

Negotiating Kinship: the language of intersubjectivity in an Australian culture

Abstract. The goal of this paper is to give the reader a sense of the rich varieties of discourse through which speakers of the Australian language *Pitjantjatjara* enact their social relations. The brief sketch here is based on a fuller survey in Rose 2001, using the tools of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) for relating language to its social contexts. The discussion involves three steps: firstly, an outline of the options for enacting interpersonal meanings in Pitjantjatjara, in its systems of MOOD and MODAL ASSESSMENT, secondly, an outline of the system of social relations in Pitjantjatjara culture, governed by the kinship system, and finally, examples of exchanges between various kin, illustrating how the interpersonal potential of the language realizes dimensions of the social system in varying patterns of discourse.

1. Introduction. Pitjantjatjara is a dialect of the Western Desert language which is spoken across a vast arc of arid lands from the Great Sandy Desert of northern Western Australia to the Great Victoria Desert of South Australia. Pitjantjatjara is located approximately at the center of this region, across the borders of Western Australia, Southern Australia, and the Northern Territory. The Western Desert peoples were traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers of very large territories with low population densities (see Tonkinson 1978, Myers 1986 for evocative ethnographic studies). Each of the Western Desert dialects has two or three hundred to a thousand speakers over an area spanning a few hundred kilometers, and today there are probably around 6,000 speakers altogether, in an area the size of western Europe. All the Western Desert peoples now live in settled communities, to which they moved in waves from the late 1930s to 1960s.

The interpersonal metafunction is a distinct mode of meaning in Pitjantjatjara, in both its functional options and structural realizations. Paradigmatically, one distinguishing feature of interpersonal meanings is their gradability, which enables speakers to negotiate their relationships with myriad shades of attitude and engagement. Syntagmatically, interpersonal structures are distinctly prosodic, as Martin (this volume) describes for a range of languages and functional regions. As interactions unfold between speakers, gradations of interpersonal meanings

swell and diminish, as melodious prosodies of tones and wordings. Interpersonal functions have tended to be marginalized in standard ‘morphosyntactic’ descriptions of Australian languages, as these are rarely grounded in an articulated model of social context, and tend to privilege segmental over prosodic features.¹ I have endeavoured here to illustrate relations between social contexts and interpersonal meaning in Pitjantjatjara discourse, in the hope that this may lead to a richer and more accurate understanding of communication in Australian cultures. The language in its cultural contexts is discussed in detail in Rose (2001), and other regions of the grammar are summarized in Rose (1996, 2005), and contrasted with English in Rose (1993, 2004).

2. Descriptive conventions. In the text examples that follow, translations distinguish four ranks of grammatical organization: clause, word group, word, and morpheme. Firstly, most word groups realizing an interpersonal or experiential function are directly translatable from Pitjantjatjara to English, and these are clearly spaced apart in the original clause and its interlinear gloss. Secondly, within each group, each word and grammatical morpheme is translated or labeled (a group may consist of a single word). Thirdly, in the next line, groups are ordered to follow the textual sequence of the original clause as closely as possible, rather than being a ‘free translation’. This approach makes explicit the steps from the original clause, to the interlinear glosses, to the clause rank translation, illustrated in (1). Grammatical affixes realizing functions are shown with a dash.

- (1a) *wati kutjara pula* *a-nu* *malu-ku*
 man two they go-PAST kangaroo-for
 ‘Those two men went hunting for kangaroos.’
- (1b) *kuka kanyila-ku* *tati-nu* *puli-ngka*
 game wallaby-for climb-PAST hill-on
 ‘For wallaby game, that is, they climbed up in the hills.’

Steps in translation of word groups are clearly visible, firstly at word and morpheme ranks within each group, such as *kuka* ‘game’ *kanyila* ‘wallaby’ *-ku* ‘-for’, and then at group rank, from the inflected nominal group *kuka kanyila-ku* to the prepositional phrase ‘for wallaby game’. The experiential function of this group is a circumstance of Purpose, indicated by the suffix *-ku*, the meaning of which is directly translatable by the English preposition ‘for’. On the other hand, verb suffixes are labeled (*a-nu* ‘go-PAST’), as their English translations are more complex

and variable, with combinations of verb suffixes, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. At clause rank, the arrangement of word groups maintains theme and information patterns of original clauses, so, for example, the Purpose comes first in (1b). Finally, at discourse level, clause (1b) elaborates the meaning of clause (1a) by specifying the type of game the men were hunting and where. The elaboration is foregrounded in Pitjantjatjara by starting with the Purpose *kuka kanyila-ku* that elaborates *malu-ku* ‘for kangaroos’. It is made explicit in the translation with an elaborating conjunction ‘that is’.

Grammatical functions are given labels or English glosses as shown in Tables 1-4. These tables summarise options for verbal and nominal affixes and personal pronouns, and their structural forms (see Rose 2001, 2004, 2005 for further discussion of these glossing principles).

2.1. Verb suffixes. Verb suffixes realize either imperative mood, tense in indicative clauses, or aspect in non-finite dependent clauses, set out in Table 1, along with glossing conventions.

Table 1. Options in TENSE and ASPECT

| System | Feature | Example | Translation | Label in text |
|--------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| TENSE | future | <i>tati-lku</i> | will climb | climb-FUT |
| | present | <i>tati-ni</i> | is climbing | climb-PRES |
| | past | <i>tati-nu</i> | did climb | climb-PAST |
| | past durative | <i>tati-ningi</i> | was climbing | climb-DUR |
| | habitual | <i>tati-lpai</i> | does climb | climb-HABIT |
| ASPECT | perfective | <i>tati-ntjikitja</i> | to climb | climb-PERF |
| | imperfective | <i>tati-ra</i> | climbing | climb-IMPF |
| | completed | <i>tati-ntjanu</i> | having climbed | climb-COMPL |

The forms of verb endings realizing imperative mood vary between four formal verb classes (with no semantic significance). Imperative mood is glossed in examples with an exclamation mark.

2.2. (Pro)nominal groups. Pitjantjatjara has a core repertoire of four nominal case inflections which contribute to realizing various participant and circumstantial roles depending on their functional environment in a clause. I have labeled these inflections *active*, *neutral*, *genitive* and *locative*. Their realizations for singular personal pronouns,

common nominals, demonstratives, and proper names are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Options in NOMINAL INFLECTION

| NOMINAL CLASS | active | neutral | genitive | locative |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| personal pronouns '1sg' | <i>ngayulu</i> | <i>ngayu-nya</i> | <i>ngayu-ku</i> | <i>ngayu-la</i> |
| common nominals 'man' | <i>wati-ngku</i> | <i>wati</i> | <i>wati-ku</i> | <i>wati-ngka</i> |
| demonstratives 'this' | <i>nyanga-ngku</i> | <i>nyangatja</i> | <i>nyanga-ku</i> | <i>nyanga-ngka</i> |
| proper names | <i>Mitaiki-lu</i> | <i>Mitaiki-nya</i> | <i>Mitaiki-ku</i> | <i>Mitaiki-la</i> |

Inflecting morphemes are suffixed to the last element in a nominal group, or to each unit in a pronoun complex or nominal group complex. The functions of active and neutral inflections are to distinguish participant roles in multi-participant clauses, and are labeled in examples as ACT or NEUT.² The roles of locative inflections vary according to their functional environment, realizing circumstantial functions of Place, Time, Means, or Accompaniment, and participant functions such as Receiver, and are glossed with appropriate prepositions such as *at*, *to*, *with*. Genitive inflections realize either causal circumstances such as Purpose, or possession, and are glossed with *of*, *to* or *for*.

Options for personal pronouns in PERSON and NUMBER specify the roles of participants in interaction, and whether they are one, two, or more persons. Each category in PERSON and NUMBER may be realized by a full (salient) pronoun, and most may be realized by a clitic pronoun. The paradigm of clitic pronouns in imperative clauses differs from that for indicative clauses. Table 3 gives the realizations of each option in PERSON and NUMBER for active pronouns in imperative clauses, together with the glosses used in examples.

Table 3. Options in PERSON and NUMBER in imperative clauses

| PERSON | NUMBER | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|---------|----------------|--------------|-------|----------------|------------|-------|
| | single | | | dual | | | plural | | |
| | full | clitic | gloss | full | clitic | gloss | full | clitic | gloss |
| addressee | <i>nyuntu</i> | \emptyset | you | <i>nyupali</i> | <i>-pula</i> | you2 | <i>nyura</i> | <i>-ya</i> | you3 |
| speaker | <i>ngayulu</i> | <i>-na</i> | I | <i>ngali</i> | <i>-li</i> | we2 | <i>nganana</i> | <i>-la</i> | we3 |
| non-inter | <i>paluru</i> | - | s/he/it | <i>pula</i> | - | they2 | <i>tjana</i> | - | they3 |

In indicative clauses the clitic options for addressees and non-interactants are the reverse of those for imperative clauses: it is non-

interactants that may be implicit, with *ya* as an option for plural and *pula* for dual non-interactants. Table 4 gives the realizations of each option in PERSON and NUMBER for full or clitic active pronouns.

Table 4. Pronouns realizing options in PERSON and NUMBER in indicative clauses










| PERSON | NUMBER | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|---------|----------------|--------------|-------|----------------|------------|-------|
| | single | | | dual | | | plural | | |
| | full | clitic | gloss | full | clitic | gloss | full | clitic | gloss |
| non-inter | <i>paluru</i> | \emptyset | s/he/it | <i>pula</i> | <i>-pula</i> | they2 | <i>tjana</i> | <i>-ya</i> | they3 |
| speaker | <i>ngayulu</i> | <i>-na</i> | I | <i>ngali</i> | <i>-li</i> | we2 | <i>nganana</i> | <i>-la</i> | we3 |
| addressee | <i>nyuntu</i> | <i>-n</i> | you | <i>nyupali</i> | - | you2 | <i>nyura</i> | - | you3 |

The simple pronouns in Tables 3 and 4 refer exclusively to addressee(s) or to non-interactant(s) or inclusively to dual or plural speakers, that is *nyupali* means ‘you two addressees’, *ngali* means ‘one speaker and one addressee’, and so on. However pronouns may be complexed to include other categories. The pronoun system is not limited to one word realizations of ‘inclusive’ or ‘exclusive’ categories, as morphologically focused descriptions of Australian languages sometimes imply. Personal pronouns are glossed in the examples as far as possible with corresponding English pronoun cases, e.g. ‘I/me; we/us; they/them’. Unlike English, singular non-interactant pronouns are gender neutral, but for the sake of clarity are glossed in English according to the gender of their referents in text examples. For the Pitjantjatjara system of single, dual, and plural pronouns, I have used glosses such as ‘I’, ‘we2’ or ‘we3’.

2.3. Tone contours. Tone is a crucial resource for realizing interpersonal meanings in Pitjantjatjara such as mood, force, and commitment. Five tone contours constitute the general options available for varying interpersonal meanings by intonation: falling, rising, rise-fall, fall-rise, and level. These five general options are further specified by the pitch to which they rise or fall.³ In the description here, each of these options is indicated graphically, in order to make the examples more readily accessible for the reader. The conventions for doing so are set out in Table 5, together with their numbers based on those assigned to each tone contour in Halliday (1967). (Exceptions are tones 1-, 3+ and 5+ which have no equivalent to those described by Halliday.) The meanings each tone realizes in the context of specific speech functions is also given.⁴

Pitjantjatjara is a foot-timed language, with a close correspondence between each rhythmic foot and word, which is normally of two or three

Table 5. Tone movements, symbols, numbers and speech functions

| Symbol | Tone movement | # | Force and commitment of speech functions |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | mid fall | 1 | neutral statement; mild command or vocation |
|  | high to low fall | 1+ | forceful statement; insistent command or element-question |
|  | high to mid fall | 1- | committed response or exclamation |
|  | rising | 2 | yes-no question, requesting proposal |
|  | level (slight rise) | 3 | uncommitted response; sympathetic exclamation; neutral dependent clause in a sequence |
|  | level high pitch | 3+ | 'solidary' vocation |
|  | fall then rise | 4 | reserved statement; deferent vocation; primary clause in a sequence |
|  | mid rise then high fall | 5 | neutral command, element-question or exclamation |
|  | rise-fall then slight rise | 5+ | tagged command or element-question |

syllables, stressed followed by unstressed. (Multisyllabic suffixes may also have their own foot.) To read the examples in this chapter aloud, place the stress on the first syllable of each word.

3. Interpersonal grammatical resources. In Pitjantjatjara, the grammatical resources of MOOD enact moves in exchanges between speakers. They enable speakers to adopt interactant roles in an exchange, and to position their addressees in responding roles, as Halliday (2004:68) describes for the English MOOD system: "For example, in asking a question a speaker is taking on the role of seeker of information, and requiring the listener to take on the role of supplier of the information demanded." The related systems of POLARITY, MODAL ASSESSMENT, and VOCATION enable speakers to adjust the intensity of interpersonal meanings on scales between yes and no, close and distant, and deferent and dominant. A brief description of MOOD systems and MODAL ASSESSMENT options follows, including a few example clauses, but POLARITY and VOCATION will be illustrated in the text examples.

3.1. Mood systems. The most general choice in MOOD is between imperative and indicative clauses, which are distinguished firstly by the presence and form of verbs. Imperative mood is indicated by verb endings re-

alizing direct or oblique obligation. Indicative mood is indicated by verb suffixes realizing tense, and verbless clauses are inherently indicative. (If a verb suffix realizes aspect, the clause is dependent and so is not independently negotiable in the exchange). At the level of discourse this grammatical choice correlates with a distinction in the commodity that speakers exchange in interactions. Imperative mood typically enacts a move in an exchange of goods or services, while indicative mood typically enacts a move in an exchange of information. Halliday (2004) uses the terms **[proposal]** and **[proposition]** respectively for these types of exchange move.

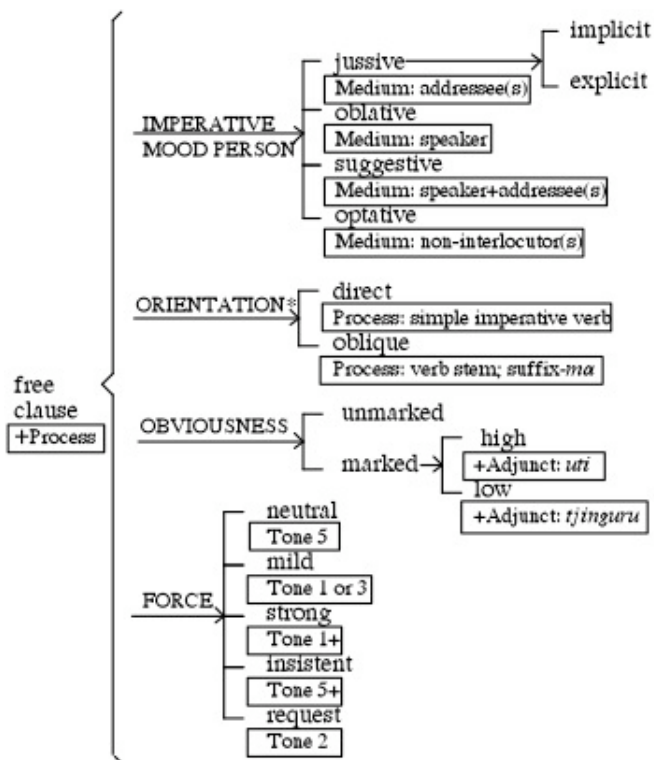
3.2. Imperative clauses. There are four sets of simultaneous options for imperative clauses. In *IMPERATIVE MOOD PERSON*, the person assigned modal responsibility for performing the proposed act may be the addressee(s), realizing a command, the speaker(s), realizing an offer, both addressee and speaker, realizing a suggestion, or a non-interactant. This person responsible for acting in proposals is always the Medium of the proposed action. (I have avoided the label ‘Subject’ since there is no general interpersonal function in Pitjantjatjara that corresponds to that of Subject in English.) In *ORIENTATION*, the obligation may be oriented, by the verb ending, as direct (simple imperative verb) or oblique (suffix *-ma*). In *OBVIOUSNESS*, the obligation may be interpreted, by modal items, as highly self-evident (*uti* ‘clearly’) or mildly evident (*tjinguru* ‘maybe’). In *FORCE* the obligation may be adjusted, by varying the tone contour, as neutral (rise-fall), mild (low fall or level), strong (high fall), insistent (rise-fall-rise), or requesting (rising). These options for imperative clauses are set out in Figure 1.

The typical imperative tone rises from mid to high, and then falls to low (Tone 5), exemplified for a command in (2) below. Strong force is realized by a high falling tone (Tone 1+), exemplified for a suggestion in (3). In the examples that follow, tone contours are indicated with graphic symbols to facilitate reading. Each line corresponds to at least one whole tone group, and additional tone group boundaries are indicated with a double slash //.

[imperative: jussive]

- (2) *wala-ngku watja-la*
 quickly-ACT tell!
 ‘Tell me quickly!’

Figure 1. Options for imperative clauses



[imperative: suggestive]

- (3) *a-ra -la // uru-kutu*
 go-! we3 waterhole-to
 'Let's go to the waterhole!'

As far as MOOD PERSON is concerned, jussive, oblique, suggestive, and optative options are exemplified as follows in (4), (5), and (6).

[jussive ^ oblique]

- (4a) *uwa ngalya-pitja* mild force
 yes hither-come:!
 'Alright, you come here' + direct orientation

- (4b) *ka ngayulu paka-ra ma-pitja* neutral force
 and I rise-IMPF away-go:!
 + direct orientation
 ‘and I’ll get up and go away!’

- [suggestive]
 (5) *a-ra -la // uru-kutu* insistent force
 go-! we3 waterhole-to
 + direct orientation
 ‘Let’s go to the waterhole!’

- [optative]
 (6) *paluru uti wangka-ma* neutral force
 s/he clearly speak-should + oblique orientation -*ma*;
 + high obviousness *uti*
 ‘Clearly she should speak.’ (‘should’ is used to gloss -*ma*)

3.3. Indicative clauses. Four sets of simultaneous options for indicative clauses are set out in Figure 2. First, there is a choice of INDICATIVE TYPE between declarative, yes-no, and *nya*-interrogatives. For declaratives there are further options in TAGGING and degrees of COMMITMENT to a statement (realized by tone contour), and for *nya*-interrogatives in ELEMENT TYPE and degrees of FORCE in the demand. Second, there is the choice in INDICATIVE MOOD PERSON, between interactant and non-interactant. Whereas in jussive imperative clauses the addressee may be implicit, in indicative clauses it is a non-interactant that may be the implicit mood person. Third, there are options for grading the PROBABILITY of propositions by means of modal items. Fourth is the option of marking ABILITY as positive or negative.

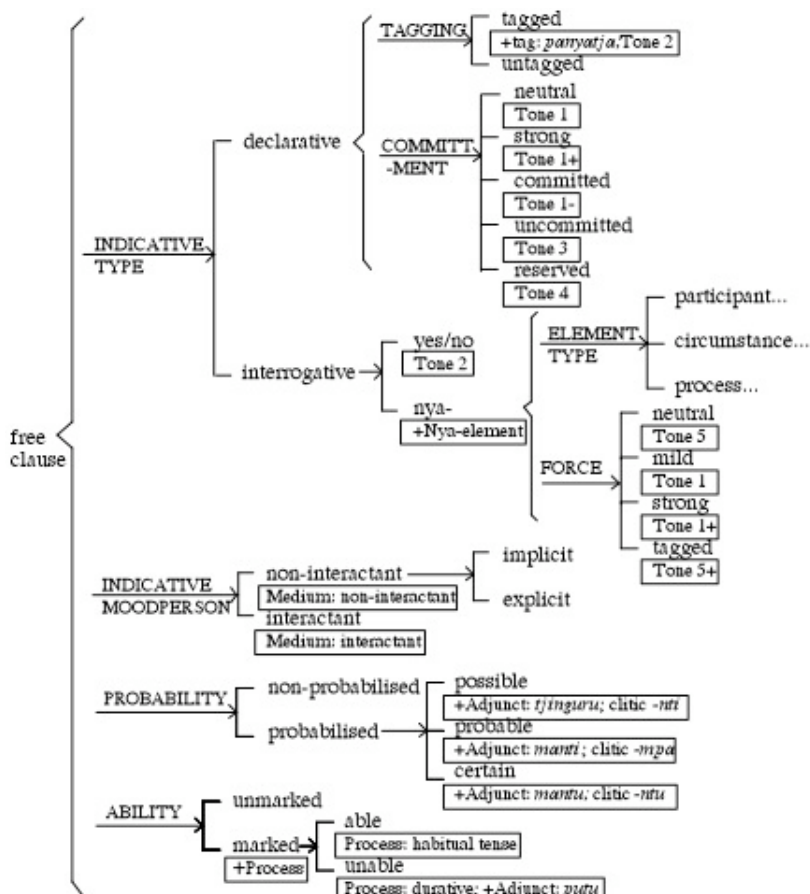
If the indicative clause is declarative, the unmarked tone is mid to low fall (Tone 1); if yes-no interrogative, the unmarked tone is rising (Tone 2). Example (3) is a dialogic pair from an exchange.

[indicative: yes-no interrogative -> declarative]

- (7a) *uti -ya nyanga-ngi*
 clearly they3 see-DUR
 A: ‘Could they see it clearly?’

- (7b) *uwa nyaku-la ura-ra kati-ngu*
 yes see-IMPF collect-IMPF bring-PAST
 B: ‘Yes, having seen it, they collected it and brought it back.’

Figure 2. Options in indicative clauses



Element interrogatives demand the identity of a wide variety of participants (4), circumstances, or processes. Their unmarked tone is rise-fall, as for imperatives (Tone 5).

[element interrogative]

- (8) *ngana-lu -nta pu-ngu*
 who-ACT? you hit-PAST
 ‘Who hit you?’

3.4. Modal assessment. Independent of these MOOD systems, Pitjantjatjara has further resources for adjusting interpersonal meanings in clauses, in options for MODAL ASSESSMENT. This includes seven sets of options realized as modal words, or clitics that are appended to word groups. The basic resources are set out in Table 6.

Table 6. MODAL ASSESSMENT systems

| | System | Feature | Item |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | USUALITY | occasionally sometimes frequently continually | <i>kutjupara</i> <i>kutjupara kutjupara</i> <i>tjuta ara</i> <i>rawa</i> |
| 2 | DEGREE | nearly utterly: positive utterly: negative | <i>nguwanpa</i> <i>alatjitu</i> <i>wiyatu</i> |
| 3 | REALITY: POSITIVE | really only just | <i>mulapa</i> <i>kutju</i> <i>unytju</i> |
| | REALITY: NEGATIVE | mistaken untrue | <i>Palku</i> <i>Ngunti</i> |
| 4 | CONTINUITY | transient permanent | <i>Unytju</i> <i>rawa; -tu</i> |
| 5 | RESPONSIBILITY | deflected | <i>Kunyu</i> |
| 6 | DEFERENCE | deferent | <i>Wanyu</i> |
| 7 | DESIRE | addressee other | <i>Putu</i> <i>-wi</i> |

These options are explained as follows: (1) The usuality of an event may be assessed by a set modal adverbs, in either indicative or imperative clauses (in contrast to the English USUALITY system which only modalizes propositions). (2) Options in DEGREE assess the completeness of an event, relation, quality, or quantity. (3) Options in REALITY assess an event or relation, as more or less real or unreal. (4) Temporal continuity of an event may be assessed as either transient or permanent. (5) The word *kunyu* displaces responsibility for an utterance away from the speaker. Its approximate translation in English is ‘reportedly’ or ‘so it’s said’. (6) The word *wanyu* expresses deference to the addressee. Its approximate translation is ‘if you please’ or ‘if you don’t mind’. (7) De-

sire for an object or the outcome of an event may be assigned to the addressee by the adjunct *puta*, where its meaning approximates ‘do you wish / think?’ Or it may be assigned by the clitic *-wi* to the speaker meaning ‘I wish’ or a non-interactant meaning ‘they wish’.

3.5. Grammatical metaphors for proposals. Options in the person, orientation, force, and evidence for proposals, as well as modal assessment, provide considerable flexibility for negotiation between speaker and addressee. However, the potential for obligating others and oneself to act does not stop there. Imperative mood is the ‘congruent’ mode of expression for proposals; it is certainly the most common form in which proposals are expressed and is the form first learned by children. However there are also a range of resources for expressing proposals through mood choices other than imperative, including interrogatives and declaratives in which speaker rather than addressee is Medium, as well as affective mental projections and relational enhancements. Halliday characterizes these modes of expression as ‘metaphorical’, since they mean on two levels simultaneously—on the discourse semantic plane they function as exchanges of goods and services, while on the grammatical plane they realize exchanges of information.

The most common types of interpersonal metaphors in Pitjantjatjara are mental projections. These express proposals as explicitly subjective, i.e. that the obligation originates in the consciousness of the speaker, in the form of desires or thoughts. Example (9) illustrates this with an offer, a metaphor for oblique mood.

- (9) α *ngayulu* *mukuri-nganyi* β *anku-ntjikitja*
 I desire-PRES GO-PERF-SAME
 ‘I want to go.’

Interrogative proposals are perhaps the next most common form of interpersonal metaphor. They re-enact a demand for goods and services (command) as a demand for information (yes-no question). This has the effect of offering the addressee the choice of responding with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Thus (11) expresses a command ‘listen to me!’ deferentially as a yes-no question ‘shall I tell you?’.

- (10) α *kangkuru* β *watja-lku* *-na*
 elder.sister tell-FUT I
 ‘Sister, shall I tell you?’

3.6. A misreading of interpersonal metaphor. The tension between the discourse semantic and grammatical interpretation of interpersonal metaphors is beautifully illustrated by the following exchange (11), in which a mother (M) politely demands a spare blanket of her son (S), in the form of an interrogative.

- (11)
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| M | <i>katja</i> | // | <i>nyuntu</i> | <i>blanketa kutjupa</i> | <i>kanyi-ni</i> |
| | son | | you | blanket another | have-PRES |
| | 'Son, do you have another blanket?' | | | | |
| S | <i>uwa</i> | <i>ngari-nyi</i> | <i>nyara</i> | | |
| | yes | lie-PRES | yonder | | |
| | 'Yes, it's over there.' | | | | |
| F | <i>u-wa</i> | <i>-ni</i> | | | |
| | give-! | me | | | |
| | 'Give it to me!' | | | | |
| S2 | <i>munta</i> | | | | |
| | sorry? | | | | |
| | 'Pardon?' | | | | |
| M2 | <i>wiya</i> | // | <i>nyuntu-mpa</i> | <i>//nyanga-ngka</i> | <i>-na tjapi-ni piruku</i> |
| | no | | yours | this-at | I ask-PRES again |
| | 'No it's yours. I'll ask (everyone) here again.' | | | | |

The son misinterprets the metaphor as meaning a demand for information rather than goods and services, replying 'yes it's over there'. His father (F) makes the command explicit 'give me!', which the son (S2) questions with 'sorry?', i.e. 'what do you mean?'. His mother then attempts to repair the misunderstanding (M2), conceding that it is his blanket, and offering to request one from others.

4. Social context: variations in the tenor of kin relations. Social relations in the Western Desert are regulated by a strongly classified kinship system based on the general categories of generation, gender, descent, and marriage which extend beyond the direct kin community to include, ultimately, the entire indigenous Australian population. Within the classificatory kinship system, each person stands in a clearly defined kin relation to all others, to whom one is expected to behave accordingly. Relationships are highly positional in Bernstein's terms, in that

each person's social position in relation to others is defined by criteria beyond their own person.⁵ So for example, one interacts with a man classified as a brother as if he is one's actual brother, or with a woman classified as one's mother's sister as if she is one's own mother, and so on. Although there is generally more social distance exhibited between classificatory than between actual kin, the warmth and respect with which classificatory kin interact is genuinely felt.

4.1. Pitjantjatjara kinship terms. The kinship system is realized in the socio-semantic code of Pitjantjatjara overtly in the system of kinship terms. These terms refer not simply to consanguinal (actual direct relations), but classify the whole social world as classificatory kin. They constitute the main part of the interpersonal system of VOCATION, by which speakers address each other. The Vocative forms of these items are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. System of kinship terms

| AGNATION | | GENERATION | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | same <i>ngananmirri</i> | opposite <i>inyurpa</i> | alternate <i>ngananmirri</i> |
| agnate relations (descent) | elder | <i>kuta</i> 'elder brother' <i>kangkuru</i> 'elder sister' | <i>mama</i> 'father' <i>nguntju</i> 'mother' <i>kulpal</i> 'mother's brother' <i>kuntili</i> 'father's sister' | <i>tjamu</i> 'grandfather' <i>kami</i> 'grandmother' |
| | younger | <i>malan</i> 'younger sibling' | <i>katja</i> 'son' <i>untalpa</i> 'daughter' <i>ukari</i> 'man's sister's or 'woman's brother's child' | <i>pakali</i> 'grandson' <i>puliwiri</i> 'granddaughter' |
| affinal relations (marriage) | secular | <i>kuri</i> 'spouse' <i>marutju</i> 'man's brother-in-law' <i>tjuwari</i> 'woman's sister-in-law' | <i>minkayi</i> 'parents & daughter-in-law' | |
| | cere- monial | <i>pikatja</i> 'betrothed spouse' <i>purka</i> 'man's brother-in-law' | <i>waputju</i> 'father & son-in-law' <i>umari</i> 'mother & son-in-law' | <i>inkilyi</i> 'father-in-law's parents' & 'son's son-in-law' |

Table 7 brings out the organizing principles of the Western Desert kinship system, most generally in terms of generation on one hand and agnation on the other. Agnation is either by common descent (agnate relations) or by marriage (affinal relations). Agnate relations are distinct as elder or younger; younger agnates generally defer to their elders. Affinal ('in-law') relations are either secular or ceremonial. Secular affinal relations flow from actual or potential marriages, i.e. a person may be classified and so addressed as one's potential spouse. Ceremonial affinal relations are established through initiation ceremonies, in which women are ceremonially betrothed ('promised') by their fathers or brothers to potential husbands. These betrothals may or may not result in marriage, but they establish sacred reciprocal bonds between betrothing families, ensuring the cohesion and survival of the society.

Generation cross-classifies agnation categories. Generations are construed as cyclic in the Western Desert system: the generations immediately before and after one's own are construed as the 'opposite' generation, while the next generations before and after are 'alternate', the next are 'opposite' again, and so on. This cyclicity is encoded in the ceremonial system, in which one's own generation, one's grandparents, and one's grandchildren are grouped together as *ngananmirri* 'our skin'. Conversely, one's parents' and children's generations are grouped together as *inyurpa* 'opposite'. Beyond three generations, time cycles back on itself, so that great-grandchildren become 'aunt' or 'uncle' to their great-grandparents; there are no terms for great-grandchildren or great-grandparents. As Table 7 shows, terms within each of these generational categories is either elder or younger, secular or ceremonial. Finally, we can note that gender has variable relevance as a classifying criterion within each of these categories and is not distinguished in the pronoun system, although it is basic to the society's division of labour and ceremonial systems.

3.2. Tenor variations in kin relations. Variations in the tenor of interpersonal relations in the Western Desert are a function of the kin relationships set out in Table 7 above. Tonkinson modeled tenor variation in Western Desert culture in terms of gradations of 'restraint', "between two extremes: complete avoidance and uninhibited joking".

Avoidance relationships, typified by the [wife's father-daughter's husband] affinal link necessitate the taking of rapid evasive action if either party seems likely to come within 20 or 30 yards of the other. Joking relationships, which generally obtain between certain same sex relatives, involve rowdy exchanges of sexually explicit epithets and mock abuse. . . Whenever an element of restraint figures in the relationship, it is accompanied by the presence of "shame-embarrassment" between individuals so related. Restraint signals an asymmetry of status that calls

for a measure of deference, respect, obedience, authority, and so forth. (Tonkinson 1978:47)

This model needs elaborating, since mutual deference is characteristic of equal but distant kin relations, while authority and obedience are generally limited to age differences between siblings. A model of tenor that includes *status* and *contact* as independent variables (Martin 1992) can take such features into account. Status difference is a function of age and gender in certain contexts. Differences in realizations of social contact are not merely a product of familiarity, but of the classification principles of the kinship system. Thus exchanges between an adult brother and sister, or between a man and his daughters, realize features of social distance even though they have known each other all their lives. On the other hand, exchanges between classificatory same-gender siblings, and between classificatory cross-cousins, may realize features of close contact such as high affect and joking behavior, even if the interactants know each other only slightly. Given these qualifications, Tonkinson's paradigm of a continuum of kin behavioral patterns is a useful overview of status and contact variables in the Western Desert kinship system. This paradigm is presented from the perspective of an initiated man in Table 8 below. Vocative kin terms are given, together with ethnological notation for the relationship. Most importantly, these categories of con-

Table 8. Tenor variables in kin relations (after Tonkinson 1978:48)

| STATUS | CONTACT | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | avoidance | distance | moderation | proximity | Joking |
| deference | <i>waputju</i> father-in-law <i>umari</i> mother-in-law | <i>inkilyi</i> grand-parents-in-law <i>marutju</i> brother-in law | <i>mama</i> dad <i>kulpal</i> uncle | <i>kuta</i> big brother <i>tjamu</i> grandpa | |
| equality | | <i>kuntili</i> aunt <i>mingkayi</i> daughter-in-law | <i>nguntju</i> mum <i>kangkuru</i> big sister | <i>kami</i> grandma | <i>tjuu</i> mate (wb) |
| dominance | | <i>ukari</i> nephew/niece <i>untal</i> daughter | <i>katja</i> son <i>malan</i> little sister | <i>kuri</i> spouse <i>malan</i> little brother | |

tact status are elastic rather than absolute, depending on specific relationships between individuals.

5. Realization of tenor in exchanges. While the kinship system is realized overtly in the categories of kin terms, it is realized more covertly in linguistic resources for negotiating speech roles and modal assessments in discourse. Status differences are realized by features such as deferent vocations, affirmation, metaphors of mood, and low values of force and commitment, versus dominating vocations, direct demands, high assessment values, and negations. These features generally occur between older and younger kin, particularly siblings, in situations where the older person's authority is significant, such as ceremonial, economic, or educational contexts. Close contact between equals is characterized by features such as direct vocations, direct demands, exclamatives, little modal assessment, stressed tones, as well as by joking, mimicry, teasing, swearing, and sexual references. This applies to relationships between same sex siblings, between men and women who are actual or potential spouses, between grandparents and grandchildren, as well as between parents and children and opposite sex siblings up until adolescence when these relationships become more circumspect. In contrast the principle of inter-familial equality and the need to avoid conflict means that more distant kin tend to be addressed with circumspection, ranging from expressions of mutual deference and solidarity to total avoidance in the case of certain in-law relationships. The syndrome of semantic features realizing respectful social distance is formalised in Western Desert culture as a register variety called *tjal-pawangkantja* 'speaking obliquely' that children begin to learn in adolescence (Lester 1989). This mutually deferent mode of address is characterized by metaphors of mood, iteration of vocation and low modality, and oblique reference to persons.

5.1. Exchange between brothers. Although kin relations are clearly defined and mutually understood by all members of the community, there is scarcely less variety of interpersonal grammatical resources for delicately shading relations of status and contact and solidarity than we see in familiar stratified cultures. However since it is a spoken language, intonation is a crucial resource in Pitjantjatjara for realizing interpersonal meanings, as it also is in the spoken mode of languages such as English. The following exchange (12) illustrates phonological and lexicogrammatical realizations of status difference between a younger sibling (M for *malan*) and older sibling (K for *kuta*) who are preparing to camp for the night.

- (12)
- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| M | <i>kuta</i> | | // <i>ngayulu</i> | <i>nyanga-ngka</i> | <i>ngari</i> |
| | elder.brother, | I | | here-at | lie:! |
| | Vocative | | | | |
| | 'Big brother, may I sleep here?' | | | | |
| K | <i>wiya</i> | <i>ngura</i> | <i>nyaratja</i> | // <i>tjitji</i> | <i>ma-ngari</i> |
| | no, | yonder | place | child, | apart-lie:! |
| | Adjunct | | | Vocative | |
| | 'No, over there child, sleep apart!' | | | | |

In (12) the younger brother (M) prefaces his request with the respectful Vocative *kuta* 'older brother', spoken on a deferent low falling tone. This is followed with an imperative clause in first person, realizing the speaker's inclination to 'lie here'. However, since it is spoken on a rising tone, it becomes a yes-no inquiry of the addressee's inclination, i.e. a deferent request, 'may I lie here?' The older brother (K) responds with a flat *wiya* 'no', followed by a direct contradictory command 'lie apart over there!', including the dominating Vocative *tjitji* 'child'. The use of this Vocative drives home the fundamental status distinction in Anangu society between initiated men and the uninitiated, particularly poignant to an uninitiated youth who must defer to his elder. This command is stressed with a high falling tone on the location *nyaratja* 'over there', and a rise-fall-rise on the process *ma-ngari* 'lie away'. The rise-fall-rise functions similarly to a tagged imperative in English 'lie apart over there, will you!', stressing the speaker's exasperation.

The rich texture of interpersonal meanings in this brief exchange is realized by complex interactions of various features. To begin with, a minimal grammatics would recognise an 'imperative' formal structure of the verbs in both clauses, in this case consisting of uninflected verbs (like the imperative verb form in other languages such as English). The question for a semantically motivated grammatics is, what does this imperative form mean, given that the first move in the exchange is a question and the response is a command? A systemic model enables us to identify a generalized grammatical choice in Pitjantjatjara for realizing the interpersonal meaning of 'proposals', i.e. exchanges of goods and services, by imperative mood, in contrast to the option for realizing 'propositions' exchanging information, by indicative mood. Within the generalized speech function of proposal, a further step in delicacy enables us to identify a contrast between proposals for the speaker to act, realizing inclination [M], and proposals for others to act, realizing

obligation [K]. These semantic categories are realized in the grammar by contrasts in imperative mood person, known traditionally as ‘oblativ’ and ‘jussive’, respectively. Categories like ‘imperative’, ‘oblativ’, and ‘jussive’ are *definition criteria* in a systemic functional grammatics (see Hasan & Fries 1995: xiii–xx), they do not simply denote formal properties of grammatical structures, but have semantic values such as proposal: offer, that are meaningful because they contrast with other semantic values such as proposal: command.

4.2. Two sisters. Text (13) is a dialogue between an elder and younger sister, which illustrates their relationship of close contact but unequal status. The exchange begins as the younger sister (YZ) has just run back to her elder sister after discovering a large python *kuniya* in a burrow *piti*. She breathlessly exhorts her elder sister *kangkuru* (EZ) to come and see, the elder sister demands to know what she has seen, what she is talking about, and the younger sister explains with awe, what she has seen. Features selected in MOOD and MODAL ASSESSMENT are labeled to the right of each line, in square brackets.

- (13)
- | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| YZ1 | <i>wanyu</i> | <i>paka-ra pitja</i> | | | [jussive; strong force; deference <i>wanyu</i>] |
| | please | rise-IMPF come-! | | | |
| | ‘Please get up and come!’ | | | | |
| 2 | <i>kangkuru</i> | // <i>watja-lku-na-nta</i> | | | [yes-no interrogative; mild vocation <i>kangkuru</i>] |
| | elder.sister | tell-FUT-I-you? | | | |
| | ‘Big sister, shall I tell you?’ | | | | |
| EZ1 | <i>nyaa-n</i> | <i>nya-ngu</i> | // <i>nyaa</i> | // <i>nyaa</i> | [<i>nya</i> -interrog; neutral force; <i>nya</i> -interrog x 2; neutral force] |
| | what?-you | see-PAST | what? | what? | |
| | ‘What did you see? What? What?’ | | | | |
| 2 | <i>wala-ngku</i> | <i>watja-la</i> | | | [jussive; neutral force focused on quality <i>wala-ngku</i>] |
| | quickly-ACT | tell-! | | | |
| | ‘Tell me quickly!’ | | | | |
| 3 | <i>nyaa-n</i> | <i>wangka-nyi</i> | | | [<i>nya</i> -interrog; strong force] |
| | what?-you | say-PRES | | | |
| | ‘What are you saying?’ | | | | |

- YZ3 *wanyu puta* // *pitja-la nya-wa* [jussive; mild force;
would.you please come-IMPF look-! deference *wanyu*;
desire *puta*]
'If you please, come and see!'
- 4 *kuniya pulka alatjitu* *tjarpa-ngu* [declarative;
python big utterly enter-PAST strong commitment
focused on size *pulka*]
'There's an absolutely huge python inside a burrow!'
- 5 *piti-ngka -ni nguwanpa* *tjarpatju-nu* [declarative; strong
burrow-in me nearly insert-PAST commitment
focused on degree
nguwanpa]
'It nearly dragged me into the burrow!'
- 6 *pulka mulapa* [declarative; strong commitment
big really focused on size *pulka*]
'It's really huge!'

The roles of speech functions and other interpersonal choices in realizing status and contact in (13) are as follows. Firstly, the younger sister opens the exchange excitedly, with a direct command to her elder sister, but immediately moderates this by i) addressing her respectfully by her kinship term *kangkuru*, and ii) offering to explain herself, modulating the offer with an interpersonal metaphor of mood, as a yes-no interrogative 'Shall I tell you?', in place of the more congruent oblique imperative 'I'll tell you!' or simply 'Listen!'. This strategy defers to her elder sister by opening up the space for her to respond with a demand. The elder sister does respond with a series of strong demands, in EZ1 and 3 for information, 'What did you see?!', and in 2 for a symbolic service, 'Tell me quickly!'. The younger sister responds deferentially in YZ3 with a mild command modulated by *wanyu puta* 'would you please . . .', and in 4–6 with the information demanded by her elder sister.

The unequal relationship between the two is expressed by the different mood and assessment choices the elder and younger sisters take up. On the other hand, close contact is realized by i) the directness of demands on the part of both sisters, ii) the kinship vocation *kangkuru*, and iii) by the intensity given to demands by the elder, and to qualities described by the younger. The inherent tension between close contact and unequal status is evoked in the younger sister's blurting out a command to her sister, and then correcting it with a deferential offer. Her elder sis-

ter is able to demand answers so insistently, not only because she is dominant, but also because she is familiar.

5.3. Family members planning a gathering trip. Text (14) is a conversation in the evening between four family members planning a trip in the morning to gather bush foods. The interactants are the elder mother (M), her brother's wife (BW), her son (S), and another son's wife (SW). The plan is negotiated by means of a series of suggestions, affirmations, counter-suggestions, and resolutions. This is given here in English to orient the reader, before analysing the Pitjantjatjara moves one by one.

(14)

M1 Perhaps in the morning we can gather *tjala* (honey ants), what do you think?

S1 Yes, definitely!

M2 Tomorrow morning in the daylight, we'll go gathering, and we'll show the children how to do it too.

BW1 Let's head for the *kurkur*_area (acacia bushes where honey ant nests are found).

M3 For the *kurkur*, and *arnguli* (bush plums) as well. Maybe we'll get *ili* (wild figs). If you go over there you could gather and bring back plenty very quickly.

S2 Over there, lots of *ili* can be found. (indicating direction)

BW3 Yes.

M4 That's true.

SW1 No, not there, over here! (indicating opposite direction)

M5 If we go over here (SW's direction) we can have a look. Maybe there are plenty in this place.

SW2 That is the other day (my son) Mitaiki dug up and gathered plenty.

M6 There is *ili* here, so let's go and look. Plenty of *ili* is there, so we can gather and bring it back - *ili*, and what else? - *arnguli*. We'll gather *arnguli*. Halfway along the road there's a lot. And as well we can get *tjuratja* (sweet grevillea flowers) afterwards.

The exchange begins with M's suggestion to gather *tjala* 'honey ants'.

(14)

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| M1 | <i>kuwari</i> | <i>-nti</i> | <i>-la</i> | <i>mungawinki</i> | <i>tjala</i> | <i>ura-lku</i> |
| | now | maybe | we3 | morning | <i>tjala</i> | gather-FUT |
| | // <i>mulapa</i> | | | | | [declarative; mild; |
| | really? | | | | | possible; tagged] |
| | 'Perhaps in the morning we can gather <i>tjala</i> (honey ants), what do you think?' | | | | | |

Addressing the other adult family members, M1 uses five different strategies for modalizing her initial suggestion that ‘we might gather *tjala* ‘honey ants’ in the morning’, in order to avoid any implication of power over the others.

- i. She uses declarative mood in place of imperative: hortative, effacing the obligation inherent in her suggestion with the metaphor of giving information rather than demanding compliance.
- ii. She lowers the certainty of the assertion with a clitic realizing low probability *-nti* ‘maybe’.
- iii. She reduces its assertive force further using mild tone 1, in contrast to the unmarked suggestive tone 5 (used later in M2, BW1, etc.).
- iv. She uses future tense *ura-lku* ‘will gather’ because it expresses less certainty than present tense (later used in M2 *ura-ni* ‘are gathering’).
- v. She leaves it open for her listeners to agree or not, by means of the tag question *mulapa* ‘really?’.

The prosody of deference realized by these strategies opens up the interpersonal options for responding to M’s suggestion, by inviting her sister-in-law and adult son and daughter-in-law to provide certainty, acknowledging the equality of relationships with them, and the need to negotiate joint action, rather than command it. Accordingly, M’s son responds in D1 below, with an affirmation *uwa mulapa* ‘yes, really’, committed on tone 1-

S1 *uwa mulapa* [affirmative; declarative; committed]
 yes really
 ‘Yes, definitely!’

Her son’s affirmation encourages M, who begins turning her suggestion into a plan in M2:

- (i) reiterating the time to gather, this time in present tense *ura-ni*,
- (ii) suggesting that ‘we show the children how to gather’, realized by the verb *ungka-lyi-nanyi*, also with indicative inflection like M1, but this time on the neutral imperative tone 5.

M2 *kalala kuwari mungawinki ura-ni* [declarative; mild force]
 i daytime now morning gather-PRES
 ‘Tomorrow morning in the daylight, we’ll go gathering.’

- ii *munu -la ungkalyi-nanyi* [declarative;
and we3 train-PRES neutral force]
'and we'll show the children how to do it too.'

At this stage, M's sister-in-law BW contributes to the plan, in BW1 below, with an elliptical suggestion of the destination to go to, *kurkur*, the acacia tree under which *tjala* are found.

- BW1 *kurkur-taku* [imperative; ellipsed;
kurkur-towards neutral force]
'Let's head for the *kurkur* area.'

BW's suggestion is affirmed by M in M3, (i) re-stating it with commitment, and then (ii) elaborating it with other bush foods to collect, *arn-guli* 'bush plums' and *ili* 'wild figs'. This is a suggestion with 'we3' and tone 5, but with the verb ellipsed, and modalized by *tjinguru*, i.e. 'maybe we'll get *ili*'. She uses this modal item again in the next modalized suggestion (iii), which offers evidence to support the plan and translates as 'you could probably drive over there, gather it and bring it back really quickly'.

- M3 *kurkur-taku // arnguli kulu* [declarative; ellipsed;
i *kurkur-towards arnguli as well* strong commitment]
'For the *kurkur*, and *arnguli* (bush plums) as well.'
- ii *tjinguru -la ili* [declarative; ellipsed; reserved;
maybe we3 *ili* (wild figs) low obviousness *tjinguru*]
'Maybe we'll get *ili*.'
- iii *nyara tjinguru wala pulka nyura ma-wirtjapaka-ra*
yonder maybe fast much you3 away-race-IMPF
- ura-ra ngalya-kati-nyi* [declarative;
gather-IMPF hither-bring-PRES neutral commitment]
'If you go over there you could gather and bring back plenty very quickly.'

M's son now makes an oblique suggestion in S2, by stating a location where 'lots of *ili* grow'. His aunt BW responds politely to his suggestion with a neutral affirmation, in BW3, and his mother affirms it with commitment in M4.

- S2 *nyaratja pakal-pai ili pulka* [declarative;
yonder rise-HAB *ili* much committed]
'Over there, lots of *ili* can be found.' (indicating direction)
- BW3 *uwa* [affirmation;
'Yes' neutral commitment]
- M4 *mulapa panya* [affirmation;
true that committed]
'That's true.'

However, as his brother's wife, SW is a classificatory spouse to S and is free to talk openly to him. She negates S's suggestion, in SW1 below, and on tone 5+ strongly suggests an alternative location 'here', pointing in the direction she means.

- SW1 *wiya nyangatja* [negation; imperative; ellipsed;
no here insistent force]
'No, not there, over here!' (indicating opposite direction)

M seizes this opportunity to agree with SW, without having to directly contradict S, in M5

- (i) with the suggestion 'lets go and look here',
(ii) with the modalized explanation that '(*ili*) may be in here'.

- M5 *nyanga-ngka -la nya-wa anku-la* [hortative;
(i) here-at we3 look-! go-IMPF neutral force]
'If we go over here (SW's direction) we can have a look.'
- (ii) *nyangatja tjinguru ngari-nyi unngu* [declarative; neutral
here maybe lie-PRES inside commitment;
low probability
tjinguru]
'Maybe there are plenty in this place.'

SW then offers evidence in SW2 that her son 'Mitaiki recently gathered *tjala* at this place'.

SW2 *mungatu panya Mitaiki-lu tjawa-ra ura-ningi* [declarative;
 recently that Mitaiki-ACT dig-IMPf gather-DUR neutral
 commitment]
 ‘That is the other day (my son) Mitaiki dug up and gathered
 plenty.’

M affirms SW’s statement in M6 by (i) repeating her suggestion ‘(let’s) go and look for *ili* here’, and (ii) elaborating it with ‘*ili* is there, so (let’s) gather it, and *arnguli* as well’. She then repeats this suggestion (iii), but modalized as an indicative ‘it’s *arnguli* we are gathering’, and elaborates it (iv) with a committed statement of the location of *a lot of arnguli*, and a suggestion (v) that ‘we then (gather) *tjuritja* grevillea flowers’ (for nectar to make sweet cordial).

M6 *ili nyangatja anku-la nya-wa* [imperative;
 i ili here go-IMPf look-! neutral force]
 ‘There is ili here, so let’s go and look.’

ii *ili ngara-ma* [declarative;
ili stand-HABIT neutral commitment]
 ‘Plenty of ili is there,’

ka ura-ra kati // ili munu nyaapa // arnguli
 so gather-IMPf bring-! ili and what? *arnguli*
 [imperative;
 neutral force]
 ‘so we can gather and bring it back - *ili*, and what else? - *arnguli*.’

iii *arnguli -la ura-ni* [declarative;
arnguli we3 gather-PRES neutral commitment]
 ‘We’ll gather *arnguli*.’

iv *road-angka kultu pulka ngari-nyi* [declarative;
 road-in middle much lie-PRES committed]
 ‘Halfway along the road there’s a lot.’

v *munu -la piruku munu tjuratja -lta* [declar.;
 and we3 further and *tjuritja* at that neutral]
 ‘And as well we can get *tjuritja*’ (sweet grevillea flowers).

M is clearly the leader of her family in this context of planning a gathering expedition; she initiates the plan and of the 21 clauses spoken in text (14), 14 clauses are hers. She makes all the proposals for action except for BW's elliptical suggestion *kurkurtaku* 'to the *kurkur* area', S's suggestion *nyaratja* 'yonder', and SW's response *nyangatja* 'here'. However, M does not explicitly dominate the group with any direct commands, or unmodalized statements; all her proposals and supporting evidence are proffered with a prosody of probabilities and oblique orientations, realized by mild tones, modal items like *-nti* and *tjinguru*, and metaphors of mood such as indicatives standing for proposals.

Opening up the interpersonal space in this way encourages the group to participate. As they do so, agreement for M's plan increases, and the need for modalizing her suggestions diminishes. In this way, the diminuendos and crescendos of interpersonal prosodies in discourse mirror the rising and falling of tenor relations that discourse enacts. By observing the rich diversity of interpersonal meanings realized by the interaction of lexicogrammatical and phonological choices, and how these meanings are employed in various types of exchange, the systemic functional analysis illustrated here makes it possible to systematically relate the culture's grammar to its contexts of social interaction. The entire set of such linguistic reactances at the levels of phonology, grammar, discourse, register, and genre constitute the interpersonal meaning potential of the Western Desert Code.

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ENDNOTES

¹Of all the realms of scholarly study, none is more concerned with social life than language is. Yet it remains exceptional for linguists to have a strong grounding in the social sciences, and still less to systematically relate language descriptions to the social relationships in which the language has evolved. Some even explicitly reject a role for social theory in language study, such as Wierzbicka (1991:71) who claims ethnographic terms are "simply not helpful in the elucidation of cultural differences", followed by Goddard (1992), who rejects the value of Western Desert ethnographies for describing the language, claiming that their "descriptive labels like 'respect' and 'hierarchy' are far from culture-neutral, but rather represent English-specific sociocultural concepts". The alternative for Goddard is to resort to intuitions about the psychology of speakers, legitimated in Wierzbicka's universalist theory of 'semantic primitives' as a 'natural semantic metalanguage'. His intuitions about the meaning of the politeness register *tjalpawangkantja* are "a. I know who this person is. b. This person is someone not like me. c. I don't want this person to think anything bad about me. d. I don't want to say anything to this person. e. If I have to say something, I have to think about it." The conclusion drawn from these interpretations of Indigenous Australians' inner thoughts is that "... the illocutionary proscriptions [of *tjalpawangkanyi*] prohibit one from directly

expressing that the addressee plays a clear part in one's motives for speaking . . . perhaps the easiest way of 'pulling this off' is to pretend, and behave as if, the addressee is not present at all."

²The inflectional differences between nominal classes may be associated with the frequency of the transitivity roles they fulfil in discourse: personal pronouns are most often in active roles, so this has evolved as their uninflected form, whereas common nominal and demonstratives are more often in neutral roles, in which their form is uninflected, and proper names most often function as Vocatives, and so are inflected for all transitivity roles (see Rose 1996, 2001a).

³Analysis of the Pitjantjatjara tone system was assisted by CECIL speech analysis software, available as shareware from the SIL website.

⁴The functions of tones in speech functions correspond in some respects to those Halliday describes for English but differ in others. For example tone 5 realizes neutral force in commands and element (nya-) questions, in contrast to tone 1 in English wh-questions.

⁵Bernstein (1971–90) contrasts 'positional' types of kin relations that are characteristic of families who are directly involved in material production (e.g. hunter-gatherers, factory workers, factory managers), with the more 'personal' forms of social relations characteristic of contemporary middle class families who are not directly involved in material production (e.g. teachers, academics).

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