WUNAMBAL: A language of the North-West Kimberley Region, Western Australia.

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts with Honours, at the University of New England.
April, 2000.
Statement

Unless otherwise acknowledged this thesis is the original work of the author. This material has not previously been submitted, either in whole or part, for a degree at this or any other university.
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Abstract

Wunambal is an Australian language traditionally spoken on the Mitchell Plateau and adjacent areas of the interior, coast, and islands of the northern coast of the Kimberley region in Western Australia. Closely related dialects were also spoken in the region to the east of Wunambal country. It belongs to the Worrorran family of non-Pama Nyungan languages with noun classification. There are five noun classes in most Wunambalic languages.

Typologically Wunambal is head-marking. Pronominal prefixes to the verb index the person, number and class of S and O arguments. The number, and to some extent the person, but not the class, of A grammatical roles are also indexed by verbal prefixes. O prefixes precede A prefixes, and they follow a pattern of inverse alignment. Nominals are not marked for syntactic case. Most verbs in this language have two parts: a non-finite lexical coverb, and an inflecting verb which bears the person, number, and class prefixes as well as tense, mode and aspect suffixes and other categories. There are less than a dozen verb roots that participate in the two part construction.

Chapter One introduces the language and its speakers. As for other languages of the Kimberley region, the number of speakers is small. In Chapter Two I discuss the segmental phonology of Wunambal. Chapter Three: Grammar of the simple sentence describes the major word classes and sentence types. The nominal morphology, an introduction to noun classification in Wunambal, pronouns, the demonstrative system, and temporal qualification and post-positional phrases are presented. There is also a preliminary treatment of the verb and logical and propositional modification. A more detailed treatment of verbal morphology follows in Chapter Four. This includes analysis of the prefixes, an examination of the classifying function of the inflecting verb, and the interaction of tense, mood and aspect categories marked on the verb. The forms and function of the other verbal affixes are also described in Chapter Four.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Wilfred, Pudja-wala, William, Basil, Lily, Jack, Lewis and Rosie for their patience in teaching me about their language. I hope my interpretation is something like the real thing. The field-trips were exciting and challenging experiences on every occasion. Wilfred, especially, made sure I persisted in this ambitious enterprise. Patsy, Pudja, Janet and Bridgette took a warm interest in my progress and personal welfare.

At the University of New England it gives me great pleasure to thank Helen, Cliff, Kim, Nick, Jean, Vicky, Libby, Diana, Geoff, Anne and Jennifer for their support and encouragement, especially in the finer details of life and study - thank you all.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIATSIS) funded fieldtrips to and from the Kimberley to work with the Wunambal speakers. An APA scholarship award made it practical to devote more time to fieldwork and personal study over the first two years. Staff and friends from all over the Kimberley provided practical assistance in the field. Organizations concerned include: Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Kimberley Land Council (KLC), Mowanjum and Kandiwal Communities, Derby Telecentre, Derby Aboriginal Hostel and Kamali-nangga in Derby. In Kununurra the people at Mirima Dawang Woorlab Gerring Language and Culture Centre and the Kimberley Land Council were also helpful.

Old and new friends in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Hall’s Creek and Kununurra made it a pleasure to be on the road. They also suffered the trials of Therese with assuring equanimity and good humour. The people at the Kalumburu school, clinic, mission, store and office were all friendly and welcoming. Special thanks to Dave for helping out with transport, bush-trips and believing in the work.

Finally thanks Frances, David and Peta for helping out when fortunes were low, and you too Anna, et al, all those times I couldn’t remember to take a purse to the coffee-shop. To all the people who made sure I had some great breaks and holidays - good on you, lets have some more. Making new friends in Armidale has been a bonus of my long stay here. Anna, Emily and Dorothea have been oh so steady a connection in the long haul. Blair surprised by making a healthy come-back, I’m glad he’s been around to remind me of the value of a good feed, a seaside recharge and lots of love, fun and patience. Frances Kofod freely gave invaluable assistance when the amendments were due, and helped me renew my interest in the languages of the region especially the more fun bits of work and play in the field. All my ex-flatmates will be glad to know the harder bits are over too.

Geejiwarra!
Map One: The Kimberley region of Western Australia
(After Veitch 1991: 67)
Map Two: Kimberley Languages (approximate locations)
(After McGregor 1993: 6)
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>first person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1in</td>
<td>first person inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1ex</td>
<td>first person exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>third person plural (B class only) [3.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>formally 'transitive' subject [Ch 3/4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>ablative postposition [3.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acl</td>
<td>A-noun class/gender prefix [3.1.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'away'</td>
<td>verbal directional suffix indicating centripetal direction away from speaker or subject. [4.6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B-noun class/gender prefix, 3rd (B-class) person pronominal prefix, collective (non-B-class) prefix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bcl</td>
<td>B-noun class/gender prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAR</td>
<td>characterized by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLL</td>
<td>collective/mass prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>comitative 'having' postposition [3.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
<td>continuative aspect [4.1, 4.5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>desirable tense/mode [4.1, 4.5.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTR</td>
<td>distributive [4.2.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUAL</td>
<td>dual number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>emphatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCL</td>
<td>exclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>genitive 'of' postposition [3.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST</td>
<td>instrumental 'by' postposition [3.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INV</td>
<td>inverse alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>immediate aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative ba-, φ [4.4.5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>iterative/durative suffix [4.2.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLRC</td>
<td>Kimberley Language Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative postposition [3.1.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M noun class/gender prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mcl</td>
<td>M noun class/gender prefix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOD    modifying suffix/clitic of undetermined function [3.1.6]
NEG    negative polarity (irrealis) [4.4.4]
NEG:PAST negative past tense/aspect/mood [4.4.4, 4.5.2]
nonPAST nonPAST 'tense' (especially of =N) [3.3.1, 4.4.1, 4.5.1, 4.5.4]
NP     Noun Phrase
O      formally transitive object [Ch 3/4]
OBL    oblique argument pronoun suffix/clitics
PAST   past tense suffixes [4.5.2]
PAUC   paucal suffix -na [3.1.1]
pl/PL  plural number prefix -rr- [3.1.1., 4.4]
POS    Possessive pronoun suffix/clitic [3.1.1, Table 3.4]
PURP   purposive postposition -gu [3.1.3]
REDUP  reduplication
REFL   reflexive/reciprocal [4.4.6]
S      formally intransitive subject [Ch 3/4]
S.     Southern usually of dialect, or of associated country.
SIL    Summer Institute of Linguistics (Source)
SPEC   specifically, 'alone' postposition -we [3.1.3]
SUBORD subordinate/relative clause suffix -ngarri
TO     toward/around/past postposition -marre [3.1.3]
       'toward' verbal directional suffix indicating direction 'from' somewhere and 'toward' the deictic centre (speaker or subject). (The same form as ABL, slightly different function, not related to -marre TOward/past postposition). [4.6]
Vás   Vászolyi (Source)
[]     phonetic form in e.g. Chapter 2; following word or sentence the square brackets contain some or all of the following categories: speaker initials, year recorded, text title and/or number, document, field notebook or cassette tape year/number, or other source.
=     prefix-verb stem boundary. For a list of inflecting verb stems see Table 3.7, page 96.
/     in the environment
>     'becomes' in Chapters 2-4, higher than on animacy scale (in text in Chapter 4 only, not in glosses)
<     'is acted on by' (in bivalent pronoun prefixes inter-morphemic glosses which have not been segmented for O and S, esp. in chapters 2 & 3)
Other Abbreviations

Verbs: Each of the verbs, especially when used in complex constructions is identified by one of the root allomorphs in small capitals plus its gloss. These are introduced in Table 3.7.

Examples: In sentence and textual examples capitalization indicates words originating from English, whether Kriol, Aboriginal English or English is being spoken (code-switching) or an English word is merely substituted for the Wunambal. Underlining is used to draw attention to morphemes that are being exemplified, compared or discussed.

Speakers and other source information: Note also that abbreviations used to identify speakers are provided in 1.7, table 1.4. These are used to identify speakers in some examples, rather than attempt to define dialects. Some sentence examples also have information that identifies the year and sometimes the place the information was recorded, e.g.: K / KAL for Kalumburu, otherwise Mowanjum/Derby, others refer variously and somewhat idiosyncratically to original field notebooks (fnb:page #), cassette tapes (ct), files, and/or identify particular texts (tx) by title. This information is chiefly for my own reference. It is hoped that all tapes and a small transcribed and translated text collection will be archived at AIATSIS as well as in the communities in early 2001.

The abbreviations for other sources like Vászolyi and SIL are indicated above.