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PREFACE

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**PREPARING VERNACULAR
BEGINNING READING MATERIALS
FOR THE
NDJÉBBANA (KUNIBIDJI)
BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:
SOME LINGUISTIC ASPECTS***

Graham R. McKay

0. INTRODUCTION

Ndjébbana (Kunibidji) is a rather complex language spoken by about one hundred and fifty Aboriginal people in and around Maningrida on the central north coast of Arnhem Land. Maningrida itself (Manayingkarírra in Kunibidji) is traditionally owned by Kunibidji speakers. Up until June 1982 I was working towards the implementation of a bilingual

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 6th Annual Congress of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, Canberra, August 1981. The present version has been slightly revised in the light of discussion at the Congress. The paper applies to the program as of the end of 1981.

education program in the language. The program was introduced into the classroom Easter 1981 after some years of preparation. An earlier stage of this preparation, the development of a workable orthography for the language, was previously reported on (McKay 1982).

Following approval of the orthography by the Department of Education's Orthography Committee in 1979, a small number of literacy workers were trained in the use of the orthography and began to write material at a variety of levels for publication and eventual use in the program. Initially this writing was unstructured, being largely used as an orthography training exercise. We worked on the basis that eventually we would need to have on hand as much literature as possible in line with the recommendation of O'Grady and Hale (1974: 9, Recommendation 21) to 'Flood the place with literature'. Children's own stories were taped and transcribed, both to provide printable material in the Experience Reader series (see sect. 8 below) and also to give some indication of the children's linguistic level, vocabulary and interests for the purpose of developing structured materials for the teaching of reading. It is to this process that we now turn.

Final responsibility for curriculum development in bilingual education programs in Northern Territory schools lies with the teacher linguists who are primarily teachers, with a minimum of linguistic training to enable them to work from materials provided by the departmental or other linguists (cf. McGill ed. 1980: 23-26). The linguists themselves are considered to be 'the local authorities on language matters for the Department' (McGill ed. 1980: 25). Thus the details of the formal approaches to vernacular reading instruction for Kunibidji children were worked out in discussion between the Teacher Linguist, Peter Jones, and myself, the Linguist. I will confine myself in the present paper largely to discussion of some of the linguistic issues that were found to influence the decisions made and the materials produced. There is no time here to examine linguistic structures in full. I will simply attempt to give an impression of some of the linguistic factors involved.

1. BROAD APPROACHES

Initially we were able to take advantage of reports from various areas of the difficulties experienced in using highly analytic approaches as the starting point with young Aboriginal children (cf. Christie 1976; Christie n.d.; Department of Education 1977: 30; Harris 1982: 15-16; McKay 1978: 17-20). Contrast the findings with Navajo in the U.S.A. (Holm 1980: 80-81). The major problems that had been found rested with the analytic skills required (e.g. to abstract a syllable from a word) and with the unavailability in many languages of enough short, minimally contrasting words to permit analysis and word building in any

interesting or meaningful way (cf. Glass 1978: 143). These problems, as far as we could see, would apply equally to Kunibidji. For instance, in teaching young English-literate adults to write Kunibidji I used key words (initially obtained from senior adults) to illustrate the contrasts between sounds (letters) which needed to be distinguished. I found that many of the clearest contrasts could not be used because one or other of the contrasting pair of items was unknown to these people. The problem could be expected to be more acute with the young children of these same adults.

Christie (n.d.: 1), basing his comments on research such as that of Harris (e.g. 1980), suggests that the predominantly 'visual' rather than 'verbal' thinking processes of Aboriginal children makes the learning of sight words more effective than 'phonics', which I take to be a term covering analysis and synthesis involving abstract units on either of a couple of phonological (sub-morphemic) levels - phonemes or syllables (cf. Glass 1978: 144). It was decided, in the Kunibidji program, to combine elements of four approaches:

(i) Language experience work in which captions and stories dictated by the children are written under their own pictures by the teacher and read back.

(ii) Breakthrough to Literacy approach in which sentences and words can be built up by the children using small cards without prior mastery of writing skills.

(iii) A structured set of Instant Readers (primers) to teach sight morphemes or words, based on a count of words and affixes used by the children themselves.

(iv) A phonic letter recognition strand is built into the reading workbook series *Rid ngamangka ngaréndjeya*, along with the sight morphemes. We believe that some phonics is necessary to form the basis of word attack skills in reading and to lead to phonically based writing skills.

Some of the reasons for the above decisions will become more apparent as we outline some overall typological features of the language below. Note that similar considerations to those mentioned above have also influenced the choice of method for teaching English language and literacy to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory (e.g. Breakthrough, Batchelor 1975; All's Well, Keppert 1981).

2. VERB STRUCTURES AND FORMS

Ndjébbana is a prefixing language. In the Australian Aboriginal context this means that affixation is not restricted to suffixation as it is in

the Pama-Nyungan languages which cover most of the continent, but also involves prefixes. In Ndjébbana verb suffixes mainly mark tense, while mood and pronominal agreements are marked by prefixes. Pronominal prefixes are obligatory on the verbs and indicate both subject (transitive or intransitive) and direct object of the verb. In a small number of 'ditransitive' verbs, like *wú* (VII) 'give' and *djébbá* (I) 'deprive of', it is the indirect rather than the direct object which is marked by the pronominal prefix. Furthermore it is unusual, though by no means unknown, for the subject and object to occur as free form noun phrases in the sentence in addition to the obligatory bound forms. For instance in a count of a sample of children's stories the first person exclusive subject prefix *njarra-* occurred 165 times while the corresponding free form pronoun *njírabbá* occurred only 20 times, and that mainly with the older children. Thus it is quite common for the one-word verb complex to constitute a whole sentence by itself. As a result items like subject, verb and object which, in a more isolating language like English, appear as discrete items on the page, in Ndjébbana are fused into an often long and formidable single form. The beginning Instant Reader series is structured around varying either the prefix or the verb root plus suffix while keeping the other constant in order to teach pronominal prefixes and verb roots as 'sight' morphemes and to begin training in segmentation into morphemes. The division between prefix and root is not overtly symbolised.

Even an apparently simple principle such as that just outlined presented its own linguistic problems. The system of verb conjugations in Ndjébbana is relatively complex. An analysis of almost two hundred verbs (McKay 1980) revealed that seventeen distinct conjugation classes (some with sub-classes) were needed to classify the verbs according to tense suffixes. Even this left seven irregular verbs such as *yó* 'lie, be', *yirrí* 'go', *nó* 'sit, be' and *djí* 'drink'. While we have not analysed the grammatical competence of children thoroughly it has become obvious that children and even young adults have not mastered the complexities of this system and tend to regularise unusual patterns. In some cases verbs of other conjugations are placed in Conjugation II which has a suffix *-na* for the Past 2 (remote past) tense and no suffix in the other tenses. The system of tense categories, incidentally, is similar to that found in Burarra and outlined by K. Glasgow (1964). For example we often encounter *barra-djórkká-na* 'they took it' instead of the correct Conjugation XII form *barra-djórkká*, or *barra-kkóndjá-na* 'they cut it' instead of the normal Conjugation I form *barra-kkóndjá-nga*. Interestingly all known verbs of Conjugation II are intransitive, unlike these additions to the class.

Alternatively verbs with suppletive forms may have one form generalised into other tenses by the children. For example some children use the future tense form *-móya* of the verb 'to eat', instead of the Past 1

(proximate past/present) form *-ba* or the Past 2 form *-bála*. Thus we often find a form like *barra-móya* meaning 'they are eating it' instead of the correct form *bárraba* as given in example 1 below.

In general, problem forms have been avoided where other complications also arose or the corrected adult forms were used where these were straightforward. In any case we have tried in the first twenty Instant Readers to use only a single tense, the Past 2 or remote past. Only with the verb *nó* 'to sit' did we not follow this pattern but used the Past 1 because of irregularities in other tenses. This variation has imposed some sequence of tense constraints on the use of this verb in any sort of connected narrative. In other words this verb in the Past 1 cannot be followed by any Past 2 verb form.

The major problems in the verbs, however, are not due to this plethora of conjugation classes but arise out of some phonological processes related to the movement of stress and vowel length, which, incidentally, is symbolised in the orthography using an acute accent. We cannot give full details at this point but examples 1 to 5 should give some idea of the phenomena involved. The general problem raised is the inability in some verbs to keep to a standard form of the verb root and/or of the pronominal prefix.

1. *ba-ya-móya* (VIIID)
they-FUT-eat
They will eat it.

bá-rra-ba
they-pl nonFUT-eat (Past 1)
They are eating it.

ba-rra-bá-la
-eat-Past 2
They ate it.

kóma ba-ya-bá-ngana
NEG they-IRREAL.-eat-Past 2 Neg.
They didn't eat it.

2. *bi-yi-ríma* (VI)
they(du)-FUT-hold
They will hold it.

bá-rrí-rama
they-du nonFUT-hold (Past 1)
They are holding it.

bi-rrri-rimé-ra
-hold-Past 2
They held it.

kóma bi-yi-rimí-ngana
NEG they(du)-IRREAL.-hold-Past 2 Neg.
They didn't hold.

3. *bi-yi-wála* (I)
they(du)-FUT- ascend
They will ascend.

bi-rrri-wála (Past 1)
They are ascending.

bi-rrri-wála-nga
-Past 2
They ascended.

kóma bi-yi-wala-ngóna
-Past 2 Neg.
They didn't ascend.

4. *ba-ka-djǎjúwa* (VIII)
they-FUT- be sick/die
They will get sick.

ba-rra-djǎjúwa (Past 1)
They are sick.

ba-rra-yawé-la
-Past 2
They died.

kóma djawé-la ba-ngkayína
(INFIN) they-do(Past 2 Neg.)
They didn't die.

5. *njana-wú-na-yana* (VII)
he me-give-Past 2-he
He gave it to me.

njandá-ka-wa-yana
he me-FUT-give-he
He will give it to me.

Comparison of the forms presented in examples 1 to 5 will exemplify a number of the complications. While example 4 exemplifies a verb root in which stress may shift from one syllable to another on the root, depending on tense, regularly reducing any vowel without the major stress (plus length) to -a- but leaving the prefix form constant (apart from the modal -rra-/-ka-/-yi- alternation), examples 1 and 2 exemplify common verb roots from which the major stress may shift to the prefix initial syllable in the Past 1 tense. The prefixes for these verbs in this tense are thus not the same in form as for the more common pattern found in examples 3 and 4. Additionally there are some phonetic vowel harmony phenomena involved with unstressed vowels as seen with the dual forms in example 2 - *i* being the vowel characteristic of the dual in the prefixes. Finally example 4 exemplifies root initial stop gemination and lenition processes whose operation is determined by the presence or absence respectively (in non-initial position) of a following stressed long vowel, which is marked orthographically. This phenomenon has been dealt with in greater detail elsewhere (McKay 1980; forthcoming). It presents variant forms of a number of verb roots - those with stress shifting and initial stops. One final example of prefix variation brought about by stress shifting is given in example 5.

Initially the Past 1 tense was avoided in order to avoid stress shifting to the prefix and the resultant variant prefix and root forms. Verb forms in which root initial gemination of a stop had to be written were also avoided. Variant vowels heard as a result of phonetic harmonisation processes, however, are written as they are heard.

The more difficult or complex forms of the common irregular verbs were also avoided in the earliest materials. For instance it was a very easy choice with the verb 'to go' to use the Past 2 form *nga-béna* 'I went' rather than the Past 1 *nga-yirríya* 'I went' (with a difficult stress pattern) or the future *ngé-yarra* 'I will go' (with unusual prefix and stress shifting). With the verb 'to sit' the Past 1 form *njarra-nóra* 'we sat/are sitting' was preferred to the Past 2 *njarrúka-na* 'we sat' or future *njayúka-na* 'we will sit' (because of the unusual prefixes on these last two). Keeping to 'standard' prefix and root forms allowed us to vary prefix and root separately to teach each as sight morphemes in the Instant Readers.

In the Breakthrough to Literacy materials we plan to use separate prefix and root plus suffix cards to allow word/sentence building. As with the Instant Readers some of the more 'synthetic' conjugations, for which segmentation is difficult and interchangeability is restricted, will not be able to be used for this purpose, at least initially.

3. VOCABULARY CONTROL

It was mentioned above that an attempt was made to ascertain what

vocabulary is used by the children so that only familiar words would be used. This was done by recording a number of stories on tape from individual children and examining the vocabulary used. The familiar distinction between 'functors' and 'content words' (Gudschinsky 1974: 45 referring to Fries 1952) was observed and these two categories were counted separately. Furthermore, following Gudschinsky's view (1974: 49), we saw the most important frequency measure as one which counted how many different speakers used a particular item, rather than how many times it occurred in text. In fact a single occurrence of a word in text is sufficient to show that the word is familiar to that speaker. In point of fact we might almost summarise our practice by saying that almost all words which occurred in spontaneous children's speech were considered usable. Preference was given to the words used by the highest number of children, but for interest value it was also essential to use some of the less frequent content words. We assumed these were familiar to children because they were used, albeit rarely, in the speech of a small number of children. English borrowings were avoided where there was a Kunibidji equivalent but borrowings from other Aboriginal languages were often retained as being more familiar to the children in their multilingual environment than the often more complex Kunibidji form. Thus we have found the children using Kunbarlang *kudjun* and Kunwinjku *dalek* instead of Kunibidji *barnamarrákka* 'white clay', or Kunbarlang *mandorl'ddorl* instead of Kunibidji *rrayíya* 'bush watermelon'.

The notion of frequency of occurrence was seen to be problematic in another sense, given the use of a single type of data. Most of the stories collected on tape were cast in the first person exclusive with a scattering of third person forms. The stories mostly dealt with weekend hunting expeditions, encounters with devils, or sport. The narrow range of topics covered appears to be normal in Aboriginal school contexts. Christie reports (1976:40) that preferred stories at Milingimbi in language experience sessions were almost invariably related to mundane domestic activities - 'even the day one of the school buildings burnt down produced nothing'. These limitations of content, which proved rather difficult to overcome, meant that the tape recorder operator was not usually included in the events narrated. There is thus a dearth of first person inclusive and second person forms. There is also an almost totally uniform use of the Past 2 tense. These biases in the figures on frequency are presumably not related to the overall familiarity or frequency of particular categories in the children's speech but are due to limitations of data collection in terms of types of discourse and the social context of the act of recording. We did, in fact, stick to first person exclusive and third person forms in the Instant Readers. With three separate number categories for each this still gave an ample number of distinct prefix forms for the very early books.

4. GENDER CONSTRAINTS

The pronominal prefix system presented a further issue which influenced the construction of materials. This revolved around the gender distinction made in Kunibidji between masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns and had an effect on the sequencing of the introduction of vocabulary items and the types of sentences in which certain vocabulary items could be used. The masculine/feminine distinction is realised formally in the third person singular and in all persons of the dual. Each number category is to be discussed separately below.

4.1 IN THE SINGULAR

The third person singular feminine is characterised by distinctive pronominal prefix forms when it represents intransitive subject or transitive object, but not when it represents transitive subject. This constitutes some evidence for an element of ergativity in the bound pronominal system as I argue elsewhere (McKay 1981). Gender of a third person singular object is, however, only indicated when the transitive subject is also third person. We encounter forms such as those given in examples 6, 7 and 8.

The marking of feminine gender in these particular forms meant that it was necessary to be careful about the introduction of nouns of feminine gender unless we wanted to add these feminine prefix forms to the large range already covered. Common feminine nouns such as *bíbbó* 'crab' and *kíkka* 'mother, Mummy' could, in fact, be used without distinctive prefixes as long as they were used in transitive subject function or as transitive object only when the subject was not third person. Thus, for instance, the early Instant Readers used the plural prefixes *barra-* (third person) and *njarra-* (first person exclusive). These could function both as intransitive subject prefixes and as transitive subject prefixes with third person singular object. In the latter function, however, *barra-*, unlike *njarra-*, was restricted to use with a masculine object because a feminine object would need to be specially marked with the form *yabarra-*. In order to avoid having to introduce such forms at an early stage we were forced to use first person transitive subjects whenever the noun object was feminine.

6. *ka-nána* (VII)
he/she him-saw
He/she saw him.

yaka-nána
he/she her-saw
He/she saw her.

dja-nána
you(sg) him/her-saw
You saw him/her.

7. *barra-nána*
they him-saw
They saw him.

yabarr-nána
they her-saw
They saw her.

njarra-nána
we him/her-saw
We saw him/her.

8. *ka-balákkana* (II)
he-returned
He returned.

ya-balákkana
she-returned
She returned.

barra-balákkana
they-returned
They returned.

4.2 IN THE DUAL

The next problem of gender to be discussed was discovered in the course of checking a story written by one of our literacy workers about herself and her husband in an encounter with a devil in the bush at night. Throughout the story she used the prefix form *njirri-* which I had always encountered as a first person exclusive dual masculine form referring to two males - though I had for some time intended to check its range of meanings. It contrasted with a form having prefix *njarra-* and suffix *-nja* which I understood to cover two females or one person of each sex in the first person exclusive dual. It was this prefix/suffix form which I had expected to see used in reference to a husband and wife combination. The third person forms *birri-* and *barra-...-nja* do in fact pattern just like this.

On checking with the lady concerned, however, it emerged that in the

first person the husband and wife combination is referred to as *njirri-* by the wife but as *njarra-...-nja* by the husband. I had worked largely with male informants and had thus obtained my wrong impression which had been reinforced by the analogy with the third person forms. The phenomenon is discussed in more detail in McKay 1979.

The two forms *njirri-* and *njarra- . . .-nja* are set out below, coupled with the verb *-bena* 'went', to illustrate the four broad sets of referential facts which they cover. It can readily be seen that the forms are based on a 'speaker plus one other' analysis, and that it is the sex of the 'one other' which determines the prefix form used. Thus the differences in the sex of the speaker can bring about differences in the overall reference of a given form with respect to sex.

'we two (exclusive) went'

njirribéna

njarrabénanja

male speaker

two males went
i.e. speaker + 1 male

one male & one female went
i.e. speaker + 1 female

female speaker

one male and one
female went
i.e. speaker + 1 male

two females went
i.e. speaker + 1 female

We had to ponder the implications of this variability for the book illustrations. It also raised the question of how a child, beginning to learn to read, perceives written material. Whose words are on the page? This could be important if the sex of the speaker determines interpretation. Is the sex of the teacher implicated and can it affect the way the material can be presented in class? In another context Sayers (1982) has documented the difficulty experienced by Aboriginal children in coping with 'disembodied' story characters who are not an integral part of the local society and kinship system. Young Aboriginal readers apparently have some general problems with the 'context-free' nature of written material in comparison with spoken language. It is a problem which is inherent in the nature of written material in all cultures (cf. Stubbs 1980:108-110).

5. DIALECTS

There are, in fact, several dialects of Kunibidji based on the Djówanga/Yírriddjanga and coastal/inland divisions. The differences between them are mainly lexical but also affect verb forms, etc. The matter has not been fully studied but a few examples can be given.

One literacy worker outlined in a book entitled *Ndjébbana Mándjad*

(Waybananga 1979) three groups of Kunibidji speakers - his own Yirridjanga group *Kanakána* from upriver; *Mabárnad*, a Yirridjanga group from Maningrida itself, in the river estuary; and *Márrro*, a Djówanga group from the northern coastal area. The test word he used was 'fire'. *Mabárnad* people call it *yúya*, *Kanakána* people call it *ngayawárrwarra*, and *Márrro* people call it *ngálngarda*. The children normally seem to use the first of these forms at school.

Other examples of a rough Djówanga/Yirridjanga division in the coastal dialects are given in examples 9 and 10.

9.	<u>Djówanga</u>	<u>Yirridjanga</u>	
	<i>yána</i>	<i>yéna</i>	'earlier today'
	<i>marnawarrínjba</i>	<i>kórnska/karrórnsba</i>	(yam type)

10.	The verb root <i>-rlúrrabayi</i> (III) 'arrive' has a suppletive future tense form <i>-míba</i> .	The verb root <i>-rlúrrabayi</i> (III) 'arrive' forms all tenses regularly on the same root.
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Finally there are some verbs for which the Djówanga dialect has an inflected form for the Past 2 Negative (formed by suffix) while the Yirridjanga dialect uses an auxiliary construction. Both dialects use both types of Past 2 Negative in particular words (one per word) but the distribution is a little different. The Yirridjanga uses slightly more auxiliary forms, which appear to be a simplifying innovation parallel to the gradual extension of 'weak' past tense formations in English and German at the expense of the 'strong' forms. See example 11.

11. *-rórradjja* (I) 'to clean (transitive)/to clear'

<u>Djówanga</u>	<i>Kóma nga-ya-rarradjja-ngóna</i> NEG I-IRREAL.-clean-Past 2 Neg. I did not clean it.
<u>Yirridjanga</u>	<i>Kóma na-rórradjja nga-ya-ngkayína</i> NEG INFIN-clean I-IRREAL.-do (Past 2 Neg.) I did not clean it.

Occasionally, too, there are forms which are simplified by younger adults and by children as in example 12.

12.	<u>Older</u>	<u>Younger</u>	
	<i>barrarókadjdjiba</i>	<i>barraródjdjiba</i>	'children'
	<i>karrabba</i>	<i>arrabba</i>	'and, like'
	<i>Ndjúdda</i>	<i>Djúdda</i>	'Juda Point'
	<i>nbarrábarra</i> etc.	<i>barrábarra</i>	'big (masc. sg.)'

Our policy has been not to standardise one dialect or form rather than another, but to admit whichever form the writer uses in speech, provided only that the written form is an accurate phonemic representation of a genuine spoken form. This may even result in minor variation within a single work in particular words. This policy has followed the general inclinations of the literacy workers - though on occasion they will want to check a form with particular old people and defer to them in pronunciation. We can probably expect some indigenous standardisation to take place once literacy is more firmly established, but we cannot predict which directions such standardisation will or should take. The lack of standardisation at present permits a more phonic approach by new literates.

6. AUXILIARY CONSTRUCTION

One further point of relevance to producing natural Ndjébbana materials is the extremely common use of a type of auxiliary construction in which a general positional or motion verb is appended to a more specific verb within the same intonation contour and without pause between the two. In translation this auxiliary verb adds nothing to the meaning. It is possible for such a second verb to have its full force (e.g. sitting, lying, going) but in this case there will be a pause between the two. Some examples of the auxiliary construction are given in example 13.

13. a *Birri-walédjba birri-rekarawéra.*
 They-paddled they-moved
 'They paddled (canoe).'
- b *Karrówa duram ka-rendjína ka-béna.*
 many drums they-stood they-went
 'There were many drums there.'
- c *Nga-ngúdjeya nga-nóra.*
 I-talk I-sit
 'I am talking.'

- d *Dílkarra ngíya-na ngíya-na.*
 Moon let's-look let's-sit
 'Let's look at the moon (to determine what phase).'
- e *Njirrikébbá nji-yi-wákka. Njirrikébbá nji-yi-wákka nji-yarra.*
 We we-FUT-go back We we-FUT-go back we-will
 go
 'We'll go back.'
- f *Yá-nabo barra-yóra-nja.*
 she-fell they-lay-dual feminine
 'She fell on top of her mother.' (of calf and cow buffalo)

This auxiliary construction, though normal and almost obligatory in adult speech, does not appear to be so common in children's stories. It has been omitted from the structured readers partly because of this and partly because use of it would double the length of any sentence and produce a more forbidding reading task.

7. REPETITION AS A PROBLEM IN EDITING

One final feature, common to many Aboriginal languages, presented an editing problem for the Children's Experience Readers series. We aimed in these to edit out, where possible, excessive hesitation, repetition, English words etc. We needed to distinguish, however, between repetition which functioned like 'Um' in English, as a mark of hesitation, and repetition which carried significance of one of two kinds.

Firstly, in the absence of the reduplication processes productive in many Aboriginal languages, repetition may function in Kunibidji as a marker of duration or iteration as in examples 14 a and b.

14. a 'Nirrikébbá níyarra budborl?' *Njirriyáŋkana, 'I.'*
Njarrakkóya, njarrakkóya, njarrakkóya, njarrakkóya,
yaláwa njarrowolobéna kúl...

'Do you two want to go to the football?' We said, 'Yes.' Four days later (lit. 'we slept, we slept, we slept, we slept' - four times) we came to school...

- b *Njírrabba njarrabéna ngána nakkáyala. Njarrawolabéna,*
njarrawolabéna, njarrawolabéna...

We were walking along on foot. We walked and walked...

Secondly repetition of part of a previous sentence at the beginning of a new sentence has a sort of connective function equivalent to 'then...' in English, as in example 15, in which the phrase meaning 'we'll cook it' is repeated in the second sentence.

15. *Yúya nayákama, yaláwa ngabadjórraba ngabayúkana. Ngabadjórraba ngabayúkana yaláwa ngabamóya ngabayúkana.*

'Get some firewood and we'll cook it and then (having cooked it) eat it.'

It is clearly not appropriate simply to edit out all repetitions which, by English standards, are superfluous. Their functions must be recognised, even though in the English translation these can be handled differently, without any repetition.

8. MATERIALS BEING PRODUCED

Apart from a variety of readiness materials and workbooks the program has been producing three main series of reading books for the children. These are:

Instant Readers - A series of beginning readers or primers (20 designed by the end of 1981, 40 intended in all) with strictly controlled vocabulary and structures. These are to be used to draw together and consolidate the week's reading instruction in various forms including language experience work, breakthrough, workbook exercises etc. There is one sentence and one illustration per page. In the earliest books these are one word sentences. Varying the prefixes and verb roots is designed as an introduction to the segmentation of verb complexes into morphemes.

Story Readers - A series using the same sequencing and the same controlled vocabulary as the Instant Readers, and designed to supplement that series. A further series of Photo Readers, again using the same controlled vocabulary and intended as a second supplementary series, was started in 1981.

Children's Experience Readers - A series of books (over twenty printed up to the end of 1981 with another thirty in various stages of production) each containing a story told on tape by a child, later transcribed by literacy workers and sometimes undergoing a little editorial modification to remove English words, excessive hesitation or repetition. These are at a variety of levels of difficulty and will be

used to extend the children's reading experience beyond the strictly controlled Instant Reader, Story Reader and Photo Reader series.

In addition the program is slowly building up a series of more advanced Adult Readers containing stories and other materials provided by or written by adults. These will be suitable for supplementary reading at advanced levels and have also been used for reading to adults to promote awareness of the program. A couple of photo caption books, a picture dictionary, a Christian song book, two comics in Kunibidji and English versions and a T-shirt are among miscellaneous items so far produced, the last couple being conceived and executed by the white teacher of the Kunibidji class in the school. Finally a regular community newspaper, *Manayingkarírra Djúrrang*, containing English, Kunibidji, Burarra and an occasional other language item, began publication in 1981.

It can be expected that experience in classroom use of the materials prepared will bring about future modifications. In addition further linguistic study will no doubt raise issues which will further determine the course of materials development. It is an exciting process.

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