LESSON 10

Adjectives – Gayrrda

This lesson introduces more Gamilaraay adjectives and discusses their use.

Vocabulary

**Play audio:** GGU 10.1.mp3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garay</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>minyangay?*</td>
<td>how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maal</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bulaarr</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gulibaa</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burrulaa</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marayrr*</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burrul</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bidi*</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burrulbidi</td>
<td>great big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaay</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-DHuul</td>
<td>small, one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buluuy</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banggabaa</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guwaymbarra</td>
<td>red</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Minyangay is a ‘Y2’ word. In other words, the place/Locative form is minyanga-dha, and the from/Ablative form is minyanga-dhi.*
Statements like ‘How many children do you have?’ are translated into Gamilaraay using possessives.

Minyangay nginu birralii?
Gulibaa ngay, birralii. I have three, children.

*Note that there are two ways of translating ‘big’ – with the adjective burrul or with the suffix -bidi. It is not clear at present if there is any difference in their meaning or use. The most common occurrence of -bidi is with another adjective, particularly burrulbidi – ‘great big’. It also occurs in wanu-bidi ‘big fat’ and words such as gagilbidi ‘bad-big’, as well as on nouns. -bidi does not occur on gaba ‘good’.

It is suggested that when there is an English way of doing things and a different Gamilaraay way of doing it – for instance, an adjective and a suffix that both mean ‘big’ – it is good to make sure the Gamilaraay way is often used.

The suffix -DHuul is more complex than -bidi. While it sometimes means ‘small’ it can at times mean ‘one’ and even ‘just’ – so yinarr-duul ‘woman-DHuul’ can mean a girl who has just become a woman. The -DH changes to d after words ending in rr, l and n. (In fact, words ending in rr are often pronounced without the rr, so yinarr-duul is often pronounced yina-duul.) The suffix is common in Yuwaalaraay place names, often written ‘dool’ in English. It is likely that we will learn more about this suffix with further investigation.

*Marayrr is used to translate ‘no + noun’ phrases such as:

gali marayrr no water
yarral marayrr no money

It is also used to translate ‘none’.

marayrr; gali marayrr none; no water
Grammar

This grammar section is mainly example sentences.

A question in Gamilaraay grammar is: What was the traditional practice for noun–adjective word order? The order in the sources varies, but is predominantly adjective–noun, especially for numbers. R.H. Mathews, writing around 1900 (Mathews 1902, 1903), said that the GR order is noun–adjective. It may be that the Gamilaraay sources have been influenced by English word order. For the present, use predominantly noun–adjective order. In many Australian languages the order is almost exclusively noun–adjective.

Remember, where a suffix is used on a noun it is also used on adjectives associated with the noun. In 10.1, buluuy and buruma go together – no suffix. In 10.2, buluuy and man.ga go together. Both have the Locative suffix, -Ga.

Play audio: GGU 10.3.mp3

10.1(a)  Buruma buluuy man.gaga.
The black dog is on the table.
Buluuy buruma man.gaga.
The black dog is on the table.

10.2(a)  Buruma man.gaga buluuydha.
The dog is on the black table.
Buruma buluuydha man.gaga.
The dog is on the black table.

In Gamilaraay the order for sentences like the next seems to be fairly fixed:

adjective–demonstrative–noun

Gaba nhama yinarr.
The woman is good.
With further research, it turns out that the old sources do not have the clear patterns of adjective use given above. (The information comes from Yuwaalaraay, since there are very few Gamilaraay sentences recorded.) While numbers and words like ‘many’ are often case marked, phrases such as wirridha gabaga ‘on the good plate’ are quite rare. For the time being, stick with the process given in the grammar section, until someone finds how Gamilaraay actually used adjectives.

In fact, in Gamilaraay an adjective and the noun it goes with do not have to be next to each other, so 10.1 could also be said:

10.1(b)  

Buruma man.gaga buluuy.

The black dog is on the table.

and you know that buruma and buluuy go together because they have the same suffix (in this instance ‘zero’), so 10.2 can also be said:

10.2(b)  

Man.gaga buruma buluuydha.

The dog is on the black table.

Here man.gaga and buluuydha have the -Ga suffix and so go together.

Two women.

Yinarr bulaarr. Or, less regular:
Bulaarr yinarr.

There is also a suffix -gaali/-gaalay that means something like ‘a pair of’, e.g. yinarrgaali.

Gaay nhalay gundhi.

This house is small.

Man.gadhi girrinilgu baranhi bandaarr burrul.

The big roo hopped from the table to the door.

Ngamila, burumabidi gundhigu yananhi.

Look, a big dog went to the house.
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Dhinaga warraya bulaarra.
Stand on two feet.

Giyal ngaya burumadhi burruli, gamilbala ngaya burumadhi giyal gaaydhi. I am afraid of the big dog but not of the small dog.

Minyangay biibabiiba man.gaga? How many books are on the table?

Giirr gaay nhama gulibaa dhuru. Those three snakes are really small.

Yaama buluuy nhama gundhi nginu? Is your house black?

Play audio: GGU 10.5.mp3

Below are four translations of an English sentence.
Is the white horse on the road?

a) Yaama nhama yuruunda, yarraaman banggabaa?
   Yuruunda, yarraaman ngaama banggabaa?

b) Yaama yarraaman banggabaa yuruunda?
   Yarraaman banggabaa, yuruunda?

In a) the question is about where the horse is, in b) it is about what is on the road.

Burrulaa dhayn gundhidha. There are lots of people in the house.

Giirr ngaya marayrr yarral.
I’ve got no money. (note: ngaya)

Gamil ngaya giyal burumadhi. I am not afraid of the dog.

Yaama nginda giyal dhurudhi? Are you afraid of the snake?

Wiyayl bulaarr dhaay gaanga!
Bring two pens here.

Burrulaa burruluu dhinggaaga.
There are lots of flies on the meat.

Practice

Just the adjective

Sound: Play audio: GGU 10.6.mp3

To get used to the words, just use an appropriate adjective.

Start with colours. Point to objects and say the colour. Do this for other adjectives – size, number and so on.

Yilaa/then sentences.

(Remember, the examples provide the pattern. You need to create many similar sentences using other vocabulary.)

Banggabaa nhalay biiba.
This paper is white.

Wiyayl guwaymbarra.
White paper.

A: Man.garr buluuy? (pointing to a bag)
Is it a black bag?
Yes, that is a black bag. // No, that bag is white.
A: Dhalaa baadhal?
Where is the bottle?
B: Man.gaga baadhal gaaydha.
The bottle is on the small table.
A: Minyangay wiyayl? (pointing to/holding wiyayl)
How many pens?
B: (counts) maal, bulaarr, gulibaa, burlaaw. Burlaaw wiyayl maraga. One, two, three, many pens. A lot of pens in (your) hand.

A: Minyangay wiyayl buluuy? How many black pens?

Commands

Gradually build up to sentences like:

A: Wiyayl buluuy bulaarr dhiyamala man.gadhi, biibaga banggabaaga wiimala. Pick up two black pens from the table and put them on the white paper.

Winangala, garay guwaala, yawala. Listen, say and read.

Play audio: GGU 10.7.mp3

Yarraaman buluuy yananhi gundhigu. The black horse went to the house.

Yarraaman yananhi gundhigu buluuygu. The horse went to the black house.

Yarraaman yananhi gundhigu, buluuy. The black horse went to the house. The horse went the house, the black one.

Gundhigu yarraaman yananhi, buluuygu. The horse went to the house, to the black one.

Yaama gundhigu banggabaagu buruma banaganhi? Did the dog run to the white house?

Yawu, banggabaagu. Yep, to the white one.
Sheila:  *Yaama Freida.*  
Hi Freida.

Freida:  *Yaama Sheila.*  
Hi Sheila.

Sheila:  *Yaamanda yanay gundhigu ngay?*  
Will you come to my place/house?

Freida:  *Ngaayaybaay. Dhalaa gundhi nginu?*  
OK. Where is your house?

Sheila:  *Yuruunda.*  
On the road.

Freida:  *Ngaayaybaay. Yaama nhama banggabaa?*  
OK. Is it white?

Sheila:  *Yawu, banggabaa nhama.*  
Yes, it is white.

Freida:  *Burrul?*  
Is it big.

Sheila:  *Gamil. Gaaybala gundhi ngay.*  
No. My house is small.

Freida:  *Minyangay birralii gundhidba?*  
How many kids at the house?

No kids and one husband.  
*(Marayrr is first, since it is the new information, the answer.)*

Freida:  *Ngaayaybaay. Yanay ngaya gundhigu.*  
OK, I will go to the house.

Sheila:  *Gaba.*  
Good.