

Wangkatja Verb Prefixes and Verbalisers III

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Introduction

In this paper Wangkatja verb prefixes *ma- away from the speaker*, *marla-* and its variant *marlarr- behind*, *parra- around, about* and *wati- across, to one side*, and verbalisers *-ma, -rri* and its variant *-arri* are analysed and described. The analysis is based on the compilation of a large corpus of historical data dating between 1920s and 2020s. Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre Aboriginal Corporation (GALCAC) has been collecting data for over two decades from numerous speakers residing in various parts of the Goldfields region, Western Australia, including Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, and Kalgoorlie.

Wangkatja is a member of the Wati language family, a subgroup of the Pama-Nyugan family of Australian languages. Its AIATSIS code is A103 and it is closely related to Ngaanyatjarra, AIATSIS code A38. The data suggests that the name of the speech form comes from the word *wangka* meaning speech and language and other derivations of the word exist such as *Wangkayi* or *Wangkatja*, a First Nations person; *wangka-* to talk, to speak. Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett, the compilers of *Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra to English Dictionary 2003*, noted Wangkatja as a linguistic form in 1978:

‘I am often asked the question “What about Wangkayi (Wongi)? Aren’t the Warburton people Wangkayi?” The origin of the term Wangkayi is now somewhat obscure. However it is mainly used by white people to refer to the Aborigines living in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia. The people themselves use the term Wangkatja (meaning people who talk our talk) to distinguish themselves from others who talk completely unrelated languages (including English).

The language, of course, had no written form. It was first scientifically studied by Wilfrid Douglas, a linguist of the United Aborigines Mission, in the early 1950’s. He devised the alphabet for the language and published several books about it.’

Into Another World, Ameer Glass, 1978

‘You may have heard the Ngaanyatjarra language referred to as “Wangkayi (‘Wongi’). White people, especially use this term to refer to the language of the Aboriginal people of the Eastern Goldfields and beyond (although these Aboriginal people prefer to call themselves and their language ‘Wangkatja’).’

Ngaanyatjarra & Ngaatjatjarra to English Dictionary, Ameer Glass, Dorothy Hackett, 2003

It seems that Wangkatja might have emerged as a creole¹ in a similar way with Cundelee Wangka, Cundelee, Western Australia and Martu Wangka, Northwest Western Australia. The

¹ A Creole is “A term used in sociolinguistics to refer to a pidgin language which has become the mother-tongue of a speech community ... The process of creolization expands the structural and stylistic range of the pidginized language, so that the creolized language becomes comparable in formal and

data contains variants in glossing, spelling, sentence structure, tense suffixes, contemporary phrases, and word formation. This indicates that the corpus may contain more than one variant of the same speech form.

1. Prefixes

1.1. Directive prefix **ma-** *away from the speaker*

1.1.1. **Ma-nyina.**
 ma+nyina
 away+sit
Sit away.

Ma-marra.
 ma+marra
 away+grab
Take it away.

1.1.2. **Ma-tju!**
 ma+tju
 away+put
Put it away. (KLCA, 2008)

1.1.3. **Ma-watjanu** ma-kula kaninytjarra
 ma_watja+nu ma_kula kaninytjarra
 away_say+PAST go_away inside

tjana	pulpangka	nyanpiranyi	Warlawurrulu	kumpirnu
tjana	pulpa+ngka	nyanpi+ranyi	warlawurru+lu	kumpi+rnu
3PL	cave+LOC	dance+PRES	eagle+ERG	hide+PAST

ma-waru marnu tilirnu.
 ma_waru ma+rnu tili+rnu
 away_fire grab+PAST make_fire+PAST
They all went to the cave saying that the Eagle had gone there to hide and make a fire and dance. (The Magpie and The Crow)

1.1.4. Tjirntu pakarnu **ma-kulinu** piyarrka
 tjirntu paka+rnu ma_kuli+nu piyarrka
 sun rise+PAST away_hear+PAST galah

pirninya		pawarranyi	purlkanya.
pirni+nya		pawarra+nyi	purlka+nya
many+focus_marker		make_noise+PRES	big+focus_marker

In the morning, they heard the galahs making a loud noise.
 (Gordon, 2007)

functional complexity to other languages.” A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, David Crystal, 2008.

1.2. **marla-**, **marlarr-** *behind, backwards, back*

1.2.1. **Marla-yu!**
marla_yu
back_give
Give it back!

1.2.2. **Marlarr-nyawa!**
marlarr+nya+wa
behind+look+IMP
Look behind!

1.2.3. **Marlarr-tju!**
marlarr_tju
behind_put
Put it behind!

1.3. **parra-** *around, about*

1.3.1. **Parra-yuwa!**
parra+yu+wa
around+give+IMP
Share it around!

1.3.2. **Parra-watjala!**
parra+watja+la
around+tell+IMP
Tell it around!

(Spurling and Jones, 2015)

1.3.3. Tjana yinkangu turlku **parra**-nyinangu warungka yila.
tjana yinka+ngu turlku parra_nyina+ngu waru+ngka yila
3PL sing+PAST song around_sit+PAST fire+LOC nearby
They sang songs one by one sitting around the fire. (Weldon, 2018)

1.3.4. Yapungka ngayu ngaralku kaa **parra**-pitjangku.
yapu+ngka ngayu ngara+lku kaa parra_pitja+ngku
hill+LOC 1SG stand+FUT and around_move+FUT
I will stand on this hill and move around.

(Brownley, We are Australians Song)

1.4. **wati-** *across, side of*

1.4.1. Watjala tjana **wati**-pitja!
watja+la tjana wati+pitja
tell+IMP 3PL across+move
Tell them to move across! (KLCA, 2008)

1.4.2. **Wati-pitjangu.**
wati+pitja+ngu
across+move+PAST
Moved across. (KLCA, 2008)

1.4.3. **Wati-ngarrira** yapu purlkanya.
wati_ngarri+ra yapu purlka+nya
side_of_lie+SER_VERB hill big+focus_marker
It lies to the side of the big hill.

2. Verbalisers

2.1. -ma

Existing data includes only two examples of -ma used as a verbaliser.

2.1.1. kinti-kinti *cough*
kintilma- *to cough*

2.1.2. tjukurr, *traditional creation stories*
tjukurrma- *to receive a story as a gift from creation beings*

2.2. -rri

-rri is one of the most productive verbaliser in Wangkatja meaning *to become*. Its variant **-arri** is added when the preceding morpheme ends with a consonant.

2.2.1. Ngurlurringu.
ngurlu+rri+ngu
frightened+verbaliser+PAST
Became frightened.

2.2.2. Karlaya kanarringu.
karlaya kana+rri+ngu
emu awake+verbaliser+PAST
The emu became awake.

2.2.3. Yilarringu.
yila+rri+ngu
closer+verbaliser+PAST
Became closer. (KLCA, 2008)

2.2.4. Tjirta piri warurranu wangkatjakutu
 tjirta piri warurra+nu wangkatja+kutu
 bird many run+PAST person +ALL

ma-watjanu karlaya piri karnpirringu.
 ma_watja+nu karlaya piri karnpi+rri+ngu
 away_say+PAST emu many good+verbalizer+PAST
The Birds ran to the people and said that the Emus had become nice again.

2.2.5. Rawa nyinangu Karlaya piri kuyarnarringu
 rawa_nyinangu karlaya piri kuyarn+arri+ngu
 after_a_while emu many mean+verbalizer+PAST

yuntjuranyi tjirta tjungkurni piri
 yuntju+ranyi tjirta tjungkurni piri
 to_be_angry+PRES bird small many

tjirta piri ngurlurringu.
 tjirta piri ngurlu+rri+ngu
 bird many fearful+verbalizer+PAST
After a while, the Emus became mean and they were being angry with small birds and the birds became frightened. (Why The Emu Can't Fly)

2.2.6. Pukurlarringu.
 pukurl+arri+ngu
 happy+verbaliser+PAST
Became happy.

2.2.7. Kun-kunarringu.
 kun_kun+arri+ngu
 asleep+verbaliser+PAST
Became sleepy.

Table of Wangkatja Verb Suffixes, Prefixes, and Verbalisers*

Imperative	-la	-wa	-rri/-rra	null class ∅	irregular
Past tense suffixes	-nu	-ngu	-rnu	-kati	
Present tense suffixes	-nanyi -rra class	-nganyi -wa class	-ranyi, -rranyi -la class	-nyi	-rni
Present continuous tense suffixes	-ngkulanyi	-kulanyi	-lanyi		
Future tense suffixes	-ku	-nku	-lku	-ngku	
Future tense demonstrators	kujurnu	kurtu			
Serial	-ra				
Purposive	-kitja	-tjaku			
Desirative	-tjaku				
Habitual	-payi				
Negation	-munu				
Causative	-ma-	-tjinga	-ka	-tju	
Continuous	-ma				
Prefixes	ma- <i>away from the speaker</i>	marlarr- <i>behind</i>	parra- <i>around, about</i>	wati- <i>across</i>	
Verbalisers	-ma	-rri / -arri			

* This table does not indicate the verb classes of the verb suffixes, prefixes, and verbalizers.

Conclusion

Wangkatja corpus includes significant number of verbalised nouns. Verbaliser -rri / -arri *to become* is one of the most productive verbalisers in some of the Goldfields languages. Some verbs carry -ma as the final syllable and it is not certain yet whether these verbs are verbalised or not. In Wangkatja corpus kuti- is glossed as *directive prefix towards* and glossed as a -la class verb *to go towards*. More data is needed to further analyse kuti-.

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