

# Creating a digital shell for sharing Indigenous language and culture

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# Context

- Of over 120 Indigenous languages still spoken in Australia, only 6 can be studied at University level
- Difficulty of developing new courses
  - Require ongoing engagement with Aboriginal language authorities
  - Sufficient time and funding to properly negotiate the process
  - Develop appropriate pedagogies, resources, administration



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HOME ABOUT FAQ CONTACT

## WHERE CAN I STUDY AN AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE?

### Can I study an Indigenous Australian language?

Yes, you can! One of the most important aims of ULPA is to increase the visibility and availability of Indigenous Australian languages to all Australians. If you are keen to study an Indigenous language, talk to your university about how it can be incorporated into your degree.

Can I study an Indigenous Australian language?

How many Indigenous languages are there in Australia?

*Arrernte  
Gamilaraay  
Kurna  
Pitjantjatjara  
Wiradjuri  
Yolŋu Matha*



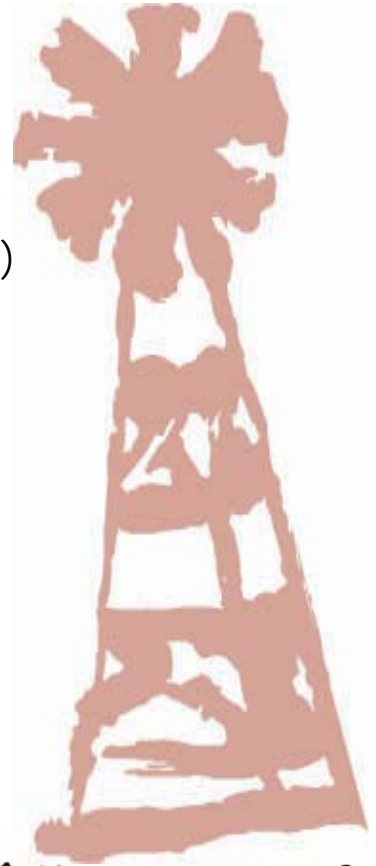
# Background

- Workshop at **ALS 2014** 'Learning Indigenous languages – can universities help?'
- Professor **Michael Christie** presented the idea of '**Mini-MOOCs**'
  - linguists, educators and language authorities work together
  - identify language materials, negotiate access, authority
  - develop plan for implementation
- Create a **digital shell** that any language group can use for sharing their knowledge
- Students could access web-based resources under authority of language owners as part of tertiary courses
- Arrangements for payment, access, supervision, assessment, teaching, etc would be negotiated separately in each case



# Digital shell project

- Application to federal government Office for Learning and Teaching to develop a digital shell for developing courses in Aboriginal languages for higher education
- **\$40,000** in seed funding awarded November 2015
- Included pilot project in **Bininj Kunwok** with Dr Murray Garde (ANU)
- Proof-of-concept that could then be shared with other interested language groups





# Pilot project – Bininj Kunwok

- Bininj Kunwok – language family from West Arnhem Land
- Existing connections through Murray Garde with Bininj authorities
- Actively involved in language resource development
- [www.bininjgunwok.org.au](http://www.bininjgunwok.org.au)
- Mailing list of people receiving “**Karriborlhme Kunwok - Let's learn words!**”
- Social media (Facebook page, Twitter)
- Materials in the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages

## Bininj Kunwok

*kunwok dja mankarre kadberre — our language, our culture*



KURED

NJALE

BENGDAYHKE

NJALENJALE

NGURRIWOKBEKKAN

BININJ

BLOG

BIM

KANDIWOKMUNKWE



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# Living Archive materials

## Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages

A digital archive of endangered literature in Indigenous languages of the Northern Territory

Search the LAAL collection

Search

Home

Map

Place

Language

People

Books

Home > Language > Kunwinjku

### Language: Kunwinjku

Grid List Popularity

#### Filter

##### Author (27) +

- 44 Nardal, Julie
- 17 Maralngurra, Dolly
- 13 Namamyilk [Nadjamerrek], Lois
- 10 Mangiru, Hannah

##### Place (3)

- 116 Gunbalanya (Oenpelli)
- 10 Barunga
- 7 Maningrida

##### Category (4)

- 73 Narrative
- 54 Language instruction
- 5 Instruction
- 1 Memoir

##### Illustrator (20) +

- 19 Namamyilk [Nadjamerrek], Lois
- 16 Namamyilk, Olive
- 9 Waduna, George
- 7 Nardal, Julie

##### Language (3)

- 133 Kunwinjku
- 19 English

Details

The collection contains 133 books published in the Kunwinjku language.

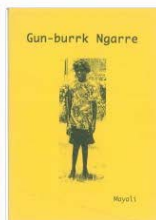
133 books



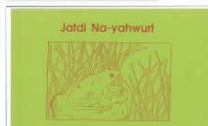
Bu nguriborlhme Kunwinjku  
Managku, Andrew  
Kunwinjku; English  
Gunbalanya (Oenpelli)



Kunhi bu kunkare birrihwaribuni  
Managu, Andrew G.  
Kunwinjku  
Gunbalanya (Oenpelli)



Gun-burrk Ngarre  
Kunwinjku; English  
Barunga



Jatdi Na-yahwurt  
Galmur, Judy  
Kunwinjku; English  
Barunga



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# Pilot project – Biningj Kunwok

- **Stage 1 Feb – June 2016**
  - Meet with Biningj elders on country to agree on key people and scope of resources
  - Explore online tools or bespoke options for digital shell
- **Stage 2 June – Aug 2016**
  - Populate shell with existing resources from LAAL and BK website
  - Ethics approval and recruit volunteer learners to test site
- **Stage 3 Sept – Nov 2016**
  - Run pilot trial – 4 units (3-4 hours a week), available over 12 weeks
- **Stage 4 Dec – Jan 2017**
  - Data collection and analysis
- **Stage 5 Feb – Mar 2017**
  - Final report and financial acquittal





# Stage 1 – establishment

- Establishment of **Bininj Kunmayali** – ‘People’s Knowledge’ committee
  - Meeting in Jabiru March 2016 to discuss project
  - Jill Nganjmirra based in Darwin, working with Andy Peart to develop resources
- Web options
  - Decision to use **WordPress**
    - free, accessible, flexible, customisable, easy to use platform
  - Researched different Learning Management Systems to plug in
    - Selected **LearnPress**
    - additional plugins for forums, quizzes, glossaries, etc



*Lois, Cathy, Jill, Donna, Andrew, Murray, Andy*



## Stage 2 - development

- Audit of materials available in Bininj Kunwok
  - Online (including LAAL and BK site), videos, books, audio, websites, digital and analog
- Selection of appropriate resources for 4 week course
- Building the shell
  - Bininj Kunwok language materials in sequenced units
  - Generic information about Aboriginal languages for use by other groups
- Ethics approval through CDU
  - Learners agree to give feedback
- Recruitment of volunteer learners via Bininj Kunwok website mailing list



# Stage 3 – run pilot course

- Ran 1 September – 30 November
- 4 units spread over 12 weeks
- Released fortnightly
- 150+ volunteers



## Useful phrases

You might find these phrases useful when speaking to Bininj.

🔊 **yeledj yiwokdin** = speak slowly

🔊 **minj bekkan** = I can't hear you

🔊 **yyawoyhyimen** = say it again

🔊 **ngawakwan** = I don't know

🔊 **nuk** = I don't know, I'm not sure

🔊 **adju** = maybe, I don't know, I'd have to think about it (different meanings depending on context)

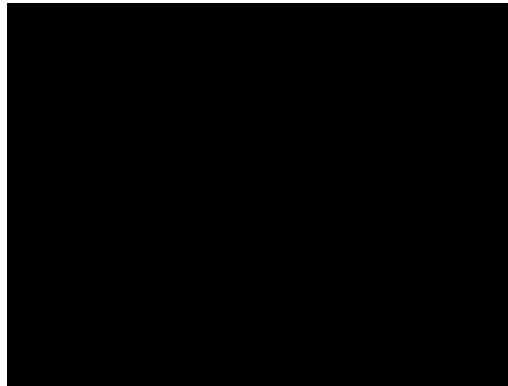
🔊 **burrkyak** = no, nothing

🔊 **yikarme bakki?** = Have you got any smokes?

🔊 **burrkyak, minj ngakarme** = no, I don't have (any)

# Stage 3 – Course content

- Videos of Bininj talking about topics
  - Some subtitled in English, some in Kunwinjku
- Lessons explored details of these topics
  - Skin / kinship systems
  - Grammar and vocabulary
- Audio files for vocabulary, pronunciation



📄 Introduction
📄 Cultural information
📄 Pronunciation
📄 Useful phrases
📄 Vocabulary
📄 Reading
📄 Grammar
📄 Practice
📄 Activity
📄 Njalenjale



UNIT	1	2	3	4
Theme	Introductions			
Cultural info	Skin systems			
Vocabulary	Skin names, verbs, nouns			
Useful phrases	Introductions			
Grammar	Basic sentences, 1sg			
Pronunciation	Overview, spelling			
Reading	<i>Duruk kanan...</i>			

UNIT	1	2	3	4
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	<b>Family matters</b>		
<b>Cultural info</b>	Skin systems	Skin & family		
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Skin names, verbs, nouns	Kin terms (reference, address)		
<b>Useful phrases</b>	Introductions	What do I call you? etc		
<b>Grammar</b>	Basic sentences, 1sg	2sg, 3sg, verbs		
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Overview, spelling	Vowels		
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Duruk kanan...</i>	<i>Kokok wam ..., Kakkak nang ...</i>		

UNIT	1	2	3	4
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	<b>Family matters</b>	<b>Coming &amp; going</b>	
<b>Cultural info</b>	Skin systems	Skin & family	Grandparents/ grandchildren	
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Skin names, verbs, nouns	Kin terms (reference, address)	Kin terms, animals, places,	
<b>Useful phrases</b>	Introductions	What do I call you? etc	‘Speak slowly,’ ‘I don’t understand,’ etc	
<b>Grammar</b>	Basic sentences, 1sg	2sg, 3sg, verbs	Q&A, past tense, plural pronouns	
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Overview, spelling	Vowels	Nasals, h, retroflex	
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Duruk kanan...</i>	<i>Kokok wam ..., Kakkak nang ...</i>	<i>Wurdwurd birriwam ..., Baleh yabok?</i>	



UNIT	1	2	3	4
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	<b>Family matters</b>	<b>Coming &amp; going</b>	<b>Karrinahnarren</b>
<b>Cultural info</b>	Skin systems	Skin & family	Grandparents/ grandchildren	Staying safe / showing respect
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Skin names, verbs, nouns	Kin terms (reference, address)	Kin terms, animals, places,	Kin terms, verbs, nouns
<b>Useful phrases</b>	Introductions	What do I call you? etc	‘Speak slowly,’ ‘I don’t understand,’ etc	‘Is it OK to go there?’ ‘Who do I ask?’
<b>Grammar</b>	Basic sentences, 1sg	2sg, 3sg, verbs	Q&A, past tense, plural pronouns	Dual, trial, inc/exc, negative
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Overview, spelling	Vowels	Nasals, h, retroflex	Stops, r / rr, diphthongs
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Duruk kanan...</i>	<i>Kokok wam ..., Kakkak nang ...</i>	<i>Wurdwurd birriwam ..., Baleh yabok?</i>	<i>Kokok dja ..., Yun yikarrme</i>

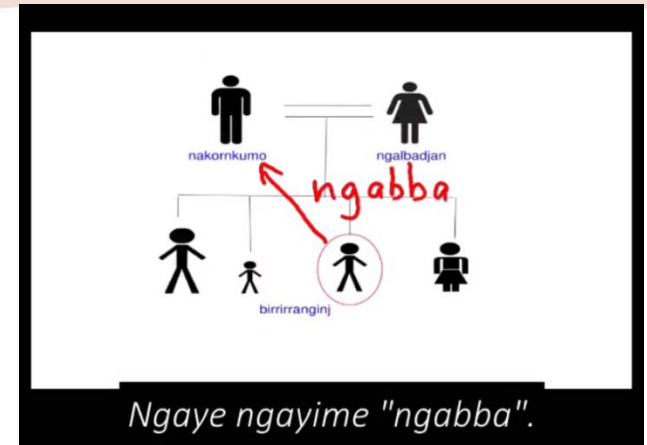
# Stage 3 – Course tasks

## Unit 1 – Introductions

- Present text and audio/video in Kunwinjku:
  - *My name is \_\_\_\_*
  - *My skin name is \_\_\_\_\_*
  - *I come from \_\_\_\_\_*
  - *I live in \_\_\_\_\_*
  - *I'm learning Kunwinjku.*

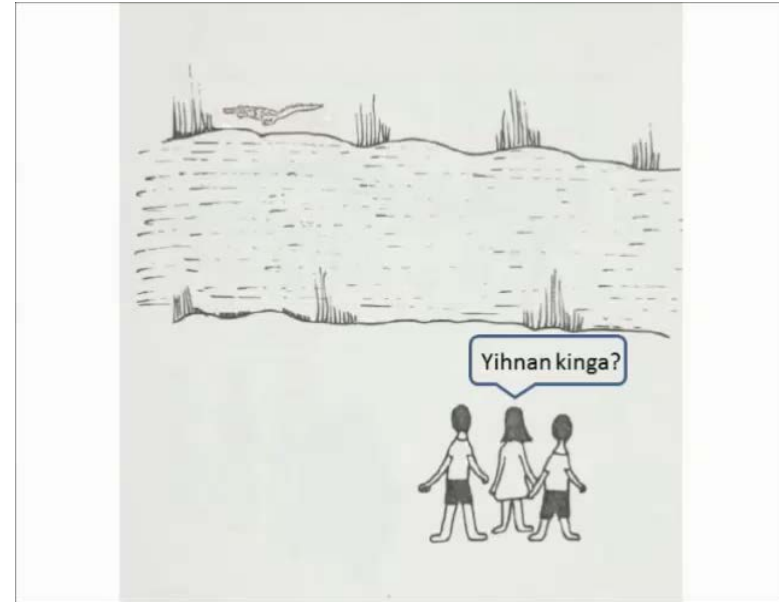
## Unit 2 – Family matters

- Introduce your (immediate) family, e.g.
  - *My mother's skin is Ngalingarridj*
  - *She calls me djedje / I call her karrang*
- Introduce someone else and their family
  - Biniŋ colleague, or two video options



# Stage 3 - Course tasks

- Unit 3 - Coming and going
  - Construct 5 sentences about each picture
- Unit 4 - Karrinahnarren - Free choice
  - Talk about family
  - Read aloud a LAAL story
  - Describe pictures





# Stage 3 - additional features

## Forums

Bininj Kunwok language course > Forums

Forum	Topics	Posts
<b>Feedback forum</b> This forum is an opportunity to interact with other learners and the course facilitators about the course.  Your comments here will form part of the data collected for the re-search project (as outlined in the Plain Language Statement).  Registered users can post new topics and respond to other posts.  Remember to keep it civil.	23	138
<b>Unit 3 Forum</b> Any comments about unit 3? Tell us what you think.	5	26
<b>Unit 4 forum</b> Another opportunity to tell us what you think. Where do you think the course should go, if we were to create more units?	6	13

## Quiz page

Test yourself with these multiple choice quizzes

Unit 1:

Pronunciation quiz

Skin systems quiz

Unit 2:

Family matters quiz

Skin and family names quiz

Unit 3:

Grandparents quiz

Unit 4

Extended family quiz

## Linguistic terms

Here you will find definitions and explanations of some of the more technical terms

- adjective
- adverb
- affix
- alveolar ridge
- consonant
- diphthong
- dual
- glottal stop
- inclusive/exclusive
- moiety
- morphology
- noun
- noun class
- object
- orthography
- part of speech
- phonology
- plural
- possessive
- prefix
- preposition
- pronominal prefix
- pronoun
- retroflex
- root
- singular
- stop
- subject
- suffix
- tense
- transitivity
- trial
- verb
- voicing
- vowel
- word order

# Stage 4 - data collection

- Survey emailed to all participants at close of pilot course
- Eliciting feedback about all aspects of course
- Some participants will be asked to do follow-up interviews
- Analysis and report due to OLT April 2017

**\* 5. Prior to starting this course did you have any connections with Bininj speakers of Kunwinjku?**

☐ none

☐ previous connections but not currently active

☐ some current connections with Bininj

☐ I live/work in a Bininj community but have minimal interaction with Bininj

☐ I live/work in a Bininj community and interact with Bininj on a daily basis

☐ Other (please specify)

**\* 6. Please indicate your main reason for doing this course**

☐ currently working in Bininj community / with Bininj people

☐ previous involvement with Bininj community / people

☐ possible future involvement with Bininj community / people

☐ general interest in learning an Indigenous language

☐ interest in learning a language online

☐ to assist with an academic research project

☐ Other (please specify)

# Statistics

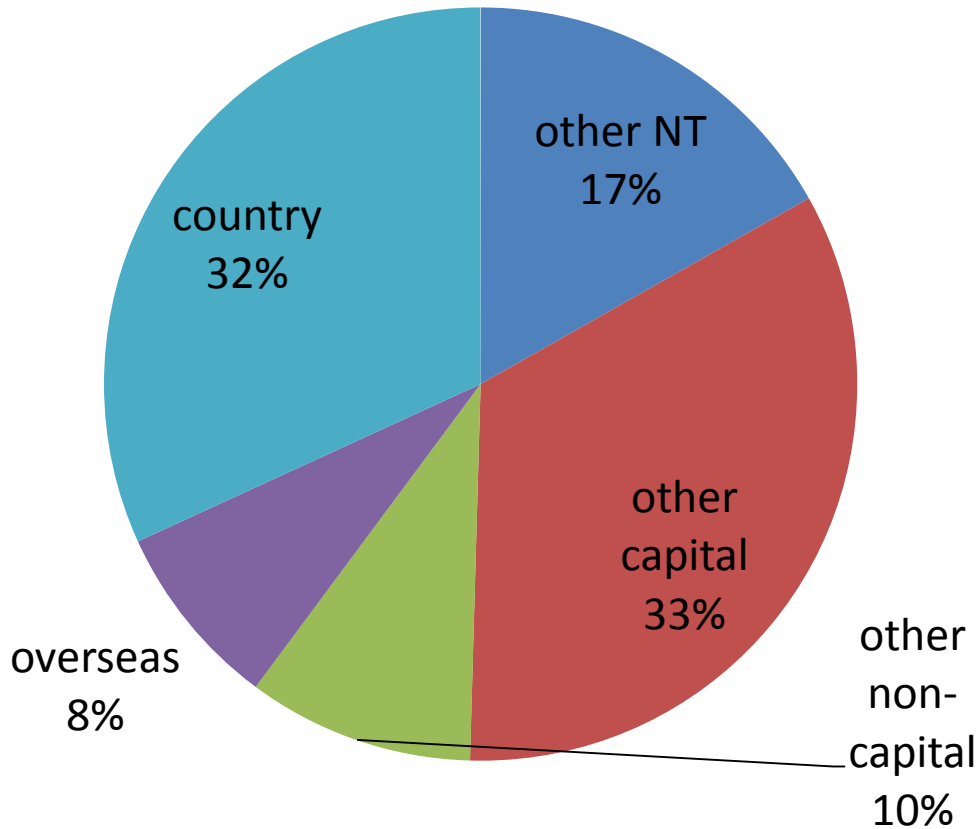
# Activity submissions

Interested	155
Consented	131
Logged in	113
Started	??

UNIT	No.	%
1	43	38%
2	27	24%
3	19	17%
4	12	10%

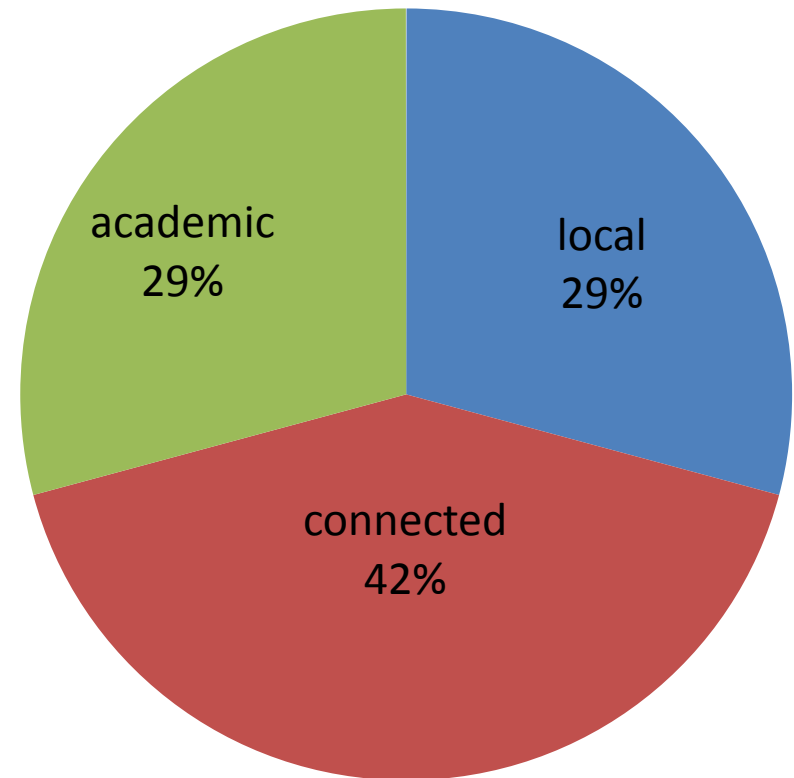
# Location

(n=113)



# Classification

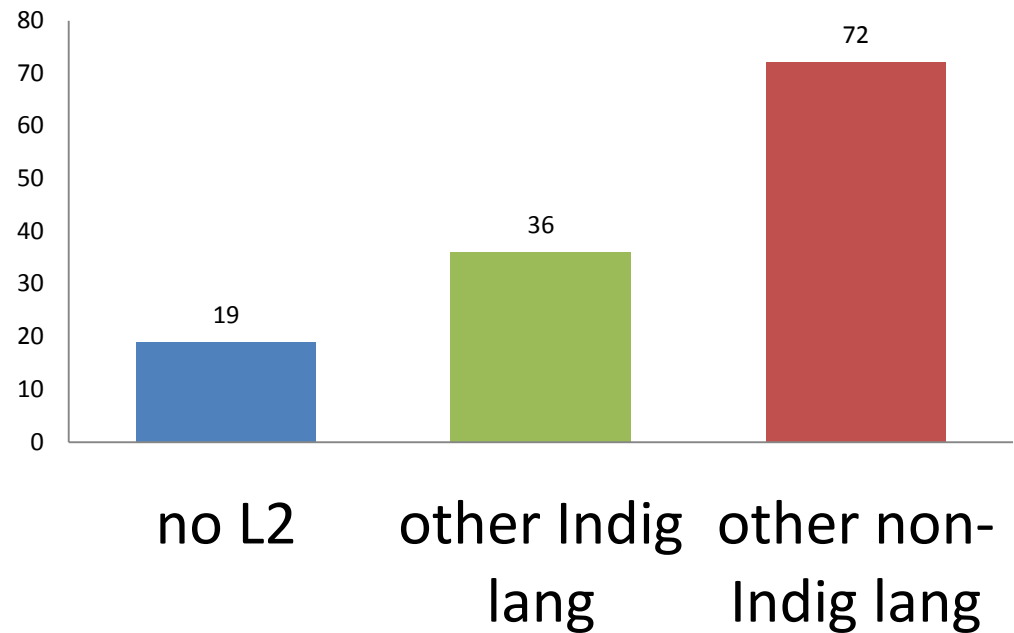
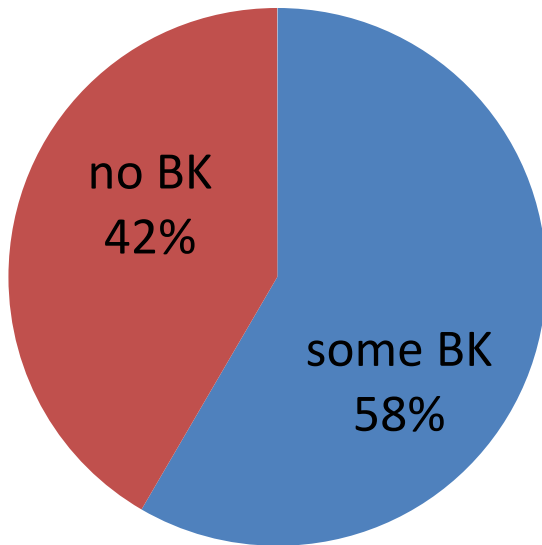
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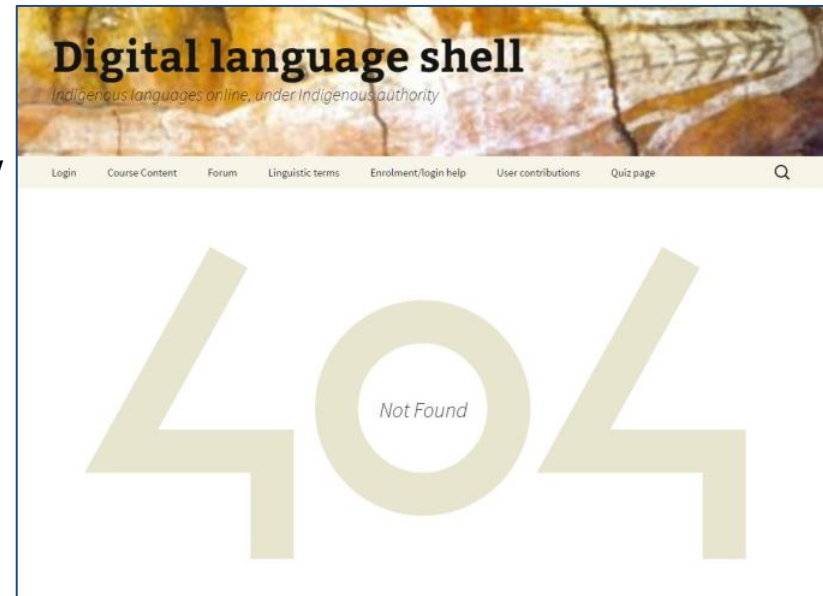
# Language Knowledge

## Prior knowledge of Bininj Kunwok



# Challenges – technical

- Limitations of free WordPress site
  - Plugins don't play well together
  - Forces certain pedagogical decisions
  - Formats for videos stored in CDU Library
- Learning Management System plugin
  - Difficulty setting up lessons
  - Complicated login system
  - No tracking of participants
  - Add-ons didn't work (quizzes, profiles)
  - Update lost all lesson links
- Updated version of LMS works better



# Challenges – linguistic / admin

- Complexity of language
  - Polysynthetic
  - Very complex verb phrases
  - Noun class system
- Large number of learners
  - Vast array of experience
  - Management of forum
  - Assessing activity submissions
- Time frame
- Bininj ownership

		SUBJECT (intr)	With verb –re	INDEPENDENT	ENGLISH
1st	SG	<b>nga-</b>	ngare	ngaye	I, me
	DUAL INC	<b>ngarr-</b>	ngarre*	ngarrku	I + you
	DUAL EXC	<b>ngane-</b>	nganere	ngarrewoneng	I + 1 other (not you)
	TRIAL INC	<b>kane-</b>	kanere	karrewoneng	I + you, and 1 other
2nd	PLURAL INC	<b>karri-</b>	karrire	kadberre	I + you and others (3+)
	PLURAL EXC	<b>ngarri-</b>	ngarrire	ngadberre	I + 3+ others (not you)
	SG	<b>yi-</b>	yire	ngudda	you (1)
	DUAL	<b>ngune-</b>	ngunere	ngurrewoneng	you (2)
3rd	PLURAL	<b>ngurri-</b>	ngurrire	ngudberre	you (3+)
	SG MASC	<b>ka-</b>	kare	nungka	he, him
	SG FEM	<b>ka-</b>	kare	ngaleng	she, her
	DUAL	<b>kabene-</b>	kabenere	berrewoneng	they 2
	PLURAL	<b>kabirri-</b>	kabirrre	bedda	they 3+

# Next steps

- Expand generic information about Australian languages
  - Phonology, ergativity
- Explore opportunities for further development
  - Run improved / expanded version of Biniŋ Kunwok based on feedback?
  - Work with different language community?
- Negotiations with universities
  - Incorporate into existing courses?
  - Expand to complete semester unit?
- Funding questions?
  - OLT closed in May 2016
  - now comes under Department of Education and Training
  - no new grants





# Acknowledgments

- Andy Peart
- Dr Murray Garde
- Jill Nganjmirra
- Seraine Namundja
- Bininj Kunmayali  
Language Project  
Committee
- Prof Michael Christie

Mah, bonj



Donna, Murray, Roseanne, Lois, Jill, Seraine, Julie, Cheryl, Frank, Andy, Andrew