

Mid-fieldwork review
Ramingin̄, mid-April 2019

things are being emphasised in dharrwa different ways
Dhulumburrk, On Semantics

SUMMARY

At this point I've been in Ramin̄ for 17 days, with roughly 17 to go. In this time I've had 8 consulting sessions, recorded & transcribed *ca.* 10.5 hours of audio data (A\$500). I've worked with 3 consultants on W. Dhuwal (2 Yirritja & 1 Dhuwa speaker). The elicitation has taken the form of translation tasks (with some contextual enrichment via verbal vignettes and basic storyboards). This elicitation has targeted the expression of TEMPORAL, MODAL and ASPECTUAL and aspectual categories entirely.

Moving forward I expect to firm up the remaining weak judgments in this data (these are emphasised in this document) over the next few working days (likely to be slightly disrupted by Easter) and then to work on **(i)** text elicitation (*dhāwu mala*), **(ii)** other semantic-typology questions (*sc.* negation, quantification and adjectival predicates), **(iii)** produce materials for basic TMA elicitation for Ritharr̄u & Wāgilak, which Salome Harris will carry out in N̄lipitji in May/June and **(iv)** perform my own basic narrative- and sentence-level elicitation for Djinba (Ganalbīu & Manydjalpīu) and/or Djinā (Marrāu) varieties for which I have access to speakers.

1 Matrix temporal reference — a clearer exposition

- One of the initial goals was eliciting (near-)minimal *n*-tuples

(1) a. **I vs II: metricality in the future**

dhiān̄ bala milmitjpa ŋarra dhu marrtji buma (mala) maypal ...bili napurr dhu luki
 now evening 1s FUT go.I collect.I PL shellfish CPLV 1p.EXCL FUT eat.II
goḍarr
 tomorrow

'I'll go out collecting shellfish this evening because we'll eat them tomorrow' [AW 20150415]

b. **I vs III: metricality in the past**

barpuru ŋarra buny'tjun; buny'tjurrana rra gāthura ga munhagu
 yesterday 1s smoke.I smoke.III 1s today and morning

'I smoked yesterday and I smoked this morning' [BM20190416]

(2) **III vs. IV: metricality in the negative past**

- a. *bāȳŋu ŋarra (ganha) ṅānha waltjan/dharyunhawuy (yawungu)*
 NEGQ 1s IPFV.IV hear.IV rain yesterday

'I didn't hear the rain yesterday' [AW20190422]

- b. *bāȳŋu ŋarra ṅāku waltjan/dharyunhawuy (gathur)*
 NEGQ 1s hear.II rain today

'I didn't hear the rain this morning.' [AW20190422]

2 Lexical and grammatical aspect

CLAIM. All verbal predicates receive an default PFV interpretation

- Unless describing the RECENT PAST (PERFECTIVE), **I** forms obligatorily cooccur with an auxiliary
- This diverges from Wilkinson’s observations about Yurrwi Djambarrpuyngu on a number of levels
- PRES interpretations *require* an IPFV auxiliary.

(3) ***ga*_N obligatory** for present interpretation

a. ***ga* required for present reference**

Narra [#](*ga*) *luka gapu*
1s **IPFV.I** eat.I water

‘I’m drinking water.’

[DG20190405]

b. **No present interpetation available.** Ungrammatical with present TFA.

Narra ^{*}(*ga*) *wandirri shoplili dhiyanu bala*
1s ^{*}(IPFV) run.I shop.ALL now

‘I’m running to the shop now.’

[DG20190405]

c. **No futurate interpetation available.** Ungrammatical with present TFA.

Narra ^{*}(*dhu*) (*ga*) *wandirri shoplili dhiyanu bala*
1s ^{*}(FUT) (IPFV) run.I shop.ALL now

‘I’ll run(/go running) to the shop now.’

[DG20190405]

- **3a** is also compatible with a recent past reading (e.g. I was drinking water yesterday.) **3b** can also cooccur with a past TFA like *barpuru* ‘yesterday’ rather than *dhiyanu bala*.
- Note that this is also the case for a wide range of predicates (e.g. psych verbs) whose translation is thought of as stative:

(4) **Obligatory IPFV marking for present states**

a. *narra ga mairr-yuwalkthirri junhi nhe manymak dirramu*
1s **IPFV.I** believe that 2s good man

‘I think you’re a good guy.’

[DG20190517]

b. *Narra ga gatjpu’yun nayi dhu buna dhiyan bala yolhu*
1s IPFV.I hope.I 3s FUT arrive.I now person

‘I hope the person will arrive imminently.’

[BM20190416]

c. *Narra ga djulhi’tbirri; bili narra ga music nāma*
1s IPFV.I be.happy.I CPLV 1s IPFV.I music hear.I

‘I’m happy because I’m listening to music.’

[DG20190517]

- Similarly *nhäma* ‘see’, *rirrikthun* ‘be sick’, *djulñithirri* ‘be happy’, *maḍakarritj’yun* ‘be cross’ etc. all obligatorily take IPFV marking to describe present eventualities.
- It is likely that these might better be understood as CHANGE-OF-STATE-denoting predicates (in which case a telic semantics makes sense.)
- However, **nonverbal predicates**: e.g. LOCATIVES, attributive predicates and the “adjectival predicates”¹ *djäl* ‘want/like/need’, *marŋgi* ‘know’ and *dhuŋa* ‘not.know’ are *incompatible with ga*. Inherently stative, they receive no tense or aspect marking.

- (5) a. *maku ŋarra dhu (*gi) ovalŋura*
 maybe 1s FUT (***IPFV.II**) oval.LOC
 ‘I might be down at the oval.’ [DG20190417]
- b. *ŋarra (*gana) shopŋura*
 1s (***IPFV.III**) shop.LOC
 ‘I was at the shop this morning.’ [DG20190417]
- c. *ŋarra gana nhinana schoolŋura*
 1s **IPFV.III** sit.III shop.LOC
 ‘I was at the shop this morning.’ [DG20190417]

(6) Ungrammaticality of IPFV with nonverbal stative predicates

- a. *ŋarritjan (*ga) marŋgi baŋardiwa*
 MÄLK (***IPFV.I**) know MÄLK.DAT
 ‘Ngarritjan knows Bangardi.’ [BM20190416]
- b. *ŋarritjan (*gana) marŋgi Bāŋardiwa 20 years ago*
 MÄLK (***IPFV.III**) know MÄLK.DAT 20 years ago
 ‘Ngarritjan knew Bangardi 20 years ago.’ [DG20190417]
- c. *Ŋäthili ŋarra yaka (*gana) djäl latjin’gu, dhiyaŋu bala ŋarra (*ga) djäl*
 Earlier 1s NEG (***IPFV.III**) want mangrove worm.DAT now 1s (***IPFV**) want
latjin’gu
 mangrove worm.DAT
 ‘I used to dislike mangrove worms, but now I like them.’ [DG20191417]

3 Futurity

- *dhu* seems to be pretty well behaved in its absolute-future orientation
- It’s been nigh impossible to get anything that looks like a future perfect: ambiguous periphrases are offered, one consultant suggested that Yolŋu would misinterpret a future perfect in English.
- As alluded to above, *dhu* is **obligatory** for future-tensed sentences for my 3 speakers.

¹This term due to Wilkinson p557

(7) a. **No bare-I ‘futate’**

*ɲarra *(dhu) nhāma ɲarraku ɲaṇḍinha dhiyaŋu bala*
 1s *(FUT) see.I 1s.DAT mother.ACC now

‘I’m seeing *ɲaṇḍi* shortly.’

[BM20190405 22’]

b. **No bare-II ‘future’**

*ɲarra *(dhu) nhāŋu mukulnha (goḍarr)*
 1s *(FUT) see.II aunt.ACC (tomorrow)

‘I’ll see *mukul* tomorrow.’

[AW20190409 46’]

- there are a *couple* of cases where it *seems* as though *dhu* is bringing up a relative past including **possibly 8**, and also the bible passage lifted from the dissy draft below.

(8) Here I was attempting to elicit ‘I was going to win a lot of money but then I had to help *mukul* so I needed to leave.’

ɲarra gana buɽ’yurruna dopulu’ ovalɥura ga ɲarra mārɾaŋala mārɾ dharrwa rrupiya beɲuri
 1s IPFV.III play.III cards oval.LOC and 1s get.III ? many money INDEF?
gan?? mukul ɲarraku riŋimap bili ɲayi djāl rrupiyawu ga ɲarra dhu gāma rrupiya
 IPFV.III? aunt 1s.DAT telephone CPLV 3s want money.DAT and 1s FUT take.I money
mukulgu
 aunt.DAT

‘I was playing cards down at the oval and I got lots of money, then *mukul* called me because she wanted/needed money and I had to/have to give *mukul* money’

[DG20190417]

I suspect that *dhu* isn’t an absolute future marker:

- (9) *Bala ɲayi marrtji-nya-mara-ɲala lakara-ɲal-nydja dhāwu-ny birrɲ’mara-ɲala [ɲunhi-ɲu-wuy-yi*
 then 3s go-IV-TR-III tell-III-PROM story-PROM spread-III [ENDO-ɲu-OBL-ANA
yoθu-walaŋu-wuy-nydja] yolɲu’-yulɲu-wal-nydja bukmak-kal-nha, [ɲunhi walal ɲuli ga-nha
 child-OBL-DAT-PROM] people-DAT-PROM all-DAT-ACC [TEXD 3p HAB IPFV-IV
gatɟpu’yu-na ga dhukarr-nhāma ɲuriki-yi], ɲunhi dhu God-thu dhawaɽmarama-n
 hope-III? IPFV road-see.I TEXD.DAT-ASSOC] TEXD FUT God-ERG expel-I?
ɲunhi-yi wāŋa-ny garrpi-na-mirri-ɲur-nydja rom-ɲur mala-ɲu-ɲur
 TEXD-ANA land-PROM bind-IV=PROP-ABL-PROM law-ABL group-ɲu-ABL

‘Then she went about spreading the news [of that child] to all the people [that were hoping and looking out for it], that God would free the place from the laws that bound it’ Godku dharuk p20

Other big question is how obligatory *dhu* is in matrix clauses to get the future readings. So *dhu* in (9) is picking out a time in the absolute past, but the future of a reference time established in the matrix clause. This suggests that *dhu* relates event time (here the FREE predicate) and a ref (or top) time set by the embedding predicate. Note that it also seems to have coupled with a I inflection (although this isn’t super clear.)

4 Sequence of Tense

- Homemade storyboard elicitation to elicit a triple of PST(PST) sentences

(10) **Relative clauses:** *I saw the wallaby that BE eating grass*

[AW20190412]

a. $t_{see} \succ t_{eat}$

gäthur *ŋarra* **nhäŋal** *ŋunhi* *bili* *weŋi* *ŋunhi* *barpuru* *ŋarra* **nhäma**, **luka** **ga** *mulmu*
 today 1s see.III ENDO CPLV wallaby ENDO yesterday 1s see.I eat.I IPFV.I grass

‘Earlier today I saw that same wallaby that I saw eating grass yesterday.’

[AW20190415]

b. $t_{see} \circ t_{eat}$

dhiyaŋ *bili* *ŋarra* **nhäŋal** *weŋi* **lukan** **gan** (*mulmu*)
 just before 1s see.III wallaby eat.III IPFV.III (grass)

‘I just saw the wallaby eating grass (at the time that I saw it).’

[AW20190415]

c. $t_{see} \mathcal{R} t_{eat}$

barpuru *ŋarra* **nhäma** *weŋi* *ŋunhi* *bili* *ŋunhi* **gan** **lukan** *mulmu*
 yesterday 1s see.I wallaby ENDO CPLV ENDO IPFV.III eat.III grass

‘Yesterday, I saw the same wallaby that was eating grass this morning.’

[AW20190422 110’]

- Note that (a) could also mean ‘Earlier I saw the wallaby that’s eating grass now.’ (also has been elicited in AW20190412)
- (b) could also be homophonous in a situation where I have assumed that the wallaby is still there grass-eating.
- preliminary evidence of a non-sequence-of-tense situation in d_{jr}?
- need to check with SCIs: *I thought Gela was collecting maypal (at the moment)* versus *I thought Gela was collecting maypal (this morning)* (**hyp**: ought not to be homophonous)

5 Intensional predicates & modality

- Given that **II** and **IV** are described as **IRREALIS** categories, we may well have hypothesised that various (intensionalising) verbal predicates license the same “conversion” as operators like *yaka/bäyŋu* ‘NEG’ and *balaŋu* ‘MOD’..., similar to a **subjunctive**.
- They don’t seem to.
- Similarly, I haven’t found all that much support for *yanbi* ‘mistakenly, erroneously’ (MW’s **COUNTERFACT**) triggering the irrealis conversion either. (This needs to be re-elicited; AW seems to have some **III/IV** syncretism in some classes or has *marrtjina/nha*).

This said, the Bible seems to provide some evidence in support of MW’s claim so it’s worth investigating more.

s

(11) a.

6 Temporal demonstratives

- The distinction between *dhiyaŋ bala* and *dhiyaŋ bili* is *not* as I described it (and some of the crucial judgments from MW leading to this analysis were rejected by speakers.)

(12) a. (Probable) incompatibility bw *dhiyaŋ bala* and past

?? *dhiyaŋ bala napurr bäpi nhāŋal gāthur*
now 1p.EXCL snake see.III today

'I saw a snake just now.'

[AW20190409]

b. Incompatibility bw *dhiyaŋ bili* and non-past

*ŋarra ga waŋdirr shoplil dhiyaŋ bala (*dhiyaŋ bili)*
1s IPFV.I shop.ALL now (*now)

'I'm going to the shop now.'

[AW20190409]

- As vDW suggests *dhiyaŋ bili* seems to refer to IMMEDIATE PAST and *dhiyaŋ bala* is compatible with speaking time and IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
- *ŋuriŋi bala/bili* do seem to be how I'd described them: they seem to refer to non-NOW times with varying degrees of precision.
- This isn't a *bad* finding per se: while it may make the table less immediately elegant it may be that this follows from the strict perfectivity that we'd seen in verbal predicates.