

CAUSE, ORIGIN AND POSSESSION IN THE FLINDERS ISLAND LANGUAGE¹

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0. INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with formal and semantic relationships between certain grammatical categories of the Flinders Island Language of south-eastern Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. In particular, it is an attempt (1) to use comparative linguistic evidence to explain an apparent connection between FI *-(i)ya* (ABLative case), *-niya* (SUBORDinate clause) and *-ni* (agentive nominaliser), and (2) to examine the way this language identifies ABLative, CAUSative, GENitive DATive, ERGative, INSTRumental, LOCative and other relations in different areas of its grammar. Identifications of this type are not uncommon in Australian languages, and some of them cannot be made sense of if they are treated purely from the formal point of view - that is, they are not wholly an arbitrary local choice from syntactic universals, but are partly determined by traditional Aboriginal assumptions about how the world works.

Beyond saying that, I have very few explanatory suggestions at present, and this paper should be taken as an interim report on a problem that might be rather more complex in reality than my limited field data indicate.²

1. A HISTORICAL PROBLEM

The distinctions between ERG/INST, LOC, GEN/DAT and ABL cases of common nouns, in at least one stage of the dialect-complex ancestral to FI and its congeners, were probably marked by separate forms of the type³:

- (1) ERG/INST *-lu, *-(ŋ)ɬu, *-ŋku, *-(n)tu, *-(m)pu (etc.)
 LOC *-la, *-(ŋ)ɬa, *-ŋka, *-(n)ta, *-(m)pa (etc.)
 GEN/DAT *-wu, *-ku (etc.?)
 ABL *-ŋu, *-mu, *-ŋun(u), *-mun((t)u) (etc.?)

At some subsequent stage FI collapsed most vowel distinctions in case suffixes and deleted the stops from those with nasal-stop clusters, giving the present forms⁴:

- (2) ERG/INST/LOC -la, -ɬa, -ŋa ~ -(ˀ)na ~ -(ˀ)ra, -ma (etc.)
 GEN/DAT -wa
 [ABL -(i)ya, -ŋamu (personal names only)]

(The first five case functions are marked by -ŋana in the case of personal names, by -(y)mana in the case of several [+ human] nouns, and by -wa in the case of a few common nouns.) For some reason, the old ABL was replaced by the present form -(i)ya. The replacement may have been triggered off by the emergence of ABL forms essentially homophonous with those of other cases (hence *-ŋa, *-ma etc.). Another factor may have been the development of the present rule which deletes word-final vowels before vowel-initial words in connected speech. The historical loss of many stem-initial consonants in FI means that this rule applies in practically every utterance. Some ambiguity is therefore introduced unless the consonants of suffixes are somehow kept distinct. Where did the new ABL in -(i)ya come from? My only hypothesis at present is that it was derived from the verbal inflection -niya (subordinate clause marker), and this paper discusses evidence for semantic and formal connections between the two affixes in FI and a few other Australian languages.

Before passing on to that discussion, it is worth noting that one of the Arandic languages (see Koch, this volume) may have reacted in a similar way to the loss of a case distinction. Original Proto Arandic ablative *-ŋ (<*ŋu) was phonologically identical with one of the two ergative suffixes, namely *-ŋ (<*ŋku). While Aranda generalised the other suffix *-l (<*lu) to all stems, losing ergative *-ŋ and retaining ablative *-ŋ, Kaititj retained both ergative alternants in the form -ŋ ~ -ɬ, and lost ablative -ŋ, replacing it with -ɬiy.

1.1. FI AND OTHER LANGUAGES

Dyirbal (Dixon 1972:108-110) has two kinds of genitive inflection, the simple genitive -ŋu which indicates a relation of present possession, and the general genitive -mi which typically indicates past possession. Functionally, -mi has many of the characteristics of 'origin' suffixes

in related languages. Since it indicates past possession, the possession referred to is something belonging to a time or situation *away from* which things have moved temporally. Dyirbal marks 'Time Since' specifically by *-mu*, which is clearly cognate with ablatives (etc.) in other languages (see below).

There are some interesting resemblances between Dyirbal and FI in the following facts:

(a) Dyirbal *-mi* is used "to describe something given by its owner (particular European-type giving, involving a white man...)" (ibid: 109); in FI, the word *rubayi* '*white man*' idiosyncratically has a single inflection for GEN/DAT and ERG/INST/LOC functions, hence *rubaymana* in all those cases. The suffix involved most commonly indicates that the stem is already inflected, usually for ABL or GEN/DAT cases (see further data on this below).

(b) Dyirbal *-mi* 'sometimes appears to have a function and meaning similar to that of the ablative *-ŋunu*' (ibid:109); Dixon gives examples where *yaŋa* '*men*' is inflected with *-mi* to indicate a return from a short visit to a group of men, and with *-ŋunu* to indicate that the speaker was at one time a member of the group, 'he was owned by them' (p.109); note the similarity in Dyirbal between the minor ABL suffix *-ŋum* and the major ABL *-ŋunu* (cf. the 'contiguous' language Warungu which has ABL *-ŋumay*, GEN *-ŋu*). FI shows close semantic relations between ABL and GEN functions, particularly in the context of social descent and group membership, although inflections for the two cases are not formally similar. When names of patrilineal descent groups are referred to in a neutral context, they consist of the preposed element *aba* '*person*' and place-name in ABL case or, in a few instances, in GEN case or a residual ending such as *-ŋu* and *-mu*⁵. These inflected names may be respectively inflected for ERG as follows:

- (3) (ABL in neutral context): stem + (-y) + *-mana*
(-y if stem ends in vowel)
(GEN in neutral context): stem + *-mana*
(-ŋu in neutral context): stem + *-ŋu* + *-mana*
(-mu in neutral context): stem + *-mana*

Common nouns differ in that GEN + ERG would be *-w* + *-mana*, and *-na* would simply be added to both *-ŋu* and *-mu* in ERG case. The fact that the stems normally marked GEN in the clan names have no inflection other than *-mana* in ERG case is paralleled by another curious fact: an important socio-geographical dichotomy in the region is *aba ŋinta* '*inland people*' versus *aba ŋikir* '*coastal people*'. These terms are said to be

roughly synonymous with *aba wuntal-iyā* 'people from hills' and *aba yiwal-iyā* 'people from the beach' respectively. The latter pair are in ABL case but the former are apparently not. However, in ERG case the two former terms behave as if they were already in underlying ABL case (*aba ŋinta-y-mana*, *aba ŋikir-ø-mana* respectively). Thus we have a practice in both these instances where social group terms behave slightly differently from ordinary lexicon, and involving both *belonging to* and *coming from*. Perhaps the anomalous case of *rubayī* 'white man' is explainable as one of underlying case: *ubayī* means 'man-made hole in ground, as eg. well, grave'⁶, and the initial trilled /r/ is only found elsewhere in the grandparent terms:

- (4) *rapi* (<*papi) FM
 rabi (<*kami) FF
 raŋi (<*ŋaŋi) MF

So it is possible that *rubayī* was a coinage meaning something like 'ancestor from/belonging to the grave' and its underlying ABL (or GEN?) case is made apparent when it is inflected for ERG or GEN cases. It can, though, be inflected for ABL case in the regular way, as in the following examples where Mr. Flinders, seeing a pale hand in a photograph of insects, said:

- (5) *aŋal rubay-a*
 hand white man-ABL
 '*It's a white man's hand.*'⁷

Possession, origin and descent are neatly expressed together by Mr. Flinders' following remark, made at a place which was part of his mother's mother's clan estate:

- (6) *makur n^yt^yilabi-ya aŋa-ø-yu*
 oysters MM-ABL eat-NONPAST-1 Sg Sb
 '*I'm eating my grandmother's oysters.*'

One does not 'possess' one's parents and forebears, one 'comes from' them:

- (7) *amwu-ya aba-ya i'pa-ya rubay-a*
 mother-ABL Aborigine-ABL father-ABL White man-ABL
 '*His mother was Aboriginal and his father was White.*'

A statement of descent can amount to a statement of 'geographical' origin, even to the extent of specifying secondary country rights through one's matriline; as in the question and answer:

- (8) (a) *a'mpa-ya aŋtal-iyā ŋulu*
 place-ABL where-ABL 3 Sg Sb
 '*Where does he come from?*'

- (b) amwu-ya urbini-ŋamu₈
 mother-ABL (name)-ABL
'His mother was Urbini.'

(c) Dyrbal -mi may be used to refer to a word coming from or belonging to a language. According to FI inflection, languages themselves are not simply possessed by kinsmen or places but come from them as well, and this dual relation is expressed by the suffixes (-y)-mana, which together have the functions elsewhere of ABL + ERG or nominal CAUSative ('because of X'); -mana also marks GEN superimposed on HAVing. I have given this complex function of possession/origin the name ORIGIN in the following examples:

- (9) u`ku i`pi-y-mana abi-y-mana
 language F-ORIGIN 'FF'-ORIGIN
*'[My] language is from/belongs to my father and his father.'*⁹
- (10) u`ku amwu-y-mana!
 language mother-ORIGIN
'[Use] your mother's language!'

Perhaps this inflection is used because a language is an inalienable possession, like a name or a body part. Thus an example such as

- (11) u`ku rubayi
 language White man
'White men's language (i.e. English).'

leads us to interpret the -mana in (10) and (12) as ORIGIN not GEN:

- (12) utakala ŋunŋidi-i-yu u`ku rubay-mana
 NEG speak-NONPAST-1 Sg Sb language White man-ORIGIN
'I don't talk White men's language.'

One also speaks of knowing or learning a language from (ABL) someone or somewhere:

- (13) ibwa`na u`ku amwu-ya wyampa-n
 man's son-ERG language mother-ABL take-PAST
*'The man's son learned his mother's language.'*¹⁰
- (14) u`ku ipwulŋan-iyā minti-yi
 language Barrow Point-ABL knowledge-HAV
'He knows the language of Barrow Point.'

Marriage, on the other hand, involves ORIGIN, not simple ABL, and the verb involved appears to be obligatorily intransitive (i.e. one gets married (with someone who is) from a particular group):

- (15) amu ŋaŋun muri-yi-n aba Walmpar-mana
 mother 1 Sg Gen marry-RECIP-PAST person (place)-ORIGIN
'My mother married someone of the Walmparwara confederation.'

- (16) amu ɲaʒun muri-yi-n rubay-mana
 White man-ORIGIN
 'My mother married a White man.'

This view of marriage is similarly expressed in Pidgin:

- (17) my mother married from Cape Melville.
 'My mother married a man from Cape Melville.'

(d) Dyirbal simple genitive -(ɲ)u is homophonous with relative clause inflection -ɲu, and (in the Mamu dialect) the general genitive -mi is homophonous with the perfective relative clause inflection -mi. In FI, the connection is not between genitive and relative clause but between ABL (-(i)ya) and SUBORDINATE clause (-niya), the latter exemplified by:

- (18) ɲayu-dun a'ti-n uka-niya
 1 Sg Sb-2 Sg Acc see-PAST go-SUBORD
 'I saw you going.'

- (19) a'ɲɪal ara-ma-yu in^{ya} aɬa-ya it^{ya}-niya
 sick lie-IRR-1 Sg Sb meat rotten-ABL eat-SUBORD
 'I'll get sick (from) eating rotten meat.'¹¹

The affix -niya might be analysable synchronically either as
 -n (PAST TENSE) + -iya (PARTICIPLE FORMATIVE)
 or as

-ni (AGENTIVE NOMINALISER) + -ya (PARTICIPLE FORMATIVE).

(Past tense is always marked in FI by -n, and -ni is the agentive nominaliser of verbs.) Evidence taken at random from other Australian languages is not of much help in deciding between the two interpretations. In some of these languages, tense markers (usually past tense) and agentive nominalisers resemble each other in form, or they resemble those in related languages. Furthermore, either or both may resemble the affix marking a verb in a subordinate clause. For example:¹²

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| (20) Dyirbal (Q'ld) | -n ^y u | 'non-future tense' |
| Warungu (Q'ld) | -n ^y u | 'verb in subordinate clause' |
| Umbuygamu (Q'ld) | -ɲu | 'agentive nominaliser' |
| Thargari (W.A.) | -ɲu ~ -ɲu ~ -ɲu | 'verb in subordinate clause' |
| Gidabal (N.S.W.) | -n ^y un | 'participle (while)' |
| Gidabal (N.S.W.) | -n ^y | 'derivational nominaliser' |

Hale (1976a:29) reconstructs Proto Paman:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| -n ^y u | 'nominaliser' |
| -n ^y | 'past tense' |

and in Walbiri (NT) (Hale n.d.:8) the derivational affix 'nomic'
 (= agentive nominaliser) is identical with past tense, except after
 verbs of Paradigm I:

(21) -ḡu ~ -ḡu ~ -nu (cf. Thargari).

Compare now the resemblances between forms having the functions listed above and forms with predominantly nominal case-marking functions, principally ABL.¹³

(22)	Yindjibarndi (WA)	-ḡu ~ - [*] ḡu ~ -yaḡu ~ -ḡu	'verb in subordinate clause'
		-ḡu ~ - [*] ḡu ~ -yaḡu ~ -ḡu	'ablative case'
	Yulbaridja (WA)	-ḡuru	'verb in subordinate clause'
		-ḡuru	'ablative case'
	Thargari (WA)	-n ^y uḡu	'from (restricted ablative)'
	Pitjantjatjara (WA etc.)	-ḡuru	'source (on nominals)'
		-ḡu ~ -ḡu ~ -nu	'past tense'
	Pandjima (WA)	-ḡuru ~ -wuru	'habitulative on nouns/ adjectives'
	Yandruwantha (SA)	-ḡura	'ablative'
		-ini + -ḡura	'verb in subordinate clause'
	Gidabal (NSW)	-ḡun	'ergative/instrumental'
		-nu	'ablative'
	Dyirbal (Q'ld)	-ḡunu	'ablative'
	Ngawun (Q'ld)	-anu	'past tense'
	Guugu-Yimidhirr (Q'ld)	-ḡu	'dative'
		-ḡan ~ -ḡuwal	'ablative'
	Oykangand (Q'ld)	-ḡand ~ -am	'ablative'
		-ḡan	'irrealis future (verbs)'
		-am	'past participle'
(23)	Dyirbal (Q'ld)	-mu	'temporal ablative'
		-mu	'verbal negative imperative'
		-muḡa	'participial (=agentive nominaliser)'
	Gugu-Yalandji (Q'ld)	-mun	'ablative'
	Ngawun (Q'ld)	-muntu	'ablative' ¹⁴
	Pitjantjatjara (WA etc.)	-munu	'verbal affix, negative'
	Guugu-Yimidhirr (Q'ld)	-muli	'privative'
	Flinders Island (Q'ld)	-mul	'privative'
		-mun	'restricted ablative (directions)'

The above lists of affixes and functions, patchy as they might be in their coverage of languages related in varying degrees to FI, do establish a field of grammatical areas where we might look for cognates to aid the analysis of FI SUBORD *-niya*. In particular they establish the high probability that it was the source of the innovative FI ABL *-(i)ya* (see particularly Yindjibarndi, Yulbaridja and Yandruwantha). I think they also suggest that the *-ni* of *-niya* is at least likely to be the same as the agentive nominaliser *-ni*. Probable cognates also support this hypothesis:

(24) Yandruwantha (SA)	<i>-ini</i>	'agentive nominaliser'
	<i>-ini</i>	'verb participle'
	<i>-ini + -nura</i>	'verb in subordinate clause'
Thargari (WA)	<i>-ni ~ -ini ~ -iniya ~ -ya</i>	'verbal concomitive', ¹⁵
Walbiri (NT)	<i>-nin^yt^ya ~ -nin^yt^ya ~ -n^yt^ya</i>	'infinitive'

The Yandruwantha case, where nominaliser + ablative → subordinate clause marking, seems to be structurally similar to the FI case.

It has proved rather more difficult to find even vaguely possible cognates for *-ya* of *-niya*, but the following have been considered:¹⁶

(25) Thargari (WA)	<i>-dd^yi ~ -d^yi ~ -d^ya ~ -yad^ya</i>	'agentive nominaliser'
	<i>-ni ~ -ini ~ -iniya ~ -ya</i>	'verbal concomitive'
	<i>-d^ya</i>	'past tense'
	<i>-n^yadu ~ -d^yadu</i>	'participial'
Garadjari (WA)	<i>-piya</i>	'agentive nominaliser'
Pitjantjatjara (WA etc.)	<i>-nt^ya</i>	'nominaliser'
Gudada (SA)	<i>-nt^ya</i>	'participle'
Nanda (WA)	<i>-ṭa</i>	'participle'
Kalkatungu (Q'ld)	<i>-ya</i>	'verbal purposive'
	<i>-t^ya -ya</i>	'purposive participle'
Mbara (Q'ld)	<i>-ya</i>	'verbal purposive'

A number of languages have something like *-ya* for various verbal moods and aspects, e.g. Pitta Pitta (Q'ld) has *-li* 'agentive nominaliser' and *-li + -ya* 'verb in potential aspect', Dyirbal has *-yaray* marking a verbal aspect 'to do it more' (etc.), and *-ya* is also a fairly common imperative and/or future tense suffix. But this is not enough to go on, and we will have to wait for detailed reconstruction of the language ancestral to FI and its congeners before the structure of *-niya* can be explicated.

2. COLLAPSING OF 'LOWER CATEGORIES' AT 'HIGHER LEVELS'

FI personal names may take a single affix *-nana* which serves the functions of GEN/DAT and also ERG/INST/LOC cases. This is the preferred practice, but an alternative is to mark the two sets of cases differentially with the regular common-noun affixes.

Personal pronouns have one paradigm for transitive and intransitive subject, one for direct object/possessive (first person singular exceptionally has separate forms for these), and one for all the roles of indirect object/benefactive, allative/locative/accompaniment and ablative, being the second paradigm-form with final *-n* deleted and *-(r)mu* added. The latter is clearly similar to ablatives in other languages. The pronoun *'who'* has a single form for ERG and GEN/DAT, and another for both LOC and ABL (in *-(r)mu*). The stem for *'what'*, on the other hand, distinguishes ABL, LOC/INST and ERG/GEN/DAT respectively. Two noun stems take a single affix *-wa* for ERG/INST/LOC and GEN/DAT, while several others do so optionally (see section 4).

Agent and possessor roles are not distinguished morphologically in the case of *rubayi 'White man'* nor in the case of stems already inflected for various cases (I have discussed above the probability that *rubayi* is underlyingly in ABL or GEN case). For example:

- (26) *aba alka-yilpu-mana alka-n anini*
man spear-HAV-ERG hit-PAST 1 Sg Acc
'The man with the spear hit me (with his hand, say).'

- (27) *arar nalinin uul-ilpu-mana*
house 1 Du Gen husband-HAV-GEN
'This house belongs to me and my husband.'

The following list gives the morphophonological details of superimposing this suffix *-mana* on stems in other cases (most of them were elicited only in ERG case, but there are examples of GEN + LOC, HAV + GEN etc.):¹⁷

- (28) (a) FINAL VOWEL OF FIRST SUFFIX DELETED:

LOC	+ <i>-mana</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>-la</i>	<i>-l-mana</i>
V- <i>wa</i>	<i>-w-mana</i>
<i>-(^h)ra</i>	<i>-(^h)r-mana</i>
<i>-(^h)na</i>	<i>-(^h)n-mana</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>
GEN/DAT	
V- <i>wa</i>	<i>-w-mana</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>
ABL	
V- <i>ya</i>	<i>-y-mana</i>

(28) (b) FIRST SUFFIX DELETED ENTIRELY

<u>GEN/DAT</u>	+ -mana
C-wa	- \emptyset -mana

<u>ABL</u>	
C-iyā	- \emptyset -mana

(c) FIRST SUFFIX RETAINED

<u>LOC</u>	
-ḡa	-ḡa-mana

<u>INESSIVE</u>	
-ḡi	-ḡi-mana

<u>HAVING</u>	
-(y)ilpu	-(y)ilpu-mana

(d) FIRST SUFFIX AUGMENTED

<u>LOC</u>	
-ḡa	-ḡa-na
-ma	-ma-na
-(r)mu	-(r)mu-na (pronouns)

As is to be expected from FI, there are some apparent exceptions to these rules:

(29)		LOC	LOC + ERG (?)
'stone'	idiḡal	idiḡana ¹⁸	idiḡal-mana
'house'	arar	ara'na	arar-mana
'hand'	aḡal	aḡa'ra	aḡal-mana
'mallet'	wiḡḡali	wiḡḡalima	wiḡḡal-mana

The probable explanation is that they are in fact ABL + ERG rather than LOC + ERG (i.e. '*he bit me from the stone*' rather than '*he, on the stone, bit me*'), and as they are, with the exception of wiḡḡali C-final stems, there is no -y- to indicate this according to the rule of (28)(b).

In the case of wu'dumu 'one', where we expect ABL + ERG to be *wu'dumuymana, we get wu'dumuna. Considering the GEN/DAT of this stem is wu'dumun-wa, we may conclude that its underlying form is /wu'du-mun/ and the latter suffix is a (possibly ossified) ablative which is augmented in ERG case by -a. Another exception, for which I have no explanation, is that t^yu'lu 'older brother' takes t^yu'lu-mana instead of the expected *t^yu'lu-y-mana as in ḡawuy t^yu'lumana it^yan '*The bird on my older brother bit (me)*'.'

Other nominal affixes and the nominalised (agentive) verbs in -ni do not have ERG superimposed by -mana but simply take the regular inflections found on simple stems:

(30)			+ ERG
	PRIVATIVE	-mul	-mul-ma
	SOCIAL PLURAL	-wara	-war-ma
	ASSOCIATIVE	-milin	-milin-ma
	AGENTIVES	-ni	-n-ma

The case of *rubayi* is now of interest, as it may be underlyingly in ABL case, and can be inflected for GEN case with *-mana*; and stems in GEN case can usually be inflected for ERG as well. Thus we get:

(31)	+ GEN	+ ERG
	<i>rubayi</i>	<i>rubay-man-ma</i>

which reminds us that *-ma* is the ERG affix for the majority of polysyllabic stems. It is possible that *-mana* contains this affix, and that its second half *-na* (see 28(d)) is isolable. It may not be a coincidence that the verbal purposive in FI is *-(')na*.

In any case, the last point to be made here is that the nominal CAUS affix is identical with the ORIGIN affix of Section 1 and the ABL + ERG of this section. Examples of CAUS are:

(32)	<i>aba</i>	<i>alŋkir-mana</i>	<i>alka-yi-n</i>
	<i>man</i>	<i>woman-CAUS</i>	<i>hit-RECIP-PAST</i>

'The men fought because of a woman.'

(33)	<i>i'pi</i>	<i>ŋaturmu-na</i>	<i>waga</i>	<i>alka-n</i>	<i>in^ya-ymana,</i>
	<i>father</i>	<i>1 Sg Abl-ERG</i>	<i>dog</i>	<i>hit-PAST</i>	<i>meat-CAUS</i>
	<i>ayi-ymana</i>	<i>alka-n</i>			
	<i>veg</i>	<i>food-CAUS</i>	<i>hit-PAST</i>		

*'My father hit the dog because of the meat, because of the food.'*¹⁹

3. ALTERNATIVE KINDS OF AGENT

In the previous section we saw that certain relations involving possession, cause, location and origin tend to be reducible in FI to a single core of semantic content which may at times have a unitary morphological expression. This core of shared content makes it possible to use differentiated grammatical relations in a rather subtle way when referring to parallel events. This section deals with the exploitation of alternative ways of specifying causal agents, and attempts a rather loose tying-up of the previous two sections.

The ditransitive verb *a't^yi-* 'to burn' may take a causal agent in either ERG or GEN/DAT inflection:

(34) (a)	<i>iŋkal-wuga-wa</i>	<i>a't^yi-n-ini</i>
	<i>vulva-sun-GEN/DAT</i>	<i>burn-PAST-1 Sg Acc</i>
	<i>'The sun burned me.'</i>	

- (34) (b) iŋkal-wuga-ŋa a't^yi-n wurmpa wa'nta
vulva-sun-ERG burn-PAST eyes sleep (n)
 uŋka-n-yu-ŋun
come-PAST-1 Sg Sb-3 Sg Acc
'The sun burned [me] and made my eyes sleepy.'

Note that in (34)(b) the intransitive verb uŋka- requires a causal agent in GEN/DAT rather than ERG, as it ends with the accusative enclitic pronoun -ŋun.

Compare:

- (35) (a) alil-wa muyu muray uŋka-y-dan
fluid-GEN/DAT lower abdomen mischievous come-NONPAST-3 Pl Acc
'The women masturbate.'
- (b) ayi-wa wawu ŋulbi-n-yu
food-GEN/DAT belly go slack-PAST-1 Sg Sb
'I was satisfied by the food.'

- (36) iŋkal-wuga-ya wawu ulga-n-yu
vulva-sun-ABL belly sweat-PAST-1 Sg Sb
'I sweated from the sun.'

The choice of GEN/DAT or ABL inflections for causal agents of intransitive verbs is frequently one that only very slightly affects meaning:

- (37) wawu-r ŋanpa-yi-l-lu alka-wa
insides-? frighten-RFL-NONPAST-3 Sg Sb spear-GEN/DAT
'He is frightened of the spear.'
- (38) wawu-r ŋanpa-yi-l-yu aba-ya
insides-? frighten-RFL-NONPAST-1 Sg Sb man-ABL
'I am frightened of a man.'

Both are examples involving indirect causal agents but in (37) the agent is inanimate, while in (38) it is animate. There is one example of a transitive verb with an indirect causal agent in ABL case, so transitivity is not the only determining factor; in this case the 'culture' chooses the alternative for us:

- (39) aba a'ŋkay-a alŋkir ŋakan-i-npa-l
person male-ABL woman belly-HAV-TR VZR-NONPAST
'The man makes the woman pregnant.'

The verb uwa- 'to cook, to burn (transitive)', as far as the data indicate, only takes ERG subjects, whereas ayaŋa- 'to straighten (wood) by heating' takes GEN/DAT subjects or instruments, unless they are pronominalised. Thus the direct agent might be understood to be heat, and the person (as subject) or the ashes (as instrument) are indirect agents.

Verbs agentively nominalised (in *-ni*) may refer to agents without any reference to a specific object they impinge on, and the probably related subordinate-clause forms in *-niya* may be used to refer to indirect agents causing some event or simply to their characteristics:

(40) (indirect causal agent)

wawu-r ŋanpa-yi-n alka-niya
insides-? *frighten-RFL-PAST* *hit-SUBORD*
 'He was frightened of being hit (by someone).'

(41) (characteristic of subject)

(a) wanti-niya aɪtal wanti-ni
open (v. tr.)-SUBORD cf. *vessel open (v. tr.)-AGT*
 'It's holed, open.' 'tin-opener'

(b) iŋkal un^Yt^Ya-niya
vulva copulate with (v. tr.)-SUBORD
 'He's a regular lecher.'

The forms in *-niya* may constitute a regular alternative to more usual ways of specifying cause:

(42) (a) a'di·na ma'n^Yt^Yi-npa-n anini
water-ERG wet (adj.)-TR VZR-PAST 1 Sg Acc
 'The rain wet me.'

(b) ma'n^Yt^Yi-yu a'di-ya
wet (adj.)-1 Sg Sb water-ABL
 'I'm wet from the rain.'

(c) a'di uba-niya
water wet (v. tr.)-SUBORD
 'The rain wet him.'²⁰

The object of a transitive verb in a subordinate clause, where the clause constitutes a causal agent, may or may not receive inflection, but where found it is *ABL -(i)ya* and 'harmonises' with *SUBORD -niya*. For example:

(43) object of subordinate-clause verb is in *ABL*:

(a) a'ŋtal ara-ma-yu in^Ya aɪa-ya it^Ya-niya
sick lie-IRR-1 Sg Sb meat rotten-ABL eat-SUBORD
 'I get sick from eating rotten meat.'

(b) ŋu'lgu aɪa in^Ya aɪa-ya it^Ya-niya
guts stinking meat rotten-ABL eat-SUBORD
 'My guts stink from eating rotten meat.'

(44) object of subordinate-clause is unmarked:

(a) in^Ya walpan it^Ya-niya u-da-mpa-ø-yu
meat worm eat-SUBORD excrement-INTR VZR-NONPAST-1 Sg Sb
 'I defecate because of having eaten worms.'

- (44) (b) ilit^yi-n-yu a'di wulu ult^ya-niya
be cold-PAST-1 Sg Sb water bitter drink-SUBORD
'I got cold from drinking beer.'

There is a close relationship *in practice* between subordinate clauses and statements of causality in FI.

This paper has been about the ways in which speakers of the Flinders Island language express a set of underlyingly similar semantic relationships by means of several different linguistic structures. Although the evidence is somewhat patchy, it seems very likely that FI speakers have replaced an earlier ablative inflection with one derived from the affix which marked verbs in subordinate clauses. The connection between the two functions appears to be that both may commonly indicate indirect causal agents. Other types of indirect agents are: nominalised verbs with the agentive suffix -ni; nominals inflected for CAUS or ORIGIN with the complex -(y)-mana; and other nominals where ERG on ABL, HAV, LOC, or GEN, LOC on GEN, and GEN on HAV, are marked by -mana. The surface identity of these grammatical categories may seem surprising, until we notice that the rest of FI nominal inflection is similarly characterised by coincidences of form. The accompanying table summarises these coincidences.

TABLE 1
 COINCIDENCES OF FORM IN CASE-MARKING: FLINDERS ISLAND LANGUAGE

	most common nominals	personal names etc. section 4.	personal* pronouns	'who'	'what'	'where'
O	1	1	1	1	1	-
S	1	1	2	1	1	1
A	2	2	2	2	2	-
I	2	2	-	-	3	-
L	2	2	3	3	3	2
G	3	2	1	2	2	3
D	3	2	3	2	2	3
B	4	3	3	3	4	4

* First person singular exceptionally distinguishes O and G cases.

KEY TO TABLE:

O = direct object	L = location
S = intransitive subject	G = possessor
A = transitive subject	D = indirect object
I = instrument	B = ablative

The same number within a single column denotes a single suffix or form. The same number does NOT necessarily denote the same suffix or form across rows. See section 4 below for details of suffixes and forms.

4. MORPHOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Some of the FI affixes mentioned in this paper are invariant (e.g. -ni) and some have slight morphophonemic alternations (e.g. -(y)ilpu). The alternants of -mana were specified in Section 2. This section summarises the alternations of the three other main sets of relevant affixes, GEN/DAT, ABL and ERG/INST/LOC²¹.

GEN/DAT

A. Exceptional stems:

rubayi → rubay-mana
 wu'dumu → wu'dumun-wa
 (personal names) → (name) + -ŋana

B. Stems ending in a peripheral stop (p, b, k, g) + -u:

u → ∅, add -wawa.
 Stems ending in -yi or -{ⁱ_r}a:
 {ⁱ_a} → ∅, add -wa.
 All other stems: add -wa.

ABL

- A. personal names: add -ŋamu.
 B. Stems ending in -y: add -a.
 Stems ending in -yi: i → ∅, add -a.
 Stems ending in a peripheral consonant (k, b, m attested) + -u:
 u → ∅, add -wuya²³.
 Stems ending in a vowel (other than as above): add -ya.
 Stems ending in a consonant (other than -y): add -iya.

Interrogative pronouns and deictics/demonstratives take -l + iya, except for *agul* 'who' (+ *agurmu*, which is similar to personal pronouns). Cardinal directions have a more complicated system with possibly several kinds of ABL, one in -mun ~ -(i)ya, one in -mun-*iya*, and one in -y-mun-*iya*.

ERG/INST/LOC (for E/I/L superimposed on other affixes, see section 2.)

A. Exceptional stems:

(i) underlying ablatives (?):

rubayi → rubaymana

aba ʔikir → aba ʔikir-mana

aba ʔinta → aba ʔinta-y-mana

(ii) personal names: where the option to use -ɲana is chosen:

stems ending in -ɲan: add -a.

stems ending in a CV sequence where the C may form a permissible di-cluster with /ɲ/: (preferentially) V → ∅, add -ɲana.

other stems: add -ɲana.

(iii) stems preferring GEN/DAT inflection for ERG/INST/LOC functions:

ugu → ugwawa 'saltwater'

yiku → yikwawa 'tree, wood'

ʔalŋku → ʔalŋkwawa 'scrub (n.)'

(iv) stems obligatorily taking -wa (= GEN/DAT):

warka → warkawa 'big'

aya → ayawa 'creek'

(v) stems obligatorily taking -la:

aba '(Aboriginal) person'

in^ya 'animal, meat'

ayi '(vegetable) food'

a^ˈmpa 'place, ground'

marta 'upper arm'

(vi) stems obligatorily taking -ʔa:

alka 'spear (generic)'

mart^ya 'leaf, paper'

t^ya^ˈka 'younger sibling'

n^yiŋarta 'fish basket'

walt^yi 'grass bag'

waya 'wind'

(vii) other exceptional stems, which are given below where the specific rules to which they are exceptions are stated.

B. Regular stems

(i) Disyllabic stems:

vowel-final: Where V₂ is /u/ and preceded by a peripheral consonant (not /w/), or is preceded by a cluster without apicals in which the last C is peripheral (not /w/):²⁴

V₂ → ∅, add -wuŋa²⁵ e.g. ulpu 'old man' → ulpwuŋa.

Where V₂ is /i/ and V₁ is short: V₂ → ∅, add -yaŋa²⁵
e.g. ulnpi 'possum sp.' → ulnpyaŋa

all other stems: add -ŋa e.g. ʔa^ˈʔi 'tail' → ʔa^ˈʔiŋa

(exception: irŋku 'three' → irŋku^ˈna).

consonant-final: Where V_2 is /u/ and preceded by a peripheral consonant (not /w/), or is preceded by a cluster without apicals in which the last C is peripheral (not /w/):

V_n } → ∅, add -wa'na e.g. tʉkʉn 'grey kangaroo' → tʉkwa'na
 V_r } tʉibur 'man's child' → tʉibwa'na

V_y → ∅, add -wu'na sometimes -u'na e.g. ubuy 'tail' → ubwu'na

V_l → ∅, add -wa'ra e.g. wagul 'thigh' → wagwa'ra

(exception: tʉaŋkur 'lightweight' → tʉaŋkwa'na).

Where V_2 is /i/ followed by -n or -r, there is variation in practice between:

V_n } → V'na e.g. ŋartʉin 'cloud' → ŋartʉi'na
 V_r } aŋkir 'woman' → aŋki'na

and:

V_n } → ∅, add -ya'na²⁶ e.g. waliŋ 'hole' → walya'na
 V_r } wulnʉtʉir 'lizards' → wulnʉtʉya'na

All other stems:

V_n } e.g. aʉin 'yamstick' → aʉi'na
 V_r } → V'na aʉar 'house' → aʉa'na
 V_y } tʉakay 'goannas' → tʉaka'na

V_l → V'ra e.g. artal 'vessel' → arta'ra

V_R → V'ra ulur 'finger, toe' → ulu'ra

(exceptions: V_r : wuŋʉir 'calm' → wuŋʉya'ra

V_l ²⁷: urpal 'brolga' → urpa'na

wardil 'pod' → wardi'na

wirtʉil 'grass sp.' → wirtʉya'na

minʉtʉil 'mainsail' → minʉtʉya'na)

(ii) Polysyllabic stems:

(a) Subclasses: polysyllabic stems containing compounds or reduplications with disyllabic second elements, inflect as if they were disyllables in many, but not all, cases:

nʉtʉilabi 'MM' → nʉtʉilabyaŋa (< anʉtʉul + abi)

urilʉuril 'sea birds' → urilʉuri'ra (< (ʉ)uril + RDP)

But compare:

artalwarka 'hawk sp.' → artalwarkama (< artal 'vessel' + warka 'big')

a'rgaylʉal 'whale' → a'rgaylʉalma (< a'rga 'back' + ylʉal 'blowhole')

Some consonant-final polysyllabic stems receive suffixation as if they were disyllables, but without final vowel-lengthening:²⁸

araʉal 'turtle' → araʉara

waraŋkar 'elongated' → waraŋkana

idilʉal 'stone' → idilʉana (doubly exceptional)

and the transparent compound (< umpu 'urine' + ŋaŋkal 'cold'):

umpuŋaŋkal 'eel sp.' → umpuŋaŋkara

Certain polysyllabic stems, possibly containing ossified suffixes with ABL associations, form a subclass:

stem-final: -mu -bu }
 -na (one case) } : add -na
 -man (one case): add -a

Hence: udamu 'fly sp.' → udamuna
 wirabu 'paddle' → wirabuna
 u'mpaŋa 'wild (dog)' → u'mpaŋana
 maɬu'rman 'crab sp.' → maɬu'rmana

Note, however, that akaymun 'from the east' contains an ablative, yet takes perfectly regular ERG/INST/LOC (akaymunma).

(b) Major productive class: Where polysyllabic stems end in CV:

-yi -wi }
 -ni (some cases)²⁹ }
 -ia } -V → ∅, add -ma.
 -ra (most cases) }
 -ru }

Hence: ŋa'ntayi 'friend' → ŋa'ntayma
 uɬuywi 'Cycas media' → uɬuywma
 uwaymini 'wallaby sp.' → uwayminma
 akala 'canoe, vehicle' → akalma
 mara'ra 'spider' → mara'rma
 mu'ŋɬu'ru 'dugong' → mu'ŋɬu'rma

Note, however, in the case of stems ending -wi (an old affix, no longer productive), two cases of alternative deletion of -wi occur:

walaywi 'whiteapple' → walaywma ~ walayma
 wi'ŋɬaywi 'wild grape' → wi'ŋɬaywma ~ wi'ŋɬayma

The remaining vowel-final polysyllabic stems, and all non-exceptional polysyllabic stems which end in consonants, namely:

-i -a -u }
 -n }
 -l } , simply add -ma.
 -r -R }
 -y }

Hence: ŋutargili 'long single-prong spear' → ŋutargilima
 yiln^Yt^Yaɬa 'larger winged insects' → yiln^Yt^Yaɬama
 alkamuɬu 'snapper sp.' → alkamuɬuma
 ŋakulkin 'queen green ant' → ŋakulkinma
 wadidil 'matchbox bean' → wadidilma
 yirkunɔar 'emu' → yirkunɔarma
 ɬukanpaɾ 'red kangaroo' → ɬukanpaɾma
 alpimilay 'possum sp.' → alpimilayma

In order to arrive at the provisional statement of ERG/INST/LOC case morphology of FI given in this paper, it was necessary to discover or elicit over 600 nominal stems in appropriate frames. FI is certainly remarkable for its complex and irregular paradigms, and I am not entirely confident that new data will not alter the picture a little here and there.

N O T E S

1. This language traditionally has no name, nor is there a collective name for its speakers. Rather than invent a bogus 'indigenous' name, which would obscure the important socio-linguistic fact of the absence of language-naming among the small language-communities in this area, I have preferred a very roughly descriptive title. It is abbreviated to FI in this paper.
2. This language has now (1979) only one competent speaker. I have been able to devote short periods of field work to it since 1973, and a study of the language and a basic reconstruction of the culture of those who spoke it is in preparation. I wish to thank the late Mr. Johnny Flinders of Palm Island and Mrs. Mary-Anne Mundy of Cooktown for their patient work in teaching me their morphophonemically complex language. This work, which has been financed by AIAS, is continuing.
3. I am being cagey about reconstructions in this area until we know more about FI's immediate neighbours. The asterisked forms are educated guesses at this stage. Stem-final vowel length was probably affected by affixation. Only some allomorphs of the affixes were phonologically-conditioned.
4. See section 4 for the details of these affixes.
5. Actually the descent-group as a *corporation* is referred to by simply adding *-wara* (SOCIAL PLURAL) to the relevant place-name, but *individuals* are usually identified by the *aba*— *-(i)ya*, ~ *aba*— *-wa* forms as described. As a method of disambiguating third person reference in conversation, use of these clan-names is extremely common, and resembles the sub-section name use of central Australia. Use of personal names

was traditionally very restricted, as is usually the case in Australia.

6. People of this area traditionally buried the dead in bark coffins after a period of mourning.

7. Body parts and other possessed things which are in a whole-part relationship are normally uninflected, so in this case the expression probably implies that the hand was an extension into the picture from an outside source. See also (7).

8. Urbini is a personal name. -*ŋamu* is the ABL or ORIGIN suffix for personal names only (cf. -*ŋana* ERG/INST/LOC/GEN/DAT for personal names only), and may consist of -*ŋa* + -*mu*, the latter being an old ABL.

Compare also the suffixes of Uradhi non-singular possessor pronouns (Hale 1976b:48-9): (singular pronouns) - *mu* (after oblique form)

-*mu-ntu* (singular possessor
in ERG case)

(non-singular pronouns) -*ŋa-mu*

9. The word for FF is usually *rabi* - see (4) - but here, as well as in the idiom *i'pi-ya abi-ya* = '*Aboriginal law*', the older form *abi*
F - ABL "FF"-ABL

is preserved. These expressions reflect belief in patrilineal inheritance of both language and law. The related language Guugu-Yimidhirr has *kami* FF, MM, which probably preserves the meaning and form ancestral to FI -*abi*. The 'unmarked' content of **kami*, in developmental terms, appears to have been FF, as both FI and its neighbour the Barrow Point Language have *less* marked (or *unmarked*) forms for FF than for MM, although both descend in each case from the one form **kami*. Hence the pattern:

	FF	MM
Guugu-Yimidhirr	<i>kami</i>	<i>kami</i>
FI	<i>r-abi</i>	<i>n^yt^yil-abi</i>
Barrow Point	<i>ami</i>	<i>ŋ-ami</i>

The *n^yt^yil-* of FI MM is presumably <**an^yt^yul* 'old woman'.

10. In this area, one's parents commonly spoke related but mutually unintelligible languages, and children normally grew up to be at least bilingual or to have a competence in two or more languages.

11. I only give the underlying forms in examples. The normal spoken form of this sentence, for example, is /*a'ŋtal aramiyu n^y aŋay it^yaniya/*.
IRR = irrealis.

12. Dyirbal from Dixon (1972), Warungu from my own field notes, Umbuygamu from Bruce Rigsby, personal communication, Thargari from Klokeid (1969), and Gidabal from Geytenbeek (1971).
13. Data on Yindjibarndi, Yulbaridja, Yandruwantha and Pandjima from Breen (1974), Pitjantjatjara from Glass and Hackett (1970), Guugu-Yimidhirr from Haviland (1972), Ngawun from my own field notes, and Oykangand from Sommer (1972).
14. See also note 8.
15. Klokeid (1969):45: "Simultaneous or serial action is indicated by the concomitative inflection in the dependent clause when the subject of that clause differs from the subject of the independent clause."
16. Garadjari data from Capell (1962), Pitjantjatjara, Gugada, Nanda, Pitta Pitta and Yukulta from Breen (1974), Kalkatungu from Blake (1974), and Mbara from my own and Gavan Breen's field notes.
17. I have simplified the morphophonological facts a little for simplicity - see section 4 for details.
18. This is itself an exception - the expected form is *idiḡalma (see section 4).
19. Mr. Flinders' own translation was "He hittem that dog from tucker".
20. This sentence could also be /a'di-ya uba-niya/, since both would have the same phonetic realisation. In any case it looks a little anomalous.
21. I give the facts as crudely as possible. More elegant formulations will involve processes also found with inflections other than those on nominals and will be attempted in the future.
22. See ERG/INST/LOC A(ii) for details.
23. yiku 'tree, wood' in ABL usually sounds like [yúkwaya] where historically original V₁ */u/ is apparently restored, and -waya is seemingly aberrant.

24. Last C/s attested: /p, b, k, g, m/; /ŋ/ is not (yet) attested, and may deviate from the rule.

25. It will be clear from the various rules that the two high vowels are not 'deleted' but in fact strengthened, u → w, i → y. Historically this was a vowel lengthening rule, and is still may be so in underlying form.

26. The latter is especially preferred, even obligatory, where laminal consonants or -l are in medial position. There does not seem much point in trying to decide on a single Pikean 'phonemic' description for those cases with the large variation. Underlying lengthened vowels are phonetically expounded by a rule that appears to be midway through a change from one extreme (simple V₂-lengthening) to the other (strengthening of V₂ to a glide + vowel sequence). I have recorded, for example, [álpì'na] ~ [álpì^yəna] ~ [álpɤ̀'na] ~ [álpɤ̀ə'na] 'mud + LOC', and something similar for the -uy → -wu'na (~ -u'na) cases.

27. If we add to this list the cases of

adul 'who' → agu'na ~ adwa'na

iditál → iditana (see (11) (a))

we get a significant subclass of -l final stems. Only about 11% of -l final disyllables take the -'na forms, however.

28. We shall need a rule elsewhere which lengthens final vowels of disyllabic stems but not those of polysyllables, in the case of verb inflection. Polysyllabic nominals ending in consonants usually take -ma in ERG/INST/LOC cases. Note that I use 'polysyllabic' to mean 'having three or more syllables'.

29. In most cases of -ni the final V is retained as schwa or [I], and in most cases of -ra the final V is deleted or retained as schwa. However, in both cases there is an observed range

-Cma -C^ema -Cəma -C{^l/_ə}ma

and the conditioning factor is partly speed of utterance.

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