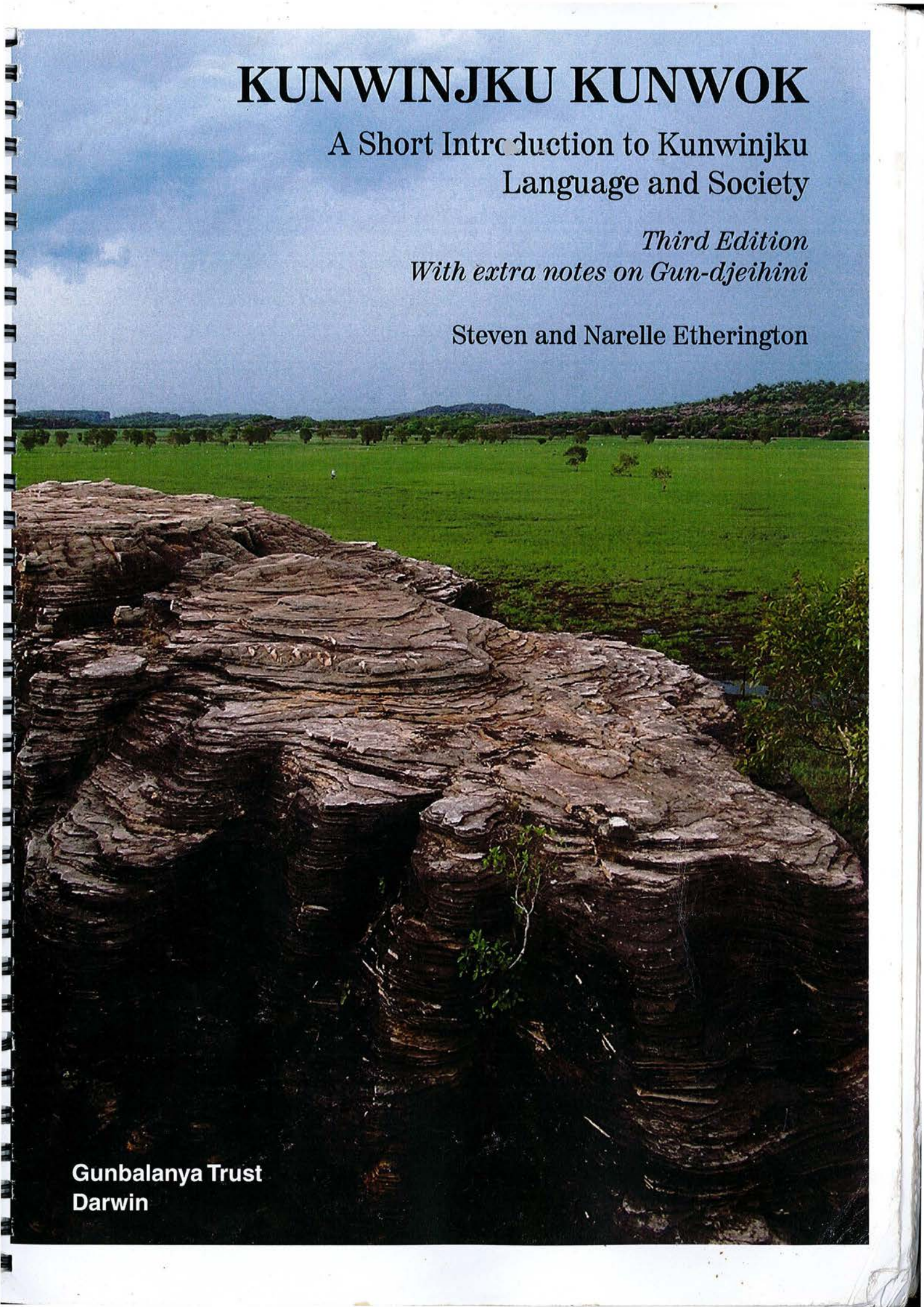


# KUNWINJKU KUNWOK

A Short Introduction to Kunwinjku  
Language and Society

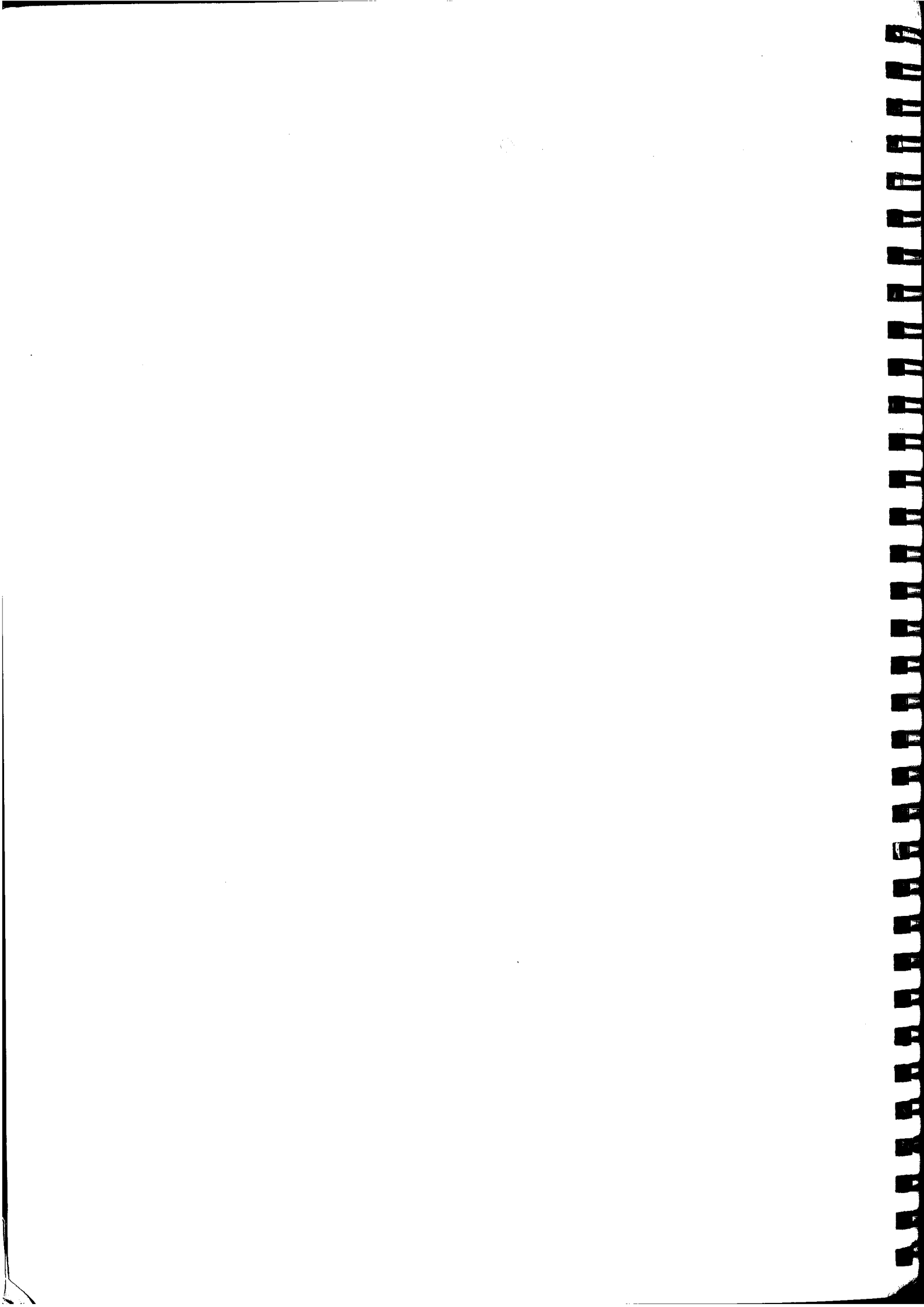
*Third Edition*  
*With extra notes on Gun-djeihini*

Steven and Narelle Etherington



Gunbalanya Trust  
Darwin





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THIRD EDITION, 1998

With extra notes on Gun-djeihmi

Steven and Narelle Etherington

The Kunwinjku Language Centre  
Kunbarllanjja

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## PREFACE

(INTENDED TO BE READ)

Kunwinjku and Gun-djeihmi are two variants of the one language spoken by Australian Aboriginal people in the north of Kakadu Park and in the western edge of Arnhem Land at Kunbarllanjnja Community (Oenpelli) and its outstations. The book is mainly aimed at those trying to learn Kunwinjku because this is the much larger of the two language groups, but most of what applies to Kunwinjku also applies to Gun-djeihmi. There is an appendix giving a detailed comparison of the two forms of the language, and at some points in the book both versions are given where this is especially useful. Those intending to learn the Gun-djeihmi form of the language should study the Appendix before beginning to use this book, to see what the differences are between the two language forms. They should also note the warning on page iv about Audio Tapes.

This is called a short course because it aims only to get you started and equip you for learning from Kunwinjku and Gun-djeihmi people. It will take a major commitment of time to learn about their language and culture, so this mini-course can only start you in the right direction. Our major assumption is that you want to have friendly working relationships with Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people on the basis that we are all fellow human beings who happen to speak different languages and have different lifestyles and ideas - at least on the surface.

The authors of this book are not authorities on all matters Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi, and this book is not a bible. The best people to help you learn both culture and language are the real experts, the Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people themselves. Our aim is to have you rely on *them* for accurate information. This is not only the most reliable way to get information, but usually gives a lot of pleasure to all concerned. Ideally you should have fun doing this, and so should those kind enough to help you learn.

We have assumed that people using this book will not necessarily have any background knowledge of linguistics, so we have avoided technical terms as far as possible. (A bibliography is supplied for those who do want more technical information. In fact, there is plenty of material, and a number of theoretical ideas in this book that may interest linguists.)

We will be happy to talk privately about particular problems or questions that you may come up with after this course, so please phone us.

Steve and Narelle Etherington.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to say thank you to some people who have been helping us learn Kunwinjku since 1977, especially: Andrew Manakgu, Ngalmakgu Nabobbob, Mirndabbarl Manakgu and members of the Kunwinjku Bible Translation team (Dolly Maralngurra, Lois Nadjamerrek, Jill Nganjmirra and her late husband, and Rev Peterson Nganjmirra). We also want to thank Peter Carroll and Meryl Rowe, who both devoted many years to working with Kunwinjku people and their language, and who have given us helpful advice on many occasions.

Steve and Narelle Etherington are supported by the *Church Missionary Society of Australia* (an independent Mission society within the Anglican Church of Australia).

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK and TAPES

This book has developed out of a number of courses we have run over the years. Its primary purpose is to help people who want to learn how to hear, speak, read and write Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi.

Of course, you will not be able to learn the language just by reading a book or listening to a cassette. Language is the means for relationships between people, and our hope is that would-be K/G speakers will be prepared to learn from the Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people themselves. It is hard work: it involves memorization, it involves making mistakes and sometimes being the object of amusement, and it involves a big investment of time. What makes all this worthwhile, is the possibility of really getting to know people in a deep way, without the usual role-playing and misunderstandings that go with the shallow and sometimes manipulative involvement of workplace contacts. An effort at language learning will also take you beyond the comfortable stereotypes of race, so instead of falling back on what you suppose is an "Aboriginal" worldview, you will have the means of finding out what individual people really think and say about themselves.

There is a series of decisions you need to make about being involved with Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people and learning their language. Primarily, you need to be ruthlessly honest with yourself about how much time you are prepared to invest. The following chart describes in order of importance the main stages of learning you will encounter, and shows both how much time and what sort of benefits are involved for each of these stages.

**STAGE 1:** (Absolutely fundamental) Learn to recognize and address people by skin group names. This will take only a few hours work to learn to pronounce and spell the skin names, and allows you to begin to function as part of the social system.

**STAGE 2:** Hear and say with correct pronunciation Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi personal names. This could take you a couple of hours a week for several weeks, and you would need to make yourself actually say the names in public. Most Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people greatly appreciate the effort you put into this, regardless of your success.

**STAGE 3:** Use some common K/G expressions, like "Where are you going?" "Are you well?" "What time is it?" etc.. All the comments for Stage 2 apply here too.

**STAGE 4:** Start learning how to spell and read K/G. This is particularly important if you intend writing down words as you hear them. You need to use the established spelling systems used and approved by the Aboriginal people. This stage will involve you in around 10 hours per week for 4 - 6 weeks to become proficient. Because the spelling systems are completely "phonetic" you will find you are able to read aloud with reasonable pronunciation without understanding what you are reading.

**STAGE 5:** Learning the language: If you decide to commit yourself to a substantial investment of time, and to actually become a speaker of Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi, and to understand what K/G people are really saying,



you would then proceed through the remainder of this book. This will involve you in a minimum of 10-20 hours per week of study and practice with K/G people, for about 2 years. Beyond that, you will find learning Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi is a lifelong adventure.

You will not be able to get far with this unless some Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi people take you under their wings and establish you as a brother, sister, son, daughter or some other relationship. You will be relying completely on some or other K/G person, preferably of the same sex, who is willing to give you advice, correct you and act as teacher. There is some practical advice on this and other aspects of learning in the section called "Learning Kunwinjku".

Once you are in this kind of relationship, you need to start learning and using the various kinship address words, like "Father" "Aunty" etc.. Your K/G instructor will help with this.

At the same time, you need urgently to learn how to put together K/G verbs. Don't get trapped into compiling lists of lots of interesting nouns - names of plants, seasons, birds, body parts etc.. These are easy to get but don't give you access to people. Life, and therefore language, is about attitudes, feelings, ideas, communications, hopes, moods and relationships. You must learn verbs to say anything worth saying at all and to participate in what is going on.

The various things you will need to learn about the verb are set out in this book in what we believe is the best order to learn, so that each new section builds on the one before. Read all the way through before starting serious work.

## NOTE ABOUT THE AUDIO TAPES WITH THIS BOOK

This book comes with three audio tapes to help you with spelling and pronunciation.

**IMPORTANT WARNING:** At present these tapes are only available in the Kunwinjku form of the language. For those who intend to learn from those who speak only the Gun-djeihmi form, you will find some slight differences, and you will need to work with your Gun-djeihmi teachers to ensure the right pronunciation.

**TAPE 1:** The tape "Kunwinjku Kunwok" provides some help with pronunciation early on. In the first few chapters of the text book the sign [TAPE] indicates that this Kunwinjku material is read aloud on the Kunwinjku Kunwok tape, side A. Kunwinjku speakers read through each item marked [TAPE] in the book. Side B is titled "Kunwinjku Pronunciation" and provides an extensive list of personal, place and clan names read slowly by a Kunwinjku person, to allow you to practice pronunciation and spelling. You need to use this in conjunction with the section of the book called "Learning Kunwinjku" which has a full print out of what is read on the tape.

**TAPE 2:** "Kunwinjku Spelling Practice". Use this in conjunction with the text book after you have read through the section on spelling. ( See notes, page 37). This tape is to provide practice in spelling Kunwinjku correctly when you write down what you hear spoken.

**TAPE 3:** "Language Assignments". This tape is used in conjunction with the Language Assignments section at the end of the book and will help you revise what you have done and check on your skill levels.

Listening to tapes, even when you practice aloud, will not help you learn to speak the language in real life. It is crucially important to use language in actual conversations with Kunwinjku people: the tape will not substitute for this. Please read the notes about the tape in the section "Use of the audio cassette"

We hope that you will find learning Kunwinjku as great a source of satisfaction to yourself and to Kunwinjku people who help you. All the best !

## LIMITATIONS OF THIS BOOK

Of course, there are many interesting details about Kunwinjku language, society and culture we have not covered in this book. It was never our intention to replace Kunwinjku people as a source of detailed information, especially about cultural issues. A thousand books and courses could not begin to do full justice to this rich, complex language, let alone describe the social, philosophical and artistic world in which it operates.

You will not be able to learn the language or anything else worth knowing about Kunwinjku life, by reading this or any other book. We have written this course on the assumption that you will depend on, and regularly interact with Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi informal teachers.

If you find your Kunwinjku/Gun-djeihmi instructor disagrees with this book, then you most certainly must take their authority as final. Where several Kunwinjku/Gun -djeihmi people disagree, you cannot use this book to make a decision about who is right. The best approach is to just shelve the query, and wait until your language skills and knowledge of K/G society is good enough to know who you should ask about what issues.

Of course, we will be very happy to hear from you if you find errors or confusing elements in this book, or there are any problems with the tape. Please do phone, write or fax.

## NOTE ABOUT DICTIONARIES and OTHER RESOURCES

The Kunwinjku Language Centre has published *A Basic Kunwinjku Dictionary* which might assist Kunwinjku learners. (See back of title page for the address). The only useful dictionary is the one you build up inside your head where it is always available, so there is no escape from memorization. Also note that throughout this book there are quite a few short lists of words given as examples along the way, which can be consolidated into a good basic dictionary.

The section of this book "Learning Kunwinjku" lists a number of other books that might be helpful to students.



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## THE KINSHIP SYSTEM: KUNWINJKU INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### INTRODUCTION TO KUNWINJKU REFERENCE SYSTEM

As in all societies, Kunwinjku people use a number of different ways to refer to each other. Names, nicknames, titles and so on. Because Kunwinjku society is small and people have a very high degree of contact with each other, there are some differences from bigger social systems. One of the most obvious differences for an English speaker entering the Kunwinjku system, is that names are not the main way of referring to people. Instead there are several other systems used in parallel. For example, one particular Kunwinjku man could be spoken to, or about, using the following terms:

- \*Nabulanj - his skin name (most common form of informal reference)
- \*Nawernwarre - "eldest" among siblings.
- \*Namandjuringunj - member of Mandjulingunj clan
- \*Njamkimuk - "beer gut" (Nicknames are common)
- \*Nadjakerr - ( His father is talking to his younger brother about him using this Kundebe term which reflects the triangle of relationships between the three of them.)
- \*kakkali - "my spouse"
- \*ngabba - "daddy"

Generally, Kunwinjku adults will go to some trouble to avoid using a name, so to make it clear which Nabulanj skin group man is being discussed, a series of terms might be used, for example:

*Nabulanj Namandjuringunj nawu Djakku* = That Nabulanj man from the Namandjuringunj clan who is left handed.

*Ngalwakadj ngalbu ngarrmanjmeng, ngalwernwarre* = Ngalwakadj that you and I both call Kakkali, the eldest of the women in that category.

Names are used too, particularly by children. Most Kunwinjku people have Kunwinjku personal as well as family names, often as well as an English first name. Personal Kunwinjku names are usually only used and known by close family members. Normally,



the only people who address you by your personal Kunwinjku name would be spouse or parents, and only in informal close family contexts.

The polite way to find out someone's name is to ask another person. In Kunwinjku this needs the question;

*Nangale kangeyyo?* = What's his name? [TAPE]

*Ngalngale kangeyyo?* = What's her name?

The most common form of address and of referring to people is to use "skin names". These are the most important thing to learn first.

## Part One: Skin Groups

### WHAT THEY ARE

Every Kunwinjku person is a member of one of eight "skin groups". (Anthropologists refer to these as "subsections", but Kunwinjku people sometimes use a word that means skin). When a Kunwinjku person is born, the skin group of his/her mother determines which skin group the child belongs to. It is not the same as the mother's skin group, but has a special relationship to it. So for example, a woman who is Ngalkodjok skin group, will have children who are all Nawakadj or Ngalwakadj skin. The diagram and notes following will help explain this.

### LIST OF THE EIGHT KUNWINJKU SKIN GROUPS [TAPE]

The eight skin groups each have a male and female form. Each is shown here, female from first.

Ngalbulanj, Nabulanj  
Ngalngarridj, Nangarridj  
Ngalwakadj, Nawakadj  
Ngalkangila, Nakangila  
Ngalbangardi, Nabangardi  
Ngalkodjok, Nakodjok  
Ngalwamud, Nawamud  
Ngalkamarrang, Nakamarrang

WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW THE SKIN GROUP SYSTEM

The skin group names are probably the most important thing to learn in trying to communicate with Kunwinjku people, because they are so absolutely fundamental to daily life:

[1] The most common way Kunwinjku people refer to each other and address each other, is using skin group names. This is true whether in intimate family life or in public. Long term visitors to Kunwinjku communities are likely to be assigned membership of one of these groups. This *does not* imply any special acceptance of that person, but is simply done so that the person can easily be referred to.

[2] Membership of a skin group determines the group of people who are eligible marriage partners.

[3] Even very young children can deduce from a person's skin group the skin groups of that person's parents, children and other relatives. If you can't do that, you are in a roughly equivalent situation as a person trying to survive in white Australian society without knowing how to use address words like Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Your Honour, mate, madam, sir etc.. It is absolutely basic stuff.

[4] The skin groups also determine ceremonial roles, totems, and other groupings.

[5] Every Kunwinjku person who has tried to teach us the language, has started by explaining these groups.

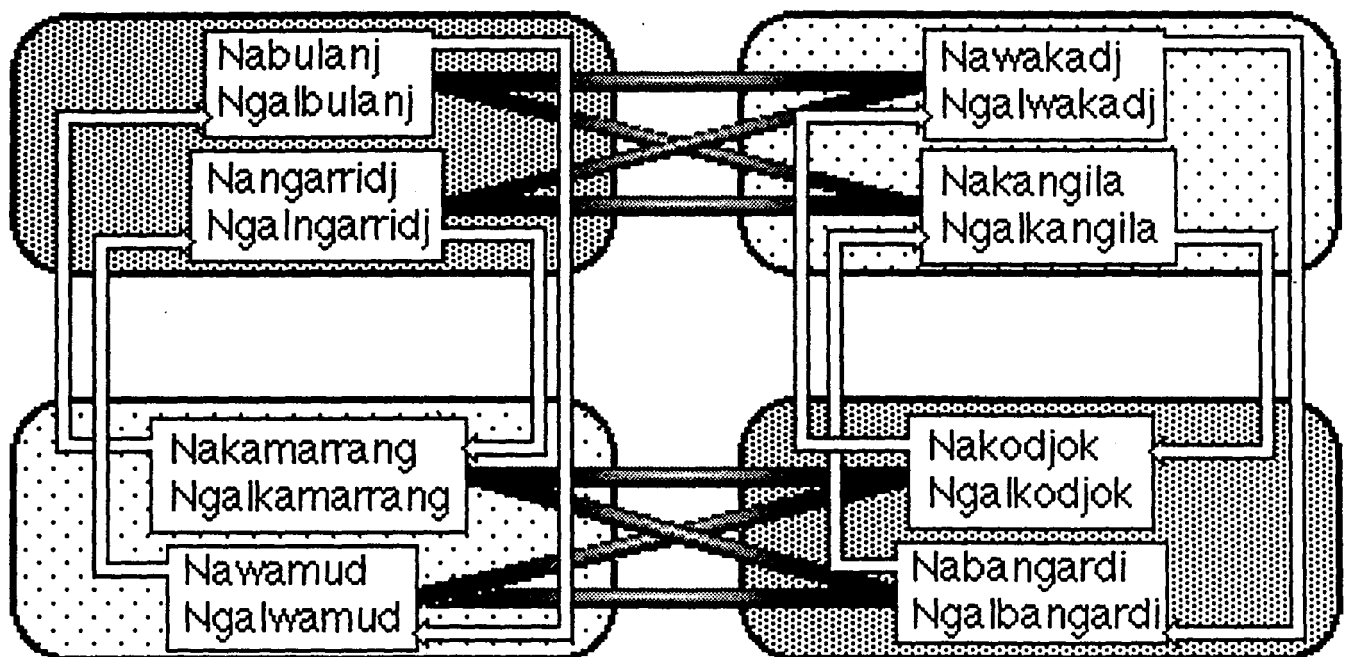
WAYS OF LEARNING SKIN GROUPS

The chart on page 4 is one way of organizing this basic information about skin groups. It is essential to memorize these groups and the relations between them using this, or whatever diagrams or other helps you draw up for yourself. Some people use circular diagrams - any diagram is okay, but the main thing is to memorize the data. Please read the notes after the chart as well. It is important to remember what the arrows mean showing who gives birth to whom, who can marry whom etc..

NOTE: EVEN IF YOU DON'T INTEND TO LEARN ANY OTHER KUNWINJKU, MEMORIZING THE SKIN GROUP SYSTEM WILL BE A HUGE ADVANTAGE.

## KUNWINJKU KUNKULAH Kunwinjku Skin Groups

Chart summarizing relations between groups. Use with notes opposite.



↳ gives birth to...

⌘ marries...

▤ Yirridjdja

▨ Duwa

Na-prefix denotes masculine forms  
Nga- prefix denotes feminine forms



## EXPLAINING THE SKIN GROUP CHART

*1 Male and Female Forms of Skin Group Names*

The eight names shown on this chart never occur without either a masculine or feminine beginning. So the one at the top left hand corner, shown as -bulanj, only occurs at Nabulanj ( if male) or Ngalbulanj if female. Similarly -wakadj is always either Ngalwakadj ( if female) or Nwakadj (if male). There are also plural forms you will need to learn later on, for example, Ngalbungalbulanj, referring to several Ngalbulanj females; Nabangabangardi referring to a group of Nabangardi males.

*2 Skin group is automatic at birth, but can be assigned to people not born in Kunwinjku society.*

A person's skin group is determined at birth by the mother's skin group. On this diagram the white arrows lead from a mother's skin group to that of her child. For example, an Ngalkamarrang woman has children who are Nabulanj or Ngalbulanj. You should aim to be able to predict from someone's skin group the skin group of their mother, or their children, and eventually, other relatives.

Non-Kunwinjku people become members of a skin group by being assigned to it after discussion among the Kunwinjku people who are involved with the particular outsider. In the case of Aboriginal people from adjacent language groups, they can just slot straight in to a skin group that matches their own. In the case of Aboriginal people from very distant places, or non-Aboriginal people, if no existing skin group can be worked out from a previous place, they will usually be slotted in as brother or sister, or other close relative of the Kunwinjku person they work with or live with. This process can be short or long, and may involve some negotiation between Kunwinjku people, but must be left up to the Kunwinjku people themselves to decide.

Sometimes people confuse skin group naming with "adoption". This is wrong. There is a legal system of adoption in Kunwinjku law involving a lot more than just having a skin group assigned. On the other hand, the more seriously you take your skin group and other kin responsibilities, the more seriously you will be taken. This means you will need to choose between either regarding all

Kunwinjku people on an equal, friendly basis, or fitting into the loyalties and responsibilities towards the family you are slotted into in ways that are more approximate to an actual Kunwinjku person.

### 3 Marriage

The heavy black lines in the chart join skin groups whose members can marry each other. Even then, not all the people in an "eligible" group would be possible because of other rules about who can marry whom. Note: it is not possible to marry someone from one's own skin group. Of course, marriage, or short term affairs, between people from wrong skin groups does occur, but attracts criticism and sometimes serious trouble. Simple arithmetic will show how very few eligible marriage partners any Kunwinjku person has.

For example, using the chart, it is clear that a Nabulanj man can only marry a woman from either Ngalkangila or Ngalwakadj groups, but not all women in these groups would be eligible, and those who *are* eligible might already be married.

There are other, more complex factors in arranging marriage that work in parallel with the skin groups. You can ask your Kunwinjku instructors about these.

### 4 Moieties

The two pairs of skin group names in the rectangles with *vertical* shading on the chart are the DUWA moiety. Those in the *horizontally* shaded boxes are the YIRRIDJJA moiety skin groups. These groupings are important for ceremonial purposes.

### 5 Other groupings shown on the chart

Most important is the division between the skin groups on the left hand side and those on the right hand side. Left hand are known collectively as NANGARRADJKU, those on right as NAMARDKU. If you get far enough into the language, you will hear more about these groups.

HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT SOMEONE'S SKIN GROUP IS [TAPE]

The best question to use is *Ngudda yingale kunkurlah?* if asking the person directly. If asking about them, use *Nangale kunkurlah*

*nuye?* if about a male, or *Ngalngale kunkurlah ngarre?* if asking about a female. Children will sometimes ask you what is your skin group using the forms: *Baleh yikurndi? Njale yikurndi?*

PRACTICE EXERCISES ON SKIN GROUP CHART: NOTE ON PROBLEMS

These questions can be answered from the chart. You should aim to get pretty fast. Kunwinjku speakers will assume you can make skin group deductions, like the following ones, almost automatically once you start speaking Kunwinjku. They can do these sorts of calculations instantly, although mostly they simply *remember* who everyone is. Doing the exercises on this chart will not necessarily help you if you are not meeting people and practising calling people by their skin group names. It is essential that you remember the skin group of everyone you relate to regularly.

In real life, ( not on the chart), where children are born in a "wrong skin" marriage, it may be hard to predict their skin group, but these are a very small percentage of what you will encounter. There are some men who have more than one wife, and these may not all be members of the one skin group. Don't worry about this possibility in these practice examples.

Note that there are sometimes two or more answers possible to these questions. These are given immediately under the questions, and can be covered for self-testing.

[1] You are a Nabulanj man. What skin group will your children probably be?  
*Nabangardi boys or Ngalbangardi girls if your wife is an Ngalwakadj woman.  
Nakodjok boys or Ngalkodjok girls if your wife is an Ngalkangila women.*

[2] If you hear a woman address her daughter as Ngalkamarrang, what skin group is the speaker's husband?  
*He could be either Nawakadj, or Nakangila. Only an Ngalngarridj woman can have a daughter who is Ngalkamarrang, and the two skin groups who could marry an Ngalngarridj are Nawakadj, or Nakangila.*

[3] If a child says he is a Nabangardi, what is the skin group of his mother's brother?  
*Nawakadj or Nakangila ( Nawakadj would be the mother's birth brother. But some of her classificatory brothers could be Nakangila)*

[4] A man says he is Nawamud. What are the likely skin groups of his father in law?  
*Nabulanj or Nangarridj. ( The Nawamud's wife should be either Ngalkodjok or*

KUNWINJKU INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

*Ngalbangardi, who in turn have mothers who are Ngalkangila or Ngalwakadj respectively. The men who could be married to either of these are either Nabulanj or Nangarridj.)*

[5] A man says his mother-in-law is Ngalbangardi. What skin group are his children? *Nakodjok or Ngalkodjok (An Ngalbangardi woman has a daughter who is Ngalkangila, so the man must have children who are Nakodjok or Ngalkodjok. He, of course, could be either Nabulanj or Nangarridj.)*

[6] A woman is Ngalbulanj. What skins could her grandchildren be? *They could be Nangarridj, Ngalngarridj, Nawakadj, Ngalwakadj, Nakangila or Ngalkangila. (An Ngalbulanj woman has children who are either Nawamud, or Ngalwamud. The son, Nawamud, could marry either Ngalkodjok, or Ngalbangardi, so that his children would be either Nawakadj and Ngalwakadj, or Nakangila and Ngalkangila. Meanwhile, the Ngalwamud would have Nangarridj, or Ngalngarridj children.)*

[7] If your mother's birth brother is a Nangarridj, what skin is your daughter? *If you are a man: Ngalwakadj, or Ngalkangila. ( Your mother must be Ngalngarridj , so you are Nakamarrang, and you should be married to either Ngalbangardi or Ngalkodjok, in which case your daughters must be either Ngalkangila or Ngalwakadj.)* *If you are a woman: Ngalbulanj. ( Your mothers skin means you are Ngalkamarrang, so your daughter must be Ngalbulanj.)*

[8] What skin group is my father if my husband is Nawamud? *Nabulanj, or Nangarridj. ( To be married to a Nawamud, you must be either Ngalkodjok, or Ngalbangardi, so your mother would be either Ngalkangila or Ngalwakadj. They in turn would have to be married to either Nabulanj or Nangarridj. )*

[9] What skin group are my daughters-in-law if my wife is Ngalwakadj? *Ngalkamarrang or Ngalwamud. ( Your sons must be Nabangardi, who should marry one of these two skin groups.)*

[10] What would be the skin groups of a Nabangardi's grandchild? *Nawamud, Ngalwamud, Ngalkamarrang, Nakamarrang, Nakodjok, Ngalkodjok, Nabangardi or Ngalbangardi. ( A Nabangardi would have children who are Nabulanj, Ngalbulanj, Nangarridj or Ngalngarridj. The Ngalbulanj or Ngalngarridj women would have children who are either Nawamud, Ngalwamud, Ngalkamarrang or Nakamarrang. On the other hand, the Nabulanj and Nangarridj men could marry either Ngalwakadj or Ngalkangila women, so their children could be Nakodjok, Ngalkodjok, Nabangardi or Ngalbangardi.)*

## More information on skin groups

### ALTERNATIVE NAMES FOR SKIN GROUPS

There is an alternative set of skin group names in use in Western Arnhem Land. These are set out below. They follow the same rules as those shown on the chart. If the Kunwinjku people teaching you use these alternative forms, then follow their lead. Pages 186-189 of the Appendix shows both forms of skin names in both Kunwinjku and Gun-djeihmi spellings.

### ALTERNATE SKIN GROUP NAMES [TAPE]

Nakodjok .....	Wamud
Ngalkodjok .....	Wamuddjan
Nawakadj.....	Ngarridj
Ngalwakadj.....	Ngarridjan
Nabangardi.....	Kamarrang
Ngalbangardi.....	Kamanj / kamanjdjan
Nakangila .....	Bulanj
Ngalkangila .....	Bulanjdjan
Nakamarrang .....	Bangardi
Ngalkamarrang.....	Bangardidjan
Nabulanj.....	Kela
Ngalbulanj.....	Kalidjan
Nawamud.....	Kodjok
Ngalwamud.....	Kodjan
Nangarridj.....	Balang
Ngalngarridj.....	Berlinj / berlinjdjan

### PLURAL FORMS OF SKIN NAMES: [TAPE]

Along with many words in Kunwinjku, plural forms can be shown by reduplication ( doubling up parts of words ). The following list is not guaranteed, because, like all people, Kunwinjku speakers all speak in slightly different ways, and there are variations in the way people say these plurals. These are the most common forms:

PLURAL FORMS OF SKIN GROUP NAMES [TAPE]

Nabulabulanj Ngalbulngalbulanj	Nawawakadj Ngalwangelwakadj
Nangarridjngarridj Ngalnarridjngarridj	Nakangkangila Ngalkangkangila
Nakamakamarrang Ngalkamakamarrang	Nabangabangardi Ngalbangalbangardi / Ngalbabangardi
Nawawamud Ngalwangelwamud	Nakodjokodjok / Nakokodjok Ngalkodjokodjok / Ngalkokodjok

SKIN GROUPS AND IDENTITY

Knowledge of people's skin group is essential, but is still only a starting point. Identity is constructed and lived out in relationships. The venue for relationships is language. Skin group is only one of a cluster of features that Kunwinjku people use to define their own identity and that of others. Each Kunwinjku child grows up becoming aware of the place names of their mother's and father's countries, the animals and stories associated with those places, sacred places and other aspects of their individual and clan (Kunmokokurr) identities.

Many Kunwinjku people have both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal names, and all learn the complex ways of referring to relatives by the appropriate polite indirect terminology, especially when dealing with people in relationships which involve special respect. Whilst it is not appropriate to "grill" people about these details, most Kunwinjku people will welcome genuine interest within a relationship between equals.

OTHER NOTES ON SKIN GROUPS

[1] Sometimes the skin names are modified by including the syllable "yik" in the name, between the gender prefix and the stem, for example, Nakodjok and Ngalkamakarrang could be said Nayikkodjok and Ngalyikkamakarrang respectively. This is done when you speak



to someone about a person who is closely related to them.

[2] In some Kunwinjku stories certain animals are associated with specific skin groups, for example some people classify all emus as Ngalkangila from the Ngalwurrkbarn clan.

[3] Even pets can have a skin group assigned. For example a dog could be Ngalbangardi and her pets might be referred to as Ngalkangkangila. This is basically an expression of ownership, with the pet usually referred to by the skin name of its master's children.

[4] When talking about - not talking to - infants or toddlers, you add yaw to the skin name. So a child of Nabulanj skin group can be addresses as Nabulanj, but would often be referred to as *Nabulanj yaw*.

**Practice in using the Skin Groups to work out relationships.**

**WARNING:** Although the following are a reliable guide most of the time, there are other complicated rules involved here too which may make a difference in some cases, so you always need to check with Kunwinjku people if in doubt. However, if you practice this kind of "calculation" you will find you understand Kunwinjku society a lot better. Using the skin group chart, you can figure out what relationship exists between your own skin group and someone else this way:

**People from skin groups in same "box":**

*brothers or sisters*  
*half your grandparents (mother's mother, father's father)*  
*half your grandchildren*

**People in the box horizontally opposite**

*wife, husband, brother or sister in law*  
*half your grandparents (mother's father, father's mother)*  
*half your grandchildren*

**People in box vertically above or below:**

*your children if you are female*  
*mother*  
*uncle, nephew, niece*  
*sons and daughters in law if you are a man*  
*father in law*

**People in box diagonally opposite either above or below:**

*your children if you are a male*  
*father*  
*sons and daughters in law if you are a woman*  
*aunty*  
*mother in law*

## Part Two: Terms of Address

### WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY YOU NEED TO LEARN THEM

All human languages have a key group of words which are the terms of address. In English this includes such items as Mum, Dad, Sis, Grandma, Aunty, etc.. Life grinds to a halt without these sorts of words. The most common Kunwinjku ones are listed in this section. Anyone who wants to build meaningful relationships with Kunwinjku people will need to use these words.

### HOW TO KNOW WHICH WORD YOU USE WITH WHICH PEOPLE

You begin using these terms when you have been slotted into a skin group relationship, so you know your relationship with at least one Kunwinjku person - maybe your sister or brother. You work outwards from this relationship to establish others.

Use these questions to find out what your kin relationship is to others:

*Baleh marneyime?* = what do I call you? [TAPE]

*Baleh ngamarneyime?* = what do I call him/her?

To answer these questions, people will need to find out who is considered to be your close brother or sister. Then, whatever kinship relations apply to your brother or sister will also apply to you. Note: not everyone you call brother or sister is 'close'. It must be the person who classifies you as having the same biological mother and father as them (by an informal sort of sibling adoption). To explain whose brother or sister you are, say:

*Ngaye Wally nganedanginj* [TAPE]

Which means "I am Wally's brother/sister."

(*Ngaye* = I *Nganedanginj* = He (or she) and I are siblings.)

### ABOUT LEARNING AND USING THIS LIST OF TERMS

[1] All the titles on these sheets are used when talking to the people concerned. NOT when talking about them. Those words will be dealt with later.

[2] The terms come in pairs, so if you address someone as *rdardda*,

they would address you as *kokok*. It is essential to memorize the reply to each term, so you know what to call the person who addresses you. So, for example, if someone calls you *berluh* you know automatically that you call them *korlonj*. In many cases the reply is the same as the term of address, for example if you call someone *kakkak*, they call you the same. This makes memorization a bit easier.

[3] Please note that for many terms there is a difference in use depending on whether you are male or female. Whenever this is the case, it is indicated in the definition.

WARNINGS ABOUT THESE TERMS

[1] There are lots more of these terms; and some of them have other uses not listed here, and the unseen factors governing their use are unbelievably complicated. The best approach is just to remember what you call particular people and don't try to work out why.

[2] The English equivalents are a bit misleading. For example, in large societies like English speaking Australia, we usually have only one person we call "father", but in Kunwinjku there are lots of people one calls father, mother etc. Beware especially of the English word "cousin" which is used in several different ways in Oenpelli, none of them meaning the same as the English word.

[3] Words like "older", "younger" etc. are not necessarily based on age but on other factors. For example if you are a woman, you might call a younger sister *yabok* because her mother is older than yours. Also, "grandparents" may be younger than you.

[4] It is rarely possible to work out what you call a person by only knowing their skin group. Always check. Especially when persons from the same skin group could equally turn out to be any one of your spouse, aunty, nephew, niece, son or daughter!

MAIN TERMS OF ADDRESS [TAPE]

Note: throughout this chart information about male speakers is underlined; material about Female speakers is in italic. Information applying to both genders is in ordinary type.

RDARDA

If you are a man this is what you call your younger brother. He calls you KOKOK.

*If you are a woman, this is what you call your younger sisters. They call you YABOK*

*This is also what a woman calls any of her brothers whether younger or older. And they all call her YABOK*

YABOK

If you are a man, this is what you call any of your sisters. They call you RDARDA.

*If you are a woman, this is what you call your older sister. She calls you RDARDA*

KOKOK

If you are a man, this is what you call your older brothers. They call you RDARDA.

NGADBURRUNG

This is what you call any brother or sister, whether you are male or female. It's less formal and less definite than the other terms for brothers and sisters. They might call you the same or use a more definite term, for example, rdarda.

NGABBA

What you call your father or his brothers. They call you KORLONJ.

KORLONJ

If you are a man, this is what you call your children, or your brothers' children. They call you NGABBA.

*If you are a woman this is what you call your brothers' children. They call you BERLUH.*

KARRANG

What you call your mother or her younger sisters. *They will all*

KUNWINJKU INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

*call you DJEDJE*

DJEDJE

*This is what mothers call their children. They (both sexes) call her KARRANG*

MORLAH

*What you call a woman who your mother calls YABOK, i.e., your mother's older sister. They call you the same.*

NGADJADJ

*What you call your mother's brothers. They call you KANKINJ*

KANKINJ

*What your mother's brothers call you. You call them NGADJADJ*

NGALKURRNG

*Ask Kunwinjku people about this one. Basically it means someone you treat as your close mother-in-law, regardless of whether you actually are married to her child. She would call you Nakurrng or Ngalkurrng, but in fact you and she both should use mother-in-law language to communicate, in which case a whole new set of terms is used. Some people, misleadingly, use the English word "cousin" for this term. There is a set of social rules about how you relate to those you call Ngalkurrng, involving limits on how close you can go to each other and many other complexities. Ask your Kunwinjku instructors about this.*

BERLUH

*Your father's sisters. They call you KORLONJ.*

KAKKALI

*Your spouse and his or her brothers and sisters. They call you the same. These are people you could be eligible to marry. Sometimes it is more polite to use KANJOK when addressing members of the opposite sex among these people, unless you actually are married to a member of the family of the person you are talking to.*

KANJOK

*Similar to Kakkali but less formal. Too complicated to explain,*

but is like kakkali without being quite as specific about marriage. If someone calls you this, you call them the same.

BANJDJI

Same comments apply as KANJOK, but this is even less formal. Reply also BANJDJI.

KAKKAK

What you call your mother's mother (also her sisters and brothers) They call you the same but from their point of view it means grandchild.

MAMAM

What you call your mother's father and his sisters and brothers. They call you the same but from their point of view it means grandchild.

MAKKAH

What you call your father's mother and her brothers and sisters. They call you the same but from their point of view it means grandchild.

MAWAH

What you call your father's father and his brothers and sisters. They call you the same but from their point of view it means grandchild.

DOYDOY

What you call your great grandmother, i.e., your mother's mother's mother. You call each other this.

NAKURRNG

You may call some of your male relatives this. If you are male they call you the same. If you are female they will call you ngalkurrng.

DJONGOK

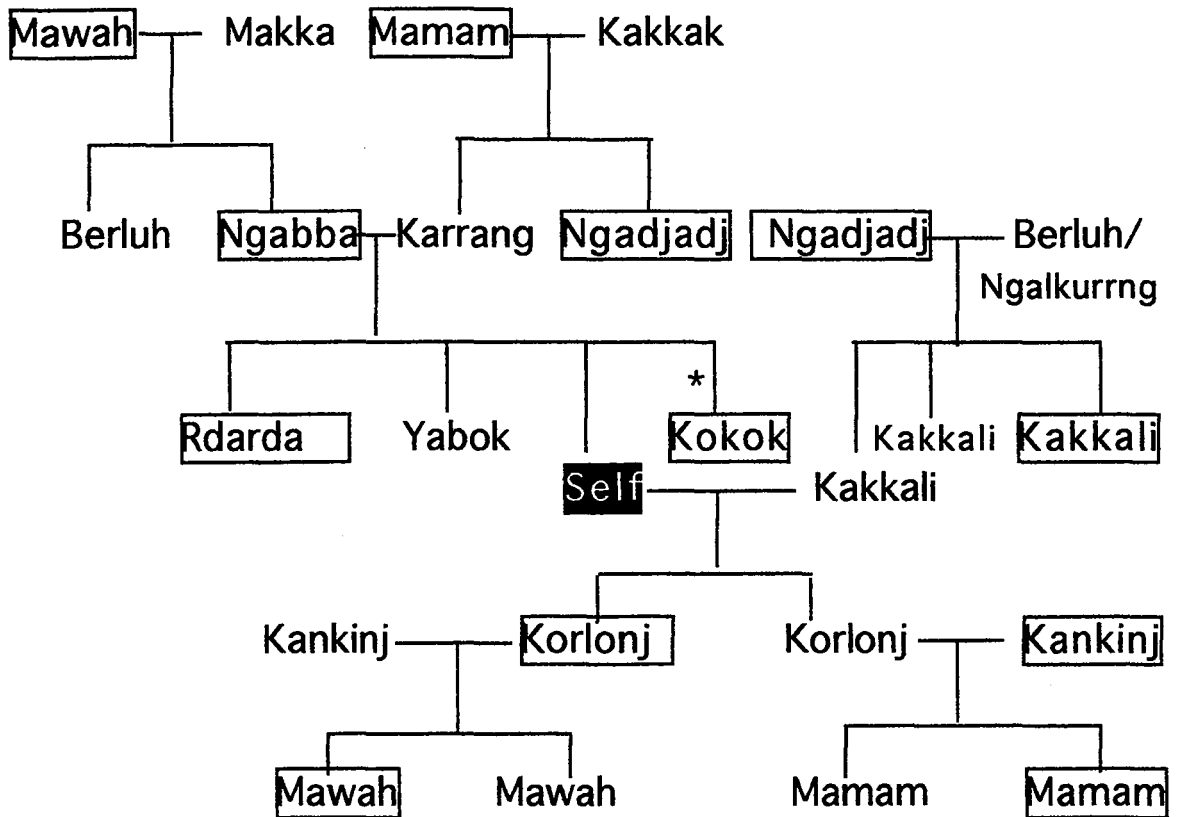
Refers to members of a particular sub group of your relatives. Ask your Kunwinjku advisers about this.



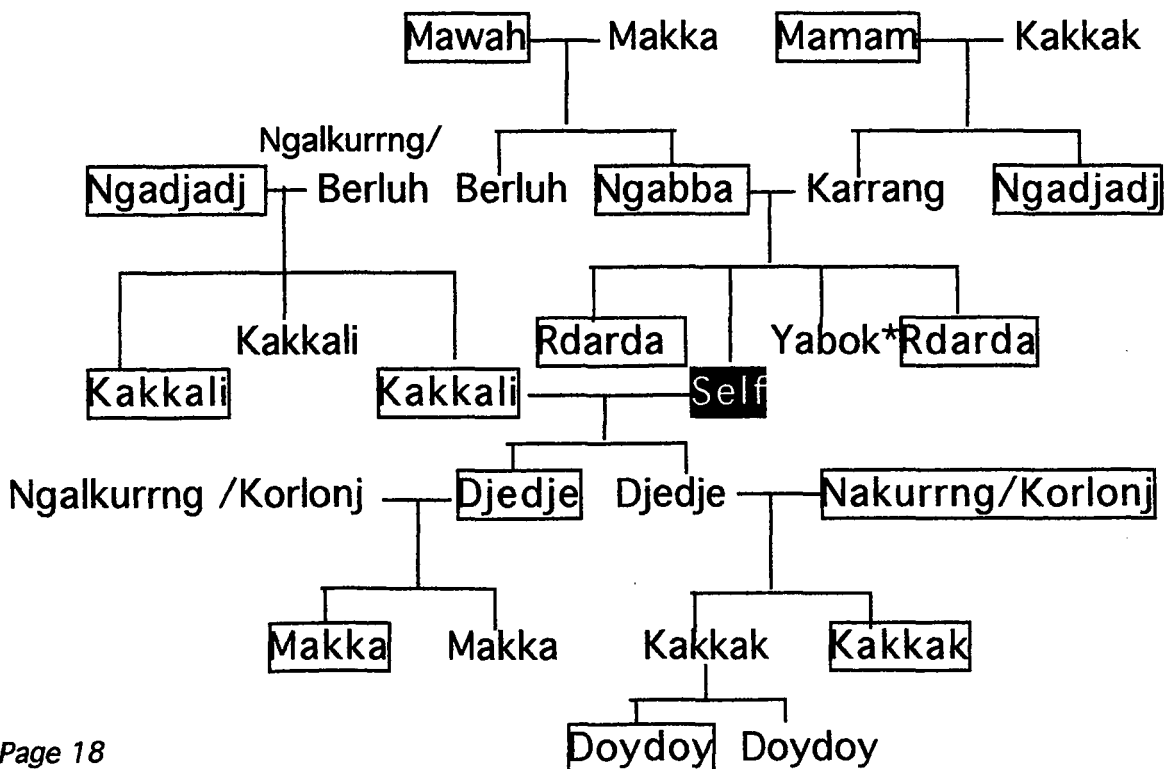
## Simplified chart of immediate family kin terms

Boxed = male relative; \* marks eldest. Other symbols are explained on page 22.

### IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS FROM MALE PERSPECTIVE



### IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS FROM FEMALE PERSPECTIVE



## Part Three: Words Referring to People

The following are words we use to talk about other people, rather than talking to them. These are also fundamental words, without which it is impossible to function as an adult member of any society. They are parallel to English words like mother, grandson, husband, boyfriend, friend, cousin, etc.. The following list only shows the most common terms.

### SELECTED KEY PERSONAL REFERENCE WORDS [TAPE]

Note: Of course, there are many other words of this type, especially in relation to the ceremonial status of people, which we haven't shown.

*Group a: Family Members - alphabetical (Only sample of most common terms shown)*

ancestors ( not mythical).....	mawahmawah
aunty (father's sister).....	berluh
brother.....	narangem
cousin (English first cousin).....	this varies, for example: <u>nganemodjarrkdorrij</u> = he or she and I are cousins <u>benemodjarrkdorrij</u> = those two are cousins
eldest son, daughter.....	nawernwarre / ngalwernwarre
eldest of eldest in family.....	nadjaman (male only)
family.....	namud
father.....	kornkumo
female.....	ngaldaluk
grandfather (father's father).....	namawahmikenh
grandfather (mother's father).....	namanjmikenh
grandmother (father's mother).....	ngalmawahmikenh
grandmother (mother's mother).....	ngalkinjbarlen
husband.....	nabininjkobeng
male.....	narangem
married man/woman.....	nakaliyi / ngalkaliyi
mother.....	ngalbadjan
mother-in-law.....	ngalbinjbalak
sister.....	ngaldaluk

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son /daughter ( of a woman ) .....nayaw / ngalyaw  
son/daughter in law ( of woman )....nabinjkurrng / ngalbinjkurrng  
son/daughter( of a man ).....beywurd / ngalbeywurd  
uncle (mother's brother).....nabadjan, ngadjadj  
wife.....ngalbininjkobeng  
youngest son, daughter .....nawalawalak / ngalwalawalak

*Group b: Short sample list of names for various categories of People - some plurals shown in brackets [TAPE]*

Aboriginal person.....bininj  
adult man.....bininj ( binihbininj )  
adult woman .....daluk ( daluhdaluk )  
baby boy.....nabarrken, nayawrangem  
baby girl.....ngalbarrken  
bald man.....kodjbarla  
blind man /woman .....mimbunje / ngalmimbunje  
boss.....nawu kawohnan  
caucasian race person.....balanda  
child.....wurdyaw ( wurdwurd)  
crippled man/woman.....nabirl / ngalbirl  
deaf man / woman.....bengwarr / ngalbengwarr  
friend (same sex).....djawirna  
girlfriend / boyfriend.....marrarradj  
good looking person.....kukmak / ngalkukmak  
healer/doctor.....marrkidjbu  
left handed man/woman.....djakku / ngaldjakku  
little boy, male person.....narangem  
man/woman with leprosy.....nangorddo / ngalngorddo  
middle aged woman .....morlehmorlenj  
old man.....nakohbanj ( kohbahkohbanj )  
old woman.....ngalkohbanj ( kohbahkohbanj )  
orphan boy/girl.....namarladj / ngalmarladj  
people who lived long ago.....nawu birrikare  
person with big stomach.....njamkimuk  
policeman.....djamun  
short man/woman.....dedjumbung / ngaldedjumbung  
single man.....nadjadmud  
stupid person.....bengwarr  
teenage boy .....yawurrinj

teenage girl.....yawkyawk  
 tough/cranky man/woman.....nabang / ngalbang  
 widow.....ngalkodjmong

*Group c: Short sample list of other Kunwinjku personal reference categories: [TAPE]*

kurlawurddu.....sisters refer to and address brothers this way after the boy has been through only the Kunabibi ceremony. Opposite sex siblings must not share food while the brother is referred to by this term. After completing other ceremonies, this term and other restrictions are lifted.

limbidj.....ceremonial term of address

lakayen.....circumcized male

burlu.....eldest child

ngalbinjdoy.....daughter in law

bindoy.....son/daughter in law

kundoy.....son/daughter in law

ngalbulkabulkayh.....middle daughter in family

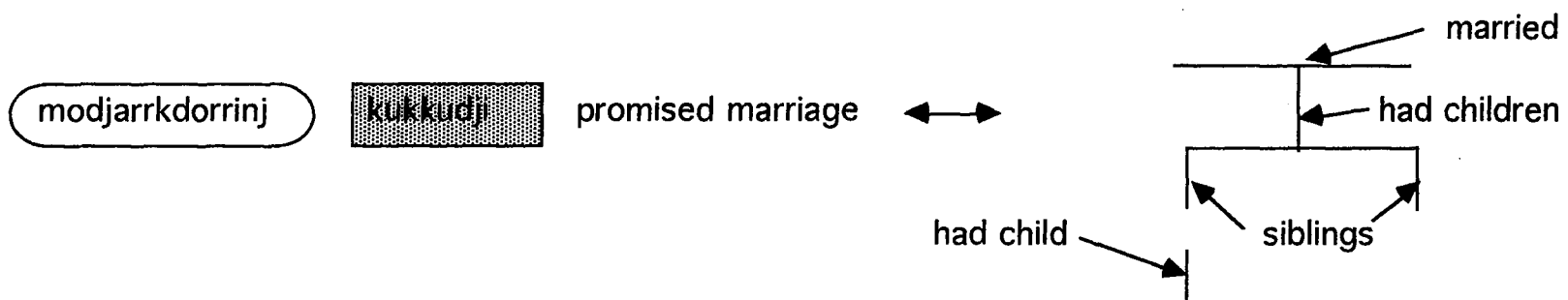
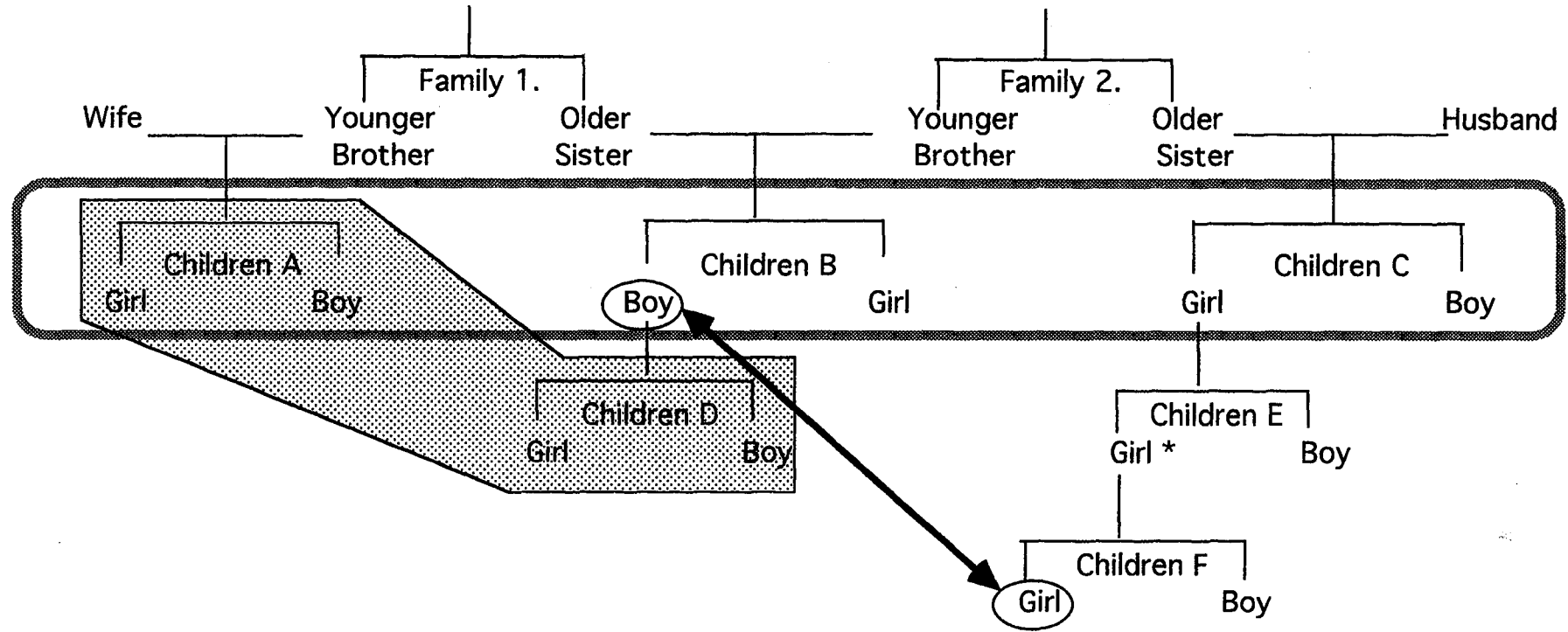
kukkudji.....relationship between people who call the same person father, but who are not brothers and sisters. See diagram on page ##

mimngorrkbel#.....same as kukkudji

modjarrkdorrij.....relationship between people whose parents are biological siblings. When a brother and sister marry their respective spouses, their children would be in a marriageable relationship with each other if the kinship rules were applied normally. But in Kunwinjku society these full first cousins are considered too closely related to marry. They are said to be *birrimodjarrdorrij* and relate to each other as if the children of the older sibling are aunties or fathers to the children of the younger sibling. This sounds complex, but the reality is more so, since sometimes, for example, this rule is only applied to one gender among siblings and not the other.

The diagram (overpage) shows how this system worked in one actual family.

SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM OF MODJARRKDRRINJ AND KUKKUDJI SYSTEMS IN ONE ACTUAL FAMILY



Notes on chart showing kukkudji and modjarkdorrini groups

The following notes will take you through the diagram opposite.

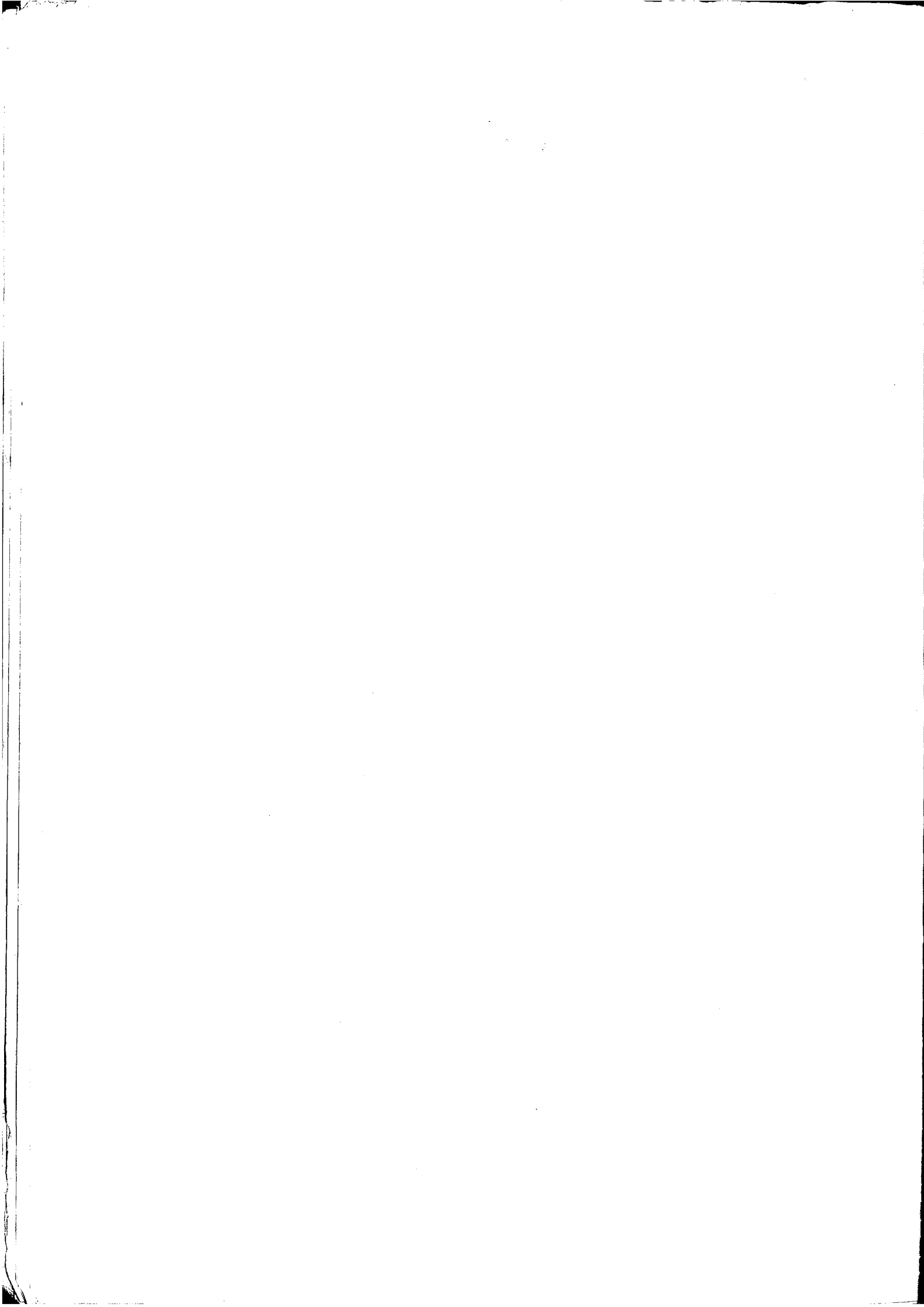
[1] Children A call Children B aunty or father (*berluh* or *ngabbard*.) Children B call Children A *korlonj* (reciprocal of both *berluh* and *ngabbard* ). Children A and B are said to be *birrimodjarrkdorrinj*, that is, one of the parents from each lot of children were siblings. Children A's father and Children B's mother were brother and sister. (From Family 1.)

[2] In the same way, Children B call Children C aunty or father (*berluh* or *ngabbard* ). Children C call Children B *korlonj* (reciprocal of both *berluh* and *ngabbard* ). Father of Children B was brother of Children C's mother. All the children A, B and C are said to be *birrimodjarrkdorrinj*.

[3] This system would still apply if the brother had been older than the sister. The children of the younger sibling regard children of the older sibling as aunts and fathers rather than calling them *kakkali* as the kinship system would otherwise dictate.

[4] Children A and Children D all call Children B aunty or father, so all Children A and D together are said to be *birrikukkudji*. There is a sense of mutual support between people who share this relationship. Note that on this diagram, to avoid clutter, we have not shown the *kukkudji* relationship that also exists between Children B and Children E.

[5] The first choice in arranging a promised marriage relationship is between a male and his *benemodjarrkdorrinj* aunty's daughter's daughter. So, male B (circled) calls female C *berluh*; and calls female E (with asterisk) mother-in-law (*ngalkurrng.*). Female E's daughter ( F, circled whom he calls *kakkali* ) is most eligible to be promised to him in marriage. This arrangement is not always applied. When it is however, note that Female F would be mother of Children D.



## KUNWINJKU / GUN-DJEIHMI ALPHABET AND SPELLING

### Part One: About Writing Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi

#### WHY YOU CAN'T SPELL KUNWINJKU / GUN-DJEIHMI WORDS ANY WAY YOU LIKE

Although no Aboriginal languages had a written form traditionally, they had, and still have, an enormous body of oral literature. Taking advantage of new technology, Kunwinjku has had a written alphabet in use now for over thirty years. This spelling system was developed in a team situation with Kunwinjku people. Gun-djeihmi spelling has been formulated over the last few years by Gun-djeihmi speakers. It is far too late for any self-appointed expert to decide to change these spelling systems. If and when Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi people want to make changes they will do so, since they were developed through consultation with them, and in response to their usage. In the meantime, the response you will get if you decide to spell words "the way you hear them" will be about the same as the response to those who spell English in their own individual, non-standard way: you run the risk of not communicating effectively, and may appear either incompetent or arrogant.

In any case, the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi orthography ( spelling systems) are fairly consistent (Gun-djeihmi still has some variation while final decisions are being made) and easy to learn, avoiding the problems that have grown up over the centuries in English, where a single sound can be spelt in more than one way: ( the "Oh" sound in low, but also spelt owe, dough, so, etc.) And where the same spelling can have a number of different sounds: ( dough, rough, through etc.) In Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi, the spelling is so consistent, that if you learn the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi alphabet in this chapter, you should be able to write down any words you hear in the language even when you don't know what they mean.

A fair bit of practice will be needed to get to the stage after that, which is to be able to read Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi aloud so that a native speaker could understand *you*. You can actually read individual words aloud without knowing what they mean, because the spelling system is based on the idea that the same sound should always be spelt the same way. There are only 22 letters or pairs of letters.



The sounds that are labelled "Same as English" later in this chapter are only approximately the same as English, but if you pronounce them as per English you will be understood, though you may still have an "accent". The other English equivalents are also only approximate so keep comparing your version with the way Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi people speak - this will gradually correct you.

You must practice as much as possible - try in the shower, alone in the car etc., anywhere so long as its aloud, since this is how you will need to speak to people! The main thing is to keep practising using as many different Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi words as you can get. If you find a particular sound or combination of sounds is a problem, just keep saying it for long enough and it will come eventually. Remember: It doesn't have to be perfect for people to understand you.

## Pronouncing and Writing Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi

### SAME LETTERS, DIFFERENT ALPHABET

Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi spelling is based on the same letter system used in English, but most of the letters have different values from English. The full list of 22 items is:

a, b, d, dj, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, ng, nj, o, r, rd, rl, rn, rr, u, w, y

Note that some are digraphs (double letters spelling a single sound, like English has, for example ch, sh). The capitals are done on the same basis as English, eg: B, Ng, Dj, M. When Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi people write English words, or names, they simply use the English spelling system for those words.

Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi is about average for world languages in the number of sounds it uses to construct words. (English has a lot, about 44, Hawaiian about 11, and most are in between.) Some writing systems don't use alphabets, but those that do work out ways for a relatively few letters to describe all the sounds in the language. Because English has a 26 character alphabet, it has to have a complex spelling system to fit all the 44 sounds. Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi has a pretty good match between the number of sounds and the number of letters, thus simplifying spelling.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ALTERNATIVE SPELLING, ESPECIALLY OF NAMES AND PLACES

You will soon notice some variations in the way personal names and place names are spelt in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi ( just as in English). These spellings were created for administrative reasons before a full spelling system was available, and they became established in their old forms. Some people spell names using the new system, some don't. Some are actually still changing from time to time. The best approach is to make sure you spell people's personal names the way *they* prefer, and the names of outstations in the way preferred by residents.

### The Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi Alphabet and Sounds

NOTE: The Gun-djeihmi version of sounds or examples is shown in square brackets when and if the Gun-djeihmi differs from Kunwinjku.

You will be able to use the audio tape to practice writing accurately what you hear. See the section of this book explaining how to use the tape. Read through this list first as a guide to how to pronounce and write Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi sounds you hear.

#### a

Say it like a in the English word father, but with your mouth open wider. Don't change the position of lips or tongue during the sound. If you think you hear a sound in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi that is like the u in but, this should be written as a.

Examples: kamak = good!, OK; balwam = he went; badj = pipe; Aba = oh no!; manme = food; ngarriwam = we went; karrinang = we saw; ngarrbenmangi = we were getting them.

#### b

Same as English but without air coming from your mouth. English b is near enough.

Examples: bebbehbeh = separately; bibom = it hit him; bidbonghmeng = it struck his/her hand; bobidbom = water came up; ba bu = so that; bimbuni = was drawing

#### d

Say it like an English d ( but without air coming from the mouth) unless it is at the end of a syllable, when it sometimes sounds like an English t. There is no letter t in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi, so if you hear what sounds like a d or a t in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi, write it as d.

Examples: dedj = base, underneath part; dird = moon; med = wait! (Sounds like *met*) kundad = leg; dedded = type of bird; dord = lice; dadbe = king brown snake.

When there is a d between two vowels in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi , it is often pronounced and written as a r r sound. This often happens when

two words are combined to make a longer word.

Examples: bidanj**o**m = bi + danj**o**m: he/she speared him/her - pronounced and spelt biranj**o**m. yidurndeng = yi + durndeng: you are going back - pronounced and written as yirurndeng

## dj

Say it like j in jump, unless it is at the end of a syllable, when it sometimes sounds like tch as in catch. If you hear what sounds like a j or a tch in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi, write it as dj.

Examples: djenj = fish; dja = and, so; kunmadj = clothing; dja = and, but djodj = centipede; djang = sacred place/story; djak = ant (generic).

## e

Say it like the English word air, but don't let the shape of your mouth, or the position of the tongue change during the sound. ( i.e., it is a pure, long vowel ) If you hear a Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi word that seems to have a longer version of this sound at the end, something like ey as in English they, it may be the ey combination described below in the section on combinations.

Examples: bekk**an** = I hear you; weng = she threw it; man**me** = food; web**meng** = vomited; bebm**eng** = arrived; med**jek** = goose wing fan.

## h

This letter represents the sudden cutting off of sound in a word. It is very common in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi and its presence usually changes the meaning of a word. The air is cut off at the end of a syllable by closing the back of the throat as far back as possible. The first h in the English expression "oh oh" is like the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi h. ( The English h like in hot, is nothing like the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi sound at all.) Technically this sound is a glottal stop, and is sometimes described as being like the underlined part of bottle when pronounced with a Cockney accent: i.e., bo'le.

Examples: njah! = said when giving someone something; kuhri = that way, there ngahre = I'm going right now - compare with ngare = I'm going; kamhre = he/she is coming ( at the moment of speaking ) - compare to kamre = he/she is coming ( at some time); bebbehbeh = separately.

The h sound can get muddled with other sounds at the end of syllables. Be careful with these:

yoh = yes but yok = bandicoot; yahwurdminj = it got small, compare yakminj = it vanished; belhmeng = it stuck to it (not belbmeng) compare with bolbmeng = learnt.

Note: the presence or absence of h sometimes alters meaning :

ngahre = I'm going right now - compare with ngare = I'm going; kamhre = he/she is

coming ( at the moment of speaking) - compare to kamre = he/she is coming ( at some time)

Often the glottal stop helps "break up" a long word, especially when there is a lot of doubling (reduplication), common in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi.

Examples: birrikikhkimuk = big people; karriduhdurndi = we were going back; yehyeng = thing, odds and ends.

## i

Sounds like ee in feet but a bit longer, and without changing the shape of lips or position of tongue. If you think you are hearing an ee sound in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi, write it as i. Don't get this mixed up with the three letter combination of i y i which occurs at the end of some words.

Examples: minj = not; yihdi = you are/were there; dingihdi = it was sitting there; ngalmangiyi = long necked turtle; bikkibikki = pigs (said by children)

## k [g or k]

This is probably the most common sound in the language. At the start of a word or a syllable, it sounds like the English letter g, but is written as a k in Kunwinjku. In Gun-djeihmi, when it sounds like a g, you write a g. In other places it sounds like the English k sound, and you say it like the first k in kick, but without letting a puff or air come out of your mouth. You actually say this sound a lot in English, but not at the beginning of words. It is almost exactly like the k sound in *skip*, *skid* and *skill*.

If you hear either a g or a k in Kunwinjku write it as k. The rule for Gun-djeihmi is: if it sounds like a g, write g; if it sounds like a k, write k. (There *is* a letter g in Kunwinjku spelling, but only as part of the ng sound. Never put a g in Kunwinjku except as the second letter of ng.)

Examples: kinga = crocodile [ginga]; kek = really, you don't say [gek]; bekkan = I'm listening to you [bekkan]; kakkak = grandma (mother's mother) [gakkak]; kikkik = type of bird [gikgik]; kakkali = my spouse [gakkali].

## l

Same as English. (Avoid confusion with r l sound.)

Examples: manlod = loaf of bread; larlmei = separated; larrk = no, nothing, none left; Kunbarllanjja = correct spelling of Gunbalanya, Kunbarlanya etc.

## m

Same as English.

Examples: mamam = grandpa (mother's father); mam = evil spirit; manmim = seed, bullet; yimka = bring it here; bimmunkeweng = he/she sent him/her

In Kunwinjku the names of many plants and trees begin with man-, which is reduced to An in Gun-djeihmi.

Examples: mandem=lily [an-dem]; manmarnawan=fig tree [an-marnawarn] See notes at the end of this section about hyphens.

The letter m often occurs as a morpheme, that is it is often used to change the meaning of a word. When it is inserted before the main part of the verb, it makes the action of the verb "come" towards where the speaker is.

For example kabenere = they are going, but adding m, kabenemre = they are coming.

## n

Same as English. (Avoid confusion with rn, nj, ng)

Examples: nan = I see you; ni = he/she was there; kanwo = give me! ningihni = he/she was staying there; nani = he/she was looking.

## ng

 [Many Gun-djeihmi words omit or vary this at the beginning.]

KUNWINJKU VERSION: Same as English, like in singalong. BUT, unlike English, this sound often starts a word in Kunwinjku. Practice saying "singalong", progressively leaving off the beginning, so the ng starts the word ( i.e. "singalong" turns into "ingalong", which turns into "ngalong"). This gets you used to starting a word with ng. You need to practice this out loud.

NOTE: Often this sound often seems to disappear at the start of words in Kunwinjku. If you think you are hearing a Kunwinjku word starting with a or u, it could be actually starting with ng. Almost no words begin with a vowel in Kunwinjku but people will often pronounce the ng so softly and quickly you can't hear it. For example, very often a phrase like *ngaye ngare = I'm going* sounds like *aye are*, but if you ask the speaker they will tell you the ng sound was really there at the start of both words. In fact, in order to say the a sound correctly in words like this, your mouth needs to start from the position of saying the ng sound, even if it isn't heard. There are some place names (which are imported from other languages) that do begin with vowels, for example Adjumarllarl and Arramunda. Also, some exclamations like A!, Aba ! turn up often in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi.

GUN-DJEIHMI VERSION: Many words that start with Ngal in Kunwinjku start with Al in Gun-djeihmi. Look closely at the following:

Examples: ngalkurrng = mothe in law [al-gurrng]; ngalkimuk= big woman [al-kimuk]; ngaye = me, I; nginj = fish hook; wong = he gave it; ngad = us; nguneng = he/she ate; ningihni = he/she was there; bongdi = was in prison; ngudda=you [gudda, udda].

## n j

When at the end of a word, this sounds like the English letters y and n together. For example, the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi word *bonj* is said as if it were written in English as *boyn*. When not at the end of a word it sounds like English letters ny as in the teasing sound, *njanyah!*, or like "n y" when you say "good on ya." This sound is technically a laminal, and is made by putting the tip of the tongue behind your lower teeth, and pushing the tongue forward so that it bunches up. The best thing with very non-English sounds like this, is to get some Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi people to demonstrate!

Example: *bonj* = that's all; *wanjh* = so, then; *kunj* = kangaroo; *njilngmakminj* = he became happy; *yakminj*=it run out/got used up; *nginj* = fish hook; *njale ?* = what?; *duninjh* = very; *djenj* = fish (any kind); *njah* = when handing something to someone

## O

Sounds like the English word *or* said quickly. There are some words in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi where some speakers will say *o* and others will say *u*. Like the other four Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi vowels, don't change the shape of mouth or position of tongue when saying it, and remember it is a bit longer than an English vowel. So *bod=fly* sounds a bit like *board*.

Examples: *bod* = fly; *dord* = louse; *kordborlbok* = frog; *bom* = she hit it; *boyh!* = hey!; *bobo* = goodbye; *bobom* = she/he hit the water; *mok* = sore.

## r

Same as English. Never comes at the end of a word or even part of a word. It must not be confused with the *rr* sound, see below. The single *r* sound is not trilled or flapped - just a smooth gliding *r*. Compare the *rr* and the *r* in *ngar<sup>u</sup>ridjare*=we want. The *rr* temporarily interrupts the air flow with the tongue, where the single *r* just constricts it a little. Be careful not to get *r* confused with *rd*, *rl*, *rn*. Remember, the *r* does not go with the vowel it follows, like English *or*, *ar* etc., and it never closes a syllable on its own. So if you see, *kunbard*, *burnbom*, *barlkeng* etc., you know the *r* is part of *rd*, *rn*, *rl*.

Examples: *red* = nest; *ruy* = it burned; *kured* = home; *duruk* = dog; *kare* = he/she is going; *rerrngemey* = got firewood; *barabom* = tried but failed; *kore*= towards

## rd

Say English *d* but with tip of your tongue curled back behind the hard ridge on the roof of your mouth just behind the upper teeth. Sounds like the way some Americans will say the *rd* in *hard*. This sound *begins*

some Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi words, which takes practice for an English speaker. This is one of three retroflex (curled back) sounds in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi. The other two follow. Note the similar spelling.

Examples: rdarda = younger brother; kunbard = knee; kurduyimeng = did; kardmey = caught with hook; burd = small fish; kundurddu = heart.

Avoid confusing rn with n in some words:

Examples: kundamen = frillnecked lizard, not kurndamen.

## r l

Same as English l but with tip of tongue back, just as for the r d sound. Sounds like American version of r l in cur l.

Examples: barlmeng = filled up; lurlmeng = swollen; Marlwon = name of a place;

Some Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi speakers pronounce ordinary l sounds like this, so if you can get two different spellings for the same word one with l, the other with rl;

Example: some say lobmeng, some say rlobmeng = he ran, drove.

But be careful to distinguish between words that really must be spelt with either rl, or l.

Examples: kunkulah = skin, not kunkurlah.

## r n

Same as English n but with tip of tongue back, just as for the r d sound. Sounds like American version of r n in bur n.

Examples: burnbom = finished; kornobolo = type of kangaroo; marnbom = she fixed it; durndi = went back, returned; darnkih = close, near.

Don't get rn and n confused.

Examples: darnkih = close; dan = small stinging grub;

## r r

Sounds like what happens to the t t in but ter when you say it very quickly. It becomes "flapped". Very important not to mix it up with the ordinary r sound in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi. Many Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi words that might be spelt with a d between two vowels will end up with the d being pronounced and written r r. For example bidoy is the same word as bir roy. The rr never comes at the start of a word. When starting to practice this sound, it won't hurt if you make this a trilled sound, so long as you try to make it as short a trill as possible.

Examples: karri = kadi = he is standing; birribom = they hit it; rerrngmey = she got firewood; ngalkurrng = mother in law; larrk = nothing, none, no; birrh! = hurry up; werrk = quickly; kurorre = ground, floor; warrhkeng = fell.

## U

Like oo in English word, book, but say it with your lips puckered and hold the sound a bit longer without changing tongue or lip position. If you are tempted to write oo in a Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi word, it should be u. The English words bush and put are spelt using the u to make this same sound. (Remember the a in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi spells a sound like the u in but.) The Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi u sounds like u in push, although some speakers make it sound a bit like a long o sound.

Examples: ngudda = you; bu = if, when; dulubuni = was shooting; kunmud = fur; burlumerrinj = boasted; dudji = buried, planted; kukbuyika = different.

## W

Same as English.

Examples: wam = she went; rowk = all, every; djuwimeng = squeezed; mawah = father's father; wiw! = yuk!; kundiw = liver; rawinj = didn't go; rawong = mixed.

## y

Same as English.

Examples: yolyolmi = he was telling a story; yoy = it was lying there  
yeng = something or other; kunyar! = rope

### COMBINATIONS OF LETTERS - KUNWINJKU VERSION

Just as in English, there are some groups of sounds that regularly come together. The secret to saying or writing these is just to put the sounds side by side and then join them, without changing either. The set of combinations is:

ay, aw, ey, ew, iy, iw, oy, ow, uy, uw.

These pairs of letters don't represent any new sounds, they are simply two sounds said very close to each other, without the join showing. Sometimes these are followed by an h, but this simply cuts off the sound abruptly, without changing it in other ways.

### COMBINATIONS OF LETTERS - GUN-DJEIHMI VERSION

Gun-djeihmi spelling has chosen to represent most of these same sounds in a slightly different way:

ai, au, ei, eu, iy, iu, oi, ou, ui, uw.

## ay [ai]

Like English word eye, or the aye in the English "aye aye captain". Note that combination ayi at the end of some Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi words, pronounced like English eye -ee. Sometimes the a by itself in



a word can sound like ay, so *kankadju* = *follow me* sounds as if it is spelt *kankaydju*.

Examples: *yiray* [yirai] = get lost! *mayh* [maih] = animal; *kardabaybay* = diver bird; *minj kanmayi* = it didn't get me.

Be careful when a comes before a new syllable beginning with y.

Examples: *kayolyolme* = telling a story; *kayo* = he/she lives there.

## aw [au]

This is counter-intuitive for English speakers. Like English *ow* as in *cow*, but don't get it mixed up with the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi combination *ow* which sounds like *ow* in rowing! This is not a common group in Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi.

Examples: *lawk* = type of spear; *rawinj* = didn't go; *yawkyawk* [yaukyauk]=young women.

Be careful when a comes before a new syllable beginning with w.

Examples: *kawe* = he/she is throwing; *kurlbawarrhkeng* = blood flowed

## ey [ei]

like *ey* in the English *they*. Note the combination *eyi* at the end of some Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi words, pronounced like the English *ayee* as in *payee*. Don't get it mixed up with the *ay* combination. The examples give some easily confused pairs:

Examples: *ngalbeywurd* = daughter; *mey* = she got it; *ngarey* = I was going; *ngaray* = I must go; *meyi* = she/he was getting; *mayi* = he/she might have got it; *ngeybom* [ngeibom]=named someone.

Be careful when e comes before a new syllable beginning with y.

Examples: *bebbeyoy* = laying separately

## ew [eu]

Say the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi *e* then the Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi *w*. Something like the English "air - oo" said very quickly.

Examples: *bewh* [beuh]= further, beyond; *mandjewk* [an-djeuk] = rain;

Be careful where e ends a syllable followed by w.

Examples: *bebbewong* = gave separately

## iw [iu]

Sounds like you are saying the two English sounds "ee-yoo" quickly. A bit like the *eua* part of English word *beaut*. Not particularly common.

Examples: *wiw* = ooh yuck! *njiwkmirey* = he/she was sulking; *kundiw* [gun-diu]= liver

Be careful where i ends a syllable followed by w.

Examples: biwong = he/she gave to him/her; biwarrewong = he/she caused trouble for him/her.

## oy [oi]

Same as English oy as in boy.

Examples: boyh = hey you! doy = he/she struck it; kunboy = anthill; woybukkih = true; -kunboy [gun-boi]=anthill.

Be careful where o ends a syllable followed by y.

Examples: boyoy = fluid was there; boyakbom = used it all up (fluid).

## ow [ou]

Like English ow as in low.

Examples: djowkkeng = crossed over; dowk = sound made by gun firing; rowk [rouk]= all, every

Be careful where o ends a syllable followed by w.

Examples: bowarreminj = went rotten (fluid); bowong = gave fluid

## uy [ui]

Sounds like you are saying the two English sounds "oo - wee" quickly.

A bit like the ooey part of English word gooey but said quickly.

Examples: duyh = powdered form of anything; yidduy = he/she was angry; koluy = he descended; kadjuj [gaidjui]=followed, chased.

REPEATED LETTERS OR REPEATED DOUBLE LETTERS: KK, MM, DJDJ, NGNG etc..

Often a syllable will start with the same sound as the end of the previous syllable. When this happens the sound will be written twice.

Like English "yes sir". Examples:

ngun nang = she saw you [ ngun+nang]

yim munkeweng = you sent it here [ yi+m+munke+weng]

kunkerrngnge = new [ kun+kerrng+nge]

Sometimes a sound is lengthened or doubled (geminate), and so is also written twice:

bedda = they, them (pause after first d)

bebbeh = separately (pause after first b)

However, sometimes Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi people shorten the spelling of words with double letters , just to save time and space, something like English abbreviations For example: *kerrngehkenh* = *earlier, in the beginning* is short for *kerrngengehkenh*

Note: the combination r r r never occurs. Where it might have been expected it always becomes rr. For example, the word that means "you and I are going" should be written ngar r re, because it is made up from ngarr = you and I, and re = going, but this is written and said, ngarre.

OTHER FREQUENTLY OCCURRING COMBINATIONS

These just need practice. Some common ones are:

-arrng eg. in kunkarrngbakmeng = four; ngalkarrng = your mother

-urrng eg. in kunkurrngkenh = mother in law language

-errk eg. in manberrk = outdoors, the outstations, etc..

Also, make sure you hear and write the difference between combinations at the end of words or parts of words, especially listen for the difference between words ending in -l b, -l h, -r r k, -r r h.

Examples: manbelk = pandanus; kuberrk = outdoors; belhmeng = joined, stuck; bolbmeng = learnt; larrk = no, nothing; wirlarrk = egg; mirrhmak = sharp; kumilh = forehead; manbolc = place, country; manbolh = road.

THE PATTERN OF SOUNDS WITHIN A WORD - STRESS

In English we tend to stress some syllables more than others in every word, in accordance with complicated rules we have all learned as we grew up, without even knowing we did. For example, we say yes terday, rather than yesterer day. Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi also has complex rules like this, but to start with, the best approach is to try to say each syllable in a word at the same level of emphasis. For example, the skin group name Nabulanj is not said Nabulanj or Nabulanj, but has each syllable equal. Again, don't worry if this is too hard to start with, just keep it in mind when trying to imitate Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi speakers. There is more about this in the section of this book "Learning on Your Own".

ABOUT HYPHENS.

Kunwinjku uses hyphens in the same way as English, that is to break a word at the end of a line. Gun-djeihmi uses hyphens to break up longer words, and especially to separate noun class beginnings from the main part of the words. For example: ngaldaluk [al-daluk] = female; Ngalbulanj [Al-bulanj]; kunburn [gun-burn] = knob of ankle; mankerenge [an-gerrnge] = new.

FINALLY, BY WAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

You *can* learn to pronounce and spell Kunwinjku / Gun-djeihmi. It requires mostly a lot of time, and willingness to practice and make a

fool of yourself trying to get it right. If you do make an effort, Kunwinjku / Gun-djehmi people will appreciate the work you are putting in. After all, they feel the same pressure about their own daily struggle to use English, undoubtedly the most perverse language in the world to learn.

**SPELLING PRACTICE TAPE**

The following section (pages 38-39) is to give you some practice in using the Kunwinjku spelling system. The next two pages contain the text of the Spelling Practice tape. Listen to the introduction on the tape, using the answers on the next two pages to check how well you are able to write down what you hear in Kunwinjku.

**POCKET SPELLING GUIDE**

Page 186 (in the Appendix) is designed to be copied from the book to act as a pocket spelling guide for use when writing down words and phrases in the course of daily contact with people. We suggest laminating a copy and keeping it with you constantly, along with a notebook and pencil.

Kunwinjku Spelling Practice Tape

SIDE A OF TAPE

Group 1: English words in Kunwinjku spelling.

bad, dad, wan, now, dju, djek, djil, budj, med, wina, wayn, djulri  
minamam, bu, ba, bi, bo

Group 2: Kunwinjku words that look like English words.

bad, man, med

Group 3: Single letter Kunwinjku words.

*No double letters needed for these.*

bom, bim, bimbom, bibom, bidbom, kunbid, kundad, kunmim, kunmud, kunak, kured, wam,  
balwam, yiwam, benewam, dulubom, buni, yibom, bowam, bobo, manbokimuk, redbo, yire,  
duruk.

Group 4: Consonant clusters - no digraphs. Note the use of h.

*Some words differ importantly when the air flow is interrupted half way through. This break is written as "h".*

kundulk, kundalk, kare, kahre, yire, yihre, kondah.

Group 5: Digraphs - ng and nj.

*The usual mistake is to either get them confused with each other, or think they are both a simple "N" sound.*

kundang, danginj, nginj, nja, ngaye, ngare, bonj, njale, kinga, njalekenh, nang

Group 6: Digraphs - retroflexes rd, rl, rn.

kunyarl, kunberd, kordborlbok, kunberl, borndok, darda, dird, rlobmeng, kornbayeng,  
durndi,

Group 7: Double rr and triple letter combinations.

*These are in fact quite common.*

ngarre, birriwam, birridurndi, ngurrinang, birrh, larrh, kunburrk, kunrerrng,  
kunmurrng.

Group 8: Vowel and consonant combinations

*Remember the rule: break the word up into individual sounds.*

mey, yiray, yimray, yimrey, yimrawinj, minj yibuyinj, wanahwam, rowk, boyh, ngayh,  
wurdyaw.

Group 9: Changing d to rr between consonants.

*The rr in each of these words is in fact a d sound, but no Kunwinjku speaker will pronounce it as d. This often happens when a word like the first one in this list loses the n in kun-*

kundenge, kurrenge, karrurndeng, karrengemok, birrulubom, ngarredjingmang

Group 10: Problems areas - and repeated letters.

*Warning: I will read these a bit faster and only twice.*

bibom, wanjh, duninh, yuwn, ngabba, aba, berrebom, bibuni, bibbuni, biddulubom,  
bebbehbeh, ngarre, birrirerrngmangi, adju, ngurrirawinj, birredjbonghmeng,  
bimunkeweng, bimmunkeweng.

SPELLING TAPE SIDE B

These are realistic Kunwinjku sentences but somewhat simplified for learners. Again, I have done each fast then slow, but try to avoid the slow versions as soon as you can. You can use these to :

- do further spelling practice
- do further pronunciation practice
- get a feel for basic sentences in Kunwinjku

Feel free to get translations (and improvements!) from Kunwinjku tutors.

- [1] Kakkak dja Mamam benewam kore shop.
- [2] Ngaye nganang nganabbarru darnkih kulabbarl.
- [3] Yiddok ngudda yiwam Sydney?
- [4] Kankukwo five dollars.
- [5] Burrkyak, minj ngakukkarrme.
- [6] Minj birrikakrawinj.
- [7] Ngadjare ngangun kunkanj.
- [8] Nangale nakka bininj kahre?
- [9] Kunmekbe ngundimarnekurduyime malaywi.
- [10] Danjbik wurdwurd birriwam birriwurlebmi.

Practice conversation

Nabulanj, baleh yire?

*Kuhri.*

Kamak kankurrme kumekbe?

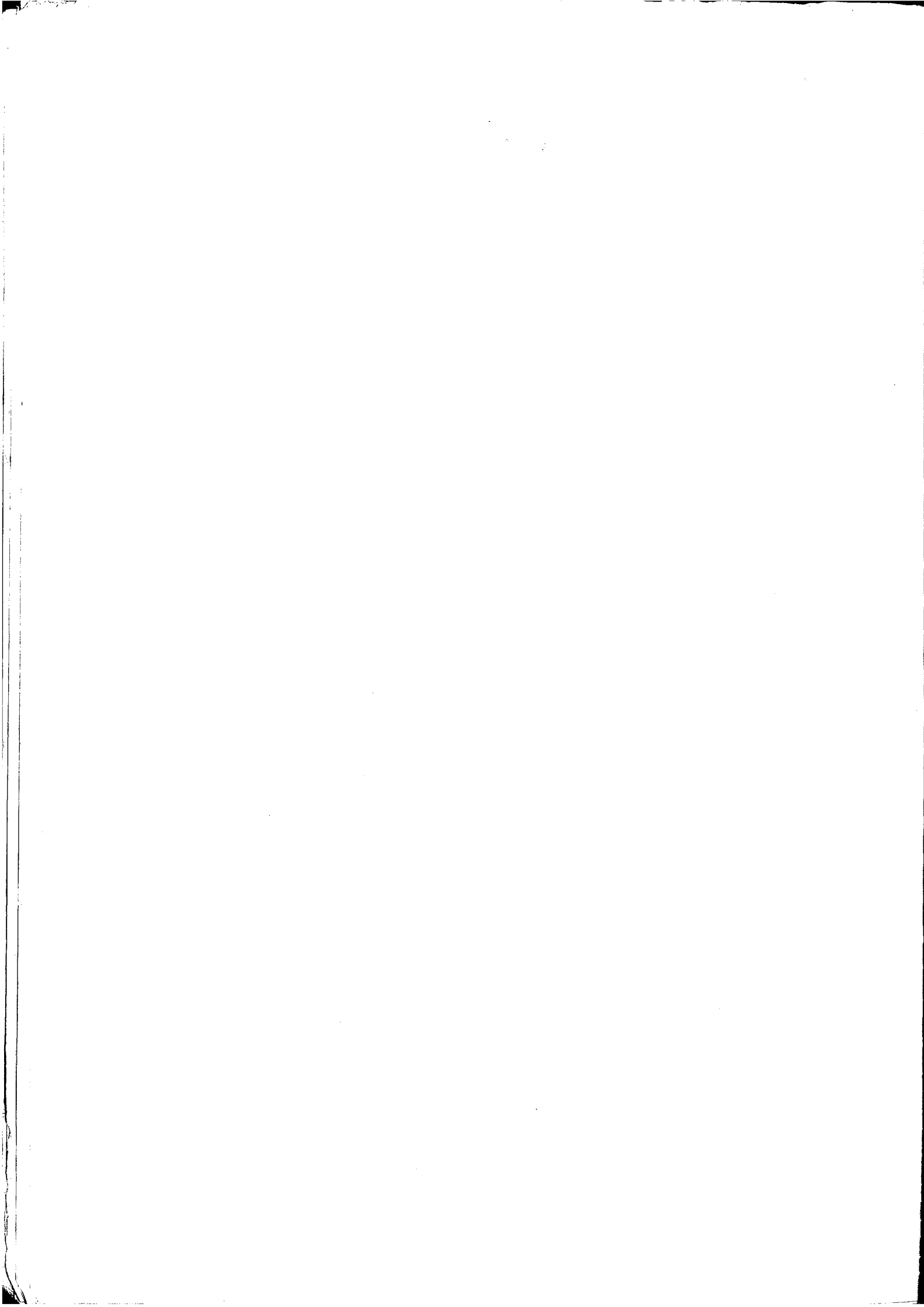
*Mah.*

Thank you Korlonj.

*Ngabba, yiddok mako yikarrme?*

Yoh. Dja bakmeng.

*Bonj.*



## KUNWINJKU VERBS: INTRODUCTION

### Part One: Saying things in Kunwinjku.

#### VERBS IN KUNWINJKU AND ENGLISH

Usually, the most important words in what we say are the verbs. These words carry the main idea of what you are talking about. They can be actions ( ran, ate, looked ), states of affairs ( slept, was dead, stayed ) mental states ( thought, felt ) or forms of expression ( said, sang ).

Before you can even begin to make statements or ask questions in Kunwinjku, you need to know some Kunwinjku verbs. Some of these are quite easy, as you will see from this sample list of a few common verbs. Read through this just to get a feel for it.

#### SAMPLE LIST OF KUNWINJKU VERBS [TAPE]

bakkeng .....she, he or it broke [ something ]  
bom .....she, he or it hit [ something ]  
bonguneng .....she, he or it drank  
danginj.....she, he or it stood still  
di.....she, he or it was there  
doy.....she, he or it struck [ something ]  
durndi.....she, he or it came back  
kadjuy.....she, he or it followed [ something ]  
karrmi.....she, he or it had [ something ]  
mey .....she, he or it got [ something ]  
nang .....she, he or it looked at / saw [ something ]  
nguneng .....she, he or it ate  
ni.....she, he or it was there  
rui.....she, he or it got burnt  
wam.....she, he or it went  
weng.....she, he or it threw [ something ]  
wong.....she, he or it gave [ something ]  
yakminj.....she, he or it vanished / passed away  
yimeng.....she, he or it said  
yimerranj.....she, he or it became /turned into  
yoy.....she, he or it camped / lived

#### ABOUT THIS LIST

[1] Kunwinjku has the same alphabetical order as English.

[2] These words will be used again and will be built on during the explanations that follow. These particular verbs were chosen because



they can be used to explain the most important features of all Kunwinjku verbs.

NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENTS SECTION OF THIS BOOK

This list appears in Language Assignment 1, at the end of the book. These assignments have lists of words that should be memorized fairly early, since they are very common words, and also form the basis for many other words. You may want to read now the introduction to the language assignments section.

MAKING MEANING IN KUNWINJKU

Generally, when you try to make yourself understood in any language, you will speak in groups of words called sentences. These may have one or two word: "Dunno!" "Oops!" "Coming Mum." Or they can be very long indeed. They might be commands: "Give it to him", or questions "Can you help me?" or just statements: "It's fixed". As soon as you can, you should start trying to use Kunwinjku sentences in the right contexts. What follows is a list of useful short sentences of various kinds. We've called it a survival list, because each of these sentences is useful in a lot of ways, and can help you learn more Kunwinkju as well. Note: sometimes a single word in Kunwinjku is equivalent to a whole sentence in English. Ask Kunwinjku people to help with pronunciation of these.

SURVIVAL LIST OF KUNWINJKU SENTENCES [TAPE]

baleh wam ?.....where has he/she gone?  
(name) baleh wam ?.....where has name gone ?  
baleh marneyime ?.....what do I call you ?  
njale kundung ?.....what's the time?  
nangale nakka ?.....who is that ( male )  
ngalngale ngalka ?.....who is that ( female )  
ngaye ngangeyyo ( speaker's name).....my name is...  
yeledj yiwokdi.....speak slowly  
minj bekkkan.....I can't hear you  
ngadjare.....I want...  
baleh yire ?.....where are you ( one person ) going?  
burrkyak.....no  
yoh.....yes  
njalekenh?.....why?  
njale ?.....what?  
ngawarnyak.....I don't want to / I don't want any  
nuk.....I don't know  
baleh karriyime ?.....how do we say / what do we call...

## CREATING SENTENCES FROM DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORDS

As in English, Kunwinjku puts nouns and verbs together, with other types of words, to generate whatever sentences are needed. The following is a list of very common words in Kunwinjku, followed by some sample sentences so you can practice making statements.

It's a good habit to look for any patterns, repeated elements, among these words as a help to memorizing. For example, please notice that some words have prefixes that turn up quite a lot: na-, ngal-, man- and kun- all appear at the beginning of many nouns. English has a lot of prefixes, like dis-, un-, anti- and so on, but Kunwinjku uses prefixes different purposes.

## LIST OF MOST COMMON WORDS - ALL KINDS [TAPE]

bininj.....man , (of any age beyond teens ) , any aboriginal person  
 daluk.....woman, (of any age beyond teens)  
 djenj.....fish of any kind (there are also names for each species)  
 duruk.....dog (but not dingo)  
 kore.....to, towards, at, in connection with  
 kunbang.....alcoholic drink  
 kundulk.....tree of any kind (there are also names for each species)  
 kunj.....kangaroo (there are also names for each species)  
 kunkanj.....meat  
 kured.....home  
 mankabo.....river  
 mankung.....wild honey  
 nakimuk.....large person or animal ( male )  
 nakohbanj.....old man  
 ngalkohbanj.....old woman  
 nganabbarru.....buffalo  
 wurdwurd.....children  
 wurdyaw.....child of either sex (older than baby)

## GUIDED PRACTICE

Try to translate the following sentences. All words needed are from the two lists on page 41 and this page. You may need more English words than there are in the Kunwinjku. Answers appear in italics, immediately underneath, so these can be used to self check by covering them up while you try to translate. You can also reverse the exercise, trying to translate back from the answers.

Note: a slash (/) in the answers means there are two possibilities; brackets includes information that is implicit in the other language

a. *Kunwinjku to English*

1. bininj wam mey nganabbarru

*the man went (hunting for) buffalo*

2. duruk nguneng kunkanj

*the dog ate (some) meat*

3. wurdyaw nang manme

*the child saw (the/some) food*

4. ngalkohbanj di kured

*the old lady was at home/in the camp*

5. daluk bakkeng kundulk

*the woman broke the tree*

b. *English to Kunwinjku*

1. the man ate the wild honey

*bininj nguneng mankung or mankung nguneng bininj*

2. the old man went back

*nakohbanj durndi or durndi nakohbanj*

3. a dog got the food

*duruk mey manme or manme mey duruk*

4. a woman was there

*daluk di*

5. the buffalo was at the river  
*nganabbarru di kore mankabo*

ABOUT WORD ORDER IN SENTENCES AND WHO DOES WHAT TO WHOM

Some of the sentences above have answers showing word order difference. In English, the order of words is crucial to the meaning. For example, compare these two sentences:

the dog bit the man  
the man bit the dog

Changing the order of words changes the meaning drastically. In Kunwinjku, word order is important too, but not in the same way. As will be explained in the next section, Kunwinjku verbs have a different method for showing who does the action and who it gets done to.

## Part Two: Learning How to Learn Kunwinjku Verbs.

SAMPLES OF TYPICAL KUNWINJKU VERBS

Kunwinjku verbs can be very short: *di* = *it was there*; *bom* = *he hit it*. They can also be very long: *karriyawoyhdjarrkbidyikarrmerrimeninj* = *we should have all helped each other again*. They always need a full English sentence to translate them, even the short ones. The reason for this is that Kunwinjku verbs have to contain several different bits of information. In fact, you can pack a lot of different ideas in. The following table shows the various kinds of information put into Kunwinjku verbs, and the specific part of the verb where it needs to be slotted in.

INFORMATION SLOTS IN KUNWINJKU VERBS

Each of these sentences, based on the verb "see/look", is analyzed underneath to show what has been incorporated into the one word.

**IMPORTANT:** As you study these, notice that every verb has a section at the beginning with information about "who"; a key section with the root meaning; and the end which gives more detail about when the action occurred. Also note the other kinds of information that are all packed into these sometimes long words.

[1] *birrinang* = *they saw*  
birri + na + ng  
they + see +past event

[2] *birridulknani* = *they were seeing the tree/s*

birri + dulk +na +ni  
 they + tree ( kundulk, without the kun- prefix) + see + past continuous event

[3] *nguneyawoyhnang* = *you (two people) saw again*

ngune + yawoyh + na +ng  
 you two + again + see +past event

[4] *ngundiyawoyhwernhnang* = *they stared at you (one person) again*

ngundi +yawoyh +wernh + na + ng  
 they (two or more) +again + hard +see + past event

[5] *yidjalwohna* = *you (one person) keep on purposefully looking ( at it)*

yi +djal +woh +na +∅  
 you (one person) +keep on +for the agreed purpose +look +command

Note: the ∅ symbol means there is supposed to be nothing there. The absence of anything means something in this context. See also example 9.

[6] *ngunbenekaknayinj*=*maybe he saw you two at night*

ngunbene +kak +na +yinj  
 he (actor) you two (acted upon) +at night/in dark +see +indefinite

[7] *kabenedjarrkdarnhnan* = *they (two) are looking closely together*

ka +bene +djarrk +darnh+na +n  
 non-past event marker +they (two) +together+close+see+non-past event

[8] *kariyawoyhdjarrkbidyikarmmerrimeninj* = *we should have all helped each other again .*

karri +yawoyh +djarrk +bidyikarme+ >>>  
 we (all of you and I) +again +together +help+ >>>

+ rrimen +inj  
 +reflexive ( action done by actor to actor) +indefinite

[9] *nang*=*he/she/it saw it*

∅ +na +ng  
 he/she or it acted on non-human +see +past completed event  
 See note on example 5.

[10] *binani*=*he/she/it was looking at him/her*

bi +na +ni

Compare this beginning with example 9.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HOW TO LEARN TO SPEAK KUNWINJKU

So, each verb has three parts that always occur:

[1] Firstly, it has a basic stem or root ( see, hit, think, sleep). There are thousands of these to learn, but you only need a few dozen to begin to be fluent.

[2] The beginning of each Kunwinjku verb specifies who did the action, and if it was done to someone, this is also shown in the beginning. There are less than a hundred of these to learn, but you really need to learn them early on in learning the language. Once you get past this fairly tough first step in memorization, you will feel you have made real progress.

[3] The endings on the verbs show whether the action was a past event, or past continuous event, or not a past event. It can also specify if the action was indefinite, not achieved or in doubt, or, is a command to be carried out. There are only around 30 of these endings to learn, and they are fairly easy. Just as well, because they are essential.

Verbs can also have other bits that are optional. In the *middle* of the verb, between the beginnings about who does what, and the actual stem, there is room to insert a number of things: adverbs (like near, hard, at night, together) and nouns (like tree as in example 2 above). These are less important to learn early on, but you will soon notice them.

Obviously, you can't learn all this at once, and this book has set out the order of items so that each one makes the next in the series a lot easier. We will follow the sequence outlined on page 48, which is recommended for those trying to learn on their own. The idea is to thoroughly understand each topic before moving on to the next one. Don't be intimidated by this list of topics. Each one is a manageable chunk.

SEQUENCE OF TOPICS TAUGHT ABOUT VERBS

**Part One: Verb beginnings.**

**Beginnings on intransitive verbs: (action not done TO anyone, anything.**

- one person only doing action
- two people doing action
- three or more people doing action

Examples: they slept; we ( you and I) went home; I was sick; he ran.

**Beginnings on transitives : action is done to third person objects.**

- action is done to him/her/it.
- action is done to them ( two )
- action is done to them (three or more)

Examples: you (2) were chasing them (3+); we ( you and I) ate it

**Beginnings on transitives :action done to second person objects.**

Verb beginnings when action is done to the hearer, not speaker.

Examples: they saw you; he loves you (2); we ( they and I) need you(1)

**Beginnings on transitives : action done to first person object**

Verb beginnings where action is done to the me, or us.

Examples: you ( 3+) hate me; they (2) sent it to me; give me.

**Combined table of all verb beginnings.**

**Some additional information about verb beginnings.**

**Part Two: Verb Endings**

**Explaining the five kinds of endings.**

**Grouping verbs which have the same endings as each other.**

**Complete set of verb endings for verbs like bom.**

Examples: you will hit, you hit, you were hitting, hit !, you didn't hit

**Verb endings for all other kinds of verbs.**

Examples: you will run, you ran, you were running, run!, you didn't run.

**Complete list of verb endings covering all Kunwinjku verbs.**

**Summary table of verb endings.**

**Chart showing one verb (bom) with all possible beginnings and endings.**

**Part Three. Incorporating other information in verbs.**

**Adverbial Modifications showing how, when where etc. action was done.**

Examples: you ran fast, you ran yesterday, you were running together, don't run!, you nearly didn't run.







## VERB BEGINNINGS

## Part one: Intransitive verbs: action of the verb not directed at anyone.

## WHAT THESE KINDS OF VERBS ARE

Intransitive verbs are verbs where the only participant in the action or state, is the one doing the verb. The action is not done TO anyone or anything. For example you can swim, but you can't swim someone. Typical intransitives are: came, rested, thought, existed, or even ate (you do this to food, but that is not in focus when someone says, for example, "I've eaten"). To explain the Kunwinjku intransitive verb beginnings, we will use the same verb throughout, in this case the verb go, in the past tense, went. There are some verbs which can be transitive or not depending on context, for example, worrying can be intransitive (*He's worrying*) or transitive (*He's worrying me.*) Also, compare *I floated* with *I floated the raft*. To start with we only be concerned with events and states where action does not affect any object, human or otherwise.

## THE PREFIXES (BEGINNINGS)

In English, the word "went" by itself demands the extra information to make it a full sentence. We would settle for just knowing who went. This minimal necessary data is usually supplied by a pronoun - he, she, they, I, you etc.. So for example, *She went. They went.* are full sentences. They don't say much, but they make sense on their own. Just "went" doesn't make sense on its own. If you think through all the possible short words like she and they, that could go with went, you might end up with a list like this: I went, you went, he went, she went, it went, they went. Kunwinjku is similar, but differs in two important ways. First, the pronouns are joined on to the verb. If we did the same thing in English, we would say *hewent, theywent, youwent, etc.* . Second, in Kunwinjku there are more of these than in English. This is the way they do it:

## KUNWINJKU INTRANSITIVE VERB BEGINNING [TAPE]

English word..... Kunwinjku beginning .....Beginning + verb stem.

I ..... nga .....ngawam = I went  
 you [ if one person ] ..... yi .....yiwam=you went  
 you [ if 2 people ] ..... ngune .....ngunewam=you went

you [three or more ] ..... ngurri .....ngurriwam=you went  
 he ..... (leave blank) .....wam=he went  
 she..... (leave blank) .....wam=she went  
 it..... (leave blank) .....wam=it went  
 they [2 people ] ..... bene.....benewam=they went  
 they [three or more ] ..... birri .....birriwam=they went  
 we [we=he/she or .it and I] ... ngane .....nganewam=we went  
 we [we=you (one) and I]..... ngarr .....ngarrwam=we went  
 we [we=you 2 and I]..... kane.....kanewam=we went  
 we [they 3+ and I]..... ngarri .....ngarriwam=we went  
 we [you 3+ and I]..... karri .....karriwam=we went

Notice that Kunwinjku goes into more detail than English in categorizing pronoun form. It has a "dual" form, distinguishing between we (2 people) and we (more than two) and also between they (2) and they (2+). It also has a "trial" form (pronounced tree -al) distinguishing between when we is three people.

Kunwinjku also distinguishes in first person forms (I, we, us etc.) between we including the hearer, versus we not including the hearer. These are known as the inclusive and exclusive forms respectively.

You don't have to remember that ngarr- is the first person dual inclusive pronominal prefix, so long as you know when to use it.

ANOTHER ARRANGEMENT OF INTRANSITIVE BEGINNINGS

For technical reasons, we will normally list the Kunwinjku verbs in the following order, which shows the same information as the first list.

*Singular - one person*

ngawam.....I went  
 yiwam.....you went [ talking to one person only ]  
 wam.....he/she/it went

*Dual - two people*

ngarrwam..... we went [ you and I went ]  
 nganewam ..... we went [one other person and I went ]  
 ngunewam ..... you went [ talking to two people ]  
 benewam..... they went [ talking about 2 people ]

*Trial - three people (Less commonly used than plural ngarri- )*

kanewam..... we went [ including the 2 people you are talking to]

*Plural - three or more people*

ngarriwam.....	we went [ they and I went, not person you are talking to ]
karriwam.....	we went [ you and I went, talking to more than 2 people ]
ngurriwam.....	you went [ talking to more than 2 people ]
birriwam.....	they went [ talking about more than 2 ]

PRACTICE ON THE FIRST LIST OF BASIC VERBS FROM PAGE 41 [TAPE]

This is just to show what happens with one of the 12 beginnings when applied to each of the verbs on the basic list.

birribakkeng.....	they broke [ something ]
birribom.....	they hit [ something ]
birribonguneng .....	they drank*
birridanginj.....	they stood still*
birridi.....	they were there*
birridoy.....	they struck [ something ]
birridurndi.....	they came back*
birrikadjuy.....	they followed [ something ]
birrikarrmi.....	they had [ something ]
birrimey.....	they got [ something ]
birrinang.....	they saw [ something ]
birringuneng .....	they ate*
birrini.....	they were there*
birriruy .....	they got burnt*
birriwam.....	they went*
birriweng.....	they threw [ something ]
birriwong.....	they gave [ something ]
birriyakminj.....	they vanished*
birriyimeng.....	they said
birriyimerranj.....	they became*
birriyoy.....	they camped, lived*

The intransitive verbs are marked with an asterisk. It's worth the effort to write out and say each of these verbs with each of the beginnings, and the exact English meaning. So your first list would look like the following. Note that you should use the order shown on page 52. Note that where we have in brackets "people" this would also apply to animals or things. The main point is the number of participants.

ngayoy.....	I lived
yiyooy.....	you (1 person) lived
yoy.....	he/she or it lived
ngarryoy.....	we [ you (1) and I ] lived

nganeyoy ..... we [he/she/it and I ] lived  
nguneyoy ..... you [two people] lived  
beneyoy ..... they [two people] lived  
kaneyoy ..... we [you two and I] lived  
ngarriyoy ..... we [all of you and I] lived  
karriyoy ..... we [all of them and I] lived  
ngurriyoy ..... you [three or more people] lived  
birriyoy ..... they [three or more people] lived

If you do this with each verb it will take a fair bit of time, but you'll find you are off to a good start with the language, especially if you go through saying them aloud, Kunwinjku first, then English, then reverse the process. You must memorize these twelve beginnings.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

In this explanation, we have used verbs in the past tense (action already done). So the list on page 44 is you lived, we lived etc. rather than you live, you will live etc.. This is to avoid some complications with verb beginnings that happen when we move from past to non past tenses. Once you have mastered the beginnings, we will deal look at non past forms on page #

**WRITTEN PRACTICE**

This exercise is repeated in Language Assignment 3, page 3. Answers underneath, to allow self checking. Each pair of question and answer can be reversed for further practice.

Try to translate into English the following:

1. bininj birriwam kured

*the men went home*

2. wurdwurd birrinang nganabbarru

*the children saw a buffalo*

3. duruk birridurndi kore mankabo

*the dogs went back to the river*

4. ngalkohbanj dja nakohbanj benenguneng mankung

*the old lady and the old man ate bush honey*

5. bininj , daluk dja wurdwurd birriyoy kore mankabo dja birrinang kunj  
*men, women and children camped at the river and saw kangaroos*

## Part Two: Transitive verbs

### WHAT TRANSITIVE VERBS ARE

These are verbs where the action is directed at, or directly affects, a person or thing other than the actor. For example he hit her, they saw you, you ate it. The affected parties ( technically called "objects") are underlined.

### GROUP ONE

#### VERB BEGINNINGS WHERE ACTION AFFECTS HIM, HER OR IT.

These are verbs where the action is directed at, or directly affects a singular third party - represented in English by pronouns *him, her* or *it*. These are easy to learn, because they are almost exactly the same as the intransitive beginnings you have already learnt. The only difference is when action affects a *him* or *her*, rather than an *it*.

#### VERB BEGINNINGS WHEN ACTION AFFECTS HIM, HER OR IT. [TAPE]

nganang.....I saw him/her/it  
 yinang.....you saw him/her/it  
 nang.....he/she/it saw it [ non-human ]  
 binang.....he/she/it saw him/her [ human ]  
 ngarrnang.....we saw him/her/it  
 nganenang.....we saw him/her/it  
 ngunenang.....you saw him/her/it  
 benenang.....they saw him/her/it  
 kanenang.....we saw him/her/it  
 ngarrinang.....we saw him/her/it  
 karrinang.....we saw him/her/it  
 ngurrinang.....you saw him/her/it  
 birrinang.....they saw him/her/it

NOTE ABOUT SIMILARITY BETWEEN THESE BEGINNINGS AND THE INTRANSITIVE BEGINNINGS. Except for the items in bold, where **him** or **her** is affected, rather than **it**, these beginnings are the same as if this verb wasn't affecting anyone other than the actor, so they could be translated simply as I saw, you saw, etc.. Only context will tell you if the speaker is talking about an action affecting a third party. So, for example, the word *birribom* could equally well mean *they hit*, or *they hit him/her or it*.

FOLLOW UP PRACTICE ( ALL ITEMS FROM LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT 4)

[1] Practice writing and saying aloud all the other basic verbs with each of these beginnings.

[2] Write the Kunwinjku for the following:

1. she hit him

*bibom*

2. they (3+) broke it

*birribakkeng*

3. you (2) and I ate it

*kanenguneng*

4. he and I got him

*nganemey*

5. they [2 people] followed her

*benekadjuy*

[3] Write the English for:

1. birrinang

*they (3+) saw or they (3+) saw him/her or it*

2. binguneng

*he/she or it ate him or her*

## 3. benebakkeng

*they (2) broke him/her or it*

## 4. ngarrikarrmi

*we [they and I] had him/her or it*

## 5. nganenang

*we [he/she or it and I] saw him/her or it*

GROUP TWO  
ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS THEM (TWO PEOPLE)

These are verbs where the English translation would always involve action done to "them" when them means *two of them*. There are a couple of warnings needed with these, although they are based on the same set of twelve intransitive beginnings you have already learnt. Note that there are two equally correct alternatives to some of these, depending on personal preference of the speaker, the alternatives are in italics after the more predictable form. We suggest you learn the first of each where two alternatives are given, and worry about the alternative later. The alternatives are underlined

VERB BEGINNINGS WHERE ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS THEM (2) [TAPE]

ngabenbenenang..... I saw them  
 yibenbenenang..... you saw them  
 benbenenang..... he/she/it saw them  
 ngarrbenbenenang..... we [ you and I ] saw them  
 ngunebenbenenang ..... you [2] saw them  
ngurrbenbenenang..... *you [2] saw them*  
 nganebenbenenang ..... we [he and I ] saw them  
ngarrbenbenenang..... *we [he and I ] saw them*  
 bindinang ..... they [2] saw them  
 kanebenbenenang..... we [you 2 and I ] saw them  
karrbenbenenang..... *we [you 2 and I ] saw them*  
 ngarribenbenenang ..... we [ not you ] saw them  
ngurrbenbenenang..... *we [ not you ] saw them*  
 karribenbenenang..... we [ includes you ] saw them  
karrbenbenenang..... *we [ includes you ] saw them*  
 ngurribenbenenang ..... you (3+) saw them  
ngurrbenbenenang..... *you (3+)saw them*



bindinang ..... they (2+) saw them (2+)

NOTES ON THESE BEGINNINGS

[1] You will notice that mostly the only difference between these beginnings and the intransitives is the addition of benbene, giving some quite long beginnings. Probably the reason bindi appears is that otherwise the rule behind these beginnings would have produced *birribenbene*, or *benebenbene*, which are awkward forms.

[2] Every time you see benbene in a Kunwinjku verb, it means the action is affecting two participants.

[3] Apart from the benbene, these beginnings are still almost the same as the first series you learnt. Differences are all caused by pressure to shorten the beginning:

bindi is used instead of benebenbene and birribenbene.  
ngarri, karri and ngurri usually drop their last letter i.  
ngane, ngune and kane become ngarr, ngurr and karr.

[4] A resulting problem is that some forms have more than one meaning. For example: *karrbenbenenang* might be the short form of *karribenbenenang* or of *kanebenbenenang*. Correct meaning is automatically established by the speech act context.

[5] There are two other variations between speakers that are worth noticing:

- (i) some people say *menmene* instead of *benbene*;
- (ii) sometimes *benbene* is shortened to *ben*, which can cause some confusion, since *benbene* means two people are being spoken of, whereas *ben* means three or more ( as explained on page 60). Context will clarify which is meant.

FOLLOW UP PRACTICE ( ALL ITEMS FROM LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT 4)

[1] Pick a few of the basic verbs and write them out with each of these beginnings, saying each aloud with its English meaning.

[2] Translate these into English:

1. *benbenekadjuy*

*he/she or it followed them (2)*

2. bindimey

*they got them*

3. ngarrbenbenebom

*we [you (1) or (2) and I] hit them (2) or we [he/she or it and I] hit them*

4. karrbenbenebakkeng

*we [you 3+ and I] broke them (2) or you [you 2 and I] broke them (2)*

5. ngunebenbeneweng

*you (2) threw them (2)*

[3] Translate into Kunwinjku: [ action affects two participants ]

1. they saw them

*bindinang*

2. you and I hit them

*ngarrbenbenebom*

3. it broke them

*benbenebakkeng*

4. you [two] struck them

*ngunebenbenebom or ngurrbenbenebom*

5. we [you and I] followed them

*ngarrbenbenekadjuy*

GROUP THREE  
ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS THEM (MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE)

These beginnings only differ from the benbene list above, by becoming a lot shorter. They simply have ben, instead of benbene. The bindi forms stay the same, and there is the same choice between pairs like nganeben and ngarrben.

VERB BEGINNINGS WHERE ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS THEM (3 OR MORE) [TAPE]

ngabennang ..... I saw them  
yibennang ..... you saw them  
bennang ..... he/she/it saw them  
ngarrbennang ..... we saw them  
ngunebennang ..... you [2] saw them  
ngurrbennang ..... you [2] saw them  
nganebennang ..... we [he and I ] saw them  
ngarrbennang ..... we [he and I ] saw them  
bindinang ..... they [2] saw them  
kanebennang ..... we [you 2 and I ] saw them  
karrbennang ..... we [you 2 and I ] saw them  
ngarribennang ..... we [ not you ] saw them  
ngarrbennang ..... we [ not you ] saw them  
karribennang ..... we [ includes you ] saw them  
karrbennang ..... we [ includes you ] saw them  
ngurribennang ..... you (3+) saw them  
ngurrbennang ..... you saw them  
bindinang ..... they saw them

FOLLOW UP PRACTICE ( ALL ITEMS FROM LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT 4)

[1] Pick a few of the basic verbs and write them out, saying each aloud with its English meaning, with each of these beginnings.

[2] Translate into English:

1. benbom

*he/she or it him them (3+)*

2. bindikadjuy

*they followed them - no way of knowing how many participants from just this word.*

3. ngarrbenmey

*we [you and I] got them (3+)*

4. *karrbennguneng*

*we [you (3+) and I] ate them (3+)*

5. *ngunebenkarrmi.*

*you (2) had them (3+)*

[3] Translate into Kunwinjku: [ them always means 3+ ]

1. they followed them

*bindikadjuy*

2. you and I got them

*ngarrbenmey*

3. it had them

*benkarrmi*

4. you [two] broke them

*ngunebenbakkeng or ngurrbenbakkeng*

5. we [ you and I ] struck them.

*ngarrbenbom*

## Part Three: Revision of Verb Beginnings

### AIM OF THIS SECTION

The idea of this section is to allow some revision of what has been covered so far, and to introduce some more of the words that occur most frequently in the language. The first part of the list is made up of verbs that are all based on verbs in previous lists. The verb beginnings already explained will apply to these too.

### SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORY LIST OF KEY WORDS [TAPE]

#### *Group a: verbs.*

bawong	.....	he/she/it left it
bek kang	.....	he/she/it heard
bimbom	.....	he/she /it wrote or drew
burrbom	.....	he/she/it knew or thought
dokmeng	.....	he/she/it went home or went ahead
doweng	.....	he/she/it died/was sick
dulubom	.....	he/she/it shot it
durndi	.....	he/she/it went back
durndiweng	.....	he/she/it sent it back
kang	.....	he/she/it took [something] from a to b.
kinjeng	.....	he/she/it cooked something
kukburrbom	.....	he/she/it recognized it
kurlbawam	.....	he/she/it bled
marneyimeng	.....	he/she/it said/told
rlobmeng	.....	he/she/it ran
warreminj	.....	he/she/it became bad/got worse
warrewong	.....	he/she/it made mistake, got bad
wong	.....	he/she/it gave something to it [ Note: this is a bit unusual. birriwong looks like it should mean "they gave him/her/it" but it actually means, "they gave <u>something to</u> him/her/it. ]
yakwong	.....	he/she/it used up all of it

#### *Group b: Other useful words.*

bokenh	.....	two
bu	.....	when, as, [ also other meanings]
dja	.....	and
kinga	.....	crocodile
kulabbarl	.....	waterhole, billabong
kunkanj	.....	meat*
mayh	.....	animals generally [ also other meanings]

wanjh..... then ( other meanings too )\*

REVIEW OF THE WAY KUNWINJKU VERBS SPECIFY WHO DID WHAT TO WHOM

If English verbs were constructed the way Kunwinjku verbs operate, this is how we would translate some of the verbs and their beginnings you have been looking at so far:

benbenenang = he/she/itthosetwosaw  
 ngarrbenenang = youandlthosetwosaw  
 bindinang = theythemsaw  
 bennang = he/she/itthemsaw  
 binang = he/she/ithim/hersaw  
 nang = he/she/ititsaw  
 ngurrbenenang = you(2+)thosetwosaw

REVISION EXERCISES (THESE ARE REPEATED, WITH OTHERS, IN LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT 5)

Note: the Kunwinjku in these sentences is a bit artificial, since we needed to keep within the limits of the material taught up to this point. You can get extra practice out of these by reversing the test, using the answers as questions. As you do these, have a good look at the way each language is a translation of the other. Note especially the way some words have to be supplied in English, and the word order changes.

[1] Write the English for:

1. Nakohbanj bennang djenj kore mankabo.

*The/an old man saw fish at/in the river.*

2. Nakimuk bininj wam benbenemey wurdwurd kore shop.

*The/a big man saw two children at/in the shop.*

3. Bininj dja daluk benenang nganabbarru dja benewam kured.

*A man and a woman saw a buffalo and went home.*

4. Daluk benbeneweng djenj.

*The/a woman threw (the two) fish*

5. Wurdwurd bindikadjuy duruk.

*(The ) children followed (the) dogs.*

6. Bininj bokenh benewam benedulubom nganabbarru dja benekinjeng kunkanj.

*Two men went and shot a buffalo and cooked the meat.*

7. Daluk benkadjuj wurdwurd bu birriwam birrimey djenj, dja benwong mankung.

*The/a woman followed the children when they went and got fish, and gave them bush honey.*

8. Ngarrkarrmi duruk nakimuk dja nguneng kunkanj kore kured.

*We had a big dog and it ate meat at the camp.*

9. Bininj dja daluk bindidurndiweng wurdwurd bu bindinang birridi kore kinga yoy.

*The man and the woman sent the children back when they saw them where the crocodile lived/was.*

10. Ngarrbenbenedulubom kunj bokenh dja benekurlbawam.

*We shot two kangaroos and they bled.*

[2] Write the Kunwinjku for:

1. They ate them

*Bindinguneng*

2. The old man saw the children at home.

*Nakohbanj bennang (or benbenenang if two) wurdwurd kore kured.*

3. We [ you and I ] got them [two] dogs.

*Ngarrbenbenemey duruk bokenh.*

4. They [two] saw them and followed them to the river.

*Bindinang dja bindikadjuy kore mankabo.*

5. You [two] hit them [two ] and followed them to the waterhole.

*Ngunebenbenedom dja ngunebenbenekadjuy kore kulabbarl. Or,  
Ngurrbenbenedom dja ngurrbenbenekadjuy kore kulabbarl*

6. You and I saw the two children at the trees and we sent them back.

*Ngarrbenbenenang wurdwurd bokenh kore kundulk, dja  
ngarrbenbenedurndiweng.*

7. Two old ladies saw the buffalo at the billabong, and they went home.

*Ngalkohbanj bokenh benenang nganabbarru kore kulabbarl, dja  
benedokmeng kured.*

8. I had two dogs and a kangaroo, and a man shot them.

*Ngakarrmi duruk bokenh dja kunj, dja bininj bendulubom.*

9. We [ them and me ] saw the buffalos at the waterhole, and we shot two of them, cooked them and ate the meat.

*Ngarrinang nganabbarru kore kulabbarl, dja ngarridulubom,  
ngarrbenbenekinjeng dja ngarrnguneng kunkanj.*

10. Two children followed the two animals to the river, then they went back, climbed a tree and got some wild honey.

*Wurdwurd bokenh bindikadjuy mayh bokenh kore mankabo, wanjh  
benedurndi benebidbom kundulk dja benemey mankung.*

NOTE

At this stage you could work through Language Assignments 1 through 5, before going on with the next section of the book.



## Part Four: Transitive verbs with action affecting you, me, us.

### GROUP ONE

#### BEGINNINGS WHEN ACTION AFFECTS THE HEARER: "YOU".

##### ABOUT THESE VERBS

These beginnings show when action is done to you, whether you is singular, dual or plural, and whether the action is done by one or by more than one person. English examples: he loves you, they are waiting for you (2), I will follow you. There are only a few of these beginnings which each cover several meanings, this time added to the front of *nang*:

##### VERB BEGINNINGS WHERE ACTION AFFECTS "YOU" [TAPE]

##### One person doing action:

ngunnang.....he/she/it saw you [ one person ]

ngunnang.....he/she/it saw you [ more than two people ]

benbenenang.....I saw you [ two people ]

ngunbenenang.....he/she/it saw you [ two people ]

nang .....I saw you [one person]

nang .....I saw you [ more than two people ] Note: nang actually has nothing in front of it, so has no beginning, but this carries the meaning of "I do action to you"

##### More than one person doing action:

ngundinang.....they [ any number ] saw you [ any number ]

ngundinang.....we [ any number ] saw you [any number ]

binang .....we [ any number ] saw you [ more than one ]

##### NOTES ON THIS TABLE

[1] There are fewer of these prefixes, and some of them have more than one meaning.

[2] Because *benbene* turns up on this list, you now know that a word like *benbenebom* could mean either he/she/it hit them (2), or I hit you (2 people). Context is needed to make this clear.

[3] Note that *ngundi* and *bi* are interchangeable when we (any number) does action of verb to you (more than one person).

[4] One of these prefixes is actually a blank that means something.

Because this is the same as the ø prefix elsewhere, you now know that *nang* could mean either he/she/it saw it, or I saw you (1) or (3+). Context will make this clear.

WAYS OF LEARNING THESE BEGINNINGS

An alternative way to set out these forms is shown below. There is no right way to do this. Practice with whatever best helps you remember. For example, you could try drawing little stick figure groups of people and fill in speech balloons to practice the correct forms. Mostly, you need to try them in real life and suffer the necessary frustrations and humiliations of learning!

VERB BEGINNINGS WHERE ACTION AFFECTS "YOU", DISPLAY FORM

		Action affects/done to hearer:		
		you [ 1 ]	you [ 2 ]	you [ 2 + ]
One Doer	I	zero	benbene	zero
	he/she it	ngun	ngunbene	ngun
Two or more Doers	we	ngundi	ngundi OR bi	ngundi OR bi
	they	ngundi	ngundi	ngundi

PRACTICE EXERCISES

[1] Give English equivalents for:

1. ngundikadjuy

*they are following you or we are following you*

2. bibom

*we hit you (2+) or he/she/it hit him or her.*

3. ngunbenewong

*he/she/it gave you two something*

4. bekkang

*I heard you (1 or 3+) or he/she/it heard it*

5. benbenemey

*I got you (2) or he/she/it got them (2)*

[2] Give Kunwinjku equivalents for:

1. he hit you [2]

*ngunbenebom*

2 they followed you two

*ngundikadjuy*

3. we [2] followed you [2]

*ngundikadjuy or bikadjuy*

4. it saw you 3+

*ngunnang*

5. I heard you [2]

*benbenebekkang*

6. we got you 3+

*ngundimey or bimey*

7. they heard you [ more than 2]

*ngundibekkang*

8. they hit you [2]

*ngundibom*

9. she got you [1]

*ngunmey*

10. I love you [1]

*marnedjare*

GROUP TWO  
BEGINNINGS WHEN ACTION AFFECTS THE SPEAKER: "ME", "US"

## ABOUT THESE VERBS

These beginnings indicate action of the verb impacts the speaker, either as an individual ("me") or as part of a group ("us"). English examples: *they shot us, he hates me, you gave it to us.*

## VERB BEGINNINGS WHEN ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS ME, US. [TAPE]

One person does action to one, or three or more people:

kannang .....you [ 1 person ] saw me

kannang .....you [ 1 person ] saw us

kannang .....he/she/it saw us [ this can also be ngannang ]

ngannang .....he/she/it saw me

ngannang .....he/she/it saw us [usually this is kannang ]

One person does action to two people:

kanbenenang .....you [one person] saw us two

kanbenenang .....he/she/it saw us two

nganbenenang .....he/she/it saw us two

More than one person does action:

kandinang .....you [ more than one person ] saw me

kandinang .....you [ more than one person ] saw us

kandinang .....they saw us two, [ can be ngandinang ]

ngandinang .....they saw me

ngandinang .....they saw us [ two people ] [ often = kandinang ]

Note that many meanings share the same beginnings, so there is less to memorize, but it is easier to get the meaning wrong if you are not sure of the context. These prefixes can be tabulated as shown over the page. You will need to find a system for memorizing them that suits you best. This table is merely a suggestion of how you might organize the data mentally. It also provides an insight into the way Kunwinjku uses its resources as a language.

## ANOTHER REVIEW OF THE WAY KUNWINJKU VERBS SPECIFY WHO DID WHAT TO WHOM

kandinang = you(2+)mesaw

benbenenang = Iyou(2+)saw  
 binang = we(2+)you(2+)saw  
 kannang = he/she/itus(3+)saw  
 nganbenenang = he/she/itustwosaw

VERB BEGINNINGS WHEN ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS ME, US.

		Action done to speaker/s:		
		me	us two	us [ 2 + ]
One Doer	you	kan	kanbene	kan
	he/she it	ngan	nganbene OR kanbene	ngan OR kan
Two or more Doers	you	kandi	kandi	kandi
	they	ngandi	kandi	kandi

NOTES ON THESE PREFIXES

- [1] Some of these have three different meanings.
- [2] kanbene and nganbene are simply alternatives.
- [3] Note the way bene turns up in forms affecting two people.

PRACTICE

Translate the following, remember there are mostly several correct English forms for each Kunwinjku form.

Group 1: Translate into Kunwinjku:

1. you [ more than 1 person ] hit me

*kandibom*

2. they [2] followed us [ 2]

*kandikadjuy*

3. they gave me [ something ]

*ngandiwong*

4. he saw us [ more than 2 ]

*kannang*

5. you (2) hit us [two]

*kandibom*

Group 2: Translate into English:

6. kanbenedurndiweng

*he/she/it sent us (2) back*

7. kanbekkang

*you heard me or you heard us (3+) or he heard us (3+)*

8. kanbenekadjuy

*you followed us (2) or he/she/it followed us (2)*

9. nganbenebom

*he/she/it hit us (2)*

10. ngandidulubom

*they shot me*

## Part Five: Combined Table of all Verb Beginnings.

### WHAT THIS TABLE IS ABOUT

The table on the opposite page summarizes all the information about the pronominal prefixes, i.e.. verb beginnings, in Kunwinjku. This information needs to be memorized but is easier than it first appears, provided you move through the material in the order we have done up to now. (The Gun-djeihmi version of the same chart is on page 184).

### NOTES ON USING THIS TABLE

1 The arrows mean you keep using the same beginning as in the left hand column. So the top left hand entry "nga-" stays the same for the first three columns.

2 The *ka* prefixes are underlined. These beginnings are only used when the action is happening now or in the future. When talking about something already done, the *ka* is left off the word. This only applies to the *ka* that have been underlined. Words starting with *kane* or with *karri* have nothing to do with this. In other words the disappearing *ka* rule only applies to the third person subject prefixes. The endings of verbs change between past and non-past tenses too, so in a word like *bom* = he/she was hitting, the non-past form puts a *ka* on the front, and changes the ending, to give *kabun* = he is hitting. Endings will be dealt with in the next section.

3. Boxes left blank on this table are where there is no need for any beginning, usually because the action would be reflexive, which is shown by an ending, not a beginning.

4. The symbol  $\emptyset$  means that you don't put anything at the front of the verb, and in this case the nothing means something.

5 Where there are two possibilities in a box, either can be used. Be guided by your Kunwinjku language instructor on which to use.

6 Practice drawing up this table roughly from memory and you will notice there are not as many of these beginnings as first seems. The only way to remember them quickly is to practice speaking Kunwinjku as often as possible. Select one set of beginnings at a time and try using them in conversations as often as possible.

Combined Table of All Kunwinjku Verb Beginnings

Action done to... Subject or agent "doer"	no-one (Intransitive verb: no object.)	Third person objects			First person objects			Second person objects			
		Singular		Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural
		him her	it	them [2]	them [3]	me	us [2]	us [3]	you [1]	you [2]	you [3]
1st person singular <b>I</b>	nga-	->	->	ngabenbene-	ngaben-				∅	benbene-	∅
2nd person singular <b>you [1]</b>	yi-	->	->	yibenbene-	yiben-	kan-	kanbene-	kan-			
3rd person singular <b>he, she, it</b>	<u>ka</u> -	<u>kabi</u> -	<u>ka</u> -	<u>kabenbene</u> -	<u>kaben</u> -	ngan-	kanbene- nganbene-	kan- ngan-	ngun-	ngunbene-	ngun-
1st person dual inclusive <b>we [you &amp; I]</b>	ngarr-	->	->	ngarrbenbene-	ngarrben-						
1st person dual exclusive <b>we [he or she &amp; I]</b>	ngane-	->	->	ngarrbenbene- nganebenbene-	ngarrben- nganeben-				ngundi-	bi- ngundi-	bi- ngundi-
2nd person dual <b>you [2]</b>	ngune-	->	->	ngurrbenbene- ngunebenbene-	ngurrben- nguneben-	kandi-	kandi-	kandi-			
3rd person dual <b>they [2]</b>	<u>kabene</u> -	->	->	<u>kabindi</u> -	<u>kabindi</u> -	ngandi-	ngandi- kandi-	kandi-	ngundi-	ngundi-	ngundi-
1st person Trial <b>we [you 2 &amp; I]</b>	kane-	->	->	karrbenbene- kanebenbene-	karrben- kaneben-						
1st person plural inclusive <b>we [you 3+ &amp; I]</b>	karri-	->	->	karrbenbene-	karrben-						
1st person plural exclusive <b>we [they &amp; I]</b>	ngarri-	->	->	ngarrbenbene-	ngarrben-				ngundi-	bi- ngundi-	bi- ngundi-
2nd person plural <b>you [3+]</b>	ngurri-	->	->	ngurrbenbene-	ngurrben-	kandi-	ngandi- kandi-	kandi-			
3rd person plural <b>they [3+]</b>	<u>kabirri</u> -	->	->	<u>kabindi</u> -	<u>kabindi</u> -	ngandi-	ngandi- kandi-	kandi-	ngundi-	ngundi-	ngundi-



## Part Six: Some other important prefixes.

TWO ADDITIONAL BEGINNINGS USED FREQUENTLY WITH ALL OTHER PREFIXES

[1] The single letter m is inserted immediately after the other verb beginnings whenever you need to indicate that the action is coming towards the hearer in the conversation. For example:

he is going = kare  
he is coming = kamre

she is running = karlobme  
she is running (towards here) = kamrlobme

A complication can occur with this little m prefix. When talking about action already done, you leave off the ka (see note 2 above). But this produces some unacceptable word beginnings:

he comes = kamre  
he came = mwam ( ka has been left off as required)

The combination m w just cannot begin a word in Kunwinjku, so in these situations the ka stays but takes the special form ku:

he came = kumwam instead of kamwam or mwam.  
he returned = kumdurndi rather than kamdurndi or mdurndi.

[2] The other common single letter prefix is h. You will notice that sometimes the only difference between two nearly identical verbs is this glottal stop sound, written as "h". This often means that the action being talked about is happening at the time you are speaking, or when the speaker is stressing that something happened at the time he/she is referring to. For example:

he is coming, he comes = kamre [ no focus on actual time ]  
he is coming = kamhre [ focus on fact that action is now ]

they were going = birrirey [ no focus on actual time ]  
they were going = birrihrey [ at the time being talked about ]

This little prefix is extremely common. But there are a lot of words where it occurs merely as part of the word, without having this time related meaning:

Examples: wanjh = then, well, so; nahnang = he/she it looked after it;  
kondah = right here; wohrey = travelled about.

**marne:** CHANGES THE PERSON AFFECTED BY THE ACTION OF THE VERB

The prefix **marne** is common and very important in Kunwinjku. It can be inserted just after the prefixes showing who does what to whom. It performs two main functions:

[1] Marne changes the verb so that the action is not done to the participants in the prefix, but for their benefit. For example:

ngabennahnang = I looked after them  
ngabenmarnenahnang = I looked after it for them

kandiwong = you gave it to me  
kandmarnewong = you gave it for me.

dolkayhweng = I pulled you up  
marnedolkayhweng = I pulled it up for you

kandiyakwong = they used me up, made me disappear  
kandmarneyakwong = they used it all up for me, they've run me out of it.

nganmarnewarreminj = its broken on me! [ eg vehicle ]

[2] It links the verb to a reason or person being talked about:

bebmeng = he/she/it arrived  
bimarnebebmeng = he/she or it arrived for her, to see her, etc..

birringalkeng = they found it  
birrimarnengalkeng = they found it for him, because of him

birridurrinj = they were arguing  
birrimarnedurrinj = they were arguing about ( that particular issue)

Note: some words have *marne* permanently attached, as part of the basic form or the word, especially:

marneyimeng = spoke to, said to, addressed someone, told someone  
marnedjareminj = loved, desired someone

There is more information about other prefixes in the later section *Incorporating Additional Meaning in Verbs*.

## Part One: Introduction to verb Endings: the five tenses of each verb.

### ABOUT VERB TENSES

Every time you say a verb in Kunwinjku, you must choose which of five possible endings to put on it. These endings focus on some aspect of the time the action happened, or how definite it is, or whether it is a command or just a statement. To make this clear, these are the five endings as they affect one verb:

Typical verb .....	Meaning.....	Name of ending
ngabun.....	I am hitting .....	NON-PAST
ngabu.....	I must hit.....	COMMAND
ngabom .....	I hit .....	SIMPLE PAST
ngabuni.....	I was hitting .....	PAST CONTINUOUS
ngabuyinj.....	I didn't hit .....	INDEFINITE

### MORE ABOUT THE SCOPE OF EACH ENDING

In the right hand column above, we have given names to each of the endings (tenses and moods) for discussion purposes. These names need more explanation, since each ending actually serves several functions. Taking the same verb, the following gives an idea of the range of meanings for each ending:

#### Non-Past Endings

The action is either happening in the present, or in the future. The future use is indicated by context.

- kare = he goes, he is going, he will go
- nganan = I see, I am seeing, I will see
- ngurrre malaywi = you (3+) will go, will be going tomorrow

As in English, this tense can be used in stories, alongside past tenses, to give the impression you are an eyewitness to the event.

yerrkang, wanjh nayin kamhre= he sat down, then snake comes...

#### Command Endings

As in English there are several ways to get someone else to do what you want. These range from subtle polite hints to direct commands.

The command ending in Kunwinjku is more polite than in English, although it can be used roughly. (The indefinite ending is often used for polite requests - see below.)

yibu = hit it !

kanwo =give it to me

NOTE; for negative commands, the non-past ending is used, but there is a command word before the verb instead:

don't go = yuwn yire ( *not*, yuwn yiray )

don't hit = yuwn yibun ( *not*, yuwn yibu )

### Simple Past Endings

This is not really simple! This ending means the action is being talked about as a single complete event, even though it may have been a long process, eg *he worked at school* is a simple past form in English, but the action may have extended over years. Kunwinjku does the same. NOTE: all the verbs examples so far in this book have been simple past forms.

wam=he/she/it went

birribom=they hit

benedoweng=they died

nganenang=we saw

di=he/she/it was there

### Past Continuous Endings

This ending focusses on the continuous, or long term, nature of an event or state in the past. This is a very simple tense to learn, nearly always being based on n i, or y i ending.

bibuni=he/she/it was hitting, kept on hitting, used to hit, him or her

nganenani=we used to look, we kept on looking, we were looking etc..

### Indefinite Endings

These are easy to remember but difficult to use, because they cover such a lot of functions. Some linguists call this kind of ending "irrealis". They always end in i, or i n j. Whether or not you leave off the n j from these seems to be a matter of individual choice, although there are some complex sound rules about this that you can happily ignore for a long time. The main uses are:

[1] Indicating something didn't happen. This is very common. The ending is used in conjunction with a word ( m i n j ) which goes in

**KUNWINJKU KUNWOK: VERB ENDINGS**

front of the verb.

she didn't hit=minj buyinj  
it didn't come = minj kumrawinj  
I couldn't see them =minj ngabenbenenayinj

When you are negating a present or future action, the minj is used, but not the indefinite ending.

minj ngare = I'm not going, I won't be going  
minj kare= it doesn't go ( talking about a car)

**[2] Polite request - with or without minj:**

kanwoyi=could you give me  
minj kankayinj = maybe you could take me

**[3] Hypothetical or uncertain situations:**

I might go = ngarawinj  
(I thought) you were looking = yinayinj  
if I could go to the moon= bu ngarawinj kore dird

**GROUPING VERBS ACCORDING TO THEIR ENDING PATTERNS**

Every verb ends in one of these five endings every time it is used. The exact ending will vary a bit depending on what the basic spelling of the verb is. For example, compare the same tense on three different verbs:

**COMPARISON OF VERB ENDINGS**

<i>TENSE</i> .....	<i>HIT</i> .....	<i>SEE/LOOK</i> .....	<i>GET</i>
non-past .....	yibun.....	yinan.....	yimang
command.....	yibu .....	yina.....	yima
simple past .....	yibom.....	yinang .....	yimey
past continuous.....	yibuni .....	yinani.....	yimangi
indefinite.....	yibuyinj.....	yinayinj.....	yimayinj

**NOTES ON THIS TABLE**

You can see from this that each verb has a different way of doing each of its five tenses, but that there are similarities. For example, the command forms of these three are all shortened versions of the non past forms, so that they end with a vowel. The indefinite and past continuous endings are also similar between verbs. The variations are caused by the spelling of the basic form of the verb, probably the non-past form.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING THE ENDINGS

Although there are thousands of verbs in Kunwinjku, you don't have to learn five endings for every verb. Almost all verbs use one of eight sets of endings, so if you learn the endings for one verb, you have automatically learnt them for all other verbs that end in the same letters and share that same set of endings. For example, if you learn the five endings for the verb *bom*, listed on page 78, you then know the five endings for all the following verbs which also end with the three letters *bom*:

## VERBS ENDING IN BOM [TAPE]

bidbom.....	climbed
bimbom.....	drew, wrote
burrbom.....	knew, understood
danjbom.....	speared
dirlebom.....	urinated
djarrngbom.....	chose
djirridjbom.....	washed
djongbom.....	put clothes on someone
dombom.....	extinguished
dulubom.....	shot
kerribom.....	cooked in earth oven
kolhmibom.....	aimed
kukmidbom.....	failed to recognize
madbom.....	waited
marnbom.....	made, repaired, healed
wabom.....	sang someone for evil purpose
wakbom.....	go around something
wohburrbom.....	realized
yakarrbom.....	tipped out, used up
yakbom.....	emptied out

There are plenty more verbs ending in *bom*. These are some of the more common ones. The point is, once you have learnt the five verb endings for *bom*, you have learnt it for dozens of other verbs ending in *b.o.m.*

## VERB BASES and COMPOUNDS

The list above shows a sample of the ways the verb *bom* forms compounds with other verbs, adverbials and nouns, so that the endings you learn for *bom* also apply to many other words. There are only about thirty of these short verb bases like *bom*, that all other verbs are built upon. As well as *bom*, for example *nang* = *saw* on

## KUNWINJKU KUNWOK: VERB ENDINGS

its own, can be compounded to form other verbs, like *wohrnang* = *was in charge of*, *bolknang* = *looked around*, etc.. The short verb *mey* = *got* also forms compounds like *djirdmey* = *stole* and *bunjhmey* = *kissed*. So for each set of five endings you master, you have learnt the endings for quite a large number of other verbs.

It is noticeable that for most base verbs each has a certain meaning associated with it, so that when it is joined to a longer form, there is often a meaning-based reason. In each of the groups of endings listed in this chapter, a sample of words built on these bases is given. For example, *bun* on its own means *strike, hit, kill*. So when it occurs as the base for a compound verb, that verb often has something to do with acting forcefully on something. For example *marnbun* = *to make, fix*; *dombun* = *to put out a fire or light*, *djirridjbun* = *to wash something*, *djuhboom* = *blamed*. In many other cases however, there is no very obvious link between the meaning of the verb base and that of the compound; for example *bidboom* = *climbed*, *madboom* = *waited*.

There is a small group of verb bases which don't have any existence as verbs in their own right, and only occur as the last part of a longer verb: *meng*, *keng* and *danj*. Read the notes about these as they occur in the list of endings below. (See also the section on Word Families in the Learning Guide chapter.)

### PRACTICE EXAMPLES USING ONLY BOM AND ITS COMPOUNDS

Try to put the correct endings on the correct verbs:

1. you empty it!

*yyakbu*

2. they were shooting

*birridulubuni*

3. he didn't choose

*minj djarrngbuyinj*

4. she made it

*marnboom*

5. I will write

*ngabimboom*

6. we were thinking

*ngarriburrbuni*

7. wash it

*yidjirridjbu*

8. don't spear it

*yuwn yidanjbu*

## Part Two: Complete list of Verb Endings

### WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

This section is a complete list of the five endings showing all versions which between them cover all Kunwinjku verbs. With each set of five, we have listed some of the more common verbs that take that particular set of endings. This is followed by a listing of all the possible verbe endings in alphabetical order, to help you analyze new verbs as you discover them. In the section after that, we have put all the endings into a condensed table form which won't help you learn them, but might be interesting. Finally, we show one verb with all the possible beginnings and endings discussed so far.

### IMPORTANT MISCELANEOUS NOTES ABOUT THESE SETS OF ENDINGS

[1] Various linguists have grouped these verbs in various ways. Until some future Kunwinjku people do a linguistic analysis of their own language there is no official and correct presentation, so I have felt free to put these verbs in an order which might make them a little easier to learn. Group numbers on the table at the end, are purely arbitrary.

[2] For each verb group, I have shown the five endings always in the order: past simple, past continuous, command, non-past and indefinite forms. This arrangement is also arbitrary, but it does allow you to compare the non-past and command forms which are the hardest to remember.

[3] The verbs given as samples are only a small portion of what is out there in the language. Every verb in the language will take the endings of one or other of these sets. As you learn new verbs, make sure you work out which set of endings it belongs with.

[4] Although there are over a dozen groups here, many of them are very similar, and you will soon develop a working feel for the endings. Use the chart on page 89 to explore the patterns that will help you memorize.

[5] Note that in the indefinite endings, when *nj* is shown at the end, this is sometimes left off in normal speech.

[6] The indefinite is easily identified by its very consistent endings [ - i n j ] and the contexts in which it is used; the past continuous is



also highly consistent [ - ni endings ]; the command forms usually shorten the endings of the past simple, but sometimes use - men instead. The other two, that is the past simple and non-past, often follow a pattern of simply differing from each other so that if one ends in a closed syllable ( with a consonant ), the other tends not to.

[7] In this section I have not included reduplicated forms like *yongohyoy*, *duhdurndi*, because all such forms still take the endings shown here. So, to use our example bom again, the past continuous form *buni* is sometimes reduplicated for emphasis to *bunihbuni*, or even changed to *bonohbom*. Regardless of word length, the endings are dictated by the verb base right at the end. Even in a long compound with reduplication, like *djirridjirridjbuni*, the same endings are used.

[8] There are a couple of cases where a verb, or a couple of verbs, don't quite fit a pattern. These are mentioned within the group they most nearly fit, with the variation shown.

[9] The Group numbers refer to the two summary charts of verb endings on pages 89 and 90.

FIVE TENSE ENDINGS FOR ALL VERB GROUPS

(Group 1 ) Verbs ending with ruy, doy etc.

ruy	rungi	ru	rung	ruyinj
durndi	durndengi	durnde	durndeng	durndeyi
mey	mangi	ma	mang	mayinj

Sample verbs

mey = got, obtained, picked up (*Also acts as base for verbs where a goal is reached, or there is the idea of something being acquired, grabbed etc. although this meaning may not be present in any given verb*)

bibunjhmei = kissed someone

bimarnedjirdmei = stole from someone

bolkmaddi = stayed behind, stayed there [cf madbom = waited for someone]

bolkmey = arrived at place, arrived at land [from sea ]

borrahkendoy = put fluid into container/tank

dedjoy = had sex with someone [ impolite terminology: better to use beneyoy ]

djakduy = rained

djirdmei = stole something

doy = struck, knocked

durndi = went back

durrkmei = pulled something/one

kadjuy = followed

kardmei = caught fish by the mouth with a hook

karuy = dug a hole in the ground [ also ngadbom ]

kelekadjuj = chased  
 koluy = went down, descended  
 larlmey = separated things, divided them  
 mey = got something, got idea, understood, picked up item  
 moyhmey = picked up from ground  
 munkekadjuy = followed, imitated, copied [ see munkeweng ]  
 ngukdi = defecated [ person or animal ] [Can take endings from Group 5]  
 ruy = burnt  
 yawmey = had a baby  
 yidduy = got angry at someone  
 yirruendi = returned something

(Group 2a) Verbs ending in kang, wong etc.

kang      kani      ka      kan      kayinj  
 wong      woni      wo      won      woyinj

Sample verbs

wong = gave something to someone/something (*Also acts as a base for other verbs where action changes the state or location of the object*).

bawong = left a person or place

bek kang = felt, heard

belewong = cleaned

birlukang = took fire along

bolknang = was able to see, looked around, looked at a place

boyakwong = finished the drink etc.

bukkang = showed, demonstrated, taught

djangkang = went hunting

dolkkang = stood up [ or dolkang ]

mankang = fell, fell over [ also motor car rolled over ]

ngorrkang = carried on shoulder

waralnang = saw as a vision [ something in the future ]

warlkang = hid something/one [ see warlkarrinj = hid oneself ]

warrewong = spoilt, did wrong to someone/thing

widnang = hated someone

wong = gave something to someone

woybukwong = believed someone

yerrkang = sat down

Note: two verbs taking a slightly different form:

bonguneng = drank.

nguneng = ate,

nguneng      nguni      ngu      ngun      nguyinj

(Group 2b) Verbs ending in bom

Note: yawam is also shown to give a clearer picture, but the two sets are identical.

bom      buni      bu      bun      buyinj

yawam      yawani      yawa      yawan      yawayinj

Sample of -bom verbs

bom = (As independent verb) hit, strike, kill.

*In compounds, this same area of meaning is often reflected:*

danjborn = speared

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dulubom = shot something/someone  
marnbom = fixed, repaired, made  
warlbom = hunted

*But in others, the impact idea is not in focus:*

berrebbom = promised [ to give woman to man in marriage, to do something ]  
boyakbom = poured out, use up some fluid  
ngeybom = named something, say name of something/one

### Sample of -yawam verbs which take same endings as bom verbs:

WARNING: Don't confuse this with wam type verbs in group 6c on the summary charts.

djawam = asked [ either question, or for something ]  
karremulewam = paid eg fine, account  
kuwam = warmed self by fire  
mulewam = told about someone, doxed in, reported, described  
wakwam = didn't know  
yawam = searched for someone/thing

### (Group 3) Verbs ending with danj

danj      dangeni      da      dan      dangimeninj / dayinj

Note: danj doesn't occur as a verb in its own right, but acts as base to many verbs that involve a change in state or circumstances by the one undergoing or doing the action of the verb.

### Sample verbs

bengmidjdanj = forgot  
durrkmirranj = worked [Can also take some endings from Group 5a]  
ngokdanj = became dark at night  
wokdanj = spoke [can also take some endings in Group 5a]  
yimerranj = became, changed into something [ also kukyimerranj ]

### (Group 4 ) Verbs ending with yonginj .

yonginj      yoy      yuwn      yo      yuwirrinj

### Sample verbs

boyoy = was there [ water, fluid ]  
bukirriyoy = dreamt [ also bukirrinang, bukirriwam ]  
kodjkeyyoy = slept  
lambarryoy = lie on back  
yirriyoy = was there [ specifically of a rope, cord or hose or similar shapes object ]  
yoy = lived, existed, lay there (Also acts as base for other verbs that involve the meaning of laying, being.

### (Group 5a) Verbs ending in di, rri, or ni.

di      di      din      di      diwirrinj

### Sample verbs

bengdi = waited for word, something to happen  
bengyirri = listened  
dahkendi = was inside a container

di (rri) = existed, was there, stood (*Also acts as a base for many verbs, both stative and otherwise.*)

dirri = played

durrkmirri = worked [ can also take Group 3 endings ]

ni = existed, was there, sat (*Also acts as a base for many verbs, both stative and otherwise.*)

wayini = sang [ also wayiniyerrkang = sang, group 2 ]

wokdi = spoke, made a noise [ can also take Group 3 endings ]

(Group 5b) Verbs (adjectival) ending in ni.

ni	ni	nin	∅	meninj
babangni	babangni	babangnin	babang	babangmeninj

Note: the non-past form of this verb is a zero ending. Many of these verbs are descriptive of states of being, so would be like adjectives in English.

Sample verbs

babangni = was hurting

djareni = wanted

kelebukni = it was tame [ eg kunj ]

kimukni = was big

kirnwernni = was very jealous

kodjkurlumak = was a morally good person

kukmakni = was beautiful

kukwarreni = was ugly

warreni = it was bad

yahwurdni = was small

(Group 6a) Verbs endings like weng, bakkeng, etc.

weng	weyi	wemen	we	wemeninj
bakkeng	bakkeni	bakkemen	bakke	bakkeyinj
bakmeng	bakmeni	bakmen	bakme	bakmeninj

IMPORTANT NOTE: a number of verbs have a *keng* and a *meng* type ending to differentiate between an action done to something, and an event that happened to something. Eg: bakkeng = he broke it, bakmeng = it broke. Neither keng, nor meng has any current independent meaning, but they both form bases for a wide range of verbs.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT weng = threw something. Weng acts as base for many verbs that involve using physical or other forms of pressure to make someone or something change its composition or location, either literally or figuratively. When compounded with other verb roots, note that the change where the two verb roots are joined:

dokmeng (went ahead) + weng (forced/threw) becomes dok*mi*weng  
 bibom (climbed up) + weng (forced/threw) becomes bidbuy*hw*weng  
 koluy (went down) + weng (forced/threw) becomes koluy*hw*weng

Sample verbs

bakkeng = broke something

barlkeng = filled something

bebkeng = brought out

bokinjeng = boiled water eg for coffee.

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borrkeng = danced [usually you hear this in continuous tense birriborrkeyi ]  
burriweng =threw away  
djobkeng = cut, chopped  
djordmihweng = raised a child  
djowkkeng = crossed over  
djuhkeng = immersed something, had a dip in water  
dokmiweng = sent ahead  
dowkkeng = fired a gun [ sound made is "dowk" ]  
durndiweng = sent back  
kanjkinjeng = roasted meat on fire  
kinjeng = roasted on fire [ roasted compare wildi, kerribom cooked in earth oven ]  
koweng = lied, tricked  
kukburriweng = threw out, knocked over by car  
mayhkeng =it flashed [ especially lightning ]  
munkeweng = sent person, thing  
ngalkeng = found  
warrkeng = dropped, lost something  
wayhkeng = lifted something up [ also see bidbuyhweng = lifted ]  
wayhkeng = pushed along  
yibkeng = pushed down

**(Group 6b) Verbs endings like dokmeng, bakmeng, etc.**

dokmeng dokmeni / dokmi dokmen dokme dokmeninj

**Sample verbs:**

bakmeng = broke  
barlmeng = filled, blocked  
bolkmayayhmeng = became lost [ person ]  
borlobmeng = ran [ fluid, eg river ]  
djobmeng =was cut off, came to an abrupt end, finished at that point  
dokmeng = went home, went ahead  
kangebarrhmeng = was shocked, surprized  
karrmeng = had, possessed  
kelerlobmeng = ran away [ in fear ]  
korlonjhmeng = called someone korlonj  
kurduyimeng = did  
rlobmeng = ran, drove vehicle  
warrhmeng = was dropped, lost [ thing, not person ]  
yimeng = said  
yolyolmeng = told story

## (Group 6c ) Verbs ending in wam

wam rey ray re rawinj

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT wam = went. Wam acts as base for many verbs that involve walking, or physically going from one place to another. When compounded with other verb roots, note that the change where the two verb roots are joined:

nalkbom (cried) + wam (went) = nalkkih~~w~~am=went along crying

WARNING: wam = he went Don't confuse with djawam type verbs in group 2b.

Sample verbs:

bukirriwam = dreamt

damhwam = went close

kurlbawam = bled [kunkurlba = blood]

nalkkih~~w~~am = went crying

wohreywohrey = toured around

yawoyhwam = went again

## (Group 7a) Verbs endings with minj eg. yakminj

yakminj yakmeni yakmimen yakmen yakmeninj

Note: minj doesn't occur as a verb in its own right, but acts as base to many verbs that involve a change in state or circumstances by the one undergoing or doing the action of the verb.

Sample verbs:

bukminj = dried up esp, bolkbukminj = country dried out after rain (Note: bukminj compounds with meanings based on drying up figuratively, eg kirnbukminj = stopped being jealous)

darlehminj = dried out eg of grass, skin.

djordminj = grew up [ person ] [ see djordmiweng = raised a child ]

keleminj = became frightened

kirnbukminj = got over being jealous

makminj = got better, improved

njilngwarreminj = became unhappy

warlahminj = became widespread, increased

warreminj = got worse

worrkminj = became full of food/ had plenty to eat

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(Group 7b) Verbs endings like doweng, danginj, burrinj

doweng	doweni	dowimen	dowen	dowimeninj
danginj	dangeni	dangimen	dangen	dangimeninj
burrij	burreni	burrimen	burren	burrimeninj

**Important note:** forms ending in r r i n j are reflexive forms of any other verb. So regardless of what endings a verb takes, when used reflexively, the r r i n j endings are used. For example, compare *marnbom = healed*, with *marnburrij = healed oneself*.

The other common use of the reflexive ending is for group behaviour when the group is treated as a single unity. Often reflexives are used where one would expect otherwise:

birridurndi = they went back >> birridurderrinj = they went back  
ngurribebmen = you all go outside >> ngurribebmerrimen

Also note: ngahdurderren = I'm coming and going

### Sample verbs:

bekkarrinj = felt [ eg pain ] in oneself, or decided something  
benemimnarrinj = they were "making eyes" at each other  
beneyurhkerrinj = they passed each other [ going opposite directions ]  
birludoweng = flames died down  
danginj = was born, stood  
djirridjburrij = washed self  
doweng = was sick, died (Also dying off, dying out of anything; mokdoweng=sore healed)  
kanjmarnburrij = escaped danger  
kombukdoweng = was thirsty  
lirrhmerrij = scratched self  
marnewokkurrmerrij = made promise/gave undertaking to someone  
marrwedoweng = was hungry, starving  
mokdoweng = sore healed [ "died away" ]  
wernmerrij = became plentiful, vast, numerous, of bigger content  
yingkihkarremarnburrij = made plans in advance, got ready in advance

## Charts summarizing Kunwinjku verb endings

ABOUT THE CHARTS ON THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES

The chart on the opposite page shows one way you can group the endings on Kunwinjku verbs. This chart summarizes the endings described in the previous section. The main benefit of organizing data this way is to reveal patterns, which, apart from the theoretical interest, will help you memorize the endings. Look for the patterns.

The chart on page 90 has its own explanatory notes following it. It attempts to show the underlying "rules" Kunwinjku uses to provide a means for efficiently signalling different meanings about the verb.

## Summary of Kunwinjku verb endings.

Group	Past Simple	Past Continuous	Command	Non-Past	Indefinite
1	oy i uy ey	ongi engi ungi angi	o e u a	ong eng ung ang	oyi eyi uyi ayi
2a	kang nang wong nguneng	kani nani woni nguni	ka na wo ngu	kan nan won ngun	kayi nayi woyi nguyi
2b	bom wan	buni wani	bu wa	bun wan	buyi wayi
3	danj	dangeni	da	dan	rr / dangimeninj / dayi
4	yonginj	yoy	yun	yo	yuwirrinj
5a	rri / di ni	rri / di ni	rrin / din nin	rri / di ni	diwirrinj niwirrinj
5b	ni	+ni	nin	∅	niwirrinj
6a	eng	eni / eyi / mi	men	e	meninj
6b	meng	meni / mi	men	me	bakmeninj
6c	wam	rey / wani	ray	re	rawinj
7a	minj	meni	mimen	men	meninj
7b	nginj doweng rrinj *	ngeni doweni rreni	ngimen dowimen rrimen	ngen dowe rren	ngimeninj dowimeninj rrimeninj

\* reflexive endings



## Table of change rules for Kunwinjku verb endings

*Use this table with the explanatory notes opposite.*

Group	Non Past	Com-mand	Past Simple	Past Continuous	Indefinite
1	ong eng ung ang	ng>∅	ng>y [ey>i]  [ay>ey]	ng>ngi	ng>yi(nj)  [ayi>eyi]*
2a	kan nan won ngun	n>∅	n>ng  [ng>neng]	n>ni	n>yi(nj)
2b	bun wan		n>m		
3	rr/dan	n>∅	n>nj	n>ngeni	n>ngimeninj/yi(nj)
4	yo	+n [o>u]	+nginj [o>u]	+y	n>wirrinj
5a	rri/di ni	+n	+∅	+∅	+wirrinj
5b	∅	+nin	+ni	+ni	+niwirrinj
6a	e	+men	+ng	+yi / ni / meni>mi	+meninj
6b	me	+n	+ng		+ninj
6c	re	e>ay	+m [rem>wam]	+y/+ni [reni>wani]	+yi/+winj [rewinj>rawinj]
7a	men	en>i+men	en>inj	n>ni	n>ninj
7b	rren ngen downen		n>ng		en>imeninj

## NOTES ON USE OF THIS TABLE

[1] This chart is a highly condensed version of the verb conjugations and was created as a tool for analysis - looking for the underlying mechanism that generates the tenses in Kunwinjku. It is still being thought about, so please don't quote without consent. Until some Kunwinjku mother tongue linguists begin analysis, this sort of thing will always be very tentative. At present we think that the underlying form for all five endings is the same for every verb, but they turn out different because of sound rules in the language. So, for example, the past continuous form of *yo* is *yoy*, rather than *yoni* or *yoyi*, because a syllable ending in *on* is very rare in Kunwinjku, or because final *i* sounds after *y* are often simply dropped. This is rather oversimplified, and won't help you learn the language. We put it in just for those who get excited about how complex and intriguing language can be at this unconscious level.

[2] Symbols used in the chart opposite:

- +            add to non-past form
- >            replaces
- ∅            nothing (ie, there is no non-past ending in 5b.
- +∅          add nothing to the Non past form.
- >∅          replaced with nothing.
- [a>e]        a becomes e in this situation due to sound rules
- en>i+men    change en to i, then add ending.
- /            Either of these forms is used.
- rri / di     rri or di
- \*            Change occurs only sometimes.

Note that when the indefinite ending has *nj* final, this last bit of sound is often left out, depending on the speaker.

[3] Where no entry occurs in a column opposite any base, it means the general rule from the top of the column applies. Eg in Group 2, there is only one form in the command column which applies to all the verbs listed for 2a and 2b.

[4] In groups with more than one verb, the information for the group is shown only once, at the top of each column. When one of the verbs varies a bit this is indicated directly opposite the base form. For example, see Group 2a, *ngun*, past simple form where the general rule at the top of the column would yield *ngung*. This form is not possible in Kunwinjku so the language changes it to *nguneng*.

[4] Entries in square brackets are explanations of sound changes made

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in the language. For example in Group 4 in Command column where the brackets contain an explanation of what is happening [o>u]: The rule would yield the form *yon*, but the sound rules of Kunwinjku changes this to *yun*.

[5] At this stage we are using the non-past form as the left-most column from which to derive other forms. To use this chart, you need to know the non-past form of a given verb. If you know the Past Simple form (eg had, went, died) you can find it on the chart on page 89 and then look across to the non-past column.

Group 5b Shown as "Ø". These are stative verbs like want, be in pain, be good, be jealous etc. In the Non-Past form they no verbal ending. If you can't locate a verb ending in any of the other groups, it could be one of these. When you ask about them, ask for a past tense form.

Group 7 Verbs ending with "men" are generally used with an adjective to give change of state meanings like "become big, get littler", etc.  
Thus:

kimukminj [ Past definite].....he,she, it got big  
yiahwurdmimen.....you get smaller!

Verbs ending with "rren" - the reflexive ending. It is added to another verb base when the action is done to the person's self. Eg:

he shot himself.....dulubu = "shoot" [Group 2b]  
Add rren, to get duluburren, which becomes duluburrinj [past simple]

they saw themselves na [ to see ] + rren = birrinarrinj  
they said to themselves yime [ to say ] +rren = birriyimerrinj

Chart showing one verb with all beginnings and endings

ABOUT THE CHART ON PAGES 94-95

The table, on the next two pages, shows just one verb with all the pronominal prefixes (beginnings about who does what to whom) and endings. This is far from a complete list even for this single verb of what can be added to the verb base, since we haven't included adverbial or other additional information dealt with in the next section of the book. You could try running through this massive display substituting other verb bases, but you would probably be happier and learn more practising a few of them at time in real life with Kunwinjku friends.

As an example of how much more can be included in every one of the words on the next two pages, consider just one: bindibom (=they hit the them). A small sample of how this verb can be expanded in real life would include:

- bindiyawoyhbom = they hit them again
- bindiyawoyhkadbom = they hit them again at night
- bindidjalwernhmalaybom = they hit them very hard in the morning
- bindiwarrekahbom = they hit them by mistake
- bindimarnebom = they hit them because of him/her/ it
- bindikuyinbon = they almost hit them
- bindidjarrkbom = they hit them together

## Chart of all bom verb beginnings and endings.

Past Complete    Past Continuous    Command    Non-past    Indefinite

### Intransitive verbs, and verbs with third person singular objects

ngabom	ngabuni	ngabu	ngabun	ngabuyinj
yibom	yibuni	yibu	yibun	yibuyinj
bom	buni	bu	kabun	buyinj
bibom	bibuni	bibu	kabibun	bibuyinj
ngarrbom	ngarrbuni	ngarrbu	ngarrbun	ngarrbuyi
nganebom	nganebuni	nganebu	nganebun	nganebuyinj
ngunebom	ngunebuni	ngunebu	ngunebun	ngunebuyinj
benebom	benebuni	benebu	kabenebun	benebuyinj
kanebom	kanebuni	kanebu	kanebun	kanebuyinj
karribom	karribuni	karribu	karribun	karribuyinj
ngarribom	ngarribuni	ngarribu	ngarribun	ngarribuyinj
ngurribom	ngurribuni	ngurribu	ngurribun	ngurribuyinj
birribom	birribuni	birribu	kabirribun	birribuyinj

### Third person dual object

ngabenbenebom	ngabenbenebuni	ngabenbenebu	ngabenbenebun	ngabenbenebuyinj
yibenbenebom	yibenbenebuni	yibenbenebu	yibenbenebun	yibenbenebuyinj
benbenebom	benbenebuni	benbenebu	kabenbenebun	benbenebuyinj
ngarrbenbenebom	ngarrbenbenebuni	ngarrbenbenebu	ngarrbenbenebun	ngarrbenbenebuyinj
nganebenbenebom	nganebenbenebuni	nganebenbenebu	nganebenbenebun	nganebenbenebuyinj
ngunebenbenebom	ngunebenbenebuni	ngunebenbenebu	ngunebenbenebun	ngunebenbenebuyinj
bindibom	bindibuni	bindibu	kabindibun	bindibuyinj
kanebenbenebom	kanebenbenebuni	kanebenbenebu	kanebenbenebun	kanebenbenebuyinj
karrbenbenebom	karrbenbenebuni	karrbenbenebu	karrbenbenebun	karrbenbenebuyinj
ngarrbenbenebom	ngarrbenbenebuni	ngarrbenbenebu	ngarrbenbenebun	ngarrbenbenebuyinj
ngurribenebom	ngurribenebuni	ngurribenebu	ngurribenebun	ngurribenebuyinj
bindibom	bindibuni	bindibu	kabindibun	bindibuyinj

Third Person Plural Objects

ngabenbom  
yibenbom  
benbom  
ngarrbenbom  
nganebenbom  
ngunebenbom  
bindibom  
kanebenbom  
karrbenbom  
ngarrbenbom  
ngurrbenbom  
bindibom

ngabenbuni  
yibenbuni  
benbuni  
ngarrbenbuni  
nganebenbuni  
ngunebenbuni  
bindibuni  
kanebenbuni  
karrbenbuni  
ngarrbenbuni  
ngurrbenbuni  
bindibuni

ngabenbu  
yibenbu  
benbu  
ngarrbenbu  
nganebenbu  
ngunebenbu  
bindibu  
kanebenbu  
karrbenbu  
ngarrbenbu  
ngurrbenbu  
bindibu

ngabenbun  
yibenbun  
kabenbun  
ngarrbenbun  
nganebenbun  
ngunebenbun  
kabindibun  
kanebenbun  
karrbenbun  
ngarrbenbun  
ngurrbenbun  
kabindibun

ngabenbuyinj  
yibenbuyinj  
benbuyinj  
ngarrbenbuyinj  
nganebenbuyinj  
ngunebenbuyinj  
bindibuyinj  
kanebenbuyinj  
karrbenbuyinj  
ngarrbenbuyinj  
ngurrbenbuyinj  
bindibuyinj

Second Person Object

bom  
benbenebom  
ngunbom  
ngunbenebom  
ngundibom  
bibom

buni.  
benbenebuni  
ngunbuni  
ngunbenebuni  
ngundibuni  
bibuni

bu  
benbenebu  
ngunbu  
ngunbenebu  
ngundibu  
bibu

bun  
benbenebun  
ngunbun  
ngunbenebun  
ngundibun  
bibun

buyinj  
benbenebuyinj  
ngunbuyinj  
ngunbenebuyinj  
ngundibuyinj  
bibuyinj

First Person Object

kanbom  
kanbenebom  
nganbom  
nganbenebom  
kandibom  
ngandibom

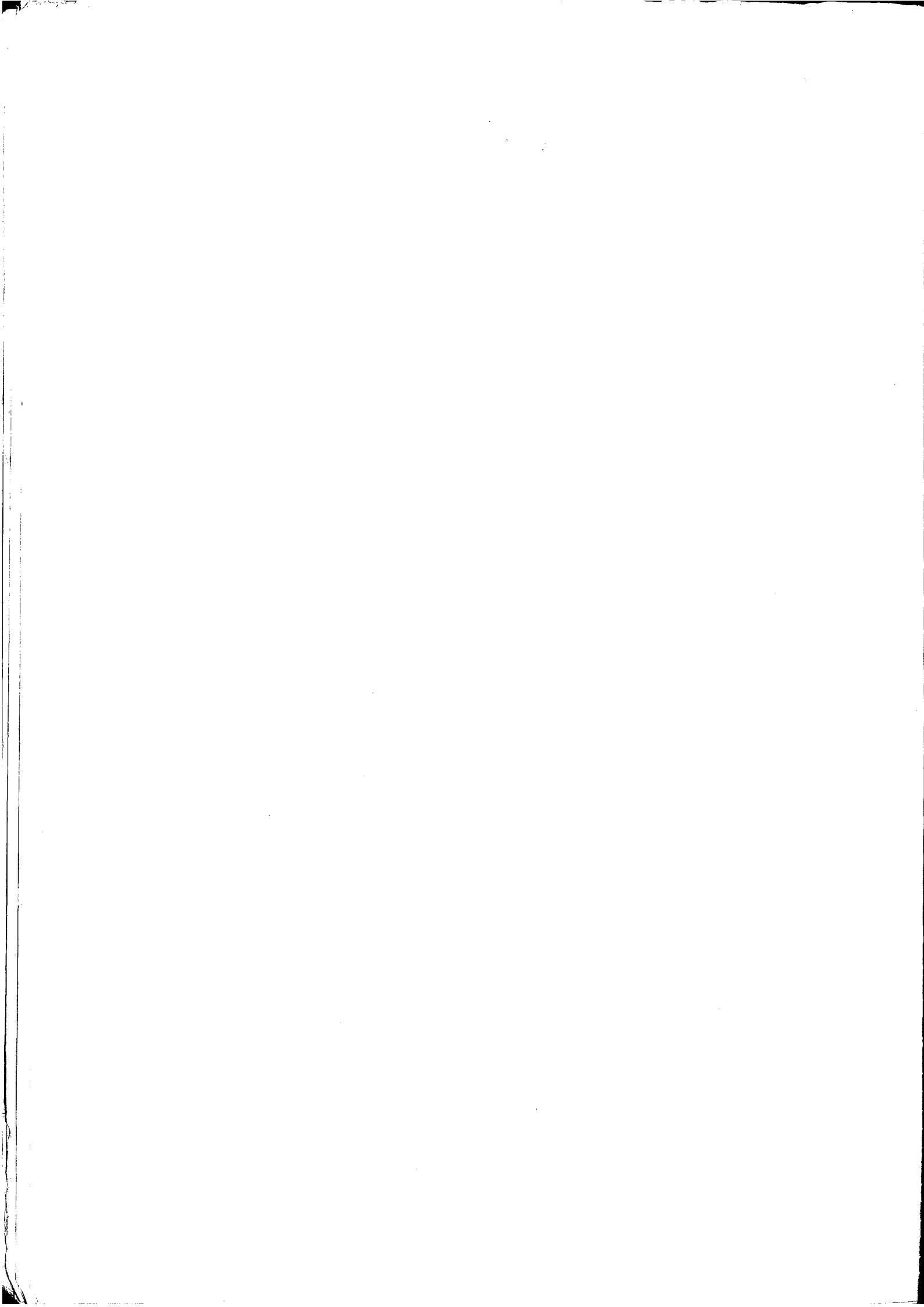
kanbuni  
kanbenebuni  
nganbuni  
nganbenebuni  
kandibuni  
ngandibuni

kanbu  
kanbenebu  
nganbu  
nganbenebu  
kandibu  
ngandibu

kanbun  
kanbenebun  
nganbun  
nganbenebun  
kandibun  
ngandibun

kanbuyinj  
kanbenebuyinj  
nganbuyinj  
nganbenebuyinj  
kandibuyinj  
ngandibuyinj







## VERB MODIFICATIONS

### Additional parts and modifications to verbs.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

There are three mandatory parts for every Kunwinjku verb:

PREFIXED  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT WHO DID  
IT TO WHOM

ROOT MEANING  
OF VERB

ENDING SHOWING IF  
PAST/NON-PAST/CONT.  
INDEFINITE  
COMMAND

As well as these, there are a lot of extra elements that are added, between the prefixes about who does what to whom, and the main root meaning. As well as these additions, there is a way of doubling up parts of the verb to show an action as repetitive etc.. These are important ways of modifying the verb, and you need to practice inserting the correct forms as soon as you feel you know a few basic verbs.

#### TYPE A: MODIFICATION BY REDUPLICATION

Of the three mandatory verb parts, the root meaning and the ending can be modified by doubling up part or all of the syllables. This is very common in Kunwinjku, and even quite young children can be competent at doubling up parts of verbs for effect. Reduplication can be done to nouns and other words as well, but we need to concentrate first on verbs:

wam=he/she/it went  
wanahwam = he/she/it was going along

durndi=went  
duhdurndi= was going back

wokdiwokdi = was talking on and on  
dingihdi =was staying there for some time  
birriningihni = they went on sitting there, had been sitting there  
dowehdowneni = she was sick  
kanangahnan = he is just looking and looking at...

#### NOTES

[1] Reduplication usually does not change the root meaning of a verb. For example *mulewarrewarreni* [= she was saying about herself ] is not significantly different from *mulewarreni*.

[2] In some verbs the meaning root is already doubled up to start with: for example the verb "told a story" is *yolyolmi*. This is not reduplicated, since there is no word "yolmi". Also, *yolyolmi* can be reduplicated to *yolyohyolyolmi* [= was telling a story ].

[3] There is a lot of individual stylistic variation in this, so be tuned to whatever your Kunwinjku teachers do themselves.

[4] Take note which part of the verb is being doubled, whether the whole lot:

barndibarndi = it was hanging, or perched up high  
 bunibunibuni = it was hitting  
 rlobmirlobmi = was running

or, only part of the verb:

durnhdurndi = he was going back  
 bakbakmeng = was breaking, broke  
 djehdjengkurmeng = set aside for later, saved up

The initial prefix ( about who does what ) is almost never reduplicated. Note the way the glottal stop *h* is used sometimes to separate the doubled elements.

birringunihnguni = they were eating  
 kawohrehwore = he is going around checking  
 bindiwonohwong = they were giving it to them  
 bonguhbonguneng = was drinking

## TYPE B: MODIFICATION BY INCORPORATION

FIRST GROUP: ABOUT THE WAY OR TIME THE ACTION IS DONE

The following is a list of the adverbial forms commonly inserted between prefixes and the root meaning parts of Kunwinjku verbs. Some of the English meanings given are approximate and incomplete - just enough to use and then keep on learning about the item, so keep refining what you know of the use of each. The prefixes *h*, *m*, and *marne* have already been dealt with.

Some of these can pair up with each other, especially *djalwoh* from *djal* and *woh*; *balwoh* from *bal* and *woh*. Sometimes there are several of these and you will soon work out the correct order. For example, *djal* always comes *before* *marne*.

This is not the complete list, but covers all the main items. Note that there are several English meanings covered by some of these words.

## DJAL

[1] *just, merely, only* [2] *unexpectedly, contrary to what was expected, suddenly or in response* [3] *continuously*

ngamdjalwam = I just came [ e.g. for a visit, no special reason.]

djalbonjni = well, that was that!

birridjaldurndi = they just went back [ i.e., there was nothing else to do ]

birridjalwam = they kept going along

Notes: [1] djal also is used with other parts of speech to emphasize or intensify meaning, e.g. *nadjalkimuk* = he's really big; *ngaldjalkudji* = just one woman only.

[2] djal often links the verb it is in with the context, and often it is only by the context that you will work out how to translate the djal into English. For example:

*birridjalkodjngan* can mean

- a. they unexpectedly saw his head
- b. they were seeing his head for a period of time/continuously
- c. they saw only *his* head
- d. they saw only his *head*
- e. only *they* saw his head

The context would help, as these possible contexts show:

- a. *Wanjh birridjalkodjngan.*
- b. *Birridjalkodjngan kunkakkuyeng.* (*kunkakkuyeng* = all night long)
- c. *...birridjalkodjngan nuyekih kukodj.* (*nuyekih kukodj* = *his* head)
- d. *...birridjalkodjngan djalkunkodj nuye.* (*djalkunkodj* = only the head)
- e. *...bedda birridjalkudji birridjalkodjngan.* (*bedda birridjalkudji* = they they only)

## YI

[1] *with, for* [2] *similar to marne*

- a. *kanjyibawon* = I am leaving the meat with you/for you  
*kanj* = short form of *kumkanj* = meat; *bawon* = leave
- b. *yimyirurndi* = you took it back with you  
*yi* = you; *rrurndi* = went back
- c. *birriyidurrinj* = they were arguing about it  
*birri* = they; *durrinj* = arguing with each other

*Yi* is often used with *kuk* (=item referred to). E.g. *birrikuyirurndi* = they took it back.

WERN / WERNH [ this also occurs as a separate word, WERNKIH ]

[1] *hard, quick, loudly ( general idea of force )* [2] *properly or effectively*

ngandiwerhnbom = they hit me hard  
 rlobmi wernkih = he ran fast  
 yiwerhwarrewong = you've really done the wrong thing  
 kawerhburrbun = he really knows [ i.e. he fully understands ]  
 minj wernhnayinj = he didn't see him properly (minj = not; nayinj = didn't see)

Note: when this is used in other parts of speech it means *lots of, much of, something*.

When used as a separate word, the short form is sometimes repeated in the verb, but not usually. So, mostly, *birriwernbom* equates with *birribom wernkih*.

**DARNH / DARN** [ this also occurs as a separate word, **DARNKIH** ]  
*close by, near in either time or distance*

yimdarnhray = come close  
 ngadarnhnang = I had a close look  
 darnkih nganbuyinj = it nearly hit me

When used as a separate word, the short form is sometimes repeated in the verb, but not usually. So, mostly, *birridarnhwam* equates with *birriwam darnkih*.

**YAWOYH**  
*again*

biyawoyhyimeng = she said to him again [ this doesn't mean she said the same thing, but rather she resumed talking to him ]  
 yawoyhdurndi = it went back again  
 birriyawoyhnang = they saw it again

**DJARRK**  
*together [ either both at once, or both took part if at different times ]*

birridjarrkni = they were there together  
 birridjarrkdulubom = they all shot it [ possibly at different times ]

Note: *djarrk* turns up in other parts of speech, but always with the meaning of all involved, e.g.. *kaddjarrkberre* = it belongs to each one of us (cf. *kadberre* = ours)

**BAL / BALH**  
*then, next, later, meanwhile*

KUNWINJKU KUNWOK : VERB MODIFICATIONS

birribalwam = they then went

yiballay = you go [ after this ] Note: bal+ray becomes ballay.

ngabalwohnang = I then/next saw/looked at it purposefully

Note: this one is hard to define. Sometimes is used like djal.

WOH

[1] *with intent, purposefully, as per plan*

[2] *a bit like an extended form of the h prefix with the idea of emphasizing that an event is imminent or sudden or conclusive*

[3] *permanent part of some verb bases, e.g. wohnang = supervize, be boss of [ literally look at purposefully ]*

[4] *some other functions like djal.*

ngabalwohdurndi = so I went back [ with that purpose in mind ]

wohdi = it was there [ with some intention ]

djalwohkudjiminj = he became all alone

wohjobmeng = it came to and end then

Note: beware of getting this confused with the morpheme wo which occurs only in compounds like wobek kang = heard news about someone.

DJALWOH [sounds like djaloh and is formed from djal and woh ]

[1] *merely, makes action less significant*

[2] *for no reason, just on the spur of the moment*

bidjalwohwong = he only/merely gave it to him

Note: sometimes the djal and the woh are not meant to be taken together, and then they have the effect of indicating highly purposeful behaviour, the opposite of the example given. For example:  
*bidjalwohbom* = he really purposefully hit him. You need to be careful.

KUYIN

*almost, nearly but not quite*

ngakuyindangkardmayinj = I nearly caught that fish

ngankuyinjdulubuyinj = he nearly shot me

ngakuyinnalkbuyinj = I almost cried

Note: These examples have the indefinite endings, but this item can be used with the non-past endings too. It can also be used, with the same meaning, in combination with djal and bal.

BANGME

*never previously, not before*

minj benebangmeyuwirrinj bininj = she was a virgin

minj bangmenayinj = I didn't see you [before that]  
 minj bangmekurduyimerrangimeninj = it hadn't happened before

**YINGKIH** [ occurs as separate words ngokko, korrokko ]  
*already, previously*

ngayingkihmarburrinj = I prepared myself, got ready  
 birriyingkihkurrmerrinj = they had already put themselves there  
 yingkihyingkihyoy = it had already been there

**BAD**

*finally, in the end, as a result, well in that case, subsequently*

karribadre = we [ might as well ] go then  
 badbu = well then why don't we... Note: this is not a verb!  
 ngambadwam = so I came

**BEBBEH** [occurs as separate words BEBBEHBEH]  
*[1] separately [2] each one*

birribebbehkarmi = they each had some  
 birribebbehdi = they were all in separate places  
 ngabenbebbehnang = I saw them all separately

**MIRNDE / MOKENH** [also occurs as separate word MOKENH ]  
*in a mob, as a group or bunch*

birrimirndewern = there was a whole bunch of them  
 mirndenang djenj = he saw the school of fish  
 birrimirndemornamerrinj = the [people ] came together in a group  
 ngamokenhdurndiweng = I sent the bunch [ of something ] back

Note: djangked, kaberrk have same meaning and are also used within the verb, but not as frequently as the other two.

**WELENG**

*alone, by oneself, in its turn, independently , the one who did it.*

ngawelengdurndi = I went back [ by myself ]  
 birriwelengyimerreni = they in turn were saying to themselves

**KAK** [ occurs as separate word KUNKAK ]  
*at night, in the dark*

kakwam = he went in the dark  
 bindikakkadjungi = they followed them at night

## MALAY

*in the morning*

birrimalayngalkeng = they found him in the morning

Note: malaykabeldoy = got up early in the morning (kunkabel = early morning)

## KUNI

*links the verb to an deed planned or experienced, suggests "with intent."*

bimarnekuniwakeng = he crawled up to him

kunibebmeng = she turned up [ in order to do such and such ]

kumhkunidi=put himself there to wait for his victim

## KURDU

*deed, effort, achievement*

kandikurdunang = you saw what I did

kanmarnekurduyimerranj = it happened [ was done ] to me

## WARRE / WARREBU / WARREBO /WARREKAH

*by mistake, the wrong thing, wrong way, in error*

ngawarrebawam = I went the wrong way

kawarrekahbidbun =he's going upstairs ( and shouldn't be)

### GROUP TWO: INCORPORATING IDENTITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ACTION OF THE VERB

Usually, the verb will indicate who was affected by the action or who did the action by incorporating in the verb part of the nouns - the names of the participants. The main part of the noun being acted on is repeated in the slot after the adverbial inserts, and before the main meaning part of the verb. For example:

nganguneng kunk a n j [ = I ate the meat ] is usually said as ngak a n jnguneng

The full noun kunkanj may also be added separately.

ngakanjnguneng kunkanj

Notice that the kun- is left off when the main meaning section is incorporated in the verb. Practically any noun can end up being incorporated this way, by being stripped of the beginnings that occur with most nouns. ( See the section later on Nouns etc.) This is a very common feature of Kunwinjku.

Other examples of this very common practice:

ngadulkdjobkeng kundulk = I chopped the tree  
 birringudjwarreminj = they became weak [ kunngudj = strength ]  
 kandiberlmey = they grabbed my arm [ kunberl = arm ]  
 ngundikebngang = they looked at your face [ kunkeb = face, nose ]  
 dadbakmeng = he broke his leg [ kundad = leg ]

There are also some general purpose incorporated forms, which represent whole classes of nouns. Sometimes, more than one of these items is incorporated. The main ones are as follows:

**BO**

*fluid* (water, beer, etc., but not blood, petrol or juices; see below)

ngabongun = I am drinking  
 yiborrahkendoy = you put fluid in it  
 borey = it was flowing

But note;

kurlbawarrhmeng = blood was spilt (kunkurlba = blood)  
 kalkkiddahkendoy = put juice/ petrol in something (kunkalkkid = juice)

**KUK**

[1] *action of verb affects the physical body of something/someone,*  
 [2] *sometimes included when not strictly needed to specify a human affected by action of verb.*

birrikuknang = they noticed him/her  
 kankukdadjung = give me the [ e.g. money - some physical item ]  
 yimkukka = bring that item here  
 bindikukmaladjaywong = they did the wrong thing by them [ lit. made them as orphans ]

**YAW**

*When the action is done by, or to a baby or infant, this is incorporated. Kunwinjku is most unusual in this particular prefix, which is usually incorporated into every verb relating to a young child.*

ngayawmey = I had a baby  
 ngayawnang = I saw the baby  
 yawkani = to be pregnant [ other terms for this too ]  
 biyawwarikkang = she hid the baby  
 biyawdjikkawong = she gave the baby the breast  
 bimarneyawdanginj = she gave birth to a baby

**KODJ**

*to do with sleeping, or the head of a person or thing. [also note kunkodjke = day = a sleep ]*



KUNWINJKU KUNWOK : VERB MODIFICATIONS

kodjbukirriyoy = he dreamt  
kodjkeyoy = he slept  
kodjbabangni = he had a headache

MADJ

*clothing, belongings*

ngandimadjwarrewong = they wrecked my things  
birrimadjdjirridjbom = they washed the clothes  
madjyak = no belongings

BIRLU

*fire, flames*

birribirludombom = they put the fire out  
birlukani = he took the fire with him

DUNG (Not an adverbial element. Incorporated form of kundung = sun, time, etc.. )

*to do with time*

dungyibmeng = the sun set  
kahdungdi = the sun is there [ i.e., at that time ]  
dungname = set a time for something to happen

BOLK [ Not an adverbial element. Incorporated form of kunbolk = land, country etc.)

*to do with country, land, ground, place*

ngbolknahnan = I'm looking after the place  
bolkwarreminj = the place has got bad

MODIFICATION BY ADVERBS AS SEPARATE WORDS

Sometimes the scope of the verb is modified by adding words to the sentence. These equate roughly with English adverbs like *quickly, now, yesterday* etc..

ROWK

*all of, every, the lot* [ always follows verb ]

birridoweng rowk = they have all died.  
birriwam rowk = they all went

Note: not used when only two people involved, where *djarrk* would do the job.

DARNKIH

*close, near in time or place*

ngawam darnkih = I went close [ can come before verb ] Same as ngadarnhwam  
darnkih kamre = it will be soon [ lit. it is coming close ]

DJARREH

*long way, long time*

bu kumkabel djarreh = it was a long time before morning  
djarreh birriwam = they went a long distance

MUNGUYH

*always, every day, all the time*

kakurduyime munguyh = he always does that  
munguyh ngahdi = I am always here

NGOKKO / KORROKKO

*already*

ngokko yimwam = you already came [ can follow, but then usually korrokko would be used ]

yimwam korrokko = you already came

korrokko nang = I saw you before

MAK / DORRENGH / WARRIDJ

*also, too, as well, in addition, [ all three can mean any of these three ]*

ngaye warridj= me too

bininj warridj nganang = I also saw a man

ngadmak ngarrimarrwedoweng = we are hungry too

yimwam Nabulanj dorrengh = you came with Nabulanj [ note: not ngunemwam ]

nahni mak yika = take that as well

WERRK / WERRKWERRK / BIRRH

*quickly, in a hurry*

ngurriray werrk = hurry up and go!

werrkwerrk wurdwurd = hurry up you kids!

Note: Often used with command form of verb. Occurs as interjection when someone is encouraging or trying to speed up a process.  
Reduplicated form: werrkwehwerrkwerrk.

**YELEDJ**

*slowly, gently, softly*

yyimen yeledj = say it slowly

yeledj! = quiet!

yelehyeledj wam = he went very quietly

**WALAKKIH / WALAKKIHWALAKKIH**

*little by little, gradually, at a steady pace*

ngamakmen walakkih = I'm gradually improving

yikurdyimen djalwalakkihwalalkkih = do it bit by bit

**WOYBUKKIH**

*truly, accurately, without dishonesty*

woybukkih! = that's true [refers to what was just said ]

The incorporated form woybuk forms compounds like

kandiwoybukwong = you believed me

kunwoybuk duninjh = the absolute truth.

**YARRKKA**

*anywhere, anything*

ngadjalre yarrkka = I'll just go anywhere

**WERNKIH**

*with force, loudly, quickly etc.*

yibu wernkih = hit him hard

wernkih yiwokdin = speak loudly

Wernkih! = "Louder! ", or " Faster! " " Harder ! "

**DUNINJH**

*very, extremely* [can be used with adjective too] This emphasizes one of the other adverbs, and always follows it.

bibom wernkih duninjh = he hit him very hard.

woybukkih duninjh = that's absolutely true!

Further emphasis can be made with djal- i.e.. djal acts as a kind of magnifier of whatever it is with.

bibom djalwernkih duninjh = he hit him very very hard.

djalwerrkwerrk bibom = he was hitting her quickly

wokdiwokdi bu djalyeledj = he spoke very softly

Emphasis on good or beautiful involves the special ending, -kaykenh.  
So, namak = a good man, namakkaykenh = a really wonderful man.

### BURUDJANG

[1] *without reason, without justification, [2] freely*

ngandibuni bu djal burrudjang = they were hitting for nothing  
kanwong burrudjang = he gave it to me free

### NEGATIVES AND OTHER MODIFIERS

#### MINJ

[1] negates action except commands.

- a. minj birrirawinj = they didn't go [use indefinite form if action is in past.]
- b. minj kamre = [ non-past ] he is not coming, he won't come, he doesn't come

[2] Asks deferential questions especially in oblique/polite requests:

minj kankayinj? = you couldn't take me there could you? [lit: you didn't take me ]

#### YUWN / YUN / YUWN BU

Makes a negative command. Don't use the command form of the verb.

yuwn yimre = don't come [ not yuwn yimray ]

yuwn bu kare = he must not go.

#### BURUDJANG

*properly, the right way*

#### MANDJAD

*straight, correctly, straight ahead* (in the middle is kore kubulkayh)

#### WARDI/ MARNDI / KUNUBEWU

*perhaps, probably, maybe, possibly etc.*

bu yire darnkih, kunubewu ngunbaye = if you go close it might bite you

Wardi bu kamre = he might come

Kunubewu = Maybe ( often occurs on its own)

#### YIMANKEK

*with the intention of...* [ often the intention is frustrated]

ngawam yimankek nganang = I went intending to see him

## DJAYING

*so I hear, so they say*, [reporting gossip or an unconfirmed report]

kamre malaywi djaying = he's coming tomorrow, so they say.

## OTHER WORDS THAT FINE TUNE THE VERB

### TIME EXPRESSIONS

Time expressions are a separate listing because of their complexity and number. For example, the time early in the morning has a range of terms including: *kumbarrhbom, dungbebmeng, karrungdjaworrk, malahmalaywi, kunkabel, kumhkabel djarreh*, etc.. For every major time of day there is a similar range. Only a few of the more common ones are listed here to get you started. When learning these, you will find few of them match clock times, although they are quite precise.

### SAMPLE TABLE OF KUNWINJKU TIME WORDS

bolkkime.....	now, today, this present era
boyen.....	a few days ago
dird.....	month
dird kamre.....	next month
dirdbuyika.....	last month
kudjewk.....	year
kukabel.....	darkness, includes early morning
kukak.....	night, last night
kunbarnangarra.....	day time, middle of day
kunbarnangarrabuyika.....	the other day
kunkare.....	long time ago
malaywi.....	tomorrow, in the morning
munguyh.....	always
munguyhmunguyh.....	forever, permanently
waken.....	a short period of say a couple of days
waken.....	for a while
wolehwoleh.....	afternoon

It is interesting to build up a full day of time words. There are also phases of the moon.

### PUTTING VERBS IN SEQUENCE

These words affect verbs by governing the sequence of events as a story is told, or instructions are given. The following are some of the more important ones:

**YERRE / YERREH / KALUK /YERRIKAH [and combination]**  
*after, later, next in time or sequence*

kannang kaluk yerrickah = you saw me later  
 kaluk yerrickah marneyime = later on I'll tell you  
 nganang yerreh = I saw him later  
 ngaburnbom yerre ngawam = I finished and then went  
 Sometimes no adverb is used:  
 ngaburnbom, wanjh ngarrokmeng = I finished, then I went home  
 ngudda werrk, nungka yerre = you first, him after.

**YERRIH**

*later on, later (like kaluk)*

yerrih kurduyimeng = later he finished it  
 ngare yerrih = I'll go later

**WERRK**

*first, earlier in time or sequence*

bibom werrk, kaluk ngaye =he hit her first, then me after that  
 ngaye werrk! = me first

[2] introducing a parenthetical comment, or aside. English terms like: "Now..." "However..." could translate this.

**KALUK**

Introduces a parenthetical comment about something, or an aside during a story. English might translate this by "Now...", "You see..."

**KAB**

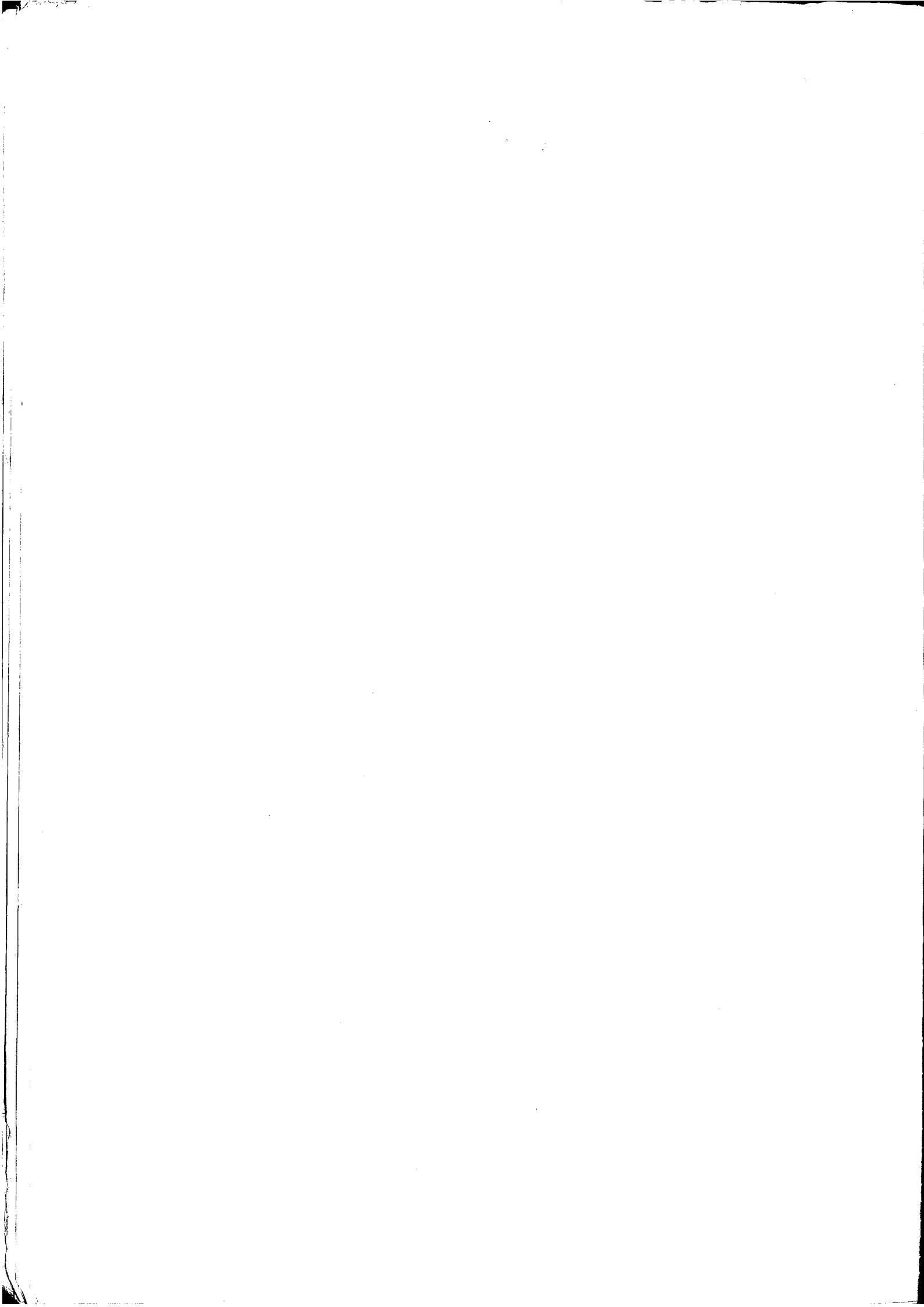
Used before command and other forms to introduce a suggestion, or to soften the command. *Kab yiray.*= what if you go, why don't you go. Could be translated as "Let's..."

**USE OF COMMAND FORM WITH ADVERBS**

The command form of adverbs, ("Quickly!" "Now!") is done in Kunwinjku by either using the word with the right tone of voice when addressing people, or by adding the command ending from the stative verb *ni* when talking about them.

Werrk wurdwurd != Hurry up kids !  
 Werrknin kabirrikurduyime! = Let them do it quickly !  
 Yeledj ! = Quiet!







## WORDS OTHER THAN VERBS

### Part A. Nouns - the names of things, people and concepts.

#### NOTE ABOUT LEARNING WORDS

This chapter has sample lists only, you will need to get out and learn lots more. Two hints on doing this: don't just stick to environmental or culturally interesting stuff - make sure you learn the mundane things, on the one hand, and the abstracts of mind and emotion on the other. Secondly, organize your material by either semantic domain (topics, like all the verbs and nouns used in hunting stories, or all the different bird species etc. ) and into word families (e.g.. doweng = died, kundowikenh = death, kahdownen =he is sick etc..).

#### NOUNS

Like English, Kunwinjku has a very large group of words which are the names of things, people, events, feelings and concepts. These are nouns. Every Kunwinjku noun is considered to be in one of four groups. The nouns in each group usually, but not always, start with one of four prefixes [beginnings]. These are the prefixes with some examples of nouns that go in each group:

#### Nouns beginning with kun-

kunwok	word
kunngol	sky, cloud
kunngabek	hair of person's head
kunngudj	strength
kunwarre	evil
kunmim	eye
kunmodme	peace

#### Nouns beginning with man-

manme	food
mannguy	flower
mankung	wild honey
manlabbarl	waterhole
mankole	spear
mankarre	law, song, plan, idea

#### Nouns beginning with ngal-

ngalbeywurd	daughter
ngalkohbanj	old lady
ngalmangiyi	long necked turtle
ngalbadjan	mother
ngalbininj kobeng	wife

## Nouns beginning with na-

nabadjan	uncle [ mother's brother ]
nadjinem	kangaroo species - male
nabininjkobeng	husband
namaddorl	osprey
nganabbarru	buffalo
djenj	fish
dalkken	dingo
wirlarrk	egg

## Notes:

[1] kun is the group with the most members.

[2] The nouns without any prefix, like wirlarrk, nganabbarru etc. are best considered masculine unless specifically indicated.

[3] Categories of meaning: beware of trying work out reasons for a noun belonging in certain class. Some are fairly obvious, for example all female names and categories start with ngal-. Nearly all body parts begin with kun-, but there are always just enough exceptions to defeat your mental model. What's more, quite often a noun can occur with either of two prefixes; kunwodj and manwodj are both logs, depending on individual choice. There are complex reasons why a noun might be considered to shift temporarily from kun to man category, depending on what aspect of meaning the speaker has in mind. (See notes about adjective agreement below).

## KINDS OF NOUNS: GENERIC

In addition to the nouns being in four groups, Kunwinjku speakers can think about their nouns in other categories. Kunwinjku has some nouns which are generic, that is they are the general purpose names for a group of items. For example *kunj* is generic for kangaroo/wallaby, but there are also more than a dozen species names, e.g., *kornobolo* is the female Agile wallaby.

Sample of generic nouns:

djenj	fish [ many species, e.g. namarnkol = barramundi ]
kundulk	tree [ hundreds of species names, e.g. manbidkurud= mango tree]
manme	food [ of any kind ]
mayhmayh	birds [ hundreds of species, e.g. manimunak= magpie goose ]
nayin	snake [ dozens of species e.g. dadbe = king brown ]

## KINDS OF NOUNS : ABSTRACT

Kunwinjku prefers to use verbs [ actions, events, deeds ] to carry meaning wherever possible, rather than using nouns. For example, the English abstract noun *love* must be conceptualized in Kunwinjku as someone loving someone, i.e., *love is wonderful* would come out as *if you love someone , its wonderful*. However, there are still a good few

abstract nouns in the language, most of which seem to be derived from verbs.

Sample of Abstract Nouns:

kunmodmikenh	peace
kunyid	hatred
kunwoybuk	truth
kunkele	fear
kunnjilng	feelings
kunmayali	idea, concept
kunmirnde	crowd
kundjak	sickness

KINDS OF NOUNS : PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIP NOUNS.

Many Kunwinjku nouns take different beginnings to show the sex or the number of people.

Samples of relationship/people nouns: [ there are many hundreds ]

Nawamud	man of -Wamud skin group
Ngalwamud	woman of -Wamud skin group
Nalrol	man from -rol clan
Ngalrol	woman from -rol clan
birrirol	people from -rol clan
nabeywurd	son
ngalbeywurd	daughter
nakurrng	woman's daughter's husband [ one of several terms ]
ngalkurrng	man's wife's mother [ one of several terms ]
nawu birrikare	people who lived long ago [see note on nawu below]

NOUN PLURALS: DIFFERENT WAYS OF INDICATING MORE THAN ONE

Kunwinjku often doesn't indicate plural nouns, leaving it to context to make it clear that more than one item is being talked about:

verb beginnings indicate number even if noun doesn't change:

bininj birriwam = the men went  
bininj kahdi = the man is there

verb has other elements indicating plural even if noun doesn't change:

mayh = bird / birds  
mayh mirndedolkkang = birds flew up in a flock/crowd  
mankole = spear  
ngamokenmey mankole = I got a bundle of spears

Plural by reduplication

bininj = man > binihbininj = men  
Nabulanj = man from -bulanj skin group > Nabulabulanj = men from

-bulanj group

wurdyaw = child > wurdwurd = children (Note: wurdwurd can also be reduplicated *wurdwuhwurdwurd*. said when talking to a group of kids.  
nakohbanj = an old man > kohbahkohbanj = old people

NOUNS ABSORBED INTO VERBS. [ See also discussion of verbs ]

Kunwinjku tends to put everything possible into the verb in a sentence. So nouns get incorporated too. The noun group beginnings are not included however. For example,

noun incorporated as the actor in a verb

dulkmankang = the tree fell [ kundulk = tree, mankang = fell ]  
borlobmi = water was flowing  
kanjnudminj = meat went rotten

noun incorporated as the affected party in a verb

dulkdjobkeng = he/she/it chopped down the tree.  
bodahkendoy = put the water in something  
kanjnguneng = he ate the meat

noun incorporated as the affected but not beneficiary in an act

bidulkwong = he gave him/her the tree  
kanmarnebomey = he got the water for us

OTHER BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS ON NOUNS - MAIN VARIETIES ONLY.

There are several endings that modify nouns, and also a modification to the prefix which is common and important.

-KENH

*about, concerning, in connection with* [Similar to genitive case]

ngayekenh = mine (ngaye = me)  
kunbidkenh = about hand, from hand, for use of hand [ manbu kunbidkenh could be used as the expression for gloves ] (kunbid = hand)  
kunyidkenh = about that trouble (kunyid = trouble)

-WI ( sometimes -YI )

[1] *with, by, using*, [Similar to instrumental] [2] *solely, only*

mankoleyi = with a spear  
kunbidwi = by hand, with his/her hands  
bininjwi = men only (bininj = men )

-BEH [often as separate word following noun]

*from, originating from, arising from*

Sydneybeh = from Sydney ( sometimes this could be Syneykenh)

kunbidbeh = from a hand

**KU - (Shortened form of prefix kun-)**

*This is used when the noun is a destination or location, or time. [Could be called locative case, but overlaps what some would call dative case.]*

kudjewk = year ( instead of kundjewk )

kukayarlanj = to, at a sandy place

kukabel = dark before dawn

kubid= to, at, in a hand

**-YAK [often as separate word following noun]**

*without, lacking*

kunwarddeyak= no money

boyak=out of fuel

kunbidyak =hand-less

**-kimuk and other adjectives**

Adjectives describing nouns can sometimes be joined to them, often with the prefix absent. See separate section about adjectives.

kunbidkimuk = big handed

ngabekkuyeng=longhaired

burrkkimuk = fat

karremak =good law, arrangement

## Part B: Adjectives and other words referring to nouns.

Adjectives are words and expressions that describe and define nouns. A big, black horse is a noun (horse) described by two adjectives (big, black). In Kunwinjku adjectives can be joined onto a noun (big head = na+kodj+kimuk, with the noun part first) or they can be statements about nouns using a verb : kakodjkimuk (although often the verb prefix is left off when talking about one person/thing.)

### PART A: RELATING ADJECTIVES TO NOUNS

Kunwinjku adjectives can behave like either nouns or verbs, taking whichever prefixes are appropriate:

For example: *warre* is the root form of bad, evil, etc.. But this needs the correct prefix so that it agrees with the prefix of the noun it

describes. Note the following possibilities for warre, which apply to all adjectives.

### Noun-like adjectives based on -warre

nawarre a bad man [ or male character in story ] Na- prefix because bininj, (man) is male. This prefix also needed when describing male animals, or some physical objects that are being discussed, like a piece of paper, or a machine.

ngalwarre a bad woman. Ngal- prefix applies when describing any female person, or female of animal.

manwarre a bad thing when the item is being described as edible, as an idea, or in some other categories. This applies even when the actual word for that item may not start with man. For example if meat tastes nice, someone might describe it as manmanjmak= nice tasting, even though meat, kunkanj, starts with kun.

kunwarre a bad item [ noun ] a bad thing when the item is being described as a concept, a general behaviour, or in some other categories. This applies even when the actual word for that item may not start with kun. For example, kunmak is a comment meaning an idea or a state of affairs or proposal is good.

kawarre (Lit; it's bad) A comment signalling disapproval of an event or action. This is a verbal adjective, so it takes a verbal prefix.

birriwarre (=they are bad people)

It is very difficult to predict which noun prefix to use sometimes. It is decided by the point of view you take to what you describe, and by whether you are focusing on appearance, or function of whatever it is, and by other complex factors.

#### For example:

kunkerrnge = a new thing, idea

manwob = an idea of no importance (lit; a lightweight thing)

To make matters worse, there is a lot of variation between Kunwinjku speakers about this, and sometimes the same speaker may say what is apparently the same thing in different ways in the one speech act (just as we do in English). Best advice therefore is to be guided by you Kunwinjku teacher.

PART B: ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS ON VERBAL ADJECTIVES

Quite often adjectives act just like verbs, taking the same beginnings as intransitive verbs:

- birrimak = they are good
- yikimuk = you are big
- ngunedjalwarre = you (2) are no good
- benebang = they (2) are tough

Sometimes the root form is used without any attachments to make a comment where the context is known to hearer:

- dedjwarlah = greedy!
- kukmorarra = skinny

When the adjective is used in the past tense, it usually takes the endings from the stative verb: ni.

- kimukni = was big
- minj kimukniwirrinj = he/she wasn't big
- yikimuknin = be big
- birridjedjwarlah = they were greedy

There is a series of verb endings to describe changes in state, which are related to adjectives:

- yikimukminj = you got big
- yahwurdni = he/she/it was small
- balyaywurdminj = then it got small
- kawarremen = it's/ he's /she's getting worse
- minj benekukwarremeninj = they didn't become ugly
- ngurriyahwurdmen = you get small!
- ngakukenmen = I'll get rich

The following is a starter list of some useful common adjectives. Note: we have listed the first few of these in relatively simple forms, be prepared to encounter them with other endings and beginnings.

SAMPLE LIST OF KUNWINJKU ADJECTIVES

- big (man) .....(nak)imuk
- fat (man) .....(na)burrkkimuk
- tall, long.....kuyeng(ni)
- short (female).....(ngal)dedjumbung
- narrow.....djokko
- wide (place).....(bolk)warlah
- greedy.....dedjwarlah

silly.....bengwarr  
 ugly (you are).....(yi)kukwarre  
 beautiful (I am).....(nga)kukmak  
 good.....mak  
 bad.....warre  
 small.....yahwurd  
 small bodied.....kukkilelhkilelk  
 curly.....dordidordi  
 bent.....barli  
 black.....burlerri  
 white.....bele  
 dry .....buk  
 wet.....kih  
 heavy.....dulmuk  
 light.....wob  
 ripe .....djoleng  
 raw.....kuk

## MODIFYING ADJECTIVES

Adjectives can be intensified or diminished. The following is a thumb nail sketch of these processes.

*Intensifying:*

kimuk = big  
 nakimukkenh = pretty big  
 nakihkimuk=very big  
 nabalkihkimuk =very very big  
 nakimukkenh duninjh = very very big/huge etc..(duninjh = very)

*Limiting:*

nadjalkimukwurd= biggish, but not very  
 minj nakimuk= not big  
 minj nawernhkimuk= not very big

NOTE: English has a lot of different vocabulary items, and makes distinctions in meaning by using different words, so you can make a list in order of size: big, huge, enormous, gigantic, etc.. But you will get disagreement among English speakers about which is bigger than which. In Kunwinkju the system works by modifying one basic word rather than using different words, but you still have scope for disagreement.

## COMPARISONS

These are quite tricky. The English system of big, bigger biggest is simpler.



Comparison when all items are in view or known.

nakimuk=big

nabalkimuk =bigger

nakimuk duninh=bigger

nawernhkimuk=biggest

manbu karrokme = which surpasses (the others)

Comparison by opposites

nungka nakimuk, dja ngaye ngayahwurd = he's big, but I'm small, i.e., he's bigger than me.

Comparison of similarities - "similar to", "like".

Using yiman kayime and rohrok to make comparisons.

not as good as you = minj kunmak yiman ngudda

it's just like mine = yiman kayime ngardduk

this is just the same as the horse = nahni karohrok djarrang

those two look the same = kabenekukrohrok

he looks like a horse = nungka kakukyime djarrang

resembling a square = yiman square

## Part C: Pronouns: words used instead of Nouns.

WHAT PRONOUNS ARE

Words like *he, it, you, theirs, yours, mine*, are all pronouns. They refer to participants that either do the action of verbs, or have the action done to them. For example: *she saw them, it opened, they killed him*. The section about verb beginnings in this book described the way each verb attaches prefixes which encode the participants in the action of the verb. Kunwinjku also has a rich collection of pronouns occurring as separate words, which can be used to disambiguate or make clearer what is happening in a verb, or for emphasis. Often they are used because they make the Kunwinjku "flow" better in the ears of its speakers.

Used to disambiguate participants in verb:

You will remember that some verb beginnings can be translated several ways, for example ngunnang could be he saw you (1) , or he saw you (3+). Supplying a pronoun can help clarify this:

ngunnang ngudda = he saw you (1)

ngunnang ngudberre = he saw you (3+)

kakang = he took us *or* you took me  
 nungka kakang = he took us (nungka = he)  
 bimulewam = he/she/it reported him *or* they and I reported you two  
 bimulewam ngonewoneng = we reported you two (ngonewoneng=you two)  
 benbenenang = I saw you two *or* he/she/it saw those two  
 ngaye benbenenang = I saw you two (ngaye = I)

Used to emphasize who was involved:

ngare = I'm going ngaye ngare = I'm going  
 birridurndi = they went back ; bedda birridurndi = they went

Sometimes the independent pronoun is added to clarify at the end of a sentence: ngaye nganang. Nungka.= I saw him. Him.

Very strong emphasis will require other strategies, like;  
 ngaye wanjh! = it's me !

Position of pronoun plus intonation used to give prominence to participants  
 Ngamdurndi ngaye = I came back.

Ngaye ngamdurndi =I came back (slight emphasis on ngaye)  
 Ngamdurndi wanjh ngaye = I came back (strong emphasis on ngaye)

We have set out the complete table of pronouns in three columns, each in the same order we have shown the prefixed pronouns earlier in the book.

KUNWINJKU PRONOUNS

<i>Actor or acted upon or Possessives</i>	<i>Singular possessives</i>	<i>Reflexives, Emphatics.</i>
ngaye.....I, me	ngardduk.....mine	ngayeman..... myself, my turn
ngudda.....you	ke .....yours	yingan..... yourself, your turn
nungka .....he, him	nuye .....his	nungan..... himself, his turn
ngaleng.....she, her	ngarre .....hers	ngalengman... herself, her turn
ngarrku .....us, ours, ( you [1] and me)		ngadman..... ourselves, our turn
ngarrewoneng..... us (2) ( but not person spoken to)		" " ..... "
ngurrewoneng.....you, yours (2)		ngudman ..... yourselves, your turn
berrewoneng.....them , theirs, (2)		bedman ..... themselves, their " "
karrewoneng.....us, ours ( you [2] and me)		ngadman..... ourselves, our turn
ngad.....we ( generally)		ngadman..... ourselves, our turn
ngadberre .....us, ours, (3+) ( not hearer)		ngadman..... ourselves, our turn
kadberre.....us, ours (3+) ( includes spoken to)		ngadman..... ourselves, our turn
ngudberre.....you, yours (3+)		ngudman ..... yourselves, your turn
bedda.....they, theirs (3+)		bedman ..... themselves, their " "

These are often used in combinations, especially with the pronouns in the right hand table, for example:

KUNWINJKU KUNWOK : OTHER KINDS OF WORDS

ngaye ngardduk = its mine, it's up to me, it's my business  
yingan ke = its yours, etc..  
ngudman ngurrewoneng = it's yours, your business, up to you  
bedman bedberre = theirs, etc..

The table is crowded but self explanatory except for the right hand column. These forms often have the function of emphasizing that something is the business of a particular person. For example, if you ask why some people are doing something, or why an argument is going on, the answer is often "Bedman" = *its just their idea, or its something just between them.*

Pronouns can form short sentences by themselves, in other words you would need a full sentence to translate into English:

Ngaleng! = It's her.  
Bedman = That's their business  
Ngardduk! = It's mine!

ENDINGS APPLIED TO PRONOUNS

There are several different kinds of endings sometimes put on pronouns.

**-WALI (=in turn)**

ngayemanwali = it's my turn  
bedmanwali = it's their turn

**-DELENG ( Same as wali)**

nungandeleng = in his turn

**-NI endings**

minj keniwirrinj = it wasn't yours

**-MBU**

nguddambu = to do with you  
ngayembu / ngaye bu = to do with me

**-KENH / -KAH (indicates possession or relationship)**

(daluk ngalbu) ngayekenh = woman who is related to me  
(wurdyaw nawu) nguddakenh = child who is related to you  
nguddakah = nguddakenh

**-KIH (indicates possession)**

ngudberrekih = yours  
bedberrekih = theirs

Note on special use of ngaleng.

This word, which from the table above means "her", "she" is used often in Kunwinjku in the sense of "So that's it" and also to link ideas, where it means "as far as that goes" or "in respect of that matter".

## Part D: Other useful word types.

### QUESTIONS

Asking questions in Kunwinjku invites exactly the same responses as it does in English. Depending on your relationship with the person being asked, the question may be welcomed, ignored, laughed at, or rejected with some hostility. There is a persistent myth that Aboriginal people don't ask questions, or at least don't ask certain types of questions. This is certainly not true in the Kunwinjku language. Be guided by your Kunwinjku instructor when asking about sensitive areas - these will be the same things you would find difficult to answer in English. The following are the main words you need, and some sample question forms.

### YIDDOK

This at the end or beginning of a sentence turns it into a question.

Yiddok birriwam ?= did they go?

Kumdurndi yiddok ? = did she/he come back

Yiddok? = Is that right? Really?

### NANGALE / NGALNGALE

This can mean "someone/anyone" or "who?"

nangale nakka = who's that man?

nangale bibom = who hit her?

minj nangale kahdi = there is no one there

nangale bininj kakarrme = who has it?

bu nangale bininj kare = if anyone goes

### NJALE

This usually asks for a reason, but not always.

njalekenh = why ? For what purpose? For what reason?

njale?=what? ( what do you want? This can also be asked dja? )

njale kundung?=what's the time?

## BALEH

This usually asks for a place or amount in the answer, but not always.

Baleh yiyo?=where do you live?

Baleh yihdi?= where have you been ?

Baleh kayime ?= how much, how many, what cost?

Some questions are just made by changing the way you say the statement, just as in English. *I did. I did??* You will need to practice the intonation patterns for questions by listening carefully to your Kunwinjku instructor.

Kumwam? = did he come?

Yidjare bun? = do you want me to hit you?

Also, the indefinite ending can be used in questions, especially when you expect a negative answer.

minj kumrawinj?= he didn't come?

minj birrinayinj?= they didn't see him?

### ANSWERS: IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KUNWINJKU AND ENGLISH

In English, there are certain rules about how to answer yes/no questions. If you are asked *John isn't sick, is he?* you would answer no, meaning, "No, he isn't sick." In Kunwinjku, and a lot of other languages, the answer to this kind of question is yes, meaning, "Yes, (you are right in thinking) he is not sick." If something doesn't make sense, don't put it down to different world views or the mysteries of indigenous ethnicity until you have made sure its not just good old fashioned communication problems like this.

### STANDARD ANSWERS

The main words for answering questions that just need a short answer are:

mah .....okay, do that, go ahead, etc..

yoh.....yes

burrkyak.....no

kayakki/kayakurra .....no

larrh.....there's none, it didn't work out, nothing

adju.....I 'd have to think about that

nuk.....I don't know

bonj.....no, its over, that's that, finished, decided

THIS THAT THOSE THESE AND OTHER ODD AND ENDS.

The words we normally translate as *this that those them these* in English, are used frequently in Kunwinjku. The most common are listed. These are hard to learn to use properly, and have the same need as adjectives to agree with the noun they are referring to. The meanings given each one on the following list are to give the main idea; in practice a word like *kunukka* or *kunu* could be translated in a number of different ways, eg. *for that reason, thus, ok then, as far as that goes, that* etc. Context is essential to get an accurate translation.

#### KUNWINJKU DEMONSTRATIVES AND ASSOCIATED WORDS

When referring to item or person already mentioned.

namekbe = that man, that item (needing na- agreement)

ngalmekbe=that woman, that item needing ngal - agreement

benemekbe=them/those two people

birrimekbe=them/ those 3+

kunmekbe=that thing, idea etc. we have mentioned

manmekbe=that one, that thing, idea, (needing man- type agreement)

When indicating with lips or pointing or other immediate reference.

nakka = that item, man

ngalkka = that one, that woman, she

kunukka = that one, thing, or item (needing kun- type agreement)

kuhri= that way, when gesturing e.g. kuhri wam= he went thataway

makka= that one, that thing, idea, needing man- type agreement

Distant reference, or referent is absent

nahni bininj = that man, that item needing na- agreement.

ngahli daluk = that woman, that item needing ngal - agreement

kuhni=over there, that way, that thing over there, that direction

mahni=that item need man- agreement, e.g. fire, house.

Intensive forms

nanihnjanu bininj = this man right here !

Managing discussion - sample of forms.

kunmekbekenh kunu = that's the reason why....

kuninjkunu=thus, in light of that

kundjalmekbe rerrih = immediately

kuninjkunukenh = thus

kunu = that, in that matter

kuhni bu = This, thus

Variations due to personal preference, and text type:

kunmekbe = kunekke, kumekbe, kumekke.

ngalmekbe = ngalekke,

These demonstratives can be modified in similar ways to verbs:

benedjalmekbe = those two (the exact same two)

nadjalmekbe = that very man

OTHER FREQUENT WORDS NEEDED EARLY ON IN LANGUAGE LEARNING:

nawu, ngalbu, manbu/manu, kunu

*which, who, that* These need to agree with the noun, just like adjectives and there, this etc.. When in doubt use the nawu form.

bininj nawu durckmirri = the man who worked

ngudda nawu kanbukkabukkan = Teacher !

kunak manbu birludoweng = the fire which had gone out

Makka manbu manwarre = that is very bad

Ngalbu benedanginj = who was his sister

Nawu is used widely in Kunwinjku to make a group of words into the equivalent of one word;

nawu kanbukkabukkan = teacher (lit. he who teaches us)

John nawu benkodjduhkeng = John the Baptist (he who baptized them)

Nawu also marks out the topic in a sentence

Wolehwoleh nawu Nabulanj wam = Yesterday Nabulanj went.

Nawu is used with demonstratives to form short sentences or introduce new subjects:

nahni nawu = That's who I mean

nahni nawu kumwam = Now, that one who had come..

bu

*If, when, as; also introduces topics*

bu yinan = if/when you see it

bu kunwarddekenh = Now, about money

Used in titles of books

Bu John Bimbom = John's writing.

Wanjh

This word is indispensable in Kunwinjku. It's underlying main meaning is "then" or "next". It turns up all over the place and has around 12 functions. Three of the more common ones are:

[1] Combine with *bu* to frame sentence of the kind: if x, then y.

Bu yinan Bob, wanjh yimarneyimen.  
If you see Bob, then tell him.

Ngaye ngawam Darwin, wanjh nganang Bob.  
I went to Darwin, and saw Bob.

*Sometimes the wanjh comes after the second statement:*  
Ngadjaldi kondah. Ngudda yirrumdeng wanjh.  
I'll just stay here. You go back.

*Sometimes, the wanjh emphasizes the sequence:*  
Ngaburnbom, wanjh ngarokmeng.  
I finished, then I went home.

[2] In stories, wanjh means the story is moving along to the next event.  
Birribolkmey Darwin wanjh birriyoy. Birriyonginj, wanjh birribolkbawong..  
They arrived in Darwin then slept. They had a sleep, then they left.

[3] Wanjh can be used to express strong conviction, assertion.  
Ngaye wanjh! = It should be me!  
Ngudda wanjh! = You did it!

Dja

[1] *because, and, so, but.* [2] *What?* [Asking someone why they want to talk to you - something like English "So....?"]

Yirrangbalhmen dja kunkedjerk = Shut the door because its cold.  
Bininj dja daluk birriwam = men and women went  
Ngaye nganang nayinj, dja ngakelerlobmeng = I saw a snake so I ran away.  
Yikukwo, dja yuwn yimadbun = Give it to him, but don't wait for him.  
Bimarnedarnhwam dja minj binayinj = he went close to him but he didn't see him

Ba, ba bu [Also occurs as bambu]  
*so that, in order to.*

kanwo djurra ba bu nganan = give me the book, so I can look  
ngaye ngakurmerrinj bambu ngakedjerkminj = I positioned myself so that I could get cool.

#### REASON AND RESULT IN KUNWINJKU

In Kunwinjku the reasons, circumstances or settings for an outcome of any kind are normally mentioned before the result or outcome. This is not true in very short pairs of propositions, e.g. *close the door because I'm cold*. But in longer propositions the rule is chronological, i.e., you talk first about what happened first. There are ways Kunwinjku people can break this rule, but you will need to become fairly competent in the language before encountering this problem. At the initial stage however, you need to know the short forms for expressing reason-



result type relations between statements. The following is only the simplest sketch outline of the way relations between propositions works in Kunwinjku.

### Result

ngawam wanjh ngamey = I went and then/so got it  
ngawam dja ngamey = I went and I got it  
ngawam ngamey = I went and got

### Reason - Result

ngawam dja kunmekbekenh kunu ngamey = I went and that is why I got it

### Conditionals

Bu ngare wanjh ngamang = If I go I'll get it

### Unfulfilled condition

Bu ngarawinj wanjh ngamayinj = If I'd gone I would have got it.

### Hypothetical

Bu ngarawinj wanjh ngamayinj = I could go and get it>

### Purpose versus result

ngare ngamang = I'm going to get it  
ngare ba ngamang = I'm going in order to get  
ngare ba bu ngamang = I'm going so that I will get

### Purpose with -kenh.

ngare ngamangkenh = I'm going in order to get it

### Reason -result in reverse order

ngamey kaluk bu ngawam = I got it after I went  
ngamey dja ngawam = I got it because I went (ambiguous)  
ngamey kaluk ngawam = I got it and went  
ngamey wanjh ngawam = I got it and went  
ngamey kore ngawam = I got it where/when I went

### KUNWINJKU NUMBERS AND AMOUNTS

Kunwinjku people mostly do what the English speaking world did earlier, they adopted the Arabic / Roman counting system. Nevertheless, there are measuring and counting systems in Kunwinjku. The basic counting numbers are:

nakudji, mankudji, kunkudji, ngalkudji.....one ( adjective, needs to agree )  
bokenh.....two  
danjbik.....three  
kunkarrngbakmeng.....four

kunbidkudji.....	five
kunbid bokenh.....	ten
mirndeyahwurd.....	few
nawern etc. ....	many, lots of ( adjective)
wernmerrinj.....	increased in amount or number
koluy.....	decreased refers price, temperature
rohrohmeng.....	counted, estimated
yibeng.....	up to, it so on
Baleh kayime?.....	How many? How much?

NOTE ABOUT IDIOMS

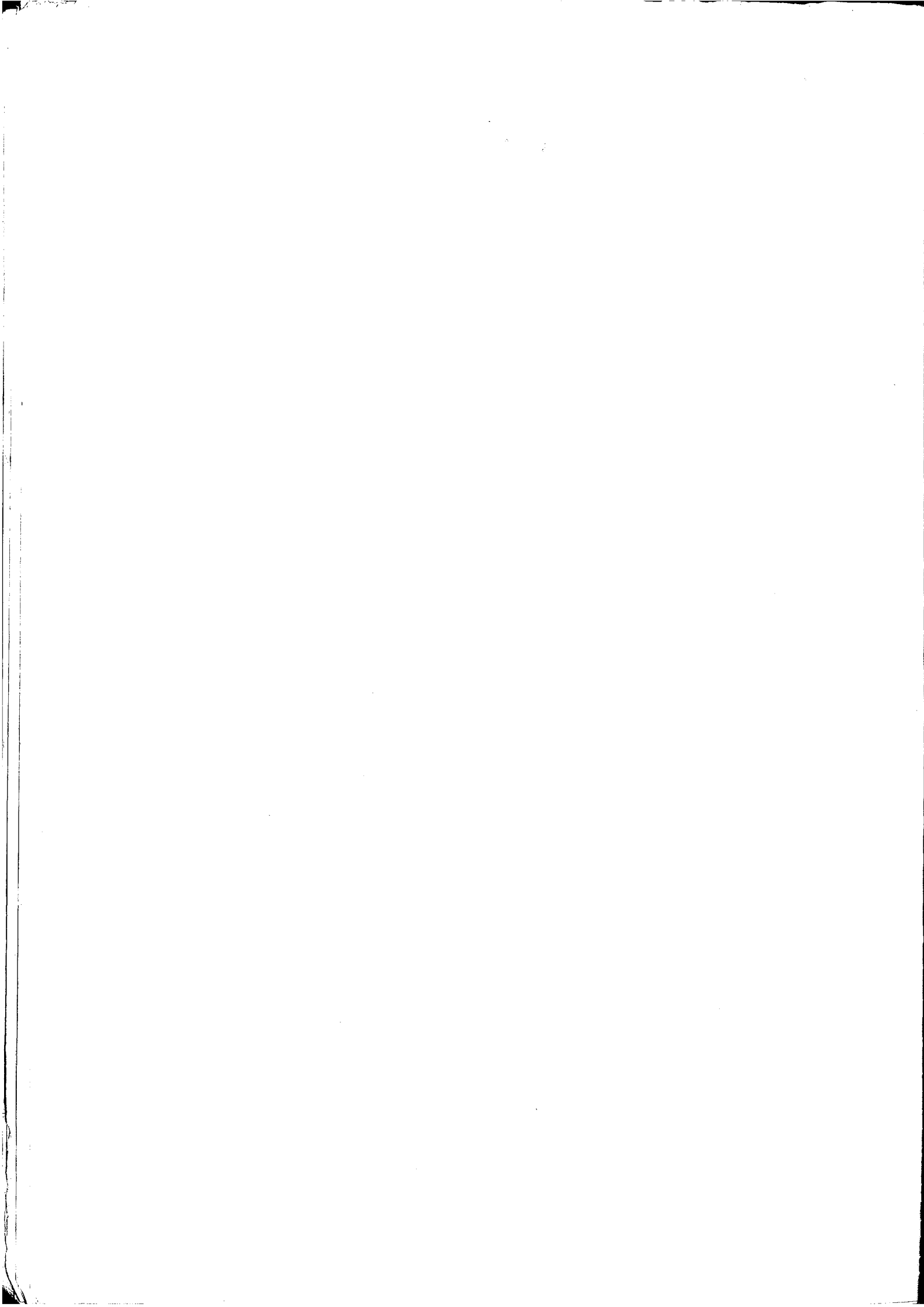
Idioms are those words and phrases in any language that have a meaning which is not obviously connected to what the word actually says. These are so common we don't notice them in our own language, but they cause real headaches (note idiom!!) to learners. Examples in English include: *You're getting up my nose. He let me down. He gave me the run around. Don't beat around the bush, etc..* Kunwinjku also has its share, so be aware that they can turn up (another one!!) at any time. Common Kunwinjku idioms include:

- dangduluburrinj = went shopping (lit. shot self in the mouth)
- kawarre! = that's excellent! (lit. its rubbish)
- bidlarrk = emptyhanded (lit. empty handed) used as in English meaning "haven't got"
- dedjwarlah = greedy (lit. big-backsided)
- kebkimuk = sticky beak (lit. big nosed)

Sarcasm, jokes and exaggerations

These all happen in Kunwinjku as in any other language, and can also be hard to understand for beginners.





## LEARNING KUNWINJKU

### Part One: Some Ideas About Language Learning

These notes are ideas that have worked for us, but since there are various styles of learning and relating, so feel free to adapt and modify as it suits you.

LEARNING KUNWINJKU FROM KUNWINJKU SPEAKERS: RANDOM NOTES ABOUT INTERPERSONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING. POINT FORM.

#### Principles

Language is always used in a human relationship. It can only be learned in a human relationship. Adult language learning requires a fair bit of humility and a very great deal of persistence. Your language instructors are human beings with their own real lives, motives, concerns and problems. They may be tired, they might find teaching you less than exciting sometimes. Be aware that your instructor may have a totally different agenda from you. You are not in an intellectual exercise, or even a job, but a set of real time, real people in relationships.

#### On making a fool of yourself:

You have to, but it pays off. Try to enjoy making the necessary mistakes - other people certainly will enjoy them. Try to learn what it feels like to absolutely have to communicate in a foreign language, to have people talking to you, and about you, without you being able to understand what is happening to you. This is what Kunwinjku people feel like a lot of the time. If at an outstation, ask that everyone just use Kunwinjku. Try to feel the associations of speaking only a minority language: second class citizenship? awareness of rights? language racism? fear? powerlessness?

If you haven't felt these at least for a short while you won't be able to imagine what Kunwinjku people experience every time they are involved with the, hospital, schooling system, police, courts, big business, bureaucracy, Darwin shops etc. etc.

#### Practicalities:

Not everyone is willing or able to teach you to speak their language. *But everyone will be* impressed by your efforts - even if they find them amusing. Native speakers must set the parameters - preference

for relational and maybe mundane issues. Let whoever teaches you set the agenda if they want to. You might expect to be learning how to talk about mystical or secret matters, or the profundities of relationships between Aboriginal people and land, but like all human being, Kunwinjku speakers spend much more time talking about normal everyday things like eating, who goes where, who that baby looks like, what time the shop closes, how to cash a cheque, who is having an affair with whom, the name of the new teacher etc. If you can't talk about this sort of thing, you have no hope of tackling the abstract stuff when it turns up.

### Write it down

No one will mind if you write things down, many will expect you to: if you are a literate English speaker, it's almost impossible to train yourself to remember without writing it down. Writing is only the reminder however, you still have to drill it and use it - or lose it. Write, drill it, use it - over and over again. Out loud, in real life wherever possible. Practice a couple of phrases aloud in private (the shower or the car are both good), then go find a situation where you can use them. This is good for your confidence, and provokes feedback - though sometimes you will get back a lot more Kunwinjku than you can handle. Don't panic, just handle what you can, write it down and learn it.

### Warnings:

\*Be patient with yourself - this is a long term process.

\*Its better to practice a little bit, but frequently [ must be at least once daily ], rather than doing a big session every now and then.

\*Be aware of gossip/ local politics etc.. It is usually very unwise to spend time alone with a member of the opposite sex. If you are male, you can unwittingly provoke someone to violence against a woman who you have put in an awkward position. This has really happened. Be sensitive.

\*Don't use too many tutors - let someone "own" you, and then ask them permission before using other people. Depend on your tutor. Don't compare quality of information between tutors except in your own thinking.

\*Decide early about payment. Most people won't expect it, but some may be willing to become a paid instructor.

\*Don't take photographs, video or audio tape without permission.

HOWEVER: Taping real life conversations, then going through them, mimicking both parties, is a brilliant way to improve your skills if you find someone willing to be taped.

How does it feel to be a stereotype?

Because Kunwinjku people live within Australia it is easy to overlook the degree to which an English speaking, urban person (regardless of their colour or ethnicity) is a foreigner in the Kunwinjku community. You should expect at least the same degree of cultural difference you would encounter in a non-European nation overseas.

Mostly mainstream majority community members don't have to worry or even think about race or language, especially not in our own homes. Minority groups, especially small, linguistic, racial and ethnic minorities (Kunwinjku people are all three) are forced to be preoccupied every day with other people controlling their lives, talking about them in a foreign language even right in their own back yards.

Whether or not we mainstreamers like it, we are associated with that dominant, invasive community. We might not feel like arrogant invaders, but that is often how we are viewed, despite what we believe to be our good personal motives. Many Kunwinjku people apply stereotypes to us, just like we do to them. Another dangerous aspect of this, is that Kunwinjku people may have unrealistically high expectations of our ability and knowledge, simply because we are associated with the mainstream and all its technology. You need to decide early whether to always adopt the role with Kunwinjku people of a helper and resource through which they can tap into the mainstream, (this will make you feel wanted) or to position yourself as a learner with nothing great to offer beyond your interest in language (this is risk taking).

Most Kunwinjku people, like all human beings, will assess your motives rather than taking you simply at your word, and will recognize goodwill even if you make mistakes. Above all, try to think through what you would feel in their situation, especially in terms of who has the power in any context. Because it happens so rarely, it will be impressive to Kunwinjku people when someone spends time (lots of time) letting them set the pace, letting them determine the agenda and control the communication, and being humble enough to make the mistakes everyone must make in learning a second language.

Here is here, and now is now.

Kunwinjku people are not 'traditional' - they are changing, they are here and now. Their society is changing in an uncontrolled and rapid

way. You do not go either back in time, or into another nation - it is in fact part of Australia's political reality. Real people get hungry, bored, distracted, sick, impatient, confused etc. They get into and out of relationships. Keep aware of your own stereotyping expectations. Be careful to avoid the "tribal" behaviour fallacy. Individual Kunwinjku people have individual views. There is no consensus on issues like mining and the environment, or politics, or religion. In all these fields Kunwinjku people, just like any other people, differ among themselves.

### Other Practicalities

\*Everyone speaks an idiolect of their own. Don't learn from a stutterer, or an Aboriginal who only speaks Kunwinjku as a second language.

\*It is more important to impose structure on your material than on your friends. If you get frustrated that they are not covering what you want to learn, talk to them about it, but leave the final decision up to them about what to teach you. Quite often they will be happy enough for you to ask questions about what interests you, provided you accept their control over whether, when and how to answer.

\*Every hour you spend with local speakers will produce several hours language learning material. By the time you write it and practice it privately and then go out and try it in real life, you find you reach saturation point every now and then.

\*Set time for use of known stuff, as well as learning new, or you risk forgetting the previous stuff. As a rule of thumb, you must be involved in talking with Kunwinjku people (NOT just listening) for at least an hour a day. Don't try to find out everything at once.

\*Learn language related to the situations you are in. If you are in a card game, absorb the language related to that. The club is possibly the worst place to learn Kunwinjku. (Factors include Kunwinjku self-image, crowdedness and to a lesser but real extent, the impact of alcohol on speech.

\*Be sensitive. When in doubt, back off and ask later, especially when questions have to do with areas that are sensitive in every culture: sex, relationships, personal histories, etc..

\*Basic to language learning is the dreaded memorization. The process is, write it down in both Kunwinjku and English, then keep testing yourself by covering answers. Do this with both words and phrases, questions etc.. Do this every day, then review every week or fortnight.



In the meantime, carry a notebook to write new stuff down, try to practice with real people at least once a day. The sequence is: *listen, write, read, (repeat ad nauseum), practice out loud, use in real life, repeat.*

\*As often as possible go hunting, fishing, or watching videos with Kunwinjku people to practice hearing and speaking in as many contexts as possible. In other words, make sure you experience as many of the real life situations that Kunwinjku people experience. You'll find that it can take an awful lot of time to do things at the pace that many Kunwinjku people do, for example a trip to the shop or hospital can be very long by the time you interact with lots of other people and just wait for the mainstream institutions to process you.

THE FIRST STEP IS THE BIGGEST

You can't really make any headway in Kunwinjku until you have learnt the verb prefixes and endings, and a whole lot of verb stems to put them on. This takes several months, but once you are over this, you can make smaller, faster steps from then on. At the beginning of the later section on *Language Assignments*, there is a set of simple Kunwinjku phrases that will help you relate to Kunwinjku people as a language learner. These are also on tape to help you practice before launching.

## Part Two: Some Useful Resources

PART A: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND KUNWINJKU

The chart on the following page summarizes some differences and similarities between Kunwinjku and English. It may be helpful to note the major ones:

Verbs matter more than nouns

In Kunwinjku a verb will be used rather than a noun whenever possible. English tends to be the opposite. We have, and use, many abstract nouns; *peace, justice, democracy, judiciary, employment, contempt* etc. In Kunwinjku almost all abstracts are replaced by verbs, and the nouns that do exist are often derived from verbs:

peace = kunmodmikenh (noun)  
yimodmen = be still, quiet

life = kundarrkid  
alive = kahdarrkid  
lived = darrkidni

rest/salvation = kungehkekenh

kanngehkeng = he/she saved us  
 nawu kanngehkeng = saviour (he who saves us)

death = kundowikenh  
 doweng = died

Verbs are used in relative clauses to make many nouns:

nawu kawohrnan = boss, Lord, ruler (lit: he/she who rules)  
 nawu kandjadme = judge (lit: he/she who judges)  
 nawu birrikare bininj = people of long ago (lit: people who they are previous)

#### Word order

In English word order tells who did what to whom: *the dog bit the man*, *the man bit the dog* only differ in the order of words. In Kunwinjku a prefix on the verb specifies who did it to whom. So regardless of word order, we know who did the biting. Both these sentences mean "the dog bit the man" despite word order. (There are complex rules that govern the way word order can change in Kunwinjku, so the following examples do not mean that Kunwinjku has "free word order". No language does. They just show that word order doesn't dictate the way participants are involved in the action of a verb.)

Duruk bibayeng bininj.  
 Bininj bibayeng duruk.

#### No passive form in Kunwinjku.

In English, passives allow us to say something without naming the perpetrator: *a man was bitten, the deal was signed, I am betrayed*. In all these passives, the main focus is on the person it happened to, rather than on who did it. In Kunwinjku, we are required to specify both these participants in the verb beginnings. There is no passive voice for verbs. However, Kunwinjku achieves the same goal by using pronouns in positions in a sentence which can emphasize the acted upon rather than the actor: for example: *bininj wanjh duruk bibayeng* = it was the man the dog bit

#### Complex reference system

Kunwinjku makes extensive and complex use of systems for referring to other people. This involves a lot of ellipsis (leaving out vital facts because they are known by your hearers.) This is a feature of small languages, where all its speakers either know each other, or about each other. Compare this to English with half a billion speakers in many cultures and places. See page 13ff.

### English words in Kunwinjku

Just as English borrows from other languages (Greek, Hindi, French, Russian etc.) so Kunwinjku borrows words from English. This happens quite often because Kunwinjku people interact constantly with the English-speaking mainstream. Kunwinjku uses several methods of capture:

Sometimes English words are just taken over as they are, e.g.. screwdriver, TV, video.

Others are Kunwinjku-ized to make them easier to pronounce: e.g.. dog has become *duruk*; motor car is *mudika*; pig is *bik*.

It is more difficult to detect the very few English roots when they have been incorporated in the verb system: e.g.. *ngarribayahmeng* = we bought (*bayah* is from the English buy).

Often a Kunwinjku person will use an English word together with the all purpose verb *yimeng* (which can mean said, did, thought, although there are other verbs in Kunwinjku for all of these): so *spoke yimeng* = he spoke (which is *wokdi* in ordinary Kunwinjku); *worried yimeng* = he/she was worried (which is *njilngwarreni* in Kunwinjku).

### Mixing languages

Kunwinjku people, indeed all bilingual people, make decisions (usually unconscious decisions) about which language to use in which context. Obviously a Kunwinjku person in their own home with other Kunwinjku people will mostly use Kunwinjku, although English can be used for jokes, in connection with an English TV programme, etc.. You may notice some Kunwinjku use of English as you are learning. This is the choice of the Kunwinjku speaker, but you should try to find out the Kunwinjku way of saying the same thing. For example, you will often hear people say, "*meeting kabirrikarme*". There is also in common use a Kunwinjku version of this: *kabirrimirndemornamerren* or *kabirridangwerren*, or *kabirriyolyolme* could all be used.

### Note about Kriol

Kriol is the name of the Aboriginal language spoken in the Roper Valley and many other parts of Australia. It has been formed by the interaction of English and several Aboriginal languages. The name "Kriol" is derived from the technical term *creole*, which is a language that forms when people start speaking a mixture of languages, and this mixture then becomes the only language of the next generation. Kriol is a full language just like English or Kunwinjku with its own complex grammatical systems. Sometimes Kunwinjku people will speak what

sounds like Kriol, but is in fact what would better be called "Aboriginal English". There are some Kunwinjku people who can speak Kriol, and even more who understand it, but it not encouraged by Kunwinjku parents. If you start speaking English in this way you will be associated in Kunwinjku minds with a certain kind of non-Aboriginal person.

#### World view versus Language

Nearly always when a non-Aboriginal finds something mysterious or different about Kunwinjku life, he/she is tempted to explain this by talking about different world views, or different values systems or approaches to life. Some may even decide there is a profoundly different set of thought processes in Aboriginal minds. There is a certain attractiveness in this perceived "otherness" of Aboriginal people, particularly since it is non-threatening otherness, and fits the expectation of mysterious associations with land and myth.

Unfortunately, almost always these differences are simply because of language. So that, if you spoke Kunwinjku well enough, the difference would either disappear, or could be explained as difference in personality or personal experience. When you speak someone's language well enough, you can then have a go at analyzing each other's world view, sharing as you do so the common ground of all human thinking that we need to occupy when we talk compare notes. This is one of the great rewards for the hard work of learning.

The chart on the following page summarizes some key differences and similarities between English and Kunwinjku.

## Simplified Overview Comparison of Kunwinjku and English

Note: This chart will only help if you keep in mind that all languages do the same basic job, but the number of ways of doing each part of the task is almost unlimited. This chart is meant to show that Kunwinjku and English are similar in what they do, but different in how they do it.

	KUNWINJKU	ENGLISH	BOTH/NOTES
Sounds:	22	44	22 is world average
Spelling:	Consistent	Chaotic	Both established systems
Sentences:	Longer words and fewer.	More, shorter.	Same job, two methods.
Vocabulary:	Fewer words.	More words.	Both have specialist subsystems.
New meanings:	Re-use or modify old words.	Generate new words.	Both steal from other languages.
Who/what:	Add extra bits to verb.	Order of words.	Both specify who/what did what.
Passives:	Indirectly.	Directly.	
Abstracts:	Prefers verbs.	Prefers nouns.	Both use abstract concepts.
Pro/nouns:	Not always needed.	Always needed.	Both use them a lot.
Adjectives:	Modified to agree with noun.	Not modified.	Both use extensively.
Adverbs:	Can be part of verb.	Separate words.	Both use extensively.
Nouns:	Classed, prefixed.	Not.	Surface level only.
Plurals:	Often not marked.	Always marked.	Both have multiple forms.
Comparatives:	Use sentences.	Modify words.	Same job, different methods.
Lit.Lang:	Oral only.	Mostly written.	Profound difference.
Ordinary:	Oral only.	Often written.	Profound difference.
Reading:	Okay but not needed.	Essential.	Profound difference.
Spoken by:	Less than 3000	>300 000 000	Think about implications.
Dialects:	Several	Dozens	Linked to politics in both.
Sociolects:	Formal, inflexible.	Less formal.	Important in both.
Abuse:	Formal systems.	Formal systems.	
Competence:	Formal, by kinship.	Written code.	

## Part B: Using the audio tapes accompanying this book

The audio cassettes with this book are designed to:

- [1] Allow you to get used to hearing the language, matching what you hear with a mental picture of what the words look like.
- [2] Help you to pronounce people's names properly, so you don't seem either incompetent or insensitive.
- [3] It is NOT intended to replace Kunwinjku people as your teacher.

Please note: we are particularly grateful to Dolly Maralngurra, Jill Nganjmirra, Peterson Nganjmirra, Andrew Manakgu, Rita Maralngurra and Analam Gamarrawu for help in recording the Kunwinjku.

TAPE 1: You have probably already used Side A of the tape "Kunwinjku Kunwok" (Described on page v in the introductory material).

Side B of that tape is titled "Kunwinjku Pronunciation" and provides an extensive list of personal, place and clan names read slowly by a Kunwinjku person, to allow you to practice pronunciation and spelling. You need to use this in conjunction with the next section of the book which has a full print out of what is read on the tape and will tell you what to do.

TAPE 2: "Kunwinjku Spelling Practice". If you haven't already done so, use this tape in conjunction with the text book after you have re-read through the section on spelling. See notes on pages 35-36. This tape is to provide practice in spelling Kunwinjku correctly when you write down what you hear spoken.

TAPE 3: "Language Assignments". This tape is used in conjunction with the Language Assignments section starting at page 151 and will help you revise what you have done and check on your skill levels. The notes on page 151 will explain how to use the tape.

### TAPE ONE: THE KUNWINJKU PRONUNCIATION TAPE

- [1] This tape is only a guide. Each person is the only proper and final authority on the pronunciation and spelling of their own name, or the name of their outstation etc.
- [2] This should not be used as a guide to spelling. As with English, proper nouns in Kunwinjku don't always follow the spelling system in use generally in the language. For example Kunwinjku is also sometimes spelt Gunwinggu.
- [3] Outstation names are also subject to various spellings, but the

pronunciation of each is easily enough obtained from people who live there.

[4] Even more so for clan names, i.e., the names of the Kunmokurrkurr groups.

[5] I haven't any idea why the surnames are not in strict alphabetical order on the tape.

[6] Try to say each item aloud, checking pronunciation against the tape.

[7] It will probably be best to listen right through once before trying to practice aloud .

[8] It will be helpful to pause the tape after each item and practice a few times.

### 1. Most common Kunwinjku Surnames.

This whole list is done twice on the tape, the second time slower and then with each name in syllables. As you practice, build up speed. The main aim here is to help you hear Kunwinjku, and to pronounce names accurately.

Badari

Balmana

Ban-garr

Bumarda

Burrunali

Dakgalawuy

Dirdi

Djanjdjomerr

Djayhgurrnga

Djogiba

Djorlom

Galamirnda

Gamarrawu

Garlngarr

Garnarradj

Garnbunji

Girrabul

Gumurdul

Guymala [also Goymala]

Ilkgirr

Lungguy

Manakgu

Man-girribbi

Mangiru

Maralngurra

Madduwarr

Mikginjmikginj

Murrumurru

Muruwalma  
Nabarlambarl  
Naborlhborlh  
Nabobbob  
Nabegeyo  
Nabulwad  
Nadjamerrek  
Nadjangorle  
Nadjowh  
Nalorlman  
Namunjdja  
Nango  
Naroldol  
Nawirridj  
Nawulunggungu  
Nayilibidj  
Nayinggul  
Rabinjina  
Wurrgidj  
Yulidjirri  
Nawurlngarri  
Namarnyilk  
Nalunjdjuk  
Namarddumburr  
Guwardbu  
Nagurrurrba  
Nganjmirra  
Nadjalaburnburn  
Yirrbbuwanga  
Djumburi  
Mardday  
Narorga  
Narndal  
Nabulurl  
Djerramuddi  
Nangukwirridj  
Ilakilak  
Nayukyuk.



## 2. Selected Outstation and Place Names

These are all spelt with standard Kunwinjku spelling. You will come across several alternative spellings for each, and I have noted some of these on this list. Most place names, as in English, don't have any particular current meaning, although some do (e.g. "Duruk benengadbom" = "Two dogs dug a well.")

Kunbarllanjja [ the correct Kunwinjku name for Oenpelli - also Gunbarlanya etc. ]  
Mamarrawerre /Marmardawerre  
Mandilbareng  
Kumardderr / Goomaderr etc.  
Kamarrkawan  
Manmoyi  
Kumarrinjang  
Marrkolidjban  
Namokardabu  
Wurlwunj  
Marddjibarri / Mudjinberry etc.  
Mamukala  
Kudjekbin  
Kurrkurr [ Table Hill ]  
Nabarlek  
Momeka / Mumeka  
Injalak  
Arrkuluk  
Adjumarllari  
Nimbabbirr  
Marlwon  
Mardbalk [ Goulburn Island ]  
Warruwi  
Mindjilang [ Croker Island ]  
Manawukan [ Maningrida ]  
Marrkanalla / Murganella

## 3. Skin groups.

Femine form is said first, masculine second. Only the singular forms are given. Ask advice from Kunwinjku tutors about pronouncing the plurals and the "Eastern" form listed in chapter one. Those forms were read aloud for you on Side A.

Ngalbulanj, Nabulanj  
Ngalingarridj, Nangarridj  
Ngalwakadj, Nawakadj  
Ngalkangila, Nakangila  
Ngalkamarrang, Nakamarrang  
Ngalwamud, Nawamud  
Ngalkodjok, Nakodjok  
Ngalbangardi, Nabangardi

#### 4. Selected Kunmokurrkurr [ Clan ] Groups.

Note: these are listed with the masculine beginning n a - only, but you will hear these terms read with both the masculine and the feminine beginning ngal-. [ Listen carefully to the differences.] In fact, these words occur with many beginnings especially birri- which means more than two people. There are also some other Kunmokurrkurr groups not listed here. Often people will use these group names without any prefix. So it is possible for any one of these Kunmokurrkurr names to be said a number of ways depending on context. For example, the first one might be heard as:

Barabba = the Barabba clan

Nabarabba = a male from the Barabba clan

Ngalbarabba = a female from the Barabba clan

birribarabba = people from the Barabba clan

ngabarabba = I am from the Barabba clan.

Clans read on tape:

Nabarabba

Nabarangh

Nabarradj

Nabardbarddjam

Nabardmarddi

Nabarrbinj

Naberdberd

Nabolmo

Naborn

Nabuyuhmi

Nabulumo

Nabunidj

Naburdoh

Narradjbaku

Narranek

Narrekkolo

Narrinhmi

Nadjalama

Nadjambalawa

Nadjarrbokko

Nadjindibi

Nadjok

Nadjorroram

Nadjurlbbinj

Narrulmangkarr

Nakardbam

Nakarndidjbarl

Nakebarn

Nakirrimo

Nakurrkbarrba

Nakururik  
Nayilukkidj  
Nayulhmanj  
Nakodjkarndi  
Namaddalk  
Namadjawarr  
Namayirrkulidj  
Namanjdjawaarlwarl  
Namandjurlingunj  
Namanilakarr  
Namanengererrbe  
Namarrkkirala  
Namarrirn  
Namadjba  
Namirarr  
Namok  
Namowang  
Namurnwarri  
Namurruwan  
Namurumburr  
Nangalngbali  
Nanguluminj  
Narrankorlo  
Narol  
Nawurlbbu  
Nawarddjak  
Nawarramal  
Nawirlirrku  
Naworkol  
Nakungkomku  
Nawurrik

## OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

For those who want a more technical description of Kunwinjku and its adjacent dialects, the following books are useful

Carroll, Peter, 1976, Kunwinjku: A Language of Western Arnhem Land, MA Thesis, ANU, Canberra.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1995, The old people told us: Verbal art in Western Arnhem Land, PhD thesis, University of Queensland. This contains a comprehensive bibliography.

Oates, Lynette, 1964, A Tentative Description of the Gunwinggu Language Oceania Linguistic Monographs, Sydney University.

Nick Evans from Melbourne University has produced a number of papers on technical aspects of Mayali, his term for the Kundjeyhmi dialect of Kunwinjku spoken in the Kakadu Park. His description of Kundjeyhmi is:

How to write Gun-djeyhmi, Prepared for ANPWS and the Gagudju Association, 1991.

His more technical articles include:

Evans, Nick, 1992, "Wanjh! Bonj! Nja! : Sequential organization and social deixis in Mayali interjections", Journal of Pragmatics, 18 (1992), North Holland, pp 225 - 244.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1994 (forthcoming) "Head classes and agreement classes in the Mayali Dialect chain", to appear in Mark Harvey and Nick Reid, (eds), Nominal Classification in Aboriginal Australia. np

For those who can get a copy, Meryl Rowe's photocopied book is very useful. It's called "Verbsatality: The Kunwinjku Verb Described for Intending Learners", Oenpelli, 1981.

Only one dictionary is currently available:

Manakgu, A and Etherington, S, 1996, Basic Kunwinjku Dictionary, Kunwinjku Language Centre, Kunbarllanjja.

Australian Nature Conservation Authority has a draft of Nick Evans' Mayali dictionary, and the Kunwinjku Language Centre is also planning to produce both illustrated and comprehensive versions of the

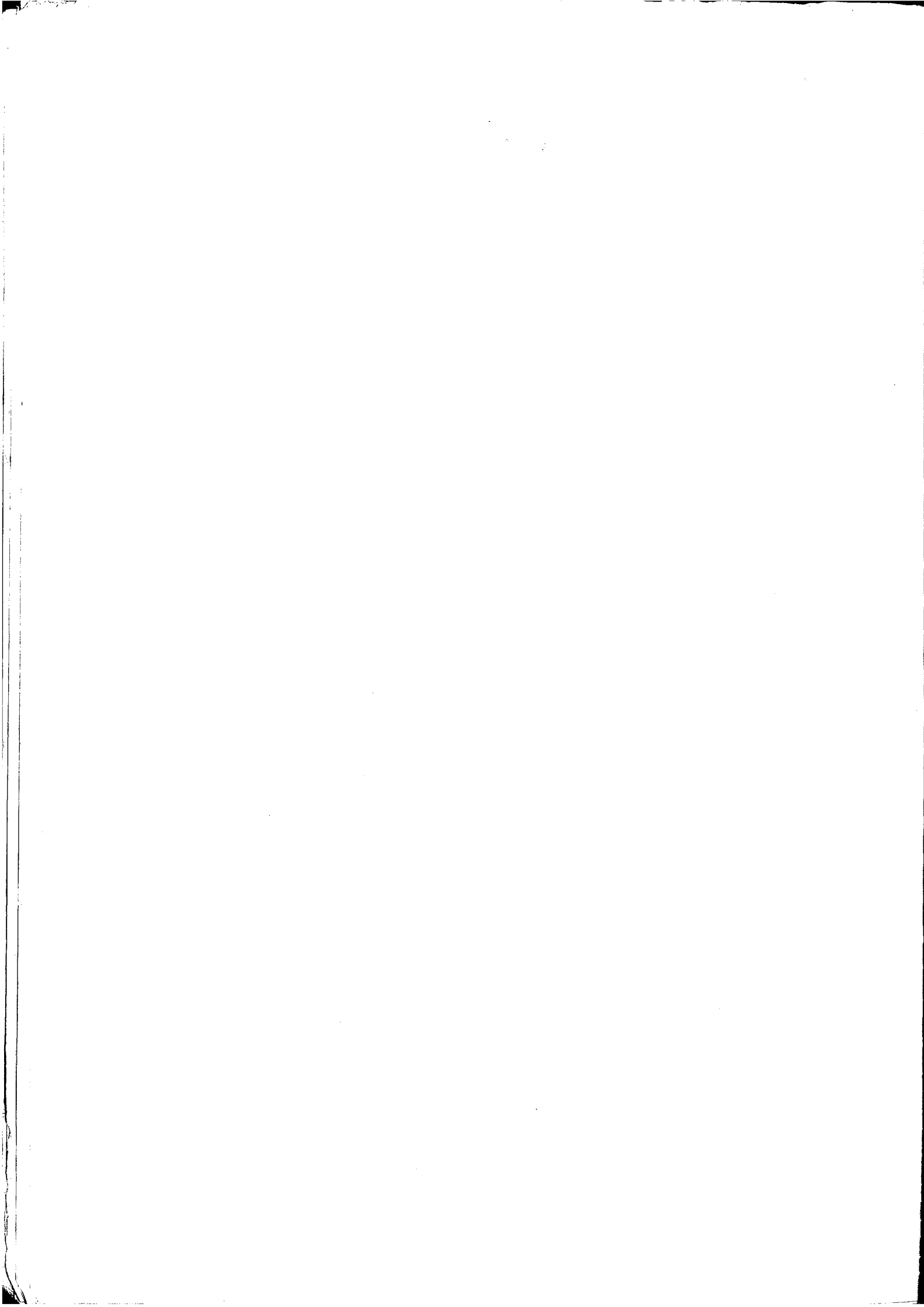
Kunwinjku dictionary in 1997 -98. The best dictionary is the one inside your own head, so make sure you keep working on it.

*Also available from the Kunwinjku Language Centre:*

Manakgu, A, Etherington S, and Etherington N. 1996, Kunbalak: Stories for Kunwinjku young people in mother-in-law language, ordinary Kunwinjku and English, KLC, Kunbarllanjja. (This includes a dictionary of Mother-in-law Kunwinjku.

Manakgu, A, Etherington S, and Etherington N,(available late 1997) Kundebe: Stories for Kunwinjku young people about Kundebe, KLC, Kunbarllanjja. (This includes a dictionary of the special kinship reference system *Kundebe*.





## SELF TEACHING, SELF TESTING KIT

## WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

This material is designed to help you manage the first stages of learning the verb system. Most exercises have answers available, usually immediately under the questions, so that you can easily check yourself, and also reverse the process, and use the questions as answers. Some of these assignments have taped material on the audio cassette "Language Assignments" Each item on the tape is introduced with a reference to page numbers in this book.

## Language Assignment 1: Survival List

These are short questions and statements to help in learning. Listen to tape and copy. Practice beyond the point of simple boredom.

Yiwokdi yeledj = speak slowly

Ngadjare ngabolbme Kunwinjku.= I want to learn Kunwinjku

Kamak bu djawan? = Is it okay if I ask you?

Kamak kanbidyikarme = Is it okay if you help me?

Ngadjare kanbukkabukkan Kunwinjku = I want you to teach me Kunwinjku

Minj ngawernhbekkan Kunwinjku = I can't understand Kunwinjku properly

Ngaye [NAME] nganedanginj.= I am [NAME'S ] brother

Baleh marneyime? = What do I call you? (eg Uncle, Sister etc)

Yingeybu = Tell me the name of this.

Baleh karryime... = How do we say...?

Baleh kamenmenyime? = What does x mean?

Njale nakka? = What's this?

Kanbekka bu ngawokdi = listen to me say this

Kanmarneyimen bu ngawarrewon bu ngawodki = Tell me if I say it wrong.

Kamak bu kanbidyikarmeng = Thanks for helping me.



**Language assignment 2: Memory list of basic verbs**

bakkeng.....she broke [ something ]  
bom.....she hit [ something ]  
bonguneng .....she drank  
danginj.....she stood still  
di.....she was there  
doy .....she struck [ something ]  
durndi.....she came back  
kadjuy.....she followed [ something ]  
karrmi.....she had [ something ]  
mey .....she got [ something ]  
nang .....she saw [ something ]  
nguneng .....she ate  
ni .....she was there  
ruy.....she got burnt  
wam .....she went  
weng.....she threw [ something ]  
wong.....she gave [ something ]  
yakminj.....she vanished  
yimeng.....she said  
yimerranj .....she became  
yoy.....she camped

**Language assignment 3: Dictation practice.**

Listen to the sentences on the tape, then play it again and try to write them down in Kunwinjku. The answers are the Kunwinjku sentences in Assignment 5.

**Language Assignment 4: Memory list of key words.**

bininj.....man , [ of any age beyond teens ], any aboriginal person  
daluk.....woman, [ of any age beyond teens ]  
djenj.....fish of any kind  
duruk.....dog [ but not dingo ]  
kore .....to, towards, at, in connection with  
kunbang .....alcoholic drink  
kundulk.....tree of any kind  
kunj.....kangaroo of any kind  
kunkanj .....meat  
kured .....home  
mankabo.....river  
mankung .....wild honey  
nakimuk.....large person or animal [ male ]  
nakohbanj.....old man  
ngalkohbanj.....old woman  
nganabbarru.....buffalo  
wurdwurd.....children  
wurdyaw.....child of either sex [ older than baby ]

**Language Assignment 5: Translation practice.**

Note: a slash (/) in the answers means there are two possibilities; brackets includes information that is implicit in the other language (this happens a lot!) The Kunwinjku of these pairs are also the answers to Assignment 3. Make sure you cover whichever language you are trying to translate into, then swap over. Throughout these assignments, we have spaced the pairs of sentences to allow you to use either as the answer. We suggest you

translate from Kunwinjku first.

1. bininj wam mey nganabbarru

*a/the man went (hunting for) buffalo*

2. duruk nguneng kunkanj

*a /the dog ate (some) meat*

3. wurdyaw nang manme

*a/the child saw (the/some) food*

4. ngalkohbanj di kured

*the old lady was at home/in the camp*

5. daluk bakkeng kundulk

*a/the woman broke a/the tree*

6. the man ate the wild honey

*bininj nguneng mankung or mankung nguneng bininj*

7. the old man went back

*nakohbanj durndi or durndi nakohbanj*

8. a dog got the food

*duruk mey manme or manme mey duruk*

9. a woman was there

*daluk di*

10. the buffalo was at the river

*nganabbarru di kore mankabo*

Language Assignment 6: Review memory list of verb beginnings.

Group One: action not done to anyone/thing, verb root wam.

ngawam  
yiwam  
wam  
ngarrwam  
nganewam  
ngunewam  
benewam  
kanewam  
ngarriwam  
karriwam  
ngurriwam  
birriwam

Group Two: actor only beginnings with English

I ..... nga  
you ..... yi [ if one person ]  
you ..... ngune [ if 2 people ]  
you ..... ngurri [ if more than 2 people ]  
he ..... leave blank  
she ..... leave blank  
it ..... leave blank  
they ..... bene [ if 2 people ]  
they ..... birri [ if more than 2 people ]  
we ..... ngane [speaker and someone else, not the person talked to]  
we ..... ngarr [speaker and person talked to]  
we ..... kane [ speaker and the 2 people he is talking to ]  
we ..... ngarri [ speaker and others, not the person talked to ]  
we ..... karri [speaker and the people he is talking to]

Group 3: Grouped by number of participants

Follow these through on tape again.

SINGLE ACTOR

ngawam ..... I went  
yiwam ..... you went [ talking to one person only ]  
wam ..... he/she/it went

TWOACTORS

ngarrwam ..... we went [ you and I went ]  
nganewam ..... we went [one other person and I went ]  
ngunewam ..... you went [ talking to two people ]  
benewam ..... they went [ talking about 2 people ]

THREE ACTORS INCLUDING SPEAKER

kanewam ..... we went [ including the 2 people you are talking to]

THREE OR MORE ACTORS

ngarriwam ..... we went [ they and I went, not person you are talking to ]

karriwam..... we went [ you and I went, talking to more than 2 people ]  
 ngurriwam..... you went [ talking to more than 2 people ]  
 birriwam..... they went [ talking about more than 2 ]

#### Group 4: one beginning on all key verbs.

This is just to show what happens with one of the 12 beginnings when applied to each of the basic verb list. Note: you may have realized by now that the basic verb list you have memorized, actually does have one of these beginnings on each verb. It is the "zero" beginning which indicates the actor as he, she or it.

birribakkeng..... they broke [ something ]  
 birribom..... they hit [ something ]  
 birribonguneng ..... they drank  
 birridanginj..... they stood still  
 birridi..... they were there  
 birridoy..... they struck [ something ]  
 birridurndi..... they came back  
 birrikadjuy..... they followed [ something ]  
 birrikarrmi..... they had [ something ]  
 birrimey ..... they got [ something ]  
 birrinang..... they saw [ something ]  
 birringuneng ..... they ate  
 birrini..... they were there  
 birriruy..... they got burnt  
 birriwam..... they went  
 birriweng..... they threw [ something ]  
 birriwong..... they gave [ something ]  
 birriyakminj..... they vanished  
 birriyimeng ..... they said  
 birriyimerranj..... they became  
 birriyoy ..... they camped

#### Language Assignment 7: Dictation practice.

Listen to and write down the sentences in Kunwinjku. Answers are the Kunwinjku sentences in LA 8.

#### Language Assignment 8: Translation practice.

Note: a slash (/) in the answers means there are two possibilities; brackets includes information that is implicit in the other language (this happens a lot!) The Kunwinjku of these pairs are also the answers to Assignment 7. Make sure you cover whichever language you are trying to translate into, then swap over.

1. Bininj birriwam kured.

*The men went home.*

2. Wurdwurd birrinang nganabbarru.

*The children saw a buffalo.*

3. Duruk birridurndi kore mankabo.

*The dogs went back to the river.*

4. Ngalkohbanj dja nakohbanj benenguneng mankung.

*The old lady and the old man ate bush honey.*

5. Bininj , daluk dja wurdwurd birriyoy kore mankabo dja birrinang kunj.

*Men, women and children camped at the river and saw kangaroos.*

**Language Assignment 9: Dictation practice.**

Try writing down these 20 assorted words after listening to the tape. Each one is one of the basic list verbs with one of the 12 beginnings.

nganeyoy  
ngurribonguneng  
yibom  
bakkeng  
ngunewam  
birrini  
ngarriruy  
ngarrdi  
kanenang  
karridanginj  
ngunewam  
benenguneng  
ngawong  
karriyakminj  
yiyimerranj  
ngarrikarrmi  
ngarrweng  
nganeyimeng  
ngunekadjuy  
beneweng

**Language Assignment 10: Review memory list of verb beginnings with action done to him/her/it.**

Note: these are almost identical with the actor-only verb beginnings. The one exception is in bold.

(1) ACTION OF VERB AFFECTS ONE PARTICIPANT [ On Tape ]

nganang..... I saw him/her/it  
yinang..... you saw him/her/it

nang ..... he/she/it saw it [ non-human ]  
 binang ..... he/she/it saw him/her [ human ]  
 ngarrnang ..... we saw him/her/it  
 nganenang ..... we saw him/her/it  
 ngunenang ..... you saw him/her/it  
 benenang ..... they saw him/her/it  
 kanenang ..... we saw him/her/it  
 ngarrinang ..... we saw him/her/it  
 karrinang ..... we saw him/her/it  
 ngurrinang ..... you saw him/her/it  
 birrinang ..... they saw him/her/it

**Language Assignment 11: Memorization.**

Practice writing and saying aloud the other basic verbs with each of these beginnings listed above.

**Language Assignment 12: Translation Practice.**

1. she hit him

*bibom*

2. they (3+) broke it

*birribakkeng*

3. you (2) and I ate it

*kanenguneng*

4. he and I got him

*nganemey*

5. they [2 people] followed her

*benekadjuy*

6. birrinang

*they (3+) saw or they (3+) saw him/her or it*

7. binguneng

*he/she or it ate him or her*

8. benebakkeng

*they (2) broke him/her or it*

9. ngarrikarmi

*we [they and I] had him/her or it*

10. nganenang

*we [he/she or it and I] saw him/her or it*

**Language Assignment 13: Dictation Practice.**

Listen to tape and write the ten assorted verbs. Answers below.

Answers

benenang, ngunebom, birringuneng, ngurrikarmi, ngadoy, weng, yikadjuy, nganebakkeng, karrimey, ngarrkarmi

**Language Assignment 14: Memorization of verb beginnings where action is done to them (=2).**

NOTE: some forms have two variants with the same meaning, depending entirely on the individual style of the speakers.

ngabenbenenang..... I saw them  
yibenbenenang..... you saw them  
benenang ..... he/she/it saw them  
ngarrbenenang..... we saw them  
ngurrbenenang..... you [2] saw them [ ngunebenbenenang ]  
ngarrbenenang ..... we [he and I] saw them [ nganebenenang ]  
bindiang ..... they [2] saw them  
karrbenenang ..... we [you 2 and I] saw them [ kanebenenang ]  
ngarrbenenang ..... we [ not you ] saw them  
karrbenenang ..... we [ and you ] saw them  
ngurrbenenang..... you saw them  
bindiang ..... they saw them

**Language Assignment 15: Review of memory list.**

Pick a few of the basic verbs and write them out with each of these beginnings, saying each aloud with its English meaning.

**Language Assignment 16: Translation practice.**

Them means two people throughout the following.

1. benbenekadjuy

*he/she or it followed them (2)*

2. bindimey

*they got them*

3. ngarrbenbenebom

*we [you (1) or (2) and I] hit them (2) or we [he/she or it and I] hit them*

4. karrbenbenebakkeng

*we [you 3+ and I] broke them (2) or you [you 2 and I] broke them (2)*

5. ngunebenbeneweng

*you (2) threw them (2)*

6. they saw them

*bindinang*

27. you and I hit them

*ngarrbenbenebom*

8. it broke them

*benbenebakkeng*

9. you [two] struck them

*ngunebenbenebom or ngurrbenbenebom*

10. we [you and I] followed them

*ngarrbenbenekadjuy*

**Language Assignment 16: Dictation Practice.**

Listen to and write Kunwinjku and the English translations of these ten verbs. Remember, some Kunwinjku forms may have more than one English meaning. Answers below.

**Answers:**

bindikadjuy (they chases them) benbenebom (he/she/it hit them 2), yibenbenenguneng (you [1] at them [2]), ngurrbenbenedoy (you [2+] struck them [2]), bindiwong (they gave it to them), ngunebenbenenang (you [2] saw them [2]), kanebenbenemey (we [you 2 and I] got them [2]), nganebenbenekarrmi (he/she and I had them [2]), karrbenbenebakkeng,



(we [all you and I] broke them [2]), ngarrbenbenedoy (you and I struck them [2]).

Language Assignment 17: Memorization of beginnings where action is done to them (more than two).

NOTE: The alternates shown in brackets are not read on the tape.

ngabennang .....	I saw them
yibennang .....	you saw them
bennang.....	he/she/it saw them
ngarrbennang .....	we saw them
ngarrbennang .....	we [ you and I ] saw them [nganebennang ]
ngurrbennang.....	you [2] saw them [ ngunebennang ]
bindinang.....	they [2] saw them
karrbennang.....	we [you 2 and I ] saw them [ kanebennang ]
ngarrbennang .....	we [ not you ] saw them
karrbennang.....	we [ and you ] saw them
ngurrbennang.....	you saw them
bindinang.....	they saw them

Language Assignment 18: Translation practice.

Note: *them* always means more than two participants.

1. benbom

*he/she or it him them (3+)*

2. bindikadjuy

*they followed them - no way of knowing how many participants from just this word.*

3. ngarrbenmey

*we [you and I] got them (3+)*

4. karrbennguneng

*we [you (3+) and I] ate them (3+)*

5. ngunebenkarmi.

*you (2) had them (3+)*

1. they followed them

*bindikadjuy*

2. you and I got them

*ngarrbenmey*

3. it had them

*benkarrmi*

4. you [two] broke them

*ngunebenbakkeng* or *ngurrbenbakkeng*

5. we [ you and I ] struck them.

*ngarrbenbom*

**Language Assignment 19: Dictation.**

Listen to tape and write.

Answers:

karrbenbom

bindimey

bendoy

ngunebenmey

kanebenmey

ngurrbenbakkeng

ngabenkarrmi

ngarrbenbakkeng

bindibom

ngarrbenkadjuy

**Language Assignment 20: Memorization: more key verbs.**

These are extra verbs. All of them are based on the ones already known.

They use all the same beginnings as the ones already discussed.

- bawong ..... he/she/it left it  
 bekkang ..... he/she/it heard  
 bimbom ..... he/she /it wrote or drew  
 burrbom ..... he/she/it knew, thought  
 doweng ..... he/she/it died, got sick  
 dulubom ..... he/she/it shot it  
 durndiweng ..... he/she/it sent it back  
 kang ..... he/she/it took something from a to b  
 kinjeng ..... he/she/it cooked something  
 kukburrbom ..... he/she/it recognized it, knew what it was  
 kurlbawam ..... he/she/it bled  
 marneyimeng ..... he/she/it said  
 rlobmeng ..... he/she/it ran

warreminj..... he/she/it got bad  
warrewong..... he/she/it made trouble, made mistake  
wong..... he/she/it gave something to it [ Note: this is a bit unusual. birriwong looks like it should mean "they gave him/her/it" but it actually means, "they gave something to him/her/it. ]  
yakwong..... he/she/it used up all of it

Other useful words.

dja..... and  
bokenh..... two  
kulabbarl..... waterhole, billabong  
mayh..... animals generally [ also other meanings]  
kinga..... crocodile  
bu..... when, as, [ also other meanings]

**Language Assignment 21: REVIEW ALL MATERIAL TO DATE.**

You can use this LA as a sort of half way point examination.

Listen to and write the five sentences from the tape, then provide a translation into English. Answers are given as LA 22 below.

**Language Assignment 22: Translation practice.**

Note: these are also the answers to LA 21.

1. Bininj dja daluk benewam djenj dja benemey bokenh, benekinjeng benenguneng.

*A man and woman went fishing and got two, they cooked them and ate them.*

2. Nganang nakimuk bininj dulubom kunj kore kulabbarl.

*I saw a big man shoot a kangaroo at the waterhole.*

3. Wurdwurd bokenh benenang nganabbarru nguneng kundalk kore mankabo, dja benedurndi kured bindimarneyimeng nakohbanj ngalkohbanj.

*Two children saw a buffalo eating grass at the river, so they went back home and told the old man and the old lady.*

4. Ngawam ngabenbenemey wurdwurd bokenh dja ngabenbenedurndiweng kured.

*I went and I got two children and I sent them home.*

5. Nakohbanj bibom nganabbarru dja doweng.  
*The/a buffalo hit the old man and he died.*

Language Assignment 23: Dictation and translation.

Listen to the children's story on the tape, try to write in Kunwinjku and translate. Answer below.

Barnangarrani bininj bokenh benekoluy kore mankabo, kumekbe benedanjbuni djenj. Kaluk nakudji balwam nang nawern nawu djenj kahmirnderri, wanjh bikayhmeng, "Yimray kondah kore nawern kahre."

"Yoh, kaluk ngabalre dja med kondah ngawohdanjbun ngalkudji burd."

Wanjh balwam nang kahkukyo kore kukadjid nakudji nakimuk namarnkol. Wanjh bimarneyimeng, "Ngokko yirranjbom dja ngayemanwali ngarranjbun ba ngarrbebbekukkan."

"Yoh, yimray. Nanih kahre nakudji."

Wanjh djahdjalnang, danjbom.

Wanjh benekukngormey benekang kured kore benehreddi. Kumekbe benererrngmey beneworrhmeng, wanjh benekinjeng. Benemadbom korroko, wanjh benewayhkeng benenguneng beneworrkminj. Wanjh bonj.

Language Assignment 24: Translation.

1. Nakohbanj bennang djenj kore mankabo.

*The/an old man saw fish at/in the river.*

2. Nakimuk bininj wam benbenemey wurdwurd kore shop.

*The/a big man saw two children at/in the shop.*

3. Bininj dja daluk benenang nganabbarru dja benewam kured.

*A man and a woman saw a buffalo and went home.*

4. Daluk benbeneweng djenj.

*The/a woman threw (the two) fish*

5. Wurdwurd bindikadjuy duruk.

*(The ) children followed (the) dogs.*

6. Bininj bokenh benewam benedulubom nganabbarru dja benekinjeng kunkanj.

*Two men went and shot a buffalo and cooked the meat.*

7. Daluk benkadjuj wurdwurd bu birriwam birrimey djenj, dja benwong mankung.

*The/a woman followed the children when they went and got fish, and gave them bush honey.*

8. Ngarrkarmi duruk nakimuk dja nguneng kunkanj kore kured.

*We had a big dog and it ate meat at the camp.*

9. Bininj dja daluk bindidurndiweng wurdwurd bu bindinang birridi kore kinga yoy.

*The man and the woman sent the children back when they saw them where the crocodile lived/was.*

10. Ngarrbenbenedulubom kunj bokenh dja benekurlbawam.

*We shot two kangaroos and they bled.*

Language Assignment 25: Translation.

1. They ate them

*Bindinguneng*

2. The old man saw the children at home.

*Nakohbanj bennang (or benbenenang if two) wurdwurd kore kured.*

3. We [ you and I ] got them [two] dogs.

*Ngarrbenbenemey duruk bokenh.*

4. They [two] saw them and followed them to the river.

*Bindinang dja bindikadjuy kore mankabo.*

5. You [two] hit them [two] and followed them to the waterhole.

*Ngunebenbenedom dja ngunebenbenekadjuy kore kulabbarl. Or, Ngurrbenbenedom dja ngurrbenbenekadjuy kore kulabbarl*

6. You and I saw the two children at the trees and we sent them back.

*Ngarrbenbenenang wurdwurd bokenh kore kundulk, dja ngarrbenbenedurndiweng.*

7. Two old ladies saw the buffalo at the billabong, and they went home.

*Ngalkohbanj bokenh benenang nganabbarru kore kulabbarl, dja benedokmeng kured.*

8. I had two dogs and a kangaroo, and a man shot them.

*Ngakarrmi duruk bokenh dja kunj, dja bininj bendulubom.*

9. We [ them and me ] saw the buffalos at the waterhole, and we shot two of them, cooked them and ate the meat.

*Ngarrinang nganabbarru kore kulabbarl, dja ngarridulubom, ngarrbenbenekinjeng dja ngarrnguneng kunkanj.*

10. Two children followed the two animals to the river, then they went back, climbed a tree and got some wild honey.

*Wurdwurd bokenh bindikadjuy mayh bokenh kore mankabo, wanjh benedurndi benebidbom kundulk dja benemey mankung.*

Language Assignment 26: Review of verb beginnings where action affects you, me, us.

WARNING: Unlike previous revision exercises which directed memorization, this one assumes you have tried to memorize the material from the text book pages 66-70.

1.bibom

*we hit you (more than one)*

2.ngunnang

*it saw you/you 2*

3.wong

*I gave it to you/you 2*

4. benbenekayhmeng

*I called you two*

5. they took you

*ngundikang*

6. kanbenebekkang

*you two heard me*

7. you said to us/me

*kandimarneyimeng*

8. he saw us

*kannang*

9. she hit me

*nganbom*

10. they liked us (two

*kandimarnedjareni*

Language Assignment 27: Review of verb endings.

WARNING: This assignment assumes you have tried to memorize the endings, treated on pages 76-92. (Material you need not have known is in brackets)

1. he didn't go

*(minj) rawinj*

2. you (1) run!

*yirlobmen*

3. I was going back

*ngadurndengi*

4. it was lying there

*yoy*

5. they are giving it to them

*kabindiwon*

6. you two shot yourselves

*nguneduluburrinj*

7. I might hear

*ngabekkayinj*

8. you (3+) didn't know

*minj ngurriburribuyinj*

9. we (not you) didn't work

*minj ngarridurrkmirrangimeninj/  
minj ngarridurrkmirriwirrinj*

10. it was burning

*rungi*

**Language Assignment 28: FINAL TEST ON ALL VERB BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS.**

Listen to and write down the Kunwinjku. These items assume you have worked through the text book up to page 95. The answers form the words in LA 29.

**Language Assignment 29: Translation Practice.**

Note: these sentences are also the answers to LA 28.

1. nganebenbenebuyinj

*he/she and I didn't hit them (2)*



2. kandina

*you (3+) look at me!*

3. bu

*he/she/it should hit it*

4. bindingalkeyi

*they didn't find them*

5. nganbenebekkan

*he is hearing us (2)*

6. kandimarneni

*you were there for me/us*

7. ngurbendurndiweng

*you (2+) sent them (3+) back*

8. karrbenbenewemen

*we (all of you and I) should throw them (2)*

9. binani

*he/she/it was looking at him/her or we were looking at you (2+)*

10. ngawong

*I gave him/her/it something*

APPENDICES:  
Assorted Extra Materials

## Part One: Introduction to Environmental Vocabulary

### NOTES ABOUT THIS SECTION

This handout is designed to equip you to ask your Kunwinjku teachers intelligent questions about the environment. Don't assume this information is complete or exact. Also, remember that some items have several names.

If you are willing to spend the time being taken on food trips and taught this "on the job" you will soon build up a lot of information.

It is very tempting, when learning Kunwinjku, to pursue a lot of vocabulary of this type. We wanted to make it a bit easier for you so you can spend your time on the much more important areas of learning. Knowing all the kinship terminology and at least some Kunbalak (mother in law language) are much more useful goals in terms of being able to effectively communicate with Kunwinjku people. However, collecting this environmental stuff will hopefully help you to learn other more socially oriented topics as well.

Our particular thanks to H Manakgu [ Ngalingarridj ] for her assistance with this section.

### a. Seasonal Calendar

KUDJEWK ( approximately January, February, March)

There is a lot of heavy rain. It is always hot and humid. Floodwaters everywhere. Grass gets taller. Fruit and root foods are growing.

BANGKERRENG (approximately April)

The rain is almost finished. Wind from the east bends the long grass. Seeds are starting to fall. Time to get goose eggs. Plenty of new fruit.

YEKKE ( approximately May and June )

This is the cold, dry season. Grass turns brown and burns. Lily roots and seeds are ready.

WURRKENG ( approximately June, July, August )

Hot dry weather begins. Eucalyptus trees are have flowers, especially Stringy Bark trees. Wild honey ( mankung ) is plentiful.

KURRUNG ( approximately August, September, October )

Hot and dry. All waterholes drying up.

KUNUMELENG ( approximately October, November, December)

First storms and rain begin. As the ground gets moist, first new grass shoots up. Time to get yams. New fruit almost ready.

### b. Sample of weather terms.

kunmayorrk - wind

mandjewk - rain

kadjakdung - it's raining

namarrkon - lightning

ngabonjdjekdownen -I'm very cold!

ngakuklardmen - I'm too hot

kamayorrbun - the wind is blowing

namarrkon doy - lightning struck

## c. Sample of tree names [ Kundulk ]

Mandjalbirddo	[ White Apple ]
Mandjardduk	[ Red Apple ]
Mandudjmi	[ Green Plum ]
Mandak	[ Yellow Plum ]
Mankurndalh	[ Black Plum ]
Marrunj	[ Palm ]

There are dozens of other Kunwinjku tree names.

## d. Sample of Bird Names [ Mayhmayh ]

Manimunak	Magpie Goose
Djirlikuybirr	Whistle Duck
Makkakkurr	Pelican
Kardabaybay	Pied Cormorant
Bonbon	Little Pied Cormorant
Komorlo	Egret
Djakarna	Jabiru
Ngalkordow	Brolga
Benuk	Bush Turkey
Kurdukadji	Emu
Kambarrikambarri	Burdekin Duck
Kawuk	Heron
Kebbaldjurri	Spoon Bill

There are about 200 other Kunwinjku bird names.

Mayh nawu welyi [animals with wings]

Kurluban Fruit bat or Flying fox

## e. Sample of Fish Names [ Djenj ]

Dunbuhmanj	Bream
wakih	Prawn
Namarnkol	Barramundi
Manmakkawarri	Cat Fish or Salmon Cod
Marddarr	Crayfish
Kuwalili	Mullet
Kuluybirr	Saratoga
Namarddakka	Nail fish
Makali	Mud cod
Kurrkabal	Long Tom
Njarlkan	Archer Fish
Karnubirr	Mussel

## f. Sample snake names [ Nayin ]

Karnbowh	Green tree snake. [ People say that he bites young girls on the breast ]
Kedjebe	File snake
Borlokko	Water Python
bek	Death Adder
yirrbardbard	Western Brown Snake
dadbe	King Brown Snake

Note nabang nayin = poisonous snake.

g. Sample of Bush Food Cooked before eating.

	[ Manme manbu karrikinje ]
Mandem	Roots from Water lilly.
Ngarderrhwo	Short-necked turtle.
Ngalmangiyi	Long-necked turtle.
Kurndamen	Frill-necked lizard.
Kurrih	Blue-tongued lizard.
Djanay	Goanna species
Kalawan	Goanna species
Borlokko	Water snake
Nawaran	Python
Warradjan	Pig-nosed turtle
Maddjurn	Python that barks like a dog. [ People say you should kill it when it is not barking or you might drown. ]
Kedjebe	File snake
Mankirndjek	Cheeky Yam. Peel and soak overnight in running water before you cook it.

h. Sample of Bush Food eaten raw.  
[ Manme manbu karringun bu djalkuk. ]

Korang or Dorlek	Slug or grub that lives in trees especially manbudbud or manbornde. We use the string from that tree to make bags and other special things.
Mankung	Wild Honey.
Marrunj	Palm leaves
Kurndih	Grubs from anthill

i. Directions etc. [ Baleh karriyimowon ]

koyek	east
kakbi	north
walem	south
karrikad	west
kanjdji	downhill
karrkad	uphill
kukun	right hand side
kudjakku	left hand side
djarreh	long way
darnkih	close
bewh	further
kondah	here
borledmikenh	other side

j. Sample Geographic Terms [ Kunbolkkenh ]

kurrulum	hill/s
kunwardde	rock, rock country
kubolkdarleh	dry country
kunbolk	country, place
manbolh	road
kunkayalanj	sand, sandy place
mankabo	river

kulabbarl, manlabbarl	waterhole
kukih	swamp
kurralk	grass
manbedje	spear grass

## k. Sample of Small animals etc.

dord	lice
wirlarrk	eggs of lice [ also of manimunak ]
djak	ant [ generic ]
kabo	green ant
djodj	centipede
kardab	spider [ generic ]
dan	poisonous grub
dabbe	paper wasp
merlehmerley	butterfly
djalangkarridjdjalangkarridj	dragon fly
bod	fly
mudmud	sandfly
warlidorn	edible green ant
yukkuyukku	firefly
djadeddje	grasshopper

There are lots more.

## l. Sample miscellaneous animal names.

kunj	kangaroo [ generic ]
duruk	domestic dog
dalkken	dingo
yok	bandicoot
djebuyh	possum
nganjmarr	native cat
djabbur	native cat
djarrang	horse
bik	pig
kinga	salt water crocodile

## m. Sample of Kangaroo names [ kunj ]

barrk	male black wallaroo
djukerre	female black wallaroo
karndayh	female large red kangaroo
korlobarr	male large red kangaroo
kalkberd	red wallaroo female
worlerrk	red wallaroo male
nabarlek	small black rock wallaby

## n. Assorted living things.

ngalmangiyi	long necked turtle
ngaderrhwo	short necked turtle
kordbolbok	frog [ generic ]
baladj	leech

o. Body Parts

kunburrk	body
kunkeb	face, nose
kunmim	eye
kunmimday	pupil of eye
kunmimdjamud	eyelashes
kunkebbord	nasal septum
kundang	mouth
kunyidme	tooth
kunberrekalk	chest
kunwobe	lungs
kundiw	liver
kunberl	arm
kunbid	hand, finger
kundenge	foot
kundad	leg

There are dozens more of these.

p. Abstract Nouns

kunmodmikenh	peace, quiet
kunnjilng	feelings, emotions
kunmayali	idea, thoughts
mankarre	law, decision
kunyid	hatred
kunmak	goodness
kunyurmi	contractual system
karrimarnedjaremerrenkenh	love [lit. concerning the fact that we love one another]

Sample List of other environmental topics for exploration:

colours and dyes  
bat species [ there are several ]  
worms and their ilk  
medicinal plants and insects  
Place names

## Part Two: Varieties of Kunwinjku.

Kunwinjku speakers don't all speak Kunwinjku exactly the same way: this is true of speakers of all languages. Each of us has our own unique version of the language, our *idiolect*. There are also characteristic ways that identifiable groups of people speak a particular variety of the language, and there are some varieties that everyone uses from time to time (just as in English we need to speak formally on some occasions).

### AGE AND CEREMONIAL VARIATIONS

Children go through the same stages as English speakers in growing up. There is an identifiable young children's way of talking, which adults sometimes join in when talking to them. For example children will say *yirrire* instead of *ngurrire*, using impeccable logic in mistaking the first two letters, since *yire* is *you (1) are going*, therefore, they think, *you (3+)* would be *yirrire*. This is exactly the same sort of logical but incorrect encounter English speaking children have with language when they put a past tense ending on a verb like *go*. ("goed"). Teenagers have their own jargon opaque to the rest of their society, as is the case in English. There are no very clear gender based systemic differences. There are special languages associated with certain ceremonies, but these are not accessible to most people.

### SOCIOLECTS

Kunwinjku also contains two main sociolects. Kunbalak, or mother in law language, is used when talking to or about, or in presence of people in *ngalkurrng* type relationships with the speaker. (It has some other uses too that are too complex to explain here). Kunbalak uses the same grammar, and many of the same words as Kunwinjku, but uses several hundred different root forms for common words. The following translation illustrates how it works:

KUNWINJKU: bininj bokenh benewam kured , wanjh benebunguneng kukku

KUNBALAK: yulyul burlarlh benedokang kumerlwon wanjh benedjurkinjyakwam kundjurkinj

ENGLISH: two men went to the camp and they drank some water

There is a book available about Kunbalak, containing a dictionary of Kunbalak terms along with stories translated into both English and Kunbalak from Kunwinjku, together with more information about the use of Kunbalak. Copies can be obtained from the Kunwinjku Language Centre. It is called *Kunbalak: stories for Kunwinjku young people in mother-in-law language, ordinary Kunwinjku and English*.

The second major sociolect is called Kundebi ( or Kundembuy ). Very



few young people master this, and those who do are regarded highly by other Kunwinjku speakers. Kundebi is a system of reference terms used to refer to a third party in a way that recognizes what both speaker and hearer call that other person in kinship terms. For example, a mother speaking to her daughter about the daughter's husband, refers to him as *namamam*. The daughter replies using the term *ngardduknamam*. In both cases they are talking about the same man, but this pair of words embodies the fact that one speaker calls the man *kakkali*, and the other ( the mother ) calls him *korlonj*. There are a couple of hundred of these terms, and in order to use them, you obviously need to know what you as speaker call each other Kunwinjku person you want to refer to, AND you need to know what your hearer calls that other person. The Kunwinjku Language Centre plans to publish a book about this intriguing and complex language sub-system in 1997.

#### DIALECTS AND OTHER VARIATIONS

Despite the small number of speakers, Kunwinjku has lots of identifiable groups within it speaking in slightly different ways. At clan level, Kunwinjku people can point out to you slight differences in the way some families will speak. These are often quite unimportant, and can be a source of friendly teasing. Ask Kunwinjku people about this. (This is similar to the way regional English accents can be a source of teasing, and lead us to make snap judgements about the people speaking in a particular way).

There are also dialects, that is varieties of the language that are associated with particular geographical areas, and the differences from general Kunwinjku are more distinctive . At the Eastern end of the chain of Kunwinjku speaking communities, they speak what some people call the Kuninjku ( Eastern Kunwinjku) dialect. Dangbon, (or Kune or Walem) dialect is spoken by families who come from the south eastern outstations. Kundjeyhmi ( or Mayali) is the dialect of Kunwinjku spoken by a small group in the Kakadu Park. Because some of the traditional owners of Kakadu Park speak this dialect, the park has used their spelling system, so we have provided a summary of the Kundjeyhmi system in the next section. There is some discussion about terminology for all these language types, and at some point Kunwinjku speakers themselves will decide what to call the whole chain of dialects, whether Mayali ( as has been suggested by some linguists) or Kunwok, or something else.

#### OTHER LANGUAGES

There are also several completely different languages spoken by Kunwinjku people as second or third languages, and by people in nearby communities. The most important of these are:

Maung spoken by people on Goulburn Island (Warruwi) and many Kunwinjku people who have relatives from that community.

Yiwadja spoken at Croker Island (Mindjilang) and a few Kunwinjku people who have relatives from that community.

Burarra/Burarda and Rembarrnga spoken at Maningrida (Manawukan) and some Kunwinjku people who have relatives from that community.

Gagudju spoken by a few people in the Kakadu Park who mainly speak Kunwinjku.

Gunbalang spoken by a few people north east of Oenpelli and by a few in Oenpelli.

Kunwinjku is in fact a *lingua franca* for the Western Arnhem region, with many speakers in, and south of Maningrida, and speakers as far south as Pine Creek, and Katherine. Most people from Goulburn and Croker Islands speak Kunwinjku as a second language.

## Overview comparison of Kunwinjku and Gun-djeihme / Mayali

Kunwinjku is one of a group of closely related languages - they are in fact dialects of each other: Kune is spoken on the eastern end of the Oenpelli outstations area, and Gun-djeihmi, or Mayali in the southern part of the Kakadu Park. Kunwinjku is spoken in between, and by a larger number of speakers than the other two. Although the two languages have the same sound patterns, a decision has been made by the Gun-djeihmi speakers to use a slightly different spelling system from Kunwinjku. This document uses their system but shows the Kunwinjku spelling of the same items.

Gun-djeihmi and Kunwinjku are regarded as dialects because their speakers can readily understand each other. If you can speak Kunwinjku you will find you can understand and be understood in Gun-djeihmi, with a few minor exceptions, outlined in this document. The differences are in the areas of:

- use of hyphens
- spelling systems [ but most sounds are spelt the same ]
- some vocabulary items
- slight difference in verb beginnings and pronouns

### Aims of this document

This is not a comprehensive comparison, and is designed only to allow a person learning Kunwinjku to also learn Gun-djeihmi. This covers the most obvious difficulties faced when a Kunwinjku speaker is communicating with Gun-djeihmi speakers.

### Two warnings:

This is a simplified comparison only. Languages change quickly, and there are more complex aspects of difference not explored here. I have outlined the main areas that will be "new" after learning the Kunwinjku verb system and spelling.

Be sensitive to the fact that people may wish to keep their language quite distinct from adjacent languages, despite many similarities. [ For example, think of your reaction to an American actor trying to imitate an Australian accent]. Even if we understand each other, there is an emotional charge on even minor differences in pronunciation.

Note that the Kunwinjku spelling of Gun-djeihmi is Kundjeyhmi.

Ask Kunwinjku and Gun-djeihmi speakers about the use of the term Mayali. There is some doubt that it should be used as another word for Gun-djeihmi, and its meaning is generally unclear - pending more analysis by Aboriginal people of their own languages.

## Spelling System Differences:

## Kunwinjku

no hyphens except at line breaks  
mankimuk, kudjewk, ngalbadjan

k for any k/g sound  
kunkanj, kamak, nakimuk

*both use kk for the double/long form:*

gukku, kakkak

noun class beginnings:  
mankung, ngalbeywurd  
kunkanj, nawern

## Gun-djeihmi

hyphens after noun class prefix  
an-kimuk, gu-geb, al-badjan

g at the start of syllables  
gunkanj, gamak, nagimuk

kukku, gakkak.

noun class beginnings:  
an-kung, al-beywurd  
gun-ganj, na-wern

*Same blended sounds [ diphthongs ]*

a w yawkyawk, ngal-yaw, yawkani

a u yaukyauk, al-yau, yaugani

a y malaywi, yimray, mayh

a i malaiwi, yimrai, maih

e w bewh, mandjewk, kewkmeng

e u beuh, an-djeuk, keukmeng

e y ngeybom, nabeyngu

e i ngeibom, nabeingu

i w kundiw, kebnjiwkmiwam

i u gun-diu, gebnjiukmiwam

o w rowk, karnbowh

ou rouk, garnbouh

oy woybukkih, doy

o i woibukkih, doi

uy ruy, kadjuy

u i rui, gadjui

Sample of different vocabulary items: [mostly both language use the same words]

Kunwinjku	Gun-djeihmi	English
minj	djama	not
wirlarrk	dabu	egg
kaddum	gadi	on top, above
kurduk	an-gord	faeces
yoh	woh	yes
njale	njanjuk	what?
njalkekenh	njanjukgen	why?
dalkken	na-garndegin	dingo
djarreh	djarre	distant, long way

**Complete list of differences in the verb beginnings:**

[1] The Gun-djeihmi form is shown only when different from Kunwinjku.

[2] Only the ones underlined are really different. The other ones that appear different are simply a result of the Gun-djeihmi spelling.

Group a: action affects no one beside person doing verb, or only one person.

Kunwinjku	Gun-djeihmi	
nga		
yi		
ka	ga	[ non-past forms ]
[zero]	<u>ba</u>	[ past forms ]
bi		
ngarr		
ngane	<u>ngani</u>	
ngune	<u>nguni / kuni</u>	
kabene	<u>gabani</u>	
bene	<u>bani</u>	
kane	<u>kani</u>	
ngarri		
karri	garri	
ngurri	<u>kurri</u> / ngurri / nguddi	
kabirri	<u>gabarri</u>	
birri	<u>barri</u>	

Note: some speakers of Gun-djeihmi drop the ng at the start of these verb prefixes, resulting in beginnings like: *urriwam* [ for ngurriwam ] and *awam* [ for ngawam ]. Sometimes ngurriwam becomes wurriwam.

Group b: action affects "them" either two, or three and more. These are the same as Kunwinjku except that:

ben	ban
benbene	banbani
bindi	bandi
ngarr	ngarr
ngane	ngarr
ngarri	ngarr
kane	ngarr
ngarri	ngarr
karri	ngarr
ngune	ngurr / kurr
ngurri	ngurr / kurr

Examples to illustrate:

*Kunwinjku*  
 ngunebenenebom  
 yibennang  
 kabindinan  
 babom  
 bibom

*Gun-djeihmi*  
 kurrbanbanibom  
 yibannang  
 gabandinan  
 bom  
 bibom

Group c: action of verb affects me, us.

kan	gan
kanbene	ganmani
kandi	gandi
ngan	ngan
nganbene	ganbani
ngandi	ngandi

Group d: action affects speaker and associates: me, us.  
 The Kunwinjku form is given, with the Gun-djeihmi beneath.

Who does action?	Action affects:		
	you [1]	you [2]	you [3+]
I	zero zero	benbene banbani	zero bi / di
he, she, it	ngun gun / ngun	ngunbene ngunbani / gunbani	ngun ngudberre / gudberre
we	ngundi kundi / ngundi	ngundi / bi bi / di	ngundi / bi bi / di
they	ngundi kundi	ngundi pangunbani / gunmani	ngundi bi / di

## Differences in Pronouns (main items only)

ngad	ngad nungga	us=he/she and I
ngarrewoneng	ngarriwoneng	ours=them and I
karrewoneng	garriwoneng	ours=you and I
ngurrewoneng	gurruwoneng	yours (2+)
ngudda	wudda/gudda/ngudda	you
ke	nguddanggi	your (1)
bedda [ 2 ]	banibogen	they (2)

## Complete Table of All Gun-djeihmi Verb Beginnings.

Please read notes on opposite page. This table should also be used in conjunction with the notes on page 72 and the whole section on Verb Beginnings (Pages 51-75)

Action done to... Subject or agent "doer"	no-one (Intransitive verb: no object.)	Third person objects				First person objects			Second person objects		
		Singular		Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural
		him her	it	them [2]	them [3]	me	us [2]	us [3]	you [1]	you [2]	you [3]
1st person singular <b>I</b>	NGA*	->	->	NGABANBANI	NGABAN				∅	BANBANI	BI / DI
2nd person singular <b>you [1]</b>	YI	->	->	YIBANBANI	YIBAN	GAN	GANMANI	GAN			
3rd person singular <b>he, she, it</b>	<u>GA</u> **	*** <u>GA</u> BI	<u>GA</u>	<u>GA</u> BANBANI	<u>GA</u> BAN	NGAN	GANMANI	GAN	GUN / NGUN	GUNMANI / NGUNBANI	GUDBERRE / NGUDBERRE
1st person dual inclusive <b>we [you &amp; I]</b>	NGARR	->	->	NGARRBANBANI	NGARRBAN						
1st person dual exclusive <b>we [he or she &amp; I]</b>	NGANI	->	->	NGARRBANBANI	NGARRBAN				NGUNDI / GUNDI	BI / DI	BI / DI
2nd person dual <b>you [2]</b>	NGUNI / GUNI	->	->	NGURRBANBANI GURRBANBANI	NGURRBAN GURRBAN	GANDI	GANDI	GANDI			
3rd person dual <b>they [2]</b>	<u>GA</u> BANI	->	->	<u>GA</u> BANDI	<u>GA</u> BANDI	NGANDI	GANDI	GANDI	NGUNDI / GUNDI	GUNMANI / NGUNBANI	BI / DI
1st person Trial <b>we [you 2 &amp; I]</b>	GANI / NGARRI	->	->	NGARRBANBANI / GARRBANBANI	NGARRBAN						
1st person plural inclusive <b>we [you 3+ &amp; I]</b>	GARRI	->	->	NGARRBANBANI	NGARRBAN						
1st person plural exclusive <b>we [they &amp; I]</b>	NGARRI	->	->	NGARRBANBANI	NGARRBAN				NGUNDI / GUNDI-	BI / DI	BI / DI
2nd person plural <b>you [3+]</b>	NGURRI / GURRI	->	->	NGURRBANBANI GURRBANBANI	NGURRBAN GURRBAN	GANDI	GANDI	GANDI			
3rd person plural <b>they [3+]</b>	<u>GA</u> BARRI	->	->	<u>GA</u> BINDI	<u>GA</u> BINDI	NGANDI	GANDI	GANDI	NGUNDI / GUNDI	GUNMANI / NGUNBANI	BI / DI

## Gun-djeihmi Verb Beginnings Table

This table summarizes all the information about the pronominal prefixes, i.e.. verb beginnings, in Gun-djeihmi. This information needs to be memorized but is easier than it first appears. (Try to learn the first column first, then the next four, then the rest). The beginnings in this table are never used as words on their own. They only occur as the first element in verbs. The Kunwinjku beginnings differ in some important ways from Gun-djeihmi, not just in the spelling, so they are shown on a separate table.

### NOTES ON USING THIS TABLE

1 The arrows mean you keep using the same beginning as in the left hand column. So the top left hand entry "nga-" stays the same for the first three columns.

\* 2. Throughout this table, whenever a beginning starts with the NG, note that in normal speech NG can disappear. So Ngawam (I went) can be said and written Awam. Note for example, that NGURRI can also be said and written as *urri*, *gurri*, and sometimes *uddi*.

\*\*3 The ga prefixes are underlined. These ga beginnings are only used when the action is happening now or in the future. When talking about something already done, the ga is left off the word, and when the action is done in the past by "he", "she" or "it", the ga changes to ba. (\*\* on the table shows where this occurs). For example, he is seeing ganan, but he saw banang (Notice the ending changes too).

\*\*\* Notice what happens when the action is done to a human - he is hitting her gabibun, but he was hitting her bibun - the ga has gone, but the bi part of the prefix stays.

NOTE: These rules only applies to the ga beginnings that have been underlined on the table. Words starting with gani or with garr etc. have nothing to do with this. In other words the disappearing ga rule only applies to the third person subject prefixes (*he, she, it, or they* doing things).

4. Boxes left blank on this table are where there is no need for any beginning, usually because the action would be reflexive, which is shown by an ending, not a beginning.

5. The symbol Ø means that you don't put anything at the front of the verb, and in this case the nothing means something.

6. Where there are two possibilities in a box, either can be used. Be guided by your Kunwinjku language instructor on which to use.



KUNWINJKU AND GUN-DJEIHMI SPELLING ( GUN-WINJGU AND KUNDJEYHMI ) EXPERIMENTAL POCKET SUMMARY

Kunwinjku	Nearest English Approx.	Gun-djeihmi
a	<u>part</u> , <u>father</u> , <u>large</u>	a
b	Bob, bib	b
d	do, did	d
dj (start of syllable)	<u>j</u> oy, <u>j</u> ump	dj
(end of syllable)	ca <u>tch</u> , wa <u>tch</u>	
e	<u>air</u> , <u>rare</u> , <u>bear</u>	e
See k	go, get	g
h	oh'oh, bot'le (air stops)	h
i	<u>beet</u> , <u>seat</u>	i
k (When it sounds like..)	go, get	g
(When it sounds like..)	<u>skip</u> , <u>skil</u>	k
l	lily, all	l
m	Mum, me	m
n	no, in	n
ng	<u>singsong</u> (can start word)	ng
nj (start of syllable)	" <u>Goodonya!</u> "	nj
(end of syllable)	abo <u>yn</u> agirl	
o	<u>awful</u> , <u>roar</u>	o
r	red, rare	r
rd	Retroflexed d	rd
rl	Retroflexed l	rl
rn	Retroflexed d	rn
rr	Start of trill	rr
u	Stew, true (wide, back)	u
w	wow, owe	w
y	boy, yippey	y

Combinations: (Hint, say both sounds without trying to blend them)

aw	<u>brow</u> , <u>now</u>	au
ay	<u>high</u> , <u>die</u>	ai
ew	<u>air-oo</u> (said fast)	eu
ey	<u>Hey!</u> They. Prey	ei
iw	<u>phe<u>w!</u></u>	iu
iy	<u>Whe<u>ee!</u></u>	iy
ow	<u>oh</u> , show, <u>blown</u>	ou
oy	<u>royal</u> , <u>oil</u>	oi
uy	<u>gooey!</u>	ui

Note: English sounds are only approximate - you need to practice by listening to and talking to native speakers. Use this chart in conjunction with more detailed notes.

Remember: Gun-djeihmi uses hyphens to break up words where Kunwinjku doesn't: eg, kunwok; gunwok. Both use hyphens like English to break words at the end of lines.

The sound written "Ng" is sometimes difficult to hear at the beginning of words. In Gun-djeihmi it can be left off the spelling, eg. ngalkimuk; al-gimuk; an-dudjmi; al-badjan.

Use Capitals and all other punctuation marks just as in English.

## Skin Group Charts - both versions In Kunwinku and Gun-djeihmi Spellings

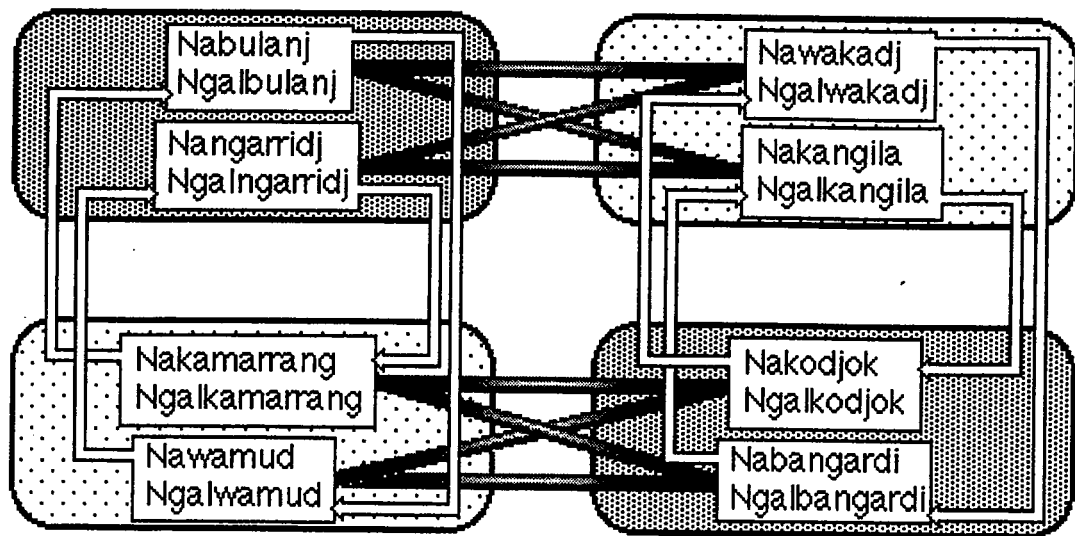
The following pages contain four charts, each one showing the same set of relationship between the same eight skin groups. There is only one skin group system, but each of the eight male and eight female "skins" can have two versions, and each of these versions can be spelt in two different ways! Don't panic. Just learn one very thoroughly first, then move out to the others. Use these charts in conjunction with the notes on pages 2 - 8.

- Chart A: "Nabulanj" forms in Kunwinjku Spelling
- Chart B: "Kela" forms in Kunwinjku Spelling
- Chart C: "Nabulanj" forms in Gun-djeihmi Spelling
- Chart D: "Gela" forms in Gun-djeihmi Spelling.

## Kunkulah - Skin Groups

Chart showing relationships between groups.

CHART A: "Nabulanj" forms in Kunwinjku Spelling.



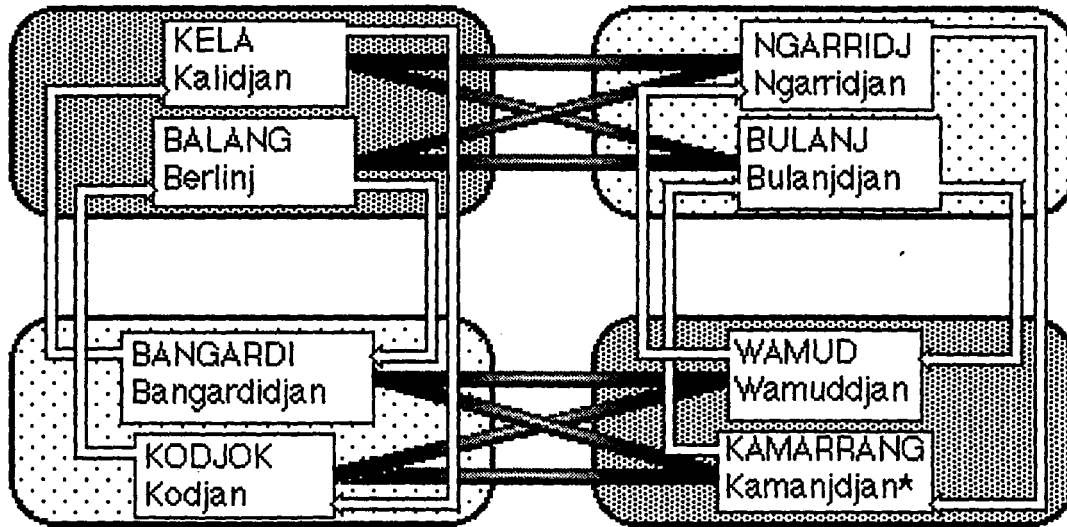
- gives birth to...
- marries...
- Yirridjdja
- Duwa

Na-prefix denotes masculine forms  
 Ngal- prefix denotes feminine forms

## Kunkulah - Skin Groups

Chart showing relationships between groups.

**CHART B: "Kela" forms in Kunwinjku Spelling.**



↳ gives birth to...

▫ Yirridjdja

⊗ marries...

▨ Duwa

CAPITALS ..... masculine form

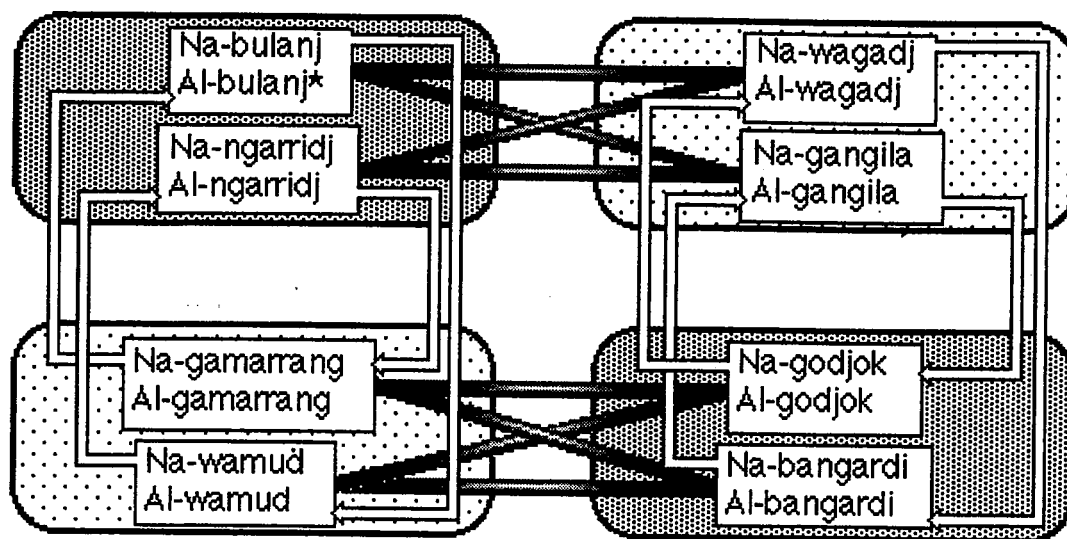
Lower case ..... feminine form


\* Kamanjdjan *can be shortened to* Kamanj.

## Kunkulah - Skin Groups


Chart showing relationships between groups.

**CHART C: "Nabulanj" forms in Gun-djeihmi Spelling.**



 gives birth to...

 Yirridjdja

 marries...

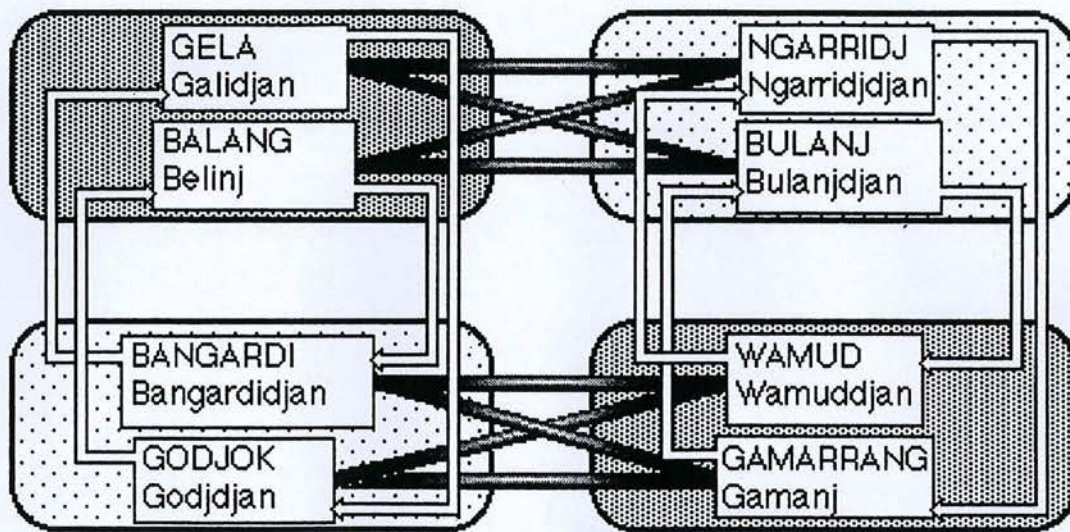
 Duwa

\* Al-bulanj is alternative form  
 Na- prefix denotes masculine form.  
 Al-prefix denotes feminine form.

## Kunkulah - Skin Groups

Chart showing relationships between groups.

CHART D: "Gela" forms in Gun-djeihmi spelling.



↳ gives birth to...

◻ Yirridjdja

⊗ marries...

◼ Duwa

CAPITALS denotes masculine forms.

Lower Case denotes feminine forms.

