

# Discourse and Djambarrpuyŋu: three features

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## *Abstract*

*Some of the world's lesser known linguistic systems have discourse features that are not in accord with the usual topic-vs.-comment splits, whatever contents are ascribed to either (Chafe 1976; Li and Thompson 1976). The data and observations presented here should be of value in revising or redefining terminology and concepts relating to discourse at a universal level, since in Djambarrpuyŋu, most of the characteristics of the various discourse functions are packaged quite differently and cross-cut the bounds discussed in much of the literature on the subject. It follows that this language presents yet another case which does not fit traditional models but must be described on its own terms, thereby enriching our overall understanding of discourse structure. Three discourse tactics will be discussed herein: (1) fronting (as opposed to unmarked word order), which is a means of EMPHasis, (2) the suffix nydja, which is a mark of OPPosition, and (3) the suffix -nha, which is a mark of SEQuence (either logical or chronological). Fronting and -nydja can be stylistic, i.e. they have no syntactic relevance and can, to a large extent, be present or not according to an individual speaker's preference. However, this is not the case for -nydja in its use as a switch-reference marker, nor for -nha as a sequence marker.*

NOTE: FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ARTICLE, SEE THE APPENDIX ON PAGE 873.

## **1. Background notes on Djambarrpuyŋu<sup>1</sup>.**

Djambarrpuyŋu is a dialect of the Yolŋu subfamily (Schebeck n.d.; Wood 1978; Zorc 1978), which has also been called the Murrngic family (Voegelin and Voegelin 1977: 241), which in turn is a member of the Pama-Nyungan family of Australian languages. This dialect is spoken in

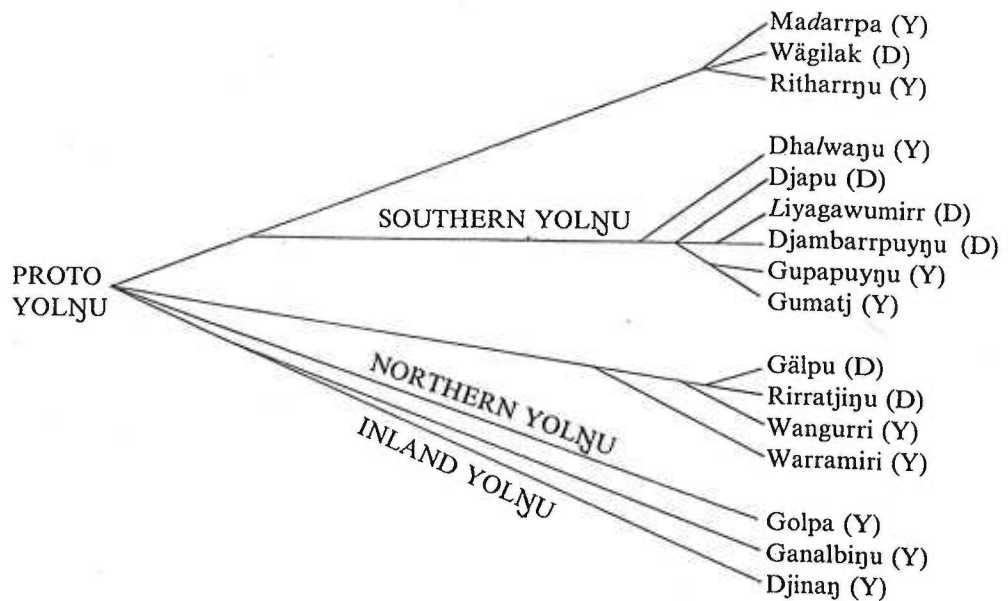


Figure 1. Genetic position of Djambarrpuyŋu within Yolŋu-Matha. Zorc has expanded his preliminary subgrouping (1978), based on 50, to 100 functors (pronouns, demonstratives, case-marking suffixes, numerals, temporals, preverbal particles, etc.), and posits the above tree. Data for Ganalbiŋu and Djinaŋ have been kindly supplied by Bruce Waters (SIL). This subgrouping does not differ substantially from that of Wood (1978: 59) derived from a lexicostatistical classification, but Wood's tree includes many more dialects and communilects

northeastern Arnhemland in communities such as Yurrwi (Milingimbi), Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island), Ramingimij, Gapuwiyak (Lake Evella), and Yirrkala, and is used in the bilingual education program on Elcho Island. It is closely related to speech varieties such as Liyagawumirr, Gupapuyŋu, and Gumatj, spoken in the same area and often in the same communities. Speakers are polylingual, knowing the above dialects and understanding (if not speaking) several more distantly related members of this Yolŋu subfamily, such as Gälpu, Rirratjŋu, Wangurri, and Ganalbiŋu (see Figure 1 for genetic relationships). Each of these speech varieties is represented by one or more clans belonging to one of two moieties (Dhuwa or Yirritja).<sup>2</sup> Marriage rules dictate a selection of spouse from the opposite moiety (and, further, from the proper totemic subsection):<sup>3</sup> parents will speak distinct dialects, if not languages. Children grow up learning their mother's language, but as young adults they are expected to make a transition to father's language. Because of this and other factors,<sup>4</sup> Yolŋu-Matha shares a large and common lexical pool, whereas grammatical and discourse features clearly distinguish and mark the various speech varieties.<sup>5</sup>

The phonology of Djambarrpuyŋu is given in Table 1. We follow the

Table 1. *Phonology of Djambarrpuyŋu*

	Bilabial	Lamino-dental	Apico-alveolar	Lamino-palatal	Apico-domal (retroflex)	Velar
Lenis (word-initial and medial)	b	dh	d	dj	<i>d</i>	g
Fortis (word-medial and final)	p	th	t	tj	<i>t</i>	k
Nasal	m	nh	n	ny	<i>n</i>	ŋ
Glide	w		rr	y	<i>r</i>	
Lateral			l		<i>l</i>	
Vowels (short)		u	i	a		
Vowels (long) (in first syllable only)		o	e	ä		

In addition, there is a glottal stop (ʔ), which is a feature of syllable prosody, and does not have segmental status (Wood 1978: 80ff; Morphy i.p.); in the orthography it is written where it appears phonetically, e.g., *bala* 'house' (contrast *bala* 'away, thither'), *djawaŋyŋu* 'to pierce, spear' (contrast *djawaŋyŋu* 'to be tired/bored'). Syllable types: CV, CVC, CVCC; e.g. *ga* 'and', *goŋ* 'hand', *gulk* 'cut'. A large number of dissimilar clusters occur across syllable boundaries; e.g. *gur.tha* 'fire', *gany.bu* 'fishnet', *gal.ŋa* 'skin, bark', *män.ŋu* 'take it!', *burk.thun* 'float'.

established orthography, designed by B. Lowe, which is now in use for Djambarrpuyŋu, Gupapuyŋu, and Gumatj literature in bilingual schools.

## 2. Word order

### 2.1. *Unmarked word order*<sup>6</sup>

In Djambarrpuyŋu (Dj) word order is not relevant for the indication of NP functions; however, it does have a discourse function (2.2). Case is indicated by a variety of suffixes (see Table 2), and the normal unemphasized word order for statements<sup>7</sup> is SVO, as in

- (1) *Dirramu -y nhä-ŋal garrtjambal -0.*  
 man      ERG see P<sub>1</sub>(2) kangaroo    UNM  
 'The man saw a/the kangaroo.'

A different construction can obtain according to the referential hierarchy (Silverstein 1976) of the object — totemic or nontotemic<sup>8</sup> (henceforth TO and NT respectively). Compare (1) above and

Table 2. Case-marking suffixes of Djambarrpuyyu. The cases are distributed over five classes of nominals: totemic (TO)<sup>8</sup> (including personal names, kin terms, and animals of some sacred significance), nontotemic (NT) (including inanimate objects, plants, and nontotemic animals), place names, pronouns, and deictics

	Totemic nouns	Nontotemic	Place	Pronouns	Deictics
ERGative	-y (-dhu, -thu)	-y	#	(ŋa)rra-θ <sup>10</sup>	dhiyaŋ
UNMarked	-θ	-θ	-θ	(ŋa)rra-θ <sup>10</sup>	dhuwal
ACCusative	-ny (-nha)	-θ	#	ŋarrany	dhuwal
GENitive	-w (-gu, -ku)	-w	#	(ŋa)rraku <sup>10</sup>	dhiyak
ABLative	-Galaŋaŋur	-ŋur	-ŋur	ŋarrakalaŋaŋur	dhipuŋur
LOCative	-wal (-gal, -kal)	-ŋur	-θ	ŋarrakal	dhiyakal
ALLative	-wal (-gal, -kal)	-lil	-lil	ŋarrakal	dhipal
PERgressive	-Galaŋakurr	-kurr	-kurr	ŋarrakalaŋakurr	balakurr
ASSociative	-Galaŋawuy	-wuy/-puy	-wuy	ŋarrakalaŋuwuy	dhiyakuwuy
PRODuctive	-wuŋ (-guŋ, -kuŋ)	-wuŋ	#	ŋarrakun	dhiyakun
EXIStential	-mirriŋu	-mirr	#	#	'dhuwalmirr'
PRIVative	-miriw	-miriw	#	'ŋarramiriw'	#

Certain terms may be reserved for syncretic surface cases; e.g. ABSolutive for the Nontotemic and Deictic UNM + ACC, or NOMinative for Pronoun ERG + UNM. Note also that the Totemic and Pronoun LOC + ALL, Nontotemic ABL + LOC, and Place UNM + LOC are syncretic respectively. In the case of -ŋur, this is the result of final vowel loss among certain functors in Dj; in Gumatj and Gupapuyyu the NT-ABL is -ŋuru, while the NT-LOC is -ŋura. The first allomorph listed is that found after stems ending in vowels or continuants, the second after nasals, and the third after fortis stops. Other conventions: -G is a morphophoneme that behaves as do the allomorphs for the TO-GEN. # = such nominals do not occur in that respective case. Quotes ( ' ) enclose forms limited to idiomatic expressions.

- (2) Dirramu -y nhä-ŋal garrtjambal -nha.  
 man ERG see P<sub>1</sub>(2) kangaroo ACC-TO

(2) has the same translation as (1), but here the informant considers *garrtjambal* 'kangaroo' as part of his totemic system.

When the object NP (in the broad sense of ACC, ALL, ABL, etc.) is a pronoun, the normal word order is SOV,<sup>9</sup> as in

- (3) Dirramu -y ŋarra- ny nhä -ŋal.  
 man ERG I ACC see P<sub>1</sub>(2)  
 'The man saw me.'
- (4) Dirramu -θ ŋarra- kal marrtji -n.  
 man UNM I ALL go P<sub>1</sub>(3b)  
 'The man came to me.'
- (5) Dirramu -θ (ŋa)rra- ku<sup>10</sup> waŋa -n.  
 man UNM I GEN talk P<sub>1</sub>(4)  
 'The man asked for me.'

Table 3. *Djambarrpuyŋu verb suffixes and provisional classification*

Group	Base	Future	Past <sub>1</sub>	Past <sub>2</sub>	Comment
1	-un	-urr	-urr	-una	most productive class
2	-ma	-ŋ(u)	-ŋal	-nha	CAUSative, FACTitive
3	-mirr	-mirr	-min	-minya	REFLExive, RECIProcal
3a	-i + rr	-θ	-n	-nya	INCHoative
3b	-i +	-θ	-n	-nya	7 stems
4	-a +	→ + i	-n	-nha	historically old stems
5	-an	-ul	-ar	-ana	approximately 50 stems
6	-θ	-θ	-θ	-θ	Makassarese/English loans

Note: the verbal system of Dj has yet to be described clearly and convincingly. The labels used here reflect one basic semantic attribute of each of the four verb forms. Other scholars (Lowe, Ross, Christie) use labels that identify the inflections on a strictly formal basis; see Table 4 for a comparison.

Table 4. *Comparison of verbal system labels*

Our label	Alternate label	Function(s)
Base (BAS)	Primary	simple present, past, or future (with preverbal particles, e.g. <i>ga</i> PROGressive, <i>dhu</i> FUTure) definite or tomorrow future; positive or negative imperative; past negative for nonspecific or to-day inflection
Future (FUT)	Secondary	
Past <sub>1</sub> (P <sub>1</sub> )	Tertiary	specific or recent past remote past; negative of specific past; used in derivations for CAUSatives, RECiprocal, AD-Jectivals, INFinitives
Past <sub>2</sub> (P <sub>2</sub> )	Quaternary	

Elements followed by + are considered to belong to the base or stem, e.g., *wāŋa + wāŋ + i*, *wāŋa-n*, *wāŋa-nha* (group 4) 'to speak' or *marrtji +*, *marrtji + θ*, *marrtji-n*, *marrtji-nya* (group 3b) 'to go, walk'.

Examples (3–5) also give a glimpse of the complex verb morphology exhibited by Dj. A provisional classification of these verbs and their various forms can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

## 2.2. Fronting

Fronting in Dj involves bringing any syntactic phrase forward from (or to the left of) its unmarked position in the sentence or clause; this may be accomplished by movement to initial position (FI), or merely by dislocation to the left of its normal position (FR). Fronting can obtain with any

syntactic phrase, except subjects (see 2.1 and 3), and often does so in conjunction with either *-nydja* or *-nha* (the allomorphs of which can be found in Table 5).

(a) *Fronting verbs.* In the following example, a man is out in the bush looking for food:

- (6) Galk -urr *ɲayi*, bala *ɖɪrramu -y* *nhä-ɲal- nha* *garrtjambal*  
 wait P<sub>1</sub>(1) he then man ERG see P<sub>1</sub>(2) SEQ kangaroo  
 - $\emptyset$ .  
 UNM  
 'He stood quiet, then the man saw a kangaroo.'

The informant glossed this sentence as, 'The first thing he did was wait, then the man saw a kangaroo.' The 'seeing' + *-nha* is a consequence of his waiting in hiding (section 4). Contrast also examples (24) and (25).

(b) *Fronting NPs.* In the UNM (Object) case for nontotemic nouns, compare

- (7) Narra - $\emptyset$  *nhä-ɲal* *bäpi - $\emptyset$* .  
 I UNM see P<sub>1</sub>(2) snake UNM  
 'I saw a snake.'
- (8) Nunhi *bili* *bäpi - $\emptyset$*  *ɲarra - $\emptyset$*  *nhä-ma* *yawungu*.  
 DEIC-2 same snake UNM I UNM see BAS(2) yesterday  
 'This same snake I saw yesterday.'  
 ---FI-----

In the ACC case for totemic nouns,

- (9) Watu -*ny* *ɲarra- $\emptyset$*  *bu -mar*.  
 dog ACC I UNM kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b)  
 --FI--  
 'The dog, I killed (it).'

The above is said by Speaker B in answer to a question from Speaker A:

- (10) Wanha *ɲunhi* *ɲarra -ku* *watu?*  
 where DEIC-2-UNM I GEN dog  
 'Where is that dog of mine?'

Again, the following example (12) answers the question (11):

- (11) *Nhaltj -an* *Yukuyuku -nha<sup>11</sup> -ny?*  
 do-what? BAS(5) YB ACC OPP  
 'What happened to Younger Brother?'

- (12) Yukuyuku -ny dharpu -ŋal Ŋapipi -y.  
 YB ACC spear P<sub>1</sub>(2) MB ERG  
 ---FI---
- ‘Younger Brother, Uncle speared (him).’

On a parallel with the last example, note the following:

- (13) Napipi -ny dharpu -ŋal Yukuyuku -y, muka?  
 MB ACC spear P<sub>1</sub>(2) YB ERG Qp  
 --FI--
- ‘Was it Uncle whom Younger Brother speared?’

answered by

- (14) Yaka, Yukuyuku -θ dharpu -nha -wuy<sup>12</sup> Ŋapipi -wuŋ.<sup>12</sup>  
 no YB UNM spear P<sub>2</sub>(2) ASS MB PROD  
 ‘No, it was Younger Brother who was speared by Uncle.’

Consider the following fronted phrases in a brief dialog elicited by the question, ‘What did you do on Saturday?’

- (15) Weŋi' -lil ŋarra -θ marrtji +θ.<sup>13</sup>  
 wallaby ALL I UNM go BAS(3b)  
 ---FI---
- ‘I went after wallaby.’
- (16) Bu -ma<sup>13</sup> nhe -θ, wo bāyŋu?  
 kill BAS(2b) you UNM or none  
 --FI--
- ‘Did you get any or not?’
- (17) Ŋi,<sup>14</sup> lurrkun' -θ ŋarra -θ bu -ma.<sup>13</sup>  
 yes three UNM I UNM kill BAS(2b)  
 --FR--
- ‘Yes, three I got.’

(c) *Fronting adverbs.* Note the answer to the following question:

- (18) Bala nhaltj -an -a nhe?  
 then do-what? BAS(5) SEQ you  
 ‘Then what did you do?’
- (19) Rāli ŋarra roŋiyi +rr bala wāŋa-lil napurru -ŋgal.  
 hither I return BAS(3a) to home ALL our (excl) ALL  
 -FI-
- ‘Here I returned to our home.’

The locative deictics also function adverbially:

- (20) Nunhi-y          ŋunhi-θ          d̄rramu -θ          nhina +θ  
 DEIC-2-PRES DEIC-2-UNM man          UNM sit          BAS(4)  
 --FI--

ga.

PROG

'There that man is sitting.'

There is a small class of stems that function as adverbs, even though they are inflected as verbs; they modify the verbs with which they agree and which they usually follow:

- (21a) Djawar + y -urr    ŋayi mirithi          -n.  
 tired          P<sub>1</sub>(1) he          INTENSIVE P<sub>1</sub>(3a)  
 'He was very tired.'

- (21b) Mirithi          -n          ŋayi djawar + y -urr.  
 INTENSIVE P<sub>1</sub>(3a) he          tired          P<sub>1</sub>(1)  
 ---FI---

'He was VERY tired.'

- (22a) Mirithi          -r          ŋarra dhuwal djannarr(th-irr).<sup>15</sup>  
 INTENSIVE BAS(3a) I          DEIC-1 hungry          BAS(3a)  
 ---FI---

'I am VERY hungry.'

(d) *Fronting adjectives.*

- (22b) Djannarr ŋarra dhuwal mirithi          -rr.  
 hungry I          DEIC-1 INTENSIVE BAS(3a)  
 --FI--

'I am very hungry.'

- (23) Manymak ŋayi d̄rramu.  
 good          he          man  
 --FI--

'He is a good man.'

(e) *Paragraph cohesion.* The repetition of this same strategy can be used to mark the boundaries of a paragraph, as in a story entitled

- (24) Linyu    bala    weti    -w'    marrtji + θ.  
 we-2-excl toward wallaby GEN go          BAS(3b)  
 ----FR----

'We two went wallaby hunting.'

Note that *bala wetiw'* is here dislocated from its normal place after the verb; this NP cannot be interpreted as forming a compound verb (with *marrtji*) precisely because of its GEN case ending.<sup>16</sup>



The first line of the story proper then sets the picture, but it bears no discourse strategy of any kind. However, each of the following two sentences of the first paragraph starts with the same verb which is fronted and followed by its subject:

- (25) Wangany -dhu walu -y, ŋarra ga rra -ku bäpa' -mirriŋu  
 one ERG time ERG I and I GEN father EXIS(TO)  
 linyu marrtji +θ wezi -w'. Marrtji +θ linyu  
 we-2 go BAS(3b) wallaby GEN go BAS(3b) we-2  
 -- FI --

ga

PROG

dhumuk -kurr, yurr linyu ŋunhi märr weyin' marrtji -n.  
 thicket PER but we-2 then quite long go P<sub>1</sub>(3b)  
 -- FR --

Manymak, marrtji +θ linyu ga, bala linyu nhina-n  
 'well' go BAS(3b) we-2 PROG then we-2 sit P<sub>1</sub>(4)  
 --- FR -- 'stopped'

gandarr -ŋur -nha yän djawar -djalk + th -un...  
 halfway LOC SEQ so-that tired throw BAS(1)  
 'relieve exhaustion'

'One time, my father and I, we-two went (hunting) for wallaby. We walked and walked through heavy bushland, and we went on for quite some time. Well, we kept on walking, and then we stopped about half-way so that we could rest ourselves...'

*Marrtji linyu* could be translated as 'walk we did' or 'we walked and walked'. The second sentence contains the dislocated adverbial *märr weyin'* in its second clause, which serves to emphasize 'quite a long time'. The third sentence begins with a discourse particle, *manymak*, often employed in narratives of this kind for audience rapport. The three instances of fronting have been used to stress the main ideas and cohesion of the paragraph.

From the above examples can be inducted the effect and discourse value of fronting in Dj: everywhere the fronted item adds extra information to a stock of presuppositions (Keenan 1971; Schiebe 1978), either immediate (from an earlier context) or general and cultural, which speaker and addressee share in common.

However, if we are constrained to give an overall and yet precise account of the details or rules that obtain in Dj discourse from the terminology extant in most literature on the topic, we run into difficulty. Among examples in our corpus, some represent *given* information (9, 12, 14, 25, 41), while others are *new* and also *contrastive* (13, 15, 17); others again are better accounted for as *contrastive only*, for instance, some of the fronted adverbs and deictics

(19, 20, 21b, 22a). This list is by no means exhaustive, but since all these items bear the same construction, it suffices to illustrate that the common denominator of fronting must be found elsewhere. It is clear that this device in Dj is a means of emphasizing the fronted element, in a very general and broad sense: through the very mechanics of displacing the FRonted element to the left of its expected position, FR gives it added importance, insists on it, and strengthens its impact on the flow of discourse. Whether the phrase is moved to sentence-initial position or merely dislocated to the left of its normal place is just a question of degree. Obviously, the strategy does not apply to subjects, since their rightful place is at the start of an unmarked sentence. It follows that a different strategy will have to be used for them. This will be discussed in the next section, along with further precisions as to the EMPHasis function of FRonting in Djambarrpuyŋu.

### 3. -nydja

The allomorphs of this discourse morpheme are given in Table 5. Note in the examples below that it is added to syntactically complete phrases, but can only occur ONCE per clause, except in instances of agreement between two phrasal elements (e.g. Adj + N, Deic + N, Pro + N [32]).

As to the meaning of *-nydja*, it is the following: for the very reason above of its occurring only once in a clause, a unit marked with *-nydja* is singled out, therefore highlighted/EMPHAsized, i.e. expressed with extra vigor,

Table 5. *Allomorphs of Djambarrpuyŋu discourse-sensitive suffixes*

Stem ending in	<i>-nydja</i> opposition	<i>-nha</i> sequence	Totemic accusative
Vowel	-ny	-n	-ny
Continuant [l, l̥, r, rr, w, y]	-nydja	-a	-nha
Voiceless C	-tja	-nha	-nha
Nasal	-dja	-nha	-nha

Note: Several syncretic forms occur with the TO-ACC; however, they are generally disambiguated in context. The *-nha* SEQUENCE morpheme is also syncretic with the PAST<sub>2</sub> form of certain verbs (see Table 3), e.g., *nhä-ma* 'see' → *nhä-nha* 'seen', *mo-ma* 'forget' → *mo-nha* 'forgotten', *bu-ma* 'hit, kill' → *bu-nha* 'hit/killed', *ŋä-ma* 'hear' → *ŋä-nha* 'heard', *dhärra* 'stand' → *dhärra-nha* 'stood', etc. Although possibly historically related, there is rarely any confusion between them because PAST<sub>2</sub> forms are always *-nha* (i.e. they do not lose the final vowel), while the discourse forms take the allomorphs *-n* or *-a* after the majority of verb inflections. Again, they are disambiguated in context on the basis of verb agreements (i.e. the discourse utilizes PAST<sub>2</sub> forms elsewhere, if not throughout) in contrast to logical or temporal SEQUENCE(s) to previous clauses.

just as it is when dislocated, whether FI or merely FR (see above, 2.2). In addition, a unit marked with *-nydja* is in OPPOsition to all other possible units of the same grammatical class that are not so marked. The two, +*-nydja* and —*-nydja*, form the OPPosing and complementary subsets of a set that contains them both and is that particular universe of discourse.

It follows logically that each subset in this set is SPECifically determined by its very OPPOsite. OPP and SPEC are thus NOT two separate characteristics: quite the contrary, they proceed from each other; the SPECificity of these subsets is generated by the fact that they are disjunct subsets of the same universe of discourse. This can be formalized as follows:

$$E^+ \cup E^- = U$$

$$E^+ \cap E^- = \emptyset$$

where U is the universe of discourse,  $E^+$  the subset marked with *-nydja*, and  $E^-$  the unmarked subset. The same can be thus exemplified: *X-nydja* means 'that particular X and no other' (and see below). To sum up, a unit marked with *-nydja* shows both syntagmatic contrast — because it is the only unit in the clause to be so singled out — and systematic OPPOsition because it is SPECifically OPPOsited to all other possible unmarked units in the same universe of discourse. Here, SPEC is inherent to OPP and vice-versa. In some contexts, SPEC will be more immediately sensible than OPP, elsewhere the other way around; this depends both on the meaning of the verb and on the context; but in any case one cannot go without the other, for the two are inherently one and the same feature. This obtains quite apart from any given–new dichotomy (Bolinger 1961: 87; Chafe 1976: 33ff), which is irrelevant here. Accordingly, units marked with *-nydja* will be understood as containing OPP/SPEC as the same single meaningful feature.

### 3.1. *Subjects + nydja*

A subject, whether  $S_t$  or  $S_i$ , marked with *-nydja* shows the same highlighting as a fronted nonsubject. Examples of these have been opposed to suffixless subjects wherever possible:

- (26) Dhuwal rrupiya ŋarra -ku. Dhuwal -nydja rrupiya d̄irramu -w.  
 DEIC-1 money I GEN DEIC-1 OPP money man GEN  
 'This money is mine. THIS is the man's money.'

There is an OPPOsition<sup>17</sup> here between the first and second subject. This is specifically part of the meaning of *-nydja*, whether with a subject or a nonsubject.

- (27) Njarra ga Lewukanj marrtji -n do' -lil,  
 I and [Name] go P<sub>1</sub>(3b) store ALL  
 bala naji -ny gärrı -na<sup>11</sup> -n.  
 then he OPP enter P<sub>1</sub>(3b) SEQ  
 Bala narra -ny ga -n galk -urr badak -nha yän.  
 then I OPP PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) wait P<sub>1</sub>(1) still SEQ just  
 'Lewukang and I went to the store, and he went in.  
 'And I [OPP] just stayed (outside) waiting.'
- (28) Djanda -ny wandı -n bala, ga bäyñu wiripu -nydja  
 goanna OPP run P<sub>1</sub>(3b) away, and not the others OPP.  
 'The goanna ran away, but not the other animals' (previously  
 mentioned in the story, i.e. these and no others).

Again,

- (29) Dirramu -wurr -nydja marrtji -n garriwa -lil  
 boy PLURAL OPP go P<sub>1</sub>(3b) turtle ALL  
 ga märrma dharpunjal.  
 and two spear P<sub>1</sub>  
 'A group of boys went for turtle and speared two.'

This last example brings home the fact that a unit marked with *-nydja* takes on an element of SPECificity: the story is told about a specific group of boys, that particular group involved, and no other (see gloss under [35] below).

- (30) Dirramu -y -nydja nhä -ñal garrtjambal -nha,<sup>19</sup>  
 boy ERG OPP see P<sub>1</sub>(2) kangaroo ACC  
 ga bäyñu -n miyalk -thu -nydja.  
 and not SEQ woman ERG OPP  
 '[It was] the boy [who] saw the kangaroo, and not the woman.'
- (31) Garrtjambal -nydja nhä -nha -ra- wuy dirramu -wun,  
 kangaroo OPP see P<sub>2</sub>(2) FM<sup>20</sup> ASS<sup>21</sup> boy PROD  
 ga bäyñu -n djanda -ny  
 and not SEQ goanna OPP  
 'The kangaroo was seen by the boy, and not the goanna.'
- (32) Narra ga -n nhina -n dhumuk -ñur,  
 I PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) sit P<sub>1</sub>(4) forest LOC  
 ga naji -ny wäña -ny badayala' -thi -na<sup>11</sup> -n.  
 and it OPP place OPP light INCH P<sub>1</sub>(3a) SEQ  
 'I was sitting in the forest, and *the place* became bright.'

Thus, subject + *-nydja* can highlight a new development in a situation that is already established, as in (26), or an entirely new one — within a well-known cultural setting — as in (29). Moreover, the inherent semantic features of *-nydja*, EMPH, and OPP/SPEC cannot ever be separated.

### 3.2. *Nonsubjects* + *nydja*

The following examples demonstrate that just as any phrase type in any grammatical function can be FRonted in Dj, so can any such construction bear *-nydja*.

(a) *NP* or *pronoun* + *-nydja*. Considering examples (9) and (10) above; the following is speaker B's answer if he knows it is A's dog that he has killed:

(33) Bili ŋarra watu -nha<sup>22</sup> -ny bu -mar -nha.  
done I dog ACC OPP kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b) SEQ  
'I have killed the very dog.'

(34) Nhä ŋunhi mukul -yu bath -ar, warrakan wo damba?  
what DEIC-2 MiL ERG cook P<sub>1</sub>(5) meat or damper  
Ni, warrakan. Warrakan -dja ŋunhi mukul -yu bath -ar.  
yes<sup>23</sup> meat meat OPP DEIC-2 MiL ERG cook P<sub>1</sub>(5)  
What did Mother-in-Law cook, meat or damper?  
Oh, meat. It was meat which Mother-in-law cooked.

In the next example, OPP comes out strongly with its inherent SPECificity:

(35) ...bala nhä -ŋal. -nha räga, bala walal nhä -ŋal -nha  
then see P<sub>1</sub>(2) SEQ berry then they see P<sub>1</sub>(2) SEQ  
matpuna — matpuna -ny.  
bream bream<sup>24</sup> OPP  
'...then [they] saw white berries, then they saw [a] bream — bream [SPEC + OPP].

After repeating the last word, the informant added, 'that one, not another; still the one'. No better gloss could be found of the meaning of SPEC as it is used in this paper.

The above examples have showed Obj NP + *-nydja*, but this suffix can occur with any NP case:

(36) Wangany -dhu walu -y limurr dhu Dawin -lil -nydja  
one ERG time ERG we (incl) FUT Darwin ALL OPP  
marrtji.  
go (3b)  
'One day, we shall go to Darwin.'

(b) *Verb* + *nydja*. Although only one *-nydja*-marked phrase can occur in a clause, two marked clauses can occur in the same sentence. In (37) and (38), the talk is about buffalo-dung in a cave. Speaker A asks, 'Did you see the dung?' Speaker B answers,

- (37) Bãyŋu ŋarra nhä -nha -nydja, yurr ŋarra nhum -ar.  
 none I see P<sub>2</sub>(2) OPP but I smell P<sub>1</sub>(5)  
 'I didn't see [it/any], but I smelled [it].'

A variant by the same informant has the OPP suffix after the second verb as well:

- (38) ...yurr ŋarra nhum -ar -nydja.  
 but I smell P<sub>1</sub>(5) OPP  
 '...but I sure smelled [it].'

(c) *Adverb* + *-nydja*.

- (39) Dhi-yal (-nydja) ŋali dhu galk -un.  
 DEIC-1-LOC OPP we-2-incl FUT wait BAS(1)  
 'HERE (AND NOWHERE ELSE) we shall wait...'

Gurryala had given us two versions of the sentence, with and without *-nydja*. When asked about the difference, he said that most of the time there was no *-nydja* after *dhiyal* 'here', but that 'it helps the story'. Both strategies, FRonting and *-nydja*, are then to some degree optional. Such is the case with all phrase types.

### 3.3. *Optional or stylistic nature of -nydja*

This stylistic usage was further brought home to us by an experiment conducted by Zorc. In a literacy class at the School of Australian Linguistics, he gave eight speakers of Dj the following text to translate: 'We killed a kangaroo. We cut it open and took out the guts. Then we cooked it; afterwards, we cut it up, and gave parts to our relatives.'

- (40a) Napurr dharpu -ŋal dhum'thum.  
 we-excl spear P<sub>1</sub>(2) kangaroo
- (40b) Bala napurr mit+th -urr -a, ga mărra -ŋal (-nha) biyapiya.  
 then we-excl cut P<sub>1</sub>(1) SEQ and take P<sub>1</sub>(2) SEQ guts
- (40c) Bala napurr bath -ar (-a).  
 then we-excl cook P<sub>1</sub>(5) SEQ
- (40d) Beŋuryi napurr mit-mit+th -urr, bala gurrup -ar (-a)  
 afterwards we-excl cut-cut P<sub>1</sub>(1) then give P<sub>1</sub>(5) SEQ

- (40e) wiripu mala napurru-ŋ gurrutu' -mirri -nha -n.  
 other-parts plural we-excl GEN kin EXIS ACC SEQ

Many lexical differences were employed, such as the use of synonyms, *wut + th-urr* 'hit' for *dharpu-ŋal* 'spear' (40a), *garrtjambal* for *dhum'thum* 'kangaroo' (40a), *gulun* 'intestines' for *biyapiya* 'guts' (40b), as were alternate grammatical possibilities; e.g. one person told the story in the simple present, using the BASE form of each verb, some used the GEN suffix, *gurrutu'-mirri-w-nha* 'to [our] kin' (40e) — the verb, *gurrupan* 'give', can have a beneficiary in either the GEN or the ACC. But such differences are not germane to discourse issues. If *-nydja* was used at all (three speakers did not employ the device and told the story basically as in [40a–40e]), it was first used on 'guts', *biyapiya-ny* (40b) [clearly not ACC since this is a NT noun] by four of the writers, or on 'cut', *mit + th-urr-nha-nydja* (40b) by one other instead. It was then used once on the conjunctive *beyuryi-ny*, or alternatively on *mit-mit + thu-rr-nydja* by another in (40d), and four times on the quantifier *wiripu-ny* (40e) [again, not ACC since this refers to the NT 'other parts of the meat']. Similarly, FRonting was used by two speakers, *dhum'thum napurr dharpu-ŋal* (40a); SEquence (see section 4 below) was omitted by one writer (40b, 40c, 40d), but discussion with the group brought this out to be an error of omission.

To sum up, both discourse strategies, FRonting and *-nydja*, are optional; those semantic features that obtain for subjects + *-nydja* have the same value (EMPH and OPP/SPEC) for nonsubjects + *-nydja*. As to FR alone, it can also occur with all kinds of grammatical units and gives the FRonted item added EMPHasis and vigor of expression. What then, if any, is the difference between FRonted and *-nydja*-marked units? Can we do better than one of our informants, and find out how they 'help the story'?

### 3.4. Fronting vs. *-nydja* marked units

Considering examples of FRonting (2 above), all FRonted units are EMPHAsized, but, interestingly, also left unspecified — apart from kin terms or personal names, which are specific in themselves, and apart also from explicitly determined items as in (8). Merely FRonted (or FI) NPs can be generic or nonspecific. From these and other data in our corpus, we infer that in Dj FRonting alone, whether partly or all the way to FI, is indifferent to SPECificity: it will EMPHAsize any unit, SPEC or not, but will do so without adding an element of SPEC to it. It follows that it is chosen as a means of EMPHAsizing generic or unspecified phrases of all types. This use clearly emerges from the following oppositive pairs of

examples: (9) above with a merely fronted Obj is said à propos of an unknown dog. It can be contrasted with

- (41) Bili ɲarra watu -nha -ny bu -mar -nha.  
 done I dog ACC OPP kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b) SEQ  
 'I have killed the very dog.'

Again,

- (42) Rrupiya, rrupiya, ɲarra -ny dhu nhu -ɲu gurrup -an  
 money money I OPP FUT you GEN give BAS(5)  
 yalala -n.  
 SEQ  
 'Money, money, I will give you [some] later on.'

In the latter sentence, 'money' is FRonted but unspecified. It can be opposed to (26) above, where it is SPECified by *-nydja on dhuwal* 'this', with which it is in agreement, or more explicitly to

- (43) Wanha rrupiya -ny ɲunhi ɲarra mo -mar?  
 where money OPP DEIC-2 I forget P<sub>1</sub>(2b)  
 'Where is the money that I left behind?'

These (and other) data confirm that the difference between FRonting (EMPH) and *-nydja* (EMPH and OPP/SPEC) lies in the explicit OPP/SPEC value of *-nydja*: *nydja* always denotes a SPEC unit, whereas mere FRonting is neutral as to SPEC.

One universal feature of subjects (Keenan 1971) is their specificity; here also, the formal strategy which combines fronting and lack of specificity is not accessible as a strategy for subjects — since they are naturally fronted and specific, the only strategy available to them (marking with *-nydja*) keeps their intrinsic specificity intact; it causes them to be EMPHAsized, and enhances their OPPosition value. Moreover, if Focus is understood as applying to a part of the Rheme (Bossong 1980; Tchekhoff n.d.), the Focus vs. non-Focus pair does not obtain either. Discourse pairs that do obtain in Dj are EMPH vs. non-EMPH and OPP/SPEC vs. neutral.

It is S+ *-nydja*, and no one else, who Verbs.

Thus, of the traditional discourse dichotomies, topic vs. comment, given vs. new (Chafe 1976: 28), theme vs. rheme (Bossong 1980), definite vs. indefinite, none obtain in Dj.



4. *-nha*

The suffix *-nha*, or its allomorphs (see Table 5), can be used on any syntactically complete phrase, and can co-occur with FRonting (but not with *-nydja* on the same morpheme; see section 5). Examples already given (6, 18, 25, 27, 32, 33, 35, 40b–40e, 41, 42) illustrate that *-nha* marks a development within a series of developments which belong to the larger unit of discourse. It marks SEquence, so that sentences cannot be interpreted as unconnected. Consequently, it never appears in the introductory sentence of such a series. It shares a special affinity with conjunctions that express a sequence, e.g. *ga* ‘and’ (32), *bili* ‘after’ (33, 41), *beŋuryi* ‘afterwards’ (40d), *bala* ‘then’ (6, 18, 25, 27, 35, 40b, 40c). Note that its place is after suffixed forms (case-marks on nouns or tense-marks on verbs). Unlike FRonting and the idiosyncratic uses of *-nydja*, *-nha* is (considered by careful Yolŋu story editors to be) compulsory as an indicator of logical or chronological events (see 3.3 concerning its omission in [40] by one student, and 5 below, concerning its use as a marker in the switch-reference system, e.g. [56–57]).

If someone notes that a person has been waiting a long time for an event to take place, such as the beginning of a ceremony, he might query,

- (44) *Badak nhe ga galk -un?*  
 still you PROG wait BAS(1)  
 ‘Are you still waiting?’

If the same person comes back and sees the other still waiting, he might then say,

- (45) *Badak -nha nhe ga galk -un?*  
 still SEQ you PROG wait BAS(1)  
 ‘Are you STILL waiting?’

Again, besides the normal value of SEQ, this has the additional discourse value of EMPHasis, because it is also FRonted (see 2 above); compare this with example (27), where the sequential value alone obtains.

This device is often employed on the last morpheme of stories, regardless of the part of speech, as in ‘How the wallaby got its tail’, where the final word functions as an Adj:

- (46) ...*ga dhiyaŋbala limurr ga nhä -ma weti<sup>25</sup> -ny'*  
 and nowadays we-incl PROG see BAS(2) wallaby ACC  
*wambal -mirr -a*  
 tail EXIS SEQ  
 ‘...and nowadays we see the wallaby with a tail.’

Consider the following conversational exchanges, for they give the key to the use and identity of the SEQ morpheme. If speakers A and B are in adjoining rooms, and A hears a sudden noise from B's room, A asks,

- (47) Nhal + tj -arr nhe?  
do-what P<sub>1</sub>(5) you  
'What did you do?'

B's answer might then be,

- (48) Njarra bu -mar boduk.  
I kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b) cockroach  
'I killed a cockroach.'

However, if A is awakened in the middle of the night and realizes that B is awake too, he might first ask something to the effect of 'Why are you up?', and B might answer, 'There were lots of cockroaches in the house' (*Dharrwa boduk dhiyal bala'nur*). The exchange may then go on with

- (49) Nhal + tj -an -a nhe?  
do-what BAS(5) SEQ you  
'Then what did you do?'

The answer to this question is likely to be

- (50) Njarra bu -mar -nha boduk.  
I kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b) SEQ cockroach  
'I killed [SEQ] a cockroach.'

If, on the other hand, A can guess from the noise that B has hit something, A might ask,

- (51) Nhä nhe bu -mar?  
what you kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b)  
'What did you kill/hit?'

In that case, the answer would be

- (52) Njarra bu -mar boduk -nha.  
I kill P<sub>1</sub>(2b) cockroach SEQ  
'I killed a cockroach [SEQ].'

In the three pairs of examples, (47–48) are unmarked in any way; they set the scene, so to speak. Both (49–50) take it from there, with special insistence on the action, hence the marked verb. But in (51–52), the action itself is given: B's answer carries the story a step further again and tells A what he (B) has hit — hence, the SEQ morpheme on the object of the verbal operation.

The exact value of the SEQ suffix in simple sentences is to take the story one step further within an immediate context that is explicit to both speaker and hearer. Within these bounds, the *-nha*-marked morpheme can be either new (6, 27, 32, 35, 40, 42, 50, 52) or renewed inside a chain of developments (25, 33, 41, 45, 46), be they logical or chronological. It follows that, unlike FRonting or *-nydja*, *-nha* is not stylistic or optional, but is compulsory IF the sentence is to be construed as forming an integral part of and relationship to the discourse at hand.

### 5. *-nha* and *-nydja* as subject markers

There is no grammatical gender in Dj. This makes the interplay of subject markers even more essential. Both *-nha* and *-nydja* enter into the switch-reference (Austin 1981: 309–334) system of Dj, and in this role, both are compulsory in complex sentences. They mark a different subject (DS) in the subordinate clause from that of the main clause. As such, both suffixes are opposed to  $-\emptyset$ , which is the same-subject (SS) marker. Although the two have been observed to occur in the same clause (55 below), they cannot appear attached to the same morpheme — our informants rejected all attempts on our part to do this.<sup>26</sup> Each brings with it its special intrinsic meaning, SEQ for *-nha* and OPP for *-nydja*.

The suffix *-nha* typically marks DS in consequence or purpose subordinate clauses that are implicated by the main clause of a complex sentence (Austin 1981: 313). These implicated clauses have a typically loose connection with the main clause; they are adjoined rather than grammatically subordinate; that is, nothing except the SEQ suffix indicates their subordination to the main clause. The relationship between subjects can be one of inclusion as in (53), where S of the subordinate clause is included in S of the main clause:

- (53) Wawu napurr marrtji + $\emptyset$  wänŋa -m retja -kurr  
 unaware we-excl go BAS(3b) walk BAS(2) jungle PER  
 larru -m garrtjambal -gu, bala d̄irramu -y -nha  
 seek BAS(2) kangaroo GEN then man ERG SEQ  
 nhä -ŋal garrtjambal - $\emptyset$ .  
 see P<sub>1</sub>(2) kangaroo UNM  
 'Quite unawares, we were walking through the bush looking for kangaroo, when a man [SEQ] saw a kangaroo.'

Here, the placing of the SEQ morpheme after 'man' indicates quite clearly that he was one of the party; the suffix also indicates that the second clause is a consequence of the first. Had the man been a stranger, the act

of seeing would have had no connection with the party's walk through the bush, and there could have been no SEQ morpheme in the sentence.

It has not yet been possible to determine whether this inclusion relationship is symmetrical, as it may be in a number of languages (Austin 1981: 316), or whether it operates only one way, as in Diyari, 'i.e., from the main to the subordinate clause. If the main-clause subject includes the referent(s) of the subordinate-clause subject, then IMPL(DS) marking MUST be used' (Austin 1981: 316). This aspect of switch-reference in Dj needs further study.

The following examples illustrate a contrast obtaining in the speech of our informants, where *-nydja* marks both OPP and DS:

- (54) John -dhu bum -ar Bill -nha, bala *ɲayi wandi* -na -n.  
 John ERG hit P<sub>1</sub>(5) Bill ACC then he ran P<sub>1</sub>(3a) SEQ  
 'John hit Bill, then he [John] ran away.'
- (55) John -dhu bum -ar Bill -nha, bala *ɲayi -ny wandi* -na  
 John ERG hit P<sub>1</sub>(5) Bill ACC then he OPP ran P<sub>1</sub>(3a)  
 -n.  
 SEQ  
 'John hit Bill, then he [Bill] ran away.'

These examples incidentally confirm that Dj is a language with accusative syntax, since S<sub>i</sub> and S<sub>j</sub> in (54) are treated alike. Were it syntactically ergative, it would treat O and S<sub>i</sub> alike, and the OPP suffix would be inverted: it would be needed in (54) and not in (55) in order to achieve the same result (see Comrie 1973; Dixon 1979; Tchekhoff i.p.).

The next pair of examples illustrates the same point: *-nydja* is employed in its role of DS marker and is syntactically compulsory, while *-nha* is SEQ marker in a chain of events:

- (56) Nunha -θ *d̄irramu -ny wut+th -urr miyalk -thu,*  
 DEIC-3-UNMman ACChit P<sub>1</sub>(1) woman ERG  
 ---- FI-----  
 bala *ɲayi OPP marrtji -n(a-n)<sup>27</sup> nho -kal -nha.*  
 then he OPP go P<sub>1</sub>(3b) SEQ you ALL SEQ  
 'The woman hit that man, and he [DS] came to you.'

In the next example, the subordinate clause has the same subject as the main clause:

- (57) ...bala *ɲayi-θ marrtji -n(a-n)<sup>27</sup> nho -kal -nha.*  
 then she go P<sub>1</sub>(3b) SEQ you ALL SEQ  
 [as for 56]<sup>6</sup>...and she [SS] came to you.'

The OPP and SEQ suffixes can replace each other as DS markers, but when they do, the meaning of the whole sentence changes, for each

morpheme brings with it its extra meaning. The following scene has three possible candidates for DS in an adjoined purpose clause (Father, Mother, and possibly John). The first sentence sets the scene and bears the simple strategy of fronting to EMPHAsize the throwing of stones (58a):

- (58a) Djamarrkuŋi' ga -n bu' + y -urr, yurr gunda -y  
 children PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) play P<sub>1</sub>(1) but stone ERG  
 -- FR --
- (58b) walal ga -n wirriw' -wirriwu + y -un -mi -n,  
 they PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) throw throw BAS RECIP P<sub>1</sub>(3)
- (58c) ga John -dhu -ny walala -ny ga -n nhä -ŋal.  
 and John ERG OPP they ACC PROG P<sub>1</sub> see P<sub>1</sub>(2)  
 'The children were playing, but they were throwing stones at each other, and John was watching them.'
- (58d) Yurr yaka ŋayi ga -n djäl -thi -na -n  
 but not he PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) like INCH P<sub>1</sub>(3a) SEQ  
 gul -mara -nha -ra -w walala -ŋ.  
 stop CAUS P<sub>1</sub>(2) FM<sup>14</sup> GEN they GEN  
 'But he didn't like to make them stop.'
- (58e) Bala bäpa' -mirri + ŋu -y walala -ŋgal  
 so father EXIS -REL ERG they ALL  
 djamarrkuŋi' -wal -nydja marrtji + 0,  
 children ALL OPP go BAS(3b)
- (58f) bala garr' + y -un ŋändi' -mirri + ŋu -ny walala -ŋ,  
 then get BAS(1) mother EXIS -REL ACC they GEN  
 märr...  
 so that  
 'So then the father went to those children,  
 and then got their mother so that...'
- (58g) ...ŋayi (bäpa) dhu walala -ny dhä-gir' + y -un.  
 he father FUT they ACC punish BAS(1)  
 'he (father) would punish them.'
- (58h) ...ŋayi -ny dhu walala -ny dhä-gir' + y -un.  
 she OPP FUT they ACC punish BAS(1)  
 'she (mother) would punish them.'
- (58i) ...ŋayi-n dhu walala-ny dhä-gir' + y -un.  
 'she (mother) would [then SEQ] punish them.'

In (58g), the informant optionally added *bäpa* 'father' because *ŋayi* alone might not be clear. However, in (58h), the OPP morpheme is used to mark

DS, and hence clearly refers to 'mother'; while in (58i), the SEQ morpheme is used to mark DS, still referring to 'mother'. Our informants favored *-nha* as the clearest option (between [58h] and [58i]) — it expresses a direct consequence of the main clause (58e–58f). A fourth, logically improbable, alternative was elicited; this combination's very absurdity confirms our view of *-nydja* and *-nha* respectively. When one of our informants was asked whether any of the above (58g–58i) subjects could refer to John, he answered, 'John *baman*', *linygu* 'John's finished, out of the picture.' But when the informant was pressed — exceptionally, faulty method can yield fortunate results — he came up with

(58j) ..*ŋayi* -ny John -dhu -ny dhu walala -ny dhä-gir' + y  
 he OPP John ERG OPP FUT they ACC punish  
 -un.

BAS(1)

'he, John, would punish them.'

Although, he remarked that this was *mayali'miriw* 'senseless' — why would father and mother be there, if John was going to be the one to punish? (58j) is remarkable for its presence of *-nydja* as an OPP-DS marker AND for the absence of *-nha*, since in the context presented, the clause is not a consequence (logical or otherwise) of any of the previous material.

As has been noted above, when the adjoined clause has the same subject (SS) as the main clause, its expression is zero; then the OPP or SEQ markers take up their usual discourse functions:

(59) Djamarrkuli' marrtji +  $\emptyset$  gunda djalk + th -un wäŋa  
 children go-on BAS(3b) stone throw BAS(1) house  
 lil,

ALL

bala *ŋändi'* -mirri + *ŋu* roŋi + y -irr bala walala -ny  
 then mother EXIS-REL return BAS(3a) and they ACC  
*ŋarr* + tj -un -a.

growl BAS(1) SEQ

'The children went on throwing stones at the house,  
 so when mother [SS] returned, [she SEQ] scolded them.'

(60) Yothu -y ga -n daw'taw -mara -ŋal buthu/u,  
 child ERG PROG P<sub>1</sub>(4) break CAUS P<sub>1</sub>(2) bottle

gä *ŋändi'* -mirri + *ŋu* buna +  $\emptyset$ ,  
 and mother EXIS-REL arrive BAS(4)

bala (*ŋayi*) dhä-gir' + y -un yothu -nha -n.  
 then she punish BAS(1) child ACC SEQ

'The child was breaking the bottles, and mother arrived; then [SEQ]  
 she [SS] punished the child.'

In (59) the SEQ suffix stresses Mother's action and in (60) the action's recipient.

In the same way, the subject of the adjoined subordinate clause may be a DS, but if the pragmatics of the adjoined consequence or purpose clause permit, DS is not marked, and the suffix again takes on its usual discourse value. Here are two examples of consequence with no intent:

- (61) Yothu marrtji +θ räli bala -irr -a mutika  
 child go BAS(3b) here then hit BAS(3a) SEQ car  
 -y.

ERG

'The child came here and was hit by a car.'

- (62) Weŋi' wap+th -un worrk -lil, bala nhära +θ borum  
 wallaby hop BAS(1) fire ALL then burn(4) cook  
 -dh+irr -a.

INCH(3a) SEQ

'The wallaby hopped into the fire and got cooked.'

It follows from these examples that the opposition between discourse and syntactic values for the two suffixes must not be hardened too much: both can slip from one function to the other whenever context, linguistic or extralinguistic, permits.

## 6. Conclusion

Among generally familiar discourse values, two obtain in Dj and are immediately recognizable as such: *-nydja*, OPP/SPEC, and EMPH (FRonting alone). However, their distribution is idiosyncratic. As for the third discourse feature (*-nha*), it establishes an immediate hierarchy in the chain of events referred to.

The opposition between OPP/SPEC (*-nydja*) and FRonting (neutral for SPECificity) is strongly systematized in Dj since the speaker can choose to attach either to the syntactic unit he wants to highlight: both strategies are regularly available. One must bear in mind that there is no syntactically unmarked means of opposing SPECific to neutral for SPECificity in Dj. When the difference needs to be expressed, FRonting is one way to do so, next to other morphematic means. This exemplifies one instance of the dialectics between syntax and discourse in Dj: another is the syntactic function of *-nydja* and *-nha* as 'different subject' markers in the switch-reference system of Dj; both straddle syntax and discourse.

As for *-nha*, its functions are more unusual than those of *-nydja* or FR, since it knits several sentences into a coherent unity as a single discourse.

Table 6. Summary of Djambarrpuyu discourse functions

Fronting	-nydja	-nha
EMPHasis Neutral for SPECificity	OPP/SPEC EMPHasis	SEQuence

Note that the two discourse suffixes follow the case or tense suffixes (if any), thus *Dawin-lil-nydja* (36), *watu-nha-ny* (33), *dirramu-y-nydja* (30), *wambal-mirr-a* (46), *bu-mar-nha* (50), etc. In contrast to fronting, they appear to be 'backed'.

The *-nha*-marked unit follows from something that went on immediately and expressly before, and is unequivocally connected to it. But these traits are only part of a larger determining factor: the relationship of SEQUENCE or conSEQUENCE of the *-nha*-marked unit in a causal-consequential chain of development. Thus, the traditional given-new dichotomy can hardly be said to be relevant here. Hence, the discourse values that do obtain in Dj ultimately boil down to neutral in terms of SPECificity (FRonting) vs. OPP/SPEC (*-nydja*) on the one side, and to OPP/SPEC (*-nydja*) vs. SEQ (*-nha*) on the other. This double concatenation of opposites is illustrated in Table 6. The difference between OPP and EMPHasis (as interpreted herein) is SPECificity for OPP, whereas a merely EMPHAsized unit can remain non-SPECific.

Another point that we have noted with regard to Dj: only with the SEQ suffix is it necessary to establish the context of a sentence, and then this context is immediate and is part of the SEQUENCE. Elsewhere, no special precautions are needed to bring in new information: whether new or given is irrelevant; no preliminary framework is necessary, so that all information will be imparted on the same footing. From our analysis of the three discourse strategies, it does not look as if there were special means of foregrounding or backgrounding (Hopper and Thompson 1980) parts of discourse as opposed to other parts. This is contrary to what obtains in many other languages. The absence of such a discourse hierarchy would appear to be explained by the fact that in a very close and relatively small hunting and gathering community, activities are almost always presupposed by speaker and listener. Hence, there is no necessity to establish this general context. New information can be given directly, and with no preparation, because it is expected or anticipated in any event.

Finally, on the question of switch-reference, Dj remains outside — both geographically and through its surface mechanisms — of Austin's conclusions on the subject (1981: 329ff). In particular, the DS marker in Dj is not 'in the form of a suffix attached to the subordinate-clause verb' (1981:



329). Nor does Dj have switch-reference only in relative clauses: those we have reported on here are all of the implicated adjoined type. The subject-marking system in Dj appears to be quite different from that which Austin describes, for no correlation has been noted 'between case inflections and formal switch-reference markers' (1981: 331). In fact, Dj switch-reference as described herein appears to be unique within the Yolŋu-Matha community, where Southern Yolŋu speech varieties have a related and cognate *-nydja* OPP marker, and Northern Yolŋu have a parallel *-m(a)* OPP marker; hence, Austin's exclusion of Yolŋu (1981: note 31). It may have developed as a discourse-relevant semantic extension of the OPP marker, 'but as for [X] just referred to', and come to set Dj aside from other communilects of the Yolŋu bloc.

These differences raise new problems. Further study is needed to see if and how this classification should be extended and/or qualified. Dj has given us a glimpse of yet another type of subject marking in Northern Australia, the existence of which would appear to affect Austin's areal, genetic, and typological conclusions in his seminal paper on switch-reference systems and their implications.

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## **Appendix**

Abbreviations used in this article:

ABL	ablative	DEIC	deictic
ABS	absolutive	DS	different subject
ACC	accusative	Dj	Djambarrpuyngu
ADJ	adjectival	ERG	ergative
ALL	allative	EXCL	exclusive
ASS	associative	EXIS	existential
BAS	base	FACT	factitive
CAUS	causative	FI	fronting to initial position

FOC	focus	P <sub>2</sub>	past <sub>2</sub>
FM	formative morph	PER	pergressive
FR	fronting to the left of its normal unmarked <sup>6</sup> position	PROD	productive
FUT	future	PROG	progressive
GEN	genitive	PRON	pronoun
INCH	inchoative	Qp	question phrase
INF	infinitive	RECI	reciprocal
LOC	locative	REFL	reflexive
MB	mother's brother	S	subject
MiL	mother-in-law	SEQ	sequence
N	noun	S <sub>i</sub>	subject of an intransitive verb
NOM	nominative	SPEC	specific
NP	noun phrase	SS	same subject
NT	nontotemic	S <sub>t</sub>	subject of a transitive verb
O	opposition	TO	totemic
P <sub>1</sub>	past <sub>1</sub>	UNM	unmarked
		YB	younger brother

### Notes

1. We acknowledge with deep gratitude the assistance of our informants: Fay Mätjarra Garrawurra, Peter Djumbu' Galbayunga, Ronnie Gurryala, Michael Lewukanj Buku-latjpi, Keith Lapuluj Dhamarrandji and Djiliwuy Brian Wanambi. Comments from Kevin Ford and Paul Black have also been most helpful in revising some of the statements in this paper. However, we assume full responsibility for errors of fact or interpretation.
2. These dual subdivisions are partially analogous to the Chinese *yin* and *yang*. Dhuwa is symbolized by the black cockatoo (*yatili*), the sun (*walu*), and archaic or traditional elements of the universe, while Yirritja is symbolized by the white cockatoo (*yerrk*), the moon (*yalindi*), and new or introduced (Makassarese and/or European) elements of the universe. Every being or spirit, all flora and fauna, places, and natural features are assigned in a complex and culture-bound fashion to one of the two moieties — these divisions are in no way as simplistic as 'light' and 'dark', 'old' or 'new'.
3. These subsections (called 'skins' in Aboriginal English) are

Dhuwa:		Yirritja:	
Male	Female	Male	Female
Burralanj'	Galikali/Galiyan	Bu/any'	Bu/anydjan
Wämut	Wamuttjan	Gudjuk/Gayak	Gutjan
Balanj'	Bilinydjan	Ńarritj	Ńarritjan
Gamarranj'	Gamanydjan	Bañadi'	Bañaditjan

Marriage must be to a person of the opposite moiety: first choice — opposite sex in the same horizontal line, or else second choice — opposite sex two lines lower. One's mother is a female of the opposite moiety one line higher. Brother and Sister are side by

side in the same moiety. Father in a first-choice 'regular' marriage is one line up, same moiety; in a second-choice marriage, one line down, same moiety.

4. The death taboo forbids the use of lexical items that sound like or rhyme with names of the recently deceased. Hence, while certain words may belong to or be associated with a particular dialect group, they can be used as synonyms to replace tabooed forms, e.g. *gapu* = *ŋarkula* = *wakutu* 'water', *gunda* = *bumbarru* = *wataba* = *bäthu* 'stone' (see Walker and Zorc 1981: 116 for the introduction of a large number of Makassarese loans as viable synonyms for Yolŋu-Matha words, such as *bäthu* 'stone' above).
5. The Yolŋu themselves classify their languages on the basis of the first-person unmarked deictics: *dhuwal* (Djambarrpuyŋu, *Liyagawumirr*, *Djapu*, etc.), *dhuwala* (Gumatj, Gupapuyŋu, etc.), *dhay'yi* (Dhalwaŋu), *dhiyakuy* (Ritharrŋu, Wägilak, Madarrpa), *dhaŋu* (Rirratjiŋu, Gälpu, Wangurri), *djaŋu* (Warramiri), *nhaŋu* (Golpa), *djinaj* (Djinang), *djininy* (Ganalbiŋu). Schebeck (n.d.) has evaluated the accuracy of this intuitive classification. Djambarrpuyŋu is characterized by dropping of final vowels among some function words (along with other Dhuwal dialects), and the use of *-nydja* as a switch-reference marker (as described in section 5 of this paper) — this has not been found in closely related dialects such as Gumatj or Gupapuyŋu, nor in the more distantly related Northern Yolŋu speech varieties.
6. Obviously all sentences are uttered in some discourse context or other. By 'unmarked' we refer to sentences that do not call on any special discourse features. Our data are replete with SVO (and SO-ProV) utterances which clearly represent the standard (and in this sense, discourse-neutral) Dj word order.
7. We do not treat interrogative elements herein, but questions in Dj have a reverse unmarked order from statements (i.e. question particles come first), as do answers to questions (which are also often highly abbreviated and/or elliptic):
 

Q Nhä — mirr nhe?  
   what EXIS you  
   'How are you?'  
   A Manymak (ŋarra)  
   good I  
   '(I'm) fine.'

 A switch in such order effects a change in EMPH, viz: '*Nhe, nhämirr?*' 'As for you, how are (you)?' or '*narra manymak*' 'As for me, (I'm) fine, [but X isn't].' Examples of questions in this paper (10, 11, 34, 43, 47, 49, 51) all have such fronted question particles.
8. The terms totemic and nontotemic (see Table 2 for syntactic differences) were suggested by Yolŋu students at the School of Australian Linguistics. Heath (1976: 174) distinguishes 'human and "higher" animate nouns' [= TO] and 'inanimate and "lower" animate nouns' [= NT]. The terms 'proper' and 'common' would also be appropriate, if carefully defined in Yolŋu terms.
9. The partial fronting of object pronouns is clearly bound up with some elements of syntax and discourse and requires further study, particularly on intonation. See the discussion at the end of section 2 and in section 6 on the discourse value of fronting in Dj.
10. Short forms of several pronouns are also a mark of Djambarrpuyŋu, e.g. *rra* for *ŋarra* 'I', *rraku* for *ŋarraku* 'mine', *limurr* for *ŋilimurr* 'we (all-inclusive)', *napurr* for *ŋanapurr* 'we (all-exclusive)', etc.
11. The loss of final vowels in function words was mentioned in Table 2 and note 5. However, it is clear that a final vowel is often retained morphophonemically, as in this example, and in the following:

Njayi marrtji -n.	versus	Njayi marrtji -na -n.
he go P <sub>1</sub> (3b)		he go P <sub>1</sub> (3b) SEQ
'He went.'		'Then he went.'
Nhä -ŋu yothu -ny.		Nhä -ŋu yothu -nha -ny.
see FUT(2) child ACC		see FUT(2) child ACC OPP
'Look at the child!'		'Look at <i>the</i> /this child!'

12. On the surface this construction would appear to be an antipassive. However, it consists of a verb stem + PAST<sub>2</sub> allomorph + ASSociative case suffix, and functions syntactically as an ADJectival. This is the normal way of expressing an agentless sentence (or with an optional agent in the PRODuctive case, as here). A translation closer to the original would be, 'No, Younger Brother was the speared-one by Uncle.' That such constructions are adjectival (and not quasi-passive) can be seen in the example:
- Narra nhä -ŋal miyalk -nha marrtji -nya -wuy.  
I see P<sub>1</sub>(2) woman ACC go P<sub>2</sub>(3b) ASS  
'I saw a woman walking.'
13. Note the use of the BASE form to denote simple past in these examples.
14. ⟨ŋi⟩ is the orthographic representation of what is phonetically [ẽ:], a long nasalized mid front vowel. Neither nasalized vowels nor vowel-initial syllables have been observed to occur elsewhere in Djambarrpuyŋu.
15. The verbal ending is optional in this sentence; this construction can function verbally or adjectivally (contrast 22a and 22b).
16. Compound verbs do follow a NV order, but the N is always in the UNM case, as in *walu-ŋupan* 'do all day' (literally 'chase the sun') or *goŋ-dhawar'yun* 'to complete, finish (making)' — note that no ERG/instrumental ending is used on *goŋ* 'hand'. Note the compound verb, *djawar-djalkthun* 'relieve exhaustion' (literally 'throw off tiredness') in example 25.
17. The term 'contrastive' is replaced by oppositive herein. Indeed, it is preferable to keep 'contrast' for syntagmatic differences and 'opposition' for paradigmatic ones. In (26) *dhuwal* is in CONTRAST with *rrupiya*, in OPPOSITION with a unit that can replace it but is not present in the string.
18. As was rightly pointed out to us, a unit can be both SPECific and indefinite, as in example (29). SPECificity is thus quite independent of grammatical determinacy.
19. An alternate interpretation of this sentence (in an appropriate context) would take *-nha* to be the SEQUENCE morpheme (section 4), meaning, 'And then it was the boy who saw the kangaroo.' Here, the speaker has taken *garrtjambal* 'kangaroo' as a totemic noun (see example [2] and Table 2).
20. The formative (FM) *-ra-* is an empty morph required by the grammar of some verbs in making nominal or adjectival constructions.
21. See note 12 for an explanation of a similar adjectival construction. A literal translation would be, 'The kangaroo was visible to the boy.' Such constructions cannot be subordinated and are reminiscent of similar ones in Hindi (Tchekhoff 1978b).
22. *Watu* 'dog' is here considered totemic or higher animate (see examples [2] and [30] and Table 2). Note that it is FRonted to precede the verb.
23. See note 14 for the phonetics of *ŋi*. Its appearance here is culturally motivated in that Yolŋu answer either/or questions with *ŋi*, since Speaker A has provided a correct answer within the terms of his question. In other contexts, *ŋi* is an indicator of Yolŋu politeness, e.g. 'Would you like beef or lamb for dinner?' 'ŋi' leaves the choice in the

- hands of the host, although this kind of answer tends to frustrate non-Yolŋu, who would prefer the choice to be in the hands of the guest.
24. Bream: *Acanthopagrus australis* or *Acanthopagrus berda*.
  25. Wallaby: *Macropus agilis*, also called the 'agile wallaby', a distinct and smaller species of marsupial than the kangaroo.
  26. Forms such as \**ŋarra-nha-ny*/\**ŋarra-nydja-n* 'I [SEQ + OPP]' or \**bumar-nha-ny* 'killed [SEQ + OPP]', etc. We offered many such alternatives, and ALL were rejected as ungrammatical unless syncretic with the ACC case form, e.g. *garrtjambal-nha-ny* 'kangaroo-ACC + OPP', which only allowed a totemic interpretation for the noun, certainly not \*'kangaroo-SEQ + OPP'.
  27. Considered as optional by one informant but obligatory by three others. It should be obligatory in (57) because we are dealing with the same subject, but the informant may not have considered the second action as consequential.

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