

The influence of English on possessive systems as shown in two Aboriginal languages, Arabana (northern SA) and Paakantyi (Darling River, NSW)

LUISE A. HERCUS
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

This paper discusses the gradual erosion of the alienable-inalienable distinction in two Pama Nyungan languages, Arabana and Paakantyi. These two languages become structurally more similar to each other because of the unifying influence of English, which has become the dominant language throughout southern Australia. There is a brief note on inalienability in the Western Kulin languages of Victoria.

1. Introduction

Arabana

The two languages under discussion belong to very different areas. Arabana was once spoken in one of the driest and hottest parts of Australia, on the western side of Lake Eyre. Arabana people gradually moved away from there, mainly in search of employment, and quite a large group came to live a little further to the south on Finnis Springs between 1917 and 1961. In the 1960s, when the writer first started learning Arabana, (see Hercus 1994) there were still Arabana speakers who were born in the previous century and for whom it was their first and main language. The people born on Finnis however were brought up in a bilingual environment, Arabana and English—there was no krio in this area, as throughout the more southerly parts of Australia. The Finnis people now form the core of speakers who have been contributing to an excellent Arabana language teaching and language revitalisation program conducted by Greg Wilson (see Wilson 2004). What is called 'Traditional Arabana' in this paper is the language of the old people in the sixties, and what is called 'Modern Arabana' is the norm suggested by Arabana participants in the revitalisation program.

The living conditions on Finnis had much to do with the linguistic developments that took place there. The men were constantly away working with sheep and cattle and on the Ghan railway line. Children therefore learnt the language mainly from their mothers. This helped with the retention of the Arabana language, because the older women spoke Arabana with each other all the time. Unlike the men, they did not have to communicate to the same extent on a daily basis with purely English-speaking workmates. For the later part of this period there was a mission school on Finnis Springs. All this had an influence on the development of the language. It led to a number of euphemisms in the vocabulary as well as some unexpected changes. An interesting example is in the pronoun system. Traditional Arabana had four different forms for the first person plural pronoun, exclusive and inclusive, and two special forms for kinship groups: 'father and children' and 'mother and children'. Of these only the last survived: the term 'we mother and children' became the normal word for 'we'. The increasing influence of English, largely due to the mission school, clearly had a strong impact on the use of possessive markers in Arabana, as will be outlined below.



Map 1: Arabana and Paakantyi, based on Tindale (1974)

Paakantyi

Paakantyi had a large number of distinct dialects, some spoken quite a distance from the Darling River. Since the 1960s most of those dialects are no longer spoken, and the last of the first language speakers have passed away. Paakantyi people worked on stations all over their traditional country and there was just one major mission, at Menindee. For a while this was a haven for Paakantyi people, as was the camp at Pooncarie, a little further south. In 1933, however, a large group of Ngiyampaa were forcibly moved to Menindee and the Pooncarie people were also transported there. The Ngiyampaa were the eastern neighbours of the Paakantyi, but their language was very different and so the mission ceased to be a focal point for the survival of the language: it was individual families who carried on the use of Paakantyi. The examples discussed in this paper are on the one hand from Southern Paakantyi as recorded in the 1960s and early 70s, (see Hercus 1982¹), and on the other from recordings of Paakantyi people by Luise Hercus and David Nathan for a Paakantyi Language CD in 2002.

Arabana and Paakantyi are not closely related and are structurally very different: Arabana belongs to the Karnic subgroup of Pama Nyungan (see Bower 1998 and 2001), and Paakantyi is in a separate subgroup,² not immediately contiguous. Paakantyi has pronoun subject and object enclitics on the verb and has bound possessive markers. Arabana has none of these features. It is therefore quite surprising that similar changes should take place in both languages under the influence of English.

2. Genitive possession in noun phrases consisting of two nouns

In Arabana, inalienable possession was and is expressed by juxtaposition with both animate and inanimate possessors. In this respect there has been no change from the older language to the modern phase. The following examples reflect both past and present usage.

Inalienable:

<i>nharla wimpa</i> ³	'man track', a man's track
<i>kungarra unthu</i>	'kangaroo tail', a kangaroo's tail
<i>kurawarra palku</i>	'rain-cloud body', a big bank of rain-cloud
<i>punga walpu</i>	'humpy bones', the upright supports of a humpy
<i>miltyaard pangki</i>	'eye side', the corner of one's eye
<i>pantu-tharku</i>	'salt-lake edge', the edge of a salt-lake

Alienable genitive possession was and is expressed by the possessive adjectival suffix *-kunha*:

<i>thanthi-kunha ngunku</i>	'grandfather-belonging-to tobacco', grandfather's chewing tobacco
<i>mathapurda-kunha ngura</i>	'old man-belonging-to camp', the old man's camp

This system has remained unaffected by English: on the noun phrase level the inalienable versus alienable distinction has been maintained in the modern language.

3. Arabana inalienable possession at clause level: then and now

Traditionally in Arabana, as in so many other languages, possessive adjectives were not used with inalienable possession such as body parts and also kinship terms: the semantic environment usually made it quite clear who was the possessor. Now, however, possessive adjectives are constantly used.

In contrast to the situation at noun-phrase level, at clause level, under the influence of English, the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession has been gradually obliterated.

This applies in all environments at clause level, in verbless and intransitive clauses and in transitive clauses.

In verbless clauses

In verbless clauses where the subject is a demonstrative or interrogative Arabana people said:

- (1) *Nhiki mara*
this.here hand
'This is (my) hand'
- (2) *Intyara lhuka?*
where mother?
'Where is (your) mother?'

but now, as in English, the possessive adjective is used:

- (3) *Nhiki anthunha mara*
this.here my hand
'This is my hand.'
- (4) *Intyara ankunha lhuka?*
where your mother?
'Where is your mother?'

Possessor dominance in the traditional language

In descriptive verbless clauses, i.e. in clauses with a zero copula verb, if body parts are involved, the whole, the possessor, was always the dominant feature and was the subject:

- (5) *Antha thidna madlanthi*
 I foot bad
 'I have a sore foot.'

In modern Arabana possessive adjectives are used and the body part is the dominant feature and is the subject:

- (6) *Anthunha thidna madlanthi*
 my foot bad
 'My foot is sore.'

Here the body part is viewed almost as a separate entity. English has both these possibilities, 'I have a sore foot', and 'My foot is sore', but these sentences have separate nuances of meaning (cf. Chappell and McGregor 1996:7).

This development in Arabana is therefore not a straight borrowing from English. It is a secondary effect. It seems that the English influence evident in simple sentences like (3) and (4) has triggered a general need to use possessive adjectives, pronominal or noun-based, whenever possession of any kind, alienable or inalienable is implied.

One can see the same pattern even in those cases where it was not just a question of part and whole, but where the possessor was originally totally identified with the thing possessed, as in the case of 'name', 'appearance' or 'totemic identity'. These are culturally very important linguistic features, described by Hosokawa (1996:183) as 'identity-sensitive constructions':

- (7) *Antha pidla Jimmy-nha, antha Warrukathi mardu*
 I name Jimmy-(proper noun) I Emu matrilineal totem
 'My name is Jimmy, and my matrilineal totem is Emu.'

Now possessive adjectives are used as in English, and the concept of total identity between name and person has been lost:

- (8) *Anthunha pidla Jimmy-nha anthunha mardu Warrukathi*
 my name Jimmy-(proper noun) my totem Emu

In the case of 'name' and 'appearance' the 'identity sensitive constructions' applied even to inanimates:

- (9) *Minha nharla-pidla nhiki wadlhu?*
 what Aboriginal-name this place?
 'What's the Aboriginal name of this place?'

Because in this sentence a noun is involved rather than a pronoun, the possessive-adjective forming suffix *-kunha* 'belonging to' is now used:

- (10) *Minha nhiki wadlhu-kunha nharla-pidla?*
 what this place-belonging.to Aboriginal-name?

There has thus been loss of the alienable versus inalienable distinction in equational sentences in the modern language, even in 'identity sensitive constructions'. As all modern Arabana speakers now have English as their first language, there can be little doubt that this change was initiated by the influence of English.

Use of the proprietary suffix *-purru*

The suffix *-purru* 'having', 'full of' was in the older form of the language yet another way of distinguishing between alienable and inalienable possession: it was originally used only with alienable possession.

With alienable possession the usage of old and modern Arabana is the same, as in the following :

- (11) *Uka kadnaardi-purru*
he money-having
'He's got money.'

With inalienable possession, however, the situation has changed. The older speakers simply used the noun phrase containing 'the inalienably possessed' as a complement. This applies to body parts:

- (12) '*Wiri-nguyu-nha*', *uka wiri nguyu*
Hair-one-(proper noun) he hair one
'He (the Fire-striker) is called 'One Hair' (because) he has only one strand of hair.'
- (13) *Nhiki paya marna parnda*
this bird beak big
'This bird has a big beak.'

Now, however, people use the proprietary suffix *-purru*, which once served only for alienable possession: this usage would therefore have been unacceptable in the past:

- (14) *Uka wiri-nguyu-purru*
he hair-one-having
'He has (only) one (strand of) hair.'
- (15) *Nhiki paya marna-parnda-purru*
this bird beak-big-having
'This bird has a big beak.'

The increased use of the proprietary suffix is no doubt due to the influence of English proprietary sentences with the verb 'have'.

When the inalienable becomes alienated

As regards body parts there was in the past a distinction between the possessor's own body part and a separated body part (for examples of this from other languages see Chappell and McGregor 1996:3). Old people made this distinction clearly—and they often talked about teeth. The body part, when it still formed part of the possessor, was a feature of the noun-phrase used as complement in sentences with a zero copula verb, as in (12) and (13) above and in the following:

- (16) *Antha yakarra nhuka*
I teeth many
'I have a lot of teeth'

but when 'the inalienable' was not part of the possessor the proprietary suffix *-purru* was used:

- (17) *Antha yakarra-purru*
I teeth-having
'I've got my teeth (my false ones) here, (I may not even have bothered to put them in).'

Now only this sentence is used, whether these teeth are part of the person or not.

Where semantics allow it, this also is the case with kinship terms. Older people said:

- (18) *Antha wardukupa nhuka*
I child many
'I've got a lot of children.'

This implied that I, the parent, inalienably have many children: the children are mine.

Older people could also say:

- (19) *Antha wardukupa nhuka-purru*
I child many-having
'I have a lot of children (not necessarily mine) here with me.'

Only this second sentence (19) is acceptable to modern speakers, not (18), even if it is a parent speaking.

In this way the increased use of *-purru* 'having' has caused the loss of a subtle distinction that existed in the older language: this is yet another symptom of the general collapse of the alienable versus inalienable distinction.

In the negative the distinction never did apply, because when one hasn't got something one can't inalienably own it. Both traditional and modern Arabana speakers use the privative suffix *-padni*, which is parallel in function, but opposite in meaning to the proprietary suffix:

- (20) *Antha wardukupa-padni*
I child- without
'I haven't got any children of my own' or 'I haven't got any children here with me.'
- (21) *Antha yakarra-padni*
I tooth-without
'I haven't got any teeth (this could refer to one's own or false ones).'

4. Paakantyi possession marking in verbless clauses

Paakantyi had a system of marking pronominal possession by means of possessive suffixes: there was one set of possessive suffixes, which were used for both alienable and inalienable possession in all environments. As in Arabana, on the noun phrase level the traditional system has not changed.

There has also been no change in verbless clauses where the subject is a demonstrative or interrogative, and the following sentences were considered correct for both the old and new phases of the language.

Alienable possession:

- (22) *Wintyara mir-ai*
where bag-1sg POS
'Where is my bag?'

and inalienable:

- (23) *Iki mar-ai*
this hand-1sg POS
'This is my hand.'

Possessor dominance in the traditional language

When the word for 'name' or for 'a person's totemic identity' was involved, Paakantyi, like Arabana used 'identity-sensitive constructions' which precluded possessive markers: the name or the totemic identity *was* the person, not just part of him or her:

- (24) *Minha nhiiki ngimba?*
what name you
'What's your name?'

As in Arabana this is now being changed under the influence of English:

- (25) *Minha nhiiki-ma?*
what name-2sg POS
'What's your name?'

Similarly people used to ask:

- (26) *Minha wan.ga ngimba?*
what meat you
'What's your meat (i.e. your matrilineal totemic identity)?'

Because of the demise of the matrilineal totemic system, there is no modern equivalent to this question.

In the traditional language the same structure prevailed with words for body parts: the possessor was the dominant feature and was the subject, and possessive suffixes were not used if the subject, the possessor, was pronominal:

- (27) *Nguri mathir-athu*
fat⁴ big-3sg
'(The porcupine) he has a lot of fat.' (Fat big-he)

However possessive markers were used if the subject was a noun, as in sentence (34) below.

In traditional Paakantyi, unlike Arabana, possessor dominance in the case of body parts was not a strict rule. Occasionally the body part was the subject, as in the following traditional story about the Crow:

- (28) *Miiki-nha paatyirka*
eye-3sg POS white
'His eye is white.' (Eye-his white)

while the favoured construction would have been 'eye white he'.

As in modern Arabana, the shift of emphasis to the body part has now become the rule, and sentences like (24), (26) and (27) are no longer acceptable. A typical modern sentence is the following:

- (29) *Paliira thartu-ai*
good head-1sg POS
'My head is good, i.e. I have a good head, I am a clever person.' (Good head-mine)

The proprietary suffix *-tya*

In traditional Paakantyi the proprietary suffix *-tya* had a wider scope than the corresponding Arabana suffix. It basically served to mark alienable possession:

- (30) *Yarnda-tya-athu*
money-having-3sg
'He has money.'
- (31) *Ngulau-tya ithi karku*
water-having this flagon
'This flagon has (only) got water in it.'

Unlike the Arabana suffix it could be used for inalienable possession, i.e. body parts, particularly if a not necessarily permanent situation was implied:

- (32) *Thartu-mika-tya-apa*
head-pain-having-1sg
'I have a headache.'
- (33) *Thulaka ngandi-tya-apa*
bad teeth-having-1sg
'I have bad teeth.'

The following two traditional sentences are typical of the old category showing possessor dominance:

- (34) *Ngatyi yalhi pampa-nha*
water-snake long neck-3sgPOS
'The Water-snake has a long neck.' (Water-snake long neck-his)

and

- (35) *Ngatyi yalhi pampa-ngka*
water-snake long neck-3plPOS
'Water-snakes have long necks.' (Water-snake long neck-theirs)

These sentences are now no longer acceptable, just like (24), (26) and (27). They showed a number distinction, conveyed by the bound possessive markers. Now the only accepted way of expressing the meaning of these sentences is by use of the proprietary suffix:

- (36) *Ngatyi yalhi pampa-tya*
water-snake long neck-having
'Water-snake(s) have long necks.'

As in the case of Arabana the modern increased use of the proprietary suffix masks a previous distinction, in Paakantyi it is the number distinction that was conveyed by the bound possessive marker. Under the influence of English the two languages have ended up with exactly parallel sentence structures, differing only in the word order of the noun phrase in the complement. Modern Arabana people would say:

- (37) *Kanmarri unku parraparra-purru*
water-snake neck long-having
'Water-snake(s) have long necks.'

The increased use of the proprietary suffix under English influence has brought two very different Aboriginal languages closer together. On the way the culturally very important 'identity sensitive constructions' have been lost.

5. Arabana sentences with verbs

The feature pointed out by McGregor (1985:209) is basic in both Arabana and Paakantyi grammar: "Nominal expressions for both the part and the whole are accorded identical morphological marking."

In Arabana this applies to inalienable possession in general and not just body parts. There are only rare examples with an intransitive verb, with both the possessor and the inalienably possessed in the nominative case.

- (38) *Wimpa nguyu thika-rnda*
track one go.back-PRES
'(He) went away with only one set of footprints i.e. he went away, never to return (he died).'

There is another very similar expression with the same meaning: and the use of a body part term:

- (39) *Wakarra nguyu thika-mda*
 back.of.neck one return-PRES
 '(He) went away, the back of his neck (showing) only once.'
- (40) *Anpa marna kilya yanhi-mda*
 you mouth raw speak-PRES
 'You speak (as one with a) raw mouth.'

The meaning is 'you speak raw-mouthed', ie. you are talking in a disgusting way.

These sentences represent fixed locutions, which have not been altered by those who know them, and there is no modern version. They are still recalled, though rarely, but no longer form part of a productive syntactic category.

With transitive verbs the identical morphological marking is often obscured by the accusative-marking hierarchy, where pronouns and nouns denoting persons are marked for the accusative, whereas ordinary nouns are in the absolutive form.

- (41) *Anha tyintya-ka wiri*
 me+ACC cut-PAST hair+ACC
 '(She) cut my hair.'
- (42) *Mintalpa-nha ngawi-ka pidla*
 Clever Man-ACC hear-PAST name+ACC
 '(I) heard the Clever Man's name.' (I) heard him name.

There has now been a main shift away from possessor dominance. Modern speakers, influenced by English, insist that the possessive pronoun should be used, and the possessor, the main entity is omitted. The modern version of these sentences is:

- (43) *Tyintya-ka anthunha wiri*
 cut-PAST my hair
- (44) *Mintalpa-kunha pidla ngawi-ka*
 Clever Man-belonging.to name hear-PAST
 '(I) heard the Clever Man's name.'

This second example is particularly telling as it involves the abandonment of what was originally an 'identity-sensitive construction', pertaining to a person's name: in the modern version the possessed is the main feature, the main entity is represented just as an owner, and is marked only by the use of a possessive adjective or suffix. The general structure of the sentence now resembles English.

6. Paakantyi sentences with verbs

In traditional Paakantyi, just as in Arabana, the general rule of identical morphological marking for the part and the whole prevailed in the case of body parts. The evidence is not always transparent as there is syncretism between the accusative and the possessive in the free pronouns and also in the bound markers. A distinction was retained in the Pantyikali (also called Wanyiwalku) dialect in the first person: the bound accusative first person accusative suffix was *-anha* and the first person possessive suffix was *-ai*.

The following Pantyikali sentences are from a set of similar ones elicited from George Dutton, the last speaker of this dialect by Tindale (1938 notebook). The glosses are added by the writer, the translation is Tindale's. The body part was sometimes marked for possession:

- (45) *Ngulartyi karli-wa thatya-wa-anha yalku-ai*
 many dog-EMPH bite-PAST-me-ACC leg+ACC-mine
 'Many dogs bit me on the legs.' (lit. 'Many dogs bit-me my leg')
- (46) *Thuru-wa thatya-wa-anha mar-ai*
 snake-EMPH bite-PAST-me ACC hand-mine
 'The snake bit me on the hand.' (lit. 'The snake bit me my hand')

Sometimes however the body part was not marked for possession. This may have conveyed a different semantic nuance: there was probably a lesser emphasis on the part if it was not marked for possession.

- (47) *Ngulartyi karli-wa thatya-wa-anha yalku*
 many dog-EMPH bite-PAST-me+ACC leg+ACC
 'Many dogs bit me on the legs.' (lit. 'Many dogs bit-me leg', possibly with the meaning 'Many dogs bit me, on the leg'.)

Among modern speakers of Paakantyi—as of Arabana—the main principle of parallel marking of part and whole has been lost, and now only the part is mentioned together with a possessive suffix, just as in English. People now say:

- (48) *Thuru parta-tyi mar-ai*
 snake bite-PAST hand-mine
 'The snake bit my hand.'

in exactly the same way as they would say 'the snake bit my dog'.

The influence of English has gradually eliminated the old alienable versus inalienable distinction in both Arabana and Paakantyi, and with it number of finer semantic nuances. The two languages have both moved towards English syntax with regard to possession: linguistic diversity is giving way to uniformity.

7. Note on inalienable possession in the Western Kulin languages of Victoria

The Western Kulin languages are briefly mentioned here because they had a particularly interesting possessive system. In these languages the use of possessive suffixes with inalienable possession was obligatory to the degree that one could not elicit the words for body-parts without a possessive suffix being attached.

The third person possessive marker was used as a default marker or 'dummy marker' when the possessor was indeterminate or insignificant. This marker was *-uk* in Western Kulin, and *-u* in the North Western Kulin languages, which include Wati-Wati of the Swan Hill area.

<i>kirany-uk</i> leaf-3sgPOS	anklebush, used in corroborees, lit. 'its leaves' (Wemba-Wemba, cf. A.C.Stone, 1911)
<i>manany-uk</i> hand-3sgPOS	necklace made from crayfish claws lit. 'its hands' (Wemba-Wemba)
<i>mith-u</i> skin-3sgPOS	bark of a tree, lit. 'its skin' (Mathi-Mathi, i.e. NW Kulin)

Sentences with verbs

A very special version of the 'identical morphological marking' principle can be illustrated by the North-Western Kulin language, Watiwati.

In the typical Arabana example:

- (41) *Anha tyintya-ka wiri*
 me+ACC cut-PAST hair+ACC
 '(She) cut my hair.'

the possessor, the entity, is dominant and the body part is not marked for possession. This happens too in Victorian languages. Since something inalienably possessed cannot be without a possessive marker the default form, the third person singular possessive is used.

This is illustrated by the following Wati-Wati example from John Beveridge in Curr (1886:III:440ff). The gloss is by the writer:

- (49) *Jeleka noonthi wurto-oo yanden boin.*
 long.ago he back+ACC-3sg.POS me+ACC spear+PAST
 'Long ago he back mine speared.' (Beveridge's translation)

Here *yanden*, i.e. *yandin* 'me' is accusative as is *wurtoo*, i.e. *wartu* 'back', which is marked with the default possessive marker and not with that of the first person, because it was the entity that mattered, not the part possessed.

It would have been interesting to see how this possessive system would have reacted to English, but unfortunately these languages did not survive long enough to acquire a more modern version.

8. Hidden possession and the benefactive

Arabana

The benefactive is a stem-forming verbal suffix and indicates that the action is for the benefit or otherwise of someone who is not the subject.

The grammatical verbal category, which is widely known by this term, e.g. Austin (1981:77) and Blake (1979:205), is found in Arabana/Wangkangurru, in the Diyari language group and in Pitta-Pitta and is an important areal feature. The benefactive occurs in other Australian languages, it is known from NSW from Ngiyampaa, Kamilaroi and closely associated languages, and also Wiradyuri (Donaldson, pers.com.) but with differences in detail. It occurs also in Non-Pama Nyungan languages: Evans (1996) has described it in connection with possession for Mayali, a Gunwinyguan language of Arnhem Land.

As regards the benefactive, Arabana-Wangkangurru closely resembles the neighbouring Pitta-Pitta language both semantically and morphologically: the same suffix, *-la* is used.

Unless body-parts are involved the object of the verb can take a possessive marker:

- (50) *Ankunha punga karra-l-ta*
 your humpy tie-BEN-PRES
 '(He)'s fixing up your humpy for (you).'

Much more frequently possession, or impending possession on the part of the 'beneficiary' or 'involved person' is simply understood, it is well and truly hidden:

- (51) *Punga karra-l-ta*
 humpy tie-BEN-PRES
 '(He)'s fixing up (your) humpy for (you).'
- (52) *Ngura kudni-la-thira*
 camp put down-BEN-PUNCTILIAR
 '(He) is setting up (your) camp for (you).'

- (53) *Tharni-l-ta*
eat-BEN-PRES
'(They) eat (his dinner) for him (because he didn't come in time).'

In the Wangkangurru dialect there is even one example of an intransitive verb used as a benefactive, with a hidden possessor:

- (54) *Yunga kurda-la-yangu*
waterbag fall-BEN-PAST
'(His) waterbag fell down (for him), (it slipped out of his hand because he got such a shock).'

This refers to an Ancestor who is getting water at the bottom of the *Parra-Parra* Well, 'the Long One', the deepest in the Simpson desert. He is horrified by what he can hear happening up above. This sentence has become an alternative name for the site.

Benefactive constructions are still understood but no longer used in modern Arabana. Hidden possession no longer features in the language, and modern speakers simply use the possessive:

- (55) *Ankamba ngura kudni-rnda*
your camp put.down-PRES
'(He) is setting up your camp.'

The hidden possession on behalf of a 'beneficiary' or 'involved person' represented a subtlety of expression that has now faded from memory.

The dative of involvement in Paakantyi

Paakantyi did not have a verbal suffix corresponding to the benefactive. It did however have a means of expressing the 'involved' person or 'beneficiary' of an action, but *only* if that person was represented by a pronoun. The dative of the bound pronoun was affixed to the verb, as a dative of involvement, in a manner that closely resembles the situation described by Bally for Indo-European (C. Bally 1996:44).

- (56) *Ngindu-wa-rta karma-ty-ai inhu pamdu*
you-EMPH-however steal-PAST-me+DAT this fish
'But you stole (my) fish on me.'
- (57) *Wan.ga-ulu wartu-ty-ika-ai*
meat-only.one take-PAST-they-me
'They took (my) one and only bit of meat on me.'

One could use the possessive marker as well as the dative of involvement, exactly as in the examples quoted by Bally:

- (58) *Wan.ga-ulu-ai wartu-ty-ika-ai*
meat-only.one-mine take-PAST-they-me+DAT
'They took my one and only bit of meat on me.'

Unfortunately we do not have very many recorded examples of the dative of involvement.

Modern Paakantyi people hardly use pronominal suffixes any more, they prefer participles to finite verbs, so these subtleties of expression have now disappeared. As in all the situations described above, diversity has been replaced by uniformity: the unifying factor is the influence of English.

Notes

1. The language name is there spelt 'Bagandji'.

2. R.M.W. Dixon (2002:xxxvi) who views languages by 'Areal Group', treats Paakantyi as an isolate and puts Arabana into the Lake Eyre Basin Areal Group.
3. Language examples are given in bold italics.
4. The word *nguri* 'fat' is a noun.

References

- Austin, P.K. 1981. *A grammar of Diyari, South Australia*. (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 32) Cambridge University Press.
- Bally, C. 1996. The expression of concepts of the personal domain and indivisibility in Indo-European languages. [Translation by C. Béal and Hilary Chappell of 1926 article by C. Bally: L'expression des idées de sphere personnelle et de solidarité dans les langues indo-européennes. In F. Frankhauser and J. Jud (ed.)] In Chappell and McGregor (eds), 31-61.
- Beveridge, J. 1886. Swan Hill and Tyntynder. List 199. In E. Curr III, 439-45.
- Blake, B.J. 1979. Pitta-Pitta. In R.M.W. Dixon and B.J. Blake (eds), *Handbook of Australian languages*, Volume 1, 182-242. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Bowern, Claire 1998. The case of Proto Karnic: morphological change and reconstruction in the nominal and pronominal system of Proto Karnic (Lake Eyre Basin). BA Honours thesis, Australian National University.
- Bowern, Claire 2001. Karnic classification revisited. In J. Simpson et al. (ed.), 245-61.
- Chappell, H. and W. McGregor (eds) 1996. *The grammar of inalienability: a typological perspective on body part terms and part-whole relation*. (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 14) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Chappell, H. and W. McGregor 1996. Prolegomena to a theory of inalienability. In H. Chappell and W. McGregor (eds), 3-30.
- Curr, Edward M. 1886-1887. *The Australian race: its origin, languages, customs, place of landing in Australia, and the routes by which it spread itself over that continent*. # vols. Melbourne: J. Ferres, Government Printer.
- Dixon, R.M.W. 2002. *Australian languages, their nature and development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, Nicholas 1996. The syntax and semantics of body part incorporation in Mayali. In H. Chappell and W. McGregor (eds), 65-109.
- Frankhauser F. and J. Jud (eds) 1926. *Festschrift Louis Gauchat*, Aarau Switzerland.
- Hercus, L.A. 1982. *The Bagandji language*. (Pacific Linguistic Series B no. 67) Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Hercus, L.A. 1994. *Grammar of the Arabana-Wangkangurru language, Lake Eyre Basin, South Australia*. (Pacific Linguistics Series C 128) Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Hercus, L.A. and D. Nathan Paakantyi. CD containing dictionary, talking dictionary and grammar, (available since 2002 but not yet published). Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
- Hosokawa, K. 1996. *The quasi-passive and body parts in Yawuru*. In H. Chappell and W. McGregor (eds), 155-92.
- McGregor, W. 1985. Body parts in Kuniyanti clause grammar. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 5:209-32.
- Simpson, J., Nash, D., Laughren, M., Austin, P. and B. Alpher (ed.) 2001. *Forty years on: Ken Hale and Australian languages*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Stone, A.C. 1911. The Aborigines of Lake Boga. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 23(2):433.
- Tindale, N.B. 1938. Notes on Wainjiwalku Grammar, July 1938. MS. Exercise Book attached to *Notes of the Harvard Adelaide University Anthropological expedition 1938-9*. South Australian Museum.
- Tindale, N.B. 1974. *Aboriginal tribes of Australia: their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits and proper names*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Wilson, G.J. 2004. *Arabana, Years R to 10: An Arabana teaching framework for Reception to Year 10, Language revitalisation and second language learning*. Adelaide: Department of Education and Children's Services, South Australia.

L.A Hercus was Reader in Sanskrit at ANU until retirement in 1991, and is now a Visiting Fellow in the School of Language Studies at ANU. She has been carrying on linguistic work on highly endangered Aboriginal languages for over 40 years, mainly in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.