From ethical datives to number markers in Murriny Patha

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1 Introduction\(^1\)

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 action 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.\(^2\) Murriny Patha is a fine example of an Australian language that has taken a culture specific notion and evolved distinctions that pervade throughout the language, 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 Ngarinyin, 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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\(^2\) 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 ‘universalism’ 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 marks a sibling versus non-sibling distinction for dual and paucal participants, and in this respect differs from its eastern neighbour Nganjgityemerrini. 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 pronouns. 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 conversations. 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 useful 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, -nemu for arguments comprising groups of approximately three to ten males (paucal masculine, PAUC.M) and -ngimi for arguments comprising groups of approximately three to ten participants which include at least one female (paucal feminine, PAUC.F). There is one other stipulation, namely that these number markers are used only when the denoted group of participants are not siblings. Nganjgityemerrini, 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, -neme (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 Nganjgityemerrini trial number marker and the Murriny Patha paucal number markers are clearly cognates (cf. (1) and (2)).

Nganjgityemerrini

(1) Alayi warrakma kinyi wernengiphinimete.
    alayi warrakma kinyi wernme -ngi -pul -nime -tye
mother three this 3.PLS.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) Puhangwehugime.
    puban -ngi -wetnik -ngime
3.DOAC.S.17.NFUT -1.S.DO-blame -PAUC.F.NSIB
FINV DO -COV NUM
'They (paucal feminine non-siblings) blamed me.' (JBJ2005FN3, 61)

The question arises: did Proto Southern Daly (pSD) have just a single trial/paucal number marker like Nganjgityemerrini and did Murriny Patha go on to innovate gender marking in the paucal? Alternatively, did the proto-language already make a gender distinction that Nganjgityemerrini 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' pronouns

Modern Murriny Patha has two productive series of 'object' pronouns, a direct object series and an indirect object series. 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 pronouns. 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 copverb (which encodes the bulk of the lexical meaning of the verb).

Pannigabuestra ngimgum.

pan -ngi -bat =kanam niggum -yu
FINV -DO -COV -SERFINV PRO -PART
'She was beating me.' (2004-09-12JBJ04.txt, 0230.604)

Nganjgityemerrini

3. Ngganjgityemerrini, also differs from Murriny Patha in that it marks trial, rather than paucal (Reid 1990).

4. In this case, 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'.

5. Abbreviations used in this paper: ADJ = adjective, ADV = adverbial, CAS = case, COV = coverbs, DAT = dative, DATIVE = dative/dual/paucal (lbr. between 2 and 10), DEM = demonstrative, DET = determiner, DO = direct object, DRTRANS = direct-transitive, DOX = dual, DUB = dual bound, ED = ethical dative, EGO = egophonic, EMM = emphatic, EX = exclusive, F = feminine, FINV = finite verb, FUT = future, IMP = incorporated body part, INC = inclusive, INCH = inchoative, INT = interrogative, IO = indirect object, INTENS = intensifier, IRK = reflexive, M = masculine, NFUT = non-finite, NUM = number, NOUN = noun, NC = non-categorial, NS = non-singular, NUM = number, PART = particle, PAUC = paucal, PIP = past impersonative, PIFNAME = proper name, PRO = free pronoun, PST = past, RC = reciprocals, S = singular, S = subject, SERFINV = serial finite verb, SIB = siblings, TNS = tense, TOP = topicaliser, V = verbal.
Table 1: The direct object and indirect object series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DO</th>
<th>IO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-ngi</td>
<td>-nga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-nji</td>
<td>-nja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.F</td>
<td>-φ</td>
<td>-ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.M</td>
<td>-θ</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-nji</td>
<td>-nye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual and paucal non-sibling ('daucal')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-ngan'gu</td>
<td>-ngarru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-nan'gu</td>
<td>-narru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-n'gu</td>
<td>-rru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-wum'gu</td>
<td>-wirru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural and paucal sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-ngan</td>
<td>-ngarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-nan</td>
<td>-nara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-n</td>
<td>-rra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-wum</td>
<td>-wirra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 pronoun 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) *Mampirrurwadaninha.*

mam -wirru -warda -nintha
3.S.S.8.say.NFUT -DAUC.IO -then -DEU.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 dual 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).

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 experience expressed by a direct object pronoun.

(5) *Peltip jinjukngavardudim.*

peltipj man -nji -nginjikawurl
head 3.S.S.8.DO_w_hand.NFUT -1.S.DO -give_lecture
NOUN FinV -DO -COV
=dim
=3.S.S.1.SIL.NFUT
=SER FINV
‘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 predating expressions where a stative subject (6) or an experiencer subject (7) is expressed by a direct object pronoun. Walsh (1996b) gives an account of a range of these predating 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.

(6) *Dertemnamnyidhay.*

dertemnam -nji -dhay
hard -2.S.DO -mouth
ADJ -DO -HIP
‘You’re a hard person’ (you always say so to request). (JB2004FN, 91)

(7) *Ngay kardu ngingenunginginaradanggu.*

ngay kardu ngingenungge -nji -marda -nngi
PRO Nom CL ROOT -IO -MARR -??
‘I’m a jealous person.’ (JB2005FN, 89)

7 Diachronically, the short forms of third person dual 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-finite, i.e. all tenses where the finite verb ends in a vowel. In non-finite tense verbs, the bilabial glides are realized as stops following the final nasals of the non-finite finite verb forms. The underlying /a/ surfaces in non-verbal constructions such as in (6).

8 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 reflexes expressed by the morphemes glossed ‘daucal’ in object position includes dual siblings, dual non-siblings, paucal non-siblings but not dual non-siblings for dual siblings. In spite of this discrepancy, I prefer to coin the succinct term ‘daucal’ with its succinct gloss (i.e. 3DOA LCS) rather than a clumsy alternative (i.e. 3DOA PAUC.NSIB).

9 See also Walsh (1996a) for an account of body part and metaphor.
Example (7) is one of two kinds of constructions based around the inherently reciprocated root, *ninggenenge*, jealous. The root derives from the coverb *-nge*, 'be jealous of', prefixed by an unanalyzable *ni* (Street 1980:13). This first group of *ninggenenge* constructions usually includes a direct object pronounal and the semantically elusive cranberry morpheme, *-wardangu* (partially analysable as *-marda*, 'belly'), plus the unanalyzable *-nggu*. 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 experiences are dual nonsibling, a dual non-sibling number marker appears to the right of the direct object pronounal, as in (8).

(8) **Kardu ninggenengekuwa* gungwardangungintha.**

kardu ninggenenge -wun'gu -marda -nggu -ngintha
human jealous -3,DAUC.DO -belly -? -DUL,F,NSIB
NomCl root -do -IMP -? -NUM

'The two women (non-siblings) are jealous.' (JB2005FN4, 91)

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

(9) **Niynanka ninggenengepatanamangintha wurrinidhaya.**

nigunu-ka ninggenenge -patha -mana -ngintha
3.SF -TOP jealous -INTENS? -INTENS -3.SF -?
pro -PART adj -ADV -ADV -?

wurrin -dha -ya
3.SS.6 Go,PIMP -PST -DUB
FNV -INS -PART

'She was very jealous.' (2004-09-12JB04.txt, 0205.S88)

(10) **Nuynanka kardu ninggenengepatanintha.**

nukumu-ka kardu ninggenenge -patha -nintha
pro -PART NomCl adj -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 ninggenengepatungintha.**

nyinyi kardu ninggenenge -patha -ngutha
2.s human jealous -well? -2.S -?
pro NomCl adj -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 *-ny* which is conspicuously absent from example (11). The form *-ngutha* is not attested as a number marker, so it would appear that rather than the direct objects, these *ninggenenge* constructions have a new set of pronominals that inflect for person and gender. The forms *nintha*, *-ngintha* and *-ngutha* 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 pronouns' 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 pronouns are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Flynn's 3rd object series**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1s</th>
<th>-ngintha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>-nintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3s</td>
<td>-nintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1du,INC</td>
<td>-nyintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ul</td>
<td>-winthu *-ngintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.DU.M</td>
<td>-winthu -nintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Pl</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Old Murriny Patha (c1950)**

(12) **Nandji bamnganthavurkpurk.**

nandji bam -ngantha -wurkpurk
residue 3.SS.19,FUT -1.S -? -fall and break? -
NomCl FNV -? -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) **Dumnganthonkathak.**

dam -ngantha -winthakat
3.SS.19,FUT -1.S -? -prevent
FNV -? -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 binds 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 effects are attested elsewhere in the Daly, although sometimes with different labels. It would appear that if the Murray Patha series was ‘defective’ in the middle of the 20th century, then it is even more marginal in the first decade of the 21st. It has proven very difficult to elicit ethical datives, particularly in verbs, however, the forms do surface occasionally in texts.

(14) Nangu kanamungaparti kanggurl ngay pinggarima.
Nangu kanam -ngantha part kanggurl
place_name 3.S.S.D be.NFUT -IS.ED -leave father’s, father’s, sister
NOUN FNV -ED -COV NOUN
ngay pinggarima -ma
1.S knee -having
PRO NOUN -COM
‘At Nangu, Pinggarima, my father’s auntie, left him behind, which displeased me.’ (2004-09-12B04.nx, 0059.993)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dative Series</th>
<th>Flynn</th>
<th>Blythe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-ngantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-ngantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.F</td>
<td>-ngantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.M</td>
<td>-ngantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>-nintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual and pausal non-sibling (‘daucal’)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pausal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sibling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and plural</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-winthu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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., ‘she prevented her’. That would account for why -ngantha is missing from his data. Secondly, the initial nasal differs in the second person form (-nuntha versus -ngantha). Most likely, he failed to hear the nasal as velar. From the two sources of data we can expand the paradigm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dative Series</th>
<th>Flynn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual and pausal non-sibling (‘daucal’)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pausal sibling and plural</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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10 The ‘ethical dative’, ‘ethical dative’ or ‘dative Ethics’ 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 malefactive, the ethical dative is usually translated into English with ‘an’.

11 Reid (1900:134) refers to a series of ‘implicated’ pronouns in Nganga/yengemeri whereas Ford (1998:176) describes an ‘adverbial’ set in Eimmu. Green (1989:126-128) describes a series of ‘angga’ pronouns in Marniethal that mark adverse effects but have other functions as well. Since I cannot be sure that the marking of malefactive was the only semantic role expressed by this series, I use the ‘broader’ term ‘ethical dative’.

12 An alternative explanation may be that the once robust -nuntha, use versus -angantha, form distinction that we see in Murray Patha (and throughout the Daly), had a reflex in the second person singular ethical datives (i.e. -ngantha, 2.S.F.ED versus -nuntha, 2.S.I.ED). When I elicited the form -angantha 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 use was pretty vague. He generally did perceive velar nasals where I would expect to find them, however, a gender distinction in the second person pronouns would be unprecedented throughout this region, so I’m hesitant to propose such a contrast on the basis of such flimsy evidence.
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 -ninha.\(^{13}\)

### Table 5: Ethical datives versus number markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ethical dative series</th>
<th>dual non-sibling number markers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.S.M</td>
<td>-ninha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.S.F</td>
<td>-ngintha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.DU.M</td>
<td>-winhu (+ -ninha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.DU.F</td>
<td>-winhu (+ -ngintha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.PL</td>
<td>-winhu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 pronouns with respect to the coverb.

(15) **pre-coverb**

_Damganthawinthakat._

namji -ninha -winhu -wurkpurrk -num -ninha
residue 3.SS.18.FUT -3.DU.ED -fall_and_break?? -FUT -DD.M.NSB
NomCL FinV -ED -COV -TNS -NUM
"He prevented me (from doing something)." (Flynn n.d.a:11)

(16) **post-coverb**

_Ngambinthakatwintha._

gam -winhu -ninha -ninha
1.SS.19.FUT -prevent -3.SS.ED
FinV -COV -ED
"I prevented him." (Flynn n.d.a:11)

(17) **post-coverb**

_Ngambinthakatwintha._

ngam -winhu -ninha -ninha
1.SS.19.FUT -prevent -3.PL.ED
FinV -COV -ED
"I prevented them." (Flynn n.d.a:11)

(18) **pre-coverb**

_Nandji balthinthawurrpurrk._

nandji -winhu -wurkpurrk
residue 3.SS.18.FUT -3.PL.ED -fall_and_break??
NomCL FinV -ED -COV
"I prevented them." (Flynn n.d.b:6)

(19) **pre-coverb**

_Nandji buywinthawurrpurrkbinth._

nandji -winhu -wurkpurrk -num -ninha
residue 3.SS.18.FUT -3.DU.ED -fall_and_break?? -FUT -DD.M.NSB
NomCL FinV -ED -COV -TNS -NUM
"The thing, it belonging to those two broken-in-falling will be." (Flynn n.d.b:6)

The thing will break on them (2 males).

Examples (15)-(19) demonstrate four things. Firstly, (16) and (17) show ethical dative occurring after the coverb, in the same place as where the number markers go. Secondly, (15) and (18) show ethical dative occurring in a different position, namely in front of the coverb. Thirdly, we find the same plural ethical dative -winha occurring after the coverb in (17) and before the coverb in (18). The other two object series (the direct object and indirect objects) have only one available position, before the coverb. Finally, (19) shows a dual ethical dative occurring before the coverb being specified by a number marker, after the coverb, 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 number 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: finite verb—a portmanteau morpheme coding subject, verb class, tense, mood, aspect and stance. This is the only obligatory element in the complex.

Num1: Num2: takes a number of dissimilar elements: direct and indirect object bound pronouns, dual non-sibling subject marking and 'dualistic' subject marking.

_dTran:_ Detransitive: a valency reducing morpheme, encoding reflexive, reciprocal and intransitive functions.

IBP: incorporated body part

Cov: coverb (possibly reduplicated)

Adv: adverbial(s)

Tns: tense

Part: particle

Num2: dual/pascual 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.

---

\(^{13}\) See example (19).
3.2 Expressing dual non-sibling objects

As mentioned in §2, the direct and indirect object markers occur between the finite verb and the copverb. This is the position all Num₁. 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 Num₁ 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 Num₂, so Num₁ and Num₂ work in concert to specify number and gender.

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

Mampirrawardaninha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Num₁</th>
<th>Num₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mam</td>
<td>-wirru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


FNV -io ADV -NUM

‘He said to the two boys’ (who weren’t brothers).

(2004-08-08/12JW03b2.txt, 849438_850860)

3.3 Expressing paucal non-sibling objects

When either the direct or indirect object is paucal non-sibling, a paucal non-sibling number marker (-nemé14 for referents comprising all male participants and -ngime for referents comprising at least one female) is placed in the Num₂ slot, adding further specificity to the numerically underspecified dual object.

(21) (Pattern 6 in Figure 1)

Ngartat pangu bangamangarrapuynimetharra ngamimarda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Num₁</th>
<th>Num₂</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngartat</td>
<td>pangu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bangam -ngaru -ruv


FNV -io COV

‘She came out to us, on the other side, at Ngartat.’

(2004-09-12JW04.txt, 0071.571)

3.4 Expressing dual sibling objects

When the referent expressed by a direct or indirect object comprises two siblings, the object pronoun goes in the only position it can go, namely the Num₁ slot. The Num₂ slot remains empty.

(22) (Pattern 25 in Figure 1)

‘Wurda’, thamunya ngay pumantpirrupirrimka.

Wurda thamunya ngay pumantpirrupirrimka Num₁

-wirru

No mother’s_father 1.S 3.DAUC.S1_SILNFUT -3.DAUC.IO

INTERJ NOUN PRO FINV -IO

-pirrimka

3.DAUC.S1_SILNFUT

-SERFINV

‘“No”, they were saying to two maternal grandfathers.’

(2005-07-14JW02c.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 Num₁, effectively incrementing the number of the indicated singular subject to two.

(23) (Pattern 4 in Figure 1)

Thangkugawu damaunthangkardu?

Num₁

thangkugawu -wa dam -nintha -ngkardu


INT -PART FINV -NUM -COV

‘What did you two males see?’ (2005-07-14JW02c.txt, 618930_621333)

In verbs with a singular or plural object (i.e. non-ducal), for which we can expect a pronominal object argument, the dual non-sibling number marker now appears in the Num₂ slot, rather than in Num₁.

(24) (Pattern 3 in Figure 1)

Nari’ngamindha pama thuuringayitjwingintha ngamununggui.

Num₁

nari’ngamindha pama thuuringayitjwingintha Num₁

ngamununggui

2.DAUC.S8.8.say.NFUT medial 2.S.S.30.FUT -1.S.IO -tell_story be_Able

PRO DEM FINV -IO -COV -MODAL

Num₂

-ngintha angununggui

-DAUC.S8.8.say.NFUT totem_site

-NUM NOUN

‘Why don’t you two tell me the story about that totem site?’

(2004-07-04JW01.txt, 0429.832)

---

14 Some speakers use the variant -nemé.
3.6 Expressing paucal non-sibling subjects

When the subject is paucal non-sibling, a paucal non-sibling number marker goes into the Num₂ slot, adding further specificity to the numerically underspecified paucal subject (the finite verb).

(25) (Pattern 9 in Figure 1)

\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{Num}_2 \\
&\text{Tjindi marda ngerawatthangine.}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{array}{ll}
\text{Tjindi} & \text{marda} \\
\text{place} & \text{ngarne} \\
\text{num} & \text{wat} \\
\text{num} & \text{-tha} \\
\text{num} & \text{-ngime}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{We didn't go to Tjindi any more.} \quad (2004-08-03JB0083.txt, 509760_0511670)
\end{array} \]

So whether specifying subjects or objects, -neme and -ngime only ever occur in Num₂ whereas -nintha and -nginthika can be found in both places.

3.7 Expressing dual-sibling subjects

When the Num₂ slot is empty and the subject of the finite verb is dual, then the subject number, by default, indicates dual siblings, as in example (26). Note that in (26) both slots Num₁ and Num₂ are empty.

(26) (Pattern 8 in Figure 1)

\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{Karda nyinda nguminangguyeldhangerde.}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{array}{ll}
\text{Karda} & \text{nyinda} \\
\text{human} & \text{mu} \\
\text{num} & \text{ngumin} \\
\text{-ngarne} & \text{CAS} \\
\text{FinV} & \text{-DO}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{l}
\text{We two sisters were looking at him.} \quad (2005-07-14JB02c.txt, 231591_23339)
\end{array} \]

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 Num₂ slot. The dual number markers -nintha and -nginthika also specify both subjects and objects, but only in the Num₂ slot. Unlike the paucals, they also appear in Num₁, but when they do, they only ever specify subject number.

In summary:

-\[ \text{Num}_1 \quad \text{Num}_2 \]

-\[ \text{ninthal-nginthika (S only)} \quad \text{ninthal-nginthika (S/O)} \]

-\[ \text{neme-ngime (S/O)} \]


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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Position of ethical dative pronominals as attested in verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual and paucal non-sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned above in §2, the third plural form -wimuthu 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 Num₂ and also that 'before coverb' corresponds to the position Num₁. 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 -nginthika do not have any strong candidates for cognates in neighbouring languages,² I propose that earlier Murray Patha speakers reassigned 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 Murray Patha paucals, predated the reassignment of the two ethical datives.

² Ford (1998:126) and Green (2003:135) suggest that the Murray Patha dual forms -nintha and -nginthika are cognate with the two number markers in Etrami, -ninya, male augmented and -ninyga, female augmented. However there are notable differences between the functionality of the Etrami and the Murray Patha forms. Firstly the Etrami forms denote four or more participants whereas the Murray Patha forms denote two. Secondly in Etrami, -ninya and -ninyga denote all males and all females respectively, whereas in Murray Patha -nintha and -nginthika 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 (Etrami 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, *-nine* is a single reflex of what was a pair of trial/paucal number markers already bearing such a distinction.\(^\text{16}\) However prior to that, it is possible that Proto Southern Daly, the ancestor of Murray 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 *-me. 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.\(^\text{17}\)

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 *-nine* (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 Murray Patha in preserving an /n/ versus /ng/ gender distinction.\(^\text{18}\) 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 Murray Patha adjective *ngemere*, ‘several’ (that is paucal). Given that there are three suffixes -ve (argative, instrumental, temporal), it is possible that the syllable /me/ may be a reflex of the SMD number-marking stem *-me* (as proposed above) and that *ng* 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 *-nginththa* 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 Murray Patha had a fully productive ethical dative series, and that *-nintha* and *-nginththa* did not exist as number markers, but only as members of this series. I also propose that at this earliest 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.

\[(27) \quad \text{pre Murray Patha (Stage 1)}
\]
\[\ast \text{ngambinthakatinwhita} \]
\[\text{ngam} \quad \text{winthakat} \quad \text{winthu} \]
\[\text{I.S.S.1.NFUT} \quad \text{3-DU.ED} \quad \text{FINV} \quad \text{ED} \quad \text{ED} \]
\[\text{\textquoteleft I prevented those two (from doing something).\textquoteright} \]

\[(28) \quad \text{pre Murray Patha (Stage 1)}
\]
\[\ast \text{ngambinthawinhakat} \]
\[\text{ngam} \quad \text{winthu} \quad \text{winthakat} \]
\[\text{I.S.S.1.NFUT} \quad \text{3-DU.ED} \quad \text{FINV} \quad \text{ED} \quad \text{ED} \]
\[\text{\textquoteleft I prevented those two (from doing something).\textquoteright} \]

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 Murray Patha would have permitted constructions of the type exemplified by (29).

\[(29) \quad \text{pre Murray Patha (Stage 1)}
\]
\[\ast \text{Ku mangaminhthara ngarra da} \]
\[\text{ku} \quad \text{mangan} \quad \text{nintha} \quad \text{art} \quad \text{ngarra da} \]
\[\text{ANIMATE 3.S.S.9.NFUT} \quad \text{3-S.M.ED} \quad \text{FINV} \quad \text{ED} \quad \text{ED} \quad \text{ED} \quad \text{FINV} \]
\[\text{\textquoteleft He took the meat home, to the other man's disadvantage.\textquoteright} \]

Modern Murray Patha: ‘The two men took the meat home.’

In Modern Murray 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 Murray 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 *-nginththa* in this position.

6.2 Stage 2

For this second stage, I propose that Murray 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:

\[\text{In Ngan’gityemerri, *-nine* marks trial for second person, third person and first exclusive. For first inclusive the morpheme plural marks plural.}\]

\[\text{As *nig*, feminine versus *ng*, masculine distinction in the various object series is well attested throughout the Daly, indeed throughout northern Australia. Ford (1998:126–127) lists a pair of contrasting prefixes in Enam, *ng*, female, *nig*, male.}\]

\[\text{Marttingai: *-nin*, paucal (Green 2006); Marri Tjevin, Marri Annenu and Magani Ke: *-nin*, plural (when first person inclusive (Ford pers. comms.)); Marrarranandji: *-ninji*, third (Tryon 1974); Marrriyiel: *-ninji*, trial (Green 1989); Nil: The Enam augmented number markers *-nganyer*, fem., and *-ninja, masc., do carry a gender distinction, yet appear not to be cognates with this group of trial/paucal.}\]
(30) pre Murray Patha (Stage 2)
   *ngambinituwinitachatintha
   ngam -winthu -winthakat -nintha
   FNV -ED -COV -ED
   'I prevented those two males (from doing something).'

(31) pre Murray Patha (Stage 2)
   *ngambinituwinitachagintha
   ngam -winthu -winthakat -gnintha
   FNV -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 Murray Patha is effectively a
masculine versus non-masculine distinction, we may presume that the motivation for
distinguishing groups of adversely affected 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 -gnintha, when they occurred in this
Num1 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 the 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 Murray Patha.19 As
typical of Australian kinship systems, Murray Patha classificatory kinship incorporates
'same-sex sibling merger' (Scheffler 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 brother. 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, ngiawan. A different term, pugari, is used for one's mother's
brother's children or father's sister's children (cross-cousins). Same-sex sibling merger is a

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

fundamentally important concept to the Murray Patha,20 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 Murray 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 to do things together and for
sisters do things together. This behaviour is borne out in my corpus.21 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
sharp 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 -gnintha 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 alota Num1 and Num2 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
experiences in both impersonal verbs and in predicating nominal constructions, and in
these constructions also atutive 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 those dual non-sibling number
marking morphemes were regularised right across the free pronoun paradigm essentially by

20 The Murray 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.
21 My corpus of Murray 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.
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 pronounals as compared to the free pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>direct objects</th>
<th>free pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num1</td>
<td>Num2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ngi</td>
<td>ngay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ngi</td>
<td>ngani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>n'gi</td>
<td>ngarirtwmani</td>
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<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>n'em</td>
<td>ngitha</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>n'yi</td>
<td>nok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>n'yi</td>
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<td>n'yi</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>dual</td>
<td>dual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-siblings</td>
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<td>ngan'gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>siblings</td>
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<td>ngan'gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n'yi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n'yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paucal</td>
<td>1F</td>
<td>ngan'gu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-siblings</td>
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<td>n'yi</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8: Pre-Murriny Patha trial/paucal *-nime as compared with certain other fillers of slots Num1 and Num2</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>-nge</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-nginthi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUAL NON-SIB</td>
<td>-nintha</td>
<td>-ninthi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*TRIAL/PAUC</td>
<td>-nime</td>
<td>-nime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6 Stage 6

In the final stage, the ethical dative series would have been rendered unproductive,
especially 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 malfeasance to be subsumed by other series or other
constructions. Example (32) provides some evidence for this.

(32) Ngayka ngarinarrarwumginka da ngihipinyu nyi ngavanirtwmani
    ngay -ka  ngani -narru -wit -nginthi
    ls -top   ls,sa,be,fut 2-du,sib 10 go_to_sleep 3-du,sib
    pro -part  finv  -io  -cov -num
    da  ngihipinyu  nyi  nga  -rintur -manu
    place/time  like/similar  that  1.s.s,19,fut -ignite -should
    non/cl  ADJ  DEM  FinV  -COV -modal
    namanga.
    nam  -nga
    2.s.s,8.say,NFUT  -ls,io
    FinV  -io
    'I'm falling asleep on you two. I should try lighting a fire like that one
you were telling me about.' (2004-08-081B03b1.txt, 232666, 232664)

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 malfeasive predicate. Arguably, this referent expressed by the indirect
object might have once been expressed by the ethical dative series. 22

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 Ngan gityemerri form. With the -nintha and -nginthi
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 /u/ and /gu/. 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 Num1 and Num2.

22 Green (pers. comm.) suggested an alternative scenario—that the indirect objects, in taking on the
marking malfeasance, 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 Num₂, two of them bearing a gender contrast and the third no. Significantly, the other masculine fillers of this slot began with the same phoneme /m/ as the number marker not bearing the contrast. Under these circumstances, paradigmatic pressure would help speakers to interpret the /m/ in *-nîme 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 /m/ with its feminine counterpart /n/. Thus by analogy with the dual number markers, the language arrives at two pre-Murriny Patha forms *-nîme (trial/paucal masculine) and *-ngge (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, *-nîthna and *-ngthna, 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

dirramaanginangamunggevarndanu
    dirrim -nu -ngthna -nu -ngge
    FINV -DTRANS -ED -DTRANS -COV
    -warda -nu
    -then -INC?
    -ADV -DTRANS?

mitkuna warda bathu dirrangan'ge.
    nukuru warda bathu dirrangan -Ø -ngge
    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. Dirrangan'ge is a high transitive verb of class 38, literally meaning 'he jealously someone'. Dirramaanginangamunggevarndanu is a low transitive, class 36, inchoative of what is basically the same scenario, verb class 36 being the low transitive version of class 28. Dirramaanginangamunggevarndanu is an extremely unusual word form because there would appear to be three inchoative de-transitiivisers, -mu. 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 Num₂ 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 -ngthna 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) Dirramaanginangamungge.
    dirrim -nu -ngthna -nu -ngge
    3.S.36.NFUT -RECIP -DUF.NSIB -RECIP -jealous e/o
    FINV -DTRANS -NUM -DTRANS -COV

'Those two (or at least one of whom is female) ‘jealous’ each other.' (JB2006FN1, 3)

This time, in (34), -ngthna 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, -ngthna, 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 and malefactive readings.

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

24 ‘Jealousy’ a person is more active process than ‘envying’ them or ‘being jealous of’ them. ‘Jealousy’ (from the Kriol *jealum) is to give someone a hard time through jealousy. This includes threats, intimidation, verbal abuse or even violence. Jealousy is more than merely being jealous of someone or something. The implication is that the jealous one is doing something about it so you had better watch out!’ (Blythe 2001:40).

25 Two de-transitiivisers in the one verb complex are uncommon, 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.

26 This claim I am making is that ‘jealous’, as practised in Aboriginal communities, tends to describe a naturally reciprocal state of affairs. Husband 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
9 Conclusion

It is perhaps not surprising that we should find the reflexes of the ethical dative series persisting in constructions relating to jealousy. The notion of jealousy is heavily marked for malefactions. Invariably, a second party is affected detrimentally by the actions of the party who is jealous. ‘Being jealous of someone’ is also an inherently negative function. 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 *Ninggeningapatha* 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 ninggeningpethaninha*, ‘jealous man’, and *kardu ninggeningpethanginha*, ‘jealous woman’, are essentially frozen forms, or are on the way to becoming frozen forms.

In §6, I suggested that Murray 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, 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, Murray Patha would have moved from a system 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Direct and indirect objects + number markers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 inclusive</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>D</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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 guiding boys to fight over them.

27 Note that of the valency reducing strategies, a reflexive mapping of this function would be nonsensical since the function implics more than one participant.

28 Murray Patha is nominally classifying with ten nominal classifiers which include only the one human category, *kardu*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flit</th>
<th>Num1</th>
<th>Cov</th>
<th>Num2</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Eq.</th>
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<td>sing subj, HSO</td>
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<tr>
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<td>sing</td>
<td>Cov</td>
<td>sing subj, sing obj</td>
<td>sing subj, HSO (same)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>sing</td>
<td>Cov</td>
<td>dux subj, sing obj</td>
<td>dux subj, sing obj</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>dux subj, HSO (same)</td>
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<td>dux subj, dux subj</td>
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</table>

Figure 1: Number marking in Murrinity Patha verbs

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10 The diachronic evolution of the directional particle lǎi in Mandarin

JAMES MCELVENNY

1 Introduction

This paper investigates the diachronic evolution of the Modern Mandarin particle lǎi 来 'hither' and its associated grammatical constructions. Lǎi 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. 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 lǎi 'hither' describing a path is provided in (1) below.

(1) The Modern Mandarin directional particle lǎi

...只见一位 體格 面容 頭巾 胡子 的
zhǐjiàn yī wèi tǐgé miànrong tóu jin húzi de
only-see one CL body large-boned full-face beard ASSOC

--- 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.

--- What I describe here as directional particles are normally identified as gā xǐng 進行 '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.

--- In Modern Mandarin lǎi and the other directional forms 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 (1968:456-467), Li and Thompson (1981:58-57) and Huang and Chang (1996) for further discussion on the metaphorical uses of the directional particles.

--- Abbreviations used in glosses: 1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person; ASP = Old Chinese aspect marker; CL = classifier; MVM = 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 yī 跟; Q.PART = question particle; S = singular.
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