Case marking and grammatical relations: Pitjantjatjara

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Pitjantjatjara (IPA: ['pɪcaɲcacaɾa]) is a Pama-Nyungan language spoken by about 3,000 people in the central desert region of Australia. The following data are from the central variety, presented in the standard orthography. Underlined consonants are retroflex. The digraphs ly, ng, ny and tj represent singleton consonants, however, knowing the precise pronunciations is not necessary to solve this problem. An entertaining overview of the Pitjantjatjara language, including pronunciation, can be found at: http://www.ngapartji.org/ (by the way, this website will not help you solve this problem!).

Your tasks:

A. Give the probable English translation for #38 and the Pitjantjatjara for #39.

B. Describe the case marking system of Pitjantjatjara, giving a chart or charts of all the relevant forms. Be sure to take into account all variations, and make reasonable hypotheses as to whether the variations are based on form (morphophonemics) or function (genders). Give any evidence for your claims.

C. Discuss whether and why the Pitjantjatjara case marking system is consistent or inconsistent with universal expectations.

Note: There is some intriguing verb morphology here, but the problem is concerned only with the case system.

1. Malu ngalyapitjangu.
The kangaroo came.

2. Untalpa pakanu.
The daughter got up.

3. Ngali ngalyapitjangu.
We (two) came.

You (sg) got up.

5. Ampintu malu nyangu.
Ampin saw the kangaroo.

You (sg) heard the daughter.

7. Malungku nyuntunya nyangu.
The kangaroo saw you (sg).

8. Untaltu ngalinya kulinu.
The daughter heard us (two).

We (two) saw the kangaroo.

10. Untaltu malu kulinu.
The daughter heard the kangaroo.

11. Tjitji ngurangka nyinangu.
The child sat in camp.

12. Watingku malu wakanu.
The man speared the kangaroo.

The kangaroo scratched the man.

Pili saw me.

15. Ngayulu minyma wanaŋu.
I followed the woman.

I became angry.

17. Nyuntu ngayunya nyangu.
You saw me.

18. Minymangku nyuntunya nyangu.
The woman saw you.

19. Minyma mapitjangu.
The woman went away.

20. Paluŋu wati wanaŋu.
She/he followed the man.
23. Ampinnga pakanu. Ampin got up.
24. Paluru mapitangu. She/he went away.
25. Nganana nyinakatingu. We (pl) sat down.
26. Nganana antalpa yaltingu. We (pl) called the daughter.
27. Ngali antalpa tjapinu. We (2) asked the daughter.
30. Nyura tjiitji kulinu. You (pl) heard the child.
32. Tjana tjiitji makatingu. They (pl) took the child away.
33. Tjiitjingku tjanantya pirinu. The child scratched them (pl).
34. Tjana tjiitjingka nyinangu. They (pl) sat on the child.
36. Tjana pakanu. They got up.
39. __________________________

Reference: