

European Australianist Workshop, Leuven, 20-22 November 2009

Organizers: Jean-Christophe Verstraete, An Van linden, Stefanie Fauconnier

Venue: Faculty of Arts, University of Leuven (directions: see below)

Programme:

Friday, 20 November 2009 (all in room 06.30, on the 6th floor)

12.30 Lunch

14.00 Workshop, part 1

14.00-14.40 [Chair: David Nash]

Alan Dench & Marie-Eve Ritz (University of Western Australia)

Now and then: an analysis of the semantics of three temporal clitics in Panyjima

14.40-15.20

Louise Ashmore (SOAS)

Time reference in Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr

15.20-16.00

Coffee break

16.00-16.40

[Chair: Marie-Eve Ritz]

Eva Schultze-Berndt (University of Manchester)

Function and distribution of imperfective verb forms in Jaminjung texts

16.40-17.20

Candide Simard (University of Manchester)

Prosodic contours related to tense-aspect marking in Jaminjung

17.20-18.00

Patrick Caudal (CNRS & Paris-7)

The Nyamal usitative: individuals in context

19.00 Dinner

Saturday, 21 November 2009 (all in room 06.30, on the 6th floor)

9.30 Workshop, part 2

9.30-10.10

[Chair: Eva Schultze-Berndt]

Clair Hill (MPI & University of Leuven)

Ineffability and 'gaps' in the linguistic encoding of Umpila visual perception

10.10-10.50

Felicity Meakins (University of Manchester)

Cardinals, contact and cognition in Gurindji

10.50-11.20
Coffee break

11.20-12.00 [Chair: Rachel Nordlinger]
Dorothea Hoffmann (University of Manchester)
Strategies of ground descriptions in motion events in Jaminjung

12.00-12.40
Bill McGregor (Aarhus University)
Establishing discourse referents in Gooniyandi narrative

12.40-13.20
Jane Simpson (University of Sydney)
Warumungu kinship: Changes over a century

13.20-14.00
Lunch

14.00 Workshop, part 3

14.00-14.40 [Chair: Alan Dench]
David Nash (ANU)
Copying in Cumberland: words from the Sydney Language.
Making the best of bad data in historical contact linguistics

14.40-15.20
Jean-Christophe Verstraete (University of Leuven)
The genetic status of Umpithamu

15.20-16.00
Coffee break

16.00-16.40 [Chair: Bill McGregor]
Rachel Nordlinger (University of Melbourne)
Body part applicatives in Murrinh-Patha (Australia)

16.40-17.20
Torbjörn Westerlund (Uppsala University)
The enigmatic verbalisers of Ngarla (Pama-Nyungan, Ngayarta)

17.30 Beer tasting reception

19.00 Dinner

Sunday, 22 November 2009 (by car; we have arranged 3 cars)

Visit to:

- (i) the area around Westvleteren abbey (beer tasting & lunch)
- (ii) WWI sites around Poperinge or Ypres

Time reference in Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr

Louise Ashmore

School of Oriental and African Studies

This paper considers the role of locational demonstratives in referencing time in Wik-Ngathan (Nn) and Wik-Ngatharr (Nr), two closely related dialects of a Paman language spoken on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula (CYP), Australia. Verbs in Nn and Nr have no manifestation of tense (Sutton, 1978: 290). Rather, verbs are marked for realis and irrealis mode with suffixes (-*nh*, -*ny*, -*n*) marking definite, and (-*k*) indicating indefinite and imperative mood. Time, aspect and additional mood information is expressed by aspectual particles, temporal qualifiers and enclitics that mark modality categories on preverbal constituents (Sutton, 1978: 294).

Demonstrative locational forms are frequently combined with directional and aspectual particles, morphological case-suffixes and ideophones to communicate a range of deictic reference functions spanning the spatial and temporal domains. Based on data published in Sutton (1978, 1995) and field data recorded at Aurukun, CYP (2008–9), I present an analysis of the grammatical marking and semantic interpretation of time encoded in the Nn and Nr demonstrative system. In particular, I investigate to what extent temporal reference in Nn and Nr everyday discourse can be considered a semantic extension of spatial deictic reference (Haspelmath, 1997).

References

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The Nyamal usitative: individuals in context

Patrick Caudal,
CNRS & Université Paris 7

Nyamal (a language of the Pilbara region) possesses three past tenses, which have been labeled ‘usitative’, ‘past’ and ‘continuative past’ by Dench (ms). I will here focus on the usitative (-*yamu* in the □ conjugation class, -*l(k)amu* in the *L* conjugation class). This tense has three basic uses:

- (i) **past habits/practices that are no longer followed, cf. (1):**
- (1) Yamu -rna ngaja pirrapirra-karni
goUSIT-1sg 1sgNOM pearlshell-ALL
I used to go for pearlshell.
- (ii) **‘existential hapaxes’ (in the sense of Onfray 1989), i.e. turning points in an individual’s life, radically its nature; such readings typically occur with a limited range of event descriptions, such as events described by marry, leave (a job, a social/geographical environment...), die...), cf. (2)-(5):**
- (2) Then he malkarri -ngarri-yamu now
pass.away-INCH-USIT
And then he passed away.
- (3) Pirirri-ngarri-yamu-ngka pala-ngka?
man-INCH-USIT-2sg that-LOC
You came to be a man there?
- (4) Kati-yamu nganya warilangu-karni
take-USIT 1sgACC Warralong-ALL
I was taken to Warralong Station.
- (iii) **Life-period (‘individual-level period’): bounded period at the end of which the subject of the predication changes (end of one’s childhood/education period..)**
- (5) Parrirti-ngarri-yamu-rna yari-ngka
grown.up-INCH-USIT-1sg Yari-LOC
I grew up at Yari Station.

The analysis I intend to propose here is based on an extension of Carlson’s (1977) classic treatment of kind reference vs. individual(-level) reference vs. stage(-level) reference (see also Kratzer 1995, Carlson & Pelletier 1995). I propose to distinguish between meta-individuals (or m-individuals) and individuals, where m-individuals refers to our ability to consider an individual from a completely global, and almost eternal point of view. In contrast, I will argue that *individuals* actually refer to different ‘periods’ (and natures/essences) for a given m-individual (one can almost think of them in terms of ‘sub-lives’ –hence the use of the concept of *m-individual* to abstract over the totality of these life periods/essentially distinct entities, although they remain united in a sense: cf. Rimbaud’s famous formula “*I is an other*”). The important implication of this ontological move is that it is possible to conceive, for a given m-individual, transitions from individual to individual (that is: changes of individual) on a par with the usual notion of transition from state to state (that is: stage-level changes-of-state). I will call such changes *existential hapaxes*, a term borrowed from Onfray (1989). I will show that the Nyamal evidence and related evidence across languages grammaticalize the notion of existential hapax, and require

a richer, highly context-sensitive notion of individual than has been so far assumed in the literature.

The core idea is the following: a number of linguistic forms (including nominalization affixes (cf. *-er* in *killer* or *man-eater*) and special uses of certain tenses, such as so-called ‘experiential’ uses of perfect, cf. McCawley 1971) behave like the Nyamal usitative in that they connect a stage-level event with an individual-level characterization, such events marking ‘turning points’ in the definition of an individual (and effectively serving to segment what I will call a ‘meta-individual’ (following Roussarie & Caudal 2009) into distinct sub-individuals). I will therefore effectively depart from existing literature on proper names (von Heusinger 2007, 2009a,b), which tends to view individual-level reference as being essentially a-temporal and ‘parallel’ to stage-level reference (rather than vertically and potentially temporally connected to it).

References

- Carlson, G. (1977), "A unified analysis of the English bare plural". *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1, 413-457.
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- Kratzer, A. (1995), "Stage-Level and Individual-Level Predicates", in Carlson & al. (1995), 125-175.
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Now and then: an analysis of the semantics of three temporal clitics in Panyjima

Alan Dench & Marie-Eve Ritz
University of Western Australia

This paper examines the uses of three temporal clitics in Panyjima, *-rru*, *-mu*, and *-layi*, in order to characterize their semantics as well as their discourse pragmatic functions. As shown in (1), *-rru* can be used to denote the time of speech:

- (1) tharni-wali yana-ku-**rru**?
where-ALL go-PRES-**NOW**
Where are you going?

In his grammar of Panyjima, Dench (1991) explains that *-rru* is also commonly used to establish a narrative present, and he comments that the clitic “marks that the NOW of the last time reference is considered past, and that a new NOW has been established.” (Dench, 1991:85) Example (2) illustrates this function, with the clitic used in a clause in the future tense and where *-rru* appears to contrast with an earlier time:

- (2) kana-ngka-layi, paka-larta yurlu-karta-**rru**.
light-LOC-TAS come-FUT camp-ALL-**NOW**
Then once it's light, (he) comes into the camp now. (lit. 'he'll come into the camp now')

As discussed in Ritz, Dench and Caudal (2009), the clitic also combines with the past tense to produce a perfect meaning; this is illustrated in (3):

- (3) panha jilya ngayi-rna-**rru** mantu-yu
that(mid) child drop-PAST-**NOW** meat-ACC
That child's dropped the meat now.

The clitic *-mu* is said to complement the functions of *-rru* in that the eventuality described by the clause is happening at another time than the time of speech (4); Dench (1991: 84) more generally describes this clitic as being used to express the fact that the eventuality is “outside the main sequence of narrative events” (this is illustrated by (5)).

- (4) ngaliyakuru mirnu-wayi-nha kupija warlipi-**mu**
1plexc know-INCHO-PAST little boy-**THEN**
I learnt when I was a little boy.

- (5) ngalikuru karlpa-rta ngunha-ngka malu-ngka panti-rta
1plinc go up-FUTthat-LOC shade-LOC sit-FUT
ngarlarla-pati-la-**mu**.
noise-PRIV-LOC-**THEN**
We'll get up and sit in that shade, there will be no noise then.

Finally *-layi* is labelled by Dench (1991) as a *Tense Axis Shift* (TAS) clitic whose function is to advance narrative time. It appears most commonly on verbs bearing the perfect inflection and on locative NPs. Example (6) illustrates the use of *-layi* in a programmatic narrative, where verbs in the perfect augmented by *-layi* are followed by verbs in the future tense:

- (6) manganya-ku kutu-ma-lalha-**layi**, wirnta-larta
 echidna-ACC dead-CAUS-PERF-**TAS** cut-FUT
 pula-kutha-ku. wirnta-lalha-**layi**, ngayi-larta
 lump-DU-ACC cut-PERF-**TAS** throw-FUT
*Once the echidna has been killed, cut out the two lumps (in its throat).
 Having cut (them out), throw (it) down..*

The paper attempts to characterize the semantics of these three temporal clitics more precisely by examining their uses in a corpus comprising seven texts transcribed by Dench and exemplifying different genres: narrative, instructions/programmatic text and dialogue. The set of transcribed texts is 18 pages long, including translations. In addition to this corpus, we also used 16 pages of individual examples that illustrated the categories investigated taken from Dench's fieldnotes, making a total of 34 pages of text, including glosses.

Analysis begins with the examination of the use of each clitic in combination with different lexical and phrasal categories, the different tenses of Panyjima (past, present, future/purposive, perfect), as well as the lexical aspect of the verbs in the clauses where they appear. Behaviour in discourse is also investigated, taking account of rhetorical relations (such as NARRATION, ELABORATION, CONTRAST...) so as to relate uses of the clitics to the presence or absence of temporal progression (following the framework of Asher & Lascarides, 2003) as well as to other discourse functions. Our goal is to propose a characterisation of the temporal semantics of the three clitics, relating it also to lexical aspect; possible lines of investigation involve specifying:

1. the relation between event time, reference time(s) and speech time in clauses containing each of the clitics (using insights from Reichenbach, 1947, Vikner, 1985, Kamp & Reyle, 1993) ;
2. the phase of the eventuality that is in focus (following Smith, 1997, Caudal & Roussarie, 2004, Ritz, 2007);
3. the contribution of each clitic to discourse structure (using temporal inferences derived from the relations between clauses as in Asher & Lascarides 2003).

References

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Ineffability and ‘gaps’ in the linguistic encoding of Umpila visual perception

Clair Hill

MPI & University of Leuven

In what ways do language systems manage areas of ineffability, low specificity and semantic gaps? This paper considers this issue with regard to the linguistic encoding of visual perceptual modalities in Umpila, a Paman Australian language. In Umpila, areas of ineffability in the visual domain are supported by salient domains outside the perceptual realm and by other communicative resources. For example, kin categories are put to work by speakers to fill ‘gaps’ in the color spectrum, and simultaneous co-speech gesture is employed to add shape specificity to a simple two term ‘big-small’ lexical distinction.

This paper compares data from three contexts - responses to MPI ‘Language of Perception’ stimuli, supplementary tasks, and conversational narratives. Based on these comparative datasets, two broad types of relative perceptual ineffability can be posited: (1) domains with established systems of domain-specific lexicon - the ineffability here, is that such systems do not consistently map across an entire domain’s perceptual space; and (2) domains which employ all-purpose vocabulary (e.g. antonym pairs like good-bad, big-small) that can be readily applied across an entire perceptual domain, but lack the codable precision that domain-specific lexicon affords a speaker.

A comparison of types of ineffability and ‘gap’ filling strategies will be used to address a number of wider questions, such as: What is the relative resilience of perceptual categories in the midst of language obsolescence and cultural innovation given the current rapid language/cultural change situation in Aboriginal Australia? What is the relationship between areas of poor and rich linguistic and cultural elaboration?

Strategies of ground descriptions in motion events in Jaminjung

Dorothea Hoffmann
University of Manchester

This paper deals with the distribution of different types of ground descriptions in motion events in Jaminjung, a Non-Pama-Nyungan Australian Aboriginal Language spoken in the Victoria River area in the Northern Territory.

Jaminjung's only obligatory element in a motion event clause is an inflecting verb (IV) belonging to a closed class of ca. 35 verbs which specifies only the fact of motion and restricted path information (*-angga* in example (0)). Optional parts of a motion description are uninflecting verbs (UVs) belonging to an open class. They can specify manner, path (*buru*) or position. Furthermore, case-marked noun phrases (*kul-bina*) can optionally appear as well as any argument NP including the figure and direction (*janggagu*) of motion events.

- 1) buru -biya yirr- angga kul -bina janggagu
return =NOW 1PL.EXCL- go.PRS school -ALL up
'let's go back, up to the school!'

(ES08_A13_01tt.045)

This paper aims to investigate the distribution of ground descriptions in these motion events on the basis of existing text corpora. A ground can be specified explicitly as well as left implicit in Jaminjung. Most obvious is the use of case-marked/non-case-marked landmarks such as *kul-bina* in example (0). Other explicit possibilities include deictics, toponyms and absolute directionals such as *janggagu* in example (0). However, ground and path can also be conflated in an UV as in *bu* in example (0) or expressed in the IV itself as is the case for *-bardagarra* 'follow', *-arrga* 'approach' and *-unga* 'leave'.

- 2) Ben =marlang bugu digirrij =jung bu ga-rdba-ny gambaja
B. =GIVEN just die=RESTR enter.water 3SG-fall-PST laugh
'Ben just fell down in the water, laughing so much'

(ES08_A04_06tt_0261)

However, a combination of different ground specifications is also possible as in example (3), where the path and ground are conflated in the verb *bardagarra*, but additionally expressed in the path UV *buru*.

- 3) jungulug=gung gumard yinthu na buru ba-rdagarra
one=RESTR road this now return IMP-follow
'this same road now follow back'

(ES08_A04_06tt_0021)

This paper investigates the use of these possible ground descriptions in discourse and analyses patterns and frequencies.

Establishing discourse referents in Gooniyandi narrative

William B. McGregor
Aarhus University

This paper focusses on one aspect of doing reference in Gooniyandi, namely the strategies available for introducing new referents — those not previously mentioned — into narrative discourse. These strategies fall into four main types, for some of which subtypes are identifiable: (a) use of a separate presentative clause; (b) use of a segmented NP, an NP on its own intonation contour, separated from the remainder of the clause; (c) use of an NP in the same intonation contour as the remainder of the clause; and (d) NP-ellipsis, i.e. no NP, and at most a bound cross-referencing pronominal in the VP. I argue that these strategies can be hierarchised on a significance scale from (a) to (d), reflecting the relative importance of the referent entity in the narrative. These strategies are not uniquely associated with the introduction of new narrative referents, and I conclude the paper by identifying some of their other uses, and linking these to the significance hierarchy.

Cardinals, contact and cognition in Gurindji

Felicity Meakins

University of Manchester

It is argued by neo-Whorfians that our language influences the way we think about space (Levinson 2003). One explicit test of this link between language and cognition has been cross-linguistic studies of how speakers of different languages configure objects in nonlinguistic tasks (the so-called 'Animals-in-a-Row' task (Levinson 2003: 156)). Speakers perform these tasks differently depending on whether their language uses a predominantly absolute frame of reference e.g. cardinals, or a relative frame of reference e.g. left/right.

The study presented in this paper is a comparison of Gurindji speakers (45+ years) and Gurindji Kriol speakers who live in Kalkaringi. Gurindji is a typical Australian desert language which relies heavily on cardinal directions to express position and movement in space even in very small areas. This cardinal system has largely been lost in Gurindji Kriol. Gurindji Kriol speakers only use cardinal directions when other resources fail in their 'space toolkit' (e.g. place names, gestures, demonstratives), such as when the hearer cannot see the speaker. For example when asked to perform the Man and Tree task which involves a speaker describing the relative position of two objects to a hearer who cannot see the speaker (Levinson 2003: 149), Gurindji Kriol speakers relied heavily on Gurindji cardinal directions and used them in much the same way as Gurindji speakers. Thus the Gurindji cardinal system is available to Gurindji Kriol speakers but a marginal resource.

Given this shift in the use of cardinal directions, it must be asked whether Gurindji Kriol speakers conceptualise space differently from Gurindji speakers. In order to test this I asked 17 Gurindji people (6 Gurindji speakers and 11 Gurindji Kriol speakers) to perform the Animals-in-a-Row task. Participants were given three animals lined up in a particular order and then asked to turn 180 degrees and rearrange them. Without exception, Gurindji speakers arranged the animals along a cardinal axis, which was the expected result based on other studies of Aboriginal people. On the other hand, Gurindji Kriol speakers performed variably. Most speakers under the age of 27 arranged the animals relative to their body position. If the neo-Whorfian view is correct, then Gurindji Kriol speakers were performing as if they were speakers of a language which uses a predominantly relative frame of reference. This result is curious given that, though the cardinal direction system is marginal in everyday use, it has not been replaced by an English left/right system. This paper will suggest that non-linguistic reasons may be the cause of this apparent disjuncture between language and cognition, such as the increasing emphasis for younger Gurindji people on left/right orientation (e.g. driving and writing).

**Copying in Cumberland: words from the Sydney Language
Making the best of bad data in historical contact linguistics**

David Nash

ANU

I present my revision of the etymology of the 58 word senses attributed to 'Dharug' (the Sydney Language) in the main reference work *_AND_* (and the allied *_AAWE_*). This study illustrates some of the pitfalls involved in etymologising in a situation where the form of the source word in the donor language itself requires inference (not uncommon where a colonial language has copied a word from a poorly documented indigenous language). Perceiving the lexical signal from the donor language through the noise of opportunistic documentation and the filtering of the recipient language's structure involves undoing "loan adaptation" of the form of the word (Ito & Mester 2001), and parallel attention to semantics. Further, a wide variety of historical sources (not only language documentation) may help reveal how a local word came to be adopted in English.

References

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Body part applicatives in Murrinh-Patha (Australia)

Rachel Nordlinger
University of Melbourne

Murrinh-Patha (a head-marking polysynthetic language of northern Australia) allows for regular incorporation of body parts into the verbal word, with a variety of literal and metaphorical functions (see Walsh 1996). In this paper I provide evidence for an additional function for incorporated body parts: as a source for applicative markers. Although Murrinh-Patha has been previously claimed to have no applicative constructions, I provide a range of syntactic tests to show that some incorporated body parts have grammaticalised into applicative markers. Body parts as a source for applicative markers are only briefly discussed in the general typological literature (e.g. Peterson 2007), but they have been described for some other Daly River languages (e.g. Marrithiyel (Green 1989); Ngan'gi (Reid 1990)).

I survey data from a range of Daly River languages arguing that the development of body parts into applicatives is a robust areal phenomenon.

References

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Function and distribution of imperfective verb forms in Jaminjung texts

Eva Schultze-Berndt
University of Manchester

In Jaminjung (Western Mirndi), tense and aspect are marked by verbal inflection and stem suppletion on a closed class of inflecting verbs. This inflectional system distinguishes present tense, and perfective and imperfective past tense (future is arguably not marked as a tense, but covered by the 'potential' mood which has a broader range of functions); example (2) illustrates the imperfective form. In addition, Jaminjung has a construction that can be described as a periphrastic progressive which at the same time has features of a complex predicate, combining a continuous-marked uninflecting verb with one of the two inflecting verbs /-yu /'be? or /-ijga /'go? (example 2).

- (1) bunug=biya yirra-nji=burrag, gulb=ma
steal=now 13PL-go.IMPF=3PL.OBL immersed=SUBORD
burr-arra-nyi, mululurru-ni
3PL>3SG-put-IMPF RDP:old.woman-ERG
?we used to steal it (cheeky yam) from them, when they used to put it (in running water) to soak, the old women?

- (2) yurru-nyunga=biyang ngiyina garrb-mayan burru-yu
flower-ORIG=NOW DIST gather-CONT 3PL-be.PRS
?they are gathering (honey) from the flower there? (Frog Story book)

Somewhat unexpectedly, the past imperfective verb form is almost exclusively used in habitual context, as in (1). The progressive construction, while having typically progressive functions in that it occurs in comments on an ongoing event (as in 2), appears to encroach on the more general imperfective domain in marking backgrounding of events. In this presentation, I will examine the distribution of these two forms in their discourse context.

Prosodic contours related to tense-aspect marking in Jaminjung

Candide Simard

University of Manchester

In this presentation, I will investigate some characterisations of tense-aspect marking through intonation in Jaminjung. The tense/aspect/mood system in Jaminjung consists of four mood categories indicative, potential/future, irrealis, and imperative. The indicative is unmarked and the other categories are marked by prefixes in the verb stems. Imperfective and perfective aspect are only distinguished in past indicative and potential/future forms. Seemingly however, no language uses a change in intonation to mark tense. Indeed, tense, and most aspectual functions in Jaminjung are marked through verbal inflections. There are, however, some interesting phenomena. I will examine the relationship between specific prosodic contours and tense-aspect marking, focusing on (a) the iconic lengthening contour and b) prosodic foregrounding vs. backgrounding. In Jaminjung, a flat lengthened contour is used as an aspectual device to mark durative meaning; similar contours have been attested across Australian languages. The perfective and imperfective aspects are not usually distinguished by intonation, except in the case of the past imperfective which can function – as is common to imperfectives cross-linguistically – in presenting an event as unbounded, or ‘backgrounded’, with respect to another. In this case, the salience of the units manifests itself through intonation.

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Warumungu kinship: changes over a century

Jane Simpson

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The anthropologists Francis Gillen and Baldwin Spencer provided an analysis of the kinship system used by a group of Warumungu people living around Tennant Creek, N.T. at the end of the nineteenth century. By comparing the system they proposed with that proposed by later recorders of the descendants of their consultants, we can gain an insight into how the language of kinship systems changes over a specified period of time, given the pressures and influences on their speakers in the intervening century.

Most of the terms recorded by Spencer and Gillen have denotations consistent with at least subsets of the modern denotations. Preliminary findings suggest that terms for affines are the most likely to undergo change, and this may be connected with the increased interaction with other groups with different marriage patterns, as well as with the decline of traditional marriage arrangements. Other findings include the stability of the unusual three-term grandparent system, which is maintained even under borrowing.

The genetic status of Umpithamu

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In this paper, I will examine the genetic status of Umpithamu, a language of Cape York Peninsula whose classification has so far remained uncertain (see, for instance, Dixon's (2002) treatment of the language as falling outside any of his 'areal groups' in CYP). I will use evidence from morphology (mainly the pronoun system) and from phonology (e.g. the reflexes of Proto-Paman intervocalic rhotics, and laterals in clusters) to show that the language can be classified at Middle Paman. At the same time, I will also try to revisit the status of Middle Paman as a subgroup, as first proposed by Hale (e.g. 1976), and I will argue against Black (2004) that there is reasonable evidence from shared innovations to regard it as a subgroup.

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The enigmatic verbalisers of Ngarla (Pama-Nyungan, Ngayarta)

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Using verbalising suffixes on nominal words is a well-known phenomenon in the Aboriginal languages of Australia. Among the languages of the Ngayarta group (Pama-Nyungan) of the Pilbara region of Western Australia, Panyjima has been described as having five different verbalisers, creating causative, inchoative, psych-inchoative, processive and placement meanings (Dench 1991:153-155, 187-191), and in an as of yet unpublished grammar the Nyamal language is stated to have causative/factitive, inchoative and reciprocal derivational suffixes (Dench 1999:ch. 7, pp. 48-59).

In Nyamal's closest neighbour to the west, the previously understudied Ngarla, as neat a situation as in the two previously mentioned languages is however not found. As stated in Westerlund (2007:17), the first attempt of a more thorough description of the grammar of the language, Geytenbeek has listed what appears to be no less than 17 different Ngarla verbalising suffixes (c.f. Geytenbeek 2006:11). Since the publication of Westerlund (2007) two more verbalisers have been identified in the language, giving a total number of 19. While the proliferation of suffixes might appear confusing at first, a close inspection reveals that quite a number of the Ngarla verbalising morphemes are used for the two common causative/factitive and inchoative functions. This of course leads one to question why so there are so many suffixes that are used for these functions. And when it comes to remaining verbalisers, the exact functions of these have turned out to be surprisingly difficult to pin down.

These and other issues relating to Ngarla verbalising suffixes will be discussed and illustrated in the presentation.

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