on a high level of linguistic expertise to interpret old sources, and to use this knowledge creatively to produce new sentences that conform as well as it can to the grammar of the traditional language as known from historical sources. Consequently, efforts to revive Kurna were based on intensive research by a non-Indigenous linguist working together with Kurna people. These Kurna people at the centre of language reclamation efforts have gained considerable knowledge of linguistics and of Kurna grammar over a period of years, always demanding an ‘interlinear gloss please’ for any translations produced so that they are able to appreciate the morphology and syntax of the words and sentences produced.

This close relationship between linguists and Kurna community members has been criticised by some outside the language group who see the involvement of non-Indigenous expertise as unhealthy. The historical sources are regarded as the ultimate authority on the language. But of course, these sources are incomplete and are open to interpretation; consequently the linguist has considerable influence. A high level of guesswork is often needed. Various options are carefully considered and discussed, and consensus is nearly always achieved as to the best way forward. Revisions are also often accepted, sometimes long after the fact. This collaboration has resulted in a 250 page learner’s guide (Amery and Kulluru Marni Ngattaitya 2007).

Requests for Kurna names and translations are now addressed through Kurna Warra Pintyandi (KWP), an informal language planning body that meets each month. The group, which grew out of the Kurna language development workshops, has been meeting regularly since August 2002 to work on Kurna language projects and address Kurna language issues as they arise. Agendas are set and formal minutes recorded. KWP funds are auspiced through University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide. To support the teaching of Kurna at tertiary level, over the period 2001–2004, Amery created a large database of on-line resources, available only to enrolled students and members of the Kurna community via a password. These resources include most of the extant Kurna wordlists, phoneme charts, lecture notes, past exam papers and the textbook (Amery 2000). In 2003, ownership over the Kurna courses taught within the two universities was vested in the signatories of KWP, who grant a royalty-free license to allow the Kurna courses to be taught.

KWP has also engaged a website developer to create a series of pages for the Adelaide City Council providing background information on the Kurna language, and sound recordings accompanying images and information about the newly re-instated Kurna placenames and other Kurna words and phrases in use within the Adelaide City precincts. These will also be produced on a stand-alone CD-ROM. KWP is also working with the Tappa Iri business centre, the four southern councils (Onkaparinga, Marion, Holdfast Bay and Yankalilla) and the Geographical Names Unit to establish Google Earth maps with information about Kurna placenames (see www.kurnaplacenames.com).

9.3 A case study of Ngarrindjeri language revival

Ngarrindjeri is a great example of a language that is being revived according to the wishes of the community no matter what the linguists may say or think. Unlike Kurna, Ngarrindjeri is a language that never went to ‘sleep’, and has always been spoken in some form or other by the people of the Lower Murray, Lakes and Coorong region of southern SA. Whilst nobody speaks Ngarrindjeri fluently today, at least 400 words are still remembered by the Elders and they continue to pepper their English speech with commonly known words in their own version of Nunga English. The reason we can say that Ngarrindjeri is being revived is because it is currently undergoing a renewal process whereby the younger generation are now learning

and speaking more Ngarrindjeri, and the function of the Ngarrindjeri language is expanding to include formal occasions and other purposes in the everyday lives of Ngarrindjeri people.

As in many mission situations in Australia, during the assimilation era of the twentieth century, children (and adults alike) were forbidden to speak the Ngarrindjeri language. Those who chose to keep the language alive had to do so surreptitiously. It is not surprising, therefore, that the words and utterances that are most well known among the people today are the types of things once said in the presence or absence of ‘outsiders’ as some sort of secret code, such as: swear words (especially about white people), private body parts, subtle instructions to children (such as ‘wipe your snotty nose’) and expressions of endearment (such as ‘he’s good looking’, or ‘you’re deadly’).

What makes the revival of Ngarrindjeri different to the revival of languages like Kaurna (where the ‘old sources’ and the linguist are seen as the authority) is that it is still the Ngarrindjeri Elders who are the authorities on the language. It is to them that the younger generation (and the linguist) looks to for advice on how to pronounce the words, no matter how much English influence there may be in their contemporary pronunciation. It is also to the Elders that we look to for advice on the nuances of meaning for words that are still remembered and used today.

The renewal of the Ngarrindjeri language didn’t begin at any particular meeting or occasion, but instead has been happening gradually since the mid 1980s. It has never been a conscious or planned movement coordinated by a representative body, nor has it been directed by an authoritative organisation. Instead it has been a more gradual movement initiated by individuals and groups as the need or desire arises. This increased use of language has occurred in association with a definite Ngarrindjeri cultural revival—largely due to local community initiatives—just as there has been a resurgence of cultural expression among many Indigenous groups across Australia. This resurgence of language use is particularly prevalent amongst the youth. This has been made possible by funding through different government sources, but also because of the increased demand from the public to see and learn more about the culture of local Aboriginal groups.

One very significant initiative that revived the knowledge and respect of the Ngarrindjeri people and their importance in the history of SA was the mounting of the long-running exhibition *Ngurunderi* (the most important Ngarrindjeri Dreaming ancestor) in the late 1980s at the SA Museum.²⁵ This was accompanied by a quality short film which contains considerable amounts of Ngarrindjeri language. Every school child throughout the 1990s in SA would have viewed that video many times. The Ngarrindjeri language is also an important part of performances by the *Talk-in-jeri* dance troupe,²⁶ led by Major Sumner, and the more recently formed young men’s dance troupe: *Nappin Ko:rnis* (meaning ‘show-off men’), led by Walter Jackson.

Songwriting has been another important means of language revival in Ngarrindjeri. In 1990, the highly successful songbook and tape *Narrunga, Kaurna, and Ngarrindjeri Songs* was produced with 33 songs written in the three local languages: Ngarrindjeri, Narungga, and Kaurna, with a little English in between.²⁷ Of these songs, 19 include Ngarrindjeri language,

25 This exhibition was put together by a team of Ngarrindjeri people working with Steve Hemming, Philip Jones and Philip Clarke (see SA Museum 1989). Hemming and Clarke have also done considerable oral history research with the Ngarrindjeri community over the last decade or so.

26 The name for the group is taken from the word for ‘bush turkey’ also spelt *talkindjeri*.

27 This was an initiative of the teacher Kathryn Gale and the Narungga/Kaurna Aboriginal Education Worker Josie Agius, who convened a songwriters workshop with National Aboriginal Languages Program (NALP) funding.

with one *No:ri and Mulduri* (Pelican and Magpie) putting a traditional song, originally recorded by missionary Taplin, to music. Another song, *Three Little Mice (Nepaldar Po:rlar Punthar)*, is translated into ‘traditional’ Ngarrindjeri from an English song remembered by Auntie Leila Rankine from her childhood at Raukkan. These songs have inspired other Ngarrindjeri singers and song-writers to write original songs incorporating words from the Ngarrindjeri language, such as Vic Wilson, Lesley Matcham, Dot Shaw and Howie Sumner. The reggae band *Kineman Karma* is a recently formed group who also use Ngarrindjeri language in their public performances. They were brought together by John Rigney in 2002 with the aim to ‘document traditional and contemporary Australian and Ngarrindjeri cultural and political issues’ (see their website at <http://www.kinemankarma.com/>).²⁸

Camp Coorong (established in 1986) is another institution that has been instrumental in promoting Ngarrindjeri culture and language. It is a camp-site out of Meningie run by the Trevorrow family, and other Ngarrindjeri Elders, which offers cultural experiences to school students and the public, and now houses much of the *Ngurunderi* exhibition in its museum. In the last decade, there has also been an increase in Ngarrindjeri language programs taught in schools, which teachers claim have increased the confidence of their Indigenous students and their sense of identity. It has also nurtured their willingness to speak their language outside the classroom context in the presence of non-Indigenous students, who in turn have become more respectful (Lesley Matcham and Barb Huxford, pers.comm., Murray Bridge).²⁹ But still, the authority for all these initiatives has been the language and cultural knowledge of the Ngarrindjeri Elders. This is despite Ngarrindjeri having a relatively large and enviable corpus of early written sources of wordlists and language texts from a variety of researchers.³⁰ These sources are regarded with suspicion by many in the Ngarrindjeri community, and are only drawn on as a back-up when all other means fail.

When one considers the quality of some of these very early Ngarrindjeri language sources, particularly the work of the Lutheran missionary H.A.E. Meyer, who worked with the Ramindjeri people of the Victor Harbor and Encounter Bay region, it may seem to some a lost opportunity—especially because Meyer (1843) provides a surprisingly detailed grammar, in addition to his many sample sentences within his 1,700 plus wordlist. But to date few in the community are willing to use the ‘traditional’ Ngarrindjeri grammar in their language use.

It is argued by some that Meyer worked in a different dialect of Ngarrindjeri to that spoken at Raukkan (the homeland of Ngarrindjeri people), but the community are also hesitant to access the grammar written by George Taplin who *did* work on the local Yaraldi dialect of Raukkan (see Taplin 1879a).³¹ People are, however, willing to access Taplin’s English-to-

28 Kineman is the word for ‘black’ in Ngarrindjeri. The word ‘Karma’ has Hindu origins.

29 See also the paper ‘Teaching Ngarrindjeri language at Murray Bridge’ presented by Matcham, Huxford, and M. Gale at the 2004 national conference for the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, held in Adelaide.

30 Ngarrindjeri was the first Indigenous language of Australia in which to have ‘extracts’ from the Bible published: *Tungarar Jehovah*. This translation work was done by Rev. George Taplin and James Ngunaitponi in ‘Yarildewallin’ (literally: ‘Yaralde-becoming’). Together they translated parts of both the Old and New Testament, including: Genesis, chapters I–IV; Exodus, chapters XIX–XX; Matthew, chapters V–VII; and St. John, chapters III and XVIII–XXI. These extracts were first published in 1864, but have since been republished as facsimile editions in 1926, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and again in 1986 by the Bible Society in Australia. It is now out of print. A further early publication in the ‘Narrinyeri’ language was a *Lessons, Hymns and Prayers* booklet, also published in 1864 by Taplin, for use in the school at Point McLeay.

31 Taplin established Point McLeay mission, now known as Raukkan, on Lake Alexandrina in 1859.

Ngarrindjeri wordlist if they need a word unknown by the Elders.³² Taplin actually relied heavily on James Ngunaitponi (father of David Unaipon) for all his language work, but James' dialect was Warrawalde (of the Portaulun clan).

Other written sources that are yet to be accessed in any systematic way by the Ngarrindjeri community are the records of anthropologists N.B. Tindale (of the SA Museum from the 1920s), who worked closely with Clarence Long (also known as Milerum) of the Tangani clan. The anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt also worked closely with Albert Karloan (a Yaraldi man), and with Pinkie Mack and Mark Wilson, from 1938 to 1942, in recording their memories of traditional Ngarrindjeri culture, place-names and mythology. Major Sumner is exceptional, however, in the research he has carried out in the SA Museum to aid his public performances with his dance troupe.

There are also copies of audiotapes held in various collections, which were made by Kath Ellis in the mid 1960s when researching Ngarrindjeri culture and music. A major source of information was James Brooksie Kartinyeri, but David Unaipon and others were also recorded. It will be interesting to see whether these, and other more recent studies (such as Colin Yallop 1975 and Maryalyce McDonald 2002) are accessed by the community in current revival activities.

There are probably three contemporary periods that stand out in Ngarrindjeri language revival efforts when the community have been willing to have some input from linguists. In the mid 1980s the linguist Brian Kirke began working with a team of Ngarrindjeri co-workers (including Marlene Stewart, Jillian Sumner and others) to produce a language learning kit for use in schools and the community, which they entitled *Ngarrindjeri Yanun* (literally 'speaking Ngarrindjeri', Kirke 1987a). This work was a direct response to an expressed desire by the Ngarrindjeri community to learn their own language in schools. Kirke had been teaching Pitjantjatjara at the South Australian College of Advanced Education (now the University of SA) and wondered why so few Nunga students enrolled in this course. On enquiry, he was told that it wasn't their language, and that they did indeed want access to their own languages. In response, Kirke sought funds from a variety of sources, including the Schools Commission and the South Australian Jubilee, and recruited local Ngarrindjeri co-workers. Then in the mid-1980s, a group of Ngarrindjeri adults (including Kevin Kropinyeri, Totty Rankine, Lorraine Kartinyeri and Doug Milera) travelled to the School of Australian Linguistics (SAL), at Batchelor south of Darwin, to study their own language with Steve Johnson. The result was the compiling of a wordlist, which is now available on Word from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

The production of Kirke's language kit and the work of Johnson forced some decisions to be made by the Ngarrindjeri community, which until then had been avoided—the big issue of spelling. Because the kit included contemporary texts (in the form of comic strips) and flash cards of well-known words, in addition to copies of the two nineteenth century wordlists compiled by missionaries Meyer and Taplin, a decision had to be made on whether to follow the missionaries' spelling system or to develop another. After considerable consultation, a decision was made to continue to use the phonemic system used by the missionaries, but to drop the use of double letters (geminate, such as <pp>, <tt>, <ll>, and <nn>) and to add letters for the sounds missed by the missionaries such as the interdental <th>, <lh>, and <nh>. An alternative spelling system that was rejected by Kirke was an anglicised spelling system

32 Taplin actually just reversed Meyer's Ramindjeri-to-English wordlist to English-to-Ramindjeri, then added further words from the local Yaraldi dialect, noting which words were only used at Encounter Bay (see Taplin's journal, 1879b, State Library of SA).

that somehow tried to adapt the inconsistent spelling system of English.³³ This spelling system of Kirke and his co-workers was endorsed by the community at a meeting held at Raukkan in November 1989.³⁴ This same system has been used more or less ever since for all formal curriculum materials produced for schools.³⁵ However, community generated materials have not always conformed, and Ngarrindjeri people to this day discuss and debate, and occasionally use, an anglicised spelling system for Ngarrindjeri signs and other products.³⁶

The second opportunity for input from a linguist was in 1990, during the production of the songbook and tape *Kaurna, Narrunga and Ngarrindjeri Songbook*, which has already been mentioned. Rob Amery was employed as a consultant for the song-writing workshop, whereby either of the three Nunga languages were incorporated into the 33 songs written. Some significant linguistic decisions had to be made for each song composed, with up to ten songs eventually incorporating 'traditional' Ngarrindjeri grammar.

The third opportunity for linguistic input into Ngarrindjeri has been through the recent curriculum work initiated by the schools in Murray Bridge. In 2004 Ngarrindjeri was the second most popular Indigenous language taught in SA schools, after Pitjantjatjara. Ngarrindjeri is taught in 12 different schools in 13 programs, which includes 279 Aboriginal students and possibly over 600 non-Aboriginal students.³⁷ At Murray Bridge, Ngarrindjeri is taught at Fraser Park Primary, Murray Bridge North Primary and Junior Primary, Murray Bridge South Primary and Murray Bridge High; in Adelaide at Kalaya CC; in the Riverland at Renmark Primary, Winkie Primary and Winkie CPC; at Victor Harbor at the Kindy and in the Victor Harbor Primary school; and finally at Narrung Primary school, just kilometers from Raukkan. Surprisingly Ngarrindjeri is not currently taught at Raukkan school, though it has been in the past.

Ngarrindjeri is primarily taught in schools to Aboriginal students, through the 'Mother Tongue' program, but it is also taught as the LOTE subject in a few schools. It is generally understood in the community that Ngarrindjeri should only be taught in schools by Ngarrindjeri language teachers, so some programs have had to close because of lack of teachers. The longest-standing, and arguably the strongest Ngarrindjeri program to be taught in any school, was that taught by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) and language specialist Rhonda Agius at Mansfield Park Primary in Adelaide. She taught the language primarily to Aboriginal students in the school for ten years, but the program unfortunately folded soon after Rhonda retired at the end of 2003 due to the difficulty in replacing her.³⁸

33 Kirke was less successful with his advice on a practical phonemic orthography for the Narungga language kit he prepared with Narungga co-workers in the same year. He was persuaded by the Narungga to use an 'English spelling' system (Kirke 1987b).

34 This meeting was convened during the 'Ngarrindjeri Yanun Workshop' [literally: 'speaking Ngarrindjeri workshop'] held at Raukkan.

35 It differs from Johnson's in that there are no voiced sounds (b, d, dj and g) in Johnson's list.

36 One of the main areas of contention is the use of the letter 'u' for the [a] sound in *nakan* 'to see'—which is often spelt *nukkin* by community members. Elders also prefer not to use the colon to mark the long vowels a: i: u: e: o:.

37 The number of non-Aboriginal students includes those learning about Ngarrindjeri in programs better described as language awareness programs. Note in 2004 there were nine different Aboriginal languages taught in South Australian Schools in 64 different sites or schools (see Wilson and Tunstall 2004), and in 2006 in 76 sites (Wilson and Tunstall 2006).

38 Rhonda Agius has always accessed the old written sources, and adopted varying spelling systems in her own language resources over the years. Rhonda is also adventurous in her use of grammar and in 1996 composed a very complex text in Ngarrindjeri which was published in a curriculum resource (DETE 1998b and in the June 1999 issue of *Voice of the Land*, page 7).

Another problem that has been faced by schools is the lack of Ngarrindjeri teaching materials and a contemporary wordlist with consistent spelling. In the 1990s a wordlist was compiled by David Roe-Simons (a teacher at Murray Bridge High School), working with Connie Love (Roe-Simons and Love n.d.). A smaller wordlist was also compiled by Greg Albrecht (a teacher at Glossop High) working with Bessie Rigney, however neither list offered a consistent spelling system.³⁹ Through commonwealth funding, via DECS, an offer was made to the linguist Mary-Anne Gale at the end of 2002 to work with the teachers in Murray Bridge schools, and the Elders, to produce a Ngarrindjeri curriculum for schools. Much collaborative activity is presently being conducted and a draft 40-module curriculum has been written. Gale is also working with a team of Ngarrindjeri academics from the University of SA, under the leadership of Syd Sparrow, to produce a contemporary Ngarrindjeri dictionary. A draft version of the dictionary (of 3,000 word entries) has been the centre of a consultation process from 2004–2006, and a final print version is planned by the end of 2008. An electronic version of this dictionary has also been compiled on FileMaker Pro, which conflates most of the wordlists compiled to date.⁴⁰

One of the features that stands out in recent efforts to revive the Ngarrindjeri language is the way the language is now not merely peppered within everyday English speech. Relatively well-considered and constructed speeches are now being given at public functions, and the age of those prepared to give these speeches in front of large crowds is getting younger and younger. Cheryl Love (a respected AEW at Murray Bridge North Primary, and later Remark Primary) gave a welcoming speech in Ngarrindjeri at the opening of the *Po:rlis Yuntuwarrin* room at her school in 2004, and Dorothy French (another respected AEW who now works closely with Gale on the curriculum) gave a speech at the launch of her family biography (which also included much language) in 2004.⁴¹ Similarly, Eileen McHughes gave a speech in Ngarrindjeri at a health fair in Murray Bridge in 2004. None of these women needed a linguist to write their speeches. It doesn't worry them that the sentence structure of their speech is that of English, and that plurals are marked with an English 's'. Nor does it worry them how they spell their speeches—they are oral presentations. Similarly, more songs will be written and sung, and more dances will be performed alongside a song-man singing Ngarrindjeri—none of which will need to be written.

It is largely when it comes to writing down the language for teaching purposes that the curly questions of grammar and spelling have to be addressed by the present Ngarrindjeri language revival movement, which is now unstoppable. The decisions that have to be made regarding how much 'traditional' grammar will be incorporated into these public performances will (and always will) be made by the community themselves—and again, as always—the authority and decisions will rest with the Elders. But as the younger generation start to broaden their expectations of the language, and increase in confidence as they use it, maybe they themselves will start to access the old written sources more, and start determining how far the language will go.

39 The Lower Murray Nungas Club at Murray Bridge conducted further work in the 1990s, and compiled a very small contemporary dictionary of 'Nunga words' in 2003, but this too lacks consistency (Lower Murray Nungas Club 2003).

40 Barry Alpher, a linguist based in Washington D.C., has also compiled a large Ngarrindjeri wordlist on Word from secondary sources, including Berndt and Berndts' (1993) material, but this is not publicly available as yet.

41 With DCITA funding in 2006, Gale and French have produced draft Picture Dictionaries and an Alphabet Book for schools in Ngarrindjeri, plus accompanying CDs with recordings of the Elders: Auntie Julia Yandell, Uncle Neville Gollan, Auntie Totty Rankine and Auntie Veronica Brodie.

10. Further directions and conclusion

In this paper we have sketched a brief history of attempts to revive Indigenous languages across Australia, and provided some detail on individual movements. We have discussed factors that have served to initiate these movements in both community and school settings, and focussed on the influence linguists have had in these movements. We have also shown that policy and funding considerations play a major role in shaping the nature and extent of language revival activity. We have demonstrated that there are considerable variations in the different revival initiatives across the country, but shown that there are also commonalities. One feature that all revival movements share is an increased use of Aboriginal languages in public performances and forums. Take for example Tasmania where, despite the decision for *Palawa kani* not to be introduced into schools until the Palawa community have a command of the language themselves, they are willing to use and share their language at large public events. One young language worker Lutana Spotswood from Launceston, for example, gave a eulogy in *Palawa kani* at the televised funeral of Premier Jim Bacon in 2004.

For most language revival initiatives information is not publicly available on matters such as successes, difficulties, funding, staffing and adopted methodologies. For others only sketchy information is available. Given that the Commonwealth has supported more than 150 different languages through the PILR program (ATSIS 2003/04 Annual Report), there is much we have not discussed or reviewed. Many language revival activities result in in-house products and outcomes for the exclusive use by members of the language group concerned. Many programs have stipulated that only Indigenous people should teach Indigenous languages. Some have maintained that only Indigenous learners should have access to the language. In many programs where non-Indigenous learners have been encouraged to learn the language alongside Indigenous learners, it has been made quite clear that only Indigenous people have the right to use the language in public. More detailed longitudinal studies of language revival movements are needed before much can be said about the successes of different language revival approaches and processes, or before any historical trends or patterns can be discerned.

Language revival is still in its infancy in Australia, with the longest running programs still less than 30 years old. A number emerged spontaneously in the late seventies in different parts of the country, largely in response to grassroots Indigenous wishes at a time when policy either ignored their needs or denied their legitimacy outright. When funding became available in the mid-1980s, language revival activity picked up substantially, and has mushroomed in the 21st century. More and more community-based language programs are being established and supported, and the teaching of language revival programs in schools is growing rapidly, especially in NSW, Victoria, SA and WA. This growth in school programs has been accompanied by the development of curriculum and generic teaching frameworks in most states. Whilst resources are still severely lacking compared to the resources available to world languages, some quality printed and digitised electronic resources are now being produced for some languages, including a range of sophisticated interactive CDs.

Linguists have been involved in this movement from the beginning—some in a more direct way than others—by accessing and interpreting archival materials, or through their support in the development of language learning materials, dictionaries and other resources. Some have been so involved to the point of actually teaching the languages themselves, or undertaking creative translations and engineering the language. Although such cases generally involve a happy collaboration, there is a clear need for more training opportunities for Aboriginal people themselves to develop the linguistic and technological skills required for successful language revival.

What does the future hold for language revival in Australia? With less than twenty Indigenous languages being passed on to the younger generation in natural ways, clearly there is much language revival work to be done if more than twenty languages are to survive and thrive. But as the Kurna Elder Kauwanu (Uncle) Lewis O'Brien always says 'it is the journey that is important' ... and this is what we should remember if the task ahead seems overwhelming at times. But we should be encouraged by the successes of a number of longer-running language revival movements which show what might be possible, even in situations where resources are limited and the community is fragmented and dispersed. We must remember that success inevitably depends on Indigenous people owning the process and having control over it (Walsh 2001:254–257). Linguists need to work doubly hard in renewal and reclamation contexts to ensure that Indigenous people themselves remain in control of the decision-making process and are continually empowered through that process. Even if linguists feel ill-at-ease with some of the linguistic decisions made, they have no choice but to abide by them until the community sees fit to see things differently or are in a position to make more informed choices.

Knowledge is power, and many Indigenous leaders foresee a more secure identity and future through language and cultural knowledge as part of the solution to a raft of social problems. As linguists we have the skills to assist Indigenous communities as they strive to revive their languages for positive outcomes. Indigenous languages continue to be lost at an exceedingly rapid rate in Australia as the older speakers pass on and as children shift to English or Kriol. Despite this continued language loss, the increase in language revival activities across the nation among languages that have been 'sleeping' shows no sign of abating.

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14 *A history of the study of Australian Aboriginal sign languages*

ADAM KENDON

1. Introduction

Among Australian Aborigines the use of conventionalised systems of gestural communication, often referred to as ‘sign languages’, has been reported from the Cape York Peninsula westwards through northern Queensland, in the central, southern and western desert regions and also in Arnhem Land (Kendon 1988a:30–68). Today among certain groups in the central desert region where women still observe a ban on speaking after bereavement, complex sign languages remain in use. In areas where such a ban is not observed, somewhat less elaborate gesture systems are used in a variety of circumstances, as in communicating at a distance, communicating when speaking out loud is either unseemly or impractical, or as an alternate modality in telling stories.

These sign languages and related gesture systems are of interest for a number of reasons. First of all, unlike sign languages elaborated among the deaf (which may be referred to as *primary* sign languages), these systems have been elaborated for use as *alternatives* to speaking, and have thus been developed by people who have full and direct access to spoken language (for this reason they may be referred to as *alternate* sign languages). A question that can immediately be raised about such systems is: to what extent, and in what ways, are they related to the spoken languages of their users? This was one of the central issues explored in my own work (Kendon 1988a) and I found, at least for the sign languages that I studied directly (those of the North Central Desert), that each showed a close relationship to the morpho-semantic structure of the spoken language of the community where they were used. I proposed that since, at least in some respects, each of these sign languages could be regarded as a kinesic rendition of the semantic morphemes of the spoken language of the community where they were used, they could be compared to certain kinds of writing systems (a point taken up by Tuite 1997). It is also to be noted that, even in the most complex varieties of these sign languages (for example, as found in use by Warlpiri women), signs cover more meanings than words in the spoken languages do, sometimes categorising meanings in different, although related, ways. Thus a study of the meaning categories of signs in comparison to those of

words in the associated spoken language can throw valuable light on the semantic systems made use of in Aboriginal societies (Kendon 1988a:330–368; Wilkins 1997).

These sign languages are also of great interest from the point of view of the place they occupy within the ‘communication economy’ of the societies in which they are found (see Kendon 1988a:442–461, and see also Kendon 2004:350–351). Probably the main reason why these sign languages were elaborated is that, for ritual reasons (in bereavement but also in male initiation ceremonies), as a consequence of bans on the use of speech, alternative ways of communicating had to be found. Nevertheless, at least among the Warlpiri and other groups I studied in the North Central Desert, those who had command of the sign language (mostly older women, in this part of Australia) also used it in many circumstances when no ritual restrictions were in force. Indeed, it appeared that the availability of a system such as an alternate sign language was sometimes a great convenience. A close study of the different circumstances in which it is useful to use an alternate sign language of this nature can throw valuable light on how humans exploit in diverse ways the different modalities for communication that are available to them.

Here a survey and analysis is offered of the development of interest in Australian Aboriginal sign languages. It is an adaptation of Chapter 2 from my *Sign languages of Aboriginal Australia* (Kendon 1988a:13–29). Readers are urged to consult that work if they wish to have a detailed description and discussion of the nature of these sign languages and their place in Australian Aboriginal ethnography. Here we provide an account of the history of how they came to be considered from the time of the first European encounters with Australians until the present.

2. The development of interest in Australian Aboriginal sign languages

These systems attracted the attention of a number of early settlers and pioneer students of the Aborigines and while, especially in the work of Walter Roth, fairly extensive descriptions were provided, no detailed descriptions and analysis were undertaken until the late 1970s. Prior to this, almost all that was known on this topic was derived from the work of four of the main pioneers of Australian ethnography: Alfred Howitt, Walter Roth, Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen. Since their work (Howitt 1890, 1891, 1904; Roth 1897, 1908; Spencer and Gillen 1899, 1904, 1927), we find only the sign list for the Arrernte (Aranda) published by Carl Strehlow (1978 [1915]) and the brief reports of Warner (1937), C.P. Mountford (1938, 1949) and Berndt (1940), before we come to the important but isolated paper of Meggitt (1954). Thereafter, apart from the aborted work of La Mont West (1963), no further work on the topic is reported until the publication of Wick Miller’s (1978) brief but valuable discussion of Western Desert sign language, Wright’s pictorial dictionary of Warlpiri sign language (Wright 1980), and my own work (Kendon 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986a, 1987, 1988a, 1988b).

Given the tremendous amount of work that has been done on Australian Aborigines,¹ this paucity of studies may seem surprising. A number of factors may be mentioned that may account for this. Undoubtedly, many investigators who were struck by the presence of sign language did not try to work on it for technical reasons. Whereas there are well-established methods for writing down spoken languages, there is no agreement on methods for writing down signs, and such methods as exist are of relatively recent invention. The first of these, a system of notation developed for American Sign Language, was not published until 1965

1 Greenway’s (1963) bibliography lists over 10,000 items up to 1959 (and this is a selection from over 22,000 that he had compiled).

(Stokoe, Casterline and Croneberg 1965). This method has since served as a starting point for other systems.² Learning to use them, however, requires special efforts and, in any case, they are not widely known by scholars other than those who specialise in sign language studies. Further, since sign language plays no part in the daily life of most members of the urban northern European culture which formed the background of all early students of Aborigines, its use there being wholly confined to the deaf community, most investigators, however interested they may have been in it initially, probably found that it appears very difficult to study because they had no previous conception of it. In addition, the use of sign language in Aboriginal daily life, though it was widespread, at least west of the Great Dividing Range and north of the Murray River basin, nevertheless may have seemed to be specialised and limited. Its intensive use in the North Central Desert, for example, is confined to older women, for the most part in association with the observation of speech bans connected with mourning. Its use elsewhere is occasional, or confined to special periods, such as during male initiation ceremonies. To an outsider it thus may not appear to be central to people's lives. In consequence, whereas, for ethnographic work, a study the spoken language is clearly necessary or at least highly desirable, this might not seem so for the study of sign language.

It is notable, however, that both Roth and Howitt accord sign language a prominent place in their work. Roth's (1897) treatment is presented as the fourth chapter of his book, immediately following his discussion of spoken language and prior to any ethnographic descriptions. Howitt (1904) devotes an entire chapter to various communication systems, including message sticks and smoke signals, as well as an extended treatment of sign language. The subsequent lack of attention to sign language, therefore, is not to be accounted for wholly in terms of the kinds of factors just listed. If it had continued to be seen as something of as much interest as Howitt or Roth saw it to be, it seems probable that more studies would have been undertaken.

Howitt, Roth, and Spencer and Gillen belong to a phase in the development of anthropological research in Australia during which direct observation was for the first time being made of Aborigines by people with scientific training, and for whom the study of Aborigines was their primary business. These observers were interested in all aspects of Aboriginal life and set as much value on detailed description as they did upon accounts that were guided primarily by more general theoretical interests. Elkin (1963) has distinguished this period as the Phase of Fortuitous, Individual Field Projects. It extends roughly from about 1890 to World War I, and it resulted in a large amount of detailed descriptive ethnography. Subsequently, anthropological research became more systematic. It began to be undertaken by people who were trained as anthropologists in the first instance (none of the pioneer ethnographers started their careers as anthropologists: Howitt was a geologist, Roth was a surgeon, Baldwin Spencer was a zoologist), and this meant that they were trained to do work in terms of what was deemed most relevant from the point of view of general anthropological theory. Sheer ethnographic description was given less emphasis. As a result, only those aspects of Aboriginal culture deemed relevant to the prevailing theoretical preoccupations of the time received detailed attention. This certainly did not include sign language. The prevailing theoretical climate, profoundly influenced by the interests of Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown (appointed the first Professor of Anthropology in Australia at Sydney University in 1926) meant that great emphasis was placed upon the study of social organisation and ritual from a structural-func-

2 For example, the Hamburg Notation System (Prillwitz *et al.* 1989). In Kendon (1988a) the system I used a system for notating signs in the Aboriginal sign languages I studied was an adaptation of the system proposed by Stokoe, Casterline and Croneberg (1965).

tionalist point of view. As Meggitt (1954:2) observed of this period, 'attention was being fixed more closely on problems of social organisation rather than on cultural content'.

Meggitt, in fact, appears to have been quite aware of the unorthodox nature of the paper he published on Warlpiri sign language, given the prevailing theoretical climate, for he writes as if he felt he was under some obligation to justify its publication. After noting the extreme lack of information on the subject, especially given the very large amount of fieldwork that had been done on Aborigines up to that time, he writes: 'It may be objected that this [lack of information] is of no great consequence, the subject being one of dilettante rather than of scientific interest.' He then goes on to reply to this possible objection by saying that sign language ought to be of interest because it is a practice of some importance in the daily lives of Aborigines, and therefore should not be ignored by ethnographers. However, he adds that, in addition, its study may help to throw light 'on the way in which Aborigines think about things, how they view their socio-geographical environments and why they single out some features for attention rather than others' (Meggitt 1954:3).

Attention to Aboriginal sign languages by linguists was also quite limited. Of the early observers who presented systematic data on one or more Australian language, only Roth also presented material on sign language, as we have already mentioned. Systematic work on Australian languages by people who were specialised in linguistics began in Australia in about 1950, but did not become widespread until after 1960. The focus of the work at that time was mainly on the grammatical description and comparative study of Australian languages, so that a typological and genetic classification of them could be arrived at. Some linguists working in the field did notice sign language and some collected occasional notes on the topic, but it was generally treated as a topic quite peripheral to what has been looked upon as the main task of linguistics. Sign language is not mentioned in the general treatises on Australian languages by Wurm (1972), Dixon (1980) or Yallop (1982), although there is a brief discussion of it in a more popular book by Blake (1981). More recently it has received brief coverage in Edwards (1988), there is an entry on sign language in Horton (1994), and there is also a mention of it in McGregor (2004), together with some discussion of gesture.

The lack of attention paid to Aboriginal sign languages during the first three quarters of the twentieth century may also be seen as a consequence of a lack of interest in gestural communication in general that prevailed for much of this period. A review of the history of the study of sign language and gestural communication shows that, whereas these topics commanded much interest among major investigators at the end of the nineteenth century, interest in them dwindled almost to nothing and did not begin to show any revival until about 1970. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, under the influence of Darwin's evolutionary theory, there was much discussion of the question of language origins (Stam 1976), and several important figures of the time considered the study of gesture and sign language to be very relevant to this question. Thus Edward Tylor (1865) devotes much space to the topic in his *Researches into the early history of mankind* and Wilhelm Wundt, likewise, in his *Volkerpsychologie*, devotes a major section of his volume on language to a discussion of gesture and sign language, which he saw as a kind of intermediate stage in the process by which fully articulate language emerged (Wundt 1973 [1921]). Also during this period Garrick Mallery, who undertook extensive work on the sign languages in use among Native Americans, published his comprehensive *Sign language among the North American Indians compared with that of other peoples and deaf mutes* (Mallery 1972 [1881]). There was, thus, in the late nineteenth century, a theoretical climate within which the observations on Aboriginal sign language of Howitt and Roth would have had some relevance, beyond having an interest as part of a complete and detailed description of Aboriginal customs. However, by the end of the first

decade of the twentieth century, a marked shift had begun in the theoretical climate in anthropology, linguistics and psychology. Investigators began to turn away from historical studies towards a concern with synchronic studies of systemic structures. Thus a major reason why the study of gesture and sign language might be of more general theoretical interest was removed, and this undoubtedly contributed to a decline of interest in them (see Kendon 2004: 42–83).

Another context in which gesture and sign language is studied today is in the context of the study of communication in face-to-face interaction. However, this focus of interest was not common before about the sixth decade of the twentieth century. The study of ethnography of speech (Hymes 1974), conversation analysis (Schenkein 1978), discourse analysis (Stubbs 1983), and semiotics (Eco 1977) generated interest in the variety of communication practices employed in interaction. Interest in communication practices among Aborigines, which reflected these developments, did not show itself until a little later. See Malcolm (1982) for an early survey of Aboriginal work from this perspective. Sansom (1980) and Liberman (1982a, 1982b, 1985) provide further illustration of this interest. It will be seen, accordingly, that since the whole question of interpersonal communication and interaction was not an issue for linguists and anthropologists for most of the twentieth century, it is perhaps not surprising that detailed studies of communication practices among Aborigines were not undertaken and that, in consequence, sign language received only scant attention.

3. A history of observations on Australian Aboriginal sign languages

The earliest report of sign language or the use of sign-like gestures for any Australian Aboriginal group appears to be that of C.W. Schürmann, in a publication from 1846 (reprinted in Woods 1879).³ Schürmann was a Lutheran missionary from Hanover, Germany who, together with another German missionary, established a school for Aborigines near Adelaide in South Australia. He also served as a deputy-protector of Aborigines at Port Lincoln, and it is in his account of the Aborigines he encountered there (probably Barngarla and Nauo) that we find his mention of the use of signs. He writes (p.7):

They have also a great number of manual signs by which they can indicate the description of game in sight, without speaking. Thus, pointing with the forefinger, while the rest are closed: and making a motion that reminds one of the hopping of a kangaroo indicates that animal: three fingers extended, the middle one dropping a little below the other two, denotes an emu: four fingers shut, and the thumb only extended, means an opossum: the whole hand extended and held horizontally on edge, shows that fish are seen. They have as many similar signs as there are kinds of game, employing a different one for each.

Another early account was published by Samuel Gason in 1874 (Gason 1874), who wrote about the Diyari (also Dieri) of Cooper's Creek, South Australia. Gason was a police trooper in charge of two men at an isolated police post at Lake Hope. This had been established in about 1864, shortly after European settlers had begun to run cattle in the region and required protection from the Aborigines (Bonython 1971). Gason became very well acquainted with the Diyari, he learnt their language and participated in their initiation rituals (Howitt 1891: 83). He was persuaded to publish his observations of the Diyari, together with some account of their language in a small monograph in 1874. This monograph was subsequently reprinted in whole or in part in several different works of compilation (including Woods 1879, and Curr 1886). In this monograph Gason says:

3 I am indebted to Jane Simpson for drawing my attention to this reference; see further Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume.

Besides the spoken language, they have a copious one of signs—all animals, native man or woman, the heavens, earth, walking, riding, jumping, flying, swimming, eating, drinking, and hundreds of other objects or actions have each their particular sign, so that a conversation may be sustained without the utterance of a single word. (Gason 1874:35)

Unfortunately, Gason provides no description of this sign language. He adds: ‘This dumb language, of which I possess a thorough knowledge, cannot be described in words’ (Gason 1874:35).

Only a very few signs of the Diyari are known to us. Howitt (1891), in his account of the Diyari, provides a description of some 65 signs, 44 based on descriptions supplied by his correspondent, the Rev. H. Vogelsang (a Lutheran missionary), 16 by Gason, the remaining five being his own. According to Howitt (1891), who also quotes Gason as his source, Diyari mourning ritual included the maintenance of prolonged speech taboos by the deceased’s spouse, widow or widower, that is. This speech taboo was sustained for longer periods by women than by men. In the case of widows, it could last for many months, for they had to wait until all of the white clay with which they had bedaubed themselves had completely worn off. Howitt also notes that male novices were also placed under speech taboos during their periods of seclusion. Such speech taboos were applied in association with each of the four different initiation ceremonies that Howitt describes.

Another early reference to what might be sign language among Aborigines is the curious account by the explorer John McDouall Stuart of his observation of ‘masonic signs’. The account is to be found in Stuart’s journal of his fourth expedition into central Australia, which he undertook in 1860 (Stuart 1983). Stuart describes an encounter with four Aborigines, including an older man and two younger men who, Stuart thought, must be a father and his two sons. The encounter took place at Keckwick Ponds, which is just south of what is now known as Attack Creek, situated some seventy kilometres north of Tennant Creek, in the Northern Territory. It was here that Stuart was turned back by a large and hostile group of Aborigines, almost certainly Warumungu. Stuart describes how the four men approached his camp about an hour before sundown on 23 June 1860:

One was an old man, and seemed to be the father of these two fine young men. He was very talkative, but I could make nothing of him. I have endeavoured, by signs, to get information from him as to where the next water is, but we cannot understand each other. After some time, and having conferred with his two sons, he turned round, and surprised me by giving me one of the Masonic signs. I looked at him steadily; he repeated it, and so did his two sons. I then returned it, which seemed to please them much, the old man patting me on the shoulder and stroking down my beard. They then took their departure, making friendly signs until they were out of sight. (Hardman 1865:213)

As several different authors were to comment later, it seems likely that the ‘Masonic sign’ Stuart saw was a sign belonging to the sign language that was later found to be in extensive use among the Warumungu.⁴ However, this report by Stuart apparently contributed to widely

4 As to what the gestures were which Stuart mistook for a masonic sign, we can only guess, of course. However, it may be worth noting that according to one account of the rituals of freemasonry, the Sign of Fidelity of the Second Degree in a Craft Lodge is described as ‘Right hand on left breast with thumb squared upwards’ (Hannah 1953:81). It is conceivable that one of the Warumungu signs for ‘water’ could be mistaken for this masonic sign. Stuart had tried to get information about water, as he explains. Perhaps he had made himself understood, and the Warumungu were replying with the sign for ‘water’ in which the centre of the chest is tapped with the fingertips, all fingers fully extended and adducted (held together – a ‘flat’ hand). Perhaps the Warumungu, seeing Stuart use so many gestures and grasping the topic of his gesturing, presumed he knew a kind of sign language, and so used a relevant sign from their own. As we may guess from Stuart’s account, this produced a rather surprising response in the strange white man!

circulated rumours that ‘freemasonry’ was practised by the Aborigines and several investigators appear to have taken this idea seriously enough to inquire further about it. Thus E.M. Curr included as Question 80 in the printed Questionnaire that he circulated in the 1870s, as he gathered data for his monumental *The Australian race*: ‘Have your Blacks any Masonic signs?’ (Curr 1886 Volume 2:206). And again, in the questionnaire circulated in 1904 under the authority of Malcolm A.C. Fraser, the Registrar General of Western Australia, we find as Question 30: ‘Any use of Masonic signs observed among the natives in the district?’.

According to Elizabeth Salter (1971:112), Malcolm A.C. Fraser was inspired to circulate this questionnaire by John Fraser, of Maitland, New South Wales. John Fraser had reminded him in 1900 that it was ‘a pity your colony [Western Australia] had done nothing toward a record of your Aborigines’. Malcolm Fraser persuaded his Government to provide funds for an assistant to compile all information available on Western Australian natives and he appointed Daisy Bates to the post. It was she, in collaboration with Malcolm Fraser, who designed the questionnaire. This questionnaire contained a number of questions about Aboriginal customs, as well as extensive word lists. It was sent to every policeman, magistrate and settler throughout the colony. The question on masonic signs may have been suggested by Curr (his questionnaire had been circulated in Western Australia), but equally likely, it may have been directly suggested by John Fraser himself, for it appeared that he believed that the Aborigines used masonic signs.

John Fraser had written a short treatise on the Aborigines of New South Wales (Fraser 1882a) which had won him election to the Royal Society of New South Wales and which had also won him its Money Prize (of £25). He also wrote on Australian and Polynesian languages, and he edited a collection of Lancelot Threlkeld’s work on Awabakal, a New South Wales language (Fraser 1882b). He was appointed by the New South Wales Commissioners for the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago to write a short book on the Aborigines of New South Wales which was to be distributed at the Exhibition. It is in this book (Fraser 1892) that he expresses his belief that the Aborigines used masonic signs. Thus, he writes (1892:24): ‘In several instances, blacks in their wild state, and in places far removed from contact with white civilization, have been known to make use of masonic signs when approached by white men.’ As proof of this, he quotes at some length from a previously unpublished private letter from a Mr. Bedford, a staff surveyor in Queensland. Mr. Bedford writes of an incident in 1882 or 1883 in which he saved the life of an Aborigine he was about to shoot, because the Aborigine addressed him with what he took to be a masonic sign. This man was the last left alive of several with whom Mr. Bedford and his ‘well armed party’ of Kanakas had had a skirmish. The fight was ‘short, sharp and decisive’. At the end of it ‘only one black was left—a very tall and powerful specimen, evidently a chief’. Mr. Bedford continues:

I had just covered him with my rifle and in another instant he would have dropped, when, to my utter astonishment, he gave me in rapid succession three or four times, the penal sign of the master mason, and thereupon stood to order. I instantly answered him, and, going nearer, I gave the signs of entered apprentice, fellow craftsman and master mason, which he appeared to understand. My next five or ten minutes were fully occupied in saving him from the wrath of my boys. But when I had succeeded in making them understand that he was not to be harmed, I turned round to our captive and found he was gone! He had dived head foremost into the very long grass, and wriggled through it like a snake, he got clean off, for not one of us could find him; I was much disappointed at this, for I wanted to question him, and through him I might have succeeded in forming friendly relations with the tribes round about. (In Fraser 1892:24)

John Fraser concludes his discussion of Mr Bedford's letter by quoting from Stuart's journal (he refers to him as 'Sturt'⁵—a confusion W.E. Roth also falls into, as will be noted below), but adds that 'in the region where this incident happened to Captain Sturt (sic), the blacks have an extensive system of gesture language' (Fraser 1892:25) and he suggests that 'Captain Sturt's adventure was only an incident of this gesture language but I can scarcely explain the experience of Mr Bedford, in Queensland, in the same way. I leave it unexplained.'

To revert to Mr. Bedford's letter for a moment, it is worth adding the closing portion of it that Fraser quotes. Mr. Bedford writes:

Our Right Worshipful D.G.M., the Hon. Charles Augustus Gregory [=Augustus Charles Gregory], formerly Surveyor-General of Queensland, one of our earliest explorers, told me that he also found traces of free-masonry amongst the blacks of the north-west of Queensland, although not so unmistakable as those I have narrated. (In Fraser 1892:25)

Augustus Charles Gregory (1819–1905), it may be added, was a prominent freemason (he joined the Craft in 1855), as well as being one of Australia's most important explorers (Birman 1979). He was thus a man of some influence. Gregory does not make any reference to masonic signs among Aborigines in his journals (Gregory and Gregory 1884); however Mr. Bedford was not the only man to whom he mentioned this observation. He also mentioned it to a J. Malbon Thompson, who reported it in the February 1902 issue of *The Science of Man* (Thompson 1902:15). Daisy Bates had come across this, for she refers to it in the manuscript for her projected book on Western Australian natives (Bates ms. c1904). The rumour of 'freemasonry among the blacks' is thus not due to Stuart alone.⁶ Since, as we know from later observation (by W.E. Roth), sign language was widely used in north-western Queensland, it is likely that Gregory's observation of 'masonic signs' in this part of the country, perhaps like that of Stuart's, really refers to an observation of sign language.

W.E. Roth was also influenced by Stuart's observation of masonic signs. As we see from the quotation below, Stuart's suggestion prompted Roth to pay attention when he first witnessed communication by signs. Having noted their use, however, the critical study of the idea led him to realise that it was erroneous. His work then gave us some of the most detailed accounts of Aboriginal sign language available. In his *Ethnological studies in North-West-Central Queensland* (Roth 1897), Roth includes a chapter entitled 'The expression of ideas by manual signs: a sign language'. This begins with some brief but very acute observations on the nature and use of the sign language and contains careful descriptions of 213 signs, with notes on their origin, use, and the group to which each sign was attributed. All his descriptions are accompanied with excellent drawings. It remains to this day a most valuable source for information on sign language in this part of Australia. Indeed, it is the only detailed information on this area that we have.

In the Preface to the book, Roth gives an account of how he came to recognise the existence of a sign language among the Aborigines in the district where he worked as a doctor. He

5 Charles Sturt (1795–1869) is mainly known for his exploration of the Murray River system around 1830. J. McDouall Stuart (1815–1866) accompanied Sturt on his last expedition into the Simpson Desert, 1844–1846, and then himself led three further expeditions into the centre of Australia. His encounter with the 'masonic' Warumungu took place during his second expedition in which he was attempting to find a permanent route to the north from South Australia.

6 The editor of Stuart's journals, W. Hardman, must bear some of the responsibility for this, also. He heads page 213 of his edition of Stuart's Journals 'Native Freemasons!', thus drawing attention to the 'masonic' signs Stuart claims to have observed. As a more recent editor of the same journal has noted (Stuart 1983), Hardman showed considerable contempt for Stuart and doctored his journals in various ways in an attempt to improve their literary quality and their popular appeal.

encountered it quite accidentally for the first time at Roxburgh Downs, on the Upper Georgina River:

I was out on horseback one day with some blacks when one of the 'boys' riding by my side suddenly asked me to halt, as a mate of his in front was after some emus, consisting of a hen-bird and her young progeny. As there had been, apparently to me, no communication whatsoever between the boy in front and the one close to me, separated as they were by a distance of quite 150 yards, I naturally concluded that my informant was uttering a falsehood, and told him so in pretty plain terms, with the result that, after certain mutual recriminations, he explained on his hands how he had received the information, the statement to be shortly afterwards confirmed by the arrival of the lad himself with the dead bird and some of her young in question. The reported use of 'masonic' signs attributed to the blacks by Captain Sturt [sic], who had been in close proximity to these districts some half a century ago, immediately flashed across my mind, and the possibility of such signs being ideagrams [sic], the actual expressions of ideas, led me on step by step to making a study of what I subsequently discovered to be an actual well-defined sign-language, extending throughout the entire North-West-Central districts of Queensland.

Roth took 'Captain Sturt' seriously enough, at first, to trouble to investigate his claim. In his introduction to the chapter in which he presents descriptions of the signs he says (Roth 1897:72): 'So far as my limited knowledge of the craft [of freemasonry] allows, I have tested these people over and over again, repeatedly submitting them even to strict cross-examination, but have never succeeded in corroborating the gallant explorer's statement. I can only conclude that what he conscientiously believed to be aboriginal masonic signs are really the ideagrams [sic] which I am about to describe.'

We may now consider the contribution of E.M. Curr. In the 1840s he had managed a sheep run for his father near Shepparton in Victoria, where he came into contact with the Pangerang (also known as Bangerang). Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was sympathetic to these Aborigines, treated them with much respect, and learnt something of their language. After a varied life, which included travel on horseback through the Middle East and work as an importer of horses to New Zealand, Curr returned to Melbourne as Chief Inspector of Stock in the region. From 1873 onwards he became interested in the possibility that a study of the languages of the Aborigines might throw light upon their origins. In pursuit of this, he compiled a vocabulary list of 125 items and a series of questions which he sent to as many people as possible. Among these questions, as already mentioned, he had included as Question 80 a question about freemasonry. He also included as Question 65: 'Do your Blacks use signs instead of words? To what extent, and what particulars can you state?' The returns were presented in his *The Australian race* (Curr 1886). In this book, he summarises the findings of his survey in a long introductory chapter, and then presents details of the vocabularies and the answers to his Questionnaire which he received from over 200 correspondents. Although there are many shortcomings to this work, it is nevertheless of great value, for it gives the only documentation available for many groups whose languages and customs have since disappeared.

Of the 200 correspondents from which Curr received replies, only 11 appear to have given a positive answer to his questions about Gesture Language and Freemasonry. This, combined with his own observations of the Pangerang people made some years earlier, led him to conclude: 'Though communication by signs has been reported to prevail in a few tribes, the practice is exceptional, the Australian being noticeable for the little use he makes either of signs or of gesticulation' (Curr 1886, Vol. 1:26). This seems surprising, in the light of what soon was to become evident from the observations of Howitt, Stirling, Spencer and Gillen, Roth, and others. However, Curr based his statement firmly upon the information he had gathered from

his numerous correspondents and his conclusion was correct, given the information he had at his disposal at the time.

Such a conclusion, erroneous as it proved to be, is less a reflection on Curr than it is a reflection on the poor qualities of observation of so many of his correspondents. Curr appears not to have corresponded much with the people who sent in answers to his questions and in this he contrasts with A.W. Howitt, who also made extensive use of the questionnaire as a means of gathering information about Aborigines. Howitt was originally trained as a geologist and had the benefit of some scientific education (Curr's education included a British Public School and a period of study in France). Furthermore, Howitt, after he had entered into collaboration with Lorimer Fison (leading to their joint work *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, Fison and Howitt 1880),⁷ came to have a definite theoretical position he wished to explore. Whenever a correspondent showed an intelligent interest in answering his questions he would enter into correspondence with him, following up many of the answers he received with further more detailed questioning (Mulvaney 1971).

Howitt's main interest was in social organisation and marriage practices, for he was, as a result of Fison's influence, intent on developing a theory of the evolution of society as illustrated by the Aborigines. However, he was interested in all aspects of Aboriginal culture, and in at least some of the questionnaires he circulated, he included a question about sign language (but not about freemasonry, as far as I know) and, as we have seen, he accorded quite a prominent place to this topic in two different articles and also in a chapter in his major book (Howitt 1904).

The section on sign language in his *The Native tribes of South East Australia* is in large part a re-presentation of a paper he had published earlier (Howitt 1890). Howitt does not accept the idea that the extensive use of gestural communication among some Aboriginal groups is due to any 'paucity of language' (as some had suggested). He goes on to note that there is a good deal of variation in the extent to which gesture is used in different groups. He says 'Some have a very extensive code of signs, which admit of being so used as to almost amount to a medium of general communication. Other tribes have no more than those gestures which may be considered as the general property of mankind' (Howitt 1890:723–724). He states that his own observations and the information he had received from correspondents leads him to the conclusion that 'the use of sign language is more common in Central and North-eastern Australia than in the South-eastern quarter of the Continent' (Howitt 1890:724). He remarks that this variation in use is difficult to explain, but he offers the following hypothesis as a possible way of accounting for it:

The reason for this may perhaps be found in the vast extents of open country plains, sandhills, stony tracts which occur in the interior of Australia as, for instance, in the Lake Eyre basin.

A stranger is seen there from afar off, and can be interrogated at a safe distance by gesture language as to who he is, where he comes from, and his intentions. In the coastal regions or in the forest-clad mountain ranges which lie alongside the Great Dividing Range, separating the coast lands from the interior, such would not be the case, and gesture language could not be made use of at a distance, except in rare cases. (Howitt 1890:724)

7 Lorimer Fison (b. England 1832, d. Victoria 1907) joined the Methodist Church in Melbourne and became a missionary in Fiji where he became interested in the structure of the Fijian kinship system. He corresponded extensively with L.H. Morgan, who used his ideas in his *Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family* (1871). He returned to Australia in 1870, and collaborated with Howitt in the study of Australian Aboriginal kinship systems which resulted in their joint work published in 1880. From 1875 to 1884, he was again in Fiji, where he became head of a school for native training. In 1895, he was president of the anthropological section of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science.

Howitt does not seem to be fully convinced by this hypothesis, offering it, perhaps, as the most plausible, for he adds: 'I venture this supposition, but without laying much stress upon it' (Howitt 1890:724). It does seem rather unlikely, for the main functions of these complex gesture languages have to do with communication in circumstances where speech is avoided for ritual reasons, and not for such limited functions as communication at a distance, although it certainly is useful for this purpose and may be observed being used in this way at times (see Kendon 1988a:442–461).

Howitt continues his review by citing examples of groups which, on the one hand, have complex gesture languages, such as the Diyari; groups which have virtually no use of gesture, such as the Kurnai of Gippsland on the Southeast coast (which Howitt knew well from first hand acquaintance); and groups which were intermediate between these two extremes. He concludes by remarking that the 'systematic use of gestures by the Australian aborigines in lieu of words, or in connection with speech, seems to have been almost overlooked until lately by writers on the native tribes of Australia' (Howitt 1890:726). He remarks, however, that there are great difficulties in the way of investigating the use of gesture language, suggesting that 'the ordinary inquirer needs to be almost specially trained to the work' (Howitt 1890:726). He admits to being able to treat of the subject in only a superficial way, and concludes with descriptions of some 63 signs attributed to ten different groups, mostly from South Australia and New South Wales, the descriptions all being derived from those supplied by his numerous correspondents. The descriptions, like those to be found in the earlier paper on the Diyari already mentioned, suggest that in many cases the gestures his correspondents had described were those made either in long distance contact, as often as not with Europeans, or gestures used when in closer contact with Europeans in the course of efforts to make themselves understood.

Despite Howitt's interest in this topic and the greater recognition that he gives to it in comparison to Curr, it is clear that he himself made few detailed observations. It is also clear that his correspondents also made few observations. The nature of the gestures they did describe suggests how little intimate contact they actually did have with the Aborigines they were writing about.

Following Howitt, the next observer to remark in detail on sign language among Australian Aborigines was W.E. Roth, whom we have already mentioned. Roth became interested in collecting information about Aborigines while he was Surgeon in the Boulia district of North-West-Central Queensland. The duties of this position were sufficiently light to allow him to learn to speak Pitta-pitta, to write a grammar of it, and to collect a large amount of detailed information about the Aborigines living in the area, all within the space of three years. As already remarked, his treatment of sign language is excellent, and it remains to this day among the best accounts we have. In 1898, Roth moved to Cooktown to take up an appointment as Northern Protector of Aborigines for Queensland, an office he took very seriously, much to the annoyance of the local settlers who wished to exploit Aborigines as cheap labour (Pope and Moore 1967). During his time in this office (1898–1905), he collected a great deal of information about the Aborigines of the Cape York Peninsula, again paying attention to sign language where it could be observed. Some of these observations were published (Roth 1908), but others remain in manuscript form. It is to Roth that we owe much of what little is known about sign language in the Cape York Peninsula area.

Other early observers of Aborigines also remarked on the use of sign language. E.C. Stirling, as a member of the Horn Scientific Expedition which, in 1895, traversed much of

northern South Australia and the southern part of what is now the Northern Territory,⁸ was quite struck by it. As the anthropologist on the expedition, he was responsible for Section IV of the report in which the anthropological observations were presented. He includes a section on sign language. In this section (Spencer 1896, Part IV:111–126) he remarks that although he had been made aware, by the observations of various writers, that many groups of Aborigines made use of signs, it was ‘a great surprise to us to find that these signs constituted, in the districts visited, a very extensive system of gesture language, which is not only much used, but is capable of indicating a very large number of objects, as well as simple ideas concerning them’ (Spencer 1896, Part IV:111–126). He states that among the Arrernte (Aranda) and Luritja (Luritja) signs were observed to be in constant use. He also cites the observation of Francis Gillen (at the time Post and Telegraph Station Master at Alice Springs, and Aboriginal Sub-Protector and Special Magistrate) that north of the MacDonnell Ranges ‘the sign language reaches a still higher development’ (Spencer 1896, Part IV:111–126). He adds that he noticed that some Aborigines were much greater adepts at sign language than others and, he adds ‘I think, generally speaking the lubras [i.e. women] excelled the men in readiness of execution’ (Spencer 1896, Part IV:112). He concludes with a description of forty-two signs, with several variant forms noted. The descriptions are careful and, on the whole, interpretable, and accompanied by clear drawings.

Baldwin Spencer (see Mulvaney and Calaby 1985) was also a member of the Horn Scientific Expedition (he was officially zoologist and photographer and later editor of the published reports), and it was on this journey that he first met Francis Gillen and began his famous collaboration with him. Gillen had already learned to speak Arrernte when Spencer met him, and had accumulated a large body of observations. An outline of these observations was included in Part IV of the Report of the Expedition. Gillen does not mention sign language in this Outline although, as Stirling’s reference to Gillen’s observations makes clear, he had certainly made observations about it.

Spencer and Gillen refer to sign language in several places in their publications; however, they do not offer any descriptions of any detail, with the exception of 64 signs from the ‘very many’ that were shown to them on one occasion by an old Arrernte man. These descriptions are given as an Appendix to their book *The Arunta* (Spencer and Gillen 1927) and re-printed in Baldwin Spencer’s *Wanderings in wild Australia* (1928).

From the remarks Spencer and Gillen make about sign language in various places in their books, it appears that they were most impressed by the use of sign language among the Warumungu. Although they certainly observed it to be in use elsewhere in the central and north central desert regions, it seems clear that the Warumungu were, in their observation, the most prolific and extensive users of it:

One of the things that struck us most when wandering around the Warramunga [sic] camps was the fact that so many of the women were under a ban of silence. Many times when we spoke to a woman she signified by putting a finger to her lips that she was not allowed to speak. If four men, each of them belonging to a different section of the tribe, happened to die within a short time of one another, there would not be a single woman in the whole camp who would be able to utter a word.

They did not seem to mind in the least, and those who were under the ban of silence chattered gaily away on their fingers. Without making any sound, except that of laughing, they easily communicated with one another by means of their remarkable system of gesture language. Their conversation deals with matters of a concrete, rather than an ab-

8 The Horn Scientific Expedition was organized by the rich mining magnate and pastoralist William Austin Horn. It was the first scientific expedition into the Australian interior.

stract nature, and it is simply wonderful to watch the way in which they can express themselves. (Spencer and Gillen 1912:389–390)

Spencer and Gillen add that sometimes the women of the Warumungu preferred not to have the ban of silence lifted and they reported an encounter with one old woman who, they were told, had not spoken for twenty-five years (Spencer and Gillen 1912:394).

Arrernte sign language was also observed by Carl Strehlow, who includes in his treatise on this group (Strehlow 1907–1920) a description of 290 signs for 454 meanings.⁹ Strehlow remarks that the sign language ‘has an astonishing importance for and is perfected to a remarkable degree by the Central Australian natives’ (Strehlow 1978 [1915]:349). He offers little in the way of further observations on its use, however, and neither in the section on sign language, nor elsewhere in his treatise, does he mention extended speech taboos, either in connection with mourning ritual or with the rituals of male initiation. He does, in one place, mention that if a brother of someone who has died has been living elsewhere, he may be informed of the death by means of sign language. He makes no mention of the practice of widow’s silence, however.

Strehlow’s descriptions of the signs of the Arrernte remain the most complete for this group to date. Unfortunately, he provides no details about how he acquired these descriptions (whether they were based on demonstrations from women or men, for instance), and many of his descriptions (at least in the Chewings translation that is now available in Umiker-Sebeok and Sebeok 1978) are very hard to follow. As Wilkins (1997:418) shows, there are also omissions in the Chewings translation, which add to the difficulty of using it.

After Strehlow’s account, as we have already observed, we have to wait until 1954 for the next substantial contribution to this subject, when Meggitt published his paper on Warlpiri sign language.¹⁰ Thereafter, the next publication of significance is Miller (1978). Apart from Basedow’s (1925) derivative account, the only other publications to be noticed in this period are those of Mountford (1938, 1949) on the Ngada and the Warlpiri, respectively; Berndt (1940) who published a note on some signs shown him by an old survivor of the Yaraldi (Jaralde) of Murray Bridge, South Australia; Lloyd Warner (1937) who describes signs he observed in North East Arnhem Land in an appendix to his book; and Love (1941) who describes the kinship signs of the Worrorra (Worora).

One other investigation of Australian Aboriginal sign languages deserves a further mention, even though its findings were never published. This was the investigation undertaken in the 1960s by La Mont West, which we noted at the beginning of this essay. West had completed, in 1960, an extremely detailed structural study of a form of Plains Indian Sign Language which he reported in a doctoral thesis in the Department of Linguistics at Indiana University (West 1960). After this, he received funding from the US National Science Foundation that allowed him to go to Australia. Most of the time he was there he spent in Queensland, especially in the Cape York Peninsula, and he shot extensive 16mm footage of sign language. Unfortunately, for none of this material did he leave any detailed annotations and the only results of his work available to us are in the form of one or two ‘Final Reports’ to the National Science Foundation.¹¹ These reports document where in Australia he studied

9 Wilkins (1997:419) gives a slightly different estimate and discusses why it differs from my own.

10 Editor’s note: The Swedish anthropologist Yngve Laurell, a member of the 1911 Swedish Scientific Expedition to Australia, describes in his notebooks some conventional gestures used in the Mt. Barnett region (Kimberley). He published none of these observations, however. (See further Boström, this volume.)

11 These may be consulted in the library of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Studies, Lamont West, Jr. MS 2456. See http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/lbry/ms/finding_aid/MS2456.PDF.

sign languages but they contain very little on what he learned about their structure or the circumstances of their use. By the end of the 1960s, West had abandoned linguistic work and his project was never completed. He left us with some very interesting films which, however, because they were not annotated, are of limited scientific value.

4. Developments since 1978

The first development in the study of Australian Aboriginal sign languages after 1978, was a pictorial dictionary of Warlpiri sign language which was undertaken among Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu [formerly Warrabri] by Cheryl D. Wright, a teacher at the school at the settlement (Wright 1980). This documents with photographs 816 Warlpiri signs, each with a gloss in Warlpiri and English. The next development was my own work (Kendon 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986a, 1987, 1988b), which culminated in the publication by Cambridge University Press of my *Sign languages of Aboriginal Australia: cultural, semiotic and communicative perspectives* (Kendon 1988a). This remains the single most comprehensive book on this topic. Aside from an historical survey and a general geographical survey, which allowed me to propose a map showing how the use of sign languages throughout Aboriginal Australia is distributed (in the ‘ethnographic present’), the book reports an extensive and detailed study of sign languages as they were found in an area of central Australia that I called the ‘North Central Desert’. Studies are reported of sign languages among the Warlpiri (at Yuendumu), Kaytej (at Ti Tree), Warlmanpa and Warumungu (at Tennant Creek), and Mutpurra (Mudbura) and Jingilu (Djingili) (at Elliott). I presented studies of the kinesic structure of signs (that is, the formational properties of signs or ‘phonology’), form-meaning relationships in signs, and how signs are related to the spoken languages of the communities in which they were in use. Here I found that the individual signs in these sign languages often correspond to the semantic morphemes of the spoken language. I concluded that it is as if these sign languages are comprised of gestural versions of the meaning units the spoken language provide. In constructing discourses in Warlpiri sign language, furthermore, I found that these discourses (stories) were very close in structure to the spoken versions. As a consequence, I proposed that these sign languages could be compared to early forms of writing systems such as Sumerian or early Chinese, in which graphical units, often pictorial in derivation, are established to correspond to the meaning units provided by the morphemes of the spoken language.

Aside from such structural studies, I also undertook to compare the sign languages that I had studied in the North Central Desert with one another, and found that the more geographically separated any two language groups were in my set, the more different their sign languages were from one another. In a chapter devoted to signs for kinship relations, I was able to make comparisons between kin signs recorded for groups living beyond the North Central Desert. This showed that, in respect to some of these, at least, there is a great deal of similarity from one part of Australia to another. The penultimate chapter of the book attempts a comparison between the Australian Aboriginal sign languages that I had studied with other kinds of gesture systems and sign languages. The last chapter discusses the relationship between the ecology of social life in Aboriginal Australia, and how this might provide conditions that could especially favour the use of a gestural system such as these sign languages. In an appendix to the book a detailed transcription of a story told entirely in sign is provided. This is followed by a transcription of a verbal telling of the same story by the same storyteller to make possible a detailed comparison between signed and spoken discourse in Warlpiri. This story

was recorded on video-tape in 1981. It is included in the video *Sign languages of Aboriginal Australia: a visual exposition* mentioned below.

The work undertaken for this book was carried out in five different periods of field work. In the first period, in 1978, when I was still a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific Studies at Australian National University, I was able to make use of 16mm film. This was done under the auspices of the Human Ethology Laboratory which had been set up in the Department of Anthropology. These films, which have been deposited at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders Studies (AIATSIS), included several 400ft reels of women gathered around fires cooking and chatting after hunting expeditions. On these occasions I had tried to encourage them to use sign language. One pair of 400ft reels was made at one of the houses at Yuendumu and showed several women together preparing or eating lunch, or resting after eating, and in this footage at least one woman present was currently observing a speech taboo so that quite a lot of naturally occasioned sign language exchanges were recorded. I also recorded on film a number of stories told in sign language. One of these may be seen as one of the two sign language stories included in my *Sign languages of Aboriginal Australia: a visual exposition* which is a video-tape that was made at the Instructional Resources Unit, Australian National University in 1990 (Kendon 1990). Copies of this can be had on demand from AIATSIS (the library reference is LV2073).

In the second period of fieldwork, undertaken in 1981 and which was funded by the National Science Foundation, I was able to use portable video equipment. In this period, I worked wholly at Yuendumu, and I undertook extensive elicitation sessions with several Warlpiri women, all of which were video-taped. Careful study of these elicitation sessions, as well as a number of narrations which I was also able to record, formed the basis for the collection of over 1800 Warlpiri signs that I made, and which permitted the detailed studies of the structural and semantic aspects of Warlpiri sign language reported in my book.

In a later visit to Yuendumu, I made a survey of sign language knowledge and use in that community (published as Kendon 1984). In a fourth period of fieldwork, in 1986, this time funded by AIATSIS and by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research of New York, I collected sign language material, mainly by means of elicitation sessions, all of which were video-taped, in several different places in the North Central Desert area so that I could make comparisons between the sign languages as I found them among the Kaytej, Warlmanpa, Warumungu, Mutpurra and Jingilu communities, as well as that of Yuendumu. These comparative studies were published as a chapter in my book, as mentioned above. The video-tapes from all of these studies have all been deposited for safe-keeping at AIATSIS. Also in 1986 I returned to Yuendumu to make a video-dictionary of Warlpiri sign language. This dictionary (Kendon 1986b), in which about 1200 signs are recorded, and which is organised according to semantic domains, is available from the AIATSIS, where it has been deposited (and has now been transferred to digital format).¹² A full transcription of this dictionary was begun, but unfortunately this was never completed.

My last scientific visit to Australia was made in 1990 when, with the support of AIATSIS, I produced what I called a 'visual exposition' of my work on Australian Aboriginal sign language, as mentioned above (Kendon 1990). This video includes extracts from my 1978 films, the Warlpiri video dictionary, and two stories told in sign language and subtitled in English. Detailed transcriptions of these are to be found in the booklet written to accompany this video. This video has also been transferred to a digital format and copies can be obtained from AIATSIS.

12 David Nash played an important role in undertaking this transfer.

Subsequent to my own work, no one else appears to have undertaken any studies of these sign languages as such. However, David Wilkins has published a study of semantic associations in Arrernte (Wilkins 1997), in which he examined the relationship between the network of semantic relations suggested by polysemy in handsigns and that suggested by polysemy, lexical derivation, and etymological relations between words in the spoken language. His study of pointing (Wilkins 2000) also draws on observations of Arrernte handsigns. If it is still possible, it would be most valuable to have other studies of a structural nature, similar to those I carried out, on sign languages in the Western Desert, Arnhem Land and Queensland. It also would be most useful to undertake detailed studies of the everyday uses of these sign languages in regions such as the North Central Desert where, even today, they remain in active use. Although (in Chapter 14 of Kendon 1988a) I offered a discussion of the place of sign language in what might be called the ‘communication economy’ of Aboriginal society, further detailed observation would be merited.

Today, the recognition that communication in co-presence is ‘multimodal’ is widespread. However, few studies hitherto have addressed in any detail how the different modalities of communication are deployed in relation to one another within the context of occasions of interaction. A study of this in a community where a well developed alternate sign language is in active use, as among the women of the Warlpiri, could prove to be quite illuminating. A sign language such as that in use among the Warlpiri, as a communicative system, has many properties that are very different from those of spoken language. As I noted in Chapter 14 of Kendon (1988a), this means that it may be suited for use in circumstances where speech is less useful. A detailed study, in which occasions of interaction are analysed wherein both sign language and speech are in use, and in which the ecology and participation frameworks (cf. Duranti 1997, Ch. 9) of the occasion are fully taken into account, could be highly instructive with regard to how participants make choices among communicative modalities available to them.

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15 *History of fieldwork on Kimberley languages*

WILLIAM B. MCGREGOR¹

1. Introduction

Piecing together a history of fieldwork is not the easiest task confronting the historian of Australian Aboriginal linguistics. Fieldwork and fieldwork methods have been, and remain, among the most under-discussed and under-theorised aspects of research in the discipline. Few descriptive works provide detailed treatment of the topic; most give little more than a gross description of the fieldwork situation and the odd anecdote. Substantial discussion of the methods employed in relation to the descriptive and theoretical approach of the linguist, as well as the socio-cultural circumstances encountered in the field, is uncommon.

This is true not just of Australian linguistics, but also of other descriptive traditions. Linguists lag far behind their anthropological colleagues in reflecting critically on their fieldwork methods. There are to be sure a number of general compendiums of fieldwork methods such as Samarin (1967), Vaux and Cooper (1999), Abbi (2002), and Payne (1997); there are also manuals designed specifically for the Australian situation, such as Capell (1945, 1965), Wurm (1967), and Sutton and Walsh (1979). But there are scarcely any treatments that reflect deeply or reflexively on the activity, although some exceptions can be found in the recent collection *Linguistic fieldwork* edited by Newman and Ratliff (2001).

Conspicuous for its absence is a historical perspective on fieldwork. Even Newman and Ratliff (2001) shows no historical consciousness. Yet it could be argued that an adequate answer to the fundamental question ‘What is fieldwork?’ demands an appreciation of historical

1 This is a revised version of a contribution to the workshop *Linguistic Fieldwork: Challenges and Experiences from Endangered Languages*, held in Aarhus University in March 2003, jointly organised by Peter Bakker, Hien van der Voort and myself. I am grateful to Peter Sutton and Hilary Carey for comments on an earlier draft, and to David Nash for many e-discussions on the term *fieldwork*. Thanks also go to all of the Aboriginal people who have instructed me in their languages over the past quarter of a century. If I may single out some for special acknowledgement in the present context, having contributed to my understanding of fieldwork and caused me to reflect upon it, they would be: †Jack Bohemia, Rene Chestnut, †Joe Dimeye, †Bigfoot Jagarra, †Dave Lamey, Suzie Lamey, †Lanis Pluto, David Street, and Mervin Street (all Gooniyandi speakers); †Mary Carmel Charles and †Magdalene Williams (Nyulnyul); †Billy Munro (Morndi) and †Ginger Warrebeen (Unggumi); †Michael Angelo and Tommy May (Wangkajunga); Maudie Lennard and †Freddy Marker (Warrwa); and †Buru Goonak and †Daisy Utemorrah (Worrorra and related varieties).

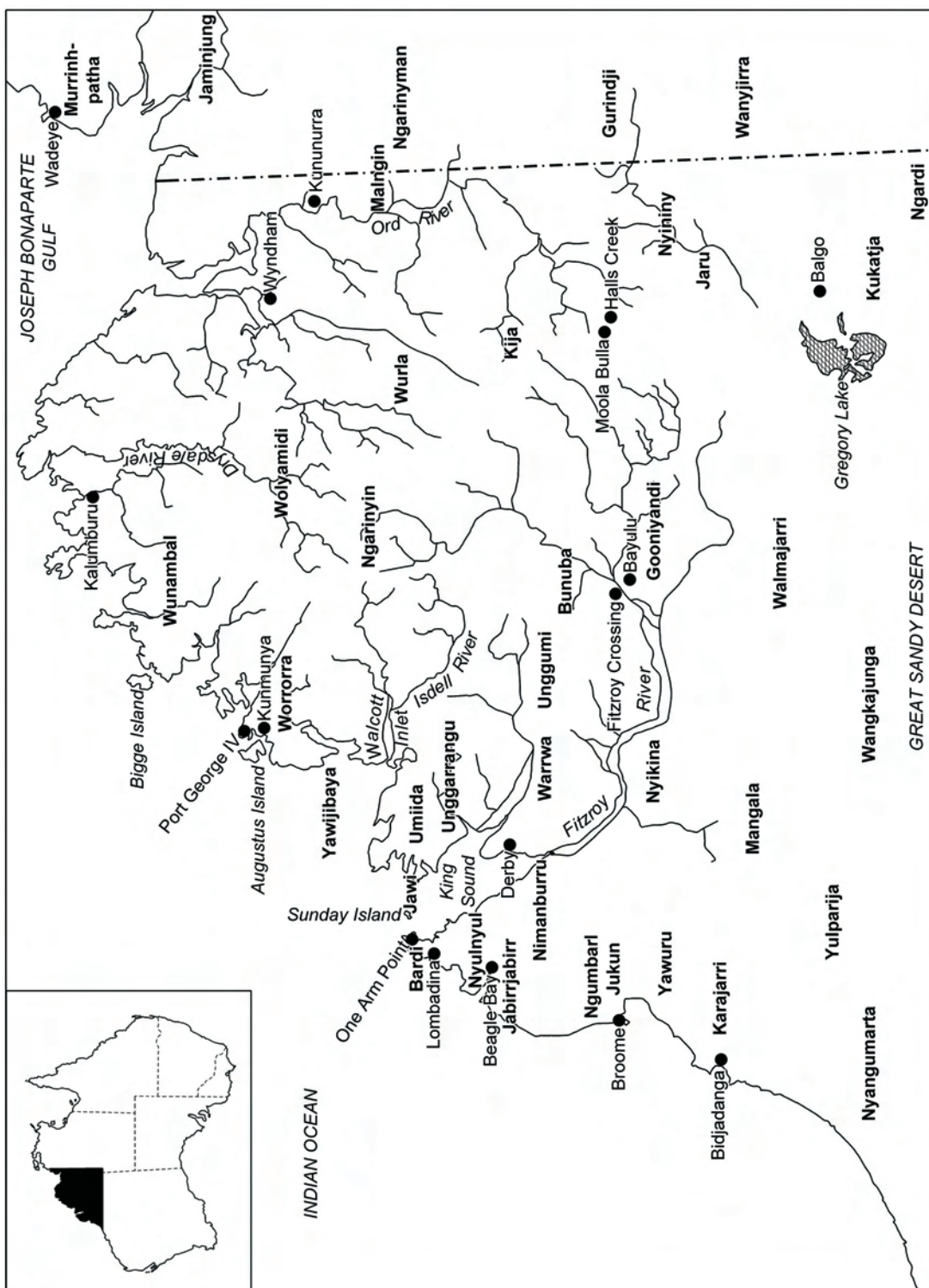
considerations. Linguists have been engaged in doing what would now be called fieldwork for centuries: from at least the eighteenth century travellers and scholars from Germany, Holland, Sweden, and Finland had been collecting information on the languages of Russia (Hovdhaugen *et al.* 2000). But use of the term *fieldwork* in linguistics—and perhaps in some sense the very notion of fieldwork and doing fieldwork (though I baulk at taking an extreme Whorfian stance)—is more recent, and appears to post-date the usage of the term in anthropology, which emerged soon after the rise of modern anthropology as a professional discipline. Thus *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson and Weiner 1989, vol. V:885) accords the first use of the term to Bronislaw Malinowski (1922:4). When the term was first used in the Australianist linguistics is uncertain, though widespread use seems to date to the third phase of research, post 1960.²

To put together a history of fieldwork therefore involves a considerable amount of guesswork, inferencing from what is said in published and unpublished documents that which might have been done and might have happened in the field. The following are some of the components of the story—many of which are of course interdependent—that are pertinent to a historical perspective:

- TECHNOLOGY: how have technological developments affected the nature of fieldwork?
- SOCIAL CONTEXT: how have the international, national, and regional social contexts impacted on the practices of doing fieldwork?
- SOCIETAL ATTITUDES: how have the attitudes and philosophies inscribed within the wide socio-political arena affected or impacted on fieldwork practice?
- ETHICS: what ethical concerns have arisen over time, and how have they changed?
- INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: what is the nature of the relationships between fieldworkers and collaborators or language teachers (I use the former term in this paper), and the roles and social personas of each; how have these changed over time?
- RELATIONSHIP TO THE DISCIPLINE: how does fieldwork practice relate to the foci of concerns of linguistics, broadly, to concerns of Australianist linguistics, to other descriptive traditions, and to theoretical linguistics, specifically?
- RELATIONSHIP TO NEARBY DISCIPLINES: how does linguistic fieldwork relate to fieldwork in nearby disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, and sociology?
- INSTITUTIONS: what has been the influence over time of funding institutions on the directions of fieldwork, and the influence of gate-keeping institutions?

To deal adequately with these questions would require a book-length study. Instead, I focus my story on three components in which diachronic change is relatively readily discernible. First, in §2, we deal with changes in the methods used by those who, since the 1890s or shortly before, have gathered first-hand information on Kimberley languages. Aside from limiting the paper to a feasible size and scope, the restriction to Kimberley languages is motivated by the fact that this is the region I am most familiar with personally, and in which I have undertaken investigations of linguistic historiography (e.g. McGregor 1998, 2000, 2004),

2 Prior to 1960, most publications on Australian Aboriginal linguistics speak simply of *research on*, and *recording of*, the languages. Thus even Capell's fieldwork manual of 1945 does not employ the term. The previous year the anthropologist Ursula McConnel spoke of a 'post-field analysis of Wikmunkan texts' in her article on Wik Mungkan phonetics (1944). McConnel's papers held at the South Australian Museum make numerous references by her to fieldwork in reports and seminar papers from the 1930s, including regarding her 3 months' on Kuruk in California under Sapir's direction as *field work*. (I am grateful to Peter Sutton (pers.comm.) for this information.) The first published attestations I have found of the term *fieldwork* in Australianist linguistics date to the early 1950s: in Worms (1953:967)—see quote in §2.1.2 below—and Oates (1953: Preface, unpaginated). A few years later McConnel also refers to the work of *field-workers* in the Preface to her volume of Wik Mungkan texts (McConnel 1957:xiii).



Map 15.1: Traditional locations of main Kimberley languages mentioned in text

thus providing a background against which fieldwork in the region can be assessed. Following this, in §3, I discuss technological changes over the time period, and their impact on processes of doing fieldwork. Third, in §4, I turn to changes in the broader socio-political context, and how these have affected fieldwork practices. Section 5 winds the paper up with a few concluding remarks.

2. Fieldwork methodologies over the past century

Linguistic fieldwork methodologies can be conveniently divided into three principal types: (a) direct or ‘formal’ elicitation; (b) observation and recording of ‘naturalistic’ data; and (c) experimentation. These are listed in order of frequency of normal use by fieldworkers, and the extent of their contribution to the average corpus. We discuss them in order in the following three subsections.

2.1 Elicitation

2.1.1 First period

Elicitation has been used, it seems, from the beginning in gathering information on Kimberley languages, going back to the last two decades of the nineteenth century (excepting the isolated Bardi word heard and recorded by William Dampier—see McGregor, this volume). From then until about 1930—that is, for the entire first period of research (McGregor, this volume)—almost all information gathered on Kimberley languages was by amateurs who compiled small lists of words in the languages, which they collected during course of the other activities they were primarily engaged in for their employment. These collectors included: explorers and adventurers such as James Martin (an Eastern Nyulnyulan language, either Yawuru or Nyikina, and perhaps also Karajarri (Pama-Nyungan)—Martin 1865) and Michael Terry (Gurindji—Terry 1926); the postmaster and protector of Aborigines at Fitzroy Crossing, C.J. Annear (Gooniyandi—Bates n.d.); policemen such as W.J. Wilson of Halls Creek (Kija); pastoralists such as N.H. Stretch (Jarau), Ernest Rigby (Walgi—an unidentified language closely related to Kija), and A.E. Clifton (Nyikina); the amateur anthropologist Daisy Bates (Jukun, Yawuru, Nyulnyul and Ngumbarl); the ethnographer Yngve Laurell (Mangala, Ngarinyin, Nyikina—see Boström, this volume); the school teacher William Bird (Jawi); and missionaries (see below).

By and large these collectors focussed on isolated words; normally just a small number of words were gathered, in many instances from lists compiled beforehand, and filled out as opportunity arose. In some cases the words were gathered at the behest of a central investigator. Around the turn of the twentieth century individuals such as R.H. Mathews (see Koch, this volume), and Daisy Bates compiled lists of several hundred fairly basic words in English that they sent out to policemen (e.g. W.J. Wilson), station owners (e.g. A.E. Clifton), protectors of Aborigines (e.g. C.J. Annear), and other white people working at the interface with Aboriginal people.³ In other cases the lists were evidently compiled and filled out by the collectors

3 R.H. Mathews’ 1901 self-published pamphlet *Thurrawal grammar—part I* presents a sketch of Thurrawal grammar as a model for his correspondents. (I am grateful to Jutta Besold for providing me a copy of this pamphlet at very short notice.) This five page pamphlet includes a section ‘Directions for obtaining information’ that provides advice on how to elicit certain grammatical information (e.g. dual and plural forms of nouns and pronouns, forms of verbs). It does not, however, contain any information on how to approach speakers, or on fieldwork methodology as such. It seems that Mathews was in the habit of circulating off-

themselves—e.g. Yngve Laurell (Boström, this volume) and Daisy Bates herself. Presumably these lists were filled out by eliciting the translation of English prompts, and/or by pointing as opportunity permitted (see again Boström, this volume). Otherwise, we have little certain knowledge about the procedures used. Often the resulting lists covered just a fraction of the lexical items on the questionnaire; rarely, a recorder provided more information, perhaps using the list as the basis for further elicitation.

Lists often contained a few phrases or sentences, typically simple ones that might be useful in everyday communication. In all probability these were mostly elicited through the medium of English. There were no systematic attempts to elicit grammatical information, and little apparent awareness of the types of grammatical phenomena that might be expected.

During the first period there were also a few missionaries in the Kimberley, some of who gathered data on particular languages: Frs. Duncan McNab, Alphonse Tachon, Nicholas Emo, and Joseph Bischofs on Nyulnyul in the northern Dampier Land, and James R.B. Love on Worrorra at Port George IV, during his first brief stay in 1914–1915. These men also seem to have employed elicitation as their primary method, but there were differences from the elicitation of other amateurs. The missionaries were generally in the region for longer periods of time, and so could develop closer relationships with their collaborators, and in many cases attempted to learn the language. They also gathered larger and more semantically varied wordlists that were not restricted to the most basic items. Having translation of religious material as their goal meant that they targeted their elicitation beyond individual words to utterances; they were also challenged to elicit words and utterances corresponding to difficult, culturally embedded, concepts. This can be illustrated by the wordlist of perhaps the best linguist of the first period, Fr Alphonse Tachon. His list has entries for a variety of concepts that would be useful in translating religious material (e.g. ‘adulterer’, ‘adulteress’, ‘angel’, ‘beget’, ‘expiate’, ‘idleness’, ‘immortal’, ‘lewd’, ‘obscenity’, etc.).⁴ On the other hand, there are domains that are not so well represented as would be expected for a word list of its size, including flora, fauna, kinship, and artefacts. The following quote is revealing of Fr Alphonse’s approach and attitudes—note especially that he saw his role was more than that of a mere observer.

There are more words in it [i.e. Nyulnyul] than in Caledonia. The language is harmonious although there are too many z’s. They are down to earth and here is an example: to say ‘I love you’ they say literally, ‘I give you my stomach’, or ‘I give you my breath.’ They laughed at me when I told them it would be better to say, ‘I give you my heart.’ I will have to create words. (Letter from Fr A. Tachon to his aunt, dated 20 May 1891, cited in Zucker 1994:32; original held in Abbaye Notre-Dame de Sept-Fons, Dom Pierre sur Besbre, France.)

Tachon’s observation concerning the expression of the notion ‘I love you’ seems somewhat strange. In Nyulnyul, the expression with ‘give stomach’ is used, although (at least in the speech of the last speaker) more commonly the expression *liyan* ... -M was used to express liking, desiring, and loving. It is not easy to give a simple explication of *liyan*, though evidence suggests that it covered ‘heart’, and ‘life force’. The inflecting verb -M can be glossed ‘put’. This compound is probably what Tachon refers to in his alternative ‘I give you my breath’.

prints of his numerous papers to European residents of remote parts of the continent in order to establish reciprocal exchanges of knowledge with these individuals (Thomas 2004:26).

4 Of course, one must regard such items with some suspicion, and they often turn out to mean something different to what the missionary linguist intended or hoped. Nevertheless, they reveal joint attempts of missionary and native-speaker to understand one another, and to express new meanings in the traditional language; for this reason they can be revealing of the semantics and pragmatics of the language.

2.1.2 *Second period*

Moving on to the second period research, which extended from the late 1920s to about 1960 (McGregor, this volume), it can be said that, on the whole, investigators were less linguistically naive, and usually aimed at gathering more substantive information on the target language or languages. In elicitation they aimed at collecting texts—especially culturally significant narrative texts, such as mythology—not just words and sentences.

The late 1920s saw the arrival of academically-trained fieldworkers. The first was the anthropologist A.P. Elkin, who, in 1927 and 1928, undertook his first field trip to the region. Elkin's primary interests were in kinship, genealogy and social organisation, but he also gathered relevant terms and information on their uses. In addition, he recorded names of artefacts, flora, fauna, places, and a number of verb forms in Nyulnyul, Bardi, and Ngarinyin. Elkin is noteworthy as the first person to transcribe indigenous texts in a Kimberley language—earlier investigators, including Daisy Bates, had gathered texts, exclusively mythological, but these had been told and recorded in (Pidgin) English. Elkin had at least some training in phonetics, and transcribed words directly into notebooks using the phonetic notation he had learnt in London—then one of the most important centres for phonetics—as a doctoral student. Thus the quality of Elkin's record is superior to that of the amateur investigators from the first period, who used spelling systems based on their native language (English, French, Spanish).⁵ And, in contrast with the missionaries, his principal focus was on gathering culturally-relevant linguistic data.

The first professionally trained linguist to work in the Kimberley was Gerhardt Laves, a student of Edward Sapir who had been brought to Australia in 1929 by Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, then professor of anthropology at the University of Sydney, under funding from the Australian National Research Council. Laves recorded information on an impressive variety of languages during his Australian fieldtrip, including, in 1930, two Kimberley languages Karajarri (at La Grange) and Bardi (on Sunday Island—see Bowern, this volume). He presumably used the methods developed by Frans Boas and Edward Sapir, which form the basis of modern linguistic fieldwork methodologies. Thus he gathered lexical and grammatical information, sentences, and texts in the languages, which he transcribed onto paper. His fieldnotes are highly regarded for their phonetic accuracy and detail; they are also significant for the grammatical understanding they reveal. They have been used by linguists in recent years both as records of the past, and in investigations of recent historical changes within languages (see McGregor, this volume).

In 1927 Reverend J.R.B. Love, who had done a six month stint in Port George IV Presbyterian mission in 1914–1915 (see §2.1.1), returned to the mission, which had in the meantime been relocated to Kunmunya. He remained there until 1940, at which time he took up the position of superintendent the Ernabella mission (see further Trudinger 2004). Love had been interested in learning Worrorra from his first contact with the people in 1914, and continued this interest throughout his second stay. He was motivated primarily by a desire to speak the language and to translate the bible; at the same time, he had academic interests, and wanted to learn about the language and culture of the Worrorra. Love was a well-educated amateur linguist: he had been awarded a BA some years previously, although he had no training in linguistics as such. During his time in Kunmunya he enrolled for a MA in Adelaide University under the classicist J.A. FitzHerbert, who was involved with an Adelaide-based group of researchers working on Aboriginal languages (see Monaghan, this volume; Moore, this vol-

5 Some early recorders may have been familiar with and used the spelling system recommended by the Royal Geographical Society. This has not, however, yet been confirmed.

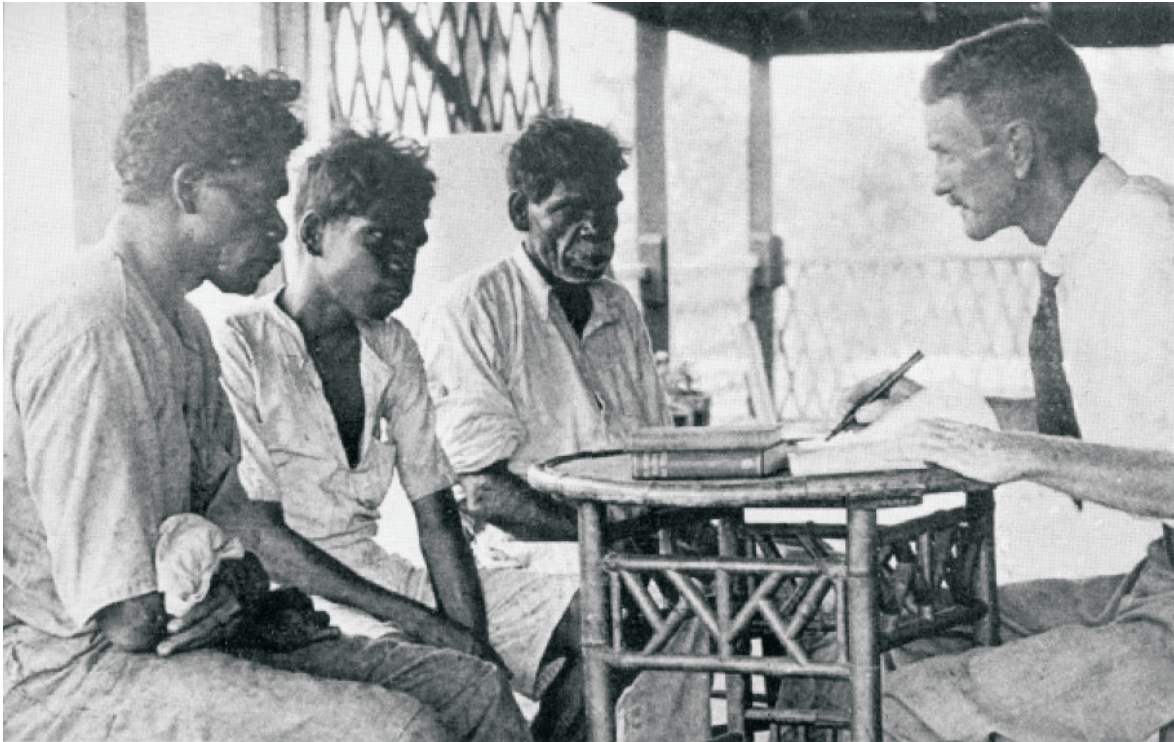


Plate 15.1: J.R.B. Love's Worrorra translation team, 1929. Left to right: Njimandum, Albert Baranga, Woonoonmoi and Rev. J.R.B. Love. Photograph courtesy John Love.

ume; Simpson, Amery and Gale, this volume). This provided him with essential linguistic expertise, including a grounding in phonetics and grammar.

Love employed elicitation in combination with naturalistic observation (see §2.2). His elicitation sessions were done with a Worrorra language team who met regularly on the verandah of the mission house. Other than Love himself, the team consisted of Njimandum (or Ernie), Albert Baranga, and Woonoonmoi (see Plate 15.1). Aside from eliciting linguistic data, the team was involved in translation of biblical passages, the two activities going hand in hand. One remark of Reverend Love's is revealing of his elicitation methods:

I have been at work for three days on a single word, 'kill' during the last week and have counted up the number of forms I have written down for this verb: it is 1,383 different forms of the word meaning 'kill'. (Cited in Burgess 1986:80)

Love was evidently eliciting verb forms in a systematic, albeit slavishly paradigmatic fashion. Nevertheless, he was by no means a slavish fieldworker: he was talented and innovative, thinking creatively about ways of getting the desired information if it was not forthcoming. One notable elicitation strategy he employed was to invoke shared experiences, and build on them to elicit new words and phrases.

During the 1930s, two other missionaries arrived in the Kimberley who were to make an important contribution to Australian linguistics. They were the Pallottine fathers Hermann Nekes and Ernest Worms, who went to the Catholic mission fields of Broome and Beagle Bay in 1935 and 1930 respectively. Nekes, already 60 years of age, had been a professor of ethnology in the Pallottine seminary at Limburg, and had linguistic training as well as a number of years experience working on the Bantu language Ewondo. Worms had been one of his students in Limburg during the post World War I years, and also had some linguistic and anthropological training. From their arrival they began a scholarly investigation of the languages of Dampier Land and environs, subsequently extending it through the Kimberley and beyond, to



Plate 15.2: Fr Worms at work in Broome. Photograph courtesy of the Australian Pallottine Archives.

northern Queensland and northern and western New South Wales. The results of their investigations appeared first on microfilm (Nekes and Worms 1953), and many years later in book form (Nekes and Worms 2006).

Fr Nekes conducted the bulk of his research from the Beagle Bay and Lombadina missions, while Fr Worms undertook most of the fieldwork beyond the confines of the missions. Nekes did however do some fieldwork beyond Beagle Bay, taking trips south into Karajarri country, realising that Karajarri was a language of a different type to Nyulnyul and Bardi. His fieldwork was hampered by age and ill health (Worms 1953:967).

It is worth quoting at length from Fr Worms' description of the circumstances of their fieldwork and the methods they employed, this being the earliest account I am aware of for any language of the Kimberley region (Worms 1953:967):

The most comprehensive work could be done at Beagle Bay and Lombadina. To these places members of other tribes were brought periodically for interviews of longer duration, sometimes lasting for several months. Periodically universal round-table conferences were held with representatives of different tribes. It is interesting to note that the appreciation of each of these for their mother tongue increased as they became more and more aware of their linguistic differences. They proudly realized that the special characteristic of their own language was their prerogative, e.g., the Bâd took pride in the shortness of their language, the Yaoro in the fitness and completeness of theirs.

Difficulties for the authors arose from varied sources, bodily fatigue from the enervating climate, and the high expenses caused by the upkeep and transport of the informants. Much patience was also required in dealing with the natives on account of the shyness of women, the secrecy of men, and the restlessness of both. The endless repetition of conjugations especially made them tired, listless and disinterested. The authors had to be very careful in order to receive correct information, as some women tried to 'make it easy', as they confessed later when found out, by simplifying complicated grammatical forms so as to shorten the sessions and lessen inquiries. E. A. WORMS' fieldwork was a more primitive one as he had to find the natives in the bush or desert and stay with them in improvised camps. Due to the paucity of provisions the number of natives had to be kept to a minimum.

During sittings shorthand notes were continually taken. When possible these were re-arranged and checked the next morning. Each word was written on a separate slip of paper in duplicate (English-Native; Native-English), and arranged in alphabetical order in several long boxes. Sentences used by the natives in spontaneous conversation in their

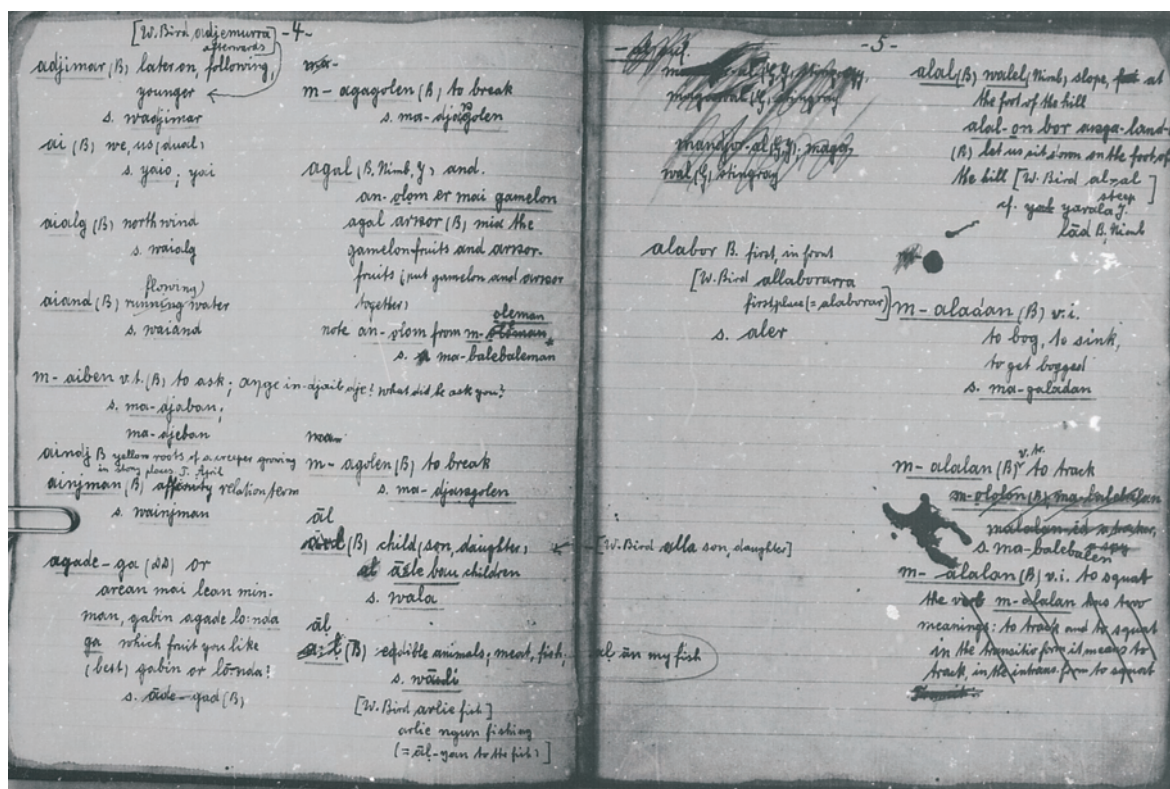


Plate 15.3: Sample page from one of Fr. Hermann Nekes' notebooks

own tongue were written down and analysed after each session. This gave ample scope for further investigation in grammatical and ethnological problems.

Most of this is fairly standard fieldwork practice and data analysis, except for the round-table discussions involving speakers of different languages. This is a set-up, one suspects, that could lead to a range of practical problems, as well as interesting results (such as the attitudes alluded to by Worms in the above quote). For instance, it might promote excessive attention to speech. It might lead to a heightened concern for the purity of the languages and to less naturalistic forms of speech; perhaps borrowed forms regularly used in the language would be rejected in favour of archaic or rarely used forms. Alternatively, it might not inconceivably lead to on the spot borrowings, and interference in the retrieval of the form in the speaker's language.⁶ (See also Bower, this volume, and §3 below on recording technologies.)

Unfortunately, the original shorthand materials that Worms refers to appear to be lost, and it is not known what system of shorthand Nekes and Worms employed, or how reliable their original transcriptions were. Nor do any of the slips that they wrote on appear to be extant. All that we have access to are the notebooks into which they transcribed their material at a later date, probably in Melbourne. In these they employed the phonetic orthography developed by Wilhelm Schmidt (1907), the so-called *Anthropos* system. Nekes' seven notebooks are an al-

6 Alan Dench cites evidence that speakers may be aware of sound correspondences among languages in the multilingual situations typical of Australia, and cites a case in which a Martuthunira speaker created a form by analogy on the basis of form in related languages Panyjima, Yindjibarndi, and Kurruma, as he later realised when he recalled the non-cognate word in his language (Dench 2001:117–118). Given the closeness of Nyulnyulan languages, it is not unreasonable to expect that such analogical constructions might be facilitated by the structure of the round table discussions.

phabetically-organised compilation of headwords from each of the languages he gathered data on, together with example sentences, sample paradigms, and so on.

It is impossible to infer much about the authors' elicitation procedures from the surviving material, which represents a secondary source. The above quote does suggest that, like J.R.B. Love, Nekes and Worms did attempt to elicit verb paradigms systematically and paradigmatically, though it is not clear whether they adopted other strategies to alleviate the acknowledged boredom of this approach. Beyond this, the sentences cited in Nekes and Worms (1953, 2006) indicate that (again like Love) they did often elicit contextually relevant utterances.

Arriving in the Kimberley at around the same time as Frs. Nekes and Worms was the 'itinerant' (to use his own self-description) protestant missionary Howard Coate (see McGregor 1996 for a biography). Although lacking the education of the two Catholic fathers, he was also to make a unique contribution to the study of Australian languages. With little schooling and no training in linguistics, Coate became interested in learning the Worroran language Ngarinyin (spoken in the region of his missionary base on the Isdell River), and later other languages. He initially sought advice from J.R.B. Love (McGregor 1996:3), and later had intensive contact with Elkin and Capell, who he served for many years as their 'man on the ground', providing them with answers to their questions, and acting as guide on their fieldtrips.

Coate evidently learnt fieldwork methods on the ground, by first-hand experience so to say, through his own personal contacts with Aboriginal people, and by watching Love, Elkin, and Capell at work. He acquired fluency in Ngarinyin, and some knowledge of the related languages Worrora and Wunambal. In 1946–1947 he was employed by A.P. Elkin to gather information on the northern Kimberley Wandjina cult; in the course of this Coate gathered a large corpus of mythological texts in Worrora, Ngarinyin and Wunambal, and compiled sizeable word lists in all three languages (Elkin 1948; McGregor 1996:4).

In 1938–1939 Arthur Capell, who had recently been awarded his PhD from London University, undertook a lengthy fieldtrip from Broome through the Kimberley, and on to Arnhem Land. He took Howard Coate along as guide through the northern Kimberley region. Coate, however, also played an active role in recording linguistic information (Capell 1970:684), perhaps because of interpersonal relations he had established with Aboriginal people of the region. During this fieldtrip Capell gathered basic lexical and grammatical information on many Kimberley languages, primarily by elicitation. With a good linguistic background, he knew what to do in the field, and the type of information to gather. As well as words and sentences, he elicited and transcribed a number of short texts in the languages, primarily texts of mythological significance. Like the others from this period, his primary recording instruments were paper and pencil. Unfortunately, he says little about his elicitation methods, even in his manual on fieldwork methods for Australia (Capell 1945), which focuses on what to record rather than how to obtain the information.

The anthropologist Norman B. Tindale collected short wordlists from about thirty Kimberley languages—including Bardi, Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Jaru, Ngarinyin, Nyulnyul, Unggumi, Warrwa, Worrora, and Wurla among others—in 1953, during the University of California at Los Angeles and Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition to North West Australia (Tindale 1952–1954; see also Monaghan, this volume). It seems that Tindale used a standard list of basic words, which he filled out (in most instances incompletely) for each language.

The second period of research saw expansion in methods of elicitation, from the elicitation of words and a few sentences characteristic of the first period, to elicitation of longer

stretches of speech, though this was seriously hampered by inadequate technology.⁷ Fieldworkers became increasingly aware that the languages had extensive vocabularies of kinship and other cultural domains, and that the vocabularies were not constituted by mere translation equivalents of English lexemes; the languages had their own semantic systems, at times surprising to European observers.

2.1.3 Third period

The third period, beginning in 1960 and extending to the present (see McGregor, this volume), is characterised by more linguistically sophisticated investigators: academic investigators, some at the beginning of their careers, others practising academics; and missionary linguists, a number of who had attended Summer Institute of Linguistics training courses—the first of which in Australia was conducted in 1950 (Oates 2003:29)—prior to going to the field, or sometimes during their period of residence in the region. Thus fieldworkers are generally less linguistically naive than in earlier periods, and often have had the advantage of a course on fieldwork methods. In addition, they have a better knowledge of anthropology and appreciation of cultural differences between the collaborators and themselves.

Much linguistic fieldwork from the third period has been geared to not just to gathering lexical and grammatical information, but also textual material, again principally by elicitation. More than in previous periods, fieldwork has focussed on obtaining representative corpora of the target languages; fieldworkers have increasingly aimed at documenting the languages to the extent and depth that detailed grammars and dictionaries can be prepared. Range and depth of data has been a primary concern throughout the period, replacing the somewhat superficial and limited (by today's standards) corpora characteristic of much research of earlier periods.⁸ The better anthropological background means that fieldworkers are better prepared and have more informed expectations of concepts that might be lexicalised and grammaticalised, and of the text types to elicit.

With increasing linguistic sophistication, fieldworkers were more aware of pitfalls and inadequacies of elicitation procedures—including problems with eliciting 'decontextualised' words and sentences—and ways of getting around the difficulties. For example, I attempted to elicit more contextually relevant sentences by constructing imaginary scenarios in which the utterance might be embedded, and by drawing on shared experiences as a context (McGregor 1990:33). Other fieldworkers did the same sort of thing (e.g. Schultze-Berndt 2000:21); see also remarks on Rev. J.R.B. Love in the previous section. Fieldwork courses also discouraged fieldworkers from adopting slavish sequential filling out of grammatical and lexical paradigms.

7 Another practical difficulty sometimes faced by fieldworkers was restrictions imposed on them by white authorities in their access to Aboriginal people. Thus, the Western Australian department concerned with Aboriginal affairs (which went under a variety of names during the twentieth century) could control entry of white people, including fieldworkers, into almost any location in which Aborigines habitually resided. Missions, government reserves and ration stations, and pastoralists also had, in practice, the power to limit access to their charges. The literature contains little certain evidence of such controls being invoked, and it is not clear that any Kimberley missions limited linguistic fieldworkers in the way that the Oenpelli mission hampered Lynette Oates' investigation of Gunwinjgu in 1952 (Oates 1999:43–44).

8 As remarked above, basic survey work in the Kimberley was done in the late 1930s by Arthur Capell, and a decade or so later by Norman Tindale. Geoffrey O'Grady and Ken Hale passed very rapidly through the Kimberley during their extensive 1959 survey fieldtrip (see McGregor, this volume), skirting the southern boundary via the main highway; they recorded little information en route, and their survey included just a few languages of the greater Kimberley region, all Pama-Nyungan.

New to the elicitation toolkit of the modern fieldworker are grammaticality judgements, which became popular in syntactic investigation with the rise of generative grammar. Doubtless at one time or another investigators from earlier periods asked their collaborators ‘can you say X’, trying out their understanding of the grammar. But in the post–1957 period, ungrammatical sentences took on a significant role in linguistic theorising, and consequently in the data the linguist attempted to elicit. All linguists in the modern period have probably attempted to elicit grammaticality judgements at one time or another, though investigators have assigned varying degrees of importance to them. I myself placed little direct faith in any judgement I elicited from a speaker (see also Bolinger 1968; Chelliah 2001:158–161; McGregor 1990:35–36). How could I know on what basis it was rejected? Was it because it was culturally inappropriate (e.g. ‘The woman speared the kangaroo’)? Was it uttered on the wrong intonation contour? Was it inappropriate to the context that the speaker first thought of, so that they were garden-pathed to a wrong analysis, not perceiving an appropriate or intended one? Or was it that the non-native utterance was simply not understood? Nor did acceptance of an utterance indicate anything certain. Perhaps the speaker was just happy that I could say something and wanted to be encouraging; perhaps it was acceptable but ungrammatical, or unacceptable but grammatical. Such judgements cannot be used as though they are unassailable primary facts; interpretation is essential. Thus I did not ignore them; nor have I ceased attempting to elicit them. They are important grist for the grammarian’s mill, and need to be incorporated into the description of a language.

Investigators working within the generative framework have usually assigned a more significant role to grammaticality judgements. Somewhat surprisingly, Metcalfe’s descriptions of Bardi verb morphology (1972, 1975), which employ an *Aspects*-model, include practically no starred sentences, causing one to wonder whether he did attempt to elicit many grammaticality judgements in the field.

Some fieldworkers in Australia—though none to my knowledge working in the Kimberley—have taken an extreme aversion to elicitation, and I wind up this section with some remarks on these ideas. The one perhaps most critical of elicitation is Jeffrey Heath, who avers that he had ‘no confidence whatever in such data [elicited words and sentences—WBM], since my own early “data” of this type often turned out to be seriously wrong’ (Heath 1984:5). It seems to me that Heath is overreacting to what is admittedly a genuine problem with elicitation. He appears to presume that what one elicits represents genuine and untouchable raw linguistic data.⁹ But just like elicited grammaticality judgements, elicited words and sentences need to be treated cautiously: one cannot simply equate elicited utterances with the prompts that elicited them. The fieldworker must view elicited material critically, and interpret and reinterpret it as their knowledge and understanding of the language improves. Finding that an elicited utterance does not have the meaning we initially thought or attempted to elicit is no reason to disregard it entirely, and it is reasonable to revise one’s interpretation in the light of better knowledge. This is not, of course, to suggest that anything goes, and one must guard against ‘doctoring’ data to put it in line with one’s theory. The line between doctoring data and reinterpreting it legitimately is perhaps not entirely clear-cut, but there is surely a distinction. Ultimately, an understanding of any utterance in a language must be in reference to the corpus of information on that language, and a linguistic theory; it is thus continually subject to refinement. Elicited words and utterances cannot be considered in isolation as immutable pieces of data independent of other words and utterances in the corpus.

9 Another difficulty with Heath’s stance is that textual materials recorded by fieldworkers are normally also in a very real sense elicited, as even more so are their translations, typically done on a word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence basis. These ought to be, according to Heath’s stringent criteria, as subject to question as elicited words and utterances.

2.2 Observation

Observations of natural speech were made right from the beginning—recall William Dampier’s recording of the Bardi word *ngaarri* ‘devil’ (McGregor, this volume). It is hard to imagine missionary linguists of the calibre of Fr Tachon not observing Nyulnyul speech around him, recording overheard words and utterances, which he perhaps tested later in elicitation.

Indeed, some linguists from the first period were excellent observers. Perhaps most notable was Rev. J.R.B. Love (see above; McGregor 1986), who was in the habit of carrying a notebook around with him wherever he went, noting linguistic and anthropological observations into it. During his 1914 stint at Port George IV mission, he ‘made a practice of going around the camps each evening, to see who was in the camps, and armed with a notebook and pencil, I would write down names of those present, as well as any new words that I would pick up in my rounds’ (Love 1936:34). Love combined his observations of natural speech with elicitation, following up on the observed utterances with directed discussion of the words or sentences with his language team (see §2.1.2 above).

Even less gifted observers than Love observed speech around them, especially as their facility in the language improved with increased exposure. These days, it is standard practice to involve oneself in social interactions with community members, acting at the same time as both a participant and an observer—this the method of participant observation. Fieldworkers often organise activities such as bush trips, hunting trips, and visits to significant sites, in order to maximise their chances of participating in natural interactions. But this is by no means a modern phenomenon. Even in the earliest days of occupation missionaries and other individuals serving in interface occupations had to interact on a personal level with Aboriginal people, enlisting them in work parties, travelling with them, and so forth. Such interactive contexts must have provided numerous instances of natural-language utterances.

Following observations up with questions in elicitation sessions is a standard procedure. Of course, these days we have the advantage of modern technology, that in principle would permit recording of naturalistic utterances, with hidden microphones, video cameras, and the like. But for ethical reasons few fieldworkers avail themselves of this potential. Instead, they make overt audio or video recordings of more-or-less natural speech interactions. In any event, one cannot record all instances of speech in all circumstances in a speech community. That crucial utterance may well arise in the most unexpected circumstances, and a fieldworker who is not an alert observer will miss out on it. The unaided ear (and brain) remains an important tool.

The success of observation depends on many other considerations, including level of speaking and understanding control of the language, the nature of one’s interactions with the speakers, one’s knowledge and expectations as a linguist, the emergence of relevant contexts, available time and opportunity, and theoretical considerations. By itself, most would agree that it is limited, especially in circumstances of extreme language shift and endangerment.

2.3 Experimental methods

Whereas in standard elicitation the linguist and collaborator interact via the medium of language and/or gesture, in what I will refer to as experimental methods, other types of prompt or prop (including analytical instruments) are employed. Ideally, the experimenter obtains data from a representative sample of speakers, and attempts to control situational variables, giving thought to the context within which the data is gathered, constraining and possibly varying it. The primary concern is with the range of language behaviours exhibited by speakers in the

controlled context, rather than with finding out how to express a previously determined notion, as in word and sentence elicitation.

Experimentation has been the least used linguistic fieldwork method in the Kimberley, as elsewhere in Australia.¹⁰ The first instance I am aware of in the Kimberley dates to the 1940s, when Fr Ernest Worms, with his colleague Fr Hermann Nekes, undertook what he referred to as a ‘psychological and linguistic study’ of the sense of smell (Worms 1942). In some ways one could regard this as the first psycholinguistic experiment attempted in the Kimberley field, the interest being in perception, cognition, and language. As Worms explains (1942: 109), he was not interested in testing the acuity of the sense of smell of Aboriginal people,¹¹ but rather in obtaining their reactions to smells, these reactions being encoded linguistically (rather than by pressing buttons, for instance) as descriptions in their own language of the smell; he also wanted to elicit more words and expressions from the olfactory domain. Worms made up samples of eight scent types, which he tested with 26 different Aboriginal people (11 men and 15 women), from a variety of cultural and linguistic affiliations, including two Pama-Nyungan languages (Karajarri, Mangala), six Nyulnyulan languages (Bardi, Jabirrabirri, Nimanburru, Nyikina, Nyulnyul, Yawuru), and one English-lexicalised post-contact language. (During the war years the entire Aboriginal population of Broome had been forcibly shifted to Beagle Bay mission, which therefore had a number of persons representing different languages and cultures readily available.) Fr Nekes conducted the interviews and recorded in writing the responses in the interviewee’s language.

One can easily criticise Worms’ experimental methodology, which by no means meets the exacting standards of modern psycholinguistic experimentation. Nevertheless, this was pioneering work, from which useful results emerged, including additional lexical and grammatical information on the targeted languages, many now moribund. Moreover, the data elicited was reactions of the interviewees to the smells, and not merely translations from English prompts like ‘nice smell’. It is also significant that Worms did not attempt to make direct comparisons in test-performance between Aboriginal people and Europeans or to draw conclusions concerning mental differences—normally to be read as deficiencies or ‘primitive’ qualities of Aborigines—as did some of his contemporaries.

With a little generosity, one might also include use of visual stimuli under the heading of experimentation, although it is impossible to say when these were first used to elicit spoken reactions. I can only speak from personal experience of my own attempts in the early 1980s to elicit things like colour terms in Gooniyandi by use of small sets of colour tokens pasted onto cards (certainly not the real McCoy in colour term fieldwork!), and descriptions of scenes and sequences of actions via drawings. The circumstances and experimental conditions were relatively uncontrolled, as in Worms’ earlier experiments, and they were tested on even fewer speakers and not systematically.

Since the early 1990s I have used an expanded range of stimuli, including widely used films such as *The pear story* (to gather narrative text), and wordless picture books such as Mayer (1969); Mayer and Mayer (1971) and others produced under the auspices of the Max

10 Investigators in other fields of study used experimental methods. For instance, in the late 1920s, the American psychologist Stanley Porteus tested Aboriginal people from Beagle Bay, Gogo station (near Fitzroy Crossing), Moola Bulla (a government ration station near Halls Creek), and other locations with a battery of physical and psychological tests (Porteus 1931). None of these, however, are linguistically relevant.

11 In fact, Worms disputes the received wisdom of the time, according to which Aboriginal people have a particularly acute sense of smell, and suggests that differences from Europeans, such as they are, can be largely put down to environmental factors (Worms 1942:108–109). (In subsequent writings, however, Worms tended to forget his critique, and sometimes presented his experiment as though it supported the received wisdom.)

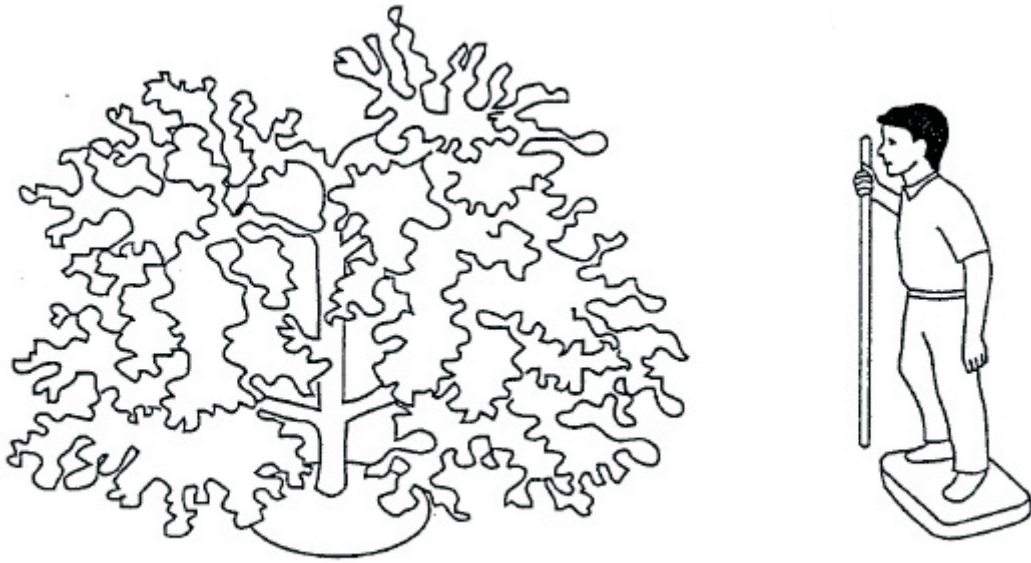


Plate 15.4: One arrangement from the *Men and trees* photo series. Courtesy Max Planck Institute of Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen

Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (MPI) in Nijmegen (e.g. *Melissa Bowerman's topological relations picture series*—Bowerman and Pederson n.d.; *The circle of dirt*—Eisenbeiss and McGregor 1999). In addition to these stimuli, researchers at the MPI have developed a range of props and experimental designs geared to investigation of spatial cognition and language, including:¹²

- MEN AND TREES, a set of photographs depicting different spatial arrangements of men with respect to trees (see Plate 15.4). These are described one-by-one by a speaker, while a second speaker (who cannot see the photograph under description) identifies the matching photograph from the description.
- FARM ANIMALS, set of photographs depicting farm animals in various arrangements. As for Men and trees, one speaker describes a photograph, while another attempts to identify it.
- ROUTE DESCRIPTION, in which one speaker moves a toy man along a path on a map, and describes the route to a second person, who cannot see the first speaker's map, and who traces out the route on a map in front of them.
- MOTION ELICITATION: 'Moving "in(to)"' and 'Moving "out (of)"'. This kit consists of a set of objects including toy animals and containers of various types which the experimenter uses to enact motion events to be described by the speaker.

I used some of these to a limited extent with the last two speakers of Warrwa, though due to the highly endangered situation of the language it was impossible to use them in the approved controlled fashion. Eva Schultze-Berndt has used the same stimuli, in a more controlled way, in her fieldwork on Jaminjung (Schultze-Berndt 2000:21, 2006), as has David Wilkins in fieldwork on Mparntwe Arrernte in Central Australia (Wilkins 2006).

¹² What follows are the props relevant to linguistic research. Stephen Levinson has also pioneered other more or less formal experiments investigating non-linguistic spatial conceptualisation (e.g. Levinson 1992, 2003).

The methods discussed in this section could just as well be treated as a subtype of elicitation, the aim, in most cases, being to elicit a response from the speaker; I have separated them mainly for expository purposes. Yet the possibilities for use of more- or less-constrained experimental methods in investigating the interface of language and cognition are enormous, and a fruitful field for future fieldworkers. One such domain in which experiments have been used is in studies of language acquisition and attrition. Although no such investigations have, to the best of my knowledge, been conducted on Kimberley languages, some have been conducted nearby, in or almost in the greater Kimberley. Notable are the experiments Felicity Meakins and Carmel O'Shannessy have conducted with Gurindji and Warlpiri children and adults in Kalkaringi and Lajamanu, as part of the Aboriginal Child Language Acquisition project, a joint project of the MPI Nijmegen, the Australian Research Council, the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney. These investigators have performed tightly controlled experiments in the field using visual and auditory stimuli to test things such as the relative weights of word order and case-marking as indicators of subjects amongst different age-groups of speakers (Felicity Meakins and Carmel O'Shannessy pers.comm.; Meakins and O'Shannessy 2006).

Another area where experimentation could fruitfully be employed is in articulatory phonetics; I am not aware of any such investigations of any Kimberley language, although Andy Butcher and Peter Ladefoged have performed instrumental investigations on some languages of Central Australia and Arnhem Land. A limited number of instrumental acoustic phonetic studies have been conducted away from the field of recordings of the spoken word—e.g. McGregor (1990:54–58, 60); Ross (2006).

Considerable sensitivity is required in employing experiments in the field, and some fieldworkers (the present writer included) feel that it can easily lead to treatment of speakers as experimental 'subjects', undermining the personal relationship one tries to establish in linguistic fieldwork. Perhaps experiments in the field will always be less constrained—and thereby more open to confounds—than in urban settings. This does not argue against using the method at all, however: no fieldwork methodology is without its drawbacks.

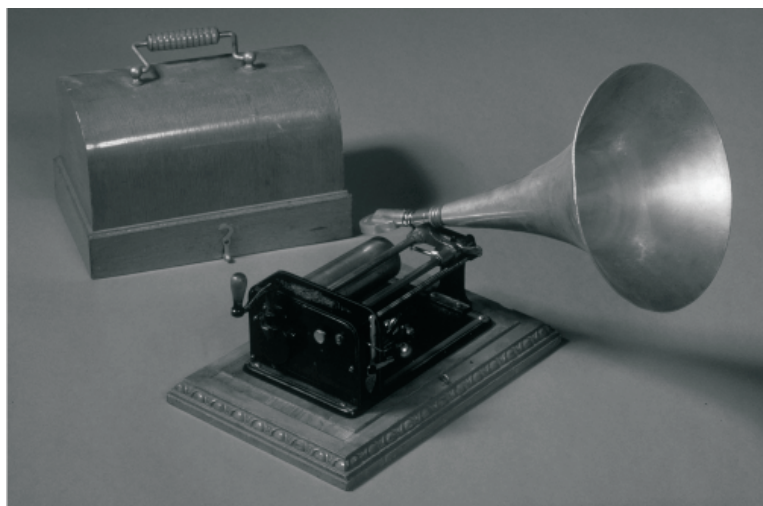


Plate 15.5: An Excelsior phonograph, the type usually supplied by the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv to travellers (Susanne Ziegler pers.comm.). Reproduced courtesy Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin/bpk

2.4 Concluding remark

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, we know little about the fieldwork techniques that language investigators have actually used, and few have said much about the topic. Knowledge of the method employed in an investigation is important in evaluating the data and conclusions—aside from being potentially useful to others coming to the field as a guide to what might be found, and hints on improved or novel ways of getting data.

Some of the most innovative and exciting research carried out by a missionary linguist in the Kimberley was by Fr Anthony Peile, a Pallottine missionary stationed at Wirrimanu (Balgo) from 1973 until his untimely death in 1989. Peile's main talents were not in descriptive linguistics, but in Kukatja ethno-science, in the Kukatja conceptualisation of the world. He believed that language was central to this, and that it was impossible to understand the Kukatja views of the world without understanding the language, and how it is used to speak about phenomena of the world. His two most significant publications (both posthumous), Peile (1996, 1997)—the latter a much expurgated version of Peile n.d.—deal respectively with the Kukatja understanding of plants, and the human body and soul. Regrettably, Peile never made public the means by which he obtained his information, some of which appears quite sensitive; when I asked him about this in the mid-1980s, he dismissed the question with a shrug of his shoulders.

3. Recording technologies

3.1 Sound and image recording

Technologies for recording sound were developed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Thomas Edison is credited with the invention of the phonograph in 1877, which recorded sound on a rotating wax cylinder, though there were earlier prototypes. The first to be used in fieldwork—initially in ethnomusicological studies—was Edison's phonograph. One advantage of these instruments for the fieldworker was that electricity is not required: they are powered manually, by winding-up. But they suffer from a number of disadvantages: they are bulky, heavy, and somewhat unreliable, often breaking down in transit (though they were more easily repaired by non-technicians than modern recorders); the wax cylinders were also very bulky. Moreover, the performer had to speak or sing with considerable force into the horn, which had to be located quite close to them; nor was the sound quality particularly good.

From early in the twentieth century the Phonogramm-Archiv in Berlin had been in the habit of providing missionaries and other visitors to exotic locations with a phonograph and wax cylinders on the condition that they record music and songs; recording of plain speech was discouraged, though not everyone heeded this stricture. In any event, because of their bulk and weight, only a small number of cylinders could be taken along with a traveller. Users therefore tended to be circumspect in what they recorded, reserving the cylinders for the most valued items, usually songs and mythological narratives. A considerable number of recordings were thus made of music from a variety of locations around the world (Ziegler 1995; Simon and Wegner 2000).

Fr Bischofs, a German Pallottine missionary stationed at Beagle Bay from 1905–1917, made the first known sound recordings of a Kimberley language (see Koch 2000). He made some thirty recordings of Nyulnyul songs, music, and speech at the Beagle Bay mission in 1910, amounting to approximately forty minutes in total. It seems that the recordings were made with difficulty, the Nyulnyul people being reluctant to have their voices recorded

(Koch 2000:43), probably due to fears of having their souls stolen. They had to be persuaded by gifts of food and trinkets; they insisted that the recordings be done outdoors. The following year the Swedish ethnomusicologist and ethnographer Yngve Laurell visited Sunday Island briefly, and recorded some songs and a short conversation in Jawi (see Bown, this volume; Boström, this volume); this was transcribed early this century by Claire Bown. These brief recordings in Nyulnyul and Jawi represent virtually the extent of known recordings of fluent speech in these two effectively-extinct languages.

Phonographs were still used in the 1930s and 1940s—in fact, it was not until the early 1950s that they went out of use amongst fieldworkers. In the course of his fieldwork at La Grange in 1930, Gerhardt Laves recorded eleven wax cylinders of Karajarri speech and song, amounting to around 25 minutes in total. The spoken material consists of a dialogue, a funeral oration, and stories. These recordings of Karajarri seem to be the only extant recordings from Laves' two years of Australian fieldwork.

The Pallottine missionary Fr Worms was also provided with a phonograph and wax cylinder blanks by the Phonogramm-Archiv, brought to Australia in 1935 by his colleague Fr Nekes (see above). Worms recorded a dozen cylinders in 1936 and 1937, which he duly forwarded to the museum. These are disappointing for the linguist. All are songs, and there is not a single spoken utterance other than a few introductory words in Worms' own voice. The phonograph seems never to have been used again, probably because all of the cylinders were recorded by early 1937. An offer of more cylinders was made by the director of the Phonogramm-Archiv, Dr. Marius Schneider, in mid-1937. No action was taken, however, perhaps partly because of Worms' imminent move to Melbourne to take up the position of Rector of the Pallottine College in Kew, and partly because of the imminence of war with Germany.

Summing up, phonographs were used to a limited extent in the Kimberley field, primarily for recording songs, and, to a lesser extent, speech. Limitations of the technology meant that its use was very selective, and restricted to 'posed' performances of songs and stories.

By the 1930s other recording technologies had been developed. In 1900 the Danish engineer Valdemar Poulsen invented the telegraphone, a device that recorded speech onto piano wire; this led to the development of magnetic tape devices in the 1920s. It is possible that Arthur Capell took a telegraphone with him on his 1938–1939 survey fieldtrip through the Kimberley.¹³ According to Freddy Marker, when he was a young man, a linguist visited Meda and recorded some Warrwa from the old people, who were very impressed when they heard it replayed. Quite likely this event happened during Capell's 1938–1939 fieldtrip, when Freddy Marker would have been a young man. Granted this, it was most likely a telegraphone. Capell, however, avers that

There were no instruments to use at that time [referring to the 1950s: patently false—WBM]. The only time I took anything up it was records [acetates] ... and the end of that was that the record box fell off a moving vehicle and was caught by a bush fire. So we didn't even get it back. (Newton 1982:69)

I suspect Capell's memory was faulty: Doug Blythe, manager of Mount House station at the time, says (pers.comm. 7 November 1987) that he was riding through the bush one day when he came across what appeared to be a primitive wire-recording device, that had evidently fallen off the back of Howard Coate's wagon, and was presumably broken. If the ma-

13 Among the other devices used by fieldworkers was one made by the French company Pathé from 1922, that recorded on aluminium disks. A few unused Pathé disks were found in Ursula McConnel's recently discovered trunk, donated to the South Australian Museum in 2006, suggesting that she may have used one of these recorders in fieldwork either in Cape York Peninsula or in California. (I am grateful to Peter Sutton (pers. comm.) for this information.)

chine did fall from the wagon on Mount House, Capell could well have made recordings of Warrwa in Meda.¹⁴

It was not until the late 1940s that recording devices had developed to the stage that they were convenient to use in the field. But their widespread use in Australianist fieldwork lagged somewhat, and it was not until the third period that tape recorders were commonly used. Perhaps the major advantage of tape recorders was that no longer did linguists need to be so circumspect in what they recorded; in particular, they could record elicitation sessions as well as texts and songs.

It was reel-to-reel recorders that were first used in the field. Geoffrey O'Grady may have been the first to use one of these recorders in fieldwork on a Kimberley language, namely Nyangumarta (Pama-Nyungan) in the early 1950s (although O'Grady's fieldwork was conducted just outside of the Kimberley).¹⁵ In 1959 in Broome, O'Grady also recorded an old Bardi man describing pictures from a UN publication (Bower 2004:13). The next year, Ken Hale and Geoffrey O'Grady had reel-to-reel recorders with them on their renowned fieldtrip, and recorded various languages (Nash and O'Grady 2001). As remarked in note 4, they travelled quickly through the Kimberley, and recorded just a few Pama-Nyungan languages on the margins of the Kimberley: Nyangumarta (outside Roebourne), Jiwarliny (Bidyadanga, La Grange mission), and Nyininy (Nicholson and Gordon Downs).

Howard Coate (see §2.1.2 above) returned to the Kimberley in the early 1960s after an absence of about a decade. Coate appears to have been the first fieldworker to systematically record a corpus of speech in a non-Pama-Nyungan language of the Kimberley. From 1962–1973 Coate, under funding from the then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, recorded numerous texts in Ngarinyin. In addition, he also tape-recorded small samples of speech—from about 30 minutes to an hour or two—in a selection of other languages, including Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Umiida, Unggarrangu, Worrorra, Wunambal, and Yawijibaya.

By the end of the 1960s, other missionary linguists with Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) training were appearing in the Kimberley scene, including Joyce Hudson and Eirllys Richards, who worked on Walmajarri from 1967 to 1984, and Joy and Peter Taylor, who worked on Kija for about a decade from 1967. They used tape recorders from the beginning of their fieldwork.

Academic fieldwork on Kimberley languages really began in 1969 with Toby Metcalfe's work on Bardi. Tape recorders were a standard item of equipment, used by all. By the late 1970s fieldworkers in the Kimberley had mostly switched to cassette recorders,¹⁶ these being more convenient to use, and less bulky. There is some reduction in sound quality relative to the best reel-to-reel machines, to be sure, but this is on the whole insignificant compared to the external noises one gets in the fieldwork context (generators, wind, vehicles, animals, children, etc.). Cassette tapes continue to be used by fieldworkers today, even though they have been largely superseded by digital technology, initially by DAT tape recorders, then by

14 Telegraphones were used by just a few Australianists during the second period. A letter from T.G.H. Strehlow to Fr Worms (dated 13 May 1959) indicates that he had made a number of wire tape recordings of Arrernte in 1949–1950. These he transferred to records just prior to his letter. According to Margaret Sharpe, she saw a wire recorder demonstrated in University of Sydney in the late 1950s or early 1960, though was not aware of use of one in the field. She also recalls that she took a cassette recorder to Darwin with her in the late 1960s (Sharpe 2001:240).

15 A report in the Perth *Daily News* dated 5 November 1955 'Perth man will compile native grammar' indicates that O'Grady had a portable tape recorder with him for at least some of his stay on Wallal Downs.

16 Peter Sutton informs me (pers.comm.) that the switchover from reel-to-reel recorders to cassette recorders in the Cape York Peninsula area was roughly in the period 1970–1973.



Plate 15.6: Postprandial fieldwork on Gooniyandi at Jiljiyardie, 1980. Left to right: Joe Dimeye, Jack Bohemia, William McGregor. Photograph courtesy Alan Rumsey.

minidisc, MP3 recorders and computers. Of course, some fieldworkers have used digital technology, for example, Claire Bower (see Bower, this volume:71).

The great advantage of cassette recorders lies in their size, ease of use, robustness, ease of obtaining tapes locally, cheapness, and good sound quality. Aside from this, there is a considerable corpus of field recordings in a range of Kimberley languages housed in the archives of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, which will take years to digitise. (On the other hand, Bower has transferred material recorded on minidisc to CD-ROMs and analogue tape for archiving and use by the community.) Presumably cassette recorders are on their way out, and one expects that they will sooner or later be completely replaced by digital recording devices.

The medium of film has been employed to a small extent in the Kimberley. During the second period, Rev. James R.B. Love and Fr Ernest Worms shot a small number of silent ethnographic films. To the best of my knowledge, the first sound films were made in the early 1970s, not by linguists or anthropologists, but by the professional film maker Michael Edols, who shot the film *Lalai—Dreamtime* in June and July 1973 (Blundell and Woolagoodja 2005:130–131, 285). This sixty minute film is narrated by Sam Woolagoodja in Worrorra, with English subtitles.

It was with the advent of video recorders that Kimberley fieldworkers first recorded films with soundtracks. Thus Patrick McConvell made video recordings of speech interactions in Wave Hill in the early 1980s. One of these was of the butchering of a *pulumani* ‘bullock’ by a group of multilingual men. This recording forms the primary corpus for a series of papers on code switching (McConvell 1985, 1988, 1991).

I began using video technology in the early 1990s, and have continued using it since, though I exercise more selectivity in what I record on video than on cassette tape. Initially I used it just for recording narrative and song in Gooniyandi; I later video-recorded a number



Plate 15.7: Screen shot from a video recording of a narrative in Warrwa by Maudie Lennard, illustrating use of gestures.

of more-or-less casual conversational interactions in Gooniyandi. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I also video-recorded Maudie Lennard telling Warrwa stories (a transcription and analysis of a short narrative text is given in McGregor 2004:299–304), and performing some of the MPI spatial tasks (see §2.3 above). Eva Scuhltze-Berndt has recorded and transcribed a significant corpus of videos in Jaminjung.

The medium of video recording opens areas of research that previously lay beyond the scope of descriptive linguistics, including the interaction of gesture and speech. The possibilities have yet to be fully explored by Kimberley fieldworkers. Digital audio and video recorders show enormous promise in the possibilities of immediate transfer to computer files, which can then be archived in electronic archives such as the DoBeS Archive (Wittenburg 2003) and Paradesic (Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures). The digital files are much easier to edit, annotate, and analyse with software such as ELAN than analogue recordings. Modern computer technology holds enormous promise for the development of comprehensive language documentation, which will, in turn, feed into language description, and the production of materials of use to communities of speakers and their descendants. In the Kimberley, this process is still in its infancy.

3.2 Transcription: the technology of paper

Unlike the technologies discussed in the previous section, the technology of transcription into fieldnotes has remained relatively stable: basically, pen and paper. The changes that have occurred concern mainly use of the technology, although of course improvements have been made to both writing tools and paper, for example, making writing in ink more convenient to-

day than in 1900. And, of course, there are computers. But as transcription devices they leave much to be desired: the keyboard limits the number of easily made symbols and diacritics and iconic indication of things like prosody remains difficult; keeping pace with speech in elicitation for most linguists is probably more difficult than with writing for anyone but a well-trained typist, and many (such as myself) are more error-prone on a keyboard; and finally, use of computers encourages subsequent changes to the record as one's knowledge improves. (For the same reason many handbooks advise against use of pencils.)

In the absence of convenient sound recording devices in first two periods, fieldworkers were forced to rely entirely on what they could transcribe by hand, on-line, as things unfolded, or, if lucky, later, relying on memory. With the widespread use of sound-recording devices in the third period, transcription took on a different role. Most fieldworkers, I presume, attempt to transcribe as best they can, in real time, the utterances of speakers in elicitation sessions, along with translations of greater or lesser precision and other relevant observations. Fieldworkers usually also record these sessions,¹⁷ so that they have some back up: they can listen to the tape again, checking their on-line transcription, annotating and emending (but definitely not changing) it.

Elicited texts are a different matter. The modern fieldworker has the great advantage over fieldworkers from previous times in that they can allow the speaker to talk at a normal rate, while the recording device runs. The recording can be transcribed at a later time. Here the practices of fieldworkers differ. Some, like myself, always attempt to transcribe textual material with the assistance of a native speaker, or, if none is available, at least someone with a good knowledge of the language. (The only time I did not do this as a matter of course was in my Nyulnyul fieldwork: the last speaker was deaf, and no other person more knowledgeable than myself was available.) In fact, on advice from my erstwhile PhD supervisor Alan Rumsey, I always recorded the transcription sessions, in case something important arose in the process that might be lost in a fleeting instant of loss of concentration.¹⁸ This may seem like overkill to some, but I have found the practice can pay dividends, and if one runs the recorder at half speed the additional cost incurred is insignificant. The focus of such transcriptions of texts is normally on getting the lexical items down and appropriately glossed, the utterances translated. Further details such as prosodic features, gestures (if the material is video recorded), and the like can usually be done effectively by the fieldworker.

By contrast, there are other fieldworkers who do most of the transcription of texts themselves, consulting speakers for clarification only where necessary. This procedure is used, for instance, by Eva Schultze-Berndt (Schultze-Berndt 2000:20). In some situations, native speakers are employed to transcribe recorded texts. This, of course, is possible only where literate speakers are available, preferably with linguistic training. It is only relatively recently that this situation has arisen in the Kimberley, effectively since the mid-1980s with the establishment of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (now located in Halls Creek) and the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWG) in Kununurra, and of educational institutions such as Karrayili Aboriginal Education Centre (Fitzroy Crossing), branches of universities, and occasional courses run by Batchelor College.

17 For reasons I have never been able to understand, much less appreciate, some fieldworkers skip the audio-recording of elicitation sessions, thus eliminating important sources of data one did not think of transcribing in the situation. Most handbooks advise against this reprehensible habit.

18 It seems that Michael Silverstein, Alan Rumsey's doctoral supervisor, who was doing fieldwork on Worrorra while Rumsey was working on Ngarinyin, kept his tape recorder running for extremely lengthy periods even when not eliciting.

Computers have a significant role to play not in the preparation of fieldnotes, but in the subsequent representation of these transcriptions in forms that lend themselves better to archiving and analysis. Software such as Toolbox (and its earlier incarnation, Shoebox) is useful to the fieldworker in these secondary processes, as also are programs for editing and annotating digital videos. To deal adequately with this side of the story would take us far from the main concerns of this paper, and belongs more to an investigation of the history of language documentation.

4. The social context of fieldwork

For Australianists today fieldwork is part of our research *modus operandi*, the standard means of gathering primary data; it serves a role comparable to experiments for psychologists, physicists, and chemists. It is written into grant applications—it is an activity that costs money, and funds need to be applied for in order to do it. It is also an interpersonal activity involving interaction with other human beings, normally members of a different culture; this dimension adds to the challenge of fieldwork, and makes it something that most fieldworking linguists enjoy doing. Fieldwork thus has social values (in the Saussurean sense) both within academe and the wider society within which academe is embedded, and within the social environments within which fieldwork is performed. Two perspectives are relevant to the latter: what is fieldwork to the practising linguist; and what is it to the speaker of the language? In this section I remark on historical dimensions of these aspects of linguistic fieldwork in the Kimberley.

In the first period of research, academic concerns were marginal. Investigators were primarily employed in unrelated jobs (see above), but by some quirk of personality were interested in the languages spoken by the Aboriginal people around them. Otherwise, they may have been motivated by practical communicative needs, like the first missionary linguists who found themselves in environments where Aboriginal languages were strong and English (and other European languages) little understood. As to the former group, some published their findings in geographical journals or journals of the royal societies of the colonies or states; others provided information to collectors like Daisy Bates. Until about 1910 missionaries in the Kimberley played little role in the construction of western knowledge, and what they wrote was intended for personal or mission-internal use (McGregor 1998, 2000).

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we can guess that information was often gathered on a fairly casual basis, the investigator asking for words for items or activities in the course of doing other things, for instance constructing a fence or building, or travelling on horseback (see e.g. Boström, this volume). This activity of participant elicitation was unlikely to have been regarded as ‘work’, and would not normally be paid for separately as such. The following description, from a slightly later time, nicely illustrates participant elicitation (and participant observation):

One man who paddled round our vessel was finally coaxed near, and strange to say, he dipped his hand over the side into the water, and said ‘agua.’ He was brought aboard and given water, and as he squatted down, I obtained a strange vocabulary from him. The words were written phonetically, and after I had pointed to the water and repeated his word ‘agua,’ I pointed to his dog in the canoe, ‘caningo,’ he repeated laconically. It seemed strange, for one could literally converse with this wild man. The word ‘caningo’ bore an extraordinary resemblance to canine and dingo. Other words I obtained in the brief time span were ‘apita,’ for his head, and ‘oombooro’ for arm. A dead fish was ‘mat’ in his dialect, and in truth it was very ‘morte.’ I pointed to the mast of the vessel,

and he grunted ‘oobra.’ I could not follow that until I realised with a shock that he pointed to the shadow of the mast. (Ryder 1936:33)¹⁹

I suspect that in general limited use was made (in the first period) of lengthy formal elicitation sessions devoted exclusively to recording linguistic information. Longer sessions, I would guess, were considered parts of larger labour exchange networks in which the Aboriginal person performed physical services in exchange for material goods such as food and tobacco. Thus linguistic elicitation may have served as one of many tasks an Aboriginal person might have been expected to perform for the linguist, and was taken up on a casual basis, as opportunity arose. It was not strongly differentiated from these other tasks.

Coercion and power are also relevant considerations. It is well known that in the colonial setting Europeans used violence and the threat of violence to control Aboriginal people. Even the most enlightened missionaries considered violence necessary—as it probably was, presuming they wanted to survive. Thus J.R.B. Love remarked in 1914 in a letter to his parents that, in addition to the humane means of developing the mission, he would back them up ‘by muscular persuasion if needed’ (cited in Burgess 1986:60). Many missionaries were quite liberal in their application of this type of persuasion, both on children and adults (see e.g. Walter 1982; Halse 2002). It was not that missionaries were always physically stronger or better fighters than Aborigines. Rather, they had other advantages on their side, including access to guns and the police.²⁰

The point is not that fieldworkers in the first period necessarily used physical violence to extract information from unwilling or recalcitrant speakers, although they may have on occasions. Malinowski admits in his diaries to resorting to physical violence on occasions (Malinowski 1989 [1967]), and he is unlikely to have been unique. Rather, the point is more general: gathering language information fell under the umbrella of colonisation, and its practice depended on control of the colonised.

As mentioned already, the end of the first period saw the arrival of professional and semi-professional investigators enjoying better training in linguistics (including phonetics) or philology. From then on, formal elicitation similar to the modern type took off, ultimately replacing informal and participant elicitation. In the anthropological fieldwork of A.P. Elkin and Phyllis Kaberry, elicitation played an important role; by this method they collected genealogies, mythology, and information about the pre-colonial past. In the process they elicited words in the local languages, including in particular kinterms, toponyms, terms for artefacts, and so on. Professionals like Gerhardt Laves and Arthur Capell, and semi-professionals like James R.B. Love, Hermann Nekes, and Ernest Worms used elicitation to gather lexical, grammatical and textual information, as well as cultural information on religion, ways of life and so on. The primary purpose of the interaction was to obtain linguistic and cultural information, and this became the commodity sought after, and paid for with food, tobacco, or clothing—see the previous quote from Worms (1953:967), in which the author speaks of the expenses incurred in ‘upkeep and transport of the informants’. Money is unlikely to have been exchanged: in the Kimberley (as elsewhere in Western Australia) cash payments were not (until the late 1940s) normally made to Aboriginal people for services rendered.

19 In fact, most of the words of this Aboriginal man cited in the passage are identifiable Worrorrnan words, albeit misunderstood and poorly transcribed. Compare the following Worrorra words: *agu* ‘water’ (cf. Unggumi *yangga(ngga)* ‘water’), *garnanggurri* ‘dog’, *-miri* ‘head’ (which shows denasalisation following some person prefixes, as in *adbiri* ‘their heads’), and *obra* is almost certainly related to *wumba* ‘tree’ in Unggumi, perhaps with some mishearing, or a generous hearing.

20 Love (1936:20) provides a very instructive story of the efficacy of the threat (or imagined threat) of guns in controlling Aborigines.

These circumstances—formalising elicitation sessions, restricting activities to exchange of information, and paying specifically for information—form, it seems to me, the basis for construing elicitation, and thus fieldwork, as a type of work, both by the investigator and the collaborator. As for other work, the Aborigines themselves were relatively invisible from the outside, their contribution largely unacknowledged. Collaborators were rarely named or acknowledged in academic publications; Aboriginal people were sometimes named in field notebooks and popular publications, and it is sometimes possible to infer from these sources the identity of the collaborators. J.R.B. Love, for instance, identifies a number of Kunmunya residents by name in his popular book *Stone age bushmen of today* (1936), though not in his linguistic articles or MA thesis. The only places in *Nekes and Worms* (1953) where the identity of a collaborator is revealed is in the attributions of texts and songs in Part V, and then not consistently. Similar remarks hold for other publications by the two authors, with the exception of the write-up of Worms' experiment on the sense of smell (Worms 1942; see §2.3 above). Unusually, in this article each of the 26 experimental 'subjects' is named, social information given about them, and their responses individually recorded.

By the third period of research, fieldwork had become well entrenched as work, and cash payment, as well as goods (food and tobacco) and services (such as provision of travel by vehicle), were expected in recompense for time spent in elicitation and other arduous tasks such as transcription. At the same time, changes were occurring in the wider social and political environment: after the war, Aboriginal workers were beginning to be paid a wage, although (until the 1970s) it was below award level. During the 1950s and 1960s fieldworkers were also becoming more highly professionalised, and consequently put greater expectations on collaborators in regard to the amount and type of information they were to provide in fieldwork sessions; the range of their language competence was plumbed more deeply.

Formal elicitation and transcription sessions form only small portion of the typical activities of the fieldworker in terms of time. (The main exceptions are cases of extreme language endangerment where there is only a single speaker or two, and possibilities of other types of interaction are limited, as in the case of my fieldwork on Nyulnyul and Warrwa.) Many other activities, such as participant observation in a range of contexts (§2.2 above), involve development of personal relationships with speakers, and are not (yet) fully commodified as 'work'. Nevertheless, being admitted to the community as a member of some sort, the fieldworker has certain rights and duties, including provision of goods (possibly money, food, items of equipment) and services (such as driving, and providing training—see below). This is a characteristic of modern fieldwork, separating it from the type of fieldwork typical of the first period, where linguists maintained somewhat greater distance from Aboriginal speakers—and where the unmarked expectation was that the latter would participate in more or less western-approved activities initiated by the investigator, not the reverse.²¹ Again, I am not suggesting this is absolutely unique to the modern period; most likely, things changed gradually throughout the twentieth century.

The third period of research has seen an increasing emphasis on applications of linguistics, and with that have come other changes to the face of fieldwork. SIL fieldworkers have always placed applications high on their list of priorities for linguistic research, including in particular translation and literacy. Thus there has been a particular emphasis on teamwork involving the linguist and speakers of the languages, who may work together on decisions concerning orthography, translations, analysis, etc. (Oates 1999:48). From the beginning, Joyce Hudson

21 A partial exception is events such as corroborees, that were sometimes staged for western observers; but these were performances to be observed rather than (in most instances) participated in, and do not contradict the observation.

and Eirlys Richards invested considerable effort into Walmajarri literacy training, and worked closely with literate speakers in the production of literacy materials and bible translations. In 1968–1969 Olive Bieundurry, working from transcribed Walmajarri texts, compiled a first draft of a dictionary of the language (Richards and Hudson 1990:5). Some twenty years later Olive Bieundurry read and corrected the draft manuscript of the entire dictionary, which was published the following year (Richards and Hudson 1990).

An important change to the face of fieldwork in the Kimberley dates to the early 1980s: increasing Aboriginal control of the nature and direction of language-based research. This was facilitated by the formation of two key organisations: the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC), the first language centre in Australia, established 1985 as a result of recommendations in Joyce Hudson and Patrick McConvell's report *Keeping language strong* (Hudson and McConvell 1984); and the MDWG, established in Kununurra in the late 1980s (McGregor 2004:19–20). Both organisations are controlled by committees of Kimberley Indigenous, which determine research needs and priorities. The KLRC serves the language needs of Indigenous communities throughout the Kimberley, while the MDWG serves more local interests in the East Kimberley.

The early 1980s saw the emergence of self-determination, and Aboriginal communities in Australia began to decide on the sort of language-related research they themselves wanted done, and sought researchers to do it (Wilkins 1992). The two language centres emerged in this milieu, and from the beginning adopted advisory roles, determining and prioritising community needs, recommending useful research projects for communities, and finding people to undertake them. A number of projects involving linguistic fieldwork have been initiated and funded by the centres, including oral history projects (e.g. Binayi *et al.* 1996), dictionary projects (e.g. Lands *et al.* 1987; Clendon, Lalbanda, Peters and Utemorra 2000), and language documentation projects. These projects have provided opportunity for a number of linguists to do fieldwork on Kimberley languages, sometimes as unpaid volunteers, sometimes under contract for a particular job, and sometimes as part of their employment as full time linguists for the KLRC. Often the linguist is permitted to gather information beyond what is directly relevant to the project, and to utilise what they collect for their own purposes, which may be writing a thesis (see e.g. Bower, this volume) or descriptive grammar. Aside from this, language centres serve as gatekeepers, protecting the interests of Aboriginal communities and people by vetting academic linguists intending to do research in the region, who must make initial contact via the relevant centre. These are all recent developments: in previous times the linguist determined their project themselves, and the directions it would take, without consulting speakers.²²

Also since the early 1980s fieldworkers have been expected to return information they gather in some form suitable to the community. This can take a variety of forms. At the most basic level, it can be the provision of recordings and fieldnotes to the community and/or to the language centre for archiving. More significantly, the fieldworker can provide training in linguistics, assistance in production of users' dictionaries and learners' grammars, advice on educational issues, and so on. Most (if not all) linguists presently active in the Kimberley field have contributed to such applications. In previous periods, too, linguists provided some training to Aboriginal people, usually in writing their language. This particularly applies to missionary linguists involved in bible translation, whose self-imposed task would be pointless in the absence of literate speakers.

22 This does not mean that Aboriginal speaker-teachers did not in practice exercise influence over the direction fieldwork took, only that this happened on a local individual level, and was not formalised as a part of fieldwork requirements. No good fieldworker could possibly not respond to the interests, talents, and desires of their language teachers, and modify the directions of their fieldwork and subsequent research accordingly.



Plate 15.8: Howard Coate and Bill McGregor in conversation outside Coate's demountable in Derby, 1995. Photograph courtesy Kevin Shaw ©.

A number of difficulties arise as a result of the developments just sketched, that have not yet been satisfactorily resolved. The fieldworker may well be responsible to their academic institution, to a funding organisation, and to Aboriginal communities and organisations. These demands may be difficult to reconcile, if not incompatible, putting the fieldworker in an invidious position. Other problems concern the identification of Aboriginal communities (what is an Aboriginal community?) and 'their' language desires or attitudes—as though Aboriginal communities, whatever they might be, are homogenous units (see McGregor 2004: 320; Bowern, this volume). And where is the individual speaker situated in all this? Space does not permit these questions to be addressed here.

In this section I have discussed some aspects of the social side of fieldwork, in particular the interpersonal relationships between fieldworker and collaborator(s). These are not independent of the wider social milieu within which the interactants find themselves: no one can step outside of the socio-cultural circumstance into which they were enculturated. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, European-Aboriginal relationships were basically master-servant/slave. I have suggested that this was manifest to some degree in the shape 'fieldwork' took, in particular that it was not construed, in itself, as work. This came only later, beginning in the second period, and intensifying in the third period. At the same time as this change, which accompanied the progressive inculcation of the work ethic, we find a somewhat contradictory change, the development of closer personal relationships between fieldworker and collaborator, in which the fieldworker attempts to become a participant in the speech community.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a historical overview of some aspects of fieldwork in the Kimberley, occasionally linking the story to fieldwork in Australia generally. In many places my story is admittedly a construct made up of (hopefully) intelligent guesses and inferences. As mentioned more than once, Kimberleyanists have been somewhat reticent about their fieldwork practices. One can only hope that this will change in the future.

I have been selective in the range of topics treated, leaving out many important and problematic themes. Among these, I would single out three as particularly promising, and in need of treatment in a historical perspective: fieldwork ethics; the contribution of Aboriginal collaborators (which emerges only indirectly in my story); and the nature and development of linguistic fieldnotes, and their relation to ethnographic fieldnotes.

To a large extent linguistic fieldwork in the Kimberley, as elsewhere in Australia and the world, has been, and remains, a European enterprise. Increasingly over recent years Aboriginal people have, however, become involved as investigators or co-investigators, documenting their traditional languages. Since the 1980s the KLRC has employed speakers in positions ranging from collaborator to language instructor (in the school context) to trainee linguist. Ultimately, we may expect, Aboriginal people will be investigating their own languages as linguists.²³ In most cases, this will presumably be as fieldworkers, since (assuming things continue along their present trajectories) it is unlikely they will be speakers. The 'ideal'—presuming it is: I do not so sure—of having a native-speaker investigator, who can apply speaker intuitions to the language, is unlikely to ever materialise in the Kimberley.

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23 I am not aware of this having yet happened in the Kimberley, although there are of course Indigenous linguists elsewhere in the country, including, among others, Eve Fesl, Jeanie Bell, and Ephraim Bani (1944–2004). In addition, a few Aboriginal people attempted independently, without the benefits of any formal linguistic training, to record and document their languages for posterity. Oates (1990) discusses the attempts of two Aboriginal men, Jimmie Barker (Muruwari) and Norman Baird (Kuku-Yalanji). I am aware of just a few such attempts by Kimberley Aborigines. For instance, perhaps in the 1970s Albert Kelly, a Nyulnyul man, with the collaboration of his sister Magdalene Williams, made a cassette tape recording of some Nyulnyul stories and words in an attempt to preserve some information on this now extinct language.

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16 *History of research into Australian pidgins and creoles*

PETER MÜHLHÄUSLER

1. Introduction

The history of research into pidgin and creole languages in Australia closely reflects the wider ideological agendas of the linguistic profession. Whereas Pidgin English and other contact languages were spoken from the earliest days of contact between Aboriginal people and outsiders (particularly by settlers), these varieties were not considered true languages worthy of linguistic inquiry. Moreover, whereas scholarly descriptions of Indigenous languages appeared from the 1830s, similarly comprehensive accounts of the pidgin and creole languages began to appear only after 1970. The wish of linguists to describe pure and authentic traditional languages left little room for work on languages perceived to be bastards and perverted (see also Monaghan this volume, especially §2). This was expressed aptly by Sayer (1939), who was an amateur driven by curiosity and not constrained by the prevailing paradigm of the linguistic mainstream.

Purism in all forms of conversation or writing is an ideal, which looms upon the horizon of every language critic, but it becomes a reality to a favoured few. To scrupulously aim at purity, that selection of only choice words and sentences, and to maintain a rigorous supervision over all speech emanating from your tongue and mouth, that truly makes one a language perfectionist.

All such perfectionists will receive a rude shock when they read and study this book, but its perusal and study will add a chapter to such perfectionists' knowledge of the English language.

They will realize that utility and not perfection is the objective of Pidgin English talk.

Pidgin is the antithesis, the condition of oppositeness of all that the English language purist experts desire; nevertheless Pidgin has proved itself a necessity, and to many millions of natives and other people in the East, the Pacific Islands and elsewhere Pidgin has made it possible for them to enjoy a conversation with the white man, and to carry on business, and help along a social and economic life: 'Not what I want to do, but what I must do' being the final arbitrament.

I claim this is the first comprehensive book ever published upon the subject of Pidgin English, even though Pidgin first began to be talked away back around 1635. (Sayer 1939: Preface)

As in other parts of the world—Sapir worked on Chinook but ignored Chinook Jargon, Bantu linguists ignored Fanakalo—many opportunities to document the origin, development

and use of contact languages of Australia were missed. When Reineke *et al.* (1975) published the comprehensive bibliography of pidgin and creole languages of the world, the section on 'Australian Aboriginal English' consisted of no more than 42 entries (most of them brief references in work dealing with other topics), plus four entries on Torres Strait Pidgin English; no reference was made to pidgins based on languages other than English, such as Macassan Pidgin. By contrast, 232 titles dealt with West African Pidgin English and 89 with West African Creole English. This lack of attention may account for the persistence of poorly informed statements about this topic such as Bauer's (1975:140)—'no tendency to creolize contact languages is in evidence in Australia' (translation mine) or Dixon's problematic characterisation of the nature and development of Pidgin English in Australia:

As we have already said, Aboriginal Australians were eager and able to learn normal English, if they were exposed to it. But they were often not addressed in the standard dialect. The pioneer missionary E.R.B. Gribble described a typical situation around 1900: 'in the early days of our work pidgin English was used by us all, and a beastly gibberish it was. As time passed, I determined that it should cease, and good English be used; and, strange to say, the people seemed to find it easier to avoid than did the staff, who has got so accustomed to its use that they found it extremely difficult to avoid addressing in pidgin English every black they met.' It was because they were spoken to in this way, that Aboriginal Australians initially adopted a poor type of pidgin English. As T.G.H. Strehlow put it, with typical directness: 'Northern Territory pidgin English is not English perverted and mangled by the natives; it is English perverted and mangled by ignorant whites, who have in turn taught this ridiculous gibberish to the natives and who then affect to be amused by the childish babbling of these "savages".' (Dixon 1980:71)

The foreigner talk hypothesis of pidgins dates back to behaviourism and early American structuralism (see Bloomfield's 1933 account) and had been largely superseded by other explanations when Dixon wrote this passage.

The emphasis on linguistic purity that has dominated Australian linguistics up to quite recently is paralleled by Australia's official language and social policies. Assimilation of Aboriginal people, in particular mixed race ones, was official policy until the 1970s. With the arrival of multiculturalism in 1972, the rights of languages were strengthened first for European migrant languages and subsequently for speakers of Australian Aboriginal languages. The inclusion of Kriol and Torres Strait Broken as recognised languages in the Australian National Language Policy occurred in the mid-1980s only; other languages, in particular Kanaka English and various Pidgin varieties, still remain excluded.

2. Australian pidgins and creoles

The notion of language is a highly problematic one in societies with no tradition of standardisation, grammar writing, and other practices associated with European national languages. As Sutton (1979) has illustrated identifying, naming and putting boundaries around Australian Indigenous languages is an enterprise fraught with difficulties, particularly when one is dealing with large language continua such as the Western Desert. And Monaghan (2003) draws attention to the insufficiency of the widely accepted Tindale map (Tindale 1974). The situation is even more difficult with pidgins and creoles as these languages tend to be unfocussed (in the technical sense of not having a single norm—Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). The question 'how many pidgins and creoles are there in Australia and what are their names?' has no determinate answer. Conventionally, linguists have tended to apply the standard formula for these languages, which yields labels such as:

Location	Pidgin/Creole	Lexifier language
Australia	Pidgin	English
Kanaka	Pidgin	English
Torres Strait	Creole	English

The geographic boundaries have tended to coincide with state and territorial boundaries. Given that these boundaries have changed several times over the last 200 years, a label such as N.S.W. Pidgin English is quite unsatisfactory.

The problem is compounded by the fact that there have been a considerable number of splits and mergers. The Pidgin English that developed at Botany Bay was transported to Moreton Bay, where it merged with an independently developed Queensland Pidgin English, which over the years split into a variety spoken by Aboriginal people and another one spoken by Melanesian Kanakas (Tryon and Charpentier 2004:71–74).

Another issue is the arbitrary acceptance of national boundaries on continua of related ways of speaking. For instance in the case of Cape York, Torres Strait and parts of Papua (e.g. Daru or Kiwai Island), the suggestion that one needs to distinguish a Torres Strait Pidgin from a Papuan Pidgin English is difficult to support with linguistic and sociolinguistic data.

Creolisation has created another problem. In many instances structurally relatively impoverished pidgin varieties have been used side by side with fully developed creoles in areas such as the Torres Strait. Again, linguists have not produced coherent criteria for treating them as one, two or several languages. Pidgins and creoles are often dealt with together with Aboriginal English and Koinés. There are excellent reasons for doing this, but within the confines of the present paper, it is simply not possible to deal with the research on all of these varieties. In any event, there are a number of valuable surveys of work on Aboriginal English (e.g. Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm 1982; Malcolm and Kaldor 1991; Harkins 1994), and Mühlhäusler and Amery (1996a) provide an overview over the Koine situation in non-traditional settlements.

For similar reasons, I shall not comment on work concerned with pidgins and creoles spoken in Australian controlled external territories such as the Malay of the Cocos and Christmas Islands, the language of Norfolk Island (Norf^ok) or Antarctic English.

Given the difficulties in establishing an inventory of Australian pidgins and creoles, I shall follow the practice adopted by the compilers and contributors of the *Atlas of intercultural communication in Pacific, Asia and the Americas* (Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon 1996) i.e. to recognise a different pidgin or creole where one can point to a major independent structural development. This would suggest:

- A N.S.W. English which was widely spread (via stock routes) and a major factor in the development of Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland Pidgin English;
- An independent Western Australian Pidgin English that developed around Perth and in the prison of Rottnest Island;
- An independent Pidgin English spoken in the early Northern Territory settlements;
- Kanaka Pidgin English which differs from other Queensland and N.S.W. varieties in terms of numerous structural and lexical innovations;
- Three creolised Pidgin Englishes (Northern Territory Roper River, Western Australian La Grange, and Torres Strait).

There are also a number of relatively short-lived Pidgin Englishes involving an Australian Indigenous language and English, such as the Kaurua English contact language of the Adelaide Plains, and Noongar English of the southwest of Western Australia.

It appears certain that the above-mentioned varieties were preceded by pidgin varieties of local languages. Next to unsubstantiated suggestions such as that by Vászolyi (1976) as to the existence of a Pidgin Wunambal, there are well documented ones such as Pidgin Kaurua (Simpson 1996); and sociolinguistic evidence suggests the existence of an early Aboriginal contact language, Pidgin Ngarluma, in Western Australia (Dench 1998). Very little is known about pre-colonial contact languages, though we have earlier accounts of the Pidgin Macassan language spoken in the context of Trepong trade between Indonesians and Northern Australians (Macknight 1976; Urry and Walsh 1981). Little is known about postcolonial pidgins based on introduced languages other than English, for example the Pidgin Italian in use at the New Norcia Monastery (Mühlhäusler 1998), the Pidgin German used in a number of Melbourne industries (Clyne 1976) and Cossack and Broome Pearling Lugger Pidgin Malay (Hosokawa 1987; Mühlhäusler and McGregor 1996). All of the above languages have exhibited a significant extent of institutionalisation, lexical norms, and some degree of grammatical stability. If one were to relax these criteria and include a number of *ad hoc* solutions to the problem of intercultural contacts, the list would no doubt be considerably longer. In practice, linguistic research has been focussed primarily on the English-based varieties of the northern part of Australia with some major varieties such as Tasmanian Pidgin English (Crowley 1996), Central Australian Cattle Station English or Chinese Pidgin English in Australia being very poorly documented.

3. Research history

Given that serious research on Australian pidgins and creoles is a relatively recent phenomenon, a chronological account of its history is somewhat problematic, particularly for the years after 1970, when a lot of research was initiated simultaneously. However, organising this paper in terms of topics and concepts would have been even more difficult, and I have therefore opted to follow a rough chronology.

3.1. The beginnings

The first accidental record of an Australian Pidgin that I am aware of comes from Tasmania. It is a sermon produced by the Reverend George Augustus Robinson who in 1829 was under the impression that he preached to the Tasmanians in their own language, whereas ‘the text ... contains words strung together in an order that is identical to English, but stripped of all grammatical markers’ (Crowley 1996:28). Indigenous forms of Pidgin Tasmanian are reported for the Bass-Strait and in contacts between Tasmanians and white settlers. Examples dating from 1837 are quoted in Crowley (1996:30). The next account of an Australian Pidgin was penned by a German ship’s doctor who visited Adelaide in 1838 and was unaware of what he was describing. Hermann Koeler (1841–1844) had intended to write a sketch grammar of the language of the Adelaide Plains. What he actually described was the contact Kaurua which had developed among settlers and Aboriginal people, and which differed in significant ways from Kaurua proper (Mühlhäusler 2004). A scrutiny of other early language descriptions may yield similar insights into first contact pidgins that developed shortly after the white occupation of Australia.

The first scholarly (rather than derogatory) mention of Pidgin English in Australia is found in two articles by Hugo Schuchardt (1979a [1889] and 1979b [1883], both translated into English in 1979). They were not the outcome of a visit to Australia but are based on correspondence, a method Schuchardt employed throughout his creolistic research. The choice of correspondents for his Australian data appears to have been infelicitous, and included the missionary linguist R.H. Codrington who took a very dim view of Pidgin English (cf. Mühlhäusler 2002) and his regular correspondent, the ship's doctor Alphonse Bos who supplied him with a newspaper cutting. Schuchardt focussed on the varieties spoken by Aboriginal and Melanesian speakers in the Australian north, but he did not distinguish between them. In his earlier article he deplors the fact that so little is written about this pidgin in newspapers, a lament he repeats in his second article, although by then he had managed to locate one extract of Aboriginal English from the *Evening Journal* in Adelaide (19 January 1884). Had Schuchardt carried out a systematic search of Australian newspapers or parliamentary records,¹ he would have come across hundreds of similar sources, but careful archival work did not begin until late in the twentieth century. Schuchardt's data were republished without any further comments in Lentzner's (1891) account of Australian English.

Another early scholarly article is that by Sidney Ray (1907), which is an appendix to his anthropological account of the Torres Strait Islanders. Ray mentions that the language is also spoken in parts of Papua and comments on the likely disappearance of Pidgin English in the Western Islands, a prediction, which, like Schuchardt's prediction of the replacement of Pidgin English by Pidgin Fijian, has not turned out to be correct. The bulk of the paper is a competent grammatical sketch and a brief vocabulary—no attempt is made to link this description to wider issues.

In 1939, a much-maligned book entitled *Pidgin English* was privately published by Edgar S. Sayer, an amateur who had collected samples of Pidgin English from around the world for over thirty years. The book is valuable mainly as a source of language samples, as the linguistic and sociolinguistic observations therein are naive. Another valuable aspect of the book is Sayer's distinction between Aboriginal and Melanesian varieties of Australian Pidgin English.

The question of whether Australian Pidgin English is a dialect of Melanesian Pidgin English or a separate variety is the topic of Robert Hall's brief article (1943). It provides a grammatical sketch of a single variety, that spoken in the East Kimberley. This was based on written passages in Pidgin English from Phyllis Kaberry's study of Kimberly women (Kaberry 1939) that were read to Hall by Kaberry herself. Hall also employs the dubious method of using materials orally dictated to him by non-indigenous speakers elsewhere. His analysis of Chinese Pidgin English (1944), for instance, is based on texts read by four native speakers of British or American English. The resulting descriptions, particularly when compounded by the idealisations of the idiolectal approach, which was the order of the day in the heyday of structuralism, leave a great deal to be desired. Hall's conclusion that Australian Pidgin English is totally separate from Melanesian Pidgin English would not have been arrived at had the speakers been from the Cape York Peninsula. Moreover, Hall's assumption of a single Aboriginal Pidgin English has no basis in reality. Thus, as a basis for work on Aboriginal Pidgin English it is far less useful than Sayer's collection, which was very unfavourably reviewed by Hall (1943).

1 The Royal Commission on labour trade published in 1885 (Queensland 1885) contains a huge amount of transcripts of spoken Pidgin English evidence, which was first used in linguistic work by Dutton, Sankoff, and myself in the 1970s. Another excellent source of data available at the time was the newsletter of the Queensland Kanaka Mission, *Not in Vain* (Mühlhäusler and Mühlhäusler forthcoming).

Sydney Baker (1945) devotes a chapter of his book *The Australian language* to the English language of Aborigines and Pidgin English. He provides a useful survey of scholarly and popular attitudes, though his main concern is with the contribution of these varieties to mainstream white Australian English. An update of Baker's work is found in Ramson (1966) and again in Turner (1966). Turner (1966:202) perpetuates the myth of the defective nature of Australian Pidgin English:

The Pidgin English that developed at Port Jackson and was spread more widely was not a structured language that could be described as a linguistic system in the way New Guinea Pidgin, called Neo-Melanesian by linguists now, has been, but a collection of disjointed elements of corrupt English and native words. Pidgin English on the mainland of Australia is substandard English rather than a regular language in its own right.

It is interesting to note that none of these authors had carried out field work and that none of them make mention of creolisation or the existence of an expanded Aboriginal Pidgin English, in spite of the fact that creolised forms of Pidgin English developed from the 1880s in the Torres Strait (Shnukal 1991) and in the first decade of the 20th century at the Roper River mission (Harris 1986:301ff), and had spread widely in Northern Australia and in the Torres Strait when the above surveys were written. But, as Alan Rumsey once remarked, '[t]he very existence of Australian Creoles was—outside of Northern Australia—a well-kept secret' (1983: 177).

3.2 The 1960s

Studies focussing on English pidgins and creoles for their own sakes date from the 1960s only. A major initiative was Elwyn Flint's Queensland Speech Survey, carried out under the auspices of the University of Queensland between 1964 and 1975 (Flint 1964). This project surveyed numerous communities where non-standard forms of English were spoken. Of particular importance was Tom Dutton's work for this project, which led to the description of Palm Island Aboriginal English (Dutton 1964, 1965, 1969), Torres Strait Pidgin/Creole or Broken (1970), and Kanaka Pidgin English. Dutton subsequently used the speech data of the last first generation Kanakas in a monograph (Dutton 1980). Flint regrettably did not publish extensively, and the bulk of his field notes and papers awaits further analysis.²

An interesting project dating to the 1960s is Peter Sutton's investigation of Cape Barren English, which contains traces of the Pidgin English previously spoken by the Aborigines of Tasmania (Sutton 1969, 1975) and English dialects used by whalers and sealers.

The first description of a 'combination of elements from the native dialects and English' (Douglas 1968:8–9) in Western Australia is Wilf Douglas' sketch of Neo-Nyungar. Douglas does not commit himself to whether the language is a creole, and as his is a purely synchronic (and slightly idealised) description, he clearly was not in a position to present firm conclusions. Further studies on Western Australian pidgins and creoles were not undertaken until the late 1980s.

Central Australia also remained poorly described. Exceptional is the work begun by Margaret Sharpe in the 1960s, which culminated in a sketch grammar of Alice Springs Aboriginal Children's English (Sharpe 1979). This work also explored the pedagogical implications of the differences between this variety and Standard Australian English.

Björn Jernudd (1969) summarises his own work on Aboriginal pidgins and creoles up to the 1960s. His original contribution is the discussion of socially motivated variation in these

2 The Flint materials are located in the Fryer Collection of the University of Queensland (http://www.library.uq.edu.au/fryer/ms/Flint/flint_catalogue.html). They are generally of a very good quality with attention to phonetic detail and consist of both written texts and tape recordings.

languages, based on two months fieldwork in Northern Australia. Jernudd pays particular attention to the rules governing the choice of pidgin and creole varieties of English. These rules vary across generations and from community to community. At the end of this excellent survey he observes that ‘the problem of Aboriginal communication has been given far too little attention in Australia’ (Jernudd 1969:24). Michael Walsh (1979:18) in his survey of research in Australian Linguistics from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s observes ‘[f]or many years forms of English used by Australian Aborigines which differ markedly from so-called “standard” Australian English have received scant attention. For this particular area there is little material available which precedes the period under consideration.’ This situation was to persist for some considerable time.

3.3 The 1970s

Ramson’s edited volume (Ramson 1970) represents an unpromising start to this decade. Other than an excellent paper by Tom Dutton on Torres Strait Pidgin, which includes a brief comparison with other pidgins and creoles, Australian pidgins and creoles do not feature in this volume devoted to the topic of ‘English transported’.

Hancock’s inventory of the pidgins and creoles of the world, published in Dell Hymes’ well known edited collection *Pidginization and creolization of languages* (1971), contains just two intriguing entries for Australia:

76. Bagot Creole English spoken on the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve near Darwin Northern Australia. Originally a variety of Australian Pidgin English with possible influence from 72 and 74 above. (Professor R.W. Thompson, personal communication.)

77. Australian Pidgin English, a direct development of Neo-Melanesian. Similarities shared by this group of Pidgins are in part due to the illegal practice of ‘blackbirding’, whereby inhabitants of widely separated areas were pressed into plantation work, use of the Pidgin then becoming necessary for mutual comprehension. See R.A. Hall, ‘Notes on Australian Pidgin English’, *Language* 19:283–7 (1943), and S.J. Baker, *The Australian Language*, containing a chapter on Pidgin (Sydney and London 1945). (Hancock 1971:523)

The falsehoods in these statements are repeated and compounded in Bauer (1975), who adds that Australian Pidgin is restricted to vertical communication between white Australian and Aboriginal communicators and who takes the small number of Australian pidgins and creoles listed by Hancock as evidence that there are fewer varieties of Australian Pidgin English than Melanesian Pidgin English.

Whereas mainstream Australianist linguists continued to ignore pidgins and creoles, there was considerable interest by missionaries working with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)—now SIL International—in Pidgin and Creole English spoken in northern Australia. A number of research projects were initiated from 1973, the results of which were published in the Working Papers of SIL-AAB over the following years. An interesting example is Margaret Steffensen’s study on reduplication in Kriol (1977), which describes the emergence of constructions not found in its predecessor pidgins. Her findings disconfirm the frequent claim that reduplication is a salient feature of early pidgin development.

The first systematic overview of the Australian pidgin/creole situation is found in Sandefur and Sandefur (1979). This volume also contained a map highlighting the distribution and similarities of different varieties. The main issue the SIL missionaries were concerned with was the extent to which a single pidgin/creole could be used as a language of all mission work in Australia’s north. Unfortunately, the criteria for what constitutes the same language were very much *ad hoc*, and, with hindsight, of very dubious reliability. And as ar-

gued by Rhydwen (1996), their criteria were sociolinguistically naive and at odds with the views of the users of the many ways of speaking Pidgin/Creole English in Australia's north.

The outcome of SIL work on Northern Territory ways of speaking was the creation of a standard form of Kriol,³ its promotion as an Aboriginal language and its introduction into bilingual education, bible translation and other applications. A small number of booklets in standardised Kriol for use in education (Kriol has been used for initial literacy at Bamyili since 1977) and mission work was developed at Bamyili; many of them are listed in Rumsey (1983). As Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) have argued, the acceptance of common norms (focussing) in creoles results from communal acts of identity; that is, it is a kind of bottom-up standardisation. In the case of Kriol, there was a top-down attempt to create a language and identity. Kriol is now referred to as an Aboriginal language, though the role of SIL linguists in the 'creation of a new language' (Harris 1991) is not properly admitted by its creators, and speakers of creolised varieties of English do not universally accept the concept of Kriol, or indeed its being an Aboriginal language (Rhydwen 1996).

In spite of these ideological problems, there can be no question that the various SIL workers who have concerned themselves with Kriol have produced some excellent descriptive work, and have added the largest amount of information to the documentation of fully developed creoles in Australia's north.

Secular linguists appear to have been much less prepared to study Australian pidgins and creoles in the 1970s, an exception being solid descriptions of Northern Cape York Peninsula Creole English by Bruce Rigsby (1973) and Crowley and Rigsby (1979). Also in the 1970s, Peter Mühlhäusler, under the auspices of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS), carried out fieldwork on Queensland Kanaka English and Torres Strait Creole. His preliminary findings, as well as a survey of the pidgin/creole situation in Australia, were published in 1979.

Studies of patterned variation in linguistic systems became a popular pursuit of sociolinguists from the mid-1970s with two main approaches being taken (Bailey 1996): the Labovian correlational and quantitative approach, and the Baileyan lectological approach. The latter ignores both statistics and social correlates and simply regards present day structural variation as a reflection of structural change over time. According to the Baileyan approach, the patterns of variation are a product of language-internal forces such as markedness-reduction. In a polylectal grammar the presence of newer constructions implies the presence of older ones but not vice versa (see Mühlhäusler 1996). Both approaches were developed as tools for the studies of language change. Pidgins and creoles, because of their fast rate of change, were often taken as test cases for variation linguistics.

In 1977 Gillian Sankoff published a paper, whose subtitle 'cliticization in New Guinea Tok Pisin' does not suggest the Australian continent. However, the first part of this paper deals with variable data from the 1885 Royal Commission on the Queensland labour trade (Queensland 1885), a copy of which I had sent to Sankoff in the mid-1970s. Sankoff suggested that a continuous development of cliticisation can be documented beginning on the Queensland sugar plantations and culminating in contemporary Tok Pisin. This ignores a major problem, to wit that very few Papua New Guineans ever went to Queensland, and that Tok Pisin is a development of Samoan Plantation Pidgin English and not Kanaka Pidgin English. A more general paper on variation was presented by Sankoff at the St Thomas Conference on Theoretical Orientations in Creole Studies in 1979 and published in 1980. This work contains

3 The role of politicians, missionaries and linguists as language makers and the consequences of this for linguistic theorising are discussed by Roy Harris (1979). I am sure that by now Kriol is talked about as a 'natural language'.

a detailed analysis of variation in the Royal Commission papers and demonstrates that this variability is far from random.

3.4 The 1980s

Research into Australian pidgins and creoles accelerated and achieved maturity in the 1980s, and the work produced in this decade compares favourably with pidgin and creole linguistics elsewhere. That pidgins and creoles had gained respectability is borne out and by their inclusion in Blake's (1981) popular survey of Australian Aboriginal languages. In addition, in Holm's (1989) reference survey of pidgins and creoles, Australian research gets a very positive write-up, and for the first time, an international publication distinguishes Kriol, Torres Strait Broken, and other varieties of Aboriginal pidgins and creoles.

A survey of Australian scholarship at the beginning of the decade was compiled by Sandefur (1983), who also provides a number of maps illustrating the currency of the principal pidgin and creole languages of the time. Both the maps and the text show that little was known about history and development of these languages. It is this topic that received most attention in the 1980s. Thus, questions of the social and linguistic history of Northern Territory Kriol are dealt with in detail by Sandefur (1986) and Harris (1986) respectively.

As to descriptive studies, Dutton (1980) and Dutton and Mühlhäusler (1984) provide a detailed account of Queensland Kanaka Pidgin English. Dutton's monograph also addresses the question of language death, as does a detailed sociological study of the decline of Kanaka English in Mackay by Jourdan (1983). Harris also addresses the question of early Pidgin English in the Northern Territory such as Port Essington and the contact between Pidgin English and Macassan contact language. This language is described by Urry and Walsh (1981). The impact of Macassan on Top End languages was subsequently explored by Nick Evans (1992). Another non-European based pidgin, the Malay-based contact language of the Western Australian pearling industry, Broome Pearling Lugger Pidgin, is described by Komei Hosokawa (1987). SIL work during this decade continued with descriptions of Northern Creole varieties (Hudson 1983). Hudson's work is remarkable in that it deals not just with grammar but also with semantics. A second publication that appeared during this year (Rumsey 1983) equally demonstrates the importance of semantic factors in understanding structural developments. In the 1980s Hudson began to address questions of Kriol educational linguistics (Hudson 1984). Hudson continued integrating Kriol into the schools of the Kimberley until 2007, in her capacity as education officer for the Catholic Education Office in Broome.

Increased interest in Australian pidgins and creoles coincides with the growth of sociolinguistics and educational linguistics in Australia. A collection of papers edited by Michael Clyne and published in 1985 includes contributions on Kanaka English (Mühlhäusler), Kriol (Harris and Sandefur), and Torres Strait Broken (Shnukal). The latter work is one of several papers by Anna Shnukal, whose extensive fieldwork in the Torres Strait under the auspices of the AIAS was summarised in a monograph that also contains an extensive dictionary (Shnukal 1988).

3.5 The 1990s

A survey of research trends in linguistics carried out on behalf of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (Clyne 1991) suggests that the study of pidgins and creoles continues to be regarded as marginal. No separate section of this survey is devoted to them and apart from an occasional mention in connection with language shift and language education they remain

invisible. This is more an indication of the continued undervaluation of these languages by the linguistic profession than a reflection of the quality of research.

Research emphasis up to the 1990s had been on the language varieties of Queensland Kanakas, Northern Territory Kriol speakers, and the Torres Strait Islanders, with pidgins and creoles spoken in many other parts of Australia remaining unexplored. This in part was due to the privileging of synchronic work and emphasis on recording spoken language whenever possible. The use of archival sources for the study of the languages was pioneered by Flint and Dutton in their work on Kanaka, Torres Strait and other Queensland varieties of ‘informal English’. Diachronic studies relying on archival documents subsequently became standard procedure among those associated with the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University under the guidance of the late Professor Stephen Wurm, a pioneer of pidgin in Australia.

One major research project—supported during the 1990s by the Australian Research Council, the University of Oxford, and the Australian National University—began in the mid-1980s, and gained impetus in the early nineties. Its results were published in the *Atlas of intercultural communication in the Pacific, Asia and the Americas* (Wurm, Mühlhäusler and Tryon 1996). This atlas and accompanying text volumes were meant to summarise what was known about pidgins, creoles, and other contact languages of the Pacific rim, to identify areas requiring further attention, and to promote a theoretical framework for documenting development and diffusion of such languages. With regard to the first point, its findings were based not so much on secondary sources, but on an intensive collaborative search of archival and other primary sources. This enabled a large number of contributors to document hitherto unknown pidgins and contact languages of South Australia (Dineen and Mühlhäusler 1996), Victoria (Clarke, Mühlhäusler and Amery 1996b), Tasmania (Crowley 1996) and Western Australia (Mühlhäusler and McGregor 1996). The atlas identified a number of areas that required further study, in particular Australian Cattle Station English and several Aboriginal European contact languages. One such language, Pidgin Ngarluma was subsequently identified in Western Australia by Dench (1998), and work on Cattle Station English has begun at the University of Adelaide (Monaghan 1998).

The documentation of pidgin development and diffusion was done in terms of a set of diagnostic features (Baker and Mühlhäusler 1996); this has since been modified to serve as a diagnostic tool for pidgin Englishes and creoles around the world (Baker and Huber 2001). They include lexical features such as *all same* ‘as, like’, *black fellow* ‘Indigenous male person’, *gammon* ‘to deceive’, grammatical features such as absence of the copula, transitive suffix *-m*, or *-it*, and pronominal features such as first person dual inclusive, ‘you and me’. These features clearly show that many so-called substratum constructions of Melanesian Pidgin English did originate in N.S.W. and Queensland even before Melanesians were recruited in the 1850s and 1860s. This severely weakens claims that these languages have a Melanesian grammar (Keesing 1988). The features also show that the claims regarding a relatively uniform kind of creole spoken across the Top End of Australia are in need of revision.

One of the diagnostic features of pidgins and creoles of the region is the transitivity marker *-im*. In the mid-1990s Miriam Meyerhoff compiled a comparative study of this marker in Melanesian Pidgin English, including a consideration of Torres Strait Broken (Meyerhoff 1996). However, none of the other Australian pidgins and creoles were included. This omission was subsequently rectified in a detailed study by Koch (2000b).

Baker and Mühlhäusler were able to draw on the numerous samples of NSW Pidgin English cited in Jackie Troy’s (1990) monograph on this variety (a revision of her University of Sydney Honours thesis, 1985). Troy subsequently wrote a number of detailed analyses of this

form in a range of articles. Of particular interest are her comments on a mixed contact language (Troy 1992), and on the important role women played in the development of N.S.W. Pidgin English.

Troy also draws attention to the imperfect varieties of English spoken by Irish convicts as another possible source of N.S.W. Pidgin English. Irish conscripted labourers and slaves were employed in North America and the West Indies, and the shared features of Australian pidgins and creoles and those of the Americas may be due to more extensive historical links between these varieties than is commonly acknowledged by creolists.

Descriptions of various little-known languages appeared during the 1990s. These include a detailed study of early Western Australian Pidgin English and less well-known pidgins such as the Luggar Malay of the Cossack pearling industry (Mühlhäusler 1998). Information about the history of Pidgin English in nineteenth century South Australia is found in Foster, Mühlhäusler and Clarke (1998) and Dineen and Mühlhäusler (1996). An early contact language spoken around Adelaide and based on Kurna is documented by Simpson (1996). A major report on Aboriginality of English was presented by Malcolm and Kosciielecki (1997); it also contains important material on early contact varieties.

One of the signs of maturity in the field is that it provides topics for higher degree thesis. Joyce Hudson's thesis on the grammar and semantics of Fitzroy River Kriol was submitted in 1981 (published as Hudson 1983) and Sandefur's MA thesis on Kriol was submitted in 1984. The highlights of the 1990s were Barbara Budrich's (1992) MA thesis submitted at the Freie Universität Berlin, the first overseas thesis devoted to Australian pidgins and creoles, and Mari Rhydwen's (1993) PhD thesis on Kriol literacy, which appeared in a short form as Rhydwen (1993) and as a monograph (Rhydwen 1996). Finally, there is Troy's monumental PhD thesis on N.S.W. Pidgin English (1994). Shorter theses include Margaret Wilson's MA thesis on Kanaka English (Wilson 1992), Gail Hermanis' BA (Hons.) thesis on the Pidgin English in Arthur Upfield's detective novels (Hermanis 1997), and Paul Monaghan's BA (Hons) thesis on the development and diffusion of Pidgin English in South Australia (Monaghan 1998).

Because of the recognition pidgins, creoles, and Aboriginal English gained in Australia's national language policies (Lo Bianco 1990), their role in state education became more widely acknowledged. An excellent overview of language planning and educational issues in the Torres Strait was produced by Kale (1990), and a survey of resources for teachers was prepared by Eggington and Baldauf (1990). A special issue of the *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* (Siegel 1992) contains a number of important papers on policy matters and classroom practice (Shnukal 1992; Mickan 1992; Ovington 1992). How to translate national policy into practice is discussed in detail in the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) and the publications that were developed for its implementation. A sound survey is found, for instance in the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia's (SSABSA) reader titled *Australia's Indigenous languages* (SSABSA 1996), edited by David Nathan.

With growing numbers of tourists visiting the Australian North, Lonely Planet published a phrasebook with chapters on Kriol and Torres Strait Broken (referred to as Yumpla Tok) (Balzer *et al.* 1999).

Compared to the number of speakers and historical importance of Australian pidgins and creoles, these outputs remain modest. The languages are underrepresented in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* and there is a conspicuous absence of any mention of them in the *Creole Language Library* or in the *Varieties of English around the World Series*. They also are not mentioned in the vigorous debate about language endangerment that began in the

early 1990s. Dixon's (1991) survey of the endangered languages of Australia, Indonesia and Oceania has nothing to say about the fact that a significant number of pidgins and creoles spoken in this area were moribund at the time, and that the documentation of these languages could be of value for both professional linguists and their speakers.

4. Current research and future prospects

The new millennium did not bring with it any spectacular changes or new theoretical developments in studies of pidgin and creole languages in Australia, and few publications have come to my attention since 2000. Koch (2000a) provides additional evidence on the impact of Australian Aboriginal languages in the later development of Central Australian Aboriginal (Pidgin) English, and Simpson (2000) examines the impact of Afghan cameleers in the spread of Australian pidgins and creoles. An account of early Aboriginal English in South Australia is given by Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003). Monaghan (2003) includes extensive comments on the use of Pidgin English in eliciting language data by N.B. Tindale. The effect of using Pidgin English in linguistic fieldwork is a topic that would well repay scrutiny.

There remain many gaps in the documentation of pidgin and creole languages in Australia. Most prominent would seem the neglect of the pre-1788 period. Aboriginal people did not live in isolation from one another but communicated in trade, ceremonies and numerous other contexts (Brandl and Walsh 1982; McCarthy 1939; McBryde 1987; Mulvaney 1976). Their solutions to the problem of interlinguistic communication are only partly known. There was a considerable amount of bi-, dual- and multilingual communication, and speakers whose languages were located on a language chain (such as Western desert) made extensive use of their passive exolexicon when communicating with speakers of related varieties (Hansen 1984). To what extent these practices were supplemented by verbal or signed pidgins is not known, nor do we know whether any such putative pidgins were realised. Reconstructing language contacts and pidginisation remains a difficult task and Hoenigswald's (1971) call to develop methods in historical linguistics to deal with convergent language phenomena has gone largely unheeded (but see Heath 1978 who addresses the results of language contacts in Australia). The task would involve both empirical reconstruction, typologising (though the role of structural criteria for defining pidgins and creoles remains hotly debated), and logical argumentation. Linguists would be well advised to study evidence of prehistory regarding trade contacts to identify likely scenarios for pidgin development. General remarks on reconstructing earlier pidginisation and creolisation can be found in Mühlhäusler (1997).

Another area requiring further investigation are pidgins based on Aboriginal languages. A perusal of historical sources is likely to result in a substantially larger set of languages spoken in the early years of European and Aboriginal contact pre-1788 than is currently available.

Mainstream linguists have been reluctant to study impure languages. They have also shown great reluctance to take seriously linguistic work that is not driven by pure scholarship. This is expressed particularly clearly by Leonard Bloomfield, one of the most influential descriptive linguists:

The era of exploration brought a superficial knowledge of many languages. Travellers brought back vocabularies, and translated religious books into the tongues of newly discovered countries. Some even compiled grammars and dictionaries of exotic languages. ... These works can be used only with caution, for the authors, untrained in the recognition of foreign speech sounds, could make no accurate record, and, knowing only the ter-

minology of Latin grammar, distorted their exposition by fitting it into this frame. (Bloomfield 1933:7)

There has been an astonishing neglect of missionary work on Australian languages, particularly when published in languages other than English, as was the case for some work by German, French or Spanish missionaries. Past missionary views on pidgins were generally negative, but the very fact that mission stations typically brought together speakers of different languages, combined with the fact that many mission workers were untrained in linguistics and unwilling to learn complex languages, made the use of pidgins inevitable. Many examples of Pidgin English can be found in the notes and writings of mission workers.⁴ The only mission that deliberately used and cultivated Pidgin English was the Queensland Kanaka Mission (Mühlhäusler and Mühlhäusler 2005).

I have begun to examine an extensive body of data in the archives of this institution. These data afford very interesting insights into structure and use of Kanaka Pidgin English in the nineteenth century.

Another area of pidgin and creole studies awaiting further work is their use in literature. Children's books in particular are an astonishing source (e.g. Gunn n.d.), and together with other popular writings must have been an important factor in the diffusion and stereotyping of pidgin across the continent.

Most of this chapter addresses the question of development and use of pidgins and creoles inside Australia. It needs to be remembered, however, that Australia after 1788 was part of world-wide network of pidgins. Pidgins played an important role in contacts between Australia, Asia and the Pacific islands. On the one hand, some pidgin varieties spoken outside Australia had a major impact on the development of Australian pidgins. Northern Territory Pidgin English, for instance, may in part be a relexified form of Macassan Pidgin. The simplified second language English of Irish convicts may have been a significant influence on New South Wales and other Australian Pidgin Englishes, and (Afro) American whalers and sealers may also have had a significant impact. The influx of large numbers of Chinese miners during the gold rushes is another episode in the history of Australian Pidgin English, which requires further investigation.

On the other hand, Australian Pidgin English spread to many parts of the Pacific. Sydney was one of the main supply ports for the area and it seems unlikely that its exports of pork, fruit, and manufactured goods did not go hand in hand with the spread of Pidgin English. Baker and Mühlhäusler's (1996) study of diffusion of diagnostic features suggests that this was an important phenomenon. Aboriginal people who employed Pidgin English were sent to places such as Norfolk Island and the gold mines of Papua, as well as travelling on the pearling luggers of Cossack, Broome, and Thursday Island. Gold miners from many nationalities shifted from Australia to New Zealand and Papua and may have been another factor in the diffusion process.

A final area I would like to comment on is that of social functions of Australian pidgins and creoles. Aboriginal people in most instances were not the passive recipients of perverted English, though this myth is remarkably persistent (Adler 1977:94). Rather, Aboriginal Australians were active users and makers of these languages. The numerous ways in which Aboriginal people changed and adapted them to their requirements, and their ingenuity and resourcefulness in face of linguicide, remains a topic to be studied. The results of such a study

4 Because of the hostility against Germans subsequent to World War I, missionaries from a German background were reluctant to publish anything. I have found important linguistic materials on Australian Aboriginal languages and pidgins among the papers of a number of German-background missionary families.

would be useful in providing better informed education policies as well as removing the stigma that has become attached to pidgins, creoles, and their speakers.

In conclusion, the reluctance of the majority of mainstream Australian linguists to take pidgins and creoles seriously is similar to the neglect of such languages in linguistic research in North America and Africa. It reflects a mindset, rather than the importance of these languages to linguistic theory and language typology. It also reflects the failure of mainstream Australian linguistics to recognise the importance of these languages for those who speak them.

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17 *Wilhelm Schmidt's Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen revisited*

FRITZ SCHWEIGER¹

1. Introduction

Father Wilhelm Schmidt was born on 16 February 1868 in Hörde (Westfalen), and died on 10 February 1954 in Fribourg, Switzerland. At the age of 15 he joined the then newly founded missionary institution in Steyl (Netherlands), the birthplace of the religious order Societas Verbi Divini. Latin was one of the central subjects in his education. In 1892 he was ordained as a catholic priest. A very good appreciation of his life can be found in Henninger (1956).

Schmidt was a distinguished scholar working in theology, anthropology and linguistics. A bibliography appeared in Bornemann (1954). His interest in linguistics was stimulated by his contacts to missionaries from New Guinea who provided him with data on languages and culture. This interest led him to several publications on Oceanic languages (e.g. *Die sprachlichen Verhältnisse von Deutsch-Neuguinea*, 1900–1901). In this context he proposed the designation Austronesian, which has replaced the former term Malayo-Polynesian.

Schmidt also published a number of important works on Australian (see below) and Austroasiatic languages (*Grundzüge einer Lautlehre der Mon-Khmer-Sprachen*, 1905; *Die Mon-Khmer-Völker, ein Bindeglied zwischen Völkern Zentralasiens und Austronesien*, 1905). In addition he was concerned with phonetics, and published a general description of the phonetics of the world's languages, which included a phonetic alphabet (Schmidt 1907). His book *Die Sprachfamilien und Sprachenkreise der Erde* (1926) was a landmark of its time. A careful appreciation of his linguistic work can be found in Burgmann (1954).

In the year 1906, he founded the distinguished journal *Anthropos*. Later, in 1932, he founded the Anthropos-Institut in Vienna, though political reasons forced him to relocate it to Fribourg, Switzerland. This institution was designed as a centre for research and publication. In the list of his collaborators we find the names Father Wilhelm Koppers, Father Josef Henninger, and Father Paul Schebesta. One of his life-long concerns was the exploration of religious ideas among the world's peoples. His first major contribution, the book *L'origine de*

1 I would like to thank Bill McGregor for valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.

l'idée de Dieu, published in 1910, was followed from 1912 onwards by the twelve-volume work *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*. Schmidt always remained sympathetic with the great diversity of languages.

Wilhelm Schmidt started his major publications on Australian languages with a series of articles published in the journal *Anthropos* between the years 1912 and 1918. These were subsequently collected together and published as a single volume, *Die Gliederung der Australischen Sprachen* (Schmidt 1919a). This work is highly regarded by Australianists:

... but Father Wilhelm Schmidt of Vienna—who never in his life heard an Australian language spoken—made a full study of the literature and produced a classification of Australian languages, with hypotheses about their relationships one to another. (Dixon 1980:15)

The same year, 1919, saw the appearance of Wilhelm Schmidt's *Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen* (Schmidt 1919b). Much later, his *Die Tasmanischen Sprachen* (Schmidt 1952)—a book with more than 500 pages!—appeared.

Schmidt was very optimistic about his classification: '... so glaube ich nicht, daß das Bild von der Gruppierung der australischen Sprachen, welches ich hier entwerfe, in Zukunft noch einmal wesentliche Änderungen erfahren wird' [... I don't believe that the picture of the classification of Australian languages given here will see essential changes in the future] (Schmidt 1919a:3). An overview of Schmidt's *Gliederung* is given in Schweiger (1998).

Schmidt's main result was the establishment of two major subgroups which he called 'Nordaustralische Sprachen' and 'Südaustralische Sprachen'. This result was basically correct. It was later replaced by another typological classification that distinguished between 'prefixing' and 'suffixing' languages (see Arthur Capell's seminal work *A new approach to Australian linguistics*; Capell 1956). It was not until the early 1960s that a genetic classification of Australian languages was first proposed, by Ken Hale and Geoffrey O'Grady, who distinguished the Pama-Nyungan family from non-Pama-Nyungan families (these terms



Plate 17.1: Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, 1928. Photograph courtesy Anthropos Institut.

were initially proposed by Hale). The boundaries between the subgroups in the different classifications were different, though not entirely at odds with one another.

Schmidt's classification employed the following linguistic criteria:

(1) Lautverhältnisse [phonetics and phonotactics]

Schmidt was very accurate in describing the phonotactics of the languages. However, phonology is, of course, not a reliable criterion for genetic subgrouping. (For example, possession of nasal vowels would assign French, Portuguese, and Polish, in a single group; the possession of front rounded vowels *ü* and *ö* as distinct from front unrounded vowels would group German, Hungarian, Turkish, and French, together.)

(2) Pronomen personale [personal pronouns]

Looking back one has to admit that this criterion has been the most valuable. The possibility of reconstructing roots for a set of personal pronouns is one convincing piece of evidence for the genetic unity of Australian languages. Pronouns have been taken as diagnostic by several scholars for the definition of Pama-Nyungan (Blake 1988, 1990; Harvey 2003).

(3) Possessivum [expression of ownership by 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons]

In most cases these are the genitive or dative case forms of the pronouns, but possessive suffixes also occur.

(4) Interrogativum [interrogative pronouns]

Words for 'who' and 'what' are given.



Plate 17.2: Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, 1952. Photograph courtesy Anthropos Institut.

(5) Numerale [number words]

Schmidt gives some information on number words for small numbers and how numbers are expressed by using words for body parts ('hand', 'foot') or by compounding.

(6) Substantivum [nouns]

Schmidt gives information about number (singular, dual, plural), but he virtually gives no information about case-marking. He also was interested in the possessor phrase. (In 1903 he claimed the following universal to be true: 'Sprachen, welche den Genitiv voranstellen, sind Suffixsprachen, haben aber Possessivpräfixe; Sprachen, die den Genitiv nachstellen, sind Präfixsprachen, haben aber Possessivsuffixe' [Languages which prepose the genitive are suffixing but employ possessive prefixes; languages which postpose the genitive are prefixing but employ possessive suffixes]; Schmidt 1919a:7–8.)

(7) Adjektivum [adjectives]

Occasionally information about comparative forms is given.

Schmidt's classification was heavily influenced by the ethnological theory of Graebner which was published under the title 'Wanderung und Entwicklung sozialer Systeme in Australien' (Graebner 1906): '... so tritt es wohl klar genug zu tage, in wie weitgehendem Maße die Ergebnisse meiner linguistischen Untersuchungen mit den soziologischen Aufstellungen Graebner's zusammentreffen' [... in this way it is sufficiently clear how strongly the results of my linguistic investigations coincide with the sociological findings of Graebner] (Schmidt 1919a:17). To my knowledge, present classifications are only sporadically linked to results of anthropological research (however, Evans and Jones 1997 link the spread of Pama-Nyungan with the spread of new technology and ritual).

2. A survey of the contents of *Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen*

Schmidt devoted a separate study to the pronominal systems of Australian languages (Schmidt 1919b) which will be the topic of the present study. Arthur Capell regarded Schmidt (1919b) more highly than (1919a): 'His later work on the pronoun in Australian languages is not so well known as his larger work, *Die Gliederung der Australischen Sprachen*, but it is really the better of the two and of permanent value' (Capell 1956:1).

We first say a few words about Schmidt's orthography. Then we give an overview of the chapters of his book *Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen* (including an appendix *Die Interrogativpronomina in den australischen Sprachen*) which consists of 113 pages, a map, and six large tables presenting the personal pronouns of about 80 languages. This overview follows the titles of the chapters. The Roman numerals refer to Schmidt's chapter numbering system. In referring to this book (Schmidt 1919b) we will just give the page number in the format p.x, say. The translations from Schmidt's work are my attempt to convert his very scholarly language into English. The names of the languages are the names given in Schmidt's work but modern spellings are provided (following the AIATSIS list or other sources). Clearly these identifications must be regarded with some caution. Map 17.1, an excerpt from the map included with Schmidt (1919a), shows the main languages mentioned in this article.

Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien
Philosophisch-historische Klasse
Denkschriften, 64. Band, 1. Abhandlung

Die Personalpronomina
in den
australischen Sprachen

Mit einem Anhang:

Die Interrogativpronomina in den australischen Sprachen

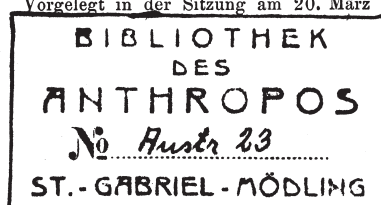
Von

P. W. Schmidt s. v. D.

korresp. Mitglieder der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien

Mit einer Kartenbeilage

Vorgelegt in der Sitzung am 20. März 1919



Wien, 1919

In Kommission bei Alfred Hölder

Universitäts-Buchhändler,
Buchhändler der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien



Plate 17.3: Title page of Schmidt (1919b)

2.1 Schmidt's orthography

Schmidt uses some special characters which are explained in his work Schmidt (1907). However, one finds a long list of special symbols in Schmidt (1907). With some caution however, the following picture emerges (note that I do not use Schmidt's original fonts but tried to use close approximations). The last four symbols *d'*, *t'*, *dZ*, and *tS* seem to refer to various laminal stops but their exact phonemic status must be examined for every language!

Table 17.1: Schmidt's special symbols

	Schmidt 1907	Phonetic description
<i>ŋ</i>	sonans gutturalis	velar nasal
<i>ń</i>	n palatalisata	palatal nasal
<i>d'</i>	d palatalisata	voiced palatal dental
<i>t'</i>	t palatalisata	unvoiced palatal dental
<i>dZ</i>	consonans mediodentalis (frontalis) sonora + consonans praedentalis fricativa	voiced dental stop + voiced fricative
<i>tS</i>	consonans mediodentalis (frontalis) muta + praedentalis fricativa muta	unvoiced dental stop + unvoiced fricative

The great difficulties in interpretation of earlier transcriptions are well known. For sake of illustration we give four examples from Yorta Yorta (Bowe and Morey 1999). The entry in bold face represents the proposed reconstruction (in phonetic orthography).

Table 17.2: Reconstructions from Bowe and Morey (1999)

Gloss	Normalised form	Forms in the sources
fire	bitja	<i>biitya, biitya, bitcha, pee-cha, pit yer, pitya, pitja, bickya, pitha, pe-da</i>
fish, perch	gangupka	<i>kongōōpka, kangupka, kungupgah</i>
foot	djina	<i>chīn-na, jinna, jet-cha-ra, tin-ner, tin ner, tyunna, jenna, chinna, gen-a, ginna</i>
tongue	dhaling	<i>thāl-ling, talhng, tal.lin, tal-lin, tal leen, saleng, tallye, tallan</i>

Schmidt does not explain in what way he regularised his sources (the references are given in his *Gliederung*). A transcription of Schmidt's tables can be found in Schweiger (2002). A comprehensive survey of pronouns and pronominal systems is given in Dixon (2002).

2.2 I. Einleitung

In the introduction Schmidt refers to his book *Die Gliederung der australischen Sprachen*.

Durch diese Arbeit wurde auch zum ersten Male die grundlegende Tatsache festgestellt - welche die bisher allgemein festgehaltene Anschauung von der generellen Einheitlichkeit der gesamten australischen Sprachen beseitigt - , daß die australischen Sprachen in zwei große Gruppen zerfallen, die miteinander durch keinerlei innere

Beziehungen verbunden sind: die der nordaustralischen und die der südaustralischen Sprachen. Diese beiden Gruppen unterscheiden sich auch dadurch wesentlich voneinander, daß die der nordaustralischen Sprachen eigentlich nur negativ eine Einheit bildet. [By the present work, the basic fact has been stated for the first time that the Australian languages are divided into two major groups which are not connected to each other, contrary to the common belief of a general unity of Australian languages. These groups will be called: the Southern Australian languages and the Northern Australian languages. But there is a fundamental difference: the Northern Australian languages are just the languages which do not belong to the Southern Australian group.] (p.3)

However, he restricts his attention more or less to the languages which he calls ‘südaustralisch’.

Wenn nun auch die Gruppe der südaustralischen Sprachen sich von der der nordaustralischen dadurch unterscheidet, daß sie wirkliche Gemeinsamkeiten des Wortschatzes wie des inneren Aufbaues aufweist, so ist damit noch nicht die ursprünglich innere Verwandtschaft aller dieser Sprachen gegeben. In Wirklichkeit läßt sich schon jetzt feststellen, daß auch diese Einheitlichkeit keine ursprünglich innere ist, sondern erst verursacht wurde durch den starken Einfluß, den in dieser großen Gruppe eine Untergruppe, die Zentralgruppe, wie ich sie nenne, auf die übrigen Untergruppen ausübte. [Though the group of Southern Australian languages is distinguished by common features in their structure and shared vocabulary from the group of Northern Australian languages, this does not imply a genetic unity. In fact one sees that this unity is due to the strong influence of a certain subgroup which I call the Central group] (p.4)

In short, the similarities of the group of Southern Australian languages are seen as a result of convergence and diffusion due to the influence of the languages of the so-called central group (comprising the Süd-Zentral-Gruppe and Nord-Zentral-Gruppe).

2.3 II. Gesamtübersicht der Personalpronomina und Possessiva (correction of ‘Passiva’) in ihren verschiedenen Funktionen

Schmidt presents in his tables the nominative form of the personal pronouns. He first gives what he calls the intransitive form (corresponding to the S role in the terminology of Dixon 1980) and, as far as known, the transitive form (corresponding to the A role). Since he is interested in reconstructing the pronominal roots, he occasionally uses oblique case forms to corroborate his reconstructions: ‘... die obliquen Kasus [werden] nur insoweit herangezogen, als sie dazu beitragen, den Pronominalstamm mit allseitiger Sicherheit festzustellen’ [... the oblique case forms are used in so far as they help to state the pronominal stem with certainty] (p.4). What he calls the possessive form is usually equivalent to the genitive (or dative) form of the (free) pronoun. He sees these forms as compounds of the pronominal roots affixed to a ‘possessive particle’. Furthermore, he lists possessive suffixes and verbal suffixes which he calls ‘Verbalsubjektsuffixe’ because they are said to primarily refer to the subject of the verb. We give three examples from Schmidt’s tables.

Table 17.3: Pronouns of Dieri (Diyari)

	Intransitive form	Transitive form	Possessive form
1sg	<i>ɲani</i>	<i>(ɲ)atSu, ɲato</i>	<i>ɲakani, ani</i>
2sg	<i>ninni, yidni</i>	<i>yundru</i>	<i>yinkani, yani</i>
3sg	m <i>nau</i> f <i>nani</i>	<i>nulu</i> <i>nandru</i>	<i>nunkani</i> <i>nankani</i>

	Intransitive form	Transitive form	Possessive form
1pl.incl	<i>ŋaiana</i>		<i>ŋaiani</i>
1pl.excl	<i>ŋaiana-ni</i>		<i>ŋaiani-ni</i>
2pl	<i>yura</i>		<i>yura-ni</i>
3pl	<i>tana</i>		<i>tana-ni</i>
1du.incl	<i>ŋaldra</i>		<i>ŋaldra-ni</i>
1du.excl	<i>ŋali</i>		<i>ŋali-ni</i>
2du	<i>yudla</i>		<i>yudla-ni</i>
3du	<i>pudla</i>		<i>pudla-ni</i>

Table 17.4: Pronouns of Süd-Narrinyeri (South Ngarrindjeri)

	Intransitive form	Transitive form	Possessive suffix	Verbal suffix
1sg	<i>ŋape, -appe, -ap</i>	<i>ŋate</i>	<i>-an, -ān</i>	<i>an-ai</i>
2sg	<i>ŋinte, -(i)nde</i>		<i>-m,^a -am, -em, im, -um</i>	<i>m-a</i>
3sg	<i>kit'e, -(i)t'e, (a)t'e</i>	<i>kile</i>	<i>-n,^a -en, -in</i>	<i>n-ai</i>
1pl.incl, 1pl.excl	<i>ŋane, -aŋ, aŋaŋ</i>		<i>-anamm, -aŋanain</i>	
2pl	<i>ŋun(e), -uŋuŋ (o)al</i>		<i>-onomm</i>	
3pl	<i>kar, -ar</i>		<i>-ān, -kān</i>	
1du.incl 1du.excl	<i>ŋēl(e), aŋall</i>		<i>-alamm, -aŋalain</i>	
2du	<i>ŋurl(e), -uŋull</i>		<i>-olomm</i>	
3du	<i>keŋk, -eŋk</i>	<i>keŋg-ul</i>	<i>-eŋg-un</i>	

^a Schmidt places the hyphen at the end of the form; this seems to be a misprint, as the morphemes are apparently suffixes.

Table 17.5: Pronouns of Tyatyalla (Djadjala; Blake and Reid 1998)

	Nominative form	Possessive form	Possessive suffix	Verbal suffix
1sg	<i>yurw-ek</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-ek</i>	<i>-ek</i>	<i>-an</i>
2sg	<i>yurw-in</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-in</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-ar</i>
3sg	<i>yur-uk</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-uk</i>	<i>-uk</i>	<i>-a</i>
1pl.incl	<i>yurw-eŋurrak</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-eŋurrak</i>	<i>-urrak</i>	<i>-aŋu</i>
1pl.excl	<i>yurw-endak</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-endak</i>	<i>-andak</i>	<i>-andaŋ</i>
2pl	<i>yurw-uddak</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-uddak</i>	<i>-uddak</i>	<i>-awat</i>

	Nominative form	Possessive form	Possessive suffix	Verbal suffix
3pl	<i>yurw-ennak</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-ennak</i>	<i>-ennak</i>	<i>-anat'</i>
1du.incl	<i>yurw-al</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-al</i>	<i>-ul</i>	<i>-aŋul</i>
1du.excl	<i>yurw-alluk</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-alluk</i>	<i>-ulluk</i>	<i>-aŋulaŋ</i>
2du	<i>yurw-ulla(k)</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-wula</i>	<i>-ula</i>	<i>-awul</i>
3du	<i>yur-bullaŋ</i>	<i>yurwaŋ-bullaŋ</i>	<i>-bullaŋ</i>	<i>-abullaŋ</i>

Since I have tried to reproduce Schmidt's tables as closely as possible, no attempt has been made to correct possible inconsistencies. It must be pointed out that Schmidt not only had to use doubtful data, but also his work contains numerous misprints. *Die Gliederung der Australischen Sprachen* contains a list of corrections and additions at the beginning of the book; no such list was appended to *Die Personalpronomina in den australischen Sprachen*. Moreover, the data given in the two books is not always consistent.

2.4 III. Singularformen

2.4.1 1sg

Schmidt distinguishes four groups.

Group I has 1sg *ŋai* augmented by *a, o, u, e, i* or 1sg *ŋai* or *ŋu* augmented by *ńa, ńo, ńi*, or *ni*. These forms probably were used to express S function.

Schmidt claims that this intransitive form is the older form and a transitive form is derived from it by the addition of the transitive suffix *-da, -ta*. At this point he states an incorrect generalisation 'In den australischen Sprachen ist ... der Unterschied von tonlosen und tönenden Konsonanten unbekannt.' [In the Australian languages the difference between unvoiced and voiced stops is unknown] (p.6). He is aware of the fact that some languages use the intransitive form also in transitive clauses and some others use the transitive form for both types of clauses. From forms like *ŋat'a, ŋat'o, ŋadza, ŋatso* he concludes that the root of the 1sg pronoun ended in a palatal or palatalising vowel. From this he says that *ŋai* (p.6) was the original form ('Urform').² Similarly, Dixon (1980:344) reconstructs **ŋay* for proto-Australian, although he derives the transitive desinence from **DHu*. Schmidt thinks of an original ergative form *-ta ~ -da*, along with a secondary development *a > o > u*. He derives an attested modern form such as *ŋańa* from *ŋaina*. (Note that Schmidt did not consider laminal stops and nasals.)

Group II has 1sg forms *ŋape, ŋapu, ŋap, ŋaba, ŋuppa, ŋaiamba, ŋaiba*. Schmidt then observes that within the Narrinyeri (Ngarrindjeri) languages the transitive forms are *ŋate, ŋaŋa, ŋaie* and reconstructs the root *ŋa* (the form *ŋaie* is derived from *ŋa+ye*). He considers *-p, -b*, and *-ba* as variants of an intransitive suffix.

Group III has the 1sg pronominal element *-ik ~ -ek* as a suffix to a non-pronominal element, which property is seen as related to the observation that the genitive follows its head. Schmidt discusses the possibility of a derivation *ik ~ ek* from *ŋak < ŋat'* with an unexplained change *t' > k*. However, he sees no way to relate the verbal suffix *-an* to *ŋat'u* or *(ŋ)ai* (see group I). Several languages are seen as transient between groups I to III. In fact, I think that derivation of the suffixes *-ik ~ -ek* from an oblique stem **ŋaka* and *-an* from an accusative form **ŋanha*

2 Since Schmidt does not use an asterisk for his 'original' forms I have followed his convention.

is plausible. Such a conclusion could be made by comparison of Diyari (Austin 1981) with several Victorian languages (Schweiger 2004).

Group IV is seen as the residual set with various peculiar and isolated forms.

2.4.2 2sg

Again Schmidt finds evidence for four groups which overlap with the four groups mentioned before to some extent.

Group I has 2sg *nin* ~ *nin* ~ *in* ~ *yin* (~ *ɲin*) suffixed augments *-a* ~ *-na*. The vowel *a* is sometimes changed to *o* or *u*, and sometimes is assimilated to *i* (under the influence of the stem vowel). These are the intransitive forms. There is a transitive form which uses the transitive suffix *-ta* ~ *-da* (again the vowel sometimes changes to *o* or *u*). After a lengthy discussion, Schmidt is led to reconstruct the root as **nín*, which is not far from Dixon's reconstruction for proto-Australian, namely **ɲin* > *NYin* (Dixon 1980:344).

Group II has 2sg forms *ɲurru* ~ *ɲurro* ~ *ɲurra* ~ *ɲurre*. It is claimed that the final vowels *u* and *o* correspond to intransitive meaning, while the final vowels *a* and *e* correspond to transitive meaning.

Group III involves pronominal suffixes attached to a preceding particle. These suffixes are seen as remnants of a pronominal stem but Schmidt sees no way to derive their forms *-in* ~ *-en* and *-ar* ~ *-er* from a single proto form.

Group IV is again a residual group with several disparate forms.

2.4.3 3sg

No large groupings can be distinguished since the 3sg pronouns exhibit a variety of new forms that originate in former demonstrative stems. In the so-called Südzentralgruppe (Kana-Sprachen (Karnic languages), Dieri (Diyari)) and certain other languages, masculine and feminine genders are distinguished.

2.5 IV. Die Mehrheitbildung im allgemeinen

In Chapter IV Schmidt deals with the various processes of forming non-singular pronouns. He rightly observes: '... die übergroße Mehrheit der südaustralischen Sprachen (weist) neben dem Singular sowohl einen Plural als auch einen Dual auf.' [... the majority of Southern Australian languages show a singular, a plural, and a dual] (p.13). In many cases the data is incomplete. However, he states:

1. There is no dual in Minyung (Minjungbal/Minyangbal) and in the so-called Wakka-Kabi-Gruppe (of the East coast)
2. Only the Buandik (Bungandij/Buandig) and Kulin languages (Victoria) additionally show a trial by adding a particle to the plural form. This particle is *wuŋ*, *baiap* or *kullik*.

There are two subgroups: languages in which plural and dual are not derived from singular, and languages in which plural and dual are derived from singular. There is also an intermediate stage in which only 1pl and 1du are independent from 1sg.

A further parameter is the distinction between first person non-singular inclusive and exclusive. This is dealt with in Chapter V (see next section).

2.6 V. Der Unterschied von inklusiver und exklusiver Form in der 1. Person Plural, Dual, Trial

According to Schmidt, in several languages or language groups the distinction of inclusive form versus exclusive form does not exist, or one form is derived from the other in a transparent way. Examples of the latter type are Kurnu in which the 1du exclusive form *ɲutt'eraɲulli* apparently derives from a combination of the 3sg and 1du inclusive pronouns, and Wiradyuri (Wiradjuri) where the particle *guna* is added to the 1du inclusive. The following statement is made:

Eine organisch in der Sprache selbst wurzelnde Unterscheidung von inklusiver und exklusiver Form in der 1. Plur., Dual, Trial fehlt: 1. In den Südwestsprachen; 2. in den Narrinyeri-Sprachen; 3. und 4. in der Süd- und in der Nordzentralgruppe; 5. in der größten Zahl der Kuri-Sprachen; 6. in den gesamten Ostsprachen. [A distinction between inclusive and exclusive form of first plural, dual, or trial which is rooted in the language itself is lacking: 1. in the South Western languages; 2. in the Narrinyeri languages; 3. in the Southern Central group; 4. in the Northern Central group; 5. in the majority of the Kuri languages; and 6. in all Eastern languages] (p.17).

Als Sprachen, in welchen die Unterscheidung von exklusiver und inklusiver Form wurzelt organisch geübt wird,³ verbleiben mithin nur noch: 1. die Buandik- und die Kulin-Sprachen in Victoria; 2. die isolierten Sprachen am Oberen Murray R. 3. die Yuin-Sprachen und das Süd-Kuri. [The remaining languages which distinguish exclusive and inclusive forms 'organically' are: 1. the Buandik and the Kulin languages in Victoria; 2. the isolated languages on the Upper Murray River; and 3. the Yuin languages and the Southern Kuri] (p. 17).

It is admitted that in the latter group of languages one can also find relations between inclusive and exclusive forms, but the derivation is less transparent.

On the basis of a comparison of several languages Schmidt identifies some regularities that lead him to think that some of that data should be 'corrected'. Thus, according to his sources, Thurga (Thaua/Dhawa) has the following first person dual forms:

Table 17.6: First person dual forms in Thurga according to Schmidt's sources

	Pronoun	Possessive suffix	Verbal suffix
1du.incl	<i>ɲaia-wuɲ</i>	<i>-ɲul</i>	<i>-uɲ</i>
1du.excl	<i>ɲaia-wuɲulla</i>	<i>-ɲulluɲ</i>	<i>-uɲalla</i>

Based on evidence from Tharumba (Darumbal), namely 1du inclusive *ɲaia-wuɲul* and 1du exclusive *ɲaia-wuɲulla*, and looking at the form of possessive suffixes Schmidt proposes to change the data in the following way:

Table 17.7: Schmidt's revised Thurga first person dual forms

	Pronoun	Verbal suffix
1du.incl	<i>ɲaia-wuɲul</i>	<i>-uɲul</i>
1du.excl	<i>ɲaia-wuɲulla</i>	<i>-uɲalla</i>

3 The meaning of the adverb *organisch* 'organically' is not entirely clear. Like many other linguists, Schmidt very often used a metaphorical wording where a language is seen as a kind of living entity.

He says that the exclusive form derives from the inclusive form by the addition of a suffix *-a*. For the Thurawal variety of Darumbal he even reconstructs an infix *-uŋ*; this would be a remarkable feature. ('Dieser Fall eines echten Infixes ... in einer australischen Sprache ist etwas überaus Merkwürdiges' (p. 20).)

For the Kulin languages three groups are distinguished, namely: (1) West-Kulin languages and Wuddyawurrung (Wathawurrung; Blake 1991:50); (2) the other Ost-Kulin languages; (3) Tyeddyuwurrung (Djadjawurrung; Blake 1991:50).

(1) For the West-Kulin languages he presents three sets of pronominal stems. The 'Nominalreihe' is used as possessive suffix and the 'Verbalreihe' is used to indicate verbal subject. They are compared with the 'Nominalreihe' of Bureba.⁴

Table 17.8: Pronominal suffixes of the West-Kulin languages

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe	Nominalreihe Bureba
1sg	<i>-a-n</i>	<i>-ek</i>	<i>-ak</i>
2sg	<i>-a-r</i>	<i>-in</i>	<i>-in</i>
3sg	<i>-a</i>	<i>-uk</i>	<i>-uk</i>
1pl.incl	<i>-aŋ-ur</i>	<i>-eŋ-urrak</i>	<i>-aŋ-ura</i>
1pl.excl	<i>-an-daŋ</i>	<i>-en-dak ~ -an-dak</i>	<i>-aŋan-daŋ</i>
2pl	<i>-a-wat</i>	<i>-uddak</i>	missing
3pl	<i>-an-at'</i>	<i>-en-nak</i>	missing
1du.incl	<i>-aŋ-ul</i>	<i>-ul ~ -al</i>	<i>-al ~ -aŋ-ul</i>
1du.excl	<i>-aŋ-ulluŋ</i>	<i>-ulluk ~ -alluk</i>	<i>-ulluŋ ~ -aŋ-ulluŋ</i>
2du	<i>-a-wul</i>	<i>-(w)ula</i>	missing
3du	<i>-a-bullaŋ</i>	<i>-bullaŋ</i>	missing

The corresponding set of suffixes for Wuddyuwurrung reads as follows (p.22).

Table 17.9: Pronominal suffixes of Wuddyuwurrung

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe
1sg	<i>-a-n</i>	<i>-ek ~ -ik</i>
2sg	<i>-a-r</i>	<i>-in ~ -en ~ -un</i>
3sg	<i>-a</i>	<i>-uk ~ -núk</i>
1pl.incl		<i>-aduk ~ -eduk</i>
1pl.excl		<i>-wud'ak ~ -wod'ok</i>
2pl		<i>-(ŋ)ūt</i>

4 Schmidt distinguishes Bureba from Bureba-Bureba (Baraba Baraba). His data gives some differences for the pronouns, e.g. Bureba-Bureba 1sg *ŋat'* but Bureba 1sg *yetti*.

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe
3pl		-(g)anak ~ -tanoŋ
1du.incl		-al ~ -ul
1du.excl		-alluk
2du		-bula ~ -bullok
3du		-bullay ~ -bulloŋ

(2) For the other languages of the Nordost-Kulin group the ‘Verbalreihe’ is used to form the pronouns (e.g. we find 1sg *wan* or 2sg *war*). The data given is the following.

Table 17.10: Pronominal suffixes of Ost-Kulin languages

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe
1sg	-na-n (Future: -ntSa-n)	-ik
2sg	-ne-r (Future: -ntSe-r)	-in
3sg	-n	-u ~ -o ~ -ńo
1pl.incl	-(ŋ)uńin	-(n)uńin ~ -ŋańin
1pl.excl	-(ŋ)uńińu	-nuńińu ~ -ŋańińu
2pl	-na-t ~ -wat-gurabil ~ -ntSa-t	-ŋūt
3pl	-n-ur ~ -muńi-gadzán ~ -ntSu-r	-(o)dZán
1du.incl	-(ŋ)ul	-ŋul
1du.excl	-(ŋ)un	-ŋun
2du	-nbul	-bul
3du	-nbu-lań ~ -muńi-bulabil	-(o)bulłań

(3) We also present Schmidt’s data on Tyeddyuwurrung (p.23).

Table 17.11: Pronominal suffixes of Tyeddyuwurrung

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe
1sg	-a-n	-ek
2sg	-a-r	-in
3sg	- ^a	-uk
1pl.incl	-(ŋ)ur	-urra ~ -urruk
1pl.excl	-(n)daŋ	-anduk
2pl	-(ŋ)at ~ -wat	-attuk
3pl	-(n)at’	-annuk

	Verbalreihe	Nominalreihe
1du.incl	-(<i>ŋ</i>) <i>ul</i>	- <i>ul</i> ~ - <i>al</i>
1du.excl	-(<i>ŋ</i>) <i>ullaŋ</i>	- <i>alluk</i>
2du	- <i>wul</i>	- <i>woluk</i>
3du	- <i>bullaaŋ</i>	- <i>wolaaŋ</i>

^a On p.23 Schmidt gives this information. However, in his tables he notes *-(n)an*, *-(n)ar*; *-(n)* for the singular verbal suffixes with an optional preceding *n*.

Schmidt finds that in Tyeddyuwurrung all forms and formative processes of the other groups are united. He points out that the same particle *waŋ* is used to form the (independent) pronouns and the possessive forms: *waŋ-an* 'I' *waŋ-ek* 'my'.

Finally it is stated that within the Kulin languages no trace of a difference between intransitive and transitive forms can be found.

2.7 VI. Sprachen, bei denen Plural und Dual unabhängig vom Singular gebildet werden

2.7.1 1pl

For the vast majority of the languages the canonical form is $C_1V_1C_2V_2$. In all cases $C_1 < \eta$ and V_1 can be *aia*, *ea*, *e*, or *i*, where the latter may induce change $\eta > \hat{n}$. C_2 can be *n* or *l*, *ll*. Thus the following groups are distinguished.

Table 17.12: Overview of 1pl forms

Group I.	
Subgroup a	Subgroup b
<i>ŋaiana</i> , <i>ŋaani</i> , <i>ŋenna</i> , <i>ŋinna</i> , <i>ńana</i>	<i>ŋanu</i> , <i>ŋunu</i>
Group II.	
Subgroup a	Subgroup b
<i>ŋeulla</i> , <i>ńulli</i>	<i>ŋulla</i> , <i>ŋalla</i>

Although the languages of the second group do not show evidence of a separate dual Schmidt is not convinced that the plural forms are 'old' dual forms. He thinks that the suffix *li* in the dual forms is a trace of *bulali* 'two' (p.27). Schmidt considers three further groups. These are formed by the Narrinyeri languages, the Kulin languages, and a group of two languages with isolated forms, Parnkalla showing *ŋarrinēlbo* and Northern dialect of Halifax Bay languages (most probably Biyay dialect of Wargamay) showing the strange form *mundi* (which form Schmidt admits is very insecure).

2.7.2 1du

Here the surprising similarity of almost all forms is observed, namely *ŋalli* ~ *ŋulli* ~ *ŋulla* ~ *ŋullu*. Though Schmidt is aware of the fact that the English writing collectors could have written *u* for approximately phonetic *a* he decides to consider *u* as phonetically distinct.

2.7.3 2pl

Schmidt again distinguishes four groups.

Group I languages show reflexes of *nura* ~ *núra* ~ *yura* ~ *ntSura*. Some occasionally attested forms (e.g. in Kurnu and Wakka (Waka Waka)) point to an earlier form *ɲura* and may be due to a secondary development. The ending *-r(a)* is seen as a plural suffix, in contrast with the dual suffix *-l* (p.30).

Group II is defined by the presence of *ɲun*.

Group III is constituted by the Kulin languages, which show a root **wat > (w)ūt ~ (w)udd*.

Group IV is again a residual group with apparently unrelated forms: Parnkalla *nuralli*, Meyu (Kaurna) *na*, Goa (Guwa) *waia*, Turubul (Yakara) *ɲilpulla*, and Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) *ɲulan ~ ɲupu*.

2.7.4 2du

Schmidt thinks that almost all forms can be explained as a compound of a root *nu ~ nú ~ yu* with *bula(r)(a)* 'two'. Forms like *nbul(a)*, *mbul(a)* are seen as proof that forms such as *bulla ~ wul* can be explained by dropping the pronominal root.

2.7.5. 3pl, 3du

The forms *tana ~ dzana* are seen as the original pronominal root for 3pl.

2.8 VII a) Sprachen, bei denen Plural und Dual vom Singular abgeleitet werden. b) Übergangsgruppe mit Ableitung bloß der 2. (und 3.) Person Plural und Dual vom Singular

We can only give a very brief sketch of Schmidt's complicated arguments. For the languages of subgroup (a), he claims that originally there was a whole set of plural and dual pronouns consisting of a particle and a pronominal root. Due to phonological changes these forms were shortened and became almost indistinguishable. Therefore the singular pronouns were used as 'diacritical' prefixes. Within subgroup (b), the additional suffixes are mere plural or dual markers which very often can be found with nouns too.

2.9 VIII Das Personalpronomen als Affixum

Schmidt thinks that in pronominal suffixes older stages are conserved: 'Eine besondere Untersuchung fordern noch die Fälle, wo das Personalpronomen, durch Enklisis stark verkürzt, mit einem Wort in engere Beziehung tritt, weil ... sich (in diesem Fall) ältere Zustände länger konservieren ...' [A special investigation would be required for the instances in which a shortened form of the personal pronoun is attached as an enclitic particle because in this case ... older states are conserved longer] (p.37). Schmidt seems to propose two stages. In an earlier stage possessive pronouns (genitive or dative forms) are derived from pronouns by affixes. In the second stage these possessive pronouns are reduced to clitics or possessive affixes.

2.9.1 Nominalaffixe

Two issues are considered in Schmidt's discussion. One is the derivation of the possessive suffixes from the (full) pronouns and the position of these suffixes. For the first stage (mentioned before) it is remarked that: (I) the possessive form of the pronoun is marked by suffixes or postpositions if the unmarked genitive (Schmidt: 'affixloser Genitiv') preceded its head; and (II) the possessive form is marked by prefixes or prepositions if the unmarked genitive succeeded its head.

Schmidt says that all languages which he considers 'südaustralisch'—with the exception of the Kulin languages—use suffixes or postpositions. Thus he arrives at a grouping of Australian languages that is very close to Capell's. The languages which use suffixes or postpositions form the above mentioned group I, while the Kulin languages form group II. However, for some languages of group I, the modern pronoun is an old possessive consisting of a preposition and an older pronoun. For Tharumba (Darumbal), Thurga (Thaua/Dhawa), and Dyirringań (Djirringany) the 'old' plural and dual forms (see 2.8 above) are also regarded as compounds of particle and pronoun. Therefore these forms (though not the languages!) belong to group II.

The Kulin languages are split into two subgroups. In the first the (full) pronoun and the possessive pronoun are formed by using two different particles. I give some examples using Schmidt's data.

Table 17.13: Formation of pronouns in Thangwurrung

	Thangwurrung (Thagungwurrung; Blake 1991:48)
1sg	<i>wa-n</i>
1sg.poss	<i>nugal-ik</i>
1du.incl	<i>wa-ŋul</i>
1du.incl.poss	<i>nugal-ŋul</i>

In the second, the particle of the possessive form is derived from the particle of the pronoun by adding a suffix. Schmidt gives the following examples (p.38; for the names of the languages see Blake and Reid 1998).

Table 17.14: Formation of pronouns in West-Kulin

	Tyatyalla (Djadjala)	Wuttyaballuk (Wuttyabullak)	Wuddyawurrung (Wathawurrung)
1sg	<i>yurw-ek</i>	<i>walluŋ-ek</i>	<i>baŋ-ek</i>
1sg.poss	<i>yurw-aŋ-ek</i>	<i>walluŋ-aŋ-ek</i>	<i>baŋ-ordig-ek</i>

Schmidt remarks that the genitive suffixes can be either peculiar for pronouns or identical with nominal genitive suffixes in the language, or in a related language. Occasionally the accusative suffix is used, or a nominal dative suffix. Schmidt distinguishes 'unmittelbare Affigierung' when the genitive form of the pronoun is used without an additional linking word and 'mittelbare Affigierung' when an additional linking word is used. The following rule is stated:

- If the unmarked nominal possessor follows the possessed noun then the possessive pronoun has the position of a suffix. If the unmarked nominal possessor precedes the possessed noun then the possessive pronoun has the position of a prefix. If the position of the nominal possessor changes then the pronouns may retain the older position.

Schmidt observes that in the languages calls ‘südaustralisch’ no possessive prefixes appear with the exception of some opaque remnants in Süd-Narrinyeri (South Ngarrindjeri) (for example, in *naiṅkowe* ‘my mother’, *niṅkowe* ‘your mother’ (p.39)).

2.9.2 Verbalaffixe

‘Die Pronominalaffixe am Verb haben entweder das Subjekt oder das Objekt am Verb auszudrücken.’ [The pronominal affixes on the verb express either subject or object] (p.40). Within the languages under consideration only suffixes appear; Süd-Narrinyeri (South Ngarrindjeri) may again be a possible exception.

First, Schmidt considers subject suffixes and identifies two groups of languages. In the first group, no subject suffixes appear. The full pronoun is used together with a verbal form (which is not changed according to the pronoun). In other languages, pronouns appear together with pronominal suffixes but the scope may change according to mood or number.

Schmidt next considers suffixes expressing objects, which are less well represented. Schmidt rightly observes that the combination of subject and object suffixes sometimes produces opaque portmanteau forms which early observers found difficult to analyse.

Schmidt’s analysis of Süd-Narrinyeri (South Ngarrindjeri) is one of the few instances in which he lists three case forms of pronominal suffixes. The three cases he calls nominative, accusative, and ablative (though he remarks in a footnote: ‘Die Bezeichnung, Ablativ ist identisch mit Transitiv oder Ergativ’ [The denomination ablative also includes transitive or ergative] (p.43)). Therefore he was aware of the three core cases—or to put things in a different theoretical frame, the syntactic roles S, O, and A (e.g. Dixon 1980). Following his source (Meyer 1843), he gives the full set of these forms, which Meyer called ‘separable pronouns’ (i.e. free pronouns) and ‘inseparable pronouns’ (i.e. bound pronouns). We present below a partial table of the forms (p.43).

Table 17.15: Pronouns of South Ngarrindjeri

	‘separable pronouns’	‘inseparable pronouns’
1sg nom	<i>ṅāpe</i>	<i>appe ~ app ~ ap</i>
acc	<i>ṅān</i>	<i>an ~ ān</i>
abl	<i>ṅate</i>	<i>atte ~ att ~ at</i>
2sg nom	<i>ṅinte</i>	<i>inde ~ nde</i>
acc	<i>ṅūm^a</i>	<i>um ~ am ~ em ~ im ~ m</i>
abl	<i>ṅinte</i>	<i>inde</i>
3sg nom	<i>kit’e</i>	<i>it’ ~ t’e</i>
acc	<i>kīn</i>	<i>it’an ~ yan ~ en ~ in ~ n</i>
abl	<i>kīle</i>	<i>il ~ el</i>

^a Schmidt gives *ṅūn* but this seems to be a misprint.

2.9.3 Die Frage der Nominal- und Verbalaffixe beim Süd-Narrinyeri

South Ngarrindjeri must have fascinated Schmidt, because this language is one of the few for which he even discusses sentences. The main issue is the question if this language allows prefixes—recall examples such as *naiṅkowe* ‘my mother’ and *nijṅkowe* ‘your mother’ mentioned above (p.39).⁵ He discusses sentences like *yāṅ an ai mulde?* ‘Where is my pipe?’ *yāṅe m ai ru?* ‘Where is your country?’ Since the accusative form which is used in the possessive construction precedes a particle *ai ~ a* he speaks of ‘indirekte Präfigierung’ (p. 45) obviously with the same meaning as ‘mittelbare Präfigierung’ mentioned before. He mentions that two other constructions can be found: one illustrated by examples such as *kīn-auwe yarnde* ‘his spear’, *ṅūm-auwe kalde* ‘your speech’, and another by examples such as *porle-ān* ‘my child’, *nāp-el-em* ‘by your wife’. The possessive forms in the first construction are seen as a kind of compound case (free pronoun + accusative + genitive). In the latter case Schmidt explains the forms as *ān* < 1sg + accusative and *-em* < 2sg + accusative. Since the ergative suffix *-el* occurs before the possessive expression these suffixes may be better given an interpretation as clitics.

Schmidt also discusses the use of verbal suffixes. We mention the following examples (from p.46).

- (1) *ṅate lakk-in kōye*
‘I make a basket’.
- (2) *kōy ate lakk-in*
‘I make a basket’.
- (3) *lakke-in-atte kōye*
‘I make a basket’.

2.10 IX Vergleichung mit den Personalpronomina der nordaustralischen Sprachen

Due to the lack of reliable data, Schmidt comes to the conclusion that no shared features can be found among the pronominals of the northern languages—‘Tatsächlich sehen wir auch bei ihren [i.e. den nordaustralischen] Personalpronomina ... keinerlei Gemeinsamkeiten hervortreten’ [In fact, we don’t see any common features within the Northern Australian pronouns] (p.48). Following the discussion in *Die Gliederung der australischen Sprachen*, Schmidt distinguishes three groups among these northern languages:

1. Sprachen mit konsonantischen Auslauten;
2. Sprachen mit sonantischen Auslauten;
3. Sprachen mit vokalischem Auslaut.

According to Schmidt the languages of the Northwest belong to the first group, e.g. Niol-Niol (Nyulnyul). As an example of the second group we name Woolna (Wuna). The third group comprises e.g. Aranda (Arrernte), Chingalee (Jingulu), Kap-York-Sprachen (Cape York languages).

Within the first group he finds some similarities with the neighbouring ‘Southern Australian’ languages, e.g. 1sg *ṅai(o) ~ ṅiin*, and 2sg *ṅiṅan ~ nundu*. A similar observation is made for the second group: 1sg *ṅaio*, and 2sg. *yuno ~ inu*. A completely different situation is observed within the third group (and one wonders why Schmidt does not go a step further, and

5 Schmidt gives the title of this section (p.43) as *Die Frage der Nominal- und Verbalsuffixe beim Süd-Narrinyeri*, but in the table of contents (p.112) it appears as in the section header above. The latter is obviously preferable.

add these languages to the family of languages which he named ‘Südaustralische Sprachen’). He fully discusses Aranda (Arrernte), where he clearly states the sound law of initial dropping—‘Bezüglich des Anlautes ist das Wegfallen der Konsonanten und Sonanten zu beachten, das dem Aranda eigentümlich ist.’ [The dropping of the initial consonants and resonants is peculiar to Arrernte] (p.49). He also gives an extensive account of the pronouns of several Cape York languages (including the languages of the adjacent islands). Again he observes initial dropping for some of these languages (stated explicitly for Yaraikana (Yadhaykenu) in footnote 5 on p.54). For sake of illustration we present the singular pronouns he gives for Yaraikana (Yadhaykenu) (p.51).

Table 17.16: Pronouns of Yaraikana

	intransitive form = transitive form	possessive form
1sg	<i>aiyu-va, aid’u-va</i>	<i>atu-m</i>
2sg	<i>undu-va</i>	<i>aku-m</i>
3sg	<i>ulu-va</i>	<i>uŋu-m</i>

The strange fact that the Cape York languages seem to have quite different vocabularies and phonological inventories (they are ‘phonologically aberrant languages’) but their pronouns seem to be very ‘Southern Australian’ in form leads Schmidt to the following conclusion: ‘Wir haben es in der Kap York-Gruppe mit Sprachen zu tun, die, ursprünglich südaustralisch, von einer ganz fremdartigen Spracheinwanderung überzogen wurden ...’ [The languages of Cape York originally were Southern Australian languages but were changed by a quite foreign migration] (p.57). He even thinks that some of the original ‘Southern Australian’ features were preserved better in Cape York languages. One of his examples is a reconstructed root *pal ~ bal* with the semantic feature of a dual. Here a longer excursion on number words is included. The observed lexical similarities of some items are explained by diffusion which started from Cape York languages. He lists fifteen lexical items, which in a different scale reached other regions. These include the word ‘man’ (p.60).

Table 17.17: Distribution of **pama*

Language and/or location	‘man’
Kap York-Gr. Festland-Ost	<i>ama</i>
Kap York-Gr. Festland-West	<i>ma</i>
Kap York-Gr. Gudang	<i>unbomo</i>
Karandi Inld.	<i>apmū, apmā</i>
Walsh R.-Spr.	<i>pama</i>
Akunkul	<i>pama</i>
Bulponara	<i>báma</i>
Kokoyimidir	<i>báma</i>
Nordzentralgr.: Cook Distr.	<i>bama</i>

The proposed path of diffusion is via the adjacent languages along the Eastern coast, the ‘Nordzentralgruppe’, the ‘Südzentralgruppe’ and eventually the ‘Südwestgruppe’. Surprisingly, these latter groups are seen as the languages which superimposed the apparent uniformity within the ‘Southern Australian’ languages! It should be mentioned that Schmidt sees a connection with the social organisation of the tribes.

2.11 X. Zusammenfassung

In a first step, three series for singular and plural pronouns are reconstructed which are called Südreihe, West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe, and Südostreihe. These three series are considered as independent from each other. In the central area of the Südreihe are the Narrinyeri (Ngarrindjeri) languages. In the central area of the Südostreihe are the Kulin languages. The West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe comprises the largest area. His reconstruction is as follows (p.62).

Table 17.18: Reconstruction of singular and plural pronouns

	Südreihe	West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe	Südostreihe
1sg	<i>ŋa</i>	<i>ŋai</i>	<i>-ek ~ an</i>
2sg	<i>ŋur(u)</i>	<i>ńin</i>	<i>-in ~ -ar</i>
3sg	<i>ninn(i)</i>	[various]	<i>-u(k) ~ -a</i>
1pl	<i>ŋennu</i>	<i>ŋaiana ~ ŋeani ~ ŋeulla ~ ŋali</i>	<i>-ur ~ -ad (incl.) anday ~ -ud' (excl.)</i>
2pl	<i>ŋunu</i>	<i>ńura ~ nura</i>	<i>-(w)ut ~ -(w)udd</i>
3pl	<i>nau, nam</i>	<i>tana</i> and other.	<i>-tana ~ -anat'</i>

Surprisingly the dual pronouns seem to form a single series and the various forms are distributed differently (p.63). However, Schmidt later says that there are two series with a distribution which is independent of the distribution of the singular and plural series (p.63).

Table 17.19: Reconstruction of dual pronouns

	Südreihe, West-Mittel-Ost-Reihe, and Südostreihe
1du	<i>ŋalli ~ ŋulli ~ ŋulla ~ ŋullu</i>
2du	<i>ńubal(a) ~ ńulla ~ nbula</i>
3du	<i>-bulla</i>

From this observation Schmidt claims that the dual pronouns are a comparatively recent innovation. He thinks that originally the three groups of languages (corresponding to ‘Südreihe’, ‘West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe’, and ‘Südostreihe’) were separated but the present dual pronouns were formed at a time when these groups came into close contact. The diagnostic feature for the two series of dual pronouns is the root of 2du, namely *bula(r)* against *bal*. The distribution of these roots is seen in connection with different social organisation and different waves of migrations. The languages with root *bula(r)* are considered as the oldest layer of Australian languages. This is seen in connection with South-Eastern Tasmanian *puali* (p.65).

A detailed discussion of the formation of the plural pronouns follows. For the West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe the following picture is given. Schmidt postulates three ancient plural suffixes (*a*)*na*, (*a*)*la*, and *ra*. Then we get (p.67) the following modern forms:

1pl *ɲaiana* < 1sg *ɲai* + Plural (*a*)*na*
 1pl *ɲeulla* < 1sg *ɲai* + Plural (*a*)*la*
 2pl *ɲura* ~ *yura* < 2sg *ɲin* ~ *ɲun* ~ *yun* + Plural *ra*

It is claimed that the origin of the pronominal roots *ɲai* and *ɲin* must be an older stratum of Eastern languages. Schmidt discusses the puzzling fact that in the Ostsprachen the distinction between transitive and intransitive pronouns is no longer maintained. This is attributed to the influence of the adjacent Victorian languages. For the formation of the plural in the Südreihe the insufficient data does not permit conclusions to be drawn.

The situation in the languages of the Südostreihe is seen as very complex. Schmidt postulates the existence of two series of singular pronouns—‘Wir haben ja im Singular zwei Reihen, die wir als wurzelhaft verschieden bezeichnen mussten’ [We find in the singular two series which go back to different roots] (p.72). He finds evidence that the series of nominal suffixes has been borrowed from the West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe, but subsequently underwent considerable reduction: 1sg *ɲatSu* > *yet* (*yet'*), *yek*, *ek*; 2sg *ɲindu* > *in* (p.74). The series of verbal affixes goes back to the original pronouns of the Kulin languages (p.72). The plural pronouns are seen as a continuation of this original series of singular pronouns. Special attention is given Kurnai and Buandik (Bungandidj/Buandig). Kurnai 1pl *warra* ~ *werna* and 2pl *ɲurtana* (p.77) are considered reflexes of an original series of plural forms which give evidence for an old system of pronouns in the Victorian languages. He claims that the (full) pronouns in Bureba-Bureba (Baraba Baraba) are compounds, as in other Victorian languages. Therefore even in 2pl *ɲūt*, the initial *ɲ* is seen as a remnant of an old possessive particle.

Next the so-called nominal affixes are discussed. For the languages of West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe and Südreihe it is stated that the possessive affixes are used as indirect prefixes (‘mittelbare Affigierung’, p.80). If I understand Schmidt’s ideas correctly, this means the following. The possessive form of the pronoun consists of the pronominal stem and a suffix but the whole possessive form precedes the possessed noun. Within the languages of the Südostreihe the possessive pronouns follow the possessed noun. This can occur in the expected way (as Schmidt says ‘stilgerecht’; p.80), namely by the use of pronominal suffixes or by the use of possessive pronouns consisting of the pronominal root as a prefix to a possessive particle. Again a lengthy discussion of the possible scenarios of diffusion and mixing follows.

Schmidt states again that all languages which use possessive suffixes with nouns have verbal suffixes marking the subject. These languages are more or less identical with the languages of the Südostreihe.

Last but not least, Schmidt starts a discussion of the relative chronology of the three pronominal series. Again the postulated migrations from north-east to south-east and south-west are given a crucial role. The languages of the Südostreihe are seen as the oldest layer—‘... dass jedenfalls in Südostaustralien und auf dem Gebiet, auf dem sie sich jetzt befinden, die Sprachen der Südostreihe die ältesten sind’ [... in any case the languages of the ‘Südostreihe’ are the oldest in South Eastern Australia and the area of their present distribution] (p.88). At this point the split of the West-Mitte-Ost-Reihe into two subseries is seen as essential! With the help of evidence from the different social and cultural organisation of the tribes and some additional linguistic data (including the distribution of *binna* ‘ear’; p.90) the following relative chronology is obtained:

- (a) Südostreihe
- (b) (West-Mitte-)Ost-Reihe
- (c) Südreihe
- (d) West-Mitte(-Ost)-Reihe.

In summary the following reconstructions are suggested.

(a) Südostreihe. ‘Die eigenstämmigen Pronominalformen der Victoriasprachen sind die folgenden:’ [The original pronominal forms of the Victorian languages are the following] (p. 92).

Table 17.20: Victorian languages

	Kulin Sprachen	Kurnai	Buandik
1sg	<i>an</i>		
2sg	<i>ar</i>		
3sg	<i>a</i>		
1pl.incl	<i>aŋur ~ ad(uk)</i>	<i>warra ~ wer(na)</i>	
1pl.excl	<i>andaŋ ~ wud’a(k)</i>		
2pl	<i>awat ~ aŋūt</i>	<i>ŋurta(na)</i>	<i>ŋat(-puer)</i>
3pl	<i>tana ~ anat’</i>		
1du.incl	<i>aŋul</i>	<i>ŋalla</i>	
1du.excl	<i>aŋalluŋ</i>	<i>nalanalla</i>	
2du	<i>awul</i>		<i>ŋut(-pul)</i>
3du	<i>abullaŋ</i>		

These pronouns are preserved only as suffixes and the forms from which they are derived are unknown.

(b) Ostreihe. ‘Damit sind wir in der Lage, die Ostreihe in ihrer ursprünglichen Gestalt vorzuführen:’ [Now we are in the position to present the original forms of the ‘Ostreihe’] (p. 94).

Table 17.21: Ostreihe

	Stamm	Intransitiv	Transitiv
1sg	<i>ŋai</i>	<i>ŋaia ~ ŋad’a</i>	<i>ŋad’a ~ ŋaiaga</i>
2sg	<i>ńin</i>	<i>ńina</i>	<i>ńindu</i>
3sg			
1pl	<i>ŋeani ~ ŋali</i>		
2pl	<i>ńura</i>		
3pl	<i>(dzana)</i>		

Note that Schmidt states that in this series originally there were no dual pronouns and no distinction between inclusive and exclusive plural.

(c) Südreihe. ‘Somit gestaltet sich die Südreihe in ihrer ursprünglichen Gesamtheit ziemlich einfach.’ [Therefore the original system of the ‘Südreihe’ is very simple] (p.95).

Table 17.22: Südreihe

Nominativ	
1sg	<i>ŋa(p)</i>
2sg	<i>ŋur(u)</i>
3sg	<i>nin(i)</i>
1pl	<i>ŋainu ~ ŋeanu ~ ŋinu</i>
2pl	<i>ŋunu</i>
3pl	<i>nan ~ nam</i>

Again, Schmidt asserts that in this series originally there were no dual pronouns and no distinction between inclusive and exclusive in the first person plural.

(d) West-Mitte-Reihe. ‘Somit ergibt sich die ursprüngliche Form der West-Mitte-Reihe in folgender Form:’ [In such a way the original form of the ‘West-Mitte-Reihe is as follows] (p. 96).

Table 17.23: West Mitte-Reihe

	Stamm	Intransitiv	Transitiv
1sg	<i>ŋai</i>	<i>ŋańa</i> (aus <i>ŋai-na</i>)	<i>ŋad’u</i> (aus <i>ŋai-du</i>)
2sg	<i>ńin</i>	<i>ńinna</i>	<i>ńindu</i>
3sg			
1pl	<i>ŋaiana ~ ŋala</i>		
2pl	<i>ńura</i>		
3pl	<i>(dana)</i>		
1du	<i>ŋali</i>		
2du	<i>ńubal</i>		
3du	<i>bula</i>		

In this series the dual and the distinction between intransitive and transitive form is seen as original. The transitive suffix is reconstructed as *-da*.

The Südstreihe is seen as the oldest series, one which was rich in various formations. The Südreihe is seen as the simplest series. The fact that the Ostreihe and the West-Mitte-Reihe are connected corresponds with the postulated migrations from Northeast to South.

The correspondence between the classification of the Southern Australian languages in *Gliederung* and the pronominal series in *Personalpronomina* can be given with some simplification as follows:

Victoria-Gruppe ~ *Südost-Reihe*

Yuin-Kuri-Gruppe, Wiradyuri-Kamilaroi-Gruppe, Gruppe der selbständigen Sprachen der Ostküste, Bulponara-Kokoyimdir-Gruppe ~ *(West-Mitte)-Ost-Reihe*

Narrinyeri-Gruppe, Bangerang, Dhudhuroa ~ *Süd-Reihe*

Südwestgruppe, Süd-Zentralgruppe, Nord-Zentralgruppe ~ *West-Mitte(-Ost)-Reihe*

2.12 Anhang. Die Interrogativpronomina in den australischen Sprachen

Again Schmidt gives data from several languages which will not be discussed in this paper. One result should be mentioned. There are two pairs of the interrogative pronouns ‘who-what’ which are seen as the oldest, namely *ɲana-miña* and *wara-miña*. This analysis is used to corroborate his ideas on the different series of personal pronouns, their relative chronology, and their relations to various forms of social and cultural organisation.

3. Conclusion

It is a great pity that Schmidt’s work on Australian languages did not promote his greatest hopes, namely to stimulate research on these languages—or encourage appropriate support—and to facilitate the recognition of the importance of respect and protection of Aboriginal culture. Many years later, in his seminal study (Capell 1956), Capell discusses Schmidt’s work. Although Schmidt was not in a position to give a comprehensive overview of Australian languages (mainly due to the lack of reliable data), his monographs were milestones in this area, and are still worthy of study.

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18 *The European ‘discovery’ of a multilingual Australia: the linguistic and ethnographic successes of a failed expedition*

DAVID P. WILKINS AND DAVID NASH¹

1. Introduction

Like historians, linguists and anthropologists are often obliged to reevaluate—and sometimes retell—earlier accounts of people, cultures, languages, and events. This is especially so when the field concerned has developed new models or attitudes, or when accumulated knowledge allows a reinterpretation, or when a new document comes to light allowing added insight into known accounts. This is just such a retelling and reevaluation.

In April, 1791, under the leadership of Captain Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, an expedition was mounted ‘to reach Hawkesbury-River, opposite Richmond Hill, and, if possible, to cross the river and get to the mountains’ (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:340), and to ‘ascertain whether or not the Hawkesbury and the Nepean, were the same river’ (Tench 1961 [1793]:223). This expedition did not achieve any of its stated aims, but in the course of the expedition its participants had encounters with Australian Aboriginal groups which profoundly affected their understanding of the linguistic situation of the area. This trip was the first time that the English colonisers had encountered an Aboriginal language that was significantly different from Iyura (i.e. Eora), the language which they had en-

1 Wilkins began the analysis of the language data considered here when a research assistant to R.M.W. Dixon at ANU in the 1980s, and drafted this paper in 1991 at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The authors’ collaboration on this topic began during the inaugural Australian Linguistic Institute when they (and others) followed part of the route of the 1791 expedition on Saturday 4 July 1992. It continued at MPI Nijmegen in 1993, and remotely in 2005. Attenbrow (2002:34) used extracts from the 1993 version. The authors thank for helpful comments two anonymous readers, William McGregor, Michael Walsh, Jaky Troy, Jane Simpson, Bruce Rigsby, Susan Locke, David Nathan, R.M.W. Dixon and particularly Ray Wood who also kindly shared with us Wood (2005). Plate 18.1 appears with the kind permission of Library Special Collections, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Spelling convention, primarily in tables: **bold** for pre-modern spellings, *italics* for modern spellings. We follow our own transcription, mostly agreeing with Troy (1994) but in some cases differing such as our *d* (not *dj*) for /d/ before /i/.

countered, and become somewhat familiar with, at Sydney and Parramatta, and which has been recognised as a dialect of the Sydney Language.²

Dixon (1980:9–10) recognises this expedition as the first to reveal that Australia was a multilingual continent.³ Of course, this is a fact which would have been well known to the Aborigines themselves, and was probably known by the Macassans who frequented Arnhem Land, but it had previously been assumed by Europeans that only one language would be spoken throughout Australia. In 1770, along with Joseph Banks and certain other members sailing aboard the *Endeavour*, Captain Cook had collected a list of words from the people living on what the Englishmen christened the Endeavour River (in what is now north Queensland) and he described this as ‘a short vocabulary ... in the New Holland language’.⁴ This list, the earliest known wordlist recorded of an Aboriginal language, is now recognised as the Guugu Yimidhirr language, but a copy of it was brought along with the First Fleet in order to aid communication with the Aboriginal people living at the site of the proposed convict colony that eventually took root at Sydney Cove in Port Jackson, just north of Botany Bay (the spot originally chosen as the landing place of the First Fleet). When the Iyura speakers living around Port Jackson were confronted with unknown words from an Australian language over two thousand kilometres away, they naturally thought the words belonged to the language of the Englishmen.⁵ For their part, the Englishmen were at a loss to explain why the inhabitants didn’t understand their own language. The 1791 expedition to the Hawkesbury under Phillip provided the information needed to resolve this mystery.

A detailed examination of this expedition also reveals that many other important linguistic and ethnographic observations were made. The purpose of this paper is to provide a recounting of this expedition which highlights those points of ethnographic and linguistic significance, as well as detailing the evidence that was collected to support the claim that Australia is a multilingual continent. Along the way we propose revision to some ideas on boundaries and basis of group identifications.

2 We follow Troy (1992, 1994) in using ‘Sydney Language’ as a cover term for the varieties making up the language of Sydney and environs, rather than a particular name from the records, notably Dharuk. We do however use Iyura (Eora) as a convenient label for the variety spoken at Port Jackson and the sea coast, mindful of Attenbrow’s (2002:35–36) discussion of its origin.

3 Troy (1993:43–44) limited the geographical scope—‘For two years it was believed that there was only one Aboriginal language in the Sydney region. This fallacy was exposed when Phillip, in April 1791, explored [...]’—but it does seem that the colonists’ belief extended to all of New Holland, from their discussion of the Endeavour River vocabulary. Newton (1987) also discusses the topic.

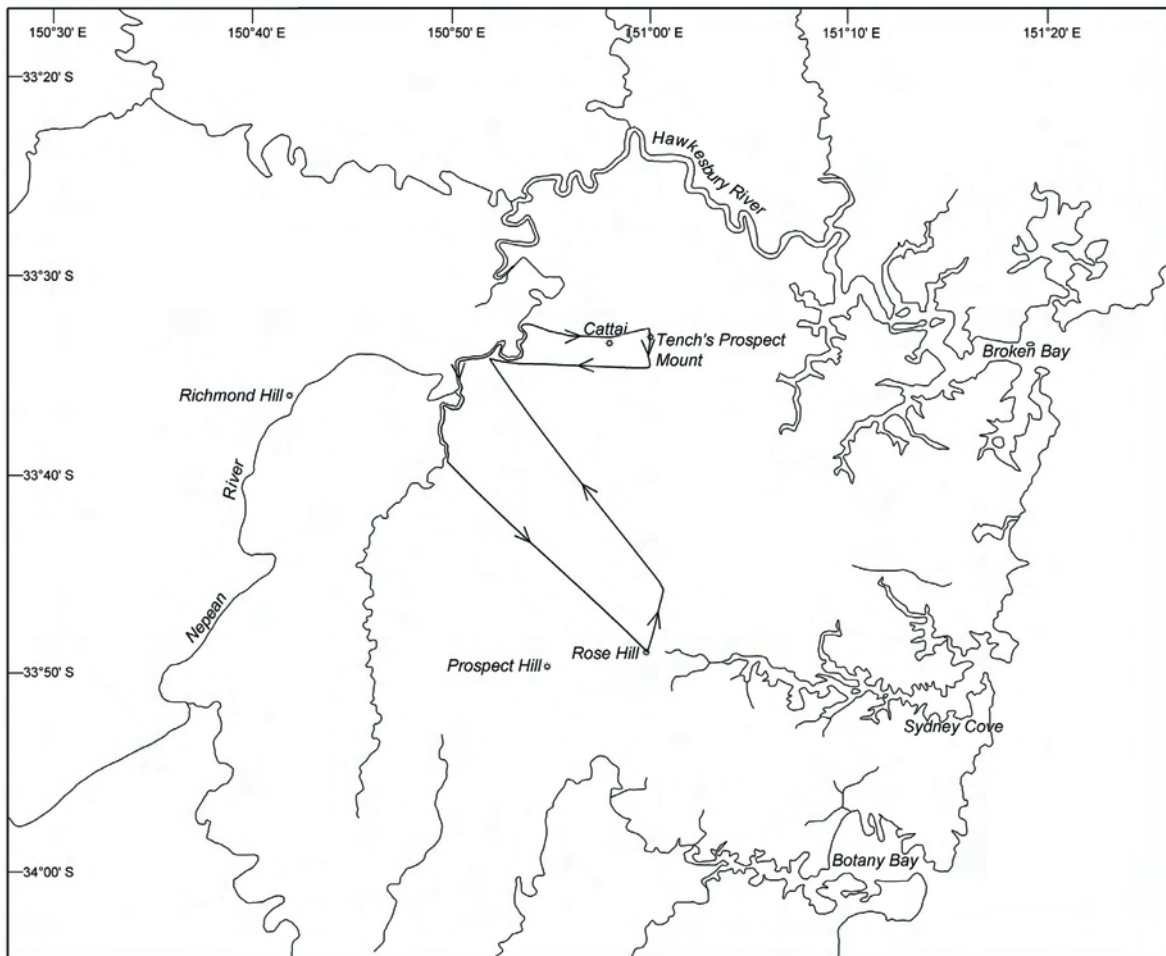
4 In Beaglehole and Skelton (1955:411). See also Cook’s journal for 10 July 1770 <http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/cook/17700710.html> and the map http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/maps/44_endeavour.html. The 10 July 1770 encounter, when Cook noted ‘neither us nor Tupia [the Tahitian] could understand one word they said’, presaged the later realisations that Australia was different linguistically from the South Seas.

5 Tench (1961 [1793]:51) records the Iyura application of the word ‘kangaroo’ (Guugu Yimidhirr *gangurru* ‘large black kangaroo’), as follows:

Whatever animal is shewn them, a dog excepted, they call kangaroo: a strong presumption that the wild animals of the country are very few. Soon after our arrival at Port Jackson, I was walking out near a place where I observed a party of Indians, busily employed in looking at some sheep in an inclosure, and repeatedly crying out, Kangaroo, kangaroo!

As Dixon (1980:9) observes ‘[t]here were plenty of Kangaroos around Sydney Cove but the Dharuk people [sc. the Iyura] did not recognise this word; indeed they thought they were being taught an English generic term and enquired whether cows were a type of kangaroo!’

Compare Tench’s comments here with those given after his experiences on the trip to the Hawkesbury (these are quoted in §2.6).



Map 18.1: Sketch of route traversed in April 1791, after Campbell (1926)

The retelling is based on the published accounts of three members of the expedition Arthur Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:340–348), Watkin Tench (Tench 1961 [1793]:223–234), and David Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:506, 512–513). The linguistic notebooks of another member of the expedition, William Dawes, found their way into the Marsden Collection at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and came to the attention of Australianists only in 1972. These unpublished notebooks contain linguistic information which adds significantly to our understanding of the observations made during the expedition. Wood's (1926) retelling provides a helpful reassessment, and instigated Campbell's (1926:37–39) plotting of the route, drawing also on Dawes' (1793) map.

It is important to realise that none of the significant finds made during the excursion to the Hawkesbury would have been possible had it not been for the fact that two Iyura men, Gulbi of the Gadigal and Baludiri, accompanied the expedition and were the actual points of contact with the various people encountered on the trip.⁶ The actions of Gulbi and Baludiri during the trip, their relations with the English members of the expedition, and their interactions with members of other tribes are also highlighted and examined in this paper. In two hundred years a lot more information and understanding concerning the culture and beliefs of different Australian Aboriginal groups has emerged, and attitudes which characterised the first colonisers

⁶ McBryde (1989) collects the recorded details about Gulbi (Colebe) and Baludiri (Baloderree), and reproduces portraits of them.

are no longer current. In this light, it is possible to give new interpretations to many of the events which occurred in April 1791.

2. The Expedition

2.1 11 April 1791—the meeting with Bariwan of the Burubirangal

The expedition began from the Governor's house in Parramatta (Rose Hill) on Monday 11 April 1791, and the party comprised 21 people including Gulbi (Colbee, Colebe); Baludiri (Boladeree, Ballederry), Governor Phillip, Captain Collins (judge-advocate) and his servant, Captain Tench, Lieutenant Dawes, Mr White (principal surgeon), two sergeants, eight privates, and three gamekeepers (i.e. 'three convicts who were good marksmen' [Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:340]). It was hoped that Gulbi and Baludiri would provide 'much information relating to the country; as no one doubted that they were acquainted with every part of it between the sea-coast and the river Hawkesbury.' However, it appears that Gulbi and Baludiri volunteered to go on the trip because they had believed that 'Governor Phillip and his party came from the settlement to kill ducks and patagorongs [sc. *patagarang* 'the grey kangaroo']; but finding that they did not stop at the places where those animals were seen in any numbers, they were at a loss to know why the journey was taken' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:344).

Not understanding anything about Aboriginal attachment and rights to land, and believing that anyone that Gulbi and Baludiri met on the trip would be a 'countryman' and acquaintance of theirs, the Englishmen were surprised that, at a very short distance from Parramatta (Rose Hill), Gulbi and Baludiri claimed no knowledge of the area which they were in (Tench 1961 [1793]:225), and throughout the trip demonstrated their reluctance to pass uninvited through the country of other groups. In the early part of the trip, at a point approximately four or five miles north of Parramatta, Gulbi (Colbee, Colebe) and Baludiri (Boladeree, Ballederry) 'informed them that this part of the country was inhabited by the Bidjigals, but that most of the tribe were dead of the small-pox' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:340). As they proceeded further inland, moving north 34° west towards the Hawkesbury, Gulbi informed the party that the people who lived inland were called the Burubirangal,⁷ and that these people lived on birds and animals, having no fish (Tench 1961 [1793]:225).

The party stopped for the night of 11 April approximately ten miles to the north of Parramatta, and about an hour after sunset some voices were heard in the wood, and Gulbi and Baludiri, having 'caught the sound instantaneously, and bidding us to be silent, listened attentively to the quarter whence it had proceeded' (Tench 1961 [1793]:225).

7 The original spellings are Boð-roo-ber-on-gal in Tench (1961 [1793]:225); Bu-ru-be-ron-gal in Phillip's journal in Hunter (1968 [1793]:342); and Burubirangál in Dawes (1791:46a) where the 'ng' is actually represented by an engma symbol that Dawes used to represent a simple velar nasal. In our spelling, Burubirangal, the *ng* represents a velar nasal.

Burubirangal has an analysis in the Sydney Language: as *buru* '(Eastern Grey) kangaroo', *-birang* associative suffix, and the gentilic suffix *-gal*. In the coastal dialect, there is a morphophonological rule which changed the initial stop consonant of a suffix to the homorganic nasal when that suffix was attached to a stem ending in a nasal. So the name literally means 'people associated with/characterised by the (grey) Kangaroo'. It may be an ecological typifier term (perhaps indicating that the group so designated had the grey Kangaroo as a primary form of game). However, Wood (2005:17) also suggests that Burubirang may have been a place name, pointing out that none of the other named community groups in the Sydney region carry *-birang* (i.e. Bidyigal, Gwiyagal, Dugugal, Badugal etc. are all plain). These terms are often formed on the name of the place where the group lives (or the place with which the group has a primary affiliation), which supports Wood's hypothesis.

<i>Boorubiragal</i>		<i>Coasters</i>	<i>E.</i>
<i>Gyinde</i>	-----	<i>Gyine</i>	
<i>Bündung</i>		<i>Bünung</i>	<i>Knee</i>
<i>Münduru</i>	-----	<i>Münuru</i>	<i>Hand</i>
<i>me</i>	-----	<i>mi</i>	<i>Eye</i>
<i>Mijer</i>			
<i>Mandouwe</i>	-----	<i>Mandouwe</i>	<i>Foot</i>

Plate 18.1: Dawes' (1791:46a) comparative table, cf. Table 18.1. © SOAS
Dawes online <http://www.hrelp.org/dawes/>

After listening for a while it was decided that Gulbi and Baludiri would make contact with the strangers, and they moved a little distance from the party and Gulbi 'gave them [i.e. the strangers] a loud hollow cry' (Tench 1961 [1793]:225), after which 'there was whooping and shouting on both sides' (Tench 1961 [1793]:225). Gulbi and Baludiri remained cautious at the meeting and as the voice of a stranger drew nearer 'they asked everyone else to lie down and be silent' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:341) while they made contact. Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:341) records that '[a] light was now seen in the woods, and, our natives advancing towards it a pretty long conversation ensued between them and the stranger, who approached them with great precaution.' Tench (1961 [1793]:226) notes that '[t]he first words which we could distinctly understand were, "I am Colbee of the tribe of Cåd-i-gal"', to which 'the stranger replied, "I am Bèr-ee-wan, of the tribe Boorooberongal"'. Bariwan (recorded as Bu-ro-wan in Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:342) was about 30 years old (according to Tench) and '[h]is hair was ornamented with the tails of several small animals' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:342). Phillip observes that Bariwan 'had preserved all his teeth', suggesting that he belonged to a group which did not practice tooth evulsion as a form of initiation. He was very reluctant to come into such a large camp, especially one full of whitemen, but Gulbi managed to coax him in and Bariwan was introduced to everyone, with Gulbi and Baludiri calling out the name of everyone who was present. Apparently Bariwan had a stone hatchet, a spear and a throwing-stick with him, but the sources disagree as to whether he came into the camp unarmed or not; Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:342) claims that Gulbi and Baludiri wanted Bariwan to leave his weapons, but he refused, while Tench (1961 [1793]:226) claims that '[h]e came to us unarmed, having left his spears at a little distance'.

Bariwan stayed for a long conversation with Gulbi and Baludiri. Gulbi related that Bariwan had no canoe and he lived as a hunter. It appears that he had been out hunting with his dogs and a small party of other people when they were summoned by Gulbi's calls. Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:341) notes that 'a little boy who was with him carried the fire, which was a piece of the bark of the tea-tree'.

2.1.1 The linguistic significance of the meeting with Bariwan

It is important to note that, for all the important pieces of ethnographic information this first encounter contains, none of the published sources suggests that Bariwan spoke a noticeably different language from Gulbi and Baludiri. Thus, although mode of living (hunting instead of fishing), aspects of material culture (lack of canoe), and ritual practices (lack of tooth evulsion), were different from the coastal dwellers, the language at this spot appears to be substantially the same. Interestingly, Dawes (1791:46a) records a very brief comparative word list (Table 18.1, Plate 18.1), with the headings *Burubirangál*, *Coasters*, and *E* (for English), which strongly suggests that the language of Burubirangal and Iyura were sister dialects, and also indicates an interesting, and regular, dialectal distinction.

Table 18.1: Dawes' comparative list of Burubirangal and Iyura words, cf. Plate 18.1

<i>Burubirangál</i>	<i>Coasters</i>	<i>E.</i>
Ngyindi	Ngyini	
Bundung	Bunung	Knee
Mundururu	Munuru	Navel
Me	Mi	Eye
Mandaouwi	Manaouwi	Foot

Although the first line of Dawes' comparative list does not have an English gloss, the forms are clearly those of the 2nd person singular pronoun 'you' (see Table 18.2 below). What Dawes appears to have observed is that Burubirangal and Iyura are substantially similar bar a few differences in pronunciation. In particular, there is a regular correspondence such that words in Burubirangal with an *nd* correspond to cognate forms which show only *n*. In fact, this appears to be a regular difference between Iyura and all of its sister dialects, as is demonstrated by the following set of correspondences.⁸

Table 18.2: Comparative list demonstrating that words with *nd* in the 'Dharruk' and 'Georges River' dialects of the Sydney Language correspond to words with *n* in the Iyura dialect

Dharruk Matthews (1901)	'Georges River' Rowley (1878)	Iyura
nyindi '2nd singular'	nindi 'you'	ngyini 'you' [Dawes] gnee-ne 'you' [Collins]
kukundi 'laughing jackass'	kogunda 'laughing jackass'	go-gan-ne-gine 'laughing jackass' [Collins]
bindhi 'belly'	bindi 'stomach'	binny 'with young' [Hunter] bin-niee 'pregnant' [Collins] ^a

⁸ It is possible that some words in Iyura varied between having only *n* and having *nd*. The only piece of evidence for this is that Dawes records *ngana* meaning 'black' while in the list attributed to Hunter **nan** is glossed as 'black'. Note that in Dharawal, which adjoins Iyura to the south, the word for 'black' is *nganda*.

Dharruk Mathews (1901)	'Georges River' Rowley (1878)	Iyura
dundi 'scorpion'		dtooney 'scorpion' [Dawes]
mundu 'mouth'		moonoo 'the bill of a bird' [Hunter]
kunda 'smell' (verb)		gu-na-murra 'a stink or bad smell' [Hunter]
jandiga 'laugh' (verb)		janna 'laugh' [Dawes] jen-ni-be 'laughter' [Collins]
	mundowo 'leg'	ma-no-e 'foot' [Collins] manouwi 'foot' [Dawes]

^a It is common in Australian languages for the word for pregnant to be based on the word for 'belly; stomach'. For instance, in Arrernte the word for 'belly; stomach' is *atnerte* and one word which means 'pregnant' is the reduplication of this form *atnerte-atnerte*. Within the series of dialects under discussion it is important to note that in his grammar of Dharruk, Mathews gives **bindhiwurra** 'pregnant' as well as **bindhi** 'belly'.

The meeting with Bariwan of the Burubirangal is not the event which captured the linguistic interests of the majority of the party; that was to come two days later on the Hawkesbury. Still, as noted above, it is significant precisely because of the keen linguistic observations that Dawes makes, and the lack of linguistic observations in the published works. A new group, the Burubirangal, are introduced, their position can be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy, and the evidence strongly supports the contention that they spoke the same language as the Iyura, albeit a different dialect.

2.2 12 April 1791—the expedition reaches the Hawkesbury

The party set off early on Tuesday 12 April 1791, and continued to move in a northwesterly direction towards the Hawkesbury River, which they reached in just over two hours. At this point it was reckoned 'that the party were now eighteen miles and an half from Rose-Hill, which bore from them north 28° west' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:342). Tench recorded Gulbi and Baludiri's reaction:

Our natives had evidently never seen this river before; they stared at it in surprise, and talked to each other. Their total ignorance of the country and of the direction in which they had walked appeared when they were asked which way Rose Hill lay; for they pointed almost oppositely to it.' (Tench 1961 [1793]:226)

McLaren and Cooper (1996:34) summarise this as 'when the expedition came upon a major stream, the Aborigines demonstrated their total disorientation', and use it as evidence for their general thesis that 'when in unfamiliar territory they [Aboriginal guides] were often of no greater competence than the white explorers whom they were meant to be guiding'. Indeed, the colonists did feel at this point that their idea of the party's location was superior to that of their guides. However, we disagree that the guides 'demonstrated their total disorientation' and venture an alternative interpretation: that the guides in their pointing gesture were anchoring themselves at Rose Hill and indicating, as if from there, the party's location.⁹ This

⁹ Nash has seen this kind of remotely anchored gesture made by Aboriginal men in the central Northern Territory.

interpretation, if correct, would explain why the pointing was ‘almost oppositely’ (rather than in some random direction, or not forthcoming at all), and is also consistent with the guides’ joy four days later, when the party headed for home.

Believing themselves to be to the west of Richmond Hill, the party moved down river towards the east. Gulbi and Baludiri, unlike their fellow travellers, walked unhindered and untroubled along the river side. Tench (1961 [1793]:227) writes that ‘[t]he hindrances ... which plagued and entangled us so much, seemed not to be heeded by them, and they wound through them with ease; but to us they were intolerably tiresome.’ Tench goes on to note that Gulbi and Baludiri derived great pleasure from the misfortunes of their English companions, and if any of the Englishmen were ‘to use any angry expression to them, they retorted in a moment, by calling them every opprobrious name which their language affords.’ An example of this is ‘Gon-in-Pat-ta’ (*guna-yin bada shit-ABL eat*) ‘eat shit!’.¹⁰

In the afternoon, the group came upon a hut which Gulbi and Baludiri wished to destroy since it ‘belonged to their enemies’ (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:343). The accounts differ at this point; the dispatch from Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:342–343) says that Governor Phillip prevented Gulbi and Baludiri from destroying the hut, at which ‘they were much displeased’, while Tench (1961 [1793]:227) recounts that ‘Boladerree destroyed a native hut today very wantonly, before we could prevent him.’ The party came to a creek, now known as Cattai Creek, which they could not cross, and so they left the river to follow the course of the creek hoping to find a crossing place, or to go round its head. Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:343) observes that ‘when our party came to the creek already mentioned a native fled on their approach, leaving his fire, and some decayed wood he had drawn out of the creek for the purpose of procuring a large worm which is found in it and which they eat.’ Phillip notes that the wood had a strong smell which ‘cannot be distinguished from the foulest privy.’ Collins’ (1975 [1798–1802]:462) rendering of what is apparently the same encounter is worth quoting at length:

In an excursion to the Hawkesbury, we fell in with a native and his child on the banks of one of the creeks of that noble river. We had Cole-be with us, who endeavoured, but in vain, to bring him to a conference; he launched his canoe, and got away as expeditiously as he could, leaving behind him a specimen of his food and the delicacy of his stomach; a piece of water-soaked wood (part of the branch of a tree) full of holes, the lodgement of a large worm, named by them **cah-bro**, and which they extract and eat; but nothing could be more offensive than the smell of both the worm and its habitation. There is a tribe of natives dwelling inland, who, from the circumstance of their eating these loathsome worms, are named Cah-bro-gal.

These ‘worms’ are most likely a form of edible teredo (i.e. an edible shipworm) which, despite its worm-like appearance, is a mollusk. They bore into wood in estuarine, mangrove and ocean environments, and provided a food source for many Aboriginal communities, including communities living on the Georges River (the basic location of the ‘Cabrogal’, and the source of the city name Cabramatta).

Tench (1961 [1793]:227) notes that small fish bones were found in the fire of the man who went away. This encounter appears to be the most instructive find of the day. From it one can observe that, unlike Bariwan, the people living on the Hawkesbury had canoes and fished, and also procured from the water edible mollusks (i.e. edible ‘worms’). The expedition stopped to camp at the side of this creek at four o’clock in the afternoon.

¹⁰ Tench (1961 [1793]:227), in a footnote, observes that ‘[t]heir favourite term of reproach is *Go-nin-Pat-ta*, which signifies, *an eater of human excrement*.—Our language would admit a very concise and familiar translation’.

2.3 13 April 1791—the party discover they have been travelling in the wrong direction

The following morning, on Wednesday 13 April 1791, the party continued to follow the creek until they crossed its head, and then attempted to return back to the river along a northwesterly course. They were again foiled in their attempt, this time by a deep ravine. However, Mr White, the surgeon, ascended a hill to look around, and to the west he saw what appeared to be Richmond Hill, the object of their pursuit. The rest of the party climbed the hill to take a look for themselves, and Phillip confirmed that they had been travelling in the opposite direction from their target; Richmond Hill 'bore west by south, and appeared to be from eleven to thirteen miles distant, as near as could be determined' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:343). Tench (1961 [1793]:228) estimated that Richmond Hill was 'distant about eight miles.' Phillip named the 'pile of desolation' (Tench 1961 [1793]:228) from which these observations were made 'Tench's Prospect Mount'¹¹ since this was the first time Captain Tench had seen Richmond Hill. On discovering their error, they decided to return to the head of the creek which they had rounded earlier in the day and camp there for the night.

Early in their day's travels, before they had crossed the head of the creek, Tench (1961 [1793]:227–228) notes that the party 'mounted a hill and surveyed the contiguous country'¹² and from it saw 'a tree on fire and several other vestiges of the natives.' There are no further observations recorded for the 13 April concerning Aboriginal occupation of the area. Gulbi and Baludiri, although apparently cheerful, were no doubt at a loss to understand why they were now retracing their steps, and were very concerned to know when they would be returning home. As intruders in the country of another group, they were clearly feeling uncomfortable. Tench observes that Gulbi and Baludiri would 'point to the spot they are upon, and all around it, crying *Weè-ree*, *Weè-ree*, (bad) and immediately after mention the name of any other place to which they are attached, (Rose Hill or Sydney for instance) adding to it *Bud-ye-ree*, *Bud-ye-ree* (good).' It need not be assumed, as Tench appears to, that they were describing as bad the country that they were in. They could well have meant that it was dangerous for them to be where they were, and that it is bad to enter uninvited into an unfamiliar tribe's country. There is no doubt that they would have felt more comfortable in their own country where they had rights to fishing and hunting, and to which they had spiritual and kinship ties. Still, they remained in good spirits and, after the party stopped for the night, they entertained the others by mimicking the misfortunes that beleaguered the travellers during the day, imitating the leaping of the kangaroo, singing, dancing, and meeting each other with spear poised in a mock fight (Tench 1961 [1793]:228).

2.4 14 April 1791—the encounter with Gumbiri, Yalamundi, and Dyimba

Unlike the preceding couple of days, Thursday 14 April 1791 was to bring the party into direct contact with the inhabitants of the Hawkesbury. The expedition started early, crossed the creek, and headed back towards the river. After several hours they 'arrived on the borders of the river, and soon got to the place where they had first stopped in the morning of the 12th' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:344). At, or near, this place, they saw several canoes being paddled up the river, and Gulbi and Baludiri made the rest of the party lie down among the reeds while they attempted to contact the people in the canoes. However, at this stage, their calls were unheeded by the other party which had stopped on the opposite shore.

11 Fitzhardinge, who annotated the 1961 edition of Tench's journal, observes that this is now the site of Campbell Trig. Station (Tench 1961 [1793]:228, 324 n.10); this is 17.6 miles (28km) from Richmond Hill.

12 Fitzhardinge suggests that this is probably the site of Cattai Trig. Station (Tench 1961 [1793]:227, 324 n.9).

The expedition continued westward along the river until they came to another creek which blocked their way. This time, however, they were able to bridge the creek with a tree and continue across. It was at this time that a man paddled along side them in a canoe and entered into a short conversation with Gulbi and Baludiri, after which he came ashore, showing no signs of fear or worry, and joined the group. Gulbi and Baludiri ascertained that the people in the canoes were going up river to get the stones with which they make their axes. It appears that the place where they procure such stones was near Richmond Hill, 'which the old man said was a great way off, and the road to it was very bad' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:344).

Gulbi and Baludiri explained who everyone was, and in response the man returned to his canoe and collected two stone axes, two spears, and a spear thrower, all of which he presented to Governor Phillip. Phillip describes the spears and spear thrower as follows:

The spears were well made; one of them had a single barb of wood fixed on with gum, the other had two large barbs cut out of solid wood, and it was as finely brought to a point as if it had been made with the sharpest instrument. The throwing stick had a piece of hard stone fixed in gum instead of the shell which is commonly used by the natives who live on the sea coast; it is with these stones, which they bring to a very sharp edge, that the natives make their spears.

In return, the man was given two small metal hatchets, some fish-hooks, and some bread. Not knowing what bread was, Gulbi showed him that it was to be eaten, which he did without hesitation. (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345)

The expedition set off, continuing along the river, and the man followed along in his canoe. Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345) mentions that 'another canoe, with a woman and child, joined him'. When the man observed that the party was not taking the most sensible path, he got out of his canoe and led them to a path which had been made by the local inhabitants, and which followed along the river. At this point, Tench (1961 [1793]:229) observes that 'a canoe, also with a man and a boy in it, kept gently paddling up abreast of us'. Around four o'clock the party stopped and made camp for the night, and they were joined by the man who had led them, and the man and the boy from the canoe. It was clear that these three people planned to join them for the night, 'though their families were on the opposite bank, and they had two fires lighted' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345).

The older man was named Gumbiri (Phillip records *Go-me-bee-re*; Tench records, *Gombeè-ree*, and Anon 1790–1791 records *Gome-bee-re*). He is described by Tench (1961 [1793]:229) as 'a man of middle age, with an open cheerful countenance, marked with the small pox, and distinguished by a nose of uncommon magnitude and dignity'. The younger man, believed to be the son of Gumbiri, was named Yalamundi (Phillip records *Yal-lah-mien-di*; Tench records *Yèl-lo-mun-dee*; Collins records *Yel-lo-mun-dy*; and Anon 1790–1791 records *Yello-mundy* or *Yellah-munde*). Phillip states (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345) that Baludiri said that Yalamundi was bad, but this may be another misunderstanding of how the word *wiri* 'bad; dangerous; powerful' can be used. Given that Yalamundi is later found to be a *garadi* 'doctor; sorcerer' of some note, it may be that Baludiri was indicating that Yalamundi was a powerful, indeed dangerous, man. Neither of the two men had lost their front tooth. The youngest, 'a lively little boy' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345), was believed to be Yalamundi's son, and, therefore, Gumbiri's grandson. This boy's name was Dyimba (perhaps *Diyimba*, cf. *diyìn* 'woman' (Dixon 1980:9); Phillip records *Jim-bah*; Tench records *Dèe-im-ba*; and Anon records *DJimba* or *Jimbah*).

Gumbiri, Yalamundi, and Dyimba were at ease in the camp, and 'all sides continued to chat and entertain each other' (Tench 1961 [1793]:231). The party were able to learn that Gumbiri's tribe lived chiefly on the small animals which they killed and the roots, particularly a species of wild yam, which they dug up. This diet was occasionally supplemented with

the mullets that the women fished from the river. Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:464) recounts that '[w]e were told, on the banks of the Hawkesbury, that all the men there, and inland, had two wives', and Tench (1961 [1793]:230) also records this fact.

The Englishmen wanted Gulbi and Baludiri to ask why Gumbiri and Yalamundi had not lost their front tooth, and whether or not that custom was practised within their group, but this made Gulbi and Baludiri uneasy and they steadfastly refused to talk about such matters. Tench (1961 [1793]:230) wrongly attributes this reluctance to talk about tooth evulsion to a notion that it was a 'mark of subjection imposed by the tribe of Cameragal, (who are certainly the most powerful community in the country) on the weaker tribes around them'. In fact, throughout Australia, initiation rites are a secret and sacred aspect of the personal life of both individuals and tribes which cannot be talked about publicly, especially with strangers. It may also have been that they wished to avoid overt reference to a difference between peoples. Thus, Gulbi's and Baludiri's refusal to discuss these matters is totally expected within the Australian context.

Gumbiri showed them all the scar left by a spear which had pierced him in the side and which apparently penetrated to quite a depth. Tench records (1961 [1793]:231–232) that Gumbiri related the details of how, where, and why he was speared to Gulbi, after which ensued a discussion of the wars 'and, as effects lead to causes, probably of the gallantries of the district, for the word which signified a woman was often repeated.' Gulbi, for his part, appears to have passed on detailed information concerning the colonisation of Sydney and Parramatta, informing them 'who we [i.e. the Englishmen] were; of the numbers at Sydney and Rose Hill; of the stores we possessed; and above all, of the good things which were to found among us' (Tench 1961 [1793]:232).

2.4.1 Description of ceremony performed by Yalamundi to cure Gulbi

Gulbi also showed one of his wounds to Gumbiri and Yalamundi, one which was causing him pain, and Yalamundi, who was a *garadi* 'doctor, sorcerer', performed a ceremony to alleviate the problem. The ceremony is recorded by Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:346), Tench (1961 [1793]:232), and Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:494) and the events appear to have unfolded as follows. While Gulbi, Baludiri, Gumbiri, and Yalamundi were sitting in conversation, Gulbi suddenly asked for some water, and Tench gave him a cupful. Gulbi presented the cup 'with great seriousness' (Tench) to Yalamundi who took a mouthful of water which he squirted just below Gulbi's left breast, the location of the wound. Yalamundi then proceeded to suck strongly at the affected area just below the nipple. He sucked 'as long as he could without taking breath' (Phillip) and then, appearing to be sick, he rose up from the seated Gulbi, and walked about for a few minutes. These same steps were repeated three times, and on the final occasion of his sucking at Gulbi's wound Yalamundi appeared, 'by drawing in his stomach, to feel the pain he had drawn from the breast of his patient' (Phillip) and he appeared 'to receive something into his mouth, which was drawn from the breast' (Tench). Yalamundi arose for the final time, retreated a few paces, put his hand to his mouth and extracted something which he threw into the river. On his return to the fireside, Gulbi assured the onlookers that the *garadi* 'doctor' had extracted *bula duwal* (two short-spear)¹³ 'two short spears' from his breast. Phillip describes the conclusion of the ceremony as follows:

Before this business was finished, the doctor felt his patient's back below the shoulder, and seemed to apply his fingers as if he twitched something out; after which he sat down by the patient and put his right arm round his back. The old man, at the same time, sat down on the other side of the patient, with his face the contrary way, and clasped him

13 Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:346) in fact records *Bul-ler-doo-ul*, and is the only one to note this term.

round the breast with his right arm. Each of them had hold of one of the patient's hands, in which situation they remained few minutes.

Thus ended the ceremony, and Colebe said he was well. He gave his worsted night cap and the best part of his supper to the doctor as a fee; ... (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:346)

The sources disagree as to what was actually sucked out of the breast: some believed that it was two barbs of a fishing spear (i.e. a 'fizgig' or muting); Phillip contended that it was 'two pains'; Collins that it was 'the barbs of two spears'; and Tench that it was 'two splinters of a spear'. In a note to Phillip's account (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:435), Elkin suggests 'Colebe's reference was probably to the extraction of two pointing bones, invisible spears'. Elkin's position gains some support from the fact that Phillip and Tench both observe that there was no apparent scar at the supposed site of the wound, suggesting that it was probably believed by Gulbi and the others to be of supernatural origin. Whatever the cause of Gulbi's pain, he 'was satisfied with the car-rah-dy's efforts to serve him, and thought himself perfectly relieved' (Collins 1975 [1798–1802]:494). Gulbi assured the Englishmen that Yalamundi was 'a Cár-ad-ye, or Doctor of renown', and 'Baludiri added, that not only he, but all the rest of his tribe were Cár-ad-ye of especial note and skill' (Tench 1961 [1793]:232). Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:346) was given to believe that both men were *garadigan* 'doctors', as was the boy, and from this he 'presumed the power of healing wounds descends from father to son'.

Tench (1961 [1793]:232) records that '[t]he Doctors remained with us all night, sleeping before the fire in the fullness of good faith and security.' Dyimba slept in his father's arms, and 'whenever the man was inclined to shift his position, he first put over the child, with great care, and then turned round him' (Tench 1961 [1793]:233).

2.5 15 April 1791, Part 1—a description of Gumbiri's method of climbing trees

The next morning, Friday 15 April 1791, Gumbiri, Yalamundi and Dyimba stayed for breakfast, and before departing Gumbiri demonstrated how to climb trees in pursuit of small game. He asked for an axe, but declined the Englishmen's hatchet, preferring a familiar stone axe. The tree he chose to climb, no doubt a species of gum tree, had smooth slippery bark, was perfectly straight, and was about four feet in diameter. He used the axe to cut notches in the tree, and the first notch, which was about two and a half feet above the ground, was a foot hold for the left foot (Tench 1961 [1793]:233). Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345) records that '[t]hese notches are cut in the bark a little more than an inch deep, which receives the ball of the great toe; the first and second notches are cut from the ground; the rest they cut as they ascend, and at such a distance from each other that when both their feet are in the notches the right foot is raised nearly as high as the middle of the left thigh.' In order to raise himself up, Gumbiri held the axe in his mouth and used both of his hands to hold the tree as he thrust himself upwards. Apparently, 'when cutting the notch the weight of the body rests on the ball of the great toe' and '[t]he fingers of the left hand are also fixed in a notch cut on the side of the tree for that purpose, if it is too large to admit their clasping it sufficiently with the left arm to keep the body close to the tree' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:345).

Although the Englishmen had occasionally seen the inhabitants of Sydney and Parramatta climb trees in like manner, Gumbiri amazed them with his great agility; with no effort at all he had quickly raised himself to a height of about twenty feet, and was able to descend with equal ease. Tench (1961 [1793]:233) reports that '[t]o us it was a matter of astonishment; but to him it was sport; for while employed thus, he kept talking to those below, and laughing immoderately.' Given that the tribes living inland in the wooded areas appear to have been dependent on climbing trees for their subsistence, it is not surprising that they were so adept at it, nor is it surprising that the Iyura called them 'climbers of trees' (Phillip in Hunter 1968:

345). Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:462) observes that '[t]he natives who live in the woods, and on the margins of rivers are compelled to seek a different subsistence [i.e. from those on the coast], and are driven to a harder exercise of their abilities to procure it. This is evinced in the hazard and toil with which they ascend the tallest trees after the opossum and flying squirrel.' Phillip (in Hunter 1968:345–346) adds that 'these people climb trees whose circumference is ten or fifteen feet, or upwards, after an opossum or a squirrel, though they rise to the height of sixty or eighty feet before there is a single branch.'

After Gumbiri's demonstration, each party went its own way. Tench (1961 [1793]:233) records that 'Colbee and Baladeree parted from them with a slight nod of the head, the usual salutation of the country; and we shook them by the hand, which they returned lustily.'

2.6 The linguistic significance of the encounter with the people on the Hawkesbury: details of the European 'discovery' of a multilingual Australia

The thing which most struck each person who recorded this encounter with Gumbiri, Yalamundi, and Dyimba, is the fact that the language that they spoke was noticeably different from Iyura. It is worth quoting each of the sources in detail on this point. Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:506) observes:

The dialect spoken by the natives at Sydney not only differs entirely from that left us by Captain Cook of the people with whom he had intercourse to the northward (about Endeavour river) but also from that spoken by those natives who lived at Port Stephens, and to the southward of Botany Bay (about Adventure Bay), as well as on the banks of the Hawkesbury. We often heard, that people from the northward had been met with, who could not be exactly understood by our friends; but *this is not so wonderful as that people living at the distance of only fifty or sixty miles should call the sun and moon by different names; such, however, was the fact. In an excursion to the banks of the Hawkesbury, accompanied by two Sydney natives, we first discovered this difference; but our companions conversed with the river natives without any apparent difficulty, each understanding or comprehending the other.* [emphasis ours]

After mentioning certain comparisons of mode of living and daily life, Tench (1961 [1793]:230–231) notes:

These are petty remarks. But one variety struck us more forcibly. Although our natives and the strangers conversed on a par, and understood each other perfectly, yet they spoke different dialects of the same language; many of the most common and necessary words, used in life, bearing no similitude, and others being slightly different.

That these diversities arise from want of intercourse with the people on the coast, can hardly be imagined, as the distance inland is but thirty-eight miles; and from Rose Hill not more than twenty, where the dialect of the sea coast is spoken. It deserves notice, that all the different terms seemed to be familiar to both parties, though each in speaking preferred its own.*

...

* ... After this, it can not be thought extraordinary, that the little vocabulary, inserted in Mr. Cooke's account of this part of the world, should appear defective; even were we not to take in *the great probability of the dialects at Endeavour river, and Van Dieman's land*,¹⁴ differing from that spoken at Port Jackson. And it remains to be proved, that the animal, called here Pat-a-ga-ram, is not there called Kangaroo. [emphasis ours]

14 Tench's reference here must be to the ten words recorded by Anderson, Cook's Surgeon, on 29 January 1777 at Adventure Bay in what is now Tasmania, which are quite different from the 1770 vocabulary of Endeavour River, as noted at the time (Cook and King 1784:Volume 1, Chapter VI). Given the great difference between the Endeavour River and Adventure Bay vocabularies, the First Fleeters had little reason to expect a similar language at Port Jackson, unless they believed the Endeavour R. vocabulary was recorded at the landfall near Sydney—see below.

Tench's secondary observation, that 'though each in speaking preferred its own' is the first note of what has been termed bilingual conversation (Nash 1992:8), which has been reported in a number of multilingual contexts around Australia.

Finally, in a letter to Banks, Phillip wrote:¹⁵

It was a matter of great surprise to me when I first arrived in this Country, to find that the words used by the natives when you was here, were not understood by the present inhabitants, but in my last little journey, I found on the banks of the Hawkesbury, people who made use of several words we could not understand, and it soon appeared that they had a language different from that used by those natives we have hitherto been acquainted with. They did not call the Moon, *Yan-ne-dah*, but *Con-do-in*, they called the Penis *Bud-da*, which our natives call *Ga-dia*. *Two of those natives who have lived amongst us for some time were with us, and it was from them that we understood that our new friends had a language different from theirs ... I now think it very probable that several languages may be common on different parts of the coast, or inland, and that some tribe may have driven away the people you found on this part of the coast.* [emphasis ours]

This passage strongly suggests that Phillip was under the misapprehension that the Endeavour River vocabulary (the only one from New Holland from the 1770 voyage) was recorded at the landfall near Sydney (i.e. Botany Bay); cf. footnote 15.

Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:347) also records that:

the names they gave to several parts of the body were such as the natives about Sydney had never been heard to make use of. *Ga-dia* (the penis), they called *Cud-da* [sic; a publishing error, sc. *Bud-da*—DPW]; *Go-rey* (the ear), they called *Ben-ne*; in the word *mi* (the eye) they pronounced the letter I as an E. And in many other instances their pronunciation varied, so that *there is good reason to believe several different languages are spoken by the natives of this country, and this accounts for only one or two of those words given in Captain Cook's vocabulary having ever been heard amongst the natives who visited the settlement.* [emphasis ours]

Thus, this encounter brought the first definite realisation that there were a number of languages spoken in Australia, that these languages might contain some similar vocabulary items, and that Australian Aborigines were frequently multilingual and/or multidialectal. As Dixon (1980:9–10) observed, this expedition resolved the enigma of 'the lack of correspondence between the local language and the Cook/Banks vocabulary'; '[t]here were A NUMBER OF distinct languages spoken on the continent' and it is '[s]mall wonder that if a different language were spoken only 40 miles from Sydney there should be little in common between the Sydney language and the earlier vocabularies that had in fact been gathered at the Endeavour River, 2,000 miles to the north.'

Phillip was not the only one to substantiate his observations with comparative linguistic evidence. In fact, both Tench (1961 [1793]:231) and Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:512–513) published tables comparing items of basic vocabulary of Iyura with that of the people at the Hawkesbury. A list of items headed *Words used by the Natives in the Hawkesbury* also appears in Anon (1790–1791), the third Sydney notebook.¹⁶ This list is as follows:

15 Governor Arthur Phillip to Banks, 3 December 1791. Number 20 of Series 37: letters with related papers and journal extract, received from Banks from Arthur Phillip 1787–1792, 1794–1796. Sir Joseph Banks' papers. State Library of NSW. http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/banks/series_37/37_20.cfm Frames 100, 101 and 102. Also cited by Dixon (1980:9) and Attenbrow (2002:34 n.160, 191).

16 This anonymous notebook is held with Dawes' two notebooks in the Library of SOAS in London. Troy (1992:155–156, 1993:45) justifies her attribution of its authorship to Collins, Phillip and Hunter.

Words used by the Natives in the Hawkesbury

Bod-da	the Penis
Bo-roo-bal	hair
Bo-roo	Scrotum
Ma-ree-my	Testicles
Con-do-in	Moon

The items in the above list, along with Tench's, Phillip's, and Collins' comparative data have been amalgamated to form Table 18.3. Note that Collins introduces his table by saying 'The following difference of dialect was observed between the natives at the Hawkesbury and at Sydney.', and then gives the three columns in the table the following headings: 'Coast', 'Inland', and 'English'. Tench heads the columns of his table 'English', 'Name on the sea coast', and 'Name at the Hawkesbury' (reprinted in Troy 1993:44). Nowhere in Tench's or Collins' discussion of the meeting with the people on the Hawkesbury is a tribal or language name given, nor in Phillip's letter to Banks. Phillip (in Hunter 1968 [1793]:520) gives the impression that these people were also Burubirangal like Buriwan (cf. §2.1), and seems to treat the name as a cover term for inlanders.¹⁷ Given the silence of the other sources on this point, along with apparent linguistic, cultural, and geographic differences (see below), it seems improbable that Gumbiri, Yalamundi, and Dyimba belong to the Burubirangal group.

Table 18.3: Vocabulary collected on the Hawkesbury during the April 1791 expedition, and the comparisons with Iyura made by Phillip (P), Collins (C), and Tench (T); (A) is Anon (1790–1791)

<i>English</i>	<i>Iyura</i> (at the Coast)	<i>On the Hawkesbury</i> (Inland)
Head	Ca-ber-ra (C)	Co-co
Hair	De-war-ra (C); Deè-war-a (T)	Ke-war-ra (C); Keè-war-a (T); Bo-roo-bal (A)
Forehead	Gnul-lo (C); Nùl-lo (T)	Nar-ran (C); Nar-ràn (T)
Eye	Mi (C & P)	Me (C & P)
Ear	Go-ray (C); Goo-reè (T); Go-rey (P)	Ben-ne (C); Bèn-na; Ben-ne (P)

17 Attenbrow (2002:34 n.160, 191) proposes that this 'may have been a misunderstanding on the part of Stockdale who compiled this version of Phillip's reports.' Tindale (1974:127) in his 'Discussion and comments on tribes, New South Wales tribes' makes the same unwarranted conflation:

The boundary between the Eora and the Daruk, who lived northwest of Sydney, was first established by observations during Governor Arthur Phillip's explorations in April 1791. Having ventured beyond the hordal territory of the Bidjigal, somewhat north of Castle Hill, his party was preparing to camp when his aboriginal companions came upon a young man and a boy who of another tribe and spoke a different language or dialect. Subsequently, on the Hawkesbury River a few miles farther north, the governor met the same man and others of his horde, the Buruberongal. They were in possession of several canoes. Their camp was on the northern bank of the river but there were indications of their presence farther south. Phillip's native helpers who had discovered a camp made by a hunter in the bush south of the river wished to destroy it on an excuse that it belonged to an enemy. Their own evident lack of security seemed to imply that they were very close to their own tribal boundary. Information on Eora hordes is incomplete. ...'

<i>English</i>	<i>Iyura (at the Coast)</i>	<i>On the Hawkesbury (Inland)</i>
Neck	Cad-lian (C); Càl-ang (T)	Gang-a (C); Gan-gà (T)
Belly	Ba-rong (C); Bar-an`g (T)	Ben-de (C); Bin`-dee (T)
Navel	Moo-nur-ro (C); Mùn-ee-ro (T)	Boom-boong (C); Boom-bon`g
Thigh	Tàr-a (T)	Dàr-a (T)
Buttocks	Boong (C and T)	Bay-ley (C); Bay-leè (T)
Penis	Ga-dia or Ga-diay(P)	Bud-da (P); Bod-da (A)
Scrotum		Bo-roo (A)
Testicles		Ma-ree-my (A)
Moon	Yen-na-dah (C); Yèn-ee-da (T); Yan-ne-dah (P)	Dil-luck (C); Con-dò-en (T); Con-do-in (P & A)
Sun	Co-ing (C)	Con-do-in (C) ^a
Hail	Gora (C)	Go-ri-ba (C)
Laughing Jackass	Go-gen-ne-gine (C)	Go-con-de (C)

^a This would appear to be a mistake on Collins' part; the form he gives as the word for 'moon' on the Hawkesbury is **dil-luk**, which is well attested for Iyura, but not the Hawkesbury, and the word he gives for 'sun' on the Hawkesbury is the word the others record for 'moon'.

2.6.1 What language did Gumbiri, Yalamundi and Dyimba speak?

Given the significant differences in basic vocabulary that exist between Iyura (and the other varieties of the Sydney Language) and the linguistic variety spoken on the Hawkesbury, the question remains: what was the language of those people encountered on the Hawkesbury? We can begin exploring this question by noting that the discussion of the encounter with Gumbiri and his family suggests that the group to which he belonged were associated with the northern shore of the Hawkesbury. While canoeing up the river it is reported that members of Gumbiri's party landed several times on the northern shore, the bulk of Gumbiri's group camped the night of the 14 April on the northern shore, and the purpose of their journey was to gather stones for axes around Mount Richmond on the northern shore.

Further evidence of the association of this group with the northern shore of the Hawkesbury is to be found in Tench's account (1961 [1793]:234–237) of another expedition to Mount Richmond which took place the following month. During this expedition—which was mounted on 24 May 1791, and involved Tench, Dawes, a sergeant, and a private—there was an encounter on the Hawkesbury with a man named Didura (Tench records Dee-do-rà) who 'appeared to know our friend Gombeeree, of whom he often spoke' (Tench 1961 [1793]: 235). This encounter was first initiated by Didura who called over to the party of explorers from the northern bank of the river. Later, after this group arrived at the spot across the river from Mount Richmond, a party of local inhabitants known to Didura were on the northern bank, and helped ferry the party of Englishmen from the southern to the northern shore so that they could reach Mount Richmond. In particular, a man named Murunga (perhaps Muranga; Tench records Mo-rù-nga), lent his canoe and his skill to the task. As was the case with

Gumbiri and Yalamundi, neither Didura nor Murunga 'had lost his *front tooth*' (Tench 1961 [1793]:237).

Interestingly, it appears that Dawes and Tench were able to converse, at least to some degree, with these people; on the first encounter with Didura, Tench (1961 [1793]:235) notes 'we had reached within two miles of Richmond Hill, we heard a native call: we directly answered him, and conversed across the river for some time.' Given that Tench and Dawes would only have known Iyura, this indicates that at least Didura knew Iyura or spoke a closely related dialect or language. It is, however, to be doubted that this was the primary language of the group encountered on the Hawkesbury.

The comparative vocabularies in Table 18.4 lend support to the view that the people encountered on the Hawkesbury in 1791 were speakers of Darkinyung. For the twelve possible comparisons that can be made between the 1791 Hawkesbury list and the other two lists (Mathews' Darkinyung list and the Tuckerman list collected in territory now attributed to the Darkinyung) there is a high rate of correspondence. The words 'head', 'hair', 'forehead', 'belly', 'thigh', 'penis', 'moon', 'hail' and 'laughing jackass' correspond very closely to forms in one, the other or both of the later lists. The words for 'eye' and 'ear' correspond if we allow extensions to be added to the Hawkesbury forms in order to realise Mathews' recorded forms (i.e. *-kang* adds to *mi*, to give the form for 'eye', and *-ngari* adds to *binulbina* to give the form for 'ear'). The Hawkesbury word for 'scrotum', **bo-roo**, could possibly be related to the Darkinyung form for 'testicles', *burrul*. The only form collected in 1791 that is clearly not cognate with a semantically related form in one or other of the other two lists is **mareemy** 'testicles', and we have no recorded terms in Darkinyung to compare with the 1791 form for 'neck'. From these facts we conclude that Darkinyung and the linguistic variety encountered on the Hawkesbury in 1791 are the same language.¹⁸ Given the ease with which speakers of Iyura were able to converse with these people we must conclude either that the two languages were very closely related, or that there was enough contact between the two groups for speakers to become bilingual in the two languages. Of course, these possibilities are not mutually incompatible.

Table 18.4: Comparison between words collected on the Hawkesbury and two later (Darkinyung) vocabularies. Abbreviations as for Table 18.2.

<i>English</i>	<i>On the Hawkesbury 1791 (Inland)</i>	<i>Darkinyung (Mathews 1903: 280–281)</i>	<i>Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay (Tuckerman 1887)</i>
Head	Co-co	kamburung or koko	kunibeen
Hair	Ke-war-ra (C); Keè-war-a (T); Bo-roo-bal (A)	kyuar	kewurra
Forehead	Nar-ran (C); Nar-ràn (T)	ngurran	

¹⁸ The possibility that the variety on the Hawkesbury is a form of the Sydney Language cannot be dismissed out of hand. However, this is extremely unlikely given the substantial differences between this variety and Iyura, as well as the fact that a generous count only gives 7 out of a possible 14 correspondences between the Hawkesbury variety and Mathews' (1901) 'Dharruk'. Further, Mathews' (1901, 1903) later descriptions of the location of language groups puts south of the Hawkesbury the transition between Darkinyung (to the north) and the Sydney Language (to the south). (Remember, the range given by Mathews for 'Dharruk' would include Iyura.) We have benefited here from Wood's (2005) careful territorial analysis of the published and unpublished writings of Mathews (and others).

<i>English</i>	<i>On the Hawkesbury 1791 (Inland)</i>	<i>Darkinyung (Mathews 1903: 280–281)</i>	<i>Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay (Tuckerman 1887)</i>
Eye	Me (C & P)	mikkang	mekung
Ear	Ben-ne (C); Bèn-na; Ben-ne (P)	binungari	binna
Neck	Gang-a (C); Gan-gà (T) ^a		
Belly	Ben-de (C); Bin`-dee (T)	bindhi	ukul
Thigh	Dàr-a (T)	dhurra	durra
Penis	Cud-da (P); Bod-da (A)	buthun	
Scrotum	Bo-roo (A)		
Testicles	Ma-ree-my (A)	burrall	
Moon	Con-dò-en (T); Con-do-in (A)	gundon	koodang
Hail	Go-ri-ba (C)	wallaji ^b	kooribai
Laughing Jackass	Go-con-de (C)	kukundi	kookundi

^a There is no Darkinyung form given for ‘neck’, but the forms given here are cognate with **kungga**, the form Mathews (1901) gives for neck in ‘Dharruk’. As is indicated in Table 17.3 these forms for ‘neck’ are not cognate with the Iyura forms. Given that the Sydney Language and Darkinyung border one another, we would expect borrowing to take place between the two, and this might be such an example.

^b Note that Mathews gives **gurpang** ‘frost’ and **gillibin** ‘dew’ for Darkinyung, which could be suggested, with much hesitation, as possible correspondences with the Hawkesbury word for ‘hail’. For Mathews’ **wallaji** compare Tuckerman’s **wollong** ‘rain’. Tuckerman’s **kooribai** is a straightforward equivalent for the 1791 record.

2.7 15 April 1791, Part 2—Baludiri’s protest

After taking leave of Gumbiri, Yalamundi, and Dyimba, the expedition continued towards Richmond Hill along the path that had been shown them the day before. Yet again their path was blocked by a large creek which could not be forded or bridged by a tree. The Hawkesbury is tidal up to Windsor, and since the tide was coming in, the creek presented more problems than it would have at low tide. They followed this creek, said by Fitzhardinge to be South Creek, in the hopes of reaching and rounding its head. The party continued along the creek ‘till they supposed themselves at the head of it, and then they endeavoured to regain the banks of the river. But they presently found they had only rounded a small arm of this creek, the principal branch of which they continued to trace, with infinite fatigue, for the remainder of the day’ (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:347). Because it was threatening to rain, they decided to make camp, even though they had just reached a possible crossing point at a place where the creek split into two branches. For their fires they made use of timber from trees which had already been burnt down by the local Aboriginal inhabitants.

Both Gulbi and Baludiri were getting increasingly unhappy about the expedition. Amongst other things, they were growing angry about certain injustices which they encountered during the trip. Whenever a duck was shot, they were sent to swim out and recover it,

but they were never given any duck to eat 'except the offals, and now and then a half-picked bone' (Tench 1961 [1793]:234). During this day's journey, Baludiri finally protested the state of affairs by refusing a request to swim for some ducks which had been shot. Tench (1961 [1793]:234) records that Baludiri 'told us, in a surly tone, that they swam for what was killed, and had the trouble of fetching it ashore, only for the white men to eat it'. They had been given all the crows and hawks which had been shot, but they, like the Englishmen, much preferred duck. Their agitation and impatience also seemed to be exacerbated by homesickness; 'Colebe talked about his wife, and said his child would cry' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:347) and 'the exclamation of "Where's Rose Hill; where?" was incessantly repeated with many inquiries about when we should return to it' (Tench 1961 [1793]:234).

2.8 16 April 1791—the return home

On the morning of Saturday 16 April 1791, it was decided that the party would give up its quest and return to Parramatta, 'which bore from the sleeping place south-east, sixteen miles distant' (Phillip in Hunter 1968 [1793]:347). No doubt Gulbi's and Baludiri's disposition were factored into the decision, along with the fact that it would have taken at least another two days to reach Richmond Hill. As one could imagine, Gulbi and Baludiri 'expressed great joy' on hearing that they were returning home. When they arrived at Parramatta in the late afternoon, a boat was about to leave for Sydney and 'Colbee and Baladeree would not wait for us until the following morning; but they insisted on going down immediately' (Tench 1961 [1793]:234). They were both keen to meet with Banalang (Benelong), and return to their families and friends.

3. Conclusions: taking stock of the successes of a failed expedition

This expedition is not cited, or brought forward, as one of even minor importance in the annals of the exploration and history of Australia. Indeed, even the Englishmen who had participated in it considered it a failure because it had not achieved any of its primary goals. They had not succeeded in reaching Richmond Hill, they had not ascertained whether the Hawkesbury and the Nepean were the same river, they had not made any major geographic finds, and they had not discovered any major tracts of land that were obvious candidates for development and colonisation. In light of the values and priorities of the day, they had failed, in their minds, to make any progress. Thus, Collins (1975 [1798–1802]:132), himself a member of the expedition, is able to write as part of his entry for April 1791, that:

During this month the governor made an excursion to the westward, but he reached no farther than the banks of the Hawkesbury, and returned to Rose Hill on the 6th [sic, sc. 16th], *without making any discovery of the least importance.* [emphasis ours]

Although all accounts give sound, and important, ethnographic and linguistic information, little value is attached to this in the context of the expedition. However, with hindsight, it is possible to say that it is in these areas that the expedition was particularly successful. Wood (1926:22) already briefly remarked that 'The one success of the journey had been its revelation of the more amiable aspects of native character', and, in that context, the ethnographic observations that were made with respect to the various people observed and contacted during this excursion inland are numerous and substantial. On the basis of these observations, fruitful comparisons between the coastal groups and the 'inlanders' can be made.

The Englishmen, fascinated by the ritual of tooth evulsion, but at this time not really aware of its significance, were able to determine that it is not practised inland, but seems to be con-

tained to the coast. The fact that Gulbi allowed himself to be cured by Yalamundi, and felt the curing ceremony had brought him great relief, indicates that the people on the Hawkesbury and the Iyura shared similar beliefs and practices concerning *garadi* 'Aboriginal doctors' and healing. Another shared custom that was recorded during the expedition was the fact that a man could, and in fact tended to, have more than one wife.

As far as artefacts were concerned, the party was able to determine that the sharp stone affixed to the spearthrower of the people on the Hawkesbury corresponded to the sharp edged clam shell affixed to the spearthrowers of the Iyura. These sharp attachments to the spearthrower were used as knives and, amongst other things, were employed to sharpen the spears. Later written records and archaeological finds confirm that one of the obvious material distinctions between the groups living on the south-eastern coast of Australia and those living inland from the coast was that the latter used stones on their spears and woomeras where the former used shells. Thus a death spear from the coast would have been 'armed with pieces of broken oyster-shell for four or five inches from the point, and secured with gum' (Collins 1975 [1798–1802]:487) while the corresponding spear from inland was 'made by embedding a series of small jagged stone chips in a gum layer that has been smeared over the head of the spear' (Davidson 1934:147). Not surprisingly, people living inland away from both the river and the coast, like the Burubirangal, lacked canoes, whereas the inland river dwellers, like the people on the coast, had canoes.

As is the case on the coast, it was observed that, amongst the people living on the Hawkesbury, it is the women who had primary responsibility for fishing from canoes. Moreover, the diet appears to have been supplemented by edible worm-like mollusks. However, while fish, and other ocean fauna, were the main source of food for the Iyura, the people on the Hawkesbury apparently relied very little on fish, and, if the accounts are correct, the Burubirangal did not rely on fish at all. For the 'inlanders' small animals and birds appear to be the primary source of meat, and it seems that possums and flying squirrels were the mainstay of the diet. As their method of procuring these animals was to climb large trees, in the manner described above, it was recognised that the 'inlanders' were significantly more adept at this activity than the people who lived by fishing on the coast. Clearly, despite proximity, changes in environment provided a great force for differentiating basic practices of daily life including diet, methods of food collection, and artefacts.

Although other comparisons could be made, these stand out as the most significant points of similarity and difference between the Iyura (the 'coasters') and the different groups of 'inlanders'. If the colonisers had been more interested in seeking a peaceful coexistence with the original inhabitants of these areas, then an understanding of the similarities and differences in customs and mode of living of different Aboriginal groups would have been crucial and the findings of this expedition more highly regarded. However, the colonisers assumed that they were superior and took for granted that they 'were the new lords of the soil' (Tench 1961 [1793]:46) with the rights to colonise any place they chose and thereby displace the 'old lords of the soil'.

Given the bold and unfounded pronouncements that the Aborigines 'are ignorant savages' (Collins 1975 [1798–1802]:513) and that 'they certainly rank low, even in the scale of savages' (Tench 1961 [1793]:281), it is welcome to find in the accounts of this expedition that the Englishmen were often forced to acknowledge the superiority of their Aboriginal companions, and also that Gulbi and Baludiri took several opportunities to ridicule and make fun of their frequently pompous fellow travellers. No doubt they felt the Englishmen were lacking a certain sophistication, charging through other people's territories, hunting their game, and attempting to pry into their personal sacred-secret affairs. The Englishmen followed or-

ders when Gulbi and Baludiri told them to hide themselves so that they alone could make first contact with other groups, and when Gumbiri found that the Englishmen did not know the best ways to walk along the river, they were forced to fall in behind him and follow his lead. Indeed, as has been noted, the inability of the Englishmen to trek with any sort of ease or grace through the country was a constant source of merriment to Gulbi and Baludiri; they were overloaded, overdressed, and ignorant of the best paths to take.

Baludiri's protest over the unfair sharing of food, mentioned previously, underscores the tense relations that existed even between 'friendly' Aborigines and the Englishmen. The ever-possessive Englishmen thought that 'their natives' could be used as tools, as servants, and ordered to swim for shot ducks, or used to gain further knowledge of the land. Gulbi and Baludiri recognised and protested the inequities, as other Aboriginal people had and would continue to do. In a different social, intellectual, and historical context, the events of such an expedition might have been taken to signal the parity of races, but blinded by the prejudices of the day, the recorders of this expedition were unable to divine the significance of their own accounts and see the incongruities and inconsistencies in the position they took on relations between race, intelligence, and 'civilisation'.

Finally, the numerous linguistic merits of the expedition cannot be neglected. The comparative word lists which have been mentioned or reproduced in this study are the first such comparative lists recorded for Australian languages. From them it has been possible to discover (1) that the language of the Burubirangal appears to have been a sister dialect of that spoken by the Iyura, and that one dialect marker is the correspondence of *nd* in Burubirangal words with simple *n* in Iyura words, and (2) that the language spoken by the people encountered on the Hawkesbury is distinct from that on the coast (and that spoken by the Burubirangal) and appears to be the same language, or a dialect of the same language, as Darkinyung. That Gulbi and Baludiri could converse with the different people encountered is also the first clear indication of the multilingual and multidialectal capabilities that was typical of the Aboriginal inhabitants. Moreover, we have here the first recording of what appears to be a bilingual conversation with each participant using their own language.

Indeed, the most significant linguistic find was the realisation that there are a number of languages spoken on the continent. The 1791 discovery of the multilingual nature of Australia is as important as any geographic or scientific discovery, but it was conveniently and quickly forgotten. It is only in the last thirty years or so that the wider Australian public has begun to appreciate that there were several hundred Australian Aboriginal languages, not just one, spoken throughout the country. Even today, a web search on 'the Aborigine language' or 'the Aboriginal language' will reveal documents around the world which maintain the myth of a single Australian Aboriginal language. Counterfactually, we can imagine 19th century Australia acknowledging that Aboriginal people spoke real languages which resembled Latin and Greek in structure and which eluded most of the first colonists' attempts to learn them, and that the continent was covered by a great variety of languages and cultural systems, in the same way that a great variety of languages and cultural systems cover Europe. Would this have moderated the colonial expansion which led to the displacement and decimation of so many Aboriginal communities? Probably not, but had the first colonists heeded and explored the evidence before them of Australia's indigenous multilingualism and multiculturalism, then they might have come sooner to the recognition that Aborigines had civil societies with customary law and land ownership, and so would have much earlier rejected the doctrine of *terra nullius*.

The real failure of this expedition is that its participants, and other observers, were blind to its successes. A rich spectrum of ethnographic and linguistic discoveries was relegated to the

realm of insignificance when Collins pronounced that the expedition returned ‘without making any discovery of the least importance.’ One can only speculate as to whether history would have been any different if such discoveries had been vested with real significance and value.

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