

# Pitjantjatjara: a metafunctional profile

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# 1 Cultural contexts

This chapter looks at resources for meaning in the language of the *Anangu* people of Australia's Western Desert, exemplified with the dialect *Pitjantjatjara*. Dialects of the Western Desert language are 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 centre of this region, across the borders of WA, SA 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 kilometres, 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.

Social relations across the Western Desert are regulated by a classificatory 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. Each person stands in a clearly defined kin relation to all others, to whom one is expected to behave accordingly. The social system is organised and regulated collectively by the elders of each kin community in the region, through ceremonial initiations and betrothals that link families in relationships of reciprocal rights and obligation across vast distances, and minimise the potential for inter-family conflict. This system of ceremonies and social regulation is known throughout indigenous Australia today as the *Law*. Its basis is in religious narratives, songs and rituals that celebrate the travels and actions of ancestral anthropomorphic beings who created the physical and social worlds manifest today, known as the *Dreaming* (Stanner 1966). The prevailing ideology of this social system is one of 'egalitarian mutuality' (Maddock 1972). Although age and gender are factors in status differences within local kin communities, the ideal relation between communities and peers is one of equality. The act of initiation and betrothal is crucial for maintaining this social principle, creating a sacrosanct and indivisible bond between distant families, maximising the opportunities for peaceful cooperative exploitation of resources and coordinated (re)production and transmission of the culture.

Australian languages form a relatively homogeneous family (Capell 1956, Dixon 1980, 1990), despite the potential for variation at all linguistic strata and ranks over the probable 40,000 years of modern human occupation of the continent. Harvey (1997) argues that this homogeneity is suggestive of extremely slow rates of linguistic change in Australian cultures. The Australian family has been sub-classified on lexical and morphological criteria into two general groups, including the so-called 'Pama-Nyungan' group which covers most of the continent, and more diverse 'non-Pama-Nyungan' groups in northern WA and NT (O'Grady, Wurm & Hale 1966, Blake 1988, Evans 1988, Harvey 1997). Western Desert dialects are classified as members of the Pama-Nyungan subgroup 'Nyungic', that covers the south-western third of the continent (O'Grady & Fitzgerald 1997). One 'non-Pama-Nyungan' language is Kuniinti (or Gooniyandi), described by MacGregor (1992) using an SFL framework for clause rank systems. With some exceptions, such as a greater tendency to realise participant functions in the verbal group, the functional organisation and realisation strategies of Kuniinti closely resemble those of Pitjantjatjara.

Research into typological relationships outside of Australia has in the past been opposed by Dixon, claiming that "there is absolutely no evidence for a genetic connection

between Australian languages and anything outside the continent; there is not even the remote ‘possibility’ that scholars could argue about” (1980: 238). However Nichols (1997) has revived interest in such relationships with a comparative study of various syntactic classes that are shared between various Papuan languages and various Australian languages. One such feature, discussed in 2.3 below from a functional perspective, is the system of ‘switch-reference’ conjunction, which identifies the core participant in the clause (formalist ‘subject’), as either the same as or different from that of the preceding clause. This resource is common to Australian and Papuan families, but is less apparent in neighbouring Austronesian languages. It is integrated with clause complexing resources that construct additive series of finite clauses and enhancing non-finite series culminating with a finite clause (sometimes known as ‘serial verbs’ or ‘clause-chaining’). Other Papuan and Australian examples of these features are described by Gleason (1968), Wurm (1975), Martin (1983), Foley (1986), Austin (1981, 1988), MacGregor (1992), Rose (1993, 1998).<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I will attempt to outline some of the semantic motifs with which Pitjantjatjara speakers enact their culture as social discourse. In order to do so I have endeavoured as far as possible to exemplify the range of resources available in each functional region of the grammar with whole texts that evoke the social contexts in which they were spoken.

## 2 Metafunctional Preview

This section provides a brief orientation to the major grammatical systems available for Pitjantjatjara clauses, of MOOD, TRANSITIVITY and THEME, before describing each in more detail in sections 3, 4 and 5. However before turning to these clause rank systems, it will be helpful to briefly examine some general features of systems at lower grammatical ranks which contribute to the realisation of clause rank functions, as well as features of tone that contribute to variations in clause rank functions. Tables 1 to 6 below summarise options for verbal and nominal affixes and personal pronouns, their structural forms, and the English glosses they are assigned in the text examples in this chapter. The information in these short tables is intended to enable the reader to recognise the functions of morpheme rank features in examples, without needing to repeat their technical labels for each instance that they recur.

In the examples, each verbal or nominal group is translated in the interlinear gloss as a corresponding English verbal group, nominal group or prepositional phrase. This means that morpheme rank grammatical items are glossed at the same level of abstraction as word rank lexical items, with natural English grammatical or lexical items that correspond to their functions in the context of the word group in which they are instantiated. Examples include functional correlations between suffixes on Pitjantjatjara nominal or verbal groups and English prepositions or auxiliary verbs. This consistently structural approach to glossing is designed to make explicit the realisational relationships between group rank function structures and features in clause rank grammatical systems, that are our primary concern in this volume, allowing us to focus on these clause rank systems, and their deployment in discourse. Where the reader wishes to clarify the paradigmatic location of grammatical morphemes in a Pitjantjatjara transcription, the following tables will provide a simple reference.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.1 Verb suffixes

Verb suffixes may realise features of TENSE in indicative clauses, ORIENTATION in imperative clauses, or ASPECT in non-finite dependent clauses and verbs. Options in TENSE and ASPECT specify the relative time of the process and its relative duration, as set out in Table 1 below. English auxiliary verbs are consistently used in interlinear glosses to bring out semantic proportionalities between Pitjantjatjara and English tense and aspect systems.

Table 1: Options in TENSE and ASPECT

system	feature	example	gloss
TENSE	future	<i>tati-lku</i>	will climb
	present	<i>tati-ni</i>	is climbing
	past	<i>tati-nu</i>	did climb
	past durative	<i>tati-ningi</i>	was climbing
	habitual	<i>tati-lpai</i>	does climb
ASPECT	irrealis	<i>tati-ntjikitja</i>	to climb
	realis	<i>tati-ra</i>	climbing
	completed	<i>tati-ntjanu</i>	having climbed

The exact phonetic form of these verb suffixes varies slightly with the morphology of the verb, of which there are four formal verb classes that appear to have no semantic significance.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand the forms of verb endings realising direct orientation of imperative mood vary widely between these four formal classes. They are set out in the following Table 2. Imperative mood is glossed in examples with an exclamation mark.

Table 2: Forms of verb endings realising direct imperative mood

verb ending	example	gloss
<i>-la</i>	<i>tati-la</i>	climb up-!
<i>-wa</i>	<i>ukali-wa</i>	climb down-!
<i>- ('zero')</i>	<i>pitja</i>	come-!
<i>-ra</i>	<i>a-ra</i>	go-!

However when the polarity of the clause is negative there is only one possible verb ending, *tati-**ntjawiya***, literally 'not climbing', whether the clause is indicative or imperative, so that mood and time reference must be discerned by the listener from tone and context.

## 2.2 (Pro)nominal groups

Pitjantjatjara has a core repertoire of four nominal case inflections which contribute to realising various participant and circumstantial roles depending on their functional environment in a clause. I have labelled these inflections *active*, *neutral*, *genitive* and *locative*. Their realisations for singular personal pronouns, common nominals, demonstratives, and proper names are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Options in NOMINAL INFLECTION

nominal class	active	neutral	genitive	locative
personal speaker pronouns: addressee non-interactant	<i>ngayulu</i> <i>nyuntu</i> <i>paluru</i>	<i>ngayu-nya</i> <i>nyuntu-nya</i> <i>palu-nya</i>	<i>ngayu-ku</i> <i>nyuntu-mpa</i> <i>palu-mpa</i>	<i>ngayu-la</i> <i>nyuntu-la</i> <i>palu-la</i>
common nominals 'man' demonstratives 'this'	<i>wati-ngku</i> <i>nyanga-ngku</i>	<i>wati</i> <i>nyangatja</i>	<i>wati-ku</i> <i>nyanga-ku</i>	<i>wati-ngka</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 roles of active and neutral inflections are to distinguish participant roles in transitive clauses. For example, active is the uninflected form for personal pronouns when functioning as Actor in both transitive and intransitive action clauses, but they are inflected as neutral when functioning as Goal. Common nominals and demonstratives are inflected as active when functioning as Actor in transitive actions, while their uninflected form is neutral when functioning as Goal in transitive or as Actor in intransitive clauses. Proper names are inflected for both active and neutral transitivity roles and are uninflected when functioning as Vocatives. These differences in formal inflectional paradigms between nominal classes do not affect transitivity roles: as in English the Actor has the same roles in 'he brought me', 'a man brought me' or 'Jimmy brought me', as does the Goal in 'I brought him', 'I brought a man' or 'I brought Jimmy'. Where English distinguishes these roles by sequence in active or a by-adjunct in passive clauses, Pitjantjatjara does so with nominal inflections.<sup>4</sup>

The roles of locative inflections vary according to their functional environment, realising circumstantial and participant functions of Place, Time, Means, Accompaniment, Receiver or Source, and are glossed in text examples with appropriate English prepositional phrases, using the prepositions 'in/at/with/to'. Genitive inflections may realise types of causal circumstances, glossed with the prepositions 'of' or 'for', or a possessive Deictic or Token and glossed with 'my/mine', etc. Genitive is also used to indicate the Phenomenon in a mental reaction, realised with a preposition in English only in passive voice. Nominal groups have comparable options for expansion as in English, although in the reverse sequence: Thing, Deictic, Qualifier, Classifier, Epithet, Intensifier, Numerative, and finally the inflection. However it is uncommon to see nominal groups with more than three of these elements, as in 4 below.

4.    ngura    kutjupa    tjuta-ngka  
       place    different   plural-locative  
       **Thing    Epithet    Numerative**  
       in numerous places

Nominal groups are more often expanded to specify personal identities, rather than classes and qualities of things (perhaps a feature of spoken modes in general). This is illustrated in 5 below with a nominal group complex that specifies an identity with the name *Kipara*.

5.    wati    kutju-ngku    Kipara-ngku  
       man    one-active    Kipara-active  
       **Thing    Numerative    Thing**  
       only one man, only Kipara [1=2]

In 6 below, an identity is first indicated with a demonstrative pronoun, and then specified with a personal pronoun complex as Deictic.

6. pala palu-nya tjana-nya  
 there it-neutral them-neutral  
**Thing Deictic** [1=2]  
 those ones there

As in example 6 above, personal pronouns are glossed as far as possible with corresponding English pronoun cases, eg. 'I/me; we/us; they/them'. Unlike English, singular non-interactant pronouns are gender neutral, but 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'. The full range of these pronoun options are discussed as follows.

### 2.3 Personal pronouns

As with TENSE and ASPECT for verbs, PERSON and NUMBER are word rank systems available for personal pronouns, but are realised by the form of the pronoun itself rather than by affixes. Options 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 realised by a full (salient) pronoun, and many may be realised by a clitic pronoun. Clitic items in Pitjantjatjara are non-salient realisations of clause rank functions, including pronouns or modal adjuncts, that are appended to other salient elements of a clause. The paradigm of clitic pronouns in imperative clauses differs from that for indicative clauses. Table 4 below gives the realisations of each option in PERSON and NUMBER for active pronouns in imperative clauses, together with the glosses used in examples.

Table 4: Pronouns realising 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

The choice of implicit addressee is classed in this paradigm as a clitic with 'zero' realisation, since this is the non-salient realisation of this function. All other choices of person must be realised explicitly, as a full or clitic pronoun, although clitic is not available where the person is a non-interactant. 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 5 below gives the realisations of each option in PERSON and NUMBER for full or clitic active pronouns.

Table 5: Pronouns realising 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>	∅	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

These contrasting pronoun paradigms appear to reflect the relative frequency of person options in proposals and propositions. In proposals one's addressee is the person most frequently made responsible and so may be left implicit (ie. in commands), while non-interactants are infrequently made responsible and so have not evolved clitic options. In contrast in propositions it is the identity of non-interactants that may be assumed from the preceding discourse and so left implicit, while dual and plural addressees are infrequently the referents of propositions and so do not have clitic options. In addition the following clitic options are available for neutral and genitive pronouns.

Table 6: Clitic options are available for neutral and genitive pronouns

	single		dual		plural	
	neutral	neutral	genitive	neutral	genitive	
speaker	- <i>ni</i> 'me'	- <i>linya</i> 'us2'	- <i>limpa</i> 'our2'	- <i>lanya</i> 'us3'	- <i>lampa</i> 'our3'	
addressee	- <i>nta</i> 'you'	-	-	-	-	

The simple pronouns in Tables 4, 5 and 6 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. For example *paluru nyupali* means 's/he and you', including a non-interactant with addressee, or *paluru ngali*, 's/he and I', includes a non-interactant with speaker. The pronominal system is not limited to one word realisations of 'inclusive' or 'exclusive' categories, as morphologically focused descriptions of Australian languages sometimes imply. It is also worth mentioning here that numeration in Pitjantjatjara nominal groups traditionally consisted of only three primary options, single *kutju*, dual *kutjara* and plural *tjuta*, with plurality potentially adjusted as low *mankurpa* 'few', or high *winki* 'all'. This mirrors the three options for number in the pronoun system, for an individual, a pair or a group, illustrating in a small way relationships between social and ideational categories suggested by Durkheim (1912).

## 2.4 Tone contours

Tone is a crucial resource for realising 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 (as Halliday 1967 shows for English). These five general options are further specified by the pitch to which they rise or fall.<sup>5</sup> In the description here, each of these options are indicated graphically, in order to make the examples more readily accessible for the reader. The conventions for doing so are set out in Table 7, 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 realises in the context of specific speech functions is also given.<sup>6</sup>

Table 7: 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
	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

Before turning to the metafunctional previews, there is one more lower rank feature that is relevant for all examples, at the phonological rank of foot. Pitjantjatjara is a foot-timed language, with a close correspondence between each rhythmic foot and word, which is normally of two or three 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.

## 2.5 Basic MOOD

The starting point for the outline of clause grammar is with resources in MOOD, for two reasons. Firstly the deployment of these resources in discourse clearly illustrates the role of the language in enacting social relationships in Western Desert culture. Secondly interpersonal functions have been marginalised to date in descriptions of Australian languages, treated as sub-types of transitivity structures, or as lists of particles ancillary to major experiential word classes, and the complex role of intonation in interpersonal meaning has been largely unexplored. Such incomplete analyses have contributed to considerable misunderstandings, and sometimes implausible theories of exotic 'communication styles' in Australian languages. I have made an effort here to illustrate the functions of interpersonal grammatical resources in enacting Western Desert relationships in discourse, in the hope that this may lead to a richer and more accurate understanding of communication in Australian cultures.

The most general choice in MOOD is between imperative and indicative clauses, correlating with the generalised speech functional categories of 'proposal' or 'proposition', which are capable of functioning as moves in an exchange between speakers. Variations in imperative mood realise different types of proposal such as command, offer or suggestion, depending on the person obligated to carry out the proposal. Proposals can also be oriented

as direct or oblique by the verb suffix, and assigned various degrees of force by tone contours. The unmarked imperative tone rises from mid to high, and then falls to low, exemplified for a command in 7 below. Strong force is realised by a high falling tone, exemplified for a suggestion in 8. 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]

7.         wala-ngku    watja-la  
          quickly    tell-!  
          Tell me quickly!

[imperative: suggestive]

8.         a-ra        -la        // uru-kutu  
          go-!        we<sub>3</sub>        to waterhole  
          Let's go to the waterhole!

Indicative mood is used to negotiate propositions, as statements, yes-no questions or element (nya-) questions. It is realised by the presence of tense suffixes on the verb, if the clause represents a process. Clauses without verbs that represent relations between entities are inherently indicative. If the indicative clause is declarative, the unmarked tone is mid to low fall; if yes-no interrogative, the unmarked tone is rising. Example 9 is a dialogic pair from an exchange.

[indicative: yes-no interrogative -> declarative]

9.  
A        uti        -ya         nyanga-ngi  
          clearly    they<sub>3</sub>    were seeing?  
          Could they see it clearly?
- B        uwa    nyaku-la    ura-ra         kati-ngu  
          yes    seeing    collecting    did bring  
          Yes, having seen it, they collected it and brought it back.

Element interrogatives demand the identity of a wide variety of participants (10), circumstances or processes. Their unmarked tone is rise-fall, as for imperatives.

[element interrogative]

10.         ngana-lu    -nta    pu-ngu  
          who?    you    did hit  
          Who hit you?

## 2.6 Basic TRANSITIVITY

From the perspective of experiential meaning, a clause in Pitjantjatjara represents a process or a relation between entities. I have used the semantic term *figure* here to include

processes and relations (following Halliday and Matthiessen to appear). Each figure involves at least one participant, the Medium, it may be extended to one or more other participants, its Range, and it may also be associated with one or more Circumstances. The Medium in Pitjantjatjara is the generalised core participant in a clause, which acts, senses, says, or is assigned an attribute or identity. It is realised by the uninflected active form of personal pronouns, whether the clause is transitive or intransitive, eg. intransitive (11), transitive (12) and verbless relation (13).

[non-effective action]

11. ngayulu a-nu  
I did go  
**Medium Process**  
I went.

[effective action]

12. paluru malu waka-nu puli-ngka  
he a kangaroo did spear in the hills  
**Medium Range Process Circumstance**  
He speared a kangaroo in the hills.

[relation]

13. nyuntu ninti kuwari  
you aware now  
**Medium Range Circumstance**  
You are aware (know) now.

Other realisations of Medium, including demonstratives, proper names or common nominals, may be inflected as active in transitive clauses, to distinguish Medium from Range. The active inflection is indicated in bold type in 14.

[verbal signification]

14. kuta-**ngku** -ni watja-nu  
elder brother me told  
**Medium Range Process**  
My big brother told me.

The term Range generalises other participant functions, which involve the entity that the process or relation is extended to, ie. the thing or person that is acted on, done for or given to, said, addressed, perceived or reacted to, or the attribute or identity of the Medium. The suffix distinguishing the Range varies according to which one of these specific roles it fulfils. Circumstances include the logico-semantic categories of time and place, reason, purpose, means, accompaniment, role, comparison and quality, and are realised by nominal, adverbial or verbal groups depending on the type. The analysis of transitivity presented here considerably elaborates the binary model of Dixon's and other descriptions of clause grammar in Australian languages, that is defined in terms of verb classes as "either strictly transitive - occurring with subject (A) and object (O) core NPs - or strictly intransitive - occurring just with a subject (S) core NP" (Dixon 1980: 378). This definition is not inclusive enough to apply to verbal and mental clause types in which the Medium is active but not an 'agent' of an effective action, and does not apply to various other types of non-effective

actions. It also obscures analysis of relational clauses, in which there may be no verb and neither participant is 'agent'. I have tried to show in section 4 below how the model of experience immanent in the transitivity system of Pitjantjatjara is considerably richer than such reductive rule definitions allow for.

## 2.7 Basic THEME

The textual resource of Theme is employed in Pitjantjatjara for organising the structure of a clause as a message that has relevance to its context, and for adjusting the relative prominence of messages in the flow of discourse. Theme has had little attention in Australian linguistics, with the exceptions of Kilham (1977) on Theme in Wik-Munkan discourse, and MacGregor on Kuniinti clauses, both using Halliday's 1967 model of Theme, and Bowe (1990) on 'constituent order' in Pitjantjatjara clauses, using Comrie's 1981 formalist notion of 'syntactically basic word order'. Bowe improves on Dixon's influential dismissal of textual organisation (1980: 441), that the "order of words and phrases can, in most Australian languages, be extraordinarily free; it has little or no grammatical significance", but is still limited by a formalist non-discursive perspective and lack of intonation analysis. The model developed here elaborates the functions of Theme in Pitjantjatjara discourse, and relates them to variations in information structure realised by intonation.

Theme is realised in Pitjantjatjara by first position in the clause; that is the structural starting point of a clause is employed as the point at which the message is related to its context, in three possible ways. Each Theme includes an element that is the experiential starting point for the message, grounding it in the field of discourse. This experiential Theme (also known as 'topic') may be preceded by an interpersonal element such as a modal item, positioning the message in the speakers' interaction, and by a textual element such as a conjunction that connects the message to the preceding discourse. An example with all three possible thematic elements is given in 9. Themes are underlined in the examples that follow.

15.	<u>ka</u>	<u>kunyu</u>	<u>wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku</u>	<u>tili wirutjara-ngka</u>	<u>nyina-ngi</u>
	and	reportedly	only one man, only Kipara	with good brands	was living
	textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	experiential Theme		

In all major clauses the Medium is identified within the Theme. Its identity is either presented as a thing or a name (or both as in 15), or presumed by a salient pronoun, clitic pronoun or switch reference conjunction. These options are illustrated in the following extract (16), from a narrative about the mythic origin of fire.

16.1	<u>munu tjana-ya</u>	<u>watarku</u>	<u>nyina-ngi</u>
	and they3-they3	in ignorance	were living
	<b>Medium</b>		
	...and those people were living in ignorance.		

- +2 ka kunyu wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku tili wiru tjara-ngka nyina-ngi  
and it's said only one man, only Kipara with good brands was living

**Medium**

And apparently there was only one man, only Kipara who was living with fire with good firebrands.<sup>7</sup>

- +3 ka ngura kutjupa tjuta-ngka wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku kuli-ni wati kutju  
and in many different places many different men are thinking one man

**Medium**

So in numerous places, a great many men were thinking of this one man.

In the Theme of 16.1 the Medium is first identified by the additive conjunction *munu*, as the same as the Medium of the preceding clause, and then doubly identified by a salient and clitic pronoun *tjana-ya* 'they3'. In +2 the identity of the Medium is identified as different from that of 1 by the additive conjunction *ka*, and is specified by a nominal group *wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku* 'only one man, only Kipara'. In +3 the Medium identity is again switched by *ka*, and specified by a nominal group *wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku* 'many different men'. But here the Medium is preceded by another experiential Theme, a Place *ngura kutjupa tjuta-ngka* 'in many different places'. In contrast to Halliday's 1994 description of English Theme, the thematic potential of Pitjantjatjara clauses is not consumed until the Medium is identified.

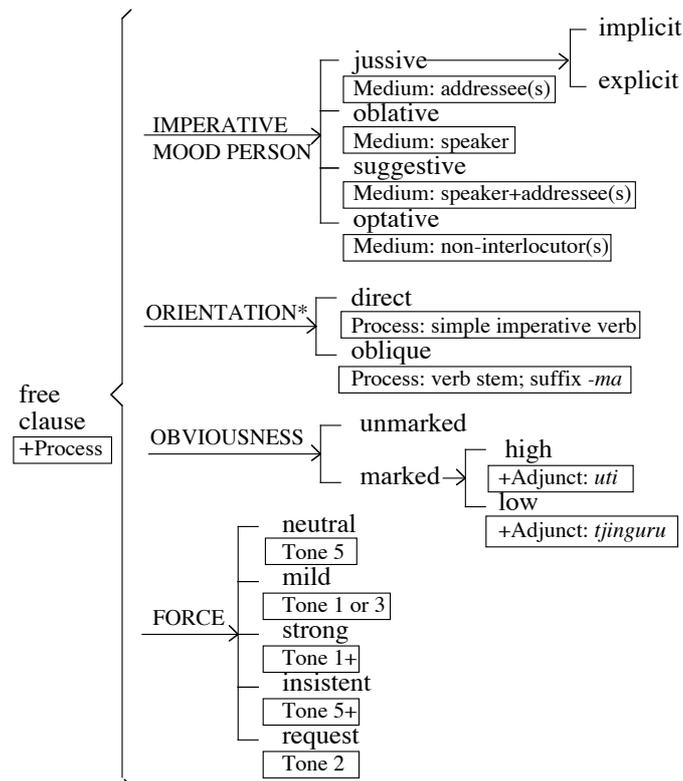
Example 10 also illustrates the contrast in thematic prominence between neutral (1) and foregrounded (+2,+3), realised by the relative salience of the experiential Theme. The neutral Theme of 1 is spoken on one rhythmic foot, whereas the foregrounded Themes of +2 and +3 occupy three and six feet. In this example, foregrounded Themes function discursively to foreground the changes in Medium identity in +2 and +3. (Thematic prominence in +2 is glossed in written English with an existential clause as Theme 'there was only one man, only Kipara'.)

## 3 Mood

In Pitjantjatjara, the grammatical resources of MOOD, and related systems of POLARITY, MODAL ASSESSMENT and VOCATION enable speakers to adopt interactant roles in exchanges with each other, and to position their addressees in responding roles. In Anangu society, as in any other, each exchange involves a sequence of predictable choices from the interpersonal resources of the grammar, enabling people to negotiate their relationships, within the explicitly defined framework of tenor relations in a conservative egalitarian culture. The most general variables within these tenor relations are *status* and *contact* (as Martin 1992 describes for English). For example, where contact is close such as between siblings, status differences may be explicit, whereas in other situations Anangu will go to great lengths to avoid any implication of differences in status. These variations in tenor are illustrated below in texts 22 and 23.

### 3.1 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), realising a command, the speaker(s), realising an offer, both addressee and speaker, realising a suggestion, or a non-interactant. This person responsible for acting in imperative clauses is also always its Medium from an experiential perspective; so rather than invent a distinct interpersonal label for the same element, I have retained the term Medium in the realisation statements below. (I have avoided the label 'Subject' since there is no general interpersonal function in Pitjantjatjara that corresponds to that of Subject in English.)<sup>8</sup> In ORIENTATION, the obligation may be oriented directly or obliquely according to the verb ending. In OBVIOUSNESS, the obligation may be construed as more or less self-evident, by means of modal items. In FORCE the obligation may be adjusted as neutral, mild, strong, insistent or uncertain by varying the tone contour of the imperative clause. These options for imperative clauses are set out in System 2.



System 2: Options for imperative clauses (\*contrast not available if negative).

Most of the options in these four systems are illustrated in texts 22 and 23 below. As far as MOOD PERSON is concerned, jussive, oblativ, suggestive and optative options are exemplified as follows.

[jussive ^ oblativ]

17.1 ———  
 uwa ngalya-pitja mild force  
 yes come hither-! + direct orientation

+2 ^  
 ka ngayulu paka-ra ma-pitja neutral force  
 and I getting up away-go-! + direct orientation  
 and I'll get up and go away!

[suggestive]

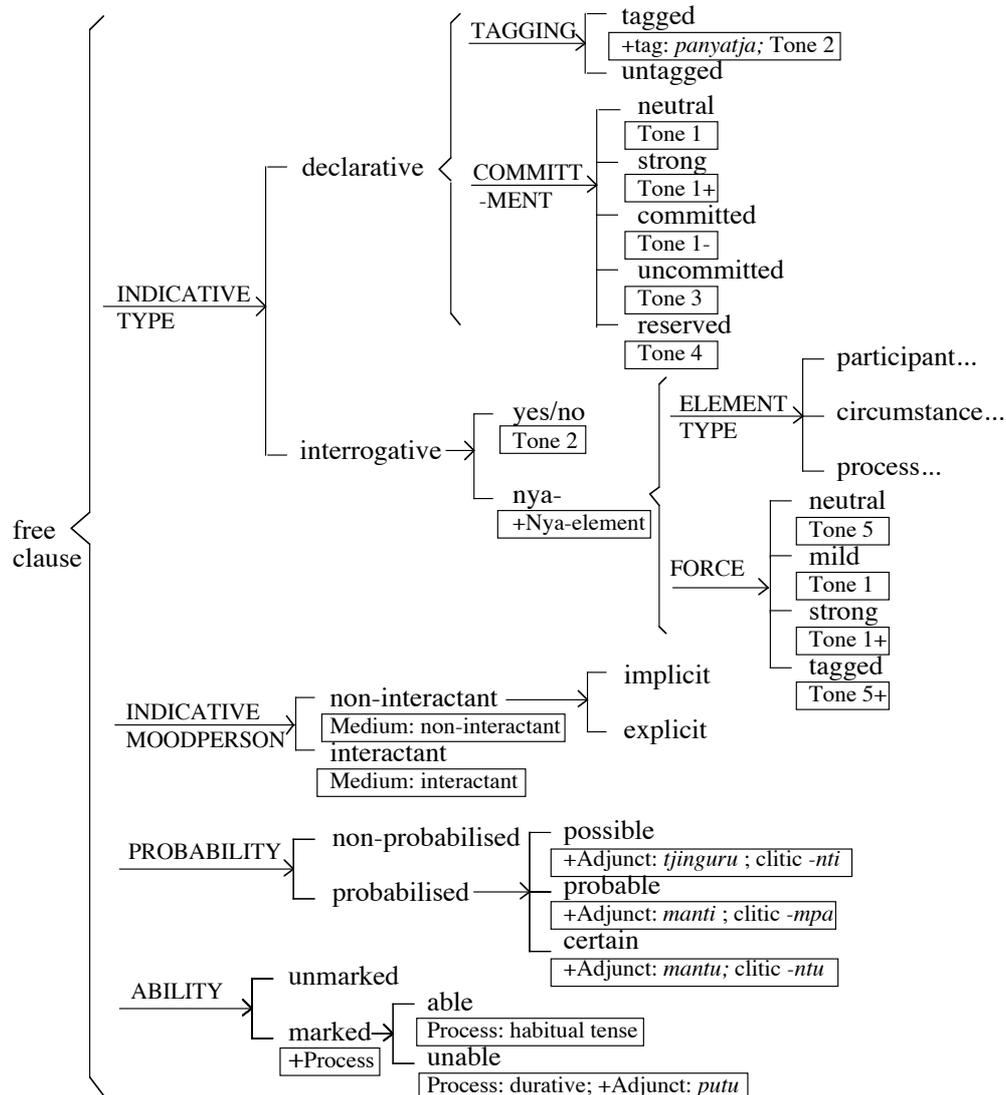
18. / ———  
 a-ra -la // uru-kutu insistent force  
 go-! we<sup>3</sup> to waterhole + direct orientation  
 Let's go to the waterhole!

[optative]

19. ^  
 paluru uti wangka-ma neutral force  
 s/he clearly should speak-! + oblique orientation -ma;  
 Clearly she should speak. + high obviousness uti  
('should' is used to gloss -ma)

### 3.2 Indicative clauses

Four sets of simultaneous options for indicative clauses are set out in System 3 below. Firstly 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 (realised by tone contour), and for nya-interrogatives in ELEMENT TYPE and degrees of FORCE in the demand. Secondly 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. Thirdly 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.



System 3: Options in indicative clauses

Sub-types of indicative clauses are exemplified in Texts 22 and 23 below, including many examples of declarative clauses, and various examples of yes-no and nya-interrogatives. The latter cover a similar spread of transitivity functions as wh-questions in English, but also include options for nya-processes, such as effective (20) and non-effective (21).

20. nyuntu palu-nya nyaa-nu  
 you him did what?  
 What did you do to him?

21. nyaa-ri-nganyi // awai  
 what's happening? hey?  
 What's happening, ay?

### 3.3 MODAL ASSESSMENT

Independent of these MOOD systems, Pitjantjatjara has further resources for adjusting interpersonal meanings in clauses, in options for MODAL ASSESSMENT. These options are realised as modal Adjuncts that are words or clitics. The basic resources are set out in the following Table 8.

Table 8: MODAL ASSESSMENT systems

System	feature	item
USUALITY	occasionally sometimes frequently continually	<i>kutjupara</i> <i>kutjupara kutjupara</i> <i>tjuta ara</i> <i>rawa</i>
DEGREE	nearly utterly: positive utterly: negative	<i>nguwanpa</i> <i>alatjitu</i> <i>wiyatu</i>
REALITY: POSITIVE	really only just	<i>mulapa</i> <i>kutju</i> <i>unytju</i>
REALITY: NEGATIVE	mistaken untrue	<i>palku</i> <i>ngunti</i>
CONTINUITY	transient permanent	<i>unytju</i> <i>rawa; -tu</i>
RESPONSIBILITY	deflected	<i>kunyu</i>
DEFERENCE	deferent	<i>wanyu</i>
DESIRE	addressee other	<i>puta</i> <i>-wi</i>

As well as these clause rank resources for specifying and intensifying modal assessments, Pitjantjatjara also has clause and group rank resources for specifying and intensifying qualities, in the clause as circumstances of Quality, and in nominal groups as Epithets and Intensifiers. Interpersonal Adjuncts are distinguished from these elements, because they are not inflected for transitivity as circumstances of Quality are, and do not occur within nominal groups as Epithets and Intensifiers do. Each of these options also interact with tone contours to enable speakers to negotiate judgements. These kinds of reactances are displayed in the following text examples.

### 3.4 Examples from discourse

As rich as the interpersonal resources are outlined above, in discourse their deployment adds another layer of potential elaboration. Speakers negotiate their relationships and their judgements using combinations of these resources simultaneously in the same clause, and these combinations develop as an interaction unfolds. Furthermore, adult discourse is characterised by the use of interpersonal metaphors for proposals that deflect modal responsibility from the speaker or addressee, and open up the negotiability of the proposal. For these reasons, the mood and assessment resources set out above are exemplified here in the context of dialogue between various kin.

#### Text 22: Two sisters

Text 22 is a dialogue between an elder and younger sister, that 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 labelled to the right of each line, in square brackets.

YZ1	wanyu please Please get up and come!	paka-ra pitja getting up come-!			[jussive; strong force; deference <i>wanyu</i> ]
2	kangkuru elder sister Big sister, shall I tell you?	// watja-lku-na-nta will tell -I -you?			[yes-no interrogative; mild vocation <i>kangkuru</i> ]
EZ1	nyaa-n what?-you What did you see?	nya-ngu did see What?	// nyaa what?	// nyaa what?	[nya-interrog; neutral force; nya-interrog x 2; neutral force]
2	wala-ngku quickly Tell me quickly!	watja-la tell!			[jussive; neutral force focused on quality <i>wala-ngku</i> ]
3	nyaa-n what?-you What are you saying?	wangka-nyi are saying			[nya-interrog; strong force]
YZ3	wanyu puta would you please If you please, come and see!	// pitja-la nya-wa coming look!			[jussive; mild force; deference <i>wanyu</i> ; desire <i>puta</i> ]

- 4      kuniya pulka alatjitu      tjarpa-ngu      [declarative; strong commitment  
utterly huge python      did enter (a burrow)      focused on size *pulka*]  
There's an absolutely huge python inside a burrow!
- 5      piti-ngka      -ni      nguwanpa tjarpa-tju-nu      [declarative; strong commitment  
into a burrow      me      nearly      did drag in      focused on degree *nguwanpa*]  
It nearly dragged me into the burrow!
- 6      pulka mulapa      [declarative; strong commitment  
really big      focused on size *pulka*]  
It's really huge!

The roles of speech functions and other interpersonal choices in realising status & contact in text 22 are as follows. Firstly, the younger sister opens the exchange excitedly, with a direct command to her elder sister, but immediately moderates this, i) addressing her respectfully by her kinship term *kangkuru*, 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 realised 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 sister is able to demand answers so insistently, not only because she is dominant, but also because she is familiar.

### Text 23: Family members planning a gathering trip

Text 23 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.

- 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 *tjuritja* (sweet grevillea flowers) afterwards.

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

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

Addressing the other adult family members, M1 uses five different strategies for modalising 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 realising 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?'.

These strategies open 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;  
yes really committed]  
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’, realised 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;  
i this morning in the daytime are gathering mild force]  
Tomorrow morning in the daylight, we’ll go gathering,
- ii munu -la ungka-lyi-nanyi [declarative;  
and we3 are training (the children how to do so) 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-ta-ku [imperative; ellipsed;  
(heading) for the *kurkur* 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, *arnguli* ‘bush plums’ and *ili* ‘wild figs’. This is a suggestion with ‘we3’ and tone 5, but with the verb ellipsed, and modalised by *tjinguru*, ie. ‘maybe we’ll get *ili*’. She uses this modal item again in the next modalised 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-ta-ku // arnguli kulu [declarative; ellipsed;  
i for the *kurkur* *arnguli* (bush plums) as well strong committment]  
For the *kurkur*, and *arnguli* 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 very fast you3 racing away  
ura-ra ngalya-kati-nyi [declarative;  
gathering are bringing back neutral committment]  
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 do come up lots of *ili* committed]  
Over there, lots of *ili* can be found. (indicating direction)

BW3	uwa				[affirmation; neutral committment]
	yes				
M4	mulapa	panya			[affirmation; committed]
	true	(is) that			
	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; insistent force]
	no (not there)	here			
	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 modalised explanation that '(ili) may be in here'.

M5	nyanga-ngka	-la	nya-wa	anku-la		[hortative; neutral force]
i	at here	we3	look-!	(while) going		
	If we go over here (SW's direction) we can have a look.					
ii	nyangatja	tjinguru	ngari-nyi	unngu		[declarative; neutral committment; low probability <i>tjinguru</i> ]
	here	maybe	are lying	inside		
	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; neutral committment]
	the other day, that is	Mitaiki		was digging and gathering			
	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 modalised 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; neutral force]
i	<i>ili</i>	here	going	look-!		
	There is <i>ili</i> here, so let's go and look.					



## 4 Transitivity

The transitivity functions of Medium, Range and Circumstance, discussed in section 2.2 above, are highly generalised roles. Their significance is apparent below the clause in the system of nominal inflection, and above the clause in discourse patterns of theme and participant identification. More specifically the transitivity system distinguishes three types of figure - actions, significations and relations (terms from Martin 1996). Action and signifying processes are both realised by a Medium+Process nucleus, but in signifying processes i) the Medium must be a conscious Sayer or Sayer (typically human), and ii) the signifying process can project ideas and locutions. Relations may be realised simply by contiguity of elements, or with processes of inception, possession or stance. Within each type of figure there are finer distinctions in types of doing, signifying and relating, each involving a unique set of participants. Circumstances may freely associate with different types of figures. General recognition criteria for distinguishing figure types include:

- whether the figure involves a process,
- the type of process realised by the verb: material, verbal, mental, stance, etc.,
- the type of entity instantiating the Medium: active, social or conscious,
- the inherent number of participants: 1, 2 or 3,
- the inflection of (pro)nominal groups realising the participants,
- the potential for projection of locutions or ideas.

### 4.1 FIGURE TYPE

Participant functions specific to process types are correlated in Table 9 below with generalised nuclear functions of Medium, Range and Agent.<sup>9</sup>

Table 9: Participant functions by figure types

Figure type		Medium	inner Range	outer Range	Agent
ACTION	effective	Actor	Goal	Recipient	
	non-effective	Actor	Behaviour	Domain, Source or Target	
SIGNIFICATION	verbal	Sayer	Verbiage	Receiver	
	mental	Senser	Phenomenon		
RELATION	attributive	Carrier	Attribute		
	identifying	Value	Token	Assigner	

The following text 24 is an extract from a traditional narrative, chosen because it displays a representative cross-section of experiential resources. The story begins with two sisters busily digging out burrows looking for small game. One sister tells the other to go and fetch a long stick *wili*, for feeling into burrows, but while going to do so she finds a burrow made by two *wanampi* serpents, gigantic mythic pythons that dwell in the sacred waterhole of *Piltati*. These *wanampi* are actually the sisters' own husbands who have transformed themselves. In this extract the woman sees the tail of a *wanampi* lying in the mouth of the burrow, and mistakes it for the tail of an ordinary desert python *kuniya*. The selection in process type is specified to the right of each clause, in square brackets, and transitivity functions are labelled in bold beneath each group. Ellipsed participants are glossed in brackets and also given functional labels, in order to make the transitivity functions clear.

**Text 24: *Piltati*** (extract 1)

				<b>Figure type</b>
1	ka and	kangkuru-rara panya kutjara those two sisters <b>Actor</b>	tjawa-ningi were digging <b>Process</b>	[action]
		...and those two sisters were digging.		
=2	watarku heedlessly	minyma kutjara two women <b>Actor</b>	tjawa-ningi were digging <b>Process</b>	tjawa-ra tjawa-ra digging digging <b>Duration</b>
		Heedlessly the two women were digging, continuously.		[action]
+3.1	ka and	∅ (one) <b>Sayer</b>	watja-nu commanded <b>Process</b>	[signification]
		Then one sister told the other,		
"3.2	∅ (you) <b>Actor</b>	wanyu 'please' <b>Goal</b>	wili long stick <b>Process</b>	mantji-la fetch-! <b>Process</b>
		"Please fetch a long stick."		[action]
+4	ka and	kutju one <b>Actor</b>	a-nu did go <b>Process</b>	[action]
		So the other sister went,		
+5.1	munu and	∅ (she) <b>Senser</b>	anku-la nya-ngu going along did see <b>Process</b>	[signification]
		and while going along she saw,		
'5.2	nyaa "what?" <b>Attribute</b>	nyangatja this <b>Carrier</b>	pupa-nyi is crouching" <b>Process</b>	[relation]
		"What is this here?"		
'5.3	∅ "(it) <b>Carrier</b>	wanampi-purunpa like a <i>wanampi</i> serpent" <b>Attribute</b>		[relation]
		"It is like a <i>wanampi</i> serpent."		
=6	kuniya a desert python <b>Attribute</b>	-lta palku that (was) mistakenly <b>Carrier</b>		[relation]
		She mistook it for a desert python.		

=7.1 piti tjaa                      ∅                      nya-ngu    [signification]  
 a mouth of a burrow    (she)            did see  
**Phenomenon                      Senser            Process**  
 It was the mouth of a burrow that she saw,

'7.2 nyangatja    piti tjaa    [relation]  
 "this (is)        a mouth of a burrow"  
**Carrier            Attribute**  
 "This is a mouth of a burrow."

The story of text 24 unfolds as an *activity sequence* (Martin 1992), but this is not simply a sequence of material events. Three events are material actions (1-2 'digging', 3.2 'fetching', 4 'going'), but other events include verbal interaction (3 'commanding') and perception (5-7 'seeing').

The sequence 3-4 construes verbal interaction as an exchange, with one sister demanding a service (3), to which the other complies by going (4). The discursive function of including this exchange in the story is to ground the discovery of the *wanampi* in the sisters' relationship. It is the younger sister who finds the *wanampi* burrow, but this is the result of the older sister demanding a service of her.

What the younger sister perceives are things - something that looks like a *wanampi* (5.3), but which she mistakes for a *kuniya* (6), and the mouth of burrow *piti tjaa* (7). But these perceptions are construed not merely as things. Rather the story tells us what the sister thought as she saw them, using the same resources for quoting speech as in the verbal interaction - "What is this?" she asks herself, "It's like a *wanampi*." and then states to herself "This is the mouth of a burrow." But note that these internal questions and statements are not projected by a process of saying as in (3), but by the process of seeing itself, as though perceiving were experienced by the Senser as inner speech.

This enables the perception to be expanded in two dimensions. Firstly it enables the storyteller to express the Senser's feeling in response to a perception, by means of mood and intonation, eg. surprise, horror, joy; in 5.2 a puzzled response is realised with a *nya*-question. Secondly it enables the perceived phenomenon to be grounded in a concrete situation, by means of a reference item as Carrier in an attributive relation - *nyangatja* 'this' (5.2, 7.2) or implicit 'it' (5.3). This construes the woman's mental processing as a sequence of perceptions of relations between features of the environment, and lexicalised categories of things, such as *wanampi* or *piti tjaa*.

Perception is construed here as a linguistic process of classifying and labelling entities; the entity perceived instantiates a lexicalised class of phenomena. This conscious activity of ascribing class labels to perceived phenomena is made explicit in the *nya*-question (5.2), in which the Senser asks herself what kind of thing 'this' is.

The same strategy of ascribing a label to a referent is also used in the comment in 6, in which the Carrier is the anaphoric clitic *-Ita* 'that' (6) and its Attribute is the misapprehended *kuniya*. This construal of perception as classification of phenomena is further expanded by the use of comparative attribution in 5.3, which implies that the perceived entity shared some characteristics with the category *wanampi*, but not enough to label it categorically, rather it is *wanampi-purunypa* 'like a *wanampi*'. (Earlier in the story the specific resemblance was made explicit, as both *wanampi* and *kuniya* have short thin tails at the end of their bodies.)

The discursive function of the woman's misapprehension follows this extract: thinking that it is merely a *kuniya*, she attempts to pull it out, but is nearly dragged into the

burrow herself, leading to the exchange with her sister presented as text 22 above.

It is in the context of discourse that the Western Desert theory of experience immanent in the grammar of transitivity becomes apparent. Most generally it is experienced as process - the meaning of a clause as a quantum of change, or as a relation of attribution or identity that may be more persistent. But material processes and relations in our external environment are not the only types of experience grammaticalised in the TRANSITIVITY system, the experience of perceiving them is too, as is the experience of social interaction.

The potential of the system to construe reality is drawn on dynamically as a text unfolds, to construe experience as sequences of such figures. Each sequence represents an instance in the ongoing history of experience in the culture. But despite the complexity of experience construed in the patterns of transitivity in text 24, it is by no means the whole story. Each figure is construed as constituted of the elements process, participants and circumstances. Reality is further categorised, identified and processed within each of these elements. Participants may be persons, things or qualities that may be modified with qualities, number and deixis. Processes may be inflected to indicate time and duration, and may also be complexed to realise lexical items unique to the language, such as *anku-la nya-ngu* 'saw while going along' (5.1). When relations require temporalising, they may be realised by verbs of stance, such as *pupa-nyi* 'is crouching' (5.2), or *nyina-nyi* 'sitting', *ngara-nyi* 'standing, or *ngari-nyi* 'lying'.<sup>10</sup> Circumstances construe a range of experiential categories that may be associated with the clause nucleus or a participant. The general set of circumstantial options are presented in the following section, before turning to analyses of figure types.

## 4.2 CIRCUMSTANTIATION

Circumstances are associated with a figure by various types of logico-semantic relation. Many of these options are exemplified throughout the text examples in this section:

- i) They may **elaborate** the figure with a Role (text 26: line 2), Comparison (39:7), Quality (24:2) or Bodily Means. Each of these elaborating circumstances inflects for transitivity, as active or neutral. This inflection mirrors the transitivity role of the element elaborated by the circumstance - Medium, Range or Process.
- ii) They may **extend** it with an Addition, Possession (39:4), Accompaniment (39:5) or Means. These are realised by nominal groups with an additive, possessive or locative suffix.
- iii) They may **enhance** it with Duration (24:2), Location in Time (7) or Place (39:2-3), Destination, Purpose, Behalf or Reason. Duration is realised by a verb series, Location by a nominal group with locative, allative, ablative, or processive suffixes, Destination and Behalf by genitive, Purpose by purposive, and Reason by ablative suffixes. These general options, realisations and glosses are set out in Table 10.

Table 10: Options in CIRCUMSTANTIATION

Enhancing	structural realisation	gloss
Duration	iterated realis process, eg. <i>ankula ankula ankula</i>	'going going going'
Location:	rest	nominal gp-locative <i>-ngka, -la</i>
movement towards	nom gp-allative <i>-kutu</i>	'to (place or time)'
away from	nom gp-ablative <i>-nguru</i>	'from (place or time)'
through	nom gp-processive <i>-wanu</i>	'through (place or time)'
Destination	nom gp-genitive <i>-ku</i>	'(heading) for (place)'
Purpose	nom gp-purposive <i>-kitja</i>	'in order to do (thing)'
Reason	nom gp-ablative <i>-nguru</i>	'from doing (thing)'
Behalf	nom gp-genitive <i>-ku</i>	'for (person)'
<b>Extending</b>		
Accompaniment	nom gp-locative <i>-ngka, -la</i>	'with (person/thing)'
Addition	nom gp-additive <i>-kulukulu</i>	'as well as (person/thing)'
Possession	nom gp-possessive <i>-tjara</i>	'with (possession)'
Means	nom gp-locative <i>ngka, -la</i>	'with (instrument)'
<b>Elaborating</b>		
Bodily Means	nom gp+/- active <i>-ngku</i>	'using (body part)'
Role	nom gp+/- active <i>-ngku</i>	'as (role)'
Comparison	nom gp- <i>purunypa</i> +/- active - <i>tju</i>	'like (person/thing)'
Quality	adverbial gp+/- active <i>-ngku</i>	quality-'ly'

Not included in Table 10 are options for realising Location with spatial demonstratives, eg. *nyaratja* 'yonder', and temporal adverbs, eg. *kuwari* 'now' or *mungatu* 'recently'. As can be seen Pitjantjatjara circumstances cover a similar logico-semantic spread to circumstances in languages such as English, and are realised by similar means, nominally or adverbially. One exception to commonalities with English is Bodily Means which differs from Means in that the body part is inflected as though it elaborates the actor (like a Role or Quality), eg. *ngayulu mara-ngku pungu* 'I, hand did hit' rather than extending it with a separate instrument, eg. *ngayulu punu-ngka pungu* 'I hit with a stick'. Another major difference is the realisation of temporal Duration as a series of non-finite verbs, eg. *tjawa-ra tjawa-ra* 'digging digging'. This contrasts with the realisation of Duration in SAE languages which Whorf characterised as 'objectifying' time as a nominal group or prepositional phrase. The following Pitjantjatjara clause (25) represents a single process of 'travelling', realised by a finite verb *a-nangi* 'was going', but whose duration in time is strung out through a series of circumstances of Quality (realised adverbially), Duration (realised verbally) and Place (realised nominally).

25.	ka	paluru	a-nangi	alatjitu	titutjara	anku-la	anku-la	anku-la
	and	s/he	was going	utterly	continually	going	going	going
	<b>Medium</b>		<b>Process</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>Duration</b>		
	ngura	nyara	wanu	wati-pitja-la	wati-pitja-la	wati-pitja-la		
	through	yonder	place	crossing	crossing	crossing		
	<b>Place</b>			<b>Duration</b>				

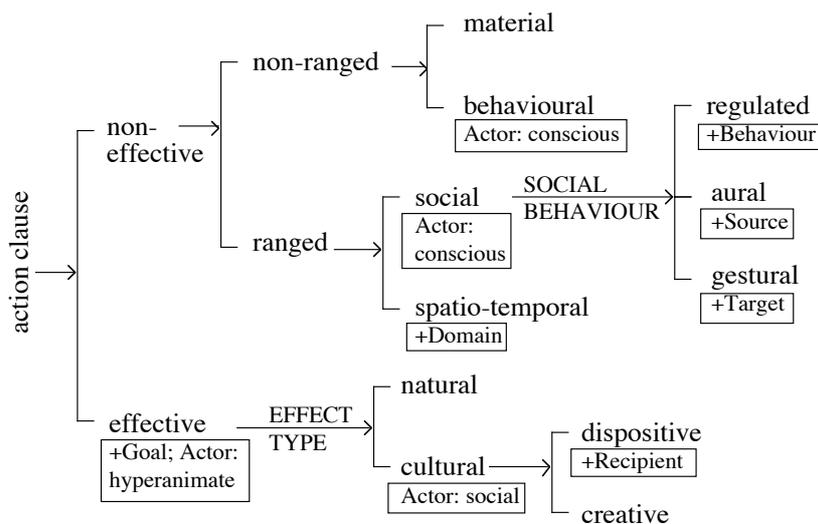
anku-la anku-la anku-layii  
going going going

### Duration

He was travelling continually, for a very very long way, through that country yonder (pointing out direction), continually travelling across there, for a very very long time.

## 4.3 ACTION

The ACTION region of the TRANSITIVITY system construes experience as entities acting in space-time. The primary distinction is between effective and non-effective actions. **Effective actions** impact on a Goal. They may be natural actions with non-animal Actors, eg. *mina-ngku puyi-ni* 'rain is chilling' (ie. 'it's raining'); while in cultural actions Actors are typically human, or at least animals. In Pitjantjatjara discourse, it is overwhelmingly people who act on the world, and very rarely the reverse. **Non-effective actions** are most frequently non-ranged, involving Actor alone (intransitive), or they may be ranged, involving a second participant that the process is extended to, but does not have an effect on, Domain, Behaviour, Source or Target. These options are set out in System 4. By far the most frequent options, with the largest verbal lexis, are effective creative actions and non-effective material actions.



System 4: ACTION systems

Effective and non-effective actions are exemplified in text 26 below, another extract from the *Piltati* myth. This extract exemplifies effective and non-effective action in the context of an activity sequence involving two men and two women. Experiential roles are labelled for each action clause, and their effectivity value is given to the right.

### Text 26: *Piltati* (extract 2)

1 wati kutjara kunyu kuta-rara nyina-ngi  
two men it's said brother-pair were sitting  
It's said that there were two men who were brothers.

**Action type**  
(relation)

- 2 kungkawara kutjara  $\emptyset$  alti-ngu, kangkuru-rara effective  
 two young women (they) married sister-pair  
**Goal Actor Process Role**  
 They married two young women who were sisters.
- 3 wati kutjara pula a-nu malu-ku non-effective  
 they2 two men went for kangaroos  
**Actor Process Purpose**  
 Those two men went hunting for kangaroos.
- 4 kuka kanyila-ku  $\emptyset$  tati-nu puli-ngka non-effective  
 for wallaby game (they) climbed up in the hills  
**Purpose Actor Process Place**  
 For wallabies, that is, they climbed up in the hills,
- +5 munu pula kuka kanyila kati-ngu effective  
 and-sm they 2 wallaby game brought back  
**Actor Goal Process**  
 and they brought back wallaby meat to the camp.
- +6 ka pula mai-ku tjaru-ukali-ngu non-effective  
 and-sw they 2 for vegetable food descended down  
**Actor Purpose Process**  
 Meanwhile the other two for went down to the plain, looking for vegetable foods,
- +7 munu pula mai ili ura-ningi effective  
 and-sm they 2 fig food were collecting  
**Actor Goal Process**  
 and were collecting wild figs.
- +8 munu pula mai  $\beta$  kati-ra  $\alpha$  u-ngu wati kutjara effective:  
 and they2 food bringing gave to the two men dispositive  
**Actor Goal Process Recipient**  
 Then they brought the vegetable foods back and shared them with the two men
- +9 munu kuka  $\beta$  wiya-ringku-la  $\alpha$  ailuru-ri-ngu (relation)  
 and game finishing a drought began  
 Then all the game was finished as a drought began.
- 10  $\emptyset$  putu  $\beta$  tjawa-ra  $\alpha$  pitja-ngi non-effective  
 (they) unable digging were coming  
**Actor Process**  
 Unable to dig anything up, the women were coming back to camp emptyhanded.
- +11 munu pula kunyu pararitja-kutu a-nu non-effective  
 and they2 it's said far away went  
**Actor Place Process**  
 Then it's said they travelled far away,

- +12    munu pula    ma-antjakari-ngu    non-effective  
 and they2    camped away overnight  
**Actor**    **Process**  
 and camped away overnight.
- +13    δ    munu pula    ngarin-tjanu-ngku    non-effective  
 and they2    after sleeping  
**Actor**    **Process**  
 Then after sleeping,
- γ    pungku-la    β antjakaringku-la    α wirkati-ngu    γ effective  
 killing,    camping out,    finally arrived    β & α non-effective  
**Process**    **Process**    **Process**  
 killing small game and camping out further, they finally arrived (at a distant place).

Material and creative actions predominate in text 26. This stage of the story is a sequence of the brothers and sisters acting purposefully in time and space, moving, stopping, performing (non-effective), and transforming, transporting or exchanging other entities (effective). These processes construe the socio-economic activities of the culture, explicitly contrasting the purposes, processes and objects of men's and women's economic activity: the men 'climb for game', the women 'descend for vegetable food', which they share on returning to camp. The place of each these processes in the transitivity system are set out in Table 11. To the left of the table the most general categories of experience are realised grammatically. To the right the most delicate categories are specified lexically.

Table 11: Functions of action processes in text 26

Grammatical		Lexical	
non-effective	non-ranged	moving	<i>a-nanyi</i> 'going', <i>tati-ni</i> 'climbing', <i>pitja-nyi</i> 'coming',
		stopping	<i>antjakari-nyi</i> 'camp away for the night', <i>ngari-nyi</i> 'lying'
		performing	<i>tjawa-ni</i> 'digging'
	ranged		<i>alti-ni</i> 'marrying (inviting/calling)'
effective	creative	transforming	<i>pu-nganyi</i> 'killing (hitting)'
		transporting	<i>kati-ni</i> 'bringing', <i>ura-ni</i> 'gathering', <i>wirkati-nyi</i> 'finally arriving'
	dispositive		<i>u-nganyi</i> 'giving'

Another significant feature of text 26 is the clause complex +13, that consists of a series of non-finite clauses concluding with a finite clause,  $\delta \rightarrow \gamma \rightarrow \beta \rightarrow \alpha$ . Such hypotactic clause series represent a temporal sequence of events that are partially discrete, but oriented towards completion in the final finite process. In discourse they alternate with the additive option for sequencing finite clauses, exemplified in text 26 as 4+5+6+7+8, etc., which construes each event as wholly discrete, and added to the preceding event rather than heading towards a goal. As mentioned above, such hypotactic clause series are a characteristic feature of Australian and Papuan languages, sometimes known as 'clause-chaining' or 'serial verbs'. They are also a common feature of spoken English (Martin 1988).

The less frequent non-effective actions are exemplified as follows. Non-ranged behaviour includes verbal or mental processes that do not signify anything; the Actor is conscious but the action is construed simply as behaviour, such as *walpa wangka-nyi* 'wind

is talking'. Regulated social behaviour includes activities such as singing, performing and playing games (27). The Range is a name the behaviour, and the Actor is not inflected as ACTIVE. In aural behaviour the Range is a speaker or other sound source that is inflected as LOCATIVE (28). Gestural behaviour includes non-verbal actions like laughing, and the Range is the target of the gesture, inflected as LOCATIVE (29). Spatio-temporal Domain is construed as an unaffected second participant, such as a hill that is climbed; it is not inflected as a locative circumstance, and the Actor is not inflected as active (30).

[regulated social behaviour]

27. kungka tjuta inma inka-nyi  
 many girls song are playing (ie. 'singing')
- Actor Behaviour Process**
- The girls are singing a song.

[aural behaviour]

28. ka panya Tonkin-tu kuli-ningi nyara anangu tjuta-ngka  
 and that Tonkin was listening to those people
- Actor Process Source**
- ...and that man Tonkin (SA Premier) was listening to those people.

[gestural behaviour]

29. ka paluru ngayu-la ikari-ngu  
 and he at me laughed
- Actor Target Process**
- ...and he laughed at me.

[spatio-temporal domain]

30. ka nyantju panya wala winki puli tati-nu  
 and that horse very quickly hill climbed
- Actor Quality Domain Process**
- ...and that horse climbed the hill really fast.

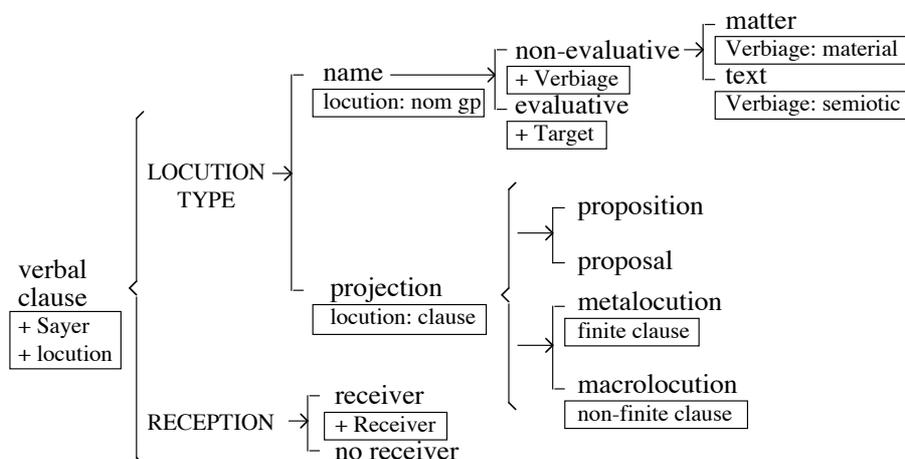
#### 4.4 SIGNIFICATION

The two types of signifying processes, verbal and mental, represent a move by a Sayer in a verbal exchange, or the internal conscious processing of a Senser. Both have the option of representing signification as direct or indirect speech, ie. as "quoted wording' or as 'reported meaning'. So the two modes of semiosis, inter-personal and intra-personal, are both construed as linguistic phenomena at two levels, as lexicogrammar and as semantics. Both may also represent the act of meaning as a thing, that is a concrete or abstract entity that is said or sensed. Structurally, mental process clauses are distinguished from verbal ones most generally by the verb instantiating the signifying Process, ie. either a type of saying or of sensing, and by the option of including the exchange participant Receiver in verbal clauses.

##### 4.4.1 Verbal processes

In Pitjantjatjara verbal processes, only people may instantiate the role of Sayer,

except in the case of mythic beings that are simultaneously human and animal. This contrasts with the model of verbal processing in written languages such as English where any entity capable of symbolising, such as clocks or books, may function as Sayer. Projected locutions may be paratactic, ie. “quoted speech”, or hypotactic, ‘reported speech’, and either a proposition or proposal. These options are set out in System 5.



System 5: Options in verbal clauses

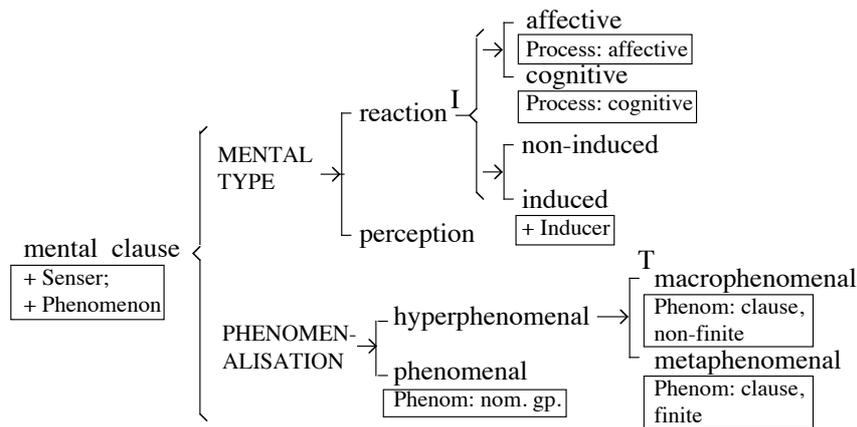
Direct speech is the most frequent choice in verbal projections; it enables the speaker to reproduce the intonation, rhythm and ‘timbre’ of the quoted speech act, opening up a large potential for expressing attitude towards both the Sayer and the locution. A common device is imitating or exaggerating the character of the Sayer, to amuse listeners who know the person, or to develop the character of a participant in a narrative. Since speakers are able to play around with the phonology of locutions to diversify varieties of saying, the range of ‘saying’ verbs is limited, distinguishing speech functions and genres rather than attitude (whereas written languages such as English may have a large ‘saying’ lexis).

Probably the most common environment for projected locutions is in narrative. The following extract, text 31, exemplifies projected propositions and proposals in an exchange between a younger and elder brother, YB and EB. In the transcription here, tone contours of projected clauses are presented to illustrate how the exchange is construed by the narrator. (Projecting clauses always come first and are normally not on separate tone groups.)

### Text 31: Two brothers

1.1	ka and	nyanga-ngku this one <b>Sayer</b>	wangka-ngu said <b>Process</b>	<b>Projected speech function</b> (+ projected voice quality)
		...and this one (the younger brother) said,		
1"2	kuta EB	// ngari-ku -na will lie I	nyanga-ngka here?	“question” (deferential alto)
		“Big brother, may I lie here?”		





System 6: Options for mental process

Perception and reaction differ in their construal of the nature of the process and its relation to the phenomenon. In perception, the phenomenon is construed as a semiotic outcome of perceiving. Reaction on the other hand is construed as a change in the Senser in reaction to the phenomenon. Internal perception is typically realised by the verb *kulini*. This may be an individual process of thinking, or a collective one (32) in which thinking is construed as internal to the Senses' consciousness, but at the same time as social, since two or more people are thinking together.

**Text 32.** Here *kulini* means 'judging' (1'2) and then 'exhorting ourselves' (2'2).

1.1 ka -la pala palu-la kuli-ni  
and we3 at that there are thinking  
**Senser Time Process**

So at that point we were thinking,

1'2 nyanga palu-nya piranpa-ku idea pitja-ntja "statement"  
this here whitefellow's idea [[coming]]  
"This here is a whitefellow's idea that's come along."

+2.1 ka -la kuli-ni  
and we3 are thinking  
**Senser Process**

So we were thinking,

2'2 uti nganana kuli-lku "suggestion"  
clearly we3 will think  
"Clearly we should think for ourselves."

As discussed in the context of text 26 above, processes of 'seeing', 'hearing' or 'feeling' phenomena that are external to the Senser's consciousness are construed in the same manner as processes of 'thinking (about)' phenomena internal to one's consciousness. McGregor (1992) notes a similar feature in the Kimberley language, Kuniyanti, and his examples show that both internal and external projected perception are represented as quoted speech.

Reaction processes are realised by verbs of affective and some cognitive qualities, that are inflected for inceptive aspect, suggesting a mental process of qualities coming into being. The Senser in a reaction is inflected as neutral and the phenomenon is either a nominal element with the GENITIVE inflection *-ku* (33), or a projected non-finite process (34). The inflections of these nominal and verbal phenomena both suggest an external stimulus which the internal reaction is directed towards, in time or space, eg. ‘desiring **for** a thing’ or ‘desiring **to** do’.

33.   nyuntu   nyaa-ku   ngayu-ku   pikari-nganyi  
 you       why?       to me       are being angry  
**Senser   Reason   Phenomenon   Process**  
 Why are you angry at me?

34.   α paluru   kuntari-nganyi   β anangu tjuta-ngka   wangka-ntjikitja  
 he       is embarrassed   to many people       to talk-SM  
**Senser   Process           macrophenomenon**  
 He is embarrassed talking in front of many people.

Reactions construe this realm of mental activity as incipient qualities,<sup>11</sup> such as *pika* ‘angry’ or *kunta* ‘embarrassed’ that may otherwise function to describe people with Attributes in relations (see next section) or Epithets in nominal groups, eg. *wati pikati* ‘cranky man’. Reactions are generally social processes, that Myers (1986) describes as functioning to internalise the values of Western Desert culture. Reactions are either positive or negative, as listed in Table 12.

Table 12: Types of mental reactions

positive		negative	
<i>mukuringanyi</i>	liking, wanting, desiring	<i>kuraringanyi</i>	disliking, hating
<i>unyuringanyi</i>	desiring, loving	<i>watjilarinyi</i>	longing, feeling homesick
<i>raparinganyi</i>	feeling brave, confident	<i>nguluringanyi</i>	fearing
		<i>kuntaringanyi</i>	feeling shy, ashamed
<i>ngalturinganyi</i>	feeling sympathy	<i>nyararinganyi</i>	feeling jealous
<i>pukularinyi</i>	feeling happy	<i>mirparinganyi</i>	feeling offended
		<i>waruringanyi</i>	getting heated
		<i>pikaringanyi</i>	getting angry
<i>nintiringanyi</i>	learning	<i>ngurparinganyi</i>	forgetting

It is noteworthy that ‘learning’ is construed in Pitjantjatjara as a quality *ninti* ‘knowledgeable/clever’ that comes into being, on the same model as affective reactions. Many verbs that realise mental reaction also have corresponding causative forms, which involve an additional agentive participant, the **Inducer**, as well as a Senser and Phenomenon (35).

35.   α ngayuku tjamu-ngku -ni       ninti-nu   β punu palya-ntjaku  
 grandfather                   me       did teach   to make artefacts-sw  
**Inducer                   Senser   Process   macrophenomenon**  
 My grandfather taught me to make artefacts.

#### 4.5 RELATION

Relational clauses enable an entity to be related to another element in two general ways, attributing to it a general class, quality, possession or circumstance, or identifying it with a unique characteristic such as name, role or owner. This semantic contrast between generality and definiteness is exemplified in the choice of *nya*-questions between *nyaa* ‘what?’ (36) and *ngananya* ‘who/ which one’ (37).

[attributive]

36.A nyangatja nyaa  
 this what?  
**Carrier Attribute: nya-question**  
 What is this?

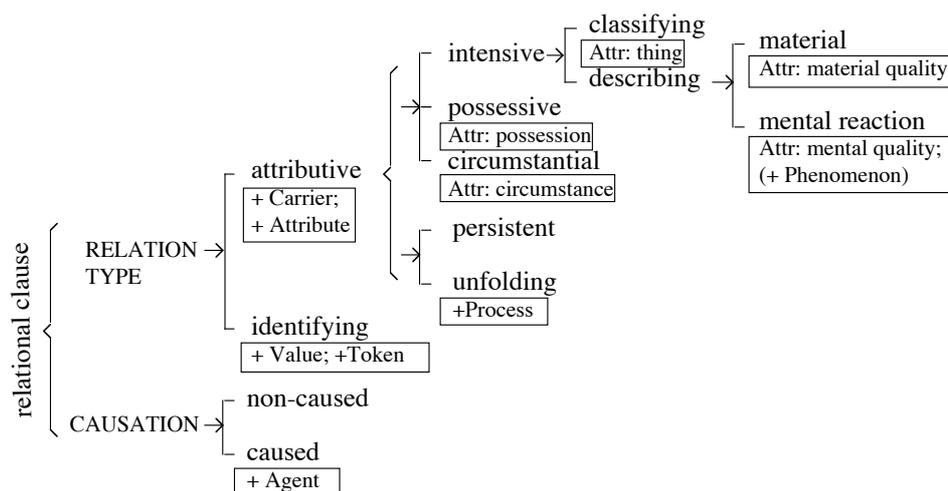
B wiya nyanga kura kura  
 no this no good  
**Carrier Attribute: quality**  
 No, this is no good.

[identifying]

37.A wati palatja ngananya  
 that man who?  
**Value Token: nya-question**  
 Who is that man?

B paluru ngayuku katja  
 he my son  
**Value Token: kin relation**  
 He is my son.

Attributive relations may be intensive (either classifying or describing), possessive, or circumstantial, but identifying relations are inherently intensive. Attributive relations also have a further option in temporality. Since mood, tense, phase and aspect are realised by inflection of verbs in Pitjantjatjara, relational clauses without verbs are inherently indicative and ‘timeless’, ie. the relation is construed as persistent rather than unfolding. Where an attributive relation requires temporalising, ie. to be grounded temporally or modally, it can be realised by a relational process, either by verbalising the nominal group functioning as Attribute, with inceptive aspect ‘becoming thing/quality’, or by a separate possessive verb *kanyi-ni* ‘having’, or verbs of stance for circumstantial relations.



System 7: General options for relational clauses

As System 7 shows, both attributive and identifying relations also have the option of being caused by an additional agent, who assigns an Attribute or an Token. For example, the process of assigning a name (38).

38.	nyaaku	piranma-ngku	ini panya	tju-nu	Council nyangatja
	why?	the whites	this name	did put	(to) this Council
	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Assigner</b>	<b>Token</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Value</b>
	Why have the whites given this name to this Council?				

Many options for relational clauses are displayed the following text example (33), an extract from a mythic narrative recounting the people's original acquisition of fire. The orientation stage of text 33 is concerned with establishing the location of the activity sequence, the possessions of the core participants and qualities. Attributive relations are employed in clauses 2-9 and 13 to do so. In the transcription here, types of circumstantial Attributes are specified as place, accompaniment and quality. (These and other circumstances are discussed further in the following section.) Where the Carrier is implicit it is glossed and labelled in brackets (Cr).

**Text 39: Kipara**

				<b>Attributive type</b>
1	∅	tjukurpa	kunyu	intensive
	(this)	a Dreaming story	it's said	
	<b>(Cr)</b>	<b>Attribute</b>		
	This is a Dreaming story, I have been told.			
=2	anangu tjuta	nyina-ngi	manta nyanga-ngka	circumstantial
	many people	were sitting	in this land	
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Attribute:place</b>	
	People were living in this land.			

- 3 manta wingki-ngka kunyu nyina-ngi anangu tjuta circumstantial  
 in all lands it's said were sitting many people  
**Attribute:place Process Carrier**  
 In all the lands, it's said, the people were living.
- +4 munu ya paluru tjana waru kurakura kanyi-ningi tili maru-tjara possessive  
 and they3 they3 useless fire were having with black brands  
**Carrier Attribute Process Possession**  
 But at that time those people had useless fire, with black firebrands.
- 5 tili maru-tjara ∅ kunyu nyina-ngi circumstantial  
 with black brands (they) it's said were sitting  
**Attribute:possession (Cr) Process**  
 With black firebrands, it's said they were living.
- 6 nya-wa tjana putu kunyu waru mantji-ningi (action)  
 look-! they3 unable it's said fire were getting  
 Look, it's said they were unable to make fire.
- 7 munga-purunypa maru-ngka munga maru-ngka circumstantial  
 like night in darkness in dark night  
**Attribute:comparison Place Place**  
 It was like perpetual night, like living in darkness, in the dark night,
- +8 munu tjana-ya watarku nyina-ngi circumstantial  
 and they3-they3 in ignorance were sitting  
**Carrier Attribute:quality Process**  
 but furthermore those people were living in ignorance.
- +9 ka kunyu wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku tili wiru-tjara-ngka nyina-ngi circum.  
 and it's said only one man only Kipara with good brands was sitting  
**Carrier Attribute:accomp Process**  
 And apparently there was only one man, only Kipara, who was living with fire with good brands.
- +10α ka ngura kutjupa tjuta-ngka wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku kuli-ni wati kutju (signif.)  
 and in many different places many different men think one man  
 So in numerous places, a great many men were thinking of this one man,
- 10β mantji-ntjikitja waru palu-nya (action)  
 to get that fire  
 of getting that fire from him.
- +11 ka ya palu-nya putu mantji-ra tjulya-ra wana-ra tjulya-ra wana-ra (action)  
 and they3 it unable getting snatching following snatching following  
 But they were unable to get it, as they snatched at it, and followed him continuously.
- =12 wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku tjulya-ningi putu (action)  
 many different men were snatching unable  
 All those men were unable to snatch the fire from him.

- +13 ka ø tjilka-ri-ngu intensive: inceptive  
 and (this) became the *tjilka* (initiation ceremonial journey)  
 (Cr) **Attribute**  
 And this journey was transformed into the *tjilka*.
- 14 tjilka-rara alatjitu kati-ngu (action)  
*tjilka* group exactly did bring  
 It was the *tjilka* host itself that was carried along in this journey.

The relational clauses in text 39 well illustrate the temporalising function of expressing relations with a verb. Two relations are persistent: clause 1 refers to the present '(this is) *tjukurpa*', while in 5 persistent past time is implicit *munga purunypa* '(it was) like night'. Others are temporalised in order to locate the relation in the past time of the story. The circumstantial relations (2, 3, 4, 5, 8) are construed as unfolding, but they are still relatively persistent with past durative tense: *nyina-ngi* 'was being', *kanyi-ningi* 'was having'. By contrast the inceptive relation in 13 came into being just once, with the punctiliar past tense *tjilka-ri-ngu* 'did become *tjilka*'.

Two other significant sets of features displayed in this text are the functions of implicit Carriers, and expanding circumstances at the end of clauses. In clause 1 the implicit Carrier is the following text, classified as *tjukurpa*; in 5 it is the whole world, which is compared with *munga* 'night'; in 13 it is the preceding activity sequence, that 'became the *tjilka* ceremonies'. By means of such implicit reference, abstract entities such as activity sequences are identified in the language without needing to lexicalise them, and causal relations can be inferred between events of the Dreaming, such as 'the origin of fire' and their contemporary consequences, such as the *tjilkatja* initiation ceremonies (Rose 1993). By such means abstract concepts can be construed at the discourse semantic level, without requiring the lexicogrammatical resources for abstraction characteristic of written modes in other cultures (as in this paper for example).

Expanding circumstances are illustrated in clauses 4, 7 and 9. In 4 a circumstance of Possession *tili maru-tjara* 'with black coals' expands on the qualities of the Attribute *waru kurakura* 'useless fire'. In clause 7, the circumstances of Place *maru-ngka* 'in the night' and *munga maru-ngka* 'in the dark night' expand on the Attribute *munga purunypa* 'like night'. Expanding circumstances are a common feature of Pitjantjatjara clauses - elements are expanded on by circumstances that tend to occur at the end the clause (as late New information, typically on a separate tone group); another example in text 26 above was the Role *kangkurara* 'sister-pair' in clause 2.<sup>12</sup> Finally, a circumstance of Possession that expands on the qualities of fire occurs again in clause 9, but this time it is 'with good firebrands', *tili wiru-tjara*, not 'black' ones, and the circumstance of Possession is embedded in one of Accompaniment, *tili wiru-tjara-ngka*, that we discussed above in section 2.1. In this case this circumstance is not clause final, but functions in a similar manner to other expanding circumstances; it expands on the quality of the fire that *Kipara* is living with, but here the fire is implicit, presumed from its preceding mentions in the text. This strategy avoids the potentially ambiguous complexity of a group structure such as \**waru tili wiru-tjara-ngka*, which do not occur in the language, but contributes to the text's cohesion by means of ellipsis and lexical collocation.

## 5 Theme

The meaning of the thematic organisation of each clause only makes sense in the context of its discourse semantic function, that of grounding each message in its local context of situation or preceding text, so I have exemplified Theme functions below wholly in the context of texts.

### 5.1 Resources in THEME

Resources in THEME consist of two sets of options; on the one hand the type of Theme, textual, interpersonal or ideational, and on the other, the relative prominence of the Theme. Textual Themes are Conjunctions and Continuatives, while interpersonal Themes are Adjuncts, Vocatives and Nya-elements. Ideational Themes include the transitivity functions of Medium, Range, Circumstance or Process, or a logical Theme consisting of a conjunctive Adjunct *palulanguru* 'from that'. There are three options in Theme prominence realised by rhythm and intonation - neutral, foregrounded and backgrounded. These options in Theme type and prominence were illustrated in section 2.3 above.

By far the most common experiential Theme is Medium, which is a part of the Theme in all clauses. Since what the message is most often concerned with, from an experiential point of view, is the Medium - what it is doing, what is happening to it, or what its attributes or identities are - it is most frequently the Medium that is presented and then tracked through a text within the Theme of each message. This is such a pervasive pattern that even when the identity of the Medium is not stated, it is inherently thematic. Unless otherwise indicated, it can be implicitly presumed to be either the addressee of a proposal, or in a proposition the same identity as the Medium of the preceding clause.

Amongst the options for realising Medium listed in 2.3 above, the most common is as a personal pronoun, salient or clitic. The primary function of clitic pronouns is to be able to background the identity of participants in the textual structure of the clause. This enables salient elements other than Medium to become Theme, to which clitic identities may then be appended. These suffixed clitics are still part of the thematic foot of the clause, so that the identities they presume are presented as part of the Theme, as are implicit Mediums. This is well exemplified in the exchange between sisters in text 22 re-presented here as 22'. Experiential Themes are given transitivity labels in the presentation, labels for cliticised functions are abbreviated, and in brackets for implicit Medium. (For the sake of space, lause rank glosses are not repeated here.)

#### Text 22': Two sisters

- M1 wanyu paka-ra pitja  
 'please' getting up come-! (you)  
**Process (Md)**
- 2 kangkuru watjalku-na-nta  
 older sister will tell-I-you?  
**Process-Md-Rg**
- K1 nyaa-n nya-ngu nyaa nyaa  
 what?-you did see what? what?  
**Range-Md**

2	<u>wala-ngku</u> watja-la quickly (you) tell-! <b>Quality (Md)</b>		
3	<u>nyaa-n</u> wangka-ny what?-you are saying <b>Range-Md</b>		
M3	<u>wanyu puta</u> <u>pitja-la nya-wa</u> 'would you please' coming look-! (you) <b>Process (Md)</b>		
4	<u>kuniya pulka alatjitu</u> tjarpa-ngu an utterly huge python did enter (a burrow) <b>Medium</b>		
5	<u>piti-ngka</u> -ni      nguwanpa      tjarpa-tju-nu into a burrow me (it) nearly did drag in <b>Place-Rg (Md)</b>		
6	<u>pulka mulapa</u> (it was) really big <b>Range (Md)</b>		

In this dialogic text, the message organising function of clitic and implicit identities is clear. With the exception of M4, each of the salient experiential Themes in text 22 is not the Medium, rather the salient Themes are:

- Process: M1 *pakara pitja*, M2 *watjalku*, M3 *pitjala nyawa*
- Range: K1 *nyaa*, M6 *pulka mulapa*
- Circumstance: K2 *walangku*, M5 *pitingka*.

Even though these elements are not Medium they are thematised by realising the Medium (and if necessary the Range as well) as enclitic or implicit. This is comparable to the function of passive voice in English described by Halliday (1994:169), which enables elements such as Range or Goal to become unmarked Theme. However the Pitjantjatjara strategy of cliticisation enables a Process or Circumstance, as well as Range, to be unmarked Theme. Cliticisation means that the identity of the Medium, and potentially a Range as well, remains a backgrounded element of the Theme, while another element is presented saliently. This enables the identity of core participants to be tracked through a text within the Theme of each clause, while at the same time presenting other elements as salient Themes.

## 5.2 THEME and IDENTIFICATION

In texts that constitute their own field, such as narratives, Theme structures at clause rank interact with identification chains at text level. If we look at a narrative from the perspective of Theme, we find that almost all of the identification takes place in the Theme of each message, either presenting identities of people, things and places lexically, or presuming them pronominally. The narrative extract 39 is re-presented below as 39'. Each Theme is underlined, and reference arrows are shown, pointing left for anaphoric, and right for cataphoric reference. Lexical Themes that first present identities are double underlined, pronominal Themes that presume these identities are single underlined, while Themes that are not part of reference chains are dotted underlined. Where reference items are explicit, reference arrows are located above these items, eg. 4 *-ya*, 6 *tjana*, 8 *tjana-ya* 'they3'. Where reference is implicit, in lines 1, 5, 13 and 14, there are also reference arrows above the Theme, since the unstated Medium identity is inherent in the Theme, and the implicit

identity is glossed in brackets below.

**Text 39': Kipara**

- 1     tjukurpa     kunyu  
       (this) myth   it's said
- =2     anangu tjuta   nyina-ngi     manta nyanga-ngka  
       many people   were living    in this land
- 3     manta wingki-ngka   kunyu     nyina-ngi     anangu tjuta  
       in all lands (they)   it's said   were living    many people
- +4     munu-ya paluru tjana   waru kurakura   kanyi-ningi     tili maru-tjara  
       and-they3 those ones   useless fire     were having     with black coals
- 5     tili maru-tjara     kunyu     nyina-ngi  
       with black coals (they)   it's said   were living
- 6     nyawa tjana     putu     kunyu     waru     mantji-ningi  
       look-! they3   unable   it's said   fire     were getting
- 7     munga-purunpa     maru-ngka     munga maru-ngka  
       like night           in the dark     in the dark night
- +8     munu tjana-ya     watarku     nyina-ngi  
       and they3-they3   in ignorance   were living
- +9     ka kunyu wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku   tili wirutjara-ngka   nyina-ngi  
       and it's said   only one man   only Kipara   with good brands   was living
- +10 α ka ngura kutjupa tjuta-ngka wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku   kuli-ni     wati kutju  
       and in many different places   many different men   are thinking   one man
- 10β mantji-ntjikitja     waru palu-nya  
       (they) to get       that fire
- +11 ka ya     palu-nya     putu mantji-ra     tjulya-ra wana-ra   tjulya-ra wana-ra  
       and they3   it (the fire)   unable getting     snatching following   snatching following
- =12 wati kutjupa tjuta-ngku     tjulya-ningi putu  
       many different men       were unsuccessfully snatching
- +13 ka     tjilka-ri-ngu  
       and (this)   did become *tjilka*

- 14 tjilka-rara alatjitu kati-ngu  
 the *tjilka* group itself (this) did carry along

Most of the experiential Themes in text 39' include the three entities participating in reference chains, *anangu tjuta* 'the people', *tili maru-tjara* '(fire) with black coals' and *wati kutju-ngku, Kipara-ngku*. These three participants are either presented or presumed as Themes. This is the natural position for presenting entities from the speaker's point of view (ie. "this entity is what I'm talking about"), and the natural position for presuming them from the perspective of both speaker and addressee (ie. "we both know this entity that I'm talking about").

### 5.3 THEME PROMINENCE

In Theme prominence, the periodic structure of the clause as message is employed to organise texts and text segments as larger periodic structures. These periodic hierarchies are achieved by 'marking' clause rank Themes as more or less prominent in the periodic structure of a text. The neutral choice is for experiential elements to be identified by salient (pro)nominal groups. The least prominent realisation of Medium is as an additive conjunction plus clitic pronoun. When these comprise the Theme, it is minimally prominent (or maximally backgrounded). A more prominent choice of Theme is to expand or re-iterate its identity or qualities, illustrated in section 2.3 above. However the most prominent resource for foregrounding Theme is to give it tonic focus. Tonic focus on Theme is a marked option in INFORMATION FOCUS. The unmarked pattern is for the tonic focus to fall on the last lexical element of a clause, so that when it falls on the Theme its effect is to foreground the thematic element. This is exemplified in lines 2 and 3 of text 39', re-presented below. Here the Theme is underlined, and the item receiving tonic focus is in **bold**.

Text 39': extract

- 2 anangu tjuta nyina-ngi manta **nyanga**-ngka  
 many people were living in this land
- 3 manta wingki-ngka kunyu nyina-ngi // **anangu** tjuta  
 in all lands (they) its said were living many people

In clause 1 the identity of the central participants *anangu tjuta* is presented with neutral Theme prominence, and the tonic focus is on the last clause element *manta nyanga-ngka* 'in **this** land'. In 2 this element is re-presented as Theme *manta wingki-ngka* 'in **all** lands', with the tonic focus on *wingki* 'all'. The effect is to foreground the significance of the location of the people 'in every land', as the starting point from which the narrative unfolds.

In addition to this local function of reiterating a New element as the following Theme (sometimes described as 'tail-head linkage' in Papuan languages, Scott 1983, Reesink 1987), the resources of THEME and INFORMATION FOCUS also interact to organise Pitjantjatjara texts into segments I have called *information waves*.<sup>13</sup> Each information wave involves an information peak, where Theme and New are conflated. In text 39 there are two information waves, 1-8 and 9-14. The first wave introduces the people *anangu tjuta*, as Themes, and their problem, lack of fire as News. It culminates with the consequence of this lack in clause 7, in which New is also Theme, and is elaborated by two further late New

elements on separate tone groups, as follows.

Text 39': extract

7 **munga** purunpa // **maru-ngka** // munga **maru-ngka**  
(it was) like night in the dark in the dark night

The second wave introduces *wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku* as a foregrounded Theme in 9, and the following New elements are the fire and the inability of the men *wati kutjupa tjuta* to snatch it. This wave culminates with the consequence of their journey in 13-14, in which New elements are also Theme.

Text 39': extract

+13 **ka** **tjilka-ri-ngu**  
and (this) did become the *tjilka* (initiation ceremonial journey)

14 **tjilka-rara alatjitu** kati-ngu  
*tjilka* group itself (it) did bring

So foregrounded Themes may function (i) to foreground significant elements, (ii) to signal new text stages, and (iii) as the tonic peaks of information waves. The information wave structure of text 29' is illustrated in the following Table 12. Each row in the table is an 'information group' consisting of one clause or an elaborating clause complex. New elements are in bold.

Table 7: Information waves in text 39'

	Themes	News	discourse function
2-3	<i>anangu tjuta</i> 'the people'	<i>manta nyanga-ngka...manta winki-ngka</i> 'in this land...in all the land'	setting in time and place
4-5	"	<i>waru kurakura...tili maru-tjara</i> 'useless fire...with black brands'	the people's lack of fire
6	"	<b>putu waru mantji-ningi</b> 'unable to get the fire'	their inability to get the fire
7-8	<b>munga purunpa, munga maru-ngka...watarku</b> 'like night, in the dark night...in ignorance'		consequence: living in the dark, in ignorance
9	<i>Kipara-ngku</i> 'only Kipara'	<i>tili wiru-tjara-ngka</i> with good firebrands'	Kipara's possession of fire
10	<i>wati kutjupa tjuta</i> 'many men'	<i>kulini wati kutju...waru palu-nya</i> 'thinking of one man...of that fire'	men's desire to get the fire
11-12	"	<b>putu mantji-ra...tjulya-ningi putu</b> 'unable to get it...unsuccessfully snatching'	frustrated attempts to get it
13-14	<b>tjilkaringu...tjilkarara alatjitu</b> 'this became the <i>tjilka</i> ...the <i>tilka</i> group itself'		consequence: transformation as the <i>tjilka</i> ceremonies

This very regular pattern of information waves, culminating with the consequences of activity sequences, may be typical of myths in Australian cultures. It may be one of the

resources that enables myths to be meticulously reproduced over countless generations, and to recur in diverse social groups all over the continent. Other text types, such as contemporary or historical recounts, have less regular information wave structures (Rose 1998).

The discourse level analyses presented here illustrate the roles of THEME in managing the continuity of identities and their prominence in the flow of text. The roles of INFORMATION on the other hand, are to manage patterns of change unfolding around these continuities. Features of the two systems come together where a change is most significant to the development of a text, and is presented as both the starting point of a message, and its point of arrival.

## Conclusion

This has been a very brief survey of the clause grammar of Pitjantjatjara, and some of its implications for discourse. Yet it has been possible to display a considerably richer variety of resources for meaning than has generally been available to date in grammatical descriptions of Australian languages. These resources have included elaborate systems of interpersonal functions, together with examples of the complex ways in which these are used by speakers to negotiate their relationships in social discourse. They also included complex sets of ideational resources for construing speakers' experience as sequences of action, signification or relation, and complex textual resources using sequencing, rhythm and intonation for organising clauses and texts as waves of meaning. Three sets of 'meta'-resources have enabled this degree of descriptive enrichment to be achieved. Firstly the starting point has been with the functions of grammatical resources in social discourse, made possible by a powerful theory of language in social context in SFL; secondly the relationship of linguistic syndromes to their contexts has been informed by excellent ethnographies of the social contexts of Western Desert culture (Tonkinson 1978, Myers 1986); and thirdly the interpretation of relationships between language and culture has been guided and inspired by Anangu elders who have taken pains over many years to educate me in their culture and language. Given the tools that we now have available, for describing the discursive functions of grammatical syndromes, and for relating these resources to the cultural contexts in which speakers use and learn them, there is no reason why descriptions of Australian languages should not become much richer. This survey has shown no more than a hint of the directions in which such explorations could grow.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> An 'Indo-Pacific' phylum has also been proposed by Greenberg (1971), on the basis of large scale multilateral lexical comparisons, that includes the Papuan languages of the Papua-New Guinea/Irian Jaya mainland, and islands of western Melanesia and eastern Indonesia, as well as the languages of the Andaman Islands, west of lower Thailand. If this grouping is plausible, the Australian, Papuan and Andaman languages may represent a linguistic macro-phylum that once occupied the extended land masses of southern south-east Asia and Australia in the late Pleistocene ice-age, before the southward migrations of Austronesian speakers.

<sup>2</sup> Since interlinear glosses here are designed to make group rank function structures explicit, structural relations between them at clause rank become equally explicit in the gloss of the clause as a whole that follows. This however is never a 'free translation' in the presentation here, rather its textual organisation and other features are shaped to accurately translate clause rank and discourse semantic features of the original Pitjantjatjara. This rank and stratum based approach to glossing also has the added advantages of presenting transcriptions of Pitjantjatjara clauses as more transparently meaningful to English speaking readers, reducing some of the unnaturally exaggerated semantic distance between these languages that

low level labelling tends to produce. A rank and stratum based approach to glossing Pitjantjatjara text examples is discussed in more detail in Rose to appear.

<sup>3</sup> We could describe variations in verb endings as a morpheme rank system of VERB CLASS or CONJUGATION, to borrow the traditional terminology based on a similar system in Latin. These formal variations tend to be a significant focus in formalist Australian descriptions.

<sup>4</sup> The labels I have used for nominal inflections here are oriented to their clause rank roles rather than their forms, and so differ in part from labels used in formally oriented descriptions of Australian languages. I have used the term 'active' for the inflections that formal grammars label as 'nominative' for personal pronouns, but 'ergative' for other nominals, and I have used 'neutral' where formal grammars use 'accusative' for personals and 'absolute' for others. A semantic interpretation is sometimes ascribed to the 'nominative/accusative' vs 'ergative/absolute' inflectional contrast (eg. Dixon 1979, 1980), but I have found no evidence of this in text analyses, by asking speakers, or as a Pitjantjatjara speaker myself; the contrast is one of form rather than function. The inflectional differences may be associated with the frequency of the transitivity roles these nominal classes fulfil in discourse: personal pronouns are most often in active roles (as Medium), so this has evolved as their uninflected form, whereas common nominal and demonstratives are most often in neutral roles (Range or intransitive Medium), and proper names most often function as Vocatives, so these have evolved as their uninflected forms. (For more detailed discussion of this issue see Rose 1996, 1998, to appear.)

<sup>5</sup> Analysis of the Pitjantjatjara tone system was assisted by CECIL speech analysis software, available as shareware from the SIL website.

<sup>6</sup> The functions of tones in speech functions correspond in some respects to those Halliday describes for English but differ in others. For example tone 5 realises neutral force in commands and element (nya-) questions, in contrast to tone 1 in English wh-questions, although in French this tone is also unmarked for element (qu-) questions (Cafferel this volume).

<sup>7</sup> In example 16, the active inflection *-ngku* has a 'reflexive' function in the context of this intransitive clause, meaning 'this and no other', so that *wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku* is translated here as '**only** one man, **only** Kipara'. In the same clause the word *tili* refers to a burning stick in a fire that can be used as a torch, or to ignite other fires, and is glossed here as 'brand'.

<sup>8</sup> The term Medium partially corresponds to the traditional category of 'subject', denoted in formalist accounts as 'S' or 'A' depending on the transitivity of the clause. However as Halliday (1994: 30-31) points out, traditional definitions of 'subject' actually cover three independently variable functions, textual (traditional 'psychological subject'), interpersonal (traditional 'grammatical subject') and experiential (traditional 'logical subject'), and Halliday reserves the label Subject for the interpersonal function in English of 'modally responsible element', which together with the Finite verbal auxiliary constitutes the Mood element of English clauses. This function has no direct equivalent in Pitjantjatjara.

<sup>9</sup> Note the contrasts in Table 9 with agency in English, in which Actor is construed as the agent of effective actions, Phenomenon may be the agent of sensing, and Token is the agent of identifying. Only in three marginal clause types in Pitjantjatjara is one participant explicitly agentive - induced mental reactions and caused relations. In contrast to the focus on causation of effective processes in modern English, effective actions in Pitjantjatjara are concerned with the result of the process on a Goal. The Pitjantjatjara model of experience is primarily transitive - concerned with types of extension of processes and relations, in contrast to the ergative model of English described by Halliday (1994). For this reason I have classed Goal in Pitjantjatjara as a type of Range (whereas in English a Goal may be Medium of middle material clauses). For the same reason I believe that the label 'agentive subject' or 'A' applied in formalist grammars to the Medium of transitive clauses, and the associated characterisation of Australian languages as 'ergative' (eg. Dixon 1979, 1980) may be misleading. (See Rose 1996, 1998, to appear, for more detailed discussion.)

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting that Indo-European relational verbs are also derived from verbs of stance.

<sup>11</sup> Note that these reaction qualities are not 'mental states'. See Matthiessen 1996 for a deconstruction of metaphors of mental states and containers in spoken English and cognitive science.

<sup>12</sup> Circumstances that expand other elements as late New are commonly labelled an 'afterthought' structure in formalist descriptions, as though the speaker needed to correct their utterance. However they are anything but 'afterthoughts', and serve a similar function to qualifying phrases in English nominal groups, which also frequently occur as late New. In Pitjantjatjara this qualifying function is performed at clause rank, by discrete constituents. For this reason they are also sometimes described as 'discontinuous noun phrases'.

<sup>13</sup> Comparable discourse levels of periodic structures have been described by for spoken languages in general by Pike (1982), for spoken English by Van Leeuwen (1993), and Martinec (1995), and for written English by Martin (1992).

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