

For almost 40 years, Michael Walsh has been working alongside Indigenous people: documenting language, music and other traditional knowledge, acting on behalf of claimants to land in the Northern Territory, and making crucial contributions to the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in NSW. This volume, with contributions from his colleagues and students, celebrates his abiding interest in and commitment to Indigenous society with papers in two broad themes. 'Language, identity and country' addresses the often complex relations between Aboriginal social groups and countries, and linguistic identity. In 'Language, identity and social action' authors discuss the role that language plays in maintaining social identities in the realms of conversation, story-telling, music, language games, and in education. 'Indigenous language and social identity' will be of interest to students of linguistics, Indigenous studies, anthropology, and sociology.

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INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE
AND SOCIAL IDENTITY
papers in honour of Michael Walsh

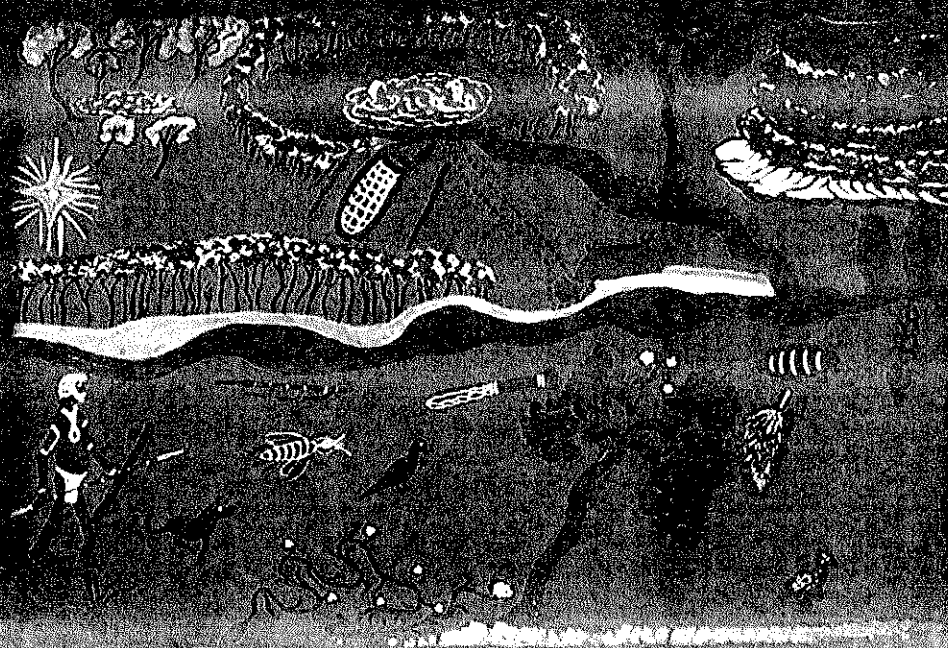
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Pacific Linguistics 615



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Indigenous language and social identity: papers in honour of Michael Walsh

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Ku Thithay Sugarbag Dreaming by Lawrence Kolumboort.

The people left the place Mawurt because two women drowned as they tried to recover their dilly bags of cycad nuts that they had been soaking. The cycad nuts are poisonous if they are not prepared and cooked properly.

The ancestors travelled throughout the country forming hills, creeks and waterholes. The ancestors settled in different places.

Ku Thithay (Native Bee) and Ku Nguluyguy (Echidna) continued to the hill known as Bathuk and they settled there.

Nguluyguy said, "I am going up to the top of the hill and I will stay there."

Thithay said, "I am too tired and my legs are too short for me to climb up there, I will stay here at the bottom."

Ku Thithay stays in the stone arrangement at the base of the hill.

Copyedited by the editors and formatted by Andrea Kittila

Cover art: Ku Thithay Sugarbag Dreaming by Lawrence Kolumboort.

© Collection of Kanamkek Yile-Ngala Museum, Wadey Northern Territory,
commissioned in 1995. Courtesy the artist's family

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Michael Walsh
Painting by Ros Fraser

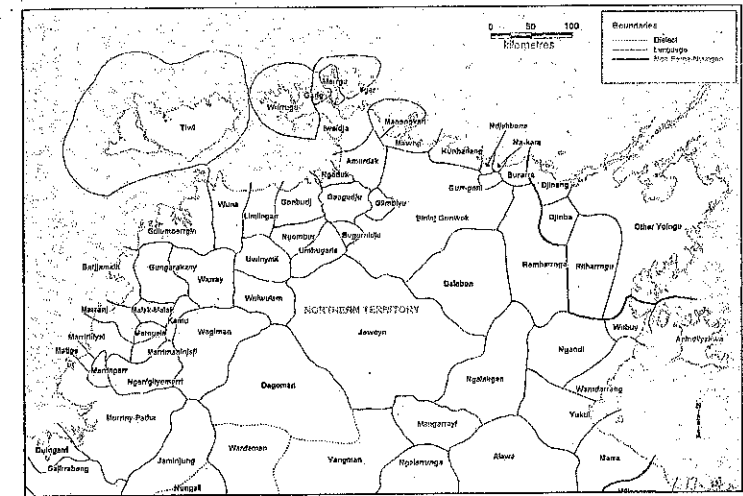
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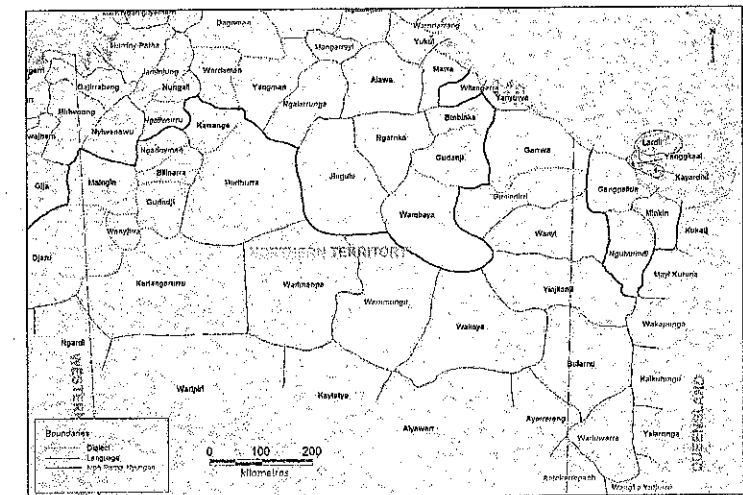
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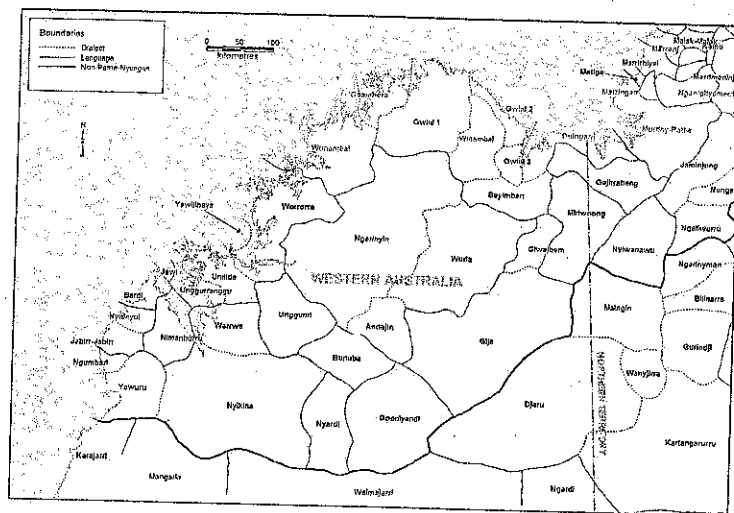
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Map 1: Top End Northern Territory languages



Map 2: Mid Northern Territory languages



Map 3: Kimberleys languages

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The editors are grateful for the assistance of the following individuals and institutions:

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1 Introduction

ROD GARDNER, MARK HARVEY, ILANA MUSHIN AND BRETT BAKER

1.1 General introduction

In this chapter we aim to give a necessarily brief overview of Michael Walsh's major contributions to the field, as well as a synopsis of the chapters to follow.

1.2 Michael's work

Michael is inimitably unique. We won't talk here of his seemingly unshakable good humour, his dedication to the welfare of students, and his compassion for the downtrodden more generally. We will instead focus on his contributions to scholarship and public life, which have been both extraordinarily broad and also far reaching.

Apart from his broad interests within linguistics itself, in historical linguistics, lexical semantics, discourse and pragmatics, and morphosyntax, his wide-ranging mind has led him into fields such as anthropology, education, history, native title and forensic linguistics, song, and digital technology and archiving. Language, though, has remained at the core, and his passion for language is evident throughout his work.

Michael's PhD, awarded in 1976 (Walsh 1976), started him on what has become a lifelong association with Murinypata (as he spelled it then). This is a language whose complexities are widely acknowledged to be truly fiendish, spoken at Wadeye in the Daly River region of the Northern Territory, south of Darwin. His association with the community of Wadeye continues to the present day. His grammar of Murriny-Patha (as it is now known) was the first detailed description of an Australian language with a multiple classifier system, and revealed much of the interesting behaviour of these systems (Walsh 1997). Based on his fieldwork, Michael published a number of other studies of Murriny-Patha which broke new ground in Australian linguistics: on impersonal constructions (1987b), on body part incorporation (1995), on the 'category squish' of 'vouns and nerbs' (Walsh 1996), and more recently on Murrinh-Patha song (Walsh, Barwick, Marett, Ford, & Reid 2005).

But Michael didn't stop at Murriny-Patha. His first post-PhD professional job was as Linguistic Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS), from 1975-1981. Here, he started a one-man publishing tradition of overviews of Australian languages (e.g. 1979, 1981, 1984, 1987a, 1991c, and especially his book Walsh & Yallop 1993/2005). He also produced the first practical guides for budding fieldworkers, on the lexicon and grammar (Walsh & Sutton 1979a, 1979b), and on recording and archiving materials (Walsh 1983), and thus influenced a generation of Australian linguists.

In addition to being an outstanding descriptive fieldworker, there has always been a strong applied aspect to his work. Most prominently, he has for a long time been dedicated to the fight for Aboriginal land rights. He was centrally involved throughout the difficult Kenbi land claim, which ran for nearly three decades, during which he wrote numerous reports and made numerous appearances as an expert witness. He also made important contributions to other land claims for the Northern Land Council, for example in the Wadeye region (Walsh 1991b). And he wrote a significant submission on Aboriginal identity for the Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991d). These efforts marked him out early on as a person who was truly committed to the betterment of Aboriginal people.

Based partly on his experiences in land claims, he pioneered (with a handful of other Australian linguists such as Diana Eades) the now burgeoning field of study of Indigenous interaction, and in particular the differences in conversational style between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (e.g. Walsh 1991a, 1994). His work has highlighted the extent to which misunderstandings can arise between Aboriginal witnesses and white lawyers and judges. His (1999) paper, for example, demonstrated how courtroom transcriptions can seriously misrepresent what Aboriginal witnesses say in court, with potentially serious consequences for land claims.

Arguably Michael's most important and long-lasting contribution came in the late nineties, when he turned his energies to another major project: language revitalisation in New South Wales. Starting with an (in)famous roadtrip through regional NSW with colleagues Jaky Troy and Tony Lonsdale (described in the contribution by Michael's partner *Ros Fraser* in Ch. 2), Michael began an intense and fruitful engagement with Aboriginal groups throughout the state. One of the many positive results that stemmed from this initial effort was the K-10 Aboriginal Languages Syllabus for NSW, so that for the first time Indigenous languages are now being taught seriously in many NSW schools. The K-10 Syllabus, and other initiatives, have led to a renaissance in the study of traditional languages by Indigenous people in NSW (described in Walsh 2001). This flowering of Indigenous scholarship is still unfolding. The impact has reached politicians, educationalists and language planners, as well as linguists interested in language endangerment. Michael is these days considered a world authority on language endangerment and language revival, as demonstrated by a major survey contribution to the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Walsh 2005), 'Will Indigenous languages survive?'

Most recently, Michael has been working with a team of linguists and ethnomusicologists on Aboriginal song, for a long time a seriously neglected field of Aboriginal studies. His article on Aboriginal song language (2007), subtitled 'So many questions, so little to work with', raises a host of crucial questions that will stimulate scholars in this emerging field of studies.

Michael's research cannot be measured merely by his publications in journals and books, impressive as these are. He has been an inveterate speaker at conferences, disseminating his thoughtful and often unconventional ideas to diverse audiences; he has gained the trust of Indigenous Australians with his long-term commitments; and he has written numerous reports that have had a significant impact on land claims, courtroom procedures, and education, and ultimately on the day-to-day lives of Indigenous Australians.

1.3 Contributions to the volume

The range of contributions to this volume reflects many of Michael Walsh's interests over the years, as set out in the previous section.

The first half of the volume focuses on the relationship between people, language and country. The complexity of this relationship, both historically and today, has been a central focus of Michael's research and his professional activities in land claims. In particular, he has been concerned with the effects of colonisation, dispossession and catastrophic population decline on the relationship between Aboriginal people and their land.

Rigsby and Hafner consider in their chapter the notions of place, land, country, and property, specifically for the Lamalama people around Yintjiingga (Port Stewart) in Cape York. They summarise the history of contact with Europeans, with land appropriations and the exclusion of the Indigenous people, and the later transfer back to the Lamalama people under freehold tenure. This arose out of recognition and protection of traditional-customary Lamalama property rights and interests at Yintjiingga through several forms of tenure under Queensland law in cooperation since about 1986 between the Lamalama people and the state and commonwealth governments. The authors argue that this result could not have been attained through litigation.

Sutton, who has known Michael since their undergraduate days, takes a journey back to Tindale's work in the Western Desert region, spanning the middle part of the last century. He shows how linguistic identities in this region proved difficult to establish, probably because this region was settled only a few centuries ago. Thus, there was still flux in social organisation, due also to the environmental extremes, including lack of rainfall. As Sutton puts it, 'Desert people were still culturally in migratory expansion mode', resulting in less rigid linguistic identities.

Dixon's chapter is based on her work with the Walmajarri people in Western Australia. She reports on a dictionary project of Juwaliny, a dialect of Walmajarri, in which she compares the lexis and morphology of the two varieties. She finds major differences in the lexicon, but generally similar nominal and verbal morphology, and also some phonological differences. For Juwaliny speakers, these differences are sufficient for them to want their own language materials.

Baker's chapter uses historical records, together with modern recollections in the community, to trace the trajectory of the name 'Yukul' from its probable origins as a language name to its current use as a collective term for Roper River people. The Yukul land-owning group were greatly affected by systematic massacres in the early colonial period, and by 1900 there appear to have been very few Yukul land owners and Yukul speakers. Understandings of Yukul identity were very attenuated during the 20th century. The associations of this identity became highly variable, and it acquired generic uses which were not characteristic of pre-colonial society. However, certain kinds of more specific links between totems, social groups, country, and semi-moieties appear to have survived the devastating impacts of European colonisation.

Harvey's chapter reflects on another aspect of Michael's work. This is the interaction between Aboriginal and European conceptions of land tenure. Harvey focuses on the problems that arise from the fact that European conceptions offer a binary owner vs non-owner choice whereas Aboriginal conceptions normatively involve a range of degrees of ownership. He discusses an area in which Michael has been very active, and one where the effects of colonisation have been very significant: Darwin and its hinterland.

Koch also delves into history in his discussion of the languages of the Canberra region, using primarily word lists and a sketch grammar of Ngunawal which are available for these

no-longer-spoken languages. He sifts through the linguistic evidence to argue for a reassessment of the relationships between the languages.

Waefer and Lissarrague undertake a similar project, drawing on Walsh's 'Language map of south-eastern Australia and Tasmania' (Walsh 1981), and his knowledge of NSW languages more generally, as a starting point for their synthesis of currently available knowledge of the languages of the Central Coast of NSW. They focus on 'Kuringgai', a name given variously to a language or a group of closely related languages spoken around Sydney. They conclude that most likely there were at least five distinct languages, belonging to three distinct language groups. Therefore, Fraser's (1892) proposal that the name 'Kuringgai' refers to a single 'super-language' lacks support.

Nash's contribution investigates the evidence, from historical records of the Sydney Language, for the operation of an unusual phonological process whereby nasal-stop clusters in the inland variety correspond to nasals in the coastal variety. Nash names the pattern 'Dawes' Law' after Lt William Dawes, to whom we owe the relatively rich record we have of this language. Nash speculates that the pattern may have been a marker of linguistic identity.

Stirling addresses the cross-linguistic diversity of systems for referring to space, drawing on narrative data from the Torres Strait language Kala Lagaw Ya (KLY). She asks what the significance of the environment is in shaping the system of spatial reference in this language, which uses the parameters of wind direction (leeward/windward), and land and sea (up/down), as well as ego-centred deictics. KLY is one of the few languages that have linguistic evidence pairing the future with a metaphorical 'behind ego' and the past with metaphorical 'in front of ego'. Stirling suggests some reasons why wind direction, rather than topographical reference, might be better suited as a metaphorical basis for time reference, and for the particular pairing we observe between these two reference systems.

In the second half of the volume, we see a diversity of papers addressing the general theme of language as a basis for identity through social action of various kinds. One of Michael's pioneering and enduring interests in this area has been the discourse level, which has in recent years attracted greater interest in studies of Australian languages. Two chapters consider conversational style, and in particular the differences between Aboriginal and Australian white middle class ways of talking.

Mushin and Gardner use Conversation Analysis to explore a different aspect of conversational interaction, taking up Michael's challenge to investigate aspects of conversational style, in this case turn-taking practices in Garrawa as they relate to what Michael calls 'non-dyadic' and 'continuous' conversational style. Whilst they find a similar underlying architecture to turn-taking to Anglo-Australian norms, they also note some potentially widespread differences in how silences, overlapping talk and response tokens are used.

Blythe's chapter concentrates on the language which has been a focus of Michael's linguistic career: Murriny-Patha. Using a Conversation Analysis method, Blythe analyses narrative storytelling, and specifically the use of prosody and rhythm to achieve particular interactional objectives.

Hill also focuses on narratives, in this case on repetition across speakers in collaborative storytelling. This chapter focuses on two Cape York languages – Umpila and Kuuku Ya'u – to illustrate what is considered the canonical mode of multi-party storytelling in these communities. Hill distinguishes between primary and secondary narrator roles, and finds that repetition of turns spoken by the secondary narrator are most typically elements previously told, and have the function of emphasising important themes in the story.

Black also deals with Cape York narratives in his chapter. Drawing on Michael's observation that in traditional Aboriginal narratives co-construction is the norm, he presents a story that is delivered by two narrators, from the Koko-Bera people.

Evans has a different take on narrative, picking up on foundational work by Michael and others on Aboriginal multilingual verbal arts. He takes up Sutton's (1997) seven propositions, which note, amongst other observations, that languages are owned by speakers, and tied to specific places. Polyglot narrative texts reflect complex linguistic practices and relationships, harnessing multiple languages for aesthetic purposes, for example indexing country affiliations and characterisation, or the location of an event, or accommodating the audience's languages. He ends by raising some questions for future attention, notably 'What makes a "good story" good?'

With *Turpin and Green's* chapter, we come to another of Michael's interests: song. The Arandic languages form a closely related group of varieties spoken close to the geographic centre of Australia. Whilst language and country are strongly connected, Turpin and Green find that in Arandic songs, there are often words, verses and even whole songs that use a neighbouring variety, a phenomenon also found elsewhere in Australia. This pattern is also found with respect registers. Turpin and Green suggest that the role of language in song and respect is different from its role in other domains. In everyday life, the choice of particular words is strongly influenced by considerations of land tenure. Particular words and particular areas of country are directly linked, and the use of a particular word evokes its country. In song and respect registers, the choice of particular words is not so focused on evoking country. Rather, the choice of distinctive song or respect forms serves to distinguish the register from everyday registers.

Reid's chapter is also on song, this time back to where Michael began his Australianist journey: Wadeye and Murriny-Patha. Reid examines the Djanba song repertory, and the ways in which it has served to reinforce social identities but also to create a co-dependence between social groups in Wadeye since colonisation. He proposes that the central function of the repertory is to overtly mark the links between the worlds of the living and the dead. The performance of Djanba helps maintain links at significant points of change in the life cycle, such as funerals and circumcisions, when these two worlds come into contact.

Martin and Rose again address the discourse level, focusing on 'cultural frontiers' in the story genre. They argue that the maintenance and restoration of Indigenous language and culture not only needs a record of the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis of language; it also requires community members to be involved in passing on cultural practices. As schools have become the main institution for cultural reproduction, it is necessary for members of the community to be involved in schools to tell their stories and talk about cultural activities, and for cultural traditions to be incorporated into school curricula.

In her paper, *Borowsky* examines a language game played by Pitjantjatjara teenagers, and used as a means of reinforcing in-group identity. Borowsky proposes an account of this language, which involves truncation of an initial syllable, within an Optimality Theory analysis using crucial re-ranking of constraints in the ordinary language, together with Correspondence relations between the varieties. This is a little-examined area of language, which is nevertheless important in understanding the extent to which humans can consciously manipulate linguistic structure in order to achieve social goals.

Riemer's chapter picks up Michael's abiding interest in lexical semantics, in a reconsideration of the basis for claims of polysemy. One prominent analysis is guided by the lexicalist-generativist position, which proposes that polysemy maps directly to syntax, and specifically to alternative verb subcategorisations. Riemer argues that this model is

unworkable if cases are found in which differences in syntax are not accompanied by differences in meaning. He presents examples (mainly from English, but also from Indigenous Australian languages) of just such cases.

Whilst a number of chapters in the volume allude to education, the one by *Simpson, Caffery and McConvell* is a strongly focused and argued contribution on the role of bilingual education in maintaining Indigenous languages. In particular, they pay tribute to Michael's efforts in putting local languages into the curriculum in many New South Wales schools. They run through the overwhelming evidence, both Australian and international, pointing to the educational, cognitive, social and health benefits of including children's first languages in school education, and make a plea for education policy to recognise these benefits at a time when, if anything, the trend is retrogressive. The chapter also provides a valuable contribution to the history of bilingual education, focusing on the Northern Territory.

In sum, this volume perhaps succeeds in something that many would consider next to impossible: covering close to the entire range of Michael's interests in language in Australian Indigenous societies. We therefore hope that it would constitute a book that he would enjoy reading, notwithstanding his characteristic hesitation in offering an opinion.

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8 *Aboriginal Languages and Social Groups in the Canberra Region: Interpreting the Historical Documentation*

HAROLD KOCH

8.1 Introduction: Traditional views and the need for new interpretation

8.1.1 The usual view of languages and groups in the Canberra area

The prevalent view of the end of the 20th century has been that the local Aboriginal group, and hence the local language name, in the Canberra area was Ngunawal, and that the Ngarigu group and language associated with the Monaro extended to the vicinity of Queanbeyan. For example, a history of Canberra includes the following statement about Aboriginal groups, and further assumed that the local language was Ngunawal.

At the time of first settlement the numbers of the Ngunawal tribe, whose territory included the Limestone Plains and extended as far as Boorowa and Goulburn, and the Ngarigo tribe, who frequented a large area south of Queanbeyan, were each estimated at five hundred or more. (Gillespie 1991:44)

This view is assumed in Flood's (1980) well-known book on 'moth hunters'. For example: 'The Ngunawal are called the Queanbeyan tribe by Howitt and others, and their territory probably included the Tinderry and Namadgi ranges and the part of the Murrumbidgee lying between them' (Flood 1980:112); 'This "Canberra tribe" [of the early settlers] could have been the Ngunawal, who occupied the Southern Tablelands area, and could have had their tribal base at Canberra' (Flood 1980:37). The 'magnificent view' from the top of a high peak at the southern end of the ACT ranges, near Mt Kelly, was described as 'a view in fact of what was probably the territory of the local Ngunawal tribe' (Flood 1980:151).

Until recently the Aboriginal language spoken closest to Canberra has been known in the linguistic literature primarily through the Queanbeyan wordlist published in Curr (Police Magistrate 1886-1887). Meanwhile it is often claimed that the city of Canberra is situated within the traditional territory of the *Ngunawal*¹ people (the name has also been

¹ I use italics to highlight a word when the spelling is at issue, even if it is quoted from a source that doesn't use italics.

spelled *Ngumawal* in recent years). Tindale's work on Aboriginal tribes (Tindale 1974:198-199 and his 1976 map) has three of his named territories – those of the Ngunawal, Ngarigo, and Walgalu peoples – converge in the vicinity of the modern city. Recent work by Ann Jackson-Nakano (2001) reintroduced the term *Kamberri* as a label for the Aboriginal people of the area – following W. Davis Wright (1923), who in his history of Canberra claimed that *Kemberra* was both a placename meaning 'meeting place' and the name of the 'tribe' that had its headquarters in the area of the original *Canbury / Canberry* – in the region of Black Mountain, Sullivans Creek, the Molonglo River, and the Acton Peninsula. In a later publication Jackson-Nakano (2005) changed the designation *Kamberri* to *Ngambri*, apparently in recognition of the evidence of a nasal sound at the beginning of the placename as it was pronounced by local Aboriginal people in the early days. I have argued (Koch 2009) that the original form of the placename *Canberra* (which was also widely written as *Canberry* and *Canbury* in early days of European settlement) was in fact probably something like *Nganbirra* – with some uncertainty about the nature of the final vowel and the *r*-sound preceding it. For discussion of whether the placename also served as a group label in pre-European times, see section 8.2.2.3 below.

The Ngunawal language has been known primarily through a short wordlist (Bench of Magistrates 1886-1887) in Curr's compendium and a sketch grammar ('The Ngunawal language', pp. 294-299) and 'Vocabulary of Ngunawal words' (pp. 302-305) included in Mathews (1904).

Jackson-Nakano (2001:33) in fact claims that the *Kamberri*/*Ngambri* probably spoke Walgalu. This seems to be a conclusion drawn from the fact that the territory associated with this group included the *Namadgi* area, which Tindale assigned to the Walgalu. Almost no information has been known about the language of the *Walgalu* (in Tindale's terminology) or *Walgal* (Howitt's rendition). Descriptions of their location suggest that as well as the Alpine ranges from Cowambat past Tumberumba and Kiandra to Tumut, their range may have extended to Canberra and Queanbeyan (Howitt 1996:78). Tindale (1974:199) included 'headwaters of the Murrumbidgee, and Tumut rivers... northeast to near Queanbeyan'. One might therefore expect some overlap with the language recorded at Queanbeyan.

The *Ngarigo* people and language (spelled *Ngarrugu* in Mathews 1908) have long been associated with the Monaro tablelands – Delegate, Bombala, Nimmitabel, Cooma, etc. According to Tindale (1974:198) 'Canberra... is very close to the boundary line between this and the Ngunawal tribe'. There is an early wordlist, difficult to interpret,² in Lhotsky (1839). There are two short wordlists of the Monaro language – by du Vé and Bulmer³ – in Curr (1886-1887). Mathews (1908) provides a longer wordlist. In 1962 Luise Hercus recorded vocabulary from some families of Monaro background at Orbost, Victoria; this vocabulary was published as 'Southern Ngarigu' (Hercus 1986).

² As noted already by Curr, who calls him John Shotsky (Curr 1886-87 vol. 3:429). Some of the words are Pidgin English (for example *waddi* 'tree'); some others are probably Ngunawal (for example *bubel* 'boy', reflecting the Ngunawal-Gundungurra form *bubal* rather than the Monaro-Canberra-Walgalu *burrbal*). The Ngunawal terms may have been collected from the Pajong that Lhotsky met on his way to the Alps (see section 8.2.1.2).

³ Bulmer's list has to be used with caution, since a number of words in the list have 'slipped', with the result that a word is given the meaning of the previous word. Thus Bulmer's *mamat* 'canoe' should be glossed 'sun', the next word in the list; it stands for *mamady* (cf. Mathews' *mummatch*, Queanbeyan *mumite*). This slippage presents a problem for those who present comparative wordlists (for example Flood 1980:350-59) or do statistical calculations based on the wordlists.

The usual linguistic sources for the traditional languages of the area from Yass to the Monaro are summarised in Table 8.1.⁴ It should be noted that, apart from Mathews' sketch of Ngunawal, there is no grammatical information on these languages, but only vocabulary (plus phonology in Hercus' work). There is no published linguistic material on Walgalu except a list of 15 totem names in Howitt (1996:102).

Table 8.1 Main sources for Canberra region languages

Source name	Date collected	Reference
Yass	-1887	Bench of Magistrates 1886-87
Ngunawal	-1904	Mathews 1904
Queanbeyan	-1887	Police Magistrate 1886-87
Menero	1834	Lhotsky 1839
Moneroo	-1887	Bulmer 1886-87 ⁵
Moneroo	-1887	du Vé 1886-87
Ngarrugu	-1908	Mathews 1908
S. Ngarigu	1960s	Hercus 1986

8.1.2 Further documents on the Aboriginal languages and groups in the Canberra region

The major source of new documentation is from George Augustus Robinson, made available through the transcription and publication by Ian Clark of the journals and Aboriginal vocabularies from the time of Robinson's work as Chief Protector of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, 1839-1849. The five volumes of his journals present information on geography (detailing his travels), ethnography, as well as vital contextual information for the interpretation of the vocabularies. The volume of vocabularies (Robinson 2000) provides linguistic data not otherwise available. Professor Barry Blake says, in his foreword to Clark's compilation:

Robinson's collection of Aboriginal vocabularies from south-eastern Australia is perhaps the largest source of information on the languages of the area that we have, certainly it is the most varied. It covers practically every area of Victoria as well as some adjacent areas of South Australia and New South Wales. (Robinson 2000:6)

Robinson undertook a number of journeys during his protectorate. During 1844 he made a fact-finding trip to investigate the Aboriginal situation in Gippsland and what is now the south-eastern portion of New South Wales (see Mackaness 1941). His journal of this trip is published as volume 4 of Clark's edition of the journals (Robinson 1998). The expedition took place between 13 April and 20 October. The route went roughly: Melbourne, Westernport, Port Albert, Omeo, across the Manero [Monaro] plains to

⁴ For example, these are the wordlists quoted (with the addition of an Omeo list in Curr 1886-1887) in Flood's (1980:350-359) Appendix XI: 'Vocabularies of tribes in the Southern Uplands'.

⁵ According to Curr (1886-1887 vol. 3:429), Bulmer reported that the name of the language was Ngarago.

Twofold Bay [Eden] – with an excursion southwards to Cape Howe, Bemm River, Cann River and back to Twofold Bay – Pambula, Bega, Nimmitabel, Cooma, Limestone Plains [Canberra], Yass, Gundagai, Albury, Melbourne.⁶ Robinson had obviously planned to cross the mountains from Cooma to Tumut, but because of heavy snowfalls in the mountains he rather made a detour around the northern fringe of the mountains, stopping (and making records of the Aboriginal people) at Canberra, Yass and Gundagai. It was thanks to this unplanned detour that we have his records from these three places. (He also recorded wordlists for the languages of: Omeo, Twofold Bay and Cape Howe, Bega, and the (eastern) Monaro group.)

There are, however, a few further sources for the languages and social groups in the Canberra region that should be considered. Stewart Mowle, who worked for Terence Aubrey Murray at Yarralumla and Mannus (near Tumbarumba) as a young man from 1838, has a short list of words, placenames, and a song (Mowle 1891). Edward John Eyre's (1845:vol. 2, 397) journal includes a wordlist labelled 'Molonglo or its vicinity', which must stem from his short period of residence in the upper Molonglo valley in the years 1834-1836.⁷ A.W. Howitt's manuscript notes, held in the State Library of Victoria, include some short wordlists from the Ngarigu and Walgalu languages. The historical documents relating to the Aboriginal people of the Monaro have been brought together in Young, Mundy and Mundy (2000) and Young (2005). Meanwhile new interpretations of history and geography have been attempted, using the expanded source materials. Jackson-Nakano (2001) investigates the history of Aboriginal families in the ACT region. Wesson (2000) discusses the geography of Aboriginal groups in south-eastern New South Wales and adjacent areas of Victoria.

It is therefore appropriate to reassess the available data for the traditional languages spoken in the Canberra region as well as the Monaro and the Alpine area of NSW. This is an ongoing project in which I am engaged. Short wordlists for which I was responsible have recently been published in Wafer and Lissarrague (2008).⁸ In the small study presented here I have two principal aims. In section 8.2 I concentrate on the principal names that have been used for Aboriginal groups (and languages) in the area, and try to establish from early historical sources how the Aboriginal people projected their identity to Europeans who cared enough to enquire. The discussion proceeds largely in the direction of north to south. In section 8.3 I try to determine on the basis of linguistic evidence how the recorded language samples are related to one another. This involves both the issues of which data sets constitute the same language and how closely the separate languages are related to one another.

⁶ A map of his route is provided in Mackaness (1941) and in Jackson-Nakano (2001:74).

⁷ From his autobiography (Eyre 1984) we learn that he had a property some 20 kilometres southeast of Queanbeyan, that in 1837-1839 he was engaged in overlanding stock from Limestone Plains to Melbourne and Adelaide, in a joint venture with Robert Campbell, whose pastoral operations were based at Duntroon, and that one of his companions on the second trip in 1838 was an Aboriginal man named Unmallie from Gundaroo.

⁸ Word-lists 4B Ngunawal (pp. 570-576), 4C Ngarigu (pp. 577-586), 4D The Canberra language (pp. 587-591), 4E The Omeo language (pp. 592-595). See also chapter 4: 'South-east NSW ('Yuin') languages', where some of my interpretations are quoted.

8.2 Survey of group names

8.2.1 Yass to Lake George

8.2.1.1 Ngunawal at Yass

Robinson (1998:211) recorded in his journal 16 Sept 1844 that he got a 'vocabulary of the Yass language from Jillambo who had been brought up in Mr. A. [Andrew] Hume family'. The vocabularies volume includes a census of 'Yass Tribe, nearly all men' and a 154-item wordlist (Robinson 2000:207-210), which ends with the ethnonyms *O.ner.wul* 'Yass mob' and *Ko.ro.mul* 'Limestone mob'. The first of these terms is obviously Robinson's hearing of the name *Ngunawal* (he often missed an initial *ng*, wrote an indistinct vowel as *er* and a short low central vowel as *u*). It is significant that the inhabitants of the Limestone Plains, that is the Canberra region, were not included under the Yass group's own group name, but were given another designation, which may not be the name by which they called themselves. R.H. Mathews (1904) provided the spelling *Ngunawal* for the name of the language of his grammatical sketch and vocabulary, and used the same term for the people: 'The native tribes speaking Ngunawal tongue occupy the country from Goulburn to Yass and Burrowa, extending southerly to Lake George and Goodradigbee' (Mathews 1904:294).

Howitt's survey of Aboriginal tribes, included in his 1904 book, includes a group that he calls *Nungawal* – relying on information from A.L.P. Cameron – whose territory is said to be to the east of that of the Wiradjuri (Howitt 1996:56). This agrees with the known location of the Ngunawal and presumably represents a miscommunicated version of the name *Ngunawal*.

Tindale locates the 'Ngunawal tribe' as follows:

Queanbeyan to Yass, Tumut to Boorowa, and east to beyond Goulburn; on highlands west of the Shoalhaven River...Canberra, the federal capital is very near their southern boundary and thus this tribe has claims to have been the one actually on the site of the capital. The Ngarigo were the people immediately to the south also with a boundary passing close to Canberra. (Tindale 1974:198)

Jackson-Nakano (2001) documents how the descendants of the Canberra Aborigines in the course of the 20th century came to identify as *Ngunawal*.

8.2.1.2 More localised names

In 1834 the Polish scientist John Lhotsky, on his journey from Sydney to the Alps, met a group of some 60 Aboriginal people who called themselves 'the *Pajong* tribe', near Gunning (Lhotsky 1979:43). These people reported that in their peregrinations 'they go as far as Goulbourn [sic], and Yass Plains, but not so far as Limestone' (Lhotsky 1979:41). The location of this group, which was also called the 'Fish River tribe' (since the Lachlan River at Gunning had this name in the early days), suggests that they may have been a local group of the Ngunawal. Jackson-Nakano (2002:36), however, assumes that they rather spoke the closely related Gundungurra language of the Southern Highlands.

At least two further group names are attested within the presumed Ngunawal territory – *Wallabalooa* in the Yass area and *Burrooa* or *Burrowa* in the vicinity of Boorowa (Jackson-Nakano 2002: see xxvii and chapter 4 for references). Robinson (1998:164) further mentions a group name *Tooke.yang mittong* with a gloss 'Yass Blacks' when he was at the South Coast; this presumably includes the placename now known as Jugiong (between Yass and Gundagai) plus the form *mittong* that designated a group.

8.2.1.3 Kurrmal as 'other'

Robinson's wordlist recorded at Yass 16 Sept. 1844 gives *Ko.ro.mul* as the Yass tribe's designation of the 'Limestone mob' (Robinson 2000:210). In his official report he said: 'The Yass Blacks are designated *Oncrwul* and the Limestone *Koromul*' (Robinson 1845:26).⁹ Tindale reports, from his correspondent W.S. Parkes, that the Wiradjuri used the name *Guramal* or *Gurmal* (said to mean 'hostile people') to describe the Walgalu and the Ngarigu, whom they considered one people (Tindale 1974:198-199). Parkes' letter to Tindale, quoted in Jackson-Nakano (2001:30f) applies the term *Gurmal* especially to 'the Tumut blacks'. Jackson-Nakano (2001:33) reports, from his notebooks, that R.H. Mathews in 1902 had discussions with Aboriginal people at the Brungle Aboriginal Reserve concerning the identity of the '*Goormull / Goorimal*' people and language: people there offered associations with the area of the Tumut, Goodradigbee, upper Murrumbidgee, and upper Murray rivers and the towns of Kiandra and Adaminaby, and suggested that the term overlaps with the '*Ngarroogoo*' (Ngarigo) language and '*Wolgal*' tribe. A handwritten note on one of his offprints in the National Library further specifies: 'Guramal language at Queanbeyan' (Jutta Besold, pers. comm.). The combined evidence thus suggests that *Kurrmal*¹⁰ was a term used by others, namely the Ngunawal and Wiradjuri groups, to describe the groups south of Yass and Gundagai – that is the Nyamudy, Walgalu, and Ngarigo.

8.2.2 Canberra area

8.2.2.1 Limestone Plains as an early European name

The district around Canberra was known as the Limestone Plains in the early decades of colonisation. When G.A. Robinson visited the area in September 1844 he was the guest of Terence Aubrey Murray at his Yarralumla property, where he 'saw a number of Limestone Blacks', as he called them, and took down their names (Robinson 1998:203). His main list of names includes 36 individuals, and a smaller group that he calls the '*Molongler* tribe' includes 11 more people (Robinson 1998:203-205). His vocabulary, which is labeled 'Vocabulary Limestone Blacks, communicated by Wellington, Yare.rer.bum.ber.le, on Murray' (Robinson 2000:270-271) is assumed to be from the former group, which includes the 16-year-old 'Wellington, Mo rid jer gang,¹¹ my interpreter' (Robinson 1998:204).

8.2.2.2 Namwich, etc. as the Aboriginal group name

The earliest recorded name for the group inhabiting the area around the Limestone Plains is *Namitch* or *Namwich*, which seems to be based on a region, presumably the one that gave rise to the geographic name *Namadgi*. In May 1829 Assistant Surveyor R. Dixon 'met... several tribes from Moneroo and *Nammage*' (quoted in Flood 1980:9, 301). In January 1834 Lhotsky saw the '*Namadgi* range' from Duntroon: 'From this place [the Duntroon dairy] the people pointed out to me *Namadgi* range, being 18 miles distant S.W.'

⁹ In Mackaness (1941:26) this name was misread as *Koroimal*. This version was repeated in Wesson (2000:122).

¹⁰ Jackson-Nakano (2001:123 n71) suggests that her *Gurmal* (as she spells the name) was possibly pronounced with initial *ng*. This is presumably based on a variant spelling *Nguramal* given in Tindale (1974:198).

¹¹ Wellington's Aboriginal name is presumably the same as the word *maritchegang* (that is, *muridyakang* or *muridyakang*) that Mowle's (1891) vocabulary gives as meaning 'flying squirrel'.

(Lhotsky 1979:56). The use of the group name can be traced back to an article dated 1831 written by William Edward Riley, which describes a 'Corobborie at Tuggranon Isabella Plains', which he witnessed a few years earlier. The article begins with the words: 'The *Namitch* tribe of natives was assembled here' (Lamb 2006:256 [italics added]). A list of Aboriginal people receiving blankets at Janevale (near Tuggeranong on the Isabella Plains) in June 1834 gives *Namwich* as the name of the tribe of 60-70 people, headed by the chief Hong Kong, whose district includes the 'mountains beyond the Murrumbidgee, Limestone Plains, sometimes reside about this part of the country' (quoted from Jackson-Nakano 2001:55, who suggests an identification of *Namwich* with the placename *Namadgi*). A second group, totaling 43 people and headed by the chief Jemmy the Rover, whose native name was *Newlop*, was described as the Hagen Hope tribe from a district consisting of 'Lime-stone Plains, Condore Mts, Murrumbidgee' (Jackson-Nakano 2001:55). These two groups appear together in a later blanket-distribution list, from Queanbeyan in May 1841. This lists 43 people of the 'Murrumbidgee Tribe, Hagen-Hope District', headed by 'Hong-gong, Plate, chief of tribe & Newlop, Jemmy the Rover, Plate, Condore Mountains' (quoted from Jackson-Nakano 2001:63). The name *Hagen Hope* cannot be further identified. It is presumably 'the English rendition of a contemporary Aboriginal name' for a region (Jackson-Nakano 2001:54) – possibly with a form something like *Ngakinub* (names in this area could end in */ubl*, as indicated by the name of the leader *Newlop /Nulubl*).

G.A. Robinson passed through the Canberra region in September 1844, from Cooma to Yass. In his official report he says of this 'fertile tract of Limestone Plains or rather Downs' that 'The *Yammoit Mittong* are the original Inhabitants' (Robinson 1845:25). Earlier, at Brooks' station 'Jejetheric' [Gegedzeric, near Berridale] on 7 July, he had met a 'messenger from Limestone near Yas' and taken a 'census of Limestone natives' (Robinson 1998:131). This appears as 'Census of the *Yam.moit mittong*, or Limestone' and includes names such as the chief *Ong.gong*, *Noo.lup / Jemmy* [the Rover], *Kangaroo Tommy*, *Hamilton / Jem.mut*, and *Mor.rid.jer.gong / Wol.lur.dan* [Wellington], who reappear in the main 'Limestone Blacks' list recorded at Yarralumla 12 September. He once referred to the two groups met at Canberra as 'the *Yammoit* and *Molanglo* Tribes' (Robinson 1845:25). Since *mittong* is a term occurring on many group names in the Alpine area, it seems that *Yammoit* is the key term in the group name (which does not exclude it from denoting a region as well). I conclude that *Yammoit* represents Robinson's hearing of the same name that is behind *Namitch*, *Namwich*, *Nammage*, and *Namadgi*, the original form being probably *Nyamudy* (Koch 2009). Robinson also once referred to the *Nam mit tong* tribe – with reference to *Noo.lup / Jemmy the Rover* (Robinson 1998:204). This spelling may hide a version of the same name, perceived this time as **Nammit*, with one of the two *mi* syllables omitted by mistake from an intended **Nammit mittong*.

The name is also attested on a king plate, which reads 'Moororar of *Namutch* – NSW' (Troy 1993:133). Its wearer may have been the same person as the 'Moo.ro.rare.rer Tommy' mentioned on Robinson's *Yammoit* census (Robinson 2000:206). Finally, the name is attested in Howitt's notes. According to information – dating from the 1880s or earlier – from Mickey, an Aboriginal man born at Mutong near Buckleys Crossing [Dalgety], 'The Queanbeyan blacks were called *Ngye-mitch-mittang*, Cooma blacks

Ngarego mittāng' (Howitt n.d. Box 1050/2(c)).¹² I interpret this as another representation of the name that in the spelling system I use would be *Nyamudy-midhang*. This name, which presumably meant 'Namadgi mob', is attested from the first years of European settlement (Canbury was occupied by J.J. Moore in 1823 or 1824) until the 1880s, and seems to be the name that Aboriginal people of the Queanbeyan-Canberra-Namadgi area applied to themselves and by which they were known to people identifying as Ngarigu.

8.2.2.3 Kamberri, Ngambri, etc.: A group name?

William Davis Wright, who grew up at Lanyon in the 1840s, refers to the local Aborigines as 'the Kamberra tribe' and claims that:

The correct rendering of their tribal name was Kamberra. Their corroboree ground was at Kamberra, as far as I can gather the exact spot being near the Canberra Church,¹³ where the Administration Offices are now erected at Acton, Canberra, and by Canberra Church¹⁴ toward the old Duntroon dairy.¹⁵ It served also as their general and best known meeting place. (Wright 1923:57-58)

He also claimed, of the land purchased by John Joshua Moore and named Canbury: 'This block of land, with adjoining blocks, is in really [sic] the exact locality of the name of Canberra, pronounced 'Kamberra' by the natives' (Wright 1923:22).

William Bluett – on the basis of information gained from early residents John Blundell, born 1838, and Mrs. John MacDonald, nee Webb, born 1842 – called the local Aborigines 'the Nganbra-Pialligo tribe', claimed that their 'headquarters...was right here within the City boundaries', and reported that one group camped at Pialligo and was known to the early settlers as the Pialligo blacks and that another, larger group who camped at the foot of 'Black's Mt close to Canbury Creek' was known as 'the Canbury or Nganbra blacks' (Bluett 1954:1). That they constituted a single group in some sense is suggested by his claim that: 'The domain of the *Kgamburry* tribe extended from Lake George on the east to the Goodradigbee River on the west, and from near Yass, to the head waters of the Murrumbidgee' (quoted in Jackson-Nakano 2001:85).

On the authority of Wright and Bluett, Jackson-Nakano first called the Aboriginal group that included Canberra in their range the *Kamberri* (Jackson-Nakano 2001) and, in a later publication, the *Ngambri*, claiming that Ngambri is both a placename and 'the name of the local Aboriginal group' (Jackson-Nakano 2005:6).

There is no doubt that the name *Canberra* – probably pronounced *NganbiR(V)*, with some doubt about the nature of the *r*-sound and the quality of the final vowel, if there was one (Koch 2009) – was attached to a locality focused around the Acton Peninsula, Sullivan's Creek, and Black Mountain. Furthermore, it was common in early days to refer to the Aborigines by the areas they typically frequented. Samuel Shumack, who lived in

¹² Young's (2005:353) transcription of the name as 'Ngye-mulich(?)-mittang' has been corrected after viewing a photocopy of the manuscript. Howitt's own summary (in the same manuscript) interprets the name as *Ngai-mitch-mittang*.

¹³ This was actually Acton House, formerly called Canbury Cottage, which was used for some time as the rectory of St Johns Church.

¹⁴ St John the Baptist Church, consecrated 1845, on the west side of Anzac Parade, in the modern suburb of Reid.

¹⁵ This is now a heritage site in the suburb of Campbell, at the foot of Mount Pleasant.

Canberra from 1856, refers a number of times to the local group (including some of the same men Robinson met) as 'the Pialligo tribe' (Shumack 1967:148-149). Using similar terminological practice the later Canberra historian Lyall Gillespie refers to 'the Ginninderra and Queanbeyan Blacks' (Gillespie 1992:116ff). So a term like 'the Canberra mob' may well have been a designation used – by settlers and perhaps Aboriginal people as well – in the middle years of the 19th century. But whether it was used as a designation for an Aboriginal group in pre-European times remains in doubt, in my judgement. The case is much stronger that (at least one group of) the Aboriginal people in the Canberra area rather called themselves 'the Nyamudy mob'.

8.2.2.4 Molonglo: Another group in the Canberra area

Robinson's journal (1998:204-205) 12 Sept 1844 includes, in his census of Limestone Blacks met at Terence Aubrey Murray's Yarralumla property, a separate list of about twelve people of the 'Molongler tribe' from *Molongler* country. Their leader was 'Bob, Bim.mim.mi.gal, King, country *Molongler*'. This country must have been the Molonglo Plains area, which was a term applied to an area around the upper Molonglo River between Queanbeyan, Captains Flat, and Bungendore, and the same area from which Eyre obtained most of his vocabulary. The surveyor William Harper used the spelling *Moolingoolah* for the plains and the river (Jackson-Nakano 2001:23, note 82). Tindale (1974:198) associates the Eyre wordlist and the 'Molonglo tribe' with the Ngunawal, without giving any reasons. Jackson-Nakano (2001:23) says that 'Moolingoolah or Molonglo Plains' group 'probably spoke the Ngarigu "dialect"'.¹⁶

8.2.3 Monaro and Ngarigu

8.2.3.1 Monaro and the 'Monaro Tribe'

The term *Monaro* (with its many spelling variants) came into European usage with the discovery by explorers Currie and Ovens, around Bredbo (Mitchell 1926:19), of the extensive plains that they named 'Brisbane Downs', but of which they learned from the 'natives' they met there 'that the clear country before us was called *Monaroo*' (Currie 1825:375). The term *Monaro* has subsequently been used widely as the name of the largely treeless district extending from Michelago to the Victorian border.¹⁷ It can be seriously doubted that the Aborigines intended the term as a placename rather than a label for a topographic feature – treeless plains – and that they restricted its application to the area south of Bredbo or Michelago. The same term seems to have been used of the Limestone Plains. The botanist Allan Cunningham visited the Canberra region in April 1824, crossing the Tuggeranong Plain, fording the Murrumbidgee River, discovering Mt Tennant and naming it Mt Currie (its local Aboriginal name was Tharwa), and on his way back 'inspected the Limestone Plains, or the Plains of *Mineira* as he called them' (Moore 1999:3). According to Andrews (1998:100), Cunningham's journal refers to 'open Country called *Mineira* by the Aborigines situate about 15 miles SW from Lake George'.

¹⁶ This seems to be based on a (speculative) identification she makes between Robinson's names *Bimmer Mittong* and *Bimerringal* for the people of the Monaro and *Bim.mim.mi.gal*, the name of the leader of his Molonglo group. See section 8.3.2 for further discussion of Eyre's wordlist.

¹⁷ See Hancock (1972) for the history of this name and of the district.

The earliest records concerning the Aboriginal people of the Monaro refer to their groups either in terms of a 'Manero(o) tribe' or with reference to a particular place of European settlement. For example, Lhotsky (1979:106) referred to the Indigenous inhabitants of this area, or more particularly those that sometimes visited Kuma hut, as 'the Menero tribe', without giving any indication that this was their own self-designation. He was told that this group wandered as far as Yass and Limestone Plains. It seems to me that the term (a) was phonemically /Mintru/ and phonetically [mi'neru], [me'neru], [mi'nero], or [me'nero],¹⁸ (b) referred to treeless country, and (c) was used in the Canberra region as well as further south. When writers talk about the Aboriginal people of the Monaro, they were using Monaro in the sense it¹⁹ had come to have in European parlance.

8.2.3.2 Bimmer-mittong, Bemunggal, and Bimmeringal

G. A. Robinson used *Bimmer Mittong* or *Bimme Mittong*²⁰ as his general term for the inhabitants of Monaro plains. *Mittong* (*midhang*) means 'group' in languages of the Alpine area, and the first part, *bimmer* or *bimme* (*bima* in my orthography), is the word for 'plain', minus the final *ng* which occurs when the word is cited by itself.²¹ In the language spoken by the coastal group from Twofold Bay to Cape Howe, the term for 'all about blacks at Maneroo' was recorded as *Bem.ung.gal* (Robinson 1998:160); this is *bimang-kal*, consisting of *bimang* 'plain' plus the suffix *-kal* that indicates 'inhabitant of'. These terms designate the Monaro group as the 'plains people'.²²

Another term was used by their coastal neighbours: 'The *Bimmermittong* are the original inhabitants [of the Maneroo]...by the Coast Natives they are called *Bimmeringal* from *Bimmering* to the North' (Mackaness 1941:15). Howitt (1996:330) confirms this label: 'Those who live on the mountains...are called Bemeringal or mountaineers, from Bemering, "a mountain"'. It seems (from Howitt manuscripts I have seen) that coastal people used this term to refer to several groups of their inland, western neighbours, including the Biduwal of east Gippsland and the Braidwood group. But, according to Howitt (1996:563), 'the "true" Bemeringal, according to the Yuin, are the Ngarigo of the Manero tableland'. In my opinion, the basis for this term, *bimiring*, may mean 'west' rather than 'north' or 'mountain'. At any rate, this is a term used by others and not a self-designation.

8.2.3.3 Local group names

Robinson obtained from Aboriginal people group names that convey more localised identities. The names typically are of the form *X-mittong*, where X is the name of a place and *mittong* (*midhang* in my orthography) means 'group'. For example, from Aboriginal people at the coast he learned: 'The Tinnon, Kyrerkong, Ponedyang and Worarer Mittong

¹⁸ I assume that [i] and [e] are variant pronunciations of the phoneme /i/, and [u] and [o] of the phoneme /u/.

¹⁹ It is worth remembering that areas of the upper Murrumbidgee and Encumbene rivers (Adaminaby, Kiandra, etc.) were included in 'Monaro' in the 19th century (Hancock 1972:9).

²⁰ For example: 'Census of Bim.me.mittong or Maneroo tribe' (Robinson 2000:190).

²¹ Robinson records the word as *be.mung*, *bim.mung*, and *bim.mang* in the meaning 'plain'. Howitt's manuscript notes from Mickey, a native of the Monaro, include a comment that 'the open plain country was called Bimung' (cited in Young 2005:353).

²² It is worth noting however, the observation of Flood (1980:181) that 'treeless plains are, in fact, an unfavourable environment for Aborigines', and that she accordingly found little archaeological evidence in the Monaro area for campsites away from rivers or forested areas.

are Tribes inland [from Cape Howe]' (Mackaness 1941:18). I discuss these group names in clockwise order, beginning in the east.

8.2.3.3.1 Bingira-Midhang

While he was at Twofold Bay (Eden), Robinson interviewed visiting Monaro people, as well as natives of the coast. His journal 19 August 1844, reports: 'Increased my vocabulary of Maneroo language from a Black called Num.mer, alias Jemmy, alias Mr Robinson, age 22 years, country *Bingerer*, near Nimertebil Mountains at Rocky Flat, a *Bingerer mittong*' (Robinson 1998:172-173). Here is a group name derived from a locality called *Bingerer* (*Bingira*) on the eastern side of the Monaro plain, in area between Cooma and Nimmitabel.²³

8.2.3.3.2 Bundyang-Midhang

A little farther to the south, near Cathcart and Bibbenluke, at the eastern edge of the Monaro plains, before he descended to the coast, on 13 July 1844, Robinson had met this group. He travelled '...to Hibbert's Inn, Dollykwo by natives, the tribe is called *Pundeang mittong*, *Bungunggarley* alias John Gow is a native of this place at Pundang' (Robinson 1998:134). Later, on 12 August at Twofold Bay, from a 'number of Maneroo Blacks' visiting the coast, he 'got an increase vocabulary Maneroo language also names of Aborigines', including one described as 'country *Pone.de.ang*, a *Pone.di.ang.mittong*' (Robinson 1998:164). Making allowance for the variable spellings (and variable perception of the un-English sounds), we can see here the name of a region *Bundyang*, from which was derived the group name *Bundyang-Midhang* and an individual name (of John Gow) *Bundyang-kali*. Wesson (2000:113) identifies this group with Lambie's Maharatta group (Maharatta being the name of a European property).

8.2.3.3.3 Kyrerkong-Midhang

Robinson's journal gives *Kyrer kong mittong* as the name of the tribe at 'Delaget Hill' (Robinson 1998:168). Wesson (2000:108) identifies this group with the one associated with Currawong²⁴ Station, which is in the vicinity of Delegate.

8.2.3.3.4 Worara-Midhang

Several times Robinson refers to a group called by this name. From the Omeo Aborigines he learned that the 'Menero blacks are called *Wararerer mittong*' (Robinson 1998:109). His vocabularies from Omeo give *Wor.rare.rer.mittong* as the 'Snowy River tribe' (Robinson 2000:205). In a later journal entry written at Twofold Bay he gives *Wor rare rer mittong* as the name of the Inyebyerer [Ingebyra] tribe (Robinson 1998:168). Wesson (2000:77) further quotes from Billy Wood in the Howitt papers (1053/4a): 'The Gelantipy men are called *Wurara midung*, Gelantipy is *Wurara*'. She also quotes (ibid.) John Bulmer in Smyth (1878:191), who claims: '*Woorarra* is the name for Black

²³ This same name may be indicated by the entry 'Pang.er.re mittong: Limestone Blacks' (Robinson 1998:134), if we assume a mistaken reference: from the perspective of Eden, the group was in the direction of the Limestone Plains. Wesson (2000:105, 113) had the same idea, but nevertheless treated the two groups as separate.

²⁴ Variably spelled.

Mountain / Wulgulmerang area'. All this information suggests that this group was associated with the south-western part of the Monaro, even extending into Victoria along the Snowy River.

8.2.3.3.5 Bolaro-Midhang

From information gained at Yass Robinson learned that 'the *Bolarer* and *Jinne Mittong* inhabit the Eastern and South Eastern extremity of the Mountains' (Mackness 1941:26). From the group he met at Yarralumla, Robinson (1998:205) also recorded a group name *Bol.lare.rer Mittong*. One of the 'Limestone Blacks', Johnny Bywoit, was from *Bol.lare.rer*, another had the names Jemmy and *Bol.lore.re*, and a third had the English name *Bolererer Tommy*. Young (2005:49) mentions a breastplate awarded to 'Jemmy, King of *Bolara*, Maneroo'. Wesson (2000:105) identifies him with Robinson's Jemmy *Bol.lore.re* and says he is the son of *Bolererer Tommy*. These references presumably relate to the area around where Bolaro Station was (and still is) located, on the upper Murrumbidgee east of Adaminaby.²⁵

8.2.3.3.6 Other possible groups

It is likely that Robinson's list of groups is not complete, but that there were other named groups that remain unknown. Wesson (2000:110) discusses an unnamed group in the Mowamba district, in the western Monaro south of Jindabyne. Oswald Brierley (1842-1843), on a trip from Twofold Bay at the end of 1842, mentions a 'sheep station on the Mowimba, a small river, where we found a portion of the Moneroo tribe of blacks encamped'. This was one area where Commissioner of Lands John Lambie distributed blankets and took an annual census throughout the 1840s.

Wesson (2000:111-112) posits a further group centred at Mutong Station near Dalgety on the Snowy River. She assumes this is the place where Lambie distributed blankets and took an annual census, under the name 'Snowy River', during the 1840s. She further assumes that this was the group that Robinson met at Richard Brooks' Gecedzeric station (near Berridale) in 1844. No native name is given.²⁶

In the annual 'Census of the Maneroo Aborigines' by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, John Lambie, during the years 1842-1851, he gives the numbers of Aborigines according to the 'names of places usually frequented'. These are (in addition to Onco in 1842 and 1843) Mowenbar (cf. Mowamba above), Snowy River, and Maharatta (combined with Cambelong from 1846). These are respectively in the western, central, and eastern regions of the Monaro plain. The last mentioned, in the Bombala area, is identified by Wesson (2000:113-114) with the Bundyang-Midhang. The habitation pattern noted by Lambie matches fairly well the divisions signalled by Robinson's group terminology, except that Lambie's group terminology follows placenames that had become significant in the European economy, and there are fewer groupings than Robinson's examples suggest were current traditionally.

²⁵ Wesson (2000:102) confuses this group, probably pronounced [bolaro] or [bolero], with two *Beloura* [bilawro] groups located in the coastal area and near Braidwood respectively.

²⁶ Hancock (1972:478 map) gives a squatting run named 'Snowy River' in the vicinity, just north of Matong.

8.2.3.4 Ngarigo

A.W. Howitt, whose ethnographic work dates from the 1870s and 1880s, used *Ngarigo* as the designation of one of the 'tableland tribes' - 'the *Ngarego*'²⁷ of the Maneroo 'tableland' (Howitt 1884:185). He explains his usage of 'tribe' as follows.

I use the word 'tribe' as meaning a number of people who occupy a definite tract of country, who recognise a common relationship and have a common speech, or dialects of the same. The tribes-people recognise a common bond which distinguishes them from other tribes, usually a tribal name, which may be their word for 'man,' that is, an aboriginal of Australia. (Howitt 1996:41)

Howitt gained much of his knowledge of the Monaro people from correspondents who returned his questionnaire. The first question on the circular was: 'What is the name of the tribe to which your answers refer; that is its name as distinguishing it or its members from other tribes by which it is surrounded;...the boundaries of the country occupied by the tribe?' (Young 2005:339). C. Clive, providing information from the Aborigines at Currawong (just west of Delegate, in the far south of the Monaro), with particular mention of the elder Old Munday, says in answer to the first question: '*Ngarego*. They also call themselves Murr-ring to distinguish themselves from other tribes' (Young 2005:345). A Howitt manuscript note headed '*Ngarego* tribe per Mickey' (in Howitt n.d. Box 1050/2(c)) states: 'Mickey was born at Mütong near Buckley's Crossing [Dalgety] at Rutherford's old place—it is his country. His language is called *Ngarego*'. The same summary from Mickey includes some group names: 'The *Ngarego* used to go up to the mountains to eat bogong moths = ngü-e-ang at the Murrumbidgee and the Queenbeyan blacks went with them. The Queenbeyan blacks were called *Ngye-mütch-mittäng*, Cooma blacks = *Ngarego mittäng*'. In a manuscript note based on Mickey's information, Howitt says: 'The *Ngarego-mittäng* were as far as Cooma'. Mickey signalled friendly relations with the 'Queenbeyan blacks', who are nevertheless not included within the designation *Ngarego*.

Howitt's general conclusion about *Ngarigo* is stated thus:

The *Ngarigo* in fact occupied the Maneroo tableland. The name of this tribe was that of that its language, and the tribespeople called themselves 'Murring,' that is 'men,' indicating that it belonged to another nation who used that term in common. (Howitt 1996/1904:79)

The specific information quoted above raises as many questions as it provides answers. It appears that *Ngarigo* can be used as a group name, at least for the group around Currawong. It is also applied to the people of Cooma, and as a language name can be used for Mutong halfway between Currawong and Cooma. Its status as a group name seems to be confirmed by the fact that it can be compounded with the group-marking *midhang*. It is also claimed to name a language. Is this its primary sense or is this usage derivative from its group name status? If the group name is primary, to what locality does it relate? The whole central swathe of the southern plains, from Cooma to the Victorian border? Or some more restricted site within this area? Is it perhaps the missing term for Wesson's Mutong and Lambie's Snowy River group? Or could it be co-extensive with Robinson's

²⁷ In his earlier publications Howitt uses the spelling *Ngarego*, but later wrote it as *Ngarigo*.

Kyrerkong-mittong at Delegate Mountain?²⁸ Has Howitt used the name in a wider sense than any of the Monaro Aboriginal people themselves did?

R.H. Mathews (1908:335), a few decades after Howitt's research, ascribed a more northerly extent to the 'tribe', which he spelled as *Ngarrugu* (with a different vowel in the middle syllable): 'the *Ngarrugu* tribe, which formerly occupied the country from Queanbeyan, via Cooma and Bombala, to Delegate'. He includes the 'Queanbeyan blacks' among the Ngarigo. Tindale (1974:198) largely follows Mathews,²⁹ but adds a western border which is beyond the plains: 'Monaro tableland north to Queanbeyan; Bombala River from near Delegate to Nimmitabel; west to divide of the Australian Alps'. Wesson (2000:119) reports that according to a map in Fraser (1892:19) '*Garego* includes the County of Wellesley, Bombala, Nimmitabel, Cooma, Kiandra through into Victoria'.³⁰

8.2.4 Wolgal, Walgalu

This is another term that is not found in Robinson's journals. The name originates in Howitt's ethnographic materials. Howitt obtained his information from Yibai-malian (Murray Jack), his daughter Janey Alexander, and the songmaker Mragula (Singing Johnny). Murray Jack, whose photo with his breastplate declaring him 'King of the Wolgal' is shown in Young (2005:324), was born at Talbingo Mountain (near Tumut), of a Wiradjuri father and a mother from the Theddora [Dhudhuroa] of Omeo, and functioned as an influential leader of both the Wolgal and Ngarigu peoples.³¹ Howitt describes their territory as extending over the western slopes of the Alps, from Cowambat (or Tom Groggin) northward to include Tumberumba, Adelong, Tumut, but also the Upper Murrumbidgee River, including Kiandra, Queanbeyan, Michelago, and Cooma. Howitt (1887:23) refers to them as 'the Wolgal of the Tumut and Upper Murrumbidgee Rivers'. Howitt (1996:102) says 'the *Wolgal*...extended over the great alpine ranges in which the Murray and Murrumbidgee rise'. Another 19th century observer, J. Jauncey, writing around 1889, located the *Walgal* tribe at 'Kiandra snowfields and headwaters of Murray, Tumut and Murrumbidgee' (quoted in Wesson 2000:86). R.H. Mathews, who spells the name *Walgalu*, gives their location in fairly unspecific terms: 'adjoining the Ngarrugu on part of the west' (Mathews 1908:336); 'From Jingellic [at the eastern end of Dhudhuroa territory] eastward was the country of the *Walgatu*³² tribe (Mathews 1909:278). Tindale (1974:199) locates the *Walgalu* at 'headwaters of the Murrumbidgee, and Tumut rivers; at

²⁸ It is conceivable even that *Kyrerkong* represents a rendition of *Ngarikung*, a coastal version (with final *ng* added), of the name *Ngariku* (= *Ngarigo*).

²⁹ According to Flood: 'the tribal boundaries in the Southern Tablelands area are less certain that they appear on the [Tindale's] map being based, primarily, on late evidence by R.H. Mathews (Tindale 1974:198)' (Flood 1980:112); and '[in] the Southern Tablelands...our information is less reliable, being based mainly on the very late and slight linguistic evidence of R.H. Mathews' (Flood 1980:107). I suspect that Mathews interpreted the Queanbeyan wordlist as being of the same language as the Monaro wordlists, and on this basis concluded that Queanbeyan must be included in the territory of the people who called themselves Ngarigu.

³⁰ *Garego* is actually *Ngarego*: there is a dot inside the G, which is used to indicate the *ng* sound. The territorial limits for all of Fraser's groups are so loose that no reliance should be placed on them.

³¹ A local history of Boloco Station (near Dalgety) indicates that he lived there in the last years before his death in 1891, and that he was a brother-in-law of the Ngarigo elder Mickey (Young 2005:387).

³² It seems he received his information, and the form of the group name (with a final vowel *u* and stress on the second syllable), from Dhudhuroa informants. Hence I prefer to use the spelling *Wolgal*, which Howitt obtained from people who identified as members of the group.

Kiandra; south to Tintaldra; northeast to near Queanbeyan' and reports that they were called Guramal or Gurmial (that is *Kurrmal*) by a Wiradjuri man at Brungle in 1952.

8.2.5 Conclusions concerning group names

It is clear, especially from G.A. Robinson, that the Aboriginal people of this region used names for fairly local groups of people that were based on the names of areas. Attested local group names in the Monaro area are: *Bingira-Midhang*, *Bundyang-Midhang*, '*Kyrerkong mittong*', *Worara-Midhang*. In the Queanbeyan-Canberra-Namadjgi region there was the *Nyamudy-Midhang*, and to the east of them the *Molonglo* group. Further to the southwest were the *Bolaro-Midhang*, who were included among the 'Yammoit Mittong' group that Robinson met at Yarralumla in 1844. It is likely that there were further local groups whose names have been lost – none have been recorded across the northwestern (Walgalu) part of this territory, for example – in addition to names like Hagen Hope that remain uninterpretable.³³

Terms that were much more general in their application are Robinson's '*Bimmermittong*' ('plains people') of the Monaro plains. The term *Wolgal* seems also to be a fairly general term, applying to people living in mountainous areas.³⁴ *Kurrmal* seems to be an even more general term, applied to all of the Bima-midhang, Nyamudy-midhang, and Wolgal by outsiders, the Wiradjuri and Ngunawal people. The name *Ngarigu* seems to have been used both for the group of Aborigines inhabiting the area from Cooma south to Currawang and for their language. This name seems to be intermediate in its scope between a local group name such as Bundyang-Midhang and a broad areal term like Bima-Midhang.³⁵

It is obvious that group names, being of different scope, may overlap. Thus the Limestone Plains – Upper Murrumbidgee group, which called itself *Nyamudy-Midhang*, may have been included for certain purposes in the denomination *Wolgal* / *Walgalu* (especially if this referred to 'mountain people' as opposed to 'plains people' in the Monaro) and in other circumstances as *Kurrmal* (together with other Walgalu people and Monaro people in opposition to the Ngunawal and Wiradjuri neighbours to their north and west).

8.3 Language relations

8.3.1 Previous classifications of the languages

All of the languages with which we are concerned here are related and belong to a group that has come to be called the 'Yuin' group of languages.³⁶ Howitt (1904) introduced

³³ Cf. the caution that Peterson and Carr (1998) advocate with respect to the incomplete state of our knowledge about local groups in the area.

³⁴ *-Gal/kal* occurs in coastal languages to indicate inhabitants of a region, for example *Kathung-kal* 'sea people', *Kuyang-kal* 'southern people'; but if *Wal-kal* is to be analysed in this way, we cannot be assured that there was a word *wal* or what it meant.

³⁵ If it was identical in origin to Robinson's *Kyrerkong mittong*, it may have been extended from a local group name to include several other groups, after the traditional residence patterns were disrupted by the incursion of European settlers.

³⁶ See Wafer and Lissarrague (2008:chapter 4) for the languages that are considered to belong to this group, called there the South-east NSW ('Yuin') languages.

the term *Yuin* (*yuwiny*) as a social group name, noting that both *yuwiny* and *murring* (*mariny*) are widespread terms for 'person' among the Indigenous people of south-eastern New South Wales. He uses the term 'Yuin tribes' especially for groups on the NSW south coast. The Austrian scholar W. Schmidt's (1919) classification of Australian languages typically uses a widespread term for 'man' or 'people' to name groups of languages. On the basis of the documentation available to him (which did not include Robinson's data), he classified the languages of south-eastern New South Wales into a 'Yuin' group. This group was further subdivided into a coastal and an inland Yuin subgroup, and each of these was further subdivided into a northern and a southern sub-subgroup. He placed Ngunawal in the northern and Ngarigo in the southern divisions of his 'Inland Yuin'. The classification in Wurm (1972:137) includes Ngunawal and Ngarigo-Wolgal (treated as dialects of the same language) as two languages of the Yuin subgroup³⁷ (beside the languages of the coast between Sydney and the Victorian border). Walsh and Wurm (1981) likewise treat Ngunawal and Ngarigo (with its dialect Walgalu) as separate languages within a Yuin subgroup. Dixon (2002:xxxv) treats Ngarigo (or Ngarrigu) as a separate language from Ngunawal (which he treats as a dialect of Gundungurra), and includes both in a 'Southern tablelands group', which is classified with a 'NSW south coast group' of four languages into a 'Southern NSW Group'. Wesson (2000:81, 114-116) analyses Ngarigo, Wolgal, and Ngunawal as three dialects or variants of the same language, which she does not name. But it is clear that her 'Ngunawal' includes data from both the Queanbeyan and Yass wordlists – which should be kept separate.

Scholars have differed on what language the Queanbeyan wordlist, widely attributed to Nellie Hamilton, should be ascribed to. Wesson, as just mentioned, groups it with Ngunawal (Yass) sources. Murphy (1987:16) quotes from a paper read by Josephine Flood to the Canberra and District Historical Society, August 1983, which claimed that the language of Nellie Hamilton is not Ngunawal but Ngarigo. Flood based this conclusion on an unpublished paper by Maryalyce McDonald of the (then) Linguistics Department of the Australian National University.³⁸

8.3.2 My conclusions regarding language relations

In deciding which language samples belong together, linguists typically measure the proportion of vocabulary that they have in common, using a technique called lexicostatistics. Beginning from a set of meanings represented by English words, they first make lists of what the equivalent terms are in the languages to be compared. Since different wordlists often do not indicate exactly the same set of meanings, not all items from each vocabulary set will be represented. But of those meanings that do have a translation equivalent in each of a pair of languages, the number of compared terms can be counted, and of these it can be determined which forms are the same in form as well as meaning; these are called cognates.³⁹ The proportion of cognate terms relative to the total

³⁷ Since the 1960s language groups in southeastern Australia have been considered to be subgroups of a large Pama-Nyungan language family that encompasses the major part of continental Australia.

³⁸ Flood presumably got this from the files of the then ANU Linguistics Professor R.M.W. Dixon, whose most recent book (Dixon 2002:xxxv) likewise does not distinguish Walgalu, the Canberra language, or the Omeo language, from Ngarigo. Flood, following McDonald, also mentions the names Yam-moit-mittung and Koromul given by Robinson.

³⁹ Strictly speaking, the term 'cognate' should be restricted to forms that are assumed to derive by transmission through time from the same form in a presumed language that is ancestral to both of the

number of forms compared is given as a percentage. The lexical similarity of different pairings of languages can then be presented.

If we apply these techniques to the languages in the Canberra-Queanbeyan area we get the results shown in Table 8.2. For this comparison I have used the relatively basic vocabulary items given in Wafer and Lissarrague (2008), supplemented by the 'Wolgal' terms found in Howitt's manuscripts. Each language's wordlist is based on an amalgamation from several sources, with the result that there are sometimes two or more synonyms available for a given language. It can be seen that the proportion of vocabulary that the Canberra language shares with Ngarigo is a little bit higher than what it shares with Ngunawal. Walgalu scores higher in relation to the Canberra language than to Ngarigo. The Canberra language, Walgalu, and Ngarigo share about 70% or more vocabulary, which is usually taken to indicate a relationship close enough to be considered dialects of the same language. But Ngunawal is not far behind.

Table 8.2 Lexical comparison of the Canberra-Queanbeyan language and its neighbours

	Ngunawal and Canberra	Canberra and Ngarigo	Canberra and Walgalu	Walgalu and Ngarigo
No. compared	89	95	19	23
No. cognate	59	68	17	16
Percentage cognate	66.2	72	89.5	69.6

There is more to language relationships than vocabulary, however. The grammar of the languages should also be considered. In cases of a conflict between the evidence of vocabulary and that of grammar, it is grammar that is usually considered decisive in deciding linguistic relations. The evidence from grammar, especially personal pronouns, convincingly shows that Ngunawal is closely related to Gandangara (Gundungurra) from the Southern Highlands. 'I' is *kulangka* and 'you' is *kulandyi* in both Ngunawal and Gundungurra; in fact, all pronouns except those of the third person are built on a stem *kula-*, to which suffixes are added to indicate the specific person and number. Only these two lects, of all the Yuin languages, have pronouns of this type. It is now clear that Gundungurra and Ngunawal are very closely related, enough so that they can be considered dialects of the same language (Eades 1976, Besold 2003, Dixon 2002:xxxv).

It is potentially more difficult to classify the lects that were spoken by the Yammoit-mittung, Walgalu, and the Monaro Aborigines, since we have available no grammatical description but only wordlists. Nevertheless some grammatical information can be extracted from the wordlists. The first and second person singular pronouns are indicated by many of the sources, even though they have sometimes inverted 'I' and 'you' in what must have been a confusing elicitation situation. (One can easily imagine how an informant, asked what term they use for 'you' would answer with 'me' and vice versa.) The first person pronoun is amply attested as *Ingayambal*; it is found in Robinson's Limestone Plains, Curr's Queanbeyan wordlist, Monaro vocabularies by Robinson, du Vé,

languages being compared. Words that have been borrowed from one language into the other are not 'cognates' in this sense. But since it is often impossible to distinguish real 'cognates' from such 'loanwords', in practice any shared forms are often called cognates in lexicostatistical operations.

Bulmer, and Howitt, as well as from Howitt's Wolgal informant Yibai-Malian (Murray Jack). In addition, the possessive form *ngayamba-dyanul* 'my' appears to lie behind related forms given for the Monaro and Wolgal languages. The original spelling and glosses are given in Table 8.3. Forms for 'I' based on a stem *ngaya-* are found elsewhere (*ngaya* at Sydney, *ngayaka*, *ngayakang*, *ngayadha*, *ngayalu* on the South Coast), but only in this set of lects do we find an extension in *-mba*.⁴⁰

Table 8.3 Attestation of 1Sg pronoun ('I') in southern inland Yuin lects

Lect	Form	Gloss	Source
Limestone	<i>ime.bar</i>	you	Robinson 2000:271
Queanbeyan	<i>imeba</i>	you	Police Magistrate 1886-1887:425
Maneroo	<i>ime.bar</i>	me	Robinson 2000:193
Moneroo	<i>ngimba</i>	I	du Vé 1886-1887:431
Moneroo	<i>ngiamba</i>	I	Bulmer 1886-1887:433
Ngarigo	<i>niamba</i>	I	Howitt n.d.: Box 1054/2
Wolgal	<i>ngaimba</i>	thy	Howitt n.d.: Box 1050/4(d)
Maneroo	<i>i.am.bad.jer.no</i>	mine	Robinson 2000:197
Maneroo	<i>i.un.bad.jer.no</i>	wife	Robinson 2000:195
Wolgal	<i>ngaimbajun</i>	his	Howitt n.d.: Box 1050/4(d)

For the second person singular, the same sources (plus Mowle for Canberra) provide evidence for a form *yindiki*.⁴¹ The closest equivalent in the Yuin languages is *yindika* in Dhurga and *nyindikang* in Dharawal on the South Coast. And forms in *ngindV*, *nyindV*, or *yindV* (where V is any vowel) are widespread in other Australian languages. But no other language consistently shows the increment *-ki* after the vowel *i*, with *y* instead of *ny* or *ng* at the beginning of the word. These forms are shown in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Attestation of 2Sg pronoun in southern inland Yuin lects

Lect	Form	Gloss	Source
Canberra	<i>yindagee</i>	you	Mowle 1891
Limestone	<i>in.de.ge</i>	me	Robinson 2000:271
Queanbeyan	<i>indegee</i>	I	Police Magistrate 1886-1887:425
Maneroo	<i>in.de.ge</i>	you	Robinson 2000:193
Moneroo	<i>yindigee</i>	you	du Vé 1886-1887:431
Ngarigo	<i>indigee</i>	you	Howitt n.d.: Box 1054/2
Wolgal	<i>indigi</i>	my	Howitt n.d.: Box 1050/4(d)

While it is usual in Australia for neighbouring languages to share some vocabulary items, it is significant that certain words are unique to Ngarigo, the Canberra language, and

⁴⁰ This *-mba* is unlikely to be related to the enclitic subject form *-ba* of Darkinyung (a language north of Sydney (Jones 2008)) and the Hunter River and Lake Macquarie language (Lissarrague 2006).

⁴¹ Bulmer offers a form *nindega*, which resembles more the form in Dhurga (in the Moruya area).

Wolgal, and the Omeo language (not discussed here). These include: *dhawang* 'stomach', *kundhal* 'eye', *mirung* 'eaglehawk', *mamady* 'sun', *dyidyukang* 'snake', *wadha* 'fire' and *nurr* 'nose' (vs. *nukurr* in the coastal Yuin languages and other terms in Ngunawal and Gundungurra). Such unique items of vocabulary combine with the distinctive pronoun forms to support the claim that the former were dialects of the same language, whereas Ngunawal was in a dialect relation with Gundungurra from the southern highlands.

It must be admitted that there is no evidence from pronouns to establish that the Eyre's Molonglo wordlist belongs with the Canberra-Queanbeyan dialect. Most of the 25 words that are identifiable agree with either the Canberra or the Monaro wordlists, but at least two agree with Ngunawal and two with the Braidwood (and coastal) language. It is normal for dialects to share some vocabulary with each of their neighbouring dialects.

The evidence of grammar and vocabulary thus show that the Canberra language – and the Wolgal / Walgalu language – belong with the language of the Monaro, called Ngarigo, as dialects of the same language.⁴² (The Omeo language – not discussed here – was also probably closely enough related to be considered another dialect.) Ngunawal is very closely related to Gundungurra – they are dialects of the same language. But Ngunawal-Gundungurra is a separate language from the one spoken by the inhabitants of the Canberra region, the Monaro, and the Alpine region of the ACT and New South Wales.⁴³ The Canberra dialect of this language, however, shares a relatively large amount of its vocabulary with the Ngunawal dialect of the Ngunawal-Gundungurra because of the geographical proximity.

There is no indication of what the Nyamudy people called their language. It seems that the practice in this part of the country was for the language name to be the same as the group name. Thus the terms Ngunawal, Ngarigo, and Walgal(u) are each used (by early scholars at least) to refer to both a social group and their language. By this logic the Canberra area language may well have been called *Nyamudy* by its speakers and by those who knew them as the Nyamudy-midhang. Meanwhile outsiders, the Wiradjuri and Ngunawal in particular, who applied the name *Kurrmal* to all the people of the Tumut, Canberra-Queanbeyan, and Monaro region, apparently used the same term *Kurrmal* for the language of all of them as well (see section 8.2.1.3 above).

8.4 Summary and conclusions

A reassessment of the historical documentation leads to these conclusions about the social groups in the immediate Canberra area. The earliest attested name that the local group used for themselves was *Nyamudy-Midhang*, which probably meant the mob associated with the Nyamudy (Namwich, Yammoit, Namadgi) region. They may sometimes have been included in a wider term *Wolgal* or *Walgalu*, which was used for people inhabiting the mountainous areas around the Australian Alps, but whose best-

⁴² Here I am using the term 'language' in two different senses: in the non-technical sense, any group's speech is called their language; in linguists' technical talk, however, all local varieties that can be described by the same set of grammatical generalisations are called 'dialects' of a 'language' in a more abstract sense. Speakers of traditional languages typically had a name only for their 'language' in the non-technical sense, but no name for the language in the linguists' more general sense. The term 'lect' is sometimes used to refer to a language in the non-technical sense.

⁴³ Jackson-Nakano (2001:33) concluded that the Kambarri (her term for the Canberra group) probably 'used the Walgalu dialect', but she gives no basis for her conclusion.

known representatives were from the Tumut area. They were included – with the Walgalu and Ngarigu – in the designation *Kurrmal* used by Wiradjuri and Ngunawal people. The group centred on the growing village of Canberra was called by Europeans, and may have called themselves, the 'Canberra mob', based on the placename *Nganbirra* (or similar) from the middle of the 19th century.

What was their language? The combined evidence of wordlists from Robinson, Mowle, the Queanbeyan Police Magistrate, and probably Eyre in the Molonglo Plains, indicates the Canberra area language is to be distinguished from Ngunawal, whose sources of documentation are all from around Yass. Rather it should be seen as one regional variant of a common language that was spoken in the Monaro, where it was known as *Ngarigu* or *Ngarrigu*, and in the Tumut area, where it was called *Wolgal* or *Walgalu*. No distinctive name is recorded for the Canberra area dialect: there is no evidence that it was included in the name *Ngarigu* or *Walgalu*, but it is possible that it was called *Nyamudy*, as the local group was called *Nyamudy-Midhang*.

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