The development of the Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay & Yuwaalayaay Dictionary

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Abstract

The Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay & Yuwaalayaay Dictionary was published in 2003, one of a series of publications produced as part of Gamilaraay–Yuwaalaraay language revival. This paper outlines the context in which the Dictionary was developed, beginning with the Gamilaraay–Yuwaalaraay area and the decline and current situation of the languages. Then it considers the revival programs beginning around 1990 and the production of the Dictionary, with a major discussion on the range and quality of the sources of information. A number of principles of dictionary development are considered. It concludes with some thoughts on the role of the Dictionary as one resource in the evolution and revival of the languages.

Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay country and languages

Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay are languages from the inland north of New South Wales (NSW). The Gamilaraay area includes towns such as Tamworth, Gunnedah, Coonabarabran, Narrabri, Moree, Pilliga, Toomelah–Boggabilla and Collarenebri. The Yuwaalaraay area is further west including Goodooga, Lightning Ridge, and Walgett. These languages are closely related and also share many features with other Central NSW languages (Austin, Williams & Wurm, 1980) – Wangaybuwan and Wayilwan (these two are also known as Ngiyambaa) and Wiradjuri. Their use declined rapidly after colonisation. The Gamilaraay language declined much more

1 Australian National University.

2 In the rest of this article Yuwaalaraay will be used to refer to both Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay since there is very little difference between these dialects.

3 See Buckhorn (1997) for details of the early contact history.
rapidly than Yuwaalaraay further west. So, the Gamilaraay records begin earlier, but there are few records of fluent Gamilaraay on tape or recorded by experienced linguists, whereas there are around 60 hours of Yuwaalaraay tapes held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) which have provided most of the information for revival. Peter Austin has worked extensively on Gamilaraay and his recent article (2008) provides further background to that language and an extensive bibliography. More information about the Gamilaraay area can be found in O’Rourke (1997) and the Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay & Yuwaalayaay Dictionary (GYYD) (Ash et al. 2003) has information on the whole area.4

Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay language revival

The GYYD was produced as part of the increased revival work on Gamilaraay–Yuwaalaraay (GY) that began around 1990. Peter Austin, a native of Tamworth and, at that time professor of linguistics at La Trobe University, published short Gamilaraay dictionaries (1992, 1994) and with David Nathan produced an online Gamilaraay dictionary (1996). It is difficult to find information about community language activity in those years. Uncle Ted Fields in Walgett and Auntie Rose Fernando in Collarenebri had also been working on language and I worked with Uncle Ted from 1994. In 1996, after consultation with Aboriginal people at the school, a Yuwaalaraay language program began at St Joseph’s Primary, supported by the school and the Catholic Schools Office with funding initially from the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and later from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) (Cavanagh 2005). After further community meetings the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) funded resource production and training as part of setting up a Year 7 GY program at Walgett High School. A language program also began in Goodooga around 1998. The model employed in the school programs included a linguist (myself) with Uncle Ted generally teaching the teachers. I used Williams (1980) as my basic grammar source and the Yuwaalaraay tapes from AIATSIS for other information, particularly pronunciation.

It was clear that there was a hunger for language among many GY people. Most knew a few words but few knew many. And no-one knew how to put words into sentences and to string sentences together as people like Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece had been known to in the 1970s.

Between 1999 and 2001 there were a number of language meetings around the GY area, with GY people and others coming from many towns. Largely because of the

4 The website www.yuwaalaraay.org provides information on developments in GY. It lists resources, including the Gaay Garay Dhadhin (Picture Dictionary) (Yuwaalaraay and Gamilaraay Language Program, 2006) and has a link to Gayarragi, Winangali, a GY multimedia language resource launched in March 2009. This includes a searchable dictionary with sound, many Yuwaalaraay sentences, stories, songs and games.
existence of the tapes there is much more Yuwaalaraay information than Gamilaraay. There are some 1600 Yuwaalaraay words (more than double the Gamilaraay recorded) and considerable grammatical information. Over 70% of the words and much of the grammar are the same (Austin, Williams & Wurm 1980, p. 170). The meetings recognised that Gamilaraay revival would be severely limited by this lack of information and decided that, where one language lacked a word or grammatical information, it would use what was known from the other language.

Earlier publications

1998 saw a flurry of language work in Walgett. DET provided funding for development of resources and inservicing of prospective language teachers, specifically Aboriginal education workers from Walgett and nearby towns. Marianne Betts (a teacher at Walgett High School) and I prepared a 100-hour high school GY course, with Marianne designing the program and going through the time-consuming process of getting Board of Studies approval for the course. One result was *Yaama Maliyaa* (Giacon & Betts 1999), a text for the Walgett High School program. *Yuwaalayaay – Language of the Narran River* (Giacon 1998) contains material collected by Ian Sim at Goodooga in the 1950s and edited by me.

In 1999, I produced a Yuwaalaraay–Gamilaraay wordlist based on the Austin dictionaries and the wordlist in Williams (Giacon 1999). This, like its sources, generally gave a one word equivalent to the headword. It included the source for each word (Williams [CW] or Austin [PA]), the part of speech and whether each verb was transitive or intransitive. It included an introductory section and three lists of words; GY to English, English to GY, and semantic fields (word groups like fish, and so on). A sample is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bundaa-ng</td>
<td>V-INT</td>
<td>fall</td>
<td>CW, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundaama-l</td>
<td>V-TR</td>
<td>knock down</td>
<td>CW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bundabunda</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>poison</td>
<td>CW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The spelling system was largely borrowed from Austin’s earlier dictionaries. There were also some minor changes to entries based mainly on information from the tapes.

Users of the list need to know that N means noun and need to know how nouns are used in GY – it is not the same as English. Similarly the ng in *bundaa-ng* tells you which group of verbs it belongs to, but you then need to know how to use the verb. There is no word *bundaang* in GY but there are *bundaagi* (will fall), *bundaanhi*

5 For a brief introduction to pronunciation of the Gamilaraay–Yuwaalaraay words see yuwaalaraay.org/pronunciation.html, and for a longer explanation, yuwaalaraay.org/lessons/pron.html
(fell) and many others formed by adding suffixes to bundaa-. The difference between transitive verbs (TR) and intransitive verbs (INT) is crucial to GY and Aboriginal languages in general. A dictionary requires prior knowledge on the part of the reader if it is to be properly used.6

The first publication that included sound appeared in 2001. Gaay Yuwaalaraay (Giacon 2001) included a CD of Yuwaalaraay words and phrases which had been extracted from the tapes and, for the first time, it was possible for people to learn directly from the pronunciation of the older traditional speakers. Originally the publications were distributed by the Walgett language program, but it became clear that commercial distribution had many advantages. It was also clear that there was a need for a more complete dictionary and a grammar. The latter is still in progress.7

Production of the Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay & Yuwaalayaay Dictionary

By 1998 the need for a comprehensive dictionary to provide a firm basis for the revival work was clear. There was also new information available from the tape transcripts. There was some funding available – part of a NSW DET grant and contributions from local clubs. Anna Ash had linguistic qualifications and experience and was available, and I was able to work on the project part time. However it was also something very new we were taking on and we knew that more funding would be needed, so it was with some trepidation that work began. Fortunately more funding was provided by ATSIC and the overall expenditure was something over $150 000. Anna Ash gathered material from the old sources and tapes to include in the database, Amanda Lissarrague worked on verbs, and we all worked on the final entries, mostly in telephone meetings. As well there was ongoing consultation with members of the Walgett, Goodooga and Toomelah–Boggabilla programs and others. This covered many areas – layout, wording, design, readability, sale price and more. The final consultation concerned words that might be excluded. There were strong and differing opinions among the Elders and a number of words were excluded from the published dictionary. The final stage included production of the grammar section, proof-reading by the authors and friends, and negotiations with the publishers.

What is a dictionary?

Typically a dictionary includes many sections. Generally there is an introduction then a list of words and their meanings. Often there is other information for each word; perhaps part of speech, pronunciation, where the word came from and if there are any special rules for its use. There will often be example sentences. In bilingual dictionaries, such as the GYYD, the headword (the first word in an entry) and

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6 When producing the published wordlist I wondered if anyone would ever use it. In fact it was widely used and I was delighted one day, when visiting a school, to see a very worn, well-used copy of the book.

7 For a list of currently available publications see yuwaalaraay.org/gypublications.html
The process

The main aspects of the production of the GYYD were establishing the team and administrative structure, community consultation, information gathering and processing, data entry, writing the definitions and overall entries, and design and production. Three linguists worked on the project. Anna Ash did most of the data entry, I co-ordinated the work, and Amanda Lissarrague was part of the team for a shorter time. The administration of the funds was initially provided by Walgett High School and later by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale.

Previous publications had included Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay words. However there are differences between Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay, albeit minor, and it was decided to distinguish three languages, Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Yuwaalayaay. It is worth noting that there are several dialects of Gamilaraay (Austin, Williams & Wurm 1980, p. 168) but that so little of them has been recorded that it was not practical to set up separate sections for them in the Dictionary.

Another major decision was how to input data and output the text for the Dictionary: that is, which computer program to use. It was decided to use FileMaker Pro. This was satisfactory in producing the Dictionary but has had some disadvantages subsequently. Users need the (expensive) FileMaker Pro program to read the data. The program is also relatively complicated, so a consultant was employed to design the input screens and manage the output. This at times led to delays. It is difficult to update the material and output new versions of the Dictionary. At the moment we are working on producing a version of the database using Toolbox, a program with specific capacity for dictionary production.

Figure 1 and 2 below provide examples of the FileMaker Pro version of the Dictionary. They show sections of the database to do with the Yuwaalaraay word *guwaali*. Figure 1 shows the main Yuwaalaraay screen. There are similar Gamilaraay and Yuwaalayaay screens. Sources of information are shown at the bottom, (Williams’ grammar, Uncle Ted Fields, Arthur Dodd, Stephen Wurm). Other information includes four definitions, the part of speech and a record of decisions about the word. Figure 2 is associated with the meaning tell. It contains an example sentence and a linguistic comment.
Figure 1. The main database page for Yuwaalaraay guwaali.

Figure 2. The database page for tell.
Sources of information

For strong languages, information about words comes from speakers and text. Questions about words can be referred to speakers. With languages whose use has declined, such as GY, the main source is historical material. For GY this includes written material by amateur and professional linguists; tape material, including transcripts; words recorded from contemporary speakers, and words developed by language programs.

The *Yuwaalaraay Gamilaraay Wordlist* relied mainly on recently published material for information. The aim, largely realised, with the *GYYD* was to go back to original sources and use the new information available from tape transcripts. The GY historical records contain around 1500 pages, so GY is much better placed than many other languages from eastern Australia.

Written sources are valuable but are also limited by the expertise of the recorder and the fluency of the informants and by the time they had to do the recording. They often do not accurately capture the actual form of the words and are generally deficient in capturing the full set of meanings associated with any word. Sounds such as ng at the start of words were often not recognised. Often only a few of the many meanings and uses of one word were recorded.

The main early Gamilaraay sources are listed in Austin (2008, p. 48 following) and include Rev William Ridley (1875) (but possibly recorded around 1840) and R.H. Mathews (1903). There are other less important sources. Major Yuwaalaraay sources from this time include Mathews (1902) and the books of Katie Langloh Parker (1896, 1905).

In 1938 Norman Tindale recorded material from Harry Doolan and George Murray (Austin & Tindale 1986). In the 1950s Ian Sim, working with Dr Arthur Cappell, collected Yuwaalaraay material at Goodooga from Mrs G. Rose, Willy Willis, Greg Fields and Mrs West (Giacon 1998). Gerhardt Laves (1929–32) worked with George Murray on Gamilaraay and Ada Murray on Yuwaalaraay. In 1955 Stephen Wurm worked with Burt Draper, Peter Lang and Mrs F. Munro on Gamilaraay, and with Harry Hippi (also known as Harry Murray, from Mungindi), Mrs Rose of Goodooga, Charley Dodd and Arthur Dodd of Walgett on Yuwaalaraay.

Key to our current understanding of GY is the tape material. Wurm recorded 20 packed minutes – mostly single words and short sentences. Later tapes from the 1970s include these but also have more connected speech, particularly narrative, and so illustrate other features of the languages. The main informants for these were Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece, both born in 1890. Jack Sands and Harry Hall were also recorded.

Janet Mathews made some 50 of the Yuwaalaraay tapes. She was not a linguist and the speakers mostly translate the words, sentences or stories that Mathews provides. The final tapes were made by Corrine Williams as part of her linguistics honours research. They have the great advantage that Williams knew much about the language and so
was aware of interesting features that emerged in elicitation and was able to follow up some of these. Williams’ thesis was published in 1980 and has since been the key reference for GY work. By the time the current GY revival began there was no-one left with anything like the knowledge of Yuwaalaraay that Dodd and Reece had, and knowledge of Gamilaraay was even less.

The great value of tapes is that they record the actual speaker, not the interviewer’s understanding of the speaker. It is possible to re-listen to the tapes to check the sound and language structures and the more experienced listener will also hear more. In addition tapes often have many examples of the one word in different sentences, allowing a better understanding of its meaning or meanings than that given by the one English word typically found in wordlists. Transcription is the first step in using the tapes. There are some 600 pages of Yuwaalaraay transcriptions, which have taken thousands of hours to produce.

There were also some relatively recent sources. Peter Thompson (n.d.) collected words in Toomelah–Boggabilla in the 1980s and I collected around one thousand words from Uncle Ted Fields. Some were already in the records. Others – such as gadjigadji (tree regrowth) – were not recorded elsewhere. At other times Uncle Ted was not certain about a word. When pressed for a word for welcome he came up with a number of words that he remembered that might be appropriate but that he was not sure of. The word gulbiyaay is now used for welcome, but Ted was uncertain of the precise meaning and form, with options for the latter including galbiyay, gulbiyaanha, and gulbiyay. Finally there are words, including numbers, developed by the language programs.

Gathering and interpreting the information

The production of the entries for each word involved gathering information and then composing sections of the entry.

It was often difficult to decide on the form of a word. Written sources need to be interpreted – they often do not capture the difference between long and short vowels or the difference between r sounds.

Figure 3 shows the Gamilaraay sources entered for gagil (bad). Austin had given the modern spelling as gagil. Mathews had kuggil (bad) and kugil (wet). It was decided that wet was not an appropriate translation. In the current orthography both k and gg would be rendered as g. It is common for sources to follow the English pattern and use u for both the sounds in put and putt – these sounds are represented by u and a respectively in current GY. Where there is tape evidence, as there is for gagil, it is easy to decide what the actual sound is. In general the information about a word in one language would be similar to that in the other languages, so the final entry, given below, drew on information from all three languages:

\[
gagil \quad \text{(YR, YY, GR)} \quad \text{adjective, adverb, placename}
\]

1 bad, no good (YR, YY, GR). •Gagil-wan.gaan ngaama dhadha-y-la-nhi. (YR)
That tasted really bad. *Gagil nhama gungan.* (YR) That’s bad water.

**Gagil** has a wide range of meanings, including ‘naughty, horrible, sore, sick, jealous and stale’. Sometimes occurs in *gagil-dhuul* (bad - little, one) meaning ‘unhappy’ or ‘bad one, bad person’.

Figure 3. Gamarillaay sources in the database for *gagil* (bad).

A particular difficulty arose with words still being used. Often because of English influence the forms being used now are different from the traditional ones. For instance mother is *guni* in current usage with stress on the gu and the final vowel short but, on the tapes, it is *gunii* with *nii* containing a long vowel and being stressed. *Gabaa* was previously used for white man but it is now pronounced *gaba*. Uncle is traditionally *garruu* but now often said *garu*, with the final sound shortened, stress on the first syllable and the r not trilled. The traditional form of the word is used in the Dictionary.8

Generally GY words that have developed since colonisation, such as animal names, also have a range of forms. The words for horse include *yirraamaan* (Giacon 1998); *yarramaan, yarraaman* (Fred Reece); *yarraman* (Arthur Dodd); Williams (1980); Austin (1992) and *yaramun* (Milson c. 1840.). Contemporary use is *yaraaman* and *yaraman* showing the common tendency to lose the trilled rr and to shorten vowels. The Dictionary headword is *yarraman* but I suspect that *yarraamaan* is the more traditional form.

The meanings of words are often much more complicated than their forms. Below I give a few examples to illustrate this complexity and the ease with which words can be misinterpreted, or have their meaning unintentionally modified.

It is relatively easy to get information about some words, such as the names of objects. The interviewer points at their hand and asks, ‘What is that?’ The informant says, ‘*Mara*’ (Gamilaraay) or ‘*Maa*’ (Yuwaalaraay). It would be very easy to miss the fact that those GY words are also used for finger. Similarly *dhaygal* (Yuwaalaraay) and

8 See N. Reid, this volume, for an extended discussion of these issues.
*gawugaa* (Gamilaraay) mean head, but also hair of head – and not other hair. In these instances we are aware that the one Gamilaraay or Yuwaalaraay word has various translations in English and vice-versa. However it is also likely that for other GY words parts of their previous meaning have been lost and they are now used to represent exactly the same information as an English word. For instance the information on the GY words for left and right (hand) is quite limited and we cannot be sure of how these words were traditionally used.

The word *gaba* also illustrates the range of meanings a word can have and the ease with which these can be lost. There is no argument about the form of this word or about its main translation, good. However, it would be a major mistake to think that *gaba* is equivalent to English good. Other translations found include glad, happy, pleased, tender, right, all right, fresh, sweet, honest, pleasant, nice, wholesome, pretty, and kind. As well *gaba* combines with other words in GY in expressions such as *giirr gaba* (that’s right), *gaba ngulu* (good looking; literally: good face) and *gaba guyaay* (happy, literally good spirit). It would be foolish to expect that all meanings of *gaba* have been recorded, and particularly foolish to expect that we have anything like a complete list of the common phrases in traditional GY that included *gaba*.

*Gaba* mostly functions an adjective but, at times on the tapes, it is also used as an adverb qualifying a verb. The Dictionary entry lists *gaba* as adjective and adverb, but I have some doubts. It may be that the use of *gaba* as an adverb is a misinterpretation of the tapes. It may be that the informant has been influenced by English, and that the use of *gaba* as an adverb does not represent traditional GY. It would be easier to make a decision if it were known whether related Aboriginal languages have words that are both adjectives and adverbs, but that is one of the many pieces of research that has not yet been done.

The Dictionary also gives information about the way to use a word in phrases and sentences. Giving the part of speech gives considerable information about usage. It is also critical to distinguish transitive and intransitive verbs in most Aboriginal languages, since this indicates major differences in the way they are used. It is particularly important to point out ways that a word is different from what an English speaker would expect. For example English speakers tend to interpret *guwaali* as equivalent to English talk in all situations. Some give other translations including tell and speak. Below are some examples of the use of *guwaali* in Yuwaalaraay. The word order of traditional GY sentences is variable and generally different from English word order.

(1)

I will talk.

*Gaay guwaa-li ngaya.*

word will.tell I
I will talk Yuwaalaraay.

Yuwaalaraay guwaa-li ngaya
Yuwaalaraay will.tell I

We will talk (converse).

Gaay guwaa-la-y ngali
word will.tell.each.other we (2 people)

Talk to me.

Gaay guwaa-la nganunda.
word tell (command) me.at

Tell me.

Giwaa-la nganha.
tell (command) me

The Dictionary entry for guwaali is quite long. It provides information about the word but also tries to give an indication of the complexity of the rules governing its use in GY. In the examples above, the one English word (talk) is translated as gaay guwaali (1), guwaa-li (2), guwaa-la-y (3) and gaay guwaa-la (4). It is part of the role of the Dictionary to inform readers about this sort of complexity in the use of GY words.

Another area where GY and English do things very differently is in the description of time. English speakers often use the words yesterday and tomorrow, and would look for equivalents in GY. In fact, as Arthur Dodd and Fred Reece point out clearly, GY did not have words for yesterday and tomorrow, but had other ways of conveying that information. There are a number of verb suffixes that are used to translate yesterday and tomorrow, but their meanings do not correspond totally with those of English words. Further research will help us to better understand the GY time system, and then the dictionary entries will change. In the meantime the dictionary has ngurrugu ‘tomorrow’ and gimiyandi (one source) ‘yesterday’ – words probably written down by someone who expected every language to have these words, but whose actual meanings are more like ‘after the night’ and ‘when it happened a day or so ago’.
The entries often give indications about how sure we were about the information given. The annotation, one source, is found nearly 500 times in the Dictionary. It is an indication that there may be uncertainty about the form and meaning of the word. Uncertainty is also signalled in the entry for *guugaarr* (tree goanna, Varanus varius), which includes the text ‘perhaps a Wangaaybuwan word’, indicating that there is some question as to whether this is a GY word at all.

At times there are multiple entries with the same English translation. For instance both *balandharr* and *dhaygal* are translated head hair. However the entry for *balandharr* contains the text ‘This is a rare word, the common word is *dhaygal*’. It is quite possible that *balandharr* has a slightly different meaning which has now been lost.

**The work process**

Production of the entries involved data entry and analysis followed by the actual writing of the definitions. Anna Ash worked for approximately two years on data entry and analysis. She and I would regularly have telephone conversations about the material. My tasks included to review the tape material and to work with Anna on any difficulties. Amanda Lissarrague also worked on the project for some months, entering material on verbs and writing many of those entries.

There was a plethora of small jobs such as checking scientific names, deciding what constituted sufficient evidence that a particular word was found in a language, assigning words to semantic domains and deciding on the cover photo. It was decided early on to include a sketch grammar in the Dictionary. This was necessary to give people some basic idea as to how the languages works; we were aware it would be some time before a comprehensive grammar was available.

The IAD (Institute for Aboriginal Development) in Alice Springs had published a number of impressive Aboriginal language dictionaries and agreed to publish the *GYYD*. A major strength of their dictionaries was the high quality design and editing by Christine Bruderlin and Mark MacLean. One role of the Dictionary is to provide information, but another is to make a clear statement of the existence and status of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay. The marvellous design and high standard publishing have very much helped achieve those aims.

**Principles**

I am not clear at what stage the following principles became clear to me – some of them were explicit before the work on the Dictionary began.

The main aim of language revival is to help maintain and develop the pride and identity of the people of the language. A dictionary should be something that people can be proud of, both in appearance and in the quality of the work that it contains. Another aim was to provide information about the traditional languages. When a language is declining in use there is simplification and loss, and the language adopts many of the features of the dominant language. The aim of the *GYYD* was to document traditional
GY and words that have been adopted into GY. Some adopted words such as *gulbiyaay* (welcome), discussed above, are of uncertain form and meaning but do have some basis in the sources and are useful. Others have been specifically developed because there is a need and no existing word. Examples include the expanded number system, or *wiyayl*, traditionally an echidna quill and now extended to mean pen or pencil.

Standardisation of language is a major issue. We have at times tried to produce resources that incorporate local dialects. But to produce even one resource for the whole GY area is a major task – to produce a different resource for each town is impossible. At this stage of language revival, when there is virtually no one who can hold even a brief conversation in language, the emphasis will be on a common language. Local variation can co-exist with the common language but to focus on the variations could impede language revival. The Dictionary recognises variation, beginning with three languages, but it also provides the basis for a common language across a substantial area.

A dictionary is a record but it also includes many decisions that will influence the reviving language. It is the responsibility of dictionary creators to make sure that decisions are based on good information and appropriate research. The database contains notes on discussions that led to many of these decisions and is available for people who want to check the information and process used to arrive at any particular entry.

The Dictionary needs to honour the people whose knowledge and work it builds on, so the names of informants are included on numerous occasions. Many entries make reference to the source of information – often Arthur Dodd, Fred Reece, Uncle Ted Fields and others.

The Dictionary has multiple audiences. Some people might like to have it on their bookshelf and rarely open it. Others, such as people learning the language or students, could use it regularly. Professional linguists have used it as part of their work to compare languages or to find out information about kinship terms. An attempt was made to cater for a wide range of readership in the printed dictionary and the material is available in other forms. I often use the FileMaker Pro database or the text files of the Dictionary rather than the book itself. The database has been deposited in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies and both it and the text files are available.

After consultation with the community it was decided to exclude some words, mostly with sexual reference, from the Dictionary and to clearly label words that had been recently developed. Some words were excluded on the basis that they added little to the usable language. It is not clear which bird *guinarey* (*guwinaray?*) (light eagle hawk) refers to, and so it is not included in the printed dictionary but is in the database.

A constant principle in language revival is: Do the best you can do now. The Wordlist (*Giacon 1999*) was produced first, and later the Dictionary. I hope that there will be

9 See yuwaalaraay.org/gynew_words.html
an updated and corrected dictionary in future but the current one is what we could do with the personnel, knowledge and finance available at the time.

An important part of the production of the Dictionary was that a team was involved. Having three linguists working on this led to much better decisions and fewer mistakes. It was also good that the work was peer-reviewed, with Christina Eira’s review appearing in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (2005). Having works well reviewed will only increase the effectiveness of language revival. More importantly the process of creating the Dictionary involved many GY people and was one factor in the ongoing development of a community of GY speakers.

Some errors have been found in the *GYYD*. One is *Gundhimayan* as the origin of the name Condamine. The word Condamine comes from English and is not a GY word. Placenames are a trap for players young and old.

**Conclusion**

Some 900 copies of the Dictionary have been sold and it is the main source of the languages for the vast majority of people. There is no doubt that both the process and the Dictionary have had a strong impact on GY revitalisation and current use.

The Dictionary is widely used in GY language work. However it is important to recognise that any language is extremely complex, and that learning a language is a long and demanding process that generally needs lots of assistance and feedback. There are people who are working together to develop their skills, and their GY is getting closer to the traditional languages. These people recognise the need to constantly revise their use of language and therefore to change some patterns they have adopted, often unconsciously. However there are also many people relearning GY on their own, generally without a background in languages or linguistics. In these situations many aspects of revived GY differ greatly from the traditional languages. Some aspects of pronunciation and rhythm can follow English, the structuring of words and sentences also often follows English patterns, and the choice of words can be inappropriate. These people will be developing different versions of GY. It is encouraging to see people who are so committed to relearning the languages. It is a great pity that there are not classes and appropriate resources which would help people to better learn the basics of the languages, nor is there ready access to someone who can advise whether new and creative language use conforms to the traditional language structure.

Appropriate planning, structures and resources are needed for the development of a revived language which is consistent with the original language, which does not split into multiple versions, which is a functional language and which has a chance of long-term survival. The *Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay & Yuwaalayaay Dictionary* is an authoritative work and provides one of the many resources and structures necessary for the rebuilding of Gamilaraay and Yuwaalaraay.
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