The Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) Language, northern New South Wales — A Brief History of Research

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1 Introduction[1]

This chapter is an outline of the history of the research on the Gamilaraay language of northern New South Wales, with a focus on some of the major figures who have contributed to its documentation. It is not intended as a comprehensive statement covering all the available source materials but is meant to give an overview of the main directions of work that has been and is being done. Gamilaraay is quite closely related to the neighbouring languages Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay (see Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980, Austin 1997), and on occasion we will refer to Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay, especially in the context of language revival efforts that treat them as a joint entity.

Gamilaraay is unusual among Australian languages in that although there is a considerable amount of 19th century data available on the language in various forms, there is little that was recorded by professional linguists in the 20th century (we have a deal more on Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay, however), yet it was one of the first indigenous languages to make an appearance on the World Wide Web and it has an extremely active language revival movement that has been working on linguistic and cultural revival since 1995. Currently there are language courses at preschool, primary and tertiary (adult education, university) levels in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay, and an increasing flow of publications, both paper and electronic. The revival movement has certainly changed the status and perception of the language in northern New South Wales, among both Aborigines and non-Aborigines, and there is some evidence that the revival movement has been successful in increasing the use of at least some aspects of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay language.

1.1 Location and background

The Gamilaraay language was traditionally spoken over a vast area of north-central New South Wales when Europeans began colonising Australia. Gamilaraay country

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extended west of the Great Dividing Range, apparently from as far south as near the current town of Murrurundi and the Page River, to the areas where are now located Tamworth, Narrabri, Moree, Boggabilla, Mungindi, Collarenebri, Walgett and Gunnedah. The major watercourses in this area are the Peel, Namoi and Darling Rivers.

There is good evidence for dialect variation in both vocabulary and grammatical structure throughout this region but the available materials are so scant it is not possible to establish the variation in detail. On the basis of some of this material, Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980 identify dialects and present the following map:
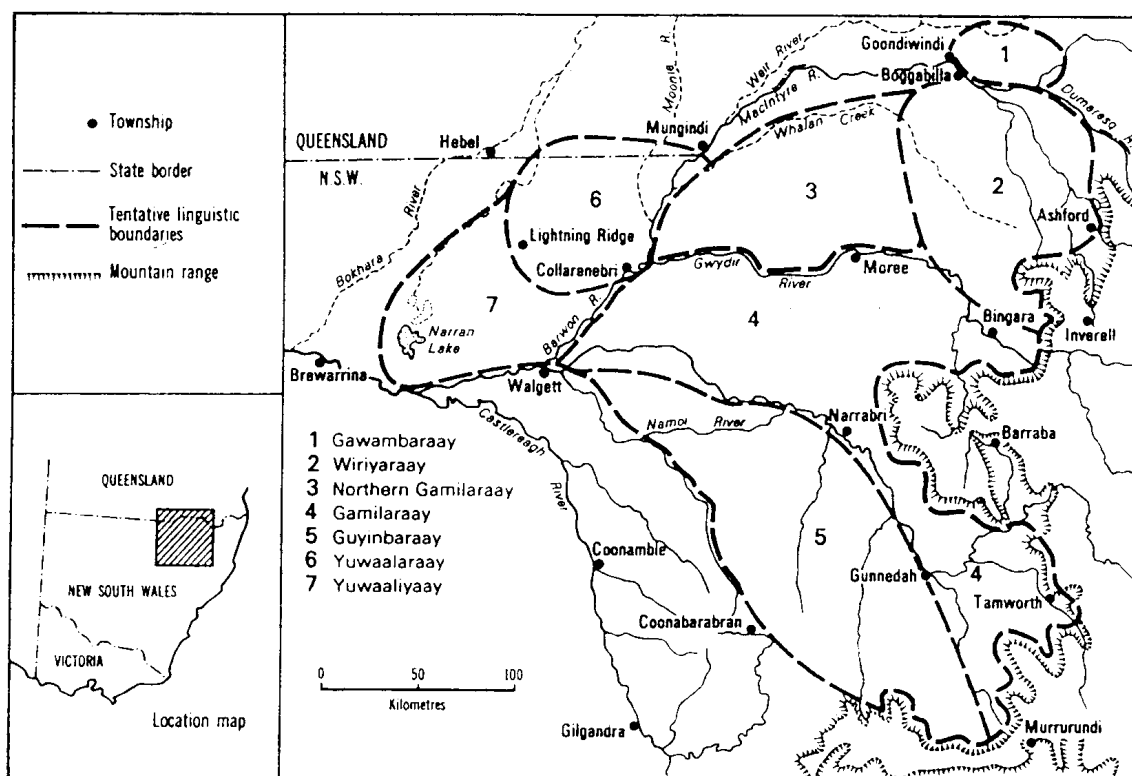
Map1: Languages and dialects in northern New South Wales (after Austin, Williams and Wurm 1980)

Austin, Williams and Wurm (1980:170) present the following cognate percentages for shared vocabulary on a 200 item basic word list:

Gamilaraay		
73%	Yuwaalaraay	
63%	80%	Yiwaalayaay

The languages spoken to the south and south-west of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay are Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa (known in two dialect forms, Wayilwan and

Wangaaybuwan, see Donaldson 1980:1-2). They are relatively closely related and Austin 1997 presents reconstructions of their phonological histories, together with reconstructed lexicon. The following map shows the locations of neighbouring languages.
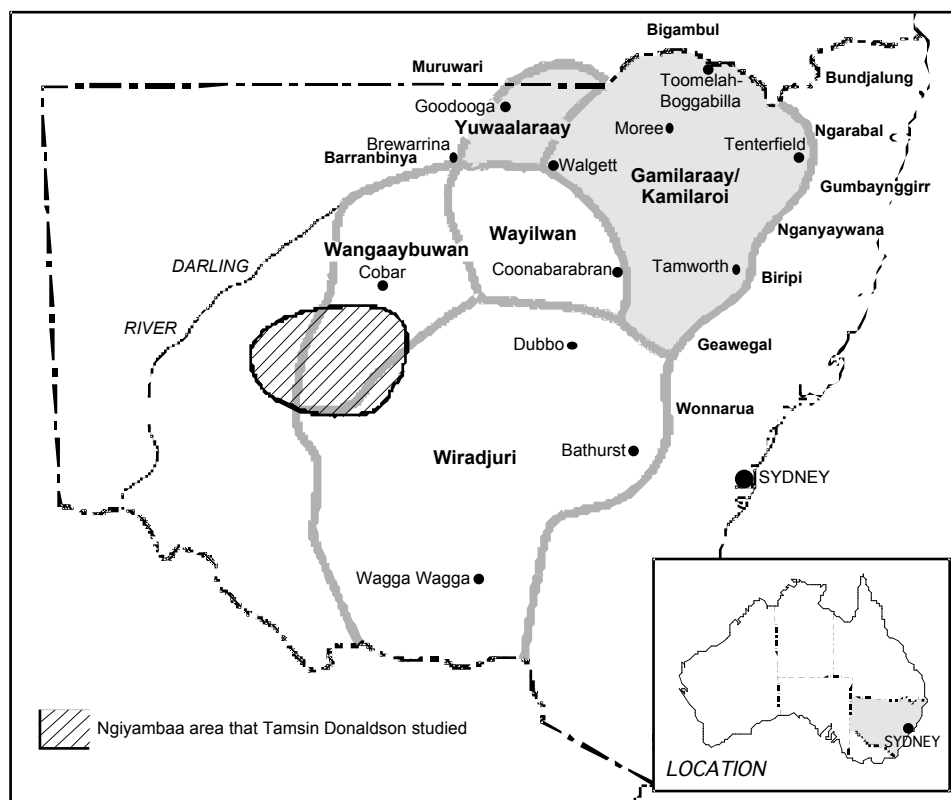
Map: The languages neighbouring Gamilaraay – Yuwaalaraay (from Giacon 2001:6 , adapted from Horton 1994)

1.2   Early records — 1830 to 1930

The earliest records we have of Gamilaraay date from February 1832 when the explorer Major Thomas Mitchell collected some basic vocabulary. Mitchell wrote in his journal (1839:108):

> "[n]one of the names, which we had written down from Barber's statements, seemed at all familiar to their ears; but Mr White obtained a vocabulary, which shewed that their language was nearly the same as that of the aborigines at Wallamoul; the only difference being the addition of na to each noun, as 'namil' for 'mil', the eye etc."[2]

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[2] Unfortunately, Mitchell seems to be confusing *mil* 'eye' with *ngamili* 'to see' in this quotation. He gives no other examples of the process.

The location given by Mitchell is 29 degrees south and he says (loc cit.) "[t]heir name for the river was understood to be 'Karaula'". This appears to be a reference to the Macintyre river at about Mungindi. On Mitchell's map 'Wallamoul' is a short distance upstream on the Peel River from where Tamworth is now situated. Mitchell recorded just a handful of vocabulary items in his diary (Volume 2, pp. 377-384).

Following this we have is a list of thirty three words for the "Peel River language" given by Horatio Hale in his report on Aboriginal languages for the Wilkes expedition (Hale 18XX). This material appears similar to Mitchell's vocabulary.

In 1852 William Ridley came to the area as a Presbyterian missionary and began to learn the language. His contributions to its documentation are described in detail below. Ridley's materials were reprinted later by Reverend Charles Greenway, in his own name without attribution. Gamilaraay vocabularies from Barrabra, Boggabri, Moree, Namoi, and Nundle appear in the collection of Curr 1886 (Bench of Magistrates, 1886a, 1886b, 1886c, 1886d, 1886e, Ridley, 1886); these are mostly of peripheral interest, but do show some evidence of possible regional variation.

There are a number of amateur sources from around this time collected by local settlers, including Colin McMaster (McMaster, 1890, McMaster, 1890-98) and a woman known only as Mrs Milson (Milson, n.d. [1840?]). The latter is an extensive vocabulary of some 1,000 items, short sentences, and songs. Most of it is transcribed according to English spelling conventions and is rather difficult to make sense of.

The next major source from the turn of the century is the infamous R.H. Mathews (see below and Koch, this volume).

1.3   Reverend William Ridley

William Ridley was born on 14th September 1819 at Hartford End, Essex, England (Blair, 1881, Johns, 1934, Serle, 1949). He graduated B.A. from Kings College, University of London in 1842, and in 1850 was brought by Dr Lang, a leading Sydney churchman, to Australia. He was appointed Professor of Greek, Latin and Hebrew at the Australian College and ordained a Presbyterian minister. From 1852 to 1856 he served as a missionary to the Gamilaraay and neighbouring groups in northern New South Wales, and then from 1856-58 was minister at Portland Bay, Brisbane. In 1861 returned to Sydney. According to (Blair, 1881:502):

> the care of his family caused him to relinquish this occupation and to come to Sydney, where he became connected with the 'Empire' newspaper, and continued on that journal until its discontinuance

Ridley seems to have acquired a reasonable knowledge of the Gamilaraay language – Blair (1881) says: 'Ridley was a man of extraordinary attainments as a linguist, and as a singularly pure and upright character' – and published a number of books and articles about it, including a vocabulary and bible story translations. Most of

his main publications were written well after he had completed his missionary activities in northern New South Wales in 1856. The early publications were:

1855 'On the Kamilaroi language of Australia', in *Transactions of the Philological Society*. This consists of paradigms, grammar notes, 27 words (Ridley 1855).

1856 'On the Kamilaroi Tribe of Australians and their Dialect', in *Journal of Ethnological Society of London*. This contains words, short sentences, and bible translations (Ridley 1856a).

In the latter Ridley notes: 'the following are my first essays towards expressing gospel truths in Kamilaroi: they need long and careful revision … But this is quite enough of a learner's uncertain guesses to be tedious'. Interestingly Ridley used <z> in these works for the dorso-velar nasal, otherwise printed as a turned G.

Also in 1856 Ridley published *Gurre Kamilaroi or Kamilaroi Sayings*, a vocabulary of the language (Ridley 1856b). Interestingly, a draft handwritten grammar of , perhaps compiled by Ridley himself, is to be found in the back of a copy of *Gurre Kamilaroi* held in the Australian National Library, Canberra.

Ten years later, a comparative work (Ridley 1866) appeared, with information on the languages of northern New South Wales and the Brisbane region. According to Serle (1949): 'He spent a few weeks among the aborigines in 1871 endeavouring to increase his knowledge of their languages and traditions, and in 1875 published a revised and enlarged edition of the 1866 volume under the title "Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages"' (Ridley, 1875).

In the early 1870's Ridley contributed to Aboriginal languages vocabulary collections of the time, including Taplin's (Ridley 1871), and in 1872 published a report on Australian languages in *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* (Ridley 1872-3). His materials was reprinted in later collections (Ridley, 1886a, 1886b, 1889, 1892).

Ridley's major work was *Kamilaroi and other Australian Languages* published by the Government Printer in 1875, a sumptuous volume that includes his Gamilaraay vocabulary, sketch grammar and bible stories, as well as notes on a range of other languages. In 1877 at the age of 58 Ridley began to study Chinese and became responsible of the Chinese mission in Sydney. He died a year later on 26 September 1878.

Ridley's materials were republished in *Science of Man* without acknowledgement by Rev. C. Greenway in 1910 (a copy of Ridley 1875 with minor changes), and 1911 (bible translations similar to Ridley 1856).

As a language recorder Ridley showed a number of remarkable characteristics. He was the first author in Australia to write the velar nasal with engma N (printed as a turned uppercase G in his books), and he was relatively consistent in his use of orthographic <a> for the low vowel and <u> for the high back vowel (certainly compared to other collectors of the time, and even later, especially R. H. Mathews (see below)). He also marked vowels with a macron, which one might be tempted to think

codes for vowel length, however it has a more complex distribution. Gamilaraay has a phonemic contrast between long and short vowels which applies in all syllables. Primary stress fall on the first long vowel of a word, if there is one, otherwise on the first vowel. Secondary stress falls on odd-numbered syllables to the left and right of the primary stress. In Ridley's work, a vowel with a macron in syllables later than the first is generally a long vowel, however in the first syllable the macron marks both long vowels and stressed short vowels. It appears that Ridley's macron is rather a marker of stress than vowel length, although there are many inconsistent usages. Consider these examples for words beginning with <b>:

Type	Syllable	Stress	Ridley	Modern sources	Gloss
Correct, macron = long vowel	non-initial	Y	buka€ndi	bagaandi	sister-my
			bunda€r	bandaar	kangaroo
			birra€	birraa	k.o. grub
			beru€	biruu	far
			buri€n	burriin	shield
			birridu€l	birraydjuul	small boy
			bunda€ne	bundaanhi	fall-past
	both	Y	ba€bi€	baabiy	sleep-nonfuture
Incorrect, macron ≠ long vowel	initial, no long vowels	Y	bi€bil	bibil	box tree
			pu€ndi	bundi	club
			bu€ra	bura	bone
			bu€rul	burrul	big
			bu€ralgha	buralga	brolga
	initial, 2nd long	N	bu€lui	buluuy	dark
	non-initial, no long, <u> for /a/ in 1st	N	bullawha€ku€r	balawagur	k.o. lizard
			pumbu€l	bambul	native orange
	both, no long	N	ba€lu€n	balun	dead
			bu€ma€le	bumali	hit-fut
	both, 2nd long	N	pa€ri€	baraay	jump-nonfuture
			bu€la€r	bulaarr	two
Incorrect, no macron long V	monosyllable long vowel		bhan	baan	mistletoe
	2nd long		pi€lar	bilaarr	spear
	3rd long		burula	burrulaa	many

Incorrect, no macron long diphthong	initial		baiame	baayama	God
	non-initial		bu€khai	bagaay	creek
Vr for length	non-initial		pullar	balaa	white

Table 1: Ridley's use of macron

Ridley also sometimes uses orthographic <u> for phonemic /a/, often before a doubled medial consonant or a nasal plus stop sequence as in:

Syllable	Long V	Medial C?			
initial syllable	N	double	buk-kulla	bagala	leapordwood tree
			butta	badha	bitter
			burran	barran	boomerang
		NC	pumbu€l	bambal	native orange tree
	Y, later syllable	double	pullar	balaa	white
		NC	bunda€r	bandaar	kangaroo
			punagai	banagaay	run-nonfuture
non-initial syllable		double	buk-kulla	bagala	leapordwood tree

Table 2: Ridley's use of <u> for /a/

Ridley's grammatical notes reveal that he understood that Gamilaraay had a complex case system, with a separate form for transitive subject of nouns (later to be called 'ergative' case). He worked out the pronoun paradigms, but the verbs seem to have eluded him completely as he simply lists groups of forms for individual verbs. He does not seem to have realised that there are four verb conjugations, however he was not alone in this. It was not until Williams' work on Yuwaalaraay in the 1970's (see below) that we gained a proper account of the verb conjugational system. Ridley's understanding of the syntax of the language seems to have been rudimentary.

1.4   R.H. Mathews

Mathews was a surveyor and amateur linguist-anthropologist who travelled widely through eastern Australia and recorded a great deal of information from local Aboriginal people. He published extensively, producing about 200 journal articles (some being different versions of the same data, or translations into other languages), mostly very brief and of variable reliability. His main publications on Gamilaraay and Yuwaalayaay are Mathews 1902 and 1903. Additionally, Mathews original notes for northern New South Wales languages have been preserved (copies held at AIATSIS) and it is possible to compare his notes with the published materials. Mathews' data on Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay is primarily of value for the vocabulary he included, some of which differs from other available sources.

2   First professional materials — 1930 to 1950

Following the period of collection by amateurs and missionaries from 1835 to 1905, there is almost nothing recorded on north-west New South Wales languages until the first professional researchers enter the region in the 1930's. Here we find two anthropologists, Gerhard Laves and Norman B. Tindale, followed in 1950 by Stephen A. Wurm, the first professional linguist to visit the area.

2.1   Gerhardt Laves

In the 1930's the American anthropologist Gerhardt Laves (see David Nash's website at http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/laves/) worked with George Murray (Laves papers, p1399) recording kinship terms in Gamilaraay and Ada Murray at Angledool recording Yuwaalayaay vocabulary and kinship terms (p1392). Laves materials are phonetically accurate but unfortunately very brief for the languages of this region.

2.2   Norman B. Tindale

Norman Tindale was an anthropologist associated with the South Australian Museum who undertook research on Australian languages across the continent. In June 1938 Tindale recorded Gamilaraay kinship data from Harry Doolan (see photograph in Tindale 1976:18), with additional details on Collerenbri variations from George Murray (the same consultant Laves had interviewed earlier). This material appears in Tindale NSW Notebook p39ff, and Kinship sheet 53.

Tindale collected some vocabulary and a short text on Emu and Turkey in Gamilaraay with English translation from Harry Doolan. This was published as Austin and Tindale 1986 with attempted phonemicisation and analysis by Austin. Tindale's phonetic representation is relatively accurate.

2.3   Marie Reay

In the 1940's Marie Reay did a sociological study of the contemporary Aboriginal community in Moree (Reay 1949). She makes a number of comments on language use and the replacement of Gamilaraay by English, but did not publish anything in the form

of linguistic documentation. She apparently wrote a report on her visit to Moree as a manuscript dated 1965, however I have not been able to locate this.

2.4 Father Ernest Worms

Father E. Worms did some fieldwork on both Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay in the 1943 and 1944 in western New South Wales and southern Queensland[3]. Part III of Nekes and Worms *Australian Languages* (see McGregor, this volume) has 65 entries in Gamilaraay and 79 in Yuwaalayaay, along with some example sentences.

3   After 1950

From the 1950's until the present there has been some attention paid to the study of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay both by professional linguists and by the Aboriginal community themselves, especially from around 1980 onwards. Today there is a strong language revival program based in schools in the north-west of New South Wales.

3.1   Stephen A. Wurm

The only extensive work done on Gamilaraay by a professional linguist which includes phonetic transcription, morphological and syntactic data and magnetic tape recording dates from 1955 when the late Stephen A. Wurm visited the north-west of New South Wales. Wurm apparently collected some materials on Gamilaraay at Moree with Burt Draper (see below), but his main data comes from Boggabilla with Peter Lang, apparently the last fluent speaker of the language. Wurm's materials, which he kindly passed to me in 1975, consist of twenty-two double-sided sheets (i.e. 44 pages) of fieldnotes and approximately 12 minutes of tape recording, made on a Phillips reel-to-reel recorder. The fieldnotes (a copy of which has been deposited with the AIATSIS, Canberra) are in phonetic transcription, with glosses in shorthand. I have attempted to phonemicise Wurm's materials on the basis of my own later fieldwork, analysis of the source materials outlined above, and comparisons with the description of Yuwaalayaay given in Williams (1980).

In 1961 at the research conference that resulted in the founding of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Wurm summarized the results of research carried out in New South Wales up till that time. This was published in the form of a table (Wurm 1963:137):

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[3] I am grateful to William McGregor for bringing the Worms materials to my attention.

'Linguistic research accomplished in two areas'

Language	Gamilaroi	Jualjai	Juwalarai
Rank	3	3	3
Speakers			
- fair to good knowledge	2	2	2
- incomplete knowledge	4	4	3
Vocabulary	2	4	2
Structure	2	2	2
Recordings (minutes)	12	15	15

Table 4: Reorganised data from Wurm 1963

In the key to the table the following translations of these figures are given (Wurm 1963:138):

Ranking of Languages

3. a few, mostly old, individuals can still speak the language more or less fluently.

Number of Speakers

2. under 5

3. 5 - 10

4. 10 - 50

Vocabulary. Lexical information secured to date

2. approximately 500 items

4. over 1,000

Structure

2. a fair amount of information is available on main structure features.

As this table indicates, Wurm's materials on the language he calls Jualjai (which corresponds to the Yuwaalayaay of Williams 1980) are more extensive than those he collected for Gamilaraay.

Capell (1963:Area D p5) gives the following information in his listing for Gamilaraay:

Recent study has been done by SAW. who lists as informants the following:-

Peter (Herb) Lang,	95 years	Boggabilla
Ted Murphy,	72	Walgett
Bingi (Fred) Pitt,	76	Moree
Billy Troutman,	80	Mungindi
Mrs. (H)ynch,	70	Moree
Leslie Mundi	70	Collarenebri
Robert Mundi	70	Collarenebri
Charlie Kennedy,	70	Walgett
Jack McPherson,	70	Dalby
Jack Hill,	75	Bollon
Billy Dutton	80	Bourke-Wanaaring-Engonnia

Wurm (1963:138) commented on the data in his tables as follows:

> As can be seen from these tables, detailed information can at present still be obtained for most of the languages listed in the two tables if linguists are given the time and opportunity to undertake the necessary lengthy fieldwork.

Capell (1963:5) makes similar comments in respect of Gamilaraay:

> The speakers are mostly elderly but possess considerable knowledge. SAW has recorded some 300-500 items and a fair amount of structural information, along with 12 minutes of tape recording. Up to 50 speakers have been located. Gamilaroi is one of a number of related dialects in NW N.S.W. and a comparative study of the whole series of dialects might well be made.

Unfortunately the time and opportunity seem not to have arisen for Wurm since he never again visited the area, nor wrote up any of the materials he collected. It was sixteen years before another professional linguist took an interest in the Gamilaraay language and by that time the remaining fluent speakers were all deceased.

Wurm apparently used as the model for his work Capell 1945 (also published as a separate book). He was trained as a Turkologist and his phonetic transcription is very detailed and accurate. In lexical elicitation he recorded primary and secondary stress along with narrow transcription of vowel height and colour, and labialisation and palatalisation of consonants. He did not record interdental nasals and transcribed interdental stops with the labio-dental fricative symbol edh. His grammatical elicitation covered most aspects of the nominals, pronominal and verbal morphology. Wurm contributed information on Gamilaraay to O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966 and collaborated with Hale and O'Grady on their seminal study of Australian language classification (O'Grady, Wurm and Hale 1966). He later wrote a general book on

Aboriginal languages (Wurm 1972) but because of commitments elsewhere, especially in Papua New Guinea, he did not pursue Australian Aboriginal work as one of his main research fields. To him however we do owe records of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay from some of the very last fluent speakers.

3.2 Janet Mathews and John Gordon

In 1967 a relative of R.H. Mathews, Janet Mathews (and under her guidance Harry Hall, an Aboriginal man from New South Wales), began recording Gamilaraay vocabulary with Bill Reid (Bourke), Burt Graves (Sydney), Ivy ("Granny") Green (Walgett), and Charlie Dodd (Lightning Ridge) (AIATSIS Archive tapes A1236, 1237, 1180, 1946, 1995). Mathews was not trained as a linguist but was a keen and interested amateur. She did not transcribe her tapes but they serve as a useful source of vocabulary data. Williams was able to use some of the extensive materials collected by Mathews on Yuwaalaraay as part of the source materials for here grammar. John Giacon has subsequently transcribed all of Mathews' tapes and typed his transcripts up as word processor files. Janet Mathews also recorded Leila Orcher (see below) at Boggabilla in June 1976, after I had interviewed her.

In the late 1960's John Gordon, an amateur musicologist, also recorded some Gamilaraay corroboree and dance songs (AIATSIS Archive tapes A1176, 1177, 1178, 1219, 1220) but since he provided no transcription or analysis of the recordings, they are very difficult to use.

3.3 R.M.W. Dixon

In November 1971 R.M.W. Dixon spent a few days at Moree and Boggabilla when his car broke down on his way from Canberra to Cairns, interviewing possible consultants for Gamilaraay (see Dixon 1984). According to his fieldnotes, Dixon found that 'no one remembers more than a few words'. Dixon was able to collect data from the following people:

Moree

1. Tom Binge (born at Boomi Aboriginal station in about 1900)

2. Charlie White (or Dubby Paine, born at Narrabri in 1897)

3. Glen Cutmore (born at Terry Hie Hie in about 1900)

4. Arthur Davey

Boggabilla

5. Leila Orcher

6. Ron McIntosh (born about 1901)

Together these people were able to recollect about 150 vocabulary items but no morphology or syntax. Dixon lodged recordings of the first two consultants at AIATSIS Canberra (AIATSIS Archive tape 2615).

In 1972 Dixon passed his fieldnotes to me and they provided part of the data for an essay entitled 'The Kamilaroi Language' which I wrote for Dixon's innaugural Australian Linguistics course at ANU.

3.4 Peter K. Austin

My involvement with research on Gamilaraay began in May 1972 when as a second-year undergraduate student I visited Moree and Boggabilla for three days to try to collect any available language data. I located a number of rememberers and collected vocabulary material from the following people, some of whom had also recorded materials with Dixon the previous year:

Moree

1. Arthur Pitt (born Moree approximately 1896) whose father had spoken Gamilaraay fluently but who only remembered vocabulary.

2. Burt Draper (born about 1896, estimated by Wurm (in Capell 1963) to have been born in 1893) who had been one of Wurm's consultants seventeen years earlier and who also knew some Wayilwan vocabulary.

3. Mrs. Draper (born about 1897), originally from the New England region who knew some Gamilaraay vocabulary but mixed in Yugumbal words. Chris Court (Sydney University, Linguistics department) had interviewed her at Tingha in the 1960's and obtained some vocabulary items which are clearly Gamilaraay, again mixed with words from other languages.

Boggabilla

4. Leila Orcher

5. Ron McIntosh

The two Boggabilla consultants, Leila Orcher and Ron McIntosh, provided most of the material used in the essay written at that time and clearly had the most extensive knowledge of what survived of the Aboriginal language formerly spoken in the area.

In December 1973 I again visited Moree and Boggabilla, this time spending about a week in the area and tape-recording all the material available. As well as seeing the consultants I had worked with before for a second time I also spoke to:

Moree

6. Mary Brown, who was Arthur Pitt's sister. Her knowledge of the language was extremely limited but she did provide some material to fill in gaps.

7. Grace Munro

8. Charlie French

9. Malcolm Green

Boggabilla

10. Hannah Duncan, who proved to be the most proficient of all the consultants interviewed. She had by far the greatest vocabulary (about 200 items) and could remember simple sentences that she had heard her parents and grandparents using when she was growing up. An example is *yuulngin ngay ginyi, dhalaa dhuwarr* 'I'm hungry, where is the bread?'. Mrs Duncan was not able to analyse these or use her other vocabulary in a productive way (so for example, *yuulngin* consists of *yuul* 'vegetable food' plus the derivational suffix *–ngin* 'lacking', and although she knew *gali* 'water' she did not recognize *galingin* 'thirsty'). She also sang a corroboree song in Gamilaraay.

Tamworth

11. Florence Munro (born about 1900) was from the New England region and mixed Gamilaraay words with words from languages of that area.

While visiting the Toomelah Mission station at Boggabilla I was informed by the manager that Darrel Tryon of the Australian National University had visited the area some years before but had only stayed for a day or two and 'couldn't find anything'. Tryon (pers. comm.) reports that he collected no data.

At the beginning of 1974, then, the situation was that eleven consultants had been interviewed, about one hour's tape recording had been made and the data stood at 212 cross-checked vocabulary items and half a dozen sentences. I deposited a copy of my fieldnotes and tapes with AIATSIS. It seemed that the prospects of any further data being collected, or morphological or syntactic material becoming available, were very small.

In January 1975 I again visited the Gamilaraay consultants, this time taking a copy of Wurm's 1955 fieldtape with me. I played the tape to Arthur Pitt, Burt Draper, Leila Orcher, Hannah Duncan and Ron McIntosh. Hannah Duncan and Ron McIntosh remembered watching Peter Lang and S.A. Wurm making the recording, and were able to show me the place where it had been made. They listened to the tape with great interest. Although they (and the other people I interviewed) were able to pick out odd vocabulary items that they recognised, no-one could understand what Peter Lang had told Wurm twenty years before. Clearly, all that remained of Gamilaraay were the two hundred odd words remembered by the last handful of elderly Gamilaraay descendants, without any knowledge of the grammatical system.

In 1975 I moved my focus of attention to South Australian languages and began my PhD research on Diyari and Thirrari (eventually published as Austin 1981 and various journal articles). It seemed that little more could be done on Gamilaraay,

although I continued to collect and analyse the older materials and made up a card file of vocabulary materials, incorporating everything that I had been able to put together. In 1976 I hand-wrote an incomplete sketch grammatical statement setting out what I was able to recover of the grammar from Wurm's notes and the older sources. In 1978 I spent a year in Western Australia and started work on languages of the Gascoyne-Ashburton region, then at the end of 1978 I left Australia for three years as a post-doctoral researcher in the United States.

4   Corinne Williams and Yuwaalaraay

In 1976 Corinne Williams, then a fourth-year undergraduate student, undertook fieldwork on Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay with two remaining speakers, Fred Reece and Dodd. These two men were fluent, but rusty, full speakers and Williams was able to elicit a range of grammatical materials and some brief texts from them. She also looked at Wurm's data on these languages, and the tapes of Janet Mathews. She wrote a short descriptive grammar as her BA Honours thesis, and then did another brief fieldtrip towards the end of 1976 with the late Terry Crowley to collect further materials. The revised version of her thesis was published in 1980 (Williams 1980). Williams did not do any further work on the languages.

What materials we have of a grammatical nature on Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay are mainly due to Williams' work. It is possible that further research could be done with both her tapes and those of Janet Mathews, and John Giacon (see below) has made some moves in this direction.

5   A revival of interest — 1980's and 1990's

In 1981 I returned to Australia and started a major multi-language bilingual dictionaries project focussed on the Gascoyne-Ashburton languages (Austin 1983), but including files on Diyari and Gamilaraay. These were originally in plain ASCII file format, later converted to a database management system, and even later exported as RTF files for formatting and printing with Microsoft Word. I published a paper in the Australian Journal of Linguistics (Austin 1986) outlining the sociolinguistic situation in northern New South Wales and discussing apparent changes that had occurred as a result of the obsolescence of the languages. In March 1989 I had my Gamilaraay grammar sketch typed up as a Word file.

In about 1990 the late William Wentworth, who had a long standing interest in Aboriginal languages and cultures, lobbied for the provision of funds by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission for a National Dictionaries Project to publish dictionaries on as many languages as possible. The project, run by Nick Thieberger at AIATSIS funded dictionary research and publication, and under a grant from this project I published a short bilingual dictionary of Gamilaraay with English finderlist (Austin 1992). This was followed by a larger reference dictionary that included all the lexical data I had available at the time (Austin 1993). Both dictionaries went through several printings and were widely distributed; orders for them continue to be received.

With the assistance of David Nathan in 1995 I prepared a hypertext version of the reference dictionary which Nathan took to a number of north-west Aboriginal

community meetings for consultation and feedback; this was officially launched and published on the world wide web in Moree in March 1996. The web dictionary has been extremely popular and has received thousands of 'hits', as well as wide publicity. The web dictionary is fully hypertextual and captures relations between forms within the dictionary as links; in addition in the revised version developed by Austin and Nathan in 1998 there is a finderlist and thesaurus that are linked to headwords in the main dictionary (see Appendix for screen shots of the web dictionary). A revised and expanded version of the web dictionary is in preparation, adding further ethnographic and pictorial information, as well as details about sentence structure and grammar of the example sentences included in the main dictionary (screen shots of this new version can also be found in the appendix).

5.1 Bill Reid

William ("Bill") Reid was born on 23rd January 1917 on the Cuttabri Aboriginal reserve near Wee Waa, NSW, of Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) descent. He had a lifelong interest in Aboriginal language and culture and in about 1990 he was able to see this come to fruition. After retiring to Tamworth in the 1980's, Bill moved back to Bourke in 1989 and began study of the Gamilaraay language. He had been interviewed about the language by Janet Mathews in June 1968 (AIATSIS archive tapes 1236–7), and she had supplied him with copies of 19th and early 20th century materials collected by Ridley and Mathews (see above). Using this information and his memories of hearing the language as a child (Bill's uncle by marriage was Harry Doolan, who had acted as a consultant for N.B. Tindale and Gerhard Laves in the 1930's), Bill developed his own spelling system and began typing up a wordlist and language lessons. In July 1991 he visited the AIATSIS library to collect further information, and was able to listen to and comment on his 1968 recordings with Institute staff, including Tamsin Donaldson. He was told of the existence of my draft *Dictionary of Gamilaraay* and immediately wrote to me, generously sending me copies of his materials and a tape-recording. We were able to meet in Sydney in December 1991 to check and correct the dictionary entries, and the following year I presented Bill with copies of Austin 1992. In March 1993 Bill was invited to open the *Paper and Talk* workshop on the use of 19th century sources held at AIATSIS (Thieberger 1995; the paper by Austin and Crowley in that volume includes some Gamilaraay materials). He gave an opening speech in Gamilaraay and told the attendees about the address he had recently given in the language at the funeral in Bourke of Professor Fred Hollows. Using his press contacts in northern New South Wales Bill was able to widely advertise the publication of Austin 1992 and 1993 that lead to larger than expected sales of the dictionaries. Bill Reid died in November 1993.

5.2 John Giacon

Brother John Giacon began linguistic work in Walgett in 1994, supported by the Catholic Education Office, the Christian Brothers and St Joseph's Primary School. His main collaborator has been Ted Fields, an elder of the Walgett community, who is a rememberer of Yuwaalaraay vocabulary (see Ash, Giacon and Lissarrague (2003:4) for some of his life history information). Giacon has been one of the driving forces associated with the revival of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay languages, and has been

the author of a number of textbook materials for the language. He began teaching language at Walgett TAFE College to adult learners, and then was instrumental in organising the introduction of preschool and primary school programs in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay as a Language Other Than English. His BA Honours thesis (Giacon, 2001) is a study of new word formation, but also includes a large amount of background material.

Giacon has been responsible for copying and typing into computer files much of the earlier manuscript and tape-recorded documentation, and he has produced an extensive collection of primary documentation in digital form (available on CD-ROM). With Anna Ash and Amanda Lissarrague he worked on a FileMaker Pro database dictionary incorporating all the known materials, and together they published a full reference dictionary of Gamilaraay-Yuwaalayaay (Ash, Giacon and Lissarrague 2003). In 2002 an illustrated wordlist and audio CD of 100 words entitled *Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay Guwaaldanha Ngiyani* (We are speaking Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay) was published in northern New South Wales with his assistance. Also in 2002 Marianne Betts and John Giacon published a high school textbook called *Yaama Maliyaa* (Hello Friend) that was used for a 100-hour Language other Than English (LOTE) course taught at Walgett High School. In 2003 the Yuwaalaraay language Programme based in Walgett produced a book and CD called *Yugal Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay Songs*, most of which are translations into the local languages of well-known English and Australian songs.

There can be no doubt that Giacon has been responsible to galvanising interest in Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay language in northern New South Wales and particularly opening up opportunities for Aboriginal people to access resources and structures in ways that they have not been able to do previously. A network of people interested in language has been set up, and annual conferences have been held in the past several years (Walgett, Goodooga, Collerenbri, Tamworth). It appears that the revival movement now has sufficient momentum that it will see continued publication and extension of education efforts well into the future.

In 2004 the Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay group received a major boost with the introduction of an Aboriginal Languages course for high school students by the New South Wales state government. This has given the language a new status in the eyes both of the Aboriginal and the local white community. The provision of government funds will also assist with materials development. An interactive CD-ROM of language materials and lessons for teachers is currently under development by John Giacon and David Nathan.

6   Conclusions

After a long period of neglect and loss of linguistic knowledge, the Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay people of northern New South Wales, in collaboration with linguist scholars, are recapturing their language heritage and revitalising it. The language is now well represented on the world wide web, and has an strong reactivation programme with wide community and governmental support. Despite lack of funds and

infrastructure support, progress is being made to reestablish language and cultural knowledge for the future.

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Appendix — World Wide Web Dictionary

The following is a screen shot of the Gamilaraay dictionary on the world wide web. The dictionary presentation is emblematic as the colours are those of the Aboriginal flag. There are three panels:

the main dictionary is on the left (with hyperlinks in red, note the use of bold, italics and indentation as in a paper dictionary);

English wordlist access via the initial letter of the English finderlist item is on top left, while thesaurus access via broad semantic groupings is bottom left;

an unchanging menu bar at the bottom which enables easy access to all parts of the dictionary, as well as to the explanatory front matter.
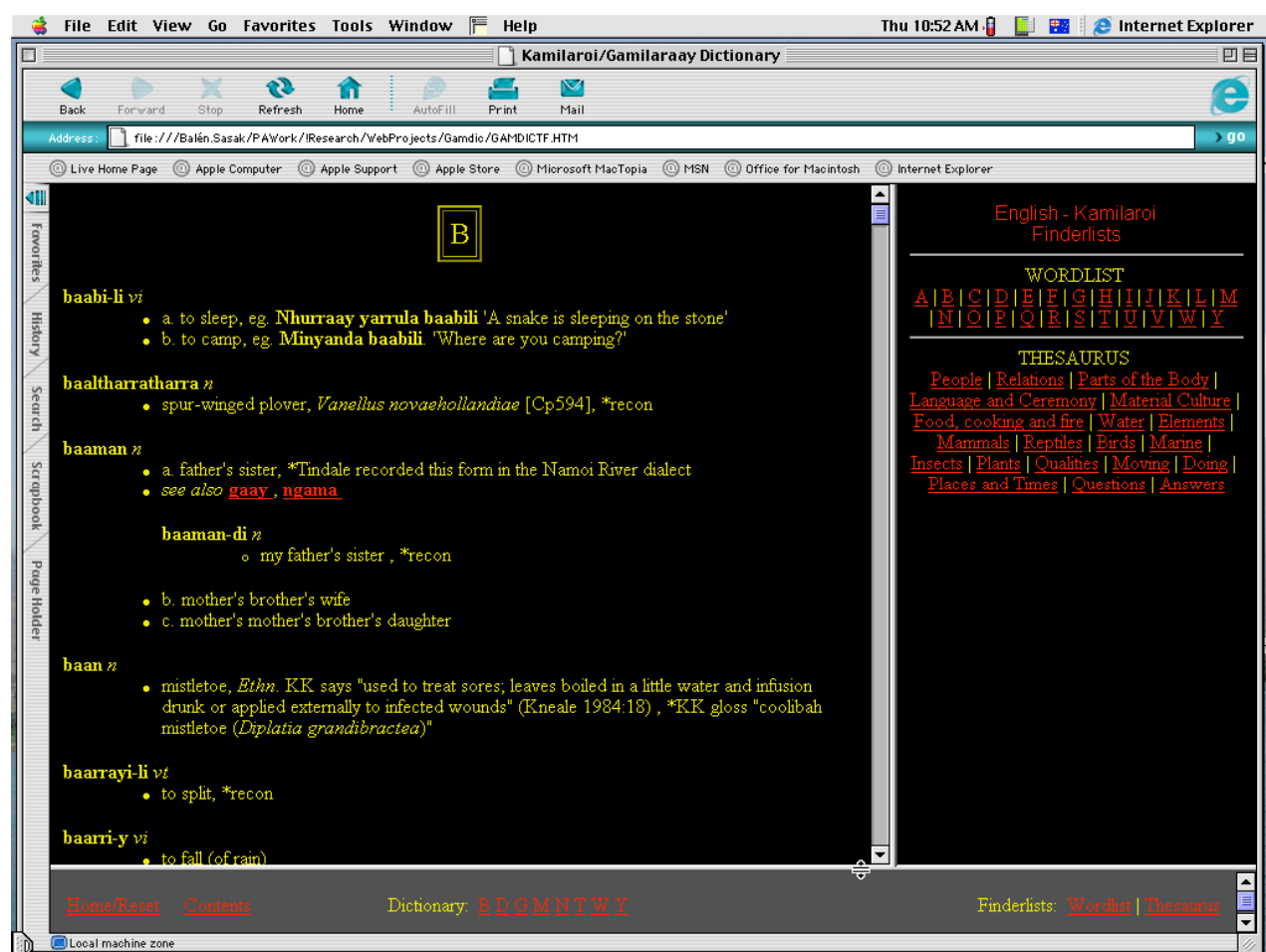
A revised version of the dictionary is currently being prepared with further added information, including pictures and grammatical explanations. The following screen shots illustrate this new version.

This is a shot of the main dictionary window; the major difference is the added information on ethnographic usage of the plant *baan* 'mistletoe' and the hyperlinks for the example sentences (accessed by clicking on eg):
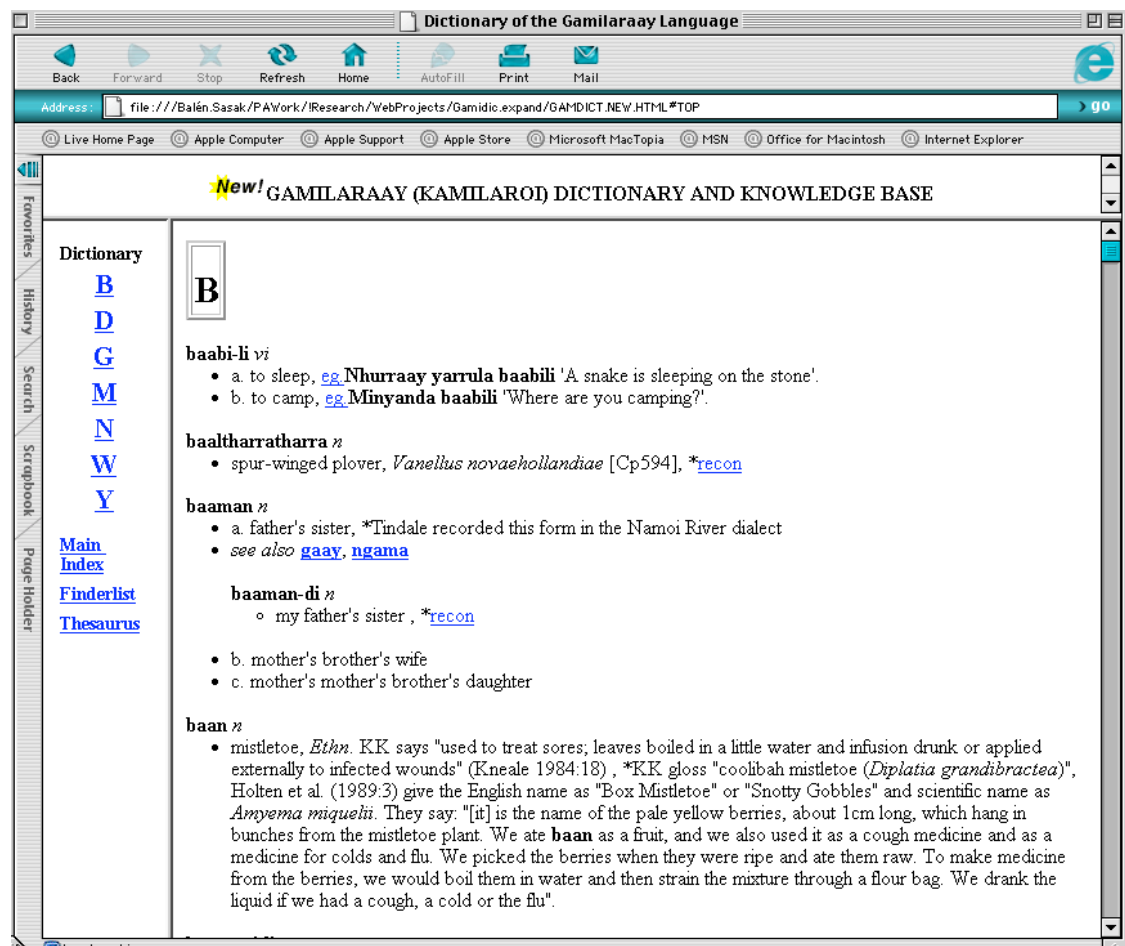
Clicking on the example hyperlink begins the possibility for the user to explore sentence and word structure. This is illustrated in the following screen shot. The sentence example (top right) is presented with word-by-word gloss and grammatical function label annotations. If the user clicks on highlighted Gamilaraay words this opens a window where their morphological structure is explained (middle right window for the item *baabili*). Any metalanguage used in these explanations is linked to a definitions file which includes explanation and further examples (bottom right window for *future*). There is also access to the grammatical function labels attached to each sentence, with explanation and exemplification (top left window for *subject* in this example). In the following picture arrows indicate the hypertext pathways that the user may choose to follow. Note that these pathways are *available* for exploration but the user is not *forced* to negotiate them, in contrast to much technical linguistic literature that presents, for example, full morpheme by morpheme glosses and abbreviated grammatical labels.

GAMILARAAY DICTIONARY B-D

B

baabi-li *vi*
- a. to sleep, eg. **Nhurraay yarrula baabili** 'A snake is sleeping on the stone'.
- b. to camp, eg. **Minyanda baabili** 'Where are you camping?'.

baaltharratharra *n*
- spur-winged plover, *Vanellus novaehollandiae* [Cp594], *recon

baaman *n*
- a. father's sister, *Tindale recorded this form in the Namoi River dialect
- *see also* **gaay**, **ngama**

   baaman-di *n*
   - my father's sister , *recon

Untitled Document

This is a sentence example in Gamilaraay showing the Gamilaraay words, their function in the sentence and the meaning of the sentence as a whole. You can click on any highlighted item for more information about it.

Nhurraay   **yarrula**   **baabili**
Subject   Location   Verb

'A snake is sleeping on the stone'

Untitled Document

Baabili

The word **baabili** is the future form of the verb root **baabi** meaning "sleep". It is the form used to talk about some event happening later than now, "will sleep".

Click here to go to the example: **Nhurraay yarrula baabili**.
Click here to go to the example: **Minyanda baabili**.

Untitled Document

Subject

The term *subject* is used to describe the person or thing which **carries out** an action or which **starts** an action. There are two sorts of *subject* in Gamilaraay:

1. an *intransitive subject* occurs with an intransitive verb such as 'run, go, fall, laugh'. Examples of an *intransitive subject* in English are:

   .
   "The man fell down"
   "I   laughed"

   In Gamilaraay, the basic root form of a noun or pronoun, as listed in the dictionary, is used for the intransitive subject.

2. a *transitive subject* occurs with a transitive verb such as 'kill, break, see'. Examples of a *transitive subject* in English are:

   .
   "The man killed the kangaroo"
   "I   saw the child"

Untitled Document

Future

The *future* is the form of verbs used to indicate a situation which happens at some time later than now. It translates into English as "will ... " (eg. 'He **will go** to the camp', 'The man **will spear** the kangaroo'). The *future* form of all verbs is the one listed in the dictionary.

Examples of future forms are **baabili**, **balugi**, **bumali**.