

# WANGKATJA PRONOUNS

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## Introduction

In this paper Wangkatja pronouns are analysed and described. The analysis is based on the compilation of a large corpus of historical data dating between the 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 closely relates to Ngaanyatjarra, AIATIS 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*. Amee Glass and Dorothy Hackett, the compilers of *Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra to English Dictionary 2003*, noted Wangkatja as a linguistic form:

*‘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, Amee 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, Amee Glass, Dorothy Hackett, 2003

It appears that Wangkatja might have emerged as a creole<sup>1</sup> in a similar way as Cundeelee Wangka, Cundeelee, Western Australia and Martu Wangka, Northwest Western Australia. The

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<sup>1</sup> 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

lexical data collected by GALCAC contains variants in glossing, spelling, sentence structure, tense suffixes, contemporary phrases, and word formation as historical material was collected by a verity of people and non-linguists who used their own spelling system. This indicates that the corpus may contain more than one variant of the same speech form.

Wangkatja language, like many Wati family languages, has two pronominal systems, a free pronoun and a bound pronoun. The current lexicon records preference the free pronoun.

## 1. Wangkatja free pronouns

The majority of the Wangkatja pronouns are recorded as free pronouns. Further analysis is required to test reflexive, directive, and possessive pronouns for all other classifications.

### 1. First person singular

#### 1.1. subject pronoun, *I*, **ngayu**

1.1.1.	<b>Ngayu</b>	nyurranya	watjarnu	ngala.
	ngayu	nyurra+nya	watja+rnu	nga+la
	1SG	2SG+focus_marker	tell+PAST	eat+IMP
	<i>I told you to eat.</i> (KLCA)			

#### 1.2. object pronoun, *me*, **ngayunya**

1.2.1.	Nyurra	kuliranyi	<b>ngayunya?</b>
	nyurra	kuli+ranyi	ngayu+nya
	2SG	hear+PRES	1SG+focus_marker
	<i>Can you hear me?</i> (KLCA)		

#### 1.3. possessive pronoun, *my*, **ngayuku**

1.3.1.	Ngurra	<b>ngayuku</b>	kanyila!
	ngurra	ngayu+ku	kanyi+la
	camp	1SG+POSS	look_after+IMP
	<i>Look after my camp!</i> (KLCA)		

#### 1.4. directive pronoun, *towards me, to me*, **ngayukutu**

1.4.1.	Tjamunya	marra	<b>ngayukutu.</b>
	tjamu+nya	marra	ngayu+kutu
	grandfather+focus_marker	bring	1SG+ALL
	<i>Bring your grandfather to me.</i> (KLCA)		

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

1.5. reflexive pronoun, *myself*, **ngayu yungara** (Fasola, 2010), the linguistic corpus does not contain an example.

## 2. First person plural

2.1. subject pronoun, *we, we all*, **ngalipa**

2.1.1. **Ngalipa** kapiwiyatjarra.  
 ngalipa kapi+wiyatjarra  
 1PL water+without  
*We are without water.* (KLCA)

2.2. inclusive object pronoun, *us all*, **ngalipanya**

2.2.1. Tjana **ngalipanya** pungu.  
 tjana ngalipa+nya pu+ngu  
 3PL 1PL+focus\_marker hit+PAST  
*They hit us.* (Wangkatja Words and Sentences)

2.3. possessive pronoun, *our*, **ngaliku**

2.3.1. Ngayu tjukurrpa nyinanku  
 ngayu tjukurrpa nyina+n+ku  
 1SG creation\_story be+1SG+FUT  
  
 parna **ngaliku** mularrpu.  
 parna ngali+ku mularrpa  
 land 1PL\_INC+POSS true  
*I will stand on truly our own sacred land.* (Brownley)

2.4. exclusive subject pronoun, *we all*, **ngayululatju**

2.4.1. **Ngayululatju** pitjangu  
 ngayu+lu+latju pitja+ngu  
 1SG+ERG+1PL\_EXC come+PAST  
  
 tjukurrpa kulirnu.  
 tjukurr+pa kuli+rnu  
 creation\_story+EMPH hear+PAST  
*We all came and heard a creation story.* (Wangkatja Dictionary)

## 3. First person dual

3.1. subject pronoun, *me and you, us two*, **ngali, ngalila**, the linguistic corpus do not contain an example of the later.

3.1.1. **Ngali** nyinangu.  
 ngali nyina+ngu  
 1DU sit+PAST  
*We two sat.* (KLCA)

3.2. object pronoun, *me and you, us two*, **ngalinya**, the linguistic corpus does not contain an example.

3.3. possessive pronoun, *our*, **ngalipaku**

3.3.1. Nyanganya **ngalipaku** ngurra.  
 nyanganya ngalipa+ku ngurra  
 this 1DU+POSS camp  
*This is our camp.* (Fasola, 2010)

3.3.2. Yuwa kuwarri tjana **ngalipaku** mayi ngalkulanyi.  
 yu+wa kuwarri tjana ngalipa+ku mayi ngalku+lanyi  
 give+IMP now 3PL 1DU+POSS food eat+PRES  
*Now, they are eating our food.* (Fasola, 2010)

#### 4. Second person singular

4.1. subject pronoun, *you*, **nyurra**, **nyurrapa**, **nyuntu**

4.1.1. **Nyurra** kananta?  
 nyurra kana+nta  
 2SG awake+CAUS  
*Are you caused to be awoken?* (KLCA)

4.1.2. Nayulu **nyurrapa** parna ngaliku mularrpa.  
 ngayu+lu nyurra+pa parna ngali+ku mularrpa  
 1SG+ERG 2SG+EMPH land 1PL+POSS true  
*I am, you are we are on this true land.* (Brownley)

4.1.3. Watilu tjapilku **nyuntulu** nyinama.  
 wati+lu tjapi+lku nyuntu+lu nyina+ma  
 man+ERG explain+FUT 2SG+ERG sit+CAUS  
*The man will explain, you be seated.* (Wangkatja Dictionary)

4.2. object pronoun, *you*, **nyurranya**

4.2.1. Pikakalku **nyurranya**.  
 pika+ka+lku nyurra+nya  
 unwell+CAUS+FUT 2SG+focus\_marker  
*It will cause you to be unwell.* (KLCA)

#### 4.3. possessive pronoun, *your*, **nyurraku**

- 4.3.1. **Nyurraku**            kuka    nyarratja.  
nyurra+ku            kuka    nyarratja  
2SG+POSS            meat    over\_there  
*Your meat is over there.* (Wangkatja Dictionary)

### 5. Second person dual

- 5.1. subject pronoun, *you two*, **nyupali**, the linguistic corpus does not contain an example.

### 6. Third person singular

- 6.1. subject pronoun, *he, she, it*, **palu**

- 6.1.1. **Palu**            kurriwiyatjarra.  
palu            kurri+wiyatjarra  
3SG            spouse+without  
*She/He is without a spouse.*            (Wangkatja Dictionary)

- 6.2. object pronoun, *him, her, it*, **palunya**

- 6.2.1. Puntulu            **palunya**            nyangu.  
puntu+lu            palu+nya            nya+ngu  
man+ERG            3SG+focus\_marker    see+PAST  
*The man saw him/her/it.*            (KLCA)

- 6.3. possessive pronoun, *his, hers, its*, **paluku**

- 6.3.1. **Paluku**            kurri    wakarnu            palunya.  
palu+ku            kurri    waka+rnu            palu+nya  
3SG+POSS            spouse spear+PAST    3SG+focus\_marker  
*Her husband speared her.*            (Fasola, 2010)

- 6.4. directive pronoun, *towards him/her/it*, **palukutu**

- 6.4.1. Ngayulu    wiyartu            wangkangu            **palukutu.**  
ngayu+lu    wiyartu            wangka+ngu            palu+kutu  
1SG+ERG    no\_more            speak+PAST    3SG+ALL  
*I stopped talking to her.*            (Fasola, 2010)

## 7. Third person dual

### 7.1. subject pronoun, *they two, them two*, **pula**

7.1.1.	<b>Pula</b>	tjirta	kulirnu	karpinya	yaltiranyi.
	pula	tjirta	kuli+rnu	karpi+nya	yalti+ranyi
	3DU	bird	hear+PAST	good+focus_marker	call+PRES
					<i>Two of them heard the bird calling beautifully.</i>

(The Bush Trickster)

### 7.2. possessive pronoun, *their*, **pulaku**

7.2.1.	Kultu	<b>pulaku</b>	palyarnu.
	kultu	pula+ku	palya+rnu
	back	3DU+POSS	prepare+PAST
			<i>Their backs were prepared.</i> (Goanna and Lizard)

## 2. Wangkatja bound pronouns - Enclitics

The current linguistic corpus contains five bound pronouns.

### 2.1. **-li**, *me and you*, first person dual inclusive subject bound pronoun

2.1.1.	Kalyparringuli.
	kalyparri+ngu+li
	calm_down+PAST+1DU_INC
	<i>You and me calmed down.</i> (Wangkatja Dictionary August 2015)

### 2.2. **-n** and **-na**, *you*, second person singular subject bound pronoun

2.2.1.	Papalu	watjarnu,	"Kaarnka!	Walykumunun."
	papa+lu	watja+rnu	kaarnka	walyku+munu+n
	dog+ERG	say+PAST	crow	bad+NEG+2SG
			<i>The dog said, "Crow! You are not bad!"</i>	(Trimmer 2006)

2.2.2.	Yililpa	tjalytjunanu.
	yilil+pa	tjalytju+na+nu
	tin+EMPH	squash+2SG+PAST
		<i>You squashed the tin.</i> (Wangkatja Dictionary)

### 2.3. **-ngku** *your*, second person singular possessive bound pronoun

2.3.1.	Kurtangu	watjala	ma-pitja!
	kurta+ngku	watja+la	ma_pitja
	brother+2SG_POSS	tell+IMP	away_move
			<i>Tell your brother to move away!</i> (Evans, 2019)

- 2.3.2. Tjana pikapungkulanyi puntukungurungku?  
 tjana pikapu+ngkulanyi puntu+ku+nguru+ngku  
 3PL fight+PRES\_CONT man+DAT+RES+2SG\_POSS  
*Are they fighting because of your man? (KLCA)*

**2.4. -rna**, *I*, first person singular subject bound pronoun. In this example both ngayu, *the single subject free pronoun*, and -rna, *the single subject bound pronoun*, are used to emphasize it was *I*, the subject, who caused the quietening.

- 2.4.1. Ngayulurna pawurntjingarnu tjananya.  
 ngayu+lu+rna pawurn+tjinga+rnu tjana+nya  
 1SG+ERG+1SG quieten+CAUS+PAST 3PL+focus\_marker  
*I caused them to be quietened. (Wangkatja Dictionary)*

**2.5. -latju**, *we all*, first person plural exclusive subject pronoun

- 2.5.1. Ngayululatju pitjangu  
 ngayu+lu+latju pitja+ngu  
 1SG+ERG+1PL\_EXC come+PAST  
  
 tjukurrpa kulirnu.  
 tjukurr+pa kuli+rnu  
 creation\_story+EMPH hear+PAST  
*We all came and heard a creation story. (Wangkatja Dictionary)*

### 3. Wangkatja Indefinite Pronouns

**3.1.** *everybody, everyone, everything, all*, **karlki, yarnangu winki**, the linguistic corpus do not contain an example of the later.

- 3.1.1. **Karlkinga** wukanu parna kutjupa kutju.  
 karlki+nga wuka+nu parna kutjupa kutju  
 people+focus\_marker move+PAST land another one  
*Everyone moved to another land. (Ashwin)*

**3.2.** *group*, **pala pirni**, the linguistic corpus do not contain an example.

**Table of Wangkatja Pronouns**

	<b>Subject Pronoun</b>	<b>Object Pronoun</b>	<b>Possessive Pronoun</b>	<b>Directive Pronoun</b>	<b>Reflexive Pronoun</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular	<b>ngayu, -rna, -n</b>  <i>I</i>	<b>ngayunya</b>  <i>me</i>	<b>ngayuku</b>  <i>my</i>	<b>ngayukutu</b>  <i>towards me, to me</i>	<b>ngayu yungara</b>  <i>myself</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural	<b>ngalipa</b>  <i>us all, we all</i>	<b>ngalipanya</b>  <i>us all</i>	<b>ngaliku</b>  <i>our</i>		
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural exclusive	<b>ngayululatju, -latju</b>  <i>we all</i>				
1 <sup>st</sup> person dual	<b>ngali, ngalila</b>  <i>me and you, us two</i>	<b>ngalinya</b>  <i>me and you, us two</i>	<b>ngalipaku, -limpa</b>  <i>our, belonging to us two</i>		
1 <sup>st</sup> person dual inclusive	<b>-li</b>  <i>me and you, us two, we two</i>				
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular	<b>nyurra, nyurrapa, nyuntu, -n, -na</b>  <i>you</i>	<b>nyurranya</b>  <i>you</i>	<b>nyurraku, -ngku</b>  <i>your, yours</i>		
2 <sup>nd</sup> person dual	<b>nyupali</b>  <i>you two</i>  <b>nyupali pula</b>  <i>pair</i>				
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural					



3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	<b>palu</b> <i>he, she, it</i>	<b>palunya</b> <i>him, her, it</i>	<b>paluku</b> <i>his, her, its</i>	<b>palukutu</b> <i>towards him, her, it</i>	
3 <sup>rd</sup> person dual	<b>pula</b> <i>they, them two, two of them</i>  <b>pula kutjarra</b> <i>pair</i>		<b>pulaku</b> <i>their</i>		
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural	<b>tjana</b> <i>they</i>	<b>tjananya, nyurratjana</b> <i>them, those</i>	<b>tjanaku</b> <i>their</i>		
Indefinite Pronouns	<b>karlki, yarnangu winki</b> <i>everybody, everyone, everything, all</i>  <b>pala pirni</b> <i>group</i>				

**Table of Wangkatja, Ngaanyatjarra / Ngaatjatjarra, Pitjantjatjarra & Yankunytjatjara Pronouns Table**

	Wangkatja Pronouns			Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra Pronouns			Pitjantjatjarra and Yankunytjatjara Pronouns		
	Subject	Object	Possessive	Subject	Object	Possessive	Subject	Object	Possessive
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular	ngayu, -rna, -n <i>I</i>	ngayunya <i>me</i>	ngayuku <i>my</i>	ngayulu, -rna	ngayunya, -rni	ngayuku, -tju	ngayu, -rna	ngayunya, -rni	ngayuku, -tju
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural	ngalipa <i>us all, we all</i>	ngalipanya <i>us all</i>	ngaliku <i>our</i>				nganarna, -la	nganarnanya -lanya	nganampa, -lampa
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural inclusive				-la, -lan	-lanya	-lampa			
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural exclusive	ngayululatju, -latju <i>we all</i>			-latju	-lanyatju	-lambatju			
1 <sup>st</sup> person dual	ngali, ngalila <i>me and you, us two</i>	ngalinya <i>me and you, us two</i>	ngalipaku, -limpa <i>our, belonging to us two</i>	-li, -lin	-linya	-limpa	ngali, -li	ngalinya, -linya	ngalimpa, -limpa
1 <sup>st</sup> person dual inclusive	-li <i>me and you, us two, we two</i>								
1 <sup>st</sup> person dual exclusive				-litju	-linyatju	-limpatju			
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular	nyurra, nyurrapa, nyuntu, -n, -na <i>you</i>	nyurranya <i>you</i>	nyurraku, -ngku <i>your, yours</i>	nyuntulun, -n	nyuntunya nya, -nta	nyuntuku nku, -nku	nyuntu, -n	nyuntunya -nta	nyumtumpa

2 <sup>nd</sup> person dual	<b>nyupali</b> <i>you two</i>  <b>nyupali</b> <b>pula</b> <i>pair</i>			<b>-pula,</b> <b>-pulan</b>	<b>-pulanya</b> <b>nta</b>	<b>-pulampa</b> <b>nku</b>	<b>nyupali</b>	<b>nyupalinya</b>	<b>nyupalimpa</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural				<b>-ya, -yan</b>	<b>-tjanany</b> <b>anta</b>	<b>-tjanampa</b> <b>nku</b>	<b>nyura</b>	<b>nyuranya</b>	<b>nyurampa</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	<b>palu</b> <i>he, she, it</i>	<b>palunya</b> <i>him, her, it</i>	<b>paluku</b> <i>his, her, its</i>	<b>zero</b>	<b>-lu</b>	<b>-ra/-nku</b>	<b>palurru</b>	<b>palunya</b>	<b>palumpa,</b> <b>-rra</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person dual	<b>pula</b> <i>they, them</i> <i>two, two of</i> <i>them</i>  <b>pula</b> <b>kutjarra</b>  <i>pair</i>		<b>pulaku</b> <i>their</i>	<b>-pula</b>	<b>-pulanya</b>	<b>-pula</b> <b>mpa,</b> <b>-pulanku</b>	<b>pula,</b> <b>-pula</b>	<b>palunya</b>	<b>pulampa</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural	<b>tjana</b>  <i>they</i>	<b>tjananya,</b> <b>nyurratja</b> <b>na</b>  <i>them,</i> <i>those</i>	<b>tjanaku</b> <i>their</i>	<b>-ya</b>	<b>-tjananya</b>	<b>-tjana</b> <b>mpa,</b> <b>-yanku</b>	<b>tjana,</b>  <b>-ya</b>	<b>tjananya</b>	<b>tjanampa</b>

## Conclusion

The current Wangkatja linguistic corpus contains five bound pronouns. The second person plural subject pronoun is not included in the current data as no example of this pronoun has arisen in the data to date.

In the pronoun comparison table, Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra, Pitjantjatjarra and Yankunytjatjara languages have both free pronouns, which act as pronoun stems, and bound pronouns, which are appended to the pronoun stems. Further analysis is required to determine other potential bound pronouns in Wangkatja because the Wangkatja pronominal system contains many spaces where a pronoun would expect to be available.

There are a number of reasons why the corpus contains far fewer bound pronouns than would be expected from a Wati language: the language may not use a full range of bound pronouns; the historical material was initially collected by non-linguists who may have been unaware of a second pronominal system due to the English pronominal system being based on one pronoun system; the language was spoken extensively by children on Mount Margaret Mission and the children favoured the free pronoun system in preference to the bound system. The lesser used bound pronouns may have fallen from use in favour of free word pronouns which would be an impact of being in a spoken English environment at the Mission.

## **List of Abbreviations**

1SG – First person singular subject pronoun  
2SG – Second person singular subject pronoun  
3SG – Third person singular subject pronoun  
1PL – First person plural subject pronoun  
1PL\_INC – First person plural inclusive subject pronoun  
1PL\_EXC – First person plural exclusive subject pronoun  
3PL – Third person plural subject pronoun  
1DU – First person dual subject pronoun  
1DU\_INC – First person dual inclusive subject pronoun  
3DU – Third person dual subject pronoun  
IMP – Imperative  
PRES – Present tense  
PRES\_CONT – Present continuous tense  
FUT – Future tense  
ALL – Allative, towards  
CAUS – Causative  
DAT – Dative, for  
EMPH – Emphatic, reinforcement  
ERG – Ergative, the doer of the action  
NEG – Negative  
POSS – Possessive  
RES – Resultative

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