

Classifiers in Anindilyakwa

Classifiers characterise the noun they refer to by describing some of its inherent salient features. There are various types of classifiers, and I propose that Anindilyakwa, a Non-Pama-Nyungan language spoken on Groote Eylandt, NT, has three of them: verbal classifiers, which are incorporated into the verb and classify one of its arguments; noun classifiers, which in my data are always incorporated into an adjective; and numeral classifiers, which occur with numerals and other expressions of quantity.

I will argue that Leeding's (1989, 1995) incorporated 'body part noun roots' and 'shape adjective roots' act like classifiers, as in the following examples.

ni-rikw-pwitji-na (Leeding 1989:31)
3mSg-body-jump-TNS
'he jumped'

n-arning-pwitj-anga (Leeding 1989:365)
it(a)-pointed-jump-TNS
'it [the spear] sprang up'

Since the same body part noun roots are used in Anindilyakwa for noun incorporation as well as for compounding, it may be hard to distinguish these three phenomena. I will discuss some ways to discern these types of incorporation.