

GRAMMATICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY
OF THE ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

EDITORIAL NOTICE.

THE following attempt, confessedly imperfect, to explain the grammatical structure of the language spoken by the Australian Aborigines on the banks of the Swan, and in the country adjacent, has been the occupation of the leisure hours of a friend and myself.

I would wish it, however, to be distinctly understood, that our task has been limited to the arrangement. The materials have been furnished by the Native Interpreter, Mr. Francis F. Armstrong; without whom we could have done nothing, and to whom is to be ascribed altogether the merit of any information which it is to be hoped the following pages will be found to contain.

It will be observed that many of the explanations and grammatical rules are in inverted commas. These are passages extracted from the preface to Capt. Grey's Vocabulary.

It is only an act of common justice to that able officer to acknowledge, whenever we have adopted, his words. We have occasionally differed from him, but it has been with reluctance, and the more so, because how much we have been benefited by his Vocabulary can only be appreciated by those who may have attempted to acquire a knowledge of this language, before he shaped it into a consistent and tangible form.

I am as willing as any one (more so, perhaps, than most, because I have studied the subject matter in order to master it,) to acknowledge the difficulties of entering into any of the details "of the Grammar of a language which is yet by so imperfectly known." Still I cannot avoid indulging the sanguine expectation that this effort, feeble and defective, as I confess it to be, may prove useful to the settler, interesting to the Philologist, and be the means of furnishing a more sound and thorough knowledge of the tongue to the Christian Missionary, by whose labor alone civilization can be introduced, if at all, among the wandering tribes of Australia.

CHARLES SYMMONS,
Protector of Aborigines.

Perth, Western Australia, }

October 8th, 1841. }

THE LETTERS.

A. B. D. E. G. I. J. K. L. M. N. Ng. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. W. Y.

(1)

The sounds of these letters, as used in the accompanying short grammatical sketch, are adopted from the Orthography recommended in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London.

(2)

The Consonants are to be sounded as in English. G being invariably hard.

(3)

The Vowels are to be sounded for the most part as in the following English words:

(4)

A as in father, except at the end of words, or when it has the mark ^ over it, and it is then to be pronounced like the first *a* in *mamma*.

(5)

E as in *there*, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of words.

(6)

I as in *fatigue*.

(7)

O as in cold; Ow as in *cow*, *low*, *now*.

(8)

U as in *rude*.

(9)

Y is used sometimes as a consonant, sometimes as a vowel. In the latter case it is always long, as in my, shy, try, scythe.

(10)

ARTICLES.

In the Australian language there are no articles. The English sentences, "Where is the horse? there is a man; the women are gone; I saw a ship;" would be expressed in Australian by – "Horse where? man there; women gone; I ship saw."

NOUNS.

The following is a list of the commonest and most useful nouns: –

ELEMENTS.

Air (or rather wind),	Mar
Earth,	Bud-jor
Fire,	Kal-la
Water.	Gab-bi

TIME, WEATHER, &c.

A cloud,	Mar-gab-bi
A comet or meteor,	Bin-nar
Darkness,	My-art
Dawn of morning,	Wau-lu
Daylight,	Bi-ryt
Dew,	Min-yi
Fog, a mist,	Dul-ya
Hail,	Mu-lat
Ice,	I-ril-bar-ra
Lightning,	Bâb-bâng-win
Mid-day,	Mal-yâr-râk
Moon,	Mi-ki
Moonlight,	Mi-kâng
Rain,	Gab-bi, Mo-ko
Do. (sky water),	Gab-bi gud-jy-tâl
Sky, Gu-jyt	
Stars, Ngan-gar	
Storm from the north,	Dtal-la-jar
Storm from the south,	Wir-rit
Sun,	Ngan-ga
Sunlight, sunshine,	Mo-nak

Thunder,	Mâlgar
To-day, Yyi	
To-morrow. }	Morogoto,
}	Bi-nâng
Twilight of morning,	Wau-lu
evening,	Ngal-lan-bâr-rang
Wind,	Mar
Yesterday,	Myrh-ruk
SEASONS.	
Spring,	Jilba
Summer,	Bi-rok
Autumn,	Bur-nu-ro
Winter,	Mâg-go-ro
INDIVIDUALS OF THE TWO SEXES.	
A man,	Mam-mâ râp
An old man,	Windo
A young man,	Gu-lam-bid-di
A woman,	Ya-go
An old woman,	Win-do
A young woman,	Mân-dig-gâ-ra
A child of either sex,	Gu-lang
An infant,	Gud-ja
RELATIONS	
Ancestors,	N'yettin-ngâl
Aunt,	Mân-gat
Brother,	Ngun-du
eldest, }	Ngu-ban
}	Bor-ran
middle,	Kardijit
youngest,	Gu-loyu
in-law,	De-ni

Daughter,	Gwoy-rat
Father,	Mam-mân
in-law,	Kan-gun
Husband,	Kar-do
Mother,	Ngan-gan
in-law,	Mân-gat
Nephew,	My-ur
Niece,	Gâm bart
Sister,	Dju-ko
eldest,	Jin-dam
middle,	Kow-at
youngest,	Gu-loyin
married,	My-râk
in-law,	De-ni
Son,	Mam-mâl
Uncle,	Kan-gun
Wife,	Kar-do

PARTS OF THE BODY.

Arm from the shoulder to the elbow,	Wan-go
Arm from the elbow to the wrist,	Mar-ga
Arm, right	Ngun-mân
left	D'yu-ro
Armpit,	Ngal-ya
Back,	Bo-gal
Backbone;	Bo-gal-kot-ye
Beard,	Ngan-ga
Blood,	Ngu-bo
Bone,	Kot-ye
Bowels,	Ko-nâng
Brain,	Mal-ya

Breast of a man,	Min-go
of a woman,	Bi-bi
Calf of leg,	Wal-gyt
Cheeks,	Yw-rytch
Chin,	Ngan-ga
Countenance, {	Dta-mel
{	Mi-nyt
Ear,	Ton-ga
Elbow,	No-gyt
Excrements,	Ko-nâng
Eye,	Mel
Eyebrows,	Mim-bat
Eyelash,	Mel-kam-bar
Eyelids,	Mel-nal-yâk
Flesh,	I-lyn
Foot,	Ji-na
Forehead,	Bi-gytch
Hair of head,	Kat-ta-mân-ga-ra
Hand,	Marh-ra
Head,	Kat-ta
Heel,	Ngar-do
Knee,	Bon-nit
Leg,	Mat-ta
Liver,	My-er-ri
Moustachios,	Mu-ning
Mouth,	Dta
Mucus of nose,	Ngo-ro
Nails,	Bi-ri
Navel,	Bilyi
Neck,	War-do
Nose,	Mul-ya

Nostrils,	Mul-ya-pu-nân
Ribs,	Ngar-ril
Shoulder,	Mun-ga
Side,	Ngar-ril
Skin,	Ma-bo
Sole of foot,	Ji-na-gâb-bârn
Spittle,	Dtal-yi
Stomach,	Kob-bâ-lo
Swallow, or inside of throat,	Gu-ni-di
Tear,	Min-gal-ya
Teeth,	Nalgo
Teeth, upper	Ngar-dâk-yu-gow-in
lower,	I-ra-yu-gow-in
Temples,	Ya-ba
Thigh,	Dtow-al
Thumb,	Marh-ra-ngan-ga
Tongue,	Dtal-lâng,
Veins,	Bi-di
Wrist,	Mar-dyl

NATIVE DRESS AND ORNAMENTS.

Bag carried by women, the general receptacle for all small articles,	Go-to
Bag in which the children are carried,	Gun-dir
Band of opossum's hair worn round the head,	Kun-yi
Band for the neck,	Bu-ro-ro
Band for the waist,	Nul-bârn
Band of human hair worn round the waist,	Nig-ga-ra
The board used for throwing the spear,	Mi-ro
Bone or skewer used for fastening the cloak,	Dju-nong
Bone of kangaroo worn in the nose,	Mul-yat

Charcoal used by the men to rub themselves with, as a sign of mourning,	Morh-ro
A cloak,	Bo-ka
Feathers of emu, (ornamental tuft of)	Ngal-bo
Ditto of cockatoo,	Ngow-er
Grease,	Boyn
Hair of the head arranged with grease and <i>wil-gey</i> ,	Wad-ju
Hammer,	Kad-jo
Knife,	Dtab-ba
Lime, or pipe clay, with which the woman rub themselves as a sign of mourning,	Dâr-dâk
Paint (red ochreous clay),	Wil-gi
A spear, wooden barb,	Gid-ji
glass or quartz barb,	Gid-ji-bo-ryl
without barb,	Gar-bâl
A staff carried by the women,	Wan-na
A stick, short throwing,	Dow-ak
Tail of the native dog, worn in the hair,	Dur-da-dy-er
Tattooing,	Ngam-bârn
ANIMALS, BIRDS, AND INSECTS.	
Ant,	Bu-lo-lo
Bandicot,	Gwen-di
Bat,	Bam-bi
A bird,	Ji-da
Bustard, or Turkey,	Bi-bil-yer
Caterpillar,	Nar-na
Centipede,	Kan-bar-ra
Cockatoo, black, with red tail,	Ka-rak
Cockatoo, white tail,	Ngo-lak
Cockatoo, white.	Man-hyt
Cockatoo, pink crested,	Jak-kal-yak-kal

Cow,	Jin-gal-er-ga-dâk
Crow,	War-dang
Cuckoo-owl.	Gu-gu-mit
Dog,	Dur-da
Dog, native or wild,	Dur-da-mo-kyn
Duck, grey,	Ngwo-nâ-na
Duck, musk or steamer,	Gad-dâ-ra
Emu-wren,	Jar-jil-ya
Flea,	Ko-lo
Fly,	Nur-do
Frog,	War-gyl
Gadfly,	Gu-yal-la
Grasshopper,	Jet-tyl
Grub, edible, found in the Xanthorea and in the Wattle,	Bar-di
Guana,	Yur-na
Kangaroo, in general,	Yun-gor
Kangaroo, male.	Yow-art
Kangaroo, female,	War-ru
Kangaroo, rat,	Wal-yo
Kingfisher,	Kang-in-nak
Lizard,	Ji-na-âr-ra
Lizard found in the York District, commonly termed "Devil,"	Mâl-li-war
Louse,	Ko-lo
Magpie,	Gur-bat
Moscheto	Ni-do
Mouse,	Mar-do
Opossum,	Ku-mal
Parrot,	Dâm-mâ-lâk
Parrot (called twenty-eight),	Dow-arn

Pelican,	Bud-tal-lâng
Pig,	Mâg-go-rong
Pigeon, bronze winged,	Wod-ta
Porpoise,	War-ran-âng
Quail, }	Mu-rt
}	Mu-ro-lâng
Robin,	Gu-ba
Scorpion,	Ka-ry-ma
Seal (hair),	Man-yin-ni
Snake,	Wan-gâl
Spider,	Ka-ra
Swallow,	Budi-bring
Tortoise,	Bu-yi
Turtle, fresh water,	Ye-kyn
Vermin of all kinds,	Kolo

FISH.

Cobbler,	Ka-ral-ya
Crab,	Kar-ri
Crayfish,	Ko-nak
Flounder,	Bam-bi
Mullet,	Kal-ka-da
Oyster,	Mu-ri-di
Salmon,	Mur-ri
Shark,	Mun-do
Snapper,	I-ja-râp
Tailor fish,	Mar-gyn
Whale,	Mi-man-ga
Whiting,	Dur-dyn

TREES, PLANTS, &c.

Banksia, or honeysuckle,	Bi-a-ra
Banksia flower,	Mân-gyt
Banksia seed cone,	Bi-ytch
Banksia bark,	Djan-ni
Blackboy, or grass tree, common sort,	Bal-ga
Blackboy flower stem,	Wal-jâp
Blackboy gum,	Pi-ning
Blackboy leaves, green or dried	Min-dar
Blackboy, tuft topped, from which the strongest resin is procured,	Bar-ro
Blackboy, tuft topped, gum of,	Kad-jo
Blackboy, underground,	Mi-mi-di
The Broom tree,	Kow-e-da
Cabbage tree,	Mut-yal
Cabbage tree, flower of,	Bel-bar
Cabbage tree, gum of,	Mod-jar
Fern,	Kar-bâr-ra
Grass,	Bo-bo
Gum tree, red,	Gâr-dan
Gum tree, red, flower of,	Numbit
Gum tree, red, gum of,	Nal-la
Gum tree, red, bark of,	Tu-at-ta
Gum tree, white,	Wan-do
Gum tree, white, fungus of,	Me-dâp
Gum tree, flooded,	Gu-lur-to
Gum tree, York,	Wu-rak
Hakea,	Jân-ja
Hottentot fig (large)	Kol-bo-go
Hottentot fig (small)	Man-bi-bi
Hottentot fig, leaves of,	Mân-ga-ra

Kennedia, purple creeper,	Ku-ra-lo
Mahogany tree,	Djer-ral
Mahogany tree, bark of,	Bud-to
Moss,	Nan-gat-ta
Pear, native,	Jan-jin
Rushes,	Bat-ta
She oak,	Gul-li
Sow thistle,	Wau-dâ-râk
Tea tree, small,	Ko-lil
Tea tree, large,	Mu-dur-du
Tea tree, bark of,	My-a
Wattle tree,	Gal-yang
Wattle tree, gum of	Gal-yang
Zamia,	Dji-ri-ji
Zamia, fruit of,	By-yu
Zamia, downy wool,	Dji-ri-ji Kun-dyl

SOME OF THE COMMONEST

EDIBLE ROOTS.

Bohn, Dju-bâk, Dja-kât, Jitta, Mâd-ja, War-ran, Yan-jid-di.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Bark of a tree,	Ma-bo
Bird, (nest of) }	Ji-da-my-a
}	Mân-ga
A crook, or hooked stick, used for pulling down the Banksia flowers,	Kal-ga
An egg,	Nur-do
Estuary,	Dâr-bal
Feathers,	I-dal-ya
Food, flesh of all sorts, (fish, flesh, fowl, and creeping things,)	Dad-ja
Food, vegetable, of any sort,	Ma-ryn

Grass,	Bo-bo
a Grave,	Bo-gal
a Gun,	Wid-ji-ban-di
the Ground,	Bud-jor
a Hill	Kat-ta
a House,	My-a
a Lake (large),	Mu-lur
a Lake (small),	Ngu-ra
Leaf of a tree,	Dil-bi
a Path,	Bi-di
Rain,	Mo-ko
a River,	Bi-lo
a Rock,	Bu-yi
Sand, or sandy land,	Go-yar-ra
the Sea,	Odern
Skin of any thing,	Ma-bo
Stick, or piece of wood,	Gar-ba
Stick, fire-stick,	Kal-la-mat-ta
a Stone,	Bu-yi
String,	Mâd-ji
a Tree,	Bur-nu
a Tree, limb or arm of,	Mar-ga
Vegetation in general,	Jil-ba
Water,	Gab-bi
Water, brackish,	Gab-bi-kâr-ning
Water, fresh,	Gab-bi dji-kâp
Water, running,	Gab-bi-gur-jyt
Young of any living thing;	No-ba
Young of any animal,	No-pyn.

(12)

Nouns in the Australian language undergo certain inflections.

(13)

“The Genitive case (or Possessive) is formed by the addition of *âk* or *âng*. This varies from district to district. The literal meaning of these particles is, ‘of,’ or, ‘belonging to,’” as may be traced in some words derived originally from the inflection of others, – e. g., Kal-la, fire, Kal-lar-âk, (of, or belonging to, fire,) hot; Mi-ki, the moon, Mi-kâng, (of, or belonging to, the moon,) moonlight; Dta, the mouth, Dtal-lâng, (of, or belonging to, the mouth,) the tongue.

(14)

Examples of the Genitive case in *âk*.

Mam-ma-râp gidji, a man’s spear; Ya-go-âk bo-ka, a woman’s cloak; Ku-mal-âk gâr-rab (or) my-a, an opossum’s hole or nest.

Examples of the Genitive case in *âng*.

Der-bal-âng, of, or, belonging to, the Estuary, particularly applied to the inhabitants on the banks; Gab-bi-lâng, of, or, belonging to, the water; Bud-jor-lâng, of, or belonging to, the ground.

(15)

The sign of the Dative case seems, also, in some instances, to be expressed by *âk*, – as York-âk, Perth-âk bar-din, going to York, to Perth; but, generally it is rendered by *âl*, – as, I gave it to the child, Ngadjo al-li-ja gu-lang-âl yong-a-ga.

(16)

The Accusative terminates in “in,” – as, Ngad-jo yân-gor-in ngan-gow bru, I do not see the kangaroo.

(17)

The Ablative is expressed by affixing *âl* to the Nominative case, – as, Ngad-jo boat-âl Perth-âk bar dê-ga, I went in a boat to Perth; Ngal-a-ta ky-bra-âl watto bar-dê-ga, We went away in a ship; Bal gun-âl bu-ma-ga, She was killed by a gun; Dur-da cart-âl bar-duk bar-dê-ga, The dog went away with the cart.

(18)

“The Plural number is generally formed by the addition of the Numerals as far as three, beyond which, the term Bu-la (much or many) is usually employed. But all nouns which express human beings, form the plural, by the addition of *mân*, or *âr-ra*, or *gâr-ra*; *mân* being an abbreviation of *mân-da*, altogether, collectively.”

(19)

“Those words which end in a vowel, take mân in the plural, while those which end in a consonant, take gâr-ra,” – as, Kar-do, a wife or husband, makes Kar-do-mân; Ya-go, a woman, Ya-go-mân; Dju-ko, a sister, Dju-ko-mân; Mam-mul, a son, Mam-mul-gâr-ra; Gu-lang, a child, Gu-lang-gâr-ra.”

(20)

DECLENSION OF A SUBSTANTIVE.

Singular.

Plural.

Nom. Ya-go, a woman.

N. Ya-go-mân, women

Gen. Ya-go-âk, of a woman

G. Ya-go-mân-âk, of women

Dat. Ya-gol (or) Ya-go-âl, to a woman

D. Ya-go-mân-âl, to women

Acc. Ya-go-in, a woman

A. Ya-go-mân-in, women

Abl. Ya-go-âl, with or by means of a woman.

A. Ya-go-mân-âl, with or by means of women.

(21)

EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF THE CASES.

A woman came to the house,

Ya-go my-ak-âl yu-gow bar-da-ga

That is a woman's staff,

N'yag-ga ya-go-âk wan-na

I gave flour to a woman

Ngad-jo mar-yn ya-go-âl yong-a-ga

I saw a woman,

Ngad-jo ya-go-in djin-nâng-ga

The ground was dug by a woman,

Bud-jor Ya-go-âl bi-an-a-ga

(22)

ADJECTIVES.

The following list comprises the commonest Adjectives.

Alive,

{ Won-gin

{ Dor-dâk

Angry,

Gâr-rang

Bad,

Djul

Big,

Ngo-mon

Bitter,

Djal-lâm

Black,

Mo-ân

Clear, as water,

Kar-ryl

Cold,

Nag-ga

Dead,	Won-na-ga
Dry, not wet,	I-lar
Far-away,	U-rar
Fat,	Boyn-ga-dâk
Fresh,	Mil-gar
Good,	Gwab-ba
Green,	Ge-rip-ge-rip
Hard, not soft,	Mur-do-en
High,	I-ra-gân
Hot,	Kal-lâng
In the habit of (accustomed to),	Ma-lyn
Left (arm),	N'yar-do
Like, similar to,	Mo-gin
Little,	N'yu-map
Long, in length,	Wal-ya-di
Low,	Ngar-dâk
Narrow,	Nu-lu
Near,	Ba-duk
Old,	Win-do
Red,	Wil-gi-lâng
Right (arm),	Ngun-man
Short,	{ Go-rad
	{ Go-rad-da
Sick,	Men-dyk
Slow,	Dâb-bâk
Soft,	Gun-yâk
Sweet,	Mul-yit
Tall,	Ur-ri
Tame,	Ban-jar
Thin,	Kot-ye-lar-ra
True,	Bun-do

Well, not ill,	Bar-ra-bar-ra
Well, good,	Gwab-ba
Wet,	Bal-yan
White,	Wil-ban
Wild, shy,	Wy-i-wy-i
Young,	Yyi-nâng.

(23)

In addition to this list of Adjectives, there is one, “*Ga-dâk*,” which requires, from its nature, to be separately mentioned. It means *having*, or, *possessing*, and it is the exact opposite of “*bru*.” (See rule 66.) It is used always as an affix to the substantive, expressive of that which a person or thing possesses, – as, Bal boyl-ya-ga-dâk, he is a sorcerer, or one who possesses the power of boyl-ya (sorcery); Bal kar-do-ga-dâk, he or she is married, or, is one who possesses a wife or husband; Ngin-ni bo-ka mil-gar-ga-dâk, you have a new cloak, or, are the possessor of &c.; Bo-ka-ga-dâk, Wil-gi-ga-dâk, Gid-ji-ga-dâk, having a cloak, wil-gi, spears, &c.

(24)

The Adjectives vary in their degrees of comparison, but it is, perhaps, more difficult to give general rules in this than in any other case. Some of them form their comparatives by the addition of “*jin*,” – as, Dâb-bâk, slow; Dâb-bâk-jin, slower. Gwid-jir, sharp; Gwid-jir-jin, sharper. Yer-râk, high; Yer-rak-jin, higher. “But, most generally, the Comparative degree is formed by the repetition of the word, whilst the Superlative may always be found by the addition of the Intensive ‘*jil*,’ – as, Gwabba, good; Gwabba-gwab-ba, better; Gwab-ba-jil, best.”

(25)

The degree or condition of a thing, understood in English by the word “very,” is rendered in Australian by the repetition of the Adjective, – as, Mul-yit mul-yit, very sweet; Mur-do-in mur-do-in, very strong; Gun-yak gun-yak, very soft. The same form of expression occurs in English, – as, many and many is the time, (i.e.) very many times; again and again, or, often and often, (i.e.) very frequently; more and more, &c. &c.

(26)

The Intensive *jil*, the meaning of which is rendered into English by “verily,” is applicable to all other parts of speech besides Adjectives, – as, Kar-do-jil, one who is in the direct line for marrying with another; Dad-ja-jil, it is certainly meat; Kannah-jil, eh! verily? is it indeed so?

(27)

NUMERALS, OR NOUNS OF NUMBER.

One, Gyn; Two, Gud-jal; Three, Warh-rang.

(28)

Commonly speaking, among the Aborigines of this part of Australia, the power of computation ends here, and any quantity beyond three is expressed by Bu-la (much or many), but they have a complicated mode of defining other numbers, – as,

Four, Gud-ja-lin gud-ja-lin (two two)

Five, Marh-jin-bân-ga (half the hands)

Six, Marh-jin-bân-ga-gud-jir-gyn (half the hands and one)

Seven, Marh-jin-bân-ga-gud-jir-gud-jal (half the hands and two)

Eight, Marh-jin-bân-ga-gud-jir-warh-rang (half the hands and three)

Nine, Marh-jin-bân-ga-gud-jir-gud-jal-in-gud-jal-in (half the hands and four)

Ten, Bel-li-bel-li-marh-jin-bân-ga (the hand on either side)

(29)

Their mode of reckoning time is, by “sleeps” for short, and by the seasons for longer intervals, – as,

“He will be here in three (days) sleeps,”

“Bal-mi-la bid-jar warh-rang-âl yu-al bar din.”

Will Wannyn stay a long time on Rottnest?”

“Wan-nyn Rottnest-âl kal-ya-gâl ngin-now-in ka
get-jin wân-jow-in?”

“Yes, three years (summers and winters),”

“Qua, bi-rok, mag-goro warh-rang.”

(30)

PRONOUNS.

It is in the Pronouns that the peculiarity of this language shows itself, and upon the proper use of them “it is necessary, therefore, to bestow the greatest care, for they are complicated, and a very slight change, in the termination of one of them, will alter altogether the force and meaning of a sentence.”

(31)

The Personal Pronouns are: –

Singular

Ngad-jo, or ngan-ya, I

N’yun-do, or Ngin-ni, thou

Bal, he, she, it.

Plural

Ngal-a-ta, we

N’yu-rang, ye

Bal-gun, they.

These Pronouns are thus declined: –

<i>Singular.</i>	<i>Plural.</i>
Nom. Ngan-ya, I	N. Nga-la-ta, we
Gen. Ngan-na-lâk, of me	G. Ngan-nil-âk, of us
Dat. Ngan-na, to me	D. Ngan-nil-âk, to us
Accu. Ngan-ya-in, me.	A. { Ngannil, } us
	A. { Ngan-nil-in, }
	A. Ngan-nil-âl, by us.
<i>Singular.</i>	<i>Plural.</i>
Nom. N'yun-do (or) Ngin-ni, thou	N. N'yu-rang, ye
Gen. N'yun-no-lâk, of thee	G. N'yu-rang-âk, of you
Dat. N'yun-no, to thee	D. N'yu-rang-âl, to you
Accu. Ngin-nin, thee	A. N'yu-rang-in, you or ye
	A. N'yu-rang-âl, by you.
<i>Singular.</i>	<i>Plural.</i>
Nom. Bal, he, she, it	N. Bal-gun, they
Gen. Bal-âk, of him, &c.	G. Bal-gun-âk, of them
Dat. Bal-âk, to him	D. Bal-gun-âk, to them
Accu. Bal-in, him	A. Bal-gun-in, them
Abl. Bal-âl	A. Bal-gun-âl, by them

It will be seen, that there are two pronouns to express I: ngad-jo and ngan-ya; and two to express thou: n'yun-do, and ngin-ni.

The difference between them seems to consist in this: viz., ngad-jo and n'yun-do are used to indicate the Active sense of the Verb, and ngan-ya and ngin-ni the Passive; that, there being no Passive form of the Verb, and no auxiliary Verb “to be,” ngan-ya and ngin-ni are employed whenever this Verb can be at all required; and they are always used with the present or past Participle, or, an Adjective; which is never the case with ngad-jo and n'yun-do: as, for example,

Ngad-jo djin-nâng	I see
Ngan-ya bar-din,	I am going
Ngad-jo dtan,	I pierce

Ngan-ya ngan-now-in,	I am eating
Ngad-jo bur-no den-dang-a-ga,	I climbed a tree
Ngan-ya wau-gâl-âl bak-kan-a-ga,	I was bitten by a snake
Ngan-ya win-do,	I am old
Ngan-ya gâr-rang.	I am angry.
N'yun-do kat-tidj?	Do you understand
Yan ngin-ni wan-gow-in?	What are you talking about?
N'yun-do nyt-jâk gab-bi ngan-na gang-ow bru?	Why do you not fetch me water?
Ngin-ni nyt-jâk bal-in bu-ma-win?	Why are you beating him
Ngin-ni djul,	You are wicked
Ngin-ni go-rad-da,	You are short.

(34)

Ngad-jo and n'yun-do are also used to indicate the future tense of the Verb. The Rule and Examples of this will be found under the Verb. (See rule 44, and example 50, Future Tense.)

(35)

Besides the above, there are three separate forms of Dual Pronouns. "The first is used with relation to Brothers and Sisters, or, between to friends, implying that two people are to each other as brothers and sisters, or very nearly connected," – as,

Ngal-li, we two, brothers and sisters, or friends			
Nu-bal, ye two,	"	"	"
Bu-la, they two,	"	"	"

(36)

"The second Dual expresses two persons standing to each other in the relation of parent and child, uncle and nephew," – as,

Ngal-la, we two, parent and child, &c.			
Nu-bal, ye two,	"	"	
Bu-la-la, they two,	"	"	

(37)

“The third Dual expresses, that, two persons of the different sexes are man and wife, or, greatly attached to each other,” – as,

Ngan-nik, we two, husband and wife,

Ngan-na-na, we two, brothers in law

Nu-bin, ye two, husband and wife

Bu-len, they two, “ “

(38)

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS.

The Possessive pronouns are derived from the inflected forms of the Personal Pronouns, – as,

Mine, Ngan-na-lâk

His, her, or its, { Bal-âk

My, Ngan-na

{ Bal-al-âk

Thine, { N’yun-na-lâk

Our or ours, Ngan-nil-âk

{ N’yun-na-lâng

Your or yours, N’yu-rang-âk

Thy, N’yun-do

Their or theirs, Bal-gun-âk.

(39)

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS.

That or those, N’yag-ga

This or these, Nid-ja.

(40)

RELATIVE PRONOUNS.

The Relative Pronouns are: –

Ngan-ni, who? (in the sense of “who are you?”)

Ngan-do, who? (in the sense of “who did that?”)

Ngan-nong, whose?

THE VERB.

The following is a list of the Verbs in most common use: –

To	arise,	I-ra-bin
	beat,	Bu-ma
	become,	Ab-bin
	bite,	Bâk-kan
	break,	Tak-kan
	bring,	Bâr-rang
	burn (slightly),	Nar-row
	burn, to consume, as a fire, or as meat overroasted,	Bur-ra-râp
	bury,	Bi-a-nan
	carry,	Gang-ow
	carry off,	Bâr-rang
	close,	Di-din
	cook,	Du-kun
	cough,	Kul-bu-kul-bu-dtan
	cry,	Mi-rang
	cry out,	Mi-row
	dig,	Bi-an
	divide,	Wal-lâk-yong-a
	drink,	{ Ngan-now
		{ Nalgo
	eat,	{ Ngan-now
		{ Nalgo
	fear,	Wy-en
	fight,	Bak-ad-ju
	fly,	Bâr-dang
	frighten,	Dâr-nâ-vân-i-jow
	go,	{ Bar-do
		{ Wat-to

go away,	Kol-bar-do
hear,	Kat-tidj
hide,	Bal-lar-i-jow
know (a person),	Nag-ol-uk
laugh,	Go-a
leave,	Wân-ja
light a fire,	Du-kun
marry,	Kar-do-bâr-rang
move,	Mur-ri-jo
open,	Yal-gar-ân-ân
pain,	Bâk-kan
pierce,	Dtan
play,	Wab-bow
pull up (or) out,	Maul-bâr-rang
put or place,	I-jow
run,	Yu-gow mur-ri-jo
scold,	Gâr-rang
see,	{ Djin-nâng
	{ Ngan-gow
shut,	Di-din-wân-ja
sing,	Yed-dig-e-row
sit,	Ngin-now
smell,	Bin-dang
speak,	Wan-gow
spear,	Gid-jil
stand,	Yu-gow
take,	Gang-ow
take away,	Bâr-rang
tear,	Je-ran
throw,	Gwar-do
tie,	Yu-tarn

understand,

Kat-tidj

walk,

Gan-now.

(42)

There are a few imperative of Verbs, of very common and useful import, which may be inserted here.

Come here,

{ Kow-a-kow-a

{ Yu-al

Continue,

{ Ngat-ti

go on,

{ Ngatti-ngatti

Get up,

I-rap

Go away,

Wat-to

Leave (a thing) alone,

Bal Wân-ja

Listen,

Nâh-nâh

Look, take care,

Gar-rod-jin

Remain, stay,

Nan-nâp

(43)

TENSES OF THE VERBS.

“In forming the Tenses, very few difficulties present themselves.”

The Present Tense is either the same as the Infinitive, – as, Ngad-jo djin-nâng, I see, – or, is formed of the Present Participle, – as, Ngan-ya bu-ma-win, I am beating.

(44)

PRETERITE OR PAST TENSE.

“The Preterite is nearly always formed by adding ‘ga’ to the Present, and is the same as the Past Participle. The longer or shorter periods of time past since which any action has occurred, are distinguished by prefixing to the Preterite the words, ‘Go-rah,’ a long time ago; ‘Ka-ramb,’ a short time since; ‘Go-ri,’ just now.”

(45)

FUTURE TENSE.

The Personal Pronouns, Ngad-jo and N’yun-do, having their termination changed to “ul,” are used as signs of the first and second persons singular of the Future Tense. Ngad-jul and N’yun-dul answer exactly to the English, I will, you will, – as, Ngad-jul yong-a, I’ll give; N’yun-dul wat-to, you’ll go. For the most part, however, the Adverbs, “Bur-da,” presently, and “Mi-la,” any time hereafter, prefixed to the Present Tense, indicate that an action is about to take place, and that a longer or shorter interval of time is likely to occur before its performance.

(46)

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

“The Imperative Mood is formed by laying additional emphasis on the Present tense.”

(47)

PRESENT PARTICIPLE.

The Present Participle is formed by the addition of “in,” (or) “win” to the Infinitive of the Verb.

(48)

PAST PARTICIPLE.

The Participle Past is the same as the Preterite Tense, and is formed by the addition of “ga,” to the Infinitive.

(49)

The Passive action of the Verb is shown by the elliptical or defective form of the sentence, or, by the use of Ngan-ya and Ngin-ni, together with the Past Participle, and the Ablative case of the instrument of action, or cause of suffering.

(50)

“No change takes place in the singular or plural number of the Tenses, and the different persons of a Tense are formed by the mere addition of the characteristic pronouns.”

(51)

Examples of the Tenses, and Uses of the Verbs.

Infinitive, Bu-ma, to beat, to kill, to blow, (as a flower)

Part. Pres. Bu ma-win, beating

Part. Past Bu-ma-ga, beaten or having beat.

PRESENT TENSE.

Singular.

Ngan-ya bu-ma-win, I beat or am beating

Ngin-ni bu-ma-win, Thou beatest, &c.

Bal bu-ma-win, He, she, it beats, &c.

Plural.

Ngal-a-ta bu-ma-win, We beat or are beaten

N'yu-rang bu-ma-win, You beat, &c.

Bal-gun bu-ma-win, They beat, &c.

PAST TENSE.

To be used with Go-ri, Go-rah, or Ka-ramb, according to the period of time which has elapsed, and which is intended to be expressed. (See rule 44.)

Singular.

Ngad-jo go-ri bu-ma-ga,	I have just now beaten
N'yun-do go-rah bu-ma-ga,	Thou hast long since beaten
Bal ka-ramb bu-ma-ga,	He has some time since beaten

Plural.

Ngal-la-ta go-ri bu-ma-ga,	We &c.
N'yu-rang go-rah bu-ma-ga,	You &c.
Bal-gun ka-ramb bu-ma-ga,	They &c.

FUTURE TENSE.

The Future Tense is used with Bur-da (soon, presently), or Mi-la (hereafter), according to the idea of the interval of time wished to be conveyed by the speaker; with Ngad-jul and N'yun-dul for the first and second persons singular. (See rule 44.)

Singular.

Ngad-jul bur-da bu-ma,	I shall soon beat
N'yun-dul bur-da bu-ma,	Thou wilt soon beat
Bal mi-la bu-ma,	He will hereafter beat

Plural.

Ngal-la-ta bur-da bu-ma,	We shall soon beat
N'yun-rang bur-da bu-ma,	You will soon beat
Bal-gun mi-la bu-ma,	They will hereafter beat

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Bu-ma,	Beat.
--------	-------

PASSIVE VOICE.

In rule 49 it has been stated, that, throughout all the Tenses the use of the Passive Voice is shown, first, by the elliptical or defective form of the sentence, – as,

PRESENT TENSE.

Singular.

I am beaten,	Ngan-ya-in bu-ma,	(some one) beats me
Thou art beaten,	Ngin-nin bu-ma,	(some one) beats thee
He is beaten,	Bal-in bu-ma,	(some one) beats him

Plural.

We are beaten,	Ngan-nil-in bu-ma,	(some one) beats us
You are beaten,	N'yu-rang-in bu-ma,	(some one) beats you
They are beaten,	Bal-gun-in bu-ma,	(some one) beats them

PAST TENSE.

To be used with Go-ri, Go-rab, or Ka-ramb, (see rule 44,) – as,

Singular.

I was beaten (lately), Ngan-ya-in go-ri bu-ma-ga, (some one) beat me lately

(The same form to be continued through the remainder of the persons, both in the Singular and Plural numbers.)

FUTURE TENSE.

To be used with Bur-da, or Mi-la, (see rule 45) – as,

I shall be beaten, Ngan-ga-in bur-da bu-ma, (some one) will beat me presently

(The same form to be continued through the several persons of both numbers.)

In the instance of each of the above Tenses, it will be perceived that, Ngan-ya-in, Ngin-nin, &c., &c., are the Accusative cases of the several Pronouns, governed by the Verb, of which the Nominative case is understood.

But, secondly, the Passive form of the Verb may be indicated by the use of Ngan-ya, Ngin-ni, and the other Pronouns, or a Substantive in connection with the Past Participle and the Ablative case of the instrument of action, or the cause of suffering. (See rule 49.)

PRESENT TENSE.

Singular.

Ngan-ya gid-ji-âl dtan-nâ-ga,

I am pierced by a spear

Ngin-ni yer-ra-wa-âl bourn-a-ga

Thou art wounded by a knife

Bal dur-da-âl bak-kan-â-ga,

He is bitten by a dog

Plural.

Ngal-a-ta wan-gâl-âl dal-lâng-âg-a,

We are pursued by the Wau-gâl

N'yu-rang wil-gi-âl dar-ra-jan-nab-bow,

You are covered with Wil-gi

Bal-gun mal-gar-âl dur-na-vân-i-ja-ga,

They are frightened by the thunder

PAST TENSE.

Bud-jor yago-mân-âl bi-an-a-ga,

The ground was dug by the women

My-a mar-âl tak-kan-â-ga,

The house was destroyed by wind

Yân-gor dur-da mo-kyn-âl ngan-na-ga,

The kangaroo was devoured by the wild
dogs

FUTURE TENSE.

Singular.

Ngan-ya mi-la get-jin won-nâ-ga,

I (shall be) soon dead

Ngin-ni bur-da gab-bi-âl mor-de-kâp bar-da-ga,

Thou (wilt be) presently drowned

Kal-la bur-da get-jin du-ku-nâ-ga,

The fire (will be) made soon

Plural

Ngal-a-ta djan-ga-âl mi-la gor-an-â-ga,

We shall be scolded by the white people

N'yu-rang horse-âl bur-da gan-nâ-ga,

You will be kicked by the horse presently

Bal-gun bur-da get-jin bu-ma-ga,

They will be soon punished

(55)

The above examples of the Tenses of the Passive Voice must be taken rather as illustrations of the possible, than the common use of the Verb in its Passive signification. It might seem pedantic and over-strained to an Aboriginal Australian to insist upon this form of speaking. He would, it is most probable, prefer making use, in most cases, of the Active form of the Verb, and it is evident that the idea conveyed is the same, whether we say,

I am beaten, or, Some one beats me

I was beaten, or, some one has beaten me

I am pierced by a spear, or, a spear has pierced me

The ground was dug by the women, or, the women dug the ground

We shall be scolded by the white people, or, the white people will scold us.

(56)

When an Adjective, expressive of the quality or condition of a thing, is preceded by a Pronoun or Substantive, the Auxiliary Verb, “to be,” is always understood in some one of its Tenses, – as,

Singular.

Ngan-ya yu-lâp

I am hungry

Ngin-ni kot-ye-la-ra,

Thou art thin

Bal win-do,

He is old

Plural.

Ngal-a-ta gwab-ba,

We are good

N’yu-rang djul,

You are wicked

Bal-gun min-dyt,

They are sick

When other periods of time are to be expressed, the same rules, as previously laid down, are to be observed. (See rules 44 and 45.)

(57)

ADVERBS.

The following is a list of the commonest and most useful Adverbs: –

Accidentally,

Bal-luk

Actually,

Yam-bo

After, behind,

Ngo-lan-ga

Again,

Gar-ro

Already,

Go-ri

Always,	Dow-ir
Badly,	Djul
Before (in front),	Gwytch-ang-ât
Close (near),	Ba-duk
Continually,	Kal-ya-gâl
Enough,	Bel-âk
Far-away,	U-rar
Formerly,	Ka-ramb
Gently,	Bet-tik-bet-tik
Here,	N'yal
High,	{ Ye-rak
	{ Yi-ra-gan
How many,	Nâm-mân
Immediately,	{ I-lak
	{ Gwytch
In this manner,	Wan-no-itch
In vain,	Mur-do
Just now,	Go-ri
Long time ago,	Go-rah
Low down,	Ngar-dâk
More,	Ngat-ti-ngat-ti
Near,	Bar-duk
Never,	Yu-at-jil
No,	Yu-a-da
Not,	{ Bârt
	{ Bru
	{ Yu-a-da
Now,	Yy-i
Perhaps,	Gab-byn
Quickly	Get-get
Short time since,	Go-ri

Slowly,	Dtab-bâk
So (in this manner),	Win-ni-râk
So many,	Win-nir
Softly,	Bet-tik
That way,	Wun-no
Then,	Gar-ro
There (a short distance off),	Yel-lin-ya
There (a long distance off),	{ Bo-ko
	{ Bo-ko-ja
Truly,	Bun-do-bâk
Very (affixed to words as an intensive),	Jil
Well,	Gwab-ba
Where,	{ Win-ji
	{ Win-jal
	{ Yan
Yes,	Qua
Yonder,	Bo-ko-ja.

(58)

The position of the Adverb in a sentence seems to be of little importance, provided only it is placed before the Verb.

PREPOSITIONS.

The Prepositions are few in number:

After, (used with the Dative case) as	Ngo-lang
Among (mingled with any thing),	Kar-da-gor
Amongst (to divide amongst),	Mân-da
Between,	Kar-do-gor
By, is rendered by affixing <i>âl</i> to the Nominative case of the Substantive or Pronoun, (See Ablative case, rules 17 and 20)	
In (within),	Bu-ra

Of is rendered by affixing *âk* to the Nominative case of the Substantive or Pronoun,
(See Genitive case, rules 13 and 20)

On (upon), used with the Dative case; in the instance of one thing lying upon another, but never of anything upon the ground; Ngad-ja

To is rendered by affixing *âk* or *âl* to the Nominative case of the Substantive or Pronoun,
(See Dative case, rules 15 and 20)

With is usually expressed by Gâm-bârn (in company with) and the Accusative case; or Bar-duk (near) and the Dative case

Without,	Bru
----------	-----

The Prepositions are always used after the Substantive or Pronoun.

EXAMPLES.

Bal ngan-na ngo-lang mur-ri-ja-ga,	He came after me
Djan-ga ka-da-gor gid-ji gwart bru,	Do not throw the spears among the white people
Ngad'jo n'yag-ga ma-ryn n'yu-rang-âk mân-da yong-a,	I give this flour amongst you
Yel-la bur-nu-âk kar-da-gor mur-ri-jo,	Go between these trees
My-a bu-ra dâr-bow,	Go in the house
Ji-da bur-nu-âk ngad-ja,	The bird is on the tree

Ngad-jo bal-in gâm-bân ba-dâ-ga,
Ngad-jo cart-âl ba-duk ba-dâ-ga,
Bo-ka bru,
My-a bru,

I went with him
I went with the cart,
Without a cloak,
Without a house

(61)

MODE OF INTERROGATION.

“A question is most commonly put by terminating the sentence with the interrogative interjection Kân-nah,” – as,

N’yun-do ton-ka Kân-nah?
Bal bur-nu gang-â-ga kân-nah?
Bal n’yun-no bab-in kân-nah?

Do you hear, or understand?
Has he brought the wood?
Is that man your friend?

(62)

MODE OF AFFIRMATION.

The reply to the question, if in the affirmative, may be rendered either by “Qua,” yes, – as,

N’yun-do bur-da gab-bi bâr-rang kân-nah?

Will you fetch water presently?

Qua,

Yes

Mam-ma-râp go-ri yu-âl kan-nah?

Is the man come?

Qua,

Yes

(63)

Or, by affixing the particle “Bâk” to the end of the word which is used in reply, – as,

Bal-ngan-ni? who is that? Yel-la-gon-ga-bâk, it is Yellagonga (it is no other than Yellagonga)

Yal-la-nyt? what is that? Bur-nu-bâk, it is a tree (it is nothing but a tree)

Yal-la gwab-ba kân-nah? is that good? Gwab-ba-bâk, it is good (it is indeed good)

Ngin-ni bun-do-jil wan-gow-in kân-nah? are you speaking the truth? Bun-do-bâk, it is perfectly true.

(64)

MODE OF NEGATION.

If the reply to the enquiry be in the negative, Bârt, Bru, or Yu-a-da, may either of them be used. They each signify *not*. But Bârt and Bru are most generally used with Verbs, and Yu-a-da with Adjectives, – as,

Ngad-jo kat-tidj bârt,	I do not know (or) understand
Ngad-jo djin-nâng bru,	I do not see
Kal-la du-kun-a-ga yu-a-da,	The fire is not prepared (not lighted)
N'yag-ga gwab-ba yu-a-da,	That is not good

(65)

Bru also signifies “without,” and answers to the English word “less” in composition, – as,

Ngan-ga bo-ka bru,	I am without a cloak (cloakless)
Ngin-ni my-a bru,	Thou art without a house (houseless)
Dur-da dy-er bru,	The dog is without a tail (tailless)
Ngal-a-ta gab-bi bru,	We are without water
N'yu-rang dad-ja-ma-ryn bru,	You are without food
Bal-gun ngan-gan bru,	They are orphans (i.e. without a mother, motherless)

(66)

Yu-a-da means “no” as well as “not,” and is always used for the simple negative to a question in the same way as *Qua* is for the simple affirmative. (See rule 64.)

(67)

CONJUNCTIONS.

There are only three conjunctions, so far as can at present be ascertained. More, doubtless, will be discovered as our knowledge of the language advances –

Gud-jir,	And
Min-ning,	If
Ka,	Or

(68)

Among the Adverbs there is no word for “when.” “Min-ning,” and “Ka,” do duty for it, – as,
Min-ning ngad-jo ngin-ni bi-nang djin-nâng ngad-jul n’yun-no sixpence yong-a,

When (or) if I see you to-morrow I will give you sixpence

N’yun-do Perth-âk yy-i ka my-rok yu-âl-a-ga, When did you come to Perth?

(would be rendered) Did you come to Perth to-day or yesterday?

N’yun-do Perth-âk yy-i ka mo-ro-go-to (bur-da ka mi-la yu-âl), When will you come to Perth?

(would be rendered) Will you come to Perth to-day or to-morrow, (soon or some time hence)?

(69)

INTERJECTIONS.

There are two Interjections, –

Nâh, *ah!*, or, *so*: in reply, or as an acknowledgement that the person who utters it is listening to, or is interested in, what is being related

N’yôn, Alas an expression of sorrow at bad news; uttered long and slowly.