

# Missionary grammars of two indigenous languages of Australia: Gamilaraay and Diyari

Peter K. Austin

Department of Linguistics

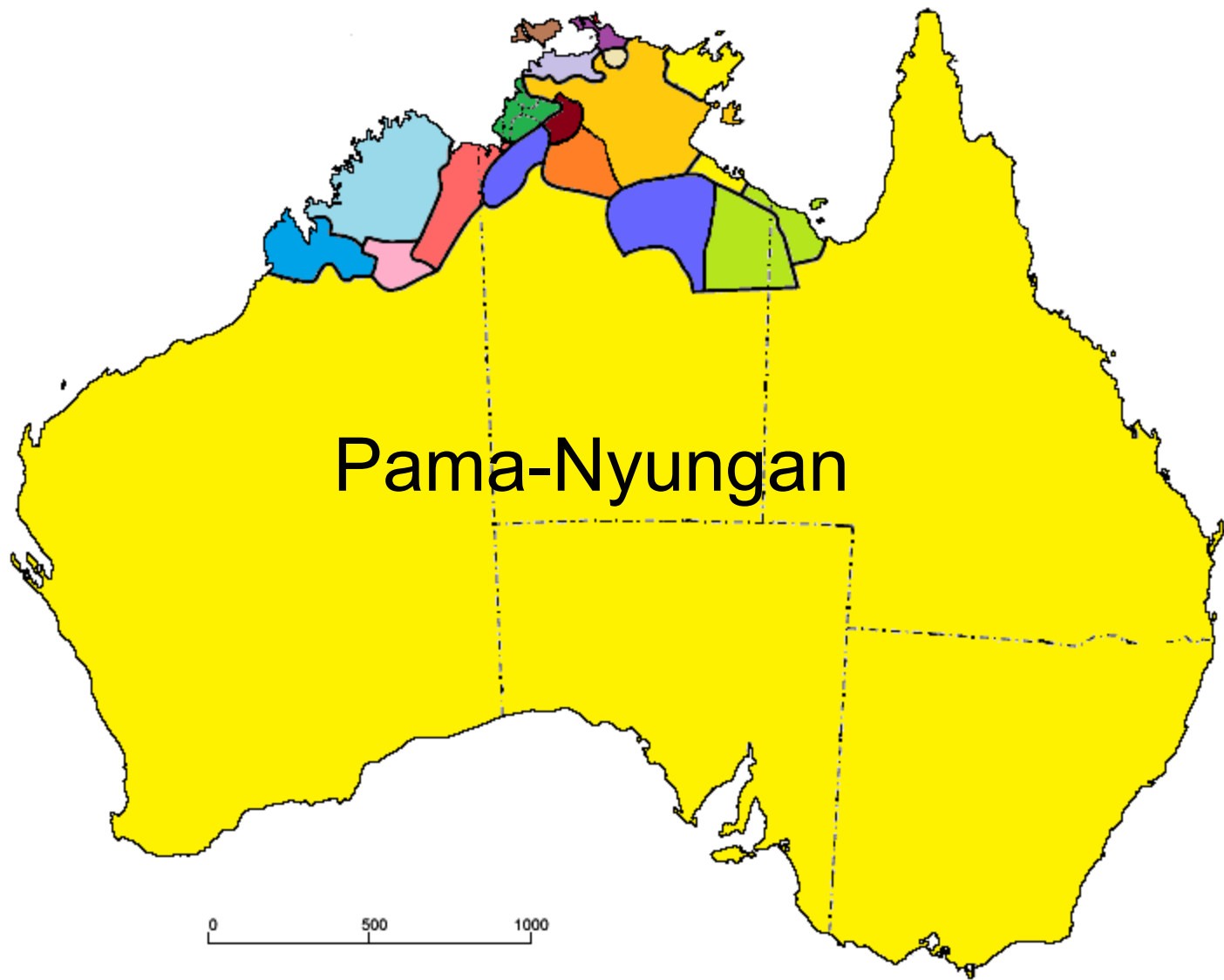
SOAS, University of London

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# In 18<sup>th</sup> century

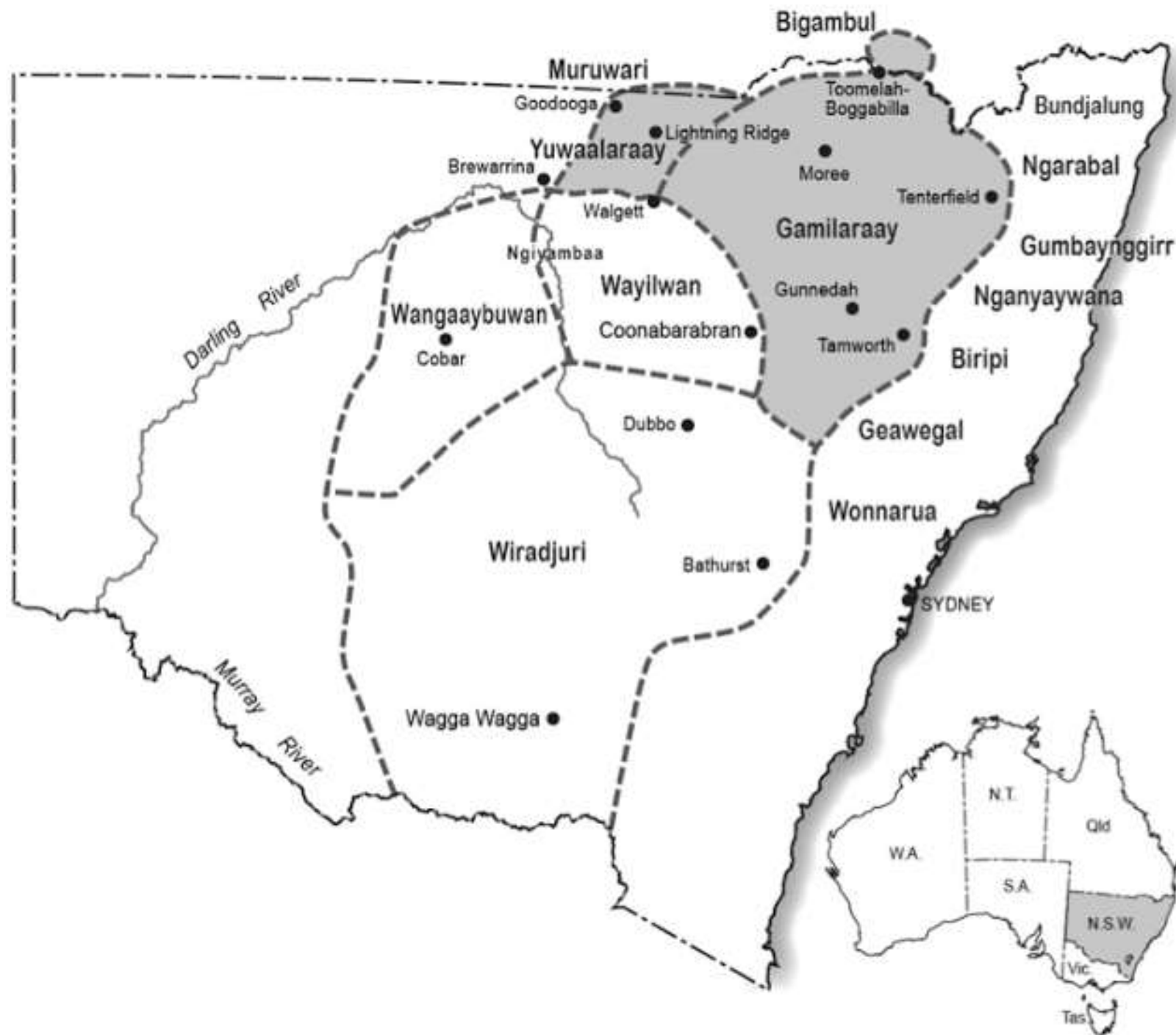
- 600 different groups occupied the whole continent
- each group had their own land, laws, beliefs, Dreamings, songs, stories and ways of speaking
- 350 different languages
- people grew up multilingual due to marriage exogamy
- languages can be classified into 17 families (cf. Indo-European vs. Turkic) – these may or may not all be distantly related



# **CASE STUDY 1 -- GAMILARAAY**

# Liverpool plains, New South Wales



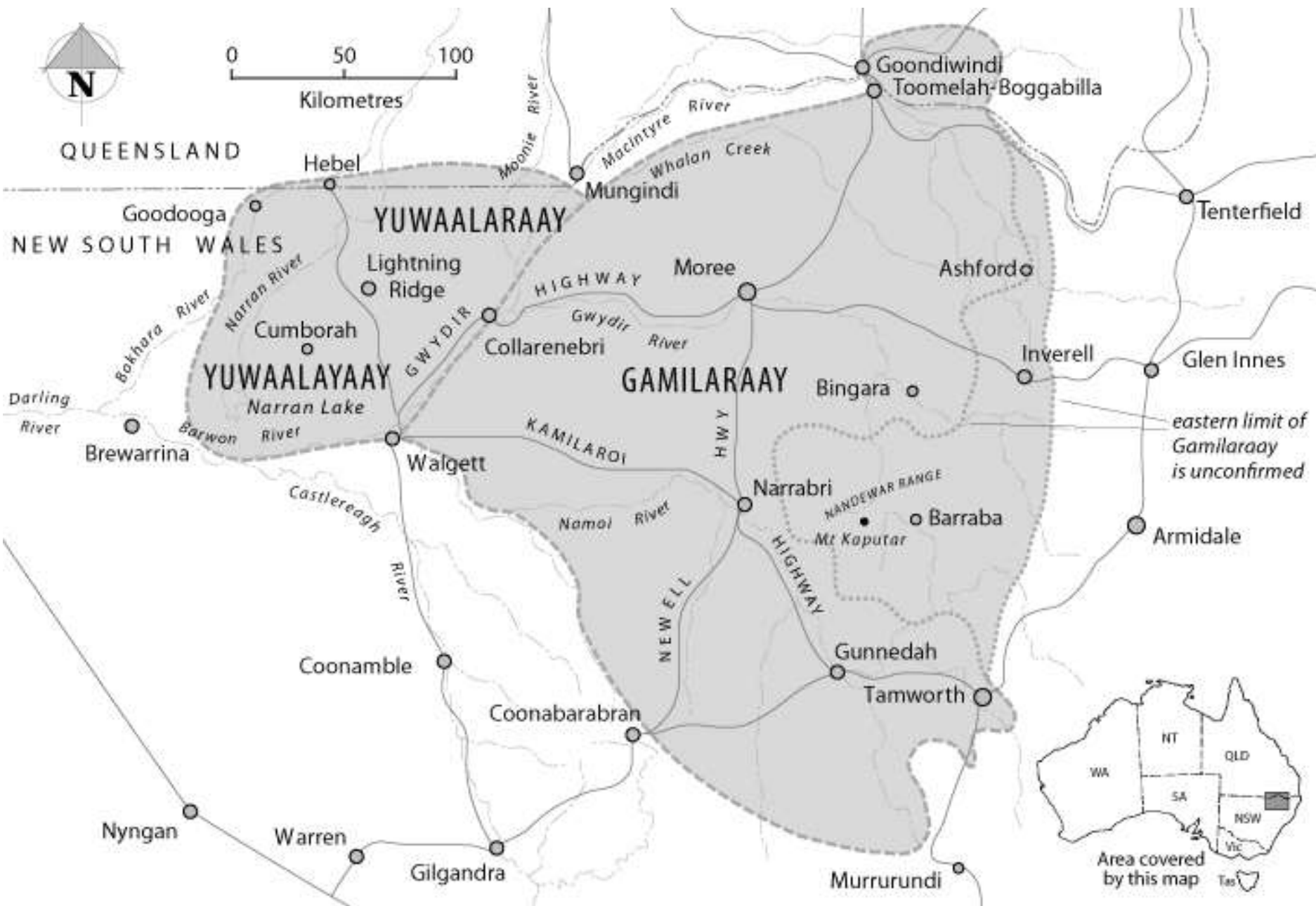




0 50 100  
Kilometres

QUEENSLAND

NEW SOUTH WALES



*eastern limit of  
Gamilaraay  
is unconfirmed*





# William Ridley

- born 14 Sept 1819 in Hartford End, Essex, educated at King's College and University of London, graduated B.A.
- brought to Australia by Dr. John Lang, arrived 19 March 1850, taught languages at the Australian College.
- ordained in the Scots Church by Lang in 1850, in 1853 began an itinerant ministry in the New England region of New South Wales, 1855 published *Report ... of a Journey Along the Condamine, Barwan and Namoi Rivers*, and in 1856 published *Gurre Kamilaroi: or Kamilaroi Sayings*, Bible translations in Gamilaraay
- published *Kamilaroi, Dippil, and Turrubul: Languages Spoken by Australian Aborigines* in 1866, revised and enlarged as *Kamilaroi and Other Australian Languages* in 1875

# Research on Gamilaraay

Giacon (2014: 5):

“The earliest published material is from Ridley, from 1856 on. Much of his material was published later, with some changes, by Greenway. The actual provenance is unclear. *These materials include analyses, which were strongly influenced by the languages these two clergymen knew, firstly English and then the classical languages that had been part of their education.* Ridley and Greenway both published similar biblical texts (Ridley’s is *Gurre Kamilaroi*). They contain *extremely simplified GR, without Ergative forms and with very few of other features characteristic of fluent Y[uwaalaraay-]G[amilaraay]*, such as locational adverbs.” [emphasis added]

# Ridley

## *Achievements*

- recorded velar nasal and uses special symbol ŋ
- recognised ergative case form (for transitive subjects) but omitted it in his Bible translations
- Giacon (2014): “recognised the standard and Personal Declension Locative forms, but not their functions”

# Ridley

## *Achievements*

- recognised verb category of 'time of day' but did not analyse the forms properly (eg. TOD affix precedes tense inflection) – cf. Giacon's analysis

# Ridley

gimbi or gim°bi ..... *make.*

## INDICATIVE.

PAST :	gim°bi .....	<i>made.</i>
	gim°biljēn .....	<i>made (to-day).</i>
	gim°bilmiēn .....	<i>made (yesterday).</i>
	gimbillēn.....	<i>made (long ago).</i>
PRESENT :	gimbildona .....	<i>makes.</i>
FUTURE :	gim°bille .....	<i>will make.</i>
	gim°biljari .....	<i>will make to-morrow.</i>

Table 117 Analysis of Ridley's verb paradigm in Table 116

Tense	Original	Gloss	Analysis
	<i>gimbi</i> or <i>gin°bi</i>	make	<i>gimubi-y</i> (Past)
<i>INDICATIVE</i>			
Past	<i>gin°bi</i>	made.	<i>gimubi-y</i>
	<i>gin°bilhēn</i>	made ( <b>today</b> ).	<i>gimubi-l.ngayi-nyi</i>
	<i>gin°bilmiēn</i>	made (yesterday).	<i>gimubi-l.mayaa-nhi</i>
	<i>gin°billēn</i>	made ( <b>long ago</b> ).	<i>gimubi-l.ayi-nyi</i>
Present:	<i>gimbildona</i>	makes.	<i>gimubi-lda-nha</i>
Future:	<i>gin°bille</i>	will make.	<i>gimubi-li</i> (Fut)
	<i>gin°bilhari</i>	will make <b>tomorrow</b> .	<i>gimubi-l.ngarri-y</i>
<i>PARTICIPLES</i>			
	<i>gimbildendai</i>	making	<i>gimubi-lda-ndaay</i>
	<i>gimbilhendai</i>	having made	<i>gimubi-l.ngayi-ndaay</i>
	<i>gimbilmiendai</i>	having made <b>yesterday</b>	<i>gimubi-l.mayaa-ndaay</i>
	<i>gimbillendai</i>	having made <b>long ago</b>	<i>gimubi-l.ayi-ndaay</i>

# Ridley

## *Failures*

- Poor understanding of phonology – attempts to distinguish short and long vowels however this is inconsistent and sometimes represents stress (non-phonemic) rather than length (phonemic) (see Austin 2008)
- Missed verb conjugations (4 morphologically distinct classes) and hence verb inflection paradigms

# Ridley

goälle will speak

goë did speak

goälla speak

wīmulle will put

wīmi put (down)

wīmulla put down

guwaa-li tell-FUT

guwaa-y tell-PST

guwaa-la tell-IMP

wiima-li put-FUT

wiima-y put-PST

wiima-la put-IMP

kāge will take

kāne took

kāŋa take

gaa-gi take-FUT

gaa-nhi take-PST

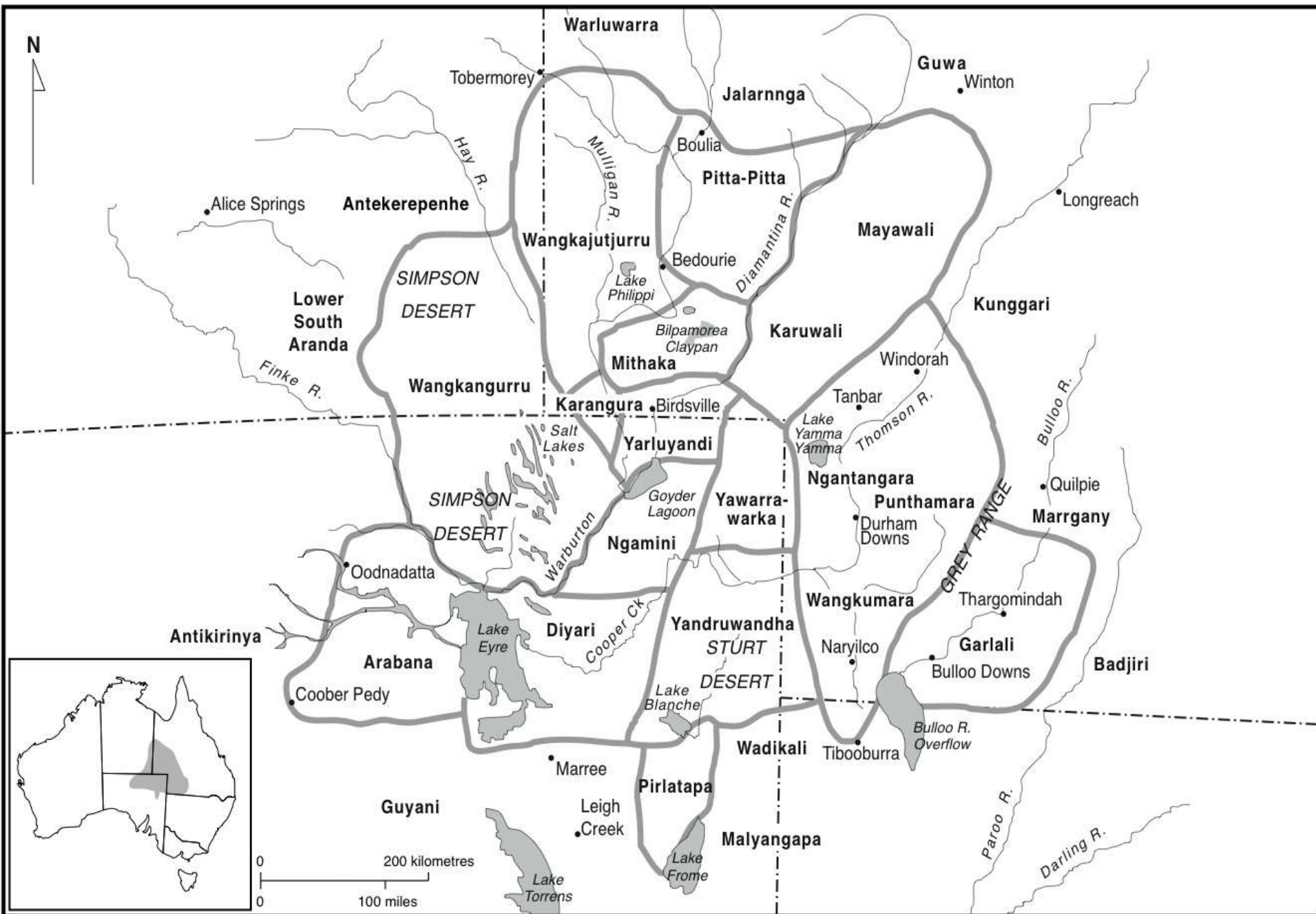
gaa-nga take-IMP



## **CASE STUDY 2 -- DIYARI**







# The Diyari and missionaries

- Lutheran mission established by German missionaries in 1867
- Missionaries learn Diyari language and prepare school books and religious materials
- Literacy well established by 1880s
- Mission attracts Aboriginal people from a wide area, offering a haven from incoming white colonists
- Mission did well from 1890's to early 1900s



## Bethesda Lutheran Mission, Killalpaninna, 1910



Roxby Down Str.  
Via Woomera West. S.A.  
22. 5. 1954

Tyai Kamaneli Nganyaku Ted. Vogelsang  
Tfidni kara ngaruparala nganai  
ngakangundru pepa manila mai  
Kamaneli wardaru fidni karari  
matja tepi ja ngaiani prafana  
tipe ja walkarli pinna nganai  
jinkanga ja jinkani taani ja kupani  
wata mala jurangundru ngarana  
wardaru jura panyana ja ngaiani  
Gada jurakukananto mula nganini  
kananiaku tepi ngamalkai fax  
Ngarani karati Roxby Down Str.  
ngamai nankana~~xi~~ wendri waru  
ngaiani jurangundru ngarana  
wonti & ngadani wata marla  
ja ngaiani wata kuritarjai wardaru  
ngaiani selalu nganana wonti Kilalpanina  
mitani jakajai findni karari marla  
ja marla pinaku panti ja ngaiani  
wallis tikala ngamai finnie springe  
Ataia jerufa ngaiani paruparu wirarija  
Ngankani wontitarjai ja wardaru

# Diyari grammars

- 1868 *Wilhelm Koch* – German school teacher, born 1848, died 1869,
- 1872 *Carl Schoknecht* – missionary (1841-1905)
- 1880 *Johannes Flierl* – Neudettelsau trained missionary (1858-1947) revised orthography
- 1899 *Reuther* – Neudettelsau trained missionary (1861-1914)



# A true grammatical tradition

Stockigt (2016) notes: “Structurally, the Diyari grammars are organized under the **same headings and sub-headings**, employ the same numbering of sections and mostly give the same Diyari example clauses. The extent to which the later grammars replicate *the structure and schema* of the first grammar (Koch 1868) is evident through comparison of the pages detailing verb morphology. ... The missionaries’ analyses **are not however identical**. Flierl (1880) and Reuther (1899 [1894]) for example, provide case paradigms of possessive pronouns, i.e., ‘double case-marked’ pronouns where the possessive pronoun is marked for clausal case — while the earlier grammarians, Koch (1868) and Schoknecht (1872) do not.” [emphasis added]

# Wilhelm Koch

Stockigt (2016) “fleeing financial and moral dishonour (Kneebone 2005: 89-90), Koch decided to join the missionaries and to travel with them to Lake Eyre. His initial application to Hermannsburg was rejected. Koch was later reacquainted with the missionaries while working as a teacher in the Barossa Valley during the missionaries’ 1867 retreat south. Koch reapplied to join the mission and was this time accepted. Koch, who had studied — although had not completed — four years of gymnasium education including Latin and Greek is described as “a gifted young man” (Hebart 1938: 187), who is also said to have “brought to the mission a classical education and considerable natural talent for language” (Kneebone, 2005: 10). At the time of their acquaintance, Koch is said to have: “helped [the missionaries] to explore the Dieri language about which the missionaries knew nothing except for a wordlist of 300 Dieri words” (R. Ganter, Hermannsburg Mission Society, retrieved 06/03-2014). On arrival at Bethesda, Koch was given responsibility for teaching in the mission school and used Diyari as the language of instruction (Harms 2003: 51). Substantial linguistic progress was made in 1868.”

# Compare Neudettelsau training

“From its humble beginnings, the curriculum was steadily built up. In 1859 the teaching timetable started at 8 am and ended at 7 pm, including half a day on Saturdays, with five hours of formal instruction, interspersed with two hours of independent study. About half of the teaching was dedicated to instruction in English, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Next to theological training, candidates were also instructed in piano, violin and singing, and writing and oratory.”

# Koch's grammar

Stockigt (2016): “In correspondence with HMS mission director Harms, Koch refers to his grammar of Diyari as *Grundzüge der Grammatik* [Basics of a Grammar]. The work is known to have been sent by the missionaries in Australia to Harms in Germany (Harms 2003: 297). ... A copy of the original MS has been located in a box of papers acquired by the University of Adelaide's Barr Smith Library Rare Books and Special Collections (henceforth: BSL) from Professor J. A. FitzHerbert (1872–1970), Hughes Professor of Classics at Adelaide University between 1928 and 1957. “

# Schoknecht's grammar

English translation 1947 – material appears to be almost identical to the Koch grammar

## *Achievements:*

- analysis of complex verbal and nominal morphology and major grammatical categories
- difference between alienable and inalienable possession
- difference between inclusive and exclusive first person non-singular pronouns

# Schoknecht's grammar

- 7 cases recognised, including 'nominative', 'accusative', and 'active' (= ergative) – “with the transitive verb, the word expressing the subject is always used in the active form (noun as well as pronoun)”
- realised that reflexive and reciprocal are marked on verb
- thorough analysis of verb tense and mood system for main clauses
- “passive verbs, strangely enough, are entirely absent”

# Schoknecht's grammar

## *Failures:*

- Phonology under-differentiated: missed laminals and retroflexes: *th, nh, lh, rt, rd, lh*; word-initial *ng*, over-differentiated three phonemic vowels (inclusion of *e* and *o*)
- Case system: failed to realise that distinction between “first declension” and “second declension” is phonological (based on syllable counts and root final vowel) not morphological

# Schoknecht's grammar

- failure to distinguish **derivation** (word building) from **inflection** from **post-inflection** (can attach to words of any class) – grouped together as “suffixes”
- interrogative forms mixed pronoun interrogative and demonstrative interrogative, ‘who’ versus ‘which’
- missed **switch-reference** (“supinum” for ‘in order to’ but only for same-subject cross-reference, missed different-subject form), *-rnanhi* glossed as “present participle” and “conditional”



# What is the value of missionary sources?

- For Gamilaraay there is limited modern data and no fluent speakers – the best linguistic material is from 1955 and 1975 from semi-speakers. Giacom 2014 shows how Ridley's work can be interpreted using all evidence
- For Diyari there are modern sources, fluent speakers, and Austin's extensive research so the missionary grammars are historically interesting and confirmatory, but otherwise not so significant

# Thank you!

- To the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, my Dieri and Gamilaraay language teachers and friends, Greg Wilson (colleague extraordinaire), Clara Stockigt for sharing her Diyari library research, John Giacon for sharing all aspects of his work on Gamilaraay
- You (plural) the audience