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## 9 From ethical datives to number markers in Murriny Patha

JOE BLYTHE

### 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Australian languages provide fascinating examples of cultural preoccupations selecting for linguistic structures. One such example is the emergence of syntactic structures reflecting kinship systems. McConwell (1985a, 1985b) has shown that bilingualism and practices of wife-bestowal amongst speakers of different language groups gave rise to subsection terms from earlier section terms. Triangular kin terms, clan-lects, moiety-lects and 'mother-in-law' registers have evolved independently in languages that are not closely related. This 'kintax' can be conceived as resulting from processes of co-evolution that see cultural innovation and emergent linguistic structures develop through patterns of positive feedback.<sup>2</sup> Murriny Patha is a fine example of an Australian language that has taken a culture specific notion and evolved distinctions that pervade throughout all the pronominals, free and bound, and hence right into what is conceivably the beating heart of the language, the polysynthetic verb.

Murriny Patha is spoken at Wadeye (formerly Port Keats) and surrounding communities in the Daly region of the Northern Territory of Australia. In this region the language has grown to be a lingua franca and as such has over two thousand speakers. Along with neighbouring Ngan'gityemerri, Green (2003) convincingly reclassified the language as belonging to the Southern Daly family of non-Pama-Nyungan languages, after it was previously thought to be a genetic isolate.

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<sup>2</sup> See Evans (2003a) for a review of culturally specific linguistic structure and terminology in Australian languages emerging from specific cultural preoccupations. The paper uses these examples to argue against the hard-wired 'universalist' view that linguistic diversity is constrained by biologically given principles as a result of adjusting various parameter settings (i.e. Chomsky 1980; Pinker 1994; Bickerton 1996).

As is typical of a number of the Daly languages, Murriny Patha makes a four-way number distinction: singular, dual, paucal and plural. However the language is unusual in that it also makes a sibling versus non-sibling distinction for dual and paucal participants, and in this respect differs from its eastern neighbour Ngan'gityemerri.<sup>3</sup> The sibling/non-sibling distinction is made through the presence or absence of dual and paucal non-sibling number marking morphemes that combine with subject and object-marking pronominals. The dual and paucal non-sibling number marking morphemes also indicate gender (all male versus at least one female).

In this paper I offer an explanation for how Murriny Patha may have innovated this unusual three-way opposition (groups of siblings versus groups of all male non-siblings versus groups of non-siblings including at least one female). In §6, I propose that two members of a no-longer productive series of ethical dative bound pronouns were reanalysed as dual non-sibling number markers, thus enabling a gender distinction to be made for dual non-sibling referents. For evidence, I will draw on some archival manuscripts from the 1950s as well as some recent textual data, much of which comes from recordings of natural conversation. This textual data includes some fortuitous attestations of the ethical dative series of bound pronouns, which in 21st century Murriny Patha has a very marginal status indeed. It is the archival data that provides a lucky snapshot of the final stages of grammaticalisation, a process that by now is largely complete.

Although the aim of this paper is primarily to account for the Murriny Patha dual number markers, the question of the paucal number markers is not irrelevant. Murriny Patha has two paucal number markers, *-neme* for arguments comprising groups of approximately three to ten males (paucal masculine, PAUC.M) and *-nigime* for arguments comprising groups of approximately three to ten participants which include at least one female<sup>4</sup> (paucal feminine, PAUC.F).<sup>5</sup> There is one other stipulation, namely that these number markers are used only when the denoted group of participants are not siblings. Ngan'gityemerri, on the other hand, marks trial rather than paucal and it doesn't care about siblings. For arguments comprising three participants, it does not mark gender, since it has just one trial number marker, *-nime* (Reid 1990). In spite of these differences, the functional and positional similarities in the verb complex as well as the similarity in form, show that the Ngan'gityemerri trial number marker and the Murriny Patha paucal number markers are clearly cognates (cf. (1) and (2)).

<sup>3</sup> Ngan'gityemerri, also differs from Murriny Patha in that it marks trial, rather than paucal (Reid 1990).  
<sup>4</sup> By rights, the gender distinction in Murriny Patha is technically not a 'masculine' versus 'feminine' distinction so much as a 'masculine' versus 'non-masculine' distinction. In spite of this, I will persist with the label 'feminine'.

<sup>5</sup> Abbreviations used in this paper: ADJ = adjective, ADV = adverbial, CAS = case, COV = coverb, DAT = dative, DAUC = 'dual'—dual/paucal (i.e. between 2 and ~10), DEM = demonstrative, DIST = distal, DO = direct object, DTRANS = dextranstransitive, DU = dual, DUB = dubitative, ED = ethical dative, ERG = ergative, EMPH = emphatic, EX = exclusive, F = feminine, FINV = finite verb, FUT = future, IBP = incorporated body part, INC = inclusive, INCH = inchoative, INT = interrogative, IO = indirect object, INTENS = intensifier, IRR = realis, M = masculine, NFUT = non-future, NOUN = noun, NOMCL = nominal classifier, NPST = non-past, NS = non-singular, NSIB = non-siblings, NUM = number, NUM = numeral, PART = particle, PAUC = paucal, PIMP = past imperative, PRNAME = proper name, PRO = Free Pronoun, PST = past, RECP = reciprocal, S = singular, S = subject, SERFINV = serial finite verb, SIB = siblings, TNS = tense, TOP = topicaliser, VOC = vocative.

### Ngan'gityemerri

- (1) *Alayi warrakna kini werrmngipuhimetye.*  
 alayi warrakna kini werrme -ngi -pul -nime -tye  
 mother three this 3.PL.S.hands -1.S.DO -wash -trial -PST  
 NOUN NUM DEM FINV -DO-COV -NUM -TNS  
 'These three mothers of mine used to wash me.' (Reid 1990:225)

### Murriny Patha

- (2) *Pubanngiwethukngime.*  
 puban -ngi -wethuk -ngime  
 3.DAUC.S.17.NFUT -1.S.DO-blame -FAUC.F.NSIB  
 FINV -DO -COV -NUM  
 'They (paucal feminine non-siblings) blamed me.' (JB2005FN3, 61)

The question arises: did Proto Southern Daly (pSD) have just a single trial/paucal number marker like Ngan'gityemerri and did Murriny Patha go on to innovate gender marking in the paucals? Alternatively, did the proto-language already make a gender distinction that Ngan'gityemerri subsequently went on to lose? Unfortunately, in the absence of a clear source for the trials/paucals, there is not a lot of hard evidence for either proposition, though in §5 and §7, I will return to this question and propose two plausible accounts for these morphemes. The main aim of this paper is to account for the dual numbers and it is here that I find considerable evidence for grammaticalisation

## 2 Three series of 'object' pronominals

Modern Murriny Patha has two productive series of 'object' pronominals, a direct object series and an indirect object series.<sup>6</sup> The forms of the direct object and indirect object series are listed in Table 1.

In transitive constructions human patients are marked by the direct object pronominals. In the verbal template, they occur between a highly fusional finite verb (which encodes categories such as subject, verb class, tense, mood, aspect and stance) and the coverb (which encodes the bulk of the lexical meaning of the verb).

- (3) *Panngibakanam nigumiyu.*  
 pan -ngi -bat =kanam nigunu -yu  
 3.S.S.23.NFUT -1.S.DO -hit =3.S.S.4\_be.NFUT 3.S.F -??  
 FINV -DO -COV =SERFINV PRO -PART  
 'She was beating me.' (2004-09-12JB04.txt, 0230.604)

<sup>6</sup> I will use the term 'object' as a cover term for the direct object series, the indirect object series and the ethical dative series. Strictly speaking, the expressed arguments are not always objects, but it is useful to morphologically group these series and distinguish them from the finite verb forms, which express subjects.

Table 1: The direct object and indirect object series<sup>7</sup>

	DO	IO
singular		
1	-ngi	-nga
2	-nyi	-mba
3.F	-Ø	-nge
3.M	-Ø	-na
1 inclusive	-nyi	-nye
dual and paucal non-sibling ('daucal')		
1	-ngan'gu	-ngarru
2	-nan'gu	-narru
3	-n'gu	-rru
	-wun'gu	-wirru
plural and paucal sibling		
1	-ngan	-ngarra
2	-nan	-narrā
3	-n	-rrā
	-wun	-wirrā

The marking of number in Murriny Patha is a complicated issue that will be dealt with more thoroughly in §3. However, for the moment it suffices to say that if an argument expressed by direct or indirect object is dual and non-sibling, then the object pronominal is morphologically underspecified as to whether it is dual or paucal — it might be two, it might be a few. However, it is the addition of a dual non-sibling number marker that gives specificity to this underspecified 'daucal' direct object and constrains the reading to two (and not a few). There are two dual non-sibling number markers, *-nintha* for two male participants and *-ngintha* for two participants, at least one of whom is female.

- (4) *Mampirruwardanintha.*  
 man -wirru -warda -nintha  
 3.S.S.8.say.NFUT -3.DAUC.IO -then -DU.M.NSIB  
 FINV -IO -ADV -NUM  
 'He said to the two boys (who weren't brothers).'  
 (2004-08-08JB0362.txt, 849438\_850860)

In (4), the third person daucal indirect object, *-wirru*, in combination with the masculine dual non-sibling number marker, *-nintha*, expresses the recipient of the talk as two males (who weren't brothers).<sup>8</sup>

The direct objects are also used in impersonal constructions, a quasi-transitive construction (Walsh 1987), where a dummy third person singular subject acts on an experiencer expressed by a direct object pronominal.

- (5) *Pelpij mamingkawurldim.*  
 pelpij mam -ngi -ngkawurli  
 head 3.S.S.8.do\_w\_hands.NFUT -I.S.DO -give\_headache  
 NOUN FINV -DO -COV  
 =dim  
 =3.S.S.I.sit.NFUT  
 =SERFINV  
 'I've got a headache.' (lit. it gives me a headache)  
 (2004-07-04JB01.txt, 1793.116)

Analogous to the impersonal verbs, there are also a number of nominally predicating expressions where a stative subject (6) or an experiencer subject (7) is expressed by a direct object pronominal. Walsh (1996b) gives an account of a range of these predicating nominal constructions that exhibit morphology generally associated with the polysynthetic verb. He shows that the constructions are intermediate between those in the language that are prototypically verbal and those that are prototypically nominal. It is quite common for these expressions to include an incorporated body part, often with a metaphorical reading.<sup>9</sup>

- (6) *Dertemmyidhay.*  
 dertemam -nyi -dhay  
 hard -2.S.DO -mouth  
 ADJ -DO -IBP  
 'You're a hard person' (you always say no to requests). (JB2004FN, 91)
- (7) *Ngay kardu ninggeningengimardanggu.*  
 ngay kardu ninggeningge -ngi -marda -nggu  
 I.S human jealous -I.S.IO -belly? -??  
 PRO NOMCL ROOT -IO -IBP? -??  
 'I'm a jealous person.' (JB2005FN4, 89)

<sup>8</sup> The way Murriny Patha groups dissimilar elements creates all sorts of problems for nomenclature and the proposed 'daucal' is a good example. The range of potential referents expressed by the morphemes glossed 'daucal' in object position includes dual siblings, dual non-siblings, paucal non-siblings but not paucal siblings (cf. Table 7). In subject position, morphemes glossed 'daucal' refer to dual-siblings and paucal non-siblings but not to dual non-siblings nor paucal siblings. In spite of this disparity, I prefer to coin the succinct term 'daucal' with its succinct gloss (i.e. 3DAUCS) rather than a clumsy alternative (i.e. 3DU.SIB/PAUC.NSIBS).

<sup>9</sup> See also Walsh (1996a) for an account of body part incorporation and metaphor.

<sup>7</sup> Diachronically, the short forms of third person daucal and plural objects are derived from the long forms although synchronically they may be considered variants. The short forms are found in verbs of all tenses except non-future, i.e. all tenses where the finite verb ends in a vowel. In non-future tense verbs, the bilabial glides are realised as stops following the final nasals of the non-future finite verb forms. The underlying /w/ surfaces in non-verbal constructions such as in (8).

Example (7) is one of two kinds of constructions based around the inherently reduplicated root, *ninggeningge*, 'jealous'. The root derives from the coverb *-ngge*, 'be jealous of', prefixed by an unanalysable *ni-* (Street 1980:13). This first group of '*ninggeningge* constructions' usually includes a direct object pronominal and the semantically elusive cranberry morpheme, *-mardangu* (partially analysable as *-marda*, 'belly', plus the unanalysable *-ngg*). My consultants explained the above phrase as 'I can't let my wife follow other people'.

In a pattern reminiscent of what we saw in verbs, when the experiencers are dual non-siblings, a dual non-sibling number marker appears to the right of the direct object pronominal, as in (8).

(8) *Kardu ninggeninggewuu' gumardangunguntha.*

kardu ninggeningge -wun'gu -marda -nggu -ngintha  
human jealous -3.DAUC.DO -belly? -?? -DU.F.NSIB  
NOMCL ROOT -DO -IBP? -?? -NUM

'The two women (non-siblings) are jealous.' (JB2003FN4, 91)

In (8) the number marker *-ngintha* has the effect of specifying the 'daucal' direct object *-wun'gu* as dual feminine and not paucal. The second group of *ninggeningge* constructions usually includes the morpheme *-patha*. In these constructions, this morpheme probably functions as an intensifier, see (9) and (10).

(9) *Nyupuka ninggeninggepathamanangintha wurriidhaya.*

nyupuka ninggeningge -patha -mana -ngintha  
3.S.F -TOP jealous -INTENS? -INTENS -3.S.F??  
PRO -PART ADJ -ADV? -ADV -??

wurriini -dha -ya

3.S.S.6 -go.PIMP -PST -DUB

FINV -INS -PART

'She was very jealous.' (2004-09-12JB04.txt, 0205.588)

(10) *Nukumuka kardu ninggeninggepathanintha.*

nukunu-ka kardu ninggeningge -patha -nintha  
3.S.M -TOP human jealous -INTENS? -INTENS? -3.S.M??  
PRO -PART NOMCL ADJ -ADV? -ADV? -??

'He's a jealous man.' (JB2005FN4, 89)

The first point to note is that although *-ngintha* and *-nintha* look like the dual non-sibling number markers, they cannot be, because the referents are singular, so they must be something else. In (11) we have a second person singular example.

(11) *Nyinyi kardu ninggeninggepathanguntha.*

nyinyi kardu ninggeningge -patha -nguntha  
2.S human jealous -well? -2.S??  
PRO NOMCL ADJ -ADV? -ADV? -??

'You are a jealous person.' (JB2005FN4, 89)

In Murriny Patha the third person singular direct objects are zero (Table 1), so no direct object pronominals would be expected to surface in either example (9) or (10). However, the second person direct object form is *-nyi*, which is conspicuously absent from example (11). The form *-nguntha* is not attested as a number marker, so it would appear that rather than the direct objects, these *ninggeninggepatha* constructions have a new set of pronominals that inflect for person and gender. The forms *-nintha*, *-ngintha* and *-nguntha* resemble forms that appear in a pair of manuscripts from the late Father William Flynn MSC, who was the Catholic priest stationed in Port Keats between 1946 and 1952. In these manuscripts, Flynn (n.d.a, n.d.b) listed three series of 'object pronominals' which included the direct object and indirect object series listed in Table 1, as well as a third series which he described as 'defective'. Flynn's third series of bound pronominals are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Flynn's 3rd object series

1.S	<i>-ngantha</i>
2.S	<i>-nuntha</i>
3.S	<i>-nintha</i>
1.DU.INC	<i>-nyantha</i>
3.DU.F	<i>-winthu</i> <i>-ngintha</i>
13.DU.M	<i>-winthu</i> <i>-nintha</i>
3.PL	<i>-wintha</i>

Flynn believed that the series sometimes had a genitive function and his free translations reflect this.

Old Murriny Patha (c1950)

(12) *Nandji bamnganthawurripurrk.*

nandji bam *-ngantha* -wurripurrk  
residue 3.S.S.18.NFUT -1.S?? -fall\_and\_break??  
NOMCL FINV -?? -COV  
'The thing it belonging to me was broken-in-falling' (Flynn n.d.b:6)  
→ 'The thing broke on me.'

Notice that the consequences of the thing breaking could be construed as being a negative result for the owner of the thing, just as in English the 'on me' expresses an undesirable result; as in, 'The thing broke on me'. Flynn gave another set of examples using this series that also express a negative result for the participant cross-referenced by these pronominals.

Old Murriny Patha (c1950)

(13) *Damnganthawinthaikat.*

dam *-ngantha* -winthaikat  
3.S.S.19.NFUT -1.S?? -prevent  
FINV -?? -COV

'He prevented me (from doing something).' (Flynn n.d.a:11)

Flynn's third series turns out to be a no-longer productive series of ethical dative<sup>10</sup> bound pronouns. These ethical datives express a sort of disadvantage for, or dissatisfaction on the behalf of the experiencer referent, a kind of 'malefactive' reading. Similar pronominal series expressing undesirable affects are attested elsewhere in the Daly, although sometimes with different labels.<sup>11</sup> It would appear that if the Murriny Patha series was 'defective' in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, then it is even more marginal in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>. It has proven very difficult to elicit ethical datives, particularly in verbs, however, the forms do surface occasionally in texts.

(14) *Nangu kanaminganhapart kangguri ngay pinggarlma.*

Nangu kanam -ngantha -part kangguri  
 place\_name 3.S.S.4.be.NFUT -1S.ED -leave father's\_father's\_sister  
 NOUN FINV -ED -COV NOUN

ngay pinggarl -ma  
 1.S knee -having  
 PRO NOUN -COM

'At Nangu, Pinggarlma, my father's auntie, left him behind, which displeased me.' (2004-09-12JB04.txt, 0059.993)

Further elicitation with this verb failed to yield any other forms. However, the *Ninggeningepatha* construction proved more useful in fleshing out the forms (Table 3).

Table 3: Ethical datives as attested by Flynn and myself.

	Flynn		Blythe
	1	-ngantha -nintha	
singular	1	-ngantha -nintha	-ngantha -ngintha -nintha
1 inclusive	1	-nyantha	
duat and paucal non-sibling ('daucal')	2		
	3	-winthu	-winthu
paucal sibling and plural	1		
	2		
	3	-wintha	

Apart from the holes in the paradigm, there are a couple of notable differences in the two columns that require examination. Firstly, Flynn's data lacks a third person feminine singular form. I suspect this is an artifact of the elicitation process. In his free translations, all of the third singular forms are masculine. If Flynn elicited these forms from a man, he may have forgotten to ask for a third person feminine singular form i.e., 'he prevented her'. That would account for why *-ngintha* is missing from his data. Secondly, the initial nasal differs in the second person form (*-nintha* versus *-ngantha*). Most likely, he failed to hear the nasal as velar.<sup>12</sup> From the two sources of data we can expand the paradigm.

Table 4: Ethical dative series as reconstructed from Flynn's data and my own

	ethical datives				
	1	2.F	2.M	3.F	3.M
singular		-ngantha	-ngantha	-nintha	-ngintha -nintha -nyantha
1 inclusive	1				
duat and paucal non-sibling ('daucal')	2				
	3				
paucal sibling and plural	1				
	2				
	3				

<sup>12</sup> An alternative explanation may be that the once robust *n/V*, masc versus *ng/V*, fem distinction that we see in Murriny Patha (and throughout the Daly), had a reflex in the second person singular ethical datives (i.e. *-ngantha*, 2.S.F.ED versus *-nintha*, 2.S.M.ED). When I elicited the form *-ngantha* from a female consultant, I asked her, 'What do I (male) say, if I want to say to you, that you (who are female) are jealous?' If Flynn elicited these forms from a man, he would have got masculine forms for both the second and the third person singular ethical datives. Flynn's ear was pretty good. He generally did perceive velar nasals where I would expect to find them. However, a gender distinction in the second person pronominals would be unprecedented throughout this region, so I'm hesitant to propose such a contrast on the basis of such flimsy evidence.

<sup>10</sup> The 'ethical dative', 'ethic dative' or 'dativus ethicus' is sometimes glossed as the 'dative of feeling' or the 'dative of affect'. These datives express a particular interest or concern for a participant who is semantically external to the event. (In Romance languages, the external participant is usually the speaker or the addressee.) For the external participant, the effects may be negative (in which case the ethical dative has a malefactive reading) or positive (where the ethical dative has a benefactive reading). In the case of malefaction, the ethical dative is usually translated into English with 'on'.

*i/No te me vayas!*

not you to me go

'Don't walk out on me!' (De/becca and Lamiroy 1996:107)

Simpson (1991:380) gives an example from Waripiri of a positive effect being conveyed through an ethical dative.

*Ngarrika-ngku ka-nla kardu-ku karli jarni-rni*  
 man-ERG PRES-3.DAT child-DAT boomerang trim-NPST

'The man is trimming the boomerang for the child.'

<sup>11</sup> Reid (1990:134) refers to a series of 'implicated' pronominals in Ngan'gityemeri whereas Ford (1998:176) describes an 'adversative' series in Emmi. Green (1989:126-128) describes a series of /anga/ pronominals in Murriny Patha that mark adverse effects but have other functions as well. Since I cannot be sure that the marking of malefaction was the only semantic role expressed by this series, I use the 'broader' term 'ethical dative'.

Now, if we compare the third person singular ethical dative forms with the dual number markers in Table 5, we see that they are identical. We also can see that the same forms appear in conjunction with the third person dual form *-winthu*.<sup>13</sup>

Table 5: Ethical datives versus number markers

	ethical dative series	dual non-sibling number markers
3.S.M	<i>-nintha</i>	
3.S.F	<i>-ngintha</i>	
3.DUM	<i>-winthu</i> (+ <i>-nintha</i> )	<i>-nintha</i>
3.DUF	<i>-winthu</i> (+ <i>-ngintha</i> )	<i>-ngintha</i>
3.PL	<i>-wintha</i>	

Flynn gives two example-sets of the ethic dative series occurring with two separate verbs. What is significant in the following examples (15)–(19), is the variability in the position of the ethic dative pronominals with respect to the verb.

- (15) pre-verb  
*Damnganthawintha*  
 dam -ngantha -winthakat  
 3.S.19.NFUT -1.S.ED -prevent  
 FINV -ED -COV  
 'He prevented me (from doing something).' (Flynn n.d.a:11)

- (16) post-verb  
*Ngambintha*  
 ngam -winthakat -nintha  
 1.S.19.NFUT -prevent -3.S.M.ED  
 FINV -COV -ED  
 'I prevented him.' (Flynn n.d.a:11)

- (17) post-verb  
*Ngambintha*  
 ngam -winthakat -wintha  
 1.S.19.NFUT -prevent -3.PL.ED  
 FINV -COV -ED  
 'I prevented them.' (Flynn n.d.a:11)

- (18) pre-verb  
*Nandji bambintha*  
 nandji bam -wintha -wurkpurk  
 residue 3.S.18.NFUT -3.PL.ED -fall\_and\_break??  
 NOM/CL FINV -ED -COV  
 'I prevented them.' (Flynn n.d.b:6)

- (19) pre-verb  
*Nandji buywinthawurkpurknintha*  
 nandji buy -winthu -wurkpurk -nu -nintha  
 residue 3.S.18.FUT -3.DU.ED -fall\_and\_break?? -FUT -DU.M.NSIB  
 NOM/CL FINV -ED -COV -TNS -NUM  
 'The thing, it belonging to those two broken-in-falling will be.'  
 → 'The thing will break on them (2 males).'

Examples (15)–(19) demonstrate four things. Firstly, (16) and (17) show ethical datives occurring after the verb, in the same place as where the number markers go. Secondly, (15) and (18) show ethical datives occurring in a different position, namely in front of the verb. Thirdly, we find the same plural ethical dative *-wintha* occurring after the verb in (17) and before the verb in (18). The other two object series (the direct object and indirect objects) have only one available position, before the verb. Finally, (19) shows a dual ethical dative occurring before the verb being specified by a number marker, after the verb, as dual masculine.

In order to understand how these two positions construct the number of objects and subjects, we need to look at the verbal template and discuss the position of morphemes in more detail.

### 3 Number marking in Murriny Patha verbs

#### 3.1 The verb template

Typically, Murriny Patha verbs conform to the template given below.

#### Murriny Patha Verb Template

FinV - dTns<sub>1</sub> - Num<sub>1</sub> - dTns<sub>2</sub> - IBP - Cov - Tns - Adv/Part<sub>1</sub><sup>n</sup> - Num<sub>2</sub> - Adv/Part<sub>2</sub><sup>n</sup> = SerFinV - Part

FinV: finite verb—a portmanteau morpheme coding subject, verb class, tense, mood, aspect and stance. This is the only obligatory element in the complex.

Num<sub>1</sub>: Num<sub>1</sub> takes a number of dissimilar elements: direct and indirect object bound pronouns, dual non-sibling subject marking and 'daucal' subject marking.

dTns: Dtransitiver: a valency reducing morpheme, encoding reflexive, reciprocal and inchoative functions.

IBP: incorporated body part

Cov: coverb (possibly reduplicated)

Adv: adverbial(s)

Tns: tense

Part: particle

Num<sub>2</sub>: dual/paucal non-sibling number marking.

SerFinV: serial finite verb—also a portmanteau morpheme coding subject, verb class (classes 1–7 only), tense, mood, aspect and stance.

<sup>13</sup> See example (19).

I will limit the discussion to the two positions, Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub>. Number is not the only grammatical category that gets marked in these positions, but it is the only category that all fillers of both slots have in common. The subscripts 1 and 2 capture the notion that the slots are in a combinatorial relationship to each other—both positions work together to mark number and gender. For the discussion of the examples (20)–(26) refer to Table 9 and Figure 1 in the Appendix.

### 3.2 Expressing dual non-sibling objects

As mentioned in §2, the direct and indirect object markers occur between the finite verb and the coverb. This is the position all Num<sub>i</sub>. In (4) (repeated in (20)) we saw that when the referent of a direct object comprises two non-siblings, the numerically underspecified ‘daucal’ direct object in the position Num<sub>1</sub> is further specified as dual by the addition of one of the two dual non-sibling number markers to the right. These go into the position Num<sub>2</sub>. So Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub> work in concert to specify number and gender.

(20 = 4) (Pattern 5 in Figure 1)

	<i>Mampirruwar danimtha.</i>	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
mam	-wirru	-warda
3.S.S.8_say.NFUT	-3DAUC.IO	-then
FINV	-IO	-ADV
		-NUM
		-nintha
		-DU.M.NSIB
		-DU.M.NSIB

‘He said to the two boys’ (who weren’t brothers).  
(2004-08-08JB03b2.txt, 849438\_850860)

### 3.3 Expressing paucal non-sibling objects

When either the direct object or indirect object is paucal non-sibling, a paucal non-sibling number marker (-*neme*<sup>14</sup> for referents comprising all male participants and -*ngime* for referents comprising at least one female) is placed in the Num<sub>2</sub> slot, adding further specificity to the numerically underspecified daucal object.

(21) (Pattern 6 in Figure 1)

	<i>Ngartat pangu bangamngarruruyngimetharra ngamimarda.</i>	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
Ngartat pangu	bangam	-ngarru
place that/there_(DIST)	3.S.S.14.NFUT	-IDAUC.EX.IO
NOUN.DEM	FINV	-IO
		-COV
		-ruy
		-come_out
		-COV
		-ngimetharra
		ngamimarda
		-PAUC.F.NSIB
		-moving
		otherside
		-PART
		NOUN
		-tharra
		-ngame
		-Num <sub>2</sub>

‘She came out to us, on the other side, at Ngartat.’  
(2004-09-12JB04.txt, 0071.571)

<sup>14</sup> Some speakers use the variant -*neme*.

### 3.4 Expressing dual sibling objects

When the referent expressed by a direct or indirect object comprises two siblings, the object pronominal goes in the only position it can go, namely the Num<sub>1</sub> slot. The Num<sub>2</sub> slot remains empty.

(22) (Pattern 25 in Figure 1)

	<i>‘Warda’, thamuny ngay pumampirruwirrimka.</i>	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
Warda thamuny	ngay	pumam
No mother’s father	1.S	3.DAUC.S.8_say.NFUT
INTERJ	NOUN	PRO
	FINV	-IO
		-3.DAUC.S.1_sil.NFUT
		=SERFINV
		=pirrimka
		‘No’, they were saying to my two maternal grandfathers.’
		(2005-07-14JB02c.txt, 128923_131089)

### 3.5 Expressing dual non-sibling subjects

The dual and paucal number marking morphemes behave differently for subjects. If the referent of the subject consists of two non-siblings, then the finite verb is in singular form and a dual non-sibling number marker goes into the first number marking slot Num<sub>1</sub>, effectively incrementing the number of the indicated singular subject to two.

(23) (Pattern 4 in Figure 1)

	<i>Thangkuguwa damminhangkardu?</i>	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
tiangkugu	-wa	dam
what animate?	-EMPH	2.S.S.13.NFUT
INT	-PART	FINV
		-NUM
		-nintha
		-DU.M.NSIB
		-see/look
		-COV
		‘What did you two males see?’ (2005-07-14JB02c.txt, 618930_621333)

In verbs with a singular or plural object (i.e. non-daucal), for which we can expect a pronominal object argument, the dual non-sibling number marker now appears in the Num<sub>2</sub> slot, rather than in Num<sub>1</sub>.

(24) (Pattern 3 in Figure 1)

	<i>Nan’gungintha pana thurdingayijjimaninginta ngawuminggi.</i>	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
nan’gungintha	pana	thurdi
2.DU.F.NSIB	medial	2.S.S.30.FUT
PRO	DEM	FINV
		-IO
		-COV
		-ngi
		-yiti
		-teil_story
		-be_able
		-MODAL
		-nguminggi
		nguminggi
		-nguntha
		-DU.F.NSIB
		-NOUN
		-totem_site
		-NOUN
		‘Why don’t you two tell me the story about that totem site?’
		(2004-07-04JB01.txt, 0429.832)

Indeed, the object pronominal, which has only the one potential position in the complex (Num<sub>1</sub>), seems to have pulled rank over the dual number marker, relegating it to the Num<sub>2</sub> slot.

### 3.6 Expressing paucal non-sibling subjects

When the subject is paucal non-sibling, a paucal non-sibling number marker goes into the Num<sub>2</sub> slot, adding further specificity to the numerically underspecified daucal subject (the finite verb).

(25) (Pattern 9 in Figure 1)

*Tjindi marda ngarnewathangime.*

Tjindi	marda	ngame			Num <sub>2</sub>
place_name	don't	I.DAUC.EX.S.4	be.PST.IRR	-go	-ngime
NOUN	NEG	FINV		-COV	-PAUC.F.NSIB
				-TNS	-NUM

'We didn't go to Tjindi any more.' (2004-08-08JB03b2.txt, 509760\_511670)

So whether specifying subjects or objects, *-neme* and *-ngime* only ever occur in Num<sub>2</sub>, whereas *-nintha* and *-ngintha* can be found in both places.

### 3.7 Expressing dual-sibling subjects

When the Num<sub>2</sub> slot is empty and the subject of the finite verb is daucal, then the subject number, by default, indicates dual-siblings, as in example (26). Note that in (26) both slots Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub> are empty.

(26) (Pattern 8 in Figure 1)

*Kardu nyindanu nguminanggayelerrhangarde.*

Kardu	nyinda	-nu	ngumina		Num <sub>1</sub>
Human	there	-DAT	I.DAUC.EX.S.12.PIMP		-Ø
NOMCL.	DEM	-CAS	FINV		-3.S.DO
					-DO

-ngga	-yeleir	-dha	=ngarde
-eye/face	-look_out	-PST	=IDAUC.EX.S.4
-IBP-	COV	-TNS	=SelfinV

'We two sisters were looking at him.' (2005-07-14JB02c.txt, 231591\_23339)

The important points to glean from these examples are that the paucal non-sibling number markers *-neme* and *-ngime* can specify both subjects and objects, but they only ever occur in the Num<sub>2</sub> slot. The dual number markers *-nintha* and *-ngintha* also specify both subjects and objects, but only in the Num<sub>2</sub> slot. Unlike the paucals, they also appear in Num<sub>1</sub>, but when they do, they only ever specify subject number.

In summary:

Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
<i>-nintha/-ngintha</i> (S only)	<i>-nintha/-ngintha</i> (S/O)
	<i>-neme/-ngime</i> (S/O)

## 4 Position of the ethical datives

Let us return to the ethical dative series and consider their position in the verbal template with respect to the coverb. Table 6 presents Flynn's data and that portion of my data that was attested in verbs.

Table 6: Position of ethical dative pronominals as attested in verbs

		before coverb	after coverb
singular	1	<i>-ngantha</i>	
	2		<i>-nguntha</i>
	3F	<i>-ngintha</i>	
	3M		<i>-nintha</i>
1 inclusive		<i>-nyentha</i>	
	1		
	2		
	3F	<i>-winthu</i>	(+ <i>-ngintha</i> )
dual and paucal non-sibling	3M	<i>-winthu</i>	(+ <i>-nintha</i> )
	1		
	2		
	3	<i>-wintha</i>	<i>-wintha</i>
paucal sibling and plural			
	1		
	2		

As mentioned above in §2, the third plural form *-wintha* was attested by Flynn in two positions, both before and after the coverb. We can also see from the future tense example in number (19), that the position in Table 6 marked 'after coverb' actually occurs following the tense marker, so it is safe to assume that this position corresponds to Num<sub>2</sub> and also that 'before coverb' corresponds to the position Num<sub>1</sub>. However, although the positions are the same, the ethical dative data suggests that the combinatorial relationship between the slots may not always have been what we find today.

Given that the two dual non-sibling number markers *-nintha* and *-ngintha* do not have any strong candidates for cognates in neighbouring languages,<sup>15</sup> I propose that earlier Murriny Patha speakers reanalysed two members of the ethical dative series, to arrive at these forms. However, before I outline this process, I'll propose an account for the Southern Daly trials/paucals. This account supposes that the innovation of the gender distinction that we see today in the Murriny Patha paucals, predates the reanalysis of the two ethical datives.

<sup>15</sup> Ford (1998:126) and Green (2003:135) suggest that the Murriny Patha dual forms *-nintha* and *-ngintha* are cognate with the two number markers in Emmi, *-niya*, male augmented and *-nganya*, female augmented. However there are notable differences between the functionality of the Emmi and the Murriny Patha forms. Firstly the Emmi forms denote four or more participants whereas the Murriny Patha forms denote two. Secondly in Emmi, *-niya* and *-nganya* denote all males and all females respectively, whereas in Murriny Patha *-nintha* and *-ngintha* denote all males versus at least one female. This pattern is replicated in the paucals. The structural differences between the way the two languages mark gender and number (Emmi has a minimal/augmented system), make the cognate assumption less tenable.



### 5 Gender marking in the trials/paucals

This account presumes that the Ngan'gityemerri trial, *-nime* is a single reflex of what was a pair of trial/paucal number markers already bearing such a distinction.<sup>16</sup> However prior to that, it is possible that Proto Southern Daly, the ancestor of Murriny Patha and Ngan'gityemerri, had a productive pair of prefixes, ngV- (F) and nV- (M), that was affixed to a number marking stem, for instance *\*-ne*. If this is what happened, we would expect to find reflexes of this distinction elsewhere in the language, which we do (apart from in the number markers) in third singular indirect objects and the third singular ethical datives. The fact that such a distinction has not been attested in any nominals, suggests that such a prefix has not been productive in these languages for a long time, although there is evidence for there having been one ancestrally.<sup>17</sup>

The second part of this proposal is that some ancestor of modern Ngan'gityemerri had two number markers for either trial or paucal, say *\*-ngime* (f) and *\*-nime* (m), and that the distinction was lost by abandoning the feminine form. An examination of trial/paucal/augmented number markers (or inclusive plural number markers—demonstrably the same morpheme) throughout the Daly reveals a number of likely cognate forms, none of which mirror Murriny Patha in preserving an /n/ versus /ng/ gender distinction.<sup>18</sup> Given the attestation of such cognate forms, the most likely scenario would be that once Ngan'gityemerri had lost the gender distinction in the trial, the form spread to the other Daly languages by diffusion. This suggestion receives some support from the fact that languages with an attested cognate are all contiguous. This account also receives support from the Murriny Patha adjective *ngamere*, 'several' (that is paucal). Given that there are three suffixes *-re* (ergative, instrumental, temporal), it is possible that the syllable /me/ may be a reflex of the PSD number-marking stem *\*-me* (as proposed above) and that *nga-* may be a vestige of the once-productive feminine prefix.

### 6 Reanalysis of the ethical datives

I now propose a reanalysis of the two third singular ethical datives, *-nintha* and *-ngintha* as dual non-sibling number markers. I envisage this reanalysis as having taken place in six distinct stages.

#### 6.1 Stage 1

For the first stage, I propose that Murriny Patha had a fully productive ethical dative series, and that *-nintha* and *-ngintha* did not exist as number markers, but only as members of this series. I also propose that at this earlier stage all members of this series may have

occurred both before and after the coverb. I do not wish to suggest that their position was not governed at all, only that all members of the series could and did appear in either slot.

In this earlier form of the language the third person dual form would have been *-winthu*, on its own. It is likely that one or both of the following constructions ((27) and (28)) would have been permissible.

- (27) pre Murriny Patha (Stage 1)  
*\*ngambinithakatwinthu*  
 ngam -winthakat -winthu  
 I.S.S.19.NFUT -prent -3.DU.ED  
 FINV -COV -ED  
 'I prevented those two (from doing something).'
- (28) pre Murriny Patha (Stage 1)  
*\*ngambinithawinthakat*  
 ngam -winthu -winthakat  
 I.S.S.19.NFUT -3.DU.ED -prent  
 FINV -ED -COV  
 'I prevented those two (from doing something).'

The reconstructions in (27) and (28) would have made no distinction in gender for the adversely affected parties. At this first stage we must also presume that Murriny Patha would have permitted constructions of the type exemplified by (29).

- (29) pre Murriny Patha (Stage 1)  
*\*Ku manganninthart ngarra da.*  
 ku mangan -nintha -art ngarra da  
 ANIMATE 3.S.S.9.NFUT -3.S.M.ED -get/take LOC camp  
 NOMCL FINV -ED -COV PREP NOUN  
 'He took the meat home, to the other man's disadvantage.'  
 Modern Murriny Patha: 'The two men took the meat home.'

In Modern Murriny Patha this sentence would be translated by most speakers as 'The two men took the meat home', and the malefactive reading for *-nintha* would be an unlikely one. However, even in Modern Murriny Patha the malefactive reading for *-nintha* should not be ruled out altogether. As we will see in §8, there are contexts in discourse, where for a certain restricted set of verbs, a malefactive reading is still possible for *-nintha* and *-ngintha* in this position.

#### 6.2 Stage 2

For this second stage, I propose that Murriny Patha speakers were motivated to make a gender distinction between groups of adversely affected dual participants. In order to do this, they exploited the fact that there were two positions in the verbal template for the ethical dative series and so they chose the third person singular ethical datives, because they distinguish gender, to help them make the distinction. Thus, we can reconstruct forms that were similar to the following examples:

<sup>16</sup> In Ngan'gityemerri, *-nime* marks trial for second person, third person and first exclusive. For first inclusive the morpheme marks plural.

<sup>17</sup> An /ng/, feminine versus /n/, masculine distinction in the various object series is well attested throughout the Daly, indeed throughout northern Australia. Ford (1998:126–127) lists a pair of contrasting prefixes in Emimi, *nga-*, female, *ni-/ne-*, male.

<sup>18</sup> Marrigarr: *-nith*, paucal (Green 2006); Marri Tjevin, Marri Ammu and Magati Ke: *-nim*, plural (when first person inclusive (Ford pers. comm.)); Marramanandji: *-ninimpi*, trial (Tryon 1974); Marrithiyel: *-nimbini*, trial (Green 1989). NB: The Emimi augmented number markers *-nganya*, fem, and *-niya*, masc, do carry a gender distinction, yet appear not to be cognates with this group of trial/paucals.

## (30) pre Murriny Patha (Stage 2)

\*ngambinhuwinthakainintha

ngam	-winthu	-winthakat	-nintha
1.S.19.NFUT	-3.DU.ED	-prevent	-3.S.M.ED
FINV	-ED	-COV	-ED

'I prevented those two males (from doing something).'

## (31) pre Murriny Patha (Stage 2)

\*ngambinhuwinthakaingintha

ngam	-winthu	-winthakat	-ngintha
1.S.19.NFUT	-3.DU.ED	-prevent	-3.S.F.ED
FINV	-ED	-COV	-ED

'I prevented those two females (or one male and one female) (from doing something).'

Since the true nature of the gender contrast in modern Murriny Patha is effectively a masculine versus non-masculine distinction, we may presume that the motivation for distinguishing groups of adversely effected dual participants had its origins in activities that pertained particularly to men. Thus the utility was in distinguishing pairs of men from other pairs who were not exclusively male (such as pairs of women, husbands and wives, mothers and children, etc.).

## 6.3 Stage 3

In the third stage I propose that it became so fundamentally useful to distinguish between groups of dual participants that *-nintha* and *-ngintha*, when they occurred in this Num<sub>2</sub> position, became reanalysed as masculine and feminine dual number markers. From here the use of these number markers was extended to the direct object and indirect object series. I suggest that it was not particularly important to indicate the gender of siblings. Since it was not important, these pairs were not marked. This would have been the stage that language got its three-way opposition, dual masculine versus dual feminine versus dual siblings. However, quite why it might have been unnecessary to mark the gender of pairs of siblings warrants some exploration.

Paradoxically, although morphologically unmarked by virtue of the absence of the non-sibling number markers, 'sibling' is the socially marked category in Murriny Patha.<sup>19</sup> As typical of Australian kinship systems, Murriny Patha classificatory kinship incorporates 'same-sex sibling merger' (Scheffer 1978:115), where a single kin-term is applied to certain sets of siblings (Falkenberg and Falkenberg 1981:111-112). For example, the same term *yile* is used for one's father and one's father's brothers. The same term *kale* is used for one's mother and one's mother's sisters. In the next generation, one's father's brother's sons or one's mother's sisters' sons (parallel cousins) are called by the same term as is used for one's brothers, *ngathan*. A different term, *pugarli*, is used for one's mother's brother's children or father's sister's children (cross-cousins). Same-sex sibling merger is a

fundamentally important concept to the Murriny Patha,<sup>20</sup> indeed it is a founding tenant of the kinship system.

In the verb complex (and also in the free pronouns) the gender of pairs of siblings is not marked. The same morphological category can indicate two brothers, two sisters, or a brother and a sister. Presumably, at this third stage of the grammaticalisation process there must have been social reasons as to why it was unnecessary to mark the gender of pairs of siblings.

What might have been these reasons? The Murriny Patha observe strong taboos on interaction between opposite-sex siblings, except amongst young children (Street 1987:32). Thus, knowing the gender of pairs of siblings is actually really important. I suggest that the non-marking of something so important can be explained in terms of a lack of social interaction between opposite-sex siblings. The norm is for brothers do things together and for sisters do things together. This behaviour is borne out in my corpus.<sup>21</sup> On this basis, distinguishing the gender of sets of siblings is not particularly beneficial. However, if a brother and a sister were to do something together, this would be a highly marked activity that may warrant scrutiny. Attention could then be brought towards the participants by using the socially marked (although morphologically unmarked) category 'sibling'. Assuming the cultural preoccupations are not hugely different now from when this proposed third stage was happening, the grammaticalisation of the sibling category could thus have been achieved due to the lack of necessity in marking the gender of sibling participants. This situation is in stark contrast to the one proposed for non-siblings, where the ability to distinguish dual participants was extremely beneficial. These cultural preoccupations are likely to have been the ones that contributed to the evolution of such a useful three-way distinction, made possible by the very efficient use of only two morphemes.

## 6.4 Stage 4

With *-nintha* and *-ngintha* now fully reanalysed as masculine and feminine dual number markers, there would be nothing to stop the speakers from further exploiting the two morphemes' occurrence in the slots Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub> and extending this gender-enhanced dual number marking ability to subjects. In effect this would not have been a huge leap for the language to make, given that the direct object series would have already marked experiencers in both impersonal verbs and in predicating nominal constructions, and in these constructions also stative subjects. Stage four thus represents the morphemes' extension to specifying all kinds of subjects.

## 6.5 Stage 5

Presumably, the three-way distinction between male versus female versus sibling referents would have proved so beneficial that as a fifth stage these dual non-sibling number marking morphemes were regularised right across the free pronoun paradigm essentially by

<sup>20</sup> The Murriny Patha also practise the sororate and levirate marriage patterns (Street 1987:33). That is, where a widower (in the case of the sororate) or a widow (in the case of the levirate) preferably marries the sibling of their deceased spouse.

<sup>21</sup> My corpus of Murriny Patha data does not include a single reference to a set of opposite-sex siblings, although the corpus (consisting of natural conversation, monologic texts and song texts) contains well over fifty constructions expressing 'sibling' arguments.

<sup>19</sup> If the kin-relation between participants is unknown to speakers, then the default category for constructing person reference is 'non-sibling'.

copying the relevant forms from the direct object series (Table 7). A similar process is likely to have happened with the paucals (although this may have happened previously).

Table 7: The direct object pronominals as compared to the free pronominals

	direct objects		free pronominals	
	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
singular	-ngi -nyi -Ø -Ø		ngay nyinyi nigumu nikumu	
I inclusive	-nyi -nyi -nyi	-ngime -neme	neki nekingime nekinime neki	
D	IF	-ngintha	ngan'gungintha	
	1M	-nintha	ngan'gunintha	
	2F	-ngintha	nan'gungintha	
	2M	-nintha	nan'gunintha	
	3F	-ngintha	perningintha	
A	3M	-nintha	pernintha	
		-nintha	perenintha	
U	1	-ngan'gu	ngan'gu	
	2	-nan'gu	nan'gu	
	3	-n'gu	piguna	
C		-wun'gu	puwuna	
		-ngan'gu	ngan'gungime	
A	1M	-ngan'gu	ngan'guneme	
	2F	-nan'gu	nan'gungime	
L	2M	-nan'gu	nan'guneme	
	3F	-n'gu	peningime	
	3M	-wun'gu	peneme	
plural + paucal siblings	1	-ngan	ngan'gi	
	2	-nan	nan'gi	
	3	-n	pigumu	
		-wun	pigurau	

6.6 Stage 6

In the final stage, the ethical dative series would have been rendered unproductive, essentially because the two highest frequency members were interpreted first and foremost as number markers. Thus, we arrive at Modern Murriny Patha, where the ethical datives do surface occasionally in certain verbs in texts. Since the series has become unproductive, we

might expect the role of marking malefaction to be subsumed by other series or other constructions. Example (32) provides some evidence for this.

- (32) *Ngayka nganinarrwivingintha da nginipuny nyini ngarirturmani*  
 ngay -ka ngani -narru -wit -ngintha  
 1S -TOP 1SS.4\_be.FUT -2.DU.SIB.IO -go\_to\_sleep -DU.F.SIB  
 PRO -PART FINV -IO -COV -NUM  
 da nginipuny nyini nga -rirturt -mani  
 place/time like/similar that 1.S.S.19.FUT -ignite -should  
 NOM/CL ADJ DEM FINV -COV -MODAL  
*namnga.*  
 nam -nga  
 2.S.S.8\_say.NFUT -1.S.IO  
 FINV -IO  
 'I'm falling asleep on you two. I should try lighting a fire like that one  
 you were telling me about.' (2004-08-08JB03b1.txt, 232666\_236614)

In (32) 'on you two' is being expressed by the indirect object *-narru*. The argument (you two) is affected, albeit mildly, by the action of falling asleep. Thus, this could be considered a mildly malefactive predicate. Arguably, this referent expressed by the indirect object might have once been expressed by the ethical dative series.<sup>22</sup>

7 An alternative account for the trials/paucals

Here I propose an alternative account (to that proposed in §5) for the extension of gender marking to the paucal category. This account does not claim the trials/paucals as a Proto Southern Daly innovation. It does presuppose a single trial/paucal number marker, most likely *\*-nime*, the same as the Ngun gityemeri form. With the *-nintha* and *-ngintha* already fully reanalysed as dual number markers, speakers would have been conscious of a robust masculine/feminine distinction brought about by the contrast between the two phonemes /n/ and /ng/. At the very least, this contrast would have been evident in third singular indirect objects, the third singular ethical datives and in the two new dual non-sibling number markers. Significantly, this small set of morphemes were all fillers of the two slots Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub>.

Table 8: Pre-Murriny Patha trial/paucal *\*-nime* as compared with certain other fillers of slots Num<sub>1</sub> and Num<sub>2</sub>

	3.S.IO	3.S.ED	DUAL NON-SIB	*TRIAL/PAUC
masculine	-na	-nintha	-nintha	-nime
feminine	-nge	-ngintha	-ngintha	

<sup>22</sup> Green (pers. comm.) suggested an alternative scenario—that the indirect objects, in taking on the marking malefaction, may have stolen ground from the ethical datives, leaving them ripe for reanalysis. Attractive as this stronger claim is, I do not yet have enough examples (like (32)) to support it.

At this stage of the grammaticalisation process Murriny Patha speakers would have had three dedicated number marking fillers of slot Num<sub>2</sub>, two of them bearing a gender contrast and the third not. Significantly, the other masculine fillers of this slot began with the same phoneme /n/ as the number marker not bearing the contrast. Under these circumstances, paradigmatic pressure would help speakers to interpret the /n/ in \*-nime as masculine. This would then leave a gaping hole in the paradigm for the feminine trial/paucal, a hole that could be easily filled by replacing the /n/ with its feminine counterpart /ng/. Thus by analogy with the dual number markers, the language arrives at two pre-Murriny Patha forms \*-nime (trial/paucal masculine) and \*-ngime (trial/paucal feminine).

Both of the outlined proposals are feasible but due to the lack of hard evidence, neither scenario is verifiable until further research uncovers the ultimate source of the trial/paucal morphemes.

### 8 A bridging context

Thus far I have concentrated on building a case for the grammatical reanalysis of the two morphemes, *-ninha* and *-nginha*, based primarily on their distribution in the verb complex. However the argument would be greatly strengthened by finding a bridging context; that is, some particular forms or constructions, whereby under certain conditions, either the former or the latter interpretations might be equally plausible. Example (33) comes from a creation myth:

- (33) *Wirndiwandutj nganaka kardu wirndiwandutj.*  
 wirndiwandutj nganaka kardu wirndiwandutj  
 man's\_name you\_know? human man's\_name  
 PRNAME INT NOMCL PRNAME  
*dirrimunginthamungewardanu*  
 dirrim -nu -nginha -nu -nge  
 3.S.36.NFUT -INCH -3.S.F.ED -INCH -become\_jealous  
 FINV -DTRANS -ED -DTRANS -COV  
 -warda -nu  
 -then -INCH?  
 -ADV -DTRANS?  
*nikunu wardathu dirrangange.*  
 nukunu warda -gathu dirrangan -Ø -nge  
 3.S.M then -towards 3.S.28.NFUT -3.S.DO -jealous\_someone  
 PRO ADV -PART FINV -DO -COV  
 'Wirndiwandutj, you know, a man called Wirndiwandutj, he started to  
 get jealous on her.' (2004-10-16JB02.txt, 0193.081, 0197.54)

The extract contains two verbs, both with the same coverb *-ngge*. *Dirrangange*<sup>23</sup> is a high transitive verb of class 28, literally meaning, 'he "jealous" someone'.<sup>24</sup> *Dirrimunginthamungewardanu* is a low transitive, class 36, inchoative version of what is basically the same scenario, verb class 36 being the low transitive version of class 28. *Dirrimunginthamungewardanu* is an extremely unusual word form because there would appear to be three inchoative detransitivisers, *-nu*.<sup>25</sup> The other reason it is unusual, and for this it was an extraordinarily fortuitous attestation, is that it is the only example in my corpus of a third singular ethical dative occurring in the Num<sub>1</sub> slot, the same slot where we would expect the dual non-singular number markers to go. Note that my consultant translated this expression in the singular as 'he became jealous', which is an inchoative construction. The subject of the verb is co-referential with the named participant, *Wirndiwandutj*. The third singular feminine ethical dative *-nginha* introduces his wife, the main protagonist in the story, as the person adversely affected by (that is bearing the brunt of) his becoming jealous. This particular use of the verb is not an example of the other valency-reducing strategy that may be applied to the transitive verb 'jealous someone', namely the reciprocal construction. However the reciprocal attestation has basically the same form (cf. (34)).

- (34) *Dirrimunginthamungge.*  
 dirrim -nu -nginha -nu -nge  
 3S.36.NFUT -RECIP -DU.F.NSIB -RECIP -jealous\_e/o  
 FINV -DTRANS -NUM -DTRANS -COV  
 'Those two (at least one of whom is female) "jealous" each other.'  
 (JB2006FN1, 3)

This time, in (34), *-nginha* is the dual non-sibling number marker. It serves to increment the indicated singular subject to two, giving the reciprocal verb a dual feminine subject. Here what is basically the same form, *-nginha*, in (33) is interpreted as an ethical dative giving a malefactive reading, and in (34), as a number marker. This bridging context arises because 'jealous someone' lends itself to both reciprocal<sup>26</sup> and malefactive readings.

<sup>23</sup> As a result of a morphophonemic process (Street 1987:105-110), the velar nasal of the coverb *-ngge* is deleted following the preceding nasal.

<sup>24</sup> 'Jealousing' a person is a more agentive process than 'envying' them or 'being jealous of' them. 'Jealousing (from the Kriol *je/ijim*) is to give someone a hard time through jealousy. This may include threats, intimidation, verbal abuse or even violence. Jealousing therefore is more than merely being jealous of someone or something. The implication is that the jealousiser is going to do something about it so you had better watch out!' (Blythe 2001:40).

<sup>25</sup> Two detransitivisers in the one verb complex are not common, although for the low transitive verb classes 36, 37 and 38 two is the norm for dual participants. I have only one other attestation in a low transitive verb of an extra *-nu* so far to the right of the coverb, which is not enough data to revise the verbal template presented in §3.1, although it is enough to convince me that neither form can be dismissed as a mere speech error.

<sup>26</sup> This claim I am making is that that 'jealousing', as practised in Aboriginal communities, tends to describe a naturally reciprocal state of affairs. Husbands and wives tend to be mutually jealous of each other for seeing other (real or imagined) partners. Such jealousy is actively fostered. For example, a wife who suspects her husband's attentions may be straying, will actively seek out the attentions of another man so as to regain the attentions of the husband. With regards to Aboriginal clients of a Townsville medical clinic, Kahn et al. (1980:730) state: 'Further, there is a pervasive jealousy and mistrust that seems to be present in most relationships. Whilst it is accentuated by alcohol, the jealousy is much more than the result of drunken states. The women too regard the men as always ready to "play up" with other women, especially when drinking. [...] The men consider the women potentially always ready to be

This is strong evidence that the dual number markers were sourced from the ethical dative paradigm.

### 9 Conclusion

It is perhaps not surprising that we should find the final reflexes of the ethical dative series persisting in constructions relating to jealousy. The notion of jealousy is heavily marked for malefaction. Invariably, a second party is affected detrimentally by the actions of the party who is jealous. 'Being jealous of someone' is also an inherently agentive function.<sup>27</sup> It is not surprising then that even in the cases of reduced transitivity, such as in (33), that the detrimentally affected argument is expressed, since there is invariably a detrimentally affected party.

It is equally unsurprising that the *Ninggeninggepatha* constructions should also preserve the ethical datives. After all, these constructions effectively constitute a different kind of low-transitivity mapping of the 'be jealous of' function. In these cases, it is the experiencer subject that is expressed by the ethical datives as the party detrimentally affected by jealousy. Perhaps then a better translation of example (10) might be 'He is consumed by jealousy'. Given that these constructions are also nominal, rather than verbal, one might expect the forms to occur with higher frequency than the ethical datives might otherwise occur in verbal constructions. Perhaps the two forms *kardu ninggeninggepathamintha*, 'jealous man', and *kardu ninggeninggepathangintha*, 'jealous woman', are essentially frozen forms, or are on the way to becoming frozen forms.

In §6, I suggested that Murriny Patha speakers were motivated to make a gender distinction between groups of dual participants. What might the motivations be driving the extension of gender marking? Speculatively, there may have been benefits in distinguishing the context of social activities, such as hunting or those ritual activities that involved groups of men, from those contexts that included women such as in family life. However, as Simpson (2002) points out, the processes of grammaticalisation can take many centuries and the cultural practices that motivated the initial change may no longer be current amongst the speakers of the modern language. The initial triggering cultural practice may no longer be recoverable. However, I have made the assumption that the cultural preoccupations concerning the behaviour amongst pairs of siblings may be similar to those we find in Wadeye today. Under this assumption, I have made suggestions as to why it was unnecessary to morphologically mark the gender of siblings.

The spread of the number markers is likely to have been driven by referential enrichment. Given that in natural conversation the language makes scant use of case to indicate core syntactic arguments, and that the polysynthetic verbs do not mark differences in nominal class membership,<sup>28</sup> the language is heavily reliant on its interlocutors' ability to distinguish between groups of human participants. Under the pathway proposed in §6, if one counts all the possible distinctions, Murriny Patha would have moved from a system

unfaithful, especially during the long periods when they are away drinking or working. Even amongst the young teenagers, jealousy interactions are frequent. Girls seem to seek attention and gain pleasure from goading boys to fight over them.'

<sup>27</sup> Note that of the valency reducing strategies, a reflexive mapping of this function would be nonsensical since the function implies more than one participant.

<sup>28</sup> Murriny Patha is nominally classifying with ten nominal classifiers which include only the one human category, *kardu*.

able to distinguish 20 possible groups of human participants as subjects and direct objects, to a system able to distinguish up to 26 groups of participants. Amongst the indirect objects, it would have moved from a system able to distinguish 21 groups, to one able to distinguish 27 possible groups. These gains were achieved by using only two morphemes. If one factors in the gaining of a gender distinction in the paucals as well, the gains were even greater. In terms of referential enrichment, the benefits are clear.

### Appendix

Table 9: Direct and indirect objects + number markers

		direct objects		indirect objects	
		Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>	Num <sub>1</sub>	Num <sub>2</sub>
singular	1	-ngi		-nga	
	2	-nyi		-mba	
	3F	-Ø		-nge	
	3M	-Ø		-na	
I inclusive	DU	-nyi		-nye	
	PAUC	-nyi	-ngime	-nye	-ngime
	F				
	PAUCM	-nyi	-neme	-nye	-neme
D	dual non-siblings	1F	-ngan'gu	-ngintha	-ngarru
		1M	-ngan'gu	-nintha	-ngarru
2F		-nan'gu	-ngintha	-narru	
2M		-nan'gu	-nintha	-narru	
3F		-n'gu	-ngintha	-wirru	
3M		-n'gu	-nintha	-wirru	
U	dual siblings	1	-ngan'gu	-ngarru	
		2	-nan'gu	-narru	
		3	-n'gu	-wirru	
A	paucal non-siblings	1F	-ngan'gu	-ngime	-ngarru
		1M	-ngan'gu	-neme	-ngarru
		2F	-nan'gu	-ngime	-narru
		2M	-nan'gu	-neme	-narru
		3F	-n'gu	-ngime	-wirru
L	plural + paucal siblings	3M	-n'gu	-neme	-wirru
			-wan'gu	-neme	-wirru
			-ngan	-ngarra	
	1	-nan	-narru		
	2	-n	-wirra		
	3	-wan	-wirra		

FinV (Subj)	Num1	Cov	Num2	Reading	Eg.
1 Singular	Ø	Cov	Ø	sing subj, (low trans) or sing subj, 3sDO (trans)	33
2 Singular	sing/pl obj	Cov	Ø	sing subj, sing/pl obj	3, 5, 33
3 Singular	sing/pl obj	Cov	du.nsb	du.nsb subj, sing/pl obj	24
4 Singular	du.nsb	Cov	Ø	du.nsb subj, (low trans) or du.nsb subj, 3sDO (trans)	23, 34
5 Singular	dauc obj	Cov	du.nsb	sing subj, du.nsb obj or du.nsb subj, du.nsb obj	4, 20, 32
6 Singular	dauc obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	sing subj, pauc.nsb obj or du.nsb subj, pauc.nsb obj	21
7 Singular	dauc obj	Cov	Ø	sing subj, du.sib obj	
8 dauc	Ø	Cov	Ø	du.sib subj, (low trans) or du.sib subj, 3sDO (trans)	26
9 dauc	Ø	Cov	pauc.nsb	pauc.nsb subj (low trans) or pauc.nsb subj, 3sDO	25
10 dauc	sing/pl obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, sing/pl obj	2
11 dauc	dauc obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, pauc.nsb obj or du.sib subj, pauc.nsb obj,	
12 dauc	dauc obj	Cov	du.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, du.nsb obj or du.sib subj, du.nsb obj	
13 dauc	dauc obj	Cov	Ø	du.sib subj, du.sib obj	
14 p/pauc.sib	Ø	Cov	Ø	p/pauc.sib subj (low trans) or p/pauc.sib subj, 3sDO (trans)	
15 p/pauc.sib	sing/pl obj	Cov	Ø	p/pauc.sib subj, sing/pl obj	
16 p/pauc.sib	dauc obj	Cov	du.nsb	p/pauc.sib subj, du.nsb obj	
17 p/pauc.sib	dauc obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	p/pauc.sib subj, pauc.nsb obj	
18 p/pauc.sib	dauc obj	Cov	Ø	p/pauc.sib subj, dauc obj	
19 non-sing	dauc subj	Cov	Ø	du.sib subj (low trans)	
20 non-sing	dauc subj	Cov	Ø	pauc.sib subj (low trans)	
21 non-sing	sing/pl obj	Cov	Ø	du.sib subj, sing/pl obj	
22 non-sing	sing/pl obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, sing/pl obj	
23 non-sing	dauc obj	Cov	du.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, du.nsb obj or du.sib subj, du.nsb obj	
24 non-sing	dauc obj	Cov	pauc.nsb	pauc.nsb subj, pauc.nsb obj or du.sib subj, pauc.nsb obj	
25 non-sing	dauc obj	Cov	Ø	du.sib subj, du.sib obj or pauc.nsb subj, du.sib obj	22

Figure 1: Number marking in Murriny Patha verbs

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# 10

## The diachronic evolution of the directional particle lái in Mandarin

JAMES MCELVENNY

### 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This paper investigates the diachronic evolution of the Modern Mandarin particle *lái* 來 'hither' and its associated grammatical constructions.<sup>2</sup> *Lái* belongs to the closed class of directional particles, whose basic function is to indicate paths over which the events described by the verbs they follow occur.<sup>3</sup> Their presence in the language gives Modern Mandarin a 'satellite-framed' structure for the expression of manner and path in motion events, according to Talmy's (1985; 2003:21–146) system of classification. An example of *lái* 'hither' describing a path is provided in (1) below.<sup>4</sup>

(1) The Modern Mandarin directional particle *lái*

... 只見	一位	體格	魁偉	滿臉	胡子	的
<i>zhǐ-jàn</i>	<i>yí</i>	<i>wèi</i>	<i>tǐgé</i>	<i>kuí wēi</i>	<i>mǎn-liǎn</i>	<i>húzi de</i>
only-see	one	CL	body	large-boned	full-face	beard
						ASSOC

- <sup>1</sup> My thanks go to Jane Simpson and Derek Herforth, who have provided many insightful comments and criticisms on successive drafts of this paper. I also thank the anonymous reviewer who provided several suggestions that helped to strengthen this paper. Any errors of fact or argumentation are of course my own.
- <sup>2</sup> What I describe here as directional particles are normally identified as *qū xiàng* 趨向補語 'directional complements' in most research into Chinese grammar. I have avoided this term, however, since the forms that appear in Modern Mandarin do not have the properties of complements as that term is generally understood in modern Anglophone syntactic theory. Although there are several competing definitions of complement, they all tend to describe forms that fill argument slots of verbs (see, for example, Crystal 1997:75). The directional forms in Modern Mandarin and other modern Chinese dialects do not fill argument slots and so fall outside these definitions.
- <sup>3</sup> In Modern Mandarin *lái* and the other directional particles can also have a range of metaphorical meanings. These extended metaphorical uses of the directional particles fall outside the scope of this paper. See Chao (1968:458–467), Li and Thompson (1981:58–67) and Huang and Chang (1996) for further discussion on the metaphorical uses of the directional particles.
- <sup>4</sup> Abbreviations used in glosses: 1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person; ASP = Old Chinese aspect marker; CL = classifier; NOM = nominalisation marker; OBJ = Object; PART = Old Chinese sentence-final particle; PERF = perfective aspect marker; PL = plural; POS = possessive marker; PREP = the multi-purpose Old Chinese preposition *yú* 於; Q.PART = question particle; S = singular.

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