

A methodological approach on the study of Aboriginal language loanwords in contemporary standard Australian English : creating an extensive corpus

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Forum on Australian Englishes – La Trobe University

October, 7th 2022

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Outline

Context of the study

Collecting data

Filling in gaps

Other ideas

Conclusion

1. Context of the study

Aims

Guierrian
approach
SAusE

ILA

Context of the study and aims

- Phonological and phonetical study on loanwords from Indigenous Languages of Australia (ILA) - PhD by Stéfany THIERRY – still a WIP
- Dictionary study – Lionel Guierre’s and his followers’ approach
- Aims – to compare the pronunciation of loanwords from ILA in SAusE and in the source languages
 - What features are maintained, adopted, invented? The lexical stress pattern? The pronunciation of consonants? Of stressed and unstressed vowels? What is the impact of their orthography?
 - How does it impact SAusE?

Guierrian approach

An empirical approach on **large datasets, often from computerised pronouncing dictionaries;**

Orthographic information is taken into consideration : **graphophonemics**

Our morphological approach assumes **that semantically opaque constituents play a role in stress assignment (orthographic geminates <oo, ee> = strong ending if prefix or not)**

We assume that **English phonology includes a number of different subsystems which correspond to different lexical strata of borrowings (or words perceived as such).** ('Italian' words, works on loanwords in *-eur/euse* – See P. Fournier 2016 and 2018)

A. C. Gimson about Guierre in the foreword of *Drills in English Stress-Patterns* (1984 new ed.):

“L. Guierre has carried out a computer analysis of the stress-patterns of the majority of words in the Jones English Pronouncing Dictionary and has been able to derive from this analysis sufficient rules of general validity to be of great practical help for the foreign learner. [...] The tendencies of word-stress which have emerged are likely to reflect the underlying rules which the native English speaker has as part of his linguistic generative capability [...].”

Standard Australian English (SAusE)

“By Australian English we mean that form of English that originated early in the nineteenth century among those children of British settlers who were born and raised in the colony. Australian English has had a continuous tradition ever since as the mother tongue of a large proportion of the Australian community. It is the national variety of English, and the variety which speakers of other varieties, or indeed of other languages, meet when they come to Australia, whether as visitors or as immigrants.”(Delbridge, 1981, p.12)

“AusE is dear to the hearts of those of us who are Australian – we know each other by the sound of the language we speak, by the special words we use, by the sense of shared experience and a common history that filters through it. AusE therefore becomes one of the icons of our culture.”Butler (2001, p.151)

Indigenous Languages of Australia (ILA)

*“Although English has been the dominant language in Australia for the last two centuries it has not been the only language spoken. **Many Aboriginal languages are still spoken, albeit by a vastly reduced number of speakers.**”(Collins, 1989, p.4)*

Census 2021 : 237 ILA

“Of the estimated 250 original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Australia, it was found in 2012 that 120 are still spoken and of these 13 are considered strong in the sense that they are still spoken by all age groups. The 13 strongly spoken languages is a decline from the 18 found to be strong in 2004. Some languages considered to be strong also show signs of declining vitality.”

Australian Government Action Plan for the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

2 . Collecting Data for the corpus

Creating an extensive corpus including

For each item in SAusE :

- Etymology (source language, year of appearance in the SAusE lexicon)
- Orthographies
- Pronunciation(s) : IPA transcription and audio file
- Grammatical category/ies
- Definition
- Frequency of use

For each corresponding item in ILA:

- Orthographies
- Phonological description of the source language
- Pronunciations : IPA transcription and/or audio file
- Grammatical category/ies
- Definition or meaning in ILA
- Meaning in SAusE

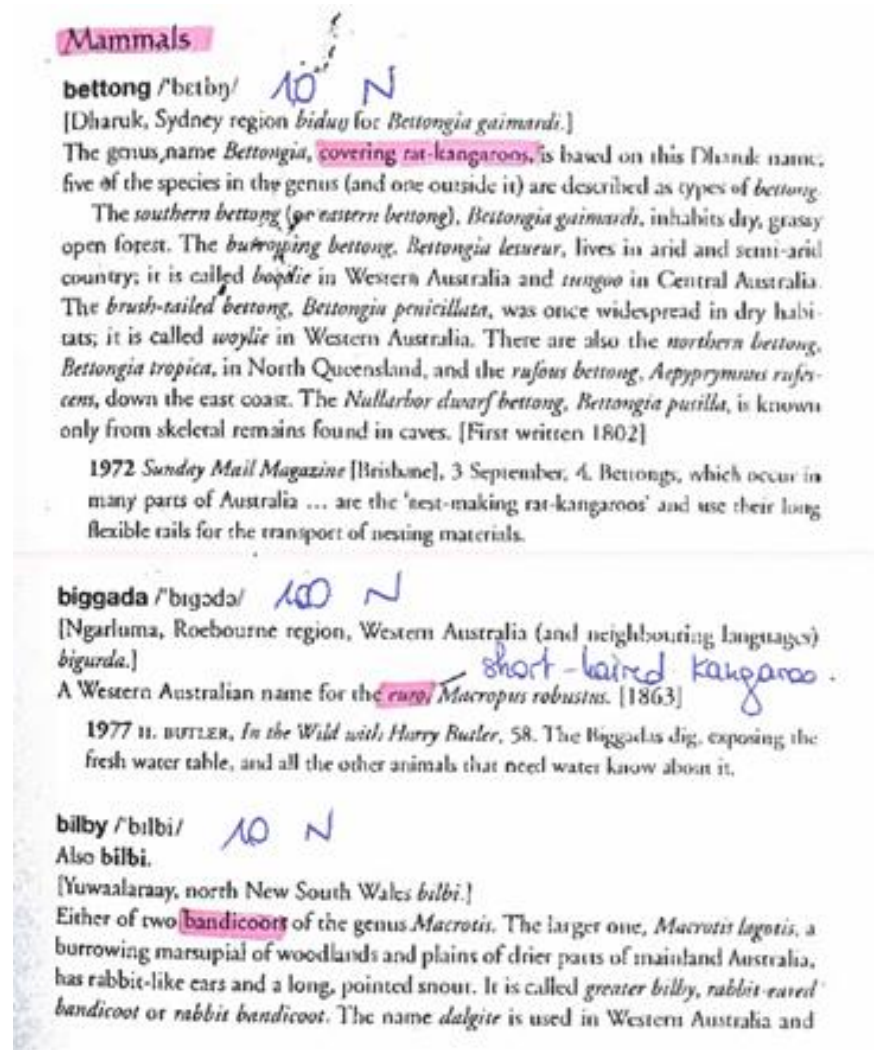
Reference books – SAusE –

Australian Aboriginal Words in English : Their Origin and Meaning ; Dixon et al. 2006 (AAWE)

"Up until the late 1980s, all dictionaries of English – including the Macquarie Dictionary (1981) - included some words borrowed from the indigenous language of Australia, but without stating their specific origin" Dixon et al. (2006)

The Macquarie Dictionary ; 5^{ème} edition, 2009 (MD 2009)

The Macquarie Dictionary ; online edition (2020/2022) (MD 2020)



Australian Aboriginal Words in English : Their Origin and Meaning ; Dixon et al. 2006, p,51

SAusE - Data

- 308 words in common in *AAWE*, *MD 09* et *MD 20*
 - ✓ mainly fauna (107) and flora (91)
- 290 words in common in the two editions of *MD* (majority of toponyms (240))
- 30 words in common in both *AAWE* and *MD 20*
 - ✓ mainly fauna and flora
- 7 words in common in both *AAWE* and *MD09*
 - ✓ divided in flora, fauna, toponyms, natural phenomena

! The rest of the study presented here does not involve toponyms



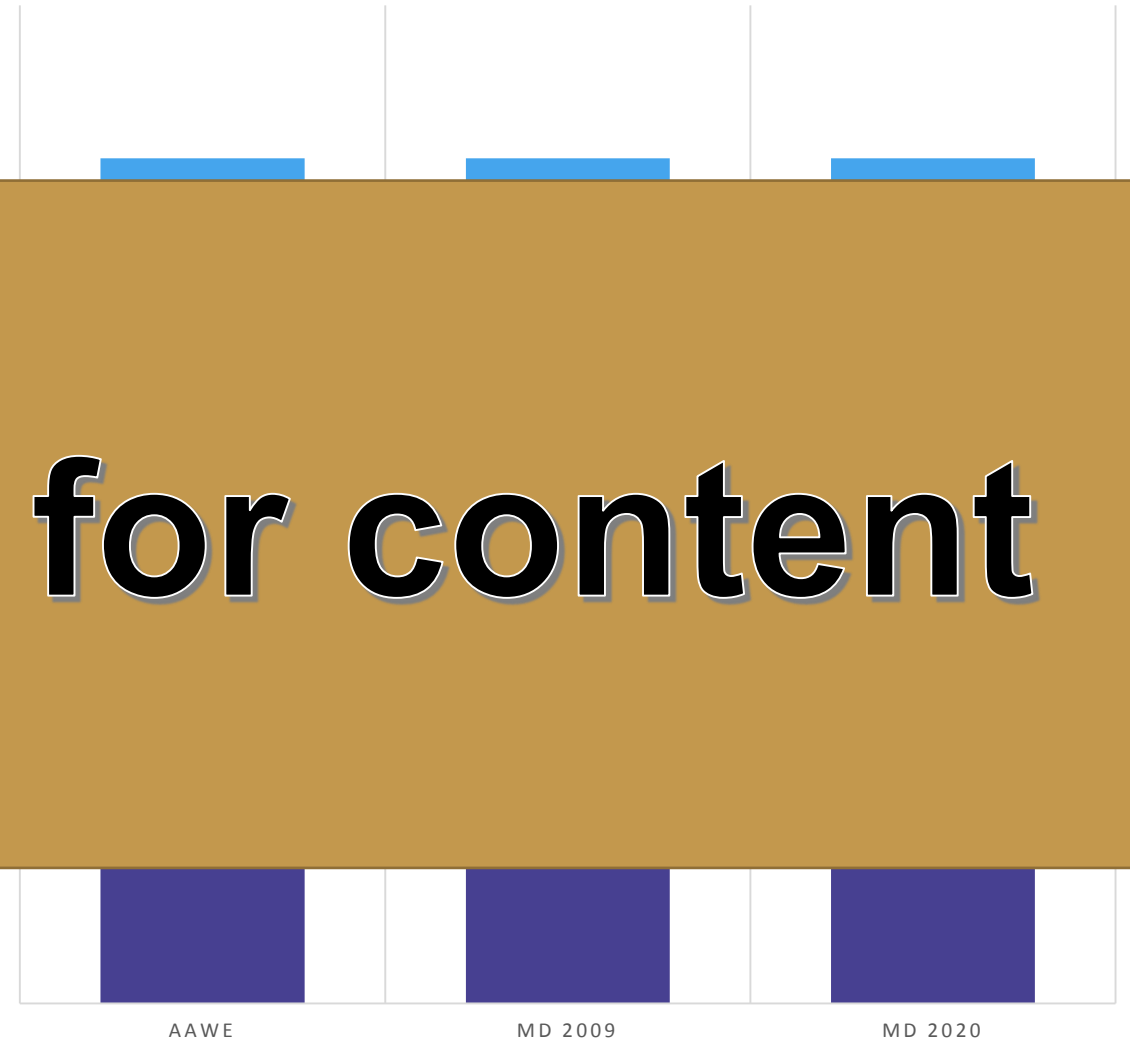
Creating an extensive corpus including

For each item in SAusE :

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Etymology

RESULTS ON ETYMOLOGY BY REFERENCE BOOKS



Ask authors for content

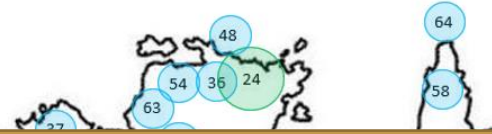
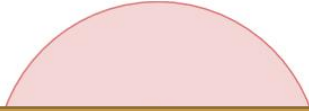
ILA at stake

ILA	Area	Rank	Nb of loanwords in <i>Dixon et al 2006</i>
Nyungar	WA	1	60
Dharuk	NSW	2	56
Dharuk probably	NSW	2	2
Wiradjuri	NSW	3	23

Ask authors for content

Wathawurung	VIC	16	6
Yindjibarndi	WA	17	6
Panyjima	WA	18	5
Bandjalang	NSW	19	4

Source ILA and nb of loanwords



Distribution of the number of loanwords in Dixon et al. 2006 for each language

Ask authors for content

60 items and Dharuk 56 items



Looking for data on the 75 ILA source languages

- 33 references were taken into account (dictionaries, lexicons, web applications) See specific bibliography for details
- Most of the time these are grammars containing extensive linguistic descriptions regarding history, territory, phonology, syntax, morphology, sample texts and lexicons in ILA

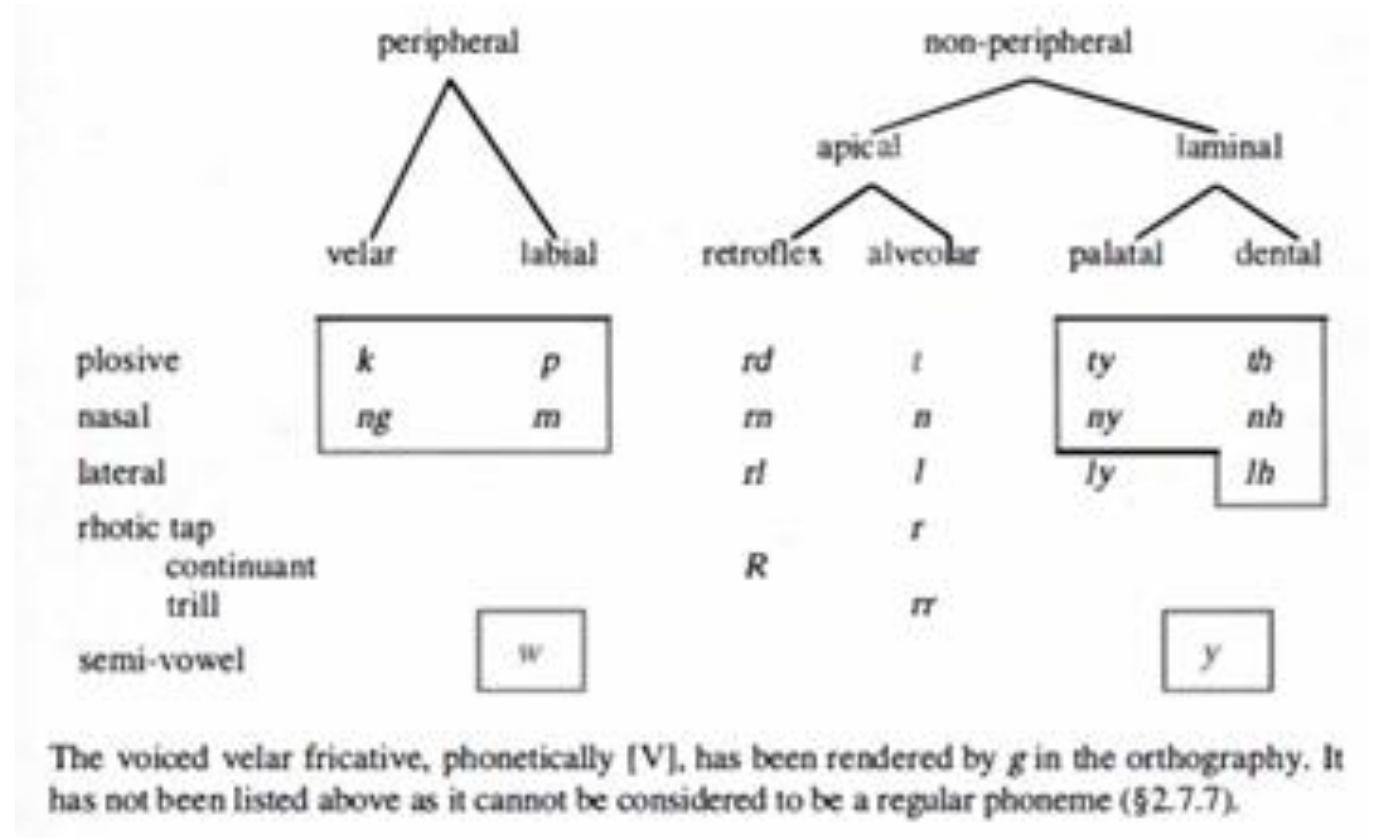
II A - data

Ask authors for content

Djingu	Jingulu (Djingili)	1	of the Northern Territory. Pacific Linguistics.	ingulu%20(Djingili).are%2023%20speakers%20of%20Jingulu.	Pensalfini	no	yes	to do	no
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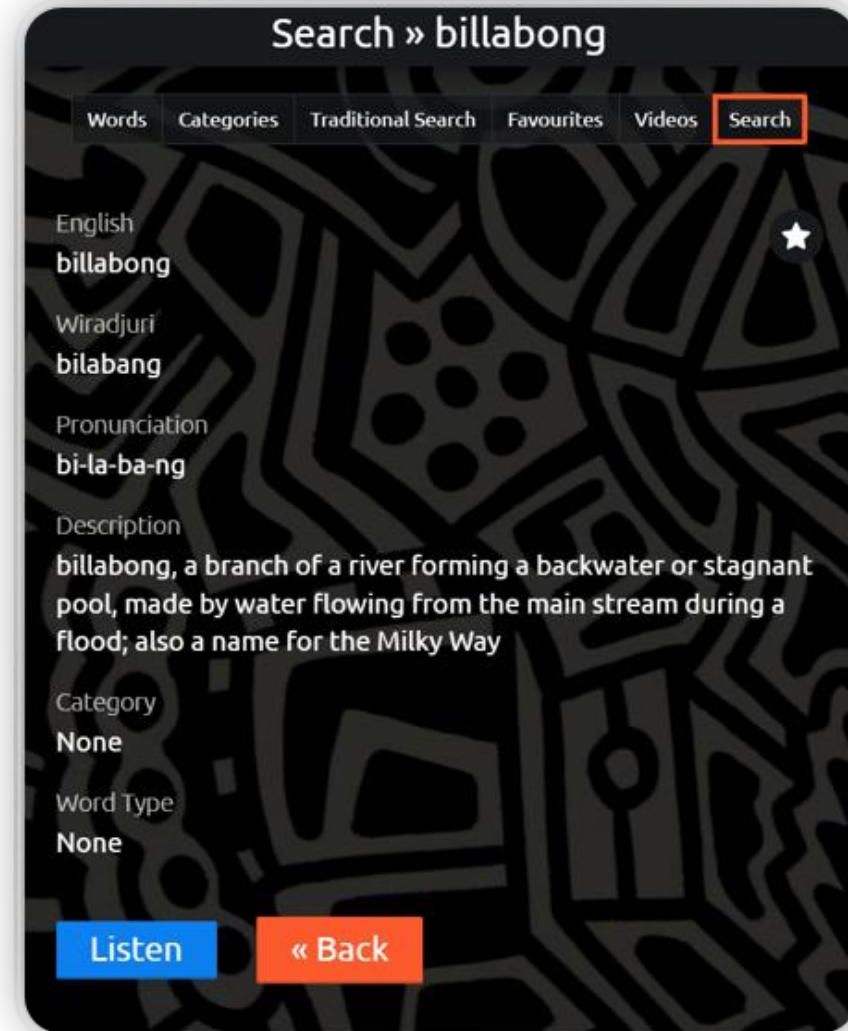
Example of a phonological description

- Here is what we found for the Wanganguru language
 - 3 loanwords
 - Reference book: Hercus, L.A. *A Grammar of the Arabana-Wangkangurru Language*, Lake Eyre Basin, South Australia. C-128, xx + 344 pages. Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, (1994)
 - Pages: 26-47



Apps

- Apps containing ILA data: 7 created by Regenr8, 1 by the AECG (Aboriginal Education Consultative Group of NSW) and 1 by speakers of the Gadjigadji language
- The apps work like bilingual dictionaries
- It is possible to use a traditional search tool using a photo, which avoids the spelling/reading problem



An example in the Wiradhuri app by Regenr8 : *billabong*

Retrieved ILA data for the corpus

Number of items per book according to 4 different criteria

Ask authors for content

■ Dixon ■ MD 9 ■ MD 20

Creating an extensive corpus including

For each item in SAusE :

- Etymology (source language, year of appearance in the SAusE lexicon)
- Orthographies
- Pronunciations : IPA transcription and audio file
- Grammatical category/ies
- Definition
- Frequency of use

For each corresponding item in ILA:

- Orthographies but no info on how they were created
- Phonological description of the source language
- Pronunciations : IPA transcription and/or audio file
- Grammatical category/ies
- Meaning in ILA
- Meaning in SAusE

3 . Filling in gaps

IPA
transcriptions,
socio-linguistics
survey and
perception test

Transcribing

When possible, use of the correspondence between spelling and pronunciation given for a particular ILA to build IPA transcriptions of the loanwords

- Ex in Nyungar : « *kitj* » (« *gidgee* » in SAusE). Whitehurst 1997 gives a correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. For this example we used the following correspondence :

- “ *k* not in standard English, but almost as in **skill** “
- “ *i* as in **hit** “
- “ *dj* and *tj* are the same sound ”
- “ *dj* not in standard English, but almost as in **dew** “

To transcribe the word [*kɪdʒ*].

Bias linked to the spelling, sometimes unstable – need for more details on the decision making process of the orthographies – use of OED?

Survey – AusE - ILA oral data and frequency perception test

- Use of COCAE and BNC for other studies – not possible here
- Creation of a sociolinguistic survey to retrieve oral data and perform a frequency perception test
- The survey is divided into 3 parts:
 1. Collection of social data
 2. Perception test : AusE speakers on their frequency of use of loanwords from ILA
Bias: indication but not totally reliable
 3. Acknowledgments and recordings in AusE and ILA
Difficulty: the focus on ILA speakers – 4 months in Australia in 2023

First results

Ask authors for content

- *Great diversity for some words but not enough data yet*
- *No recording in ILA for the moment*

4 . Other ideas

YouGlish,
toponyms,
OED

Other ideas

- YouGlish
 - Use other AusE oral data from YouGlish
- Toponyms
 - 291 toponyms including only 50 items with precise etymology – small numbers because of dictionary checked data
 - Idea: concentrate on one specific area and work with local ILA speakers
- *OED*
 - Using the Oxford English Dictionary to complete the corpus
 - Using the “Australian Aboriginal” filter in order to collect missing data – preliminary study 20 words out of 195 items
 - Frequency bands as an indication

5. Conclusion

Conclusion

- A recipient language that is well described when the donor languages are not
- Different methods used to compensate the lack of data:
 - IPA transcriptions based on graphophonology
 - Sociolinguistic survey and perception test
 - Recordings in SAusE and ILA (Survey, YouGlish, Field work)

Ideas

**Thank you for
your attention**

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