Yugambeh Nation

Name: _____

Date: _____

AGES 13 AND UP

Language Detective

Five things that make Yugambeh a special and unique language.

1 Aspect, not tense

Yugambeh predominately marks verbs for **aspect**, not tense. If tense is where an action sits in time (past, present or future), aspect is *how* an action sits in time: is it progressive, complete, imperfect?

Write each one in the right column: “I was walking home”, “She has finished her lunch”, “They are singing”, “We ate the fish”

Progressive (ongoing)	Complete (finished)

2 No “the” or “a”

Yugambeh does not use articles like *the* and *a/an*. Instead there is a complicated set of demonstratives (this/these, that/those) with a three-way division between **visible**, **invisible**, and **“not there anymore”**. For these 4 English words, Yugambeh has about 18 equivalents!

Write each one in the right column: that bird on the fence, that bird we can hear in the trees, that tree that was cut down last year

Visible	Invisible	Not there anymore

3 Nouns that show their job

Yugambeh nouns can be marked for many cases, including a unique **aversive** case for things you fight or are afraid of. Because every noun’s place is clearly marked, word order is quite free.

In English, “The dog chased the boy” and “The boy chased the dog” mean different things. Why? Why wouldn’t word order matter as much in Yugambeh?

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PART 2

Language Detective

4 "We" but not you

"We're leaving!" "Not you, just us!" Ever had this confusion in English? You wouldn't in Yugambeh, as pronouns have **inclusive** and **exclusive** forms. There are also dual and plural forms, like the informal *you two* and *youse*.

Tick inclusive (includes the listener) or exclusive (does not).

"We should all go to the beach together, you too!"	☐ inclusive	☐ exclusive
"We're going to Grandma's. Sorry, you can't come."	☐ inclusive	☐ exclusive
"Let's eat; we're all hungry."	☐ inclusive	☐ exclusive

5 Natural noun "genders"

Unlike the masculine, feminine and neuter of some European languages, Yugambeh nouns have more natural types: **Animate** (humans and animals), **Inanimate** (plants and objects), and **Places/Locations**.

Write each one in the right column: grandmother, kangaroo, gum tree, spear, Beaudesert, eagle, Brunswick Heads, rock

Animate	Inanimate	Places

Think about it

Through minority languages like Yugambeh, you can give your brain an interesting cognitive exercise! One Aboriginal language, Jingulu, has even been used as the basis for a computer language. Why does it matter when a language is lost?

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