

Switching Tracks: Identification in Western Desert discourse

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Abstract

This paper outlines resources in Australia's Western Desert language, exemplified with the dialect Pitjantjatjara, for introducing and keeping track of people, things and places through a discourse. Where multiple identities are tracked through a discourse, Western Desert switches between identities using conjunctive relations between clauses, widely known as 'switch reference' conjunctions. As it is concerned with tracking and switching identities, this discourse semantic system is termed IDENTIFICATION. The discourse functions of IDENTIFICATION are first outlined, followed by descriptions of the sets of grammatical resources that realise these functions, and their interactions with other language systems. The roles of each set of resources in discourse are illustrated with extended text examples. The paper presents a range of original interpretations of these resources in an Australian language, and demonstrates that understanding their functions depends on recognising their interactions with other systems.

1 Identification and discourse systems

The goal of this paper is to describe the functions of the discourse system of IDENTIFICATION in Australia's Western Desert language.¹ In general terms the functions of this system are to introduce people, things and places into a discourse, and to keep track of them as the discourse unfolds. Of all linguistic systems that operate beyond the clause, these discourse functions are perhaps most widely recognised in general linguistics. This general recognition of discourse functions may be attributable to their overt grammatical realisation within clauses as pronouns and determiners, which have obvious interclausal functions. Martin 1983 provides a useful contrastive perspective on identification systems across diverse languages, that fulfil similar discourse functions but are realised by distinct grammatical strategies. For other language descriptions that touch on these issues, see for example Caffarel, Martin & Matthiessen (eds.) 2004.

Relations between social functions, discourse patterns and grammatical structures are modelled in systemic functional (SF) theory as realisation, that is social functions of language are realised ('expressed/symbolized/manifested') as patterns of discourse, which are realised as patterns of grammar (which are in turn realised as patterns of phonology). As languages have multiple social functions, so IDENTIFICATION is just one of a number of discourse systems that serve these various social functions. In addition to introducing and tracking people and things through a discourse, language also construes the activities they are involved in, evaluates them, and enables speakers to exchange information about them, as well as packaging these meanings as comprehensible waves of information. In the model here, each discourse system that serves these functions is realised by a set of grammatical resources that are also organised as systems. The relevant discourse

systems are described in Martin 1992a and Martin & Rose 2003. Corresponding grammatical systems are described in detail for Western Desert in Rose 2001a, and summarised briefly in Rose 2004a. Social functions, discourse systems and grammatical systems are outlined in Table 1. (Note language systems are labelled here in small caps, and grammatical functions are distinguished with initial capitals, such as Actor.)

Table 1. Discourse systems and grammatical resources in Western Desert
social functions **discourse systems** **grammatical resources**

introducing and keeping track of people and things	IDENTIFICATION	PERSON, NUMBER, DEIXIS, CONJUNCTIVE IDENTITY (same/switch)
construing experience as activities involving people, things, places and qualities	IDEATION	TRANSITIVITY, THING TYPE, CLASSIFICATION, EPITHESES...
logically relating sequences of activities	CONJUNCTION	CLAUSE COMPLEXITY
expressing, grading and sourcing attitudes	APPRAISAL	MODAL ASSESSMENT, POLARITY
negotiating exchanges between speakers	NEGOTIATION	MOOD, MOOD PERSON, VOCATION
presenting meanings as waves of information	PERIODICITY	THEME, INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION, INFORMATION FOCUS

Although the focus in this paper is on functions of IDENTIFICATION, these functions also interact with other discourse systems, since they identify people, things and places (IDEATION), combine with the logical functions of conjunctions (CONJUNCTION), indicate the person in exchanges (EXCHANGE), and are more or less prominent in waves of discourse (PERIODICITY). For these reasons it is essential to describe the interaction between identification functions and these other systems. This approach is influenced by the pioneering work of Martin 1983, who compares interactions between IDENTIFICATION, CLAUSE COMPLEXITY, MOOD and TRANSITIVITY in English, Tagalog and the Papuan language Kâte, following the lead of Gleason 1968.

The first step that follows here is to outline the IDENTIFICATION system and its general functions, then to describe its resources in detail and their interactions with other systems, illustrating each set of resources with extended text examples. This is followed with a text analysis that illustrates how these resources work together to track and switch identities in chains of reference, and finally a summary of the interactions between IDENTIFICATION and other systems.

The most general functions of IDENTIFICATION are either to present the identity of a person or thing into a discourse, or to presume an identity that is recoverable from either the context (exophoric reference) or from the discourse (endophoric reference). Presenting an identity is typically realised by a lexical item, without requiring indefinite deixis. But the system for presuming identities is a more complex set of options for reference. It consists of two systems that can be drawn on simultaneously: PRONOMINAL REFERENCE and CONJUNCTIVE REFERENCE. The discussion here assumes a grammatical rank scale, including the four ranks of clause, word group, word and morpheme. PRONOMINAL REFERENCE is realised at the

grammatical rank of word group, either as the Head or as a Deictic in a (pro)nominal group. Most pronominal resources can function either exophorically or endophorically. CONJUNCTIVE REFERENCE is realised at the rank of clause, in conjunctive relations in clause complexes, and is purely endophoric to adjacent clauses.

Types of pronominal reference include personal and demonstrative pronouns, which identify people, things and places, by person, number and proximity. Both types can be more or less textually prominent, that is the identity may be foregrounded, backgrounded or neutral in salience, relative to other clause elements. Conjunctive reference distinguishes identities as the same or 'switched' from the adjacent clause. In paratactic (coordinating) clause complexes, this contrast is realised by additive conjunctions; in hypotactic (subordinating) clause complexes, it is realised by suffixes on the dependent verb. These resources for presuming reference are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: General options for presuming identities

PRONOMINAL REFERENCE (pro)nominal group	PRONOMINAL TYPE	demonstrative personal
	SALIENCE	neutral foregrounded backgrounded
CONJUNCTIVE REFERENCE clause complex	IDENTITY TYPE	same identity switch identity
	INTERDEPENDENCY	paratactic hypotactic

Note that values in PRONOMINAL TYPE and SALIENCE are always selected simultaneously, as are values in IDENTITY TYPE and INTERDEPENDENCY. Pronominal and conjunctive reference may also be selected simultaneously, in identifying a single referent. The options for discourse functions in Table 2 are realised by the grammatical resources of personal and demonstrative pronouns, additive conjunctions and verbal suffixes. These are described as follows.

3 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns identify entities by their roles in an exchange between speakers, as addressee, speaker or non-interactant, and by their number as singular, dual or plural. These options involve both textual and interpersonal dimensions: they are textual as they identify entities in the text or the context; and they are interpersonal as they enact social relations as an exchange between 'you' and 'I', who take turns as speaker and addressee. This interactive dyad at the heart of the social system is also reflected in the dual option for number; its significance in the Western Desert social system is such that it requires a distinct pronominal category. Beyond the dyad of 'you' and 'I' are non-interactant persons and things; and each of these roles in an exchange may involve the basic social categories of an individual, a pair or a group. These social categories are also mirrored in the simple system of numeratives in nominal groups of one *kutju*, two *kutjara*, and plural *tjuta*, and in nominal suffixes denoting pairs and groups, e.g. *kangkuru-rara* 'sister-pair', *kungka-raralpa* 'girl-group'.

The roles of personal pronouns in exchanges are illustrated in example (1), in which a younger sister (YS), wants to tell some exciting news to her elder sister, and the elder sister (ES) responds by demanding that she tell her. In both moves the identities of interactants are realised as clitic pronouns that follow a salient element.

(1)

YS1 kangkuru watja-lku -na -nta
 elder sister tell-FUT -I -thee?
 Sister, shall I tell you?

ES1 nyaa -n nya-ngu nyaa nyaa
 what? -you see-PAST what? what?
 What did you see? What? What?

In YS1 the speaker is construed as the active Sayer in ‘telling’, so is identified by the nominative 1st person pronoun *-na* ‘I’. On the other hand the addressee is the neutral Receiver of ‘telling’, so is distinguished by the accusative 2nd person pronoun *-nta* ‘thee’. By means of these strategies, this clause not only enacts a move in an exchange, but also construes a future move in which the speaker will ‘tell’ the addressee. It is the ability of personal pronouns to simultaneously realise mood functions by means of person, and transitivity functions by means of case, that makes this possible. In ES1, the addressee is now the active participant in ‘seeing’, so is identified by the nominative 2nd person *-n* ‘you’. Note also that polar questions in Western Desert, such as YS1, are distinguished from statements by their rising tone, not shown in the transcript here.

In example (2) such dyadic pairs are referred to by the dual 3rd person pronoun *pula*, glossed as ‘they2’. This is an extract from a traditional narrative involving a pair of brothers and a pair of sisters, told by Nganyintja.²

(2)

1 wati kutjara kunyu kuta-rara nyina-ngi
 two men REPORT³ brother-pair sit-CONTIN⁴
 There were two men, it’s said, who were brothers.

2 kungkawara kutjara Ø alti-ngu kangkuru-rara
 young.woman two (they2) marry-PAST sister-pair
 Two young women were married to them, who were sisters.

3 wati kutjara pula a-nu malu-ku
 man two they2 go-PAST kangaroo-for
 Those two men went hunting for kangaroos.

4 kuka kanyila-ku Ø tati-nu puli-ngka
 game euro-for (they2) climb-PAST hill-in
 For euros⁵, they climbed up in the hills,

- 5 munu pula kuka kanyila kati-ngu
 and-SM they2 game euros bring-PAST
 and they brought back euro meat to the camp.
- 6 ka pula mai-ku tjaru-ukali-ngu
 and-SW they2 vegetable.food-for down-descend-PAST
 Meanwhile the other two for went down to the plain, looking for vegetables,
- 7 munu pula mai ili ura-ningi
 and-SM they2 food fig gather-CONTIN
 and were collecting wild figs.

The identity of the ‘two men’ *wati kutjara* is presented as the starting point in line 1, and presumed anaphorically in following clauses. In line 2 their identity is implicitly presumed as the Actor in marrying the ‘two women’ *kungkawara kutjara*. As *kungkawara kutjara* is not inflected with an active case suffix, the two women are not the Actor but rather the ones who are married by the two men. Implicitly presuming the Actor allows the two women to be presented as the starting point of this message. This textual function is achieved by passive voice in English, as in the clause rank translation for line 2. In line 3 the two men are re-identified, and their identity is made unambiguous with *pula* operating as a group rank Deictic, translated here as ‘those two men’. In 4 their identity is again implicitly presumed, while in 5 it is again made explicit, with *pula* now operating as a clause rank participant. In 6 the identity of *pula* switches, from the men to the women, indicated by the switch reference conjunction *ka* (discussed further below), and this identity is again presumed in 7 as *pula*.

Most options in person and number have a salient form and a clitic form of the pronoun. The function of clitic forms is to present an identity as a non-salient weak syllable, that is appended to another element. This strategy allows other elements to be presented saliently, as part of the textual function of foregrounding and backgrounding identities, while keeping track of them in the flow of discourse.

Options for foregrounding and backgrounding identities have greatest significance for identifying elements as starting points of clauses. From the perspective of discourse as information, each clause in Western Desert discourse functions as a message. The starting point of the clause presents a local context in which the message can be interpreted by the listener (Matthiessen 1995, Rose 2001b). In all major clauses in Western Desert this local context includes one or more identities of participants in the clause (people or things). Participants may be identified by salient lexical items or pronouns, or by non-salient clitic pronouns, or be implicitly presumed.

Backgrounding an ongoing identity as non-salient allows another element to be presented saliently as the starting point of the clause, while also including the ongoing identity. This pattern is illustrated in lines 2 and 4 in text (2), in which the ongoing identity is implicitly presumed as \emptyset , and in text 1, where clitic pronouns follow other salient elements.⁶ The starting point of the clause as message is known in SFL as Theme, a term adopted by Halliday 1967 from the Prague School tradition (Mathesius 1975). This system will not be elaborated on here, but for comprehensive

discussions of THEME in Western Desert and other languages, see Caffarel, Martin & Matthiessen 2004, Halliday 1994, Martin 1992b, Rose 2001a&b, 2005a.⁷

The least salient forms of personal pronouns include a single phoneme *-n* 'you', as in text (1), and zero realisation, i.e. implicit presumption. Zero realisation is further illustrated in (3), which continues the dialogue begun in (1).

(3)

ES2 walangku Ø watja-la
quickly (you) tell-IMP
Tell me quick!

YS2 kuniya pulka alatjitu tjarpa-ngu
python big utterly enter-PAST
An absolutely huge python entered (the earth).

YS3 piti-ngka Ø [-ni] nguwanpa tjarpatju-nu
burrow-in (it) me nearly drag.in-PAST
It nearly dragged me into a burrow!

Text (3) illustrates how the mood of a clause conditions which person is implicitly presumed; in imperatives it is 2nd person, in indicatives it is 3rd person. In ES2 the elder sister commands the other to tell what happened, in imperative mood, and the addressee is implicitly presumed. YS3 on the other hand, is a statement in indicative mood, and the previously mentioned 'python' is implicitly presumed. Note also the accusative 1st person pronoun *-ni*, also appended to the first element of the clause. As in YS1 in example (1), two identities are included with the first element of the clause, presumed either by overt clitics or zero.

In order to recognise how clitic pronouns function in dialogue and monologue, it is essential to understand how they vary in different mood environments, and why. Imperative mood realises a demand for good-&-services, in which the addressee (2nd person) is the default Actor and so can be implicitly presumed. Thus the clitic form for singular addressee in imperatives is implicit Ø, while dual addressee is *-pula*, and plural addressee is *-ya*. There are no clitic forms for non-interactants, as these are the least common Actors in imperative mood. On the other hand, indicative mood realises an exchange of information, in which the default Actor is a non-interactant (3rd person), so the singular clitic form is implicit Ø, dual non-interactant is *-pula* and plural non-interactant is *-ya*. There is a clitic form for singular addressee *-n*, but none for dual and plural addressees, as these are least common as Actors in indicative mood. As the zero option serves the same function as overt clitic pronouns, of presuming identities non-saliently, I have treated it as part of the clitic system (rather than as ellipsis, as it is often treated in other languages, e.g. Halliday 1994). These options for personal pronouns are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Personal pronoun options

PERSON	NUMBER								
	single			dual			plural		
	salient	clitic	gloss	salient	clitic	gloss	salient	clitic	gloss
imperative									
addressee	<i>nyuntu</i>	∅	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-interactant	<i>paluru</i>	-	s/he/it	<i>paluru pula</i>	-	they2	<i>paluru tjana</i>	-	they3
indicative									
non-interactant	<i>paluru</i>	∅	s/he/it	<i>paluru pula</i>	<i>-pula</i>	they2	<i>paluru 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

With respect to PERSON, dual and plural pronouns in Table 3 refer ‘exclusively’ to addressees or non-interactants, e.g. *nyupali* ‘you two addressees’, *paluru tjana* ‘they non-interactants’, or ‘inclusively’ to speakers, e.g. *ngali* ‘speaker plus one other from any category’. But pronouns may also be complexed to include other people, e.g. *paluru nyupali* ‘s/he and you’, or *nyuntu ngali*, ‘you and I’. The pronominal system is not limited to one word realisations of ‘inclusive’ or ‘exclusive’ categories.

In addition to mood, pronoun systems also interact with the grammatical system of TRANSITIVITY, where they function to distinguish the roles of multiple participants in a clause. In order to recognise how participant identities are distinguished in each step of a discourse, it is essential to understand how IDENTIFICATION interacts with the roles of participants, in the transitivity of a clause. This issue is strikingly illustrated in the second line of text (2), in which the identities of the ‘two men’ are implicitly presumed from the preceding clause. But it is only because the ‘two women’ *kungkawara kutjara* are not inflected as the Actors in the process of marrying, that the identities of the two men are recoverable as the Actors. In this case the identification is implicit, and so too is the transitivity role; for an example of identities distinguished by overt pronoun cases, see the note 13 below.

It is well known that the transitivity cases of personal pronouns in Australian languages differ from the case paradigms of other nominals (e.g. Dixon 1980). However the significance of these differences is less well understood. A functional explanation is briefly summarised as follows. Table 3 shows the uninflected forms of personal pronouns, which are labelled ‘nominative case’ in the classical tradition. The meaning of this pronominal case marking lies in the nuclear model of transitivity described by Halliday among other theorists. From the nuclear perspective, one entity is the core participant in each clause that either acts, senses, says, or is ascribed an attribute or identity, depending on the transitivity type of the clause. Halliday generalises this core participant role as Medium, “the one through which the process is actualized” (1994:163).

Medium partially overlaps with the traditional term ‘subject’, but as Halliday (1994:31) points out this label covers three independent functions, traditionally known as psychological subject ‘the concern of the message’, grammatical subject ‘of which something is predicated’, and logical subject ‘the doer of the action’. Medium includes the ‘doer’ function in doing, sensing and saying types of processes, but in relational

clauses with no action the Medium is ascribed an attribute or identity. With some variations, these general transitivity patterns appear to be common across languages (Caffarel, Martin & Matthiessen 2004), including Western Desert.

The nuclear participant function of Medium is also recognised in other paradigms. For example in role and reference grammar it is generalised as ‘macro-Actor’, however the term Medium is preferred here as it generalises across all transitivity types, including relational clauses as well as material action. For comparable treatments of nuclear transitivity in other paradigms, see Butler 2003, Dixon 1994, Martin 1996, Van Valin 1993.⁸ For a comparative discussion of transitivity from the perspectives of case grammar and SFL traditions, see Martin 1996.

Since the Medium is present in every Western Desert clause it takes the uninflected personal pronoun form, while other roles are inflected. These roles include additional participants that are acted upon, sensed, said, or an attribute or identity that is ascribed to the Medium in relational clauses. These other participant roles are generalised in Rose 1996, 2001a, 2004 as Range, the entity to which the process or relation is extended.⁹ Ranges are participants that are specific to particular types of process or relation. More peripheral than Medium and Range are types of Circumstances that are attendant on the process or relation, but are not specific to any one type, including place, time, cause, means, accompaniment, quality and role.

As personal pronouns in Western Desert, Ranges are most commonly distinguished by so-called accusative case. For salient pronouns this is indicated by the suffix *-nya*, e.g. *ngayu-nya* ‘me’, *nganana-nya* ‘us3’, *nyuntu-nya* ‘you’, *tjana-nya* ‘them3’, etc. Circumstances of place, time, means and accompaniment take locative case, indicated in personal pronouns by *-la*, eg. *palu-la* ‘with/to her/him/it’, *nganana-la* ‘with/to us’. Circumstances of cause and possessives take genitive case, indicated in personal pronouns by *-mpa*, eg. *nyuntu-mpa* ‘for you/yours’, or *ngayu-ku* for ‘my/mine’. Certain types of Ranges are also distinguished by non-accusative case making: a Phenomenon in mental reactions is indicated by the genitive suffix, *nyuntu-mpa mukuringanyi* ‘liking you’, and a Receiver in verbal clauses by the locative suffix *ngayu-la kulinma* ‘listen to me’. There are also a few clitic forms for these cases, shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Clitic forms for neutral and genitive pronoun cases

	single		dual		plural	
	accusative	accusative	genitive	accusative	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> ‘thee’	-	-	-	-	

The singular accusative clitics *-nta* ‘thee’ and *-ni* ‘me’ were illustrated above in texts (1) and (3). Text (5) illustrates various roles for salient personal pronouns, indicated by nominative case *nganana* ‘we3’, genitive *nganampa* ‘our3’ (group rank) and ‘ours3’ (clause rank), and locative *tjana-la* ‘to them’. The speaker here interprets the achievement of land rights as akin to ‘our breath opening up’, in contrast to the old Aboriginal reserve system, when the whites had ‘choked our breath’, i.e. with legal and physical controls.

(5)

- 1 ka nganana tungunpungku-la
and we3 disagree-IMPERF
So disagreeing with them,
- pulkara tjana-la wangka-nyi piranpa tjuta-ngka nganampa manta-ku
strongly them-to talk-PRES white plural-to our3 land-for
we were talking strongly to them, to the whites, for our land.
- 2 munu -la nganana mala-ngka waintari-ngu
and we3 we3 afterwards move.ahead-PAST
And after that we moved ahead with land rights.
- 3 munu -la uwankarra nganampa ngaalpa lipiri-ngu
and we3 all our3 breath widen-PAST
So for all of us it was as if our breath opened up,
- nganampa ngaalpa utju-nyangka
our3 breath narrow-IMPERFECTIVE
since they had choked our breath.
- 4 munu -la watja-nu
and we3 tell-PAST
Then we told them,
- nganampa ngura tju-ra nganampa homeland
our3 place set.up-IMP our3 homelands
“Build our communities, our homelands!”
- 5 ka nganampa kuwari uwankara wiru ngara-nyi
and ours3 now all good stand-PRES
So today everything is fine for us.

While *nganampa* functions at group rank as a possessive deictic in 1, 3 and 4, it functions at clause rank in 5, as a participant that is ascribed the attribute *uwankara wiru* ‘all good’. In other words the possessive pronoun functions as the Medium in this clause, providing a salutary demonstration of the distinction between morphemes and their varying functions at group and clause ranks.

This text also illustrates the potential for personal pronouns to function both as anaphoric reference in a narrative genre, as *pula* functioned in text (2), and as exophoric reference to people in the context. Text (5) is an extract from a speech by an *Anangu* leader *Ilyatjari*,¹⁰ to a community meeting, so that *nganana* and *nganampa* function anaphorically to track identities through the historical narrative he is telling, as well as exophorically to refer inclusively to himself and the audience who are the participants in the story. As such these plural 1st person pronouns function in this context to include and so engage the listeners in the discourse.

3 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns identify entities in the context by their proximity to the interactants, or in the co-text by their proximity to the current instance in the discourse. They include three options in proximity – *nyanga* ‘near’, *pala* ‘far’ or *nyara* ‘distant’. These items may refer to people and things, translatable as ‘this’, ‘that’ and ‘yon’, or to places, translatable as ‘here’, ‘there’ and ‘yonder’. These three options in proximity are a common pattern across languages as Halliday (1994:313-14), describes:

Proximity is typically from the point of view of the speaker, so *this* means ‘near me’. In some languages...there is a close correspondence of demonstratives and personals, such that there are three demonstratives rather than two, and the direction of reference is near me (*this*), near you (*that*) and not near either of us (*yon*).

This certainly appears to be the case for Western Desert. Plural forms are also available, *nyanganpa* ‘these’ and *nyaranpa* ‘those’, although these are relatively infrequent in discourse. There is also a demonstrative that only refers back to identities in the discourse (anaphoric deixis), *panya*, translatable as ‘the’ or ‘that’.

With respect to salience, neutral salience may be realised by the demonstrative stem with a nominal suffix –*tja*, *nyangatja*, *palatja*, *nyaratja*, *panyatja*. The identity may also be relatively backgrounded in the discourse using just the stem of the proximal demonstratives *nyanga*, *pala*, *nyara*. But for the anaphoric pronoun there is a clitic form –*lta*, that can be appended to other elements.

And like the personal pronouns, the reference can also be foregrounded as a pronoun complex. For example, *nyanga paluru* ‘this it’ foregrounds the identity in terms of both proximity and person, i.e. ‘this one here’; it is more salient than simply *nyangatja* ‘this’. Other examples are *pala palu-la* ‘there it-LOC’, meaning ‘at that there’, *nyaratja-lta* ‘yon-that’, meaning ‘the one yonder’, and *panya paluru* ‘that it’, meaning ‘the one already mentioned’. Options for demonstratives in phoricity, proximity and salience are set out in Table 5.

Table 5: Demonstrative pronoun options

	gloss	backgrounded (stem or clitic)	neutral (with suffix)	foregrounded (pronoun complex)
proximal	‘this/ here’	<i>nyanga</i>	<i>nyangatja</i>	<i>nyanga paluru</i>
(exophoric/	‘that/ there’	<i>pala</i>	<i>palatja</i>	<i>pala palu-la</i>
endophoric)	‘yon/ yonder’	<i>nyara</i>	<i>nyaratja</i>	<i>nyaratja-lta</i>
anaphoric	‘the/ that’	<i>-lta</i>	<i>panya(tja)</i>	<i>panya paluru</i>

Demonstrative pronouns inflect like common nominals, differently from personal pronouns. Where there is no affected second participant, the Medium is uninflected, but where there is a Range that is acted upon, sensed or said, it is this Range that is uninflected. This is because demonstratives and common nominals typically denote things rather than people, and in transitive clauses, things are typically acted upon, sensed or said by people; the typical role takes the uninflected form. The traditional

label for this uninflected form of demonstratives and common nominals is absolutive case. Where a demonstrative or common nominal denotes a Medium that acts upon, senses or says another participant, it is inflected with *-ngku*, and this is labelled in the formal tradition as ‘ergative case’, the one ‘doing the work’. Demonstrative inflections are as follows:

‘absolutive’	‘ergative’	‘locative’	‘genitive’
<i>nyanga(tja)</i>	<i>nyanga-ngku</i>	<i>nyanga-ngka</i>	<i>nyanga-ku</i>

These inflections distinguish Medium, Range and Circumstances in multi-participant clauses. However it is essential not to confuse morpheme rank differences in the form of inflections with their clause rank functions. The differences in inflections of personal and demonstrative pronouns flow from the frequency of their functions in discourse (see Hopper & Thompson 2001 for a comparable argument); personal pronouns typically denote people, demonstratives typically denote things; beyond this the differences in inflections have no semantic significance.¹¹ For this reason, ‘nominative’ and ‘ergative’ are grouped in Rose 2001a, 2005a4&b as [active] inflections, and ‘accusative’ and ‘absolutive’ are grouped as [neutral] inflections.

The functions of demonstrative pronouns for indicating proximity are well illustrated in text (6), in which one person (E) is instructing another (D) to dig for honey ants, a prized desert food source. Digging them out involves following their tiny burrows down for a metre or more. The burrows are very hard to see so E repeatedly uses demonstratives to direct D’s attention to the right spots to dig. A third person (Y) also interjects on occasions. Various forms of demonstratives are used to indicate things and places in the context.

(6)

D1 nyangatja nyaa
 this what?
 What is this?

Y1 wiya nyanga kura kura
 no this bad bad
 No, this is no good.

E1 piruku wati-wani nyangatja
 more across-throw-IMP here
 Throw (the earth) again over here!

uwa alatjitu piti panya palatja
 yes exactly hole the that
 Yes exactly, it’s the hole there.

Y2 pakuri-ngu ala palatja
 tire-PAST ‘see that’
 He’s getting tired, see!

E2 palatja kurariya' nya-wa
that worsen look-IMP
That's no good, look!

nyangatja wiru-nya
this good-NEUT
This is good.

Y3 ala pala'
'see that'
See!

pala munkarra waakari-nyi munkarra
there far.side work-PRES far.side
There on the other side he's working, on the other side (of the hole).

E3 nyaratja-lta nyina-nyi paluru
yon-that is sitting it
That's the one, over there.

nyara nyina-nyi nya-wa
yon sit-PRES look-IMP
It's over there, look!

Y4 wiya nya-wa
no look-IMP
No, look!

E4 nyaratja nyina-nyi
yon sit-PRES
It's over there.

munkarra ma-tjawa
far.side (you) dig away-!
On the other side, dig over there.

nyangatja katja
here son
Here, son!

tjinguru nyara-ngka nyina-nyi uril-ta
maybe yonder sit-PRES outside-at
Maybe it's over there, on the outside.

D2 nyangatja
this
This?

E5 uwa ala **palatja**
yes 'see that'
Yes, see!

pala palu-la arka-la
there that-at try-IMP
Try that there!

Y5 ala **pala**
'see that'
See?

D3 muntuwa
aha!
I see!

In addition to primarily exophoric reference in text (6), there are several (pro)nominal groups that refer anaphorically as well. The first is *piti panya palatja* in E1, 'the hole (we're talking about) there', in which *piti* is Head, *panya* is an anaphoric Deictic, and *palatja* is an exophoric Deictic. The next is *nyaratja-lta* in E3, 'the one (I mentioned) yonder', in which *nyaratja* is the exophoric Head, modified by the clitic *-lta* as an anaphoric Deictic. Then *pala palu-la* in E5, 'that (one I mentioned) there', in which *pala* is the exophoric Head, modified by *palu-la* as an anaphoric Deictic. Such double reference has the effect of foregrounding the element in the discourse. Note that median proximity *pala* is also used in the idiomatic exclamation in Y5 *ala pala(tja)*, corresponding to the French *voilà!*

Using various resources for exophoric reference a teacher here is able to direct a learner's activities without naming any of the entities with which he is engaged. This kind of instructional discourse is characteristic of learning practical skills in *Anangu* society. Such learning tends to occur only in the context of the activities, but usually involves verbal instruction as skills are demonstrated and practised. This contradicts the common myth that learning in Aboriginal Australian cultures tends to be non-verbal (e.g. Harris 1980). It is just that the instruction is usually context dependent, as text (6) illustrates, relying particularly on demonstrative pronouns for exophoric reference. Of course this is probably a common genre for learning practical skills in all cultures, but in industrial cultures with a written mode, it is complemented by explicit procedures in which steps, tools and materials are lexicalised.

4 Conjunctive reference

Conjunctive reference functions to distinguish multiple identities in discourse. It keys into conjunctive relations between clauses, to indicate whether an identity is the same as the previous clause, or another identity. In this respect its discourse function is comparable with comparative reference in English nominal groups (e.g. 'the same one/another one'). Correlation of discourse functions of comparative and conjunctive reference is described by Martin 1983, for conjunctive reference in Kâte, and comparative reference in English and Tagalog. This type of reference system is commonly known as 'switch reference', but this term foregrounds its identity

switching option, at the expense of its complementary function to maintain identities, which is far more frequent in discourse. I have used the term conjunctive reference for Western Desert, to focus on its relation to the system of conjunctive relations between clauses, in contrast to pronominal reference that is realised in pronoun systems. (See Stirling 2002, for a typological study of switch reference systems.¹²)

Like the personal pronoun system, conjunctive reference is concerned with the identity of the Medium, that is whether the Medium is the same or switched from the preceding clause. The form of realisation of these contrasting options depends on the dependency relation between the two clauses – whether it is paratactic (coordinating) or hypotactic (subordinating). In parataxis, both clauses have equal status; in hypotaxis one clause is dominant and the other dependent.

In paratactic clause complexes, the additive conjunction *munu* ‘and’ indicates that the Medium is the same identity as the Medium of the preceding clause, but the additive conjunction *ka* indicates that the Medium identity is switched. Example (7) is an extract from text (2) above, illustrating paratactic clause complexing. In the first clause the Medium is the same as the preceding clause (the two men) with *munu*; in the second clause it switches to the others (the two women) with *ka*.

(7)

1 wati kutjara kunyu kuta-rara nyina-ngi
two men REPORT brother-pair sit-CONTIN
There were two men, it’s said, who were brothers.

2 kungkawara kutjara Ø alti-ngu // kangkuru-rara
young.woman two (they2) marry-PAST sister-pair
Two young women were married to them, who were sisters.

...

5 munu pula kuka kanyila kati-ngu
and-SM they2 game wallaby carry-PAST
and they brought back wallaby meat to the camp

6 ka pula mai-ku tjaru-ukali-ngu
and-sw they2 vegetable-for down-descend-PAST
and the other two went down to the plain for vegetable foods

In hypotactic clause complexes, the dependent verb suffix indicates whether the Medium identity is the same or switched, from the preceding or following dominant clause. This suffix also distinguishes perfective from imperfective aspect of the dependent process. Examples (8-11) illustrate hypotactic clause complexes, with the dependent verb inflected for both aspect:perfective/imperfective, and Medium identity:same/switched. Greek letters indicate dominant α and dependent β clauses.

(8) imperfective same Medium.

β munu pula mai kati-**ra**
 and-SM they2 food bring-IMPERF:SM
 And bringing the vegetable foods back,

α u-ngangi wati kutjara
 give-CONTIN man two
 they would share them with the two men.

(9) imperfective switch Medium

α munu -la uwankara ngaalpa nganampa lipi-ri-ngu
 and-SM we all breath our wide-become-PAST
 So for all of us it was as if our breath opened up,

β nganampa ngaalpa utju-**nyangka**
 our breath narrow-IMPERF:SW
 since (the whites) had closed off our breath.

(10) perfective same Medium

α ngayulu kuli-ni
 I think-PRES

β ini kutjupa tjungku-**ntjikitja**
 name another put-PERF:SM
 I was thinking of putting another name to it.

(11) perfective switch Medium

α paluru ngayu-nya watja-nu
 he me tell-PAST

β ngura-ngka nyina-**ntjaku**
 camp-in sit-PERF:SW
 He told me to stay in camp.

These options for hypotactic conjunctive reference are displayed paradigmatically in Table 6.

Table 6: Conjunctive reference options

		REFERENCE		
		same identity	switch identity	
INTERDEP- ENDENCY	paratactic (additive conjunction)	<i>munu</i>	<i>ka</i>	
	hypotactic (verb suffix)	perfective 'to V'	<i>V-ntjikitja</i>	<i>V-ntjaku</i>
		imperfective 'V-ing'	<i>V-la/ra</i>	<i>V-nyangka</i>

Complementary roles of conjunctive reference in parataxis and hypotaxis are illustrated in text (12), an extract from a traditional narrative that concerns the hunting activities of two women.

(12)

1 pula pararitja-kutu a-nu
 they2 distant.place-towards go-PAST
 They went to a distant place,

2 munu pula ma-antjakari-ngu
 and they2 away-camp.out-PAST
 and they camped away for the night.

3 δ munu pula ngari-ntjanungku
 and they2 lie-after
 Then after sleeping,

γ pungku-la
 strike- IMPERF:SM
 hunting some more,

β antjakaringku-la
 camp.out-IMPERF:SM
 and camping out again,

α wirkati-ngu
 finally.arrive-PAST
 they finally arrived.

In text (12) both parataxis and hypotaxis sequence activities in time. The semantic contrast is between adding one event to another to accumulate the sequence, versus running non-finite events together towards completion in a final event. In parataxis the conjunctive reference is the starting point for each clause; in hypotaxis it is merely an inflection to the process.

5 Reference chains

Text (13) illustrates how the resources of IDENTIFICATION, outlined above, work together to introduce and keep track of identities in a discourse, through chains of reference. Reference chains are described by Halliday & Hasan 1976, Martin 1992a, Rose 2001a and Martin & Rose 2003. Text (13) is an extract from a traditional myth concerning the origins of fire and the *Tjilkatja* initiation ceremonies, told by Nganyintja. At the start, the plains bustard *Kipara* alone possesses fire and refuses to give the people any, except for black embers, which they find useless for starting a fire. The men then chase *Kipara*, attempting to snatch the fire from him, and these activities symbolise the origin of the *Tjilkatja*, as the fire symbolises sacred knowledge. The text is first presented with reference items highlighted, and implicit presumptions indicated with Ø. The first instance of this is in the first line 0, in which the text to come is implicitly presumed, and classified as *tjukurpa*, a religious myth or 'Dreaming story'. Note how clitic pronouns may be appended to additive conjunctions

as well as to salient pronouns, to foreground identities as starting points of messages.

(13)

- 0 Ø tjukurpa kunyu
(this) story REPORT
This is a Dreaming story, it's said.
- 1 anangu tjuta nyina-ngi manta nyanga-ngka
person PLURAL sit-CONTIN land this-in
People were living in this land.
- 2 manta wingki-ngka kunyu nyina-ngi anangu tjuta
land all-in REPORT sit-CONTIN person PLURAL
In all the land, it's said, there were people.
- 3 munu _ya paluru.tjana waru kura-kura kanyi-ningi tili maru-tjara
and-SM they3 they3 fire bad-bad carry-CONTIN ember black-with
And those people had fire that was useless, with black embers,
- 5 tili maru-tjara Ø kunyu nyina-ngi
ember black-with (they3) REPORT sit-CONTIN
With black embers, it's said, they were living.
- 6 nya-wa, tjana putu kunyu waru manti-ningi
look-IMP they3 unable REPORT fire get-CONTIN
Look, they were unable, it's said, to get any fire.
- 7 munga purunpa maru-ngka munga maru-ngka
night like black-in night black-in
It was like night, in the dark, in the dark night,
- 8 munu tjana-ya watarku nyina-ngi
and-SM they3-they3 ignorant sit-CONTIN
and those people were living in ignorance.
- 9 ka kunyu wati kutju-ngku Kipara-ngku tili wiru-tjara-ngka nyina-ngi
and-SW REPORT one man-ACT Kipara-ACT fire good-have-with sit-CONTIN
And it's said one man was living with good fire.
- 10α ka ngura kutjupa.tjuta-ngka
and-SW place every-in
So in every place
- wati kutjupa.tjuta-ngku kuli-ni wati kutju
man various-ACT think-PRES man one
various men were thinking about this one man,

- β mantji-ntjikitja waru palu-nya
 get-PERF fire it-NEUT
 to get that fire from him.
- 11α ka -ya palu-nya putu mantji-ra
 and-CONTRAST they3 it-NEUT unable get-IMPERF
 But they were unable to get it,¹³
- β tjulya-ra
 snatch-IMPERF
 as they snatched at it.
- 12 tjulya-ra wana-ra tjulya-ra wana-ra
 snatch-IMPERF follow-IMPERF snatch-IMPERF follow-IMPERF
 Continually snatching and following him,

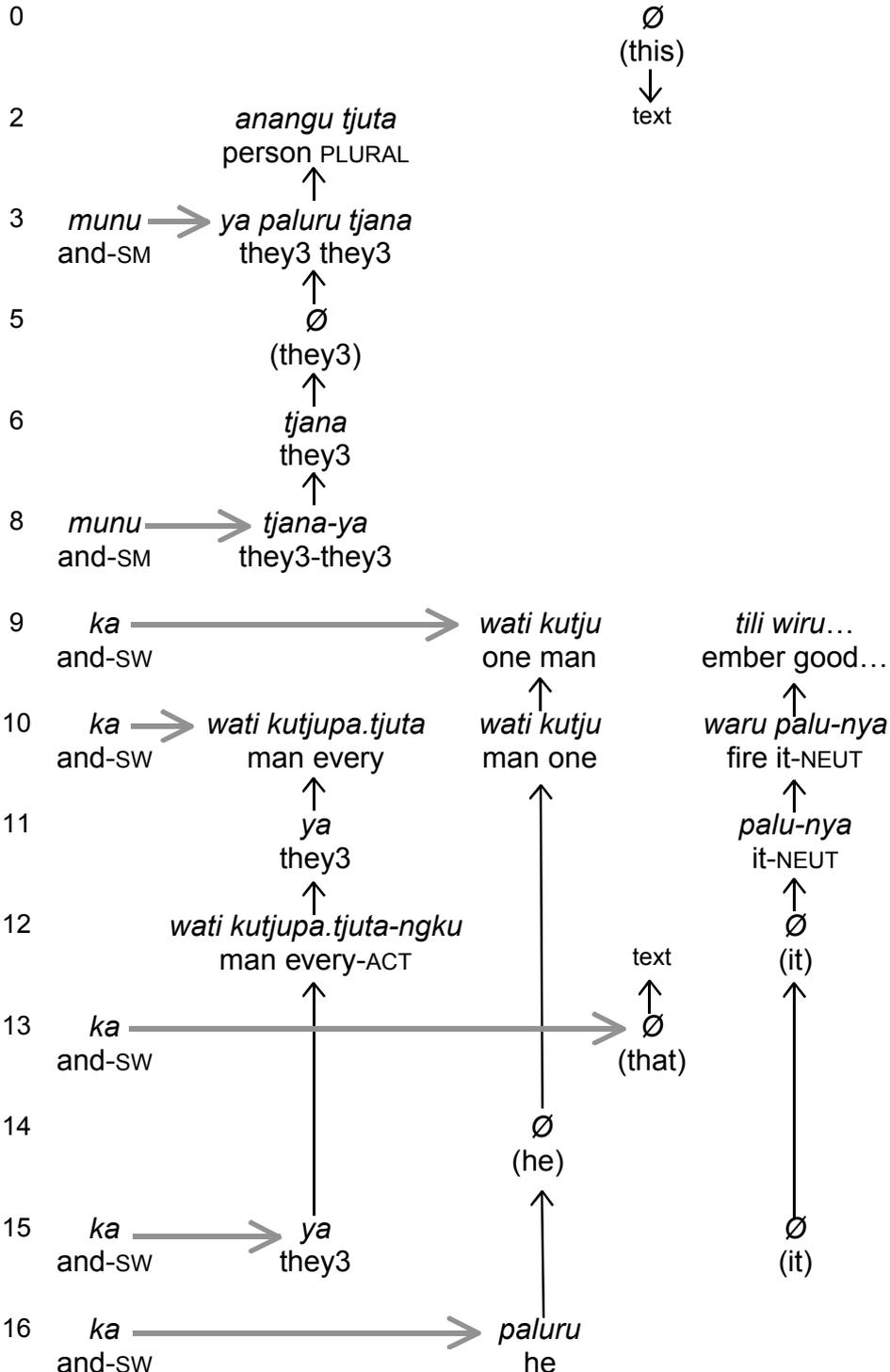
 wati kutjupa.tjuta-ngku Ø tjulya-ningi putu
 man various-ACT (it) snatch-CONTIN unable
 various men were unable to snatch it.
- 13 ka Ø tjilka-ri-ngu
 and-SW (that) tjilka-INCEPT-PAST
 And this became the Tilkatja (initiation ceremonies).
- 14 tjilka-rara alatjitu Ø kati-ngu
 tjilka-group utterly (they) carry-PAST
 It was the Tjilkatja itself that he carried along.
- 15 ka -ya Ø putu tjulya-ra
 and-SW they3 (it) unable snatch-IMPERF
 But they were unable to snatch it,

 tjulya-ra wana-ra tjulya-ra wana-ra
 snatch-IMPERF follow-IMPERF snatch-IMPERF follow-IMPERF
 as they snatched and followed continually.
- 16 ka paluru a-nangi alatjitu tjitutjara
 and-SW he go-CONTIN utterly continuously
 And he kept going on and on for a great distance.

Except for *manta nyanga-ngka* in line 1, all the reference here is endophoric, and except for the text reference in line 0, which is cataphoric to the coming text, this is all anaphoric. There are two hypotactic conjunctive references in 10 and 11. There are also several other imperfective verbs, but these are not analysed as conjunctive reference: in 11α and 15 imperfective aspect is used with the inability adjunct *putu*, to realise ongoing inability, and in 12 and 15 a series of imperfective verbs *tjulya-ra wana-ra tjulya-ra wana-ra* realise a circumstance of duration in time, attendant on the clause process (see Rose 2001a, 2004a&b for this circumstantial feature). Other reference items in the text participate in chains that track identities through the

discourse. Four such chains are presented in Figure 1, that track the people *anangu tjuta*, the *Kipara*, the fire *waru*, and the men *wati kutjupa.tjuta* who snatch at it. Anaphoricity is indicated by backwards arrows, and cataphoricity of the initial text reference by a forward arrow. In addition, conjunctive reference is indicated by horizontal arrows from the conjunction to the relevant item.

Figure 1: Reference chains in text (13)



The reference chain analysis in Figure 1 clearly displays the interplay of pronominal and conjunctive reference, in tracking and switching Medium identities as the text unfolds. In line 3, conjunctive reference *munu* combines with clitic and salient pronouns to emphasise the people's identity. It is then backgrounded in 5 as zero, neutral in 6, and foregrounded again in 8 as conjunction plus clitic and salient pronoun. In 9 *ka* switches the Medium identity track across to *Kipara*, and his 'good fire' is also introduced as a Range. In 10 *ka* switches the Medium identity track to the men *wati kutjupa.tjuta*, while the identity of both *Kipara* and the fire is maintained by repetition and deixis as Ranges. The men are tracked as Medium through 11 and 12, and the fire as Range, as they try to snatch it. In 13 *ka* switches the Medium identity to the preceding text, which is implicitly presumed, and identified as the origin of the *Tjilkatja*. In 14 *Kipara* is implicitly presumed as carrying along the *Tjilka* group itself, i.e. the men who are chasing him. In 15 *ka* switches the Medium back to the men, and in 16 back again to *Kipara*. By these means the listener is always able to identify which participant is being referred to in which role as the text unfolds, even though the last previous mention may be several clauses back. It is also noteworthy that text reference is always implicit in Western Desert, as overt pronouns always refer to people, things and places. Text reference can be presumed in the initial line, by its classification as *tjukurpa*, and in 13 by the conjunctive switch in Medium identity, and its identification as the *Tjilka*.

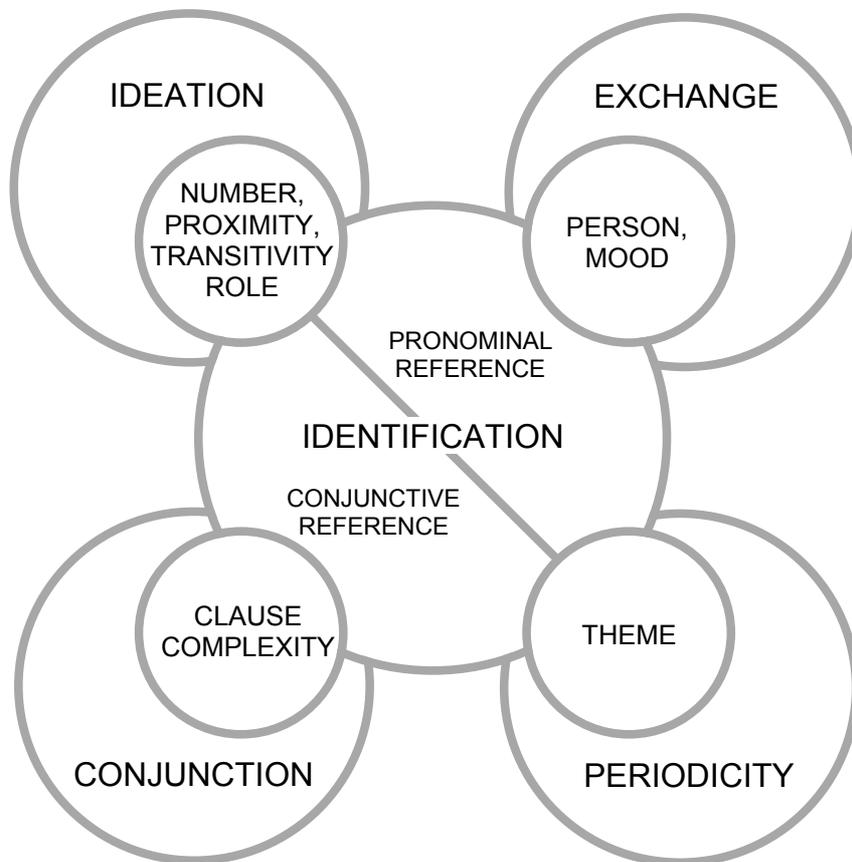
5 Interaction of identification with other systems

Introducing and keeping track of identities in a discourse seems simple enough from the perspective of one or two clauses at a time, that display a small set of personal and demonstrative pronouns, conjunctions and verbal affixes. But as we have seen, identification is woven together with other discourse systems in complex patterns as a text unfolds. It interacts with IDEATION to identify multiple participants in clauses, with EXCHANGE to vary the person in exchange moves, with CONJUNCTION to weave multiple identities through sequences of activities, and with PERIODICITY to foreground and background identities in waves of information. These interactions between discourse systems are mediated by grammatical structures, in which features from multiple discourse systems are conflated. These include personal pronouns, that simultaneously realise options in PERSON, NUMBER and TRANSITIVITY; demonstrative pronouns that realise PROXIMITY, NUMBER and TRANSITIVITY; and conjunctions and verb affixes that realise values in CLAUSE COMPLEXITY and identity of the Medium in TRANSITIVITY.

It is possible for a small set of reference items to realise such a complex network of discourse functions because most structural items are able to make more than one kind of meaning at a time, within and beyond the clause. Pronouns use a segmental strategy in the form of their stem and/or suffixes to track identities (from beyond the clause), by means of person, proximity and number (within the clause), and to distinguish transitivity roles (within the clause). Likewise, conjunctions and verbal affixes use the segmental strategy to indicate both logical relation and identities (from beyond the clause) in a single structure. On the other hand, the strategy of sequencing enables reference items to be mapped onto clause Themes, simultaneously presenting identities as the local context (within the clause) and foregrounding or backgrounding them in the discourse (beyond the clause). This

network of interactions is diagrammed in Figure 2, with larger circles representing discourse systems and smaller circles representing grammatical systems.

Figure 2: Interactions of IDENTIFICATION with other language systems



Conclusion

In this contribution, the broad functions of the discourse systems of pronominal and conjunctive reference were first outlined, and the details of their resources set out and illustrated with text examples. In order to show the potential of these resources, it was also necessary to outline their relations to the interpersonal grammatical system of MOOD and the ideational grammatical systems of TRANSITIVITY and COMPLEXITY. Along the way, relations with the textual system of THEME have also been apparent, although there was not the space for a detailed exploration here. These interactions illustrate something of the complex multifunctionality of discourse, and the strategies that languages have evolved for realising multiple functions simultaneously through the same structures. It is hardly surprising that IDENTIFICATION resources should have such a central role in this, as the global role of the textual metafunction is to integrate and present the other two broad functions of language - to enact our social relations and construe our experience - so that these functions are meaningful in context. Such contexts include elements of the situation external to the text, which proximal demonstratives, as well as personal pronouns, have evolved to incorporate into the discourse through exophoric reference, as in the digging text (6). And they also include contexts constructed by the text itself, as in the story text (13). In constructing such virtual realities, the resources of endophoric reference are crucial, as entities

are introduced as nominal groups, and then tracked through the unfolding events by means such as pronouns, determiners, implicit presumption, and in Western Desert among other languages, by conjunctive reference. This contrast between discourse that accompanies a field of activity, such as digging for honey ants in (6), and discourse that constructs its own field, such as the story in (13), is among the primary distinctions in the roles that language plays in social life.¹⁴ For this reason among many others, the roles of textual resources in organising discourse is a field of study that deserves as much attention as we can pay.

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¹ The Western Desert language is spoken by several thousand members of a widely dispersed hunting-gathering culture known as *Anangu*,¹ in a vast arc of arid lands from the Great Sandy Desert of northern WA, to the Great Victoria Desert of SA. Anangu identify social sub-groupings by various dialect names, without an overarching name for the language, but they also assert their linguistic, cultural and religious unity. The Pitjantjatjara dialect has about 2,000 speakers whose ancestral lands are the desert ranges and sand plains in the approximate centre of the region. Western Desert is classified as a member of the Pama-Nyungan subgroup 'Nyungic', that covers the south-western third of the continent (McConvell 1997). Languages on the eastern and northern boundaries of the culture bloc are not directly related, although *Anangu* share religious and marriage ties with these neighbours.

² Nganyintja is the author's adopted mother, and a well known community leader and educator.

³ The reportative adjunct *kunyu* functions to displace responsibility for an utterance away from the speaker. Its approximate translation in English is 'reportedly' or 'so it's said'.

⁴ CONTIN denotes continuous past tense 'was/were V-ing'

⁵ Euros are a type of kangaroo that live in rocky hills.

⁶ Mushin 2004 also observes that clitic pronouns tend to occur in so-called 'second position' in clauses in other Australian languages.

⁷ Analyses of Theme in Australian languages support Dixon's 1980:441 observation that "there can be unlimited deviation from this preferred order [of words and phrases], dictated partly by discourse considerations ('topic' and the like)."

⁸ The nuclear perspective on the transitivity potential of Western Desert clauses comparable with the model of 'nuclear', 'core' and 'peripheral' clause constituents described in role and reference grammar (Butler 2003, Van Valin 1993), and also used by Dixon (1980, 1994) to classify transitivity functions in Australian languages. However there are a number of important differences. One is the category 'nucleus', which for Van Valin includes only the process ('predicator'), while his 'core' includes both this process and one or more nominal groups ('arguments'). Labels such as 'predicate', 'argument', 'core' and 'periphery' are a mix of formal and functional categories, whereas Medium, Process, Range and Circumstance are semantic functions distinguished by grammatical criteria (Halliday 1994, Rose 1996, 2001a, 2004b).

⁹ Nuclear roles in Western Desert differ from Halliday's description for English (1994), in that the participant acted upon, the Goal, is the Medium of effective material processes in English, not the Range of the process. This feature is associated with the prominence of the ergative pattern in English transitivity, which is a minor motif in Western Desert.

¹⁰ Ilyatjari was the author's adopted father and a director of the community development and education programs on which he worked for many years.

¹¹ A semantic interpretation is sometimes ascribed to the 'nominative/accusative' vs 'ergative/absolutive' inflectional contrast (e.g. Dixon 1980, 1994), but I have seen no evidence of this in text analyses; the contrast is one of morpheme rank form rather than clause rank function.

¹² Stirling 2002 opens by foregrounding verbal realisations of conjunctive reference: "In central cases of switch reference, a marker on the verb of one clause is used to indicate whether its subject has the same or different reference from the subject of an adjacent, syntactically related clause." However in Western Desert the option of additive conjunctions is more common, and in Kâte, described in Martin 1983, this appears to be the only option.

¹³ Line 11 in text (13) strikingly illustrates the interaction of IDENTIFICATION with TRANSITIVITY to distinguish identities in a multi-participant clause. As *ya* is both active and plural, and *palu-nya* is neutral and singular, *ya* identifies the men from the preceding clause as Medium, and *palu-nya* identifies the fire as Range. Therefore the conjunctive function of *ka* in this line is not to switch the Medium identity, but is instead contrastive, translated as concessive 'but' rather than 'and'.

¹⁴ It is remarkable to me that languages as diverse as Western Desert and English, to name just two, achieve such similar social functions, through comparable patterns of discourse and grammatical strategies. Investigations of discourse systems in Western Desert have inspired contrastive studies to this end in Rose 2001b, 2005 and 2006.