# POSSIBLE CLAUSE TYPES IN MURUWARI

## Judy Trefry

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Muruwari, a language of north-western New South Wales, was formerly spoken by people living in the environs and west of Bourke, Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge, along the Bokhara River and over the border into Queensland. Few speakers remain and most are well advanced in years.

The source of data for this paper was a series of seventeen language tapes spoken and recorded by Mr. Jimmy Barker of Lightning Ridge during 1968-69. Since then he has recorded several more tapes. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Barker and Mrs. Janet Mathews who have made these tapes available to me. The terminology and method of analysis used are based on "Beginning Morphology and Syntax". ELSON (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Glendale, California. 1958).

Because there has been no way to check the data or add to any areas where there is lack of information, future data may prove some analyses erroneous. For example, no time slot was found in any imperative or interrogative type clauses. This may be peculiar to Muruwari but it may be that the recordist did not choose to record this particular aspect. Further word lists, sentence, clause and phrase forms have been submitted to Mr. Barker, some of which he has recorded already.
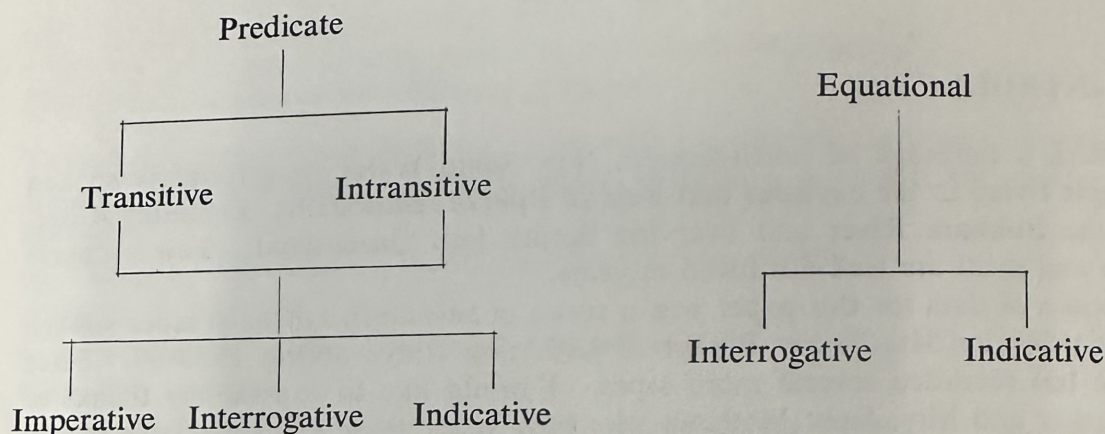
## 2. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

| | |
|---|---|
| + | obligatory |
| ± | optional |
| P | predicate |
| S | subject |
| O | object |
| I.O | indirect object |
| L | location |
| Inst. | instrument |
| Acc. | accompaniment |
| Pur | purpose |
| It. | item |
| C | comment |
| Neg. | negative |
| T | time |
| Int. | interrogative |

## CLAUSE TYPES

The clause in Muruwari has been found to contain two basic types namely Predicate and Equational. These may be subdivided further as shown in the following diagram.

```
                    Predicate
                       |
                                              Equational
          ┌────────────────────┐                  |
          |                    |
      Transitive         Intransitive
          |                                 ┌────────────┬────────────┐
          |                                 |            |
   ┌──────┼──────┐                    Interrogative   Indicative
   |      |      |
Imperative Interrogative Indicative
```

Transitive clauses are distinguished from intransitive by the class of verbs found in the Predicate slot and by the obligatory absence of the Object slot in Intransitive clauses.

Equational clauses may contain Item and Comment slots with the equator suffixed to the first nuclear slot.

There would appear to be no rigid ordering of slots and occasionally the informant will give several different orders of the same utterance with no apparent change of meaning. Subject and Object slots show more rigid ordering than lateral slots and in most cases only carry slot suffixes to avoid ambiguity or show emphasis. Lateral slots are seldom found without slot suffixes.
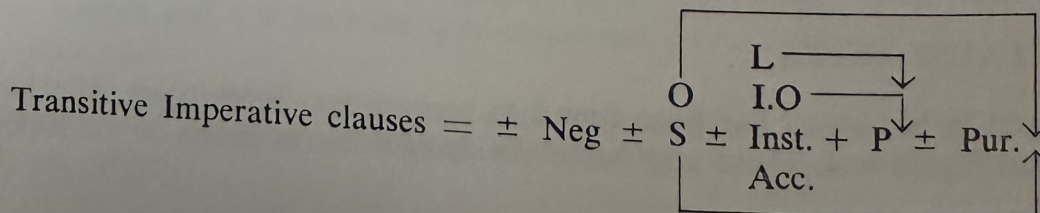
## 4. PREDICATE-TYPE CLAUSES

### 4.1 Transitive and Intransitive Imperative

The verb in the imperative clause consists of a stem only and the Predicate is the one obligatory slot although the most common examples were those consisting of two slots. Worthy of note is the fact that, in the examples recorded, Subject and Object slots are in mutual exclusion. No time slot has been recorded and further data has been requested. Negative occurs only in clause initial position. Lateral slots would appear to revolve around the Predicate slot. Likewise, Subject and Object slots also revolve in this manner but outside the lateral slots. The maximum number of slots found in any one clause was four. One example was found of a double location slot.

| ṭaṇ | yena | bilʌ-ŋgʌ | ṭigʌ | "come behind me" |
|-----|------|----------|------|------------------|
| here | go | back-on | my | |

Formulae for this clause might be represented thus:—

```
                                                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                                                    |        L──────┐          |
                                                    |               ↓          |
                                                    |  O    I.O─────┐          ↓
Transitive Imperative clauses =  ± Neg ±  S ±  Inst. +  P↓± Pur.↗
                                                    |       Acc.    ↑──────────┘
                                                    └──────────────┘
```

$$\text{Intransitive Imperative clause} = \pm \text{ Neg } \pm \text{ S } \pm \text{ Acc. } + \text{P} \pm \text{ Pur.}$$

*Negative* is filled by a negative particle. *Object* may be filled by pronoun, noun, noun phrase, proper noun, proper noun phrase or clause.

*Subject* may be filled by pronoun, noun, noun phrase, proper noun or proper noun phrase.

*Locative* may be filled by locative, locative phrase, noun, noun phrase or proper noun.

*Indirect Object* may be filled by pronoun or proper noun phrase.

*Instrument* may be filled by a noun.

*Accompaniment* may be filled by a proper noun.

*Purpose* may be filled by a noun or clause.

*Predicate* may be filled by verb or verb phrase.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *ŋaɾʌnʌ*<br>that | *wan*<br>tree | *bʌɾiɾʌ*<br>chop | | "Chop that tree" |
| *ŋuŋʌɾʌ*<br>this | *wan*<br>tree | *gula*<br>climb | *weiæn-gu*<br>honey-for | "Climb this tree for honey" |
| *lʌɾʌgʌɾʌŋʌɾʌ*<br>tell | *dʒimi-ga*<br>Jimmy-to | *mænu-gu*<br>bread-object | *mara*<br>get | "Tell Jimmy to get bread" |
| *meri-gu*<br>Mary-to | *yenʌ*<br>go | | | "Go to Mary" |
| *kʌțuŋʌɾʌ*<br>quickly | *mugu*<br>move | | | "Move quickly" |
| *wʌlʌŋʌɾʌ*<br>not | *ŋindu*<br>you | *gindei*<br>laugh | | "Don't you laugh" |
| *yagibʌl*<br>knife | *m-wɔnʌ*<br>to me-give | *yʌgi-guŋʌɾʌ*<br>cut-to | *wiki*<br>meat | "Give me a knife to cut the meat" |

## 4.2 Transitive and Intransitive Interrogative

The Interrogative clause is characterised by an obligatory Interrogative slot in clause initial position. Here, have been found either interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs of location, manner or reason. No temporal has been found in the recorded examples. Further data has been requested to determine whether this is a possibility.

If a Subject slot is present it follows the Interrogative slot, which in turn may be followed by the Object or Indirect Object slot. Next is the obligatory Predicate. The Object slot has also been found following the Predicate mutually exclusive with Location.

The minimum number of clause slots found was two, the maximum four. No Negative Interrogative was recorded.

$$\text{Transitive Interrogative clause} = + \text{ Int. } \pm \text{ S } \pm \begin{smallmatrix} O \\ I.O \end{smallmatrix} + \text{ P } \pm \text{ L}$$

$$\text{Intransitive Interrogative clause} = + \text{ Int. } \pm \text{ S } + \text{ P } \pm \text{ L}$$

Interrogative slot may be filled by interrogative pronoun or interrogative adverbs of location, manner or reason.

Subject slot may be filled by pronoun, noun or noun phrase.

Object slot may be filled by noun, noun phrase or proper noun.

Indirect object slot filled by pronoun.

Location slot filled by locative.

Predicate slot filled by verb.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *naṇdiŋʌřʌ*<br>how | *ŋindu*<br>you | *munei*<br>know | "How do you know?" |
| *tiřʌŋguŋʌřʌ*<br>where | *ŋaḍu*<br>I | *ṯʌŋgigu*<br>run | "Where will I run?" |
| *minyenŋʌřʌ*<br>what | *bingei-bu*<br>stab-he | | "What is he spearing?" |
| *miyen-guŋʌřʌ*<br>what-for | *bʌaḍʌřʌn-du*<br>hit-you | *džimi-ga*<br>Jimmy-object | "Why did you hit Jimmy?" |
| *ŋanduŋʌřʌ*<br>who | *wiki*<br>meat | *ṯʌnma*<br>ate | "Who ate the meat?" |
| *ŋinduŋʌřʌ*<br>you | *yeraman-du*<br>horse-on | *wʌndili*<br>ride | "Can you ride a horse?" |

## 4.3 Transitive and Intransitive Indicative

Again the Predicate is the only obligatory slot, although two or three slots are more common in a clause. The maximum number found was four. The Subject and Object slots appear to revolve around the Predicate, the Object slot being on the inner circle. Although when it occurs preceding the Predicate it may be

separated from the verb by Location, Purpose or Instrument slots. When it occurs after the Predicate it immediately follows it. Negative most commonly occurs in initial position but examples were found with it in medial positions. Indirect Object and Instrument were not found following the Predicate nor was Accompaniment found preceding it.

Transitive Indicative Clause =

$$\pm \text{Neg}_1 \pm L_1 \pm \text{Neg}_2 \pm \begin{matrix} T_1 \\ \text{Pur}_1 \end{matrix} \pm S_1 \pm \begin{matrix} \text{Inst}_1 \\ \text{I.O.} \end{matrix} \pm \text{Neg}_3 \pm O_1 \pm \begin{matrix} L_2 \\ \text{Pur}_2 \\ \text{Inst}_2 \end{matrix} \pm P$$

$$\pm O_2 \pm \begin{matrix} T_2 \\ \text{Acc} \end{matrix} \pm S_2 \pm \begin{matrix} L_3 \\ T_3 \end{matrix} \pm \begin{matrix} \text{Inst}_3 \\ \text{Purp}_3 \end{matrix}$$

Intransitive Indicative Clause =

$$\pm \text{Neg}_1 \pm L_1 \pm \text{Neg}^2 \pm \begin{matrix} T_1 \\ \text{Pur}_1 \end{matrix} \pm S_1 \pm \begin{matrix} L^2 \\ \text{Pur}^2 \end{matrix} + P \pm \begin{matrix} T_2 \\ \text{Acc} \end{matrix} \pm S \pm \begin{matrix} L_3 \\ T_3 \end{matrix} \pm \text{Pur}_3$$

NOTE only one of any numbered slot may occur in any one clause.

Subject may be filled by pronoun, noun, noun phrase, proper noun or proper noun phrase.

Object may be filled by pronoun, noun, noun phrase, proper noun, proper noun phrase or clause.

Negative may be filled by negative particle.

Location may be filled by locative, locative phrase, noun phrase, proper noun or clause.

Indirect object may be filled by pronoun.

Instrument may be filled by noun.

Predicate may be filled by verb or verb phrase.

Time may be filled by noun phrase.

Purpose may be filled by noun, noun phrase or clause.

Accompaniment may be filled by noun phrase.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *gaḍʌ-ŋgʌŋʌr̃ʌ*<br>dark-in | *ŋaḍu*<br>I | *yænmiyu*<br>go | "I am going in the dark" |
| *bʌlʌ-??gu ŋʌr̃ʌ*<br>lost-I | *ŋaḍʌ-ŋgu*<br>I-possessive | *bʌʒul*<br>stone, money | "I have lost my money" |
| *ŋaba-gu ŋʌr̃ʌ*<br>water-for | *bʌlga-bu*<br>come-he | | "He came for water" |

ŋaḍu-gu     yænmiyu ŋʌr̃ʌ     briwɔr̃ina-gu     lʌitniŋ ridž-ŋʌ
I subject     go           Brewarrina-to     Lightning Ridge-from
"I went to Brewarrina from Lightning Ridge"

ŋur̃uṇ     ŋarʌŋguŋʌr̃ʌ     ṭʌŋgina     "An emu is running over there"
emu        over there       run

ŋaḍu ŋʌr̃ʌ     gulaŋʌr̃ʌ bi??geiyu     gulia-ŋgu
I           kangaroo stab        spear-with
"I speared a kangaroo with a spear"

wʌlʌŋʌr̃ʌ     bʌlga-bu     "It did not come"
not         come-3rd person

ŋindu ŋʌr̃ʌ     wʌlʌ    midžiṇ     tʌr̃ʌɛʌndu    "You are not telling a lie'
you         no      lie         tell

## 5. EQUATIONAL TYPE CLAUSES

In the equational clause, the suffix -ŋʌr̃ʌ acts as an equator being suffixed to either the item or the comment slots depending upon whichever occurs first. Elsewhere -ŋʌr̃ʌ appears to function as a declarative, an auxiliary verb or the verb "to be".

### 5.1 Equational Interrogative

An item slot filled by an interrogative pronoun, adjective or adverb occurs in clause initial position. It is the only obligatory slot and may be followed by a comment and location slot. No examples were found to contain a negative.

$$\text{Equational Interrogative} = + \text{It.} \pm \text{C} \pm \text{L}$$

Item may be filled by an interrogative pronoun, adjective or adverb.
Comment may be filled by noun, noun phrase, proper noun or proper noun phrase.
Location may be filled by proper noun.

ŋaŋgu-ŋʌr̃ʌ     "Who is it?"
who-equator

naṇdu-ŋʌr̃ʌ     kapenti-ŋʌr̃ʌ     "Whose hat is this?"
whose-equator    hat

ṭir̃ʌŋgu-ŋʌr̃ʌ     guga     "Where is the large tree goanna?"
where-equator    large tree goanna

ṭir̃ʌŋgu-ŋʌr̃ʌ     bil smiṭ-ga     džimi baka-ga     sidni-gʌ
where-equator     Bill Smith-and     Jimmy Barker-and    Sydney-in
"Where are Bill Smith and Jimmy Barker in Sydney?"

## 5.2 Equational Indicative

Both item and comment slots may occur in any one clause or either may occur alone. Negative and Locative were the only other slots found.

$$\text{Equational Indicative} = \pm\ \text{Neg} + (\pm\ \text{It.} \pm\ \text{C}) \pm\ \text{L}$$

Negative is filled by negative particle.
Item may be filled by pronoun, noun.
Comment may be filled by adjective, noun,
Location may be filled by noun, noun phrase.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *mugᴧɾ̃ᴧ-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>burr-equator | *ṭinᴧ-ŋɛᴧ*<br>foot-in | *ŋaḍu-ŋgu*<br>I-possessive | "There is a burr in my foot" |
| *ṭuɾ̃i-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>sun-equator | *wi-gᴧlᴧ*<br>fire-like | | "The sun is like fire" |
| *bulᴧ-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>dead-equator | *gula*<br>kangaroo | | "The kangaroo is dead" |
| *ŋinduga-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>you-equator | *tr̃upi*<br>clumsy | | "You are clumsy" |
| *ŋindu-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>you-equator | *ŋaḍu-gu*<br>I-possessive | *bᴧbᴧ*<br>sister | "You are my sister" |
| *wᴧlᴧ*<br>no | *ŋaḍu-ŋᴧɾ̃ᴧ*<br>I-equator | | "It is not I" |