Warumungu digital stories – new technology for old recordings

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Puliima Conference, Melbourne, October 2015
1. Warumungu Country - Tennant Creek, NT
2. Introduce ourselves
3. Recordings by Prith Chakravartī
   - Thirty recordings were made in 1966 of Warumungu speakers, stored in AIATSIS
4. Our work with the recordings
Our Project Team

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Also David Nash, Samantha Disbray Sandra Morrison Nangali
Tennant Creek
Population approx. 3,500
Estimated 25% Warumungu people
25% other Indigenous people
50% non-Indigenous people
Prith Chakravartti’s trip in 1966

(Photo 2015)
Warumungu Recordings by Prith Chakravarti

In the 1980’s, tapes copied onto cassette.

1989 Chakravarti returned to NT and worked for Batchelor College.

2014 we contacted AIATSIS and got digital copies of the recordings.

Digital copies = easy to copy, easy to share and lots of possible new resources.

26 people recorded on 30 tapes recorded in 1966.

Deposited at AIATSIS, with a report and transcripts of four tapes.
Sandra Nangali Morrison

Learnt languages from old people at Rockhampton Downs. Young people were starting to mix language back then. Language studies from 1988 at Batchelor College, with a family group of students.
Working on Language & the recordings

• We met Prith Chakravarti & heard the tapes in 1989 at Batchelor.

• Sandra’s father Michael Jones and his brother were strong speakers.

• At Batchelor they helped with spelling, writing, hard words and deep language.

• Now we are transcribing the tapes, again with the help of elders.
Ronald Morrison Jungarrayi

• Language studies at Batchelor
• Organising the right family to listen to tapes
• Checking tapes with men
• Discussing permission and use of materials with families
J. Napangarti Morrison listening to old recordings, Tennant Creek September 2015
Meeting Prith Chakravarti again 2015
Wordlists


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Extract from a story about places by M.Jangala

kurtumungu ajjinyi winkarra ngini

and manu ngini ajjinyi waljjalki

ngalinya manu ngini wangarriki purtu

ajjinyi ngini manu wangarri jangu

walalaka yin apijiki
Jurtanti kurangi awul winkarra apina.

Jurtanti akinyi ngini wangarri.

karnungu ngini ama an anyul antijji ngattu.

Apinyi awula karnunganja jina awul nyanyi.

Wangkinyi aku jurtanti akinyi ngini.

"Karnanganja alinya kuyu warlinyirrila".

Kiarri ngini ama warlinyirrinyi.

Jinangka aku purtangarajinyi warlinyirrinyi ama warlinyirrinyi.

Partanpinyi ama kiwarri ngini pala pala karn.

Aku ngini jurtanti akinyi purtangara apinyi wangkinyi aku.

"Jurtanti, nyuyu anganjju ngappa“. 

Extract from a story ‘for fun’ by T Plummer
A mother's mother and grandchild were travelling in the dreamtime. The grandmother was rock. The boy was like us. They were walking and they saw emu tracks. So his grandmother told him "chase that emu“. He chases it. He chased and chased it, until he could run no more and he fell down exhausted.

And he goes back to his grandmother and said “Grandmother give me water” . “No, I’m not giving you water”. First get that emu, go and get it. And again he ran and chased it he got tired and sat under the tree. She followed him behind.

He said to her "Give me water grandmother!“. “I won't give you any!“. “Only when you get that meat first“. “Go catch that meat first for us”! "You can drink later"
Using the recordings in the future

• Return copies to families
• Discuss permission to use and share recordings
• Transcribe all of the recordings
• Develop teaching resources for language, history and cultural knowledge
• Develop new multimedia resources – talking books, animations
• Extensive dictionary of Warumungu is under development and will have sound files of words, sentences, stories
Some quotes from our talk

There are thirty tapes, but just four tapes are transcribed, and the transcripts we have are in an older spelling system. So we have a lot of work to do.

We didn’t know that there were recordings of these old people. If Chakravarti hadn’t recorded it, we would have lost it. There are lots of old words, ways of talking, stories we don’t hear now.

That’s why we are working on the tapes now, for next generations. We want to teach our young people and other people Warumungu language, law and culture.

The old people are not here, but this what they left for us. Its something precious, and it’s for the next generations to come.

*Sandra Morrison Nangali*

I’ve been listening to the men’s tapes, to all those old people.

My uncle is on some of the tapes and my tapu-tapu, my mother’s dad, my grandfather.

At the next workshops I was getting the right people to come and listen to their family.

I was talking to people about permission for others to listen and permission to start writing down what old people are talking.

*Ronald Morrison Jungarrayi*

Chakravarti went to different places, looking for my father. Someone must have said that my father, he was at Ti-Tree. My father was working at Ali Curung as a labourer, as a plumber, that’s where he got his surname from. Chakravarti recorded my father telling stories in Warumungu and in English. He had very good English skills, so he became a prominent figure acting as a go-between for Wumpurrarni and Papulanyi. He went droving when he was 10 years old. He must have learned from those papulanyi stockmen. You can hear his voice. He changed his voice when telling stories, that’s what makes a good story-teller. He told dramatic stories, stories for fun for children.

I am thinking about putting those little Dreamtime stories in a book. They are very good Wumpurrarni oral histories.

*Rosemary Plummer Narrurlu*
Kamarnta – The End

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Puliima conference for travel assistance

Thanks to the ARC Centre of Excellence, Dynamics of Language

Thanks to Charles Darwin University, CRC Remote Economic Participation

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