



Orthographies (spelling Systems) and Pronunciation

Because Australian Aboriginal languages were traditionally oral languages and not written down, it is important to establish a standardised spelling system that allows learners to read and write the language and also enables them to transcribe any words they may know in an unambiguous way.

Phonemes are the sounds that are found in any given languages. Different languages may have different phonemes.

For example, in English we have the phoneme that is represented as 'th' as in the word *there* or *path*. You wouldn't find this phoneme in German or French or in Dharawal. When you see *th* in the spelling of words in the old historic Dharawal sources, like Mathews' *Thurrawal* this represents a slightly different sound to the English *th*.

Another example is the *ng* sound as in the English word *sing* or *singer*. In Dharawal, this sound also occurs at the beginning of a word, which it doesn't in English and is often difficult for learners of Dharawal (or any other Aboriginal language) to pronounce. You will find that in some of the old sources, this sound may have been represented as *Gn...* or in Mackenzie's published texts the upside down capital *G* was used.

So, phonemes, which are the sounds in a language are then represented by symbols of letters (or combination of letters) and they are called graphemes.

It doesn't really matter (well, it does, but theoretically it doesn't) what symbol/grapheme you use for each sound in your language, as long as it is *consistent and standardised and doesn't allow for misinterpretation*.

What I have tried to do in this course is to use the most approximate combinations of the English alphabet to achieve the sound of the Dharawal words.

Oftentimes I have used the apostrophe to indicate where the emphases should be on words. Normally, the emphasis occurs on the second syllable of a word, however in many cases the words are actually comprised of a number of words and I have used the apostrophe to denote the emphasised sounds.

For example, for the phrase, Galumban'winima'kamawi'dyawa; I went near your home, where the emphasis or accent occurs on the **loom, wi, ka and dya**.

The Dharawal Alphabet

a	First as in Badyal (flesh), second and subsequent as in Dara (thigh).
ai	As in Baija (Air)
b	As in Binit (Tawny Frogmouthed Owl)
d	As in Dirar (hair)
dh	As in Dharamuoy (Bronze Winged Pigeon)
dj	As in Djanaba (Laughter)
dy	As in Dyalgala (Embrace)
e	As in E'ora (Yes, we are The People)
g	As in Gabara (Dance)
gw	As in Gwaybila (Mars)
i	As in illa (no)

j	As in Jambuk (white cloud)
k	As in Kuriheyat (All People)
kw	As in Quandong
l	As in Illiwera (White clay)
m	As in Mana (Gather)
n	As in Nadan (Good Water)
ng	As in Ngoonungi (Flying Fox)
ny	As in Nya (we or us)
o	As in Pokulbi (Dianella)
p	As in Parra (eel)
r	As in Turella (Ceremonial War Ground)
rr	As in Warrawarra (far away)
t	As in Talara (frost)
tj	As in Tjimbung (Spirit of Love)
uh	As in Mullgoh (Black Swan)
u	As in Muray (come back)
w	As in Wahu (skin)
y	As in Yaguna (Don't tell me!)