

23 *On the syntax and semantics of trying*

ALAN RUMSEY

1. Introduction

One of the many things worth celebrating about Ken Hale's brilliant research on Australian Aboriginal languages is the way in which it has revealed what Benjamin Whorf (1956:158) called "fashions of speaking": global complexes of features that "cut across the typical grammatical classifications, so that such a 'fashion' may include lexical, morphological, syntactic, and otherwise diverse means coordinated in a certain framework of consistency".¹ It may seem odd to open a Festschrift paper for Ken by identifying him with Whorf in this way, given his longstanding commitment to Chomskian linguistics. Many, perhaps most Chomskians regard Whorf's work as antithetical to their own, because of Whorf's emphasis on differences among languages rather than any underlying commonalities, and his treatment of grammar as intimately bound up with other aspects of culture rather than 'autonomous'. But Ken has always kept an open mind about such matters. For example, after pointing out what seems to be a significant correlation between aspects of Navajo grammar and a Navajo 'view of the universe', he says "It is not necessary, however, to imagine that pervasive principles of the grammar will reflect the ideas which make up a philosophy. It seems to me to be a matter of luck, a chance happening [when such a correlation is found]" (Hale 1986:237). He adds immediately that 'This could, however, be wrong and the search for such correlations should never be abandoned'. And in the same

¹ A previous incarnation of this paper was presented at the 1978 annual meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society. I would like to thank those who offered me comments on that paper, including Bob Dixon, Sue Kesteven, Bruce Rigsby and Anna Wierzbicka. For their feedback on the present version I would like to thank Barry Alpher, Francesca Merlan and David Nash. Linguistic abbreviations and symbols used in this paper are: 1, 2, 3 – first, second, third person; ABS – absolutive; B.CLASS – one of the Ungarinyin noun classes; CONT – continuative; D.B. – dative/benefactive; FEM – feminine; FUT – future; IMP – imperative; INC – inclusive; IRR – irrealis; LOC – locative; MASC – masculine; NOM – nominative; OB – object; OPT – optative; PL – plural; PRES – present; PURP – purposive; SG – singular; SUB – subject; :- morpheme boundary in underlying form where not shown by a hyphen in the top line of text.

paper he goes on to develop what is to my mind one of the most penetrating studies anywhere in the literature of the way in which aspects of the grammar of a given language are 'coordinated in a certain framework of consistency', showing how six different areas of Warlpiri grammar are organised in terms of a single semantic opposition between 'central coincidence' and 'non-central coincidence'.

Having had the good fortune to hear Ken present a preliminary version of that paper at the annual meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society in Canberra in 1981, I took it as a model for my own attempts to analyse apparently disparate aspects of the grammar of Ungarinyin that seemed to be similarly consonant with each other. Some results of that research were reported in Rumsey (1990), where I compared Ungarinyin and English with respect to the grammar of textual cohesion and of reported speech, and argued that in both languages there was a close relationship between these two areas of grammar, which could in turn be related to aspects of Ngarinyin and English 'linguistic ideology', namely, the presence or absence of a strong distinction between 'wording' and 'meaning'.

In this paper, drawing on Rumsey (1982), I develop a third area of comparison between English and Ungarinyin, namely, the way in which predications of 'trying' are constructed in each. Bringing in some interestingly convergent data from Yidiny, I argue the grammar of 'trying' in both of these Australian languages fits with the grammar of reported speech in them, as an aspect of the same 'fashion of speaking'.

2. The grammar of 'trying' in Ungarinyin and English²

In Ungarinyin as in many Aboriginal languages there is a verb meaning 'try out', 'test' or 'taste' which takes an NP object (try out the spear, taste the honey, etc.), but there is no verb of 'trying' which can take a clausal complement, that is no verb 'try to ___'. How then does one express the notion of trying to do something in Ungarinyin? In order to show how, I will first introduce some necessary background details concerning Ungarinyin grammar. I will show that, rather than being expounded by a monolexemic verb of 'trying', a more or less equivalent meaning is conveyed in Ungarinyin by the use of certain modal categories which are grammaticalised in the verb, in combination with a clause-level particle that further qualifies the modality in a certain way. This raises the question: what could modality have to do with the notion of trying? To address this question I turn to a consideration of 'try' in English, and show that its meaning also implicates notions of intentionality and uncertainty, which, while distributed differently across the clause, are quite similar to the ones which are entailed in the grammar of trying in Ungarinyin. But since modality is inherently speaker-centred, in order to attribute an act of trying to second and third persons, Ungarinyin, unlike English, makes use of a kind of quasi-reported-speech construction so as to be able to transpose them into the first person.

As in many northern Australian languages, verbal expressions in Ungarinyin are of two kinds: simple and compound. A simple verb consists of a single finite verbal word, which in turn consists of a root and its inflectional morphemes, including pronominal elements which cross-reference the subject of an intransitive verb or the subject and object of a transitive verb (for details see Rumsey 1982:74–122). For example:

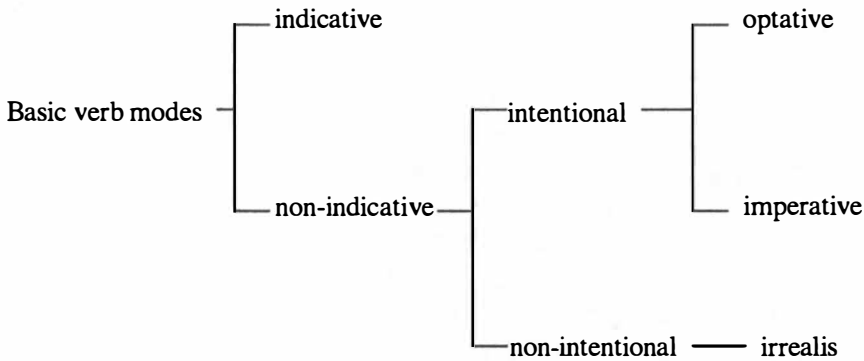
² Portions of this section draw closely on Rumsey (1982).

- (1) *Ngiya.*
 1SG:FUT:go
 'I will go.'/'I intend to go.'

Other examples are *iya* in (3) and *ngarriya* in (8).

A compound verb consists of one such finite verbal word, immediately preceded by a nonfinite verbal word of the kind known in Ken Hale's and subsequent work on Warlpiri as a 'preverb'. Examples are *bandug bi* in (5) and *balya ide* in (7).

As can be seen from these examples, the finite verbal word, whether occurring by itself or in combination with a preverb, carries almost all the grammatical (as opposed to lexically specific) meaning of the verb. Among other things, it is obligatorily inflected for one of four mode categories, that is categories concerned with speaker's commitment as to the desirability or necessity of the event or state of affairs being predicated by the verb (commonly known as *deontic* modality) and its degree of certainty (*epistemic* modality). The four alternative mode categories for which the Ungarinyin verb is inflected are: indicative, irrealis, optative, and imperative. These may be logically ordered as follows:



In addition to these four, purely modal categories, there is another category expressed in the Ungarinyin verb which acts now like a tense, now like a mode. This is the so called 'future' category, which, as in many languages, is used not just to predicate an event or state of affairs of a time posterior to the time of speaking but also to express an intention on the part of the speaker to bring it about. This is illustrated in example (1) above. As far as I have been able to determine, this intentional meaning is limited to cases where the subject of the future-marked verb is a first-person one. To predicate intentionality of someone else, the Ngarinyin speaker uses a future verb with a first person subject, framed by an appropriately prefixed form of the following verb *-ma*, which means 'say' or 'do'. For example:³

- (2) *Ngiya amerri.*
 1SG:FUT:go 3SG.MASC:say/do:PRES:CONT
 'He wants to go.' (lit. 'He is doing "I will go".')

The same sort of framing construction is also used to express an intention on the speaker's part that someone else do something. For example:⁴

³ Here and also in (3) the verb root *-ma* is followed by the continuative aspect suffix *-yirri*, yielding *-merri*. For discussion of the morphophonemic process involved, see Rumsey (1982:28–9, 109–10).

⁴ For further details and examples of this construction, see Rumsey (1982:157–66).

- (3) *Iya ngamerri.*
 3SG.MASC:FUT:go 1SG.MASC:say/do:PRES:CONT
 'I want him to go.'

In addition to the mode categories I have discussed so far, which are marked in the finite verb, there are others which are expressed by what I call mode particles. These comprise a distinct word class which may be defined on purely distributional grounds: they are never affixed with inflectional or derivational morphemes, they always occur before the verb (most often clause-initially) and each of them occurs only in combination with a specific subset of the basic modes discussed above. For instance, *biyarra*, meaning 'can' or 'possible', occurs only with irrealis verbs. For example:⁵

- (4) *Biyarra beja jari nyanggingi.*
 possible already leave 3SG.FEM:go:IRR.PAST
 'She may already have left.'

These mode particles subcategorise the more basic modal categories expressed in the verb, adding greater specificity to the modality of the clause. For example, by itself the irrealis mode means something like 'I do not assert the event or state of affairs predicated in this clause to be an actually occurring one'. The inclusion of *biyarra* (as in 4) adds the proviso 'but it is a *possible* state of affairs'.

The reason why this discussion of mode particles is relevant to the question of 'trying' is that, although the language has no verb 'try to', there is a word *yagu* which Ungarinyin speakers gloss as 'try', the syntactic behaviour of which seems to characterise it as a mode particle. It never takes inflectional or derivational affixes, it precedes the verb, and it occurs only with verbs in certain modes: optative or imperative. It also occurs with future verbs, but only if the subject of the verb is a first person one—which, recall, is one of the conditions under which the 'future' category expresses a modal meaning of intentionality. Examples (with *yagu* left un glossed for now) are:

- (5) *Yagu bandug bi.*
 settled.down IMP:be
 'Try to settle down.'
- (6) *Yagu bardumindara ngala.*
 IMP:B.CLASS.OB:bring:1SG.DB meat
 'Try to bring me some meat.'
- (7) *Yagu balya ide wongay.*
 go 3SG.MASC.OB:3PL.SUB:go.to:OPT women
 'Let's try letting women go to him.'
- (8) *Yagu ngarriya bigja-gu.*
 1 PL.INC:FUT:go movies-DAT
 'We'll try to go to the movies.'/'Let's try to go to the movies.'

⁵ Other particles which occur with irrealis verbs are *wa* 'not', *gajin.ga* 'can't', and *biya* 'ought to'. The particle *menya* 'too bad that' occurs with indicative and future verbs. For details and examples, see Rumsey (1982:166–72).

- (9) *Me* *yagu* *bungumara*.
 (vegetable)food B.CLASS.OB:1SG.SUB:FUT:get
 'I'll try to get some food.'
- (10) *Yali* *yagu* *anguwilya*.
 kangaroo MASC.OB:1SG.SUB:FUT:spear
 'I'll try to spear a kangaroo.'

Given the mode-particle-like syntax of *yagu* as illustrated by these examples (5)–(10) and the fact that Ungarinyin speakers consistently gloss such sentences in English with 'try to__', we must ask: what could the notion of 'trying' have to do with modality, that is with the speaker's commitments concerning the desirability and/or certainty of the event or state of affairs being predicated in a given clause?

There has been a long debate among philosophers about the ordinary meaning and uses of English 'try' that can provide a good starting point for this discussion, given that Ungarinyin-speaking informants who gloss *yagu* with 'try (to)' are presumably looking for the closest English equivalent they can find on the basis of their considerable experience with colloquial Australian English. One point of agreement among the philosophers seems to be the assumption that, for an action to count as a 'try', there must be an intention on the part of the agent that a certain result, namely that described in the complement of the verb *try*, be effected by means of that action (Wittgenstein 1963:161; Grice 1989). Hence the strangeness of a sentence such as:

- (11) *I did not intend to step on your foot, but I tried to do so.*

But although intention seems to be a necessary condition of 'trying', it is not a sufficient one. Wittgenstein argued this by pointing out that "when I raise my arm I do not usually *try* to raise it" (Wittgenstein 1963:161). He claimed that, in order for an action to count as a try, there must be some difficulty about it. Those who have agreed with him on the first of these two points (about the insufficiency of intention) have generally adopted some version of the second one as well (that a 'try' presupposes difficulty of accomplishment). Other philosophers have phrased the condition differently and claimed that the outcome of the try must be *uncertain*. This I would argue is really the right way of putting the matter. Consider in this respect an example adduced by Grice (1989:7):

A doctor may tell a patient, whose leg has been damaged, to try to move his toes tomorrow, and the patient may agree to try; but neither is committed to holding that the patient will fail to move his toe, or that it will be difficult for him to do so.

But although the use of 'try' in this context does not presuppose difficulty in moving the toes on the next day, it does presuppose *uncertainty* as to whether they will move. As Grice realises,⁶ uncertainty of outcome is in fact a general condition on the use of *try*. Hence the strangeness of (12) and (13):

- (12) *I'm certain my toes are going to move; I'll try to move them.*
 (13) *I was certain that I was going to get some food; I tried to get some.*

Note that these examples differ slightly from Grice's in that the speaker is the same person who will be doing the trying, whereas in Grice's example it is someone else. In

⁶ Grice (1989:18) observes that "what makes 'A tried to do X' appropriate is the real or supposed possibility ... that A might not have *succeeded* in doing X".

examples of that kind, the question arises: who is it that must be uncertain of the outcome, the speaker or the person performing the action? In many such cases it seems that the locus of relevant uncertainty is not the former, but the latter. Thus, in contrast to (13), (14) seems less anomalous:

(14) *I was certain that she was going to get some food; she tried to get some.*

But when *try* is used in the imperative, the locus of relevant uncertainty seems to lie with the speaker rather than the person who is to do the trying. Hence the strangeness of (15) as opposed to (16) and (17):

(15) *I'm certain that you'll get some food; try to do so.*

(16) *I'm not certain you'll get any food; try to get some.*

(17) *I'm not certain you'll get any food even if you are, so please try to get some.*

This difference in the locus of relevant uncertainty for imperative *try* is probably tied up with a more basic difference—in the locus of intentionality. In examples such as (11)–(14), *try* presupposes an intention only on the part of the trier. Examples such as (15)–(17) may also involve an intention on the trier's part (perhaps an 'induced' intention), but they definitely also presuppose an intention on the speaker's part. Hence the strangeness of

(18) *I don't intend for you to get any food; try to get some.*

Now let us return to the question of what an Ungarinyin particle glossed as 'try' could have to do with modality. Both of the conditions on English *try* developed above—the intentionality condition and the uncertainty condition—intersect with the semantics of modality—i.e. the speaker's commitment with respect to the deontic and epistemic status of what is being predicated—whenever (a) *try* has a first person subject or (b) *try* occurs as an imperative verb. Only when the subject of indicative *try* is a non-first-person one do its lexical semantics no longer involve a mode-like component, since in those cases the *speaker's* attitude is irrelevant. Another thing to notice about this English verb is that its meaning involves two components—intentionality and uncertainty—which are logically independent of each other, and could just as well be expressed separately, the combination of them conveying much the same meaning.

Now suppose that there is a language which lacks a verb of trying that can take a clausal complement, but does include among its grammatical modes one which means something like 'I evaluate any yet-unrealised state of affairs which is projected by this sentence as one which is not certain to come about'. Suppose further that this language includes (tense/mode) categories which express speaker intentionality. Given the analysis of *try* developed above, it would be possible for speakers of this *try*-less language to construct the functional equivalent of a *try* sentence solely by means of the grammatical mode categories available in this language.

Ungarinyin seems to be just such a language. What English does with a complement-taking verb, Ungarinyin does by pairing imperative or other intentional forms of the verb with the particle *yagu*, which I have left untranslated in the above examples (5)–(10), but which I would now claim means just what I have said it does in the previous paragraph. In each of examples (5)–(10) there is a presumption on the part of the speaker that the projected state of affairs—settling down, getting some food, etc.—is one which is not certain to come about, either because of the actor's inability to bring it about or due to circumstances beyond

his control. And there is an intention by the speaker to bring it about, expressed by an imperative or optative verb, or a future verb with first-person subject.

It will be apparent that the Ungarinyin constructions I have been discussing so far cover only a part of the ground covered by English *try*, since they are available only for cases where the speaker is the locus of intentionality and uncertainty, whereas the latter can also be used to attribute these to someone else. How does one do this in Ungarinyin?

As I have already discussed in connection with examples (2) and (3), the standard way of attributing intention in Ungarinyin is to frame it with a verb *-ma* 'say, do' in a kind of construction which is used for reported speech. The same construction is used in combination with *yagu* to attribute an act of trying to someone else. Thus alongside (2) above, one can say:

- (19) *Yagu ngiya amerri.*
 1SG:FUT:go 3SG.MASC:say/do:PRES:CONT
 'He is trying to go.'

And alongside 10:

- (20) *Yali yagu anguwilya amara.*
 kangaroo MASC.OB:1SG.SUB:FUT:spear 3SG.MASC:say/do:PAST
 'He tried to spear a kangaroo.'

The same construction is used even for first-person subjects, when the act of trying took place in the past. This is illustrated in (21).

- (21) *Yali yagu anguwilya ngamara.*
 kangaroo MASC.OB:1SG.SUB:FUT:spear 1SG.MASC:say/do:PAST
 'I tried to spear a kangaroo.'

To summarise this comparison between Ungarinyin and English, it can be seen that these languages differ greatly in how the notion of 'trying to__' is expressed. Whereas in English a complex of logically distinct components is packed into the semantics of a single lexical item, in Ungarinyin a similar complex meaning is expressed through the interaction of a semantically less complex lexical item with a range of grammatical devices that also serve other functions, including not only the mode categories, but also the entire range of person-number categories and the grammar of reported speech that allows for 'transposition' among the person categories (in the sense developed in Bühler 1991 and Hanks 1990).

What are we to make of these differences? Might they be related to other aspects of the languages in question? In order to address this question it is useful to introduce some further comparative data from another Aboriginal language, spoken on the other side of Australia, one of the many on which Ken Hale did ground-breaking fieldwork in 1960 on his journey around north Australia.

3. A parallel case from Yidiny

Yidiny is a Pama-Nyungan (more specifically a Paman) language, formerly spoken in what is now the Cairns area of northern Queensland. Following Hale's pioneering work, it was intensively studied by R.M.W. Dixon during 1971–74. Dixon published a detailed grammar of the language (Dixon 1977) and sizeable text collection (Dixon 1991), from which I have gleaned most of the data to be reported below.

In most respects, the grammar of Yidiny is very different from that of Ungarinyin. It makes no use of cross-referencing pronominal elements on the verb like those which figure so centrally in Ungarinyin; and far more use of grammatical case-marking on nominals to mark the major syntactic case relations, and of syntactic transformations to provide alternative grammatical case frames. It is in general terms a strongly 'dependent-marking' language, while Ungarinyin is a strongly 'head-marking' one. Yet in at least one respect there is a striking similarity.

Yidiny has a small set of 'Particles' which Dixon defines as a distinct word class, on the basis of the fact that they do not inflect for case or tense. They "provide logical- or modal-type qualification of a complete sentence" (Dixon 1977:372). They usually occur immediately before the verb, but may occur earlier in the sentence.

One of these particles, *gana*, acts very much like Ungarinyin *yagu*. Dixon says that "its semantic content is slight and elusive, and is probably best summed up in the informants' gloss 'try'" (Dixon 1977:374). Examples (1977:513–30, text 2, cited by line number) are

- (22) *Gana ngali gali:na.*
 TRY we.two:NOM go:PURP
 'We two should try to go.' (line 3)
- (23) *Gana nyundu:ba mayi yingu bana: budi.*
 TRY you.all:NOM fruit:ABS this:ABS water:LOC put:IMP
 'You all try to put this food in the water.' (line 46)
- (24) *Ngayu gana gamba:na gali:na.*
 I:NOM TRY crawl:PURP go:PURP
 'I must try to go on by crawling.' (line 122)

Dixon notes that *gana* occurs especially frequently with imperative and purposive forms of the verb (purposive being a kind of intentional form which combines semantic characteristics of the Ungarinyin future and optative categories), as in (22)–(24). Indeed, of the thirty-five sentences in which *gana* is used in Dixon (1977) (including both the example sentences and the texts at the end), only four have verbs in the other Yidiny mode, the indicative. Another point to note is that, except in clauses where *gana* appears with an imperative verb, it almost always occurs with a first-person subject. Of the 123 instances of *gana* in the texts in Dixon (1991) and the example sentences in Dixon (1977), there are only six which occur with nonimperative verbs having a subject other than first person. Eighty occur with first-person singular subject, and sixteen with first-person dual or plural ones.

In all of these respects, the resemblance between the behaviour of Ungarinyin *yagu* and Dyirbal *gana* is striking. Might this be related to other points of convergence between the two languages, or Yidiny and Ungarinyin speakers' typical ways of using them? As I have said, the two languages are structurally very different in most respects. But there is one particular pattern of language *use* pointed out by Dixon—an aspect of 'narrative style' (Dixon 1977:118) that is similar to what one finds in Ungarinyin. That is what Dixon calls its "first person orientation", whereby Yidiny speakers typically represent the utterances, intentions and actions of others from an assumed first-person point of view. He points out that Yidiny, like Dyirbal, "has no grammatical technique of indirect speech" (1977:119) whereby the utterances of someone other than the narrator could be represented in the third person. Rather (1977:119):

Yidiny stories typically involve the principal character serving as narrator, with the whole tale being given a 'first person' slant. There may be a few sentences at the beginning told in the first person—those that set the scene and introduce the main character, who thereafter takes over the narration. If the central character changes, the narrator will shift (still remaining in the first person); the first narrator will introduce the arrival of the second character and then silently relinquish his meta-role to him.

As a look through the many texts in Dixon (1991) will make clear, when Dixon talks of a character in the story 'serving as narrator' he does not mean that the character tells it *as* a story, or 'narrates' at all in the usual sense. Rather, the character is represented as speaking within the here-and-now frame of the narrated event in such a way as to advance the action of the story with only minimal explicit framing by the story-teller from within the here-and-now of the narrating event. This is a discourse style that is very frequently used among speakers of Aboriginal languages, including Ungarinyin, as can be seen by even a cursory look through the text in, for example Coate (1966), or any of the now sizeable body of text collections which have been published in Aboriginal languages. The main difference between Yidiny speakers and Ungarinyin ones in this respect seems to be that the latter make rather more use of framing verbs of saying to explicitly anchor the narrated acts of speaking within the context of the narrating event.⁷ Notwithstanding this difference, there is a fundamental similarity in that all reported speech is represented as direct discourse,⁸ and this is the main means by which a speaker represents the thoughts and intentions of others (see Rumsey 1982:157–66; 1990:346–9).

4. Conclusions

Given the similarity I have just pointed out between the discourse patterns of Ungarinyin and Yidiny, the similarity between the behaviour of Ungarinyin *yagu* and Yidiny *gana*, and the fact that the two languages are quite different in other respects, one is led to ask: are these matters of random variation between languages or might there be some motivated relationship between the two points of similarity? My discussion of the grammar of 'trying' in Ungarinyin will already have suggested that I do see a systematic relationship between the syntax and semantics of *yagu* and the grammar of reported speech. As the comparison with English revealed, the notion of 'trying' inherently involves intentionality and judgements of uncertainty. Since the standard way of attributing such mental states to others in Ungarinyin is to 'dramatise' them in first-person reported speech rather than 'objectifying' them with mental process verbs (Rumsey 1990:354–5), it is not surprising that the language should

⁷ See for example the analysis of a text fragment in Rumsey (1990:347–8) and the full text from which it is taken, published by Coate (1966). Dixon (1977:119) notes a similar difference between Yidiny and Dyirbal in this respect and treats it as a fundamental one, but for my purposes it is less significant than what Dixon says is "the main factor distinguishing Dyirbal story-telling", namely "the precise and lengthy reportage of direct speech" Dixon (1977:119).

⁸ More precisely, it is framed in a form that resembles direct discourse in languages which have both direct and indirect. Elsewhere (Rumsey 1990:346–8) I have argued that the kind of reported speech used in Ungarinyin (as in Yidiny) cannot be equated with direct discourse in a language that distinguishes it from indirect: where no such distinction is grammaticalised, the use of reported speech does not presuppose that the *form* of some presumed original utterance is being reproduced, or at least not to the same extent as assumed in the idea of 'quotation'.

have a way of predicating acts of trying by also placing them in the first person and using speaker-centred, modal categories to express the meaning compositionally.

There seems to be a similarly close interrelationship between the grammar of *gana* and the 'first person orientation' of Yidiny narrative.⁹ The account I have developed above of the link between two areas of Ungarinyin grammar can make sense of some features of *gana* that would otherwise seem quite odd: (a) the fact that this word, which Dixon's informants glossed as 'try', is assigned by him on distributional grounds to a class of words which generally function as sentence-level 'modal' or 'logical' qualifiers; and (b) the fact that almost all attested examples of it occur with first-person subjects or imperative verbs.

Elsewhere (Rumsey 1990), I have argued that:

- 1) the grammar of reported speech in Ungarinyin is closely related to particular forms of anaphora, ellipsis and other devices through which textual cohesion is achieved, the combination of these grammatical features comprising a 'fashion of speaking' in Whorf's (1956:158) sense
- 2) the complex of grammatical features referred to in 1 can be related to aspects of a particular 'linguistic ideology', or shared body of common-sense notions about the nature of language in the world.

I am not sure whether Ken Hale would be convinced by my argument on either of these points, but I think he would agree that they can and should be investigated as separate matters, the second of which depends on the first, but not vice versa. Indeed Hale (1986) provides a compelling practical demonstration of this more general methodological point, as well as a powerful confirmation that coordinated complexes of features *like* those discussed in this paper can be found in natural-language data. Inspired by his success in that regard, I have in this paper tried to build upon the analysis in Rumsey (1990), and in doing so I hope to have shown how aspects of the same 'fashion of speaking' fit together with another aspect of Ungarinyin that I did not take up there: the syntax and semantics of 'trying'.

References

- Bühler, K., 1991, *Theory of language: the representational function of language*. Translated by Donald Fraser Goodwin. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Coate, H.H.J., 1966, The Rai and the third eye. *Oceania* 37:93–123.
- Dixon, R.M.W., 1977, *A grammar of Yidiny*. Cambridge: CUP.
- 1991, *Words of our country*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Grice, H.P., 1989, *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hale, Ken, 1986, Notes on world view and semantic categories: some Warlpiri examples. In P. Muysken and H. van Riemsdijk, eds *Features and projections*, 233–54. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.
- Hanks, W.F., 1990, *Referential practice: language and lived space among the Maya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁹ One difference between Ungarinyin and Yidiny is that in Yidiny the verb meaning 'taste', *banjal*, can apparently also be used to mean 'try to do' (Dixon 1977:252–3, 374). But in the only examples I have been able to find (Dixon 1977, example sentences 326 and 839), it occurs in combination with *gana* and a first-person subject.

- Rumsey, Alan, 1982, *An intra-sentence grammar of Ungarinjin, North-western Australia*.
PL, B-86.
- 1990, Wording, meaning, and linguistic ideology. *American Anthropologist* 91:346–61.
(Unpublished, more detailed 1988 version available from the author)
- Whorf, B.L., 1956, *Language, thought and reality*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Wittgenstein, L., 1963, *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: B. Blackwell.

