sous la direction de
Pierre J.L. Arnaud

LE NOM COMPOSÉ
DONNÉES SUR SEIZE LANGUES

© Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2004
80, Boulevard de la Croix-Rousse - BP 4371
69242 Lyon CEDEX 04

ISBN 2-7297-0757-3

PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE LYON
La composition nominale est un objet d'étude intéressant au plus haut point les lexicologues, qui examinent les composés en tant qu'unités lexicales, et les spécialistes de morphologie et de syntaxe auxquels ils posent des problèmes théoriques intéressants, notamment à propos des frontières entre ces deux domaines. Le but et les principes de cet ouvrage collectif sont simples: il s'agit de mettre à la disposition des chercheurs et des étudiants des données sur les noms composés de diverses langues en un format compact. La motivation initiale provient de la constatation du fait que se documenter sur les composés peut être une tâche redoutable dès lors que l'on ne dispose pas d'une très riche bibliothèque et que, même dans ce cas, la compilation de données à partir d'ouvrages parfois très différents est souvent une activité frustrante. Peu de ressources comparables existent: un numéro de la Rivista di Linguistica (4, 1, 1992) dirigé par Sergio Scalise a rassemblé des articles sur l'allemand, le néerlandais, le hongrois, l'anglais, le latin, l'espagnol, le grec moderne, l'italien, le portugais et le français. Plus récemment, les Transactions of the Royal Philological Society (100, 2, 2002) ont consacré un numéro aux composés des langues indo-européennes anciennes.

Le thème du présent volume est le nom composé, et non le lexique composé en général, pour deux raisons: d'une part, les unités nominales sont généralement les plus typiques et les plus fréquentes parmi les composés d'une langue et, d'autre part, la prise en compte des autres classes aurait risqué de mener à une prolifération taxinomique préjudiciable à l'unité de l'ouvrage.

Les langues représentées ont été choisies afin de représenter un large éventail typologique et de faire ressortir à la fois la variété et l'unité des phénomènes de composition. Certes, on pourra regretter que telle ou telle langue n'y figure pas, mais l'échantillon idéal par sa couverture typologique et géographique est sans doute plus un vrai piège qu'un objectif réalisable dans des délais et un format raisonnables. D'emblée, l'anglais, l'allemand et les langues romanes ont été exclus de l'inventaire pour la raison évidente que la documentation sur ces langues est abondante et généralement accessible.

AVANT-PROPOS
Parmi les langues représentées, certaines sont abondamment décrites de longue date ; d'autres, comme le néêmwa, le galît, et l'angami, le hlînî jîn-woak, sont en cours de description. Le sôk pînîn est bien sûr un cas à part en raison de sa nature de langue de contact et de son évolution rapide qui oblige à prendre une perspective dynamique. On se trouvait en lisant ces contributions que l'anglais, la plus intensivement étudiée de toutes les langues modernes, est pourtant loin d'avoir livré tous ses secrets en ce qui concerne la composition. L'ordre de présentation est simplement l'ordre alphabétique des noms des langues, car il n'est pas apparu de raison impérieuse de classer les langues autrement en regard du thème du volume. Quatre contributions ont été laissées en anglais, ce qui ne risquait pas de les rendre inaccessibles à des linguistes et évitant une interpolation entre la pensée des auteurs et le lecteur (on trouvera le galît à Welsh).

La perspective est préthorique. Ce terme n'est pas ici affecté d'une connotation négative : il signifie simplement que les données sont présentées de manière à être exploitables dans le cadre de n'importe quelle théorie, sans être enfermées dans un ou des cadres qui risqueraient de se perimer au point d'être difficiles d'accès d'ici vingt ou trente ans. La consultation d'un grand nombre des publications sur les composés anglais ainsi que de certaines descriptions de langues des années 1960 et 70 fait clairement apparaître ce danger. Préthorique ne veut bien sûr pas dire que les auteurs des contributions ne placent pas leurs recherches dans un cadre théorique, qui est d'ailleurs souvent visible dans leurs textes, mais tous ont fait un effort d'accessibilité qui, je pense, assurera la durabilité de ce travail.

Les auteurs n'ont pas été enfermés dans un cercle descriptif, et on verra par exemple que l'extension de leurs notions de la composition nominale peut varier quelque peu. En règle générale, les contributions, après une très brève présentation générale de la langue, donnent des indications sur les classes ouvertes et sur le syntagme nominal, afin de préparer la présentation de la typologie des noms composés et des phénomènes morpho-phono-logiques liés à la composition. La dernière contribution est plus générale et échappe à ce canevas ; elle réintroduit l'anglais et le français comme sources de problèmes.

Il me reste à espérer que ce volume remplira son but, et fera avancer la connaissance de ce domaine indispensable.

P.A.

Mes remerciements vont, bien sûr, tout d'abord aux linguistes qui ont cru à ce projet et ont bien voulu s'y associer, en persévérant et en tenant remarquablement les délais. Philippe Théron, directeur du CRTT, m'a soutenu, de la formulation de l'idée à la publication. Sans Dominique Moniez, peu avant de son temps, certains des problèmes liés à l'informatique n'auraient jamais été résolus, et le volume n'aurait pas la même apparence.


**Nicholas Evans**

University of Melbourne

**BININJ GUN-WOK**

family: Australian

group: gunwinjguan

2000 speakers, with approximately 50% native speakers

Western Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

**1. THE LANGUAGE**

**1.1. Dialects**

Bininj Gun-wok is a cover term for a dialect chain with a number of named varieties: Gundjeihmi (DJ), Kunwinjku (W), Kunawjdju (DN), Kunju (I), Kune (two subdialects, Narcery (ENR) and Dulerreyeck (EDR)) and Mawarrayaliuy Mayali (MM). Sue Evans (2003) for a fuller discussion of these varieties. Previous literature on this language has used one or another or these dialect-specific terms, or an orthographic variant thereof: Gunwinjgu (Oates 1964), Kunwinjku (Carroll 1975), Gun-djeihmi (Evans 1996), Mayali (Evans 1995a, 1997a, b), but in the absence of any superordinate term that all speakers find acceptable the term Bininj Gun-wok has recently been mvoed as an alternative term for this whole complex of varieties, based on bininj "Aboriginal person" and gun-wok "language". There are only minor differences in compensating behaviour across dialects, all noted as the paper unfolds, and I draw on material from the entire dialect chain.

**1.2. Overall typeology**

Bininj Gun-wok is a highly polysynthetic language with around twelve prefix slots on the verb and two suffix slots. This is shown by the morphological...
template in (1); note the following abbreviations: dir = directional ("hither" or "thither"), imm = immediate ("right now/then/there"), msc = miscellaneous (encompassing a wide range of adverbial type prefixes such as "at night", "in the wrong place", "surreptitiously"; some of these precede and some follow the next slot, with some variation among speakers as to their exact placement), ben = benefactive applicative, gin = generic incorporated nominal (see below), bpn = body part incorporated nominal, num = numerospatial prefix (e.g. "many in a bunch"), con = conative applicative, refl/recip = reflexive/reciprocal, TAM = tense/super/mood. For fuller discussion and exemplification see Evans (1995a, 1996, 1997a, 2002, 2003).

(1) 12 14-10 12 6.7 8 6.5 -5 -4 -3 -2 →
TENSE PHONOM dir imm. msc. ben. msc. gin. bpn. msc →
→ 1 0 1 2
→ con ROOT refl/recip TAM/SUF

Sample verbs illustrating some of the morphological possibilities are (2) and (3):

(2) Birri-yawohl-djarak-mirrade-moname-rr-nji.1
W 3pl-old(together-many-assemble-RR)PP
"They assembled together as a group."

(3) Aban-yawohl-warrqoh-mane-ganj-ginje-ng.
Dj 1pl-again-wrong-BEN-meat-cook-PP
"I cooked the wrong meat for them again."

1.3. Noun incorporation

One element contributing to the complexity of BGW verbal morphology is noun incorporation, which is responsible for the presence, within a verbal word, of the nominal root: nganj "meat" in (3).

A simpler example (4a-b) illustrates both the possibility of the process, and the fact that the incorporated form omits any noun class prefix that may be present in the external form (the prefix gun- is a noun-class marker — see below).

(4a) Ba-ginje-ng - gun-ganji
Dj 3/3L-cook-PP IV-meat 3/3L-meat-cook-PP
"(S)he cooked (the) meat."
(4b) Ba-ganj-ginje-ng
Dj 3/3L-cook-PP IV-meat
"(S)he cooked (the) meat."

Noun incorporation is optional, in the sense that there always exist unincorporated (and near-synonymous) counterparts in which the nominal appears externally. Only a limited number of nominal roots may incorporate: a fixed set of about forty, mainly generic roots with meanings like "rock", "tree", "grass" etc., plus the open set of all body part nouns (including compound nouns). Table 1 gives the set of incorporable nominal roots.

Table 1 Incorporating "generic" nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(m)an</th>
<th>buraum</th>
<th>&quot;herramient&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kun</td>
<td>burrk</td>
<td>&quot;metal&quot;, &quot;tool&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bo-</td>
<td>&quot;fire&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;liquid&quot; (incop. only), nearest coronal equivalent gadi &quot;water&quot; (Dj, W)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bay</td>
<td>&quot;beet&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kum</td>
<td>kurrk</td>
<td>&quot;dirt&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(s)ma-</td>
<td>&quot;cooking stone&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>lod, lod(no)</td>
<td>&quot;leaf&quot; (D, E only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| kun   | marj | "saw", "paw", "paw"
| kum   | bulk | "branch" (f) |
| bok   | "branch" (m) |
| bok   | "branch" (f) |

There is no voicing contrast, and in general voiced symbols are used, except that <k> rather than <q> is used for velar stops, in all positions in some dialects and syllable-finally in others. The long/short contrast for stops is shown by double stop symbols.
1.4 Noun incorporation and compounding - formal similarities, distinguishing diagnostics

Interestingly, compound nominal formation is limited in exactly the same way as nominal incorporation in terms of the stock of participating morphemes. All nominal elements in compounds must belong either to the set of about forty roots given in Table 1, or be a body-part noun. Further, in the few cases where there is a suppletive relationship between free and bound forms, this is the same for compounds and incorporation constructions. The clearest case is the word for "water", bahhi in western dialects and kun-roni in eastern dialects, which has the compounding form bo-2 (western) or koh-2 (eastern), regardless of whether it is in a compound or an incorporated construction. Cf. the Gun-djeihni compounds an-bo-mak [VEG-liquid-good] "good water" or gu-bo-buruk [LOC-liquid-body] "in the middle of the water", and the verbs ga-bo-wo [3-liquid-locNP] "there is water", ga-bo-bebe [3-liquid-appearNP] "water comes up, appears".

Although on the surface, in given cases, noun incorporation may at first appear indistinguishable from noun-verb compounding, which is also a common process in the language, various tests can be used to distinguish them, most importantly:

(a) position: incorporated nouns precede the N elements of N+V compounds;
(b) the existence of agnate constructions for noun incorporation, in which the noun root is external to the verbal word, as in (4), whereas in the case of N+V compounds no agnate construction exists;
(c) grammatical and thematic relations: incorporated nominals are essentially restricted to objects and intransitive subjects, whereas in N+V compounds the N may be in just about any relation to the V;
(d) availability of incorporated nominals for modification by demonstratives, adjectives, etc. that are external to the verbal word, something that is impossible with the noun root in N+V compounds.

Since this article is about nominal compounds rather than verbal ones we do not pursue this issue here (see Evans 1996, 1997a, 2003), but confine ourselves to giving a few examples of N+V compounds: [[mariri]-[dowey];[y] [hunger-die] "be hungry, starving", [giri]-[bun];[y] [ground-open-hit] "cook (something) in a ground oven (v.t.)", [[nani]-[y];[bun];[y] [flower-hit] "break into flower", [[bo];[wo];[y] [water-give] "throw (poisonous bark or seeds) into water (so as to stun fish)".

2 Incorporation of this root is attested only in Oates (1964) but is not found in contemporary Bini Gun-wok.

3 This is an incipient suppletive form. For speakers in some dialects (e.g. Kunti)) this root specifies designates the fluid part of wild honey when used as a free nominal, but when incorporated means "honey" more generally, a meaning generally expressed in all dialects by the free form (m)an-kung.

4 Note that "body-part" noun is used in a rather broad way here, including (a) parts of plants (b) other types of "representation", including "voice", "name", "shadow", "spirit" etc.

5 In fact, in this case, the bound form has a broader semantic range, including other forms of liquid (e.g. beer) not covered by the free form kun-ru.
As these illustrate – and in marked contrast to the nominal compounding we will discuss below – N+V compounds are highly variable in terms of the semantic relation found between noun and verb. There are also large numbers of words which appear, from their phonological structure and from the recurrence of the final verbal element elsewhere, to have originated as X+V compounds but for which no synchronic identification of the X is possible. For many of these it is likely that the X was originally a noun, now lost from the language, but for others the X is likely to have belonged to other word classes, such as ideophones. As a generic term for all such X elements, including Ns in N+V compounds, that remains non-committal about their basic word class, I use the term *prebound*. The high frequency of prebounds that are cranberry morphs – around 50% – again contrasts markedly with the situation in nominal compounds, where cranberry morphs are extremely rare.

Below, I will use the term *composition* as a superordinate term that includes both compounding and nominal incorporation, in recognition of the many morphological commonalities shared by these two distinct processes.

### 1.5. [V + V] constructions

A further type of composition worth mentioning while we are considering verbs is the conjoining of two verbal roots inside a single word – essentially the incorporation of a gerundivized root, in which the TAM suffix is replaced by a morpheme here glossed IVF for “incorporating verb form”. This is rather rare, and its incidence varies significantly across dialects; an example is:

(5) *Gag-yinj-gamj-ngu-nilmi-rx.*  
*Dj* 3-child-meat-eat-IVF,goNP  
“The child goes along eating meat.”

### 1.6. Nominal morphology

Nominal morphology is much less exuberant than verbal, and many nouns appear with no inflectional morphology at all. This is quite impossible for verbs, which must minimally inflect for agreement with subject (and object, if relevant) and for Tense/Aspect/Mood, as well as frequently filling many of the other slots given in (1). The small set of case suffixes is used sparingly and optionally, and only marks non-core grammatical roles.

The most salient non-root morphemes in nouns and adjectives, however, are a set of prefixes which mark gender agreement when attached to adjectives and certain other modifiers (demonstratives being the most important), and which are also found on some nominals as intrinsic “noun class prefixes”. On animate nouns only about half of roots take noun-class prefixes, whereas the majority of inanimates take them. Table 2 illustrates the canonical situation, where noun class markers are congruent with the gender prefix on the governed adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Typical gender/noun class correlations in three dialects.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congruent examples (at least in Kunwinjku)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>“good boy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunwinjku Gun-djelini Kune</td>
<td>na-rangem no-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na-rangem na-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine (W, Dj only)</td>
<td>“good old woman”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunwinjku Gun-djelini Kune</td>
<td>ngal-kobhaxj ngal-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ngal-kobhaxj na-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable (W, Dj only)</td>
<td>“good food”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunwinjku Gun-djelini Kune</td>
<td>man-me mon-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an-me an-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuter (W only)</td>
<td>“good rock”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunwinjku Gun-djelini Kune</td>
<td>kum-wardele kum-mak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kum-wardele no-mak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Evans (1997b) and Evans, Brown and Corbett (2002), the gender and noun-class prefixes, despite their formal identity, belong to two distinct systems with partially-overlapping semantics. Only in one dialect (Kunwinjku) do all four non-zero prefixes – *na*, *ngal*, *man* and *han* – also serve as gender prefixes indicating agreement. In this dialect no-mark masculine gender, *ngal*- feminine, *ngan*- “vegetable”, and *kan*- neuter. The other dialects have restricted gender agreement to a greater or lesser extent: Gun-djelini has jettisoned neuter agreement, extending vegetable agreements to nouns that are neuter in Kunwinjku, and Kune has eliminated gender agreement altogether, generalizing the masculine form of modifiers. There are slight formal differences in these markers across dialects: the feminine is generally *al*- in Dj and MM, and the vegetable is *an*- or *ngan*- in these same dialects. (The first difference, in the feminine, reflects sound changes alone, whereas the second appears to reflect the generalization, in different dialects,
of alternate morphemes that coexisted in an earlier stage of the language. Kan- and gun- are simply dialect-specific orthographic equivalents: see Footnote 1.

A significant number of noun phrases exhibit mismatches between a noun's prefix and the gender it governs: this may result from a variety of factors, including (a) specific lexical specification of a non-congruent gender by a noun (e.g. an-djewk "rain", which governs the masculine, e.g. an-djewk na-kimuk "a big/heavy rain"); (b) generalization of the masculine in plural and certain other contexts; (c) use of the biologically-appropriate gender on modifiers of species terms with a conventionalized noun class. See Evans (1997a), Evans et al. (2002) for details.

Two points about these prefixes are relevant to our discussion of compounding. Firstly, as we have seen, prefixes are dropped from morphemes that are incorporated or compounded. We saw this with (4) where gun-ganji "meat" drops its class IV prefix gun- when incorporated. But it also applies to adjectives when they get compounded; an-gimuk [VEG-big], prefixed for vegetable agreement, would be the form of adjective expected when it modifies a word like gun-dulk "tree", but the compounded form meaning "big tree" is an-dulk-gimuk, with a single prefix for the whole compound; this is determined by properties of the compound as a whole, rather than either single compounding element.

Secondly, as Table 1 shows, only nouns taking Class III or Class IV prefixes, or no noun class prefix at all, participate in compounding; there are no compounding elements that take Class I or II prefixes. This eliminates most human, indeed most animate, nouns from participation in nominal compounds.

A final point on noun-class prefixes: on some nouns taking class III or class IV prefixes, these may be replaced by the "locative" prefix gu-ku- when denoting locations (whether as locative adjuncts, or as independent nouns denoting location): cf. gun-wardu "[IV]-camp", gu-wardu "at the

6 The generic noun tiniy "person" is a partial exception. It does not normally incorporate, but may do so just with three-verb phrases of which it is the direct object (see Evans 1997a), and it also participates (in reduced form) in a small number of frozen compounds, e.g. na-bine-goberg "husband" < na-biniy-goborg. (The element goborg is not attested outside this compound).

7 There is also a rare and non-productive "vegetable locative" form mi-, historically the Class-III equivalent of ku-, but now extremely restricted: cf man-ngarre "[III]-jungle", which yields the vegetable locative form mi-ngarre "in the jungle" in some dialects only, e.g. Ntanyak subdialect of Kan, but which in other dialects would be expressed either with the gu-locative (Gun-djehmi gu-ngarre), or by combining the locative preposition kore with the III-prefixed form, e.g. kore man-ngarre (Kunwinjku dialect). Historically, these two forms are relics of an older paradigm combining case and noun class, that has gradually been restricted in BGW by generalizing a single form series, with ku- and mi- being the last residues of an old locative series in a noun class paradigm organized on the two dimensions of noun class and case role.

1.7. The noun phrase

The noun phrase is rather a problematic concept in Bininj Gun-wok. If it is taken as a semantic concept (i.e. a referring expression), it is artificial just to deal with those words which happen to be outside the verbal word, because in many cases the referring expression integrates external material with incorporated nouns, information on verbal prefixes and so forth, as in (6, 7). On the other hand, if it is taken as a grouping of words, then the frequent discontinuous expressions, e.g. (8), present a problem, since the main grounds for grouping them together are semantic. Are we dealing, in such cases, with a single, split NP or two independent apposed expressions that happen to provide information about the same entity? The best evidence that we are in fact dealing with a single NP comes from gender agreement: particularly in cases where gender assignment is arbitrary (this is the case with many bird and reptile names). In (8), for example, "big" is masculine in agreement with "barramundi" (a type of fish), the noun it modifies. Gender agreement by adjectives and demonstratives with their head noun cannot be explained semantically, so we must postulate a dependency relation of modifier on head noun. But since gender selection is also achieved by incorporated nouns -- incorporated jëëryr "wood" in (6) governs the vegetable gender prefix on the adjectival root jëëy "different" -- arguments for NP integrity apply equally well to the grouping of incorporated nominals and external modifiers.

In many Australian languages case agreement can be used as a diagnostic for NP status, but the rarity of overt case morphology in BGW, and the fact that on the rare occasions that it appears it is marked on just one word, renders even this diagnostic inapplicable.

(6) An-biya garri-yerrag-ma-ng
VEG-different 12a-wood-get-NP
"We’ll get some different wood...."

(7) Ngakongok bogen go-rabar-gurme.
grey-crowned babbler two 3-egg-layNP
"Grey-crowned babblers lay two eggs."

(8) Namarn.go1 gu-gurme na-gimuk.
barramundi 3-catchNP MA-big
"He’s catching a big barramundi."

There are, of course, frequent examples of more tidy-looking phrases consisting of contiguous words combined to form a single referring expression: (9) is an example.
In terms of functional equivalence, multi-word NPs in French or English will often be translated into BGW using single compound words, as in (10) and (11). This is particularly common when expanding upon a noun root also incorporated into the verb — as with rruk, the root for "tree", in (10), and bo-, the root for "liquid" in (11). Often these are "syntactic compounds" — non-lexicalized expressions, using productive morphology such as the prefix *djul-* "just" in (10), which does not normally occur in lexicalized expressions.

Dj 1-lightening VEG-only-tree-one 3-tree-strike-NP  
"Lightning always strikes just that one tree."  

(11) Na-behrme diabbilarna ga-bo-garre-me an-bo-gimuk.  
Dj MA-then billycan 3liquid-haveNP VEG-liquid-big  
"That billycan has lots of water."  

In most cases it is simple to distinguish single-word compounds from multi-word phrases, since each grammatical word is rationed to a single prefix position at its left edge — for noun class, if a noun, gender if an adjective, or for pronominal categories, if a verb or a predicate adjective. The compounding of several words can thus usually be identified by the dropping out of all but one of these prefixes. For example, the words gun-berrl "arm", gun-gal "narrow", gun-marrng "bone" and an-yahwur "small (vegetable gender)", when compounded together, give the word *gun-berrl-gal-marrng-yahwur* "radius (bone)", with only a single occurrence of the class IV prefix *gun-* at the beginning of the word. The only times this test cannot be used is in the case of words lacking a prefix.

There are also "phrasal compounds", which result from the fact that not all nominal morphemes can participate in compound formation: in such cases the words follow each other in a fixed order, without any loss of morphological material. Consider *gun-denge-bot* [IV-foot-print/track] "foot-print" and *an-gortle-hand* [II-bamboo-knee] "knot of bamboo": these are both permissible compounds, either because their first root is a body-part noun (the first case) or because it belongs to the set of compounding formations (an-gortle, the second case). On the other hand, if one tries to form semantically similar compounds like "kangaroo track" or "pandanus fruit" this is impossible, because the relevant roots *(gunj "macropod, kangaroo" and an-qimujm "Pandanus aquaticus, water pandanus") are not permissible com-

8 In its normal external form this word is *gun-dult*; when it is incorporated the class IV prefix *gun-* is dropped, and the initial *d* becomes *rr* after vowel nonsonorizable prefixes.

1.8. Word classes

Both nouns and verbs are clearly open classes, though in the case of verbs the number of monomorphemic lexical items is only around twenty, with the rest being formally compounds of the form X-V as described above. Adjectives form a much smaller class. Often they are hard to distinguish from nouns, especially given the shared prefixal morphology and frequent recruitment of new nouns from N+Adj compounds, e.g. "white person" can be denoted using the compound *luk-bela* [[body]+[white]a]. The simplest test for distinguishing adjectives from nouns is to see if their prefixes can range over the whole set of genders without change of meaning otherwise than directly attributable to the gender itself, which never happens with nouns. But while this works fine with adjectives like *warre* "bad" or *mak* "good" it doesn't work so well with others that are more restricted in what they can combine with, like *lorrk* "hollow" (never attested with masculine or feminine prefixes). At the same time there are plenty of nouns with paired masculine and feminine forms, such as *na-gohbanj* "old man" and *nga-gohbanj* "old woman".

The freedom with which adjectives can be used as the only element of a NP makes it impossible to apply tests of syntactic combination to determine if these are nouns or adjectives, since either could occur alone. A better diagnostic for adjectives is their ability to take predicate pronominal prefixes, and (in these constructions) to incorporate selected nouns", as in (12); nouns cannot do this.
2. FORMAL CATEGORIES OF NOMINAL COMPOUNDS

Nominal compounding in Binjin Gun-wok is both productive and regular, and
moreover reveals a striking correlation between morphological make-up and
semantic interpretation, as we shall see.

Nominal compounds may involve two or more elements, though multi-
root compounds are largely restricted to detailed anatomical terms, as in (13).

(13) gun-garre-murng-badjam  gun-garre-murng-yau
   Dj  IV-call-bone-mother  IV-call-bone-child
   "femur"  "tibia"

Except for "whole-part" compounds, which involve body part roots (2.2.),
nominal compounds are built on a closed class of first elements, or "com-
ounding elements", which are typically noun roots stripped of their class
prefixes. As mentioned above, this set is identical to the set of incorporeal
nominals, and suppletive forms found with incorporated nouns reappear in
nominal compounds (most notably gubka/bukka "water" in Dj and W, and
kun-ronj "water" in E and MM, whose suppletive compounding forms are bo-
and kordh- respectively). For a full review of compounding elements see
Evans (2003), but the examples in (14) will show the parallelism.

(14) Free (prefixed) form Ex. in nominal compound Ex. as incorporated nominal
    gun-dulk an-dulk-rayek ngarri-dulk-djabeng
    "IV-Jtree, wood" "hard wood" "we chopped the tree"
    gun-madj madj-mak nga-madj-jarrmeng
    "IV-Jswag" "told" "I put down my swag"
    an-rud an-rud-gare ga-rud-yo
    "III-Jroad" "old road" "there is a road"
    gubku an-bo-mak ga-bo-yo
    "water" "good water" "there is water"

Compounds fall into six classes on both structural and semantic grounds; the
sixth is limited in productivity. Table 3 summarises these types, and gives
parallels to compositionally analogous noun-incorporation constructions

11 (Anx.) "A bundle of personal belongings."

BINJIN GUN-WOK

where these exist. Note that restrictive domain, mishap and taste compounds
are exocentric, modifying compounds are endocentric, while the centricty of
whole-part compounds is problematic and will be discussed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of compound</th>
<th>Structure [X-Y]</th>
<th>Semantics</th>
<th>Parallel verbal constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted domain</td>
<td>N-Adj</td>
<td>&quot;having an X which Y&quot; or &quot;Y as far as one's X is concerned&quot;</td>
<td>Incorporated body part constr. with intras. verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compounds</td>
<td>E.g. ralma-warre &quot;lame, bad-hipped&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulative restr.</td>
<td>CL-N-N, where X is a body-part and Y is a N</td>
<td>(animal or person) having an X like a Y's</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>domain compounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-part</td>
<td>CL-N-N where Y is a body-part, e.g. gun-dul-gureh &quot;sole of foot&quot;</td>
<td>The Y part of X or Y, which is inalienably linked to X</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifying</td>
<td>GENDER-N-Adj where the gender value is governed by the gender marker of X, e.g. an-dulk-rayek &quot;hard wood&quot;</td>
<td>X which is Y (x) Y X</td>
<td>Generic noun incorporation with intras. verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishap nicknames</td>
<td>N-N, where X is a body part and Y is a noun denoting an animal or weapon, e.g. mat-</td>
<td>person who suffered an injury to their X inflicted by Y</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste compounds</td>
<td>N-N, where X denotes the type of taste and Y means &quot;taste&quot;</td>
<td>(thing) smelling/tasting like X</td>
<td>Incorporation of nouns into non-verbal predicates meaning &quot;smell/taste&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major types of nominal compound are summarized in Table 3, which also refers to any parallel verbal constructions involving incorporation; the third and sixth are limited in productivity. The word status of three of these - "modifying compounds", "simulative compounds" and "restricted domain" compounds - is problematic, in each case sharing both noun-like and adjective-like characteristics, and we will discuss these problems in the
2.1. Restricted domain compounds.

These make a predication whose application is restricted to a part designated by the first element, which must be a body-part noun. The noun class prefix or part suffix associated with the root is dropped (although see as a predicate may then result in the addition of a predicate prefix). The resultant structure is thus:

(15) [N-verb - Adj]p
X Y

The meaning is “(person/thing) having a Y X” or “Y as far as one’s X is concerned”, which often translates into English as Y-Xed. Examples are:

(16) rakmo-warre (Dj)
hip-bad
“same, bad-hipped (person)”
(gan-rakmo "big")

mim-warre (Dj)
eye-bad
“short-sighted, having bad eyes”
(Cf. gun-mim "eye")

njam-ginuk (Dj)
guts-big
“fat, having big guts”

kodji-rayek (I)
head-hard
“fuzzy-haired”

kub-yirek (I)
body-smooth
“smooth-bodied”

The word-class status of these compounds is not straightforward like adjectives, and unlike nouns, they may take prefixes for subject person and number when used predicatively (17, 18) and be suffixed for past tense if appropriate (19). However, unlike adjectives, they do not take gender prefixes. This locates these compounds somewhere on a continuum between noun and adjective status. (Though some, such as keb-dukkar ‘estuarine crocodile’, have become standard nouns as their denotation becomes conventionalised.)

(17) Bani-wok-bujiga.
Dj 3sa-language-different
“They have a different language, they are different as far as their language is concerned.”

(18) Yi-berd-kimuk !
1 2-penis-big
“You’ve got a big prick!” (typical remark between joking partners)

(19) Ngaling wonj a-kela-ni Lamalama na-wu o-berd-kimuk-ngi.
W she then 3P-afraid-P [name] MA-REL 3P-penis-big-P
“She was afraid of (the monster) Lamalama, who had a big penis.”

There is a clear structural parallelism between these constructions and verbs with incorporated body-part nouns (see Evans 1996), such as nga-nim-warreng (I-eye-bad-became) “my eyes are no longer any good” or Dj ba-bid-nineng (I-eye-hand-entered) “he put his hand in”, lit. “he entered as far as his hand is concerned”. Structurally, both are made up of a body-part noun followed by a predicate, which is an adjective in the case of the compound and a verb in the case of the incorporated noun construction. Semantically, in both cases the body part noun gives the domain or part of the nominated entity to which the predication is restricted. It is the preference for predicate use of this type of compound which makes the word-class status of these compounds hard to determine, since the best tests for both noun and adjective status (e.g. case suffixation with nouns, agreement with a nominal head in adjectives) only work on words used non-predicatively.

12 A further feature of these compounds that might be taken to be adjective-like is the fact that, like uncompounded adjectives, they may be followed by the genitive suffix -en-gen in expressions of quantity (Evans 2003:143-5). Compare no-nimulgen [MA-big-GEN] “big cow”, ao-wern-gen [MA-many-GEN] “many, a lot”, which illustrate use of this genitive with simplex adjectives, with compound expressions like berd-gervoeng-gen [tail-long-GEN] “having a long tail”, bani-yidme-gopeng-gen [estuarine crocodile-gen] “the two teeth are long”. However, it is unclear whether the constituency is [IX-Y]-GEN or [IX][Y-GEN]. If it is the latter, which seems plausible given that all attested examples so far use a Y also found in the plain adjectival construction, then the presence of the genitive suffix follows from the fact that it is the second compound element, rather than the compound as a whole, which is adjectival.
2.2. Similative compounds

Structurally close to restricted-domain construction are similative compounds, which have a body-part noun as their first element, a noun rather than an adjective as their second element, and in which this second element contributes the meaning "like an X" rather than just "X" as in a restricted-domain compound.

(20) [N-body part - N] X Y

Examples are D) moi-l-bor-dok [tail-woomera] "orange horseshoe bat", i.e. "like a woomera as far as its tail is concerned", Kuninju ngal-herd-ji [ill-tail-fish] "mermaid, i.e. like a fish as far as her tail is concerned", W kodi-bulj "white-haired person", lit. head-old person, i.e. "like an old person as far as his/her head is concerned" and 1 kodi-njaing [head-yabby] "having a head like a yabby", a term of reference used by a man about his sister. On the basis of their translations, similative compounds appear to be clear nouns, though at present we lack the crucial syntactic evidence, since we have too few examples of them being used in sentence contexts, as opposed to simple nomination contexts. One piece of evidence against them being adjectives, as it was with the restrictive-domain compounds discussed in 2.1., is the possibility of zero-prefixation, which is available for nouns but not adjectives.

2.3. Whole-part compounds

These have the meaning "the Y part of X" (e.g. "sole" is "tie skin part of the foot") or "Y, which is only there because X is/ was there" (e.g. "footprint" is "track, which is only there because (a foot was there)"). Note that by "whole-part" I am including a range of inalienable semantic relations (see Evans 1996), which, in addition to regular parts like "foot" or "eye", takes in representations (e.g. "name"), manifestations (e.g. "shadow"), and natural signs (e.g. "footprint"). Whole-part compounds take a noun class appropriate to the first noun; the fact that this prefix is fixed marks them clearly as nouns rather than adjectives. Their structure, then, is

(21) [CL - N - N-body part] X Y

Some examples are:

13 (Aust.) A crayfish (Charax sp.)
Examples are

(25) dedji-mad-no  bid-ngalany-no  
E:R butt-ankle-PART hand/finger-nail-PART 
"root of tree"  "finger/nail" 
(cf mad-no "(its) ankle")  (cf ngalany-no "(his/her/its) nail", bid-no "(its) hand")

bodme-murring-no  back-bone-PART 
"backbone" (cf bodme-no "(his/her/its) back")

As mentioned above, whole-part compounds are the only morphologically complex nouns that may incorporate into verbs. Like all incorporated nouns, they drop their noun class prefix when incorporated. "bus the class IV prefix kun- is dropped from kun-karrre-mok [IV-calf-sore] "sore on calf" in (26a) and from kun-kodji-mad [IV-head-hair] in (26b), and the class prefix an- is dropped from an-gorre-bard [III-bamboo-knee] "node of bamboo" in (25c):

(26a) Ngan-[karrre-mok]-bukka-ng. 3/1-[calf-sore]-show-PP
"He showed me the sore on his calf."

(26b) Ngan-[kodji-mad]-djohbe-re-n. 1-[head-hair]-cut-RR-NP
"I'm going to cut my hair."

(26c) Kaban-[gorre-bard]-djumme-re-n. 3/5p-[bamboo-knee]-join-RR-NP
"The bamboo's nodes join it together."

- Noun-part collocations

Where the noun denoting the whole is neither a generic (e.g. gun-dulke "tree") nor a body part noun (e.g. gun-denge "foot"), it is not eligible for compounding, as mentioned above. In such cases the terms for whole and part will still be conjoined, in the same order as for whole-part compounds, but as morphologically separate words. In the eastern dialects the part noun bears the part suffix -no (27a), but in the western dialects it does not (27b). Examples are:

(27a) man-katav dulu-no  E ngal-kardaw min-no  
III-E. bleed(M) tree-PART II-emu eye-PART 
"red-flowered herbaceous bush" (flowers are said to resemble emu's eyes)

(27b) Dj gunuguiji gun-denge  Dj guraj gurbi  
emu IV-foot kangaroo blood 
"Hibiscus merriakensis" (leaves have emu-foot shape)
In all dialects, modifying compounds are the preferred method of applying adjectives to nouns capable of compounding or incorporation, and in some dialects (e.g. I) this is the only way of modifying such nouns. Compare the behavior of the noun an-ggayawal "long Dioscorea transversa" 14 yam" which cannot be compounded, with the noun ayn-dulit "tree", which can: modification of the first results in the phrasal two-word combination an-ggayawal inyag-gayawal-ga "long Dioscorea yam" (using the D1 form), while modification of the second is expressed by the compound an-dulit-gayawal "VEG-tree-long" "tall tree" in D1 and by the structurally parallel man-dulit-gayawal in W and I.

In E gender agreement is restricted to occasional use of the masculine prefix "e" and a more productive means of marking modifiers is to use the part suffix, as in biniy drikurru-ni [man short-PART] "short man". Modifying compounds in these dialects simply join the noun and adjective, with no part suffix, as in yuni-drikurru [string-short] "short string". The fact that most compounds are no longer inanimate generics, or body parts, skews the semantic distribution of this construction, since modification of animate nouns, and of specific inanimates (e.g. tree names) will instead be carried out by the non-compounding construction.

Because of the formal identity of gender and noun class prefixes it is not immediately obvious that gender prefixes are involved here, as opposed to the noun class prefixes used in whole-part compounds. The reason for analysing them as gender rather than noun prefixes comes from the principles of prefix selection. Examples are the words for "tree" and "flake", both of which take kun- noun class prefixes (e.g. D1 kun-dulit "tree, wood", W kun-biri "flake") but govern agreement with the vegetable prefix (m)an-. Modifying compounds based on these roots are D1 kun-dulit-ru "hard wood" and W man-biri-kumul "big flake", in each case taking the vegetable prefix (m)an-, according to the principles of gender agreement, rather than the kun-noun class prefix associated with the noun root. Analysing the prefixes as gender also allows a unified account of gender agreement in nominal modification, whether it is realised by separate words or compounds.

14 Where the noun governs neuter agreement, as in the case of most body parts and landscape features, the compound will take the prefix kun-, e.g. kun-mak-kare [NEU-sore-old] "old sore", kun-birru-kul [NEU-hand-one] "five", kun-birru-kolek [NEU-hand-two] "ten", and "water" viewed as a landscape feature in (29). However, such cases are not decisive for our argument, since kun- is also the noun class prefix of the head noun.
e.g. (29, 32), it is more typical for them to be the sole word in their phrase, as in (33, 34).

(32) An-farrman go-no go-negerme.  
MM III-kurrangj flow-VERB flow-red  
"Kurrangj trees have red flowers."

(33) Man-wul-kare kuri-dorrorko.  
I VEG-log-old 12a-dragNP  
"Let's drag the hollow log."

(34) Bolkimne kuri-re kuddem kurri-yo kur-kul-sfarrkno.  
EN now 12a-goNP up-high 12a-sleepNP NEU-night-two  
"Let's go into the high country now, and camp there for two nights."

- **Complex modifiers**

As well as monomorphic adjectives or numerals, the second element in modifying compounds may comprise a derived property expression formed by adding the privative ("without") or "much" suffices to a noun root:

(35) gun-bolk-djifhning-yak  
Dj NEU-place-laterite-PRIV  
"place with no laterite"

(36) gun-bolk-djifhning-wern  
Dj NEU-place-laterite-much  
"place with lots of laterite"

Note that the above examples are exceptional, within the Dj dialect, in taking a neuter prefix. As discussed in Evans (1997b, 2003) and Evans et al (2002), this dialect retains gun- as a noun class prefix but has lost neuter gender agreement, replacing it with generalised vegetable agreement. The above examples may represent archaic formations from a period when neuter agreement was still possible; in W the head noun gun-bolk "place" still governs neuter agreement when used to discuss landscape features.

- **Buyigal-biyika-biya "other" in modifier compounds**

There are two ways of translating English "another": the adjective -buyigal-biya (Dj), -buyikal-biyika (I, E) and the verbal prefix yeyowik (Evans 1995a). The adjective can have both meanings of English "another", viz. "another (token of the same type)" and "another, a different one, one of the wrong type", whereas the verbal prefix can only have the first meaning (in addition to covering other types of event-repetition). The forms -buyiga, -biyika and -biya appear to be merely phonological variants.

---

**Bininj Gun-Wok**

Like other modifiers in this construction, this root appears as a separate word when modifying words whose roots are not complementing elements, such as namangem "male" in (37). It may also be used as a head noun, particularly with the third person augmented prefix, with the meaning "others", as in (38). When modifying a word whose root is a complementing element, however, it generally appears in a modifying compound, as in (39, 40).

(37) Ngal-dob-daluk, namangem na-buyika nami wanyik  
I FE-RED-female MA-noun MA-different MAT-DEM then →  
→ konen-hayong rangika.  
→ tallness-long he  
"That's a female, the male is different; he has a long neck."

(38) Birri-buyika minj balemane birri-belme-minj, bong birri-ruyik →  
I 3a-other NEU where 3a-emerge-IRR right 3a-burn-PP →  
→ birri-down-n birri-dakka-rakka-mi-in.  
→ 3a-die-PP 3a-REDUP-die-PP  
"Some of the others had nowhere to get away, and so in the end were burned, withering to death."

(39) Ngad warxuwa ba-yowu ngu ga-djeuk-biya.  
Dj we child 3P-die-PP LOC-rich-other  
"Our child died last year."

(40) Ladji-karrungu la ye-yu, kandangal-yalok-were ngamen-ya.  
I [address term] CONJ2-goNP here 1F-sister-RESP 3a-sleepNP  
"Oh, ka-ekka mak ka-bolk-buye-kna ngale-ya."

LOC-DEM DUB LOC-place-other I-EMPH4-inNP  
"Ladji-karrungu you go, I'm sleeping here with your sister."

"Oh, I'll go and sleep somewhere else then."

The set of roots with which -buyiga and its variants can form modifying compounds is slightly larger than that found with other modifiers, taking in a number of time nominals that do not normally incorporate, such as "tomorrow" and "yesterday" (41) as well as other such as *dird* "month"16, which suggests that it is on its way to becoming grammaticalized as a suffix rather than a simple complementing element.

16 The only attestations of these as anything like incorporated or compounded nouns are in the collocations malapi-barrhun (Dj) "day break, day dawn" and dir-danu (W) "dust by moonlight", in both of which they are arguably lexicalized rather than productive incorporating elements.
2.5. Mishaq nicknames

Nicknames identifying people by a mishap that has befallen them have the form X-Y, where X denotes the body part affected by the mishap, and Y the source of the mishap. As one Gun-djijimi speaker, Mick Alderson, explained this practice: "whatever you get hit by, you get a nickname". Examples of such nicknames are:

(42) Ngorrk-madjawarr
   Dj flank-goose.spear
   (Nickname) "hit in the flank by a goose spear"

(43) Mud-djurrang
   Dj ankle-horse
   (Nickname) "kicked in the ankle by a horse"

(44) Garre-gingga
   Dj calf-crocodile
   (Nickname) "bitten on the calf by a crocodile"

(45) Dengge-wamba
   I foot-shark
   (Nickname) "bitten on the foot by a shark"

Though they are clearly descriptive, these terms are only used as proper names. It is therefore reasonable to say that they belong to a subclass of the noun category, namely proper nouns. They are probably etymological, but it is not clear how one could decide in a principled way.

2.6. Taste compounds

The order expected in taste/smell compounds, by analogy with other modifying compounds (2.4.), is exemplified by forms such as man-manji-mak [III-taste-good] "delicious" and na-manji-warre [I-taste-bad] "saltwater crocodile", said to taste foul. Often the two-part element manji-warre [taste-bad] is further compounded after the tasted entity, e.g. an-bo-manji-warre "stagnant water" and guk-manji-warre [body-taste-bad] "filthy, disgusting to taste" (said of black bats in contradistinction to fruit bats). These can all be treated as a semantically-defined subtype of modifying compounds.

However, a second and unexpected order is found in a handful of other taste/smell compounds, which exemplify a distinct compounding structure. These form exocentric compounds which have the second element as head, preceded by a modifier giving the type of smell, e.g. an-ngay-manji [III-taste, i.e. tasting like shit] "cheese fruit, Morinda citrifolia". What appears to be this order is found in many names for plants and fishes which have manji as a second element, without the first element being analysable: Dj an-garrularahman "wild cashew", darbuhman "brean", an-djurgman "Brachychiton sp.", the name for the olive python exhibits both orders, but in different dialects: Dj al-ngewurrmanj "W manji/gurji". But W manji/gurji.

It is possible this aberrant ordering results from the affects of structural analogy on nominal compounds, taking nominal predicates in which banji "smell" incorporates a nominal root designating the source of the smell, e.g. ga-ngay-banj [3-flower-smell] "it smells of flowers", go-mul-banj [3-puss-smell] "it smells rotten", ko-bolk-dile-banj [3-place-plant-smell] "the place smells of plants" or yi-kord-banj [2-shit-smell] "you smell of shit or farts". Unlike the examples with -manji, which take nominal morphology in the form of noun class prefixes, the banji constructions clearly take predicate morphology, viz. pronominal prefixes, and the order [incorporated noun - predicate] is normal for a predicate. It seems possible that analogy mediated by the close semantic link between "taste" and "smell" has then led to the order in nominal predicates with -banji influencing that with nominal compounds in -manji.

2.7. Minor types of compound; extension of second compounding elements into derivational use

In addition to the major, productive structures discussed above, there are several minor types in which
(a) the set of Y elements is restricted to one, or just a few, nominal roots,
(b) there may further have been reanalysis of the second root as a derivational suffix; in this case it may combine with first elements otherwise unattested in compounds.

I discuss one example of each of these; see Evans (2003:5.3.) for the full set.

2.7.1. gu-X-POStion

Precise location can be expressed by prefixing the locative prefix gu- to nouns compounded with various roots denoting positional parts. Examples are gu-k-burrk "in the middle of X" (cf. burrk "body"), as in (46, 47), gu-X-wodj

17 I can personally vouch for the accuracy of this description.
3. MORPHOPHONEMICS OF COMPOUNDING

Binjin Gun-wok is highly agglutinative, with only a few morphophonemic rules adjusting sounds at morpheme boundaries within words. None of these apply to compounds: apart from dropping their noun class prefixes, as described above, compounded morphemes keep their shape unchanged.

The stress assignment rules in BGW are complex (see Evans 1995b, 2003 for accounts): the three main features are the sensitivity of foot construction to morpheme boundaries, the tolerance of monosyllabic feet, and the stressing of the leftmost syllable of each foot. Primary stress, manifested primarily by raised pitch, is normally assigned to the first foot of at least two syllables as one moves from the word’s right edge.

Compounds deviate from the normal stress pattern by allowing more than one primary stress per word, just in case both compounded roots are disyllabic. Compare (51), where one of the roots is monosyllabic and hence only receives secondary stress, with (52), where both roots are disyllabic and each receives primary stress. (Feet are enclosed in square brackets, primary stress is shown by an acute accent and secondary stress by a grave accent.)

(51) [gis-][djege-][bok] [arki]-[jorje]-[bär] [kis-][bok]-[var]  
IV-foot-track lîl-bamboo-knee LOC-place-bad  
“footprint” “joint of bamboo” “bad place”

(52) [gis-][djege-][gjarak] [rikame]-[var]  
IV-foot-skin hip-bad fat-big  
“sole of foot” “lame, bad-hipped” “having lots of fat”

This aberrant stress pattern, though primarily associated with compounds, is also found with a couple of other disyllabic suffixes, some originating as the second element of compounds (e.g. -dörreng “with”, originally a nominal root meaning “body”), but others apparently arising through the reduplication of a monosyllabic suffix (-djâjilâm “characteristic location”, -djâ- “location”) or the fusing of two suffixes (-migen “kin dyad”, from delocutive -mi plus genitive -gen).

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nominal compounding is an important resource for word-formation in Binjin Gun-wok. However, as we have seen, it is constrained on the one hand by a small set of constructional templates, each with their own strict semantics, and on the other by grammatical and semantic constraints on what may be the first element of the compound. As a result of these constraints, there are many types of compound, found in other languages, that cannot be expressed as compounds in Binjin Gun-wok. Noticeors like "ash-tray", "book-shelf", "police-"
station" or "meat-cleaver" in English are not possible compounds in Bininj Gun-wok because their semantics - "Y to be used for X" or "place [Y] where one finds X" - do not fall into one of the types mentioned in 2. Such concepts will be expressed by various types of nominal derivation, such as using the derivational suffix -dajahm "characteristic location", as in djam-dajahm [dangerous-characteristic-location] "police station".

Others, like "kangaroo-hunter", "land-owner", "hit-man" or "washer-woman" in English, are likewise impossible, this time because the head noun would need to be translated by a BGW noun (binjin "man" or datuk "woman") that is not a permissible compounding element. Concepts of this type are frequently expressed as deverbal nominals, in which a fully inflected word is simply used as a syntactic noun without any overt signalling of class-change; these may or may not have an incorporated nominal. Examples are kawaribun "hunter", segmentable as ka-waribun [3-hunt-NP], lit "he hunts", and kabarrbolknaanun "land-owners, custodians", segmentable as kabarr-bolk-naanu-now [-now-when-NP], lit "they look after the land".

Although criteria for identifying word-classes can be clearly established in BGW, and applied straightforwardly to many types of compound, there are two types - "restricted-domain compounds", which are a type of bauhurri compound, and "modifying compounds" - which appear to lie halfway between nouns and adjectives in their behaviour. Initial observations suggest these are rarely or never used within argument NPs, i.e. in the prototypical role for nouns or attributive adjectives, and are instead confined to predicate uses where the features that distinguish nouns from adjectives are less manifest. As yet, though, we are at an early stage in our understanding of BGW grammar, and are yet to establish a substantial corpus: we need much more quantitative discourse-based work before we can fully understand what lies beyond the rather mixed behaviour of compounds.

REFERENCES


