

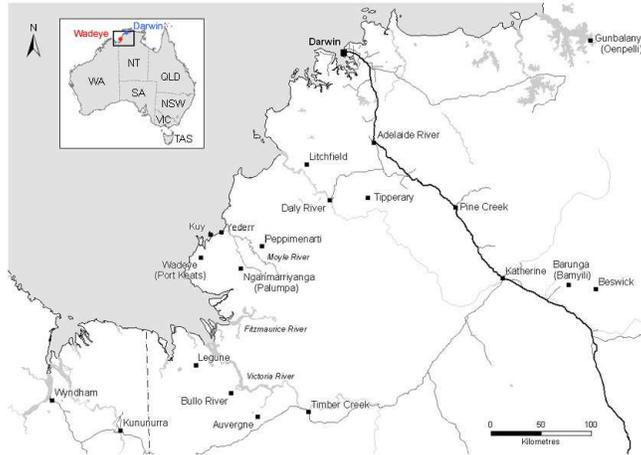
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THE MURRINH-PATHA LEGAL GLOSSARY¹: A BRIDGE BETWEEN LAWS

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Introduction

The plain fact is that in the Northern Territory the trial of an Aborigine in most cases proceeds, and so far as I could gather, has always proceeded, as if the accused were not present. If he were physically absent no one would notice this fact. The accused, so far as I could judge, in most cases takes no interest in the proceedings. He certainly does not understand that portion of the evidence which is of the greatest importance in most cases, namely, the account a police constable gives of the confession made by the accused. No attempt is made to translate any of the evidence to him. If the rule requiring substantial comprehension of the proceedings were applied to the Northern Territory, many Aborigines could simply not be tried. (Kriewaldt 1960)

Justice Kriewaldt delivered these remarks in a paper entitled 'The Application of the Criminal Law to the Aborigines of the Northern Territory', which he read to the fifteenth annual conference of the Australian Universities Law Schools Association held in Perth, Western Australia in 1960. His remarks are less apposite today than they were in 1960, but there would be still situations today when Aboriginal defendants do not know what is occurring to them within the court system. This continues to form a most compelling justification for the construction of legal glossaries in up to a dozen Indigenous languages spoken in the Northern Territory.

An Effective Communication Link

For us to create an effective communication link with another there must be a means that we each comprehend and use equally well so that a meeting of minds occurs. This means is called 'language' - Indonesian, Afrikaans, Braille or even HTML.

In addition, there are languages within languages described as 'specialty' languages, or registers: Medicine; Engineering; and Law – often referred to as "legalese". Even when these are discussed in your native tongue, they may be incomprehensible to the general public, so that I may ask of you:

"Do you understand all that is discussed in medicine; in anthropological texts; or when an accountant explains a profit and loss or balance sheet – or just your tax? If not, why not? You speak the *same language*, don't you? Or do you?"

So then, what is 'language'? Language is our means of communication, discovery of each other and participation within the world around us. It is the phraseology peculiar to a profession. It is the basis of creating a link with others and understanding them and their world. Language is created by and contains within it history, social values and a contextual background upon which the world is judged. Without language, one cannot access the world we live in or the world of another fully, nor make decisions based on properly understood knowledge or information obtained.

Because of this, every effort must be made to ensure the correct transferral, and subsequent understanding, of information. The arena of the legal system, then - with its court structure, specialised knowledge, obscure legalese and administrative burdens - poses its own particular difficulties.

The understandable inability of that system's personnel - including court orderlies, field officers and administrative staff - to speak the multitude of differing languages of multi-cultural Australia, and the corresponding difficulties of multi-cultural Australia to speak English, means that unique solutions must be sought in order to provide assistance.

Usage of English within the Northern Territory of Australia

Between 240 and 250 Indigenous² languages were spoken by about seven hundred groups in Australia at the time of annexation by Great Britain in 1788.

“More than half of these [languages] are no longer spoken or remembered (save for perhaps a sprinkling of words used within the English spoken by their tribal descendants). No more than twenty are currently being learnt by children. The remainder have just middle-aged or old speakers; each decade a few more of these languages cease to be spoken or remembered.” (Dixon 2002:2).

59% of Australian Indigenous languages are currently spoken in the Northern Territory. Most speakers of these languages speak Standard Australian English as a second, third or even fourth language. The 1999 *Learning Lessons Report* on Indigenous Education produced by Bob Collins et al. states:-

"Within the Northern Territory, only around 30% of Aboriginal people used English as a first language. The corresponding figure for non-Aboriginal Territorians is close to 90%. It is noteworthy that the corresponding figure for *Aboriginal people throughout the rest of Australia* is around 80%. [Only] around 4% of Aboriginal people in the East Arnhem region use English as a first language, which effectively relegates English to the position of being *a minor language* for Aboriginal people in that region. It is probable that this situation is not duplicated outside the Territory". (Emphasis added).

The 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data confirmed these figures. Indigenous peoples comprise approximately 25% of the Territory's population. Therefore, at least 1 in every 4 of the people that Northern Territory criminal lawyers are required to deal with will be Indigenous. Of those people, only 3 in 10 speak English as a first language – not even one third of the Indigenous population.

² Australia's Indigenous population is made up of Aboriginal groups living only on the mainland, and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are Melanesian by culture and appearance, come from the islands of the Torres Strait between Cape York and Papua New Guinea but increasingly settle on the Australian mainland.

At a bare minimum then, 70% of Indigenous people that Northern Territory criminal lawyers are required to work with will not be able to converse in English as a first language.

How adequate an Indigenous person's knowledge is of English as a second, third or even more further removed language is for counsel to attempt to ascertain, and this has its difficulties (which are also applicable to members of wider, multi-cultural Australia):-

- Some, knowing a little English, will be too embarrassed to admit that they don't know English adequately, and will continue on in an attempt to save face;
- Others will be able to converse readily in a fluent, conversational style, while not comprehending the technical vagaries of legalese. As you would be aware, fluency of speech does **not** equal adequate specialized knowledge, therefore miscommunication may occur in two ways:
 - The person may not know the legal term at all; or
 - While the person has heard the term being used and in fact uses it, s/he has only a vague idea of the concept behind the term.

It is perhaps surprising then that in the Northern Territory an Indigenous Interpreter Service was only funded for the very first time in the year 2001. In fact, prior to this the only interpreter service existing the *Northern Territory Interpreter & Translator Service* which provided interpreters for a broad range of multi-cultural languages other than Indigenous languages. As a result, it was far easier for a person in Darwin to secure by way of a phone call an interpreter in Polish, Indonesian, French or Vietnamese, than it was to gain assistance with respect to one of the 15 major Indigenous language groups present in the Northern Territory.

Thankfully, the *Aboriginal Interpreter Service* as it is now known, has offices in both Darwin and Alice Springs operating on a 24-hour call out basis. It remains difficult, however, to gain interpreters who have sufficient English language fluency and a conceptual understanding of English legal terms and the manner in which the dominant Australian culture operates.

The language situation at Wadeye (Port Keats)

Languages of the Wadeye region are the last in Australia to be documented. There are few roads into the region and the local language groups were justly feared by all other persons, including other Aboriginal groups, as fierce warriors and powerful sorcerers.

The community of Wadeye, previously known as Port Keats is located some 400km south-west of Darwin and is now home to approximately 2,500 Indigenous people. It is within a region known as the Thamarrurr Region, comprising 20 clan groups, the majority of whom now live at Wadeye. The dominant language is Murrinh-patha, the mother-tongue of the Murrinh-patha language group, whose Kardu Diminin (gravel people) clan are traditional owners of the land on which Wadeye sits.

The Murrinh-patha language group have dominated the local political scene ever since 1934, when they welcomed on to their lands a handful of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) missionaries who set up a mission and began converting the local Aborigines. From 1947, these missionaries financed their mission by acting as government administrators. Providing rations and medical care, they lured into a sedentary life on the mission all outlying groups and established dormitories where children spent two weeks of every month away from their families, learning English and the Catholic liturgy, and speaking Murrinh-patha as their lingua franca. The dormitories and the mission are long gone, but the priest and nuns are still there. For the past thirty years Murrinh-patha and Standard Australian English have been taught in the bilingual program in the only school at Wadeye, now known as the OLSH Thamarrurr School.

The result is that all 2500 Indigenous people in Wadeye, from senior elders to toddlers, speak Murrinh-patha. Basic English is used to non Murrinh-patha speaking persons in the shop, clinic, church, Post Office/Centrelink Agency, and Takeaway food outlet. Elsewhere, the language you hear around you is Murrinh-patha.

All other languages of the region are spoken by a handful of old people in their sixties and upwards. Each of these fluent speakers is ill and on medication. Their children and grandchildren no longer speak their ancestral languages but retain a sense of separate identity which periodically flares into hostility towards their traditional enemies, the Murrinh-patha³.

Requirement for Conceptual Legal Knowledge at Wadeye, Port Keats

The Northern Territory Department of Justice's Annual Report for 2003-04 provides some illuminating statistics with respect to Indigenous incarceration rates as at 30 June 2004. At this time, the prisoner profile reflected that:-

- 77.5% of persons in jail were Indigenous;
- 75.5% were unemployed;
- 72.2% of all prisoners were aged between 20-39 years; and
- The most common offence was assault. (p. 48)

Further:-

- The daily average number of prisoners was 719, reflected as 90% of operational capacity.

Specifically, the Wadeye area and its surrounds have for some time attracted great attention from the Criminal Justice System. It is indeed well-known, although at times

³ This language shift is unusual because it has happened in the lifetime of the fluent speakers, and because it is a shift not to Kriol as has happened elsewhere in Australia, but to another Australian Indigenous language. For details, see Ford & Klesch 2003.

unfairly, as a problematic community commonly termed “a war zone”. In the “Department of Justice Statistical Summary 2003-04” at Table 10, a census of prisoners on 30 June 2004 according to prison, last known address and Indigenous status reveals that 31 persons from the Wadeye area were held in prison at that time, compared to 29 in 2002-03 and 32 in 2001-02. This figure does not include juveniles (Under 18) held at other institutions”.

Utilising 30 persons as an average per year in conjunction with the daily average prisoner population in 2003-04 of 719, such a figure indicates that Wadeye, a community of 2,500 people (merely 0.95% of the total NT population), provides approximately 4% of the prison population on any given day OR just over FOUR TIMES its expected statistical contribution per head of population.

While there has clearly been a high *exposure* to the Criminal Justice System, this *exposure* does not automatically transform into *understanding* of what has occurred, or is occurring, particularly at an intellectual level. To return and consider previous examples, one only has to look at the terms “bail” and “suspended sentence”.

There remain people at Wadeye who, while they have been released on bail numerous times, continue to “flaunt the law” and not answer their bail conditions because they do not understand bail is but conditional liberty. Consequently, they are often angered when a Warrant of Apprehension is issued for their arrest and they are detained by Police, later being brought before the court to answer a breach for a condition which they did not know existed.

Further, the concept of a “suspended” sentence remains a mystery to many. They serve a period in jail, are released and go home. Unfortunately, many are unaware that they are now subject to a Good Behaviour Bond – even if they have this level of understanding, they are often totally unaware it is requiring them to be of good behaviour for a particular period AND, should this be breached, they must return to court and most likely serve the remainder of their suspended sentence IN ADDITION to receiving further punishment for the new offence.

The use of interpreters, and greater understanding generated by materials such as the Legal Glossary should, theoretically, decrease the incidence of such occurrences or at least the lack of understanding presently in existence.

Why A Glossary is Required in a Legal Setting

Such a document is required for two (2) primary reasons:-

- 1) First and foremost, its production will bring out from hiding the secret language of the law belonging to the foreigner. By doing so, it has the capacity to assist in the greatest process which can occur between people, cultures and nations – that

of education which generates real intellectual understanding of how the ‘other’ looks at the world.

As noted above, such work creates an effective communication link, allowing discovery of another and participation within their world. While merely a beginning, Indigenous people are able to then make decisions based on properly understood knowledge or information obtained. Suddenly, with understanding of the overall system, a clear choice begins to manifest itself.

The word list generated by the Glossary also begins to paint a picture of the courtroom, personnel involved, their roles and their place within it. It also illuminates the role of the Police Record of Interview. In doing so, it is hoped that this will aid and clarify the interaction between lawyer, interpreter and client. It may also serve to diminish to some small extent the fear of the client or accused (and often the interpreter also!) within a courtroom or Police interview scenario;

- 2) Secondly, through its production Police, lawyers, Magistrates and Judges will become far more aware of how words and concepts are dealt with and discussed in another language and context. It will explain why a single word may be pronounced in English which requires a lengthy discussion in Murrinh-patha – the reason being that, simply, there is no direct interpretation, leading to the requirement for the initial construction of a layered, intellectual base of knowledge, in order to eventually convey the concept required.

From this, it is hoped that all levels of the judicial system will be more aware of the manner in which to ask questions of Indigenous persons. Further, they will appreciate the extra care required to be taken in laying a foundation of understanding from a conceptual viewpoint, having realized that the particular words and the contexts to which they relate are totally and utterly foreign and not capable of direct interpretation.

Three examples are the following:-

- “Bail” – many Indigenous people, trainee interpreters included, understand this word to mean: “You are free to go”, these being the final words that a Magistrate regularly pronounces before the person concerned leaves the courtroom. However, Indigenous people are most often unaware that it is, in fact, **conditional** liberty, requiring the defendant to actually return!

Our translation of the term “bail” is as follows:-

Bail

Ampa	Ngay=ka	ngungu+nhi+wuy=nu	marra	damatha
<i>OK</i>	<i>I=TOP</i>	<i>I will (A32)+you+ set free=will</i>	<i>today</i>	<i>for certain</i>
‘All right, I will set you free today for certain.’				

Mu, **ngay=ka** **marda mangan+art**
But *I=TOP* *belly* *I have (A9)+desire*
 ‘But what I want is that.’

nhinhi=ka **da+nga+yet=nu** **mange** **kanhi**
you=TOP *you will(A14)+to me+promise=will* *deed* *this*
 ‘you are to promise me’

ngarra **ngay** **ma+mpa=nu=ka** **thama=nu** **damatha.**
that *I* *I will tell (A8)+to you=will=TOP* *you will do(A34)=will* *for certain*
 to do these things for certain that I will tell you.’

Mange=ka **kanhi=wa:**
deed=TOP *this=THITH*
 ‘These are the actions.’

Nhinhi=ka **thurdi+wurl=kathu=nu** **da** **ngarra** **ngay**
you=TOP *you will (A30)+ return=HITH=will* *time* *which* *I*
 ‘You will come back here at a time that I’

ma+mpa=nu. **Da+ngini=ka** **4** **July** **2005,** **1 pm.**
I will tell+to you=will *TimeNC+that=TOP* *4* *July* *2005,* *1 pm*
 (A8)+
 ‘tell you to – that time is 4 July 2005, at 1 pm.’

Mu **nuparl=nu** **ngatha** **murrinh+kanhi=ka**
But *you break=will* *suppose* *WordNC+this=TOP*
 ‘But, suppose you break these conditions,’

mere **pirdith** **damatha**
NEG *long* *for certain*

thurdi+wurl=nu **ngarra** **murrinh+court**
you will (A30)+ return=will *to* *wordNC +court*
 ‘you will soon return to the court’

i **kama=ka** **ngay=ka** **nga+mpa+dhap=nu** **deyida.**
and *maybe=TOP* *I=TOP* *I will(A19)+on you+close door=will* *again*
 ‘and I may lock you up again.’

‘All right, I will set you free today for certain. I want you to promise me to do for certain these things that I will tell you. These things are:

- 1) ‘You will come back here at a time that I tell you to – that time is 4 July 2005, at 1 pm.’
- 2) But, suppose you break these conditions, within a short time you will return to the court and I may lock you up again.’

Note that the Murrinh-patha paraphrase spells out the law and is provided with a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss. This degree of rigour is not present in the only other glossary produced for an Aboriginal language, that by the Aboriginal Resource Development Scheme (ARDS) for Yolngu Matha, the language of the Yirrkala region

of North East ArnhemLand.⁴ Their website is smart and easy to use, with spoken discussion in Yolngu Matha and back-translation in English of 4 of the items listed in the glossary. Unfortunately there are no morpheme by morpheme glosses provided for the written Yolngu Matha translations, and the project suffers from the lack of a lawyer. This is evident in the back-translation of bail, which essentially repeats the English term ‘bail’.

- “Suspended Sentence” – again, most Indigenous persons that Ford and McCormack have worked with are confused by this combination of words. While many will appreciate the significance of “sentence” meaning “to receive punishment”, the addition of the word “suspended” does not have any contextual background to it. For example, consider that when punishment is imposed in an Indigenous context, there would be no thought of not carrying out that punishment, or only carrying out part of it, having the remainder conditional upon an event yet to occur. Yet that is exactly how the legal term of “suspended sentence” operates in practice.

Our translation of the term “suspended sentence” is as follows:-

Suspended Sentence

Ngay=ka pule ngala I ngay=ka nga+mpa+mut=nu
I=TOP boss big and I=TOP I will (A19/20)+to you+give=will
 ‘I am the magistrate and I will give you’

merrk perrkenku +numi.
moon two+one
 ‘three months.’

Mu ngay=ka nga+mpa+dhap=nu merrk perrkenku damatha.
But I=TOP I (19)+on you+shut door=will moon two for certain
 ‘But I will lock you up for two months for certain.’

Merrk numi=ka dam+nhi+we+bath da ngatha
moon one=TOP you have (A13)+you+head+bring TimeNC suppose
kanam
it is (A4)

‘One month is continually hanging over your head.’

Ne+wiye=nu ngatha ngarra thangku numi.
You will do (A10)+bad+will suppose for wet season one
 ‘Suppose you were to commit offences during that one year.’

Bere, ngalarr=ka ma+nhi+rta=nu deyida
OK policeman=TOP he will do (A8)+you+grab=will again
 ‘OK, the police will arrest you again’

i murrinh+court thurdi+wurl=nu. Kama=ka ngay=ka
and WordNC+court you will (A30)+return=will. Maybe=TOP I=TOP

⁴ ARDS (2004).

‘and you will come back into court. I may’

nga+mpa+dhap=nu **merrk numi ngini deyida**
I will (A19/20)+on you+shut door=will moon one that again

‘lock you up again for that one month’

i merrk ngamere kama nga+mpa+dhap=nu
and month some maybe I will (A19)+on you+shut door=will

‘plus any extra time’

mange wiye marra nam.

deed bad new you have done(A8)

‘for the new offence you have committed.’

“I am the magistrate and I will give you three months. But I will lock you up for only two months. One month is continually hanging over your head. If during that year you were to commit an offence, the police will arrest you again and you will come back into court. I may lock you up again for that one month plus any extra time for the new offence you have committed”.

- Indirect Force. To convey the notion of ‘Indirect Force’ we had to construct the following culturally plausible scenario:

Indirect force

Kanhi ngatha=ka:-
This suppose=TOP

‘What about this?’

Nanthi+thanangkuy ngatha men†+tharr pinthim kangkarl
ThingNC+ dugout suppose he has(A10) tied it up it is hanging(A5) on high

i kardu=ka pepe pirrim.
and HumanGEN=TOP under he stands(A3)

‘Someone has tied up a canoe so it is suspended up high and there is a man standing underneath.’

Kardu+numi=de=ka marda mangan+art
HumanNC+ one-again=TOP belly he has (A9+)want

‘Another person wants’

pu+na+rtal=nu nanthi+pi
he will chop(A23)+on him+cut=will ThingNC+rope

‘to cut the rope’

i thanangkuy ngini=ka pani+na+yagal=nu
and dugout this=TOP it will be(A4)+on him+fall=will

‘so this canoe will fall down’

i pi yibi=nu kardu ngarra pirrim
and rope it will lie down(A2)=will HumanGEN who he stands(A3)

‘and lie on the man standing underneath’

pepe i mam=dha thathpirr.
underneath and he has done it=PAST really

‘and he does it and it really happens.’

‘What about this: someone has tied up a canoe so it is suspended up high and there is a man standing underneath. OK, then the other man decides to cut the rope on him, so that the canoe will fall down on him and lie on the man standing underneath and he does it and it really happens.’

†By morphophonemic rule mem+tharr> menh+tharr, written mentharr (Street 1987:106)

The glossary also reveals how specific Murrinh-patha is with respect to descriptors dealing with violent action. The language contains numerous specific terms for the location of bruises, and different terms for differing strikes to different parts of the body. In these instances the opposite would occur to the normal complaint levelled by lawyers and others – for a complete sentence in English, such as “the bruise is on my upper arm” there would be but a single Murrinh-patha term — “**wur dan malawi**”.

The team

- Elizabeth Kalingkunh ‘Mason Wasp’ Cumaiyi, elder, leader of the Nangu Murrinh-patha women, aged mid-seventies. Famous for her erudition and skill as a dancer. Affectionately known as Professor’.
- Lucy Tcherna, early 70s. from Nangu
- Phyllis Bunduck, early seventies, leader of the Yek Maninh Murrinh-patha women.
- Christine Cumaiyi, aged 40, daughter of Elizabeth Cumaiyi, court interpreter.
- Lawrence Kolumboort and Felix Bunduck, Murrinh-patha elders and leaders of the Diminin clan;
- Frank Dumoo, Marri Tjevin elder, fluent in Murrinh-patha, interpreter in the Darwin Magistrates Court;
- Claude Narjic, Marri Ngarr elder, fluent in Murrinh-patha, former interpreter in the Darwin Magistrates Court;
- Dominic McCormack, fluent speaker of *Murrinh-patha*; NAATI-qualified interpreter within the Criminal Justice System; translator and qualified lawyer who understands the Criminal Justice System, is aware of the niceties of legal language, had participated in criminal proceedings as an instructing solicitor and seen the difficulties faced by Indigenous persons when confronted with legalese.
- Lysbeth Ford, linguist with eighteen years experience documenting languages in the Darwin-Daly area, who has focussed for the past eight years on documenting languages in the Wadeye region.

- John Sheldon, then a lawyer for North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, initiated the whole project and worked with Ford, Dumoo and Narjic in Darwin 2001-2.

The combination of knowledgeable senior fluent speakers, lawyers and linguist brought rigour to the project and sets it apart from similar projects.

Process

In order to translate the legal terminology, our process followed a simple template:-

- McCormack and I would ensure that together we understood the meaning of the legal term. We referred often to a Legal Dictionary and also a Law Handbook produced by the Darwin Community Legal Service;
-
- Having confirmed our understanding, and if McCormack was unable to provide an immediate interpretation for the legal term, we would ask our Indigenous language experts:-
 - whether they understood the term; and, if so
 - was the term capable of direct interpretation. At times it was e.g. **nanthi darrarat** ‘theft’; **mungam+ngi+wil** (he has done+me+force) ‘He used duress on me.’
 - on other occasions there was no directly related term;

If they did not understand the term, then:-

- Having already confirmed our understanding and utilised written references, we would then produce a plain English version of the legal term;
- McCormack would then read the plain English version of the term to our colleagues, followed by his view of what the interpretation could be. This forced McCormack to confront the limits of his current understanding, and explore the linguistic background required to build upon it.
- By doing this, our Murrinh-patha colleagues gained an understanding of the English concept of the term concerned in a non-threatening environment.
- We explored it via discussion and provision of examples – including role-playing by McCormack– for as long as was necessary.
- Although McCormack was learning new words, his current knowledge of the language allowed him to follow conversation between our Murrinh-patha colleagues to ensure they remained on the right conceptual path. When they strayed, he was able to interject and bring them back to the focus point.

- Once all were comfortable with our interpreted result, a translated version of the terminology would then be typed, checked for spelling and read back in total to the group. At this point, either the version would be accepted, or amendments made. Sometimes amendments were required when I had, throughout the myriad of discussion points, constructed a sentence incorrectly or added/deleted certain markers. Often this would generate laughter and a quiet, admonishing shake of the head from our colleagues, leading to the error being corrected.
- In working with our female Murrinh-patha colleagues, there were certain protocols which had to be observed, such as the non-discussion of sexual matters in a mixed group. McCormack was required to leave the room in order that the women could even begin to discuss with me topics of a sexual nature. The youngest female in the group, the interpreter, wanted to create legal definitions in Murrinh-patha of indecent assault, rape and incest, because she had had to deal with these offences in court. But the female elders were adamant in their refusal to discuss these matters even in an all-female group, nor would they countenance their inclusion in a public document such as the legal glossary.
- It was very important that the project was long-term. It took place over a period of four years, thus allowing time for all members of the team to get to know, trust, and respect each other's expertise. This enabled the team to revise the draft glossary several times and to submit the final draft to the scrutiny of some of the linguists who had previously worked on the language⁵, and of Thamarrurr Council at Wadeye, where it currently rests. Once we have their comments, we will make final revisions to the glossary, and send it to be printed by Batchelor Press, and made available on the Worldwide Web.

Conclusion

The project has had several successful outcomes:-

- a legal glossary of the most commonly used English legal terms;
- increased understanding of the legal process by the Murrinh-patha elders who worked on the project;
- increased understanding of the subtleties of Murrinh-patha by the non-Indigenous researchers.

The glossary has also proved a useful pedagogical tool in the training of Indigenous interpreters, because it consists largely of paraphrases which provide an Australian Indigenous context for each legal concept. The rigour with which it was conducted is evident in the attention to detail of the rendering of legal terms and the morpheme by morpheme glosses provided for each Murrinh-patha translation. Agencies in other areas

⁵ Dr Chester Street (Street 1983, 1987) ; Dr Michael Walsh (Walsh 1976, 1996 and unpublished notes); Dr Ian Green (Green 2003, 2004).

of the Northern Territory are now looking to incorporate the successful features of the project in their own attempts to construct legal glossaries in local Indigenous languages.

Appendix 2: Orthography

The spelling system used in this glossary is the phonemic orthography developed by Chester and Lyn Street of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and used in the bilingual programme in the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) School at Wadeye since 1976 (Street 1987: 3-4, 8-9, 19; 30; 35-37). Murrinh-patha has twenty four phonemes. They are:

Vowels: i, e, a, u.

Stops: p, b, t, d, k, g, pronounced much as in English;

rt and rd are voiceless and voiced retroflex stops, made with the tongue tip curled back;

th is voiceless and laminal, made with the blade of the tongue. It is realised as a dental stop, made with the tongue touching or between the teeth, before a, u, and as a palatal stop, made with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, before i, e;

dh is voiced and laminal. It lenites into an interdental fricative, made with the tongue between the teeth, before a, u. and is realised as a palatal stop, made with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, before i, e.

Nasals: bilabial m;

laminal nh (dental before a, u, and palatal before i, e);

alveolar n;

retroflex m;

dorso-velar ng.

Laterals: alveolar l, and retroflex rl;

Rhotics: retroflex continuant r and alveolar flap between vowels or trill rr elsewhere.

Appendix 3: Abbreviations

Abbreviations have been kept to an absolute minimum in the morpheme-by morpheme glosses. They are:

A	Auxiliary verb
ERG	Ergative (marks the agent of a transitive verb)
FOC	Focus marker
GEN	Generic noun
HITH	Towards speaker
INSTR	Instrumental
NC	Noun Classifier
REDUP	Reduplicated
TOP	Topic marker
THITH	Away from speaker

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