LESSON 13

Verbs: NG class, RR class

This lesson introduces the last two of the four Gamilaraay verb classes. These are relatively small classes, known as the NG and RR classes. Both have a number of transitive and intransitive verbs. It also introduces the concept of three-place verbs.

Vocabulary

![Play audio: GGU 13.1.mp3](attachment:image.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garay</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some NG class verbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngarunga!</td>
<td>drink!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundaanga!</td>
<td>fall!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gungga!*</td>
<td>become!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yulunga!*</td>
<td>dance, play, enjoy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaanga!</td>
<td>bring/take!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wurunga!*</td>
<td>go.in!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some RR class verbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wuuna!</td>
<td>give!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuna!*</td>
<td>poke!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuuna!</td>
<td>crawl!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The command or imperative forms of the verbs are given above. The Dictionary gives the future form of verbs, for example ngaru-gi ‘drink’ and wuu-ri ‘give’.

*Ginga* can be translated ‘get’ as in ‘get happy’, but not as in ‘get a hamburger’ or ‘get a joke’.

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*Yulunga, in the Dictionary, is ‘play, dance, gamble’. It is possible these are specific examples of its actual, broader meaning, something like ‘have fun’, and that GY did not have more specialised words.

*Wurunga. This verb is not in the Dictionary, but the Yuwaalaraay wuu-gi is, so that form was used in Gamilaraay classes for many years. Recent research has found the verb wuru-gi a number of times in the Gamilaraay sources, so it is now used.

Note: when using wuru-gi the location entered is in the ‘from’ form, i.e. in Ablative case. See below in the Grammar section.

*Dhuna has a wide range of uses. See the Dictionary entry. A number of GY verbs (and other words) have a wide range of uses and no simple translation in English. The concept of a ‘gloss’ is useful. It is used where a one-word equivalent is needed, but any translation needs a very careful consideration of the context. For instance, dhuna can be translated with ‘spear, stab, poke’ and with other words. It has also been used for ‘write’, as have similar words in other Aboriginal languages. To make this use explicit use dhurri wiyayl-u or wiyaylu dhurri ‘poke using pen’ (pen-instrument poke).

Grammar

By now you might be getting used to the idea that there are a number of simple verb forms – a command form (‘Do it!’), a future form (‘Will do it’) and a past form (‘Did it’). The table below shows these forms for some NG class verbs.

**NG class verbs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yulunga</td>
<td>yulugi</td>
<td>yulunhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dance!</td>
<td>will dance</td>
<td>danced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaanga</td>
<td>gaagi</td>
<td>gaanbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring it!</td>
<td>will bring</td>
<td>brought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

dance/play/have fun int
bring/take tr
Lesson 13. Verbs: NG Class, RR Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngarunga</td>
<td>ngarugi</td>
<td>ngarunhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundaanga</td>
<td>bundaagi</td>
<td>bundaanhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wurunga</td>
<td>wurugi</td>
<td>wurunhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giga</td>
<td>giga</td>
<td>ginya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember the idea of ‘verb root’, the part of the verb that stays the same – for instance, yulu for ‘dance/play’ – which is followed by suffixes. Can you work out what the Command suffix is for NG class verbs? The bit that comes after the root? yulu-nga, gaa-nga, ngaru-nga… The future suffix for NG class verbs: (yulu-gi, gaa-gi) is -gi and the past tense suffix (yulu-nhi, gaa-nhi, gi-nyi) is -nhi after a or u, and -nyi after i.

Sometimes verbs are written with dashes to show how they are made up (yulu-nhi) but this is only to help you to learn. It would be like separating English words (cook-ed, cook-ing, cook-s) to help people understand the processes of the language.

The last group of Gamilaraay verbs are RR class and some verbs are shown in the table.

Play audio: GGU 13.3.mp3

RR class verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wuuna</td>
<td>wuuri</td>
<td>wuunhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give (it)!</td>
<td>will give</td>
<td>gave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuna</td>
<td>dhurri</td>
<td>dhunhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuuna</td>
<td>dhuuri</td>
<td>dhuunhi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice again that there are patterns. The Command ending is -na, the future ending is -rri and the past ending is -nhi. The past ending is the same as for Y and NG class. Work out the roots of the RR class verbs above.
Simple Gamilaraay verbs

You have now seen all four Gamilaraay verb classes and the simple forms are given in the table below. You might like to copy it and have it for handy reference. Being able to use the four verb classes is a major step in learning Gamilaraay.

Gamilaraay verbs – simple forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Future*</th>
<th>Past*</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yananga*</td>
<td>yanay</td>
<td>yananhi</td>
<td>walk/ come/ go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gubiya</td>
<td>gubiya</td>
<td>gubinyi</td>
<td>swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bumala</td>
<td>bumali</td>
<td>bumay</td>
<td>hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yulunga</td>
<td>yulugi</td>
<td>yulunhi</td>
<td>dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ginga</td>
<td>gigi</td>
<td>ginyi</td>
<td>become (get)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wuuna</td>
<td>wuurrri</td>
<td>wuunbi</td>
<td>give</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: We have used the labels ‘future’ and ‘past’ since they are simple and give a lot of information about the verb forms in that column. That is appropriate for an introductory course and given our knowledge of traditional Gamilaraay. However, the reality is a bit more complex, for instance the ‘future’ form is sometimes translated ‘might’ or ‘could’. Be prepared for some adjustments in your understanding of these if you continue in your Gamilaraay study.

Wuurri, dhurri, wurugi – complex verbs

You have learnt about simple intransitive (which basically involve one thing) and transitive verbs (two things, mostly). You will be excited to know things can get more interesting, more complicated.

Wuu-rri ‘give’

Play audio: GGU 13.4.mp3
It generally takes some practice to use this verb correctly. You need to remember that generally there are three things involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>the giver</th>
<th>doer.to/Ergative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>the given</td>
<td>done.to/Accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>the receiver/given.to</td>
<td>possessive/Dative case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Wuurri can be called a ‘three-place’ verb.)

\[ I_1 \text{ gave the book}_2 \text{ to you}_3. \]

The table below shows some nouns and pronouns to use with wuurrri and the case of each of the three involved. Make sure you understand the cases used in the sentences that follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. giver: doer.to/</th>
<th>2. given: done.to/</th>
<th>3. receiver/given.to: possessive/Dative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ergative</td>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaya ‘I’</td>
<td>gali ‘water’</td>
<td>miyay-gu ‘(to the) girl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gunii-dhu ‘mum’</td>
<td>banggul ‘money’</td>
<td>birralii-gu ‘(to the) child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhagaan-du ‘brother’</td>
<td>minya ‘what’</td>
<td>gunii-gu ‘(to) mum’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaandu? ‘who?’</td>
<td>man.garr ‘bag’</td>
<td>ngay ‘to me’ (my)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giwiirr-u ‘man’</td>
<td>wirri ‘plate’</td>
<td>nginu ‘to you(1)’ (your)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Play audio:** GGU 13.6.mp3

\[ \text{Gali}_2 \text{ ngaya}_1 \text{ miyay-gu}_3 \text{ wuunrri.} \]

Water  I  girl-to  give-will.

I will give water to the girl. // I will give the girl water.

\[ \text{Gunii-dhu}_1 \text{ banggul}_2 \text{ birralii-gu}_3 \text{ wuunhi.} \]

Mum gave the child money. // Mum gave money to the child.

\[ \text{Minya}_2 \text{ dhagaan-du}_1 \text{ guniigu}_3 \text{ wuunhi?} \]

What did brother give mum? // What did brother give to mum?

\[ \text{Bubaa-gu}_1 \text{ birralii-gu}_3 \text{ dhuwarr}_2 \text{ wuunhi.} \]

Dad gave the child bread.

\[ \text{Bubaagu}_1 \text{ ngay}_3 \text{ gali}_2 \text{ wuunhi.} \]

father-ERG my(to.me) water give-PAST

Dad gave me water.
Wuu-na dhingga₂ dhayn.gu₃
Give-IMP meat person-to
Give that guy some meat.

(Imp = Imperative = Command verb)

Ngaandu ngurungu gali wuurrī.
Who₁ will give her₃ some water₂?

Common phrases

Play audio: GGU 13.7.mp3

Dhaay wuuna.
Give it here.

Ngay wuuna.
Give it to me.

The verb dhurri ‘poke’ can be used as a simple transitive verb, but most often an instrument is mentioned, so there are three nominals used:

| The poker | (doer.to/Ergative) |
| The poked | (done.to/Accusative) |
| The instrument | (Ergative, but with instrumental use) |

Giirr ngaya dhagaan dhurri!
I will poke my brother. (simple use, two things)

Giirr ngaya dhingga₂ gulagu dhurri!
I will poke/stab the meat with my fork. (instrument explicit, three things)

Dhungi giwiirr-u bandaarr bilaarr-u.
Poked man-ERG kangaroo spear-ERG.instrument
The man speared the kangaroo.

Birraydhu=nha dhunhi wiyaylu.
The boy poked her with a pen.

Minyadhu ngaya biiba dhurri?
What will I write with?
**Wurugi** ‘go.in’ is an intransitive verb, but mostly a place is named, and that is in Ablative/from form.

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**Ngaandi gundbi-dhi wurunhi?**
Who house-from go.in-past
Who went into the house?

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**Gamil ngaya wilbaarri wurugi.**
I will not get into the car.

**Garriya ngirima wurunga.**
Don’t go in there.

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**Practice**

**Play audio: GGU 13.8.mp3**

These can be done in pairs or groups, or adapted for individual practice. Repeat the pattern of each exercise using different verbs and other elements. Start by using all the new *NG* and *RR* class verbs.

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**A:** B, yulunga.

B, dance!

**B:** **Yawu, yulugi ngaya.** (dances) **Yulunbi ngaya.**
Yes, I will dance. I danced.

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**A:** (Drinks) *Minya ginyi?*  
What happened.

**B:** **Gali nginda ngarunhi.**  
You drank water.

**A:** **Yawu, gali ngaya ngarunhi.**  
Yep, I drank water.

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**A:** **Gali-wadhaay dhaay gaanga.**  
Water(please) to.here bring.

**B:** **Gamil, gamilbala ngaya gali gaagi.**  
No. I won’t bring the water.
A:  Dhurri ngaya man.garr, gula-gu.
    I will poke the bag with a fork.

A:  Gayrr dhuna wiyaylu.
    Write (your) name.

B:  Ngaayaybaay. Gayrr ngaya wiyaylu dhurri, biibaga.
    Gayrr ngaya dhunhi.
    OK. I will write my name on the paper. I wrote my name.

Play audio: GGU 13.9.mp3

Guniigu man.garr wuuna.
Give the bag to mum.

Yaama nginda ngay gali wuurri? (or Yaama=nda …)
Will you give me some water?

Minya bubaagu miyaygu wuunhi?
What did dad give the girl?

Gamilbala ngaya dbagaan.gu wiyayl wuunhi.
I did not give my brother a pen.

Ngaandu burumagu dhinggaa wuunhi?
Who gave the dog the meat?

Create more sentences using the words in the table, and other words you have learnt.

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

Play audio: GGU 13.10.mp3

Gürr nguru gali burrulaa ngarunhi.
really s/he water a.lot drink-Past
He drank a lot of water.
Lesson 13. Verbs: ng class, rr class

Dhaay nhama wuuna, yarral.
Give that money here.

Ngaandu nginu wiyayl wuunhi?
Who gave you the pen?

Birraliidhuul/gaaylidhuul ngambaagu dhuunhi.
The baby crawled to mum.

Yaamanda badha gali ngay ngarunhi?
(badha/badha gali/gali badha ‘beer’)
Did you drink my beer?

Maridhu bandaarr bilaarru dhunhi.
(bilaarr ‘spear’)
The Murri speared the kangaroo.

Play audio: GGU 13.11.mp3

Gamil ngaya bundaagi galidha.
I will not fall in the water.

Giirr burumaga dhuunhi gaaylidhuul/birraliidhuul.
The baby crawled on the dog.

Yaamanda dhaay yanay?
Will you come here?

Gaaylidhu yarral dhiyamay, gaanhi.
The kid picked up the money and took it.

Minyanda ngarugi, dhali?
What will you eat and drink?

Dhalaagu dhuuru dhuunhi?
Where did the snake crawl to?
This text is taken from *Wiidhaa: An Introduction to Gamilaraay*, by John Giacon, published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.