LESSON 16

Verbs: Continuous – non-moving

This lesson introduces some further Gamilaraay verb structures. Verbs in Aboriginal language typically incorporate information that English uses separate words for, as you will see in Lessons 16 and 17. This is an important area but can take a while to absorb, so give yourself time.

For a somewhat technical article on continuous Gamilaraay verbs go to ‘Associated Eating and Movement’ (Giacon, 2008, pp. 107–14) available at tinyurl.com/jgpublications, or the later treatment in Giacon (2017). A summary of information on verbs is being prepared for yuwaalaray.com.

Vocabulary

Play audio: GGU 16.1.mp3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garay</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yaliwunga</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yilaadhu</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gunhugunhu dhu-rri</td>
<td>cough (verb phrase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gunhugunhu</td>
<td>cough (noun)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grammar

Gamilaraay verbs, and Aboriginal language verbs generally, can have many suffixes. You are used to some already: -li and -y ‘future tense’, - nhi ‘past tense’, -gu ‘purpose’, and so on. The suffixes introduced in this lesson have a number of functions, but the basic one is to show that the action is continuous. English would generally use a verb ending with -ing.
**Warra-**y.la-nha ngaya.
I am standing.

stand-**y**.CONT-PRES  
(CONT = continuous, PRES = present tense)

We can think of the bits of the word *Warra-y.la-nha* as carrying different information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>warra</em>-</td>
<td>This is the root of the verb <em>warra-y</em> 'stand' – it indicates what the 'action' is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-<strong>y.la</strong>-</td>
<td>This tells you that the action is ongoing, it continues. -<strong>y.la</strong>- corresponds to the -<strong>ing</strong> in 'standing'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘continuous’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-nha</td>
<td>This tells you the action is happening now. It corresponds to the 'am' in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘present tense’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-<strong>y</strong>-</td>
<td>This tells you it is a <em>Y</em> class verb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can easily form other similar *Y* class verbs.

**Ngarri-y.la-nha ngaya.**
I am sitting.

**But,** and this is a big but, there is another continuous suffix used for verbs that involve 'moving along', and you will learn about that in the next lesson. So you cannot use the suffix -**y.la-nha** to say 'I am walking' or 'I am running' or 'the bird is flying' because those involve 'moving along'.

-**y.la**- is the continuous (non-moving) suffix for *Y* class verbs. (There have been various names for the suffix.) There are similar suffixes for the other verb classes, shown in the table below.

**Play audio:** GGU 16.2.mp3
Continuous (non-moving) verb examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warra-y.la-ya</td>
<td>warra-y.la-y</td>
<td>warra-y.la-nha</td>
<td>warra-y.la-nhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep standing</td>
<td>will be standing</td>
<td>is/am/are* standing</td>
<td>was standing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **L Class** |              |                  |             |
| dha-lda-ya | dha-lda-y | dha-lda-nha | dha-lda-nhi |
| keep eating | will be eating | is eating | was eating |

| **NG Class** |              |                  |             |
| ngaru-gi.la-ya | ngaru-gi.la-y | ngaru-gi.la-nha | ngaru-gi.la-nhi |
| keep drinking | will be drinking | is drinking | was drinking |

| **RR Class** |              |                  |             |
| wuu-dha-ya | wuu-dha-y | wuu-dha-nha | wuu-dha-nhi |
| keep giving | will be giving | is giving | was giving |

*Make similar adjustments as appropriate.

Non-moving continuous suffixes have a number of uses.

1. To show **continuous action** when it is (more or less) **on the one spot**, it does **not** involve ‘moving along’.
   ‘I am standing.’ ‘You are sitting.’ ‘They were eating.’ ‘She will be drinking.’ ‘He is sleeping.’ ‘Keep talking.’, etc.
   The suffix is used with verbs that would typically be moving verbs (‘walk, run’, etc.) if there is no ‘linear movement’.

2. To show **habitual action**. That is, something that regularly happens. For example:
   ‘I walk (every day).’ ‘She reads books.’ ‘They eat (spinach).’ ‘He is sick (all the time).’ ‘We go to the pictures.’

3. To show **ability** and occasionally to show preference:
   ‘I can talk Gamilaraay.’ ‘She can swim.’ ‘He knows how to cook prawns.’
   ‘I like to (eat kebabs).’
   For ‘like’ you can also use the suffix -nginda, see Lesson 18.
Translation

When the action being referred to is continuous GY more commonly uses a continuous verb, whereas English tends to use simple verb forms: e.g. ‘I slept’ (all night) has a non-continuous verb in English, but would mostly be translated with baabi-lda-nhi, the continuous verb, in GR.

GY continuous verbs like ‘stand, sit, lie’* often translate English ‘is/are’. (*These are sometimes called stative verbs.)

The present tense sentence can be verb-less, but otherwise tense is shown using a stative verb.

Dhulu gundhi-dha. or Dhulu gundhi-dha warra-yla-nha.
The tree is near the house.

We do not know which stative verb GR used for various things, e.g. does a house ‘stand’, ‘sit’ or ‘lie’? Information from other Aboriginal languages could inform future GY usage.

A similar principal applies to command/imperative verbs. If the meaning is do x, and keep doing it, use the continuous command form.

If you wanted someone to listen you would say:

Bamba winanga-lda-ya.
Listen carefully (and keep listening).

Look at the sentences below. They show the alternative translations of verbs with the continuous non-moving suffix.
Lesson 16. Verbs: Continuous – Non-Moving

Warraylanha nhama.
He is standing. / He stands.

Dhaldanha nguru.
She is eating. / She eats.

Ngarugilanha nguru.
He is drinking. / He drinks.

Wuudhanha nguru.
She is giving. / She gives.

Ngarriylanha dhawunda.
She/He is sitting on the ground. / She/He sits on the ground.

Ngarriylanha nhama dhawunda.
He is sitting on the ground. / He sits on the ground.

Play audio: GGU 16.4.mp3

Gamil ngaya bandaarr dhaldanha.
I am not eating kangaroo. / I don’t eat kangaroo.

Giirr ngaya gabi ngarugilanha.
I am drinking coffee. / I do drink coffee.

Yaamanda Coke ngarugilanha?
Are you drinking Coke? / Do you drink Coke?

Giirr ngaya Coke ngarugilanhi,
I used to drink Coke,

gamilbala ngaya yaliwunga Coke ngarugilanha.
but I don’t drink Coke now.

Yaamanda Gamilaraay guwaaldanha?
Do you talk Gamilaraay?
Practice

You can practise with any verb. With non-moving verbs the meaning often refers to current action.

In a group of three, A talks to B, pointing in turn to A, B and then C.

Warraylanha ngaya. Warraylanha nginda. Warraylanha=nha.
I am standing. You(1) are standing. He/she is standing.

Then B talks to C, then C to A.

Repeat with A, B and C in different positions.

(note the order =nha=bala)

Repeat with a range of verbs. Make sure you cover all verb classes: e.g. Ngamildanha, winangaldanha, ngarugilanha, dhudhanha, wuudhanha, bundaagilanha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am drinking.</td>
<td>You(1) are drinking.</td>
<td>Mary is drinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Giirr ngaya nginunha ngamildanha.
I am looking at you.

Gamilbala nginda nganha ngamildanha.
You are not looking at me.

Use ngarriy ‘sit’ for ‘live’, as in:

Dhalaa=nda ngarriylanha?
Where do you live?

Canberraga ngaya ngarriylanha, Coomagabala ngaya ngarriylanhi.
I live in Canberra, but I used to live in Cooma.

Use the non-moving suffix with any verb to indicate ability or habitual action.
Lesson 16. Verbs: Continuous – Non-Moving

Play audio: GGU 16.7.mp3

A: Gabi=nda ngarugilanha?
   Do you drink coffee?
B: Giirr ngaya gabi ngarugilanha. Burrulaa.
   I drink coffee. Lots of it.
   Giirr ngaya badha burrulaa ngarigulanhi.
   I used to drink a lot of beer.
   Yilaadhubala ngaya gamil badha ngarugilanha.
   But now I don’t drink beer.

Start conversations with sentences like:

Dhinggaa nginda dhaldanha?
Do you eat meat?

Mandarin ngaya guwaaldanha, ngindabala?
I can talk Mandarin, and you?

Gamil ngaya Mandarin guwaaldanha*.
I don’t talk Mandarin.
(*guwaal… is pronounced like g+wall, i.e. English ‘wall’.)

Gamil ngaya banagaylanha.
I don’t run. (Continuous non-moving suffix on a moving verb)

Look at the verb lists from previous lessons and practice the continuous
form. Then use longer sentences:

Giirr birraliidhu gabagu gali dhigaraagu wuu-dha-nha.
The good boy is giving water to the bird.

Commands

Play audio: GGU 16.8.mp3

A: Nganha winangaldaya.
   Listen (and keep listening) to me.
B: Giirr ngaya nginunha winangaldanha.
   I am listening to you.
A: *Dhaldaya.*
A to B: Eat, and keep eating.
B: *Dhaldanha ngaya.*
    I am eating.
A: *GARRiya dhaldaya.*
    Don’t keep eating. / Stop eating.

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

There are also many examples of these suffixes on Gayarragi, Winangali. Remember that the examples are Yuwaalaraay, so the actual root may be different (e.g. *yanaa-* ‘go’ in YR and *yana-* ‘go’ in Gamilaraay) but the rest of the structure is the same.

🎧 Play audio: GGU 16.9.mp3

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A: *Giirr nginunda burruluu warraylanha.*
    There are flies on you.
B: *Gamil, marayrrbala nganunda burruluu warraylanha.*
    No, there are no flies on me.

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*Giirr ngiyaningunda guniidhu garay guwaaldanha.*
Mum is talking to us.

*Gamil ngiyani yulugilanha.*
We are not playing. / We don’t play/gamble.

*Yaama nginaalinya yarraamandu ngamildanhi?*
Was the horse looking at you(2)?

*Gamil ngalinya giwiirru winangaldanha.*
The man is not listening to us(2).

*Dhalaa nginda baabildanhi?*
Where were you living?
Lesson 16. Verbs: Continuous – Non-Moving

(play audio: GGU 16.10.mp3)

Nginunha burumagu ngamildanha.
It’s you(1) the dog is looking at.

Gamil nganunda Marygu garay guwaaldanbi.
Mary was not talking to me.

Ngaandi yuruunda baabildanha?
Who is sleeping on the road?

Garriya warraylaya dburuga.
Don’t keep standing near the snake.

Yaamanda ngarriylay gundhidha?
Will you be at the house?

Gamil garrawalgu yanaylanba gaayligal.
The kids don’t go to the shop. / The kids are not going to the shop.

Giirr nginda bamba gunhugunhu dhudhanhi.
You were really coughing badly.