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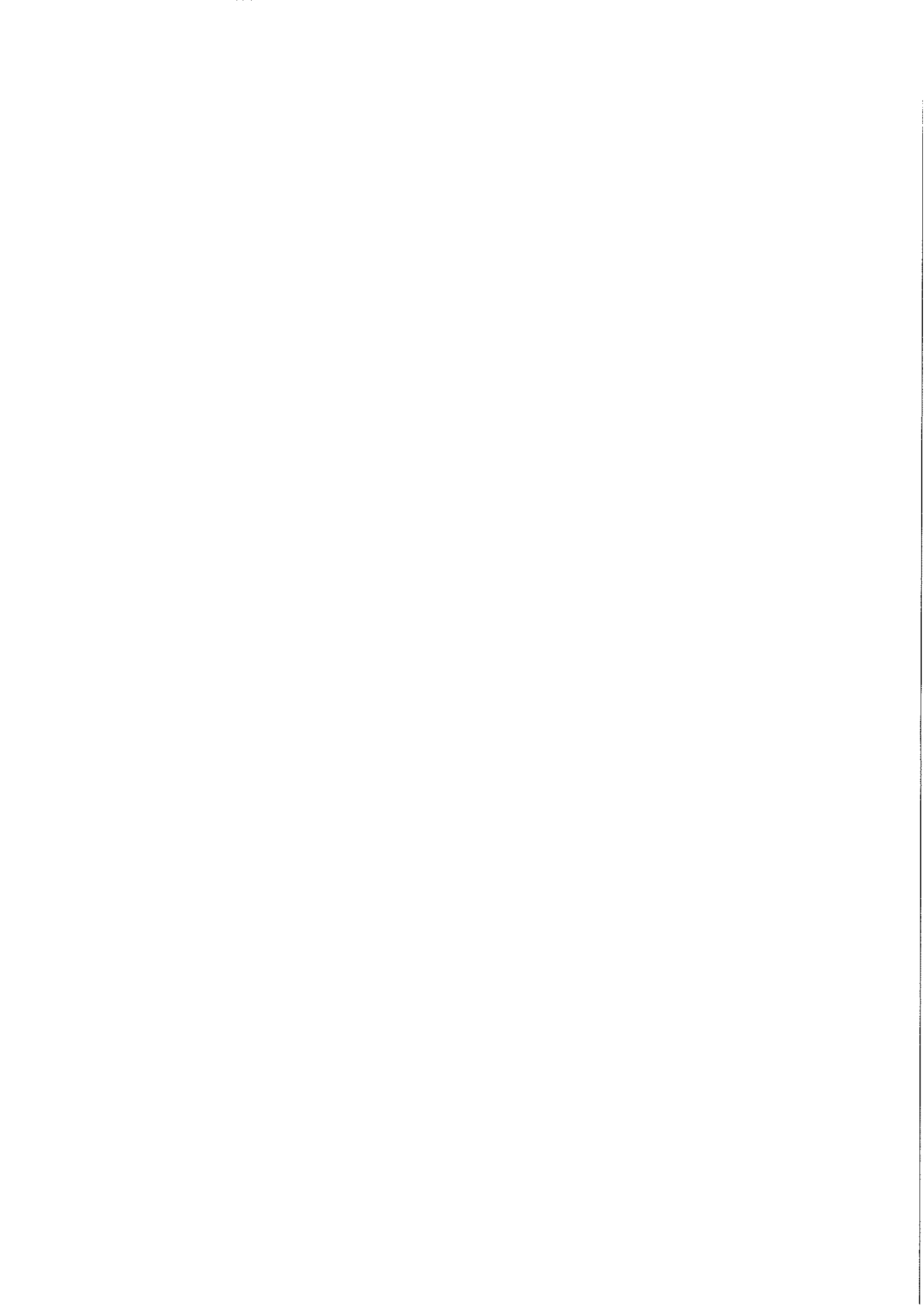
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## IWAIDJA VERBAL CLAUSES

Noreen Pym

### 1. DEFINING THE VERBAL CLAUSES

Attempting to describe Iwaidja clauses using a traditional, or even a more modern, format is a frustrating experience. The Iwaidja system does not fit easily into either a description based on case or one based on clause types. The determining factor in Iwaidja is semantics, not form. E.g. the two following examples are identical in form, i.e. a verb in the second plural imperative followed by a noun. In the first, the meaning of the noun indicates that it is the reason for the action, the second, that it is the means.

- (1) *Gud-* *burtinyurtiying* *yirta*  
2p=imper-bathe mud

'Have a bath (because of) the mud.'

- (2) *Gud-* *burtinyurtiying* *ubaj*  
2p=imper-bathe water

'Have a bath (in) water.'

Most of the morphology in Iwaidja occurs on the verbs. Apart from nouns used for humans, which can be pluralised and some body parts which are inalienably possessed, the form of a non-verbal constituent is inviolate (does not change). There are thus no overt case markers or subject or object markers on non-verbal constituents.

In the verbal constituents there are no participles, infinitives or auxiliary verbs. Every verb is finite with obligatory person-number prefixation and optional directional and tense-aspect affixation. There may be a free-form adverb or a negative associated with the verb but this is not common.

The obligatory person-number prefixes divide the verbs into two main classes: transitive with subject and object prefixes, and intransitive with subject prefixes only. There are some grounds for considering the object of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb as the same form. I have discussed this in my paper, 'The Iwaidja Verb System: A Description', p. 127 of *Work Papers of SIL-AAB, Series A, Vol. 2*.

Strings of verbs are common in Iwaidja, but there is no difference in the form of the verb used alone as against one used in a string. I have examples of strings of up to ten verbs in the one breath group.

In the texts used there are approximately 200 examples of strings of verbs in the one breath group, accounting for 500 verbs—one fifth of the verbs occur in strings of two or more. On comparing texts from different speakers it is noted that the faster the speech the more strings of verbs there are. Some people string verbs together almost indefinitely while others, much more deliberate in speech, use many more non-verbal terms. Strings of verbs are used when the actions are simultaneous:

- (3) *A-* *ban* *ad-* *mani*  
I=3s-hold we=dual-sit

'I sit and hold him' (I hold him, we 2 sit.)

where there is a closely tied sequence of action:

- (4) *Ri- malgba- ny r-udba- n*  
he=3s-take=outside-p he=3s-put=down-p

'He took it off and put it down.'

in set phrases:

- (5) *Ny- irta- n nya-ba- ng ba shovel*  
to=I-return-p to=I-bring-p that shovel

'I brought the shovel back.'

where we would use a participle or infinitive in English:

- (6) *Ngarru-rdaya-ng r-aharralbi-ny*  
we=3s- see- p 3s-jump- p

'We saw (the horse) bucking.'

- (7) *Yad- ban-ara arru-ban-arnugbun uga*  
we=imper-fut-go we=3s-fut-get=oyster over=there

'Let's go to get oysters over there.'

and as the climax of the story approaches:

- (8) *A- ri j-amang ri- nguldi-ny alanud burru- 3s-stand 3s-work he=3s-make- p road good*

'He's working at making a good road.' (From a story about the work her husband did which built up to the climax of the good road he was building.)

However, all verbs which occur in strings also occur as single verbs in clauses.

What does all of this mean for the analysis of clauses? The hypothesis, 'Each verb means a new clause', applied to text material yielded the following facts:

Of the 2,500 or so clauses handled,

48% consisted of a verb (+ negative or adverb) only,

42% a verb and one non-verbal constituent,

9% a verb and two non-verbal constituents,

0.6% a verb and three non-verbal constituents,

and 0.08% (2 examples) a verb and four non-verbal constituents.

Thus 90% of the clauses consisted of a verb or a verb and one non-verbal constituent.

In the following sets of examples the only difference in the clause is the lexical item following the verb.

Intransitive verbs:

- (9) J-an-ara      *yilgi*  
away=I-fut-go Palm=Bay

'I'm going (to) Palm Bay.'

- (10) J-an-ara      *yab*  
away=I-fut-go fish

'I'm going (for) fish.'

- (11) J-an-ara      *guburr*  
away=I-fut-go tomorrow

'I'm going tomorrow.'

- (12) J-an-ara      *ajbud*  
away=I-fut-go beach

'I'm going (to/along) the beach.'

- (13) J-an-ara      *gubuny*  
away=I-fut-go canoe

'I'm going (by) canoe/ (to) the canoe.'

example of verb plus adverb:

- (14) J-an-ara      *mangawarla*  
away=I-fut-go fast

'I'm going fast.'

Transitive verbs:

- (15) A-ba-ldalgun *yab*  
I=3s-fut-cut fish

'I'll cut the fish.'

(16) A-ba-ldalgun *ajbud*  
I=3s-fut-cut beach/sand

'I'll cut it at the beach/on the sand.'

(17) A-ba-ldalgun *guburr*  
I=3s-fut-cut tomorrow

'I'll cut it tomorrow.'

(18) A-ba-ldalgun *jumung*  
I=3s-fut-cut for=him

'I'll cut it for him.'

(19) A-ba-ldalgun *manjawag*  
I=3s-fut-cut knife

'I'll cut it (with) a knife.'

As can be seen in the above sets of examples, ambiguity at the clause level is resolved by the semantic content of the non-verbal constituent or by context. It is also resolved by implied information or context of situation (and at higher levels by amplification, i.e. added clauses providing further information). E.g. the following series of verbs is taken from a text on gathering yams. Implied information is supplied in the gloss. (This information is retrievable by the Aborigine but not by the outsider.)

(20) *Ngarrurlhan jarrara ngarrugagan ngarrurdayan warndi*  
we-enter away=we-go we-look-rep we=3s-see 3s-on

'We go into (the jungle), we look around (and) we see (the vine of the long yam) up (on the tree)

*ngarrubirdbaldang barduwa lda ngarrunjawu:n ngarruwartama*  
we=3s-put=down compl and we=it-dig-cont we=3s-follow

we put down (our bags) and then we dig (with a digging stick) and we follow (stem of the vine down into the ground).'

## 2. CLAUSE TYPES

On first looking at clauses I posited one verbal clause type, that is, a clause in Iwaidja consists of a verb and up to four non-verbal constituents, the semantics or context determining the function of the non-verbal constituents.

In example ( 9) the function is Goal.  
 (10) Purpose.  
 (11) Time.  
 (12) Goal or Route.  
 (13) Goal or Means.  
 (15) Patient.  
 (16) Location.  
 (18) Benefactive  
 and (19) Instrument.

In the following examples the function is determined by the verb structure:

(21) *A-murdb-in marldu*  
 3p=fear-intrans wind

'They're afraid of the wind.'

(22) *Bu-murdb-an marldu*  
 3p=3s=fear-trans wind

'They fear the wind.'

In both examples the stem of the verb is the same, but (21) has intransitive *-in* and (22) transitive *-an*. *Marldu* 'wind' functions as source in (21) and as object in (22). Also *amurdbin marldu* 'They're afraid of the wind' in (21) parallels the speech verbs, most of which are intransitive, but may have free form objects such as 'story', 'song', 'law'.

(23) *A-ldaharrama inyman warruwi*  
 3p=speak/talk language Goulburn=Is.

'They're talking/speaking (in) the language of Goulburn Island.'

However, I have now decided there are two clause types, transitive and intransitive. The division is determined by the constituents obligatorily cross-referenced in the verb.

An intransitive clause has only the subject marked in the verb.

(24) *Ang-bani*  
 2s=sit

'You are sitting.'

- (25) *Binggung ba wara yurrngud*  
3s-arrive-p that 3s-go on=top

'The plane has come.'

- (26) *Jarr-ara-n nanguj arrarnarn mudiga*  
away=we-go-p yesterday oyster car

'Yesterday we went for oysters in the car.'

A transitive clause has its verb marked for subject as actor/agent and object as patient, recipient or person spoken to. It is the semantics of the verb which determines the function of the object.

Object functioning as patient:

- (27) *Ang-mun-man*  
2s-3p-take

'You're taking them.'

- (28) *Ga-rangan wimung*  
2s=3s-send to=3p

'You're sending it to them.'

- (29) *A-bu-man-dung nuwurrung gudnuwulang ldungun*  
to-3p=3s-get-habit for=2p your=pl=mothers yam

'Your mothers used to bring you yams.'

Object functioning as recipient:

- (30) *Ang-mun-ugun*  
2s-3p-give

'You're giving it to them.'

- (31) *Aw-ugung Ngawuyug janad ba shovel martan*  
I=3s-give-p fem.=name her that shovel little

'I gave Ngawuyug her little shovel.'

Object functioning as person spoken to:

- (32) *Ang-mun-dalgan*  
2s-3p-ask

'You're asking them.'

A sub-class of transitive verbs marked by *ang-* or *mam-* has a restricted morphology. First and second person object forms and third person singular subject forms do not occur and the third person object form is either *ang-* or *mam-* (depending on the verb and often carrying no apparent meaning). The form used for third person plural in other transitive verbs here means any third person singular or plural.

For example:

- (33) Ang-b-ayan  
earth-3-see

'He/she/they see the ground.'

- (34) Nam-b-irrguran  
obj-3-close

'He/she/they close it up.'

- (35) Ang-b-unman      *wimung yiwarruj warranuna*      *ngarrgarrg*  
obj-3-tell=story to=3p story pl-white=woman two

'He/she/they told the two white women a story.'

Note that while the cross-referencing within the verb is obligatory, the occurrence of the free form is not.

All other non-verbal constituents i.e. those not cross-referenced in the verb are considered to be peripheral. One of these, the directional, is optionally marked in the verb. With the exception of the transitive verbs in which the object functions as recipient or person spoken to, all verbs may carry a prefix denoting the direction of the action in relation to the hearer. Source or Goal/Location is cross-referenced in the verb when it is hearer-oriented.

For example:

- (36) Ya-w-ara-n      *wag*  
away-3s-go-p Merganella

'He went to Merganella.' (away from hearer)

- (37) A-w-ara-n      *wag*  
to-3s-go-p Merganella

'He came from Merganella.' (towards hearer)



(38) Ya-bani            *wag*  
away-3s=stay    Merganella

'He's staying at Merganella.' (away from hearer)

(39) J-an-ara            *yilgi*  
away=I-fut-go    Palm=Bay

'I'll go to Palm Bay.' (away from hearer)

(40) Ny-an-ara        *yilgi*  
to=I-fut-go    Palm=Bay

'I'll come to Palm Bay.' (towards hearer - a message sent to hearer already at Palm Bay.)

As well as words and phrases, the non-verbal constituents may also be embedded (or rank-shifted) clauses.

Intransitive clause:

(41) Ng-alidba-n bulldozer a-ldaharrama-n three week  
I-listen-p    bulldozer 3p-talk-p            three week

'I listened to the bulldozers making a noise for three weeks.'

Transitive clause:

(42) Ngarru-rdayan    a-ri        ba        ldungun  
we-3s-see            3s-stand    that    yam

'We see that yam standing (there).'

When Accompaniment occurs it is never ambiguous and is obligatorily marked by the word *ngalaj* (used only in this context) and the form *jumung* (which changes for person and number). An amplifying noun or phrase may also occur. There is always another non-verbal constituent present when Accompaniment is used.

For example:

(43) Uga manggu ngad-bani ngalaj            jumung wartad nuna  
in shade we-sit    accompaniment one    white=woman

'We're sitting in the shade with one white woman.'

The form *jumung* without *ngalaj* functions as Benefactive, Recipient or

person spoken to. It may be followed by an amplifying noun or noun phrase.

Benefactive: example (18)

Recipient: example (28)

Benefactive and recipient: example (29)

- (44) *Baga ga-ldangan ngarrurrung inyman wimung a-widbarra-ga-n-ud*  
that she-send to/for=us message to/for=3p 3p-white-dual-pl

'That one is sending a message to the two white people for us.'  
(Context showed that the message was 'to the white people for us'  
and not 'to us for the white people'.)

Person spoken to: example (35)

- (45) *R-aharra-ny jumung ba barlbarragan Nawahaj*  
3s-shout-p to=3s that 3s-old=person man's=name

'He/she shouted to the old man, Nawahaj.'

The forms *burrān* 'from there' and *uga* 'over there' may optionally mark Source and Goal/Location.

Source marked:

- (46) *Ay-an-ara ba arrarrbi burran warruwi*  
to=3p-fut-go that pl=man from Goulburn=Is.

'Those men will come from Goulburn Island.'

- (47) *A-w-ara-n burran uga*  
to-3s-go-p from over there

'He came from over there.'

Source not marked:

- (48) *Warrin w-ulgari-ny marldu baga ruli*  
bush 3s-go=out-p wind that foot

'Out in the bush the air came out of that tyre.'

Goal marked:

- (49) *Ya-w-urdi-ny* *ubug barta* *manandi*  
away-3s-cross-p to(out of sight) mainland

'He crossed over to the mainland.'

Goal not marked:

- (50) *Yinang yung-gurr-ara wilbanyan ba mirlag*  
don't away-2p-go long that grass

'Don't go (where) the grass is long.'

Location marked:

- (51) *Nga-wani uga warrin uga Merganella*  
I-sit at bush at Merganella

'I'm living in the bush at Merganella.'

Location not marked:

- (52) *A-wani manggu*  
3p-sit shade

'They're sitting in the shade.'

Word order in the Iwaidja clause is normally the verb first with other constituents following. There is some tendency for time or location to occur finally and also a tendency for phrases or embedded clauses to occur clause final. Such phrases and clauses usually contain new information.

- (53) *J-ara-n ngunjul wurji gabal*  
away=I-go-p turtle dig.=stick plain

'I went (for) turtles (with) a digging stick (to) the plain.'

- (54) *Ij-bu-ldaharra-n warrwag jumung arjambuj jumung ang-bu-yawu-ng*  
away-3p-shout-p long=time to=3s hole where earth-3p-dig-p

'They shouted for a long time at the hole where they had dug.'

All occurrences of non-verbal constituents preceding the verb in a clause can be accounted for by the context of situation in the larger text. They mark such things as paragraph breaks, changes in subject, focus and emphasis.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Iwaidja verbal clauses are of two types: transitive and intransitive. The cross-referencing in the verb of nuclear clause constituents determines to which type of clause a particular example belongs. The normal clause word order is verb first.

## ABBREVIATIONS

compl	completive
cont	continuous
dig	digging
fem	feminine
fut	future tense
habit	habitual
imper	imperative
intrans	intransitive
obj	object marker
p	past tense
pl	plural
trans	transitive
2s	2nd person singular
3s	3rd person singular
2p	2 person plural
3p	3rd person plural
3	3rd person, singular or plural

