

**Construing confrontation:  
Grammar in the construction of a key historical  
narrative in Umpithamu**

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a linguistic perspective on the structure and the interpretation of a key historical narrative in Umpithamu (a Pama-Nyungan language of Cape York Peninsula, Australia), against the background of a larger corpus of narrative texts in Umpithamu. The analysis focuses on the role of participant tracking devices in the macro-structure of the narrative, and the role of case marking in the build-up of narrative motifs. It is argued not only that marked types of participant tracking serve to mark the boundaries of episodes, as often noted in the literature, but also that some types have additional functions within episodes, which leads to a proposal for refinement of Fox's (1987) Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness. On a micro-structural level, it is shown how a rare system of case marking is used by the narrator to construe white–Aboriginal interactions as events in which the Aboriginal participants experience an extreme lack of control. (Episode structure, participant tracking, information structure, case marking, Australian Aboriginal narrative, Umpithamu)\*

INTRODUCTION

In this article we will present an analysis of a key historical narrative in Umpithamu, a Pama-Nyungan language spoken in Cape York Peninsula in the northeast of Australia. The narrative was recorded by the first author from Mrs. Florrie Bassani, one of the last speakers of Umpithamu. It recounts a central event in the recent history of the group of Aboriginal people currently known as Lamalama:

the forced removal in 1961 from their home country on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula to a reserve about 400 kilometers further north. The narrative is interesting in its own right, because it documents an Aboriginal view on the practices of forced removal that persisted into the second half of the previous century in parts of Australia. From a linguistic perspective, moreover, the text is particularly striking in its use of grammar in the construction of the narrative, both in macro-structural and in micro-structural terms. On a macro-level, the narrative illustrates how grammatical resources relating to participant marking are used in Umpithamu to mark episode boundaries in narrative, as often noted in the literature (e.g., Fox 1987), but it also shows clearly that these same resources can take up specific functions in the internal structure of episodes, a point that has less often been commented on in the literature on episode structure. On a micro-level, the narrative shows how grammatical resources relating to case marking are exploited by the narrator in the initial episodes to build up the central motif of dehumanization in the actions of white officials directed to Aboriginal people.

In this article we will leave aside the historical and social aspects of the events described, and we will focus on linguistic aspects of the narrative, specifically on how participant marking and case marking contribute to the build-up and interpretation of the text. By focusing on the linguistic structure of the narrative, we hope to contribute to a domain that has generally remained underrepresented in work on Australian Aboriginal languages. In spite of the availability of good grammatical descriptions for a whole range of Australian languages, there are relatively few published linguistic analyses of Australian Aboriginal narratives, and there is even less literature on the role of grammar in these narratives. The most important work in this domain can be found in a handful of publications, such as the edited collection of texts by Hercus & Sutton 1986, the analyses of various grammatical aspects of Gooniyandi narrative by McGregor 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2005, or the contrastive analysis of the macro-structure of Aboriginal and Western narrative by Klapproth 2004. What the present article can add to the literature in this domain is an analysis of the linguistic devices used in Umpithamu to signal the macro-structure of texts, and a study of the use of marked grammatical devices for rhetorical effect, highlighting the confrontation between white officials and Aboriginal people. From a more general perspective, moreover, the analysis of the macro-structure will confirm the wider applicability of the Expected Actor Principle, as formulated by McGregor 1992, 1998 for episode structure in Gooniyandi, and it will allow us to refine Fox's (1987) Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness, showing how and why marked forms of participant marking can also occur within episodes rather than at their boundaries.

The rest of this article will be structured as follows. In the second section, we will provide some basic information about the current status of Umpithamu, and we will present the narrative and its historical context. The third and fourth sections will then be devoted to the macro-structure and the micro-structure of the

narrative, respectively, focusing on the role of participant marking in the build-up of the general structure of the story, and on the role of case marking in the elaboration of the central narrative motif. In each section, we will first outline the basic grammatical information that is needed to follow the discussion, and we will then show how the grammatical resources in question are used in the narrative. The fifth section, finally, will bring together the results and formulate some more general conclusions about the analysis of Australian Aboriginal narrative.

#### THE LANGUAGE AND THE NARRATIVE

In this section, we will provide basic information about the current status of the Umpithamu language, and we will present the narrative in Umpithamu, together with some information about the historical context of the removal of Aboriginal people.

##### *The Umpithamu language*

Umpithamu is a language that is spoken on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula in northeast Australia. It belongs to the Paman subgroup of the Pama-Nyungan family, as established by Hale 1964. It is one of the four languages associated with a group of people currently known as Lamalama (a post-classical group type that has been called a “language-named tribe”; see Sutton 2003:72–73), together with the languages Morrobalama (also known as Umbugamu), Mba Rumbathama (also known as Lamalama), and Rimanggudinhma (see Rigsby 1992 for more information on the languages of this group). Like the other languages associated with the Lamalama people, Umpithamu is moribund, with two remaining full speakers, a handful of people who can use Umpithamu with varying degrees of fluency but whose main language is one of the other Lamalama languages, and a number of younger people who can understand Umpithamu but do not themselves speak it. In spite of the small size of the speech community, the language and the stories told in Umpithamu are still very much part of everyday life. For the last speakers, it is the basic language of interaction when talking to each other, and they also frequently speak Umpithamu to other members of the community who can understand the language. With older speakers of other Lamalama languages, such conversations are often bilingual in Aboriginal languages, with the Umpithamu speakers addressing the interlocutors in Umpithamu and the interlocutors replying in Morrobalama or Mba Rumbathama. With younger people who can understand Umpithamu, the conversations are typically bilingual with English, with the Umpithamu speakers addressing the interlocutors in Umpithamu, and the interlocutors replying in English.

There has been a large amount of historical and anthropological work about the past and current lives of the Lamalama people (see, e.g., Hafner 1999, Jolly 1997, Rigsby 1999, Rigsby & Chase 1998, Thomson 1934), but there is little published linguistic work on the languages associated with the Lamalama (see Rigsby 1992, 1997 on Umpithamu). The analysis in this article is based on the

first author's linguistic work with Mrs. Florrie Bassani since 2003, and on recordings made by Bruce Rigsby with Ms. Joan Liddy in 1972 and 1974. The analysis of the narrative studied here is checked against a larger reference corpus consisting of 30 narrative texts (27 recorded by the first author, and 3 recorded by Bruce Rigsby). The corpus is annotated for aspects of participant marking and case marking, and amounts to approximately 6,000 words or 1,700 clauses. Any quantitative information on aspects of grammatical structure in this article is based on this reference corpus.

### *The historical context*

In 2003, the first author recorded a text from Mrs. Florrie Bassani, in which she describes the removal of her family from their home country at the mouth of the Stewart River on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula (Port Stewart, *Yintyingka* in Umphithamu), their subsequent deportation to an Aboriginal reserve 400 kilometers further north (near Bamaga at the tip of Cape York Peninsula), the attempts of various family members to visit their home country or to receive visits from other family members who remained near Port Stewart, and their final return to Coen, a town about 70 kilometers west from their home country.

The events recounted by Mrs. Bassani are documented in various historical sources, and they are by no means uncommon in the history of contact between Aboriginal people and white settlers and officials in Australia. For extensive documentation of the historical circumstances, the reader is referred to the official documents excerpted in McIntyre-Tamwoy (2000), and to the historical surveys in Rigsby & Williams (1991) and Genever (1997). In this section, we will merely summarize the events on the basis of these sources, to enable the reader to better understand the social and historical background of the narrative.

The people currently known as Lamalama are a post-contact group of Aboriginal people, formed in the 1920s around the mouth of the Stewart River, from those who survived dispossession and introduced diseases in the lower Princess Charlotte Bay area, on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula. Their traditional way of life was studied at the end of the 1920s by the anthropologist Donald Thomson (e.g. Thomson 1934), and they continued to live on their home country around Port Stewart until their removal in 1961. The removal was instigated by the owners of a nearby cattle station, who considered the presence of a group of Aboriginal people a nuisance and in the late 1950s started lobbying for their removal with the Department of Native Affairs. After some discussion with the local Protector of Aborigines from the nearby town of Coen, who initially defended the Lamalama against the accusations, the Department of Native Affairs decided to give in to the owners of the cattle station, and to remove the Lamalama people from Port Stewart to an Aboriginal reserve near Bamaga. In 1961, white officials used the excuse of a medical examination to convince a group of twenty-three Lamalama people to board a boat, and then took them 400 kilometers north to Bamaga at the tip of Cape York Peninsula. A number of other

Lamalama people, who were working on cattle stations at the time, were not removed. In spite of continuous requests to return to their home country, the deported Lamalama people were kept on the reserve, and for a long time family members who were not deported were refused permission to visit their deported relatives in Bamaga. Several elderly people, including the father of Mrs. Florrie Bassani, passed away near Bamaga without seeing their home country again. In the 1970s, the remaining people in Bamaga started moving back south, and settled in the town of Coen. They soon started going back to Port Stewart, and now they have three outstations in the area, with some people staying there permanently and others coming in from Coen for shorter periods of time to fish, hunt, and spend time on their home country (see Rigsby & Williams 1991 for an account of the Lamalama people's re-occupation of their home country).

### *The narrative*

In this section, we will present the narrative as it was recorded from Mrs. Florrie Bassani in 2003. The version reproduced here is slightly edited, in the sense that we removed some English lines that translate Umpithamu lines and were obviously meant to provide clarification for the sake of the recorder, whose proficiency in Umpithamu was limited at the time. We realize, of course, that issues like switching between languages, and the choice which lines to translate and how, are not trivial and constitute a topic of research in their own right, especially for questions like the interactive dimension of narrative performance. They are not immediately relevant to the questions of narrative structure investigated here, however, so we have chosen to leave out these translations for the sake of brevity. We have only removed clauses that repeat information already provided in Umpithamu.<sup>1</sup> Toward the end of the text, there is some shifting to English in the story line as such, with some information that is provided only in English. These clauses have, of course, been retained.

The narrative is represented in Table 1. It is subdivided into numbered lines (1–97), and the lines are grouped into episodes, defined further in the following section. The lines are presented in the form of a table, with the line number in the first column, the Umpithamu clause in the second column, a glossed version in the third column, and a free translation in the fourth column. Each episode is identified by a character (A–M) and preceded by a brief summary.

### PARTICIPANT MARKING AND THE MACRO-STRUCTURE OF THE NARRATIVE

The subdivision of the narrative into episodes is based on a number of traditional criteria of internal thematic cohesion, such as the requirement that episodes present distinct time sequences within the narrative (Prince 1973:45), and that each episode is oriented toward the realization of a central goal (Johnson & Mandler 1980). In some cases, the temporal and the goal-oriented definitions do not

TABLE 1. *The narrative.*

	Umpithamu text	Glosses	Translation
A	<i>1: Abstract</i>		
	1 Kali-n=antyangana / Yintyingka-munu	take-PST=1PLEXC.GEN / Yintyingka-ABL	They took us away from Yintyingka (Port Stewart)
B	<i>2–20: Removal</i>		
	2 Ama katha-nu yongki-n=iluwa	person bind-NLZ come-PST=3SG.NOM	A policeman came
	3 Yongki-n=ilu aawarra	come-PST=3SG.NOM east	He came east [to Yintyingka]
	4 Antyampa weerra wuna-n	1PLEXC.NOM sleep lie-PST	We were asleep
	5 Ngaman=antypampa-ingku yoompi-na-mun alu	see-PST=1PLEXC.NOM-3SG.ACC stand-NLZ-ABL DEM	We saw him standing there
	6 Ah, iya-ku=uurra ungarra	go-POT=2PL.NOM north	[Policeman:] “You will go north
	7 Ungarra iya-ku=uurra	north go-POT=2PL.NOM	You will go north
	8 Ungarra iya-ku=uurra checkup	north go-POT=2PL.NOM checkup	You will go north for a check-up
	9 Doctor ngama-ku=uurrangana alu	doctor see-POT=2PL.GEN DEM	The doctor will examine you there”
	10 Ukunu ngaani-ku iya-ku=antypampa	ukunu IGNOR-DAT go-POT=1PLEXC.NOM	[Aborigines:] “What should we go for?”
	11 Well youfella gonna go / TI	—	[Policeman:] “You will go to Thursday Island
	12 Checkup / youfella got sick or body like that	—	For a checkup – if you’re ill”
	13 Antyampa alu iya-ku	1PLEXC.NOM NEG go-POT	[Aborigines:] “We won’t go
	14 Antyampa miiintha	1PLEXC.NOM good	We are allright”
	15 Nah, iya-ku=uurra	go-POT=2PL.NOM	[Policeman:] “No, you will go
	16 Yupa ilima-ku=uurra	soon return-POT=2PL.NOM	You will come back soon
	17 Ngarrkal nhunha niina-ku	moon other sit-POT	You will stay for another month
	18 Alu yongki-ku ungarra-mun	DEM come-POT north-ABL	Then you will come back from the north
	19 Kawuthi kali-ku=uurrangku / kawuthi onongkol	boat take-POT=2PL.ACC / boat one	The boat will take you”
	20 Iya-n=antypampa ungarra	go-PST=1PLEXC.NOM	We went north
C	<i>21–30: Administrative procedure at Red Island Point</i>		
	21 Yitha-n=antyangana / Bamaga	leave-PST=1PLEXC.GEN / Bamaga	They left us at Bamaga
	22 Jetty alu yinthu / Red Island Point	jetty DEM down / Red Island POINT	That jetty down there, Red Island Point
	23 Yitha-n=antyangana alu	leave-PST=1PLEXC.GEN DEM	They left us there
	24 Nhunha ama iya-n ayngkiingka ungarra	other person go-PST first north	Other people went north first
	25 Ilima-n=inu ungarra-munu	return-PST=3PL.NOM north-ABL	They came back from the north

	26	Antyampa iya-n=antyampa / amitha athuna omoro athuna	I PLEXC.NOM go-PST=I PLEXC.NOM / mother 1SG.GEN father 1SG.GEN	Then we went, together with my mother and father
	27	Antyampa iya-n ungarra	I PLEXC.NOM go-PST north	We went north
	28	Niina-n=antyampa ungarra / three week	sit-PST=I PLEXC.NOM north	We stayed north for three weeks
	29	Yongki-n=antyampa ungarra-munu	come-PST=I PLEXC.NOM north-ABL	We came back from the north
	30	Niina-n=antyampa	sit-PST=I PLEXC.NOM	Then we stayed
D	31–34:	<i>First request to return (all)</i>		
	31	Yongki-n=ilu waypala / L	come-PST=3SG.NOM whitefella / L	A whitefella came, L
	32	Ilima-ku=antyampa aakurru-ku?	return-POT=I PLEXC.NOM home-DAT	[Aborigines :] “Can we go home ?”
	33	Niina-l=uurra / ngarrkal nhunha-ku	sit-IMP=2PL.NOM / moon other-DAT	[Whitefella:] “You stay, for another month”
	34	Keep like that	—	
E	35–43:	<i>Second request to return (father)</i>		
	35	Omoror athuna ayka-n	father 1SG.GEN enter-PST	My father went in [to the office]
	36	Ayka-n=iluwa	enter-PST=3SG.NOM	He went in
	37	Ayka-n=iluwa	enter-PST=3SG.NOM	And went in
	38	That waypala uuku wakara erke-n=ilu-ungku	whitefella language hard speak-PST=3SG.NOM-3SG.ACC	The whitefella spoke strong words to him
	39	No, you can’t go, you gotta wait, till your time up	—	“No, you can’t go, you have to wait until your time is up.”
	40	Angampal iluwa	IGNOR 3SG.NOM	He was like that
	41	Omoror athuna wuypu-n=iluwa	father 1SG.GEN die-PST=3SG.NOM	My father passed away
	42	Aakurru iminh ungu-n=iluwa	home INT think-PST=3SG.NOM	He was thinking about home too much
	43	He bin leavim home behind	—	He left his home behind
F	44–49:	<i>Reminiscences</i>		
	44	Yukurun ngaani yitha-n=antyampa kuurra	gear IGNOR leave-PST=I PLEXC.NOM / behind	We left some gear behind
	45	Mayi yitha-n	food leave-PST	We left food
	46	Ngaani yitha-n=antyampa kuurra	IGNOR leave-PST=I PLEXC.NOM / behind	We left things behind
	47	Wayngkarrangka yitha-n=antyampa	canoe leave-PST=I PLEXC.NOM	We left the canoe
	48	Waawa-n=ina kuwa / kuurra / yuma-mpal	burn-PST=3PL.NOM west / behind / fire-LOC	They burned it in the west, behind our back, in the fire
	49	Eelewen ngaympi-n=antyangana kuurra	dog hit-PST=I PLEXC.GEN behind	They killed our dogs behind our back
G	50–57:	<i>First request to visit north</i>		
	50	Unatha athuna / arrkatha athuna	o.brother 1SG.GEN / y.brother 1SG.GEN	My older brother and my younger brother
	51	Arrkatha uutherri athuna unatha onongkol athuna	y.brother two 1SG.GEN o.brother one 1SG.GEN	I have two younger brothers and one older brother
	52	Ayka-n=ina	enter-PST=3PL.NOM	They went in [to the police office]

(continued)

TABLE 1. (*Continued*)

	Umpithamu text	Glosses	Translation
	53 Iya-ku=antyampa ungarra	go-POT=1PLEXC.NOM north	[Aborigines:] “We want to go north
	54 Omoro amitha uwi-ku=antyampa	father mother find-POT=1PL.EXC.NOM	We want to visit our mother and father”
	55 No, alu iya-ku=uurra	NEG go-POT=2PL.NOM	[Policeman:] “No, you can’t go
	56 Aka niina-ku=ina	PERM sit-POT=3PL.NOM	Let them stay”
	57 Niina-n=ina	sit-PST=3PL.NOM	They stayed
<i>H</i>	58–68: <i>Second request to visit north</i>		
	58 Nhunha yongki-n=iluwa	other come-PST=3SG.NOM	Another one came
	59 Ama katha-nu nhunha yongki-n=iluwa	person bind-NLZ come-PST=3SG.NOM	Another policeman came
	60 Miintha iluwa	good 3SG.NOM	He was good
	61 Old JS / noongorro ilu policeman	old JS / name 3SG.NOM policeman	Old JS, the policeman’s name
	62 Aapatha-n=ilu-ungku	ask-PST=3SG.NOM-3SG.ACC	He asked him
	63 I can go Bamaga, see my parents?	—	“Can I go to Bamaga, to see my parents?”
	64 Yes, you can go, you can go anywhere	—	[Policeman:] “Yes, you can go, you can go anywhere.
	65 If you want to bring mother and father, you can bringim / anytime	—	If you want to bring your mother and father, you can bring them any time.”
	66 Yongki-n=ina ungarra	comez-PST=3PL.NOM north	They came north
	67 Ah, miintha ilu waypala, miintha	good 3SG.NOM whitefella good	Ah, he was good that whitefella
	68 Iya-ku=uurra iiparra	go-POT=2PL.NOM south	[Brothers:] “You can go south”
<i>I</i>	69–77: <i>Another refusal</i>		
	69 Iya-n=antyampa yenu	go-PST=1PLEXC.NOM up	We went up [to the office]
	70 No, youfella not going	—	[Superintendent:] “No, you are not going.
	71 You not gonna takim them	—	You can’t take them.
	72 They can go byembye behind	—	They can follow you later.”
	73 Ngo’oyi	Nothing	Nothing
	74 Naykana-n=ina	lie-PST=3PL.NOM	They told lies
	75 Dad bin like that na, till he bin passed away	—	Father was like that, until he passed away.
	76 Worry, home worry for home	—	He worried too much for home.
	77 So, mum bin stay, still there	—	So mother stayed, she was still there.



J	78–84: <i>Back and forth to Coen</i>		
	78 I bin here	—	I was here
	79 I married	—	I was married
	80 Yeah yongki-n=antypampa	come-PST=1PLEXC.NOM	Yeah we came
	81 Yongki-n=aniya apii	come-PST=1DUExc.NOM here	We came here
82 Amitha athuna yongki-n	mother 1SG.GEN come-PST	My mother came	
83 Uwi-n=iluwa	find-PST=3SG.NOM	She visited (us)	
84 Ilima-n=iluwa	return-PST=3SG.NOM	She went back	
K	85–91: <i>Younger sister's return</i>		
	85 Iilatha athuna	y.sister 1SG.GEN	My younger sister
	86 Alu niina-ngka=iluwa / J	DEM sit-PRS=3SG.NOM	She is sitting there / J [name]
	87 He keep going, mind mother	—	She kept going, looked after mother
	88 Stop na, till mother bin passed away	—	She stayed, until mother passed away
	89 Apii yongki-n=iluwa	here come-PST=3SG.NOM	She came here
	90 Manta kali-n=iluwa ungarra-mun	child carry-PST=3SG.NOM north-ABL	She brought the kids from up north
91 School apii yongki-n=iluwa-inangku	school here come-PST=3SG.NOM-3PL.ACC	She came here to put them in school	
L	92–94: <i>Younger brother's return</i>		
	92 Arrkatha onongkol niina-n=athuna ungarra / R	y.brother one sit-PST=1SG.GEN north	One of my younger brothers remained up north, R [name]
	93 Iluwa niina-n	3SG.NOM sit-PST	He stayed
94 And he bin come after then	—	He came afterwards	
M	95–97: <i>End result: Whole family back</i>		
	95 Arrkatha iilatha athuna yongki-n=ina ungarra-munu	y.brother y.sister 1SG.GEN come-PST=3PL.NOM north-ABL	My younger brother and sister came back from up north
	96 Alu niina-ngka=antypampa	DEM sit-PRS=1PLEXC.NOM	We are here
97 Ngo'oyi ungarra now	nothing north	There is nothing up north now	

TABLE 2. *Summary of the structure of the narrative.*

A	1	Abstract
B	2–20	Removal
C	21–30	Administrative procedure at Red Island Point
D	31–34	First request to return (all)
E	35–43	Second request to return (father)
F	44–49	Reminiscences
G	50–57	First request to visit north
H	58–68	Second request to visit north
I	69–77	Another refusal
J	78–84	Back and forth to Coen
K	85–91	Younger sister's return
L	92–94	Younger brother's return
M	95–97	End result: Whole family back

coincide, but these are also the instances where we find unexpected phenomena in the domain of participant marking, as we will discuss in more detail below.

The first clause in the narrative does not constitute an episode in the strict sense of the term, but rather functions as an “abstract” that summarizes the main thematic line, and thus has scope over the rest of the narrative. This is a general convention in the Umpithamu narratives in the corpus, which typically start with a summarizing clause. After the “abstract” clause in A, the narrative unfolds in 12 episodes (B–M), summarized in Table 2, which show the well-known pattern of a complication, several potential turning points that could lead to a resolution, and the final resolution (Labov 1972:362–63).

The complication is described in episodes B and C: The Lamalama people are taken away from their home country (B), and they are moved around in an administrative procedure for a couple of weeks before they are finally settled at the Aboriginal reserve (C). Both of these episodes illustrate the potential conflict between temporal and goal-oriented definitions of episodes. Episode B describes one temporal sequence, but two opposing goals: the policeman's goal to remove people, and the people's goal to stay. In episode C, by contrast, we have more than one temporal sequence (the other people's move followed by the Umpithamu people's move), but only one central goal: the settlement in the Aboriginal reserve. At this point, we have chosen to take the largest groupings as the basic episodes. Below we will provide linguistic evidence to show that the smaller groupings in this case should be regarded as thematically related subunits that make up a larger episode.

Episodes D to I represent potential turning points, describing either unsuccessful attempts by the deported Lamalama people to go back south, or unsuccessful attempts by the Lamalama people in the south to visit their deported family members. Within this sequence, episode F has a somewhat special status:

It does not serve as a potential turning point, but instead elaborates on the suffering of the Lamalama people by providing a flashback to the removal and focusing on what the white officials did to their possessions after they had boarded the ship. Episodes J to M, finally, describe the steps leading to the final resolution, by describing how various members of the family move south and settle in Coen, until the whole family is back south.

While the subdivision of the narrative into episodes is based on thematic (i.e., nonlinguistic) criteria, we will show in this section that there is a clear linguistic correlate in the system of participant marking. Specifically, we will show that a new episode in the narrative is signaled by lexical marking of the subject in the first clause, for non-speech act participants (i.e., participants different from speaker and/or hearer) and by a switch to a new pronominal subject, for speech act participants. In addition, we will show that the association of marked focal pronouns with participant switches within episodes provides an interesting counterexample to Fox's (1987) Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness, according to which marked types of participant tracking tend to be associated with the boundaries of episodes. On the basis of the unexpected distribution of focal pronouns, we will propose a refinement of Fox's principle, and we will provide an overall account of the distribution of the different types of participant marking in terms of the Expected Actor Principle formulated by McGregor 1992, 1998, according to which each episode has an expected Actor that is maintained throughout the episode. We will first outline the grammatical basis of the system of participant marking in Umpithamu, and then we will show how this system is used to mark episode boundaries in the narrative.

### *Participant marking in Umpithamu*

In Umpithamu, as in many other languages of the Pama-Nyungan family, clause participants are marked primarily with pronominal means, and secondarily with lexical means. The example clauses in (1), (2), (3), and (4) below represent the most typical ways to mark participants in Umpithamu. Participants can be marked only with pronouns, as in (1), where the nominative pronoun *ilu* refers to the subject role and the accusative pronoun *ungku* refers to the object role; or only with lexical items, as in (2), where *nayngka* 'child' is the only element referring to the direct object role; or with a combination of a lexical item and a cross-referencing pronoun, as in (3) and (4), where the subject *angkutha athuna* 'my grandfather' and the direct object *anharra yawul* 'big crocodile' are cross-referenced with a nominative pronoun *iluwa* and an accusative pronoun *ungku*, respectively.

- (1) *kali-n=ilu-ungku*                      *aakurru-ku*  
 carry-PST=3SG.NOM-3SG.ACC home-DAT  
 'She carried him home.'<sup>2</sup>
- (2) *nayngka kali-l=inu*  
 child carry-IMP=2SG.NOM  
 'You carry the children.'

TABLE 3. *Frequency of pronominal and lexical marking of participants.*

Only pronominal	Lexical				Total (verbal predicates)
	Intransitive subject	Transitive subject	Transitive object	Transitive subject and object	
915	132	28	281	12	1368
67%	10%	2%	20%	1%	100%

(3) angkutha athuna ayngkiingka iya-n=iluwa  
 grandfather 1SG.GEN first go-PST=3SG.NOM  
 'My grandfather went first.'

(4) anharra yawul ngama-n=ilu-ungku  
 saltwater.crocodile big see-PST=3SG.NOM-3SG.ACC  
 'He saw a big saltwater crocodile.'

Within this system, lexical marking of participants is the least typical option overall, as shown by the figures in Table 3. Of all verbal clauses in our reference corpus, about two-thirds have no lexically marked participants at all and rely exclusively on pronominal marking. Only one-third have lexically marked participants, hardly ever more than one per clause. For clauses that use lexical marking, there is a further degree of markedness, in that subjects are less often marked lexically than objects, representing slightly less than one-third of all lexically marked NPs.<sup>3</sup> This is even more striking if we take into account that transitive clauses represent only about half of all verbal clauses, which implies that there are about twice as many subjects in the corpus as objects.

What these figures show, therefore, is that in Umpithamu discourse, the most typical way to mark participants is to use only pronouns, and the least typical way is to use lexical marking for subjects, with lexical marking of objects in between. This is somewhat reminiscent of patterns of preferred argument structure (e.g., Du Bois 1987), but what stands out here is the generalized discrepancy between subjects and objects,<sup>4</sup> with even intransitive subjects receiving far less lexical marking than objects, which cannot really be explained by a pattern of preferred argument structure. In the following section, we will argue that the overall rarity of lexical subjects can be attributed to a special discourse function in the macro-structure of texts: the signaling of the start of a new episode.

Within the system of pronominal marking, Umpithamu has a further contrast between two positions in the clause: Pronouns most typically occur in their standard position as enclitics to the verb, as in (1)–(4) above, but they can also occur in a less frequent position at the start of the clause, as in (5) below. This marked position signals focal status for the referent in question; in such cases, the referent is central in the local development of the discourse, for instance in establish-

TABLE 4. *Frequency of pronoun positions.*

Final	Initial	Total (verbal & non-verbal predicates)
1310	99	1409
93%	7%	100%

ing a relation of contrast or an explanatory relation between two subsequent clauses. In (5), for instance, the fronting of the pronoun is motivated by the contrast between the fact that the referent of the 3rd person singular nominative pronoun *ilu-* in (5b) claims ignorance about the whereabouts of a fugitive (5a), and the fact that this same person is the one who told the fugitive to go into hiding (5b).

- (5) a. “wantha-wa iya-n=iluwa”  
 IGNOR-LOC go-PST=3SG.NOM  
 b. ilu-ungku ayngkini-n  
 3SG.NOM-3SG.ACC send-PST  
 ‘‘I don’t know where she went’’ [he told the policeman] But he was the one who sent her away [warned her to go into hiding].’

Within this grammatical opposition, the clause-initial position is marked not only in qualitative terms, because of its association with a marked information-structural option, but it is also clearly marked in terms of its frequency in natural text. As shown in Table 4, out of the 1,409 clauses that contain pronominal forms (both with verbal and nonverbal predicates), only 99, or 7%, have a clause-initial pronoun.

#### *Participant marking and episode structure*

The literature on episode structure has shown that systems of participant marking can play an important role in the delimitation of episodes, in the sense that switches in the constellations of participants can be one of the factors that trigger thematic breaks between episodes (see Hinds 1977 for descriptive evidence, and Tomlin 1987 and Ji 2002 for experimental evidence). From a linguistic perspective, moreover, Fox 1987 has shown that in contexts allowing choice between various types of participant tracking devices, the morphosyntactically marked types tend to be associated with the start of episodes, and thus come to function as formal markers of episode boundaries. If we apply these two principles to the system of participant marking in Umpithamu, they make the following predictions. For non-speech act participants, there is a choice between the default system of pronominal 3rd person marking and the marked system of lexical marking, which predicts that lexical marking will be used at

the start of episodes, and pronominal marking within episodes. For speech act participants, there is only pronominal marking, but in this system there is a choice between the default postverbal position and the marked clause-initial position, which predicts that the clause-initial position will be used at the start of episodes, and the postverbal position within episodes. If we look at the data, both in our narrative and in our reference corpus, these predictions are only partially borne out, because lexical marking is also found within episodes, and clause-initial pronominal marking is even found exclusively within episodes. On the basis of a qualitative analysis of this unexpected distribution of marked forms, we will argue for a refined version of the Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness, which not only looks at formal markedness oppositions in participant tracking as such, but also takes into account their specific functions. In addition, we will argue that McGregor's Expected Actor Principle, originally formulated for episode structure in Gooniyandi (McGregor 1992, 1998), provides a good explanatory framework for the overall distribution of participant marking devices found in Umpithamu narratives, including the unexpected distribution of clause-initial pronouns.

If we look at the start of episodes in the narrative, these generally confirm the prediction about the distinction between lexical and pronominal marking found in the literature. For non-speech act participants, we find lexical subjects in the first line of the episode, which are different from the final subject in the preceding episode, while for speech act participants we find pronominal subjects that are different from the final subject in the preceding episode. Thus, episodes B, D, E, G, H, K, L and M each start with a line that contains a lexical subject. In episodes B, D, E, H, L and M, the rest of the clause is in the same line as the lexical subject. In the case of G and K, the lexical item is separated from the clause for which it forms the subject by an aside about the person(s) involved – that is, an explanation about the makeup of the family in line 51 in G, and an indication of the location of the person involved in line 86 in K. In any case, the distribution of lexical subjects in the narrative strongly suggests a link with episode structure, in that lexical subjects tend to occur in the first clauses of episodes, and thus seem to mark the start of a new episode. The first clause in episodes F and I (and the English one in J) all use a pronominal subject referring to a speech act participant that is different from the one used at the end of the preceding episode. Thus, episode F starts with a 1st person plural subject, switching from the 3rd person singular subject at the end of episode E, and episode I starts with a 1st person plural subject, switching from the 3rd person singular subject at the end of episode H (not including the quoted line in 68). In this sense, the prediction about the distribution of lexical versus pronominal marking is borne out: When dealing with non-speech act participants, we tend to find lexical subjects at the starts of episodes (as in B, D, E, G, H, K, L and M).<sup>5</sup>

There are also some predictions that are contradicted by the data, however. On the one hand, we also find lexically marked subjects that occur within episodes,<sup>6</sup>

as in episode C, with *nhunha ama* ‘other people’ in line 24, or in episode E, with *waypala* ‘whitefella’ in line 38 and *omoro athuna* ‘my father’ in line 41. On the other hand, if we look at the opposition between postverbal and clause-initial position of pronouns, we find the unmarked type for participant switches at the start of episodes, and the marked type for participant switches within episodes. This is the case in episode B, for instance, where there is a switch from the policeman as a subject in lines 2 and 3, to a focal 1st person plural subject in line 4, and in episode C, where there is a switch between the ‘other people’ and the 3rd person plural form in lines 24 and 25, to the focal 1st person plural in line 26.

The existence of such counterexamples to the Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness suggests that markedness oppositions in systems of participant tracking cannot be taken at face value when we are dealing with their distribution in narrative. Specifically, we argue that the marked forms have different functions that are compatible with their use inside the structure of episodes. Take, for instance, what happens between lines 23 and 26 in episode C, reproduced in (6a–d) below.

- (6) a. *yitha-n=antyangana alu* [= 23]  
 leave-PST=1PLEXC.GEN DEM  
 ‘They left us there.’
- b. *nhunha ama iya-n ayngkiingka ungarra* [= 24]  
 other people go-PST first north  
 ‘Other people went north first.’
- c. *ilima-n=ina ungarra-munu* [= 25]  
 return-PST=3PL.NOM north-ABL  
 ‘They came back from the north.’
- d. *antypampa iya-n=antypampa* [= 26]  
 1PLEXC.NOM go-PST=1PLEXC.NOM  
 ‘Then we went.’

In this excerpt, there is a switch to a new lexical subject *nhunha ama* ‘other people’ in (6b), and a switch to a focal 1st person plural subject *antypampa* in (6d), all of this within the episode. Such participant switches are similar to the episode-delimiting ones in that they all signal distinct units of action within the narrative – as mentioned in the introduction to this section, this was precisely one of the instances for which there was some doubt about the delineation of the episode. In this case, the switch in (6b) introduces the movement and return of another set of deported people (in an administrative procedure before settling them at the reserve), and the switch in (6d) introduces the movement and return of the Lamalama people. What makes the switches discussed here qualitatively different from undoubted episode-delimiting switches, however, is that the units of action they introduce are thematically linked to each other in the function of the larger episode in which they occur. In this case, for instance, the switches introduce the successive moves of the Lamalama people and a group of other deportees, which together form an episode defined by the general goal of resettling people in the Aboriginal reserve. This is also why we chose to group the

whole set of clauses in 21–30 as one single episode consisting of distinct sub-units, rather than as distinct episodes. The same applies to an episode like E, where *waypala* ‘whitefella’ in 38 and *omoro athuna* ‘my father’ in 41 are episode-internal lexical subjects. Again, these uses delimit closely linked units of action (request, refusal, and effect) that together form a larger unit that we chose as our basic episode.

There is linguistic evidence for the relevance of this analysis, in that pronominal equivalents of these situations use a different position for episode-internal and episode-delimiting participant switches – the focal rather than the neutral position. As already mentioned, the clause-initial focus position is associated with participants that are prominent in the local development of discourse, typically in establishing an interclausal relation between two subsequent clauses, such as the relation of contrast between (6c) and (6d). It is such interclausal relations that build the thematic links between subsequent units of action to cluster them into an episode. The same can be observed in the episode-internal pronoun switch in line 4 in episode B, repeated in (7a–c) below. The switch from the policeman in (7a–b) to the focal 1st person singular in (7c) introduces a distinct unit of action. The policeman, representing the white officials’ goal of removing people, is contrasted with the Lamalama people, whose goal is to stay on their home country. Again, however, these two units of action are thematically linked in the larger build-up of the episode, in dramatizing a conflict between the contrasting goals of the white officials and the Aboriginal people. And again, there is a focal, clause-initial pronoun to mark the contrast between the two units.

- (7) a. ama katha-nu yongki-n=iluwa  
 person bind-NLZ come-PST=3SG.NOM  
 ‘A policeman came.’  
 b. yongki-n=ilu aawarra  
 come-PST=3SG.NOM east  
 ‘He came east.’  
 c. antyampa weerra wuna-n  
 1PLEXC.NOM sleep lie-PST  
 ‘We were asleep.’

To sum up, we can say that episode boundaries are associated with switches in subject participants, formally realized either by lexical marking of the subject in the case of non-speech act participants, or by pronominal marking of the subject in the case of speech act participants. More generally, switches in subject participants signal the start of a distinct unit of action, which means that they can also occur within episodes. In such cases, however, the units of action separated by the participant switch are thematically related, for instance in a relation of contrast, and cluster together as related subunits of one single episode. In the case of pronominal marking, these episode-internal switches can also be formally distinguished from episode-introducing switches because they use the clause-initial focus position for pronouns instead of the standard postverbal position.



From a broader perspective, the apparent exceptions to the Principle of Morphosyntactic Markedness examined here also suggest some refinements to the principle. Markedness oppositions in the system of participant tracking cannot be taken at face value, because we also need to take into account their function before we can make predictions about their distribution in narrative texts. Unlike the opposition between lexical and pronominal marking for subjects, the distinction between focal and non-focal pronouns has a specific function to establish local semantic links between units of action, which explains why it is associated with the middle of episodes rather than their boundaries. If we look at our analysis in terms of the literature available on episode structure in Australian Aboriginal narratives, our observations can most easily be integrated into the Expected Actor Principle formulated by McGregor 1992, 1998 for episode structure in Gooniyandi. According to this principle, “[t]he episode protagonist is – once it has been established – the expected (and unmarked) Actor of each main narrative clause; any other Actor is unexpected” (McGregor 1998:516). This principle explains why episode structure hinges on subject marking. On the one hand, subjects are the only possible locus for Actor roles in Umpithamu,<sup>7</sup> given the absence of perspective-changing devices like passives. On the other hand, these subjects are usually also the source of the central goal that defines the episode (or its sub-units in the case of the structurally complex episodes discussed above). Taken together, this allows us to summarize the distribution of lexical subject marking and pronominal marking described above as follows:

(i) For subjects that are not speech act participants: Lexical subject marking is used to establish an expected Actor at the start of the episode, and to mark switches to another Actor in thematic subunits within the episode. Any other reference to the expected Actor is pronominal.

(ii) For subjects that are speech act participants: Non-focal pronominal subject marking is used to establish an expected Actor at the start of the episode, and focal pronominal subject marking is used to mark switches to another speech act participant Actor in thematic subunits within the episode. Any other reference to the expected Actor is pronominal.

#### CASE MARKING AND THE MOTIF OF CONFRONTATION

Moving from the macro-structure of the text to micro-structural issues, one of the basic motifs that run throughout the complication and turning-point episodes of the narrative is the confrontation between white officials and Aboriginal people, first in the removal of the Lamalama people from their home country, and then in their successive attempts to go back to their home country. Especially in the complication episodes describing removal, the confrontation with the white officials is highlighted by the use of a marked type of case frame: the use of genitive pronouns for human direct objects instead of the default accusative pronouns. In this section, we will first show that such genitive pronouns mark an

extreme lack of control on the part of the human being undergoing the action, and we will then show how the narrator exploits this construction rhetorically to highlight the dehumanizing effect of the white officials' actions on the Aboriginal people.

### *Case marking in Umpithamu*

In Umpithamu, the grammatical roles of participants are marked with suffixes, in an ergative-absolutive system for lexical items and a nominative-accusative system for pronouns. Thus, lexical transitive subjects can receive the ergative marker *-mpal*,<sup>8</sup> as with *Barry-mpal* in (8), while lexical transitive objects and intransitive subjects remain unmarked, as with *minya oomolo* in (8) and *minya* in (9). For pronominally marked participants, on the other hand, objects are in the accusative form, as with *ungku* in (4) above, while transitive and intransitive subjects are in the nominative form, as with *ilu(wa)* in (3) and (4) above.

(8) Barry-mpal minya oomolo warrngkatha-n=ilu ngoki-mpal  
Barry-ERG animal barramundi wash-PST=3SG.NOM water-LOC  
'Barry washed the barramundi in the water.'

(9) minya wuypu-ngka=ina  
animal die-PRS=3PL.NOM  
'The fish die.'

While the split between an ergative system for lexical items and an accusative system for pronouns is typical for many Australian languages, Umpithamu has an additional option for case marking that is much rarer, and that is exploited with rhetorical effect in the narrative studied here. When referring to human participants undergoing actions, Umpithamu allows a choice between the standard accusative pronoun, as with *inangku* in (10) – and similar structures in (1) and (3) above – and a genitive pronoun, as with *ulangana* in (11) (a genitive pronoun precludes presence of a nominative pronoun in the same structure; see note 5). This type of pronoun is labeled “genitive” because its primary function is to mark possession with nouns, as in the structure in (12).

(10) aampa-n=iluwa-inangku yenu-mun  
bury-PST=3SG.NOM-3PL.ACC on.top-ABL  
'He covered them from on top (with ashes)'

(11) ulangana aampa-n=ulangana / ula inatha-nti  
3DU.GEN bury-PST=3DU.GEN 3DU.NOM father's.elder.brother-COM  
'They buried them two, uncle and nephew.'

(12) eelewen ulangana  
dog 3DU.GEN  
'Their dog.'

The semantic effect of the use of genitive pronouns for human direct objects is to mark an experience of extreme lack of control on the part of the person affected by the action (McGregor 1999, who describes a comparable construction in Nyulnyulan languages, argues for an analysis in terms of actions “befall-

ing” people rather than people “being affected” by them). There is evidence for this semantic effect from at least three sources: (i) the type of objects that typically receive genitive marking, (ii) the type of subjects that typically trigger genitive marking for human direct objects, and (iii) the rhetorical exploitation of the accusative/genitive contrast in discourse. The first factors will be discussed in this section, and the last one will be discussed in a following one, using the narrative studied here to demonstrate rhetorical uses of the genitive/accusative distinction. There is additional evidence for the analysis with which we will not deal in this context, most importantly the grammatical similarity of the genitive construction to experiencer constructions describing physiological and psychological states or events.

In the majority of cases, the distinction between genitive and accusative is a matter of choice for the narrator and relates to the perspective the narrator wishes to impose on the events. There is a small number of constructions, however, that have obligatory genitive marking, and therefore provide an interesting perspective on the semantics of the genitive pronoun. The first factor that can make the genitive obligatory relates to the type of human direct object used in the construction. If the human direct object is inherently without control, the genitive will be used. Some typical examples are a dead body being handled for burial, as in (11) above, or a baby being handled for care, as in (13) below. In both cases, we are dealing with human referents undergoing an action, but unlike the typical human referent, these are inherently without any control over the action, and accordingly also receive genitive marking.

- (13) ngoki-mpal warrngkatha-n=inangana  
 water-INSTR wash-PST=3PL.GEN  
 ‘They washed them (babies) with water.’

Another factor that can make the genitive obligatory relates to the type of subject used in the construction. If the subject refers to an inanimate entity affecting a human direct object, the genitive is obligatory for the direct object. A typical example is in (14) below, with the inanimate entity *yuma* ‘fire’ acting on the human direct object, which receives obligatory genitive marking. Moreover, if the subject refers to a lower animate entity or a supernatural being, genitive marking is typical – though not obligatory – for the human direct object, as in (15) and (16) below, with *ewen* ‘mosquitoes’ and *wooperri* ‘Stories’ (mythological beings) representing the lower animate and supernatural categories, respectively.

- (14) yuma-mpal anthi-ku=uurrangana  
 fire-ERG burn-POT=2PL.GEN  
 ‘The fire is going to burn you.’
- (15) ewen atha-n=athuna  
 mosquito bite-PST=1SG.GEN  
 ‘The mosquitoes bit me.’

TABLE 5. *Frequency of accusative and genitive pronouns for direct objects.*

Accusative	Genitive	Total
174	19	193
90%	10%	100%

- (16) Wooperri neena noomu-n=antyangana  
 Story smell smell-PST=1PLEXC.GEN  
 'The Story [mythological being] smelt us.'

Taken together, the types of subjects and objects that can trigger obligatory genitive marking provide good evidence for the semantics of lack of control associated with the genitive. The evidence from objects is most direct: Human direct objects inherently without control, illustrated in (11) and (13), always receive genitive marking. The evidence from subjects is more indirect, but points the same way. What is special about inanimates and lower animates, illustrated in (14) and (15), is that they are unexpected as agents of actions (compare Wierzbicka 1980). Unlike higher animates, inanimates and lower animates are not typically monitored as potential agents, and are therefore associated with actions that take the human object by surprise and are thus outside his or her control. Supernatural beings, by contrast, illustrated in (16), are expected agents, and are therefore typically monitored as potential agents, but what distinguishes them from normal animate agents is that their actions are inescapable and therefore inherently uncontrollable. In this sense, the use of genitive marking in constructions with inanimate, lower animate, or supernatural subjects indirectly confirms the semantics of lack of control associated with the use of genitive marking. For all other subjects – that is, the higher animate range, which is the default type of subject – use of genitive or accusative is a matter of choice, and therefore reveals the perspective the narrator wishes to impose on a particular event.

#### *Genitive pronouns and white-Aboriginal confrontation*

A third piece of evidence for the semantic effect of genitive marking is its rhetorical exploitation in actual discourse. The narrative studied here is particularly interesting in this respect because it uses the genitive marker more frequently than normal texts do, and also exploits it strategically to highlight the dehumanizing effect of the white officials' actions on the Aborigines.

If we look at the quantitative profile of genitive marking in our reference corpus of 30 texts, genitives for direct objects are an extremely rare feature overall, as shown in Table 5. Within the reference corpus, genitives constitute a little less than 10% of all pronominally marked direct objects.

From this perspective, the use of the genitive marker is unusually high in this particular text. Out of the seven pronominally marked direct objects found in the whole text, four are genitive-marked. This is not only more than the number of accusative pronouns in the same text, but it is also one-fifth of the total number of uses of genitive markers in the whole reference corpus, which suggests that the profile of this text deviates strongly from the normal profile.

If we look at the distribution of genitive pronouns within the text, moreover, it is obvious that the narrator exploits the distinction between accusative and genitive objects for rhetorical effect. All genitive pronouns are used to refer to the Aboriginal people in constructions where they undergo actions by white officials or their associates. This is the case in lines 1, 9, 21 and 23, repeated below as (17)–(19).

- (17) kali-n=antyangana / Yintyingka-munu  
 carry-PST=1PLEXC.GEN Yintyingka-ABL  
 'They took us away from Yintyingka.'
- (18) doctor ngama-ku=uurrangana alu  
 doctor look-POT=2PL.GEN DEM  
 'The doctor will examine you there.'
- (19) yitha-n=antyangana / Bamaga  
 leave-PST=1PLEXC.GEN Bamaga  
 'They left us at Bamaga.'

All three instances are from the complication episodes describing the deportation to Bamaga. Given the semantics of lack of control associated with the genitive pronoun, the use of genitives to refer to Aboriginal people undergoing deportation can be regarded as a rhetorical choice by the narrator. Instead of construing the actions with accusative pronouns – that is, with normal involvement for the human direct object – the narrator chooses to represent the actions as involving less than normal control. By doing this, she represents the actions of taking Aboriginal people away in (14), depositing them in a reserve in (16), and the ruse of medically examining them in (15) as actions that take place completely outside any control of the human beings involved in them.

In this sense, the text does not just provide an account of what happened at the deportation, and what happened subsequently to get the family back to their home country; its use of case marking also contains a subtle way to highlight the actions of the white officials, and to construe the confrontation between white officials and Aboriginal people as one involving less than normal control for the Aboriginal people involved.

#### FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

Although this study focuses on specific aspects of narrative in one language, the analysis can also be relevant to some further questions of narrative analysis, in Australian languages and beyond. If we look at the internal structure of episodes, for instance, our refinement to Fox's Principle of Morphosyntactic

Markedness predicts more generally that focal types of participant tracking will have functions within episodes rather than at their boundaries. This is confirmed if we compare our findings with McGregor's (1992, 1998) findings about episode structure in Gooniyandi, where one of the functions of ergative marking on lexical transitive subjects is to track deviations from the expected actor within an episode. In this sense, the parallel distribution of focal pronouns in Umpithamu and ergative marking in Gooniyandi can be regarded as language-specific instantiations of a similar principle: that focal participant marking tends to have episode-internal functions. This could be related to an even more general principle that all kinds of highlighting devices will occur at the centers of episodes, where the peak of the action is. Saulwick 2006, for instance, shows how in Rembarrnga a marked type of incorporation of alienable nominals is typically found in the "punch line" of a narrative. Similarly, in our narrative, the main point of most of the "complication" and "turning point" episodes is construed with quotative structures that represent discussions between white officials and Aboriginal people. These quoted stretches serve to highlight the attempts by the Lamalama people to resolve the basic problem in the narrative, reenacting them rather than just describing them. Again, this is not specific to Umpithamu but has been noted in other Australian languages (McGregor 2004:288–91) and beyond (Labov 1972:372–73).

If we move beyond questions of episode structure to questions of episode type, finally, the narrative studied here is also relevant in the discussion on the culture-specificity of Aboriginal narrative. Klapproth 2004 has shown convincingly that not all traditional narratives in Pitjantjatjara are organized on the basis of the well-known Western problem-solving schemes of a complication followed by attempts at resolution. Those that do conform to such schemes, however, are thematically remarkably similar to the narrative analyzed here, in the sense that they are what Klapproth calls "retrieval stories" (2004:301–6), in which relatives are separated from their family and subsequently reintegrated into the family group. We hope that a comparison with other genres in Umpithamu, specifically mythological narratives, will allow us further to explore Klapproth's hypotheses about the specificity of complication-resolution schemas, and its association with retrieval-type stories.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> An example is the following sequence (= lines 4–5 in the narrative): *Antyampa weerra wuna-n* (IPLEXC.NOM sleep lie-PST). *We bin sleep. Ngama-n=antyampa-ingku yoompi-na-mun alu* (see-PST=IPLEXC.NOM-3SG.ACC stand-NLZ-ABL DEM). *We bin seem there standup*.

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ABL ablative, ACC accusative, COM comitative, DAT dative, DEM demonstrative, ERG ergative, GEN genitive, IGNOR ignorative, IMP imperative, INSTR instrumental, INT intensifier, LOC locative, NEG negative, NLZ nominalization, NOM nominative, PERM permissive, POT potential, PRS present, PST past.

<sup>3</sup> This is independent of animacy factors: Constructions with and without lexical marking of objects have comparable proportions of higher-animate object referents (40% and 37%, respectively), as do constructions with and without lexical marking of subjects (85% and 95% for transitive subjects, 74% and 64% for intransitive subjects).

<sup>4</sup> Some further evidence for a generalized discrepancy between subjects and objects is the fact that lexical subjects typically are cross-referenced (a bit less than two-thirds of the cases in the corpus, both for transitive and for intransitive subjects), while lexical objects typically are not (less than one-third of the cases).

<sup>5</sup> The only exceptions are in the first clauses of episodes A and C, which do not have any overt subject at all. This is due to a morphosyntactic peculiarity of Umpithamu, which does not allow pronominal subjects when the postverbal slot is filled with a genitive pronoun.

<sup>6</sup> In addition, we also find episode-internal lexical subjects in quoted clauses, but these have a different status from non-quoted ones, since they belong to a different deictic center.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that Actor is a broader concept than the thematic role of agent, and is therefore not restricted to transitive clauses. It remains to be seen whether the subject role in Umpithamu (defined by nominative pronominal cross-reference) can entirely be equated with Actor. It is not unthinkable that some types of subject roles, like subjects of presentative constructions, do not represent Actors, and do not play a role in the operation of the Expected Actor Principle.

<sup>8</sup> Ergative marking is optional in Umpithamu, and is determined by a combination of principles of animacy and information structure, which we will not discuss in detail in this context.

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