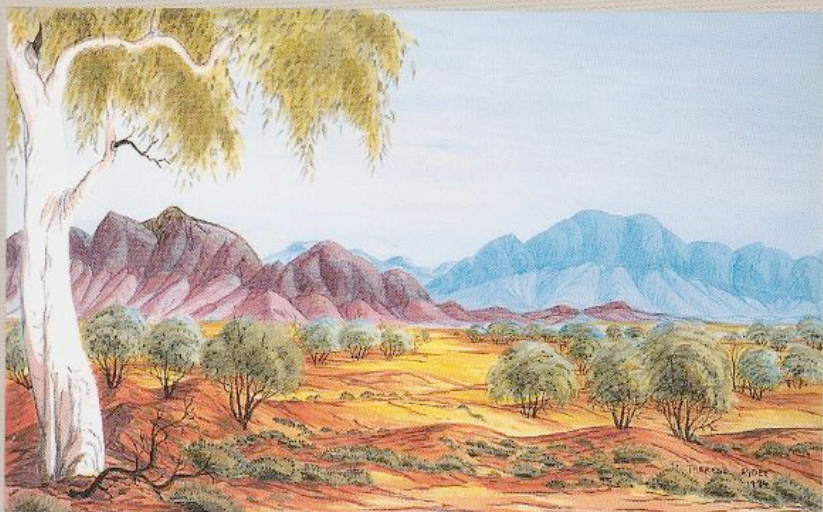# A Learner's Guide to Eastern and Central Arrernte

Revised edition

A LEARNER'S GUIDE TO EASTERN AND CENTRAL ARRERNTE

Revised edition

Jenny Green

Acknowledgements

First published by the Institute for Aboriginal Development as *A Learner's Guide to Arrernte* in 1984. Reprinted as *A Learner's Guide to Eastern Arrernte* in 1984. Published with substantial revisions as *A Learner's Guide to Arrernte and Central Arrernte* in 1994, reprinted 1999. This revised edition first published in 2005.

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Preface

This learner's guide aims to give people trying to learn Arrernte guidelines about the structure of the language and how it sounds. The basics of the grammar are explained in a clear way, and linguistic and grammatical jargon have been avoided.

However, it must be stressed that this is not a complete description of the grammar. Many aspects of the Arrernte language are not covered in this publication, and others are simplified to give the learner a good start. The aim is to give learners enough skills to enable them to pursue their own exploration of the language.

The audio cassette for this learner's guide has additional information about the sounds of Arrernte, as well as recordings of the example sentences that begin on page 6, and the dialogues in chapter 7.

Learning the words and the structure of a language is only a beginning towards hearing what is being said. The richness of a language depends very much on the context in which it is being used, and understanding this requires respect and openness towards the culture of the people whose language you are learning.

If you are keen to learn more Arrernte there are other relevant publications published by IAD Press which are highly recommended and could assist you greatly.

Some useful books on Arrernte are:

Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary (IAD Press, 1994)
Bush Foods — Nhenhe-Areye Anwerne-arle Arlkwerne: Arrernte Foods from Central Australia (IAD Press, 1994)

Chapter One
Introduction — some features of the language

Learning a new language is a very exciting thing, and one of the most challenging things for a learner to do is to discover new ways of viewing the world as seen through the eyes of another culture and expressed in a very different language.

In order to do this it is important to get an overall feel for the sounds and structure of the new language. Expect to find things about Arrernte that are very different from English, both in the way the language sounds, and in the way words are put together in sentences and phrases. Don't always expect to find easy translations between the two languages, as there will be some words in Arrernte that are very difficult to translate into English and vice versa. Very often Arrernte will make a distinction in meaning that is not made in English, and some Arrernte words have no English equivalent at all. The *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary* is invaluable in dealing with some of these more complicated issues of translation and meaning. Try to understand the logic of the Arrernte world view, and don't assume that it is a mirror image of your own.

Specialisation in vocabulary often reflects to some degree the values and priorities of a culture. On the one hand a single Arrernte word may cover a range of meanings for which English has different words. An example of this is the word *atantheme* which can mean 'pierce', 'sew', 'spear', 'write' or 'poke'.

Likewise what is described by a single word in English may have several corresponding Arrernte words. For example in English we simply say 'grandmother', whereas in Arrernte society there is a distinction made between a person's mother's mother *ipmenhe* and their father's mother *aperle*.

The Arrernte language is very rich in the way it describes family and kin, animal and plant species, the interaction of people with each other and their environment, and the land and its forms. Conversely the Arrernte language has few number terms as a traditional lifestyle was not oriented towards measurement and numerical calculations. While it is difficult to talk about computer programming in Arrernte it must also be said that the language is adapting and incorporating new vocabulary needed to deal with change.

Although many English words have been borrowed into Arrernte and changed to suit the sound patterns of Arrernte, it is not uncommon to hear other English words spoken in Arrernte sentences. In this learner's guide we have sometimes used an English word in an example sentence, as this reflects the way Arrernte people speak today. However some Arrernte people are concerned that too much English is being mixed with Arrernte, especially by younger people.

1.1 Where is Arrernte spoken? Dialects of Arrernte

It has been estimated that there are about 1500 to 2000 speakers of Eastern and Central Arrernte. These languages are part of a group of languages that contains other varieties of Arrernte as well as Anmatyerr, Alyawarr, and Kaytetye. This group is often referred to as the Arandic group, and it has around about 4500 speakers in total. The main communities where Eastern and Central Arrernte are spoken are Alcoota (Alkwerte), Harts Range (Artetyerre), Bonya (Uthipe Atherre), Santa Teresa (Ltyentye Apurte), Amoonguna (Imengkwerne), and Alice Springs (Mparntwe).

In general, the term Eastern Arrernte refers to the type of Arrernte spoken to the east of Alice Springs, and Central Arrernte or Mparntwe Arrernte to the type of Arrernte language spoken in Alice Springs, although Alice Springs is now home to many speakers of different types of Arrernte, as well as other languages such as Luritja, Warlpiri and Pitjantjatjara.

Throughout these communities there is some local variation as to the way words are pronounced, and there is variation between the communities in the vocabulary people use. In spite of these differences these dialects remain closely related.

As well as differences between the dialects of Arrernte there is also sometimes a significant variation between the way older people and younger people speak Arrernte.

Willowra

ANMATYERRE

Neutral Junction
Stirling
Anningie
Ampilatwatja
Antarringinya
Irrwelty
Ngkwarlalanima
Ti Tree Station
Ti Tree (6 Mile Camp)
Adelaide Bore
Utopia
Pine Hill
Woolla Downs
ALYAWARR
Napperby
Aileron
Mulga Bore
Mt Swan
Alcoota
Bonya
Mt Riddock
Harts Range
PLENTY
Apiwentye
McGraths Dam
WESTERN ARRERNTE
LURITJA
RD
Jay Creek
Hermannsburg
Alice Springs
Amoonguna
EASTERN and
CENTRAL ARRERNTE
Wallace Rockhole
Santa Teresa
Rainbow Bore
SIMPSON
Iltjiltjari
Maryvale
YANKUNYTJATJARA
DESERT
SOUTHERN ARRERNTE
PITJANTJATJARA
LURITJA
LASSETER HWY
Mt Ebenezer
LURITJA
Finke
Scale
0   50   100
Kilometres
River
Area covered by this map
HIGHWAY
STUART HIGHWAY
TANAMI
SANDOVER
Southern

Central

Northern

Eastern

North-eastern

The Eastern and Central Arrernte region showing current distribution of languages. Boxes indicate dialect areas within the Arrernte region.

1.2 Handsigns and polite ways of communicating

In some situations it is convenient or culturally appropriate to use hand-signs rather than speech as a way of communicating, and Arrernte people are able to have very detailed conversations solely using this complex system. There are some situations when an Arrernte person is not allowed to speak, for example after the death of certain relatives, and in this case hand-signs may be relied on completely. Handsigns are also useful for communi-cating with people who are too far away to hear.

Different cultures have different ways of showing respect in social situations and greetings and farewells cannot usually be translated easily between languages. For example some English speakers are surprised that in Arrernte there are no words for 'please' or 'thankyou', just as there are no easy translations for 'good morning', 'goodnight' or 'merry Christmas'.

1.3 Names

Arrernte people often have several names used in different situations and by different people. They might have a bush name, a European Christian or first name such as Mary or Bruce, a European surname and a 'skin' name. Personal names are used much less than they are by English speakers, and often people are refered to indirectly as for example 'my brother', 'the one married to Mary', 'that what's-his-name', by references to their country, or simply by using their skin name. It is assumed that everybody knows from the context who is being referred to. Skin names and kinship will be discussed in more detail later on in Chapter Three.

It is generally seen as impolite to ask someone their name directly and it is better to find out such information through a third person. In Arrernte society it is also considered shameful and disrespectful to mention the names of certain kin, particularly mothers-in-law and sons-in-law.

If a person passes away their personal names (except for their skin name and surname) are not used for a significant amount of time and instead people who have the same name as the deceased are called *kwementyaye*, or they are given another name. The *kwementyaye* rule also applies to place names, animals, plants and objects that have the same or similar sound to the name of the person who has passed away. For example, Alice Springs is referred to by some people as Kwementyaye Springs.

1.4 Pronunciation and the Arrernte spelling system

Many non-Arrernte speakers are daunted when they first encounter the system used for spelling Arrernte and other Arandic languages. You may perhaps have noticed the variation in the spelling of Arrernte words around Alice Springs, with even the word 'Arrernte' itself spelt in quite a few different ways: Arunta, Aranda, Arrarnta and Arrente, to mention just a few. Over the last 15 years or so Arrernte people in Alice Springs and in communities such as Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) have worked together with linguists to develop a spelling system that is consistent and reflects the sound system of the Arrernte language.

Several things must be said about this spelling system. Firstly, it is far more logical and consistent than English. Just think how difficult it must have been to learn some of the irregularities in the English spelling system, for

example words such as 'through', 'bough', 'cough', 'enough', 'bought' and 'although', in which the sequence of letters 'ough' stands for quite different sounds. Secondly, the range and combinations of English letters used to spell Arrernte words are necessary to describe the sound contrasts in the language; it is not possible to simply spell things the way they sound in English because the sounds of Arrernte are different. Thirdly, Arrernte people themselves have had the major input into the design of the spelling system and they have found that this system works well for spelling their language. Once you get used to the system, the Arrernte language is spelt the way it sounds.

Every language has an inventory of significant sounds which it draws upon to make up words, and these are called **phonemes**. In the spelling system used for Arrernte and other languages in the Arandic family, English letters, or combinations of two or three letters, are used to represent these phonemes. In these spelling systems each phoneme is expressed in a unique way by a particular English letter or group of letters, and so it is possible to predict the way a word sounds from the spelling once the system has been mastered, something which is much more difficult to do in English.

The following is a simple guide to the way Arrernte words are spelt and pronounced. For a more in-depth discussion of this refer to the introduction to the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary* or better still try to practice some Arrernte words with an Arrernte speaker.

The letters used to write the vowel sounds are *a*, *e*, *i*, and *u*.

You will notice that many Arrernte words begin with *a*, although this *a* may not be pronounced all the time. The meaning of the word is not usually affected by including the *a* on the front of the word or leaving it out, though some speakers of the language may prefer to pronounce the word in one way or the other. Note that there are some words that never begin with *a*, for example *kwatye* 'water'. The general rule is that if the speaker *can* pronounce the *a* on the beginning of the word, it is always written with the letter *a* there, even if it is not always pronounced. If a speaker never pronounces a word with the *a* at the beginning, then it is never written with *a*. There are also a few pairs of words where the *a* at the beginning is the only significant difference between the two words, for example *ampe* 'child' and *mpe* 'let's go'.

In any language we tend to make it easy for the tongue by pushing words together and leaving some small bits out so that the speech flows along.

In English we might say 'press tuds' instead of 'press studs'. In written Arrernte you might see something like this:

1. *Arelhe*   *anyente*   *apmere*   *ikwerenhele*   *aneme*

    woman   one   home   her-at   is-pres.

    One woman is at her home

In Arrernte *e* is written on the end of every word. But in speech there is no sharp break between the words as if each of the written vowel sounds were articulated precisely. Rather the final vowel sound is dropped, if the next word begins with a vowel, so that the words flow smoothly together.

So the sentence might sound more like this:

2. *Arelh*   *anyent*   *apmer*   *ikwerenhel*   *aneme*

    woman   one   home   her-at   is-pres.

    One woman is at her home

The only way you can get a feel for this melody and rhythm is by listening to the language and practising speaking.

Table 1 shows the consonant sounds of Arrernte as compared to the consonant sounds used in speaking English. You can see from this that Arrernte has 27 consonants compared to 26 used in English (and 15 to 20 in most other Aboriginal languages).

In this table sounds are in the same column if they are pronounced using a similar part of the mouth, such as the lips, tongue, or palate; and sounds are in the same row if they are produced using a similar mechanism, such as by blocking off the mouth so the air goes through the nose, or by letting a small puff of air out after the sound. I have deliberately left the linguistic terminology off this diagram as the main point of this is to show you which sounds are the same or similar in the two languages, and which sounds are different. So if an Arrernte and an English word appear together in the same box, as do 'nap' and *aneme*, this shows that the 'n' sound is the same in both languages. You can also use this diagram to remind yourself of English sounds that are *close* to ones found in Arrernte. For example, the sound represented by *ty* in *tyape* is similar to, but not the same as the sound represented by 'ch' in 'church'.

These differences in the sound systems of English and Arrernte explain why English speakers may have difficulty in pronouncing some Arrernte words

and why Arrernte speakers may have difficulty pronouncing some English words.

Table 1: A comparison of the consonant sounds of Arrernte and English

(See description of consonant sounds on pages 8–12.)

	1		2	3	4	5		6
	bin			din			judge	girl
A	*apere*		*atherre*	*atere*	*artewe*	*tyape*		*kere*
	pin			tin			church	kin
		vile	there	zip			vision	hip
		file	thin	sip			shop	
	map			nap			canyon	sang
B	*meye*		*nhenhe*	*aneme*	*arne*	*anyente*		*angepe*
C	*apmere*		*uthneme / utnheme*	*atneme*	*artneme*	*atnyeme*		*akngeme*
				lip			million	
D			*alheme*	*aleme*	*arleye*	*ulye*		
	wet			rip			yacht	
E	*ware*			*arreme*	*areme*	*ayepe*		*aherre*

1.5 Pronunciation Guide

CONSONANTS

We'll begin by describing the manner in which Arrernte sounds are made, as shown by the sounds represented in the rows lettered A to E in Table 1.

A. Stops: *p, th, t, rt, ty, k*. The flow of air is stopped completely by the lips or some part of the tongue.

In Arrernte there is no distinction between *p* and *b, t* and *d*, and *k* and *g*, so don't be surprised to hear a word spelled with *p* pronounced as a *b*, or a word with *t* in it pronounced as *d*. Arrernte lacks the aspiration or little puff of air that escapes from the mouth with the English pronunciation of 'p', 't' and 'k' and so the distinction between 'p' and 'b', 't' and 'd' and 'k' and 'g' is irrelevant to Arrernte ears.

Arrernte does not have sounds like 'v', 's', 'f', 'z', 'sh' and so on which appear in English. When words with these sounds are borrowed into Arrernte these sounds are replaced by the closest equivalent in Arrernte.

B. Nasals: *m, nh, n, rn, ny, ng*. These sounds are made through the nose. Some of these are like sounds in English, although *nh* and *ng* at the beginning of a word tend to be difficult sounds for English speakers to hear and pronounce.

C. Pre-stopped nasals: *pm, thn, tn, rtn, tny, kng*. These sounds are made by blocking the air and then letting it flow through the nose. The *pm* sound is one of these. The first sound is so close before a nasal sound like *m* or *ng* that it is really one sound.

D. *l* sounds: *lh, l, rl, ly*. These are all sounds like English 'l', but differ according to whereabouts in the mouth they are made.

E. Glides: *w, r, y, h*. These are smooth sounds made without the passage of air being obstructed at all.

The *rr* sound is a trilled or rolled *r* sound. The *rr* and *h* are sounds not found at all in Australian English.

Now we will discuss the groupings represented by the columns numbered 1 to 6 in Table 1, and describe in greater detail how some of the more difficult sounds are made.

1. Sounds made with the lips are as follows: *p, m, pm* and *w*.

The *p* and *m* are essentially the same as in English:

apere   river red gum tree

marle   girl

You can imagine the *pm* sound to be a bit like 'pm' in the English word 'topmost', though remember that in Arrernte *pm* is really one sound rather than a 'p' followed by an 'm'.

apmere   country, place

The 'w' sound is like the 'w' in English words such as 'wet'.

werte   hello, greeting

Beware
The letter *w* as it is used in Arrernte will be discussed further at the end of this section and in the section on vowels.

---

2. *th, nh, thn / tnh, lh*

These are called **interdentals** and they are pronounced with the tongue touching the back of the upper front teeth, and sometimes with the tip of the tongue protruding slightly between the teeth. They are completely different from ordinary 't', 'l' and 'n'. You can see from Table 1 that *th*, for example, is close to the sound written as 'th' in the English word 'there'. Note that *thn* and *tnh* are two alternative ways of writing the same sound.
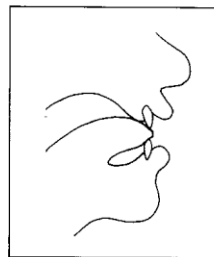
atherre   two

alheme   go

nhenhe   here

uthneme   bite

3. *t, n, l, tn, rr*

The first three of these sounds are are more or less the same as the corresponding sounds in English. They are made with the tip of the tongue touching the hard ridge behind the upper teeth.

atere	fear, fright
aneme	sit
aleme	liver

The *tn* sound is another pre-stopped nasal, and it is a little like the 'tn' sound in the English word 'chutney'. Remember that it is really one sound rather than simply a 't' followed by an 'n'.

tneme	stand
atneme	digging stick

The *rr* sound is different from *r* which is like the ordinary Australian English 'r' sound. Arrernte *rr* is a hard, rolled or tapped sound, a bit like that used in Scottish English, except that usually the tongue touches once, rapidly, in a 'tap', unlike a true rolled sound.

arreme	lice
arrentye	devil, monster

4. *rt, rn, rtn, rl, r*

These sounds are called **retroflexes** and they are made with the tip of the tongue higher in the mouth than for *t*, *n*, and *l* and curled back. These sounds are hard for English speakers to hear and produce properly. They have a 'heavier' sound than non-retroflex sounds, a bit like the way Americans pronounce the word 'water'. The 'r' sound is like the normal Australian English soft 'r'.

kwerte	smoke
arne	tree
arlte	day
artneme	cry
areme	see
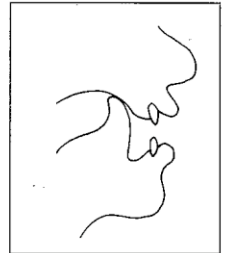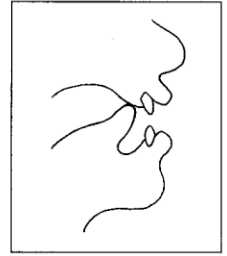
5. *ty, ny, tny, ly, y*

These sounds are produced by thrusting the tongue forward so it touches the backs of both sets of teeth. The blade of the tongue rests against the front part of the roof of the mouth.

ty sounds somewhat similar to the 'ch' in 'church', or the 'j' in 'judge'.

*ape**ty**eme*	come
***ty**ape*	grub

ny sounds somewhat similar to the sound in the middle of words such as 'onion', 'senior' and 'canyon'.

*a**ny**ente*	one
***ny**ingke*	zebra finch

ly sounds somewhat similar to the sound in the middle of 'million'.

***ly**epe**ly**epe*	intestines
*u**ly**e*	shade

tny is made with a *ty* sound so close before a *ny* sound that it is really one sound.

***tny**eme*	dig
*a**tny**eme*	fall

The *y* sound is similar to the 'y' sound in the word 'yes' but not like that in 'by', 'hymn' or 'silly'.

***y**a**y**e*	elder sister
*a**y**epe*	tar-vine

6. *k, ng, kng, h*

These sounds are made with the back part of the tongue held up to the back part of the mouth. Arrernte *k* is very close to the English 'k' or 'g' sound as in 'kin' or in 'girl'. To Arrernte ears there is no distinction between *k* and *g* and so it doesn't really matter which of these two symbols are chosen to represent the sound. Arrernte people chose 'k' instead of 'g'.

***k**ere*	meat

The *ng* sound is pronounced like the 'ng' in English words such as 'sang'

and 'lung', but *not* like the 'ng' in 'finger' or 'danger'. This sound is common at the beginning of Arrernte words and you may have trouble hearing or pronouncing this sound in this position as it is not found at the beginning of English words.

ayenge   I

ngenhe   you (object form)

kng is again a blend of the *k* sound and the *ng* sound, made by blocking the flow of air, then releasing it through the nose, a bit like a half-formed sneeze. English speakers typically find it difficult to pronounce this sound at the beginning of a word.

alknge   eye

Kngwarraye   one of the skin names

Arrernte *h* is a difficult sound not found in English and found in only a few Arrernte words but sounding similar to the Scottish pronunciation of 'ch' in the word 'loch', or a bit like 'w' in 'wonder', but without rounded lips. Arrernte children and some young adults tend not to pronounce this sound, substituting a long vowel instead, but the words are still written with the *h* whether it is actually pronounced or not.

aherre   kangaroo

ahentye   throat

7. All the consonants except for *w* and *h* have another form where they are pronounced with *rounded* lips. This is written with a *w* following the consonant.

apwerte   hill, rock

kwarte   egg

atweme   hit

VOWELS

The vowel sounds in Arrernte words are heavily influenced by the consonant sounds in the word, and this is especially true of *e*.

1. *a*

Pronounced like the 'a' in 'father' or, at the beginning of words, like the 'a'

sound in 'alone'.

anatye   bush potato

arratye   straight, correct

a sounds a bit different when it comes before *rt, rn, rl* or *rtn*.

artwe   man (pronounced 'EIGHT-wa' or 'ART-wa')

Remember that many Arrernte words start with *a* and that this *a* is often dropped, without the meaning of the word changing.

2. *e*

The pronunciation of *e* is heavily influenced by the sounds around it. However, it will often sound like the second vowel sound in 'border'.

merne   food

apmere   country, place

Following *w* the lips are rounded, and it sounds like 'oo' in 'soot'.

kwerte   smoke

apwerte   rock, hill

At the end of all Arrernte words *e* is written, although you may hear variation in the sound at the end of the word, or no vowel sound at all.

3. *i*

i may sound a bit like the 'i' in 'in' or 'ill'.

inteye   cave

tyampite   billy can

Or it might sound like the 'e' in 'bed'.

ngkwinhe   yours

alhirreme   lust after someone, fancy someone

However if *i* is followed by *rt, rn, rtn, rl, ty, ny, tny,* or *ly* the sound is slightly different, and it will sound more like the 'ee' in 'feet' or 'eel'. Compare:

ilweme   die (pronounced 'ill-OOM-a')
irlweme   take something off (pronounced 'eel-OOM-a')

| *arritnye* | name (pronounced 'uh-REET-nya') |
| *ampinye* | side, area (pronounced 'um-BEEN-ya') |

4. *u*

This letter is pronounced differently depending on whether it is at the beginning of a word or in the middle. At the beginning of a word it may sound a bit like the 'u' in 'put' or 'oops'.

| *unte* | you |

In the middle of a word (or when it is stressed) it sounds something like the 'au' in 'caught', or the 'or' in 'port'.

| *apurrke* | tired |
| *apurte* | clump |

Beware

Sometimes it can be hard to hear the difference between words such as:

| *apwerte* | rock, hill (pronounced 'uh-PUT-a') |
| *apurte* | clump (pronounced like 'uh-PORT-a') |

---

5. *ay* and *ey*

ay sounds like the 'ie' in 'lie' or in some words like the 'ay' in 'away'.

| *alaye* | lake, sea (pronounced 'uh-LIE-a' or 'uh-LAY-a') |
| *yaye* | elder sister (pronounced 'YAY-a') |

Beware

ay always sounds like the 'ay' in 'away' in order or imperative forms of the verb where it is added to give emphasis

apetyaye! come here ! (pronounced 'uh-PITCH-aye')

anaye! sit! (pronounced 'uh-NEIGH')

---

ey sounds like 'ee' in 'bee'.

meye	mother
urreye	boy

6. *aw* and *ew*

aw sounds a bit like 'ow' in 'how'.

ulyawe	pigweed (pronounced 'ool-YOW-a')

ew sounds a bit like 'ow' in 'snow'.

anewe	spouse (pronounced 'uh-NO-a')

STRESS

Another thing that is important when pronouncing words is knowing where the stress or emphasis goes. For example, in English you say '**ig**norant' rather than 'ig**nor**ant'. A difference in stress makes a word sound weird and in some cases, such as the difference between the two words per**mit** (I permit you to do it) and **per**mit (a liquor permit), a difference in stress can change the meaning.

In Arrernte the stress is usually on the first vowel after a consonant.

ur**I**npe	hot
ap**E**tyeme	come

Usually the main stress goes on a vowel right at the beginning of a word if the only vowel after a consonant would be the last vowel in the word.

Ampe	child

HYPHENS

Many Arrernte words are made up of lots of different parts or endings and so can be quite long. In order to make it easier to read Arrernte words Arrernte people decided to put hyphens between the parts of words to break them up. For example it is easier to read *Mparntwe-arenye-kenhe* (belonging to those from Alice Springs) than *Mparntwarenyekenhe*.

In this learner's guide, endings with a hyphen in front are always hyphenated onto the word, whereas those that appear in the text with a '+' sign just

go straight onto the word without a hyphen. For example, the combination of the word *ampe* and the ending *+le* is written as *ampele*, whereas *ampe* plus the ending *-kenhe* is written as *ampe-kenhe*.

In practice there is some variation as to when people will use hyphens or not, and sometimes two words, or a word and an ending, may be written with a hyphen between them, with a space between the two word parts, or just as a single word. For example *kwatye-akerte*, *kwatye akerte* and *kwatyakerte* 'having water' are all correctly written. Sometimes the *a* is also dropped off the front of endings, so another possible way of writing the above example is *kwatyekerte*.

Combinations of short words and short endings that begin with vowels are usually written as a single words. For example, *re* (he/she/it) *+arle* becomes *rarle*.

Chapter Two
The simple sentence

2.1 Terminology

Before we start this chapter it is necessary to talk about a few terms that will occur throughout this book. Although linguistic jargon is kept to a minimum it is useful to introduce two grammatical terms: **nominal** and **verb**. In the group of words called nominals are 'things': people, animals, places, plants, rocks etc., but also pronouns (words such as 'me' and 'you'), question words ('what?', 'why?') and what we would call in other situations 'adjectives' (words like 'big', 'red'). Verbs are words that describe the action that is taking place in a sentence, words such as 'sitting', 'eating', 'carrying' etc. They are discussed in more detail later on. In this book we also talk about **word endings**, and this term covers some small words or word parts that may appear on the end or in the middle of a word. Some of the longer endings are hyphenated onto the word whereas the shorter ones just go straight on. Some endings go just on verbs, some just on nominals, and some can go on both types of words.

2.2 Starting a conversation

The most common form of greeting in Arrernte is simply to say *'Werte'*, which literally means 'What is the matter?' but can be translated as 'G'day', 'How are you going?, or 'What's up?'. The common response to this is *'Ware'* which means 'Nothing much'. The usual thing to say when you are farewelling someone is to say *'Urreke aretyenhenge'* which means 'See you later'. A short conversation of this kind may go as follows:

Person A	*Werte*	G'day, what's up?
Person B	*Ware*	Nothing much
Person A	*Unte mwerre?*	Are you alright?
Person B	*Ye, ayenge mwerre*	Yes, I'm alright
Person A	*Urreke aretyenhenge*	See you later
Person B	*Kele aretyenhenge*	Okay. See you later

2.3 This and that

There are three useful Arrernte words that are worth learning right from the start.

nhenhe	this, here
yanhe	that, there (short distance away)
nhakwe	that, there (further distance away)

3. **Nhenhe**   *ampe*

    this   child

    This is a child

4. **Yanhe**   *marle*

    that   girl

    That is a girl

5. **Nhakwe**   *artwe*

    that   man

    That is a man (over there)

Note
The order of the words in the above example sentences could be changed around without the meaning being affected much. So *ampe nhenhe* can mean 'this is a child' or 'this child'.

2.4 'Be' and verbless sentences

From the above examples you can also see that it is not always necessary to have a verb in order to form a sentence in Arrernte, and that there is no single verb in Arrernte corresponding to the English verb 'to be' (and its other forms such as 'is', 'are', 'were', 'was', 'will be' etc). In Arrernte if you want to say 'this is a dog' you can just say *nhenhe akngwelye* 'this dog'. Note also that there are no words corresponding to 'a' and 'the' in Arrernte.

6. *Ampe*   *nhenhe*

   child   this

   This is a child

7. *Nhenhe*   *ampe*   *akweke*

   this   child   small

   This is a small child / This child is small

8. *Ayenge*   *apmerele*

   I   home-at

   I'm at home

In other cases where English uses 'is', 'are' etc., Arrernte might use a verb which could also mean sitting, standing, or lying.

9. Meeting   *aneke*

   meeting   sit-past

   There was a meeting

2.5 Putting a group of words together — word order

One of the things that confuses learners is the way the words are ordered in an Arrernte sentence. Often there seems to be no set order at all. The order of Arrernte words in a sentence is often completely different to that in an English sentence. For example:

10. *Artwele*   *angepe*   *urrperle*   *atweke*

    man-actor   crow   black   hit-past

    The man hit the black crow

Without changing the meaning of the sentence and still remaining grammatically correct in Arrernte you could change the order of the words in the above sentence in the following ways:

11. *Angepe urrperle artwele atweke*

12. *Angepe urrperle atweke artwele*

13. *Atweke **angepe urrperle** artwele*

14. *Atweke artwele **angepe urrperle***

15. *Artwele atweke **angepe urrperle***

In English word order is very important in showing meaning: for example 'the man hit the crow' means something entirely different from 'the crow hit the man', even though there are exactly the same words in both sentences. In general, the order of Arrernte words is quite free, with the endings on the words, rather than the word order, telling you such things as who the actor in a sentence is.

Although all the above variations are grammatically correct, the most usual order is for the verb to come last or late in an Arrernte sentence.

However, in Arrernte descriptive words such as *akngerre* 'big', *urrperle* 'dark' or *atherre* 'two' always follow the thing that they are describing (the opposite to English). From the Arrernte sentences above you can see that the two words *angepe* and *urrperle* are always next to each other and that *urrperle* always follows *angepe*, even while the other words in the sentence change order quite freely.

16. *Angepe   urrperle*

    crow   black

    The black crow

It would be incorrect to say *urrperle angepe*.

Other examples showing how the descriptive words follow the thing they are describing are:

17. *Ampe   akngerre   atherre*

    child   big   two

    Two big children

18. *Ampe   akngerre   atherre   atyenhe*

    child   big   two   my

    My two big children

In the examples above you can see that the word order in these phrases is the inverse of the word order in a similar English phrase.

2.6 Verbs: the heart of the sentence

Verbs are words such as 'hit', 'eat' and 'run'. They show what sort of action is taking place in the sentence. The **stem** of the verb is the part that doesn't change. In most examples in this book verbs will be written with at least the present tense ending on them.

Mastering the use of Arrernte verbs is one of the most important things to do when learning the language, as the Arrernte verb carries much of the important meaning in a sentence: you can't say much without them.

The verbs can also be very complicated, with many bits or endings added to the stem of the verb to elaborate on its meaning. In this way many things can be shown about the action, such as the time of an event, whether it happened in the past, is about to happen or is happening now, whether more than one individual was involved in the action, and whether or not the action was completed.

For example, here are some of the more common endings that can be added to the verb stem *arlkwe* 'eat'.

Present tense   *arlkweme*   is eating

Past tense   *arlkweke*   ate

Future tense   *arlkwetyenhe*   will eat

If the event is happening now, is ongoing, or almost certainly will happen, we use the present tense (+*me*) and if it is over and done with we use the past (+*ke*). If it is a future event which will probably happen we use the future ending (+*tyenhe*).

19. *Ampele   kere   arlkweme*

    baby-actor   meat   eat-pres.

    The baby is eating the meat

20. *Ampele   kere   arlkweke*

    baby-actor   meat   eat-past

    The baby ate the meat

21. *Ampele   kere   arlkwetyenhe*

    baby-actor   meat   eat-fut.

    The baby will eat the meat

2.7 Other verb endings

PURPOSE AND INTENT

Another useful verb ending is +*tyeke*. This ending on a verb stem shows that the verb action 'must', 'should' or 'ought' to happen, or that the action is supposed to happen. In the case of sentences with two verbs, it shows that something is done 'in order to do something else' or 'so that something else can happen'. In other words it shows that the event is the endpoint of the main verb action.

22. *Ayenge*   *lhere-werne*   *alheme*   *kwatye*   *inpetyeke*

    I   creek-to   go-pres.   water   get-purp.

    I'm going to the river to get water

23. *Marle*   *mpe!*   *Anwerne*   *kele*   *alpetyeke!*

    girl   come on!   we   now   go back-purp.

    Come on girl! We've got to go back now!

Sometimes it can simply be translated as 'to do something', 'have to do something', 'ought to do something' or 'want to do something'.

24. *Alpetyeke*   *ayenge*

    go back-purp.   I

    I must go back

25. *Arlkwetyeke*   *the*   *kere*

    eat-purp.   I   meat

    I've got to eat some meat/ I want to eat some meat

HOW TO SAY YOU'RE NOT DOING SOMETHING

If you want to say that some verb action is not happening, hasn't happened or won't happen, or in other words, turn the verb into the negative, the ending +*tye-akenhe,* and more rarely -*tyange,* is added to the verb. This then translates as 'hasn't', 'isn't', 'didn't', 'can't', 'couldn't' (do the action).

26. *Atyewe*   *atyinhe*   *alhetye-akenhe*

    friend   my   go-not

    My friend didn't go / My friend isn't going

27. *Iwenhenge*   *apwerte*   *anthetye-akenhe?*

    what-from   money   give-not

    Why hasn't the money been given?

28. *The*   *ngenhe*   *awetye-akenhe*

    I   you   hear-not

    I didn't hear you / I can't hear you

29. *Ayenge*   *apwerte*   *anetye-akenhe*

    I   money   is-not

    I haven't got any money

Beware

The ending +*tye-akenhe* does not combine with the tense endings +*me,* +*ke,* +*tyenhe,* so you can't tell *when* the action didn't take place.

HOW TO TELL SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING

In English writing we use an exclamation mark to show that the words are being spoken in a forceful way, or that someone is making a command or telling someone to do something. Whereas in English it can often sound quite rude to say things to people in this way, the Arrernte command form of the verb is used frequently and is not seen as being impolite, though it does of course depend on who you are talking to and what you are asking

them to do. To make direct requests the verb stem is simply used on its own with no additional ending. Often extra bits (+*aye* or +*we* or +*yewe*) are added to make the speech stronger or more emphatic.

30. *Awe!*

    listen-imp.

    Listen!

31. *Awaye!*

    listen-emphasis

    Listen! (said with more emphasis)

32. *Arlkwe!*

    eat-imp.

    Eat!

33. *Kwatye   antywaye!*

    water   drink-emphasis

    Drink the water!

34. *Kwatye   antyweyewe!*

    water   drink-emphasis++

    Drink the water! (said with a lot of emphasis i.e. 'do it or else!').

HOW TO TELL SOMEONE NOT TO DO SOMETHING

To tell someone not do do something, in a direct way or to give a negative order, the ending +*tyale* or +*tyele* is added to the verb stem.

35. *Merne   yanhe   arlkwetyale!*

    food   over there   eat-don't

    Don't eat that food!

36. *Ankwe   intetyale!*

    sleep   lie down-don't

    Don't go to sleep!

37. *Atheke-irretyale!*

    hurry become-don't

Don't hurry!

2.8 Transitive and intransitive verbs

There are, in general, two types of Arrernte verbs: **transitive** and **intransitive**. In the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary* these are referred to as '+le' type verbs and 'Ø' type verbs respectively. Intransitive verbs are generally ones where there is no recipient of the action, or the action of the verb does not directly affect something, and is related only to the subject of the sentence. Typically, verbs describing motion, spontaneous change, and human emotions are intransitive, e.g. 'sitting', 'going', 'swelling', 'being homesick', 'feeling happy' etc. Transitive verbs are those where an action is typically being done by someone to someone or something, or the action directly affects something else, e.g. 'eating', 'hitting', 'cooking.'

38. Some intransitive, or 'Ø' type, verbs

alheme	go
aneme	sit, live
irrare-irreme	feel homesick
itirreme	think

39. Some transitive, or '+le' type, verbs

atweme	hit
arlkweme	eat
iteme	cook
antyweme	drink

An example of a simple sentence with an intransitive verb is:

40. *Ayenge*   *aneme*

    I   sit-pres.

I am sitting

There are two important differences between sentences with a transitive verb and those with an intransitive verb.

The first thing that happens in a sentence with a transitive verb in it, that is one where someone or something is doing something to something else, is that the actor in the sentence, or the one that is performing the verb action, is marked by the ending +*le* (unless it's a pronoun).

In English the sense of who is doing the action is shown by the order of the words in the sentence, but because the order of words in Arrernte is relatively free there has to be some other way of showing *who* is doing what. Take the following examples:

41. *Artwele*   *ampe*   *areme*

   man-actor   child   look-pres.

   The man is looking at the child

42. *Ampe*   *artwele*   *areme*

   child   man-actor   look-pres.

   The man is looking at the child

Both of these sentences mean the same thing, and it is the +*le* on the end of *artwe* that shows us that the man is doing the looking. If, however, *ampe* is marked with +*le* , rather than *artwe*, the meaning changes:

43. *Artwe*   *ampele*   *areme*

   man   child-actor   look-pres.

   The child is looking at the man

In this case the +le on the end of *ampe* shows us that the child is doing the looking.

Note

This is why transitive verbs are also called '+le' verbs in the dictionary. The intransitive verbs are also known as 'Ø' verbs because a sentence with one of those in it does not require a special ending on the doer of the action.

Secondly the word for the pronoun 'I' changes from *ayenge* to *the* if the 'I' is doing actions to someone or something else. So compare the following examples:

44. ***Ayenge***   *aneme*

    I   sit-pres.

    I am sitting

45. ***The***   *kere*   *arlkweme*

    I   meat   eat-pres.

    I am eating the meat

Note

The +le does not go on pronouns if they are in the actor part of the sentence, so it would be incorrect to say '*The-le kere arlkweme.*'

Fortunately for the learner of Arrernte, *ayenge* and *the* are the only pronouns that are affected by either a transitive or intransitive verb being used in a sentence.

2.9 Reciprocal and reflexive verbs

DOING VERB ACTIONS TO ONESELF OR TO ONE ANOTHER

There is a way of showing that someone or something is doing a verb action to themselves, like painting themselves, or looking at themself, by adding +*lhe* to the verb stem, then adding another ending as you would normally to show whether the action happened in the past or is happening in the present etc.

46. *Ampe*   *artelheme*   blanket-*le*

    child   cover-self-pres.   blanket-with

    The child is covering herself with the blanket

47. *Arrweketye apernelheme   urlpele*

    woman   rub-self-pres.   ochre-with

    The woman is rubbing herself with ochre

48. *Mutekaye   ikwerenhe   ultakelheke*

    car   her/his   break-self-past

    Her car broke down

To show that people or things are doing a verb action to each other +*rre* or +*irre* is added to the verb stem, and then the tense marker is added after that.

49. *Ampe*   *atherre*   *arnele*   *atwerreme*

    child   two   stick-with   hit-each other-pres.

    The two children are hitting each other with sticks

50. *Akngwelye   atherre   utnherreke*

    dog   two   bite-each other-past

    The two dogs bit each other

51. *Ratherre   iwerreke*

    those two   throw-each other-past

    Those two split up (threw each other away)

2.10 Other verb matters

COMPOUND VERBS

In Arrernte new verbs may be made by putting two verbs together, or by putting a nominal and a verb together.

52. *apetye-alpeme*   return

    is made up of *apetye* 'come' and *alpeme* 'go back'

53. *atne-iweme*   gut an animal

    is made up of *atne* 'guts' and *iweme* 'throw away'

54. *pelhe-iweme*   spit

    is made up of *pelhe* 'saliva' and *iweme* 'throw away'

Sometimes the meanings of these compound verbs are not immediately obvious from looking at the meanings of the parts that they are made up of, for example:

55. *irlpele-irreme*   forget

is made up of *irlpe* 'ear' and *irreme* 'become'

Note that these are fixed expressions and learners can't just make up new ones.

Further information

So far we have only talked about the situation where you add one ending to the verb stem. Arrernte verbs are often very complex. Consider the following example *angkerrintyalperlanerreperreme* which means '(two people) frequently speaking continuously to each other while coming back (towards here)'. This formidably long word is actually made up of the bits *angke+rr+inty+alpe+rle+ane+rre+pe+rre+ me* .

Sometimes it is useful to imagine the verbs as being composed of a series of slots into which various bits or endings can fit. Fortunately for the learner not all the slots need to be filled, though it is a minimum requirement that the verb contain its stem and one other ending (though this may be the Ø ending used when forming the imperative (order form of the verb).

2.11 Nouns and endings

There are many endings in Arrernte that go on words to change their meaning in some way and show such things as direction, location, possession, similarity and a host of other things. These endings are often used in situations where English uses small words such as 'to', 'from', 'in', or 'by' before another word or where endings are added to a word, such as by adding 's' in the word 'boys' or an apostrophe 's', as in 'the car's engine'.

It is beyond the scope of this learner's guide to deal with all of the Arrernte endings but they are treated in detail in the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary*. Learning these endings is one way to rapidly increase your repertoire of Arrernte. Remember that some small endings will just go straight onto the Arrernte word, whereas some will be hyphenated on to make reading long words easier.

Beware
In some instances the same ending has several functions in Arrernte, and one of the most common of these is *+le*. This ending has many uses and for a full description of this refer to the dictionary.

LOCATIONS AND INSTRUMENTS

We have already seen how *+le* is used to show the actor in a transitive sentence. *+le* can also be used to show location — where something is, or where an action is happening — particularly in sentences with stance verbs such as *aneme* 'sit', *tneme* 'stand' and *inteme* 'lie down'. When it is used in this way it may be translated as 'in', 'on', 'at' or 'around'.

56. *Marle*   *ulyele*   *aneme*

    girl   shade-in   sit-pres.

    The girl is sitting in the shade

57. *Ampe*   *apwertele*   *tneme*

    child   rock-on   stand-pres.

    The child is standing on the rock

+*le* can also be used to show the instrument, or the thing the action is done with, as can be seen in the following example. It may be translated as 'with (something)' or 'using (something)'.

58. *The*   *akngwelye*   *atweme*   *apwertele*

     I   dog   hit-pres.   rock-instr.

     I am hitting the dog with a rock

59. *Re*   *ure*   *tyelkerneme*   *ilepele*

     he/she   firewood   split-pres.   axe-instr.

     She is splitting the firewood with an axe

+*le* can also be used to mark the day, time or season in which an event took place.

60. *Ingwele*   *re*   *alheke*

     night-in   he/she   go-past

     He went in the night

Beware

If there is a group of words describing an actor in a sentence, or the recipient of the action, or the location of the action, then the endings talked about in this section actually go on the last word in this group. To use an example from above:

The   *akngwelye*   *atweme*   *apwerte*   *urrperle*   *atherrele*

I   dog   hit-pres.   rock   black   two-instr.

I am hitting the dog with two black rocks

In this case the +*le* ending showing what you are hitting *with* goes on the end of the phrase:

apwerte   *urrperle*   *atherrele*

rock   black   two-instr.

rather than on the end of *apwerte* 'rock'. If a word or phrase has more than one ending, the order of the endings is also important.

POSSESSION

The ending -*kenhe* is like the apostrophe s in English (e.g. 'the girl's dog') in that it expresses ownership. It may be added to a noun and some pronouns to show that the person or thing that follows (or precedes) belongs to the person or thing with the -*kenhe* on the end.

61. *Arelhe-**kenhe***   *kere*

    woman's   meat

    The woman's meat

62. *Mwekarte*   *artwe-**kenhe***

    hat   man's

    The man's hat

Note

Another use of -*kenhe* is to show that something is closely associated with or used for something. So X-*kenhe* means something that people use for thing X, or only belongs with thing X.

*werlatye-**kenhe***   bra   (*werlatye* 'breast', 'belonging to the breast')

*ingke-**kenhe***   shoe   (*ingke* 'foot', 'belonging to the foot')

*alte-**kenhe***   comb, brush   (*alte* 'hair', 'belonging to hair')

Beware:

There is another *kenhe* or *akenhe* word in Arrernte that should not be confused with the ending -*kenhe*. The word *kenhe* indicates a change in focus in what's being talked about, and in a sentence it may be translated as 'and', 'but', 'on the other hand', 'whereas'.

Nhenhe   akenhe   itnekenhe

this   and   theirs

And (on the other hand) this one is theirs

Another ending that is closely related in meaning to *-kenhe* is *-akerte*. When this ending is added to a noun (X) the resulting word means 'someone/ something having X', in the sense of having that thing X with them (but not necessarily owning that thing). For example, *merne-akerte* means 'having food'. It may be translated as 'with', 'having' or 'holding' something.

63. *Artwe*   *anewe-akerte*

    man   spouse-having

    The man is married (i.e. has a wife)

64. *Unte*   *kwatye-akerte*

    you   water-having

    You've got water

65. *Re*   *rlkerte-akerte*

    he/she   sickness-having

    He is sick (having sickness)

Note

An example using both *-kenhe* and *-akerte* is as follows:

Unte   *arelhe-kenhe*   *atneme-akerte*

you   woman's   digging stick-having

You've got the woman's digging stick

But if you were referring to your digging stick:

Arelhe   *atneme*   *ngkwinhe-akerte*

woman   digging stick   yours-having

The woman has got your digging stick

Unte   *atneme*   *ngkwinhe-akerte*

you   digging stick   yours-having

You've got your digging stick

Note continues page 34

In this situation possession (of the digging stick) is shown by using a possessive pronoun *ngkwinhe*. These pronouns will be discussed further in Chapter Three. In English there are special pronouns that show possession: 'you' changes to 'your', 'I' changes to 'my' and so on. In Arrernte *unte* changes to *ngkwinhe* and so in order to say 'your digging stick' we say *atneme ngkwinhe* rather than *atneme unte-kenhe* (which would be the equivalent in English of saying 'you's digging stick').

NEGATIVES, NOTHING AND BEING WITHOUT SOMETHING

One way to say the opposite of this, i.e. that you don't have something, or something is lacking, is to use another ending *-kwenye*. When this ending is added to a noun (X) the resulting word means 'someone/ something doesn't have X or hasn't got X'. This ending may also be used to say that 'something is not something' or 'X is not a thing about which you could say Y is true'.

66. *Artwe   anewe-**kwenye***

    man   spouse-without

    The man doesn't have a wife

67. *Unte   mutekaye-**kwenye***

    you   car-without

    You haven't got a car

68. *Re   rlkerte-**kwenye***

    he/she   sick-without

    He's not sick

HOW TO SAY NO

The word *arrangkwe* can be used as a direct negative answer to a question or request. It can mean 'no', 'nothing', 'no-one', 'having nothing' etc.

69. *Unte-ame   merne-akerte?*   Have you got any food?

    you-?   food-having

    Arrangkwe   No

70. *Re-ame*   *lyete*   *apetye-alpeme?*   Is she coming back today?

he/she -?   today   come back-pres.

Arrangkwe   No

Note

If you want to say 'yes' you use the word *ye* or *yewe-yewe*.

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71. *Arrwekele*   *apmere*   *nhenhele*   ***arrangkwe*-*arle*** *aneke*

first   place   here-at   nothing-focus   is-past

At first there was nothing here at this place

72. *Maneke*   ***arrangkwe***

money-for   nothing

(I) haven't got any money

73. *Artwe*   *arnkentye-arenye*   *aneweke*   ***arrangkwe***

man   single mens' camp-origin   spouse-for   nothing

A man who lives in a single men's camp doesn't have a wife

Note

Remember that when we wanted to say that a verb action was *not* happening +*tye-akenhe* was added to the verb stem.

PURPOSE — DATIVE ENDING

The ending +*ke* has many uses in Arrernte and again it is a good idea to refer to the dictionary for a full explanation. One of the simplest of these uses is to show the purpose of an action, or who or what an action is being done for. It may be translated as 'for', 'at', 'with', 'to' or 'into'. The +*ke* ending can go on nominals and on some pronouns.

74. *Iwenheke?*

    what-for

    What for?

75. *Anwerne   tyapeke   alheme*

    we   grub-for go-pres.

    We are going for (witchetty) grubs
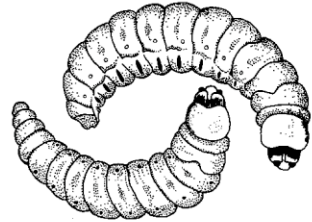
76. *Arrweketyele   merne   iteme   ampe   akwekeke*

    woman-actor   food   cook-pres.   child   small-for

    The woman is cooking food for the child

The ending +*ke* can go on the end of a thing that a feeling is directed towards:

77. *Marle   yanhe   ahele-irreme   kweye   atyenheke*

    girl   over there   get angry-pres.   girl   my-for

    That girl over there is getting angry with my girl

78. *Ngkwarleke   ayenge   akangkeme*

    sweet-for   I   like-pres.

    I like sweet things / I like grog

79. *Ayenge   apmereke   irrare-irreme*

    I   country-for   get homesick-pres.

    I'm homesick for (my) country

It can show the location of the object of a sentence, and in this situation it is best translated as 'on', 'at', 'in' or 'by'. With some motion verbs, it shows

where the motion ends up.

80. *Ampe   ngkwinhe   the   areke   apmere**ke***

child   your   I   see-past   camp-at

I saw your child at the camp

81. *Arlewatyerre   alhwengeke   irrpe**ke***

goanna   burrow-in   go in-past

The goanna entered the burrow

82. *Ampe   akweke   mape   alheme   kwatyeke   irrpetyeke*

child   small   lots of   go-pres.   water-in   go in-purp.

The children are going for a swim

Note
We have already talked about other ways of showing location apart from using *+ke*. Earlier we saw that one of the functions of *+le* is to show the location of the action of certain types of verbs.

TO AND FROM

If the ending *-werne* is added to a nominal it shows that the action is directed towards, or is going towards, that place, person or thing. It can be translated as 'to' or 'towards'.

83. *Ayenge   apmere-**werne**   alpeme*

I   camp-to   go back-pres.

I'm going back to camp

Another ending that shows that the action or the motion is aimed towards a place, a person or a thing is *-atheke*. This ending is not often used on its own, and follows the ending *-werne*.

84. *Ayenge*   *apmere-**werne-atheke***   *alpeme*

    I   camp-to-towards   go back-pres.

    I'm going back to camp

85. *Ayenge*   *kwatye-**werne-atheke***   *alheme*

    I   water-to-towards   go-pres.

    I'm going to the water

86. *Re*   *atyenge-**werne-atheke***   *iweme*

    he/she   to me-to-towards   throw-pres.

    He's throwing [it] to me

There are many uses of the word 'from' in English, for example: 'I come from Sydney', 'I came from the bank', 'Milk comes from cows' etc. In Arrernte there are two endings which have meanings that cover some of the meanings of the English word 'from', and these are *-ntyele* and *+nge*. In some situations these two endings are interchangeable, though they each do have some particular meanings that are unique.

-ntyele shows where something moves from, or is moved from, and where someone or something has just come from *recently*. It can also show the reasons for something happening, and the source of something. It can be translated as 'away from', 'from', 'off'.

87. *Arrweketye*   *Ltyentye Apurte-**ntyele***   *apetyeke*

    woman   Santa Teresa-from   come-past

    The woman just came from Santa Teresa

88. *Mpwele*   *school-**ntyele**?*

    you two   school-from

    Have you two come here straight from school? / Are you two back from school?

The ending *-nge* has the general meaning of 'from', in the sense of motion away from that place or thing. It may be translated as 'from', 'away from', 'out of.'

89. *Nthenhenge?*

    where-from

    Where from?

90. *Urreye,*   *apetyaye,*   *kake*   *ngkwinhenge!*

    boy   come-emphasis   elder brother   your-from

    Boy, come away from your elder brother!

Note

The ending +*nge* can also mean 'with'. Thus, sentence 90 above —
Urreye, apetyaye, kake ngkwinhenge! — has two possible meanings:

Boy, come away from your elder brother!

and

Boy, come with your brother!

Sometimes both endings -*ntyele* and +*nge* can be put together to make +*nge-ntyele*:

91. *Alkwerte**nge-ntyele***   *itne*   *apetyeke*

    Alcoota-from   they   come-past

    They came from Alcoota

> ### Note
> The ending *-nge* can also be used to mark the means of transport, and to show other things such as points in time, particularly on words borrowed from English such as the names of days, months, years etc.
>
> | *Ayenge* | Toyota-**nge** | *alheme* | *Sunday-**nge*** |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | I | Toyota-in | go-pres. | Sunday-on |
>
> I'm going in the Toyota on Sunday
>
> | *1942-**nge*** | *anwerne* | *aname-irreke* | *Arltengke-werne* | *Anthelke Ulpaye-ntyele* |
> |---|---|---|---|---|
> | 1942-in | we | shift-past | Arltunga-to | Charles Creek-from |
>
> In 1942 we shifted from Charles Creek to Arltunga.

If you want to say that someone or something is going somewhere on the way to somewhere else, going via a place, or coming from somewhere via a particular place, the ending *+le-mpele* is used.

92. | *Re* | *Inteyarrkwe**le-mpele*** | *alheke* | *Arltangke-werne* |
    |---|---|---|---|
    | he/she | Ross River-via | go-past | Arltunga-to |

He went to Arltunga by way of Ross River

93. | *Ayenge* | *Alice Springs-ntyele* | *alheke* | *Cooper Pedy-**le-mpele*** | *Adelaide-werne* |
    |---|---|---|---|---|
    | I | Alice Springs-from | go-past | Cooper Pedy-via | Adelaide-to |

I went from Alice Springs to Adelaide via Cooper Pedy

94. | *Nhenhe**le-mpele*** | *apetyaye,* | *ure* | *yanhe-ketye* |
    |---|---|---|---|
    | here-via | come-emphasis | fire | over there-fear of |

Come this way, because of that fire.

The endings *-ntyele* and *-nge* show 'coming from' in one sense. But in Arrernte there is another ending, *-arenye*, which indicates that a person, animal or thing 'comes from' or belongs to a particular place or country. When this ending is added to a place name and used to describe a person, this usually indicates the person's origins, that they have traditional connections

to that place, or that they are closely associated with that place.

95. *Arrweketye*   *nhakwe*   *Mparntwe-**arenye***

     woman   that   Mparntwe-origin

That woman is from Mparntwe

96. *Ayenge*   *apmere*   *ikngerre-**arenye***

     I   country   east-origin

I'm from the east country

-arenye can also refer to something or someone who is usually found in a place.

97. *Rapite*   *iperte-**arenye***

     rabbit   hole-origin

Rabbits are hole-dwellers

98. *Kwatye*   *alaye-**arenye***

     water   sea-origin

Coastal dwellers

99. *Ayepe-**arenye***

     tar-vine-origin

Caterpillar from the tar-vine

Note

The *ayepe-arenye* caterpillar is an important Dreaming for Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and the word *ayepe-arenye* is seen spelt in several ways around town: Yipirinya School, Yeperenye Shopping Centre, Ayiparinya Hostel.

AFTER

The endings -*ipenhe* and -*iperre* have several uses in Arremte and we will only discuss a few of these. If a word is marked with -*ipenhe* it can mean that the event being talked about happened after the thing that has the -*ipenhe* on it. It can be translated as 'after', 'from', 'after having done X'. It can also mean 'because of something', 'due to something.'

100. *Thape-**ipenhe***   *anwerne*   *alheke*

     supper-after   we   go-past

     We went after supper

101. *Re*   *ilweke*   *ngkwarle-**iperre***

     he/she   die-past   grog-after

     He died from grog

102. *Ngkwerne*   *ultakelheke*   *re*   *arnengarle*   *tnyeke-**iperre***

     bone   break-self-past   he/she   tree-from-focus   fall-past-after

     He broke his leg falling from a tree

-*iperre* and -*ipenhe* can also go on place or direction terms to show the place where the person or thing was before moving to be in the place where they are now, as well as the origin of something.

103. *Darwin-**iperre***   *meye*   *apetyalpeke*

     Darwin-from   my mother   come back-past

     My mother came back from Darwin

104. *Artetye-**iperre***   *ilye*   *mpwareme*

     mulga-from   boomerang   make-pres.

     Boomerangs are made from mulga wood

105. *Ayenge*   *ikngerre-**ipenhe***

     I   east-from

     I'm from the east
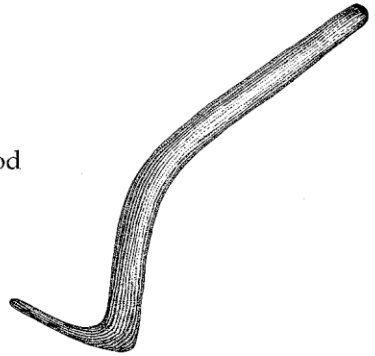
WITH, TOGETHER

The ending +*le-arlenge* (or +*nge-arlenge*) has a range of meanings but it can be used to show that two elements in a sentence are equally involved in the action of the event, or that the two things in general play the same role. In general two things connected by +*le-arlenge* must be of the same type, for example people together, or inanimate objects together. It translates as 'with', 'together', 'along with', 'in the company of ' and sometimes as 'in' or 'inside'.

106. *Akatyerre   yalkele-arlenge   arntapele   aneme*

     desert raisin   bush onion-together   bark-in   sit-pres.

     Desert raisins and bush onions are in the bark (container)

107. *Anyene   unte   kerele-arlenge   arlkweme*

     onion   you   meat-together   eat-pres.

     You eat onions with meat

Further information

Following is an example of the use of -*arlenge* to mean 'in' or 'inside':

Kwatye   tyampitele-arlenge   tneme

water   billycan-in   stand-pres.

The water is in the billycan

Note

One of the important considerations in the type of Arrernte sentence where there are two people or animals etc. doing something together is who is the controller or initiator of the action. This is often the more senior person in the group.

There is a difference between 'two people just going along together' and one or other of the individuals 'taking the other along' and this difference in meaning determines which ending should be used. Earlier we looked at the endings -*akerte* and +*nge*. Consider the following examples:

Ayenge	*akngwelyele-arlenge*	*alheke*
I	dog-together	go-past

I went with the dog (together)

Ayenge	*akngwelye-akerte*	*alheke*
I	dog-having	go-past

I went with the dog (I'm in control)

Ayenge	*akngwelyenge*	*alheke*
I	dog-with	go-past

I went (along) with the dog (dog in control)

SOMETHING IS SIMILAR TO SOMETHING ELSE

The ending -*arteke* shows that something is similar to or like something else. This ending can go on either nominals or verbs.

108. *Iwenhe-arteke?*

   what-like

   What's it like?

109. | *Merne* | *atyenhe* | *apwerte-arteke* |
   |---------|-----------|------------------|
   | food | my | rock-like |

   My damper is like a stone

Another ending, *-ulkere*, can also have the meaning of 'this type of (thing)', 'the same type of (thing)', 'like (something)'.

110. *Merne   nhenhe-**ulkere**   inaye!*

    food   this-type   get-emphasis

Get (me) some food like this!

BECAUSE — SOMETHING MIGHT HAVE BAD CONSEQUENCES OR SOMETHING IS DISLIKED

The ending *-ketye* can go on the end of verbs or nouns to show that something is disliked, feared, or may have unwanted consequences unless the suggested action is undertaken. Something bad might happen unless the action is done. In a sentence where there are two verbs the addition of *-ketye* to one of them (X) indicates that the other action (Y) should be carried out in order to avoid (X). It is often translated as 'because of', 'from', 'lest', 'for fear of', 'in case' or 'away from'.

111. *Ampe   mape   apmwe-**ketye** alaye!*

    child   lots of   snake-fear of look out

All you kids, watch out for the snakes!

112. *Arneke   antyetyale   atnye**ketye**!*

    tree-at   climb-don't   fall-fear of

Don't climb trees, in case you fall
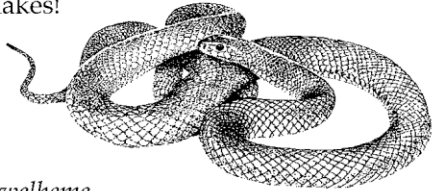
113. *Ayenge   ikwere-**ketye**   alengke-iwelheme*

    I   of him-fear of   hide-self-pres.

I'm hiding from him

Note

-ketye can also be used in the situation where kin avoidances are being referred to:

*Artwe   re   mwerikwe-**ketye**   ularre-irreke*

man   he/she   mother-in-law-fear of   face away-past

The man faced away from his mother-in-law

In this situation it is not being suggested that his mother-in-law will actually cause him physical harm unless he turns away, but that social conventions and behaviour should be adhered to. For more discussion of this sort of 'avoidance' behaviour see Chapter Three.

SUMMARY OF ENDINGS LEARNT SO FAR

ending	gloss	abbreviation used
+aye	emphasis	emphasis
+ke	for	for, at
+le	actor in a sentence	actor
+le	instrument	instr.
+le	location	at, in, on
+le-arlenge	together, with, in	together, in
+le-mpele	by way of, via	via
+nge	from	from, with
+we	stronger emphasis	emphasis +
+yewe	really strong emphasis	emphasis ++
-akerte	having	having
-arenye	from (origin), association	origin
-arteke	similarity	like
-atheke	towards	towards

-iperre, -ipenhe	after, from	after, from
-kenhe	belongs to	's
-ketye	because (bad consequence)	fear of
-kwenye	not having, without	without
-ntyele	from	from
-ulkere	this type of (thing), like (something)	type
-werne	to	to
+ke	past	past
+lhe	reflexive	self
+me	present tense	pres.
+rre/+irre	reciprocal	each other
+tyale	negative imperative	don't
+tye-akenhe	negative	not
+tyeke	purpose or intent	purp.
+tyenhe	future	fut.
Ø	imperative	imp.

2.12 How to ask questions in Arrernte

It is very important for the language learner to learn to ask questions. Although there are some particular words that are used for asking questions, a sentence can be turned into a question simply by a rising inflection of the voice at the end of the sentence.

A simple phrase like *unte mwerre* can be changed from meaning 'you're alright' to 'are you alright?' by using a questioning tone of voice. This technique is also used in English, although we also have the option of changing the order of the words to form a question. This strategy doesn't work in Arrernte as the order of the words is already quite flexible.

Questions can also be formed by adding the small ending -*ame* onto a word which has the effect of asking for information about the word to which it is attached. Note that this ending goes after all the other endings we have learnt so far.

114. *John-le-**ame***   *renhe*   *atweke?*

      John-actor-?   him/her   hit-past

      Was it John who hit her?

115. *Unte-**ame***   *arerte?*

      you-?   mad

      Are you mad?

116. *Nthakenhe-**ame***   *anwerne*   *irretyenhe?*

      how-?   we   become-fut.

      What'll we do?

WHAT? AND WHY?

The word for 'what?' is *iwenhe*

117. ***Iwenhe***   *nhenhe?*

      what   this/here

      What's this?

118. ***Iwenhe***   *yanhe*   *apetyeme?*

      what   over there   come-pres.

      What's that coming over there?

By adding to *iwenhe* the ending +*ke* we get a word meaning in English 'why' or 'what for.'

119. ***Iwenheke***   *artwe*   *yanhe*   *apetyeme?*

      what-for   man   over there   come-pres.

      What's that man coming for?

120. **Iwenheke** *arrantherre* *atherreme?*

what-for   you all   laugh-pres.

Why are you all laughing?

By adding +*nge* to *iwenhe* we get the word *iwenhenge*, meaning 'from', 'because of what', 'why' 'what's the reason' etc.

121. **Iwenhenge** *unte* *angketye-akenhe?*

what-from   you   talk-not

Why aren't you speaking?

Another word with the same meaning is *iwenhe-iperre*. This is used when the person asking the question is wondering what happened to cause something.

By adding -*ketye* to *iwenhe* we get *iwenhe-ketye*, which also can mean 'why', 'because of what', or 'for fear of what'. It is used when the person asking the question thinks another person is frightened or worried about something.

122. **Iwenhe-ketye** *ampe* *akweke* *artneme?*

what-fear of   child   small   cry-pres.

Why is the baby crying?

123. *Akngwelye-**ketye***

dog-fear of

Because she/he's frightened of the dog

Useful phrase

iwenhe-aperte?   'what's up?', 'what's the matter?'

WHO?, WHOSE?, WHO FOR?

The Arrernte word for 'who?' or 'which person?' is *angwenhe?*

124. **Angwenhe** *apetyeme?*

who   come-pres.

Who's coming?

125. *Angwenhele*   *ngenhe*   *akaltyele-antheke?*

    who-actor   you-object   teach-past

Who taught you?

In the above example you can see that if the 'who' you are talking about is the actor in a sentence it takes the *+le* ending.

Useful phrases

Angwenhe-akweye   'what's-his-name' or 'what's-her-name'

Iwenhe-akweye   'what's-its-name'

By adding the ending *-kenhe* to *angwenhe* we can make a word, *angwenhe-kenhe,* which translates as 'whose?'

126. *Nhenhe*   **angwenhe-kenhe?**

    this one   who-'s

Whose is this?

127. **Angwenhe-kenhe** *mutekaye*   *ultakelheke?*

    who-'s   car   break-self-past

Whose car broke down?

By adding to *angwenhe* the ending *+ke* we get a word, *angwenheke,* meaning 'who for?' or 'for whom?'

128. **Angwenheke** *unte*   *merne*   *iteme?*

    who-for   you   food   cook-pres.

Who are you cooking for?

129. **Angwenheke** *arrantherre*   *akarelheme?*

    who-for   you-plural   wait-pres.

Who are you all waiting for?

WHERE?, WHICH WAY?

The basic Arrernte word for 'where' is *nthenhe*.

130. *Marle   akweke   ngkwinhe   **nthenhe**?*

   girl   small   your   where

   Where is your little girl?

Like most of the other question words this *nthenhe* can take different endings to make new words with different meanings.

131. ***Nthenheke-ame**   unte   apmwe   renhe   areke?*

   where-at-?   you   snake   it   see-past

   Where did you see the snake?

132. ***Nthenhe-ntyele**   unte   apetyeme?*

   where-from   you   come-pres.

   Where are you coming from?

133. ***Nthenhe-werne**   unte   alheme?*

   where-to   you   go-pres.

   Where are you going?

134. *Unte   **nthenhe-arenye**?*

   you   where-origin

   Where are you from? What's your country?

WHEN?

The Arrernte word for 'when?' is *ilengare*.

135. *Marle   yanhe   **ilengare**   apetye-alpetyenhe?*

   girl   over there   when   come back-fut.

   When is that girl coming back?

136. ***Ilengare**   anwerne   apwerte   inetyenhe?*

   when   we   money   get-fut.

   When will we get the money?

HOW?, HOW MANY?, HOW MUCH?

To ask the question 'how?' in Arrernte the word *nthakenhe* is used. As a question on its own *nthakenhe?* can mean 'What's up?' or 'What's happening?'

137. **Nthakenhe**   *unte*   *merne*   *nhenhe*   *iteme?*

     how   you   food   this   cook-pres.

     How do you cook this food?

A common answer for this question would be *alakenhe*, 'like this', accompanied by a demonstration of how to do it.

The word for 'how many?' is *nthakentye* or *nthakintye*.

138. *Ampe*   *ngkwinhe*   **nthakentye?**

     child   your   how many

     How many children do you have?

Chapter Three
Pronouns and kinship

3.1 Pronouns

Pronouns are words like 'I', 'you', 'we', 'his' etc. A pronoun doesn't describe the thing it stands for, as a noun does, but simply 'points' to it. In Arrernte there is no distinction made between male and female in the pronoun system so whereas in English there are three words (he, she, it) which are chosen according to the humanness and the gender of the third party, the word *re* in Arrernte can refer to a male or a female, or in fact to a non-human entity.

In English there is one set of pronouns to indicate a single person and another to refer to two or more persons or a group of persons. In Arrernte there are different sets of singular, dual and plural pronouns, so there are different words for 'I', 'we two' and 'we' (more than two), as there are for 'you', 'you two' and 'you' (more than two).

To make matters more complicated, the form of these pronouns changes depending on which groups of kin are being referred to (or more precisely what relation the people in the group are to each other).

Let's start by taking a look at a table of English pronouns:

Table 2: English pronouns

	subject	object	dative	possessive
1 person singular	I	me	for me, to me	my, mine
plural	we	us	for us, to us	our, ours
2 person singular and plural	you	you	for you, to you	your, yours
3 person singular	he, she, it	him, her, it	for him/her/it, to him/her/it	his, her, its his, hers
plural	they	them	for them, to them	their, theirs

Table 3 presents the simplest version of the Arrernte pronouns, which are the ones used when the type of of kin involved are not being specified (or in fact if the people in a group have the same 'skin', like, for example, a group of brothers and sisters together).

Table 3: Arrernte Pronouns

	subject	object	dative	possessive
1 person singular	*ayenge/the*	*ayenge/ ayenhe*	*atyenge*	*atyenhe/atyinhe*
dual	*ilerne*	*ilernenhe*	*ilerneke*	*ilernekenhe*
plural	*anwerne*	*anwernenhe*	*anwerneke*	*anwernekenhe*
2 person singular	*unte*	*ngenhe*	*ngkwenge*	*ngkwinhe*
dual	*mpwele*	*mpwelenhe*	*mpweleke*	*mpwelekenhe*
plural	*arrantherre*	*arrenhantherre*	*arrekantherre*	*arrekantherrenhe*
3 person singular	*re*	*renhe*	*ikwere*	*ikwerenhe*
dual	*re-atherre*	*renhe-atherre* *renhe-atherrenhe*	*ikwere-atherre*	*ikwere-atherrenhe*
plural	*itne*	*itnenhe*	*itneke*	*itnekenhe*

You can see from Table 3 that Arrernte has many more pronouns than English. In fact English has a very limited pronoun system, which can easily mislead you when you come to learn the Arrernte pronouns.

The different columns in Table 3 show the pronouns that have different functions in the sentence, and the rows show the ones that are used depending on whether there are one, two, or more than two people involved.

In English and in Arrernte there are different pronoun forms depending on the function of the pronoun in the sentence: e.g. in English we use 'I' for the subject, the one carrying out the action, 'me' for the object, the one the action is being done to, 'for me, to me' for the dative, the one for or to whom the action is being done, and 'my, mine' for the possessor. It is proper in English to say 'he hit me' rather than 'he hit I' and 'I hit him' rather than 'me hit he'.

In Arrernte there are also different forms of the pronouns for different functions in the sentence. And in some cases English requires two words for what can be said in Arrernte in one: 'I got it for you'. The 'for you' is expressed in Arrernte by one word, *ngkwenge*.

139. *The   renhe   atweke*

I   him/her hit-past

I hit him/her

140. *Re   ayenge   atweke*

he/she   me   hit-past

He/she hit me

141. *Re   ayenge   atweke   ikwere*

he/she   me   hit-past   for him/her

He/she hit me for him/her

142. *Ayenge   ngkwenge   angkeme*

I   to you   talk-pres.

I am talking to you

Note

Possession of parts of the body. In English you say 'my head' and 'my meat', using the word 'my' in both cases. In Arrernte you can't normally use the possessive pronouns (words such as *atyenhe, ngkwinhe*) when talking about parts of the body. This is because you don't 'own' your body parts: they are a part of you. So you might say:

Akaperte   ayenge   My head

head   I

instead of

Akaperte   atyinhe

head   my

Although both variants are used in modern Arrernte, the latter is used only by younger people.

3.2 Kinship

Aboriginal social organisation is based on kinship, though the principles of this kinship system are very different from non-Aboriginal societies. Unlike the English system, the Arrernte is an extended system which defines relationships between people who are not necessarily connected by birth links or by marriage, though Arrernte people do distinguish 'close' and 'distant' kin.

Although it is beyond the scope of this book to deal with these concepts in depth, one aspect of the complex kinship system which is reflected in the Arrernte language, and in the pronouns in particular, is the way people are divided into groups.

In order to regulate human relations such as marriage, Arrernte people are born into one of several groups, and the 'skin name' that all Arrernte people have is a system of labelling for these groups. Thus in addition to a personal name, the Arrernte person acquires at birth not only an extended web of family relationships, but also a skin name which partly defines their relationship to all other people within their language group and to others beyond.

Originally Arrernte people, especially on the north and eastern side, used a system of four skin names or 'sections', but in recent times they have *changed over to a system of eight skin names or 'sub-sections'. These names* provide a way of labelling and summarising a complex system of relationships and responsibilities between people, and between people and the land. The section or sub-section a person belongs to depends on the sections of each of their parents, but is not the same as that of either parent.

The eight sub-sections or skin names in the Arrernte (and also the Warlpiri) systems, and the four sections in the old North-eastern and Eastern Arrernte and Alyawarr systems are listed on page 57.

Table 4

old Eastern Arrernte	Eastern/ Central Arrernte	Anmatyerr	Alyawarr	Kaytetye	Warlpiri
Peltharre	Peltharre	Peltharr/ Petyarr	Apetyarr	Peltharre/ Kapetye	Japaljarri Napaljarri
	Pengarte	Pengart		Pengarte	Japangardi Napangardi
Kemarre	Kemarre	Kemarr	Akemarr	Kemarre	Jakamarra Nakamarra
	Ampetyane	Mpetyan		Ampetyane	Jampijinpa Nampijinpa
	Kngwarraye	Ngwarray	Kngwarrey Ngwarrey	Kngwarreye	Jungarrayi Nungarrayi
Penangke	Penangke	Penangk		Penangke	Japanangka Napanangka
Perrurle	Perrurle	Pwerrerl/ Pwerl	Pwerl	Pwerle	Jupurrula Napurrula
	Angale	Ngal		Thangale/ Ngale	Jangala Nangala

A person has the same skin name as, for example, their brothers and sisters, their father's father, and their father's brother's children. A person has a different skin from their mother, father, children and spouse.
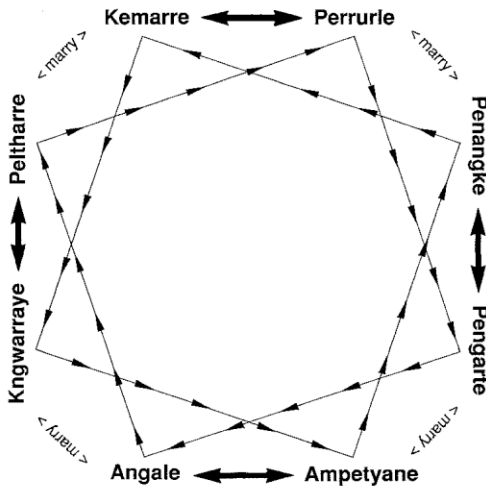
**Eastern and Central
Arrernte skin names.**
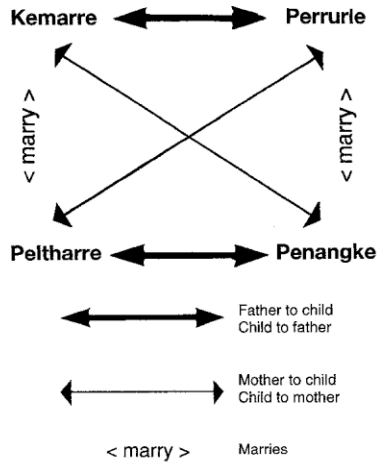
**Old Eastern Arrernte
skin names.**

In order to see how this system works, it is sometimes useful to visualise the kin system being split into halves or 'moieties'. One way of dividing the four skin names is into two patrimoieties as follows:

Patrimoiety 1	Patrimoiety 2
Kemarre	*Kngwarraye*
Perrurle	*Peltharre*
Ampetyane	*Penangke*
Angale	*Pengarte*

People belong to the same patrimoiety as their fathers, brothers and sisters, and their fathers' fathers, brothers' children etc. Patrimoieties tend to be important in land and Dreaming ownership, and in ceremony.

Note

Which patrimoiety someone belongs to depends on descent through their father. The same person also belongs to one of the two matrimoieties through descent from their mother. These matrimoieties are important in births, deaths, marriages etc., but because they have no consequences in the pronoun system or on other aspects of grammar, they are not discussed further here.

The second division is into generation moieties:

Generation moiety 1	Generation moiety 2
Peltharre	*Kngwarraye*
Kemarre	*Perrurle*
Pengarte	*Penangke*
Ampetyane	*Angale*

A person belongs to the same generation moiety as their brothers, sisters, cousins, spouses, grandparents and grandchildren.

Generation moieties are important in ceremonies and in marriage patterns. It is preferred that a person marries into their own generation moiety.

Whilst these moieties do not have names as they do in some other Aboriginal cultures, people in one generation moiety call people in the other *nyurrpe*, and people in one patrimoiety call the people in the opposite patrimoiety *malyanweke*. You are not supposed to marry someone who is *nyurrpe* to you.

Further information

The Arrernte pronoun system reflects these divisions, there being one set of dual and plural pronouns for people who are in the same patrimoiety and same generation group, another for people of the same patrimoiety but different generation group, and another for people of the opposite patrimoiety.

So as well as the dual and plural pronouns shown in Table 3 in the previous section there are two other sets of kin specific pronouns which show what sort of relations there are in a group of two people or more. These are formed by adding:

Ø or +*ingkerre*   to show same patrimoiety and same generation group

+*ake*   to show that the people belong to same patrimoiety and different generation group

+*anthe*   to show that the people belong to opposite patrimoieties

Thus;

ilerne   we two (e.g. my brother and I, maybe two Kemarre)

ilake   we two (e.g. me and my father, maybe a Kemarre and a Perrurle)

ilanthe   we two (e.g. husband and wife, maybe a Kemarre and a Peltharre)

Although all this seems very complicated don't despair, as it is beyond the scope of the beginning learner of these languages to master this system completely. Remember that Arrernte children start learning these kin-specific words from very early on, whereas a person attempting to learn the pronouns first has to master the basics of the kin system itself.

Encoded in the kinship system are rules and conventions about marriage and behaviour towards particular kin. Some of these relationships between particular kin are characterised by easy going interactions and joking, whilst between others verbal communication and close contact is avoided altogether. The latter is sometimes called 'avoidance' behaviour or *ikirrentye* in Arrernte, and this lack of appropriate social space between certain kin is sometimes referred to in English as 'no room'. So if someone says that there is no room in a social situation the solution is not to clear a space, but rather to allow adequate social distance between relations who should not be near each other. This may mean that certain relations cannot, for example, travel in the same car together even though there appears to be plenty of 'room' in the back seat.

One of the strictest of these avoidance relationships is that between men and women who are in a mother-in-law/son-in-law relationship to each other. Ideally they should not sit together or travel close together and they should exchange goods and messages through a third person. In some dialects of Arrernte there are even special words for use by women to talk about their sons-in-law, or by men to talk about their mothers-in-law.

For example, in some dialects women use the word *ahaneme* for 'go' when they are talking about their sons-in-law, and the word *lheme* for 'go' when they are talking about anyone else.

In Arrernte there are many words to describe actual relations: words for mother, father, uncle, cousin etc. Remember that these do not always work the same way as such family words do in English; for example, in English your father's brother's children are called cousins, whereas in Arrernte they are called brothers and sisters. There are also generally four kinds of grandparent (and grandchild) recognised: mother's mothers, mother's fathers, father's fathers and father's mothers. In English the terms great-aunt and great-uncle overlap with these. The terms for the four grandparents are also 'two-way', so grandparents of a particular type and their grandchildren call each other by the same kin term. These family words are also used to describe the relationship between people and country and Dreamings. See the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary* for more discussion of this.

Further information

There are three endings that can go go on the end of these family words to show whether you are talking about your own kin (my/our ...), about kin belonging to the person you are talking to (your ...) , or about someone else's kin (his or her /their...). These are *+atye*, *+angkwe* and *+ikwe* respectively.

altyelatye	my/our female cousin (of a woman)
altyelangkwe	your female cousin (of a woman)
altyelikwe	her/their female cousin

We have touched briefly on a few sets of ideas that are interwoven and connected in ways that are a bit difficult to visualise: the skin names, words used to describe certain kin (such as mother, father, cousin etc.), and the idea of kin being split into groups or moieties showing patrimoiety and generation level.

The diagram opposite is a fragment of a family tree drawn from the perspective of a Kemarre woman and using the eight skin names or sub-section system. Shown here are the skin names of some of the close relations of the Kemarre woman, and the kin terms, or Arrernte words for 'father', 'mother' etc that *she* would call these respective relations.

In order to partly represent the idea of division into groups, the relations who belong to the opposite generation moiety or are *nyurrpe* to the Kemarre woman have black shorts or skirts, and those who are in the same generation moiety have white. You can see clearly from this that people in the generation level immediately before and immediately after the Kemarre woman are *nyurrpe* to her, whereas those two levels away belong to the same generation moiety as her, for example her grandparents and grandchildren. Those with black shirts belong to the same patrimoiety as the Kemarre woman and those with white shirts belong to the other and are *malyanweke* to her. It must be emphasised that this diagram represents but a small part of the potential close family of the Kemarre woman; you have to imagine this network extending out in all directions, in fact in ways that are difficult to show in two dimensions.
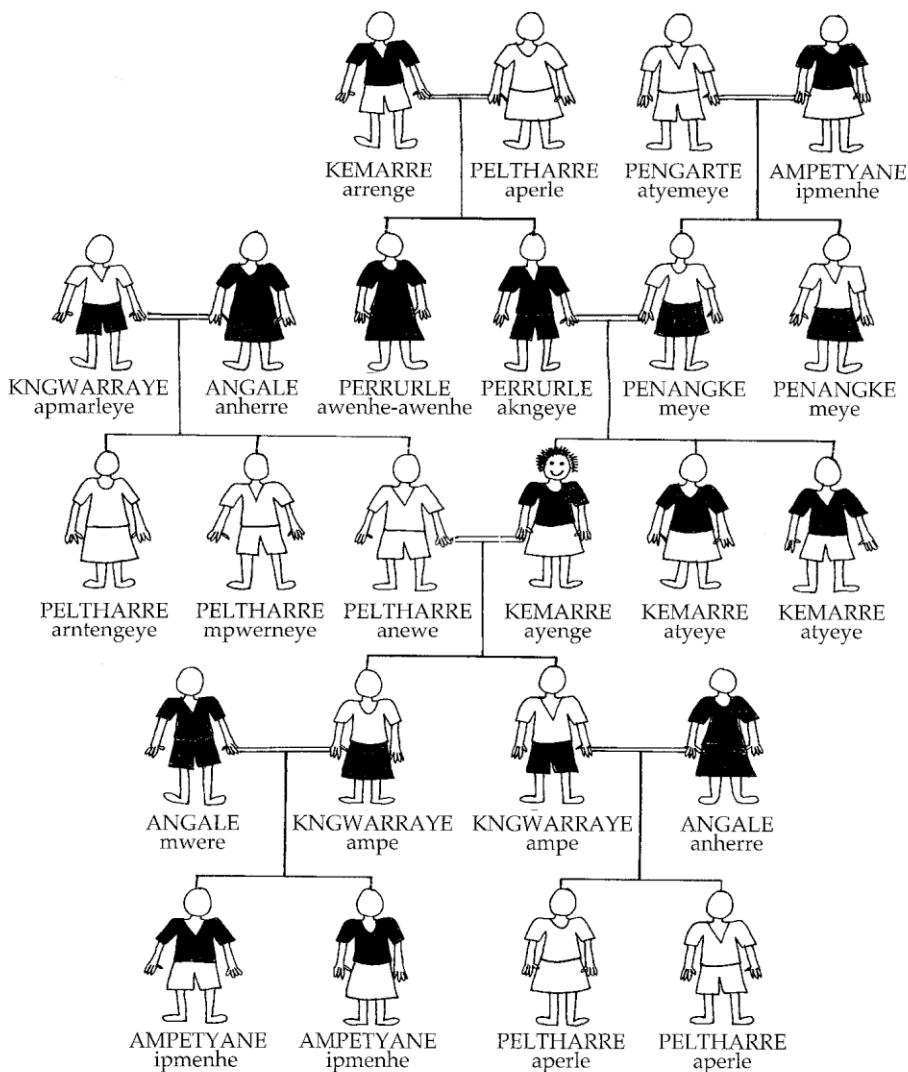
Part of the 'family tree' of a Kemarre woman showing the sub-sections and the kin terms she would use for some of her relations.

Chapter Four
More complicated sentences

4.1 Ways of saying 'and' — joining words

The word 'and' is frequently used in the English language. In Arrernte there are several different ways of linking things together in a sentence in a way that would translate into English as 'and'.

One way of joining words together in a sentence is by simply listing them, one after the other, with a pause in between:

143. *Kwementyaye,   Gabrielle   apmwerrke   apetyeke*

    Kwementyaye   Gabrielle   yesterday   come-past

    Kwementyaye and Gabrielle came yesterday

144. *Artwe   mape   lheke   aherreke,   arleyeke,   arteweke*

    man   lots of   go-past   kangaroo-for   emu-for   bush turkey-for

    The men went for kangaroo, emu and bush turkey

The word *ante* or *ane* is adapted from the English word 'and'. It can be used to join lists of words together in a sentence and can occur between all the nouns listed, or it can be put between the last two nouns of a list.

145. *Artwe   re   arlkwerte,   amirre,   irrtyarte **ante** alye-akerte   alheke*

    man   he   shield   woomera   spear   and   boomerang-having   go-past

    The man went (armed) with a shield, a spear thrower, spears and a boomerang

146. *The   kere,   merne   **ante**   tyape   arlkweke*

    I   meat   food   and   grubs   eat-past

    I ate meat, vegetable food and grubs

Beware

The word *ante* cannot be used to join pronouns. You can't say, for example, *Rosie **ante** ayenge*.

When describing two things or two groups of things together, particularly pairs of words that commonly occur together such as 'man' and 'woman' or 'tea' and 'sugar', the joining word *uthene* can be used. This word can be translated as 'and', 'as well as', 'also'.

147. *Artwe* **uthene** *arelhe* **uthene**

     man   and   woman   and

     Man and woman

148. Tea **uthene** *tyweke* **uthene**

     tea   and   sugar   and

     Tea and sugar

149. *Artwe Kngwarraye* **uthene** *arelhe Angale* **uthene**-*kenhe   ampe Peltharre*

     man   skin name   and   woman skin name and-belongs to   child skin name

     A Kngwarraye man and an Angale woman's children are Peltharre

However it would be unacceptable in Arrernte to use *uthene* to join two words such as 'woman' and 'sugar'.

Note that it is usual for the *uthene* to appear after each item in the pair, and not just in between the two of them as you would in English constructions. Other endings can also come after *uthene*.

150. *Ayenge ahentye-aneme nhenge arrpenhe* **uthenele** *akaltyele-anthetyeke*

     I   want-pres.   that   another   and-actor   teach-purp.

     I'd like to teach together with someone else

When two people are being referred to in a sentence and they are commonly thought of as being closely associated in some way, such as close friends, a pair of siblings, or a couple, the names of these people can be joined in a sentence by putting *atherre* after each name (*atherre* is the word for 'two').

151. *John* **atherrele** *Gavan* **atherrele** *Arrernteke* *akaltyele-antheke*

     John   two-actor   Gavan   two-actor   Arrernte-for   teach-past

     John and Gavan taught Arrernte

Sometimes the second name in such a sentence is left out altogether, leaving one name with *atherre* after it, but still meaning that two people were carry-

ing out the verb action. It is assumed that the listener will know who the other person being referred to is. So you could say:

152. *John* **atherrele** *Arrernteke* *akaltyele-antheke*

John   two-actor   Arrernte-for   teach-past

John and the other one (i.e. Gavan) taught Arrernte

153. *Kwementyaye* **atherre**

Kwementyaye   two

Kwementyaye and her husband / Kwementyaye and his wife

Further Information

We said before that *ante* cannot be used to connect pronouns, and in fact none of the ways listed above of saying 'and' in Arrernte are used to do this.

Something which is quite different from English usage happens when you want to connect a pronoun, and something refering to a person, together. The correct way to say 'Rosie and I' is *Rosie ilerne* (that is if Rosie is your sister or someone with the same skin name as you). Other examples:

akngeye   *ilake*   father and I (literally: 'father we two')

father   we two

kake   *ilerne*   elder brother and I (literally: 'brother we two')

brother   we two

Kwementyaye   *arrantherre-ame*   *ayeye*   *aweke?*

kwementyaye   you plural-?   story   hear-past

Did Kwementyaye and you mob hear the news?

Note that the pronouns used in these types of constructions must reflect the kin relations between the members of the group. See page 60.

Another ending that can mean 'and', 'also', 'too' or 'as well as' is *-arlke*.

154. *Re-atherre*   *nanthe-arlke*   *pweleke-arlke*   *areke*

    those two   horse-also   cattle-also   see-past

    They saw horses and cattle

155. *Alhwengele*   *aneme*   *arlewatyerre,*   *atyunpe,*   *apmwe,*   *kelyawe-arlke*

    burrow-in   live-pres.   goanna   perentie   snake   lizard-also

    Goannas, perenties, snakes and lizards live in burrows

The word *kenhe* or *akenhe* can be used to mean 'and', 'but' or 'on the other hand'.

156. *Nhenhe*   *atyinhe*   **kenhe**   *yanhe*   *ikwerenharle*

    this   my   and   that   his/hers-focus

    This is mine and that's his

157. *Ayenge*   *nhenhe*   **kenhe**   *re*   *alhekarle*

    I   here   and   he/she   go-past-focus

    I'm here, and she's gone
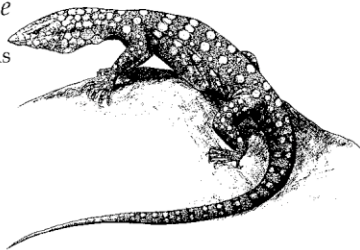
4.2 Sentences with more than one verb

Once you have mastered the use of simple sentences in Arrernte, in particular those containing one verb, it is important to move on and learn how to make sentences that have more than one verb, e.g. 'I went and saw the woman', or 'I saw the child crying.' Once you master this, you will find that the range of things you can say will increase greatly.

One very basic principle is this. When there are two verb actions in a sentence and the subject of one action is different from that of the one doing the other action, the grammar used is different to that used when the same person or thing is the subject of both verbs.

USE OF +MELE

In sentences where there are two or more verbs, but the one doing both the actions is the same (the subject) and the actions are closely connected, the two phrases can be joined by using the +*mele* ending on one of the verbs. This can be translated in English as 'while ...ing' (like in 'while eat*ing*' or 'while go*ing*'). For example take the following two sentences:

158. *Artwe*   *apetyeme*

     man-actor   come-pres.

     The man is coming

159. *Artwele*   *kere*   *arlkweme*

     man   meat   eat-pres.

     The man is eating meat

They can be joined in this way:

160. *Artwele kere*   *arlkwe**mele***   *apetyeme*

     man-actor   meat   eating   come-pres.

     The man is eating meat while he's coming

Another example. The following two sentences:

161. *The*   *ampe*   *areke*

     I   child   see-past

     I saw the child

162. *Ayenge*   *alheke*

     I   go-past

     I went

Can be joined to make:

163. *Alhe**mele***   *the*   *ampe*   *areke*

     going   I   child   see-past

     While I was going I saw the child

Another example:

164. *Artwele   kere   iteme*

man-actor   meat   cook-pres.

The man is cooking the meat

165. *Artwe   alyelheme*

man   sing-pres.

The man is singing

166. *Artwele   alyelh**mele**   kere   iteme*

man-actor   singing   meat   cook-pres.

The man is singing while cooking the meat

USE OF +*RLENGE*, +*RLEKE*

But take a case when the subjects of the two sentences are different. The +*rlenge* or +*rleke* ending shows that the subject of this verb is not the same as that of the other verb. It can be translated as 'while', 'when', 'after' 'and'. In the following example the subjects are 'I' in the first sentence and 'man' in the second:

167. *Artwe   the   areme*

man   I   see-pres.

I can see the man

168. *Artwele   kere   arlkweme*

man-actor   meat   eat-pres.

The man is eating the meat

These two sentences can be joined in the following way:

169. *Artwe   the   areme   kere   arlkwe**rlenge***

man   I   see-pres.   meat   eating

I can see the man eating the meat

Another example ('I' is the subject in the first sentence and 'the dog' is the subject in the second):

170. *The   akngwelye   areke*

I   dog   see-past

I saw the dog

171. *Akngwelye   alheke*

dog   go-past

The dog went

172. *The   akngwelye   areke   alhe**lenge***

I   dog   see-past going

I saw the dog going

173. *The   ankerte   areke   amenge   arlkwer**lenge***

I   lizard   see-past fly   eating

I saw the lizard (while it was) eating a fly
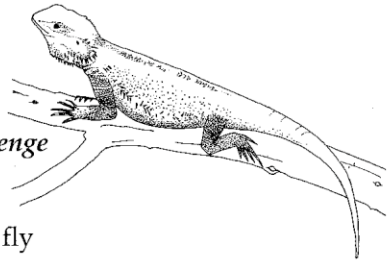
174. *The   ngenhe   tape-eme-ileke   angker**lenge***

I   you   record-past   talking

I recorded you talking

175. *Thipe   nyingke   unte   aweme   angker**leke***

bird   finch   you   hear-pres.   making sound

You can hear the zebra finches (twittering)

Beware

There is another form of both of these endings, +*lenge* and +*leke*, which goes on verbs stems that end with one of the sounds *nhe*, *the*, *lhe*, *tnhe*, and sometimes with *nye*, *tye*, *lye* or *tnye* (as in example 172).

> **Note**
>
> There is another ending -*[ke]rleke* which should not be confused with the
> -*rleke* discussed above. It goes on nominals and translates as 'on', 'onto',
> or 'into' and shows a spatial relation between two entities. For example:
>
> | *Apwerte-kerleke* | *the* | *arrerneme* | *merne* |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | rock-on | I | put-pres. | food |
>
> I'm putting the food on the rock

SOME OF THE USES OF -*ARLE*

-*arle* can be used simply to provide emphasis for words.

176. | *Arlkwenhe-arlkwenhe* | *kwenye-arle* | *yanhe* |
     |---|---|---|
     | edible | not-focus | over there |

   That one is not edible

It is often used when contrasting things:

177. | *Nhenhe-arle* | *akngerre* | *akenhe,* | *nhenhe* | *akweke-arle* |
     |---|---|---|---|---|
     | this-focus | big | but | this | small-focus |

   This one is big and this one is small

178. | *Ampe-arle* | *ampe-arle* |
     |---|---|
     | child-focus | child-focus |

   Kids will be kids

179. | *Ayenge* | *nhenhe* | *kenhe* | *re* | *alhekarle* |
     |---|---|---|---|---|
     | I | here | whereas | he/she | go-past-focus |

   I'm here, whereas she's gone

It can also mean 'that'. Take the following two short sentences:

180. | *Artwele* | *kere* | *arlkweke* |
     |---|---|---|
     | man-actor | meat | eat-past |

   The man ate the meat

181. *The   kere   areke*

    I   meat   see-past

    I saw the meat

If you want to join these together and say, 'The man ate the meat that I saw' you can use *-arle*:

182. *Artwele   arlkweke   kere   **tharle**   areke*

    man-actor   eat-past   meat   I-focus   see-past

    The man ate the meat that I saw

It is also used in describing what someone says or thinks.

183. *Re   anwerneke   ileke   unte-**arle**   alheke*

    he/she   to us   tell-past   you-focus   go-past

    He told us that you'd gone

Further information

When *-arle* goes on a short word such as *re* or *the*, it is usually joined straight on to give: *rarle* or *tharle*.

Chapter Five
Making new words, borrowing words, and other matters

5.1 Word Building

Arrernte has many ways of making new words from others and learning these tricks is a useful way of expanding your Arrernte vocabulary. Below are some examples of how to do this.

MAKING INTRANSITIVE (Ø) VERBS USING -*IRREME*

When -*irreme* is added to a nominal (call it X), the resulting verb generally means 'become (more) X'. *Irreme* generally means 'become some way'.

Some examples are as follows:

mwerre	good	*mwerre-irreme*	get better
akaltye	knowing, knowledgeable	*akaltye-irreme*	learn
urinpe	hot	*urinpe-irreme*	get hot
apurrke	tired	*apurrke-irreme*	get tired
ampwe	old, thin	*ampwe-irreme*	get old, thin

Further information
The +*me* ending on -*irreme* makes it the present tense. You can also use all the other verb endings with it e.g *urinpe-irreke* 'got hot' etc.

MAKING (+LE) TRANSITIVE VERBS USING -*ILEME*

In a similar way -*ileme* can be added to a nominal (call it X) and the resulting verb has the meaning of 'make (more) X'.

mwerre	good	*mwerre-ileme*	make better
urinpe	hot	*urinpe-ileme*	make hot

arratye	correct, straight	*arratye-ileme*	correct, straighten, put right
akurne	bad, no good	*akurne-ileme*	make something bad, spoil
urlkere	slippery, smooth	*urlkere-ileme*	smoothe something

Further information

In some cases +*lhe* is joined onto the nominal before -*ileme*, and when -*ileme* is added to another verb +*lhe* always goes on first. For example:

| *arrateme* | come out |
| *arratelhe-ileme* | make something come out |

5.2 Loan words

Like any language, Arrernte borrows words, and in recent times many new words have been borrowed from English. In some cases these words may have a somewhat different meaning from the way they are used in English. Often they will be pronounced in a distinctly Arrernte way, that is, using the sound system of the Arrernte language. In some cases this makes these borrowed words sound quite different to the way they sound when spoken by an English speaker. Arrernte people who are literate in their own language may decide to spell these words in an Arrernte way. The following are examples:

mutekaye	car, motor vehicle (from English 'motorcar')
mane	money (from English 'money')
wernmine	old man (from English 'old man'), a respectful term
tyampite	billycan (from English 'jam pot')
angketye	handkerchief, scarf (from English 'handkerchief')

Arrernte transitive verbs can also be made from English transitive verbs by

adding +*eme-ileme* (we discussed -*ileme* in the previous section and the +*eme* originally comes from English 'him' or 'them').

pay-*eme-ileme*	buy, pay
drive-eme-ileme	*drive*
Apmere clean-*eme-ilaye!*	Clean the place up!

And intransitive Arrernte verbs can be made from English words by adding -*irreme*.

warrke-irreme	work
married-*irreme*	get married

5.3 Doubling words up

Some Arrernte words are made by doubling up whole words or parts of words, usually to make new words that are slightly different in meaning. This process is quite complicated and it is beyond the scope of this learner's guide to go into this in detail, but here are some interesting examples of this process:

kwatye	water
kwatye-kwatye	slippery, wet, watery, transparent, glossy
awethe	again, more
awethe-awethe	again and again, more than expected
atnerte	stomach
atnerte-atnerte	pregnant
ngkwerne	bone
ngkwerne-ngkwerne	bony, very skinny
atnwaye	back of ankle, including heel
atnwaye-atnwaye	high heel shoes (modern use)
therrke	general term for green plants
therrke-therrke	green

werlatye	breast, milk
werlatye-werlatye	type of plant with milky sap

One way of doubling up verbs shows that the action is happening 'over and over again' or repeatedly. In this case a *pe* is added to the basic verb part or verb stem and then the last few sounds of the original verb part are repeated.

iteme	cook
itepe-iteme	cook (continuously), keep on cooking
atakeme	demolish something
atakepakeme	keep demolishing something
kwerneme	swallow
kwerneperneme	keep swallowing
untheme	go along
unthepe-untheme	wander along (stopping from to time)

To show that the action is 'sort of happening', or 'starting to happen +*elpe* is added to the first part of the verb, and then the whole verb is repeated after it.

atheme	grind
athelpatheme	start to grind
areme	look
arerlpe-areme	start to look

Beware
When the last consonant in the first part of the verb is either *n, l, t, rn, rl, rt, tn, rtn, rr,* or *r,* the form +*erlpe* is used instead of +*elpe.*

Refer to the dictionary for a fuller explanation of these processes of doubling up words.

5.4 Making nominals out of verbs

There are also regular ways in Arrernte of deriving one sort of word from another, for example making a verb from a nominal by adding a certain ending onto the stem of the verb, just as in English a verb like 'speak' has an equivalent noun 'speaker'.

The first way of doing this is by adding *+nhe* to the verb stem and then doubling the last two syllables. Thus a verb (X) is changed into a noun with the meaning of 'someone or something who usually does (X), or gets (X) done to them'. This might be something that usually does the action of the verb, or has that action done to it, or is used to do that action.

angke	speak
angkenhe-angkenhe	speaker, speech, a loud speaker, tape recorder
antywe	drink
antywenhe-antywenhe	drinker, drink
atwe	kill, hit
atwenhe-atwenhe	killer, gun

184. *Ampe*   *akweke*   *akwetethe*   *artnenhe-artnenhe*

     child   small   always   cryer

    The baby is always crying

Other examples:

Arlkwenhe-arlkwenhe   food

eat

Akaltyele-anthenhe-anthenhe   teacher

know   give

Another way of doing this is by adding *+ntye* to the stem of the verb. This shows that the thing being referred to is involved in the performance of the action, or the performance is being described as a thing.

angkentye	words, language, message, speaker
speak+ntye	
alyelhentye	song, singer, singing
sing+ntye	

Yet another way of doing this is to put the word *akngerre* (*akngerre* means big, a lot) after a verb stem that has *+ntye* on it, to show a person or thing who is typically involved with the verb action:

185. *Kere arlkwentye akngerre*

    meat   eat+ntye   lot

    A meat eater / edible meat

186. *Artwe nhenhe antywentye akngerre*

    man   this   drink+ntye   lot

    This man is a drinker

5.5 More than one

It is worth noting that on their own Arrernte words such as *ampe* 'child' can mean both 'child' and 'children'.

The Arrernte do not have many words to describe number.

anyente	one
atherre	two
urrpetye	a few, three
atningke, arunthe	many, large numbers of

When these words are used to show how many, they always go after the thing rather than before it as do number words in English.

187. *Ampe*   *atherre*

     child   two

    Two children

rather than *atherre ampe*.

If you want to be more specific and show that there are many (more than two) of a particular thing add the word *mape*. This is a bit like adding 's' to words in English e.g. 'dogs' or changing the word 'child' to 'children'. *Mape* comes from the English word 'mob' and it is used when talking about more than four or five things.

188. *Aherre*   *mape*   *the*   *areke*

     kangaroo lots of   I   see-past

    I saw the kangaroos

189. *Ampe*   *mape*   *arrkene-irreme*

     child   lots of   play-pres.

    The children are playing

By adding the ending -*ngare* to the number words we can make words meaning 'once', 'twice', and so on.

*anyente-**ngare***	once
*atherre-**ngare***	twice
*atningke-**ngare***	many times

5.6 Making comparisons

The ending -*ulkere* can show that one thing is greater in terms of quantity or quality than another thing. It means something like 'more', or '-ish'. It is sometimes a bit like the 'er' in 'taller'. See also page 45.

arlpentye	tall	*arlpentye-**ulkere***	taller, tallish
mwerre	good	*mwerre-**ulkere***	better, a bit better

190. *Kerwepe   arrpenhe   aneke   arrare-**ulkere***

    crowbar   other   is-past   light-more

The other crowbar was lighter

When used in a sentence the person or thing that the comparison is with has the ending *-nge* on it.

191. *Arne   nhenhe   arne   nhakwenge   arlpentye-**ulkere***

    tree   here   tree   over there-from   long-more

This tree is taller than that one over there

192. *Ampe   atyenhe   akngerre-**ulkere**   ampe   ngkwinhenge*

    child   my   big-more   child   your-from

My child is bigger than yours

5.7 Location and direction

Location of people and events within the geographical landscape is of utmost importance to the Arrernte who learn from early childhood how to place themselves within space and within their country. In fact some childhood games rely on a very sound knowledge of direction. The Arrernte words used to describe compass directions north, south, east, west etc. may be used to talk about movement and direction over long distances or to talk about movements made on a small scale, for example telling someone how to draw a shape on paper or which direction to move a swag (whereas in English commonly the words 'left' and 'right' or 'up' and 'down' are used).

The compass direction words are as follows:

ayerrere	north
antekerre	south
alturle	west
ikngerre	east

Here are some useful words that describe location or movement of people,

objects or places with respect to a speaker.

nhenhe	here (close)
yanhe	there (short distance away)
nhakwe	there (longer distance away, like old English 'yonder')
anpere	past, beyond
irntwarre	on the other side
angathe	on this side, close
ularre	facing this way, facing something
untyeme	facing away from
talkwe	across, crossing over
akethe	outside
kwene	inside
arrekwele, arrwekele	in front
ingkerne	behind
itere	along, beside
mpepe, mpwepe	middle, in between

Examples:

193. **Arrwekele   yanhe**   *araye!*

in front   over there   look-emphasis

Look! In front of you there!

194. *Alkngenthe   akngerre   araye,*   **ularre**-*atheke*   *ampintyeme*

flame   big   look-emphasis   his way-towards   burn-this way-pres.

Look at those big flames, they're burning in this direction

195. *Kele   itne   Yam Creek-nge-ntyele*   **angathe** *alheke*   *yard-nge*   **irntwarre**

then   they   Yam Creek-from   this side   go-past   yard-from   other side

So they went along this side of Yam Creek, the other side of the yard

> **Note**
>
> Most of the direction and location words can be made into verbs by adding *-irreme* or *-ileme* as discussed in Section 5.1.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *ayerrere-irreme* | go north, turn north |
> | *anpere-ileme* | move something past |
> | *irntwarre-irreme* | (move) to the other side |

5.8 Verbs and motion

We have already discussed how Arrernte verbs can be imagined as having lots of slots that can be filled with various endings and 'bits'. An Arrernte verb can be packed with information which tells the listener how the verb action is associated with motion, for example whether the action was happening on the way there or on the way back, whether it happens on the way up or on the way down, and whether it happens quickly or not. We will not go into a lot of detail about this but rather just give a list of examples. Again this is not beginner's stuff, but it is useful to know what the possibilities are with Arrernte verbs, as this will perhaps alert your ears to the many variations possible.

The following sentences all show variations on the same simple sentence:

196. *Re   ayenge   atweke*

    he/she   me   hit-past

    She hit me

Remember that in the following examples the basic part of the verb, or the stem, is *atwe*.

a. *Re ayenge atwintyeke*	She hit me as she came
b. *Re ayenge atwintye-alpeke*	She hit me on her way coming back / She hit me back
c. *Re ayenge atwintye-alheke*	She hit me on her way through
d. *Re ayenge atwintye-akerleke*	She hit me on the way down

e.	*Re ayenge atwetye-akerleke*	She hit me on her way down
f.	*Re ayenge atwetye-antyeke*	She hit me on her way up / She hit me when she arrived
g.	*Re ayenge atwetye-alpeke*	She went back and hit me
h.	*Re ayenge atwetye-alheke*	She went and hit me
i.	*Re ayenge atwirtneke*	She hit me on her way back / She hit me back
j.	*Re ayenge atwenheke*	She hit me on her way past
k.	*Re ayenge atwerle-alpeke*	She hit me and went back
l.	*Re ayenge atwerle-alheke*	She hit me and went
m.	*Re ayenge atwartne-alpeke*	Quickly she hit me then returned
n.	*Re ayenge atwartne-alheke*	She quickly hit me and went.
o.	*Re ayenge atwartne-akerleke*	She hit me quickly on her way down.
p.	*Re ayenge atwartne-iweke*	She started to hit me quickly

Beware

You can see that when the part of the verb that is added starts with an *i* or an *a* the *e* on the end of *atwe* is dropped.

5.9 How an action is done — in what manner?

These are words used to show the speed at which an action happened, the degree of force used to perform the action and to provide other information about how the action happened, such as whether or not the action was completed successfully. They almost always go before the verb in a sentence and they may have the ending +*le* on them. Some examples of these words are:

mwantye	slowly, carefully, skilfully
iparrpe	quickly
arnterre	intensively

ankeye	in a begging manner
uyarne	in vain, try to do something but be unable to
apale	do action wrongly, make a mistake doing something

Examples:

197. *Arelhele*　**mwantyele**　*arntarnte-areme*　*ampe*　*rlkerte*

woman-actor　carefully　look after-pres.　child　sick

The woman is carefully looking after the sick child

198. *Re*　**apale**　*alheke*

he/she　wrongly　go-past

He went the wrong way

199. *Re*　**uyarne** *akarelheke,　kele　imernte　apmere-werne　alpemele*

he/she　in vain　wait-past　then　after　camp-to　going back

He waited in vain so he went home

200. *Re*　**arnterre** *anthurre antewe-irreme merne-arle akngerre arlkweke-iperre*

he/she intensively　really　vomit-pres.　food-focus　lots　eat-past-after

He's really vomiting after eating a lot

201. **Iparrpe** *untemele　inaye,　re　itnyemele　untye　ultakelheketye*

quickly　running　get-emphasis　he/she　falling　neck　break-self-fear of

Quickly run and get him before he falls and breaks his neck

Chapter Six
Word lists

Following is a short Arrernte wordlist with the words grouped according to meaning rather than in alphabetical order. If you want a full alphabetical list of Arrernte words and an English to Arrernte finder list these can be found in the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary*. Because this is only a word list, the full meanings of the following words are not reproduced here, and you would be wise to consult the dictionary to get a better understanding of the full range of meanings of the following words. Remember that there is not always a direct correspondence between an Arrernte word and an English word.

TYPES OF PEOPLE

tyerrtye urrperle	Aboriginal person
mperlkere	white person
artwe	man
artwe ampwe	old man
arrweketye, arelhe	woman
awenke	teenage girl, young woman
ampe	baby
marle	girl
urreye	boy
ngangkere, angangkere	traditional healer
arrirtne, arritnye	name

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

meye, matye	mother, mother's sister
akngeye	father, father's brother
alere	son or daughter (of a man)
ampe	son or daughter (of a woman)
kake	big brother
yaye	big sister
atyeye	little brother or sister
ankele	boy's or man's male cousin
altyele	girls' or woman's female cousin
arrwempe	cousin of the opposite sex
apmarle(ye)	mother's brother
awenhe	father's sister
arrenge	father's father
atyemeye	mother's father
aperle	father's mother
ipmenhe	mother's mother
anewe	husband or wife
mpwerne	man's brother-in-law
arntenge(ye)	woman's sister-in-law
ahenterre(ye)	man's father-in-law
apmarle(ye)	woman's father-in-law

mwere	man's mother-in-law, woman's son-in-law
arnteweye, nteweye	man's father-in-law

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL STATES

akangkeme	be happy, content
alhwarrpe	sad, unhappy
ahele	angry
apure	shy, ashamed
atere	frightened
atnerre	bold, confident
akaltye	clever
arerte	mad

PARTS OF THE BODY

akaperte, ake	head
alte	hair of head
alknge	eye
irlpe	ear
alhe	nose
arrakerte	mouth
artitye	tooth
arralte	beard
ahentye, ite	throat
amulte	arm
iltye	fingers, hand
werlatye	breast
atnerte	belly
artepe	back
atnilhe	buttocks, bum
ulyepere	thigh
ampere	knee
alhwe	blood
urtakwerte	heart
aleme	liver
ngkwerne	bone
alwerrknge	tendon
atne	faeces, anus

mpwe	urine
ingke	foot
atywe	calf

BODILY STATES AND REACTIONS

itethe	alive
ankwe	asleep
akarre	awake
ngkethakwe, ngkethele	thirsty
angayakwe, angayele	hungry
apurrke	tired
rlkerte	sick
apekape	weak
utyewe	thin
atherreme	laugh, smile
artneme	cry
ilweme	die

RELIGION AND SUPERNATURAL

Altyerre	Aboriginal Law, Dreaming
anthepe-irreme	dance (women)
urnteme	dance (men)
alyeme	sing
utnenge	person's spirit
ameke-ameke	secret/sacred
arrentye	monster, bad spirit

TOOLS AND WEAPONS

urtne	coolamon, bowl
pmware	digging scoop
atneme	digging stick
athere	large flat grinding stone
arturte	small hand-held grinding stone
irrtyarte	hunting spear
amirre	woomera

alye, ilye	boomerang	akaltye-irreme	learn
ankere	spinifex gum	akaltyele-antheme	teach
alyweke	knife (stone)	angkeme	talk, say something
kwetere	nulla-nulla	apayuthneme	ask
		arlkeme	call out for some-one

CAMP AND FIRE

apmere	place, home, camp
takwe, kwintye	windbreak
warle	house, building
ure	fire, firewood
kwerte	smoke

ileme	tell, say
intelhe-ileme	write, paint, draw

MOTION

iparrpe	quickly
mwantye-mwantye	slowly
apetyeme	come
alheme	go
alpeme	return
arratetye-alheme	arrive
antyeme, intyeme	climb, ride
akeme-irreme	get up
arratintyeme	come out
irrpeme	enter, go in
itnyeme, atnyeme	fall
unteme	run
apenteme	follow
alkereke-irreme	fly
aname-irreme	move on
akngeheme	move self

EATING, DRINKING AND COOKING

kere	meat
merne	vegetable food, bread
tyape	edible grub
ngkwarle	sweet, sweet food
yerrampe	honey ant
arletye	raw, uncooked
mpenge	cooked, ripe
arntirte, irntirte, arnterte	rotten
atyerreme	cook in ashes
iteme	cook, light a fire
ntheke-iweme	singe off hair, fur or skin
arlkweme	eat
antyweme	drink
awantyeme	lick
arrkerneme	taste, try

REST

aneme	stay, sit
arrernelheme	sit down, land
inteme	lie
kwene-irreme	bend over, crouch
tneme	stand
akarelheme	wait
alengke-iwelheme	hide (oneself)

THOUGHT, SPEECH AND PERCEPTION

aweme	hear, understand
itirreme	think
areme	see, look
ntyerneme	smell something
untheme	search, look for

GETTING, TAKING, GIVING, HOLDING (POSSESSION AND TRANSFER)

atnyeneme	have, hold
akngeme	carry, take
antheme	give
athankweme	gather something up
ineme	get, pick up
arrerneme	put down
rakeme	grab, snatch
iweme	throw away

AFFECT (PHYSICAL IMPACT)

ultakeme	break something
ampeme	burn something
akelheme	break
akeme	cut
tyelkerneme	slice, cut meat
tnyeme	dig
mpwareme	fix, make, do
atweme	hit, punch
atheme	grind
atantheme	spear, pierce, sew
aperneme	smear
alherreme	scratch something
ayerneme	tie up
tyarrineme	pull
ankerte-iweme	push
uthneme, akakweme	bite
alheweme	wash something
arteme	cover

WEATHER AND THE SKY

kwatye	fresh water, rain
angkulye	cloud
rlke	wind
uterne	sun, summer
atnyentye	moon
kwerralye	star
ingwe	night
alkere	sky
alhwerrpe	winter
arlte	day
ulye	shade

LANDFORMS AND LANDSCAPE

ahelhe	ground, earth, land
apwerte	hill, mountain, rock, stone
akethe	plain
arne-artne	scrub
lhere, ulpaye	creek, river
inteye	cave
arerrke, arlpe	sand, sandhill
arnerre	rockhole

ANIMALS

kere	meat, animal
aherre	kangaroo
arenge	euro
rapite	rabbit
antetherrke, arntetherrke	carpet snake
arlewatyerre	goanna
atywenpe, atyunpe	perentie lizard
artewe	bush turkey
arleye	emu
akngwelye	dog

BIRDS

thipe	bird
kwarte	egg
arlpelhe	feather, wing
antywe	bird's nest
angepe	crow
irretye	wedge-tailed eagle

REPTILES AND INSECTS

apmwe	snake
yerre	ant
intelyapelyape	butterfly
amenge	fly
arreme	lice
inurle	spider

PLANTS

arne	tree, stick
atherrke, name	grass
arlpelhe	leaf
lyeke	prickle, thorn
artekerre	root
artetye	mulga
apere	river red gum
ayepe	tar-vine

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

urrperle	black
mperlkere	white
urinpe	hot
untyetye	warm
irrernte	cold
arlenye	dry
arrirlpe	sharp
metye	blunt
lterrke	hard
anteke	wide
urlpme	narrow, tight

QUANTITY AND SIZE

anyente	one, only
atherre	two, a pair
urrpetye	a few, three
arunthe, atningke,	
mape	many, plural
akngerre	big
akweke	little

urtetye	short
arlpentye	long, tall

EVALUATION

mwerre	good
mwerre akngerre	nice, beautiful
akurne	bad, spoiled
arratye	true, straight, right, correct
apale	wrongly
arnkwerte-arnkwerte	crooked
alkarle	new, flash
ingkweye	old
irnterre, arnterre	very, strongly
uyarne	unsuccessfully

TIME

lyete	now, today
lyete-ulkere	recently
urreke	later on
apmwerrke	yesterday, very recent past
ingweleme	in the morning, this morning
angwerre-angwerre	late afternoon, evening
ingwele	at night, tonight
ingwenthe	tomorrow, very near future
arrule	a long time ago
awethe	again
akwetethe	always

INTERJECTIONS AND USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

werte	greeting, how are you going?, what's up?
ware	greeting response
ye, yewe-yewe	yes
arrangkwe	no, nothing
apeke	maybe
kele mwerre	okay, good
yweke, yekwe	don't know
akunye	poor thing!
arratyeye?	really?
kele	that's all
alaye!	look out!, get out of the way!
ipmentye	don't
impaye	leave it
mpe	let's go
iwenheke	why?, what for?
ngke	give it to me
me	here it is, here take this
ilengare	when?
nthenhe	where?
nthakenhe	how?
nthakentye	how many?
angwenhe	who?
awethe	again
alakenhe	like this
kweye?	is that right?
kweye!	oops!
ayekaye!	ouch! oh! gee!
eye!	yuk! (you think something is repulsive), oh no!
Ingkartele areme	true to God, honest to God

Chapter Seven
A song and some simple conversations

CONVERSATION 1

Person A: *Apetyaye!*
            come-emphasis
            Come here!

Person B: *Nthenhe-werne   alheme?*
            where-to   go-pres.
            Where are you going?

Person A: *Apmere-werne*
            home-to
            Home

Person B: *Iwenheke?*
            what-for
            What for?

Person A: *Kereke*
            meat-for
            For meat

Person A: *Unte   apetyeme?*
            you   come-pres.
            Are you coming?

Person B: *Kele,   ayenge   apetyeme*
            Okay   I   come-pres.
            Okay, I'm coming

Unte Nthenhe-arenye?

by Group 9692

Unte Nthenhe-arenye?

Where do you come from?

by Group 9692

Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Atyenge ilaye, atyenge ilaye.	Tell me! Tell me!
Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Atyenge ilaye, atyenge ilaye.	Tell me! Tell me!
Ayenge apmere ikngerre-arenye.	I'm from a place in the east.
Ltyentye Apurte, Ltyentye Apurte.	Santa Teresa, Santa Teresa.
Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Ltyentye Apurte, Ltyentye Apurte.	Santa Teresa, Santa Teresa.
Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Atyenge ilaye, atyenge ilaye.	Tell me! Tell me!
Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Atyenge ilaye, atyenge ilaye.	Tell me! Tell me!
Ayenge apmere Imengkwerne-arenye.	I'm from Amoonguna.
Apmere nhenhe mwerre anthurre.	That's very good place.
Unte nthenhe-arenye?	Where are you from?
Imengkwerne-arenye, Imengkwerne-arenye.	From Amoonguna, from Amoonguna.

Unte Nthenhe-arenye? tape and songbook are published by IAD Press.

CONVERSATION 2

Person A: *Yaye   ngkwinhe   mwerre?*
            elder sister   your   good
            Is your elder sister well?

Person B: *Ye, mwerre   anthurre*
            yes   good   really
            Yes, she's really well

Person A: *Re   anewe-akerte?*
            she/he   spouse-having
            Is she married?

Person B: *Ye, re   anewe-akerte*
            yes   she/he   spouse-having
            Yes, she is married

Person A: *Re   ampe   akweke-akerte?*
            he/she   baby   small-having
            Has she got children?

Person B: *Ye, re   ampe   urrpetye-akerte*
            yes   he/she   baby   three-having
            Yes, she's got three children

Person A: *Nthenhele   itne   aneme?*
            where-at   they   live-pres.
            Where do they live?

Person B: *Itne   Imengkwernele   aneme*
            they   Amoonguna-at   live-pres.
            They live at Amoonguna

Person A: *Arratye?   Atyeye   atyenhe   yanhele   aneme*
            true   younger brother/sister   mine   over there-at live-pres.
            True? My younger brother/sister lives over there

CONVERSATION 3

Person A: *Apetyaye!*
come-emphasis
Come here!

Person B: *Werte,   iwenhe aperte?*
G'day,   what's up
G'day, what's up?

Person A: *Ayenge   ngkethakwe   anthurre*
I   thirsty   really
I'm really thirsty

Person B: *Unte   nthenhe-arenye?*
you   where-origin
Where are you from?

Person A: *Ayenge   Mparntwe-arenye*
I   Alice Springs-origin
I'm from Alice Springs

Person B: *Ayenge   Kngwarraye*
I   Kngwarraye
I'm a Kngwarraye

Person A: *Ayenge   Peltharre*
I   Peltharre
I'm a Peltharre

Person B: *Unte   akngeye   atyenhe*
you   father   my
You're my father

Person A: *Unte   alere   atyenhe*
you   son   my
You're my son

Person B: *Akngeyaye,   kwatye   anthaye*
father-emph.   water   give-emphasis
Father, give me water!

CONVERSATION 4

Person A: *Yekaye, urinpe anthurre*
             gee   hot   really   Gee, it's really hot

Person B: *Meye, atnerte ayenge ampeme, ayenge angayakwe*
             mother stomach I   burn-pres. I   hungry
             Mum, my stomach's aching from hunger

Person A: *Urreke, akarelhaye,   the   merne   iteme*
             later   wait-emphasis   I   food   cook-pres.
             Wait, I'm cooking food

Person B: *Iwenhe   yanhe?*
             what   over there   What's that?

Person A: *Nhenhe   kere   arlewatyerre*
             this   meat   goanna
                                                 This is a goanna

Person B: *Nthakenhe unte iteme?*
             how   you   cook-pres.
                                                 How do you cook it?

Person A: *Kere   arlewatyerre alpmanthele iteme*
             meat   goanna   hot earth-in cook-pres.
             Goanna is cooked in the hot earth

Person B: *Kere   yanhe   iwenhe-arteke?*
             meat   there   what-like   What's that meat like?

Person A: *Kere   nhenhe   chicken-arteke*
             meat   this   chicken-like   This meat is like chicken

Person B: *Kele,   kere   akweke   ayenge   anthaye*
             Okay   meat   small   me   give-emphasis
             Okay give me a little meat

Person B: *Yekaye, mwerre akngerre anthurre, awethe ayenge anthaye!*
             gee   good   lots of   really   more   me   give-emphasis
             Oh, it's really good. Give me some more!

Person A: *Me,   awethe arlkwaye!*
             here,   take it   more eat-emphasis
             Here, take it. Eat some more!

Further information

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Eastern and Central Arrernte are strong languages, spoken every day by about 2000 people in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) and other communities in Central Australia. For Arrernte people, their language is important in a way that goes beyond straightforward communication; it links them with their family, with their country and with their Dreamings.

This fully revised learner's guide is an excellent introduction to the Arrernte language. It explains the structure of the language in a clear way, without using linguistic jargon. Special features of this book include sections on kinship, useful words and phrases and a guide to the pronunciation and spelling of Arrernte.

An accompanying audio cassette contains readings of the example sentences and dialogues in the learner's guide, as well as additional information about the sounds of Arrernte.