

CHAPTER 8

NOUN PHRASES

This chapter describes the syntax of noun phrases. Section 8.1 presents the structure of the noun phrase as an ordered set of functional slots which may be filled by different nominal lexemes (and embedded noun phrases). Part-whole constructions are described in §8.2 and generic-specific constructions in §8.3. Section 8.4 discusses the problems associated with determining the head in a Martuthunira noun phrase and the apparent ellipsis of heads. It is argued that a very liberal approach to defining what may be a head avoids the problems introduced by assuming widespread ellipsis. Section 8.5 describes complex noun phrase structure – the embedding of clauses and phrases of particular types within the various functional slots – while §8.6 describes adjoined noun phrase structures. Finally, §8.7 discusses apparent exceptions to the patterns of noun phrase structure established in previous sections.

8.1 NOUN PHRASE STRUCTURE

Noun phrases in Martuthunira can be defined as follows:

1. Noun phrases are sequences of nominals over which some nominal suffix may be distributed. The distribution of a particular suffix over more than one word defines a noun phrase.
2. Noun phrases consist of a sequence of nominals (or noun phrases) which fill defined functional slots.

Typically one intonation contour covers a noun phrase although complex noun phrases consisting of a number of embedded phrases may be broken up by pauses despite an encompassing nominal inflection. The Martuthunira noun phrase can be described as an ordered arrangement of functional slots in the following order (following McGregor's (1984) analysis of Kuniyanti noun phrases):

$$(\text{Determiner}) \wedge (\text{Quantifier}) \wedge (\text{Classifier}) \wedge \text{Entity} \wedge (\text{Qualifier})^*$$

The Entity slot and its filler is the semantic head of the noun phrase. Typically, it is the nominal in this slot that makes the primary reference to some object or person. Nominals preceding the Entity, in Determiner, Quantifier and/or Classifier slots, restrict the reference of the head nominal by narrowing the set of entities from which the referent is chosen. Nominals following the Entity, in Qualifier position, have a non-restrictive modifying function. They provide some additional information about the entity picked out by the noun phrase. Possible fillers of each of the slots are discussed below.

8.1.1 DETERMINER

Nominals filling the Determiner slot serve to narrow the reference of the phrase by contextual identification of the referent. Demonstratives and possessive pronouns (including the genitive definite demonstrative, *ngurnulangu* (§5.5.3)) are the most common fillers of this slot. In addition, the nominals *yarta* ‘other one’, and *yartapalyu* ‘others, other group’ typically function as Determiners. These narrow the reference by distinguishing the referent of the noun phrase from some referent already introduced or assumed. *Yartapalyu* at example (8.1) below emphasises that a number of people are grouped together as a unit separate from some other group or individual. The simple form *yarta* may take regular number marking despite the existence of the special group form (8.2).

- (8.1) *Nganaju yaan yungku-lha murla-a yartapalyu-u kanyara-ngara-a.*
 1SG.GEN wife give-PAST meat-ACC others-ACC man-PL-ACC
 My wife gave meat to the other men. (trans.)
- (8.2) *Kartu-lwa puni-nguru kuyil yarta-ngara-a nhuunu-ngara-a.*
 2SG.NOM-ID go-PRES bad other-PL-ACC spouse-PL-ACC
 You're the one who is bad to other spouses of yours.

8.1.2 QUANTIFIER

The Quantifier slot may be filled by one of three number words or by a nominal functioning as a mass quantifier:

<i>kalika</i>	one
<i>kayarra</i>	two
<i>jarrkurti</i>	three, a few
<i>maruwarla</i>	many, much
<i>kupuyu</i>	a little

Only one complex number expression occurs in the data:

- (8.3) *Nhamintha ngula? Kayarra jina, kayarrajuwayu wirra-ngara wiyaa.*
 how.many IGNOR two foot two hand boomerang-PL maybe
 How many were there? Maybe twenty boomerangs (lit. two hands and two feet of boomerangs).

The nominal *maruwarla* functions as a Quantifier for all numbers greater than *jarrkurti*, if the entity is inherently countable, or for any relatively large amount of a non-countable substance. The plural suffix may be used to indicate an overly large amount of a usually non-countable entity such as sand, fat or liquid. The nominal *kupuyu* ‘little’ is used to indicate a small amount of a non-countable substance.

8.1.3 CLASSIFIER

The nominal in Classifier function narrows the reference by picking out a subset of the set of items to which the nominal in Entity function may refer. There are a number of types of subset classification. Firstly, the Classifier may specify a referent by describing a property manifested by a subset of the class of objects denoted by the Entity nominal.

- (8.4) ... *purra-lyarra parla-marta yarta-ngka pilyi-ngka parla-ngka.*
hit-CTEMP stone-PROP other-LOC flat-LOC stone-LOC
...hit with a stone on another *flat* stone.
- (8.5) *Ngayu kuliya-la warntitha-rrngu-rra kuyil-ngara-a*
1SG.NOM ear-LOC throw-PASS-CTEMP bad-PL-ACC
marrari-ngara-a nhuwana-lu.
word-PL-ACC 2PL-EFF
I'm getting *bad* words thrown at me, in [my] ear, by you.
- (8.6) *Kampa-rninyji-rru ngurnaa marli-ngka-a ngamari-i.*
burn-FUT-NOW that.ACC paper-LOC-ACC tobacco-ACC
Now light that 'paper-rolled tobacco' (a cigarette as opposed to a plug
of chewing tobacco).
- (8.7) *Ngunhu kartatha-lalha marruwa-a wirra-a.*
that.NOM chop-PAST snakewood-ACC boomerang-ACC
He chopped a *snakewood* boomerang.

Secondly, the Classifier may name a specific type of entity which forms a subset of the generic class denoted by the nominal in the Entity slot.

- (8.8) *Thathu-rnu warnu pala ngaliwa ngurnu tharnta-a murla-a.*
send-PASSP ASSERT IT 1PL.INC that.ACC euro-ACC meat-ACC
Well, it's because we were sent that euro meat.

Thirdly, human stage-of-life terms are used as classifying stage-of-life terms with some animals. Animals such as the euro, plains kangaroo, emu and goanna have their own special stage-of-life terms. In example (8.9) *pawulu* 'child', and *julyu* 'old man', are used to classify dogs. *Kupuyuwaja* functions as a Classifier of the first type described above.

- (8.9) *Nganarna yanga-lalha kupuyuwa-a muyi-i, ngurnula-ngu-u*
1PL.EXC chase-PAST little.one-ACC dog-ACC that.DEF-GEN-ACC
pawulu-u muyi-i. Ngunhu-lwa pawu, julyu muyi.
child-ACC dog-ACC that.NOM-ID father old.man dog
We chased off those little dogs, that one's puppies. That's the father, that
old dog.

8.1.4 ENTITY

The nominal in the Entity slot is the semantic head of the phrase in that it makes the primary reference to some object. Usually this slot is filled by a nominal which is prototypically noun-like but this is not a strict requirement. The Entity slot may be filled by any of the following:

1. simple nominal lexemes
2. part-whole composites (§8.2)
3. embedded clauses (§8.5.3)
4. derived adnominal expressions (§8.5.1)

8.1.5 QUALIFIER

This slot is filled by expressions attributing some characteristic to the referent of the noun phrase. While nominals preceding the Entity slot have the primary function of facilitating successful reference by restricting the class of items to which the noun phrase may refer, nominals following the Entity slot add some additional information about an already identified referent. All nominals which may precede the head of a noun phrase may also function as fillers of the Qualifier slot, and apparently the converse also holds. The most common fillers of the Qualifier slot are nominals functioning as prototypical adjectives. Some of these are listed below by semantic type (following Dixon 1982):

Dimension and shape:	<i>mirtali</i> 'big', <i>kupuyu</i> 'small', <i>ngurrara</i> 'huge', <i>kuruuru</i> 'round', <i>pangkira</i> 'rounded, bulging', <i>pilyi</i> 'flat', <i>wanarra</i> 'long, tall', <i>purnta</i> 'deep'.
Physical property:	<i>wanka</i> 'alive, raw', <i>puwa</i> 'rotten, stinking', <i>nhurnti</i> 'dead', <i>nhungkurn</i> 'stinking', <i>wurtura</i> 'dirty, dusty', <i>warlyarra</i> 'smooth', <i>ngungkuwarla</i> 'heavy'.
Colour:	<i>jiwarra</i> 'white', <i>jurlwin</i> 'grey', <i>kurnangu</i> 'black', <i>martamarta</i> 'red' (<i>marta</i> 'blood'), <i>piyulu</i> 'yellow (ochre)', <i>palharra</i> 'green'.
Age:	<i>kuwarrira</i> 'new', <i>kuwarrinyjangu</i> 'young', <i>manyjira</i> 'old'.
Value:	<i>panyu</i> 'good', <i>kuyil</i> 'bad', <i>jalya</i> 'useless', <i>murlurru</i> 'straight, correct'.
Human propensity:	<i>kur.ta</i> 'clever, knowledgeable', <i>payawurtu</i> 'savage, sulky', <i>paya</i> 'angry, wild', <i>thaapuwa</i> 'a person who stands out from the crowd, important, distinguished (not necessarily in a positive way)', <i>thurlajinkarri</i> 'poor fellow, unfortunate', <i>wantumarta</i> 'crazy', <i>paarnpaarn</i> 'silly', <i>kamparta</i> 'restless, stirred up', <i>jalya</i> 'useless, bereaved'.

Other nominal types which may function as Qualifiers include number nominals (8.10), possessives (8.11) and (4.130), and proper names (8.12) and (8.13).

- (8.10) *Ngayu yungku-layi ngurnaa ngawurrmarta-a kalika-a,*
 1SG.NOM give-FUT that.ACC soap-ACC one-ACC
wara-marnu-u.
 clothes-ASSOC-ACC
 I'll give him some laundry soap, one piece (lit. soap for clothes).
- (8.11) *Ngayu kanarri-lha nhuwana-a wangka-lu ngurra-ngka*
 1SG.NOM come-PAST 2PL-ACC speak-PURPss camp-LOC
nhuwana-wu-la nyina-nyila-a.
 2PL-GEN-LOC sit-PrREL-ACC
 I came to talk to you sitting in camp, your camp.

- (8.12) *Nhuwala puni-layi manku-lu kurlany-ku Kurlanypungkunhu-u.*
 2DU go-FUT get-PURPss knife-ACC Kurlanypungkunhu-ACC
 You two go and get a knife, a *Kurlanypungkunhu* (place name)knife.
- (8.13) *Ngunhu-tharrathathu-rnu puni-lha mimi-ngku Karnuny-thu.*
 that.NOM-DU send-PASSP go-PAST uncle-EFF Karnuny-EFF
 Those two went off sent by their uncle *Karnuny*.

A number of qualifying expressions may follow the Entity nominal. However, an extended sequence of Qualifiers does not usually occur under the same intonation contour and instead successive nominals are separated by a noticeable pause. This phenomenon argues that these nominals be treated as independent noun phrases and further suggests that in fact all Qualifiers be considered independent of a separate head-final noun phrase structure. Nevertheless, in this description I prefer to maintain a view of the Martuthunira noun phrase as including a generally tightly bound post-head Qualifier position, though on the basis of the currently available data it is difficult to argue convincingly for one position over the other. The indeterminacy of noun phrase heads is discussed in §8.4.

8.2 PART-WHOLE CONSTRUCTIONS

Part-whole constructions are considered to be complex fillers of the Entity slot – the nominals referring to whole and part are apposed at a subordinate level of structure within the noun phrase. Either order, part-whole or whole-part, is possible as the examples in (8.14) show. (For detailed discussion of the semantic relationships which may be represented by part-whole constructions in Australian languages see Hale (1981) and McGregor (1985).)

- (8.14) a. *marli kartawura* butt of a cadjeput tree
 cadjeput butt
- b. *murtiwarla yinyjin* car engine
 car engine
- c. *mirntirimartapunga* goanna guts
 goanna guts
- d. *ngayu jirli* my arm
 1SG.NOM arm
- e. *jina-ngka ngathala* on my foot
 foot-LOC 1SG.LOC
- f. *jamanu muyi* dog track
 track dog
- g. *yilhi wirra* boomerang chip (the chips of wood
 chip boomerang left after a boomerang has been carved)

Modification of the part in a part-whole construction involves a fixed construction, almost a compound, of part and modifier. For example:

- (8.15) *Ngayu yirna murla-a wurnta-rninyji mulha jurirri-lu*
 1SG.NOM this.ACC meat-ACC cut-FUT point sharp-EFF

jumpirri-lu.

knife-EFF

I'll cut this meat with a sharp-pointed knife.

- (8.16) *Kupuyu-tharra mir.ta-lwa kalya-rnu muyi-ngku, jalya-ngku*
 little-DU not-ID bite-PASSP dog-EFF useless-EFF

waruul, muyi-ngku tharta para-ngku, parna yirla mirtali-lu,
 still dog-EFF crutch hollow-EFF head only big-EFF

jalya-ngku waruul, ngarnmarr karta-ngku.

useless-EFF still rib.cage bony-EFF

The two little fellows weren't bitten by the dog, the useless thing, hollow-crutched dog, only big in the head, useless thing, bony-ribbed thing.

As these examples show, the usual distribution of case to all elements in a constituent is suspended where a modifying nominal is restricted in its scope to the part. Were the distribution of case allowed to include the part, the scope of the modifier would be taken to include the whole. Compare the following examples.

- (8.17) a. *Ngayu nhawu-lha ngurnu muyi-i jamanu mirtali-i.*
 1SG.NOM see-PAST that.ACC dog-ACC track big-ACC
 I saw the big tracks of a dog. (trans.)
- b. *Ngayu nhawu-lha ngurnu muyi-i jamanu-u mirtali-i.*
 1SG.NOM see-PAST that.ACC dog-ACC track-ACC big-ACC
 I saw the tracks of a big dog. (trans.)

The order of part and modifier is also fixed as the following show:

- (8.18) a. ... *mulha jurirri-lu jumpirri-lu*
 point sharp-EFF knife-EFF
 ...with a sharp-pointed knife (cf. (8.15) above)
- b. **mulha-ngku jurirri jumpirri-lu*
- c. **jurirri-lumulha jumpirri-lu*
- d. **jurirri mulha-ngku jumpirri-lu*

Despite the blocking of full case agreement and the fixed order, these part-modifier constructions cannot be described as compound lexemes. Firstly, as example (8.16) illustrates, the choice of stem-length-sensitive nominal suffix allomorphs, such as the effector, is dependent on the length of the modifying nominal rather than the combined length of part and modifier. Secondly, adverbs and clitics may intervene between part and modifier, again illustrated in (8.16). The construction must be treated as a tightly bound constituent existing below the level of the noun phrase, and within which the usual patterns of multiple case-marking do not hold.

8.3 GENERIC-SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTIONS

Martuthunira makes very little use of generic-specific constructions, unlike some Australian languages in which generic classification is almost mandatory. This is not to say, of course, that generic classification does not exist, just that the use of generic classification of a specific object in making primary reference to an entity is rare. Given this situation the

setting up of a special generic-specific construction just to explain the few examples which resemble generic-specific constructions in other languages is hardly justified. The following examples illustrate generic-specific nominal pairs (the generic is underlined).

- (8.19) *Nhurnti-ma-rnu waruul-wa-rru murla warryumuntu jinyji-warla.*
 dead-CAUS-PASSP still-Ø-NOW meat mother.euro fat-FULL
 It's been killed all right, a nice fat euro with a joey.
- (8.20) *Ngaliwa puni-nguru murla-marta jankurna-marta!*
 1PL.EXC go-PRES meat-PROP emu-PROP
 We've got meat, emu!
- (8.21) *Ngayu manku-layi thanuwa-ngara-a maan-ngara-a.*
 1SG.NOM get-FUT vegetable.food-PL-ACC seed-PL-ACC
 I'll get some food, seeds.
- (8.22) *Ngathu mulhaa-rnu ngunhaa murla-marnu warrirti.*
 1SG.EFF sharpen-PASSP that.NOM meat-ASSOC spear
 That meat-getting spear was sharpened by me.

There is some indeterminacy involved in deciding which of the two, generic or specific, is the semantic head of the phrase (see §8.4 below). Examples of specific-generic pairs were described in §8.1.3 as instances of the Classifier-Entity relationship; the specific nominal serving to pick out a particular kind of the generic class in contrast to all other kinds included in that class. However, it is not clear that in examples such as (8.19) to (8.22), the generic performs a similar classifying function. The generic does not convey the notion that the specific is being considered in one sense (an entity of the type defined by the generic) in contrast to any other sense. Rather, the generic also functions as the head in generic-specific constructions, the specific nominal filling the Qualifier slot. Thus the two phrases *murla tharnta* 'meat euro' and *murla panyu* 'meat good' have a similar interpretation. In each, 'meat' is the semantic head, making the primary reference to some entity, and the following nominal describes this entity as 'a euro', on the one hand, and as 'good' on the other. By this analysis the noun phrase, *murla warryumuntu jinyjiwarla*, in (8.19), is interpreted as having 'meat' as its head and both 'mother euro' and 'fat-FULL' as Qualifiers.

8.4 THE INDETERMINACY OF NOUN PHRASE HEADS AND APPARENT ELLIPSIS

The analysis of the noun phrase given in §8.1 assumes an optional post-head Qualifier. However, in that the putative head of any noun phrase is not categorially distinct from other elements in the noun phrase (see §3.1.1) there is a degree of indeterminacy in the analysis. How is one to decide which of the nominals in a noun phrase is in the Entity slot functioning as the head? For example, (8.8) includes the noun phrase *ngurnu tharnta-a murla-a* (that.ACC euro-ACC meat-ACC) for which it is suggested that *murla* 'meat' is the head and *tharnta* 'euro' a Classifier. But this noun phrase could have an alternative reading in which 'euro' is the head and 'meat' a post-head Qualifier. The two readings for sentence (8.8) would be:

- a. We were sent that meat of the euro kind.
- b. We were sent that euro, which is meat.

There are other alternatives. The initial demonstrative might be the head, followed by a post-head modifying noun phrase which contains in turn the two nominals 'euro' and 'meat' in various alternative interpretations:

- c. We were sent that thing, which is euro meat.
- d. ...

Rather than attempt to impose strict interpretations on these structures, it is assumed here that noun phrases are ambiguous. The grammar generates a range of alternative structures for which different semantic interpretations are possible.

As a further complication, there are numerous examples in the data in which a clearly entity-referring nominal appears to be missing from a noun phrase. That is, the noun phrase appears to be without a head. Examples (8.23) and (8.24) illustrate a common pattern in which elliptical responses in a conversation preserve the case-suffixes appropriate to the full clause.

- (8.23) a. *Ngayu kangku-lha mayiili-marnu-ngu kulhampa-arta.*
 I take-PAST SoSo+IPOSS-GROUP-ACC fish-ALL
 I took a group of my grandchildren for fish.
- b. *Nganangu-ngara pawulu-ngara?*
 who.GEN-PL child-PL
 Whose children are they?
- c. *Ngurnu-ngara-a yaan-wirriwa-wura-a.*
 that.OBL-PL-ACC spouse-PRIV-BELONG-ACC
 [I took] the ones who belong to the one who is without a spouse.
- d. *Ngaa, purrkurupala. Ngarraya-ngu-ngara-a.*
 Yes Okay IT niece-GEN-PL-ACC
 Yes. Okay that's it (I understand). (You took) niece's ones.
- (8.24) a. *Ngunhu muyi yanga-lalha pawulu-tharra-a.*
 that.NOM dog chase-PAST child-DU-ACC
 That dog chased two children.
- b. *Ngana-ngura-tharra-a yanga-lalha?*
 who-BELONG-DU-ACC chase-PAST
 Whose two did it chase?
- c. *Yirna-tharra-wura-a.*
 this.OBL-DU-BELONG-ACC
 [It chased] the ones belonging to these two.

In examples (8.23c) and (8.23d) the response maintains the accusative case-marking of (8.23a), similarly in (8.24b) and (8.24c). However, not all examples of adnominally inflected heads are quite so easily explained by a regular pattern of ellipsis. In (8.25) (occurring also in (4.89) and (10.53)), the two principle protagonists are referred to by transparent adnominal expressions. Neither of these expressions can be thought of as lexical derivations. The expressions *thaluwaya* and *murlamarnu* are chosen to emphasise the particular relationship existing between a man and his dog. The man is described solely as the dog's owner, the dog is described by a generic expression often used for grouping together hunting implements (see (8.22) above).

- (8.25) *Thalu-wayá panyu-npa-wala-rru wiru ngurnulangu-lu-rru*
 pet-OWNER good-INCH-PURPDs-NOW feelings that.GEN-EFF-NOW
murla-marnu-lu kanarri-yangu.
 meat-ASSOC-EFF come-PASSP
 The pet-owner will be getting good feelings now that his meat-getter (dog)
 has come to him.

A speaker may choose to use an adnominally expressed attributive as a head where there may not be a specific referent known to either speaker or addressee. Thus in example (8.26), it turns out that the first speaker has a ‘camel bush’ spike in his foot, but this is not known until later in the conversation. Until then, the spike is referred to by the ascriptive property that it is *in the foot*.

- (8.26) a. *Jina karta-rnu want hala?*
 foot poke-PASSP somewhere
 [Your] foot got poked somewhere?
- b. *Ngawu, thuulwa-rninyji-nu jina-ngka-a ngathala-a?*
 yes pull-FUT-QUOT foot-LOC-ACC 1SG.LOC-ACC
 Yes, how about pulling out [the thing] in my foot?
- c. *Nyina-Ø kartu ngathala yilangu, ngayu thuulwa-rninyji-la jina-ngka-a.*
 sit-IMP you me.LOC here, I pull-FUT-LOC foot-LOC-ACC
 You sit here by me while I then pull out [the thing] in [your] foot.

There are two examples of apparently elliptical expressions in example (8.27). First the noun phrase *thawun-ta* (town-LOCative) (8.27b), which refers to the things bought ‘in town’, provides a generic reference to a collection of things which are itemised later in the text (when it is discovered that some things have been forgotten). The second expression, *thanuwa-marta-ngara* (food-PROPrictive-PLural) (8.27c), referring to the people ‘with the food’, picks out a particularly relevant property of the shoppers who were sent back to town for the forgotten items.

- (8.27) a. *Nhuwana puni-rra wii thawun-mulyarra, ngana ju wuruma-rninyji*
 2PL go-CTEMP if town-ALL 1SG.ACC do.for-FUT
yurntura-a manyarrka-a-thurtiwii parrka-a wii?
 flour-ACC sugar-ACC-CONJ maybe tea-ACC maybe
 If you go to town will you get for me some flour and sugar maybe, and
 maybe tea?
- b. *Nganarna manku-lha-nguru-rru thawun-ta-a, wuruma-l.yarra*
 1PL.EXC get-PAST-ABL-NOW town-LOC-ACC do.for-CTEMP
kartungu, parrani-lha-ma-rninyji-rru kartungu-mulyarra ...
 2SG.ACC return-PAST-CAUS-FUT-NOW 2SG.OBL-ALL
 Now having got [the things] in town for you, we then brought them
 back to you...
- c. *Ngayu marlara-a karri-nguru nhawu-rra. purrkuru waruul,*
 1SG.NOM road-ACC stand-PRES watch-REL true still
nhula-ngara murna-ngka-rru ngaliwa-a, thanuwa-marta-ngara.
 that (near.you)-PL close-LOC-NOW 1PL.INC-ACC food-PROP-PL

I stand watching the road. True enough, they are close to us now, [those people] with the food.

Rather than treat these constructions as elliptical, the adnominal expressions are assumed here to be fillers of the Entity slot in a complete noun phrase. Under this interpretation, the ascriptive use of adnominal suffixes is seen as a productive device allowing a great deal of creativity in the construction of narrative. An entity can be referred to by any of the properties it is known to have, whether these be inherent, such as determine its being considered a token of a particular nominal type (e.g. ‘dog’ or ‘man’), or whether they be dependent on a particular context (that dog’s owners use them in hunting meat) (see (8.24)). Similarly, once a participant has been introduced into a text it can be named by any of the characteristic properties that served to identify it in the first place, by the properties attributed to it by way of qualifying expressions, or by characteristics or properties acquired through its role in the events recounted in the text.

As example (8.28) shows, this pattern of using ascriptive predicates as the heads of nominal referring expressions is not restricted to adnominally marked nominals. Here the underlined expression is a verb bearing plural marking and the accusative suffix. Embedded clauses of this kind are described in §8.5.3 below.

- (8.28) *Thanuwa-ngara-martanyina-layi wangkarnu-marra-rru nhartu-ngara-a*
 food-PL-PROP sit-FUT talk-COLL+CTEMP-NOWthing-PL-ACC
manku-lha-nguru wuruma-l.yarra nyina-marri-lha-ngara-a.
 get-PAST-ABL do.for-CTEMP stay-COLL-PAST-ABL-ACC
 With all the food they then sit down and talk together, having got the things for
[the ones who] stayed (behind) together.

8.5 COMPLEX NOUN PHRASES

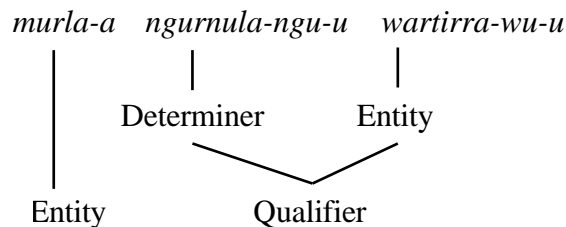
The basic noun phrase consisting of a selection of functional slots filled by simple nominal lexemes can be expanded by filling the slots with more complex structures. These structures are of three types: noun phrases, conjoined noun phrases, and clauses.

8.5.1 EMBEDDED NOUN PHRASES

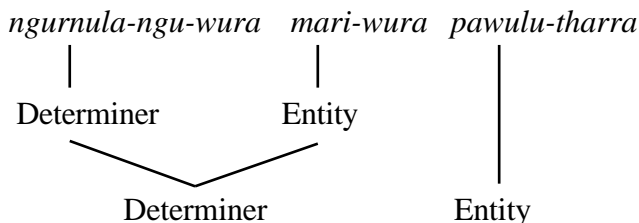
Embedded noun phrases occur in each of the positions described in §8.1. The simplest non-basic noun phrases consist of a single nominal bearing an adnominal suffix (example (8.29)). Other embedded noun phrases consist of a number of nominals conforming to the general noun phrase structure (8.30), (8.31). Depending on the relationship between the embedded nominal and the matrix head, some adnominal suffix may be distributed over the embedded noun phrase.

- (8.29) *Ngurnu tharnta-a murla-a ngarri-ngka-nguru-u*
 that.ACC euro-ACC meat-ACC ashes-LOC-ABL-ACC
 that euro meat from out of the ashes (from example (4.62))
- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| <i>ngurnu</i> | <i>tharnta-a</i> | <i>murla-a</i> | <i>ngarri-ngka-nguru-u</i> |
| | | | |
| Determiner | Classifier | Entity | Qualifier |

- (8.30) *murla-a ngurnula-ngu-u wartirra-wu-u*
 meat-ACC that.DEF-GEN-ACC woman-GEN-ACC
 meat belonging to that woman



- (8.31) *ngurnula-ngu-wura mari-wura pawulu-tharra*
 that.DEF-GEN-BELONG sister-BELONG child-DU
 his sister's two children (from example (5.10))



8.5.2 EMBEDDED CONJOINED NOUN PHRASES

The conjunction of noun phrases within a noun phrase structure is achieved with the conjunctive morpheme *-thurti*. As discussed in §4.19, the status of *-thurti* as a nominal suffix is not completely clear: it usually occurs within the scope of a distributed relational nominal suffix (8.32), but may occur following such a suffix (8.33). There are no obvious differences in meaning associated with the different positions.

- (8.32) *Ngayu ngawurri-ma-rninyji puwara-thurti-i martarr-thurti-i.*
 1SG.NOM mixed-CAUS-FUT charcoal-CONJ-ACC red.ochre-CONJ-ACC
 I'll mix up charcoal and red ochre.

- (8.33) *Ngayu kampa-lalha thanuwa-ngara-a wuruma-l.yarra*
 1SG.NOM cook-PAST vegetable.food-PL-ACC do.for-CTEMP
pawulu-ngara-a-thurti kanyara-ngara-a-thurti.
 child-PL-ACC-CONJ adult-PL-ACC-CONJ
 I cooked food for the children and the adults.

Occasionally, *-thurti* appears on only the second of two nominals. In such examples there is usually an implication that the second of the two conjuncts is subordinate to the first.

- (8.34) *Mir.ta-l nguyirri-wirraa-ma-rninyjiyirna-ngara-a*
 not-THEN asleep-PRIV-CAUS-FUT this.OBL-PL-ACC

kanyara-ngara-a wartirra-thurti-i.
 man-PL-ACC woman-CONJ-ACC

Then you won't be keeping awake these men, or women either.

The conjunction suffix may also occur on a nominal in isolation (examples (4.178) to (4.180)). In such cases the *-thurti*-marked nominal may be construed with another noun phrase through case concord, resulting in an effective conjunction of the two noun phrases. Although semantically very similar, this type of conjunction is syntactically very different from that described here.

8.5.3 EMBEDDED CLAUSES

Whole clauses may be embedded within a noun phrase, either in the Entity position or as a Qualifier. The clause appears without a subject and it is the assumed filler of the subject slot that can be understood as the entity to which the noun phrase as a whole refers. The use of subjectless embedded clauses as noun phrases is equivalent to the use of adnominal expressions as the sole constituents of noun phrases as discussed in §8.4. Here reference is made to an entity by describing an action in which that entity has been involved as a central participant.

- (8.35) *Ngayu wara-ngara-a wantha-rninyji, wilyiwilyi-ma-rnu-ngara-a*
 1SG.NOM clothes-PL-ACC put-FUT clean-CAUS-PASSP-PL-ACC
wantha-rninyji.
 put-FUT
 I'll put out the clothes, put out [the ones that] have been cleaned.

The verb in an embedded clause usually bears either the past tense or the passive perfective verb inflection and carries the nominal suffixes inherited from the noun phrase structure. The examples chosen here all show the distribution of plural marking to the subordinate clause verb, thus making the embedded structure very clear. In example (8.36) the embedded clause fills the Entity slot while the pronoun is a Determiner. The nominal *wantamartu* 'silly' functions as a Qualifier. In (8.37) and (8.38) the clause is a Qualifier.

- (8.36) *Kartu panyu-npa-layi nganarna-a ngalarri-lha-ngara-a*
 2SG.NOM good-INCH-FUT 1PL.EXC-ACC forget-PAST-PL-ACC
wantamartu-ngara-a.
 silly-PL-ACC
 You be good to us forgetful silly people.
- (8.37) *Nhiingara panyu-ngara wirra-a yinka-lalha-ngara...*
 this.PL good-PL boomerang-ACC chisel-PAST-PL
 These good people who carved the boomerang...
- (8.38) *Ngayu nhawu-ngu-layi ngurnu-ngara-lu kanyara-lu puwany*
 1SG.NOM see-PASS-FUT that.OBL-PL-EFF man-EFF hunting
puni-lha-ngara-lu.
 go-PAST-PL-EFF
 I'll be seen by those men who have gone hunting.

Given that verbal clauses may be embedded in noun phrase slots, it might be assumed that non-verbal clauses may also be so embedded. However, since an embedded clause usually does service for the nominal which ordinarily fills its subject position, most embedded non-verbal clauses would be indistinguishable from noun phrases. For example, the non-verbal ascriptive clause *ngunhu kanyara / parla-marta* (that.NOM man money-PROP) ‘that man has money’, would appear as simply *parla-marta* if embedded under some noun phrase.

8.6 ADJOINED NOUN PHRASE STRUCTURES

Complex noun phrases are distinguished from adjoined noun phrase structures. The latter can be considered special cases of a general pattern in which similarly case-marked noun phrases are construed at some higher level of semantic interpretation. Two general functions of adjoined noun phrase structures can be recognised. Firstly, an adjoined noun phrase may provide a fuller description of a group denoted by some noun phrase by specifying the membership of the group:

- (8.39) *Ngunhaa parrani-lha-rru nhawu-lu ngurnala-ngu-u*
 that.NOM return-PAST-NOW see-PURPss that.DEF-GEN-ACC
ngarniyarrangu-u, pipi-thurti-i pawu-thurti-i
 family-ACC mother-CONJ-ACC father-CONJ-ACC
mimi-thurti-i.
 uncle-CONJ-ACC
 He went back to see his family; mother, father and uncle.
- (8.40) *Nganarna jalurra-a nhawu-layi kupiyaji-i, wuntu-ngara-a-thurti*
 1PL.EXC dance-ACC see-FUT little(PL)-ACC boy-PL-ACC-CONJ
ngurrinymarta-ngara-a-thurti panyu-ma-rnura-a.
 girl-PL-ACC-CONJ good-CAUS-PrREL-ACC
 We'll watch the little fellows, boys and girls, making a good job of the dance.

The use of an adjoined noun phrase expression to describe the composition of a group is a common device in explicating non-singular pronoun reference. Often adjoined noun phrases specify just one or two of the members of the group, typically specifying the third person included within the reference set of a first person exclusive pronoun. The following example provides a good illustration.

- (8.41) *Ngunhaa nganarna-lu, yilu ngathu, manku-yangu jarrkurti-lu.*
 that.NOM 1PL.EXC-EFF this.EFF 1SG.EFF grab-PASSP three-EFF
Ngaliwa-rru, kartu-thurti-rru puni-layi.
 1PL.INC-NOW 2SG.NOM-CONJ-NOW go-FUT
 That fellow was grabbed by us, by this fellow and me, by three of us all together.
 We, you included, will go now.

The particle *wii* (§7.6) is very common in adjoined sequences, as seen in examples (8.42) and (4.159).

- (8.42) *Ngunhaa puni-layi thanuwa-ngara-amanku-lu yurntura-a,*
 that.NOM go-FUT food-PL-ACC get-PURPss flour-ACC
manyarrka-a, ngamari-i, minthirriny-ku wii, wuruma-l.yarra
 sugar-ACC tobacco-ACC rice-ACC maybe do.for-CTEMP

nhuunu-nhanu-ngu, jilyarta-a wii, kayartu-marnu-u,
 spouse-3POSS-ACC pipe-ACC maybe smoke-ASSOC-ACC

pirriri-i wii, ngawurrmarta-awii, parrani-rrawaara
 matches-ACC maybe beer-ACC maybe return-SEQ

ngurnu-ngara-marta.
 that.OBL-PL-PROP

That one's going to get food; flour, sugar, tobacco, and rice maybe, doing it for her husband, a pipe maybe, smoking gear, matches perhaps, and beer maybe, then she'll come back with those things.

The second clear type of adjoined noun phrase pattern involves the listing of a number of noun phrases all of which give particular descriptions of some object. As mentioned earlier, this is very like an extension of the Qualifying slot in the basic noun phrase structure. A common device is to list a set of synonyms to emphasise some special characteristic of an object or person.

- (8.43) *Nhula wartirra kangku-nguru pawulu-u, purna-a kupuyu-u*
 near.you woman carry-PRES child-ACC baby-ACC little-ACC

purluthan-wirriwa-a.
 walk-PRIV-ACC

That woman is carrying a child, a little baby that isn't walking yet.

- (8.44) *Mir.ta-l kunti nhuura ngunhu-ngara, wantharni-npa-waa*
 not-THEN RHET knowing that.NOM-PL how-INCH-PURPs=o

ngurnaa, ngurnu-tharra-a-lwa. thaapuwa-tharra, jiwarra-tharra,
 that.ACC that.OBL-DU-ACC-ID big.man-DU white-DU

mirtamirta-tharra, jurlwin-tharra...
 white-DU white-DU

They really didn't know then what those fellows would do, that's those two fellows, the important ones, the white ones...

8.7 APPARENTLY EXCEPTIONAL NOUN PHRASE STRUCTURES

There are some apparent exceptions to the patterns of noun phrase structure described in previous sections. The first class of exceptions includes orders of noun phrase constituents which appear not to conform to the general pattern of functional slots presented in (§8.1). Both (8.45) and (8.46) are examples of a principled exception to normal ordering whereby part of the noun phrase can be preposed for special, contrastive, emphasis.

- (8.45) *Jami, ngunhaa kawurru jarrala-ma-rninyji, wal.yu-rru*
 medicine that.NOM medicine healthy-CAUS-FUT far-NOW

puni-waa.
 go-PURPs=o

As for medicine, that *kawurru* sort makes you healthy, so you can keep on going.

- (8.46) *Yirna-tharra-wu kanyara-tharra-wu, ngunhu ngurra parlu-ngka*
 this.OBL-DU-GEN man-DU-GEN that.NOM camp top-LOC

parla-ngka.

hill-LOC

These two men's camp is on top of a hill. (trans.)

The two examples illustrate a pattern in which some nominal precedes a demonstrative in Determiner function. In (8.45), *jami* is a generic and might be expected to fill the Classifier slot, but here the speaker preposes the generic to draw attention to the particular topic of discussion. In (8.46), the genitive noun phrase would be expected to function as a Determiner but would normally follow the demonstrative, which makes a more general determining reference. As well as serving to identify a particular camp, the preposed genitive noun phrase draws attention to the possessor. The two men are certainly unusual in deciding to make their camp on the top of a hill and the speaker goes on to speculate on just what they might be afraid of in building in such a strategic defensive position. To conform with the analysis presented here, the fronted expressions are to be treated as separate noun phrases, apposed to a following noun phrase.

The second class of apparent exceptions involves the lack of number agreement within apparent noun phrases. Number suffixes like other nominal inflections might be expected to be distributed to all elements of a noun phrase, excluding nominals which are inherently specified for number such as numerals, non-singular pronouns, and idiosyncratic plurals like *kupiyaji* 'little ones'. However, it is not uncommon for number marking to appear on some part of an apparent noun phrase rather than on all words in the noun phrase. Firstly, nominals in the Entity slot marked for number may be followed by what appears to be an unmarked Qualifier:

- (8.47) *Thurlajinkarri-tharra nganajumarta-la mir.ta kuliya-lalha.*
 poor.fellow-DU 1DU.DISHARM-LOC not hear-PAST
 Those two poor fellows with us didn't listen.

- (8.48) *Nhuwana pawulu-ngara kangku-Ø muyi-tharra-a nhuwana-wu-u.*
 2PL child-PL take-IMP dog-DU-ACC 2PL-GEN-ACC
 You children take those two dogs of yours.

Secondly, a number-marked noun phrase may be introduced by a singular demonstrative or singular possessive construction:

- (8.49) *Ngunhu kupiyaji karranykarrany-ngara jalya waruu.*
 that.NOM little(PL) comorant-PL useless still
 Those little comorants still can't fly (lit. are still no good).

- (8.50) *ngurnu kayarra-a wirra-tharra-a panyu-tharra-a*
 that.ACC two-ACC boomerang-DU-ACC good-DU-ACC
 those two good boomerangs

- (8.51) *Ngayu thawu-lalha nganaju-u pawulu-ngara-a thawun-mulyarra.*
 1SG.NOM send-PAST 1SG.GEN-ACC child-PL-ACC town-ALL
 I sent my children to town.

The simple solution to this problem is to stick to the definition that the scope of an inflection defines a noun phrase and so treat the apparent noun phrases in the above examples as adjoined structures. The apparent noun phrases in (8.47) to (8.51) can then be paraphrased as:

- (8.47') ... *thurlajinkarri-tharra, nganajumarta-la* ...
 poor.fellow-DU 1DU.DISHARM-LOC
 ... two poor fellows, with me...
- (8.48') ... *muyi-tharra, nhuwana-wu* ...
 dog-DU 2PL-GEN
 ... two dogs, yours...
- (8.49') ... *ngunhu, kupiyaji karranykarrany-ngara* ...
 that.NOM little(PL) comorant-PL
 ... that, a group of comorants...
- (8.50') ... *ngurnu, kayarrawirra-tharra panyu-tharra* ...
 that.ACC two boomerang-DU good-DU
 ... that, two good boomerangs...
- (8.51') ... *nganaju, pawulu-ngara* ...
 1SG.GEN child-PL
 ... mine, children...