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**A grammatical sketch of
Ngarla:
A language of Western Australia**
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Abstract

In this thesis the basic grammatical structure of normal speech style of the Western Australian language Ngarla is described using example sentences taken from the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* (by Geytenbeek; unpublished). No previous description of the language exists, and since there are only five people who still speak it, it is of utmost importance that it is investigated and described. The analysis in this thesis has been made by Torbjörn Westerlund, and the focus lies on the morphology of the nominal word class. The preliminary results show that the language shares many grammatical traits with other Australian languages, e.g. the ergative/absolutive case marking pattern. The language also appears to have an extensive verbal inflectional system, and many verbalisers.

Abbreviations

0	zero marked morpheme
1	first person
1DU	first person dual
1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
2	second person
2DU	second person dual
2PL	second person plural
2SG	second person singular
3	third person
3DU	third person dual
3PL	third person plural
3SG	third person singular
A	the transitive subject
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
ALL/ALL2	allative
ASP	aspect marker
BUFF	buffer morpheme
C	consonant
CAUS	causative
COM	comitative
DAT	dative
DEM	demonstrative
DU	dual
EMPH	emphatic marker
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclusive, excluding addressee
FACT	factitive
FUT	future tense
HORT	hortative
ImmPAST	immediate past
IMP	imperative
INCHO	inchoative
INCL	inclusive, including addressee
INSTR	instrumental
LOC	locative
NEG	negation
NMLISER	nominaliser
NOM	nominative
N.SUFF	nominal class suffix
OBSCRD	obscured perception
P	the transitive object
p.c.	personal communication
PAST	past tense
PLACE	placement

PLEN	plenty of
PLUR	plural
POSS/POSS2	possessive
PRES	present tense
PRIV	privative
PROC	processive
PROV	provenience
PSYCH	psych-inchoative
PURP	purposive
REC	recipient
REFL	reflexive
RemPAST	remote past
S	the intransitive subject
TAM	tense, aspect, mood
UNDOUBT	undoubtedly
V	vowel
VBLISER	verbaliser
V.SUFF	verbal class suffix

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[Y]ou will see a day coming when we will
no longer be able to carry on our ceremonies,
for our children will not be able to speak their own language.

The prophet Skanientariio (Wilson 1998:426)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background, purpose and method

There are about 6000 languages spoken in the world today. About a third of these have received close attention by linguists. Sadly enough many of the world's smaller languages are expected to become extinct in this century, and perhaps as many as half of all languages will disappear. The languages that have yet to be described by linguists include many of these threatened languages (Payne 1997:1).

Australia is a country where many languages were traditionally spoken. Estimates of how many languages there actually were on the continent at the arrival of the white man range from about 230 to 250 (Blake & Dixon 1979:1, 1991:2, Dixon 2002:xviii, Frawley 2003:170, O'Grady et al. 1966:26, Walsh 1993:1). Today many Australian languages are rapidly becoming extinct. Over a hundred languages have already ceased to be spoken, and of the remaining languages only about two dozen are expected to survive in the longer perspective (Blake & Dixon 1979:2, 1991:27, Frawley 2003:170, Walsh 1993:2).

The documentation of Australian languages started already with the arrival of explorer James Cook and his ship the Endeavour in 1776. Cook and his crew took down more than 100 words with English translations of the Guugu Yimidhirr-language of Northern Queensland (Blake & Dixon 1979:4, 1991:3-4). Up until the 1930s documentation of Australian languages was mostly done by amateurs, though. One important work published during this period was Victorian sheep farmer Edward Micklethwaite Curr's *The Australian Race*, which was published in four volumes in 1886-87. Curr drew up a list of 124 English words and sent it out to various government officials, clergymen etc. all over Australia, asking them to get the equivalents in local Aboriginal languages. *The Australian Race* presents word lists for over 200 languages and dialects, and it is the only source of information for some languages that are now extinct (Blake & Dixon 1979:4, 1991:4, Walsh 1993:10). The second period of the study of Australian languages can be said to have been started by Arthur Capell of the University of Sydney (Blake & Dixon 1991:3-5). He began to publish works about Australian languages in 1937. This period stretches up until the present time, and documentation is now done predominately by linguists. Over 100 Australian languages have been closely examined and presented in dissertations, books and linguistic periodicals (Blake & Dixon 1979:4, 1991:5, Dixon 2002:xxviii-xlii, 700-718, Koch 2004:25-29). For more information about the grammars that have been written, see section 2.2 below. Despite the efforts by many linguists, though, more than 100 Australian languages presently lack thorough grammatical descriptions (Blake & Dixon 1979:4-5, 1991:6, Dixon 2002:xxviii-xlii, Frawley 2003:170, Walsh 1993:10). One of the Australian languages that has not yet received closer scholarly attention is a language of Western Australia called Ngarla (Geytenbeek, p.c., Hanson, p.c). The language had several hundred speakers in the nineteenth century, but is now all but extinct (see section 1.2 below).

The purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the basic grammatical structure of Ngarla. This will be accomplished by comparing the nominal class and verbal class morphology of the language to recurring morphological patterns in other Australian languages. Comparisons will also be made with the neighbouring languages Panyjima and Martuthunira and with the brief description of Ngarla pronouns and morphology made by O'Grady et al. in 1966 (pp.80-82, see also section 2.3 below). The aim is not to make a complete analysis of the grammar of the language. The focus of the thesis will be on nominal class morphology, and for the most part only simple, declarative Ngarla sentences will be used. Sources of information about Australian languages used in this study include R M W Dixon's *The languages of Australia* (1980) and *Australian languages* (2002), and Barry J Blake's *Case marking in Australian languages* (1977). Sources of information for languages related to (or at least spoken in the same region as) Ngarla are Alan Dench's "Panyjima" (1991) and *Maruthunira, A Language of the Pilbara Region of Western Australia* (1995). Thomas E Payne's book *Describing Morphosyntax, A guide for field linguists* (1997) is also used here to describe Ngarla.

Like all other languages of the world, the Australian languages have a number of different speech and song genres (see Frawley 2003:175-176, Dixon 1980:47-68, Payne 1997:356-361). The aim of this thesis is to investigate the basic grammatical structure of normal everyday speech. For that reason examples from *Ngarla Songs* by Brown and Geytenbeek (2003), the most substantial work in/about Ngarla yet to have been published, have not been used. The analysed sentences have instead been taken from the *Ngarla - English Dictionary 31 Oct 2006* (unpublished), compiled by Geytenbeek. Just as the title indicates, the dictionary translates and explains Ngarla words and expressions, and also exemplifies them by a large number of sentences. The dictionary has long been a spare-time project for Geytenbeek (p.c.), and it shows signs of inconsistencies in the preliminary classifications presented. It appears that Geytenbeek has classified different phenomena as he has gone along, but has lacked the time to go back through the material and do a more thorough analysis. Geytenbeek's source of information has been Ngarla senior elder Alexander Brown (Nyapiri).

The transcription of all the example sentences used in this thesis has been done by Geytenbeek, using the phonemic alphabet developed for the languages of the eastern Pilbara region by Brian and Helen Geytenbeek, Joyce Hudson, Eirlys Richards, and Jim and Marjorie Marsh (Geytenbeek, p.c.; for pronunciation rules, see *Appendix*). The morpheme-by-morpheme analysis of the sentences has entirely been done by me.

1.2 Australian languages and Ngarla, a short overview

In the anthropological and linguistic literature produced over the last two centuries, a number of different names are used to refer to the Ngarla people and their language, for example Ngurla, Ngerla, Gnalla, Wanbarda and Kudjunguru (Curr 1886:287, Berndt & Berndt 1964:71, O'Grady et al. 1966:36, 80, Dixon 2002:xxxviii). Ngarla was traditionally spoken along the coast of Western Australia, in the Pilbara region, north of the modern city of Port Hedland (von Brandenstein 1967:map 5).¹ As late as in the second half of the nineteenth

¹ "Pilbara" is the north-west division of Western Australia, located between the 20th and 26th degree southern latitude and the 113th and 121st degree eastern longitude. The term is also often applied to the mining district between the De Grey, Oakover and Fortescue rivers. The Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre in South Hedland, established in 1987 and charged with studying and teaching the languages of the area, defines Pilbara as stretching "from the Tropic of Capricorn north to Bidyadanga, as far west as Onslow and East to the desert communities of Pargurr, Punmu and Kunawarji." (*Wangka Maya* 2007. See also von Brandenstein 1967:1.)

century the language had hundreds of speakers, but at the present time no more than five are left, Alexander Brown, the quadra-lingual senior elder of the Ngarla, two other older members of the Ngarla-people, and two persons belonging to the neighbouring Nyamal-people, who use Ngarla as a second language (Curr 1886:288, Geytenbeek, p.c., O’Grady et al. 1966:80). In all likelihood the language will completely have ceased to be spoken in a decade.

Australian languages show great similarities in grammatical structures, phoneme inventories, and phonotactics, but great diversities in vocabulary (Blake & Dixon 1979:2, 1991:3, Dixon 1980:127-128, 2002:67-68, 553-557, 643-644). Morphologically words in Australian languages are divided into two main word classes, the nominal class, to which not only common nouns are counted, but also proper nouns, pronouns, adjectives, demonstratives, and time words, and the verbal class, which includes verbs, and sometimes also adverbs. There is also a residual word class, where particles and “other types” of words are placed. According to O’Grady et al. (1966:80-82) these basic word classes can also be found in Ngarla. Verbal class words take suffixes for tense and/or aspect and/or mood in all Australian languages. The nominal class words in the languages often referred to as Pama-Nyungan all take case marking suffixes, and both nouns and pronouns are suffixed to show case relationships. These case systems usually display split ergativity. Pronouns normally follow the nominative/accusative case marking pattern, and common and proper nouns and demonstratives the ergative/absolutive pattern, in the following way (Blake & Dixon 1979:2, 6, 10, 1991:3, 16, Dixon 2002:66-91, O’Grady et al. 1966:80, Yallop 1993:16):

Table 1: Split ergativity in Australian languages (Blake & Dixon 1979:7)

Syntactic function	Nouns	Pronouns
Transitive subject (A)	ergative	-
Intransitive subject (S)	-	-
Transitive object (P)	-	accusative

O’Grady et al. give a few case marking suffixes for Ngarla (see section 2.3 below); however if the language has the common Australian kind of split ergativity or not remains to be seen. That issue will be discussed in sections 3.2.1.1, 3.2.3.1, 3.2.3.2, 3.2.3.3 below.

Great divergences in the phonological systems of Australian languages exist in the northernmost parts of the country. However, for the most part languages have strikingly similar phoneme inventories (Blake & Dixon 1979:18-19, 1991:8-12, Dixon 2002:548-550). That Ngarla is a language that closely follows the “phonological norm” will be seen in the section 2.5 below.

The area of phonotactics deals with how words are formed. Australian languages are very similar to each other also in this area. The basic syllable in an Australian language has the following structure: CV(C). In most languages, however, monosyllabic words are rare or non-existent. Instead the basic word pattern is disyllabic: CVCV(C) or CVCCV(C). Languages diverge from this pattern, but usually only do so in minor ways (Blake & Dixon 1991:12-15, Dixon 1980:127-128, 2002:553-557, 643-644).

1.3 The shifting classification of the Ngarla language

Ever since the lexicostatic classification of the Australian languages made by Hale, O'Grady and Wurm in the 1960s, and outlined by O'Grady et al. in "Languages of the World: Indo-Pacific Fascicle Six" (1966:1-161, see also Blake & Dixon 1979:4, 1991:6, Dixon 2002:44-48, Koch 2004:30-33), there has been an ongoing discussion about exactly how the Australian languages are related to each other. This discussion won't be treated further here. A short introduction to how Ngarla has been regarded and re-defined in terms of genetical relationships to the neighbouring languages might be of interest, though.

The classification by O'Grady, Wurm and Hale placed Ngarla in a subgroup of the Pama-Nyungan language family labelled "Ngayarda". This classification underwent a big revision by Stephen Wurm in 1972, but the status of the Ngayarda languages was not changed at that time. In the revision of 1981, made by Walsh and Wurm, von Brandenstein's subgroups "Coastal Ngayarda" and "Inland Ngayarda" were incorporated. von Brandenstein had made the division of the Ngayarda group already in 1967, mainly based on the noun case systems of the languages in question. The languages with nominative/accusative alignment were placed in one group, and the languages with ergative/absolutive alignment in the other (Koch 2004:36-38). For the present status of Ngarla within the Pama-Nyungan paradigm, see table 2 below.

R M W Dixon considers the Ngayarda languages to belong to the same linguistic area, an area in which there are many shared features but also big differences from other languages. In Dixon's estimate these similarities are however not of a nature as to allow the reconstruction of a common proto-language (Dixon 2002:xviii- xix, xxiv-xxv, xxx-xlii, 44-54, Koch 2004:50-51).

Alan Dench's opinion is that it is not possible to determine whether the morphosyntactic features shared between Ngayarda languages are indeed a result of diffused innovation or of common inheritance (Koch 2004:34-35).

Henceforth in this thesis Ngarla and its surrounding languages will be labeled "Ngayarta", since that is the spelling of the term accepted and used by linguists today. The Ngayarta languages are in this thesis regarded as a group in which there are great similarities. However, it is not the aim of the thesis to establish whether the Ngayarta languages are in fact related to each other or not. More research is necessary in order to be able to come to any conclusions in that area.

Table 2: The Ngayarta languages within the Pama-Nyungan family, the changing classification (Koch 2004:37)

Language	O'Grady et al. 1966	Wurm 1972	Walsh & Wurm 1981	Present
Palyku	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Wati	Ngayarta
Panyjima	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Inland Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Ngarla	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Inland Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Nyamal	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Inland Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Jurruru	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Inland Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Yinhawangka	-	-	Inland Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Ngarluma-Kariyarra	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Coastal Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Martuthunira	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Coastal Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Nhuwala	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Coastal Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Yinjubarndi-Kurrama	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Coastal Ngayarda	Ngayarta
Warriyangka	Mantharta	Mantharta	Inland Ngayarda	Mantharta
Thiin	Mantharta	Mantharta	Coastal Ngayarda	Mantharta
Jiwarli	Mantharta	Mantharta	Coastal Ngayarda	Mantharta
Pinikura	Ngayarda	Ngayarda	Coastal Ngayarda	Kanyara

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Shared phonological and grammatical features in Australian languages

2.1.1 Introduction

In section 1.2 it was stated that Australian languages show great similarities in grammatical structures, phoneme inventories, and phonotactics. In this section some of the features of the phonology and grammatical structures of Australian languages will be introduced in more detail. First, the typical phonological system will be looked at, and after that the nominal word class, the verbal word class, and particles will in turn be described.

2.1.2 Phonology

The tables below show what could be called the phonological “norm” for Australian languages, the phoneme inventory which is found with only smaller variations in languages all over the country (the northernmost parts not included). It should in this context be noted that there is usually no phonemic distinction between voiced and voiceless stops (Blake & Dixon 1979:18-19, 1991:8-12, Dixon 2002:548-550).

Table 3: Consonant phonemes usually found in Australian languages (Dixon 2002:549-550)

Place of articulation: Manner	Bilabial	Dorso-velar	Lamino-palatal	Lamino-dental	Apico-alveolar	Retroflex
Rhotic					r	ɽ
Lateral			ʎ	ɭ	l	ɭ
Nasal	m	ŋ	ɲ	ɳ	n	ɳ
Stop	b/p	g/k	ɟ/c	ɕ/ç	d/t	ɖ/ʈ
Semi-vowel	w	w	y	y		

Table 4: Vowel phonemes usually found in Australian languages (Blake & Dixon 1979:18, Dixon 2002:549).

	Front		Back
High	i		u
Low		a	

2.1.3 *The nominal class*

2.1.3.1 *Common nouns and adjectives*

In Australian languages common nouns (but not proper nouns), demonstratives, and the words usually labelled “adjectives” commonly have the same morphological possibilities, thus indicating that they should be seen as belonging to one and the same, and not separate, word classes (Dixon 2002:67, 73). Demonstratives, however, serve two different functions in Australian languages, by Dench called “adnominal” and “adverbial” (1995:109). In the latter, they provide “locational qualification” of a statement (Dench 1995:110), in the former they occur as either modifiers or heads of a noun phrase. In Ngarla’s neighbouring languages Panyjima and Martuthunira demonstratives only take nominal suffixes in the former function (Dixon 2002:68, 70, 73, Dench 1991:160-161, 1995:109-110).

In section 1.2 it was mentioned that the languages often referred to as Pama-Nyungan all have case systems which usually display split ergativity (Blake & Dixon 1979:2, 6, 10, 1991:3, 16, Dixon 2002:66-91, O’Grady et al. 1966:80, Yallop 1993:16). It is however important to note that the picture is not always as simple as the one presented in table 1. Traces of ergative case marking can often be found in the pronoun section, and traces of nominative/accusative case marking on nouns (Blake 1977:13-27). A few of Ngarla’s neighbouring languages also use the nominative/accusative case marking pattern not only on pronouns, but also on all proper and common nouns (see section 1.3 above, table 6 below, and Dench 1982:43-59, 1991:125-126, 1995:63, 66).

In Australian languages a number of syntactic/semantic functions are encoded by suffixes. Not all languages have separate suffixes for all the different functions that are encoded, however. Many languages instead display a certain amount of “case syncretism” (Blake 1977:60-61). It is common in Australian languages to find case markers for many, if not all, of the following functions (Blake & Dixon 1979:9, Blake 1977:35-43, 60-61, Dench 1991:145, Dixon 2002:134-135): intransitive subject (S), transitive subject (A), transitive object (P), dative (the complement of intransitive verbs, the indirect object of transitive verbs, also commonly used to express the semantic roles of purpose and beneficiary), possessive, instrumental, locative (“at”), allative (“to”), ablative (“from”), causal (marks the inanimate cause of some event, physical or emotional state). Some languages have two different allative suffixes, one denoting the motion to some point that is eventually reached, and the other only indicating “towards, in the direction of”. Languages lacking a special causal suffix usually use the instrumental, locative or ablative suffix for this function (Blake 1977: 51, 55-57, Dench 1991:142).

Common suffixes used to mark dative and possessive in Australian languages are *-ku* (*-gu*) and *-nga* (Blake 1977:35, Dixon 2002:166-168). The locative and ergative case markers commonly have a number of different allomorphs. In Australian languages the allomorphs of the ergative case marker usually end on the vowel *u*, allomorphs of the locative case marker on the vowel *a*, as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Allomorphs of the ergative and locative case marking suffixes commonly found in Australian languages (Blake 1977:51, Hale 1977:414-417, Dixon 2002:157-166).

Ergative	Locative
<i>-lu</i>	<i>-la</i>
<i>-ngku</i>	<i>-ngka</i>
<i>-dhu</i>	<i>-dha</i>
<i>-tu</i>	<i>-ta</i>
<i>-gu</i>	<i>-ga</i>
<i>-ngu</i>	<i>-nga</i>
<i>-mpu</i>	<i>-mpa</i>

The allomorph *-lu* is commonly used as an ergative marker on demonstratives, interrogative/indefinites (see section 2.1.5 below), proper nouns, kin terms, generic nouns (i.e. not specific common nouns) and also on pronouns in languages that use the ergative/absolute case marking pattern also in the pronoun section. In languages where *-ngku* is in use it is the main ergative form used after vowels, and in the languages of the Ngayarta group (see section 1.3 above) and in some other languages, it also occurs as an ergative marker on disyllabic stems (Dixon 2002:157-164). As a point of reference for the discussion in the analysis section, some of the important case marking suffixes in Ngarlas's neighbouring languages Panyjima and Martuthunira are given below. Following Dench 1991:143-144 the obscured perception marker in these languages is also included in this table. It is used to mark a noun phrase which obscures the perception of something else:

Table 6: Case marking nominal suffixes in Panyjima and Martuthunira (Dench 1991:137-145, 1995:63, 73-80, 91, 93-94).

Syntactic function	Suffix (Panyjima/Martuthunira)
Nominative	<i>-/-</i>
Agentive (marks the core argument of a verb marked as passive)	<i>-ku, -ngku, -lu/-lu, -tu, -u, -ngku</i>
Accusative	<i>-ngu, -yu, -ku/-ngu, -yu, -ku, -Vi</i>
Locative	<i>-ka, -ngka, -la/-ngka</i>
Allative	Panyjima: I (point reached): <i>-karta</i> II (motion): <i>-wali</i> , Martuthunira: <i>-:rta, -mulyarra</i>
Ablative	<i>-nguru/-nguru</i>
Possessive	<i>-tharntu/-ngu, -ku, -yu, -wu</i>
Causal	<i>-mari/-ngalyarnta</i>
Obscured perception	<i>-puru/-ngurni</i>

The nominal class morphology in Australian languages is very extensive, and includes suffixes marking a number of further functions than those mentioned above. These suffixes are however normally “stem-forming” (Dench 1991:146), which is to say that they do not serve to relate units above the level of the noun phrase. Commonly, these suffixes express things like dual, plural, comitative (the Australian “having” function), privative (marking the absence of an object or state; the opposite of comitative), and provenience (marking the place with which a person, animal or thing is generally associated) (Dench 1991:146-151, Dixon 2002:138-142, 170-171). Common comitative suffixes are: *-dhirri*, *-dharri*, *-garray*. The privative suffix often develops from markers of negation (Dixon 2002:81, 84-86, 170). Instead of using suffixes to mark plural, reduplication of the nominal stem is also sometimes used (Dixon 2002:77, Payne 1997:98). Ngarla’s neighbouring languages Panyjima and Martuthunira use the following suffixes for these functions:

Table 7: Stem forming suffixes in Panyjima and Martuthunira (Dench 1991:146-153, 1995:80-82, 84-90, 96-99).

Function	Suffix (Panyjima/Martuthunira)
Dual function	<i>-kutha</i> , <i>-pula/-tharra</i>
Plural	Panyjima: <i>On nouns: -kuru/-kurru/-rra/-ra</i> , <i>on demonstratives: -jirri/ntharri/-rtarri/-rri</i> Martuthunira: <i>-ngara</i>
Comitative	<i>-ngarni/-marta</i>
Privative	<i>-pati/-wirriwa</i> , <i>-wirraa</i>
Provenience	<i>-nyungu/-ra</i>

The demonstratives in Panyjima and Martuthunira show a three-way distinction between “near me” (*nyiya/nyiyu*), “near you” (*panha/nhula*) and “far” (*ngunha/ngunhu*) (Dench 1991:160-161, 1995:109-110).

2.1.3.2 Proper nouns

Proper nouns often have slightly different morphological possibilities than common nouns. In some languages different allomorphs of the ergative and locative suffixes are for example used for common and proper nouns (see table 5 and the discussion in section 2.1.3.1), and there can also be differences in the order in which case suffixes are added to the common noun and the proper noun stem (Dixon 2002:67).

2.1.3.3 Pronouns

There are usually rich systems of first and second person pronouns in Australian languages. In most languages there is a distinction between singular, dual and plural forms. A common feature is also for languages to have different inclusive (including addressee)/exclusive (excluding addressee) pronouns (Blake & Dixon 1991:17, Dixon 2002:68-69). First and second person pronouns display great similarities in languages all over the Australian continent (Dixon 1980:327). Most languages also have a reflexive/reciprocal function, used when the A and the P argument of a transitive phrase are identical. In some languages this function is expressed by the use of a free standing pronoun, but it is more often marked by a verbal suffix (Dixon 2002:319-320). Table 8 below introduces the pronoun system of the

Watjarra language, which, according to Blake and Dixon, is a good example of what pronoun systems in Australian languages look like, both when it comes to the number of distinctions and to the actual forms (Blake & Dixon 1991:17):

Table 8: The pronoun system of Watjarra (Blake & Dixon 1991:17).

	Singular	Dual	plural
1 INCL	-	<i>ngali</i>	<i>nganyu</i>
1 EXCL	<i>ngatya</i>	<i>ngalitya</i>	<i>ngantyu</i>
2	<i>nyinta</i>	<i>nyupali</i>	<i>nyurra</i>
3	<i>palu</i>	<i>pula</i>	<i>tyana</i>

2.1.4 Verbs and verbalisers

A number of common verb roots have been identified by Dixon in languages all over Australia (see Dixon 2002:117-124, 224-234, and table 17 below). However, the verbal inflectional systems in Australian languages vary much more than nominal inflectional systems. Not only are there great variations in the meanings expressed, neighbouring and closely related languages often also employ completely different suffixes for the same functions (Dixon 2002:209, 210, 212).

Most, but not all, Australian languages have tense systems, which relate the event talked about to a reference point, usually the time of utterance. Commonly these tense systems distinguish past/present/future, past/non-past or future/non-future. Sometimes a difference between recent and remote past is also expressed (Blake 1987:7, Dixon 2002:71, 72, 210, 211, Payne 1997:236).

Common aspectual markers in Australian languages separate perfective (where a situation is seen in its entirety) and imperfective aspect (where a situation is seen as an ongoing process). Markers for continuative/progressive (used for an ongoing process), and habitual aspect (referring to events that regularly take place) are also frequently found (Blake 1987:7, Dixon 2002:71, 72, Payne 1997:234, 238-241).

Mood markers, which describe the speaker's attitude toward the situation discussed, are also common. All Australian languages make a distinction between indicative and imperative, and in some of the languages that have future tense, the same marker is used for future tense and the imperative mood. A number of languages also employ zero imperative, leaving the verbal stem bare. In most languages a purposive inflection, expressing intention and sometimes obligation, can also be found (Blake 1987:7, Dixon 2002:71, 79-80, 211, 213).

In Australian languages it is common to find inflections that combine tense, aspect and mood (Dixon 2002:211, Payne 1997:234-235, 240), and this is also the case in Ngarla's neighbouring languages Panyjima and Martuthunira (Dench 1991:169, 1995:136-137).

Only a few recurring TAM-inflections have been identified by Dixon in the Australian languages, the imperative *-ga*, the past tense *-nhu/-nju*, and the purposive *-gu* (compare these forms to corresponding Panyjima inflections in table 10; see also Dixon 2002:213, 214). According to Dixon (2002:212), Panyjima is a good example of an Australian language with an elaborate TAM inflectional system.

Almost all Australian languages employ so-called verbalisers to derive verbal stems from non-verbs. The common transitive verbaliser, with the meaning “to make something” is usually called causative. Some languages have several of these. There is an intransitive verbaliser that is also labeled causative or factitive. The intransitive verbaliser with the meaning “become” is usually referred to as inchoative. The inchoative suffix varies very much across languages, but one recurrent form, **-dharri-*, is found in a number of languages in the north and west of Australia. Verbalisers are often suffixed to the non-verbal word (Dixon 2002:xxx-xlii, 76-77, 207-208). Below the verbalisers of Panyjima are given as an example.

Table 9: Panyjima verbalisers (Dench 1991:153-155, 187-191)

Label	Function	Suffix	Examples
Causative/ Factitive	To form verb stems of the L-conjugation meaning “to make something”	<i>-ma-L</i>	<i>muttartu-ma-L</i> bruise-CAUS to bruise <i>ngurriny-ma-L</i> swag-CAUS to roll a swag
Inchoative	To form verb stems of the 0-conjugation meaning “to become”	<i>-yayi-</i> on disyllabic stems in final /i/ <i>-wayi-</i> on disyllabic stems in final /u/ <i>-wi-</i> on stems of more than two syllables with final /u/ <i>-yi-</i> elsewhere	<i>kamungu-wi-0</i> hungry-INCHO to be(come) hungry <i>pirri-yayi-0</i> afternoon- INCHO to be(come) afternoon
Psych-Inchoative	To derive verbal stems referring to body parts or psychological states	<i>-nguli-</i>	<i>thurla-nguli-0</i> eye-PSYCH to have eye trouble
Processive	To form verb stems of the L-conjugation	<i>-pi-L</i>	<i>pukany-pi-L</i> hunting-PROC to go hunting
Placement	To form transitive verbs stems of the L-conjugation	<i>-tu-L/-thu-L</i>	<i>yapan-tu-L</i> hot stone- PLACE to put hot cooking stones into

Most Australian languages have between two and seven verbal conjugations, all with their own allomorphs of the suffixes employed. Although it is common to find between four and six conjugations in the languages of Western Australia, the conjugational systems of the Ngayarta languages have undergone a simplification (Blake & Dixon 1979:13-14, Dench

1991:167, 168, 1995:137, 138, Dixon 2002:70-71, 176-181). The verbal inflectional system for the two conjugations of Panyjima is presented below.

Table 10: Verb inflections in Panyjima (Dench 1991:169)

	0-conjugation	L-conjugation
Present	<i>-ku</i>	<i>-lku</i>
Past	<i>-nha</i>	<i>-rna</i>
Perfective	<i>-lha</i>	<i>-lalha</i>
Passive perfective	<i>-jangaanu</i>	<i>-rnaanu</i>
Future/Purposive	<i>-rta</i>	<i>-larta</i>
Realis future	<i>-kaji</i>	<i>-lkaji</i>
Relative	<i>-jangu</i>	<i>-rnu</i>
Imperative	<i>-ma</i>	<i>-nma</i>
Habitual	<i>-wuru</i>	<i>-lwuru</i>
Hortative	<i>-kara</i>	<i>-lkara</i>
Contrafactual	<i>-rtanguru</i>	<i>-lartanguru</i>
Consequential	<i>-ngumalku</i>	<i>-rnumalku</i>
(active) might	<i>-jara</i>	<i>-ljara</i>
(passive) might	<i>-puru</i>	<i>-lpuru</i>

2.1.5 Particles and clitics

Particles and clitics make up the residual class in Australian languages (see section 1.2 above). Although the Ngarla particles and clitics will not receive a closer study in the analysis section of this thesis a more thorough introduction to this class of words might be helpful to the reader. Particles and clitics typically express notions such as negation, interrogation, uncertainty, emphasis, direction or orientation. Some particles stand alone, some can either stand alone or can be cliticised to the preceding word. Some members of this group exist only as clitics (Blake & Dixon 1979:17).

Polar (yes/no-) questions are often only marked by a change in intonation, or by an interrogative clitic (Blake & Dixon 1979:18, Dixon 2002:80). Interrogative words used in so called “content questions” in many Australian languages often also have an indefinite sense. It is therefore often more appropriate to call these words indefinite/interrogatives. The words in this group can include words meaning: who/someone, what/something, which/some type, how many/some number, where/somewhere, when/sometime. These words can follow different inflectional patterns, depending on what other major word class they are most closely identified with. In many Australian languages the interrogatives can thus be said to form a “meta-word-class” (Dixon 2002:80).

2.2 *Grammars written for Australian languages*

In section 1.1 it was stated that over 100 Australian languages have been described in reference grammars since the 1930s. Through these grammars important contributions have been made to the understanding of the nature of Australian languages. Many linguists have taken part in the investigation of the languages of Australia, and in this section they are briefly introduced. The first paragraph looks at some of the linguists who have written more than one grammar each, and after that the grammar writers are introduced by Australian state or territory. That is to say, the languages they have written about are categorized not by language families, but by the Australian state where they are (or have been) spoken. The information in this section is taken from Dixon 2002:xxviii-xlii, 700-718, and the language names and spellings used are his (alternative language names are given within parentheses). For full information, see Dixon.

Terry Crowley has written grammars of five languages, two on the Cape York-peninsula, Anguthimri and Uradhi, and three in New South Wales, Yaygirr, Bandjalang and Nganjaywana. Barry J Blake has produced grammars of Kalkatungu (Kalkutungu/Kalkadoon), a language of Queensland, Wadha-wurrung and Wuy-wurrung, languages of Victoria, and for Pitta-Pitta (Pitha-Pitha), of South Australia. Together with Breen he has also written about the languages in the north and west Lake Eyre Basin-region of South Australia. Breen has on his own written grammars of Bidjara and Walwura, languages of Queensland, and has also written about the Mayic languages of northwestern Queensland. R M W Dixon and Kenneth Hale have written grammars of languages in Queensland. Dixon's grammars describe the languages Yidinj, Dyirbal, Warrgamay and Nyawaygi, and Hale's grammars Anguthimri, Uradhi, and Lardil (the first two ones spoken on the Cape York peninsula). Evans has investigated the Kayardild language of Queensland and Gunwinjgu (Mayali/Binij/Gun-wok/Neinggu) of the Northern Territories. Three languages of Victoria and South Australia (Wemba-Wemba, Arabana/Wangkangurru, Wirangu) have been investigated by Hercus. Frances Kofod has analysed Miriwung of Western Australia, and has together with Bolt and Hoddinott produced grammars of two languages in the Northern Territories (Djamindjung/Ngaliwuru and Nungali).

The languages of the Cape York-peninsula have received thorough attention. Excluding those linguists that were mentioned above, these languages have been investigated by Alpher, Godman, Hall, Haviland, Jolly, Smith & Johnson, Sommer, Sutton, and Thompson. Patz has produced grammars of two coastal languages of Queensland, spoken south of the Cape York-peninsula, Kuku-Yalnji and Djabugay. Languages in other parts of Queensland have also been investigated by Beale, Bransch, Donaldson, Keen, Kite, Sutton, and Tsunoda.

Holmer has written grammars of two languages of New South Wales, Djan-gadi (Thangatti), and Gadjang (Kattang), and linguists Cunningham, Donaldson, Eades, Geytenbeek & Geytenbeek, Smythe, and Williams have produced grammars of other languages in the state.

McGregor has written grammars of four Western Australian languages (Njigina, Baardi (Baard), Guniyandi (Guniyan/Gooniyandi), Wunambal). Rumsey's grammars analyse two other languages of the state, Bunuba and Ungarinjin. Alan Dench has written about Panyjima, Martuthunira, and Yingkarta, the first two of which belong to the Ngayarta languages. The only other Ngayarta language to have received a thorough scholarly treatment is Yinjtjiparnrti/Kurrama, in a grammar by Wordick. Grammars of other languages of Western Australia have been written by Aklif, Blevins, Clendon, Douglas, Dunn, Hosokawa, Hudson, Love, Marmion, Sharp, Stokes, and Tsunoda. The Nyangumarta language will be

thoroughly analysed by Geytenbeek (forthcoming; Geytenbeek p.c.).

The many languages of the Northern Territories have been investigated by a large number of linguists: Heath, who has produced grammars of Warndarrang (Wuyarrawala), Marra (Marranbala), Ngandi and Nunggubuyu (Wubuy/Yingkwira), and together with Simpson of Warumungu, Merlan (in grammars of Mangarrayi (Ngarrabadji), Ngalakan, and Wardaman), McKay (Rembarrnga, Ndjebbana (Kunibidji/Gunavidji/Ndeya/ Gidjiya)), Ford (Patjtjamalh (Wadjinginj/Wogait), Emmi/Merranunggu (Warrgat)), Green (Burarra, Gurrioni (Gungorrogone/Gudjartabiyi), Harvey (Warray, Gaagudju). Grammars of other languages of the Northern Territories have been produced by Belfrage, Birk, Capell & Hinch, Cleverly, Coleman, Cook, Eather, Evans, Furby & Furby, I Green, Kirton, Kirton & Charlie, Lee, Leeding, Morphy, Nash, Nordlinger, Oates, Osborne, Parish, Pensalfini, Pym & Larrimore, Reed, Schultze-Berndt, Sharpe, Simpson, Street, Strehlow, Walsh, Wilkins, Wilson, Walsh, Yallop, and Zandvoort.

The different dialects of the Western Desert language (in South Australia, Northern Territories, and Western Australia) has been treated in no less than seven different grammars, written by Trudinger, Douglas, Glass & Hackett, Marsh, Hansen & Hansen, Goddard, and Bowe.

Grammars of languages in South Australia have been written by Austin, Cerin, and Schebeck, and of the languages of the Torres Strait Islands by Ford & Ober and Piper.

Despite the efforts of many linguists, knowledge about many Australian languages remains patchy, and much work remains to be done.

2.3 Published material about the Ngarla language

The Ngarla language has, as was mentioned in section 1.1, received very little scholarly attention. There is a Ngarla-Italian word list compiled in the 1860s by Pietro Ferrara (Geytenbeek 2006a:3). Information about the language received a wider audience with the publication of Curr's *The Australian Race, Volume 1* (1886), where Charles Harper's short Ngarla-vocabulary and account of the tribe's recent history and lifestyle were included (1886:287-293). Based on O'Grady's field notes from 1954 O'Grady et al. made some short remarks about Ngarla phonology and grammar in their 1966 article (pp. 80-82). As was mentioned above (in section 1.2), they state that the basic word classes in the language are nouns, verbs and particles. They also present short lists of Ngarla pronouns, case markers and tense markers:

Table 11: Ngarla pronouns by O'Grady et al. (1966:82, see also Dixon 1980: 335, 354).

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1 INCL	-	<i>ngali</i>	<i>nganytyara</i>
1 EXCL	<i>ngaya/ngayi</i>	<i>ngaliya</i>	<i>nganarna</i>
2	<i>nyinpa</i>	<i>nyumpalu</i>	<i>nyura</i>
3	<i>ngunyi</i>	<i>ngunyiipyalu</i>	<i>ngunyipanyalu</i>

Table 12: Ngarla case marking suffixes by O’Grady et al. (1966:82).

Noun case	Suffix
elative (“from where”)	<i>-nguRu</i>
Locative	<i>-ngka</i>
Allative	<i>-kani/-kati</i>
Possessive	<i>-nga</i>

Table 13: Ngarla tense-markers for verbs by O’Grady et al. (1966:82).

Tense	Suffix
Past	<i>-n</i>
Present	<i>-ngkaya</i>
Future	<i>-kuRa</i>

A number of later works about Australian languages mention the findings of O’Grady et al., e.g. Dixon 1980 (pp. 335, 354), where the development of pronouns in Australian languages are discussed.

In von Brandenstein’s “The language situation in the Pilbara – past and present” (1967), Ngarla is also mentioned. Von Brandenstein divides the Pilbara languages into two groups relating to “transitive action” of the verbs of the languages (1967:3). While some languages of the area have a “Passive Verbal Concept”, where the “action” is presented as a happening (1967:4), related to somebody or something, Ngarla belongs, according to the article, among the languages with an “Active Verbal Concept”, where the focus is on the acting person (1967:4, see also pp. 5-8).

However, no systematic analysis of Ngarla has yet been published (Geytenbeek, p.c., Hanson, p.c.). The book *Ngarla Songs*, mentioned in section 1.1, is as of yet the book containing most information about the language. For a list of published and unpublished material about the Ngarla people and their language, see *Wangka Maya*, www.wangkamaya.org.au.

2.4 Ngarla history

At the time of the arrival of the white man the Ngarla people inhabited a territory stretching twenty miles in either direction from the mouth of the De Grey river, and also twenty miles inland (Curr 1886:288). Not much of the history of the people previous to European contact is known with any certainty; however, in his article from 1967 (mentioned in section 2.3 above) von Brandenstein looks at different cultural and linguistic traits of the area, and argues that a good case can be made for groups of people earlier in history having moved both from the inland towards the coast, and in the opposite direction (1967:6). He also argues that the fact that the word *tartaruga*, the Portugese and Italian word for “turtle”, is used in Ngarla and two neighbouring coastal languages shows that Portugese explorers led by Jean Parmentier de Dieppe must have visited the area on an expedition to Sumatra in 1529 (1967:10-11).

British authorities opened the northern part of the Pilbara region for colonists in 1861 (von Brandenstein 1967:1). Three years later the Ngarla territory received its first European settlers, at a time when the Ngarla language had “several hundred” speakers

(O'Grady et al. 1966:80, Curr 1886:288). The newcomers immediately took full control of the land. Like in other parts of Australia the ecological balance of the region was seriously altered by the cutting down of most of the trees, and the introduction of new grasses and new animals, such as cats, foxes and livestock (Curr 1886:288, Davison, Hirst & Macintyre 1998:593-594, Geytenbeek p.c.). New diseases, brought from Europe, claimed many Aboriginal lives. As early as in 1865-66 the area saw the first outbreak of small-pox. Despite many Ngarlas dying in the disease the tribe was again increasing in numbers towards the end of the nineteenth century (Curr 1886:288, 290, 291).

With the loss of land and the altering of the ecological balance the Ngarla and other Aboriginal peoples of the area lost the capacity for self-support. They became dependent upon the whites, and many became employed by pastoralists and farmers (at much lower wages than white workers; Davison, Hirst & Macintyre 1998:593-594, Hayes 2007). The loss of the capacity for self-support was one important factor for the loss of language (Geytenbeek, p.c.). The poor living conditions for Aboriginals in the Pilbara led to a three-year strike that started on May 1, 1946, the so-called "Pilbara walkoff" (Davison, Hirst & Macintyre 1998:6, 506). Led by Don McLeod, a white man, and the two Aboriginals Dooley Bin Bin and Clancy McDenna, workers from several Aboriginal peoples went on strike to demand better wages and living conditions. As it turned out, the walkoff became another contributing factor to the loss of language. During this period Ngarla's neighbouring language Nyangumarta became the lingua franca among the participants. Nyangumarta thus became widespread at the expense of other languages (Geytenbeek p.c., von Brandenstein 1967:map 7). In the mid-1950s, when Geoffrey O'Grady did his survey of the languages of the Pilbara region, the Ngarla-speakers were, in his estimate, "reduced to less than half a dozen" (O'Grady et al. 1966:80, see also page 24). According to von Brandenstein the number of speakers in 1967 were "not more than ten" (1967:19).

The Equal Wages ruling of 1965 meant that pastoralists and farmers had to pay the same wages to Aboriginal employees as to whites. Because of this many uneducated Aboriginals lost their jobs. Only well-trained white workmen were kept (Geytenbeek, p.c., Hayes 2007). However, under the unemployment benefit system, introduced after the Australian constitution alteration of 1967, Aboriginals were entitled to get unemployment benefits (Davison, Hirst & Macintyre 1998:6, 548, 594-595, Geytenbeek p.c.). One unusual feature of this system, which is still in use, is that Aboriginals, unlike other groups of Australians, are entitled to get benefits indefinitely. Drug abuse and alcoholism were already widespread problems in Aboriginal communities before the introduction of the unemployment benefit system, but have since increased dramatically. There is today in the Pilbara region a very high incidence of drunken driving and drunken fighting, and many Aboriginals die in drug- and alcohol-related accidents (Geytenbeek p.c., Mackie 2004:67-68).

An organisation that controls matters involved with the custodianship of Ngarla territory was formed a few years ago under the Native Title Act (implemented 1994). It deals with mining companies who want to prospect for minerals, start mining operations, or put new roads through the territory. The organisation decides what sacred sites should and should not be interfered with, what royalties companies are required to pay, and how many Ngarlas must be employed in any given venture (Davison, Hirst & Macintyre 1998:7, Geytenbeek p.c.).

No one knows exactly how many Ngarlas there are today. Counting becomes complicated by the fact that inter-tribal marriages have become common, and that a person with parents from different tribes usually is recognised as a member of both. The senior elder of the Ngarla, Alexander Brown, is himself a man of mixed descent (Geytenbeek p.c.).

2.5 Ngarla phonology

Geytenbeek (p.c.) claims that Ngarla today has the same phoneme inventory as neighbouring Nyangumarta. This is something that was already noted by O’Grady in the 1950s (O’Grady et al. 1966:80-81). O’Grady et al. report that the following phonemes were used by O’Grady’s Ngarla-informant:

Table 14: Ngarla consonant phonemes (O’Grady et al. 1966:81, see also Blake & Dixon 1979:18, 1991:9, Dixon 2002:549-550.)

Place of articulation: Manner	Bilabial	Dorso- velar	Lamino- palatal	Apico- alveolar	Retroflex
Rhotic				r	ɽ
Lateral			ɬ	l	ɭ
Nasal	m	ŋ	ɲ	n	ɳ
Stop	p	k	c	t	ʈ
Semi- vowel	w		y		

Table 15: Ngarla vowel phonemes (O’Grady et al. 1966:81, see also Blake & Dixon 1979:18.)

	Front		Back
High	i		u
Low		a	

It can easily be seen that this is a very typical Australian phoneme inventory (Blake & Dixon 1979:18-19, 1991:8-12, Dixon 2002:548-550). The lamino-dental series of sounds (ɬ, ɲ, ɭ) is however missing. In the opinion of O’Grady et al. the Ngarla word list in Curr (1886:292-293) indicates that the language did in fact earlier have lamino-dental sounds in addition to those presented above. O’Grady et al. speculate that the lamino-dental sounds must have merged with their palatal counterparts in the ideolect of O’Grady’s informant of 1954. Thus O’Grady’s informant was speaking “‘n yangumardized’ Ngarla” (O’Grady et al. 1966:81).

2.6 The Ngarla noun- and verb phrase and basic word order

This section serves as an introduction to the analysis section. Here it will be shown how the Ngarla noun and verb phrases are built up in the example sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, and Ngarla basic word order will also be discussed. The number within parentheses given after the English translation of Ngarla example sentences refers to the page in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* from which the sentence has been taken. To avoid confusion the dictionary is occasionally also referred to as “Geytenbeek 2006b”.

2.6.1 The Ngarla noun phrase

As the head of the Ngarla noun phrase one of the following can usually be found: a proper noun (example 1), a common noun (to which also adjectives and adverbs are counted; example 2), a pronoun (3), a demonstrative (4) or a nominalised verb (5). The relevant noun phrases in these examples are marked in bold (more about morphology in section 3 below):

- (1) *Nyapirilu mujarri kayinyu nganu kunyjarta.*
Nyapiri-lu mujarri ka-yinyu
 Nyapiri-ERG running away secretly VBLISER-ImmPAST
 nga-nu kunyjarta.
 1SG-POSS2 woman
 Nyapiri secretly took my woman. (47)
- (2) *Jilya jartun ngarri-yan*
 child jump, leap VBLISER-PRES
 The child is leaping upwards (5)
- (3) *Jurni kayinyu ngaya palka-palka.*
 Jurni ka-yinyu **nga-ya** palka-palka.
 laugh VBLISER-PAST 1SG-ABS increasingly, do something more
 energetically
 I laughed uproariously. (11)
- (4) *Palakarni-lu nganyjarra-nya yangka-yangka ma-rnu.*
 DEM (near)-ERG 3PL INCL-ACC ? VBLISER-PAST
 That fellow was rocking us. (101; the combination *yangka-yangka ma-rri* means “to
 shake, rock something”(99))²
- (5) *Kurralka ngayinyu ngaya pajirnguru karlumpu.*
 Kurralka nga-yinyu nga-ya **paji-rnguru**
 belch, burp VBLISER-ImmPAST 1SG-ABS bite, eat-NMLISER
 karlumpu.
 karlumpu (fruit)
 I burped from eating karlumpu (lit. “as a result of karlumpu-eating”). (30)

Noun phrases however often consist of more than one word, for instance a demonstrative and another word of the nominal class (see section 2.1.3.1 above):

- (6) *Nyayi yawarta mangan karri.*
Nyayi **yawarta** mangan karri
 DEM (here) horse lively, energetic VBLISER-0
 This horse will buck. (20)
- (7) *Jirli-ngka karri palakarni jilya!*
 1) upper arm, 2) whole arm-LOC carry-0DEM (near) child
 Lead that child by the hand (lit. “carry that child by the arm”)! (8)

² In the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* Geytenbeek does not always give the meaning of the nominal class word used in a verb phrase together with a verbaliser. Quite frequently only the meaning of the combination is given. In the examples used in this thesis the meaning of the nominal class word is given where known. Where the meaning is not known the meaning of the combination is instead given within parentheses after the translation of the sentence. For more information about the Ngarla verbalisers, see sections 2.6.2 & 3.3.3. For information about Ngarla verbal class morphology, see section 3.3.1.

Noun phrases can also consist of more than two words. A common reason for this appears to be that nominal class words in Ngarla seldom are marked for plural. Instead what is here called “a dummy-pronoun” (my term) is inserted to specify how many of a certain phenomenon the utterance is about (see also example 12 below, *pananya kukurnjayi*):

- (8) *Palakarni panalu yalya nganungakapu malyakapu waantangu.*
Palakarni pana-lu yalya nga-nu-nga-kapu
 DEM (near) 3PL-NOM clothing, belongings 1SG-BUFF-POSS-N.SUFF:from?
 malya-kapu waa-ntangu.
 father, father’s brother-N.SUFF:from? give-ASP
 Those belongings were given to me by my father. (107)

At times, noun phrases can consist of as many as four words, as in example 9. (Ngarla has no copula, which accounts for the lack of a verb in this clause.)

- (9) *Nyayi panalu yurta kartunyarri yinta ngurrara.*
Nyayi pana-lu yurta kartu-nyjarri
 DEM (here) 3PL-NOM fish grown up-PLUR
 yinta ngurrara.
 permanent water-hole local inhabitant
 Those grown-up fish inhabited the permanent billabongs. (Lit.: “Those grown-up fish were inhabitants of the permanent water-holes.”) (72)

The different constituents of the noun phrase get the same case marking, which is illustrated by examples 6-9 above. See e.g. also example 43 below. Since common nouns, proper nouns and demonstratives follow a different case marking pattern than the majority of the pronouns, however, examples like sentence 39 below are also quite common in the material (see in this context also sections 3.2.1, 3.2.3).

2.6.2 The Ngarla verb phrase

In the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, the typical verb phrase consists of either a verb (see examples 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16), or a nominal class word plus a verbaliser (1-6, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18). At times verb phrases are also found that simply consist of a nominal class word with verbal class suffixes (53, 143), so-called “zero derivation” (Dench 1991:156, 1995:162-163). There can also be more than one verb/verb phrase in a clause, as in example 10 below. TAM-markers are cliticised directly to the verb/verbaliser. Ngarla has person marking on the verb. It is the subject of the clause that is marked, and in the material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* only examples of the marking of dual and third person plural have been found. For dual the suffix *-pula* is used, and for 3PL the suffixes *-ya*, *-pi-ya* (it is here assumed that the *-piya* suffix consists of a buffer morpheme which occurs after certain sounds, and the “real” 3PL marker *-ya*) See the following examples (and also sentences 65, 79, 80, 82, 88, 118, 119, 126, 131, 139, 148, 157, 170, 171, 174). See also table 7 above for the function of the *-pula* suffix in Panyjima:

- (10) *Pungarnu ngaja parnunya yana-nyjangu.*
Punga-rnu nga-ja pa-rnu-nya **yana-nyjangu.**
hit, kill-PAST 1SG-ERG 3SG-BUFF-ACC go-ASP
I hit him while he was walking past me. (112)
- (11) *Jarra-jarra marayanpiya pirtirra.*
Jarra-jarra **ma-ryan-pi-ya** pirtirra.
scattered VBLISER-PRES-BUFF-3 PL corella
The corellas are scattering. (5)
- (12) *Pananya kukurnjayi ngaparri marriya kulukarta.*
Pana-nya kukurnjayi **ngaparri ma-ri-ya** kulu-karta.
3PL-ACC sheep ? VBLISER-PRES-3PL louse-COM
They are spraying the sheep that have lice. (24; the combination *ngaparri ma-ri*
means “to splash/spray/sprinkle water on something” (53).)
- (13) *Ngunyi jilya-jarra purlpi jinaru karriyanpula.*
Ngunyi jilya-jarra purlpi jinaru **karri-yan-pula.**
DEM (far) child-DU stop able carry-PRES-DU
Those two little children are able to walk now (lit. “are not carried any more”). (7)
- (14) *Karrirripula mantu.*
Karri-ri-pula mantu.
carry-PRES-DU meat, animal, bird
Those two are carrying the meat. (20)

Relatively few “pure” verbs have been found in the *Ngarla - English Dictionary*. Verb phrases instead more often consist of a nominal class word and a verbaliser. However, a number of the “pure” Ngarla verbs mentioned in the dictionary appear to come from the stock of common Australian verb roots identified by Dixon (2002:117-124, 224-234). In table 16 verbs from the *Ngarla-English Dictionary* that appear to be derived from the roots in Dixon’s list are given. Following the Ngarla stem is the present tense marker (more information about Ngarla present tense markers can be found in table 17 and section 3.3.1.):

Table 16: Ngarla verbs derived from common Australian verb roots.

Ngarla verb	Verb root in Dixon 2002
<i>jarrpi-yan</i> , to enter, go inside, go underneath (5)	<i>dharraba-y</i> (to enter, dive), with the variants <i>djari-</i> , <i>dja:-</i> <i>djab-</i> , <i>thurpang-</i> (Dixon 2002:118)
<i>kama-rri</i> , to cook, burn (15)	<i>gamba-y/ganda-/ga(r)na-</i> (to burn, cook, melt) (Dixon 2002:121)
<i>maa-rri</i> , to get (also loosely used for “picking something up”) (33)	<i>ma:-nj/n</i> (to hold, get, take) (Dixon 2002:119)
<i>nyini-yan</i> , to stay, sit, be (62)	<i>nji:-n</i> (to sit), with the alternative roots <i>ninja-</i> , <i>nijne-</i> , <i>nijnga-</i> , <i>njid-</i> , <i>ni-</i> , <i>ne-</i> (Dixon 2002:119)
<i>pujula-rri</i> , to puff, blow, shoot (78)	<i>bu-/buwa-/buya-/bu(:)ba-/burba-/buma-/bumba-/bunga-/bulga-/bunja-/buni-</i> etc. (to blow) (Dixon 2002:122)
<i>punga-rri</i> , to hit, kill (79)	<i>bu-m/buma-/bumi-/bunga-/bumdu-/buwa-/bungu-/bungu-/bunga-/bunggu-/bundja-/budha-/budhi-/burba-/burda-/bura-</i> etc. (to hit) (Dixon 2002:120)
<i>wanyja-rri</i> , to separate (from), leave (89)	<i>badha-/wanhdha/wanda-/wana-</i> (to leave) (Dixon 2002:119)
<i>warni-yan</i> , to fall (91)	<i>wanda-y/wandi-/warni-</i> (to fall) (Dixon 2002:118)
<i>wurtarri-yan</i> , to stand (97)	<i>yugarri-/garri-/yuga-/warra-</i> (to stand) (Dixon 2002:119)

Geytenbeek identifies what appears to be no less than 17 different verbalisers in Ngarla (see table 17 below). Unfortunately there are relatively few examples of the use and meaning of most of these in the material, and as a result it won’t be possible in this thesis to come to any far-reaching conclusions about the majority of them. A few of the verbalisers however receive a more careful study in section 3.3.3 below.

Table 17: Geytenbeek’s classification of verbalisers by verbal conjugation (Geytenbeek 2006a: 11).

yan-class	rayan-class	rri-class
<i>jarri-yan</i>	<i>ma-rayan</i>	<i>ja-rri</i>
<i>karri-yan</i>	<i>nga-rayan</i>	<i>ji-rri</i>
<i>ngarri-yan</i>	<i>nya-rayan</i>	<i>ku-rri</i>
<i>-rri-yan</i>	<i>pi-rayan</i>	<i>ma-rri</i>
	<i>pinya-rayan</i>	<i>nya-rri</i>
		<i>nyi-rri</i>
		<i>pi-rri</i>
		<i>pinya-rri</i>

All the verbalisers except *-rri-yan* are by Geytenbeek treated as free forms (2006a:10-11). Dench sees the verbalisers in Panyjima and Martuthunira as morphemes that are suffixed to the noun class words (1991:153-156, 187-192, 1995:155-162; see also table 9). In Ngarla’s

neighbouring language Nyangumarta two writing systems exist side-by-side, one in which verbalisers are suffixed, and one in which they are regarded as free forms (Geytenbeek, p.c.). Since no conclusive evidence has been found for either option in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* Geytenbeek’s system will be followed in this thesis.

2.6.3 Basic word order in Ngarla

Trying to place Ngarla in the Greenbergian constituent order universe (see e.g. Payne 1997:71-76) is not an easy task. For one thing, subjects and objects are not compulsory in the sentences/clauses of the language. Instead it appears that they are habitually omitted when the referent can be otherwise understood by the discourse context. As in example 16 below, the case marking on the subject of the clause, and possibly also the transitivity of the verb, can sometimes serve as indicators of the omission of an object (see more about the case marking on pronouns in section 3.2.3):

(15) *Pinurru* *julya* *ja-lu.*
 fire buried in the ground VBLISER-PURP
 (He) will bury the fire. (10)

(16) *japa-rnu* *nga-ja.*
 cover, bury –PAST 1SG-ERG
 I covered (it). (4)

(17) *Jakatiti* *karri-yan.*
 rotation VBLISER-PRES
 (It) is spinning (on its axis). (2)

At first glance the word order of the sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* might also appear completely free and arbitrary. Compare for example the following intransitive sentences, where the subject comes before the verb, with example 3 above:

(18) *Nyi-npa* *jankan karri-yan.*
 2SG-ABS ? VBLISER-PRES
 You are shivering. (3; the combination *jankan karri-yan* means ”to shiver, tremble”(3).)

A closer inspection however reveals that although there is no such thing as a completely rigid word order in the sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* there are still obvious tendencies when it comes to the ordering of constituents within a clause. In no less than 82% of the simple, declarative, intransitive sentences (with an overt subject) studied in the course of the work with this thesis the subject is placed before the verb. When it comes to simple transitive, declarative sentences all six possible combinations of subject, verb and direct object (APV, AVP, VAP, VPA, PAV & PVA; Payne 1997:72) are present in the studied material. However, in these sentences the subject is more often than not placed before the object. This is the case in 75% of all transitive sentences studied, in one of the three following constituent orders: APV (the most common constituent order, represented in 36% of all cases), AVP (19,5%), VAP (19,5%). The constituent orders VPA and PAV are represented in 11% each of the sentences, and PVA, being the most uncommon constituent order, in only 3% of all cases.

3. Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The analysis of the basic grammatical structure of the sentences taken from the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* is divided into two main sections. In the first one nominal class morphology is analysed, in the second one verbal class morphology. The latter section also includes a discussion about the transitivity and function of a number of the Ngarla verbalisers (3.3.3). It will be shown that parts of the morphology used in Ngarla is shared with other Australian languages, and that most of the functions commonly marked on nominal class words in Australian languages are also marked in the Ngarla example sentences. Verbal functions common to Australian languages are also found in the material. Some of the inflections used in the example sentences however differ markedly in form from the ones found in neighbouring languages, and also from the recurring inflections in Australian languages (see sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.4 above, and the analysis sections 3.2.1, 3.3.1 below).

3.2 Nominal class morphology

In this section the case marking and stem forming suffixes corresponding to those introduced in section 2.1.3.1 will be discussed. This section is divided up into three parts. In the first one case marking on common nouns, proper nouns and demonstratives is introduced. The second part looks at the stem forming suffixes used in Ngarla. The pronouns are treated separately in the third part, since pronoun morphology differs from that on remaining nominal class words.

3.2.1 Case marking suffixes on common nouns, proper nouns and demonstratives

The same suffixes, with smaller variations, are used to mark common nouns, proper nouns and demonstratives. Table 18 summarises various case markers along with the terms used to describe them.

Table 18: Case marking morphology on the Ngarla common noun, proper noun and demonstrative

Syntactic function	Case marker
Ergative/instrumental (ERG/INSTR)	Common nouns: <i>-ngku/-ku/-lu/-tu/-ju</i> Proper nouns: <i>-lu</i> Demonstratives: <i>-ngku/-lu</i>
Absolute (ABS)	-
Locative (LOC)	<i>-ngka/-ka/-ngura/-ta/-ja</i>
Possessive/Dative (POSS/DAT)	<i>-rra/-ku</i> (after consonant)
Allative (ALL)	I (point reached): <i>-karni</i> II (towards): <i>-karti</i>
Ablative (ABL)	<i>-nguru</i>
Obscured perception (OBSCRD)	<i>-puru</i>

3.2.1.1 Ergative/absolute, instrumental and locative

As table 5 above shows, ergative and locative allomorphs in Australian languages are very similar to each other. Usually only the final vowel separates an ergative suffix from a locative one. For that reason they are treated together here. As will be shown in section 3.2.1.1.3 below, there are in Ngarla phonological and morphological rules governing what kind of contexts different allomorphs can occur in.

3.2.1.1.1 Ergative/absolute and instrumental

The material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* indicates that Ngarla follows the ergative/absolute case marking pattern on proper and common nouns and demonstratives. Absolute is the non-inflected form of the word, and the ergative is marked by one of a number of ergative allomorphs (-ngku/-ku/-lu/-tu/-ju), some of which belong among the ergative allomorphs introduced in section 2.1.3.1 above. The absolute form is illustrated in examples 19-22. The noun phrase interesting in this context is marked in bold:

- (19) ***Nyampali!*** *Marlajangu* *nyukarri* *warrukurla* *karlajangu* *kunyjarta!*
Nyampali! Marlajangu-lu nyuka-rrri warrukurla karlajangu
 Boss bull-ERG mate-PRES black 1) cow, 2) cattle
 kunyjarta!
 woman
 Hey, boss! The bull is mating with the black cow! (64)
- (20) *Yurala-yurala ngarra maniyan yukun.*
 Yurala-yurala ngarra mani-yan **yukun.**
 increasingly, more and more upwards(?) climb-PRES smoke
 The smoke is rising more and more. (54)
- (21) *Yarti wiiny jan wanyja.*
 Yarti wiiny ja-n **wanyja.**
 later free, not restrained VBLISER-IMP dingo, tame dog
 Release the dog later on. (93)
- (22) *Julya jan palakarni mantu puka!*
 Julya ja-n palakarni mantu
 buried in the ground VBLISER-IMP DEM (near) meat, animal, bird
puka!
 rotten smell
 Bury that stinking meat! (10)

Examples 23-27 below are all transitive, and an ergative suffix is added to the nominal class words introduced above:

- (23) *Nyampalilu ngajapa juntu marnu, pakurta nyayi jankurna.*
Nyampali-lu nga-japa juntu ma-rnu, pakurta
 boss-ERG 1SG-DAT straight VBLISER-PAST bad, no good, worn
 nyayi jankurna.
 out DEM (here) emu
 The boss told me, “This emu is no good.” (11; the combination *juntu ma-rri* means “to tell someone” (11).)
- (24) *Kunti marnu nganya yukuntu.*
 Kunti ma-rnu nga-nya **yukun-tu.**
 ? VBLISER-PAST 1SG-ACC smoke-ERG
 The smoke choked me. (26, the combination *kunti ma-rri* means “to choke, to inundate something/someone” (26).)
- (25) *Wanyjaku nyina karntirnin!*
Wanyja-ku nyi-na karntirni-n!
 dingo, tame dog-ERG 2SG-ACC bite-FUT
 (That) dog will bite you! (19)
- (26) *Pukangku nganya maturarri jiparnu.*
Puka-ngku nga-nya maturarri jipa-rnu.
 rotten smell-ERG 1SG-ACC ? VBLISER-PAST
 The stinking smell made me vomit. (Idiomatic. Lit.: “stirred me into vomiting”). (8; the combination *maturarri jipa-rri* means “cause to vomit” (43).)
- (27) *Mangunyju yarni marnta.*
Manguny-ju yarni ma-rnta.
 Manguny (Dreamtime-being)-ERG ? VBLISER-RemPAST
 A Manguny-being made (it) long ago. (9; the combination *yarni ma-rri* means “to make something” (100).)

It should be noted that examples 21 and 22 above are also transitive sentences, and that the highlighted noun phrases there get no case marking. This further serves to indicate that Ngarla follows the ergative/absolute case marking pattern on nominals, since the highlighted noun phrases in examples 21, 22 function as the objects of the clauses (see Payne 1997:129-167). Unfortunately no intransitive sentence with the word *Manguny* has been found in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, or indeed another example of the use of the *-ju* morpheme. *-ju* can therefore only very tentatively be classified as an ergative allomorph (see more in section 3.2.1.1.3 below).

Although proper nouns are infrequent in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary*, a preliminary observation is that *-lu* seems to be the only ergative allomorph used with proper nouns (see section 2.1.3.2 above). See example 1 above, and the following examples:

- (28) *Yini-la palakarni Nyapiri.*
 name-EMPH DEM (near) Nyapiri
 HIS name is Nyapiri. (103)

- (29) *Nyapiri-lu nga-nya kartuwarra ma-rnu.*
 Nyapiri-ERG 1SG-ACC saviour, rescuer VBLISER-PAST
 Nyapiri rescued me. (22)

- (30) *Purlamilu nyurranga muwarr murru marnu*
Purlami-lu nyurra-nga muwarr murru ma-rnu
 Purlami-ERG 2PL-POSS word stone, hill(?) VBLISER-PAST
 Purlami sent a word about you (108; the word *murru* is listed as “stone, hill” in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* (49), however in this context it seems to mean something else.

In neighbouring Panyjima and Martuthunira a three-way distinction is made for demonstratives (see section 2.1.3.1 above). This appears also to be the case in the sentences in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary*. The Ngarla demonstratives, which appear to be more closely related to those of Panyjima than to those of Martuthunira, are *nyayi/palakarni/ngunyi*. There is no way to tell from the material if they represent other distinctions than those in Panyjima and Martuthunira. The working hypothesis in this thesis is therefore that they express the same kind of distinctions as the demonstratives do in the neighbouring languages. The different demonstratives will be labelled “here”, “near” and “far”, respectively. Two different ergative allomorphs are used on demonstratives. Compare examples 4, 6-9, 13, 22, 23, 28 above to the following sentences:

- (31) *Nyayingku pajin nganya mara.*
nyayi-ngku paji-n nga-nya mara.
 DEM (here)-ERG bite, eat-FUT 1SG-ACC hand
 This one might bite my hand. (62)³

- (32) *Palakarnilu nganyjarranya yangka-yangka marnu.*
Palakarni-lu nganyjarra-nya yangka-yangka ma-rnu.
 DEM (near)-ERG 3PL INCL-ACC ? VBLISER-PAST
 That fellow was rocking us. (101; the combination *yangka-yangka ma-rri* means “to shake something” (99).)

- (33) *Ngunyingku jarnu.*
ngunyi-ngku ja-rnu
 DEM (far)-ERG VBLISER-PAST
 That one over there did (it). (57)

There are plenty of examples in the material of the suffixes introduced above also being used as the instrumental marker (INSTR). Unfortunately examples have not been found of all the allomorphs above being used in this way. Based on the examples that have been found, however, a tentative hypothesis can be formulated: the same set of suffixes is used both to mark the subject of a transitive clause (ERG), and instrumental (see section 2.1.3.1, Blake 1977:60, Dench 1991:137):

³ At times Geytenbeek’s English translation of a Ngarla sentence differs in tense/mood/aspect from the original. This is the case in this sentence, and one possible reason for this is that some of the example sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* might be taken from longer Ngarla discourses. See in this context also sentence 48, 107, 111, 117, 122, 140, 211.

- (34) **Kurkalkalu** *kunyjartalu pujularri pinurru.*
Kurkalka-lu obsession, focus, fascinated interest, intent repetition-INSTR kunyjarta-lu
 pujula-rri pinurru. woman-ERG
 puff at, blow at, shoot at-PRES fire, firewood
 The woman is repeatedly fanning the fire. (28)
- (35) *Ngananyawanti palakarni nganyjarrala wangka juntu marri kurti-kurtulu?*
 Ngananyawanti palakarni nganyjarra-la
 why/what for DEM (near) 1PL INCL-DAT
 wangka juntu ma-rri **kurti-kurti-lu?**
 speech, talk straight VBLISER-PRES bewildering, unintelligible, difficult-
 INSTR
 Why is that one telling us using “high” (bewildering) language? (32)
- (36) **Kupalyayanyangku** *ngaja yarni marnu murtuka.*
Kupalya-yanya-ngku nga-ja yarni ma-rnu murtuka.
 sleep-PRIV-INSTR 1SG-ERG ? VBLISER-PAST car
 Without sleep I repaired the car (i.e. “worked all night on it”). (33; the combination
yarni ma-rri means “to make something” (100).)

3.2.1.1.2 Locative

According to O’Grady et al. the locative suffix used in Ngarla is *-ngka* (see table 12 above). This is indeed one of the locative allomorphs used in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary*, however, a few more allomorphs are also used:

- (37) *Kanarni nganarna kurnu ngarriyanta tayangka.*
 Kanarni nganarna kurnu
 underneath/inside/down 1PL EXCL:NOM clenched, closed up, rolled up
 ngarri-yanta **taya-ngka.**
 VBLISER-HabPAST tire-LOC
 We used to double-up inside the tyre. (42)⁴
- (38) **kunaran-ta**
 winter-LOC
 in the winter (85)
- (39) *Palakarni pananya mantu kaman jirntaka.*
 Palakarni pana-nya mantu kama-n **jirnta-ka.**
 DEM (near) 3PL-ACC meat, animal, bird cook-IMP sparks, hot coals-LOC
 Grill that meat on the hot coals. (8)

⁴ *Taya* appears to be a loan-word, from English “tire”. In the same way the word *paamu* in example 165 below appears to be derived from English “bomb”.

- (40) *wankaly-wankaly-ja mantu-ka*
 raw-LOC meat, animal, bird-LOC
 on the raw meat (1)

–*la* is a common locative allomorph in Australian languages (see table 5 above). This allomorph is not used in the material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*. Example 28 above however shows that there is indeed a –*la* suffix in Ngarla, but it appears to be an emphatic marker, which makes it a member of the residual word class (see sections 1.2 and 2.1.5 above). See also the following example, and the examples in section 3.2.3.1.1:

- (41) *Ngananyawanti yanangkayan nyinpala?*
 ngananyawanti yanangka-yan **nyin-pa-la**
 why/what for (INTER) go-PRES 2SG-ABS-EMPH
 What are YOU going for? (33)

In addition to the locative allomorphs shown above, the morpheme –*ngura*, which might be related to the Panyjima/Martuthunira ablative marker (see table 6 above), is in the material also used to denote location. It is used both on common nouns and on the demonstrative *palakarni*:

- (42) *Wurrangkurakurrungura nganarna ngayinyu.*
Wurrangkura-kurru-ngura nganarna nga-yinyu.
 River Red Gum tree-PLUR-LOC 1PL EXCL:NOM VBLISER-ImmPAST
 We camped at that place where there were lots of Red Gum trees. (31)

- (43) *Parlapanta panta palu palakarningura wakurlangura.*
 Parlapanta panta pa-lu **palakarni-ngura**
 shallow water close, near 3SG-DAT DEM (near)-LOC
wakurla-ngura.
 rounded boulder, upper mill-stone-LOC
 There's shallow water close to that rock. (68)

3.2.1.1.3 The use of ergative/instrumental and locative allomorphs on common nouns and demonstratives, a deeper study

Based on the example sentences analysed in this thesis, the following is suggested about the use of the different ergative/instrumental and locative allomorphs on the common nouns and demonstratives of Ngarla: On disyllabic words the allomorphs –*ngku/-ngka* are preferred. These allomorphs are in fact used only on disyllabic words (see the discussion about –*ngku* in section 2.1.3.1 above, and examples 7, 26, 31, 32, 36, 37, 130, 131, 141, 171, 180). On words of three or more syllables the ergative –*lu* and the locative –*ngura* are instead the allomorphs most commonly used (see examples 1, 4, 19, 23, 29, 30, 32, 34, 42-44, 74, 102, 115, 116, 122, 123, 128, 133-136, 139, 148, 151, 154, 156, 158, 179, 180, 203, 207.)

The use of the allomorphs –*tu/-ta* and –*ju/-ja* is ruled by the phoneme with which a word ends, regardless of how many syllables it has. The first set is used on words that end with an apico-alveolar consonant (see table 14 above and examples 24, 38, 95, 100, 163, 179), the second set on words that end on a palatal consonants (although this last observation should be seen as very tentative, considering the small number of examples of the use of these allomorphs; examples 27, 40).

One more set of allomorphs is used exclusively on disyllabic words, the allomorphs –*ku/-ka*. These are only used if the disyllabic word has a first syllable that ends with a nasal (as in examples 25, 39, 40, 101, 145, 159, 170).

- (50) *Malyarra para nyinungarra wangka karri kuntu-kuntu.*
Malya-rra pa-ra **nyi-nu-nga-rra** wangka
 father, father's brother-DAT 3SG-DAT 2SG-BUFF-POSS-DAT speech, talk
 karri kuntu-kuntu.
 VBLISER-0 careful, polite, respectful
 Speak politely to your father. (84)
- (51) *Walyi ngaja para karra marnu karlajangurra.*
 Walyi nga-ja pa-ra karra ma-rnu **karlajangu-rra.**
 almost, nearly 1SG-ERG 3SG-DAT ? VBLISER-PAST cow-DAT
 I almost caught that cow. (87; the combination *karra ma-rra* means “to grab, hang on to, hold on to something” (19).)

3.2.1.3 Allative

The two allative suffixes used by O’Grady’s informant are *-kani* and *-kati* (see table 12). These suffixes, transcribed *-karni* and *-karti* by Geytenbeek, are also used in the material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*. The *-karni* suffix is used to imply that the point one is moving towards can/will be reached (see examples 52, 53). The use of the *-karti* suffix is more difficult to ascertain, due to the small number of examples of its use. Based on the examples that there are a tentative assumption is however given, that *-karti* is the equivalent of allative II in Panyjima (see table 6 above and also section 2.1.3.1), the function of which is to mark the motion toward some point. This suffix will therefore in the following be designated ALL2 (see examples 54, 55 below):

- (52) *Ngaya yanangkayan wulakarni, pananga malya.*
 nga-ya yanangka-yan **wula-karni**, pana-nga malya.
 1SG-ABS go-PRES water-ALL 3PL-POSS father, father's brother
 I'm going to the water, father of three (lit. “their father”). (70)
- (53) *Yarra pananga ngunyikarni wanyaparrikura.*
 yarra pana-nga **ngunyi-karni**
 go:IMP (irregular form of the verb *yanangka-yan*) 3PL-DAT DEM(far)-ALL
 wanyaparri-kura
 understanding-HORT
 (You) go over there to them in order to listen (lit. “for the purpose of learning”)! (88)
- (54) *jurta-karti*
 breeze, wind-ALL2
 windward side (“towards the wind”) (21)
- (55) *Palakarni mantu wanyjan mapal-karti.*
 Palakarni mantu wanyja-n **mapal-karti**
 DEM (near) meat, animal, bird separate, leave-IMP sun-ALL2
 Put that meat on the sunny side [of the house]. (21)

3.2.1.4 Ablative

The suffix used for the ablative function in the *Ngarla - English Dictionary* is identical to the one given as “elative” by O’Grady et al. (see table 12 above). This suffix is also identical to the ablative suffixes in Panyjima and Martuthunira (see table 6). In the *Ngarla-English Dictionary* the suffix is however not only used in the literal way, to express movement from one point. It also has a figurative use, see examples 57, 58 below :

- (56) *Partulyayi jakaly warninyu kankaranguru.*
 Partulyayi jakaly warni-nyu **kankara-nguru.**
 bird gently, softly fall-PAST high up-ABL
 The bird came down from above and landed smoothly. (1)
- (57) *Pirliri-pirliri-nguru ngani marnta ngaja yurnpa partanyal kalya jipurl maya, winta kujarranykarti kartarli.*
Pirliri-pirliri-nguru ngani ma-rnta nga-ja
 ruined, full of holes-ABL ? VBLISER-RemPAST 1SG-ERG
 yurnpa partanyal kalya
 same, unchanged one remaining in one place, continuing in a state or process
 jipurl maya
 ? house
 After seeing it in ruins long ago I saw that stable again, still the same one (23; the combination *ngani ma-rri* means “to look at, to see something”, the word *jipurl* is obviously used together with *maya* to produce the meaning “stable”, however, its exact meaning is not known at this point (52).)
- (58) *Karrkalypa-nguru ngaya punpal kayinyu,*
Karrkalypa-nguru nga-ya punpal ka-yinyu,
 alert-ABL 1SG-ABS sick, painful VBLISER-ImmPAST
 After being alert I got sick (52)

3.2.1.5 Causal

Panyjima and Martuthunira both have separate causal suffixes (*-mari* and *-ngalyarnta* respectively, see table 6 above). In this study no suffix that marks the causal function has been found in the material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* (see section 2.1.3.1). This does however not necessarily mean that there is no such marker in the language. It might only mean that the marker is not represented in the dictionary. Further research in this area is therefore needed to establish if Ngarla indeed has a causal marker or not.

3.2.1.6 Obscured perception

Ngarla uses the same obscured perception marker as neighbouring Panyjima (see table 6 above). The marker is however not only used to indicate that something is hidden from perception, by extension it also means something like “overwhelmed by”, as examples 61, 62 show:

- (59) *Ngananya palakarni nyimpurl marayan marralyapuru?*
 ngananya palakarni nyimpurl ma-rayan
 what/what for/why (INTER) DEM (near) pulse, throb VBLISER-PRES
marralya-puru?
 leaf-OBSCRD
 What's that thing pulsing hidden under that leaf? (82)
- (60) *nyirtura-puru*
 mirage-OBSCRD
 distorted by a mirage (82)
- (61) *warrarra-puru*
 nervous-OBSCRD
 overcome by nervousness (82)

- (62) **Jarrurru-puru** *nga-ya* *karnumarra.*
 dizzy, listless, helplessly weak-OBSCRD 1SG-ABS body of a living creature
 My body is full of fever. (82)

3.2.2 Stem forming suffixes

This section discusses the Ngarla stem forming suffixes corresponding to those introduced in section 2.1.3.1 and table 7 above. It will be shown that although the exact same functions are marked as in the neighbouring Panyjima and Martuthunira, the suffixes used are for the most part different. Table 19 serves as a summary of the various stem forming suffixes along with the terms used to describe them.

Table 19: Ngarla stem forming suffixes used on common noun, proper noun and demonstratives

Function	Suffix
Dual (DU)	- <i>jarra</i> (- <i>ngarra</i> /- <i>karra</i> /- <i>yarra</i>)
Plural (PLUR)	- <i>marta</i> /- <i>marri</i> /- <i>nyjarri</i> /- <i>karrungu</i> /- <i>kurru</i> /- <i>malingka</i> + reduplication of stem
Plenty of (PLEN)	- <i>putu</i>
Comitative (COM)	- <i>karta</i>
Privative (PRIV)	- <i>yanya</i>
Provenience (PROV)	- <i>jiirri</i>

3.2.2.1 Dual

The Ngarla dual suffix is closely related to that of Martuthunira. In Martuthunira *-tharra* is used to mark dual (see table 7), in Ngarla most commonly *-jarra*:

- (63) **kunyjarta-jarra**
 woman-DU
 two women (26)
- (64) **kamparra-jarra yurta-jarra**
 small-DU fish-DU
 two small fish (5)
- (65) *Ngunyi jilyajarra purlpi jinaru karriyanpula.*
 Ngunyi **jilya-jarra** purlpi jinaru karri-yan-pula.
 DEM (far) child-DU stop able carry-PRES-DU
 Those two little children are able to walk now (lit. “are not carried any more”). (7)

A number of different allomorphs of this suffix (-*ngarra*/-*karra*/-*yarra*) have been found in the *Ngarla - English Dictionary*, but the use of these allomorphs is very restricted. They appear only to be used in kin-terms:

- (66) **martu-ngarra**
 a man's term of reference for a married couple who from the speaker's point of view are in *yakankarra* relationship (that is, two generations apart), and the woman is the speaker's real father's sister but the man is not his real mother's brother, but merely a classified sister's son (42)

- (67) *kurnta-karra*
my spouse and child (29)
- (68) *kurntal-karra*
a man and his daughter, a woman and her daughter. Can also be used (by persons other than his spouse) of a man and his sister's son (30)
- (69) *kal-yarra*
one's sister's son and his son (14)
- (70) *marnti-yarra*
a man and his son, a woman and her brother's daughter (40)

3.2.2.2 *Plural markers and other related suffixes*

As was stated already in section 2.6.1 above, plural markers are only rarely used on nominal class words in the material. However, when plural is indeed marked on nominal words, a number of different suffixes are used (*-marta/-marri/-nyjarri/-karrungu/-kurru/-malingka*). Since there are relatively few examples of the use of each plural morpheme the issue of plural marking in Ngarla will need further investigation before anything definite can be said. The following plural markers are the ones used in the *Ngarla - English Dictionary*:

–*malingka* , which functions as a plural marker on certain kin-terms:

- (71) *ngangkarniny-malingka*
the plural form of *ngangkarninyurlu*, a term of reference used by a man speaking to his *yaku* (male cross cousin) about the *yaku*'s mother (i.e., the speaker's mother-in-law, his father's sister). The term can include fathers-in-law too. (52)
- (72) *kurtarniny-malingka*
term of address used by one parent talking to or about three or more of his children (whether own or classified). (31)

–*nyjarri*, which is used on a number of words describing certain groups of people (see also example 9 above):

- (73) *pakarli*
teenage boy, who has been through the first initiation rites (55)
- (74) *pakarli-nyjarri-lu*
teenage boy-PLUR-ERG (64)
several young initiates
- (75) *mirtawari*
post-menopausal woman (46)
- (76) *mirtawari-nyjarri*
three or more elderly women (46)

–*marta*, which appears to be a plural suffix with a more general use:

- (77) *kunaparri*
a really good, really generous person (25)
- (78) *kunaparri-marta*
three or more really good people (46)
- (79) *Yukurrumarta yanangkayanpiya.*
Yukurru-marta yanangka-yan-pi-ya.
tame dog-PLUR go-PRES-BUFF-3PL
Several dogs are going. (41)
- (80) *Mungu-marta yaanu-ya.*
alone, only-PLUR go:ImmPAST-3PL
Only three went. (41)
- (81) *Palakarnimarta waan nganu.*
Palakarni-marta waa-n nga-nu.
DEM (near)-PLUR give-IMP 1SG-REC
Give me those ones! (41)

The suffix –*karrangu* is used in a number of sentences to create the plural form of *jilya* (child), and –*marri* to create the plural form of *kunyjarta* (woman). Neither of these suffixes is used on any other words in the material. The same goes for the suffix –*kurru*, here used on the word *kapalya* (which also means “child”):

- (82) *Ngananyawanti palakarni jilyakarrangu pinyarriyanpiya?*
Ngananyawanti palakarni **jilya-karrangu** pinyarri-yan-pi-ya?
Why/what for DEM (near) child-PLUR fight-PRES-BUFF-3PL
What are those children fighting over? (74)
- (83) *kunyjarta-marri*
three or more women(26)
- (84) *Kapalya-kurru ma-ryan.*
child-PLUR VBLISER-PRES
Lots of children are “tagging along”. (16)

Two cases where reduplication is used to mark plural have also been found, see the following examples and example 157 below, (see also section 2.1.3.1 above, and compare to Dixon 2002:77):

- (85) *mirtanya*
elderly man (46)
- (86) *mirtanya-mirtanya*
three or more elderly men (46)

One morphemes that has a similar functions to the plural markers above is –*putu*. It is suggested here that it means “plenty of” (PLEN):

- (87) *Ngaya nyiniyan wulaputu.*
 Nga-ya nyini-yan **wula-putu.**
 1SG-ABS stay, sit, be-PRES water-PLEN
 I'm staying (here where there is) plenty of water. (83)

3.2.2.3 Comitative

The comitative suffix used in the material is –*karta*, a suffix that is strikingly similar to the Martuthunira comitative suffix –*marta* (but it should be noted that –*karta* is also identical to Panyjima allative I, see table 6):

- (88) *Pananya kukurnjayi ngaparri marriya kulukarta.*
 Pana-nya kukurnjayi ngaparri ma-rri-ya **kulu-karta.**
 3PL-ACC sheep ? VBLISER-PRES-3PL louse-COM
 They are spraying the sheep that have lice. (24; the combination *ngaparri ma-rri* means “to splash, spray sprinkle water on something” (53).)
- (89) *Jantukarta yanangkayan pilakarni.*
Jantu-karta yanangka-yan pilakarni.
 weapon-COM go-PRES DEM (near) [misspelled]
 With weapons he is going to a fight. (3)
- (90) *Ngananyakapu nyinpa jupiny marayan ngaliyanga wangkakarta?*
 Ngananyakapu nyi-mpa jupiny ma-ryan ngaliya-nga
 why 2SG-ABS ? VBLISER-PRES 1DU EXCL-POSS
wangka-karta?
 speech, talk-COM
 Why are you butting in while we are talking (lit. “while we are talk-having”)? (11; the combination *jupiny ma-ryan* means “to butt in” (11).)

3.2.2.4 Privative

Ngarla has a suffix marking the privative function, but it bears no resemblance to the privative suffixes of Panyjima and Martuthunira (see section 2.1.3.1 and table 7):

- (91) *Yalyayanya palura.*
Yalya-yanya pa-lura.
 clothing, belongings, corroboree decorations-PRIV 3SG-NOM
 He has no clothes. (99)
- (92) *Nyayi panalu kukurnjayi kurlkurayanya kurlku jantangu.*
 Nyayi pana-lu kukurnjayi **kurlkura-yanya** kurlku
 DEM (here) 3PL-NOM sheep hair, fur, wool-PRIV cropped close
 ja-ntangu.
 VBLISER-ASP
 These sheep without wool have been shorn. (29)
- (93) *Yurnpa-yanya kalya nyayi.*
 choreography-PRIV continuing in a state or process DEM (here)
 This (song) doesn't have a choreography yet (lit. “is continuing to be choreography-lacking”). (14)

3.2.2.5 Provenience

The suffix marking the provenience function in Ngarla appears to be *-jirri*, a suffix that bears no similarity to the provenience suffixes in Panyjima and Martuthunira (see table 7 above):

(94) *Mukurri-jirri nga-ya.*
Mukurri-PROV 1SG-ABS
I live at Mukurri-nya. (9)

(95) *Yurta manganta Pajakaljirri.*
Yurta mangan-ta
Fish lively, active, energetic-LOC
The fish at Pajakal are leaping. (6)

Pajakal-jirri.
Pajakal-PROV

3.2.3 Pronouns

The analysis of the Ngarla pronouns is divided up into three parts, due to differences in the case marking on different pronouns. In the first part case marking on the first and second person singular pronouns will be studied. The second part focuses on the third person singular pronoun, and in the third part the remaining pronouns of the language are analysed. No comparisons will be made here to the pronoun paradigms found in neighbouring languages. The pronouns used in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* will instead be compared to the Ngarla pronouns given by O’Grady et al. (see table 11). Interesting in this context is also the discussion in section 1.2 about case marking patterns in Australian languages, and the discussion in section 2.1.3.1 about the different semantic/syntactic functions commonly marked in Australian languages. It will be seen that the pronoun forms given for Ngarla by O’Grady et al. are identical to the ones used in the nominative/absolute function in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*. The fact that O’Grady et al. however have a different set of third person pronouns is discussed in section 3.2.3.6. Section 3.2.3.4 briefly looks at inalienable possession, and in 3.2.3.5 the reflexive pronoun *pulala* is introduced. The following tables give an overview of the case marking on Ngarla pronouns:

Table 20: Case marking on Ngarla singular pronouns.

	1SG	2SG	3SG
ABS/NOM	<i>nga-ya</i>	<i>nyi-mpa</i>	<i>pa-lura</i>
ERG	<i>nga-ja</i>	<i>nyi-nta</i>	-
ACC (-nya)	<i>nga-nya</i>	<i>nyi-na#</i>	<i>pa-rnu-nya</i>
POSS (-nga)	<i>nga-nu-(nga)</i>	<i>nyi-nu-(nga)</i>	<i>pa-rnu-nga</i>
DAT	<i>nga-japa</i>	<i>nyi-ntapa</i>	<i>pa-ra/pa-la/pa-lu</i>

#=irregular form

Table 21: Case marking on Ngarla dual pronouns.

	1DU INCL	1DU EXCL	2DU	3DU
NOM	<i>ngali</i>	<i>ngaliya</i>	<i>nyumpa-lu</i>	<i>piya-lu</i>
ACC (-nya)	<i>ngali-nya*</i>	<i>ngaliya-nya*</i>	<i>nyumpa-la-nya</i>	<i>piya-nya</i>
POSS (-nga)	<i>ngali-nu-nga*</i>	<i>ngaliya-nga</i>	<i>nyumpa-la-nga</i>	<i>piya-nga</i>
DAT (-la)	<i>ngali-la</i>	<i>ngaliya-la</i>	<i>nyumpa-la-la*</i>	<i>piya-lala</i>

*=unattested forms

Table 22: Case marking on Ngarla plural pronouns.

	1PL INCL	1PL EXCL	2PL	3PL
NOM	<i>nganyjarra</i>	<i>nganarna</i>	<i>nyurra</i>	<i>pana-lu</i>
ACC (-nya)	<i>nganyjarra-nya</i>	<i>nganarna-nya</i>	<i>nyurra-nya</i>	<i>pana-nya</i>
POSS (-nga)	<i>nganyjarra-nga</i>	<i>nganarna-nga</i>	<i>nyurra-nga</i>	<i>pana-nga</i>
DAT (-la)	<i>nganyjarra-la</i>	<i>nganarna-la</i>	<i>nyurra-la</i>	<i>pana-lala</i>

3.2.3.1 Case marking on first and second person singular (1, 2 SG)

On the first and second person pronouns of Ngarla a three-way distinction is morphologically made for the intransitive subject, the transitive subject and the transitive object, and this is the most obvious way in which the 1, 2 SG pronouns are set apart from remaining pronouns of the language. Although third person pronouns in Australian languages most often inflect like first and second person pronouns (Dixon 2002:73), the examples of the use of remaining pronouns in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* show that they all follow the nominative/accusative case marking pattern (see sections 3.2.3.2.1, 3.2.3.3.1 and 3.2.3.3.2). The dative and possessive markers used on 1, 2 SG are also partly different from corresponding markers on other pronouns.

The case marking on the intransitive 1, 2SG subject will be called absolutive (ABS) here, marking on 1, 2SG transitive subject ergative (ERG), and on the transitive object accusative (ACC). The same direct object marker is used on all pronouns of the language, with the exception of 2SG (see section 3.2.3.1.2 below).

3.2.3.1.1 Ergative and absolutive

The root morpheme for 1SG is *nga-*, and for 2SG *nyi-*, and the absolutive suffixes used are *-ya* and *-npa* respectively:

(96) *Karliny jarriyan ngaya.*

Karliny	jarri-yan	nga-ya.
returning	VBLISER-PRES	1SG-ABS
I am coming back. (18)		

- (97) *Nyinpa jankan karriyan.*
Nyi-npa jankan karri-yan.
 2SG-ABS ? VBLISER-PRES
 You are shivering. (3; the combination *jankan karri-yan* means “to shiver, tremble” (3).)

Although the suffix *-lu* is commonly used as an ergative marker also in the pronoun section of Australian languages, this is evidently not the case in Ngarla (see section 2.1.3.1 above, and section 3.2.3.3.1 below). The markers on the transitive subject are for 1, 2 SG *-ja* and *-nta* respectively:

- (98) *Ngaja jaarnu warnta.*
Ngaja jaa-rnu warnta.
 1SG-ERG chop-PAST tree, timber
 I chopped the tree. (1)

- (99) *Ngurrku ma-rri nyi-nta nga-nya.*
 ? VBLISER-PRES 2SG-ERG 1SG-ACC
 You are squashing me. (58; the combination *ngurrku ma-rri* means “to squeeze something/someone”(58).)

It was stated already in section 2.1.3.1 that it is not uncommon for traces of ergativity to be found in the pronoun section of Australian languages. Examples 96-99 show that Ngarla is one of the languages where such traces can be found.

3.2.3.1.2 Accusative

As was stated in section 3.2.3.1, the accusative marker, *-nya*, is the same for all pronouns, except for 2SG, where the irregular form *-na* is used. See sentence 99, the following examples, and also sections 3.2.3.2.1, 3.2.3.3.2 below:

- (100) *Ngalkarntu pajirnu nganya.*
 Ngalkarr-tu paji-rnu **nga-nya.**
 ant-ERG bite, eat-PAST 1SG-ACC
 The ant bit me. (51)
- (101) *Wanyjaku nyina karntirnin!*
 Wanyja-ku **nyi-na** karntirni-n!
 dingo, tame dog-ERG 2SG-ACC bite-FUT
 (That) dog will bite you! (19)

3.2.3.1.3 Possessive

The possessive case marker used on Ngarla pronouns is *-nga*, a suffix commonly found either as a genitive or a dative marker in Australian languages (see section 2.1.3.1, and compare also to table 12). In Ngarla it is used for alienable possession (i.e. possession that can be terminated; see Payne 1997:40, 41, 104-107) on all pronouns. It is however also used to express the semantic roll of recipient (REC; see Payne 1997:50, 51 and examples 104, 108 below). There are also examples of the suffix functioning as a dative marker (example 105), a common type of case syncretism in Australian languages (see section 2.1.3.1 above and Blake

1977:60). The suffix is usually attached directly to the stem. For first and second person singular a buffer morpheme is however inserted, creating the forms *nganunga* and *nyinunga*. In the material a shortened version of these forms also appears. The *-nga* suffix is left out, leaving only the buffer morpheme on the stem: *nganu*, *nyinu*. Thus the 1, 2 SG pronouns in reality have two different possessive forms, the first one in the following labeled POSS1, and the second, shortened version, labeled POSS2. The use of the shortened form dominates in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary*:

- (102) *Wanyjan marnta nganya nganungalu nyampalilu.*
 Wanyjan ma-rnta nga-nya **nga-nu-nga-lu**
 ? VBLISER-RemPAST 1SG-ACC 1SG-BUFF-POSS1-ERG
 nyampali-lu.
 boss-ERG
 My boss nearly left me behind. (52; the combination *wanyjan ma-rri* is not listed in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, although the sentence is taken from there, but the combinations appears to mean "to leave someone/something behind".)
- (103) *Munyjany jarnu nyinta nganu piju.*
 Munyjany ja-rnu nyi-nta **nga-nu** piju.
 blunt VBLISER-PAST 2SG-ERG 1SG-POSS2 knife
 You made my knife blunt. (47)
- (104) *Nyinpa nganu karrikura.*
 Nyi-mpa **nga-nu** karri-kura.
 2SG-ABS 1SG-REC carry-HORT
 You could take/bring it for me. (20)
- (105) *Ngakarri nyinta nganu,*
 Ngaka-rri nyi-nta **nga-nu,**
 block, prevent-PRES 2SG-ERG 1SG-DAT
 You are obstructing (the view) for me (51)
- (106) *Nyinunga yini?*
Nyi-nu-nga yini?
 2SG-BUFF-POSS1 name
 (Is this) your name? (54)
- (107) *Ngananyakapu nyinu palakarni warnta ngarlinymarra ngayinyu?*
 Ngananyakapu **nyi-nu** palakarni warnta
 why 2SG-POSS2 DEM (near) tree, timber, wood
 ngarlinymarra nga-yinyu.
 leaning VBLISER-ImmPAST
 What's wrong with that tree of yours, it's leaning over? (54)
- (108) *Waalu nga-ya nyi-nu.*
 Give 1SG-ABS 2SG-REC
 I will give you (some). (86)

3.2.3.1.4 Dative

In Ngarla the morphemes *-japa/-ntapa* are used as dative markers on 1, 2 SG pronouns:

- (109) *Palura ngajapa nyanta kurnamarta mantu.*
 Pa-lura **nga-japa** nyanta ku-rnamarta mantu.
 3SG-NOM 1SG-DAT here VBLISER-UNDOUBT meat, animal, bird
 He must push the meat across to me. (62)
- (110) *Ngarta ngajapa kumarriyanu yurtarrapa.*
 Ngarta **nga-japa** kumarri-yanu
 person, human being, mankind 1SG-DAT being stingy, mean-ImmPAST
 yurta-rra-pa.
 fish-DAT-N.SUFF:?
 The man didn't want to give me any fish. (Lit. "He wanted to withhold fish for me".)
 (25)
- (111) *Palakarni nyintapa puurl karri.*
 Palakarni **nyi-ntapa** puurl ka-rrri.
 DEM (near) 2SG-DAT ? VBLISER-PRES
 That (dust) will billow up around you. (64; the combination *puurl ka-rrri* is not listed in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* although the sentence is taken from there. The combination appears to mean "to billow up".
- (112) *Nyayi nyintapa yangal karriyan.*
 Nyayi **nyi-ntapa** yangal karri-yan.
 DEM (here) 2SG-DAT companion VBLISER-PRES
 This one wants to come with you. (64)

3.2.3.2 Case marking on third person singular (3 SG)

The 3 SG pronoun has a dative morphology that differs from that of remaining pronouns of the language (see section 3.2.3.2.3 below). This warrants its separate treatment here.

3.2.3.2.1 Nominative and Accusative

No signs of ergative case marking has been found for the third person singular pronoun in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*. Instead, as was stated above (in section 3.2.3.1), all Ngarla pronouns except 1, 2SG display nominative/accusative case marking. Consider the following 3SG sentences. The first one is intransitive and the second one transitive:

- (113) *Palura wangka karriyanu juntu.*
Pa-lura wangka karri-yanu juntu.
 3SG-NOM speech, talk VBLISER-ImmPAST straight
 He spoke rightly. (64)
- (114) *Palura ngalila nyanta karrin mantu.*
Pa-lura ngali-la nyanta karri-n mantu.
 3SG-NOM 1DU INCL-DAT here carry-FUT meat, animal, bird
 He'll bring the meat over to us. (61)

The 3 SG accusative marker is the same one as was used for 1SG, *-nya* (see 3.2.3.1.2). Here, however, a buffer morpheme is inserted, creating the form *parnunya* (see also example 10 above):

- (115) *Yukurrulu parnunya pajirnu.*
 Yukurru-lu **pa-rnu-nya** paji-rnu.
 tame dog-ERG 3SG-BUFF-ACC bite, eat-PAST
 The dog bit him. (32)

3.2.3.2.2 Possessive

The 3SG possessive also takes a buffer morpheme before *-nga*, creating the form *parnunga*. Example 117 shows the morpheme being used in the dative function:

- (116) *Karrarrulu jungkarri parnunga parru-parru.*
 Karrarru-lu jungka-ri **pa-rnu-nga** parru-parru.
 spider-ERG make a net-PRES 3SG-BUFF-POSS net
 The spider is spinning his net. (20)
- (117) *Kari ngarriyan palakarni parnunga murri.*
 Kari ngarri-yan palakarni **pa-rnu-nga** murri.
 feel sympathetic VBLISER-PRES DEM (near) 3SG-BUFF-DAT very
 The man felt very sorry for that chap. (48, 49)

3.2.3.2.3 Dative

Excepting 1, 2SG, the same dative suffix, *-la*, is used for all Ngarla pronouns. However, it occurs rarely with 3SG in *the Ngarla - English Dictionary*. Together with *-rnu-nga* (example 117) a couple of other suffixes, *-ra/-lu* are frequently used to signal dative:

- (118) *Kulyparr nagani manpiya pala malukurrukurru wurrangkura.*
 Kulyparr ngani ma-n-pi-ya **pa-la**
 visualisation ? VBLISER-IMP-BUFF-3PL 3SG-DAT
 malukurrukurru wurrangkura.
 big shady tree River Red Gum tree
 Visualise those shady Red Gums, you fellows! (25; the combination *ngani ma-rri* means "to look at, see something" (52).)
- (119) *Jarrpi-pula pa-ra.*
 enter, go inside, go underneath-DU 3SG-DAT
 Those two (dogs) will go in (to the yard) for him. (5)
- (120) *Mintu jalu nyinpa para.*
 Mintu ja-lu nyi-mpa **pa-ra.**
 awake, alert VBLISER-HORT 2SG-ABS 3SG-DAT
 You should wake him up. (44)
- (121) *Jilya palu ngarlpu jimpayi ngayinyu.*
 Jilya **pa-lu** ngarlpu jimpayi nga-yinyu.
 child 3SG-DAT speedily, hastily in hiding VBLISER-ImmPAST
 The child quickly hid from him. (6)

- (122) *Marrungu maninyu palu ngurrupayangura.*
 Marrungu mani-nyu **pa-lu** ngurrupaya-ngura.
 Man climb-PRES 3SG-DAT horse-LOC
 The man climbed onto the horse. (36)

As illustrated above, it is not possible to establish any clear difference in the use of the *-la/-ra/-lu* morphemes based on the material in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary*. More research is needed to establish if there is indeed a difference, and if not, why so many different morphemes are used for the same function.

3.2.3.3 Case marking on other pronouns (1, 2, 3 DU, 1, 2, 3 PL)

The remaining pronouns of the language all take the same case marking suffixes. Less than half of these (2, 3DU and 3 PL) however follow the pattern of the singular pronouns, and take suffixes on a root morpheme that is different from the nominative form. For 1 DU and 1, 2PL the case suffix is instead added directly to the nominative. It should in this context be noted that the nominative marker for 2, 3 DU and 3PL is *-lu*, which might indicate that all Ngarla pronouns at one point consistently followed the ergative/absolutive case marking pattern (see sections 2.1.3.1, 3.2.3.1.1, and also *pa-lu*, section 3.2.3.2.3). All first person pronouns of the language have the same root, *nga-* (see tables 20-22 above and the following sections).

3.2.3.3.1 Nominative

Due to a shortage of intransitive/transitive sentences, it is hard to establish if 2, 3PL indeed follow the nominative/accusative case marking pattern. However, a reasonably good case can be made for all the remaining Ngarla pronouns following the nominative/accusative case marking pattern. The examples below illustrate the use of all the remaining pronouns in intransitive and transitive sentences, starting with the dual pronouns:

- (123) *Karrikura ngali jinyji-jinyjilu.*
 Karri-kura **ngali** jinyji-jinyji-lu.
 carry-HORT 1 DU INCL:NOM spaced out evenly-INSTR
 Let's take turns carrying (it). (8)
- (124) *Milpanyu ngaliya yajarri nyangkala.*
 Milpa-nyu **ngaliya** yajarri nyangkala.
 come-PAST 1 DU EXCL:NOM same now, today, these days
 We both arrived at the same time. (99)
- (125) *Yukurru nyumpa-lu ngani ma-lu.*
 tame dog 2 DU-NOM ? VBLISER-PURP
 You two should see to the dog. (52; the combination *ngani ma-rri* means “to look at, see something” (52).)
- (126) *Jarrurn piyalu kunyjarta kumpungu ngayinyupula.*
 Jarrurn **piya-lu** kunyjarta kumpungu nga-yinyu-pula.
 man 3DU-NOM woman married VBLISER-ImmPAST-DU
 The man and the woman got married. (25)
- (127) *Para malu nganyjarra pananya.*
 Pa-ra ma-lu **nganyjarra** pana-nya.
 3SG-DAT VBLISER-PURP 1PL INCL:NOM 3PL-ACC
 We mean to copy them. (69)

- (128) *Wurrangkurakurrungura nganarna ngayinyu.*
Wurrangkura-kurru-ngura **nganarna** nga-yinyu.
Red Gum tree-PLUR-LOC 1PL EXCL:NOM VBLISER-ImmPAST
We camped at that place where there were lots of Red Gum trees. (31)

- (129) *Ngananyawanti wangka karriyan nyurra malyaparr-malyaparr?*
Ngananyawanti wangka karri-yan **nyurra**
why, what for (INTER) speech, talk VBLISER-PRES 2PL:NOM
malyaparr-malyaparr?
at once
Why are you all talking at the same time? (35)

- (130) *Palakarni panalu pilangka.*
Palakarni **pana-lu** pila-ngka.
DEM (near) 3PL-NOM fight-LOC
That lot are fighting (lit. “are in a fight“). (73)

3.2.3.3.2 Accusative

No examples of 1 DU INCL and 1 DU EXCL in the direct object position have been found in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*. However, judging from the behaviour of these pronouns with other case markers (see table 21 above) the following forms would be expected for 1 DU INCL ACC and 1 DU EXCL ACC: *ngalinya**, *ngaliyanya**. Further research is of course required to ascertain if these forms do in fact exist or not. Remaining dual and plural pronouns have the following accusative forms:

- (131) *Karra marripula parlarr, jurtangu nyumpalanya parngarra warni jin.*
Karra ma-rrri-pula parlarr, jurta-ngku
? VBLISER-PRES-DU tightly, securely wind-ERG
nyumpa-la-nya parngarra warni ji-n
2DU-BUFF-ACC inevitable, unavoidable ? VBLISER-FUT
Hang on tightly, you two, (or) the wind will suddenly hurl you completely away! (20, 70; the combination *karra ma-rrri* means “to grab, hang on to, hold on to” (19), and *warni ji-rrri* “to throw something” (90).)

- (132) *Palakarni jilya wantajangu kurrpan piyanya malya warniya.*
Palakarni jilya wanta-jangu kurrpa-n **piya-nya** malya
DEM (near) child silly-N.SUFF:? cause trouble-FUT 3DU-ACC father,
warniya.
father’s brother classified mother
That child being silly will cause trouble for his father and mother. (31)

- (133) *Palakarnilu nganyjarranya yangka-yangka marnu.*
Palakarni-lu **nganyjarra-nya** yangka-yangka ma-rnu.
DEM (near)-ERG 1PL INCL-ACC ? VBLISER-PAST
That fellow was rocking us. (101; the combination *yangka-yangka ma-rrri* means “to shake something/someone”(99).)

- (134) *Wanngirimannyalu pungarri nganarnanya.*
Wanngirimannya-lu **nganarna-nya.**
full blast of a storm, strongest part of a cyclone-ERG **punga-rrri**
1PL EXCL-ACC hit, kill-PRES
The full blast of the storm is hitting us. (89)

- (135) *Wanngirrimannya lu nyurranya pungarri palakarningura.*
 Wanngirrimannya-lu **nyurra-nya** punga-rrri
 full blast of a storm, strongest part of a cyclone-ERG 2PL-ACC hit, kill-PRES
 palakarni-ngura.
 DEM (near)-LOC
 The full force of the cyclone is hitting you there now. (89)
- (136) *Jakurr marri pananya palakarnilu yukurrulu.*
 Jakurr ma-rrri **pana-nya** palakarni-lu yukurru-lu.
 ? VBLISER-PRES 3PL-ACC DEM (near)-ERG tame dog-ERG
 That dog is following them. (2; the combination *jakurr ma-rrri* means “to drive
 someone along”, according to the Ngarla-English Dictionary (2). In this example it
 appears to mean “to follow someone”.)

3.2.3.3.3 Possessive

No examples have been found of the possessive suffix used on 1 DU INCL. Geytenbeek, however, proposes the form *ngalinga** for 1 DU INCL POSS (2006a:7). More research is of course also in this case needed to show if this form does indeed exist. Only one sentence has been found where 1 DU EXCL gets the *-nga* suffix:

- (137) *Ngananyakapu nyinpa jupiny marayan ngaliyanga wangkakarta?*
 Ngananyakapu nyi-npa jupiny ma-ryan **ngaliya-nga**
 why (INTER) 2SG-ABS ? VBLISER-PRES 1DU EXCL-POSS
 wangka-karta?
 speech, talk-COM
 Why are you butting in while we are talking (lit. “on our talk-having”)? (11; the
 combination *jupiny ma-ryan* means “to butt in” (11).)

Below are examples of the use of the *-nga* suffix in its possessive and dative function on the other pronouns of the language. Example 141 also shows the morpheme used for the semantic role of recipient. Note that a buffer morpheme is inserted in 2 DU:

- (138) *Ngananyakapu palakarni nyumpalanga jupiny marnu?*
 Ngananyakapu palakarni **nyumpa-la-nga** jupiny ma-rnu?
 why (INTER) DEM (near) 2DU-BUFF-DAT ? VBLISER-PAST
 Why did he butt in on you two? (11; the combination *jupiny ma-rrri* means “to
 butt in” (11).)
- (139) *Palakarnilujarra piyanga nyampali yurtu-yurtu marripula.*
 Palakarni-lu-jarra **piya-nga** nyampali
 DEM (near)-ERG-DU 3DU-POSS boss, master
 yurtu-yurtu. ma-rrri-pula
 ? VBLISER-PRES-DU
 Those two are criticising their boss. (108; the combination *yurtu-yurtu ma-rrri* means
 “to explain, tell all about something”, or “to criticise someone/something”
 (108).)
- (140) *Ngunyi nganyjarra-nga wula minyji ma-rrri*
 DEM (far) 1PL INCL-POSS water ? VBLISER-PRES
 That fellow might steal our water! (69; the combination *minyji ma-rrri* means “to
 steal something” (44).)

- (141) *Nyayingku nganarnanga mantu pungarri pajilwanti.*
 Nyayi-ngku **nganarna-nga** mantu **punga-ri**
 DEM (here)-ERG 1PL EXCL-REC meat, animal, bird hit, kill-PRES
 paji-lwanti.
 bite, eat-V.SUFF:?
 This man is killing meat ready for us to eat. (80)
- (142) *Kuparu nyurra-nga.*
 graveyard 2PL-POSS
 It's your graveyard. (27)
- (143) *Yarra pananga ngunyikarni wanyaparrikura.*
 Yarra **pana-nga** ngunyi-karni
 Go:IMP (irregular form of the verb *yanangka-yan*) 3PL-DAT DEM(far)-ALL
 wanyaparri-kura.
 learn, pay attention-HORT
 (You) go over there to them in order to listen (lit: “for the purpose of learning”)! (88)

3.2.3.3.4 Dative

As was already stated in section 3.2.3.2.3 above, the dative suffix is *-la* for all pronouns investigated in this section. A buffer morpheme is however inserted before the dative suffix on 3 DU, 3 PL. No dative form has been found for 2 DU. Geytenbeek proposes the form *nyumpalala** (2006a:7), but it is at this point impossible to know if this is indeed a valid form or not.

- (144) *Palura ngalila nyanta karrin mantu.*
 Pa-lura **ngali-la** nyanta karri-n mantu.
 3SG-NOM 1DU INCL-DAT here carry-FUT meat, animal, bird
 He'll bring the meat over to us. (62)
- (145) *Ngaliya nyiniyanu wangkaka palura ngaliyala yaanu jurruru.*
 Ngaliya nyini-yanu wangka-ka pa-lura
 1DU EXCL:NOM stay, sit, be-ImmPAST speech, talk-LOC 3SG-NOM
ngaliya-la yaanu
 1DU EXCL-DAT go:ImmPAST (irregular form of the verb *yanangka-yan*)
 jurruru.
 secretly
 While we two were talking he sneaked away from us without us knowing. (12)
- (146) *Nyurra marri pulala piyalala.*
 Nyurra ma-ri pulala **piya-la-la.**
 2PL:NOM VBLISER-PRES REFL 3DU-BUFF-DAT
 (He) is boasting about himself to those two. (64, 65)
- (147) *Palakarni nganyjarrala kurlampi nyiniyan.*
 Palakarni **nganyjarra-la** kurlampi nyini-yan.
 DEM (near) 1PL INCL-DAT daydream stay, sit, be-PRES
 That fellow is “daydreaming” on us, unaware of us. (28)

- (148) *Palakarnilujarra nganarnala mayi yurtu-yurtu mayinyupula pakurta.*
 Palakarni-lu-jarra **nganarna-la** mayi yurtu-yurtu
 DEM (near)-ERG-DU 1PL EXCL-DAT vegetable food ?
 ma-yinyu-pula pakurta.
 VBLISER-ImmPAST-DU bad, in bad condition, no good, worn out
 Those two told us that their food is no good. (67, 110; the combination *yurtu-yurtu ma-rri* means “to explain, tell all about something”, or “to criticise someone/ something” (108).)
- (149) *Parta ngaja nyurrala ngani marri,*
 Parta nga-ja **nyurra-la** ngani ma-rri,
 other, another, different 1SG-ERG 2PL-DAT ? VBLISER-PRES
 I’m watching one of you fellows, (66; the combination *ngani ma-rri* means “to look at, see something” (52).)
- (150) *Nyanta waan panalala.*
 Nyanta waa-n **pana-la-la.**
 here give-IMP 3PL-BUFF-DAT
 Give it this way (viz, in this direction), to them. (113)

3.2.3.4 Inalienable possession

Inalienable possession is the kind of possession that cannot be terminated. In languages that make a difference between alienable and inalienable possession the inalienably possessed class of words always includes body parts and relatives (Payne 1997:40-41, 104-107). That Ngarla is a language that separates alienable and inalienable possession becomes obvious in the study of the pronoun morphology. While alienably possessed items have a special case marker (see sections 3.2.3.1.3, 3.2.3.2.2, 3.2.3.3.3 above), inalienable possession does not:

- (151) *Jina nga-nya yaji-rnu tingkiri-lu.*
 foot 1SG-ACC spear, stab-PAST stingray-ERG
 A stingray jabbed my foot. (3)
- (152) *Ngananyakapu nyi-mpa kangku mirntily ma-rayan?*
 why (INTER) 2SG-ABS knee clicking noise VBLISER-PRES
 Why is your knee clicking? (45)
- (153) *Palakarni yini jukari.*
 DEM (near) name substitute name used in place of a deceased person’s name
 His name should not be pronounced anymore. (10)

3.2.3.5 The reflexive pronoun pulala

The material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* indicates that Ngarla belongs among the Australian languages that have free-standing reflexive pronouns (see section 2.1.3.3 above). The reflexive *pulala* appears in the direct object-position in a number of sentences, but unfortunately only together with singular subjects. There are no examples of the use of *pulala* or another pronoun with the same function with plural subjects. Consider example 146 above, and also the following sentences:

- (154) *Ngananyakapulu nyayi* *yukurru-lu* *pirri-rri*
 why (INTER) DEM (here) tame dog-ERG 1) scratch, 2) dig a hole
 pulala.
 -PRES REFL
 Why is that dog scratching himself? (79)

- (155) *Ngaja pulala wanyaparra marri, mirta wanpari.*
Ngaja-pulala wanyaparra ma-rri, mirta wanpari.
 1SG-ERG REFL understanding VBLISER-PRES NEG good, healthy, well
 In myself I am feeling a bit sick, not well. (79)

3.2.3.6 A comparison between the third person pronouns in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, and those given by O’Grady

The Ngarla pronouns given for third person singular, dual and plural by O’Grady et al. (*ngunyi/ngunyi-piyalu/ngunypanyalu*; see table 12 above) differ from the ones that are taken to be third person pronouns in this analysis. In the case of the singular pronoun, *ngunyi* is here considered to be the demonstrative used for something that is far away from the speaker (see section 3.2.1.1.1). In the case of O’Grady’s dual and plural pronouns, these are here analysed as a combination of a demonstrative and a pronoun. Compare O’Grady’s forms to the following examples, and to the use of *ngunyi* in examples 13, 33, 53, 65, 140, 143:

- (156) *Yurrarnu-ngura ngunyi pana-lu.*
 happy, pleased-LOC DEM (far) 3PL-NOM
 They are celebrating over there. (108)

- (157) *Yu, ngunyi pana-lu mangkuru jarnti-jarnti*
 look (verb?) DEM (far) 3PL-NOM kangaroo several items sticking up
 nyini-yan-pi-ya.
 stay, sit, be-PRES-BUFF-3PL
 Look! Those kangaroos are sitting up everywhere (creating a "jagged skyline" effect).
 (4)

3.3 Verbal class morphology

It was stated in section 2.6.2 that the verbs in Ngarla fall into two categories, the “pure” verbs and the verb phrases created with the help of verbalisers. This section investigates the basic inflections used on these verbs and verbalisers. With “basic” the inflections introduced in section 2.1.4 are understood. As illustrated by example 141 above, there are however other verbal inflection than the ones that are introduced here, and this discussion should therefore not be seen as exhaustive. Remaining verbal inflections will be left to a more careful investigation of the Ngarla verbs. Basic verbal inflections of Ngarla are introduced in section 3.3.1. Section 3.3.2 briefly looks at the inflections used on verbalisers with the *-rayan* present tense marker (see table 17 above), and in section 3.3.3 the transitivity and function of some of the Ngarla verbalisers receive a more thorough analysis.

3.3.1. Common verb morphology

As the examples below show, the sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* indicate that there are two main verbal conjugations in the language, just like in Panyjima (see table 10), and following Geytenbeek 2006a:8 they will here be referred to as the *rri-* and the *yan-* conjugation, after the present tense suffix in the respective conjugation:

(158) *Jarrumirnti pajirri nganya parralyalu.*

Jarrumirnti	paji-rri	nga-nya	parralya-lu.
joint	bite, eat-PRES	1SG-ACC	ache-ERG

My joint is aching (lit.: “an ache is biting my joint”). (5)

(159) *Nyayi maruntu nyiniyan kanjingka warntaka.*

Nyayi	maruntu	nyini-yan	kanjing-ka
DEM (here)	Gould’s Goanna (goanna species)	stay, sit, be-PRES	alongside-warnta-ka.

LOC tree, timber, wood-LOC
This goanna is staying alongside the log. (15)

O’Grady et al. stated that the suffix *-ngkaya* was used as a present tense marker by O’Grady’s informant (see table 13 above). This marker has however not been found in the material in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*.

A verbal suffix *-nyu* clearly related to the recurring Australian past tense suffix has been found in the material. It is only used on *yan*-class verbs. For *rri*-class verbs the suffix *-rnu* is used for the same function (compare the *-nyu* suffix to the past tense markers in Panyjima, table 10):

(160) *Makurru murri nyininyu paamu.*

Makurru	murri	nyini-nyu	paamu.
long time	very	stay, sit, be-PAST	bomb

The bomb stayed there a very long time. (34)

(161) *Japa-rnu nga-ja.*
cover, bury-PAST 1SG-ERG
I covered (it). (4)

O’Grady et al. stated that *-n* is a suffix used as a past tense marker in Ngarla, but this has not been found to be the case in the material in the *Ngarla - English Dictionary*. Furthermore, O’Grady et al. wrote that *-kuRa* is a future tense marker (see table 13 above). The *-n* suffix

can indeed frequently be found on verbs in the sentences in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, but it appears to be used to mark both future tense and imperative mood (see section 2.1.4 above), and it only appears on *rri*-class verbs. In corresponding sentences with *yan*-class verbs the verbal stem is instead left bare:

- (162) *Pinurru japa-n!*
 fire, firewood cover, bury-IMP
 Cover the fire! (74)
- (163) *Purntultu nganyjarranya japa-n.*
 Purntul-tu nganyjarra-nya
 dust-ERG 1PL INCL-ACC **japa-n.**
 The dust will cover us. (81)
 cover, bury-FUT
- (164) *Mani nyi-mpa!*
 climb-0 2SG-ABS
 YOU climb it! (36)
- (165) *wula nganyjarranga warni.*
 water 1PL INCL-POSS fall-0
 rain (lit. “water”) will fall for us. (81)

The *-kuRa* suffix (in Geytenbeek’s transcription *-kura*) appears in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* in sentences expressing the purposive mood, but only on verbs of the *yan*-class. The corresponding *rri*-class suffix is *-lu*. These markers appear neither to be related to the purposive suffix in Panyjima (table 10), nor to the recurring Australian purposive suffix (see 2.1.4 above):

- (166) *Kalya parni-kura*
 remaining in one place, continuing in a state or process wait, stay-PURP
nga-ya.
 1SG-ABS
 I intend to stay in the one place. (69; *Parni-yan ngaya*, I am staying (69).)
- (167) *Ngaya kama-lu.*
 1SG-ABS cook-PURP
 I’ll cook (it). (15)

The *-kura/-lu* suffixes are however not only used to mark purposive. There are also frequent examples of them occurring in sentences expressing what the speaker thinks that someone else ought to do (hortative mood, compare to Panyjima hortative in table 10 above):

- (168) *Kuntu-kuntu murri nyurra nyini-kura*
 careful, polite, respectful very 2PL:NOM stay, sit, be-HORT
 You fellows ought to be very careful (7)
- (169) *Pinurru japa-lu.*
 fire, firewood cover, bury-HORT
 (He) should cover the fire (with earth). (4)

Past tense markers were discussed above. In addition to the suffixes introduced above, a number of other markers are however also used in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* sentences that talk about past events. It is here suggested that these suffixes are used to mark recent (*-yanu/-nmayinyu*) and remote past (*-rnta*) respectively, though more research is needed to ascertain exactly how these markers differ in meaning and use from the past tense marker introduced above. The first two suffixes, used on *yan*-class and *rri*-class verbs respectively, will here be labeled Immediate past (ImmPAST), the latter suffix Remote past (RemPAST). Sentences in the material that talk about remote events unfortunately only include *rri*-class verbs, which means that it cannot be known for the time being if the same or a slightly different suffix would be used on *yan*-class verbs when discussing remote events.

- (170) *Warrumurntu karrapirti nyiniyanuya wangkaka.*
 Warrumurntu karrapirti **nyini-yanu-ya** wangka-ka.
 morning very long time stay, sit, be-ImmPAST-3PL speech, talk-LOC
 They've been talking there since morning. (77)
- (171) *Kamanmayinyuya mararntikarta pilangka.*
Kama-nmayinyu-ya mararnti-karta pila-ngka.
 cook, burn-ImmPAST-3PL firestick-COM fight-LOC
 They burned one another with firesticks while they were fighting. (15)
- (172) *Kanyi-rnta* *nga-ja.*
 1)looking after, taking care of, 2)tread on, kick-RemPAST 1SG-ERG
 I trod on it long ago. (16)

The suffixes *-nyamarta/-rnamarta* are another set of mood markers in the language, used to express what one thinks that someone absolutely has to do (whether one is telling that person or not). This function is here called Undoubtedly (UNDOUBT):

- (173) *Palakarni nyini-nyamarta.*
 DEM (near) stay, sit, be-UNDOUBT
 That kid has got to stay home. (60)
- (174) *marlirri ja-rnamarta-ya.*
 flat, smooth VBLISER-UNDOUBT-3PL
 They must flatten it. (39)

The suffixes *-nyjangu/-ntangu* interestingly enough seem to be general aspect markers (ASP), used to mark a number of different aspects. It appears that they get their meaning from the immediate context they appear in. Compare the following sentences, and also examples 8, 10, 92:

- (175) *Parnunga para kunyjarta ngaja yila nganawayiny marnu muwarr ngayinyjangu.*
 Pa-rnu-nga pa-ra kunyjarta nga-ja yila
 3SG-BUFF-POSS 3SG-DAT woman 1SG-ERG perhaps, maybe
 nganawayiny ma-rnu muwarr **ngayi-nyjangu.**
 ? VBLISER-PAST word say-ASP
 Perhaps I misunderstood what was said by his wife (112; the combination *nganawayiny ma-rri* means “to fail to recognise, fail to understand something, to make a mistake” (51).)

- (176) *Pungarnu ngaja parnunya yana-nyjangu.*
 Punga-rnu nga-ja pa-rnu-nya **yana-nyjangu.**
 hit, kill-PAST 1SG-ERG 3SG-BUFF-ACC go-ASP
 I hit him while he was walking past me. (112)
- (177) *Punya-ntangu wula.*
 drink-ASP water
 The water has been drunk. (59)
- (178) *Punya-ntangu, punga-n!*
 drink-ASP hit, kill-IMP
 While it is drinking, shoot it! (111)

There are, finally, suffixes used to create a noun out of a verb (see section 2.6.1 above). These are *-nguru* for *yan*-class verbs and *-rnanguru* for *rri*-class verbs:

- (179) *Panta ngani marnangurulu nyumpalanga murrilyi witi yangka marnu pikun-pikuntu.*
 Panta **ngani ma-rnanguru-lu** nyumpa-la-nga, murrilyi
 close, near ? VBLISER-NMLISER-ERG 2DU-BUFF-POSS emu's tail
 witi yangka ma-rnu pikun-pikun-tu.
 feathers fun, games ? VBLISER-PAST dodging, zig-zagging-ERG

After seeing you two from close up, (the emu) shook his tail feathers playfully at you by dodging from side to side. (85; the combination *ngani ma-rri* means “to look at, see something” (52), and *yangka ma-rri* means “to shake something”(99).)

- (180) *Pinpaka wanyjarri ngukungku warninyurulu.*
 Pinpaka wanyja-rri nguku-ngku **warni-nyuru-lu.**
 1) glow 2) flash separate, leave-PRES meteor-ERG fall-NMLISER-ERG
 The meteor is leaving a glow behind it as it falls. (65)

Table 23 summarises the discussion about verbal inflections above.

Table 23: Ngarla verbal inflections

	<i>yan</i> -conjugation	<i>rri</i> -conjugation
Present (PRES)	<i>-yan</i>	<i>-rri/-rayan</i>
Past (PAST)	<i>-nyu</i>	<i>-rnu</i>
Future/Imperative (FUT/IMP)	<i>-0</i>	<i>-n</i>
Purposive/Hortative (PURP/HORT)	<i>-kura</i>	<i>-lu</i>
Immediate PAST (ImmPAST)	<i>-yanu</i>	<i>-nmayinyu</i>
Remote PAST (RemPAST)	?	<i>-rnta</i>
Undoubtedly (UNDOUBT)	<i>-nyamarta</i>	<i>-rnamarta</i>
General aspect marker (ASP)	<i>-nyjangu</i>	<i>-ntangu</i>
Nominaliser (NMLISER)	<i>-nguru</i>	<i>-rnanguru</i>

3.3.2 Inflections on verbalisers with the *-rayan* present tense marker

In the discussion about the Ngarla verb phrase in section 2.6.2 above, the Ngarla verbalisers were, following Geytenbeek, divided up into three different conjugations (see table 17). In table 23 above, the *-rayan* present tense marker was however included in the *rri*-column. The reason for this is that the verbalisers taking the *-rayan* present tense marker seem to get the same TAM-markers as the *rri*-class verb. This is illustrated by the examples below. It should however be noted that this observation is tentative, since only examples with the past tense marker, the purposive/hortative marker, and the imperative/future tense marker have been found in the material.

- (181) *jirnta kurru* *ma-rayan*
 sparks PLUR(?; see section 3.2.2.2) VBLISER-PRES
 (The fire) is making lots of sparks. (31)
- (182) *Mujurarri kurru* *ma-rnu.*
 cloudy PLUR(?) VBLISER-PAST
 The clouds built up in all directions. (31)
- (183) *Ngurntily-ngurntily ma-rayan.*
 cough VBLISER-PRES
 (He) is coughing. (58)
- (184) *Ngurntily-ngurntily ma-lu.*
 cough VBLISER-HORT
 (He) ought to cough. (58)
- (185) *Ngananyakapu nyi-npa nganyjarr-nganyjarr ma-rayan?*
 why (INTER) 2SG-ABS panting, puffing, breathless VBLISER-PRES
 Why are you puffing so hard? (53)
- (186) *Nganyjarr-nganyjarr ma-n.*
 pantning, puffing VBLISER-FUT
 (He) will puff! (53)

3.3.3 The transitivity and function of Ngarla verbalisers

Up until this point, the Ngarla verbalisers have been treated as a group. No distinctions have been made between them in terms of transitivity and function. The purpose of this section is to do a more thorough analysis of the verbalisers of which there are plenty of examples in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* in order to see if anything more specific can be said about them.

The *yan*-class verbalisers of which there are many examples are *karri-yan* (which is also a “pure” Ngarla verb, though it should be noted that *karri-* as a verb appears both with *rri-* and *yan*-class morphology, see examples 13, 14, 65, 104, 114, 123, 144), *ngarri-yan*, *-rri-yan*. All three of them turn out to be intransitive inchoative verbalisers (see section 2.1.4 above):

- (187) *jakatiti*
rotation (2) *jakatiti karri-yan*
rotation INCHO-PRES
is spinning, is rotating rapidly (2; see also
example 17 above.)
- (188) *maru* (42)
a rearing-upwards motion *maru*
a rearing-upwards motion *karri-yan*
INCHO-PRES
is rearing up (42; as in example 189.)
- (189) *Kartarrapuka maru*
Humpback Whale a rearing-upwards motion *karri-yan.*
INCHO-PRES
The humpback whale is surfacing and then sinking. (42)
- (190) *yirnta*
cold/chilly (103) *yirnta*
cold/chilly *ngarri-yan*
INCHO-PRES
is becoming cold/chilly (4; as in example 191.)
- (191) *Yirnta* *ngarri-yan*
cold/chilly INCHO-PRES
(It)'s getting cold (4)
- (192) *jimpayi*
hiding/in hiding (6) *jimpayi*
in hiding *ngarri-yan*
INCHO-PRES
is hiding (6; see example 121.)
- (193) *karntu-karntu*
itch (19) *karntu-karntu-rri-yan*
itch-INCHO-PRES
is itching (19; as in example 194.)
- (194) *Mara ngaya* *karntu-karntu-rri-yan.*
hand 1SG-ABS itch-INCHO-PRES
My hand is itching. (19)
- (195) *mala-mala*
nauseating (34) *mala-mala-rri-yan*
nauseating-INCHO-PRES
is feeling nauseated (34; as in example 196.)
- (196) *Yurtarra pajirnguru ngaya mala-malarriyan.*
Yurta-rra paji-rnguru *nga-ya* *mala-mala-rri-yan.*
fish-DAT bite, eat-NMLISER 1SG-ABS nauseating-INCHO-PRES
Every time I eat fish I feel nauseated. (34)

Of the *rri*-class verbalisers mentioned in table 17, three are interesting in this context, *ja-rri*, *ma-rri* and *pi-rri*. They are most commonly used as transitive, causative verbalisers:

- (197) *julya*
buried in the ground (10) *julya* *ja-rri*
buried in the ground CAUS-PRES
is burying something (10; see example 15.)
- (198) *jangka*
attached, fastened on (3) *jangka* *ja-rri*
attached, fastened on CAUS-PRES
is fastening something (3; as in example 199.)

- (199) *Jangka jarnu nyinta piyanya warntajarra?*
 Jangka ja-rnu nyi-nta piyanya warnta-jarra?
 attached, fastened on CAUS-PAST 2SG-ERG 3DU-ACC tree, timber, wood
 (here used in the sense “stick”)-DU
 Did you fasten those two sticks together? (3)
- (200) *jarra-jarra* *jarra-jarra ma-rrri*
 scattered (5) scattered CAUS-PRES
 is scattering something (5; as in example 201.)
- (201) *Jarra-jarra ma-n!*
 scattered CAUS-IMP
 Scatter them! (5)
- (202) *karliny* *karliny ma-rrri*
 returning (18) returning CAUS-PRES
 is bringing something back, is making someone
 come back (18; see example 203.)
- (203) *Karliny ma-rrri palakarni-lu.*
 returning CAUS-PRES DEM (near)-ERG
 That chap is bringing (it) back. (18)
- (204) *kangkarrkarra* *kangkarr pi-rrri*
 a tear or a split (15) a tear or a split CAUS-PRES
 is tearing something (15; as in example 205.)
- (205) *Kangkarr pi-n*
 a tear or a split CAUS-FUT
 (He) will tear (it) open. (75)
- (206) *jinta* *jinta pi-rrri*
 some, others, the rest (7) some, others, the rest CAUS-PRES
 is separating something from the rest (7; as in
 example 207.)
- (207) *Jinta pirnu pananya yukurrulu kukurnjayi.*
 Jinta pi-rnu pana-nya yukurru-lu kukurnjayi.
 some, others, the rest CAUS-PAST 3PL-ACC tame dog-ERG sheep
 The dog separated off some of the sheep. (7)

There are, however, also examples of *pi-rrri* being used as an intransitive inchoative verbaliser:

- (208) *nyuka* *nyuka pi-rrri*
 increase site or feature (64) increase site or feature CAUS-PRES
 is conducting an increase ceremony (64;
 as in example 209.)

- (209) *Nyuka pilu nyinpa jankurnarra.*
 Nyuka pi-lu nyi-npa jankurna-rra.
 increase site or feature CAUS-HORT 2SG-ABS emu-DAT
 You should do the increase ceremony for the emu. (64)
- (210) *marra* *marra pi-rrri*
 flying (40) flying INCHO-PRES
 is going in a hurry (40; as in example 211.)
- (211) *Parta marra pi-rnu.*
 other, another, different flying INCHO-PAST
 He's gone, really fast. (40)

In the Ngarla example sentences used in this thesis there are also examples of the use of the verbaliser *ka-rrri*, which is not included in Geytenbeek's list of verbalisers (table 17). Judging from the examples of the use of this verbaliser (sentences 1, 3, 58, 111) it appears that it is used both in the transitive, causative sense, and the intransitive, inchoative sense, just like *pi-rrri*. The fact of the matter, though, is that in three of the four examples of *ka-rrri*, the verbaliser is used in the inchoative sense. However, more research is needed in the area of Ngarla verbalisers, both in order to establish if there really are close to 20 verbalisers used in the language, and also to determine what functions they are and are not used for.

The only verbaliser with the *-rayan* present tense marker of which there are many examples in the *Ngarla – English Dictionary* is *ma-rayan*. It is evidently an intransitive verbaliser, but it appears to be used for a number of different functions. A deeper study is needed to be able to say anything conclusive about *ma-rayan*:

- (212) *mujurarri* *mujurarri ma-rayan*
 cloudy (47) cloudly INCHO-PRES (47; see example 182.)
- (213) *mirntily* *mirntily ma-rayan*
 a clicking noise a clicking noise PROC(?) -PRES (47, as in
 example 214. See also
 table 9 above.)
- (214) *Kangku nga-ya mirntily ma-rnu.*
 Knee 1SG-ABS a clicking noise PROC(?) -PAST
 My knees are clicking. (47)
- (215) *nganyjarr-nganyjarr* *nganyjarr-nganyjarr ma-rayan*
 panting, puffing panting, puffing FACT(?) -PRES (53, see
 example 186.)

3.4. Summary

The purpose of this thesis has been to shed light on the basic grammatical structure of Ngarla, a previously almost completely unstudied language, with a focus on the nominal class morphology. This has chiefly been done by comparing the morphology of Ngarla to recurring morphological patterns in other Australian languages. Comparisons have also been made to neighbouring Panyjima and Martuthunira, and to O'Grady's short description of Ngarla morphology and pronouns (O'Grady et al. 1966:80-82). The sentences, that have all been analysed morpheme-by-morpheme, have been taken from the *Ngarla – English Dictionary*, and in the analysis words and phrases have been assumed to have the meanings given in the dictionary by Geytenbeek (except in those cases where they obviously are used in other senses).

The study has shown that Ngarla employs the ergative/absolute case marking pattern with common nouns, proper nouns, and demonstratives, just like most other Australian languages. The language however also shows traces of ergative/absolute case marking in its pronouns; with 1, 2SG a three-way distinction is made morphologically for the intransitive subject, the transitive subject and the transitive object. Remaining pronouns follow the nominative/accusative case marking pattern, in the common Australian way. Compared to the pronoun morphology in the more thoroughly studied neighbouring languages, that of Ngarla is however quite scant (see Dench 1991:156-160, 1995:100-103). The ergative suffixes used on common nouns, proper nouns and demonstratives in Ngarla are also used to express the instrumental semantic role, a type of case syncretism not unusual in Australian languages. Ngarla uses nominal morphology for most of the functions commonly found in Australian languages (however, no causal suffix has been found), and it has some of the morphology in common with surrounding languages. Some of the morphology is however also very different from that found in the neighbouring languages, and from the recurring morphemes used for certain functions in Australian languages. The analysis of Ngarla nominal morphology pointed out a number of areas that will need further study for a complete grammatical description of the language to become possible, e.g. the area of plural marking.

The analysis has also been able to show that Ngarla has a rich verbal morphology, and that there is an especially rich flora of mood and past tense markers. The verbs fall into two main conjugations, with the possibility of a third conjugation, the *rayan*-conjugation, existing or having existed. Sadly enough the sentences in the *Ngarla-English Dictionary* more frequently include verbs from the *rri*-conjugation than *yan*-conjugation verbs, with the result that the equivalents for all the markers found on *rri*-verbs have not been found for *yan*-class verbs. This is another reason for the need of a further study of the language. In the analysis of some of the words/morphemes given as verbalisers by Geytenbeek it was demonstrated that the language seems to employ a number of intransitive, inchoative verbalisers, and also a few transitive, causative ones, some of the latter of which are also occasionally used as inchoative markers. The status of the verbaliser *ma-rayan* unfortunately still remains unclear. There is a possibility that Ngarla employs up to ten more verbalisers than those discussed in this study. The area of verbalisers in the language, needless to say, will also require a more detailed study.

Hopefully this thesis has been able to shed some light on an understudied language, a language that will soon become extinct. And hopefully a desire for further study of the language has been awakened in the reader. That has at least been the writer's intention.

4. Vocabulary

This vocabulary includes all the words used in the Ngarla example sentences analysed in this thesis. Morphology is not included. For information about Ngarla morphology, see tables 18-23.

J

ja-rrri	VBLISER
jaa-rrri	to chop
jakaly	gently, softly
jakatiti	rotation
jakurr ma-rrri	to drive someone along
jangka	attached, fastened on
jankan karri-yan	to shiver, tremble
jankurna	emu
jantu	weapon
japa-rrri	to cover, bury
japal	meal
jarnti	an item that is sticking up
jarnti-jarnti	several items sticking up
jarntu	tame, friendly
jarra-jarra	scattered
jarri-yan	VBLISER
jarrpi-yan	to enter, go inside, go underneath
jarrumirnti	joint
jarrurn	man
jarrurru	dizzy, listless, helplessly weak
gartun	jump, leap
ji-rrri	VBLISER
jilya	child
jimpayi	hiding/in hiding
jina	foot
jinaru	able
jinta	some, others, the rest
jinyji-jinyji	spaced out evenly
jipa-rrri	VBLISER
jipurl	stable(?)
jirli	1) upper arm, 2) whole arm
jirnta	sparks
jukari	substitute name used in place of a deceased person's name
julya	buried in the ground
jungka-rrri	to make a net
juntu	1) straight, 2)?; see <i>juntu ma-rrri</i>
juntu ma-rrri	to tell someone
jupiny ma-rayan	to butt in
jurni	laugh
jurta	breeze, wind

K

ka-rrri
kalya

kal-yarra
kama-rrri
kamparra
kanarni
kangkarr pi-rrri
kangkarrkarra
kangku
kanjing
kankara
kankala mara-yan
kanyi-rrri

kapalya
kari
karlajangu
karliny
karlumpu
karntirni-rrri
karntu-karntu
karntu-karntu-rrri-yan
karnumarra
karra ma-rrri
karrapirti
karrarru
karri-rrri

karri-yan
karrkalypa
kartarrapuka
kartu
kartuwarra
ku-rrri
kukurnjayi
kulu
kulypurr
kumarri-yan
kumpungu
kunaparri
kunaran
kunti ma-rrri
kuntu-kuntu
kunyjarta
kupalya
kuparu

VBLISER

remaining in one place, continuing in a state or process
one's sister's son and his son
to cook
small
underneath/inside/down
to tear/split something, see *kangkarrkarra*
a tear or a split
knee
alongside
high up
to fly
1)looking after, taking care of, 2)tread on, kick
child
feel sympathetic
1) cow, 2) cattle
returning
karlumpu (a fruit)
to bite something
itch
to itch
body of a living creature
to grab, hang on to, hold on to something
very long time
spider
to carry something (probably a loanword from English.)

VBLISER

alert
Humpback Whale
grown up
saviour, rescuer
VBLISER
sheep
louse
visualisation
to be stingy, mean
married
a really good, really generous person
winter
to choke, to inundate something/someone
careful, polite, respectful
woman
sleep
graveyard

kurlampi	daydream
kurlkalka	obsession, focus, fascinated interest, intent repetition
kurlku	cropped close
kurlkura	hair, fur, wool
kurnta-karra	my spouse and child
kurntal-karra	a man and his daughter, a woman and her daughter
kurnu	clenched, closed up, rolled up
kurralka	belch, burp
kurrpa-rri	to cause trouble
kurru	plural morpheme(PLUR)?, see <i>kurru ma-rayan</i>
kurru ma-rayan	to become lots of
kurtarniny-malingka	term of address used by one parent talking to or about three or more of his children (whether own or classified).
kurti-kurti	bewildering, unintelligible, difficult
<u>M</u>	
ma-rayan	VBLISER
ma-rri	VBLISER
makurru	long time
mala-mala	nauseating
mala-mala-rri-yan	to feel nauseated
malukurrukurru	big shady tree
malya	father, father's brother
mangan	lively, active, energetic
mangkuru	kangaroo
manguny	dreamtime-being
mani-yan	to climb
mantu	meat, animal, bird
mapal	sun
mara	hand
mara-yan	VBLISER
mararnti	firestick
marlajangu	bull
marlirri	flat, smooth
marnti-yarra	a man and his son, a woman and her brother's daughter
marra	flying
marralya	leaf
marrungu	man
martu-ngarra	a man's term of reference for a married couple who from the speaker's point of view are in <i>yakankarra</i> relationship (that is, two generations apart), and the woman is the speaker's real father's sister but the man is not his real mother's

maru	brother, but merely a classified sister's son (42)
maruntu	a rearing-upwards motion
maturarri jipa-rrri	Gould's Goanna
maya	cause to vomit
mayi	house
milpa-yan	vegetable food
mintu	to come
minyji ma-rrri	awake, alert
miranu	to steal something
mirntily	?
mirta	clicking noise
mirtanya	negation (NEG)
mirtanya-mirtanya	elderly man
mirtawari	three or more elderly men
mujarri	post-menopausal woman
mujurarri	running away secretly
mungu	cloudy
munyjany	alone, only
munyju-rrri	blunt
murri	to swallow
murrilyi	very
murru	emu's tail feathers
muwarr	stone, hill(?)
	word

N

nga-rayan	VBLISER
ngaja/ngaya	I (1SG ERG/ABS)
ngaka-rrri	to block, prevent
ngali	we two (1 DU INCL NOM)
ngaliya	we two (1 DU EXCL NOM)
ngalkarr	ant
ngananya	what/what for/why
ngananyakapu	why
ngananyawanti	why/what for
nganarna	we (1 PL EXCL NOM)
nganawayiny ma-rrri	to fail to recognise, fail to understand
ngangkarniny-malingka	something, to make a mistake
ngani ma-rrri	the plural form of <i>ngankarninyurlu</i>
ngankarninyurlu	to look at, to see something
	a term of reference used by a man speaking to his <i>yaku</i> about the <i>yaku's</i> mother (i.e., the speaker's mother-in-law, his father's sister). The term can include fathers-in-law too.
nganyjarra	we (1PL INCL NOM)
nganyjarr-nganyjarr ma-rayan	to pant, to puff, to be breathless
ngaparri ma-rrri	to splash, spray sprinkle water on something
ngarlinymarra	leaning

ngarlpu	speedily, hastily
ngarra	upwards(?)
ngarri-yan	VBLISER
ngarta	person, human being, mankind
ngaya/ngaja	I (1SG ABS/ERG)
ngayiny	1) general term for internal organs 2) seat of feelings and emotions
nguku	meteor
ngunyi	DEM (far)
ngurtily-ngurtily ma-rayan	to cough
ngurrara	local inhabitant
ngurrku ma-rrri	to squeeze something/someone
ngurrupaya	horse
nyampali	boss
nyangkala	now, today, these days
nyanta	here
nyayi	DEM (here)
nyimpurl	pulse/throb
nyini-yan	to stay, sit, be
nyinpa/nyinta	you (2SG ABS/ERG)
nyinta/nyinpa	you (2SG ERG/ABS)
nyirtura	mirage
nyuka	increase site or feature
nyuka-rrri	to mate
nyumpalu	you two (2DU NOM)
nyurra	you (2PL NOM)

P

paamu	bomb (a loanword from English.)
paji-rrri	to bite, eat
pakarli	teenage boy, who has been through the first initiation rites
pakurta	bad, no good, worn out
palakarni	DEM (near)
palarr	tightly, securely
palka-palka	increasingly, do something more energetically
palura	he/she/it (3SG NOM)
panalu	those two (3DU NOM)
panta	close, near
parlapanta	shallow water
parni-yan	to stay, wait
parnngarra	inevitable, unavoidable
parralya	ache
parru-parru	net
parta	other, another, different
partanyal	one
partulyayi	bird

pi-ri
piju
pikun-pikun
pila
pinpaka
pinurru
pinyarri
pirliri-pirliri
pirri-ri
pirtirra
piyalu
pujula-ri
puka
pulala
punga-ri
punpal
punya-ri
purl ka-ri
purlpi
purntul

T

taya
tingkiri

W

waa-ri
wajarri-yan
wakurla
walyi
wangka
wankaly-wankaly
wanngirrimannya

wanpari
wanta
wanyja
wanyja-ri
wanyjan ma-ri
wanyjaparri
warni-yan
warni ji-ri
warniya
warnta
warrarra
warrukurla
warrumurntu
wataku

VBLISER

knife
dodging, zig-zagging
fight
1) glow 2) flash
fire, firewood
fight
ruined, full of holes
1) to scratch, 2) to dig a hole
corella
they (3PL NOM)
to puff at, blow at, shoot at
rotten smell
reflexive pronoun (REFL)
to hit, kill
sick, painful
to drink
to billow up
stop
dust

tire (a loanword from English.)
stingray

to give something
to search
rounded boulder, upper mill stone
almost, nearly
speech, talk
raw
full blast of a storm, strongest part of a
cyclone
good, healthy, well
silly
dingo, tame dog
to separate (from), leave
to leave someone/something behind
understanding
to fall
to throw something
classified mother
tree, timber, wood
nervous
black
morning
unimportant

wayirru	how was it
wiiny	free, not restrained
witi	fun, games
wula	water
wurrangkura	River Red Gum tree
wurtarri-yan	to stand
<u>Y</u>	
yaanu	the immediate past form (ImmPAST) of the verb <i>yanangka-yan</i> .
yajarri	same
yaji-rii	to spear, stab
yakan-karra	grandparent and his/her spouse, grandchild and his/her spouse. This term is used when from the speaker's point of view the two people are two generations apart.
yaku	a man's male cross-cousin
yalya	clothing, belongings, corroboree decorations
yana-	alternative verb stem for the verb <i>yanangka-yan</i> .
yanangka-yan	to go
yangal	companion
yangka ma-rii	to shake something
yangka-yangka ma-rii	to shake, rock something
yarni ma-rii	to make something
yarra	the imperative form of the irregular verb <i>yanangka-yan</i> .
yarti	later
yawarta	horse
yila	perhaps, maybe
yini	name
yinta	permanent water-hole
yirnta	cold/chilly
yu	look (verb?)
yukun	smoke
yukurru	tame dog
yularri-yan	to say, tell
yurala-yurala	increasingly, more and more
yurnpa	1) same, unchanged, 2) choreography; this appears to be a case of Ngarla homonymy, see Saeed 2003:63-64.
yurrarnu	happy, pleased
yurta	fish
yurtu-yurtu ma-rii	1) to explain, tell all about something, 2) to criticise someone/something

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Appendix: Pronunciation guidelines for the phonemic alphabet used for the Aboriginal languages of eastern Pilbara

The following guidelines have been adapted from Geytenbeek 2006a:6:

Vowels

a	As in	“putt”.
aa	" "	“part”; twice as long as “a”.
i	" "	“pit”.
ii	" "	“peat”; twice as long as “i”.
u	" "	“put”; never like “oo” in “coo” or “boot”.
uu	" "	“put” but twice as long.

Consonants

j	Akin to the d in “dew” or “due”. It is made with the tongue flat and the tip touching the back of the top teeth.
k	At the beginning of words is like the k in “skid”, though not aspirated. Elsewhere in words it can sound either that way or like a g.
l	As in English.
ly	Like the l in “million”, but with the tongue flat and the tip touching the back of the top teeth.
m	As in English.
n	As in English.
ng	As in English.
ny	Like the n in “new”, but with the tongue flat and the tip touching the back of the top teeth.
p	At the beginning of words is like the p in “spin”, though it is not aspirated. Elsewhere in words it can sound either that way or like a b.
r	Retroflex r, made with the tongue-tip curled up and back.
rl	Retroflex l, made with the tongue-tip curled back a bit.
rn	Retroflex n, made with the tongue-tip curled back a bit.
rr	A flap or a briefly trilled r.
rt	Retroflex t or d, made with the tongue-tip curled back a bit.
t	At the beginning of words is like the t in “stick”, though not aspirated. Elsewhere in words it can sound either that way or like a d.
w	As in English.
y	As in English.

As a primary rule stress should be placed on the first syllable of each word (as in the English noun *permit*, “a licence”), not the second syllable (as in the verb *permit*, “allow”). In words of four or five syllables, the second-to-last syllable is also stressed, though more lightly than the first.

A predictable exception occurs only in words of five or more phonemes, and only when sequences within such words begin with /k/, /p/, or /t/, are followed by /i/ or /u/, and then by /r/ or /w/. In such cases the first vowel is shortened or even omitted, and if there would have been stress on that vowel it is transferred onto the next vowel, which is then sometimes slightly lengthened. For example, *Kura-kura* (a place-name), where each word has only four phonemes, is pronounced “kura-kura”; but *kuran-kuran* (a species of spinifex) is pronounced as “kran-kran”; *pirirri* (initiated man) is pronounced as “pri:rri”; *kuwarri* (now) is pronounced as “kwa:rri”; *yunturi* (sulky) is pronounced as “yuntri”.

The only other exceptions to the above rules are few and minor ones.