Pitjantjatjara

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Pitjantjatjara is a dialect of the Western Desert Language (WDL) of central Australia (Douglas 1958). The Western Desert Language is a member of the south-west Pama-Nyungan group. Together with Warnman, it forms the Wati sub-group. It is spoken by 4000–5000 people, and covers the widest geographical area of any language in Australia, stretching from Woomera in central northern South Australia, as far west as Kalgoorlie and Meekatharra and north to Balgo Hills, in Western Australia. The main dialects, which differ most in regards the lexicon but also to some extent in grammar and phonology, include Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Southern Luritja, Pintupi-Luritja, Kukatja, Gugarda, Ngalia, Wangkatja, Wangkatha, Manyjilyjarra, Kartutjarra and Yurlparija. It is perhaps more accurately conceived of as a dialect chain, whereby a dialect such as Pitjantjatjara is mutually intelligible with its neighbours Ngaanyatjatjarra and Yankunytjatjara, but not with dialects more distant than these, such as Kukatja and Manyjilyjarra.

Pitjantjatjara is spoken mainly in the north-west of South Australia, but extends north into the Northern Territory, and west into Western Australia. It shares a dictionary and learner's guide with Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1993, 1996). Yankunytjatjara includes the area known as Ayers Rock (or Uluṟu in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara).

The main speaker in these recordings is Kathleen Windy,[1] a 35-year-old Pitjantjatjara woman from Areyonga in the Northern Territory. She works with the community's young people as a sports and recreation officer, and comes from a family which is active in language maintenance and education. Areyonga is a small community of about 200 people, located about 230 km south-west of Alice Springs. It is a community in which Pitjantjatjara is the first language of infants, with English learned as a second language for communication with wider Australian society. Although Areyonga is considered a Pitjantjatjara community, it is very close to the border of traditional Arrernte land (see Breen & Dobson 2005 for an IPA

[1] For the purposes of this Illustration, we occasionally use examples from recordings made in 1990 by male speaker Mike Williams from Ernabella community, South Australia.

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description of Arrernte). Langlois (2004) provides a vivid overview of teenage Pitjantjatjara speech in Areyonga.

Consonants

	Bilabial	Apical		Laminal	Velar
		Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Alveo-palatal	
Plosives	p	t	ʈ	c	k
Nasals	m	n	ɳ	ɲ	ŋ
Laterals		l	ɭ	ʎ	
Rhotics		r	ɻ		
Glides	(w)			j	w

All examples show the consonant in word-initial position, except for the retroflex stop, nasal and lateral, the laminal lateral, and the trill/tap /r/, which do not occur in initial position. These consonants are illustrated intervocalically.

Also, the speaker in these recordings did not produce a word-initial la-, ru- or yi-, so these syllables are given in second (and final) position in the word.

	IPA	Orthography	English
pa	paka	*paka*	'tobacco'
pi	pika	*pika*	'pain, angry'
pu	puju	*puyu*	'smoke (n)'
ka	kapa	*kapa*	'belly'
ki	kipaɻa	*kipa̲ra*	'bush turkey'
ku	kuka	*kuka*	'meat'
ca	caka	*tjaka*	'typical'
ci	cina	*tjina*	'foot'
cu	cuka	*tjuka*	'sugar'
ta	tali	*tali*	'sandhill/dune'
ti	tili	*tili*	'flame'
tu	tupunpa	*tupunpa*	'sandhill country'
ʈa	kaʈaɳi	*kaṭa̲ni*	'to cut'
ʈi	iʈi	*iṭi*	'baby'
ʈu	kuʈuʈu	*kuṭu̲ṭu*	'heart'
ma	maku	*maku*	'witchety-grub'
mi	miːta	*miita*	'spouse'
mu	muʈi	*mu̲ṭi*	'knee'
ŋa	ŋaʎa	*ngalya*	'forehead'
ŋi	ŋijaɻi	*ngiya̲ri*	'thorny devil'
ŋu	ŋula	*ngula*	'later'
ɲa	ɲaː	*nyaa?*	'what?'
ɲi	ɲiku	*nyiku*	'elbow'
ɲu	ɲupali	*nyupali*	'you two'
na	nanikuta	*nanikuta*	'goat'
ni	nikiti	*nikiti*	'naked'
nu	nuːnpuŋaɲi	*nuunpunganyi*	'to twitch'

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ɳa	aɳaɳu	*aṉangu*	‘(aboriginal) person’
ɳi	iɳi	*iṉi*	‘loose, on the brink’
ɳu	puɳu	*puṉu*	‘plant, tree’
ʎa	paʎaɳi	*palyaṉi*	‘to make, fix’
ʎi	puʎi	*pulyi*	‘navel’
ʎu	awaʎuru	*awalyuru*	‘bush currant’
la	ila	*ila*	‘near’
li	lipi	*lipi*	‘wide’
lu	lukupupu	*lukupupu*	‘ant lion’
ɭa	maɭa	*maḻa*	‘after, behind’
ɭi	pakaɭi	*pakaḻi*	‘grandson’
ɭu	maɭu	*maḻu*	‘red kangaroo’
ra	kura	*kura*	‘bad’
ri	iriti	*iriti*	‘long ago’
ru	liru	*liru*	‘poisonous snake’
ɻa	ɻapa	*ṟapa*	‘confident, trusting’
ɻi	ɻiŋki	*ṟingki*	‘thin, fragile’
ɻu	maɻu	*maṟu*	‘black’
wa	waku	*waku*	‘right hand’
wi	wiya	*wiya*	‘no’
wu	wuːlukatiɲi	*wuulukatinyi*	‘to crouch down in fear’
ja	jakuca	*yakutja*	‘bag’
ji	kuji	*kuyi*	‘harmless snake’ (glide deleted on final repetition)
ju	junpa	*yunpa*	‘face’

The Pitjantjatjara consonant inventory is typical of Australian languages in having many places of articulation, but comparatively few manners of articulation (Evans 1995, Butcher 2006). Specifically, it has five consonant places of articulation, including three coronals.[2] The coronals are divided into apical and laminal articulations – the apical articulations are in turn divided into alveolar and postalveolar (or retroflex) articulations. In contrast to neighbouring Arrernte, WDL is one of the Australian languages that do not make the distinction between different laminal articulations – that is, it does not contrast lamino-dentals and lamino-alveopalatals. The two types of laminal sound exist within Western Desert, but their occurrence is diaphonic rather than phonemic. Certain dialects, such as Ngaatjatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra have a more dental articulation for the laminal,[3] while others, such as Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, have a more alveopalatal articulation. This is clearly audible in the form of a strong palatal off-glide in the speech of Pitjantjatjara speakers we have worked with, including the speaker in the current recordings, and is borne out by the static palatographic data presented in Butcher (1995). It should be noted that we use the palatal IPA symbols for these sounds /c ɲ ʎ/, so it is important to highlight the fact that these sounds are not dorsal palatals, but laminal alveopalatals.

Figure 1 presents averaged FFT (Fast Fourier Transformed) spectra of the three coronal stop consonants, centred at stop burst, and Figure 2 illustrates the strong affrication of the initial stop /c/. However, in intervocalic position, the lamino-alveopalatal may be lenited. These lenitions are more likely to occur between two vowels, both within and across word

[2] To put this in context, note that 81% of UPSID (the UCLA Phonological Segment Inventory Database) languages (Maddieson 1984) have only one coronal place. Only 3.5% have three or four coronal categories; of these 16 languages, 14 are Australian.

[3] The laminals in these dialects are noticeably dental in the context of /a/, but have alveopalatal allophones in the context of /i/. There is some variation in the context of /u/, but generally the pronunciation is more alveopalatal in this high vowel context as well.

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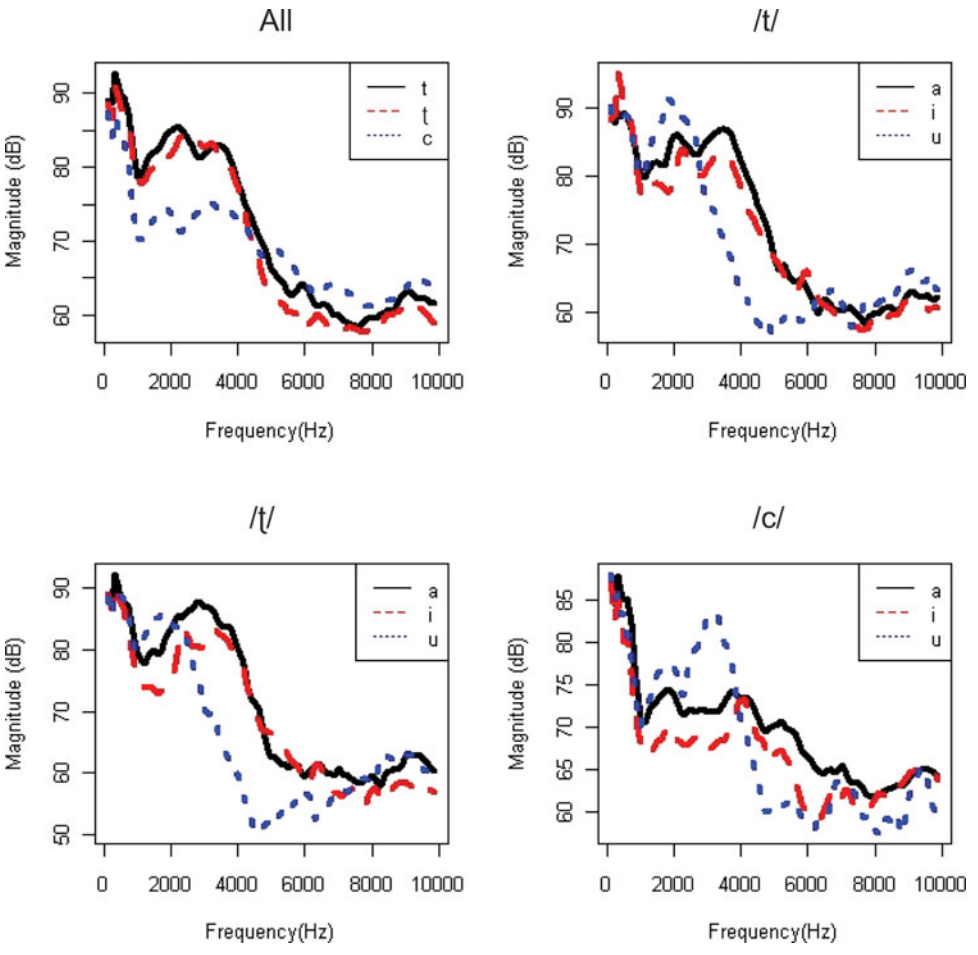

Figure 1 (Colour online) FFT spectra of the three coronal stops of Pitjantjatjara, based on a 10-ms Hamming window centred at stop burst release. Data are from three female speakers, and represent a total of 684 tokens. The data in the top left panel show spectra collapsed across vowel context for the three speakers combined, whereas the remaining three panels show spectra for each stop consonant separately according to vowel context. It can be seen that the vowel /u/ has a profound effect on the spectrum for all three consonants, but that the effect differs for the two apical consonants /t/ and /ʈ/ as compared to the lamino-alveo-palatal consonant /c/.

boundaries and irrespective of syllable position – an example can be heard in the word *pikatjara* 'sick' /ˈpikacara/.

There is a nasal series which parallels the plosive series, including all three coronal places of articulation. Moreover, the lateral series also contains contrasts at all three coronal places of articulation, and there is also a rhotic contrast that is phonologically considered to parallel the apical contrast between alveolars and postalveolars (e.g. on the basis of distribution within the word): for the rhotics, the trill/tap /r/ is alveolar, and the continuant /ɻ/ is post-alveolar. Finally, Pitjantjatjara also has the glides /w/ and /j/.

The status of the apical contrast is problematic in many Australian languages, including Pitjantjatjara. Phonologically, the contrast is neutralized in initial position, and word-medially carries a very low functional load. As a result, the contrast is not very robust even in word-medial position: this is evidenced by the fact that even highly literate speakers are unsure of how to spell a word with an apical consonant, and often need to consult the dictionary

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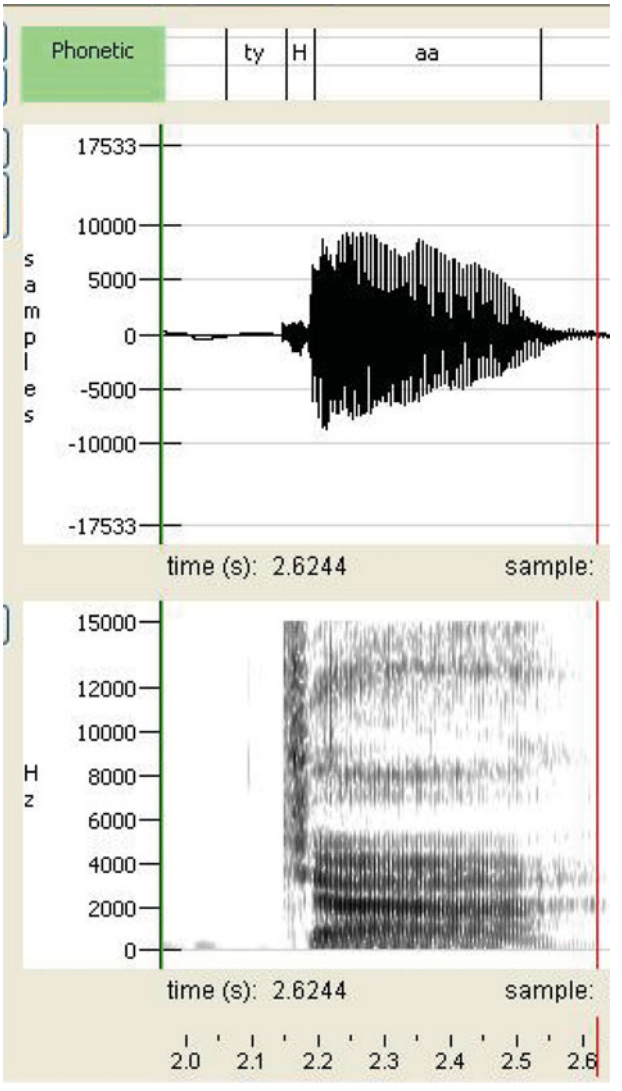

Figure 2 (Colour online) Spectrogram of the word *tjaa* 'mouth'. Note the strong frication following the release of the initial lamino-alveopalatal stop.

(in Pitjantjatjara orthography, retroflex consonants are underlined, whereas alveolars are not – e.g. 'ṯ' vs. 't' – therefore, in the case of Pitjantjatjara, speakers are often unsure, when they write, as to whether or not a particular apical consonant should be underlined in the word). Nevertheless, speakers are taught the contrast in school, and are aware of minimal pairs, such as 'wanka' and 'waṉka', given in the table of consonant clusters below. Finally, it should be noted that both apical stops are often tapped in connected speech. Such a pronunciation may be heard in speaker KW's recording of the words *wuulukatinyi* 'to crouch down in fear' /wuːlukatiɲi/, *nanikuta* 'goat' /nanikuta/ and *nikiti* 'naked' /nikiti/. In the case of the alveolars, since a single tap is also the most common realisation of the so-called trill, the two phonological categories /t/ ~ /r/ may become indistinguishable from one another. In addition, /r/ may be realised as an approximant in rapid speech, leading to potential confusion for non-native listeners. The word *iriti* 'long ago', for example, is often pronounced as [ˈɪɻɪɾɪ],

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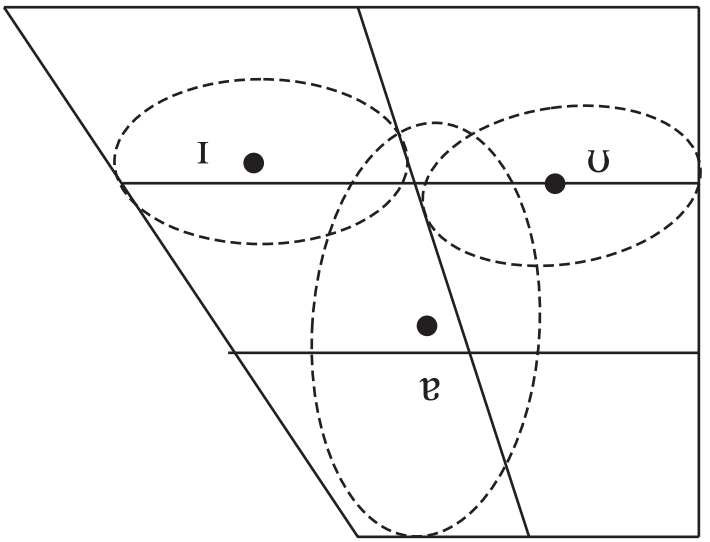
thereby neutralising the paradigmatic /ɻ/ ~ /r/ contrast (whilst effectively preserving the /t/ ~ /r/ contrast within the word). This realisation of /r/ as [ɹ] or even [ə] is also very common before a following stop, especially in unstressed syllables – e.g. *nyurka-nyurka* 'skinny' may be pronounced as [ˈɲʊɾkɐɲʊðgɐ][4] (compare the disappearance of non-prevocalic /r/ from the non-rhotic accents of English and German).

It is also important to highlight two features of Pitjantjatjara phonology which are typical of Australian languages but unusual outside Australia: there are no fricatives and there is no contrastive voicing. Thus, like most Australian languages, Pitjantjatjara belongs to the 16% of the world's languages which lack a voicing distinction among the stops and to the 6% of UPSID languages that have no fricatives (Maddieson 1984); of these latter 21 languages, 15 are Australian. Although lacking in obstruents, Pitjantjatjara has a much richer system of sonorant contrasts than most languages outside Australia – 70% sonorants as opposed to 30% obstruents – precisely the opposite proportion to that proposed as the normal tendency amongst the languages of the world (Lindblom & Maddieson 1988). As a result, spoken Pitjantjatjara sounds very sonorous to non-native speakers. In the phoneme chart, we use the voiceless unaspirated symbols for the plosives: this is the default production of these sounds, although voiced variants may be heard intervocalically or following a nasal consonant.

Vowels



Additional example words illustrating long vowels and surface diphthongs are as follows:

a	paka	*paka*	'tobacco'
i	pika	*pika*	'pain, angry'
u	puju	*puyu*	'smoke (n)'
aː	caː	*tjaa*	'mouth'
iː	ɲiːku	*nyiiku!*	'here! take this!'
uː	juː	*yuu*	'windbreak'
ai	mai	*mai*	'food'
au	pauɲi	*pau̲ni*	'roasting'

[4] The reader may wish to compare the realization of *iriti* by Kathleen Windy, the speaker in this Illustration, with its realization in the connected speech phrase *iriti kunyu* 'it is said that a long time ago', as produced by speaker Mike Williams (MW) of Ernabella community. Speaker MW also provides an example of reduction of /r/ to a schwa-like glide in *nyurka-nyurka*.

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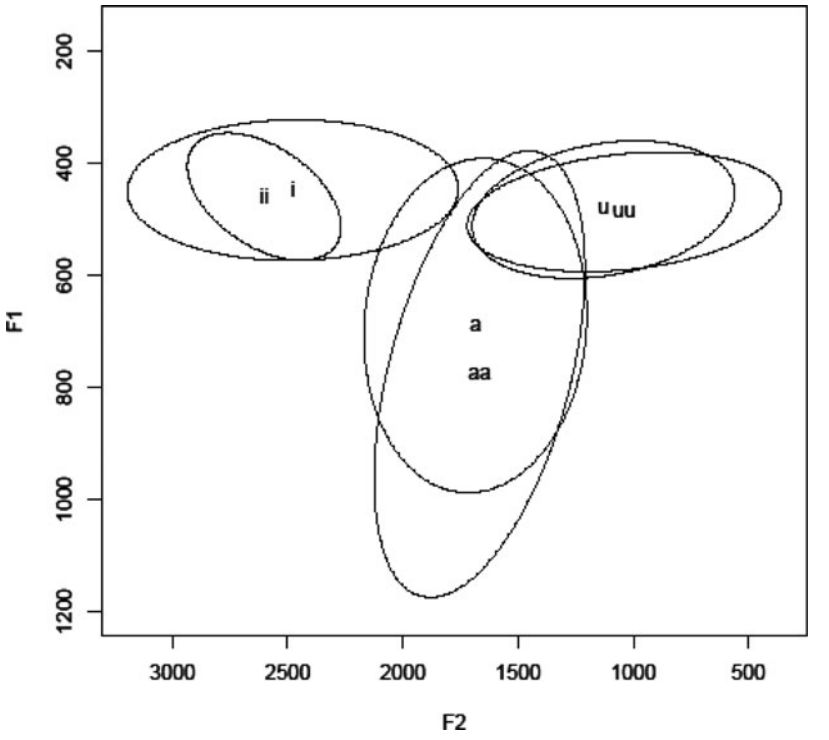

Figure 3 Vowel formant data from three female speakers of Pitjantjatjara, including speaker KW. Ellipses represent two standard deviations around the mean, which is plotted for each of the three short (/a i u/) and three long (/aa ii uu/) vowels. Data represent 5280 short vowel tokens and 178 long vowel tokens, collapsed across all consonant contexts in the language.

Pitjantjatjara has three vowel qualities [ɪ ɐ ʊ] – these are the symbols used on the vowel plot above. However, for phonemic purposes these are more commonly written /i a u/, and these are the symbols used in the phonemic transcriptions of the words. This three-way quality contrast is supplemented by a length contrast, giving /iː aː uː/ as separate phonemes. However, long vowels are low in frequency, and have a low functional load (the minimal pair *nyiku* ~ *nyiiku* /ɲiku/ vs. /ɲiːku/ 'elbow' vs. 'here, take this!' in the wordlist would be one of very few). Figure 3 presents an F1-F2 plot of the short and long vowels of Pitjantjatjara.

The vowel sequences /au/ and /ai/ (the latter often pronounced [ɛɪ]), as in *pauṉi* and *mai*, are usually analysed phonologically as bi-syllabic /awu/ and /aji/, respectively. There is no doubt, however, that these are phonetically diphthongs, and they can occur even in Pitjantjatjara words with a glide in the orthography – e.g. *nyiṯayira* 'boy' is often perceived by linguists as having only three syllables: [ˈɲɪɖɐɪrɐ]. Goddard (1993) suggests that /i/ before a postalveolar /ʈ ɳ/ or /ɭ/ is lowered and centralised (thus *piṯi* 'hole' → [ˈpɪɻɪ], *iṉi* 'loose' → [ˈɪɳɪ]), but we have not observed this to be the case with our speakers (e.g. speaker KW's production of *iṉi* and speaker MW's production of *piṯi*). Finally, it is worth noting that certain speakers of Pitjantjatjara pronounce the sequence /wa/ as [wɔ] or [wɒ]. Author AB has frequently heard this pronunciation, for example, *wangka* 'speech' as [ˈwɒŋgɐ], *wala* 'quickly' as [ˈwɒlɐ]. Author MT has never heard this pronunciation, which we attribute to the fact that AB's contact has been with speakers from South Australia, whereas MT's contact has been with speakers from the Northern Territory. It is possible that author MT's contacts are more influenced by orthographic conventions, having been taught to read and write Pitjantjatjara in school. It should be noted that the speaker in these recordings produces the sequence as [wɐ].

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An acoustic study of vowel formants in the read speech of three Areyonga Pitjantjatjara women, including the current speaker, Kathleen Windy, shows minimal differences in vowel quality between metrically strong and weak syllables (Tabain, Fletcher & Butcher 2014). However, formant analysis of the same text read by four speakers from Ernabella community some 20 years earlier suggests a more schwa-like quality for /a/ in weak syllables as compared to strong syllables. These results align with the two authors' auditory impressions of Pitjantjatjara speech: author MT, who has worked with Areyonga speakers, has not noticed extensive vowel reduction, whereas author AB, who worked with the Ernabella speakers, has noticed vowel reduction. For example, the very frequent word *mulapa* 'really' is often heard as [ˈmʊləβ̞ə] in conversational speech – see speaker Mike Williams's reading of the phrase *iriti mulapa* 'really long ago', where it is pronounced [ˈmʊləpɐ]. Moreover, in certain environments, for example between a stop and an approximant – and especially morpheme-finally – the vowel may be deleted altogether, e.g. *ngar̲nkurpa wiya* 'without whiskers' → [ŋɐɳgʊrbˈwɪjə].

Vowels are generally not nasalised before nasal consonants. Pitjantjatjara, like most Australian languages, avoids anticipatory coarticulation of nasality: both auditorily and through the visual inspection of spectrograms and air flow data (Butcher 1999), it is quite apparent that in vowel–nasal sequences speakers avoid lowering the velum until the latest possible instant. The exception to this rule is where metrically weak vowels occur between two nasals. In fact in fast casual speech a weak syllable consisting of a phonological N–V–N (or even N–stop–V–N) sequence may be realised phonetically as a long nasal, e.g. *nganampa mai* 'our food' → [ˈŋɐnɐmˈmɐɪ].

Pitjantjatjara syllable structure is (C)V(C), with the coda consonant restricted to nasals, laterals, and the trill/tap /r/. Moreover, CV syllables are highly preferred, to the extent that Pitjantjatjara (among other dialects of WDL) is renowned for putting /pa/ at the end of a word which in neighbouring Yankunytjatjara ends in a consonant. For example, where Yankunytjatjara speakers would say *kuur-kuur* 'owl' /kuːr kuːr/, Pitjantjatjara speakers would say *kuur-kuurpa* /kuːr kuːrpa/. It should also be noted that the onset consonant is optional only in word-initial position: Pitjantjatjara has lost the initial /j-/ which is still retained in traditional Yankunytjatjara (for instance Yankunytjatjara *yananyi* /janaɲi/for the word meaning 'going', in comparison to Pitjantjatjara *ananyi* /anaɲi/) – see speaker MW's production of the phrase *yaaltjikutun ananyi?* /jaːlcikutun anaɲi/ 'where are you going?'.

Given the above syllable structure, consonant clusters may occur in word-medial position. However, there are no geminate clusters. Table 1 presents a brief summary of the consonant clusters in Pitjantjatjara – for more detail on the structure of phonological words in Australian languages, including phonotactic constraints, the reader is referred to Hamilton (1996).

Homorganic nasal–stop clusters

mp	kampaŋu	*kampangu*	'burnt'
nt	ninti	*ninti*	'familiar, known'
ɳʈ	paɳʈa	*panta*	'groin'
ɲc	waŋkaɲca	*wangkanytja*	'talking'
ŋk	waŋka	*wangka!*	'talk!'

Heterorganic nasal stop clusters

np	junpa	*yunpa*	'face' (also used for /ju/)
nc	ancaki	*antjaki*	'on an overnight trip'
nk	wanka	*wanka*	'awake, alive'
ɳp	kuɳpu	*kun̲pu*	'strong'
ɳk	waɳka	*wan̲ka*	'spider'
ɲp	puɻuɲpa	*pur̲unypa*	'like, similar'
ɲk	maɭaɲkira	*mal̲anykira*	'person together with young siblings'

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Table 1 Examples of consonant clusters. A dash denotes that the sequence is not phonotactically permissible. Note that examples are not exhaustive (e.g. there is no example of the homorganic alveolar lateral–stop sequence in the present recordings).

C1–C2	Bilabial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	/r/
Bilabial	kampaŋu	–	–	–	–	–
Alveolar	junpa inma	ninti	–	ancaki pacaɲɲaŋka	wanka unŋu walka	–
Retroflex	kuɳpu waɭpa	–	paɳʈa ŋaɭʈucara	kuːɭcunaɲi	waɳka ŋaɳŋi puɭka	–
Palatal	puɟuɲpa miɲma kaʈaʎpa	–	–	waŋkaɲca waʎca	maɭaɲkira puʎku	–
Velar	–	–	–	–	waŋka	–
/r/	murpu warmala	–	–	carcarpa irɲaɲi	tarka	–

Notes: (i) C1 cannot be a stop or a glide. (ii) C2 cannot be a lateral or a rhotic. (iii) In homorganic clusters, C1 and C2 must have different manners of articulation. (iv) In heterorganic clusters, the first consonant must be coronal, and the second consonant must be non-apical. However, in sequences of two nasals, the second consonant must be non-coronal; and following /**r**/, the second consonant must be non-apical.

Heterorganic nasal–nasal clusters

nm	inma	*inma*	'ceremony'
nɲ	pacaɲɲaŋka	*patjannyangka*	'while/because biting'
nŋ	unŋu	*unngu*	'inside'
ɳŋ	ŋaɳŋi	*nganngi*	'frog'
ɲm	miɲma	*minyma*	'senior woman'

Homorganic lateral–stop clusters

ʎc	waʎca	*walytja*	'relation'
ɭʈ	ŋaɭʈucara	*ngaltutjara*	'sorry for (exclamation)'

Heterorganic lateral–stop clusters

lk	walka	*walka*	'mark (n)'
ɭp	waɭpa	*walpa*	'wind'
ɭc	kuːɭcunaɲi	*kuultjunanyi*	'to swallow'
ɭk	puɭka	*pulka*	'big'
ʎp	kaʈaʎpa	*katalypa*	'broken'
ʎk	puʎku	*pulyku*	'sinew'

Clusters with /r/

rp	murpu	*murpu*	'mountain top'
rm	warmala	*warmala*	'raiding party'
rc	carcarpa	*tjartjarpa*	'shallow water'
rɲ	irɲaɲi	*irnyan̲i*	'to shine, glow'
rk	tarka	*tarka*	'bone'

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of consonant clusters in Pitjantjatjara, as in most Australian languages, is that heterorganic nasal–stop sequences do not appear to develop into homorganic sequences. As a result, a minimal set such as /waŋka/ ~ /waɳka/ ~ /wanka/

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'talk' ~ 'spider' ~ 'awake/alive' exists – speaker KW provides a clear example of this set. Electropalatographic data from other Australian languages (e.g. Fletcher, Loakes & Butcher 2008) suggests that the apical closure is present in almost all instances of words containing apical–velar sequences. In some of the present recordings there is a weak click at the release of the oral closure for the nasal in a heterorganic nasal–stop sequence. Butcher (2006) speaks of the 'place-of-articulation' imperative in Australian languages, and such heterorganic sequences form part of the challenge in maintaining cues to place of articulation.

In contrast to the usual absence of anticipatory assimilation of nasality (in vowels), perseverative assimilation of nasality (in consonants) is very common. In connected speech there is often no differentiation in nasality within a consonant cluster, where in the corresponding citation form a nasal is differentiated from a following homorganic oral stop. This is particularly common in unstressed suffixes, such as ergative *-ngku* /ŋku/, locative *-ngka* /ŋka/ and possessive *-mpa* /mpa/, e.g. pulampa 'those two's' → [ˈpʊlɐmːɐ]. This relates to a general tendency for words not to contain two nasal–stop clusters in sequence, the first instead being reduced to a simple nasal. For instance, when the word *wati* 'man' receives the ergative suffix *-ŋku*, followed by the non-finality particle *-mpa*, the result is not /wa.tiŋ.kum.pa/ but /wa.ti.ŋum.pa/. It is not clear whether this is a form of dissimilation (usually called elision in the grammar textbooks).

A brief note on prosody

There has been very little work on intonation in Australian languages in general, and this includes WDL and Pitjantjatjara. However, analyses presented in Tabain, Fletcher & Butcher (2014) show that the first syllable of the Pitjantjatjara word is marked by a raising of pitch and by extra duration, but that there is no evidence for secondary stress elsewhere in the word. These results are based on read text recordings of three speakers from Areyonga (including the present speaker, Kathleen Windy) and four speakers from Ernabella in South Australia. This goes against traditional grammatical descriptions of Pitjantjatjara, which often refer to alternating secondary stresses in the word (see Tabain et al. 2014 for more detail).

Although far more detailed analyses are needed of Pitjantjatjara prosody and intonation, we refer the reader to Section VII of Douglas (1955) which, broadly, seems to be a good impressionistic overview of the main intonation patterns in Pitjantjatjara. A very brief description of Pitjantjatjara intonation is also provided in Tabain et al. (2014), with the high pitch accent aligned with the left edge of the word being a characteristic feature.

Finally, the name of the language, which morpho-phonologically is /pi.caɲ.ca+ca.ra/ (i.e. with five syllables), is almost always pronounced [ˈpi.caɲ.ca.ra], with the final syllable of the first (ternary) foot deleted.[5] Such instances of syllable deletion are quite common in connected speech, especially where there is a succession of two identical (or even similar) unstressed syllables. It could therefore be argued that this is some phonological evidence for a left-headed binary foot structure, though as noted above there is no phonetic evidence for secondary stress, which appears to align with native speaker intuitions. Langlois (2004: Chapter 2) provides an excellent overview of these syllable deletions, as well as of vowel deletions which result in surface consonant clusters otherwise not permitted in the language.

[5] The root /pica+/ means 'to come', and the suffix /+ɲca/ is a nominalizer, giving the word /pica+ɲca/, with three syllables. The relator suffix (translated as 'having') is the disyllabic /ˈcara/, which is then attached to the trisyllabic /ˈpicaɲca/. The name of the language, therefore, means '(the language) with *pitjantja* (as the word for *coming*)', in contrast to the language Yankuntjatjara, which is the language with *yankuntja* as the word for *coming*.

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Transcribed passage

English

SOUTH WIND AND SUN

South Wind and Sun were arguing.

They saw a traveller approaching. He was wrapped in a warm blanket. They said to one another, 'Whichever of us can make that traveller take off his warm blanket is stronger than the other.'

So first South Wind started to blow. He blew really hard.

The traveller, however, wrapped his warm blanket more tightly around himself.

South Wind blew as hard as he could, in vain. Then Sun shone. It got really warm. The traveller very quickly took off his warm blanket. South Wind said, 'Sun, you're too clever for me.'

Pitjantjatjara

WALPA ULPARIRANYA PULA TJINTUNYA

Walpa Ulpariranya pula Tjintunya pikaringanyi.

Paluru pula nyangu yanngatja pitjanyangka, pulangkita unytjunpangka tjutura. Paluru pulanku ngaparku tjapiningi, 'Nganalu puta yanngatja palumpa pulangkita unytjunpa waniku kunpu ngarala.'

Ka Walpa Ulpariratjalu puunu. Paluru pulkara puunu.

Ka yanngatjalu panya pulangkita unytjunpa palumpa pulkarangku witira tjutunu.

Walpa panya ulparira nguru puunu pulkarangku mulapa. Ka Tjintungku irnyanu. Ka unytjunpa mulaparingu. Ka yanngatjalu mapalku mulapa pulangkita unytjunpa palumpa waningu. Ka Walpa Ulpariratjalu wangkangu, 'Tjintu nyuntu nintipuka mulapa ngayuku.'

Phonemic transcription

walpa ulpaɻiraɲa pula ciɳʈuɲa

walpa ulpaɻiraɲa pula ciɳʈuɲa pikariŋaɲi.

paluɻu pula ɲaŋu janŋaca picaɲaŋka, pulaŋkita uɲcunpaŋka cutuɻa. paluɻu pulanku ŋaparku capiniŋi, ŋanalu puʈa janŋaca palumpa pulaŋkita uɲcunpa waɲiku kuɳpu ŋaɻala.

ka walpa ulpaɻiracalu puːɳu. paluɻu pulkaɻa puːɳu.

ka janŋacalu paɲa pulaŋkita uɲcunpa palumpa pulkaɻaŋku witiɻa cutuɳu.

walpa paɲa ulpaɻira ŋuɻu puːɳu pulkaɻaŋku mulapa. ka ciɳʈuŋku irɲaɳu. ka uɲcunpa mulapariŋu. ka janŋacalu mapalku mulapa pulaŋkita uɲcunpa palumpa waɲiŋu. ka walpa ulpaɻiracalu waŋkaŋu, ciɳʈu ɲuntu niɳʈipuka mulapa ŋajuku.

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