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LEXICOGRAPHIC RESEARCH
ON AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES 1968–1993

CLIFF GODDARD AND NICK THIEBERGER

1. INTRODUCTION

O’Grady (1971:779) began his landmark review of lexicography on Australian Aboriginal languages with the rueful observation that in terms of quantity ‘lexicographic output…has shown a falling off since the turn of the century’1. He further observed that if the term ‘dictionary’ were to be confined to compendia of 5,000-plus richly detailed lexical entries, then “the state of lexicographic research on Australian (and Tasmanian) languages…can be stated very simply: no such work yet exists”. Even after lowering his sights to extend the term to reasonably sophisticated assemblages of 1,000-plus lexical entries, O’Grady could list no more than eight published dictionaries of Aboriginal languages.

In other words, as of 1968 (the final year considered in O’Grady’s article) the vast bulk of lexicographic research done in the twentieth century remained unpublished. In his paper O’Grady sought to sketch the history of lexicographic research on Australian languages, to evaluate the principal contributions, and to highlight research opportunities in the hope of helping ‘break the stalemate’ in the making and, especially, the publishing of Australian Aboriginal language dictionaries.

What then is the state of Australian Aboriginal language lexicography now, some twenty-five years later? How have changes in linguistic research techniques and in the sociopolitical landscape affected the making of dictionaries of Australian Aboriginal languages? What are the prospects as the twentieth century draws to a close? In this paper, we will address these questions following, with some elaboration, the organisation of O’Grady’s original article: §2 will update the history of lexicographic research and publishing; §3 will evaluate aspects of the new works, considering orthographic issues, scope and organisation, and questions to do with definition; and §4 will briefly look to the future of lexicography on Australian Aboriginal languages.

We adopt the following terminology, which differs somewhat from that of O’Grady. By ‘wordlist’ we mean any list of Aboriginal language words with brief translation equivalents, often consisting of a single English word. Wordlists may be of any length, though most have fewer than 1,000 Aboriginal words. We reserve the term ‘dictionary’ for a compendium of 2,000 or more lexical entries which includes detailed semantic information (either as specified ‘senses’ or implicitly in the form of varied examples of usage), and information on

1 We would like to thank Peter Austin, Gavan Brenn, Carolyn Coleman, Bob Dixon, Nicholas Evans, John Henderson, Robert Hoogezaard, Mary Laughren, David Nash, Nick Reall, Julie Waddy, Anna Wierzbicka and David Wilkins for information and comments which helped improve an earlier version of this paper. The remaining errors are of course our own responsibility.

Darrell Tryon and Michael Walsh, eds Boundary rider: essays in honour of Geoffrey O’Grady, 175–208.
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the derivational relationships between words. Once a certain threshold size is reached, in other words, the distinguishing characteristic of a dictionary, as we see it, is the sophistication of the information it contains. Dictionaries, thus defined, usually also give at least basic grammatical information about individual words, along with facts about their dialectal affinities, pronunciation variants, etymology and cultural significance, and include illustrative phrases or sentences.

We use the expression ‘small dictionary’ as an intermediate category between wordlist and dictionary proper: that is, for assemblages of dictionary-standard, or near dictionary-standard, information on fewer than 2,000 lexical entries. Most small dictionaries have between 1,000 and 2,000 entries, but they may be smaller if they are for a specialised purpose, for example, for primary school use, or for a single domain such as botany.

One type of modern lexicographic compendium escapes the terminology laid out so far, namely, lexical files on computer. Due largely to the AIAS National Lexicography Project (Nash & Simpson 1989) there are many of these which, though unpublished, are in the public domain though having been deposited in the AIATSIS Aboriginal Studies Electronic Data Archive (ASEDA). They will be referred to, in the current jargon, as ‘electronic data files’.

2. DEVELOPMENTS IN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE LEXICOGRAPHY 1968–1993

Diverse purposes have motivated the production of Aboriginal dictionaries over the past twenty-five years, some quite different to those which animated earlier generations of Aboriginal language lexicographers. Since the nature of a dictionary is partly dictated by its purposes, it can be expected that recent dictionaries and wordlists differ considerably from their predecessors (as well as from each other). Before moving to these matters, it will be helpful to step back and take an overview of some factors which have brought changes in almost all the component aspects of Aboriginal language lexicography, including the kind of people doing it, their aims, their methods, and the sources of support available to them.

2.1 TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

One significant development has been the rise of linguistics as an academic discipline and its expansion in Australian universities. This is not the place to relate this history, but notable turning points would include the establishment of the first Department of Linguistics in 1965 at Monash University, and the arrival at the Australian National University in 1970 of R.M.W. (Bob) Dixon, who was to become a dynamic force in Australian linguistics. Most lexicographers since the 1970s have received at least some academic training in linguistics, and have therefore been better able to cope with the phonological and syntactic peculiarities of Aboriginal languages than their predecessors. As O’Grady’s (1971:781) noted, many of the workers in the 1930s and 1940s spent decades compiling dictionary material without being au fait with the ‘phonemic facts of life’.

Two other factors whose importance can hardly be overestimated are the changed standing of Aboriginal people in Australian life generally, and the rise of government-supported bilingual Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory and South Australia. At the time of O’Grady’s 1971 article, Aboriginal people had had citizenship rights for a mere three years, the reforming Whitlam Labour government had not yet been elected, and ‘land rights’ and ‘self-determination’ were idealistic slogans. To all but the most visionary it would have been inconceivable that, in little more than twenty years, native land title would be recognised by the High Court or that an Aboriginal rock group (Yothu Yindi) would be ambassadors of Australian culture to the world, to mention only two signs of the profound change which has taken place in the status of Aboriginality.

Though such general societal trends have indirectly affected Aboriginal language lexicography in many ways, one very direct and obvious factor was the Federal government decision in 1973 to support the development of bilingual education in the Northern Territory. This created a new educational application for linguistic studies of Aboriginal languages, and, ultimately, a generation of Aboriginal people literate in their own languages. Increasingly, dictionary makers have wanted to serve the needs of Aboriginal users, as well as to document Aboriginal languages for scientific purposes. For many linguists, a dictionary is now seen as a way of getting the research back to the people who provided it and in a form which is, to some extent at least, familiar and expected. A good dictionary is a basic multipurpose resource, not the least of its benefits being its capacity to ‘free’ the community from the lexicographer by providing a spelling resource they can use themselves. Aside from being the primary end-users, Aboriginal people literate in their own languages now play a crucial role as co-workers on many, perhaps most, contemporary dictionary projects.

A more mundane, but still important, change over the past twenty-five years has been improved transport and communication. As O’Grady (1971:780) observed, twentieth century linguistic scholars have generally had to travel far from their city homes to undertake lexicographic fieldwork on an Aboriginal language, which for most of the century has been a costly, arduous and time-consuming exercise. Though it still is to some extent, there can be little doubt that getting to a remote location is easier now than ever before, and that working and living conditions in the field are generally more conducive to productive research.

Sources of material support, never particularly healthy, have fluctuated greatly. From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, funds from universities and from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS, now AIATSIS) flowed fairly freely, but linguistic research over this period favoured grammatical, rather than lexicographic, work. Ironically, as fashions in linguistic theorising have moved to reinvigorate interest in the lexicon, funding for original linguistic research from Australian universities and from AIATSIS has tended to dry up. In the Northern Territory, the Department of Education has funded some lexicography. Another source has been the Australian branch of the missionary organisation Summer Institute of
Linguistics (SIL-AAIB). Overseas institutions, such as the US National Science Foundation and Systems Development Foundation, have helped support the work on Warlpiri by the Strait Islander Languages Initiatives Programme (ATSLIP) and the association of Aboriginal language centres, most of which do some lexicographic work. On unfunded.

2.2 Output

Coming to the published output of the past twenty-five years, we can observe at once that Heath (1982:ix) could still fairly remark "...the number of published dictionaries is a single published dictionary which makes any pretensions of being comprehensive". The hundred words in a wordlist at the end.

Over the 1980s, this situation improved. An increasing number of small dictionaries and wordlists began to be published, and much more work became accessible as manuscript or electronic data files. A substantial, but not exhaustive, annotated list of such materials appears as Appendices 1 and 2. Much of it reflects a trend, made possible by the availability of personal computers, to publish first (or draft) editions with a view to making corrections electronic form. (For interest, Appendix 3 goes through the thirty or so projects cited by O’Grady (1971:755ff.) as then in-progress, with comments on their current state. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say, with Austin (1991), that dictionary making largely remained the 'poor cousin of grammatical description'.

It was not until the 1990s that reasonably large and comprehensive dictionaries of Australian languages began to appear in any numbers. Table 1 below lists all such materials available or in press at the time of writing. From a publishing point of view, one notable house. The only (partial) exceptions are academic publishers such as the University of Queensland Press and Mouton de Gruyter. Otherwise, dictionaries and wordlists were published mainly by universities, schools, SIL-AAIB, AIAS, Aboriginal Language Centres, and by the publishing arm of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: DICTIONARIES PUBLISHED SINCE 1968</th>
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<td>[2,000+ entries with detailed semantic information]</td>
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Green, Jenny, 1992, Alyawarra to English dictionary. Alice Springs, NT: IAD.


Heath, Jeffrey, 1982, Nunggubuyu dictionary. Canberra: AIAS.


The IAD, an Aboriginal-controlled educational institute in Alice Springs, deserves special mention. Not only has it consistently published quality dictionaries and wordlists over the last twenty years, it has provided a sophisticated base for lexicographic projects in Central Australia for over a decade. The Pijinjatjara/Yankunyjatjara to English dictionary (Godward 1992), the Warlpiri Dictionary Project and the Arandische Dictionaries Program have all been based at IAD, and a host of smaller wordlists have also issued from there (see Appendix 1).

Some impression of the diversity in nature and purposes to be found in recent lexicographic output can be gained by some quick, and necessarily highly-selective, comparisons. At the smaller end of the spectrum, there are picture vocabularies, and learner’s wordlists such as A learner’s wordlist of Eastern and Central Arrernte (Henderson 1991). The latter contains about 750 words and is intended as a reference for students learning the language and to assist literate Arrernte people in spelling. Other examples of this genre are
the wordlists of Pilbara languages produced by Wangka Maya (1989–90). Such products represent a change from the earlier academic work which was not designed for use by the speakers of the language or by the general public.

Of medium size are the recently published dictionaries listed in Table 1. These contain between 2,000 and 5,000 lexical entries, with reasonably detailed semantic, grammatical and serving language learners, Aboriginal schoolchildren in bilingual education, Aboriginal Yoront dictionary has perhaps the broadest scope of the published works listed in Table 1, including information about etymology, language variety (respect vocabulary) and totemic affiliation in addition to semantic information, example sentences, and so on. The only large dictionary which has been published at the time of writing is the Eastern and Central Arrernte to English dictionary (Henderson & Dobson 1994) the Warli the only rich exemplification and encyclopedic information. The Warli Dictionary Project (cf. Laughren & Nash 1983 is truly remarkable for its scope, longevity and ambitiousness, as brought to bear upon it. Its primary purpose is scientific, viz. the most complete possible abridged versions are planned to serve the needs of bilingual education and Warlipi adult education, and attempts to combine scientific and practical purposes. Even so, the publication is so large (almost 800 pages) that an abridged ‘junior’ edition is envisaged for schools.

A trend in recent years has been the renewed interest in the collation and reworking of early records of Aboriginal languages. For instance, Jane Simpson and Rob Amery (1994) and Barry Blake (1991) have reconstituted parts of the vocabulary of Kaurna (Adelaide) and Wurundjeri (Melbourne) from historical sources (cf. Simpson 1993; see also Troy 1994). No longer speak their ancestral languages and with the increasing availability of funding, recent, but relatively inaccessible, 1991 has assisted the reworking of more wordlists or dictionaries. For instance, electronic data file, and the Kimberley Languages Resource Centre (Halls Creek) is keyboarding Tasak Tusnoda’s large Jaru wordlist.

Finally, it should be noted that there is evidence that in various Language Centres, schools and community council offices, Aboriginal people are increasingly doing lexicographic work were said to be able to read and write Warumungu. One young woman (Doreen Noonan, 1974). This dictionary has since gone missing.

In general, published Aboriginal language dictionaries tend not to include any great detail on etymology, the practical relevance to Aboriginal users, the partial or speculative nature of the information and the data files, if not in published ‘hard copy’ dictionaries.

2.3 NEW METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The new methods and techniques used by lexicographers over the past twenty-five years fall under two broad headings: new ways of gathering data and new ways of manipulating data.

At the time of O’Grady’s 1971 review, the most widely used data gathering method was elicitation, assisted by standard wordlists. O’Grady mentions Capell’s use in the 1930s of a 600-item lexical list to compile information on over ninety languages of northern Australia (cf. Capell 1945), his own use of a 100-item list in the northern part of Western Australia in the 1950s, and Stephen Wurm’s work in eastern Australia at about the same time (cf. Wurm 1967), among others. All this was essentially survey work, with a comparative orientation. Later, AIAS published its own widely used standard elicitation wordlist organised by semantic fields (AIAS & Capell n.d.; Sutton & Walsh 1979, 1987). Usually the elicitation would be done through (Aboriginal) English, a variety of Kriol, or sometimes through a traditional Aboriginal language francs. In any case, there are obvious limitations on the richness of the information which can be obtained by elicitation.

More substantial recent dictionary work has relied on methods better suited to producing in-depth data on individual languages. These include intensive language-learning by the linguist, participant observation, extensive use of tape-recorded and transcribed texts, and, increasingly, collaboration with literate Aboriginal speakers of the language in question.

For the purposes of data manipulation and analysis, lexicography is today unthinkable without the computer. In place of boxes of file-sigs, lexical information is now stored in some kind of structured database, which can be manipulated to produce different types of
formatted dictionary (e.g. alphabetically ordered, thesaurus, special purpose). The computer allows much greater speed, accuracy and consistency. Increasingly, vernacular source making it possible for the lexicographer to compile textual examples using 'concordance' software.

The earliest computer-aided lexicography, such as O'Grady's 1966 comparison of wordlists of Australian languages, the Research dictionary of the Western Desert language of Australia (Rae & Woeckner 1970-1973), and the comparative Pilbara Dictionaries Project (cf. most all contemporary projects use personal computers and existing software. Current dictionaries and data management), Free Text, Micro-OPC, Shoebox, TACT, and Conic (text-browsers and concordancers), and MacLex (dedicated dictionary maker).

Much day-to-day lexicography is done without special purpose software, however. Instead, data is compiled as structured text within a standard word-processor, using declarative mark-up to make the structure of the information explicit. The marked information described below. The most widely used mark-up system is based on conventions developed by SIF, and promoted by the AIAS Lexicography Project (cf. Nash & Simpson 1989) and its successor ASEDAD. It employs a backlash followed by a letter-code to identify different types of 'fields' of information within the lexical entry. This is known as a 'field-oriented standard format' or FOSF file. The key advantage of a mark-up format is that it frees the text to be current within an entire research community. In future we can expect to be using internationally recognised mark-up, such as Standard Generalised Markup Language or SGML, for which software and conventions for use in dictionary construction are now available.

Database programs, such as Paradox or FileMaker, are also popular as a means of entering data in a structured framework, allowing it to be exported as tab-delimited text files of languages, as in the use of Oracle by Peter Austin for storing and locating data from a number of Pilbara languages.

To give something of the flavour of current, computer-assisted lexicography, we will work through some of the stages involved in transforming a lexical database into final output. Second we introduce the example of the Piljinjajjaru/Tunkanjajjaru to English dictionary. The 'sensitive language', U a definition, V dialect or style (e.g. 'slang'), Layering of definitions and examples is provided for by numerical codes which identify the field which they precede. Thus U preceding a definition indicates that this is the second distinct 'sense' of the lexical unit. Derivational relationships are provided for through the codes 'N' and 'f' which identify a 'sub-headword' and fixed expression (idiom or phrase). Symbols such as * or @, and <> within the definition fields mark English words for the purpose of making a reversed (English-PY) listing.

second *PAL
\uexclamation
\u(exural directed >o dogs) *clear of off \u(be off pias off>
\u(papa, pali! 'get out of it, dog!'
\uPAIN
\u(transitive verb (l)
\u1
\u289 Regulation
\u297 Ejection
\u<drive away,>*shoo off, *haunt away
\u nagangawara paliwapi 'wiya, waminla' they used to shoo us (school-children) away 'No, leave it alone'
\u ka tjanal mukaringany, puyan tujua, nagangawara painjikji, nagangawara 'the white fellows want to drive us out of our country'
\u purppuwa kajangk jarwi, kajangk painji 'I'm shooing the flies from my eyes, so they won't bite my eyes'
\u2
\u923 Disproportion
\u*hilf off, *soodle, *rebuke, *growl>
\u nyuukumpa kaajangk nguyaju karju painji 'your son's been telling my son off'
\u palugwa palumyu kwumyu wajangk wiya, palugwa 'he didn't tell his uncle, lest his uncle tell him off'
\u*3
\u*warn, *caution against
\u4
\u<forbad,>*direct not to
\u kamirinjajara painji tjkumujja 'Grandmother's forbidden us to play for (from camp)'
\uPRAFAYAM
\u order to leave,< *send off packing (pum a) send>
\u ka palunya pelukangk malubinga palu a) 'after the bullock master, we're sending him packing'
\u Tadjinjik maluku rawangka ngaaadjinga kwar-kwarangji palu a) 'if a kid keeps on and on trying to get you to give food, you get sick of it and order them to go'

FIGURE 1: EXTRACT FROM DATABASE FOR PITJANTJATJARA/YANKUNJATJATJARU TO ENGLISH DICTIONARY (GODDARD 1992)

The schema shown in Figure 1 had various defects. For instance, having the example glosses appear within the \u field, identified by framing in single inverted commas, led to problems in subsequent processing, as did the many inconsistencies in punctuation. But although it is impossible to achieve fully automatic conversion from data files to final formatted text, a great deal of the re-formatting can be done automatically.

At IAD the initial re-formatting is done within the Nius word processor, using the regular expression (GREP) rule facilities, which allow users to write customised programs for manipulating text. Figure 2 shows part of such a macro devised by John Henderson. Current IAD practice is to use macros to convert an edited version of underlying database into 'style-tagged text' in which unique symbols enclose every stretch of characters destined for a particular final style (font/size/face combination). As well as tagging each field with the appropriate styling information, it adds any text or symbols needed to introduce the field in the published version.

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Footnote: It should be noted that FOSF has been criticised as a violation of certain principles of dictionary language knowledge encapsulated within it rather than being designed for processing convenience; they on) are integral to the dictionary, so too should they be integral to the design and computer representation
eagle: white breasted eagle
kangaroo: ornate kangaroo tick
ornate kangaroo tick: ornate kangaroo tick
white breasted eagle

Whether working on FOSS files or from a database, it is important to design and use automatic reversal procedures carefully (cf. Nathan & Austin 1992) otherwise the resulting lists can be bizarre and impractical. An unfortunate example of this is the finderlist in the third edition of the Pintupi/Luritja dictionary (Hansen & Hansen 1992:222), in which, for instance, the following series of 15 entries appears under the English word 'did':

did here, did miracles, did not bury, did not eat (it), did not forget, did not inform another, did not win, did nothing, did signs and wonders, did supernatural things or acts, did that which was displeasing, did there, did up hell.

Reversals can be converted, by extensive editing, into English-Aboriginal language 'finderlists', but it is advisable to check any finderlist against a suitably sized list of common English vocabulary. This is because a finderlist serves a person who wishes to find Aboriginal equivalents for English words, but many common English words will not have found their way into the definitions for Aboriginal language words in the main dictionary. Such lists are available in electronic form from ASEDA.

3. ISSUES IN LEXICOGRAPHIC PRACTICE

3.1 ORTHOGRAPHY

When O'Grady (1971:792) wrote, it was still feasible for him to call for a standardisation of orthographic symbols, primarily to avoid "a major and unnecessary burden to the comparativist". For the stop series, O'Grady himself favoured [p, t, tʃ, c, k], and for the nasals [n, nʷ, n̪, n̪, n̩, N]. These suggestions have been overaken by the times. It is now generally accepted that an Aboriginal language dictionary must employ a 'practical orthography' based on Roman alphabet letters, and bearing as straightforward a relationship as possible to the English spelling system. This is for the convenience of non-linguists, Aboriginal and otherwise, who are now recognised as the primary users of the dictionaries.

Even the principle of phonemic spelling is no longer sacrosanct if, for one reason or another, it conflicts sharply with the priorities of the Aboriginal community. After all, a mild amount of under-differentiation in the spelling system presents no problems for native speakers. Sometimes, too, a community already literate in English may prefer an orthography closely based on English, even at the cost of a less than maximally efficient system. For example, the Yiyiyi community has adopted an orthography in which the name of their language is spelt Goomanyandi, rather than Kuyinyai as it would have been in the standard 'linguist's notation': this system both under- and over-differentiates phonemes (McGregor 1986, 1990:25-28). Less commonly, local tradition has sanctioned the retention of letter symbols alien to the typewriter keyboard. This is the case with the hooked 'ng' symbol of the Yolŋu languages of north-eastern Arnhem Land, which also employ 'k' to indicate the long vowel usually shown as aa.
Some of the trickiest orthographic decisions have arisen in places where two kinds of complicating factors coexist, viz. the Aboriginal language has unusual phonological Arandic languages of Central Australia. Dictionary makers must sometimes come to grips to represent, can be a decision with political dimensions.

3.2 ORGANISATION

Most published Aboriginal language dictionaries employ listing by alphabetical sequence of lexical stems, sometimes supplemented with an English 'finderlist'. The sequence is based either on the initial letter, as is done in English dictionaries, or, more commonly, on the initial 'orthographic symbol' where digraphs (i.e. sequences of two letters standing for a single phoneme) are regarded as single symbols. An example of the latter ordering principle is shown below from the Pintupi/Luritja dictionary.

a, i, k, l, ly, m, n, ng, ny, p, r, rr, t, tj, w, y

The rationale is to make it easier for Aboriginal users to locate words, assuming that they will do so directly on a phonemic basis. A listing like the one shown above prevents words beginning with 'n', 'ng', and 'ny' becoming interspersed.

The argument in favour of the competing letter-based sequence is that almost all Aboriginal users today go or have gone to school, where they learn the conventional digraphs. It can also be argued that experienced readers tend not to operate on a direct phonemic basis, but to 'see' words in a graphic form (so that a word like nganytja, for example, is seen as beginning with the letter 'n'). Research is needed into the relative merits of the two competing systems.

A less common alternative to alphabetical listing is thesaurus-style organisation, either as the primary format, as in McKeown (1989), Dixon (1991), and Groote Eylandt Linguistics issue with thesaurus formats is the selection of the classification system, and in particular to English. Many Aboriginal languages have explicit classifier (or 'generic noun') systems for people, living things and artefacts, making it relatively simple to organise at least some of the nominal vocabulary into an 'ethno-thesaurus'. But the semantic organisation of other lexical domains may be obscure even to native speakers, and require detailed analytical work. Aside from the work of Dixon (1982) on the semantic implications of Dyirbal 'mother-in-law' language, there has been little published on this, though some practising lexicographers have devised quite elaborate semantically based schemes to help with collecting lexical data. Nonetheless, it would be fair to say that semantically organised dictionaries continue to rely in large measure on categories derived from European lexicography.

8 Among dictionaries which list by initial digraph, there is variation as to whether the same ordering principle is followed non-initially. The Pintupi/Luritja dictionary (Hames & Hames 1992) does, so that, for instance, pungu 'bit' comes after pugu 'tree'. Most others, such as the Kayardild dictionary and thesaurus (Evans 1992), use conventional alphabetical order inside the word.
common with each of the English words offered, while not being completely identical with any of them, so it would be wrong to reject the listing approach as wholly uninformative. But the listing simply leaves to the reader the task which properly belongs to the lexicographer, that is, of isolating the invariant meaning and specifying it in a testable form. This is a particularly unfortunate failing when it concerns culturally important words which lack close equivalents in English.

Of course, most dictionaries do at times attempt explicit explanatory paraphrases, in addition to listing translation equivalents. The examples below are from three dictionaries as cited above (Green 1992:146; Warlipiri Lexicography Group 1986a:63; Goddard 1992:43). It would be good if this practice were to become more consistent.

Ilbertiiliheyel be confused, become mixed up, go off your head, not think straight, be in a hurry, be unable to think of something

Miirmir(pa) very rapid involuntary movements of the body; shaking, shakes, trembling, twitching, shivering

Kunta respectful, embarrassed, ‘shame’. Discomfort at being observed by someone because of the type of person they are, because of worrying that you might do something on account of which they might think badly of you

Australian lexicographic practice could also improve its handling of the distinction between a lexical unit having several distinct but-related senses, as opposed to it having a single general meaning—that is, the distinction between polysemic and semantic generality. Many Australian lexicographers seem to think this distinction is arbitrary or unimportant, giving an unstructured string of glosses where others would identify separate (polysemic) senses. The entries below exemplify the contrast in approach; they deal with the same verb nyina-st.

(a) Nyina-w. sit, to sit, to live, to be, to exist, to stay

[An introductory dictionary of the Western Desert language (Douglas 1988:55)]

(b) Nyinanyi intrinsite verb (gl)

1. sit, be sitting. 2. live, stay: Nyinanyi kuwu ngara nguwa nyinanyi? Where is your big brother staying/living? 3. be in a place: Tjilgaga nyinanyi! Is the Old Fella around? 4. be in, have or hold a temporary condition: Njumaga pukulpa nyinanyi. We were contented. 5. (with serial verb, in the ‘way of life’ construction) do something generally, customarily, as a way of life: Kungka nguwa nguwa katuwa nyina? Why do you bring your wife with you?

[Piijanja/lari/Ankunjaja/lari to English dictionary (Goddard 1992:97)]

Australian dictionary makers would do well to draw on criteria identified by semantic and lexicographic theorists (e.g. Apsesjan 1972, 1992 [1974]; Mel’tuk 1988; Wierzbicka 1992–1993) for establishing polysemic, such as the putative distinct meanings having different syntactic properties, or different antonyms, or only one of the senses participating in a derivational process. Importantly, whatever for a generosity analysis or a polysemic analysis the putative sense or senses must be stable in explicit and testable formulations.

3.3 DEFINITIONAL PRACTICE

Questions of definition are at the heart of dictionary making. In 1971, O’Grady (1971:795) remarked of the then published dictionaries: “[Their] definitions leave much to be desired. There would be no point, however, in deriving the earlier works...[The] compilers operated within the limitations imposed by the state of lexicography of their respective eras”.

It is not clear that the future will be able to judge contemporary practice in the same charitable light. The problem, which we hasten to point out is not confined to the Australian Aboriginal arena, is that there is a wide gulf between semantic theory and lexicographic practice. Comparatively few Australian lexicographers over the past twenty-five years have been well trained in semantics, and most have developed their definitions on a fairly ad hoc basis. This is particularly noticeable in two respects: first, descriptive inadequacy and explicitness; second, lack of criteria for distinguishing between polysemic and semantic generality.

On the issue of semantic adequacy, we can observe that most Australian language dictionaries make little effort to explicitly capture the precise meaning of the words being defined. Rather than attempt a precise explanatory paraphrase, they more commonly list a series of possible English translation equivalents, as in the examples below, which come from the Alyawarr to English dictionary (Green 1992:219), an early draft of the Warlipiri dictionary (cited in Wierzbicka 1983:141), and the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English dictionary (Goddard 1992:112), respectively.

Riwayi, riwayi
Nyawaanyi-vi/mi
Pitjataju

Select possible translation equivalents do not meet one of the prime requirements of a good lexicographic definition, namely, that it should make the meaning fully explicit. The reader may fairly assume that the meaning being defined contains some components in

should be more practical for community use. Lexical information will be accessible by initial segment of verb root, by auxiliary, or by thesaurus classification. The FileMaker Pro format ‘backslash code’ system.

Regardless of the organisational framework, example sentences or phrases are an important part of any bilingual dictionary, though their role can be construed in various complex examples can be a vehicle for implicit grammatical information. Example sentences may also contain ethno-encyclopaedic information, or take the form of vernacular definitions.

Some dictionary makers insist that ‘naturally occurring text’ is the only or ideal source for example sentences, even though this may mean that many are grammatically complex and highly context-embedded. Others prefer text-based material but allow that it may be edited for sentences; so long as they are written by experienced Aboriginal language workers. In any case, one difficulty to be faced is that tape-recorded text corpora are almost always unrepresentative of ordinary speech, because they tend to be dominated by monologues (especially narrative).
Even dictionaries which recognise the polysemy versus generality distinction seldom implement it with consistency or supply any explicit discussion of their criteria. [An exception is Alpher (1991).] Some examples of apparent inconsistency are given below. We assume that separating senses by numbers or semicolons is intended to indicate polysemy, while a unitary sense is indicated by glosses separated by commas.

(a) maatthu
   (1) settle someone down after they have been angry or wild
   (2) tame or subdue someone or an animal
nga'athu
   hide (something or yourself); put inside (something)
ceg'yan
   listen, understand, hear (and obey)

(dictionary and source book of the Wik-Mungkan language [Kilham et al. 1986:144, 142])

(b) wudu
   1. Corner, curve,
   2. Small point on coastline
yiwija
   Lie down, sleep, camp the night

(keyardil dictionary and thesaurus [Evans 1992:143, 179])

Most modern practical dictionaries frame their definitions in terms of relatively simple, common English words, if only to maximise their intelligibility for Aboriginal users. One of the few exceptions is the main version of the Warlipiri dictionary (i.e. the version intended for linguistic, rather than for general, use), which employs a rather technical, semi-standardised metalanguage. This has been the subject of one of the very few theoretically-oriented exchanges in the scant literature about Aboriginal language lexicography. The exchange, in Austin, ed. (1983), occurred between Anna Wierzbiacka and Mary Laughren, and is sufficiently interesting to review here.

Wierzbiacka (1983:136-137) criticised the style of definition shown below.

paka-ru — 'xERG produces concussion of surface of yABS, by coming into contact with y'
liri-ru — 'yABS increases in size, typically to assume abnormal dimensions'

Such definitions, she said, violated the requirement that a sound definition "must reduce what is complex to what is simple, what is obscure to what is clear, what is conceptually ‘posterior’ to what is conceptually ‘prior’". The rather learned style of language used was an unnecessary barrier to understanding. Wierzbiacka also claimed that by using the complex defining language one runs the risk of committing the lexicographic sin of circularity, if only in a hidden form. For instance, if a word close in meaning to 'hiri' is defined in terms of 'concussion', there is implicit circularity because we understand the word 'concussion' in terms of 'hitting'.

Laughren (1983) defended the form of the definitions on the grounds that they bring out the natural semantic classes to be found in Warlipiri. She explained that the first of the definitions cited above is formulated so as to show that paka-ru falls into the class of 'contact/effect' verbs, whose core meaning is defined as 'xERG produces an effect on yABS by some entity coming into contact with y'. The other details of the definition distinguish paka-ru from other verbs of the same class (e.g. panti-ru 'pierce, poke, stick into, spear', yipi-ru 'squeeze out', palji-ru 'wash'). The differences are captured by specifications of the nature of the effect (e.g. concussion, pressure, cleaning, etc.), the nature of the entity (sharp pointed, hands, water, etc.) and the nature of the contact. Laughren also pointed out that the apparent simplicity of English words such as 'hit' may be misleading. For instance, there are several different senses for 'hit', only one of which could be translated using Warlipiri paka-ru. Laughren even argues that technical vocabulary, because it is less polysemous, tends to focus on simple concepts better than everyday words do.

Though the Warlipiri dictionary's commitment to systematic semantic decomposition is commendable, it does not in our view constitute a sufficient defence of complex defining metalanguage because there is no reason to believe that systematic decomposition requires complex terms. Another drawback is that because terms such as 'concussion', 'surface', and 'contact' are not directly translatable into Warlipiri, the resulting definitions are not directly accessible to the intuitions of native speakers and cannot be verified by testing their substitutability into authentic Warlipiri contexts of use. It is surely preferable that a defining metalanguage should be as simple and as cross-translatable as possible, though, to be sure, establishing an optimal translatable metalanguage is no easy task.9

A final issue to do with the definitional side of dictionary making concerns encyclopaedic information. In general, the larger dictionaries tend to include liberat amounts of cultural knowledge in or along with their definitions or in the example sentences. The kind of facts often noted include the habits of animals, uses for plants and animals, procedures for making and using tools and implements, as well as social customs and beliefs.

From the viewpoint of semantic theory, the importance of cultural knowledge is being increasingly recognised, with richly detailed scenarios and cultural scripts now widely accepted as plausible representations of linguistic knowledge. Some semantic theorists, such as George Lakoff (1987) and Ronald Langacker (1987), reject the distinction between linguistic and real-world knowledge altogether, while others, such as Wierzbiacka (1983, in press) would rather redraw the boundary so that some details about the habits of animal species and the functions of artefacts are seen as aspects of semantic knowledge. In any case, there can be no theoretical objection to the encyclopaedic dictionary, so long as the 'knowledge' being included is that of the indigenous culture, as opposed to Western 'scientific' knowledge.10 As pointed out by Evans (1992, this volume) and by Wilkins (1996), encyclopaedic information also often helps to make sense of polysemy and to identify pathways of semantic change. Finally, from a practical point of view, encyclopaedic dictionaries are often more interesting and more useful.

4. THE FUTURE FOR ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE LEXICOGRAPHY

Until recently, makers of Aboriginal language dictionaries have largely worked in isolation from one another.11 It is greatly to be hoped that the future will see more debate, discussion and exchange on theory and methodology as well as on data management.

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9 Work within Wierzbiacka’s Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework posits the existence of some 60 or so ‘semantic primitives’, hypothesised to have lexical exponents (i.e. precise translation equivalents) in all languages (Wierzbiacka 1996, Evans 1994, Goddard 1994) and Hanks and Wilkins (1994) investigate the translatability of 36 of these into the Aboriginal languages Kayardild and Arrente. Semantic research of this kind has obvious value for the definitional side of lexicography.

10 A further distinction could (and arguably should) be made between knowledge which is linguistically encoded, as evidenced by lexical collocations, metaphorical interpretations and so on, and specialist knowledge possessed only by the experts of the culture (cf. Apreajan 1992 [1974], Wierzbiacka in press, Wilkins this volume).

11 The main exception to this statement was the 1982 ALS Workshop on Australian Aboriginal Lexicography convened by Peter Austin (cf. Austin ed. 1983).
techniques. There is an important role here for AUSTRALEX (the Australasian Association for Lexicography), formed in 1990.

In terms of language coverage, the main focus for future work in Australian lexicography must surely be non-Pama-Nyungan languages, which, as mentioned, have scarcely been Nyungan languages present the lexicographer with far greater analytical and organisational theory.

A more radical departure from current practice, and one less likely to eventuate, except by bilingual dictionary. As noted by Crowley (1986), among others, a preponderance of (There have been some moves towards the development of monolingual Aboriginal language dictionary (1986), but as far as we are aware, there has been no serious attempt to seek an Afro-Aboriginal vernacular bilingual dictionary for any language.)

Advances in computer and video technology mean that dictionaries of the future will not necessarily take the form of books. Already, integrated ‘multimedia’ packages (e.g., sequences, and graphic displays, as well as printed matter. Such media offer to overcome alphabetic and list format (though books will retain the edge in price and portability for some accessing information in many alternate ways and being able to move freely between heavy demands on computer processing speed and storage capacity, production of such lexicographic teams.

The next twenty years will undoubtedly see far greater input into lexicographic projects from dictionary workers who are themselves native speakers. Likewise, there will be even quite new uses in language revival (as the Kaurna people of Adelaide and the Aboriginal languages (to be implemented from 1994 as a Higher School Certificate subject).

Linguists too will be looking to Aboriginal language lexicography for new purposes; for example, to study semantic change and diffusion (cf. Wilkins 1996), pursuits which call for representing over 200 Australian languages, there is sufficient data to construct a pane. Interestingly, one of the preoccupations of the nineteenth century, namely, reconstructing the shadows for many years (cf. O’Grady 1979; McConville and Evans in press). Also, general linguistic prehistory of Australia, is beginning to re-emerge having been fallen into the linguistic theory is increasingly interested in the detailed structuring of the lexicum. In

APPENDICES: LEXICOGRAPHIC OUTPUT ON AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES 1968–1993

Note that dictionaries with more than 2,000 entries and detailed semantic information are listed separately, in Table 1 (§2.2).

The following lists have been compiled from the AIATSIS library catalogue, on keywords ‘dictionary/wordlist/vocab’, supplemented where omissions are apparent. Note that this is not a complete list of such work. Where a manuscript has been superseded by a published or more substantial edition only the later edition is included here. If an electronic data file has entries marked by topic and coded for reversal, it is marked in this list as being a topical list with a findfile.

APPENDIX 1: PUBLISHED WORDLISTS AND SMALL DICTIONARIES

Lists under 200 words are not included, except for illustrated wordlists or collections of comparative lists.

CODES

r = available from ASED a as electronic data file

• = includes findfile

k = reconstituted from historical materials

® = illustrated

W = topical list

S = includes sentence examples

= = work in progress

# = unseen/unable to be coded fully


r kW Amery, Rob and Jane Simpson, 1994, Kaurna. In Nick Thieberger and William McGregor, eds Macquarie Aboriginal words: a dictionary of words from Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, 144–172. Sydney: Macquarie Library.


r W Austin, Peter, 1992, A dictionary of Jwarril, Western Australia. Bundoora, Vic.: Dept of Linguistics, La Trobe University.

12 The largest English-Aboriginal vernacular list, not of the ‘finderlist’ variety, would be in McKelson


Eades, Diana, 1976, *The Dharrawal and Dhurga languages of the New South Wales south coast*. Canberra: AIAS.


Marsh, James, 1992, Martu Wangka—English dictionary. Darwin: SIL.
Osborne, Charles Roland, 1974, The Tiwi language: grammar, myths and dictionary of the Tiwi language spoken on Melville and Bathurst Islands, northern Australia. Canberra: AIAS.
Plomley, N.J.B., 1976, A word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal languages. Launceston, Tas: The author.
Robertson, Carol, 1984, Wangkumara grammar and dictionary. Sydney: Dept. of Technical and Further Education.
Sharpe, Margaret, 1992, Dictionary of Western Bundjalung, including Gidabal and Tabulam Bundjalung. Armidale, NSW: Margaret Sharpe.
Soravia, Giulio, 1969, Tentative Pitjantatjara–English dictionary (Warburton Ranges dialect). [Cagli, Italy]
Stamhans, Janet, 1972, Notes on the grammar of Alyawara, including a small dictionary (Murray Downs Area). Darwin: SIL–AAIB.
Swan, Christobel and Marlene Cousins, 1993, A learner’s wordlist of Pertame. Alice Springs, NT: JAD.
Tsunoda, Tasaka, 1971, Birri vocabulary. Palm Island, Qld.
Waddy, Julie, 1988, Classification of plants & animals from a Grootye Eylandt Aboriginal point of view. Darwin: North Australia Research Unit, ANU.
Wafer, James and Julie Carter, 1982, Kayetuye picture vocabulary. Alice Springs, NT: JAD.
Wanolungu picture vocabulary. Alice Springs, NT: JAD.
Wangka Maya, Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, Bruce Thomas, Frank Thomas and Brian Gyettenbelt, 1989–90, Aboriginal languages of the Pilbara: Nyunguntha. Port Hedland, WA: Wangka Maya, Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre.
APPENDIX 2: UNPUBLISHED WORDLISTS AND DICTIONARIES AVAILABLE AS MANUSCRIPT OR AS ELECTRONIC DATA FILE

CODES

r = available from ASEDAl as electronic data file
n = includes fieldlist
k = reconstituted from historical materials
s = illustrated
W = topical list
w = work in progress

r Anderson, Bruce. Yindjibarndi dictionary.


Evans, Nicholas, Mayali vocabulary.

Flower, Margaret and Janie Winder, Waangka Maya, Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, Mulikana.

Flower, Margaret and Mabel Tommy, Yinhawangka wordlist.

Furby, E.S. and C.E. Furby, Garawa dictionary.

Furby, E.S., C.E. Furby, A. Rogers and L. Rogers, Garawa/Wanyi wordlist.

Girde, Murray, Kunjinju (Eastern Kunjinju) vocabulary and texts.

Green, Ian, Daly lexicon.

Green, Thomas, 1988, Ngarrindjeri wordlist (with preliminary grammatical notes and text).

Djabugay wordlist.


Hale, Kenneth and G.N. O'Grady, Bayungu wordlist.

Hale, Kenneth, Geoffrey O'Grady and E. Curr, Nhanta wordlist.

Hale, Kenneth, Barbara Sayers and Chris Kilham, Wik Mungkan wordlist.

Hanlelmann, Robert, Towards a description of Amurdak: a language of Northern Australia.


1990, Provisional Munggo–English vocabulary.

Gunwinjguan papers.

Waray grammar, Waray dictionary, bibliography, Waray verbs.

Havlind, John, Guga Yimithirr vocabulary.

Heath, Jeffrey, 1973, Dhay'yi (Dharawang) texts and vocabulary, 1975, Anindilyakwa (East Arnhem) language materials.

1975, Yanyula vocabulary, mostly flora–fauna.

Hercus, Luise, Gippsland vocabulary.

Maljiangga-Wadgali vocabulary.

Southern Ningirra vocabulary.

Wergaia vocabulary J.

Yolayandji vocabulary.

Machine-readable files of Arabana and Wangkanguru vocabulary.

Hercus, Luise and Nicholas Thieberger, 1993, Murring vocabularies.

Hewett, Heather, Anne Dinson, David Tainsh and Robin Field, Maung dictionary project.

Hore, Michael, Nunggubuyu dictionary.

Hosokawa, Komei, 1988, Classified Yawuru dictionary.


Hughes, Earl James, 1970, Nunggubuyu legends: more tales of the Nunggubuyu tribe.


Johnson, Edward, Karajarri Sketch Grammar.

Johnson, Steve, Ngarrindjeri wordlist.

Johnson, Steve and Amanda Lissarrague, Yanyir vocabulary.
APPENDIX 3: WORKS-IN-PROGRESS MENTIONED IN O'GRADY (1971)

The following is a summary of information about work mentioned in O'Grady (1971): 782-787 which has subsequently appeared, been deposited at AIATSIS, or been reworked. The order of presentation, and the references, are as used by O'Grady.

Various Tasmanian vocabularies have been compiled and published in Plomley (1976). A larger version of Teichelmann and Schürmann's work on Pankarla and Kaurna was found in Cape Town and has been keyboarded by Jane Simpson. Taplin's Narrinyeri was keyboarded by Steve Johnson and Jane Simpson. Curr's vocabularies have been widely quoted and incorporated into other work. They have now been keyboarded, but it should be noted that the printed version apparently differs from the manuscript, copies of which are in the possession of R.M.W. Dixon.

Moore's (1884) dictionary of Wadjuk is subsumed into an encyclopaedic Nyungar dictionary by Alan Dench, as is the work of Lyon (1833), Nind (1831) and Salvado (1854).

H. Hale's (1846) Gamilaraay and Wiradjuri have been reworked by Peter Austin, and Sally McNicol and Dianne Hosking, respectively. Ridley's (1875) Gamilaryan has been reworked by Peter Austin. Brough-Smyth's (1878) vocabularies appear in Barry Blake's keyboarding of Victorian languages.

Some of Bates (1904) 5,000 typescript pages of vocabularies have been keyboarded; those representing the south-east of Western Australia by Luise Hercus and Nicholas

Thieberger, Nicholas and Alice Smith, Nyahungka wordlist.

Thieberger, Nicholas, Manny Lockyer, Bernie Lockyer and Sam Clifton, Kariyarra wordlist.


Thorley, Peter, Walungurru curriculum database.

Tindale, Norman Barnett, Parallel vocabularies in 160 Australian languages.

Trimmer, Kathy, 1990, Wanggathi language material.

Troy, Jakelin, 1990, Australian Aboriginal contact with the English language in New South Wales: 1788 to 1845. PL: B-103.

Tsunoda, Tasaka, 1971-72, Warungu vocabulary.

University of Adelaide, 1969, Anadaringa/English word list.


Walker, Alan, [Collected date files].

Wangka Maya, Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, Nicholas Thieberger, Desmond Taylor, Pjuka Edwou, Minyawu Miller, Desmond Taylor, Muik Taylor and Waka Taylor, Warman wordlist.

Warlpiri Dictionary Project and others, Warlpiri dictionary.

West, La Mont, Database sketch dictionary.


Wrigley, Matthew and Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Wangkajunga wordlist.

Wunungmurra, Djarraguy, Dharwaguy dictionary.

Yamaji Language Centre and Doug Marmon, Wajarri dictionary.

Thieberger (1993), and those from the Kimberley by McGregor (1992). Black's (1920) vocabularies have been incorporated into Jane Simpson's South Australian data.

Capell's 600-item wordlist in 40 Arnhem Land languages has been keyboarded and is held at the AIATSIS library. T.G.H. Strehlow's 30,000 word dictionary has not appeared, though a typescript copy of around 6,700 entries is held at AIATSIS. Nelkes and Worms work is being keyboarded by Bill McGregor.

O'Grady's Nyangumarta, Yurlparija, Walmajarri, Payungu, Umpila dictionaries, and his 100-item lexical list of 142 communalecets were keyboarded as part of O'Grady's University of Hawaii project (1966-67). An electronic data file is available in AESDA.


Kenneth Hale's data have been reproduced or incorporated into later work. In particular, the Wambaya material has been checked and used by Nordlinger (1993), and the Yanyurra (Yanyuwaa) material is in Bradley et al. (1992). The Gungngungu material is being incorporated into a comparative Gungngungu dictionary in preparation by Nicholas Evans.

Petri's Nyangumarta dictionary is in Germany; efforts are being made to have copies available in Australia. Von Brandenstein's 10,000-entry Ngurang dictionary is now in AIATSIS files. Schebeck's Murungin lexical work has not appeared, but he has produced a text-based dictionary of Adnyamathanha (1987). Dixon's work on Dyirbal and Yidny is now well known.

La Mont West's Dalabon dictionary type specimens is in the AIATSIS collection. Unear the Kuku Yala and Umpila material. Coate has material on several Kimberley languages (Coate & Elkpin 1974). Holmer's work on Danggadi has been incorporated into Lissarrague's (1994). His survey of south-eastern Queensland (1983) has also been incorporated into Jeanie Bell's work; unsure about the Gadgad material.

The table in O'Grady (1971:786) lists AIAS grantees of the time. Work by the following is listed in Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 of the present paper: B. J. Blake; J. Bolt; N. Chadwick; M. C. Cunningham (now Sharpe); A. H. Hall; L. Hercus; Charles Osborne; C. Yardop; J. de Zwaan.

Alpher's Yir-Yoront dictionary is now available. Flint's material on Wanyi and Yiddindji (Yidiny) has been deposited at AIATSIS. Other work mentioned in O'Grady (1971:787) which has subsequently appeared is that of E. Hughes (Nunggubuyu); A. Pelie (Kukatja); L. Reecie (Warlipiri); J. Strakes (Anindilyakwa); B. Lowe (Gupapuyku); K. McKelso (Nyangumarta, Yurlparija, Mangala, Karajiri); B. and H. Goehrdey (Gidabalu); B. Sommer (Kunjen); B. Sayers and C. Kilham (Wilk-Mungkan); H. and R. Hershberger and L. and W. Oates (Kuku-Yalanji); J. Kirton (Yanyurra/Yanyuwaa); K. and D. Glasgow (Burarra); H. Hinch (Mauyg); J. and M. Marsh (Gardudjarra/Martu Wangkla); K. and L. Husea (Pintupu); J. Hudson and E. Richards (Walmarajiri).

O'Grady (1971) does not mention William Dawes' information on Dharuk/Eora, the language of Sydney (which has been reworked by Jacklin Troy), nor Gerhardt Laves, who produced extensive lexical and grammatical information about Nyungu languages of the south-west of Western Australia, the area around La Grange (Karajarri). These works are available at AIATSIS.

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Not including dictionaries cited. These can be found in Table 1 (§2.2), in Appendix 1 or in Appendix 2.

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Crowley, Terry, 1985, Bilingual dictionaries. LLDD3 Dictionary-Making (Unit Two, Topic Two), 105-118. University of the South Pacific.
Haugerud, Robert, forthcoming, They care about the language: Aboriginal lexicographers in Central Australia.


1979, Preliminaries to a Proto Nuclear Pama-Nyungan stem list. In S.A. Warm, ed. *Australian linguistic studies*, 107-139. PL, C-54.


Sutton, Peter and Michael Walsh, 1979, Revised linguistic fieldwork manual for Australia. Canberra: AIAS.


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A LINNGITHIGH VOCABULARY

KEN HALE

Some twenty-five years ago, in the context of his general program of documenting the lexical and grammatical wealth of Pama-Nyungan, Geoff O'Grady invited me to work with him in Honolulu during June 1968. This was just one of the many times we worked together on aspects of Pama-Nyungan linguistics, always to my great benefit and delight. On this particular occasion, I promised Geoff that I would assemble some of the Pama-Nyungan vocabularies I had in my fieldnotes, including the short Linngithigh vocabulary which I now deliver, somewhat shamefacedly, a full quarter century after making my promise.

Linngithigh is a Northern Paman, initial-dropping language originally spoken in the vicinity of the Hey and Embley Rivers, in a region referred to as Winduwintra by the speaker with whom I worked. This is north of the Watson River, in western Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland. The anthropological literature (with which I am personally familiar, at least) leaves rather ambiguous the precise location of the original Linngithigh territory, due perhaps to certain characteristics inherent in the Aboriginal practices favoured in designating local communities in the area, practices which sometimes result in the circumstance that distinct groups have very similar names (e.g. Linngithigh and Layngith, Ndr'a-ngith and Ndrw'a-ngith). Thomson (1972) places the Linngithigh territory north of Pera Head, west of the Hey and south-west of the Embley, a region according reasonably well with my understanding of the location of Winduwintra.

The lexical items set out below were taken down in 1960, during a period of approximately two weeks, at Aurukun, an important centre in the Wik linguistic area south of the Watson. The items were given to me by the late Sam Kerndun, who, though himself fully fluent in Linngithigh, was one of the very last speakers of the language. He was a man of many and varied talents, with correspondingly many responsibilities at Aurukun, and I was extremely fortunate to be able to work with him, if only for a fortnight. I would like to dedicate this brief vocabulary both to Geoff O'Grady and to the memory of Sam Kerndun.

A brief sketch of the phonology and morphosyntax of Linngithigh is to be found in O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966), and a number of observations on the language are offered in Capell (1956). An excellent report on the grammar and lexicon of a closely related Northern Paman language is found in Crowley (1981).

The Linngithigh items set out below are rendered in an orthography which is 'practical', in the sense that it avoids the use of diacritics and hence can be written on an ordinary typewriter. The voiceless obstruents are represented orthographically as follows: p, t, k, c, k. The peripherals (p, k) are lightly to heavily aspirated when fully stopped; they are occasionally articulated as fricatives. The lamino-dental (th) is lightly aspirated. The lamino-alveopalatal (written c) is more often a fricative than a stop, hence [s], though the stop

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