Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

DISPLACEMENT — a stated universal and distinctive feature of human language — permits us to make assertions that are embedded in different times, locations and possible worlds (*e.g.* Hockett's 'design features of human language' 1960:90). Linguistic work — descriptive, pedagogical, theoretical — has traditionally assumed a categorical distinction between subtypes of verbal inflection: *viz.* the TEMPORAL and MODAL domains. Whether or not these basic claims are intended as heuristic, they quickly unravel upon close inquiry into cross-linguistic data; a challenge for linguistic theory, and one that a growing body of literature is identifying (*e.g.* Condoravdi 2002, Laca 2008, Rullman & Matthewson to appear *i.a.*).

The **empirical focus** of the dissertation proposed here is the tense-mood-aspect (TMA) systems of a set of languages in the Arnhem Land linguistic area of Northern Australia. Arnhem Land is 'linguistically dense' — an area of close historic and contemporary contact between unrelated languages (see map in Figure 4.1). The verbal systems of many of these languages have evaded an adequate, unified account and exhibit various features that have been identified elsewhere as typologically rare (and certainly sharply diverge from better described Indo-European systems).

Consequently, given how resistant these data have been to description and analysis with existing linguistic apparatus, no theory neatly accounting for the inflectional range or making predictive generalisations; a better understanding of these systems will help us to nuance the way we think about categories like 'tense' and 'modality' — a theory of temporomodal displacement. The potential **theoretical contribution** of this dissertation, then, bears broadly on *intensionality*: our notional categories of tense, mood, modality, aspect, evidentiality, conditionals *etc.* Further, as will be shown in §2, the role of pragmatics/information structure and their interactions with semantics are crucial for understanding how these categories are expressed and interpreted: how intensional meanings are generated, how communication permits for the displacement of times and worlds.

Additionally, in this work I seek to consider the contribution of studying **language change** (specifically meaning change) to a better understanding of the cognitive apparatus that permits for the interpretation of temporomodal devices (*sc. 'what is it that speakers are doing in order to 'displace' discourse?*). A starting point in the assumption that 'diachronically consecutive grammars are not characterised by radical discontinuities or unpredictable leaps, but that change consists of gradual discrete steps constrained by properties of grammar' (Deo 2006: 5). By hypothesis, then, the investigation of these 'steps' between subsequent stages of a grammar with respect to its verbal semantics–and the inference of 'constraints' on these changes–represent a significant potential source of insight into the linguistic expression and evaluation of event structure, time and possibility.

1.1 Methodologies, conventions etc.

Chapter 2

The linguistic ecology of Arnhem Land

2.1 Notes on the writing systems of Yolŋu and Australian languages

2.2 Background notes on Australian Kriol

2.3 Background notes on Yolŋu Matha

Chapter 3

Formal theories of displacement

Part I

The emergence of apprehensionality in Australian Kriol

Part II

Yolŋu Matha intensionality

Drawing on data from Yolŋu Matha, a subfamily of Pama-Nyungan spoken in central- and eastern Arnhem Land, this Part of the Dissertation provides an amp[illegible]ronic description and analysis of the Yolŋu Matha verbal paradigm and a discussion of the linguistic devices that speakers use for displacement: temporal and modal displacement.

Yolŋu Matha is a language family spoken in north-central and -eastern Arnhem Land. . As explained in Chapter 2, subgrouping of the family remains somewhat controversial, but most treatments understand the it as containing six languages with thirty or so 'clan-lects' distributed between them. For the purposes of this prospectus, I will make reference to the closely related Western varieties of Djambarrpuyŋu ([djr] Dhuwal) and Gupapuyŋu ([guf] Dhuwala), slightly further afield Wangurri ([dhg] Dhaŋu) and Southern variety Ritharrŋu [rit]; the varieties for which there is the most significant amount of presently available documentation.

Xref here to introductory chapter/s

Chapter 4 *contains a general description of the language e[illegible]gy of Yolŋu Matha and patterns of verbal inflection in Yolŋu varieties, paying particular attention to Djambarrpuyŋu, how it diverges to Djinba, Ritharrŋu and Wangurri, and the puzzles that these paradigms pose for theories of tense and modality.*

Chapter 5 *proposes a formal treatment and analysis of temporal and modal expression in synchronic Yolŋu varieties.*

Chapter 6 *foregrounds 'diachronic thinking' about the comparative Yolŋu data presented here and considers: What might the paths of change and synchronic variation in Yolŋu Matha suggest about the cognitive implementation of displacement operators?*

Chapter 4

The Yolŋu Matha verbal paradigm

The verbal inflectional paradigms of contemporary Yolŋu languages can be reconstructed to proto-Yolŋu (*e.g.* Bo[illegible]n 2009). Notwithstanding this demonstrated cognacy, there is significant cross-linguistic variation reported in the distributions and 'meanings' associated with the varieties' cognate inflectional categories. Where eastern and southern language varieties are described as having 'basic tense categories' that are 'semantically straightforward' (*e.g.* Heath 1980a on Ritharrŋu:74*ff*), an adequate treatment of the morphosemantics of tense marking in the related Yolŋu languages spoken in western Arnhem Land appears to be much more elusive, notwithstanding the nuanced and detailed descriptions in Wilkinson 1991 and McLellan 1992.

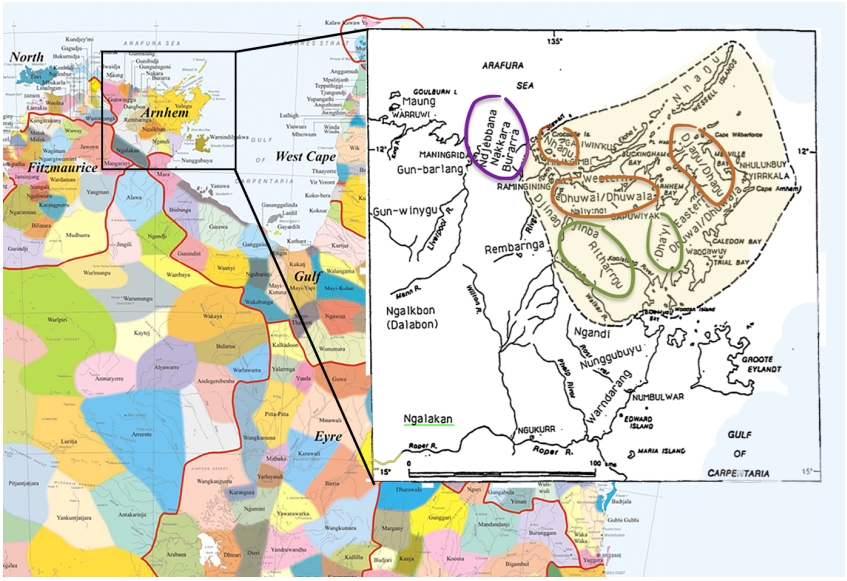
In this chapter, I provide description of verbal inflection across a number of Yolŋu varieties on the basis of data from existing descriptive works (published grammars and related publications) in addition to novel field data collected by the author. For reasons that will become clear, I pay particular attention to the *Dhawu* variety Djambarrpuyŋu (Dhuwal) and mutually the intelligible *Yirritja* variety Gupapuyŋu (Dhuwala). The verbal inflectional system for this language is described in §4.1.

On inspection this isn't the most appropriate ch title if i'm speaking about nonparadigmatic things (auxiliaries, adverbials etc.)

Do I want to talk at this point about adopting a particular (probably realizational) morphological theory?

Will work on acquiring a nicer-looking map. Also it may/probably will turn out this this is better placed in Chapter 1 (the basic introduction to Arnhem Land.)

Figure 4.1. Traditional language communities in Northern Australia (Horton 1996).
Inset. Northeast Arnhem land (colourised from Wilkinson 1991:2. Yellow shading indicates the *Yolŋu Wäŋa* (homeland). Brown and green circles indicate the contemporary distribution of Yolŋu languages investigated. Purple circling indicates the neighbouring (but genetically unrelated) Maningrida language family.



4.1 Djambarrpuyŋu & Gupapuyŋu

TMA distinctions in Dhuwal(a) are encoded in a paradigm that disinguishes four 'inflections', which are cognate with a number proto-Yolŋu inflections according to the reconstructions provided by Bowern (2009). Work on Dhuwal and Dhuwala varieties (notably Lowe 1996, Wilkinson 1991) has eschewed a metalinguistic gloss for these inflections, given the ostensible non-unifiability of their semantics. Both authors appeal to an arbitrary numbering system for the four "inflections", which I follow in this section. In addition to these inflections, the expressive burden of encoding TMA relations is shared by a (closed) class of auxiliaries, which appear to interact with the verbal paradigm.

Further complicating the exposition of this, is the fact that there are a number of *conjugation (sub)classes*: 9 according to Lowe (1996) for Gupapuyŋu, 3 larger classes each with a number of subclasses in addition to "non-inflecting" and (semi-)irregular categories for the closer description in Wilkinson (1991).

4.1.1 The verbal inflections & their functional domains

As mentioned above, Dhuwal(a) varieties make use of a verbal paradigm with four inflectional distinctions. As discussed in Chapter 2, varieties of Dhuwal-Dhuwala are mutually intelligible, the primary distinction resulting from a productive apocope rule (Morphy 1977:51). The formal consequences of Dhuwal apocope on the verbal paradigm are shown in Table 4.1 below. The table gives examples of the verb paradigm for each of the major Djambarrpuyŋu conjugation classes as described by Wilkinson (1991:306ff) (parentheses give the corresponding verb group number assigned by Lowe (1996) for Gupapuyŋu.)

Of course I can provide more detailed information (the subclasses) but that feels like it'd be better appended? The comparative spreadsheet i've made/Claire's 2009 stuff has most of this formative data...

Class	***Example***	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**
Ø (2)	*marrtji* 'go'	*marrtji*	*marrtji*	*marrtji**n(a)***	*marrtji**nha***
N (5)	*l̲upthu**n*** 'wash'	*l̲uphtu**n***	*l̲upthu**rr(u)***	*l̲upthu**rr(una)***	*l̲upthu**na***
Ŋ (7)	*nhäma* 'see'	*nhä**ma***	*nhä**ŋu***	*nhä**ŋal(a)***	*nhä**nha***

Table 4.1. Examples of the paradigm of four morphological TMA inflections in Djambarrpuyŋu [djr] and (Gupapuyŋu [guf]). djr data from Wilkinson (1991), guf data from *Gupapuyŋu* (2016).

In the first paragraph of this section, I alluded to Beulah Lowe's eschewal of a "semantic description" for each of the four inflectional classes. Melanie Wilkinson follows this system in her 1991 grammar and I will follow them here. Below I provide examples of the functional domains of each of the four inflections in Dhuwal-Dhuwala. Inflections are glossed with the bold-faced Roman numerals given in Table 4.1. This section focuses on the interpretation received by inflections in simple sentences (*sc.* matrix clauses) – complex sentences and predications are investigated in further detail in §4.1.6.

Table 4.2, adapted from Wilkinson (1991:336) summarises the metalanguage decisions made by other authors in their attempts to describe Dhuwal(a) varieties.

	I	**II**	**III**	**IV**
Wilkinson 1991 (Djambarrpuyŋu)	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Lowe 1996 (Gupapuyŋu)	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Quartenary
Tchekhoff and Zorc 1983 (Djambarrpuyŋu)	Base	Future	$Past_1$	$Past_2$
Heath 1980b (Dhuwal)	Pres/Fut	Fut/Imp	Past	Past Remote
Morphy 1983 (Djapu)	Unmarked	Potential	Perfective	Past Non-indicative

Table 4.2. Summary of metalinguistic descriptors for the four inflectional classes in a number of Dhuwal/Dhuwala varities, adapted from Wilkinson (1991:336).

The Primary inflection

The 'primary' inflection (**I**), cognate with inflections in other Yolŋu languages which have been described as "unmarked" or "base", surfaces in predications about the present, past and future. Here I provide examples of **I**-inflected clauses receiving each of these temporal interpretations.

Now for both of these (and i suspect all sentences in this sssection) context ought to be modulable s.t. a non-present reading is available. This can/should/will be tested in the field

(1) *Present-reference encoded with **I***

a. *Ŋunhi-y ŋunhi ḏirramu **nhina** ga*
TEXD-? TEXD man sit.**I** IPFV.**I**

'There that man is sitting.' (Tchekhoff and Zorc 1983:856)

b. *ŋarra **marrtji**-n dhiyaŋu-n bala*
1s go.**I**-SEQ MED.ERG-SEQ then

'I am going now.' (Wilkinson 1991:256)

The sentences given in (1) show the compatibility between present temporal reference and the **I** inflection: in both cases, the event described by the predicate (*nhina* 'sit.**I**' and *marrtji* 'go.**I**') is understood as being contemporaneous with speech time. Both sentences appear to receive event-in-progress readings (although only (a) contains explicit aspectual marking, see §4.1.3 for more.)

Is it a shitty idea to use colour coding for more formatting/highlighting options? I want to resolve bold for the verbforms themselves but would like to be able to second-order emphasise non-paradigmatic things like TFAs, aspectual ops...

(2) *Past-reference encoded with **I***

a. *ga **ŋayatham** ŋunha baṉ'thula-wuy ŋayambalk*
and reach.**I** DIST PLACE-ASSOC place

'And (then we) reached the place (associated with) Baṉthula.' (Wilkinson 1991:461)

b. *ḏirramu-wal yothu-wal bäpa-'mirriŋu-y rrupiya barpuru djuy'yu-**n** märr*
man-OBL kid-OBL father-PROP-ERG money yesterday send.**I** somewhat
*barpuru ga barpuru **buna**-ny dhiyal-nydja*
yesterday and yesterday arrive.**I**-PROM MED.ERG-PROM

'The father sent money to the boy recently and it arrived here yesterday'
(Wilkinson 1991:343)

Additionally, the sentences given in (2) show compatibility between **I** and past time reference. For both examples the events described by the predicates (e.g. the seeing event described by *nhäma* in (a)) *precede* speech time. Similarly, the two past events in (b) both receive **I** inflection. The instantiation times of both of these events are restricted by with *barpuru* ≈ 'yesterday. – frame adverbials of this type are discussed in some detail in §**??**.

(3) *Future-reference encoded with **I***

a. *yalala ŋarra dhu nhokal lakara-**m***
later 1s FUT 2s.OBL tell-**I**

'Later (today) I'll tell you.' (Wilkinson 1991:373)

b. *dhiyaŋ bala walal dhu **buna**, yalala*
now 3p FUT arrive.**I** later

'They are coming later today.' (Wilkinson 1991:256)

c. Imperative force with *dhu*+**I** (full clausal syntax)

*Way! Nhe dhu gurruka-**m** helmet! Rom ga **waŋa**.*
Hey! 2s FUT wear-**I** *helmet* law IPFV.**I** say.**I**

'Oy! You wear a helmet! The law says so! AW 20170730

Finally, the examples in (3) above, show the compatibility of **I**-inflected verb forms and future temporal reference. In both sentences, the event described by the predicate is understood to obtain in the future of speech time. In these sentences the presence of FUT marker *dhu* is obligatory in order to establish future reference.

Evidence of infelicity of *dhu*-less future readings?

The Secondary inflection

Like **I**, the Secondary inflection (**II**) has a range of uses. It is notably obligatory when predicating of future times beyond the current day and is the main strategy for forming imperative sentences.

(4) *Future-reference encoded with **II***

a. Co-occurring with *dhu* 'FUT'

yalala-ŋu-mirri-y *ŋula nhätha* *ŋarra* *dhu* *nhokal* *lakara-**ŋ***
later-*ŋu*-PROP-ERG sometime 1s FUT 2s-OBL tell-**II**

'I'll tell you sometime later on' (Wilkinson 1991:346)

b. Future interpretation independent of *dhu* 'FUT'

ŋayi *boŋguŋ* ***nhini*** ***ŋäku*** *ŋarra-ny* *ŋunhal* *yirrkala*
3s tomorrow sit.**II** hear.**II** 1s-PROM DIST-LOC PLACENAME

'She'll be there at Yirrkala tomorrow, listening to me' (Wilkinson 1991:340)

c. Infelicity of **I** with non-today future

Barpuru *goḏarr* *ŋarra* *dhu* *nhä(**-ŋu/**#**-ma**)*
funeral tomorrow 1s FUT see(-**II**/#-**I**)

'I'll see the funeral tomorrow' AW 20180730

The two sentences in (4) show how **II** is used to establish future temporal reference. The conditions on the (non-)appearance of FUT-marker *dhu* are unclear at the present time (see §4.1.2 for more), but future-readings with **II** do not appear to be reliant on this auxiliary (cf. the data in (3) above). A notable contrast between (3a) and (4a) is the apparently obligatory retrieval of a TODAY-reference time for **I**-inflected futures, as against a (probable) BEYOND-TODAY-reference time for **II**-inflected futures.[1] Effectively, this distinction seems to be one place where the grammar of Dhuwal(a) grammaticalises "temporal remoteness" (Comrie (1985), Dahl (1985) referred to elsewhere in the literature as 'metrical tense' e.g. Chung and Timberlake 1985:204).

(5) *Ŋarra* *ŋuli* *bäynha* ***dhiŋgun*** *ŋawulul-yu*
1s HYP? MOD? die.**II?** smoke-ERG?

'I might die from the smoke.' (Buchanan 1978:164)

It would be good to get sentences with richer context (i.e. an established time of instantiation for the prejacent (tomorrow, imminently etc...)) This said we can probably assume that the we're talking about immediate future here... Is **I** incompatible with this? There's not much more to say here until I have speaker judgments on this question.

(5) shows the compatibility of **II** with a future-oriented possibility reading. The modal particles *ŋuli* and *bäynha* are responsible for the 'weakening' or 'downtowning' of the speaker's commitment to the prejacent proposition. Modal operators are described in §4.1.4.

[1] Wilkinson (1991:347) gives an example of a speaker using a *dhu*-**II** structure in the context of a narrative she is telling, signalling that she 'will (return to the time of the old people).' Wilkinson takes this as evidence of an association between **II** and the irrealis. This generalisation is pursued in detail in the next chapter of this dissertation.

(6) *Imperative force with **II***

a. *wäy! gurtha ŋunha, nhawi, ḏutji män-**ŋu**, bakmara-**ŋu***
hey! fire(wood) DIST what's.it firesticks get-**II** break-**II**

'Hey! Get that firewood, what's it, those firesticks, and break them.'
(van der Wal 1992:114)

b. *yaka walala-ŋ buku-bakamara-**ŋ***
NEG 3p-DAT head-break-**II**

'Don't answer them!' (Wilkinson 1991:360)

The sentences in (6) show the imperative function of **II**-inflected clauses. Shown in (6b), negative imperatives (probibitives) are treated identically.[2]

The Tertiary inflection

The Tertiary inflection (**III**) is generally associated with predications about the PAST. An important caveat, however, is that this inflection is infelicitous when describing RECENT events instantiated BEFORE THE CURRENT DAY. The examples in (7) below show the compatibility between **III** and a reference time that is 'earlier today.'

(7) *TODAY PAST and the **III** inflection*

a. *Gäthur ŋayi **marrtjin** räli Galiwin'ku-ŋur*
today 3s go.**III** hither PLACE-ABL

'[Earlier] today he came from Galiwin'ku.' (Buchanan 1978:150)

b. *Bili ŋayi **marrtjin** dhipuŋur natha-ŋur nyan'thuna-ŋur*
COMPL 3s go.**III** PROX.ABL food-ABL eat.**IV**-ABL

'He has already gone from having lunch here.' (Buchanan 1978:150)

(7a) shows the compatibility between temporal frame adverbial (TFA) *gäthur(a)* 'today' and **III** in `djr`, which leads to an temporal interpretation of 'earlier today.' However even in the absence of a TFA, the event described in (b) is interpreted as having been instantiated EARLIER.TODAY/in the immediate past of speech time.

(8) *REMOTE PAST and the **III** inflection*

a. *nhä nho-kiyin-gal wäwa-'mirriŋu-y warkthu-rr ŋäthil rarrandharr-yu*
what 2s-EMPH-OBL bro-PROP-ERG work-**III** before dry season-ERG

'What did your brother do last summer?' (Wilkinson 1991:343)

b. CONTEXT. The speaker is describing a locality as it was in her youth.

*märrma' ga-**n** malwan-dja dhärra-**n** yindi maṉḏa-ny*
two IPFV-**III** hibiscus-PROM stand-**III** big 3d-PROM

'Two big hibiscus flowers were (growing).' (Wilkinson 1991:339)

[2] Although the use of privative-marked nominals is another common strategy, se.e Phillips (2018, 2019) for more

The Quaternary inflection

(9) *Ŋayi ŋuli märra-**nha** ŋunhi meṉḏuŋ-nha*
3s HAB get-**IV** TEXD snail-ACC

'She would (used to) get (collect)

(10) *Yaka balaŋ nhe marrtji-**nya** Darwin-lil*
NEG IRR 2s go.**IV** Darwin-ALL

'I might die from the smoke.' (Buchanan 1978:164)

4.1.2 *dhu*

4.1.3 Aspectual auxiliaries

ga

marrtji

4.1.4 Modal auxiliaries

ŋuli

balaŋ(u)

mak

is auxiliary the right characterisation of these particles?

4.1.5 Sentential negation: *yaka* & *bäyŋu*

4.1.6 Complex predications

(11) a. *way marŋgi nhe ŋarra-kalaŋa-w bäpa-'mirriŋu-w-nydja ŋunhi ŋayi dhiŋga-**ma**-ny*
hey know 2s 1s-OBL-DAT father-PROP-DAT-PROM TEXD 3s die-**I**-PROM
ŋuriŋi bala dhuŋgara-y
TEXD-ERG then year-ERG

'Hey, did you know my father, who died last year?' (Wilkinson 1991:343)

b. *dirramu-y **dharpuŋal** weṯi' [ŋunhi [barpuru **ga** dhiyal **nhina**]]*
man-ERG spear.**III** wallaby TEXD yesterday IPFV.**I** MED.LOC sit.**I**

'The man speared the wallaby which was sitting here yesterday.'
(Tchekhoff 1985:575)

c. *bili ŋarra bumar ŋunhi weṯi' ŋatha li ga luka*
already 1s kill.**III** TEXD wallaby food HAB IPFV eat.**I**

'I killed the wallaby which was eating the food' yesterday.' (Tchekhoff 1985:576)

(12) *bäpa-mirriŋu-y märra-ŋal ŋändi-mirriŋu-ny, märr ga ŋayi-n dhu dhägir'yun*
father-PROP-ERG get-**III** mother-PROP-ACC so that 3s-SEQ FUT punish.**I**
djamarrkuli'-nha-ny
children-ACC-FOC

'Father fetched Mother so she would punish the children.' (Tchekhoff 1985:574)

4.2 Yan-ŋaŋu & Goḻpa

KL describes guf as a "modality-based language" (176) against which she contrasts Golpa: 'There are several (more and less strong) arguments against a modality-based analysis of the Golpa verb system' (Kabisch-Lindenlaub 2017:179ff)

KL ex 365,55,77 — reanalysis of III by Goḻpa speakers as a general past marker? (Cf. Yannhaŋu), see pg 209ff (table 26), 159ff for forms (Table 15ff). No negation efffects ex 28, 119

4.3 Wangurri (Dhaŋu-Djaŋu)

Mally's thesis came out almost the same time as Mel's (there're signs that they were speaking/comparing also and they were both at Sydney universities): a big point of difference which is likely the language (rather than the linguist) is that Mally describes the cognate to **III** as the **PFV** and **doesn't report cyclicity.** She *does* argue for a very mood-central conception of the verbal paradigm. My inclination is that this has some intersections with the evidential status and more accurately the **illocutionary force** of an utterance given its inflectional status.

4.4 Ganalbingu (Djinba) & Wurlaki (Djinaŋ)

Djinaŋ-Djinba look to have floresced a little in verbal inflectional domain. There seems to be solid attested cyclicity/metricality in the djr/guf style and then a bit of extra stuff. Unsure what happens under negation.

Waters focuses his work on Djuwiŋ Djinaŋ. I have access to Ganalbingu speakers which could help to fill some of the big gaps in his data on this language. Additional judgments from Yirritjiŋ Djinaŋ are also available via the Wuḻaki men and Margaret hopefully.

4.5 Ritharrŋu

A likely close relative of Dhuwal-Dhuwala, Ritharrŋu, the southernmost Yolŋu variety is described by Heath as "...

Chapter 5

The Yolŋu language of intensionality

Chapter 6

Variation, change & ‘design principles’

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