



Fig. 4: Composition of Australian languages.

the traditional categorisation, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, and adverbs. Two chapters are devoted to the verb, one on verbs in Nyulnyulan languages, the other on Pama-Nyungan verbs. The former is by far the better and more comprehensive of the descriptions, providing as it does paradigms of many verbs, listed according to the first segment of the verb root; there is also a fair amount of information on irregular verbs. One discerns from the description that the authors had a good intuitive appreciation of the relatively complex verbal construction of Nyulnyulan languages. The following chapter on verbs in Pama-Nyungan (suffixing) languages is concerned almost exclusively with a single language, Karajarri – rather a poor choice as a representative of the Pama-Nyungan family in that it exhibits evidence of considerable structural and lexical borrowing from the Nyulnyulan languages immediately to the north. Doubtless, Karajarri was chosen because the authors had most information on it; unfortunately, however, they do not really seem to have understood the verbal system of this language very well. The very brief final chapter of Part I, "Exclamations" stands out in that it provides information on language usage and the ethnography of speaking, in particular interjections and curses and good wishes.

Part II, "Dictionary English – Native Languages," is a 100-page finder list for the main dictionary presented in Part III. Little information is provided other than the names of the languages in which the words are found. The usefulness of the finder list is somewhat diminished by major inconsistencies with the main dictionary, as discussed in McGregor (2005).

Part III, "Dictionary Native Languages – English (a Paradigmatic Syntax)," accounts for over a half of the book. This part presents in a single ideally alphabetical (there are numerous inconsistencies and errors in the ordering) list of around nine thousand words from some thirty languages, mainly from the northwest of the continent. The size and scope of the dictionary can be appreciated from the breakdown given in the table (next page).

The provenance of each word – actually the headword entries include not just lexical words but also grammatical words and some bound morphemes (those which, like case suffixes and enclitics that are easily segmented) – is indicated (with a number of accidental omissions) by an abbreviation for the language name. In some cases morphological paradigms are given, and fairly extensive cross-references are made to phonetically similar words in other languages; unfortunately information on word class membership is provided