

6.5.7 SAMPLE TEXT

Unlike many of the other sample texts in this book, this is a piece of unedited oral literature, recorded by a linguistic field worker (Dixon 1972: 382–387). It is an autobiographical story, in which the storyteller recounts one of her experiences as a little girl. While sitting in the camp with the tribe one night, she heard a strange noise and was told by the old people that the noise was made by the Dambun spirit.

- (109) *tampun-ta* *ŋan-a-ŋka* *mukuru* *ɲina*
 Dambun(F)-LOC DET.NVIS-F.APPR-LOC quiet[abs] sit[imp]

‘“Sit quiet in fear of the unseen Dambun!”

The unattributed dialog in this story represents speech by the camp elders.

[*ŋanaŋka*] comes from [*ŋan-ɲa-ŋka*]; when morphemes are combined, the second of two nasals is sometimes dropped.

- (110) *wuŋcan-a-ŋka?*
 DET.Q-F.APPR-LOC

‘“Where is she who we are in fear of?”

- (111) ηa -n pa-n-kalu- η unu jalkaj-ca-ru wanti-n
DET.NVIS-F[abs] DET-F-front-ABL road(N)-LOC-motion go_upriver-NFUT
‘‘Unseen, she is coming from out there, upriver, along the road.’’
- (112) η ira-l-pila
pierce-V-APPR
‘‘She might pierce us!’’
- (113) mujmpa puni pu η a-l-pila tampun-tu
extinguish[imp] fire(F)[abs] see-V-APPR Dambun(F)-ERG
‘‘Put out the fire lest Dambun see it!’’
- (114) η anaci-na cinti η ira- η
1PL-ACC chest(N)[abs] pierce-FUT
‘‘She will pierce our chests!’’
Inalienable possession, such as that involving one’s own body parts, is indicated by simply placing the words next to each other in the same case. Note that case agreement between pronouns and nouns requires negotiating two different morphosyntactic alignment systems. The absolutive is the noun case that corresponds to the pronominal accusative case.
- (115) wupca-n
DET.Q-F[abs]
‘‘Where is she?’’
- (116) kila- η unta η ala-n η ala-n η anta- η mulku
place-INDF DET.NVIS[abs]-F DET.NVIS[abs]-F call_out-FUT noise[abs]
‘‘Somewhere out there, unseen, she will make a noise.’’
- (117) η aca walma~walma-kali- η u pa- η um ma η ka-l-mpari-ku tucu-ku
1SG[nom] get_up~INT-quick-NFUT place-IMP pick_up-V-REFL-PURP torch-DAT
kinta-l-ma-l-i
search_by_light-V-INS-V-PURP
‘I sprang up from there quickly to pick up a torch, so that I could use it to go searching with a light.’
The speaker used the English word for ‘torch’, adapting it to Dyirbal phonology. It was not an established loanword.
- (118) ca η ca η aca janu
now 1SG[nom] go[nfut]
‘Then I went out.’
[janu] (as opposed to the expected *[janu-n]) is the only irregular verb in Dyirbal.
- (119) pa- η ku-ma η kan-tu kintimpa-n
DET-ERG-PL-ERG warn-NFUT
‘They warned me.’

- (120) ε kalka pa-n tampun kinta-m
 INTERJECTION PROH DET-F[abs] Dambun(F)[abs] search_by_light-PROH
 pani-mpila
 come-APPR
 ‘“Hey! Don’t look for Dambun with the light, lest she come here!”’
- (121) η aca pala kulu η ampa-n pa- η u-man η kan-u kuwal
 1SG[nom] DET[ABS.N] NEG listen-NFUT DET-GEN-PL-GEN speech(N)[abs]
 micu-kani- η u
 ignore-ITER-NFUT
 ‘I didn’t listen to what they were saying; I kept ignoring them.’
- (122) pa-li-cilu η aca janu
 place-DEM-INT 1SG[nom] go[nfut]
 pa-ku-n kinta-l- η a- η u tampun-ku
 DET-DAT-F search_by_light-V-ANTIP-NFUT Dambun(F)-DAT
 ‘I went in that direction, looking for Dambun with a light.’
- (123) η aca pa-n pu η a-l-i tampun
 1SG[nom] DET-F[abs] see-V-PURP Dambun(F)[abs]
 m η ina- η aru-mpa-n tampun
 what-like-V-NFUT Dambun(F)[abs]
 ‘I wanted to see Dambun, what Dambun looked like.’
- (124) pa-n-cana tampun kila-k η ina-n ja η a- η aru-mpa-n
 DET-F[abs]-INT Dambun(F)[abs] somewhere-DEM-F[abs] man-like-V-NFUT
 pala-n muraj cuta pikup η -kalu~kalu
 DET-F[abs] head_hair(N)[abs] bushy[abs] nail-in_front~AUG[abs]
 marki~marki wirmpa η taji~taji-kala
 thin~AUG[abs] skin_and_bones[abs] up~AUG-up[abs]
 ‘That Dambun somewhere out there [is supposed to] look something like a man,
 bushy hair, long nails, very thin, skin and bones, very very tall.’
- (125) pa-lu-pawal η aca janu
 place-DEM-DIST 1SG[nom] go[nfut]
 ‘I went way out there.’
- (126) Jimpa pa-n-kalu pu η a-n η aca kujipara jampi- η u
 no DET-F-in_front see-NFUT 1SG[nom] curlew(F)[abs] fly-REL[abs]
 ‘No, I saw a curlew flying.’
 The bush stone curlew is a large nocturnal bird whose call sounds much like a wail.

- (127) kijukijukiju ŋa-n-kalu pa-n jampi-n
(cry_of_curlew) DET.NVIS-F[abs]-in_front DET-F[abs] fly-NFUT
‘“Keeyoo, keeyoo, keeyoo” – it flew out of sight.’
- (128) pa-ŋum pala-n juŋkukan cakun-kapun-ta ŋaca ŋampa-n
place-IMP DET-F[abs] another_one[abs] night-another-LOC 1SG[nom] hear-NFUT

pa-n-kalu mulku-pi-ŋku
DET-F[abs]-in_front noise-V_{INTR}-REL[abs]

pala-n ŋampa-n kuŋu tampun
DET-F[abs] hear-NFUT new[abs] Dambun(F)[abs]
‘Then on another night I heard another one; it was making noise out there;
I heard a new Dambun.’
- (129) janu ŋaca
go[nfut] 1SG[nom]
‘I went out.’
- (130) maŋka-l-mpa-n ŋaca tucu kinta-l-ma-l-i
pick_up-V-INS-NFUT 1SG[nom] torch(N)[abs] search_by_light-V-INS-V-PURP
‘I picked up the torch, to look with it.’
- (131) tampun-ta ja-ŋku-n kinta~kinta-ma-l-pila tampun
Dambun(F)-LOC DET.PROX-ERG-F search_by_light~AUG-INS-V-APPR Dambun(F)[abs]
‘“What if this girl shines a light on Dambun?!”’
- (132) ŋanaci caŋca manma-j-ku ja-lu-kuŋkari
1PL[nom] now shift_camp-V-PURP place-PROX.DEM-north
‘“We might have to shift camp to the north.”’
- (133) pa-li-cilu ŋaca janu kinta-l-ŋa-ŋu
place-DEM-INT 1SG[nom] go[nfut] search_by_light-V-ANTIP-NFUT
‘I went out there looking with a light.’
- (134) puɕa-n kija-n-pajc-i kuku ŋina-ŋu mulku-mpa-ŋu
see-NFUT DEM-F[abs]-DOWN-DIM mopoke(F)[abs] sit-REL[abs] noise-V-REL[abs]
‘I saw this mopoke sitting just a little bit below me, making its noise.’
The mopoke, or southern boobook, is a small nocturnal owl.
- (135) m̥.m̥.m̥ jalama-ŋu pa-n-kal-i
(cry_of_mopoke) do_like_this-REL[abs] DET-F[abs]-DOWN-DIM

jiti-ɬa ŋina-ŋu pujpa-jiri-ŋu
grass(N)-LOC sit-REL[abs] hide-REFL-REL[abs]
‘going “mm-mm-mm”, sitting, hiding down in the grass,’

- (136) kajka-pu pulkan ηaca ηaɥpa-n
 eye(N)[abs]-only big[abs] 1SG[nom] be_startled-NFUT
 ‘just its big eyes (visible), I jumped with fright.’
- (137) panaka-j-ara-ɲu ηaca puɥa-l-a-j-ku ηujma-l-a-j-ku
 return-V-again-NFUT 1SG[nom] see-V-ANTIP-V-PURP do_properly-V-ANTIP-V-PURP
 kajka-ku pa-ku-n
 eye(N)-DAT DET-DAT-F
 ‘I went back to have a proper look at its eyes.’
 The [ɲ] of the antipassive suffix [ηaj] is often dropped.
- (138) pala-n puɥa-n kuku ɲina-ɲu
 DET-F[abs] see-NFUT mopoke(F)[abs] sit-REL[abs]
 ‘(I) saw a mopoke sitting there.’
- (139) caɲca ηaca mijanta-ɲu pala-j-cilu
 now 1SG[nom] laugh-NFUT place-LOC-INT
 ‘I laughed, right there.’
- (140) pa-ηku-manɲan-tu ηajku-na ηunca-ɲu tampun-tu
 DET-ERG-many_people-ERG 1SG-ACC blame-NFUT Dambun(F)-ERG
 kitimpa-ɲu
 tickle-REL[abs]
 ‘They blamed it on me being tickled by Dambun.’
- (141) pa-n ηaca pa-n mijanta-ɲu pa-ku-n
 DET-F[abs] 1SG(NOM) DET-F[abs] laugh-NFUT DET-DAT-F
 tampu-ηampija-ku kuku-ku
 Dambu-whatchamacallit-DAT mopoke(F)-DAT
 ‘I was laughing at that Dambu-whatchamacallit: that mopoke.’