

# **A Grammar of Kuuk Thaayorre**

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Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

July 2006

Department of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics

The University of Melbourne

## **Dedication**

Wanhn ngathnmak, Alfred Charlie, culture man;  
For Ralph & June Mottram; who first taught me the joys of language;  
And for Rosanne Gaby, the wisest woman I know.

# Abstract

This thesis is a comprehensive description of Kuuk Thaayorre, a Paman language spoken on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, Australia. On the basis of elicited data, narrative and semi-spontaneous conversation recorded between 2002 and 2005, this grammar details the phonetics and phonology, morphosyntax, lexical and constructional semantics and pragmatics of one of the few indigenous Australian languages still used as a primary means of communication. Kuuk Thaayorre possesses features of typological interest at each of these levels.

At the phonological level, Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a particularly rich vowel inventory from an Australian perspective, with five distinct vowel qualities and two contrastive lengths producing ten vowel phonemes. It is in the phonotactic combination of sounds that Kuuk Thaayorre phonology is particularly noteworthy, however. Kuuk Thaayorre's tendency towards closed syllables (with codas containing up to three consonants) frequently leads to consonant clusters of as many as four segments. Kuuk Thaayorre is also cross-linguistically unusual in allowing sequences of its two rhotics (an alveolar tap/trill and retroflex continuant) within the syllable – either as a complex coda or as onset plus syllabic rhotic. Finally, monosyllables are ubiquitous across all Thaayorre word classes, despite being generally rare in Australian languages.

At the level of morphology, Kuuk Thaayorre is one of the very few languages demonstrated to possess phrasal affixation (cf. Dench and Evans 1988, Anderson et al. 2006); the irregularity of Thaayorre ergative case inflection proves the ergative morpheme to be a suffix, yet only the final nominal of the noun phrase is inflected (§6.1). The syntactic combination of words into phrases and clauses reveals a predominantly nonconfigurational language (cf. Austin and Bresnan 1996) which nevertheless has a highly structured noun phrase (§6). Of particular theoretical significance is the complex encoding of arguments by apposed noun phrases, free pronouns and incipient enclitic pronouns (§6.8-6.9, Gaby 2005). Kuuk Thaayorre is also unusual in possessing multiple distinct inclusory constructions, including a set of inclusory pronouns that express both the participant group as a whole and an individual member thereof distinctly within a single lexeme (§5.1.5).

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses myriad polyfunctional, homophonous and polysemous forms. Of particular interest here is the exploitation of morphosyntactic categories for pragmatic purposes (e.g. the use of spatial distinctions in demonstratives to express how easily the referent is retrievable [§5.3.3], or the use of ergative case-marking to signal whether or not the subject's reference accords with the addressee's expectations [§4.2.1.3, cf. Gaby to appear-a]). The fact that Kuuk Thaayorre is one of the few traditional Australian indigenous languages still being learned by children and used in daily interactions allows us the rare opportunity to explore such pragmatic concerns alongside the grammatical structures through which they are expressed.

*This is to certify that*

- (i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,*
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,*
- (iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of examples, tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices*

Alice Gaby

## Acknowledgements

In Kuuk Thaayorre, both friends and family are referred to by the expression *pam thaaw*. I wish to thank my ‘elder brother’ Alfred Charlie for helping me to forget why English speakers find it necessary to distinguish the two. I am enormously grateful to all the people in Pormpuraaw who instructed me in their language and culture with great generosity, patience and humour. Chief among them were: Alfred Charlie, Edna Charlie, Gracie Charlie, Irene Charlie, Alice Chillagoe and her family, Christine Coleman, John Coleman, Ivy Conrad, Molly Edwards, Ned Edwards, Esther Foote, Lawrence Foote, Myrtle Foote, Albert Jack, Gilbert Jack, Toby Joe, Elizabeth Norman, Georgina Norman, Freddy Tyore, Cyril William and Donald William. The Tarpencha, Holroyd and Shortjoe families have applied their considerable linguistic talents to the documentation of Kugu Muminh, Kugu Mu’inh and Wik Iyenh – I look forward to seeing their dedication to this project bear fruit. I further acknowledge the more than a hundred members of the Pormpuraaw community who have at one time or another taught me language(s), though it is impossible to name them all individually.

John Taylor first introduced me to the Pormpuraaw community, and has generously shared with me his extensive local knowledge, unpublished materials, and many wonderful meals. I thank him and Barbara Taylor for their warmth and generosity from the outset. Along with John Taylor, I owe a great debt to Barry Alpher and Allen Hall, who won the respect and affection of the many people in Pormpuraaw with whom they worked. It is due to their marvellous precedent that I was greeted with immediate enthusiasm rather than suspicion or resentment.

Both Allen Hall and Tom Foote have contributed much to this grammar posthumously. I thank them and their families for the linguistic legacy they have left future generations of Kuuk Thaayorre speakers and linguists, including myself.

Barry Alpher has been stunningly generous with his data, unpublished manuscripts and deep knowledge of the languages of the area. I have also been fortunate to have Jean-Christophe Verstraete as teacher, collaborator, friend and Cape York neighbour. Many of his ideas and insights have also found their way into this thesis. I am also very grateful for the wisdom, reflection and Cape York camaraderie of Bruce Rigsby and Claire Hill.

This grammar would never have been written without the moral, financial and practical support of the Pormpuraaw Community Council (councillors and administrative staff) and the Pormpuraaw State School (staff and students). John Coleman, Bert Edwards, Christine Coleman, Peter and Tanya Gottstein, John Thurlow, Irma Ashwin, Bruce Houghton, Murray McKenny, Gai Durham and Joss have been especially helpful. The research reported here was also generously supported by the University of Melbourne, the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (Nijmegen) and the Cape York Peninsula Language Documentation Project. Many thanks to the CYPLDP coordinator Clair Hill and the administrative staff of Melbourne Uni and the MPI Nijmegen, especially Christine McKeown, Cheryl Burrell and Edith Sjoerdsma (who has saved many a rasher in her time).

I also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Vivienne Blanksby, Janet Fletcher and the lab rats, who provided me with my two ideal thesis incubators.

Thanks to Asifa Majid for my education in psychology and single malts, for pushing me intellectually, and pulling me away from the intellect when I needed it

most. Ruth Singer has been a peer, collaborator, editor and friend since the very beginning of our linguistic careers. She has contributed to this thesis as both a reader of draft chapters and a model of linguistic analysis. During the final months of writing, it was Mary Stevens and Debbie Loakes whose tea, keys and camaraderie (not to mention stinky cheeses and pinossimo) got me through with a minimum of tears and torn out hair. Thank you so much for your support, proofreading and spectrogram production, and for being such good role models at work and at play.

Thanks also to the many people who have mentored, advised, challenged and inspired me throughout my candidature. Rattling off their names in an alphabetical list does an injustice to the very different roles they've played in getting me through my PhD. Nevertheless, thank you: Anna Margetts; Barb Kelly; Bhuvana Narasimhan; Bill McGregor; Birgit Hellwig; Dan Slobin; Debbie Loakes; Erich Round; Felicity Meakins; Felix Ameka; Frank Seifart; Hywell Stokes; Janet Fletcher; Janet Sharp; Juergen Bohnemeyer; Leslie Stirling; Loretta O'Connor; Mandana Seyfeddinipur; Marcus Barber; Marianne Gullberg; Mary Stevens; Meladel Mistica; Michael Clyne; Mimmi Ono; Pamela Perniss; Robyn Loughnane; Ruth Singer; Sarah Cutfield; Sasha Aikhenvald; Sebastian Fedden; Stephen Morey; and Susy Macqueen. Susy, Rohan, Anna, Andrew and Clara have kept me well-nourished in a number of respects. Mark, Harry, Tim, John and the boys provided the perfect 'wind down time' entertainment.

I could not imagine a better combination of institutions to have produced this thesis at than Melbourne Uni and the MPI Nijmegen. Heartfelt thanks to my supervisors at the latter, Stephen Levinson and Nick Enfield, for introducing me to exciting new domains of inquiry, methodologies and people. The staff of the Melbourne Uni Department of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, and especially my supervisors Nick Evans and Rachel Nordlinger, were the reason I studied linguistics and then Australian languages in the first place. I still have much to learn from them, but I'm also aware of how much they have taught me already and how hard it will be to forget! Rachel has a remarkable talent for disentangling my data- and theory-induced befuddlement and laying things out so clearly I wonder why I was ever confused in the first place. Thank you for your support over these last weeks especially, and for knowing when less is more.

Though Nick's own research has frequently left me feeling stupid by comparison, his input into mine has always left me engaged and enthused. Thank you, Nick, for your advice and inspiration but also for your patience in letting me make my own mistakes. I know I have been lucky to have had your guidance through these formative years.

My wonderful family has supported me in so many ways since long before this thesis was dreamt of. The interest, care and sustenance I have received from them all, and particularly Mum, over the last few weeks is all the more remarkable for the fact that it is not unusual. My love and thanks to all of the Gabys, Mottrams, Palmieris, Greers, Hirsts, Blanksbys and Sibillins. Without them there would be no words.

Finally, my thanks to Daniel Hirst, who has made this thesis — and so much else in my life — not only possible, but fun. Dan has opened my eyes to countless insights and opportunities, linguistic and otherwise. His whole-hearted enthusiasm for Pormpuraaw helped make it a home, and provided plenty of fodder for example sentences.

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## Glosses and abbreviations

<RDP>	reduplication
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative case
ACC	accusative case
ADN.PRIV	adnominal privative case
ATTN	attention-drawing prefix (to adnominal demonstratives)
B	brother
CDICT	contradictory particle
CMP	completive particle
COM	comitative case
CONTR	contrastive particle
CTF	counterfactual mood
D	daughter
DAT	dative case
DETR	potential detriment particle
DIRECTED	directed verbal prefix
du	dual number
DUB	dubitative enclitic
e	elder
ERG	ergative case
#ERG	pragmatically conditioned omission of ergative morpheme

ERG^	pragmatically conditioned inclusion of ergative morpheme
F	father
f	calculated with respect to female anchor
GEN	genitive case
GO&	first associated motion morpheme
HORT	hortative particle
IDPH	ideophone
IMM	imminence morpheme
IMP	imperative
incl	inclusive
INF	infinitive
M	mother
m	calculated with respect to male anchor
NEG	negative particle
NO	constituent negator
NMLZ	nominaliser
NOM	nominative case
NP	noun phrase
NPST	nonpast tense
NUM	loan numeral marker
P.IPFV	past imperfective
P.PFV	past perfective
PERM	permissive particle
pl	plural number
POS	possessive pronoun
PRAG	pragmatic enclitic
PRIV	privative enclitic

PROHIB	prohibitive particle
PURP	purposive
RCPCANT	marker of reciprocant subject argument
RDP	reduplication
REL.PRIV	relational privative enclitic
REL.PROP	relational proprietive enclitic
RFL	reflexive (verbal suffix or pronoun)
S	son
SBD	subordinate
SBJV	subjunctive
TR	transitive verbaliser
TRM	topological relation marker
UNXP	unexpected event particle
V^	valence increasing derivational suffix
VBLZ	verbaliser
WANT	desiderative/purposive particle
y	younger

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 The Thaayorre language(s)

### 1.1.1 Speakers

Kuuk Thaayorre is a language of western Cape York Peninsula. Of approximately 350 ethnic Thaayorre, around 250 are regular speakers<sup>1</sup> of the language. Almost all of them are now resident in the community of Pormpuraaw, which at latitude 14 degrees 54 minutes south, longitude 141 degrees, 37 minutes east lies within the territory traditionally occupied by the Thaayorre people. The community was established in 1938 as an Anglican mission (then named ‘Edward River’), and remained so until the church handed administrative control to the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs in 1967 (Taylor 1977:150). Formerly semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, the Thaayorre still maintain close links to their traditional lands, which for the most part lie inland and to the south of Pormpuraaw. Many Pormpuraaw residents live part or most of the year on outstations on these lands.

The patrilineal clan was and remains the most important social unit, particularly with respect to land tenure. Each clan is affiliated with a number of totemic beings (*pulowar*, such as the *minh puntil* ‘brolga’) and associated stories, songs, dances and ‘story places’ (*raak woochorrm*). The Thaayorre, like most groups of Cape York Peninsula, traditionally lived in local bands revolving around a ‘focal male’ (Sutton 1978, Sutton and Rigsby 1982), nowadays often identified as a (deceased) ancestor. Other members of the local band would be related to this focal male by descent, marriage or sometimes merely friendship (Smith 1986:514). Because the members of these bands would have spoken a number of different languages and dialects, children would have grown up with at least a passive knowledge of a number of different varieties, fostering (at least in part) the multilingualism discussed below.

---

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the difficulty in assessing linguistic competence as a non-native speaker, I estimate number of speakers according to how many people preferentially use Kuuk Thaayorre in their normal daily interactions.

The community of Pormpuraaw is home to a number of different ethnic groups, most of whom were drawn to the settlement from adjacent territories during the mission era. Because the Thaayorre are the most numerous and politically powerful group, most other indigenous locals have at least a passive knowledge of the Thaayorre language, and many are fully fluent.

### 1.1.2 Alternative names and dialects

*Kuuk Thaayorre* [ku:k ʈa:jor] is the name applied by the Thaayorre people to their own language. This bipartite term comprises the Thaayorre generic noun *kuuk* (meaning ‘language’) followed by the (specific) ethnonym *Thaayorre*<sup>2</sup>. Although the English language generally makes no distinction between the proper noun referring to a language (e.g. *He studies Russian*) and the adjective that describes its group of speakers and their culture (e.g. *He studies Russian film*), I make a principled distinction between the two. The binomial expression *Kuuk Thaayorre* is used throughout this grammar as a noun denoting the language, while *Thaayorre* is used either as adjective or ethnonym. Reference will thus be made to *the Thaayorre (people)* or *Thaayorre culture*.

There are a range of alternative spellings for *Kuuk Thaayorre*. The one followed here is that used by Hall (1968, 1972 and elsewhere) and used most widely in the Pormpuraaw community. The spelling *Koko Daiyuri* is used by Simmons, Graydon and Gajdusek (1958), *Thayore* by Alpher (1972), *Taior* by Tindale (1974) and both *Koko Taiyor* and *Koko Daiyuri* in the notes of Donald Thomson. Other documented spellings vary in (the representation of) vowel length, consonant voicing, the alveolar tap/trill (transcribed here as ‘rr’), and the representation of a final vowel (which marks ergative/instrumental case): *Kuuk Thaayoore*, *Thaayore*, *Thayorre*, *Taior*, *Tayore*, *Taiol*, *Da:jor*, *Gugudayor*, *Kuktayor*, *Koko-Daiyuri*, *Kokkotaijari*, *Kokotaiyari* and

---

<sup>2</sup> The term *Thaayorre* is most likely a compound in origin since the morpheme *thaa-* < *thaaw* ‘mouth’ commonly occurs as the first element of compounds (see §4.3.2). However, the etymology of the putative second element, *yorre*, is unknown.

*Kukudayore*. Grimes and Grimes (2000) also list the language name *Behran* as an alternative to *Kuuk Thaayorre*, but this is not a form I have encountered elsewhere.

The genetic status of the variety *Kuuk Yak* (literally ‘snake language’) is unclear. From discussions with the handful of Thaayorre in Pormpuraaw who remember or partially speak this language I have the impression that it is a dialect of *Kuuk Thaayorre*, or at least a closely related language<sup>3</sup>. This impression may be fostered somewhat erroneously by the processes of language obsolescence, whereby fluency in *Kuuk Thaayorre* is leaving its mark on the remnants of *Kuuk Yak*. Barry Alpher (p.c.) is currently documenting what remains of *Kuuk Yak* lexicon and grammar. It is hoped that this, combined with Alpher’s longstanding expertise in the languages of the region, will shed more light on the genetic status of *Kuuk Yak*, especially vis à vis *Kuuk Thaayorre*. It may be, though, that the obsolescence of *Kuuk Yak* is too far progressed to allow detailed reconstruction.

Some *Kuuk Thaayorre* speakers remember the names of additional dialects (e.g. *Kuuk Thaayunth*, *Kuuk Thayem*, *Kuuk Thanon*), but these seem to have approximated standard *Kuuk Thaayorre* as speaker numbers dwindle. The present sociolinguistic situation in Pormpuraaw appears to comprise a single standard variety with small idiolectal and family-lectal differences (mostly in vocabulary). Notwithstanding small inter-speaker variances in allomorphy (notably in the forms of ergative case marking), I have found no dialectal differences in grammar proper. The few instances of grammatical variance between individuals and age groups appear better attributed to obsolescence than to enduring dialects.

The variety described here was selected by providence rather than by design. My two key consultants (AC and GJ, both of whom self-selected) are only very distantly related, belong to different generations, and spend little social time together. Nevertheless, their speech converges to the point that it can confidently be labeled a single dialect, with only a few minor (possibly idiolectal) differences in vocabulary

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<sup>3</sup> Alpher (1972:68), on the basis of personal communication with Allen Hall, similarly concludes that *Kuku Yak* is likely to be the most closely related language to *Kuuk Thaayorre*, or perhaps a ‘sister dialect’.

and pronunciation<sup>4</sup>. That the variety shared by AC and GJ is a Pormpuraaw standard was confirmed by conversations with and observation of other Kuuk Thaayorre speakers in the community. Most divergences from the grammar set down here were found amongst younger speakers whose speech displays multiple effects of language attrition.

### 1.1.3 Registers

In the pre-mission era, adult speakers of Kuuk Thaayorre were also fluent in a manual sign register as well as an oral respect register. Manual signs were used to communicate over large distances (out of earshot but within sight), while hunting (so as not to disturb the quarry), or in the presence of a taboo relative. I observed manual signs being used only the first two of these contexts, and involving only a very circumscribed subset of what I understand to be the earlier inventory of signs. The speakers I interviewed remember only the most common hand signs (denoting certain family members, animals and asking questions). There may be some elders in the community who retain a deeper knowledge of the manual system, however.

The respect register appears to be even further eroded than the manual register. In earlier times, however, it was apparently used in communication with people in mourning or with those in a taboo (*nganc*) kinship category (e.g. the opposite sex parent-in-law). This register appears to be derived from the standard variety of Kuuk Thaayorre through lexical substitution.

The alternative categorisations of family members across these two registers and spoken Kuuk Thaayorre are touched upon in §4.1.1.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the adverb *angunp* ‘in this place’ is pronounced [aŋunp] by AC, [ŋamunp] by GJ, and [ajunp] by a third consultant (LN) and many other younger speakers.



### 1.1.4 Genetic affiliation

Kuuk Thaayorre is a Pama-Nyungan language of the Paman subgroup, as suggested by its reflex of the eponymous *\*pama* ‘man’; *pam* ‘man’. The languages of Cape York are in many respects aberrant from the standard Pama-Nyungan typological profile. Cape York languages were therefore routinely excluded from this family (e.g. by Schmidt 1919) until Hale (1964) convincingly demonstrated their genetic relatedness.

Under Alpher’s (1972) analysis of the genetic relationships between the languages of the western Cape York area, Kuuk Thaayorre forms Upper Southwest Pama along with Uw Oygangand, which then go on to form Southwest Pama with the ‘Coastal Southwest Pama’ languages, Koko Bera, Yir Yoront and Yir Thangedl (these latter two forming the ‘Yir’ subgroup), as depicted in Figure 1. This classification differs significantly from those of Capell (1963), O’Grady and Voegelin (1966), and Hale (1964, 1966a, 1976a), who classify Kuuk Thaayorre as a member of the ‘Western Pama’ subgroup. Dixon (2002:xxxii) alternatively proffers an areal classification of Kuuk Thaayorre (Ea1; upper southwest Pama group of the Western Cape York Peninsula areal group) in lieu of committing to a broader genetic relationship.

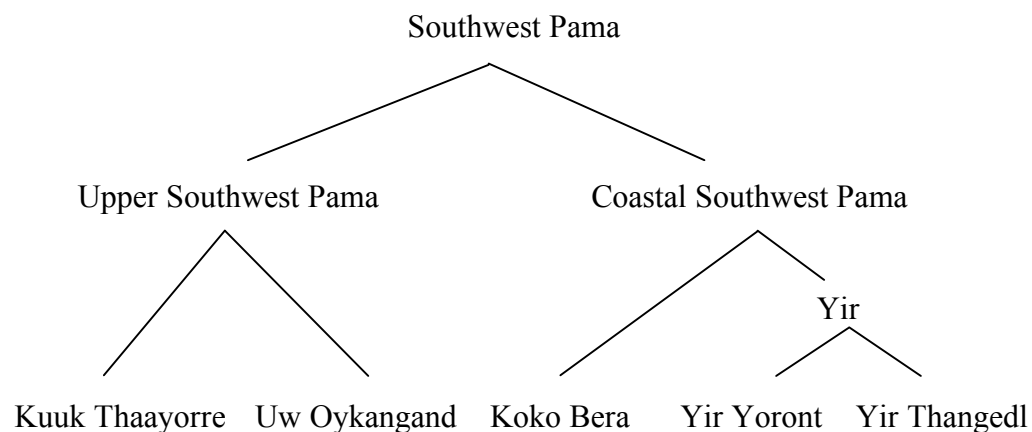


Figure 1. Southwest Paman languages (adapted from Alpher 1972)

### 1.1.5 Linguistic ecology and sociopolitical context

To my knowledge, there are no monolingual Kuuk Thaayorre speakers, nor is it likely that there would have been many in the past. This multilingualism does not simply arise from the necessity of functional proficiency in the language of colonial power, English (revisited below), but stems from a range of social and familial structures discussed by Sharp (1934), Sutton (1978) and Taylor (1984), inter alia, including linguistic exogamy. Cape York Peninsula has long been an area of widespread and sustained multilingualism (cf., e.g., Sutton 1978, 1991 and Mülhäusler 2000 who characterises Cape York as a ‘balanced equitable ecology’). For generations, then, the Thaayorre would also have been proficient (to various degrees) in other languages of the area, notably: Yir Yoront, Koko Bera, Kugu Nganhcara, Pakanh, Ayapathu, Kunjen, Uw Oykangand and more. All of these languages remain either spoken or partially remembered by present day Kuuk Thaayorre speakers, but Kuuk Thaayorre has by far the widest currency in the community (excepting English).

The arrangement of domestic dwellings in Pormpuraaw today approximately replicates the geographical relationships between the traditional territories of their occupants<sup>5</sup>. Most obviously, almost all of those living on the southern side of ‘Pormpuraaw Street’ (on which is located the school, the shop, most council buildings, the garage and the canteen) are ethnically Thaayorre or Yir Yoront, and Kuuk Thaayorre is spoken. Yir Yoront (described by Alpher 1973, 1991) is spoken rarely if at all, and all those who remember it now speak Kuuk Thaayorre or English in their daily interactions. Nevertheless, the close genetic relationship and long history of contact between Kuuk Thaayorre and Yir Yoront (and their respective speakers) is evident in the many shared linguistic and cultural features. Both the Yir Yoront people and their language are referred to by the Thaayorre as *Koko Mincena* (pronounced with a very rare penultimate stress).

The Wik peoples, who traditionally occupied territories to the north of the Thaayorre but were drawn to the community during the mission era, live almost exclusively on the northern side of Pormpuraaw St. This northern area is known in the community as

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<sup>5</sup> Alpher (1973:2) notes the same of the Mitchell River settlement (now ‘Kowanyama’).

‘Munkan side’<sup>6</sup>, and is populated mostly by Kugu Nganhcara people (≈250). Wik Mungkan is becoming a lingua franca amongst ‘Munkan siders’ (due to its strength in Aurukun, where most of the Kugu Nganhcara have lived or have family), although there are few Wik Mungkan people proper living in Pormpuraaw. Of the six patrilects<sup>7</sup> that form the (Central Paman) Kugu Nganhcara language (Kugu Muminh, Kugu Mu’inh, Kugu Uwanh, Kugu Ugbanh, Kugu Yi’anh and Wik Iyenh), Kugu Muminh and Kugu Mu’inh are the only two I have heard used regularly on the street. Even these patrilects, however, have fewer than forty speakers, and the effects of contact with English and Wik Mungkan upon Kugu Muminh in particular have been well documented by Smith (1986). More clearly moribund, is the Kugu Yi’anh patrilect, of which I have been able to locate only a single speaker. Kugu Nganhcara is presently documented by a sketch grammar (Smith and Johnson 2000) and related papers, as well as some unpublished documentary materials (Gaby, Foote, Holroyd). Although we may infer a long history of contact between the Nganhcara and the Thaayorre peoples, the nature of this contact was dramatically altered by the establishment of the Edward River mission. Prior to this, the two groups were isolated from one another for much of the year (Smith 1986:513) despite their occupation of contiguous territories. Nowadays they are in daily contact and there is occasional intermarriage, although there remains significant hostility between the groups.

The multilingual balance of the western Cape York region has been comprehensively destroyed by the introduction of English. Although there is no reason to suppose that this ecology could not have absorbed one more language, the attendant political, technological and cultural changes have brought about the death of many languages in the area and the obsolescence of many more. Sharp (1952, 1958, *inter alia*) and Taylor (1984) have documented the immediate and irrevocable impact of imported European cultural traditions and — in particular — technologies upon the Thaayorre

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<sup>6</sup> This is somewhat of a misnomer, as it often leads to confusion with the Wik Mungkan people. While many people living on ‘Munkan side’ (and referred to as ‘Munkan’) do speak Wik Mungkan, few identify with this ethnicity.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Patrilect’ is used as shorthand for a dialect shared by people of a single line of patrilineal descent.

(and Yir Yoront) cosmology and social system, both of which are predicated upon a stable and unchanging social and physical context. Whilst Standard Australian English is the official language of schooling and most administration in Pormpuraaw, the indigenous population speak one of a number of varieties I shall refer to as Pormpuraaw English, a variety exhibiting many of the hallmark features identified for ‘Aboriginal English’ by Capell (1979), Black (1995), Arthur (1997) and Malcolm (2002), *inter alia*.

## **1.2 Previous studies**

By far the most extensive prior treatment of Kuuk Thaayorre grammar is Allen Hall’s 1972 PhD Thesis, “A study of the Thaayorre language of the Edward River tribe, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland: being a description of the grammar”. This tagmemic grammar was preceded by Hall’s (1968) “A depth-study of the Thaayorre language of the Edward River tribe, Cape York Peninsula: being a description of the phonology with a brief grammatical outline and samples of lexicon and oral literature”, an unpublished M.A. thesis. Hall additionally published two papers in Sutton (ed. 1976a), and produced three Kuuk Thaayorre – English dictionaries and numerous pedagogical materials in collaboration with Tom Foote<sup>8</sup>, a native speaker linguist. Many of these were kindly made available to me by the Pormpuraaw Community Council. Extensive reference is made to Hall (1968) and (1972) and to the unpublished works of Foote and Hall throughout the present grammar, and the very generous number of example sentences included in these works have made an extremely valuable contribution to the corpus analysed herein. Examples sourced from these works have been re-transcribed to reflect changes in the practical orthography and (in some cases) phonological analysis. I have also in most cases adjusted segmentation, glossing and translation in order to integrate these examples within a grammatical analysis that differs from Hall (1972) in a number of key respects. It should therefore be noted that where these works are cited as the source of

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<sup>8</sup> Mr Foote was by all reports an extremely intelligent and diligent man with a natural talent for linguistics. Although he had sadly passed away by the time of my arrival in Pormpuraaw, I was fortunate enough to work with several members of his immediate family, who were keen to see his legacy augmented.

an example sentence, they represent the point of origin only and should not be held responsible for any added layers of interpretation. I take full responsibility for all errors in transcription and analysis of example sentences, regardless of their origin. Concomitantly, readers interested in any example sentences cited from these works are recommended to the original theses and materials.

John Taylor's (1984) PhD thesis represents the most detailed anthropological study of the Thaayorre people specifically (supplemented by a number of later articles — e.g. Taylor 1977 — and contributions to land claims). Many studies of neighbouring groups (most notably the Yir Yoront and Wik peoples) by Lauriston Sharp (1937), Ursula McConnel (1953) and Donald Thompson (1935, 1936) should also be understood to apply to the Thaayorre people<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to the published and unpublished materials of Foote and Hall, a number of other linguists and anthropologists have collected Kuuk Thaayorre data (in the form of field notes, audio-recordings, etc.), often in the course of research on other languages. Barry Alpher has the most extensive field notes on Kuuk Thaayorre as far as I am aware, but other notable researchers in the area include: John Taylor, Ian Smith, Steve Johnson, John von Sturmer, Lauriston Sharp, William Oates, Lamont West, Donald Crim, Arthur Capell, Donald Thompson, Paul Black, Michael Martin, Ken Hale, Ursula McConnel, and Bruce Sommer. Aside from personal communication with Barry Alpher, I have not sighted any of these unpublished materials and am unable to comment on their contents.

## **1.3 Linguistic type**

### **1.3.1 Typological profile**

The Thaayorre phonemic inventory is not unusual for an Australian language, comprising sixteen consonants and the relatively high figure of ten vowels

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<sup>9</sup> In keeping with standard anthropological practice at the time, Sharp (1937, and elsewhere) intended explicit reference to the Yir Yoront to extend to their culturally similar neighbours the Thaayorre; cf. Sutton (1978:30) and Taylor (1984:4).

(distinguishing five vowel qualities and two lengths). Typically for a Pama-Nyungan language, Thaayorre inflection is strictly suffixal. Closer to the analytic than the polysynthetic end of the spectrum, it is rare for a word to contain more than four morphemes. The verbal word *nhaathnhanrrnhanunt* in (1) represents an unusually morphologically complex example, containing six morphemes (two of which are realised by a single, portmanteau morph).

- (1) *pulnan yup nhaath-nhan-rr-nhan=unt*  
 3du(ACC) soon see-V<sup>^</sup>-RCP-GO&:NPST=2sg(ERG)  
 ‘you’ll soon be making them two see each other’  
 [Hall 1972:392]

Kuuk Thaayorre is a predominantly dependent-marking language (cf. Nichols 1986), with grammatical relations signalled by the case-marking of arguments. The Thaayorre case system distinguishes the grammatical functions of intransitive subject, transitive subject and transitive object. In terms of morphological form, however, there is a split between the pronominal paradigm (in which the syncretism of nominative and ergative case forms results in a nominative-accusative marking pattern) and other nominals (in which nominative/accusative syncretism gives rise to an ergative-absolutive marking pattern).

There is an incipient system of pronominal enclitics to the verb (§5.1.1.2), but these are optional and functionally equivalent to the free pronouns from which they are in the process of grammaticalising. Because this system is still in its infancy, the enclitic forms are analysed here as essentially pronominal (rather than verbal cross-referencing), and hence are described as bearing case; this fits the characterisation of Kuuk Thaayorre as a dependent-marking language.

- (2) *ngay ii-rr-kuw Darwin-ak yat=ay*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west Darwin-DAT go:P.PFV=1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I went west to Darwin’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative/Conversation]

Kuuk Thaayorre approaches the prototype of a non-configurational language (Hale 1983, Austin and Bresnan 1996), with extremely flexible ordering of constituents and the free ellipsis of arguments (and other constituents). Word order within the noun phrase is more fixed, although permutations motivated by pragmatic focus or speech style are common in natural speech. In general, the head noun is followed by all modifiers. Hence we find the orders: Noun–Adjective, Noun–Numeral, Noun–Genitive, and Noun–Demonstrative. There are three degree adverbs; two precede the Adjective and the third follows.

An overt argument takes the form of one or more noun phrases (including pronouns) apposed in the same case, as in (3). The repetition of pronouns is common, in both full and reduced (encliticised) forms:

- (3) *ngali*                    *I. C.*                    *ngali*                    *yat*                    *kuthirr*  
 1du:excl(NOM) I. C.(NOM) 1du:excl(NOM) go:P.PFV two(NOM)  
 ‘I. C. and I went, the two of us’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

### 1.3.2 Typologically interesting features of the language

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses features of typological interest at every level of its grammar: phonology; morphology; the lexicon; syntax; semantics; and discourse pragmatics. At the phonological level, Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a particularly rich vowel inventory from an Australian perspective, with five distinct vowel qualities and two contrastive lengths producing ten vowel phonemes. It is in the phonotactic combination of sounds that Thaayorre phonology is particularly noteworthy, however. Kuuk Thaayorre’s tendency towards closed syllables (with codas containing up to three consonants) frequently leads to consonant clusters of as many as four segments. Kuuk Thaayorre is also cross-linguistically unusual in allowing sequences of its two rhotics (an alveolar tap/trill and retroflex continuant) within the syllable – either as a complex coda or as onset and nucleus (filled by a syllabic rhotic). Finally, monosyllables are ubiquitous across all Thaayorre word classes, despite being rare in Australian languages (Dixon 2002:553).

At the level of morphology, Kuuk Thaayorre is one of a very few languages demonstrated to possess phrasal affixation (cf. Dench and Evans 1988, Anderson et al. 2006); the irregularity of Thaayorre ergative case inflection proves the ergative morpheme to be a suffix, yet only the final nominal of the noun phrase is inflected (§6.1). The syntactic combination of words into phrases and clauses reveals a predominantly nonconfigurational language (cf. Austin and Bresnan 1996) which nevertheless has a highly structured noun phrase (§6). Of particular theoretical significance is the complex encoding of arguments by apposed noun phrases, free pronouns and incipient enclitic pronouns (§6.8-6.9, Gaby 2005). Kuuk Thaayorre is also unusual in possessing multiple distinct inclusory constructions, including a set of inclusory pronouns that express both the participant group as a whole and an individual member thereof distinctly within a single lexeme (§5.1.5).

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses myriad polyfunctional, homophonous and polysemous forms. Of particular interest here is the exploitation of morphosyntactic categories for pragmatic purposes (e.g. the use of spatial distinctions in demonstratives to express how easily the referent is retrievable [§5.3.3], or the use of ergative case-marking to signal whether or not the subject's reference accords with the addressee's expectations [§4.2.1.2, cf. Gaby to appear-a]). The fact that Kuuk Thaayorre is one of the few traditional Australian indigenous languages still being learned by children and used in daily interactions allows us a rare opportunity to explore such pragmatic concerns alongside the grammatical structures through which they are expressed.



## **1.4 This grammar**

### **1.4.1 Approach**

#### ***1.4.1.1 Theoretical background***

Constant revision, redevelopment and replacement are the nature of most theories. To write a grammar too constrained by a particular theoretical framework, then, is to run the risk that this grammar will be unreadable or uninteresting to linguists of other theoretical orientations and generations. This has sadly been the fate of too many grammars already; for example the numerous very detailed grammars written within the tagmemic tradition, which rarely find their way into typological (or other) samples today. Yet as Dryer (2006) has convincingly argued, “there is no such thing as an atheoretical description”. The present grammar can be broadly described as falling within the tradition of ‘Basic Linguistic Theory’ (Dixon 1997), inasmuch as it builds upon the descriptive theoretical framework that has evolved through grammatical descriptions (particularly of Australian languages) aiming to describe each language on its own terms. There is increasing recognition that even cross-linguistically common categories need to be identified — and the criteria for doing so be made explicit — for each language independently (Cristofaro 2006). To obstinately and blindly describe Kuuk Thaayorre on its own terms, however, would be to run the risk of obscuring the many ways in which Kuuk Thaayorre resembles other languages inside and outside Australia. This grammar attempts to avoid employing formalisms likely to date the grammar (cf. Evans and Dench 2006), whilst still linking into the typological, theoretical and descriptive literature where relevant. Where Kuuk Thaayorre exhibits a feature or structure of relevance to recent theoretical debates, or where particular theoretical models are helpful in explaining particular aspects of the language, I make reference to whichever theoretical framework appears most relevant to the case at hand<sup>10</sup>. There doubtless remain many points at which this balance is lacking, however.

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<sup>10</sup> It is true that the references to Lexical Functional Grammar herein outstrip references to any other theoretical framework, but this is due at least in part to the fact that LFG expressly attempts to be relevant to non-configurational languages like Kuuk Thaayorre.

In its attempt to describe the grammatical system of a single language variety, this grammar unfortunately reinforces the fiction of “an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community” (Chomsky 1965:3). Yet monolingual conversations in Pormpuraaw are vanishingly rare, with most conversations involving between two and four languages. Reflecting this, I rarely recorded the purely monolingual text most documentary and descriptive linguists strive for. Nevertheless, a full account of how multilingualism operates in the Pormpuraaw context, and how it affects and is affected by Kuuk Thaayorre grammar, is a topic for future research rather than the present work. All that space allows for here are sporadic appeals to language contact as a potential explanation for puzzling facts about Thaayorre grammar. Similarly, I make a number of references to grammaticalisation and putative earlier linguistic forms and structures in lieu of a full and integrated account of the diachrony of Kuuk Thaayorre grammar. Advocating the latter approach, Martinet (1986:248) observes:

*A dynamic approach to linguistic description has of late often been recommended even in the case of unilingual situations where we have to reckon with imbalance in every linguistic system, arising from tensions within the system itself, and the permanent conflict between the ease of the speakers, the needs of communication, and the pressure of tradition. The more so in the case of diglossia where, in addition to all these, we have the inevitable tensions between the languages in contact.*

Finally, I have tried to emulate Hall’s (1972) munificent provision of example sentences as far as space will allow. I believe this is important not only for the benefit of future linguists who may wish to form their own conclusions without their being mediated by my own analytical interpretation, but also to help the reader form an impression of the Thaayorre language as it is used. But while Mithun (2001:53) exhorts that grammars should let speakers “speak for themselves, creating a record of spontaneous speech in natural communicative settings”, the reader should not assume that the example sentences herein accurately reflect the culture, interests, priorities or personalities of the speakers that uttered them. The descriptive imperatives to

illustrate a particular linguistic form or structure have in many cases had to outrank the desire to provide sociologically representative or encyclopaedically informative example sentences.

#### ***1.4.1.2 Corpora and data collection***

The data presented in this paper were collected during four visits made by the author to the community of Pormpuraaw (home to the majority of Kuuk Thaayorre speakers) over seven months in total. The contexts in which they were elicited may be roughly classified as either: (a) grammatical elicitation; (b) elicited narrative; (c) prompted natural speech; or (d) conversation. Grammatical elicitation includes asking speakers to translate English clauses into Kuuk Thaayorre and vice versa. It might also involve prompting speakers with a context and asking them what they might say in that situation, or providing them with a Thaayorre clause and asking them in what contexts they could imagine uttering it. One drawback of grammatical elicitation is ‘judgement hypercorrection’; where consultants reject sentences as ungrammatical because they are not provided with the discourse context in which they might be uttered. Narratives in this corpus were elicited by providing the consultant(s) with a particular topic (usually negotiated by linguist and consultant), upon which the consultant(s) expound at length and without further prompting. Prompted natural speech arose from presenting consultants with a visual (usually video) stimulus to describe (cf. Appendix 2). Alternatively, a pair or group of consultants would be asked to play a game or attend to a task requiring verbal interchange. The responses of the consultant(s) in these cases were usually lengthy and fluent. However, the fact that the subject matter has been manipulated by the linguist may affect language use. Examples presented herein of the final data type, conversation, cannot be taken as fully representative of Thaayorre conversational norms. In many cases I was amongst the interlocutors, and my lack of cultural and linguistic fluency is certain to have influenced the flow of conversation. Nevertheless, the informal conversations I recorded (usually at the beginnings and endings of consultation sessions) have proven an extremely valuable data source. These, along with elicited narratives and prompted natural speech, are my preferred illustrative data since they are sufficiently

fluent, lengthy and contextually anchored to be grammatically and pragmatically rich, while also being controlled enough to allow for error detection.

Finally, the published and unpublished written corpora of Tom Foote and Allen Hall have yielded numerous illuminating and challenging clauses that have made a very significant contribution to the analysis presented herein.

#### 1.4.2 Overview of topics

A grammar is rarely read from cover to cover. This is fortunate since few if any languages possess an internal structure that would favour a purely linear presentation. I have therefore attempted to organise this description in such a way as to allow typologists and linguists interested in either the languages of this region or particular topics in the grammar of Kuuk Thaayorre to find what they are looking for and understand it with the minimum of background reading.

In standard traditions of grammatical description, it is usual for a phonology chapter to follow the introduction as ‘Chapter 2’. There is less consensus as to the respective contents of subsequent chapters, however. There is often a tension between organising topics according to their related communicative functions regardless of form (for instance grouping together the genitive nominal suffix, the comitative suffix, possessive pronouns, the associative particle *mangka*, noun phrase apposition and attributive clauses because each may code possession) and organising topics according to form regardless of their function (e.g. discussing all verbal suffixes together, spanning reciprocity, reflexivity, causation, associated motion, various tense, aspectual and modal categories and so on). As Cristofaro (2006: 175) points out:

*the function-to-form approach and the form-to-function approach reflect two distinct processes: the encoding process that takes place in the speaker’s mind, on the one hand, and the decoding process that takes place in the hearer’s mind, on the other. Both approaches are therefore essential to language description.*

Confronted with a choice between the two, this grammar leans strongly towards a semasiological — or form-to-meaning — structure. This dominance of the semasiological approach means that related semantic or conceptual fields may be discussed in a number of different sections of this grammar, depending on the morphosyntax of their encoding. Appendix 1 therefore provides an index of topics organised by conceptual field in order to help the reader find semantically linked topics that may be distributed over a number of different chapters and sections. The converse also occurs: a number of formally related structures and polysemous forms have been distributed across chapters and sections.

### 1.4.3 Treatment of examples

Example sentences are numbered according to their sequence within the grammar. Where examples are repeated within a chapter they bear the original example number followed by a prime (i.e. [12']). Where an example is repeated from an earlier chapter, it receives a new example number and no reference is made to the fact that it has been repeated.

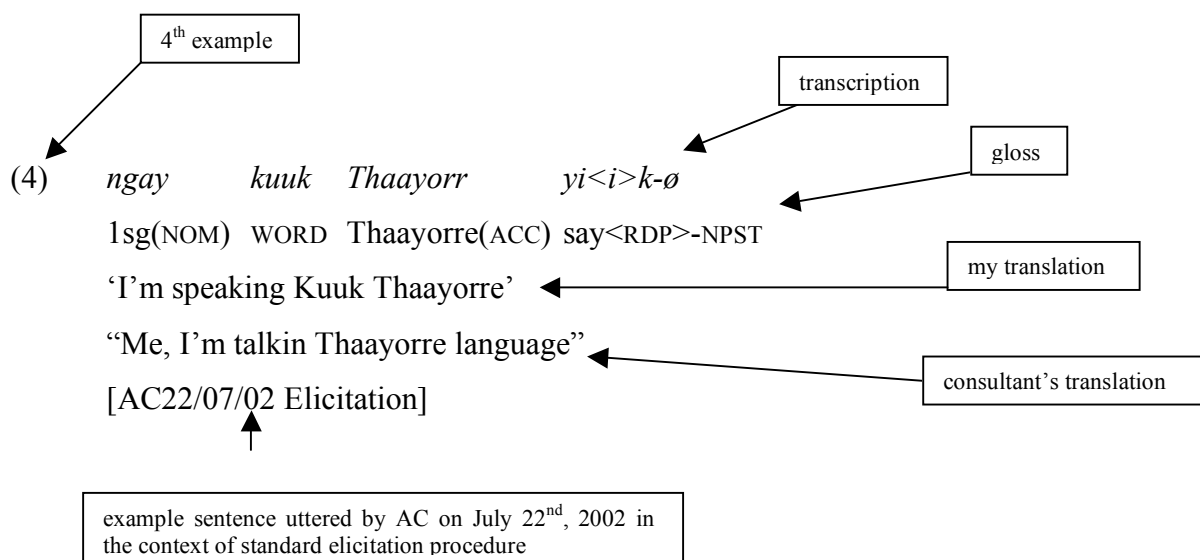
Standard Pormpuraaw Orthography is employed for all examples except where phonetic transcription is required (e.g. throughout Chapter 2; Phonology). This orthography (along with its alternatives) is introduced in §2.9. Glossing of examples follows the *Leipzig Glossing Rules* (Comrie et al. 2003; cf. also Lehmann 1983) where practicable. Several diversions are made, however. For instance, the fact that Thaayorre verbs are reduplicated by infixation creates a conflict between the Leipzig convention of segmenting a reduplicative morpheme by a tilde (followed by its functional gloss), and the convention of representing infixation by triangular brackets. I represent the Thaayorre reduplicative infix as <RDP>, describing the functions of reduplication externally (§7.2.4). Other divergences from the Leipzig Glossing Rules are justified where introduced.

Most example sentences are translated into English by me, though this has usually been informed by discussions with native speakers. Where a consultant's translation

is provided verbatim, this is enclosed in double quotation marks (“...”). All example sentences taken from the work of Hall (1968, 1972) and Foote and Hall (1992, undated school materials) are segmented, glossed and translated by me except where otherwise indicated. Although Hall often provides segmentations, glosses and translations, for the sake of consistency I have chosen to replace these with segmentations, glosses and translations that reflect the analysis presented here.

The source of each example sentence is given in square brackets below the translation line. Where the example has been extracted from my own corpus, this constitutes the speaker’s initials, date of recording and data classification. Data classification may be simply ‘Conversation’ or ‘Elicitation’ (cf. §1.4.1.2), or a code may be given in reference to the particular story or song the example sentence was extracted from, or in reference to the specific stimulus used to prompt the response presented. The full list of data classification codes is given as Appendix 2.

The following illustrates all of the typical characteristics of an example sentence:



Example (4) also illustrates the use of small capitals in the glossing of generic nouns (e.g. *kuuk* ‘WORD’).

Where an example comprises a sequence of clauses uttered in succession, each clause is marked by a sequence number as in example (5):

(5)

1. *werngr ii-ø-parr thunp-m*  
boomerang(ACC) there-at-south throw-P.IPFV  
‘[they] were throwing a boomerang down in the south’
2. *pam peln mong, werngr ulp thunp-m*  
man 3pl(NOM) many boomerang(ACC) dem:adr.prx throw-P.IPFV  
‘there were a lot of men [who were] throwing that boomerang’
3. *ulp koo-pal=p therk-m*  
dem:adr.prx DIRECTED-towards=PRAG return-P.IPFV  
‘it kept coming back’  
[AC13/09/02 Narrative Werngr]

Where an example presents an excerpt from a dialogue, each speaker is identified by a capital letter at the start of the transcription line, as in (6):

(6)

1. A: *ngay kar ngeeym nhunt kar sixteen=nhurr=p*  
1sg(NOM) like think:P.IPFV 2sg(NOM) like sixteen=ONLY=PRAG  
‘I thought you were just sixteen’
2. B: *pokon! Ngay twenty-four*  
NO 1sg(NOM) twenty-four  
‘no! I’m twenty-four’  
[Anon conversation, confirmed LN02/10/02]

Where speakers have requested anonymity, or the example is drawn from an unofficial communicative context, the speaker’s initials are replaced by ‘Anon’. For the purposes of this grammar, official contexts are those where the speaker is aware that they are being taped or otherwise recorded for later linguistic analysis and have given explicit permission for this recording to be presented to an audience. All other

communicative contexts are unofficial, including utterances recorded at the periphery of, or even during, an official context, but where the speaker appears to have forgotten that they are ‘on the record’. Where it has been necessary to check the grammaticality of these utterances with a native speaker, the consultant who confirms grammaticality is indicated in the source line along with the consultation session date (e.g. ‘LN02/10/02’ in [6]). On several occasions, snippets of conversation I happened to overhear (and later checked for grammaticality with a native speaker) have proven analytically interesting and have found their way into this grammar as ‘anonymous’ examples. Although it would of course be preferable to be able to furnish audio recordings of all data referred to, opportunistic observations from informal interactions are frequently more valuable than those conducted in the rather sterile ‘language work’ context. As Sutton (1978:xvii) declares, “my main ‘research tool’, if it can be called that, was paying attention”.

Some phrases or expressions are too common to be ascribed a single source; for instance I have heard the expression *ngay pamngoongkom* ‘I don’t know’ so many times that I feel confident including it as an example (illustrating, for instance, the first person singular nominative pronoun *ngay*) without specifying a source. All example sentences presented without an explicitly named source are similarly commonplace expressions.

Non-standard (dialectal and idiolectal) forms in example sentences are dealt with in one of three ways. Where the difference is simply one of pronunciation (e.g. *yarrii* ~ *yariy* ‘thus’), the transcription reflects the standard form<sup>11</sup> rather than what may have been uttered in the particular context. Where the difference is one of vocabulary (e.g. *angunp* ~ *nhamunp* ‘in this place’), the form is transcribed as uttered by the speaker and no comment is made except where relevant to the discussion at hand. Where the differences are considered to reflect a divergence from the standard Thaayorre grammar described here (e.g. regularisation of ergative morphology by younger speakers), this is noted in a footnote.

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<sup>11</sup> The standard form is determined by token frequency in my corpus.



#### **1.4.4 Index of consultants and collaborators**

The example sentences quoted in this grammar were uttered by dozens of people in numerous speech contexts. Not all of the people who worked with me wanted their utterances to be attributed to them in this written document. Many others, however, were keen to be identified along with quotations of their speech. They are listed in Table 1, along with the initials that index them in the last line of example sentences herein.

AC	Alfred Charlie
ACh	Alice Chillagoe
AJ	Albert Jack
AP	Alice Peter
DJ	Donald Joe
DW	Donald William
EC	Edna Charlie
EF	Esther Foote
FT	Freddy Tyore
GJ	Gilbert Jack
GN	Georgina Norman
IC	Ivy Conrad
ICh	Irene Charlie
JC	John Coleman
JCo	Jocelyn Coleman
LC	Leonie Chillagoe
LN	Elizabeth Norman
ME	Molly Edwards
NE	Ned Edwards

Table 1. Authors of example sentences.



# Chapter Two: Phonology

## 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 begins with a brief summary of the more unusual aspects of Thaayorre phonetics and phonology, followed by: a brief summary of phonemic distinctions in Kuuk Thaayorre (§2.2); the range of allophones associated with each phoneme (§2.3); minimal pairs illustrating phonemic contrasts (§2.4); the nature of Thaayorre words and syllables, and phonotactic constraints on their internal structure (§2.5-2.6); morphophonological rules and processes (§2.7); suprasegmental features of Thaayorre speech (§2.8); and finally a brief discussion of the practical orthographies that have been used in the documentation of Kuuk Thaayorre, and in particular the ‘Pormpuraaw Orthography’ used in the following chapters (§2.9). Since Thaayorre phonetics and phonology have received detailed treatment in Hall 1968, this chapter will be in summary form, focusing on the differences between the analysis followed herein and that of Hall.

Though not especially complex, the Thaayorre phonological system is typologically interesting in several respects. Phonemically, Kuuk Thaayorre presents more vowel distinctions and slightly fewer consonants than a typical Australian language (Evans 1995:724-731, Dixon 1980:132)<sup>12</sup>. Phonetically, Thaayorre stops are more frequently aspirated than one would expect of an Australian language. It is in its phonotactic combination of phonemes, however, that Kuuk Thaayorre is particularly noteworthy. A tendency towards closed syllables — with codas containing up to three consonants — frequently leads to consonant clusters of as many as four segments (once one adds the onset of the subsequent syllable). Kuuk Thaayorre is also unusual in allowing sequences of rhotics (both [ɾɾ] and [ɾɻ]) within the syllable; either as a complex coda or as onset plus syllabic rhotic. Kuuk Thaayorre’s plentiful monosyllables — found in all word classes — are also an unusual find in the Australian context (Dixon 2002:553). The morphophonological patterns of reduplication discussed in §2.7.1 are

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<sup>12</sup> The Thaayorre phonemic inventory is also significantly larger than that proposed by Hale (1964:255) for proto-Paman.

typologically rare. Finally, the tendency for stops to fricate word-initially but not morpheme-internally is also typologically marked.

## 2.2 Phonemic inventory

### 2.2.1 Consonants

Table 2 presents the sixteen Thaayorre consonants in phonemic transcription<sup>13</sup>:

	bilabial	lamino-dental	apical	lamino-palatal	velar	glottal
Obstruents	p	t̪	t	c	k	ʔ
Nasals	m	n̪	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Tap/trill			r			
Lateral			l			
Glides			ɭ	j	w	

Table 2. Inventory of Thaayorre consonant phonemes.

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a single oral stop series with a nasal series corresponding to every place of articulation. In addition to these, there is a glottal stop, three glides (labio-velar, palatal and retroflex) and an alveolar lateral and tap/trill. No phonemic distinction is made between the alveolar and retroflex articulations of apical stops, but obstruents and nasals are generally articulated at the alveolar ridge, whilst the glide /ɭ/ is undeniably retroflex.

Though the Thaayorre consonant inventory is not unusual for an Australian language, the number of Thaayorre consonantal phonemes is significantly fewer than that of its

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<sup>13</sup> Broad phonetic (IPA) transcriptions will be used throughout this chapter until the introduction of the practical Pormpuraaw Orthography in §2.9. Subsequent chapters employ the Pormpuraaw Orthography.

nearest neighbours, Yir Yoront (Alpher 1973, 1991) and Kugu Nganhcara (Smith and Johnson 2000). The former distinguishes retroflex consonants (oral, nasal and lateral), while the latter contrasts voiced and voiceless oral stops.

### 2.2.2 Vowels

Kuuk Thaayorre makes a phonemic distinction between ten vowels; five vowel qualities (/i/, /u/, /e/, /o/, and /a/), each of which have two phonemic lengths. Front and central vowels (/i/, /e/ and /a/) are unrounded while the back vowels (/u/ and /o/) are rounded.

	front	central	back
high	i(:)		u(:)
mid	e(:)		o(:)
low		a(:)	

Table 3. Inventory of Thaayorre vowel phonemes.

This ten-vowel system is rich by Australian standards; Dixon (2002:643) lists only twelve Australian languages (including Kuuk Thaayorre) that distinguish more than three vowels as well as a phonemic length contrast. Nevertheless, the phonetic distributions of the Thaayorre vowels are not unusual, particularly in the local context. Kugu Nganhcara and Pakanh, for example, have identical vowel systems (Gaby, field notes), Uw Oykangand and Uw Olkola distinguish the same five vowel qualities (though not length; Hamilton 1996), and Yir Yoront possesses these same five short vowels as well as a phonemic schwa (Alpher 1991:7).

## 2.3 Allophones

### 2.3.1 Obstruents

Allophones of the Thaayorre oral stops vary in voicing, aspiration, fricativisation, length and the presence or absence of release. The peripheral obstruents (bilabial /p/ and velar /k/) may each be realised as: (1) a voiceless aspirated stop; (2) a voiceless unaspirated stop; (3) a voiceless unreleased stop; (4) a voiced stop; (5) a voiced fricative; and (6) a glide, as follows:

/p/ → [p<sup>h</sup>] / #\_

→ [p̚] / \_\$

→ [b] / N#\_ <sup>14</sup>

→ [β] ~ [w] / <\_ <sup>15</sup>

→ [p] ~ [β] ~ [w] / -\_ <sup>16</sup>

→ [p] / elsewhere

/k/ → [k<sup>h</sup>] / #\_

→ [k̚] / \_\$ /p/ <sup>17</sup>

→ [g] / N#\_

→ [ɣ] / =\_ <sup>18</sup>

→ [ɣ] ~ [j] / <\_

→ [k] / elsewhere

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<sup>14</sup> Unusually, the voicing of obstruents appears to be conditioned only across word boundaries, not within words.

<sup>15</sup> This is intended to represent the fricativisation of the initial segment of a reduplicative infix.

<sup>16</sup> This allophone is found following a morpheme boundary.

<sup>17</sup> This allophone is found in codas preceding a bilabial stop as onset of the following syllable.

<sup>18</sup> This allophone is found following a clitic boundary.

The aspirated allophones tend to occur as the onset of a stressed, word-initially syllable (as in /pan/ [p<sup>h</sup>an] ‘bait’ and /ka:l/ [k<sup>h</sup>a:l] ‘ear’). The unaspirated, released allophone, may appear in a variety of positions, including word-finally (e.g. /waʔap/ [waʔap] ‘river’). All obstruents have an unreleased allophone that appears as the coda of a non-final syllable (especially where the onset of the following syllable is homorganic and/or bilabial), as in /katpir/ [k<sup>h</sup>at̚pɪr]<sup>19</sup>. The voiced stop is typically found word-initially following a word ending in a nasal or vowel (e.g. /miŋ ku:c/ [miŋ gu:c]). Both the voiced fricative and glide allophones are found intervocalically (usually as the initial segment of a reduplicative infix, e.g. /ko:kope/ [k<sup>h</sup>o:yope] or [k<sup>h</sup>o:jope] ‘wait’). It seems likely that the glide allophone has arisen as a further lenited variant of the fricative allophone, and indeed speakers are likely to pronounce the obstruent as a fricative when asked to slowly repeat a word in which a glide allophone was present on first utterance. The palatal glide allophone of the velar stop in fact represents a range of phonetic realisations, varying from a palatalised velar fricative to a purely palatal glide.

Although Hall does not analyse obstruents as possessing glide allophones, he does (1968:47) acknowledge that “an affinity exists between /p/ and /w/. These two phonemes fluctuate in morphs like /wal/ ~ /pal/”<sup>20</sup>. The fact that the labiovelar glide has phonemic status in Kuuk Thaayorre (e.g. /waath/ ‘search’ contrasts with /paath/ ‘fire’, cf. §2.4) does not prevent it from also being an allophone of the obstruent /p/ since the neutralisation is unidirectional (i.e. /w/ is never realised as [p]). So, for instance, the onset of the second syllable in the reduplicated /pa:pat̚/ ‘hot’ (from /pa:t̚/ ‘fire’) may be realised either as a voiced bilabial fricative or as a labiovelar glide (i.e. [pa:wat̚] ~ [pa:βat̚]). Similarly, whilst /pal/ ‘towards’ has allophones [pal]~[wal], this

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<sup>19</sup> Such variation in release is commonplace and will not be remarked upon in the discussion of the following obstruent phonemes.

<sup>20</sup> Hall (1968:61) also remarks: “/p/ has an alternative nasal release used by most speakers word-medially before /m/. It is a voiceless velic flap with the lips closed as in /tanp-m/ ~ [unreproducible] ‘pushed’”. No such pronunciation is attested in my data.

is distinct from with /wal/ [wal] ‘dillybag’, which is never pronounced [pal]. Further discussion of the distribution of allophones and conditioning of allophonic variation will be held off until §2.3.7.

As with the peripheral obstruents, the lamino-dental stop has aspirated, unaspirated (released and unreleased), fricated and glide allophones:

- /t/ → [t<sup>h</sup>] / #\_
- [t̚] / \_\$
- [d̪] / N#\_
- [d̪<sup>h</sup>] / -\_
- [d̪], [j] / <\_
- [t] / elsewhere

There is additional variation in the place of articulation, with some speakers tending to produce an interdental [t], whilst most produce it just behind the upper teeth. This appears to be an idiosyncratic difference between speakers rather than being conditioned by phonetic context.

The voiced stop allophone, commonly found word-initially following a nasal-final word (e.g. /pam tu:mp/ [p<sup>h</sup>am d̪u:mp<sup>h</sup>]) is often slightly fricated. Full frication of the lamino-(inter)dental fricative is rare, unlike the relatively common fricative allophones of the peripheral stops. In the suffix-initial position, however, [t] has an audible fricative release (e.g. /kuta-t̪ak/ [k<sup>h</sup>uta d̪<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>] ‘dog-DAT’). In the process of reduplication the dental stop often lenites to a palatal glide, or a strongly palatalised dental approximant (as in /tu:t̪ut̪/ [tu:jut̪] ~ [tu:ðut̪] ‘crawl:RDP’).

The apico-alveolar stop is the second rarest consonant in my data (behind the glottal stop), and no clearly lenited variants of it were found. This phoneme does, however,



vary in aspiration, place of articulation and the presence or absence of release, as follows:

- /t/ → [t<sup>h</sup>] #\_
- [t̚] \_\$
- [d] / N#\_
- [t̚] / [ɹ̚]\_\$
- [d] / [ɹ]\$\_
- [t] / elsewhere

Although retroflex stops are not phonemic in Kuuk Thaayorre, apico-alveolar stops are realised as retroflex stop allophones following the retroflex glide<sup>21</sup>.

Hall (1968:46) classifies the lamino-palatal stop /c/ as an affricate, whereas I consider it a simple palatal obstruent. My data contains aspirated, unaspirated and voiced lamino-palatal allophones, but no voiced fricative as Hall (1968:67) found.

- /c/ → [c<sup>h</sup>] / \$\_
- [c] / elsewhere

Along with the voicing of obstruents discussed so far there is often some leakage of nasality wherever the obstruent follows a nasal segment. This has not been listed as a separate allophone.

The final obstruent in the Thaayorre phonemic inventory is the glottal stop. This has only two allophones, a glottal stop and suprasegmental creaky voice realised on adjacent segments:

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<sup>21</sup> Osborne (1970) argues for an analysis of phonetic retroflex stops in Tiwi as underlying clusters (e.g. [t̚] = /ɹt/). Cf. also Breen (1992) on Kukatj retroflex stops.

/ʔ/ → [ʔ] ~ [+creaky voice] / [α] \_ [α]  
 → [ʔ] / elsewhere

The creaky voice allophone is found only between identical segments. Hence /iŋʔŋuŋun/ is frequently pronounced [iŋ:uŋun], and /waʔap/ pronounced [wɑ:p]. It seems that the creaky voice realisation of the glottal stop may lead to the eventual loss of this phoneme. There are few tokens of the glottal stop in any stretch of Thaayorre discourse, but also notably fewer in the speech of the young than in that of elders. Further evidence that [ʔ] is being phased out is the fact that many younger speakers will give the — carefully pronounced — citation forms [iŋuŋun] for /iŋʔŋuŋun/ and [wɑ:p] for /waʔap/. Even some elders, whose speech is generally more conservative, occasionally give these latter pronunciations. The fact that the phonemic glottal stop appears to be a relatively recent innovation in Cape York languages (cf. Alpher 1972, Hale 1976a, Dixon 2002) may help explain why it might also be early to leave the Thaayorre phonemic inventory (according to the ‘last in, first out’ principle). Nevertheless, there exist some minimal pairs (e.g. /koʔor/ ‘speared each other’ vs. /ko:r/ ‘outside’) where the glottal stop contrasts with zero for all speakers.

### 2.3.2 Nasals

For each of the nasal allophones except /ɲ/ there is a voiceless variant found in a syllable onset following a syllable containing a voiceless coda (e.g. in *rintŋan* ‘cook:GO&:NPST’)<sup>22</sup>:

/m/ → [m̥] / C \$ \_  
 [-voice]  
 → [m] / elsewhere

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<sup>22</sup> In some cases, voicing of the nasal may be delayed but not altogether absent. This is not differentiated from the voiceless allophone here.

/ɲ/ → [ɲ̥] / C \$ \_  
           [-voice]  
       → [ɲ] / elsewhere

/ɲ/ → [ɲ]

/ŋ/ → [ŋ̥] / C \$ \_  
           [-voice]  
       → [ŋ] / elsewhere

The absence of voiceless allophone for the palatal nasal may simply be due to the fact that the palatal nasal is itself quite rare, and my corpus contains no lexemes in which this nasal follows a voiceless consonant (the conditioning environment for nasal devoicing). Note also that my analysis of the place of articulation of the palatal nasal departs from Hall (1968:63), who analyses it as a single segment formed by compounding the alveolar nasal and palatal glide (as suggested by the digraph /ny/ in his working orthography), which he claims also has a “voiced apico-dental lamino-alveolar nasal” allophone.

The dental nasal has both lamino-interdental and lamino-dental allophones. As with the corresponding obstruent, these two articulations appear to be due to interspeaker variation and are not differentiated here.

The apico-alveolar nasal has a retroflex allophone, conditioned by a preceding retroflex rhotic, in addition to the standard voiceless allophone.

/n/ → [n] / [ɻ] \_  
       → [n̥] / C \$ \_  
           [-voice]  
       → [n] / elsewhere

### 2.3.3 Rhotics

The alveolar rhotic may be realised as either a tap or a trill:

/r/ → [r] / \_ɹ  
→ [r̥] / C \$ \_  
          [-voice]  
→ [r] / elsewhere

Throughout my data the retroflex rhotic seems to have only one phonetic form; /ɻ/ = [ɻ]. As Barry Alpher (personal communication) notes, the Thaayorre retroflex glide is particularly extreme, articulated with a deeply depressed tongue root<sup>23</sup>.

### 2.3.4 Lateral

There is a single lateral phoneme which is basically alveolar in articulation, though a retroflex allophone is conditioned by a preceding retroflex approximant.

/l/ → [l] / [ɻ] \_  
→ [l̥] / elsewhere

The phonemes /ɻ/ and /l/ are phonetically similar, and in some words appear to be in free variation: e.g. /pork/ ‘big’ ~ /polk/<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> This depressed tongue root sometimes gives rise to a preceding phonetic palatal glide (particularly following the reflexive morpheme, -e), which Alpher (personal communication) suggests may relate to the Arandic pre-palatalised stops, which themselves developed from original retroflex phonemes.

<sup>24</sup> Although most consultants will give the citation form /poɻk/ ‘big’, this lexeme has cognates that support the reconstruction of /l/ (e.g. Dyirbal *bulgan* ‘big’ [Dixon 1972], Pitjantjatjara *pulka* ‘big’ [Goddard 1996]).

### 2.3.5 Semivowels

I found both the palatal and labiovelar glide phonemes to have only a single phonetic realisation ([j] and [w] respectively), although Hall (1968:72) finds the latter to also have a bilabial fricative allophone.

### 2.3.6 Vowels

Each of the Thaayorre vowels appears to undergo rhoticisation preceding a retroflex rhotic. Further conditioned variation appears to mainly involve the centralisation of vowels in unstressed syllables (see Hall 1968:88 for a detailed account).

Vowel length is contrastive only in stressed syllables (which are usually word-initial). The difference between a long and short vowel is usually very clear in context, although actual vowel duration is relative to surrounding segments. Further, a short vowel may be significantly longer when emphasised than a long vowel in a pragmatically neutral context. Thus the short vowels in the first syllable of words like /ɲamal/ ‘large’, /to:ɲkor/ ‘long, tall, far’ and /kananɲkar/ ‘long ago’, for example, are commonly lengthened to a duration of a second or more for emphasis (hence [ɲa::mal] ‘really enormous’).

### 2.3.7 Phonetic effects of affixation, encliticisation and compounding

Whether or not a suffix-initial stop lenites depends on the identity of the stop itself and of the preceding segment. So, for instance, the velar onset of /-kuw/ ‘west’ and /-kaw/ ‘east’ tends to fricate following stem-final /r/, but not following vowels or other consonants (e.g. /i:-r-kaw/ [iɾɲaw] ‘there-to-East’ but /i:-kaw/ [i:kaw] ‘there-East’<sup>25</sup>).

The apical onset of the dative suffix /-tak/ seems always to lenite (e.g. in /kuta-tak/ [k<sup>h</sup>utaɲ<sup>ɔ</sup>ak] ‘dog-DAT’ and /mit-tak/ [mit<sup>h</sup>ɔak] ‘work-DAT’), whereas the apical onset of the ablative suffix rarely lenites (e.g. /kanpa-tam/ [k<sup>h</sup>anpatam] ‘first-ABL’ and /ɲan-tam/ [ɲantam] ‘what-ABL’).

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<sup>25</sup> Note that both these these words exhibit initial-syllable stress.

Frication at the word=clitic boundary is ubiquitous; far more common than frication at the stem-suffix boundary. So, for instance, the enclitics /=*kak*/, /=*ka:ɿ*/, and /=*ka:k*/ are almost always realised as [*ɣak*], [*ɣa:ɿ*] and [*ɣa:k*] respectively, regardless of the preceding segment. Note that the latter two enclitics always receive primary stress, illustrating that this lenition is not only a feature of unstressed syllables. The only enclitics that do not lenite are the two emphatic discourse markers /=*t*/ and /=*p*/. Two factors easily explain their resilience: (1) their appearance in contexts of pragmatic emphasis (which favours fortition over lenition); (2) their position as the final element of the phonological word — and hence as syllable coda — where lenition is a feature of onsets in Kuuk Thaayorre.

The onset of the second component of a compound is usually fricated (e.g. /*me:ɿ-puŋk*/ [*me:ɿβuŋk*] ‘eyebrow’, /*ɿi:ŋ-ka:l*/ [*ɿi:ŋ.ɣa:l*] ‘leaf’). This may be an extremely recent development within the language since Hall (1968:62) notes that “transitional vowels tend to separate contiguous consonants at syllable boundaries in compounds, when different points of articulation are involved”. The examples he gives (/ka:l-puŋ/ ‘forget’ and /kul-puŋk/ ‘crowd’) are throughout my data pronounced [*k<sup>h</sup>a:lβu.ŋ*] and [*k<sup>h</sup>ulβuŋk*] respectively.

Contrary to expectations, frequency of lenition tends to increase in correlation with the ‘size’ of the preceding morphological boundary. So frication across a compound juncture is extremely common, as is frication between clitic and host, with frication at the suffix level less common, and intramorphemic frication rare. The exception to this is reduplication, which favours frication. Where there is frication within a monomorphemic root, this usually appears to derive from an original compound (e.g. /*me:ɿkole*/ [*me:ɿɣole*] ‘taipan’, where /*me:ɿ*/ ‘eye’ is frequently found as first element of a compound). Nonetheless, frication between words should not be taken as evidence that these form a compound (as does Hall 1968). For example, although the sequences /*pam ɿu:mp*/ [*p<sup>h</sup>am ɿu:mp*] and /*pa:nɿ kunjaŋka:ɿ*/ [*p<sup>h</sup>a:nɿ ɿunjaŋka:ɿ*] are

amenable to analysis as compounds, the frication evident in the following clause could not possibly be attributed to morphophonological processes:

- (7) *T.A.=okun Ansett katpir=okun*  
 [t<sup>h</sup>i:je:jokun enset ʔatpɪrokən]  
 ‘(we) caught either T.A. or Ansett’

Although such a correlation between size of juncture and lenition is cross-linguistically rare, a parallel may exist in Japanese ‘rendaku’ voicing of consonants in compounds (Ito and Mester 1986). In Kuuk Thaayorre, the lenition of word-initial onsets is likely to be an effect of phrase-level prosody on word-level phonology.

## 2.4 Minimal pairs

As it would demand too much space to provide minimal pairs contrasting every pair of phonemes in each syllabic position, this section will focus on contrasting suspicious pairs. It should be taken as read that phonemic contrasts are maintained in all environments unless otherwise specified.

A contrast between each of the full inventory of obstruents is suggested by the following set of verb stems:

- (8) *miʔi* ‘pick up’  
*piʔi* ‘dream:RDP’  
*pitit* ‘hold:RDP’  
*jikik* ‘say:RDP’  
*ɰipip* ‘exit:RDP’  
*ɰi:c* ‘run’

Confirming this for the peripheral obstruents and glide, is the following minimal triplet:

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- (9) **katp** ‘grasp’  
**patp** ‘hawk’  
**watp** ‘dead’

(10) and (11) demonstrate the contrast between the velar obstruent and the glottal stop:

- (10) **puʔam** ‘wounded’  
**pu:kam** ‘new, young’

- (11) **waʔɿ** ‘jellyfish’  
**wakɿ** ‘follow:P.PFV’

The contrast between apical and laminal front-coronal stops is neutralised word-initially (dental pronunciation being most common), and the only word-initial palatal stops are found in marginal word classes (ideophones, interjections and loanwords; cf. §3.4, §3.5.1). Their phonemic status is, however, confirmed by contrastive use in other positions:

- (12) **pa:ʔɿ** ‘bite:P.PFV’  
**pa:tɿ** ‘flower’  
**pancɿ** ‘body hair’

- (13) **wa:ʔir** ‘search:P.PFV’  
**wacir** ‘correctly’

- (14) **wa:t** ‘incorrectly’  
**wa:ʔ** ‘crow’

The palatal stop is further distinguished from the palatal glide in (near-)minimal pairs such as the following:



- (15) **j**uk ‘thing, tree’  
      **c**uk ‘sugar (loanword)’

- (16) pu:**j** ‘crab’  
      ku:**c** ‘kangaroo’

The following minimal pairs show the contrast between oral and nasal stops at each place of articulation:

- (17) **m**an ‘throat’  
      **p**an ‘bait’

- (18) **ɲ** ‘this’  
      **ɲ̃** ‘that’

- (19) **ɲ**an ‘go:NPST’  
      **ɲ̃**at ‘go:P.PFV’

- (20) **ɲ**ʊɲan ‘sea’  
      **ɲ̃**ucan ‘scrub:DAT’

- (21) **ɲ**ul ‘then’  
      **k**ul ‘lap’

As in the oral stop series, the contrast between apical and laminal front-coronal nasals is neutralised word-initially. Example (22) shows the contrast between these two nasals in the final position:

- (22) **ɲ**an ‘what’  
      **ɲ̃**an ‘me’

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The contrast between bilabial, lamino-dental and velar nasals is evident in the following triplet:

- (23) **mul** ‘tail’  
**ɱul** ‘(s)he’  
**ŋul** ‘then’

Apical and lamino-palatal nasals contrast preceding the palatal stop (in heterorganic and homorganic clusters respectively), as seen in the following couplets<sup>26</sup>:

- (24) **minc** ‘true’  
(25) **kɥnc** ‘penis’

Although no minimal pairs have yet been found to distinguish palatal and other nasals in the intervocalic position, phonemic status is strongly suggested by the following contrasts:

- (26) **pinirm-** ‘imagine’  
**wɨɲi** ‘prawn’  
(27) **kuman** ‘thigh:DAT’  
**kunanp** ‘straight’  
**ŋɥan** ‘sea’  
**yɥaɪ** ‘swim’

The minimal pair in (28) distinguishes the two Thaayorre rhotics:

- (28) **ʔa<:>np-r** ‘kick<RDP>-RCP’  
**ʔa<:>np-ɻ** ‘kick<RDP>-P.PFV’

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<sup>26</sup> My thanks to Barry Alpher for confirming this contrast, and supplying audio files to support it.

That neither rhotic is an allophone of the apical plosive or lateral is demonstrated by the following set of minimal contrasts:

- (29) wa:ɹin ‘chase’  
wa:r ‘bad’  
wa:t ‘incorrectly’  
wa:l ‘silly’

Finally, it was mentioned above that the glottal stop is elided by many speakers, often producing a long vowel (as in the case of /waʔap/ -> /wa:p/ ‘river’). Nevertheless, for some lexemes the presence or absence of a glottal stop remains synchronically contrastive, as the following shows:

- (30) koʔo-r ‘spear-P.PFV’  
ko:r ‘behind’

Advanced phonetic analysis may reveal some trace of the glottal stop even in the contexts I have described it as elided (e.g. glottalisation of adjacent segments). If this is so, the retention of the glottal stop in words such as /koʔor/ ‘speared’ can be understood as hyperarticulation motivated by the desire to avoid ambiguity.

Turning finally to the vowels, it would again require too much space to provide a minimal pair illustrating every possible contrast. Assuming, then, that vowels are most likely to be in complementary distribution if they share features of frontness or height, the following discussion will focus on proving such ‘close’ vowels to contrast.

Beginning with high vowels, /i/ and /u/ can be differentiated as follows:

- (31) pil ‘hip’  
pul ‘they two’  
(cf. pal ‘towards’)

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The two mid-height vowels are contrasted in:

- (32) pɔ:ɪpɪ ‘soft’  
peɪpɪ ‘cover:NPST’

Back vowels contrast in the following:

- (33) kun ‘bottom (anatomical)’  
kon ‘short’  
-kan ‘up (bound root)’

Although /e/ in one ideolect often corresponds to /i/ in another, there are a few minimal pairs that show the two to be clearly separate phonemes, such as:

- (34) peɪp ‘cover’  
pi:ɪp ‘semen’

/e/ can also be differentiated from the low central vowel as follows:

- (35) ɹe:k ‘give’  
ɹa:k ‘place’

Finally, the fact that length is a contrastive feature for each of the vowels is evident in the following (near-)minimal pairs:

- (36) mul ‘tail’  
mu:l ‘white paint’

- (37) kop ‘below’  
ko:p ‘all’

- (38) kal ‘carry’  
ka:l ‘ear’
- (39) pe:p ‘cover’  
pe:p ‘net’
- (40) jin ‘female genitalia’  
ji:n ‘itch’

## 2.5 Phonotactics

### 2.5.1 ‘Optional’ vowels: epenthetic, reduced or ‘silent’

Before discussion of Thaayorre phonotactics can proceed it is important to establish the status of what were analysed by Hall (1968) as (reduced) vowels, but which are not transcribed as such in this grammar. This is especially important because their analysis has consequences for the analysis of possible syllable types in later sections (e.g. permissible consonant clusters and the existence of syllabic consonants).

Consider, to begin with, the (extremely) reduced vowels in the second syllables of /ŋanc(i)<sup>27</sup>n/ [ŋancin] ‘1pl:excl’ and /wa:ɿ(i)ɿ/ [wa:ɿ<sup>h</sup>ɿɿ] ‘search:NPST’. On phonological grounds alone, there seems little reason to transcribe such vowels: the quality of the reduced vowel is never contrastive<sup>28</sup>, and speakers do not produce a full vowel (or lengthened schwa) when asked to pronounce a word slowly and carefully. Furthermore, when I deliberately pronounce words such as /ŋancn/ and /wa:ɿɿ/ with a syllabic nasal and rhotic as nucleus of the final syllable, speakers approve this

<sup>27</sup> The choice of the grapheme /i/ to represent these vowels is motivated by the transcriptions of Hall (1972) and Foote and Hall (1992), rather than by their phonetic qualities.

<sup>28</sup> In some cases, the reduced vowel (or absence of vowel, depending on the analysis) does contrast with an unreduced vowel (e.g. *nhangk(a)n* [ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>ən]~[ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>ɿ] ‘2sgGEN’ vs. *nhangkun* [ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>un] ‘2sgDAT’). This does not prove the phonemic status of the reduced vowel, however, since the full vowel may just as well contrast with a syllabic nasal as with a reduced vowel.

pronunciation without suggesting an added vowel. Conversely, most speakers rejected prompt pronunciations that included a full vowel. Furthermore, these reduced ‘vowels’ can in many cases be attributed to aspiration resulting from the release of the preceding stop, rather than a vowel per se.

In favour of omitting the vowel from phonemic transcription, then, are the following facts:

1. speakers never produce a full vowel in natural or hyperarticulated speech
2. speakers accept pronunciations that omit the vowel entirely (and reject pronunciations in which a full vowel is articulated)
3. the phonetic character is entirely determined by surrounding segments (as described below)
4. some phonetic ‘transitional vowel’ is inevitable given surrounding segments

Illustrating points 1 and 2 is the lexeme /parɪ/, transcribed by Foote and Hall (1992) as *parr’ir*. It’s not clear on what grounds Foote and Hall choose the vowel /i/ to include as nucleus of the second syllable, but every speaker I consulted was clear that this word should be pronounced [p<sup>h</sup>arɪ] or occasionally [p<sup>h</sup>arəɪ], but never [p<sup>h</sup>ariɪ] or [p<sup>h</sup>arʔɪ]. Supporting point 3 is the fact that reduced vowels are always high following palatal stops (e.g. /ɲanc(i)n/ [ɲancɪn] ‘1pl:excl(NOM)’), always rounded preceding bilabial consonants (e.g. /wa:t(i)m/ [wa:təm] ‘search:P.IPFV’), and always rhotacised preceding rhotics (e.g. /parɪ/ [p<sup>h</sup>arəɪ] ‘child’). Hall (1968:64) himself adduces evidence of point 4, noting of the palatal stop that “before a syllable border, its affrication and aspiration help to cause the transitional vocoid which links it to the next syllable”.

Such reduced medial vowels are likely to arise from one of two diachronic scenarios: (1) an originally full vowel in an unstressed (i.e. non-initial) position becomes a reduced vowel (e.g. schwa); (2) an epenthetic vowel is inserted to reduce a consonant

cluster (or alternatively a transitional vowel is unavoidable given a consonantal sequence)<sup>29</sup>. The first of these scenarios is attested throughout Thaayorre discourse: in fluid speech most vowels in non-initial syllables will be reduced. The difference between this and the medial vowels under discussion here, is that the underlying full vowel is retrievable and pronounced as such in carefully produced citation forms. So, for instance, although /waŋtanŋun/ ‘where at’ often sounds more like [waŋt<sup>h</sup>(ə)n(ə)n] in rapid speech, speakers will always approximate [waŋt<sup>h</sup>anŋun] in careful pronunciation. Other polysyllabic words, such as /iriparop/ [irip<sup>h</sup>arop<sup>h</sup>] ‘south.riverwards’, are pronounced with full vowels in each syllable, despite all syllables but the first being unstressed. Both of these cases differ from reduced medial vowels, which are not produced as full vowels even when carefully pronounced. This can be seen in the reduced medial vowel of the second person genitive pronoun, for example. This differs from the second person dative pronoun only in the vowel of the second syllable. In the case of the dative pronoun, this vowel is indisputably the full vowel /u/; /ŋaŋkun/ [ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>un] ‘2sgDAT’. The second syllable nucleus of the genitive pronoun, however, may be analysed as either a reduced vowel or a syllabic nasal; /ŋaŋk(a)n/ [ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>ən] ~ [ŋaŋk<sup>h</sup>ŋ] ‘2sgGEN’<sup>30</sup>. Although Hall (1972) usually transcribes this genitive pronoun as /nangkan/, the vowel of the second syllable is never produced as [a].

I have established conventional spellings for such words on the basis of: speakers’ careful pronunciation and spelling suggestions; my own intuition; comparison with related words in the lexicon; and comparison with the works of Allen Hall. It should be noted, however, that Hall himself varies as to whether such vowels are included or omitted in transcription<sup>31</sup>. Further, many of the vowels present in the phonemic transcriptions of Foote and Hall are rejected by speakers today; for instance /paŋ/

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<sup>29</sup> Note that observing stress patterns does not resolve this analytical problem since the syllables in question remain syllabic regardless of whether or not they contain a vowel.

<sup>30</sup> This may be considered analogous to the phonetic process in Wik Mungkan whereby “a reduced vowel combines with a following sonorant to yield a syllabic consonant” (Smith 1986:517).

<sup>31</sup> Foote & Hall (1992) tend to include underlying vowels in transcription, Hall (1972) tends to omit them.

[p<sup>h</sup>ar(ə)ɪ] ‘child’ is transcribed by Foote Hall (1992:102) as *parr’ir*, though all speakers I asked rejected any pronunciation that included a full vowel in the second syllable, suggesting that for most speakers /parɪ/ is ‘sesquisyllabic’<sup>32</sup> (cf. §2.5.3.3 below). In the absence of substantial evidence suggesting that a reduced medial vowel corresponds to a particular underlying full vowel, I have chosen to analyse the (following) nasal or liquid as syllable nucleus. Many or all of the underlying vowels transcribed by Hall (and/or Foote) may indeed be sound. But since I am in most cases unable to reconstruct their rationale for ascribing reduced vowels to full vowel phonemes, I have chosen not to follow their transcriptions except where there is independent evidence.

## 2.5.2 Syllable types

### 2.5.2.1 Permissible monosyllables

The Thaayorre lexicon contains an unusually large number of monosyllables for an Australian language. These monosyllables must be minimally bimoraic, possessing either or both a long vowel nucleus and coda. There also appears to be a limit on the maximum syllable weight, with three-consonant codas permissible following a short vowel but not a long one. The permissible phonotactic structures of these monosyllables can be summarised as in (41).

- (41) V:  
CV:(C)(C)  
(C)VC(C)  
CVCCC

Each of the monosyllables generated by (41) is exemplified in Table 4.

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<sup>32</sup> Matisoff (1973:86) coined the term “sesquisyllable” (literally, ‘one-and-a-half syllables’) to refer to words that are phonetically disyllabic, but for which the vowel of the first syllable is epenthetic rather than phonemic (and therefore omitted most practical orthographies). I find it useful to apply this term to the syllable structure of many Thaayorre words, although in these cases it is the vowel of the second syllable that is extremely reduced and non-phonemic.



V:	i:	‘there’
CV:	ko:	‘oh (I see)!’
CV:C	pu:n	‘breeze’
CV:CC	pa:nt	‘head’
VC	iŋ	‘this’
VCC	ulp	‘the’
CVC	pan	‘bait’
CVCC	punt	‘elbow’
CVCCC	ne.ŋk	‘male’s child <sup>33</sup> ’

Table 4. Phonotactic range of Thaayorre monosyllables.

The need to posit four separate rules for monosyllable structures may appear inelegant. Indeed, the vast majority of monosyllables have a phonotactic structure fitting (42).

(42) CV(:)C(C)(C)

The only monosyllables whose phonotactic structures (42) fails to predict belong to a restricted set of word classes. The deictic adverb *i:* ‘there’ is the only monosyllable in my corpus that lacks both onset and coda (V:). All remaining open monosyllables (CV:) belong to the marginal word class of interjections (e.g. the backchannel response *ko:* ‘oh, I see’). The other four onset-less monosyllables (VC and VCC) in my corpus are the ‘hortative’ particle (*ak*) and the three adnominal demonstratives; *iŋ* ‘this’, *iŋ* ‘that’, and *ulp* ‘the<sup>34</sup>’. The only syllable type generated by (42) that does not find an exemplar in my corpus is CV:CCC, ruled out on the grounds of exceeding the maximum syllable weight.

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<sup>33</sup> The term *ne.ŋk* denotes a category of kin that has at its core the sons and daughters of a male ego.

<sup>34</sup> *Ulp*, translated here as ‘the’, may be more accurately characterised as an addressee-proximate demonstrative, cf. §5.3.2.1.

### 2.5.2.2 Syllabification

There is a widely observed cross-linguistic tendency for CV (as opposed to VC) syllables to be unmarked<sup>35</sup> (Jakobson 1962, Blevins 1995). This tendency is reflected in the segmentation of polysyllabic words from right to left, such that consonants found intermediate between the vowel nuclei of adjacent syllables first of all supply an onset to the syllable that follows, with remaining consonants forming the coda of the preceding syllable. Hence the word-medial /n/ in Kuuk Thaayorre /ŋanip/ ‘father’ would be analysed as the onset of the second syllable rather than the coda of the first. Given that Kuuk Thaayorre allows a maximally one-consonant onset, to apply such an analysis to its polysyllables would result in such syllabic structures as in (43).

- (43)   ŋa.ŋa.nam ‘mother’  
          i.luŋ.kar ‘from the north’  
          ŋe.ŋ.kan ‘yesterday’  
          kat.pirr ‘grasped’  
          jom.parr ‘become’

But does this syllabification reflect the structure of the language, or the prevailing assumptions of phonological theory? Sommer (1969, 1970) proposed an alternative pattern of syllabification for Kunjen (a close neighbour of Kuuk Thaayorre), arguing that the VC syllable should be considered basic in this language. Though this analysis was roundly criticised (Darden 1971, McCarthy and Prince 1986) and later recanted (Sommer 1981), some more recent papers (e.g. Breen and Pensalfini 1999, Tabain et al. 2004) have amassed more convincing arguments that the underlying syllable structure in Arrernte is VC(C), furnishing complex codas at the expense of onsets. Although I do not deny the existence of onsets in Kuuk Thaayorre, the dominant pattern of reduplication suggests that this language may also display a preference for filling codas before supplying onsets. This is best illustrated by comparing the final three words in (43) with their reduplicated counterparts (nb. syllable boundaries have been interted according to the traditional analysis, filling onsets before codas):

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<sup>35</sup> Indeed, for decades phonological theory assumed the universal primacy of CV syllables. Thanks to Mary Stevens for some very illuminating discussions on this topic.

- (44) ɲe.ɲ.kan ‘yesterday’  
 ɲe.ɲ.ke.ɲ.kan ‘morning’  
 kat.pir ‘grasped’  
 kat.pat.pir ‘kept grasping’  
 jom.par ‘become’  
 jom.pom.par ‘kept becoming’

If we retain an analysis under which intervocalic consonant series (e.g. /ɲnk/ in /ɲe.ɲkan/) supply onsets before codas (hereafter referred to as the “CV analysis”<sup>36</sup>), we are required to explain the apparent reduplicative infixation of the syllable /ke.ɲ/ in the word /ɲe.ɲ.kan/, the syllable /pat/ in the word /katpir/, and /pom/ in /jompar/. This could be done by stating that the reduplicative infix takes the onset of root’s second syllable, followed by the rhyme of the root’s first syllable. A more parsimonious alternative is offered by a left-to-right syllabification analysis (hereafter “VC analysis”), under which intervocalic consonant series fill the coda of the preceding syllable before the onset of the following one. Under this analysis, the words presented in (44) reduplicate via the infixation of the rhyme of the first syllable. This alternative syllabification is presented in (45).

- (45) ɲe.ɲnk.an ‘yesterday’  
 ɲe.ɲnk.e.ɲnk.an ‘morning’  
 katp.ir ‘grasped’  
 katp.atp.ir ‘kept grasping’  
 jomp.ar ‘become’  
 jomp.omp.ar ‘kept becoming’

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<sup>36</sup> The shorthand terms “CV-analysis” and “VC-analysis” used herein are not intended to imply that Thaayorre syllables do not contain codas or onsets respectively. Instead, these labels are meant to reflect a preference for filling onset slots versus coda slots where the two are in competition.

The VC analysis does admit the presence of syllable onsets both word-initially (where there is no preceding coda to fill), and where the series of intervocalic consonants would violate the phonotactic restrictions on permissible consonant clusters were they to form a coda. Hence /mop.ɲun/ ‘butterfly’ is syllabified /mop.ɲun/ rather than /mopɲ.un/, since the sequence /pɲ/ within a coda would violate the sonority hierarchy (cf. §2.5.2.3).

These data are insufficient to reach any definitive conclusions regarding the preference for CV vs. VC syllables in Kuuk Thaayorre. Further investigation — and in particular close phonetic analysis — may provide evidence that confirms one syllabification pattern as correct. It is possible, though, that Kuuk Thaayorre instead represents an intermediate step in the transition from CV-dominant (as attested in most of the world’s languages) to VC-dominant (as attested in Arrernte and perhaps Kunjen). Throughout the following discussion, I will attempt to remain agnostic, considering the implications of both CV and VC analyses wherever the two diverge.

### 2.5.2.3 Syllable types in polysyllabic words

As might be expected, the set of permissible syllable structures in Kuuk Thaayorre depends very much on whether we adopt a CV or VC analysis. For example, onsetless syllables are restricted to the initial position under the CV analysis. Conversely, open syllables are only found word-finally under the CV analysis (and hence are never long). A further point of divergence between the two analyses is the fact that the CVCCC syllable structure (well documented for monosyllables) is only possible for polysyllabic words under a VC analysis, and even then is only ever found word-initially. Likewise, the VCCC syllable shape is only present under the VC analysis, and even then only in word-medial reduplicative infixes<sup>37</sup>. The three rules that generate the set of syllable structures found in polysyllables under the CV analysis are given as (46), while (47) presents the three rules that apply under the VC analysis.

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<sup>37</sup> Although the word *melnk.elnk.ar* ‘tomorrow’ — which exhibits this medial syllable type under the VC analysis — is synchronically monomorphemic, its formal structure suggests a reduplicative diachronic origin.

(46) (C)V(C)(C)  
CV:(C)(C)  
V:(C)

(47) V(C)  
CV(C)(C)(C)  
(C)V:C(C)

Table 5 illustrates which of the syllable types generated by the formula (C)V(:)(C)(C)(C) are attested in Thaayorre polysyllables under both the alternative syllabification rules. Where possible, I have included examples of the syllable types in word initial, medial and final position. Where a syllable type is only attested in polymorphemic words, these words are included in italics with morphemic boundaries indicated by hyphens.

	Exemplar words (CV analysis)	Exemplar words (VC analysis)
V	<b>o.tɔŋ.ci</b> ‘hill’ <b>a.ŋar</b> ‘purposive’	<b>wiŋ.i</b> ‘prawn’ <b>ot.ɔŋ.ci</b> ‘hill’
CV	<b>wi.ŋi</b> ‘prawn’ <b>mi:n.ŋa.-ni-r</b> ‘frightened (somebody)’	<b>ŋaʔ.n.ma</b> ‘from me’ <b>pu:n.ŋa</b> ‘larrikin’
CVC	<b>wan.ʔan</b> ‘where’ <b>ʔut.piŋ.pan</b> ‘lizard sp.’ <b>ŋa.nip</b> ‘father’	<b>ŋan.ip</b> ‘father’ <b>mi:n.ŋa-n.i-r</b> ‘frightened (somebody)’ <b>ʔi:nt.mur</b> ‘paralysed’
CVCC	<b>ŋu.ʔn.tu.ʔn.tur</b> ‘nighttime’ <b>ko.ʔŋ.kulm</b> ‘string bag’ <b>we.ʔn.ka</b> ‘between’	<b>wan.ʔ.an</b> ‘where’ <b>maŋk.wark.ant</b> ‘go circuitously’
CVCCC	*	<b>ʔo.ʔŋk.r</b> ‘light’ <b>we.ʔnk.a</b> ‘between’ <b>melnk.elnk.ar</b> ‘tomorrow’
VC	<b>iŋ.ʔul</b> ‘that one here’ <b>ak.pi</b> ‘regardless’	<b>ot.ɔŋ.ci</b> ‘hill’ <b>ʔa:p.ir.i</b> ‘close’ <b>ŋan.ip</b> ‘father’
VCC	<b>iŋʔ.nul</b> ‘this one’	<b>iŋʔ.nul</b> ‘this one’ <b>ot.ɔŋ.ci</b> ‘hill’ <b>pin.i.ʔm</b> ‘imagine’ <b>ko.ʔŋk.ulm</b> ‘string bag’
VCCC	*	<b>melnk.elnk.ar</b> ‘tomorrow’ <b>ŋe.ʔnk.e.ʔnk.an</b> ‘morning’
V:	<b>i:.-l-uŋ.kar</b> ‘from there in the north’	*
CV:	<b>ʔa:p.ir.i</b> ‘close’	*
CV:C	<b>ŋo:ŋ.kom</b> ‘ignorant’ <b>mi:n.ŋa.-ni-r</b> ‘frightened (somebody)’	<b>ʔa:p.ir.i</b> ‘close’ <b>mi:n.ŋa-n.i-r</b> ‘frightened (somebody)’
CV:CC	<b>pi:ŋʔ.-nan</b> ‘going to grow’ <b>ŋe:ŋk.-mam</b> ‘love’ <b>puŋk.+pa:nt</b> ‘kneecap’	<b>pi:ŋʔ.aw.ar</b> ‘tired’ <b>ŋo:ŋk.om</b> ‘ignorant’ <b>puŋk.+pa:nt</b> ‘kneecap’
CV:CCC	*	*
V:C	<b>i:-ŋ.kar</b> ‘there in the north’	<b>i:-l.-uŋ.kar</b> ‘coming from the north’ <b>punt.=a:ʔ</b> ‘wingless’
V:CC	*	<b>i:-ŋk.ar</b> ‘there in the north’
V:CCC	*	*

Table 5. Range of syllable structures found in Thaayorre polysyllables.

Further to the syllable structures generated by (46) and (47) above, polysyllabic words can also contain non-initial syllables with consonantal nuclei. Only sonorants may be syllabic, thus consonantal nuclei are restricted to nasals and liquids (/l/, /r/ and /ɺ/) <sup>38</sup>. Syllables with a consonantal nucleus are never found word-initially and hence are never monosyllables. Table 6 presents the range of syllable structures containing a consonantal nucleus found under both CV and VC analyses.

	<b>Exemplar words (CV analysis)</b>	<b>Exemplar words (VC analysis)</b>
Ç	weɺ.k-r.-ɺ ‘rubbed each other’	weɺk.-r.-ɺ ‘rubbed each other’; keɺmp.l ‘corella’
CC	mi:n.ɲ-ɺ ‘take fright’; keɺm.pɺ ‘corella’	mi:n.ɲ-ɺ ‘take fright’
ÇÇ	*	jo.kun.man.rɺp ‘same way’
CCC	jo.kun.ma.nɺp ‘same way’	pɺk ‘breaking sound [ideophone]’

Table 6. Range of syllable structures containing a consonantal nucleus.

Under the CV analysis, the fact that a syllable nucleus will take any immediately preceding consonant as its onset generally restricts syllables without onsets to the word-initial position. Since syllables with a consonantal nucleus are restricted to non-initial positions, this would imply that consonantal nuclei must always be preceded by onsets under the CV analysis. This is not the case, however, since words like /weɺ.kɺr.ɺ/ ‘rubbed each other’ contain a series of two syllabic consonants, the second

<sup>38</sup> There appears to be just one exception to this generalisation, and that is the emphatic pragmatic suffix -ɺ, which consists simply of the dental oral stop. This morpheme appears syllabic, for instance, when it is suffixed to the addressee-proximate demonstrative *ulp*. The sequence of these two morphemes could be syllabified as [ul.pɺ] under the CV analysis, or [ulp.ɺ] under the VC analysis. The unusual phonotactic behaviour of this segment/morpheme can be attributed to its likely grammaticalisation from the free distal adnominal demonstrative *it*.

of which must comprise a syllable in and of itself since the preceding consonant is ineligible for the function of onset, being itself a syllable nucleus.

The examples of closed syllables with consonantal nuclei (i.e. CCC) in my data are marginal at best. They comprise particles such as /jokunman(o)rp/ ‘in the same way’, which may or may not contain a reduced vowel in the final syllable, and ideophones (which violate the phonotactic rules of Kuuk Thaayorre in a number of other ways).

### **2.5.3 Phonotactic constraints within the syllable**

#### **2.5.3.1 Onset**

The restrictions on which of the sixteen Thaayorre consonants may function as onset depend upon both the position of the syllable (i.e. whether or not it is word-initially) and upon whether the word has been syllabified according to the CV or VC analysis. The glottal stop, for instance, never appears word-initially and only appears as word-medial onset where the word has been syllabified according to the CV analysis. Thus the glottal onset of the second syllable in /pu.ʔam/ (with CV syllabification) is alternatively analysed as the coda of the first syllable under the VC analysis (i.e. /puʔ.am/).



	<i>word-initially</i>	<i>non-initial (CV)</i>	<i>non-initial (VC)</i>
<b>p</b>	pip ‘mud’	ak.pi ‘regardless’	*
<b>t̚</b>	t̚e.ɬk ‘return’	kemp.t̚e ‘separately’	kemp.t̚e ‘separately’
<b>t</b>	*	t̚e.rep.-tam ‘rock-ABL’	t̚e.rep.-tam ‘rock-ABL’
<b>c</b>	*	wa.cir ‘properly’	*
<b>k</b>	kumun ‘thigh’	pu.kam ‘young’	ka.ɬ-jup.=ka.ɬ ‘without delay’
<b>ʔ</b>	*	pu.ʔam ‘wounded’	*
<b>m</b>	mopɲun ‘butterfly’	t̚u:c.-mam ‘bush-ABL’	t̚u:c.-mam ‘bush-ABL’
<b>ŋ</b>	ŋerɲk ‘man’s child’	ko.jeɬ.ŋiɬ ‘grandfather’	ko.jeɬ.ŋiɬ ‘grandfather’
<b>n</b>	*	we.net̚ ‘scared’	ak.na ‘let me’
<b>ɲ</b>	(ɲor ‘throat tickle’)	ɲu.ɲan ‘sea’	*
<b>ŋ</b>	ŋay ‘I’	mop.ŋun ‘butterfly’	mop.ŋun ‘butterfly’
<b>ɬ</b>	ɬi:c ‘run’	punt̚.-ɬa:l ‘(arm)-elbow’	punt̚.-ɬa:l ‘(arm)-elbow’
<b>l</b>	*	ku.lam ‘track’	ɲamp.lin ‘us all (excl)’
<b>r</b>	*	ki.ri ‘permissive’	*
<b>j</b>	jo:c	ko.jeɬ.ɲiɬ ‘grandfather’	jeɬ.jor ‘knitting sticks’
<b>w</b>	wu:c	ɲa.woj ‘yes’	maɲk.wark.ant ‘go circuitously’

Table 7. Possible syllable onsets.

### 2.5.3.2 Nucleus

Only sonorants (vowels, liquids, rhotics and nasals) and the dental stop /t/ may function as syllable nuclei, the latter only as the pragmatic enclitic -t (used for focal emphasis). The nucleus of the initial syllable of a word must be a vowel, though this vowel can be either long or short (e.g. /wa:l/ ‘silly’ vs. /wal/ ‘dilly bag’)<sup>39</sup>. Long vowels are restricted to stressed syllables, which are generally word-initially (though there are exceptions, as discussed in §2.8.1).

Phonetic on- and off-glides are often detectable where no phonemic glide is present. For example, the ignorative /ɲene/ ‘why’ is often pronounced [ɲjene], and the verb /ti:k/ ‘break’ often surfaces as [ti:jk].

### 2.5.3.3 Coda

As has already been noted, Kuuk Thaayorre allows clusters of up to three consonants in the coda position<sup>40</sup>. There are numerous restrictions on which of the sixteen consonants may fill each of these three slots, however. To begin with, Table 8 presents the range of segments that may appear as simplex syllable codas (i.e. codas consisting of a single consonant) both word-medially and in word-final position. Under the CV analysis, all of the consonants except /ɲ/ and /ʔ/ may function as both word-medial and word-final simplex codas<sup>41</sup>. Under the VC analysis, these two segments may appear word-medially.

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<sup>39</sup> Although vowel length does not in general affect permissible syllable structures, there may be a restriction that the vowel in an open monosyllable must be long. Open syllables containing short vowels are frequent in polysyllables, however (e.g. /pa:n.tu/ ‘woman:ERG’, /maŋ.ka/ ‘low.down’).

<sup>40</sup> This holds under both CV and VC analyses.

<sup>41</sup> Although Hall (1968:54) finds that “only one example of the dental nasal occurs [word-finally]; /ɲu:r mopɲu/ ‘butterfly’”, I find many examples of word-final dental nasals, for instance: /ɲaŋ/ ‘me’ (contrasting with /ɲa/ ‘what’); /waŋ/ ‘who’ (contrasting with /wan/ ‘give’), /pu:ŋ/ ‘sugarbag’ (contrasting with /pu:n/ ‘breeze’).

	<i>word-medial (CV)</i>	<i>word-medial (VC)</i>	<i>word-final (simple coda)</i>
<b>p</b>	te.rep.-tam ‘rock-ABL’	wup.an ‘temporary’	tip ‘liver’
<b>t</b>	wa:t̚.-nan ‘will look’	ɲaʔ.un ‘to me’	wa:t̚ ‘crow’
<b>t</b>	put.pun ‘on top’	put.ar ‘tree sp.’	wa:t ‘wrongly’
<b>c</b>	me:ɽ.-mic.-nr ‘sharp-ERG’	kec.er ‘freshwater’	jo:c ‘sop [i.e. be covered with fluid]’
<b>k</b>	ak.pi ‘regardless’	puk.am ‘young’	jak ‘snake’
<b>ʔ</b>	*	puʔ.am ‘wounded’	*
<b>m</b>	ku.lam.-nam ‘track-ABL’	kum.un ‘thigh’	ɽoʔom ‘woman’s child’
<b>ɲ</b>	wan̚.tan ‘where to’	wan̚.ul ‘who:ERG’	ɲan̚ ‘me’
<b>n</b>	mi:n.ɲɽ ‘take fright’	kan.a ‘well’	ɲan ‘what’
<b>ɲ</b>	*	wiɲ.i ‘prawn’	*
<b>ɲ</b>	maɲ.ma.ɲal ‘happy’	maɲmaɲ.al ‘happy’	puɲ ‘sun’
<b>ɽ</b>	teɽ.ɲ-ar ‘killed’	wa:ɽ.in ‘chase’	ka:ɽ ‘negative’
<b>l</b>	Pen.kel̚.tan ‘place name’	kul.am ‘track’	ɲamal ‘large’
<b>r</b>	kur.ca ‘cold’	kir.i ‘permissive’	wa:ɲtar ‘call out’
<b>j</b>	*	pu:j-il ‘crab-ERG’	ɲe:j ‘listen’
<b>w</b>	Poɽmpuɽa:w.-ɽak ‘Pormpuraaw-DAT’	ɲaw.oj ‘yes’	ko:w ‘nose’

Table 8. Simplex syllable codas.

A number of segment sequences, presented in Table 9, are permissible in complex codas. The ordering of segments within the coda (and more generally the rhyme) proceeds from more sonorous to less, although some sequences of equally sonorous

stops (e.g. /tp/) are permissible. The glottal stop - which is not classed as an oral stop - is extremely restricted in its distribution. Exemplar words in Table 9 have been syllabified according to the VC analysis. Words for which a CV syllabification would reduce the cluster described are marked with a hat (^‘^’).

C <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	Exemplar words
ɹ	(n, N <sub>α</sub> )	(C <sub>α</sub> )	teɹmp ‘saltwater’, neɹŋk ‘man’s son’, koɹnt ‘black flying fox’, koɹŋk.ulm ‘string basket’, peɹp ‘net’, poɹk ‘big’
n	p, c, k	-	ɹanp ‘kick’, kunk ‘alive’, punk ‘hunk’
N <sub>α</sub>	C <sub>α</sub>	-	puŋk+pa:nt ‘kneecap’, ɹomp ‘smoke’, ɹa:pjnc ‘owl’
l	m, n, ŋ	(k)	^melnk.elnk.ar ‘tomorrow’, , koɹŋk.ulm ‘string basket’, peln ‘they (3plNOM)’
	p, t, k	-	ulp ‘the’, polk ‘big’, ^ngamal-t.am ‘large-ABL’
r	N, C	-	ka:lk.ure ‘cold’, wo:c.orm ‘sacred’, park ‘shine’,
ç	ʔ	-	iŋʔ.nul ‘this one’, ^iʔ.ark.o ‘wow!’
t, k	p	-	watp ‘dead’, patp ‘hawk’, akp ‘despite’

Table 9. Complex syllable codas.

The first row of Table 9 condenses a number of cluster types. The most complex of these, comprising three consonants, must have the retroflex glide in the initial position, followed by a nasal, followed by an oral stop. Where the nasal is alveolar in articulation (/n/), this may be followed by any of the oral stops. Any of the other nasals, however, can only precede a homorganic oral stop. The same is true of two-consonant clusters of nasal + oral stop (as seen in rows 2 and 3); the alveolar is the

only nasal that may enter a heterorganic cluster<sup>42</sup>. The only oral consonant that is not found following the alveolar stop in a complex coda is the dental, which appears always to trigger place assimilation in the nasal.

The lateral approximant is attested in three-consonant complex codas where the second slot is filled by a non-palatal nasal and the third slot is filled by the velar oral stop. It may also serve as initial segment of a two-consonant coda where the second segment is any non-laminal nasal or oral stop. While the lateral approximant and retroflex glide regularly appear within complex codas, the glides /w/ and /j/ are never attested preceding another segment within a coda except where a pragmatic enclitic (=t or =p) has attached to a glide-final word (e.g. in *ŋaj-t* 'I-PRAG').

The apical tap/trill may be combined with only one other segment in a coda, though this segment can be any nasal or oral stop. The glottal stop is likewise found only in two-segment clusters, and only following a dental (nasal or oral) stop. The final cluster type attested in my corpus is the sequence of an apical or velar followed by bilabial oral stop.

Finally, it is worth noting that although sequences of nasals are always treated here as heterosyllabic, their pronunciation varies such that some tokens appear to suggest a complex cluster analysis. For example, the inflected verb *tɛŋm* 'hit-P.IPFV' is variously produced as bisyllabic, sesquisyllabic and (potentially) monosyllabic. There are also a number of roots that contain sequences of nasals (e.g. *mi:nŋ* 'take fright'), although their obligatory inflection allows for the analysis of the root-final nasal as second-syllable onset. Future research, and in particular acoustic phonetic analysis, may shed light on the status of these putative complex nasal clusters.

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<sup>42</sup> The pragmatic enclitics =t and =p produce a number of possible exceptions to this rules since they may attach to words that end in nasals of other places of articulation (e.g. *ŋaŋ=p* 'me=PRAG', *puŋ=t* 'sun=PRAG').

### 2.5.4 Phonetic effects of syllable structure

Hall (1968) includes a detailed discussion of the phonetic characteristics of consonants according to their position within the syllable. Many of his observations, however, do not accord with my own observations of Kuuk Thaayorre. It is unclear whether this is due to differences in approach, analysis, speakers consulted or changes in the language itself.

Nonetheless, Hall's (1968:58) observation that word-initial oral stops to be aspirated, voiceless and 'fortis' (e.g. in /ka:l/ [k<sup>h</sup>a:l] 'ear') holds true for my data. The onsets of subsequent syllables are also often aspirated (e.g. /pi:t/ [p<sup>h</sup>i:t<sup>h</sup>] 'hold:NPST'). Where this onset forms a homorganic stop sequence with the coda of the preceding syllable, though, it is usually unaspirated, e.g. /naŋkn/ [naŋkn] '2sgPOS' (cf. Hall 1968:58). As mentioned above, the first segment(s) of a consonant cluster are usually released, except where followed by a bilabial stop (e.g. /taŋkt/ [taŋk<sup>h</sup>t] 'pus:PRAG' but /watp/ [wat<sup>h</sup>p] 'dead'). Word-final consonants are almost always released and optionally aspirated (word-final aspiration usually associated with emphasis).

## 2.6 The word

### 2.6.1 Phonotactic constraints at the word level

Kuuk Thaayorre contains a particularly high number of monosyllables for an Australian language (cf. Dixon 1980:167, 2002:651), but it also possesses numerous lexemes with four or more syllables. Words are minimally bimoraic, however, containing either a long vowel nucleus, a coda, or both.

Polysyllabic words — syllabified according to the CV analysis — include: /maŋk.war.kan.t/ 'went circuitously'; /i.li.pa.raw/ 'from south east'; /po.te.pa:t/ 'shiver' (Hall 1968:143); /wa.ram.na.ma.rul/ 'he was getting worse' (Hall 1968:145); /to.to.wol.na.nul/ 'he made them keep playing' (Hall 1968:146); /ne.m.pe.na.ni.cr.ta/ 'nearly pushed me down' (Hall 1968:146).

As noted in §2.5.3.1, there are a number of restrictions on word-initial segments. Namely, /r/, /t/, /n/, /ŋ/, /c/, /r/ and /l/ are only attested word-initially in ideophones and English loan words. Hall (1968:55) gives a number of examples of words beginning with these phonemes, but I do not take these exceptions to disprove the restriction for several reasons. To begin with, the procedure Hall followed in order to determine felicitous syllable structures may have led informants to attribute meaning to phonetic strings that are not part of the Thaayorre language proper. As he (p. 127) puts it:

*Generative lists comprising proved phonemes served to encourage informants to ‘recognize’ actual Thaayorr words.*

We might infer that Hall’s consultants were asked to attribute meaning to random strings of phonemes. Whilst their responses may be both interesting and significant, it cannot be assumed that the ‘recognised’ words form part of the structured lexicon of the Thaayorre language. Indeed, none of these forms are attested in my corpus.

Secondly, the examples with which Hall illustrates these phonemes in word-initial position appear to be almost exclusively ideophones (e.g. /liŋ/ ‘flash of torch’, /lak/ ‘speared’, /lup/ ‘in’, /law/ ‘break’, /tu:r/ ‘gunshot sound’). Ideophones are well-known to flout phonotactic constraints in many other Australian languages (cf. Alpher 1994, Schultze-Berndt 2001, inter alia). The exceptions to this are a couple of interjections (e.g. /ce:r/ ‘sorry’, used usually in situations of contact between proscribed relatives) and partially-assimilated loan words (e.g. /cuk/ ‘sugar’). Again, we might allow that unusual phonotactic patterns may emerge in such marginal cases. Nevertheless, the fact that these phonemes can appear at the beginning of any word suggests that the contrast between them and other stops (e.g. between the postalveolar [t] and dental [t]) has not been neutralised in this position, but rather that there is a phonotactic constraint on their appearing at the start of lexemes from less marginal word classes.

Like the palatal obstruent, palatal nasals generally do not appear word-initially. Hall (1968:53) gives one example of an initial palatal nasal — /ŋor/ ‘throat tickle’ —

though the word class of this lexeme is unclear. It seems likely that /ɲor/ is some kind of ideophone or exclamation (like the words containing initial palatal stops mentioned above). In other words the absence of initial palatal nasals seems to again be due to phonotactic constraints. Further research may prove word-initial /ɲ/ to be a marginal rather than disallowed, however.

Some vowel-initial morphemes have consonant-initial allomorphs, found usually following vowel-final words. The distal demonstrative /it/, for example, often surfaces as /ɲit/ in contexts such as /kuta ɲit/ ‘that dog’. Similarly /ulp/ ~ /ɲulp/ ‘the’, /aka/ ~ /ɲaka/ ‘this place’ and /i:wal/ ~ /ji:wal/ ‘hither from there’<sup>43</sup>. These consonant-initial allomorphs are likely the more historically conservative, with the vowel-initial allomorphs formed by a process of deletion following a closed syllable. Synchronically, too, we must take the consonant-initial allomorph to be basic (otherwise it is impossible to motivate the insertion of the particular nasal following vowels), although these initial consonants may be deleted even following vowel-final words (i.e. /kuta it/ ‘that dog’ is also an acceptable string). The deletion of word-initial segments is also found in fast speech (§2.7.2) and in some other contexts (the dubitative enclitic /=okun/, for instance, is no doubt related to /jokun/ ‘perhaps’).

Although extremely few Thaayorre verb or noun roots are vowel-final, many words end up with final vowels due to suffixation and encliticisation. Many ergative and dative-inflected nouns end in vowels, for instance, and the reflexive suffix -e is sometimes the final segment of a verb. Furthermore, the emphatic enclitics /=pa/ and /=e(ej)/ add to the number of vowel-final phonological words in Thaayorre discourse.

I have found no evidence so far of sandhi, either internal or external.

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<sup>43</sup> This is also observed by Hall (1968:64): “the semivowel /y/ appears intermittently before /i/ as a lenis ‘prefix’ in many vowel-initial directional terms: e.g. in /i:wal/ ~ /yi:wal/ ‘come from there’”.



## 2.7 Morphophonology

### 2.7.1 Reduplication

Although reduplication is most common amongst verbs, members of other word classes may also be reduplicated, though with less predictable semantic effect (the semantic functions of verbal reduplication are discussed in §7.2.4). Reduplication takes two main forms, seemingly determined by the length of the first-syllable vowel:

- (48) Short vowel:            ɟok ‘enter’                   ɟokok ‘keep entering’  
 Long vowel:                wa:n̩tar ‘search for’    wa:wan̩tar ‘keep searching for’

Where this vowel is short (e.g. in /ɟok/ ‘enter’), the reduplicative rule differs for CV and VC analyses. Under the VC analysis, reduplication can be simply characterised as the infixation of the first syllable rhyme immediately following the first syllable. Under the CV analysis, the same rule holds for monosyllabic roots, but for polysyllabic roots we must state that the reduplicative infix consists of the onset of the root’s second syllable followed by the rhyme of its first<sup>44</sup>.

- (49) kal ‘carry’                   kal<al>                   ‘keep carrying’  
 peɪp ‘cover’                   peɪp<eɪp>               ‘keep covering’  
 katp ‘grasp’                   katp<atp>               ‘keep grasping’  
 jompar ‘become’               VC: jomp<omp>ar       ‘becoming’  
   CV: jom<pom>par       ‘becoming’  
 kunut ‘remove’               VC: kun<un>ut           ‘keep removing’  
   CV: ku<nu>nut           ‘keep removing’

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<sup>44</sup> It might alternatively be argued that reduplication precedes syllabification. Under this analysis, the reduplicative infix consists of the first vowel of the root and every consonant that intervenes between this vowel and the second vowel of the root. This infix would then be inserted immediately prior to the second vowel of the root. Hence from the verb root /jompar/ the reduplicative infix <omp> would be identified and preposed to the root’s second vowel, creating /jomp<omp>ar/. The later syllabification of this reduplicated stem would create /jom.pom.par/, irrespective of morpheme boundaries. Whilst such an analysis is possible, it remains clearly less elegant than the VC analysis of reduplication.

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piniɿm ‘imagine’	VC: pin<in>iɿm	‘keep imagining’
	CV: pi<ni>niɿm	‘keep imagining’
ɲeɿnkən ‘yesterday’	VC: ɲeɿnk<eɿnk>ən	‘morning’
	CV: ɲeɿn<keɿn>kən	‘morning’

Although for many words this might be analysed as a process of suffixation (e.g. /perp-erp/ ‘keep covering’), it is clear for all polysyllabic roots that the reduplicative morpheme is infixal (e.g. /ɲeɿnk<eɿnk>ən/ ‘morning’).

Where the vowel is long, the onset plus the short congener of the first vowel are infixal following the first syllable:

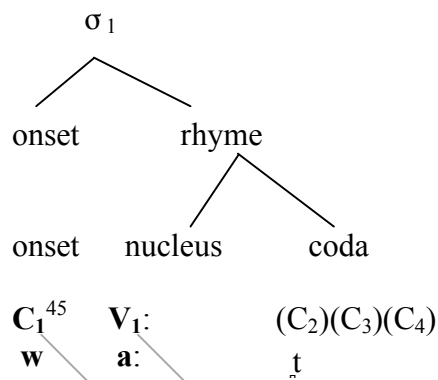
(50) tu:t	tu:tut	‘crawl’
ko:pe	ko:kope	‘wait’
wa:t	wa:wət	‘search’
pa:t (‘fire’)	pa:pat	‘hot’

It could be argued that the onset plus vowel are instead prefixed, with the vowel of the second syllable reduced due to the productive phonological rule that only initial syllables may contrast vowel length. However, since the first mode of reduplication clearly involves infixation, I believe it is more parsimonious to view the second as infixation as well. Indeed, we might equally well view the infixal syllable as containing the same vowel as the initial syllable of the verb root, but that this vowel is reduced in the infix due to the phonological restriction of long vowels to initial syllables.

The following three figures show the morphophonological processes of reduplication; the part of the initial syllable of the verb root that is reduplicated is shown in bold. The subsequent syllables of polysyllabic roots are unaffected by the reduplicative process, and are therefore excluded from these figures.

*initial syllable  
of verb root*

(wa:t 'search')



*initial syllable plus  
reduplicative infix*

(waa<wa>th)

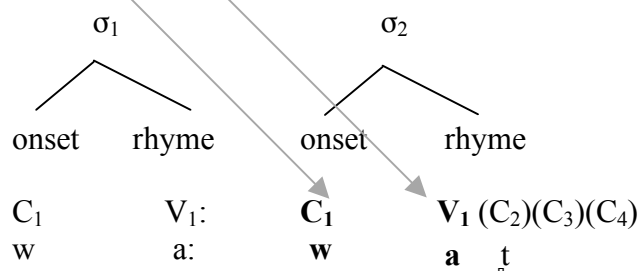


Figure 2. Reduplication of vowel root with initial long vowel.

In the first form of reduplication (represented by Figure 2), the second manifestation of ( $C_1$ ) (in the second syllable) is almost always lenited to a voiced fricative. Hence /t̪e:t̪e.t̪k/ [t̪e:ðe.t̪k] 'return:RDP'; /ko:kope/ [k<sup>h</sup>o:ɣope] 'wait:RDP'; and /pa:pat̪/ [p<sup>h</sup>a:βat̪] 'hot'.

Figure 3 diagrammatises the process of reduplicating a root with short initial vowel according to the VC analysis, while Figure 4 shows how the same process of reduplication is manifested under the CV analysis.

<sup>45</sup> There are no vowel-initial verbs in Kuuk Thaayorre.

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*initial syllable of  
verb root*

(*pi.ɸmp* ‘float up’)

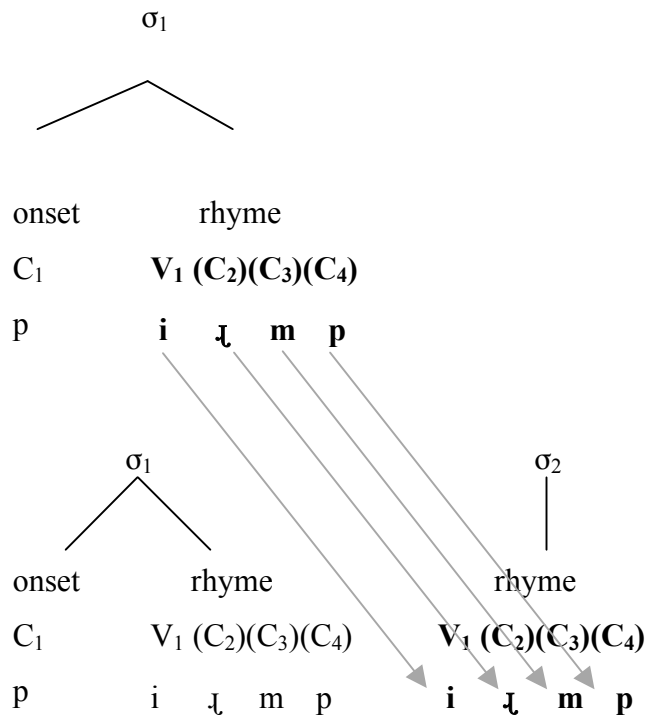
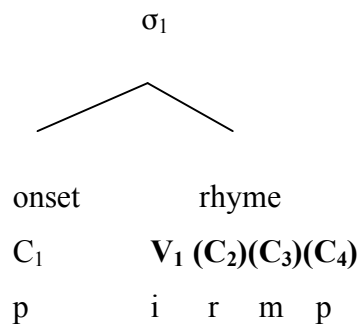


Figure 3. Reduplication of vowel root with initial short vowel (VC analysis)

initial syllable of  
verb root

(*pirmp* ‘float up’)



initial syllable plus  
reduplicative infix

(*pirmp*<*irmp*>)

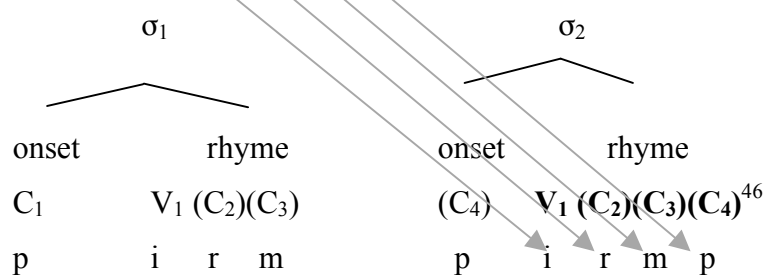


Figure 4. Reduplication of vowel root with initial short vowel (CV analysis).

For some verbs, lengthening of the (short) vowel in the initial syllable represents an alternative form of reduplication. For instance:

- (51)    *jan* ‘go’                                  *ja:n* ‘keep going’  
           *wun* ‘lie’                                *wu:n* ‘go on lying’  
           *muŋk* ‘eat’                                *mu:ŋk* ‘keep eating’

These three verbs do not otherwise reduplicate, and some irregularity in inflection might be expected given that they are amongst the most frequently used verbs. More problematic, however, are the few other verbs for which lengthening of the initial-syllable vowel contrasts with a standard reduplicated form. For example, the verb /ɬat/ ‘chop’ may be ‘reduplicated’ as either /ɬatɬat/ (the expected form) or /ɬa:t/. On

<sup>46</sup> The final reduplicated consonant becomes the onset of the third syllable (should there be one).

first inspection, it seems that vowel-lengthening (i.e. /ɪ̃aːt/) is associated with an enduring event, whereas reduplication proper (i.e. /ɪ̃aːtɑːt/) is associated with iteration. Similarly the verb /paːt/ ‘bite’ may be alternatively reduplicated as /paːtɑːt/ ‘bite repeatedly’ and /paːt- / ‘be biting’. The semantic contrast created by the availability of these two alternative reduplication patterns appears to apply to only a small subset of verbs. The functions of (multiple) verbal reduplications are considered in more detail in §7.2.4.3.

## 2.8 Suprasegmental phonology

The suprasegmental phonology of Kuuk Thaayorre warrants much deeper investigation than I have been able to undertake. The few observations outlined in the following sections are intended as starting points for future study. The interested reader is also referred to Hall (1968), which includes detailed and more richly exemplified discussion than space allows for here.

### 2.8.1 Stress

Primary stress in Kuuk Thaayorre is allocated to the first syllable of the lexical head (cf. Alpher’s 1972:71 similar claim that stress falls on the root-initial syllable in both Kuuk Thaayorre and Yir Yoront). Since Kuuk Thaayorre is a predominantly suffixing language, the initial syllable of the lexical head usually but not always corresponds to the first syllable of the phonological word. Examples of nonalignment, where the lexical head is not the word-initial morpheme, are compounds and two enclitics. It is generally the second root of a compound that receives primary stress (e.g. /puŋk+páːnt/ ‘kneecap [lit. knee+head]’, mɛː.ɪ+kun+wáːr ‘pitiful [lit. eye+guts+bad]’). The enclitics /=(k)aːk/ ‘propriative’ and /=(k)aːɪ / ‘privative’ are unusual both in their tendency to attract primary stress and in the fact that they contain long vowels (these two features being clearly related). The initial syllable of the word

to which these enclitics attach will usually exhibit secondary stress, with all intervening syllables unstressed (e.g. /jì:ramokunká:k/ ‘perhaps having another’<sup>47</sup>).

For most words, the initial stressed syllable is followed by secondary stress on every second syllable (as noted by Dixon 1980:128 as a common Australian stress pattern), hence /mánkwarkàntɪ/ ‘going circuitously around’. Dixon also notes that word-final syllables tend to be unstressed in Australian languages, even in words containing an odd number of syllables. Odd-syllabled Thaayorre words vary in this respect, with the allocation of stress to final syllables seemingly dependent on: (a) the phonotactic structure of the syllable (e.g. does it contain a vowel nucleus); (b) the morphological status of the syllable (i.e. is it part of a root or suffix); and (c) the position of the word within the intonational phrase. Accordingly, /mánk.war.kànt/ ‘go circuitously around (imperative)’ allocates secondary stress to the final syllable, but /ŋàt̪n-m(a)n/ ‘my-ERG’ does not. These findings stand contrary to Hall’s (1968:61) observations that “the second morpheme tends to compete with the first and receives a stronger accent: e.g. [pòk<sup>h</sup>ón] ‘nothing’” and “operative suffixes frequently receive greater stress than initial syllables of the root-morpheme: e.g. /ŋàt̪n/ ‘my’; cf. /ŋàt̪n/ ‘to me’” (1968:151). In my data, it is exclusively the first syllable of /pókón/ that is stressed, as is the first syllable of /ngát̪n/ ‘1sgDAT’<sup>48</sup>.

In spontaneous speech, stress patterns may be altered for discursive or stylistic effect. Hence in the ‘Two Crocodiles’ narrative told by DW, the word /irkuw/ ‘to the west’ (which usually carries stress on its initial syllable) is pronounced once with second-syllable stress:

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<sup>47</sup> The phonological word /jì:ramokunká:k/ can be segmented as /ji:ram=okun=ka:k/ ‘another=dubitative=relational.propriative’.

<sup>48</sup> We might perhaps speculate that Hall’s consultants stressed contrastive suffixes in an elicitation context.

- (52) *ŋul puʔam i:-r-kúw .teɻk-ɻ*  
 then wounded there-towards-west return-P.PFV  
 “then when he was wounded he went back to the beach”  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

This stress pattern of this word is presumably changed for contrastive effect, highlighting the direction of the crocodile’s movement (since it is the unusually stressed morpheme /kuw/ that means ‘west’). Throughout the rest of the story, /írkuw/ ‘to the west’ is pronounced with the usual word-initial stress.

It has already been noted that the vowel nuclei of unstressed syllables will often be somewhat reduced. Conversely, pragmatic emphasis is frequently reflected in prosodic vowel lengthening. There is thus a certain iconic function of lengthening the initial vowel of /ŋamal/ ‘large’ in [ŋa::mal] ‘enormous’ or /kanaŋkar/ ‘long ago’ > [k<sup>h</sup>a::naŋkar] ‘very long ago’. In the following chapters, vowels lengthened due to pragmatic emphasis (rather than being phonemically long) will be transcribed ‘V::’ rather than ‘VV’.

### 2.8.2 Fluid Speech and contractions

Although there is a strong tendency in Kuuk Thaayorre towards closed syllables, there is no elision when a vowel-final word is followed by a vowel-initial word:

- (53) ... *ŋaŋ kuta-ku angar ŋe:j-ŋ*  
 1sgACC dog-ERG WANT hear-SBJV  
 ‘... so the dog would hear me’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

In fast speech, however, both vowels and consonants are often elided both word-initially and word-internally (e.g. /wanŋunŋun/ ‘whose’ is often pronounced [wanŋwun], especially by younger speakers). The Thaayorre tendency for the onsets of word-initial syllables, rather than word-final codas, to be reduced or omitted may be unusual in a broader typological perspective (cf. Martinet 1955, Hock 1991, Keating



et al. 1998, and Cho and Keating 2001). However, as noted earlier, in the Australian context initial segments seem prone to weakening (cf. Hale 1976a on Northern Paman languages; Dixon 1980 on Arrernte; and Stoakes pers. comm. on Bininj Gun-Wok).

Hall (1968:64) labels the phenomenon of word-initial onset deletion in rapid speech ‘telescoping’, observing that “after word-final consonants, the following  $C_1$  is often lost [...] About 14.1% of word-initial phones, almost entirely consonants, may be omitted in normal speech” (1968:72). Onset deletion within an intonational phrase may be responsible for the emerging class of pronominal enclitics, e.g. =*ay* ‘1sg(NOM)’ < *ngay* ‘1sg(NOM)’. There is some evidence, however, that these forms are no longer merely the result of reduction phenomena in fast speech. Firstly, they are frequently repeated in their reduced, phonologically-dependent form, even in the hyper-articulated speech of consultants during transcription sessions. Secondly, in examples such as (54), the enclitic pronoun may intervene between the host word and other enclitics:

- (54) *pa:nt*                      *pit<it>-ŋ*                      *wu:mp=ul=okun*  
           woman(ACC)    hold<RDP>-SBJV CONTR=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
           “if he had a wife, alright”  
           [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

## 2.9 Orthographic conventions

There are presently several practical orthographies in use in Pormpuraaw. Their use is somewhat ad hoc, though it is likely that a standardised Thaayorre orthography will emerge from language maintenance projects currently underway in the community. This section will briefly review these orthographies, outlining the key differences between them.

It seems most likely that the first orthography used in the community was developed by Allen Hall, probably in collaboration with speaker-linguist Tom Foote. This orthography was used in an impressive array of primers, readers and other literacy materials printed variously by the Queensland Education Department and the Jollen

Press (Brisbane) for the Pormpuraaw State School (circa 1970). Although a generation of Thaayorre-speakers (and some speakers of other languages) became literate in Kuuk Thaayorre by means of these publications, few would nowadays employ this orthography when writing in their language. Those who remain literate (or who have redeveloped their literacy) in Kuuk Thaayorre, generally employ one — or a mixture — of the alternative working orthographies (hereafter ‘WO’) used around the community. It seems likely that native speaker linguists (probably in collaboration with outsiders) developed these orthographies based jointly on English orthography and what they remembered of the Hall/Foote (hereafter ‘HF’) orthography from school. Finally, there is the practical orthography employed by the native speaker linguists involved in the Cape York Peninsula Language Project and me, and used in the *Ngay Kuuk Thaayorre Yiik* (‘I speak Kuuk Thaayorre’) language and literacy cd-rom. Although this will be labelled P(ormpuraaw) O(rthography), it should be noted that it may yet change before community-wide approval (and thus official status) is obtained. PO will be used throughout the rest of this grammar because it has the widest currency in the community. The phonemic inventory of Kuuk Thaayorre, as represented in PO, is as follows:

	bilabial	lamino-dental	apical	lamino-palatal	velar	glottal
Obstruents	p	th	t	c	k	‘
Sonorants	m	nh	n	ny	ng	
Tap/trill			rr			
Lateral			l			
Glides	(w)		r	y	w	

Table 10. Consonants in Pormpuraaw Orthography.

	front	central	back
high	i, ii		u, uu
mid	e, ee		o, oo
low		a, aa	

Table 11. Vowels in Pormpuraaw Orthography.

The key differences between the three orthographies lie in their respective representations of: the dental nasal; the palatal obstruent; word-initial apical stops; and epenthetic vowels. The HF orthography represents the dental nasal as /h/, while WO and PO represent it as /nh/. The palatal obstruent is represented by HF as /c/, by WO as either /j/ or /ch/ or /c/, and by PO as /c/. The initial lamino-dental stops are represented in HF and WO as /th/ and /n/ respectively, while PO represents both as dental; /th/ and /nh/.

Further to these, there is an array of small differences between the orthographies, particularly in their representations of compounds, affixes and clitics. These differences between orthographies are largely due to differences in morphological analysis, and space does not permit further discussion.

The high number of orthographies for Kuuk Thaayorre stands in contrast to the low frequency with which the Thaayorre language is written. Communication is overwhelmingly oral in the community, with the written medium largely restricted to official business, all of which is conducted in English. Excluding my own work and related projects, for example, I have only encountered written Kuuk Thaayorre in the form of: dictionaries and literacy materials prepared by Allen Hall and Tom Foote, presently locked in a storage cupboard at the Pormpuraaw State School; two posters regarding sexually transmitted diseases at the Pormpuraaw Primary Healthcare Centre, translated by Mrs Myrtle Foote; and signage for Pormpur Paanthu women's centre and various other organisations. There is significant enthusiasm in the community, however, for increased visibility of local languages (including but not

limited to Kuuk Thaayorre), and this is likely to be a priority for people involved in the Cape York Peninsular Language Project. It seems likely that the number of orthographies employed will diminish as more widespread use breeds standardisation.

A few further orthographic conventions in PO require explanation before we proceed. Firstly, homorganic dental clusters are simplified as follows:

/ŋ̣/ + /ṭ/ → nth

There do not appear to be any heterorganic alveolar-dental clusters within morphemes, but where a morpheme-final alveolar nasal is followed by a morpheme-initial dental stop (most commonly the pragmatic suffix *-th*), this is disambiguated from the homorganic cluster by an underscore if not an intermorphemic hyphen:

/ṇṭ/ → nth

/ŋ̣ṭ/ → n\_th

The underscore is used in preference to a full stop in order to reserve the latter for signalling a boundary between morphemes subsumed by a single word in the gloss line. Hence a full stop, rather than a hyphen, is generally used to indicate the morphemic boundary within the verbal compound *thaa.riic* ‘tear’ (literally ‘mouth-run’) because of its monomorphemic English gloss.

Homorganic velar and palatal clusters remain unsimplified:

/ŋk/ → ngk

/nk/ → nk

/ɲc/ → nyc

/nc/ → nc

Sequences of rhotics are separated by an underscore:

/r.ɹ/ → rr\_r

/.ɹr/ → r\_rr

An alveolar nasal followed by a palatal glide is similarly disambiguated from the palatal nasal by an intervening underscore:

/nj/ → n\_y

/ɲ/ → ny



## Chapter Three: Word classes

At the broadest level, Kuuk Thaayorre lexemes can be divided into four major word classes — nominals, verbs, adverbs and ideophones — which are joined by a host of particles and enclitics that do not form a unified class as such. Each of the major classes is open, in the sense that it is possible to coin new nominals, verbs, adverbs and (possibly) ideophones, yet all but the ideophones possess one or more closed subclasses. Pronouns form a closed nominal subclass, for instance, and directional adverbs form a morphologically complex closed paradigm.

The word class membership of a lexeme is generally decided on the basis of its inflectional and syntactic possibilities, and the many homophones in the Thaayorre lexicon can usually be assigned membership to different word classes on this basis. The form *patp*, for example, is analysed as a specific noun when it inflects for case (e.g. *patpa* ‘hawk:ERG’) and/or combines with a generic noun in a classifying phrase (e.g. *minh patp* ‘MEAT hawk(NOM)’), but the same form is analysed as a verb when it inflects for tense, aspect and/or mood (e.g. *patpirr* ‘camp:P.PFV’). The morphosyntactic criteria used to distinguish the Thaayorre word classes are discussed in the relevant subsections below.

### 3.1 Nominals

Nominals are a class of referring forms, all of which may function as the argument of a predicate and/or copula verb, and all of which<sup>49</sup> bear case signalling their role in the clause. Within the nominal class it is possible to identify various subclasses, particularly with respect to their position and function within the noun phrase. The syntactic structure of the noun phrase is the concern of Chapter 5, but it is worth

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<sup>49</sup> Predicate adjectives are an exception to this rule since they never bear case. Predicate adjectives can, however, function as arguments of a copula predicate (as seen in example [81] below).

previewing here since the definitions of many of its constituents rely on these syntactic facts.

Whilst constituent order is remarkably flexible in Kuuk Thaayorre, the ordering of elements in a noun phrase is relatively fixed (though permutable for pragmatic or stylistic effect)<sup>50</sup>. This order is:

(generic) (specific) (adjective) (pos.pro<sup>51</sup>) (quantifier) , (adn.dem<sup>52</sup>)

Each constituent may be omitted; quantifiers and adnominal demonstratives may appear in either order at the end of the noun phrase<sup>53</sup>.

Figure 5 summarises the various nominal subclasses and the hyponymic relationships that hold between them. Dashed lines represent valid alternative classifications<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. McGregor (1990), Wilkins (1989) and Smith and Johnson (2000) for similar analyses of the noun phrase structures of other Australian languages (discussed in more detail in §6).

<sup>51</sup> Possessive pronoun.

<sup>52</sup> Adnominal demonstrative.

<sup>53</sup> At this stage of investigation, it is unclear whether it is pragmatically marked for the quantifier to precede or follow the adnominal demonstrative, or whether the order of the two is otherwise determined.

<sup>54</sup> The divisions between subclasses are not always neat; possessive pronouns, for instance, could equally be considered a subclass of modifier (and hence a nomen) or a subclass of pronoun. Demonstrative pronouns similarly share characteristics of both demonstratives and pronouns, as their label suggests. The exclusive allocation of such word (sub)classes to an intermediate class (e.g. nomen vs. pronoun) is viewed here as a (somewhat arbitrary) heuristic necessity, rather than an inherent feature of the forms in question.





### 3.1.1 Nomina

I follow Wilkinson (1991) — with slight modification — in applying the term ‘nomen’ (pl. ‘nomina’) to a nominal subclass spanning generic nouns (‘generics’), specific nouns (‘specifics’, including kin terms), adjectives and quantifiers. These elements are united by their shared inflectional morphology<sup>55</sup>. Further, there are many lexemes that may function as any or all of generic nouns, specific nouns and adjectives. The form *wang*, for example, can function as a generic noun (denoting the class of ghosts, as in [55]), as a specific (denoting white people and their language, as in [56]) or as an adjective (denoting the colour white, as in [57]).

(55) *wang kirkunka*  
ghost red.legged.devil  
‘red legged devil [ghost]’

(56) *kuuk wang*  
language white.person  
‘English’

(57) *pormpr wang*  
house white  
‘white house’

Although nomina are united by their common morphology and the existence of forms that span the functional and syntactic range of generics, specifics and adjectives, there are clear grounds for distinguishing these latter three subclasses. Firstly, the categories may be differentiated in terms of their semantic contribution to the noun phrase. Generic nouns are semantically broad, always a hypernym of the generic-specific pairing as a whole. Adjectives tend to describe qualities or characteristics, and as such they may freely combine with all — or at least a wide range of — generics whereas specifics are restricted to combining with one or two generics (cf.

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<sup>55</sup> Although most case categories are common to both nomina and pronouns, the former are united by their employ of a single set of case suffixes, whilst the latter display case by stem mutation.

Dixon 2002:459)<sup>56</sup>. A further distinctive feature of adjectives is the fact that these, but not generics or specifics, may be modified by degree adverbs (58).

(58a) *waarr ngamal*  
 very large  
 ‘very large’

(b) \**waarr nganip*  
 very father  
 ‘very father’

Also reflecting the noun-adjective distinction, the lexes *yiirr* ~ *yiirram* ‘other/different’ and *mant* ~ *mantam* ‘small’ have different forms according to whether they are functioning as specific or adjective. In the first clause of (59), for example, the form *yiirr* ‘other’ is used as an adjective (modifying *pam* ‘man’), while the longer form *yiirram* ‘(an) other’ in the second clause corresponds with its use as a specific noun.

(59) *pam yiirr. yiirram riic-arr*  
 man other<sub>ADJ</sub> other<sub>SPC</sub> go.fast-P.PFV  
 ‘[it must have been] a different man. Someone else drove off’  
 [LN27/01/04 Conversation]

The ending *-am* could for this reason be analysed as a suffix used to derive specific nouns from adjectives. But since it is found only in the two forms *yiirram* and *mantam*, I shall continue to treat these nouns as monomorphemic.

Justifying the separation of generic from specific nouns is somewhat more difficult. Ruhl’s (1989) monosemy bias — which assumes monosemous accounts to be more parsimonious than polysemous ones — would urge us to seek a singular definition of

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<sup>56</sup> Again, though, there seems to be a cline from those (adjectives) that may combine with all the generics, to those (adjectives and specifics) that may combine with a limited number of generics, to those (adjectives and specifics) that only combine with one. It is possible to account for such a distribution by appealing to semantics, without recourse to establishing separate word classes.

nomina like *wang* ‘~white’ (55-57). In order to do so, we might argue that noun roots are categorially indeterminate at the level of the lexicon, with the categories of ‘generic’ and ‘specific’ being constructional slots rather than distinct word classes. Their distinct interpretations (e.g. ‘ghost’ vs. ‘whitefella’), then, are a product of the respective constructional slots rather than reflective of differences in lexical semantics. Under this analysis, the lex *wang* ‘~white’ has a single meaning which allows different interpretations according to whether it occupies the generic or specific slot in the noun phrase. The fact that some nomina are restricted with respect to which NP slot they may fill would be attributed to lexical semantics rather than word class. I reject this analysis, however, since it does not account for the Thaayorre data satisfactorily, let alone parsimoniously. To begin with, many of the putatively polysemous forms defy semantic unification. The nomen *pam*, for instance, denotes the class of humans when functioning as a generic noun (e.g. in *pam nhangnam* ‘mother’), but only male humans when functioning as a specific (e.g. in *parr\_r pam* ‘boy’ – lit. ‘CHILD male’). This difference in scope cannot simply be attributed to syntax, but is instead best characterised as polysemy. Just as such cases of polyfunctional forms with distinct meanings are problematic for the monosemous approach, so too are forms that have only one function and one meaning. A case in point is the generic noun *ngan* ‘RELATION’ — denoting the class of kin — which cannot function as specific noun or adjective, but only as a generic, as in (60). There is nothing inherent in its semantics that prevents such polyfunctionality. It is easy to imagine its use as a specific noun (61) or adjective (62).

(60) *ngan pinhirr ngathn*  
 RELATIVE FZ 1sgPOS  
 ‘my aunt [father’s sister]’

(61) \**pam ngan ngathn*  
 HUMAN relative 1sgPOS  
 ‘my relatives’

(62) \**parr\_r pam ngan*  
 CHILD male relative  
 ‘relative boys [i.e. young males within the family]’

I argue, therefore, that *ngan* ‘RELATION’ only functions as a generic noun precisely because it is monosemous. Where forms are associated with multiple functions (e.g. as both specific and generic noun) I view this as indicative of polysemy.

The morphological structure of nomina, discussed in more detail in chapter 4, can be summarised as in Table 12.

<b>(deriv)*</b>	<b>root</b>	<b>-infl</b>
(nomen+)*	nomen<RDP> verb- <i>m</i>	-case

Table 12. Structure of the nomen word.

The nomen word minimally consists of a case-inflected root, which may optionally be reduplicated (cf. §4.3.1). The inflectional slot for case suffixes is not bracketed as optional since all nomen stems are analysed as bearing case, although this inflection does not take the form of an overt suffix for nominative and accusative cases (§4.2.2-4.2.3). The nomen root can alternatively be replaced by a verb stem followed by the derivational (nominalising) suffix *-m*. New nomen stems can also be derived by the compounding of two or more nomen roots (§4.3.2).

### 3.1.1.1 Generics

The closed nominal subclass of generics is composed of at least thirteen members. Generics occupy the initial position in the noun phrase, taking the full range of case suffixes where appropriate. In (63), for instance, the generic noun *minh* ‘MEAT’ is inflected for ergative case due to its being the sole exponent of the NP.

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- (63) *yokun minh-al patha-rr pulnan*  
perhaps MEAT-ERG bite-P.PFV 3duACC  
'perhaps a [crocodile] got them'  
[GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

Where generic and specific nouns are paired in a 'classifying construction' (§6.2), the construction as a whole is always a hyponym of the generic. As such, generic nouns serve a categorising function, optionally classifying entities in the world into thirteen generic groups<sup>57</sup>. Table 13 presents a list of the generics documented to date.

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<sup>57</sup> Specific nouns are frequently used in the absence of generic nouns (see §3.1.1.2).

Form	Gloss	Denotational range
<i>minh</i>	MEAT	<b>edible land animals:</b> meat, land animals that one eats, all birds, inedible aquatic animals (e.g. crocodiles).
<i>ngat</i>	FISH	<b>edible aquatic animals:</b> fish, sharks, crabs (younger speakers only).
<i>may</i>	VEG	<b>edible plants:</b> non-meat food, a meal (which may include meat since <i>may</i> is the unmarked food generic), honey, honey bees.
<i>ngok</i>	LIQUID	<b>liquids:</b> prototypically water, all drinkable fluids, water-based non-drinkable bodies of water (e.g. <i>ngok thermp</i> ‘saltwater’).
<i>kuuk</i>	WORD	<b>structured utterances:</b> words, languages, individual utterances, pronouncements, human speech generally, birdsong.
<i>warrath</i>	GRASS	<b>grasses</b>
<i>yuk<sub>1</sub></i>	TREE	<b>trees:</b> tree species and parts thereof (e.g. roots, branches, etc.)
<i>yuk<sub>2</sub></i>	THING	<b>objects (typically elongated):</b> microphones, cigarettes, aeroplanes, cyclones, dye.
<i>raak<sub>1</sub></i>	PLACE	<b>locations:</b> place names, geographical areas, ground, the earth, soil.
<i>raak<sub>2</sub></i>	TIME	<b>times:</b> diurnal phases, seasons, etc.
<i>raak<sub>3</sub></i>	OBJECT	<b>items of material culture:</b> money
<i>pam<sub>1</sub></i>	MAN	<b>people:</b> humans
<i>pam<sub>2</sub></i>	MAN	<b>men:</b> adult male humans
<i>paanth</i>	WOMAN	<b>women:</b> adult female humans
<i>parr_r</i>	CHILD	<b>youth:</b> immature humans and other species
<i>kuta</i>	PET	<b>social animals:</b> cats, dingoes
<i>ngan</i>	KIN	<b>relatives</b>
<i>ruurr</i>	INSCT	<b>insects</b>

Table 13. List of Thaayorre generic nouns.

### 3.1.1.2 Specifics

In a pragmatically neutral noun phrase the specific noun immediately follows the generic, the two entering into a classifying construction. Taking the full range of case suffixes, specific nouns comprise the largest nominal subclass, freely incorporating newly coined, derived or borrowed terms. The formation of neologisms through nominal compounding is widespread (e.g. *meer-kay* ‘spectacles’, lit. ‘eye-metal’), and English nouns are borrowed daily without any special morphology<sup>58</sup>. Generic-specific pairings may themselves become lexicalised via compounding, producing a new specific noun which may enter a classifying construction afresh. This is the case for *ngat minh-patp* ‘spotted eagle-ray’, where *minh patp* means ‘hawk’. Specific nouns may also be derived from verbs or phrases, e.g. by suffixing the ‘nominaliser’ suffix *-m* (e.g. *yuur-kath-m* ‘policeman’, lit. ‘hand-bind-NMLZ’), see §8.1.7 for further discussion of this derivational process.

As mentioned above, some specific nouns do not co-occur with any generic. There seems to be a cline ranging from: (a) specific nouns that are unable to enter into any classifying construction (e.g. *pung* ‘sun’); to (b) those that rarely co-occur with a generic (such as [*ngat*] *puuy* ‘[FISH] crab’<sup>59</sup>); to (c) those that are found as frequently with as without a generic (e.g. (*raak*) *ngurturnturr* ‘[TIME] night’); to (d) those that usually occur with a generic (e.g. *minh pinc* ‘MEAT crocodile’); to (e) those that are only attested with a generic (e.g. *raak rirkr* ‘money [lit. OBJECT shell]’). Some specific nouns may co-occur with multiple generics, e.g. *pam wang* ‘HUMAN whitefella’, *minh wang* ‘MEAT eagle sp.’, *kuuk wang* ‘WORD English language’. This makes the Thaayorre system appear more classifier-like (cf. §6.2.1). However, the semantics of such generic-specific pairing is rarely compositional, which suggests that each coupling is stored as a separate entry in the mental lexicon rather than produced on the fly.

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<sup>58</sup> There is wide interspeaker and intraspeaker variation in the degree of phonological assimilation of English loan words.

<sup>59</sup> The infrequency with which the generic *ngat* ‘FISH’ precedes *puuy* ‘crab’ has lead many younger speakers to reclassify this specific noun as *minh puuy* ‘MEAT crab’, possibly by analogy with its fellow amphibians *minh pinc* ‘MEAT saltwater crocodile’ and *minh kanharr* ‘MEAT freshwater crocodile’.



The nomen subclass of specific nouns in turn subsumes a number of subclasses — discussed in detail in §4.1 — with their own internal semantic and paradigmatic structures. Most notable amongst these are kin terms, person part terms and the proper names of people and places.

### 3.1.1.3 Adjectives

The prototypical adjective describes some quality or characteristic of an entity. In a pragmatically neutral noun phrase, the adjective will directly follow the specific noun (or generic if there is no specific noun). Most adjectives take the usual nominal case suffixes and certain adjectives may additionally be reduplicated to indicate plurality or intensity, e.g. *kump* ‘deep’ > *kumpumpum* ‘really deep’ (Hall 1972:92). This reduplication does not appear to be productive, however, and the above reduplications may therefore be separate, frozen lexical entries formed during a period when reduplication was more widespread.

### 3.1.1.4 Quantifiers

The five native Thaayorre quantifiers (*thono* ‘one’, *kuthirr* ‘two’, *pinalam* ‘three, several’, *mong* ‘many’, *koop* ‘all’) appear to be part of an open class, despite their limited number. The class can be considered open on the grounds that loan numerals are prevalent throughout Thaayorre speech (though obligatorily taking the suffix *-nharr*, §4.4.3). Additionally, a number of rarely used numerals (e.g. *yuur* ‘five’ [lit. ‘hand’]) are likely to be calques of English, coined due to the increasing demand for numeracy during the mission era. These possibly innovative numerals have extremely limited currency nowadays. Quantifiers are assigned a particular slot in the noun phrase and inflect for case when phrase-final. I have not yet found any evidence to suggest that numerals should be distinguished from the other quantifiers as a separate (sub)class.

The numeral quantifier *thono* ‘one’ is additionally employed as a reference tracking device, introducing new participants that might potentially be confused with participants already on ‘scene’ (cf. §6.10.2).

### 3.1.1.5 Possessive pronouns

Though formally identical to the genitive-inflected form in the personal pronominal paradigm, possessive pronouns are distinguished functionally and morphosyntactically. To begin with, possessive pronouns have a modifying function, restricting the reference of a referring expression (usually the nomen that heads the noun phrase). Morphologically, possessive pronouns take regular case suffixes like other nomina and nominal modifiers (e.g. *-mak* ‘DATive’ in [64]), while cardinal pronouns may not combine with these suffixes.

- (64) *ngay pormpr ngathn-mak thee<the>rk-ø*  
1sg(NOM) house 1sgPOS-DAT return<RDP>-NPST  
‘I’m going back to my house’  
[GN20/08/02 Conversation]

And finally, possessive pronouns occupy a particular syntactic slot within the nomen-headed noun phrase (§6.5), and therefore always and only inflect for the case of the whole noun phrase when in phrase-final position (as in [64]). Under the analysis put forward in §5.1.2, genitive cardinal pronouns function relationally, whilst possessive pronouns function adnominally.

### 3.1.2 Pronouns

A macro-class of pronouns — subsuming cardinal pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, emphatic pronouns, inclusory pronouns, ignorative pronouns and demonstrative pronouns — can be established on the basis of formal and indexical similarities. Nevertheless, possessive pronouns and demonstrative pronouns display characteristics of nomina and (adnominal) demonstratives respectively. As flagged in §3.1, my analysis allows for the dual class-membership of such forms, though it is organisationally preferable to classify them in one class or another. Because this chapter is primarily organised according to shared morphology and syntactic functions, possessive pronouns are discussed alongside other nomina in §3.1.1.5 and demonstrative pronouns are discussed alongside adnominal demonstratives in §3.1.3.1.

### 3.1.2.1 (Free) cardinal pronouns

Thaayorre cardinal pronouns distinguish three person values (first, second and third), three numbers (singular, dual and plural) and make a binary inclusive/exclusive distinction for dual and plural first person pronouns. Each of the eleven basic pronominal categories (formed through the various combinations of these values) further inflects for nominative/ergative, accusative, genitive, dative and ablative cases. The full paradigm of case-inflected cardinal pronouns is given in §5.1.1.1.

The cardinal pronominal paradigm is nominal in its encoding of case categories. Cardinal pronouns encode case through stem mutation, though, rather than hosting the case morphs suffixed to other nominal classes. The syntactic relationship between pronouns and other co-referential nominals is also much looser than that which holds between co-constituents of a nomen-headed noun phrase. Pronouns are frequently repeated several times in a single clause (65), are considerably freer than other nominals with respect to word order and may precede or follow a co-referential NP, to which it may be either adjacent or non-adjacent<sup>60</sup>.

- (65) *ngay piinthawaarr-m-r ngay nhangknma*  
 1sg(NOM) tired-VBLZ-P.PFV 1sg(NOM) 2sgABL  
 ‘I wearied of you’  
 [Hall 1972:138]

### 3.1.2.2 Enclitic pronouns

Nominative and accusative (and, marginally, dative) cardinal pronouns possess alternative enclitic forms that attach to a variety of word classes, usually the verb. These enclitics are in the early stages of grammaticalising from the free cardinal pronouns, and share the same forms minus the initial nasal of the free pronouns. Thus the first person singular enclitic pronoun =*ay* in (66) is transparently derived from the first person singular free pronoun *ngay*. Similarly, the third person singular accusative enclitic =*unh* (67) derives from the corresponding free form *nhunh*.

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Stirling (to appear) on the apposition of coreferential pronouns and noun phrases in Kala Lagaw Ya.

(66) *two years nhamunp nhiin-r=ay*  
two years in.that.place reside-P.PFV=1sg(NOM)  
'for two years I stayed there [Darwin]'  
[GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

(67) *punth thiika-rr=unh*  
arm(ACC) break-P.PFV=3sgACC  
'[the crocodile] broke his arm'  
[GJ03/02/04 Narrative NewsStory]

The full paradigms of enclitic pronouns are given in §5.1.1.2, which also contains a discussion of their syntax.

### 3.1.2.3 Reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns signal that the subject participant is affected by their own actions. These forms may thus be used to achieve a reflexive interpretation of a clause whether in the presence or absence of verbal reflexive coding. Reflexive pronouns decline for person and number, but do not encode case. The reflexive pronominal forms are formally very close to compounds of the corresponding possessive pronouns and nominative cardinal pronouns. Hence the second person singular reflexive pronoun *nhangknunt* 'yourself' is patently derived from *nhangkn* '2sgPOS' + *nhunt* '2sg(NOM)'.

The reflexive pronouns are not only used to describe self-directed ('reflexive') actions, but also events that occur without the intervention of an external Agent, as in the second clause of (68).

(68) *ngul thaathi-n-r, nhululr thaa<tha>th-r*  
then dry-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST 3sgRFL dry<RDP>-NPST  
'then you dry out [the raffia], it dries itself out [in the sun]'  
[ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

The morphology and functions of reflexive pronouns are discussed in §5.1.3, while the semantics and morphosyntax of reflexive constructions more generally are discussed in §10.6.1.

### 3.1.2.4 Reciprocal subject marker, *-nharr*

The suffix *-nharr* ‘ReCiPROCANTS’ is quite rare in my corpus, and its characterisation herein is tentative at best. In examples such as (69) *-nharr* appears to derive a reciprocal pronoun from an emphatic pronominal stem (analogous in function to the reflexive pronoun described in §3.1.2.3 above).

- (69) *pelpelr-nharr rangk<angk>-rr-nam pam ith*  
 3plEMPH-RCPCANT question<RDP>-RCP-P.IPFV men(NOM) dem:dist  
 ‘those men were questioning each other’  
 [Hall 1972:107]

However, it may be alternatively suffixed to a nomen-headed noun phrase functioning as reciprocal subject (70).

- (70) *wakrr parr\_r ngathn-nharr*  
 fight:RCP kid 1sgPOS(NOM)-RCPCANT  
 ‘all my kids are fighting’  
 [Hall 1972:107]

Strengthening its analysis as a marker of strictly reciprocal subjects, *-nharr* may not be used in the description of collective (71) or distributive events.

- (71) *parr\_r ngathn-mun/\*-nharr ngat mungk-m*  
 kid 1sgPOS-ERG/\*- RCPCANT fish(ACC) eat-P.IPFV  
 ‘my children were eating fish [together]’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

Finally, it is worth noting that the same suffix form is employed as a marker of loan numerals (§4.4.3). It is unclear at this stage whether and how these two functions are related.

### 3.1.2.5 *Emphatic pronouns*

The set of emphatic pronouns, discussed in §5.1.4, is used to focus attention on the participant(s) encoded as subject, in contrast with other potential Actors. Thus in (72) the emphatic pronoun *nhulnhulr* makes clear that the stick breaks spontaneously (or from its own internal propulsion), rather than due to any external force applied by an alternative Actor.

- (72) *yuk thongkn nhulnhulr rumparr-r*  
THING stick(NOM) 3sgEMPH break<sub>itr</sub>-P.PFV  
'the stick broke by itself'  
[LN15/12/02 CutBreak16]

The strong formal resemblance between the emphatic pronouns and the nominative forms of the corresponding cardinal pronouns suggests that the former were originally formed through reduplication of the cardinal pronouns, followed by the suffixation of *-r* (cf. §5.1.4). Hence *nhul(nh)ulr* 'itself' in (72) is formally related to the third person singular nominative pronoun *nhul*.

### 3.1.2.6 *Inclusory pronouns*

Inclusory pronouns refer to a nonsingular participant group, simultaneously encoding the group as a whole and picking out one or more of its members (always either speaker or addressee[s]) for individual reference. This is evident in (73), in which the inclusory pronoun *ngalngun* 'you and I [lit. you and I with you]' makes the addressee particularly prominent amongst the plural participant group.

- (73) *nhunt ngalngun pam.thaaw*  
 2sg(NOM) 1du:incl|2sgINCL friend(NOM)  
 ‘you and I are good friends together’  
 [Hall 1972:380]

The set of inclusory pronouns (presented in Table 14) seems likely to have been formed through the encliticisation of dative cardinal pronouns (representing the individual) to nominative cardinal pronouns (representing the group).

Inclusory pronoun	Nominative pronoun	Dative pronoun
<i>ngalathun</i> ‘we two including <b>me</b> ’	<i>ngal</i> ‘1du:incl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
<i>ngalngun</i> ‘we two including <b>you</b> ’	<i>ngal</i> ‘1du:incl’	<i>nhangkun</i> ‘2sg’
<i>ngalingathun</i> ‘we two including <b>me</b> ’	<i>ngali</i> ‘1du:excl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
<i>ngampathun</i> ‘we all including <b>me</b> ’	<i>ngamp</i> ‘1pl:incl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
<i>pelnathun</i> ‘them including <b>me</b> ’	<i>peln</i> ‘3pl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
<i>nhunturra</i> ‘each one of <b>you all</b> ’	<i>nhunt</i> ‘2sg’	<i>nhurrnhungun</i> ‘2pl’
<i>nhipurra</i> ‘the two of <b>you all</b> ’	<i>nhip</i> ‘2du’	<i>nhurrnhungun</i> ‘2pl’

Table 14. Comparison of inclusory, nominative and dative pronouns.

The functions and morphosyntax of inclusory pronouns are discussed in §6.7.3.

### 3.1.2.7 Ignorative pronouns

Ignoratives<sup>61</sup> (Wierzbicka 1977, 1980) function primarily to express a lack of knowledge on the part of the speaker. This may be done in order to mark a referent as indefinite (e.g. *he has something in his pocket*), or to request information from the hearer (the ‘interrogative’ use; e.g. *what does he have in his pocket?*). The seven Thaayorre ignoratives form a class defined by shared semantic, distributional and functional properties. Where they differ, is in the particular categories of knowledge they mark as lacking (Mushin 1995). Hence *ngan* ‘what<sup>62</sup>’ corresponds to a lack of knowledge in the category THING, *wanh* ‘who’ to the category PERSON, *ngene* ‘why’ to REASON, *wanthan* ‘where to’ to PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> (a place defined by a trajectory – see below), *wanthanngun* ‘where at’ to PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> (a static location), *wanthantharr* ‘how’ to MANNER, *ngannganr* ‘how much’ to QUANTITY and *wanhwanhrr* ‘how many’ to ANIMATE QUANTITY. The more precise delineation of these semantic categories is explored below.

In addition to their core indefinite and interrogative functions, ignoratives frequently (cross-linguistically) adopt peripheral functions, e.g. in clause combining, rhetoric, as a hedge or (restricted) quantifier<sup>63</sup>. The Thaayorre ignoratives perform the following range of functions:

- (a) interrogative pronoun
- (b) indefinite pronoun
- (c) relative pronoun
- (d) free choice pronoun
- (e) rhetorical particle
- (f) whatchamacallit pronoun
- (g) apprehensive counterfactual

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<sup>61</sup> Mushin (1995) applies the term ‘epistememe’ to the same word class.

<sup>62</sup> *Ngan* might alternatively be translated ‘something’ or ‘anything’ or ‘that’ or ‘which’, etc. Ignoratives are glossed with an interrogative English term, but translated according to their function in the clause.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Haspelmath’s (1997) detailed exploration of typologically related functions.



Whilst it is cross-linguistically common for ignoratives to function as negative indefinite pronouns<sup>64</sup>, in Kuuk Thaayorre the constituent negator *pokon* ‘NO’ performs this function<sup>65</sup>.

The inclusion of ignoratives within the macro-class of nominals, and more specifically pronouns, is justified functionally by the fact that they are often referring expressions (e.g. *wanh* ‘somebody’ in [74]), morphologically by the fact that they may inflect for case (e.g. *ngenem* ‘from what cause’ in [75]), and syntactically by the fact that they may fill an argument slot subcategorised for by the verb (e.g. the Agent-subject *wanhul* ‘who’ in [33]).

(74) *ulp wanh=okun thongko-rr*  
 dem:adr.prx who=DUB arrive-P.PFV  
 ‘somebody has arrived’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

(75) *kiin ulp ngene-m?*  
 tooth(NOM) dem:adr.prx why-ABL  
 ‘what happened to [your broken] tooth?’  
 [EF14/12/02 DemonstrativeScene2]

(33) *wanhul church inh yump-m?*  
 who:ERG church(ACC) dem:sp.prx make-P.IPFV  
 ‘who built this church?’  
 [LN06/09/02 Elicitation]

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<sup>64</sup> Negative indefinite pronouns would translate as ‘no one’, ‘nothing’, ‘nowhere’, etc. Haspelmath (1997) and Evans (2003b) discuss the use of ignoratives as indefinite pronouns cross-linguistically.

<sup>65</sup> *Pokon* ‘NO’ sometimes collocates with nomina (e.g. *pam* ‘man’) to produce binomial negative indefinite expressions (e.g. *pam pokon* ‘no one’), cf. §10.3.3.

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In some contexts, certain ignoratives (e.g. *ngan* ‘what’, *wanh* ‘who’, *ngannganr* ‘how much’, *wanhwanhrr* ‘how many’ and *wanthan* ‘where’) function as nominal modifiers. *Ngannganr* ‘how much’ thus quantifies *raak rirkr* ‘money’ in (76).

- (76) *nhunt raak rirkr ngannganr pit-r*  
2sg(ERG) OBJECT money(ACC) how.much keep-NPST  
‘how much money do you have?’  
[LN15/12/02 Elicitation]

However other ignoratives (e.g. *wanthanthaarr* ‘how’ [77], *ngene* ‘why’) are more adverbial in function:

- (77) *nhunt wanthanthaarr theerng-nhan?*  
2sg(ERG) how kill-GOAND:NPST  
‘how are you going to kill [that fish]?’  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

The ignorative word class is syntactically heterogeneous, spanning a wider range of clausal functions and combinatorial possibilities (both morphological and syntactic) than the members of most other word classes. As Evans (2000:719-720), Dixon (1972:49-58) and others have pointed out, it is cross-linguistically common for ignoratives to cross-cut other word classes established on the more conventional grounds of shared morphology and syntactic environments (notably pronouns). The ignorative word class is nevertheless identifiable on functional and semantic grounds as a set of forms expressing lack of knowledge in a particular epistemic domain (Evans 2000:719).

#### 3.1.3 Demonstratives

The class of demonstratives is defined on functional grounds as the set of deictic elements that refer or restrict reference to entities in the discursive, attentional or

physical environment. They may be used endophorically, exophorically and ‘recognitionally’ (Enfield 2003b, cf. §5.3.3). There are no common morphosyntactic criteria (beyond some formal resemblances suggesting a common etymology) that unify pronominal and adnominal demonstratives. Further, this word class is bisected by the class of pronouns (under which pronominal demonstratives can be alternatively classified).

### 3.1.3.1 Demonstrative pronouns

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a somewhat irregular paradigm of demonstrative pronouns, only some of which appear to bear case through stem mutation, while others take the external case suffixes available to nomina and some other nominals (e.g. dative *-ak*). Table 15 presents the inventory of demonstrative pronouns.

Thaayorre form	Gloss	Translation
<i>inh'nhul</i>	this.one	‘this one’
<i>yuunh'nhul</i>	that.one	‘that one’
<i>inh'nhaka</i>	right.here	‘to/at right here’
<i>inh'nhungun</i>	this.one:DAT	‘to this one (nearby)’
<i>yuunh'nhungun</i>	that.one:DAT	‘to that one (far away)’
<i>inh'nheman</i>	this.one:ABL	‘from this one (nearby)’
<i>yuunh'nheman</i>	that.one:ABL	‘from that one (far away)’

Table 15. Thaayorre demonstrative pronouns.

The structure of the demonstrative pronominal word is discussed in §5.3.1.

### 3.1.3.2 Adnominal demonstratives

The three adnominal demonstratives — *inh* ‘speaker proximate’, *ulp* ‘addressee proximate’ and *ith* ‘distal’ — defy both purely spatial and purely interactional

analysis. In §5.3.2 we will see that speakers draw on a range of spatial, interactional, cognitive (‘attentional’) and discourse pragmatic factors that converge upon the referent being ‘proximal’ to either speaker or addressee, or ‘distal’ to both.

Adnominal demonstratives occupy the final slot in the noun phrase (arguably as ‘specifier’ – see §6.4) serving to restrict the reference of the head noun (whether overt or elided). They are distinguished from other nominal modifiers (which also restrict reference) by their general insensitivity to case.

Almost all adnominal demonstratives are morphologically simplex. They may, however, combine with an optional ‘attentional’ prefix, *-aw* (78), and the addressee-proximate demonstrative *ulp* very occasionally bears an ergative case suffix (79), as summarised in Table 16, cf. §5.3.2.2.

- (78) *yal-am kal-r ngat aw-ith?*  
 creek-ABL carry-NPST fish(ACC) attn-dem:dist  
 ‘are you bringing the fish from the creek?’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 10, dialogue 1]

- (79) *minh ulp-thn paatha-rr nganh*  
 MEAT dem:adr.prx-ERG bite-P.PFV 1sgACC  
 ‘that dog bit me’  
 [Hall 1972:388]

attentional prefix	adnominal demonstrative root	ergative suffix ( <i>ulp</i> only)
( <i>aw-</i> )	<i>inh</i> <i>ith</i> <i>ulp</i>	( <i>-thn, -nthurr</i> )

Table 16. Morphological structure of adnominal demonstratives.

### 3.1.4 Predicate adjectives

Predicate adjectives are peripheral members of the nominal class. They are unlike other nominals in that they do not inflect for case, and they resemble verbs functionally, in that they predicate rather than refer and subcategorise for one or two arguments. *Pamngongkom* ‘ignorant of’, for example, subcategorises for both a nominative-case subject and an accusative-case direct object, as seen in (80):

- (80) *peln        nhunh   pamngongkom*  
 3pl(NOM) 3sgACC ignorant.of  
 ‘they didn’t know about him [that he had arrived]’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

Unlike verbs, though, they do not inflect for any TAM categories or undergo any of the derivational processes available to verbs. Further confirming their nominal status, predicate adjectives can function as complements in copula constructions (such as [81], headed by the copula postural verb *nhiin* ‘sit’).

- (81) *ngay        walmeerem        angarr    nhiin*  
 1sg(NOM) knowledgeable.of WANT    sit:NPST  
 ‘I want to know’  
 [Anon.]

The two most common predicate adjectives are nominal compounds. *Walmeerem* ‘knowledgeable of’ is composed of the person part terms *wal* ‘brow’ and *meer* ‘eye’, with the verbalising/nominalising suffix *-m* (cf. §8.1.7). *Pamngongkom* ‘ignorant of’ is composed of the noun *pam* ‘man (or person)’ and the adjective *ngoongkom* ‘ignorant’.

The syntax of predicate adjectives is discussed in §9.1.4.

### 3.2 Verbs

Verbs are easily identified by their distinctive morphology. All verbs inflect for at least a subset of TAM categories and a subset of derivational suffixes such as the valence increasing *-n(i)*, reciprocal *-rr* and reflexive *-e*. The morphological template for the verbal word (including enclitics in italics) is presented in Table 17, with each of the categories presented therein discussed in chapters 6 and 7. Only the root and inflectional slots must be filled; all other morphemes are optional.

DERIV	ROOT	DERIV	DERIV <sup>66</sup>	DERIV	DERIV	INFL	ARG	ARG	PRAG
body+	<b>ROOT-</b> <RDP>	-VBLZ	-V <sup>^</sup>	-RFL -RCP	-GO& -RUN&	<b>-TAM</b>	= <i>PRO</i>	= <i>PRO</i>	= <i>le</i> = <i>th</i> = <i>p(a)</i> = <i>thurr</i>
verb roots may be compounded with a person part nominal	the bound verb root is optionally reduplicated	derives a verb from nouns, etc.		increases valency by one argument	produce a reflexive or reciprocal stem with reduced valency	one of two associated motion suffixes	either a tense / aspect or mood suffix	<i>first enclitic pronoun</i>	<i>second enclitic pronoun</i> (see §5.1.1.2 for ordering rules)

Table 17. Morphological template of the Thaayorre verbal word.

The verb is the head of the clause, determining the tense, transitivity, mood etc. of the clause as a whole. The verb also dictates argument structure, including the case

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<sup>66</sup> The ordering of the Valence increaser and the reflexive/reciprocal morphemes is variable, as indicated by the diagonal line between these two slots. See §8 for a discussion of the iconic correlation between linear order and the semantic order of application.

marking of the arguments it subcategorises for. Regardless of its linear position within the clause, the verb tends to attract any pronominal enclitics<sup>67</sup>.

The macroclass of verbs can be alternatively subcategorised according to either morphology or syntax. Morphologically, verbs fall into three subclasses or ‘conjugations’. The first of these (composed mostly of transitive verbs) is by far the largest. For first conjugation verbs, the suffix *-r* signals nonpast tense. For second conjugation verbs (the majority of which are intransitive), the suffix *-r* encodes the past perfective. In addition to these two conjugations are a set of irregular verbs, for which no common inflectional pattern can be identified. The morphological distinction between verbs of the conjugations is illustrated in Table 18, and discussed in more detail in §7.1.3.

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Conjugation</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Conjugation</b>	<b>Irregular</b>
	<i>mungk</i> ‘eat’	<i>thongk</i> ‘arrive’	<i>ya-</i> ‘go’
Nonpast	<i>mungkr</i>	<i>thongk</i>	<i>yan</i>
Past perfective	<i>mungkarr</i>	<i>thongkr</i>	<i>yat</i>

Table 18. Key differences between the three conjugations.

Syntactically, verbs may be subcategorised according to the number and type of arguments they subcategorise for, as shown in Table 19. Hence the intransitive verbs which take a single (nominative) subject argument are distinguished from the semitransitive verbs which subcategorise for both a nominative subject and dative object, and both of these subcategories are distinguished from ‘quasitransitive’ verbs that subcategorise for a nominative subject and accusative object. A number of additional subclasses are discussed in §9.1. The set of postural verbs may either function as intransitive predicates (their diachronically prior function), predicating a

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<sup>67</sup> The verb is not the only potential locus for these clitics, however, as they may be encliticised to other word classes (so far only demonstratives, pronouns and connective *ngul*).

### Chapter 3

particular posture of their subject argument (82), or as copula verbs, subcategorising for a complement NP that is predicated of the subject (83).

- (82) *pam-al ith kuta thanpa-rr ngul kuta nhiin-r*  
man-ERG dem:dist dog(ACC) kick-P.PFV then dog(NOM) sit-P.PFV  
'the man kicked the dog and the dog sat down'  
[GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

- (83) *punguk ngay mincwanc=aak nhiin-m*  
last.time 1sg(NOM) sickness=ADN.PROP sit-P.IPFV  
'I was sick last week'  
[Anon Conversation]

The cline of verbal subclasses, arranged from lowest to highest valency, is presented in Table 19. Each subclass is listed with its subcategorisation frame and a set of exemplar verbs.



Valence	Verbal subclass and Subcategorisation frame	Sample verbs {with sample objects}
<b>Monovalent</b>	<b>Intransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>riic</i> ‘run’ <i>rip</i> ‘enter’ <i>thangkar</i> ‘laugh’
<b>Bivalent</b>	<b>Intransitive copula</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Subj-COMP <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>nhiin</i> ‘sit; be’ <i>than</i> ‘stand; be’ <i>yomparr</i> ‘transform’
	<b>Semitransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , I.Obj <sub>DAT</sub> >	<i>kooppe</i> ‘wait for’ <i>ngee</i> ‘listen to’ <i>nhaa</i> ‘look at’
	<b>Quasitransitive</b> <sup>68</sup> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>paarr</i> { <i>meerngok</i> } ‘cry {tears}’ <i>rok</i> { <i>mimp</i> } ‘put on {clothes}’ <i>thaangk</i> { <i>minh</i> } ‘ride {an animal}’
	<b>Transitive</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>kal</i> { <i>yuk</i> } ‘carry {something}’ <i>matp</i> { <i>yuk</i> } ‘smash {something}’ <i>mungk</i> { <i>may</i> } ‘eat {food}’
<b>Trivalent</b>	<b>Transitive copula</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , Obj-COMP <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>wan</i> { <i>yuk, ngan</i> } ‘name {something, something}’
	<b>Semiditransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , I.Obj <sub>DAT</sub> >	<i>yik</i> { <i>kuuk, wanhngun</i> } ‘say {words, to somebody}’ <i>waantharr</i> { <i>kuuk, wanhngun</i> } ‘call out {words, to somebody}’ <i>wan</i> { <i>yuk, wanhngun</i> } ‘give {something, to somebody}’
	<b>Ditransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>reek</i> { <i>wanh, yuk</i> } ‘give {somebody, something}’ <i>wan</i> ‘tell {somebody, on somebody}’

Table 19. Verbal subclasses by argument structure.

<sup>68</sup> The quasitransitive class includes both intransitive verbs that take cognate objects (e.g. *paarr* {*meerngok*} ‘cry {tears}’) and bivalent verbs that subcategorise for both a nominative-case subject and accusative-case (non-cognate) object, cf. §9.1.4 for further discussion.

In addition to the verbal subclasses presented here, there is the problematic case of some intransitive verbs (e.g. *patp* ‘camp’, seen in [84]) which optionally co-occur with seeming cognate objects (e.g. *wuuc patp* [lit. ‘ceremony camp’] ‘take part in a ceremonial retreat, with associated singing and dancing’, seen in [85]). These would appear to pattern with the (quasitransitive) cognate object verbs were it not for the fact that the subject of, e.g., *wuuc patp* ‘take part in ceremonial retreat’ receives ergative case marking.

- (84) *pam ith=ul yarra yan patp-nhan=okun=ul*  
 man(NOM) dem:dist=3sg(NOM) away go:NPST camp-GO&:NPST=DUB=3sg(NOM)  
 ‘maybe that chap will hive off and pitch camp’  
 [Hall 1972:85]

- (85) *ngancn wuuc patp-m, Conrad-n pul, ulp*  
 1pl:excl(ERG) ceremony(ACC) camp-P.IPFV Conrad-ERG 3du(ERG) dem:adr.prx  
 ‘we used to camp for the ceremony, (with) Conrad and him’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

Thus in terms of its array of arguments (and case-marking thereof), *patp* functions as either a straightforwardly intransitive verb (84) or a straightforwardly transitive verb (85). It is, therefore, best to view this as a case of verbal heterosemy despite the semantic linkage between these two uses. There are examples of verb forms that straddle other categories too. *Thaangk*, for example, may function as a semitransitive verb meaning ‘climb’ (subcategorising for a nominative-case climber and a dative-case ground object or locus of climbing [86]), but also an intransitive cognate-object verb meaning ‘ride’ (subcategorising for a nominative-case rider and an accusative-case vehicle [87]).

- (86) *ball ii otonyciy-ak thaangk-ica-rr*  
 ball(NOM) there hill-DAT climb-RUN&-P.PFV  
 ‘the ball went and climbed up the hill’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation MoverbTriads4]

- (87) *yarrman*      *thaangk-m*      *peln*  
 horse(ACC)      ride-P.IPFV      3pl(NOM)  
 ‘they were riding horses’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

Although large, there is no firm evidence that the class of inflecting verbs is open. I have not recorded any neologisms formed from Thaayorre morphemes, which is particularly significant given the wealth of nominal neologisms created during the process of bible translation in the sixties and seventies. The expression of new verbal concepts is instead achieved via the coining of complex verbs, in which a loan verb (usually English) or native lexeme from another word class is paired with the inflecting verb *rirk* (originally meaning ‘rise’, but glossed as ‘DO’ in this function). Many loan verbs take the transitive suffix *-m*. This appears to be creating a new (open) class of coverbs, defined by their lack of inflection and co-occurrence with the ‘light’ verb *rirk* ‘DO’<sup>69</sup>. (88) exemplifies a complex predicate involving a loan verb, while (89) places a Thaayorre noun *mit* ‘work’ in the coverb slot:

- (88) *ngay*      *ulp*                      *net*      *kaar*      *drag-m*      *rirk-ø*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:adr.prx net(ACC) NEG      drag-TR      DO-NPST  
 ‘I don’t drag those [fish] nets’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

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<sup>69</sup> There is a wealth of recent literature on coverb–light verb pairings and analogous complex predicates both cross-linguistically (e.g. Butt 1995, Alsina et al. 1996, Amberber et al. to appear) and in Australian languages in particular (e.g. Nash 1982, Wilson 1999, Schultze-Berndt 2000, McGregor 2002, Bowern 2004). Coverbs generally contribute lexical information about the event described (e.g. its manner, as seen in [88]) while grammatical information (such as tense, aspect, mood and/or agreement) is realised in the inflection of the light verb (so-called because it is relatively ‘light’ in semantic content). These two word forms — drawn from distinct word classes — jointly predicate within a single clause (cf. Amberber et al. to appear).

- (89) *kaar rirk-m ngay mit*  
 NEG DO-P.IPFV 1sg(NOM) work  
 ‘I wasn’t working [in those days]’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Note that in (89) the coverb *mit* is separated from the preceding light verb by the subject pronoun. This is unusual but perfectly grammatical in stylistically or pragmatically licensed contexts. Inversion of coverb and light verb has not yet been found with an English loan coverb; these appear to always immediately precede the light verb. Both transitive (88) and intransitive (89) complex predicates are attested, and the coverb determines argument structure. Other than the transitive suffix, the coverbs remain morphologically simplex. All TAM categories and valence-changing morphology are affixed to the light verb.

The morphosyntactic subclasses of verb, including the coverbs and light verb, can be represented as in Figure 6, leaving aside the differences in argument structure (which cross cut each of these verb classes).

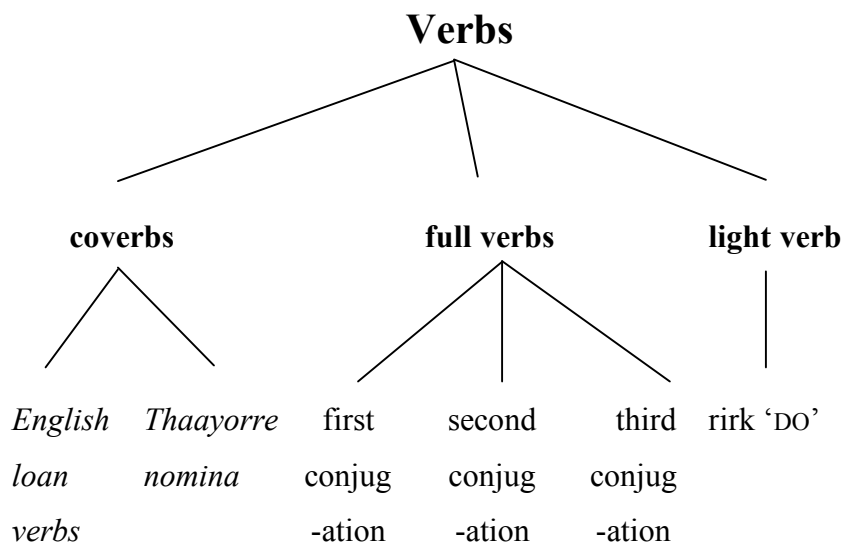


Figure 6. Morphosyntactic verbal subclasses.

### 3.3 Adverbs

The word class of adverbs is identified primarily by the function of modifying predicates. Syntactically, adverbs tend to precede the predicate where there is one (90). Adverbs commonly appear in verbless clauses (91).

- (90) *nhul maalmal yump-m pormpr*  
 3sg(ERG) slowly make-P.IPFV house(ACC)  
 ‘he built the house slowly [over a long period of time]’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation]

- (91) *yuur wacirr!*  
 hand correctly  
 ‘be careful of your hands [or they might get cut on that barramundi fin]’  
 [EF15/12/02 Conversation]

Whilst individual subclasses of adverb may display morphological uniformity, the broader adverbial class is formally, functionally and semantically heterogeneous, making impossible any general discussion of, e.g., the structure of the adverbial word. In a number of cases (e.g. deictic *pal* ‘towards’) the boundary between adverb and particle is fuzzy. This issue is revisited in §11; the remainder of this section will be concerned with the identification and characterisation of adverbial subclasses rather than of adverbs overall. These subclasses — and the semantic relationships between them — are presented in Figure 7.

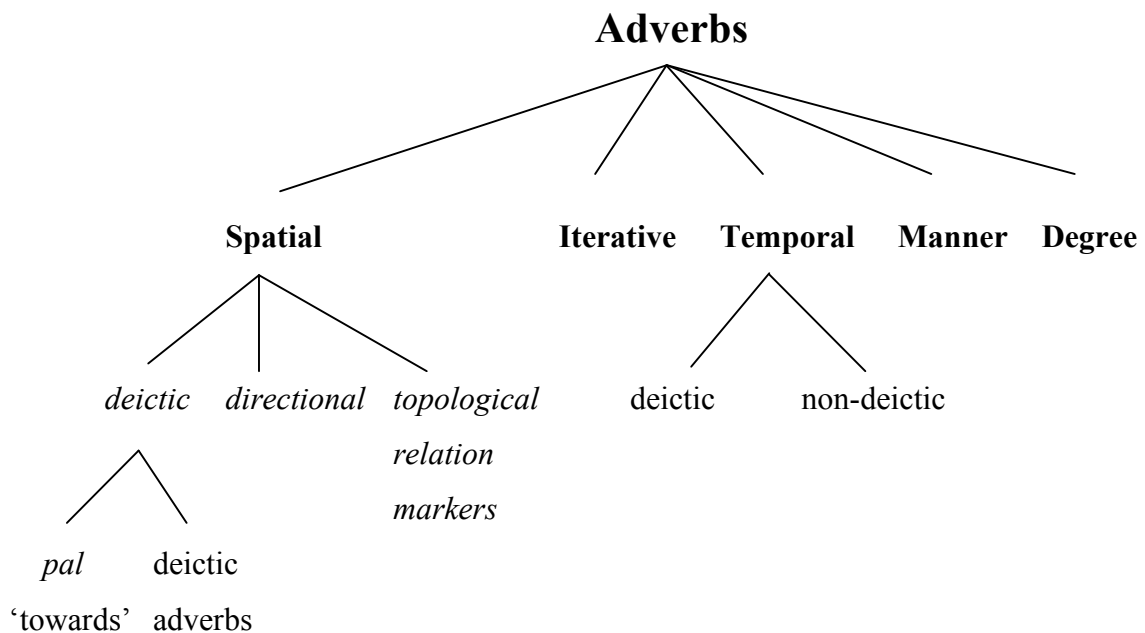


Figure 7. Adverbial subclasses.

As is evident from Figure 7, the spatial adverbial subclass is by far the most elaborated, especially given the morphological and semantic complexity of the directional paradigm it subsumes.

### 3.3.1 Spatial Adverbs

There is both formal and semantic overlap between the various subclasses of spatial adverb, and between these subclasses and the class of demonstrative pronouns (§3.1.3.1, cf. §5.3.1). Thus the free deictic adverb *pal* ‘towards’ is clearly linked to the bound morpheme *-pal-*, found in: the deictic adverb *yuupal* ‘(coming) from far away’; the directional *palipan* ‘nearby on the south bank’; and the topological relation markers *palpal* ‘nearby’ and *palkoorr* ‘just behind’. These linkages between subclasses bespeak a long history of multidirectional grammaticalisation. Nevertheless, I believe the classification presented here most accurately reflects the synchronic subdivision of spatial adverbs.

### 3.3.1.1 Deictic adverbs

If we define the class of deictic adverbs semantically as the set of forms that (optionally) locate an event with respect to the deictic centre, it comprises the eleven members given in (92):

- (92) *i'i* 'here'  
*i'irra* 'to here'  
*ii* 'there'  
*iirra* 'to there'  
*yuuw* 'far away'  
*yuurra* 'to far away'  
*yarra* 'away'  
*pal* 'towards'  
*nhaka* 'in this place'  
*angunp* 'at that place'  
*nhemana* 'from that place'

Each of these has a roughly equivalent role in the clause when appearing as a monomorphemic lexeme:

- (93) *ngumpurr wang ii thongk-nhat*  
 old.lady white(NOM) there arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
 'the white lady turned up over there'  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]
- (94) *paath pal minharr*  
 firewood(ACC) towards pick.up:GO&:IMP  
 'bring some firewood (towards) here'  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation / Elicitation]

- (95) *ngancn may dinner nhaka mungk-r*  
 1pl:excl(ERG) VEG dinner(ACC) in.this.place eat-NPST  
 ‘sometimes we eat dinner here’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

Of these forms, however, it is clear that *pal* ‘towards’ has special status. Table 20 illustrates the paradigmatic relationship between *i’i* ‘here’, *ii* ‘there’ and *yuuw* ‘far (away)’.

	<i>i’i</i> ‘here’	<i>ii</i> ‘there’	<i>yuuw</i> ‘far’
emphatic prefix <i>aw-</i>	<i>aw-i’i</i> ‘right here’	<i>aw-ii</i> ‘right there’	-
with ‘allative’ <i>-rra</i>	<i>i’irra</i> ‘to here’	<i>iirra</i> ‘to there’	<i>yuurra</i> ‘to far away’
compounded with <i>+pal</i> ‘towards’	<i>i’ipal</i> ‘from here’	<i>iipal</i> ‘from there’	<i>yuupal</i> ‘from far away’

Table 20. Paradigm of deictic adverbs.

The combinatoric possibilities for *pal* ‘towards’ differ significantly from those of *i’i* ‘here’, *ii* ‘there’ and *yuuw* ‘far (away)’ (as well as the remaining deictic adverbial forms). Each of these may combine with the allative suffix, and *i’i* ‘here’ and *ii* ‘there’ may also combine with an emphatic prefix, while *pal* ‘towards’ may not. Further, *i’i* ‘here’, *ii* ‘there’ and *yuuw* ‘far (away)’ may be compounded with *pal* ‘towards’, though they may not combine with one another. Finally, *pal* ‘towards’ enters into restricted collocations with other forms (e.g. *wanthan pal* ‘in which direction’ and *thakr pal* ‘facing towards’ – cf. §11.4.2.1) while the other deictic adverbs do not. For this reason, I distinguish *pal* ‘towards’ from the set of deictic



adverbs proper, which I define as the paradigmatically-related closed subclass presented in Table 20.

Finally, the form *yarra* ‘away’ shows a strong formal resemblance to the ‘allative’ forms in the middle row of Table 20, though this is the only deictic form beginning with the segments /ya/<sup>70</sup>. A further paradigmatic link between *ya(rra)* ‘away’, *ii* ‘there’, *yuu(w)* ‘far’ and *pal* ‘towards’, is their appearance in the initial morphemic ‘slot’ of the directional terms discussed in §3.3.1.2.

The semantics and functions of *pal* ‘towards’ are elaborated upon in §11.4.2.1, while those of the deictic adverbs proper are discussed in §11.4.2.2.

### 3.3.1.2 Directionals

Kuuk Thaayorre can be classified as possessing an ‘absolute’ spatial reference system (Levinson 2003). In natural conversation and narrative, speakers regularly anchor the events they describe with respect to the set of compass directions (north, south, east and west) and the nearby Chapman River. The latter is conventionally referred to by the directional term *iingkarrop*, segmented and glossed in (96).

- (96) *ii-ø-ngkarr-op*  
 there-at-south-river  
 ‘the Chapman River’  
 [LN28/10/02 Elicitation]

The first morpheme, *ii-*, indicates that the location is neutral with respect to distance from the deictic centre. The absence of any second-slot prefix indicates a static or stable locative relationship (as opposed to movement to, towards or away from the direction in question). The bound root form *-ngkarr* refers to the compass direction ‘south’, while the final suffix *-op* specifies that the location is determined with respect

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<sup>70</sup> Though somewhat aberrant paradigmatically, the Thaayorre form *yarra* ‘away’ is reconstructable to proto-Paman \**yarra* ‘away’ Alpher (personal communication).

to the river<sup>71</sup>. The structure of the Thaayorre directional word is analysed in detail by Foote and Hall (1992:227), and can be summarised as in Table 21.

Slot 1	Slot 2	Slot 3	Slot 4	Slot 5
distance / motion	(orientation) <sup>72</sup>	directional root	(secondary direction)	(river reference)
<i>ii-</i> ‘there’ <i>yuu-</i> ‘far’ <i>pal-</i> ‘near’ <i>ya-</i> ‘going’, ‘away’	<i>th-</i> / <i>k-</i> ‘to’ <i>-rr</i> ‘towards’ <i>-l</i> ‘from’ <i>-ø</i> ‘at’	<i>-ungkarr</i> ‘N’ <i>-parr</i> ‘S’ <i>-kaw</i> ‘E’ <i>-kuw</i> ‘W’ <i>-ipan</i> ‘Sbank’ <i>-kan<sub>1</sub></i> ‘Nbank’ <i>-kop</i> ‘below’ <i>-kan<sub>2</sub></i> ‘above’ <i>-korr<sub>1</sub></i> ‘behind/ beyond’ <i>-kan<sub>3</sub></i> ‘inside’ <i>-korr<sub>2</sub></i> ‘outside’	<i>-uw</i> ‘W’ <i>-aw</i> ‘E’	<i>-op</i> ‘river’

Table 21. Morphological template for the Thaayorre directionals.

The first directional slot is obligatorily filled by one of three prefixes marking direction, the second by one of five prefixes marking motion and/or orientation (including a zero morph that signals lack of motion), followed by the root. The root is obligatory, and may be filled by one of eleven morphemes. Not all of these root forms can take the full range of inflections, however. The four cardinal directions and two river-bank directions may be considered ‘core’ or ‘prototypical’ directional roots, with the remaining five being peripheral members of this class. The root is followed by

<sup>71</sup> Thus the Chapman River is named in (96) by a directional term that would otherwise be used to locate a figure with respect to the river itself.

<sup>72</sup> The morphemes of the orientation slot are optional except following *ya-*, which may not immediately precede the directional root.

two optional suffixes. The first of these further specifies the direction, for example by adding the suffix *-uw* to the stem *ii-ø-parr* ‘in the south’ to create *ii-ø-parr-uw* ‘in the south-west’. The second adds the river as a relevant reference point, usually the start- or endpoint of motion. The morphology and functions of directional adverbs are discussed in §11.4.2.3.

### 3.3.1.3 Topological relation markers (TRMs)

The intentionally vague label ‘topological relation marker’, borrowed from Levinson and Meira (2003), is applied to a semantically and functionally united set of Thaayorre lexemes (97) that range from the more adverbial to the more postpositional (cf. §11.4.2.4). In the absence of firm evidence to the contrary, I tentatively categorise these lexemes as an adverbial subclass.

(97) <i>koorr</i>	‘behind, outside’
<i>kanpa</i>	‘in front’
<i>thorkorr</i>	‘far away’
<i>thaapirri</i>	‘nearby’
<i>palpal</i>	‘close’
<i>(put)pil</i>	‘beside’
<i>kop</i>	‘below’
<i>putpun</i>	‘on top’
<i>mangka</i>	‘low down by’
<i>wernka</i>	‘in the middle of, between’

Though the set of TRMs listed in (97) contains some pairs of antonyms (e.g. *koorr* ‘behind’ vs. *kanpa* ‘in front’), the semantic relationships between most of the TRMs are more loose. Nevertheless, all are used in order to locate a figure with respect to a ground object. Like other adverbs, all of the TRMs may appear as the sole exponent of a location in the absence of any noun phrase referring to a ground object. Where the TRM combines with an overt NP referring to the ground object, there is significant variance in the syntactic relationships that hold between the two. In some cases (in

which the TRM appears to function more like a postposition) the TRM immediately follows the ground NP. In other cases the two are free with respect to their respective positions in the clause. There is likewise significant variation — both between TRMs and between different tokens of a single TRM — as to the case-marking of the ground NP. Finally, the TRMs *kop* ‘below’, *mangka* ‘low down by’ and *(put)pil* ‘beside’ may optionally bear dative marking themselves, betraying their nominal origin. These three key parameters of variation (strength of syntactic bond with ground NP, case-marking of ground NP and case-marking of TRM) are explored in more detail in §10.8.2.4.

Aside from the optional case-marking of *kop* ‘below’, *mangka* ‘low down by’ and *(put)pil* ‘beside’, TRMs are non-inflecting forms. The person part prefix *koo-* ‘nose’ is optionally prefixed to TRMs in order to emphasise the directedness (i.e. frontwise orientation) of the topological relationship (cf. §11.4.7). In all other respects, however, TRMs are morphologically simplex forms.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is some formal and functional overlap between the TRMs and the paradigm of directional adverbs (§11.4.2.3). Indeed, the TRM *koorr* ‘behind, outside’ is differentiated from the bound directional root *-koorr* ‘behind, outside’ only by the length of the vowel.

### 3.3.3 Temporal Adverbs

Temporal adverbs can be subdivided into:

1. deictic temporal adverbs (which locate the event with respect to the moment of speech, or an alternative deictic centre); and
2. non-deictic temporal adverbs (which locate the event with respect to the periodic cycles of days and seasons).

Each of these subclasses is considered briefly below, and in more depth in §11.4.3.

### 3.3.3.1 Deictic temporal adverbs

The set of deictic temporal adverbs attested in my corpus is given in (98). Each of these forms is synchronically monomorphemic. A number of them, however, may well have been polymorphemic at some stage in the past<sup>73</sup>.

(98)	<i>yoorr</i>	‘today, now, nowadays’
	<i>thil</i>	‘recently’
	<i>kanpa</i>	‘before, previously’
	<i>kanangkarr</i>	‘long ago’
	<i>melnkelnkarr</i>	‘tomorrow’
	<i>ngernkan</i>	‘yesterday’
	<i>yup</i>	‘soon, in the impending period’
	<i>punguk</i>	‘last time’
	<i>yukurra</i>	‘later on, next time’

Although there is variation in the length of the period intervening between the reference time and the deictic centre (e.g. one day in the case of *ngernkan* ‘yesterday’, but years in the case of *kanangkarr* ‘long ago’), calculation of the reference time is dependent upon knowing the time of the speech event or alternative deictic centre. What was *yup* ‘soon’ a fortnight ago may be *punguk* ‘last time’ now.

### 3.3.3.2 Non-deictic temporal adverbs

The non-deictic temporal adverbs can be fully understood out of context since they make reference to a point in a (diurnal or seasonal) cyclic period calculated

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<sup>73</sup> For example, the lexeme *ngernkan* ‘yesterday’ might have been formed through the dative inflection of *ngernk* ‘morn’. It also seems likely that *melnkelnkarr* ‘tomorrow’ might have been formed through the reduplication of (synchronically non-existent) *\*melnkarr*. Likewise *kanangkarr* may have been reduplicated from putative *\*kankarr*, with the additional assimilation of the final nasal of the infixed reduplicans *-an* from an alveolar to velar place of articulation.

independently of the speech (or any other) event. The set of non-deictic temporals that appear in my corpus is given in (99).

(99)	<i>(raak) miing</i>	‘daytime’
	<i>(raak) ngurnturnturr</i>	‘nighttime’
	<i>raak meerngernk</i>	‘pre-dawn morning’ (lit. ‘TIME eye-morn’)
	<i>raak patpirr</i>	‘sunrise’ (lit. ‘TIME camp-P.PFV’)
	<i>ngernkernkernkan</i>	‘dawn/really early morning’ (lit. ‘morn:RDP:RDP-DAT’)
	<i>ngernkernkan</i>	‘dawn-9.30ish’ (lit. ‘morn:RDP-DAT’)
	<i>raak pung putpun</i>	‘9.30am - 1pm’ (lit. ‘TIME sun on.top’)
	<i>mincngul</i>	‘afternoon’ (lit. ‘true-later’)
	<i>meerngernka reeknhan</i>	‘sunrise/sunset’ (lit. ‘eye-morn give-GO&:NPST’)
	<i>raak wutan</i>	‘midnight’ (lit. ‘TIME sleep-DAT’)
	<i>raak karrtam</i>	‘wet time [broadly defined]’
	<i>raak warreekaman</i>	‘wet season [~December-February]’
	<i>raak wurripan</i>	‘dry-wet [~March-May]’
	<i>raak kaalkurrc</i>	‘cold time’ [~June-August]’ (lit. ‘time ear-cold’)
	<i>raak paapath</i>	‘hot time [~September-November]’ (lit. ‘TIME fire:RDP’)

Unlike the deictic temporals, almost all of these terms are polymorphemic and many are polylexemic. Even *ngurnturnturr* ‘nighttime’, which is not segmented above, structurally resembles a reduplication (though there is no present-day corresponding form *\*ngurnturr*). Further, many of the non-deictic temporals co-occur with the generic noun *raak* ‘TIME’ in what looks like a classifying construction (§6.2). But whilst they may resemble nominals (and in particular, specific nouns) in this respect, the semantics, functions and clausal syntax of these forms justifies their inclusion within the adverbial macroclass (cf. §11.8.3.2).

### 3.3.4 Iterative adverbs

The subclass of iterative adverbs (given in [100]) are concerned with where the event described falls within a series of (potential) repetitions of that event.

(100) <i>yoorr=nhurr</i>	‘for the first time’ (lit. ‘now=only’)
<i>(yuur) kuthrrka</i>	‘twice’ (lit. ‘[hand] two-KA’)
<i>yuur pinalam</i>	‘a few times’ (lit. ‘hand three’)
<i>yuur mongrron</i>	‘many times’ (lit. ‘hand many-RRON’)
<i>thil</i>	‘again’ (cf. <i>thil</i> ‘recently’)

Each of these iterative adverbs is either homophonous with or derived from a form in another word class, as indicated in the literal translations above. None of the iterative adverbs permit inflection, with the exception of *thil* ‘again’ which may be reduplicated to indicate iteration beyond that inherent in its meaning (i.e. *thilil* ‘yet again’ or ‘again and again’).

### 3.3.5 Manner adverbs

My corpus includes the following manner adverbs:

(101) <i>waat</i>	‘wrongly’
<i>wacirr</i>	‘correctly, effectively’
<i>ritar</i>	‘without purpose, gammon do something’
<i>porprm</i>	‘excessively’
<i>petpan</i>	‘fast’
<i>therp</i>	‘hastily’
<i>maalmal</i>	‘slowly’
<i>thintintrr</i>	‘very slowly’
<i>kampan</i>	‘peacefully’
<i>kempthe</i>	‘singly’
<i>thurma</i>	‘together’
<i>thele</i>	‘in turn’
<i>yoorrrp</i>	‘that way’
<i>yarryy</i>	‘like this, thus’
<i>waarr</i>	‘badly’
<i>min</i>	‘well’

*minc* ‘truly, strongly, with increased impact’<sup>74</sup>,

Several of the forms in this list are homophonous with forms in other classes. For instance *waarr* ‘badly’ and *min* ‘well’ are homophonous with the adjectives *waarr* ‘bad’ and *min* ‘good’ respectively.

It is possible for some manner adverbs to reduplicate for intensification (*wacirr* ‘correctly’ > *wacwacirr* ‘just so’, *kempthe* ‘singly’ > *kempkempthe* > ‘each one’), while other manner adverbs appear inherently reduplicated (e.g. *maalmal* ‘slowly’ < \**maal*, *thintintrr* ‘very slowly’ < \**thintrr*). No other inflection or derivation of manner adverbs is possible.

### 3.3.6 Degree adverb

The three Thaayorre degree adverbs are presented in Table 22, along with the parts of speech they modify. The rightmost column of Table 22 lists whether or not the degree adverb can also function as a manner adverb, modifying verbs. This is included for comparison only and should not be understood as a degree adverbial function.

modifies:	adjective	adverb	(verb)
<i>minc</i> ‘really’	√	√	√
<i>waarr</i> ‘very’	√	x	√
<i>mangr</i> ‘rather’	√	x	x

Table 22. Functional ranges of Thaayorre degree adverbs.

*Minc* ‘really’ has the widest functional range, modifying adjectives (102), adverbs (103), and — as a manner adverb meaning ‘with intensity’ — verbs (104). Although

<sup>74</sup> I.e. with some force, emphasis or deliberation.



*minc* always appears following the adjective it modifies, when modifying an adverb or verb *minc* appears in the pre-head position.

- (102) *inhul ngamal minc, meer-pungk paant waarr ngamal!*  
 this.one large really eye-knee head(NOM) very large  
 ‘this one [crocodile] was really big, the eyebrows on its head were really big!’  
 [AJ3/02/04 Conversation]

- (103) *yuk thongkn minc waarr thiika-rr*  
 tree piece(ACC) really badly break-P.PFV  
 ‘[he] broke the stick really badly (so the pieces were still attached)’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break25]

- (104) *nhul meerkay rok-r minc nhaawr*  
 3sg(NOM) glasses(ACC) enter-P.PFV really see:P.PFV  
 ‘he put on his glasses so he could see better [i.e. more effectively]’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

*Waarr* may also function as a manner adverb meaning ‘badly’ (103), but as a degree adverb it may only modify adjectives (e.g. the second clause of 102). *Mangr* ‘rather’ has the most restricted functional range, modifying adjectives alone (105).

- (105) *ngul ulp kunk than-r, mangr min yancm ii-rr-kuw*  
 then dem:adr.prx alive stand-P.PFV rather good go:P.IPFVthere-towards-west  
 ‘then he [saltwater crocodile] was alive, he was quite okay when he went west’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

Note that it does not appear possible to combine two or more degree adverbs (as in the English clause *I’m so very pleased you could come*). Although the two forms *minc* and *waarr* combine in (103), *waarr* is functioning here as a manner adverb (meaning ‘badly’) rather than a degree adverb (meaning ‘very’, in which case [103] would have the opposite meaning; ‘he well and truly cut the stick’).

### 3.4 Ideophones

Many words within the sound symbolic class of ideophones display some onomatopoeic resemblance of the event or entity they describe (e.g. *purt* ‘fart’) and are set apart from the intonational contour of the clause (cf. §11.5 for discussion of the prosodic characteristics of ideophones). Many interjections violate the phonotactic rules that apply to the rest of the lexicon (e.g. word-initial /l/ in *liiy* ‘beam of light’) or contain non-phonemic segments<sup>75</sup> (e.g. the initial segment [tʃ] in *churr* ‘spear flying through air’). Ideophones also frequently draw attention to inaudible but expressive components of an event (as with *liiy* ‘beam of light’ above).

Ideophones do not enter into any syntactic relationship with other elements in the formation of larger phrases, but rather independently contribute information about (the sound or other evocative characteristic of) the event. Aside from reduplication (e.g. in *we’we’we* ‘bird call’ Foote and Hall 1992:235), ideophones do not participate in any morphological processes, inflectional or derivational.

At this stage it is unclear how much creative input speakers have into the form of the ideophones they use, and accordingly whether the class of ideophones is closed or open. The scarcity of ideophones in my data, particularly in comparison with the texts recorded by Foote and Hall, suggests that this class is presently in a state of decline.

### 3.5 Particles

The remaining Thaayorre word classes are closed, morphologically simplex (i.e. uninflecting and underived) and have fewer members than the ‘major’ word classes discussed above. They are for this reason collected under the heading ‘particles’, although this is not intended to represent a single united word class.

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<sup>75</sup> It is an interesting question whether a segment should be considered phonemic simply by virtue of its contrastive usage in an ideophone. Nevertheless, such segments should be considered only marginal members of the Thaayorre phonemic inventory if their distribution is restricted to ideophones (and interjections; cf. §3.5.1).

### 3.5.1 Interjections

Interjections are defined as forms belonging to no other word class that may be uttered in isolation as a complete, non-elliptical utterance. A sample list of interjections is given as (106), along with their approximate English translations:

(106)	<i>ngawoy</i>	‘yes’
	<i>kece</i>	‘that’s wrong’
	<i>wooy</i>	‘hello, I’m here’
	<i>yawo</i>	‘goodbye’
	<i>wuurrwuurr</i>	‘goodbye’
	<i>ith’tharrko</i>	‘wow, you don’t say!’
	<i>e’</i>	‘hey’
	<i>ngeeca</i>	‘hooray’
	<i>yiki</i>	‘yikes’
	<i>chaa</i>	‘get away [to dog]’
	<i>psi’psi’</i>	‘apology before mother in law’ (Foote and Hall 1992:235)
	<i>ngee</i>	‘I see [usually as backchannel]’
	<i>koo</i>	‘oh [usually as backchannel]’
	<i>mmm</i>	‘mm [often as backchannel]’
	( <i>pokon</i>	‘no’)
	( <i>ongkorr</i>	‘don’t’)

The negative interjection *pokon* ‘no’ is included in brackets in (106) since it functions as both an interjection and a constituent negator (in which latter function it syntactically combines with an NP), thereby violating the condition that interjections should not belong to another word class. Likewise the interjection / prohibitive particle *ongkorr* ‘don’t!’ is bracketed. The use of these two forms as interjections could be viewed as elliptical.

For similar reasons, the monolexemic utterances *thak* ‘leave it!’ or *kuuk-kaar* ‘be quiet!’ (in which the relational privative suffix *-kaar* is attached to the generic noun *kuuk* ‘WORD’) are not considered interjections on the grounds that: (a) they are members of other word classes (*thak* ‘leave’ being a verb, *kuuk-kaar* being a privative

relational nomen); (b) *kuuk-kaar* ‘be quiet!’ is morphologically complex; (c) they can combine with other morphemes or lexemes (107, 108).

(107) *aawoy, nhunt kuuk-kaar nhiinhin*  
yes 2sg(NOM) WORD-REL.PRIV sit<RDP>:NPST  
‘yes, you’re sitting silent’  
[ME02/10/02 Conversation]

(108) *pormp-an thaka-rr*  
house-DAT leave-P.PFV  
‘I left [my cigarettes] at home’  
[BN1/10/02 Elicitation]

Like ideophones, interjections frequently contain segments found nowhere else in the Thaayorre lexicon (e.g. the initial segment [tʃ] in *chaa* ‘get away! [to dog]’<sup>76</sup>, or the alveolar fricative /s/ in *psi’psi* ‘apology before one’s mother in law’ [Foote and Hall 1992:235]). Unlike ideophones, though, they do not tend to be embedded within a clause. Where interjections are uttered as part of a larger utterance, they tend to be separated from the following or preceding clause by a pause and an intonational break. This is true of both *ngeeca* and *koo* in (109).

- (109) 1. *ngeeca! Win-m rirk-r!*  
hooray win-TR DO-P.PFV  
‘hooray, we won [the football]!’
2. *koo, ngamp melnkelnkarr ii-th-iparr therk-ø*  
oh 1pl:incl(NOM) tomorrow there-to-south return-NPST  
‘okay then, we’ll return [to Pormpuraaw] tomorrow’  
[AC21/08/02 Narrative WeipaFootball]

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<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, the same interjective form (including the areally unusual segment [tʃ]) is found across Arnhem Land (Evans, personal communication).

Finally, it should be noted that the interjections *koo* ‘oh’ and *ngee* ‘I see’ — most frequently used by addressees as ‘backchanneling’ devices — are likely derived from the person part term *koow* ‘nose’ (which has many other grammaticalised functions, cf. Gaby 2006) and *ngeey-* ‘hear’ respectively.

### 3.5.2 Connectives

The four Thaayorre connectives *ngul* ‘then, so, but’, *ith* ‘if’, *akp* ‘despite’ and *kar* ‘like’ are invariant in form and have the common syntactic property of connecting clauses and/or phrases. These forms typically appear in between the two constituents they connect (110, 111).

(110)

1. *paanth pit<it>-nh wuump=ul=okun*  
 woman(ACC)keep<RDP>-SBJV CDICT=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
 ‘it would be one thing if he had a wife...’

2. *ngul pul wupan*  
 but 3du(NOM) temporary  
 ‘but they’re just temporary’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

- (111) *quiet one akp ngay kaar trust-m rirk-ø*  
 quiet one despite 1sg(ERG) NEG trust-TR DO-NPST  
 ‘although [that crocodile] is quiet, I don’t trust him’  
 [GJ3/02/04 Conversation]

Alternatively, though, the connective may appear immediately preceding the first of two connected clauses (112) or at the beginning of a (sequence of) clause(s). To illustrate the latter point, consider the use of *ngul* throughout the stretch of dialogue in (113).

Chapter 3

(112) *kar nhunt yancnh inh truck-ak, nhaath-nhancnh nhunt*  
like 2sg(NOM) go:SBJV dem:sp.prx truck-DAT see-go&:SBJV 2sg(ERG)  
'if you go there by truck you will see it for yourself'  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(113)

1. AJ: *Dan raak ngan pal therk-nhan?*  
Dan TIME what towards return-GO&:NPST  
'when will Dan come back?'
2. AG: *ngay pamngongkom,*  
1sg(NOM) ignorant.of  
'I don't know'
3. AG: *nhul mit rirk-ø Melbourne-ak, meerkunwaarr!*  
3sg(NOM) work DO-NPST Melbourne-DAT pitiful  
'he's working in Melbourne, poor thing!'
4. AJ: *ngul ngathun, teacher thono [...],*  
so 1sgDAT teacher one(NOM)  
'so anyway, this teacher [said] to me... [pause for repair]'
5. AJ: *ngay yik-nhat yariy "Alice wanthan?"*  
1sg(NOM) say-GO&:P.PFV thus "Alice where<sub>TRJ</sub>"  
'I said "where's Alice?"'
6. AJ: *ngul nhul ngathun yariy yik-r*  
then 3sg(NOM) 1sgDAT thus say-P.PFV  
'and he said to me.'
7. AJ: *"Alice yuw yat!"*  
Alice(NOM) far.away go:P.PFV  
'"Alice has gone away"'

8. AJ: “*wanthan pal yat?*”  
 where<sub>TRJ</sub> towards go:P.PFV  
 “‘where has she gone to?’”
9. AJ: “*ii-rr-iparr, Melbourne-ak yat*”  
 there-towards-south Melbourne-DAT go:P.PFV  
 “‘[she’s] gone to Melbourne’”
10. AG: *pokon!*  
 NO  
 ‘no!’
11. AJ: *ngul ngay yarriy yik-r “kece!”*  
 then 1sg(NOM) thus say-P.PFV CDICT  
 ‘then I said “you’re wrong!’”  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

*Ngul* ‘then’ appears three times in this dialogue, each time indicating a different degree of connection between clauses. Illustrating the loosest degree of connection, AJ employs *ngul* at the beginning of his second turn (113.4) to introduce a clause that is not obviously connected to the preceding discourse. *Ngul* here functions to express that the following statement nevertheless has current relevance. In (113.11), AJ once again employs *ngul* at the very beginning of a turn, but this time it introduces a clause that fits more tightly into the chronological sequence of the incident he is relating. Illustrating the tightest degree of connection between clauses, *ngul* appears immediately between clauses ([113.5] and [113.6]), which are tightly linked both thematically and chronologically, being a description of an answer and response between the two participants.

The four connectives have quite different functions in a range of complex clause types. The use of the concessive particle *akp* in concessive constructions is discussed in §11.2.4, the use of *kar* and *ith* in conditional constructions is discussed in §11.1 and §11.3.3, while the use of *ngul* in simple conjunction is discussed in §11.2.2.2.

In addition to the four native Thaayorre connectives, the English form *or* has been borrowed as a disjunctive particle (cf. §11.2.3). The Thaayorre third person dual pronoun also appears to be developing a connective role (114), conjoining noun phrases that are functioning as a single argument (cf. §6.8.1 for discussion as to how this use of *pul* ‘they two’ differs from its use as a simple cardinal pronoun).

- (114) *ngul Ebi-n pul Donald pul mi'im:rr*  
then Ivy-ERG 3du(ERG) Donald 3du(ERG) sing:P.PFV  
‘then Ivy and Donald sang’  
[GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

### 3.5.3 Negative particles

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses four negative particles, grouped together here due to their shared function of negation since they share few morphosyntactic features beyond being non-inflecting particles. The clausal negator *kaar* ‘NEG’ generally precedes the predicate, as does the prohibitive (negative imperative) particle *ongkorr*. The constituent negator *pokon* ‘NO’ is usually found immediately following the noun phrase it negates, while the contradictory interjection *kece* (~*kace*) always forms a syntactically complete clause by itself. *Pokon* ‘NO’ and *ongkorr* ‘PROHIB’ also double as interjections (meaning ‘no/none/nothing’ and ‘don’t!’ respectively). The syntax and functions of each of these are discussed in further detail in §10.3.

### 3.5.4 Modal particles

While tense and aspect are encoded in verbal inflectional morphology, modal information is marked by a range of particles (as well as a couple of verbal suffixes). (115) presents the list of modal particles and enclitic along with their gloss and the section of this grammar in which they are discussed.



- (115) *kirri* ‘permissive’ (§7.3.1.1)  
*wuump* ‘CONTRastive’ (§11.5)  
 =*okun* ‘DUBitative’ (§11.8.8)  
*angarr* ‘WANT’ (§11.4.7)  
*kar* ‘like’ (§11.3.3)

### 3.6 Other enclitics

This section presents a number of morphemes that are relatively unrestricted with respect to the word classes to which they attach. The fact that these formally invariant morphemes attach to a wide range of words and phrases (including normally non-inflecting lexemes, such as adnominal demonstratives and particles) is taken as evidence that they are enclitics rather than suffixes.

#### 3.6.1 =*Nhurr* ‘only’

The enclitic =*nhurr* ‘only’ is used with the sense ‘and nothing else’, drawing attention to the limited number or scope of an entity or activity. This can be seen in (116), where the speaker uses =*nhurr* to stress that her activities will be limited to the house.

- (116) *ngay pormp-an=nhurr nhiinhin*  
 1sg(NOM) house-DAT-only sit:RDP:NPST  
 ‘I’m just going to stay at home’  
 [LN06/09/02]

Likewise, in (117) =*nhurr* is used to stress that only the one man (to which the speaker turns attention in 117.2) had died.

- (117) *ulp three-nharr pelnan thaka-rr; Conrad, William ngul Jack*  
 1. dem:adr.prx three-NUM 3plACC leave-P.PFV Conrad William then Jack  
 ‘there were three of them left; Conrad, William and Jack’

2. *pam ulp=nhurp James wonp-r*  
man(NOM) dem:adr.prx=only James(NOM) die-P.PFV  
'just the [one] man, James, died'  
[IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Finally, note that the iterative adverbial *yoornhurr* 'for the first time' is composed of the morpheme *=nhurr* 'only' suffixed to the temporal adverb *yoorr* 'now'.

### 3.6.2 Focal =thurr

The primary function of *=thurr* 'FOCUS' is to accord pragmatic prominence to the clausal element or constituent to which it is attached<sup>77</sup>. Frequently found in contrastive contexts, the encliticisation of *=thurr* attracts attention to one element of a phrase at the expense of the phrase as a whole. So in (118), it is not the fact that the participants in question have a father that is newsworthy, but rather the singularity of this father (i.e. the fact that they share one father, despite having two different mothers). Accordingly, the emphatic *=thurr* is attached to the lexeme *thono* 'one':

- (118) *nhangnam yiirr-ntam. Nganip thon=thurr*  
mother different-ABL father one=FOC  
'they're from different mothers [but] one father'  
[Anon. Conversation]

Similarly, the newsworthy information in (119) is the fact that the man's face is nice, not that he has a (nice) face:

- (119) *pam ith koow.miing min=thurr*  
man(NOM) dem:dist face good=FOC  
'that man has a nice face'  
[LN02/10/02 Conversation]

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<sup>77</sup> The form *=thurr* (when not functioning as an ergative marker) is glossed by Foote and Hall (1992:16-18) as 'go on!', 'isn't it?', 'indeed!', 'enough', 'you think?', 'with' and 'good enough' and by Hall (1972:140) as 'hortative'.

Though the same phonological form, =*thurr*, also functions as a marker of ergative case (§4.2.1), the focal morpheme can be differentiated from the case morpheme on formal as well as functional grounds. Firstly, the focal enclitic is formally invariant, while the ergative suffix has many allomorphs (including the phonetically similar -*nthurr*). The combinatorics of the two morphemes also differ widely; the ergative suffix appears only in the inflection of nomen stems, while the focal enclitic may take a much wider range of hosts. For instance, the latter but not the former may attach to nomina already inflected for case (e.g. dative-marked *thiyya* ‘for a pee’ in [120]). This can be attributed to the fact that Kuuk Thaayorre, unlike many Australian languages (cf. Dench and Evans 1988, Dench 1995b), does not allow multiple case-marking and it is therefore impossible to attach a case morph to an already case-marked noun.

- (120) *ngay thiyy-a=thurr yan*  
 1sg(NOM) urine-DAT=FOC go:NPST  
 ‘I’m going for a pee’  
 [Anon. Conversation]

As well as attaching to already-inflected nomen stems, =*thurr* may also be encliticised to non-nominal clausal elements which are ineligible for case inflection. In (145), for example, =*thurr* is attached to the permissive particle, which permits no inflection, while in (122) it is attached to a verb:

- (121) *koo kirri=thurr yarr*  
 oh PERM=FOC go:IMP  
 ‘get going!’  
 [Foote and Hall 1992:17]

- (122) *ngay ya<a>n=thurr!*  
 1sg(NOM) go<RDP>NPST=FOC  
 ‘I’ll go right now!’  
 [Hall 1972:140]

It should be noted that the directionality of grammaticalisation in this case has not been established, so while it may be the focal usage of =*thurr* is a case of advanced grammaticalisation of the ergative morpheme, it may equally be that the original function of =*thurr* was to mark focus, from which ergative case use has subsequently grammaticalised. The latter course is more in line with the tendency of pragmatic or lexical elements to grammaticalise into grammatical units (Traugott and Heine 1991).

### 3.6.3 Pragmatic / emphatic enclitics

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a number of additional enclitics which may be attached to a word or phrase, apparently to accord it prominence. Table 23 lists these forms, along with the numbers of following example sentences illustrating their use. As further research is required in order to precisely delineate their respective functions, a single gloss ('PRAGmatic') will be used for each of the morphemes pending better substantiated glosses.

	Example numbers	Possible diachronic source
= <i>p</i>	(123), (126), (138), (137)	<i>ulp</i> 'the' (addressee-proximate demonstrative); <i>pam</i> 'man' <sup>78</sup>
= <i>th</i>	(124), (125), (126), (139)	<i>ith</i> 'that' (distal demonstrative); = <i>thurr</i> 'focus'
= <i>rr</i>	(127), (128)	= <i>thurr</i> 'focus'
= <i>le</i>	(129), (130), (131), (132)	
= <i>a</i>	(133), (138), (139)	
= <i>e(ey)</i>	(135), (136), (137)	

Table 23. Index of pragmatic enclitics.

<sup>78</sup> It is possible that the combination of =*p* and =*a* (forming =*pa*, as seen in [138]) is in fact a reduction of *pam* 'man'. Although there is little evidence of this from the Thaayorre data alone, Verstraete (2005) points out possible parallels in the development of reflexes of Paman *pama* 'man' into, e.g., emphatic pronouns in other Cape York languages (e.g. Olkolo, Sommer 1972:93-94).

The following examples illustrated the encliticisation of these pragmatic forms to a range of word classes.

- (123) *missed-m rirk-r pelnan, ngay yarryi=p nhiin-m.*  
 miss-TR DO-P.PFV 3plACC 1sg(NOM) thus=PRAG sit-P.IPFV  
 ‘I missed them [my family], that’s how I was feeling’.  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]
- (124) *pam nhump ith William=th wonp-r*  
 man elder(NOM) dem:dist William=PRAG die-P.PFV  
 ‘that old man, William, died’  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]
- (125) *Ngawoy, kar Friday ulp yokunmanrrp big day ulp=th*  
 yes like Friday dem:adr.prx same.way big day dem:adr.prx=PRAG  
 ‘yes, Friday is also a big day there [at the Canteen]’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]
- (126) *ngay=th thele nhiin=p*  
 1sg(NOM)=PRAG in.turn sit:NPST=PRAG  
 ‘it’s my turn to sit next’  
 [Hall 1972:140]
- (127) *ngancn nhiplin ngeeyr kar yak-a patha-rr,*  
 1pl:excl(ERG) 2duACC hear:P.PFV like snake-ERG bite-P.PFV  
  
*kar minh-al=rr patha-rr*  
 like MEAT-ERG=PRAG bite-P.PFV  
 ‘we thought you might have been bitten by a snake, or bitten by a crocodile’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]
- (128) *ulp parr\_r pam=rr pokon*  
 dem:adr.prx CHILD male=PRAG NO  
 ‘this isn’t a boy! [It’s a girl]’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

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(129) *kuuk letters learn rirk-ø=le!*

WORD letters(ACC) learn DO-IMP=PRAG

‘learn the letters!’

[MF10/01/04 Elicitation]

(130) *ngamp yoorr inh thurma=le*

1pl:incl(NOM) now dem:sp.prx together=PRAG

‘now we’re here together’

[FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot13]

(131) *Ngul ngay thil mit=kaar=le nhiin-m ulp*

then 1sg(NOM) again work=REL.PRIV=PRAG sit-P.IPFV dem:adr.prx

‘then I was without a job again’

[GJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(132) *ngul yoorr raak yiirr=le yomparr-r*

then now PLACE other=PRAG become-P.PFV

‘now it [Pormpuraaw] has become a different town’

[GJ26/11/02 Narrative]

Note that the enclitics *-a* and *-ey* may appear either in isolation (133), (134), (135), (136) or in conjunction with the enclitics *-p* (138-137) and *-th* (139).

(133) *raak nhul ngan ya<a>n=a yarra therk-ø?*

TIME 3sg(NOM) what go<RDP>:NPST=PRAG away return-NPST

‘‘what on earth time will he be going back there?’’

[Hall 1972:139]

(134) *nganip pelnan=a work-orr thernga-rr koop yuunhul*

father(ACC) 3plACC=PRAG string-ERG kill-P.PFV all that.one

‘those fathers [my father and his brothers] were all killed by string [sorcery]’

[IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

(135) *pik kuthirr=eey*

pig two=PRAG

‘there are two pigs’

[GJ12/01/04 ManAndTree3]

(136) *tourist ulp weneth miinng-r=eey!*

tourist(NOM) dem:adr.prx scared take.fright=PRAG

‘the tourists were all scared!’

[GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

These pragmatic enclitics always appear at the right edge of the word (except where followed by a second pragmatic suffix, e.g. [137]). Thus they follow all inflectional categories (138).

(137)

1. *kar inh waarrmin-tam yak-ntam*

like dem:sp.prx thing-ABL snake-ABL

*nhunt weneth=p=eey miinng-r*

2sg(NOM) scared=PRAG=PRAG take.fright-NPST

‘you’re scared of things like snakes’

[AJ03/02/04 Conversation / Elicitation]

2. *Pinc, nhul kar winwin=p=eey!*

saltie(NOM) 3sg(NOM) like fearsome=PRAG=PRAG

‘or crocodiles are scary’

[AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

(138) *paath waarr rint-nh=p=a*

fire(ACC) really burn-SBJV=PRAG=PRAG

‘so that we can make a fire’

[AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

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- (139) *ngay kar palpal=th=a learn-m rirk-m*  
1sg(ERG) like nearby=PRAG=PRAG learn-TR DO-P.IPFV  
“I kept on learning English”  
[GJ26/11/02 Narrative/Conversation]

The pragmatic enclitics each attach to a wide range of word classes, including: nomina (124), (128), (135), (137); pronouns (126), (134); demonstratives (125); verbs (129), (133), (138); adverbs (139), (130); particles (123); and other enclitics (131).

Finally, note that these forms are evident in a number of frozen lexemes or expressions (e.g. *-rr* and *-p* in *yokunmanrrp* ‘in the just same way’).



## Chapter Four. The nomen class

### (nouns, adjectives and numerals)

The term ‘nomen’ is used here (following Wilkinson 1991) to refer to the nominal subclass spanning generic nouns, specific nouns, kin terms adjectives and numerals. The syntactic, functional and semantic criteria used to differentiate these nomen subclasses were discussed in §3.1.1, while their respective roles and positions in the noun phrase are outlined in §6. Despite these differences, nomina are discussed together as a single class in this chapter due to their common morphological structure and to the fact that a single (polysemous) lexical form will frequently span each of these functions. The form *kuta*, for example, may function as a specific noun referring only to dogs, or as a generic noun denoting the class of social animals (hence pairing with the specific noun *thok* ‘cat’ to produce *kuta thok* ‘cat’).

This chapter is primarily concerned with the morphological structure of the nomen word, detailing the range of inflectional and derivational affixes with which nomina may combine. Preceding this, however, is the semantic and morphosyntactic analysis of three subclasses of specific nomen: kin terms, person part terms and proper names. These three subclasses are singled out for attention here due to their lexical elaboration and internal semantic structure.

#### 4.1 Subclasses of specific noun

##### 4.1.1 Kin terms

Kin terms are a subclass of specific noun identified semantically by their denoting the range of classificatory kin relationships recognised in Thaayorre culture, and paradigmatically by their entering into a set of hypernymic relationships with one another. The full set of Thaayorre kin terms and the hypernymic relationships between them are presented in Table 25 below. At the finest level of granularity, the set of referential terms (e.g. *yapa* ‘[someone’s] elder sister’) distinguishes thirty-four classes of relative. These are hyponyms of the vocative terms (e.g. *yapn!* ‘big sister!’),

which may be used to address the speaker's elder sister, but also their son's daughter [where the speaker is male] or their brother's son's daughter), which are in turn hyponyms of the terms for bereaved relatives which constitute part of the 'respect register', cf. §1.1.3 (e.g. *piluump*, which may be used to refer to the elder sister of the deceased, but also to the deceased's elder brother, brother's son's daughter, brother's son's son and so on). Least elaborated are the kinship hand signs of the manual register (§1.1.3), which are hypernyms of the terms in the bereavement register. In this register, an elder sister is signalled by a point to the shin, a gesture that may also index all other siblings (elder and younger brothers and sisters) and all grandchildren and grandparents of the same patriline as the anchor.

The hierarchical relationships between kin terms are illustrated in Figure 8, which shows all the kin terms hyponymically related to the manual sign 'point to shin', shown at the top of the Figure. There are three hyponyms of the shin-point in the respect register (the next tier down), the first of which, *piluump*, refers to both elder siblings and grandchildren of the same patriline as the anchor. This respect register term is in turn the hypernym of two vocative kin terms (presented in the tier immediately below the respect register). These two vocative terms distinguish the males of the kin group (denoted by *waanhn*) from the females (denoted by *yapn*). At the level of the referential kin terms, these two terms are subdivided according to generation. The referential term *pam kanam* denotes only (classificatory) elder brothers, while *parr\_r punth-waanha* denotes 'grandsons' (i.e. male relatives of the same patriline, two generations below the anchor). The bottom tier of Figure 4.1.1a lists the primary denotata of the referential kin terms (and hence their hypernyms), employing the abbreviations listed in Table 4.1.1a. Additional extensions of the kin terms may be calculated according to the principle of the equivalence of same sex siblings. For example, the term for one's father's father may also be extended to one's father's father's brother.

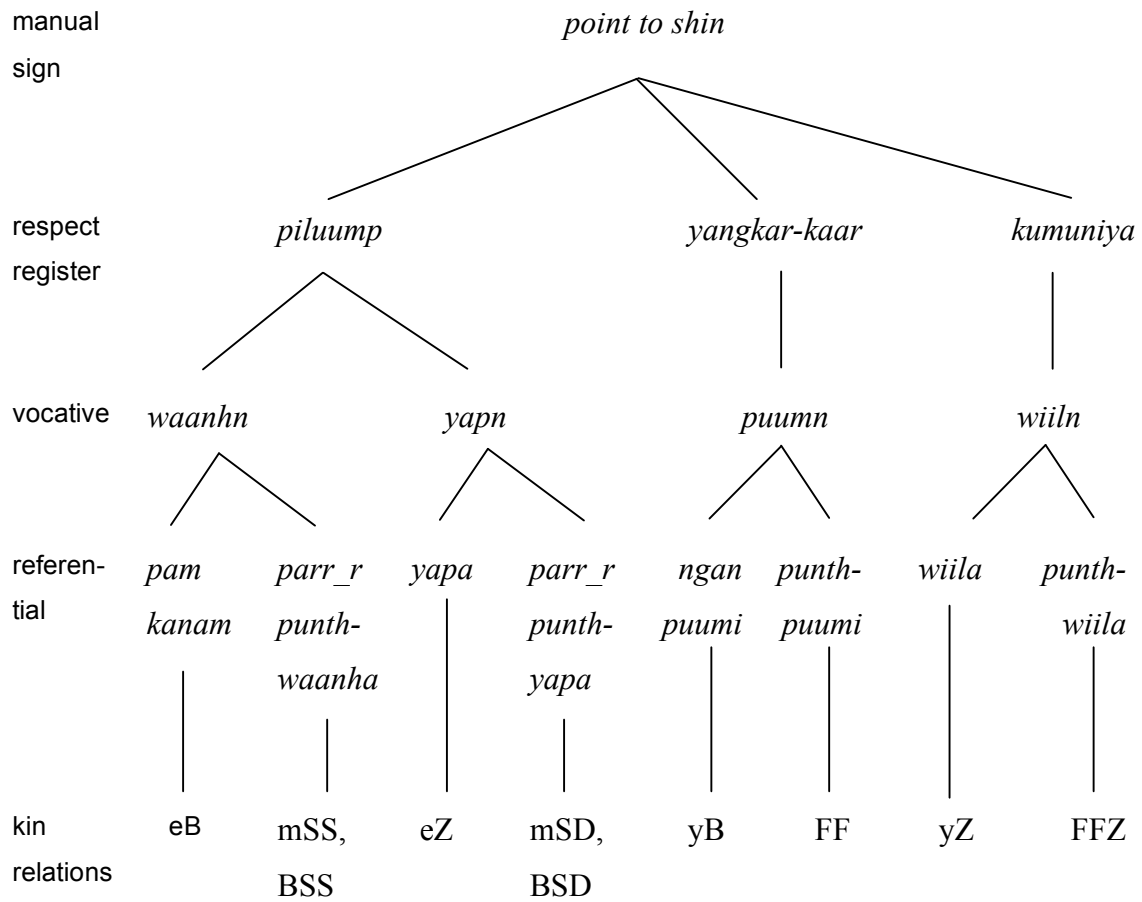


Figure 8. Kin terms grouped together by the superordinate sign ‘point to shin’.

B	brother
D	daughter
eB	elder brother
eZ	elder sister
F	father
f	calculated with respect to female anchor
M	mother
m	calculated with respect to male anchor
S	son
yB	younger brother
yZ	younger sister
Z	sister

Table 24. Glossary of kinship abbreviations.

Table 25 presents the full paradigm of kin terms, ordered from most specific (in the leftmost column) to most general (in the rightmost column). In the column of manual signs (which lists the person parts to which the ‘speaker’ points in order to index a family member), I also give a componential analysis of the kin categories denoted by each sign. The respective semantic ranges of the manual signs can be precisely delimited by specifying one of two values for each of three features (patriline, matriline and generational harmony). For example, the denotational range of the manual sign ‘point to bicep’ can be characterised as +Patriline (i.e. of the same patriline as the anchor<sup>79</sup>), -Matriline (i.e. of a different matriline to the anchor) and -Harmonic<sup>80</sup> (i.e. of a disharmonic generation with respect to the anchor). Each manual sign is associated with a unique combination of values for these features, with the feature of ‘Matriline’ neutralised just in the case of the shin-point. This table represents a synthesis of my own data combined with those of Foote and Hall (1992) and Taylor (1984). Few speakers today are able to list the full set of terms without prompting.

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<sup>79</sup> I use the term *anchor* to refer to the person with respect to whom the kinship relation is calculated. For example, if someone were to call out *what are you doing, Dad?*, the relationship invoked by the use of *Dad* is calculated with respect to the speaker (since it is a vocative term). However, if I were to say *Mary loves her mother*, the relationship invoked by *mother* is calculated with respect to Mary. The terms *ego* and *propositus* are used analogously elsewhere in the kinship literature.

<sup>80</sup> The principle of generational ‘harmony’ is concerned with the number of generations that separate the denotatum of a kin term from the anchor (cf. Hale 1966b). Where the two are separated by an even number of generations (as one is from one’s siblings, grandparents, great great grandchildren, etc.) this relationship is considered ‘harmonic’. Where an odd number of generations intervene (as with one’s children, parents, great grandchildren, etc.) the relationship is considered ‘disharmonic’.

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Referential</b>	<b>Vocative</b>	<b>Respect (X of deceased)</b>	<b>Manual</b>	
eB	<i>pam kanam</i>	<i>waanhn</i>	<i>piluump</i>	<b>shin</b> +Patriline (+/-Matriline) +Harmonic	
mSS, BSS	<i>parr_r punth-waanha</i>				
eZ	<i>yapa</i>	<i>yapn</i>			
mSD, BSD	<i>parr_r punth-yapa</i>				
yB	<i>ngan puumi</i>	<i>puumn</i>	<b>yangkar-kaar</b>		
FF	<b>punth-puumi</b>				
yZ	<i>wiila</i>	<i>wiiln</i>	<b>kumuniya</b>		
FFZ	<b>punth-wiila</b>				
F, FB	<i>nganip</i>	<i>nganin</i>	<i>kaal-mangk</i>	<b>bicep</b> +Patriline -Matriline -Harmonic	
FZ	<i>ngan pinharr</i>	<i>pinharr</i>			
mS, BS	<i>pam nherngk-ngathn</i>	<i>ngothon</i>	<i>thanakunm</i>		
mD, BD	<i>paanth nherngk-ngathn</i>				
MF, MFZ	<i>paanth ngan-ngethe</i>	<i>ngethin</i>	<i>yuumanthaar</i>	<b>acromion</b> -Patriline -Matriline +Harmonic	
FM, FMB	<i>pam ngan-ngethe</i>				
fSS, ZSS	<i>pam nhemthinthin</i>	<i>ngethe</i>	<b>thaa-ngethe-kaar</b>		
fSD, ZSD	<i>paanth menthinthin</i>				
M, MZ	<i>(nha)nganam</i>	<i>kalin</i>	<i>kuukum</i>	<b>breast</b> -Patriline +Matriline -Harmonic	
MyZ	<i>ngan nhangnam mantam</i>				
MyB	<i>ngan kaala, pam kaal-mele</i>	<b>kaaln</b>	<i>raprrm</i>		
MeB	<i>ngan mokr</i>	<i>mokr</i>			
ZS, fS	<i>pam rothom</i>	<i>thuuwn</i>	<i>ngamkaar</i>		
ZD, fD	<i>paanth rothom</i>				
MBD, W	<i>rorko, paanth paathum</i>	<i>rorko</i>	<i>yuk-waarr-mungkm</i>	<b>thigh</b> -Patriline -Matriline +Harmonic	
MBS, WB	<i>ngan kuth, pam muth</i>	<i>kuthn</i>	<i>thaknham</i>		
FZD, HZ	<i>paanth meer-mele</i>	<i>maarn</i>	<b>muthyurum</b>		
FZS, H	<i>pam meer-mele</i>				
MM	<i>paanth kamtil-mele</i>	<i>kaman</i>	<b>thaa-keme-kaar</b>	<b>ribs</b> -Patriline -Matriline +Harmonic	
MMB	<i>pam meer-mele</i>				
DS, ZDS	<i>pam ngan-keme</i>	<i>kemeth</i>			
DD, ZDD	<i>paanth ngan-keme</i>				
MMBS	<i>ngan thaam</i>	<i>thaaman</i>	<i>yencil</i>		<b>buttock</b> -Patriline -Matriline +Harmonic
MMBD	<i>ngan-mayath</i>	<i>mayath</i>			
FZDS	<i>pam parr_r punth-wayump</i>	<i>paangun</i>	<b>yanganwaarra</b>		
FFDD	<i>paanth parr_r punth-wayump</i>				

Table 25. Inventory of Thaayorre kin terms.

Many of the kin terms optionally combine with the ‘relation’ generic *ngan* (e.g. *ngan pinhirr* ‘father’s sister’) and the ‘human’ generic *pam* (140).

- (140) *Angelina-n pit-m pam kanam ngathn*  
 Angelina-ERG keep-P.IPFV HUMAN eB 1sgPOS(ACC)  
 ‘Angelina was in a relationship with my elder brother’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

There is a cline between those that never combine with generics in my data (e.g. *mokr* ‘mother’s elder brother’) through those that rarely combine with generics ([*pam*] *nhangnip* ‘father’, [*ngan*] *pinhirr* ‘father’s sister’) to those that obligatorily combine with generics (e.g. *pam kun yangkar* ‘brother’). This last example is of particular interest since the generic noun *pam* here appears to have narrowed its scope to just ‘MALE HUMANS’, in opposition to the generic *paanth* ‘FEMALE HUMANS’. It is only in combination with kinship specific nouns that we find the generics *paanth* ‘FEMALE KIN’ and *pam* ‘MALE KIN’<sup>81</sup>. This might further justify the identification of kinship terms as a distinct subclass of specific noun, or it might alternatively suggest that *pam* and *paanth* are actually specific nouns within a compound (which as a whole functions as a specific noun). The variability in the obligatoriness of generic terms is reflected in Table 25, where just the specific term is entered for some kin relations but the full classifying phrase is entered for others. The inclusion or exclusion of generic nouns in Table 25 was determined by frequency; where they are present in over 50% of tokens for that kin category in my data they are included in the table.

The fact that kin terms optionally combine with generic nouns supports their status as a subtype of specific noun (as opposed to a separate word class altogether). This is also supported by the fact that they enter into the noun phrase syntactic template in the specific noun position, optionally combining with all the modifiers used with other specific nouns. In (140), for example, the specific noun *kanam* ‘elder brother’

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<sup>81</sup> The form *pam* is, of course, more widely used as a generic denoting the class of humans. However it is only with kinship specific nouns that this form is polysemously used to denote the (sub)class of male humans.

combines with both the generic noun *pam* ‘(male) human’ and a possessive pronoun, *ngathn* ‘my’.

#### **4.1.2 Person part terms**

Person part terms occupy a privileged position in Thaayorre morphosyntax in several respects (beside their role in the system of kinship reference). Firstly, they are frequently compounded with a verbal head (§8.3) and prefixed to certain adverbs and particles (§11.4.7). Secondly, they enter into the ‘part-whole apposition’ construction (§6.9.1). Thirdly, they exhibit an extremely high degree of polysemy, and are used metaphorically in the description of space, landscape, human emotions and intellectual and psychological experiences (cf. Gaby 2006 and forthcoming). The inventory of person part terms collected to date is presented in Tables 26, 27, 28 and 29, respectively grouped into parts of the face, external parts, internal parts and others.

Person part term	Gloss	English translation
<i>koow</i>	nose	‘nose’
<i>koo-miing</i>	nose-daytime	‘face’
<i>koo-mut</i>	nose-back	‘overlip’ (between mouth and nose)
<i>koo-mut-pancr</i>	nose-back-body.hair	‘moustache’
<i>koo-petan</i>	nose-skin	‘upper lip’
<i>koo-ranth</i>	nose-hole	‘nostril’
<i>koo-rirkr</i>	nose-shell	‘forehead’
<i>koo-thongkn</i>	nose-log	‘nose-bone’
<i>meer</i>	eye	‘eye’
<i>meer-mut</i>	eye-back	‘eyelid’
<i>meer-nhapn</i>	eye-egg	‘eyeball’
<i>meer-paath-wirm</i>	eye-fire-WIRM	‘pupil’ (Foote and Hall 1992:231)
<i>meer-pancr</i>	eye-body.hair	‘eyelash’
<i>meer-piinth</i>	eye-bone	‘cheekbone’
<i>meer-pungk</i>	eye-knee	‘eyebrow’
<i>meer-wal</i>	eye-temple	‘area on the outside of eyes’
<i>paant-wal</i>	head-temple	‘temple’
<i>thaa-petan</i> <sup>82</sup>	mouth-skin	‘lower lip’ (cf. <i>koo-petan</i> ‘upper lip’)
<i>thaa-put</i>	mouth-PUT	‘cheek’
<i>thaaw</i>	mouth	‘mouth’
<i>therpr</i>	chin	‘chin’
<i>wal-kut</i>	temple-KUT	‘jaw’

Table 26. Parts of the face.

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<sup>82</sup> This term is ambiguous, also meaning ‘labia’.



<b>Person part term</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>kaal</i>	ear	‘ear’
<i>kaal-ranth</i>	ear-hole	‘ear-hole’
<i>kaal-thamr</i>	ear-foot	‘earlobe’
<i>kaap</i>	underarm	‘underarm’
<i>kaap-ranth</i>	underarm-hole	‘armpit’
<i>kumun</i>	thigh	‘thigh’
<i>kun</i>	bum	‘bum’
<i>kunyc</i>	penis	‘penis’
<i>kun-thaaw</i>	bum-mouth	‘anus (external)’
<i>man</i>	throat	‘throat’
<i>man-pert</i>	throat-PERT	‘shoulder ridge’
<i>man-ruuw</i>	throat-front	‘chest (male)’
<i>man-werngr</i>	throat-boomerang	‘collarbone’
<i>mangk-nherp</i>	middle-spirit	‘waist’ (Foote and Hall 1992:79)
<i>may-pungk</i>	VEG-knee	‘fleshy hip area’
<i>mepr</i>	corner.of.shoulder	‘corner of shoulder’
<i>mepr-rirkr</i>	corner.of.shoulder-shell	‘shoulder blade’
<i>mut</i>	back	‘back’
<i>mut-mangk</i>	back-middle	‘centre of back’
<i>ngeengk</i>	belly	‘belly’
<i>ngutr</i>	navel	‘navel’
<i>nhit</i>	above.hip	‘area above hip’
<i>paant</i>	head	‘head’
<i>pancr</i>	body.hair	‘body hair’
<i>penprrr</i>	armpit.to.hip	‘side of body’

<i>petan</i>	skin	‘skin’
<i>pil</i>	hip	‘hip’
<i>pungk</i>	knee	‘knee’
<i>pungk-paant</i>	knee-head	‘kneecap’
<i>pungk-rathilk</i>	knee-RATHILK	‘back of knee’ (Foote and Hall 1992:115)
<i>pungk-therrep</i>	knee-rock	‘kneecap’
<i>punt</i>	elbow	‘elbow’
<i>punt-man-aakr</i>	elbow-throat-AAKR	‘soft area inside elbow’
<i>punth</i>	arm	‘arm’
<i>punth-kun-mangk</i>	arm-bum-middle	‘upper arm’
<i>punth-man-koow</i>	arm-throat-nose	‘forearm’
<i>rerngk</i>	torso	‘torso’ (Foote and Hall 1992:132)
<i>riila</i>	testicle	‘testicle’
<i>thaa-man-aakr</i>	mouth-throat-AAKR	‘soft area under chin’
<i>thaa-petan</i>	mouth-skin	‘labia’ (also ‘lip’)
<i>thaathin</i>	breast	‘breast’
<i>thaathin-meer</i>	breast-eye	‘nipple’
<i>thamr<sup>1</sup></i>	foot	‘foot’
<i>thamr-(koo-)ngamal</i>	foot-(nose-)big	‘big toe’
<i>thamr-mant</i>	foot-small	‘toe’
<i>thamr-mut</i>	foot-back	‘upper side of foot’
<i>thamr-rathr</i>	foot-RATHR	‘ankle’
<i>thamr-rirkr</i>	foot-shell	‘toenail’
<i>thamr-thip</i>	foot-liver	‘sole of foot’
<i>thamr-wuurr</i>	foot-digit	‘toe’
<i>yangkar</i>	calf	‘calf’
<i>yangn</i>	head.hair	‘head hair’

<i>yin</i>	vulva	‘vulva’
<i>yuur</i>	hand	‘hand’
<i>yuur-(koo-)ngamal</i>	hand-(nose-)big	‘thumb’
<i>yuur-mant</i>	hand-small	‘(pinkie) finger’
<i>yuur-mut</i>	hand-back	‘back of hand’
<i>yuur-pil</i>	hand-hip	‘wrist’
<i>yuur-rirkr</i>	hand-shell	‘fingernail’
<i>yuur-thip</i>	hand-liver	‘palm of hand’
<i>yuur-wuurr</i>	hand-digit	‘finger’

Table 27. External parts of the body.

<b>Person part term</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>kermpr(-thaaw)</i>	muscle(-mouth)	‘muscle’
<i>kiin</i>	teeth	‘tooth, gums’
<i>kun-piinth</i>	bum-bone	‘coccyx’
<i>kun-ranth</i>	bum-hole	‘anus (internal)’
<i>kun-worngoc</i>	shit-WORNGOC	‘large intestine’
<i>man</i>	throat	‘throat’
<i>man-kunyc</i>	throat-penis	‘uvula’
<i>man-ngeengk</i>	throat-belly	‘heart’
<i>man-pukal</i>	throat-umbilical cord	‘Adam’s apple’
<i>man-theerpr</i>	throat-tongue	‘tongue’
<i>man-yakyakr</i>	throat-cut<RDP>:NPST	‘lung’
<i>meer-piinth</i>	eye-bone	‘cheekbone’
<i>mut-riitham</i>	back-kidney	‘kidney’
<i>(mut-)thelel</i>	(back-)spine	‘spine’

<i>muth-thelel</i>	back.of.neck-spine	‘neck bone’
<i>ngeengk</i>	belly, stomach	‘belly’
<i>ngeengk-kun-ngamal</i>	stomach-shit-big	‘guts’
<i>ngeengk-thip</i>	stomach-liver	‘liver’
<i>paant-thuur</i>	head-marrow	‘brain’
<i>penprrr-piinth</i>	side-bone	‘ribs’
<i>piinth</i>	bone	‘bone’
<i>piinth-thuur</i>	bone-marrow	‘marrow’
<i>pil-piinth</i>	hip-bone	‘hip bone’
<i>pil-perrk</i>	hip-PERRK	‘hip bone’
<i>pil-kermpr</i>	hip-muscle	‘thigh muscle (any)’
<i>piram</i>	bladder	‘bladder’
<i>pukal</i>	umbilical.cord	‘umbilical cord’
<i>punth-nherp</i>	arm-spirit	‘arm vein’
<i>punth-put</i>	arm-PUT	‘bicep’
<i>punth-raal</i>	arm-RAAL	‘elbow bone’
<i>punth-thaat</i>	arm-tendon	‘arm tendon’
<i>rithrr</i>	fat	‘fat’
<i>thaat</i>	tendon	‘tendon’
<i>thawarr</i>	lung	‘lung’
<i>theler</i>	womb,placenta	‘womb, placenta’
<i>wal.kut-piinth</i>	jaw-bone	‘jaw bone’
<i>yangkar-pan</i>	calf-PAN	‘calf muscle’
<i>yangkar-thaat</i>	calf-tendon	‘tendon in leg’
<i>yin-ranth</i>	female.sex.organ-hole	‘vagina (internal)’
<i>yuur-piinth</i>	hand-bone	‘knuckle’

Table 28. Internal parts of the body.

Person part term	Gloss	English translation
<i>kam</i>	blood	‘blood’
<i>koo-nhic</i>	nose-NHIC	‘snot’
<i>kul</i>	lap	‘lap’
<i>kun</i>	shit	‘shit’
<i>kuuk</i>	word, language	‘voice’
<i>man-nganp</i>	throat-NGANP	‘shadow’
<i>man-nhunk</i>	throat-phlegm, cough	‘phlegm, cough’
<i>man-paat</i>	throat-uterus.fluid	‘burp’
<i>man-pitl</i>	throat-PITL	‘hiccup’
<i>man-wal-rumparr</i>	throat-temple-break	‘head bowed forwards’
<i>mayil</i>	pimple	‘pimple’
<i>meer-mak-key</i>	eye-MAK-KEY	‘scab’ (Foote and Hall 1992:59)
<i>meer-ngok</i>	eye-water	‘tear’
<i>(ngeengk-)nherp</i>	(belly-)spirit	‘soul, spirit’
<i>(ngok-)paat</i>	(water-)uterus.fluid	‘uterus fluid’ (Foote and Hall 1992:97)
<i>nhumurr</i>	sweat	‘sweat’
<i>pirp</i>	semen	‘semen’
<i>pungk-kul</i>	knee-lap	‘curled up’
<i>pungk-nganp</i>	knee-NGANP	‘cross-legged’
<i>punth-nherp</i>	arm-spirit	‘heartbeat’
<i>puungk</i>	bruise	‘bruise’ (Foote and Hall 1992:121)
<i>rerp</i>	scar	‘scar’

<i>thamr-kamp</i>	foot-blood:PRAG	‘footprint’
<i>thamr-rathr</i>	foot-RATHR	‘footfall’
<i>thangk</i>	pus	‘pus’
<i>thethor</i>	pimple	‘pimple’ (Foote and Hall 1992:158)
<i>thiyy</i>	urine	‘urine’
<i>yin-kam</i>	female.sex.organ-blood	‘menstrual blood’
<i>yuur-wang</i>	hand-white	‘fist’

Table 29. Configurational parts, growths, excreta and traces.

The semantic processes involved in producing person part compounds are explored in §4.3.2.

### 4.1.3 Proper names

Both the class of ‘bush names’<sup>83</sup> and that of place names are likely to have special morphosyntactic and semantic properties that distinguish them from other types of specific noun. Unfortunately, the limitations of both corpus and time prevent the serious analysis of these terms here. All I can offer at this stage is the observation that both classes of proper noun are generally composed of lexicalised phrases (‘fixed expressions’) or compounds (usually composed of a noun and verb) which refer to historically or mythologically important events. These phrases and compounds<sup>84</sup> do not appear to permit the usual case inflections. The bush name given in (141) references an event during the sacred epoch often referred to (by outsiders) as ‘the

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<sup>83</sup> The label *bush name* is applied to a range of traditional personal terms of address.

<sup>84</sup> At this stage, I distinguish between lexicalised phrase and compound proper nouns on an (impressionistic) phonetic basis. The compound in (141) has only a single prosodic peak, whilst the phrase in (142) has a clear secondary stress on the second word.

dreaming'<sup>85</sup>, while the *raak woochorrm* 'story place' (sacred site) named in (142) more directly references the ancestral being it is named for.

(141) *Pormpr-rint-m*  
 house(ACC)-burn-P.IPFV  
 'the house was being burned'

(142) *Ngumpurr nhiinhin*  
 old.lady(NOM) reside<RDP>:NPST  
 '[where] the old lady is'

It may turn out that there is little difference between these two classes of proper nomen, with the names of some sacred sites doubling as personal 'bush names'. This is suggested by the fact that when remembering his father's bush name, AC at one point included the PLACE generic noun *raak*:

(143) *Yak thorkorr, Yak thorkorr. Raak yak thorkorr.*  
 snake long snake long PLACE snake long  
 '[his bush name was] Long Snake, Long Snake. Long Snake place.'  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

## 4.2 Case inflections on nomina

In Kuuk Thaayorre, case inflection is the repository of all information about grammatical relations, and also encodes various adjunct roles. It plays a prominent role in both morphosyntax and discourse pragmatics. Throughout this grammar, I analyse case as a property of the noun phrase, rather than just the lexeme that bears it. Accordingly, the following description of the case system should be understood to apply to all components of the noun phrase, although the forms considered here are exclusive to nomina. Thus the accusative case is common to both nomina and pronominals, although formally it is unmarked for nomina (along with the nominative

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<sup>85</sup> There are some interesting parallels here with the Lardil bush names described by McKnight (1999).

case) but marked for pronominals and hence distinct from the nominative case (cf. Goddard 1982, Blake 1994). In addition to the three core cases (ergative, nominative, accusative), Thaayorre nomina inflect for the genitive, dative, ablative, comitative, proprietive and privative cases. Table 30 presents the case-inflected forms of a representative sample of nomina, with the case-inflected forms of a possessive pronoun and a cardinal pronoun added for comparison.

	<i>paanth</i> 'woman'	<i>pam</i> 'man'	<i>thok</i> 'cat'	<i>ngathn</i> 'my (1sgPOS)'	<i>nhul</i> 's/he (3sg)'
<b>Ergative</b>	<i>paanthu</i>	<i>pamal</i>	<i>thokn</i> ~ <i>thokthn</i> ~ <i>thokthurr</i> ~ <i>thokthurr</i>	<i>ngathnthurr</i> ~ <i>ngathnman</i> ~ <i>ngathnantamn</i>	<i>nhul</i>
<b>Nominative</b>	<i>paanth</i>	<i>pam</i>	<i>thok</i>	<i>ngathn</i>	<i>nhul</i>
<b>Accusative</b>	<i>paanth</i>	<i>pam</i>	<i>thok</i>	<i>ngathn</i>	<i>nhunh</i>
<b>Genitive</b>	<i>paanthak</i>	<i>pamak</i>	<i>thokthak</i>	<i>ngathnmak</i>	<i>nhangn</i>
<b>Dative</b>	<i>paanthun</i>	<i>pama</i> ~ <i>paman</i> ~ <i>pamak</i>	<i>thokthak</i>	<i>ngathnmak</i> ~ <i>ngathnmun</i>	<i>nhangun</i>
<b>Ablative</b>	<i>paanthum</i>	<i>pamam</i> ~ <i>pamtam</i>	<i>thokntam</i>	<i>ngathnmantam</i>	<i>nhangnma</i>
<b>Comitative</b>	<i>paanthkak</i>	<i>pamkak</i>	<i>thokkak</i>	<i>ngathnkak</i>	-
<b>Proprietary<sup>86</sup> (adnominal)</b>	<i>paanthaak</i>	<i>pamaak</i>	<i>thokaak</i>	<i>ngathnaak</i>	-
<b>Proprietary (relational)</b>	<i>paanthkaak</i>	<i>pamkaak</i>	<i>thokkaak</i>	<i>ngathnkaak</i>	-
<b>Privative (adnominal)</b>	<i>paanthaar</i>	<i>pamaar</i>	<i>thokaar</i>	<i>ngathnaar</i>	-
<b>Privative (relational)</b>	<i>paanthkaar</i>	<i>pamkaar</i>	<i>thokkaar</i>	<i>ngathnkaar</i>	-

Table 30. Case-inflected forms of a selection of nominals.

<sup>86</sup> Note that both the proprietive and privative morphemes have distinct relational and adnominal forms (cf. Dench and Evans 1988). These are discussed in §4.2.7 and §4.2.8 respectively.



As seen in Table 30, many Thaayorre nomina have a number of alternative forms for the ergative, dative and ablative cases. The nomen *pam* ‘man’, for example, has three alternative dative forms; *pama*, *paman* and *pamak*. These allomorphs do not contrast with one another in any meaningful way, but rather appear to have been produced through the diachronic interaction of sound changes in general (operating across the lexicon) and the grammaticalisation of case morphemes in particular. The same is true of the alternative ergative and ablative forms. The diachrony of this irregular case inflection and its implications are explored further in the relevant sections.

Because a single nomen may combine with a number of allomorphs of a particular case, it is not possible to set up strict declensional classes according to which the dative and ablative forms of a nomen automatically follow from the nomen’s ergative form. So although *pam* ‘man’, *minh* ‘MEAT’ and *ngat* ‘FISH’ share the same ergative inflection (producing *pamal* ‘man:ERG’, *minhal* ‘MEAT:ERG’ and *ngatal* ‘FISH:ERG’), *pam* ‘man’ has three alternative dative forms *paman*, *pamak* and *pama*, while *minh* ‘MEAT’ and *ngat* ‘FISH’ have only one (*minha* and *ngata* respectively). Nor is it possible to predict the ergative form from the dative since the dative suffix *-ak* is found in the inflection of nomina from all declension classes. Thus *mong* ‘many’ has the dative form *mongak* but the ergative form *mongthurr*. Nevertheless, it is possible predict from the ergative form of a nomen that it will be able to combine with a particular dative and ablative allomorph, even if it may additionally combine with alternative (unpredictable) dative, ablative and ergative allomorphs. Any nomen with an ergative-inflected form ending in *-VI*, for instance, will have a dative form ending in *-V* (though this may alternate with other dative forms, as with *pam* ‘man’). Table 31 thus presents the broad declensional classes into which Thaayorre nomina can be divided. Where the exemplar nomina used to illustrate the classes may combine with alternative case allomorphs these are presented in brackets, and should not be taken to apply to the declensional class as a whole. Where corpus includes no examples of the exemplar nomen in a particular case form, this is indicated by a hyphen ‘-’ in the relevant cell. Note also that Table 31 omits proprietive, privative and comitative inflected forms since these case suffixes are morphologically invariant and are therefore unaffected by declension class.

Declension	Gloss	Ergative	Nominative	Accusative	Genitive	Dative	Ablative
<b>Declension 1.</b>		-(n)thurr	∅	∅	-(th)ak	-(th)ak	-(n)tam
	‘black’	<i>ngotnthurr</i> (~ <i>ngotnthn</i> )	<i>ngotn</i>	<i>ngotn</i>	<i>ngotnak</i>	<i>ngotnak</i>	<i>ngotntam</i>
	‘many’	<i>mongthurr</i>	<i>mong</i>	<i>mong</i>	<i>mongak</i>	<i>mongak</i>	<i>mongtam</i>
<b>Declension 2.</b>		-V	∅	∅	-ak	-Vn	-Vm
	‘woman’	<i>paanthu</i>	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanthak</i>	<i>paanthun</i>	<i>paanthum</i>
	‘snake’	<i>yaka</i>	<i>yak</i>	<i>yak</i>	<i>yakak</i>	<i>yakan</i>	<i>yakam</i>
	‘hole’	<i>ranthi</i>	<i>ranth</i>	<i>ranth</i>	<i>ranthak</i>	<i>ranthin</i>	<i>ranthim</i>
<b>Declension 3.</b>		-VI	∅	∅	-ak	-V	-Vm
	‘man’	<i>pamal</i>	<i>pam</i>	<i>pam</i>	<i>pamak</i>	<i>pama</i> (~ <i>paman</i> ) (~ <i>pamak</i> )	<i>pamam</i> (~ <i>pamntam</i> )
	‘FISH’	<i>ngatal</i>	<i>ngat</i>	<i>ngat</i>	<i>ngatak</i>	<i>ngata</i>	<i>ngatam</i>
	‘WORD’	<i>kuukul</i>	<i>kuuk</i>	<i>kuuk</i>	-	<i>kuuku</i>	<i>kuukum</i>
‘water’	<i>ngokel</i>	<i>ngok</i>	<i>ngok</i>	-	<i>ngoke</i> (~ <i>ngokak</i> ) (~ <i>ngokeln</i> )	<i>ngokem</i>	

Table 31. Major nomen declension classes.

Table 32 presents a sample of irregular nomina that do not fit into any of the three major declensional classes. These nomina may combine with suffixes not found in the major declensional classes (as seen in the ergative form of *kuta* ‘dog’, *kutaku*), or they may combine with the regular suffixes seen in Table 32, but have dative and/or ablative forms that are unexpected given their ergative form (e.g. *kumun* ‘thigh’, which has the ergative form *kumunthurr*, but dative *kuman* rather than the expected *kumunak*).

<b>Declension</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Accusative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>	<b>Dative</b>	<b>Ablative</b>
Irregular	'dog'	<i>kutaku</i> ~ <i>kutan</i>	<i>kuta</i>	<i>kuta</i>	<i>kutathak</i>	<i>kutan</i> ~ <i>kutathak</i>	<i>kutakum</i>
	'thigh'	<i>kumunithurr</i>	<i>kumun</i>	<i>kumun</i>	<i>kumunak</i>	<i>kuman</i>	<i>kumunmam</i> ~ <i>kumuntam</i>
	'old lady'	<i>ngumpurran</i>	<i>ngumpurr</i>	<i>ngumpurr</i>	<i>ngumpurrak</i>	<i>ngumpurrak</i>	-
	'raffia'	<i>yencnthurr</i>	<i>yencer</i>	<i>yencer</i>	<i>yencrac</i>	<i>yencer</i>	<i>yencntam</i>
	'child'	<i>parran</i>	<i>parr_r</i>	<i>parr_r</i>	<i>parr_rak</i>	<i>parr_rak</i>	<i>parrntam</i>
	'foot'	<i>thamarr</i>	<i>thamr</i>	<i>thamr</i>	<i>thamrak</i>	<i>thamrak</i>	<i>thamrntam</i>

Table 32. Declension of some irregular nomina.

The assignation of phonologically- and lexically-determined case allomorphs to nomen roots is discussed separately for each case. Before moving on to consider the individual case morphemes, however, it is worth noting a significant formal correspondence between the ergative, dative and ablative-marked forms of second and third declension nomina. The marking of these cases in the second and third declension always includes a lexically-specified vowel (rendered as ‘V’ in the abstract suffix forms given in 31). That this vowel cannot be predicted in phonological terms is evident in Tables 33-34, which compare the nominative and ergative forms of a range of second and third declension nomina. Note that the vowels of the ergative forms presented therein are always the same as those of the corresponding dative and ablative forms. Hence the vowel /u/ is found in the ergative, dative and ablative forms of *raak* ‘PLACE’ (*raaku*, *raakun* and *raakum* respectively), while the vowel /a/ is found in the ergative, dative and ablative forms of *minh* ‘MEAT’ (*minhal*, *minha* and *minham* respectively).

<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<i>yak</i>	<i>yaka</i>	‘snake’
<i>patp</i>	<i>patpa</i>	‘hawk’
<i>waal</i>	<i>waala</i>	‘silly’
<i>kiin</i>	<i>kiina</i>	‘tooth’
<i>peep</i>	<i>peepa</i>	‘net’
<i>pork</i>	<i>porka</i>	‘big’
<i>kunk</i>	<i>kunka</i>	‘alive’
<i>ngeengk</i>	<i>ngeengka</i>	‘belly’
<i>ruuc</i>	<i>ruuca</i>	‘ashes, dust’
<i>min</i>	<i>mini</i>	‘good’
<i>nhan</i>	<i>nhani</i>	‘sand’
<i>meer</i>	<i>meere</i>	‘eye’
<i>pot</i>	<i>pote</i>	‘dry’
<i>koow</i>	<i>koowo</i>	‘nose’
<i>thomp</i>	<i>thompo</i>	‘smoke’
<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanthu</i>	‘woman’
<i>kaal</i>	<i>kaalu</i>	‘ear’
<i>raak</i>	<i>raaku</i>	‘place’
<i>kam</i>	<i>kamu</i>	‘blood’
<i>yuk</i>	<i>yuku</i>	‘tree’
<i>minc</i>	<i>mincu</i>	‘true’

Table 33. Nominative and ergative forms of some second declension nomina.

<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<i>Pam</i>	<i>pamal</i>	‘man’
<i>Ngat</i>	<i>ngatal</i>	‘FISH’
<i>minh</i>	<i>minhal</i>	‘MEAT’
<i>kun</i>	<i>kunal</i>	‘bum, shit’
<i>puun</i>	<i>puunil</i>	‘breeze’
<i>puuy</i>	<i>puuyil</i>	‘crab’
<i>pinc</i>	<i>pincil</i> (~ <i>pinci</i> )	‘saltwater croc’
<i>ngok</i>	<i>ngokel</i>	‘water’
<i>kuuk</i>	<i>kuukul</i>	‘word, language’

Table 34. Nominative and ergative forms of some third declension nomina.

It has already been noted that the quality of the vowel found in case-inflections cannot be predicted by the phonological form of the nomen stem. There can be no phonological motivation for marking the ergative form of *waal* ‘silly’ with *-a*, for example, but *kaal* ‘ear’ with *-u*. It is clear, then, that selection of the appropriate vowel requires access to lexical, not merely phonological, properties of the word. How these vowels came to be associated with particular lexemes is best understood in a diachronic context. Witness the resemblance between the Thaayorre ergative-inflected nomina presented in the second column of Table 35 and the reconstructed/cognate nominative forms presented in the third.

Nominative	Ergative	Reconstructed and cognate forms
<i>kaal</i> ‘ear’	<i>kaalu</i>	PP * <i>kaalu</i> ‘ear’ (Alpher, personal communication), Ayapathu <i>kaalu</i> (Rigsby, personal communication).
<i>yuk</i> ‘tree’	<i>yuku</i>	PP * <i>yuku</i> ‘tree’ (Alpher p.c.), Pakanh <i>yuku</i> ‘tree’ (Rigsby p.c.).
<i>pungk</i> ‘knee’	<i>pungku</i>	PP * <i>pungku</i> ‘knee’ (Alpher p.c.), Pakanh <i>pungku</i> (Rigsby p.c.), Kugu Muminh <i>pungku</i> ‘knee’ (Gaby, field notes), Yidij <i>bunggu</i> ‘knee’ (Dixon 1977).
<i>kam</i> ‘blood’	<i>kamu</i>	PP * <i>kamu</i> ‘water’ (Alpher p.c.), Kaanytyu <i>kamu</i> ‘blood’ (Rigsby p.c.); Yidij <i>gamu</i> ‘blood’ (Dixon 1991).
<i>raak</i> ‘place’	<i>raaku</i>	Kugu Muminh <i>agu</i> ‘place’ (Gaby, field notes), Pakanh <i>agu</i> ‘place’ (Rigsby p.c.).
<i>thip</i> ‘liver’	<i>thipa</i>	Pakanh <i>thipa</i> ‘liver’ (Rigsby p.c.).
<i>pinc</i> ‘saltwater crocodile’	<i>pinci</i> ~ <i>pincil</i>	Kugu Muminh <i>pinci</i> ‘saltwater crocodile’ (Gaby, field notes).
<i>pam</i> ‘man’	<i>pamal</i>	PP * <i>pama</i> ‘man’ (Hale 1966a), Kugu Muminh <i>pama</i> ‘man’ (Gaby, field notes), Guugu Yimidhirr <i>bama</i> (Haviland 1979).
<i>kuuk</i> ‘LANGUAGE’	<i>kuukul</i>	Kugu Muminh <i>kugu</i> ‘language’ (Gaby, field notes), Guugu Yimidhirr <i>guugu</i> ‘language’ (Haviland 1979), Yidij <i>gugu</i> ‘language’ (Dixon 1977).
<i>minh</i> ‘MEAT’	<i>minhal</i>	PP * <i>mija</i> ‘meat’ (Hale 1966a), Kugu Muminh <i>minha</i> ‘meat’ (Gaby, field notes), Wik-Ngathan <i>minh</i> ‘meat’ (Sutton 1995).
<i>ngat</i> ‘FISH’	<i>ngatal</i>	PP * <i>ngata</i> (Alpher p.c.), Kugu Muminh <i>nga’a</i> ‘fish’ (Gaby, field notes), Yir Yorong <i>ngart</i> (Alpher 1991).
<i>kun</i> ‘shit’	<i>kunal</i>	PP * <i>kuna</i> ‘shit’ (Hale 1966a), Kugu Muminh <i>kuna</i> ‘shit’ (Gaby, field notes), Wik-Ngathan <i>kun</i> ‘shit’ (Sutton 1995).

Table 35. Cognates of some second and third declension nomina.



As Table 35 shows, the ergative forms of Thaayorre second declension nomina (e.g. *kaalu* ‘ear:ERG’) are formally identical to the corresponding nominative forms reconstructed for proto-Paman, or otherwise have cognates in the nominative forms of other Paman languages. For third declension nomina, the vowel that precedes /l/ in the ergative inflection (e.g. /a/ in *pamal* ‘man:ERG’) is identical to the root-final vowel of the corresponding nominative forms of other Paman languages. The comparative evidence thus points strongly towards the lexically-determined vowels being a part of the nomen root at some point in Kuuk Thaayorre’s history. The historical phonological process of word-final vowel deletion<sup>87</sup> resulted in the loss of the root-final vowels in the nominative and accusative nomen forms. These vowels have been preserved, however, in case-inflected forms. The historical processes through which the present case allomorphs were formed are discussed further in each subsection detailing the relevant case.

Case-marking is realised only on the final eligible constituent of the noun phrase, as is fairly common across the Australian continent<sup>88</sup>. While some theoreticians have argued such phrasal marking indicates that the case morphs are postpositional enclitics (Anderson 2005), the formal irregularity of the Thaayorre ergative morpheme, in particular, is hard to reconcile with such an analysis (cf. Table 33). Because this irregularity cannot be predicted by either phonological environment or semantics (i.e. noun classes), I analyse case inflection as edge-marked suffixation (cf. Anderson et al. 2006).

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<sup>87</sup> Independent evidence of word-final vowel deletion across the Thaayorre lexicon is provided by the verb stem allomorphy discussed in §7.1.3. This process was evidently in operation prior to Kuuk Thaayorre’s separation from other members of the Southwest Pama subgroup; cf. Alpher 1972.

<sup>88</sup> Phrase-final case marking is also found in, for example, Diyari (Austin 1981), Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1985) and Wik Mungkan (Sayers 1976).

### 4.2.1 Ergative

The Thaayorre ergative case — primarily associated with the marking of transitive subjects — is both formally and functionally multitudinous. This section will begin by considering its allomorphic variance, followed by a discussion of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions of this morpheme.

Ergative case is marked by the suffixation of *-(n)thurr* to first conjugation nomina. The two allomorphs *-nthurr* and *-thurr* are treated here as a single suffix (in contradistinction to the ergative suffixes of other declensions) since their respective distributions are for the most part phonologically predictable. The suffix *-thurr* occurs following apical-final and nasal-final nomen stems and *-(n)thurr* occurs elsewhere (as schematised in [144]).

$$(144) \quad -nthurr \quad \rightarrow \quad -thurr \quad / \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [+apical] \quad \_ \\ N \quad \_ \end{array} \right\}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad \rightarrow \quad -nthurr \quad / \quad \text{elsewhere}$$

Table 36 presents a sample of first conjugation nomina:

Nominative	Ergative	gloss
<i>thono</i>	<i>thonthurr</i>	‘one’
<i>saw</i> [so:]	<i>sawnthurr</i>	‘saw’
<i>ngamal</i>	<i>ngamalthurr</i>	‘large’
<i>muul</i>	<i>muulthurr</i>	‘ochre’
<i>government</i> [gabment]	<i>governmentthurr</i>	‘government’
<i>kun_yangkar</i>	<i>kun_yangkarthurr</i>	‘sibling’
<i>min</i>	<i>minthurr</i>	‘good’
<i>mong</i>	<i>mongthurr</i>	‘many’
<i>mantam</i>	<i>mantamthurr</i>	‘small’
<i>pung</i>	<i>pungthurr</i>	‘sun’

Table 36. Selection of first declension nomina.

There are just a handful of exceptions to the rule given in (144). These include *keynayp* ‘cane knife’ which has the ergative form *keynaypthurr* although it ends in a non-apical oral stop, the nomen *thatr* ‘frog’ which has the ergative form *thatrnthurr* although it ends in an apical glide, and the nomen *thok* ‘cat’ which appears as both *thoknthurr* and *thokthurr* in my data.

The allomorph *-thurr* is homophonous with the ‘FOCAL’ suffix (§3.6.2) which attaches to stems of any word class (e.g. the permissive particle in [145]) to add prominence.

- (145) *koo kirri-thurr yarr*  
 oh PERM-FOC go:IMP  
 ‘get going!’  
 [Foote and Hall 1992:17]

This discourse function of *-thurr* is likely to have preceded its ergative case function. The grammaticalisation of an ergative morpheme from a focus morpheme is in line with DuBois’s (1987) finding that speakers tend to avoid representing Agents lexically. It follows from this that lexical Agents are most often pragmatically marked. Accordingly, it is likely for there to have been frequent coincidence of *-thurr* focal marking on these pragmatically marked lexical Agents at some stage of Kuuk Thaayorre’s history. It is not difficult to imagine that such focal marking could be reanalysed by language learners as coding the grammatical function of transitive subject since where a transitive subject was encoded lexically, it would frequently be marked by *-thurr*. The final stage of development would then see this association between *-thurr* and the transitive subject function being extended to the analysis of *-thurr* as an ergative case-marker, which would therefore be used also for Instruments, etc. This diachronic development can be summarised as follows:

- Stage 1:        =*thurr* ‘focal’ (frequently encliticised to pragmatically-marked Agents)  
 Stage 2:        =*thurr* ‘focal’, ‘lexical Agent’  
 Stage 3:        =*thurr* ‘focal’; *-thurr* ‘ergative case’

Such a diachronic development is in keeping with the cross-linguistic tendency noted by Traugott and Heine (1991) for pragmatic elements to grammaticalise into grammatical units.

Perhaps because *-(n)thurr* appears to be a relatively recent addition to the Thaayorre case-marking arsenal, it is today the most productive ergative allomorph. It is commonly used with loan words, and many younger speakers use it in place of the conservative ergative forms of less common vocabulary items. As the forces of language obsolescence favour regularisation, it seems likely that *-(n)thurr* may become the standard ergative suffix with only high-frequency nomina retaining irregular inflection.

For second conjugation nomina, the ergative case is marked by a lexically-specified vowel. As discussed in §4.2, I assume that this vowel was originally part of the nomen root, but was subsequently deleted for nominative and accusative case forms. There are a number of possible explanations for the preservation of this vowel in the ergative-inflected form. Firstly, there may have been some ergative suffix that shielded the root-final vowel from deletion. Then, at some stage following the process of word-final vowel deletion, the remaining consonant of the ergative suffix was lost<sup>89</sup>, leaving the formerly root-final vowel as the sole indicator of ergativity. This process is summarised in Table 37, in which an imagined early ergative suffix is represented as CV.

	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>
Stage 1:	<i>paanthu</i> ‘woman’	<i>paanthu-CV</i>
Stage 2:	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanthu-C</i>
Stage 3:	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanthu</i>

Table 37. Putative diachrony of second declension ergative marking.

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<sup>89</sup> This loss might have been due to another sound change in operation at that time.

Alternatively, the reanalysis of the root-final vowel as an ergative marker may have been fostered by a similar association between pragmatic focus and the grammatical function of transitive subject as more recently led to the reanalysis of the focal suffix *-thurr* as ergative<sup>90</sup>. Specifically, the root-final vowel may have been preserved in contexts of pragmatic focus, being later reanalysed as ergative-marked.

Diachrony aside, it is unclear whether the nominative or ergative form of second declension nomina should be considered ‘unmarked’. The fact that the final vowel of the ergative form is lexically specified makes it more economical to make the ergative form the lexical entry for second declension nomina, with the nominative/accusative form produced through subtractive morphology. Hence the Thaayorre lexeme for ‘name’ would be listed as *nhampu* ‘name(ERG)’, with the nominative/accusative form *nhamp* ‘name:NOM’ formed by deletion of the root-final vowel /u/. This analysis has the added benefit of the dative and ablative suffixes being suffixed directly to the vowel-final root rather than including a lexically-determined vowel. Hence the single segment dative suffix *-n* would be attached to the root *nhampu* ‘name’ to produce *nhampu-n* ‘name-DAT’ and likewise the ablative suffix would be reduced to *-m* in *nhampu-m* ‘name-ABL’. Also supporting this analysis is the retention of the ergative-marking vowel in certain fixed phrases (146) in which ergative marking is semantically and syntactically anomalous.

- (146) *nhamp(u)*<sup>91</sup> *ngay*      *Alfred Charlie*  
 name(NOM) 1sg(NOM) Alfred Charlie  
 ‘my name is Alfred Charlie’  
 [AC06/08/02 Conversation]

Having the ergative form as lexical entry is made problematic by the fact that the citation form given in elicitation contexts is always the nominative/accusative. On

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<sup>90</sup> Specifically, the vowel-final root form may have been preserved in contexts of pragmatic focus, being later reanalysed as ergative-marked.

<sup>91</sup> The final vowel of *nhamp(u)* ‘name’ in [146] is bracketed to indicate its optionality. When asked to pronounce this clause slowly and carefully for transcription, most consultants were clear that the final vowel should be omitted.

balance, though, the formation of the nominative/accusative form from the ergative lexical entry via subtractive morphology remains the most parsimonious synchronic analysis. This analysis will not be reflected in the glossing of example sentences throughout this grammar, however. Subtractive morphology is difficult to represent through standard glossing conventions and may potentially mislead readers trying to parse example sentences. Accordingly, the final vowels of second declension ergative forms will be segmented as suffixes, with the (representationally-driven) implication that the nominative form is the root.

The ergative form of third conjugation nomina consists of the nominative form followed by a lexically-specified vowel plus the segment /l/. This final segment can be reconstructed to a proto-Paman ergative suffix *\*-lu* (Hale 1966a). We can thus account for these *-l* ergative forms by means of the historical process of vowel-final deletion described above. Unlike the diachrony of second declension ergative marking suggested in Table 37, however, third declension nouns have retained the initial consonant (/l/) of the original ergative suffix. This development is shown in Table 38.

	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>
Stage 1:	<i>pama</i> ‘man’	<i>pama-lu</i>
Stage 2:	<i>pam</i>	<i>pama-l</i>

Table 38. Putative diachrony of third declension ergative marking.

It is not immediately obvious what form should serve as lexical entry for third declension nomina. The vowel of the ergative-inflected form must be lexically specified, as with second declension nomina. We might therefore propose the ergative form as lexical entry, with the nominative/accusative formed through the subtraction of the final two segments (i.e. /l/). Hence *pamal* ‘man(ERG)’ would be the morphologically unmarked lexical entry and *pam* ‘man:NOM’ formed through subtractive morphology. The dative form *pama* ‘man:DAT’ is likewise produced through the subtraction of root-final /l/. This analysis is less elegant when it comes to

accounting for ablative-inflected forms (e.g. *pamam*), however. These must be formed through the subtraction of root-final /l/ followed by the suffixation of *-m*. It would be more parsimonious to take the dative form *pama* ‘man(DAT)’ as the lexical entry. From this, the nominative/accusative can be formed through the subtraction of the final vowel (as with second conjugation nomina), the ergative formed through the suffixation of *-l*, and the ablative formed through suffixation of *-m*. Although I take this to be the best synchronic analysis, the representational imperative once again dictates the segmentation of third conjugation nomina such that the root-final vowel is presented as part of the case suffixes (implying that the nominative form is unmarked and the dative marked by a suffixed vowel).

In addition to the three major declensional classes there are a number of nomina which have irregular ergative forms though they otherwise conform to the inflectional patterns of first declension nomina. The most common of these irregular ergative forms are: *-(a)n* (Table 39), *-thn* (Table 40) and *-arr* (which replaces the root-final segment as shown in Table 41).

<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>gloss</b>
<i>meerkole</i>	<i>meerkolen</i>	‘taipan’
<i>kuta</i>	<i>kutan</i>	‘dog’
<i>waarr</i>	<i>waarran</i>	‘bad’
<i>parr_r</i>	<i>parran</i>	‘child’
<i>yiirram</i>	<i>yiirraman</i>	‘other’
<i>ngumpurr</i>	<i>ngumpurran</i>	‘old lady’

Table 39. Sample of nomina that take ergative *-(a)n*.

- (147) *-(a)n*    →    *-n* / V \_\_  
                   →    *-an* / elsewhere

<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>gloss</b>
<i>ngotn</i>	<i>ngotnthn</i>	‘black’
<i>thok</i>	<i>thokthn</i>	‘cat’
<i>workrr</i>	<i>workrrthn</i>	‘string’

Table 40. Sample of nomina that take ergative *-thn*.

<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Ergative</b>	<b>gloss</b>
<i>werngr</i>	<i>werngarr</i>	‘boomerang’
<i>thamr</i>	<i>thamarr</i>	‘foot’
<i>yapn</i>	<i>yaparr</i>	‘elder sister’s

Table 41. Sample of nomina that take ergative *-arr*.

There are additionally a handful of unique ergative inflections, such as *kuta-ku* ‘dog-ERG’ (which alternates with *kuta-n* ‘dog-ERG’) and *kuthirr-man* ‘two-ERG’.

For irregular nomina, both ergative and nominative forms must be specified in the lexicon. I have no specific proposals as to their diachronic development, other than to note the possibly coincidental formal similarity between the ergative suffix *-thn* and pragmatic enclitic *=th*, and between ergative *-arr* and the pragmatic enclitic *-rr* (cf. §3.6.3).

The following subsections consider the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions of the ergative case.



#### 4.2.1.1 Ergative – transitive subject

All transitive, semitransitive and ditransitive verbs assign ergative case to their subject<sup>92</sup>. Ergative case marking is thus indicative of the syntactic function of transitive subject, as seen in (148):

- (148) *pam-al ith yuk raath-r*  
 man-ERG DEM:DIST stick(ACC) chop-NPST  
 ‘the man’s chopping a stick’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation Cut&Break3]

Although it is possible to offer a semantic characterisation of ergative case-marking in such contexts (e.g. ‘ergative – Agent’), this would be somewhat misleading since the ergative case is also used to encode non-agentive transitive subjects (e.g. Experiencers, as in [149]), while being omitted from the marking of significantly more agentive subjects of semitransitive verbs (150.2):

- (149) *kuta-ku nhul glass nhaa<nha>m*  
 dog-ERG 3sgACC glass(ACC) look.at<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the dog is looking at the jar’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

- (150) *ngul nhul ngathun yariy yik-r teacher*  
 1. then 3sg(NOM) 1sgDAT thus say-P.PFV teacher(NOM)  
 ‘then the teacher said to me’  
 2. “*kece, wut=okun wun, door ulp lock ulp*”  
 CDICT asleep=DUB lie:NPST door(NOM) dem:adr.prx locked dem:adr.prx  
 “‘no way, maybe [she’s] asleep, the door’s locked”  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

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<sup>92</sup> This is not true of all bivalent and trivalent verbs, however, cf. §9.

## 4.2.1.2 Ergative – Instrument

As well as marking NPs with the grammatical function of transitive subject the ergative case may also mark instrumental adjunct NPs<sup>93</sup>, an extremely common pattern of polysemy amongst Australian languages (Blake 1987, Blake 1994). This can be seen in the identical inflection of *coconut* in both (151), in which it has the grammatical function of transitive subject, and (152) in which it has the function of instrumental adjunct:

- (151) *pam coconut-nthrr theernga-rr*  
 man(ACC) coconut-ERG kill-P.PFV  
 ‘the coconut [fell and] killed the man’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>93</sup> I have stated elsewhere (e.g. Gaby 2005) that ergative and instrumental cases are differentiated in the inflection of genitive pronouns, based on the comparison of (a) with (b):

- (a) *kuta ngalin-man yak theernga-rr*  
 dog 1du:excl:POS-ERG snake(ACC) kill-P.PFV  
 ‘our dog killed the snake’
- (b) *Tom-thurr ngali kay ngalin-antamn yak theernga-rr*  
 Tom-ERG 1du:excl(ERG) gun 1du:excl:POS-ERG snake(ACC) kill-P.PFV  
 ‘Tom and I killed a snake with our gun’

However, more recent research has revealed *-man* and *-antamn* to be simply allomorphs of a single ergative/instrumental case morpheme. Hence the form *-antamn* is occasionally found marking transitive subjects (e.g. in [c]):

- (c) *kar old people ngancantamn minh kirk-a ko'om*  
 like old people 1pl:excl:ERG MEAT(ACC) spear-ERG spear:P.IPFV
- peln kanangkarr*  
 3pl(NOM) long.ago  
 ‘for instance, our ancestors used to go hunting with spears long ago’

- (152) *ngay theernga-rr=unh coconut-nthrr*  
 1sg(ERG) kill-P.PFV=3sgACC coconut-ERG  
 ‘I killed him with a coconut [by throwing it at him]’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

I view the ergative and instrumental as distinct categories (associated with distinct thematic roles) that are encoded by the polysemous ergative suffix. Foley and Van Valin (1984), McGregor (1990) and Van Valin and Wilkins (1996), however, argue for a single thematic role that spans both of these uses (labelled ‘Effector’ in the Role and Reference Grammar framework). This argument builds upon the idea of a causal chain (cf. the event construal model developed by Talmy 1988, *inter alia*), in which the ergative-marked ‘Effector’ argument (whether transitive subject or instrumental adjunct) is implicated in the causation of the event. It does not seem possible, however, to provide a semantic definition of ‘Effector’ that will capture every ergative-marked transitive subject (e.g. [149] above), but exclude other kinds of non-ergative Causers (e.g. the girl in [153] and the woman in [154]).

- (153) *parr\_r paanth ith minc.munthi-rr*  
 child female(NOM) dem:dist wash.body-P.PFV  
 ‘the girl washed herself’  
 [AJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

- (154) *trouble=okun yan yup paanth-um inh'nheman*  
 trouble(NOM)=DUB go:NPST soon woman-ABL this.one:ABL  
 ‘I might get into trouble from [because of] this woman’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Also weighing against a purely semantic account of the ergative case is the fact that Instruments may not be ergative-marked when they appear in an intransitive clause.

Hence the *yuk* ‘stick’ the man uses to help him walk in (155) must take dative, not ergative, case<sup>94</sup>.

- (155) *pam yuk-un / \*u yan*  
man(NOM) stick-DAT/\*ERG go:NPST  
‘the man’s walking with a (walking) stick’  
[GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

Note that the case-marking of Instruments in intransitive reflexive clauses is somewhat more complicated (cf. §10.6.1).

The debate as to whether the formal identity of ergative and instrumental marking represents the syncretism of two cases or a single case spanning two grammatical functions or a single case with a single function seems unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future. Pending such consensus, I shall continue to assume the existence of a single Thaayorre case category which I label ‘ergative’. (Di)transitive predicates assign this case to their subjects, but the same case may also mark instrumental adjuncts, identified here as a distinct grammatical function. The ergative case morpheme is thus associated with a range of thematic roles; namely all those associated with the subjects of transitive predicates (e.g. Agent, Force, Effector, Experiencer, etc.) and that of Instrument.

#### 4.2.1.3 Ergative – Unexpected Actor

Both purely syntactic and purely semantic accounts of ergative case-marking in Kuuk Thaayorre are challenged by examples such as (156) and (157).

- (156) *Parr-an pul kuta-ku ngok-eln wont-r*  
child-ERG<sup>^</sup> 3du(NOM) dog-ERG<sup>^</sup> water-DAT fall-NPST  
‘the child and the dog fall into the water [together]’  
[MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

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<sup>94</sup> It could, of course, be argued that the stick in (155) is simply not classified as an instrumental in Kuuk Thaayorre. The fact remains, however, that there are no intransitive clauses in which a potentially instrumental adjunct receives ergative case marking.

- (157) *minh patp piinth.kat waawath-ø*  
 MEAT hawk(#ERG) scrap(ACC) search<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘hawks fossick for scraps’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

In (156), the subject of an intransitive clause is unexpectedly ergative-marked. For clarity, the gloss ‘ERG^’ will be employed where the morph occurs in such syntactically non-ergative contexts. In (157) the transitive subject is morphologically unmarked where ergative marking would be expected. Such cases where the expected ergative marking is omitted are coded ‘(#ERG)’. In examples such as these, the morphological case forms exhibited are out of alignment with the grammatical function and semantic role of the arguments they mark. The distribution of ergative case-marking in such clauses is instead determined by pragmatic factors. Specifically, as I argue in Gaby (to appear-a), the Thaayorre ergative case suffix may be used to mark the subject of an intransitive clause as ‘unexpected’, while it may be omitted if the subject of a transitive clause is ‘expected’.

Pragmatic and discourse contexts similarly influence the distribution of ergative morphemes in several other Australian languages. McGregor (1998, 2006), discusses in detail the influence of discourse pragmatics on the inclusion or omission of the ergative morphemes in Gooniyandi and Warrwa respectively. He argues that the Warrwa focal ergative marker combines the functions of marking syntactic ergative case and pragmatic focus. In Rembarrnga, too, unexpected intransitive subjects may optionally be ergative-marked (Adam Saulwick, personal communication). Pensalfini (1999) argues that the Jingulu ergative markers have grammaticalised into focus markers (which now operate in parallel to ergative case markers), due to the pressures of language contact and obsolescence. Meakins and O’Shannessy (2004) similarly attribute to language contact the fact that the ergative-marking of transitive subjects may be omitted in Gurindji Kriol and Light Warlpiri. In Kuuk Thaayorre, by contrast, the pragmatic use of the ergative morpheme would appear to predate its syntactic function (cf. the above discussion of the diachrony of ergative morphology, §3.6.2).

### 4.2.2 Nominative

The nominative case form generally signals the subject of an intransitive predicate, whether in a verbal (158) or verbless clause (159).

- (158) *puun*            *ii*    *yik*            *iipal*  
 breeze(NOM)    there say-NPST    from.there  
 ‘the breeze is whistling up from that way’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

- (159) *ngat*            *inhul*            *pinporro*  
 fish(NOM)    this.one            barramundi  
 ‘this fish is a barramundi’  
 [GJ28/10/02 Elicitation]

Nomina with this case form may also have a number of adjunct roles in the clause. Thus in (160) a nominative noun phrase referring to a time of day has the role of temporal adjunct, whilst in (161) a nominative noun phrase referring to a time period (*kapr kuthirr* ‘two moons’, or ‘two months’) is used to indicate the duration of the event. The lack of oblique case marking on these adjunct NPs can be attributed to the fact that temporality and/or duration is inherent to their semantics, and their role in the clause therefore needs no further indication.

- (160) *ngul may pucr*            *katp<atp>-m*            *raak*    *ngurnturnturr*  
 then VEG nanda(ERG) grasp<RDP>-P.IPFV    TIME    night  
 ‘he was feeling for nanda nuts [during] the night’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

- (161) *ngay*            *aka*            *kapr*    *kuthirr*            *nhiin-m*  
 1sg(NOM) at.this.place moon two(NOM) live-P.IPFV  
 ‘I’ve been here for two months’  
 [GJ16/12/02 Elicitation]

Somewhat differently, in (162) the second nominative noun phrase (*bush food*, the first nominative noun phrase being the subject pronoun) refers to the Instrument or catalyst for the growing event.

- (162) *ngancn may bush.food piinthi-rr*  
 1pl:excl(NOM) VEG bush.food(NOM) grow-P.PFV  
 ‘we grow up on bush food’  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

#### 4.2.3 Accusative

Kuuk Thaayorre nomina exhibit a syncretism of nominative and accusative cases, in line with the ergative-absolutive marking pattern found across much of the Australian continent (cf., e.g., Dixon 1994). Thus the same unmarked nomen form is interpreted with the grammatical function of (intransitive) subject in an intransitive clause (163), but as direct object in a transitive clause (164):

- (163) *may puunh wont-r yuk-um*  
 VEG bee(NOM) fall-NPST tree-ABL  
 ‘the bees fall from the tree’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

- (164) *kuta-ku may puunh koo<ko>c-r*  
 dog-ERG VEG bee(ACC) bark<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the dog barks [at] the bees’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

For pronouns the nominative (165) and accusative (166) case forms are distinct.

- (165) *ngay kana thakarr*  
 1sg(NOM) CMP leave-P.PFV  
 ‘I left Pormpuraaw’  
 [BN1/10/02 Elicitation]

- (166) *minh pinc-i nganh patha-rr*  
 MEAT saltie-ERG 1sgACC bite-P.PFV  
 A crocodile bit me  
 [EN1/10/02 Elicitation]

The accusative case form is only ever found with the grammatical function of direct object. As such, it is a useful diagnostic of clausal transitivity (cf. §9.1).

#### 4.2.4 Genitive

The genitive case is marked by the suffix *-ak* for all nomina<sup>95</sup>. This form formally and functionally resembles proto-Pama-Nyungan *-ku*, which Blake (1976:421) names the “most widespread affix to be found in Australia”<sup>96</sup>. *\*-Ku* and its present-day reflexes span a number of functions, including the marking of possessors, as well as dative and allative case, leading Blake (1976:423) to suggest its historical development from marking a ‘Goal of motion’ to a ‘Purpose-Beneficiary’ to a possessor (amongst other things). This mirrors Thaayorre *-ak*, which also encodes dative case for most nomina (and the Thaayorre dative case spans Goals, Purposes, beneficiaries, Locations, etc. – see §4.2.5 below). Although *\*-ku* and *-ak* share only a single segment, the following hypothetical scenario (taking the nomen *pam* ‘man’ as example) is in keeping with historical loss of word-final vowels discussed above.

	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
Stage 1:	<i>pama</i> ‘man’	<i>pama-ku</i>
Stage 2:	<i>pam</i>	<i>pama-k</i>
Stage 3:	<i>pam</i>	<i>pam-ak</i>

Table 42. Putative diachrony of genitive marking of *pam* ‘man’.

<sup>95</sup> The regularity of this form is such that it could potentially be analysed as an enclitic, given its position at the periphery of the phrase. But for reasons of parsimony — given the affixal analysis of ergative case marking justified above — I gloss this morpheme as a suffix throughout this thesis.

<sup>96</sup> It may prove that the irregular ergative allomorph that attaches to *kuta* ‘dog’ (*kutaku* ‘dog:ERG’) descends from this original genitive morpheme.



In Table 42 I propose a third stage in the development of the genitive case suffix in which the (formerly root-final) vowel is reanalysed as part of the genitive suffix. This is supported by the fact that the genitive inflection has been regularised such that second and third declension nomina with root-final vowels other than /a/ nevertheless take the genitive form *-ak*. This fourth stage of regularisation is shown in Table 43, using the second declension exemplar nomen *paanth* ‘woman’.

	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Genitive</b>
Stage 1:	<i>paanthu</i> ‘woman’	<i>paanthu-ku</i>
Stage 2:	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanthu-k</i>
Stage 3:	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanth-uk</i>
Stage 4:	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanth-ak</i>

Table 43. Putative diachrony of genitive marking of *paanth* ‘woman’.

The Thaayorre genitive case expresses alienable (167) and inalienable (168) possession:

- (167) *yuk waarr.min inh [parr\_r ngathn]-mak*  
 THING thing dem:sp.prx [child 1sgPOS]-GEN  
 ‘my children’s things’ or ‘these things belong to my children’  
 [LN date unrecorded Elicitation]

- (168) *nhangnam [nganip ngathn]-mak*  
 mother [father 1sgPOS]-GEN  
 ‘my father’s mother’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

It is unclear in example (167) whether the genitive case functions relationally or adnominally (cf. Dench and Evans 1988). Under the relational analysis, the genitive phrase *parr\_r ngathnmak* ‘of my children’ is predicated of *yuk waarrmin inh* ‘these things’, which functions as subject of the verbless clause. Alternatively, *parr\_r*

*ngathnmak* ‘of my children’ might function as adnominal modifier *yuk waarrmin inh* ‘these things’, the two forming a complex possessive NP; *yuk waarrmin inh parr\_r ngathnmak* ‘these things of my children’s’. The adnominal function of the genitive case is clear in example (168), however.

In addition to marking possessors, the genitive case may also be used to encode beneficiaries. This is no doubt due to the fact that the beneficiaries of material goods are generally the future possessors of the item in question. This can be seen in (169b)<sup>97</sup>:

(169a) *nhunt coffee=aak?*  
 A: 2sg(NOM) coffee=ADN.PROP  
 ‘do you want some coffee?’ (lit. ‘are you coffee-having?’)

(b) *kirri ngul ngathn yump-ø!*  
 B: PERM then 1sgGEN do-IMP  
 ‘yes please’ (lit. ‘go ahead then and make mine’)  
 [LN8/9/02 Conversation]

But genitive case may also be employed to mark non-possessive beneficiaries.

(170) *parr\_r inh nhunt pit-ø ngathn*  
 child(ACC) dem:sp.prx 2sgERG keep-IMP 1sgGEN  
 ‘look after this baby on my behalf [I am meant to look after it for its mother]’  
 [GJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

(171) *may inh stir-m rirk-ø ngathn*  
 VEG(ACC) dem:sp.prx stir-TR DO-IMP 1sgGEN  
 ‘stir this food for me’  
 [GJ07/02/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>97</sup> (a) also illustrates the inverse; the future possessive relationship is signaled by the proprietive NP *coffee=aak* ‘coffee-having’.

Meronymic (part-whole) relationships, expressed by genitive case in many of the world's languages, are typically expressed by same-case apposition in Kuuk Thaayorre<sup>98</sup>. This is illustrated by the following example, in which first person possessor of the person part *yuur* 'hand' receives accusative, rather than genitive case:

- (172) *yuur*            *stitch-m*    *rirk-r=anh*  
 hand(ACC)    stitch-TR    DO-P.PFV=1sgACC  
 'they put stitches in my hand'  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Similarly, the relationship between a person and their shadow, voice, name or other index is coded by case agreement. So in (173), the noun phrase *pam nhangkn* 'your husband' is apposed in accusative case to the noun phrase representing his name, *nhamp*:

- (173) *ngay*            *pam nhangkn*            *nhamp*            *ngay*            *pamngongkom*  
 1sg(NOM)    man 2sgPOS(ACC)    name(ACC)    1sg(NOM)    ignorant.of  
 'I've forgotten your husband's name'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

The syntax and semantics of this meronymic apposition is discussed in §6.9.1 (cf. Chappell and McGregor 1996).

Interestingly, the genitive case is only rarely encoded by a dedicated form (notably, by singular personal pronouns). There is a syncretism of genitive and dative case-marking for most nomina, and of genitive and accusative case for nonsingular pronouns.

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<sup>98</sup> This is typical of Australian languages, as discussed in more detail in §6.9.1.

## 4.2.5 Dative

For first declension and irregular nomina (174) the dative case suffix is homophonous with the genitive. For second declension nomina (175) the dative suffix has the form *-Vn* (or *-n* suffixed to the vowel-final ergative stem, cf. §4.2.1). For third declension nomina (176) dative case is signalled by a final vowel (arguably part of the root, cf. §4.2.1).

- (174) *nhul parr\_r waa<wa>ntharr-ø thatr-ak*  
 3sg(NOM) child(NOM) call.out-NPST frog-DAT  
 ‘the boy is calling out to the frog’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

- (175) *pam nhul wanthantharr=okun yik-r paanth-un*  
 man(NOM) 3sg(NOM) how=DUB say-P.PFV woman-DAT  
 ‘the man said something to the woman’  
 [FT10/02/04 RCP Pilot16]

- (176) *ngay ngat-a yan*  
 1sg(NOM) fish-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘I’m going fishing [lit. for fish]’  
 [LN04/08/02 Conversation]

There are additionally a handful of irregular dative forms. The English loan *Cairns*, for instance, forms the irregular dative *Cairnsna* by suffixation of *-na*. The origin of this suffix is unclear. For a number of nouns the dative is formed by the mutation or insertion of the stem-final vowel (e.g. *kumun* ‘thigh(NOM)’ > *kuman* ‘thigh:DAT’; *yencr* ‘raffia(NOM)’ > *yencer* ‘raffia:DAT’).

Functionally, the Thaayorre dative case is very broad, spanning a range of case roles encoded by the allative, locative or other cases in other languages of the world. These roles are the subject of the following subsections.

#### 4.2.5.1 Dative – Recipient

The dative case was originally named for events of giving since it marked the indirect object cum Recipient of these events in Greek and Latin (Blake 1994:144). The two Thaayorre verbs of giving differ in the cases they assign to the Recipient argument. Whilst *reek* ‘give’ subcategorises for a Recipient in accusative case its near-synonym *wan* ‘give, transfer’ subcategorises for a dative Recipient. Both of these verbs are illustrated in (177).

- (177) *pam ii reeka-rr ngul nhul pam thon-thak wani-rr*  
 man(ACC) there give-P.PFV then 3sg(NOM) man one-DAT give-P.PFV  
 ‘[she] gave the man there [a book], then he gave [it] to this other man’  
 [FT10/02/04 RCP Pilot5]

The target of communicative acts (e.g. *paanthun* ‘to the woman’ in [175] above, and *ngathun* ‘to me’ in [178] below) may also be considered Recipients of a sort.

- (178) *nhunt ngathun paac-r?*  
 2sg(NOM) 1sgDAT growl-NPST  
 ‘are you growling at [scolding] me?’  
 [LN14/08/02 Elicitation]

#### 4.2.5.2 Dative – Affected party

It is cross-linguistically common for the marking of Recipients and of Beneficiaries to overlap, due to the fact that the Recipients of material goods most usually benefit from the transfer and conversely most beneficiaries come into possession of some item. This can be seen in (179), in which the *pama* ‘men:DAT’ are expected to benefit from the wallaby’s roasting by later receiving it:

- (179) *minh ngaak-r ngan yap-arr pam-a ngith*  
 MEAT(ACC) roast-P.PFV REL e.sister-ERG man-DAT dem:dist  
 ‘big sister roasted the wallaby for those men’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 10]

Similarly, the Beneficiary of (180) benefits through their later possession of the clean clothes (hence the alternative encoding of beneficiaries in genitive case, e.g. [170] above):

- (180) *nhunt rirrkir ko'o-nhan ngathun*  
 2sg(ERG) clean spear-GO&:NPST 1sgDAT  
 'you wash those things clean for me!'  
 [Hall 1972:132]

Beneficiaries may be dative-marked without any implication of future possession or receivership, however. In example (181), for instance, a man indirectly suggests that his poison cousin move off the path she is travelling along so that he can pass her without violating taboo. There is clearly no implicit transfer in such clauses.

- (181) *ngathun kulam ak thak-r, ngay ulp yan yuurra*  
 1sgDAT road(ACC) JUSS leave-NPST 1sg(NOM) dem:adr.prx go:NPST to.far  
 'would that the road be left for me, I'm going far off that way'  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The dative-marked participant might also be adversely affected by the event (i.e. having the role of 'Maleficiary'). Hence in (182), the father is affected by the woomera's loss through being its (former) possessor. In (183), the speaker is affected by the fish's not biting because she had been hoping to catch them:

- (182) *thul nganip-n yuuw kerp-r*  
 woomera(NOM) father-DAT far disappear-P.PFV  
 'Dad's woomera got lost far away'  
 [Hall 1972:109]

- (183) *ngay ngat-a yan, ngat ngathun kaar paath-r*  
 1sg(NOM) fish-DAT go:NPST fish(NOM) 1sgDAT NEG bite-NPST  
 'I go fishing, but the fish don't bite for me'  
 "I go fishing but I don't catch any fish, nothing"  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

For this reason, I use the more general characterisation ‘dative of affected party’ rather than ‘dative of beneficiary’.

#### 4.2.5.3 *Dative – Goal*

The dative case encodes all kinds of Goals. Perhaps most basic amongst these is the endpoint of a translocation event:

- (184) *ngay ii-rr-kan Kowanyama-ngak yat school-ak*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-above Kowanyama-DAT go:P.PFV school-DAT  
 ‘I went to Kowanyama for school’  
 [ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

- (185) *kar ngancngun theerk-nhan, family-ak*  
 like 1pl:exclDAT return-GO&:NPST family-DAT  
 ‘she’s going to return to us, her family’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The translocation may end in a simple locative relationship (as in [184], where the speaker ended up being located in Kowanyama), or in a relationship of general proximity (as in [185]), or in a relationship of containment, as in (186):

- (186) *bin-ak kaar roka-ni-rr*  
 bin-DAT NEG enter-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘I never put’m [beer cans] in the bin’  
 [AP8/10/02 Conversation]

In other cases, the Goal may not be the final endpoint of the motion, but it is still a Goal in the sense of being the target the event is directed towards. This is true of *pama* ‘for/up to the man’ in the following example:

- (187) *minh ulp ranci-rr pam-a, punth patha-rr*  
MEAT dem:adr.prx jump-P.PFV man-DAT arm(ACC) bite-P.PFV  
‘that crocodile jumped for the man and bit him on the arm’  
[GJ03/02/04 Conversation/Narrative DarwinTrip]

#### 4.2.5.4 Dative – Location

The functional range of the Thaayorre dative case spans what would usually be considered the domain of a locative case; i.e. where a figure is either temporarily situated (188) or habitually located (188):

- (188) *kumun-ak rii<ri>tp-m*  
thigh-DAT separate.fibres-P.IPFV  
‘she was splitting [the cabbage palm raffia] on her thigh’  
[ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

- (189) *nhul ii-ø-kaw wun H.A.C.C.-ak*  
3sg(NOM) there-at-east live:NPST H.A.C.C.-DAT  
‘she lives over there in the east, at the H.A.C.C.’<sup>99</sup>  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

Where a theme is saliently located on or in an Instrument that impacts upon it, this Instrument may receive dative case-marking, rather than the expected ergative marking:

- (190) *ngok kaalkurrc-ak kuungk-r*  
water cold-DAT wet-NPST  
‘[and then you] wet [the raffia] with cold water’  
[ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

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<sup>99</sup> HACC is an acronym for the ‘Housing and Community Care’ aged accommodation.



(191) *yuk yenhyorr-ak ko'om, kornkon*  
stick yenhyorr-DAT knit:P.IPFV dilly.bag(ACC)  
'then [she] knit the dilly bag with knitting sticks'  
[ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

(192) *ngul ngancn irra dinghy-ak yat*  
then 1sg:excl(NOM) to.there dinghy-DAT go:P.PFV  
'then we went there by dinghy'  
[AJ9/10/02 Conversation]

The dative morpheme in such cases does not mark the instrumental relation per se, but rather the contact between the Instrument and theme (similar to the locative usage noted above). Reflecting this, (190) could be re-translated as 'wet [the raffia] in cold water', (191) as 'then [she] knit the dillybag on knitting sticks', and (192) as 'we went there in a dinghy'.

#### 4.2.5.5 Dative – Approaching path

As well as marking static Locations and the endpoints of trajectories, the dative case may encode the path of a trajectory towards an (implicit) Goal, as seen in the following example:

(193) *raak-un yan warrath-n, yak pil-wacirr!*  
ground- DAT go:NPST grass-DAT snake hip-carefully  
'you walk through the grass [to get pandanus], but watch out for snakes!'  
[GJ06/06/05 Elicitation]

#### 4.2.5.6 Dative – Duration

In keeping with the TIME IS SPACE metaphor that pervades Thaayorre grammar and lexicon<sup>100</sup>, the dative morpheme extends from marking a spatial passage (as in [193]) to marking a passage of time; i.e. the time period through which an event endures. In (194), for instance, the period *awa* ‘an hour’ is encoded as the duration of the communication event:

- (194) *hour-ak yik-m pul yak-am*  
 hour-DAT say-P.IPFV 3du(NOM) snake-ABL  
 ‘they two talked for an hour about the snake’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

#### 4.2.5.7 Dative – Purpose

Like the polysemous English noun *goal*, the Thaayorre dative case encodes both the endpoint of a trajectory and the motivation or expected reward for some activity. Thus in (195), the wallabies the men hope to catch are coded dative:

- (195) *pam peln ii kana yan minh-a, minh kothon-ak*  
 man(NOM) 3pl(NOM) there about.to go:NPST MEAT-DAT MEAT wallaby-DAT  
 ‘those men are hunting wallaby’  
 [AC10/08/02 Elicitation]

Similarly, in (196) the fiscal incentive for the selling activity is marked by dative case:

- (196) *raak.rirkr-ak sell-m rirk-ø*  
 money-DAT sell-TR DO-NPST  
 ‘[they] sell [it] for money’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

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<sup>100</sup> As exemplified by the polysemous generic noun *raak* ‘place, ground, earth, time’, which quite literally reveals the cultural conceptualisation that TIME IS SPACE.

It is interesting, though not cross-linguistically unusual, that a single case category can encode both beneficiaries and the benefit itself. The dative-coded Purpose motivating an event need not relate directly to material benefit, however. In (197), for example, *Jesusak* ‘for Jesus’ represents an inspiration, rather than a potential reward:

- (197) *ngancn wuuc=yuk thowol-nam ulp nhangun Jesus-ak*  
 1sg(NOM) dance=STUFF perform-P.IPFV dem:adr.prx 3sgDAT Jesus-DAT  
 ‘we were doing those dances and things for Jesus [at Christmas]’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative/Conversation Christmas]

The dative case is also strongly associated with learning, with the body of knowledge being acquired marked as the Goal of the learning event:

- (198) *nhul learn-m rirk-m wang ulp kornkon-ak*  
 3sg(NOM) learn-VBLZ do-P.IPFV whitefella(NOM) dem:adr.prx dillybag-DAT  
 ‘that white woman was learning [how to make] dillybags’  
 [ME04/06/02 Narrative Yencr]

#### 4.2.5.8 Dative – Stimulus

Closely related to the usage of dative case to mark Goals, is its use to mark the Stimulus/target of sensory activities. Hence the dative case is used to encode the thing seen in (199), and the thing heard in (200):

- (199) *kaapac-ak nhaath-m ngancn*  
 cloud-DAT look.at-P.IPFV 1pl:excl(NOM)  
 ‘we were staring at the clouds’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

- (200) *nhunt wuump news-ak ngeey-r?*  
2sg(NOM) CONTR news-DAT listen.to-P.PFV  
'did you listen to the news?'  
[GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

For both *nhaa*- 'look at, see' and *ngeey*- 'listen to, hear', the nominative-dative case frame alternates with an ergative-accusative case frame (see §9.1.3).

#### 4.2.5.9 Dative – Experiencer

The Experiencer of a Stimulus or sensation is sometimes dative-marked, showing again the use of dative case to mark both elements in an inverse relationship (in this case, Stimulus and Experiencer):

- (201) *aa, kul.paath=pa pam-a ith paapath wun!*  
yes sweet(NOM)=PRAG man-DAT dem:dist hot lie:NPST  
'yes, [water] is sweet to someone who is hot!'  
[Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

The dative pronoun *ngathun* 'to me' in (202) can be interpreted either as a Goal or as an Experiencer:

- (202) *may coconut ngathun wont-r*  
VEG coconut(NOM) 1sgDAT fall-P.PFV  
'that coconut fell on me'  
or: 'that coconut fell (and I was watching)'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

I have not been able to construct any grammatical elicitation sentences that include both a dative-marked Experiencer and a dative-marked Stimulus. It seems that the dative-marking of stimuli can only be assigned by the predicate, whereas dative Experiencers may more readily be incorporated into a clause as an adjunct.

**4.2.5.10 Dative – Accompaniment**

Although Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a dedicated comitative morpheme (*-kak*; see §4.2.9), the dative case is also sometimes used to comitative effect, as seen in the third line of the following example:

(203)

1. *ngay parr\_r mant yancm*  
 1sg(NOM) child small(NOM) go:P.IPFV  
 ‘when I was a boy’
  
2. *ngay nganam wak-m, kanangkarr*  
 1sg(ERG) mother(ACC) follow-P.IPFV long.ago  
 ‘I would follow my mother [here], long ago’
  
3. *ngay nganip-an yan*  
 1sg(NOM) father-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘or I’d come with my father’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

Dative-marking is the only comitative strategy for personal (204) and possessive (205) pronouns, neither of which may host the comitative suffix *-kak*:

(204) *nhunt ngathun wiitl Cairnsna*  
 2sg(NOM) 1sgDAT in.company Cairns-DAT  
 ‘you’ll accompany me to Cairns [won’t you?]  
 [LN27/01/04 Conversation]

(205) *nhul pam nhangn-mak*  
 3sg(NOM) man 3sgPOS-DAT  
 ‘she’s with her husband’  
 [LN27/01/04 Conversation]

### 4.2.6 Ablative

The ablative case suffix has the allomorphs  $-(n)tam \sim -ma(m) \sim -Vm^{101}$ . Correspondence between the form of the nomen stem and the ablative allomorph selected is not absolute. For instance, the noun *nganam* ‘mother’ takes the *-tam* allomorph, while the phonetically similar *pam* ‘man’ takes *-am*. Nor does the ergative form of the nomen help predict which ablative allomorph will be selected. So, for instance, both *kumun* and *ngamal* take the ergative allomorph *-thurr*, but the ablative form of the former is *kumun-mam*, and of the latter, *ngamal-tam*. Further, some nomina may be paired with multiple ablative allomorphs, even by the same speaker (e.g. *yak* ‘snake’ may take either *-ntam* or *-am*). Yet the nomen *thuuuc* ‘scrub’ which takes the same ergative allomorph as *yak* ‘snake’ (viz. *thuuuca* ‘scrub:ERG’ and *yaka* ‘snake:ERG’) takes a third ablative allomorph; *thuuuc-mam* ‘scrub-ABL’. This remains a topic for further investigation.

Exceptionally, the ablative morpheme may also be suffixed to adverbs (206-207), even though case inflection is generally restricted to nominals:

- (206) *pul inh kanpa-tam*  
 3du(NOM) dem:sp.prx before-ABL  
 ‘they two are from before [i.e. were born before I was]’  
 [GJ09/10/02 Conversation]

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<sup>101</sup> The vowel of this final ablative allomorph is determined by the thematic vowel of the nominal stem (cf. §4.2.1). Representing this allomorph as  $-Vm$  is in fact a simplification of the more likely case that this suffix has the form  $-m$ , but attaches to the allomorph of the nominal stem that includes the final thematic vowel. It is no coincidence that this nominal stem + thematic vowel, to which ablative  $-m$  attaches, in all cases corresponds to the ergative-inflected stem form which is argued to have originally been the uninflected, unreduced nominal root (cf. §4.2.1). This latter analysis is strengthened by the fact that ablative  $-m$  attaches to the ergative form of some nouns even where this differs from the simple addition of a thematic vowel (e.g. *kuta-kum* ‘dog-abl’ < *kuta-ku* ‘dog-ERG’).

- (207) *ball werngka-ntam kerp-r ngul koorr yomparru-rr*  
ball(NOM) middle-ABL disappear-P.PFV then outside appear-P.PFV  
'the ball disappeared from the middle [of the ring] and then reappeared  
outside'  
[GJ20/11/02 Elicitation MoverbEnterExit8]

The ablative case, like the dative, spans numerous thematic roles which will be outlined in the following subsections.

#### 4.2.6.1 Ablative – Source

Ablative case-marking is used to encode Sources of several kinds. First of these is a spatial Source; the point of origin for a figure that undergoes translocation:

- (208) *peln Ngumpurr.Nhiinhin-tam theerk-ø*  
3pl(NOM) Ngumpurr.Nhiinhin-ABL return-NPST  
'they must be coming from Ngumpurr Nhiinhin (place name)'  
[GJ07/02/04 Conversation / Elicitation]

- (209) *parr\_r kumun-mam wont-r paanth-um*  
child lap-ABL fall-P.PFV woman-ABL  
'the child fell from the woman's lap'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

In examples like (210), the ablative noun phrase represents not just a Source location, but also a prior possessor:

- (210) *kuta-ku may pam-am pirra-r*  
dog-ERG VEG man-ABL snatch-P.PFV  
"dog took food from man"  
[GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

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In other cases, the ablative noun phrase represents a place of origin which is specified for identificational purposes rather than to describe motion extending outwards from it:

- (211) *pam friend ngathn pam iipal England-tam yat*  
man friend 1sgPOS(NOM) man from.there England-ABL go:P.PFV  
'my friend [in Melbourne] comes from England'  
[GJ16/10/02 MelbourneTrip Narrative]

- (212) *only Kowanyama-ntam thaangk-m peln*  
only Kowanyama-ABL climb-P.IPFV 3pl(NOM)  
'(nobody from Pormpuraaw competed in the rodeo) only people from  
Kowanyama rode'  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The Source encoded in ablative case may represent a temporal origin:

- (213) *kanangkarr-ntam*  
long.ago-ABL  
'[this dress is] old'  
[MF10/01/04]

- (214) *pul inh kanpa-tam, ngay parr\_r nhulam*  
3du(NOM) dem:sp.prx before-ABL 1sg(NOM) child youngest.offspring  
'[my two siblings] are from before [me], I am the youngest child'  
[GJ26/11/02 Conversation]

The final kind of Source encoded by the Thaayorre ablative case represents the origin of information or knowledge:

- (215) *ngul ngancn book-tam ulp thil kaalathi-rr*  
then 1pl(ERG) book-ABL dem:adr.prx recently learn-P.PFV  
'we learned [about the plane we had seen] from a book'  
[GJ15/10/02 PlaneSighting Narrative]



- (216) *may inh            wang-am thil        thongk-nhat*  
 VEG dem:sp.prx white-ABL recently arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
 “whitefella food come lately”  
 [IC26/11/02 Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

#### 4.2.6.2 Ablative – Departing path

As well as marking the point of origin from which a trajectory extends, the ablative case may be used to mark intermediate locations within a larger motion event that extends outwards from the deictic centre (or alternative reference point):

- (217) *peln            Musgrave-ma    yat*  
 3pl(NOM) Musgrave-ABL go:P.PFV  
 ‘they went through Musgrave (en route from Pormpuraaw to Cairns)’  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation DahlTMA]

- (218) *paanth            window-ntam    thaa<tha>ngk-r*  
 woman(NOM) window-ABL climb<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the woman climbs [out] through the window’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents107]

Example (218) was uttered in the description of a video clip shot from within a room, with the woman climbing through the window to the outside. The inverse video clip (219), in which the woman climbs from the outside into the room (with the video camera still located within the room), was described with dative case marking on the ground NP.

- (219) *paanth            window-ak        thaa<tha>ngk-r*  
 woman(NOM) window-DAT climb<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the woman climbs [in] through the window’  
 [GJ19/10/02 StagedEvents146]

As well as marking intermediate points along a trajectory, the ablative case may be used to mark the scope or domain of the trajectory as a whole. This is particularly common in descriptions of particularly lengthy or extensive travels, such as the following:

(220)

1. *parr\_r*      *all over the Queensland-tam* *yat*:  
 child(NOM) all over the Queensland-ABL go:P.PFV

*Aurakun, Lockhart, Weipa, Bamaga, Torres Strait, Yarrabah, Kowanyama, Normanton, Mornington Island,*

‘we children went all over Queensland: to Aurakun, Lockhart, Weipa, Bamaga, Torres Strait, Yarrabah, Kowanyama, Normanton, Mornington Island.

2. *parr\_r*      *everywhere-ntam* *yat*      *ngancn*      *parr\_r mant*.  
 child(NOM) everywhere-ABL go:P.PFV 1pl:excl(NOM) child small

‘We children went everywhere.’

[GJ16/10/02 Narrative]

In all such cases, the ablative-marked domain of travel (e.g. *Queenslandntam*) actually stands for a series of intermediate points along the trajectory that are subsequently enumerated.

It was noted under §4.4.5 above that a static relationship between a figure and ground is usually expressed by the dative marking of the ground NP. However, a handful of examples exist where the ground object is Ablative-marked:

- (221) *kutpol*      *chair* *pal-ø-kop-mam*      *wun*

football(NOM) chair near-at-under-ABL lie:NPST

‘the ball is near the below-part of the chair [i.e.the ball is nearly under the chair]’

[GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed16]

This may reflect the speaker's recasting the static picture in terms of a larger (imagined) event, in which the chair represents a point along the ball's trajectory rather than its final resting place.

#### 4.2.6.3 Ablative – Stimulus/Cause

Closely related to the 'Source' usage of the ablative case, is its use to mark a Stimulus (e.g. of fear in [222]) or other external trigger or Cause of an event (223-154).

(222) *wang-tam ulp                    nhunt        weneth    miinng-r*  
white-ABL dem:adr.prx 2sg(NOM) scared    take.fright-NPST  
'you are scared of ghosts'  
[AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

(223) *kaal    kam-kak        pam    waal-am*  
ear    blood-COM    man    silly-ABL  
'his ear was bleeding after meeting up with the mad man'  
[Foote and Hall: Primer 7]

(154') *Trouble=okun    yan        yup    paanth-um    inh'nheman*  
trouble=DUB    go:NPST soon    woman-ABL this.one:ABL  
'I might get into trouble from [because of] this woman'  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

In (154), ablative case marks the woman as the ultimate Cause of the trouble the speaker fears may befall him. In (224), the origin of the old lady's name is similarly traced back to the tribal elders.

(224) *nhamp        pam ngamal-tam,    pam ngotan-tam    ngumpurr        Paanthepr*  
name(NOM) man large-ABL    man black-ABL    old.lady(NOM) Paanthepr  
'the old lady's name, Paanthepr, [was given to her by] the tribal elders'  
[IC26/11/02 Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

#### 6.1.6.4 Ablative – Attribution

The ablative of attribution is related to the ‘Source’ uses of ablative case described above. Once again, the ablative-marked entity is depicted as the ultimate origin of some other entity (‘X’), but in the attributive case the identity of X is defined by the identity of its origin. In the following example, for instance, the *kirkmuk* ‘black snake’ is definitional of the black snake story under discussion, through being its totemic originator:

- (225) *ngay story=nhurr wuump wal.meerem... kirkmuk-ntam*  
 1sg(ERG) story(ACC)=ONLY CONTR remember black.snake-ABL  
 ‘I only remember the story [not the song] of the black snake’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

In some other languages, analogous relationships are coded by the same grammatical means as are used to mark inalienable possession (cf. Chappell and McGregor 1996). Indeed, the English translation of (225) employs the possessive construction ‘the story of the black snake’.

#### 4.2.6.5 Ablative – Conversation topic

The ablative case may encode a topic of discussion, or of other events of communication or cogitation:

- (194) *hour-ak yik-m pul yak-am*  
 hour-DAT say-P.IPFV 3du(NOM) snake-ABL  
 ‘they two talked for an hour about the snake’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

This ablative function is related to the Stimulus/Cause usage noted above since the snake in (194) may be considered to stimulate or inspire the conversation much as the dog in (226) inspires the worry felt by the child:

- (226) *parr\_r nhul kuta-kum worry rirk-ø*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) dog-ABL work DO-NPST  
 ‘the child is worried about the dog’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

#### 4.2.6.6 Ablative – Means

The ablative case may be used to encode a Means by which the subject participant is able to do something (e.g. travel large distances in [227]), but over which the subject does not exercise direct control (unlike an ergative-marked Instrument).

- (227) *bush pilot-tam ulp ngay yat*  
 bush pilot-ABL dem:adr.prx 1sg(NOM) go:P.PFV  
 ‘I went by that bush pilot [light aircraft]’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

#### 4.2.6.7 Ablative – Portmanteau case

There are a number of clauses in which the ablative morpheme is attached to a noun referring to the possessor of an entity encoded as the head of a noun phrase, where the possessum (and thus the NP as a whole) has a clausal function usually signalled by overt case-marking. In (228), for example, the referent of the head noun of the initial phrase, *kuta* ‘dog’ has the grammatical function of transitive subject.

- (228) [*kuta Dan*]-*tam ii kuta thok waa<wa>rin-r*  
 [dog Dan]-ABL there PET cat(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘Dan’s dog is chasing the cat there’  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

This function of the ablative morpheme is born out of the restriction of one-case-per-nomen; that any single nomen may bear at most a single case inflection. To see how

this operates, consider (229) and (230), both of which express a simple possessive relationship:

(229) *kuta Dan-ak*  
dog Dan-GEN  
'Dan's dog'

(230) *kuta ngathn*  
dog 1sgPOS  
'my dog'

In both (229) and (230), an unmarked nomen representing the possessum is followed by a nomen representing the possessor; in (229) this is a genitive-case noun, in (230) a possessive pronoun. Because the possessive pronoun does not bear a genitive case suffix as such it is eligible for case inflection where this is demanded by the role of the possessive phrase in the larger clause (cf. §5.1.2):

(231) [*kuta ngathn*]-*thurr piinth mungk-m*  
[dog 1sgPOS]-ERG bone(ACC) eat-P.IPFV  
'my dog is chewing a bone'  
[LN4/8/02 Elicitation]

However, unlike many Australian languages (Dench and Evans 1988), Kuuk Thaayorre does not allow the concatenation of multiple case markers upon a single host nomen. Accordingly, where the possessive pronoun of (231) is replaced by a genitive-marked possessive nomen, it is ungrammatical to add a further, ergative, case-suffix:

(232) *\*[kuta Dan-ak]-thurr piinth mungk-m*  
[dog Dan-GEN]-ERG bone(ACC) eat-P.IPFV  
'Dan's dog is chewing a bone'

Instead, the sequence of genitive + ergative case marking is replaced by the ablative suffix:

- (228') *[kuta Dan]-tam ii kuta thok waa<wa>rin-r*  
 [dog Dan]-ABL there PET cat(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 'Dan's dog is chasing the cat there'  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

- (233) *ith iiparr [television Molly]-ntam*  
 DEM:DIST there-at-south [television Molly]-ABL  
  
*nhul kaar show.off rirk-ø ulp yokunman yuk.ngat, pokon*  
 3sg(ERG)NEG show DO-NPST dem:adr.prx same.way cyclone(ACC) NO  
 'that television of Molly's doesn't show [news about] the cyclone either'  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The bracketing in (228) and (233) reflects the fact that the possessum + possessor, which always appear in a fixed order, form a phrase together, the head of which is the possession (*kuta* 'dog' in [228] and *television* in [233]). The ablative morpheme in such clauses has two functions, one adnominal function within the possessive phrase and one relational function phrase-externally. The first is simply to mark the possessive relationship between the ablative-marked possessor and the unmarked possessum it follows (a function elsewhere fulfilled by the genitive case). The second function of the ablative case here is to signal the grammatical function of the possessive noun phrase as a whole; i.e. the fact that *kuta Dantam* 'dan's dog' has the function of transitive subject in (228). If the possessor were simply genitive-marked, there would be no indication that the possessive phrase functions as transitive subject. This use of a single case marker to represent two distinct roles (one within the phrase, one within the clause) is an example of what Dench and Evans (1988:42) label a 'case portmanteau'<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> As Dench and Evans (1988:42) note, portmanteaux case suffixes are extremely rare cross-linguistically.

An association between ablative case and the grammatical function of transitive subject is also attested in other Australian languages. In Jaminjung, for instance, ergative case-marking of transitive subjects alternates with ablative case-marking depending on the ease with which the addressee is expected to retrieve the intended referent (Schultze-Berndt 2000). As alluded to above, however, the portmanteau use of the Thaayorre ablative case is not restricted to the genitive + ergative combination. Rather, it can express the combination of (adnominal) genitive case with any other (relational) case. In (234), for example, the relational case assigned to *kuta Dantam* ‘Dan’s dog’ is dative. This is made explicit in the paraphrase (b), in which the possessor is preposed to the possessum head and marked by the loan English possessive morpheme *'s*, leaving the final constituent of the NP *Dan’s dog* free to bare the dative case suffix.

(234a) *ngay yuk thongkn reeka-rr, [kuta {Dan}-tam]*  
 1sg(ERG) TREE piece(ACC) give-P.PFV [dog {Dan}-ABL]  
 ‘I gave a stick to Dan’s dog.’

(b) *ngay yuk thongkn reeka-rr, [Dan’s dog]-ak*  
 1sg(ERG) TREE piece(ACC) give-P.PFV [Dan’s dog]-DAT  
 ‘I gave a stick to Dan’s dog.’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation]

#### 4.2.7 Proprietary =*aak*, =*kaak*

The proprietary enclitics (=aak and =kaak) are used to express the fact that some other element (the possessor) possesses or has the NP to which =aak is attached (the possessum). Hence in (235), the proprietary marks *koow thorkorr* ‘long nose’ as possessed by *minh pink* ‘bandicoot’:

(235) *minh pink nhul koow thorkorr=kaak*  
 MEAT bandicoot(NOM) 3sg(NOM) nose long=REL.PROP  
 ‘the bandicoot has a long nose’  
 [Hall 1972:77]



The proprietive enclitics possess no phonologically- or lexically-conditioned allomorphs, though it is similar to the comitative suffix *-kak* in both form and function (cf. §4.2.9). Unlike other Thaayorre case morphemes, the proprietive morpheme (and the privative below) formally distinguishes adnominal and relational functions. So where the proprietive-marked NP functions as clausal predicate (e.g. in [236]), this signalled by the use of the *=kaak* form. However, where the proprietive-marked NP functions adnominally, the *=aak* form is used:

- (236) *jet ulp ngancn first.time nhaath-nhat kun thomp=aak*  
 jet(ACC) dem:adr.prx 1pl:excl(ERG) first.time see-GO&:P.PFV bum smoke=REL.PROP  
 ‘it was the first time we had seen a jet with smoke coming out behind it’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

The contrast between adnominal and relational functions corresponds to a contrast in emphasis (cf.). The use of the adnominal proprietive form places the emphasis on the head nominal (i.e. *pam* ‘man’ in [237]), while the use of the relational proprietive places the emphasis on the proprietive relationship itself (as in [238]):

- (237) *pam paanth=aak*  
 man woman=ADN.PROP  
 ‘a married man’

- (238) *nhul pam=kaak*  
 3sg(NOM) man=REL.PROP  
 ‘she has a husband’

My present corpus does not contain examples of both relational and adnominal uses of every case morpheme. However, where both uses are attested with other cases, they are never formally distinguished other than for the proprietive and privative (and perhaps the comitative – cf. §4.2.9). Thus the one ablative suffix may be used both relationally (212) and adnominally (208):

(212') *only Kowanyama-ntam thaangk-m peln*  
only Kowanyama-ABL climb-P.IPFV 3pl(NOM)  
'only people from Kowanyama rode'  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(208') *peln Ngumpurr Nhiinhin-tam therk-ø*  
3pl(NOM) Ngumpurr Nhiinhin-ABL return-NPST  
'they must be coming from Ngumpurr Nhiinhin (place name)'  
[GJ07/02/04 Elicitation]

This formal distinction between relational and adnominal uses appears cross-linguistically uncommon, though it may find analogues in, e.g., the 'predicative' and 'attributive' forms of Russian adjectives (cf. Timberlake 1993, Corbett 1995).

The fact that the proprietive morpheme is an enclitic, rather than a suffix, is suggested by the fact that it may follow the dubitative enclitic =*okun* (cf. §11.3.5):

(239) *nhul paanth yiirram=okun=kaak*  
3sg(NOM) woman other=DUB=REL.PROP  
'he might have another woman'  
[Anon.]

It may in fact be preferable to analyse the proprietive — and privative — morphemes as postpositions that happen to encliticise to their complement NPs.

Despite functional similarities to the 'having' affixes discussed in Dixon (ed., 1976), there does not seem to be any formal similarity between =(k)aak and the proprietive morphemes of fifty languages surveyed by Sutton (1976b).

#### 4.2.8 Privative =*aar*, =*kaar*

The PRIVative enclitics express the converse of the propriative: lack. They attach to an NP that is lacked by another element, optionally encoded as part of a dependent-marked, privative NP:

- (240) *pam paanth=aar*  
 man woman=ADN.PRIV  
 ‘a single man’

Note that the head NP being modified by the privative-marked NP (i.e. the non-possessor) may be omitted:

- (241) *minh.punth=aar*  
 wing=ADN.PRIV  
 ‘wingless (bird)’

Again, there is a formal alternation between =*aar* and =*kaar* that reflects a functional alternation between the relational privative usage (242) and the adnominal (241).

- (242) *nhul paanth=kaar*  
 3sg(NOM) woman=REL.PRIV  
 ‘he has no wife’

It may be significant that the relational privative form (=ka*ar*) so closely resembles the negative particle *kaar*. The semantic and pragmatic differences between these two morphemes (and between the privative enclitic and alternative negating strategies) are explored under §10.3.2. It may further be significant that the difference between relational and adnominal forms of both the propriative and privative morphemes hinges upon the initial segment, /k/ (always realised as [ɣ]). It may be possible to further segment these two enclitics, analysing the initial *k-* as a ‘relationalising’ prefix that transforms the propriative and privative enclitics (=a*ak* and =a*ar* respectively) from markers of adnominal case to markers of relational case.

### 4.2.9 Comitative suffix *-kak*

The comitative suffix<sup>103</sup> marks a NP whose referent is with (either accompanying or in spatial proximity to) another referent:

- (243) *Bill            minh   way-a-th                    kay-kak   ya<a>n*  
 Bill(NOM) MEAT   cuckoo.shrike-DAT-FOC gun-COM   go<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘Bill has gone off after a cuckoo-shrike with his gun’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 7]

- (244) *yal        pip-kak*  
 creek   mud-COM  
 ‘the creek is muddy’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 7]

It was noted in §4.2.5 that the dative case (the most common allomorph of which is *-ak*) may in some cases mark ‘accompaniment’, as well as ‘locative’ spatial proximity. This functional similarity between the dative and comitative cases is matched by their formal similarity, the two differing only in the initial segment (*/k/*) of the comitative suffix. As noted in §4.2.8, the same initial segment determines whether the proprietive and privative enclitics function relationally or adnominally. We might, therefore, expect this to be mirrored in a similar alternation between the dative and comitative suffixes, with the former functioning only adnominally and the latter only relationally. This is not born out by my data, however, and is additionally problematised by the fact that the dative morpheme has other allomorphs formally unrelated to *-(k)ak*. Rather, the two cases appear to differ in the fact that the comitative tends to mark the figure, while the dative marks the ground or reference point (as might be expected, given that it is also encoding the locative relation)<sup>104</sup>:

<sup>103</sup> At this stage, I have no solid evidence upon which to conclude that *-kak* is either a suffix or an enclitic. Pending evidence to the contrary, I shall assume that it is a suffix.

<sup>104</sup> The alternation between (245) and (246) was elicited by a set of video stimuli, and is motivated by the extremely strong preference in Kuuk Thaayorre for a moving or most prominent entity to be represented as subject or unmarked topic.

(245) *may orange kirk-kak*  
 VEG orange(NOM) spear-COM  
 ‘the orange [moves so that it] has the spear [inside it]’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation FigureGround19]

(246) *kirk may orange-ak rok-r*  
 spear(NOM) VEG orange-DAT enter-NPST  
 ‘the spear enters the orange’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation FigureGround19]

We might alternatively compare *-kak* with the proprietive enclitic *=kaak*. The formal resemblance between the two (which differ only in the length of the vowel and the optionality of the onset), is matched by a semantic connection. As Smith and Johnson (2000:394) point out: “the comitative signals the inverse of the possessive, i.e. that the comitative NP accompanies or is possessed by another N or NP”. Unlike Kugu Nghanhcara, Kuuk Thaayorre divides this inverse territory into the comitative category (which expresses only accompaniment) and the proprietive category (which expresses only possession). Nevertheless, the two domains are subtly associated in the case system since the most widespread allomorph of the dative morpheme (which encodes accompaniment, a Location, etc.) is homophonous with the genitive case suffix *-ak* (which encodes possession):

(247) *yuk church-ak than<an>*  
 tree(NOM) church-DAT stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the tree is next to the church’  
 [EC02/10/02 Elicitation BowPed49]

(248) *yuk waarr.min school-ak*  
 thing object school-GEN  
 ‘things belonging to the school’  
 [LN27/01/04 Elicitation]

*Incipient dyadic uses of comitative NPs*

Dyadic forms (first labelled as such by Merlan and Heath 1982) express a relationship between two or more people. This relationship is usually one of kinship, with the dyadic term or construction making reference to ‘two people, such that one calls the other K’ (following Evans 2006). In Kuuk Thaayorre, this kind of dyadic interpretation is available to some comitative-marked nomina. Hence the comitative NP in (249) invokes both father and child and the relationship that obtains between them:

- (249) *nhangnip-kak yan*  
 father-COM go:NPST  
 ‘father and child going along’  
 [GJ28/10/02 Elicitation]

Although the kin term *nhangnip* ‘father’ only refers to one of the participants involved in the event, it seems that the comitative case-marking here creates a classic dyadic expression with the meaning ‘two people, such that one calls the other *nhangnip* ‘father’’. Similarly, the inclusory construction (§6.7.2) *pam-kak...pul* ‘they two [including] the man/husband’ in (250) is used not only to make reference to the two people involved in the event, but also to comment on the relationship that obtains between them (i.e. that one is man/husband to the other):

- (250) *pam-kak ii yan pul...*  
 man-COM there go:NPST 3du(NOM)  
  
*pul ii yan, kuthirr pam-kak*  
 3du(NOM) there go:NPST two man-COM  
 “there go that husband and wife”  
 [AC12/09/02 Conversation]

Note that the final clause of example (250) makes explicit the fact that the total number of participants in the event is two (as opposed to the two people encoded by the dual pronoun plus the comitative-marked man). Similar extensions of comitative,

propriative and related morphology are attested in a range of other Australian languages (cf. Breen 1976, Merlan and Heath 1982, Evans 2003b)

In all the spontaneous examples of my corpus, it is the elder relative who is named by the comitative-marked nomen. When I prompted consultants with examples formed from the term for a younger relative, asking for an English translation, I received a variety of dyadic (251) and non-dyadic (252) responses:

(251) *pumun-kak pul wakrr-nham*  
 yBro-COM 2du(NOM) fight-IMPF  
 “two brothers fighting”  
 [GJ06/12/02 Elicitation]

(252) *parr\_r-kak nhip yarr!*  
 child-COM 2du(NOM) go:IMP  
 “you and the kids go!” (rather than ‘you go with your son/daughter’)  
 [GJ06/12/02 Elicitation]

The fact that *parr\_rkak* ‘with the child(ren)’ is not included in the scope of the dual pronoun *nhip* ‘you two’ (as it would be in a dyadic construal) was made clear by my consultant, who said (252) could be uttered of a group of children with an adult.

## 4.3 Nomen derivation

### 4.3.1 Reduplication

Unlike with verbs (§7.2.4), nomen reduplication does not produce a regular and predictable semantico-functional effect. With a handful of adjectives, reduplication has an intensifying or pluralising effect:

(253) *yiirram* ‘other’                      *yiirryirram* ‘some(pl), several’  
*kump* ‘deep’                                *kumpumpum* ‘really deep’ (Hall 1972:92)

There is also evidence of reduplication having been a derivational process at some earlier stage. For example, the specific noun *mantmant* ‘(small) bird’<sup>105</sup> apparently derives from a reduplication of the adjective *mant* ‘small’. Conversely, the adjectives *paapath* ‘hot’ and *kamkamu* ‘red’ apparently derive from the reduplication of the nouns *paath* ‘fire’ and *kam(-u)* ‘blood(-ERG)’ respectively. The semantics of these three couplets are clearly connected, though the semantic effects of reduplication appear to be neither predictable nor productive. I therefore do not consider reduplication a derivational process for nomina synchronically, but rather an etymological relic.

### 4.3.2 Compounding

Nomen compounding is widespread in Kuuk Thaayorre, with a comparatively large proportion of nomen stems being polymorphemic. The vast majority of these compounds involve a person part term as (usually) their first element, the second element being either a noun (254) or adjective (255), or in some cases even a verb (256):

(254) *kun-yangkar*  
bum-calf  
‘sibling’

(255) *thaa-porpr*  
mouth-soft  
‘kind’

(256) *kul-path*  
lap-bite  
‘sweet’

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<sup>105</sup> This specific noun is only ever found within a classifying construction with the generic noun *minh* ‘MEAT’.



The class of words produced through compounding is not predictable from their component parts. In (255), for instance, the combination of person part term and adjective produces a compound adjective, whereas in (257) it produces a noun:

(257) *meer-pork* (eye-big) ‘star’

While bipartite compounds such as those above are the best represented in the Thaayorre lexicon, tripartite compounds such as (258) are also not uncommon:

(258) *meer-kun-waarr*  
eye-shit-bad  
‘sorry, pitiful’

The degree to which Thaayorre compounds are semantically compositional varies greatly. In most cases there is at least some semantic association between the meaning of (at least one) component morpheme and the meaning of the compound as a whole. In (255), for instance, there is an association between softness and kindness, and we may even infer a cultural association between a soft mouth as index of kindness (I have no independent evidence of this, however). As for (254), there are (often lexicalised) associations between shins and the sibling kin relationship (Sebeok and Sebeok 1978, Kendon 1988), possibly linked to females’ ritual gashing of shins to express grief over the death of a brother. A sweet taste is logically connected to the act of biting (256), and stars could reasonably be metaphorically described as big eyes since both stars and eyes are said to twinkle. Yet in none of these cases is the meaning of the compound fully predictable from the meanings of its component parts. All of these forms are clearly individual entries in the mental lexicon, rather than productively derived on the fly.

Not only do person part terms frequently enter into compounds describing non-corporeal entities, but many person part terms are themselves compounds of other (monomorphemic) person part terms. The semantic schemata underlying some of these combinations are cross-linguistically common (cf. Wilkins 1996, Heine 1997); such as *paant-thuur* (head-marrow) ‘brain’, and *pungk-paant* (knee-head) ‘kneecap’. Others are more unusual; such as *thamur-thip* (foot-liver) ‘sole of foot’. Interestingly,

the Thaayorre term *meer-paath-wirm* (eye-fire-WIRM) ‘pupil’, contains the same pupil/flame metaphor as the Welsh pupil term, which translates literally as ‘candle of the eye’ (Cownie 2001, Brown and Witkowski 1981:600) – a metaphor nowhere else attested in Brown and Witkowski’s sample of 118 languages.

Overwhelmingly, in Kuuk Thaayorre, the denotatum of the first element of a person part compound is related to the denotatum of the entire term by spatial contiguity and/or inclusion, while the denotatum of the second element is related via some physiological similarity, in terms of form, function or structure. So *meer-pungk* ‘eyebrow’ is metonymically located above the *meer* ‘eye’, and resembles the *pungk* ‘knee’ in its arched shape and position above an active person part<sup>106</sup>. *Yuur-mut* ‘back of hand’ is related to the *yuur* ‘hand’ by synecdoche, and to the *mut* ‘back’ by virtue of its being the inactive side, with a prominent bone structure that stabilises its superordinate part (i.e. the hand or torso). It should be noted that the second element of these compounds is not always a person part term. It may be a ‘cranberry’ morpheme (as in *pil-perrk* [hip-PERRK] ‘hipbone’) or a noun (e.g. *man-werngr* [throat-boomerang] ‘collarbone’) or adjective (e.g. *yuur-ngamal* [hand-big] ‘thumb’) from the broader Thaayorre vocabulary. Person part compounds may also be derived from more than two morphemes, as in: *koo-mut-pancr*<sup>107</sup> (nose-back-body.hair) ‘moustache’; and *ngeengk-kun-ngamal* (belly-shit-large) ‘stomach, bowel’. For the former, two sequential processes of derivation are indicated. The first involves *koow* ‘nose’ and *mut* ‘back’ being compounded to form *koo-mut* ‘upper lip’. This output then feeds into the new compound *koo-mut* (‘upper lip’) + *pancr* (‘body hair’) > *koo-mut-pancr* ‘moustache’.

In compounds denoting bodily products or excreta, the first element serves to denote the Source of the Product. So, in *meer-ngok* (eye-water) ‘tear’, *meer* ‘eye’ represents the point of origin of the tear, rather than entering into a metonymic or synecdochic

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<sup>106</sup> The speakers questioned view the *yangkar* ‘calf’ as the active body part involved in walking.

<sup>107</sup> Word-final glides are usually deleted when part lexemes (notably *koow* ‘nose’ and *thaaw* ‘mouth’) appear as the initial component of a compound. This appears to be a purely morphophonological process.

relationship with it. This derivational process is still productive, and extends to the description of emissions from parts of inanimate objects, as in (259):

- (259) *ngul minc nhaawr jet kun-thomp=kaak yancm*  
 then really see:P.PFV jet bum-smoke=REL.PROP go-P.IPFV  
 ‘then we saw a jet going along with smoke coming out behind it’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

Here *kun-thomp* (bum-smoke) specifies the point of origin of the vapour trail seen by the story’s protagonists. The connection between excreta and their physiological origins may also be encoded via conventionalised lexical ambiguity<sup>108</sup>. So, for example, *kun* means either ‘bum’ or ‘shit’, while *theler* can refer to a ‘womb’ or ‘placenta’. In the first case, it seems that the Product sense (‘shit’) precedes the Source sense (‘bum’) since reflexes of *\*kuna* ‘shit’ are widespread amongst Pama-Nyungan languages. This is just one example of conventionalised metonymic extension, a process exploited throughout Thaayorre vocabulary (as well as those of many Australian languages). While terms for excreta are based on Source/Product metonymy, examples from other semantic domains are typically based on other kinds of association. *Paath*, which may mean both ‘firewood’ and ‘fire’, makes use of the actual/potential metonymy described by Dixon (1980). Similarly, the ambiguous *may puun* ‘honey’ or ‘bee’ is an example of item/index<sup>109</sup> metonymy.

There are finally a number of generic-specific noun pairings that seem intermediate between a compound proper and a polylexemic fixed expression. The pairing *pam-thaaw* (MAN-mouth) ‘friend’, for example, is normally pronounced with a fricated

<sup>108</sup> Burenhult (2006) documents similar Source/Product ambiguity in the Aslian language Jahai.

<sup>109</sup> While ‘bee’ could be alternatively characterised as the Source of its Product ‘honey’, the fact that the term *may puun* involves the generic noun *may* ‘vegetable food’ (in place of the ‘insect’ generic noun *ruurr* expected for ‘bee’) suggests that the ‘honey’ sense is historically prior. This in turn suggests that bees came to be referred to by the ‘honey’ term due to their being a good index of the prized honey’s location. Alternatively, it may be that bees are treated as (an inalienable) part of the honey/hive, as Evans (2003a:197) shows for Bininj Gun-Wok. The converse use in other Australian languages of animal terms to refer to plants that index the animal’s location is documented by Evans (1997).

onset of the second morpheme (i.e. [pamða:w]), usually indicative of a compound juncture (cf. §2.3.7). This would seem to favour the compound analysis over viewing *pam thaaw* as separate lexemes forming a classifier phrase. Also supporting this analysis is the fact that a *thaaw* ‘mouth’ is not a type of *pam* ‘MAN’. There are numerous restricted collocations that appear somewhere on the continuum between classifier phrase and compound. *Yuk ngat* (OBJECT/TREE fish) ‘cyclone’, for example, is clearly unlike a standard classifier phrase in terms of its semantic composition, yet it does not display the phonological properties distinctive of compounds. The same is true of phrases such as the following:

(260) *yuk waarr-min*  
 OBJECT bad-good  
 ‘thing(s), belongings’

(261) *raak rirkr*  
 PLACE/GROUND shell  
 ‘money’

Collocations such as these are analysed here as fixed expressions; stored in and retrieved from the mental lexicon as a single unit with unitary (non-compositional) semantics, but articulated as phonologically distinct lexemes which may preserve some morphosyntactic independence from one another (e.g. the ability to be separated by intervening lexemes). The Thaayorre lexicon possesses a large number of fixed expressions, a disproportionately large number of which include a person part nomen. This is particularly true of verb-headed fixed expressions. In (262), for example, the compound *piinth-thaaw* (lit. ‘bone-mouth’) is combined with the reduplicated, reflexive form of the verb *theerk* ‘return’ in order to produce the semantically non-compositional expression:

(262) *piinth-thaaw thee<the>rk-e-ø*  
 bone-mouth return<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘[he’s] stretching’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents123]

Example (263) is similarly unlikely to be composed online, due to the semantic gulf between ‘spearing one another’s knees’ and ‘gathering together’:

- (263) *pungk ko'o-rr*  
knee spear-RCP  
‘to meet, gather together’

Although these fixed expressions likely reflect the productive syntactic processes and metaphorical schema of a bygone era, these no longer appear to be active. Such fixed expressions are a likely source of the person part + verb compounds discussed in §8.3.

### 4.3.3 Verbalisation

The semi-productive suffix *-m* may be used to produce de-nominal verbs, but also de-verbal nomina. This suffix is discussed in §8.1.7.

## 4.4 Other nomen suffixes

There are three further suffixes that attach only to nomina, discussed here due to the fact that they are neither clearly inflectional nor clearly derivational.

### 4.4.2 =*Yuk* ‘STUFF’

Speakers may add the suffix =*yuk* ‘STUFF’ to a nomen in order to speak in general terms about a ‘kind of thing’ (264-265), or to generalise their reference to include things normally associated with the denotatum of the nomen in question (266), or to indicate reference to *type* rather than *token* (i.e. ‘not a specific bull’ in [267], and ‘not a particular dance’ in [197]):

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(264) *minh ulp ngancnhan reeka-rr,*  
MEAT(ACC) dem:adr.prx 1sg:exclACC give-P.PFV

*ngat=yuk reeka-rr ngancnhan*  
fish(ACC)=STUFF give-P.PFV 1sg:exclACC

‘[they] gave us some meat and fish or whatever’

[GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

(265) *kuta=yuk yuuw yat*  
dog(NOM)=STUFF far go:P.PFV

‘‘there were no people, even the dogs not there’’

(lit. ‘dogs and stuff had gone off’)

[GJ20/01/04 Elicitation]

(266) *pormpr=yuk koop thiik-nhan*  
house(ACC)=STUFF all break-GO&:NPST

‘all the houses and things will be broken [in a cyclone]’

[GJ03/02/04 Elicitation]

(267) *bull=yuk thaangk-m peln*  
bull(ACC)- STUFF climb-P.IPFV 3pl(NOM)

‘they would ride bulls [in the rodeo]’

[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(197’) *ngancn wuuc=yuk thowol-nam ulp nhangun Jesus-ak*  
1sg(NOM) dance=STUFF perform-P.PFV dem:adr.prx 3sgDAT Jesus-DAT

‘we were doing those dances for Jesus [at Christmas]’

[GJ18/01/04 Conversation]

This suffix often has the pragmatic function of hedge, and is generally characteristic of a particular indirect speech style (favoured by particular individuals).

Etymologically, =*yuk* is clearly derived from the generic noun *yuk*, which denotes the class of trees and stick-like objects (e.g. cigarettes), but also a somewhat eclectic

collection of (typically elongated) ‘things’ (including cyclones, planes, microphones, etc.). Indeed, the Thaayorre translation of *thing* is *yuk waarr-min* ‘THING bad-good’.

#### 4.4.3 Craving *-thaarr*

The only examples of *-thaarr* in my corpus are associated with a craving for food or drink:

(268) *ngay*      *pungku-thaarr*  
1sg(NOM) knee-CRAVE  
‘I’m hungry’

(269) *ngay*      *ngok man-thaarr*  
1sg(NOM) water throat<sup>110</sup>-CRAVE  
‘I’m thirsty’

Because both *pungkuthaarr* ‘hungry’ and *ngok manthaarr* are only attested in my data with the role of predicate, I tentatively analyse *-thaarr* as a derivational suffix. However, the precise meaning and functions of this form are not yet understood. This suffix may no longer be productive, with the above examples representing fixed expressions that merely preserve the relic of this erstwhile morpheme. It is unclear whether or not this morpheme should be considered a derivational suffix, a case suffix, or a relic of an erstwhile morpheme only surviving within frozen, monomorphemic forms. Due to its extremely limited distribution in my data (coupled with the fact that it is seemingly unproductive), it will not be discussed further here.

#### 4.4.3 Loan numeral marker *-nharr*

The morpheme *-nharr* (which also functions as a marker of reciprocal subjects – cf. §3.1.2.4) is obligatorily suffixed to loan numerals, as in (270-271).

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<sup>110</sup> In an interesting parallel, many Arandic languages use the person part term for ‘throat’ to refer to wants and desires (Turpin 2002).

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(270) *nhul three-nharr ngat catfish kunutha-rr*  
3sg(ERG) three-NUM FISH catfish(ACC) catch-P.PFV  
'she caught three catfish'  
[LC19/11/02 Conversation]

(271) *ulp three-nharr pelnan thaka-rr; Conrad, William ngul Jack*  
dem:adr.prx three-NUM 3plACC leave-P.PFV Conrad William then Jack  
'there were three of them left [after James died]; Conrad, William and Jack'  
[IC26/11/02 Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]



## Chapter Five:

# Pronouns, ignoratives and demonstratives

### 5.1 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns may be divided roughly into two groups; those that inflect for case and those that do not. The former are in turn divided into cardinal pronouns (comprising both free forms and reduced enclitics) and possessive pronouns. Personal pronouns that do not inflect for case fall into three categories: reflexive pronouns, emphatic pronouns and inclusory pronouns. The relationships between the categories of personal pronoun are represented in Figure 9.

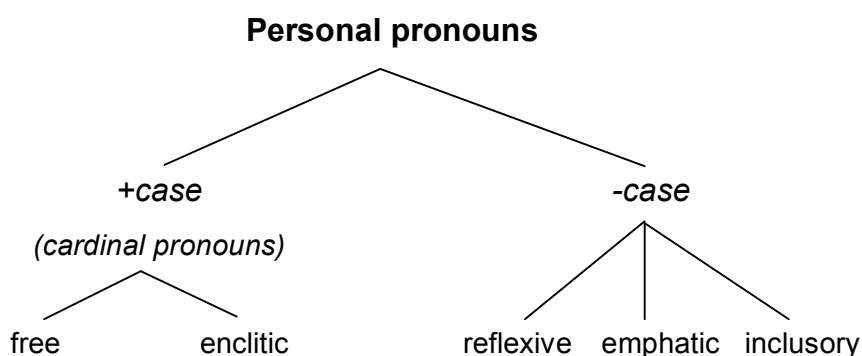


Figure 9. Relationships between categories of personal pronoun.

#### 5.1.1 Cardinal pronouns

##### 5.1.1.1 Morphology of free cardinal pronouns

The Thaayorre paradigm of cardinal pronouns distinguishes three persons (first, second and third), three numbers (singular, dual and plural) and maintains an inclusive/exclusive distinction for the first person (dual and plural). The unmarked (nominative and ergative) forms of all the cardinal pronouns are as follows:

	1 <sup>st</sup> Person	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
singular	<i>ngay</i>	<i>nhunt</i>	<i>nhul</i>
dual	<i>ngal</i> (inclusive <sup>111</sup> ) <i>ngali</i> (exclusive)	<i>nhip</i>	<i>pul</i>
plural	<i>ngamp</i> (inclusive)	<i>nhurr</i>	<i>peln</i>
	<i>ngancn</i> (exclusive)		

Table 44. Nominative/ergative cardinal pronouns.

The following three tables present the full, case-inflected paradigms of cardinal pronouns, sorted according to person. Nominative and ergative forms are identical for all pronouns, and therefore presented as a single row.

1 <sup>st</sup> Person	singular	dual, incl	dual, excl	plural, incl	plural, excl
nominative + ergative	<i>ngay</i>	<i>ngal</i>	<i>ngali</i>	<i>ngamp</i>	<i>ngancn</i>
accusative	<i>nganh</i>	<i>ngalin</i>	<i>ngalnhan</i>	<i>ngamplin</i>	<i>ngancnhan</i>
genitive	<i>ngathn</i>	<i>ngalin</i>	<i>ngalnhan</i>	<i>ngamplin</i>	<i>ngancnhan</i>
dative	<i>ngathun</i>	<i>ngalngun</i>	<i>ngalnungun</i>	<i>ngampulngun</i>	<i>ngancnungun</i>
ablative	<i>ngathnma</i>	<i>ngalnantam</i>	<i>ngalnantam</i>	<i>ngampulntam</i>	<i>ngancnantam</i>

Table 45. First person pronouns.

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<sup>111</sup> There is no a priori reason why inclusive pronouns such as *ngal* ‘you and I’ should be classified first rather than second person since they refer with equal strength to (one) first person individual and (one) second person individual. My motivations for presenting *ngal* ‘you and I’ as part of the first person paradigm are twofold. Firstly, there is the formal resemblance between the inclusive pronouns *ngal* ‘you and I’ and *ngamp* ‘we (incl.)’ and the other first person pronouns, each of which begins with *nga-*. The association between the phonological string *nga-* and first person pronouns is an areal feature (perhaps attributable to shared inheritance), attested by languages right around the Australian continent (cf. Dixon 1980). Secondly, there is of course a firmly entrenched tradition of classing inclusive pronouns as first person cross-linguistically, whether this be due to descriptive precedent or to independent corroborating evidence in each of the languages so described.

1 <sup>st</sup> Person	singular	dual	plural
nominative + ergative	<i>nhunt</i>	<i>nhip</i>	<i>nhurr</i>
accusative	<i>nhinh</i>	<i>nhiplin</i>	<i>nhurrnan</i>
genitive	<i>nhangkn</i>	<i>nhiplin</i>	<i>nhurrnan</i>
dative	<i>nhangkun</i>	<i>nhipulngun</i>	<i>nhurrnhungun</i>
ablative	<i>nhangknma</i>	<i>nhipulntam</i>	<i>nhurrnuntam</i>

Table 46. Second person pronouns.

1 <sup>st</sup> Person	singular	dual	plural
nominative + ergative	<i>nhul</i>	<i>pul</i>	<i>peln</i>
accusative	<i>nhunh</i>	<i>pulnan</i>	<i>pelnan</i>
genitive	<i>nhangn</i>	<i>pulnan</i>	<i>pelnan</i>
dative	<i>nhangun</i>	<i>pulnungun</i>	<i>pelnungun</i>
ablative	<i>nhangnma</i>	<i>pulnuntam</i>	<i>pelnantam</i>

Table 47. Third person pronouns.

The syntax of free cardinal pronouns and their role in the clause is discussed in Chapter 5 and will not be explored here.

### 5.1.1.2 Morphosyntax of pronominal enclitics

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses an emergent class of pronominal enclitics. These are basically reduced, phonologically dependent variants of the free pronouns, apparently in the early stages of grammaticalising into verbal cross-referencing<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> The Kugu Nganhcara system of pronominal enclitics appears significantly more developed than that of Kuuk Thaayorre. Smith and Johnson (2000:402) nevertheless surmise that they may have developed

Synchronically, though, they remain formally, syntactically and functionally very close to the free pronouns, and hence are still analysed as having case, though only nominative, ergative and accusative cases are attested so far.

As Blake (1987:103-4) observes, the pronominal clitics of Australian languages must either directly follow first constituent of the clause (i.e. in Wackernagel's [1892] position) or attach to the verb or auxiliary. Thaayorre clitic pronouns are found in both these positions; attaching clause-initial constituents of any word class (including particles [272, 276], demonstrative pronouns [273] and nouns [274]) or attaching to the verb, wherever it appears in the clause (275-276).

(272) *ngul=ul=unh*                      *man.pert-e*    *theerka-n-r*    *nhaknkath-an*  
 then=3sg(ERG)=3sgACC shoulder-ERG return-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST camp-DAT  
 'and he carried it back home on his shoulder to camp'  
 [Hall 1972:105]

(273) *inh'nhul=ay*                      *yik,*                      *kuuk*    *inh'nhul*  
 this.one=1sg(NOM)                      say-NPST    WORD    this.one  
 'I'm telling this story'  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

(274) *meer-e=ay*                      *nhunh*    *nhaawr*  
 eye-ERG=1sg(ERG)    3sgACC    see:P.PFV  
 'I saw her with my own eyes'  
 "I seen that old lady"  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

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quite recently "from a situation in which unstressed but unreduced cross-referencing pronouns could occur in pre- or postverbal position". Kuuk Thaayorre appears to be following much the same diachronic development, with the difference that it appears to be the postverbal position that is becoming cemented as the preferred locus for the clitic pronouns, as opposed the preverbal position now licensed in Kugu Nganhcara.

- (275) *ngay ii-rr-kuw Darwin-ak yat=ay*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west Darwin-DAT go:P.PFV=1sgNOM  
 ‘I went west to Darwin’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation / Narrative DarwinTrip]

- (276) *thil=unh koow rathirr=eln=unh*  
 again=3sgACC nose(ACC) chop-P.PFV=3pl(ERG)=3sgACC  
 “they slashed his nose once more”  
 [Hall 1972:77]

In the vast majority of cases, these pronouns encliticise to the verb, hence Hall’s (1972:378) characterisation of them as “virtual verb suffixes”.

Enclitic pronouns, like their free counterparts, readily permit both omission and redundant repetition. Example (275), for instance, is equally grammatical with or without the free pronoun *ngay* ‘I’ and/or the encliticised *=ay* ‘I’, while the third person singular accusative enclitic *=unh* features twice in (276).

The nominative/ergative case forms of the pronominal enclitics are given in Table 48, while the accusative enclitic forms are given in Table 49. Note that, in every case, the enclitic pronoun is formed by the simple deletion of the initial nasal of the corresponding free pronoun. Thus the origins of enclitic pronouns as a fast speech phenomenon (whereby word-initially segments are reduced and/or lost) are transparent.

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Person</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Person</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Person</b>
<b>singular</b>	<i>=ay</i>	<i>-unt</i>	<i>=ul</i>
<b>dual</b>	<i>=al</i> (inclusive) <i>=ali</i> (exclusive)	<i>=ip</i>	<i>=ul</i>
<b>plural</b>	<i>=amp</i> (inclusive) <i>=ancn</i> (exclusive)	<i>=urr</i>	<i>=eln</i>

Table 48. Nominative/ergative pronominal enclitics.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Person	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person
<b>singular</b>	= <i>anh</i>	= <i>inh</i>	= <i>unh</i>
<b>dual</b>	= <i>alin</i> (inclusive) = <i>alnhan</i> (exclusive)	= <i>iplin</i>	= <i>ulnun</i>
<b>plural</b>	= <i>amplin</i> (inclusive) = <i>ancnan</i> (exclusive)	= <i>urrnhan</i>	= <i>elnan</i>

Table 49. Accusative pronominal enclitics.

Because they are still a nascent syntactic class, enclitic pronouns are particularly difficult to elicit. When questioned on the subject, or asked to repeat clauses slowly and carefully, consultants are likely to replace any enclitic pronouns with the corresponding free forms. However, the following observations can be made.

In the vast majority of cases, only a single pronominal form is encliticised to the host lexeme. However, where two pronouns cooccur in sequence, this sequence appears determined by the competing hierarchies of person and grammatical function. Firstly, subject enclitics precede object enclitics, as in (276) above and (277).

- (277) *pal mi'irr=ay=unh*  
 TOWARDS pick.up:P.PFV=1sg(ERG)=3sgACC  
 'I picked it up'  
 [Hall 1972:95]

This constraint is overridden, however, by the person hierarchy. A first person object enclitic always precedes a second or third person subject enclitic (278).

- (278) *yup=okun theerng-r=anh-ul*  
 soon=DUB hit-NPST=1sgACC-3sg(ERG)  
 "he might hit me before long"  
 [Hall 1972:378]

### 5.1.2 Possessive pronouns

There are analytic reasons to postulate two distinct series — possessive pronouns and cardinal pronouns in genitive case — despite their formal identity. Functionally, possessive pronouns are always adnominal modifiers, while the genitive pronouns have a relational role in the clause. Morphologically, possessive pronouns inflect for case (taking the full range of case inflections available to nomina and sharing many of the same suffixal forms), while genitive-case pronouns are already inflected for case and thus immutable. Syntactically, possessive pronouns occupy a specific slot within the (noun-headed) noun phrase (appearing between the optional adjective phrase and any quantifiers, as in [279]), while genitive cardinal pronouns of themselves constitute a full noun phrase (as in [280] and [281]):

(279) *kuta ngamal ngotn ngathn thono=nhurr*  
 dog large back 1sgPOS one=only  
 ‘my only big, black dog’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

(280) *kirri ngul ngathn yump!*  
 PERM then 1sgGEN do-IMP  
 ‘go ahead then and make mine’  
 [LN8/9/02 Conversation]

(281) *Jessica, hat inh nhangkn?*  
 Jessica hat(NOM) dem:sp.prx 2sgGEN  
 ‘Jessica, is this hat yours?’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives16]

The formal identity between the two pronouns suggests at first glance that one should posit only a single series. However, to establish a class of possessive pronouns at the expense of the genitive pronoun would leave a significant gap in the personal pronominal paradigm. Why should cardinal pronouns inflect for accusative, dative and ablative cases but not genitive? And if cardinal pronouns operate as full noun

phrases in parallel to nomen-headed noun phrases, with case being assigned at the level of the phrase rather than to individual elements thereof, why should the latter be able to express genitive case but not the former?

Conversely, though, if we sacrifice the possessive pronominal paradigm for the sake of including genitive forms in the personal pronominal paradigm, we have to explain the exceptional syntactic distribution of genitive pronouns — since they are the only pronouns that may appear within a nomen-headed NP — plus the fact that they may secondarily inflect for case. The pronominal form *ngathnmak* ‘to my/mine’ in example (282), for instance, could either be analysed as a possessive pronoun inflected for dative case (as in the first gloss line), or as a cardinal pronoun inflected twice for both genitive and dative cases (as in the second gloss line).

- (282) *ngay parr\_r ngathn-mak yiik-r "nhunt kirri yarr rumpun!"*  
 1sg(NOM) child 1sgPOS-DAT say-P.PFV 2sg(NOM) PERM go:IMP beach-DAT  
 1sg(NOM) child 1sgPOS-DAT say-P.PFV 2sg(NOM) PERM go:IMP beach-DAT  
 ‘I said to my kid “you can go down to the beach”’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

The latter analysis — though typologically plausible — would violate the otherwise exceptionless rule that there is only one case inflection per Thaayorre nominal word (hence [283] is ungrammatical because an ergative case morpheme is suffixed to a word already inflected for genitive case).

- (283) *\*kuta Dan-ak-nthurr ii kuta thok waa<wa>rin-r*  
 dog Dan-POS-ERG there PET cat(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘Dan’s dog is chasing the cat there’

Finally, to reject the existence of either genitive or possessive pronouns is to miss the neat alignment of clause-level function with syntactic independence and morphological immutability on the one hand, and of adnominal function with syntactic integration within the noun phrase and the morphological potential to inflect for case. For all of these reasons, I shall continue to differentiate the (relational) genitive cardinal pronouns from the (adnominal) possessive pronouns.



The case inflection of possessive pronouns (presented in Table 50) is relatively regular.

	<b>suffix</b>	<b><i>ngathn</i> ‘my (1sgPOS)’</b>
<b>Ergative</b>	<i>-thurr ~ -man ~ -antamn</i>	<i>ngathnthurr ~ngathnman ~ngathnantamn</i>
<b>Nominative / Accusative</b>	<i>-∅</i>	<i>ngathn</i>
<b>Genitive</b>	<i>-mak</i>	<i>ngathnmak</i>
<b>Dative</b>	<i>-mak ~ -mun</i>	<i>ngathnmak ~ ngathnmun</i>
<b>Ablative</b>	<i>-mantam</i>	<i>ngathnmantam</i>
<b>Proprietary (relational)</b>	<i>=kaak</i>	<i>ngathnkaak</i>
<b>Proprietary (adnominal)</b>	<i>=aak</i>	<i>ngathnaak</i>
<b>Privative (relational)</b>	<i>=kaar</i>	<i>ngathnkaar</i>
<b>Privative (adnominal)</b>	<i>=aar</i>	<i>ngathnaar</i>
<b>Comitative</b>	<i>-kak</i>	<i>ngathnkak</i>

Table 50. The case suffixes for possessive pronouns.

As is evident from the table above, both ergative and dative case-marking may be achieved by a number of alternative allomorphs. The selection of allomorph is not phonologically-determined since each single possessive pronoun can combine with each of the allomorphs. Compare, for instance, dative *ngathnmak* ‘to my’ in (282) with *ngathnmun* ‘to my’ in (284).

- (284) *nhunt kirri yarr iirra raak ngathn-mun*  
 2sg(NOM) PERM go:IMP to.there place 1sgPOS-DAT  
 ‘you can go to my place (to stay there while I’m away)’  
 [AJ8/02/04 Conversation/Elicitation]

It is unclear at this stage what, if anything, motivates this allomorphic variation. But the forms given in Table 50 should be understood to apply to the full set of possessive pronouns.

The restriction of one-case-marker-per-phrase has already been observed. Following from this, it was noted in §4.2.6.7 that a genitive-marked nomen cannot take further case marking to show the grammatical function of the possessive noun phrase as a whole. This is instead achieved by replacing the genitive suffix with the ablative morpheme. The same occurs where a possessive pronoun inflected for genitive case in a complex possessive NP requires further inflection for grammatical function. This is illustrated by the contrast between (168), (286) and (287). In (168) the possessive phrase *nganip ngathn* ‘my father’ inflects for (adnominal) genitive case to display its relationship to the head noun *nhangnam* ‘mother’. In (286) the possessive phrase *parr\_r ngathn* ‘my kids’ inflects for (relational) ergative case in order to mark its grammatical function of transitive subject. In (287), however, the possessive phrase *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn* ‘my brother’ must be dually marked for its (adnominal) function of possessor-dependent of the head noun *kuta* ‘dog’ as well as its (relational) function of transitive subject. These two functions are jointly encoded by ablative -*mantam*, suffixed to the possessive pronoun:

(285) *nhangnam [nganip ngathn]-mak*  
 mother [father 1sgPOS]-GEN  
 ‘my father’s mother’  
 [MF24/09/02 Elicitation]

(286) [*parr\_r ngathn*]-*thurr ngat mungk-r*  
 [child 1sgPOS]-ERG fish(ACC) eat-NPST  
 ‘my kids are eating fish’  
 [LN14/08/02 Elicitation]

(287) *nganh kuta-ku patha-rr, nganh [kuta (pam kun\_yangkar ngathn)-mantam]*  
 1sgACC dog-ERG bite-P.PFV 1sgACC [dog (man sibling 1sgPOS)-ABL]  
 ‘my brother’s dog bit me’  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

The two sets of bracketing in (287) are intended to reflect these dual roles of the ablative case marker. While the curved brackets reveal the ablative suffix's adnominal function of marking *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn* 'my brother' as the possessor of the dog, the square brackets reflect its external, relational function of marking *kuta pam kun\_yangkar ngathn(-mak)* 'my brother('s) dog' as the clausal subject. Section 4.2.6.7 presents in more detail the analysis of the ablative morpheme as a portmanteau case, showing that it may be used to code the combination of genitive and any other grammatical case (not just the ergative).

### 5.1.3 Reflexive pronouns

#### 5.1.3.1 Morphology of reflexive pronouns

The reflexive pronominal paradigm, so far attested only with singular number, is formally related to both nominative and genitive-inflected pronouns. This is evident in the comparison of the reflexive pronouns in the third column of Table 51 with the combination of genitive and nominative pronouns in the first and second columns respectively:

	<b>Genitive</b>	<b>Nominative</b>	<b>Reflexive</b>
<b>1sg</b>	<i>ngathn</i>	<i>ngay</i>	<i>ngathney</i>
<b>2sg</b>	<i>nhangkn</i>	<i>nhunt</i>	<i>nhangknunt</i>
<b>3sg</b>	<i>nhangn</i>	<i>nhul</i>	<i>nhangnul</i>

Table 51. Morphology of the reflexive pronouns.

It is perfectly plausible that the Thaayorre reflexive pronouns could have been derived from the compounding of genitive and nominative pronouns<sup>113</sup>. But phonological reduction at the (erstwhile) morpheme boundary, coupled with vowel shift in the first

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<sup>113</sup> After all, the connection between genitive pronouns and reflexive pronouns is also attested in the English *myself, yourself, ...* etc.

person form, suggests that the compounding process is no longer productive. Instead, I assume that the reflexive pronominal paradigm has been in existence for some time, and that these forms are synchronically monomorphemic, rather than productively derived.

### 5.1.3.1 Functions of reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns may be the sole indicator of reflexivity in a ‘pronominal reflexive construction’ (described in §10.6.1.1 and exemplified by [288]), or they may combine with verbal reflexive marking in a ‘verbal reflexive construction’ (described in §10.6.1.2 and exemplified by [289]).

(288) *ngay wash-m rirk-r ngathney*  
1sg(ERG) wash-TR DO-P.PFV 1sgRFL  
‘I’m washing myself’  
[GJ25/10/02 Elicitation]

(289) *nhangknunt kar nhaath-e-ø*  
2sgRFL like look-RFL-IMP  
‘you should look at yourself!’  
[LN14/08/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

In either case, we may assume that the reflexive pronoun is not redundant, but expresses some meaning that contributes to the interpretation of the construction as a whole. This core meaning that remains constant through all uses of the reflexive pronoun can be summarised as in (290):

(290) **Reflected action** - *the Actor is affected by their own actions*

This characterisation holds across all uses of the reflexive pronoun. For instance, clauses expressing ‘oblique reflexivity’ (i.e. where some oblique role - such as Beneficiary, Location, Source, etc. - is ascribed to the subject participant in addition to the Actor role) are not marked by the reflexive verbal suffix (since the subject

participant is not an Undergoer), but are almost always marked by the reflexive pronoun. This makes sense since although the subject participant does not take on an Undergoer role per se, they are *affected* by their actions, either to their benefit (as in [291]) or detriment (as in [292]):

(291) *ngay may mi'irr ngathney*  
 1sg(ERG) VEG(ACC) pick.up:P.PFV 1sgRFL  
 'I got myself some food'  
 [Anon.]

(292) *plate ulp nhangnul thiika-rr*  
 plate(ACC) dem:adr.prx 3sgRFL break-P.PFV  
 "that kid broke his own plate"  
 [GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

### 5.1.4 Emphatic pronouns

#### 5.1.4.1 Morphology of emphatic pronouns

The three emphatic pronominal forms collected to date are presented in Table 52. Like the reflexive pronouns, there is a clear formal link to the nominative forms of the respective cardinal pronouns (given as the second column of Table 52). In this case, though, it seems that the emphatic pronoun forms were derived via reduplication of the cardinal pronoun plus suffixation of *-r* (origin unknown). Again, though, the process of derivation most likely occurred some time ago, as some phonological reduction is evident.

	<b>Emphatic pronoun</b>	<b>Nominative Pro</b>
<b>3sg</b>	<i>nhulnhulr</i>	<i>nhul</i>
<b>3pl</b>	<i>pelpelr ~ pelnpelnr</i>	<i>peln</i>
<b>1pl:incl</b>	<i>ngampampr</i>	<i>ngamp</i>

Table 52. Emphatic pronominal forms.

### 5.1.4.2 Functions of emphatic pronouns

The principal function of the Thaayorre emphatic pronouns is to focus attention on the participant(s) encoded as subject, in contrast with other potential Actors. This is exemplified by (293) and (294), the latter being particularly explicit in contrasting the participants represented by both the subject pronoun *peln* ‘3plNOM’ and the emphatic pronoun *pelnpelnr* ‘3plEMPH’, with the alternative group of would-be (or, rather, should-be) actants represented by *nhipnhipr* ‘2duEMPH’:

(293) *Dan nhululr yan melnkelnkarr*

Dan(NOM) 3sgEMPH go:NPST tomorrow

‘Dan will go by himself tomorrow’

[GJ06/06/05 Elicitation]

(294) *peln=th, pelnpelnr rirk-m, nhipnhipr riic-m*

3pl(NOM)=PRAG 3plEMPH DO-P.IPFV 2duEMPH run-P.IPFV

‘it was them, they were all working, you two ran off’

[Hall 1972:308]

An emphatic pronoun may also be called for in cases where semantic features of the participant encoded as subject make it an unlikely Actor (i.e. contrasting the actual Actor-subject with the type of Actor that might be expected by the addressee). The presence of the emphatic pronoun here rules out any alternative external Actor, and can thus result in the quasi-reflexive interpretation of simple intransitive clauses such as (295).

(295) *mimp ith nhulnhulr thaariic-r*

cloth(NOM) dem:dist 3sgEMPH tear-P.PFV

‘that piece of material is tearing up itself’

[LN3/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break8]

(295) was produced by a consultant in response to a video clip of a piece of cloth lying on a table, slowly (and spontaneously) tearing down the middle (Bohnemeyer et

al. 2001). There are no other people or objects present in the frame, so (thanks to the wonders of video technology) the tearing of the cloth is achieved in the complete absence of external causation. This is reflected also by the consultant's subsequent translation of her Thaayorre response; *that piece of material is tearing up itself*. The same clause minus the emphatic pronoun would be translated as something like: *that piece of material tore*, implying some external Agent or Force.

Reciprocal events may also be associated with emphatic pronouns for the following reason: the verb of a reciprocal clause is typically highly transitive, describing an action that proceeds from Actor to highly distinct Undergoer. Since reciprocal clauses pair such verbs with only a single argument, the involvement of additional Actor(s) might be expected. The inclusion of an emphatic pronoun in such clauses as (296), then, stresses that it is just the one group of men who are both questioning and being questioned - the potential involvement of other participants is ruled out by *pelpelr* 'themselves'.

- (296) *pelpelr=nharr rangkangk-rr-nam pam ith*  
3plEMPH=RCPCANT question:RDP-RCP-P.IPFV man(NOM) dem:dist  
'those men were questioning each other they were'  
[Hall 1972:107]

### 5.1.5 Inlusory pronouns

Inlusory pronouns make simultaneous reference to a superset of participants and to a subset or individual within the superset group. Thus in (297) the inlusory pronoun *ngalathun* '1du:incl|1sg' (i.e. 'we two including me') makes the speaker particularly prominent within the first person dual inclusive subject participant group.

- (297) *ngalathun kuuk yik-ø*  
1du:incl|1sg WORD(ACC) say-NPST  
'you and I are speaking together in the vernacular'  
[Hall 1972:380]

Although no inclusory pronouns were spontaneously used in my corpus, Table 53 (adapted from Table 14 above) lists the inclusory forms in evidence in Hall (1972).

<b>Inclusory pronoun</b>	<b>Superset</b>	<b>Subset</b>
<i>ngalathun</i> ‘you and I’	1du:incl	1sg
<i>ngalngun</i> ‘you and I’	1du:incl	2sg
<i>ngalingathun</i> ‘he and I’	1du:excl	1sg
<i>ngampathun</i> ‘we and I’	1pl:incl	1sg
<i>pelnathun</i> ‘they and I’	3pl	1sg
<i>nhunturra</i> ‘each one of you all’	2pl	2sg
<i>nhipurra</i> ‘the two of you all’	2pl	2du

Table 53. Comparison of inclusory, nominative and dative pronouns.

There is a strong formal link between the set of inclusory pronouns and the nominative and dative cardinal pronoun forms. This is explored further in §5.7.3, alongside discussion of the functions and syntax of inclusory pronouns.



## 5.2 Ignoratives

The set of ignoratives, introduced in §3.1.2.7, primarily communicate the speaker's lack of knowledge in a particular ontological category<sup>114</sup>, as made explicit in (consultants' translations of) (298) and (299.2). They are therefore analogous to the interrogative and indefinite categories of many other languages.

- (298) *ngay pam.ngongkom, wanhul=okun. Wanhul=okun thaka-rr.*  
 1sg(NOM) ignorant.of who:ERG=DUB who:ERG=DUB leave-P.PFV  
 “I don't know who left that bike there, somebody must have left it”  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (299) *ngay wal waa<wa>th-r,*  
 1. 1sg(ERG) bag(ACC) search.for<RDP>-NPST  
 “I'm looking for my bag”  
 2. *ngay wanthanngun=okun thaka-rr*  
 1sg(ERG) where<sub>DAT</sub>=DUB leave-P.PFV  
 “I don't know where I left it”  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

In addition to this lack of knowledge, ignoratives may contribute other kinds of information. Section 5.2.3 presents the inventory of functions with which the ignoratives are associated.

Ignoratives form a syntactically heterogeneous class that nevertheless possesses a coherent internal semantic structure, with each ignorative form expressing lack of knowledge in a particular ontological category. Table 54 presents the inventory of Thaayorre ignoratives along with their closest English equivalent and associated ontological category. As we shall see, the Thaayorre ignoratives span a number of

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<sup>114</sup> I use the term ‘ontological category’ following Jackendoff (1983:51) and Haspelmath (1997). Alternative terms in circulation include ‘epistemological category’ (Durie 1985), ‘knowledge category’ (Mushin 1995) and ‘epistemological domain’ (Evans 2000).

functions that are served by different word classes in English (e.g. interrogatives, indefinite pronouns, free choice pronouns, etc.). I have elected to use the English interrogative forms as glosses for ignoratives throughout this grammar.

<b>Ontological category</b>	<b><i>Ignorative</i></b>	<b>Gloss</b>
PERSON	<i>wanh</i>	‘who’
THING	<i>ngan</i>	‘what’
REASON	<i>ngene</i>	‘why’
PLACE (w.r.t. a trajectory)	<i>wanthan</i>	‘where to’
PLACE (w.r.t. a location)	<i>wanthanngun</i>	‘where at’
MANNER	<i>wanthantharr</i>	‘how’
QUANTITY	<i>ngannganr</i>	‘how much’
QUANTITY (HUMAN)	<i>wanhwanhr</i>	‘how many (people)’

Table 54. Inventory of ignoratives.

### 5.2.1 Morphological structure of ignoratives

The class of ignoratives can be subdivided into simplex and complex expressions. The morphologically simplex ignoratives are: *ngan* ‘what’; *wanh* ‘who’; *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’; and *ngene* ‘why’. Complex ignoratives may be formed by the reduplication of a simplex ignorative (e.g. *ngan* ‘what’ > *ngannganr* ‘how much’), by the inflection or other morphological modification of a simplex ignorative (e.g. *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ > *wanthanthaarr* ‘how’), or by the creation of binomial ‘fixed expressions’ that include a simplex ignorative (e.g. *raak ngan* ‘when’, lit. ‘TIME what’)<sup>115</sup>. This subsection is concerned with the structure and semantic connotations

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<sup>115</sup> Interestingly, there are many parallels between the formation of complex ignoratives in Kuuk Thaayorre and those of Kugu Nganhcara. For example, the Kugu Nganhcara quantity ignorative *ngaaraari* ‘how many’ is formed by reduplicating the THING ignorative *ngaari* ‘what’ (cf. Kuuk Thaayorre *ngan* ‘what’ and *ngannganr* ‘how much’), while the Kugu Nganhcara time ignorative is a

of these morphologically complex forms. Section 5.2.2 catalogues the semantic categories encoded by the Thaayorre ignoratives, while §5.2.3 examines their functional ranges. The syntactic behaviour (and associated morphological modification) of ignoratives is considered in §5.2.4.

*Ngannganr* ‘how much’ is formed by reduplicating the ignorative *ngan* ‘what’, then adding the phoneme *-r* (for reasons unknown). The association between reduplication and plural number or distributivity is well attested cross-linguistically (e.g. Haiman 1983). The ontological category of QUANTITY sits well within this semantic field of number, and since inanimate objects are the most commonly quantified, it makes sense for this complex ignorative to be built from the simplex ignorative *ngan* ‘what’ (corresponding to the ontological category of THING, and typically used with reference to inanimate objects). Interestingly, there is an alternative QUANTITY ignorative that may be used only with reference to people. This ignorative, *wanhwanhrr* ‘how many (people)’, is formed through a near-identical process of reduplication (this time of the PERSON ignorative *wanh* ‘who’) plus suffixation of a segment, except that in this case the segment is the tap/trill /rr/ in place of the retroflex glide that ends *ngannganr* ‘how much’.

The ignorative *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ takes the form that would be expected if *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ were inflected for dative case. Compare these two ignorative forms, for example, with the analogous contrast between nominative *ngal* ‘you and I’ with dative *ngalngun* ‘to you and me’. Despite this formal correspondence, I consider *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ to be a simplex ignorative in its own right, corresponding to the ontological category PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> rather than being simply a case-inflected form of the ignorative *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’. If *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ were dative-marked, it should be associated with the endpoint of a trajectory, as is the dative-marked demonstrative pronoun in (300):

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complex expression built from the generic noun *agu* ‘time’ and ignorative *ngaari* ‘what’ (cf. Kuuk Thaayorre *raak ngan* ‘when [lit. time what]’).

- (300) *Friday,koop therk-ø inh'nh-ngun Pormpuraaw-thak*  
 Friday all(NOM) return-NPST dem:sp.prx-DAT Pormpuraaw-DAT  
 ‘on Friday everyone is coming back to Pormpuraaw’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Instead, it is the putative root form *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRAJ</sub>’ that encodes the endpoint of a trajectory, while the arguably dative-inflected *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ refers only to static locations. It is for this reason that I analyse *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ as synchronically monomorphemic.

Incidentally, the form *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRAJ</sub>’ may itself represent lexical absorption of the dative case marker *-(a)n*. If this is true, this process of absorption must have been completed some time ago, given that the form *\*wanth* is synchronically meaningless without the (putative) suffix *-(a)n* attached. Furthermore, whilst dative case marking is compatible with a Goal or trajectory endpoint, it is never used for a Source or starting point, which means the lexicalised form *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ must have had time to expand its semantic range to include points of origin, as discussed in §3.1.2.7.

The form of the MANNER ignorative *wanthanthaarr* ‘how’ suggests that it may originally derive from the encliticisation of the ‘craving’ morpheme *-thaarr* (§4.4.3) to the PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> ignorative *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’, though the reasons behind this are so far opaque.

*Raak ngan* ‘when’ is a semantically transparent binomial expression, composed of the polysemous generic noun *raak* ‘TIME’ (also ‘PLACE’, ‘GROUND’, etc.) and the ignorative *ngan* ‘what’. This collocation may be discontinuous (133), so is clearly not a compound:

- (301) *raak nhul ngan ya<a>n-a yarra theerk?*  
 PLACE 3sg(NOM) what go<RDP>:NPST-EMPH away return:NPST  
 ‘what on earth time will he be going back there?’  
 [Hall 1972:139]

While contiguity is not required, the relative order of these two elements appears to be fixed. Where their order is permuted the meaning of the expression changes entirely to ‘somewhere’ (based on the PLACE rather than TIME meaning of *raak*), as in (302):

- (302) *ngul ngan raak ii-rr-kaw ngancn ranc-m*  
 then what PLACE there-towards-east 1pl:excl(NOM) jump-P.IPFV  
 ‘then we used to fly to somewhere in the east’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Although *ngan raak* could be analysed as a complex ignorative corresponding to the ontological category of PATH, I instead propose that examples like (302) are simply instances of *ngan* ‘what’ functioning as an epistemic determiner modifying the polysemous generic nomen *raak*, used here with the meaning ‘PLACE’.

Interestingly, while Mushin (1995:5) finds that the ignorative corresponding to the ontological category of REASON “seems to be always formed using case-marking in Australian languages”, the Thaayorre REASON ignorative *ngene* ‘why’ is one of only four indubitably simplex ignoratives.

### 5.2.2 Ignorative categories

*Ngan* ‘what’ (the episteme corresponding to the ontological category THING), *wanh* ‘who’ (PERSON) and *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ (PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub>) are the most frequently used of the ignoratives. *Ngan* ‘what’ is the most semantically general, and may be used to refer to any entity that falls outside the ambit of the other ignoratives (see below). At its core, though, *ngan* ‘what’ refers to non-human objects and entities (303).

- (303) *ant inh ngan?*  
 ant(NOM) dem:sp.prx what  
 ‘what sort of insect is this?’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives3]

The category PERSON (encoded by the ignorative *wanh* ‘who’) includes only humans and indices<sup>116</sup> thereof (e.g. their names, as in [305]).

- (304) *paanth ith wanh=okun yan?*  
woman(NOM) dem:dist who=DUB go:NPST  
“which is that lady there coming?”  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (305) *nhamp wanh, pam nhangkn?*  
name(NOM) who man 2sgPOS(NOM)  
“what’s your husband’s name?”  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Personal names fall within the scope of *wanh* because of their function of identifying human referents, not because they are inalienable possessions. Other inalienable ‘possessions’ (such as age, or body parts), and the names of non-humans are referred to using *ngan* ‘what’:

- (306) *nhunt age ngan?*  
2sg(NOM) age what  
‘how old are you?’  
[EN01/10/02 Conversation]

- (307) *raak ith ii-ø-kaw ngan nhamp wan-r?*  
PLACE(ACC) dem:dist there-at-east what name(ACC) tell-NPST  
‘what’s the name of that place?’  
[LN02/10/02 Conversation]

The ontological category of PLACE is subcategorised in Kuuk Thaayorre into the ignoratives *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ (PLACE<sub>LOC</sub>), used in reference to static locations,

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<sup>116</sup> I use the term ‘index’ here to refer to those things associated with people not through ownership, but through their function of ‘standing for’ those people, following Peirce’s (1998 [1909]:460) characterisation of “Indices, which represent their objects independently of any resemblance to them, only by virtue of real connections with them”. Thus a name may be used to represent a person despite its bearing no actual resemblance to that person.

and *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’(PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub>), used in reference to points on a dynamic trajectory (most commonly its endpoint).

The PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> ignorative *wanthanngun* is thus used to identify a stable location defined without reference to a trajectory. This may either be due to the complete absence of trajectory (308), or because the (prior) trajectory is unimportant, as in (309) where the focus is on the eventual resting place of the figure, not the trajectory by which it arrives there:

(308) *raak.pungk nhangkn wanthanngun?*

homeland 2sg:POS(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub>

‘where is your land?’

[LN08/09/02 Elicitation]

(309) *inh ngay wanthanngun thak-r?*

dem:sp.prx 1sg(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub> leave-NPST

‘where am I going to leave this?’

[LN08/09/02 Elicitation]

*Wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ is thus typically associated with a figure that does not move from the location in question (as in 309), but this is not always the case. The figure may come and go from a PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> (310) as long as it maintains a stable and ongoing relationship with this PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> which is not defined with respect to the trajectory.

(310) *nhunt wanthanngun wun-m?*

2sg(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub> reside-P.IPFV

‘where [in which house] were you living?’

[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

The trajectory is made far more prominent by the PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> ignorative, *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’, which most commonly refers to the endpoint of this trajectory:

- (311) *nhul wanthan=okun yat*  
3sg(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub>=DUB go:P.PFV  
“he must have gone somewhere”  
[Anon.]

It is with this reference to the endpoint of the trajectory that *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ combines with the directional particle *pal* ‘towards’ (§11.4.2.1), creating the collocation *wanthan pal* ‘towards where’ seen in (312):

- (312) *kapr ith wanthan pal yan*  
moon(NOM) dem:dist where<sub>TRJ</sub> towards go:NPST  
‘which way is the moon going?’  
[AC13/09/02 Conversation]

The semantics and combinatorics of *wanthan pal* ‘towards where’ are further explored in §10.8.2.1.

*Wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ also combines with *nhemana* ‘from there’ to refer to a Source (start-point of a trajectory), as in (313):

- (313) *kormun inh wanthan nhemana yan*  
cloud dem:sp.prx where<sub>TRJ</sub> from.there go:NPST  
“where this rain and this cold coming from?”  
[MF20/08/02 Conversation]

It is possible, however, for *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ to refer to a trajectory’s starting point without the explicit use of *nhemana* ‘from there’. In example (314), *wanthan* is used to question the place that is simultaneously the static location of the direct object *Daniel* and the origin point of the addressee/subject’s trajectory. We may presume that if the referent of *wanthan* were solely a static location (instead of additionally defining the bounds of a trajectory), the locational ignorative *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ would have been used in its place.



- (314) *nhunt Daniel wanthan thaka-rr?*  
 2sg(ERG) Daniel(ACC) where<sub>TRJ</sub> leave-P.PFV  
 ‘where did you leave Daniel?’  
 [AJ29/1/04 Conversation]

In addition to referring to the poles of a trajectory, *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ may also be used to make reference to the Path of the trajectory itself, as in (315):

- (315) *road wanthan?*  
 road where<sub>TRJ</sub>  
 ‘which road (are you taking)?’  
 [Anon.]

It is interesting that the distinction between static locations and trajectories (i.e. PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> and PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub>) lexicalised in the epistemic sphere cross-cuts those made in the case system (§4.2). Whilst ignoratives group together Goals and Sources (*wanthan* PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub>), as distinct from static locations (*wanthanngun* PLACE<sub>LOC</sub>), it is Goals and static locations that are collapsed into a single case category (‘dative’, §4.2.5), which is in turn differentiated from Sources (‘ablative’, §4.2.6). In the system of directional terms (§11.4.2.3), all of these categories are differentiated from one another, with distinct terms for: (a) movement from a direction; (b) movement towards a direction; (c) static location at a direction; and (d) movement at a location (in addition to a number of further distinctions based on proximity, direction, etc.).

Just as human names may be enquired after by means of the PERSON ignorative *wanh* ‘who’, so too may place names be questioned by means of the place ignorative *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’, as in the following example:

- (316) *pormpr ith ii-ø-kaw wanthanngun?*  
 home(NOM) dem:dist there-at-east where<sub>LOC</sub>  
 ‘what’s that place [called]?’ or ‘I can’t think of the name of that place’  
 [LN02/10/02 Conversation]

The speaker is here talking about preparations for a disco to be held that evening in the women's centre, *Pormpur Paanth*, but is temporarily unable to remember its name. Its location, however, is well known to both speaker and hearer. The use of *wanthanngun* here may reflect a cultural expectation that equates knowing the name of a place with knowing its location. A place name may alternatively be questioned by means of the THING ignorative *ngan* 'what', however, as in (307) above.

*Ngene* 'why' typically refers to something desired/sought (317) or the Purpose or Goal of an activity (318, 319):

(317) *ngene?*

why

'what/who do you want?'

[commonly called out when a car pulls up]

(318) *nhunt ngene yan ii-rr-kop Cairns-na?*

2sg(NOM) why go:NPST there-towards-below Cairns-DAT

'why are you going to Cairns?'

[LN04/08/02 Elicitation]

(319) *nhul ngene pal riic-r?*

3sg(NOM) why TOWARDS run-NPST

'why/where's he running to?'

[LN02/10/02 Conversation]

The semantic range of the English term *why* is in most Australian languages subdivided into the categories REASON (ie 'for what purpose') and CAUSE (i.e. 'due to what Cause') (cf. Dixon 1980, *inter alia*). In Kuuk Thaayorre, however, these two categories appear collapsed, with both REASONS and CAUSES encoded by *ngene*. It is possible to disambiguate the CAUSE use of *ngene* 'why' by the optional suffixation of the ablative morpheme, however (as seen in [320]).

- (320) *kiin ulp ngene(-m)*  
 tooth(NOM) dem:adr.prx why(-ABL)  
 ‘why is your tooth (broken)?’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives2]

Although it is in principle possible to distinguish between a REASON and a CAUSE, these two senses overlap in some contexts. In (319), for example, it is difficult to distinguish between what has caused the running event (CAUSE) and what motivates it (REASON) – either of which could be encoded by *ngene* ‘why’. Examples like (319) also reveal a semantic overlap between *ngene* ‘why’ and *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’, linking the endpoint of a trajectory to its Purpose. This can be attributed to the fact that the Purpose of a journey can often be equated with reaching the endpoint of its trajectory (cf. the ambiguous English *goal*). According to my consultants (and substantial impressionistic evidence), *wanthan* PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> and *ngene* REASON are interchangeable in contexts such as (319).

Finally, *ngene* ‘why’ also has the sense ‘by what means’ when inflected for ergative(=instrumental) case, as in (321).

- (321) *yak ith ngene-rr thernga-rr?*  
 snake(ACC) dem:dist why-ERG kill-P.PFV  
 ‘what did they kill that snake with?’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

Rather than adding a third ontological category (MEANS) to the functional range of *ngene*, however, it is better to view this interpretation as arising from the interaction between ignorative and case morpheme. Supporting the notion that the ontological category of MEANS is not lexicalised by *ngene*, is the fact that it may alternatively be encoded by the dative-marked THING ignorative, *ngan* ‘what’ (357).

- (322) “*ngan-ak yan ngancn?*” *ngancn ask-m rirk-r*  
 what-DAT go:NPST 1sg:excl(NOM) 1sg:excl(ERG) ask-TR DO-P.PFV  
 “‘how [by what means] will we go?’, we asked’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

The QUANTITY ignorative, *ngannganr* ‘how much’, is concerned with the number or proportion of a referent group:

- (323) *nhunt ngannganr pit-r?*  
 2sg(ERG) how.much hold-NPST  
 ‘how many [cigarettes] have you got?’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation]

Whilst it is possible for *ngannganr* ‘how much’ to quantify a group of humans, it is possible to specify human reference by the alternative use of *wanhwanhrr* ‘how many (people)’, as in (354).

- (324) *paanth-u wanhwanhrrul yak ii theernga-rr=unh*  
 woman-ERG how.many:ERG snake(ACC) there kill-P.PFV=3sgACC  
 ‘how many women killed that snake?’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

The TIME category (expressed by the collocation *raak ngan*, literally ‘TIME what’) includes any period or point in time (325).

- (325) *Dan raak ngan pal therk-nhan?*  
 Dan(NOM) TIME what towards return-GO&:NPST  
 ‘when / what time will Dan come back?’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

Due to the polysemy of the generic noun *raak* ‘time, place, ground’, the reverse ordering of the same lexemes can alternatively express the PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> category usually expressed by *wanthan*:

- (326) *ngul ngan raak ii-rr-kaw ngancn ranc-m*  
 then what PLACE there-towards-east 1pl:excl(NOM) jump-P.IPFV  
 ‘then we used to fly to somewhere in the east’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

The final ignorative lexicalised in Kuuk Thaayorre is *wanthanthaarr* ‘how’, illustrated by the following:

- (327) *may tea nhunt wantanthaarr mungk-r? milk-ak=okun or ngotn?*  
 VEG tea(ACC) 2sg(ERG) how eat-NPST milk-DAT=DUB or black  
 ‘how do you have your tea? With milk or black?’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]

- (77’) *nhunt wantantharr theerng-nhan?*  
 2sg(ERG) how kill-GO&:NPST  
 ‘how are you going to kill [that fish]?’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

This ignorative corresponds most closely to Mushin’s MANNER category, though its functional range is significantly wider than that of the English MANNER interrogative *how*, used here as its gloss. For example, in (175.1) the speaker uses *wanthantharr* in reference to the content of the man’s speech, as well as the manner in which he spoke:

- (328)
1. *pam nhul wantantharr=okun yik-r paanth-un ith*  
 man(NOM) 3sg(NOM) how=DUB say-P.PFV woman-DAT dem:dist  
 ‘the man said something to that woman’
  2. *ngul paanth nhul thaangka-r*  
 then woman(NOM) 3sg(NOM) smile-NPST  
 ‘and the woman smiled’  
 [FT10/02/04 RCPpilot16]

*Wanthantharr* ‘how’ is also frequently employed to question a general state of affairs, either in the past (329), present (330) or the immediate future (331):

- (329) *inh'nh wantanthaarr inhul?*  
 dem:sp.prx how this.one  
 ‘what just happened (in the movie)’  
 [GJ12/09/02 Elicitation]

(330) *Mami ngathn ii wanthantharr, home-ak*  
mum 1sgPOS(NOM) there how home-DAT  
'my mum's present state of affairs there is that she's living in a home'  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(331) *wanthantharr?*  
how  
'what now?' [i.e. what shall we do]  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

As well as encoding the ontological category of MANNER, *wanthantharr* 'how' also appears to encode the category QUALITY (i.e. 'what sort of'). In clauses like (332), for instance, the speaker employs *wanthantharr* to ask what kind of house the addressee lives in:

(332) *pormpr nhangkn wanthantharr?*  
house 2sgPOS(NOM) how  
'what is your house like?'<sup>117</sup>  
[GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

This can be distinguished as an attributive use of the ignorative, as opposed to the adverbial use in examples like (332) above. Thus the categories MANNER and QUALITY can be understood as components of a single ontological category (tentatively labelled NATURE), where the MANNER subcategory refers to the nature of an event, and the QUALITY subcategory refers to the nature of an entity.

Finally, it is worth noting that although Standard Australian English possesses no exact equivalent to Thaayorre *wanthantharr* 'how', the latter is extremely close in functional range to Pormpuraaw English *which way* (also found in most other Aboriginal English varieties).

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<sup>117</sup> I elicited the Thaayorre sentence presented in this example by asking GJ how he would ask somebody *tell me about your house*.

### 5.2.3 Functions of ignoratives

#### 5.2.3.1 Interrogative

The interrogative function is arguably the most basic of the ignorative functions. Here, the speaker requests information of a particular category (e.g. PLACE<sub>TRJ</sub> in [333]) from the hearer:

- (333) *nhunt wanthan pal yan?*  
2sg(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub> toward go:NPST  
'where are you going?'  
[common greeting]

Questions in which the interlocutor is asked to pick out a member of a restricted set (translated using English *which*), are formally identical to the corresponding simple interrogative construction in Kuuk Thaayorre:

- (334) *kapr ngan?*  
moon what  
'which month?'  
[ECh12/10/02 Elicitation]

- (335) *road wanthan?*  
road where<sub>TRJ</sub>  
'which road (are you taking)?'  
[Anon.]

The ignorative *ngan* 'what', which at its core invokes ignorance in the ontological category of THING, may also be used to create a more general interrogative mood (336).

- (336) *nhip ngan truck-ak therk-nhan?*  
2du(NOM) what truck-DAT return-GO&:NPST  
'will you two come back by truck or what?'  
[AJ27/01/02 Conversation]

Such examples, along with the ‘whatchamacallit’ usage of *ngan* ‘what’ described below, reveal it to be the most semantically general of the ignoratives.

### 5.2.3.2 Indefinite pronoun

The indefinite pronoun use characterises the ignorative’s referent in terms of the existential quantifier (i.e. ‘there exists some entity in this category for which the following is true’). Thus in (337) the PERSON ignorative *wanhul* ‘who:ERG’ indicates that ‘there exists some PERSON for whom it is true [that they ate it]’, while in (338) the ignorative *wanthanngun* indicates ‘there exists some PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> (in the south) for which it is true [that this thing is located there]’.

(337) *wanhul=okun mungka-rr*  
 who:ERG=DUB eat-P.PFV  
 ‘somebody must have eaten it’  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

(338) *ii-ø-parr, somewhere raak kuuw wanthanngun=okun*  
 there-at-south somewhere PLACE west where<sub>LOC</sub>=DUB  
 ‘[it’s] somewhere there in the south, in the west somewhere’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

In all cases where an ignorative has an indefinite function, it combines with the dubitative enclitic *=okun*. There is, therefore, never any ambiguity between the interrogative and indefinite functions. As Haspelmath (1997:21-28) has documented, it is crosslinguistically common for indefinite pronouns to be produced through the combination of ignorative/interrogative forms with suffixes and other morphemes expressing dubitative-type semantics.



### 5.2.3.3 *Free choice pronoun*

The use of ignoratives as ‘free choice’ pronouns (following Vendler’s 1967 terminology) characterises their referents in terms of the universal quantifier<sup>118</sup> (i.e. ‘for any entity in this category the following is true’). Thus in (339) the ignorative *wanthan* indicates that ‘for any PLACE<sub>LOC</sub> (he leads me), it is true [that I will follow him]’).

- (339) *wanthan=okun yith-nh nganh, ngay ak waak-r nhunh*  
 where<sub>LOC</sub>=DUB lead-SBJV 1sgACC 1sg(ERG) HORT chase-NPST 3sgACC  
 ‘anywhere he leads me I will follow on’  
 [hymn book, origin unknown]

As with the indefinite usage, the dubitative enclitic *=okun* attaches to all ignoratives functioning as free choice pronouns.

### 5.2.3.4 *Relative pronoun: ngan ‘which’*

Ignoratives may also function anaphorically, either to link an argument of the main clause with (an omitted) one in a subordinate clause<sup>119</sup> (340.2, 341), or to connect referents across clauses (342, 343). In each of these examples, square brackets (‘[]’) are used to represent boundaries between main clauses and curly brackets (‘{}’) to represent the boundaries of a subordinate clause (cf. §11 for further discussion of the structure of subordinate and coordinated clauses).

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<sup>118</sup> Though see Haspelmath’s (1997:48) and Vendler’s (1967:77) discussions of the truth-conditional differences between free choice indefinites and the universal quantifier.

<sup>119</sup> I label this function of *ngan* ‘what’ as that of a ‘relative pronoun’ in the interests of cross-linguistic comparison. It should be noted, however, that (340.2) is the only example in which it appears in a relative clause per se. *Ngan* ‘what’ is more frequently found with this function in adverbial subordinate clauses (341) and in series of conjoined or independent clauses (343).

- (340) *Ngawiyokun*<sup>120</sup>, *ngan=okun*.  
 1. I.don't.know what=DUB  
 'I don't know what it could be'
2. [*ngawiyokun yuk inh {ngan wan-ø} wun*]  
 [I.don't.know THING(NOM) dem:sp.prx {what call-INF} lie:NPST]  
 'I don't know, this thing called what is lying here'  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation / Elicitation]
- (341) [*yuk wele ith ii-ø-kuw {ngan wun rump-un}*]  
 [THING bailer.shell dem:dist there-at-west {what lie:NPST} beach-DAT]  
 'that bailer shell in the west which lies on the beach'  
 [AJ26/11/02 Conversation]
- (342) [*raak ith Wayenan*], [*ngan wan-r ii*]  
 [PLACE dem:dist Wayenan] [what tell-NPST there]  
 'that place is Wayenan, that's what it's called'  
 [AJ26/11/02 Conversation]
- (343) [*Saltpan, iikaw, raak Yaath*]. [*Yaath ngan wanr.*]  
 [Saltpan, there-at-east PLACE Yaath(ACC)] [Yaath(ACC) what tell-NPST]  
 '[on] the Saltpan out east, at Yaath. Yaath is what it's called'  
 [AJ3/02/04 Conversation]

The relative pronoun function appears to be peculiar to *ngan* 'what'<sup>121</sup> (as are the rhetorical emphasis and whatchamacallit functions described below). This is not areally unusual; the relative pronouns of Australian languages tend not to be sensitive to the semantic categories of their referent.

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<sup>120</sup> Note that the dubitative enclitic =*okun* is visible within the synchronically monomorphemic particle *ngawiyokun* 'I don't know'. This form was likely grammaticalised from the earlier encliticisation of =*okun* 'dubitative' to the affirmative particle *ngawoy* 'yes'.

<sup>121</sup> It remains possible, however, that other ignoratives would be used as relative pronouns where the referent concerned is incompatible with the THING knowledge category that *ngan* 'what' encodes.

**5.2.3.5 Rhetorical emphasis: *ngan* ‘what’**

The semantically broad ignorative *ngan* ‘what’ may also be used as a rhetorical device with emphatic effect. Thus in (344) it is used to tease the addressee by emphasising the fatness of her (my!) cheeks, while in (345) it is used to complain about the noise created by construction workers nearby.

(344) *inh'nh ngan thaa.put rika!*  
 dem:sp.prx what cheek fat  
 ‘what fat cheeks you have!’  
 [LN14/08/02 Conversation/Elicitation]

(345) *inh ngan gate peln thak-nhan-r*  
 dem:sp.prx what gate(ACC) 3pl(ERG) leave-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 “what are these people putting up the gates!”  
 [ME02/10/02 Conversation]

**5.2.3.6 *Whatchamacallit*: *ngan* ‘what’**

The THING ignorative *ngan* may also function as a filler term (roughly equivalent to English *whatchamacallit*). Illustrating this usage, in example (346) the speaker wishes to mark his identification of the vessel (whether dinghy or canoe) as uncertain or inexact.

(346) *yuunhul ith ngan kar pam.nhump ulp pam.koyethnith ngathn*  
 that.one dem:dist what like old.man dem:adr.prx great.grandfather 1sgPOS  
 “that thing like my Great Great grandfather [what was his name?]”  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

The filler usage occurs where the speaker has trouble retrieving a lexeme, (347):

(347) *ngul ngancn irra dinghy-ak yat, ngan canoe-ak*  
 then 1pl:excl(NOM) to.there dinghy-DAT go:P.PFV what canoe-DAT  
 ‘then we went off in a dinghy, or canoe or whatever’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Directly related to the generalised ignorative function of expressing a lack of knowledge, in examples like (346) and (347), the speaker temporarily lacks access to the label of the ignorative's referent, rather than lacking knowledge as to its identity.

### 5.2.3.7 *Apprehensive counterfactual ngene 'why'*

*Ngene* 'why' has a specialised usage I am labelling 'apprehensive counterfactual'. *Ngene* in these clauses expresses that something undesirable might have happened (or might happen in the future) but that it was (or should be) avoided. It is thus typically employed in the description of a lucky escape (348).

- (348) *ngay*      *nearly punth*      *inh*      *ngene lose-m rirk-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) nearly arm(ACC) dem:sp.prx why lose-TR DO-GO&:NPST  
 "nearly lost my arm!"  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

The apprehensive counterfactual interpretation seems to result from the combination of the ignorative *ngene* 'why' with either an associated motion or counterfactual-marked verb. This pairing is therefore analysed as an apprehensive counterfactual construction, and discussed in more detail in §10.4.2.

### 5.2.4 Ignorative morphosyntax

Ignoratives may function pronominally (349), adnominally (350) and quasi-adverbially (inasmuch as they modify the clause as a whole, [77]).

- (349) *wanhul*      *church*      *inh*      *yump-m?*  
 who:ERG church dem:sp.prx make-P.IPFV  
 'who built that church?'  
 [LN06/09/02 Elicitation]

- (350) *pam wanhngun kot mit pork yik-m?*  
man who:DAT God(NOM) work big(ACC) say-P.IPFV  
'to what man did God speak of this huge task?'  
[Hall 1972:114]

- (351) *nhunt wanthanthaarr theerng-nhan?*  
2sg(ERG) how kill-GO&:NPST  
'how are you going to kill [that fish]?'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

Where an ignorative functions adnominally, there is a strong tendency for it to directly follow the NP head. There is significant variation, however, in the case marking of both NP and ignorative. There are four logical possibilities here, all of which are attested in my data. Firstly, case may be marked on the NP head and not the following ignorative (352). Secondly, case may be marked on the ignorative but not the preceding NP head (353). Thirdly, both the ignorative and NP head may be marked for case (354). Finally, it is possible for neither ignorative nor NP head to be marked for a grammatical function that would normally require signalling via case (355).

- (352) *parr\_r paanth-u ngannganr wuuc mi'im peln?*  
child woman-ERG how.much song(ACC) pick.up:P.IPFV 3pl(ERG)  
'how many of the girls were singing corroborees?'  
[Hall 1972:114]

- (353) *yuk ngene-rr thernga-rr?*  
THING why<sup>122</sup>-ERG kill-P.PFV  
'with what sort of stick did they kill him?'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>122</sup> The ignorative *ngene* 'why' may be used to encode a Means (as in example [353]) as well as a Cause or a Reason.

- (354) *paanth-u wanhwanhrrul yak ii theernga-rr=unh?*  
 woman-ERG how.many.people:ERG snake(ACC) there kill-P.PFV=3sg(ACC)  
 ‘how many woman killed the snake?’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

- (355) *pormpr wanthan nheman nhul ripi-rr?*  
 house where<sub>TRJ</sub> from.there 3sg(NOM) exit-P.PFV  
 ‘which house did he come out of?’  
 [LN27/01/04 Elicitation]

This last absence of overt case marking is always found with the three ignoratives containing the phonemic string /*wan̩tan*/ (i.e. *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’, *wanthanngun* ‘where<sub>LOC</sub>’ and *wanthanthaarr* ‘how’), none of which permit case inflection. Where ablative case marking of *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’ may be semantically desirable, the same effect is achieved by combining this ignorative with the adverb *nheman* ‘from there’, as in (355).

This variation in the locus of case marking may be symptomatic of a deeper ambivalence with respect to the degree of syntactic integration of the ignorative within the noun phrase. This issue is revisited in Chapter 6’s discussion of the structure of the Thaayorre noun phrase.

Ignoratives functioning pronominally may also bear case, as seen in the ablative marking of *raak ngan* ‘when’ in (356) and the dative marking of *ngan* ‘what’ in (357).

- (356) *church inh raak ngan-tam than-m?*  
 church(NOM) dem:sp.prx TIME what-ABL stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘how long has the church been here?’  
 (lit. ‘from what time has the church been standing?’)  
 [LN6/9/02 Elicitation]

- (357) “*ngan-ak yan ngancn?*” *ngancn ask-m rirk-r*  
 what-DAT go:NPST 1sg:excl(NOM) 1sg:excl(ERG) ask-TR DO-P.PFV  
 ‘‘how [by what means] will we go?’’, we asked’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Besides the variation in the presence or absence of case marking, there is also variation in the form this case marking takes. In particular, the case marking of *wanh* ‘who’ reinforces its status as intermediate between pronouns and (modifying) nomina. Like a nomen, the unmarked form *wanh* is used with the grammatical functions of both intransitive subject and direct object. Its ergative form, *wanhul* (seen in [349]), however, resembles the unmarked nominative/ergative third person singular pronoun, *nhul* ‘s/he’ (perhaps pointing to a diachronic origin in the compounding of *wanh+nhul*). There are likewise three dative forms of *wanh* ‘who’ in my data. The first of these (*wanhngun*, seen in [350] above) resembles the dative inflection of cardinal pronouns (e.g. *ngampulngun* ‘to us [plural, excl.]’, *ngalngun* ‘to us two [incl.]’). The second (*wanhulak*, [358]) is composed of the nomen dative suffix *-ak* attached to the ergative ignorative form, *wanhul*. Third variant (*wanhulngun*, [359]) combines both the ergative ignorative form and the pronominal-type inflection.

- (358) *ngul nhul irra yat. Inhul wanhulak.*  
 then 3sg(NOM) to.there go:P.PFV this.one who:DAT  
 ‘then she went off to some other man’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

- (359) *ngat ulp wanhulngun wan-ø?*  
 fish(ACC) dem:adr.prx who:DAT give-NPST  
 ‘who are you giving that fish to?’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

The fact that two of the dative variants are built upon the (present day) ergative form *wanhul*, may suggest that *wanhul* was originally an unmarked pronominal form of the ignorative (cf. *nhul* ‘s/he’), and not necessarily associated with ergativity. However, its current usage points to its being — synchronically at least — ergative-marked.

While Mushin (1995:22) asserts: “in other languages, and not just in Australian languages, there is a strong tendency for [ignoratives - AG] to occur clause-initially”, the reverse is true of Kuuk Thaayorre. Although the ignoratives have no fixed position in the clause, it is extremely rare for an ignorative to appear in the clause-initially position. Instead, they tend to precede the (usually clause-final) predicate (360), or to occur as a clause-final complement in a verbless clause (361).

(360) *paanth ith wanh=okun yan?*  
 woman(NOM) dem:dist who=DUB go:NPST  
 “which is that lady there coming?”  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(361) *nhunt nhamp wanh?*  
 2sg(NOM) name(NOM) who  
 ‘what’s your name?’  
 [Anon.]

### 5.3 Demonstratives

The Thaayorre demonstratives are indexical forms that (potentially) locate entities along a distance scale (cf. Himmelmann 1996:210). Their wide range of functions involves indexing entities and other ‘demonstrati’ (Hanks 2005) according to: situational information (e.g. distance from speaker or addressee), activation status (e.g. new referents or those that are deactivated, in focus, common knowledge, etc.), or discourse function (e.g. identificational, contrastive, anaphoric, etc.). Because pronominal and adnominal demonstratives share the same range of functions, these are discussed together in §5.3.3. Furthermore, although the formal and diachronic evidence suggests the split between the two subclasses is founded in the distinction between pronominal and adnominal functions, it is synchronically commonplace for the demonstrative pronouns to function adnominally and — to a lesser extent — the adnominal pronouns to function pronominally (i.e. indexing non-elliptically).



Kuuk Thaayorre offers no evidence to contradict Himmelmann's (1996:206) observation that "in some languages, the pronominal forms are morphologically more complex than the adnominal ones and are clearly derived from the latter. The opposite, however, does not seem to occur". Certainly the Thaayorre demonstrative pronouns are longer in form than the adnominal demonstratives and permit more complex and more widespread inflection. We may further speculate that the demonstrative pronoun *inh'nhul* 'this one' was historically produced through the compounding and grammaticalisation of the speaker-proximal adnominal demonstrative *inh* and the third person singular cardinal pronoun *nhul*. Although my corpus does not contain an obvious bridging context in which the juxtaposition of these latter two forms might have been reanalysed as a single demonstrative pronoun, there are many instances of the distal adnominal demonstrative being immediately followed by a coreferential third person singular pronoun (362-363). It is easy to imagine how a new demonstrative pronoun could emerge in such contexts.

- (362) *pam iipal ith nhul yat*  
man(NOM) from.there dem:dist 3sg(NOM) go:P.PFV  
'the man went from over there'  
[FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot21]

- (363) *pam-al ith nhul may carrot knife-nthurr*  
man-ERG dem:dist 3sg(ERG) VEG carrot(ACC) knife-ERG  
  
*thongkthongkn yak<ak>e-rr*  
pieces cut<RDP>-P.PFV  
'the man cut the carrot into pieces with a knife'  
[LN3/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break10]

Given the formal, semantic and functional overlap between adnominal and demonstrative pronouns, we might ask what contexts and communicative requirements differentiate them. This question is surprisingly difficult to answer, and there are indeed numerous clauses in which both adnominal and pronominal

demonstratives co-index a single demonstratum (as in [364], which additionally contains a coreferential cardinal pronoun).

- (364) *ngul nhul inh'nhul ulp koo<ko>pe-ø*  
 then 3sg(NOM) this.one dem:adr.prx wait<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘this one [dog] here’s waiting [for me]’  
 “he waitin for me”  
 [ECh2/10/02 Conversation]

One obvious difference between adnominal and pronominal demonstratives is the fact that the latter are used more contrastively. Thus in (365.1) the adnominal demonstrative is used in the initial introduction of the referent (a type of pandanus palm), while the pronominal demonstrative is used in (365.2) in order to contrast it with other kinds of pandanus palm.

- (365)
1. *inh korngkulm wan-r inhul*  
 dem:sp.prx pandanus.sp.tell-NPST this.one  
 ‘this is called a *korngkulm* [pandanus sp.], this one’
  2. *inhul ngancn wan-r yencr*  
 this.one 1pl:excl(NOM) tell-NPST pandanus.sp.  
 ‘[whereas] this one we call *yencr*’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation / Narrative Yencr]

### 5.3.1 Demonstrative pronouns

#### 5.3.1.1 Morphology of demonstrative pronouns

The indexical subclass of demonstrative pronouns is primarily divided into proximal and distal forms, for each of which there is an unmarked, a dative and an ablative form, as seen in Table 55.

	Unmarked	Allative	Ablative
proximal	<i>inh'nhul</i> 'this one'	<i>inh'nhungun</i> 'to this one'	<i>inh'nheman</i> 'from this one'
distal	<i>yuunh'nhul</i> 'that one'	<i>yuunh'nhungun</i> 'to that one'	<i>yuunh'nheman</i> 'from that one'

Table 55. Core demonstrative pronouns.

These six forms can be segmented into an initial morpheme coding distance, followed by a bound demonstrative pronominal root, followed by a suffix coding case. This is represented in Table 56.

prefix	root	case inflections
<i>i-</i> 'prox'	<i>-nh'nh-</i>	<i>-ul</i> (nominative, ergative, accusative)
<i>yuu-</i> 'dist'		<i>-ungun</i> (dative) <i>-eman</i> (ablative)

Table 56. Putative prefix-root-suffix demonstrative pronominal paradigm.

The morphemes of the initial, distance slot are transparently related to both the spatial adverbs *ii* 'there', *yuuw* 'far' and the prefixes *ii-* 'there' and *yuu-* 'far' found in the directional paradigm (§11.4.2.3). The final case suffixes *-ungun* '-DAT' and *-eman* '-ABL' likewise resemble the deictic adverbs *angun(p)* 'at/to there' and *nheman(p)* 'from there' respectively. This is unsurprising; in many of the world's languages the demonstrative pronoun class cross-cuts other more syntactically, morphologically and functionally homogeneous word classes like adverbs (cf. Diessel 1999, Evans 2000, Dixon 2003, inter alia).

Whilst there is no obvious free counterpart to the bound demonstrative pronoun root, *-nh'nh-*, the resemblance between the unmarked demonstrative pronoun *inh'nhul* 'this one' and the adnominal demonstrative *inh* 'this', and the third person singular nominative pronoun *nhul* 's/he' is extremely suspicious, especially given Himmelmann's (1996:206) observation:

*In almost all cases where one is familiar with the historical sources, definite articles as well as 3rd person pronouns historically derive (are grammaticized) from demonstratives.*

In further support of the diachronic priority of the ‘unmarked’ case forms of the demonstrative pronouns (*inh’nhul* ‘this one’ and *yuunh’nhul* ‘that one’) is the fact that they may combine with the case suffixes normally affixed to nomina. Hence in (366) and (367) the suffix *-ak* marks the dative case of *yuunhul*, while in (368) the instrumental adjunct *inh’nhulthurr* ‘using this one’ is marked by the nomen ergative case suffix *-thurr*.

- (366) *try.best rirk-ø ngancn yuunh’nhul-ak ulp*  
 try.best DO-NPST 1pl(NOM) that.one-DAT dem:adr.prx  
 ‘that’s why we’re trying best for that thing’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]
- (367) *kanangkarr ngancn kaar learn-m rirk-r yuunh’nhul-ak*  
 long.ago 1pl(NOM) NEG learn-VBLZ DO-P.PFV that.one-DAT  
*paath ruc-ak ulp*  
 fire ash-DAT dem:adr.prx  
 ‘long ago we didn’t learn [how to do] this one with ashes’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation / Narrative Yencr]
- (368) *pipe inh’nhul-thurr log.cabin kar pathr kaalkurrc*  
 pipe this.one-ERG log.cabin(ACC) like bite-NPST cool  
 ‘log cabin smokes coolly in this pipe’  
 [ME02/10/02 Conversation]

The affixation of these suffix forms is relatively infrequent, however, and might be attributed to obsolescence<sup>123</sup> rather than a meaningful paradigmatic contrast between, e.g., *inh'nhungun* 'to this one' and *inhul-ak* 'this one-DAT'.

In addition to the six forms presented in 5.3.1.1a-b, there is a seventh demonstrative pronoun *inh'nhaka* 'at/to this place' used to index the location of speech. This can be seen in (369).

- (369) *inhaka*      *born*    *rirk-r*.  
at.this.place born DO-P.PFV  
'[all my children] were born here [in Pormpuraaw]'  
[ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

Just as there is a formal and semantic correspondence between the demonstrative pronoun forms *inh'nheman* 'from this one' ~ *yuunh'nheman* 'from that one' and the free deictic adverb *nheman* 'from there', so too *inh'nhaka* 'to/at this place' corresponds with the free adverbial form (*nh*)*aka* 'here'. These correspondences can, however, be attributed to the repeated and continuing reanalysis of the morphological make up of demonstrative pronouns; their roots, affixes and free forms with which they form syntactic units. Just as the free forms *ii* 'there' and *yuuw* 'far away' were likely reanalysed as prefixes (*ii-* 'proximal' and *yuu-* 'distal'), and may even have been further reanalysed as part of the demonstrative stem, so too may the free form *nheman* 'from there' have been reanalysed as an ablative suffix *-eman*. Conversely, the final two syllables of ablative-inflected *inh'nheman* 'from this one' may have been reanalysed as the stem (cf. Koch 1996), allowing *nheman* 'from there' to be used as a free form for the first time.

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<sup>123</sup> It seems reasonable that language learners might regularise the case system by over extending nomen morphology to the demonstrative pronominal paradigm (which otherwise displays irregular case inflection). While this explanation is weakened somewhat by the fact that all of these examples were uttered by middle aged and elder speakers, their speech nevertheless shows numerous other signs of English influence.

Finally, it is worth noting that the difference in distance that forms the basis of the semantic contrast between the proximal demonstrative pronoun (*inh'nhul*) and the distal (*yuunhul*) cannot be quantified in absolute terms. Thus the demonstratum of *inhul* ‘this one’ in (370) is significantly further from the locus of the speech event than is the demonstratum of *yuunhul* ‘that one (far away)’ in (371).

(370) *raak thaapirri inhul, Station Creek*  
place nearby this.one Station Creek  
‘Station Creek, that place is nearby’  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(371) *pam-al ii radio yuunhul too.high yik<ik>a-n-r!*  
man-ERG there radio that.one too.high say<RDP>-V^-NPST  
‘(those) people are playing that (radio) too loud!’  
[GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

What counts as ‘proximal’ and what ‘distal’ instead emerges from the interactional, physical, psychological and cultural context constructed by interlocutors in part through their use of the demonstratives and other indexical elements themselves (cf. Clark et al. 1983, Burenhult 2003, Enfield 2003a Hanks 2005, inter alia). Disentangling the respective contributions of each of these factors to determining demonstrative selection is too complex a task to be achieved here. The following subsections merely outline the key semantic oppositions between demonstratives, their distributions and functions.

### 5.3.1.2 Syntax of demonstrative pronouns

As their name suggests, demonstrative pronouns may be used to make (non-elliptical) reference to entities (372). Additionally, in clauses like (373) a demonstrative pronoun and a nomen-headed noun phrase corefer to the same entity.

(372) *inhul ngay thaangk-m*  
 this.one 1sg(NOM) climb-P.IPFV  
 ‘I used to climb these ones [trees]’  
 [AC04/06/051 Conversation]

(373) *wa’ap inhul ii-ø-parr-op*  
 river(NOM)this.one there-at-south-river  
 ‘this river down in the south’  
 [ME28/10/02 Conversation]

Where demonstrative pronouns are used in conjunction with a coreferential nomen-headed noun phrase, they may either retain their pronominal function or they may function adnominally. In the first case, the pronominal demonstrative and coreferential noun phrase are apposed in the same case, contributing information about a single entity (thereby united in LFG’s ‘f-structure’) yet syntactically independent at the level of surface structure. This can be seen in (367), repeated below, in which both the demonstrative pronoun *yuunhulak* ‘for that one’ and the following noun phrase *paath rucak ulp* ‘for that ash’ are inflected for dative case.

(367‘) *kanangkarr ngancn kaar learnm rirkr yuunhul-ak*  
 long.ago 1pl(NOM) NEG learn-VBLZ DO-P.PFV that.one-DAT  
  
*paath ruc-ak ulp*  
 fire ash-DAT dem:adr.prx  
 ‘long ago we didn’t learn how to do this one with ashes’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation]

Where the demonstrative pronoun functions adnominally, it appears within the nomen-headed NP, and bears the single exponent of the case assigned to the noun phrase as a whole. Hence in (368), the demonstrative pronoun *inhulthurr* ‘this one:ERG’ takes an ergative case suffix to indicate the instrumental role of the NP *pipe inhulthurr* ‘this pipe’, indicating that it is the final constituent of the NP. Conversely, the fact that *pipe* is not inflected for case indicates that it is not the final constituent of the NP.

(368<sup>c</sup>) *pipe inhul-thurr log.cabin kar pathr kaalkurrc*  
pipe this.one-ERG log.cabin(ACC) like bite-NPST cool  
'log cabin smokes coolly in this pipe'  
[ME02/10/02 Conversation]

The place of demonstrative pronouns within the noun phrase is considered further in Chapter 6.

### 5.3.2 Adnominal demonstratives

#### 5.3.2.1 Adnominal demonstrative categories

Kuuk Thaayorre makes use of three basic adnominal demonstratives; *ith* 'that (distal)', *inh* 'this (speaker-proximate)', and *ulp* 'the (addressee-proximate)'. The semantic oppositions that distinguish these forms cannot be captured through a purely 'spatialist' characterisation (i.e. relating demonstratives to one another along a distance scale of relative proximity to the speaker and/or addressee). As Hanks (2005:197) has pointed out, "under many circumstances, what counts most for proper construal of the referent object is not its location but its accessibility in memory, anticipation, perception, or prior discourse". But neither can Thaayorre demonstrative semantics be adequately captured through a purely 'interactionist' characterisation<sup>124</sup>. The more accurate, holistic description of Thaayorre demonstrative deixis — taking into account the multiple perspectives of interactants, their attention, shared knowledge, memory, prior discourse, physical environment, cultural context and so on — is a complex task demanding both deep qualitative and expansive quantitative study. Accordingly, the following discussion should be taken as a broad overview of some of the relevant factors, a more thoroughgoing analysis being deferred to future research.

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<sup>124</sup> In particular, the Thaayorre deictic system defies decomposition into a set of features, such as Choi's (1999, 2001) '+/-NEW' and '+/-PROMINENT', although these features undoubtedly enter into the online construction of deictic categories.



If we remove discourse and cultural context as far as possible by concentrating upon speakers using the demonstratives exophorically to draw the addressee's attention to an entity (as systematically investigated through the Wilkins 1999 elicitation questionnaire), the semantic contrast between the three adnominal demonstratives can be characterised in terms of accessibility to speaker and/or addressee. This is evident in the comparison of (374a-c).

- (374a) *yuk*            *ith*            *murk*  
 stick(NOM) dem:dist other's.pos<sup>125</sup>  
 'those cigarettes [on the far side of the room from you and me] are someone else's'
- (b) *yuk*            *inh*            *murk*  
 stick(NOM) dem:sp.prx other's.pos  
 'these cigarettes [that I hold in my hand] are someone else's'
- (c) *yuk*            *ulp*            *murk*  
 stick(NOM) dem:adr.prx other's.pos  
 'those cigarettes [that you are picking up over there] are someone else's'  
 [LN14/08/02 Elicitation]

*Ith* 'that (distal)' is used to index an object that is inaccessible to both speaker and hearer. The 'proximal' demonstrative *inh* 'this' is used to index an object accessible to the speaker, while the 'addressee-proximate' demonstrative *ulp* indexes an object accessible to the addressee and not the speaker. This alternation between *inh* and *ulp* is particularly obvious in dialogue, where the same object (in the personal sphere of interlocutor-a) will be referred to as *inh* by interlocutor-a (signalling proximity to the speaker) but as *ulp* by interlocutor-b (signalling proximity to the addressee), as seen in (375).

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<sup>125</sup> The adjective *murk*, meaning 'belonging to somebody else', is glossed 'OTHER'S POSSESSION'.

(375) *ant inh ngan?*

1. A: *ant(NOM) dem:sp.prx what*

‘what kind of ant is this? [pointing to ant on her own shoulder]’

2. B: *mooln ulp.*

*small.brown.ant.sp. dem:adr.prx*

‘that’s a *mooln*’

[EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives3]

Where the demonstratum is equally accessible to both speaker and addressee, the speaker-proximate form *inh* is used. On the basis of these data alone, we might posit a componential analysis along the lines of Table 57.

	<i>ith</i>	<i>inh</i>	<i>ulp</i>
<b>Accessible to Speaker</b>	-Spr	+Spr	-Spr
<b>Accessible to Addressee</b>	-Addr	+/-Addr	+Addr

Table 57. Putative componential analysis of adnominal demonstratives

It is important to note, however, that the adnominal demonstratives have a wide range of functions that cannot be thus reduced. The terms ‘proximal’ and ‘distal’ are used here for the benefit of cross-linguistic comparison, but in a broader sense than that with which they are typically used (which has strong spatial connotations). Hence what is ‘proximal’ is not only ‘here’, but also ‘now’, is accessible to touch and/or memory, is local in terms of culture and/or personal and familial allegiances, and so on. These contextual factors that speakers draw upon in selecting a demonstrative appear related along a cline, such that those at one end can be overridden by those towards the other. The spatial dimension ranks lowest on this cline, while the interactional dimension (in particular, the context of preceding discourse) ranks highly, with most other dimensions (including time) falling somewhere in between. Thus where the proximity rating of a demonstratum is low in spatial terms but high in

interactional terms we would expect the interactional feature to win out, with the proximal demonstrative being selected. This can be seen in (89.4), in which the time period referred to by *raak inh* ‘this (proximal) time’ is clearly distal (as made explicit by the speaker in the following clause), yet this is ‘outranked’ by the fact that the time period is the topic of conversation (being previously questioned by the interlocutor) and thus proximal in terms of both the speaker’s and addressee’s memory and attention.

(376)

1. GJ: *kaar rirk-m ngay mit.*  
 NEG DO-P.IPFV 1sg(NOM) work  
 ‘I wasn’t able to work’
  
2. *yuunhul ngay money sick pay mi'im.*  
 that.one 1sg(ERG) money sick pay(ACC) pick.up:P.IPFV  
 ‘I collected that sick pay’
  
3. AG: *raak ngan?*  
 TIME what  
 ‘when was that?’
  
4. GJ: *raak inh nineteen seventy. Long time, long time minc.*  
 TIME dem:sp.prx nineteen seventy long time long time really  
 ‘this was in nineteen seventy. A long time ago, a very long time ago.’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Similarly, in (377) the speaker uses the addressee-proximate demonstrative *ulp* to index an out-of-sight location, thereby signalling her expectation that the addressee is familiar with the demonstratum<sup>126</sup> (through shared local / cultural knowledge and the context of the preceding discourse).

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<sup>126</sup> It is for this reason that I glossed *ulp* ‘dem:fam (familiar to addressee)’ in previous works.

- (377) *station ulp ngathn*  
station(NOM) dem:adr.prx 1sgGEN  
'that station belongs to my family'  
[EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives25]

For similar reasons, *ulp* 'the (addressee-proximate)' is frequently used to mark narrative topics since these are expected to be within the current attention of the addressee. In (378), for example, the speaker is responding to his interlocutor's stated plan of going swimming in a lake an hour's drive away.

- (378) *ngok ulp kaalkurrc*  
water(NOM) dem:adr.prx cold  
'[but] the water's cold!'  
[GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA36]

This anaphoric use diverges from the componential analysis presented in Table 57, however, since the topic should be equally 'proximal' to the speaker's attention and therefore coded by *inh* 'this (speaker-proximate)'.

Section 5.3.3 outlines more fully the range of situational and non-situational functions with which Thaayorre demonstratives are used, relating these to the taxonomy of 'universal' demonstrative uses identified by Himmelmann (1996).

### 5.3.2.2 Morphosyntax of adnominal demonstratives

Despite their name, adnominal demonstratives may function both adnominally (379) and pronominally (380).

- (379) *yak ith kaar wonp-r*  
snake(NOM) dem:dist NEG die-P.PFV  
'the snake didn't die'  
[AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

- (380) *kanpa inh kerp-ø, yup yan!*  
 before dem:sp.prx finish-IMP soon go:NPST  
 ‘finish this first, go later!’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation]

In their adnominal function, these demonstratives occupy a dedicated ‘specifier’ position at the right periphery of the NP (following N’ – cf. §6.4). Since case inflection occurs at the right edge of N’ (§6.5), the adnominal demonstrative directly follows the case marked nomen and does not bear case itself, as seen in (381) and (382).

- (381) [*paanth-u ith*] *light keempe-nhan*  
 woman-ERG dem:dist light(ACC) extinguish-V^  
 ‘the woman turned off the light’  
 [AJ8/02/04 Elicitation ]

- (382) *learn-m rirk-m ngay [school-ak ulp]*  
 learn-TR DO-P.IPFV 1sg(ERG) school-DAT dem:adr.prx  
 ‘I learned at that [bush] school’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Because pronouns constitute an N’ of themselves, they may combine with adnominal demonstratives to form a single NP. In such cases, the adnominal demonstrative functions to restrict the reference of a potentially ambiguous cardinal pronoun (383) or demonstrative pronoun (384).

- (383) *nhul inh pam kon*  
 3sg(NOM) dem:sp.prx MAN short  
 ‘she’s short’  
 [EF15/12/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

- (384) *inhul ulp, peln Donald, Cyril,*  
 this.one dem:adr.prx 3pl(NOM) Donald(NOM) Cyril(NOM)

*peln ulp walmeerem=unh*  
 3pl(NOM) dem:adr.prx be.knowledgeable.of=3sgACC  
 ‘these ones here, Donald and Cyril and them, they remember him’  
 [AJ26/11/02 Conversation]

Exceptionally, my data contains just a handful of examples in which the ‘addressee-proximate’ demonstrative is case inflected on behalf of the NP as a whole. In (385), *ulp* is marked for the ergative case of the subject argument *minh ulp* ‘that dog’, where it would normally be the preceding nomen (*minh* ‘animal’) that would inflect for case. In (386), *ulp* functions pronominally and again receives ergative case (though interestingly this is marked by a different ergative allomorph to that in [385]<sup>127</sup>) to indicate its demonstratum’s role as Instrument.

(385) *minh ulp-thn patha-rr nganh*  
 MEAT dem:adr.prx-ERG bite-P.PFV 1sgACC  
 ‘that dog bit me’  
 [Hall 1972:388]

(386)

1. *yuk wele ith ii-ø-kuw ngan wun rump-un*  
 THING bailer.shell(NOM) dem:dist there-at-west what lie:NPST beach-DAT  
 ‘that bailer shell in the west that is found on the beach’
2. *yokunman use-m rirk-m*  
 same.way use-TR DO-P.IPFV  
 ‘[we’d] use [them] like that’

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<sup>127</sup> Indeed, this allomorphic variation, in conjunction with the extreme rarity of adnominal demonstrative case inflection, may suggest that the case marking of *ulp* ‘the (addressee-proximate)’ is a recent innovation.

3. *ulp-nthrr ngok mi'im*  
 dem:adr.prx-ERG water(ACC) pick.up:P.IPFV  
 ‘[we] would fetch water using those’  
 [AJ26/11/02 Conversation]

Rather than revising my analysis of case marking to allow *ulp* to remain in the specifier NP slot for these very few aberrant cases, it is more parsimonious to allow *ulp* to appear within the N’ (in the position of final modifier) and therefore receive the case assigned to that position.

### 5.3.3 Functions of demonstratives

The range of demonstrative functions can be broadly divided into situational (also labelled ‘exophoric’) and non-situational (‘endophoric’) uses<sup>128</sup>. Situational uses are commonly characterised as the indexation of entities within the immediate speech context, though this simplification has been revealed as a convenient fiction by Hanks (2005)<sup>129</sup>. Nevertheless, the indexation of entities in the immediate speech environment (*demonstratio ad oculos* in Bühler’s 1934 terms) falls clearly within the core of situational demonstrative usage. This is illustrated by the use of the adnominal demonstrative *inh* ‘this’ in (281) and the pronominal demonstrative *inhul* ‘this one’ in (387).

- (281’) *Jessica, hat inh nhangkn?*  
 Jessica hat(NOM) dem:sp.prx 2sgGEN  
 ‘Jessica, is this hat yours?’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives16]

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<sup>128</sup> Throughout this section I follow Himmelmann’s (1996) terminology wherever appropriate, though this has been supplemented by additional terminology in places.

<sup>129</sup> Hanks (2005:191) has instead shown deictic practice to be “an emergent construal of socially embedded deictic fields”.

- (387) *ngat inhul ngat thermp*  
 FISH(nom) this.one FISH salmon  
 ‘this fish is a salmon’  
 [GJ28/10/02 Elicitation]

Situational uses of demonstratives are frequently accompanied by pointing gestures towards the entity (or other demonstratum) in question. Most situational tokens in my data have the communicative function of attention-getting, particularly where a contrast is being made between multiple potential referents. In (281), for example, the speaker is directing Jessica’s attention towards a particular hat, in order to ask whether it is hers. In (387), the speaker directs the addressee (me) towards a particular fish in order to specify its species (in contrast with other nearby fish of other species). Furthermore, my corpus is filled with demonstratives used situationally in the context of photo-matching games (an elicitation task in which two consultants have to collaborate through verbal description to find two matching pictures), where the speaker will point to a series of pictures asking *inhul?* ‘[is it] this one?’ (e.g. in [TJ12/01/04 Elicitation Man&Tree]).

Also classed as ‘situational’ is the use of demonstratives to index locations (388-391).

- (388) *may riitham ii-ø-kaw inh, Yulu*  
 VEG bulguru(NOM) there-at-east dem:sp.prx Yulu  
 ‘there’s bulguru<sup>130</sup> just here in the east, at Yulu’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation / Narrative Yencr]

- (389) *yuuw kaar-p yat, nhul inhul*  
 far NEG-PRAG go:P.PFV 3sg(NOM) this.one  
 ‘he hasn’t gone off, he’s here’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>130</sup> Bulguru is also known as ‘water chestnut’, or *Eleocharis dulcis*.



(390) *camping wun-m peln inh'nhngun.*  
 camping lie-P.IPFV 3pl(NOM) dem.pro:DAT  
 'people must have camped here'  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

(391) *pokon, inh'nhaka Daycare*  
 no in.this.place Daycare  
 'no, [he works at nearby] Daycare [not the more distant Canteen]'  
 [Anon]

Just as the opposition between proximal and distal demonstrative forms may be used situationally to contrast demonstrati within the (contextually defined) interactional sphere with those outside it, so too may this opposition be exploited to contrast demonstrati existing in the present era with those in distant time periods (via the metaphorical schema WHAT IS HERE IS NOW). In (392.1), for example, the speaker begins by pointing towards my water bottle and commenting that nowadays people drink *inh* 'this' water from a tap. This is a case of straightforward situational indexation to an entity in the speech environment, though the demonstratum (my water bottle) could be understood to symbolise a broader referent (modern day tap water in general). In the second clause, however, the speaker contrasts this water with *yuunhul* 'that one (far away)' that people drank in the old times.

(392) *ngok inh yoorr tap water-tam mungk-r inh*  
 1. water(ACC) dem:sp.prx now tap water-ABL drink-NPST dem:sp.prx  
 'nowadays we drink this tap water here'

2. *ngancn yuunhul mungk-m ngok, ngok menc mungk-m*  
 1pl:excl(ERG) that.one drink-P.IPFV water...water well(ACC) drink-P.IPFV  
 'we used to drink that [other]... well water'  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

This use of distal demonstratives to index demonstrati of distant time periods is often difficult to distinguish this from what Haviland (1993) terms 'local anchored space';

the situational indexation of a location that stands for an entity associated with it (e.g. referring to a deceased individual by indexing the house they once lived in, cf. Clark et. al. 1983, who also point out the possible nonidentity of demonstratum and referent). In (393), for example, we might assume that the selection of the distal demonstrative pronoun *yuunhul* ‘those ones [far away]’ was motivated by the time that has elapsed between the demonstrati’s being alive and the speech event.

- (393) *nganip pelnan=a work-orr thernga-rr koop yuunhul*  
 father(ACC) 3plACC=PRAG string-ERG kill-P.PFV all that.one  
 ‘those fathers [my father and his brothers] were all killed by string [sorcery]’  
 [AJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

However, the fact that the speaker gestured eastwards (towards the traditional lands of the ‘fathers’) as he uttered (393), would seem to indicate a local anchored space use of the demonstrative. Example (394) is a more obvious example of local anchored space since the speaker uses a proximal demonstrative and points to the (former) home of the demonstratum despite the fact that he had moved to Kowanyama some years prior.

- (394) *ngul nhul irra yat, inhul wanhulak.*  
 then 3sg(NOM) to.there go:P.PFV this.one who:DAT  
 “she went to other man”  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

In (395.5), the use of the distal demonstrative to refer to unfamiliar Kuuk Thaayorre dialects may also be motivated by local anchored space since the dialects are associated with lands far removed from the place of speech. Alternatively, though, the speaker may be using the distal demonstrative to emphasise the (metaphorical) distance between the dialects and his mastery thereof.

- (395)  
 1. *ngay wuuc kaar patpi-rr*  
 1sg(ERG) ceremony(ACC) NEG camp-P.PFV  
 ‘I didn’t perform in the ceremony’

2. *wuuc            ngay        kaalpurngmat*  
 ceremony(ACC) 1sg(NOM) forget:P.PFV  
 ‘I’ve forgotten the songs’
3. *kaalpurngmat kaar-p,    ngay        kaar learn-m rirk-r*  
 forget:P.PFV NEG-PRAG 1sg(ERG) NEG learn-TR DO-P.PFV  
 ‘it’s not that I’ve forgotten, I never learned’
4. *kaar    katp-m        ngay*  
 NEG    grasp-P.IPFV 1sg(ERG)  
 ‘I couldn’t grasp [them]’
5. *theep-er    **yuunhul**    too strong, theepr yuunhul        yiirr<yirr>am*  
 tongue-DAT **that.one**    too strong, tongue that.one        other<RDP>  
 ‘those ones are too strong on my tongue [i.e. hard to pronounce], those other  
 dialects’  
 “it a bit difficult on my tongue. Different tongues”  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Bühler (1934) contrasted the more concrete indexation of entities in the speech environment (*demonstratio ad oculos*) with what he termed *deixis am phantasma*, in which the speaker takes an insiders’ perspective of the event by shifting the deictic centre from the speech event to the place and time of the event itself (thereby making reference to entities outside the speech environment). This can be seen in (396), in which the speaker describes a shovel that he had at the time of the story using the proximal demonstrative, despite the fact that this shovel is nowhere near the locus of the speech event.

- (396) *ngay    inh            yuk... yuk    shovel        kal-m/        man.pert-an*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:sp.prx    THING THING shovel(ACC) carry-P.IPFV shoulder-DAT  
 ‘I was carrying a... a shovel on my shoulder’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Later in the same narrative text (397), the speaker refers to a protagonist using the distal demonstrative pronoun, in order to emphasise her distance from him at the time of the story (not at the time of speech).

- (397) *ngul yuunhul*      *nhaawr*      “*nge’!*”  
then that.one      see:P.PFV      hey  
‘then I saw her in the distance, “hey!”’  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

A particular form of *deixis am phantasma* is the phenomenon of “demonstrative reference to a part of the speaker’s body in order to indicate where something happened to a protagonist” (Himmelman 1996:221). Example (398) illustrates this use of the proximal adnominal demonstrative — in conjunction with a pointing gesture — in order to specify where exactly the protagonist might have been hit by lightning. In (399) the speaker uses the same demonstrative form while clasping his own arm in order to describe the size of a crocodile’s leg.

- (398) *paanth*      *inh=okun*      *thernga-rr*  
woman(ACC)      dem:sp.prx=DUB      hit-P.PFV  
‘[lightning] hit the woman hereabouts [points to arm]’  
[AC14/10/02 Narrative PormprRintm]

- (399) *Punth inh*      *waarr ngamal minc*  
arm      dem:sp.prx      very      large      really  
‘[his] arm was really enormous’  
[AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Finally, Himmelman (1996:221) argues persuasively for classing self-reference to a linguistic unit or act (e.g. *this article*, *in this book*) as a subtype of situational use. Almost every Thaayorre narrative begins with a demonstrative so used; (400.1) and (401.1) are just two of many examples illustrating this use of both the pronominal and adnominal proximal demonstratives.

(400)

1. *Inhul yik-nhan ngay,*  
 this.one say-GO&:NPST 1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I’m going to tell this one [story]’
  
2. *nhul minh pinc ii-ø-kuw, wuurr ko'om*  
 3sg(NOM) MEAT saltie(NOM) there-at-west fishtrap(ACC) knit:P.IPFV  
 ‘a saltwater crocodile was in the west, [he] was building a fishtrap’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

(401)

1. *Inhul kuthip inh wan<an>-nhan,*  
 dem:pro:prx story(ACC) dem:sp.prx tell<RDP>-GO&NPST  
 ‘I’m going to tell this story’
  
3. *ngay kanangkarr parr\_r mant...*  
 1sg(NOM) long.ago CHILD small  
 ‘long ago [when] I was a small child...’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

There are three major non-situational demonstrative uses. The first of these is termed ‘discourse deixis’ by Himmelmann (1996 – cf. Fillmore’s 1982 ‘text reference’). Whereas situational uses of demonstratives index entities or locations, the discourse deictic use makes reference to propositions or events. This may be done anaphorically (as in [366], which follows the speaker’s expounding at length upon the benefits of a Christian lifestyle), or cataphorically (as in [402], in which the quoted protagonist remarks on the tracks he has just spied, from which he infers that the missing man was taken by a crocodile).

- (366’) *try best rirk-ø ngancn yuunh'nhul-ak ulp*  
 try best DO-NPST 1sg(NOM) that.one-DAT dem:adr.prx  
 ‘that’s why we’re trying best for that thing [to go to heaven]’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

- (402) *“koo, inhungun... Awoy, kana. Minh-al katpa-rr.”*  
 oh dem.pro:DAT yes OK MEAT-ERG grasp-P.PFV  
 “‘oh, that’s [what happened]!... Yes, that’s it. A crocodile got him””  
 [AC13/09/02 Narrative / Conversation]

The second non-situational demonstrative use is to track the referents (or ‘protagonists’) under discussion. This is usually done anaphorically; (403), for example, was uttered towards the end of a long story concerning the whereabouts of the demonstratum, while (404) is explicit in its reference to a previously established path.

- (403) *trouble=okun yan yup, paanth-um inh’nheman*  
 trouble(NOM)=DUB go:NPST soon woman-ABL this.one:ABL  
 ‘I might get into trouble from [because of] this woman’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

- (404) *ngay ii-rr-korr therk-r, main road ith, same road.*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-outside return-P.PFV main road dem:dist same road  
 ‘I went back that way along that main road, the same road [I had come down].’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

The use of demonstratives to introduce new participants (i.e. a cataphoric tracking use) is labelled by Himmelmann as a distinct, ‘recognitional’ use. Demonstratives so employed draw on assumed shared knowledge, often with an acknowledgement that the addressee may have some difficulty retrieving the intended reference (Himmelmann 1996:231). This can be seen in (405.2), in which the speaker uses two proximal demonstratives in his first reference to the protagonist of a traditional story, with which it is reasonable to assume an addressee with a basic level of cultural fluency will be familiar.

(405)

1. *inh'nhul=ay*                      *yik,*                      *kuuk*                      *inh'nhul*  
this.one=1sg(NOM)                      say-NPST                      WORD(ACC)                      this.one  
‘I’m telling this story’
  
2. *inh*                      *minh*                      *pinc*                      *inh'nhul*  
dem:sp.prx                      MEAT                      saltie                      this.one  
‘[there was] this saltwater crocodile’
  
3. *thernga-rr=unh*  
kill-P.PFV=3sgACC  
‘[and they] killed him.’  
[DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

Whilst the use of *inh* ‘this’ and *inhul* ‘this one’ in example (405.2) may resemble use of the English proximal demonstrative to introduce a new entity into the discourse (termed ‘new-this’ by Wald 1983, and classified by Himmelmann 1996 as a kind of *Deixis am Phantasma*), these are more accurately viewed as an example of the recognitional demonstrative function, signalling the speakers expectation that the addressee should (but might not) be familiar with the referent. My Kuuk Thaayorre data does not offer any strong counterexamples to Himmelmann’s (1996:222) observation that “these *new-this*-like uses have not as yet been attested/described for languages other than English”. The function of introducing new, unfamiliar referents (as does English *new-this*) is instead performed by the quantifier *thono* ‘one’ are discussed in §6.10.2.

Related to the potential retrieval problems signalled by the recognitional demonstrative use is the use of the distal demonstrative pronoun as a marker of ‘inaccessibility’ (translated here using the Pormpuraaw English equivalent, *whatchamacallit*, cf. Enfield 2003b). There are two key types of inaccessibility, the first being the speaker’s failure to access the lexeme corresponding to the concept they wish to express. The demonstrative is used here to fill the gap in the flow of speech caused by this temporary lexical retrieval problem on the speaker’s part. In

(406), for example, the speaker has forgotten the Thaayorre term for *windpipe* (which I had asked him to translate). He therefore employs the filler form *yuunhul* while touching his own windpipe, which would of course never be indexed by a distal demonstrative under normal circumstances.

- (406) *man yuunhul inh, ngan wan-r? man-nhapn*  
 throat(ACC) that.one dem:sp.prx what tell-NPST throat-egg  
 ‘what’s this throat-whatchamacallit called? The windpipe’  
 [AJ08/02/04 Elicitation / Conversation]

The second, converse type of inaccessibility occurs where the addressee lacks access to crucial conceptual or identificational information that is necessary for them to interpret the speaker’s use of a particular term. The distal demonstrative pronoun is used here to signal the speaker’s intention to later explain the unfamiliar (to the addressee) words, phrases or concepts that follow. This can be seen in (407), in which the demonstrative *yuunhul* ‘that one (far away)’ precedes the kin term *pam meermele* ‘poison cousin’ in order to signal to the addressee that she is not expected to be familiar with this term or its significance, which the speaker then goes on to explain.

- (407) *kar yuunhul pam meermele nhul, kar nganc-le ulp*  
 like that.one MAN FZS 3sg(NOM) like sacred-PRAG dem:adr.prx  
 ‘like that whatchamacallit cousin, that’s a kind of poison relationship’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation / Conversation]

This last use is the only demonstrative function that is restricted to just a subset of Thaayorre demonstratives (i.e. the distal demonstrative pronoun).



## Chapter Six: Noun phrase syntax

### 6.1 Arguments for the existence of a NP

Unlike in some other Australian languages, there are several clear indicators of the existence of a noun phrase in Kuuk Thaayorre. These include: (a) case marking; (b) internal word order; and (c) prosody. To begin with, case suffixes are attached only to the final eligible constituent of the noun phrase. This is visible in (408):

- (408) *ngan pumun ngathn-thurr kuta theernga-rr*  
RELATIVE yB 1sgPOS-ERG dog(ACC) hit-P.PFV  
'my younger brother hit a dog'  
[LN12/12/02 Elicitation]

Whilst the ordering of constituents in the clause is pragmatically, and not syntactically, determined, word order within the noun phrase generally adheres to the following template:

- (409) NP → ((N<sub>GEN</sub>) (N<sub>SPEC</sub>)) ((Deg) Adj (Deg))\*  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(PosPro)} \\ \text{(N')} \end{array} \right\} \text{(Quant) (AdnDem)}^{131}$

The generic noun (N<sub>GEN</sub>) and specific noun (N<sub>SPEC</sub>) together enter into what I call a 'classifying construction', analysed as N in §6.2 below. This may be followed by (multiple) adjective phrase(s) composed of a (head) adjective and optional degree adverb(s), analysed in §6.3. The next (optional) constituent may be either a possessive pronoun or N' representing the possessor of the head noun (§6.5). This constituent is optionally followed by a quantifier and/or adnominal demonstrative (§6.4).

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<sup>131</sup> In its present form, the template presented in (409) could generate a zero-NP. This is a representational shortcoming rather than intended implication. It should be understood that at least one constituent of NP must be overtly realised, though it may be any of the constituents listed in (409).

Smith and Johnson (2000:388) propose a similarly invariant NP constituent order for Kugu Nganhcara, and Wilkins (1989) and McGregor (1990) also describe the fixed ordering of NP constituents in Mparntwe Arrernte and Gooniyandi respectively. It is possible, however, to permute the order of Thaayorre NP constituents for pragmatic or stylistic effect. As the brackets in (409) indicate, each element of the Thaayorre noun phrase may be omitted, including the head noun<sup>132</sup>. It is extremely rare (and distinctly odd-sounding) for all of the elements to co-occur in a single noun phrase, and no spontaneous examples of this have been recorded to date. Illustrating just two possible combinations of constituents, then, (408) above includes  $N_{\text{GEN}} - N_{\text{SPEC}} - \text{PosPro}$  and (410) below illustrates  $N_{\text{GEN}} - N_{\text{SPEC}} - \text{Adj} - \text{Adj}$ :

- (410) *minh kothon pam ngamal*  
MEAT wallaby man large  
'an enormous male wallaby'  
[Hall 1972:67]

Prosodically, the noun phrase is characterised by: (a) a lack of planned pauses; (b) a single intonation contour; (c) a single primary stress peak.

In many of the Australian languages for which a noun phrase can be identified, these are analysed as having an internally flat structure (see, e.g., Alpher 1973, Blake 2001b). The Kuuk Thaayorre NP, however, is frequently complex. Each NP is composed of a N' (described in §6.5 below), optionally specified by a demonstrative. Below the level of N', constituents may be organised into classifying constructions (N) and/or adjective phrase(s) (AdjP). Each of these subcomponents is described in the following sections.

## 6.2 N – The classifying construction

As discussed in §3.1.1, generic and specific nouns can be identified as distinct subtypes of nomen. Defined by their semantics, combinatorics and relative position

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<sup>132</sup> Wilkins (2000:150) also finds that “an overt head noun is not obligatory in a noun phrase”.

in the noun phrase, they together enter into a ‘classifying construction’ which heads the noun phrase. The characterisation of such a construction in terms of classification (following Wilkins 2000) is motivated firstly by the semantic function of generic nouns in categorising entities of social and cultural importance. Secondly, as Smith and Johnson (2000:420) note of Kugu Nganhcara, generic nouns are “similar, in both syntactic position and semantics, to the numeral classifiers of languages of Asia and Central America”. Although generic nouns do not enter into a special relationship with quantifiers, as do most numeral classifiers, this is not a necessary criterion for classification (Craig 1986). Sands (1995) treats frequency of cooccurrence with the relevant noun as the primary criterion for being labelled a classifier, according to which the Thaayorre construction should qualify as ‘classifying’. The small number of generic nouns, along with their productive combination with newly coined or introduced specific nouns, also favours such an analysis. The following subsections outline the classifying construction’s semantics, syntax, theoretical significance and role in discourse.

### 6.2.1 Semantics of the classifying construction

The generic noun in a classifying construction is usually in a superordinate or whole-part relationship to the construction as a whole (and often also of the specific noun). So, for example, the generic noun *ngat* ‘FISH’ is preposed to a large number of specific nouns referring to fish species, for instance *ngat pinporro* ‘barramundi’, but also specific nouns referring to entities otherwise (e.g. meronymically) related to fish, such as *ngat thip* ‘fish liver’.

This construction is fully productive, with introduced concepts readily incorporated into the classification system, the new specific noun usually being paired with an existing generic noun. This is exemplified by terms such as *may punan* ‘banana’ (*may* ‘plant food’), *minh pik* ‘pig’ (*minh* ‘MEAT’), or the following:

- (411) *minh tin.meat mungka-rr*  
 MEAT tinned.meat(ACC) eat-P.PFV  
 ‘[they] ate tinned meat’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation]

In Yidinj, some specific nouns can appear with two generics, one of which will characterise the inherent nature of the referent, the other its function. Thus “all birds are considered edible and so may occur either with generic *minja* ‘flesh food’ or with the generic *djarruy* ‘bird’” (Dixon 2002:456). In Kuuk Thaayorre, too, some specific nouns may occur with multiple generic nouns. Unlike in Yidinj, however, the resulting classifying constructions make entirely different reference (rather than referring to different aspects of the same referent). So, for example, *may kermpl* ‘large white berry’ refers to a kind of *may* ‘plant food’ while *minh kermpl* ‘corella’ refers to a kind of *minh* ‘MEAT’ (the generic used with all birds). This may seem typical of a classifying system, however there is a complication. In most cases where a single specific noun can occur with multiple generic nouns, it is not possible to provide a monosemous definition of the specific noun that renders the interpretation of the various classifying constructions it enters compositional. For example, it is impossible to define *kermpl* in such a way that will predict its referring to a species of bird when combined with the ‘meat’ generic, but also a type of fruit when combined with the ‘plant food’ generic. Instead, for most such specific nouns it is necessary to posit distinct senses. This most likely means that there is in fact a simple one-to-many correspondence between generic and specific nouns, with each generic noun potentially combining with numerous specific nouns, but any particular specific noun (used with just one sense) combining only with a single generic noun.

Semantically, Thaayorre generics can be characterised as classifying the entities of the world according to humans’ interaction with them, grouping together things that are manipulated or consumed in similar ways (e.g. *ngat* ‘fish’, *warrath* ‘grasses’), or individuals with whom particular social relations hold (e.g. *parr\_r* ‘child’, *ngan* ‘kin’). This categorisation is not exhaustive, however; many specific nouns never cooccur with a generic noun (e.g. *pung* ‘sun’). The semantics of each of the generic nouns are elaborated upon in §3.1.1.1.

### 6.2.2 Syntax of the classifying construction

There is a strict ordering restriction within the classifying construction, with generic nouns always preceding specifics<sup>133</sup>. Either may be omitted, however. The generic noun frequently occurs alone, often used anaphorically in referent-tracking, as is common in Australian languages (cf. §6.10.1). What is less common is the fact that the specific noun may also occur alone. Example (412) shows a specific noun used in the absence of its associated generic (*minh* ‘meat’), see (516) below for the same clause in its broader discourse context:

- (412) *pinc, nhul kar winwin=peey!*  
 salt.croc(NOM) 3sg(NOM) like fearsome=PRAG  
 ‘the saltwater crocodile, that’s *winwin*’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Elicitation/Conversation]

There is a continuum of specific nouns ranging from those that never cooccur with a generic noun (e.g. *pung* ‘sun’), to those that rarely occur without one (e.g. *ngat pinporro* ‘barramundi’). In the middle, of course, are a large number of specific nouns that are commonly found both with and without a generic. These include *ngurnturnturr* ‘nighttime’ (which may or may not follow *raak* ‘TIME, PLACE, GROUND’) and *wanhn* ‘elder brother’ (which is often preceded by *ngan* ‘RELATIVE’). This optionality of generic nouns can cause problems for transmission of the classifying system to younger speakers. Most, for instance, are unsure of whether *puuy* ‘crab’ is classified as *ngat* ‘FISH’ or *minh* ‘MEAT’ or is incompatible with any generic (the majority of my elder informants prefer *ngat puuy*).

Within a classifying construction, a generic-specific pairing can itself enter into the construction in the specific slot. This can be seen in (413), in which the classifying

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<sup>133</sup> This special relationship between the two noun types is significant since, as Wilkins (2000:162) puts it;

*In languages as renowned for their freedom of word order as the Australian languages are, any fixed ordering of elements must be considered a good candidate for a construction functioning as a unique sign with its own form, meaning and pragmatics of use.*

construction *minh patp* ‘hawk’ (literally, ‘MEAT hawk’) fills the specific slot as a single lexeme:

- (413) *ngat minh.patp*  
 FISH hawk  
 ‘stingray sp. (devil ray)’

The structure of the classifying construction can thus be schematised as in (414). Note that the construction as a whole is labelled ‘N’, to convey the fact that it is the head constituent of a larger noun phrase, but also to indicate its status as a lexical unit (as [413] shows).

$$(414) \text{ N} \rightarrow (\text{N}_{\text{GEN}}) \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (\text{N}_{\text{SPEC}}) \\ (\text{N}) \end{array} \right\}$$

Within the classifying construction itself, the question of headedness is less easy to resolve. Since both generic and specific are types of nomen, both are eligible to head a noun phrase. In favour of viewing the generic as head is Kuuk Thaayorre’s typological tendency towards the head-initial (hence exhibiting N – Adj, N – Rel, N – Dem, Adj – Deg, though also Deg – Adj). Semantically, too, the generic noun is always the most general of the noun phrase constituents, determining the ‘type’ of referent described by the phrase as a whole, with all other elements (including the specific noun) further specifying its reference. This is roughly the approach taken by Dixon (2002:454), who argues, for Yidinj, that “the generic term (‘edible animal’) can be taken as head of the NP, and the specifier (‘kangaroo’) as a kind of modifier”.

However, McGregor (1990) argues persuasively for an analysis of the Gooniyandi specific noun as head, with the generic noun fulfilling a classifying function. Following from this, Wilkins gives an analysis of the Arrernte generic noun (within a complex head of the NP) providing classification in such a way that X Y means ‘the group of things called Y is one of the different kinds of things X refers to’ (Wilkins 2000:185). Supporting the analysis of the specific noun as the head of the Thaayorre classifying construction, is the fact that the classifying construction as a whole

functions as a specific noun (as seen in [413]). Nevertheless, noun phrases containing a generic nomen but no specific do not appear elliptical. On the basis of such ambivalent evidence, I choose to analyse the generic and specific nouns as co-heading the noun phrase, much as (Wilkins 2000:151) finds for Arrernte that:

*A generic noun and specific noun can enter into construction and together function as the head of the noun phrase, but either may occur on its own as the sole member of the head of the NP.*

The pragmatics of selecting either generic noun, specific noun or both to head the Thaayorre NP, are explored under §6.2.4.

### 6.2.3 Word classes vs constructional slots

The monosemic bias advocated by Ruhl (1989) seeks to avoid the multiplication of senses where these can be brought together by a single definition. Following from this, it is preferable to avoid positing multiple lexical entries where a lexeme can be given a single underlying meaning. To explore what exactly this means for the Thaayorre classifying construction, consider the uses of the lexeme *wang* in the following phrases. The question of whether the semantics of *wang* can be captured by a single sense will be revisited later. For the moment, it will be sufficient to point out that it refers to ghosts, spirits and other white things:

(415) *wang kirkunka*  
 ~white devil.sp  
 ‘red-legged devil’

(416) *kuuk wang*  
 word ~white  
 ‘English’

(417) *parr\_r paanth wang*  
 child ~female ~white  
 ‘a white girl’

It has already been argued that the Thaayorre noun phrase contains distinct slots for generic nouns, specific nouns, and adjectives. In (415), *wang* functions as a generic noun, referring to the class of spiritual beings. In (416), *wang* is used as a specified noun, specifying that the language in question is English. *Wang* can also be used adjectivally, as in (417) where it modifies the classifying construction *parr\_r paanth* ‘girl’. One might attribute these three uses of *wang* to a single underlying form in the mental lexicon, which then gets its part of speech from the construction. That is to say, in the lexicon there exists only a single class of ‘nomina’ (including all nouns and adjectives – cf. §4), and any of these may be input to the generic, specific and adjective slots in the noun phrase template, provided they are semantically appropriate. The fact that some generic nouns may only appear in the generic slot (e.g. *ngan* ‘relative’), and some specific nouns only in the specific slot (e.g. *kothon* ‘wallaby’), can thus be attributed to the fact that their semantics are incompatible with modification or classification respectively. The parts of speech ‘generic noun’, ‘specific noun’ and ‘adjective’, then, are constructional, coming into being only in the noun phrase. There are problems with such an analysis, however. Firstly, it is difficult to predict exactly which nomina can appear in which slots. Why, for instance, can *kuta* ‘dog, domestic animal’ appear in the generic slot (e.g. in *kuta thok* ‘cat’), but *puuy* ‘crab’ cannot? Secondly, it is extremely difficult to provide a monosemous definition of any of the multi-functional forms involved. We might want to unite the uses of *wang* (e.g. in examples [55] – [417]) in reference to both spirits and white things, by the fact that spirits are strongly associated with the colour white, just as is English (the language of white people). This does not, however, explain the fact that *wang* as an adjective can be predicated of anything — and only things — that are white, while as a specific noun it can refer to any number of things associated with white people, regardless of their colour. As a generic noun, however, *wang* classes together entities in the spirit world. Not only may the entities classed as *wang* be colours other than white, but white things (or things associated with white people) that are not spirits may not be classed as *wang*. These differences in meaning cannot simply be attributed to the interpretation they receive according to the slot they fill.



Polysemous definitions may also be necessary to account for the functions of lexemes even within a single part of speech. For example, a comparison of (418) with (419) would seem to suggest that the generic noun *paanth* classes together all and only female entities, while *pam* classes together all and only male entities:

(418) *paanth kun\_yangkar ngathn*  
 WOMAN sibling 1sgPOS  
 ‘my sister’

(419) *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn*  
 MAN sibling 1sgPOS  
 ‘my brother’

However, as (420) shows, *pam* may also be paired with specific nouns referring to females:

(420) *pam nhangnam ngathn*  
 HUMAN mother 1sgPOS  
 ‘my mother’

In examples such as (419), *pam* appears to more broadly refer to humankind, though it may also be used contrastively to refer to males. The semantics of *pam* and the other generic nouns were discussed in more detail in §3.1.1.1 and §4.1.1.

It is clear, however, that there is often a systematic formal and semantic relationship between lexemes in the generic, specific and adjectival word classes. Morphy (1983:83) argues that Djapu makes no strict distinction between generic and specific nouns, but rather that these nouns are arranged along a continuum, according to the specificity of their semantics. Wilkins’ similarly (2000:155) finds for Arrernte that the class of generic nouns is semantically, rather than syntactically, defined:

any lexicalised superordinate term which has identifiable lexicalized hyponyms can indeed occur as the generic in a ‘generic-specific’ construction, and the set of generic nouns will therefore be coterminous with the set of lexical superordinate terms

It seems likely that polylexical Thaayorre forms (such as *wang* and *pam*) were originally monosemous, belonging to a single word class. As these words came to take on different kinds of roles in the noun phrase, they developed different senses and became associated with different parts of speech. For example, where a particular noun was regularly used in the generic slot, it would come to be combined with other, semantically appropriate, specific nouns. This could be accounted for by emergence from frequency (Hopper 1987, Thompson and Hopper 2001).

### 6.3 AdjP – The adjective phrase

Immediately following the specific noun in the noun phrase template, are the adjective phrase(s). An adjective phrase is composed of a head adjective and (maximally two) optional degree adverbs. Of the three Thaayorre degree adverbs, two precede the head adjective (*waarr* ‘very’ and *mangr* ‘quite’), while the other (*minc* ‘really’) follows (cf. §3.3.6, §11.4.6). Due to the fact that the two pre-head degree adverbs are semantically incompatible, where the adjective phrase contains two degree adverbs, these are always *waarr* (preceding the head) and *minc* (following it). The structure of the maximal adjective phrase is thus:

(421) (Deg) Adj (Deg)

Example (422) illustrates an adjective phrase — the predicate of a verbless clause — in which each potential slot filled:

(422) *punth inh [waarr ngamal minc]!*  
 arm(NOM) dem:sp.prx [very large really]  
 ‘this [crocodile’s] arms were really very large!’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The combination of multiple adjective phrases within the NP is discussed in §6.5 below.

## 6.4 Specifiers and/or determiners?

Adnominal demonstratives typically occur at the end of a noun phrase (as per the NP rule given in [409]), but they do not inflect for case<sup>134</sup>. Where a case-marked noun phrase has a demonstrative as its final constituent, then it is the penultimate constituent that bears the case inflection (whether this be noun, adjective or quantifier). Thus in (423), the ergative suffix *-al* appears in the middle of the noun phrase *pam ith* ‘that man’ since *pam* ‘man’ is the last element that may inflect for case:

- (423) *pam-al    ith        kuta        thanpa-rr=ul*  
 man-ERG    dem:dist    dog(ACC)    kick-P.PFV=3sg(ERG)  
 ‘that man kicked a dog’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Similarly, in (424) it is the specific noun *nhump*<sup>135</sup> ‘elder’ that inflects for ergative case, despite the fact that it is followed by the demonstrative *ith* ‘that’:

- (424) *Yuur    pinalam    ith            sing    rirk-ø        pam    nhump-u    ith*  
 hand    three        dem:dist    sing    DO-NPST    MAN    elder-ERG    dem:dist  
 ‘the old man sang it three times’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

One way to explain why it follows the case affixes, would be to analyse the demonstrative as a determiner that heads a determiner phrase with a (case-marked) NP complement. There are several factors that complicate such an analysis, however. To begin with, it is difficult to justify giving the label ‘determiner’ to demonstratives and not pronouns. Both function semantically like determiners, in that the presence of a demonstrative entails definite reference<sup>136</sup>, while the presence of a pronoun makes a

<sup>134</sup> But see §5.3.2.2 for two exceptions to this.

<sup>135</sup> *Nhump* ‘elder’ is a dialectal variant of *thuump* ‘elder; grey (hair)’.

<sup>136</sup> Wilkins (2000:157) finds the same for Arrernte.

coreferential NP specific. Hence in (425) the demonstrative makes the NP's reference definite, while in (426) the pronoun makes reference specific, but not definite:

(425) *paanth ith nhamp wanh?*

woman(NOM) dem:dist name who

'what is that woman's name?'

[AC21/08/02 Elicitation]

(426) *kanangkarr pul pam ngumpurr-kak pul, may-i yat*

long.ago 3du(NOM) man(NOM) old.lady-COM 3du(NOM) VEG-DAT go:P.PFV

'Once upon a time an old man and his wife went looking for food'

[FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

However, the presence of neither demonstrative nor pronoun is required for a NP to be a referring expression. In their absence, the NP is simply unspecified for definiteness and specificity. Such NPs may be indefinite and unspecific (as is *pam* 'HUMAN' in [427]); indefinite but specific (as is *nhayp* 'knife' in [428]); or definite and specific (as is *nganip* 'father' in [429]):

(427) *pam yuur kuthirr=kaak*

HUMAN(NOM) hand two=REL.PROP

'people have two hands'

[GJ12/09/02 Elicitation]

(428) *ngernkan Veronica nganh nhayp-n yaki-rr*

yesterday Veronica(#ERG) 1sgACC knife-ERG cut- P.PFV

'yesterday Veronica cut me with a knife'

[AP9/10/02 Conversation]

(429) *Nganip-i yumpi-rr, nganip ilnen ii*

father-ERG made- P.PFV father(NOM) from.above there

'God made (dogs), God up there'

[AC10/08/02 Conversation]

Whilst the optionality of demonstratives and pronouns makes their classification as determiners less attractive, it does not make it impossible. So, although Alpher (1973:281-282) similarly finds Yir Yoront noun phrases may have definite reference in the absence of demonstratives and pronouns, he continues to classify them together as determiners. Blake (2001b:417) likewise establishes for Pitta-Pitta a ‘pronoun-determiner’ class that heads the phrase. However, if the Thaayorre demonstratives and pronouns formed a single word class, we would expect to find them occupying the same syntactic slots. In contrast, the demonstratives are tightly bound to the NP with respect to word order, whilst the pronouns are entirely free and inflect for case independently (even where contiguous with the N-headed NP). Additionally, pronouns are often found in combination with a (coreferential) NP that already includes a demonstrative, as in the following example:

- (430) *paanth-u      ith          nhul      yuk      thongkn      thiika-rr*  
 woman-ERG    dem:dist    3sg(ERG)    thing    stick(ACC)    break- P.PFV  
 ‘that woman broke a stick’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation Cut&Break19]

This would appear to conflict with an analysis where pronouns and demonstratives belong to a single word class. Even more problematic is the fact that demonstratives can modify pronouns themselves. This is seen in example (431), in which the demonstrative *inh* ‘this’ directly follows the pronoun *nhul* ‘she’, in order to specify that the speaker is referring to the woman sitting next to him:

- (431) *nhul          inh          kanpa-tam    inh*  
 3sg(NOM)    dem.sp.prx    first-ABL    dem.sp.prx  
 ‘she here’s the first (born)’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

It is difficult, then, to retain an analysis under which demonstratives and pronouns head DPs. Instead, I propose to analyse the adnominal demonstrative as a specifier, which combines with a N' composed of other elements of the NP as follows:

- (432) NP → N' (AdnDem)

(433)  $N' \rightarrow N (\text{AdjP})^* (\text{PosPro}) (\text{Quant})$

Moving the demonstrative out of  $N'$  and into the specifier position also explains why case markers are never suffixed to the demonstrative: case is marked at the end of the  $N'$ .

But what of the pronoun? If we were to retain an analysis of pronouns as determiners, we would require the following phrase structure rule for the determiner phrase:

(434)  $DP \rightarrow (NP) D (\text{AdnDem})$

The pronoun (here labelled 'D') can follow its complement NP and/or be followed by an adnominal demonstrative. In clauses where the NP and pronoun are separated by other clausal constituents, the pronoun would form a DP in isolation, which then forms a (discontinuous) DP at some higher level<sup>137</sup> with the NP as complement. The mapping of this phrase structure rule onto actual examples is shown by (435), in which the pronoun forms a phrase with the immediately preceding NP, and (436), in which the pronoun forms a DP in isolation:

(435) *pam -al ith nhul may carrots yakake:rr*  
 [[[man]<sub>N'-ERG</sub> dem.dist]<sub>NP</sub> 3sg(ERG)]<sub>DP</sub> [[VEG carrots]<sub>NACC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> cut:RDP:P.PFV  
 'the man cut up the carrots'  
 [LN03/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break10]

(436) *parr\_r inh yan peln school-thak*  
 [child]<sub>N'(NOM)</sub> dem.sp.prx]<sub>NP</sub> go:NPST [3pl(NOM)]<sub>DP</sub> school-DAT  
 'these children (nowadays) go to school'  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation]

Arguments for a Thaayorre DP, though, are theory-driven. Noun phrases do not require pronouns in order to refer, and often have definite reference in their absence.

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<sup>137</sup> Exactly what this higher level represents (e.g. 'f-structure' (in LFG) or 'deep structure' (in GB)) will depend on the theory employed.

The semantic relationship that holds between a pronoun and coreferential (N-headed) NP within a clause is, I believe, better captured by an appositional analysis in which independent (but coreferential) noun phrases each contribute information about a particular referent. Evans (2003a:350) explores in detail several ways in which “unification from verbal and nominal material is used to construct referring expressions” in Biniñ Gun-Wok. Many of his observations also apply to Kuuk Thaayorre, except that in the latter information about referents is generally gleaned entirely from nominal sources.

If the determiner phrase is abandoned, and pronouns are analysed simply as pronouns, we may modify the phrase structure rule in (433) to read:

$$(437) \quad N' \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (N) (AdjP)^* \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (PosPro) \\ (N') \end{array} \right\} (Quant) \\ Pro \end{array} \right\}$$

This allows us to make the generalisation that case may only be marked on the rightmost constituent of N' (whether this is a head nomen and modifiers, or a pronoun), and that this N' may form an NP in isolation, or with a demonstrative as specifier. The clause given in example (435), then, would instead be analysed as in (438):

(438) *pam -al ith nhul may carrots yakakerr*  
 [[man]<sub>N'-ERG</sub> dem.dist]<sub>NP</sub> [[3sg]<sub>N'-ERG</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> [[[VEG carrots]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>N'-ACC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> cut:RDP:P.PFV  
 ‘that man cut up the carrots’  
 [LN03/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break10]

The relationship between the N-headed noun phrase and coreferential pronoun, then, is one of apposition of two syntactically independent phrases.

## 6.5 N' – Head noun and modifiers

This chapter has so far considered the relative positioning of generic nouns, specific nouns, adjective phrases and demonstratives. The remaining constituents of the noun phrase are possessive pronouns (and the N' with which they alternate) and quantifiers. These two modifier slots, along with the adjective phrase(s), follow the head noun(s) to form N'. The structure of N' can thus be summarised:

$$(439) \quad N' \rightarrow (N) (AdjP)^* \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (PosPro) \\ (N') \end{array} \right\} (Quant)$$

An (elicited) NP including the full range of modifiers is given in (279):

- (440) *kuta ngamal ngotn ngathn thono=nhurr*  
 dog large black 1sgPOS one=only  
 'my only big, black dog'  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation, prompted by Hall 1972:69]

The possessive pronoun can be replaced by a possessive N' (i.e. a noun phrase that cannot include a demonstrative), as in (228).

- (441) *nganh [[kuta [Dan]]-tam] patha-rr*  
 1sgACC [[dog [Dan]<sub>N'</sub>]<sub>N'-ABL</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> bite-P.PFV  
 'Dan's dog bit me'  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

Note that the ablative case-marking at the right edge of the second N' represents a portmanteau case morpheme (as discussed in §4.2.6.7) subsuming the functions of the genitive case assigned to the right edge of the inner N' (*Dan*) and the ergative case assigned to the outer N' (*kuta Dan[ak]* 'Dan['s] dog'). Because the single lexeme *Dan* occupies the rightmost position of both the inner N' and outer N', the portmanteau ablative case is required to signal both case relations due to the restriction of only one case morpheme per lexeme.



As flagged above, it is possible for a number of separate adjective phrases to occur in a single noun phrase. Judging by my present corpus, however, it is extremely marked to include more than two modifiers in a single phrase, and speakers only rarely do so. (279) above demonstrates the order  $N_{\text{SPEC}}$  AdjP AdjP PosPro Quant. The ordering of multiple adjective phrases within N' warrants further investigation. At this stage, it is possible only to say that this ordering is likely to be pragmatically, rather than syntactically, organised. There do not appear to be any fixed rules, for example that adjectives denoting more fixed, stable or inherent characteristics (such as colour) precede those denoting more transient or mutable characteristics (such as age). From the few examples of NPs containing multiple adjective phrases in my data, there may be a tendency towards such semantically-based (iconic) ordering, but there are several clear counter-examples. Indeed, the ordering of modifiers of different word classes appears also to have much to do with information structure. Certainly, permutations of the adjective phrase, possessive pronoun and quantifier are possible, provided the right pragmatic circumstances obtain. Consider, for instance, the following set of permutations documented by Hall (1972:69):

(442a) *kirk ngathn pork kuthirr*  
 spear 1sgPOS big two

(b) *kirk pork ngathn kuthirr*  
 spear big 1sgPOS two

(c) *kirk kuthirr pork ngathn*  
 spear two big 1sgPOS

(d) *kirk ngathn kuthirr pork*  
 spear 1sgPOS two big

(e) *kirk pork kuthirr ngathn*  
 spear big two 1sgPOS

(f) *kirk kuthirr ngathn pork*  
 spear two 1sgPOS big  
 'my two big spears'

[Hall 1972:69]

It might be expected that (443a-f) would have different interpretations, and although Hall does not provide translations per se, he does underline the second word of each gloss (giving, e.g., ‘spears my big two’ as the gloss of [444a]), presumably to indicate pragmatic emphasis.

In most cases where the NP constituents appear in orders other than those set out in (439), it can be argued that they no longer comprise a single noun phrase. Compare, for example, (279) with (445), the translation of which was supplied by one of my consultants:

(279) *kuta ngamal ngotn ngathn thono=nhurr*  
 dog large back 1sgPOS one=only  
 ‘my only big, black dog’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

(445) *kuta ngotn ngamal thono=nhurr ngathn*  
 dog black large(NOM) one=only 1sgPOS=GEN  
 ‘big black dog is mine only’  
 [Hall 1972:69]

In (445), the pronoun *ngathn* follows the numeral, contrary to the expected position of possessive pronouns before quantifiers. However, LN’s translation of (445) suggests that it is a possessive copula construction, rather than a single noun phrase. As a copula construction, (445) would be composed of two noun phrases; *kuta notn ngamal thono=nhurr* ‘only one big black dog’ and the predicative genitive pronoun *ngathn* ‘is mine’. Similarly, the occasions where the quantifier *thono* ‘one’ follows the demonstrative specifier, which is relatively common, can be explained by *thono*’s reference tracking function (§6.10.2). This can be seen in (446):

(446) *parr\_r ith thono nhul koow.miing kar nhangnip minc*  
 child(NOM) dem:dist one 3sg(NOM) face(NOM) like father true  
 ‘that boy [rather than his brother] looks just like his father’  
 [LN02/10/02 Elicitation]

See §6.10.2 for a fuller discussion of the discourse functions of *thono* ‘one’.

The phrase structure rule (437) (repeated here) formalises the fact that personal pronouns are of themselves equivalent to the collection of elements that make up N’ in (439). They may head a noun phrase in isolation, or they may be specified by a demonstrative (as in [431], repeated here):

$$(437') \text{ N}' \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(N) (AdjP)*} \\ \text{Pro} \end{array} \right\} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(PosPro)} \\ \text{(N')} \end{array} \right\} \text{(Quant)} \end{array} \right\}$$

(431') *nhul inh kanpa-tam inh*  
 3sg(NOM) dem:sp.prx first-ABL dem:sp.prx  
 ‘she’s the first (born)’  
 [GJ2/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Of all the constituents of the Thaayorre NP, the noun (i.e. the generic and/or specific head of N), and pronoun have special status. Any one of them may constitute a noun phrase in isolation, and each may be specified by a demonstrative. Where multiple noun phrases refer to a single entity within a clause, they stand in syntactic apposition to one another, their relative ordering pragmatically determined. The apposition of multiple coreferential noun phrases to compose arguments is discussed in more detail in §6.6.

There are two final candidates for inclusion within the noun phrase template; ignoratives and pronominal demonstratives. Although both these word classes commonly function as independent pronouns (as in [447] and [448]), both can also function adnominally (as in [449] and [450]).

(447) *yuunhul ngay money sick pay mi'i-m*  
 that.one(ACC) 1sg(ERG) money sick pay(ACC) pick.up-P.IPFV  
 ‘I got that, whatsit, sick-pay’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

(448) *minh wanhul mungka-rr?*

MEAT(ACC) who:ERG eat-P.PFV

‘who bin eating that turtle?’

[AC10/08/02 Conversation]

(449) *minh yuunhul mungka-rr*

MEAT that.one(ACC) eat-P.PFV

‘(they) ate that whatsit meat’

[AJ26/11/02 Conversation/Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

(450) *ngul minh ngan waak-r Papa-n?*

then MEAT what(ACC) follow-NPST Papa-ERG

‘I wonder what bird Dad was chasing?’

[Foote and Hall: Primer 10]

Where they function adnominally, both demonstrative pronouns and ignoratives appear at the right periphery of N', bearing the case inflection of the NP (451, 452) and preceding any adnominal demonstrative in specifier position (453).

(451) *pam wanhngun kot mit pork yik-m?*

man who-DAT God(NOM) work big(ACC) say- P.IPFV

to whom did God speak of this huge task?

[Hall 1972:114]

(452) *yuk ngene-rr thernga-rr?*

THING why-ERG kill-P.PFV

‘with what sort of stick did they kill him?’

[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

(453) *man yuunhul inh, ngan wan-r? man-nhapn*

throat that.one dem:sp.prx what tell- NPST throat-egg

‘what’s this part of the throat called? The windpipe’

[AJ8/02/04 Elicitation / Conversation]

Although it might be tempting to claim that demonstrative and ignorative pronouns always occupy this slot within N' (even when functioning pronominally as in [447] and [448]), this is clearly not the case. When functioning pronominally, there is no requirement of contiguity between demonstrative/ignorative pronouns and the coreferential (nomen-headed) NP, and both bear case independently of one another. Thus (454) contains two dative-marked NPs (*inh'nhngun* 'to this [place]' and *Pormpuraawthak* 'to Pormpuraaw'), with the demonstrative pronoun preceding the nomen-headed NP. In (304), the ignorative pronoun follows the full NP (including specifier) *paanth ith* 'that woman'.

- (454) *Friday, koop therk-ø, inh'nh-ngun Pormpuraaw-thak*  
 Friday all return-NPST this.one-DAT Pormpuraaw-DAT  
 'on Friday everyone is coming back to Pormpuraaw'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (455) *paanth ith wanh=okun yan?*  
 woman(NOM) dem:dist who(NOM)=DUB go:NPST  
 "which is that lady there coming?"  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

For this reason, I choose to analyse demonstrative and ignorative pronouns as filling an N'-internal slot when functioning adnominally, whilst constituting an N in and of themselves (as do personal pronouns) when functioning pronominally. This corresponds with the N'-internal position of possessive pronouns vs. the homophonous genitive personal pronouns that constitute N' of themselves (cf. §5.1.2).

In summary, then, (456) states the full set of phrase structure rules for the Thaayorre NP.

- (456) NP → N' (AdnDem)

$$N' \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (N) (AdjP)^* (PosPro) (Quant) (DemPro) (IgnPro) \\ PersPro \\ DemPro \\ IgnPro \end{array} \right\}$$

$$N \rightarrow (N_{GEN}) \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (N_{SPEC}) \\ (N) \end{array} \right\}$$

$$AdjP \rightarrow (Deg) Adj (Deg)$$

## 6.6 Wholly coreferential NPs – referential case

It was mentioned in §6.4 and §6.5 that multiple coreferential NPs may stand in a relation of apposition within a single clause, and may together comprise an argument. In (436) (repeated below), for example, the two noun phrases *parr\_r inh* ‘these kids’ and *peln* ‘they’ do not form a continuous syntactic phrase, yet both contribute information about the same group of participants. Similarly, in (457) *peln* ‘they’ is coreferential with the clause-initially phrase *pam mong minc ith* ‘those very many men’.

(436') *parr\_r inh yan peln school-thak*  
 child(NOM) dem:sp.prx go:NPST 3pl(NOM) school-DAT  
 ‘these children (nowadays) go to school’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation]

(457) *pam mong minc ith ii yan peln*  
 man many really(NOM) dem:dist there go:NPST 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘a lot of men are walking along there’  
 [AJ07/02/04 Elicitation]

It is also common for (coreferential) free pronouns to be repeated several times in a single clause. In (458), for example, the first person singular subject pronoun, *ngay*, is repeated clause-finally<sup>138</sup>.

- (458) *nhinh ngay wuump walmeerem name nhangkn ngay*  
 2sgACC 1sg(NOM) CONTR remember name 2sgPOS(ACC) 1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I remember your name’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

These repeated, semantically redundant noun phrases are similar to those labelled by McGregor (1990, for Gooniyandi) as “afterthoughts”, and by Smith and Johnson (2000, for Kugu Nganhcara) “codas” and “postscripts”. None of these labels are appropriate to Kuuk Thaayorre, however, since in this language the extraposed phrase may precede or follow the main clause. Illustrating both these orders, a peripheral phrase (*kuta* ‘dog’) precedes the first clause of (459), whilst the peripheral phrase (*kuta mant* ‘small dog’) follows the second main clause:

- (459) *kuta, kuta ith rii<ri>c-r!*  
 1. dog dog(NOM) dem:dist run<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘that dog’s running past’  
 2. *kuta riiran thee<the>rk-ø, kuta mant*  
 dog(NOM) alone return<RDP>-NPST dog small  
 ‘that dog’s going back alone, (just a) small puppy’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

For this reason, I label them ‘peripheral phrases’, whilst acknowledging their formal and functional similarity to those described in other Australian languages.

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<sup>138</sup> The NPs *nhinh* ‘you’ and *name nhangkn* ‘your name’ similarly overlap in reference and are apposed in the same case - see §6.9.1 for analysis of this Part-Whole construction.

Peripheral phrases are distinguished by their prosodic independence from the main clause; they fall outside the latter's intonational contour and are usually separated from it by a short pause. Peripheral phrases generally do not carry the relevant case marking for their (erstwhile) role inside the clause. This is illustrated by (460), in which the location referred to by the peripheral phrase *raak inh* 'this place' would receive dative case marking if it were part of the main clause.

- (460) *raak inh Paangunth, angunp kerp-r*  
 PLACE dem:sp.prx Paangunth in.that.place finish-P.PFV  
 'this place Paangunth, (she) disappeared there'  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

It is possible, however, for the case marking of peripheral phrases to reflect their role in the clause, as in (195).

- (461) *pam peln ii kana yan minh-a, minh kothon-ak*  
 man(NOM) 3pl(NOM) there about.to go:NPST MEAT-DAT MEAT wallaby-DAT  
 'those men are hunting wallaby'  
 [AC10/08/02 Elicitation]

The repetition of coreferential noun phrases is so ubiquitous in the speech of certain individuals that it can become difficult to draw a line between peripheral phrases and main clauses. Example (462) contains maximally seven clauses (bounded by pauses), only the last of which contains a verb (*therk* 'return'). It would be possible, then, to view this final clause (in [462.5]) as the main clause, and each of the preceding phrases in (462.1) – (462.4) as peripheral phrases:

- (462) *thil peln ii-l-ungkarr, par\_r inhul peln*  
 1. again 3pl(NOM) there-from-northchild(NOM) this.one 3pl(NOM)  
 'those children [coming] again from the north'
2. *Dan mangka...*  
 Dan(NOM) mob  
 'Dan and them'



3. *Dan, peln parr\_r inhul*  
 Dan(NOM) 3pl(NOM) child(NOM) this.one  
 ‘Dan and those children, they...’
4. *parr\_r mant inhul peln*  
 child small(NOM) this.one 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘those small children’
5. *peln Friday yup therk-ø ii-l-ungkarr*  
 3pl(NOM) Friday soon return-NPST there-from-north  
 ‘they’ll come back from the North [Weipa] on Friday’  
 [AC21/08/02 Narrative WeipaFootball]

## 6.7 The inclusory construction

Inclusory constructions (Singer 2001) are employed to make explicit reference to a particular individual (or a subset of individuals) within a larger participant group. This is illustrated by (463), in which the referent of *wangath* ‘doctor’ is included within the participant group referred to by *ngali* ‘we two’:

- (463) *ngali wangath-an hour-ak ngat pit-m*  
 1du:excl(ERG) doctor-ERG hour-DAT fish(ACC) hold-P.IPFV  
 ‘The doctor and I were fishing for an hour’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 10]

Kuuk Thaayorre is unusual in having several alternative inclusory constructions (cf. Singer 2001). Each of these is composed of a pronoun referring to the superset of participants, which is apposed to one or more NPs referring to the subset(s) to which attention is drawn. The key morphosyntactic difference between the different inclusory constructions is the case-marking of the subset noun phrase, as detailed in the following sections.

### 6.7.1 The simple inclusory construction

In the simple inclusory construction<sup>139</sup>, superset and subset are represented by distinct NPs that are apposed in the same case. This is illustrated by (464), which contains three coreferential noun phrases representing the superset (*ngali* ‘we two’, twice instantiated, and *kuthirr* ‘the two (of us)’) and one NP representing the subset *I.C.* (a personal name). All four noun phrases are in nominative case, assigned by the intransitive verb *yan* ‘go’ to its subject argument:

- (464) *ngali*                    *I. C.*                    *ngali*                    *yat*                    *kuthirr*  
 1du:excl(NOM) I. C.(NOM) 1du:excl(NOM) go:P.PFV two(NOM)  
 ‘I. C. and I went, the two of us’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Inclusory constructions are most frequently associated with the grammatical function of subject. They may have other grammatical functions, however, as the following examples show.

- (465) *ngalinan*            *pam* *thuump-ak* *inhul*  
 1du:excl:GEN man old-GEN this.one  
 ‘this one is my husband’s and mine’  
 [FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

- (466) *ngay*            *pulnun* *Barry-ak*    *nhaawr*  
 1sg(NOM) 3duDAT Barry-DAT see:P.PFV  
 ‘I saw him and Barry’  
 [LN27/01/04 Conversation]

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<sup>139</sup> The simple Thaayorre inclusory construction is so labelled because of its relative lack of morphological marking (compared with the comitative, dative and ergative inclusory constructions). The term is not intended to signify cognitive primacy or diachronic priority.

In (465), the inclusory construction encodes possessors, while in (466) the inclusory construction has the grammatical function of indirect object<sup>140</sup>.

Whilst the subset NP most commonly appears immediately following the superset pronoun, the two need not be contiguous nor in this order<sup>141</sup>. In (467), for instance, the subset *ngan waanharr* ‘elder brother’ and superset *ngali* ‘we two’ are separated by the verb:

- (467) *wey, ngali yancm ngan waanharr iipal*  
 hey 1du:excl(NOM) go:P.IPFV RELATIVE e.brother(NOM) from.there  
 ‘hey, my brother and I have come here’  
 [Foote: Narrative KutaWoochorrm]

It is difficult, then, to analyse superset and subset as forming a single noun phrase. Within the theoretical framework of LFG, it could be argued that the superset and subset NPs form a single unit filling an argument position in the f-structure representation, but that they do not form a single constituent at the level of c-structure. Like the part-whole construction (described in §6.9.1 below), it seems that the linkage of the two phrases to a single argument slot (and thus grammatical function) is achieved through their agreeing in case. This fits the characterisation of ‘referential case’ proposed by Dench and Evans (1988:13):

*The referential case function involves the marking of some NP or adverb in agreement with some other (usually core) NP in the same clause... the identically marked words are separate constituents.*

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<sup>140</sup> Note that although the subset NP in (466) is marked by dative case, this is not considered an example of the dative inclusory construction (described in §6.7.3 below). In (466), the dative case is assigned by the verb to its argument (and the subset agrees with the superset pronoun in referential dative case), rather than the case marker being used to comment on the relationship that obtains between the participants.

<sup>141</sup> This is also true of many other Australian languages (see, e.g., Singer 2001), but not all. In Mparntwe Arrernte, for example, case markers — which are suffixed only to the final element of a NP — appear only once per inclusory construction, following both the superset pronoun and subset NP (which must be contiguous), suggesting that the two form a single phrase (Wilkins 1989:409).

That the number and person features of the superset pronoun are those of the argument overall, suggests that it is the superset that is the head and the subset the complement.

The superset noun phrase in a simple inclusory construction is most commonly a first or second person dual pronoun. In such cases, one referent is specified by the subset NP, and the other is fully recoverable as either the speaker or addressee respectively. The simple inclusory construction is thus used frequently in discourse to introduce new participants, or to clarify the membership of a plural participant group. In example (468), an inclusory construction formed from a second person dual pronoun is used specifically in order to request the identity of the second, non-addressee participant:

- (468) *nhip*      *wanh*      *wun*      *ii-ø-kaw*  
2du(NOM) who(NOM) reside:NPST there-at-east  
'who do you live with?'  
[MC21/01/04 Conversation]

Analogous constructions have been documented in a wide range of languages, for example by Lichtenberk (2000), Schwartz (1988), and Singer (2001). Schwartz's typology takes a slightly different approach to the other two, labelling the construction 'verb-coded coordination'. Such a characterisation clearly does not sit well with the Kuuk Thaayorre, in which there is no argument coding on the verb (excluding pronominal enclitics, which are rarely present in inclusory constructions). Singer (2001:22-25), in her typology of inclusory constructions in Australian languages, offers the following defining features of inclusory constructions: (1) the relationship between superset and subset is one of proper inclusion; (2) entailments of the predicate always hold for the superset and subset; (3) the superset is encoded by a pronoun; (4) the inclusory construction is equivalent to a single argument of a single predicate. These features straightforwardly apply to each of the Thaayorre inclusory constructions, though not the inclusory pronouns (§6.7.5) in which both superset and subset are encoded by a single pronoun.

### 6.7.2 The comitative inclusory construction

The noun phrase referring to the subset may be marked by the comitative suffix *-kak*, as seen in example (469).

(469)

1. *pam-kak ii yan pul*  
 man-COM there go:NPST 3du(NOM)  
 ‘that husband and wife are going along’
  
2. *pul ii yan, kuthirr, pam-kak*  
 3du(NOM) there go:NPST two(NOM) man-COM  
 ‘they two are going along there, two of them, husband and wife’  
 [AC12/09/02]

In (469.1), the participants are identified by means of both the nominative pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ (referring to the superset) and the comitative noun phrase *pamkak* ‘with man’ (the ‘man’ being a subset of the subject participant group). The comitative enclitic functions to relate *pam* ‘the man’ to the subject pronoun *pul* ‘they two’. Crucially, a single participant (the man) is referred to by both the subject pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ and the adjunct NP *pamkak* ‘with the man’. This contrast with a literal English translation of (469.1); *they two are going along with the man*, which entails three rather than two participants since the reference of the adjunct PP *with the man* must not overlap with the reference of the subject NP *they two*. An analogous construction is also available in Kuuk Thaayorre, with the comitative adjunct referring to a participant wholly distinct from that referred to by the subject NP. This disjoint reference is also possible in Kuuk Thaayorre, as seen in (470), in which the reference of the subject pronoun *ngay* ‘I’ is wholly distinct from that of the comitative adjunct *pam puukath-kak* ‘with an initiated man’:

- (470) *pam puukath-kak wak-m ngay*  
 man initiated-COM hunt-P.IPFV 1sg(ERG)  
 ‘I was hunting with an initiated man’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 10]

Why, then, would a speaker choose to utter the comitative inclusory construction over the simple inclusory construction, or a clause in which subject and adjunct are not partially coreferential? The Thaayorre comitative inclusory construction is advantageous in the following respects. Firstly, the fact that the subject pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ in (469) incorporates both participants in its reference captures the fact that both the man and woman participate in the event in the same way (i.e. they are both walking), and thus a single relationship holds between them and the predicate (the nominative case assigned to the subject pronoun may hence be characterised as ‘external case’, marking a dependency relationship between the noun phrase and predicate). Meanwhile, the dependent comitative NP allows the speaker to simultaneously comment on the relationship that holds between the respective subject participants (adnominal case). In (469) above, for example, the comitative adjunct is used to imply that the subject participants are married. The noun *pam* means both ‘man’ and ‘husband’, and the clauses in (469) were uttered both to point out to the addressee a couple walking past, and (more importantly) to communicate the relationship that held between them. This is an implicature, though, and not an entailment<sup>142</sup>. Where the superset pronoun is plural (as opposed to dual), the implicature of marriage is no longer present<sup>143</sup>:

- (471) *pam-kak ngancn yat*  
 man-COM 1pl(NOM) go:P.PFV  
 ‘we went with the man’  
 [GJ06/12/02 Elicitation]

The comitative inclusory construction may also be used to implicate non-familial relationships. In (472), for instance, both the participants represented by the dual pronoun *nhip* ‘you two’ are exhorted to engage in the same activity. The

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<sup>142</sup> Evans (2006) also discusses the development of a similar dyad sense through the hardening of implicature to entailment.

<sup>143</sup> Note also that comitative inclusory constructions containing plural superset pronouns are often indistinguishable from simple comitative constructions in which the referent of the comitative phrase is not included within the reference of the plural pronoun.

extraposition of one of these in the comitative adjunct *parr\_r-kak* ‘with the child’, suggests that an unequal relationship holds between the two. Specifically, we may infer from (472) that the child is less centrally involved in the event, which is to be initiated by the addressee (the unspecified member of the superset pronoun *nhip* ‘you two’). The choice of construction thus places responsibility on the addressee for the actualisation of the event, and the involvement of the subset ‘child’.

- (472) *parr\_r-kak nhip yarr!*  
 child-COM 2du(NOM) go:IMP  
 ‘you go with that child’  
 [GJ06/12/02 Elicitation]

This construction is not exotic, and both Schwartz (1988) and Singer (2001) find many languages in their samples employ an adnominal case (often comitative, dative or instrumental cases, or some other marker of nominal conjunction) to relate subset NPs to the superset. Russian, for example, possesses a construction in which a subset NP (in instrumental case, signifying accompaniment) complements a free pronoun representing the superset:

- (473) *my s vami gde.to vstrecha-l-i-s'*  
 1plNOM with 2pl<sup>144</sup>:INSTR somewhere meet-PST-PL-RFL  
 ‘you and I have met somewhere’  
 [film title]

See §4.2.9 for a discussion of the incipient dyadic function of the comitative inclusory construction.

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<sup>144</sup> The Russian second person plural pronoun is used as a respectful second person singular form.

### 6.7.3 The dative inclusory construction

The dative inclusory construction is structurally very similar to the comitative inclusory construction; the two differ only in the eponymous case assigned to the subset NP. The dative inclusory construction is exemplified by (474), in which the head NP *ngali* ‘we two’ is followed by its dative-marked complement *pam kun\_yangkar ngathnmun* ‘at my brother’<sup>145</sup>:

- (474) *ngali*                      *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn-mun nhaanhath-rr-ø*  
 1du:excl(NOM) MAN sibling                      1sgPOS-DAT look-RCP-NPST  
 ‘my brother and I are looking at each other’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

The dative inclusory construction is often found in reciprocal clauses derived from base verbs that subcategorise for a (dative-marked) indirect object<sup>146</sup>. In (474), for example, both participants are associated with two semantic roles (Agent and Goal) and also two cases (nominative and dative). The ascription of two semantic roles to a single argument is licensed by the reciprocal construction (marked by the verbal suffix *-rr*). The two participants are thus encoded as a single subject argument, encoded by a pronominal head and dative complement<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>145</sup> It might be argued here that the pronoun *ngali* ‘we two’ and nomen-headed noun phrase *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn* ‘my brother’ form a higher level noun phrase, to which the dative case marker attaches. Thus the superset NP *ngali* ‘we two’ has the same (dative) case as the subset NP *pam kun\_yangkar ngathn* ‘my brother’. However, there is no precedent to suggest that the case of unmarked pronouns can be realised on a following NP constituent. Indeed, in accusative-case (or genitive-case) inclusory constructions, the pronoun must always be inflected for accusative (or genitive) case despite its similarly being followed by the subset NP (cf. examples [465] and [466] above).

<sup>146</sup> The base verb *nhaa-* in (474) has a nominative-dative case frame, which alternates with an ergative-accusative case frame.

<sup>147</sup> Rather than analysing the dative-marked subset NP as complement to the superset pronoun (the former being related to the latter via adnominal case), we might wish to view the nominative pronoun and dative NP as separate arguments corresponding to those in the subcategorisation frame of the underived verb root *nhaa-* ‘look <NOM, DAT>’. The fact that the referent of the dative-marked subset NP is included within the reference of the subject pronoun, however, makes such an analysis problematic, as does the fact that reciprocal derivation by the suffix *-rr* would normally result in the



As well as appearing in reciprocal-marked clauses (474), the dative inclusory construction may be found in the description of semantically symmetric (i.e. reciprocated) events that may not be formally coded as such by the verbal suffix *-rr* (which may only attach to verbs that subcategorise for an accusative-case direct object). In (475), for example, the verb *yik* ‘say’ is an extended intransitive verb (subcategorising for a nominative subject, dative indirect object and optional cognate object, filled here by *kuuk* ‘WORD’), and is thus ineligible for reciprocal derivation by *-rr*. Nevertheless, the symmetry of the conversing event is encoded by the fact that both participants are encoded as a single argument. That two semantic roles are associated with this argument is meanwhile expressed by the dative marking of the subset NP. This makes it clear that the two brothers are directing their speech to one another, rather than merely broadcasting simultaneously.

- (475) *pul pam kun yangkar nhangn-mun kuuk yi<i>k-ø*  
 3du(NOM) MAN sibling 3sgPOS-DAT WORD(ACC) say<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘he and his brother are talking to one another’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

The dative inclusory construction can thus be considered a valid strategy for encoding reciprocity (classified a ‘double role marking’ strategy according to Evans’ [to

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deletion of one argument under coreference with the subject. This leads us to another interesting point. Reciprocal derivation (by the verbal suffix *-rr*) is generally only available to verbs that subcategorise for an (accusative) direct object (i.e. transitive and ditransitive verbs). The comitative inclusory construction, however, is only available to verbs that subcategorise for a (dative) ‘indirect object’ (i.e. extended intransitive and extended transitive verbs). The verb root *nhaa-* is polysemous, functioning as a transitive verb with the sense ‘see’ (with the associated <ERG, ACC> subcategorisation frame), but also as an extended intransitive verb with the sense ‘look’ (with the associated <NOM, DAT> subcategorisation frame). In (474) it would seem that the reciprocalisation of the verb is licensed by the transitive sense of *nhaa-*, but the dative inclusory construction is licensed by its extended intransitive sense. The theoretical implications of this for our analysis of valency, reciprocalisation and case warrant further consideration.

appear] structural typology of reciprocals) since its use entails<sup>148</sup> symmetry of relations between participants.

#### 6.7.4 The ergative inclusory construction

The ergative inclusory construction is the final construction in which the subset NP is marked as a dependent of the superset pronoun by adnominal case. As discussed in §4.1.1.3 (and more extensively in Gaby [to appear-a]) the ergative morpheme has some pragmatic, as well as syntactic, functions. One of these is to mark a subject referent that is likely to be ‘unexpected’<sup>149</sup> by the addressee. Accordingly, where the addressee is anticipated to have difficulty retrieving or predicting the reference of some subset of a plural referent group, the speaker will often employ an inclusory construction in which the relevant subset NP is ergative-marked. Note that the ergative inclusory construction is attested only where the complete NP has the grammatical function of intransitive subject. If the grammatical function were transitive subject, there would be no way of distinguishing an ergative inclusory construction from a simple (appositional) inclusory construction since the subset term is lost in the NP.

Exemplifying the ergative inclusory construction is (476), in which the subset NP *Edwardnthurr* ‘Edward’ is ergative-marked<sup>150</sup>.

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<sup>148</sup> This entailment depends, however, upon the construction being interpreted with its inclusory sense. If the hearer does not interpret the subject pronoun and dative NP as overlapping in their reference, (475) could alternatively be interpreted as ‘they two<sub>i</sub> were talking to his brother<sub>j</sub>’.

<sup>149</sup> A subject is defined as ‘unexpected’ where it refers to a newly introduced (or re-introduced) participant in a section of discourse that has had a stable protagonist/topic chain that has been displaced by this new participant, as characterised by McGregor’s (1998:516) ‘Expected Actor Principle’:

*The episode protagonist is - once it has been established - the expected (and unmarked) Actor of each foregrounded narrative clause of the episode; any other Actor is unexpected.*

<sup>150</sup> Although the superset pronoun and subset NP are discontinuous in this example, it is more usual for them to be adjacent.

- (476) *G.Y. nhul driver. Ngali mit rirk-ø Edward-nthurr*  
 G.Y. 3sg(NOM) driver(NOM) 2du:excl(NOM) work DO-NPST Edward-ERG  
 ‘G. Y. is the driver. We two work, [me and] Edward’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The intransitive subject subset of (476) (*Edwardnthurr* ‘Edward’) is ergative-marked due to discourse pragmatic considerations, rather than intra-clausal morphosyntax or semantics. Because the first clause of (476) has set up G.Y. as topic, when the second clause goes on to state ‘we two work’ the addressee might be misled into thinking that the speaker is referring to himself and G.Y., rather than himself and Edward. For this reason, the speaker affixes the ergative marker to *Edward* to stress the fact that (perhaps contrary to the addressee’s expectations) he is the subject of the second clause.

As well as introducing an entirely new subject referent, the ergative inclusory construction may be used to signal a change in membership of a plural subject group. Example (477) is excerpted from a story about the narrator’s childhood, recounting the time he and his siblings first saw a plane. The enduring topic of the whole narrative is *ngancn* ‘we’, which is used most of the time in reference to the speaker and his siblings (as it is in (477.1). In the second line of the example, however, the referential scope of *ngancn* ‘we’ expands to include the speaker’s parents. To mark this unexpected shift in reference, the two new participants in (477.2) are encoded by ergative-marked subset NPs; *nganipi* ‘father’ and *mami ngathnman* ‘my mum’:

- (477) *ngancn kanangkarr parr\_r mant*  
 1. 3pl:excl(NOM) long.ago child small(NOM)  
 ‘when we used to be small kids’
2. *ngul ngancn nganip-i ngancn, mami ngathn-man ngancn...*  
 then 1pl:excl(NOM)father-ERG^ 1pl:excl(NOM) mum 1sgPOS-ERG^ 1pl:excl(NOM)  
 ‘we, including Dad and Mum...’

3. *ngancn ii-rr-kaw yat*  
1pl:excl(NOM) there-towards-west go:P.PFV  
'we went out bush'  
[GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

What is particularly interesting about these examples, is that they show that case marking remains sensitive to information status even within arguments, so that where two subparts of a single argument differ in givenness, this can be represented by differing case marking. Section 4.2.1.3 and Gaby (to appear-a) discuss in further detail how pragmatic ergativity operates in Kuuk Thaayorre, including a comparison between the Thaayorre system and those documented in other Australian languages.

### 6.7.3 Inklusory pronouns

The inklusory pronoun construction, discussed here because of its functional similarity to the other kinds of inklusory construction, is syntactically very different. Inklusory pronouns express, in a single lexeme, both the subject superset and an oblique subset. An example of this is (297), in which the inklusory pronoun *ngalathun* makes reference to both a dual subject superset (equivalent to the personal pronoun *ngal* 'we two (inclusive)') and a singular oblique subset (equivalent to *ngathun* 'to me'):

- (478) *ngalathun kuuk yik-ø*  
1du:incl|1sg WORD(ACC) say-NPST  
'you and I are speaking together in the vernacular'  
[Hall 1972:380]

The inklusory pronominal paradigm is, in most instances, transparently related to both the nominative and the dative case forms of the personal pronouns, as can be seen in Table 58:

	Inclusory pronoun	Nominative pronoun	Dative pronoun
1	<i>ngalathun</i> ‘you and I’	<i>ngal</i> ‘1du:incl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
2	<i>ngalngun</i> ‘you and I’	<i>ngal</i> ‘1du:incl’	<i>nhangkun</i> ‘2sg’
3	<i>ngalingathun</i> ‘he and I’	<i>ngali</i> ‘1du:excl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
4	<i>ngampathun</i> ‘we and I’	<i>ngamp</i> ‘1pl:incl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
5	<i>pelnathun</i> ‘they and I’	<i>peln</i> ‘3pl’	<i>ngathun</i> ‘1sg’
6	<i>nhunturra</i> ‘all of you’	<i>nhunt</i> ‘2sg’	<i>nhurrnhungun</i> ‘2pl’
7	<i>nhipurra</i> ‘the two of you’	<i>nhip</i> ‘2du’	<i>nhurrnhungun</i> ‘2pl’

Table 58. Comparison of inclusory, nominative and dative pronouns.

Inclusory pronouns are attested so far only in the work of Hall (1972), and further investigation is required to provide a full explanation of their semantics and morphosyntax. Pending this, however, the following observations can be made. Firstly, the inclusory pronouns appear to be the product of dative case pronouns encliticising to, and later fusing with, nominative personal pronouns. Synchronically, though, the pronouns appear to be monomorphemic, rather than productively derived, since phonological reduction and modification have in some cases obscured the source morphemes. Nevertheless, it is useful for the discussion below to discuss the inclusory pronouns in terms of two component parts: an initial element drawn from the nominative paradigm; and a second element drawn from the dative paradigm. It is acknowledged, however, that this most likely does not reflect the synchronic morphological status of these forms.

The fact that the apparent case-marking of the component elements is not assigned by the predicate is evident in the following example:

- (479) *pelnathun kanpa ya<a>t*  
 3pl|1sgINCL before go<RDP>:P.PFV  
 ‘they and I all went previously’  
 [Hall 1972:381]

The putative origin of the second formative (i.e. a dative cardinal pronoun) is instead related to the comitative relationship that obtains between the participants<sup>151</sup>. The inclusory pronouns never express their grammatical function through case-inflection.

There is a semantic distinction between those inclusory pronouns in which the initial (nominative) element refers to the superset, and those in which it refers to the subset. The former is illustrated by rows 1-4 of Table 58 and the latter by rows 6-7. Discussion of the semantics of the latter case is deferred to below. Where the subset follows the superset, the inclusory pronoun appears to focus attention on the subset referent. This is evident in (480) and (481)<sup>152</sup>.

(480) *ngamp*                    *ngerngkan ngampathun*                    *thangkar-nam raak min-m*  
 1pl:incl(NOM) yesterday 1pl:incl|1sgINCL laugh-P.IPFV thing good-ABL  
 ‘all of us had a roaring good time yesterday from those jokes with me’  
 [Hall 1972:380]

(481) *nhunt*                    *ngalngun*                    *pam.thaaw*  
 2sg(NOM) 1du:incl|2sgINCL friend(NOM)  
 ‘you and I are good friends together’  
 [Hall 1972:380]

The semantics of the inclusory pronouns in which the subset precedes the superset, are less easily specified. Like other inclusory pronouns, they may focus attention on the subset (482).

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<sup>151</sup> It may be that these inclusory pronouns originated as reciprocal pronouns (cf. the formally analogous reflexive pronouns §5.1.3), but then generalised to other contexts (e.g. sociative, as in [479] below).

<sup>152</sup> Note also that examples (480) and (73) present what could be analysed as an inclusory pronoun construction embedded within a simple inclusory construction. The simple inclusory construction requires that a pronoun referring to the superset be apposed to one or more NPs referring to subset(s), but since the inclusory pronoun in itself refers to both superset and subset separately, it can be apposed to pronouns referring to either the superset (e.g. *ngamp* in [480]) or the subset (e.g. *nhunt* in [73]).

- (482) *nhipurra yarr*  
 2du|2plINCL go:IMP  
 ‘just two of you all go’  
 [Hall 1972:381]

Examples like (482) differ from other uses of inclusory pronouns, however, in that the verb predicates over only the subset and not the superset encoded by the inclusory pronoun. Conversely, in cases like (483) the individualisation of the plural subject group by means of the inclusory pronoun is actually intended to stress that the message applies to each individual member of the superset and not just a subset<sup>153</sup>.

- (483) *nhunturra pam; paanth nhunturra; ongkorr reepon-ø murk=th*  
 2sg|2pl man woman 2sg|2pl PROHIB steal-IMP others'.poss=PRAG  
 ‘every one of you men — and women — don’t steal what’s another’s’  
 [Hall 1972:380]

It should be noted here that there is some formal irregularity in the composition of these two inclusory pronouns; *nhunturra* ‘2sg|2pl’ and *nhipurra* ‘2du|2pl’. In Table 58 above, a comparison was made between the second element of the inclusory pronoun, and the dative personal pronoun corresponding in person and number. In these two cases, however, the second element *-urra* seems less like the second person plural dative pronoun *nhurrnhungun* and more like the unmarked *nhurr* ‘2pl(NOM)’. The similarity here is even stronger given that the nominative second person plural pronoun takes the form *nhurra* ~ *nyurra* in around a hundred other Australian languages (Dixon 1980:153). It is worth noting also that the suffix *-a* marks the dative case for some declensions of free noun (e.g. *pama* ‘to the man’).

Finally, the lexeme *pelnathun* ‘they and I’ in row 7 of Table 58 is labelled an ‘inclusory pronoun’ due to its formal resemblance of the other inclusory pronouns, despite the fact that the label is in this case somewhat of a misnomer. Used in clauses

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<sup>153</sup> Further speculation here is impossible since the context of utterance of (482) is not given by Hall (1972), and my data do not include examples of inclusory pronouns.

such as (479), the dative referent *-athun* ‘to me’ is not actually a subset of the plural nominative form *peln* ‘they’, but rather specifies an additional participant who acts in conjunction with the participants referred to by the superset:

(479) *pelnathun kanpa ya<a>t*  
3pl|1sgINCL before go<RDP>:P.PFV  
‘they and I all went previously’  
[Hall 1972:381]

## 6.8 Nominal coordination

Studies of nominal coordination differ greatly in scope. Haspelmath (to appear: 1) defines coordination extremely broadly, as:

*Syntactic constructions in which two or more units of the same type are combined into a larger unit and still have the same semantic relations with other surrounding elements.*

Haspelmath (to appear) considers inclusory constructions such as those described above as a coordinate subtype. Others (e.g. Stassen 2000) explicitly exclude inclusory constructions from their considerations of nominal coordination. The following sections describe a range of constructions in which multiple entities, each encoded by separate noun phrases, have the same role in the clause. Some of the constructions discussed may not be classified as nominal coordination proper, but their functional similarity warrants their presentation here in order to facilitate comparison. The inclusory constructions discussed in §6.7 differ from those to follow only in the fact that one or more participants or entities are encoded only in the superset pronoun, and not specified in a separate noun phrase. There are, however, many strong similarities between some coordinate constructions described below and the corresponding inclusory constructions. These will be indicated where appropriate.



### 6.8.1 Conjunction by coordinator

It appears that the nominative third person dual pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ is acquiring the function of a coordinator. Consider, for instance, example (484):

- (484) *parr-an pul kuta-ku nhaanham nhunh thatr*  
 child-ERG 3du(ERG) dog-ERG see:NPST 3sgACC frog(ACC)  
 ‘the child and the dog are looking at the frog’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

*Pul* may here be functioning as a coordinator, conjoining the two NPs *parran* ‘the child’ and *kutaku* ‘dog’. Alternatively, it may be that *pul* ‘they two’ is a simple subject pronoun, apposed to two NPs that identify the individuals it refers to. On the evidence of examples such as (484) alone, there would be no need to posit this coordinator function of *pul*. However, there are a very small number of examples in which *pul* is used to conjoin a plural (not dual) number of participants. In such cases as these, it is difficult to retain an analysis of *pul* as a (dual number) subject pronoun:

- (485) *ngul Ebi-n pul Donald mi'imrr*<sup>154</sup> ...  
 1. then Ivy-^ERG 3du(NOM) Donald(NOM) sang  
 ‘so Ivy and Donald sang’  
 2. *Cyрил pul mi'imrr*  
 Cyril(NOM) 3du(NOM) sang  
 ‘and Cyril sang’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

The second clause of (485) is separated from the first by a short pause. It would seem that the speaker originally formulated the initial clause to stand alone, then remembered a third participant, Cyril. It would be incorrect to assume that the use of the dual pronoun here is a speech error, though, as *pul* appears after the speaker has

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<sup>154</sup> The verb *mi'i* ‘pick up, sing’ is irregular. The expected form in this example would be either *mi'im* ‘sing:P.IPFV’ or *mi'irr* ‘sing-P.PFV’. The form *mi'imrr* would usually indicate reciprocal derivation — which would be semantically compatible with the collaborative nature of the performance described — but in this case it is unclear why the verb is in unmarked nonpast tense.

remembered and mentioned the third participant. If it were functioning as a subject pronoun, then, we would expect it to take the form *peln* ‘3pl(NOM)’ in (485.2), reflecting that it refers to three participants overall, or *nhul* ‘3sg(NOM)’, if it were to refer just to Cyril. The fact that the speaker instead continues to employ *pul* ‘3du(NOM)’ to add a third Actor, suggests that *pul* is here functioning as a coordinator. The grammaticalisation of coordinators from (usually dual, third person) pronouns is attested in a number of Australian languages, including Tiwi (Osborne 1974), Ngandi (Heath 1978), Arrernte (Wilkins 1989), Kayardild (Evans 1995) and the areally proximal Kugu Nganhcara dialects (Smith and Johnson 2000). Unlike the coordinators of many of these languages, however, Thaayorre *pul* does not occupy a fixed position with respect to the coordinands (nor do the coordinands occupy a fixed position relative to each other). In (485.1) and (485.2), the coordinator immediately follows the first coordinand (and in [485.1] it immediately precedes the second). In (486), however, *pul* precedes the second coordinand (*nganam-u* ‘mother’), but both are separated from the first coordinand (*nganipi* ‘father’) by the verb and its object. In (487), *pul* follows the two coordinands (*paanth thono* ‘a woman’ and *pam* ‘man’), which are adjacent:

- (486) *nganip-i ngancan thaka-rr pul nganam-u*  
 father-ERG 1pl:excl:ACC leave-P.PFV 3du(ERG) mother-ERG  
 ‘Dad and mum left us’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

- (487) *paanth thono pam pul mimp katp-r*  
 woman one(NOM) man(NOM) 3du(NOM) cloth(ACC) grasp-NPST  
 ‘a woman and man are holding up a piece of cloth’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break12]

With respect to word order, then, *pul* appears to behave more like a Thaayorre free pronoun than a conventional coordinator. There are further indications that this putative coordinator function of *pul* is not yet fully developed. To begin with, *pul* is only ever used with third person referents, and in most cases it conjoins only two NPs. This is unlike Kayardild, for example, where the second person dual pronoun *birra* —

when functioning as conjunction — can combine with a first person pronoun as in *ngada birr* (1sg CONJ) ‘me too’ (Evans 1995:20).

The final piece of evidence that Thaayorre *pul* has not yet fully grammaticalised as a coordinator, is the fact that it is only used to conjoin NPs with the grammatical function of subject, as befits its erstwhile nominative/ergative case form. Where non-subject arguments are conjoined, alternative coordination strategies are employed, such as the borrowed English conjunction *and*.

- (488) *Daniel-ak and Alice-ak pulnungun kaarp nhaaw-r*  
 Daniel-DAT and Alice-DAT 3duDAT NEG see:P.PFV  
 ‘haven’t you seen Daniel and Alice?’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Conversation]

Time will tell whether *pul* will eventually develop into a fully-fledged coordinator. For the purposes of this thesis, I will continue to treat it as a personal pronoun apposed to the coordinands.

### 6.8.2 Asyndetic conjunction (referential case linkage)

As mentioned in the preceding section, it is not possible to use *pul* ‘3du(NOM)’ as coordinator where the coordinands have a grammatical function other than subject, or where a coordinand is first or second person. In such cases, there are a range of options available to the speaker. The first of these is asyndetic conjunction, or the simple apposition of coordinands in the same case. This is illustrated by (489), in which three noun phrases (*nguk* ‘hook’, *yuk* ‘thing’ and *wal* ‘bag’) are coordinated as a single object argument:

- (489) *nguk, yuk, wal kal-r pul*  
 hook(ACC) thing(ACC) bag(ACC) carry-P.PFV 3du(ERG)  
 ‘the two of them carried hooks and things in their bags’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 10]

Although the three coordinands in (489) are adjacent, this is not a necessary condition for coordination. In (490), for instance, one coordinand (*kirk* ‘spear’) precedes the verb, whilst the other (*thul=yuk* ‘woomera-kind-of-things’) follows:

- (490) *ngul ngay kirk kempthe kal-m thul=yuk*  
 then 1sg(ERG) spear(ACC) apart carry-P.IPFV woomera(ACC)=STUFF  
 ‘I used to carry spears and woomeras separately’  
 [AJ26/11/02 Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

Similarly, in (491) one coordinand (*nganipn* ‘to Dad’) appears clause-initially while the other (*nganamun* ‘to Mum’) is clause-final:

- (491) *nganip-n ngancn yik-nhat nganam-un*  
 father-DAT 1pl:excl(NOM) say-P.PFV mother-DAT  
 ‘we said to Dad and Mum’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

Much like the apposition of wholly and partially coreferential noun phrases, coordinated noun phrases may be apposed to one another regardless of their role in the clause (e.g. object in [490] or indirect object in [491]). The fact that the noun phrases stand in apposition is marked by referential case (i.e. they must take the same case); word order plays no role in marking coordination.

### 6.8.3 Conjunction by adnominal case linkage

§6.7 presented a number of inclusory constructions in which an individual included within the reference of a non-singular pronoun is also referred to by a separate (subset) noun phrase marked by adnominal case as a dependent of the (superset) pronoun. Inherent in the definition of inclusory constructions, is the fact that at least one member of the superset is referred to only by the superset pronoun. In Kuuk Thaayorre, however, there are many examples of clauses structurally similar to inclusory constructions, but in which each member of the superset is explicitly referred to by a separate NP. In all such clauses recorded to date, the superset

includes only two participants. These constructions are discussed in the following sections.

### 6.8.3.1 *Comitative conjunction*

§6.7.2 presented the comitative inclusory construction, in which the subset NP is marked as a comitative dependent of the (ergative or nominative) superset subject. Where both superset participants are enumerated, one receives referential case (agreeing with the superset pronoun) whilst the other is marked comitative:

- (492) *kanangkarr pul pam ngumpurr-kak pul may-i yat*  
 long.ago 3du(NOM) man(NOM) old.lady-COM 3du(NOM) VEG-DAT go:P.PFV  
 ‘long ago an old man and his wife went out to gather food’  
 [FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

Like the comitative inclusory construction, the comitative conjunction construction appears to be used in order to imply that a particular relationship holds between participants. In (492), for instance, the two participants are married. We may assume that the comitative conjunction construction is used here instead of the corresponding inclusory construction because the addressee could not be expected to retrieve the reference of either participant from a superset pronoun alone. Taken from the first line of a text, (492) serves to introduce two new topics, and as such explicit reference to the individuals involved is preferred.

### 6.8.3.2 *Dative conjunction*

It is also common for one subset NP to receive dative marking (as per the dative inclusory construction, §6.7.3) and the other to receive the referential case-marking appropriate to the grammatical function of the argument as a whole. This can be seen in (493), in which the first subset NP *Jimmynthurr* ‘Jimmy’ agrees with the superset pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ (twice instantiated) in ergative case, whilst the second subset NP *Johnnyn* ‘at Johnny’ is dative-marked:

- (493) *Jimmy-nthurr Johnny-n pul ngerngkan thanp-rr-r pul*  
 Jimmy-ERG Johnny-DAT 3du(ERG) yesterday kick-RCP-P.PFV 3du(ERG)  
 ‘Jimmy and Johnny kicked each other yesterday’  
 [Hall 1972:244]

Such clauses thus contain two subject elements in different cases. The fact that dative case-marking is adnominal in function, rather than being assigned by the predicate (i.e. relational), is evidenced by the construction’s compatibility with clauses headed by a verb that does not subcategorise for an indirect object (e.g. (493) above). As with the dative inclusory construction, dative conjunction is always employed in the description of semantically symmetric events (whether formally coded reciprocal [493] or not [494]), and is the only strategy for marking the symmetry of a relationship not encoded by a transitive verb. Thus the relationship of adjacency described by (494) (i.e. that the two participants sit beside one another) — usually marked by dative case in non-symmetric clauses — is made ‘reciprocal’ through dative conjunction.

- (494) *pam ith pul paanth-ak nhiinat pul*  
 man dem:dist 3du(NOM) woman-DAT sit:GO&:P.PFV 3du(NOM)  
 ‘the man and the woman went and sat down next to each other’  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP]

- (495) *yuk thongkn church-ak than<an>-∅*  
 TREE tree(NOM) church-DAT stands<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the tree is next to the church’  
 [EC02/10/02 Elicitation BowPed49]

The dative suffix on the subset *paanthak* ‘to/at the woman’ thus captures the relationship of adjacency, whilst the fact that both participants are included within the reference of the superset subject pronoun *pul* ‘they two’ marks the event as symmetrical. This reciprocal strategy has analogues in the binomial quantifiers used to encode reciprocity in languages such as French and Russian, in which case roles are mapped onto different components (e.g. in French *l’un à l’autre* ‘the one to the other’) regardless of the fact that each participant plays both roles.

#### 6.8.4 Concessive conjunction

I have found no examples of the concessive conjunction of noun phrases or adjectival phrases. This is instead achieved by means of the concessive conjunction of clauses, as can be seen in the following example:

- (496) *pam nhangnam ngathn nhul pam koon*  
 HUMAN mother 1sgPOS(NOM) 3sg(NOM) HUMAN short  
  
*ngul nhul piintharrn*  
 but 2sg(NOM) strong  
 ‘my mother’s short but strong’  
 [GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

Rather than merely contrasting the characteristics ‘short’ and ‘strong’ (as in the English translation), the Kuuk Thaayorre construction contrasts two full propositions: *pam nhangnam ngathn nhul pam koon* ‘my mother is short’; and *nhul piintharrn* ‘she’s strong’. The role of the coordinator *ngul* ‘then, but’ in clausal conjunction is described in §11.2.2.2.

#### 6.8.5 Disjunction

Nominal disjunction is achieved by means of the modal enclitic, =*okun* ‘DUBitative’. The disjunctive function of =*okun* can be seen in (497):

- (497) *nhunt wanthanngun nhiinan, Cairns=okun, Melbourne=okun*  
 2sg(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub> sit:GO&:NPST Cairns=DUB Melbourne=DUB  
 ‘where are you going to live, Cairns or Melbourne?’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]

=*Okun* was introduced in §3.5.4 as introducing a possible world or state-of-affairs which the speaker does not have sufficient evidence to assert. As such, its closest English translation is ‘maybe’. Thus, if we interpret the ignorative *wanthanngun*

‘where’ as an indefinite pronoun (one of its core functions, cf. §3.1.2.7), example (497) could alternatively be translated ‘you are going to live somewhere, maybe Cairns, maybe Melbourne’. This reflects the indirect style of questioning preferred by most Kuuk Thaayorre speakers.

Because =*okun* is encliticised to both of the disjunct noun phrases in (497), it may be tempting to analyse this construction as bisyndetic coordination (with both coordinands being marked by the coordinator =*okun*). =*Okun* need not be encliticised to both coordinands, however, as (58) shows:

(58') *T.A. ngancn katpi-rr. T.A.=okun*  
 T.A.(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) grasp-P.PFV T.A.(ACC)=DUB

*Ansett katp-irr=okun*

Ansett(ACC) grasp-P.PFV=DUB

‘we caught T.A.A. [airline], either T.A.A. or Ansett [airline]’

[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Although =*okun* appears twice in (58), it is encliticised to only the first of the coordinands and to the verb. This suggests that it is clausal in scope, rather than directly marking coordinands. However, it should be noted that in every recorded example in my corpus, =*okun* is attached to the first coordinand as well as at least one other clausal constituent. In many examples, though, it is also encliticised to other clausal constituents, as in (58) and the following:

(498) *ngul=okun kunk=okun pul watp=okun pul*  
 then=DUB alive=DUB 3du(NOM) dead=DUB 3du(NOM)

‘(I don’t know whether) they two are alive or dead’

[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Finally, the English loan *or* is frequently used to achieve nominal disjunction (as well as clausal disjunction – cf. 11.2.3), though usually alongside the dubitative enclitic, as in the following:



(499) *may tea nhunt wantantharr mungk-r?*  
 VEG tea(ACC) 2du(ERG) how eat-NPST

*milk=aak=okun or ngotn?*

milk=ADN.PROP=DUB or black

‘how do you take your tea? White or black?’

[MF20/08/02 Conversation]

## 6.9 Possession

### 6.9.1 Part-whole apposition

Section 6.7 discussed the apposition of partially coreferential NPs that refer to part and whole of a participant group (i.e. subset and superset). It is also possible to appose NPs that refer to part and whole of a single entity. All indexes of a person (e.g. their name, voice, shadow and footprints) are treated as ‘part’ of them for the purposes of this construction. This is exemplified by (500), a clause headed by an intransitive verb, *rokr* ‘entered’, that subcategorises for a single argument in nominative case:

(500) *kuta nhul paant glass-ak rok-r*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) head(NOM) glass-DAT enter-P.PFV  
 ‘the dog put his head into the jar’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

The three nominative noun phrases — *kuta* ‘dog’, *nhul* ‘he’, and *paant* ‘head’ — together comprise the subject argument, each contributing different kinds of information. *Kuta* ‘dog’ identifies the participant involved in the event, while *paant* ‘head’ specifies the part of the dog that enters the jar. *Nhul* ‘he’ makes the reference specific, aiding reference tracking throughout the narrative.

The meronymic apposition of noun phrases referring to part and whole is a cross-linguistically common strategy for representing inalienable possession, particularly across the Australian continent. Analogous constructions in other Australian

languages have been labelled ‘External Possession’ (eg. McGregor 1998 for Nyulnyulan languages), the ‘favorite construction’ (e.g. Hale 1981 for Warlpiri), and ‘inalienable possession’ (e.g. Austin 1981 for Diyari, Goddard 1982 for Yidj, and Evans 1996 for Mayali). Each of these constructions function to link both possessor and possessum to a single argument of a predicate. Investigators differ, however, as to the relative status of whole and part. Evans (1996:87) asserts that the Mayali “part and whole are syntactically in apposition, with ‘head’ like properties shared between the part and the whole”. Hale (1981) also argues for an appositional analysis of Warlpiri part and whole nominals, with both being linked to the same argument position of the verb. Unlike Evans, though, Hale (1981:338) views the whole NP as head, proposing that the part NP may function as a secondary predicate with scope over the whole NP. Harvey (1996:134) provisionally adopts a similar analysis of the Warray construction, under which the whole is head and the part modifier.

What, then, is the relationship between whole and part NPs in Kuuk Thaayorre? To begin with, the two noun phrases do not occupy a fixed position relative to each other. Whilst they are often contiguous (as in example [500] above), they need not be. This can be seen in (458), in which the pronoun representing the possessor (*nhinh* ‘you’) appears clause-initially, while the possessum *name nhangkn* ‘your name’ does not appear until after the predicate.

(458) *nhinh ngay wuump walmeerem name nhangkn ngay*  
 2sgACC 1sg(NOM) CONTR remember name 2sgPOS(ACC) 1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I remember your name’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

The reverse ordering of part and whole is seen in example (276), in which the part NP (*koow* ‘nose’) occurs clause-initially, and the whole NP (= *unh* ‘him’) follows at the end of the clause:

(501) *koow rathi-rr=eln=unh*  
 nose(ACC) chopped=3pl(ERG)=3sgACC  
 ‘they chopped his nose off’  
 [Hall 1972:77]

It seems clear, then, that part and whole are referred to by separate NPs. How, then, are these phrases related? Both part and whole NPs exhibit some characteristics of a head. McGregor (1985); Evans (1996) and Harvey (1996) each give examples (from Warrwa, Mayali and Warray respectively) in which the predication holds for the part but not the whole. In Kuuk Thaayorre, too, what is predicated of the part need not be entailed of the whole, suggesting that the part NP has head status. This can be seen in (500), of which it is not true that the whole dog goes into the glass, only its head:

(500') *kuta nhul paant glass-ak rok-r*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) head(NOM) glass-DAT enter-P.PFV  
 'the dog puts his head into the jar'  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

But it is true to say that the dog enters the glass inasmuch as its head does, which is no doubt a motivation for these kinds of constructions. Example (502), however, illustrates a clear case of impact upon part and not whole.

(502) *kamp-an yarr pam-an*  
 track-DAT go:IMP man-DAT  
 'we must walk in his tracks'  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 9]

Example (173) presents another clause in which the predicate apparently has scope over the part but not the whole. This clause was uttered by one of my consultants who knew the referent of the whole expression, *pam nhangkn* 'your husband', very well, but had temporarily forgotten his *nhamp* 'name'.

(503) *ngay pam nhangkn nhamp ngay pamngoongkom*  
 1sg(NOM) man 2sgPOS(ACC) name(ACC) 1sg(NOM) be.ignorant<sup>155</sup>  
 'I don't remember your husband's name'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

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<sup>155</sup> *pamngoongkom* 'be ignorant' is a bivalent predicate nominal (§9.1.4).

It is possible even to omit the whole NP, as in the following statement about a recently deceased pet dog:

- (504) *nhamp ulp Buddy yancm*  
 name(NOM) dem:adr.prx Buddy go:P.IPFV  
 ‘(his) name was Buddy’  
 [LC19/11/02 Conversation]

There are, however, several factors that favour an analysis of the whole NP as head. To begin with, it is the whole that determines the selection of predicate in copula clauses. As will be discussed in §9.2, the predicate of a copula clause is drawn from small set of (mostly postural) verbs, selected according to semantic features of the subject. In example (504) above, the motion verb *yan* ‘go’ is the pragmatically unmarked ‘default’ copula where the subject is animate. This is clearly conditioned by the (omitted) whole referent; Buddy the dog. Similarly in (505), the copula verb *nhiinhin* ‘sit’ can be used in the description of an ongoing state associated with a human subject, but may not be used with an inanimate subject:

- (505) *meer purng nhiinim ngul nhul meer parrka-rr*  
 eye(NOM) closed sit:P.IPFV then 3sg(NOM) eyes(NOM) shine-P.PFV  
 ‘(her) eyes were closed then she opened them [lit. her eyes shone]’  
 [EF15/12/02 Cut&Break58]

The fact that *nhiin* ‘sit’ is used, as opposed to the default verb for inanimates, *wun* ‘lie’, suggests that the (elided) whole NP is the head.

Furthermore, where a pronominal enclitic is attached to the verb, this always agrees with the whole and not the part:

- (506) *yuur stitch-m rirk-r=anh*  
 hand(ACC) stitch-TR DO-P.PFV=1sgACC  
 ‘they put stitches in my hand’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

If the part were the syntactic head, we would expect the pronominal enclitic to agree with it in (third) person, but instead we find the enclitic =*anh* ‘1sgACC’ attached to the verb. Similarly, wherever the meronymic construction contains a free pronoun, it must have the person and number of the whole, rather than the part.

Whilst the properties of head thus seem split between the part and whole, those attributed to the whole probably outweigh those associated with the part. The scope of predication is the key feature that favours an analysis of the part as head. However, to claim (as above) that the predicate does not have scope over the whole argument in clauses such as (173) (repeated below), may be to misapply English rules of entailment to Kuuk Thaayorre:

- (173) *ngay pam nhangkn nhamp ngay pamngoongkom*  
 1sg(NOM) man 2sgPOS(ACC) name(ACC) 1sg(NOM) be.ignorant<sup>156</sup>  
 ‘I don’t remember your husband’s name’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

To say in English *I don’t remember your husband* entails that the speaker does not remember the person as a whole, not just one aspect of them. The same is not necessarily true of Kuuk Thaayorre, though. Example (507) was uttered by a friend shortly after I had arrived in Pormpuraaw:

- (507) *ngay nhinh pamngoongkom*  
 1sg(NOM) 2sgACC be.ignorant  
 ‘I didn’t know you (were here)’  
 [Anon.]

As she herself explained, she meant that she did not know I was coming Pormpuraaw, not that she didn’t know who I was. In Kuuk Thaayorre, then, ‘I don’t know you’ can mean ‘I don’t know something associated with you’. Even where a part is not

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<sup>156</sup> *pamngoongkom* ‘be ignorant’ is a bivalent predicate nominal.

specified, then, something predicated of an argument that refers to a whole, may in fact apply only to one part or aspect of that whole. If this is true, then it seems even more plausible that the whole is head, and the part is complement at some level of representation. Alternatively, it is possible to analyse the meronymic construction as double-headed, with part and whole both functioning as heads, with a single grammatical function but not operating as a single syntactic unit. Such an analysis fits Dench and Evans's (1988) characterisation of referential case (cf. §6.7.1).

Finally, it should be noted that the NPs referring to part and whole may together form a higher-level noun phrase, as in (508).

(508) *nhunt* [ *minh kothon thamr kamp* ]-ak *thanan ulp*  
 2sg(NOM) [MEAT wallaby foot track]-DAT stand<RDP>:NPST dem:adr.prx  
 'you're standing on wallaby tracks'  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

Here, the whole *minh kothon* 'wallaby' and the part *thamr kamp* 'tracks' form a single phrase (marked by square brackets), as evidenced by their contiguity and — most importantly — the presence of only a single suffix marking dative case.

As mentioned above, the terms 'possessor raising' and 'external possession' have been applied to analogous constructions in many other languages (see, e.g., the papers in Chappell and McGregor 1996). The process of 'possessor raising' (as described by, e.g., Baker 1988, O'Connor 1996, Payne and Barshi 1999) derives part-whole constructions such as the one described here from an underlying structure in which the possessor is a dependent of the possessum. There is no evidence, however, that the Thaayorre possessive construction (in which the genitive possessor is a dependent of the unmarked possessum) is more basic than the part-whole appositional construction described in this section. As argued by Hale (1981) for Warlpiri, and Evans (1996) for Mayali, the same-case part-whole construction appears to be less marked and more frequently used than a possessive construction in which the possessor is encoded as a modifier. Further, Baker (1988:274) predicts that possessor raising is only possible if the relevant noun phrase is an internal argument:

*Possessor Raising*’ should only be allowed if the raised NP is the possessor of a transitive verb’s direct object, or of an unaccusative verb’s surface subject

In the Thaayorre part-whole construction, however, the apposed noun phrases referring to part and whole may have a wide range of functions in the clause. The functions of intransitive subject and transitive object (both of which are predicted by Baker) are illustrated by (500) and (458) respectively. In addition to these core arguments, however, apposed part-whole noun phrases function as optional clausal adjuncts. In (502), for example, the noun phrases *kampan* ‘on the tracks’ and *paman* ‘on the man’ are apposed in dative case to refer to a path (the verb *yan* ‘go’ subcategorises only for a single nominative-case subject argument):

- (502) *kamp-an yarr pam-an*  
 track-DAT<sup>157</sup> go:IMP man-DAT  
 ‘we must walk in his tracks’  
 [Foote and Hall; Reader 9]

The syntax of apposed, partially coreferential NPs is discussed further in Gaby 2005.

### 6.9.2 Possessum-head

A possessum cum head may be modified by a genitive noun phrase representing the possessor. §6.5 above discussed the role of possessive pronouns in the noun phrase, pointing out that they occupy a particular nominal modifier slot and may bear the relational case suffix assigned to the phrase as a whole. (509) is an example of a clause containing a possessive pronoun.

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<sup>157</sup> Note that the two allomorphs of the dative suffix (*-an* and *-ak*) associated with the noun *kamp* ‘track’, as seen in [502] and [508] respectively. Their usage is determined by the age and dialect of the speaker, rather than any semantic or functional contrast.

- (509) *kuta nhangkn wanthan?*  
dog 2sgPOS(NOM) where  
'where's your dog?'  
[Anon.]

The possessive pronoun, *nhangkn* 'your', is part of the NP headed by the possessum *kuta* 'dog'. Possessum NPs may alternatively be modified by nomen-headed NPs in the genitive case (as in [510]), with the two together forming a complex possessive NP.

- (510) *yulu Yuwi-ak*  
apple Hughie-GEN  
'Hughie's apple'  
[Foote and Hall: Primer 8]

Where the possessive NP has a role in the clause that requires overt case-marking, the form this takes is determined by the word class of the possessor. Where the possessor is represented by a possessive pronoun, grammatical function is signalled by the relevant case morpheme attaching to the possessive pronoun, as in the following:

- (511) *ngay [pam ngathn-mak] wait rirk-ø... ngok-e*  
1sg(NOM) [man 1sgPOS-DAT] wait do-NPST beer-DAT  
'I'm waiting for my husband... for beer'  
[AP9/10/02 Conversation]

Where the possessor is represented by a genitive-marked noun, however, the grammatical function of the possessum may be marked in one of two ways. Firstly, and only where the possessum has an oblique case role, both possessor and possessum may be encoded as separate adjunct arguments, each receiving the relevant case inflection. In example (512), for example, both *pamak* 'to the man' and *pormpan* 'to the house' are marked by dative case, their status as independent adjuncts confirmed by their separation by *ii* 'there':



- (512) *ngal iirra yat pam-ak ii pormp-an.*  
 1du:incl(NOM) to.there go:P.PFV man-DAT there house-DAT  
*Pormpr nhangn-mun.*  
 house 3sgPOS-DAT  
 ‘we went to that man’s house’  
 ‘‘you ’n’ me go over there where that man house’’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

The possessive relationship that obtains between the man and his house is only implied by the first line of (512)<sup>158</sup>. This stands in contrast to its paraphrasing in the second clause, in which the possessor is encoded by a pronoun. Recall that possessive pronouns, unlike genitive-inflected nomina, can be inflected for relational case. Here, the possessor and possessum are represented in a single phrase *pormpr nhangnmun* ‘to his house’, to which the dative case is suffixed only once (phrase-finally, to the possessive pronoun). This single phrase simultaneously encodes the possessive relationship and oblique case role.

The second means by which a possessor noun can reflect the grammatical function of its possessum is through the use of ablative case marking. In (513), for instance, the ablative case marking on *Dan* does not signal any of the typical semantic case relations associated with the ablative morpheme (e.g. ‘Source’ – cf. §4.2.6.1). Rather, it marks *Dan* as the (possessive) adnominal modifier of *kuta* ‘dog’, whilst simultaneously coding the grammatical function of transitive subject held by the possessive NP *kuta Dantam* ‘Dan’s dog’ as a whole.

- (513) *nganh kuta Dan-tam patha-rr*  
 1sgACC dog Dan-ABL bite-P.PFV  
 ‘Dan’s dog bit me’  
 [GJ10/10/03 Elicitation]

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<sup>158</sup> Under the analysis presented herein, this construction is syntactically different from the (same case) Part-Whole apposition construction discussed in §6.9.1 though the two are in this case identical at the surface level.

This function of ablative case marking was discussed in more detail in §4.2.6.

## 6.10 Reference tracking

### 6.10.1 Reference tracking, generic nouns and the classifying construction

Both Wilkins (2000) and Dixon (2002) report anaphoric functions of generic nouns, which may be employed to refer back to a generic-specific pairing. This can be seen in (514), where the full classifying construction is used in the first reference to the saltwater crocodile *minh pinc* (in line 1), but then only the generic *minh* is used as anaphor in line 3:

(514) *kar minh pinc pam.thaawaarra-eey. mmm.*

1. like MEAT salt.croc(NOM) dangerous-PRAG mmm

‘Saltwater crocodiles, for instance, are very dangerous’

2. *ngay news-ak ngay nhaath-m,*

1sg(NOM) news-DAT 1sg(NOM) see-P.IPFV

‘I saw on the news...’

3. *Cairns iikop, pam farmer,nhul minh tourist-ak meeren-r.*

Cairns at.down man farmer 3sg(ERG) meat(ACC) tourist-DAT show-P.PFV

‘down in Cairns a farmer had been showing the tourists crocodiles’

4. *tourist-ak meeren-m.*

tourist-DAT show-P.IPFV

‘was showing the tourists...’

5. *nhul minh yarriy katp-m*

3sg(ERG) meat(ACC) thus grasp-P.IPFV

‘he was holding [chicken] meat like this [for the crocodiles]’

6. *ngul minh pinc ulp ranci-rr punth aka patha-rr.*  
 then meat salt.croc(NOM) dem:adr.prx jump-P.PFV arm(ACC) here bite-P.PFV  
 ‘when that crocodile jumped up and bit his arm here’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Interestingly, in line (13.5) the same generic noun as was used to refer to the crocodiles, *minh* ‘meat’, is used to refer to the chicken meat being fed to the crocodiles. This renders the generic noun ambiguous. For this reason, subsequent reference to the crocodiles is made by the full classifying phrase *minh pinc* ‘saltwater crocodile’ (514.6) rather than the generic noun alone.

Generic nouns may also be used cataphorically, introducing a new referent that subsequently receives further specification by a full classifying construction. This often occurs within a single clause, as illustrated by example (195). Here, the main clause makes a general statement about the men’s hunting for meat, while the particular animal they are hunting is specified by a full classifying construction in a peripheral phrase. In (515), too, the fronted NP *minh=yuk* ‘meat sort of thing’ introduces the referent in the most general way possible, while the kind of meat intended is specified post-verbally:

- (195’) *pam peln ii kana yan minh-a, minh kothon-ak*  
 man(NOM) 3pl(NOM) there about.to go:NPST MEAT-DAT MEAT wallaby-DAT  
 ‘those men are hunting wallaby’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation/Elicitation]

- (515) *minh=yuk kaamp-m ngancn minh kothon*  
 meat-THING roast-P.IPFV 1pl:excl(ERG) MEAT wallaby(ACC)  
 ‘we used to roast meat things, (like) wallaby’  
 [AJ030204 Conversation/Narrative]

Kuuk Thaayorre is somewhat unusual in also allowing specific nouns to appear without any generic. Although there is a strong preference for some specific nouns (including *pinc* ‘saltwater crocodile’) to be preceded by their generic, this is not a syntactic requirement, pace Dixon (2002:455):

*In Ea1, Kuuk Thaayorre, a specific noun never occurs alone, without the appropriate generic. At first mention in a text we find *minh* ('edible animal': GENERIC NOUN) *kothon* ('wallaby': SPECIFIER) but at later mentions the wallaby is referred to just by *minh* (Hall 1972:70-1).*

The specific noun *pinc* 'saltwater crocodile', appears as the sole constituent of the noun phrase in the third line of example (516), despite the fact that its associated generic noun (*minh* 'meat') appears nowhere in the discourse context:

- (516) *kar inh waarr.min-tam yak-ntam*  
 1. like dem:sp.prx thing-ABL snake-ABL  
 'like from things, from snakes'
2. *nhunt weneth=peey miinng-r*  
 2sg(NOM) scared=PRAG take.fright-NPST  
 'you take fright from them'
3. *pinc, nhul kar winwin=peey!*  
 salt.croc(NOM) 3sg(NOM) like fearsome=PRAG  
 'the saltwater crocodile, it's *winwin*'
4. *nhunt weneth miinng-r*  
 2sg(NOM) fright happen-NPST  
 'you're scared [of it]'  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Having a generic noun preposed to a specific noun, then, should be considered pragmatically preferred, rather than syntactically obligatory.

### 6.10.2 Reference-tracking functions of *thono* 'one'

The quantifier *thono* 'one' has developed a functionally and syntactically distinctive use as reference tracking particle (glossed in small caps, to distinguish it from the

quantifier). This particle functions to introduce a participant as both ‘new’ and ‘unexpected’. This participant may be unexpected either because it arrives on the scene ‘out of the blue’ (i.e. without foreshadowing) or because it contrasts with an existing participant with which it might potentially be confused (usually because of identical referring expressions)<sup>159</sup>. The first of these scenarios is illustrated by (517). After hearing only of the speaker’s own travelling in (517.1-.4), our attention is suddenly abruptly drawn to a new Actor by the use of *thono* in (517.5) who takes over from the speaker as topic.

(517) *ngay ii-rr-kuw Darwin-ak yat=ay, 1970.*

1. 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west Darwin-DAT go:P.PFV=1sg(NOM) 1970  
‘I went west to Darwin in 1970’

2. *ngul 1969 Cyclone Tracy-n thiika-rr.*  
then 1969 Cyclone Tracy-ERG break-P.PFV  
‘in 1969 Cyclone Tracy had destroyed it’

3. *Darwin ulp thiika-rr.*  
Darwin(ACC) dem:adr.prx break-P.PFV  
‘it destroyed Darwin’

4. *ngay ii-rr-kuw yat 1970.*  
1sg(NOM) there-towards-west go:P.PFV 1970  
‘I went there to the west in 1970’

5. *ngul pam thono, mark meerenm rip.*  
then man ONE mark(ACC) show-P.IPFV scar(ACC)  
‘[there was] a man, [who] showed [me] a mark, a scar’

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<sup>159</sup> It is cross-linguistically common for reference-tracking forms with similar functions to grammaticalise from the numeral ‘one’ (e.g. German *ein* ‘one’, Russian *odin* ‘one’ and even English *an* < *one*).

Chapter 6

6. *glass-n ke'err=unh.*  
 glass-ERG spear:P.PFV =3sgACC  
 ‘glass had cut him’
7. *Taxi driver, pam ngotn.*  
 taxi driver man black  
 ‘[he was] a taxi driver, a black man’
8. *Taxi driver glass-n ke'err.*  
 taxi driver(ACC) glass-ERG spear:P.PFV  
 ‘the taxi driver had got cut by glass’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

There is nothing in the preceding discourse or the addressee’s (my) background knowledge that would enable them to predict the introduction of this new participant. Neither does the addressee know anything of the identity of the *pam* ‘man’ until they are told in line 7 that he is a taxi driver. This is reflected by the presence of *thono* ‘one’ immediately following this first mention in line 3, marking the *pam* ‘man’ as an entirely new participant for whom the addressee should not search for an antecedent.

Example (518.2) illustrates the second type of situation in which *thono* is used. Again, *thono* follows the first reference to a new participant, *yuk dye ith* ‘that dye’. Here, though, the discussion of dyes is not off topic. The potential for confusion instead arises from the availability of a (false) antecedent, the *kormpr* dye (518.1). *Thono* is therefore used to stress that the noun phrase it follows refers to an entirely new participant, once again warning the addressee not to look for an antecedent in the previous discourse.

- (518) *kormpr wuump yiirram ii-ø-kuw mi'imrr, rump-un*  
 1. root.sp. CONTR other there-at-west pick.up:NPST beach-DAT  
 ‘we get *kormpr* dye on the western side, we get it at the beach’
2. *yuk dye ith thono=th*  
 THING dye dem:dist ONE=PRAG  
 ‘whereas there’s this other dye’

3.    *yuk*        *ith*        *ii-ø-kaw*,   *yuk*   *wurrk*        *wan-r*  
          THING(NOM) dem:dist there-at-east THING wurrk(ACC) tell-NPST  
          ‘that dye is in the east, it’s called *wurrk*’  
          [ME04/06/05 Conversation / Narrative Yencr]

Syntactically, this use of *thono* ‘ONE’ differs from the quantifier use *thono* ‘one’ in that it appears immediately following the noun phrase it modifies, rather than appearing within the noun phrase in the quantifier slot. This is clear in (518.2), where *thono* would precede the adnominal demonstrative *ith* ‘that’ if it were functioning as quantifier.





# Chapter Seven: Verbal inflection

## 7.1 The verbal template

### 7.1.1 Overview of categories encoded in the Thaayorre verb

Thaayorre verb stems may be either simplex (consisting solely of a verb root) or complex. Polymorphemic verb stems may be formed either by compounding a (reduced) person part noun with a verb root, or by suffixing one or a more derivational suffixes to the verb root. The valence increaser ('V^') is the only derivational morpheme that adds an argument to the subcategorisation frame of the verb. The reflexive and reciprocal morphemes lower verbal valency (though they remain ambivalent with respect to clausal transitivity), and the verb-forming suffix ('VBLZ') creates a verb from a noun or adjective. The final derivational category is that of associated motion. The two sets of associated motion suffixes (both of which grammaticalised from free motion verbs – see §8.1.4) do not affect valency, but instead derive a verb stem with altered aspect.

Although at most one inflectional suffix can appear on any one verb, a number of tense, aspect and mood categories may be expressed. Firstly, there is a binary tense split between 'past' and 'nonpast'. The 'past' tense in turn bifurcates into two aspects — perfective and imperfective — as schematised in Figure 10:

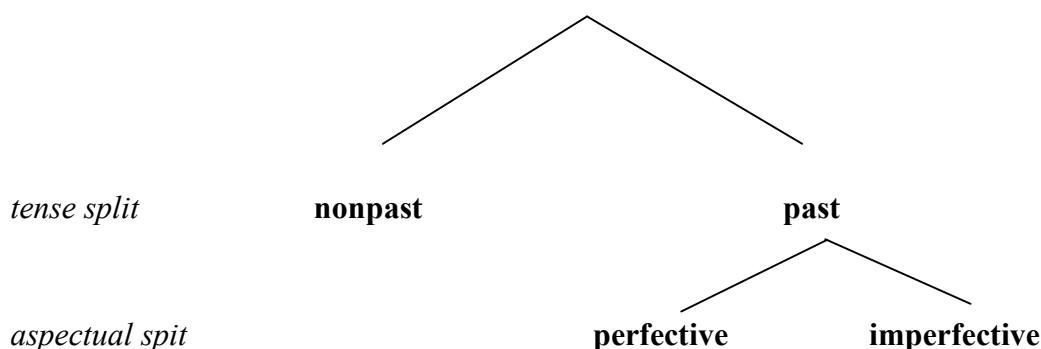


Figure 10. Tense/aspect categories encoded by the Thaayorre verb

There are thus three indicative tense/aspect categories encoded by Thaayorre suffixes (further to the aspectual effects of optional root reduplication – see §7.2.4): past

perfective, past imperfective and nonpast<sup>160</sup>. The nonpast category is neutral with respect to mood (i.e. it may express a realis event in progress at the time of utterance, or equally an irrealis desire or expectation for the future), but both past tense affixes are necessarily realis. Further to these are five modal suffixes which occur in the same slot as tense/aspect inflection, but are neutral with respect to these. The modal categories encoded are: Imperative ('IMP'), subjunctive ('SBJV'), purposive ('PURP') counterfactual ('CTF'), and imminence ('IMM').<sup>161</sup>

### 7.1.2 Internal structure of the Thaayorre verb

The order of morphemes within the Thaayorre verb can be schematised as in Table 59. Note that only the verb root and inflectional tense/aspect/mood affixes are obligatory (represented in bold), all other morphemes are optional. Aside from person part nominals (with which verb roots may be compounded) and infixal reduplication, Thaayorre verbal morphology is entirely suffixal. In this representation, morphemes are categorised into distinct 'slots', from which only one morpheme may appear in any single word. Accordingly, since there is only one 'slot' for inflectional morphology, only one inflectional (TAM) suffix may appear per verbal word. All derivational morphemes precede these inflectional suffixes, as predicted by Greenberg (1963:93). Finally, the enclitic pronouns and pragmatic clitics are represented in italics since these are not considered internal to the verb proper, despite forming part of the phonological verbal word.

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<sup>160</sup> My analysis of the Thaayorre tense/aspect/mood system owes a great debt to Barry Alpher, who made many pertinent suggestions as to the categories underlying the various TAM allomorphs. Needless to say, I take full responsibility for any remaining errors in the analysis presented herein.

<sup>161</sup> The verbal categories proposed here differ considerably from those put forward by Hall (1972). Compare, for example, my three-way distinction between past perfective, past imperfective and nonpast tense/aspect (which have different forms for the different conjugations) with Hall's (1972:86) distinctions between past, present and future tenses and nonspecific, realis and irrealis (plus punctiliar and continuous) aspects. These are not simple differences in terminology, but rather reflect a much deeper cleavage in analysis. Since the discussion of each divergence would lead to an overly convoluted exposition, only the most pertinent departures will be flagged.

DERIV	ROOT	DERIV	DERIV 162	DERIV	DERIV	INFL	ARG	ARG	PRAG
body+	<b>ROOT-</b> <RDP>	-VBLZ	-V^	-RFL -RCP	-GO& -RUN&	<b>-TAM</b>	=PRO	=PRO	=le =th =p(a) =(n)thurr
verb roots may be compounded with a person part nominal	the bound verb root is optionally reduplicated	derives a verb from nouns, etc.	increases valency by one argument	produce a reflexive or reciprocal stem with reduced valency	one of two associated motion suffixes	either a tense / aspect or mood suffix	<i>first enclitic pronoun</i>	<i>second enclitic pronoun</i> (see §5.1.1.2 for ordering rules)	<i>a range of discourse pragmatic markers</i>

Table 59. Order of morphemes in the Thaayorre verbal word.

Thaayorre derivational suffixes are organised into four separate slots, the exponents of which freely combine in the order given in Table 59. The only exception to this linear order is the combination of the valence increasing morpheme with the reflexive and reciprocal suffixes. The diagonal line between these two slots is intended to represent the fact that valence increaser and reflexive/reciprocal may occur in either order, as discussed in Chapter 8.

Although no examples have been recorded illustrating the combination of all four derivational morphemes, the following examples each contain three:

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<sup>162</sup> The ordering of the Valence increaser and the reflexive/reciprocal morphemes is variable, as indicated by the diagonal line between these two slots. See §8 for a discussion of the iconic correlation between linear order and the semantic order of application.

(519) *ngancn nhunh kaar=p yoongk-e-nhan-nhan yuk-un*  
1pl(ERG) 3sgACC NEG=PRAG hang-RFL-V<sup>^</sup>-GO&:NPST tree-DAT  
'we won't make him hang himself in the tree'  
[Hall 1972:391]

(520) *truck waarr-m-nhani-rr nhul*  
truck(ACC) bad-VBLZ-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV 3sg(ERG)  
'the truck broke down on him'  
[Hall 1972:127]

(521) *pulnhan yup nhaath-nhan-rr-nhan=unt*  
3du(ACC) soon see-V<sup>^</sup>-RCP-GO&:NPST=you(ERG)  
'you'll soon be making them two see each other'  
[Hall 1972:392]

It does not seem to be possible to combine the reflexive and reciprocal morphemes in a single verb.

### 7.1.3 Verbal conjugations

The conjugation class of a verb stem determines which allomorphs of the tense/aspect morphemes it combines with. The morpheme *-r*, for example, signifies nonpast tense when suffixed to a conjugation 1 verb, but signifies past perfective tense/aspect when suffixed to a verb of conjugation 2. The majority of Thaayorre verbs belong to conjugation 1, but the number of conjugation 2 verbs is significant. Although the second conjugation is smaller in membership than the first, there is no evidence that this is a closed class; new verbs derived by the 'verbalising' suffix *-m* are generally assigned to the second conjugation. In addition to these two major conjugation classes, there remain a handful of irregular verbs, the inflection of which must be learned on a verb-by-verb basis. Table 60 gives the conjugation membership of some common Thaayorre verbs (given in their bare root form):

<b>Conjugation 1:</b> <b>-r ‘NPST’; -rr ‘P.PFV’</b>	<b>Conjugation 2:</b> <b>-ø ‘NPST’; -r ‘P.PFV’</b>	<b>Irregular</b>
<i>kalr; kalirr</i> ‘carry’ (tr)	<i>kerp; kerpr</i> ‘finish’ (intr)	<i>ke’er; ke’err ~ ko’orr</i> ‘spear’ (tr)
<i>katpr; katpirr</i> ‘hold’ (tr)	<i>koope; kooper</i> ‘wait (intr)’	<i>mi’ir; mi’irr</i> ‘pick up’ (tr)
<i>koontr; koonterr</i> ‘deprive’ (ditr)	<i>kooc; koocr</i> ‘bark’ (tr)	<i>ngeem; ngeeyr</i> ‘hear’ (tr)
<i>matpr; matparr</i> ‘smash’ (tr)	<i>nhiin; nhiinr</i> ‘sit’ (intr)	<i>nham; nhaawr</i> ‘see’ (tr)
<i>minngr; minngarr</i> ‘take fright’ (semitr)	<i>paarr; paarr_r</i> ‘cry, be born’ (intr)	<i>yan; yat</i> ‘go’ (intr)
<i>mungkr; mungkarr</i> ‘eat’ (tr)	<i>rirk; rirkr</i> ‘rise, DO’ (intr)	<i>-nha-</i> ‘GO&’ [any verb stem ending in the first series of associated motion suffixes]
<i>munthr; munthirr</i> ‘sink’ (intr)	<i>rumparr; rumparr_r</i> ‘break’ (intr)	
<i>pathr; patharr</i> ‘bite’ (tr)	<i>than; thanr</i> ‘stand’ (intr)	
<i>patpr; patpirr</i> ‘camp’ (intr)	<i>therk; therkr</i> ‘return’ (intr)	
<i>picr; picarr</i> ‘burst’ (intr)	<i>thongk; thongkr</i> ‘arrive’ (intr)	
<i>piinthr; piinthirr</i> ‘grow’ (intr)	<i>thowol; thowolr</i> ‘play’ (intr)	
<i>piitr; piitarr</i> ‘keep’ (tr)	<i>waantharr; waantharr_r</i> ‘call out for’ (intr)	
<i>pinirmr; pinirmirr</i> ‘dream’ (tr)	<i>wene; wener</i> ‘become, want’ (semitr)	
<i>pirkr; pirkarr</i> ‘peel’ (tr)	<i>wonp; wonpr</i> ‘die’ (intr)	
<i>rathr; rathirr</i> ‘chop’ (tr)	<i>wont; wontr</i> ‘fall’ (intr)	
<i>reekr; reekarr</i> ‘give’ (ditr)	<i>wun</i> ‘lie’ (intr) [no P.PFV]	
<i>riicr, riicarr</i> ‘run’ (intr)	<i>yik; yikr</i> ‘say’ (semitr)	
<i>rintr; rintirr</i> ‘cook’ (tr)	<i>yoongke; yoongker</i> ‘hang’ (intr)	
<i>thaa-raakr; thaa-raakirr</i> ‘place/stand (tr)’	<i>yuuc; yuucr</i> ‘ache’ (intr)	
<i>thaangkr; thaangkarr</i> ‘climb’ (intr)	<i>-e</i> ‘RFL’ [any verb stem ending in the reflexive suffix]	

Conjugation 1: -r ‘npst’; -rr ‘p.pfv’	Conjugation 2: -ø ‘npst’; -r ‘p.pfv’	Irregular
<i>thaathr; thaathirr</i> ‘scorch’(tr)  <i>thakr; thakarr</i> ‘leave’ (tr)  <i>therngr; therngarr</i> ‘hit’ (tr)  <i>thunpr; thunpirr</i> ‘throw’ (tr)  <i>thuuthr; thuutharr</i> ‘pull’ (tr)  <i>waathr; waathirr</i> ‘seek’ (tr)  <i>wakr; wakirr</i> ‘follow’ (tr)  <i>wanr; wanirr</i> ‘call’ (ditr)  <i>wunpr; wunparr</i> ‘lay’ (tr)  <i>yithr; yithirr</i> ‘lead’ (tr)  <i>yoongkr; yoongkerr</i> ‘hang’(tr)  <i>yumpr; yumpirr</i> ‘do’ (tr)  <i>-n(i)</i> ‘V <sup>^</sup> ’ [any verb stem ending in the Valence increasing suffix]  <i>-ic(a)</i> ‘RUN&’ [any verb stem ending in the second series of Associate Motion suffixes]	-rr ‘RCP’ [any verb stem ending in the Reciprocal suffix]	

Table 60. Thaayorre verb conjugation classes.

The assignment of verb roots to conjugation classes is lexically-determined. There is, however, a strong correlation between conjugation class and valency. Conjugation 2 verbs are almost exclusively monovalent (exceptions include *wene* ‘want, become’ and *yik* ‘say’, which are both semitransitive, and the postural verbs, which may take complements in their copula and ascriptive functions – see §9.2). Similarly, whilst conjugation 1 is made up predominantly of polyvalent verbs, there are some notable

exceptions (e.g. *riic* ‘run’, *piinth* ‘grow’, etc.). The valency of the verb is therefore insufficient to determine conjugation membership, though it usually provides a useful clue. Further suggesting that valency is relevant to conjugation membership, is the fact that the valence-reducing reflexive and reciprocal suffixes both derive second conjugation stems, whilst the valence increasing morpheme derives a first conjugation stem<sup>163</sup>. Extremely weak correlations between conjugation membership, aktionsart and token frequency seem either to be coincidental or to fall out from the correlation with valency rather than being diagnostic in their own right.

The conjugation membership of a complex (polymorphemic) verb stem is determined solely by the final morpheme, whether this be the root (as above) or a derivational suffix<sup>164</sup>. Accordingly, all verb stems derived by suffixation of valence-increasing *-(nha)n(i)* belong to conjugation 1, regardless of the conjugation of the root from which they are derived. Derivational morphemes, like roots, are therefore assigned to a particular conjugation class. That the valence increaser belongs to the first conjugation can be seen by comparing the past perfective forms of the following base and valence-increased verbs:

- (522) *rok-r* ‘enter-P.PFV’ (Conj2) > *roka-ni-rr* ‘enter-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV’ (Conj1)  
 (523) *wont-r* ‘fall-P.PFV’ (Conj2) > *wonta-ni-rr* ‘fall-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV’ (Conj1)  
 (524) *riica-rr* ‘run-P.PFV’ (Conj1) > *riica-ni-rr* ‘run-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV’ (Conj1)  
 (525) *piintheta-rr* ‘grow-P.PFV’ (Conj1) > *piintheta-ni-rr* ‘grow-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV’ (Conj1)

The second conjugation verbs, *rok* ‘enter’ and *wont* ‘fall’, convert to first conjugation through suffixation of the conjugation 1 valence increaser *-(nha)n(i)*. The reverse

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<sup>163</sup> This accords with Dixon’s (1980, 2002:233) observation that the conjugation classes of many Australian languages are predominantly (but usually not exclusively) composed of verbs with a particular transitivity value.

<sup>164</sup> Verbal compounds and phrasal verbs take their conjugation class from the (final) verb root, except where this is followed by derivational suffix(es) (the last of which determines the conjugation class of the verb stem as a whole).

conversion is evident in examples (526) and (527), in which the second conjugation reflexive suffix derives a second conjugation stem from first conjugation<sup>165</sup> roots:

(526) *katpi-rr* ‘grasp-P.PFV’ (Conj1) > *katp-e-r* ‘grasp-RFL-P.PFV’ (Conj2)

(527) *thernga-rr* ‘hit-P.PFV’ (Conj1) > *therng-e-r* ‘hit-RFL-P.PFV’ (Conj2)

The fact that the valence increaser creates conjugation 1 verb stems, whilst the valence-reducing suffixes (e.g. the reflexive and reciprocal) create conjugation 2 stems, is further evidence of a link between conjugation classes and valency. This link is strengthened by the fact that intransitive verbs created by the verbalising suffix *-m* belong to conjugation 2, whilst transitive verbs created by *-m* ‘Verbaliser’ belong to conjugation 1. Hence the suffix *-r* signifies present tense in (528.2) (indicating that the verbaliser has derived a transitive, first conjugation stem *pinirm* ‘imagine’), but past perfective in (529) (indicating that the derived second conjugation stem *piinthawaarrm* ‘tire’ is intransitive):

(528)

1. *ngay ulp net kaar drag-m rirk-ø, iikuw rump-un*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:adr.prx net(ACC) NEG drag-TR DO-NPST at:west beach-DAT  
 ‘I don’t drag net down on the beach’

*kar ngay minh ulp pininir-m-r*  
 like 1sg(ERG) MEAT(ACC) dem:adr.prx dream-VBLZ-NPST  
 ‘because I imagine/think about those crocodiles’  
 [GJ3/02/04 conversation]

(529) *ngay piinthawaarr-m-r ngay nhangknma*

1sg(NOM) tired-VBLZ-P.PFV 1sg(NOM) 2sgABL

‘I wearied of you’

[Hall 1972:138]

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<sup>165</sup> Since none of the second conjugation roots are fully bivalent, they cannot be reflexivised.



Although this link between transitivity and conjugation membership accords with the observations made above, the fact that the Verbalising suffix can derive verb stems belonging to either of the two major conjugations is exceptional for Kuuk Thaayorre, in which all other derivational morphemes can be assigned to a single conjugation class regardless of the valency of the stem they derive.

The generalisations made above with respect to the conjugation membership of verb roots and stems hold for the vast majority of Thaayorre data. There are, however, a small number of examples from the works of Foote and Hall that diverge from these predictions. Thus, in the following three examples, bivalent verbs derived by the valence increasing morpheme (suffixed to an originally second conjugation root) appear to be inflecting as second conjugation stem, with the suffix *-r* apparently encoding past perfective:

- (530) *ngul=(nh)ul=(nh)unh man-pert-e theerka-n-r nhaknkath-an*  
 then=3sg(ERG)=3sg(ACC) shoulder-ERG return-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV home-DAT  
 ‘and he carried it back home on his shoulder to camp’  
 [Hall 1972:105]

- (531) *ngay nhunh pam pork wene-nhan-r*  
 1sg(ERG)3sgACC man big become-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘I caused him to become great’  
 [Hall 1972:131]

- (532) *nganip-i thul nhangn yuuw kerpa-n-r*  
 father-ERG woomera 3sgPOS(ACC) far finish-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘Dad lost his woomera far away from here’  
 [Hall 1972:108]

Although it might be tempting to search for reasons why these particular verb stems might be more likely to retain the conjugation class (2) of the root, it should be noted that in my data there are plenty of examples of these same verb roots combining with the valence increaser to produce first conjugation stems, as in (533):

- (533) *pam thon-thrrfind-m rirk-r, therka-ni-rr parr\_r ulp*  
man one-ERG find-VBLZ DO-P.PFV return-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV child(ACC) dem:adr.prx  
'one man found the child and brought him back'  
[FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

Therefore, I shall not try to account for counterexamples such as (530 - 532), but will assume that these might be attributed either to pragmatic, contextual or ideolectal factors (e.g. the nonpast tense might have been used for discursive effect, unreconstructable in the available fragments of text).

A further reason for attributing conjugation membership to the final derivational affix (or root) itself, rather than the resultant valency of the derived verb stem, is the fixed conjugation membership of verb stems derived through suffixation of the two associated motion suffix sets regardless of the valency of the stems to which they attach. Hence, the associated motion verb stem in (534) — derived from the transitive root *mungk* 'eat' — conjugates no differently from that in (535) — derived from the intransitive root *rok* 'enter':

- (534) *anyway mungk-ica-rr, punkuthaarr*  
anyway eat-RUN&-P.PFV hungry  
'I went and ate [the fish] anyway, because I was hungry'  
[AJ27/01/04 conversation]

- (535) *ball werngka rok-ica-rr*  
ball(NOM) middle enter-RUN&-P.PFV  
'the ball went into the middle (of the enclosure)'  
[GJ20/11/02 MoverbEnterExit18]

Table 61 presents the TAM-inflected forms of an exemplar of each of the two major conjugations.

	<i>path</i> ‘bite (Conj1)’	<i>rirk</i> ‘rise, DO (Conj2)’
Nonpast; <i>-r ~ -∅</i>	<i>pathr</i>	<i>rirk</i>
Past perfective; <i>-rr ~ -r</i>	<i>patharr</i>	<i>rirkrr</i>
Past imperfective; <i>-(nha)m</i>	<i>pathm</i>	<i>rirkm</i>
Reduplicated; [cf. §2.7.1]	<i>pathath ~ paath</i>	<i>rirkirk</i>
Imperative; <i>-∅</i>	<i>path</i>	<i>rirk</i>
Subjunctive; <i>-nh</i>	<i>pathnh</i>	<i>rirknh</i>
Counterfactual; <i>-nhata</i>	<i>pathnhata</i>	<i>rirknhata</i>
Purposive; <i>-nhatha</i>	<i>pathnhatha</i>	<i>rirknhatha</i>
Imminence; <i>-rrth(a)</i>	<i>pathrrth(a)</i>	<i>rirkrrtha</i>

Table 61. Conjugation of two typical Thaayorre verbs.

Table 62 presents the conjugations of the most common irregular verbs.

Root	<i>ya-</i> ‘go’	<i>ngee-</i> ‘hear’	<i>nhaa-</i> ‘see’	<i>mi’i</i> ‘pick up’	<i>ke’e</i> ‘spear’
Nonpast	<i>yan</i>	<i>ngeem</i>	<i>nham</i>	<i>mi’ir</i>	<i>ke’er</i>
Past perfective	<i>yat</i>	<i>ngeeyr</i>	<i>nhaawr</i>	<i>mi’irr</i>	<i>ke’err ~ ko’orr</i>
Past imperfective	<i>yancm</i>	<i>ngeeym</i>	<i>nhaathm</i>	<i>mi’im</i>	<i>ko’om</i>
Reduplicated	<i>yaan</i>	<i>ngeengem</i>	<i>nhaanham</i>	-	-
Imperative	<i>yarr</i>	<i>ngeey</i>	<i>nham</i>	<i>mi’irr</i>	<i>ko’o</i>
Subjunctive	<i>yancnh</i>	<i>ngeeynh</i>	<i>nhaathnh</i>	?	?
Counterfactual	<i>yatath</i>	<i>ngeeynhata</i>	<i>nhaathnhata</i>	?	?
Purposive	?	<i>ngeeynhatha</i>	<i>nhaathnhatha</i>	?	?
Imminence	<i>yarrtha</i>	<i>?ngeeyrrtha</i>	<i>nhaathrrtha</i>	?	?

Table 62. Conjugation of the five most common Thaayorre irregular verbs.

Throughout this grammar, verbs are transcribed with two alternative root forms; one found with nonpast, past imperfective and imperative inflections (inter alia) and the reflexive, reciprocal and associated motion derivations, the other with past perfective inflection (for first conjugation verbs) and valence increasing derivation. Table 63 presents these two root forms in combination with some common inflectional and derivational suffixes. The first root form is always consonant-final, the second is always vowel-final.

<b>C-final root</b>	<b>V-final root</b>
<i>path</i> ‘bite:IMP’; <i>path-r</i> ‘bite-NPST’	<i>mungka-rr</i> ‘eat-P.PFV’; <i>mungka-n(i)-</i> ‘eat-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>waath</i> ‘search.for:IMP’; <i>waath-r</i> ‘search.for-NPST’	<i>waathi-rr</i> ‘search.for-P.PFV’; <i>waathi-n(i)-</i> ‘search.for-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>yak</i> ‘cut:IMP’; <i>yak-r</i> ‘cut-NPST’	<i>yake-rr</i> ‘cut-P.PFV’; <i>yake-n(i)-</i> ‘cut-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>mungk</i> ‘eat:IMP’; <i>mungk-r</i> ‘eat-NPST’	<i>mungka-rr</i> ‘eat-P.PFV’; <i>mungka-n(i)-</i> ‘eat-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>yump</i> ‘do:IMP’; <i>yump-r</i> ‘do-NPST’	<i>yumpi-rr</i> ‘do-P.PFV’; <i>yumpi-n(i)</i> ‘do-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>therng</i> ‘hit:IMP’; <i>therng-r</i> ‘hit-NPST’	<i>thernga-rr</i> ‘hit-P.PFV’; <i>thernga-n(i)</i> ‘hit-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>rok</i> ‘enter:IMP’; <i>rok-r</i> ‘enter-P.PFV’	<i>roka-n(i)-</i> ‘enter-V <sup>^</sup> ’
<i>rip</i> ‘exit:IMP’; <i>rip-r</i> ‘exit-P.PFV’	<i>ripi-n(i)-</i> ‘exit-V <sup>^</sup> ’

Table 63. Alternative root allomorphs of some first conjugation verbs.

This apparent stem allomorphy can be analysed in one of three ways. The analysis assumed here is one of subtractive morphology. Specifically, I analyse the vowel-final allomorph as the lexical entry. The consonant-final allomorph is produced through the deletion of the final vowel, as specified by the relevant suffix. The imperative verbal form, for example, is formed through this final vowel-deletion alone. Such an analysis mirrors that applied to nomina with respect to the subtractive morphology of case inflection (cf. §4.2). As with nomina, the representational difficulties associated with a subtractive analysis lead me to segment and gloss verb roots in a manner that does not fully reflect this analysis. Specifically, the root-final vowel is simply omitted from the citation form and any other instance in which it has been deleted.

An alternative analysis would attribute the putative root-final vowels to the suffix that follows them. Hence the past perfective morpheme would have allomorphs: *-arr* (following verb roots such as *path* ‘bite’); *-err* (following verb roots such *yak* ‘cut’); *-irr* (following verb roots such as *waath* ‘search for’); and so on. Such an analysis would require that each verb root be assigned to a conjugation subclasses that determines the suffix allomorphs with which it may combine. So, for instance, *path* ‘bite’ would be a member of conjugation subclass-a, *yak* ‘cut’ would be a member of conjugation subclass-e, *waath* ‘search for’ would be a member of conjugation subclass-i, and so on. These subclasses are required because the suffix allomorph that is selected cannot be predicted by the phonotactics of the verb root. Such an analysis is serviceable, if inellegant.

The final analysis would enter two alternative root forms into the lexicon, specifying that the consonant-final allomorph be selected for imperative inflection, etc., and the vowel-final allomorph be selected as input for valence increasing derivation, etc. Again, this analysis is serviceable, though less parsimonious than the first analysis which posits only a single lexical entry for each verb.

## **7.2 Tense and aspect**

Kuuk Thaayorre verbal morphology marks two distinctions in tense and three in aspect. Rather than being encoded by dedicated morphemes severally, these five tense/aspect categories overlap, and hence are considered together in this section. As mentioned in §7.1.1, the two past tense morphemes contrast in (im)perfectivity, while the nonpast morpheme simply encodes tense (often with modal implicature). Reduplicative verb root mutation (discussed under §7.2.4) encodes aspect alone. The following sections detail the semantics of these tense/aspect categories, as well as the forms that encode them.

## 7.2.1 Nonpast

The nonpast tense is encoded by the bare root or stem for conjugation 1 verbs, and by the suffix *-r* for conjugation 2 verbs. The nonpast-inflected forms of the most common irregular verbs and exemplars of the two major conjugation classes (*path* ‘bite’ for conjugation 1 and *rirk* ‘rise’ for conjugation 2) are as follows:

Root	Nonpast	Meaning
<i>ke'e</i>	<i>ke'er</i>	‘spears’
<i>mi'i</i>	<i>mi'ir</i>	‘picks up’
<i>ngee-</i>	<i>ngeem</i>	‘hears’
<i>nhaa-</i>	<i>nhaam</i>	‘sees’
<i>ya-</i>	<i>yan</i>	‘goes’
<i>path</i>	<i>pathr</i>	‘bites’
<i>rirk</i>	<i>rirk</i>	‘rises’

Table 64. Seven Thaayorre verbs inflected for nonpast tense.

The tense system of Kuuk Thaayorre does not distinguish events in progress at the time of speech from those that are expected to occur at some point following the speech event. As Comrie (1985:49) notes, such a binary tense split between nonpast and past is common. However, the term ‘nonpast’ to describe the broader Thaayorre category may be somewhat of a misnomer. In order to explain why, let us first consider the etic categories of events receiving nonpast marking, in order to more precisely characterise the emic category this morpheme encodes.

Firstly, the nonpast morpheme may be used in the description of events that have not yet occurred at the time of speech, but are expected to occur sometime following this:

- (536) *ngay nhangun yup yik-ø*  
 1sg(NOM) 3sgDAT later say-NPST  
 ‘I will tell her later’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]

Further to this, an event may be encoded by the nonpast morpheme if its duration overlaps with the speech event. Example (537) is an excellent illustration of this since the speech event and the event described are necessarily coextensive:

- (537) *ngay nhangkun yi<i>k-ø*  
 1sg(NOM) 2sgDAT say<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘I’m talking to you’  
 [Anon.]

Less perfect overlap between the speech event and the event described is also permissible. For example, in (538) the speech event intersects the described event (since the speaker must necessarily have broken off his discussion with the white girl in order to utter this clause to the addressee):

- (538) *ngay paanth wang-a yi<i>k*  
 1sg(NOM) womanwhite-DAT say<RDP>NPST  
 ‘I’m talking to the white girl’  
 [AC22/07/02 Conversation]

However, in the broader perspective of the macro-event, there is sufficient overlap between the two events to warrant use of the nonpast tense.

Although the term ‘nonpast’ suggests incompatibility with events that extend backwards in time, this is not the case in Kuuk Thaayorre. (539) is an example of the of the nonpast tense used to describe an event that spans past, present and future:

- (539) *ngul ngay ulp kuuk wang yi<i>k-ø*  
 then 1sg(NOM) dem:adr.prx WORD white(ACC) say<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘since that time I can speak English’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation/Narrative]

Like examples (537) and (538), (539) describes an event that overlaps in duration with the speech event. For a morpheme that encodes present-tense events to also encode events that extend backwards (as well as forwards) in time, is not

crosslinguistically unusual. As Comrie (1985:38) observes, the basic present-tense category “invariably locates a situation at the present moment, and says nothing beyond that. In particular, it does not say that the same situation does not continue beyond the present moment, nor that it did not hold in the past”. Whilst the Thaayorre nonpast morpheme may itself say nothing about whether or not the situation held in the past, the label ‘nonpast’ does imply that it did not<sup>166</sup>. If, then, the uses of this tense category cannot be unified simply by the fact that they all encode events or situations that did not hold in the past, is it possible to provide a monosemous definition of the nonpast morpheme? Or should the nonpast category instead be subdivided into the (polysemous) senses ‘Present’ and ‘Future’? I propose that this is a monosemous category, which can be characterised as follows. If we imagine a timeline, upon which the beginning of the speech event (or alternative deictic anchor) is labelled ‘BSp’, any event encoded by the two past tense/aspects must occur during the period prior to ‘BSp’, whilst any event encoded by the nonpast morpheme must occur for a period of time that includes the period following ‘BSp’. This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

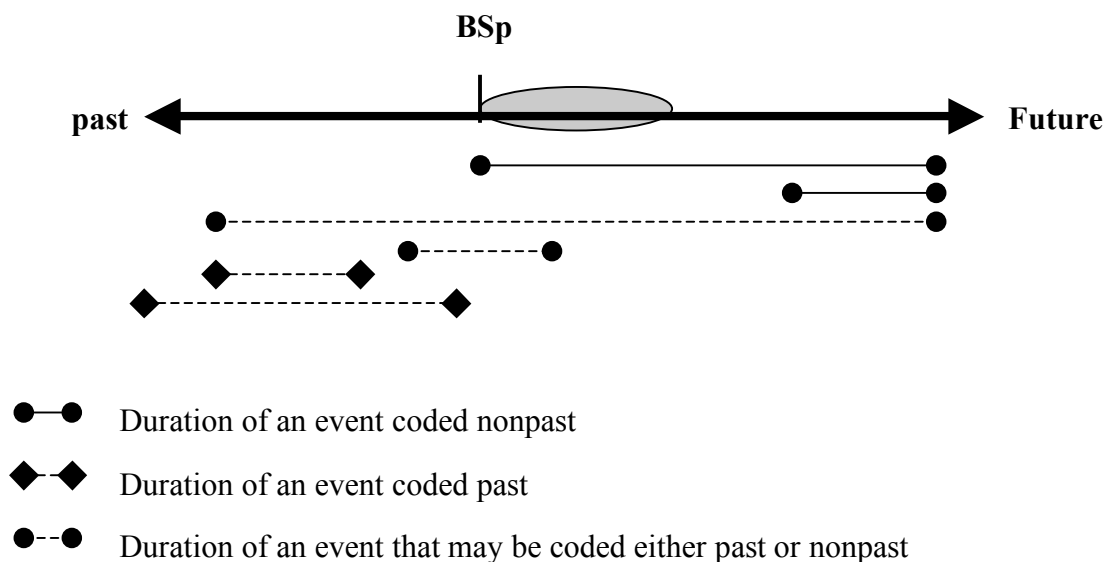


Figure 11. The division between Thaayorre ‘past’ and ‘nonpast’ categories.

<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, I shall continue to apply the term ‘nonpast’ to this category in order to facilitate typological comparison with other languages of the area, the continent and the world, in which this label has been applied to very similar verbal tense categories.



If we take the grey oblong to represent the duration of the speech event, the crucial point in determining nonpast coding is the vertical line marking the beginning of the speech event ('BSp'). If the event described has ended to the left of (and therefore prior to) this vertical line, it may not be encoded nonpast. If, however, the event has not ended by this point (including where it has not yet begun), it is eligible for nonpast marking. In other words, any event marked 'nonpast' has not yet ended by the start of the speech event. All the circle-ended lines below the diagram fall into this category. The term 'nonpast', then, should be understood as applying to events that do occur in the non-past period (i.e. the period that is not prior to the deictic anchor), rather than to events that do not occur in the past. Conversely, events that DO occur in the period preceding the beginning of the Speech event 'BSp' (represented by dashed lines below the timeline in Figure 11) may be encoded by one of the past tense morphemes. An event that spans both the period prior to BSp and the period following it should theoretically be compatible with either nonpast or past tense marking. Implausible though this may sound — that a single event could alternatively be marked past or nonpast — this is in fact what we find. Such events are represented in Figure 11 by dashed lines with terminal circles. The choice between tenses is motivated by which period the speaker wishes to emphasise. So in (539) above, the speaker chooses to stress his current fluency in English (which results from an event in the past). In (540), however, the speaker focuses on the fact that her bag was lying 'here' in the past (the whole time she was looking for it), instead of on the fact that it remains 'here' during the speech act:

- (540) *ngay kana wuwirr bag ngathn*  
 1sg(ERG) finish find:P.PFV bag 1sgPOS(ACC)  
  
*inh'nhaka wun-m yuk-un mangk-an*  
 at.this.place lie-P.IPFV tree-DAT below-DAT  
 'I've found my bag, [it] was lying under the tree here'  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

Similarly, generalisations about typical behaviour may be phrased in either the nonpast (541) or the past imperfective (542):

(541) *mit pork rirk-ø ngancn*  
 work big DO-NPST 1pl:excl(NOM)  
 ‘we work hard’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(542) *kuta thok-n koo<ko>c-m? Pokon, kaar kookoc-m*  
 PET cat-^ERG bark<RDP>-P.IPFV NO NEG bark<RDP>-P.IPFV  
 ‘do cats bark? No, they don’t bark’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA76]

Compare the latter example, in which an inductive generalisation is phrased in the past tense (presumably because it was made on the basis of past observations), with the English colloquial phrasing of generalisations in the future (*a dog’ll bark but a cat won’t*), predicting expected behaviour rather than describing past observations. Predictably, it is only the past imperfective, not the perfective, which can describe events that extend beyond the beginning of speech. This follows from the fact that perfective event must [have been] completed – see §7.2.2 for further discussion. It should finally be noted that the nonpast categories of Yir Yoront and Kugu Nganhcara<sup>167</sup> also include in their scope events that begin in the past and endure into the future.

Although I do not isolate the present and future tenses as distinct subsenses of the nonpast morpheme, Kuuk Thaayorre speakers are of course able to distinguish events occurring at the time of speech from those that will occur subsequently. Where disambiguation is required, however, this is done by clausal particles (e.g. *yoorr* ‘now’, *yup* ‘soon after’, or *ngul* ‘later’), rather than coded in verbal morphology. This can be seen in the following interchange, where I misunderstood my consultant’s initial request and she subsequently clarified using *yup* ‘soon after’:

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<sup>167</sup> Although Smith & Johnson (2000:408) label the equivalent Kugu Nganhcara tense *present*, they do acknowledge that it “might be more appropriately named nonpast; it indicates not only present events and states but also those of the future (in conjunction with the particle (yu)pa... and those with no specific timeframe (e.g. Wallabies eat grass)”.

(543)

ME: *pal kal=pa!*  
 towards carry=PRAG  
 ‘bring [the *yencr* leaves] here!’

AG: [gets up to leave]

ME: *kace, kana yan nhunt=a*  
 CDICT about.to go:NPST 2sg(NOM)=PRAG  
 ‘no, [you’re] about to go’

AG: *kana yan yoorr, or...?*  
 about.to go:NPST now or  
 ‘go now, or...?’

ME: *yup! ngal thurma yarr=ey! ngal yarr thurma,*  
 soon 1du:incl(NOM) together go:IMP=PRAG 1du:incl(NOM) go:IMP together

*kanpa inh kerp-ø, yup yan*  
 first dem:sp.prx finish-IMP soon go:NPST

‘soon [i.e. not yet]! We’ll go together! We’ll go together but finish this first.  
 we’ll go soon’

[ME04/06/05 Narrative (interruption)]

Since the nonpast tense may be used to describe both events overlapping in time with the speech event and events that will occur in the time following the speech event, it might be expected that this tense should also encode events beginning at the time of speech and enduring into the future. However, because such events are strongly associated with inceptive aspect, they are almost always marked as such (e.g. by an associated motion suffix – see §8.1.4). Rare exceptions to this usually involve the verb *ya-* ‘go’, which for reasons of etymology may not combine with the associated motion suffixes:

- (544) *ngamp kana yan ngat-a*  
1pl:incl(NOM) about.to go:NPST fish-DAT  
'let's go fishing' / 'we're about to go fishing'  
[MF10/01/04 Elicitation / Conversation]

As (544) illustrates, the alternative means for expressing the inception or imminent inception of an event is the use of the particle *kana* in combination with a nonpast verb, also seen in the following:

- (545) *ngay kana yan*  
1sg(NOM) about.to go:NPST  
'I'm going now'  
[most common Thaayorre farewell]

- (546) *paath ulp kana keempe-nhan yup!*  
fire(NOM) dem:adr.prx about.to extinguish-GO&:NPST soon  
'that fire's going to go out soon'  
[AJ8/02/04 Elicitation]

Whilst both the subjunctive and associated motion suffixes may be used to encode hope, desire or intention more explicitly, the nonpast tense often has a modal implicature. In the following example, for instance, the speaker expresses his desire to go to Melbourne simply by means of a nonpast verb (and an English loan adverb):

- (547) "*ngay yan, ngay yan*", *ngay parr\_r yik-m*,  
1sg(NOM) go:NPST 1sg(NOM) go:NPST 1sg(NOM) child(NOM) say-P.IPFV  
'I want to go, I want to go', I said [to my father] as a child'

*"ngay yan... ngay willingly yan"*  
1sg(NOM) go:NPST 1sg(NOM) willingly go:NPST  
'I want to go, I will go willingly'  
[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

The association between desire, intention and future action has been repeatedly grammaticalised in languages the world over<sup>168</sup>. Indeed, this very process is also in evidence in the case of the Thaayorre associated motion suffixes (see §8.1.4 for details).

Alpher (1973:242) notes that the nonpast tense of Yir Yoront “indicates that a reasonably *short, bounded action* is taking place in the present or will predictably take place in the near future [italicisation mine]”. This contrasts with the Thaayorre nonpast tense, which does not seem to encode any aspectual information. The fact that verbal reduplication signals durative or iterative aspect (depending on aktionsart), though, may lead to the implicature that a non-reduplicated nonpast verb describes a short, bounded action, due to the Gricean maxim of Quantity (i.e. if the action extends over time, it would be more informative to mark this through reduplication; a non-reduplicated verb therefore implicates that the action does/will not extend over time).

### 7.2.2 Past perfective

The past perfective is marked by the suffix *-rr* for first conjugation verbs, and *-r* for verbs of the second conjugation. The past perfective forms of the most common irregular verbs, plus exemplar conjugation 1 and 2 verbs *path* ‘bite’ and *rirk* ‘rise’, are as follows:

root	past perfective	meaning
<i>ke'e</i>	<i>ke'err ~ ko'orr</i>	‘speared’
<i>mi'i</i>	<i>mi'irr</i>	‘picked up’
<i>ngee-</i>	<i>ngeeyr</i>	‘hear’
<i>nhaa-</i>	<i>nhaawr</i>	‘saw’
<i>ya-</i>	<i>yat</i>	‘went’
<i>path</i>	<i>patharr</i>	‘bit’
<i>rirk</i>	<i>rirkr</i>	‘rose’

Table 65. Past perfective-inflected verb forms.

<sup>168</sup> The English full verb > auxiliary *will* is an obvious example.

The past perfective tense/aspect not only locates the event described at a time prior to the speech event (or alternative deictic anchor), but also indicates that it has been completed. So, for instance, in (548) the past perfective suffix *-rr* indicates both that the chopping event has already occurred, but also that the stick was successfully chopped; the chopping event was not interrupted or abandoned prior to completion:

- (548) *nhul thongkn kuthirr rathi-rr*  
 3sg(ERG) half two(ACC) chop-P.PFV  
 ‘he chopped (the stick) into two halves’  
 [EF15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break2]

This Thaayorre tense/aspect can also encode some events that will not take place until after the time of utterance (unlike the past perfective categories of some other languages, e.g. Kugu Nganhcara; Smith and Johnson 2000:410). This can occur where the speaker establishes some future deictic centre, with respect to which the event described is anchored. From the perspective of this deictic centre anchor, then, the described event (will have) already occurred in its entirety. Example (549) is accordingly framed with respect to some postulated time of death, at which time the addressee will receive the gift of eternal life, provided that they have (perfectively, in the past) believed in Jesus:

- (549) *ith kar nhunt kar trust-m rirk-r nhunh,*  
 dem:dist like 2sg(NOM) like trust-VBLZ DO-P.PFV 3sg(ACC)  
  
*believem rirkr nhunh*  
 believe-VBLZ DO-P.PFV 3sg(ACC)  
 ‘if you have trusted and believed him [you will have eternal life]’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

This last usage is quite rare, however. In the vast majority of cases, the past perfective is anchored by the speech act (otherwise it might better be analysed as encoding perfective aspect alone).

The past perfective tense/aspect marks an event as telic, transforming (usually) an Activity verb into an Achievement or Accomplishment. In (550), for instance, the speaker is describing a bush trip on which he lost his companion. Although *wak* ‘follow’ normally encodes an Activity, he marks it past perfective to emphasise the point at which her route diverged from his. That is to say, instead of describing the activity of following the track (i.e. in the past imperfective: *nhul kulam yiirr wakm* ‘she followed/was walking along a different track’), the speaker focuses our attention on the moment of separation, where she turned from one track to another:

- (550) *nhul kulam yiirr waki-rr*  
 3sg(ERG) path other(ACC) follow-P.PFV  
 ‘she followed a different path’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

When combined with a past perfective verb, the particle *kana* has the meaning ‘finished’, adding emphasis to the completion of the event (cf. §11.3.1). This can be seen in examples such as the following:

- (551) *ngay kana thaka-rr*  
 1sg(NOM) finish leave-P.PFV  
 ‘I left Pormpuraaw’  
 [BN1/10/02 conversation]

- (552) *yuk kana kerpr*  
 cigarette finish finish-P.PFV  
 ‘the smokes are all gone’  
 [BN1/10/02 conversation]

### 7.2.3 Past imperfective

The past imperfective morpheme has the following three allomorphs: *-nham* ~ *-nam* ~ *-m*. The latter (hereafter ‘reduced’) allomorph is most widespread, attaching to most





Root	Past imperfective	Meaning
<i>ke'e</i>	<i>ko'om</i>	'was spearing'
<i>mi'i</i>	<i>mi'im</i>	'was picking up'
<i>ngee-</i>	<i>ngeeym</i>	'was hearing'
<i>nhaa-</i>	<i>nhaathm</i>	'was seeing'
<i>ya-</i>	<i>yancm</i>	'was going'
<i>path</i>	<i>pathm</i>	'was biting'
<i>rirk</i>	<i>rirkm</i>	'was rising'

Table 66. Seven Thaayorre verbs inflected for the past imperfective.

Whereas the past perfective emphasises the completion or closure of an event, the past imperfective shifts the perspective to the internal duration of the event. Typically for an imperfective, it is used to encode “actions conceived as extending over a period of time, continuously or at intervals” (Matthews 1997), where these actions occurred at a time prior to the speech event (or alternative deictic anchor). The following examples illustrate the use of the past imperfective to encode continuously enduring activities (553 and 554) and states (555), whilst (556) describes actions iterated over a period of time:

(553) *yuk shovel kal-m man.pert-an*  
 THING shovel(ACC) carry-P.IPFV shoulder-DAT  
 ‘I was carrying a shovel on my shoulder’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(554) *yuu-rr-iparr wun-m ngancn... Thaayorr*  
 far-towards-south lie-P.IPFV 1pl:excl(NOM) Thaayorre  
 ‘we Thaayorre used to live a long way to the South’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative Kanangkarr]

(555) *ngay kanpa yat, ngok inh paapath wun-m*  
1sg(NOM) before go:P.PFV water(NOM) dem:sp.prx hot lie-P.IPFV  
‘[when] I went down before the water was warm’  
[GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA33]

(556)

1. *werngr ulp thunp-m*  
boomerang(ACC) dem:adr.prx throw-P.IPFV  
‘[they] kept throwing the boomerang’

2. *ulp koo-pal=p therk-m*  
dem:adr.prx nost-towards=PRAG return-P.IPFV  
‘but it kept coming back’  
[AC13/09/02 Narrative Werngr]

Being atelic, most states and activities strongly favour past imperfective marking (e.g. 553-555). A telic event (achievement or accomplishment) marked past imperfective must have endured over time in one of three ways. Firstly, the whole telic event may have been iterated a number of times, as in (556) above and also (557):

(557) *"koowe, koowe" waantharr-m=ay*  
koowe koowe call.out-P.IPFV=1sg(NOM)  
‘I kept calling out “koowe, koowe”’  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

The choice of representing each of (556) and (557) in the past imperfective rather than past perfective tense/aspect signifies that the actions of throwing a boomerang (and it returning) and calling out ‘koowe’ respectively were each repeated a number of times, not that each action endured in itself.

Similar to this iterative usage is the employment of the past imperfective tense/aspect in an activity, achievement or accomplishment construction in order to mark habitual aspect. Like the iterative, I take habitual aspect to encode an event that was repeated a number of times. What differentiates the habitual, then, is the fact that the event

was repeated over a long (often unspecified) period of time, rather than as subevents of a larger macroevent (as in [556] above). So in (558), the speaker is not remarking on any one particular event or set of events of eating, but is rather stating that the Thaayorre people used to frequently and habitually eat the particular food over a nonspecified period of time:

- (558) *may ngancn mungk-m*  
 VEG(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) eat-P.IPFV  
 ‘we used to eat that food’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation/Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

This habitual usage of the past imperfective often appears to contain an implicature that the event occurred only prior to the time of speech (as does the English imperfect; *we used to eat that food* similarly implicates but does not entail *we no longer eat that food*). The implicature in Kuuk Thaayorre seems significantly weaker, however. As discussed in §7.2.1 above, the past tense component of its meaning simply asserts that the event did occur prior to the speech event, not that it did not also occur during or following the speech event. So not only is it possible to defeat the implicature ‘we no longer eat that food’ in (558), but the past imperfective tense is also sometimes used to make generalisations that unambiguously hold throughout time, as in the following two examples:

- (542') *kuta thok-n koo<ko>c-m? Pokon, kaar koo<ko>c-m*  
 PET cat-ERG bark<RDP>-P.IPFV NO NEG bark<RDP>-P.IPFV  
 ‘do cats *bark*? No, they don’t bark’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA76]

- (559) *kuta ith nhul pungkuthaarr than-m,*  
 dog(NOM) dem:dist 3sg(NOM) hungry stand-P.IPFV  
  
*nhul kookoc-m*  
 3sg(NOM) bark<RDP>-P.IPFV  
 ‘when [my] dog’s hungry he barks’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA74]

It is important to note here that, although it is perfectly grammatical to employ the past imperfective in generalisation clauses such as those above, it remains more common to use the nonpast tense, as in the following:

(560) *ngay ngernkernkernkan rirk-ø*  
 1sg(NOM) morning<RDP> rise-NPST  
 ‘I get up early each morning’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA71]

(561) *ngay may rat mungk-r min*  
 1sg(ERG) VEG sugarbag(ACC) eat-NPST good  
 ‘I really like sugarbag’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

The key difference between the past imperfect and the nonpast lies in whether emphasis is placed on the period prior to the speech event (in the case of the former) or the period during and following the speech event (in the case of the latter). There is no *prima facie* reason why one tense or the other should be favoured for the coding of events that span past, present and future. What, then, determines their respective usages? It is not possible to make any definitive statements based on the extremely small number of exemplars in my data. However, there does seem to be some correlation between animacy and verbal tense/aspect. Verbs that have a human subject (as in [560] and [561]<sup>169</sup>) are only attested with nonpast tense marking in these ‘generalisation’ clauses. Where the subject is nonhuman, both nonpast and past imperfective verbal marking seems acceptable. Why should this be so? It was suggested above that the past imperfective coding of generalisations suggests that the speaker has based their induction on the basis of past observations (i.e. in [559], when

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<sup>169</sup> Whilst the subject of both [560] and [561] is first person, this need not be the case. An example of a third person subject with a nonpast verb in a generalisation clause is as follows:

(a) *nhul radio ngee<nge>m*  
 3sg(ERG) radio(ACC) listen<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘he listens to the radio [every day after breakfast]’

my dog has been hungry in the past it has barked, with the implicature that it is also likely to do so in the future). It may be that speakers are more confident to predict the behaviour of human Agents without explicit reference to their past behaviour, whilst there is a cultural emphasis on the observation of the behaviour of animals (and inanimate Forces).

It was noted in §7.2.2 that the past perfective is used to encode telic events, even with verb lexemes that more commonly describe atelic Activities or states. Conversely, the final function of the past imperfective is to focus on the (atelic) internal duration of (what would normally be) an Accomplishment, rather than on its completion. So in (562), the speaker chooses to focus on the process of building a house (and its overlap with his waiting), while in (563) the Accomplishment of building a fishtrap was interrupted before it could reach completion, thus transforming it into an Activity:

(562) *nhul pormpr yump-m*  
 3sg(ERG) house(ACC) make-P.IPFV

*ngul ngay kulam-an koo<ko>pe-nham*  
 then 1sg(NOM) road-DAT wait<RDP>-P.IPFV

‘while he was building the house I was waiting for him on the road’

[GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA28]

(563)

1. *nhul minh pinj iikuw, wuurr ko'o-m*  
 3sg(NOM) MEAT saltw.croc(NOM) at:west fishtrap(ACC) spear<sup>170</sup>-P.IPFV

‘the saltwater crocodile was in the west, making a fishtrap’

2. *minh kanharr riica-rr ii-rr-kuw*  
 MEAT freshw.croc(NOM) run-P.PFV there-towards-west

‘[when] the freshwater crocodile came west’

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<sup>170</sup> The verb *ke'e ~ ko'o* ‘spear’ is used to describe any form of manufacture by means of spear-like Instruments (e.g. knitting), including the construction of fishtraps.

3. *mun-ica-rr*            *ii-rr-kaw*  
 send-RUN&-P.PFV    there-towards-east  
 ‘and ordered him to go inland’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

Aside from its role in making generalisations, the various uses of the past imperfective seem quite standard. Of Kuuk Thaayorre’s nearest neighbours, both Yir Yoront and Kugu Nganhcara appear to have roughly analogous verbal categories, though neither is labelled past imperfective. The Kugu Nganhcara category is labelled by Smith and Johnson (2000:410) as the ‘historic’, of which they note:

*the historic is an invariant verb form, formed with the suffix -nhum for all persons and numbers. The function of the historic is not well understood. It is used frequently in story telling and can usually be interpreted duratively*

It seems highly likely that Kugu Nganhcara *-nhum* is cognate with Kuuk Thaayorre *-(nha)m*, and indeed all the examples given by Smith and Johnson (2000:410) following the above statement seem compatible with the present characterisation of the past imperfective, for example:

- (564) *nganhca*            *thaaaran*    *thangki-nhum*  
 1plexcNOM    3plDAT    arrive-HIST  
 ‘we used to go and visit them’

- (565) *ngaya*    *ngaka*            *uyu*    *mungga-nhum*  
 1sgNOM    water [alcohol]    much drink-HIST  
 ‘I had a big drink / I was drinking a lot’

Before moving on to consider the other aspect and mood categories encoded by Kuuk Thaayorre, it is worth briefly considering the homophony of past imperfect tense/aspect and ablative case (§4.2.6). Both display the same partially phonologically-conditioned allomorphy, as illustrated by the following examples of nouns in ablative case:

- (566) *ngul* *Laura-nam* *pal*            *therk-ø*  
 then Laura-ABL    towards    return-NPST  
 ‘then [they will] come back here from Laura’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation]

- (567) *raak kanangkarr-nam*  
 time long.ago-ABL  
 ‘[the church has been there] for a long time’  
 [LN06/09/02 Elicitation]
- (568) *parr\_r kumun-mam wont-r paanth-um*  
 child(NOM) lap-ABL fall-P.PFV woman-ABL  
 ‘the child fell from the woman’s lap’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

Like the past imperfective morpheme, the Ablative allomorph *-nham* usually follows a vowel-final stem (as in [566]), *-nam* follows alveolar or retroflex segments (567), and *-Vm* occurs in most other cases (e.g. *paanthum* ‘from the woman’ in [568]). The Ablative morpheme, however, possesses the additional morphemes *-mam* (seen on *kumunmam* ‘from the lap’) and *-(n)tam*, the distribution of which is not fully understood at this stage. Nevertheless, the clear parallelism between past imperfective and Ablative morphology begs the question, what do the two share in semantics? Being aspectually imperfective, events encoded by the past imperfective necessarily endure over a period of time; beginning at some point in the past and extending forwards from there. It is easy to imagine how these (target) temporal semantics might be conceptualised in terms of a more concrete physical trajectory (i.e. the past tense beginning point in time is depicted as a physical Location from which the event extends). Indeed, English speakers similarly use the preposition *from* with both spatial and temporal senses, along with various other spatio-temporal metaphors as evident in the preceding sentences. Other Australian languages also exhibit this connection between a spatial origin and past tense (cf. Dench and Evans 1988).

#### 7.2.4 Reduplicative infixation

The morphophonology of reduplication was discussed in detail in §2.7.1. To briefly recapitulate this discussion, there are three patterns of reduplication, the form depending primarily upon the length of the first-syllable vowel. Verb roots with a

long vowel in the initial syllable exhibit reduplication of the initial onset + vowel (with the reduplicated vowel reduced to short length). Hence *waath* ‘search (for)’ > *waawath* ‘search:RDP’. Verb roots with a short initial vowel, most commonly reduplicate by infixing the rhyme of the initial syllable immediately following the first syllable coda, hence *thangkr* ‘laugh’ > *thangkangkr* ‘laugh:RDP’. A few verbs with short initial vowels may either additionally or alternatively express reduplication by simply lengthening the initial vowel; *mungkr* ‘eat’ > *muungkr* ‘eat:RDP’. Where a single verb root may exploit two different models of reduplication (i.e. both infixation of initial-syllable rhyme and lengthening of the initial vowel), it seems that each is ascribed just one of the two functions of reduplication (‘iterative’ and ‘durative’ aspect, as described below). The mapping of forms to functions is explored in further detail throughout the following subsections.

#### **7.2.4.1 Iterative reduplication**

The iconic relationship between the form of verbal reduplication, and the semantics of repeated or enduring events has been well documented (see, for example, Moravcsik 1978, Anderson 1982 and Wilkins 1989:248-249). The two functions of verbal reduplication in Kuuk Thaayorre are rather standard; to express iterative and durative aspects. Both of these can be understood as marking an event’s extension through time: with durative aspect, a single instantiation of the event has an extended internal temporal structure, whereas iterative aspect encodes multiple instantiations of the same event which together form a single macroevent. Similar categories are encoded by reduplication in neighbouring language, too. In Kugu Nganhcara, “verbs can reduplicate in all tenses and aspects to indicate continuous (or repeated) action” (Smith and Johnson 2000:411), while in Yir Yoront, reduplication indicates continuative and distributive aspects among other senses (Alpher 1991:46). The relative iconicity of the alternative models of reduplication is explored further in §7.2.4.3.

Taking first the iterative function of reduplication, this is frequently seen in the encoding of events that involve a number of participants or a number of (identical) actions repeated by a single participant. The former case is illustrated by (569), in



which a large number of bees exit their hive, with each exiting only once. The latter is illustrated by (570), in which a single Agent repeated chops a single carrot into a number of pieces:

(569) *may puunh ulp ranth-im ripip-r*  
 VEG bee(NOM) dem:adr.prx hole-ABL exit-NPST  
 ‘those bees are flying out of the hole’  
 [MF17/09/02 FrogStory]

(570) *pam-al ith nhul may carrot knife-nthurr*  
 man-ERG dem:dist 3sg(ERG) VEG carrot(ACC) knife-ERG  
  
*thongkthongkn yakake-rr*  
 half<RDP> cut<RDP>-P.PFV  
 ‘that man cut the carrot into many pieces’  
 [LN03/12/02 Cut&Break10]

In both these examples, the crucial factor conditioning reduplication is distribution over events, rather than distribution over participants or activities. That is to say, the verb *rip* ‘exit’ is reduplicated in (569) because the event of a bee exiting the tree is repeated a number of times, while in (570), the man cutting the carrot is repeated as a whole a number of times. This contrasts with the non-reduplicated verbs used to describe, for instance, elicitation video clips (Bohnenmeyer et al. 2001) in which a man repeatedly chops at a branch of a tree, eventually separating it from the tree trunk (example [571]). This indicates that, because cut/break verbs such as *yak* ‘cut’ and *rath* ‘chop’ entail the separation of the Undergoer into pieces, the event as a whole (including the division of the Undergoer) must be iterated to warrant verbal reduplication, rather than simply the cutting or chopping action.

(571) *pam-al ith keynayp-thrr yuk thongkn rathi-rr*  
 man-ERG dem:dist cane.knife-ERG TREE piece(ACC) chop-P.PFV  
 ‘the man cut the branch off with a cane knife’  
 [LN03/12/02 Cut&Break3]

Examples (569) and (570) show rhyme reduplication with iterative function. Iteration by onset+vowel reduplication may equally express iteration, as seen in the following:

- (572) *yuk pungk-un thii<thi>k-r*  
 stick knee-DAT break<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘he repeatedly breaks the stick on his knee’  
 [GJ15/10/02 CutBreak5]

This confirms that the split between reduplication strategies is, for the most part, phonologically determined, rather than functionally significant. Note, however, that my data contains no instance of reduplication by vowel lengthening encoding iterative aspect, even where the lengthened initial vowel is the only reduplication strategy available to the particular verb. Vowel lengthening, then, appears to be solely associated with durative aspect. This may be due to the aktionsart of the particular verbs that permit only this form of reduplication, namely: *wun* ‘lie’; *yan* ‘go’; and *mungk* ‘eat’. *Wun* ‘lie’ inherently describes a state, in both its basic and copula usages. *Yan* ‘go’ and *mungk* ‘eat’ both describe activities, though *yan* may also be stative when functioning as copula. The latter two verbs may also encode accomplishment events, such as in the following two clauses:

- (573) *ngay ii-rr-kuw Darwin-ak yat=ay, 1970*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west Darwin-DAT go:P.PFV=1sg(NOM) 1970  
 ‘I went to Darwin in 1970’  
 [GJ3/02/04 conversation]

- (574) *may nhul koop mungka-rr thon-thrr*  
 VEG(ACC) 3sg(ERG) all(ACC) eat-P.PFV one-ERG  
 ‘the one guy ate all the food!’  
 [AJ07/02/04 Elicitation]

However, Thaayorre grammar does not appear to reflect the fact that going and eating events are in some cases telic, or at least it never seems to do so by using reduplication to mark iterated telic going or eating events. Consider the following two examples, for instance:

(558') *may ngancn mungk-m*  
 VEG(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) eat-P.IPFV  
 'we used to eat that food'  
 [AC05/08/02 Narrative ChapmanEra]

(575) *ngay may pucr kaar=p thaka-rr, ngay koop mungka-rr*  
 1sg(ERG) VEG nunda(ACC) NEG=PRAG leave-P.PFV 1sg(ERG) all eat-P.PFV  
 'I didn't leave any nunda nuts [for anyone else], I ate every one'  
 [GJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

It might be expected that *mungk* 'eat' would be reduplicated in (558) because the subject participants habitually and repeatedly ate the foods described, or in (575) because the subject ate a large number of nunda nuts in sequence. Of course it could be that the speaker in neither of these cases wanted to focus attention upon aspect, however it seems improbable that it is pure coincidence that these two verbs (along with *wun* 'lie') are nowhere marked for iteration throughout my corpus.

#### 7.2.4.2 Durative reduplication

As mentioned above, reduplication can also focus upon the internal duration of an event, marking it as enduring over time. This is particularly common with stative verbs; *nhiin* 'sit, reside', *than* 'stand, be situated' and *wun* 'lie, live' are almost always reduplicated in the nonpast tense (as also noted by Alpher [pers. com.] of Kuuk Yak):

(576) *kana=le nhul aka nhii<nhi>n thonmarr*  
 finish=PRAG 3sg(NOM) here reside<RDP>:NPST forever  
 'that's it, she's going to live here from now on'  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(577) *nhul kuuk=aar=nhurr=p than<an>-m*  
 3sg(NOM) word=ADN.PRIV=only=PRAG stand<RDP>-P.IPFV  
 'she kept quiet [and didn't answer my repeated calls]'  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Although it is more frequently found in the description of nonpast events, durative aspect can also be marked on past tense verbs (imperfective in [577], and perfective in [570]).

Finally, (578) demonstrates that onset+vowel reduplication, as well as rhyme reduplication, may mark durative aspect:

- (578) *pam minh.puth waa<wa>th-r*  
 MAN boss(ACC) search<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘[that dog] is looking for his owner’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

#### 7.2.4.3 Contrast between alternative reduplicative forms

It has already been established that both rhyme reduplication and onset+vowel reduplication may encode both iterative and durative aspects. It has also been noted that reduplication via vowel lengthening marks durative aspect alone. Where a verb permits both rhyme reduplication and vowel lengthening as alternative reduplication strategies<sup>171</sup>, it appears that the former is functionally restricted to marking only iterative aspect, leaving durative aspect to be encoded by vowel lengthening alone. For example, the verb *rath* ‘chop’ may be ‘reduplicated’ as either *raath* or *rathath*, where the former vowel-lengthening is associated with an enduring event, whereas reduplication proper (i.e. *rathath*) is associated with iteration. This is evident in the contrast between the following sentences:

- (579) *pam-al ith may carrot knife ngamal-thrr koop rath<ath>i-rr*  
 man-ERG dem:dist VEG carrot(ACC) knife large-ERG all chop<RDP>-P.PFV  
 ‘that man kept cutting up the carrot [i.e. into many pieces] with a big knife’  
 [LN03/12/02 Cut&Break6]

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<sup>171</sup> Note that it is logically impossible for a verb to permit both vowel-lengthening and onset+vowel reduplication since the latter occurs only with verbs of which the initial syllable vowel is already long.

- (580) *pam-al ith yuk ra<a>th-r*  
 man-ERG dem:dist stick(ACC) chop<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘that man kept chopping at the stick [until it eventually broke off the tree]’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Cut&Break3]

In (579), the full chopping event (i.e. bringing a blade into abrupt, forceful contact with the carrot, causing separation) is repeated a number of times, resulting in the carrot ending up in many pieces. These multiple (iterated) accomplishments are encoded as predicted by rhyme reduplication. In ((580), by contrast, the repeated chopping actions cumulate to produce a single event of severance of stick from tree. The event described here, then, represents only a single accomplishment, the extended internal duration of which is coded by vowel lengthening.

Similarly, the verb *path* ‘bite’ may be alternatively reduplicated as *pathath* ‘bite repeatedly’ (in [581] and [582]) and *paath-* ‘(ongoing) biting’ (in [583]):

- (581) *kuta ith yiin=p path<ath>-e*  
 dog(NOM) dem:dist itch=PRAG bite<RDP>-RFL:NPST  
 ‘that dog keeps biting itself’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (582) *yiki, ngat-al pathath-m iipal*  
 yikes fish-ERG bite<RDP>-P.IPFV from.there  
 ‘hey! The fish are beginning to bite now’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 10]

- (583) *kuta-ku nhul thok ulp pa<a>th-r.*  
 dog-ERG 3sg(ERG) cat(ACC) dem:adr.prx bite<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the dog’s biting the cat’  
 [LF18/09/02 Conversation]

As noted above, the rhyme reduplication of *path* ‘bite’ may indicate iteration of the full event involving the same participants (as in [581], where a single dog bites itself

repeatedly), or of multiple participants performing the same action (as in [582], where a number of different fish bite the bait).

Inferences as to the respective distributions of the two reduplication types are based here on only a rather small number of examples. Further research may show the interaction between the two to be more subtle. Note that in one or two examples, reduplication seems to have other effects, such as marking inceptive aspect in the following example:

- (584) *paath kal-r yaat pil-un, path<ath>a-n-ir*  
 firewood(ACC) carry-P.PFV yard side-DAT bite<RDP>-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 ‘they carried firewood up to the yard and began to blow up a fire’  
 (‘they carried firewood to the yard, causing [the fire] to bite [the wood]’)  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 9]

This example could be fitted into the analysis presented here, however, if we assume that the speaker was describing the subject participants’ repeatedly blowing on the fire. If this is so, we must also assume that the reduplication has scope over the predicate as a whole (thus applying after the valence-increasing morpheme to create the predicate ‘repeatedly make bite’) rather than having scope only over the verb root (with the valence-increasing morpheme only afterwards deriving the predicate ‘make repeatedly bite’). Because reduplication is a non-linear process (changing the form of the verb root, rather than appearing as one of a sequence of suffixes<sup>172</sup>), it can be considered exempt from the general iconic tendency — in Kuuk Thaayorre and elsewhere (cf. Haiman 1980, 1983) — for ‘innermost’ affixes to apply before those towards the periphery. Indeed, in all other cases where reduplication cooccurs with derivational suffixes, reduplication always appears to encode the aspect of the event as a whole. This is evident in the following clause, which describes rangers and policeman repeatedly causing the fast motion of supplies, rather than causing supplies to repeatedly move quickly:

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<sup>172</sup> It is for this reason that reduplication does not flout the generalisation that derivational affixes precede inflectional ones.

(585) *kar ranger kar policeman may=yuk*  
like ranger(#ERG) like policeman(#ERG) VEG(ACC)=STUFF  
  
*everywhere riirica-n-r*  
everywhere run<RDP>-V^-NPST  
[AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

In terms of logical order of application, then, reduplication appears to follow derivation.

Wilkins (1989:242-249) also describes a number of alternative forms of verbal reduplication in Mparntwe Arrernte (up to two of which may be employed by a single verb), although these four reduplication strategies differ from those described here in their form, combination with other verbal suffixes, and semantic functions. Nevertheless, where Thaayorre verbs possess two alternative reduplicated forms, their respective functional loads may be considered iconic in much the same way as Wilkins (1989:249) observes of Arrernte:

*reduplication of final elements in the verb stem corresponds to the verb stem event being achieved over and over again (ie. the event repeatedly comes to an end [...]), while reduplication of initial elements of the verb stem corresponds to the event continuing to begin without ever being achieved.*

Similarly, lengthening of the vowel in verbs like *mungk* > *muungk* ‘eat’ and *rath* > *raath* ‘chop’ signifies a lengthening of the event, a single instantiation of which stretches through time. Conversely, repetition of the initial syllable’s rhyme corresponds to repetition of the event as a whole.

7.2.4.4 *Alternatives to reduplication*

Iterative and durative aspects<sup>173</sup> may alternatively be marked by repetition of either verb or some other clausal element, as in (586-588):

(586) *ii-rr-kan,            nhaawr,    nhaawr,    nhaawr...*  
 there-towards-up see:P.PFV see:P.PFV see:P.PFV  
 ‘[the boomerang] went up and they watched and watched and watched [it]’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative Werngr]

(587) *peln            koo<ko>pe,            koo<ko>pe...*  
 3pl(NOM) wait<RDP>:NPST wait<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘they waited and waited’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

(588) *train            ulp                    yancm            yancm            yancm...*  
 train(NOM) dem:adr.prx go:P.IPFV go:P.IPFV go:P.IPFV  
 ‘the train kept going and going and going’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

These repeated verbs display a characteristic intonational rise on each token. Although in (586-588) only the inflected verb is repeated, the same intonation and semantic effect is evident in examples such as (589b), which might better be characterised as clausal repetition since (enclitic and full) pronouns intervene between tokens of the verb *yumpirr* ‘made’<sup>174</sup>:

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<sup>173</sup> In Yir Yoront, Alpher (1973) notes, “a continuing action can be described by repeating the verb in the nonpast tense. If the action consists of repeated discrete parts, each repetition of the verb is taken to indicate a repetition of the action”. In Kuuk Thaayorre, however, repeated verbs tend to represent enduring Activities or States.

<sup>174</sup> The verb *yump* ‘make, do’ may be used with various senses. In this instance, I take it to refer to the activity of stitching, built upon the use of this verb to refer to processes of making, constructing and fixing objects.



(589)

1. *stitch-m rirk-r=anh*  
 stitch-VBLZ DO-P.PFV=1sgACC  
 ‘they stitched me up’
  
2. *ngul nganh yumpi-rr peln, yumpi-rr=anh yumpi-rr, kana*  
 then 1sgACC make-P.PFV 3pl(ERG) make-P.PFV=3sgACCmake-P.PFV finish  
 ‘they stitched me and stitched me until I was done [the wound was sealed]’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation / Narrative]

Although (589b) could be viewed as describing multiple subevents of stitching, I believe it is more likely that the repetition of the verb (and argument) rather emphasises the extended duration of the macro-event, as evident in the translation.

Iteration of a punctual (achievement or semelfactive) event is more often achieved by repeating a clausal element — usually representing the result state — as in the following:

- (590) *ngancn yuk kumun rath-m*  
 1pl:excl(ERG) TREE root(ACC) chop-P.IPFV
- thongkn thongkn thongkn rath-m*  
 half half half chop-P.IPFV
- ‘we used to chop the roots into many pieces [to poison fish]’  
 [AC26/11/02 Narrative Kanangkarr]

## 7.3 Mood

### 7.3.1 Imperative and jussive

Although only a single imperative category is encoded in the Thaayorre verb, this interacts with a number of clausal particles to distinguish second person imperatives, on the one hand, from jussives and hortatives (hereafter ‘jussives’) on the other. Although these are therefore distinct semantic categories in Kuuk Thaayorre, there

remains nevertheless some overlap between the two in terms of their morphosyntactic realisation. The following sections (and the analysis presented within them) proceeds from the basic premise that there is such a thing as an imperative verb which is distinct from the imperative function. The former typically takes a second person subject, but under some circumstances may take a first or third person subject. The latter, however, entails an (at least partially) second person subject. The following subsections are organised according to the formal constructions used to encode imperative and jussive functions.

### 7.3.1.1 Imperative inflection

The imperative form of almost all verbs is identical to that of the root. The only exceptions encountered so far are the following irregular verbs:

Root	Imperative	Meaning
<i>ke'e</i>	<i>ko'o</i>	'spear!'
<i>mi'i</i>	<i>mi'irr</i>	'pick (it) up!'
<i>ngee-</i>	<i>ngeey</i>	'listen!'
<i>nhaa-</i>	<i>nhaam</i>	'look!'
<i>ya-</i>	<i>yarr</i>	'go!'

Verb stems formed through suffixation of derivational morphemes (aside from 'Associated Motion') do not receive any special imperative marking, but rather imperative mood is signalled by the absence of other tense/aspect/mood inflection. Hence in (591) and (592) the final morpheme of the imperative verb is a derivational suffix:

- (591) *nganh yak watp-a ongkorr miinnga-n-ø!*  
 1sgACC snake dead-ERG PROHIB take.fright-V<sup>^</sup>-IMP  
 'don't scare me with that dead snake'  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

- (592) *ongkorr yika-n-rr-ø*  
 PROHIB say-V<sup>^</sup>-RCP-IMP  
 ‘don’t tease each other’  
 [Anon.]

Following from the imperative form of *ya-* > *yarr* ‘go!’, a verb that has undergone associated motion derivation (§8.1.4) includes imperative inflection within the portmanteau morpheme *-nharr* ‘GO&:IMP’. This is seen in many of the following examples since a particular affinity is shared between the inceptive aspect marked by the associated motion morpheme and imperative mood (which marks an event the speaker urges should be initiated in the immediate future).

An imperative-inflected verb is most commonly used by the speaker to urge the addressee to perform some action. Clauses including an imperative verb may function to issue commands (as in [593]), requests (as in [594]), or to offer or give permission (as in [595]):

- (593) *pal kar-yup-kaar yarr!*  
 towards like-soon-NEG go:IMP  
 ‘come here at once!’  
 [LN14/08/02 conversation]

- (594) *nhangun may yump-ø ngathnma*  
 3sgDAT VEG(ACC) make-IMP 1sgABL  
 ‘make him some food on my behalf’  
 [LN14/08/02 conversation]

- (595) *nhunt mungk-ø inh, ngay kana mungka-rr ngeengk-ngaac*  
 2sg(ERG)eat-IMP dem:sp.prx 1sg(ERG) finish eat-P.PFV belly-full  
 ‘you eat this food, I’ve already eaten, I’m full’  
 [AJ08/02/04 Elicitation]

All these imperative subfunctions may also be achieved by combining imperative verbal inflection with PERMISSIVE *kirri*:

(596) *kirri ko'o-ø*  
PERM spear-IMP  
'spear it!'  
[MF10/01/04 Elicitation]

(597a) *nhunt coffee=aak?*  
2sg(NOM) coffee=ADN.PROP  
'do you want some coffee?'

(b) *kirri ngul ngathn yump-ø!*  
PERM then 1sgPOS(ACC) make-IMP  
'yes please!' (lit. 'go ahead and make mine')  
[LN8/9/02 Elicitation]

(598) *nhunt kirri yarr irra raak ngathn-mun*  
2sg(NOM) PERM go:IMP to.there PLACE 1sgPOS-DAT  
'you can stay at my place [while I'm away]'  
[AJ08/02/04 Elicitation]

Although *kirri* can occur in isolation as a response to a request (meaning something like 'go ahead!'), any full clause containing this particle must contain an imperative verb. I take this, together with the fact that *kirri* does not affect the modal force of the clause, but rather only increases politeness, as evidence that a clause containing *kirri* should not be viewed as a separate construction, but rather a subtype of the imperative construction.

Prohibition is effected by combining an imperative verb with the PROHIBitive particle *ongkorr*:

- (599) *therng-ø ongkorr kuta!*  
 hit:IMP PROHIB dog(ACC)  
 ‘don’t hit dogs!’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Prohibition may be achieved by placing *ongkorr* within a verbless clause, as in (600), but wherever a verb is present it must take imperative form.

- (600) *yorrrp ongkorr!*  
 this.way PROHIB  
 ‘don’t do that!’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Imperative clauses can be negated only by the inclusion of *ongkorr* ‘Prohibitive’, not, for instance, by the Negative particle *kaar*. I consider clauses containing *ongkorr*, then, as simply a negated imperative clause, rather than a distinct construction. See §10.3.4 for a fuller discussion of prohibitive *ongkorr*.

### 7.3.1.2 Jussive construction

The jussive construction consists of a nonpast-inflected verb (not Imperative) combined with the OPTative particle *ak*<sup>175</sup>. The jussive construction is used for all first and third person imperatives, other than (first person) inclusive imperatives as discussed below. (601) is an example of a jussive construction with a first person singular subject, (602) has a first person dual exclusive subject, whilst (603) – (606) all have third person subjects:

- (601) *ngay ak kal-r iipal*  
 1sg(ERG) OPT carry-NPST from.there  
 ‘I’ll carry it home’  
 [Foote KutaWoochorrm]

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<sup>175</sup> This particle may well be cognate with the Kugu Nganhcara form (ma)-ku, of which Smith and Johnson (2000:437-8) note that “third person imperatives (i.e. jussives) require the particle (ma)-ku, which may also optionally appear with first person imperatives (hortatives)”.

- (602) *ngawoy, ngali ritar ak nhiin, ngumpurr*  
 yes 1du:excl(NOM)gammon OPT sit:NPST old.lady  
 yes, let us sit a bit, old lady  
 [Foote KutaWoochorrm]
- (603) *raak ongkorr nhumpan, ak wun!*  
 PLACE(ACC) PROHIB disturb-V^:IMP OPT lie:NPST  
 ‘don’t stir up the place, let it lie!’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]
- (604) *ngul ngay letm rirk-r... ak yan!*  
 then 1sg(ERG) let-VBLZ DO-P.PFV OPT go:NPST  
 ‘I let [the fishing line go] ... let it go!’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]
- (605) *inh kaar therk-nhan,*  
 dem:sp.prx NEG return-GO&:NPST  
  
*paanth thonmarr ak nhiinan*  
 woman(NOM) forever OPT sit:GO&:NPST  
 ‘this one won’t go back [to Cairns]. That the woman may stay here forever!’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]
- (606) *ak piinth-r ngamal wene-ø*  
 OPT grow-NPST big become-IMP  
 ‘let it [cyclone] grow, let it become big’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Although hortatives and jussives are etically distinct, there does not seem to be any empirical evidence that they are emic categories in Kuuk Thaayorre. In each of the above examples (601) - (606) the speaker expresses the hope or the expectation that nothing will intervene to prevent the situation or event described.

Interestingly, imperatives with a first person inclusive subject behave as (second person) imperatives rather than (first person) hortatives. That is to say, wherever the subject includes the addressee (as do the inclusive pronouns), the clause has imperative force. Hence (607) contains an imperative-marked verb:

- (607) *kuuwiyingal*                    *yarr!*  
 hey    1du:incl(NOM) go:IMP  
 ‘come on, let’s go!’  
 [FT08/02/04 Narrative: Adoptee]

The Thaayorre modal system, then, groups inclusive subjects with second person (imperative) subjects, whilst exclusive subjects (e.g. *ngali* ‘[s]he and I’) group with first person (jussive) subjects. This makes sense when we consider that an imperative clause with an inclusive subject, like a second person imperative, makes demands of the addressee (with all the attendant interactional considerations, such as face). Jussive clauses with first person (exclusive) and third person subjects, however, demand nothing of the addressee. It is logical, then, that a primary cleavage here should fall as it does in Kuuk Thaayorre.

Examples such as (608) and (609) might at first appear to express second person imperatives by means of the jussive construction:

- (608) *yuk*                    *aw-ith*                    *kath; ak*    *ya<a>k-r*  
 tree(NOM) ATTN-dem:dist rotten OPT cut<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘that tree is dead; saw it down!’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 8]

- (609) *ee’!* *ngathun kulam*    *ak*    *thak-r,*  
 hey 1sgDAT path(ACC) OPT leave-NPST  
  
*ngay*                    *ulp*                    *yan*                    *yuurra*  
 1sg(NOM) dem:adr.prx go:NPST far.to.there  
 (to poison cousin:) ‘leave the road for me, I’m going that way’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

However, I would argue that both examples are truly jussive, but with imperative implicature. Although I am unaware of the context of utterance for (608), it seems natural for the speaker to express a general wish for the tree to be sawed down, without specifying that it should be the addressee who does so. This might be either from a desire to protect the negative face of the addressee (by avoiding a direct command), or from a genuine lack of concern as to who, of a large group of potential Agents, should execute the sawing. (608) might therefore be paraphrased ‘that tree is dead, let it be sawed down!’. In the case of (609), it is clearly plausible that in such socially sensitive contexts as speaking to a poison cousin, direct imperatives should be avoided, being instead replaced by the more indirect expression of a desire for a particular event to occur. (609) might therefore be better translated as ‘let it be that [you] leave the road, I’m going over there’. Palmer (2001:82) notes that “there are often two kinds of command in languages with mood systems, but differing in terms of politeness”. This supports the notion that the combination of the optative particle with an (implied) second person subject is associated with heightened politeness.

Finally, the jussive construction may be used in narrative to express the intention or purpose of a protagonist. So, for example, in (610) the protagonists are described as searching for firewood, and the following jussive clause might be interpreted as the will of the protagonists, rather than the speaker as such (i.e. ‘they were looking for firewood that they might light a fire’):

- (610) *paath waath-m pul ak path<ath>a-n-r*  
 fire(ACC) search-P.IPFV 3du(ERG) OPT bite<RDP>-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 ‘they looked for firewood to light [a fire with]’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 9]

Note that in such examples, the verb of the jussive clause must be inflected for nonpast tense, despite the event described’s being located in the past.



### 7.3.2 Subjunctive

Definitions of the subjunctive are commonly vague, but generally involve both some semantic notion of non-factivity and the syntactic feature of occurring in embedded clauses (cf. Matthews 1997:360; Palmer 2001). The Thaayorre category spans wishes (611), purpose (612), intention (613), potential (or ‘hypothetical’, as in [112]) and ability (615), as seen in the following examples:

(611) *ngay perp-e-nha mimp-a*  
 1sg(NOM) cover-RFL-SBJV cloth-ERG  
 ‘I want to cover myself with a blanket’  
 [Hall 1972:106]

(612) *ngay money save-m rirk-ø*  
 1sg(ERG) money(ACC) save-TR DO-NPST  
 ‘I’m saving money’

*ngay raak Cairns-na angarr yanc-nh*  
 1sg(NOM) PLACE Cairns-DAT WANT go:SBJV  
 ‘so that I can go to Cairns to see old Dr Hall’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

(613) *ngay minc min waantharr-r nganh kuta-ku angarr ngeey-nh*  
 1sg(ERG) very good call.out-P.PFV 1sgACC dog-ERG WANT hear-SBJV  
 ‘I called out good and loud so the dog would hear me’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

(614) *kar nhunt yancnh inh truck-ak, nhaathnhancnh nhunt*  
 like 2sg(NOM) go:SBJV dem:sp.prx truck-DAT see:GO&:SBJV 2sg(ERG)  
 ‘if you go you will see it for yourself’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(615) *ngay rok-nh ii-rr-kan wanthan?*  
 1sg(NOM) enter-SBJV there-towards-inside where.to  
 ‘I enter-can in where?’  
 [Hall 1972:146]

All of these uses may be characterised as expressing “something other than a statement of what is certain”, given by Palmer (2001:360) as the central role of many subjunctive markers. This terminological choice also sits well with the common usage of subjunctive verbs as the apodosis of a complex clause, as in the following:

(616) *ngal paath minharr*  
 1du:incl(ERG) firewood(ACC) pick.up:GO&:IMP

*paath waarr rint-nh=pa*  
 fire(ACC) very cook-SBJV=PRAG  
 ‘let’s go and get firewood [so as to] build a fire’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation/Conversation]

Alternatively the subjunctive clause can form the protasis of a construction contrasting an imagined hypothetical world with the actual state of affairs (cf. §11.1.2.3):

(617) *paanth pit<it>-nh wuump=ul=okun*  
 woman(ACC) hold<RDP>-SBJV CONTR=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
 “if he had a wife, alright”

*ngul pul wupan*  
 but 3du(NOM) temporary  
 “they just temporary”  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

It is also possible for the subjunctive clauses to comprise a complete utterance, as in (618). This may represent an instance of ‘insubordination’ (Evans 1995:438, forthcoming); the use of a subordinate clause as a main clause.

- (618) *ngamp kunk angarr nhiin-nh muthathan*  
 1pl:incl(NOM) alive WANT reside-SBJV forever  
 ‘we [strive] to live forever’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

Note that Hall glosses both *-nh* and *-nha* at times *desiderative* and at other times *potential*. Whilst I think both these moods are expressed by the subjunctive suffix, I believe it is preferable to subsume them under a larger modal category (especially given the diachronic links between this morpheme and the associated motion [§8.1.4] and other modal [§7.3.6] suffixes). An alternative candidate label for this category is *irrealis*, however, this term is used to label quite a different category in Yir Yoront. Like the Thaayorre subjunctive, the Yir Yoront *irrealis* indicates that the event was desired, intended or expected, but unlike the Thaayorre subjunctive category, the Yir Yoront *irrealis* entails that the event was not or will not be carried out. This clearly does not apply to examples such as (613), in which the intended effect was achieved, or (112) which was issued as a directive to go to the place described (and thus conveys that the ‘seeing’ event *should* occur in the future, rather than marking that it won’t). The Thaayorre subjunctive category is semantically and syntactically more akin to the Yir Yoront ‘Desiderative’ (Alpher 1991).

### 7.3.3 Counterfactual

The counterfactual suffix, *-nhata*, encodes an event that was (at some point) desired, intended or expected, but which did not or will not occur<sup>176</sup>. This is illustrated by (619), the description of an elicitation video clip in which a man cutting an orange also cuts his finger with the knife. By means of counterfactual marking, the speaker conveys her inference as to the man’s intended outcome (i.e. cutting the orange), simultaneously noting that this did not occur:

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<sup>176</sup> It is in this respect very similar to the Yir Yoront *irrealis* category (Alpher 1973:252-3)

(619)

1. *yiki pam ith nhul minc may orange*  
 yikes man(#ERG) dem:dist 3sg(ERG) really VEG orange(ACC)

*knife-nthurr yak-nhata=th*  
 knife-ERG cut-CTF=PRAG

2. *ngul nhul yiirrar yuur nhangn yake-rr minc waarr*  
 but 3sg(ERG) instead hand 3sgPOS(ACC) cut-P.PFV really bad  
 ‘that man meant to cut the orange with a knife, but instead he cut his finger  
 really badly’

[LN15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break18]

The counterfactual can also encode an event that might be expected to occur in the future, but that will not:

- (620) *parr-an ith peln yup thangkangkr-nhata*  
 child-ERG dem:dist 3pl(NOM) soon laugh<RDP>-CTF

‘those children are suppressing laughter [i.e. they won’t laugh although they want to]’

[GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Hall (1972:209) also describes the morpheme labelled counterfactual, though there are some significant differences between his examples and mine. To begin with, Hall lists the three allomorphs of this morpheme *-(nh)atath* ~ *-natath*, while I find the final segment /th/ to be frequently absent. For this reason, I analyse the string *-nhatath* in (619) above to be composed of the counterfactual suffix *-nhata* followed by the pragmatic focus enclitic *=th*. I also diverge from Hall’s analysis in terminology. Although Hall labels this category ‘subjunctive mood’, I prefer to reserve that term for the morpheme *-nh(a)* and believe the more specific label *counterfactual* neatly encapsulates both the examples from my own data, and those given by Hall (1972:209 - 212) as examples of subjunctive mood, including those following:

- (621) *nhunt panh pormp-nhata=th*  
 2sg(ERG) vomit(ACC) pour-CTF=PRAG  
 ‘you would have vomited’  
 [Hall 1972:209]
- (622) *ngay minc kal-nhatath, thaka-rr (nga)y*  
 1sg(ERG) really carry-CTF leave-P.PFV 1sg(ERG)  
 ‘I would have taken it but I left it’  
 [Hall 1972:210]
- (623) *peln ngul ngene=p tho<tho>wol-natha=th*  
 3pl(NOM) later why=PRAG play<RDP>-CTF=PRAG  
  
*thaapirri ranth pork-an*  
 close hole big-DAT  
 ‘how lucky it was those kids didn’t play near the big hole!’  
 [Hall 1972:211]

Note that the Kugu Nganhcara ‘Nonfactual’ enclitic =*monh* (Smith and Johnson 2000:441) also appears to have essentially the same function as the Thaayorre counterfactual suffix and Yir Yoront irrealis suffix.

The Thaayorre particle *kar* may also be used with a counterfactual-like effect, discussed further in §11.3.3.

### 7.3.4 Purposive

Although subjunctive inflection may often have a purposive interpretation (624) the purposive as a semantic category is more explicitly encoded by the morpheme -*nhatha*. Accordingly, the verb in the apodosis of a purposive construction may be inflected for purposive mood, as in the following:

- (624) *pamal ii yuur-reekarr=anh ngay yencnhatha*  
 man-ERG there hand-give-P.PFV=3sgACC 1sg(NOM) go:PURP  
 ‘the man helped me to walk’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Most commonly, the protasis of this construction describes some action performed in order to bring about the purposive clause, accordingly in (624) the man helped the speaker with a view to his being able to walk. Similarly, in (625) the speaker describes travelling to Brisbane so that he could talk to Allen Hall, with the latter event being marked purposive to stress that this was the ultimate goal:

- (625) *nhul ii yat kuuk yik-nhatha Allen Hall-ak*  
 3sg(NOM) there go:P.PFV work say-PURP Allen Hall-DAT  
 ‘he went there to speak to Allen Hall’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

It is not always the case that the subject of the purposive verb is the one who desires the event to take place. As such, purposive clauses can be used to encode reported imperatives, as in the following:

- (626) *Sakala yiik-r nhul kuuk yi<i>k-nhatha, nhangun*  
 Sakala(NOM) say<RDP>-P.PFV 3sg(NOM) word say<RDP>-PURP 3sgDAT  
 ‘Sakala said he should talk to him’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

In this case, Sakala (the subject of the matrix clause, reporting the speech event) is the one who desires the requested conversation to take place. Some other participant (*nhul* ‘he’), however, is the one who must do the speaking encoded as *yiik-nhatha* ‘talk-PURP’. Nevertheless, it is true to say that Sakala said [something to ‘him’] with the purpose that ‘he’ should talk to him.

As well as describing the Goal or intended result of some action, a purposive verb can represent the desired, intended or inherent function of some object. This is evident in the following:

- (627) *kaal kuuk ngeey-nhatha*  
 ear(NOM) word(ACC) listen-PURP  
 ‘ears are for listening’  
 [GJ19/11/02 Elicitation]

### 7.3.5 Imminence

The imminence morpheme marks an event that has not yet occurred, but is expected to do so in the immediate future (unless someone or something prevents it). This is exemplified by the following:

- (628) *kuta thok-thun nhul kuta ngulyirr kanthi-rrtha*  
 PET cat-ERG 3sg(ERG) dog(ACC) soon scratch-IMM  
 ‘the cat is about to scratch the dog’  
 [LF18/09/02 Conversation]

- (629) *nhul=okun nganh path-nhancrrth*  
 3sg(ERG)=DUB 1sgACC bite-GO&:IMM  
 ‘‘maybe he wanna bite me’’ [i.e. ‘I expect him to bite me if I don’t prevent it’]  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

It is not immediately obvious whether ‘imminence’ is a modal or tense category. Like a tense, it locates the event in the immediate future of the speech event. On the other hand, the speaker expresses some degree of certainty that the event will occur, unless measures are taken to avoid it. This latter fact makes it seem more modal. The fact that the imminence suffix *-rrtha* shares its final syllable (*-tha*) with the purposive, leads me to analyse this morpheme as part of a broader modal system (cf. §7.3.7).

The label ‘imminence’ appears to have been coined by Hall (1972:156) for the category described here. I have continued to use it, as it captures both temporal immediacy and modal near inevitability. Further, it has no connotations of the event’s

being undesirable, which is important since imminent-marked events can also be desirable, as in the following:

- (630) *nhurr may muungk-rrtha*  
 2pl(ERG) VEG(ACC) eat-IMM  
 ‘you are about to dine’  
 [Hall 1972:123]

The imminence category thus differs from the apprehensive and evitative categories of some other Australian languages (e.g. Kayardild [Evans 1995], Warlpiri [Nash 1980] and Ngandi [Baker 1999]).

### 7.3.6 Semantic overview of the modal affixes

The counterfactual, purposive and imminence suffixes (*-nhata*, *-nhatha* and *-rrtha* respectively) are not only phonologically similar, but also share similar functions. All three describe nonfactive events (i.e. events that have not actually occurred), but have different emphases and entailments. The counterfactual entails that this nonfactive event has not and will not occur, the purposive focuses on the fact that [someone] intends the event to occur (remaining neutral as to whether or not it will), whilst the imminence suffix expresses that the event will occur unless prevented.

The counterfactual and purposive differ only in their penultimate segment (/t/ versus /th/), and it is possible that the two functions were once shared by a single morpheme. Examples such as (619) show the overlap between the two semantic categories:

- (619') *yiki pam ith nhul minj may orange knife-nthurr yak-nhata-th*  
 yikes man dem:dist 3sg(ERG) really VEG orange(ACC) knife-ERG cut-CTF-PR  
  
*ngul nhul yiirrar yuur nhangn yake-rr minc waarr*  
 then 3sg(ERG) instead hand 3sgPOS(ACC) cut-P.PFV really bad  
 ‘that man meant to cut the orange with a knife, but instead he cut his finger  
 really badly’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break18]



The counterfactual-marked verb, *yaknhatath* ‘intended to cut but didn’t’ represents both the (purposive) accomplishment the Actor intended to bring about by his action (i.e. cutting the orange), as well as a (counterfactual) event that did not occur, contrary to expectations.

The functional common ground between the purposive (*-nhatha*) and imminence (*-rrtha*) morphemes - which share the ending /tha/ - can be seen in the following example:

- (631) *kuta thok-thun nhul kuta ngulyirr kanthi-rrtha*  
 PET cat-ERG 3sg(ERG) dog(ACC) soon scratch-IMM  
 ‘the cat is about to scratch the dog’  
 [LF18/09/02 Conversation]

The imminence-marked verb *kanthirrtha* ‘about to scratch’, encodes an event that is both intended by its subject (purposive), but also highly likely to occur unless measures are taken to avoid it.

Although these three suffixes are presented above as monomorphemic, it seems likely that — at some stage of the language’s history — they were composed of at least two morphemes. The first syllable of both the counterfactual and purposive suffixes, is homophonous with the subjunctive morpheme (*-nh[a]*), which is particularly significant given the semantic commonality between the three. All (can) denote irrealis states of affairs, counterfactual clauses refer to hypothetical events (just as does the subjunctive in examples such as [54], repeated below), with the counterfactual suffix further entailing that the hypothetical event did not and will not occur.

- (54') *paanth pitit-nh wuump=ul=okun*  
 woman(ACC) hold:RDP-SUBJ CONTR=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
 “if he had a wife, alright”

*ngul pul*            *wupan*  
 then 3du(NOM)    temporary  
 “they just temporary”  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

Similarly, subjunctive verbs are often used to encode a Purpose or desired outcome (cf. [611]), with the purposive suffix merely transforming this from implicature to entailment. We might therefore choose to reanalyse the counterfactual morpheme as having the form *-ta* (only suffixed to a subjunctive stem), and the purposive as *-tha* (also attached to a subjunctive stem). Such an analysis reveals the morphological similarity between the purposive and imminence morphemes, the latter currently analysed as *-rrtha*. If we assume that the latter segments of *-rrtha* ‘imminence’ actually represent the same morpheme as is suffixed to the subjunctive verb to create the purposive, it might be better to recast the function of this *-tha*. For example, labelling *-tha* ‘intention’, would allow this morpheme to combine with a subjunctive-inflected verb to denote ‘purposive’ (i.e. a non-factive event that is intended), but also to combine with what we’ll call an ‘immediate’ morpheme, *-rr*, to denote ‘imminence’ (i.e. an intended event that is temporally immediate). Such a system can be schematised as follows:

	<i>-ta</i> ‘counterfactual’	<i>-tha</i> ‘intention’
<i>-nha</i> ‘subjunctive’	<i>-nha-ta</i>	<i>-nha-tha</i>
<i>-rr</i> ‘immediate’	-	<i>-rr-tha</i>

Figure 12. Putative polymorphemic analysis of Thaayorre modal affixes.

There may well have existed a system much like this at some stage of the language’s history, but synchronically a monomorphemic analysis of the counterfactual, purposive and imminence suffixes appears more parsimonious. One reason for this is the fact that neither *-ta* nor *-tha* may be affixed to the verb directly, without either the subjunctive suffix or *-rr* intervening. A second factor weighing against segmenting these forms, is the fact that the morpheme *-rr* is homophonous with both the reciprocal and past perfective suffixes, yet neither of these could compositionally

produce the semantics of the ‘imminence’ category when combined with *-tha* ‘Intention’. A segmental approach would therefore introduce a new morpheme *-rr*, which only ever appears preceding the ‘intention’ suffix. It therefore seems clearer to postulate three monomorphemic suffixes (*-nhata* ‘counterfactual’, *-nhatha* ‘purposive’, and *-rrtha* ‘imminence’), while noting their likely diachronic origins.

## 7.4 Infinitive

For any verb, the infinitive form is identical to the imperative. This is true for both verb roots (632) and derived verb stems (633).

(632a) *kal-ø!*

carry-IMP

‘carry [it]!’

(b) *kal-ø*

carry-INF

‘carrying’

(633a) *roka-n-ø!*

enter-V<sup>^</sup>-IMP

‘put [it] in!’

(b) *roka-n-ø*

enter-V<sup>^</sup>-INF

‘putting [it] in’

This generalisation holds even where the imperative inflection is non-zero in form. Thus the marked imperative allomorph of the associated motion morpheme *-nharr* doubles as an infinitive form, suffixed to the verb *nhaath* ‘see’ in the subordinate clause of (634).

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- (634) *ngul nhul meer-kay rok-r minc nhaath-nharr*  
then 3sg(NOM) eye-metal(ACC) enter-P.PFV really see-GO&:INF  
'he put on glasses on so he could see better'  
[GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Infinitive verbs head subordinate clauses (such as [635]), the functions and morphosyntax of which are discussed in §11.1.1.1.

- (635) “*Ngay irra ritar yat, kumun therk-ø, thuuthu-n-m.*  
1sg(NOM) to.there gammon go:P.PFV thigh return-INF pull-V^P-IPFV  
“I just went for a bit over there to stretch my legs”  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

# Chapter Eight: Verbal derivation

## 8.1 Derivational morphemes

A number of derivational affixes may be attached to Thaayorre verb roots. All of these derive a new lexeme, but only one (the nominaliser/verbaliser *-m*) results in a change in lexical category. This chapter considers ‘verbal derivation’ in the broadest possible sense, including in its scope:

- all derivational morphemes that affix to a verbal root or stem (including nominalising morphemes)
- all derivational morphemes and processes that derive a new verb stem
- elements that may be compounded with verb roots to produce a new verbal stem

Section 7.1.1 provided an overview of the range of derivational (as well as inflectional) morphemes that may appear within the Thaayorre verbal word. The relevant derivational ‘slots’ are again summarised as Table 67:

COMPOUND	ROOT	DERIV	DERIV	DERIV	DERIV
BodyP+	<b>ROOT</b>	-VBLZ	-V <sup>^</sup>	-RFL, -RCP	-GO& -RUN&
verb roots may be compounded with a nominal element		derives a verb from nouns, etc.	valence increasing suffix; increases valency by one	produce a reflexive or reciprocal stem with reduced valency	Two associated motion suffixes

Table 67. Derivational slots in the Thaayorre verb.

All derivational affixes are optional. Where two morphemes are listed within a single ‘slot’ in Table 67, there are no attestations of the two co-occurring in a single verb stem. So, for instance, I have been unable to record any instances of a verb root that

undergoes both reflexive and reciprocal derivation (which would logically require a trivalent input), or of both the associated motion morphemes combining in a single verb stem. Aside from these restrictions, the exponents of the various morpheme slots may freely combine, provided they occur in the order set out in Table 67. See §7.1.1 for further discussion of the combination of multiple derivational morphemes within a single verbal stem, and §8.1.1 below for a discussion of the variable ordering of the valence increaser and the reflexive/reciprocal morphemes.

### 8.1.1 Valence increaser

Only one of the Thaayorre derivational suffixes increases the valency of the verb stem. This can be seen in the comparison of (636) and (637), the first of which includes the inflected simple root *rok* ‘enter’, which subcategorises for a single intransitive subject argument, the second of which includes the derived stem *rokan* ‘cause to enter’, which subcategorises for both transitive subject and object:

(636) *bullet tunnel-ak rok-r*  
 bullet(NOM) tunnel-DAT enter-P.PFV  
 ‘the bullet went into the tunnel’  
 [GJ20/11/02 MoverbEnterExit17]

(637) *nhul kuta pormp-an roka-ni-rr*  
 3sg(ERG) dog(ACC) house-DAT enter-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘he put the dog in the house’  
 [GJ14/10/02 Elicitation]

In the majority of instances of its use, the valence increaser has a causative interpretation, introducing an Agent that causes a Theme to undergo the Activity or State-change described by the verb root. This is evident in the contrast between *rok* ‘enter’ and *rokan* ‘cause to enter’ above, but also in the contrast between *thaa-riic* ‘tear (predicated of some saliently 2-dimensional material)’ and *thaa-riican* ‘cause (some saliently 2-dimensional material) to tear (predicated of an Agent or Force)’, as in the following:

- (638) *nhul mimp thaa.riica-ni-rr*  
 3sg(ERG) cloth(ACC) tear-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘she tore the cloth’  
 [EF15/12/02 Cut&Break1]

In such cases, the valence increaser can be viewed as adding an Agent argument (encoded as transitive subject), and encoding the erstwhile intransitive Theme-Subject as the transitive Object. However, there are many instances in which the effects of the valence increaser on argument structure are not so straightforward. For instance, when the valence increaser is added to the verb *yungar* ‘swim’, it is the locative adjunct that is promoted to direct object, while the intransitive Actor-subject simply becomes transitive Actor-subject:

- (639) *ngay ngerngkan yungar-natath wa'ap-n*  
 1sg(NOM) yesterday swim-CTF river-DAT  
 ‘I would have swum in the river yesterday (but...)’  
 [Hall 1972:122]

- (640) *wa'ap inh ngancn yungar-nan-m*  
 river(ACC) dem:sp.prx 1pl(ERG) swim-V<sup>^</sup>-P.IPFV  
 ‘we used to swim that river (i.e. cross it by swimming)’  
 [ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

In this case, valence increase not only alters the argument structure of *yungar* ‘swim’, but also results in a semantic/Aktionsart shift from describing the activity of swimming (639), to describing the accomplishment of swimming across a river in order to reach the other side (640).

When valence increaser is added to the verb *thowol* ‘play’ (seen in its underived form in [641]), for instance, it can introduce either the thing played with (as in [642]) or a comitative argument, as in (643):

(641) *thowol-nam ngancn parr\_r mant*  
 play-P.IPFV 1pl:excl(NOM) child small(NOM)  
 ‘we little kids were playing’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

(642) *Anisha, ulp ngan thowol-nan-r?*  
 Anisha dem:adr.prx what play-V^-NPST  
 ‘Anisha, what’s that you’re playing with?’  
 [EF14/12/02 DemonstrativeScene18]

(643) *nhul parr\_r ii thowol-nan-r*  
 3sg(ERG) child(ACC) there play-V^-NPST  
 ‘he’ll be playing with those kids (when we get there)’  
 [GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA]

When asked, my consultant allowed that (643) could also describe a man (as an external Agent) causing children to play. However, its more natural interpretation (and the one intended by the speaker), is that the man and children are playing together (albeit with greater responsibility for instigation attributed to the man). The activity performed by the Agent (encoded as transitive subject) is thus the same as that performed by the intransitive subject of the underived verb. Note that this differs significantly from the shift between *thaa-riic* ‘tear (itr.)’ and *thaa-riican* ‘tear (tr.)’ (seen in [638]). Example (638) would never imply that the Agent herself ‘tore’ as well as the cloth. There is clearly, then, a difference in the semantic effect of valence increase between (643) and (638). This difference cannot be attributed to verbal semantics alone. If this were the case, each verb root should allow only a single interpretation when combined with the valence increaser. That this is not the case, is demonstrated by the contrast between (642) and (643); in the former, the valence increaser adds an inanimate Instrument, whilst in the latter it adds comitative participants. Instead, the semantics of individual verb roots appears to permit (one or a number of) argument structure realignments as a result of valence increase.

Rather than spanning a range of distinct functions, I view the Valence increasing morpheme as semantically nonspecific. In all instances of its use, the Valence



increaser has the function of adding a further argument to the verb's subcategorisation frame. Unlike causative morphemes (which generally introduce a Causer argument) or applicative morphemes (which introduce, e.g., a Benefactive argument), the argument introduced by the valence increaser is unspecified for thematic role. The thematic role of the introduced argument is instead supplied by the verb root. Where the verb root in question permits more than one so-derived argument structure (as with *thowol* 'play'), the correct interpretation must be gleaned through attention to a combination of contextual information, semantic features of the introduced argument (e.g. animacy) and the addressee's inferential abilities. In example (642), for instance, it is natural to assume that the inanimate referent of *ngan* 'what' represents an Instrument with which Anisha is playing, whilst in (643) the subject is interpreted as engaging in the playing event along with the animate direct object *parr\_r* 'children', rather than playing them like Instruments.

In a bivalent clause derived by the Valence increaser, it is not always clear which of the arguments has been introduced and which corresponds to the single argument of the original monovalent clause. In example ((644), for instance, both the subject argument (the rangers and policemen) and the direct object (the food and things) move quickly, thus being potential intransitive subjects of the base verb *riic* 'run':

- (644) *kar ranger kar policeman may=yuk*  
 like ranger(#ERG) like policeman(#ERG) VEG(ACC)=STUFF  
  
*everywhere rii<ri>ca-n-r*  
 everywhere run<RDP>-V^-NPST  
 'rangers and policemen would distribute food and things everywhere'  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

It is possible to view the Valence increaser as introducing either a Comitative argument (i.e. 'the rangers and policemen run around *with food and things*'), or an Agent/Causer (i.e. 'the rangers and policemen cause the food and things to move quickly [around the village]'). Under the first interpretation, the subject of the intransitive clause would correspond to the subject of the derived transitive clause, with the Comitative argument *may=yuk* '(with) food and things' introduced. This

follows the same pattern as seen in (645), in which it must be the Comitative argument that is introduced by the Valence increaser:

- (645) *ngal irra therka-n-ø*  
 1du:incl(ERG) to.there return-V<sup>^</sup>-IMP  
 ‘let’s bring [him] back [to camp]’ (i.e. ‘let’s return to camp with him’)  
 [FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

That it is the transitive subject *ngal* ‘we two’ that corresponds to the intransitive subject of the underived clause, is clear from the narrative context in which (645) was uttered. This clause forms part of a story about an elderly husband and wife who had gone out bush looking for food when they came upon an abandoned baby, at which point the wife says to her husband *ngal irra therkan* ‘let’s bring him back’. In this context, the subject of the valence-increased verb stem *therkan* ‘return with’ (i.e. *ngal* ‘we two’) must correspond to the subject of the original intransitive verb; the baby would not be able to ‘return’ since it had not come from the camp in the first place. It is therefore clear that the baby is introduced as a comitative argument.

Under the second interpretation of (644), it is the Agent/Causer subject argument (*kar ranger kar policeman* ‘like rangers or policemen’) that has been introduced, with the subject of the intransitive clause corresponding to the direct object (*may=yuk* ‘food and things’). This would follow the pattern seen in (646), where it is the direct object of the derived transitive clause (‘the book’) that corresponds to the subject of the intransitive clause (‘the book returned’):

- (646) *book ulp pal therka-ni-rr*  
 book(ACC) dem:adr.prx towards return-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘[he] returned the book [to her]’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot5]

It is clear in this case that the valence-increasing derivation has added an Agent/Causer since the subject argument (the elided ‘[he]’) does not himself return. Rather, he remains in the same place, while causing the Theme argument (‘the book’) to return along the same trajectory by which it reached him. It is clear, then, that there

is no straightforward way of predicting the argument structure of the derived verbs *therka-n* ‘return-V<sup>^</sup>’ and *riica-n* ‘run-V<sup>^</sup>’ from those of their respective verb roots.

In summary, then, I assume that the valence increaser simply adds a new argument to the subcategorisation frame of the derived verb. The grammatical function of this new argument is determined by the verb root, rather than the valence increaser itself. Some verb roots (labelled here ‘type 1’) undergo subject-to-object derivation (e.g. *thaariic* ‘tear’), others (‘type 2’) undergo subject-to-subject derivation (e.g. *yungar* ‘swim’). There remain further verbs (‘type 3’) which permit both patterns of derivation (e.g. *thowol* ‘play’, *therk* ‘return’ and *riic* ‘run’). For these verbs, the argument introduced by the valence increaser may have one of a number of potential thematic roles. I assume that the mapping of argument/roles to grammatical function is determined for such verbs by the thematic role hierarchy (cf. Givón 1984, 2001; Bresnan and Kanerva 1989; Grimshaw 1990; Simpson 1991).

In some cases, there is a conventionalised association between a derived (valence-increased) verb and a particular event type, often far removed from the event described by the verb root. Suffixation of the Valence increasing morpheme to the verb *yik* ‘say’, for example, can result in a number of seemingly lexicalised interpretations, in addition to the more compositionally derived sense of ‘cause to make noise’ seen in (647). In (648), for example, *yika-n* ‘say-V<sup>^</sup>’ means ‘teach’, which is a far narrower sense than simply ‘cause to say’.

(647) *pam-al ii yuunhul radio too.high yik<ik>a-n-r*  
 man-ERG there far:dem.pro radio(ACC) too.high say<RDP>-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 ‘the man over there is playing his radio too loud’  
 [GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

(648) *nhunt nganh yikan-r*  
 2sg(ERG) 1sgACC say-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 ‘you’re teaching me’  
 [LF26/08/03 Elicitation]

*Yikan* can also mean ‘tease’, with the result that (649) could alternatively have been translated as ‘you are teasing me’. One specific form of teasing — tickling — may also be referred to by means of *yika-n* ‘say-V<sup>^</sup>’, as seen in the following:

- (649) *ngeengk yika-ni-rr ngul plate runca-rr*  
 belly(ACC) say-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV then plate break-P.PFV  
 ‘[he] tickled [her] belly and the plate broke [because she dropped it]’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents78]

The meanings ‘make speak’, ‘teach’ and ‘tease’ seem too saliently different for the derived verb *yika-n* ‘say-V<sup>^</sup>’ to simply be vague (thus permitting each of these interpretations). That is to say, it seems unlikely that a speaker uttering (648) would intend to express a category of event that includes teasing and tickling as well as teaching. Instead, it seems more plausible to posit ambiguity between a number of distinct senses.

Verb stems created by suffixation of the valence increaser belong to the first conjugation class. Input to this derivational process can be sourced from a range of word classes. Although all of the examples above involve a verb root undergoing valence increase, there is some evidence that this morpheme may attach directly to members of other word classes<sup>177</sup>. For example, the verb *meeren* ‘show (something to someone)’, seen in example (650) below, is apparently derived from the person part noun *meer(e)* ‘eye’ + *-n(i)* ‘V<sup>^</sup>’:

- (650) *pam farmer, nhul minh tourist-ak meere-n-m*  
 man farmer 3sg(ERG) meat tourist-DAT eye-V<sup>^</sup>-P.IPFV  
 ‘a farmer was showing some tourists crocodiles’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

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<sup>177</sup> The Kugu Nganhcara Causative morpheme combines productively with nouns, adjectives and quantifiers — as well as verb roots — to produce transitive verbs (Smith & Johnson 2000:427). The Thaayorre Valence increasing morpheme seems considerably more restricted in its combinatorics.

Such cases are rare, however, and the form *meeren* ‘show’ appears to be lexicalised as a verb root rather than productively derived via valence increase.

In most cases, the valence increasing morpheme is the first derivational suffix to follow the verb root. As flagged in §6.1.1, however, there is some variation in the respective order of valence increaser and the reflexive/reciprocal morphemes. This can be seen in the comparison of (651) with (652), the first of which exhibits V<sup>^</sup>-RFL ordering, the second exhibits the reverse RFL-V<sup>^</sup> order. Note that the valence increaser has causative semantics in both these examples.

- (651) *ngay ngathney mungka-n-e-r merrethen*  
 1sg(ERG) 1sgRFL consume-V<sup>^</sup>-RFL-P.PFV medicine(ACC)  
 ‘I made myself swallow the medicine’  
 [Hall 1972:392]

- (652) *ngancin nhunh kaar=p yoongk-e-nhan-nan yuk-un*  
 1pl(ERG) 3sgACC NEG-PRAG hang-RFL-V<sup>^</sup>-GO&:NPST tree-DAT  
 ‘we won’t make him hang himself in the tree’  
 [Hall 1972:391]

The tendency for ‘innermost’ verbal affixes to apply semantically before those towards the periphery has long been recognised (e.g. Haiman 1980, 1983; Baker 1985)<sup>178</sup>. This iconicity is reflected by the examples above, in both of which the ‘inner’ affix applies first. Accordingly, the order RFL-V<sup>^</sup> expresses ‘cause X to do V to X’, where X is the subject participant and V is the event described by the verb. Conversely, the order V<sup>^</sup>-RFL expresses ‘X causes X to do V’ – in other words the reflexive affix has scope over the causation rather than the event (cf. Hyman 2003 on similar motivations for suffix ordering in Bantu languages).

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<sup>178</sup> Though see Evans (1995) on an exception to this in the Australian language Kayardild.

## 8.1.2 Reflexive

I take the primary function of the reflexive suffix *-e* ‘RFL’ to be the marking of self-directed actions (as in [653]):

- (653) *kuta ngith path<ath>-e-ø*  
 dog(NOM) dem:dist bite<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘that dog is biting himself’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

The reflexive suffix is, however, highly polysemous. The full range of event types associated with this morpheme is discussed in §10.6.1, as is the morphosyntax of the reflexive construction.

Reflexive derivation creates a second conjugation verb stem, with a zero-marked nonpast tense (as in [653] above). The past imperfective is marked by the full allomorph *-nham* (§7.2.3) and the past perfective by *-r* (§7.2.4):

- (654) *ngay ngat-a ngay<sup>179</sup> yak-e-nham*  
 1sg(NOM) fish-DAT 1sg(NOM) cut-RFL-P.IPFV  
 ‘I cut myself [while] fishing’  
 [LN28/10/02 Elicitation]

- (655) *nhul yariy katp-e-r, iitharrkoo, kam inh!*  
 3sg(NOM) thus grasp-RFL-P.PFV wow blood dem:sp.prx  
 ‘he touched himself [on the arm] like this [and realised] “hey, I’m bleeding!”’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

An epenthetic palatal glide always intervenes between the reflexive suffix and past perfective morpheme (with the verb in [655] pronounced something like [katpej.ɿ]), but since this is a purely phonetic feature it is omitted from transcription.

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<sup>179</sup> As discussed in §6.6, it is commonplace for there to be multiple exponents of a single argument within the Thaayorre clause. The repetition of *ngay* ‘I’ here, then, is unrelated to reflexivity.

### 8.1.3 Reciprocal

I take the primary function of the reciprocal suffix to be the marking of symmetric<sup>180</sup> events. The term ‘symmetric’ may be applied to any event-type involving (minimally) two participants and in which participant A both acts upon participant B and is acted upon by B<sup>181</sup>, as seen in the following:

- (656) *paanth pinalam ith ngamal.katp-rr-ø peln*  
 woman three(NOM) dem:dist hug-RCP-NPST 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘the three women hug each other’  
 [FT10/02/04 RCP20]

This definition is intentionally semantic in orientation since the match between symmetric semantics and reciprocal coding is inexact. Hence §10.6.2 details a range of distinct functions associated with the reciprocal morpheme, as well as the potential for symmetric events to be encoded by non-reciprocal constructions.

Derivation of a reciprocal verb by suffixing *-rr* creates a stem of conjugation 2. Hence the nonpast tense is unmarked (as in [656] above) and the past perfective marked by the suffix *-r*:

- (657) *pul yoorr yith-rr-r ii-rr-kuw rump-un*  
 3du(NOM) today lead-RCP-P.PFV there-towards-west beach-DAT  
 ‘those two led each other to the beach today’  
 [Hall 1972:108]

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<sup>180</sup> I borrow this term from König and Kokutani (to appear).

<sup>181</sup> Where more than two participants are involved, I will class as ‘reciprocal’ any event in which the majority of participants both act upon, and are acted upon by, other participants. Exactly how the reciprocal semantic prototype should be characterised is an empirical question that is, I believe, yet to be satisfactorily established. The definition given above is, however, a satisfactory heuristic for present purposes. This issue is revisited in §10.6.2.2.

### 8.1.4 Associated motion

The category of ‘associated motion’ was first labelled as such by Koch (1984:23) in his discussion of Kaytetye and other Australian languages<sup>182</sup>. Quite common amongst Pama-Nyungan languages, the functional range of associated motion morphemes varies from language to language. Common to most, if not all, these morphemes, is that they can be used to mark that the event described by the verb root is accompanied by some kind of motion (typically a change in location). This is illustrated by the following Kuuk Thaayorre example, which describes an event of fishing that will occur following motion to the river:

- (658) *ngay ii-ø-kuw-op-in line pit-nhan*  
 1sg(NOM) there-at-west-river-DAT line(ACC) keep-GO&:NPST  
 ‘I’m going [in order] to fish at the westwards river’  
 [AC10/08/02 Elicitation]

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses two associated motion morphemes, the origins of each of which may be traced back to the free motion verbs *ya-* ‘go’ and *riic* ‘run’. The first associated motion morpheme (*-nha-* ‘GO&’) combines the marking of associated motion and TAM inflection into a series of portmanteau suffixes. This can be attributed to the morpheme’s origin as an irregular verb, the TAM inflection of which is not easily distinguished from the verb root. The second associated motion morpheme (*-(nh)ic(a)* ‘RUN&’) is easily segmented apart from TAM inflection. The contrast between the two is evident in the comparison between (659) and (660), the past perfective morpheme being segmentable in the latter but not the former:

- (659) *ngumpurr wang ii thongk-nhat*  
 old.lady white(NOM) there arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
 ‘the old white lady’s just arrived there’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

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<sup>182</sup> Similar categories found on other continents have been labelled ‘Andative’ and ‘Venitive’ (cf. Lehmann 1983).



- (660) *ngul yuparr kaarp kuta pam.thaawaarra kana thongk-ica-rr*  
 then later:prag NEG:PRAG dog cheeky(NOM) finish arrive-RUN&-P.PFV  
 ‘and no later [than he said that] the cheeky dog arrived’  
 [Foote: Kuta Woochorrm]

Both of the associated motion morphemes can express aspectual information as well as associated motion proper (i.e. that the event described by the verb root also involves some change of place). Nevertheless, the precise semantic categories they encode differ. The following sections detail these semantic categories, as well as the morphology and inferred etymology of the two morphemes.

#### 8.1.4.1 *-nha-* ‘GO&’

As flagged in the previous section, the first associated motion morpheme combines with TAM inflection to produce a series of portmanteau suffixes. These are presented in Table 68:

	<i>-nha-</i> ‘GO&’	<i>ya-</i> ‘go’
Nonpast	<i>-nhan</i>	<i>yan</i>
Past perfective	<i>-nhat</i>	<i>yat</i>
Imperative	<i>-nharr</i>	<i>yarr</i>
Subjunctive	<i>-nhancnh</i>	<i>yancnh</i>

Table 68. Comparison of TAM inflections of *ya-* ‘go’ and the GO& morpheme.

That this morpheme has grammaticalised from the free verb *ya-* ‘go’ is clear only from a comparison of the tense inflection of the two. *Ya-* is a highly irregular verb; no other verb has a present tense marked by *-n*, a past perfective marked *-t* or an imperative marked *-rr*. The initial segment of the first associated motion morpheme, /nh/, is likely to have once marked subjunctive mood. This fits with an inferred construction at an earlier stage of the language’s development, at which a subjunctive verb (encoding an intended event) combined with a motion verb. Illustrating this

proposed development, (661) presents a hypothetical reconstructed clause in which a subjunctive verb is immediately followed by a motion verb. It is suggested that such a construction formed the basis for the (spontaneously uttered) associated motion verb seen in (662):

(661) \**ngay yukurra kirk wuump kath-nh yan*  
 1sg(ERG) next.time spear(ACC) CONTR bind-SBJV go:NPST  
 ‘but next time I’ll go and make a spear’

(662) *ngay yukurra kirk wuump kath-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) next.time spear(ACC) CONTR bind-GO&:NPST  
 ‘but next time I’m going to make a spear’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

No such serialisation of subjunctive verb + motion verb is attested in my data, but this does not falsify my hypothesis, as such a construction could well have been superseded (and thus made obsolete) by the monolexemic associated motion verb. Too little evidence is available to justify speculation as to the semantics of the putative serial construction in (661), but it seems reasonable to imagine that it may have allowed modal and/or aspectual interpretations, as well as a literal motion reading<sup>183</sup> (cf. similar developments in Arrernte described in Wilkins 1989). An alternative source of the initial *-nh(a)*, however, might be the Pama-Nyungan nominaliser *-nh(th)a-* (Evans 1988), a reflex of which combines with the Warlpiri verb *ya-* ‘go’ to produce a similar associated motion category (Simpson 2002). Detailed reconstructive work is required to judge between these two diachronic explanations.

Associated motion derivation has no effect on valency, with the derived stem retaining the original valency of the root or stem to which the associated motion morpheme is suffixed. This is evidenced by the transitive verb *kath-nhan* ‘tie-GO&:NPST’ in (662), which is derived from the transitive root *kath* ‘tie’, and by the

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<sup>183</sup> The English collocation *going to V* as in *I’m going to stay in bed all day* is just one example of a free motion verb used with aspectual/modal force and bleached of its former entailment of motion.

intransitive verb *thaangk-nhan* ‘climb-GO&:NPST’ (derived from the intransitive root *thaangk* ‘climb’) in the following example:

- (663) *ball otonyciy mantam-ak thaangk-nhan*  
 ball(NOM) hill small-DAT climb-GO&:NPST  
 ‘the ball goes and climbs the small hill’  
 [LN03/12/02 Moland3]

The first associated motion morpheme has three major functions which can be summarised as follows<sup>184</sup> (with V representing the action described by the verb root to which the associate motion morpheme attaches):

1. **Motion** (*following motion do V*)
2. **Aspectual-inceptive** (*from a state of inaction do V*)
3. **Modal-dynamic** (*willingly do V, or be able to do V*)

The first, ‘motion’ usage is most closely connected to the origins of *-nha-* as a free motion verb. As seen in the following example, the first associated motion morpheme functions in this way to mark an event that occurs following a change in location:

- (664) *ngul raak yiirr waath-nhat*  
 then place other(ACC) search-GO&:P.PFV  
 ‘then they went to find another place’  
 “they walk all the way, till they bin find another place”  
 [AC22/07/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Although we might expect this morpheme also to encode an event that occurs during (rather than following) motion, this is nowhere attested in my corpus. Attempts to elicit an associated motion clause describing an activity that occurs simultaneously with motion, resulted instead in biclausal constructions such as the following:

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<sup>184</sup> My characterisation of these functions borrows heavily from Alpher’s (1973, 1991:51) description of the Yir Yoront associated motion category.

- (665) *pam ith riic-m, nhul paanth nhaawr*  
man(NOM) dem:dist run-P.IPFV 3sg(ERG) woman(ACC)see:P.PFV  
'the man looks at the woman as he's running along'  
[GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

The second function of the first associated motion morpheme is labelled here 'aspectual-inceptive'. The morpheme here focuses attention upon the initiation of the event described by the verb root. Hence (666) was used in the description of one of a series of pictures depicting an apple falling from a tree. In the particular picture described in (666), the apple was in mid-air just below the branch it had been hanging from:

- (666) *may yulu wont-nhan ya-rr-kop*  
VEG apple(NOM) fall-GO&:NPST going-towards-below  
'the apple is starting to fall downwards'  
[Anon. Elicitation AbsoluteTime]

GO& morphology is also found with this aspectual-inceptive function at the beginning of almost every story, as in the following two examples:

- (667) *ngay nhangkun kuthip wana-n-nhan*  
1sg(NOM) 2sgDAT story(ACC) call-V^(-GO&:NPST  
'I'll tell you a story...'  
[GJ25/10/02 Narrative]

- (668) *inhul yik-nhan ngay, nhul minh pinc ii-ø-kuw*  
this.one say-GO&:NPST 1sg(NOM) 3sg(NOM) meat saltie(NOM) there-at-west  
'I'm about to tell this [story, in which] the saltwater crocodile is in the west...'  
[DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

The aspectual-inceptive usage is also seen in examples like (669), in which the first associated motion morpheme focuses our attention on the inception of the event in order to stress the protagonist's surprise at what he saw:

- (669) *next morning ngay rirk-r*  
 next morning 1sg(NOM) rise-P.PFV  
  
*ngay nhaath-nhat punth mark inh*  
 1sg(ERG) see-GO&:P.PFV arm(ACC) mark(ACC) dem:sp.prx  
 ‘the next morning I got up and [suddenly] I saw this mark on my arm’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The final function ascribed to the first associated motion morpheme is termed here ‘modal-dynamic’, and relates to the ability or willingness of the subject participant to perform the action described by the verb root. Specifically, GO& marking (combined with Nonpast tense) here asserts that the subject participant is willing and/or able to perform the particular action. This willingness is expressed in (670), whilst ability is expressed in (671):

- (670) *ngay raak waarr nhaath-nhan,*  
 1sg(ERG) place(ACC) very see-GO&:NPST  
  
*Melbourne raak kar ngan*  
 Melbourne(NOM) place like what  
 ‘[when I was a child] I wanted to see that place, what sort of place Melbourne is’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Story MelbourneTrip]

- (671) *nhurr win-m rirk-nhan waarr!*  
 2pl(NOM) win-V^ DO-GO&:NPST very  
 ‘you go and win [this game, you can do it]!’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Interestingly, this latter function is only attested in portmanteau suffixes encoding the Nonpast tense. This is true even in examples such as (670), in which the event described is located unambiguously in the past. Further, all documented cases of the modal-dynamic usage also contain the particle *waarr* ‘very’. This is particularly

significant given that *waarr* is most likely cognate with the Kugu Nganhcara particle *waya* (which, like *waarr*, also functions as an adjective meaning ‘bad’). As Smith & Johnson (2000:409) note: “the irrealis is used in conjunction with the particle *waya* to mark desideratives”<sup>185</sup>. It is argued in §10.7 that this modal-dynamic function is more properly attributed to a whole desiderative construction (comprising a Nonpast GO& verb plus the particle *waarr* ‘very’), rather than attributing it to Associated Motion marking alone.

Finally, it is worth noting that the free verb *ya-* ‘go’ appears to share this modal-dynamic function. In clauses such as (672), this motion verb (in Nonpast tense) may be used to express a Desiderative liking for or enjoyment of a particular kind of event:

- (672) *ngay ngat-a yan*  
 1sg(NOM) fish-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘I like fishing’  
 [AC10/08/02 Elicitation]

#### 8.1.4.2 *-(nh)ic* ‘RUN&’

The second associated motion morpheme, *-(nh)ic*, derives historically from the free motion verb *riic* ‘run’<sup>186</sup>. Like the first associated motion morpheme, the first segment of the suffix may well reflect erstwhile subjunctive inflection. However, this initial segment is omitted following a root or stem ending in an apical consonant (see, e.g., [673] below). Suffixation of this morpheme derives a verb stem of the first conjugation class, with fully regular tense/aspect/mood inflection. The fact that the

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<sup>185</sup> This association between *waarr* ‘bad’ and the desiderative construction is no doubt mediated by the intensifier function of this form (*waarr* ‘very’). As both Alpher (1972) and Sommer (1978) have observed, there is a recurrent extension of the word meaning ‘bad’ to refer to ‘great abundance’ among the languages of Cape York Peninsula.

<sup>186</sup> This is observed by Hall (1972:126), who notes “it seems likely that the urgency morpheme */(nh)ic/* derives from */(r)iiic/* ‘run’, a verbroot, according to one informant. This is feasible, for with elision of the C1 and then later substitution of the common verb suffix particle */-n-/* after a vowel in verbclasses IV-III, it is explained rationally.”

two associated motion suffixes assign the resultant verb stems to different conjugation classes, is the product of their diachronic origins, in particular the conjugation class of the source verb, rather than signalling any semantico-syntactic distinction (e.g. in valence, which is unaffected by associated motion derivation as noted above).

The second associated motion morpheme is attested with two of the three functions associated with the first associated motion morpheme:

1. **Motion** (*following motion do V*)
2. **Aspectual-inceptive** (*from a state of inaction do V*)

The motion function is evident in (673) and (674), both of which describe an activity that took or should take place following a change in location by the subject participant:

(673) *minh kanharr riica-rr ii-rr-kuw*  
MEAT freshwater.croc(NOM) run-P.PFV there-towards-west  
  
*mun-ica-rr ii-rr-kaw*  
summon-RUN&-P.PFV there-towards-east  
‘the freshwater crocodile went westwards and summoned [the saltwater crocodile] to the east’  
[DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

(674) *nhunt yaarra thowol-nic-ø!*  
2sg(NOM) to:there play-RUN&-IMP  
‘you run away and play!’  
[Hall 1972:126]

The use of an associated motion morpheme with aspectual-inceptive function in order to express surprise or the suddenness of an event was noted above for GO&. This can also be seen in examples like the following:

(659') *ngul yuparr kaar=p kuta pam.thaawaarra kana thongk-ica-rr*  
 then later NEG=PRAG dog cheeky(NOM) finish arrive-RUN&-P.PFV  
 'and no later [than he said that] the cheeky dog arrived'  
 [Foote: Kuta Woochorrm]

The contrast between the first and second associated motion morphemes is not immediately obvious. It seems that RUN& is more frequently used with the motion sense than GO&, while the first associated motion morpheme is more frequently used with the aspectual-inceptive sense than the second. We might also expect there to be some emphasis on speed of motion given that this is the primary dimension of contrast between the two free verbs from which these morphemes grammaticalised. However, there is no clear proof that such a speed-based contrast exists. The only piece of evidence suggesting that this might be the case, is the tendency for the second associated motion morpheme to coincide with the free verb *riic* 'run' — and the first associated motion morpheme with the free verb *ya-* 'go' — in tightly linked clauses (e.g. [673] above). The categorical boundary between the respective functional ranges of these two morphemes warrants further investigation.

### 8.1.5 Subordinate

The subordinate suffix, *-marr* (~*-namarr*), is attested only in earlier recordings of the Thaayorre language (e.g. Hall 1972) and does not feature in my data. For this reason, my discussion of subordinate verbs will be brief and somewhat speculative. The functions of the subordinate clauses marked by *-marr* are discussed in more detail in §10.1.1.1.

Hall (1972:193) labels *-marr* 'visible contemporaneous' due to its commonly heading the complement clause of a perception verb, as in (675):

(675) *ngay pam ith nhaawr ngat kal-marr*  
 1sg(ERG) man(ACC) dem:dist see:P.PFV fish(ACC) carry-SBD  
 'I saw those men carrying fish'  
 [Hall 1972:125]



It is thus reasonable to assume that *-marr* marks the event of ‘carrying’ as occurring at the same time as (i.e. ‘contemporaneous’ with) the viewing event, and within the sights of the subject of the matrix clause (*ngay* ‘I’). However, I have chosen to eschew this label in favour of the more general ‘subordinate’ since these conditions of simultaneity and visibility often seem irrelevant to the event being encoded. In (676) it is not necessary for Jesus to be seen for it to be true that he was handcuffed when sent to Caiaphas.

(676) *Annas-an nhunh Jesus punth kath-marr muth.wunp-arr*  
 Annas-ERG 3sg(ACC) Jesus(ACC) arm(ACC) bind-SBD send-P.PFV

*nhangun Caiaphas-ak*

3sgDAT Caiaphas-DAT

‘Annas sent Jesus handcuffed to Caiaphas’

[Foote and Hall 1992]

In (677), too, the subordinator *-marr* appears to simply mark the verb as head of a subordinate clause.

(677) *nhul ya<a>n yungar-namarr*  
 3sg(NOM) go<RDP>:NPST swim-SBD

‘he will go swimming’

[Hall 1972:147]

### **8.1.6 Verbalisation and nominalisation**

There are three ways to create a verb stem from a nominal root in Kuuk Thaayorre: (1) suffixation of the verbaliser *-m*; (2) suffixation of the valence increaser *-n(i)*; (3) zero derivation. Since the first and the third of these strategies are also employed to derive nominal stems from verbal roots, it is most parsimonious to discuss these two processes — of verbalisation on the one hand and nominalisation on the other — in the same section.

The first way to create a verb stem from a nominal root is suffixation of *-m*, glossed here ‘VerBaliseR’. For example, the verb stem *ngeengkm* ‘love’ is derived from the noun root *ngeengk* ‘belly’. This morpheme can attach not only to a simplex, monomorphemic root, but also to compounds, as in *kaal-purng-m* (lit. ‘ear-blocked-VBLZ’) ‘forget’<sup>187</sup>. Significantly, this is the only Thaayorre derivational morpheme that appears to create verb stems belonging to both of the major conjugation classes. Hence, as noted in §7.1.3, the suffix *-r* signifies present tense following the verbaliser suffix in the second line of (528) (indicating a derived first conjugation stem), but past perfective in (529) (indicating that the derived stem is second conjugation):

(678) *ngay ulp net kaar drag-m*<sup>188</sup> *rirk-ø*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:adr.prx net(ACC) NEG drag-TR DO-NPST

*ii-ø-kuw rump-un*  
 there-at-west beach-DAT  
 ‘I don’t drag net down on the beach’

*kar ngay minh ulp pin<in>ir-m-r*  
 like 1sg(ERG) MEAT(ACC) dem:adr.prx dream<RDP>-VBLZ-NPST  
 ‘because I imagine/think about those crocodiles’  
 [GJ3/02/04 Conversation]

(679) *ngay piinthawaarr-m-r ngay nhangknma*  
 1sg(NOM) tired-VBLZ-P.PFV 1sg(NOM) 2sgABL  
 ‘I wearied of you’  
 [Hall 1972:138]

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<sup>187</sup> The Kuuk Thaayorre predicate *kaal-purng-m* (ear-blocked-VBLZ) ‘forget’ is strikingly similar in semantics and etymology to the ‘forget’ verbs of dozens of Australian languages, not least Yir Yoront *pin=porng+vm* (ear=stopped.up+m) ‘forget’ (Alpher 1991:724).

<sup>188</sup> Note that this exponent of *-m* has a different function to the verbalisation at issue here.

The assignation of *-m*-derived stems to conjugation classes seems to correlate with valency; with those (like *pinirm* ‘dream’) assigned to the first conjugation class being bivalent, and those (like *piinthawaarrm* ‘tire’) assigned to the second being monovalent. This is not born out by first conjugation morphology of the monovalent *waarrm* ‘go bad’ in (680), however.

(680)

1. [‘i gotta cleanm rirkm straight out, otherwise ‘i might get, you know’]  
[‘you’ve got to clean them straight away, otherwise they might, you know’]
  
2. *yup waarr-m-r*  
soon bad-VBLZ-NPST  
‘[they] will go bad’  
[ME04/06/05 Narrative/Conversation Yencr]

The vast majority of verb stems derived through this process involve nominal roots referring to parts of the body. The semantic relationships between nominal roots and derived verb stems vary in their transparency. Whilst the event of tiring (described by *piinthawaarrm* ‘tire’) is obviously connected to the characteristic of being *piinthawaarr* ‘tired’, the connection between the belly and love (lexicalised in *ngeengkm* ‘love, lit. belly-VBLZ’) or a blocked ear and forgetting (lexicalised in *kaal-purng-m* ‘forget, lit. ear-blocked-VBLZ’) is based in conventionalised metaphor. It is unclear whether the derivation of verbs by the verbaliser morpheme remains a productive process, and whether this process would be compositional. Certainly, there are numerous cases where the verbaliser morpheme appears to be fused in synchronically monomorphemic lexemes. Take, for example, the predicate adjectives *walmeerem* ‘know’ and *pamngongkom* ‘be ignorant of’. The former can be decomposed into two person part nouns (*wal* ‘forehead’ and *meer* ‘eye’) plus the verbaliser *-m*. However, the product of their combination is not an inflectable verb stem, nor is the derived meaning ‘know’ compositional. In the case of *pamngongkom*

‘be ignorant of’, there is no corresponding noun *ngongk(o)*<sup>189</sup>, though Kugu Nganhcara *ngonggolo* ‘ignorant’ is likely cognate. A further quirk is the apparent use of this suffix to derive the adverb *porprm* ‘excessively’ from the adjective *porpr* ‘soft’.

The verbaliser morpheme itself has cognate forms in neighbouring Yir Yoront and Kugu Nganhcara. In Yir Yoront, “the derivative suffix \*-m ... forms a verb of the L[dental] conjugation” (Alpher 1973:241), whilst the Kugu Nganhcara patrilects possess an ‘intransitive’ morpheme *-ma*, that both appears on (already) intransitive verbs and creates intransitive verbs from adjectives.

The coincidental homophony of the Thaayorre verbaliser *-m* and the common Kriol transitive verb suffix *-(i)m* poses a certain analytical problem. It is difficult to decide to which of these should be attributed the suffix that attaches to the English loan verbs that combine with the light verb *rirk* ‘DO’ in collocations such as the following:

(528') *ngay ulp net kaar drag-m rirk, ikuw rump-un*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:adr.prx net(ACC) NEG drag-? DO:NPST at:west beach-DAT  
 ‘I don’t drag net down on the beach’  
 [GJ3/02/04 Conversation]

Indeed, the fortuitous confluence of these two forms may have itself facilitated the incorporation of numerous English loan verbs into the Thaayorre lexicon. However, the fact that the morpheme *-m* is not suffixed to intransitive English loan verbs (e.g. in [681] and [682]) suggests that the suffix *-m* in (528) is a different morpheme to that in, e.g., (529) above.

(681) *peln glad rirk-r*  
 3pl(NOM) glad DO-P.PFV  
 ‘they were glad’ [or: they expressed being glad, e.g. by cheering]  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

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<sup>189</sup> The first element, *pam*, is a noun meaning ‘man’, but may be used here in its apprehensive sense, expressing a state or event that would best be avoided.

- (682) *minh ulp peln breedup rirk-r*  
 meat(NOM)dem:adr.prx 3pl(NOM) breed.up DO-P.PFV  
 ‘those [crocodiles] bred up (i.e. multiplied)’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

For this reason, I posit a second morpheme *-m* ‘transitive verbaliser’ which attaches only to transitive English loan verbs (which then combine with the light verb *rirk* ‘DO’ to form an inflecting verbal complex, see §8.1.7 below).

As flagged above, the form *-m* may also derive a nominal stem from a verbal root. Because the derivational processes of verbalisation and nominalisation are clearly distinct, I view the two morphemes as homophonous, glossing the nominaliser *-m* ‘NMLZ’. The most frequently encountered example of nominalisation is the noun *yuur-kath-m* (hand-bind-NMLZ) ‘policeman’. Apart from this one noun, nominalisation via the nominaliser is rare, tending to involve a whole phrase rather than a simple verb root. So whilst the nominaliser is suffixed only to the verb *thak* ‘leave’ in (683) below, the noun it forms must be considered phrasal (i.e. *raak rirkr thak-m* [THING money leave- NMLZ] ‘treasury [i.e. the place money is left]’).

- (683) *nhul wun pormpr ranth raak rirkir thak-m-an*  
 3sg(NOM) live:NPST house hole THING money leave-NMLZ-DAT

*raak yuur mong-on*  
 time hand many-DAT  
 ‘he stays in the treasury room for ages and ages’  
 [Hall 1972:74]

Note that the Locative case suffix (which only attaches to nominal stems) is attached to the derived stem *thakm*. This shows that *thakm* is the final element of the larger noun phrase *pormpr ranth raak rirkr thakman* ‘(in the) treasury room’ (see §6 for discussion of the internal structure of noun phrases). This is a complex noun phrase with the following hierarchical structure:

NP 'treasury room'				
N'' 'room'		N'' 'treasury'		
N' 'room'		N' 'money'	AdjP 'left'	
pormpr N <sub>GEN</sub> 'house'	ranth N <sub>SPEC</sub> 'hole'	raak N <sub>GEN</sub> 'thing'	rirkr N <sub>SPEC</sub> 'shell'	thakm Adj 'left.thing'

Table 69. Syntactic structure of *pormpr ranth raak rirkir thak-m-an* 'treasury room'.

To recapitulate the rules given in §6, the noun phrase here is composed of two N'', which form an expression analogous to an English nominal compound. The first N'' is composed of a simple classifying construction (N'), while the second is composed of a classifying construction plus adjective phrase. The relevant (abbreviated) phrase structure rules are repeated from §6 here:

- (684) NP → N'' (N'') (Dem)  
 N'' → N' (AdjP) \* (PosPro) (Quant) (DemPro) (Ign)  
 N' → (N<sub>GEN</sub>) (N<sub>SPEC</sub>)  
 AdjP → (Deg) Adj (Deg)

Both verbalisation and nominalisation may be achieved through zero-derivation, an extremely unusual feature for an Australian language (Dixon 1980). Indeed, given the lack of overt marking of this process, it is often difficult to ascertain whether the noun or verb is the underlying, or historically prior, form. Take for example the couplet *piinth* 'bone' and *piinth-* 'grow'. The single root form, *piinth*, may take all the case inflections of a nominal, and functions in clauses as any other nominal constituent (as seen in [231]). But at the same time, *piinth* may take all verbal inflectional and derivational suffixes, and in all other respects behaves as a normal verb (as seen in [686]).

(685) *kuta ngathn-thrr piinth mungk-m*  
 dog 1sgPOS-ERG bone(ACC) eat-P.IPFV  
 ‘my dog’s chewing a bone’  
 [LN4/8/02 Elicitation]

(686) *may mular kana piinthi-rr*  
 VEG yam(NOM) CMPL grow- P.IPFV  
 ‘the yam has grown [big]’  
 [AJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

Comparison with Yir Yoront *pey* ‘grow’ (Alpher 1991) suggests that the verbal sense of *piinth* may be historically prior. Other than this, though, there seems to be no reason to privilege one sense over the other. Indeed, it may be that the two words are synchronically homophonous, rather than related via zero-derivation. In either case, an analogous (zero-marked or non-marked) nominalisation of an entire clause is evident in the following example, taken from the work of Hall (1972):

(687) *pam yangkar-(r)int=(nh)ul-thrr nhinh nhaawr*  
 man leg-burn=3sg(ERG)-ERG 2sgACC see:P.PFV  
 ‘the crippled man saw you’  
 [Hall 1972:74]

Finally, new verbs may be created by the suffixation of the Valence increaser to a nominal root. For example, the ditransitive verb *meeren* ‘show’ is both formally and semantically related to the person part noun *meer* ‘eye’. Similarly *pak* ‘grave’ > *pakun-* ‘bury’. It is presently unclear whether this process remains productive. Every neologism of this kind that I proposed to my consultants (e.g. *\*kuthirran* ‘halve’ < *kuthirr* ‘half’) was rejected.

## 8.2 Complex predicates

### 8.2.1 The light verb *rirk* ‘DO’

The integration of any English loan verb into Kuuk Thaayorre involves the ‘light verb’<sup>190</sup> *rirk* ‘DO’. (528) — partially repeated below — gives just one example of a complex verb composed of a non-inflecting English loan plus this inflecting light verb:

- (528') *ngay ulp net kaar drag-m rirk-ø, ikuw rump-un*  
 1sg(ERG) dem:adr.prx net(ACC) NEG drag-TR DO-NPST at:west beach-DAT  
 ‘I don’t drag net down on the beach’  
 [GJ3/02/04 Conversation]

Before detailing its role facilitating the introduction of loan verbs to the Thaayorre vocabulary, it is worth briefly tracing the history of this light verb form. As a free verb, *rirk* ‘rise’ is an intransitive predicate that describes a change in posture, as can be seen in the following example:

- (688) *kuta kana rirk-r. Kanpa wut wun-m*  
 dog(NOM) CMP rise-P.PFV before asleep lie-P.IPFV  
 ‘The dog’s got up. It was sleeping before’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

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<sup>190</sup> The word class termed *light verb* (Grimshaw & Mester 1988, Butt & Geuder 2001) varies enormously across languages (compare, for example, English [Brugman 1988], Japanese [Grimshaw and Mester 1988], Chinese [Butt & Gueder 2001], Bardi [Bowern 2004]), but in all cases refers to a class of verbs that are in some sense ‘lexically weak’ or semantically deficient. This term is attractive in the description of Thaayorre *rirk* both because it specifies the semantic broadness of this lexeme, and because it does not specify anything further. Labels more commonly employed in the Australian context (e.g. *generic verb* [Jaminjung, Schultze-Berndt 2000], *inflecting verb* [Wagiman, Wilson 1999 and Mawng, Singer In prep], *finite verb* [Ngan’gityemerri, Reid 2000], *verb* [Ngalakgan, Baker 1999] and *auxiliary* [Warlpiri, Simpson 1991]) tend to describe more complex and well-developed systems, usually involving a number of verb forms that may be used contrastively as part of a paradigmatic set.



This same form may combine with Thaayorre nouns to produce a complex verb, e.g. *mit rirk* ‘work’ in the following example:

- (689) *ngal muth-wiitl mit rirk-m*  
 1du:incl(NOM) neck-jointly work DO-P.IPFV  
 ‘we were working together’  
 [LN27/01/04 Elicitation]

Although *rirk* seems quite clearly to be operating with its more grammaticalised (semantically-bleached) sense of ‘DO’ in (690), in the other common collocation — *pancr rirk* ‘be shame’ — a second analysis is possible; *pancr* ‘body hair’ might be apposed in Nominative case to the subject argument in a Part-Whole construction (with a meaning something like ‘X’s body hair rises’). The two analyses can be represented as follows:

- (690) *ngay pancr rirk-m=ay*  
 1sg(NOM) body.hair(NOM) rise-P.IPFV=1sg(NOM)  
 or: 1sg(NOM) body.hair DO-P.IPFV=1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I was shame<sup>191</sup>’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

In addition to these Thaayorre noun – verb pairings, it is possible to pair an English noun or adjective with *rirk* ‘DO’ in order to produce a complex Thaayorre verb. The construction produced sometimes has an inchoative interpretation (as in [691]), but need not. *Rirk* is not used to produce inchoative predicates from Thaayorre adjectives, nor does it have an inchoative interpretation when combined with most English loans (e.g. [692]):

- (691) *drunk rirk-r ngul ngay Lubis thanpa-rr*  
 drunk DO-P.PFV then 1sg(ERG) Louis(ACC) hit-P.PFV  
 ‘I got drunk and punched Lewis’  
 [Anon. 03/02/04 Conversation]

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<sup>191</sup> In Aboriginal English the adjective *shame* refers to an unpleasant feeling associated with shyness or embarrassment (cf. Harkins 1990).

- (692) *Celebration rirk-r nhangun, birthday.of.Christ nhangun*  
 celebrationDO-P.PFV 3sgDAT birthday.of.Christ 3sgDAT  
 ‘we celebrated for him, for the birthday of Christ’  
 [GJ18/01/04 ChristmasStory]

As well as combining with loan adjectives and nouns, all English verbs borrowed into Kuuk Thaayorre must combine with the light verb, which carries all verbal inflection. The valence of the complex predicate as a whole is determined entirely by the loan verb, which is marked by *-m* if transitive (694) and unmarked if intransitive (693):

- (693) *ngay mincngul knock.off rirk-∅, three.o'clock*  
 1sg(NOM) afternoon knock.off DO-NPST three.o'clock  
 ‘I knock off in the afternoon, at three o'clock’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

- (694) *peep ngancin drag-m rirk-m*  
 net(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) drag-TR DO-P.IPFV  
 ‘we were dragging nets’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

It is unsurprising that English loan verbs obligatorily enter into this complex predicate structure, given Dixon’s (2002:210) observation that:

*loans from English are almost always (or always?) taken into Australian languages as free forms. This means that English verbs are borrowed in the form of nouns or adjectives, which must then be verbalised in order to function as verbs.*

Since the Thaayorre verbalising suffix *-m* (§8.1.6) is only marginally productive, English loans are unable to function as full verbs in and of themselves. The relevant verbal inflections must therefore be hosted by the light verb, *rirk*. The loan verb + *rirk* may in fact form a single lexical unit (through either compounding or the

suffixation of [-]*rirk*), which would indicate *rirk*'s grammaticalisation into a new (loan-)verbalising suffix. This stands in contradistinction to the combination of *rirk* and native Thaayorre nominals, which are commonly separated by modal operators (such as *kaar* 'NEG' in [695]) and may be inverted in pragmatically marked or emphatic contexts (as in [696]):

(695) *nhunt yoorr mit kaar rirk-ø?*  
 2sg(NOM) today work NEG DO-NPST  
 'do you want to do some work today?'  
 [LN8/9/02 Elicitation]

(696) *kaar rirk-m ngay mit*  
 NEG DO-P.IPFV 1sg(NOM) work  
 'I wasn't able to work'  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The ordering of English loan 'preverb' + *rirk*, on the other hand, is never inverted in my data, nor do I find examples of the two being separated by other words. Notably, *kaar* 'NEGATIVE' — which almost always appears immediately preceding the predicate — always precedes the English loan verb (as in [528] above). Further, in many recorded utterances, the English loan + *rirk* appear to form a single phonological unit. Nevertheless, in other utterances the two are articulated distinctly. Hence I shall continue to transcribe the complex verbs as bipartite expressions whilst noting the likelihood that *rirk* will develop into a derivational loan verb suffix in future varieties of Kuuk Thaayorre.

The bleached semantics of *rirk* 'DO' correspond closely to the operator "DO" in many syntactic theories (cf. Jackendoff 1976, Foley and Van Valin 1980). If we alternatively cast *rirk* as an auxiliary, rather than light verb, Capell's (1976:615) observation holds equally well, that "auxiliaries are catalytic in nature. They add nothing to the clarity of the action, but serve to link a possibly non-verbal base with actor, time and other circumstances". Identifying the head of this construction poses considerably more difficulty, however. On the one hand, it is the loan preverb that

determines theta-role assignment and the transitivity of the clause. On the other hand, it is the inflecting light verb that encodes clausal aspect.

### 8.3 Person part noun + verb compounds

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses a large number of verbal compounds composed of (at least one) person part noun followed by an inflecting verb root (as seen in [697] below). The compounding of the two morphemes (as opposed to simple juxtaposition) is suggested by the frequent phonological reduction of the person part term (hereafter PPT), and its restriction to the immediately pre-verbal position (discussed further below). The meaning of the compound usually (but not always) differs from that of the verb root. The process of deriving such compounds does not appear to affect valency, which is determined by that of the verb root. Conjugation membership is also determined by this verb root (or any following derivational affixes), as would be expected of the final morpheme of the verb stem.

- (697) *bottle*      *table-ak*    *thaa+raaki-rr*  
bottle(ACC) table-DAT mouth+PLACE-P.PFV  
'she put the bottle on the table'  
[GJ20/11/02 Elicitation CausedPositions20]

Only a limited number of person parts have been attested in verbal compounds so far (viz: *koo(w)* 'nose', *thaa(w)* 'mouth', *man* 'throat', *muth* 'back of neck', *yuur* 'hand', *meer* 'eye', *mut* 'back', and *pungk* 'knee'), but there is no reason *prima facie* to assume that these form a closed subset of person part terms.

The derived semantics of person part + verb compounds fall into four main categories:

1. the person part represents the Instrument or theme involved in the event;
2. a feature of the event (particularly a result state) in some way resembles the person part;

3. the semantic contribution of the person part noun is unclear, with the semantics of the compound very similar to that of the verb root; or
4. the derived semantics of the compound are non-compositional, reflecting the semantics of neither person part nor verb root directly.

Each of these four categories will be discussed in turn.

### **8.3.1 Person part = Instrument or theme**

Complex stems in which the person part noun represents an Instrument often involve only a slight refinement of the verb's meaning. The verb *mungk-* 'eat, drink', for example, is disambiguated by compounding with *thaa* 'mouth'; meaning only 'eat'. Compounding *wan* 'tell, name' with the person part *yuur* 'hand' specifies that a referent is indexed or communicated by being 'pointed out' rather than through language. The verb *thaa-punyc* 'kiss' is formed by compounding the verb *punyc* 'suck' with the active person part *thaa(w)* 'mouth'. Note that the semantics of this compound verb are not strictly compositional since sucking always involves the mouth (as does drinking, above), and *thaa-punyc* 'kiss' may describe kissing someone on the cheek or elsewhere, hence *thaa(w)* 'mouth' refers to the Instrument rather than the Undergoer of the event. That *thaa-punyc* 'mouth-suck' refers specifically to kiss, then, is purely conventional. This semantic derivation by convention, rather than composition, is common to almost all Thaayorre person part + verb compounds.

Further examples of compounds in which the PPT represents an Instrument or theme are given in Table 70. The first column gives the Thaayorre predicate (and, where the translation relies upon them, core arguments), the second column gives a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, and the third an English translation / approximate. Where a form does not occur in isolation, it appears in the gloss in capitals.

No	Complex verb	Gloss	English translation
1	<i>koo-mi'i</i>	nose-pick.up	recognise (someone's face)
2	<i>koo-munth</i>	nose-sink	wash.face

3	<i>koo-than</i>	nose-stand	sneeze
4	<i>kuuk man-kerp</i>	word throat-finish	BE.dumb
5	<i>meer-maak</i>	eye-tread <sup>192</sup>	blind (somebody)
6	<i>meer-munth</i>	eye-sink	blink
7	<i>meer-nhaath</i>	eye-see	stare
8	<i>mut-maak</i>	back-tread	lie somebody down
9	<i>mut-rirk</i>	back-rise	get.out.of.bed, hunt
10	<i>pungk-therk</i>	knee-return	“right round sit down”
11	<i>thaa-mungk</i>	mouth-consume	eat
12	<i>thaa-munth</i>	mouth-sink	drown
13	<i>thaa-paj</i>	mouth-complain	argue
14	<i>thaa-pirr-</i>	mouth-strip	reply
15	<i>thaa-punyc</i>	mouth-suck	kiss
16	<i>thaa-ratpr</i>	mouth-RATP	fan.fire
17	<i>thaa-theepr</i>	mouth-defecate	spit
18	<i>thaa-whistle-thunp</i>	mouth-whistle- throw	whistle
19	<i>yuur-(koo)-wan</i>	hand-(nose)-tell	point out

Table 70. Some complex verbs in which the PPT represents an Instrument or Theme.

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<sup>192</sup> The verb *maak*, glossed here as ‘tread’, may also mean ‘trample’, and is commonly used to describe the process of feeling for things (e.g. freshwater mussels) with one’s feet. In light of the compound *mut-maak* (back-tread) ‘lie somebody down’, it may mean something more like ‘press against the ground’.

Although the person part seems to represent the Instrument in lines 3, 10, 14 and 16, the semantic contribution of the verb is unclear. The verb *pirr* ‘strip, peel’ (in *thaa-pirr* ‘reply’), for instance, typically describes removing the skin from fruit or the bark from a tree, and seems to have little to do with the communicative act of replying. In cases such as 1, 2, 5 and 8, the body seems involved in the event more as a theme or Undergoer than an Instrument. In 1, for instance, recognising a person has more to do with the face of the person recognised than the face of the person doing the recognising (apart from their eyes, the active person part). Note here, too, that *koo-mi’i* ‘recognise’ may well have been lexicalised at an earlier point in the language’s development at which time *koow* (synchronically, ‘nose’) instead referred to the upper face. That ‘upper face’ may have been the original meaning of *koow*, which has subsequently undergone semantic narrowing, is suggested by the neighbouring Kugu Nganhcara form *kaa* ‘upper face’ (Smith and Johnson 2000:445; cf. Gaby 2006) as well as reflexes of Proto-Pama-Nyungan \*ku(:)wu (Alpher p.c.), from which Thaayorre *koow* derives, such as Bidyara *guwu* ‘nose, face’ and Guwa *kuwu* ‘forehead, face’.

### 8.3.2 Feature of person part = feature of event / result state

There are two key semantic patterns in this category. One is for the morpheme *thaa* ‘mouth’ to be compounded with an extended sense of ‘hole, gap’, describing a hole or gap that appears as the result of the activity described by the complex predicate as a whole (i.e. opening, in the case of *thaa-raw*, or tearing in the case of *thaa-riic*):

Complex verb	Gloss	English translation
1. <i>koo-thak</i>	nose-leave	attack
2. <i>man-wewerngkr</i>	throat-middle:RDP	stare (downwards)
3. <i>thaa-raw-</i>	mouth-dig	open (e.g. a door, a pen)
4. <i>thaa-riic-</i>	mouth-go.fast	tear, crack (e.g. of material)
5. <i>yuur-koo-wan</i>	hand-nose-tell;name	point out

Table 71. Some complex verbs in which a feature of the PPT represents a feature of the event.

The second semantic subclass involves person parts associated with the orientation or direction of the action, namely *koo* ‘nose’ and *man* ‘throat’. This is a somewhat hazy definition based on the assumption that the nose — due to its protrusion from the front of the face — is associated with activities directed outward along the body’s sagittal axis (e.g. attacking and pointing in lines 1 and 5). Note that this last example, *yuur-koo-wan* (hand-nose-tell) ‘point out’ combines two levels of compounding. Firstly, *koo(w)* ‘nose’ is compounded with the verb *wan* (used to describe a range of event types, including the recounting of tales and naming a person or thing) to provide the directionality of the event (extending outwards from the body). This is subsequently compounded with the PPT *yuur* ‘hand’, which provides the Instrumental person part involved in the event (the person or thing is pointed out by the hand).

The throat — due to its location at the front of the body, and association with the chest (Gaby 2006) — is associated with the activity of ‘staring downwards’ (in line 2), which extends outwards and downwards from the eye origin.

### 8.3.3 Contribution of person part unclear

There is not always a clear change in semantics as a result of PPT + verb root compounding. The PPT *thaa* ‘mouth’, for example, appears to contribute little to the predicate *thaa-ranc* ‘jump’ (lit. ‘mouth-jump’) in the following example:

- (698) *minh kothon kana=thp ke'e-rr thaa-ranci-rr=p*  
 meat wallaby(NOM) finish=PRAG spear-P.PFV mouth-jump-P.PFV=PRAG  
 ‘this wallaby here really got speared and jumped’  
 [Hall 1972:140]

In this example and the following, only the analysis of a very large corpus will illuminate precisely how these verbal compounds differ in sense and distribution from the underived verb root since the speakers consulted have not been aware of a substantive difference in meaning.



- (699) *parr\_r ii koo-thaka-rr*  
 child(ACC) there nose-leave-P.PFV  
 ‘that kid got left behind’  
 [GJ28/10/02 Elicitation]
- (700) *referri-n thaa-thunp-r*  
 referree-ERG mouth-throw-NPST  
 ‘the referree is shoving [the man] along’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents80]

Sometimes the semantics of the compound verb stem differs more or less subtly from that of the verb root, yet it is far from clear that this difference is attributable to the person part. So, for example, the verb *thaa-riinth-* ‘scratch’ is formed by compounding *thaa(w)* ‘mouth’ with the verb root *riinth* ‘squeeze’. In some such cases, we may guess at the contribution of the PPT’s being due to underlying cultural conceptualisations (e.g. the ‘throat’ being somehow connected to the intellect, or the absence of hard evidence, in *man-ngeey-man* [throat-hear,understand-MAN] ‘guess’), however in the absence of corroborating evidence or native speaker intuitions, such speculation is fruitless and avoided here. Indeed, there seems to be a continuum of verbal compounds from the highly transparent to the totally opaque.

### **8.3.4 Meaning non-compositional**

In the vast majority of PPT + verb root compounds, there is no straightforward relationship between the meaning of the compound as a whole and those of its components. So the event of helping somebody seems to have little to do with noses or growing, yet the verbal compound *koo-piinth* ‘help’ is formed by compounding *koo(w)* ‘nose’ with the verb root *piinth* ‘grow’ (homophonous with the PPT *piinth* ‘bone’). Further examples of non-compositional complex predicates are presented in Table 72.

	<b>Complex verb</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>English translation</b>
1.	<i>muth-wunp</i>	back.of.neck-put	‘send (someone, somewhere)’
2.	<i>man-ke’e</i>	throat-spear	‘owe’
3.	<i>meer-thiik</i>	eye-break	‘pretend; copy’
4.	<i>koo-rok-</i>	nose-enter	‘hide’
5.	<i>thaa-raak</i>	mouth-place	‘stand (something) up’

Table 72. Some semantically non-compositional complex verbs.

Note that *raak* ‘place’ in the fifth line is a generic noun, not a verb root. It seems that it has undergone verbalisation via zero-derivation in this compound (giving rise to a noun-verb alternation much like the English ambiguous lexeme *place*). The form *raak* alone nowhere functions as a verb, however. Nevertheless, the verbal status of this form is attested in the somewhat different collocation *kiina raak* (tooth:ERG place) ‘swear’, as in the following example:

(701) *nhunt nganh kiin-a raak-r*  
 2sg(ERG) 1sgACC tooth-ERG place-NPST  
 ‘you’re swearing at me’  
 [LN14/08/02 Elicitation]

### 8.3.4 Related functions of person part terms

A closely related phenomenon to the compounding of person part terms and verb roots is the formation of phrasal verbs in which a phonologically independent (often case-marked) person part term is preposed to an inflected verb. *Kiina raak* (tooth:ERG place) ‘swear’ (mentioned above) is one such phrasal verb. Like verbal compounds, the semantics of these phrasal verbs tend to differ significantly from those of the verb roots they contain. Also like those in verbal compounds, the semantic contribution of the person part term involved may be either transparent (e.g. representing an Instrument, as in [702]) or opaque (as in [703]):

(702) *pul meer-e nhaa<nha>th-rr*  
 3du(NOM) eye-ERG see<RDP>-RCP  
 ‘they’re staring at each other’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

(703) *piinth-thaaw thee<the>rk-e*  
 bone-mouth return<RDP>-RFL  
 ‘[he’s] stretching’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents123]

PPTs also combine with non-verbal lexical roots in somewhat similar ways to the cases described above. For example, there are an enormous number of nominal compounds involving person parts as their first element (e.g. *meer-ngok* [eye-water] ‘tears’, in which the PPT *meer* ‘eye’ represents the Source of the compound referent). PPTs are also commonly prefixed to spatial adverbs, as in the following example:

(704) *ngul nheman=p meer-ii-rr-kan ngancin thowol-nam*  
 then from.there-PRAG eye-there-towards-up 1pl:excl(NOM) play-P.IPFV  
 “from then, we were playing as high up as the sky”  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]



## Chapter Nine: Syntax of the simple clause

The Thaayorre clause consists minimally of a predicating constituent and (unless elided) the core arguments it subcategorises for. The predicating constituent can be a verb, adjective, noun, demonstrative pronoun or locational adverb/particle. Core arguments take the form of noun phrases (i.e. whether pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, ignoratives, or some combination of noun and nominal modifiers; cf. §6.5), and are marked for the case assigned by the predicate. The frequent ellipsis of all clausal constituents renders both adjuncts and subcategorised-for arguments ‘optional’. Accordingly, the distinction between transitive, intransitive and other clause types is made in Kuuk Thaayorre on the basis of potential rather than actual syntactic configurations. Namely, a clause is considered intransitive if it cannot include an accusative-case argument<sup>193</sup>, transitive if it can include one and only one accusative-case argument and ditransitive if it can include two. Criteria for identifying intermediate levels of transitivity (e.g. semitransitive clauses) are discussed in the relevant subsections.

This chapter is organised according to both structural and functional characteristics of clause types. Clauses are structurally distinguished primarily according to predicate type (and valency thereof). Verb-headed clauses are hence grouped together in §9.1, including a discussion of clauses headed by quasitransitive predicate adjectives in §9.1.4. Locative, copula and existential clauses are considered separately in §9.2. These clause types share a number of key formal and functional features, and in all three the inclusion of a locative/copula/existential verb is optional.

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<sup>193</sup> Since the accusative case is unmarked for nomina (along with the nominative case), the optional inclusion of accusative pronouns in the clause is a frequently-used diagnostic for transitivity. This heuristic is made problematic, however, by the fact that pronouns may only rarely encode inanimate entities. It is

## 9.1 Verbal clauses

Table 73 (modified from Table 19 above) gives an overview of the subclasses of verb that may head the Thaayorre simple clause, along with their subcategorisation frame and two examples. The verbal clauses are named for the subclass of verb that heads them (thus an intransitive clause is headed by an intransitive verb, and so on).

Valence	Verbal subclass and Subcategorisation frame	Sample verbs {with sample objects}
<b>Monovalent</b>	<b>Intransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>rip</i> ‘enter’ <i>thangkar</i> ‘laugh’
<b>Bivalent</b>	<b>Intransitive copula</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Subj-COMP <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>nhiin</i> ‘sit; be’ <i>yomparr</i> ‘transform’
	<b>Semitransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , I.Obj <sub>DAT</sub> >	<i>koope</i> ‘wait for’ <i>ngee</i> ‘listen to’
	<b>Quasitransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>paarr</i> { <i>meerngok</i> } ‘cry {tears}’ <i>rok</i> { <i>mimp</i> } ‘put on {clothes}’
	<b>Transitive</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>kal</i> { <i>yuk</i> } ‘carry {something}’ <i>matp</i> { <i>yuk</i> } ‘smash {something}’
<b>Trivalent</b>	<b>Transitive copula</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , Obj-COMP <sub>NOM</sub> >	<i>wan</i> { <i>yuk</i> , <i>ngan</i> } ‘name {something, something}’
	<b>Semiditransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>NOM</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , I.Obj <sub>DAT</sub> >	<i>yik</i> { <i>kuuk</i> , <i>wanhngun</i> } ‘say {words, to somebody}’ <i>waantharr</i> { <i>kuuk</i> , <i>wanhngun</i> } ‘call out {words, to somebody}’
	<b>Ditransitive</b> <Sbj <sub>ERG</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> , Obj <sub>ACC</sub> >	<i>reek</i> { <i>wanh</i> , <i>yuk</i> } ‘give {somebody, something}’ <i>wan</i> ‘tell {somebody, on somebody}’

Table 73. Verbal subclasses and subcategorisation frames.

As Table 73 shows, verb-headed clauses span a range of levels of transitivity. The poles of this cline are easily identified, with intransitive verbal clauses headed by monovalent verbs that subcategorise for only a single, nominative-case argument (exemplified by [705]). At the other end of the cline, ditransitive clauses are headed by trivalent verbs that subcategorise for three arguments; an ergative-case subject and two accusative-case objects (exemplified by [706]).

(705) *pam thuump thangkar-ø porprm*  
man old(NOM) laugh-NPST excessively  
'the old man laughs too much!'  
[LN08/9/02 Conversation]

(706) *ngay kuta ngathn piinth reeka-rr mungk-nhatha*  
1sg(ERG) dog 1sgPOS(ACC) bone(ACC) give-P.PFV eat-PURP  
'I gave my dog a bone to eat'  
[LN04/8/02 Elicitation]

It is frequently difficult to assign verbs and clauses to the subcategories that fall between these two poles, however. To begin with, it can be difficult to identify whether a dative-marked noun phrase has been subcategorised for by a semitransitive verb, or whether it simply represents a dative adjunct to an intransitive verb. This issue is explored in detail in the discussion of semitransitive verbs (§9.1.3). The class of cognate object verbs is also problematic since it conflates the semantic notion of a 'cognate' object with the morphosyntactic facts of a particular argument structure configuration. Some cases of nonalignment between these semantic and morphosyntactic criteria are discussed in §9.1.4. This nonalignment of form and semantics has led to the use of the purely form-based label 'quasitransitive' throughout this grammar, as justified in §9.1.4. Finally, whilst copula clauses (discussed in §9.2.4) are differentiated from verbal clauses in this chapter, there are three verbs that have apparent copula function, but which neither fall within the semantically-defined subclass of 'postural verbs' normally associated with this function (and discussed in detail in §9.2.2), nor exhibit many of the morphosyntactic hallmarks of the copula(/locative/existential) construction type. Two of these verbs, which subcategorise for a subject and object-complement, are discussed in §9.2.7.

The third, which subcategorises for a subject, direct object and object complement, is discussed in §9.1.6.

Although ergative Australian languages rarely permit alternation between intransitive and transitive case frames (Dixon 1980:378), a couple of Thaayorre verbs span these two subclasses (albeit with different senses; cf. Guerssel et al. 1985, Evans 1995:339-347 and Dench 1995a on similar alternations in the accusative languages Lardil, Kayardild and Martuthunira respectively). Further verbs exhibit alternations between other verbal subclasses; Table 74 lists some common examples.

verb	intransitive	quasitransitive	semitrans.	transitive	semiditrans.
<i>thaangk</i>	‘climb’			‘ride’	
<i>thowol</i>	‘play’			‘dance’	
<i>nhaa</i>			‘look at’	‘see’	
<i>ngeey</i>			‘listen to’	‘see’	
<i>mi’i</i>				‘pick up’	‘tell (story)’
<i>rok</i>	‘enter’	‘put on (clothing)’			
<i>patp</i>	‘camp’			‘participate in ceremonial camp’	

Table 74. Verbal subclass alternations.

For the purposes of the following discussion, it is necessary to provide a brief working definition of the core grammatical relations in Kuuk Thaayorre, identifying the key criteria by which they may be identified. Every Thaayorre verb subcategorises for a



subject argument, and these may span a range of semantic roles including Agent, theme, Experiencer and patient. Subjects may be identified according to five key morphosyntactic criteria:

1. Subjects may be encoded by nominative/ergative-form cardinal pronouns when animate;
2. Subjects receive the semantic role of the erstwhile direct object in reflexive and reciprocal clauses;
3. The subject of a type 1 intransitive verb root corresponds to the direct object when that verb undergoes valence increasing derivation by *-n(i)* ‘V<sup>^</sup>’ (the ‘valence increasing’ morpheme, cf. §8.1.1);
4. Conversely, the new participant introduced through the valence increasing derivation of a type 1 intransitive verb is encoded as subject (cf. Blake 1987:68, Austin 1996).
5. The subject of a type 2 intransitive verb root corresponds to the subject of the transitive verb derived through the suffixation of *-n(i)* ‘V<sup>^</sup>’.

The reflexive clause (707) illustrates the first and second criteria, inasmuch as the subject argument (encoded by the nominative/ergative pronoun *nhul* ‘he’) is attributed the role of Undergoer as well as Actor.

(707) *nhul*                      *yarriy katp-e-r*  
3sg(NOM/ERG)    thus    grasp-RFL-P.PFV  
‘he grabbed himself [on the arm] like this’  
[GJ03/02/04 Conversation/Narrative]

Illustrating the third and fourth criteria, type 1 intransitive verbs undergo valence-increasing derivation through the suffixation of *-n(i)* ‘V<sup>^</sup>’ a new participant is introduced as subject, whilst the erstwhile intransitive subject is demoted to object. Thus the subject of the type 1 intransitive verb *rok(a)* ‘enter’ encodes the figure that ‘enters’ a particular ground. The subject of the derived verb *rokan(i)* ‘insert’, however, encodes the Agent that causes the figure to enter the ground. The figure is meanwhile encoded as direct object of the derived verb.

Finally, the fifth criterion for identifying a subject argument is the fact that the (nominative-case) subject of a type 2 intransitive verb root corresponds to the (ergative-case) subject of the transitive verb derived through the suffixation of *-n(i)* ‘v<sup>^</sup>’. Hence the subject of the type 2 intransitive verb *therk(a)* ‘return’ encodes the figure that ‘returns’, as does the subject of the derived transitive verb *therkan(i)* ‘return with’.

Direct objects can be characterised according to four morphosyntactic criteria:

1. Objects are assigned accusative-case;
2. Objects may be encoded by accusative-form pronouns when animate;
3. Objects feed reflexive and reciprocal derivation;
4. The subject of a type 1 intransitive verb root corresponds to the direct object when that verb undergoes valence increasing derivation by *-n(i)* ‘v<sup>^</sup>’ (the ‘valence increasing’ morpheme, cf. §8.1.1).

Indirect objects take dative case and may be pronominal in form. They are unable to feed reflexive/reciprocal derivation and do not feature in valence increasing derivations. It is extremely difficult to differentiate bona fide indirect objects from for dative adjuncts that are not subcategorised for. This issue is revisited in §9.1.3.

Subject- and object-complements take the form of a noun phrase in unmarked nominative/accusative case<sup>194</sup> and may not be encoded by pronouns, nor feed reflexive/reciprocal derivation, nor be introduced through valence increase.

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<sup>194</sup> I assume that subject complements agree with the (intransitive) subject in nominative case and object-complements agree with the direct object in accusative case. But since both of these cases are unmarked for non-pronominal NPs (and complements may not be encoded as pronouns), it is impossible to distinguish the two.

### 9.1.1 Intransitive clauses

The Thaayorre intransitive verbs typically describe movements, motion and activities that are contained within or expressed through the subject participant's body (e.g. laughing, growing, crawling and falling). Intransitive clauses are typically elaborated by adverbs (708), particles and/or adjunct NPs (709).

(708) *werngr*                      *pal=p*                      *therk-m*  
 boomerang(NOM) towards=PRAG return-P.IPFV  
 'the boomerang kept coming back'  
 [AC05/08/02 Narrative WerngrStory]

(709) *yak*                      *ranth-im*                      *ripi-rr*  
 snake(NOM) hole-ABL exit-P.PFV  
 'the snake came out of its hole'  
 [GJ28/10/02 Elicitation]

Intransitive clauses may also be headed by verbs derived by the suffixation of the reflexive morpheme *-e* to a transitive root, as in (710).

(710) *kuta*                      *ngith*                      *pathath-e-ø*  
 dog(NOM) dem:dist bite<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 'that dog is biting itself'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Reciprocal clauses derived from base transitive verbs also contain only a single core argument, but this is usually ergative-marked. These clauses therefore cannot be considered fully intransitive. Reflexive and reciprocal clauses are discussed further in §10.6.

### 9.1.2 Intransitive copula clauses

Verb-headed intransitive copula clauses are discussed under §9.2.7, while verbless copula clauses and those containing postural copula verbs are discussed in §9.2.4.

### 9.1.3 Semitransitive clauses

Austin (1993, 1996) identifies for many Australian languages a class of verbs intermediate in transitivity between the fully intransitive and the fully transitive<sup>195</sup>. Verbs of this subclass subcategorise for both a subject marked for the case normally assigned to the subjects of intransitive clauses (i.e. nominative in Kuuk Thaayorre), but also a complement in dative or locative case. Though Kuuk Thaayorre undoubtedly possesses verbs that fit this characterisation (as seen in [178]), it is difficult if not impossible to prove that the dative NP is the subcategorised-for complement of a semitransitive clause and not just an optional adjunct of an intransitive clause.

- (711) *nhunt ngathun paac-r?*  
2sg(NOM) 1sgDAT growl-NPST  
'are you telling me off?'  
"are you growling me?"  
[LN14/08/02]

In many languages there exist reliable criteria for distinguishing these two scenarios, such as: the optionality of the dative NP; its placement with respect to other clausal constituents; and its ability to feed syntactic derivations such as the passive or reciprocal. None of these criteria prove useful in Kuuk Thaayorre, however. To begin with, the criterion of optionality is not helpful since any argument (core or otherwise) may be freely elided<sup>196</sup>. Thus it is equally acceptable to omit or include the dative pronouns in both (712), an arguably semitransitive clause, and (713), an

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<sup>195</sup> Austin (1993) labels this subclass 'extended intransitive verbs'.

<sup>196</sup> Native speakers consulted did not offer any intuitions as to the difference between elided 'obligatory' elements, and optional elements that were simply unrealised.

uncontroversially intransitive clause. Further, the undoubtedly subcategorised-for subjects of both clauses may also be elided.

(712) *nhul ngathun kookope-ø*  
3sg(NOM) 1sgDAT wait<RDP>-NPST  
'he's waiting for me'  
[EC02/10/02 Elicitation]

(713) *ngamp ulp ii-rr-kan yan nhangun*  
1pl:incl(NOM) dem:adr.prx there-towards-up go:NPST 3sgDAT  
'we'll go up there to him'  
[GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

Permuting the order of clausal constituents has no syntactic effect, consequently there are no restrictions on the placement of dative adjuncts as opposed to the putative dative complements of semitransitive clauses. There may be some differences between the two in terms of the relative frequencies with which they appear in the preverbal position, however. In the semi-controlled pragmatic context of elicitation, decontextualised example sentences most frequently exhibit the constituent order SOV. We might therefore expect subcategorised-for indirect objects to precede the verb (like direct objects) more frequently than do adjunct NPs. The examination of a small subset of my corpus shows that putative dative complements of semitransitive verbs precede the verb slightly more frequently than do more obvious dative adjuncts (as illustrated by [712-713]). This tendency is tenuous due to both the small size of the sample and the large number of counterexamples this sample contained. In (714), for instance, the putative dative complement follows the verb, while in (715) the dative adjunct immediately precedes it.

(714) *nhunt yariy yik-ø ngathun: "..."*  
2sg(NOM) thus say-IMP 1sgDAT  
'you should say it to me like this: "...'  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (715) *ngumpurr ulp meer-thak-en ngathun wonp-r*  
old.lady(NOM) dem:adr.prx eye-front-DAT 1sgDAT die-P.PFV  
“she died in front of my eyes”  
[GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

Whilst a planned quantitative study of Thaayorre constituent order may reveal the syntactic distribution of the two to be significantly different, initial evidence of this is weak at best.

The third possible test for complement versus adjunct status — ability to feed valency change — is also problematic. Reciprocal constructions should offer the best testing ground in this regard (since Kuuk Thaayorre possesses no passive construction)<sup>197</sup>. However Thaayorre reciprocal derivation may only be fed by (accusative-case) direct objects and it therefore does not distinguish between the putative subcategorised-for dative complements of semitransitive verbs and dative adjuncts. Thus neither *paac* ‘tell off’, *koope* ‘wait for’ can form reciprocal stems through the suffixation of the reciprocal morpheme *-rr* (*\*paacrr* ‘tell each other off’, *\*kooperr* ‘wait for each other’).

In the absence of any better arguments, I have elected to treat as semitransitive any verbs whose meaning seems to require a dative-marked argument (whether this is overtly present in the clause or elided). Such a heuristic is somewhat tenuous, however, and subject to future revision should any morphosyntactic evidence emerge. Pending a sounder basis for their identification, judgements as to whether or not the dative-marked arguments are semantically required are based partly on the semantic function of the dative-marking. Illustrating the former, if a dative argument were not part of the subcategorisation frame of *koope* ‘wait (for)’ we would expect any dative-marked adjuncts in clauses it heads to carry one of the thematic roles usually encoded

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<sup>197</sup> Reflexive constructions shed no more light on this subject than do reciprocal constructions, but are significantly more complex for didactic purposes owing to their range of extended, middle-like functions, as discussed in §10.6.1.

by dative case (e.g. Recipient, Beneficiary, etc., cf. §4.2.5)<sup>198</sup>. The fact that the dative case-marking of *ngathun* ‘for me’ in (712) does not straightforwardly encode the semantic role of *ngathun* ‘for me’ in the clause may be taken to indicate that this information is instead part of the verbal semantics of *koope* ‘wait (for)’, and specifically part of its subcategorisation frame. Cross-linguistic comparison is also invoked in the judgement of whether or not the dative-marked NP is required by the verb. For instance, many of the putative semitransitive verbs considered here and in §9.1.7 (e.g. *paac* ‘tell off’, *yik* ‘say’, *waantharr* ‘call out to’, *nhaa* ‘look at’ and *ngeey* ‘listen to’) may be broadly characterised as verbs of communication and perception, the two semantic subclasses noted by Austin to frequently head semitransitive clauses in Australian languages. It is worth noting, however, that it is common amongst Australian languages for these perception verbs to exhibit an alternation between semitransitive and transitive argument structures (cf. Blake 1987:28-29, Morphy 1983, Evans 1995:344-345, Evans and Wilkins 1998). This is true of both Thaayorre *nhaa* ‘see; look at’ and *ngeey* ‘hear; listen to’, which are associated with two alternative subcategorisation frames. The transitive frame <NP<sub>ERG</sub>, NP<sub>ACC</sub>> is illustrated in (716), while the semitransitive frame <NP<sub>NOM</sub>, NP<sub>DAT</sub>> is seen in (717).

(716) *minh kothon-thrr pam nhaanham*  
 MEAT wallaby-ERG man(ACC) see<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the wallaby’s watching the man’  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

(717) *paanth box-ak nhaath-nharr*  
 woman box-DAT look.at-GO&:INF  
 ‘the woman is looking at the box’  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

The two subcategorisation frames of these ‘ambitransitive’ verbs — treated here as heterosemous for the purposes of glossing — are associated with differences in

<sup>198</sup> As Andrews (1982:4) puts it, adjuncts have “an invariant way of contributing to the meaning of the sentence, and appear whenever they are semantically appropriate”.

semantics and aktionsarten as well as morphosyntax. *Nhaa*<sub>1</sub> ‘see<sub>TR</sub>’, describes an accomplishment, in which an Undergoer (encoded as transitive subject) instantaneously catches sight of some Stimulus (encoded as direct object). *Nhaa*<sub>2</sub> ‘look at<sub>SEMTR</sub>’, in contrast, describes the activity of an Agent (encoded as intransitive subject) intentionally directing their gaze towards a (dative-marked) Recipient. This can be seen in the following two (consecutive) clauses taken from a story about the narrator’s first encounter with a plane:

- (718) *kaapac-ak*    *nhaath-m*    *ngancn*  
 cloud-DAT    look.at-P.IPFV    1pl:excl(NOM)  
 ‘we were watching clouds’
- ngul*    *minc*    *nhaawr*    *jet*  
 then    UNEXP see:P.PFV    jet(ACC)  
 ‘but then we saw a jet’
- [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

The first clause illustrates the usage of *nhaa*<sub>2</sub> ‘look<sub>SEMTR</sub>’, in the description of the (enduring activity of) protagonists intentionally directing their gaze towards (passive) clouds. In the second clause, however, the protagonists’ attention is instantaneously caught by the Stimulus ‘jet’.

#### 9.1.4 Quasitransitive clauses

Like transitive clauses, quasitransitive clauses optionally contain a direct object in accusative case<sup>199</sup>. Like intransitive clauses, however, the subject of a quasitransitive verb is always in unmarked nominative case. This is exemplified by (719).

- (719) *pam*    *may*    *thaa-theerp-r*  
 man(NOM)    VEG(ACC)    MOUTH-spit:p.pfv  
 ‘the man spat out the food’
- [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation]

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<sup>199</sup> Blake (1987) discusses analogous clauses as a type of ‘minority construction’.



Many verbs of the quasitransitive subclass fit Austin's (1982) characterisation of 'cognate object' verbs. Such verbs place tight restrictions on the semantic field from which the accusative 'cognate object' NP may be drawn. *Vomit*, for example, is an English cognate object verb which usually patterns as an intransitive verb but may sometimes take an object drawn from the semantic domain of foods (or vomit itself), as in *he vomited an enormous amount of vomit* or *why do you always vomit carrots?*. Thaayorre quasitransitive verbs can be ranked along a continuum according to how restricted the semantic field is from which the direct object may be drawn. At the most restricted end of this continuum are verbs that may be unequivocally classified as cognate object verbs. However, the verb and noun are never formally cognate in Kuuk Thaayorre, as Austin (1982) allows may be the case. The 'cognate object' of the verb *paarr* 'cry', for instance, appears restricted to the compound nomen *meerngok* 'tears' (lit. 'eye-water'). I have nevertheless classified such verbs here as 'quasitransitive' in preference to 'cognate object' because of the large number of verbs with the <Sbj<sub>NOM</sub>, Obj<sub>ACC</sub>> subcategorisation frame for which there is no tight semantic restriction on the nomen(s) that may function as direct object. The intransitive verb *rok* 'enter', for example, may combine with a direct object drawn from the semantic field of apparel (i.e. clothing, glasses, hats, etc.) with the meaning 'put on' as in (720).

- (720) *nhunt rok-ø thamr puut*  
 2sg(NOM) enter-IMP FOOT boot(ACC)  
 'put on these shoes!'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Similarly, the intransitive verb *thaangk* 'climb' has the meaning 'ride' when paired with a direct object representing any straddled vehicle (e.g. horse, bull, bicycle, motorcycle, etc.). To claim that such a verb fits Austin's (1982) semantic characterisation of a cognate object verb is to make problematic the boundary between such verbs and straightforwardly transitive verbs (like English *ride*) that place semantic restrictions on their direct object. Conversely, invoking semantics rather than the simple morphosyntactic facts of argument structure would make it difficult to categorise verbs like *thowol* 'play' and *patp* 'camp'. These normally

straightforwardly intransitive verbs (721) may optionally appear with an accusative NP *wuuc* ‘ceremony’. Yet despite the fact that this accusative NP is semantically restricted to a single lexeme (and thus bears the hallmarks of a cognate object clause), the presence of this accusative NP always coincides with the ergative case-marking of the subject NP, as in (722).

(721) *parr\_r ith peln wantan pal thow<ow>ol-ø*  
 child(NOM) dem:dist 3pl(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub> towards play<RDP>-NPST  
 “where them kid, chasing round”  
 ‘where are those kids playing?’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

(722) *ngali Johnny-n wuuc thowol-nam*  
 1du:excl(ERG) Johnny-ERG ceremony(ACC) dance-P.IPFV  
 ‘Johnny and I performed the traditional dance’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Conversation]

For these reasons, I define Thaayorre quasitransitive verbs and clauses purely according to their nominative-accusative argument structure, regardless of whether or not they draw an object from a restricted semantic field. On the basis of their argument structure, then, I class heterosemous verbs like *thowol* ‘play; dance’ as straightforwardly intransitive (subcategorising for a single, nominative-case argument) in clauses like (721), and straightforwardly transitive (subcategorising for an ergative-case subject and accusative-case direct object) in clauses like (722).

**Bivalent predicate adjectives**

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses two predicate adjectives that refer to psychological states; *walmeerem* ‘knowing, knowledgeable (with respect to)’ and its antonym *pamngongkom* ‘ignorant (with respect to)’<sup>200</sup>.

(723)

1. *nhinh ngay wuump wal.meerem name nhangkn ngay*  
 2sgACC 1sg(NOM) CONTR knowledgeable.of name 2sgPOS(ACC) 1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I know your name’

2. *ngay pam nhangkn nhamp ngay pamngoongkom*  
 1sgNOM man 2sgPOS(ACC) name(ACC) 1sgNOM ignorant  
 ‘I don’t remember your man’s name’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Both *pamngoongkom* (723.1) and *walmeerem* (723.2) are bivalent, subcategorising for two core arguments. However, the fact that they assign nominative case to the subject argument (and accusative to the object) means the clauses they head are classed with quasitransitive verbs.

Although predicate adjectives cannot inflect for case like other nominals, neither can they inflect for the tense/aspect/mood categories encoded by verbs. Instead, where the speaker wishes to explicitly mark the clause for TAM the predicate adjective must function as complement to a copula posture verb, as in (724) and (81).

(724) *engine parr\_r pamngongkom yancm.*  
 engine(ACC) child(NOM) ignorant.of go:P.IPFV  
 ‘(we) children didn’t know about (jet) engines’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

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<sup>200</sup> Cf. Evans (1995:231-232) on the remarkably similar Kayardild transitive predicate nominals *mungurru* ‘knowing, knowledgeable’ and *burdumbanyi* ‘ignorant, not knowing’.

- (725) *ngay walmeerem angarr nhiin-nh*  
 1sg(NOM) knowledgeable.of WANT live-SBJV  
 ‘I want to know’  
 [Anon.]

Finally, it is important to note some significant differences between the semantics of these predicate adjectives and those of the English psych verb ([not] know) used to translate them. As alluded to in §6.9.1, the English verb *know* is far more expansive in its scope than either of the Thaayorre predicate adjectives. Hence to translate (726) as ‘I know your father’ would be misleading since this suggests the speaker has a particular level of personal familiarity with the referent of the object NP. The Thaayorre clause, however, only entails that the speaker is ‘knowledgeable with respect to’ one particular aspect of the object referent (in this particular discursive context, his identity).

- (726) *ngay pam nhangnip nhangkn walmeerem*  
 1sg(NOM) MAN father 2sgPOS(ACC) knowledgeable.of  
 ‘I know the identity of your father’  
 [GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

It would be equally misleading to translate the first clause of (727.1) as ‘I don’t know you’ (although this is one possible interpretation of the clause) since the speaker goes on in (727.2) to make explicit the particular personal trait with respect to which he had previously been ignorant.

- (727)
1. *ngay nhinh pam.ngongkom!*  
 1sg(NOM) 2sgACC ignorant.of  
 ‘I didn’t know [that] about you!’
  2. *nhunt ngok kaarkarurr mungk-r!*  
 2sg(NOM) water(ACC) surprising drink-NPST  
 ‘I didn’t know you drank beer!’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

### 9.1.5 Transitive clauses

The predicates that head transitive clauses subcategorise for an ergative-case subject NP and a single accusative-case direct object, as illustrated by (728):

- (728) *kuta-ku pam kookoc-r*  
 dog-ERG man(ACC) bark<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the dog is barking at the man’  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

Transitive clauses may be derived by adding the valence-increasing morpheme (cf. §8.1.1) to an intransitive verb, as in (729):

- (729) *book ulp pal therka-n-irr*  
 book dem:adr.prx toward return-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV  
 ‘(he) took the book back’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot5]

### 9.1.6 Transitive copula clauses

Transitive copula clauses are headed by verbs that subcategorise for both an accusative-case object and an object-complement (in unmarked accusative case) in addition to an ergative-case subject. Only one transitive copula verb has been identified to date, *wan* ‘name {something, a name}’, as seen in (730-731).

- (730) *yak ngancn kirkmuk wan-r*  
 snake(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) black.snake(ACC) name-NPST  
 ‘we call that snake *kirkmuk*’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation / Narrative]

- (731) *pam nhump Louie wan-r*  
 man elder(ACC) Louie(ACC) name-NPST  
 ‘the old man’s name is Louie [lit. ‘(we) call the old man Louie’]’  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative PormpuraawKanangkarr]

### 9.1.7 Semitransitive clauses

The class of semitransitive verbs, which subcategorise for a nominative-case subject and dative-case complement, was introduced in §9.1.3. This section is concerned with clauses headed by verbs that subcategorise for both a dative-case and an accusative-case complement in addition to their nominative-case subject. Many verbs of this subclass fit traditional characterisations of ditransitive verbs, e.g. *wan* ‘give’ in (732)<sup>201</sup>.

- (732) *nhul pam thon-thak wani-rr book ulp*  
 3sg(NOM) man one-DAT give-P.PFV book(ACC) dem:adr.prx  
 ‘he gave the book to another man’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot5]

Others, however, subcategorise for a direct object from an extremely restricted semantic fields. The verb *mi'im {kuthip}* ‘tell {a story}’ in example (733), for instance, appears to allow only the nomen *kuthip* ‘story’ as its direct object<sup>202</sup>.

- (733) *nhul ngathun kuthip mi'im, glass-n yaki-rr yuk.ngat-am*  
 3sg(NOM) 1sgDAT story(ACC) pick.up:P.IPFV glass-ERG cut-P.PFV cyclone-ABL  
 ‘he told me a story, [about] when glass cut him in a cyclone’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

Such verbs resemble Austin’s (1982) cognate object verbs, aside from their additionally subcategorising for a dative-case indirect object. Fittingly, then, many verbs of this class are drawn from the semantic field of communication, a domain Austin associates with cognate object verbs. The verb *yik* ‘say’, for instance, subcategorises for a (typically human) dative complement referring to the addressee

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<sup>201</sup> Although the Recipient subcategorised for by *wan* ‘give’ is always marked by dative case, the near-synonym *reek* ‘give’ subcategorises for two accusative-case arguments, cf. §9.1.8.

<sup>202</sup> The same, heterosemous verb form also functions as a straightforwardly transitive verb meaning ‘pick up’, and as an intransitivoid verb *mi'i {wuuc}* ‘sing {a ceremonial song}’, with which function it does not subcategorise for a dative indirect object.

of the communication event (734) as well as an accusative object drawn from the semantic fields of language and utterance types (735).

(734) *ngawoy ngay nhangun yup yik-ø Alison-ak*  
 yes 1sg(NOM) 3sgDAT soon say:NPST Alison-DAT  
 ‘I’ll speak to Alison’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]

(735) *paanth wang inh kuuk thaayorr yi<i>k-ø*  
 woman white(NOM) dem:sp.prx WORD thaayorre(ACC) speak<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘this white girl speaks language’  
 [Anon.]

The same difficulties in testing whether or not the dative NP is subcategorised for obtain in semitransitive cognate object clauses as in semitransitive clauses. Here, too, the dative complement is freely omissible, can appear in any position with respect to other clausal constituents, and cannot feed reciprocalisation.

### 9.1.8 Ditransitive clauses

Full ditransitive clauses containing three overt core argument NPs (one in ergative case, two in accusative), are very rare in Thaayorre discourse. All such examples in my corpus (e.g. [736]) were uttered in an elicitation context (albeit often in spontaneous response to English or visual stimuli).

(736) *nganip-i nganh koonte-rr minh kothon*  
 father-ERG 1sgACC deprive-P.PFV MEAT wallaby(ACC)  
 ‘Dad deprived me of wallaby [i.e. killed one and refused to share it]’  
 [GJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses two apparently synonymous verbs that encode events of giving; *reek* ‘give’ and *wan* ‘give’. However, only the former may head a ditransitive clause (as in [737]).

(737) *pal nganh nhunh ritar reek-ø*  
towards 1sgACC 3sgACC gammon give-IMP  
'give me him [the baby] for a bit'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

*Wan* 'give' instead a semitransitive verb, subcategorising for a dative complement (encoding the Recipient) and an accusative object (encoding the theme), as in (738).

(738) *ngathun thono wan-ø*  
1sgDAT one(ACC) give-IMP  
'give me one [cigarette]'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

This verb form *wan* is heterosemous. As well as its function as a semitransitive verb with the meaning 'give' seen in (738), and as a transitive copula verb with the meaning 'name' (discussed in §9.1.6), it may also function as a bona fide trivalent verb with the meaning 'tell on' (739).

(739) *nganh nhunh wan-ø*  
1sgACC 3sgACC tell.on-IMP  
'tell him about me'  
[GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

## 9.2 Locative, copula and existential constructions.

### 9.2.1 Background

Locative, copula and existential clauses are discussed together in this section because the three clause types share many properties, one of which is the optionality of the verb. This optionality makes useless the verbal/verbless distinction maintained



elsewhere in this chapter. Where a locative/copula/existential construction does contain a verb, this is selected from the class of five ‘postural’ verbs<sup>203</sup> (§9.2.2). Selection of the particular postural verb employed is determined by constructional and pragmatic considerations in conjunction with semantic features of the subject argument.

It is cross-linguistically common for postural verbs such as *sit*, *stand*, and *lie* to have grammaticalised functions (e.g. as copula verbs, aspect markers, etc.). The regularity with which these postural verbs operate as a linker in locative constructions, in particular, led Ameka and Levinson (to appear) to coin the label ‘postural-type language’. Postural-type languages are found in families as diverse as Germanic, Siouan, Guaykuruan, Papuan (families and isolates) and both the Pama-Nyungan and non-Pama-Nyungan languages of Australia. Over the last few years, the grammaticalised functions of posture verbs have attracted a number of studies, both typological (e.g. Newman 2002 and Ameka and Levinson [to appear]) and focused on particular languages (e.g. Hellwig 2003 and the papers collected by Newman, ed., 2002). The particularities of the Thaayorre postural verbs (in their grammaticalised functions) in some respects fit the trends noted in the aforementioned publications, but in other respects Kuuk Thaayorre is quite unusual in this regard.

Before detailing the locative/copula/existential constructions in which Thaayorre postural verbs appear, the semantics of these verbs themselves are explored in §9.2.2. Section outlines the three constructions in which they appear, followed in 9.2.4 by an analysis of the semantic and pragmatic factors that condition the choice of predicate for each of these constructions.

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<sup>203</sup> Viz: *than* ‘stand; *nhiin* ‘sit’; *wun* ‘lie’; *yan* ‘go’; and *yooyongke* ‘hang’. I refer to this verb class by the general title ‘postural’ despite the fact that neither *yan* ‘go’ nor *yooyongke* ‘hang’ really encodes postural semantics. This is for two reasons: (a) the other verbs in the class primarily describe posture and *yan* is included as an aberrant member because of its overlapping distribution in copula and locative constructions; and (b) the class in general displays similarities of function with the ‘postural verbs’ of many other languages, to whose grammaticalised functions much attention has been paid in recent typological literature (see, for example, Newman 2002).

### 9.2.2 The set of postural verbs

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses only three postural verbs in the strict sense of describing the configuration of the human body; *than* ‘stand’, *nhiin* ‘sit’ and *wun* ‘lie’. These three verbs are hereafter referred to as the ‘core’ postural verbs. Unlike the posture verbs of some other Australian languages (cf., e.g., Reid 2002 on Ngan’gityemerri), the Thaayorre set may be used to describe a change of posture, in addition to their stative sense:

- (740)        *nhiin*  
               lie:NPST/IMP  
               ‘sit down!’ or ‘he/she is sitting’

The fourth verb included in the broader class of postural verbs is *yoongke* ‘hang’. Typically used to describe inanimate objects suspended from a surface or object, *yoongke* similarly allows both active and stative interpretations of the unmarked stem. But unlike the core postural verbs, the unmarked form *yoongke* may also function as a transitive, active verb with the Theme argument or figure (corresponding to the subject of the intransitive clause) realised as direct object<sup>204</sup> (742):

- (741) *may yulu        yuk-un    yoo<yo>ngke-ø*  
        VEG apple(NOM) stick-DAT hang<RDP>-NPST  
        ‘the apple is (hanging) on the branch’  
        [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed45]

- (742) *paanthu        yuk    ith        yuk-un yoongke-rr*  
        woman-ERG    THING(ACC)    dem:dist        stick-DAT        hang:P.PFV  
        ‘the woman hung that [rope] over the branch’  
        [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation CausedPositions38]

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<sup>204</sup> This alternation is somewhat surprising, given *yoongke*’s apparent absorption of the reflexive suffix *-e*, which usually has a detransitivising effect.

The fifth and final verb in the postural class is *yan* ‘go’. As a full verb, *yan* patterns with verbs of motion, such as *riic* ‘run’, *thaangk* ‘climb’, or *thuuth* ‘crawl’. But in its extended functions of copula and locative predicate *yan* ‘go’ is paradigmatically opposed to the other postural verbs, and hence labelled ‘postural’ for the purposes of this section.

### *Secondary senses of nhiin ‘sit’ and wun ‘lie’*

In addition to their basic postural sense, both *nhiin* ‘sit’ and *wun* ‘lie’ are functionally equivalent to English *live*. ‘Sit’ and ‘lie’ verbs are attested with this extended use across the Australian continent, as Dixon (1980:116) notes:

*In most Australian languages ‘to sit’ ... [is] used with the general sense ‘to stay, to settle down’, where no particular posture is indicated; but in Wik Munkan wun- ‘to lie’ appears to be the unmarked term, that also has the sense ‘to stay’.*

In Kuuk Thaayorre, both of *nhiin* ‘sit’ and *wun* ‘lie’ are extended in this way, though they differ in their extended meaning. *Wun*<sub>2</sub> (glossed ‘reside’) is restricted to the description of a person’s relationship to their home, or immediate domestic sphere. *Nhiin*<sub>2</sub> (glossed ‘live’), however, is associated with the broader environmental context of one’s daily life. The difference between the two can be seen in the following examples:

(743) *nhunt wanthan-ngun wun?*

2sgNOM where-DAT reside:NPST

‘where [i.e. in which house] do you live?’

[LN06/09/02 Elicitation / Conversation]

(744) *nganam ngathn angunp nhiinhin*

mother 1sgPOS(NOM) there live<RDP>:NPST

‘my mother lives there [in Melbourne]’

[ME02/10/02 Elicitation]

There is some persistence of the meaning of *wun*<sub>1</sub> ‘lie’ that leads *wun*<sub>2</sub> ‘reside’ to be associated with the place where one sleeps. Likewise, *nhiin*<sub>2</sub> ‘live’ is associated with the place where one spends one’s ‘upright’ hours due to the semantic persistence of *nhiin*<sub>1</sub> ‘sit’. This explains why both verbs may be used to describe a person’s relationship to their house (i.e. *nhiin* could be felicitously substituted for *wun* in [(310)]), but why only *nhiin* can be used to describe a person’s relationship to their home city (i.e. *wun* could not be used for [744]).

Dixon (1980:120) suggests that, for Walmatjari at least, the copula function of the cognate *wuna* ‘lie’ derives from the secondary sense ‘stay, settle, exist’. In Kuuk Thaayorre, it seems that both the original verbs *wun*<sub>1</sub> ‘lie’/ *nhiin*<sub>1</sub> ‘sit’ and the extended *wun*<sub>2</sub> ‘reside’/ *nhiin*<sub>2</sub> ‘live’ have independently extended to function as copula/locative predicates. This accounts for the broader distribution of the forms *nhiin* and *wun* in copula/locative constructions in comparison with *than* ‘stand’, as evident in the discussion below. (These verbs will hereafter be differentiated by subscript numerals only as necessary).

### 9.2.3 The postural construction

I assume that heading a postural construction was the original (and is still, in some sense, the basic) function of the postural verbs. This construction predicates a particular physical configuration of a figure, and consists minimally of a postural verb and an (optionally elided) subject, as in (740) above and (745-746). It is thus a subtype of intransitive verbal clause (§9.1.1).

- (745) *kuta thok      nhul      chair-thak nhii<nhi>n      putpun*  
 PET   cat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) chair-DAT   sit<RDP>:NPST   on.top  
 ‘the cat is sitting on top of the chair’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

- (746) *kuta thok pal-ø-korr thanan*  
 PET cat(NOM) near-at-outside stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the cat’s standing outside’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

Though the choice of postural verb is primarily motivated by the posture or configuration of the figure itself, selection is also restricted by the figure’s animacy. Specifically, *nhiin* ‘sit’ may not be used to describe an inanimate figure, whatever its configuration. Only the verbs *wun* ‘lie’ or *thanan* ‘stand’ are used to describe the posture of inanimate entities (747).

- (747a) \**cup table-ak werngka nhii<nhi>n*  
 cup(NOM) table-DAT middle sit<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the cup is [sitting] in the middle of the table’

- (b) *cup table-ak werngka wun*  
 cup(NOM) table-DAT middle lie:NPST  
 ‘the cup is [sitting] in the middle of the table’

- (c) *cup table-ak werngka than<an>*  
 cup(NOM) table-DAT middle stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the cup is [sitting] in the middle of the table’  
 [GJ6/12/02 Elicitation Sup09]

#### 9.2.4 The copula construction

The Thaayorre copula construction is composed of an optional copula verb, a nominative subject and an (unmarked) complement that is predicated of the subject argument. The copula construction has two key functions. The first is to predicate a characteristic (encoded as complement) of an entity (encoded as subject). The characteristic encoded as complement may be either a simple adjective (748) or a full, noun-headed NP (749-750).

(748) *kiin           ulp           waarr!*  
tooth(NOM) dem:adr.prx bad  
‘[your] tooth is rotten!’  
[EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives2]

(749) *yuk   wakam       merngor   min*  
TREE tree.sp.(NOM) shade good  
‘the club tree gives good shade’  
[JC09/01/04 Conversation / Elicitation]

(750) *wang           nhamp       Mr Burton       nhamp*  
white(NOM) name(NOM) Mr Burton name  
‘the white man’s name was Mr Burton’  
[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

None of the copula examples presented thus far has included a copula verb. I label such verbless copula clauses ‘unmarked’ because they contain less morphophonological material than verb-headed copula clauses. Although these clauses are typically used to describe normal, predictable and easily comprehended contexts (and thus may also be characterised as pragmatically ‘unmarked’ in the Gricean sense), the distinction made here between ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ copula clauses is a purely formal one that makes no pragmatic claims. Hence the situations and events described by means of marked copula clauses (i.e. those containing an overt postural verb) need not be pragmatically aberrant. The overt verb might be required simply to express tense, for example, as seen in the contrast between (751) and (752).

(751) *ngay       parr\_r   mant*  
1sg(NOM) child small  
‘I [am] a small kid’

- (752) *ngay parr\_r mant yancm*  
 1sg(NOM) child small go:P.IPFV  
 ‘[when] I was a small kid’  
 [AC10/08/02 Narrative ChapmanEra]

Marked copula clauses may or may not be pragmatically ‘marked’ (in as much as they comment upon unusual or unexpected features of the situation that the addressee is unlikely to infer by themselves). To minimise terminological confusion, clauses describing predictable, un-noteworthy states of affairs are henceforth referred to as ‘default’, and the verb contained therein will be referred to as ‘default verbs’. This is an important distinction since default clauses may nevertheless be (morphophonologically) marked (e.g. for tense, as in [752]). The rest of this section will be devoted to the criteria that determine which (if any) of the posture verbs is selected as copula for a particular clause.

The selection of posture verb for a marked copula clause depends first of all on the animacy of the subject referent. For all animate entities, the default copula verb is *yan* ‘go’ since animate things are usually moving. It is for this reason that the default construction used in (752) above includes the verb *yan* ‘go’. The fact that *yan* ‘go’ is used to describe default situations that are in line with the addressee’s expectations of the world (as opposed to, e.g. *wun* ‘lie’) is clear in the comparison of (753) and (754). While the speaker explicitly mentions his being an infant in (753) (through the noun *menmrr* ‘baby’), in (754) this is implied by the use of the non-default posture verb *wun* ‘lie’ since babies are the only kind of ‘small child’ whose canonical posture is lying.

- (753) *ngay parr\_r menmrr yancm*  
 1sg(NOM) child baby(NOM) go:P.IPFV  
 ‘I was a baby’  
 [Anon.]

(754) *ngay parr\_r mant wun-um*  
1sg(NOM) child small(NOM) lie-P.IPFV  
'I was a baby'  
[Anon.]

Similarly, the following phrases imply illness of varying levels of severity through the choice of posture verb:

(755a) *punguk ngay mincwanc=aak yanem*  
last.time 1sg(NOM) sickness=ADN.PROP go:P.IPFV  
'I was sick last week'

(b) *punguk ngay mincwanc=aak wun-m*  
last.time 1sg(NOM) sickness=ADN.PROP lie-P.IPFV  
'I was lying sick in bed last week'  
[Anon. Elicitation]

In (83a), the selection of the default posture verb *yan* 'go' tells us nothing about the degree of illness (except that it was not particularly noteworthy, and so unlikely to be severe). (b) suggests more serious illness (implying that the speaker was bedridden).

The addressee may similarly exploit the connotations of the non-default verbs in examples (756) and (757) to draw inferences as to the state of the subject referent:

(756) *nhul ngok murm yan*  
3sg(NOM) beer drunk(NOM) go:NPST  
'he's drunk'  
[AP9/10/02 Conversation]

(757) *nhul ngok murm wun*  
3sg(NOM) beer drunk(NOM) lie:NPST  
'he's paralytically drunk'  
[AP9/10/02 Conversation]



*Wun* ‘lie’ and *nhiin* ‘sit’ can also be used as non-default verbs without any connotations of posture. This seems to stem from their secondary senses (i.e. ‘reside’ and ‘live’ respectively), and they are therefore glossed as such. In this usage, *nhiin* ‘live’ implies an ongoing, enduring state (758-759), while the state denoted by *wun* ‘reside’ seems to denote states that are more transient (761-762).

(758) *nhul muthathan kunk nhiinhin*  
 3sg(NOM) forever alive live<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘he [Jesus] lives forever’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

(759) *missed-m rirk-r pelnan, ngay yariy=p nhiin-m*  
 miss-TR DO-P.PFV 3plACC 2sg(NOM) thus live-P.IPFV  
 ‘I missed them, that’s how I was [feeling]’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

(760) *minh kaal nhul mantam minc nhiinhin*  
 MEAT rat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) small very live<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the rat is really small’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

(761) “*aa, kulpaath=pa pam-a ith paapath wun!*”  
 ah sweet=PRAG man-DAT dem:dist hot reside:NPST  
 ‘mm, [the water tastes] sweet to someone who is hot!’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

(762)

1. *pam watp-a yat pal pul*  
 man dead-DAT go:P.PFV toward 3du(NOM)  
 ‘the pair came for the corpse’
- .2 *Pat pam-kak pal-pil wun=ul*  
 Pat man-COM beside reside:NPST=3sgNOM  
 ‘Pat is alongside with another man’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

This distinction could be cast in terms of the distinction between individual-level and stage-level predication, with *nhiin* ‘live’ corresponding to the former (i.e. describing a stable, permanent characteristic or state that holds throughout the existence of that individual) and *wun* ‘reside’ to the latter (i.e. describing a transient characteristic or state that holds only for the duration of a particular period of time, or ‘stage’). However, this appears to be an implicature of these verbs, rather than an inherent part of their lexical semantics. In (759), for instance, the speaker uses *nhiin* ‘live’ to emphasise the duration and intensity of his feeling, though this represented a ‘stage’ rather than a permanent state. Further, examples (763-764) appear to contradict both these associations since (763) refers to a state that lasts only very temporarily, while the dog referred to in (764) had clearly been mangy for some considerable time:

(763) *ngongkom nhiin*

ignorant live:IMP

‘close your eyes! [temporarily, in order to play hide and seek]’

[LN08/09/02 Elicitation]

(764) *kuta ngith meer.kun.waarr wun*

dog(NOM) dem:dist pitiful reside:NPST

‘that dog is pitiful’

‘I sorry for that dog’

[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

It is possible, however, that the speaker of (763) deliberately used *nhiin* ‘live’ to stress that the addressee should keep their eyes shut for a (sufficiently) prolonged period, not just momentarily. Likewise, the speaker of (764) might have (somewhat hopefully) wished to depict the dog’s sorry state as only temporary.

Where the subject referent of a copula clause is inanimate, the selection of copula verb is determined by its ‘canonical posture’ (whether this be a postural verb or otherwise). So, for instance, a tree canonically ‘stands’, and so any clause predicating some characteristic (or the identity) of a tree will include the verb *than* ‘stand’ (where

the clause is marked). Buildings are similarly described as ‘standing’ (765), whereas water canonically ‘lies’ (766) and nanda nuts canonically ‘hang’ (767).

(765) *pormpr kanpa ngamal thana-m*  
house(NOM) before big stand-P.IPFV  
‘the house used to be big [before it was destroyed]’  
[GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA3]

(766) *Ngernkan kaal-kurrc. Ngernkan ngok kaal-kurrc wun-m*  
yesterday cold Yesterday water(NOM) cold lie-P.IPFV  
‘yesterday it [the water] was cold. Yesterday the water was cold’  
[GJ31/01/04 Elicitation DahlTMA32]

(767) *may pucr kul-path yoo<yo>ngke-ø*  
VEG nanda(NOM) sweet hang<RDP>-NPST  
‘nanda nuts are sweet’  
[Anon.]

In some cases, the default verb employed in copula constructions with an inanimate subject does not belong to the set of postural verbs. In (768), for example, the most appropriate verb for the subject *wal* ‘bag’ is *kal* ‘carry’.

(768) *wal ith kanpa min kal-m*  
bag(NOM=ACC) dem:dist before good carry-P.IPFV  
‘this bag used to [be] good’  
[Anon.]

This is not simply because bags are most often in a carrying posture (in fact, they are probably ‘lying’ on a surface the majority of the time), but rather because the quality of the bag is judged with respect to carrying it. Interestingly, the same verb is used to ascribe qualities to (human) eyes (769). We might infer from this that the eyes are understood by Thaayorre speakers to be ‘carried’ by the skull.

(769)

1. *meer ngathn yoorr waarr,*  
 eye 1sgPOS(NOM) today bad,  
 ‘I have bad eyesight nowadays’
  
2. *ngul meer ngathn kanpa min kal-m*  
 but eye 1sgPOS(NOM=ACC) before good carry-P.IPFV  
 ‘but my eyes used to be good’  
 [Anon]

It is unclear in these examples whether the putative copula subject is in nominative case (as would be expected for this function), or in the accusative case normally assigned to the theme argument of *kal* ‘carry’. In the latter case, (768) and (769) should not be considered copula clauses proper. However the former case would suggest that *kal* is here functioning with an intransitive case frame and should be considered a legitimate postural verb.

In general, though, inalienably possessed parts are categorially equivalent to their wholes, in terms of the copula verb selected. So where the subject NP refers to an inanimate part (e.g. a name) of a larger animate entity (e.g. a dog), the selection of default copula verb is determined by the larger entity as a whole. Thus in (770) the copula verb *yan* ‘go’ is selected as the default copula verb for animates.

- (770) *nhamp ulp Buddy yancm*  
 name(NOM) dem:adr.prx Buddy go:P.IPFV  
 ‘[my childhood dog’s] name was Buddy’  
 [LC19/11/02 Conversation]

The same holds for the relationship between Product and Source. Accordingly, in (771), the choice of default copula verb is determined by characteristics of the Source-complement (*wat* ‘tea tree’, which prototypically ‘stands’) rather than of the Product-subject (*yuk thincirr* ‘drinking vessel’, which prototypically ‘lies’).

- (771) *yuk thinycirr wat inh than<an>*  
THING vessel(NOM) tea.tree dem:sp.prx stand:<RDP>:NPST  
'these drinking vessels are [made from] tea tree'  
[AJ26/11/02 Conversation/Narrative]

Finally, it should be noted that constituent order in copula clauses is mutable, though the order subject — complement — (postural verb) is by far the most common.

### 9.2.5 The locative construction

The locative construction is used to locate or position a figure (encoded as subject) with respect to a particular ground (encoded as dative-case complement), as seen in (772).

- (772) *nhul Post.Office-ak yat*  
3sg(NOM) Post.Office-DAT go:P.PFV  
'he is at [lit. went to] the Post Office'  
[GJ10/12/02 Elicitation]

The principles according to which the postural verb is selected for a locative clause differ from those that determine the selection of copula verbs. One commonality between the two, however, is the fact that higher animate subjects almost always take the posture verb *yan* 'go' in locative constructions, as in (772). The only exception to this, is where a person is being located at their home, in which case *nhiin* 'live' or *wun* 'reside' may be used:

- (773) *nhul pormp-an wun / nhiinhin*  
3sg(NOM) house-DAT lie:NPST / sit<RDP>:NPST  
'he's at home'  
[GJ10/12/02 Elicitation]

To use any verb other than *yan* ‘go’ to locate a person outside their home, forces the clause to be interpreted as a postural construction, as can be seen in (774):

- (774) *nhul Post.Office-ak thanan*  
 3sg(NOM) Post.Office-DAT stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘he’s standing near / on top of the Post Office’ (not ‘he’s at the Post Office’)  
 [GJ10/12/02 Elicitation]

Although both postural and locative clauses may contain a nominative NP, a dative NP and a postural verb (compare, for example, [772] with [774]), the two can be differentiated both syntactically and semantically. Syntactically, the postural verb is obligatory in the postural clause but not the locative, while the dative NP is an optional adjunct in the postural clause but an obligatory complement in the locative clause. Semantically, the postural construction entails the posture predicated of the subject NP, while no posture is entailed where a locative construction contains a default postural verb. The different structures of the two constructions can be summarised as in (775).

- (775)  
 Postural construction: (SUBJECT<sub>NOM</sub>), (ADJUNCT<sub>DAT</sub>), VERB<sub>POSTURAL</sub>  
 Locative construction: (SUBJECT<sub>NOM</sub>), COMPLEMENT<sub>DAT</sub>, (VERB<sub>POSTURAL</sub>)

The selection of default postural verb in the location of inanimate subjects is a little more complicated, and must take into account certain features of the subject referent. The first relevant distinction is whether or not the object is ‘moveable’. If not, the verb selected must reflect the fixed posture of the object. So, for instance, any object suspended from a surface must be described as *yooyongke* ‘hanging’. There is no default/non-default distinction available for such objects; if a verb is overtly realised, it will be *yooyongke* ‘hang’ (as in [776]).

- (776) *may yulu yuk-un yoo<yo>ngke-ø*  
 VEG apple(NOM) tree-DAT hang<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘there are apples on the tree’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed27]

Similarly, trees or buildings that are fixed in a ‘standing’ position must be located by means of the verb *than* ‘stand’ (as in [777] and [778]).

- (777) *yuk pormpr pil-un than<an>*  
 tree(NOM) house hip-DAT stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the tree is [lit ‘stands’] beside the house’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed49]

- (778) *hospital ii-ø-kuw-an inh than-m*  
 hospital(NOM) there-at-west-DAT dem:sp.prx stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘the hospital used to be there in the west’  
 [GJ27/01/04 Conversation]

For all moveable inanimate objects, the pragmatically unmarked verb is *wun* ‘lie’, and any such object positioned on a surface may be described using *wun* regardless of its actual posture. So, for example, a bottle standing on a tabletop would be described using *thanan* ‘stand’ in a postural construction (in order to draw attention specifically to its posture, as in [779]), but in a locative construction (used to locate the bottle with respect to the ground ‘table’, as in [780]), the verb *wun* is used:

- (779) *bottle table-ak than<an>*  
 bottle(NOM) table-DAT stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the bottle is standing on the table’  
 [GJ19/10/02 CausedPositions25]

- (780) *bottle table-ak wun*  
 bottle table-DAT lie:NPST  
 ‘the bottle is on the table’  
 [GJ19/10/02 CausedPositions14]

Note that (780) could be uttered equally felicitously in the description of either an upright bottle or a bottle lying on its side. Similarly, to merely locate a nanda nut in a tree the default verb *yoongke* ‘hang’ should be used, as seen in (776). To use the verb *wun* ‘lie’ (as in [781]) would entail that the nut has been placed on top of a branch, rather than hanging from the tree in its prototypical posture.

- (781) *may pucr yuk-un wun*  
 VEG nanda(NOM) tree-DAT lie:NPST  
 ‘a nanda nut is [balanced] on the tree’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation]

Interestingly, lower animates (i.e. non-human animals, usually excluding ‘social animals’ such as dogs and, for some speakers, cats) appear to be more flexible with respect to the verbs that may be used to locate them. In particular, the locative posture verbs *nhiin* ‘sit’ and *than* ‘stand’ are frequently used in cases where verbal semantics conflict with the actual posture of the subject referent:

- (782) *kuta thoknhul koo-kanpa nhii<nhi>n nhangun kuta-thak*  
 PET cat 3sg(NOM) nose-before sit<RDP>:NPST 3sgDAT dog-DAT  
 ‘the cat is standing in front of the dog’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

It is unclear at this stage what motivates verb selection in such cases.

One further characteristic of the locative construction is that a locational adverb or particle may be substituted for the dative-marked noun phrase. This can be seen in example (783), in which the location of the subject/figure is indicated by the adverb *awi’i* ‘here’:

- (783) *ngay aw-i’i*  
 1sgNOM ATTN-here  
 ‘I’m here!’



### 9.2.6 Existential construction

The existential construction is used to declare the existence of or to draw attention to some entity. Although in many respects structurally similar to the postural, copula and locative constructions, it differs from these in having no complement. In fact, the existential construction consists minimally of the subject/topic (whose existence is asserted), with an optional (postural verb) predicate, as in (784).

(784) *yak!*  
 snake  
 ‘[there’s a] snake!’

As (785) demonstrates, the existential (a) construction can be ambiguous with the copula (b).

(785a) *puun min*  
 breeze good(NOM)  
 ‘[there is a] nice breeze’

(b) *puun min*  
 breeze(NOM) good  
 ‘the breeze is nice’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation / Conversation]

Where an existential clause contains a verb, this appears to be selected according to the same principles as apply to copula clauses. Since existential clauses overwhelmingly take inanimate subjects, the verb in an existential clause tends to reflect the canonical posture of its sole argument, as in (356):

(786) *church inh raak ngan-tam thanam?*  
 church dem:dist TIME what-ABL stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘how long has the church been [in existence]?’  
 [LN06/09/02 Elicitation]

Smith and Johnson (2000:419) use the formation of negatives in Kugu Nganhcara verbless clauses to argue that these are not merely cases of verbal ellipsis, but constitute a separate constructional type. As in Kugu Nganhcara, Thaayorre existential clauses may only be negated by the constituent negator *pokon* ‘NO’ (787), and not by the clausal negator *kaar* ‘NEG’.

- (787) *kanangkarr pormpr pokon*  
 long.ago house NO  
 ‘before, there were no houses’  
 [AC06/08/02 Conversation / Narrative Kanangkarr]

This fact differentiates Thaayorre existential clauses from their (ascriptive) copula counterparts, in which negation may alternatively be achieved by means of the clausal negator *kaar* ‘NEG’ (788) or the constituent negator (789).

- (788) *nhunt God kaar=p*  
 2sgNOM God NEG=PRAG  
 ‘you’re not God!’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative ChristmasStory]

- (789) *ulp parr\_r pam=rr pokon*  
 dem:adr.prx child male=PRAG NO  
 ‘this isn’t a boy [it’s a girl]’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

### 9.2.7 Verb-headed copula clauses

The preceding subsections have been concerned with the ‘postural verb’ subclass and the constructions in which they optionally appear. Kuuk Thaayorre also possesses two further copula verbs which are not subject to the paradigmatic and morphosyntactic generalisations that apply to postural copulas. These two verbs (*wene* ‘become’ and *yomparr* ‘transform’) have inchoative and/or transformational

semantics. Like postural copulas, though, they subcategorise for a complement in addition to their nominative-case subject. In (790) this complement is a simple adjective, whilst in (791) it is a full noun phrase.

(790) *ak piinth-r, ngamal wene-ø*  
 HORT grow-NPST large become-NPST  
 ‘let it [cyclone] grow, let it become large’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

(791) *town ngamal yomparrur peln*  
 town large transform-P.PFV 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘they have become a large town’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The copula complement may alternatively be an adverb (207) or a dative-marked noun phrase (793).

(792) *ball werngka-ntam kerp-r ngul koorr yomparru-rr*  
 ball(NOM) middle-ABL finish-P.PFV then outside transform-P.PFV  
 ‘the ball disappeared from the middle then appeared [lit. became] outside’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation MoverbEnterExit8]

(793) *ball ii kerp-r, ngul thil meer-en wene-r*  
 ball(NOM) there finish-P.PFV then again eye-DAT appear-P.PFV  
 ‘the ball disappeared and then reappeared [lit. became before (our) eyes again]’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation MoverbPath2]

In such clauses, *wene* ‘become’ and *yomparr* ‘transform’ might be misinterpreted as simple intransitive verbs with the meaning ‘appear’ (exhibiting the same pattern of intransitive-copula heterosemy as their English gloss). It is more parsimonious, however, to view (207) and (793) simply as copula clauses with adverbial and dative complements respectively, as suggested by the literal translations provided.



# Chapter Ten: Constructions

## 10.1 Interrogative constructions

There are three types of interrogative construction, all characterised by a distinctive intonation contour: (a) a clause containing an ignorative (§5.2, e.g. *wanthanngun* ‘where at’ in [794]); (b) a clause containing ConTRastive *wuump* (795); (c) a clause that is morphosyntactically identical to a declarative clause (796):

(794) *raak pungk pelnan wanthanngun?*

place knee 3plPOS(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub>

‘where is their land?’

[LN08/09/02 Elicitation]

(795) *Alfred Charlie nhunt wuump nhaawr*

Alfred Charlie(ACC) 2sg(ERG) CONTR see:P.PFV

‘have you seen Alfred Charlie?’

[JCo12/09/02 Conversation]

(796) *kirkmuk nhunt heard.about rirk-r?*

black.snake(ACC) you(ERG) heard.about DO-P.PFV

‘have you heard about *kirkmuk*?’

[GJ27/01/04 Conversation]

In each of these constructions, one or more constituents is marked by focal intonation; a small dip in pitch, followed by a sharp rise with a high peak, followed by a gradual lowering of pitch. This distinctive prosodic contour is found in a number of clause types, but is strongly associated with interrogation. In the first interrogative construction, it is always the ignorative that attracts focal intonation, while focal intonation is centred on *wuump* in the second construction. The domain of focal intonation in the third interrogative construction is determined by the scope of interrogation. In (796), for instance, the domain of focal intonation coincides with the predicate *heard about rirk-r* ‘have heard about’.

Interrogation is just one of the many ignorative functions discussed under §5.2.3. The role of *wuump* ‘contrastive’ in interrogative clauses is discussed in §11.3.4.

## 10.2 Imperative constructions

Imperative constructions must be headed either by an imperative-inflected verb (as in [797] and [798]) or by a nonpast-inflected verb combined with the jussive particle *ak* (as in [799]):

(797) *koowiy, pal kar.yup.kaar yarr!*  
cooee towards without.delay go:IMP  
‘cooee, Come here right away!’  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(798) *plate onkorr matp-ø!*  
plate(ACC) PROHIB smash-IMP  
‘don’t smash that plate!’  
[AC27/8/02 Elicitation]

(799) *ak wun!*  
JUSS lie:NPST  
‘let them lie!’ (i.e. don’t move my clothes from the washing machine)  
[LN8/02/04 Conversation]

Only prohibitive imperative clauses (such as [798]) attract focal intonation, which centres upon the prohibitive particle. The morphology and semantics of the imperative and jussive constructions are elaborated under §7.3.1, as is the use of the permissive particle *kirri* to increase the politeness of an imperative clause.

### 10.3 Negation

Negation may be achieved in Kuuk Thaayorre in a number of ways. To begin with, there are two negative interjections (*kece* ‘CONTRADICTORY’ and *pokon* ‘NO’, discussed under §10.3.1) which are antonymically related to the affirmative interjection *ngaway* ‘yes’. The form *pokon* ‘NO’ also functions as a constituent negator (effecting, e.g., existential negation), as does the privative enclitic *=(k)aar*. The morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences between these two are considered in §10.3. Clausal negation is achieved by means of the NEGATIVE particle *kaar*, discussed in §10.3.2.

#### 10.3.1 Negative interjections

Both *kece* ‘CONTRADICTORY’ and *pokon* ‘NO’ function as negative interjections. *Pokon* is the unmarked of the two, frequently occurring as an answer to questions (800) or to contradict a statement perceived to be incorrect (6):

(800) A: *nhunt rump-un yan?*  
 2sg(NOM) beach-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘are you going to the beach?’

B: *pokon*

NO

‘no.’

[Anon.]

(801) A: *ngay kar ngeeym nhunt kar sixteen=nhurr=p*  
 1sg(NOM) like think:P.IPFV 2sg(NOM) like sixteen=ONLY=PRAG  
 ‘I thought you were just sixteen’

B: *pokon! Ngay twenty-four*

NO 1sg(NOM) twenty-four

‘no! I’m twenty-four’

[Anon conversation, confirmed LN02/10/02]

*Pokon* ‘NO’ is also used interjectively to add emphasis to an already negated clause:

- (802) *yoorr ngancn may kaar=p nhiina-n-r, pokon!*  
 now 1pl:excl(NOM) VEG NEG=PRAG sit-V^-NPST NO  
 ‘today we don’t plant any of that food, not at all / none of it!’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative ChapmanEra]

*Kece* is pragmatically stronger than *pokon*, carrying a contradictory connotation often translated in Pormpuraaw English as “you don’t know!”. Consequently, *kece* is usually an inappropriate response to a question, and is more typically uttered as an objection to a statement made previously by either the addressee or the speaker themselves:

- (803) A: *ball ith ngathn*  
 ball(GEN) dem:dist 1sgGEN  
 ‘that ball is mine’
- B: *kece! Ball ulp ngathn!*  
 CDICT ball(NOM) dem:adr.prx 1sgGEN  
 ‘no, the ball’s mine’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives13]

The proposition contradicted by *kece* may be implied rather than explicitly articulated by a prior statement. Hence in (804.3) AJ refutes my (AG) assumption that the place in question is far away:

- (804)
1. AJ: [...] *raak min, ee, rump, ii-ø-kuw inh*  
 place good eh beach there-at-west dem:sp.prx  
 ‘[...] it’s a good place, isn’t it, just down on the beach in the west’



2. AG: *ngay kaar yat - ngay truck pokon.*  
 1sg(NOM) NEG go:P.PFV 1sg(NOM) truck NO  
 ‘I haven’t been – I don’t have a truck’
3. AJ: *kece! inh thaapirri*  
 CDICT dem:sp.prxclose  
 ‘you’re mistaken! It’s nearby’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

*Kece* may also be employed to contradict a negative statement, much like the French interjection *si*.

These negative interjections do not enter into any kind of phrase or clause involving other constituents. They are also the only negators that can occur in isolation.

### 10.3.2 Clausal negation

Clausal negation can only be achieved using *kaar* ‘NEGATIVE’. Typically, *kaar* is placed immediately preceding the predicate, but it may also occur in clauses where the predicate is elided. *Kaar* never occurs in isolation, but owing to the optional omission of constituents, a negative clause consists minimally of *kaar* + argument (805) or *kaar* + predicate (806):

- (805) *ngay kaar*  
 1sg(NOM) NEG  
 ‘I don’t [want to go to the outstation]’  
 (also a felicitous refusal of offered cigarettes, etc.)  
 [EC02/10/02 Conversation]

- (806) *yarra kaar yat*  
 away NEG go:P.PFV  
 ‘[he] didn’t run off’  
 [Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

In examples where the predicate is omitted, such as (805), *kaar* appears to function predicatively, with a negative desiderative force (as noted by Hall 1972:90<sup>205</sup>). This modal implicature is purely pragmatic, however, and always defeasible. In cases where *kaar* is added to a verbless copula clause, there is no modal implicature:

- (807) *ngay mincminc kaar=p*  
 1sg(NOM) correct NEG=PRAG  
 ‘I’m not sure’  
 [JC13/11/02 Conversation]

The modal sense ‘not want to’ or ‘not be able to’ may also be pragmatically implicated in negative clauses containing an overt predicate. Thus example (808) can mean variously ‘I didn’t go’, ‘I didn’t want to go’, ‘I wasn’t able to go’:

- (808) *ngay kaar yat*  
 1sg(NOM) NEG go:P.PFV  
 ‘I didn’t go’

This corresponds to the fact that desire, will and ability (in affirmative, as well as negative, clauses) are most often left to inference, rather than explicitly marked<sup>206</sup>. When a speaker wishes to emphasise volitionality, this is usually done by recourse to English loan words:

- (809) *ngay yan, ngay yan. Ngay willing ngay yan*  
 1sg(NOM) go:NPST 1sg(NOM) go:NPST 1sg(NOM) willing 1sg(NOM) go:NPST  
 ‘I want to go [to Melbourne]. I’m willing [to do this], I want to go’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

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<sup>205</sup> Hall (1972:90) characterises the modal use of *kaar* as follows: “when used alone as head, the negative often substitutes for the desiderative “wish”, in a negative sense, /Nunt ka:r?/ ‘you refuse?’ “Don’t you want to?””.

<sup>206</sup> This is despite the existence of the purposive verbal inflection (§7.3.4), which is rarely used and unknown to most younger speakers.

Vernacular means do exist for explicitly encoding negative potentiality, however. In order to express an inability or impossibility (as opposed to unwillingness), *kaar* enters into a construction with the DUBitative enclitic =*okun*. This can be seen in example (810), which was uttered in an elicitation context when the speaker was asked to imagine that she had been planning (and wanted) to walk down to the beach to go fishing, but had hurt her foot and was not able to walk there.

- (810) *ngay yancnh-paa rump-un, ngay kaar=okun yan*  
 1sg(NOM) go:SBJV-EMPH beach-DAT 1sg(NOM) NEG=DUB go:NPST  
 ‘I want to walk to the beach but I can’t go (i.e. it is not the case that I might go)’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

Dubitative =*okun* is a modal enclitic used to express a lack of knowledge on the speaker’s part (§11.3.5), as seen in the following:

- (811) *ngay rump-un yan=okun*  
 1sg(NOM) beach-DAT go:NPST=DUB  
 ‘maybe I’ll go to the beach [I don’t know whether or not this will happen]’  
 [MF24/09/02]

If =*okun* expresses ‘possibly X’, the collocation *kaar=okun* expresses ‘NOT {possibly X}’, with the negative particle having scope over the dubitative enclitic, rather than the reverse. Interestingly, when the speaker of (810) was asked to translate the example sentence, she rendered it in Pormpuraaw English as follows:

- (812) *I might walk down the beach but I mightn't go. I want to walk down the beach but I mightn't go down now.*

The original translation is rather misleading since the scope of *mightn't* in Pormpuraaw English is broader than that of the Standard Australian English equivalent. For the latter, *I mightn't go* also allows *I might go* (i.e. ‘possibly {NOT X}’), whereas in Pormpuraaw English this is equivalent to *it is not the case that I might go* (i.e. ‘NOT {possibly X}’). This broad scope can also be seen in example (813):

- (813) *kece, Mum, ngul=okun kaar wang-a kaar=okun let-m rirk-ø*  
 CDICT Mum then=DUB NEG **white-ERG** NEG=DUB **let-VBLZ DO-NPST**  
 ‘No, Mum, **the white people won’t let me**’  
 [ACh05/10/02 Conversation]

I believe that this broad scope is a feature of *kaar=okun* as a restricted collocation used in the formation of an ‘impossibility construction’, rather than falling out from the scope of either *kaar* or *=okun* in their respective independent usages.

Where a negative clause is headed by a verb, there is an overwhelming tendency for *kaar* ‘NEGative’ to appear in the immediately preverbal position (an initial text count of verb-headed clauses revealed ninety-eight cases in which *kaar* preceded the verb, and only three in which the predicate occurred first). Where *kaar* precedes the verb, it has narrow scope over the verb alone. Hence example (814) describes many people not succeeding, rather than not many people succeeding:

- (814) *mong-thurr kaar win-m rirk-r*  
 many-ERG NEG succeed-VBLZ DO-P.PFV  
 ‘a lot of people couldn’t do it [i.e. each person tried and failed]’  
 [AC13/09/02 Narrative Werngr]

In the clauses in which *kaar* follows the verbal head, *kaar* appears to have wider scope than in those in which *kaar* appears preverbally. Consider the second line of example (815), in which the speaker makes explicit his intention to negate the clause as a whole (i.e. ‘NOT[I have forgotten]’, rather than ‘I have NOT[forgotten]’):

- (815)  
 1. *wuuc ngay kaal-purng-m-at*  
 song(ACC) 1sg(NOM) ear-closed-VBLZ-GO&:P.PFV  
 ‘I’ve forgotten the traditional songs’

2. *kaal-purng-m-at*                      *kaar-p*  
 ear-close-VBLZ-GO&:P.PFV NEG=PRAG  
 ‘[actually] it’s not that I’ve forgotten’
3. *ngay*            *kaar learn-m*    *rirk-r*  
 1sg(NOM) NEG learn-VBLZ DO-P.PFV  
 ‘I never learned [them]’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

This broad-scope negation in (815.2) contrasts with the narrow-scope negation of (815.3), in which *kaar* precedes the verb.

The negative particle *kaar* is presumably the source of the privative enclitic  $=(k)aar$ , which was introduced in §4.2.8 and is illustrated by example (817) below. Neither morpheme can appear as the sole constituent of a clause, but the two are formally differentiated by the following features: (a) *kaar* may appear clause-initially, while  $=(k)aar$  may not; (b) the initial segment of *kaar* is never reduced, while it is most frequently realised as a voiced velar fricative in the case of  $=(k)aar$ <sup>207</sup> (cf. phonetic transcriptions of [816] and [817] below); (c)  $=(k-)aar$  is encliticised to the final element of the NP it has scope over, while the word order of *kaar* is free with respect to all constituents except the verb; (d) the pragmatic enclitic  $=p$  may be encliticised to *kaar* (with the meaning ‘not at all’) but not  $=(k)aar$ . The two are also differentiated functionally by the fact that *kaar* is a clausal negator (as in [816]), while  $=(k)aar$  is a derivational enclitic that produces an (adnominal or relational) privative nomen:

- (816) *nhul*            *may kaar*  
 [n□ul        maj ka:□]  
 3sg(NOM) VEG NEG  
 ‘he doesn’t want any food’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

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<sup>207</sup> Note that it is typical for the initial segment of the syllable immediately following a clitic of compound boundary to be fricated.

- (817) *nhul may=kaar*  
[n□ul maj□a:□]  
3sg(NOM) VEG=ADN.PRIV  
‘he has no food’ (i.e. ‘he is without food’)  
[GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

### 10.3.3 Constituent negation: *pokon*

The particle *pokon* ‘NO’ is employed to mark constituent negation, including existential negation. Although it is typically placed directly following the constituent it modifies (as in [818]), this order is mutable (as in [819]):

- (818) *lights pokon, money pokon*  
lights NO money NO  
‘[we had] no lights, no money’  
[AJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative Pompokanangkarr]

- (819) *yuk ngay pokon*  
stick 1sg(NOM) NO  
‘I don’t have any cigarettes’  
[AC10/08/02 Conversation]

While this constituent negation is often used to express a negative possessive relation between the constituent and a potential possessor (as with both [818] and [819]), this is not a semantic feature of the construction, the usage of the latter being far more broad. For example, (820) was uttered to refute the maleness of the constituent, not to negate its existence altogether<sup>208</sup>:

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<sup>208</sup> Interestingly, though, the speaker used an English existential negation construction when paraphrasing her statement; *there is no boy one!*. It was nevertheless clear from context that existential negation was not intended. Example (820) was drawn from a stretch of spontaneous speech in which she describes her husband coming to see her immediately after she had given birth to their daughter. When he mistook the child for a son, she corrected him as in (820).

- (820) *ulp parr\_r pam=rr pokon*  
 dem:adr.prx child male=FOC NO  
 ‘this is not a boy (i.e. it is a girl)’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

This negation of a nominal constituent is presumably differentiated from existential negation pragmatically rather than constructionally since clauses like the following are ambiguous:

- (821) *ngay kuta pokon*  
 1sg(NOM) dog NO  
 ‘I don’t have a dog’ or ‘I am not a dog’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

Where *pokon* is the sole exponent of a constituent, it usually represents existential negation; ‘nothing’, ‘no one’, ‘none’. For example, in telling a story about losing his travelling companion, AC uses *pokon* to declare her lack of response:

- (822) *nhul nganh kaar thaa.pirr-m.*  
 3sg(NOM) 1sgACC NEG answer-P.IPFV  
*Pokon!Nhul kuuk=aar than-m*  
 NO 3sg(NOM) word=ADN.PRIV stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘she never answered me. [enacts listening for her]: nothing! She kept quiet’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Similarly, in the verbless copula construction:

- (823) *ngay pokon, ngay kaar born rirk-r same.time raak ulp*  
 1sg(NOM) NO 1sg(NOM) NEG born DO-P.PFV  
 same.time TIME dem:adr.prx  
 ‘I was nothing [i.e. not in existence]. I wasn’t born at that time’  
 [ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

Where *pokon* is the sole constituent of a clause uttered as a response to an open-ended question, it must be with this indefinite sense (as opposed to the contrary interjective function used in responding to statements or polar interrogatives):

(824a) *nhunt ngan yump-r minc.ngul?*

A: 2sg(NOM) what do-NPST afternoon  
 ‘what will you do this afternoon?’

(b) *pokon, ngay pormp-an=nhurr nhiin-nan*

B: NO 1sg(NOM) house-DAT=ONLY sit-GO&:NPST  
 ‘nothing, I’m just going to sit at home’  
 [LN06/09/02 Elicitation / Conversation]

Covering somewhat similar functions, *pokon* contrasts with the PRIVative enclitic *=(k)aar* in several respects. Compare, for instance, (825a) and (b):

(825a) *pam.kun\_yangkar pormpr pokon*

brother(NOM) house NO  
 ‘my brother [has] no house [right now]’

(b) *pam.kun\_yangkar pormpr=aar*

brother(NOM) house=PRIV  
 ‘my brother is homeless’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

*Pokon* tends to be associated with the lack of more temporary, alienable ownership (as with cigarettes, money), and *=(k)aar* with a lacking stable and permanent association (as with body parts, spouses, cars). This appears to be only an implicature, however, as both forms are potentially compatible with the full range of possessive relations.

Owing to their different functions and different grammatical status, *pokon* and *=(k)aar* also differ in their focal effects. *Pokon* contributes a focus on the possessum it modifies, as would be expected of a constituent negator. Accordingly, example



(826) below focuses attention on the dog that the man lacks. *=(K)aar*, on the other hand, entails a focus on the relationship itself (as befits a form most likely derived from *to* the clausal negator). Thus the privative construction in (827) focuses attention on the possessive relationship of dog-having that is absent. The adnominal privative form *=aar* gives focal prominence to the possessor, with (828) focusing attention on the man who lacks a dog:

(826) *pam*            *kuta pokon*  
 man(NOM) dog NO  
 ‘the man has **no dog**’

(827) *pam*            *kuta=kaar*  
 man(NOM) dog=REL.PRIV  
 ‘the man **doesn’t have** a dog’

(828) *pam*            *kuta=aar*  
 man(NOM) dog=ADN.PRIV  
 ‘the **dogless** man’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

This contrast in focus explains the pragmatic association of the respective markers with more vs less alienable possessive relationships. So, for instance, if the privative relation is employed to tell the hearer something about the (non)possessor, then the hearer is likely to assume that the state or situation described is something significant for the possessor, and therefore likely to be ongoing or permanent (e.g. lacking an ear is more likely to be described as an identifying characteristic of a person than lacking a watch).

#### 10.3.4 Prohibition

The prohibitive construction minimally comprises an imperative-inflected verb in conjunction with the PROHIBITIVE particle *ongkorr*. Constituent order within the

prohibitive construction is pragmatically determined, with the particle preceding the verb in (829) but following it in (830)<sup>209</sup>:

- (829) *theerng-ø onkorr, kuta!*  
hit-IMP PROHIB dog(ACC)  
'don't hit that dog!'  
"no more hitim with a stick, them dog"  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

- (830) *nhunt onkorr yarr raak nganc-an*  
2sg(ACC) PROHIB go:IMP PLACE sacred-DAT  
'don't go to that poison place'  
[GJ14/10/02 Elicitation / Conversation]

### 10.3.5 Negative constructions as a politeness strategy

In English, an interrogative construction (usually containing a modal verb) is frequently used to make requests (e.g. *would you shut that window for me?*) and offers (e.g. *would you like some tea?*). In Kuuk Thaayorre, these communicative functions are instead achieved by means of negative constructions, as seen in the following:

- (831) *nhunt kaar ngathun mit rirk-nhan*  
2sgNOM NEG 1sgDAT work DO-GO&:NPST  
'would you do some work for me?' (lit. 'you won't work for me')  
[Anon.]

- (832) *nhunt kaar mungk-nhan?*  
2sgERG NEG eat-GO&:NPST  
'would you like something to eat?' (lit. 'you're not going to eat')  
[Foote and Hall: Reader]

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<sup>209</sup> There does not seem to be any preference for the prohibitive particle to occupy second position in the clause. Thus the exclamation *onkorr mungk!* (PROHIB eat:IMP) 'don't eat that!' is perfectly well-formed.

- (833) *yuk pokon?*  
 thing NO  
 ‘you wouldn’t have any cigarettes, would you?’ (lit. ‘[you have] no cigarettes’)  
 [Anon.]

Thus the ironic declaration in (831) (‘you won’t work for me’) in fact implicates the speaker’s desire for the opposite state of affairs (‘you will work for me’). Similarly in (832) the declaration that the addressee will not eat in fact represents an indirect offer of food. Example (833) is even more obtuse, whereby the speaker requests a cigarette by declaring its nonexistence. These examples should be understood in the context of a sociolinguistic setting in which direct commands and questions are dispreferred in order to protect negative face.

## 10.4 Apprehensive constructions

### 10.4.1 *Pam* and ‘potential detriment’

Apprehensive clauses describe a (possible or actualised) event that might have (had) a negative impact<sup>210</sup>. This can be seen in the second clause of the following example:

- (834) *gas.bottle kar kunut-r in.case pam fly-m rirk-nhan*  
 gas.bottle like remove-NPST in.case DETR fly-VBLZ DO-GO&:NPST  
 ‘[we’ll] take out all the gas bottles, in case they fly [and hurt somebody]’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The possible event in (834) is the gas bottles flying around, while the negative impact (that they might collide with a person and hurt them) is only implied by the presence of *pam*. Although the form *pam* is elsewhere a noun meaning ‘man’, it appears to have undergone a semantic shift to convey some sense of the event’s potentially

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<sup>210</sup> This usage of *pam* is noted by Hall (1972:142) and labelled ‘indefinite threat’.

having some detrimental effect on a particular person or (in this case) people in general. The individual potentially harmed can be spelled out, however, as in (835b):

(835)

1. *thaapirri kaar=p nhunt katp-nhan=unh*  
 close NEG=PRAG 2sg(ERG) grasp-GO&:NPST=3sgACC  
 ‘don’t you go holding it [crocodile] close’

2. *ngul nhinh pam paath-r. Awoy.*  
 then 2sgACC DETR bite-NPST yes  
 ‘or it might bite you. True’.  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Such examples make it clear that *pam* does not represent a non-specific argument. Because it is unmarked for case, *pam* could only occupy one of two argument slots: intransitive subject or transitive object. The fact that (835b) is a transitive clause rules out the former, while the specification of a second person direct object (*nhinh* ‘you’) rules out the latter. Further, while (835b) spells out the potential detrimental occurrence (i.e. that the crocodile might bite the addressee), *pam* ‘DETR’ also appears in clauses representing the Cause of the detrimental occurrence. Thus in clauses such as (836), *pam* ‘DETR’ is the only overt signal that the event described might have some negative impact on the speaker:

(836) *pam nhunt ngene yat?*  
 DETR 2sgNOM why go:P.PFV  
 ‘why on earth did you go off (to my potential detriment)?’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(836) is taken from a story told by Alfred Charlie, in which he describes taking a white woman on a bush trip. The woman went missing only to reappear later saying that she had just wanted to stretch her legs. In (836), Charlie quotes himself admonishing her for leaving him and potentially getting him in trouble (for losing her). Slightly later in the story (837), he employs another potential detriment

construction, though this time it focuses on the detrimental effect itself rather than its Cause:

- (837) *ooh, yorrp ongkorr! Ngay pam court-ak yup yan*  
 oh like.that PROHIB 1sg(NOM) DETR court-DAT soon go:NPST  
 ‘oh, don’t do such things! I might have had to go to court’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

Because it is clearly independent of argument structure, and also contributes the ‘potential detriment’ semantics, I analyse *pam* ‘DETR’ as a clausal particle. Aside from the presence of this particle, the potential detriment construction takes the form of a regular declarative clause.

It is finally worth noting that this construction probably underlies the common collocation *pam thaawaarra* ‘dangerous’, now used adjectivally. Although *thaawaarra* is synchronically unanalysable, it may well derive from a compound *thaaw* ‘mouth’ and *waarr* ‘bad’ – especially since many things so-labelled are dangerous because they bite (e.g. dogs, crocodiles).

#### 10.4.2 Counterfactual apprehensive construction

The second type of apprehensive construction in Kuuk Thaayorre is formed through the combination of the ignorative *ngene* ‘why’ with a verb marked either by counterfactual inflection or by the first associated motion morpheme. These ‘counterfactual apprehensive’ clauses express that something undesirable might have happened (or might happen in the future) but that it was (or should be) avoided. This construction is thus typically employed in the description of a lucky escape.

- (838) *ngay nearly punth inh ngene lose-m rirk-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) nearly arm(ACC) dem:sp.prx why lose-TR DO-GO&:NPST  
 “nearly lost my arm!”  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation / Narrative]

(839) *ngul ngene peln thaaw-muunth-nhan*  
then why 3pl(NOM) mouth-sink-GO&:NPST  
'lucky if they don't get drowned!'  
[Hall 1972:112]

(840) *ngul ngene=p yungar-natath?*  
later why=PRAG swim-CTF  
'lucky he didn't swim (near the crocodiles)!'  
[Hall 1972:112]

The modal information that the unfortunate event was or might still be avoided is contributed by the verbal (associated motion or counterfactual) inflection, whilst the ignorative *ngene* contributes to the apprehensive sense of a potentially dangerous situation.

## 10.5 Secondary predication

### 10.5.1 Depictive construction

In the Thaayorre depictive construction, the main predicate of the clause (almost always a verb) is supplemented by a secondary predicate, which predicates on one of the verbal arguments. Hence in (841), both *rancirr* 'landed' and *pungkurthaarr* 'hungry' are predicated of the single subject argument *ngancn* 'we':

(841) *pungkurthaarr ngancn ranci-rr*  
hungry 1pl:excl(NOM) jump-P.PFV  
'we were hungry when we landed (by plane)'  
[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

This secondary predicating element is most often a simple adjective (e.g. *pungkurthaarr* 'hungry' in [841] and *weneth* 'scared' in [842]), but may be also be a more elaborated noun phrase (e.g. *punth koon* 'short-armed' in [842]).

- (842) *punth koon nhul koorr kanpa riic-m weneth*  
 arm short 3sg(NOM) behind before run-P.IPFV scared  
 ‘he ran back and forth, scared, with his severed arm [after a crocodile attack]’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

As Schultze-Berndt and Himmelmann (2004) have shown, depictives are often similar to adverbial expressions. Depictives, however, assign a property to a participant of the main predicate, requiring that “the two predicates share a central participant and all circumstantial information” (Schultze-Berndt and Himmelman 2004:69), whereas adverbials modify the predication overall. Hence the depictive *pungkurthaarr* ‘hungry’ in (841) tells us about the ongoing state of the participants (*ngancn* ‘we’) rather than about the event of landing. Similarly, in (843) the adjective *kempthe* ‘separate’ might be mistaken for an adverb:

- (843) *ngul ngay kirk kempthe kal-m thul=yuk*  
 then 1sg(ERG) spear(ACC) separate carry-P.IPFV woomera(ACC)=STUFF  
 ‘I used to carry spears and a woomera and things separately’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

I argue, however, that *kempthe* ‘separate’ is secondarily predicated on the direct object of the main verb *kal* ‘carry’. Rather than specifying the manner in which spears and woomera were carried (as does the English adverb *separately*), the single Thaayorre clause in (843) expresses both that the spears and woomera were carried, and that they were separate while being carried. Similarly, in (844) lightness is predicated of the child, not of the manner in which he is picked up:

- (844) *parr\_r inh ngay roorngkrr mi'irr*  
 child(ACC) dem:sp.prx 1sg(ERG) light pick.up:NPST  
 “this kid feels light when I pick him up”  
 [LN27/01/04 Elicitation]

The secondary predicate may have scope over the complement of the main predicate (as in [844]), the subject of an intransitive clause (841), or the subject of a transitive clause (845):

- (845) *Ngay ngoongkom pit-m pokon*  
1sg(ERG) ignorant hold-P.IPFV NO  
'I was fishing [holding a line] ignorant [of the crocodile nearby]'  
[AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Depictive secondary predication is thus not restricted to the 'internal arguments' as has been claimed elsewhere (cf. §10.5.2).

It is common amongst Australian languages (cf. Yankunytjatjara [Goddard 1985], Martuthunira [Dench 1995a]) for depictive constructions to be used to mark events that occurred at a particular stage of life, as in the following:

- (846) *ngay parr\_r yik-m, "ngay yan"*  
1sg(NOM) child(NOM) say-P.IPFV 1sg(NOM) go:NPST  
'I said, as a child, "I want to go!"'  
[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

There is just one instance in my data in which an apparent depictive secondary predicate receives (dative) case-marking:

- (847) *ngul ulp may kunk-un mungk-m*  
then dem:adr.prx VEG(ACC) raw-DAT eat-P.PFV  
'then he was eating the fruit raw'  
[DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

Nichols (1978) notes that the instrumental case may be used to mark depictive secondary predicates in Russian. The marking of *kunkun* 'alive:DAT' in (847) may represent an analogous use of the locative case in Kuuk Thaayorre, however it is also possible that it is the result of misspeech or mistranscription.



### 10.5.2 Resultative construction

The secondary predicate in a resultative construction is much more tightly bound to the predicate (semantically) than it is in a depictive construction<sup>211</sup>. Thus in (848) the secondary predicate *watp* ‘dead’ not only contributes information about the subject argument *kuta* ‘dog’ (i.e. that it is dead), but also about the event itself (i.e. that the dog came to be dead through the act of spearing):

- (848) *watp ke'e-rr      nhunh    kuta      ngulp*  
 dead spear-P.PFV 3sgACC dogACC dem:adr.prx  
 ‘that dog’s been speared dead’  
 [Foote: Kuta Woochorrm]

It has been claimed that secondary predicates may only be predicated on the internal argument, whether it be intransitive subject or transitive object (cf., e.g., Simpson’s (1983) ‘direct object restriction’). This has been shown to be false (e.g. in Gooniyandi [McGregor 1990] and Yankunytjatjara [Goddard 1985], cf. Dench and Evans 1988). However, I have not yet recorded any Thaayorre clauses in which a resultative secondary predicate has scope over the transitive subject, rather than object. Example (849), for instance, unambiguously describes the speaker-Undergoer becoming bloody as a result of being punched:

- (849) *nhul      nganh    yuur-u      theernga-rr kam*  
 3sgERG 1sgACC hand-ERG hit-P.PFV blood  
 ‘he hit me with the hand and blood’  
 i.e. ‘he hit me with his hand and I bled’  
 \* ‘he hit me with his hand and it [the hand] bled’  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>211</sup> Winkler (1997) views resultatives as a subtype of complex predicate since both the main predicate and secondary predicate contribute information about a single macro-event. So in (848), the verb *ke’e* ‘spear’ and the adjective *watp* ‘dead’ combine to form a complex accomplishment predicate ‘kill (something) by spearing’. This seems a plausible analysis, but the resultative construction is nevertheless discussed here owing to its structural similarity to the depictive construction.

If we instead wished to describe the assailant's hand becoming bloody as a result of the punch, we would need to employ a biclausal construction such as the following:

- (850) *nhul theernga-rr=anh ngul nhul yuur kam [yooc] than-m*  
 3sg(NOM) hit-P.PFV=3sgACC then 3sgNOM hand blood sopping stand-P.IPFV  
 'he hit me with his hand and then his hand was [dripping] with blood'  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

Although it is true that I never prompted my consultants with a clause in which the resultative secondary predicate agrees with the transitive subject in (ergative) case<sup>212</sup>, it seems likely that consultants would have offered such a clause alongside the many paraphrases of (850) proffered, were it grammatical.

Finally, it should be noted that my data contains numerous examples that in many ways resemble a resultative construction, but that are not. In (851), for example, the fact that a pause intervenes between the main clause and the adjective *watp* 'dead', suggests that *watp* is in fact a clause in and of itself (i.e. '[and he was] dead!') rather than a secondary predicate within the main clause:

- (851) *ngul nhul pam.kun\_yangkar nhangnman-thurr kat ke'err... watp*  
 then 3sg(ERG)brother 3sgPOS-ERG whack spear-P.PFV dead  
 'then his brother speared him with a whack... dead'  
 [Foote: Kuta Woochorrm]

## 10.6 Reflexive and reciprocal constructions

There are two reflexive constructions — one defined by the presence of the reflexive verbal suffix, one by the presence of a reflexive pronoun — and a single reciprocal construction (marked by a verbal suffix). While the distinction between reflexive and reciprocal seems clear in the comparison of clauses like (852a) and (b), there is

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<sup>212</sup> In Gooniyandi, for example, secondary predicates in transitive clauses receive ergative marking.

sufficient overlap between the semantics of the two, as well as their morphosyntax, to warrant grouping them together in this section.

(852a) *ngay*                      *nhaa<nha>th-e-ø*  
 1sg(NOM=ERG)    look.at<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘I’m looking at myself’

(b)    *ngal*                      *nhaa<nha>th-rr-ø*  
 1du:incl(NOM=ERG)    look.at<RDP>-RCP-NPST  
 ‘we two are looking at each other’  
 [ME09/02/04 Elicitation]

### 10.6.1 The reflexive constructions

Reflexive events are typically those in which the Actor-subject directs their actions towards themselves, rather than towards an external object. There are two reflexive constructions in Kuuk Thaayorre. The first, ‘pronominal reflexive construction’ (288) is defined by the presence of a reflexive pronoun (cf. §5.1.3) and the absence of any verbal morphology coding the reflexive or reciprocal. The second, ‘verbal reflexive construction’ (653) is defined by the presence of the reflexive verbal suffix *-e* (cf. §10.6.1.2):

(853) *ngay*            *wash-m rirk-r*    *ngathney*  
 1sg(ERG)    wash-TR DO-P.PFV    1sgRFL  
 ‘I’m washing myself’  
 [GJ25/10/02 Elicitation]

(854) *kuta*            *ngith*    *path<ath>-e-ø*  
 dog(NOM)    dem:dist    bite<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘that dog is biting himself’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

§10.6.1.1 summarises the morphosyntax of the pronominal reflexive construction. This remainder of this section will be concerned with the verbal reflexive construction, with §10.6.1.2 outlining its basic morphosyntax, and the following subsections focusing upon its semantic subsenses.

### **10.6.1.1 The pronominal reflexive construction**

The paradigm of reflexive pronouns was given in §5.1.3.1. In all cases of their use, reflexive pronouns express what I call ‘reflected action’, the fact that the Actor-subject is affected by their own actions. They may be affected as Undergoer (as in [288] above) or as Beneficiary, as in (855):

- (855) *ngay*      *may*      *mi'irr*      *ngathney*  
1sg(ERG) VEG(ACC) pick.up:P.PFV 1sgRFL  
‘I got myself some food’  
[Anon.]

In clauses such as (288) above the reflexive pronoun fills one of the argument slots subcategorised for by the verb. As examples like (855) demonstrate, though, the reflexive pronoun need not bind a core argument. Instead, the reflexive pronoun may apparently adopt any of the (core or oblique) functions eligible for personal pronouns. Reflexive pronouns thus do not appear to affect clausal transitivity, filling an argument slot where they bind the direct object (as in [288]), but simply marking the affectedness of the subject where an argument slot is unavailable (as in [855]).

It is common for a reflexive pronoun to supplement verbal marking in a verbal reflexive clause (e.g. [861] below) or a reciprocal clause (e.g. [888] below).

### **10.6.1.2 Morphosyntax of the verbal reflexive construction**

As shown in §8.1.2, reflexive derivation creates a second conjugation verb stem. Although this conjugation class is primarily associated with intransitive verbs, the verbal reflexive construction is somewhat ambivalent with respect to transitivity.

Oftentimes, as in example (653) above, the subject of the verbal reflexive clause is in unmarked Nominative case, signalling that the clause is intransitive. Other verbal reflexive clauses, however, contain an Ergative-marked subject. This is particularly common where the subject is acting upon a part of themselves, where this part is encoded as an accusative direct object. Such clauses (e.g. 856) appear to be straightforwardly transitive:

- (856) *pam-al ith koow katp<atp>-e-ø*  
 man-ERG dem:dist nose(ACC) hold<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘that man is holding [his] nose’  
 [FT10/02/04 RcpPilot8]

It is cross-linguistically common (particularly on the Australian continent) for reflexive and reciprocal clauses to display mixed and/or variable indicators of transitivity (cf. Evans et al., submitted). In Kuuk Thaayorre, there is a strong correlation between explicit reference to the Undergoer (in a separate NP to that representing the Actor) and the Ergative-Accusative case-frame indicative of transitive clauses. Complicating the analysis of transitivity somewhat, are verbal reflexive clauses containing two unmarked arguments. Such clauses (illustrated by [857], presented with two alternative glosses) arise from the differing patterns of case syncretism in the pronominal paradigm (in which the distinction between nominative and ergative is collapsed, cf. §5.1.1.1) as opposed to nominals (for which both nominative and accusative cases are unmarked, cf. §4.2).

- (857) *ngay punth inh yak-e-r*  
 1sg(ERG) arm(ACC) dem:sp.prx cut-RFL-P.PFV  
 1sg(NOM) arm(NOM) dem:sp.prx cut-RFL-P.PFV  
 ‘I cut myself on the arm’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Conversation / Narrative]

There are two possible analyses of such clauses. Firstly, they might be analysed as instances of the transitive reflexive construction, containing an unmarked ergative subject argument (in this case, *ngay* ‘I’) and an unmarked accusative direct object (in this case *punth inh* ‘this arm’). Secondly, the two noun phrases could be analysed as

forming a single argument through same-case (nominative) apposition. The apposition of noun phrases representing Part and Whole of a single entity is common in Kuuk Thaayorre (as discussed extensively in §6.9.1), but there is a crucial difference between the representation of Part and Whole in reflexive clauses such as (857), and an argument composed of Part and Whole NPs apposed in the same case. In an appositional construction, the same relationship obtains between the predicate and both Part and Whole. That is to say, the predicate has scope over the Whole referent inasmuch as the involved Part is taken to stand for the Whole (hence the Part cannot be affected or agentive without the Whole also being affected or agentive by implication). Accordingly, in (500) the dog enters the jar inasmuch as its head does:

- (858) *kuta            nhul            paant            glass-ak    rok-r*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) head(NOM) glass-DAT enter-NPST  
 ‘the dog puts his head into the jar’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

In reflexive clauses such as (857) above, however, the Whole referent plays a very different role to the Part argument. Indeed, the Whole (as Actor) acts upon the Part (as Undergoer). I therefore analyse clauses such as (857) as transitive, with the Whole subject in unmarked Ergative case and the Part object in unmarked Accusative case.

There thus is quite a neat correspondence between Ergative subject-marking in reflexive clauses with two overt arguments (representing Whole and Part of a single entity – as in [856] above) and Nominative subject-nonmarking in reflexive clauses with a single overt argument (as in [653]):

- (653’) *kuta            ngith            path<ath>-e-ø*  
 dog(NOM) dem:dist bite<RDP>-RFL-NPST  
 ‘that dog is biting himself’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Reflexive constructions in which Whole and Part are distinctly specified are transitive; here the subject referent is conceived of as saliently distinct from the object

referent they act upon, whilst their overlapping reference is signalled by the presence of the reflexive suffix. A reflexive construction containing only a single subject argument, however, is syntactically intransitive. Only one entity is involved in the event, but the fact that they are involved in this event in two ways (and therefore assigned two distinct theta roles) is signalled by the reflexive suffix. Reflecting this, I argue that there are two variants of the verbal reflexive construction: (1) an intransitive ‘core reflexive’ construction containing a reflexive-marked verb and a single (nominative) subject argument; and (2) a transitive ‘partitive object’ construction comprising a reflexive-marked verb, an (ergative) subject argument and an (accusative) direct object. Transitivity is thus a property of these (sub)constructions, rather than an inherent feature of the reflexive derivational process:

Core reflexive construction: *V-e* <SUBJ<sub>NOM</sub>, (Rfl.Pro)>

Partitive object construction: *V-e* <SUBJ(whole)<sub>ERG</sub>, OBJ(part)<sub>ACC</sub>, (Rfl.Pro)>

Before moving on, it is worth considering one exception to this neat division of reflexive clauses into transitive and intransitive constructions. In the description of reflexive events in which an Instrument is specified, the reflexive subject generally takes Ergative case marking even in the absence of a direct object:

(859) *pam-al yuk-u reenng-e-nham*  
 man-ERG stick-ERG scratch-RFL-P.IPFV  
 ‘the man was scratching himself with a stick’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

This might perhaps be linked to Kuuk Thaayorre’s general restriction — common amongst Australian languages<sup>213</sup> — of Instrument NPs to transitive clauses (cf. §4.2.1.2). Thus any Thaayorre reflexive clause containing an Instrument NP must

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<sup>213</sup> E.g. Yalarnnga (Blake 1987:57) and Alyawarr (Yallop 1977:72). The fact that Instrument NPs are allowable in (derived) intransitive reflexive/reciprocal clauses in languages such as Alyawarr, is taken by Evans et al. (submitted) to be an indicator of ‘mixed transitivity’.

behave as transitive (with regard to the case-marking of the subject), even in the absence of an overt direct object. Complicating this analysis, where the Instrument NP is a body part of the reflexive subject, the subject NP may either receive the expected ergative case-marking (as in [860]) or be unmarked (as in [861]):

(860) *pam-al yuur-u reenng-e-nham*  
 man-ERG hand-ERG scratch-RFL-P.IPFV  
 ‘the man was scratching himself with his hand’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

(861) *pam yuur-u reenng-e-nham nhangnul*  
 man(NOM=ACC) hand-ERG scratch-RFL-P.IPFV 3sgRFL  
 ‘the man was scratching himself with his hand’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

The fact that ergative marking is obligatory in (859) but optional in (861) might be attributed to the semantic difference between an inanimate Instrument (859) and a body part Instrument (861). In the case of the former, the Actor-subject is more highly agentive — despite the lack of external direct object — because they must manipulate the Instrument-object. By contrast, there is less agentivity involved in clauses like (861) since the body part (hand) is merely the active part of the subject referent, rather than an external object that the subject acts upon<sup>214</sup>. The many wrinkles in the mapping from argument structure to clausal transitivity in reflexive and reciprocal clauses present a most interesting area for future research (cf. Evans et al., submitted).

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<sup>214</sup> It may alternatively be that *yuuru* ‘hand’ in (861) is in fact in ergative case (not instrumental), itself representing the transitive subject. Correspondingly, *pam* ‘man’ would be in unmarked accusative case, representing the direct object. This might also explain the strongly preferred (possibly obligatory) presence of the reflexive pronoun, in order to stress that the hand scratching the man is part of the man himself. Such an explanation could be tested by the substitution of a pronoun for *pam* (since pronouns distinguish nominative and accusative cases). This remains to be investigated.



The following sections will outline the various event types that may be encoded by the verbal reflexive constructions.

### 10.6.1.3 Core reflexive

The first, ‘core reflexive’ sense can be characterised as follows:

*Self-directed action; (each) single participant is both Actor and Undergoer of a single (sub)event.*

This sense includes events in which a single participant acts upon themselves as a whole (as exemplified by [861] above), or in which each member of a plural participant group acts upon themselves individually:

- (862) *peln kempthe ree<re>nng-e-ø peln*  
 3pl(NOM) separately scratch<RDP>-RFL 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘each of them is scratching himself’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation]

Although the verbal reflexive construction is defined by the presence of *-e* ‘RFL’, the reflexive-derived verb frequently co-occurs with a reflexive pronoun (described in §5.1.3), used to reinforce the core reflexive interpretation (in contradistinction to other senses with which the reflexive suffix may be used – see discussion below). Reflexive pronouns in such clauses appear to have an emphatic function, stressing that the event is or should be self-directed rather than directed towards others, as seen in the following example:

- (863) *nhangknunt kar nhaath-e-ø*  
 2sgRFL like look-RFL-IMP  
 ‘you should look at yourself!’

#### 10.6.1.4 Partitive object

Reflexive events in which the Actor-subject acts upon a part of themselves (as opposed to their whole self) are labelled ‘partitive object’ by Geniušienė (1987) (and, following her, Gaby 2001). Both (856-857) above and (864) below are examples of the partitive object sense of the Thaayorre verbal reflexive construction:

- (864) *ngay muth rint-e-ø*  
1sg(ERG) back.of.neck(ACC) cook-RFL-NPST  
‘I’m warming my neck (to get rid of bad dream)’  
[AC10/08/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

As mentioned above, partitive object clauses can be identified as a distinct reflexive (sub)construction, with an ergative-marked subject NP (referring to the whole participant) and an accusative-marked direct object (referring to a part of the subject participant). Partitive object clauses are thus always higher in transitivity than a core reflexive clause.

#### 10.6.1.5 Collective reflexive

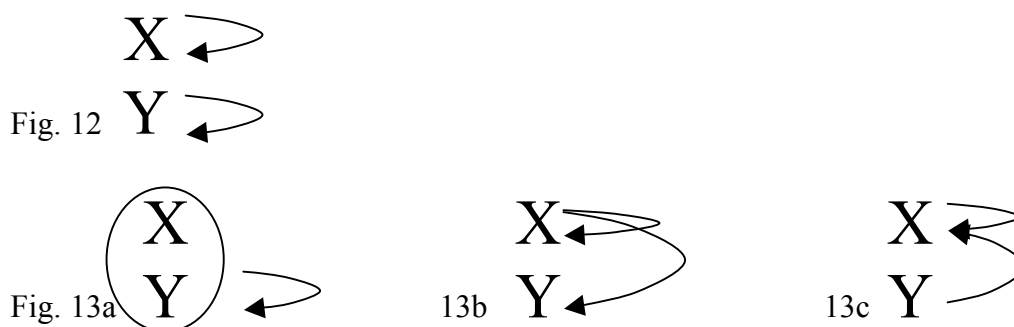
The third sense with which the reflexive suffix is used, I term ‘collective reflexive’ (following Gast and Haas forthcoming). This can be characterised as follows:

*The activity is carried out internally to the subject group, at least one member of which is both Actor and Undergoer*

Here, two or more participants are engaged in an activity, but their respective roles are underspecified. Whilst this use of the reflexive suffix entails that both Actor and Undergoer roles are ascribed to the group of participants encoded as subject (as is true of many of the senses associated with *-e* ‘RFL’), it also entails that at least one of these participants is both Actor and Undergoer of a single subevent. This can be illustrated by example (865), which was used above to illustrate the core reflexive sense. However, the same Thaayorre utterance can also be used in the description of a collective reflexive event, and as such is repeated here:

- (865) *ngali*                      *muul-thurr*                      *werk-e-r*  
 1du:excl(NOM=ERG)    white.ochre-ERG    rub-RFL-P.PFV  
 ‘we two painted each other with white ochre’  
 [EF15/12/02 Elicitation - prompted by Hall 1972]

A strictly core reflexive interpretation of (865) would entail that each participant paints themselves with white ochre (as diagrammatically represented in Figure 12). However, the same clause could be interpreted as collective reflexive (Figure 13a), describing an event in which a single person paints both themselves and a second person (Figure 13b) or - equally felicitously - an event where a single person is painted by both themselves and a second person (Figure 13c). It is interesting to note that these latter, collective reflexive senses are better rendered by the English reciprocal construction (as in the translation of [865']) than by the reflexive.



The principal difference between the collective reflexive and a core reflexive clause with plural subject, can be summarised as whether reflexivity is applied to the subject group as a whole (collective reflexive; Figure 13a), or to each individual within the subject group (core reflexive, Figure 12). The collective reflexive sense, as schematised in Figure 4a, is in fact vague as to the exact relations that may hold between individuals within the subject group. Taking a group of two participants for example, it is possible that each member of the group both acts and is acted upon (as in the core reflexive, Figure 12), or that just one member acts upon both themselves and the other member (Figure 13b), or that both members act upon just one member of the group (Figure 13c). The number of possible subrelations of course expands

geometrically with any increase in the number of group members. Reflexivity thus applied to an entire group, without specifying the exact relationships that hold between members of that group, may well prove a bridging context for the extension of reflexive constructions to encode the reciprocal category, or the reverse.

Kuuk Thaayorre is not novel in extending its verbal reflexive construction to encode this collective reflexive category. Indeed, Gast and Haas (forthcoming) document numerous examples of collective reflexivity in Germanic and Romance languages, wherein a reflexive relation holds for an entire group, rather than for an individual. This also helps to explain the reflexive coding of examples (869) and (872) below. In both these examples, two different roles are assigned by the reflexive-marked verb to the non-singular subject. Unlike a core reflexive clause, however, these two roles are not attributed to each of the participants involved. Rather, there is some vagueness as to which participant plays which role.

#### 10.6.1.6 *Medio-passive*

The third sense of *-e* ‘RFL’ backgrounds the Actor participant in order to focus attention on the Undergoer. This is labelled ‘medio-passive’ (following Geniušienė 1987), and can be viewed as the converse of the absolute function of the reciprocal suffix (which backgrounds the Undergoer in order to focus on the Actor):

*The Actor is backgrounded or unknown, with focus placed on the Undergoer.*

The second line of the following example illustrates this medio-passive sense:

(866) (*pam kuthirr pilun yongkerr nhangun Jesusak thurma*)  
(‘two men were hanging [crucified] on either side of Jesus’)

*nhul*          *Jesus*          *werngka yongk-e-nam*  
3sg(NOM) Jesus(NOM) middle hang-RFL-p.IPF  
‘Jesus was hanging in the middle’  
[Hall 1972:137]

The hearer should infer from (866) that an external Actor was responsible for the hanging (as Jesus is unlikely to have hung himself), but that the identity of this Actor is insignificant in comparison to the affect on the Undergoer. The same can be seen in (867), in which neither the Actor nor the (Whole) Undergoer is specified:

(867) *yangan kaal-ak kath-e-r*  
 hair(ACC) ear-DAT bind-RFL-P.PFV  
 ‘[his] hair is tied over [his] ears’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed46]

Uttered in the description of an elicitation drawing, it is particularly clear that the person who had tied the man’s hair is neither known nor relevant to the description.

#### **10.6.1.7 Deagentive**

The deagentive use of the reflexive suffix is closely related to the medio-passive inasmuch as the Undergoer is especially prominent in both. The deagentive sense, however, does not imply the existence of an agentive Actor that is simply too unimportant (or unknown) to be represented as subject. Instead, the effect on the Undergoer has been caused spontaneously or accidentally without the involvement of any external Actor or Force, as in (868):

(868) *minh ith kirk-an runc-e-r*  
 animal(NOM) dem:dist spear-DAT collide-RFL-P.PFV  
 “wallaby got speared [by colliding with a spear leaning on a rock]”  
 [GJ10/01/04 Elicitation]

Hence, the Deagentive sense can be characterised as follows:

*Undergoer is affected by a spontaneous or accidental event.*

**10.6.1.8 Further extended uses of the verbal reflexive construction**

Some of the events described by means of the verbal reflexive construction fit none of the above categories exactly. Example (869), for instance, combines features of both the collective reflexive and medio-passive senses of *-e*:

- (869) *pul*                      *runc-e-r*  
 2du(NOM=ERG)    collide-RFL-P.PFV  
 ‘they two collided with one other’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents5]

Like a collective reflexive event, (869) describes a scene in which one member of the subject group is responsible for an action that affects both members (i.e. they cause a collision by walking into the second participant). Like a medio-passive clause, there is no attribution of blame: the focus in (869) is not on the Cause of the event, but rather on its effect on the two participants encoded as subject. What the collective reflexive and medio-passive senses have in common, is the lack of specificity with which the Actor is identified – whether it is omitted (in the case of the medio-passive) or subsumed in a single Actor-Undergoer participant group (in the case of the collective reflexive). There is therefore no distinguishing of the individual roles played by participants, and the event is implied to be accidental.

In (870), too, the reflexive morpheme marks the event as being carried out internally to the subject group, implying that the precise assignation of roles to participants within that group is of little importance:

- (870) *pul*            *kuthip*            *mi'im-r*    *mut.thongkan*            *ree<re>k-e-ø*  
 3du(ERG)    story(ACC)    tell-P.PFV    back(NOM=ACC)    give<RDP>-RFL-INF  
 ‘they two are telling each other stories standing back to back’  
 (“they give one another their back”)  
 [GJ19/10/02 StagedEvents43]

We might expect that examples such as (869) and (870), in which a nonsingular number of participants both act and are acted upon by one another, would be encoded by the reciprocal construction (as indeed they are rendered in English). Yet like the reflexive functions described above, both these reflexive-marked symmetric events share a focus on an event that occurs between two individuals (and which is dependent on their mutual involvement), without distinguishing the respective contributions of the individuals to the event. Indeed, the employment of *-e* to mark apparently symmetric (i.e. semantically reciprocal<sup>215</sup>) events appears to be favoured where three conditions are met: (a) the occurrence of the event depends on each of the participants playing a particular role; (b) there is a blurring of the individual roles played by participants; and (c) there is close contact between the participants. The fulfilment of these three conditions can be seen in example (871):

- (871) *pul*                      *mut-u*      *thaa.yooyongk-e-ø*  
 3du(NOM=ERG) back-DAT lean:RDP-RFL  
 ‘they are leaning (on each other) back to back’  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP]

If either of the participants were not leaning in the appropriate direction, they would not be able to support each other as described (satisfying condition [a]); there is no distinction made between the roles played by the two participants (condition [b]); and the close physical contact between them (as their backs are touching) satisfies condition (c). Similarly, the event described by (872) is dependent on the mutual cooperation of participants (both delousers and delousees), the description is vague as to who is removing lice from whom, and there is close physical contact:

- (872) *peln*                      *korpn*      *nhaanhath-e-ø*  
 3du(NOM=ERG) louse(ACC) look:RDP-RFL-NPST  
 ‘they are checking (each other) for lice’  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP]

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<sup>215</sup> Following König and Kokutani (to appear), I use the term *symmetric* to refer to any semantically-reciprocal event, broadly defined. Precisely what I take to be the semantics of the core reciprocal category is expounded upon under §10.6.2.2 below.

Example (873) is slightly different. Here, the blurring of roles is less significant than for (872), with emphasis is placed on mutual involvement and close contact:

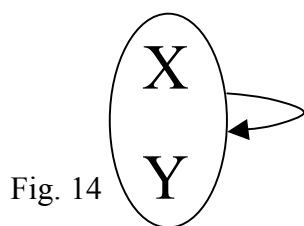
(873) *pul*                      *nhaanhath-e-ø*  
 3du(NOM=ERG)    look:RDP-RFL-NPST  
 ‘they are looking (into) each other(’s eyes)’  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP]

(874) *pul*                      *meer-e*      *nhaath-rr-r*  
 3du(NOM=ERG)    eye-ERG      look-RCP-P.PFV  
 ‘they looked at each other (in sequence)’  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP]

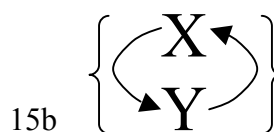
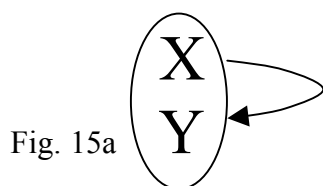
If we compare (873) to a reciprocal clause like (874), the crucial difference is the fact that in (873) the two participants look into each other’s eyes. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, making eye contact is dependent upon the mutual cooperation of participants, who must both look in the right place at the right time (condition [a]). Secondly, although they are not in close physical contact, sustaining eye contact over a period of time is quite an intimate act (especially in Thaayorre culture, which favours the avoidance of eye-contact in most contexts). The condition of ‘close contact’ is thus also satisfied.

We might ask ourselves how the three conditions proposed here relate to the reflexive coding of a symmetric event. I propose the following hypothesis: these conditions (mutual involvement; blurring of roles; close contact) favour a perspective from which the (plural) participants are viewed as a single homogeneous set, rather than their being individualised. This, then, relates back to the ‘collective reflexive’ sense, in which the actions of the participant group as a whole are directed back upon that participant group. It was suggested above that the collective reflexive could be schematised as follows:





In light of examples such as (869) and (870) - (873), we might extend this characterisation of ‘group reflexivity’ to include cases in which participants act only upon each other (traditionally conceived ‘reciprocal’ events), as follows:



#### 10.6.1.9 Lexical reflexives

Finally, there are a number of (compound) verbs that entail reflexivity even in the absence of overt reflexive marking. The verb root *munth* ‘sink’, for instance, combines with one of two preposed body parts to form the phrasal verbs *koo-munth* (nose-sink) ‘wash one’s (own) face’ and *minc-munth* (body-sink) ‘wash oneself’<sup>216</sup>, e.g.:

- (875) *parr\_r paanth*      *ith*      *minc-munthi-rr*  
 child female(NOM) dem:dist body-sink-P.PFV  
 ‘the girl washed herself’  
 [AJ07/02/04 Elicitation]

That reflexivity is specified in the semantics of these phrasal verbs — rather than being merely a contextual implicature — is clear from the fact that neither can be used

<sup>216</sup> Predictably, given the body part term involved, *minc munth* ‘wash oneself’ is the more general of the two phrasal verbs and may be used to describe any event of self washing, including washing one’s face.

to describe an other-directed event. Washing a child or a car is described entirely differently (using the English loan *washm* or Thaayorre *wothoth* ‘clean’).

In the vast majority of cases, however, a self-directed event will be explicitly coded as such. This includes prototypically self-directed events such as ‘scratching’ and ‘stretching’, which are often described by non-reflexive clauses in the languages of the world:

- (876) *piinth-thaaw thee<the>rk-e*  
bone-mouth return<RDP>-RFL  
‘[he’s] stretching’  
[GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents123]

This preference for explicitly coding reflexivity stands in contrast to the encoding of symmetric (semantically-reciprocal) events, which is frequently done by implicature or the use of an unmarked, ‘lexical reciprocal’ verb (cf. §10.6.2.7-10.6.2.8).

## 10.6.2 Reciprocal construction

### 10.6.2.1 Morphosyntax of the reciprocal construction

The reciprocal construction is defined by the presence of the reciprocal verbal suffix, introduced in §8.1.3. The core function of the reciprocal morpheme (and construction) is to mark an event in which each member of a nonsingular subject participant group directs their actions towards other member(s) of the same subject group, as in (877):

- (877) *pul ngamal.katp-rr-ica-rr*  
1du(NOM) hug-RCP-GO&-P.PFV  
‘they two went and hugged each other’  
[ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP23]

The suffix *-rr* is polysemous, though I will consistently gloss it as ‘RCP’ here. This morpheme enters into different subconstructions according to the sense with which it is used. These subconstructions will be introduced in the relevant subsections below, in which the range of senses encoded by *-rr* is delineated. The standard reciprocal construction has the following form:

(878) **Reciprocal construction<sub>1</sub>**: V-rr <SUBJ<sub>NOM</sub>>

But where the input to reciprocal derivation is trivalent, or an indirect argument is bound instead of the direct object, the reciprocal construction can be represented thus:

(879) **Reciprocal construction<sub>2</sub>**: V-rr <SUBJ<sub>ERG</sub>, OBJ<sub>ACC</sub>>

Reciprocal-marked verbs are frequently reduplicated, as seen in (877) above. There is a particular affinity between iteration — marked by verbal reduplication — and reciprocal events since the latter typically involve a plurality of subevents and relations. The overlapping distribution of the reciprocal morpheme and verbal reduplication is therefore unsurprising, although each may also occur in the absence of the other.

The optional ‘reciprocant’ enclitic (glossed as ‘RCPCANT’) is sometimes attached to the subject of a reciprocal clause (such as [880]). This morpheme, discussed in more detail in §3.1.2.4, is considered supplementary to and not definitional of the reciprocal construction.

(880) *wakrr*      *parr\_r ngathn=nharr*  
 fight:RCP   child   1sgPOS(NOM)=RCPCANT  
 ‘my kids are all fighting’  
 [Anon.]

## 10.6.2.2 Core reciprocal

I take the core function of the reciprocal construction to be the encoding of events in which each member of a participant group both acts upon and is acted upon by another member of that participant group. For a participant group containing just two individuals, this can be characterised as follows:

*The Actor of one instantiation of the event is also the Undergoer of another instantiation of the same event type (i.e. A1=U2) while the Undergoer of the first instantiation is the Actor of the second (U1=A2)*

This event-type is exemplified by (877), repeated here:

(877') *ngali pam.kun\_yangkar ngathn-mun nhaa<nha>th-rr-ø*  
 1du(NOM) brother 1sgPOS-DAT look<RDP>-RCP-NPST  
 'my brother and I are looking at each other'  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

How exactly this definition should be extended to events with more than two participants is less obvious (cf. Dalrymple et al. 1998, Evans to appear). In §10.6.1.3 it was claimed that in a core reflexive event with nonsingular subject, each participant must act individually upon themselves. But in a core reciprocal event with, e.g., four subject participants, it is unclear whether each of these participants must act upon each of the others (resulting in six reciprocal subevents, as in [881]), or whether the event should be broken down into two sets of pairwise reciprocal subevents (882), or whether it is enough for each member of the reciprocal subject group to be both Actor and Undergoer of one subevent or another, without further specification (883):

(881) *peln yuur-u thuu<thu>th-rr-ø*  
 3pl(NOM) hand-ERG pull<RDP>-RCP-NPST  
 'they shake each others' hands'

(each person shakes each other person's hand:

A↔B    A↔C    A↔D    B↔C    B↔D    C↔D)

[ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP38]

(882) *peln*      *thanp-rr-∅*  
 3pl(NOM) punch-RCP-NPST  
 ‘they are punching each other’ (two sets of two people punch each other:  
 A↔B      C↔D)  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP42<sup>217</sup>]

(883) *peln*      *thanp-rr-∅*      *wal.kut*  
 3pl(NOM) punch-RCP-NPST cheek(NOM=ACC)  
 ‘they’re punching each other’s cheeks’ (four people punch each other:  
 A→B    B→C    B→D    C→B    D→A)  
 [ICh25/01/05 Elicitation RCP44]

As examples (881) – (883) demonstrate, each of these event types may be encoded by the Thaayorre (and English) reciprocal constructions. Nevertheless, the question remains as to which of them should be considered examples of the ‘core reciprocal’ sense, and which (if any) represents a prototypical reciprocal event. It is my view that the nature of the reciprocal event prototype is an empirical, rather than theoretical, question, and that further research is required before it can be identified here. See Gaby (to appear-b) and Evans (to appear), though, for some initial suggestions.

### 10.6.2.3 Co-participation

The second sense with which *-rr* may be used I term ‘co-participation’. This entails a number of actants participating in the same event alongside one another. Further, for an event to be classified co-participatory, the action of each participant must be oriented with respect to the other participant(s); there must be mutual engagement in the activity, not a series of independent actions. The involvement of multiple Actors

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<sup>217</sup> The elicitation clip described in this example sentence actually involved six, not four, participants. The same sentence could equally well describe an event involving four people, though.

is not incidental, but defines the very nature of the event, hence the following definition:

*Participants act with respect to one another*

This can be seen in (884), an event-type characterised as ‘naturally reciprocal’ by Kemmer (1993:18):

(884) *ngamp*                      *pungk.ko 'o-rr-nan*  
1pl:incl(NOM=ERG)    gather-RCP-GO&:NPST  
‘we’ll all meet up’  
[EF15/12/02 Elicitation]

It is not felicitous to utter (884) of a group of participants acting independently (at different times, directions and/or places). Rather, their actions must be carefully coordinated in order to have their paths coincide; this results from each orienting themselves with respect to the others.

Creissels and Nougier-Voisin (to appear) discuss a very similar ‘co-participation’ construction in Wolof. They identify three subtypes of co-participation: ‘unspecified co-participation’, ‘parallel co-participation’, and ‘reciprocal co-participation’. Thaayorre clauses such as (884) above might best be characterised as parallel co-participation, given that “two or more participants share the same role” (Creissels and Nougier-Voisin, to appear: 3). Other Thaayorre clauses better approximate unspecified co-participation, which involves “two or more participants that may assume distinct roles, but the construction by itself leaves open the precise role assumed by some of them, and role recognition crucially relies on lexical and/or pragmatic factors” (Creissels and Nougier-Voisin, to appear: 3). This is evident in the following Thaayorre example:

(885) *pul*                      *yoorr yith-rr-r*              *irrkuw*              *rump-un*  
3du(NOM=ERG)    today lead-RCP-P.PFV towards.west beach-DAT  
‘those two went together to the beach today’  
[Hall 1972:108]

It is highly unlikely that this pair of Actors would either take turns in leading the other, or would both lead and be led simultaneously. Instead, by choosing to represent the event by means of a reciprocal construction, the speaker asserts that an event of (mutually-orientated) leading occurred between the two participants, but that the precise assignation of roles is unimportant. A crucial component of the Thaayorre co-participation sense that is absent from Creissels and Nougulier-Voisin’s definitions, however, is the fact that participants must orientate their actions with respect to one another.

There is some similarity between co-participation and the collective reflexivity sense of the verbal reflexive construction (cf. §10.6.1.5). Both of these event types involve a plurality of participants engaged in an event with at least two roles, without assigning particular roles to individuals. This affinity between reflexive and reciprocal semantics will be revisited in §10.6.2.6.

#### 10.6.2.4 *Asymmetric-converse*

The asymmetric-converse sense, like co-participation, entails the mutual orientation of two or more participants. A key difference between the two is the grammatical function with which the participants are encoded. In intransitive co-participation clauses (e.g. [884] above), all core participants are encoded as subject, whilst in the transitive asymmetric-converse clauses only a subset of participants are represented as subject, while others are encoded either as direct object (as in [886]) or in some oblique case.

- (886) *pam-al ulp nhunh paanth ulp*  
 man-ERG dem:adr.prx 3sgACC woman(ACC) dem:adr.prx
- koorr waak-rr-ø nhul*  
 behind follow-RCP-NPST 3sg(ERG)
- ‘that man is following along behind that woman’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot26]

The above example sentence was uttered in response to a video clip (Evans et al. 2004) in which a woman was walking down a corridor, repeatedly looking over her shoulder for a man who was clandestinely following her. The crucial point here, is that both the woman being followed and the following man are playing an active role in the event; each continually monitoring the actions of the other. A more straightforward case of unilateral following would most likely be encoded by a straightforward transitive clause involving the underived verb *wak* ‘chase’ or *waarin* ‘follow’.

The semantics and construction associated with the asymmetric reciprocal sense can be characterised as follows:

The subject’s involvement in the activity entails the converse involvement of another participant(s)

(887) **Reciprocal construction**<sub>3</sub>: V-IT <SUBJ<sub>ERG</sub>, OBJ<sub>ACC</sub>>

The grammatical encoding of involved participants as separate arguments (as opposed to all key participants being encoded as subject in co-participation clauses) reflects an important semantic difference between the asymmetric-converse and co-participation senses. Namely, participants in asymmetric-converse events are differently involved in that event, adopting mutually dependent but converse roles in a single activity.

#### 10.6.2.5 Distributive

The final function with which *-rr* is attested in my data is to mark distributive aspect, as seen in (888):

(888) *ngamp*                      *yiirryirram nhangnul kunanpun-rr-nan*      *nhangun*  
1pl:incl(NOM=ERG) each              3sgRFL      report-RCP-GO&:NPST 3sgDAT  
‘we each will give an account of ourselves to Him’  
[Hall 1972:392]



The event encoded by (888) involves distribution over both participants and subevents. It is this that is marked by suffixing *-rr* to the verb, while the fact that the participants are reporting on themselves rather than each other (as the reciprocal morphology would suggest), is made clear by the inclusion of the reflexive pronoun. It is particularly interesting that the singular form of the reflexive pronoun is used in (888), in conjunction with the adverb *yiiirryirram* ‘each’ (or ‘severally’) to refer to a plural number of Actors. A more accurate translation of this clause, then, would be something like ‘we will each of us have to report on himself to Him’, the individuation of each member of the subject group by the singular reflexive pronoun and *yiiirryirram* ‘each’ reinforcing the distributive aspect marked by *-rr*. This construction thus unambiguously encodes a multiplicity of individually self-directed events; each participant reports on themselves alone, rather than the group reporting on itself as a whole (as in a ‘collective reflexive’ event).

It should be noted that iterative and distributive aspectual categories are marked by reciprocal morphology in several other languages from Australia and elsewhere<sup>218</sup> (see Gaby 2001 for further discussion).

#### ***10.6.2.6 Extended uses of the reciprocal suffix***

As noted earlier in this section, the subjects of reciprocal clauses tend to be highly agentive. This focus on the agentive subject, coupled with the fact that reciprocal events usually impact upon the subject itself, often leads to the reciprocal subject being contrasted with other more probable Agents, having some connotation of the subject representing an ‘unexpected Agent’. (889), for example, describes the highly unusual event of a woman deliberately taking her feet in her hands and breaking them. The more usual scenario of a woman breaking her foot accidentally (e.g. by treading on uneven ground or dropping something heavy on it) would be described either by a verbal reflexive construction (with deagentive sense) or by the intransitive verb *rumparr* ‘break’.

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<sup>218</sup> E.g. Quechua reciprocal derivation necessarily involves a distributive-marked verb.

- (889) *paanth-u    thamr    nhangnul    thiik-rr-r*  
 woman-ERG    foot(ACC)    3sgRFL    break-RCP-P.PFV  
 ‘the woman broke her own feet’  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

The highly marked nature of the scene described, then, is matched by the employ of a marked construction; the reciprocal suffix (signalling high agentivity, and an unexpected Agent) plus reflexive pronoun (entailing that the subject is affected by her own action). (890) similarly describes a scene in which the addressee is likely to expect an Agent other than the one referred to by the subject pronoun:

- (890) *ngay    ngathney    mungka-n-rr-r    merrethen*  
 1sg(ERG)    1sgRFL    consume-V<sup>^</sup>-RCP-P.PFV    medicine(ACC)  
 ‘I made myself swallow the medicine’  
 [Hall 1972:392]

To describe a pragmatically neutral scene of medicine-taking, the base transitive verb *mungk* ‘eat/drink’ would most likely be used. The expression of force — by means of the valence increasing suffix *-n(i)* — would most usually entail another participant causing the speaker/subject to ingest the medicine. The fact that it is the speaker who is (agentively) acting upon himself is thus pragmatically marked, and this is once again signalled by the use of the reciprocal suffix (marking the highly agentive subject that contrasts with the expected Agent) coupled with the reflexive pronoun (entailing that it is the speaker who is affected by his own action). The use of *-rr* to mark an event with a surprising subject referent is also seen in examples (888), (891) and (892), each of which exhibits the use of reflexive pronouns to disambiguate a *rr*-marked self-directed event.

- (891) *pam thono    tup    ko’o-rr-r    nhangnul    watp*  
 man one(NOM)    IDPH    spear-RCP-PST    3sgRFL    dead  
 ‘one man speared himself dead, whack!’  
 [Hall 1972:137]

- (892) *nhunt riiran nhangknunt kaar=p*  
 2sg(NOM=ERG) alone 2sgRFL NEG=PRAG  
*kunk thana-n-rr-nancnh*  
 alive stand-V<sup>^</sup>-RCP-GO&:SBJV  
 ‘you can’t rescue yourself all alone’  
 [Hall 1972:392]

As in (889) and (890), the reciprocal suffix appears to mark the subject referent of (892) as an unlikely Agent. This makes sense since the very purpose of (892) is to declare the impossibility of coreferent rescuer and rescuee.

This leaves one further usage of the reciprocal suffix to be accounted for, illustrated by the following example:

- (893) *nhunt koorrkorr thaat pirk-rr-ø ngathun*  
 2sg(NOM=ERG) beyond:RDP wide push-RCP-IMP 1sgDAT  
 ‘move to one side for me’  
 [GJ12/12/05 Elicitation - cf. Hall 1972:132]

The addressee is, by means of this utterance, asked to move herself with regard to another participant (the speaker). Her (requested) action is thus defined with respect to the spatial relationship between the two participants, and carried out to the potential benefit of the speaker. So, although the physicality of the movement is restricted to a single individual, and only that individual is encoded as subject, (893) encodes this movement as a change in the relationship between participants, brought about by an action that is taken with respect to the mutual orientation of these participants. This notion of mutual orientation reveals the similarity between this usage and the co-participation sense described in §10.6.2.3. There is also some similarity to the asymmetric sense (§10.6.2.4), in that the converse position of the speaker (represented as an oblique object *ngathun* ‘for me’) is entailed by the relative (desired) position of the addressee (*waat* ‘wide’). Although the two participants are not encoded as a single argument, it is this converse relationship that holds between them that is marked by the reciprocal suffix.

**10.6.2.7 Lexical reciprocals**

To date, I have recorded only a single truly ‘lexical reciprocal’, being a monomorphemic verb form that strictly entails symmetry. This verb is *wuuthaw* ‘share’, used typically to describe the communal distribution of food, but also events like the following:

- (894) *kar mimp wuuthaw-ø*  
 like cloth(ACC) share-NPST  
 ‘[we] share clothes, for instance’ (of relationship between brothers)  
 [AP9/10/02 Conversation]

There are two further *lexicalised* reciprocal verbs, which appear to be frozen forms originally composed of verb root + reciprocal suffix, but no longer semantically compositional. These are *wakrr* ‘fight’ (< *wak* ‘chase’ + *rr* ‘RCP’) and *pungk-ko’orr-* ‘meet up’ (< *pungk* ‘knee’ + *ko’o* ‘spear’ + *rr* ‘RCP’).

**10.6.2.8 Reciprocal by implicature**

Semantically reciprocal (‘symmetric’) events need not be marked reciprocal at all. In (895), for instance, a symmetric event is encoded by a simple intransitive clause (‘he and his brother are talking’) which nevertheless has a strong implicature of symmetry due to the absence of a specified external Recipient:

- (895) *pul pam.kun\_yangkar nhangn-mun kuuk yi<i>k-ø*  
 3du(NOM) brother 3sgPOS-DAT word(ACC) say<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘he and his brother are talking (to each other)’  
 [MF06/08/02 Elicitation]

The same is true of ((896):

- (896) *parr\_r ith peln thaa-whistle thunp-r*  
 kid dem:dist 3pl(ERG) mouth-whistle(ACC) throw-NPST  
 ‘those kids are whistling at each other’  
 [LN08/09/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

This latter example shows the role of cultural knowledge in determining where reciprocity is overtly coded and where it can be left to inference. In English, the sentence *those kids are whistling* would rarely (if ever) carry a reciprocal implicature since the default interpretation is that the kids are whistling a tune to themselves. In Kuuk Thaayorre, the symmetry of the event is implicated because of the common practice of whistling to attract and sustain someone’s attention (especially during courtship).

How closely the event described corresponds to the usual state of affairs seems directly related to the presence or absence of overt reciprocal marking. So an event of two people hugging one another (or a group of people hugging a new arrival, etc.) is not typically marked by the reciprocal suffix:

- (897) *peln ngamal.kaatp-r*  
 3pl(NOM) hug-NPST  
 ‘they all hug’  
 [AJ24/01/05 Elicitation RCP2]

On the other hand, an event in which three people hug simultaneously does receive overt reciprocal marking since this is not a usual or predictable state of affairs:

- (898) *paanth pinalam ith ngamal.katp-rr-ø peln*  
 woman three(NOM) dem:dist hug-RCP-NPST 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘the three women hug each other’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RCP20]

## 10.7 Desiderative construction

As introduced in §8.1.4.1, the desiderative construction is formed through the combination of the adverb *waarr* ‘very’ and a nonpast-inflected, GO&<sup>219</sup>-derived verb

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<sup>219</sup> The first associated motion category.

stem. There is no restriction on their ordering, but these two clausal features must be present in order to express the modal-dynamic ‘desiderative’ (as in [899]) and ‘potential’ (as in [900]) senses:

(899) *ngay raak waarr nhaath-nhan, Melbourne raak kar ngan*  
1sg(NOM) place very see-GO&:NPST Melbourne place like what  
‘[as a child] I wanted to see that place, what sort of place Melbourne is’  
[GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

(900) *nhurr win-m rirk-nhan waarr!*  
2pl(NOM) win-VBLZ DO-GO&:NPST very  
‘you can win [this game]!’  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation / Narrative]

Note that this is a somewhat extended usage of *waarr* ‘very’, which normally functions to modify adjectives, not verbs. Indeed, in this construction it seems that *waarr* ‘very’ does not modify the semantic content of the verb itself (i.e. ‘see’ in [899]), but rather the modal content of the associated motion derivational suffix (cf. §8.1.4.1).

## Chapter Eleven: Extended clauses

This chapter details the ways in which simple clauses may be extended through their inclusion of particles, adverbs, ideophones and subordinate clauses, or through their coordination with other clauses. Whilst the optional employment of particles, adverbs and ideophones allows the speaker to elaborate their description of a particular event, subordination and coordination are generally used to express complex relationships between distinct events. There are a number of links between these processes, however, that lead to their combined presentation here. Firstly, many of the clausal particles described in §11.3 are implicated in the linkage and subordination of clauses (discussed in §11.2 and §11.1 respectively). Secondly, subordinate clauses frequently have an adverbial function analogous to the use of many of the adverbs discussed in §11.4. Finally, the formal and functional commonalities between subordinate and coordinated clauses make it difficult to distinguish between the two structures for some complex clauses.

### 11.1 Subordination

Subordinate clauses take a number of different forms in Kuuk Thaayorre, although there is no direct mapping between the structure of the subordinate clause and its function. Each of the functions performed by the two non-finite subordinate clause types, for example, may also be performed by an unmarked finite subordinate clause. Table 75 presents the five subordinate clause types, listing the range of functions expressed by each. The conditional and purposive subordinate clause types are italicised to reflect their being a subtype of adverbial clause.

Subordinate clauses				
<i>non-finite</i>		<i>finite</i>		
infinitive	<i>-marr-</i> marked	unmarked	purposive- marked	subjunctive -marked
relative adverbial	relative adverbial <i>purposive</i>	complement relative adverbial <i>conditional</i> <i>purposive</i>	complement adverbial <i>purposive</i>	adverbial <i>conditional</i> <i>purposive</i>

Table 75. Subordinate clause types.

The location of the subordinate clause with respect to the main clause is determined by its function, rather than its structural type. Thus a relative clause will always appear immediately following the relativised NP, regardless of whether it is finite or non-finite. Relative clauses are therefore frequently embedded within the main clause. Conditional subordinate clauses are always the initial constituent of the sentence, appearing at the left periphery of the main clause. Adverbial and all other subordinate clauses always appear at the right periphery of the main clause. Throughout this section, square brackets ‘[]’ will be used to mark the sentence boundaries of example sentences, while curly brackets ‘{}’ will be used to mark the boundaries of the subordinate clause.

### 11.1.1 Non-finite subordinate clauses

#### 11.1.1.1 Infinitive subordinate clauses

Infinitive subordinate clauses are headed by an infinitive-inflected verb. The infinitive verb forms are in all documented cases identical to the corresponding imperative forms, and also identical to the respective verb roots except where reduplicated (cf. §7.2.4). Hence in (901), the infinitive verb *kalal* is homophonous with the reduplicated imperative form *kalal* ‘carry (repeatedly)!', and differs from the



root form *kal* ‘carry’ only in the presence of the reduplicative infix <*al*>. This reduplication is independently (semantically) motivated and not implicated in the process of subordination.

- (901) [*Parr\_r nhul rirk-r {kuta keren kal<al>-ø}*]  
 [child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) arise-P.PFV {dog(ACC) up.high carry<RDP>-INF}]  
 ‘The child got up, carrying the dog up high’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

For first conjugation verbs (like *kal* ‘carry’ in [901] and *wan* ‘call’ in [905]), zero TAM marking must either be interpreted as signalling (semantically anomalous) imperative mood, or be accorded alternative significance (e.g. as an infinitive form, as suggested here). For second conjugation verbs, however, this infinitive form is homophonous with not only the imperative verb form, but also the nonpast tense. It is therefore much more difficult — if not impossible — to distinguish infinitive subordinate clauses from finite subordinate clauses (cf. §11.1.2.1). This is illustrated by (902), which fills all the criteria for both subordinate clause types.

- (902) [*Parr\_r nhul putpun thanan therrep-ak*]  
 [child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top stand<RDP>:NPST rock-DAT  
 {*waa<wa>ntharr-ø*}]  
 {call.out<RDP>-NPST/INF}]  
 ‘The boy is standing on a rock, calling out’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

Interestingly, the infinitive verb form is always identical with the imperative verb form, even where this is marked by a non-zero inflection. Thus verbs derived by the first associated motion morpheme (cf. 8.1.4.1), such as (903-904) take the non-zero imperative form of the associated motion morpheme *-nharr* when functioning as the non-finite head of a subordinate clause.

(903) [*ya-rr-uw*                    *yat=ay,*                    *{ngul thanc*                    *nhaath-nharr}*]  
 [away-towards-west go:P.PFV=1sg(NOM) {then tree.sp(ACC) see-GO&:INF}]  
 ‘I [saltwater crocodile] went Westwards to see the Thanc tree’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

(904) [*ngul nhul*                    *meer-kay*                    *rok-r*                    *{minc*                    *nhaath-nharr}*]  
 [then 3sg(NOM) eye-metal(ACC) enter-P.PFV {really see-GO&:INF}]  
 ‘he put on glasses on so he could see better’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Infinitive verbs frequently head subordinate clauses with adverbial function (902) or purposive function (903-904), in both of which cases the subordinate clause must appear at the right periphery of the main clause. For other clauses, such as (905), a relative clause interpretation seems most apt.

(905) [*yuk*                    *inh*                    *{ngan wan-ø}*                    *wun]*  
 [THING(NOM) dem:sp.prx {what call-INF} lie:NPST]  
 ‘this thing which is called what is lying here’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

For most English speakers, the complex clause in (905) is difficult to parse. It was uttered by my consultant in response to questioning about the Thaayorre labels for various objects, and directly follows his stating *ngawiyokun ngan=okun* ‘I don’t know what it could be’. AC then muttered (905) to himself in an attempt to jog his memory. In this pragmatic context, then, the relative clause analysis suggested by the English translation seems most appropriate. This semantic analysis is confirmed by the syntactic embedding of the subordinate clause directly following the relativised NP *yuk inh* ‘this thing’, a syntactic position reserved solely for relative clauses in Kuuk Thaayorre.

### 11.1.1.2 Subordinate verbs marked by *-marr*

Kuuk Thaayorre once possessed a dedicated verbal suffix (*-marr* ~ *-namarr*) that marked the head of a subordinate clause. This morpheme is not attested in my corpus, which suggests that it is only very rarely used and possibly being lost in the process of the language's obsolescence. On the basis of the data in Hall (1972)<sup>220</sup>, however, we can identify a number of functions associated with *marr*-marked subordinate clauses.

Most of the examples presented in Hall (1972) are translated by English clausal complements of perception verbs (doubtless the motivation behind Hall's glossing *-marr* as 'visible contemporaneous'). This is illustrated by (906), in which the subordinate clause describes the event seen by the subject of the matrix clause.

- (906) [*ngay pam ith nhaawr {ngat kal-marr}*]  
 [1sg(ERG) man(ACC) dem:dist see:P.PFV {fish(ACC) carry-SBD}]  
 'I saw those men [while they were] carrying fish'  
 [Hall 1972:125]

Closer inspection of (906), however, reveals the complement clause analysis to be inappropriate. The direct object argument of the main clause verb *nhaawr* 'saw' is not filled by a clause, but rather by the noun phrase *pam ith* 'those men'. It cannot be argued that this noun phrase forms part of a discontinuous subordinate clause (headed by *kalmarr* 'carrying') since if this were the case it should receive ergative case marking as the subject of a transitive verb. Likewise, in (907) — where the subordinate verb is embedded within the main clause — the Agents of the carrying event (i.e. the elided subject of the subordinate clause) are encoded as the direct object of the main clause in accusative case.

- (907) [*ngali pelnan {kal-marr} nhaath-m*]  
 [1du(ERG)3plACC {carry-SBD} watch-P.IPFV]  
 'we two watched them carrying it'  
 [Hall 1972:402]

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<sup>220</sup> Hall (1972:193) labels *-marr* ~ *-namarr* a 'visible contemporaneous' verbal suffix.

Although the subordinate clauses of (906) and (907) are semantically amenable to both a relative clause and adverbial clause analysis<sup>221</sup>, their respective placements within the main clause suggest the two are fundamentally different. Across all of Kuuk Thaayorre's subordinate clause types, the generalisation holds that a relative clause will immediately follow the relativised NP, while an adverbial clause will appear at the right periphery of the main clause. If this generalisation extends to *-marr*-marked subordinate clauses — and there is no a priori reason why it should not — example (906), in which the subordinate clause appears at the right periphery of the main clause, can most plausibly be analysed as an adverbial clause (Hale's 1976b 'T-relative'), controlled by the object of the main clause. The adverbial function of *-marr*-marked subordinate clauses is further illustrated by (908). Here the adverbial clause is once again controlled by the direct object of the main clause (encoded by an accusative noun phrase [*pam meerkunwaarr* 'the depressed man'] and pronominal enclitic [=unh 'him']) which is overtly coded as subject of the subordinate clause (by the nominative pronominal enclitic =ul 'he'), thus demonstrating that the pivot argument need not be gapped.

- (908) [*pul pam meerkunwaarr nhaawr=unh {yoongk-e-namarr=ul}*]  
 [3du(ERG)man pitiful(ACC) see:P.PFV=3sgACC {hang-RFL-SBD-3sg(NOM)}]  
 'they two saw the depressed man hanging himself'  
 [Hall 1972:146]

Example (907), however, is best analysed as a relative clause (i.e. as a type of 'NP-relative' in Hale's 1976b terminology), given its syntactic placement immediately following the relativised pronoun *pelnan* 'them'. Example (909) likewise illustrates the relative clause structure.

- (909) [*ngay {thamr thiinth-marr} rii<ri>c-r*]  
 [1sg(NOM) {foot(NOM)cramp-SBD} run<RDP>-NPST]  
 'I, who am cramping in the foot, am running'  
 [Hall 1972:402]

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<sup>221</sup> Cf. Hale (1976), papers in Austin (ed. 1988) and Nordlinger (2006) on the problem of distinguishing these subordinate clause functions in Australian languages.

Interestingly, the part-whole apposition of *ngay* ‘I’ and *thamr* ‘foot’ in example (909) is distributed over two clauses. The noun phrase referring to the whole has the grammatical function of main clause subject (the main clause being *ngay riiricr* ‘I’m running’), while the subordinate clause contains the part NP, apposed to the null anaphor of the relativised pronoun in nominative case. (See §6.9.1 for discussion of the syntax and semantics of part-whole apposition).

A third distinct function of the subordinate-marked verb is to encode purpose. Unlike the adverbial clauses considered above, these purposive complex clauses do not assume temporal identity between main and subordinate clause, but rather the subordinate clause is an intended (and subsequent) outcome of the main clause. In the case of (677), the swimming event is the intended result of the motion event.

- (910) *[nhul ya<a>n {yungar-namarr}]*  
 3sg(NOM) go<RDP>:NPST swim-SBD  
 ‘he will go swimming’  
 [Hall 1972:147]

Like adverbial subordinate clauses, however, the purposive subordinate clause must appear at the right periphery of the main clause.

## 11.1.2 Finite subordinate clauses

### 11.1.2.1 Unmarked finite subordinate clauses

Unmarked finite subordinate clauses, as their name suggests, bear no morphological coding of their subordinate status. The verbs that head them bear the same TAM inflections as verbs of main clauses, with the same TAM interpretation, and there are no restrictions on the overt realisation and case marking of the arguments they subcategorise for. There are syntactic restrictions on the placement of subordinate clauses with respect to the main clause, however, with relative clauses immediately

following the relativised NP, conditional clauses appearing at the left periphery of the main clause and subordinate clauses with all other functions appearing at the right periphery of the main clause, as noted above.

In the tradition of Hale's (1976b) seminal analysis of the 'adjoined relative clause' type in Warlpiri, the grammars of most Australian languages include reference to a generalised (subordinate) clause type that spans both adverbial and (NP-)relative functions, much like the Thaayorre unmarked finite subordinate clause. It is not uncommon for these clause types to lack explicit coding of their subordinate status, which may often be established only through detailed morphosyntactic analysis (e.g. McGregor 1988, Nordlinger 2006). In contrast to the other subordinate clause types discussed here, the criteria for identifying unmarked finite subordinate clauses in Kuuk Thaayorre vary according to the function of the clause. For some functions, there are clear and convincing indicators that the, e.g., unmarked complement clause should be considered subordinate. For other functions it is less clear. The syntactic analysis of the unmarked finite subordinate clause type is therefore divided according to its various functions below.

#### a) Complement clause function

The contents of cogitation and communication are frequently encoded by complement clauses. (911) is a typical example of the use of the verb *ngeey* 'think'<sup>222</sup> in conjunction with a complement clause to report the speaker's own thoughts.

- (911) [*ngay kar ngeey-m {kar nhunt sixteen=nhurr=p}*]  
 [1sg(ERG) like hear-P.IPFV {like 2sg(NOM) sixteen=only-PRAG}]  
 'I thought you were only sixteen!'  
 [Anon conversation, confirmed LN02/10/02]

Note that the inclusion of the particle *kar* 'like' in both main and subordinate clause signals that the thought was mistaken rather than marking or otherwise contributing to

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<sup>222</sup> Nb. this verb is polysemous, also meaning 'hear, listen to'.

the syntactic fact of subordination. This is only one of many disparate functions of *kar* ‘like’, each of which is discussed in §11.3.3. *Kar* ‘like’ is similarly embedded within the complement clause in (912) in order to mark a (reported) erroneous supposition.

- (912) [*ngul nganip        yik-r        pul        nganam-u*  
 [then father(NOM) say-P.PFV 3du(NOM) mother-ERG^  
  
*{kar parr\_r        nhurr        thaa-munth-irr}*  
 {like child(NOM) 2pl(NOM) mouth-sink-P.PFV}]  
 ‘then Dad and Mum said “[we thought] you kids had drowned”’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

It is typical in Thaayorre speech for the thought processes of a third person to be reported as quoted speech, as in (912). This might be attributed to an unwillingness to presume to know the thoughts of another person, other than through their own recounting of them through speech<sup>223</sup>. This extends to nonhuman sentient beings (e.g. the dog in [913]), who have clearly not communicated their thoughts to the narrator through speech.

- (913) [*nhul        yik-r        {thatr=okun ranth-in    ngaathirr wun}*  
 [3sg(NOM) say-P.PFV {frog=DUB hole-DAT still        lie:NPST}]  
 ‘he [the dog] thought the frog might still be in the hole’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

An interesting consequence of representing thoughts as quoted speech is that the deictic centres of the main and subordinate clause are almost always distinct. Hence in (912) a second person pronoun is used to refer to the narrator and his siblings, while in (913) the subordinate clause has nonpast tense, calculated from the perspective of the past perfective thinking event encoded by the main clause.

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<sup>223</sup> This may in fact have become sufficiently grammaticalised to be considered a basic strategy of representing thought, the verb *yik* ‘say; think’ being polyemous.

Despite their representation as quotations, the complement clauses of (912) and (913) should still be considered subordinate. These complement clauses remain integrated into the prosodic contour of the main clause, and function as one of the subcategorised-for arguments of *yik* ‘say’. An alternative, non-subordinate construction is available for quoting reported speech, in which *yarriy* ‘thus’ (described in §11.3.2) is used to frame the quote. In this construction *yarriy* ‘thus’ fills the complement slot of *yik* ‘say’ (which subcategorises for an object encoding words, language or speech), with the reported speech following as a coordinated main clause:

- (914) [*ngul nhul ngathun yarriy yik-r teacher:*]  
 [then 3sg(NOM) 1sgDAT thus say-P.PFV teacher(NOM)]  
 [“*kece, wut=okun wun*”]  
 [CDICT sleep=DUB lie:NPST]  
 ‘then the teacher said this to me: “no, [she] might be asleep”’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

In clauses such as (914), there is a clear prosodic break between the clause that introduces the quotation and the quotation itself. The speaker of (914) further takes great pains to imitate the protagonist quoted, with the prosodic contour of the quoted clause *kece wut=okun wun* ‘no, she might be asleep’ matching that of a complete and independent utterance. This differs greatly from the subordinate clause *thatr=okun ranthin ngaathirr wun* ‘the frog might still be in the hole’ in (913), which is fully integrated into the prosodic contour of the main clause. The fact, then, that this alternative structure exists, and may be prosodically differentiated from the unmarked finite subordinate clause, is further validation of the existence of an unmarked finite subordinate clause.

### b) Relative clause function

Unmarked finite clauses may also have the function of relative clause. Unlike the unmarked complement clauses discussed above, unmarked relative clauses are typically embedded within the main clause, directly following the NP they modify.



This can be seen in (915), in which the relative clause *thangkarnam* ‘[who] was laughing’ appears immediately following the NP head it modifies (*pam ith* ‘that man’), and separating this NP from the verb of the main clause (*yat* ‘went’), of which it is subject.

- (915) [*pam            ith            {thangkar-nam} yuuw yat*]  
 man(NOM) dem:dist laugh-P.IPFV    far    go:P.PFV  
 ‘the man who was laughing went off’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

To avoid the analysis of *thangkarnam* ‘was laughing’ as subordinate, one could argue that (915) instead comprises a sequence of two coordinated main clauses; *pam ith thangkarnam* ‘that man was laughing’ and *yuuw yat* ‘[he] went off’. It is in keeping with standard Thaayorre discourse structure for the topic (the man) to be omitted in the second clause. In favour of parsing (915) as a single (complex) clause, however, is the fact that it forms a single intonation phrase, with no discernable break at the putative clausal juncture between *thangkarnam* and *yuuw*.

Additional evidence that unmarked relative clauses like *thangkarnam* ‘was laughing’ are subordinated is furnished by the behaviour of copula constructions. As discussed in §9.2, copula clauses may be formed through the simple juxtaposition of two noun phrases, or they may contain one of a number of (usually postural) verbs functioning as overt copula. Example (916) shows a verbless copula clause functioning as an embedded relative clause.

- (916) [*pam            ith            {minh.thop} thanan*]  
 [man(NOM) dem:dist {good.hunter} stand:NPST]  
 ‘that man who is a good hunter is standing there’<sup>224</sup>  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>224</sup> Note that the embedded subordinate clause provides the new information, while it is the main clause that helps the addressee identify the intended referent. This is unlike the better documented functions of relative clauses cross-linguistically, and also goes against McKay’s (1988) observation that the Rembarrnga (relative and other) subordinate clauses are used in order to provide background information.

The tense, aspect and/or mood of a main copula clause are specified through the inflection of an overt copula verb. Where a copula clause is subordinated as a relative clause, however, the option of including a copula verb is unavailable. Hence (917a), in which the past imperfective copula *yan<sup>cm</sup>*<sup>225</sup> is included to specify the past time period over which the man was a good hunter, is ungrammatical. Instead, the past time frame can only be specified by the inclusion of the adverb *kanangkarr* ‘long ago’ in (917b):

(917a) \**pam ith {minh.thop yan<sup>cm</sup>} than<an>*  
 man(NOM) dem:dist {good.hunter go:P.IPFV} stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘that man who used to be a good hunter is standing there’

(b) *pam ith kanangkarr minh.thop than<an>*  
 man(NOM) dem:dist long.ago good.hunter stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘that man [currently] standing there [used to be a] good hunter’  
 [GJ11/01/04 Elicitation]

The fact that *kanangkarr* ‘long ago’ may be inserted with scope over just the embedded relative clause (and thus does not conflict with the nonpast inflection of the head verb of the main clause *thanan* ‘is standing’) is further evidence that the relative copula clause is both distinct from and subordinate to the main clause (as opposed to both [916] and [917b] forming simplex main clauses headed by the copula verb *thanan* ‘standing’).

It is also possible to embed a verb-headed relative clause within a copula main clause. In example (918), for example, the relative clause *wut wun* ‘is sleeping’ is embedded within the verbless copula clause *pam pam nhangnip ngathn* ‘the man is my father’:

(918) [*pam {wut wun} pam nhangnip ngathn*]  
 [man(NOM) {asleep lie:NPST} man father 1sgPOS]  
 ‘the man who is sleeping is my father’  
 [GJ12/01/04 Elicitation]

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<sup>225</sup> the verb *yan* ‘go’ is the default copula verb for humans.

Where the relativised NP is followed only by the subordinate clause it is impossible to syntactically distinguish the relative subordinate clause function from the adverbial. In (919), for example, we can infer the subordinate clause's relative function only from the fact that it is used to restrict the reference of the noun phrase it follows. The same utterance could alternatively be parsed as an adverbial clause (919b) or complement clause (919c).

(919a) [*ngay pam.ngongkom paanth ith {iipal ii yan}*]  
 [1sg(NOM) ignorant.of woman(ACC)dem:dist {this.way there go:NPST}]  
 'I don't know that woman who is coming this way'

(b) [*ngay pam.ngongkom paanth ith {iipal ii yan}*]  
 [1sg(NOM) ignorant.of woman(ACC)dem:dist {this.way there go:NPST}]  
 'I don't know that woman, [while] she is coming this way'

(c) [*ngay pam.ngongkom {paanth ith iipal ii yan}*]  
 [1sg(NOM) ignorant.of {woman(ACC) dem:dist this.way there go:NPST}]  
 'I didn't know that the woman is coming this way'  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

### c) Adverbial function

The third function typically associated with generalised subordinate clause types in Australian languages (i.e. Hale's 1976b 'adjoined relative clauses') is the adverbial clause. This function is illustrated by example (920), which includes a subordinate adverbial relative clause *kutaku waawarinr* '[while] dogs chased [him]'

(920) [*ngay pam ii nhaawr {kuta-ku waawarin-r}*]  
 [1sg(ERG) man(ACC) there see:P.PFV {dog-ERG chase-P.PFV}]  
 'I watched that man [while he] was chased by the dogs'  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Although somewhat similar in meaning to the complement clauses described above, (920) is structurally distinct from these in the fact that the subordinate clause does not fill a subcategorised-for argument slot. Instead, this argument slot is filled within the main clause by the NP *pam* ‘man’, while the subordinate clause that immediately follows the main clause merely provides contextual information about the event the man was involved in when he was seen. It is difficult to conclusively establish the dependency relation between the main clause *ngay pam ii nhaawr* ‘I saw the man’ and the putative subordinate adverbial clause *kutaku waawarinr* ‘dogs chased (him)’. The fact that the Undergoer-object of the second clause (‘the man’) is elided does not entail that it is subordinate. Core arguments are freely elided in Thaayorre discourse, especially where overtly mentioned in a preceding clause. Nevertheless, I analyse the second clause as subordinate on the grounds that: (a) there is no pause between the two clauses, which fall under a single intonational phrase; and (b) the verb of the complement clause must share the TAM values of the verb of the main clause. Hence *nhaawr* ‘saw’ and *waawarinr* ‘chased’ in (920) are both past perfective, while *thanan* ‘standing’ and *waawantharr* ‘calling out’ in (921) are both nonpast<sup>226</sup>, as are *wontr* ‘falls’ and *nhiin* ‘sitting’ in (922).

(921) [*Parr\_r nhul putpun thanan therrep-ak, {waa<wa>ntharr-ø}*]  
 [child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top stand<RDP>:NPST rock-DAT {call.out-NPST}]  
 ‘The boy is standing on a rock, calling out’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

(922) [*Parr\_r nhul wont-r {thakr nhiin}*]  
 [child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) fall-NPST {front sit:NPST}]  
 ‘the boy falls face down.’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

The same can be seen in example (923), which contains two conjoined main clauses (separated by square brackets), the second of which includes a subordinate complement clause (surrounded by curly brackets). The head verbs of all three

<sup>226</sup> Though as noted in §11.1.1.1, *waawantharr* ‘calling out’ might also be analysed as an infinitive verb.

clauses are inflected for past perfective tense/aspect, but whilst there is a clearly discernable prosodic break preceding the second main clause (i.e. between *nhiinm* ‘were sitting’ and *ngul* ‘then’), there is none preceding the subordinate clause (i.e. between *ngeeym* ‘was hearing’ and *thangkarnam* ‘was laughing’).

- (923) [*ngancn*        *mong*        *nhiin-m*]  
 [1pl:excl(NOM) many(NOM) sit-P.IPFV]  
  
 [*ngul*            *ngay*            *ngeey-m* {*thangkar-nam*}]  
 [then            1sg(ERG)        hear-P.IPFV        {laugh-P.IPFV}]  
 ‘we were all sitting together when I heard someone laughing’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

A further piece of evidence that these adverbial clauses are subordinate to, rather than merely coordinated with, the preceding main clause, is the fact that the adverbial clause must always appear at the right periphery of the main clause, even where this ordering is anti-iconic with respect to the sequence of the events described (as in [924]). The ordering of independent clauses in natural discourse would normally be expected to mirror the temporal order of the events they describe (cf. Jakobson 1966, Haiman 1985).

- (924) [*plate*        *rinca-rr*        {*pul*        *runc-e-r*}]  
 [plate(ACC) smash-P.PFV {3du(NOM) jump-RFL-P.PFV}]  
 ‘the plate was smashed after/because they bumped’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents5]

Finally, it is worth noting that transitive predicate adjectives (such as *pamngongkom* ‘be ignorant of’ in [919]) may also take a subordinate complement clause in lieu of subcategorised-for direct object.

- (925) [*peln*        *nhunh*        *pamngongkom*        {*nhul*        *thongkr*        *nhamunp*}]  
 [3pl(NOM) 3sgACC ignorant.of        {3sg(NOM) arrive-P.PFV at.that.place}]  
 ‘they didn’t know that he had arrived’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

**d) Conditional function**

Complex clauses expressing a conditional relationship between two events share several key features. Firstly, the protasis (condition clause) always precedes the apodosis (describing the possible outcome). Although these are the only subordinate clauses to appear at the left periphery of the main clause, this syntactic position is typologically common for conditional clauses (Diessel 2005). Secondly, the Thaayorre protasis is almost always<sup>227</sup> marked by *kar* ‘like’ (the many functions of which are explored in §11.3.3), optionally in conjunction with *ith* ‘if’.

- (926) [*ith kar kuta ngathn ulp pormp-an*]  
 [{if like dog 1sgPOS(NOM) dem:adr.prx house-DAT}]  
*ngay piinth reek-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) bone(ACC) give-GO&:NPST]  
 ‘if my dog’s at home [when I get there], I’ll give him a bone’  
 [LN04/8/02 Elicitation]

- (927) [*ith kar nhunt kar trust-m rirk-r nhunh,*  
 [{dem:dist like 2sg(NOM) like trust-TR DO-P.PFV 3sgACC  
*believe-m rirk-r nhunh,*]  
 believe-TR DO-P.PFV 3sgACC}]  
*nhunt ulp kunk nhiinhan muthathan*  
 2sg(NOM) dem:adr.prx alive reside:GO&:NPST forever]  
 ‘if you have trusted him, and believed in him, you’ll have eternal life’  
 “if you really believe in him you’ll have eternal life”  
 [GJ18/01/04 Narrative Christmas]

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<sup>227</sup> The one example in my corpus in which the conditional clause does not contain *kar* ‘like’ is:

- (a) *nhunt may ulp mungk-nhan nhunt wonp-nhan*  
 2sg(ERG) VEG(ACC) dem:adr.prx eat-GO&:NPST 2sg(NOM) die-GO&:NPST  
 ‘if you eat these berries you’ll die’  
 [ThaMdGJ31/01/04 Elicitation]

Neither of these features suggests that the conditional clause (protasis) is subordinate to the clause describing the outcome (apodosis). The ordering of condition/protasis before outcome/apodosis is in all recorded cases iconic, and the same ordering would therefore be expected of coordinated clauses as well. Speakers further exhibit considerable freedom in assigning TAM values to the two clauses. In (927), for instance, the protasis is past tense, whilst the apodosis is future. In favour of analysing the condition-protasis clauses as subordinate, however, is the prosodic and semantic integration of the two clauses. Whilst it is possible for clauses containing *kar* ‘like’ to stand alone as complete utterances (928), this never occurs where *kar* ‘like’ has conditional function.

- (928) *thele yoorr kar ngan?*  
 in.turn today like what  
 “what’s going to happen today?”  
 [GJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

Similarly, the prosodic contour of the *kar*-marked condition clauses also marks them as incomplete without a following outcome clause.

#### e) Purposive function

Despite the existence of dedicated purposive verbal morphology (and associated ‘purposive finite subordinate clause’ structure – see §11.1.2.2 below), the unmarked finite subordinate clause may also be used with purposive function. As with the conditional function described above, there is little evidence of subordination for this construction type, other than the single intonation contour applied to the complex clause as a whole (e.g. in [929]) and the parallels with other unmarked finite subordinate clause types.

- (929) [*minh ulp ranci-rr pam-a {punth path-arr}*]  
 [MEAT(NOM) dem:adr.prx jump-P.PFV man-DAT {arm(ACC) bite-P.PFV}]  
 “then that crocodile jumped for the man to bite him on the arm”  
 [GJ27/01/04 Conversation]

It is worth noting here that, although *pama* ‘to the man’ and *punth* ‘arm’ in (929) have overlapping reference, they are not in part-whole apposition, but rather have entirely separate grammatical functions in two different clauses, as evidenced by their different case-marking. The possessive relationship that exists between them must thus be understood pragmatically. Likewise, there is no overt marking in (929) of the fact that the subordinate clause represents the purpose or aim of the event described by the main clause. In other cases (e.g. [930]), however, the purposive function of the unmarked finite subordinate clause is made explicit by the inclusion of the hortative particle *ak*.

- (930) *paath waath-m pul ak path<ath>a-n-r*  
 fire(ACC) search-P.IPFV 3du(ERG) HORT bite<RDP>-V<sup>^</sup>-NPST  
 ‘they looked for firewood to light [lit. make bite]’  
 [Foote and Hall: Reader 9]

Purposive subordinate clauses in all cases appear at the right periphery of the main clause.

### 11.1.2.2 Purposive-marked subordinate clauses

Purposive-marked (finite) subordinate clauses share both the purposive and complement clause functions of unmarked finite subordinate clauses. They are labelled ‘purposive’ due to the explicit purposive marking of the subordinate verb, in keeping with the form-based labels applied to all the Thaayorre subordinate clause types. The purposive function is illustrated by (625), which also illustrates the obligatory placement of the purposive subordinate clause at the right periphery of the main clause.

- (931) [*nhul ii yat {kuuk yik-nhatha Allen Hall-ak}*]  
 [3sg(NOM) there go:P.PFV {WORD(ACC)say-PURP Allen Hall-DAT}]  
 ‘he went there to speak to Allen Hall’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]



Although there the purposive-marked subordinate clause in (625) shares its subject with the main clause, this is not a necessary condition. In (706), for example, the (elided) subject of the subordinate clause is coreferential with one of the two objects of the ditransitive main clause (*kuta ngathn* ‘my dog’).

- (932) [*ngay kuta ngathn piinth reeka-rr {mungk-nhatha}*]  
 [1sg(ERG) dog 1sgPOS(ACC) bone(ACC) give-P.PFV {eat-PURP}]  
 ‘I gave my dog a bone to eat’  
 [LN04/8/02 Elicitation]

Example (624) could be similarly characterised purposive (with the sense ‘the man helped me for the purpose that I should be able to walk’), but it might alternatively signal an adverbial function of the purposive subordinate clause (with the sense ‘the man helped me while I was walking’).

- (933) [*pamal ii yuur-reekarr=anh {ngay yencnhatha}*]  
 [man-ERG there hand-give-P.PFV=1sgACC {1sg(NOM) go:PURP}]  
 ‘the man helped me to walk’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

In example (934), a purposive subordinate clause functions as clausal complement, supplying the direct object of the speech event encoded by the main clause.

- (934) [*Sakala yiik-r*  
 [Sakala(NOM) say<RDP>-P.PFV  
 {*nhul kuuk yi<i>k-nhatha nhangun*}]  
 {3sg(NOM) WORD(ACC) say<RDP>-PURP 3sgDAT}]  
 ‘Sakala said he should talk to him’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

See §7.3.4 for elaboration of the purposive verbal category.

### 11.1.2.3 Subjunctive-marked subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses headed by a subjunctive verb may also have purposive function. The association between the subjunctive mood and purposive function is due largely to the particle, *angarr* ‘WANT’, which must immediately precede a subjunctive-marked verb as in (935) and (936).

- (935) [*ngay minc min waantharr-r {nganh kuta-ku angarr ngeey-nh}*]  
 [1sg(ERG) very good call.out-P.PFV {1sgACCDog-ERG WANT hear-SBJV}]  
 ‘I called out loudly so the dog would hear me’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

- (936) [*ngay money save-m rirk-ø*]  
 [1sg(ERG) money(ACC) save-TR DO-NPST]  
 ‘I’m saving money’

*{ngay raak Cairns-na angarr yancnh}*  
 {1sg(NOM) PLACE Cairns-DAT WANT go:SBJV}]  
 ‘so that I can go to Cairns’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

Example (112) illustrates the conditional use of the subjunctive subordinate clause. Like the unmarked finite subordinate clauses with conditional function, the condition-protasis is marked by *kar* ‘like’ and must appear at the left periphery of the main clause.

- (937) [*{kar nhunt yancnh inh truck-ak} nhaath-nhancnh nhunt*]  
 [{like2sg(NOM) go:SBJV dem.sp.prx truck-DAT} see-GO&:SBJV 2sg(ERG)]  
 ‘if you were to go by truck, you would see it’  
 ‘‘if you go you will see it for yourself’’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

## 11.2 Coordination

### 11.2.1 Verbal versus clausal coordination

Since most Thaayorre clauses are headed by a verb, clausal coordination entails verbal coordination. A distinction between the two may be useful in those languages where serial verbs (which share arguments) can be differentiated from the coordination of full clauses composed of predicates and their arguments. This is not a relevant distinction in Kuuk Thaayorre, however, as will become evident in the following sections.

The following discussion is organised firstly according to the three principal types of verbal coordination: conjunction, disjunction and concessive conjunction. Within each of these sections, subsections are organised according to the morphosyntactic features of the various alternative constructions. Brief mention will be made of analogous structures used in nominal coordination where appropriate, but for fuller discussion of nominal coordination see §6.8.

### 11.2.2 Conjunction

#### 11.2.2.1 *Asyndetic conjunction*

Asyndetic conjunction — the juxtaposition of clauses without any explicit marker of conjunction — is the most common form of clausal coordination in Kuuk Thaayorre. This is not areally unusual; as Smith and Johnson (2000:428) note, Kugu Nganhcara “makes extensive use of parataxis to convey what in other languages might be expressed by means of subordination”. In all cases, the ordering of clauses is iconic, with the first clause describing an event that precedes the second temporally, as in:

- (938) *[pam            ith=ul                    yarra    yan]*  
 [man(NOM) dem:dist=3sg(NOM) away go:NPST]  
  
*[patp-nhan=okun=ul]*  
 [camp-GO&:NPST=DUB=3sg(NOM)]  
 ‘maybe that chap will hive off and pitch camp’  
 [Hall 1972:85]

It is often difficult to distinguish complex clauses formed through asyndetic clausal conjunction from those containing an unmarked finite subordinate clause. In examples like (84), for instance, there is a fairly loose relationship between the events described and the two clauses could equally stand alone. In example (939), however, the conjoined clauses share their two arguments, which frame the two adjacent verbs.

- (939) *pam thon-thurr findm rirk-r therka-ni-rr parr\_r ulp*  
 man one-ERG find-TR DO-P.PFV return-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV child(ACC) dem:adr.prx  
 ‘one man found the child and brought him back’  
 [FT8/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

In a sequence of coordinated clauses, we would normally expect to find arguments overtly represented in the initial clause, with the zero anaphora (not) appearing in the second clause. In (939), though, the subject of both clauses is realised in the initial position of the main clause, while the direct object of both main and subordinate clauses (*parr\_r ulp* ‘that child’) appears only at the right periphery of the subordinate clause. This points to a closer nexus between the clauses than we might expect of a coordinate construction<sup>228</sup>.

### 11.2.2.2 *Ngul*-marked conjunction

Conjunction of clauses may be marked by the connective *ngul* ‘then’. As its gloss suggests, *ngul* ‘then’ typically expresses a temporal relationship between events, appearing at the beginning of a clause that sequentially follows some other event:

- (940) *ulp wac<ac>irr collect-m rirk-ø ngul kath-r*  
 dem:adr.prx properly<RDP> collect-TR DO-NPST then bind-NPST  
 “everything gotta be collected and tie'm up”  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

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<sup>228</sup> Further research may reveal a distinct verbal conjunction structure, of which (939) would be an example.

Both parataxis and *ngul*-marked conjunction may be used to much the same ends. This is evident in the following passage; the first pair of clauses are juxtaposed with no connective (most likely because they are paraphrases), the second pair are connected by *ngul* ‘then’, whilst (941c), which essentially rephrases (941b), contains no connective:

(941a) *ak piinth-r, ngamal wene-ø*  
 HORT grow-NPST big become-IMP  
 “let it [cyclone] grow, let it become big”

(b) *piinth-r, ngul nhul pal=ul yan*  
 grow-NPST then 3sg(NOM) towards=3sg(NOM) go:NPST  
 “when he grows up then he come”  
 ‘it will grow, then it will come’

(c) *piintharrn ngan yomparr-nhan pal=ul yan*  
 strong what become-GO&:NPST towards=3sg(NOM) go:NPST  
 “when he gets strong he’ll come then”  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The cognate form *ngula* ‘then, afterwards’ is similarly used to conjoin clauses describing sequentially-related events in Kugu Nganhcara (Smith and Johnson 2000:434) and Warlpiri (Nash 1980).

### 11.2.3 Disjunction

Disjunction was traditionally achieved by simple parataxis, as seen in the following:

(942) *nhiplin kar yak-a path-arr, kar minh-al-rr path-arr*  
 2duACC like snake-ERG bite-P.PFV like meat-ERG-PRAG bite-P.PFV  
 “[we] thought you might have been eaten by a crocodile, or bitten by a snake.”  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

Although nominal disjunction is frequently achieved by encliticising the dubitative enclitic =*okun* to both coordinands, this does not seem to be a strategy for clausal disjunction. Instead, most instances of clausal disjunction in present day speech include the English loan *or*:

- (943) *raak inhul thurma wun-an or wanthantharr?*  
 place this.one together lie-GO&:NPST or how  
 ‘will we stay here together or what?’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Interestingly, the distribution of *or* in clausal disjunction seems to mirror the distribution of =*okun* ‘dubitative’ in nominal disjunction somewhat. In example (b), for instance, *or* appears on both coordinands, whereas in English it would only appear on the second (at the juncture between the two). Note that the presence of the dubitative enclitic, =*okun*, in the first clause does not mark it as a coordinand, but is rather functioning with its modal sense, indicating that the speaker is unsure of whether or not the event will occur.

- (944) *ngay ii-rr-kuw=okun yan;*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west=DUB go:NPST  
 ‘I might go west’  
  
*or ngay rump-un yan, or ngay waap-n yan*  
 or 1sg(NOM) beach-DAT go:NPST or 1sg(NOM) river-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘I might go to the beach, or I might go to the river’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

Like Kuuk Thaayorre, Kugu Nganhcara traditionally expressed disjunction asyndetically, but “an innovative alternative construction for disjunction uses the borrowed English conjunction *oo* ‘or’” (Smith and Johnson 2000:434).

### 11.2.4 Concessive conjunction

Concessive/adversative constructions are rarely reported for Australian languages. As with the other subtypes of clausal coordination, concessive conjunction may be achieved by parataxis:

(945) *ith nhunt wurrurpirkir yuur punth thamr yangkar=okun,*  
 dem:dist 2sg(ERG) ? poke-P.PFV hand arm foot calf=DUB

*yiin=p kaar=p*  
 itch-PRAG NEG-PRAG

‘if you have a rash on hands or feet, but it is not itchy’

[Health Centre Poster - source unknown]

(Note that the distal adnominal demonstrative, *ith*, is used here to establish an irrealis proposition, not to mark concessive conjunction per se).

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses no concessive connective as such, but this may be strongly implied by the inclusion of either concessive *akp* or contrastive *wuump* in one of the two clauses.

(946) *quiet one akp, ngay kaar trust-m rirk*  
 quiet one despite 1sg(ERG) NEG trust-TR DO:NPST  
 ‘although [that crocodile] may be quiet, I don’t trust him’  
 [GJ3/02/04 Conversation]

(947)  
 1. *nhinh ngay wuump wal.meerem name nhangkn*  
 2sgACC 1sg(NOM) CONTR remember name 2sgPOS(ACC)  
*ngay, Alice nhunt...*  
 1sg(NOM) Alice 2sg(NOM)  
 ‘I know your name, you’re Alice...’

2. *ngay pam nhangkn nhamp ngay pam.ngongkom*  
1sg(NOM) man 2sgPOS(ACC) name(ACC) 1sg(NOM) ignorant.of  
‘[but] I can’t remember the name of your man’  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

The semantics and functions of these two particles are discussed in §11.3, and will not be elaborated upon here.

It was suggested in §10.4.2.2 that the primary function of *ngul* ‘then’ is to indicate temporal sequence. This is not the only sense with which *ngul* can be used, however. The second clause of (54) illustrates a seemingly concessive usage of *ngul* in a context in which temporal sequence plays no role:

- (948) *paanth pit<it>-nh wuump=ul=okun*  
woman(ACC) hold<RDP>-SBJV CONTR=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
“if he had a wife, alright”  
  
*ngul pul wupan*  
then 3du(NOM) temporary  
“[but] they just temporary”  
[ACh07/11/02 Conversation]

### 11.2.5 Comparison

The final function associated with asyndetic conjunction in Kuuk Thaayorre is forming a comparative construction. In the absence of comparative or superlative adjectives or adverbs (with the minor exception of *mangr* ‘rather’), comparison can only be made by contrasting two independent statements. This is illustrated by the following spontaneous utterance, in which the speaker wished to stress the enormous size of a crocodile he had seen by comparing it to a table near where we were sitting:



- (949) *inhul mantam, nhul nga:::mal*  
 this.one small 3sg(NOM) big  
 ‘it [the crocodile] was bigger than this [table]’  
 (lit. ‘this one is small, he was big’)  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

### **11.3 Particles**

From this section onwards, the focus will shift from the overarching syntax of combining clauses to the individual particles that play a role in the formation of complex clauses.

#### **11.3.1 *Kana* ‘well’**

The ubiquitous Thaayorre particle *kana* has five distinct meanings. Which of these obtains in a particular clause depends on the clausal predicate and — where this predicate is a verb — tense/aspect marking. The following characterisation of the semantics of Thaayorre *kana* draws heavily on Alpher’s (1991:152) description of cognate Yir Yoront *kana*, but makes some significant divergences. Table 76 summarises the five functions of *kana*, listed according to its role in the clause (including aspectual features of the verbal head where *kana* is not itself the main predicate).

Role in the clause	Meaning	Antonym
1. Nonverbal predicate	‘well’, ‘(in a) good (state)’	<i>waarr</i> ‘bad’
2. Interjection or nonverbal predicate	‘finished’, ‘enough’	<i>ngaathirr</i> ‘ongoing’
3. Particle in a clause with a Past perfective verb	‘finished’, ‘(successfully) done’	<i>ngaathirr</i> ‘ongoing’ <i>kaar</i> ‘NEGative’, <i>waat</i> ‘wrongly’
4. Particle in a clause with a Nonpast verb	‘about to’	<i>yup</i> ‘soon’, <i>yukurra</i> ‘next time’
5. Discourse particle	‘OK’	-

Table 76. The five functions of *kana*.

The first function of *kana* is as a nonverbal predicate meaning ‘well’ or ‘(in a) good (state)’<sup>229</sup>. It is used with this sense in the Thaayorre greeting *nhunt kana?* (2sgNOM well) ‘are you well?’. In addition to this highly routinised usage, *kana* can also be used to mean ‘good’ in contexts like the following:

- (950) *bag inh kana, min*  
 bag(NOM) dem:sp.prx well good  
 ‘this bag’s pretty good’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstratives8]

The antonym of this sense of *kana* is *waarr* ‘bad’. The adjective *min* ‘good’ also stands in an antonymic relation with *waarr*, and is more commonly used with this function than *kana* (outside greetings), as can be seen in the following:

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<sup>229</sup> Note that these alternative translations of *kana* should be taken to reflect an inexact match between the semantics of *kana* and those of the English translations. They are not intended to signify two distinct senses of the Thaayorre particle.

(951a) *nhul minc-wanc=kaak?*

AG: 3sg(NOM) body-ache=REL.PROP

‘is she sick?’

(b) *pokon, mami ngathn min!*

AJ: NO mum 1sg(NOM) good

‘no, my mum’s well!’

[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The key difference between *kana* and *min*, then, is that the latter focuses on an inherent characteristic (i.e. the value judgement that something is ‘good’), while *kana* is more attitudinal in focus. Hence *kana* can be used to describe a person’s being satisfied or contented rather than just physically healthy. This can be seen in the second line of the following utterance:

(952)

1. *Ngul ngay pirrkunc kuthirr katpi-rr, mantam.*  
then 1sg(NOM) SPECIES two(ACC) grasp-P.PFV small(ACC)  
‘then I caught two *pirrkunc* fish, small ones’
2. *ngay kana, good.enough inh*  
1sg(NOM) well good.enough dem:sp.prx  
‘I was satisfied, this is good enough’
3. *ngay paath thiika-rr angunp,*  
1sg(NOM) firewood(ACC)break-P.PFV in.that.place  
‘I made a fire there’
4. *anyway mungk-ica-rr, pungkurthaarr. Awoy.*  
anyway eat-RUN&-P.PFV hungry yes  
‘and went and ate them anyway, as I was hungry. That’s right’  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The second function of *kana* is as an interjection or nonverbal predicate meaning ‘finished’ or ‘enough’. Again, it seems that these two meanings, though distinct in English, may fall under a single Thaayorre sense that conveys an idea of completion of an event or a substance. Hence I was often asked by consultants — whose patience had been worn by an endless sequence of elicitation videos — *kana, or ngaathirr?* ‘(are we) finished or still going?’. *Kana* ‘finished’ can also be predicated of an argument, such as *kuthip* ‘story’ in the first clause of (953).

- (953) *kana kuthip inh. Kana kerp-r.*  
 finished story(NOM) dem:sp.prx CMP finish-P.PFV  
 ‘that’s the end of the story’  
 [GJ16/10/02 MelbourneStory]

Many narratives end with the simple statement *kana* ‘finished’, analogous to the English phrase ‘the end’.

This sense of ‘finished’ is closely linked to *kana*’s function when combined with a past perfective-inflected verb. Glossed ‘COMpletive’, this third function of *kana* indicates that the event described has (been) finished or completed, as seen in the second clause of (953) above. This is frequently accompanied by an implicature of ‘successfully completed’, no doubt fostered by *kana*’s first sense, ‘well’. Example (954.1) demonstrates the use of *kana* to mark a fully completed event, while (954.2) illustrates the use of its antonym *ngaathirr* ‘ongoing’.

- (954)
1. *Pormpr nhangkn kana yumpi-rr?*  
 house 2sgPOS(ACC) CMP make-P.PFV  
 ‘have (they) finished building your house yet?’
  
  2. *Pokon. Ngaathirr.*  
 NO ongoing  
 ‘no – they’re still going.’  
 [LN8/9/02 Elicitation]

The perfective aspect of the verb is strongly emphasised by this function of *kana*, making *kaar* ‘NEGATIVE’, which negates the event’s completion, another of its antonyms. So strong is *kana*’s association with telic events, its presence in a clause headed by an imperfective verb is ungrammatical. Hence my consultant rejected the following clause, which I had proposed with a putative meaning ‘what have you been doing (since I last saw you)?’:

- (955) *\*nhunt ngan kana yump-m?*  
 2sg(NOM) what CMP do-P.IPFV  
 [ME02/10/02 Elicitation]

When combined with a nonpast verb, *kana* has the meaning of ‘about to’, or ‘on the point of’. Hence the typical Thaayorre farewell; *ngay kana yan* (1sg[NOM] about.to go:NPST) ‘I’m going’. *Kana* in this function frequently combines with a verb stem derived by the first associated motion morpheme (as in [956]), which is hardly surprising given the latter’s use to mark inceptive aspect.

- (956) *paath ulp kana keemp-e-nhan yup!*  
 fire(NOM) dem:adr.prx about.to extinguish-RFL-GO&:NPST soon  
 ‘that fire’s going to go out soon’  
 [AJ8/02/04 Elicitation]

Rarely, *kana* is used with this sense in the absence of a verb (i.e. as an interjection). The following interchange — which was prompted by my consultant’s asking me (in language) whether we were going to work together — exemplifies this usage (which is clearly not ambiguous with the ‘finished’ or ‘well’ interjection functions):

- (957) *raak ngan?*

AG: TIME what  
 ‘when?’

GJ: *kana*  
 about.to  
 ‘now’

[GJ12/01/04 Conversation]

This function of referring to an (imminent) future event by means of a particle otherwise associated with completed, finished events might at first seem odd. As Comrie (1985:20) notes, however, in many languages around the world “the past tense can be used for imminent future events. Thus in Russian, the usual expression for use when one is about to leave is *ja pošël*, literally ‘I left’ even though this is clearly not literally true”.

There is just one example in my corpus in which *kana* combines with a Nonpast verb, but does not appear to carry this meaning of imminence or ‘about to’. Indeed, my analysis of the meaning of *kana* in such contexts led to the following misunderstanding with consultant ME:

(958) *pal kal-p-a!*

ME: towards carry-PRAG-PRAG  
 ‘bring [the *yencr* leaves] here!’

AG: [gets up to leave]

ME: *kace, kana yan nhunt-a*  
 WRONG **about.to** go:NPST 2sg(NOM)-PRAG  
 ‘no, [you’re] about to go’

AG: *kana yan yoorr, or...?*  
 about.to go:NPST now or  
 ‘go now, or...?’

ME: *yup! ngal thurma yarr=ey! ngal yarr thurma*  
 soon 1du:incl(NOM) together go:IMP=PRAG 1du:incl(NOM) go:IMP together  
 ‘soon [i.e. not yet]! We’ll go together! We’ll go together,’

*kanpa inh            kerp-ø,    yup yan*  
 first   dem:sp.prx   finish:IMP   soon   go:NPST  
 ‘finish this first. we’ll go soon’  
 [ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr - interruption]

I remain unsure as to the exact function of *kana* in this instance. Although the ‘about to’ sense would seem to have antonyms in both *yup* ‘soon’ and *yukurra* ‘next time’, the use of *kana* in the second clause of (958) appears similar to *yup* ‘soon’<sup>230</sup>.

Finally, *kana* also functions as a discourse particle, glossed here as ‘OK’. Like its English gloss, *kana* has a range of discourse functions, most prominently marking a particular kind of discourse boundary, termed here ‘thematic break’. This thematic break does not necessarily represent a change of topic (in the non-technical sense), but indicates that the state of affairs described by a clause or series thereof has been fully established, and that the subsequent clause(s) will go on to establish a different state of affairs. Such a break usually involves some change in the time or place of the events at issue. This is best illustrated by example:

(959)

1.    *Mami ngathn            ulp            ii    wun            wanthan=th.*  
 Mum   1sgPOS(NOM)   dem:adr.prx   there live:NPST   where=PRAG  
 ‘my mum lives there somewhere.’

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<sup>230</sup> There would seem to be an interesting parallel between this usage of *kana* and one sense of English *directly*, as noted by a character in Peter Carey’s *Illywhacker* (1985 [1999]:68):

*I was always offended by what I understood to be the Irish sense of the word ‘directly’ which did not mean, as it appeared to, something that would be done in a direct manner, immediately, without delay, but rather the opposite - it would be done indirectly, after taking time, having a smoke, wandering about, having a piss down the back and then approaching the object under discussion along a meandering sort of a path. It meant maybe. Or later.*

2. *Julatten. Ulp home-ak.*  
 Julatten dem:adr.prx home-DAT  
 ‘in Julatten. In a home there.’
  
3. *Ngul kana=le mami ngathn pal therk-nhan. Monday.*  
 then OK=PRAG mum 1sgPOS(NOM) towards return-GO&:NPST Monday  
 ‘So my mum’s going to come back, on Monday.’
  
4. *Kana=le nhul aka nhii<nhi>n thonmarr.*  
 OK=PRAG 3sg(NOM) here reside<RDP>:NPST forever  
 ‘[But this time] she’s going to stay [in Pormpuraaw] forever’.  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The first two lines of (959) establish where the speaker’s mother currently resides. Having done this, the speaker goes on to state that his mother will be coming back to Pormpuraaw on Monday, using *kana=le* ‘OK’ to mark the shift from describing her living in Julatten to her coming to Pormpuraaw. In the fourth line, this particle is employed to mark a further shift in focus from her travelling to Pormpuraaw to the fact that she will thereafter be living in Pormpuraaw. The same can be seen in (960), an excerpt from a story about the first time the speaker and his siblings had seen a plane:

(960)

1. “*pam-an ngan=okun yancm ulp*”  
 man-DAT what=DUB go:P.IPFV dem:adr.prx  
 ‘[we said:] “oh man, what could that thing be, going along?”’
  
2. “*yoornhurr nhaath-nhat ngamp ulp*”  
 first.time see-GO&:P.PFV 1pl:incl(NOM) dem:adr.prx  
 “‘it’s the first time we’ve seen that’”
  
3. *ngancn ulp kana.*  
 1pl:excl(NOM) dem:adr.prx OK  
 “then we alright.”



4. *Kana, may ulp ngancn mungka-rr*  
 OK VEG dem:adr.prx 1pl:excl(NOM) eat-P.PFV  
 ‘Okay, we ate some food.’
5. *therk-m ulp ngancn nhakankath-an*  
 return-P.IPFV dem:adr.prx 1pl:excl(NOM) home-DAT  
 ‘and we went home’
6. *kana=le nhamump.*  
 OK=PRAG there  
 ‘‘from there okay.’’
7. (*Ngul ngancin ulp nhemanp still schoolak ngancin jet inhul book ulp nhaathm ngancin parran*)  
 (‘then when we were still at school, we kids saw that jet in a book.’)  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

In the third line, *kana* ‘OK’ marks that the speaker believes that he has successfully established the first episode of this extract, the sighting of the plane, and intends to move on to describe the next part of the story. The significance of the break between the plane sighting and the children going back to camp to eat is emphasised by using *kana* ‘OK’ both as the head of the clause *ngancin ulp kana* (translated by the speaker as ‘‘then we alright’’) and to start the following line. *Kana* ‘OK’ then reappears in the sixth line, to mark a further thematic break between the return to normal life (as described in lines 3 and 4) and the later seeing a plane in a schoolbook (in line 6). In all of these cases, I take *kana*’s primary function as marking this thematic break, rather than expressing that things are ‘alright’ (as the consultant’s literal translation of line 3 might suggest). This is supported by the fact that *kana* ‘OK’ is frequently used in contexts of harm or danger. Accordingly, example (961) quotes the speech of a group of people looking for a man who went missing during a bush trip. One of the search party points out the tracks of the missing man near a river, then uses *kana* ‘OK’ to mark the shift from this piece of evidence to the inference that the man was taken by a crocodile:

(961) “*koo, inhungun... Awoy, kana.*

oh dem:pro:DAT yes OK

‘oh, [look] there... yes, okay

*Minh-al katparr, minh-al patha-rr.*”

meat-ERG grasp-P.PFV meat-ERG bite-P.PFV

‘a crocodile (must have) got him, a crocodile bit him’

[AC13/09/02 Conversation]

Like the ‘finished’ sense of *kana* detailed above, *kana* ‘OK’ seems to carry some sense of completion or conclusion, but in this case it relates more to the establishment of a proposition<sup>231</sup> or a discourse episode than to the perfectivity of the event described<sup>232</sup>.

It is striking how similar are the functions of Kuuk Thaayorre *kana*, Yir Yoront *kana* and Kugu Nganhcara *kana* (as well as cognate terms in other more distant languages, e.g. Wik Mungkan *kan* [Sayers 1976], Pakanh *kana* [Alpher 2004], Wik Ngathn *kan* [Sutton 1995], Yidiny *gana* [Dixon 1977] and Guugu Yimidhirr *gana* [Haviland 1979]). This, together with cognate forms in a wide range of other Pama-Nyungan languages (albeit with quite different meanings), leads Alpher (2004) to reconstruct proto-Pama-Nyungan *\*kana* ‘finished, ready’.

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<sup>231</sup> The kinds of discourse boundaries marked by *kana* ‘ok’ are not typologically unusual (cf. Stirling 2001). To take just a few examples, significant shifts in time, setting or points of view are commonly marked by ‘differential subject’ marking (Stirling 1993) or the switch from zero topic anaphora to full NPs in Chamorro (Scancarelli 1985) and Hebrew (Ariel 1990). It is likely that these discourse boundaries also have implications for Thaayorre anaphoric expression, but a quantitative study showing this is yet to be carried out. The particle *alright* in Pormpuraaw English (and many other varieties of Aboriginal English) also functions in a very similar way.

<sup>232</sup> Note that this discourse usage of Thaayorre *kana* has a close parallel in the use of Bininj Gun-Wok *bonj* (Evans 1992).

### 11.3.2 *Yarriy* ‘thus’

The particle *yarriy* ‘thus’ is typically used in order to integrate a quote, enactment or other representation of an event into spoken discourse. Through the use of *yarriy*, the speaker asserts that the introduced item illustrates the point they are trying to make. Hence it is in most cases translatable by the English *like this* or *like that*. Example (962) illustrates the use of *yarriy* to introduce quoted speech:

- (962) *peln yarriy yik-r: "ongkorr pancr rirk-ø"*  
 3pl(NOM) thus say-P.PFV “PROHIB shame DO-IMP”  
 ‘they said: “don’t be shy”’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

The form *yarriy* is historically derived from the imperative form of the verb *yan* ‘go’ (*yarr*), plus the particle *ii* ‘there’. Being a high-frequency collocation with a grammatical (rather than semantic) function, the two words *yarr* ‘go:IMP’ and *ii* ‘there’ are undergoing grammaticalisation into a single mono-morphemic unit. The form *yarri’i* (cf. *i’i* ‘here’) is also attested and is assumed to contrast with *yarriy* either semantically or discursively. The exact nature of this contrast is as yet unknown, however, since *yarri’i* is poorly represented in my data and therefore will not be discussed further. The variants *yarriy* and *arriy*, however, appear to be in free variation with both often used by a single speaker. For consistency, I transcribe both as the conservative allomorph *yarriy* since the contrast appears to be purely phonetic.

The different kinds of quotation or illustration that *yarriy* may introduce are outlined below. Following that is a discussion of the morphosyntax of the construction(s).

#### 11.3.2.1 *Illustration: quoted speech*

*Yarriy* may combine with a range of verbs describing speech, in order to introduce a quotation, such as in (963 - 964):

(963) *nhunt yariy yik-ø ngathun "pam ngathn nhamp Dan"*  
 2sg(NOM) thus speak-IMP 1sgDAT man 1sgPOS(NOM) name Dan"  
 'you [should] say to me "my man's name is Dan"  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(964) *ngay explain-m rirk-m... yariy:*  
 1sg(ERG) explain-TR do-P.IPFV thus  
  
*wacirr thowol-ø kutpol inhul*  
 correctly play-IMP football this.one  
 'I was explaining to them, like this: "play football properly!"  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

The verb of the main clause is frequently left out, in a construction similar to the colloquial English quotative construction *s/he was like*, "X", as illustrated by (965):

(965) *nhul yariy kaar=p "woy! Ngay awi'i"*  
 3sg(NOM) thus NEG=PRAG hey 1sg(NOM) here  
 'she never said "hey, I'm here!"  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(965) also demonstrates that *yariy* may be negated.

### 11.3.2.2 Illustration: quoted thought

The use of *yariy* in reporting a thought or belief is very close to the introduction of quotative speech:

(966) *ngancn yariy ngeey-m: "kee! [...]"*  
 1pl:excl(NOM) thus think-P.IPFV hey  
 'then we were thinking: "hey! [maybe Dad and Mum have had an accident]"  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

### 11.3.2.3 Illustration: verbal description

*Yarriy* may also indicate that a (previous) verbal description illustrates the point they are trying to make. As it can be taken for granted that most verbal descriptions are illustrations of some kind, this function can be taken as emphasising that the particular description is really key to the matter at hand. This is exemplified by (123), the second clause of which stresses that the emotion was an ongoing state, rather than a momentary experience:

- (967) *missed-m rirk-r pelnan. Ngay yarriy=p nhiin-m.*  
 miss-TR do-P.PFV 3plACC 1sg(NOM) thus-PRAG sit-P.IPFV  
 ‘I missed them [my family]. That’s how I was feeling’.  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

In (968), the purpose of *yarriy* is to exhort the audience to follow the verbal instructions given previously:

- (968) *wacirr thowol-ø kutpol inhul. Yarriy nhurr!*  
 right play-IMP football(ACC) this.one thus 2pl(ERG)  
 ‘play football properly! You [should do it] like that’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

### 11.3.2.4 Illustration: pantomimic gesture

The use of pantomimic gesture in narrative is widespread. Where a speaker wants to draw particular attention to their gesture, or point out that it represents the action of a protagonist, they may introduce (or sometimes follow) it with *yarriy*.

- (969) *ngul ulp ngay raak koorre nhaawr, yarriy!*  
 then dem:adr.prx 1sg(NOM) PLACE behind look:P.PFV thus  
 ‘then I looked back, like this!’ [speaker turns to look over his shoulder]  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

- (970) *yarriy punth wan-r rirk-ø*  
 thus arm(NOM) tell-P.PFV DO:NPST  
 [speaker raises hand] ‘like this she pointed’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

### 11.3.2.5 Illustration: live action / event

Finally, an instructor demonstrating their craft to a novice (e.g. an elder showing schoolchildren how to make a spear), will repeatedly utter *yarriy!* — often in isolation — to draw attention to a particular action. Similarly, if a speaker notices an event in their surrounds which illustrates their point (e.g. if they are talking about how birds eat a particular fruit, then they see a bird eating this fruit), they are likely to point and utter ‘*yarriy!*’.

### 11.3.2.6 Morphosyntax of *yarriy* ‘thus’

Although word order is not rigidly fixed, *yarriy* tends to appear in one of two positions: (a) immediately preceding a predicate referring to the event illustrated (i.e. before *yik* ‘speak’ if it is speech that is being quoted, or before *wont* ‘fall’ if it is falling that is being mimed); or (b) immediately preceding or following (sometimes with overlap) the illustration itself, where the illustration is non-verbal. These first of these positions corresponds with that of adverbs, which might be predicted given *yarriy*’s somewhat adverbial role in the clause. This order may be permuted, though, where *yarriy* is in particular focus, as in the following example:

- (971) *yarriy ngay yik-r ...*  
 thus 1sg(NOM) speak-P.PFV  
 ‘And I said: ...’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

### 11.3.3 Analogical *kar* ‘like’

The particle *kar* is a connective used to liken one phrase or clause to another. Most often, as in (972), *kar* ‘like’ connects two noun phrases rather than two clauses, and this is taken here to be its primary function.

- (972) *nhul koo-miing kar pam nhangnip nhangn*  
 3sg(NOM) face(NOM) like man father 3sgPOS  
 ‘he looks like his father’ (lit. ‘he is like his father in the face’)  
 [ACh05/10/02 Conversation]

Although they differ in vowel length, *kar* ‘like’ may be historically related to the negative particle *kaar*. The semantics of the two are plausibly related since, as Smith and Johnson (2000:437) put it: “if X is merely LIKE Y, then X is NOT Y”. Historical reconstruction would be required to prove this, but it is conceivable that the vowel would be lengthened due to the obligatory stress attributed to the negative particle, or shortened in this unstressed position. In Kugu Nghanhcara a single form (*ka’i*) is used for both this semblative function and negation. The Kayardild particle *maraka* encodes a similar association between ‘like’ and ‘counterfactual’ (Evans 1995:378-382).

As a highly grammaticalised element, *kar* has many functions. I take the most basic of these to be likening one (head) NP to another (modifying) NP which is immediately preceded by *kar*. The fact that two separate NPs are involved is indicated by the fact that both must take the case-marking relevant to the head NP’s role in the clause, as seen in (973).

- (973) *wa’ar pam.thaawaarr-an nhul kar paath-thurr*  
 jellyfish dangerous-ERG 3sg(ERG) like fire-ERG  
  
*thaath-irr nganh yangkar*  
 sting-P.PFV 1sgACC leg(ACC)  
 ‘the venomous jellyfish stung me on the leg like fire’  
 [Hall 1972:104]

However, the two constituents also seem to form a higher-level NP, as evidenced by the fact that the proprietive enclitic =*kaak* in example (974) attaches to the second NP, although it is the first (or both NPs together) which it modifies semantically (i.e. the addressee has a face, not a baby):

- (974) *nhunt koo-miing kar parr\_r meenmrr=kaak*  
 2sg(NOM) face like child baby=REL.PROP  
 ‘you have a face like a baby’  
 [Anon.]

As well as co-occurring with a verbal predicate (as in examples [973] and [974]), *kar* also appears with a somewhat predicate-like function in verbless clauses:

- (975) *kuta kar pam*  
 dog(NOM) like man  
 ‘dogs are like people’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

It may also be used to introduce an illustrative example (much as English *like*), with the meaning ‘the following is an example of what I am talking about’. In (976), then, the speaker indexes a nearby dog as a token of the class of dogs he is talking about.

- (976) *kuta... kar kuta ngith wun... nganip-i yump-irr*  
 dog like dog(NOM) dem:dist lie:NPST father-ERG make-P.PFV  
 ‘dogs, like that dog over there, god up there made [them]’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation]

In other clauses, the illustrative example might be a fictional ‘for instance’ description of the type of event that might occur (as seen in [977], uttered by the speaker as an example of he and his brother’s being close), or to make a generalised statement about an entity (978).



(977) *kar mimp wuthuuw*  
 like clothes(ACC) share  
 ‘for instance [we might] share clothes’  
 [EN09/10/02 Conversation]

(978) *pipe inhul-thurr log cabin kar path-r kaal.kurrc*  
 pipe dem.pro-ERG log cabin(ACC) like bite-NPST cool  
 ‘with this pipe, log cabin [tobacco] smokes coolly’  
 [ME02/10/02 Conversation]

The rest of this section will be spent detailing the more extended functions of this particle. Firstly, *kar* has a hedge-like usage (979-980) which is closely related to its basic likening function.

(979) *peln kar pormp-an pit-r inside*  
 3pl(ERG) like house-DAT keep-NPST inside  
 ‘they [crocodiles] live in something like a house’  
 [AC13/09/02 Conversation]

(980) *pam thono... kar ii-th-iparr turn, thono ii-rr-ikarr*<sup>233</sup>  
 man one(NOM) like there-to-south turn one(NOM) there-towards-north  
 ‘one man is... sort of turned south, and one to the north’  
 [LC15/10/02 Elicitation Man&Tree]

The second extended function of *kar* is to introduce an explanation:

(981) *kar yoorrnhurpp nhaath-nhat ii*  
 like first see-GO&:P.PFV there  
 ‘[we were scared] because it was the first time we saw [a plane]’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

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<sup>233</sup> I attribute the use here of the unconventional allomorph of *ungkarr* ‘north’ (*?ikarr*) used here to the age of the speaker (~thirteen). There seems to be some regularisation of the directional paradigm amongst younger speakers that will not be explored further here.

There is a similar polysemic link between likening and explanation for the English particle *as* (e.g. *her hands are cold as ice* versus *he couldn't leave as he was stuck to the chair*).

The third extended use I call 'fictive'. With this use, *kar* typically marks (counterfactual) reported thought:

- (982) *ngay kar ngeey-m nhunt kar sixteen=nhurr=p*  
 1sg(ERG) like think-P.IPFV 2sg(NOM) like sixteen=ONLY=PRAG  
 'I thought you were just sixteen'  
 [Anon conversation, confirmed LN02/10/02]

It seems that, with this function at least, *kar* takes the whole clause in its scope, as evidenced by its varied placement in examples (983-984).

- (983) *nhiplin kar yak-a path-arr. Kar minh-al=rr path-arr*  
 2sgACC like snake-ERG bite-P.PFV like MEAT-ERG=PRAG bite-P.PFV  
 "[we thought] you two might have been bitten by a snake or by a crocodile."  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

- (984) *ngay ngeey-r kar parr\_r nhurr thaa-munthi-rr*  
 1sg(ERG) hear-P.PFV like child(NOM) 2pl(NOM) mouth-sink-P.PFV  
 'I thought you kids had drowned!'  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

This 'fictive' function could be viewed as a subtype of irrealis. *Kar* 'like' also appears in (irrealis) clauses with (directive) deontic mood such as (985).

- (985) *nhangknnhunt kar nhaath-e-ø*  
 2sgRFL like see-RFL-NPST  
 'you should look at yourself!' [retort to teasing]  
 [LN14/08/02 Conversation]

The final extended function of *kar*, the marking of conditionality, is also associated with irrealis aspect. This can be seen in the following:

- (986) *ngay kar pormp-an therk-nhan*  
 1sg(NOM) like house-DAT return-GO&:NPST
- ngay kuta ngathn piinth reek-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) dog 1sg(ACC) bone(ACC) give-GO&:NPST  
 “If I go home I’ll give my dog a bone”  
 [LN04/08/02 Elicitation]

The counterfactual implicature associated with the ‘fictive’ usage is weakened to neutral status here. The use of *kar* ‘like’ in subordinate conditional clauses was explored in (§11.1).

### 11.3.4 Contrastive *wuump*

By including the particle *wuump* in a clause, the speaker contrasts two states of affairs. In its basic function, *wuump* is used to contrast two entities or scenarios (either real or imagined). This contrastive construction may be either biclausal or monoclausal.

In the biclausal construction, the focused clause (expressing that which is central to the speaker’s message) occurs without *wuump* (947.2), while the background against which it is set contains *wuump* (947.1). The focused clause may either precede (987) or follow (947.2) the background clause:

- (947')
1. *nhinh ngay wuump wal.meerem name nhangkn*  
 2sgACC 1sg(NOM) CONTR remember name 2sgPOS(ACC)

*ngay, Alice nhunt...*  
 1sg(NOM) Alice 2sg(NOM)  
 ‘I know your name, you’re Alice...’

2. *ngay pam nhangkn nhamp ngay pam.ngongkom*  
 1sg(NOM) man 2sgPOS(ACC) name(ACC) 1sg(NOM) lack.knowledge.of  
 ‘[but] I can’t remember the name of your man’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(987) *yoorr kaar=p nhiina-n-r pokon, kanangkarr wuump*  
 now NEG-PRAG sit-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV NO long.ago CONTR  
 ‘today we don’t plant [those vegetables]. Unlike the old days’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative]

In the monoclausal construction, the situation described is contrasted with an alternative situation that has either been established previously in the discourse, or is pragmatically understood:

(988) *yorr wuump peln yan high.school-ak*  
 now CONTR 3pl(NOM) go:NPST high.school-DAT  
 ‘nowadays they go to high school [unlike in my day]’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Narrative]

*Wuump* may also be combined with the dubitative enclitic =*okun* (§11.3.5) to contrast one situation or event with another possible, potential, or imagined alternative situation or event:

(54) *paanth pit<it>-nh wuump=ul=okun*  
 woman(ACC) hold<RDP>-SBJV CONTR=3sg(ERG)=DUB  
 ‘‘if he had a wife, alright’’

*ngul pul wupan*  
 then 3du(NOM) temporary  
 ‘‘they just temporary’’  
 [ACh05/10/02]

The interrogative function of *wuump* can be understood as asking the addressee to confirm whether the state of affairs described is true or desirable (in contrast to an implied alternative state of affairs). Consider the following:

- (989) *ngay may wuump rint-nh ngampalin*  
 1sg(ERG) VEG(ACC) CONTR cook-SBJV 1pl:incl:DAT  
 ‘can I cook something for us?’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

- (990) *ngay wal ngathn waawath-r,*  
 1sg(ERG) bag 1sgPOS(ACC) search:RDP-NPST  
*nhunt wuump nhaawr?*  
 2sg(ERG) CONTR see:P.PFV  
 ‘I’m looking for my bag. Have you seen it?’  
 [MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

In (989) the interlocutor is asked to choose between a situation in which the speaker prepares some food, and an implied alternative scenario of the food’s not being cooked. In (990), the speaker asks whether the addressee has seen her bag (or not). *Wuump*’s interrogative function is thus related to the basic use inasmuch as it presents the addressee with two contrastive scenarios between which they are asked to choose.

*Wuump* may appear in any position in the clause. Variations in word order do not appear to affect its scope.

### 11.3.5 Dubitative =*okun*

The DUBitative enclitic =*okun* is related to other epistemic forms (notably ignorative pronouns [§5.2] and *wuump* ‘contrastive’ [§11.3.4]) by its association with a lack of knowledge on the speaker’s part, as made explicit in (991).

- (991) *ngawiiyokun ngan=okun!*  
I.don't.know what=DUB  
“I don't know what it could be”  
[GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

=*Okun* is thus be used to disambiguate the indefinite interpretation of ignoratives from their many other functions (e.g. interrogative). Thus =*okun* forces an indefinite interpretation of *wanhul* ‘who’ in (992) and of *wanthanngun* ‘where at’ in [993.2].

- (992) *wanhul=okun mungka-rr*  
who=DUB eat-P.PFV  
‘somebody must've eaten it’  
[MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

(993)

1. *ngay wal waa<wa>th-r,*  
1sg(NOM) bag(ACC) search<RDP>-NPST  
‘I'm looking for my bag’
2. *ngay wanthanngun=okun thaka-rr*  
1sg(NOM) where<sub>LOC</sub>=DUB leave-P.PFV  
‘I don't know where I can have left it [lit. I have left it somewhere].’  
[MF20/08/02 Elicitation]

In the absence of an ignorative, =*okun* generally functions to introduce a possible world or state-of-affairs which the speaker does not have sufficient evidence to assert. It can thus be conceptualised as modally non-committal. This use is seen in the simple expression of possibility (e.g. in [994-995]), avoiding any commitment as to the likelihood of an event's transpiring, seen in the following examples:

- (994) *yup=okun ngay yan Waar.Paant-ak*  
soon=DUB 1sg(NOM) go:NPST place.name-DAT  
‘maybe later I'll go out to Waar-Paant’  
[ECh02/10/02 Conversation]

- (995) *trouble=okun yan yup*  
 trouble=DUB go:NPST soon  
 ‘I might get into trouble’ [lit. trouble might come]  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

The possible world described might alternatively represent an abstraction of the kinds of events that happen in the real world, in opposition to specific instantiations that have happened (as in [996], n.b. this is a function also performed by *kar* ‘like’, §11.3.3).

- (996) *pul pam.kun\_yangkar=okun wuth-nhan*  
 2du(NOM) brother(NOM)=DUB share-GO&NPST  
 ‘brothers might give each other things (this is typical behaviour for brothers)’  
 [GJ06/12/02 Elicitation]

=*Okun* may also be employed in the description of a fact or event that the speaker imagines to be the case — or to at least be possible — but does not have sufficient evidence to judge (997).

- (997) *city ngamal=okun, kar Cairns ulp*  
 city big=DUB like Cairns dem.adr.prx  
  
*yoorr yokunmanorrrp ngamal yomparru-rr*  
 now same.way big transform-P.PFV  
 “it [Melbourne] might be a big place like Cairns now”  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

This latter use is related to =*okun*’s function as a hedge. This hedge function is seen in example (998), in which the speaker describes a scene from a mythical story in which a woman is attacked by bolts of lightning. The verbal description transcribed here was accompanied by gestures to the speaker’s arms and legs at the points at which he imagines (but has no evidence to prove) the girl might have been injured.

- (998) *paanth inh=okun thernga-rr, pirka-rr,*  
 woman(ACC) dem:sp.prx=DUB hit-P.PFV swipe-P.PFV  
*thaparr, thutha-rr prrk!*  
 lightening pull-P.PFV IDPH  
 “he break this arm, and this one... lightning no friend”  
 [AC10/08/02 Narrative PormprRintm]

In example (999), a consultant is describing a video clip in which a man is tending a pot on a fire. He suggests that he might be making tea, but is unsure of the actual contents of the pot and therefore attaches the dubitative clitic to mark the tea as being presumed rather than known.

- (999) *may tea=okun riint-r*  
 VEG tea(ACC)=DUB cook-NPST  
 ‘he’s making tea, perhaps’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents140]

=*Okun* is also commonly employed to express disjunction, with which function it always appears at least twice in the clause, though not necessarily on the coordinands (e.g. in [1000]). Disjunction is nowadays largely achieved using the English loanword *or*, often in conjunction with =*okun* (as in [1001]):

- (1000) *T.A. ngancn katpi-rr. T.A.=okun Ansett katpi-rr=okun*  
 T.A.(ACC) 1pl:excl(ERG) hold-P.PFV T.A.(ACC)=DUB Ansett(ACC) hold-P.PFV=DUB  
 “we caught T.A., whether T.A. or Ansett”  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

- (1001) *may tea nhunt wantantharr mungk-r? milk-ak=okun or ngotn?*  
 VEG tea(ACC) 2sg(ERG) how eat-NPST milk-DAT=DUB or black  
 ‘how do you have your tea? with milk or black?’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]



=*Okun* also appears to form an ‘impossibility construction’ with the NEGative particle. This is described in §10.3.2.

=*Okun*’s status as an enclitic (rather than a suffix or free particle) is evidenced by four key facts:

1. it may never occur clause-initially;
2. it may intervene between a nomen and another enclitic (e.g. proprietive =*kaak*, [1002], cf. §4.2.7);
3. it never intervenes between a nomen and an affixed case marker (1003);
4. it attaches to forms of almost any word class (as seen in the examples above)

(1002) *nhul paanth yiirram=okun=kaak*  
 3sg(NOM) woman different(ACC)=DUB=REL.PROP  
 ‘maybe he has another woman’  
 [Anon. Conversation]

(1003) *yak-a=okun patha-rr*  
 snake-ERG=DUB bite-P.PFV  
 ‘a snake might have bitten [them]’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

### 11.3.6 Modal uses of *minc*: ‘against expectations’

The form *minc* — an adjective meaning ‘true’ and an adverb meaning ‘really’ — also functions as a particle used to contrast expectations or intentions with events as they actually transpire<sup>234</sup>. I label this sense of *minc* ‘against expectations’ (‘UNXP’) Hence in (1004), *minc* appears in a clause describing the intended event of orange-cutting that was in fact thwarted by the Actor-subject’s cutting his finger instead. Similarly,

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<sup>234</sup> This is somewhat comparable with the Kayardild form *nginja*, used to describe things going against the expected outcome (e.g. a lack of rain despite the presence of black clouds; see Evans 1995:382-384).

in (1005) *minc* appears in a clause describing a boy looking in a hole expecting to find a frog in it, which contrasts with the actual outcome of his finding a rat emerging from it:

(1004) *yiki pam ith*  
 yikes man(ERG<sup>^</sup>) dem:dist  
  
*nhul minc may orange knifenthurr yak-nhatath*  
 3sg(ERG)UNXP VEG orange(ACC) knife-ERG cut-CTF  
 ‘yikes! That man meant to cut the orange with the knife [but cut his finger]’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break18]

(1005) *nhul minc thatr waath-m ngul minh kaal ripi-rr*  
 3sg(ERG)UNXP frog(ACC) search-P.IPFV then MEAT rat(NOM) exit-P.PFV  
 ‘he was looking for the frog but a rat came out [of the hole]’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

In such examples, *minc* ‘against expectations’ seems to function as a counterfactual particle, marking an irrealis event that contrasts with an actualised state of affairs. In this case, it may seem curious that a form that also means ‘true’ should be used with seemingly irrealis force. However, I argue that *minc* does not mark the counterfactual state of affairs per se, but rather the contrast between the actual state of affairs and those expected (not unlike English *actually*). Hence in clauses like (1006), *minc* ‘against expectations’ appears within a clause describing the actual state of affairs:

(1006) *ngul minc nhaawr jet kun-thomp=kaak yancm*  
 then really see:P.PFV jet bum-smoke=PRD.PROP go-P.IPFV  
 ‘then [to our surprise] we saw a jet fly by with smoke coming out behind it’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

Here there is no explicit mention of an irrealis, expected, counterfactual state of affairs – the existence of an expectation running counter to actual events is only signalled by the presence of *minc* ‘against expectations’. The same is true of (1007).

- (1007) *parr\_r minc ith nhaath-nharr pul*  
 child(ACC) UNXP dem:dist see-GO&:IMP 3du(ERG)  
 ‘[to their surprise] they saw this child [alone in the bush]’  
 [FT08/02/04 Narrative Adoptee]

Example (1007) raises the somewhat perplexing fact that *minc* ‘against expectations’ can appear within a noun phrase (in this case, *parr\_r ith* ‘this child’), although the particle is clausal in scope. This could perhaps be explained by arguing that *parr\_r* ‘a child’ and *ith* ‘that’ form independent noun phrases, though this is very much a post hoc explanation.

## 11.4 Adverbs

### 11.4.2 Spatial adverbs

#### 11.4.2.1 Pal ‘towards’

The most significant and frequently used spatial adverb is *pal* ‘towards’, which marks the event described as oriented with respect to the deictic centre. The default deictic centre is the locus of the speech event, which encompasses the locations of both speaker and addressee(s). This can be seen in the following:

- (1008) *piinth-r ngul nhul pal=ul yan*  
 grow-NPST then 3sg(NOM) towards=3sg(NOM) go:NPST  
 “when he [cyclone] grows up then he come”  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

The speaker employs *pal* ‘towards’ in example (1008) in order to describe the movement of the cyclone nearing Pormpuraaw, where the speech event took place. However, the locus of the deictic centre frequently shifts. A fairly minimal shift (seen in [325] and [1010]) involves a narrowing from the speech event as a whole (encompassing both speaker and addressee) to whichever of the interlocutors is not involved as either theme (or ‘figure’, in Talmy’s 1978 sense) or Source of the motion event described. Thus in clauses with a second person figure-subject (1009) *pal*

typically describes orientation towards the speaker. Conversely, in clauses with a first person subject (1010) *pal* typically describes orientation towards the addressee:

(1009) *nhunt raak ngan pal therk-nhan?*  
2sg(NOM) TIME what towards return-GO&:NPST  
'when will you come back?'  
[AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(1010) *ngay pal kal<al>-ø*  
1sg(ERG) towards carry<RDP>-NPST  
'I'll bring [it] to you'  
[BN1/10/02 Conversation]

These patterns of interpretation are the result of pragmatic implicature, rather than forming part of the lexical semantics of *pal*. These implicatures stem from the dual facts that *pal* 'towards' marks events as 'oriented towards the deictic centre', and the default deictic centre is the speech event. Thus when one member of this speech event (i.e. either speaker or addressee) is themselves the figure whose motion is being tracked, the deictic centre shifts to the other interlocutor. So because (1009) describes the return of the addressee, she cannot herself form the reference point, leaving the speaker alone implicated as reference point. Example (1009) thus describes the movement of the addressee towards the speaker at a future point in time. This implicature is sufficiently strong that *pal* 'towards' is often the sole clue to the identity of an elided Recipient argument. Hence (1011) is a common way to make a request.

(1011) *ngok pal reek-ø*  
beer(ACC) towards give-IMP  
'give me a beer'  
[EC2/10/02 Conversation]

This implicature is defeasible, however<sup>235</sup>. In example (1012), for instance, the addressee is encoded as subject, but the clause is concerned with the movement of the ball, not the movement of the addressee herself. The addressee of (1012) therefore remains a potential reference point, and (1012) was indeed uttered to instruct the addressee to pick up the ball (towards herself) rather than to move the ball (up) towards the speaker:

(1012) *ball ulp pal mi'irr*  
 ball(ACC) dem:adr.prx towards pick.up:IMP  
 ‘pick up that ball!’  
 [EF14/12/02 Elicitation / Conversation]

The deictic centre can further shift to a locus independent of both speaker and addressee. This is illustrated by example (1013), uttered by LN to a group of people in a house after her cousin ran out of the house and past us down the road.

(1013) *nhul ngene pal riic-r?*  
 3sg(NOM) why towards run-NFUT  
 ‘why/where's he running to?’  
 [LN02/10/02 Conversation]

The subject here is demonstrably moving away from the locus of the speech event, rather than towards it. It seems here that it is the ignorative *ngene* ‘why/where’ that anchors the deictic particle *pal*.

The deictic centre may alternatively be established by the preceding discourse. Example (1014) is taken from a traditional narrative in which a large group of men

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<sup>235</sup> Indeed, it is probably the fact that the first person Recipient is implied rather than overtly encoded that makes this such a common format for requests. This fits with the tendency — both amongst the Thaayorre and worldwide — to favour indirectness in making requests, in order to protect negative face.

tried to throw away a boomerang but it kept returning to them. By the time the speaker comes to utter (1014), then, it is clear that the story's protagonists (the group of men) form the deictic centre towards which *pal* orients the boomerang's movement:

(1014)

1. *thunp-m peln...*  
throw-P.IPFV 3pl(ERG)  
'they kept throwing [it]'
  
2. *pokon! Werngr pal=p therk-m*  
NO boomerang(NOM) towards=PRAG return-P.IPFV  
'but it didn't work! The boomerang kept returning [to them]'  
[AC13/09/02 Narrative Werngr]

Similarly, where a clause contains a locative expression explicitly specifying the Goal of the event (e.g. the dative-case NP in [1015]), this is always taken to be the reference point anchoring *pal*:

- (1015) *paath-un yaki-rr pal*  
fire-DAT cut-P.PFV towards  
'[she] slices [it] into the flames'  
[Foote and Hall: Primer 9]

Although analogous deictic forms crosslinguistically are often glossed 'hither' — implying motion towards the speaker — their actual usage may not diverge significantly from that of Thaayorre *pal*. The cognate Kugu Nghanhcara form *pala* certainly appears to have a similar functional range (Smith and Johnson 2000:452), as do the deictic forms of some more areally and genetically distant languages. The English deictic verb *come*, for instance, may be used to describe motion towards a reference point other than the deictic centre where this reference point has especial discourse salience, as in [1016] (cf. Fillmore 1975).

(1016) *After four hours of wandering lost in the woods, he came to a clearing*

*Pal* ‘towards’ appears in a number of compounds and conventionalised collocations. The first of these, *wanthan pal* ‘which direction?’ (lit. ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub> towards’) is found in the standard Thaayorre greeting.

(1017) *nhunt      wanthan   pal      yan?*  
 2sg(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub>   towards   go:NPST  
 ‘which way are you going?’  
 [common greeting]

As noted above, ignoratives with interrogative function (e.g. *wanthan* ‘where<sub>TRJ</sub>’) are generally interpreted as deictic centre (thus anchoring *pal* ‘towards’), though they only rarely coincide with the location of the speaker and/or addressee.

The second collocation, *thakr pal* ‘facing’ (lit. ‘front.of.torso towards’) describes the static orientation of a figure with an inherent front side (e.g. the people in example [1018]):

(1018) *peln      thakr   pal      nhii<nhi>n*  
 3pl(NOM) front   towards   sit<RDP>NPST  
 ‘they are sitting facing [us, the viewers]’  
 [FT10/02/04 Elicitation RcpPilot8]

The collocation *thakr pal* ‘facing’ typically describes an orientation towards the speech event, much as does *pal* ‘towards’ alone. But again, this deictic centre may shift, being alternatively anchored by interrogative ignoratives such as *wanthan* ‘where<sub>DIR</sub>’ in the following example.

- (1019) *pam inthul, yuk punth mal-an kaatp-r,*  
 man this.one:EMPH stick(ACC) arm right-DAT grasp<RDP>-NPST
- nhul thakr wanthan pal thanan?*  
 3sg(NOM) front where<sub>TRJ</sub> towards stand<RDP>:NPST
- ‘this man, holding a stick in [his] right hand, which way is he facing’  
 [DJ04/02/04 Elicitation Man&Tree]

In addition to these two collocations, *pal* ‘towards’ may be compounded with the deictic adverbs *i’i* ‘here’, *ii* ‘there’ and *yuuw* ‘far’ to form *i’ipal* ‘[coming] from here’, *iipal* ‘[coming] from there’ and *yuupal* ‘[coming] from far [away]’ respectively, as discussed in §11.4.2.2 below.

#### 11.4.2.2 Other deictic adverbs

Deictic adverbs — a subclass that arguably includes *pal* ‘towards’ above (cf. §3.3.1.1) — are optional clausal elements that locate the event (or entity in verbless clauses) with respect to the deictic centre. The basic forms *i’i* ‘here’, *ii* ‘there’, and *yuuw* ‘far’ form a neat paradigmatic set<sup>236</sup>, as follows:

	<i>i’i</i> ‘here’	<i>ii</i> ‘there’	<i>yuuw</i> ‘far’
emphatic prefix <i>aw-</i>	<i>aw-i’i</i> ‘right here’	<i>aw-ii</i> ‘right there’	-
allative suffix <i>-rra</i>	<i>i’irra</i> ‘to here’	<i>iirra</i> ‘to there’	<i>yuurra</i> ‘to far away’
compounded with <i>pal</i> ‘towards’	<i>i’ipal</i> ‘from here’	<i>iipal</i> ‘from there’	<i>yuupal</i> ‘from far away’

Table 77. Partial paradigm of deictic adverbs.

<sup>236</sup> This was first observed by Hall (1972:442), who adds an additional ‘Locative, moving’ category, marked by the suffix *-wurra*. Since this form does not appear in my data it is not discussed here.



The distribution of the bare root forms *i'i*, *ii* and *yuuw* — with or without the emphatic prefix — is equivalent to that of a dative-case noun phrase. They may thus function as an optional adjunct in an otherwise complete clause (as in [1020]), or as the locative complement in a locative construction (as in [1021], cf. §9.2.5):

(1020) *kuta Dan-tam ii kuta thok wawarin-r*  
 dog Dan-ABL there PET cat(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘Dan’s dog is chasing the cat’  
 [LF12/11/02 Elicitation]

(1021) *ngay aw-i'i*  
 1sg(NOM) ATTN-here  
 ‘I’m right here!’  
 [LN04/08/02]

Deictic adverbs marked by the allative suffix occupy a subset of the syntactic slots of dative-case NPs, namely those representing the path or endpoint of the event described (as in [1022]). Deictic adverbs compounded with *pal* ‘towards’ occupy a subset of the syntactic slots of ablative-marked NPs, representing the origin of the event described (as in [1023]):

(1022) *ngay iirra yat, Saturday*  
 1sg(NOM) to.there go:P.PFV Saturday  
 ‘I went there [to the beach] on Saturday’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(1023) *ngay iipal Melbourne-mam yat punguk*  
 1sg(NOM) from.there Melbourne-ABL go:P.PFV last.time  
 ‘I came up from Melbourne a couple of weeks back’  
 [MF17/09/02 Elicitation]

There are also rare instances in which a deictic adverb functions as an adnominal modifier, appearing within the noun phrase immediately preceding the (specifier) demonstrative slot:

(1024) *pam yuupal ulp=th*  
man from.far dem:adr.prx=PRAG  
'those men from far away'  
[Hall 1972:73]

The forms *ii-* 'there/proximal' and *yuu-* 'far/distal' are also evident in many of the demonstrative pronouns discussed in §5.3.1.1, as well as the directionals discussed below.

There are three further deictic adverbs that do not fit neatly within the paradigm: *nhaka* 'in this place', *angunp* 'in that place' and *nhemán* 'from that place'. See discussion in §5.3.1.1 of the morphological and functional relationships between these three adverbs and the demonstrative pronouns.

### 11.4.2.3 Directionals

Directionals are morphologically complex clausal adjuncts that locate an entity or event (hereafter simplified as 'figure') with respect to one or more of: (a) the set of absolute (cardinal) directions; (b) the deictic centre; (c) certain geographical landmarks (notably the river). Spatial reference terms may also encode information about whether the figure is static or in motion, approaching or moving away from the deictic centre.

Directionals minimally consist of a bound directional root (e.g. *-parr* 'north', *-ungkarr* 'south', etc.) plus an initial prefix coding distance from the deictic centre (i.e. *ii-* 'there (unmarked)', *pal* 'near' or *yuu-* 'far away'). In addition to these, there are three further 'slots' that code for the orientation of the motion. The structure of the directional word is summarised in Table 78 (repeated from Table 21).

Slot 1	Slot 2	Slot 3	Slot 4	Slot 5
distance / motion	(orientation) <sup>237</sup>	directional root	(secondary direction)	(river reference)
<i>ii-</i> ‘there’ <i>yuu-</i> ‘far’ <i>pal-</i> ‘near’ <i>ya-</i> ‘going’, ‘away’	<i>th-</i> / <i>k-</i> ‘to’ <i>-rr</i> ‘towards’ <i>-l</i> ‘from’ <i>-ø</i> ‘at’	<i>-ungkarr</i> ‘N’ <i>-iparr</i> ‘S’ <i>-kaw</i> ‘E’ <i>-kuw</i> ‘W’ <i>-ipan</i> ‘Sbank’ <i>-kan<sub>1</sub></i> ‘Nbank’ <i>-kop</i> ‘below’ <i>-kan<sub>2</sub></i> ‘above’ <i>-korr<sub>1</sub></i> ‘behind/ beyond’ <i>-kan<sub>3</sub></i> ‘inside’ <i>-korr<sub>2</sub></i> ‘outside’	<i>-uw</i> ‘W’ <i>-aw</i> ‘E’	<i>-op</i> ‘river’

Table 78. Morphological structure of the directional word.

Although there is not space here to present and analyse each of the possible combinations of morphemes, the following paragraphs will briefly illustrate each of them in turn. To begin with, examples (1025)-(1028) illustrate the contrast between the prefixes in the first, ‘distance / motion’ slot: *ii-* ‘there’ (1025), *yuu-* ‘near’ (1033), *pal-* (1027) and *ya-* (1028):

(1025) *nhul ith ngan ii-ø-korr yump-r*  
 3sg(NOM) dem:dist what there-at-outside do-NPST  
 ‘what’s that he’s making outside?’  
 [LN15/12/02]

<sup>237</sup> The morphemes of the orientation slot are optional except following *ya-*, which may not immediately precede the directional root.

(1026) *yuu-rr-iparr wun-m ngancn... Thaayorr*  
 far-towards-south live-P.IPFV 1pl:excl(NOM) Thaayorre(NOM)  
 ‘we Thaayorre used to live a long way to the south’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative]

(1027) *pam nhump nhul pal-ipan wonp-r raak.mele*  
 man elder(NOM) 3sg(NOM) near-Sbank die-P.PFV homeland  
 ‘the oldfella died just there on the south side of the river, in his homeland’  
 [IC26/11/02 Conversation/Narrative]

(1028) *ya-rr-kuw yat=ay*  
 going-towards-west go:P.PFV=1sg(NOM)  
 ‘I went westwards’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Crocs]

The most frequently used prefix, *ii-* ‘there’, is unmarked for distance, though it carries an implicature of being neither saliently near nor far away due to its paradigmatic opposition to *pal-* and *yuu-*. The four prefixes vary somewhat in their combinatoric potential. *ii-* and *yuu-* can form a complete directional term with just a directional root (e.g. 1025) but can also combine with the full range of prefixes in the ‘orientation of motion’ slot (e.g. 1033). *Pal-* can also form a complete directional term with just a directional root (e.g. 1027), but it cannot occur with any of the ‘orientation of motion’ prefixes. *Ya-* is rarely used in my data, but appears to require the presence of an ‘orientation of motion’ prefix following it (e.g. 1028).

The second directional slot is optionally filled by one of a set of morphemes that distinguish between: (a) motion towards a place or in a direction, with a focus on the Path (*rr-*, example [1029]); (b) motion to a place, with a focus on the Goal (*th-*, example [1030]); and (c) motion from a place, with a focus on the Source (*l-*, example [1031]). The absence of an overt morpheme in this slot signifies simple location (as in [1032]). Because this does not appear to be a defeasible implicature (i.e. motion to, towards or from a location is always overtly coded by one of the second slot morphemes), I posit a zero morpheme encoding ‘at’.

(1029) *Monday holiday, ngerinkan, ngay ii-rr-iparr-op yancm*  
 Monday holiday yesterday 1sg(NOM) there-towards-south-river go:P.IPFV  
 ‘on the holiday Monday yesterday, I went down south, riverwards’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

(1030) *koo ngamp melnkelnkarr ii-th-iparr therk-ø*  
 oh 1pl:incl(NOM) tomorrow there-to-south return-NPST  
 ‘okay, tomorrow we’re going to return south [to Pormpuraaw]’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(1031) *ii-l-ungkarr yancm, ngancn ii-l-iparr yancm*  
 there-from-north go:P.IPFV 1pl:excl(NOM) there-from-south go:P.IPFV  
 ‘they [Munkan people] came from the north, we came from the south’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

(1032) *ngat ii-ø-kan glass-ak yan*  
 fish(NOM) there-at-inside glass-DAT go:NPST  
 ‘the fish is swimming around inside the glass bowl’  
 [EC2/10/02 BowPed32]

Although *rr-* and *th-* prototypically encode motion towards or to some Goal, both morphemes are attested with a ‘fictive motion’-like function. Hence in (1033), *iithiparr* ‘to the south’ is used to describe the traditional lands to which the speaker’s family belongs. Although this clause does not describe a motion event per se, the use of the *th-* ‘to’ directional prefix makes the distance between the speech event and the location described more vivid (much as does the equivalent usage of ‘to the south’ in the English translation):

(1033) *ngancn ii-th-iparr wun-m*  
 1pl(NOM) there-to-south live-P.IPFV  
 ‘we [Thaayorre] used to live to the south’  
 [AC21/08/02 Conversation]

Similarly, in (1034.2) the ‘towards’ prefix *rr-* combines with the ‘going’ prefix *ya-* to both hedge the statement made (i.e. expressing that the hospital was somewhere near where the current plumbers’ shed is, not necessarily the same exact location), and to denote a broader area (as would be traversed by a moving entity) rather than a specific location:

(1034)

1. *Dennis O’Connor ngan plumbers’ shed ith thanan...*  
 Dennis O’Connor what plumbers’ shed(NOM) dem:dist stand:RDP:NPST  
 ‘[where] that Dennis O’Connor or whatever plumbers’ shed is...’
  
2. *ya-rr-iparr-op than-m.*  
 away-towards-south-river stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘around there near the river in the south.’
  
3. *Nhamunp kanpa hospital than-m*  
 at.that.place before hospital(NOM) stand-P.IPFV  
 ‘The hospital used to be there before’  
 [GJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The third slot is filled by the set of obligatory directional roots. The first four of these encode the cardinal directions (*-ungkarr* ‘north’ [1031], *-iparr* ‘south’ [1030], *-kuw* ‘west’ [1035] and *-kaw* ‘east’ [1036]). Although, for simplicity, I translate these four forms with the English cardinal direction terms *north*, *south*, *west* and *east*, it should be noted that the Thaayorre equivalents are in fact skewed such that the axis denoted by *-ungkarr* ‘north’ lies approximately thirty-five degrees west of magnetic north<sup>238</sup>.

- (1035) *ii-rr-kuw-op thuu<thuth>-m*  
 there-towards-west-river crawl<RDP>-P.IPFV  
 ‘[the saltwater crocodile] went crawling west towards the river’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

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<sup>238</sup> It would seem to be no accident that the *-ungkarr* ‘north’ axis aligns almost exactly with the local shoreline. Further research into the Thaayorre and Kugu Nganhcara absolute, intrinsic and relative spatial systems is underway.

(1036) *ball otonyciy mantam-ak thaangk-nhan*  
 ball(NOM) hill small-DAT climb-GO&:NPST  
*ngul renp-nhan ii-rr-kaw*  
 then descend-GO&:NPST there-towards-east  
 ‘the ball goes and climbs the little hill and then goes down it to the east’  
 [LN03/12/02 Elicitation Moland3]

Two directional roots code for the intrinsic relators *-kan* ‘north bank’ (1037) and *-ipan* ‘south bank’ (1038.3), both of which refer to the Chapman river just south of Pormpuraaw.

(1037) *raak woocorm nhumpa-ni-rr ii-ø-kan Ngumpurr.Nhiinhin*  
 place sacred(ACC) disturbed-V<sup>^</sup>-P.PFV there-at-n.bank place.name  
 ‘[you] stirred up that story place<sup>239</sup> on the north riverbank, Ngumpurr  
 Nhiinhin’  
 [MF20/08/02 Conversation]

(1038)

1. *dinghy pokon, ngancn canoe use-m rirk-m*  
 dinghy NO 1pl:excl(ERG) canoe(ACC) use-VBLZ DO-P.IPFV  
 ‘[we had] no dingies, we used to use canoes’
2. *kar yarra New Guinea use-m rirk-m*  
 like away New Guinea use-VBLZ DO-P.IPFV  
 ‘like [they] would use off in New Guinea’
3. *canoe yokunman-ak ngancn cross-m rirk-m ii-th-ipan*  
 canoe likewise-DAT 1pl:excl(NOM) cross-VBLZ DO-P.IPFV there-to-s.bank  
 ‘we would cross to the south bank in the same kind of canoe’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

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<sup>239</sup> Sacred sites of ritual significance are usually referred to as ‘story places’ in Pormpuraaw English.

A further five roots encode relational categories defined by the intrinsic characteristics of reference objects (e.g. a house) or local geography. *-Kop*, for example, refers to an area underneath (1039) or below (1040) the deictic center or ground object.

(1039) *peln raak ranth-in pit-r ii-rr-kop*  
 3pl(ERG) place hole-DAT keep-NPST there-towards-down  
 ‘they [crocodiles] keep [dead bodies] in underwater caves’  
 [AC13/09/02 Narrative]

(1040) *yik-r ngancnngun: “city Melbourne inh ii-ø-kop ii!”*  
 say-P.PFV 1pl:excl:DAT city Melbourne dem:sp.prx there-at-down there  
 ‘[the pilot] said to us “that’s the city of Melbourne down there!”’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative MelbourneTrip]

These two meanings — ‘underneath’ and ‘below’ — can be considered contextual interpretations of a single sense; ‘down [with respect to reference object]’.

It is similarly possible to offer a unified characterisation of the semantics of *-korr* ‘beyond’, although this directional root spans the etic categories ‘behind’, ‘outside’, ‘out bush’, as seen in (1041), (1042) and (1043) respectively.

(1041) *nhul ii-rr-korr pal chair-thak move rirk-r*  
 3sg(NOM) there-towards-beyond towards chair-DAT move DO-P.PFV  
 ‘she moved backwards [i.e. behind her] in her chair towards the camera’  
 [LN3/12/02 Elicitation Cut&Break7]

(1042) *Ngul thuc-an ii-rr-kan rok-nhan*  
 then bush-DAT there-towards-inside enter-GO&:NPST  
  
*ngul rip-nhan ii-rr-korr*  
 then exit-GO&:NPST there-towards-outside  
 ‘[the ball] goes into the bushes and then [rolls] outside them again’  
 [LN03/12/02 Elicitation Moland1]



- (1043) *ngul ngancn ii-ø-korr=nhurr kaamp-m bush-ak*  
 then 1pl:excl(NOM) there-at-bush=ONLY roast-P.IPFV bush-DAT  
 ‘in those days we’d cook our food in ground ovens just out bush there’  
 [GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

The final root form, *-kan*, has three distinct senses that defy amalgamation: ‘up’ (1044), ‘inside’ (1045), and ‘north bank’ (discussed above – cf. [1037]).

- (1044) *ngancn pal-ø-kan thowol-nam*  
 1pl:excl(NOM) near-at-up play-P.IPFV  
 ‘we were playing a little way up [in a tree]’  
 [GJ16/10/02 PlaneNarrative]

- (1045) *nge’! ngumpurr ii-ø-kan wun*  
 hey old.lady(NOM) there-at-inside lie:NPST  
 ‘[surprised:] hey! The old woman’s lying indoors’  
 [ME04/06/05 Conversation]

Geographical locations are referred to by conventionalised metaphors that seem to have their bases in the river flow. Hence Kowanyama (to the southeast of Pormpuraaw) is referred to as ‘up’ (1046), presumably because it is inland and hence upriver. By contrast, Cairns is ‘down’ (1047), presumably because it is on the (eastern) side of the Great Dividing Range, and hence locally downriver. This contrasts with the pervasive English schema, NORTH IS UP.

- (1046) *ngay ii-rr-kan yan, Kowanyama*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-up go:NPST Kowanyama  
 ‘I’m going up to Kowanyama’  
 [AC22/07/02 Conversation / Elicitation]

- (1047) *awoy, ngok ii-ø-kop wuump*  
 yes water(NOM) there-at-down CONTR  
 ‘yes, by contrast [there is] hard liquor down [in Cairns]’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Conversation]

The penultimate slot in the Thaayorre directional word may optionally be filled by a secondary cardinal direction morpheme. Specifically, the directional roots *-ungkarr* ‘north’ and *-parr* ‘south’ can combine with the suffixes *-uw* and *-aw* (cf. the roots *-kaw* ‘east’ and *-kuw* ‘west’) to produce *-ungkarr-aw* ‘northeast’, *-ungkarr-uw* ‘northwest’, *-parr-aw* ‘southeast’ (1048), and *-parr-uw* ‘southwest’.

- (1048) *pam kanangkarr yungar-nam wa'ap ulp ii-ø-parr-aw*  
 man(NOM) long.ago swim-P.IPFV river dem:adr.prx there-at-south-east  
 ‘long ago, people used to swim across that river in the southeast [to get yencr]’

The final directional slot can optionally be filled by the suffix *-op*, which indicates a general association with the river (but neither bank in particular):

- (1049) *ith ii-ø-parr-op wa'ap-n mong ulp wun*  
 dem:dist there-at-south-river river-DAT many dem:adr.prx lie:NPST  
 ‘at that place on the river down south, there are lots of fish’  
 [AJ3/02/04 Conversation]

- (1050) *kornkon ii-ø-kaw ith,*  
 cabbage.palm(NOM) there-at-east dem:dist  
  
*mong thanan iingkarrop, Rita.*  
 many(NOM) stand:RDP:NPST there-at-north-river Rita  
 ‘there are cabbage palms in the east, and lots in the north by the river, at Rita.’  
 [ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

The Thaayorre directionals are high frequency items, often occurring as an optional adjunct in an otherwise complete clause, as in the following:

- (1051) *ngay ii-rr-kuw Darwin-ak yat=ay, 1970*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-west Darwin-DAT go:P.PFV=3sg(NOM) 1970  
 ‘I went westwards to Darwin in 1970’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative DarwinTrip]

The only case in which a directional is syntactically required is when functioning as locative complement. This is illustrated by both (1033.1) (in which the main predicate, *wun* ‘live’, subcategorises for a locative complement) and (1033.2), a verbless locative construction:

(1033') 1. *ngancn*            *ii-th-iparr*        *wun-m*  
 1pl:excl(NOM) there-to-south live-P.IPFV  
 ‘we [Thaayorre] used to live in the south’

2. *peln*            *ii-rr-ungkarr*  
 3pl(NOM) there-towards-north  
 ‘they [used to go] to the north’  
 [AC22/07/02 Narrative]

Finally, directionals may function as nominal modifiers. In this function, they appear immediately following the full NP, as in the following:

(1052) *pormpr*        *ith*            *ii-ø-kaw*        *wanthanngun?*  
 house(NOM) dem:dist there-at-east where<sub>LOC</sub>  
 ‘what’s the name of that eastern building?’  
 [LN14/12/02 Conversation]

(1053) *bucket*            *ith*            *ii-ø-korr*        *ngathn*  
 bucket(NOM) dem:dist there-at-beyond 1sgGEN  
 ‘that bucket outside is mine’  
 [LN14/12/02 Elicitation Demonstrative21]

**11.4.2.4 Topological relation markers (TRMs)**

The Thaayorre ‘topological relation markers’<sup>240</sup> (cf. Levinson and Meira 2003), are related along a cline from the more clearly adverbial (e.g. *kanpa* ‘in front’ in [1054]) to the more clearly postpositional (e.g. 1055):

(1054) *punth koon nhul koorr kanpa riic-m weneth*  
 arm short 3sg(NOM) behind before run-P.IPFV scared  
 ‘he ran back and forth, scared, with his severed arm [after crocodile attack]’  
 [GJ03/02/04 Narrative]

(1055) *rope yuk-un mangk-an katha-rr*  
 rope(ACC) tree-DAT low-DAT bind-P.PFV  
 ‘the rope is tied around the base of the tree’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed55]

The set of topological relation markers has as its core: *(put)pil* ‘beside’, *wernka* ‘between’, *kanpa* ‘in front’, *putpun* ‘on top’, *koorr* ‘behind, outside’, *palpal* ‘near’, *thaapirri* ‘close’ and *mangka* ‘low’. Peripheral TRMs will be discussed below. Each member of this somewhat heterogeneous collection may appear both as the sole exponent of a Location (1056), or in combination with a ground NP (apparently forming a complex locative expression, though see discussion below) (1057):

(1056) *ngul ulp dye thak-r putpun*  
 then dem:adr.prx dye(ACC) leave-NPST on.top  
 ‘then you leave that dye on top [of the cabbage palm shoots]’  
 [ME04/06/05 Narrative Yencr]

(1057) *kormun ii putpun otonyciy-ak*  
 storm(NOM) there on.top hill-DAT  
 ‘the cloud is over the mountain’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed36]

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<sup>240</sup> Smith and Johnson (2000:417) label analogous Kugu Nghanhcara forms ‘adverbial operators’.

One dimension of variation between TRMs, is whether the difference between these two functions is signalled morphologically. (*Put*)*pil* ‘beside’ and *mangka* ‘low’ take dative case marking when combined with a dative NP (e.g. in [1058] and [1055] above), while *wernka* ‘between’, *kanpa* ‘in front’, *koorr* ‘behind, outside’, *palpal* ‘near’, *thaapirri* ‘close’ and *putpun* ‘on top’ do not<sup>241</sup>. This is illustrated by the comparison of (1058) with (1059):

(1058) *yuk pormpr pil-un thanan*  
 tree(NOM) house beside-DAT stand:RDP:NPST  
 ‘the tree is beside the house’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed49]

(1059) *yuk pormpr thaapirri thanan*  
 tree(NOM) house close stand:RDP:NPST  
 ‘the tree is close to the house’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed49]

Despite their differences, in both these examples it would appear that the TRMs function much like postpositions; that the correct interpretation of *pormpr* ‘house’ as ground object depends upon the adjacency of a TRM coding the topological relationship. This postpositional analysis is problematised by two factors, however. The first of these is the fact that word order is not fixed, with the TRM sometimes following the ground object (1060) but at other times preceding it:

(1060) *yuk inh putpun otonyciy than<an>*  
 tree(NOM) dem:sp.prx on.top hill stand<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the tree is on top of the mountain’  
 [GJ15/10/02 BowPed]

In clauses like (1060), the position of the TRM does not disambiguate the respective roles of *yuk inh* ‘this tree’ and *otonyciy* ‘hill’. This is done instead by the combination

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<sup>241</sup> It should be noted, however, that *putpun* ‘on top’ appears to carry a fused locative suffix *-un*.

of world knowledge (trees are located on hills, not the reverse) and the extremely strong information-structure preference for figure NPs to precede ground NPs. Similarly, in examples (1061) and (1062) the TRM is separated from the ground NP by the verb, with the order ground – verb – TRM in (1061), and the order TRM – verb – ground in (1062):

(1061) *kuta thok          nhul          chair-thak    nhiinhin    putpun*  
 PET cat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) chair-DAT sit:RDP:NPST on.top  
 ‘the cat is sitting on top of a chair’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

(1062) *parr          nhul          putpun thanan          therrep-ak, waa<wa>ntharr-ø*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top stand:RDP:NPST rock-DAT call.out<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the boy is standing on top of a rock, calling out’  
 [MF17/09/02 Narrative FrogStory]

Significantly, though, where the TRM and ground NP are not adjacent, the ground NP always receives case-marking<sup>242</sup>. But although we might expect this case-marking to have been assigned by the TRM/postposition, this does not obviously the case. Each of the TRMs may be paired with ground NPs in a range of case frames. *Putpun* ‘on top’, for example, is paired with an unmarked ground NP in (1060), a ground NP in dative case in (1061) and (1062), and a ground NP in ablative case in (1063):

(1063) *light          putpun    table-tam*  
 light(NOM) on.top table-ABL  
 ‘the light hangs over the table’  
 [GJ15/10/02 BowPed13]

There is a correlation between the case of the ground NP and the relationship that obtains between it and the figure NP. Where figure and ground are in contact (or saliently connected/close to one another) this tends to be reflected by a dative-marked

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<sup>242</sup> The ground NP frequently receives case-marking when adjacent to the TRM, but this is not obligatory.

ground NP (e.g. in [1061] and in [1064]). This stands in opposition to the use of ablative case to signify that the figure and ground are at a distance from one another, though still related topologically as encoded by the TRM (e.g. in [1063] and [1065]):

(1064) *may yulu bowl-ak wernka wun*  
 VEG apple(NOM) bowl-DAT middle lie:NPST  
 ‘the apple is in the middle of the bowl’  
 [GJ6/12/02 Elicitation CntSeries]

(1065) *pormpr wernka thanan fence-tam. Fence pal-ø-korr*  
 house(NOM) middle stand:RDP:NPST fence-ABL fence(NOM) near-at-outside  
 ‘the house is surrounded by the fence. The fence is round the outside’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed60]

There are a small number of exceptions to this generalisation (e.g. [1057]), which can be explained by the fact that dative case is assigned to ground NPs by default, but may optionally be replaced by ablative case in order to add further relational information. Thus the case marking of the ground NP and the presence of a TRM can be understood as independently contributing to the characterisation of the topological relationship that holds between two entities.

Although directionals (§11.4.2.3) form a distinct class (based on their shared morphological template), these terms also share many of the functions of TRMs. Consider, for example, the parallelism between the use of *putpun* in the first clauses of (1061), and the use of *palkop* in the second:

(1061') 1. *kuta thok nhul chair-thak nhiinhin putpun*  
 PET cat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) chair-DAT sit:RDP:NPST on.top  
 ‘the cat is sitting on top of a chair’  
 2. *minh kaal nhul pal-ø-kop nhiinhin chair-thak*  
 MEAT rat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) near-at-below sit:RDP:NPST chair-DAT  
 ‘the rat sits underneath the chair’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

The same can be seen in the comparison between *putpun* ‘on top’ and *yuukan* ‘far above’ in (1066):

(1066) 1. *minh kaal nhul pormp-an putpun thaa<tha>ngk-r,*  
 MEAT rat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) house-DAT on.top climb<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the rat is climbing up the roof’

2. *kuta thok nhul yuu-ø-kan nhii<nhi>n nhangun*  
 PET cat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) far-at-above sit<RDP>NPST 3sgDAT  
 ‘the cat is sitting above him’

[LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

Further, we find both TRMs and directionals can be marked by case suffixes, showing them to have a nominal-like function. Hence *wernka* ‘middle’ in (1067) refers more accurately to ‘the middle area’, and *palkop* ‘just under’ (lit. ‘near below’) refers to the region underneath the chair in (1068):

(1067) *ball werangka-ntam kerp-r ngul korr yomparr-r*  
 ball(NOM) middle-ABL disappear-P.PFV then outside appear-P.PFV  
 ‘the ball disappears from the middle (of the walled area), then appears outside’  
 [GJ20/11/02 Elicitation MoverbEnterExit8]

(1068) *kutpol chair pal-ø-kop-mam wun*  
 football(NOM) chair near-at-under-ABL lie:NPST  
 ‘there’s a football just under the chair’  
 [GJ15/10/02 Elicitation BowPed16]

Finally, it is worth noting that *mangka* ‘low down’ also has an associative use, particularly when paired with a name:



(1069) *thil peln ii-l-ungkarr parr inhul peln,*  
 again 3pl(NOM) there-from-north child(nom) this.one 3pl(NOM)

*Dan mangka...*

Dan low

‘these children will [come back] again from the north, Dan mob’

[i.e. Dan and the people associated with him]’

[AC21/08/02 Conversation]

So what motivates the association between the spatial relation ‘down’ and the associative plural category? It could be that the physical postures of being seated or supine are generally adopted only around friends and family. Strangers are more likely to encounter one another upright. Whether or not this etymological speculation is well-founded, a similar association is found in certain English varieties, where to be ‘down with’ someone or something expresses familiarity, intimacy, affection and/or loyalty, as seen in in the following lyric:

(1070) *I'm still down with my homies from the hometown*

[Shakur 1991; “If my homie calls”]

### 11.4.3 Temporal adverbs

Temporal adverbs<sup>243</sup> locate an event in time with respect to the speech event or alternative reference point. Deictic temporals (given in [1071]) relate the event described to the moment of speech (or alternative reference point) by either: (a) simple proximity in time (e.g. *thil* ‘recently’), or (b) contextually determined intervals of time (e.g. *punguk* ‘last time’, which may refer to the previous week or the previous year, etc., depending on context). Many deictic temporals are compatible with both interpretations (e.g. *yup* can refer either to the simple proximal future time, or to the period immediately following the period including the speech act).

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<sup>243</sup> While Hall (1971:96) divides temporal adverbs into ‘aspectual’ and ‘calendar’ lexemes, I classify these terms into those concerned with relative time (temporal adverbs) and those concerned with the number and structure of repetitions of an event (iterative adverbs).

(1071) <i>yoorr</i>	‘today, now, nowadays’
<i>thil</i>	‘recently’
<i>kanpa</i>	‘before, previously’
<i>kanangkarr</i>	‘long ago’
<i>melnkelnkarr</i>	‘tomorrow’
<i>ngernkan</i>	‘yesterday’
<i>yup</i>	‘soon, in the impending period’
<i>punguk</i>	‘last time’
<i>yukurra</i>	‘later on, next time’

Non-deictic temporals are concerned with periodicity, locating events with respect to their position in the diurnal (99) or seasonal (1073)<sup>244</sup> cycle. These include:

(1072) <i>(raak) miing</i>	‘daytime’
<i>(raak) ngurnturturr</i>	‘nighttime’
<i>raak meerngernk</i>	‘pre-dawn morning’ (lit. ‘TIME eye-morn’)
<i>raak patpirr</i>	‘sunrise’ (lit. ‘TIME camp-P.PFV’)
<i>ngernkernkernkan</i>	‘dawn/really early morning’ (lit. ‘morn:RDP:RDP-DAT’)
<i>ngernkernkan</i>	‘dawn-9.30ish’ (lit. ‘morn:RDP-DAT’)
<i>raak pung putpun</i>	‘9.30am - 1pm’ (lit. ‘TIME sun on.top’)
<i>mincngul</i>	‘afternoon’ (lit. ‘true-then’)
<i>meerngernka reeknhan</i>	‘sunrise/sunset’ (lit. ‘eye-morn give-GO&:NPST’)
<i>raak wutan</i>	‘midnight’ (lit. ‘TIME sleep-DAT’)
(1073) <i>raak karrtam</i>	‘wet time [broadly defined]’
<i>raak warreekaman</i>	‘wet season [~December-February]’
<i>raak wurripan</i>	‘dry-wet [~March-May]’
<i>raak kaalkurrk</i>	‘cold time’ [~June-August]’ (lit. ‘time ear-cold’)
<i>raak paapath</i>	‘hot time [~September-November]’ (lit. ‘TIME fire:RDP’)

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<sup>244</sup> My thanks to John Taylor for discussions as to the extensional ranges of the Thaayorre seasonal (non-deictic temporal) terms (cf. Taylor 1984).

The fact that periodic temporals frequently co-occur with the generic noun *raak* ‘time’ suggests that they are somewhat noun-like. However, the expression as a whole still functions adverbially with respect to syntax:

- (1074) *ngul may pucr katpatp-m raak ngurnturnturr*  
 then VEG nunda(ACC) grasp:RDP-P.IPFV time night  
 “he was feeling for nunda nuts during the night”  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

### 11.4.3 Iterative adverbs

Members of the small set of iterative adverbs specify the event in question with respect to other (potential) instantiations of that event. Specifically, these adverbs refer to repetition (e.g. *thil* ‘again’) or non-repetition (i.e. a premiere event – *yoornhurr* ‘for the first time’):

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| (1075) <i>yoornhurr</i> | ‘for the first time’ |
| <i>(yuur) kuthrrka</i>  | ‘twice’              |
| <i>yuur pinalam</i>     | ‘a few times’        |
| <i>yuur mongrron</i>    | ‘many times’         |
| <i>thil</i>             | ‘again’              |

Each of these adverbs is derived from or polysemous with some other term. *Yuur pinalam* ‘a few times’ is transparently composed of the nominals *yuur* ‘hand’ and *pinalam* ‘three’. *Kuthrrka* ‘twice’ is undoubtedly related to the numeral *kuthirr* ‘two’, although the derivational process it has undergone is opaque (*-ka* appears to be a cranberry morph). Similarly, *mong* ‘many’ > *yuur mongrron*. *Yoorrhurr* is formed by fusing the enclitic *=nhurr* ‘only’ to the temporal adverbial *yoorr* ‘now’. *Thil* ‘again’ (often reduplicated as *thilil*) is polysemous with the temporal adverb *thil* ‘recently’. Although there is a semantic connection between the two (in that something repeated is made immediate, rather than simply in the past), these are clearly separate senses. This can be seen in the contrast between (1076), in which *thil* has only the iterative sense ‘again’, and (1077), in which *thil* has only the temporal sense ‘recently’.

(1076) *thil waantharr-r* “*koowee, Irma, Irma!*”  
again call.out-P.PFV cooee Irma Irma  
‘again [I] called out “cooee, Irma, Irma!”’  
(not ‘I recently called out “cooee, Irma, Irma!”’)  
[AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(1077) *may inh wang-am thil thongk-nhat*  
VEG(NOM) dem:sp.prx white-ABL recently arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
“whitefella food come lately”  
‘the white people’s food arrived recently [to this area]’  
(not ‘the white people’s food arrived [to this area] again’)  
[GJ26/11/02 Conversation / Narrative]

There is no constructional disambiguation of the two senses, which must be distinguished by pragmatic context.

#### 11.4.5 Manner adverbs

Only a small number of manner adverbs appear in my data, pertaining mainly to speed and effectiveness:

(1078)	<i>waat</i>	‘wrongly’
	<i>wacirr</i>	‘correctly, effectively’
	<i>ritar</i>	‘without purpose, gammon do something’
	<i>porprm</i>	‘excessively’
	<i>petpan</i>	‘fast’
	<i>therp</i>	‘hastily’
	<i>maalmal</i>	‘slowly’
	<i>thintintr</i>	‘very slowly’
	<i>kampan</i>	‘peacefully’
	<i>kempthe</i>	‘singly’
	<i>yoorrp</i>	‘that way’
	<i>yariiy</i>	‘like this, thus’
	<i>waarr</i>	‘badly’
	<i>min</i>	‘well’
	<i>minc</i>	‘truly, strongly, with increased impact, force or deliberation’

Manner adverbs do not take any inflectional affixes, and only two may be reduplicated for emphasis (viz. *wacirr* ‘correctly’ > *wacwacirr* ‘just so’, *kempthe* ‘singly’ > *kempkempthe* > ‘each one’). The semantic contrast between unreduplicated (843) and reduplicated (1080) forms of *kempthe* ‘singly’ is illustrated by the following examples:

(1079) *ngul ngay kirk kempthe kal-m thul=yuk*  
 then 1sg(NOM) spear(ACC) singly carry-P.IPFV woomera(ACC)=STUFF  
 ‘I was carrying spears and a woomera separately’  
 [AC14/11/02 Narrative LosingIrma]

(1080) *kempkempthe yan peln*  
 singly:RDP go:NPST 3pl(NOM)  
 ‘all of the men are walking’  
 [AJ7/02/04 Elicitation]

While the semantic connection between individuation (843) and universal quantification (1080) may not be immediately obvious, it can be explained by the fact that both require attention to each member of a larger group. (1080) was uttered as part of an elicitation series focused on quantification, immediately after a number of clauses describing ‘most of the men’ or ‘some of the men’ performing an activity. Set in opposition to vagueness with respect to the number of participants involved, the statement in (1080) predicates ‘walking’ of each member of the subject group individually. The same can be seen in the relationship between English *single* and *every single (one)*.

The manner adverbs *yoorrp* ‘that way’ and *yarriy* ‘in this way’ in some respects resemble interjections, as they frequently occur in complete isolation<sup>245</sup>, drawing attention to a non-verbal aspect of the speech context, or some preceding or following

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<sup>245</sup> Some other manner adverbs also appear in interjection-like contexts, such as the exclamation *waat!* ‘missed [it]!’

clause (cf. §11.3.2). Their adverbial status, however, is clear in examples such as the following:

- (1081) *yoorrp yanm, piirmp-nhat, ngul ngay yariy turn rirk-r*  
 like.that go:P.IPFV emerge-GO&:P.PFV then 1sg(NOM) like.this turn DO-P.PFV  
 ‘[the croc] was going along like that and popped up, so I turned like this’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Both *min* ‘well’ and *waarr* ‘badly’ often retain the evaluative semantics of their homophonous adjectival counterparts (*min* ‘good’ and *waarr* ‘bad’) when functioning adverbially. This can be seen in (25), which describes an activity performed well, and (26) in which the activity is performed ineffectually:

- (1082) *nhunt kana min yump-r*  
 3sg(ERG) about.to well do-NPST  
 ‘you are getting better [at talking language]’  
 [LF18/09/02 Conversation/Elicitation]

- (1083) *yuk.thongkn minc<sup>246</sup>waarr thiika-rr*  
 stick(ACC) really badly break-P.PFV  
 ‘[she] broke the stick ineffectually’  
 [LN15/12/02 Elicitation: Cut&Break25]

Note that while *waarr* (in this function) and *waat* ‘miss’ both describe ineffective actions, *waarr* is used when the activity has been carried out but the effect on the patient is incomplete, whereas *waat* is used when the patient is unaffected or the activity is otherwise judged entirely miscarried:

- (1084) *waat patha-rr!*  
 wrongly bite-P.PFV  
 ‘[the snake] nearly bit you!’  
 [AC10/08/02 Conversation/Narrative]

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<sup>246</sup> *minc* ‘really’ is used here as a degree adverb (intensifying the manner adverb *waarr* ‘badly’), rather than with its manner adverbial sense.

- (1085) *waat yik-r ngan yapa*  
 wrongly say-P.PFV kin e.sister  
 ‘big sister was wrong’  
 [Foote and Hall; Reader 9]

In an interesting parallel to English and some other languages around the world, *waarr* ‘badly’ may also be used to intensify or co-create a desiderative mood:

- (1086) *ngay raak waarr nhaath-nhan*  
 1sg(ERG) PLACE badly see-GO&:NPST  
 ‘I badly want to see that place’  
 [GJ16/10/02 Narrative Melbourne Trip]

- (1087) *ngay paath-meer waarr rint-nh*  
 1sg(ERG) fire-eye<sup>247</sup> badly cook-SBJV  
 ‘I really want to make a campfire’  
 [AJ27/01/04 Elicitation]

Note that in both (1086) and (1087), *waarr* intensifies the desiderative mood encoded by verbal inflection rather than the verb itself. Desiderative mood is already implicated by the subjunctive verbal suffix in (1086) and the associated motion suffix in (1087), and merely intensified by the presence of *waarr*. The combination of nonpast associated motion inflection and *waarr* ‘very’, on the other hand, creates a ‘desiderative construction’ with a modal force absent from either of the two morphemes in isolation<sup>248</sup> (cf. §10.7). The adverb *waarr* ‘very’ may either precede the verb (as in [1086] and [1087]) or follow it (1088).

<sup>247</sup> The expression *paath-meer rint* (lit. fire-eye cook) refers to building a campfire.

<sup>248</sup> This parallels Smith and Johnson’s (2000:409) observation regarding the Kugu Ngancara form *waya* (which, like Thaaayorre *waarr*, is also an adjective meaning ‘bad’): “the irrealis is used in conjunction with the particle *waya* to mark desideratives”.

(1088) *nhurr win-m rirk-nhan waarr*  
2pl(ERG) win-TR DO-GO&:NPST badly  
'you go and win [this game]!'  
[AC21/08/02 Conversation / Narrative]

This association between *waarr* 'bad' and the desiderative construction is no doubt mediated by the intensifier function of this form (*waarr* 'very'). As both Alpher (1972) and Sommer (1978) have observed, there is a recurrent extension of the word meaning 'bad' to refer to 'great abundance' among the languages of Cape York Peninsula. The development of extended functions of Thaayorre *waarr* 'bad' might be expected, given that this appears to be an extremely old form. As Evans (1990:138) notes, "a form *warri* or *warre*, extremely widespread in both Pama-Nyungan (PN) and non-Pama-Nyungan, can be reconstructed as originally meaning 'bad'".

The adverb *porprm* 'excessively' appears to be derived from the adjective *porpr* 'soft' through the suffixation of *-m*. This is particularly curious given that the derivational suffix *-m* may alternatively function as a nominaliser (attaching to verbs in order to produce nouns) and a verbaliser (attaching to nouns in order to produce verbs) – see §8.1.7.

#### 11.4.6 Degree adverbs

Kuuk Thaayorre possesses three degree adverbs (*minc* 'really', *mangr* 'quite'<sup>249</sup> and *waarr* 'very'), each of which may be used to modify adjectives. Though they are virtually synonymous, *waarr* 'very' precedes and *minc* 'really' follows the adjective they modify:

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<sup>249</sup> The polysemous English adverb *quite* used to gloss *mangr* should be understood in its sense(s) 'slightly, a bit, a small amount' rather than in its intensifying sense.



(1089) *inhul ngamal minc, meer.pungk waarr ngamal*  
 this.one large really eyebrow(NOM) very large  
 ‘this [crocodile] was really large, [it had] enormous eyebrows’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

Due to their similarity in meaning, the two can co-occur, as in:

(1090) *punth inh waarr ngamal minc!*  
 arm(NOM) dem:sp.prx very large really  
 ‘this [crocodile's] arms were really very large!’  
 [AJ03/02/04 Conversation]

*Mangr* may only combine with a restricted number of adjectives in quite constrained pragmatic contexts. In general, it must be used as a modification of a preceding statement:

(1091) *ngul ulp kunk than-r, mangr min yancm ii-rr-kuw*  
 then dem:adr.prx alive stand-P.PFV quite good go:P.IPFV there-towards-west  
 ‘then he was alive, he was quite well when he went westward’  
 [DW09/12/02 Narrative 2Cross]

Of the three degree adverbs, only *minc* ‘really’ appears to modify other adverbs. For example, it may follow temporal or iterative adverbs (e.g. *kanangkarr* ‘long ago’ > *kanangkarr minc* ‘a very long time ago’, and *yoornhurr* ‘for the first time’ > *yoornhurr minc* ‘the very first time’), or precede manner adverbs (1092).

(1092) *ngay minc min waantharr-r nganh kuta-ku angarr ngeey-nh*  
 1sg(NOM) really well call.out-P.PFV 1sgACC dog-ERG WANT hear-SBJV  
 ‘I shouted good and loud so the dog would hear me’  
 [GJ18/01/04 Elicitation]

When modifying adverbs (and verbs, as a manner adverb), *minc* ‘really’ adopts a pre-head position, as opposed to its post-head position when modifying adjectives.

### 11.4.7 Body part prefixes to adverbs

Body part terms, and in particular *koo* ‘nose’<sup>250</sup>, are frequently prefixed to deictic adverbs (1093), directionals (1094) and topological relation markers (1095):

(1093) *ngul koo-pal otonyciy mantam-ak pal-ø-kop ranth-in rok-nhan*  
 then nose-towards hill small-DAT near-at-down hole-DAT enter-GO&:NPST  
 ‘then coming over the hill, (the ball) comes down and enters the hole  
 [LN03/12/02 Moland3]

(1094) *ngul nheman=p meer-ii-ø-kan ngancn thowol-nam*  
 then from.there=PRAG eye-there-at-up 1pl:excl(NOM) play-P.IPFV  
 “then we were playing right up high [in the tree]”  
 [GJ15/10/02 Narrative PlaneSighting]

(1095) *kuta thok nhul koo-kanpa nhiinhin nhangun kuta-thak*  
 pet cat(NOM) 3sg(NOM) nose-before sit:RDP:NPST 3sgDAT dog-DAT  
 ‘the cat is sitting in front of the dog’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

It is typologically common for body part terms to extend to encode spatial relators (see e.g. Heine 1997). What is more unusual is that Kuuk Thaayorre — in which the absolute frame of reference is overwhelmingly predominant — has developed body part-based spatial relators in all three frames of reference: absolute, relative and intrinsic. Terms like *kun-koorr-e* ‘backwards’ (lit. bum-behind-RFL) fit the intrinsic frame of reference by being calculated with respect to the figure/object itself. So in example (1096) the protagonist moves into the area immediately behind her back. This movement would be described as *kun-koorre* regardless of the position of the viewer or of the desk from which she moves:

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<sup>250</sup> For clarity, I shall continue to gloss body part terms such as *koo(w)* as, e.g., ‘nose’ here, although I do not mean to suggest that speakers have this literal meaning of the morpheme in mind when they use it in such contexts.

- (1096) *nhul kun-koorr-e therk-r*  
 3sg(NOM) bum-behind- RFL return-P.PFV  
 ‘she moved backwards (from the desk at which she had been sitting)’  
 [GJ19/10/02 Elicitation StagedEvents152]

*Thakr pal* ‘facing (a direction)’ (lit. front.of.torso towards) and *ruuw-an kanpa* ‘in front’ (lit. ‘chest-DAT before’) also take an intrinsic frame of reference. The terms *punth thak* ‘left’ (lit. arm leave<sup>251</sup>) and *punth mal* ‘right’ (*mal* being a cranberry morpheme) may be used either within a relative frame of reference, describing a configuration of objects relative to the speaker’s point of view,

- (1097) *kuta thok punth mal-an nhii<nhi>n*  
 PET cat(NOM) arm right-DAT sit<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘the cat is sitting on the right [of the rat]’  
 [LF12/11/02 Narrative Up&Down]

or within an intrinsic frame of reference, particularly with respect to a human body:

- (1098) *pul yuk punth mal-an ka<a>tp-r*  
 3du(ERG) stick(ACC) arm right- DAT hold<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘the two [men] are holding sticks in their right hands’  
 [TJ12/01/04 Elicitation Man&Tree3]

Sentence (1098) can be uttered regardless of whether the men are facing towards or away from the speaker. If we assume that the relative usage of these terms is basic,

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<sup>251</sup> It is a curious coincidence that speakers of English and Kuuk Thaayorre associate the left hand with ‘leaving’. *Thak* ‘left (side)’ descends from proto-Pama-Nyungan *\*thaku* ‘left hand side’ (Evans 1988), and while it is possible that the second sense of *thak* ‘leave’ developed through calquing of English *leave ~ left*, there is no evidence to suggest this (e.g. the verbal inflection of *thak* ‘leave’ suggests that it is an old verbal form, preserving in some contexts an original stem-final vowel *thakə*). Instead, I suggest that this is an instance of coincidental parallel heterosemy. If the Thaayorre form *thak* should prove polysemous (rather than homophonous), a possible semantic motivation could be the fact that the left tends to be the inactive hand, which ‘leaves’ objects rather than picking them up. This is purely speculative, however.

examples like (1098) can be explained by the fact that the association of left and right with a person's hands is so strong that the speaker's viewpoint may be overridden just where hands are involved. Alternatively, it may be that the intrinsic usage is historically prior, but the relative usage has developed under the influence of English.

Finally, the absolute frame of reference is represented by expressions such as *meer-iikan* 'high up' (lit. eye-there:at:up), seen in example (1094) above. Interestingly, while Heine (1997:41) finds several body parts grammaticalising to encode 'up' in his sample, 'eye' is not among them.

There are also examples of body parts being prefixed to other adverbial subclasses. In the following example, for instance, *pil* 'hip' is prefixed to the manner adverbial *wacirr* 'correctly' in order to create the idiomatic 'be careful':

(1099) *raak-un yan warrath-n, yak pil-wacirr!*  
ground-DAT go:NPST grass-DAT snake hip-properly  
'walk through the grass, but watch out for snakes!'  
[GJ06/06/05 Elicitation]

## 11.5 Ideophones

Ideophones are sound-symbolic elements that are typically employed to make narrative or conversational story-telling more vivid and engaging. Though they occasionally appear in verbless clauses, ideophones typically appear adjacent to the verb, either immediately preceding it (as in [1100]) or immediately following (as in [1101]):

(1100) *nhul minh kothon tup ke'err!*  
3sg(ERG) meat wallaby(ACC) thwack spear-P.PFV  
'he speared the wallaby, thwack!'  
[Hall 1972:142]

(1101) *paanth inh=okun thernga-rr, pirka-rr,*  
 woman(ACC) dem:sp.prx=DUBhit-P.PFV strip-P.PFV

*thatpa-rr thutha-rr prrk!*

lightning(NOM) strike-P.PFV IDPH

‘[lightning] hit the woman around here [points to arm], stripped [her], the lightning struck – prrk!’

[AC14/10/02 Narrative PormprRintm]

Functionally, ideophones range from the mimetic — usually onomatopoeic — reference to the sound created by an event (e.g. *purrrp* to describe something falling into water), to the more opaque reference to movements, result states, attitudes, etc. (e.g. *ke* ‘surprised’), that entail no audible sound. Although they tend to be embedded within the clause, ideophones do not enter into any syntactic relationship with other clausal constituents to form larger units, nor are they ever subcategorised for by a predicate.

Ideophones are best identified through their unusual phonetic, phonotactic and prosodic features. Many contain non-phonemic segments (e.g. [tʃ] as the initial segment of *churr* ‘spear flying through air’), or combinations of segments that violate the phonotactic constraints that apply to the rest of the lexicon<sup>252</sup> (e.g. allowing [l] word-initially in *liiy* ‘flash of light’). Prosodically, ideophones are ‘performatively foregrounded’<sup>253</sup> (Nuckolls 1996) through being uttered at a higher pitch, at higher intensity than the rest of the clause that contains them, and through being separated from adjacent lexemes by a short pause. Impressionistically, there appears to be a correlation between the timing of ideophones and mimetic/expressive gestures, though this remains to be quantified (cf. Kita 2001). Despite their syntactic and functional similarity to secondary predicates (which similarly appear adjacent to the main predicate and commonly contribute information about result states), these phonetic and prosodic features distinguish ideophones as a special class, as does the

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<sup>252</sup> Interjections are also exempt from such constraints.

<sup>253</sup> Schultze-Berndt (2001:367) notes similar the similar usage of ‘expressive prosody’ to mark ideophone-like elements in Jaminjung.

fact that ideophones are never co-opted from other word classes (unlike adjectives used as secondary predicates).

Ideophones are most likely an open word class that may be added to by creative speakers (cf. §3.4). There are no clear examples of newly coined ideophones in my corpus, however, and their declining usage amongst younger speakers is resulting in their shrinkage in the standard Thaayorre vocabulary, and most likely their eventual disappearance.

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## Appendix 1: Topic index (function-to-form)

Conceptual field		Encoded by...	Reference
Temporality	Nonpast tense	verbal suffix	§7.2.1
	Past tense	verbal suffixes	§7.2.2-7.2.3
	Temporal adverbs	adverbs	§11.4.2
Aspect	Perfective aspect	verbal suffix	§7.2.2
	Imperfective aspect	verbal suffix	§7.2.3
	Iterative aspect	one function of verbal reduplication	§2.7.1, §7.2.4
	Durative aspect	one function of verbal reduplication	§2.7.1, §7.2.4
	Distributive aspect	reciprocal verbal suffix	§10.6.2.5
	Iterative adverbs	adverbs	§11.4.3
Mood	Subjunctive	verbal suffix	§7.3.2
	Apprehensive	particle <i>pam</i> ‘apprehensive’	§10.4.1
		ignorative <i>ngene</i> ‘why’	§5.2.3.7
	Desiderative	construction	§10.7
		associated motion morpheme	§8.1.4.1
	Counterfactual	verbal suffix	§7.3.3
		ignorative <i>ngene</i> ‘why’	§5.2.3.7
		particle <i>kar</i> ‘like’	§11.3.3
	Imperative	verbal inflection	§7.3.1.1
	Jussive	verbal inflection + optative particle	§7.3.1.2
Permissive	particle <i>kirri</i>	§7.3.1.1	
Prohibitive	particle <i>ongkorr</i>	§10.3.4	
Interrogative	ignorative pronouns	§5.2	
Number		personal pronouns	§5.1
		quantifiers	§3.1.4.4
Possession	possession (general)	genitive case	§4.2.4
		propriative case	§4.2.7
		possessive pronoun	§5.1.2
		ablative case	§4.2.6.7
	inalienable possession	same case apposition	§6.9.1
Negation	Clausal negation	negative particle <i>kaar</i>	§10.3.2
	Constituent negation	constituent negator <i>pokon</i>	§10.3.3
	Privation	privative case	§4.2.8
	Prohibition	particle <i>ongkorr</i>	§10.3.4
	Contradition	negative interjections <i>kece, pokon</i>	§10.3.1
Discourse	Hedge, vagueness	enclitic = <i>yuk</i> ‘sort of thing’	§4.4.2
		demonstrative pronoun <i>yuunh ’nhul</i>	§5.3.2.2
		ignoratives	§5.2
	Reference trackings	generic nouns	§6.10.1
		<i>thono</i> ‘one’	§6.10.2
	Emphasis and focus	emphatic pronouns	§5.1.4
		focal enclitic	§3.6.2
		pragmatic enclitics	§3.6.3
	ergative case inflection	§4.2.1.3	

## Appendix 2: Index of tasks and texts

Title of narrative text	Content
<i>2Crocs</i>	Donald William describes in prose the story behind the <i>wuuc</i> (traditional song) of the saltwater and freshwater crocodiles. This narrative is given in short bursts between verses sung by the narrator and his brother, Cyril.
<i>Adoptee</i>	Freddy Tyore tells a traditional story of an elderly couple who find a baby in the scrub and adopt it, only to find out that it is a red-legged devil; <i>wang kirkunka</i> .
<i>ChapmanEra</i>	Alfred Charlie reflects on life during the mission era, and in particular under the governance of Superintendent Chapman.
<i>Christmas</i>	Gilbert Jack reflects on the usual activities and events in Pormpuraaw surrounding the Christmas holidays, and on the meaning of Christmas to him.
<i>DarwinTrip</i>	Gilbert Jack recounts his adventures during a trip to Darwin in 1970, just after Cyclone Tracy.
<i>FrogStory</i>	Myrtle Foote composes a text to accompany the wordless picture story book “Frog, where are you” (Meyer 1969).
<i>Kanangkarr</i>	Alfred Charlie describes life for the Thaayorre before the Edward River mission was established.
<i>KutaWoochorrm</i>	An undated printed booklet containing the traditional story of the <i>kuta woochorrm</i> ‘dreamtime dog’, written and illustrated by Tom Foote.
<i>LosingIrma</i>	Alfred Charlie tells the story of taking a white lady on a bush trip only to lose her (cf. Appendix 3).
<i>MelbourneTrip</i>	Gilbert Jack remembers a school trip to Melbourne he took as a child.



<i>NewsStory</i>	Gilbert relates a news story he had seen about a crocodile biting off the arm of a farmer who had been showing around a group of tourists.
<i>PlaneCrash</i>	Alfred Charlie remembers the first time he saw a plane, when it crashed into a bog near Pormpuraaw.
<i>PlaneSighting</i>	Gilbert Jack recalls the first time he saw a plane, when he and his siblings were playing out in the bush on a hunting trip with their parents.
<i>PormprRintm</i>	Alfred Charlie tells the ‘dreamtime’ story of his namesake; the burning of an old man’s humpy to punish him for refusing a young girl shelter.
<i>PormpuraawKanangkarr</i>	Ivy Conrad, Albert Jack and Gilbert Jack contrast what life was like before the establishment of the Edward River mission with life during the early mission era.
<i>Up&amp;Down</i>	Wordless picture story book depicting a number of topological and other relationships between a cat, a mouse and various ground objects.
<i>WeipaFootball</i>	Alfred Charlie remembers taking a school group to Weipa for a football carnival.
<i>Werngr</i>	Alfred Charlie tells the traditional story of a man who threw a boomerang right up into the sky, where it became the moon.
<i>Yencr</i>	Molly Edwards (interviewed by Gilbert Jack) remembers how she first learned to make dilly bags and baskets, and provides an instructional text on how <i>yencr</i> is collected, treated, dyed and woven to make these bags and baskets.
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	Various other impromptu stretches of unnamed narrative are referred to in this thesis. These mostly involve consultants expounding on recent events they have been involved in, or speculating as to the activities of friends and family.

<b>Task code</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>AbsoluteTime</i>	Data collected during pilot trials of a stimulus designed by the author and Lera Boroditsky. The task comprises a set of cards depicting temporally linked objects or events. Consultants are asked to place the cards in sequence.
<i>BowPed</i>	Unpublished booklet of picture stimuli entitled “Topological Relations Pictures Series”, prepared by Melissa Bowerman and Eric Pederson.
<i>CausedPositions</i>	Set of video stimuli depicting caused topological relationships, published as Hellwig and Lüpke 2001.
<i>CntSeries</i>	Set of line drawings depicting topological relationships of containment, published as part of Meira and Levinson 2001.
<i>Cut&amp;Break</i>	Set of video stimuli depicting events of material separation, published as Bohnemeyer et al. 2001.
<i>DahlTMA</i>	Questionnaire relating to tense, mood and aspect, included as an appendix to Dahl 1985.
<i>FigureGround</i>	A subset of the “Moverb” video stimuli produced by Levinson (2001).
<i>Man&amp;Tree</i>	Set of photographs depicting an array of topological relationships between plastic toy figures (two men, a tree, a cow, etc.). Acquired from the Max Planck Institute Nijmegen, 2002.
<i>Moland</i>	Set of animated video stimulus clips depicting a ball moving around a simulated landscape (Bohnemeyer 2001)
<i>MoverbEnterExit</i>	A subset of the “Moverb” video stimuli produced by Levinson (2001).
<i>MoverbPath</i>	A subset of the “Moverb” video stimuli produced by Levinson (2001).

<i>MoverbTriads</i>	A subset of the “Moverb” video stimuli produced by Levinson (2001).
<i>RCP</i>	Video stimuli used to elicit descriptions of events that fall within the broad semantic space of reciprocity (published as Evans et al. 2004).
<i>RcpPilot</i>	Pilot version of reciprocals video stimuli, a revised version of which was published as (Evans et al. 2004)
<i>StagedEvents</i>	Video stimuli of various social and other interactions between people (van Staden et al., 2001).
Sup	Set of line drawings depicting topological relationships of support, published as part of Meira and Levinson 2001.

## Appendix 3: Narrative texts

**Title:** **Losing Irma**  
**Author:** Alfred Charlie  
**Recording date:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002  
**Transcription consultant:** Gilbert Jack  
**Transcription date:** 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002

**Context:** This story was told in Kuuk Thaayorre by Thaayorre elder Alfred Charlie, with occasional prompting, backchannelling and commentary in Kugu Muminh by Muminh elder Celia Peter. Celia's backchannelling has not been transcribed here, though the approximate content of her interjections is indicated in square brackets, thus: [CP: really?]. Alfred began to tell this story as we drove through the country it features on our way home from a fishing expedition. The story was so entertaining, we pulled off the road and asked him to tell it for the video camera. Hence Celia begins by prompting him once the camera is rolling.

Alfred tells the story of a bush trip he made with a Swiss woman, Irma, who used to work in the Housing and Aged Care Centre. They were walking... when she disappeared. Alfred was concerned for her welfare, and for his own potential

[CP: Brother, whereabouts did you lose Irma?]

1. *inh=th ii-ø-kan kerp-r*  
dem:sp.prx=PRAG there-at-up finish-P.PFV  
'she disappeared just up here'  
'she got lost up here'

2. *raak inh*  
PLACE dem:sp.prx  
'this place'

[CP: Paangunth]

3. *Paangunth, angunp kerp-r*  
Paangunth, at.that.place finish-P.PFV  
'at Paangunth, she disappeared there'

“just here at Paangunth”

4. *ngay inh yuk... yuk shovel kal-m man.pert-an,*  
1sg(ERG) dem:sp.prx THING THING shovel(ACC) carry-P.IPFV shoulder-DAT  
‘I was carrying a... a shovel on my shoulder’

5. *kay axe kal-m ngay.*  
METAL axe(ACC) carry-P.IPFV 1sg(ERG)  
‘and I was carrying an axe [too].’

6. *ngul ulp ngay raak koorre nhaawr*  
then dem:adr.prx 1sg(ERG) PLACE(ACC) backwards see:P.PFV

AG: [*ngululp raak koorre inh ngay yariy*]  
[then dem:adr.prx place(ACC) backwards dem:sp.prx 1sg(ERG) thus]  
‘then I looked behind me like this’  
“then I looked back”

7. *“e’! Paanth ii wanthan?” Pokon. “eey’!”*  
hey woman(NOM) there where<sub>TRJ</sub> NO hey  
‘ “hey, where’s that woman gone?”. Nothing [no response]. “hey [where are you?]” ’  
“ “where's that woman gone? No one there” ”

8. *ngul ngay waantharr-r: "kaae, kae, kae"...*  
then 1sg(NOM) call-P.PFV cooee cooee cooee  
‘so I called out, “cooee, cooee, cooee”’

9. *kuuk kaar waantharr-ø.*  
WORD(ACC) NEG call-NPST  
‘she doesn’t say a word’  
“can’t sing out”

10. *thil waantharr-r: “koowe, Irma, Irma!”*  
again call-P.PFV cooee Irma Irma  
‘[I] called again, “cooee, Irma, Irma!”’

[CP: and she didn’t answer you?]

11. *nhul nganh kaar thaa.pirr-m*  
3sg(ERG) 1sgACC NEG reply-P.IPFV  
“but she never answered me”

[CP: nothing!]

12. *pokon.*  
NO  
‘nothing.’

13. *nhul kuuk=aar than-m.*  
3sg(NOM) WORD=ADN.PRIV stand-P.IPFV  
‘she kept silent’

14. *ith'tharrkoo! paanth wanthan kerp-r?*  
 wow woman(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub> finish-P.PFV  
 'Oh no! Where's this woman disappeared to?'

15. *ngay ngene=p yithi-rr pal?*  
 1sg(ERG) why=PRAG lead-P.PFV TOWARDS  
 'why did I bring [her] here?'

[CP: aah]

16. *trouble=okun yan yup paanthum inh'nhem.*  
 trouble=DUB go:NPST soon woman-ABL dem.pro:ABL  
 'I might get into trouble from this woman'

[CP: yes, my word]

17. *Kana. Ngul ngay shovel=yuk thaka-rr, axe=yuk.*  
 OK then 1sg(ERG) shovel(ACC)=STUFF leave-P.PFV axe(ACC)=STUFF  
 'okay, so I put down the shovel thingy, and the axe'

18. *ngay ii-rr-korr therk-r, main road ith, same road.*  
 1sg(NOM) there-towards-outside return-P.PFV main road dem:dist same road  
 'I went back that way, along that main road, the same road [I had come down]'

19. *angunp therk-r=ay ii-rr-korr ii*  
 at.that.place return-P.PFV=1sg(NOM) there-towards-outside there  
 'I went back over there'

20. *"koowee, koowee!" waantharr-m=ay.*  
 cooee cooee call-P.IPFV=1sg(NOM)  
 "'cooee, cooee!' I was calling'

21. *"wanthan yat? ooee!"*  
 where<sub>TRJ</sub> go:P.PFV cooee  
 ' "where [have you] gone? Cooee!" '

[CP: and you couldn't see her?]

22. *nhul kulam yiirr waki-rr*  
 3sg(ERG) road other(ACC) follow-P.PFV  
 'she had followed a different road'

23. *thil yoorr=p thongk-nhat iipal, kuuk=aar yancm.*  
 recently now=PRAG arrive-GO&:P.PFV from.there word=ADN.PRIV go:P.IPFV  
 'all of a sudden she arrived from that way, coming silently'  
 "then she came by"

24. *nhul yariy kaar=p "woy! Ngay aw-i'i"*  
 3sg(NOM) thus NEG=PRAG hey 1sg(NOM) ATTN-here  
 'she never said "hey, I'm here!"'

[CP: she didn't call out to you?]

25. *Pokon, nhul kuuk=aar=nhurr=p than<an>-m*  
NO 3sg(NOM) WORD=ADN.PRIV=ONLY=PRAG stand<RDP>-P.IPFV  
'no, she just stayed silent'
26. *ngul yuunhul nhaawr "nge'!"*  
then that.one see:P.PFV hey  
'then I saw her in the distance, "hey!"'
27. *"ngumpurr ii thongk-nhat!"*  
old.lady(NOM) there arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
'there the old lady is, just arrived!'"
28. *"Awoy, koo...ngumpurr wang ii thongk-nhat"*  
yes oh old.lady white(NOM) there arrive-GO&:P.PFV  
'"yes, aha, the white lady's just arrived over there" '  
"this old lady here!"'
29. *"koowiy, pal kar-yup=kaar yarr!"*  
cooee TOWARDS like-soon=NEG go:IMP  
'"cooee, come here immediately!"'
30. *"pam nhunt ngene yat?"*  
DETR 2sg(NOM) why go:P.PFV  
'"why on earth did you go [to my potential detriment]?" '  
"where did you go?"'
31. *"I bin go for a walk."*  
'"I went for a walk" [she said]'
32. *"Ngay irra ritar yat, kumun therk-ø, thuuthu-n-m.*  
1sg(NOM) to.there gammon go:P.PFV thigh return-INF pull-V^-P.IPFV  
'"I just went for a bit over there to stretch my legs" '  
"I was stretching my leg"'
33. *"oo, yoorrp ongkorr!"*  
oh that.way PROHIB  
'"oh no, don't do that!" '  
"oh, not that way!"'
34. *"Ngay pam court-ak yup yan"*  
1sg(NOM) DETR court-DAT soon go:NPST  
'"I might go to court for that."'
35. *away kana=pa.*  
yes finish=PRAG  
'yes, that's the end.'

**Title:** Frog story  
**Author:** Mrs Myrtle Foote  
**Recording date:** 17<sup>th</sup> September 2002  
**Transcription consultant:** Mrs Myrtle Foote  
**Transcription date:** 20-25<sup>th</sup> September 2002

**Context:**

Mrs Foote composed this story in response to the picture story book “Frog, where are you?” (Meyer 1969). The first number of each line refers to the illustration described, the second number tracks sequence of clauses in the description.

Although Mrs Foote was dictating the text orally, rather than writing it down, this story has a distinctly literate flavour, and demonstrates her familiarity with and mastery of the written form. The overt realisation of arguments, for example, is much more frequent than in spontaneous oral texts.

- 1.1 *Thatr nhul glass-ak nhii<nhi>n.*  
 frog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) glass-DAT sit<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘A frog is sitting in a jar.’
- 1.2 *Parr-an pul kuta-ku nhaa<nha>m nhunh thatr.*  
 child-ERG 3du(ERG) dog-ERG watch<RDP>:NPST 3sgACC frog(ACC)  
 ‘A boy and a dog are looking at the frog.’
- 2.3 *Parr\_r nhul wut wun bed-ak.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) asleep lie:NPST bed-DAT  
 ‘The boy’s asleep in his bed.’
- 2.4 *Kuta nhangn yangk-an wun.*  
 dog 3sgPOS(NOM) leg-DAT lie:NPST  
 ‘His dog is lying on his legs.’
- 2.5 *Thatr nhul glass-nam rip-nhan.*  
 frog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) glass-ABL exit-GO&:NPST  
 ‘The frog is coming out of the jar.’
- 3.6 *Parr\_r nhul glass nhaawr: thatr yuuw yat!*  
 child(#ERG) 3sg(ERG) glass(ACC) watch:P.PFV frog(NOM) far.away go:P.PFV  
 ‘The boy looked at the glass: the frog’s gone!’



- 3.7 *Kuta nhul putpun nhii<nhi>n mut-un nhangn-mun.*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top sit<RDP>:NPST back-DAT 3sgPOS-DAT  
 ‘The dog is sitting on top of his back.’
- 3.8 *Kuta nhul putpun yokunmanorrrp nhii<nhi>n.*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top same.way sit<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘The dog is also sitting down.’
- 3.9 *Nhul thatr yokunmanorrrp waa<wa>th-r.*  
 3sg(ERG) frog(ACC) same.way search<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The dog is also looking for the frog.’
- 4.10 *Parr\_r nhul thamr puut nhaa<nha>m.*  
 child(#ERG) 3sg(ERG) foot boot(ACC) watch<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘The boy is looking in a boot.’
- 4.11 “*Thatr wanthan yat?*”  
 frog(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub> go:P.PFV  
 ‘“Where has the frog gone?”’
- 4.12 *Nhul thatr ngaathirr waa<wa>th-r.*  
 3sg(ERG) frog(ACC) still search<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘He’s still looking for the frog’
- 4.13 *Kuta-ku nhul glass nhaa<nha>m.*  
 dog-ERG 3sg(ERG) glass(ACC) watch<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘The dog’s looking in the jar.’
- 4.14 *Thatr wanthan yat?*  
 frog(NOM) where<sub>TRJ</sub> go:P.PFV  
 ‘Where has the frog gone?’
- 5.15 *Pul window thaarawi-rr.*  
 3du(ERG) window(ACC) open-P.PFV  
 ‘They have opened the window.’
- 5.16 *Kuta nhul paant glass-ak rok-r.*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) head(NOM) glass-DAT enter-P.PFV  
 ‘The dog has its head in the jar.’
- 5.17 *Nhul parr\_r waa<wa>ntharr thatr-ak.*  
 3sg(NOM) child(NOM) call.out<RDP>:NPST frog-DAT  
 ‘The boy is calling out for the frog.’
- 6.18 *Ngul kuta nhul wont-r window-nam.*  
 then dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) fall-NPST window-ABL  
 ‘Then the dog falls from the window.’

- 6.19 *Parr\_r nhul kuta-kum worry rirk-ø.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) dog-ABL worry DO-NPST  
 ‘The boy is worried about the dog.’
- 7.20 *Nhul parr-an kuta mi'irr nhul ngamal.katpi-rr.*  
 3sg(ERG) child-ERG dog(ACC) pick.up:P.PFV 3sg(ERG) hug-P.PFV  
 ‘The child picked up the dog and hugged him.’
- 7.21 *Kuta-kun<sup>254</sup> nhul thaa-put thaa-punyc-r nhunh.*  
 dog-ERG 3sg(ERG)cheek(ACC) mouth-suck-P.PFV 3sgACC  
 ‘The dog licked him on the cheek.’
- 8.22 *Nhul thatr-ak waawantharr.*  
 3sg(NOM) frog-DAT call.out<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘He [the boy] is calling for the frog.’
- 9.23 *Nhul may puunh kenth<enth>a-rr.*  
 3sg(ERG) VEG bee(ACC) rouse<RDP>-P.PFV  
 ‘He [the dog] disturbs some bees.’
- 10.24 *Nhul thatr ngaathirr waa<wa>th-r.*  
 3sg(ERG) frog(ACC) still search.for<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘He [the boy] is still searching for the frog.’
- 10.25 *Nhul ranth-in nhaa<nha>m.*  
 3sg(NOM) hole-DAT see<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘He [the boy] is looking in a hole.’
- 10.26 *Nhul yik-r thatr=okun ranth-in ngaathirr wun.*  
 3sg(NOM) say-P.PFV frog(NOM)=DUB hole-DAT still lie:NPST  
 ‘He [the boy] thought the frog might still be in the hole.’
- 10.27 *Kuta-ku may puunh koo<ko>c-r.*  
 dog-ERG VEG bee(ACC) bark<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The dog is barking at the bees.’
- 11.28 *Minh kaal rip-r ranth-im.*  
 MEAT rat(NOM) exit-NPST hole-ABL  
 ‘A rat comes out of the hole.’
- 11.29 *Parr\_r nhul ngeengk-rithrr ranci-rr.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) belly-fat jump-P.PFV  
 ‘The boy gets a fright’.
- 11.30 *Nhul minc thatr waath-m ngul minh kaal ripi-rr.*  
 3sg(ERG)really frog(ACC) search.for-P.IPFV then MEAT rat(NOM) exit-P.PFV  
 ‘He [the boy] was really looking for the frog, but it was a rat that came out.’

<sup>254</sup> Note this aberrant form of the ergative inflection of *kuta* ‘dog’, in place of the more usual *kutaku*.

- 12.31 *May puunh wont-r yuk-um.*  
 VEG bee(NOM) fall-NPST tree-ABL  
 ‘The bees fall from the tree’
- 12.32 *May puunh wont-r raak-un.*  
 VEG bee(NOM) fall-NPST ground-DAT  
 ‘the bees fall to the ground’
- 12.33 *May puunh ulp ranth-im rip<rip>-r,*  
 VEG bee(NOM) dem:adr.prx hole-ABL exit<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘Those bees all come out of the hole [in their hive]’
- 12.34 *peln yarra rii<ri>c-r.*  
 3pl(NOM) away run<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘and they fly away.’
- 13.35 *Parr\_r nhul yuk punth-an nhii<nhi>n.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) TREE arm-DAT sit<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘The child is sitting on a tree branch.’
- 14.36 *Minh thaapinyc ripi-rr yuk ranth-im.*  
 MEAT owl(NOM) exit-P.PFV TREE hole-ABL  
 ‘An owl came out of a hole in the tree.’
- 14.37 *Parr\_r nhul wont-r thakr nhiin.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) fall-NPST front sit:NPST  
 ‘The boy falls face down.’
- 15.38 *May puunh-thurr kuta waa<wa>rin-r.*  
 VEG bee-ERG dog(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The bees are chasing the dog.’
- 16.39 *Minh thaapinyc-in parr\_r waa<wa>rin-r.*  
 MEAT owl-ERG child(ACC) chase<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The owl is chasing the boy.’
- 16.40 *Parr\_r nhul weneth miinng-r minh thaapinyc-ntam.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) scared take.fright-NPST MEAT owl-ABL  
 ‘The boy is frightened of the owl.’
- 17.41 *Parr\_r nhul putpun thanan therrep-ak, waa<wa>ntharr-ø.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) on.top stand<RDP>:NPST rock-DAT call.out-NPST  
 ‘The boy is standing on a rock, calling out.’
- 17.42 *Kuta nhul pal-ø-kop therrep-ak yan, nhuu<nhu>th-r.*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) near-at-below rock-DAT go:NPST sniff<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The dog goes just behind the rock, sniffing.’

- 18.43 *Nhangun minh pul riri-rr iipal.*  
 3sgDAT MEAT bull(NOM) exit-P.PFV from.there  
 ‘A bull comes out towards him.’
- 18.44 *kaal-kay ngamal-kaak.*  
 ear-metal large-REL.PROP  
 ‘[which] has large horns.’
- 18.45 *Kuta nhul ngaathirr-p rii<ri>c-r, pal-ø-kop therrep-ak.*  
 dog(NOM) 3sg(NOM) still-PRAG run<RDP>-NPST near-at-below rock-DAT  
 ‘The dog is still running behind the rock.’
- 19.46 *Parr\_r nhul putpun kal-r kaal-kay-okon.*  
 child(ACC) 3sg(ERG) on.top carry-NPST ear-metal-ERG  
 ‘He [the bull] carries the child up high, using its horns.’
- 19.47 *Kuta-ku nhul yokunmanorrrp rii<ri>c-r,*  
 dog-ERG^ 3sg(NOM) same.way run<RDP>-NPST  
 ‘The dog’s also running.’
- 19.48 *kuta-ku nhul koo<ko>c-r.*  
 dog-ERG 3sg(ERG) bark-NPST  
 ‘and the dog’s barking.’
- 20.49 *Minh-al thunpi-rr parr\_r ngotonyci-ntam.*  
 MEAT-ERG throw-P.PFV child(ACC) hill-ABL  
 ‘The bull has thrown the child from the hill.’
- 20.50 *Kuta yokunmanorrrp wont-r.*  
 dog(NOM) same.way fall-NPST  
 ‘The dog also falls.’
- 21.51 *Parr-an pul kuta-ku ngok-eln wont-r.*  
 child-ERG^ 3du(NOM) dog-ERG^ water-DAT fall-NPST  
 ‘The child and the dog fall into the water together.’
- 22-23  
 .52 *Parr\_r nhul rirk-r, kuta keren kal<al>-ø.*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) arise-P.PFV dog(ACC) up.high carry<RDP>-INF  
 ‘The child got up, carrying the dog up high.’
- 24.53 *Parr\_r nhul yik-r kuta-ak: "kuuk=aar!"*  
 child(NOM) 3sg(NOM) say-P.PFV dog-DAT WORD=ADN.PRIV  
 ‘The boy says to the dog “be quiet!”’
- 25.54 *Parr-an pul kutaku yukun man-wee<we>rngk-r*  
 child-ERG 3du(ERG) dog-ERG tree-DAT throat-stare<RDP>-NPST  
*i-rr-kop nhaa<nha>m.*  
 there-towards-below look<RDP>:NPST  
 ‘The boy and the dog are on a log staring, looking down below them.’

- 26.55 *Pul minc nhaawr thatr kuthirr.*  
 3du(ERG) UNXP see:P.PFV frog two(ACC)  
 ‘they unexpectedly saw two frogs.’
- 27.56 *Yoorr pul mangmangal.*  
 now 3du(NOM) happy  
 ‘now they’re happy.’
- 28.57 *Parr\_r nhul thatr mi'irr yuur-un.*  
 child(#ERG) 3sg(ERG) frog(ACC) pick.up:NPST hand-DAT  
 ‘the boy picks up the frog in his hand.’
- 28.58 *Nhul punth rirk-ø yawo.*  
 3sg(NOM) arm(NOM) rise-NPST goodbye  
 ‘he waves goodbye.’
- 29.59 *Pul yarra therk-r,*  
 3du(NOM) away return-P.PFV  
 ‘the two of them have headed back.’
- 29.60 *Peln that-nthurr nhaa<nha>m pulnan.*  
 3pl(ERG) frog-ERG look.at<RDP>NPST 2duACC  
 ‘The frogs watch the two of them [leave].’
- 30.61 *Kana.*  
 finished  
 ‘The end.’