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9 Reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic functions in Barunga Kriol¹

Abstract: This chapter describes the reflexive, reciprocal and adverbial emphatic markers *mijelp*, *gija* and *miself* in Barunga Kriol, the variety of the Australian Kriol spoken in Beswick/Wugularr (Top End, Northern Territory, Australia). These markers are interesting because their distribution has evolved in recent years, resulting in further and neater distinctions. Firstly, a typologically rare distinction between two types of reciprocals has emerged, where transitive verbs and “semi-transitive” verbs receive distinct reciprocal marking. This distinction could result from contact with other Kriol varieties, and represents an interesting pattern of contact-induced change, where no actual form or function is borrowed from the source language. Secondly, the reflexive and emphatic markers, which were originally quasi-identical, have evolved to become two (or more) well-differentiated items.

Based on the analysis of these markers, this chapter examines the ways in which a creole can develop new categories, and questions the principles underlying these developments. Contact with neighbouring varieties of Kriol, as well as late substrate reinforcement, appear to have played a role in these innovations. In addition, this case study indicates that Kriol varieties can be influenced not only by their immediate substrates, but also by other Australian languages within a broader contact area, via contact between varieties.

1 Introduction

This chapter describes the reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic markers *mijelp*, *gija* and *miself* in Barunga Kriol, the variety of the Australian Kriol spoken in Beswick/Wugularr, near Barunga/Bamiyili (Top End, Northern Territory, Australia). The distribution of these markers has evolved in recent years, resulting in further and neater distinctions. Both Sandefur (1979) and Munro (2004) describe *mijelp* as a strictly reflexive marker, and *gija* as a reciprocal marker, with no overlap

¹ I very pleased to dedicate this article to Patrick McConvell, a dear friend and occasional co-author.

between the two. Neither Sandefur (1979) nor Munro (2004) distinguish the reflexive from the emphatic marker *miself*. In comparison to these descriptions, data collected in Beswick in 2014 offers a different picture. Firstly, *mijelp* is used as a reflexive marker but also a reciprocal marker under certain conditions. *Gija* remains a reciprocal marker, but its distribution is restricted, being complementary with the distribution of the reciprocal *mijelp*. The respective distribution of *mijelp* and *gija* delineate a typologically rare distinction between several types of reciprocals, where strictly transitive verbs and “semi-transitive” verbs (i.e. verbs that admit an oblique object) receive different reciprocal marking. Secondly, the reflexive *mijelp* and the emphatic *miself*, which were originally quasi-identical, have evolved to become two (or more) well-differentiated items.

Overall, the Barunga Kriol system of reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic markers has evolved towards further differentiation. This chapter examines the ways in which a creole can develop new categories, and questions the principles of these developments. Among plausible factors of change are contact with neighbouring Kriol varieties, as well as substrate reinforcement (Siegel 1998, 2008). Taken together, these factors suggest that in the post-colonial era, a creole can evolve towards features that are well represented among its immediate substrates, but also – via contact with other creole varieties – among other languages within a broader, pan-regional area of contact.

Contact has an interesting effect in the case discussed here. I hypothesise that contact with other varieties of Kriol may have indirectly triggered the above-mentioned innovative and typologically unusual treatment of semi-transitive verbs with respect to reciprocals. This scenario represents a case of contact-induced innovation that has rarely (if ever) been reported in the literature, and is therefore of interest for the typology of contact-induced language change (Heine and Kuteva 2005: 124–141).

Section 2 below presents Kriol and the varieties I am concerned with here, as well as the speakers I worked with and the data they provided. Sections 3 to 5 respectively describe the reflexive/reciprocal marker *mijelp*, the reciprocal *gija*, and the expression of reciprocity for intransitive verbs. Section 6 describes the exclusive adverb *miself*, which fulfils the exclusive adverbial emphatic function in today’s Barunga Kriol. After these synchronic descriptions, Section 7 adopts a historical perspective. In 7.1 I explore the interwoven evolution of the reflexive/reciprocal marker *mijelp* and of the reciprocal *gija*, and discuss scenarios and factors for this evolution. In 7.2 I discuss the historical development of the exclusive adverb *miself*.

2 Languages, speakers and data

2.1 Kriol and its varieties

Kriol is an English-based creole spoken by up to 30,000 (mostly Indigenous) people (Lee and Obata 2010) in the central north of Australia. Schultze-Berndt, Meakins, and Angelo (2013) provide an overview of the grammar of Kriol, across varieties. Kriol developed in the Northern Territory in the first half of the twentieth century, on the basis of Northern Territory Pidgin (Koch 2000a). Kriol studies begun in the 1960s, and over the years linguists have distinguished a number of varieties. Towards the east of the Kriol area (i.e. “eastern varieties”, which I am concerned with in this chapter), linguists differentiate between Roper and Barunga Kriol (Harris 1986; Sandefur 1979, 1986; Rhydwen 1995; Ponsonnet 2011, 2012; Dickson 2015). Western varieties include the Fitzroy Valley variety (Hudson 1985) and the variety spoken west of Katherine around Timber Creek, which is commonly referred to as Westside Kriol. This chapter is based mostly on data collected in Beswick, a community 110km to the east of the town of Katherine, near the community of Barunga. The variety labelled “Barunga Kriol” is also spoken in Beswick – as expected given the geographical and social proximity of these communities.

According to Sandefur (1986: 21), Kriol was adopted in the Barunga region towards the end of the first half of the twentieth century, i.e. a few decades later than in the Roper River region. Harris (1986) and Munro (2000, 2004) have argued that Kriol emerged in the Roper River region and diffused towards the west. However, as pointed out by Meakins (2014: 377–379), this has not been demonstrated, and parallel genesis is also a likely possibility. Irrespective of genesis scenarios (which are not in focus in this chapter) there is evidence for influences of Roper Kriol upon the variety spoken in Beswick and Barunga. Some words with non-English etyma used by Beswick speakers are also used in the Roper River region, and are known to have etyma in Australian languages around the Roper region (see Dickson, this volume and Dickson, 2015). Some of these words are rare in Barunga Kriol, and Beswick speakers assert that they come from Roper River.² Whether these influences are past influences resulting from diffusion or more recent influences resulting from contact is a

² Given the permeability of the boundaries between Kriol and substrate languages with respect to lexical features, it is not always possible to ascertain the origin of the words in question. Therefore, the generalised conclusion that they come from the Roper region may also reflect folk ideology. Nevertheless, there are good indications that *some* words used by Beswick speakers have no etymon in either English or local substrates, but have one in a Roper substrate.

question for further research. Borrowing via contact is plausible, since there are social interactions between the Roper River region and Beswick. Some Beswick speakers have family in the Roper River region. Roper speakers sometimes visit Beswick (and reciprocally), and speakers of all varieties can meet in Katherine, the local service town.

The data made available by Greg Dickson and Salome Harris (pers. com. Sep 2014) suggest that synchronically, the Roper and Barunga varieties are alike with respect to the features described in this chapter. Thus, the present description of Barunga features may be valid for Roper Kriol as well. Given the linguistic influences from the Roper River region to Barunga/Beswick, it is possible that these innovations started in the Roper River region and spread to the Barunga region. With respect to these particular innovations, the reverse direction of influence is also plausible. I will leave questions of diffusion aside, because there is not enough published data to tease apart Roper from Barunga Kriol with respect to the features discussed in this chapter. Firstly, there is no precise description of reflexives, reciprocal and emphatic functions in contemporary Roper Kriol (Dickson 2015; Munro 2004; Nicholls 2009). Secondly, it is not possible to know whether Roper and Barunga Kriol differed in the past with respect to reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic functions. The oldest and most detailed description of the eastern varieties, provided by Sandefur (1979), merges Roper and Barunga Kriol. Munro (2004) also offers a description of reflexive and reciprocals for Roper Kriol, and her analysis matches Sandefur's. Another source of historical information is the Summer Institute of Linguistics's translation of the Bible (1991, 2007), where the Roper and Barunga varieties cannot be teased apart either.

2.2 Barunga Kriol, its speakers and their data

Beswick (also known as Wugularr) is a small Aboriginal community (of around 500 inhabitants) located 110km to the east of the service town of Katherine (of around 10,000 inhabitants) via sealed roads. Most people who live at Beswick are Indigenous and Kriol is the main language of daily interaction. English is used with non-Indigenous residents of Beswick at the local school, clinic, supermarket and other service-providing units. The substrate languages³ of Barunga Kriol – mostly Bininj Gun-wok (Mayali on Figure 1), Dalabon, Jawoyn and Rembarrnga – are known by a significant number of older speakers. Some

3 Here “substrate” is used with the sense “local language in use prior to the emergence of creole”. Whether these languages had some influence upon the creole is independent of my labelling them “substrates”.

middle-aged speakers can also speak a traditional language, albeit often not fluently, and some younger ones – e.g. in their mid-twenties – have passive knowledge and can say a few words. Even though many people have some knowledge of traditional languages, actual use remains occasional (usually by elders). Most people at Beswick go to Katherine regularly, mostly to access health and social services, as well as supermarkets. They also have strong ties in neighbouring communities, which they often visit: for instance Barunga (formerly known as Bamiyili), 30km west on the road to Katherine, and Manyallaluk, further west along the same road, as well as Weemol and Bulman, 250km to the east (i.e. away from the town of Katherine) via a dirt road.

The linguistic analyses presented here are based on a ≈15-hour corpus of audio and video recordings, including narratives, comments on stimuli,⁴ as well as semantic and grammatical elicitation (some focused on the features discussed in this chapter). Most of the data I rely on here was collected in 2014 in Beswick, but I also recorded Kriol from a few speakers who live in Weemol, Bulman and Barunga. The age of the speakers ranged from 9 to 80 years old, with very diverse linguistic backgrounds. Table 1 provides some information about the 17 speakers who contributed data for this study. All these speakers were female, except for one young boy. Observations of male speakers suggests that gender differences are irrelevant with respect to reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic functions.

As will be discussed in Section 7, the linguistic items presented in the chapter are evidently undergoing a relatively fast evolution. As a result, my data contains a lot of variation – both intra- and inter-speaker. Two of the speakers I did extensive elicitation with, however, were remarkably consistent with respect to reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic features. One of them even volunteered firm metalinguistic judgments, all of them confirmed by the data within her speech and within several other speakers' speech. Given their linguistic and biographic background, these two speakers can be considered relatively “prototypical” speakers of the type of Kriol spoken in Beswick. †Lily Bennett, born in 1951, lived in Barunga and Weemol, before moving to Beswick in 2001. She lived in Beswick from 2001 until her death in 2014. Ingrid Ashley was born in the mid-1980s and lived in Weemol until 2011, with regular extended visits to her family in Beswick. She has been based in Beswick full time since 2011, expresses her desire to integrate and deploys efforts to achieve integration. The analyses I arrived at based on a significant amount of spontaneous and elicited data from

⁴ Still pictures, small videos designed for elicitation and the Australian movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce 2002). Recordings of speakers commenting on movies contain less Kriol speech, as participants only speak intermittently while the movie is being screened.

Table 1: Participants in the study⁵

| Initials | DOB | Recent Residence | Languages and Literacy | Data Collected |
|-------------|----------|------------------------------|---|---|
| *† LB | 1951 | Beswick | English, Dalabon. Literate. | Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based, elicitation. |
| *IA | c. 1986 | Beswick, Weemol | English. Some literacy skills. | Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based, elicitation |
| #QB | c. 1950 | Barunga, Oenpelli, Katherine | Mayali, English, Dalabon. Literate. Kriol not her most common daily language (self report). | Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based, pure elicitation. |
| *MJ | 1975 | Barunga, Oenpelli, Katherine | Mayali, English, Dalabon. Literate. Kriol not her most common daily language (self report). | Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based. |
| #JJA | 1963 | Weemol, Beswick | English, Dalabon (many borrowings into Kriol). | Narratives, stimuli-based, pure elicitation. |
| *AA | c. 1984 | Beswick, Weemol | English. | Narratives, stimuli-based. |
| ?TM | c. 1985 | Beswick, Weemol. | English. Literate. | Stimuli-based. |
| #MT | c. 1940 | Weemol | Dalabon, Mayali, English. | Narratives, stimuli-based. |
| *ABM | c. 1994 | Beswick | English. Probably literate. | Some stimuli-based and some conversation. |
| *KBM | c. 1992 | Beswick | English. Probably literate. | Some stimuli-based. |
| *JP | c. 1983 | Weemol, Manyallaluk | English. May be literate. | Some stimuli-based. |
| #JBr | c. 1960 | Weemol | English, Dalabon. Literate. | Some lexical elicitation and narratives |
| ?PA | 2001 | Beswick, Weemol | English. | Some narratives and some stimuli-based. |
| ?ND | c. 1945 | Beswick | Dalabon, English. | Participation to stimuli-based sessions. |
| ?JBi (male) | 2005 | Beswick, Weemol | English. | Participation to stimuli-based sessions. |
| #DC | ?c. 1935 | Bulman | Rembarrnga, Dalabon, English. | Some short narratives. |
| ?MJo | ?c. 1945 | Beswick | English. Probably some Dalabon. | Occasional participation to stimuli sessions. |

5 “*”: at least one of the innovative features discussed below (innovative distribution of the reciprocals *mijelp* and *gija* [Sections 3 and 4], segmental distinction between reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and exclusive adverb *miself* [Section 6]) is attested; speakers flagged with “*” are “prototypical” Beswick speakers. “#”: it is attested that at least one of the innovative features discussed below has not been adopted. “?”: the data does not show whether the innovative features discussed below have been adopted. † indicates that the speaker is now deceased.

Lily Bennett and Ingrid Ashley is consistent with the data provided in smaller amounts by other “presumably prototypical” Beswick speakers (for instance ABM and KBM, two young women around 20 years old, who have spent all or most of their lives in Beswick; as well as other speakers marked with “*”). Therefore, I relied on Lily Bennett and Ingrid Ashley’s data to set a “standard” description of the reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic functions in Barunga Kriol, and assessed divergence against this standard. Throughout the chapter, I refer to these two speakers and the other standard Beswick speakers as “prototypical speakers”.

The descriptions based on these prototypical speakers presents variation compared with speakers who live or have spent more time in Weemol, 250km to the east, as well as with older speakers from the Barunga region who have a different linguistic background. These differences suggest that the innovations discussed in the chapter have not (yet) spread from the Barunga/Beswick region towards the more remote Kriol-speaking community of Weemol.

3 The reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp*

Like other varieties of Kriol, Barunga Kriol has a marker which merges reflexive and reciprocal functions: the post-verbal clitic *mijelp*. *Mijelp* comes after the aspectual verb suffixes if there are any (i.e. after *-bat*, as shown in (1)), which is the same slot as object pronouns. While the English etymon, *myself*, agrees with the person and number of its antecedent, *mijelp* is invariable.

- (1) AP haid-im-bat=mijel feis.
 prop.noun hide-TR-CONT=REFL/RECP face
 AP is hiding his face [hiding himself face].
 (20140328d_000_ABM 135 [Stim])

The fully articulated, standard pronunciation is [mijɛlp] or [mijɛlb] but there are variations, which must be considered in order to distinguish the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* from the exclusive adverb *miself* (see Section 6). With *mijelp*, the second consonant is most commonly [j], but also realised as an affricate [tʃ]. It can be realised as [j] or this consonant can be elided, especially by younger speakers ([mijɛl], [mi-ɛl] – not a diphthong but two successive vowels). Older speakers sometimes pronounce this second consonant as [s] (sometimes clearly laminal), but prototypical speakers always have a palatal consonant if there is a consonant. The final stop varies in quality, is rarely released and more

often not pronounced at all ([mijɛl]). The [l] can be dropped as well ([mije]). By contrast with the exclusive adverb *miself*, in *mijelp* the final consonant is never realised as a fricative. Throughout the chapter, I use standard spellings in the prose, but aim at reflecting the actual pronunciations of the items under consideration in the examples.

Example (2) illustrates the reflexive use of *mijelp* in the singular (where the reciprocal reading is not available); example (3) illustrates reflexive use in the plural (where ambiguity is possible in theory, but is usually resolved by context); and (4) illustrates reciprocal use (which is obviously not available with singular participants).

- (2) Ai got la main rum ai dres-im-ap=mijel
 1SG.S get LOC 1SG.POSS room 1SG.S dress-TR-UP=REFL/RECP
 ai-l spreï=mijel komb-ep=mijel
 1SG.S-FUT spray=REFL/RECP comb-UP=REFL/RECP
 ta-im-ap=mijel ai kam-at na.
 tie.up-TR-UP=REFL/RECP 1SG.S come/go-OUT EMPH
 I get into my room, I dress (myself) up, I'll (hair-)spray myself, comb myself, tie up my hair [tie up myself], and I go out then.
 (20140326b_001_IA 77 [ContEl])
- (3) Bat yu luk im sabi dei bin aid-im=mijelp deya.
 but 2SG.S look 3SG.S know 3PL.S PST hide-TR=REFL/RECP DIST.DEM
 But you see, he knows that they're hiding themselves there.
 [Three children had been walking along together, and one is now parting from the others, who keep going by themselves, without the third one.]
 (20140411a_000_LB 068 [RPF])
- (4) Dei bin lib-um=mijal na,
 3PL.S PST leave-TR=REFL/RECP now
 oni tubala miself gone.
 only 3DU.S EXCL gone
 They have left each other now, only these two keep going, by themselves (without the other one). (20140328a_003_LB_ND 018 [RPF])

Evans, Levinson et al. (2011: 20) state that 34% of the world's languages have a construction that merges reflexives and reciprocals (see also Heine and Miyashita 2008: 171). Dixon (1980: 433) states that this is the default situation in Australian

languages. The Barunga Kriol reflexive/reciprocal marker is thus cross-linguistically unsurprising, apparently covering a fairly typical range of nuances in reflexive and reciprocal actions (König and Gast 2008a: 23–26; Dalrymple et al. 1998; Evans, Levinson, et al. 2011: 8–9). The examples above illustrate grooming events (2), which are typically expressed as reflexives across languages (Heine and Miyashita 2008: 212; Kemmer 1993: 16); actions involving the whole self instead of a second participant (in (3): hide something/hide oneself). *Mijelp* covers other events typical of reflexives or middle voice (see Kemmer 1993: 16–20), such (among others) body movement (5), emotions (6).

- (5) Im-in salki igin sidan...
 3SG.S-PST sulky again sit/be
 Tan-im=mijelh⁶ bla sidan en tok-tok-bat.
 turn-TR=REFL/RECP DAT sit/be and talk:RED-CONT
 He was sulky too, he was sitting... He turned himself around to sit and talk (together). (20140328b_000_AA 092 [Stim])

- (6) En dat men im fil-im=miyal sad.
 and ART man 3SG.S feel-TR=REFL/RECP sad
 And the man was feeling sad. (20140328c_003_JBi_PA 091 (JBi) [Stim])

Corresponding to what Kemmer labels “emotion middle” (Kemmer 1993: 18) and “cognition middle” (Kemmer 1993: 19), some Barunga Kriol intransitive verbs denoting emotions or cognitive states also occur with *mijelp*: *sori mijelp* ‘feel sorry’ in (7), *mejin mijelp* ‘imagine’ in (8). These expressions have lexicalized and do not convey any reflexive meaning. Therefore, such constructions are not productive but occur only with a small set of verbs. They will not be considered in the analyses that follow.

- (7) Yu sori=mijelb, longwei dat pesen im go-wei-go-wei.
 2SG.S feel.sorry=REFL/RECP away ART person 3SG.S go-AWAY:RED
 You feel sad, when someone is a long way away.
 (20140408b_005_JJA_MJo 76 (JJA) [El])
- (8) Tubala bin mejin-ing=mijel tu deya.
 3DU.S PST imagine-CONT=REFL/RECP too DIST.DEM
 They (the two) of them were thinking (having ideas, having fantasies)
 too there. (20140407b_000_IA 222 [El])

6 Here the final plosive is a glottal stop (“h” in Kriol).

Mijelp also describes a range of reciprocal events, whether simultaneous reciprocity (as in (4) above) or some more complicated combinations, for instance successive reciprocity in (9), and some other reciprocal combinations (König and Gast 2008a: 23–26; Dalrymple et al. 1998; Majid et al. 2011; Evans, Levinson, et al. 2011: 8–9).

- (9) Bat wei bedam dei gib-it-bat ebrithing,
 but RLTVZR before 3PL.S give-TR-CONT everything
 en wen im gib-it, tubala gib-it=mijel ebrithing.
 and when 3SG.S give-TR 3DU.S give-TR=REFL/RECP everything
 But when they keep giving all sorts of things to each other, and when he gives [to this person], these two give everything to each other [give things to each other all the time]. (20140326b_002_IA 026 [EI])

Thus, *mijelp* covers a broad semantic spectrum within both the reflexive and the reciprocal domains. On the other hand, the distribution of *mijelp* is restricted because it does not occur with all verbs, but only with verbs that admit a direct object, i.e. transitive and ditransitive verbs. Intransitive verbs do not enter in reciprocal constructions with *mijelp* (although they occur with some intransitive verbs, in the lexicalized expressions illustrated by (7) and (8) above).

The behaviour of verbs other than transitive and ditransitive in reciprocal constructions is discussed in Sections 4 and 5. Further examples of verbs entering *mijelp* constructions (reflexive and reciprocal), all transitive or ditransitive, are provided in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Some verbs found in *mijelp* reflexive constructions

| Standard transitive construction | Construction with reflexive <i>mijelp</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>ardim im</i> ‘hurt him/her’ | <i>ardim mijelp</i> ‘hurt oneself’ |
| <i>filim im</i> ‘feel him/her’ | <i>filim mijelp</i> ‘feel’ (e.g. feel drunk, tired...) |
| <i>haidim im</i> ‘hide him/her’ | <i>haidim mijelp</i> ‘hide oneself’ |
| <i>kaberimap im</i> ‘cover him/her’ | <i>kaberimap mijelp</i> (+ body-part) ‘cover oneself (one’s body-part)’ e.g. <i>kaberim mijelp feis</i> ‘cover one’s face’ |
| <i>killim im</i> ‘hurt/kill him/her’ | <i>killim mijelp</i> ‘kill/hit oneself’ |
| <i>meikim im</i> + nominal ‘make him/her’ + nominal | <i>meikim mijelp</i> + nominal ‘make oneself’ + nominal e.g. <i>meikim mijelp sik</i> ‘make oneself sick’ |
| <i>shoum im</i> ‘show it’ (ditransitive) | <i>shoum mijelp</i> ‘show oneself’ |

Table 3: Some verbs found in *mijelp* reciprocal constructions

| Standard transitive construction | Construction with reciprocal <i>mijelp</i> |
|--|---|
| <i>alpum im</i> ‘help him/her’ | <i>alpum mijelp</i> ‘help each other’ |
| <i>dijim im</i> ‘tease/harass him/her’ | <i>dijim mijelp</i> ‘tease/harass each other’ |
| <i>gibit im</i> ‘give to him/her’ (ditransitive) | <i>gibit mijelp</i> ‘give to each other’ |
| <i>graul im</i> ‘scold him/her’ | <i>graul mijelp</i> ‘argue with each other’ |
| <i>kilim im</i> ‘hit/kill him/her’ | <i>kilim mijelp</i> ‘hit/kill each other’ |
| <i>libum im</i> ‘leave him/her’ | <i>libum mijelp</i> ‘leave each other’ |
| <i>luk im</i> ‘see him/her’ | <i>luk mijelp</i> ‘see each other’ |
| <i>olim im</i> ‘hug him/her’ | <i>olim mijelp</i> ‘hug each other’ |
| <i>upahupa im</i> ‘kiss him/her’ | <i>upahupa mijelp</i> ‘kiss each other’ |

4 The reciprocal *gija*

In addition to the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp*, Barunga Kriol uses two other markers to encode reciprocity: the post-verbal and post-adjectival particle *gija* and the nominal enclitic *gija* (<Eng. *together*). These markers do not encode reflexivity. Like *mijelp*, *gija* is invariable: it does not agree with participants in person and number. Their standard (and relatively stable) common pronunciation is [gɪjẽ]. There are some rare realisations as [geðe], closer to the English etymon.

Mijelp and *gija* display complementary distribution in the speech of prototypical Beswick speakers. While these speakers only use *mijelp* with verbs that attract a direct object, i.e. transitive and ditransitive verbs, *gija* occurs with other predicates, i.e. verbs admitting an oblique argument, and non-verbal predicates. Each case is described in detail in the following subsections. I first discuss verbs admitting an oblique argument (involved in the reciprocal event), introduced by the locative preposition *na/la* or *nanga/langa*.⁷ I then discuss three types of non-verbal predicate: 1) adjectives admitting an oblique argument introduced by the locative preposition *na*; 2) numerals; and 3) nouns with reciprocal meaning – typically kin terms, but also other reciprocal terms.

⁷ The first pair is the contracted version of the second pair. These prepositions are realised either with an initial lateral or with an initial nasal, depending on speakers. The nasal realisation is generalising: few younger speakers use the lateral variants. My spelling in the prose reflects the generalising pattern, but I reproduce actual realisations in examples.

4.1 Verbs with oblique arguments introduced by a locative preposition

When used with verbs, *gija* occupies the same slot as *mijelp* and object pronouns, immediately following aspectual markers. However, while *mijelp* is a clitic that does not bear primary stress (normally falling on the first syllable of each word), the post-verbal particle *gija* does bear primary stress and is thus better considered an autonomous word.

Gija is found with semi-transitive verbs, i.e. verbs that, in non-reciprocal constructions, allow for a participant (corresponding to the one involved in the reciprocal event) introduced by the locative preposition *na*. That is, this participant is treated as an oblique rather than direct object. Within the context of this chapter, it will be convenient to refer to these verbs admitting oblique objects as “semi-transitive verbs”, contrasting with “strictly transitive” verbs, i.e. verbs that admit a direct object (including ditransitive verbs). For prototypical Beswick speakers, *gija* and *mijelp* do not alternate freely. *Mijelp* cannot be used with verbs that do not allow for oblique arguments; reciprocally, *gija* cannot be used when the arguments involved in the reciprocal event are direct objects (transitive or ditransitive verbs). It does not occur either when the participant involved in the reciprocal event is encoded as an adjunct rather than an argument (see Section 5). A few verbs, like *talim* ‘tell’, admit either ditransitive subcategorization (two direct objects: *ai bin talimbat yu dat stori* ‘I told you this story’) or transitive subcategorization with an animate oblique argument, typically the one involved in reciprocal events (*im talim la dat munanga...* ‘he says to this white person...’). Such verbs afford either *mijelp* or *gija* reciprocal constructions, reflecting the distinct argument mapping. With *talim* ‘tell’, *mijelp* is more frequent, matching the frequency of the ditransitive subcategorization for this verb.

Examples (10) and (11) illustrate the use of *gija* for reciprocal constructions with semi-transitive verbs, with both dual (10) and plural (11) subjects. In example (10), the semi-transitive verb *teneran* ‘turn around’ denotes a posture. *Gija* is also found with verbs of posture or position expressing proximity, such as *sidan gija* ‘be with each other’. This matches the English etymology (<*together*), and suggests bridging contexts between co-participation (or co-presence, see Creissels and Nougier-Voisin 2008; Lichtenberk 2000), expressed by *together*, and reciprocity. On the other hand, example (10) shows that *gija* also occurs with posture verbs where ‘together’ is not an adequate translation (see also example (14) in 4.2, *longwei gija* ‘a long way from each other’ where co-participation hardly applies at all). In these contexts, *gija* no longer expresses co-participation, but reciprocity only.

- (10) (a) Dat gel bin ten-eran na nena Maia.
 ART girl PST turn-AROUND LOC grandmother prop.noun
 The girl has turned [herself] towards grandma Maia.
 (20140328c_004_AA_IA 156 (JBi) [Stim])
- (b) Abte den tubala bin ten-eran gija.
 after then 3DU.S PST turn-AROUND RECP
 And then after, these two turned around towards each other.
 (20140328c_004_AA_IA 043 [Stim])

Example (11) illustrates the use of *gija* with verbs of social interaction: *tok* ‘talk’, which is probably the verb with the highest occurrence of *gija* constructions. This might reflect the etymology of *gija*, since *talk together* is grammatical in English. This suggests another bridging context where the etymon *together*, expressing co-participation, may have been reinterpreted as a reciprocal marker. This applies to several other social activities expressed with *gija*, for instance *laf gija* ‘laugh together’.

- (11) (a) Madi im don wande tok
 maybe 3SG.S NEG want talk
 la im asbin o enithing.
 LOC 3SG.POSS husband or anything
 Maybe she doesn’t want to talk to her husband or anything.
 (20140327b_000_KBM_ABM 143 (KBM) [Stim])
- (b) Dat mob darrei, dei bin tok gija bla samding.
 ART group DEM.DIST 3PL.S PST talk RECP DAT something
 These people there, they talked together about something
 [they talked with each other about something].
 (20140408a_002_LB 85 [El])

Example (12) nicely illustrates the respective distributions of *mijelp* (with *luk* ‘look’) and *gija* (with *sei sori* ‘say sorry’). Further examples of verbs attracting *gija* are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Some verbs found in *gija* reciprocal constructions (non-exhaustive list)

| Standard semi-transitive construction | Construction with reciprocal <i>gija</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>agyu na im</i> ‘argue with him/her’ | <i>agyu gija</i> ‘argue with each other’ |
| <i>fait na im</i> ‘fight with him/her’ | <i>fait gija</i> ‘fight with each other’ |
| <i>laf na im</i> ‘laugh with him/her’ | <i>laf gija</i> ‘laugh with each other’ |
| <i>polojais na im</i> ‘apologise to him/her’ | <i>polojais gija</i> ‘apologise to each other’ |
| <i>sher na im</i> ‘share with him/her’ | <i>sher gija</i> ‘share with each other’ |
| <i>sidan na im</i> ‘be with someone’ | <i>sidan gija</i> ‘be with each other’ |
| <i>smail na im</i> ‘smile to him/her’ | <i>smail gija</i> ‘smile to each other’ |
| <i>teneran na im</i> ‘turn around towards him/her’ | <i>teneran gija</i> ‘turn towards each other’ |
| <i>tok na im</i> ‘talk to him/her’ | <i>tok gija</i> ‘talk to/with each other’ |

- (12) Laik minbala bin luk=mijal
 CONJ 1DU.EXCL.S PST look=REFL/RECP
 en minbala bin sei sori gija.
 and 1DU.EXCL.S PST apologise RECP

Like, we (two) looked at each other and we (two) said sorry to each other.
 (20140326b_001_IA 57 [ContEl])

4.2 Adjectives and numerals

The same autonomous word *gija* is also found in verbless clauses with non-verbal predicates such as adjectives and numerals. Some adjectival predicates admit an oblique argument introduced by the locative preposition *na*. This is the case with a number of emotional adjectives, for instance *salki* ‘sulky’, *hapi* ‘happy, pleased’, *gudbinji* ‘happy, pleased, in a good mood’ (<Eng. *good* and <Sydney language *binji* ‘stomach’, [Harris 1986: 287; Nash 2010: 171; Meakins 2014]), where the oblique argument is the stimulus of emotion, and/or the person to which the emotion is “addressed”, so to say (with sulking for instance). Adding *gija* indicates that the state is reciprocal.

- (13) (a) Im-in apset, im-in salki na Maïa.
 3SG.S-PST upset 3SG.S-PST sulky LOC prop.noun
 She got upset, she was sulky with Maïa.
 (20140328c_004_AA_IA 088 [Stim])

- (b) Yinbala salki gija.
 2DU sulky RECP
 You two are sulky with each other. (20140408a_002_LB 31 [Stim])

Some adjectives that describe reciprocal relations in space also occurred in predicative constructions with *gija*, although their adjuncts are not necessarily introduced by locative prepositions. *Longwei* (14) is found with the allative *from*, and *mijimet* (15) with the comitative *garra*.

- (14) Tubala longwei gija.
 3DU away RECP
 They (two) are sitting away from each other.
 (20140328b_000_AA 013 [Stim])

- (15) Tubala mijimet gija.
 3DU together RECP
 They (two) are together.
 Lit.: They're together with each other.
 (20140408b_003_JJA_M]o 064 (JJA) [Stim])

Finally, there is one occurrence in my corpus of *gija* used with a numeral: *thribala gija*, used as a presentative expression when describing a photo showing three persons sitting together. Gaby (2008: 263) reports a comparable “group” use for a reciprocal in Kuuk Thaayorre (Paman, Cape York Peninsula, Australia).

4.3 Nouns with reciprocal meanings

A similar segmental form, *gija*, is also found after nouns with relational semantics. In this position, however, *gija* does not bear primary stress: it is an enclitic rather than an autonomous word. The nouns are often kin terms (*sista* ‘sister’ (16), *kajin* ‘cousin’, (17)) or kin-related (*femili* ‘family’ (18)). Such expressions can be used referentially ((16), and presentative use in (17)) or predicatively (18, 19). It applies to pairs of persons (16, 19) or to larger groups (17, 18). Other relational nouns, i.e. nouns implying a relation with another term or person, can also be followed by *gija*. These nouns often have positive connotations, for instance *kantrimen gija* ‘countrymen for each other’ (19), but *gija* also occurs with nouns implying a negative relationship, for instance *enimi gija* ‘enemies’.

- (16) Tu sista=gija.
 two sister=RECP
 Two sisters. (20140408b_002_M]o 34 [El])
 [Presented with a photo showing three cousins sitting around together.]
- (17) Thrii kasin=gija.
 three cousin=RECP
 [Here are] three cousins. (20140405a_004_NC 050 [Stim])
- (18) Mela on femili=gija lakijat.
 1PL.EXCL own family=RECP CONJ
 We are proper relatives for each other [family-together], you see.
 (20140326b_IA 22 [ContEl])

(19) Tubala kantrimen=gija.

3DU countryman=RECP

They (two) are countrymen. (20140406a_001_MJ 084 [Stim])

Koch (2000b: 43–45) mentions a suffix with comparable use in Central Australian Aboriginal English, and points out a resemblance to a suffix found in the Kaytetye language (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia). A comparable dyadic suffix is also found in Barunga Kriol substrates, albeit with important differences, notably the fact that *gija* can apply to more than two referents, as in example (17).

5 Other reciprocal events

Section 3 showed that *mijelp* encodes reciprocity for “strictly transitive” verbs, i.e. verbs that admit a direct object (including ditransitive verbs). *Gija*, on the other hand, encodes reciprocity for verbs labelled “semi-transitive”, i.e. intransitive verbs which admit an oblique argument (Section 4). As mentioned earlier, strictly intransitive verbs, that do not receive either direct object or oblique arguments corresponding to the participants of reciprocal events, cannot take part in *mijelp* or *gija* constructions. The semantics of some of these intransitive verbs may nevertheless allow for some reciprocal situations, or at least relatively mutual co-participation (Creissels and Nougier-Voisin 2008; Lichtenberk 2000). This is typically the case of verbs allowing an adjunct introduced by the comitative preposition *garra* ‘with’, like *plei* ‘play’, *bogi* ‘have a bath, swim’. With these verbs, events involving reciprocity/co-participation were consistently described using reduplication (which usually has a continuative value with verbs in Barunga Kriol), combined with the continuative suffix *-bat*. This occurred in spontaneous sentences or when correcting my own suggestions featuring *mijelp* or *gija*, as in (20). The second sentence in (20) indicates that such [reduplication +*bat*] constructions can be used when the event is not reciprocal.⁸ Thus, the reciprocity or co-participation senses are more probably pragmatically inferred than conventionally implied. In any case, speakers used [reduplication+*bat*] consistently in such contexts.⁹

⁸ Note that in the first clause of (20), *-bat* is reduplicated together with the verb root, while the most common pattern of reduplication (instantiated in the second clause) gives *pleipleibat*. However, there is no simple correlation between the alternative pattern in the first clause of (20) and reciprocity, since in my corpus, both reduplication patterns occur when reciprocity is not at stake.

⁹ The conceptual path could for instance line up as follows: continuative/progressive → iterative → distributive → reciprocal (see for instance François 2007; Burenhult 2011: 164).

(20) Tubala plei-bat-plei-bat.

3DU.S play-CONT:RED

[...] Im-in digol-digol-bat la im.

3SG.S-PST tickle:RED-CONT LOC 3SG

They (two) are playing [together]. [...] He was tickling her.

(20140408b_003_JJA_MJo 026 (JJA) [Stim])\

* *tubala pleiplei mijelp*

* *tubala pleiplei gija*



Figure 1: Picture used in elicitation. (Photo: Maia Ponsonnet.)

5.1 A typologically rare three-way partition

Thus, in the speech of prototypical speakers of Barunga Kriol, the distribution of the reciprocal markers *mijelp* and *gija* highlights a distinction between three classes of verbs: strictly transitive verbs (including ditransitive) (*mijelp*),¹⁰ semi-transitive verbs (*gija*), and strictly intransitive verbs (neither *mijelp* nor *gija*). Table 5 in 7.1.2 offers a synthetic representation of these distinctions.

This partition of reciprocal markers is cross-linguistically unusual. Many languages across the world distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs with respect to reciprocity. Indeed, as discussed by Gast and Haas (2008), in Germanic, Romance and Scandinavian languages, the pronouns that are ambiguous between reflexive and reciprocal with transitive verbs do not allow

¹⁰ Here I define transitivity as the ability to take a direct object. Under this definition, ditransitive verbs are a subset of transitive verbs.

reciprocal readings with prepositional phrases: another pronoun must be used instead. Thus in French, the reflexive/reciprocal pronouns (*se* etc.) cannot be used in intransitive reciprocal constructions. Instead, in constructions with *l'un l'autre* (literally ‘the one the other’) the appropriate preposition must be used: *aller l'un vers l'autre* ‘go towards each other’, *être utile l'un à l'autre* ‘be useful to each other’, etc. (see Evans 2008: 46; Guentchéva and Rivière 2007). In French, as in the families quoted above, the split occurs between transitive verbs and all intransitive verbs – hence a simple transitive/ intransitive two-way partition (see also Nedjalkov 2007a).¹¹ Languages displaying distinct encoding of reciprocity depending on the direct/oblique status of a second argument, resulting in a strictly transitive vs semi-transitive split and a three-way partition of reciprocal constructions, are far less frequent. If they exist at all, they are marginal enough that several authors discussing the typology of reciprocals, such as Nedjalkov (2007a), Evans (2008), and Evans, Levinson et al. (2011), do not mention them. I haven’t been able to find an example comparable to the Barunga Kriol three-way split across the typological volumes either (Evans, Gaby, et al. 2011; Nedjalkov 2007b; König and Gast 2008b). Therefore, the existence of such a three-way split in the encoding of reciprocity based on transitivity is a remarkable feature of Barunga Kriol.

6 The exclusive adverb *miself*

It is not uncommon for reflexive and emphatic markers to share the same form. As reported by König and Siemund (2000: 43–50), this is the case in “a wide variety of languages”, with differentiation between these categories being “more the exception than the rule”. Relevant to the present discussion, reflexive and emphatic pronouns are identical in English. Furthermore, English emphatic pronouns also merge several functions: König and Siemund (2000: 44) distinguish three functions for these pronouns. In the *exclusive adverbial* function, they roughly mean ‘do x alone’. In the *inclusive adverbial* function, they mean ‘do x as well’. In the *adnominal* function, they have a focus role. Thus, in English, the same pronominal forms have four functions: a reflexive function and three emphatic functions.

¹¹ The two-way division between transitive and intransitive verbs is reported to play some role in the encoding of reciprocity in other languages as well – for instance Japanese (Alpatov and Nedjalkov 2007), Indonesian (Ogloblin and Nedjalkov 2007: 1442–1443) or North-Arawak languages (Aikhenvald 2007).

In Barunga Kriol some of these functions split between words that derive etymologically from English reflexive/emphatic pronouns, but now have distinct forms. For prototypical speakers of Barunga Kriol, the reflexive/reciprocal marker is *mijelp*, while the exclusive adverbial emphatic function is fulfilled by the adverb *miself*, which I will call “exclusive adverb” in order to highlight its functional and etymological relation to emphatic markers. The segmental forms of *mijelp* and *miself* differ although they evidently share the same etymology (<Eng. *myself*, pronounced [miself] in non-standard English in the nineteenth century Australian pastoral industry, see Munro [2004: 95]). A much rarer form, *imself* (<Eng. *himself*)¹² is used in all the three emphatic functions, and may be in the course of narrowing towards the inclusive adverbial and adnominal emphatic functions (i.e. the functions not fulfilled by the exclusive adverb *miself*). Due to the lack of space and of extensive data on *imself*, I will not discuss it any further here. Instead, I focus on the contrast between the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the exclusive adverb *miself*.

The standard pronunciation of the adverb *miself* by prototypical Beswick speakers is [miself]. The second consonant is normally a clear [s]. As is common between vowels (e.g. *lisin* ‘listen’, *pesen* ‘person’), this [s] varies little. In initial position, for instance, [s] and [ʃ] tend to alternate freely. Thus, *sidan* ‘sit/be’ (<Eng. *sit down*) can be [sidan] or [ʃidan] – here [s] and [ʃ] are allophones of a single phoneme. With *miself*, prototypical Beswick speakers never realise the second consonant as a palatal fricative (i.e. not [mijelf] nor [mijʃelf]). The final fricative is commonly dropped, especially by younger speakers, so that [misel] is also a fairly standard realisation. Some older speakers occasionally had a final stop [miselb]. Since the reflexive *mijelp* is more often realised without a final stop ([mijel]), *miself* and *mijelp* come very near to a minimal pair contrasting a stable alveolar fricative on the one hand, and a palatal fricative along with its allophones (free variations) on the other hand.

Synchronically, *miself* is better analysed as an adverb meaning ‘do x alone’. It is an invariable autonomous word bearing primary stress – unlike the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp*, which is an enclitic. *Miself* often occurs just after the verb (21), but variations are possible. *Miself* also occurs after a pronoun referring to the subject of the clause, rather than after the verb (22). *Miself* can be reduplicated, with the sense ‘each one on their own’. Reduplication was sometimes used for disambiguation purposes by non-prototypical speakers who have not acquired a clear segmental distinction between the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the adverb *miself* (see 7.3).

¹² In the *Holi Baibul*, *yuselp* (<Eng. *yourself*) occurs as well, but it does not in my corpus.

- (21) So im sidan misel en krai.
 CONJ 3SG.S sit/be EXCL and cry
 So she sits around by herself and cries.
 (20140327b_000_KBM_ABM 119 (KBM) [Stim])
- (22) Olebat misel dei bin tok gija.
 3PL EXCL 3PL.S PST talk RECP
 They talked together, by themselves [i.e. between themselves but
 excluding another person]. (20140408a_LB 15 [EI])
- (23) Dijan tubala slip-bat miself-miself.
 DEM 3DU.S sleep-CONT EXCL:RED
 On this one [this picture], they (two) are sleeping apart [not together
 touching each other]. (20140412_003_QB 109 [Stim])

7 History and comparison

The analyses presented above reflect my observations with prototypical speakers of Barunga Kriol. Other speakers illustrate rich intra- and inter-speaker variation, indicative of the recent and rapid evolution of the linguistic features under discussion. There are descriptions of Kriol at different points in time, namely Sandefur (1979) for the Roper and Barunga varieties, and Munro (2004) for the Roper variety, as well as data from the Kriol translation of the Bible. Based on these data, combined with inter-speaker variation, it is possible to reconstruct the main lines of evolution leading to the current features of reflexive and reciprocal markers and etymologically related exclusive adverb in Barunga Kriol.

Overall, these markers have evolved towards greater differentiation. They have developed new distinctions, sharpened previously existing ones, and moved further away from their English etyma. Below, I discuss the two main innovations and formulate hypotheses regarding their motivations. I will not be concerned with the factors constraining the language at the time of genesis (for instance the reasons why eastern varieties of Kriol had two markers, *gija* and *mijelp*, in the first place), but with factors channelling language change several decades after genesis. Section 7.1 discusses the co-relative evolutions of the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and reciprocal *gija*. Section 7.2 discusses the sharpening of the reflexive vs. exclusive adverb distinction.

7.1 Reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and reciprocal *gija*: Historical development

As explained in Sections 3 and 4, the reciprocals *mijelp* and *gija* are in complementary distribution: *mijelp* occurs with strictly transitive verbs, and *gija* with semi-transitive verbs, as illustrated in Table 5 below (7.1.2). This distinction is typologically unusual. To my knowledge, it is not reported in Australian languages other than Barunga Kriol and, possibly, in Roper Kriol (Harris and Dickson, pers. com. Sep/Oct 2014).¹³ This raises the question of how and why such a distinction emerged. In this section, I present some historical elements about *mijelp* and *gija* and discuss possible motivations for this distinctive distribution.

Earlier publications on Kriol indicate that the restriction of *gija* to semi-transitive verbs is a relatively recent innovation in Barunga and Roper Kriol (as explained above, I will not try to tease these two eastern varieties apart here). Sandefur (1979: 91–93) states that in Barunga and Roper Kriol¹⁴, *mijelp*¹⁵ occurred solely in reflexive constructions, and *gija* was the only reciprocal – that is, their distribution reflected a functional split, while their more recent distribution reflects a selectional split (transitive/semi-transitive). Supporting Sandefur’s analysis, in one of his examples, *gija* occurs with the transitive verb *kilim* ‘hit, kill’, where *mijelp* would be expected in today’s Barunga Kriol.¹⁶ Munro’s (2004: 91–97) analysis of reflexives and reciprocal in Roper Kriol matches Sandefur’s.¹⁷ Although Sandefur worked mostly in the Roper region, the mismatch between his description and mine does probably not reflect a varietal difference, but rather a recent development.

This is supported by occurrences of *mijelp*¹⁸ and *gija* in the Kriol *Holi Baibul*, where they display “mixed” behaviours, in between Sandefur’s (1979) functional reflexive/ reciprocal split and the contemporary selectional split. Some sections

¹³ For analyses of Australian reciprocal constructions, see for instance Gaby (2008, 2011), McGregor (2000), Tsunoda (2007a, 2007b).

¹⁴ Sandefur refers to the Ngukurr-Bamiyili dialects together.

¹⁵ Spelt *mijelb* in Sandefur’s orthography.

¹⁶ Given the depth and quality of Sandefur’s work, the actual examples he provides, the data from the *Holi Baibul*, and the variation patterns I observed among older consultants, there is no reason to cast doubts upon the validity of Sandefur’s analysis.

¹⁷ More recent observations from Greg Dickson and Salome Harris (pers. com. Sep 2014), and data from the Kriol *Holi Baibul* suggest that in the mid-2000s, the situation had already evolved as compared to Sandefur’s description. Munro’s (2004) account will be left aside from the historical discussion.

¹⁸ Spelt *miselp* in the *Holi Baibul*, where this form occurs in reflexive and reciprocal functions as well as in emphatic functions.

of the Bible were published in 1991, and supplements appeared in 2007. *Miselp* is mostly used in reflexive functions, but sometimes also as a reciprocal, including in sections published in 1991 such as (24). According to Sandefur (1979), the reciprocal usage of *mijelp* was not acceptable at an earlier stage, but these occurrences suggest that this had already evolve in 1991. At the same time, *gija* is used mostly with verbs admitting oblique objects, but also (rarely) with strictly transitive verbs, such as *tatjim* ‘touch’ in (25) – which is not acceptable for today’s prototypical speakers of Barunga Kriol.¹⁹

- (24) Wen dubala bin luk miselp,
 when 3DU.S PST look REFL/RECP
 Heiga bin gib-it neim langa God.
 prop.noun PST give-TR name LOC god
 When they saw each other, Hagar gave God his name.
 (Holi Baibul, Old Testament, 1991, original orthography)

- (25) [...] dubala wing bin spread-at
 3DU.S wing PST spread-OUT
 en tatj-im gija langa midul [...]
 and touch-TR RECP LOC middle
 [...] the two wings spread up, and touch each other in the middle [...]
 (Holi Baibul, Old Testament, Seken Kranakuls 2007, original orthography)

Contemporary variation between speakers confirms the changing nature of the distribution of *mijelp* and *gija*. The restriction of *gija* to verbs with oblique arguments has not yet stabilised for all speakers in the Beswick/Barunga region. One Kriol consultant lives in Barunga part-time and also spends time in Oenpelli/Gunbalanya, where she speaks Bininj Gun-wok (a substrate of Barunga Kriol). She reports using Bininj Gun-wok more than Kriol on a daily basis. In her speech, and in elicitation sessions, she used *gija* with some transitive verbs, for instance *dijim* ‘tease’, for which prototypical Barunga speakers use *mijelp*. On the other hand, for some transitive verbs, like *libum* ‘leave’, she rejected *libum gija* and only accepted *libum mijelp* for ‘(spouse) leave each other’. This suggests

¹⁹ Since speakers of different dialects were involved in the translation, one may suspect that the reciprocal occurrences of *miselp* were contributed by speakers of the Barunga variety, and occurrences of *gija* with transitive verbs by speakers of the Roper variety. However, this is very unlikely, since I found instances of these two usages within one single short section (i.e. translated/revised by the same speaker(s), Margaret Michkan pers. com. Oct 2014).

an on-going process of change where some lexical items attract the new form while others still allow for some variation.

7.2 Reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and reciprocal *gija*: Explaining new patterns

The linguistic innovation under consideration consists of two interconnected changes. On the one hand, *mijelp* has broadened to cover a new function, that of reciprocal constructions for transitive verbs. On the other hand, *gija* has contracted to cover reciprocity of verbs with oblique arguments only, excluding reciprocal constructions with transitive verbs. Barunga Kriol has thus innovated a three-way contrast for reciprocal events, reflecting three categories of verbs (strictly transitive, semi-transitive, strictly intransitive). The realignment of Barunga Kriol reflexives and reciprocals is summarised in Table 5, which also includes the alignment observed in western varieties of Kriol discussed in the following subsections. The following sections provide hypotheses with respect to the motivations for each step of the realignment.

Table 5: Realignment of reflexive and reciprocal categories

| | Reflexives | Recip: Transitive | Recip: Semi-Transitive | Recip: Intransitive |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Former Alignment (functional) | <i>mijelp</i> | <i>gija</i> | | ? |
| New Alignment (selectional and functional) | <i>mijelp</i> | | <i>gija</i> | ?redup+bat |
| Western Varieties (see below) | <i>jelp/mijelp</i> | | | ?jelp/mijelp |

7.2.1 Extension of *mijelp* to reciprocals: contact and substrate reinforcement

Several possible factors may have triggered the extension of *mijelp* to reciprocal events. One factor is contact with other varieties of Kriol; the other is substrate reinforcement. These factors are not mutually exclusive and are probably inter-related. Ultimately, both factors highlight the influence of traditional Australian languages on Barunga Kriol: not only the influence of local substrates, but also the influence of more distant Australian languages (i.e. substrates of other varieties, via contacts with these varieties).

Unlike the Roper and Barunga varieties in the east of the Kriol area, western varieties use one single marker (cognate with Barunga Kriol *mijelp*) to encode both reflexives and reciprocals.²⁰ This is not surprising, given that a significant proportion of Australian languages merge reflexives and reciprocals (Dixon 1980: 433). The realignment of *mijelp* in Barunga Kriol and other eastern varieties may be the result of contact with western varieties. Indeed, speakers of western and eastern varieties interact with each other in the township of Katherine, where they share public spaces as well as some facilities such as the hospital, the Aboriginal cooperative hostel, the women's centre, the language centre, etc.

In addition, it is not impossible that substrate influence also played a role in the change under consideration. This change appears to have taken place, or at least become complete, within the last decade (in fact the evolution is not yet complete). While the influence of substrate languages was certainly not as strong in the 2000s as it may have been in earlier decades, I argue that it may still apply. For instance, I have observed some influence of Dalabon with a middle-aged Barunga speaker whose knowledge of this substrate language is relatively partial. While she rarely expresses herself in Dalabon only, she punctuates her speech with Dalabon words where a lexical category is missing in Kriol or for stylistic effects, and with occasional Dalabon sentences, also for stylistic effect (making the segment expressive or emphatic). These discourse practices demonstrate that even for semi-speakers of substrate languages, these second languages can enjoy a relatively prominent status. In addition, such discourse practices imply that younger generations, for instance the children of this particular speaker (who were born in the 1980s and retain some passive knowledge of Dalabon), are still exposed to some features of the substrates, loaded with emphasis and expressive weight. For these reasons, it is not impossible that substrate reinforcement has played a role in the recent changes described in this chapter.

All the known substrates of Barunga Kriol (Bininj Gun-wok, Dalabon, Jawoyn and Rembarrnga²¹), and three out of four substrates of Roper Kriol (Alawa, Ngalakgan and Marra, but not Nunggubuyu, see Munro [2004: 91]), merge the

²⁰ See Schultze-Berndt, Meakins and Angelo (2013: 5.1), and for specific varieties: Hudson (1985: 114–124) for Fitzroy Valley Kriol (*jelp*), Meakins (2011: 45) for Gurindji Kriol which is a mixed language with a large component deriving from Kriol (*mijelp*). Given the date of Hudson's data, and the absence of cognates of *gija* in western varieties, it is not plausible that these varieties previously had the same reflexive/reciprocal pattern as contemporary Barunga Kriol, but then evolved in the same direction as Barunga Kriol. Rather, they most probably always had just one marker (cognate with *mijelp*) covering the reflexive and the reciprocal functions.

²¹ See Evans (2003: 438) for Bininj Gun-wok, Evans and Merlan (2003: 272) for Dalabon, McKay (1975: 154) and Saulwick (2003b) for Rembarrnga, Merlan and Jacq (2005) for Jawoyn.

reflexive and reciprocal functions. Munro (2004: 55–56) analyses the Roper Kriol markers *mijelp* and *gija* as a strict reflexive and a strict reciprocal respectively (i.e. the older pattern, following Sandefur [1979]), and states that this distinction is unexpected (see also Siegel 2008: 230–231). Given the patterns observed in the substrates, one would predict that Kriol should merge these markers – some other morphosyntactic features do transfer under these conditions (see also Munro 2011).

Indeed, the split between reflexive and reciprocal functions did not persist, and it seems plausible that late substrate influence may have facilitated the extension of *mijelp* to cover the reciprocal function. This is a case of what Siegel (1998, 2008: Chap 7) calls substrate reinforcement. According to Siegel, when a given creole offers several options for expressing the same concept, creole speakers who know one or several substrate languages select the form that is closer to these substrates. As a result, this substrate-like form stabilises as the standard form. A comparable process of substrate reinforcement probably facilitated the adoption of *mijelp* as a reciprocal as well as a reflexive, when this usage was suggested by contact with western varieties. Such a late reinforcement is plausible, since many Barunga Kriol speakers still have some knowledge (sometimes passive) of substrate languages, and are still exposed to these languages.

Therefore, it is likely that both contact with neighbouring varieties and substrate reinforcement favoured the extension of *mijelp* to the reciprocal function. In this process, Barunga Kriol was influenced not only by its own substrate languages, but also by a broader array of Australian languages, via contact with other varieties. The scope of possible Australian influences is thus pan-regional, encompassing the substrates of all varieties.

7.2.2 Restriction of *gija* to semi-transitive reciprocals: contact-induced innovation?

While there are relatively obvious candidate factors for the extension of *mijelp* to the reciprocal function, the restriction of *gija* to semi-transitive reciprocals is harder to explain. As pointed out in 5.1, few languages differentiate strictly transitive from semi-transitive verbs with respect to reciprocity. Therefore, universal processes (which according to Bickerton [1977, 1984] or Mufwene [2008], for instance, play a significant role in creole formation) and spontaneous language change cannot be invoked. Contact with other Kriol varieties cannot explain the phenomenon either. In western varieties, cognates of *mijelp* are reported to occur in semi-transitive as well as transitive reciprocals, and *gija* does not occur

(at least not with verbs, but see Koch [2000b: 43–45] and 4.3).²² Superstrate influence can also be ruled out, since English uses *each other* to encode reciprocity for all verbs. Substrate reinforcement cannot have been a *direct* factor either: none of the languages which may have influenced Roper and Barunga Kriol in the last decades are known to distinguish between strictly/semi-transitive verbs in reciprocal constructions. However, I will show that *indirect* substrate influence may have played a role. Ultimately, the restriction of *gija* to semi-transitive verbs can be seen as a secondary effect of a prior, contact-induced extension of *mijelp* to the reciprocal function, possibly aided by some kind of indirect substrate reinforcement.

This innovation may be contact induced. With *mijelp* broadening to reciprocals, *gija* became redundant in this function. The two items thus became free to realign following a new criterion, so as to become complementary again, albeit in a different way. In this scenario of contact-induced innovation, the new distribution of *mijelp* and *gija* results indirectly from contact with another variety, but no material at all is replicated from another language. The only thing that is directly (but partly) replicated is the function of one of the items (*mijelp*). *Gija*, which has no counterpart in the model variety, innovates a new distribution, to “escape” redundancy, so to say. Ultimately, an innovative distribution between *mijelp* and *gija* has appeared in Kriol, which had no equivalent at all in the source languages, i.e. in local traditional languages or other Kriol varieties. This new pattern is also unusual cross-linguistically.

This process recalls the exaption scenario discussed by Lass (1990). In this scenario, an item loses its function and thus becomes idle. It is therefore available for reanalysis, and comes to endorse a new function. Pakendorf (2013) gives an example of contact-induced exaption, where the new function (a future imperative, where the original imperative had no tense distinction, but the source language had one) is inspired by contact with another language. The Barunga Kriol case is different, because as pointed out above, the innovative alignment of *gija* did not pre-exist in any source language. Besides, there are additional differences between the contact-induced innovation under discussion and Lass’s exaption scenario. Exaption targets “junk”, i.e. items that have become functionless. In the case of *gija*, this marker had become redundant to the extent that the new reflexive function was already fulfilled by an existing marker, but *gija* is not functionless. This is an important difference, because the

²² Both Meakins (2011: 45) for Gurindji Kriol and Hudson (1985: 117) for Fitzroy Valley Kriol provide examples of *mijelp/jelp* used with verbs taking arguments introduced by locative prepositions (respectively *tok* ‘talk’ and *agumen* ‘argue’, which typically take *gija* in Barunga Kriol).

remaining redundant function determined the new function (it is a more limited version of the old function). This scenario is one of realignment of several items within a semantic domain under the pressure of contact, not one of free recycling from junk.

While contact is a plausible trigger for the innovative alignment of *mijelp* and *gija*, the above scenario does not explain why *gija* realigned following a syntactic criteria rather than disappear, remain redundant, or realign to express new semantic contrasts. Gaby (2008, 2011) reports that in the Australian Kuuk Thaayorre (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape York Peninsula), reciprocity can be expressed by several markers, with their distribution governed by semantics rather than syntactic criteria. In Barunga Kriol, no semantic contrast applies between *mijelp* and *gija*.

It is not impossible that substrate reinforcement played a role as well here. In all the substrates of Barunga Kriol²³ and Roper Kriol (Munro 2004: 58) the valency of verbs is overtly marked by means of verbal morphology. Verbs are lexically constrained to cross-reference either one or two arguments. That is, their valency never changes, and the cross-referencing of arguments is obligatory in all clauses. This contrasts with many other languages in the world, where the valency of a given verb may vary depending on the context, and is not as systematically flagged by overt marking. While this flagging of valency is morphological rather than syntactic – and thus possibly a minor phenomenon from the point of view of linguistic analysis – it is nonetheless very salient from the point of view of speakers. Speakers of these languages must pay constant attention to the lexically established valency of verbs, in order to adequately cross-reference arguments. As pointed out by Dixon (1980: 378), this prominent status of valency is a common feature across many Australian languages. Koch (2000a: 27) suggests that this particularity of Australian languages may have been responsible for the reinterpretation of the English object pronoun *him* as the transitive marker *-im* in Australian pidgins and creoles.

In Barunga Kriol, the respective distribution of *mijelp* and *gija* now reflects two verb classes. In order to choose between *mijelp* and *gija*, speakers must attend to the status of the object argument of the verb in standard (non-reciprocal) constructions, whether it can follow the verb immediately or whether it is introduced by a preposition. Therefore, they must attend to the valency of the verb and to argument marking – something that speakers of the substrate languages do. In other words, the category reflected by the innovative distribution of *gija*

²³ See Evans (2003: 124) for Bininj Gun-wok, Evans, Levinson et al. (2001), Evans & Merlan (2003: 271) Evans, Merlan & Tukumba (2004:xxx, xxxi) and Ponsonnet (2014: 153–158) for Dalabon, Merlan & Jacq (2005) for Jawoyn, McKay (1975: 126) for Rembarrnga.

(namely, a valency verb class) is of a type familiar to speakers of substrate languages of Barunga Kriol. As pointed out above (7.2.1), many native speakers of Kriol still have some knowledge of one or several substrate languages, and therefore, indirect substrate influence is not inconceivable.

Admittedly, the above hypothesis is weak, if only because the ways arguments are distinguished in Barunga Kriol and in its substrates are very different. Besides, the hypothesis states that speakers of Kriol promoted a substrate-like category. Transfer of substrate-like constructions can be explained in the light of L2 learning (Siegel 2008), but the actual processes involved in “transfer of categories” remain vague and abstract. Therefore, the above hypothesis is subject to Bickerton’s (1981) justified criticism about substratists’ “cafeteria principle” – i.e. arguments against unconstrained and poorly supported substrate influence. However, the substrate influence suggested above remains the only factor available to explain the typologically unusual distribution of the Barunga Kriol reciprocals *mijelp* and *gija*.

7.3 Reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and exclusive adverb *miself*

As stated in Section 6, the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the exclusive adverb *miself* are now two different forms with two very different functions. However, they share a single etymology (<Eng. *myself*), and there is evidence that they used to be “less different” in Barunga Kriol than they currently are. Based on Sandefur’s (1979) account, on the Kriol *Holi Baibul*, and on data collected from older speakers of Barunga Kriol, it appears that in previous decades, these two items shared the same segmental form. The following sections present evidence for historical evolution (7.3.1) and discuss the conditions and motivations of this evolution (7.3.2).

Another distinction, between the exclusive adverb *miself* and the emphatic marker *imself*, also appears to be emerging in Barunga Kriol. Indeed, according to Sandefur (1979 :92), *mijelb* and *imself* were both emphatic markers. In the Kriol *Holi Baibul*, these words are also used alternatively across the board with reflexive and emphatic functions. The distinction between *miself* and *imself* is not clear-cut in my data, and will not be further discussed here. However, we may note that in this respect too, Barunga Kriol is in the course of carving finer distinctions.

7.3.1 Historical trends

Sandefur’s (1979: 91–94) analysis conflates reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic markers. Indeed, non-prototypical speakers of Barunga Kriol can conflate them

as one segmental form. Older speakers, and speakers who have not lived in Beswick in recent times, sometimes pronounce the reflexive as [miself] (without stress), i.e. as the exclusive adverb. (I have not found occurrences of the exclusive adverb realised as [ˈmijelp].)

This does not imply, however, that these speakers do not distinguish between the reflexive and the exclusive adverb: they realise them differently with respect to stress. *Miself* (exclusive) is stressed (it is an autonomous word, as pointed out in Section 6), while *mijelp* (reflexive/reciprocal) is not stressed (it is a clitic). This contrast in stress is usually matched in the respective English etyma of *miself* and *mijelp* (König and Gast 2002: 8). Thus, the stress contrast between *miself* and *mijelp* is older than the segmental contrast between them. However, the contrast between *mijelp* and *miself* is becoming sharper to the extent that prototypical Beswick speakers now use two segmentally distinct forms.²⁴ In fact, the contrast is sharp enough that one speaker (†LB) explicitly pointed out the formal and semantic difference between *miself* and *mijelp* in a metalinguistic comment. This is probably a recent change, given that pronunciation still varies for non-prototypical speakers.

To summarise, a distinction may have existed in the early stages of Kriol (based on stress), but it has recently become sharper. Instead of being near homonyms, the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the exclusive adverb *miself* are now two different items, and speakers are aware of the difference between them.

7.3.2 Explaining reinforcement of the distinction

As mentioned in Section 5.1, many languages in the world merge the reflexive function with the various functions attached to emphatic markers. It thus seems that languages can naturally “live without” distinguishing between all these functions. Can we identify factors that motivated, or made possible, this innovative distinction in Barunga Kriol?

The differentiation was rendered possible by phonological evolution. As discussed in Section 6, given that the final consonants are often dropped, the most salient segmental contrast between the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the exclusive adverb *miself* is [j] contrasting with [s] as the second consonant, hence palatal vs alveolar fricative. This contrast is often blurred in the speech of older speakers, but younger speakers treat it as a phonemic contrast.

²⁴ Contemporary Roper Kriol apparently has a comparable segmental distinction (Greg Dickson pers. com. Sep 2014).

Most Australian languages have no phonemic fricatives (Evans 1995: 729), and none of the substrates of Barunga and Roper Kriol have them. Kriol has phonemic fricatives (Baker, Bundgaard-Nielsen and Graetzer 2014: 328), but as a result of the discrepancy with Australian languages, reflexes of English words that include fricatives vary a lot in their pronunciation (Baker, Bundgaard-Nielsen and Graetzer 2014: 312). Thus, in Barunga Kriol, in many contexts [s] alternates freely with [j] or [j̥] – an alternation that largely neutralises the contrast between *mijelp* (reflexive/reciprocal) and *miself* (exclusive adverb). But there is an evolution (also observed in Roper Kriol by Baker, Bundgaard-Nielsen and Graetzer's [2014] study). Younger speakers usually say [sidan] for *sidan* 'sit/be' (<Eng. *sit down*), as opposed to [j̥idan]; they always realise the second consonant in *lisin* 'listen', *pesen* 'person' or *pasewei* 'pass away' as [s]. Only older, more conservative speakers instantiate alternative realisations ([j̥] in *sidan*, [j] or [j̥] in intervocalic position). Thus, [s] is becoming the dominant pronunciation of the reflexes of alveolar fricatives, where free alternations with (optionally affricate) palatal fricatives were previously frequent. As this free alternation between [s] and [j] reduces, the door opens for a segmental contrast between and [mijel(p)] (reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp*) and [misel(f)] (exclusive adverb *miself*) to emerge. Thus, the sharpening of the emphatic vs. reflexive/reciprocal distinction goes hand in hand with phonetic and phonological evolution.

As for factors motivating the distinction between the reflexive and various emphatic functions (among which the exclusive adverb), again, substrate reinforcement is a possibility. While in English reflexive and emphatic pronouns (among which exclusive adverbial markers) are merged (or minimally distinguished by stress), in all the substrates of Barunga Kriol, reflexives and emphatic markers represent two very different categories, both in form and in distribution. Reflexive markers are suffixes that come after verb roots (and do not agree in person and number). Emphatic functions, on the other hand, are fulfilled by person pronouns, either with a dedicated series of pronouns (Bininj Gun-wok), or with invariable suffixes that add to standard free pronouns (Dalabon, Jawoyn, Rembarnga).²⁵ In addition, in at least some of the substrates of Barunga and Roper Kriol, there is an adverb-like lexical item meaning 'by oneself' and playing a role equivalent to exclusive adverbial emphatic markers (Rembarnga, Saulwick [2003a: 104], Ngalakgan, Merlan and Baker [n.d]). Therefore, the reinforcement of the distinction between the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and various emphatic functions, in particular the exclusive adverbial function (adverb *miself*) is possibly an effect of substrate reinforcement.

²⁵ See Evans (2003: 269–271) for Bininj Gun-wok, Evans, Merlan and Tukumba (2004) for Dalabon, McKay (1975: 111) for Rembarnga, Merlan and Jacq (2005) for Jawoyn.

8 Overview and conclusions

Early descriptions of Roper/Barunga Kriol show that reflexive, reciprocal and emphatic functions used to be distributed in these creoles as they are in English, their superstrate. On the other hand, recent data collected among speakers of Barunga Kriol in Beswick show that this system has evolved in relatively recent years, offering an interesting insight into how, and under which influences, a creole can develop in the decades following its genesis. Overall, the system has moved away from English and undergone further differentiation. Early eastern Kriol matched English in distinguishing reflexive from reciprocal markers; contemporary Barunga Kriol merges the two, as in substrate languages. In addition, Barunga Kriol has innovated a typologically unusual contrast between two reciprocal markers. Finally, the early eastern Kriol matched English in merging reflexives and all types of emphatic markers; contemporary Barunga Kriol now distinguishes between reflexive and emphatic functions.

The detail of the innovations can be broken down as follows. First, the function of the reflexive *mijelp* was extended to cover the reciprocal function (for some verbs). I have hypothesised that this evolution was triggered by contact with western varieties of Kriol, possibly combined with substrate reinforcement – following a converging pan-regional Australian influence. Second, the distribution of the reciprocal, *gija*, was restricted, and now occurs with semi-transitive verbs only, while *mijelp* occurs with strictly transitive verbs. This typologically unusual distinction seems to be a “contre-coup” of the above, contact-induced extension of *mijelp* – i.e. a contact-induced realignment where very little is actually borrowed from the model language. The possible role of substrate reinforcement is not compelling here.

Third, the contrast between the reflexive/reciprocal *mijelp* and the exclusive adverb *miself* (exclusive adverbial emphatic function) was reinforced, so that these are now two different words formed with different segments. This contrast was rendered possible by the reinforcement of a phonological contrast, and was supported by substrate reinforcement.

This case study does not, of itself, suffice to firmly establish the motivations of the innovations in focus here. Some parameters, such as phonological refinement, have not been explored in detail because they require broad-scale prior analysis. The factors highlighted above deserve further attention in future research. One of these factors is the contact-induced innovation (*gija* for semi-transitive verbs), where an item comes to delineate a new category as a consequence of the contact-induced realignment of another item. Another is late substrate influence or substrate reinforcement, which is plausible but not yet

empirically demonstrated. Finally, the pan-regional influence of Australian languages upon Kriol via contact between varieties of Kriol is worth further exploration, because it suggests a mechanism where a creole is influenced by pre-colonial languages other than its immediate substrates. Exploring this type of influence seems particularly important in order to understand not only the linguistic dynamics, but also the social and cultural dynamics, in northern Australia and in other “post-colonial” social contexts across the world.

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Abbreviations

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|--------|----------------|
| ADJ | adjectival marker | LOC | locative |
| ART | article | NEG | negation |
| CONJ | conjunction | PL | plural |
| CONT | continuative | POSS | possessive |
| DAT | dative | PST | past |
| DEM | demonstrative | RECP | reciprocal |
| DIST | distal | RED | reduplication |
| DU | dual | REFL | reflexive |
| EMPH | emphatic | RLTVZR | relativizer |
| EXCL | exclusive | S | subject series |
| EXCL | exclusive adverb | SG | singular |
| FUT | future | TR | transitivizer |

Data types

- [ContEl] contextualized elicitation
 [El] elicitation
 [Narr] narratives
 [RPF] comment on the movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence*
 [Stim] response to visual stimuli

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