

The Juwaliny language: issues with working on closely related languages in the Great Sandy Desert

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Abstract:

Juwaliny is classically described as the western dialect of Walmajarri, a language from the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia. At the request of the speaker community a dictionary and sketch grammar of this dialect are under production. This documentation has facilitated greater examination of the similarities and differences between Juwaliny and the other Walmajarri dialects. This paper will present a cursory analysis of lexical, grammatical and phonological variation, as well as considering some sociolinguistic data and speaker perspectives. It will also highlight some of the challenges of documenting one speech variety in a dialectally rich context, and the implications of these challenges on how we describe and conceptualise the languages of the Great Sandy Desert.