CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN LINGUISTICS
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YOUNG PEOPLE’S DYIRBAL

An example of language death
from Australia

ANNETTE SCHMIDT
The Australian National University
FOR HAZEL AND GÜNTHER
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Watson (Nyiyija), who first taught me his Mamu dialect, and who waited patiently during the writing of this book, before we could get down to the 'real business of talking language'.

ŋaja ban durubin, nyubala Nyiyijaŋu, Nyaywiŋu, ŋayguna mala wuŋaŋu bugugu yagu. Garrjabi. ŋanaju jilbaybajun wurrbaygu qirrmaga garribajibaji!

To Nyaywi, what more can I say?
## Abbreviations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>V verb</td>
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<td>Young people's Dyirbal</td>
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Orthography

Dyirbal has 16 segmental phonemes: 13 consonants and three vowels. In this volume, these are represented by a practical orthography.

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<th>dorso-velar</th>
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The following orthographical differences to Dixon (1972) should be noted: my j = Dixon’s q (lamino-palatal stop)

\[ r = \dot{r} \text{ (retroflex)} \]
\[ rr = \ddot{r} \text{ (trill)} \]
\[ ny = \ddot{n} \text{ (lamino-palatal nasal)} \]

Vowels u, i, a are close back rounded, close front rounded, and open vowels. In addition, Young Dyirbal speakers have mid-vowels e [ɛ], and o [ɔ], in pidgin-type forms and loan items, e.g. mədɑŋa 'motorcar', aluŋɛda 'they plural'.

The sign / is used in transcribed texts and examples to separate impressionistically recognized 'intonation groups'.
MAP: DYIRBAL DIALECTS AND NEIGHBOURS