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# **PRAGMATICS IN NON-WESTERN PERSPECTIVE**

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## PREFACE

As a new field of inquiry develops, it is efficient and therefore fitting to use the most readily available data to test hypotheses, suggest new ones, and build up models of the phenomena under study. Relatively rapid progress can be made simply by virtue of the fact that the data against which an idea must be tested are ready to hand.

Linguistics has in this respect been no exception. Early in this century, when the task of descriptive linguistics was coming to be seen more and more as the uncovering of the varieties of human language structure, it was natural, for example, that linguists resident in North America investigated languages spoken in the same area. Later, when linguistic fashion focused attention on a native competence not directly perceivable, and affirmed that the nature of language could be investigated by examination of any one language, it was nearly inevitable that generative linguistics developed primarily through study of the languages spoken natively by trained linguists--e.g., English, French, Dutch.

Even sociolinguistics and the sociology of language, although receiving their predominant initial impetus from the problems of multilingual developing nations in different parts of the world, developed more rapidly when researchers turned to similar problems within their own borders throughout North America and Europe.

Likewise the field of linguistic pragmatics owes almost all its progress of the last two decades to scholars looking at language use in the communities of which they are native members--usually communities of speakers of English or other European languages.

Having developed our hypotheses, models, and metaphors of language through intense study of the materials we know best--our native languages--we cannot be content to continue within such limits. If our models resemble human language in general, and not only, say, (Indo-)European languages, then they should be readily confirmed in confrontation with phenomena from other families. If they are partly contradicted thereby, then we have an opportunity to correct our models--an opportunity which study of a narrower range of languages failed to provide. In the process, our encounter with the other languages may resolve problems and suggest

answers to enlarge our models in areas where the study of our own languages brought nothing to mind.

For these reasons, then--for confirmation, correction, and expansion of our current models of language and languages as used--we have striven to bring together in this volume descriptions of languages in use in a variety of non-Western societies in different parts of the world. At the same time, we have encouraged a wide range of topics by making little attempt to clearly delimit "pragmatics" from sociolinguistics, semantics, or other areas from which it could for some purposes be usefully distinguished.

We would like to thank Carol and Neil Brinneman and Lynn Frank for their contribution in translating the article by Suzanne Lafage, although we must accept responsibility for the final form of the English version. We thank Prof. G. Manessey, Directeur de Centre d'Etude des Plurilinguismes (IDERIC), and the publishing company L'Harmattan for permission to publish an English version of this paper, which appeared originally in 1979 in Plurilinguisme: Normes, situations, stratégies, edited by G. Manessey and P. Wald, under the title "Esquisse d'un cadre de référence pragmatique pour une analyse sociolinguistique en contexte africain."

Dallas, Texas  
January, 1984

George Huttar  
Kenneth Gregerson

## AN ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY VERBS IN WALMATJARI

Joyce Hudson

The twenty-two illocutionary verbs analyzed here represent the main speech acts of Walmatjari, an Australian Aboriginal language. It is one of the languages spoken along the Fitzroy River in the north of Western Australia. Many of the speakers live on cattle stations along the Fitzroy River and Christmas Creek, while others live in the towns of Fitzroy Crossing and Derby. Some live as far east as Halls Creek district and a closely related dialect is spoken as far west as La Grange Mission.

For readers unfamiliar with speech act theory, a very helpful introduction is provided by Lyons (1977:725-45). As he points out (p. 725), "One of the most attractive features of the theory of speech-acts...is that it gives explicit recognition to the social or interpersonal dimension of language-behaviour." The theory was first introduced into the philosophy of language by Austin (1962), further developed by Searle (1968, 1969), and is now approached from a variety of viewpoints, exemplified by Sadock (1974), Gordon and Lakoff (1975), Grice (1975), Kempson (1975), Wilson (1975), McCawley (1977), and Wierzbicka (1977, 1980).

Austin introduced the term illocutionary act for one sort of act which a speaker performs in making an utterance: one may make a statement, ask a question, make a request, or make a promise. For example, illocutionary verbs are verbs denoting illocutionary acts; English examples are state, request, promise, warn, and demand. In this description of Walmatjari illocutionary verbs I follow the approach developed by Wierzbicka (1972, 1980), according to which explications of illocutionary verbs are given in terms of a small set of semantic primitives.

In applying the theory of speech acts to other languages, one must consider the different cultural background of social interaction and describe speech acts in terms of the specific cultural system and the categories which are relevant to the speakers of the language, "the 'inside' rules for ordering and classifying the

universe" (Berndt 1974:56). This principle is illustrated in many of the papers from Bauman and Sherzer (1974). The complexity of social structure and kinship among the Australian Aborigines is well documented (see Berndt and Berndt 1967) and is reflected in the languages in many ways. Dixon (1980:26) points out that "there are in many tribes special speech styles that are used in ceremonies of certain types, e.g., in tutoring men about to be initiated; or that must be used in the presence of anyone with whom contact has, for social reasons, to be kept to a minimum. In order to know how to speak in any given circumstances one must have a full understanding of the institutionalized kin relationships holding between the speakers and addressees." Again (1980:276), "a few languages have ... complex pronoun systems with ... distinctions of form depending on the relationship between the people referred to."

It is therefore to be expected that these social structures of the Aboriginal society will produce a number of culturally bound speech acts. In Walmatjari the relationship between speaker and hearer or speaker and referent is inferred from some particular speech acts, so in such cases as these "because you are my relative" is a necessary component in the explication of the verb. Naturally, other components of<sup>2</sup>Walmatjari verbs will reveal particular aspects of the culture.

<u>Simple verb stem</u>	<u>Generalized meaning in compound verbs</u>
<b>pung</b> 'hit/kill'	forceful action
<b>many</b> 'say/speak'	action without force
<b>wanti</b> 'fall'	downward action
<b>karri</b> 'stand'	action in a vertical or straight position

### Walmatjari verb structure

The verb in Walmatjari consists of a stem and four orders of suffixes. Stems can be monomorphemic or compound and are divided into five conjugation classes. These classes have no semantic functions. The suffixes signal aspect, tense, and mood. The simple verb stems belong to a closed class of thirty-nine morphemes, e.g., **kang** 'carry', **many** 'say, speak', **yan** 'go', **warnta** 'get', and **-karra** 'place'. The majority of compound verb stems consist of two morphemes. The first (Root<sub>1</sub>) functions as the semantic nucleus of the compound stem while the second (Root<sub>2</sub>) contributes to the meaning but has primarily grammatical functions. Root<sub>2</sub> can be either a simple verb stem or a verbalizing morpheme. All verbal suffixes are attached to this root. Membership in a conjugation class does not predict transitivity in compounding. The intransitive stem **karri** 'stand' when combined with **pina** 'ear' results in the transitive compound verb **pinakarri** 'hear, listen'.



When a simple verb stem occurs in a compound stem, its meaning is broadened. Compare the meanings of four simple stems when they occur in compounds:

In some compounds, meaning contrast is carried entirely by this second morpheme and transitivity of Root<sub>2</sub> is retained.

**takurr-yan**

through an opening-go  
'enter' (intr)

**takurr-pung**

through an opening-forceful action  
'push inside something' (tr)

In most verbs, however, the meaning contrast is carried entirely by the first morpheme and transitivity is not predictable from Root<sub>2</sub>.

**warral-pung**

laugh-forceful action  
'laugh' (intr)

**turta-pung**

arise-forceful action  
'arise' (intr)

Of the thirty-nine verb stems in the data, only four are illocutionary. They are:

**many** 'say, speak'  
**jula** 'tell, call'  
**yinpa** 'sing, curse'  
**marra** 'scold, talk angrily, argue'

As with transitivity, the occurrence in compound stems can change the illocutionary nature of these morphemes. **Many** 'say, speak' is very productive and compounds built with **many** abound in the language, but only five of them have been analyzed below as illocutionary. **Jula** occurs in a few compounds, two of them illocutionary. **Yinpa** and **marra** have not been found in compounds. Non-illocutionary simple stems found in illocutionary compound verbs are **yung** 'give', **pung** 'hit/kill', **karra** (controlled action), **kuji** 'cause', **man** 'do' and **nyang** 'see, look'. No doubt others will be found in future research.

### Walmatjari illocutionary verbs

Wierzbicka (1980:28) claims that there are thirteen semantic primitives: 'want', 'don't want' (diswant), 'think of', 'imagine', 'say', 'become', 'be a part of', 'something', 'someone' (being),

'I', 'you', 'world', 'this', which are both necessary and sufficient for modeling all intuitively felt semantic relations and that "the sets of semantic primitives which can be established through the analysis of different languages coincide" (1980:26). The analysis presented in this paper follows Wierzbicka in using natural language to represent the semantic components of each verb. The semantic representation is enclosed in brackets and referred to as an 'explication'. It will be noted that words other than the thirteen semantic primitives are used. This is done to avoid very lengthy explications which would result if each verb were described only in terms of the thirteen.

In all explications the first person is used to reflect the speaker's expressed intention. As Wierzbicka says (1980:306), "we cannot say, in the third person, that the speaker intends such and such. But we can say that what the speaker says can be paraphrased, in the first person, as 'I want such and such.'" In the absence of native speakers to check the possible use of these verbs as performatives, i.e., in first person, present tense, declarative mood, the analysis has been made mainly on the basis of evidence from reported speech.

1) many 'say, speak'

This verb appears to be a semantic primitive. When it occurs alone, it always refers to the act of speech, and it can be extended to refer to animal speech, as in:

**Yawarta-rlu palu marni wangki.**

horse-ERG they said word  
'The horses neighed.'

It can be used in the quote formula of sentences with direct speech regardless of which speech act is being described.

Question -

**Purij-ju paji marni, "Wanyjani ngan luwu nyuntukura?"**

priest-ERG he-me said left you law your  
'The priest asked me, "Have you left your own law?"'

Advice -

**Malany pilarla, "Jirrkiri man kirralku, Ngajirta**  
say they 2-her straight you will-sit NEG

**ngan warawaramanyja maya."**

you cry:out strong  
'They tell her, "You should sit still; don't cry out."'

Command -

**Marni paji, "Ngapa pajin pinakangka!"**  
 said he-me water you-me show  
 'He told me, "Show me where the water is!"'

There is one example in the data of **many** in first person.

**Layi nganpayi turtangany wangkipurru, "Wali karrkanyjalu!**  
 one man arises to:talk all right silence

**Malku marna..."**  
 will:speak I  
 'One man gets up to speak. "Be quiet everyone. I have something to say...."'

It cannot be used to report indirect speech except where the speech is described by the noun **wangki** 'word, speech', as in:

**Wangki pilarlanyanu marni.**  
 word they 2-REFL said  
 'They two talked together.'

When **many** is incorporated in a compound verb stem, its meaning is broadened. Actions where noise is involved typically include **many** in the compound.

**kuu-many** 'thunder rolls'  
**rang-many** 'pant as a dog'  
**jirik-many** 'dripping of raindrops'

Sometimes there is no apparent link to noise of any kind.

**wulyu-many** 'like'  
**ruk-(m)any** 'block, forget'

2) **jula** 'tell, call'

The verb **jula** requires more than one explication. The first is for the verb as it is used to mean 'tell', and the other is translated into English as 'call', as in 'I call it a boomerang'.

**jula** 'tell'

I know something  
 I assume you want to know it  
 I want to cause you to know it

It contrasts with **many** 'say, speak' in that things 'told' are always matters of content. **Jula** can be used to introduce advice or a command in some instances but never a question.

Most discourses recorded on tape finish with the formula **Wali marnangu jularni** 'All right, I've told you'. I have never heard **many** used here, although it can substitute for **jula** elsewhere. Perhaps the best illustration of these two speech verbs is from the story told of a trip to a distant area by a Walmatjari man who was established as a preacher in the Christian church. Narrating the story of this journey, the preacher describes his sermons and conversations he had along the way. Sermon matter is always introduced by **jula**, but when the crowd respond to the sermon with a mild 'yes', **many** is used. And later when he describes conversation with a priest and other people about his preaching work, **many** is used each time. Other examples are:

**Wali marnarla pinarri kamulku, yangka pajilu jularni.**  
all right I-it know camel which they-me told  
'I know about camels because others told me about them.'

**Wajpal-lu jularni, "Minyartingurni parlipa tikiyanku."**  
whiteman-ERG said from:here we will:return  
'The whiteman (guide on a conducted tour) said, "We will turn around here and go back."'

**Jalarra marnangu jularnana minyarti wangki Graham.**  
now I-you am:telling this word  
'I am telling you this now, Graham.' (This sentence is the introductory sentence in a discourse giving advice to Graham.)

**Julalany, "Ngunawu parlipa jirrkirl."**  
tells will:be we straight  
'It (the Bible) says, "We must live uprightly."'

**Kulangarra yarrparni paji jularnani, minyakujala**  
it seemed nothing she-me was:telling but

**miyilturlpu nyanyangurra kankarni mananga kirrarnjangka.**  
cat saw up in:tree sitting  
'It seemed she was just talking about nothing, but she had seen a cat up in the tree.'

**jula** 'call'

thinking of X  
I say...

There are two circumstances for use of **jula** 'call'. They can be illustrated by two sentences.

**Julalany marnanta jaja.**  
call I-you grannie  
'I call you grannie.'

**Julalany marna karli.**  
 call I-it boomerang  
 'I call it a boomerang.'

As well as the semantic difference between **jula** 'tell' and **jula** 'call' there is a grammatical difference. The first cooccurs with both the indirect referent and object cases, though object can only be a direct quotation or the word **wangki** 'word, speech'.

**Wangki marnanyanangu jularni piyirnarnti-wu.**  
 word I-them told people-IR  
 'I told the people something.'

Reflexive/reciprocal adds a slight change of meaning.

**Jularni pajilarla-nyanu wangki ngaju-wu piyirnarnti-rlu.**  
 told they-REFL word me-IR people-ERG  
 'The people told me something about themselves.'

With **jula** 'call' no noun phrase in indirect referent case occurs, and the object is the name or kin term in focus.

**Wurripi marnalu jularnani.**  
 wurripi we-it called  
 'We used to call (the bush fruit) a **wurripi**.'

A few compounds can be formed with **jula**. They are **pinajula** 'teach', **jakuljula** 'talk about someone', and **tajjula** 'call a human by a personal name'. They will be described in detail elsewhere.

3) **papajarra** 'call out'

This verb is generally used of the action of calling to someone to gain his attention, using a loud voice and calling from a distance.

I assume you are away from me  
 I want you to do something to cause me to know you can  
 hear me  
 I want to say something more to you

**Jarti pajarra Jitirn-jarra papajani.**  
 in:vain we:2 Jitirn-2 called:out  
 'Jitirn and I called out but they didn't hear us.'

4) **tajjula** 'call a human by personal name'

I know something about you (your name and possibly other background information that may be implied here)

I assume I can say this to you  
 I assume nothing bad will happen to you if I say this to you  
 I want you to do something to cause me to know you can hear me  
 I want to say something more to you

**Tajjularni parla Ngarralja.**

call:by:name he-him Ngarralja  
 'He called him by name, saying, "Ngarralja."'

The last two verbs above differ in that **papajarra** refers to calling out from a distance while **tajjula** does not. They also differ in the form of address that is implied. To call out, **papajarra**, one could use the addressee's subsection name, a kinship term (e.g., **jaja** 'grannie'), or a term such as **parri** 'boy', but not a personal name because the name has special significance and is not to be used freely. A person will not utter his own name unless under duress as when a visiting official demands it either to write it on a form or in a mistaken effort to be friendly. It is not surprising, then, that there is a special verb, **tajjula**, to describe the vocative use of a personal name. This is inherent in the second and third components of the explication.

5) **japirlyung ~ japirlman** 'ask, request'

**Japirlyung** can be used to report a simple question with an interrogative sentence, as in:

**Japirlyinya parla, "Wanyjurla man yanany?"**

asked he-him where you go  
 'He asked, "Where are you going?"'

To soften the abruptness of a question and get permission to ask something, one often says,

**Japirlyungku marnanta.**

will:ask I-you  
 'I want to ask you something.'

The response will be **Kaj. Manyja.** 'Go ahead and speak.'

I don't know something  
 I assume you know it  
 I want you to cause me to know it

There is a second sense for this verb. It is used with an indirect quotation, which is shown grammatically by the purposive case. This is normally used when reporting a request for something to be given to or done for the benefit of the speaker.

**Japirlyinya parla parri-ngu nganpayi kuyi-purru.**  
 asked he-him boy-ERG man meat-PURP  
 'The boy asked the man to give him meat.'

The actual words the boy would use in such an incident would be  
**"Kuyi yungkaja!"** 'Give me meat!'

I want you to do something that is good for me  
 I assume you can do it  
 I assume you have to do what I say I want you to do  
 because I am your relative

The component, "because I am your relative," refers to the obligations between speaker and hearer based on kinship which are incorporated into the speech acts of Walmatjari. The reference is not limited to blood relatives, but it encompasses those who belong to certain categories within the tribe. Because of the intricacies of the system more research is needed to explain which relationships imply obligation.

6) **jinjinyung** 'order'

This verb appears to be very similar to the second sense of **japirlyung**, as in the next example, but it implies authority on the part of the speaker rather than obligation based on kinship. Note that this does not include the component, "that is good for me," which is present in **japirlyung**.

**Jinjinyinya parla parri-ngu parri-warlany "Miyi yungkaja!"**  
 commanded he-him boy-ERG boy-another food give me  
 'The boy commanded the other boy, "Give me food!"'

**Nganpayi parla jinjinyinya warrkammayin.**  
 man he-him commanded worker  
 'He ordered his staff member to do something.'

**Laparnurla warlu parla jinjinyinya.**  
 having:run firewood he-her ordered  
 'He ran up and ordered her (his wife) to get wood  
 (for the fire).'

**Jinjinyinya manya yinparnu-purru.**  
 ordered he-them sing-PURP  
 'He ordered them to begin singing the corroboree.'

In the last example the speaker has authority in the corroboree, and so he is able to order the performers to begin.

I want you to do something  
 I assume you can do it  
 I assume you have to do what I tell you to do

7) **jangkuman** 'respond'

This verb can be used to report a verbal response to speech. In text it is coupled with sentences where the verbs **many** 'say, speak' and **japirlyung** 'ask, request' are used.

I know you said something to me  
I want to say something more about it

Some examples:

**Wangki marnanyanta jangkumani kartiya-rla ngaju-ngu.**  
word I-him responded whiteman-to I-ERG  
'I said something in response to the whiteman.'

In a text describing a child chattering to his adult companion, the adult's warning response is described as:

**Jangkumani manyanta nganpayi-rlu, "Yarr yananku-rli**  
responded he-him man-ERG just will:go-we  
**kulkuru. Lanta ngarlipanyalu purluman-tu."**  
quiet pierce they-us-might bullock-ERG  
'The man responded to the child, "Let us walk  
quietly. The bullocks might gore us."'

By reduplication, the action is shown to be repetitive. This could very likely be a separate speech act, namely, a sort of argument, but the data is too limited at this point to make such a claim.

**Jangku-jangkumani pila-nyanu nganpayijarra-rlu kuli.**  
respond-responded they 2-REFL men-ERG anger  
'The two men talked angrily.'

8) **jirnapung** 'refuse, deny'

If the response to a request is negative, it is reported with the verb **jirnapung**, which has an expanded meaning of 'refuse a request in order to avoid giving something'.

I know you want me to do something for you  
I assume I have to do for you what you tell me to do  
because I am your relative  
I don't want to do it  
not wanting you to say bad things about me I say something to  
cause you to think I cannot do it

The strong obligation to give to relatives means that a refusal is bad and is usually seen to be an excuse rather than a genuine



inability to produce the goods. This is especially true in dealings with staff at the bank when old people are told there is no money in their account. They will often be very angry and accuse the staff of giving an excuse in order to withhold their money using this verb to describe it.

**Kyuiwurti palu jirnapungany yala marnin-tu**  
game they refuse out-of-sight woman-ERG

**ruwajangka-rlu, yarr pa yirri malany, minyangurru**  
hunting-ERG just it lie says but

**ngalany yalawurla yarnta ranji kangany ngurti-nga.**  
eat out-of-sight also hidden carry coolamon-LOC  
'Sometimes a woman returning from hunting refuses to give the catch. It's just a lie; she may have eaten it in seclusion or is carrying it hidden in her coolamon.'

If reflexive/reciprocal is used, there is a parallel to **jula** 'tell' which can describe the speaker telling others about himself. **Jirnapung** describes the speaker denying something.

**Jara-rlu parla marni, "Ngajirta marna warralpunka."**  
Sarah-ERG she-him said not I laugh

**Jirnapinya ma-nyanu Jara.**  
deny she-REFL Sarah.  
'Sarah said, "I didn't laugh." She denied it.'

9) **jarrmany** 'stop, rebuke, prevent, forbid'

The similarity to **jinjinyung** 'order' will be immediately obvious from the explication. Grammatically the difference is shown by an obligatorily negative sentence in the direct quotation with **jarrmany** and an obligatorily positive sentence with **jinjinyung**.

I want you not to do something  
I assume you want to do it  
I assume you have to do what I tell you to do

**"Ngajirta ngan kangka kayili parri," jarrmarni parla**  
not you take north boy forbade she-him

**ngamaji-rlu.**  
mother-ERG  
'The mother forbade the other one. "Don't take the boy north."'

The next two verbs are included, although there are very few examples in the data and it is not possible to be sure of the

finer points of meaning. Both share the component of the obligation that relatives have of giving when asked for something.

10) **panypanymany** 'demand urgently'

I want you to do something for me  
 I want you to do it now  
 I assume you have to do for me what I tell you to do  
 because I am your relative

**Nganajangka man panypanymarnana? Waliwurt nganyja!**  
 why you demanding all right eat  
 'Why are you demanding more? Eat what you have already!'

11) **nginarrmany** 'demand impatiently and angrily'

This verb includes anger on the part of the speaker. It describes the typical behavior of a drunken person who comes home demanding food from relatives and who is not easily put off.

I want you to do something for me  
 I want you to do it now  
 I feel bad toward you because you did not do it yet  
 I assume you have to do for me what I tell you to do  
 because I am your relative

**Nganpayi parla nginarrmarni miyi-wu.**  
 man he-it demanded food-IR  
 'The man impatiently demanded food.'

12) **lirrkarpung** 'advise'

The only aspect of this verb which may differ from English is that the age and status of the speaker and hearer are probably more significant in Walmatjari.

I want you to do something because I think it is a good thing  
 for you to do  
 I assume you have to listen to what I tell you to do  
 because of who I am and who you are  
 I assume you don't have to do it

**Lirrkarpungana marnanta Graham, nyuntu man pingkayi**  
 advising I-you Graham you you youth

**murtilya...**  
 post:initiate  
 'I am advising you, Graham. You are a young man, a youth....'

There are at least three verbs for 'teach'. All are built on the noun **pina** 'ear, intellect'. **Pinajula** is one which implies teaching verbally. The others include demonstration. **Pinakangka** (ear-carry) 'to teach by taking the pupil to the object to be learned', and **pinayungka** (ear-give) which is more general, including teaching by demonstration as a parent teaches a child to hunt, cook, etc. A similar division in terms describing the sphere of knowledge is described for Middle High German by Ullmann (1957:166) drawing on the work of Trier (1934).

All three share the same explication with differences as stated above. The last component refers to age and status which are necessary requirements for a teacher: e.g., a woman may not teach a man, a younger person may not teach an older one, etc.

I know something  
 I assume you don't know it  
 I assume you want to know it  
 I want to cause you to know it  
 I assume you have to listen to me when I tell you this  
 because of who I am and who you are

Examples:

**Pinajularni paji nyanarti pamarr kakaji.**  
 taught he-me that hill goanna  
 'He taught me the story of the goanna that became a hill.'

**Ngapa marnanta pinakangku.**  
 water I-you will:teach  
 'I will guide you to the water.'

**Pinayungani paja jamirti-rlu.**  
 taught he-me grandfather-ERG  
 'My grandfather taught me (the old customs and legends).'

### 13) **yinpa** 'sing, curse'

Singing is associated with a religious experience, usually danced out at a corroboree (**juju**). Such an event can be described either as 'We danced a **juju**.' or 'We sang a **juju**.' The singing and dancing is believed to affect the world, e.g., in the sense of increasing food and game supplies. The verb **singim** in the pidgin lingua franca of the area is extended in meaning to include the singing of a sacred song to work sorcery on someone. Although this data does not contain an example of **yinpa** with the extended meaning, it is expected that there will be a parallel with the pidgin verb so two explications are given.

**yinpa** 'sing'

I say...(the song)  
 because I want something to happen which will be good for us  
 I assume that by saying it in this way I can cause it to happen

**Juju marnalu yinparni wakaya.**  
 sacred:song we sang wakaya  
 'We sang the **wakaya** corroboree.'

**yinpa** 'curse'

I say...(the song)  
 because I want something bad to happen to X  
 I assume that by saying it in this way I can cause it  
 to happen

**Mimijarti pa yinparnu-jangka.**  
 sick he singing-from  
 'He is sick as a result of being cursed.' (unattested  
 sentence)

Walmatjari has an extensive vocabulary covering the various aspects of anger and fighting. These two concepts are so closely related that the noun meaning 'anger', **kuli**, also implies physical blows. The illocutionary verbs used in these circumstances have very slight differences of meaning. Those given below provide only a glimpse into this semantic area, dealing with actions which lead to fighting, either accidentally or intentionally. Throughout this section, 'do something bad' refers to anger, accompanied by verbal or physical expression of it.

14) **jingnyaka** 'tease, incite to anger'

Teasing can be verbal or nonverbal. It is a favorite activity among children. Although it can cause amusement for those watching, the illocutionary force is always to incite the hearer to anger (something bad), rather than the harmless playfulness included in English 'teasing'.

I say something which I think you don't want me to say  
 I assume you will feel bad because of that  
 I know it might not be true  
 I say it because I want to cause you to do something bad  
 I assume I will feel amused because of that

**Parriwarnti-rlu palunya jingnyangani pungu-wurra.**  
 boys-ERG they-them teased hit-until  
 'The boys teased them until they hit back.'

**Ngajirta ngarlipa kuliwarnti jingnyanganta nganangurniwurti.**  
 NEG we angry:ones tease anything:from  
 'Let us not incite each other to anger over anything.'

Teasing can be done by speaking about the hearer or his relatives. There is some similarity here with the ritual insults of the black communities of the U.S.A., described by Labov (1972) but in Walmatjari teasing comments about the addressee or his relative are not manifestly false, though they may be. Teasing can also be nonverbal, as in the case of a young donkey which was kept as a pet. It used to be teased by the children until it would chase and try to bite them. In the example the speaker is describing his dog's character.

**Yangkakaji nganangu piyirn-tu jingnyangani, nyanartila**  
 when anyone person-ERG teased then

**pajananjawal.**  
 bite

'If anyone teased (the dog), it would bite.'

15) **warralpong** 'laugh'

The first meaning of **warralpong** is simply the physical act of laughter. The second is very similar to **jingnyaka** except that there are no words involved. This second meaning is explicated below:

thinking of something bad about you, not wanting to say  
 it, I laugh

I assume you will feel bad because of that

I do it because I want to cause you to do something bad

I assume I will feel good because of that

**Warralpinya paji manga-ngu.**

laughed she-me girl-ERG

'The girl laughed at me.'

If a child reports this to a relative, it could start a fight in defense of the injured party.

16) **jakuljula** 'talk about someone'

I know something about X

I assume you don't know it

I assume you would want to know it

I want to cause you to know it

**Jakuljularni manyanangu kartiya.**  
 talk:about he-them whiteman  
 'He told them about the whiteman.'

17) **marra** 'scold, talk angrily, quarrel'

I think you have done something bad  
 I feel bad because of that  
 I say it because I want you to feel bad

**Marrarni pila-nyanu marninjarra-rlu ngumparna-ngurni.**  
 argued they:2-REFL women-ERG husband-from  
 'The two women quarreled because of their husband.'

18) **nganymany** 'abuse, scream at someone in anger'

This is related to kinship obligations and responsibilities.

I want something  
 I assume you should have known I would want it  
 I feel bad because you did not do it  
 I assume you have to do for me what I tell you to do  
 because you are my relative  
 I say something bad about you because I want you to  
 feel bad

**Nganymalany parla kuyi-wu nganpayi-rlu warrkamjangka.**  
 abuse he:for:it meat-IR man-ERG work:from  
 'The man returning from work screams out for his food.'

**Ngajirta ngan nganynganymanyja! Yarr kirrangja!**  
 NEG you scream:out just sit

**Ngalakjarri ngan.**  
 headache:become you:might  
 'Don't scream out in abuse. Sit down quietly or you might  
 get a headache.'

19) **tarrurumany** 'confront, speak straight, say what you mean'

It is unusual for any confrontation to take place. Saving face is very important. This sort of action is often done accidentally by whites who fail to recognize the need for face-saving and who speak directly and without preamble.

I want to say something  
 I know that you may feel bad because of it  
 I don't want to cause you not to feel bad  
 I say it like this because I don't care how you feel

**Tarrurumarni parla janginy-ja.**  
 confront he-him face-LOC  
 'He said it straight to his face.'

The semantics of the compound is carried mainly by the first morpheme, and the following example, in which the first morpheme is compounded with the root *yan* 'go', illustrates the meaning well.

**Tarruruyanany ngurra-karti nganawurti japirlyungu-mulu.**  
 go:straight:up camp-to any ask-without  
 'He goes straight to any camp without asking permission.'

20) **kurntayikuji** 'cause shame, embarrass'

One of the means of social discipline and punishment is to cause public embarrassment to the offender and so shame him/her into better behavior. The method is to accuse the offender of his/her various shortcomings in a loud voice at a time when there are many people around.

I say: you have done something bad  
 I say it where others can hear me because I want others to  
 know what you have done  
 I say it because I want you to feel bad because of that  
 and because  
 I want you not to do it again

**Kurntayikujirni marna marnin nganpayijawal.**  
 shamed I-her woman man:chaser  
 'I shamed the woman who is always after the men.'

21) **purntukang** 'stand in for another person, take the part  
 of another'

To offend or attack any Walmatjari person is to offend or attack his blood relatives too. Thus if someone is hit in a fight, one of his relatives will usually take up the argument and get involved too, insulting the opponent verbally and inviting him to hit the speaker who has declared his oneness with the injured person. The justice involved in the original fight seems irrelevant. It is rather a kinship obligation to take the part of one's relatives when they are insulted or injured. Although physical action is often involved, it is always preceded by much verbal combat to gain the attention of the whole community. It can also stop at the verbal stage with no ensuing blows.

I know you have said something to cause X to feel bad  
 I feel bad because of that because X is my relative  
 I want you to stop saying it to X

I want you to say it to me (as though I were X)  
 I assume I have to say this because X is my relative  
 I say it because I know others would say bad things  
 about me if I didn't

**Purrukanya paji ngarpu-ngu.**  
 took:part he:for:me father-ERG  
 'My father took my part.'

**Marninjarra-rlu pila-nyanu marralany purrukangu-jangka-rlu**  
 women-ERG they:2-REFL argue take:part-from-ERG

**yapajarra-ngurni.**  
 children-from  
 'The two women are arguing, each taking the part of  
 her child.'

Most of the verbs analyzed above reflect the culture of the Walmatjari people, and the method of analysis using natural language helps to identify this. Six verbs have a component where kinship is significant and the addressee has a special responsibility to the speaker because of their relationship. They are: **japirlyung**, **jirnapung**, **panypanymany**, **nginarmany**, **nganymany**, **purrukang**. Another six, **jingnyaka**, **warraljung**, **wakirmany**, **marra**, **tarrurumany**, **kurntayikuji**, include reference to the emotional response of the addressee. Two, **tajjula** and **yinpa**, reflect the religion of those who speak the language. The rest are verbs of requesting, or of rebuking, or general speech verbs.

To conclude, although I have had no opportunity to check these with native speakers, I offer two explications in Walmatjari to test Wierzbicka's claim that semantic primitives in English explications do have equivalents in other languages (1980:26).

## 22) **japirlyung** (1) 'ask, request' (see page 70)

**Ngurupa marnarla nganapartuwu.**  
 ignorant I-it something  
 'I don't know about something.'

**Kunyangurla man pinarrijarti.**  
 maybe man knowledge:have  
 'I assume you know.'

**Pinarri-kujiwu pajan.**  
 knowledge-will:cause you-me  
 'I want you to cause me to know.'

## **japirlyung** (2)

**Wulyu pajan nganapartu yungku.**  
 good you-me something will:give  
 'I want you to give me something good.'



**Kunyangurla man nganayijarti wulyujarti.**  
 maybe you something:have good:have  
 'I assume you have something good.'

**Ngaju marnangu jarntu, yangkala pajan**  
 I I-you relative so then you-me

**mapunikarrku.**  
 will:obey/believe  
 'I am your relative, so that I assume you must do what  
 I tell you to do.'

### NOTES

- 1 Walmatjari is a member of the Ngumbin subgroup of the Pama-Nyungan family of Australian languages (Wurm 1972:128). For an introductory description of Walmatjari, see Hudson et al. 1976. For more detailed information, see Hudson 1970, 1978.
- 2 This analysis has been done using data collected during fieldwork extended over an eleven-year period. During the time of writing there has been no opportunity for access to native speakers, so the explications given are offered as exploratory attempts to describe Walmatjari illocutionary verbs. Anna Wierzbicka's assistance in analysis and editing is gratefully acknowledged. This paper was prepared with the assistance of a concordance of 90-100 pages of text in Walmatjari produced by a joint project of the Oklahoma University Research Institute and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which was partially supported by Grant GS-1605 of the National Science Foundation.

### ABBREVIATIONS

ERG	ergative
IR	indirect referent
LOC	locative
NEG	negative
PURP	purposive
REFL	reflexive/reciprocal

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