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TESL* AND WARLPIRI CHILDREN
Understanding Warlpiri children's problems in learning to speak English[1]

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* TESL stands for Teaching English as a Second Language.

0. INTRODUCTION

The Warlpiri child (i.e. whose first language is Warlpiri) learns English as a second language. At Yuendumu, the learning of English begins in earnest soon after the child starts school. For the first three school years the child learns English **orally**, and does not begin writing or reading English until about Grade 4.

To understand something of the task facing a Warlpiri child beginning to learn English, we need to view English through Warlpiri-coloured glasses: we need to contrast the language structures of Warlpiri and English. This paper contrasts just the sound systems of the two languages. Other topics, such as the different word structures, syntax (how words are put together to make a proper sentence), and semantics (structures of meaning) are equally relevant, but are not dealt with here.

How the Warlpiri sound system accommodates a foreign word, such as one borrowed from English, illustrates the contrasts between the Warlpiri sound system and the foreign one. To understand the principles which govern the adaptation of a foreign word to make it "Warlpiri-sounding" is to appreciate how to hear foreign words with "Warlpiri ears", and in turn to appreciate the knowledge that the Warlpiri child brings to learning a second language. Hence many examples in this paper are drawn from the loan vocabulary of Warlpiri -- the words Warlpiri has borrowed from English.

Pronunciation mistakes made by a Warlpiri learning English are accommodations of the English word to the Warlpiri sound system. To understand what is behind these "mistakes" one must understand the contrasts between the two sound systems. Three levels of contrast are involved:

1. single sounds: consonants and vowels
2. combinations of sounds: syllable structure
3. word stress

At each level, English words can be graded according to the difficulties they present for a Warlpiri learner of English. The following sections consider these levels in turn.

1. SOUNDS

Since it is **oral** English that the child is learning first, we need to contrast the **sound** systems of Warlpiri and English, **not** the spelling systems. Readers can readily understand any of the

examples given here, provided they focus on the **sounds** not the choice of spelling. As an aid in this direction, it helps to say the examples aloud to oneself. For example, 'phone' is pronounced [fon] with no [p] or [h] sound, and 'laugh' is pronounced [laf] with no [g] sound. English can be written in a consistent phonetic alphabet, such as the one given in the chart in the Appendix.[2]

Warlpiri examples are given in the standard Warlpiri orthography (spelling system), and thus can be looked up in the Warlpiri dictionary and noticed in other Warlpiri language materials. Similarly, English examples are given in standard English orthography.

The Warlpiri language has the sounds represented by the symbols in the following table.[3] (It is repeated in the Appendix along side of the English system for comparison.)

CONSONANTS:

```
            p        t        rt         j         k
            m        n        rn         ny        ng
                     l        rl         ly
                     rr       rd
            w                 r          y
(word-initially,  rt,rn,rl  are written  t, n, l )
```

VOWELS:

```
            i,  u,  a
            ii, uu, aa
```

A word from any other language will be perceived by a monolingual Warlpiri according to the above sound system. He makes sense of the foreign word in terms of his own language's sound system. When he says the foreign word, he does so according to the Warlpiri sound system -- he speaks with a "Warlpiri accent". Consider what makes a Warlpiri accent different from a French accent or a Japanese accent, for instance.

Examples of how English words are perceived by a Warlpiri speaker, and how they are spoken with a strong Warlpiri accent, are readily provided by the terms Warlpiri has borrowed from English, such as in the following list.[4] If you say the English word to yourself while looking at the Warlpiri word, you will get an idea of how English sounds are perceived by the ear attuned to Warlpiri, and of what is meant by a "Warlpiri accent".

```
WARLPIRI       ENGLISH SOURCE
kalinta        calendar
tala           dollar
mijirnirri     missionary
piipi          baby
kuwana         goanna
jawa           shower
jangari        shanghai
Jantiyi        Sunday
Mantiyi        Monday
Jarritiyi      Saturday
Janyuwarri )   January
Janyuwari  )
Pipuwarri )    February
Pipuwari  )
Julayi         July
Nupampa  )     November
Napimpa  )
Tijampa )      December
```

Tijima)

Some of the sound correspondences between English and Warlpiri are evident from the above list.

1.1. Sounds that cause no problem.

The following sounds, at least when they occur between vowels, provide no problem for a Warlpiri speaker. The first column shows the equivalent symbol in the Warlpiri spelling system.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH
m	m
n, rn	n
ny	[n] some n before u, i, e.g. in **onion**
ng	[n] some ng; n before k; e.g. in **lung**
l, rl	l
w	w
y	y
r	r

In other words, Warlpiri has an almost identical sound corresponding to all the English nasals, laterals and glides. These 8 are the extent of the consonants in common between the 18 of Warlpiri and the 23 of English. Even these do not correspond in all phonetic details, but, as Capp 1977:9 says of the varieties of English [l] (compare the two occurrences in **little**), they are the new learner's least worry." They are a minor contribution to an "accent".

1.2. Voiced/voiceless distinction is a problem.

Warlpiri has a ready equivalent for English stop (plosive) consonants, and affricates, but makes no distinction between the voiced and voiceless ones. Thus the Warlpiri speaker has to learn this distinction, which takes considerable practice.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH	
	voiced	voiceless
p	b	p
t, rt	d	t
k	g	[k] k, c
j	[dz] j,g	[t] ch

See Tate 1976:46-54.

1.3. Fricatives are a problem.

English has a number of distinctive sounds called **fricatives**, in which there is a continuous flow of air through a narrow opening making a hissing or buzzing sound. Consider the difference between English **pan** and **fan**, or between **ban** and **van**. **Pan** and **ban** each begin with a **stop** consonant, while **fan** and **van** each begin with a fricative.

Warlpiri has no distinctive fricative sounds. In an English word with a fricative, the Warlpiri "accent" replaces the fricative with a stop consonant: the Warlpiri sound most closely corresponding to each of the English fricatives is a stop in roughly the same place of articulation. Just as for stops (2.), the English distinction between voiced and voiceless is not made in Warlpiri. The sounds of English listed in the right-hand columns below do not occur in Warlpiri, and they are difficult for a Warlpiri speaker to learn to say. The nearest Warlpiri equivalent is the sound whose symbol occurs in the left-hand column:

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH	
	voiced	voiceless
p	v	[f] f, ph
(	z	[s] s, c
j (	[dz] j,g	ch
(	a**z**ure	**sh**eep
(	mo**th**er	**th**irty

See Tate 1976:54-67.

Note especially the large number of distinct English sounds which Warlpiri "collapses" into j (i.e. the sound in Jampijinpa). These distinctions are all the more hard for a Warlpiri child to learn because of their number, leaving aside any difficulty with one particular sound.

There is another fricative sound in English, **h**. Warlpiri has no equivalent sound, and speakers either leave it out completely, or approximate it with y or w . Capp, working with Pitjantjatjara speakers, found that "effective grounding in the production and correct usage of this sound is a basis for teaching the aspiration of word-initial stop sounds... Learners sometimes try to produce the sound breathing in." (1977:10)

1.4. English vowels.

The many vowel sounds of English (many more than just the five vowel letters) correspond to the 3 Warlpiri vowels (and to some vowel-glide-vowel combinations). The correspondences are not straightforward, and depend partly on the neighbouring consonants and on stress, which is why certain English vowel sounds appear more than once in the following rough guide:

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH EXAMPLE WORD
i	bit, bet, beat
u	boot, put, pot
a	bat, Bart, but, bare
ii	beat
uu	boot, bought
aa	Bert
ayi	bait, bite, Bert
awu	bout
uwa	bought, bore
iyi	beat
iya	beer, bare
uwu	boat, boot
uwi)	
uya)	boy (?)
uyu)	

The English interdeterminate vowel (schwa, []) is taken by a Warlpiri to be variously i, u or a depending on the neighbouring sounds.

The Warlpiri child will have trouble distinguishing between English words which differ solely by vowels which correspond to the one Warlpiri vowel. For example, "bait" and "bite" would probably be pronounced the same, like a possible Warlpiri word `payiti`. Similarly, "buy" and "pay" are collapsed.

Tate 1976:14 notes tendencies in English vowel mispronunciations. However, as Capp found for Pitjantjatjarra, "the vowel glides (diphthongs) of English are no real articulatory problem. The difficulties lie with the consonants." (1977:2)[5]

2. SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

A **syllable** is generally a short (small) unit of sound in a language. Usually it can be uttered (said) by itself, and consists of a vowel (V) and some consonants (C). It is useful to classify syllables by their consonant-vowel (C-V) pattern. Thus the simplest type of syllable is CV, i.e. a single consonant followed by a single vowel. For example, the word "dollar" [dol] has two simple CV syllables: [do], [l]. The Warlpiri equivalent, "tala", also has two simple syllables with CV pattern: [ta], [la]. Warlpiri has only two types of syllable: CV and CVC. As well as these two types, English has in addition syllables with several consonants: CCV, CCVC, CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC, CCCVCCC, etc. Furthermore, English has syllables beginning with a vowel (i.e. without an initial consonant): V, VC, VCC, VCCC, while Warlpiri has none of this type.

A Warlpiri speaker uses Warlpiri syllable patterns when saying a foreign word. If the syllable pattern of the foreign word involves just the Warlpiri syllable types, CV and CVC, then the word is relatively easy for the Warlpiri speaker to pronounce, as in the examples already given in section 1. They are shown again here with the syllable pattern given in the middle column.

WARLPIRI	SYLLABLES	ENGLISH
kalinta	CV-CVC-CV	calendar
tala	CV-CV	dollar
mijirnirri	CV-CV-CV-CV	missionary
piipi	CV-CV	baby
kuwana	CV-CV-CV	goanna
jawa	CV-CV	shower
jangari	CV-CV(-CV)	shanghai
panji	CVC-CV	fancy
Jantiyi	CVC-CV(-CV)	Sunday
Mantiyi	CVC-CV(-CV)	Monday
Jarritiyi	CV-CV-CV(-CV)	Saturday
Janyuwari	CV-CV-CV-CV	January
Pipuwari	CV-CV-CV-CV	February
Julayi	CV-CV(-CV)	July
Napimpa	CV-CVC-CV	November
Tijimpa	CV-CVC-CV	December

There are further restrictions on Warlpiri syllables:[6]

1. the last syllable of a word must be CV -- it cannot be CVC;
2. the final C in a CVC syllable must be m, n, rn, ny, ng (nasals), l, rl, ly (laterals), or rr . (All these consonants are of the type called **sonorants** -- these are pronounced with a resonance inside the mouth, and can usually be held indefinitely.) A final C in a CVC syllable **cannot** be a p, t, rt, j, k (stops), w, y, r (glides), or rd.

2.1 Problem with consonants at the end of a word.

In accordance with the first restrictions just mentioned, an English word ending in a consonant has a vowel added at the end by a Warlpiri speaker. (Usually the vowel is i, unless the preceding vowel is u in which case the added vowel is also u.)

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE
kantini	canteen
majini	machine
kanjurlu	council
karrijini	kerosene
nanikutu	nanny goat
kamulu	camel
puluku	bullock

rapiji	rubbish
tawunu	town
tawurlu	towel
tayipurlu	table
piniji(-mani)	finish
jiminti	cement
jipini	seven
rapuranti	wrap-around

Note that the added final vowel also can break up an English word-final pair of consonants, as in "ji-min-ti" **cement**.

2.2 Certain clusters of consonants broken with extra vowel

In accordance with the second restriction mentioned above (disallowing certain consonant clusters), a Warlpiri speaker sometimes inserts (adds in) a vowel between two consonants of an English word, so that the Warlpiri pronunciation has extra syllables. In the following examples, the additional inserted vowel is underlined:

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE	ENGLISH SYLLABLES
p**i**layi	play	CCV
j**i**riyi	three	CCV
pak**u**ju	box	CVCC
j**u**muku	smoke	CCVC
j**i**nayiki	snake	CCVC
t**u**raki	truck	CCVC
p**i**langkiti	blanket	CCVC-CVC
p**u**lakani	flagon	CCV-CVC
P**u**ratiyi	Friday	CCV-CV
Jip**i**timpa	September	CVC-CVC-CV

The particular initial pair of consonants [my], found in some English words beginning "mu-", can be pronounced by a close Warlpiri equivalent, ny. Alternatively, a vowel may be inserted between the two consonants.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE
nyujiki	music
nyujiyimi	museum
m**i**yurlu	mule

2.3 Certain consonant clusters only partly pronounced.

Another strategy available to the Warlpiri speaker is to ignore one or more of a sequence of English consonants. This happens especially to prevent a pair of stop consonants occurring in the Warlpiri pronunciation, such as **school** [skul] being pronounced as kuurlu (in preference to *jukurlu, say). In the following examples, each consonant in the English word which is ignored in the Warlpiri word is underlined. Some examples also show an inserted vowel in the Warlpiri -- as above in 2.2, such a vowel is also underlined.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE	ENGLISH SYLLABLES
pija	pi**c**ture	CVC-CV
jak**u**manu	s**t**ockman	CCVC-CVC
Juujiyi	Tues**d**ay	CVC-CV
Win**i**jiyi	Wednes**d**ay	CVCC-CV
Jayijiyi	Thurs**d**ay	CVC-CV
pirdi-p**u**lawa	p**r**etty flower	CCV-CV-CCV-CV
kuurlu	**s**chool	CCVC
puunu	**s**poon	CCVC
makiti	mu**s**ket	CVC-CVC
yap**u**kaji	half-cas**t**e	CVC-CVCC

yajilitiki	athletic**s**	VC-CV-CVCC
Yalijipiringi	Alice **S**prings	V-CVC-CCCVCC

Sometimes the Warlpiri speaker changes the pronunciation of an English consonant into the corresponding Warlpiri nasal or lateral, thereby enabling the consonant to occur in syllable-final position (i.e. the last C in a CVC syllable):

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE	ENGLISH SYLLABLES
walypali	white fella	CVC-CV-CV

2.4 Problem with vowels at the beginning of a word.

Since Warlpiri has just CV and CVC syllables, every Warlpiri word begins with a single consonant before the first vowel.

An English word beginning with a vowel when pronounced by a Warlpiri speaker has a consonant added to the beginning of the word. The consonant is one of the glides, usually y or w, depending on the following vowel. Furthermore, an English word beginning with h is treated the same as English words beginning with a vowel. It is difficult for a Warlpiri speaker to say these words without adding a consonant before the first vowel.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE
Wukuju	August
Wukutupa)	October
Wukutuwupa)	
wijipirtirli	hospital
wupurlu	oval
Yingkirliji	English
yayirti	eight
yiniwayi	anyway
Yapirili)	April
Yapurulu)	
yapukaji	half-caste
yajilitiki	athletics
Yalijipiringi	Alice Springs
yaripilayini	aeroplane
yalikapita	helicopter
yurapiti	rabbit
yurutu	road

Young children say some Warlpiri words with an initial vowel (e.g. "ampiya" for yampiya 'leave it'). It may be possible to introduce English vowel-initial words through mimicry of this type of "baby talk".

Further, some Warlpiri speakers may be familiar with Pitjantjatjarra, and be aware of words in that language which begin with a vowel. (Pitjantjatjarra has V and VC syllables as well as the CV and CVC types in Warlpiri.)

2.5 Problem with words of a single syllable.

Another restriction on a well-formed Warlpiri word is that it has a minimum of two syllables. This basic restriction has many consequences for the pronunciation of English by a Warlpiri speaker, particularly since most simple and common English words consist of just one syllable, which is often a syllable type that is not found in Warlpiri, or cannot come at the end of a Warlpiri word. Many common English words have a syllable pattern type such as CVC or CCVC, i.e. one other than the two simple Warlpiri types (CV and CVC).

A Warlpiri speaker pronounces an English monosyllable (word consisting of a single syllable) as a word of two syllables, or sometimes more.

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE
	VOWEL-FINAL
Mayi	May
waya	wire
nuwu	no
jayi	chair
tuwa	door
puwa	four
tuwu	two
tiyi	tea
payi(-mani)	buy
	SONORANT-FINAL
wani	one
nayini	nine
tini	ten
Jurnu	June
rumu	room

Some final consonants are easier to pronounce than others, as Warlpiri does have CVC syllables ending in a nasal (m, n, rn, ny, ng), lateral (l, rl, ly), or rr. Words ending in t, d, p, b, k, g, s, z, sh, ch, f, v, th are much harder for a Warlpiri to master. Examples of difficult English words include those in the right-hand column below:

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE
jupa	soap
jupu	soup
jipi	sheep
Maaji	March
japu	shop
puku	book
paaki	park
pipa	paper
jaaji	church, judge
tapi	tap
kiyiti	gate
payipi	five
pinji	fence
layiti	light
waji(-mani)	wash
jatimapi(-mani)	shut up

2.6 Summary: initial consonant clusters.

A Warlpiri speaker has trouble accurately pronouncing any English word beginning with more than one consonant before the first vowel, i.e. beginning with a **consonant cluster**. Different initial consonant clusters present different degrees of difficulty:

(i) initial clusters of an English consonant followed by l, r; i.e.

p, b, f, k, g, s	followed by	l
p, b, f, th, t, d, sh, k, g	followed by	r

Examples: please, bleed, fling, clear, glass, sleep, pray, bring, Friday, throw, tread, dress, shrug, crane, green.

With some drilling, the Warlpiri pupil should manage these CC clusters without too much trouble.

(ii) initial clusters beginning with English s, and followed by a single consonant:

```
s    followed by    p, t, k, w, m
```

Examples: `spoon, still, skin, swim, smoke` The sound `s` is among the most difficult English sounds for a Warlpiri speaker to learn, even when not combined with another consonant. Having to pronounce another consonant immediately after an `s` is doubly difficult for a Warlpiri speaker. There are two common treatments of these clusters: either the s is dropped (as spoon and school become puunu and kuurlu), or a high vowel (i or u) is inserted to separate the two consonants (as smoke becomes jumuku).

(iii) initial clusters beginning with English `s`, and followed by two consonants:

```
s    followed by    pl, pr, py, tr, ty, kr, kw, ky
i.e.,
                            l
                    p
                            r
          s         t
                            y
                    k
                            w
```

Examples: `splash, sprint, spew, street, stew, scream, squall, skew`

The comments in (ii) above about clusters beginning with `s` apply from (ii) above. These clusters of three consonants are even harder. Ability to pronounce them correctly assumes the ability to correctly pronounce the simpler clusters described in (ii).

2.7 Summary: Problems with consonants at the end of a word.

The following problems are associated with final consonants and consonant clusters:

(i) English words ending in a consonant will tend to have a vowel added.

Examples: `canteen, machine, council, goat, camel, bullock, rubbish, town, towel, finish, cement, seven`.

(ii) English words ending in more than one consonant will tend to have the consonant cluster (group) simplified: a vowel might be added at the end of the word, and put between the consonants, or one or more of the consonants may be dropped (not pronounced).

Examples: `table, athletics, springs`

The dropping of the last consonant from a group is particularly troublesome in English, because of two very common inflectional suffixes (endings) which can get ignored this way. These two endings are the 3rd-person singular verb ending and noun plural "s", and the past tense "ed". Thus "milk" and "milks", or "kill" and "killed", get pronounced the same way. This also applies to the "'d" of shortened "had", as in "I'd better go home."

To begin with, it would probably be better to use verbs which have a different vowel in the past tense, such as "ran -- run", "go -- went", "sing -- sang", which the Warlpiri child can easily catch. Similarly, it would be an idea to use irregular plurals, such as "child -- children", "man -- men", and plurals of words ending in a vowel, such as "kangaroo -- kangaroos". Later, introduce the final clusters in "dog -- dogs", "talk -- talked".

2.8 Further comments on consonant clusters.

The following commentary is taken from Capp 1977:

> The existing books on English pronunciation tend to concern themselves with the total spectrum of English speech as if it was all hard... Although "Sound and Sense" [Tate 1976] does consider many of the differences between Australian languages and English, 22 pages are devoted to vowel exercises, 55 pages to consonants and consonant production... Incidental examples of the clusters do occur; but not in such a way as to really alert teachers to their importance.
>
> The same criticism is applicable to [Pearson 1972]. Both books are good as far as they go. They could have expended less effort on known sounds and the vowels and concentrated more on the problems of clusters of consonants.

Capp 1977:2 recommends "Situational English for Newcomers to Australia. Part 1 Teacher's Book (London: Longman, 1970) as "the best source book available", on teaching consonant clusters. Anon. n.d.:5 says this is available from Language Teaching Centre, P.O. Box 39, Woden ACT 2606.

Exercise:

The following examples are English words borrowed into Warlpiri. Each involve a number of changes to the English word. For each one, figure out the extent to which the principles discussed above are involved. Are any additional principles needed?

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH SOURCE	ENGLISH SYLLABLES
pajingkirli	bicycle	CV-CV-CVC
warrki(-jarrimi)	work	CVC
wurlkumanu	old woman	VCC-CV-CVC
parnpiya	family	CVC-CV
pirnpaji	breakfast	CCVC-CVCC

3. WORD STRESS

In Warlpiri the first syllable of every word is always stressed, i.e. is pronounced louder than the following syllables of the word. Warlpiri has **initial stress**.

There is a useful way of marking which syllable of a word is stressed, namely writing an apostrophe (') immediately before the syllable. So, for example, there are English words with initial stress, such as **'children**, **'water**, **e'ssential**, **'carrying**, but this is not so for other English words: **re'cording**, **in'vestigate**, **insu'rrection**.

It is possible for more than one syllable in a word to be stressed. In a word with more than one stressed syllable, it is still true that one of the stressed syllables is more prominent than the others. The syllable with the most stress is said to have **primary** stress, and it is this that the apostrophe ' indicates -- the apostrophe immediately precedes the syllable that has the primary stress. The other stressed syllables have **secondary** stress, which may be marked with a double apostrophe " before each secondary stressed syllable. Thus, in English we have words like **'indus"try**, **"consti'tution**, **"capita"li'sation**.

In English it is possible to have a word of two syllables, both stressed, such as **"can'teen**, **'foot"ball**.

This is not possible in Warlpiri. Also, some English words have stress on the last syllable, such as in'vite, re'cord, a'broad, re'ceive, a'llow, **"Tenne'ssee**, but this is not a possibility in Warlpiri. Warlpiri words are never stressed on the final syllable. Words with final stress are consequently difficult for a Warlpiri to say with accurate English stress, and hence need lots of drilling.

In Warlpiri, the root of every word has a stress on its first syllable, as does every suffix (ending) of two or more syllables: 'kirrirdi, 'Japal"jarri, 'Ngaliyi"kirlangu, 'pirli"manu, 'Yurntumu"wardingki. The stress pattern of a Warlpiri word reflects its composition, its **morphological structure**. And in a Warlpiri sentence, the beginning of each word is signalled by a primary stress -- the stress has a **demarcative** function.

In English, stress functions differently from in Warlpiri. For instance, there are some English words which are a noun or a verb depending on the stress pattern, such as **record**, **convict**, **permit**, **protest**, **conduct**, **torment**, **insert**. Such pairs are probably difficult for the Warlpiri child to distinguish.

Those English words which have stress patterns similar to Warlpiri words are not so difficult for Warlpiri speakers to learn to say correctly. However, English words with an unstressed initial syllable are difficult. A Warlpiri speaker learning English tends to pick out the first stressed syllable as the beginning of the word. For example, **ba'nana** will be said as **'nana**. The ear more attuned to English will change the stress pattern of the English word so as to include the initial syllable, and pronounce the word as **'pinana**. Similar Warlpiri loans from English are:

It is changes such as these which are behind the un-English accent of many Warlpiri speakers. Right from the beginning, attention should be given to correct placement of stress.

For example, the following words have non-initial stress (indicated by apostrophe before the stressed syllable) in English, but when borrowed into Warlpiri have initial stress:

WARLPIRI	ENGLISH
'lipini	e'leven
'tiriyali	ma'terial
'Julayi	Ju'ly
'Jipi"timpa	Sep'tember
'Napimpa	No'vember
'Tijimpa	De'cember

It is probably easier for the Warlpiri child to begin with words with initial stress (most words of Germanic origin in English), e.g. water, teacher, mirror etc., and then move on to words with non-initial stress, such as banana, tomato, potato.

4. ABORIGINAL ENGLISH AND STANDARD ENGLISH

Aboriginal children learning English acquire at least some of the features of "Aboriginal English" creole. The situation children find themselves involves two poles of adult English models: (1) "Creole" (the Aboriginal English of older Warlpiris, say) and (2) "Standard" (the English of native speakers, and of some younger Aboriginal adults). Their growing English competence is really along a continuum between the two poles.

There is much in common with similar situations elsewhere in the world. For example, a study in the West Indies

> confirmed a basic principle that directed the teaching methodology... was that, as far as the learner was concerned, the continuum between Creole and Standard consisted of four hierarchical strata of linguistic structures as follows:
>
> A those common to both Standard and non-Standard speech and therefore within the production repertoire of the learner;
>
> B those not usually produced in the informal, non-Standard speech of the learner, but known to him and produced under stress in prestige social situations;
>
> C those which the learner would recognise and comprehend if used by other speakers (especially in a meaningful context), but which the learner would be unable to produce;
>
> D those totally unknown to the learner.

(Craig 1979:180)

With respect to pronunciation of sounds, the different degrees of strength of a "Warlpiri accent" would conform to the above four levels. For instance, the pronunciation an "h" at the beginning of an English is commonly at level "B" above: when speaking informally, the young Warlpiri may say **happy** without the initial h , yet pronounce it when conscious of showing his command of English.

5. LITERACY IN ENGLISH: A NOTE

This paper has been concerned with the tasks of English speaking and listening as approached by someone who knows Warlpiri. Here I make one preliminary observation about English reading and writing from the viewpoint of someone who is literate in Warlpiri.

Warlpiri spelling uses the following letters:

```
a i j k l m n p r t u w y
```

and, as second letter of a digraph only,

```
d  (in rd),  g  (in ng)
```

Presumably, then, introductory English material, at least the words that are not sight words, would best be confined as much as possible to words using just the Warlpiri letters. Then the new letters would be introduced. The following **letters** are new to a literate Warlpiri beginning English **writing**:

```
b c e f h o q s v x z
```

Thus the child has to learn to form and to recognise 11 new letters, in both upper and lower case. Also, the letters a, d, g, i, u do not occur at the beginning of a Warlpiri word, so Warlpiri children beginning English reading would also have to learn the capital letters A, D, G, I, U as they would not be used to seeing them as initial capitals.

Those new symbols which correspond to a non-Warlpiri sound (such as f, v, h, s, z) would presumably be better introduced before those known symbols which have a different value in English from Warlpiri (such as u, g other than in ng, vocalic y). These observations about **letters** need to be integrated with the grading of **sounds** set out in sections 1 and 2.

APPENDIX: WARLPIRI AND ENGLISH SOUNDS

WARLPIRI SOUNDS

from the beginning of Hale's 1974 Warlpiri vocabulary, including the technical names for the various types of sounds.

CONSONANTS:

	bilabial	apico-alveolar	apico-domal	lamino-alveolar	velar
stops	p	t	rt	j	k
nasals	m	n	rn	ny	ng
laterals		l	rl	ly	
flaps		rr	rd		
glides	w		r	y	

Word-initially, rt,rn,rl are written t, n, l.

VOWELS:

	front	back
high	i	u
low		a

Long vowels are written as geminates: ii, uu, aa

ENGLISH SOUNDS

CONSONANTS:

	labial	apico-alveolar	dental	palatal	velar
stops	p	t			k
	b	d			g
fricatives	f	s	th	sh	
	v	z	dh	zh	
affricates				ch	
				dz	
nasals	m	n		(ny)	ng
lateral		l		(ly)	
glides	w			y	r

VOWELS: (as in the following words)

	front	central	back
high	beat		boot
	bit		put
mid	bait	about	boat
	bet	Bert	pot
		but	
low	bat	Bart	bought
diphthongs	bite	boy	bout

GLOSSARY

These are some of the more technical terms used in this paper. Please add to this list any others you need to have explained.

C	consonant
V	vowel
affricate	a mixture of a fricative and a stop
alveolar	involving the ridge behind the upper teeth
apico-	pronunciation using the tongue tip

bilabial	pronunciation using both lips
continuum	continuous variation, not just a small number of types
domal	pronunciation involving the hard palate behind the tooth-ridge
fricative	hissing or buzzing type of sound
glide	type of sound intermediate between consonant type and vowel type, sometimes called semi-vowel
lamino-	pronounciation using the blade of the tongue (the part behind the tip)
lateral	pronunciation with coming out the sides of the mouth
monolingual	knowing only one language
nasal	pronunciation with air coming out the nose
sonorant	pronounced with a resonance inside the mouth, and can usually be held indefinitely
stop	type of consonant sound involving release of pent up air (sometimes called plosive)
syllable	see beginning of section 2
velar	pronunciation involves the velum (soft palate)

NOTES

1. This paper was requested by Pam Harris (Teacher/Linguist, Yuendumu) and is intended for teachers in the Warlpiri bilingual programme. I have incorporated most of a 3p. typescript "English-Warlpiri comparison" prepared in 1977 by Mary Laughren (Linguist, Yuendumu). Valuable assistance was also given by Timothy Shopen. The notes of Anon. n.d. and the similar study by Capp 1977 provided some further suggestions. On the difficulties of phonics instruction in English, see Smith 1973.

2. Ideally, this paper would use a uniform phonetic alphabet for writing both Warlpiri and English example words, and indeed some examples are given in the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). IPA examples are usually given in square brackets. However, to make it easier for non-linguists to read, I have used a "common sense" kind of phonetic alphabet such as used by some English dictionaries.

3. For further details of the pronunciation of Warlpiri, refer to the IAD Warlpiri Language Course, and Hale 1977.

4. The loanwords cited in this paper have been taken from Hale 1974, 1977, from the IAD Warlpiri Language Course materials, from various issues of **Junga Yimi**, and from the 1981 and 1982 Yuendumu calendars.

5. Capp 1977:6 also suggests a technique for helping with the English vowel sounds which are very similar. His suggestion amounts to exploiting the different ways that one Warlpiri vowel gets pronounced according to the consonants next to it, particularly the consonant that follows the vowel. Thus the first vowel in the two Warlpiri words **pili** 'digging scoop' and **pingi** 'ant' are really the same vowel, **i**, but it is pronounced a little bit different in **pili** (a bit higher) than in **pingi**. The phonetic (sound) difference is a bit like the difference between the two different English vowels in **bit** and **bet**. Capp does not describe the technique in any detail, and it may well be more appropriate to Warlpiri linguistic training rather than oral English for children.

6. For a more detailed statement of Warlpiri phonotactics (what sounds may be adjacent) and stress, see Hale 1977 and Nash 1980 (Chapter 3).

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Back to papers page.
Back to Warlpiri page.

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