# STRESS AS RELATED TO THE GRAMMAR OF GUGU-YALANJI

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## O. INTRODUCTION

Stress in Gugu-Yalanji<sup>1</sup> functions not only as a word marker, but the placement of clause stress is one of the contrastive features by which clause types<sup>2</sup> are distinguished. At least one tagmeme in a clause must receive clause stress, but in certain clause types the location tagmeme is also obligatorily stressed, and in some clause types any postpredicate tagmeme except the negative gari is obligatorily stressed. If a stressed tagmeme is manifested by a phrase consisting of more than one word, for the most part, each word of the phrase receives clause stress.

#### WORD STRESS

Word stress occurs on the first syllable of words. It is characterised by loudness and the highest pitch of the word. A word has a minimum of two syllables, but may have as many as eight. In words of two syllables there is a sharp drop in pitch between the two syllables—especially when the word has both word and clause stress. In this section word stress is indicated by 'preceding the stressed

syllable. In other sections it is marked by word space only. 'bana water, 'gangal child, 'wunar sun.

The drop of pitch is more gradual in words with more than two syllables and composed of stem plus affixes. In such words the pitch of the first syllable may be retained on the second, then the pitch drops gradually over the rest of the word: 'nadigu long ago, 'djalamal jump, 'dunangada want to go now, 'djuwalmalda momentarily unalert.

Certain words (usually those with reduplicated stems, but occasionally those with compound stems) have a secondary stress which occurs on the first syllable of the second stem. There is variation in the occurrence of this secondary stress in that it usually occurs in slow speech but may be lacking in fast speech: 'giway'giway cold, 'maral'maral lost of girls, 'buři'dudal 'a sing', or a dance.

# 2. CLAUSE STRESS

Clause stress occurs on the first syllable of a word, that is, it co-occurs with word stress. It is marked by loudness, slight length of vowel, and high or extra-high pitch.

There are two types of clause stress: declarative stress (indicated by °), and interrogative stress (indicated by "). Both types of stress occur on the first syllable of a word. Both are marked by loudness and slight length of vowel. Declarative stress is further marked by high pitch, whereas interrogative stress is marked by extrahigh pitch. It is only the stressed syllables which differ in pitch; the other syllables of the word involved remain, for the most part, the same. Both declarative and interrogative stress are, of course, louder and higher in pitch than word stress.

In their minimal manifestations the only contrast between a declarative clause and a yes-no interrogative clause is the pitch of the stressed syllable.  $^{5}$ 

onugan (He) ate. versus "nugan Did (he) eat?
oduŋan (He) went. versus "duŋan Did (he) go?
oŋumbu (It) is black. versus "ŋumbu Is (it) black?
omayiga (He) wants food. versus "mayiga Does (he) want food?

## 3. OBLIGATORY CLAUSE STRESS

The placement of obligatory clause stress is one of the contrastive features which distinguish various clause types, see the accompanying chart.

Chart showing the relationship of clause types to stressed tagmemes

STRESSED TAGMEMES					
CLAUSE TYPE	Oblig. stressed tagmeme	Postpred. tagmeme	Location tagmeme	Negative prepred.	gari postpred.
Trans. or Intrans. Declarative	tagmeme prec. pred. 1	oblig.	oblig.	oblig.	Ø
Descriptive	descr. pred.	oblig.	oblig.	oblig.	not stressed
Associative	assoc. tagmeme	oblig.	optional	Ø	not stressed
Content Interrogative	inter. pro.	optional	optional	not stressed <sup>3</sup>	not stressed <sup>4</sup>
yes-no Interrogative	pred. <sup>2</sup>	optional	optional	gari <sup>3</sup> / pred.	not stressed <sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>If the predicate is preceded by more than one tagmeme.

#### 3.1. Transitive or Intransitive Declarative Clauses

In a transitive or intransitive declarative clause (in a clause with more than one tagmeme preceding the predicate), it is the tagmeme preceding the predicate which receives the obligatory clause stress. Since the order of tagmemes within the clause is very free, tagmemes may receive focus by occurring in the prepredicate position. (In illustrations with more than one word order the words are numbered to key into the translation.)

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gayangal "mayi2 nugan3 / mayi2 "gayangal nugan3 dog-subj.l food-obj.2 ate-pred.3 'The dog ate food.'
gayanga mayi "yilaygu nugan dog-subj. food-obj. yesterday-time ate-pred.'Yesterday the dog ate the food.'
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>If there is a manner tagmeme, the obligatory stress alternates between the predicate and the manner tagmeme.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>gari does not precede the predicate in an associative interrogative clause.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>gari does not follow the predicate in a transitive or intransitive interrogative clause.

In a transitive or intransitive declarative clause in which the predicate is preceded by one tagmeme only, there is variation in that either the predicate or the preceding tagmeme may receive the obligatory clause stress. In such an environment, it is the predicate which most frequently receives the stress.

/ <sup>o</sup>njulu duŋan o duŋ an njulu he-subj. went-pred. 'He went.' <sup>o</sup>nugan / °gayaŋga nugan dog-subj. ate-pred. 'The dog ate.'

There are clauses in which the predicate is the only tagmeme, in which case it receives the stress.

odunan '(He) went.'

## 3.2. Descriptive Declarative Clause

Onumbu

In a descriptive declarative clause, the descriptive predicate receives the obligatory clause stress.

gaya dog-subj. black-descr.pred. 'The dog is black.' dingar obuliman. man-subj. policeman-descr.pred. 'The man is a policeman.'

njulu oyaluy he-subj. here-descr.pred. 'He is here.'

qaya onavqu dog-subj. my-descr.pred. 'The dog is mine.'

## 3.3. Associative Declarative Clause

In the associative declarative clause, it is the associative tagmeme which receives the obligatory clause.

gaya<sub>1</sub> °mayiga<sub>2</sub> wawu<sub>3</sub>
dog-subj.<sub>1</sub> food-assoc.<sub>2</sub> want-pred.<sub>3</sub>
/ gaya<sub>1</sub> wawu<sub>3</sub> °mayiga<sub>2</sub> / °mayiga<sub>2</sub> gaya<sub>1</sub> wawu<sub>3</sub>
'The dog wants food.'

gaya balu omayiga
dog-subj. not-want-pred. food-assoc.
'The dog wants no food.'

omafginga yundu binal
gun-assoc. you-subj. know-pred.
'You know how to shoot.'

nayu °laliga I-subj. lolly-assoc. 'I (want) a lolly.'

# 3.4. Interrogative Clause

In any content interrogative clause, the obligatory clause stress occurs on the interrogative pronoun. Clause stress which occurs on the interrogative pronoun has extra-high pitch; that is, it is interrogative stress.

"wandjabu njulu dunan where-inter. he-subj. went-pred. 'Where did he go?'

"wandjungu gaya gunin
who-inter. dog-obj. hit-pred.
'Who hit the dog?'

njulu "wandjamun gadan he-subj. where-from came-pred. 'Where did he come from?'

gaya Numbu "wandjabu dog-subj. black-descr.pred. where-inter. 'Where is the black dog?'

"wanja mayiga wawu
who-inter. food-assoc. want-pred.
'Who wants food?'

In a yes-no interrogative clause, the clause stress, i.e., interrogative stress, occurs on the predicate tagmeme unless the clause includes a manner tagmeme.

gayanga mayi "nugan dog-subj. food-obj. ate-pred. 'Did the dog eat the food?'

gaya "numbu

dog-subj. black-descr.pred.
'Is the dog black?'

gaya "wawu mayiga
dog-subj. want-pred. food-assoc.
'Does the dog want the food?'

Optionally an interrogative introducer yala may occur, but the interrogative stress remains the same.

yala gayanga mayi "nugan ques.intro. dog-subj. food-obj. ate-pred.
'Did the dog eat the food?'

If the yes-no interrogative clause includes a manner tagmeme, the interrogative stress alternates between the manner tagmeme and the predicate.

njulu<sub>1</sub> "djinbalgu<sub>2</sub> wařin<sub>3</sub>

he-subj.<sub>1</sub> quickly-manr.<sub>2</sub> ran-pred.<sub>3</sub>

/njulu<sub>1</sub> djinbalgu<sub>2</sub> "wařin<sub>3</sub> / njulu<sub>1</sub> wařin<sub>3</sub> "djinbalgu<sub>2</sub>

/"djinbalgu<sub>2</sub> njulu<sub>1</sub> wařin<sub>3</sub> / djinbalgu<sub>2</sub> njulu<sub>1</sub> "wařin<sub>3</sub>

'Did he run quickly?'

## 4. POSTPREDICATE STRESS

In a declarative clause any tagmeme (except for the negative gari) which occurs postpredicate is obligatorily stressed. In such a case the clause contains two tagmemes with clause stress. Optionally a slight pause may occur postpredicate.

"bulanin1 baygan2 "gayanga3
them-obj.1 bit-pred.2 dog-subj.3
/gayanga3 "bulanin1 baygan2
'The dog bit them.'

he-subj. here-pred. yesterday-time
'He was here yesterday.'

gaya °mayiga wawu °yilaygu
dog-subj. food-assoc. want-pred. yesterday-time
'The dog wanted food yesterday.'

In an interrogative clause, a tagmeme occurring postpredicate frequently does not receive clause stress.

bulanin "baygan gayanga
them-obj. bit-pred. dog-subj.
'Did the dog bite them?'

dingar "dunan yalibalagu
man-subj. went-pred. early-time
'Did the man go early?'

"wanja baygan gayanga who-inter. bit-pred. dog-subj.
'Whom did the dog bite?'

#### 5. STRESS OF THE LOCATION TAGMEME

In a transitive, intransitive, or descriptive declarative clause, the location tagmeme is obligatorily stressed. A clause may, therefore, have double stress.

gayangal °bayanba2 °mayi3 nugan4

dog-subj.l house-in-loc.2 food-obj.3 ate-pred.4

/ °bayanba mayi °gayanga nugan 4

/ °gayangal mayi3 °bayanba2 nugan 4

'The dog ate food in the house.'

yilaygu<sub>1</sub> odjiganba<sub>2</sub> odjana<sub>3</sub> duŋan<sub>4</sub>

yesterday-time<sub>1</sub> grass-into-loc.<sub>2</sub> they-subj.<sub>3</sub> went-pred.<sub>4</sub>

/odjiganba<sub>2</sub> yilaygu<sub>1</sub> odjana<sub>3</sub> duŋan<sub>4</sub>

'They went into the grass yesterday.'

oyinjaymba gaya onumbu
there-loc. dog-subj. black-descr.pred.
'The dog over there is black.'

In an associative declarative clause, the location tagmeme is usually not stressed.

bayanba gaya omayiga wawu
house-in-loc. dog-subj. food-assoc. want-pred.
'The dog in the house wants food.'

In an interrogative clause, the location tagmeme is usually not stressed, but may be stressed for emphasis.

bayanba mayi "nugan house-in-loc. food-obj. ate-pred. 'Did (he) eat food in the house?'

yinjaymba gaya "numbu

there-loc. dog-subj. black-descr.pred.
'Is the dog over there black?'

gayanga bayanba "wanju nugan
dog-subj. house-in-loc. what-inter. ate-pred.
'What did the dog eat in the house?'

bayanba gaya mayiga "wawu house-in-loc. dog-subj. food-assoc. want-pred. 'Does the dog want food in the house?'

# 6. STRESS OF THE NEGATIVE GARI

The negative gari is stressed or nonstressed in accordance with the clause type in which it occurs, and in accordance with its position in the clause.

The negative gari is obligatorily stressed when it occurs continguously or noncontiguously prepredicate in a declarative clause. (The negative gari does not occur prepredicate in an associative clause.).

mayi ogari nugan food-obj. negative ate-pred.
'(He) didn't eat the food.'

gaya °gari °numbu

dog-subj. negative black-descr.pred.
'The dog is not black.'

djana <sup>°</sup>gari <sup>°</sup>yinjamba bundan they-subj. negative there-loc. sit-pred. 'They didn't sit there.'

When the negative gari occurs prepredicate in a content interrogative clause, the gari is not stressed.

"wanja gari duŋan
who-inter. negative went-pred.
'Who didn't go?'

When the negative gari occurs prepredicate in a yes-no interrogative clause, the interrogative stress alternates between the predicate and gari.

njulu garl "duŋan / njulu "garl duŋan he-subj. negative went-pred.
'Didn't he go?'

gayanga mayi gari "nugan dog-subj. food-obj. negative ate-pred. / gayanga mayi "gari nugan 'Didn't the dog eat the food?'

gaya gari "numbu / gaya "gari numbu dog-subj. negative black-descr.pred. 'Isn't the  $dog\ black$ ?'

When the negative gari occurs postpredicate, it is never stressed. (It does not occur postpredicate in transitive or intransitive clauses.).

gaya onumbu gari

dog-subj. black-descr.pred. negative

'The dog is not black.'

gaya "numbu gari

dog-subj. black-descr.pred. negative
'Isn't the dog black?'

gaya omayiga wawu gari
dog-subj. food-assoc. want-assoc.pred. negative
'The dog did not want the food.'

gaya mayiga "wawu gari
dog-subj. food-assoc. want-assoc.pred. negative
'Didn't the dog want the food?'

### 7. OPTIONAL CLAUSE STRESS

Except for the negative gari which is obligatorily nonstressed in some positions in some clauses, any clause-level tagmeme may receive optional stress. It is the time and manner tagmemes which most frequently receive optional stress, and the subject and object tagmemes which seldom receive optional stress.

°gayanga °bama baygan / gayanga °bama baygan dog-subj. people-obj. bit-pred.
'The dog bit people.'

odjinabu oyundu dunan / djinabu oyundu dunan
foot-inst. you-subj. went-pred.
'You went by foot.'

°nadigu gaya °gařgay
long-ago-time dog-subj. small-descr.pred.
'Long ago the dog was small.'

gaya "wandjungu  $^{\circ}$ gunin / gaya "wandjungu gunin  $dog\text{-}\mathrm{obj.}$   $who\text{-}\mathrm{inter.}$   $hit\text{-}\mathrm{pred.}$  'Who hit the dog?'

njulu <sup>o</sup>djinbaldagu <sup>o</sup>minja nugan he-subj. quickly-manr. meat-obj. ate-pred. 'He ate the meat quickly.'

## 8. STRESS OF THE PHRASE

When a stressed clause-level tagmeme is manifested by a phrase consisting of more than one word, each word (except for the word badjagu very) in the phrase is stressed.

yilaygu °dingar °yalbay dunan yesterday-time man - big-subj. went-pred. 'Yesterday the big man went.'

dingar °bayanba °yalbaymba
man-subj. house-in -big-descr.pred.
'The man is in the big house.'

gaya °mayiga °djiraynga wawu
dog-subj. food- much-assoc. wants-pred.
'The dog wants much food.'

oyilaygu dunan onaygu ogaya
yesterday-time went-pred. my - dog-subj.
'Yesterday my dog went.'

njulu °nayguwunmun °bayanmun °djambulmun he-subj. my-from - house-from - two-from-loc. gadan came-pred.

'He came from my two houses.'

kingar °yilaygu °yalibalagu dunan man-subj. yesterday - early-time went-pred. 'Yesterday morning the man went.'

The word badjagu very is not stressed, however, even when preceding the predicate in an intransitive declarative clause.

o qayanda o yalbaymba badiagu dunan they-subj. dogs-to - big-to - very went-pred. 'They went to the very big dogs.'

A contrast of stress occurs between a descriptive clause which contains both subject and descriptive predicate versus a descriptive clause which contains a descriptive predicate only.

onumbu qaya dog-subj. black-descr.pred. 'The dog is black.' °qaya °ŋumbu dog - black-descr.pred.

'It is a black dog.'

INTONATION

9.

In our data as analysed there are three types of intonation: (1) that in which the intonation contrasts occur, for the most part,

between the last clause stress and pause; (2) that in which an emphatic stress occurs on the clause-final syllable; (3) that in which the intonation contrast is carried by a change of key.

9.1. Intonation Contrasts Between the Last Clause Stress and Pause

In a termination contour, the contour is divided into that which precedes the last clause stress versus that which follows the last clause stress. Preceding the last clause stress, except that word and clause--stressed syllables are slightly or considerably higher than contiguous syllables, the general overall pitch is level. After the last clause stress there is decrescendo of intensity and pitch, and after the start of the decline, each syllable is lower than the preceding one. The last syllable is lenis and low in pitch.

gandiin gadiqu oburunu dunan we-subj. long-ago-time Buru-loc. went-pred. 'Long ago we went to Buru.'

nandjin omayi nugan we-subj. food-obj. ate-pred. 'We ate food.'

A tentative contour is like a terminal contour except that the prepause decline of pitch is not as steep, does not end as low, and it is not relaxed. Occasionally it ends with a glottal stop.

A sequence contour is like a tentative contour except that the last syllable has extra-high pitch. (That syllable is not stressed, however, since it lacks the features of loudness and length.)

The dubitative contour is like a tentative contour except that in the dubitative contour the last syllable has a short, lenis upglide. This contour is used to indicate doubt not only when the speaker volunteers the information, but it is also frequently used when answering a question.

In a sympathy contour the last syllable glides up from mid to high. It differs from the dubitative contour in that in the sympathy contour the glide starts higher and the vowel is longer.

# 9.2. Intonation with Emphatic Stress

Certain contours have an emphatic stress (marked by: following the vowel) which occurs on the prepause syllable. This syllable is loud, long and ends with crescendo. The pitch of the syllable with emphatic stress is the main contrastive feature which differentiates several different intonation contours. In our data, in all but the continuous-action contour, except that the key may be higher, the pitch and stress of words other than the prepause word are more or less normal.

In an impatience contour the syllable with emphatic stress is long, low, and glides upwards to high with crescendo.

An amazement contour has been recorded on two expressions only, ya: and yu:y. These are uttered with a breathy voice quality, a slight downglide and crescendo.

In a call contour the syllable with emphatic stress starts extrahigh and glides downward with crescendo. Except that the whole clause is usually raised in key, the pitch and stress of words other than the prepause word are more or less normal.

A call of the same contour shape, but made with vocoids only (not words)—a cooee—is frequently used when calling to someone at a distance. It is usually said at a very high pitch and the high-falling part of the contour is frequently in falsetto.

In a surprise contour the syllable with emphatic stress starts on extra-high and remains there, but there is a rearticulation with crescendo at the end of the long vowel.

In continuous-action contour the syllable with emphatic stress is long and level in pitch with rearticulation and crescendo at the end of the long vowel. It differs from the surprise contour in that in the surprise contour the pitch of the last syllable is considerably higher than that of the preceding syllables, whereas in the continuous-action contour the pitch of the last syllable is the same as that of the preceding syllables. Another difference is that in the continuous-action contour, the whole sentence may be a monotone whereas in the other contours syllables with word or clause stress are usually slightly raised.

njamal njaman njaman njaman njama:n boil boiled boiled boiled boiled 'It kept on boiling.'

## 9.3. Intonation Contrast by Change of Key

In a quotation intonation the whole clause is said with a high key. This high key is most frequently superimposed on a tentative or dubitative contour but it may occur on any contour.

yundu "nubidjin you-subj. lost-pred.
'Were you lost? (quoted)'

nayu baya mudjalmudjan

I-subj. firewood-obj. was-gathering-pred.
'I was gathering firewood. (quoted)'

#### 10. SENTENCES

For the most part our study of stress placement has been confined to simple sentences, i.e., to clauses. Texts with complicated sentence types, with sentences interrupted by pause, and with sentence fragments, are outside the scope of this paper. We have, however, added a few sample sentences. In these examples a termination contour is indicated by /./, a tentative contour by /;/, and a sequence contour by /,/.

onalin njadjin; omayi odjanbal owubul badjagu we-subj. saw-pred. food-quondong- many-very-subj. wunanarin obubunu lying-pred. ground-loc.
'We saw a lot of quondong food lying on the ground.'

yundu °duŋay; °baya mana
you-subj. go-pred. firewood-obj. get-pred.
'You go and get firewood.'

yinjamun ŋayu onjununin njadjin ogangadanjada afterwards-time I-subj. him-obj. saw-pred. coming-then-pred. 'Afterwards I saw him coming.'

djana <sup>o</sup>naygundu balgan; djawun <sup>o</sup>yinjabi they-subj. to-me-loc. told-pred. friend-subj. there-

owangarwangar
up-descr.pred.

'They told me, "Friend is up there."

nayu onjunun yunan; omayi maninga
I-subj. him-obj. sent-pred. food-obj. get-purpose-pred.
'I sent him to get food.'

bana onulgur; ogargayanga nuganga
water-subj. good-descr.pred. children-subj. drink-purpose.pred.
'The water is good for the children to drink.'

njulu <sup>o</sup>duŋan, <sup>o</sup>bana manin, <sup>o</sup>nugan,
he-subj. went-pred. water-obj. got-pred. drank-pred.

obayanbagu gadan
back-home-loc. came-pred.
'He went, got water, drank, came back home.'

Nayu odjarbada ginilgunin; njulu ogadan I-subj. snake-obj. was-killing-pred. he-subj. came-pred. 'While I was killing the snake, he came.'

bulgidji °baganja; Ŋaygu mugu °gagaman shellfish-obj. dug-because-pred. my - back-subj. became-sore-pred. 'Because (I) dug shellfish my back became sore.'

There is an interesting contrast of clause stress on the negative gari versus lack of clause stress on the implied-action-divertor conjunction gari.

nayu °dibur manin; gari I-subj. egg-obj. got-pred. implied-action-divertor-conj. °gabu rotten-descr.pred.

'I got an egg; but it was rotten.'

- 1. Gugu-Yalanji is the language spoken by the majority of the Aborigines living in the Bloomfield River area. The Bloomfield River is located about forty miles south of Cooktown, Queensland. There are approximately 250 people in the Bloomfield area who speak Gugu-Yalanji; however, the complete language area extends from Cooktown in the north to Mossman in the south. The total number of speakers in this area number about 500. Our informant for this paper was Miss Nora Smith whose age is about 25 years. The research for this paper was done under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- 2. For additional data on grammar but not in relation to stress, see the articles listed in the bibliography by Henry (Hank) Hershberger and Ruth Hershberger. Ruth Hershberger has since modified her analysis of clause types and the authors have profited by her suggestions. Her present analysis is reflected in this paper.

For segmental phonemes we have used the analysis as described in William and Lynette Oates, 'Gugu-Yalanji Linguistic and Anthropological Data', Occasional Papers in Aboriginal Studies, No.2, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1964. Specifically, there are 13 consonants: Stops (voiced following a nasal, usually voiceless in other environments): b, d, dj (palatalized stop), g. Nasals: m, n, nj (alveopalatal), n (velar). Resonants: 1, w, y, r (retroflexed vocoid), ř (flapped intervocalically, trilled when preceding another consonant and word finally, frequently voiceless word finally). There are three vowels: i, a, u.

- 3. In our data there is one word with one syllable only: 'ba come.
- 4. We considered the possibility that this extra-high pitch might better be considered a feature of an intonation contour. We decided in favour of our present analysis, however, since (1) the choice of an intonation contour is determined by the attitude of the speaker, whereas the choice of declarative stress versus interrogative stress is determined by the clause type; (2) the place of the contrast between

intonation contours is restricted, for the most part to (a) the clause-final syllable, or (b) between the syllable with the last clause stress and pause; whereas a syllable with interrogative stress may occur on words in any position in the clause.

5. We checked for a stress contrast between declarative and interrogative versus "imperative" clauses but found none. In a transitive clause the aspects which in the first and third person are translated as 'should...' or 'ought...' are used as imperatives in the second person. In an intransitive clause this aspect does not occur, instead nonpast forms are used in the second person for the imperative.

gayanga ominja nuga 'The dog should eat the meat.'
yundu ominja nuga 'You eat the meat (imperative)'
dingar owungun dunay 'The man will go tomorrow.'
yundu owungun dunay 'You go tomorrow (imperative)'

6. As analysed, we do not have verbal phrases in our data. Adverblike words do occur, but since they may be separated from the verb, we have considered that they are manifesting the manner tagmeme. In addition, words in other phrase types must all be stressed, or all nonstressed, whereas the verb may be stressed when the adverb is not, or the adverb may be stressed when the verb is not.

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