

## PUNGUPUNGU AND WADYIGINY: TYPOLOGICALLY CONTRASTIVE DIALECTS

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### 1. INTRODUCTORY (THE PROBLEM)

Australian Aboriginal languages have often posed problems of classification occasioned by such features as dialect chaining. In fact, in many Australian languages, adjacent dialects show neighbour intelligibility, whereas the cognate density between the dialects of that language is of the same order as that usually encountered between different languages in other language families in the world. Thus terms such as 'Family-Like Languages' (Voegelin, Voegelin et al. 1963) have been coined by linguists whose chief interest is in language classification, especially those with a special interest in lexico-statistics as a classificatory tool.

Within the Daly Family there exists a language, Wadyiginy (Wogaity) whose dialects pose almost the opposite problem to that just suggested, in that while the dialects, Wadyiginy and Pungupungu share approximately 79% cognates based on a 200-item wordlist, and would thus be normally unquestionably dialects of the same language, there exist serious morphological or morphologico-typological differences between the two dialects. In fact, these differences lead to what may be termed unidirectional bilingualism, if one may use the term "bilingualism" when speaking of dialects, for speakers of Wadyiginy have no problem in speaking Pungupungu, while Pungupungu speakers have great difficulty with Wadyiginy because of the central nature of the morphological differences to communication. Such a situation is, of course, abnormal, for normally, in the Australian context, a cognate density of more than say 70% is accompanied by almost total syntactic and morphological

identity. In order that the problems posed by Pungupungu and Wadyiginy may be highlighted, it is proposed to examine briefly the areas of near-identity, and, in a more detailed form, the areas of difference which have been observed to present such a barrier to communication.

## 2. WADYIGINY AND PUNGUPUNGU - SIMILARITIES (GENERAL OVERVIEW)

In terms of noun morphology, both dialects manifest the measure of similarity that one might expect from Australian languages.

Unmodified nouns fall into four classes, indicated by prefixes in both dialects, as follows:

- 1)  $\emptyset$ - parts of the body, kinship terms and most natural phenomena
- 2)  $met^Yem$ - with animals hunted for flesh meat
- 3)  $menen^Y$ - with vegetable food and plants
- 4)  $wi\eta$ - with trees, weapons and wooden implements.

Thus:

Pungupungu	Wadyiginy	English
$p\ae d^Ye$		'head'
$met^Yem-walan^Y$	$mira\eta uk$	'knee'
$menen^Y-melu\eta melu\eta$	$met^Yem-\eta\ae r\ae n$	'snake'
$wi\eta-mele$	$menen^Y-melu\eta melu\eta$	'emu'
	$wi\eta-mele$	'cheeky yam'
		'ironwood'

In both dialects the adjective always follows the noun which it modifies and is normally invariable. The adjective may undergo partial or complete reduplication if plurality is emphasised. There is no concord between modifier and noun head.

Examples:

Pungupungu	Wadyiginy	English
$muyin^Y pamala\eta$	$muyin^Y pamala\eta$	'big dog'
$ma\eta \eta\ae lma$	$ma\eta \eta\ae lma$	'heavy stone'

The Noun morphology of the two dialects, then, is typical of the Daly Family languages, and indeed of the languages of this part of Australia. For more detailed information see Tryon (1974).

### 3. THE DIFFERENCES (THE VERB PHRASE)

The principal differences between the two dialects, and indeed those which seriously hamper communication concern the verb morphology, particularly in the area of transitive verbs/pronoun objects.

It is proposed, therefore, to move from the less to the more problematic, beginning with a brief examination of Pungupungu verb morphology, after first listing the subject and object pronouns, which will soon be seen to be central to the discussion. The Pungupungu pronouns are as follows:

	Subject	Object
'I'	ŋet <sup>Y</sup> e	-ŋarka
'you'	kene	-wiŋ
'he'	t <sup>Y</sup> amuyit <sup>Y</sup>	-nuŋ
'she'	t <sup>Y</sup> anmuyit <sup>Y</sup>	-ŋet <sup>Y</sup> eŋ
'we pl. inc.'	ŋerere	-ŋerereŋ
'we pl. exc.'	ŋere	-ŋereŋ
'you pl.'	nawara	-nawaraŋ
'they pl.'	parmuyit <sup>Y</sup>	-pæraŋ
'we dl. inc.'	ŋaŋka	-ŋaŋku
'we dl. exc.'	ŋereken <sup>Y</sup>	-ŋereŋken <sup>Y</sup>
'you dl.'	nawaraken <sup>Y</sup>	-nawaraŋken <sup>Y</sup>
'they dl.'	parmuyit <sup>Y</sup> ken <sup>Y</sup>	-pæraŋken <sup>Y</sup>

The only true dual form is ŋaŋka, expressing first person inclusive. The remaining dual forms consist of plural forms to which the dualising suffix -ken<sup>Y</sup> is affixed.

In Pungupungu there are approximately twenty verb classes, based on the type of action being performed; thus, for example, we find verbs of lying, sitting, standing, etc. This is characteristic of all of the languages of the Daly Family.

In Pungupungu, the verb phrase may be represented by the formula:

± Verb Stem + Affix Unit (+ Actor ± Tense + Aspect)

In other words, the verb stem, normally a free form, must be accompanied by an affix unit appropriate to the verb class of which it is a member. The affix units are trimorphemic, with the exception of the non-future, which is usually dimorphemic. The morphemes within the affix unit indicate actor, tense and aspect/type of action. (In Pungupungu the affix unit follows the free form verb stem, while in other Daly Family languages it has been observed either preceding or following.) In some cases, to be discussed below, the affix unit alone may constitute a

complete utterance.

A specimen verb class will be presented. However, it should be noted that all Pungupungu verb classes function in exactly the same manner as that to be described.

### 3.1. VERBS OF LYING

The affix units which obligatorily accompany the free form verb stems belonging to this class are as follows:

	Non-F	FF
'I'	ŋi-ye	ŋa-pi-yaŋ
'you'	ken <sup>y</sup> i-ye	na-pi-yaŋ
'he'	ki-ye	ye-pi-yaŋ
'she'	ken <sup>y</sup> -ye	yen <sup>y</sup> -pi-yaŋ
'we inc.'	ŋeri-ye	ŋara-pi-yaŋ
'we exc.'	ŋere	ŋar-pi-yaŋ
'you'	kenki-ye	nar-pi-yaŋ
'they'	kere	per-pi-yaŋ
'we 2 inc.'	ŋaŋki-ye	ŋaŋka-pi-yaŋ

The basic tense distinction is between future and non-future. An habitual or continuous aspect is indicated by suffixing -m to the non-future affix units.

The affix unit describes the general field of action, normally, while the free form verb stem describes the action performed within the specified field.

Examples of usage:

mærakara marka n<sup>y</sup>ul ŋi-ye  
*yesterday flower smell I-lie*  
*'Yesterday I smelled the flower'.*

yin<sup>y</sup>mek ŋatta luruŋ ŋa-pi-yaŋ  
*tomorrow house clean I-F-lie*  
*'I shall clean the house tomorrow'.*

The actions denoted by verb stems belonging to this class are predominantly thought of as normally performed in a supine position. The inclusion of some verb stems, for example t<sup>y</sup>am 'to drink', may appear strange to Europeans.

Further example:

mærakara muyin<sup>y</sup> ŋele tar ki-ye-ŋarka  
*yesterday dog hand bite he-lie-me*  
*'Yesterday the dog bit my hand.'*

With verb classes whose sense is basically 'intransitive', such as with 'Verbs of Lying', each of the affix units may constitute a complete utterance in its own right, or may be used with an accompanying free form verb stem.

Thus:

ŋi-ye           *'I lay down'*  
 ken<sup>Y</sup>e-ye       *'You lay down'*  
 ki-ye           *'He lay down'*

However, with verb classes whose sense is basically transitive, (i.e. not sitting, standing, lying, going) the affix unit may not be accompanied by a free form verb stem.

Thus:

pambat<sup>Y</sup> p̄arak wiŋ meke ka-ren<sup>Y</sup>e  
*child small tree from he-fall*  
*'The small child fell from the tree.'*

The main point to be made here is that in the Pungupungu dialect, there is no overt marking of transitive versus intransitive verbs. If a pronoun object is expressed, either direct or indirect, it is normally suffixed to the affix or auxiliary unit, as in the example above.

Further examples:

maŋ wup ŋi-ye-nuŋ  
*stone give I-lie-him*  
*'I gave him the money.'*

muyin<sup>Y</sup> tar ye-pi-yaŋ-wiŋ  
*dog bite he-hit-lie-you*  
*'The dog will bite you.'*

t<sup>Y</sup>at ŋi-ye-nuŋ ŋurut<sup>Y</sup>ul  
*spear I-lie-him emu*  
*'I speared an emu.'*

m̄arakara ŋaka ŋe-d<sup>Y</sup>e-nuŋ wunkel  
*yesterday ask I-stand-him tobacco*  
*'I asked him for some tobacco.'*

yin<sup>Y</sup>mek win<sup>Y</sup>iŋkin<sup>Y</sup> marin<sup>Y</sup> ye-pi-yaŋ-ŋarka  
*tomorrow boomerang make he-future-lie-me*  
*'He will make me a boomerang tomorrow.'*

The above examples show, then, that in the Pungupungu dialect, no distinction is made between direct and indirect object pronouns or benefactives for that matter, as well as no formal distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. We shall see now how this contrasts with the state of affairs in the Wadyiginy dialect (or Batyamal).

#### 4. THE DIFFERENCES (WADYIGINY)

As we have seen, above, in the area of phonology and noun morphology, Wadyiginy and Pungupungu are, as one might expect, almost identical.

It is in verb morphology that the principal difference between the two 'dialects' lies. While Pungupungu makes no formal distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, in Wadyiginy transitive verbs operate in a manner unique within the Daly Family. The verb morphology of Wadyiginy will, then, be described under three heads:

- 1) Intransitive Verbs,
- 2) Transitives with Direct Object,
- 3) Transitives with Indirect Object.

##### 4.1. INTRANSITIVES

Intransitive verbs in Wadyiginy fall into exactly the same verb classes as in Pungupungu. The same affix units are found marking the same classes, with paradigms almost identical to the Pungupungu ones. Compare the following with the Pungupungu class 'verbs of lying':

	Non-future	Future
'I'	ŋi-yæ-(we)	ŋa-pi-yaŋ
'you'	ken <sup>Y</sup> i-ye-(we)	n <sup>Y</sup> a-pi-yaŋ
'he'	ki-ye-(we)	ye-pi-yaŋ
'she'	ken <sup>Y</sup> -ye-(we)	yen <sup>Y</sup> -pi-yaŋ

The sole difference between the affix unit paradigms for 'basically intransitive' verb classes, comparing Pungupungu and Wadyiginy, is that the actor morpheme for the second person singular, future tense, is n<sup>Y</sup>a- in Wadyiginy and na- in Pungupungu. As with Pungupungu, in Wadyiginy the affix or auxiliary unit defines the field of action, while the free form verb stem describes the action performed within the field so specified.

Examples:

mærakara pænet<sup>Y</sup> ŋi-yæ-we  
*yesterday dream I-lie-comp. act.*  
 'I dreamed yesterday.'

##### 4.2. TRANSITIVES WITH DIRECT OBJECT

It is, with transitive verbs which take a direct object, either substantival or pronominal, that Wadyiginy departs most radically from Pungupungu, and indeed, from the other members of the Daly Family. In

Wadyiginy, all noun objects, whether animate or inanimate, reappear in pronominal form within the verb phrase. As we have seen, in Pungupungu the pronoun object always occurs suffixed to the affix unit. However, in Wadyiginy it is prefixed, the transitive verb phrase having the structure:

Verb Phrase (Transitive) = (+ S/O + Predicate [+ V Stem + Tense])

Not only are the Wadyiginy forms prefixed rather than suffixed, but also they are phonologically unrelated to the forms used in the Pungupungu dialect. In fact, the subject and object pronoun are fused into a combined or portmanteau morpheme, a feature not found elsewhere in the Daly Family. With noun objects, then, there are four possible forms for each actor, as illustrated by the following examples:

wiŋ yin - pirine

wood you/it - cut NF

'You cut the wood.'

wiŋ n<sup>y</sup>an - pirine

wood you/them - cut NF

'You cut the wood.'

wiŋ ye - pira

wood you/it - cut F

'You will cut the wood.'

wiŋ n<sup>y</sup>at - pira

wood you/them - cut F

'You will cut the wood.'

[For purposes of this paper, the changes for tense in the verb stem need not concern us.]

The subject-object portmanteaux just listed form an integral part of the personal pronoun object system. The complete table of forms for singular actors, non-future, is as follows:

	'Me'	'You'	'Him'	'Her'	'Us'(a)	'Us'(b)	'You (pl)'	'Them'	'Us'2
'I'	-	ŋen-	yaŋ	yaŋan <sup>y</sup>	-	-	n <sup>y</sup> en	ŋan	-
'you'	n <sup>y</sup> en	-	yin	ken <sup>y</sup> t <sup>y</sup> e	-	n <sup>y</sup> atpe	-	n <sup>y</sup> an	-
'he'	ŋan	kan <sup>y</sup> a	ke	ken <sup>y</sup>	ŋarinpe	ŋatpe	ŋanpe	kanpe	ŋankanpe

Examples:

mærakara ŋen-nene

yesterday I/you-see NF

'I saw you yesterday.'

mærakara yaŋ-nene  
*yesterday I/him-see NF*  
*'I saw him yesterday.'*

mærakara yaŋan<sup>Y</sup>-nene  
*yesterday I/her -see NF*  
*'I saw her yesterday.'*

There are normally two forms for each relationship expressed - for example ŋan- '*I/them*' (NF), but ŋat- '*I/them*' (F). The non-future form is often characterised by a final -n, while the future form normally takes -t. Exceptions have been noted, however, which will not allow one to be absolutely categorical. The Wadyiginy dialect will obviously repay further study, for the portmanteau morpheme feature has raised several problems unresolved during the limited time available in the field to the present writer. For example, the table of forms just presented contains several homophonous forms; thus: n<sup>Y</sup>en- expresses the relationship '*I/you pl.*' and '*you sg./me*'. The same applies to ŋan-, which expressed '*I/them*', and '*he/me*'. For a further discussion of homophonous forms, see Tryon (1974:217). Suffice it to say that homophonous forms are used, in a number of cases, to indicate reciprocal relationships, but that not all reciprocal relationships are so indicated.

One further comment should be made, at this point, namely that all verbs expressing direct object are conjugated in the same manner. In other words, the numerous verb classes of the Pungupungu dialect become one single class which covers all transitives with direct object.

#### 4.3. TRANSITIVES WITH INDIRECT OBJECT

With Wadyiginy verbs which are 'basically intransitive', but may take an indirect object, such as '*to say, tell, call out*', a separate set of object pronouns is used. These are as follows:

'me'	-ŋarka
'you'	-wiŋ
'him'	-nuŋ
'her'	-ŋet <sup>Y</sup> eŋ
'us inc.'	-ŋararaŋ
'us exc.'	-ŋaraŋ
'you pl.'	-nawaraŋ
'them'	-pæraŋ
'us dl. inc.'	-ŋaŋkuŋ
'us dl. exc.'	-ŋaraŋkan <sup>Y</sup> i
'you dl.'	-nawaraŋkan <sup>Y</sup> i
'them dl.'	-pæraŋkan <sup>Y</sup> i

These forms are identical to those already described for Pungupungu and as with Pungupungu occur suffixed to the intransitive affix unit.

Examples:

ke-me-ŋarka

he-say-me

'He told me.' (He said to me.)

ke-me-wiŋ

he-say-you

'He told you.'

ke-me-nuŋ

he-say-him

'He told him.'

ŋe-me-nuŋ

I-say-him

'I told him.'

With Pungupungu all verbs both 'transitive' and 'intransitive' follow the above system, while as has been shown it is restricted to verbs which are basically intransitive in Wadyiginy. Indirect objects with 'transitive' verbs in Wadyiginy are treated simply as direct objects, as for example in a sentence like '*I gave the money to him*', which is maŋ yaŋawene, literally '*money I/him give*'.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The major difference between Wadyiginy and Pungupungu, then, lies in the dramatically different manner in which pronominal objects are marked with transitive verbs. The existence of a prefixed portmanteau morpheme in the one dialect, and a simple suffixed pronoun object in the other raises certain problems, not the least of which is the question of the mutual intelligibility of the two dialects (Batyamal is considered identical with Wadyiginy for present purposes).

Answers to the questions raised are not likely to be forthcoming, since the last Pungupungu speaker died two years ago. However, previous to this time, Pungupungu speakers assured the present writer that they considered Wadyiginy quite separate and difficult, although speaking it well enough for communication. Tradition has it that Pungupungu, so close to Wadyiginy in all other respects except the area of transitive verbs, was once used as a *lingua franca* within the Daly area. Possibly it too once had the same transitive/intransitive distinction described for Wadyiginy, the distinction becoming eroded by the exigencies of being a *lingua franca* in an area in which no other language, at least

not one belonging to the Daly Family, observes the same type of distinction.

It is difficult to test such a hypothesis, since most of the Daly Family languages have long been on the decline. Even if one had been able to assess the number of speakers of Pungupungu as a second, third or fourth language, the problems of attempting to go beyond the hypothetical are well nigh insuperable.

The relationship of Pungupungu and Wadyiginy, then, is certainly problematic in terms of language classification, with the bulk of the evidence favouring their classification as dialects of the same language, while the key nature of the differences between the two militates against such a classification.

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