



Scar tree (bark taken to make a canoe), Currency Creek roadside, near Lake Alexandrina

# A Tourist's Guide to the Narinyiri Language

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Perseus Press  
[aboriginallanguages.com](http://aboriginallanguages.com)  
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ISBN 978-0-6457364-1-0



### Spelling

Language names are often spelt slightly differently. As Aboriginal people originally had no writing, how to spell Aboriginal words became a matter of choice, with the result that there is no single necessarily correct spelling. Wherever possible in this guide (i.e. excluding quoted material) the simplest spelling of *Narinyiri* has been used.

Some Aboriginal people, when asked about the origins of Aboriginal people in Australia, assert ‘we were always here’. A more generally accepted view is that people arrived in Australia long ago, probably from New Guinea when it was connected to continental Australia when the seas were lower during an ice age. There might have been a succession of such arrivals. Who knows? There is evidence of Aboriginal inhabitation of the country for 65 000 years. [<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/evidence-of-first-peoples>] It is thought that people arrived in the vicinity of Darwin, and from there over time spread all over the country. As Hobart in Tasmania is about 4500 km from Darwin, a group of people travelling one kilometre a year, or three metres a day, would have had time to go there and back nine times during this immense period. One area they travelled to is the south east of South Australia. As the Narinyiri, along with other Aboriginal peoples of southern Victoria and Tasmania, subsequently travelled furthest from the far north of the country, it can be reasonably assumed they arrived in this region earlier than peoples in locations closer to, say, Darwin.

When a group of people first arrived in continental Australia its members would have all spoken the same language. It is conceivable there were multiple such arrivals over time. The population however it arose would have gradually grown, people would have begun moving away as families needed space of their own. The further they got, it stands to reason, the longer would have been the time since they or their forebears left the starting point, and it is also likely that the way they spoke to one another would have slowly evolved. This is what always happens with languages—the greater the distance, and time, of separation, the more languages change. How all this movement and development took place is not known, but by the time of the European upheaval in Australia beginning with the arrival of the First

Fleet in 1788 it is thought that there were around 300 or so language groups on the land mass—and far more dialects—all associated with their own areas of the country. [<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/languages-alive>]

So great was the disparity in power between the newcomers and the original inhabitants, however (muskets and cannons against spears and hatchets), and so incessant were the arrivals of shiploads of immigrants at the same time as the numbers of Aboriginal people were declining from new diseases and conflict, that language groups were largely overwhelmed when contact occurred, beginning in Sydney and spreading from there. Of those hundreds of language groups, today only about a dozen in the centre and north of the country remain in the flourishing state of being passed on to children.

### Who are the Narinyiri?

The Narinyiri are a South Australian Aboriginal language group occupying the coastal strip on the edge of Encounter Bay, so named because it was where Captain Matthew Flinders ran into the French explorer Nicolas Baudin in 1802, when both were mapping the Australian coast. This ‘encounter’ was a peaceable one although France and Britain were at war at the time.

In the approximate language area map following, which draws on work by Tindale [<https://www.mapworld.com.au/products/aboriginal-australia-tindale-800-x-640mm-map>], Dixon [Dixon, R. M. W. (2002). *Australian Languages*. Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press: p.xxviii] and Horton [<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>], the orange Narinyiri language area is surrounded by a number of other language groups. A well-known tourist location in this area is the Coorong.

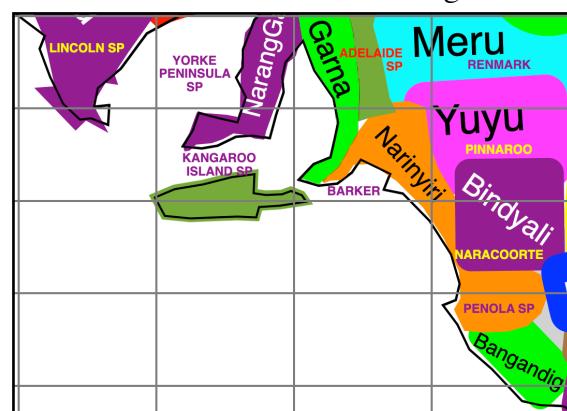


Fig. 1 SE South Australia: the Narinyiri occupy the orange area on this approximate language area map

## Where did the Narinyiri come from?

The Rev. Taplin considered this matter at some length in his Folklore book [p.12 ff]. He dismissed facial contour and bodily peculiarities as indicators of race, and language, too, though he said ‘where either lexical or grammatical similarity exists it points to a connection between the races at some past time’. ‘Organization of society—system of kinship—may be regarded as a proof, but not a perfect proof, of the country from whence a race came.’ Warming to this theme he added: ‘We are certainly justified, where we find a barbarous people possessing a complicated but peculiar and well-established system of kinship, which is the same as that which is found in a large civilised nation, in regarding it as extremely probable that they are an offshoot from that nation.’ And: ‘Myth, religion, and sorcery are also guides when we seek the origin of a people.’

Where Taplin’s reasoning was headed was this: ‘The more we study the Australian aborigines, the deeper becomes our conviction that they consist of two races. In some cases tribes are of one race only, and in other cases they are a mixture of the two. Some of their traditions support this view.’ He then noted ‘a system of kinship prevalent in southern India, amongst the Tamil and Telugu races, which is peculiar’, and went on to say: ‘Now, in some Australian tribes, this system is found in its completeness. In other tribes it is not so complete. Where it exists it is an indication that the original country of the Australian aborigines was southern and south-eastern Asia.’

Next: ‘As we look at the map of south-eastern Asia, Australasia, Melanesia, and Polynesia we shall mark the peculiar distribution of two great races. To the east we find the peoples of which the Tahitians, Hawaiians, and Tongans are types, scattered most numerously. They have, as a remarkable characteristic, unity of language, and an indisposition to change their language. As we go west we find them more and more thinly scattered, until we have but few traces of them amongst the multitudes of the dark races inhabiting the western groups of islands. These dark races—Papuans, as they have been called—are remarkable for the multitude of their languages.’ He went on:

‘Now, amongst the Australian aborigines, we have tribes of both types.’ And concluded: ‘Such facts, which it will be perceived we gather up from outside the Australian continent and apply to its aborigines, certainly go to prove that they did not have their origin here. The weight of evidence is in favor of their identity with the races inhabiting the continents and archipelagoes to the north and east, where we find the same system of kinship, the same customs, the same mental characteristics, and the same kinds of sorcery.’

From this perhaps he meant the Aboriginal people came from New Guinea, and the Pacific islands.

## Sources of information

Extensive records of the language were made at an early date by missionaries sent to the area with the aim of converting the Aboriginal people to Christianity.

The first of these was the Rev. H.A.E. Meyer (1813-62) from the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society in Dresden, Germany. Meyer arrived in South Australia with his wife in August 1840 and worked among the Ramindjeri people of the Encounter Bay area. By 1843 his 111-page book on the language had been published, comprising a word list, or ‘Vocabulary’, and a comprehensive grammar dealing with, among other things, nouns and their cases (to, from, of, at etc.), adjectives, pronouns, verbs and their tenses and moods, and adverbs. While his focus was on spiritual work, Meyer started a school and encouraged the people to support themselves through farming. The mission closed in 1848.



[Information from Griffith University ‘German missionaries in Australia’ website: <http://missionaries.griffith.edu.au/mission/encounter-bay-1840-1848-0>]

The next major source of information on the Narinyiri language came a generation later, through the Rev. George Taplin (1831-79), an English Congregationalist missionary, who arrived in South Australia in 1849, beginning



his work by Lake Alexandrina ten years later and remaining there until his death. His principal works on the language were *The Narrinyeri* (Adelaide, 1874), *Native Tribes of South Australia*, ed J.D. Woods (1879) and *The Folklore, Manners, Customs, and Languages of the South Australian Aborigines* (1879).

Taplin dealt at length with the culture and customs of the people. He also dealt with the language, and in doing so acknowledged his predecessor's work, writing: 'The Rev. H.A.E. Meyer ... made a brave attempt to master the grammar of this language in 1843, and with some success; but yet his attempt presents a great number of ludicrous mistakes to one better acquainted with it.' [Folklore, p.5]. Meyer's was, however, the more comprehensive coverage.

According to the Bible preached by these missionaries 'We are all equally made in God's image' (Genesis 1:26-28); 'The rich and poor have this in common: The Lord made them both' (Proverbs 22:2); 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). While it might therefore have been assumed that Taplin thought of the Aboriginal people he lived long amongst as the equal of himself and other Europeans, his views reflected attitudes of the time:

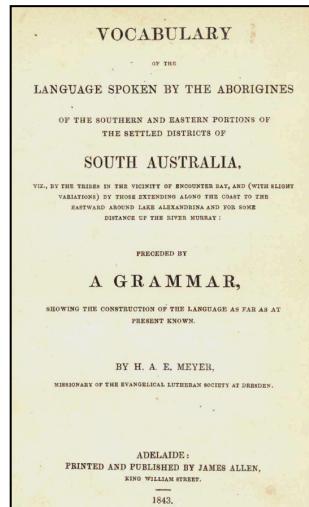
... man most nearly approaches the brute when he exists with the least possible use of implements. [Folklore, p.9]

... The human savage can never descend to the perfect brute state, because before he becomes thus completely degraded he dies. There is no country in the known world where man can live without implement or weapon. ... Man's highest state of health and vigor is only compatible with high civilisation and pure morality. The writer has had proof of this amongst the Narinyiri. There was a little family residing on Lake Alexandrina, the members of which were as nearly brutes as they could be. ... they subsisted on roots and native fruits, and such fish and game as came into their hands by means of the simplest contrivances, the thrown waddy or the

simple noose—and they were regarded by their own people as very low. They would not even make a break-wind, or shelter, but cowered under bushes and in holes; and yet it could not but be evident how far they were above the brute; the man could make twine, the woman a rush basket. The writer knew them for twenty years... [Folklore, p.10]

Meyer was not flattering either, describing Narinyiri as 'a language spoken by a people very generally considered the lowest in the scale of civilization.' [vii]

### The reference books

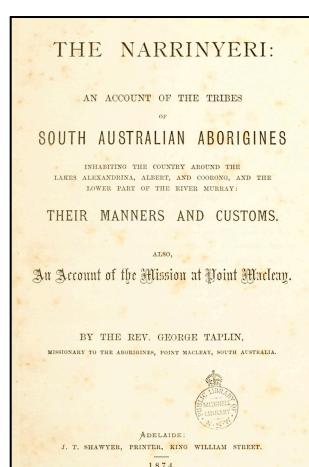


#### Vocabulary

Meyer, H. A. E. (1843). *Vocabulary of the Language Spoken by the Aborigines of the Southern and Eastern Portions of the Settled Districts of South Australia, viz., by the Tribes in the Vicinity of Encounter Bay, and (with slight variations) by those Extending along the Coast to the Eastward around Lake Alexandrina and for some Distance up the River Murray: Preceded by a*

*Grammar, Showing the Construction of the Language as far as at Present Known.* Adelaide, James Allen, King William Street.

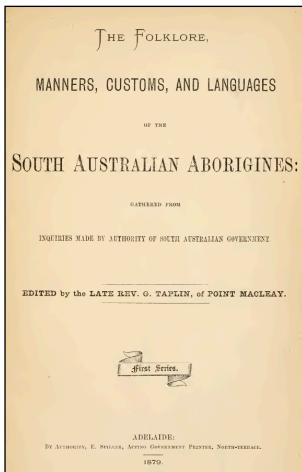
[https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-240887698/view?partId=nla.obj-240904123#page/n8\(mode/1up](https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-240887698/view?partId=nla.obj-240904123#page/n8(mode/1up)



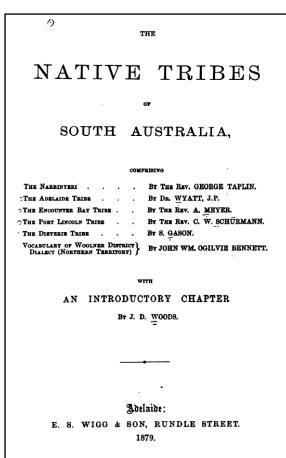
#### The Narrinyeri

Taplin, G., The Rev. (1874). *The Narrinyeri: An Account of the Tribes of South Australian Aborigines inhabiting the Country around the Lakes Alexandrina, Albert, and Coorong, and the lower part of the River Murray: their Manners and Customs; also, An Account of the Mission at Point Macleay.* Adelaide, J.T. Shawyer, Printer, King William Street.

<https://files02.sl.nsw.gov.au/fotoweb/pdf/1626/162665010.pdf>

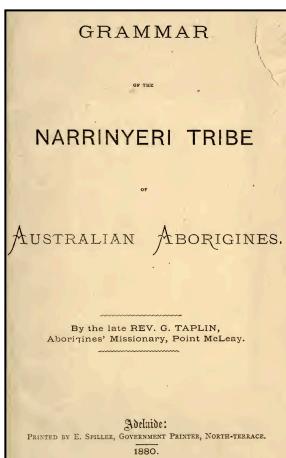


<https://archive.org/details/folkloremannersc00taplrich/mode/2up>



*Territory) by John Wm. Ogilvie Bennett with an Introductory Chapter by J.D. Woods.* Adelaide, E.S. Wigg & Son, Rundle Street.

<https://archive.org/details/nativetribessou00taplgoog>



**The Grammar**  
 Taplin, G., The Rev. (1880). *Grammar of the Narrinyeri Tribe of Australian Aborigines*. Adelaide, E. Spiller, Government Printer, North-terrace.

<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-688657419/view?partId=nla.obj-688727524#page/n0/mode/1up>

## General comments on language

The practitioners of various specialist areas of human activity, whether they be doctors, carpenters, butchers and so on, all have their

### *Folklore, including The Grammar*

Taplin, G., The Rev., Ed. (1879). *The Folklore, Manners, Customs and Languages of the South Australian Aborigines: gathered from Inquiries made by Authority of South Australian government*. Edited by the late Rev. G. Taplin, of Point Macleay. Adelaide, E. Spiller, Acting Government Printer, North-terrace.

own special words or jargon that everyone who works in that area knows, but those outside of it generally do not. So too do grammarians, and it is grammar that is being looked at here.

The major word categories, or parts of speech, in languages are nouns, to do with names of things and ideas (e.g. tree, man, happiness), and verbs, to do with actions (e.g. run, think, throw). Then there are pronouns, which stand in for nouns, and are mainly about people (I, you, us, them etc.); next come adjectives (e.g. big, little, quick, old,) and adverbs (e.g. here, there, quickly, slowly), which add meaning to, or qualify, nouns (big tree) and verbs (run quickly) respectively. Prepositions (at, in, or, by, with, from, to, in, out, under, etc.) are like the oil making a language's constituent parts work. Other parts of speech are articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that, those etc.) and interjections or exclamations (hey!, oh! etc.)

Languages are different in the way they convey meaning, and in the way they are written, if written at all. Australian languages were not written before the time Europeans descended on this land, found out something about the inhabitants and occasionally made records, writing down what they thought they heard, and what they thought it meant. As Australian languages are quite different from English, it is not surprising that often there were misinterpretations, and that the way the Europeans wrote down what they heard was approximate.

English as a language depends on word order, as the sentence dog bites man readily shows. The word that comes first indicates who or what (dog) is doing the action (biting), and a later word indicates the person or thing it is done to (man). In this sentence, the 'do-er', dog, is the subject of the sentence; its function (or case) in this situation is labelled as ergative, sometimes called nominative. Man, the 'done to', is the object of the sentence; its function is labelled accusative.

Speakers of languages generally use around 10 000 words although they may understand or know many more. The same would apply to Australian languages, including Narinyiri.

## General features of Australian languages

Australian languages vary in the way sentences are formed and how nouns and verbs are made up. In many languages, a verb stem or root is followed by various particles or *suffixes*, often finishing with a tense marker and then bound pronouns. Such elaborating suffixes provide information that in English would be supplied by separate words. In Australian languages, generally speaking, it is *all* about the suffixes.

In many languages, including Australian languages, while word order is to some extent useful it is not essential, there being other ways to indicate who or what is doing an action. In Australian languages this is achieved by adding an ending, or suffix, to the 'do-er', such a suffix often featuring '*-u*' (e.g. *-gu*, *-ngu*, *-du*). The word that includes such an ending is likely to be who or what is doing the action, regardless of where it occurs in the sentence. For example, in the sentence *man sees girl*, when the order is jumbled up but *-gu* is added to the 'do-er' (*girl man-gu sees*), we can still tell who is doing the seeing: *gu* indicates the man is doing it. The name of this suffix marking the subject, 'do-er', in a *transitive* sentence (one in which there is also a 'done to', or object) is ergative. While English does use suffixes (e.g. *govern*: *governs*, *governed*, *governing*, *governor*, *government*), it does not do so in anything like the way or to the extent that Australian languages do.

In contrast to English and other European languages, Australian languages generally do not have verbs 'to be' and 'to have'. They work around this, often using 'to sit' or 'to stand' for 'to be'. They also use noun suffixes indicating 'having' and 'lacking'. So *dogs have tails* and *people don't have tails* would be expressed as *dog tail-having* and *people tail-lacking*. Other features that differ from English and other European languages include a very limited range of words for numbers and colours.

This does not mean that Australian languages are primitive or deficient, however, just that they are different. At times they can be considerably more sophisticated than European languages. For example, where English and other languages have terms for 'we', 'you' and 'they', Australian languages distinguish between two and more-than-two people, having

words for 'we-two' and 'we-all', 'you-two' and 'you-all' and 'they-two' and 'they-all'. A further sophistication of some languages occurs in such sentences as *we are going*, in which the use of one pronoun would mean *we* (*but not you*) are going, while use of a different pronoun would indicate that *we* (*including you*) are going.

Another example of Australian language precision is found in words for human relations: separate terms for 'older sister's husband' and for the son or daughter of a male, for example, make the terms 'aunt', 'nephew', 'grandfather' and 'mother-in-law' used in English look vague.

In other respects, Australian languages tend to keep things simple. They do not have genders, which in some European languages (although not, thankfully, in English) make 'tables' feminine (French) or masculine (Italian) or the 'sea', again, feminine in French and masculine in Italian. German is yet more complicated in having neuter. All nouns in these European languages are either masculine, feminine (or neuter), and all speakers have to learn which is which.

Australian languages frequently do not show plurals. Articles (a, an, the) used in English and other European languages are not found in Australian languages. Nor are prepositions (at, in, by etc.), Australian languages expressing such concepts by using suffixes instead.

There is another instance of the keep-it-simple principle. It was mentioned above that in Australian languages a *gu*-type suffix is added to the 'do-er' in a sentence to show who is doing the action. However, there are some words, often to do with movement, whether there is no other party involved (e.g. *horse gallops*, *grasshopper jumps*). Such verbs are called *intransitive*, and as in these instances no one else other than the horse or grasshopper could be doing the galloping or jumping, generally speaking Australian languages see no need to apply a suffix to them.

## Particular features of the Narinyiri language

Taplin wrote: 'The language of the Narrinyeri is lexically very different from the languages of the neighboring tribes' [Grammar, p.6]. And

Meyer: ‘... this language [has a] great difference, not only in the grammatical forms, but also in the radicals of the words, from the language spoken by the natives in the vicinity of Adelaide ...’ [vi]

Two notable characteristics of the Narinyiri language are consonant clusters, and the fact that many words begin with *l*- and *r*-.

Consonant ‘clusters’ are occasions when two or more consonants occur together, as in the words ‘strange’ and ‘Shaftsbury Avenue’ in English. Such consonant clusters at the beginning of words in Narinyiri include *kld*-, *dl*-, *dr*-, *gl*-, *gr*-, *ngl*-, *ngr*-, *yl*-, *yr*-, as well as *-ndr*- (mid-word).

Linguist R.M.W. Dixon, on consonants in words in Australian languages writes [using ‘C’ for consonant and ‘V’ for vowel]:

In most languages words begin with a single consonant and end with either a single consonant or a vowel. In a number of languages all words end in a vowel and in some all words end in a consonant. There are

languages with initial CC [i.e. two consonants] clusters, achieved by omitting an initial CV and exposing medial CC, or by omitting the vowel between first and second consonants. And some have final CC clusters, which have developed by similar paths. In addition, a number of languages have medial clusters of three consonants, most of which probably developed through omitting an unstressed medial vowel. [Dixon 2002 p.66]

In many Australian languages every word must consist of at least two syllables; each word must begin with a single consonant and can end in a consonant or a vowel. There is just one vowel in each syllable; between any two vowels there must be one, or a sequence of two, consonants. We can summarise this in a formula:

CV(C)CV(C)

where C indicates consonant and V vowel, and parentheses, (...), include an optional element. [Dixon 1980 p.127]

A few languages, mostly in the southeast, allow words to begin with consonant clusters such as *gl*-, *bl*-, *gr*-, *br*-, it seems that this is also a recent development, involving the loss of an original unstressed vowel ... [Dixon 1980 p.128]

Dixon’s remarks indicate that it is overwhelmingly normal for Aboriginal words to begin with a consonant, then for this to be followed by a vowel, making up a first syllable; then a consonant (sometimes a pair, or even three) consonants, then another vowel—and perhaps another consonant, making up a second syllable; and there could sometimes be other syllables formed in the same way. How Narinyiri differs from this is that many words begin with two consonants—with consonant clusters.

The second significant distinguishing feature of Narinyiri is that many words begin with the consonants *l*- and *r*-.

To show how unusual this is, here is a summary of how words begin across Australia as recorded in the Bayala databases:

Database	b-	d-	g-	l-	m-	n-	ng-	r-	w-	y-
Coastal	13625	9184	15211	67	8092	4292	8867	65	4904	6385
Inland	12297	7144	6834	285	7092	7525	4729	58	7022	5350
Interstate	8775	8028	11202	625*	7297	3398	4132	287†	6369	4594
Victoria	3114	2519	2610	335	1907	1246	858	79	2080	1113
Nyungar	4414	3618	6122	4	3686	1804	2035	5	3039	2126
WestAust	540	430	725	10	535	271	200	6	588	287
Tasmania	4484	3870	2266	3897	3348	2396	181	1448	1956	304

Fig. 3 Showing the number of words beginning with particular letters in the databases

\*625 (318 Narinyiri); †287 (139 Narinyiri)

The highlighted columns in the table show that across the nation, apart from in Tasmania, numbers of instances of words beginning with *l*- and *r*- are far fewer (approaching zero in some instances) than words beginning with other consonants. This aversion to *l*- and *r*-initial words is less pronounced in the Bayala Interstate database, however, largely owing to the influence of the Narinyiri examples.

The Bayala databases are a collection of databases developed by the present writer listing Australian language words and sentences mainly from historical records nationwide. Currently including about 250 000 records, they are comprehensive enough to allow such general observations to be made as the frequency of words in Australian languages beginning with *l*- and *r*-.

Dixon, R.M.W. *The Languages of Australia*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Dixon, R.M.W. *Australian Languages*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

## Language name Narinyiri

The names of many Australian languages are based on the word ‘no’ in the language concerned. Aboriginal people evidently were well aware of the fact that each language having its own distinctive word for ‘no’ was a distinguishing feature of languages. So major language groups in New South Wales **Wira**-dhuri and **Gamil**-arayi have names that translate as *no-having*, the word for ‘no’ in those languages being respectively **wira** and **gamil**. Alternatively a language name might be ‘no’ repeated, as in the Murray River languages **Bureba Bureba, Wemba Wemba** and quite a few others.

The language name Nar-inyiri also means ‘nar’-having; however, *nar* does not mean ‘no’. Meanings recorded for *nar* include ‘intelligible’, ‘that’ and ‘build’, but it would be simply a guess to opt for one of these as being the meaning of the name for this language.

It is time to look at some examples of the Narinyiri language.



### Noun suffixes

While many Australian languages manage without a plural (English adds *-s*), Narinyiri has a suffix, or ending, to denote ‘two of something’ (basically **-engG**), and another for ‘many of them’ (**-ar**).

The following table is largely based on Meyer’s work.

Noun suffixes

		Singular	Dual	Plural
Ergative	transitive	<b>il</b>	<b>ingul</b>	<b>ar</b>
Nominative	intransitive	<b>i</b>	<b>ingG</b>	<b>ar</b>
Possessive	of	<b>awi</b>		
Dative–Allative	to	<b>ungayi / angG</b>	<b>ungingul</b>	<b>ungar</b>
Ablative–Elative	from	<b>nind</b> [person] / <b>anmand</b> [place]	<b>ingulund / iningulund</b>	<b>inind / anand</b>
Locative	at	<b>ald</b>	<b>ingal</b>	<b>an</b>
Loc/All [?]	at	<b>ungayi</b>	<b>ungingul</b>	<b>ungar</b>
Causative	by	<b>anyir</b> [?] / <b>il</b>	<b>ingul</b>	<b>ar</b>
Instrumental	using	<b>ngayi</b>	<b>ungingul</b>	<b>ungar</b>
Purposive	for	<b>ambi / uramb</b>		

Fig. 4 Noun suffixes (largely based on Meyer, and simplified, p.12-15)

Changes in the table above include:

—the addition of terms used in modern linguistics, such as *ergative* for the subject of a *transitive* sentence (one in which someone (the subject) does something to someone (the object))—as in ‘dog bit snake’. An *intransitive* sentence is when someone just does something, affecting no-one else—as in ‘he walks’.

—changes in terminology: *allative* and *elative*—to and from—replace *dative* and *ablative*, the older terms being broader concepts (dative: *to* and *for*; ablative: *by, with, from, at, in, on*). For ‘at, in, on’ the term *locative*, i.e. related to *location* or *place*, is introduced. (These terms are known as *cases*.)

—All this has necessitated some reassignment of the cases to the suffixes, notably of ergative often replacing causative in examples used by both Meyer and Taplin for the subject of a transitive sentence.

How the suffixes in the Fig. 4 table are applied to an actual word are shown for ‘child’ in the table below:

## Child

		Sing.	Dual	[Engl]	Plural	[Engl]
ERG	transitive	<b>burlil</b>	<b>burlingul</b>	2 chn	<b>burlar</b>	3+ chn
NOM	intransitive	<b>burli</b>	<b>burlingG</b>	2 chn	<b>burlar</b>	3+ chn
POSS	of			of 2 chn		of 3+ chn
ALL	to	<b>burlangG</b>	<b>burlungingun</b>	to 2 chn	<b>burlungar</b>	to 3+ chn
ELA	from	<b>burlinind</b>	<b>burlingulund burliningulund</b>	from 2 chn	<b>burlinind burlanand</b>	from 3+ chn
LOC	at	<b>burlald</b>	<b>burlingal</b>	at 2 chn	<b>burlan</b>	at 3+ chn
CAUS	by			by 2 chn		by 3+ chn
INSTR	using			2 chn using		3+ chn using
?		<b>burlungayi</b>	<b>ungengul</b>		<b>ungar</b>	
PURP	for			for 2 chn		for 3+ chn

Fig. 5 Noun suffixes on **burli**: child (based on Taplin, p.9)

The blanks in the Fig. 5 table are there because Taplin did not provide examples that might be inserted, although the following might be appropriate:

POSS **burlawi**, CAUS **burlanyir**, PURP **burlambi**.

## Verb suffixes

Verbs consist of the basic part of a word of action, its stem, to which additional components may be added. In most Australian languages such extras are suffixes, or endings. While additional components are common in Narinyiri, they are not always added onto the verb stem, there seeming to be the possibility of considerable freedom in the arrangement of the components, as shown by Taplin with the sentence:

*Nginte el our ityan lak*  
*ngindi il ur idyan lag*  
*thou must speak him*  
*thou-ERG INTent must him pierce*

Normally, i.e. in Australian languages generally, the additional components would be added onto the stem—here, **lag** (pierce)—as suffixes and so such a sentence might have the form:

*ngindi lag-il-ur idyan*  
*thou must speak him*  
*thou-ERG pierce-INTent must him*

Additional suffixes include tense markers, terms known as *derivational* suffixes (drv sfx), as well as words added on (e.g. *wal*, *war*, *mind*) affecting meaning:

Prefix (tense markers)	Tense	interpreted in the Bayala databases as:
<b>in</b>	present	now
<b>ani/il</b>	future	will/INTend
<b>ir/ur</b>	past	did
<b>imb</b>	past historic	PH
Prefix (drv sfx)	Function	interpreted in the Bayala databases as:
<b>ung</b>	reciprocal	RECIP
<b>li</b>	continuing (-ing)	CONT
<b>ur/ura</b>	must	must
<b>ild/ildi</b>	could, would	
<b>al</b>	desire	DESire
<b>il</b>	intend	INT
<b>i</b>	no, not, negative	
Suffixing verb	Meaning	interpreted in the Bayala databases as:
<b>-wal-in</b>	be, become	INERT
<b>-war-in</b>	act, make	URG
<b>-mind-in</b>	make	

Fig. 6 Common verb suffixes

## Pronouns

In Narinyiri there are pronouns for *I, thou, he, we, you, they*, and for the accusative equivalents *me, thee, him, us, you, them* ('thou' and 'thee' being used here to distinguish 'you-singular' and 'you-dual/plural'). These pronouns often have two forms: one set that stand by themselves, as is always the case in English, called 'free'. Those in the second set are usually shorter; called 'bound' pronouns, they are attached to verbs as suffixes.

Terminology: 'first person' is *I, me, we, us*; 'second person' is *thou, thee, you*; and 'third person' is *he (she, it), him (her, it), they, them*. 'Singular' is *I, thou, he*; 'dual' is *we-two, you-two, they-two*; 'plural' is *we-all, you-all, they-all*.

First, second and third person pronouns, singular, dual and plural

			Singular	[L/me]	Dual	[...-two]	Plural	[...-all]
			Free	bound	Free	bound	Free	bound
1	ERG	I	<b>ngadi</b>	<b>ad/adi</b>	<b>ngil</b>	<b>angil</b>	<b>ngurn</b>	
	NOM	I	<b>ngabi</b>	<b>ab</b>	<b>ngil</b>	<b>angil</b>	<b>ngurn</b>	
	ACC	me	<b>ngan</b>	<b>an</b>	<b>lam</b>	<b>alam</b>	<b>nam</b>	<b>anam</b>
2	ERG	thou	<b>ngindi</b>	<b>ind</b>	<b>ngurl</b>	<b>ung-urL</b>	<b>ngun</b>	<b>ungun</b>
	NOM	thou	<b>ngindi</b>	<b>ind/indi</b>	<b>ngurl</b>	<b>ung-urL</b>	<b>ngun</b>	<b>ungun</b>
	ACC	thee	<b>ngum</b>	<b>um/m</b>	<b>lum</b>	<b>alum</b>	<b>num</b>	<b>anum</b>
3	ERG	he	<b>gil</b>	<b>il</b>	<b>gingGul</b>	<b>ingGul</b>	<b>gar</b>	<b>ar</b>
	NOM	he	<b>gidyi</b>	<b>idyi</b>	<b>gingG</b>	<b>ingG</b>	<b>gar</b>	<b>ar</b>
	ACC	him	<b>gin</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>gingGun</b>	<b>ingGun</b>	<b>gan</b>	<b>an</b>

Fig. 7 Free and bound pronouns. Translations for 'Dual' are **we-two, us-two**, and for Plural, **we-all** and **us-all**

Third person pronouns: cases

	Singular	[English]	Dual	[English]	Plural
ERG	<b>gil</b>	he	<b>gingGul</b>	they-two/all	<b>gar</b>
NOM	<b>gidyi</b>	he	<b>gingG</b>	they-two/all	<b>gar</b>
ACC	<b>gin</b>	him	<b>gingGun</b>	them-two/all	<b>gan</b>
POSS	<b>ginawi</b>	of him	<b>gingGunawi</b>	of them-two/all	<b>ganawi</b>
ALL	<b>ginanG</b>	to him	<b>gingGunangG</b>	to them-two/all	<b>ganangG</b>
ELA	<b>ginanyir</b>	from him	<b>gingGunanyir</b>	from them-two/all	<b>gananyir</b>
LOC		at him		at them-two/all	
CAUS		by him		by them-two/all	
INSTR		him-using		them-two/all-using	
PURP	<b>ginambi</b>	for him	<b>gingGunambi</b>	for them-two/all	<b>ganambi</b>

Fig. 8 Additional cases for 'he/him, they/them-two, they/them-all'. 'He' stands also for 'she, it', 'him' also for 'her, hers'

## Most frequently occurring Narinyiri suffixes

The following table showing the most frequently occurring suffixes draws on the works of Meyer, Taplin and the records in Curr, E. M. (1886b) *The Australian race: its origin, languages, customs, place of landing in Australia, and the routes by which it spread itself over that continent*. In four volumes. Melbourne, John Ferres, Government Printer.

Item	Significance	Function	Freq.
<b>ab</b>	I	pronoun	4
<b>ag</b>	two		3
<b>alam</b>	us-two	pronoun	2
<b>ald</b>	at		4
<b>amaldi</b>	agent		4
<b>ambi</b>	PURPose: for		5
<b>an</b>	them-all	pronoun	2
<b>an</b>	me	pronoun	4
<b>andayi</b>	times		2
<b>andi</b>	perhaps		2
<b>angang</b>	we-two	pronoun	2
<b>angG</b>	to, at		5
<b>ani</b>	FUTure will	verb	3
<b>anmand</b>	from		3
<b>anyir</b>	from, because		3
<b>ar</b>	TRANSitive	verb	2
<b>ar</b>	they-all	pronoun	3
<b>ar</b>	PLURal		5
<b>awi</b>	[relatives] of	pronoun	3
<b>awi</b>	of		5
<b>awu</b>	justnow		2
<b>awuri</b>	HABitual		2
<b>ayi</b>	QUESTion		2
<b>di</b>	from, by		3
<b>dul</b>	place of [?]/ from [?]		2
<b>dyi</b>	lacking		3
<b>i</b>	no NEGative		2
<b>idyan</b>	him [her, it]	pronoun	3
<b>idyi</b>	he [she, it]	pronoun	3
<b>ig</b>	place [?]		2
<b>il</b>	he [she, it]	pronoun	2
<b>il</b>	exist, do	verb	2

<b>il</b>	DESire / PERMIt / might	verb	3
<b>il</b>	INTend	verb	3
<b>il</b>	by [ERG?]		3
<b>il</b>	ing [continuing]	verb	6
<b>im</b>	thee	pronoun	4
<b>imbi</b>	PAST HISToric	verb	2
<b>in</b>	self: RFLX, RECIP	pronoun	3
<b>in</b>	PRESent: now	verb	6
<b>indi</b>	thou	pronoun	4
<b>ing</b>	him [her, it]	pronoun	3
<b>ingG</b>	they-two	pronoun	2
<b>ingG</b>	two		5
<b>ingGun</b>	two-ACC		2
<b>ingGun</b>	them-two	pronoun	3
<b>inyiri</b>	having		4
<b>ir</b>	PAST did	verb	4
<b>mind</b>	make	verb	3
<b>mundund</b>	direction, location [?]		2
<b>n</b>	this		2
<b>nind</b>	from, because		3
<b>ru</b>	more		2
<b>ul</b>	somewhat		2
<b>ulum</b>	ye-two	pronoun	2
<b>und</b>	ACCusative		2
<b>ungayi</b>	at, to; in company with, INSTR		3
<b>ungung</b>	you-all	pronoun	2
<b>ungurl</b>	you-two	pronoun	2
<b>ur</b>	must	verb	3
<b>urmi</b>	INSTR using		3
<b>wadyiri</b>	plenty		3
<b>wal</b>	become	verb	5
<b>wali</b>	him-of	pronoun	3
<b>war</b>	at		2
<b>war</b>	make	verb	4

The frequency number code on the right is:  
code # significance

1	1-5 examples	4	51-100 examples
2	6-20 examples	5	101-500 examples
3	21-50 examples	6	500+ examples

The rarer code 1 examples (about 20) have been omitted.

## Narinyiri vocabulary

The Narinyiri word as originally recorded is given in the first column followed by a simplified standardised respelling. Next is the original English translation, then finally a corresponding simplified standardised English equivalent. They are drawn from the Bayala databases, which incorporate the words provided in the sources described above.

Australian	respelt	English	simplified
<b>warrin</b>	war-in	to make	act-now
<b>amalde</b>	amaldi	an agent	agent
<b>tamin</b>	dam-in	to point	aim-now
<b>Taminyun</b>	dam-in-yun	to shoot	aim-now-xxx
<b>Tumbewallin</b>	dumbi-wal-in	Alive	alive-become-now
<b>ngruntungar</b>	ngrund-ungar	of all	all-at-PLUR
<b>Ngrakkuwallin</b>	nragu-wal-in	Angry, to be	anger-become-now
<b>Nyenkulun</b>	nyinG-ul-un	Dissatisfied	anger-ing-now
<b>Konkinyeri</b>	gunG-inyiri	Away, apart [by itself]	apart-having
<b>Tyele</b>	dyili	Arm above elbow	arm upper
<b>Yari</b>	yari	Back	back
<b>laminin</b>	lamin-in	carrying on the back	backcarry-now
<b>wirrangwallin</b>	wirang-wal-in	being bad	bad-be-now
<b>Perle-wall-in</b>	birli-wal-in	being bad	bad-become-now
<b>wirrangwarrin</b>	wirang-war-in	doing wrong	bad-make-now
<b>Pulyugge</b>	bulyugGi	Ball	ball
<b>Yorle</b>	yurl	Bark of trees	bark
<b>Menake</b>	minagi	Beard	beard
<b>mempin</b>	mimb-in	striking	beat-now
<b>Tant-urmi</b>	dand-urmi	sleeping thing, a bed	bed [sleep- INSTR]
<b>Mankuri</b>	manGuri	Belly	belly
<b>Grauwe</b>	grawi	Large	big
<b>ngolkir</b>	ngulg-ir	was bitten, i.e., He bit him	bite-did
<b>Kinemana</b>	giniman	Black	black
<b>Tonde</b>	dundi	Blind	blind
<b>krewe</b>	griwi	blood	blood
<b>Kruwalde</b>	gruwaldi	Bloody	blood
<b>Winkundun</b>	winG-und-un	Breathing	blow-ing-now
<b>Partpate</b>	bardbadi	Bone	bone
<b>lulun</b>	lul-un	breaking	break-now
<b>morokkun</b>	murug-un	to fetch	bring-now
<b>gelanowe</b>	gil-an-awi	my elder brother	brother-me-of elder
<b>kulkun</b>	gulg-un	burning (transitive)	burn-now

<b>nyrangkin</b>	nyrangG-in	burning (intransitive)	burn-now
<b>Nompulun</b>	numb-ul-un	Planting	bury-ing-now
<b>Ngauandi</b>	ngawandi	Bird's-nest	camp [nest]
<b>porle</b>	burli	a child	child
<b>porlungai</b>	burl-unga	to, with, or on a child	child-at
<b>Porlaldol</b>	burl-ald-ul	Of a little child	child-at-of
<b>porlengulu</b>	burl-ing-ul-nd	from two children	child-two-of-from
<b>Wullun</b>	wul-un	Cloudless sky	clear-now
<b>Munkumbole</b>	munGumbuli	Clever	clever
<b>Murunkun</b>	murunGun	Cool	cold
<b>Tlattal-in</b>	dladal-in	becoming cold	cold-now
<b>Puntir itye</b>	bund-ir-idyi	He came	come-did he
<b>Puntir engk</b>	bund-ir-ingG	They two came	come-did they two
<b>Puntin</b>	bund-in	Coming	come-now
<b>Kurkude</b>	gurgudi	crooked, bowed, bent	crooked
<b>yuntuwalli</b>	yundu-wal-in	crowding	crowd-be-now
<b>Patyuwarrin</b>	badyu-war-in	Doctoring	cure-make-now
<b>Pornil</b>	burnil	Dead	dead
<b>Piruwallin</b>	biru-wal-in	Breathless (dead)	dead-become-now
<b>Pilepi</b>	bilibi	Dew	dew
<b>pornelin</b>	burn-il-in	dying	die-ing-now
<b>pornun</b>	burn-un	die	die-now
<b>Malde</b>	maldi	Different	different
<b>Pilbiwallin</b>	bilbi-wal-in	Dirty	dirt-become-now
<b>Kiñem-in</b>	gingim-in	dirty	dirty-now
<b>Plombēwarrr-in</b>	blumbi-war-in	making disobedient	disobedient-make-now
<b>Rig-in</b>	rig-in	holding forth, showing	display-now
<b>Ku-un</b>	guyun	Far off	distant
<b>Ellir</b>	il-ir	Done	do-did
<b>Ellin</b>	il-in	Doing	do-now
<b>Ennani</b>	in-ani	Will do	do-will
<b>mare</b>	mari	down	down
<b>Moru</b>	muru	Below	down
<b>muttun</b>	mud-un	drinking	drink-now
<b>Meralde</b>	miraldi	dead, dry, ...	dry
<b>Tyiwallin</b>	dyi-wal-in	Drying up	dry-become-now
<b>Tyiwiwalli</b>	dyiwi-wal-in	Parched up	dry-become-now
<b>Punkeri</b>	bunGiri	Widgeon	duck
<b>Pelepe</b>	bilibi	Earth	earth
<b>Yāyin</b>	yay-in	eating	eat-now
<b>Pellatti</b>	biladi	Egg	egg
<b>Maratulde</b>	maraduldi	Empty	empty
<b>Pēkel-in</b>	big-il-in	being empty	empty-ing-now

[Kunyitye]	gun-idyi	[Enough, he has been]	enough he
<b>Yappul-un</b>	yab-ul-un	going into (a house), going down (as the sun)	enter-ing-now
<b>Munmund e</b>	munmundi	Barter (an equivalent)	exchange
<b>pelinend</b>	bili-nind	"eye-First cast the wood out of thine eye"	eye-from
<b>Pitterar</b>	bidir-ar	Eyebrow	eyebrow
<b>Petye</b>	bidyi	Face	face
<b>pingkin ap</b>	bingG -in-ab	I fall	fall-now I
<b>Bailpuli</b>	balbuli	Marrow	fat
<b>nanghai</b>	nanGa-yi	my father	father-me-of
<b>Blukkun</b>	blug-un	Alarm	fear-now
<b>kldeimindi n</b>	galdi-mind-in	fetching	fetch-make-now
<b>Maltaiar</b>	malday-ar	Few (some)	few-PLUR
<b>yelpulun</b>	yilb-ul-un	lying	fib-ing-now
<b>Ngungkura</b>	ngungGura	first	first
<b>Wurt-un</b>	wurd-un	peeling, skinning	flay-now
<b>yaralin</b>	yaral-in	flows	flow-now
<b>turne</b>	durni	foot	foot-of
<b>Ngurintan d</b>	ngurindand	Often	frequent
<b>pempin</b>	bimb-in	give	give-now
<b>ngoppun</b>	ngub-un	walking	go/come-now
<b>Nunkeri</b>	nunGiri	Good	good
<b>nunkowallin</b>	nunGa-wal-in	being good	good-be-now
<b>Nanko-wall-in</b>	nanGu-wal-in	becoming good	good-become-now
<b>Pankelde</b>	banGildi	Black and white goose	goose
<b>pulkeri</b>	bulgiri	greedy, and	greed
<b>pilgeru wallin</b>	bilgiru-wal-in	Being greedy	greed-be-now
<b>Pele</b>	bili	Greedy	greedy
<b>kunkun</b>	gunG-un	swallowing	gulp-now
<b>Pandappur e</b>	bandaburi	Gun	gun
<b>Paldharar</b>	balDar-ar	Hail	hail-PLUR
<b>inyeri</b>	inyiri	belonging to or of	having
<b>kitye</b>	gidyi	he	he
<b>Kurlinyera ld</b>	gurli-nyir-ald	of a hat	head-having-of
<b>Batturi</b>	baduri	Bundle	heap
<b>tal in</b>	dalin	heavy	heavy
<b>Akhé</b>	agi	Here	here
<b>Alye</b>	alyi	Here	here
<b>Ngai war</b>	ngayi-war	Do come	here-act [come]
<b>Ngaiin ap</b>	ngay-in-ab	I come	here-now I

<b>Ngaiin inda</b>	<b>ngay-in-inda</b>	Thou comest	here-now thou
<b>nampulun</b>	<b>namb-ul-un</b>	hiding	hide-ing-now
<b>kin</b>	<b>gin</b>	him	him
<b>Ityan</b>	<b>idyan</b>	him,	him
<b>kil</b>	<b>gil</b>	by him	him-by
<b>kinambe</b>	<b>gin-ambi</b>	for him	him-for
<b>merkewaty eri</b>	<b>mirgi-wadyiri</b>	full of holes	hole-plenty
<b>Potungai</b>	<b>bud-unga</b>	On a horse	horse-at
<b>Walde</b>	<b>waldi</b>	heat, hot; perspiration	hot
<b>Molbañg-in</b>	<b>mulbangG-in</b>	being warm	hot-now
<b>mengyē</b>	<b>mingyi</b>	by what (how)	how-by
<b>Ringmail</b>	<b>ringmal</b>	Hunger	hunger
<b>Wakk-in</b>	<b>wag-in</b>	hurting	hurt-now
<b>Wiwiri</b>	<b>wiwiri</b>	sickness	ill
<b>Blēwil-amalde</b>	<b>bliwil-amaldi</b>	invalid	ill-agent
<b>Blewilin</b>	<b>bliwil-in</b>	Sick, slightly	ill-now
<b>Wirin</b>	<b>wir-in</b>	Paining	ill-now
<b>ungul</b>	<b>ungul</b>	in front of	in front
<b>Narrinyeri</b>	<b>nar-inyiri</b>	<i>narr</i> , plain, intelligible; <i>inyeri</i> , belonging to: plain speakers	intelligible-having
<b>Kraiyelin</b>	<b>grayil-in</b>	Jealous	jealous-now
<b>Rumalduw-allin</b>	<b>rumaldu-wal-in</b>	Joking	jest-become-now
<b>Purrangge</b>	<b>burangGi</b>	small, short	little
<b>muralappi</b>	<b>muralabi</b>	small	little
<b>muralappe ol</b>	<b>muralabi-yul</b>	very small	little-EMPH
<b>Rauwul</b>	<b>rawul</b>	A long time ago	longago
<b>Kaldowam p</b>	<b>galda-wamb</b>	Always	longtime-PURP
<b>Tanmul-un</b>	<b>danm-ul-un</b>	loosening	loose-ing-now
<b>Tyiutowar</b>	<b>dyiwiwar</b>	Loud	loud
<b>plonggewa tyeri</b>	<b>blungGi-wadyiri</b>	full of, or possessed by sorcery	magic-plenty
<b>korn</b>	<b>gurn</b>	(a man)	man
<b>Kornarrinyeri</b>	<b>gurna-ri-nyiri</b>	Prob. ... an abbreviation of Kornarrinyeri (belonging to men) ...	man-xxx-having
<b>Yalkund-un</b>	<b>yalg-und-un</b>	melting (active)	melt-ing-now
<b>tunti</b>	<b>dundi</b>	in the middle	middle-at
<b>Tarangk</b>	<b>dar-angG</b>	Between	middle-to
<b>nainkowa</b>	<b>nanGuwa</b>	my mother	mother-me-of
<b>Kunkundi</b>	<b>gunGundi</b>	bald	naked
<b>Merate</b>	<b>miradi</b>	Naked	naked
<b>Tokorauwe</b>	<b>dugur-awi</b>	Narrow	narrow-of

<b>Mungow</b>	mungawu	Near	near
<b>Tarno</b>	darnu	No, not	no
<b>Tauo</b>	dawu	Don't (imperative)	no
<b>Tauo ityan</b>	dawu idyan	Don't spear him	no him pierce him
<b>Nowaiy</b>	lag idyan		
<b>Nowaiy</b>	nuwayi	None	none
<b>Karlo</b>	garlu	To-day	now
<b>Yande</b>	yandi	useless, old, worthless, worn out	old
<b>[yant ald]</b>	yand-ald	[of an old man]	old-at
<b>Ranggyam-e-wall-in</b>	rangGyami-wal-in	becoming old	old-become- now
<b>ngurukwar</b>	ngurugwar	outside, without	outside
<b>Ukke</b>	ugi	Way	path
<b>[anyura]</b>	anyura	[Ye two may spear him]	perhaps
<b>Lak our inde</b>	lag-ur-indi	Do thou spear	pierce must thou
<b>Laggel el our itye</b>	lag-il-il-ur- idyi	He must spear	pierce-INT him must he
<b>Lakkin el atte ityan</b>	lag-in il- adi-idyan	I will spear him	pierce-will- INT I-him
<b>anmant</b>	anmand	from a place	place-from
<b>tunkuwalli n</b>	dunGu-wal- in	playing	play-be-now
<b>Ngruwar</b>	ngruwar	Abundance	plenty
<b>Kummarī</b>	gumari	pregnant	pregnant
<b>Palli</b>	bali	While, by- and-by	presently
<b>Yun</b>	yun	By-and-by	presently
<b>Plaityingyi n</b>	bladyingy-in	Vain	proud-now
<b>Mirrinmēl</b>	mirinmil	Quickly	quick
<b>Tiwewarri n</b>	diwi-war-in	Speedily	quick-make- now
<b>Tortuwalli n</b>	durdu-wal- in	Quiet	quiet- become-now
<b>Ngunk-un</b>	ngunG-un	being silent, sulky	quiet-now
<b>Parnar</b>	barn-ar	Rain	rain-PLUR
<b>Kurungulu n</b>	gurung-ul- un	Red	red-ing-now
<b>Prakkin</b>	brag-in	Arising	rise-now
<b>Miningkul- un</b>	miningG-ul- un	being decayed, rotten	rotten-ing- now
<b>tuniwatyer i</b>	duni-wadyiri	full of sand	sand-plenty
<b>Wuttul-un</b>	wud-ul-un	shining, warming, burning	scorch-ing- now
<b>Nak our</b>	nag-ur	Do see	see-must
<b>Nāre</b>	nari	shallow, not deep	shallow
<b>Padmuri</b>	badmuri	Sharp	sharp
<b>Padmur- wal-in</b>	badmurm- wal-in	becoming sharp	sharp- become-now
<b>kurrengk</b>	guri-ngG	the two shins	shin-two

<b>Yilkul-un</b>	yilg-ul-un	moving away	shoo-ing- now
<b>prewirrenne nd</b>	briwiri-nind	side	side-from
<b>Lewurmi</b>	liw-urmi	Backside	sit-INSTR [buttocks]
<b>[lewin]</b>	liw-in	I sit	sit-now
<b>Muwityiwa llin</b>	muwi-dyi- wal-in	Sleepless	sleep- lacking- become-now
<b>Mant</b>	mand	Slow	slow
<b>Merailde</b>	miraldi	slowly	slow
<b>Mant our</b>	mand-ur	Do slowly	slow-must
<b>Yarne- mind-in</b>	yarni-mind- in	mentioning	speak-make- now
<b>Pilbarre</b>	bilbari	Sponge	sponge
<b>Tokk-un</b>	dug-un	pressing, or pressing together	squash-now
<b>[tangulun]</b>	dang-ul-un	He stands	stand-ing- now
<b>Yerk-in</b>	yirg-in	standing up	stand-now
<b>Murungur pettin</b>	murungur bid-in	Steady steal	steady steal-now
<b>Paiappul- un</b>	bayab-ul- un	being stiff	stiff-ing-now
<b>Wiitii</b>	widi	Stinging	sting
<b>piltengi</b>	bildingi	strong	strong
<b>piltengwall in</b>	bilding-wal- in	being strong	strong-be- now
<b>piltengwar</b>	bilding- war-in	making	strong- make-now
<b>prityin</b>	bridy-in	strong	strong-now
<b>Willawalli n</b>	wila-wal-in	Stubborn	stubborn- become-now
<b>Bailpulun</b>	bayilb-ul- un	Foolish	stupid-ing- now
<b>Tyelyerar</b>	dyilyar-ar	Beams of the sun	sunbeam- PLUR
<b>kinpin</b>	ginb-in	sweet	sweet-now
<b>Wrukk- amalde</b>	wrug- amaldi	swimmer	swim-agent
<b>Wrukk-un</b>	wrug-un	swimming	swim-now
<b>Yenembēl- in</b>	yinimb-il-in	being entangled	tangle-ing- now
<b>naiye</b>	nayi	that	that
<b>kanauwe</b>	gan-awi	their	them-all-of
<b>keng'guna nyir</b>	gingGun- nyir	from them two	them-two- from [by]
<b>wunye</b>	wunyi	then	then
<b>kar</b>	gar	they	they-all
<b>kengk</b>	gingG	they two	they-two
<b>Kutyeri</b>	gudyiri	Slender	thin
<b>Yurruttulu n</b>	yurud-ul- un	Thin	thin-ing-now
<b>hikke</b>	higi	this	this
<b>neppaldar</b>	nibald-ar	three	three-PLUR
<b>Wunmul- un</b>	wunm-ul-un	throwing	throw-ing- now
<b>Luk</b>	lug	So	thus
<b>Ngrekkald</b>	nrigald	To-morrow	tomorrow

Kurrinyere nggal	guri-nyir-ingG-al	of a pair of trousers	trousers-having-two-of
Katyé	gadyi	truth	truth
ninggengk	ningG-ingG	two	two
maremunt unt	marimundund	beneath	under [down-xxx-xxx?]
loldu	luldu	up	up
loru	luru	up	up
Yond-un	yund-un	wading, fording	wade-now
Parge	bargi	Wallaby	wallaby
nyribbelin	nyrib-il-in	washing	wash-ing-now
Nguk	ngug	water	water
Pultue	bulduwi	Weak	weak
Ngenke-wall-in	nginGi-wal-in	becoming weak	weak-become-now
Muwe watyeri	muwi wadyiri	Sleepy	weary
nguldamm ulimindin	nguldam-uli-mind-in	making tired	weary-ing-make-now
Lammelin	lam-il-in	being tired	weary-ing-now
Yanggul-un	yangG-ul-un	weeping bitterly	weep-ing-now
Wurti	wurdi	Wet	wet
wurtuwarz in	wurdu-war-in	saturating with water	wet-make-now
minyī	minyi	what	what
mekimbe	migi-mbi	for what (what for)	what-PURP [why]
[ungun]	ungun	which mean when—used relatively	WHEN/if
Yaral?	yaral	When? (Interrogative)	WHEN/if
Kiuau	giya	Where (relative)	where
Yangi	yangi	Where? (interrogative)	where
Yangalli	yanga-li	Where is he?	where he
Yarnd	yarnd	Of where? Whence?	where-of
Balpi	balbi	White	white
balpin	balb-in	white	white-now
nganggi	ngangGi	who	who
ngandi	ngan-di	by whom	who-by
nauwe	na-wi	whose or whom	who-of
mindē	mindi	what reason, why	why
mimine	mimini	a woman	woman
ngarri	ngarari	wood	wood
Ronggum mun	rungGum-un	Barking (as a dog)	woof
Watanggra u	wad-angGr-awu	Yesterday	yesterday
Ondu	undu	Over there	yonder

xxx: indicates the analysis is not known

## A Narinyiri story

A native myth in the vernacular of the Narinyiri:  
*“Norar ngertir ulangk, kar morokkir an mamar. Kar tuppír an mamar Tipping. Wanyar muldurar ngungyin namuramb an mamar. Wunyar pulkeri muldurar pettir an mami. Wunyar norar ngrakkuwallir. Wunyar norar muldurar mendir. Kar pingkir muldarar brugungai wunyar Kinemin. Wunyar norar balpewallin lun ellin tukkeri.”*

Translation—“The pelicans fished in the lake and caught some tukkeri fish. They carried the fish to Point Sturt. Then the magpies made a fire to cook the fish with. The greedy magpies then stole the fish. The pelicans were angry with the magpies, and they fought. The magpies were rolled in the ashes, which made them black. Then the pelicans became white like the tukkeri fish, which they had eaten.” [Taplin, Folklore p.39]

A word for word translation from Narinyiri to English has been attempted below. The arrangement of the lines is as follows:

*Original Narinyiri text*  
*the same respelt in modern standardised style*

*Original English translation*  
*modern word-for-word translation*



*Norar ngertir ulangk,  
nurar ngirdir ulangG  
The pelicans fished in the lake  
pelican net-did lake-to  
kar morokkir an mamar.  
gar murugiran mamar  
and caught some tukkeri fish  
they-all grasp-did-them-all fish-PLUR*

*Kar tuppír an mamar Tipping.  
gar dabir an mamar dibing  
They carried the fish to Point Sturt.  
they-all bring-did them-all fish-PLUR Point Sturt, Lake  
Alexandrina*

*Wanyar muldurar ngungyin namuramb an mamar.  
wanyar muldurar ngungyin namuramb an  
mamar*

*Then the magpies made a fire to cook the fish with  
then they-all magpie-PLUR ignite-did-they-all roast-PURP  
them-all fish-PLUR*

*Wunyar pulkeri muldurar pettir an mami.  
wunyar bulgiri muldurar bidir an mami*

*The greedy magpies then stole the fish  
then they-all greed magpie-PLUR steal-did them-all fish*

*Wunyar norar ngrakkuwallir.  
wunyar nurar ngaraguwalir*

*The pelicans were angry with the magpies,  
then they-all pelican-PLUR anger-become-did*

*Wanyar norar muldurar mendir.  
wanyar nurar maldurar mindir  
and they fought*

*then they-all pelican-PLUR magpie-PLUR quarrel did*

*Kar pingkir muldurar brugungai wunyar Kinemin.  
gar bingGir muldurar brugungayi wunyar  
ginimin*

*The magpies were rolled in the ashes, which made them  
black*

*they-all fall-did magpie-PLUR fire-at then they-all dirty-now*

*Wunyar norar balpewallin lun ellin tukkeri.*

*wunyar nurar balbiwalin lun ilin dugiri*

*Then the pelicans became white like the tukkeri fish, which  
they had eaten*

*then they-all pelican-PLUR white-become-now similar  
exist-now fishtype [dugiri]*

★ ★ ★

Taplin's Folklore book contains contributions about the language from many others, including an undated one by T. Moriarty, police trooper at Goolwa [p.51-2]:

21. They have a stock of mythological legends.

**Ngurundere** had two wives who caught a large fish and a small one. They gave him the small fish to eat, and baked the large one for themselves. When he ate his, he saw the large one, and became very angry, and said to them

"You shall die for that, and all **Tanganarin** shall die, and there will be fighting, and sickness, and evil spirits until then."

**Ngurundere**, after creating them, made everything for their use, and taught them to use their implements and weapons in hunting, fishing, and fighting. But after the sentence of death by him for the deception practised by his wives, he deprived **Tanganarin**s of knowledge and power, and, in his anger, left them, and ascended to **Wyir** (their heaven). They were then ignorant and powerless, and they lived like the beasts of the field. After a long time there was born of a virgin a good and wise man, who was named **Wyungare**. He returned to them their lost wisdom and power, and taught them sorcery. When this great teacher had regenerated [51] them, he was taken up to **Wyir** by **Ngurundere**, where he is now the second king of that place; and when a **Tanganarin** dies **Wyungare** takes his spirit up to **Wyir**, and gets him a fine place in that country from **Ngurundere**.

The following is the above legend in native:

— “*Ngurundere nak ningkaiengk nape. Kengk ngartin hikke grauwe mami Kurangk muralappe. Kengk pempir kinangk hik muralappe takuramb. Kengk meram-min hikkai grauwe mami Kenggunambe. Ungunuk il takker, kil nakkir grauwe mami. Kil un enggunangk nyenungkun. Kil yarin Kenggaunangk ngurl hik onduaniratyen porna kanangk. Kar Tanganarin hik onduaratye pornani, kanangk wunyil wiwirri, wirranger, brupar, mendin.*”

★

This can be analysed as follows:

*Ngurundere nak ningkaiengk nape.  
ngurundiri nag ningGayingG nabi*  
*Ngurundere had two wives*  
*NAME OF SPIRIT see two wife*

*Kengk ngartin hikke grauwe mami Kurangk muralappe.  
gingG ngardin higi grawi mami gurangG muralabi*  
*who caught a large fish and a small one.*  
*they-two catch-now big fish stream-to little*

*Kengk pempir kinangk hik muralappe takuramb.  
gingG bimbir ginangG hig muralabi daguramb*  
*[They gave him the small fish to eat,]  
they-two give-did him-to now little eat-PURP*

*Kengk meram-min hikkai grauwe mami Kenggunambe.  
gingG miram min higayi grawi mami gingGunambi*  
*[and baked the large one for themselves]  
they-two roast-now immediately big fish them-two-for*  
*kil nakkir grauwe mami.  
gil nagir grawi mami*  
*[he saw the large one]  
he see-did big fish*

*Kil un enggunangk nyenungkun.  
gil un ingGunangG nyinungGun.*  
*[and became very angry]  
he self them-two-to anger-now*

*Kil yarin Kenggaunangk ngurl hik onduaniratyen porna  
kanangk.  
gil yarin gingGanangG ngurl hig  
unduwaniradyi [ngrunduniradyi] burna ganangG*  
*[and said to them "You shall die for that"]  
he speak-now them-two-to / all [it] die-xxx them-all-to*  
***Kar Tanganarin hik onduaratye pornani, kanangk**  
**wunyil wiwirri, wirranger, brupar, mendin***  
***gar danganarin hig unduwaradyi [ngrundaradyi]**  
**burnani, ganangG wunyil wiwiri, wirranger,**  
**brupar, mendin***

*and all Tanganarin shall  
die, and there will be  
fighting, and sickness,  
and evil spirits until then  
they-all NAME OF CLAN  
now all-PLUR-it die-will  
them-all-to then-xxx ill  
bad-PLUR bad-PLUR  
quarrel-now*

ISBN 978-0-6457364-1-0



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