

**WORD STRUCTURE
IN
NGALAKGAN**

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DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated
this thesis is my own work

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Abstract

In Ngalakgan (Gunwinyguan family, northern Australia), morphology plays a key role in constructing meaning. This thesis is concerned with the interface between morphology and prosody in Ngalakgan.

Ch 1 provides background information on the speakers and the language, and an overview of the theoretical framework used. Following Ch 1, there are two parts to the thesis: I and II. Part I provides a description of the prosodic and morphological structure in simple roots and complex words. Part II discusses theoretical issues in Ngalakgan concerning the interaction of geminates and glottal stops with prosody.

In Ch 2 I examine prosodic patterns in simple and complex words. In Ngalakgan, there is a distinction between two kinds or 'levels' of morphology: word-level and root-level. Only word-level structure is consistently reflected in prosodic structure; forms which are complex only at the root-level are treated as prosodic units. In Ch 3 I show that all word-level morphemes constitute prosodic domains: every word-level stem, affix and clitic potentially begins a new domain for metrical foot structure.

Geminates and glottal stops are over-represented at morpheme boundaries in complex words. In Ch 4 I propose that they constitute 'boundary signals' to morphological structure, in a similar fashion to stress.

Quantity-sensitivity is the topic of Ch 5. I show that syllable weight in Ngalakgan is correlated with perceptual difficulty. It is the most perceptually marked syllable which is stressed.

Ch 6 concludes with a brief summary of the discussion and claims in the rest of the thesis.

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Abbreviations

Agreement and noun class prefixes

1, 12, 2, 3:	1st, 1st incl., 2nd, 3rd person
m/MIN:	minimal number ($\approx$ non-plural)
a/AUG:	augmented number ($\approx$ plural)
f.	feminine/female
m.	masculine/male
NC	noun class (I, II, III, IV)
O	object
S	subject (that is, Agent of a transitive or Subject of an intransitive verb)

Other grammatical abbreviations

ABL	ablative
ALL	allative
AUX	auxiliary, finite verb stem
COM	comitative
DAT	dative
DUR	durative
ERG	ergative
FAM	familiar (presupposed or discourse-given participant information)
F/FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IN	incorporated noun
INST	instrumental
INT	interrogative clitic
IRR	1st position verb prefix, obligatory for 3min/NC subjects (and 3min/NC objects if there is one) in Future (positive), and (depending on predicate class) Present (positive) and Present Negative
ITER	iterative
KIN.PROP	Proprietary suffix to kinship terms (Yolngu)
LAT	lative
LOC	locative
PC	past continuous
PNEG/PRNEG/FNEG	past/present/future negative suffixes
POSS	possessive
POT	potential
PP	past punctual, present perfective
PR	present
RED	reduplication
REL	relative/subordinator
RR	reflexive/reciprocal
SAP	speech act participant (1st and 2nd person referents)
VBSR	verbaliser

(P)GN	(Proto-)Gunwinyguan (language family)
P-NgR	Proto-Ngalakgan-Rembarrnga
Dlbn	Dalabon
Jwyn	Jawoyn
Myli	Mayali
Ngkn	Ngalakgan
Ngdi	Ngandi
Rmba	Rembarrnga
sp	species

Kinship

Kinship terms are classificatory

Categories

Mo	mother
Fa	father
Zi	sister
Br	brother
So	son
Da	daughter
Ch	child
Si	sibling

Operators

+	elder
-	younger
m	male's
f	female's

Categories and operators can be combined to derive further categories, e.g. terms glossed 'FaFa' are those referring to persons in father's father's category; 'mCh' is 'male's children', including children of a man and his brother; 'mZiCh' is 'male's sister's children', and so on.

Conventions for transcriptions and glosses

Orthographic forms are given in Times font, italic style. Underlying, phonemic representations are given in PalPhon font, in slashes. Surface, phonetic representations are given in SILDoulosIPA or PalPhon font, in square brackets. For example:

SR [yérkkega]

UR /yerkke-ka?/ = *yerrkge-gah*

ludaun

below-LOC

In glosses, a period '.' separates two glosses corresponding to one item in the transcription, for example:

/ŋu-caŋ+an/

1mS-be.standing+PR

I use two boundary symbols: plus sign '+' and hyphen '-'. The former indicates a tightly bound, unproductive ROOT-level relationship, the latter indicates a loosely bound, productive WORD-level morphological relationship (and see Ch 2 for a discussion of this distinction).

Glosses such as '1mS/2mO' for a portmanteau agreement prefix such as *ŋjɪ-* indicate 1st person minimal subject acting on 2nd person minimal object.

A change of font style in Ngalakgan data marks material as a borrowing, e.g. *ngu-laydimap-miny*: 1minS-light-PP (< Kriol *laydimap* < English 'light 'em up').

Occasionally, I quote Kriol translations of Ngalakgan data given by the speakers. These should not be regarded as full translations or glosses, they are mainly intended for those familiar with Kriol, and are only included where they shed light on a complex construction or interpretation. My transcriptions of Kriol have some inconsistencies with respect to segmental quality; this reflects the nature of the language, at least as spoken by my consultants.