

# 7

## Wik Subgroup grammatical history

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In this chapter, linguistic evidence drawn from a particular area of Wik and Middle Paman grammar (specifically, the systems of dependent pronominals) is used to support the following assertions in regard to Wik tenure in the area now associated with the peoples that speak Wik languages:

- i. The modern Wik grammatical systems have evolved over a period of time well in excess of that which separates 1788 from the present.
- ii. Diversity within the Wik language family requires recognition of at least three subgroups, and simplicity considerations argue in favour of the idea that the observed linguistic diversity must have developed in situ, in the region now occupied by Wik-speaking peoples.
- iii. It follows that the Wik-speaking peoples have resided in their present location for a period that certainly exceeds the recent centuries at issue in this case; their residence in the region most probably extends to millennia.

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<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1997.

## Introduction

Following approximately the same procedure as in Chapter 6, additional linguistic evidence will be presented here in support of the proposition that the Wik-speaking peoples of Cape York Peninsula have resided in their present location for an unknown period of time beginning long before the landing of the First Fleet in 1788.<sup>2</sup> Here, the evidence will be drawn from the domain of grammar, specifically from the morphology and syntax of pronominal elements. I will take the Wik Subgroup to consist of the clans and communities so identified in Sutton (1978) and in references cited there. For the purposes of the present discussion, I will make use of linguistic material from a representative sample of the Wik languages, including the following:

- Mn: Wik-Mungkan(h)
- Me: Wik Me'nh, Wik Ep
- KN: Kugu Nganhcarra
- Nr: Wik Ngatharr, Wik A(a)lkan(h)
- Nn: Wik Ngathan(h)

The abbreviations given here follow the usage of Sutton (1978). As the list indicates, members of the Wik group, properly conceived, differ in their use of the Paman terms for language, and accordingly in the name given to the speech-form with which they are associated—some use the term derived from *\*wika*, others use that derived from *\*kuuku*.<sup>3</sup> Both are legitimate forms descending from a Paman ancestor language and, as such, are genuine elements of the Cape York Peninsula linguistic heritage. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the groups that are of interest here as Wik, following established tradition in the anthropological and linguistic literature.

The five speech-forms listed above have been chosen because they represent reasonably well the extent of linguistic diversity within the Wik group as a whole; and, to some extent, they represent as well the linguistic characteristics of three discernible Wik subgroups, to wit, (i) Mn–Me, (ii) Nr–Nn, and (iii) the Kugu Nganhcarra subgroup (Smith and Johnson

2 Hale here uses 'location' broadly. A number of Wik languages have localised but discontinuous associations with particular places. For the details of this partly mosaic pattern, compare Table 5.10 and Maps A2.1–A2.13, this volume: PS.

3 Asterisks denote reconstructed proto-forms in an ancestral stage of the language: PS.

1985, 1986; Smith 1986), abbreviated KN and represented here by Mm (Kugu Muminh, referred to as Wik Muminh in Hale's 1960 notes) and by Kugu Uwanh (Smith and Johnson 1985). In addition to linguistic materials from these Wik groups, we will make reference to materials from other members of the Middle Paman branch of the Paman (or Pama-Maric) language family, and to materials from Paman languages outside the Middle Paman branch. All of this is relevant to the question of the long-term residence of the Wik peoples in Western Cape York Peninsula.

The Wik languages belong to the Middle Paman branch of Paman (cf. Hale 1976c). Other Middle Paman languages include Kuuk Thaayorre (Ta) to the south and the Kaanju-Ya'u-Umpila (Ka, Ya) language to the east. Material from these languages will be involved in our discussions, to some extent. Linguistic data from Middle Paman languages are taken from sources indicated below:

## Wik

Mn: Hale notes (1960); Kilham et al. (1986)

Me: Hale notes (1960)

KN: Hale notes (1960); Johnson (English–Nganhcara glossary, 1989, received 1995); Smith and Johnson (1985, 1986); Smith (1986)

Nr: Hale notes (1960)

Nn: Sutton (1995a)

## Non-Wik (South)

Ta: Hale notes (1960); Hall (1976a, 1976b)

## Non-Wik (East)

Ka: Hale notes (1960)

Ya: Harris and O'Grady (1976); Thompson (1976)

The topic of this discussion is a particular aspect of the grammar of the Wik languages and their Paman relatives of Cape York Peninsula. Specifically, we will be concerned with the grammar of pronouns in the languages, and we will present data that reveal the degree of diversity that exists in the Middle Paman family. As in the first part, we will argue that the diversity observed within the family is relevant to the question

of long-term residence of the Middle Paman peoples and, therefore, of the Wik-speaking peoples themselves, in the region they currently occupy. The argument is based on the following premises:

- i. linguistic diversity takes time to develop
- ii. the Middle Paman diversity at issue here developed in situ
- iii. the time required for such diversity to develop is equal to or greater than some number of years.

It will be argued that the diversity found in the Middle Paman and Wik pronominal systems could not have developed in a shorter time than that which separates the year 1788 from the present. The evidence in support of the temporal dimension of this account will be obtained by comparing the Middle Paman situation with comparable situations in other languages for which there are historical records chronicling earlier stages and, therefore, telling us approximately how long it has taken for a given language or language family to progress from one stage to another in the evolution of a particular grammatical system.

## Wik and Middle Paman pronominal systems

In addition to a standard Paman system of independent pronouns, the Wik languages, and their Middle Paman relatives to the east (i.e. Kaanju, Kuuku-Ya'u and Umpila), possess systems of dependent pronouns ranging in character from the type commonly termed *clitic pronouns* to the type properly termed pronominal *suffixes* functioning in a system of person *agreement*.

It is the properties and behaviour of the dependent pronouns that will be of primary interest here, since this is an aspect of Middle Paman grammar in which diversity is amply represented. Kuuk Thaayorre (Ta) does not have dependent pronouns,<sup>4</sup> and assuming it to be a true member of Middle Paman, its lack of these elements is relevant to the question of time and the progress of linguistic change in the grammar of pronouns. This issue will be taken up at a later time. The relevant facts of Middle Paman pronominal systems will be presented in four subsections below—three

4 A manuscript reader points out that it appears that Thaayorre does have dependent pronouns. See Gaby (2017): PS.

corresponding to languages of the Wik Subgroup (including those using the language classifier Kugu in place of Wik), and another corresponding to the eastern Middle Paman neighbours of the Wik. We begin with Wik-Me'nh and Wik-Mungkan.

## **Wik-Me'nh (Me) and Wik-Mungkan (Mn) pronominals**

These two languages are closely similar in their pronominal systems. The two make use of both *independent* and *dependent* pronouns, also sometimes referred to as free and bound. The former, like full noun phrases, carry stress or accent, and they can be uttered in isolation or in any 'argument position' (e.g. subject, object, indirect object), like any full noun phrase. The latter, however, are unstressed (atonic) and phonologically dependent—they must, so to speak, 'lean' on some other word. Typically, in the Middle Paman languages, and in Cape York generally, dependent pronominals must have a 'host' on their left. That is to say, they are enclitics or suffixes. The properties of Wik-Me'nh and Wik-Mungkan set them slightly apart from their other Middle Paman cousins. They will be treated in two subsections below.

Before actually presenting Wik forms, it is appropriate to make a brief remark about the spelling system used in examples here. Some of the Wik languages, including Wik-Me'nh, Wik-Mungkan, Wik-Ngathan, and Wik-Ngatharr, have undergone an important sound change that has resulted in the reduction of unstressed post-consonantal vowels—i.e. unstressed vowels in the V-position of CV syllables. In the modern spoken languages, these reduced vowels can be realised in three ways: (i) as zero, i.e. deleted altogether, (ii) as a brief central vowel of the type commonly called 'schwa', or (iii) as a full low, or low front, *a*-like vowel. The third of these realisations is found most often word-finally, before a pause, when the utterance terminates in a two-syllable dipping-then-rising intonation characteristic of a common mode of delivery. The other two realisations are typical of non-final positions and of utterance-final position with falling and fading intonation. What is relevant here is that these reduced vowels are omitted in the orthography used in citing examples in this essay. This orthography differs, therefore, from that used in recent standard works on Wik-Mungkan, in which the reduced vowels are represented with the vowel *a* (e.g. in Kilham et al. 1986). The usage adopted here is merely an orthographic convention, and the omission

of reduced vowels should not be taken to imply that those segments are entirely absent phonologically—rather, each corresponds to a position (or ‘slot’) in the syllabic structure, which can be realised as a vocalic nucleus under appropriate prosodic conditions. There is a minor irritation that results from this convention: true consonant clusters must occasionally be distinguished from ‘false’ clusters resulting from orthographic omission of vowels, the latter being written with an intervening dot where necessary (i.e. ‘false’ clusters are represented C.C, while true clusters are represented CC, but the distinction is made only where absolutely necessary).<sup>5</sup>

### Wik-Me’nh

The following sentences exemplify certain essential features of free and dependent pronominals in Wik-Me’nh:

(1) Wik-Me’nh:

- (a) Ngay            enc-ng-ak.  
       1.NOM        fall-1S-FUT  
       ‘I will fall.’
- (b) Nhip            aak                ngeen            thath-nh-ip.  
       22.NOM    time                what              see-PST-22S  
       ‘When did you two see him.’
- (c) Pathpath-nh-ny            ngaakn-ng.  
       bite-PST-1O                dog-ERG  
       ‘The dog bit me.’
- (d) Ngany            pam-ng            peeyk-nh-ny.  
       1.ACC            man-ERG        hit-PST-1O  
       ‘The man hit me.’
- (e) Ngany            peeyk-nh-pul(-ny).  
       1.ACC            hit-PST-33s(-1O)  
       ‘They (two) hit me.’

5 Note that in my chapters I use the Kilham et al. (1986) orthography for Wik-Mungkan, but for Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr I use the following system. Schwa is represented by /e/. But there is also a phoneme /e/ that occurs in the first syllable of a word. That is the vowel with primary word stress. It may also appear in the first syllable of the second part of a compound. In that case, I place a hyphen just before the second part of the compound. Hence in my script *kampel* ‘quickly’ is pronounced [kampil], *kethen* ‘yamstick’ is pronounced [kəthən], and *key-elp* ‘unclear water’ is pronounced [kɛjɛlp]: PS.

- (f) Ngal            wonk            in            wak-l-ak.  
 12.NOM   bank            this            follow-12S-FUT  
 ‘We (you and I) will follow this river bank.’

The free pronouns will be considered first. With just the sample of pronouns appearing in (1a–f), it can be seen that pronouns express three grammatical categories: *person*, *number* and *case*. Thus, for example, the pronominal form *ngay* embodies the following categories:

- (2) Grammatical categories expressed in the Wik-Me’nh first person singular pronoun *ngay*:
- (a) first person (glossed 1);
  - (b) singular number (glossed with single digit, 1, in contrast to dual number, glossed with double digit, 11, and plural, glossed with triple digit, 111); and
  - (c) nominative case (glossed NOM, as opposed to accusative case, glossed ACC, e.g. *ngany* in [1d–e]).

Wik-Me’nh, like all Wik languages, has the case system that has come to be called ‘split ergative’. It is referred to in this way because nouns and pronouns exhibit different patterns of case inflection—nouns show an ergative pattern, while pronouns use the nominative-accusative system. According to the ergative system employed by nouns the subject of a transitive clause is in the ergative case (ERG), while the subject of an intransitive and the object of a transitive are in the unmarked case, which we call the nominative (NOM) here, though it is also called the ‘absolute’ in much linguistic literature. The ergative pattern of case marking is exemplified in the following sentences:

- (3) Wik-Me’nh:
- (a) Pam                    wu’-nh.  
     man                    whistle-PST  
     ‘The/a man whistled.’
  - (b) Ngaakn                enc-ny.  
     dog                    fall-PST  
     ‘The/a dog fell.’

- (c) Pam-ng            ngaakn        thath-nh.  
       man-ERG        dog            see-PST  
       ‘The man saw the/a dog.’
- (d) Ngaakn-ng      pam            thath-nh.  
       dog-ERG        man            see-PST  
       ‘The dog saw the/a man.’

In (3a–b) the nouns *pam* ‘person, man’ and *ngaakn* ‘dog’ appear without an overt case ending, as required where a noun functions as the subject of an intransitive clause. The same nouns appear as object in the transitive sentences (3c–d), and here as well they are uninflected for case, as required. In both cases, we say that these nouns are in the *nominative* case. But when a noun appears as the subject of a transitive clause, as in (3c–d), it is overtly marked for case, by means of the *ergative* case ending *-ng*, hence *pam-ng* ‘man-ERG’, *ngaakn-ng* ‘dog-ERG’:

- (4) The case of Wik-Me’nh nouns (N) in subject and object function.

<i>Ergative:</i>	<i>Nominative:</i>
N-ng	N-Ø
pam-ng	pam-Ø
ngaakn-ng	ngaakn-Ø
(subject of transitive)	(subject of intransitive, object of transitive)

By contrast with the situation just described, pronouns conform to the nominative-accusative pattern exemplified by the first person singular pronoun in the following sentences:

- (5) Wik-Me’nh:
- (a) Ngay            enc-ng-ak.  
       1.NOM        fall-1S-FUT  
       ‘I will fall.’
- (b) Ngay            ngaakn        thath-nh-iy.  
       1.NOM        dog            see-PST-1S  
       ‘I saw the/a dog.’
- (c) Ngany            pam-ng        peeyk-nh-ny.  
       1.ACC        man-ERG    hit-PST-1O  
       ‘The man hit me.’

Here, the pronominal subject is invariably *ngay*, taking the form traditionally called nominative whether the clause is transitive or intransitive. The pronominal object in (5c) is specially marked, however, appearing in the accusative case, *ngany*. This is the general pattern for Wik-Me'nh pronouns, as set out in (6):

(6) Wik-Me'nh subject and object pronouns:

	<i>Subject</i> (Nominative)	<i>Object</i> (Accusative)
1	ngay	ngany
2	nhint	nhin
3	nhil	nhin
12	ngal	ngal-n
22	nhip	nhip-n
33	pul	pul-n
11(1)	ngan	ngan-n
122	ngamp	ngamp-n
222	nhiy	nhiy-n
333	than	than-n

As mentioned earlier, a single-digit gloss is for singular number, a two-digit gloss is for dual number, and a three-digit gloss is for plural. First, second and third persons are represented by 1, 2 and 3 respectively; 11(1), abbreviating 11 and 111, is for first person exclusive (i.e. a group including speaker but excluding the addressee), while 12 and 122 are for first inclusive (i.e. a group including both the speaker and the addressee).

The non-singular pronouns in (6) show clearly that it is the accusative that is overtly marked for case, being extended by the accusative suffix *-n*. The nominative, by comparison, is relatively unmarked. In addition to the forms tabulated here, Wik-Me'nh also possesses oblique pronominal forms, e.g. the dative (DAT): 1 *ngath*, 2 *nhungk*, 3 *nhung*; 12 *ngal-nt*; 22 *nhip-ng*; 33 *pul-nt*; 11(1) *ngan-nt*; 122 *ngamp-r*; 222 *nhiy-nt*; 333 *than-nt*. Here again, it is clear that the non-singular forms are overtly marked by means of perspicuous suffixes attached to the pronominal base identical to the unmarked form used in the nominative.

Our primary interest, of course, is in the *dependent* pronominal elements of Wik-Me'nh. The sentences of (1) illustrate the basic pattern, according to which dependent pronominals are suffixed to the verb. In (7), pronominal

suffixes corresponding to the subject and the object are presented. They conform to the nominative-accusative pattern, as indicated—accordingly, the suffixes in the left-hand column are construed with the subject, whether the clause is transitive or intransitive, while those in the right-hand column are construed the object of a transitive clause (as in the case of the free pronominals, dependent non-singular accusative pronominals bear an overt case ending):

- (7) Wik-Me'nh subject and object dependent (suffixed and enclitic) pronominals:

	<i>Subject</i> (Nominative)	<i>Object</i> (Accusative)
1	-ng [- (i/a)y, -l-]	-ny
2	-(i)nt [- ngkan-]	-((nh)i)n
3	-Ø	-Ø
12	-((ng)a)l	-(ng)al-n
22	-(nh)ip	-(nh)ip-n
33	-pul	-pul-n
11(1)	-n	-ngan-n
122	-((ng)a)mp	-(ng)amp-n
222	-(nh)iy	-(nh)iy-n
333	-n [- than-, -ngan-]	-than-n

Although the fundamental paradigm here is straightforward, being identical to that of the free pronouns in relation to the grammatical categories represented (person, number, and case), there is a certain amount of extra complexity in the dependent pronominals—they exhibit a considerable amount of morphophonological alternation; that is to say, they are not consistently of the same shape in all environments. To be sure, some of the suffixes are stable, showing no alternation (i.e. 1O(b)ject) *-ny*, 3S(ubject)/o(b)ject) *-Ø*, 33S *-pul*, 33O *-pul-n*, 11(1)S *-n*, 11(1)O *-ngan-n*, 333O *-than-n*). But apart from these 'regular' forms, it is generally the case that Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominals exhibit a certain amount of contextually determined alternation. The first person singular nominative suffixes (glossed 1S), for example, has three alternants, as exemplified in (8):

## (8) Wik-Me'nh:

- (a) Ngay      nhyi-n      ngul      thath-ng-ak.  
 1.NOM      222-ACC      anon      see-1S-FUT  
 'I will see you (plural) anon (bye-and-bye).'
- (b) Ngay      ngul      thath-l-iy-n.  
 1.NOM      anon      see-1S-222-ACC  
 'I will see you (plural) anon.' (an alternative to (a))
- (c) Ngay      minh      yint-nh-iy.  
 1.NOM      fish      spear-PST-1S  
 'I speared the fish (animal).'
- (d) Ngay      thath-nhan-ng,      ngay      peeyk-nhan-ng.  
 1.NOM      see-IRR-1S,      1.NOM      hit-IRR-1S  
 'If I could see it I could hit it.'

The alternant *-ng* appears before the future tense suffix (*-ak* FUT, as in (8a)) and following the irrealis suffix (*-ngan* IRR, used in conditionals, as in (8d)); the alternant *-l-* appears before a second person object suffix, as in (8b), and the alternant *-iy* appears following the past tense ending (*-nh* PST, as in (8c)).

The foregoing is intended merely as an example of the contextual conditioning of Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominals. We will not be concerned to any great degree with the full details of the alternations observed in these elements, but there is one further observation that should be made in this regard, as it will be relevant at a later point. In general, it is possible to relate Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominals to their free pronominal counterparts. In some cases, the segmental phonology of the suffix is identical to that of the free pronoun, e.g.:

## (9) Wik-Me'nh unreduced dependent pronominals:

	<i>Free Pronoun</i>	<i>Dependent Pronominal</i>
33s	pul	-pul
33o	pul-n	-pul-n
11(1)o	ngan-n	-ngan-n
333o	than-n	-than-n

In the majority of the remaining cases, the dependent pronominal is a reduced form of the free pronoun, lacking the initial consonant, and in some cases, the entire first syllable of the latter, as in the following:

(10) Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominal alternants with initial reduction:

	<i>Free Pronoun</i>	<i>Dependent Pronominal</i>
1o	ngany	-ny
12s	ngal	-(a)l
12o	ngal-n	-al-n
22s	nhip	-ip
22o	nhip-n	-ip-n
11(1)s	ngan	-n
122s	ngamp	-(a)mp
122o	ngamp-n	-(a)mp-n
222s	nhiy	-iy
222o	nhiy-n	-iy-n

There is one important exception to the generalisation that phonological reduction in the evolution of Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominals is from left to right. The first singular nominative (glossed 1s) has a highly prominent alternant in which the initial consonant is retained, the remainder being lost:

(11) Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominal with final reduction:

	<i>Free Pronoun</i>	<i>Dependent Pronominal</i>
1s	ngay	-ng

This may seem to be a minor detail of little or no interest, but there is some evidence that this exceptional alternant represents a retention from an archaic stage in the history of Middle Paman and, if so, it is of great interest to the matter at issue here—i.e. the question of the time-depth implied by the linguistic diversity within Middle Paman. Another aspect of the Wik-Me'nh system that is interesting is the relationship between tense and the suffixed pronominals. As the examples show, pronominal suffixes may precede the future ending (*-ak* FUT), and they generally follow the past tense ending (*-nh* PST). In the present tense, the relation between the tense morphology and the pronominal suffixes is slightly more complex,

and in two instances quite irregular. The present appears to be built upon the suffix *-nh* (but with an alternant *-n* sometimes heard), probably a general non-future, from which the past tense also arises. In conjunction with the dependent pronominals, the resulting combination is not always straightforward—the first singular, second singular, and third plural show unexpected alternants (*-ay*, *-ngkan*, and *-ngan*, respectively).

(12) Wik-Me'nh nominative pronominal suffixes in the present tense

1	-nh-ay
2	(-n)-ngkan
3	-Ø
12	-n-ngal
22	-nh-nhip
33	-n-pul
11(1)	-nh-n
122	-nh-ngamp
222	-nh-nhiy
333	(-n-)ngan

This is of interest to us in relation to the question of time-depth, because irregularities often signify relative antiquity in the evolution of grammatical systems, by comparison with highly regular systems that are often recent in origin. Thus, for example, the relatively regular initial reduction in Wik-Me'nh pronominal suffixes could be quite recent, but the irregular second person singular form in (12) is almost certainly an archaic residue from an early period in Middle Paman history.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have given the basic inventories of the dependent subject and object pronominals of Wik-Me'nh and, to some extent, we have documented the phonological alternations they exhibit. We turn now to morphological and syntactic properties of the system. The following points will be relevant in later sections in which comparative observations are made:

## (13) The grammar of Wik-Me'nh dependent pronominals:

- (a) The use of subject dependent pronominals is obligatory—i.e. for any person and number category associated with the subject, the corresponding dependent pronominal must appear in the position designated for such elements (see (c) below), as exemplified in (1a), where the pronominal suffix *-ng* is construed with the first person singular subject *ngay*. This principle holds 'visibly' for all person-number combinations except third person singular, where it is assumed to hold abstractly, since that person is non-overt ( $\emptyset$ ) in Wik-Me'nh (as it is in most Australian languages).
- (b) The use of object dependent pronominals is optional, as exemplified in (1e), where the first person object dependent pronominal *-ny* (construed with the first person object *ngany*) may appear, or not appear, a circumstance represented notationally by the use of parentheses.
- (c) Both subject- and object-dependent pronominals are suffixed to the verb, as can be seen in all examples so far cited. And the subject suffix precedes the object suffix.
- (d) Both subject and object suffixes may co-occur with overt free nominals (pronouns or noun phrases) in the corresponding argument function—e.g. *-ng* co-occurs with its corresponding subject argument *ngay* in (1a) and *-ny* co-occurs with its corresponding object argument *ngany* in (1d). In the case of objects, however, there is a slight preference for the free and dependent pronominals to occur in complementary distribution—in particular, if the free pronominal occurs, the corresponding suffix is preferably (but not necessarily) omitted. And, in general, Wik-Me'nh is a so-called pro-drop language, permitting free omission of the independent argument, as in (1e), where the subject is omitted, being represented only by pronominal suffix.
- (e) Wik-Me'nh subject dependent pronominals represent a fully standard *agreement* system. That is to say, a particular category in the sentence—to wit, the inflected verb—*agrees* with its subject.

- (f) Object-dependent pronominals represent a system of pronominal enclitics. This is virtually an object agreement system, differing from a true agreement system in that the use of the enclitics is optional. The closest parallel is the phenomenon known as ‘clitic doubling’ in the study of Romance languages, and it will be referred to by this name (Jaeggli 1982).

### *Wik-Mungkan*

Wik-Mungkan nominative and accusative free pronouns are tabulated in (14). They are, clearly, very similar to their Wik-Me’nh cognates. As in that language, so also in Wik-Mungkan, the formation of accusative non-singulars is completely regular. The accusative case ending *-ng* differs slightly from its Wik-Me’nh counterpart, but it is added directly to the unmarked (nominative) form without modification of either element. In the singular accusative, Wik-Mungkan differs from Wik-Me’nh in extending this regular inflection to the second person.

- (14) Wik-Mungkan subject and object free pronouns:

	<i>Subject</i> (Nominative)	<i>Object</i> (Accusative)
1	ngay	ngany
2	nhint	nhint-ng
3	nhil	nhunh
12	ngal	ngal-ng
22	nhip	nhip-ng
33	pul	pul-ng
11(1)	ngan	ngan-ng
122	ngamp	ngamp-ng
222	nhiy	nhiy-ng
333	than	than-ng

The distribution of Wik-Mungkan accusative and nominative pronominals follows the same pattern as in Wik-Me’nh, as illustrated in the following sentences:

- (15) Wik-Mungkan:

(a)	Ngay	punth-ak	iy-a-ng.
	1.NOM	creek-ALL	go-FUT-1s
	‘I will go to the creek.’		

- (b) Ngay            kemp                    mungk-a-ng.  
       1.NOM    meat                    eat-FUT-1s  
       ‘I will eat the meat.’
- (c) Ku’-ng        ngany                    ngul                    path.  
       dog-ERG 1.ACC            anon                    bite  
       ‘The dog will bite me presently.’
- (d) Ku’-ng        path-ny.  
       dog-ERG bite-1o  
       ‘The dog bit me.’
- (e) Ku’            kan                    uthm.  
       dog            already            die  
       ‘The dog has died.’

Pronouns follow the nominative-accusative pattern, according to which the subject (whether of an intransitive or of a transitive) is in the nominative (cf. (15a–b)), while the object is in the accusative (cf. (15c)). Nouns represent the ergative system of case inflection, with the ergative appearing on the transitive subject (cf. (15c–d)) and the unmarked (i.e. nominative) case on the intransitive subject (cf. (15e)) and on the object (cf. (15b)).

As seen in (15a–b, d), Wik-Mungkan has dependent subject and object pronominals, which, as in Wik-Me’nh, are suffixed to the verb. Subject suffixes appear obligatorily, construed with their corresponding full pronominal or nominal subject arguments; these latter may, of course, be omitted optionally. Object clitics are not obligatory, occurring preferably in complementary distribution with overt syntactic arguments (i.e. full pronominals or nominals in the object function; cf. the pair (15c–d), showing complementarity of full pronominal *ngany* and clitic *-ny*). Wik-Mungkan suffixed pronominals are somewhat more regular than the corresponding elements in Wik-Me’nh. They consistently follow tense and mode suffixes, and the present-tense paradigm is regular, with minor exceptions.

(16) Wik-Mungkan subject- and object-dependent (suffixed and enclitic) pronominals:

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Subject (with present)</i>	<i>Object</i>
1	-ng	-ng	-ny
2	-n	-n-n	-(nh)int-ng
3	-Ø	-n	-Ø
12	-l	-n-l	-(ng)al-ng
22	-w	-n-ip	-(nh)ip-ng
33	-pul	-n-pul	-pul-ng
11(1)	-n	-n-n	-ngan-ng
122	-mp	-n-mp	-ngamp-ng
222	-nh	-n-iy	-(nh)iy-ng
333	-yn	-n-tn	-than-ng

In the second person singular, the portmanteau *-ngn* (phonetic [-ˈn]) typically appeared in place of regularised *-n-n* in material collected in 1960. This is reminiscent of the Wik-Me'nh second singular present tense form *-(n)ngkan* in (12). The third plural also has a slight irregularity: the lamino-dental initial assimilates to the *-n-* of the present, giving the combination *-ntn* (phonetic [-ndˈn]). Finally, the first person singular subject suffix *-ng* shows a minor irregularity that it shares with the second person singular *-ngn*. Both of these suffixes appear without the preceding present tense marker *-n-*.

The grammatical properties of Wik-Mungkan dependent pronominals are essentially identical to those listed in (13) for their Wik-Me'nh counterparts. They are given in abbreviated form in (17):

- (17) The grammar of Wik-Mungkan dependent pronominals:
- The use of subject dependent pronominals is obligatory.
  - The use of object dependent pronominals is optional.
  - Both subject and object dependent pronominals are suffixed to the verb.
  - Both subject and object suffixes may co-occur with overt free nominals (pronouns or noun phrases). For objects, free and dependent pronominals tend to be complementary.

- (e) Wik-Me'nh subject dependent pronominals represent a fully standard *agreement* system.
- (f) Object-dependent pronominals represent a system of pronominal enclitics.

## Wik-Ngathan (Nn) and Wik-Ngatharr (Nr)

These Wik entities are closely similar, and can be treated as dialects of a single language. Like the languages discussed in the previous subsection, and like Wik languages generally, Wik-Ngathan (from Sutton 1978) and Wik-Ngatharr (from Hale 1960 notes) have both free and dependent pronominals. Subject and Object free pronouns are tabulated in (18)—forms which are specific to Wik-Ngatharr are in curly braces {}:

(18) Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr subject and object free pronouns:

	<i>Subject</i> (Nominative)	<i>Object</i> (Accusative)
1	ngay	nganh {ngany}
2	nhunt	nhin {nhunh}
3	nhul	nhin
11	ngan	ngan-nh
12	ngal	ngal-nh
22	nhupl	nhup-ny
33	pul	pul-nh
111	nganthn {nganth <sup>i</sup> mp}	nganth-ny
122	ngampl	ngamp-ny
222	nhiy	nhiy-nh
333	than	than-nh

Again, the formation of the accusative is quite regular and transparent in the non-singular. The inventory of free pronouns departs little from the general Wik pattern seen in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh, with the slight difference that in Wik-Ngathan/Ngatharra dual and plural numbers are distinguished in the first person exclusive (thus, Nn 11 *ngan*, 111 *nganthn*), these categories being merged (as *ngan*) in Mn/Me.

The grammatical distribution of these free pronominal forms conforms, as expected, to the nominative-accusative pattern (i.e. nominative for all subjects, accusative for objects of transitive verbs, as in (19a–b) and (19c)). Accordingly, they contrast with the ergative-nominative pattern found with noun-based arguments (i.e. with ergative case on transitive subjects, as in (19c), and nominative on intransitive subjects and transitive objects, as in (19f–g)). Example sentences follow:

(19) Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr:

- |     |                                 |              |                |             |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| (a) | Ngay                            | pak=k-ang    | pönyc-k.       | (Nn)        |
|     | 1.NOM                           | down=PURP-1S |                | descend-FUT |
|     | 'I will (want to) go down.'     |              |                |             |
| (b) | Ngay                            | ngul=ng      | (p)alk(-k).    | (Nr)        |
|     | 1.NOM                           | anon=1S      | hit(-FUT)      |             |
|     | 'I will hit someone'            |              |                |             |
| (c) | Ngany                           | pam-nth=ny   | (pa)lk-nh.     | (Nr)        |
|     | 1.ACC                           | man-ERG=1O   | hit-NF         |             |
|     | 'A man hit me.'                 |              |                |             |
| (d) | Palk-nh=ny.                     |              | (Nr)           |             |
|     | hit-PST=1O                      |              |                |             |
|     | 'He hit me.'                    |              |                |             |
| (e) | Nhin=ng                         | (p)alk(-k).  | (Nr)           |             |
|     | 3.ACC=1S                        | hit(-FUT)    |                |             |
|     | 'I will hit him.'               |              |                |             |
| (f) | Ngay                            | yuunh=k-ang  | eep-eep-k.     | (Nn)        |
|     | 1.NOM                           | bag=PURP-1S  | weave-RDP-FUT  |             |
|     | 'I will (want to) weave a bag.' |              |                |             |
| (g) | Ku'                             | anth         | way.ngk(n)-nh. | (Nr)        |
|     | dog                             | this         | die-NF         |             |
|     | 'The dog died.'                 |              |                |             |
| (h) | Ma'ak(-k)=nt-nh.                |              | (Nn)           |             |
|     | help-FUT=2S-1O                  |              |                |             |
|     | 'Help me.'                      |              |                |             |

The inventory of recorded dependent subject and object pronominals is given in (20). Parenthetic a-vowels in subject pronominals represent the full vowels recorded by Sutton (1978) for Wik-Ngathan; these are generally reduced in Wik-Ngatharr, and accordingly not written in that dialect:<sup>6</sup>

(20) Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr subject and object dependent (enclitic) pronominals:

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>	
1	-(a)ng	-nh	{-ny}
2	-nt	-nhin	
3	-Ø	—	
12	-(a)l	-l-nh	
11	-ngan	—	
22	—	—	
33	-pul	—	
122	-mp	—	
111	-(a)nthn	—	
222	-nh	—	
333	-(a)n	-n-nh	

A special, and highly relevant, feature of Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr is the placement of these elements. Their preferred position is *enclitic to an immediately preverbal constituent*. This constituent may be: (i) a spatial or temporal/aspectual adverb, as in examples (19a–b); (ii) the subject, as in (19c); (iii) a pronominal or nominal object, as in (19e–f); in general, any preverbal constituent may host a pronominal enclitic (or subject-object enclitic sequence, as in (19f)). Enclitic pronominals may also be hosted by the verb, and they must be if the verb is initial in the clause, as in (19d), where the verb is the sole non-clitic constituent. As in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh, so also here, dependent pronominals may be construed with an overt nominal or pronominal argument, as in (19a–c).

There is an additional feature of Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr dependent pronominals that distinguishes them from those of Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh. While all of these languages share the property

6 The difference is actually only orthographic. Both dialects have the same reduced vowels. Since 1978 I have used /e/ instead of /a/ for these reduced vowels: PS.

that object enclitics are optional, available data on Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr indicates that optionality is not limited to object enclitics there; *subject enclitics are also optional*. The following Wik-Ngatharr sentences differ in this respect: the second singular subject enclitic *-nt* is construed with the subject argument *nhunt* ‘you’ in (21a), but in (21b), the free pronoun stands alone in representing the grammatical subject.

(21) Wik-Ngatharr:

- |     |                            |         |               |
|-----|----------------------------|---------|---------------|
| (a) | Nhunt                      | kan=nt  | mooenc-ny-ey. |
|     | 2.NOM                      | PERF-2S | swim-NF-Q     |
|     | ‘Did you have a swim?’     |         |               |
| (b) | Nhunt                      | ngeen   | kan ngayc-ny. |
|     | 2.NOM                      | what    | PERF see-NF   |
|     | ‘What are you looking at?’ |         |               |

Similarly, in the Wik-Ngathan sentence (22a), from Sutton (1978:306), the first person subject enclitic *-ang* is construed with the corresponding free pronoun *ngay* ‘I’, while in (22b), from Sutton (1978:277), the subject enclitic is absent:

(22) Wik-Ngathan:

- |     |                         |            |           |
|-----|-------------------------|------------|-----------|
| (a) | Ngay                    | ke'-m=ang  | ngayc-ny. |
|     | 1.NOM                   | NEG-ABL=1S | see-NF    |
|     | ‘I didn’t see it/them.’ |            |           |
| (b) | Ngay                    | ke'-m      | ngayc-ny. |
|     | 1.NOM                   | NEG-ABL    | see-NF    |
|     | ‘I didn’t see it/them.’ |            |           |

A remarkable Wik-Ngatharr concomitant of the preverbal positioning of pronominal enclitics is the optional *phonological fusion* of the enclitic and its host with the verb itself, with attendant reduction of the initial syllable of the latter (indicated informally by means of parentheses in (19b–c,e)). Thus, for example, the following alternation has been observed:

(23) Wik-Ngatharr:

- |     |                   |         |           |
|-----|-------------------|---------|-----------|
| (a) | Ngay              | ngul=ng | palk(-k). |
|     | 1.NOM             | anon=1s | hit(-FUT) |
|     | ‘I will hit him.’ |         |           |

- (b) Ngay            ngul=nga·lk(-k).  
 1.NOM        anon=1s+hit(-FUT)  
 'I will hit him.'

In the second alternant here, the initial consonant of the verb is deleted and the remainder of the verb's initial syllable is merged with the underlying vowel of the first person enclitic, giving a lengthened a-vowel, represented [aː]. The underlying vowel of the enclitic is probably dominant here, as suggested by the following pair, where it is clear (from (24b)) that the vowel of the verb loses its quality in favour of that of the enclitic (evidently /a/ underlyingly, as expected on the basis of its Proto-Middle Paman ancestor \*-nga):

(24) Wik-Ngatharr:

- (a) Ngay            ngul=ng            wump-k.  
 1.NOM        anon=1S            climb-FUT  
 'I will climb up.'
- (b) Ngay            ngul=nga·mp-k.  
 1.NOM        anon=1S+climb-FUT  
 'I will climb up.'

A preceding enclitic-cum-host is not the only conditioning factor in this optional reduction of the initial syllables of verbs. There is an additional class of elements that can trigger this effect, including, among others, the negative *ke'* and a content question word, as shown in (25):

(25) Wik-Ngatharr:

- (a) Ngay            ka'+a·yc-ny.  
 1.NOM        NEG+see-NF  
 'I can't (don't) see him.'  
 (< ke' ngayc-ny (NEG see-NF))<sup>7</sup>
- (b) Kalk            ngath            weey-ngk+a·r-n.  
 spear        1.GEN            who-ERG+take-NF  
 'Who took my spear?'  
 (< kaar-n (take-NF))

7 In this variety's sister dialect Wik-Ngathan I have recorded both *ka'* and *ke'* for the negative particle, see Sutton (1995a:23): PS.

The grammar of Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr dependent pronominals differs in interesting ways from that observed in the previous subsection for Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh.

- (26) The grammar of Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr dependent pronominals:
- (a) The use of subject-dependent pronominals is optional.
  - (b) The use of object-dependent pronominals is optional.
  - (c) Subject- and object-dependent pronominals are preferably enclitic to the constituent immediately preceding the verb. They may alternatively (though much less commonly) attach to the verb, and must do so if the verb is initial.
  - (d) Both subject- and object-dependent pronominals may co-occur with overt arguments (free pronouns or noun phrases).
  - (e) Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr subject- and object-dependent pronominals are clitics (specifically, enclitics); neither represents an agreement system, properly speaking.
  - (f) In Wik-Ngatharr, certain preverbal elements, including host elements with an enclitic, may 'fuse' with the verb, causing phonological reduction of the initial syllable of the latter.

## Kugu Nganhcara (KN)

Kugu Nganhcara shares grammatical properties with the languages discussed in the previous two subsections. In relation to its dependent pronominals, it represents a partial blending of the grammars of Wik-Mungkan/Me'nh, on the one hand, and Wik-Ngathan/Ngatharra on the other. The subject and object free pronominals of Kugu Nganhcara are set out in (27):

- (27) Kugu Nganhcara subject and object free pronouns:

	<i>Subject</i> (Nominative)	<i>Object</i> (Accusative)
1	ngaya	nganyi
2	nhinta	nhina
3	nhila	nhunha
11	ngana	ngana-na
12	ngale	ngale-na

22	nhipa	nhipa-na
33	pula	pula-na
111	nganhca	nganhca-rra
122	ngampa	ngampa-rra
222	nhiya	nhiya-rra
333	thana	thana-na

As before, these conform to the nominative-accusative pattern, unlike noun-based arguments, which conform to the ergative pattern. The following sentences exemplify, in part, these principles of case marking together with other aspects of Kugu Nganhcara grammar of relevance to the issue of diversity within the family as a whole—examples are from Smith and Johnson (1985), except for those identified as specifically Kugu Muminh (Mu), taken from Hale (1960 notes).

## (28) Kugu Nganhcara:

- (a) Nhila      pama-ng      nga'a=la      yenta.  
 3.NOM    person-ERG    fish=3S      spear  
 'The man speared the fish.'
- (b) Nhila      nganyi      yupa=nyi      yenta.  
 3.NOM    1.ACC      FUT=1O      spear  
 'He will spear me.'
- (c) Nhagu-wu=nhca      wico.  
 there-DAT=111S      travel  
 'We (exclusive plural) travelled to that place.'
- (d) Nhinta      puyu=li=nta      uwa-n.  
 2.NOM    away=then=2S    go-2S  
 'Did you go away then?'
- (e) Poje-dha-nga=nha=la.  
 dry-INCH-CAUS=3O=33S  
 'They (two) dry him.'
- (f) Ngaya      nhina      piigu-nga.      (Mu)  
 1.NOM    2.ACC      hit-1S  
 'I will hit you.'

- (g) Nhint      ngaarri-m=nh      piigu-ngan?      (Mu)  
 2.NOM      what-ABL=3O      hit-PRES.2S  
 ‘Why are you hitting him?’
- (h) Ngaya      ka’i=nh      nhaawa-ng.      (Mu)  
 1.NOM      NEG=3O      see-1S  
 ‘I didn’t see him.’
- (i) Thana      munji-yin.      (Mu)  
 333.NOM      swim-PRES.333S  
 ‘They are swimming.’
- (j) Thana      kana      munje-dhan.      (Mu)  
 333.NOM      PERF      swim-333S  
 ‘They swam.’

Two sets of dependent pronominal elements must be recognised in Wik-Nganhcara (cf. Smith and Johnson 1985:fn.3). In addition to those elements identified as *enclitics* (by means of the = sign in the example sentences of (28)), there is a residue of historically prior *subject agreement suffixes* (identified notationally by means of a hyphen in the example sentences). The two sets of dependent pronominals are tabulated in (29). The subject agreement suffixes are set off in square brackets (and where there is a second alternant, it is a portmanteau embodying the categories of person and present tense). Subject agreement is represented overtly only in the first and second persons singular and in the third person plural. The second person singular subject is represented both by an enclitic (*-nta*) and by agreement (*-n ~ -ngan*). First singular and third plural are represented only by agreement (*-ng(a)* and *-dhan ~ -yin*, respectively)—the overlap between the agreement and enclitic systems is therefore rather slim, being in the second person singular only (cf. (28d), where agreement and enclitic co-occur).

(29) Kugu Nganhcara subject and object dependent pronominals:

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>
1	[-ng(a)]-nyi	
2	-nta [-n ~ -ngan]	-na
3	-la-nha	-li-n
12	-le	

11	-na	-na-n
22	-pa	-pa-n
33	-la	-la-n
122	-mpa-mpa-rra	
111	-nhca	-nhca-rra
222	-ya	-ya-rra
333	[-dhan ~ -yin]	-rra-n

Available evidence indicates that agreement is preferred, if not obligatory, in Kugu Nganhcara—that is to say, for any subject whose category matches that of one of the agreement suffixes enclosed in square brackets in (29), overt agreement is expected. In this respect, Kugu Nganhcara conforms to the pattern seen in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh. By contrast, enclitic pronominals are optional, and in this Kugu Nganhcara is like Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr. Subject agreement morphology is suffixed to the verb, while subject and object enclitic pronominals alternate, as in Wik-Ngathan/Ngatharra, between attachment to an immediately preverbal host and attachment to the verb itself, the first being more usual than the second. If the verb is initial or the unique non-clitic constituent in the clause, as in (28e), attachment to the verb is required. The subject enclitic follows the non-subject in the example just cited, though the order is in fact free (cf. Smith and Johnson 1985:107). In this respect, Kugu Nganhcara differs from Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr.

(30) The grammar of Kugu Nganhcara dependent pronominals:

- (a) Subject agreement is preferred, possibly obligatory.
- (b) Subject and object enclitics are optional.
- (c) Subject and object enclitics are preferably attached to the constituent immediately preceding the verb. They may alternatively attach to the verb, and must do so if the verb is initial or alone in the clause.
- (d) Both subject agreement and enclitic pronominals may co-occur with overt arguments (free pronouns or noun phrases).
- (e) The relative order of subject and object enclitics is free.

## Other Middle Paman

The eastern Middle Paman languages, Kaanju, Kuuku-Ya'u, and Umpila, like the Wik languages themselves, have both free and dependent pronominals. However, Kuuk Thaayorre, a putative Middle Paman language to the south, does not have a developed system of dependent pronominals.

### Kaanju, Kuuku-Ya'u and Umpila

A partial inventory of dependent pronominals is found in Umpila field notes supplied by O'Grady (1959–60) and in brief Kaanju notes of Hale (1960):

(31) Umpila and Kaanju dependent pronominals:

1	-nga	-nyi
2	-ntu ~ -n -ni	-Ø
3	-Ø	
12	-li	—
11(1)	-na	—
22(2)	-nhu	—
122	-mpu	—
33(3)	-'a	-la-n

Example sentences are given in (32), with Kaanju (Ka) from Hale (1960 notes), and Umpila (Um) from Harris and O'Grady (1976):

(32) Kaanju and Umpila:

- (a) Nguna=ni            ku'aka-lu        patha-n?        (Ka)  
       2=2S                dog-ERG        bite-PST  
       'Did the dog bite you?'
- (b) Nganyi             ku'aka-lu        patha-n.        (Ka)  
       1.ACC                dog-ERG        bite-PST  
       'The dog bit me.'
- (c) Ku'aka-lu            patha-na=nyi. (Ka)  
       dog-ERG            bite-PST=1O  
       'The dog bit me.'
- (d) Nguna              kuna              alngki-ka=n. (Ka)

- 2.NOM                      FUT                      fall-FUT=2S  
 ‘You are going to fall.’
- (e) Ngaya (*sic*: ngayu) kuna=nga                      ngaaci-ku                      yuta-ka. (Ka)  
 1.NOM                      FUT=1S                      place-DAT                      go-FUT  
 ‘I am going to (my) place.’
- (f) Ngaani-ku=nhu’u                      wuntuu-nu-ngka?                      (Um)  
 what-DAT=22(2)S                      see-PROG-PRES  
 ‘What are you (plural) looking for?’

The dependent pronominals here evidently fall into the category of enclitics, and their use is not obligatory. Their placement is much less constrained than in the Wik languages. When they are not attached to the verb, they appear on some pre-verbal constituent, not necessarily that which is in immediate pre-verbal position.

#### 2.4.2. Kuuk Thaayorre

Data available for this language (Hale 1960 notes; Hall 1976a, 1976b) give no evidence of any evolved system of dependent pronouns. However, like other languages to the south, Kuuk Thaayorre does have atonic pronouns which, like enclitics, depend phonologically upon a preceding host:

(33) Kuuk Thaayorre:

- (a) ... waat                      ke’e-rr                      (n)unh                      (ng)ay.                      (Hall)  
 ... wrong                      spear-PST                      3.ACC                      1.NOM  
 ‘... I speared him in error.’
- (b) Ngay                      ngat                      ke’e-rr.                      (Hale)  
 1.NOM                      fish                      spear-PST  
 ‘I speared a fish.’
- (c) Ngay                      thiik-arr                      (ng)ay.                      (Hall)  
 1.NOM                      break-PST                      1.NOM  
 ‘I broke it, I did.’
- (d) Kuuk                      (nh)unt                      ngeene                      yiik?                      (Hale)  
 language                      2.NOM                      what                      speak  
 ‘What language do you speak?’

Atonic pronouns show their relative reduced character not only by their accentual weakening and their dependence on a preceding host but also, optionally, by loss of their initial consonants (indicated in example (33) by the use of parentheses). In terms of position within the clause, they may be final (following the verb) or in some pre-verbal position, e.g. following the first constituent. An atonic subject pronoun can and typically will appear finally, as in (33a), while a fully accented subject pronoun will appear in the characteristic subject position, i.e. initially, as in (33b). Non-subject pronouns in Kuuk Thaayorre are often final in either case, with atonic pronouns being distinguished accentually and by initial consonant deletion. Interestingly, atonic pronouns may co-occur with corresponding full pronouns, as in (33c). This is a common feature of languages in the region south of the Wik area, as we shall see.

## Other Paman languages of Cape York Peninsula

The Wik languages (including as usual, the Nganhcara cluster), are arguably unique in relation to the systems of dependent pronominals that have developed there. No other languages of Cape York Peninsula duplicate precisely the Wik situation as a whole or the principal subtypes pertaining to it.

Northern Paman languages generally lack dependent pronouns, the only exception coming to mind being the single atonic form found in Linngithigh:

(34) Linngithigh:

- |     |                            |           |           |
|-----|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| (a) | Nggoy=ang                  | nji-n.    |           |
|     | wallaby=1S                 | spear-PST |           |
|     | 'I speared the/a wallaby.' |           |           |
| (b) | Ayong                      | nggoy     | nji-n.    |
|     | 1.NOM                      | wallaby   | spear-PST |
|     | 'I speared the/a wallaby.' |           |           |

The enclitic first singular subject pronoun in (34a) is the atonic counterpart of the full pronoun *ayong* 'I' in (34b). Other Linngithigh pronouns lack enclitic forms of this type.

South of the Wik language region, as we have seen, atonic pronouns are found in Kuuk Thaayorre. But this is not the extent of their distribution. They are found as well in Kunjen (Ku; Sommer 1972), Aghu Tharrnggala (AT; Jolly 1989), and Rimanggudinhma (Ri; Godman 1993). These are all southern ‘initial dropping languages’, and their atonic pronouns closely resemble full pronouns. Examples follow (atonic forms are identified by means of the grave accent):

## (35) Upper South CYP Paman:

- (a) Uy           urb           idu-r           ày.           (Ku)  
 fish           barramundi   spear-PST   1.NOM  
 ‘I speared a barramundi.’
- (b) Abm        ày           eray           ija-r.       (Ku)  
 person      1.NOM      some        eat-PST  
 ‘I ate some.’
- (c) Ud-al      inh-pigipigi   adhen atha-r   ìl           ingùn.  
 dog-ERG   meat-pig   1.GEN bite-PST 3.NOM 3.ACC  
 ‘The dog bit my pig.’ (Ku)
- (d) Mawng-əl   twə -n      lì=nəng.   3.NOM=2.ACC   (AT)  
 who-ERG   hit-NF  
 ‘Who hit you?’
- (e) Nay        nhĩ-l       twə-n   lì       này.       (AT)  
 1.ACC      that-ERG   hit-PST   3.NOM   1.ACC  
 ‘That one hit me.’
- (f) Yaw        ninh       twə-gə.       (AT)  
 1.NOM      2.ACC      hit-FUT  
 ‘I will hit you.’
- (g) Lpung ə w   ta-nhəgə   yàw       nành.       (AT)  
 tomorrow   see-PURP   1.NOM      2.ACC  
 ‘I will see you tomorrow.’
- (h) Ba         aḏerr      pa-n       dyù.       (Ri)  
 person      two        see-PST   1.NOM  
 ‘I saw two men.’

- |     |                         |         |         |         |      |
|-----|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| (i) | Ba:dhi-l                | ndo-n   | nì      | là?     | (Ri) |
|     | who-ERG                 | hit-PST | 1.ACC   | 3.NOM   |      |
|     | ‘Who hit me?’           |         |         |         |      |
| (j) | Alka                    | tha-l   | ndò     | ngàn.   | (Ri) |
|     | spear                   | tie-IMP | 2.NOM   | 3.ACC   |      |
|     | ‘Tie the spear up!’     |         |         |         |      |
| (k) | Ndo                     | thùm    | ina-l.  |         | (Ri) |
|     | 2.NOM                   | 1.DAT   | sit-IMP |         |      |
|     | ‘Wait for me!’          |         |         |         |      |
| (l) | Dyu                     | ngòn    | ari     | ndo-n.  | (Ri) |
|     | 1.NOM                   | 3.ACC   | NEG     | hit-PST |      |
|     | ‘I didn’t hit/hit him.’ |         |         |         |      |

A shared feature of these languages is the essential identity (except for accent) of full and atonic pronouns—atic pronouns are not reduced or eroded in any noticeable way, a minor exception being the vocally modified alternative second and third singular accusative forms in Aghu Tharrnggala, in which schwa replaces the original vowel. Another common feature is the relative prevalence of atonic over fully accented pronouns—in Kunjen, this is taken to something of an extreme, in that while pronouns can appear in accented positions (e.g. initial), they are often provided instead with a lexical host and left in atonic form (e.g. *abm ày* (person 1.NOM) ‘I’). In distribution, atonic pronouns favour post-verbal position, though they may appear on a pre-verbal host as well; a full pronoun will often attract an atonic one, as in examples (35 l–m).

In these languages, atonic pronouns can, and often do, co-occur with the corresponding argument (pronoun or noun phrase) in pre-verbal position. This resembles the relation that holds in agreement, of course. However, this is not true agreement of the obligatory type seen in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me’nh subjects. This southern co-occurrence pattern is not obligatory. It is therefore more akin to the relation that holds between object enclitics and corresponding arguments in the Wik languages just mentioned, or the relation between enclitics and arguments generally in Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr: co-occurrence is possible, but optional. We can say, then, that an argument can be ‘doubled’ by an enclitic, but need not be.

There are at least two other languages that must be mentioned in this connection. They are Yir-Yoront (YY; Alpher 1991) and the Flinders Island Language (FI; Sutton 1980). These differ from the foregoing in that they possess two sets of reduced pronominals. One of these (not necessarily atonic) shows the simple modification of initial consonant loss (e.g. YY *nholo* - *ngolo*, *olo* '3.NOM'), the other shows a much more substantial reduction to an item properly termed enclitic (e.g. YY -*l* '3.NOM'):<sup>8</sup>

(36) Yir-Yoront and the Flinders Island Language:

- |     |   |                   |                |
|-----|---|-------------------|----------------|
| (a) | Waq-a-nn                                | kirr='y=ungnh.    | (YY)           |
|     | go-PRT                                  | see:P=1.NOM=3.ACC |                |
|     | 'I saw him going along.'                |                   |                |
| (b) | Ngoyo                                   | minha             | wa-l. (YY)     |
|     | 1.NOM                                   | meat.DAT          | go-NPST        |
|     | 'I am going for meat.'                  |                   |                |
| (c) | Makur                                   | ncilabi-ya        | atha=yu. (FI)  |
|     | oyster                                  | MoMo-ABL          | eat.NPST=1.NOM |
|     | 'I am eating my grandmother's oysters.' |                   |                |
| (d) | Ngayu=dun                               | aathi-n           | uka-niya. (FI) |
|     | 1.NOM=2.ACC                             | see-PST           | go-SUBORD      |
|     | 'I saw you going.'                      |                   |                |

These sentences exemplify the first person singular subject enclitics (YY -*y*, FI -*yu*) and their full pronoun counterparts (YY *ngoyo*, FI *ngayu*). As the examples show, the use of enclitics is not obligatory—hence, this is not an agreement system, strictly speaking. In general, enclitics appear (most frequently) on the verb, but also on the first constituent of the clause.

What is important for present purposes is the fact that these southern dependent pronominal systems are historically independent from those of the Wik languages to the north. That is to say, while the morphemes involved are, for the most part, cognate, the dependent enclitic forms developed locally through processes of reduction characteristic of the southern languages. Thus, for example, the reduction of the first person singular from *ngayu* to -*yu* in the Flinders Island language, and the parallel

<sup>8</sup> *l* is [əl], 'y is [əy] [etc.]: PS.

reduction from *ngoyo* to *-y* in Yir-Yoront, cannot be related directly to the historical derivation of generalised Wik and Middle Paman *-nga*, presumably related to the Proto-Paman reconstruction *\*ngayu*. Thus, while this reconstructed form is no doubt valid for the Paman family as a whole, the reduced forms must be understood as local developments, peculiar to the individual sub-families. A similar conclusion must be drawn in relation to the initial dropping languages, Kunjen, Aghu Tharrngala, and Rimanggudinhma. Their atonic pronominals developed in a time period quite separate from that of the remote Paman ancestor they share with Wik and Middle Paman. They can only have developed at a time subsequent to the process of initial dropping so characteristic of these languages; only in this way can the near perfect identity of full and atonic pronominals be understood.

While there are clear similarities between Middle Paman and these more southerly Paman languages in relation to the grammar of dependent pronominals, these similarities are to be attributed not to common ancestry but rather to universal principles of pronominal reduction and clisis that have been observed and studied in languages of the world generally (cf. the ample 'clitic literature' of recent decades, including Borer 1986; Everett 1996; Halpern 1992; Halpern and Zwicky 1996; Klavans 1995; Zwicky 1977; Zwicky and Pullum 1983). The special features of Wik and Middle Paman dependent pronominals, though constrained by universal principles, are, in their details, specific to that subfamily. In the next section, we will describe the most probable historical processes involved in their development and we will attempt to assess the associated temporal dimension.

## The grammar and evolution of Wik dependent pronominals

The opinions that have appeared in the linguistic literature, including the references cited above, are many and varied concerning the proper conception of the grammar and historical development of pronominal clitic and agreement systems. There is a picture that emerges, however, in relation to the evolutionary processes involved. A fully established true agreement system appears to represent the advanced stage in an evolution beginning with the prosodic weakening of pronominal elements, proceeding through clisis and clitic doubling, and culminating in

agreement. In relation to the Wik languages and their Middle and general Paman relatives, the following evolutionary schema is indicated, based on the evidence available:

- (37) Stages in the evolution of Wik and Middle Paman dependent pronominal systems:
- Stage 0: Free pronouns only.
  - Stage I: Atonic (weak) pronouns in complementary distribution with free pronouns.
  - Stage II: Clitic (enclitic) pronominals with a S(entence)-position host, with optional clitic doubling.
  - Stage III: Clitic (enclitic) pronominals with a C(lause)-position host, with optional clitic doubling.
  - Stage IV: Agreement morphology.

No Wik or Middle Paman language represents Stage 0, but this stage is nonetheless relevant, since it is without doubt represented by the more remote Paman and Pama-Nyungan ancestors of Wik. Many Paman languages represent Stage 0—most Northern Paman languages do, and many southern Paman languages belong to this stage (e.g. Guugu Yimidhirr, Yidiny, Dyirbal); even some dialects of Kunjen appear to belong here (e.g. Ogonduyan, as found in Hale 1960 notes).<sup>9</sup> In any event, the Wik and Middle Paman languages are past this stage.

The processes of interest in the present context are those that can be detected when there is ‘movement’, so to speak, in the development of a grammatical system, i.e. when there is some change, such as the prosodic weakening of pronouns, forcing their displacement to an appropriate host, as in Stage I. A pure representative of this stage is the Linnghigh example cited in (34). The pronominals of Kunjen, Aghu Tharrnggala, and Rimanggudinhma have been termed atonic pronouns in the preceding discussion primarily because they differ from full pronouns in accent only (with the minor exceptions noted). However, the grammatical systems of these languages are probably more advanced in historical development, i.e. they are probably beyond Stage I and into Stage II, since doubling is

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9 Publisher’s reader commented: “Kunjen” is not a phylogenetic group of languages, and the nearest linguistic relatives of Uw-Oykangand (illustrated above) and those of Ogonduyan are in separate subfamilies’: PS.

possible (e.g. (33c)). The same is true of Yir-Yoront and Flinders Island, where the dependent pronominals are, in addition, phonologically more reduced.

The stages that characterise Middle Paman languages are II–IV. The evidence available for Kaanju-Umpila-Ya'u and for Kuuk Thaayorre suggests that they are representative of Stage II, with enclitic pronouns attached to an S-position host, a feature these Middle Paman languages share with Yir-Yoront. An S-position is a location identified in relation to the sentence as a whole. The most renowned S-position is so-called 'Second Position' or 'Wackernagel's Position' (cf. Halpern and Zwicky 1996, and references cited therein). This is normally defined as 'after the first constituent' of the clause—it is not defined in terms of a particular category (e.g. noun phrase (NP, DP), verb phrase (VP), inflectional projection (IP)), but rather in terms of a *position* within the clause. Another popular position is 'at the end of the sentence', common in verb-final languages, like most of the Paman languages of Cape York Peninsula. In both cases, there the dependent pronoun is an enclitic, it attaches to the constituent immediately to its left—(i) to the verb, when the enclitic appears in S-final position; or (ii) to some S-initial phrase or lexical item, when the enclitic occupies second position within S. The latter position is generally abbreviated P2 (i.e. 'position two') in the literature on clitics. These patterns (P2 and S-final) are amply exemplified in sentences cited in section 2.4.

The stage just described differs from the next in respect to the exact definition of the 'landing site' of dependent, or clitic, pronominals. In Stage III, clitic pronominals are positioned in relation to a category (e.g. noun (N), verb (V), Inflection (Infl), or a projection of these, NP, VP, IP). The enclitic object pronouns of Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh exemplify this—they are regularly attached to the inflected verb.

A rare but well-documented C-position pattern is that according to which enclitics are positioned in relation to the verb, but allowed to appear either *before* or *after* that category. When a clitic follows the verb, it is hosted phonologically by the verb. When it precedes the verb, it is dependent *syntactically* on the verb but it is hosted *phonologically* by the constituent immediately to its left. Observationally, at least, this is the situation represented by both subject and object enclitics in Wik-Ngathan, Wik-Ngatharr, and Kugu Nganhcara.

While it is relatively certain that these languages represent Stage III, it must be said that there is some ambiguity inherent in the surface forms at Stages II and III. Setting aside the case of post-verbal enclitic attachment, both of these intermediate stages are characterised by a surface form in which an enclitic appears immediately before the verb. And often, as it turns out in actual textual usage, this preverbal position is also *second* position in the clause, since more often than not just one non-clitic constituent precedes the verb. And, of course, if the verb is initial, then the two stages are observationally identical, since enclitics will necessarily coincide as P2. The distinguishing factor, of course, is the notion ‘second position’:

(38) Second Position (P2):

- (a) XP=Cl ... V. (Stage II, P2 enclitic)
- (b) ... XP=Cl V. (Stage III, V-dependent enclitic)

Where the ellipsis (...) is empty, the linear arrangements at these stages coincide entirely. Where overt material appears in the position of the ellipsis, the linear arrangements are, of course, distinct. Therefore, the matter is easy to decide, in principle—if a language proffers examples of, say,  $YP^{\wedge}XP=Cl^{\wedge}V$ , then, presumably, it represents Stage III. But the matter is not trivial, in fact, because in some examples of the type just cited, YP could in fact be a fronted element, not relevant to the positioning of the enclitic (Cl). However, on the basis of the careful work of Smith and Johnson (1986) and Sutton (1978), we feel confident in assuming that the Wik-Ngathan, Wik-Ngatharr, and Kugu Nghanhcara enclitic pronouns belong to Stage III, rather than Stage II.

An important feature of dependent pronominals at stages II and III is the phenomenon known as ‘Clitic Doubling’ (see Everett 1996, for much discussion). Clitic doubling represents a certain degree of separation of a dependent pronominal from its syntactic ‘argument position’ (A-position)—that is to say, the clitic is no longer simply the reduced and phonologically dependent realisation of the argument itself. Instead, in clitic doubling, the clitic appears in its designated clitic (Cl) position, and the corresponding argument position is itself filled by an overt full and unreduced argument expression construed with the clitic. This situation, amply exemplified in the ‘Other Middle Paman’ section above, is similar in nature to agreement, in which an argument is obligatorily construed with person and number morphology in the verb, or other relevant head. A difference is that clitic doubling, particularly as it is represented in

the languages at issue here, is optional—an overt argument need not be ‘doubled’ by an enclitic. Clitic doubling evolves from Stage I through a number of means, a familiar one being the reanalysis of structures resulting from a fronting process of the type called ‘clitic left dislocation’, according to which a fronted (dislocated) argument is ‘resumed’ by a (weak) pronoun.

Before discussing the final stage, we locate the Wik and related grammatical systems within the evolutionary scheme suggested above:

(39) Stages in the evolution of Wik and Middle Paman dependent pronominal systems:

Stage 0: Northern Paman, many Southern Paman.

Stage I: Linngithigh *-ang* ‘1.NOM’.

Stage II: Yir-Yoront, Kunjen, Aghu Tharrnggala, Rimanggudinhma.

Stage III: Wik-Mungkan/Me’nh object enclitics; Wik-Ngathan/  
Ngatharra and Kugu Nganhcara subject and object enclitics.

Stage IV: Wik-Mungkan/Me’nh subject agreement;  
Kugu Nganhcara residual subject agreement.

This sequence represents an evolution toward maximal synthesis in the grammatical expression of the relationship between a verb and its direct arguments (subject and object). It arrives at an end-point, in an important sense, as subsequent developments from a system of true agreement often involve the loss of inflections and movement toward a more analytic morphosyntactic system (cf. Hodge 1970). The relevant high point of synthesis is reached in the form of subject agreement, according to which erstwhile pronominal enclitics have evolved into verbal morphology expressing a true agreement relation between the verb and its subject. Everett (1996:46) attempts to distinguish agreement from the looser clitic doubling relation in the following terms:

(40) Agreement:

The co-occurrence of a tautaphrasal, coreferent NP-AGR° pair, which refers to a single theta-role and where AGR is included within its host, i.e. [is] m-subcategorised by it.

What this means, in effect, is that agreement is the joint realisation of a single argument (e.g. the subject) by a pair of elements, one of which is a nominal argument (NP), occupying an argument position in syntax (e.g.

the position of the subject) and the other of which is dependent morphology (symbolised  $AGR^\circ$ , a suffix, prefix, or infix, depending on the language) expressing person and number (and possibly gender) features integrated into the word-morphology of its host (e.g. the verb, in the cases of interest here. Since the two pieces jointly realise an argument, the relation is one that we have characterised as ‘obligatory’. The m-subcategorisation clause of (40) refers to the notion that agreement morphology is ‘integrated’ into the morphology of the host. The host ‘selects’ (or ‘subcategorises’) the agreement morphology, in the sense that the host word is incomplete without it.

It is relatively clear that Wik-Mungkan/Me’nh and Kugu Nganhcara have arrived at this maximal degree of synthesis in relation to subject agreement. Subject agreement is fully functional in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me’nh, and it is inextricably integrated into the morphology of the inflected verb in those languages. There are, evidently, two layers of subject agreement morphology, historically speaking—an early layer involving some synchronically opaque morphology of the type seen in the Wik-Me’nh present tense forms in (12), and an evidently more recent layer involving suffixes that are transparently related to the corresponding free pronouns. This historical layering is strikingly evident in Kugu Nganhcara, since the elements involved are different syntactically and morphologically. The old layer of subject agreement is suffixed to the verb and enters into the verbal morphology in a manner that is clearly cognate to the subject agreement system of Wik-Mungkan/Me’nh. It is greatly eroded and gives evidence of being on its way to extinction, in keeping with the popular tendency of inflectional systems to evolve away from synthesis and to move in the direction of analysis. At the same time, a system of subject-oriented dependent pronominals has arisen to replenish Kugu Nganhcara grammar with a new set of enclitics transparently derived from their free pronoun counterparts.

To summarise, the Wik languages represent an evolution toward the maximal degree of synthesis, with prior stages also represented. The maximal stage is reached in subject agreement in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me’nh. And an important prior stage is reached in the form of C-positioned clitic doubling—by subject and object enclitics in Wik-Ngathan, Wik-Ngatharr, and Kugu Nganhcara, and by object enclitics in Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me’nh. Kugu Nganhcara may have progressed beyond the maximal stage of synthesis in its subject agreement morphology, which is reduced and appears to have undergone loss of original forms.

## The time-depth of Wik dependent pronominal grammars

Having presented some picture of the diversity that exists within the Wik dependent pronominal systems, we turn now to a consideration of the temporal dimension. We ask now how long it takes for grammatical systems of this sort to evolve. Years of work in historical linguistics, and in the study of clitic and agreement systems specifically, lead us to assume that a language that evolves to Stage IV must have passed through earlier stages. This follows from the fact that Stage IV is an advanced point in an evolution toward synthesis. On the basis of historiographic records and historical reconstruction, we know that the evolution of an agreement system of the type found in the Wik family involves a progression through the stages of (37), allowing of course for differences in approach among comparative and theoretical linguists. Our question, therefore, is this: How long does it take to progress through these stages?

There are two problems with this question. First, we know from the most superficial observation that rates of change vary enormously. Thus, our answer cannot be absolute. We should rather put our question this way: How *fast* can a language or language family progress through these stages? What is the shortest interval in which the relevant changes can be completed? This sets the limits in a more realistic way—while there is in theory no *longest* period within which this evolution can be achieved, there is surely a *shortest* period, given the obvious fact that linguistic change takes time. Our eventual goal here is to argue that the time-depth within the Wik family is substantially greater than two centuries, i.e. that the evolution of the Wik systems of dependent pronominals has taken more than that period of time.

The second problem with our question, of course, is that we have no direct evidence concerning the temporal dimension. Wik-family linguistic records do not predate the first decades of the twentieth century, and, moreover, the records that exist from earlier periods do not include the grammatical information that is crucial here. We have no historiographic evidence, in short. We must make use of indirect evidence.

We have two things working in our favour. First, general principles of grammar and linguistic change lead us to believe that the progression set out in (37) is real, and the study of a large number of languages

substantiates this belief. Details vary, of course, but in broad outline, this picture appears to be essentially correct. Second, we possess relevant historical records for a number of languages, and we can determine by examination of documented cases how much time a particular evolution has actually taken. We propose to look at some relevant documented cases here, in order to gain some appreciation of the time-depth implied by the evolution embodied in (39). This will give us a comparative perspective from which to assess the time factor in the Wik and Middle Paman cases.

### **Greek (Rivero, pers. comm.)**

Homeric Greek (sixth century BCE) had clitic pronouns appearing in second position within the clause, i.e. P2 or Wackernagel's position. Two hundred years later (fourth century BCE), in the language of Aristotle and the major tragedies, clitic pronouns are moving away from strict P2 and show variable positioning, sometimes immediately preverbal, sometimes P2—a mixed situation. In the Middle Ages (twelfth to fifteenth century CE), clitic pronouns are V-positioned—V+Cl when the verb is clause initial, and Cl+V following material that has been moved forward to a position on the left of the verb.

What is described here is an evolution from Stage II to Stage III. The process began in the years preceding the Christian Era and it was completed some time in the Middle Ages, a period of well over a millennium. The process culminates in a Greek grammar, which is essentially that represented by the enclitic pronouns of Wik-Ngathan, Wik-Ngatharr, and Kugu Nganhcara.

### **Spanish (Rivero 1983, pers. comm.; Otero 1976; Nishida 1996)**

In Old Spanish (twelfth century CE to 1450), clitic pronouns show variable positioning, P2 or adjacent to the verb. During the three centuries following, and in the language of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote* (1605), clitic pronouns are V-based, before or after the verb, as in mediaeval Greek. After 1750, the current Spanish system developed—clitics are still V-based, but the relative position of the clitic is determined by verbal inflection (finite, infinitive, or imperative). Dependent pronominals become proclitic to the finite verb and are, therefore, no longer constrained by the so-called 'Tobler-Mussafia Law', which blocked clitics in clause initial position prior to the modern Spanish period.

Again, the evolution that is of interest to us is from Stage II to Stage III. In the history of Spanish, this process may have been completed with greater speed than in the Greek case, but we cannot tell exactly, given that written records in Spanish do not predate the twelfth century, by which time the changes were well under way. In any event, the documented Stage II period for Spanish lasted approximately three centuries, though its inception was surely earlier, as it was firmly established in the twelfth century.

### **Bulgarian (Izvorski 1995)**

In Bulgarian of the ninth century CE, clitic pronouns appear in P2. The use of P2 continued to the seventeenth century when it began to decline in favour of pre-verbal clitics, whose use developed and grew through the following centuries resulting in the fully evolved pre-verbal clitic pattern found in nineteenth-century Bulgarian. The system is virtually identical to that of Wik-Ngathan, Wik-Ngatharr, and Kugu Nganhcara. As pointed out by Klavans (1995), the situation represented jointly by these languages is interestingly uncommon, since the dependency is to the left, while syntactic dependency is to the right (except where the verb is clause-initial).

The Bulgarian evolution also represents the passage from Stage II to Stage III. Because of the careful work of Izvorski (1995), it is possible to identify the temporal junctures rather clearly—she shows, among other things, that the use of P2 clitics arose in Bulgarian as a result of an independent change in syntactic structure and that it increased in the period from the ninth to the thirteenth century. Thus, the linguistic record extends from the beginning of Stage II to the full achievement of Stage III, a period of approximately a millennium.

### **Egyptian (Loprieno 1995)**

Earlier Egyptian (3000 to 1300 BCE) possessed a set of clitic pronouns, enclitics occupying P2. In Later Egyptian, from 1300 BCE to the Middle Ages (1300 CE), enclitic pronouns become restricted and gradually disappear, and new object pronouns develop with orientation to the verb, rather than to second position.

The evolution evidently proceeds from Stage II to Stage III, or possibly Stage IV. But the evolution of P2 clitics is not continuous, unlike that of the corresponding elements in the Wik languages. In Later Egyptian, the development of new V-oriented object pronouns involves a source other than the earlier enclitics.

The temporal scope in Egyptian is rather impressive, involving several millennia.

### **Northern Italian dialects (Rizzi 1986; Brandi and Cordin 1988)**

In their evolution from their Early Romance ancestors, some Italian languages, or ‘dialects’, including Trentino and Fiorentino, have developed an apparent system of subject agreement, attached to the inflected auxiliary, and involving morphological material that originated as clitic pronouns. These Northern Italian elements are ‘subject’ clitics, evidently, and they are considered to be agreement by the authors cited, understandably, since they enter into the relation depicted in (40). If so, this case may represent an evolution to Stage IV within a family that elsewhere generally shows evolution of dependent pronominals just to Stage III—with an additional evolutionary development of proclisis in some languages, to be sure. The Northern Italian evolution would presumably proceed through all four stages, with a time-depth equivalent to that of the Romance languages which reach Stage III. The Northern Italian situation is reminiscent of Kugu Nganhcara, in which new subject enclitics coexist with older subject agreement suffixal morphology. The recently evolved Northern Italian subject clitics, coexist, of course, with subject agreement derived from Latin and Indo-European.

### **Summary and conclusion: Time, space, and Wik grammatical diversity**

Our handle on the time dimension derives from comparative examples of the type represented in the section above. These examples all involve the evolution of dependent pronominals to Stage III, the stage that predominates in the Wik family. The shortest documented evolution is some three centuries—but this is artificially short, because of the historical accident that Spanish written records begin in the twelfth

century. In the other cases, the evolution is longer, up to a millennium. If the Wik evolution is comparable, then it has taken three centuries at least, using the shortest of the historiographically dated comparison cases. Though the temporal scope is surely greater than this, we will assume it as a minimum.

We can be relatively certain that this evolution took place in situ in an area of Cape York Peninsula encompassing the region now occupied by the Wik-speaking peoples.

First, the Wik developments in relation to dependent pronominals are entirely local and cannot be traced to any other area in Cape York Peninsula or any other part of Australia occupied by Pama-Nyungan languages.

Second, the Wik languages represent an internal diversity that requires recognition of three subgroups. In relation to the evolution of dependent pronominal systems these are the following:

- i. Wik-Mungkan and Wik-Me'nh: Dependent pronominals are exclusively verb-based and either suffixed or enclitic, never preverbal. Subject-dependent pronominals constitute an agreement system. Object- (and oblique-) dependent pronominals are enclitics showing optional clitic doubling. Dependent pronominals appear in the sequence subject–object.
- ii. Wik-Ngathan and Wik-Ngatharr: Dependent subject and object (and oblique) pronominals are verb-based enclitics, showing optional clitic doubling. They are preferably preverbal (attached to a preverbal host), but they may also attach to the verb. Enclitics appear in the sequence subject–object.
- iii. Kugu Nganhcara: There is a residual and reduced agreement system involving suffixes to the verb. In addition, a newer verb-based enclitic system is fully established involving optional clitic doubling. Enclitics are preferably attached to a preverbal host, though they may also attach to the verb. Ordering of enclitics is variable.

This is just one aspect of Wik diversity; the languages also show important differences in phonology (e.g. vowel reduction and umlaut), in morphology (e.g. the modern reflexes of the case endings, and other morphological inventories), and in the lexicon (as observed extensively earlier in this essay). A simplicity argument persuades us that this diversity developed in the present Wik area. To assume otherwise would

require a complex system of migrations into the present area on the part of linguistic communities already distinct—i.e. essentially separate immigrations. The simpler theory is that the observed diversity developed locally over a period of time that, taking all factors into consideration, greatly exceeds the time which separates 1788 from the present.

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