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## Men's and women's dialects

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the Yanyuwa language, there are separate dialects for the men and for the women, with differences of a kind normally associated with language dialects in separate locations. Reference has been made to this feature of Yanyuwa in earlier papers which describe pronominal sets, nouns and verbs in the language (see Kirton 1970:835-37, 840; 1971:9-10, 52-54; 1978:13-14).

Within the dialect system, members of each sex speak their own dialect. They have a passive knowledge of the other dialect but do not normally use it. However, if a man directly quotes a woman he uses her dialect within that direct quotation, and if a woman directly quotes a man she similarly uses his dialect. (With the coming of a written form of Yanyuwa, it is appropriate to read aloud what is written in the writer's dialect. This is a prolonged form of direct quotation.)

Traditionally, small children were primarily with their mothers or other female relatives as they went hunting and in the domestic situation. A simpler form of language was used with the small children: certain consonant changes were made and some prefixes were omitted, but they grew up hearing the women's dialect, and to a lesser extent, the men's. At the time of initiation, the boys were removed to live in an exclusively male group and they were then expected to move into use of the men's dialect at the time of attaining manhood.

The purpose of this paper is (i) to take an introductory look at some research findings on general features of differences in the speech of men and of women in English and in certain other languages, and (ii) to describe the differences in the men's and women's dialects of Yanyuwa in the language as a whole.

## 2. RESEARCH FINDINGS ON MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SPEECH IN OTHER LANGUAGES

It is not unusual to find certain differences in the use of any language by men and by women speakers. It is the nature and extent of these differences which vary from language to language. As interest in the sociolinguistic aspects of

language has grown, studies of sex-related speech differences have been made in an increasing number of languages.

Researchers describe differences in male and female use of English by children (Meredith 1975), and by adults in relation to colour terms (Steckler and Cooper 1980), forms of address towards another person (Kramer 1975), and expletives (Oliver and Rubin 1975, Bailey and Timm 1976, Staley 1978).

Andrea Meredith researches the extent to which there are recognisable differences in the language of English-speaking boys and girls in the 3-5 years age range. Her findings demonstrate that differences are apparent even then. (The results showed 79% accurate recognition of the sex of children whose voices had been recorded while they were conversing on one topic.) Unfortunately Meredith does not document for us what kind of differences in language made the sex distinction recognisable.

The differences the other researchers describe are of two kinds, differing degrees of interest and normative gender roles. Differences described in the range of colour terms used by men and women, with women noting finer discriminations, almost certainly relate to relative interest in the topic. It is normal for people to have a wider vocabulary in the areas of their special interest. No social norms have been violated if a man uses colour terms beyond the normal range for men.

However, Kramer's research into the differences in use of terms of address and of expletives (touched on in relation to one book) by speakers of English, indicates that these are of a different kind. They relate to the traditionally recognised roles of men and women in society.

Kramer researches sex-related differences which are apparent when one person addresses another. She takes her examples from short stories and novels (an equal number of male and female writers were selected), cartoons in the *New Yorker*, and research by students.

She concludes that the sex of the speaker and of the addressee are both relevant to the use or non-use of terms of address, that women and men have different repertoires of address forms from which to choose, and that women are more restricted in their choices.

Kramer observes that 'addressing someone... is often a sign of aggression — which would not fit a characterization of gentleness. ...Twin Bed Bridge by Florence M. Hecht illustrates how a woman deviating from the restrictions placed on her within the address system indicates she is breaking away from social norms in general.' Kramer also refers to 'Laurel, a rebel in Jack Matthews' *Picture of the Journey Back*... Laurel curses continually throughout the novel. ...the curses and the aggressive use of forms of address are conscious departures from the traditional speech habits of women.' And so the author

utilises expletives and terms of address outside those normally acceptable for a woman, to establish Laurel in her rebel role.

Kramer documents evidence of differences in the forms of address used by men and by women in standard Japanese, Okinawan, Korean, Mayo Speaking Crumrine and several languages in Southeast Asia. She also quotes Capell's reference to 'sex-related differences in pronoun usage in a number of languages, including those spoken by the Murinbada in North Australia and the Yuchi of Oklahoma' (1966:86, 102).

Oliver and Rubin's research on women's use of expletives follows on from Lakoff's work (1973, to which the author lacks access). They conclude that there is a difference in the use of expletives by women and men, but they suspect that the differences have been lessening among younger women. They comment that women who are 'working on being liberated' use expletives most frequently. Bailey and Timm's work follows on from Oliver and Rubins, and their research involves a wider age range of speakers. Their findings were that women in the age groups 19-23 and 43-56 used expletives less than men, but that women in the 28-32 age group were 'vigorously employing strong expletives'. Staley concludes that 'while men and women may be more equal than ever in terms of this one aspect of sexual politics in language, cultural expectations lag behind. If it is true that today's woman has more choice of terms of what to say, waiting ears may still not be ready to hear her.'

Linguists have described differences in the vocabulary of men and women in some languages in the Americas. Their descriptions relate to more general vocabulary items than those considered by the researchers in English, and some also record differences in the morphology of men's and women's speech.

Douglas Taylor (1954) writes of the Island Carib language of Dominica in the British West Indies (see Grimes 1984:36). This modified Arawakan resulted from the impact of the speech of Carib invaders on the Arawak language of the indigenes, from a band of male conquerors and their female captives. It was first described by Father Raymond Breton on the seventeenth century. Taylor writes that 'already by the middle of the seventeenth century... its phonemic and grammatical structure was essentially Arawakan.'

Breton described differences in the vocabulary of the men and the women, and also five morphemes which had variant forms. The morphemes exclusive to the men were '-pa, a negative suffix in contrast with the women's negative prefix, m-..., chi-, a causative prefix contrasting with the women's causative suffix -ketâ; and three pronominal prefixes', for 1st and 2nd person singular and 1st person plural.

Allan Taylor 1982 describes male and female speech in a dying language of the United States, the Gros Ventre or Atsina language of Montana. From data recorded since 1786, Taylor estimates that the distinctive 'male' phonetics

developed only during the last half of the 19th century. The changes in Gros Ventre are phonologically predictable. "As described by Flannery (1946:133-34), they are as follows: 'the affricates *tc*, *dj* (*ty*) pronounced by men become velar stops when pronounced by women (*k* before *e* and *i* and in final position and *ky* before *a*, *æ*, *ʌ*).' "

Kroskirty 1983 provides some notes on the Hopi, Tesa, Tiwa and Keresan languages in the southwest of the United States, and he refers to certain sex-exclusive items of vocabulary from these languages. He comments that although the actual number of these vocabulary items is small, their numerical insignificance should not be confused with any lack of cultural significance or salience within their respective speech communities.' Kroskirty also makes brief reference to studies by Sapir on Nootka (Canada) and by Haas on Koasati (Alabama). His comments suggest that they discovered patterned phonological differences in the speech of men and women in those two languages (perhaps similar to what Taylor describes for Gros Ventre). Kimball 1987 and Saville-Troike 1987 are further recent discussions of Koasati speech gender patterns.

In 1968 Dr Sarah Gudschinsky (then Literacy Coordinator for SIL International) visited Darwin and discussed with the writer the issue of men's and women's dialects in relation to literacy. Gudschinsky said that she was aware of American Indian languages which had men's and women's dialects, but in her consultation with field workers on the American continent, she had never found the differences sufficiently extensive to necessitate preparing separate sets of reading materials.

Subsequently the writer prepared materials in the Yanyuwa men's dialect, the simpler of the two, and tested them with Yanyuwa women. The length and complexity of Yanyuwa words made it a difficult language for the women to learn to read anyway, but the added difficulty of having lessons in a dialect they did not normally speak was too much for them to manage. It was found necessary to prepare separate sets of Yanyuwa literacy teaching materials for the men and for the women. (This need was later confirmed during several years of Yanyuwa literacy work by Yasuko Nagai.) It seems, therefore, that the degree of difference between men's and women's speech in Yanyuwa is greater than is commonly found in other languages which have this feature.

### 3. MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DIALECTS IN YANYUWA

The differences in the men's and women's dialects of Yanyuwa are extensive in that they relate to nouns and their modifiers, free pronouns, verbs, and certain relators and introducers. All of these differences relate back to two noun classes, but reappear throughout the grammar because of the central use of noun classes and their use in pronominal cross-reference.

The women's dialect maintains a clear distinction between the male and masculine classes in almost every reference to either of them. The men's dialect unites the two into a male-masculine class, and, for the most part, it uses the male forms of the women's dialect to represent the combined class. There are sufficient exceptions to this general pattern, however, to make it necessary to consider each of the affected word classes separately.

#### 3.1 Dialect Variation in Noun Class-marker Prefixes

Yanyuwa has seven classes of common nouns: male, female, masculine, feminine, food, arboreal, abstract. For a female speaker, these seven classes are clearly distinguished. For a male speaker the distinction between male and masculine classes is lost, except for one rarely used male possessive prefix.

The dialectally contrastive features relate to the male class, which comprises male people and other male entities which are included in the kinship system or which have close associations with people; and to the masculine class, which comprises the male members of species for which the sexes are distinguished, and most other noun items in the language. (The masculine class is the elsewhere class. The other six classes have a more restricted membership and classification within them is more predictable.)

In Yanyuwa, the noun classes are distinguished by class-marker prefixes. However there is a complication, in that when a noun is marked for case, change in the class-marker prefix accompanies the addition of the case suffix. The suffixes distinguish four cases: nominative (marking intransitive subject and object), dative (marking 'of' or 'for'), ergative-allative (marking transitive subject and 'to' a person or location), and ablative (marking accompaniment, instrument or location). All class-marker prefixes distinguish at least nominative and non-nominative cases. For certain classes they additionally distinguish dative from the remaining two cases (see Kirton 1971:37-40).

In the speech of Yanyuwa women, the class-marker for male nominative is *nya-* and for non-nominative is *nyu-*; the class-marker for masculine nominative is *ϕ-* and for non-nominative is *ji-*. In the speech of Yanyuwa men, the two classes are combined. For the resultant class, the nominative prefix is *ϕ-* and the non-nominative prefix is *ki-*. This affixation is illustrated below in relation to male noun stem *rduwarra* 'initiated man' and the masculine noun stem *buyuka* 'fire':

Women's Dialect	Men's Dialect	
Male Class:		
<i>nya-rduwarra</i>	<i>rduwarra</i>	'initiated man'
<i>nya-rduwarra-wu</i>	<i>ki-rduwarra-wu</i>	'for the initiated man'
<i>nyu-rduwarra-lu</i>	<i>ki-rduwarra-lu</i>	'to the initiated man /initiated man (erg.)'
<i>nyu-rduwarra-la</i>	<i>ki-rduwarra-la</i>	'with the initiated man'
Masculine Class:		
<i>buyuka</i>	<i>buyuka</i>	'fire'
<i>ji-buyuka-wu</i>	<i>ki-buyuka-wu</i>	'for the fire'
<i>ji-buyuka-lu</i>	<i>ki-buyuka-lu</i>	'to the fire / fire (erg.)'
<i>ji-buyuka-la</i>	<i>ki-buyuka-la</i>	'at / by / on / with the fire'

The above examples illustrate the differences in noun class-marking for men and women speakers in relation to the male and masculine classes. These distinctions are maintained by all constituents of the same noun phrase. This includes noun modifiers which are marked for class and case in agreement with nouns, free pronouns, and all pronominal morphemes which refer to male or masculine class entities.

The following examples illustrate the way in which all the constituents of a noun phrase are marked for class and for case. (Demonstrative pronouns and the allative specifier *rrku* 'other' do not take suffixes and so the prefixes marking these stems make additional case distinctions beyond those of prefixes for nouns, adjectives or numerals.) In the following illustrations in this paper, F identifies examples distinctive to the female speakers' dialect, and M examples distinctive to the males' dialect. Unmarked examples are common to both dialects. (In the glosses, F indicates class 1 nouns (female), M class 2 nouns (male), and MSC class 4 nouns (masculine); NNOM is non-nominative.)

(1)	F	<i>nya-mangaji nya-buyi nya-ardu</i>	'that small boy'
		M-that:DEF M-small N-child	
	M	<i>nya-mangaji buyi ardu</i>	'that small boy'
		M-that:DEF M-small child	
(2)	F	<i>nyuwu-mangaji nyu-ardu-wu</i>	'for that boy'
		M:DAT-that:DEF M:NNOM-child-DAT	
	M	<i>nyuwu-mangaji ki-ardu-wu</i>	'for that boy'
		M:DAT-that:DEF M:NNOM-child-DAT	
(3)	F	<i>yi-mangaji ji-buyuka-wu</i>	'for that fire'
		MSC:DAT-that:DEF MSC:NNOM-fire-DAT	
	M	<i>nyuwu-mangaji ki-buyuka-wu</i>	'for that fire'
		MSC:DAT-that-DEF M:NNOM-fire-DAT	

(4)	F	<i>nyungku-mangaji nyu-rduwarra-lu</i>	'to that initiated man'
		M:ALL-that:DEF M:NNOM-initiatedman-ALL	
	M	<i>nyungku-mangaji ki-rduwarra-lu</i>	'to that initiated man'
		M:ALL-that:DEF M:NNOM-initiatedman-ALL	
(5)	F	<i>jingku-mangaji ji-buyuka-lu</i>	'to that fire'
		MSC:ALL-that:DEF MSC-fire-ALL	
	M	<i>nyungku-mangaji ki-buyuka-lu</i>	'to that fire'
		MSC:ALL-that:DEF MSC-fire-ALL	

The above examples illustrate that the male speaker does use a class-marker prefix on demonstrative stems which modify male or masculine nouns in nominative case, although the nouns themselves are unmarked. They also illustrate that the same prefix is used for both classes. (For a full description of the morphology of nouns and noun modifiers, see Kirton 1971:2-13, 20-54.)

### 3.2 Dialect Variation in free Pronoun forms

There are differences in the men's and women's dialects in relation to both personal and demonstrative pronouns as they refer to nouns of the male and masculine classes.

#### 3.2.1 Personal Pronouns

The women's dialect has the following pronoun forms for the male and masculine classes in nominative, dative, allative and ablative cases (ergative case is not marked on free pronouns):

	Male	Masculine
nominative	<i>yiwa</i>	<i>alhi</i>
dative	<i>yiku</i>	<i>ayu</i>
allative	<i>yilalu</i>	<i>alhinju</i>
ablative	<i>yilaa</i>	<i>alhinja</i>

In the men's dialect, the set of male class pronouns from the women's dialect functions for both male and masculine classes.

#### 3.2.2 Demonstrative Pronouns

The three basic demonstrative pronoun stems in Yanyuwa are: *ja* 'this', *mangaji* 'that (definite)', *mbangu* 'that (indefinite)'. These stems all obligatorily take a class-marker prefix. There are two additional proximal forms: *jina* 'this (indefinite nominative)', *jinangu* 'this (definite nominative)'. In the men's dialect, these forms are used for both male and masculine classes. In the women's dialect, they are used only for masculine class, and the male class proximal demonstrative pronoun is regularly constructed: *nya-ja* 'this (male)'.

For the non-nominative cases, the proximal stem *ja* is used by both men and women, but in the women's dialect, there are contrastive prefixes to retain the distinction between male and masculine classes. The following are the sets used by a female speaker for the two classes.

	Male	Masculine
nominative	<i>nya-ja</i>	<i>jina, jinangu</i>
dative	<i>nyuwu-ja</i>	<i>yi-ja</i>
ergative-allative/ablative	<i>nyungku-ja</i>	<i>jingku-ja</i>

The set used by a male speaker for both classes is:

nominative	<i>jina, jinangu</i>
dative	<i>nyuwu-ja</i>
ergative-allative/ablative	<i>nyungku-ja</i>

In the construction of the two distal demonstrative pronouns for the male and masculine class, the women use the following prefix sets:

	Male	Masculine
nominative	<i>nya-</i>	<i>nya-</i>
dative	<i>nyuwu-</i>	<i>yi-</i>
ergative-allative/ablative	<i>nyungku-</i>	<i>jingku-</i>

In the men's dialect, the set of prefixes used by the women for the male class is used for both male and masculine classes. Examples 1-5 above illustrate the marking of *mangaji* in the two dialects.

### 3.3 Dialect Variation in Possessive Prefixes

Yanyuwa Type II body-part nouns and Type III kinship nouns are marked for possession. There is variation in the marking of male and masculine possessors in men's and women's dialects.

#### 3.3.1 Body-part Noun Prefixes

In the women's dialect, the body-part possessive prefix for male class nouns is *niwa-* and for masculine nouns is *ni-* 'its'. In the men's dialect, the possessive prefix for both male and masculine class nouns is *na-* 'his, its'. The following phrases illustrate this variant usage:

- (6) F *nya-ardu niwa-mi* 'the boy's eye'  
M-child his-eye
- M *ardu ni-mi* 'the boy's eye'  
child this-eye
- (7) F *mardumbarra na-mi* 'the crocodile's eye'  
crocodile its-eye
- M *mardumbarra na-mi* 'the crocodile's eye'  
crocodile its-eye

There is one additional male possessive prefix allomorph used only by men. It is the rare morpheme *nula-* 'his'. A man may say, *ardu nula-mi* 'the boy's eye'. He would not use this form for a masculine class possessor. This is the only known form in the men's dialect which gives evidence of contrast between male and masculine classes. (The other acknowledgement of any difference is in the use of the interrogative pronoun *ngani* 'who?' for male class entities and *ngalhi* 'what?' for masculine class or non-identified ones.)

#### 3.3.2 Kinship Noun Prefixes

There are three classes of kinship nouns (see Kirton 1971:30-35) which are marked for possession, called classes 10, 11 and 12. Classes 11 and 12 have the same possessor prefixes in both men's and women's dialects. However, the possessor prefix is preceded by a class-marker. The class-marker for a Class 11 or 12 male kinsman is the same as for a male entity in a common noun class; that is, *nya-* for a woman speaker and  $\emptyset$ - for a man:

- (8) F *nya-kilu-murima* 'his son's son'  
M-his-son's:son
- M *kilu-murima* 'his son's son'  
his-son's:son
- (9) F *nya-kayibantha-anda-lu* 'her son-in-law'  
M-son:in:law-she-ALL
- M *kayibantha-anda-lu* 'her son-in-law'  
son:in:law-she-ALL

Class 10 contains the most comprehensive set of kinship stems. In this class there are variant forms for both the possessive prefixes and certain of the male-marking prefixes, the variants being dependent on the sex of the speaker. The following examples illustrate the dialect differences in relation to Class 10 nouns:

- (10) F *ny-iku-nya-nganji* 'his kinsman'  
M-his-M-kin
- F *ny-ayu-nya-nganji* 'its kinsman' (e.g., used of a plant in relation  
to another which grows in the same areas)
- M *ny-ik-i-nganji* 'his kinsman, its kinsman'  
M-his-M-kinsman

Example 10 shows that, for a woman speaker, the word-initial *nya-* prefix is repeated before the stem. For a male speaker, this second prefix is replaced by *i-*. This is further illustrated in the following example:

- |      |   |                         |           |
|------|---|-------------------------|-----------|
| (11) | F | <i>ny-anku-nya-ardu</i> | 'her son' |
|      |   | M-her-M-child           |           |
|      | M | <i>ny-ank-i-ardu</i>    | 'her son' |
|      |   | M-her-M-child           |           |

### 3.4 Dialect Variation in Verb Prefixation

Indicative verbs are marked by pronominal prefixes to indicate the subject of existential, intransitive and reflexive (or middle) verbs, and both subject and object of transitive verbs. An indicative marker *ka- ~ ja-* occurs initially, followed by the pronominal morphemes relevant to the transitivity of the verb.

For existential and intransitive verbs this is a single subject morpheme. For a reflexive verb there is a pronominal subject followed by a reflexive prefix *mba- ~ umba- ~ inyamba-*. For a transitive verb there is a pronominal object followed by a pronominal subject. Sex-determined variant forms of male and masculine verb prefixes are used in the construction of these verbs.

#### 3.4.1 Existential and Intransitive Verbs

The same set of subject morphemes occurs for both existential and intransitive verbs. In the women's dialect, the 3rd person male prefix is *iwa-*. The 3rd masculine prefix is *i-* and it has the variant *ilha-* which occurs with monosyllabic stems or with the existential zero stem. In the men's dialect, the prefix for both classes is  $\emptyset$ . It has the variant *iwa-* which occurs with monosyllabic stems or with the existential zero stem. Note that the final vowel of a prefix is lost when it precedes a vowel-initial morpheme. (This general rule covers the limited data in this paper. See Kirton 1978:7-8 for the complete set of morphophonemic rules for Yanyuwa verbs.)

- |      |   |                           |                      |
|------|---|---------------------------|----------------------|
| (12) | F | <i>k-iwa-lhuwarri</i>     | 'he departed'        |
|      | F | <i>k-i-lhuwarri</i>       | 'it departed'        |
|      | M | <i>ka-lhuwarri</i>        | 'he/it departed'     |
| (13) | F | <i>k-iwa-nba-yaninya</i>  | 'he used to fall'    |
|      | F | <i>k-ilha-nba-yaninya</i> | 'it used to fall'    |
|      | M | <i>k-iwa-nba-yaninya</i>  | 'he/it used to fall' |
| (14) | F | <i>k-iwa-ninya</i>        | 'he used to be'      |
|      | F | <i>k-ilha-ninya</i>       | 'it used to be'      |
|      | M | <i>k-iwa-ninya</i>        | 'he/it used to be'   |

#### 3.4.2 Transitive Verbs

Yanyuwa transitive verbs are marked for both object and subject. In the women's and men's dialects, the following are the pronominal morphemes used for male and masculine classes:

	WOMEN		MEN
	Male	Masculine	Male-Masculine
Object	<i>anya-</i>	<i>i-</i>	$\emptyset$
Subject	<i>ilu-</i>	<i>inju-</i>	<i>ilu-</i>

The following verbs illustrate the use of male and masculine transitive prefixes in the two dialects. The distinction between male and masculine classes in both subject and object results in the following four forms in the women's dialect whereas the lack of distinction in the men's dialect results in a single form for all of these:

- |      |   |                        |                    |
|------|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| (15) | F | <i>k-any-ilu-ma</i>    | 'he cut him'       |
|      |   | INDIC-him-he-cut       |                    |
|      | F | <i>k-ilu-ma</i>        | 'he cut it'        |
|      |   | INDIC-it:he-cut        |                    |
|      | F | <i>k-any-inju-ma</i>   | 'it cut him'       |
|      |   | INDIC-him-it-cut       |                    |
|      | F | <i>k-inju-ma</i>       | 'it cut it'        |
|      |   | INDIC-it:it-cut        |                    |
|      | M | <i>k-ilu-ma</i>        | 'he/it cut him/it' |
|      |   | INDIC-him/it:he/it-cut |                    |

#### 3.4.3 Reflexive Verbs

Yanyuwa reflexive verbs are marked by a first-order reflexive marker *mba- ~ umba- ~ inyamba-* and a second-order subject prefix. The *inyamba-* prefix variant cooccurs with the masculine subject in the women's dialect; the variant *umba-* cooccurs with the male subject in the women's dialect and the male-masculine subject in the men's. There is no overt subject form for male or masculine class in either dialect for these persons:

- |      |   |                            |                                  |
|------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (16) | F | <i>k-umba-wudurruma</i>    | 'he fed himself'                 |
|      |   | INDIC-he:REFL-feed         |                                  |
|      | F | <i>k-inyamba-wudurruma</i> | 'it fed itself'                  |
|      |   | INDIC-it:REFL-feed         |                                  |
|      | M | <i>k-umba-wudurruma</i>    | 'he fed himself / it fed itself' |
|      |   | INDIC-he/it:REFL-feed      |                                  |

#### 3.5 Dialect Variation in Other Pronominal Affixation

There are other word classes in Yanyuwa which also take pronominal prefixes or suffixes to maintain clear cross-referencing. These include certain locative stems, relators and introducers.

## 3.5.1 Pronominal Suffixes

A group of morphemes cooccurs with a single set of pronominal suffixes. They include (i) the four demonstrative locative stems and the locative interrogative *ngantha* 'where?', which may take pronominal suffixes, (ii) the temporal relator *ngal* 'when, while', and a descriptive particle *nd*, which are always marked by a pronominal suffix in agreement with the subject of the clause they introduce, and (iii) the mistaken thought introducer *kath* which takes a person-marker suffix to indicate the subject of the mistaken thought in those instances where the error relates to the subject itself rather than to any action it may perform.

In the women's dialect, the male suffix from this pronominal set is *-iwa* and the masculine suffix is *-alhi*. In the men's dialect, the male-masculine suffix is *-iwa*. The following examples illustrate the use of these suffixes in the two dialects:

- |        |                             |                      |
|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| (17) F | <i>Nganth-iwa nya-ardu?</i> | 'Where is the boy?'  |
|        | where-he m-child            |                      |
| M      | <i>Nganth-iwa ardu?</i>     | 'Where is the boy?'  |
|        | where-he child              |                      |
| (18) F | <i>Nganth-alhi jayngka?</i> | 'Where is the rock?' |
|        | where-it rock               |                      |
| M      | <i>Nganth-iwa jayngka?</i>  | 'Where is the rock?' |
|        | where-he/it rock            |                      |

There are few examples of the descriptive statement particle *nd* in the recorded data and its meaning is not yet defined. The particle may occur initially or finally in a brief stative clause, either in an isolated statement or as the concluding comment in a paragraph. The pronominal suffix which marks *nd* is the subject of the clause.

- |        |                            |                                 |
|--------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (19) F | <i>Wardimbangu nd-alhi</i> | 'It (is) very bad' (of alcohol) |
|        | very:bad -it               |                                 |
| M      | <i>Wardimbangu nd-iwa</i>  | 'It (is) very bad'              |
|        | very:bad -it               |                                 |

The following example illustrates the use of the temporal relator in the two dialects:

- |        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| (20) F | <i>Ngal-alhi kilha-nba-la ngal-iwa kiya-wani-la nya-malbu.</i> |  |
|        | when-it it-fall-FUT then-he he-return-FUT m-old:man            |  |
| M      | <i>Ngal-iwa kiwa-nba-la ngal-iwa ka-wani-la malbu.</i>         |  |
|        | when-it it-fall-FUT then-he he-return-FUT old:man              |  |
|        | 'When it rains then the old man will come back.'               |  |

- |        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
| (21) F | <i>Kath-alhi nya-mangaji rdiyangu barrawu.</i> | mistakenly:thought-it MSC-that:DEF new house            |
| M      | <i>Kath-iwa nya-mangaji rdiyangu barrawu.</i>  | mistakenly:thought-it MSC:that:DEF new house            |
|        |  | '(They) mistakenly thought that it was a new building.' |

## 3.5.2 Pronominal Prefixes

The relator *yirdi* 'bearing, bringing' is marked by a set of pronominal prefixes. This relator introduces a modifying noun or noun phrase in the dative case. In the women's dialect the pronominal prefixes are *niwa-* male, *ni-* masculine. In the men's dialect the male-masculine prefix is *na-*. (The set of prefixes cooccurring with this relator is the same as that which marks the possessor on body-part nouns.)

- |        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| (22) F | <i>Nya-arrkula kiya-wingka niwa-yirdi ju-wawi-yu.</i> | m-one he-go he-bringing MSC-horse-DAT            |
| M      | <i>Arrkula ka-wingka na-yirdi ki-wawi-yu.</i>         | one he-go he-bringing MSC-horse-DAT              |
|        |   | 'One man went taking horses.'                    |
| (23) F | <i>nya-mbangu yula ni-yirdi ji-marliji-nku</i>        | MSC-that:INDEF crab it-bearing MSC:NNOM-hand-DAT |
| M      | <i>nya-mbangu yula na-yirdi ki-marliji-nku</i>        | MSC-that:INDEF crab it-bearing MSC:NNOM-hand-DAT |
|        |   | 'that crab having claws'                         |

## 4. CONCLUSION

It is not unusual to find linguistic differences in the speech of men and women. It is to be expected that there will be vocabulary differences related to semantic areas of specialised interest. There may also be differences in the way in which certain areas of language (such as terms of address or expletives) are used by men and by women in relation to their respective cultural roles.

It is unusual however, to find speech differences which are so extensive that they are comparable with differences in dialect. From Douglas Taylor's record (1954) of Father Breton's description of Island Carib in the West Indies, it seems that this language may have evidenced men's and women's dialect.

From Allan Taylor's description of Gros Ventre (1982) in the United States, it seems that the phonological differences in the men's and women's speech were of such a nature as to indicate different dialects. There may well have been other languages of this kind which have become extinct before they were recorded.

It seems that Yanyuwa is unique in Australia in having men's and women's dialects. None of its linguistic neighbours has any comparable features, nor

could the writer find reference to anything of the kind in languages further afield.

This description, then, documents in some detail a feature which appears to be unique to Yanyuwa within Australia, and rare among the languages of the world.

## NOTES

1. Yanyuwa (also known by its Garawa name 'Yanyula', its Mara name 'Wadirri', and variants of these three names), is a language spoken by about 90 adults, in an area around Borroloola (about 50 km from the coast in the north-east corner of Australia's Northern Territory). The writer has been working with the Yanyuwa under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics since 1963, primarily at Borroloola, but with 8 months spent with the Yanyuwa at Doomadgee in 1967-68.

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