Rangga ngenandayin, lingbe berranben-nging-ngerri

Possession in Miriwoong,
a non-Pama-Nyungan language of north-west Australia

Christina Ringel

For ND and BJ

–

as representatives of Miriwoong Elders past and present

–

who have whole-heartedly encouraged me to learn and facilitate

the documentation and learning of the Miriwoong language

Most importantly, I would not have been able to complete this thesis without the understanding and exceptional support of *ngayang ngoolngang* Tobias Ringel, who has helped me on all levels, from emotional via technical to life-sustaining. *Ngoondoog nemantha-ngoong doole-melig.*

CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative enclitic pronoun
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ALR	Australian Law Report
aug	Augmented (similar to non-singular: one entity plus more than one)
ALL	allative
BEN	Benefactive pronoun enclitic
C	consonant
CNJ	conjunction
CNT	continuous
dinc	dual inclusive
du	dual
DPF	distant past frequentative
DSJ	disjunctive pronoun
ELAN	EUDICO Linguistic Annotator: an annotation tool for creating, editing, visualizing and searching annotations for video and audio data
EMPH	emphatic
ex	exclusive
EXST	existential
f	feminine
FCA	(unreported, published) report of the Federal Court of Australia
FEL	Foundation for Endangered Languages
FUT	future tense
HORT	hortative
HYPO	hypothetical
IMP	imperative
inc	inclusive
INT	interrogative -*woo* (allomorph of -*goo*)
INST	instrumental -*berri*
INTS	intensifier
IPF	imperfect
IO	Indirect Object enclitic
IRR	irrealis
IV	inflected verb
lit.	literally
LA	Apprentice in the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Program at MDWg
LEO	Language Engagement Officer (team member of the Language Nest) at MDWg
LM	Master in the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Program at MDWg
LOC	locative
LW	Language Worker at MDWg
m	masculine
min	Minimal (one entity)
MID	middle verb
MDWg	Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre
n	number of sentences of a particular type in a corpus
N	nominal
NEG	negative particle
NML	nominaliser

NOM	nominal suffix
NP	noun phrase
ns	non-singular
O	object
p.c.	personal communication
PERL	perlative
pl	plural
PE	possessee
PN	cardinal pronoun: in glosses (pers pn: in tables)
POSS	possessive pronoun: in glosses (poss pn: in tables)
PR	possessor
PRS	present tense
PRT	particle
PST	past tense
PURP1	purposive -*geny*
PURP2	Purposive -*gerring*
QNF	quantifier
REAL	realis
RED	reduplication
REFL	reflexive/reciprocal
REL	relationship possessive
sg	singular
S	subject
SEQ	sequential
SUB	subordinate
SUBJ	subjunctive
TOP	topic marker
UV	uninflected verb
V	vowel

Abbreviations for kinship terms

Mo	mother
Fa	father
Br	brother
Si	sister
Da	daughter
So	son
Ch	child
Wi	wife
Hu	husband
/	either/or

Abbreviations and symbols in glosses for languages other than Miriwoong

A	transitive subject function (Dixon 2002)
AG	agentive ('-er') (McGregor 2004)
ABS	absolutive (object and intransitive subject) (Dixon 1980; McGregor 2004)
ACT	Actual main clause (involves a situation which immediately succeeds another) (Evans 1995 for Kayardild)
APP	applicative ('do with') (McGregor 2004)
ASSOC	associative ('something associated with a thing') (McGregor 2004)
BENE	benefactive pronoun enclitic (Kofod 2003 for Kija)
COM	comitative ('with') (McGregor 2004)
COMIT	comitative ('with') (McGregor 1990)
DAT	dative ('for') (McGregor 1990, 2004; Schultze-Berndt 2000)
DY	dyadic ('a pair in a particular kinship relation') (McGregor 1990)
ERG	ergative ('by') (Dixon 1980; McGregor 1990, 2004; Schultze-Berndt 2000)
EMP	emphatic ('very', 'really') (McGregor 2004)
GEN	genitive ('X's') (Dixon 1980, 2002; McGregor 1990, 2004)
IMMED	IMMEDiate subordinate clause (involves a situation which is immediately succeeded by another) (Evans 1995 for Kayardild)
IMP	imperfect ('be going on at a certain time') (McGregor 2004)
INC	inclusive (speaker and hearer) (Evans 1995 for Kayardild)
N	neuter (McConvell 2003 and Blythe & KLRC 2001 for Kija)
PL	plural (McConvell 2003 and Blythe & KLRC 2001 for Kija)
NEG.POT	negative potential (Evans 1995 for Kayardild)
NOM	nominative (Evans 1995; McGregor 2001)
OBJ	object form of a bound pronoun (e.g. 'me' rather than 'I') (McGregor 2004)
OBL	oblique form of a bound pronoun, neither subject nor object ('for/on me') (McGregor 2004, Evans 1995 for Kayardild, Schultze-Berndt 2000 for Jaminjung)
PA	past ('happened before') (McGregor 2004)
PL	plural (more than one) (McConvell 2003 for Kija)
pl	plural (more than one) (Evans 1995 for Kayardild; McGregor 2004)
poss	Possessive (Bolt et al. 1971 for Ngaliwurru)
PRES	present tense (Dixon 1980; McGregor 2001, 2004)
PRIV	privative (Schultze-Berndt 2000 for Jaminjung)
PROP	proprietive ('with') (Evans 1995 for Kayardild among others)
REL	relator (relates clauses (events) together, marking one as less important: 'when', 'where', 'why') (McGregor 2004)
SG	singular (McGregor 2001 for Nyulnyulan languages)
SUB	subject form of a bound pronoun (e.g. 'I' rather than 'me') (McGregor 2004)
/	end of intonation unit (McGregor 1990 for Gooniyandi)
:	separates elements of a portmanteau, or where segmentation is irrelevant (Evans 1995 for Kayardild)
.	joins words where the English gloss requires more than one word (Dixon 2002) or separates different pieces of morphological information for one morpheme such as number and case (McGregor 2004)
+	precedes the stem of nominals that take pronominal prefixes indicating the possessor
Ø	zero morpheme

Glossing of Miriwoong example sentences

Symbols used for glossing

1	first person (speaker)
2	second person (hearer)
3	third person (neither speaker nor hearer)
1+2	first person inclusive (speaker and hearer)
-	morpheme boundary
_	joins words where the English gloss requires more than one word or separates different pieces of information for one morpheme, such as the general meaning of a verb stem and tense (for example future)
=	clitic boundary
:	separates information on subject and object in portmanteau bound pronouns
:::	lengthening of the final vowel
\r	translation into Kriol offered by a speaker
\q	elicitation question
(.)	short pause
(..)	pause
(...)	long pause
<>	encloses Aboriginal English or Kriol words that are not integrated into Miriwoong morphology
[…]	unfinished word or utterance
xxx	unclear
www	irrelevant (in .eaf files created in ELAN)

The construction under discussion is highlighted in bold face type.

Examples

(1)   Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-8]:MAJ
    Nawiyange dawang birrgamib geniya.

nawiyange	dawa-ng	birrgamib	ge-ni-ya
his	camp-NOM	be_making	3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL

    'He [the bower bird] made his camp [i.e. nest].'

(2)   Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MaJ
  a)   *Ganiny-ba-tha-ngany.*
        ganiny-**ba-tha**=**ngany**
        digging_stick-having-EXST=1sgBEN
        'I have a digging stick.'

  b)   *Ganiny-ba-ngoong*?
        ganiny-**ba**=**ngoong**
        digging_stick-having=2sgBEN
        'Do you have a digging stick?'

Explanation of source information for example sentences

Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-8]:MAJ
   1.   2.   3.   4.   5.   6. 7.

Narrative **Kofod** [RTh-**K**86-3-1-T0178]:RTh
   1.   **A.**   4a. **A.**3a. 6.   8.   7.

1. Source Type
2. Language ID
3. Date of recording
3a. Year of recording
4. Speaker ID(s) for speakers present at the session
4a. Only or main speaker during the session
5. Topic
6. Running number of files on one topic
7. Speaker of utterance
8. Running number for all Miriwoong texts collected by Kofod in the Toolbox database (T = text)
A. Researcher (where different from the author of this thesis)

This schema is based on recommendations developed for DOBES projects (DOkumentation BEdrohter Sprachen 'documentation of endangered languages', Drude & Costa 2011)

Unless otherwise indicated, the interlinear glosses for the Miriwoong example sentences collected by Frances Kofod have essentially been adopted from her Toolbox texts (Kofod 2023), but the abbreviations and glossing conventions have been homogenised and updated to oblige with conventions communicated to me by MDWg in 2015.
The referencing of Kofod's and Dr. Knut J. Olawsky's work as "in prep." reflects that glosses and translations are given here as they were available to me at the time of writing. Since the analysis of Miriwoong grammar is ongoing, their analyses may have changed since. For example, "Kofod (in prep. (2020))" refers to her manuscript on verb morphology as it was available in 2020.

Orthography

The Miriwoong spelling system developed at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring in 1989 (Kofod 2009a:1) is used in this thesis for Miriwoong utterances.

Kriol utterances are written according to the spelling found in Jason Lee's *Kriol-English Interactive Dictionary* (http://ausil.org/Dictionary/Kriol/lexicon/index.htm, accessed 2020-05-31), which is adapted from SIL-AAIB (1986, 1996) and Sandefur & Sandefur (1979). Thus, they do not yet reflect the outcome of a Kriol orthography workshop at MDWg that took place in February 2022 (Brown et al. 2022). For acrolectal utterances that are closer to Standard Australian English, English orthography or a spelling closer to it is used.

Punctuation

Miriwoong sentences start with a capital letter to mark the beginning of utterances. A comma symbolises a clause boundary signalled by a pause.

Translations

The translations supplied for Miriwoong and Kriol are usually utterance translations rather than sentence translations in the sense of Evans (1995:xxiv), i.e. "they may be more semantically specific than the source sentence itself requires." For example, definiteness, gender and number are added where these are not grammatically marked but known from the context of the utterance. Additions are signalled by round brackets, contextual information relevant to the utterance is provided between square brackets.

Glossing of example sentences from other languages

Interlinear glosses in example sentences from languages other than Miriwoong are largely left as they appear in the original source. Minor changes are sometimes made to allow for easier understanding. The language the utterance is taken from is given at the top right. The source is given in the first line of each example sentence. If the source indicates information about the speaker and context of the utterance, it is given on the first line as well.

(3)   Schultze-Berndt (2000:56, DB, BUL220)   (Jaminjung)
       *Nawurla-**wu***   *nuwina*   *ngaba*
       <subsection>-DAT   3sg:POSS   elder.brother
       'Nawurla´s elder brother'

Conventions

The Aboriginal people of Australia are referred to in this thesis as Aboriginal Australians, Aboriginal or Indigenous people.

Language names, language families & locations

The Jarragan languages are called by the names used for them by the speakers of the respective languages and are spelt according to the current orthography of each language. Thus, names and spellings are Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng and Kija. The spelling <Jarragan> follows Miriwoong orthography. The spelling of Kimberley language names outside the Jarragan family and the information on Kimberley language families is adopted from McGregor (2004). For non-Kimberley languages the preferred spelling and information on the language family is taken from the Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2020, www.ethnologue.com, accessed 2020-05-31). Where locations for non-Kimberley languages are indicated, these are based on The World Atlas of Language Structures Online (WALS, Dryer & Haspelmath 2013, https://wals.info, accessed 2020-08-18).

Speakers

Participants in the Miriwoong project undertaken for this thesis are referred to as participants or consultants. These terms are to be understood to stress their active engagement and advice. Fluent elderly people are referred to as Elders. Senior speakers and Elders are also collectively referred to as Masters, a term inspired by the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Project (Hinton 1997).

ML telling a Dreaming story about the Spillway area to AA and others (©Ingrid Ningarmara)

AA, ML, IN, MJ, and SS (ltr) playing the Have game at Lake Argyle

MAJ, GN, ML (ltr) playing the Belong game at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre

1 Documenting possession in Miriwoong

1.1 Introduction

The topic of possession is widely recognised among linguists as intriguing and is discussed both with the aim of describing typological variation, and of validating linguistic theories from a variety of traditions. This thesis aims to add to the existing body of work on possessive constructions.

The concept of possession is universal yet notoriously difficult to define. Domains examined under this heading include (a) ownership (i.e. prototypically the relationship between a human being and material belongings), (b) kinship relationships, (c) the relation between a human being or animal and their body parts and other part-whole relationships, and (d) abstract possession. The English language can express all of these relationships by use of the verb *have*:

(a) *I **have** a house with a garage.*

(b) *I **have** two sisters.*

(c) *Most human beings **have** two legs.*

(d) *Does anyone **have** a clue?*

Alternatives are possible. In English, for example, the possessive verb *own* (e), possessive pronouns (f), the *of*-genitive (g) and the '*s*-genitive (h) are used in similar utterances. In some cases, one of the alternatives is preferred[1] for a particular utterance, such as (h) rather than (h)'. In some cases, a particular option results in semantic anomaly, as in (f)'.

(e) *I **own** a house with a garage.*

(f) ***My** sisters are doctors.*

(f)' ?*I **own** two sisters.*

(g) *The legs **of** the table are sturdy.*

(h) *The cat**'s** paws are tiny.*

(h)' The paws **of** the cat are tiny.

In German these domains of possession can similarly be communicated by employing the verb *haben* (A-D). Alternatives include possessive pronouns (E), a prepositional construction with *von* (F), genitive case (G) and possessive verbs such as *besitzen*.

(A) *Ich **habe** ein Haus mit einer Garage.*

(B) *Ich **habe** zwei Schwestern.*

(C) *Die meisten Menschen **haben** zwei Beine.*

(D) ***Hat** jemand irgendeine Ahnung?*

---

[1] The factors involved for individual languages are a matter of ongoing debate and include semantics, type and animacy of nouns, definiteness, discourse status, length, weight, dialectal variation and oral vs. written modality.

(E) *Ich **besitze** ein Haus mit einer Garage.*

(F) ***Meine** Schwestern sind Ärztinnen.*

(G) *Die Beine **von dem** Tisch sind stabil.*[2]

(G)' *Die Beine **des Tisches** sind stabil.* (preferred in Standard German)

(H) *Die Tatzen **der Katze** sind winzig.*

This thesis will define and delimit the notion of possession in more detail. Taking into account relevant phenomena as described in the typological literature, the thesis aims to make a contribution to the question of which types of constructions can be found in Miriwoong within a semantically and culturally defined domain of possession.

1.2   How is possession expressed in Miriwoong?

Miriwoong is an endangered non-Pama-Nyungan language of the Jarragan family, which is spoken in the Kununurra area in the north-west of Australia. It differs from many Australian languages in that it does not use a genitive or dative case inflection to encode possession. In this thesis, the variety of structural patterns used for the expression of possession in Miriwoong will be described. Apart from familiar strategies such as possessive pronouns and juxtaposition, the language employs devices that are also used elsewhere in the grammar such as Indirect Object enclitics and Benefactive enclitics (Kofod 2009a). In addition, there is a specialised 'having' suffix *-ba* used for possession and association, and the relationship suffix *-ga*, which expresses kinship. Finally, Miriwoong makes use of the transitive verb HAVE. The next section provides examples of some of these constructions to familiarise the reader with typical possessive patterns in Miriwoong.

1.3   Prototypical possessive sentences

Both for the choice of typical possessive constructions exemplified below and in the thesis as a whole, preference is given to utterances stemming from language games, conversations among speakers, and picture descriptions or personal narratives shared in the presence of other speakers. However, for an adequate description of rarer phenomena, and for more specific analytical questions, it is necessary to take into account other types of data as well. In particular, reference is made to (i) elicited examples and (ii) utterances from personal narratives recounted in the absence of other fluent speakers. In a few cases results from language tasks (i.e. elicitation tasks employed as alternatives to grammaticality judgement) will constitute additional evidence.[3]

---

[2] Only possessive constructions are discussed here. The meaning of (G) and G)' could alternatively be expressed by a compound: *Die Tischbeine sind stabil* 'The legs of the table are sturdy'.

[3] Data sources and methods are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Possessive pronouns are frequently used to express possession. An utterance by a fluent speaker inspired by language game stimuli is presented in (1).[4] In accordance with the implied masculine possessor (i.e. the bower bird), the third singular masculine possessive pronoun is chosen. During language games utterances following the pattern in (2) are, likewise, often heard. Here the suffix -ba 'having' is followed by the existential marker -tha[5] and the appropriate form of the Benefactive enclitic (BEN), which in this case is the one for a first singular subject, thus -ngany. The Benefactive enclitic by itself as in (3) can express, among other things, alienable possession.[6] In this example it is attached to the possessee noun (i.e. the thing being owned) and followed by a dual marker because there are two possessors (i.e. two people own the entity referred to by the possessee noun, which in this case is the house depicted on the stimulus card). The relationship between an animal and its body parts is typically expressed by another enclitic, namely the Indirect Object enclitic (IO). In (4) it cliticises to the demonstrative pronoun and represents a masculine third person possessor, thus the form is -ni. Finally, the suffix -ga is exclusively employed for kinship relations. It is usually followed by a nominal suffix. Since the possessee noun *bariying* 'younger brother' in (5) is masculine, in this case the masculine -ng rather than feminine -ny appears. Kinship possession is also typically expressed (along with abstract, temporary and alienable possession) with the HAVE-verb. The prefix *ne-* in the verb form *nemoorlindayin* in (6) encodes a first person subject (i.e. the speaker) and a third person singular masculine object (i.e. her son). The suffix -yin expresses first person subject in addition to imperfective aspect. -moorlin- is the present tense stem of the HAVE-verb. It is followed by the realis marker -da.

possessive pronoun

(1)   Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-8]:MAJ[7]

Nawiyange dawang birrgamib geniya.
nawiyange   dawa-ng   birrgamib   ge-ni-ya
3sgmPOSS   camp-NOM   be_making   3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL
'He [the bower bird] made his camp [i.e. nest].'

<u>suffix –*ba*</u>

(2) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

    Ganiny-ba-tha-ngany.
    ganiny-**ba**-tha=ngany
    digging_stick-having-EXST=1sgBEN
    'I have a digging stick.'

<u>BEN (with alienable possession)</u>

(3) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

    Dawan-tha-woorr-meleng.
    dawa-ntha=**woorr=**meleng
    camp-EXST_m=3nsBEN=du
    'The house belongs to them two.'

<u>IO (with body parts)</u>

(4) Game [MEP-20140808-MaJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

    Rarnderrnga berraying-ni.
    rarnderr-ng=a   berrayi-ng=**ni**
    nail-NOM=TOP   this_one/these-NOM=3sgmIO
    'These are its claws. ~ This is its claw.'

<u>suffix –*ga* (for kinship)</u>

(5) Game [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

    Bariyi-gang ngenjayinga, ngiyi.
    bariyi-**ga**-ng   ngenjayi-ng=a   ngiyi
    younger_sibling-REL-m   this_one_m-m=TOP   yes
    'This is his brother, yes.'

<u>verb HAVE</u>

(6) Conversation [MEP-20141001-PG-ML-family]:ML

    Ngenayima nemoorlindayin jerrawoonhiyang.
    ngenayi-m=a   **ne-moorlin-da-yin**   jerrawoonhiya-ng
    here-LOC=TOP   1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   one-m
    'Here I have one [son].'

1.4 Approach and structure of this thesis

The overarching aim of the dissertation project is to advance the documentation of the Miriwoong language. The goal of the project is to create audio and video recordings which will serve as resources for the in-depth analysis of possession in Miriwoong, thereby contributing to a more extensive description of this critically endangered language. The findings will be evaluated in light of claims about Australian languages (for example, in Dixon 2002 and Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013)

and typological predictions for languages in general, thereby making a contribution to linguistic typology. In particular, the thesis will critically engage with assumptions and claims by Heine (1997) and Stassen (2009).

This thesis intends to address the following research questions:

Which structural patterns are employed to express possession and what are the determining factors for the choice between alternatives? Are there semantic differences? Do some structures correlate with certain domains such as body parts possession or kinship relations? What influence does the structural make-up of the sentence have on the choice of construction?

More specifically, particularities of the Miriwoong language such as the difference between two options for possessive pronouns – a short version and a long version that ends in *-nge(ng/ny)* – are dealt with. Among other things, such as semantic and pragmatic constraints and speaker preference, the notion of inalienability will be discussed. The latter is also examined with respect to further areas of Miriwoong grammar involved in possessive constructions, such as the choice between Benefactive and Indirect Object enclitics. Following a literature review including claims put forward concerning Miriwoong and a presentation of patterns observed in Australian languages, areas of Miriwoong grammar influenced by inalienability are identified. The main body of data used for the analyses stems from language games and tasks conducted for this thesis.

Beyond these linguistic inquiries, the dissertation also takes into consideration the cultural concept of possession and explores potential influences of culture on language. This discussion relies on interviews conducted with the Miriwoong community and a collection of pieces of information shared by the Miriwoong participants throughout the dissertation project.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. The remainder of Chapter 1 will introduce the topic of language endangerment and go into detail about the Miriwoong language (§1.5). Subsequently, it addresses ethical considerations (§1.6), showcases the project's benefits for the language community (§1.7), and portrays the data that this thesis is based upon (§1.8).

Chapter 2 will provide an overview of previous publications and materials available on Miriwoong (§2.1). Details will be given about the Miriwoong language and its speakers (§2.2) and on further languages spoken on Miriwoong country and in the vicinity (§2.3). An analysis of language use (§2.4) and language attitudes expressed by the Miriwoong people will be presented (§2.5).

The topic of Chapter 3 is language endangerment. In addition to a description of the current situation both in Australia generally and of the Miriwoong language and its family more specifically (§3.1), indicators of endangerment and vitality and the potential consequences of

endangerment are discussed (§3.2). In addition, the Chapter covers revitalisation efforts for the Miriwoong language (§3.3).

Chapter 4 will describe aspects of Miriwoong grammar that are necessary for an understanding of the constructions under discussion in the following chapters.

Chapter 5 will explain the methodology employed throughout the thesis. It will provide a description of the games and stimuli used in the project, and will argue that elicitation tasks are needed as an additional data source for certain research questions.

Chapter 6 constitutes an analysis of Miriwoong testimony of cultural aspects of possession. Against the backdrop of a Western understanding of the concept of possession, differences in Australian Aboriginal culture will be identified and concrete examples from the Miriwoong *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) will be disclosed.

Chapter 7 will introduce terminology relevant for possession. It will take prototypical possession as a starting point in order to differentiate different types of possession. Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession will be discussed, and typological predictions such as those put forward by Aikhenvald (2013) will be addressed. Finally, the theoretical debate of possession as a cognitive domain will be summarised.

Chapter 8 will present possessive structures in Australian languages. The focus is upon Kimberley languages, as Miriwoong speakers have been in contact with these languages either as neighbouring languages or, for instance, through trade connections – as evidenced in narratives and secondary literature.

Chapter 9 is devoted to possessive structures in Miriwoong. The various options available in Miriwoong will be described in detail, and observations concerning their functions and uses will be made.

Chapter 10 will reflect upon the research questions listed in this section and developed throughout the thesis, and will respond to theoretical and typological matters. In particular, the data stemming from language games and tasks will be discussed, and Stassen's (2009) claims for the repercussions of the typological profile of the Miriwoong language with respect to predicative possession will be shown to hold.

The thesis concludes by summarising the answers to the main research questions in Chapter 11.

1.5   Miriwoong as an endangered language

Language endangerment is a global phenomenon. Austin & Sallabank assert that of around 7000 languages spoken today at least half are no longer learned by children as their first languages and will thus most likely not be spoken anymore by the generations to come (2011:1). Less optimistic estimates such as by Krauss (2007) affirm that 95% of all languages are endangered. The majority

of the remaining 'safe' languages, which number around 300, have over a million speakers, are used in education and the media, and are supported by governments (2007:2). They are spoken by about 90% of the global population. The languages in danger, in contrast, are often minority languages spoken by only a few hundred or a few thousand people, in many cases with numbers dwindling rapidly.

It has been observed that the loss of languages is most critical in Australia. Nettle & Romaine highlight that one or more languages cease to be spoken every year (2000:4). They state that approximately 90% of Australia's 250 or so Aboriginal languages are near extinction, and that it "is possible that only two or three of the languages will survive into the next century" (2000:9). This view is repeated elsewhere such as in Tsunoda (2006:16) and Wurm (2007:439), who underlines Australia's special status with respect to the situation in the Australasian and Pacific areas.

Among the Australian Indigenous languages, Miriwoong is one of the many examples of severely endangered languages. Miriwoong is traditionally spoken[8] in the Kununurra area in the north-east of Western Australia and across the border with the Northern Territory. Most people who identify as Miriwoong mainly speak Kriol, and many among them are proficient in Aboriginal English.[9] They are bilingual in Miriwoong to various degrees. In general, middle-aged speakers have a sound passive knowledge, but there are a few who have greater productive skills. A few speakers remain who have a good command of Miriwoong; they are all elderly and use Kriol as the main language of communication with younger Miriwoong, but also largely among each other. Thus, the children grow up learning Kriol and/or Aboriginal English as their first language(s).

The Miriwoong language is no longer transmitted to younger generations in natural language contexts; hence the survival of the language in its traditional form with all its intricacies is at stake. However, there is hope for its survival into the future since revitalisation programs are being implemented. To name a few, language classes are offered for a variety of age groups including toddlers, there are regular radio programs, and a Miriwoong mobile phone app was created.

1.6   Ethical considerations

For the Miriwoong their language is strongly connected to their identity and their traditional country (see Chapter 6). Since 1996 and the Miriuwung-Gajerrong Native Title case, there have been concerns with respect to ownership rights over traditional knowledge, and for a long time a community restriction on literacy and the sharing of the Miriwoong language was in place. As a

---

[8] Following Koch, this thesis will refer to the approximately 250 Indigenous languages that are assumed to have been spoken in Australia before European settlement as Traditional languages (or languages traditionally spoken). Koch uses this term in opposition to the languages that have developed after 1788 "through the changed linguistic ecology" caused by the arrival of Europeans (2007:23).

[9] Language usage among the Miriwoong people is discussed further in §2.4 and §3.1.

result, to date only a few linguistic publications featuring Miriwoong are available in the public domain (for details on previous work on Miriwoong see §2.1). In the 1990s it was Frances Kofod's intention to complete her PhD thesis comparing the three Jarragan languages. However, for a number of reasons this was never finished. One of the reasons was the aforementioned period of restrictions on the sharing of written Miriwoong.

These restrictions are gradually being lifted as language revitalisation activities by community members through the MDWg Language and Culture Centre have expanded, including the local publication of booklets on Miriwoong by Language Workers at MDWg. In addition, in 2010 the Miriwoong staff – in consultation with Dr. Knut J. Olawsky – started to regularly invite students of linguistics from different countries to the MDWg for internships, during which they were welcome to study the language. These changes enabled my research to be undertaken. As the topic of possession in Miriwoong had caught my attention during my own internship at MDWg, I was pleasantly surprised to be asked to undertake a linguistic project and to write my PhD dissertation about it. Especially in light of Miriwoong history concerning linguistic publications as described above, it was clear to me that I would have to take great care to adhere to ethical standards from the start and during all phases of the dissertation project. The most important aspects in this regard will be outlined below.

The project was carried out with the permission of the Mirima Council Aboriginal Corporation and its body, MDWg, as well as Frances Kofod. The terms under which this permission is granted are detailed in a written agreement which states among other things that the ownership of the video and audio recordings and linguistic and sociolinguistic data created within the project lies with the community. As a signatory I am given the right to use the data in this dissertation but am obliged to consult with the community and obtain their permission if I give a talk at a conference, or publish a paper or poster.

In addition, I designed a data sharing agreement form for the participants of the project (see Appendix A). The document asks the language consultants whether their language data can be used in this dissertation, and whether extracts from transcripts of video and/or audio recordings can be published. Provided that data can be published, it is enquired whether this should be done in connection with the name of the language consultant, or if he or she prefers to use a pseudonym. If the data is not to be published, the document offers to specify for whom and for how long the restrictions should be upheld. Provisions for data archiving are also included in the agreement form.

In order to ensure that all participants can give free, prior and informed consent, the first part of the agreement form explains the goals of the project as well technical terms surrounding a doctorate and the consequences of writing a dissertation. The form explains openly how the project is funded, and who outside the community is involved. Both the potential benefits and the

social and cultural impact of the research project are stressed. It is emphasised that participation in the project is voluntary and can be discontinued at any stage without stating reasons.

Furthermore, the agreement states that great care will be taken throughout the project to comply with community traditions and regulations such as restrictions on who can work together with whom and which information can only be shared between certain people (e.g. some pieces of information are 'women's business' or 'men's business').

In compliance with the ethical guidelines published by AIATSIS, the written agreement includes provision for the treatment of a language consultant's language data in the event that someone withdraws his or her participation. Moreover, it describes a process for resolving conflict and guarantees the language community full access to the results no later than at the end of the dissertation project.

Participants were given the document to read, fill in according to their preferences, and sign. Alternatively, oral consent was asked for and recorded, in particular with the older speakers.

During the project phase, co-authorship for papers and talks was offered to language consultants with whom I have worked closely and who had indicated on the form that they would be interested in this form of acknowledgement.

1.7 Benefit to the community

The dissertation project was set up to benefit all participants in various ways. Besides remuneration for all speakers involved, younger speakers – also referred to as *Apprentices* – benefitted from language sessions with Elders – also referred to as *Masters* – as they created language-learning opportunities for the Master-Apprentice pair (see §3.3 on the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning Program (MALLP)). Taking part in recording sessions with Elders meant being in contact with their Masters outside the usual day-to-day tasks at MDWg. Some have rather little contact with their Masters, who in some cases live out of town. By engaging with them in the context of language games, new domains for language use and language learning were opened up.

In addition, while taking part in elicitation sessions, Language Workers observed linguistic fieldwork in progress, which afforded them experience for their own revitalisation measures. Furthermore, several training workshops on transcription and media equipment were set up for them. These served to enhance transcription skills and to pave the way for increased independence in transcription, which empowers them to transcribe not only recordings resulting from this project but also older recordings; for example, those of stories told by their grandparents.

Finally, witnessing Kimberley Kriol being analysed as well as Miriwoong has the potential to ascribe value to a language which – in spite of being the mother tongue of most younger

Miriwoong people – is viewed by some as flawed English rather than a language in its own right (see §2.5). This sense of value can in turn contribute to a healthy sense of identity.

For the Elders, recordings sessions and field trips to country created opportunities for language use in a casual environment. Since so few full speakers are left, domains for language use are scarce. It became apparent that by bringing Elders together and creating the context of a language project, domains usually dominated by English became instances of natural Miriwoong conversation: driving in the car, fishing, shopping.

Moreover, a few children benefitted from the project by being part of some elicitation sessions and a trip to country. They were immersed in the Miriwoong language, and in one case witnessed discussions about language attitudes. Since children are vital for any revitalisation efforts, it was rewarding to see them interested in linguistic work.

1.8   Data

The data analysed in this thesis stems from two kinds of sources; example sentences drawn from my own fieldwork,[10] and from corpus data collected and processed by Frances Kofod (2023). I am indebted to Kofod for allowing me to draw on her early research, including recordings and transcriptions of Miriwoong language with many now deceased Miriwoong Elders. She has made her Toolbox database available, which represents a portion of her transcribed materials from the following genres: personal narrative/oral history, descriptions of processes, dreaming stories, elicitation, translations of both legal documents and children's books, and other forms of fairly free flowing text resulting from elicitation.

My own fieldwork data was mainly gathered during two field trips in 2014 (3 months) and 2015 (6 weeks). As often as possible, the sessions were conducted during trips to traditional country, since especially Elders feel much more confident on their traditional country than in an office environment. During the field trip in 2014, data was gathered with the help of tasks and language games which encouraged speakers to produce sentences containing possessive constructions such as *I have a big yellow bag*, *The didgeridoo belongs to the old man* or *The fish has many scales*. The second field trip in 2015 was dedicated to (i) clarifying questions that arose during transcription and analysis of this data, and (ii) carrying out revised versions of the games with additional speakers to test hypotheses and allow for possible variation in the language.

The elicitation materials were developed with two goals in mind. On the one hand, they were designed to facilitate communication among speakers in an environment that was as natural as possible, but due to the nature of the stimuli were aimed at eliciting possessive structures. On the other hand, they were created in such a way that they can also be used as language learning

---

[10] The field trips to Australia were supported by grants from the DAAD ("DAAD-Doktorandenstipendium"), FEL and FAZIT.

resources. Care was taken, for instance, to choose culturally appropriate stimuli pictures and photos – partly created with the help of Language Workers at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) in the field. Subsequent feedback on the stimuli regarding aspects such as colours, sizes etc. by Language Workers was also incorporated.

Some possessive structures in Miriwoong were possibly influenced by Aboriginal English or Kimberley Kriol, the mother tongue of most younger Miriwoong people. Therefore, during the second trip potentially relevant sentences were elicited in Kriol.

The first field trip resulted in 47 hours of recordings, 30% of which include video. The second field trip resulted in 13 hours of audio recordings, 40% of which were recorded on video as well. Together this amounts to 60 hours, 19.3 (32.2%) of which are on video. The bulk of the recordings are in Miriwoong, while some shorter sessions are devoted to Kimberley Kriol. Some recordings cover oral consent and discussions on language attitudes. A large part of the recordings have been transferred to ELAN (2020). More than 12 hours worth of material was fully transcribed, and for the majority of utterances notes on the constructions were added. These notes can be used for concordances.

The transcription of several files was started in the field with the support of Language Workers and occasionally fluent senior speakers. Since the Language Workers were, on the one hand, already involved in many aspects of the project such as stimuli creation, playing linguistic games, group elicitation etc. and, on the other hand, were tied up in many important but unrelated revitalisation programs being conducted by MDWg, the time they could spare for transcription was limited. In addition, transcription is quite time-consuming, especially for beginners. Despite the training that they had had, and which I have built on in various workshops I offered, it was unrealistic to expect that transcriptions could continue independently during my absence between the two field trips, or after the second trip. As a result, most transcriptions were done by myself. Since I had focused on language games and picture descriptions, the context was usually clear and the visual cues provided by the stimuli and video recordings helped to produce an accurate transcription. In addition, during the second field trip I seized the opportunity to check some transcriptions either with Language Workers or in some cases with the same or a different fluent speaker. Unfortunately, some sessions still have to be excluded from the analysis as the transcription remains sketchy. This is especially the case for free natural speech that has not been commented on or translated by younger bilingual speakers present during the session and that could not be checked later. Even though the sessions concerned often did not specifically target possession, I still hope to follow up on them in a future project.

2 THE LANGUAGE AND ITS SPEAKERS

This section serves to portray the Miriwoong language and its speakers. First, an account of the existing literature on the Miriwoong language will be given (§2.1). §2.2 will then illustrate some pieces of ethnographic information, such as information about the language family (§2.2.1 and §2.2.2), the location, where Miriwoong is spoken (§2.2.3), the number of speakers (§2.2.4) and contact history (§2.2.5). §2.3 will present the languages spoken in and around the town of Kununurra. Subsequently, community self-assessments of the language situation (§2.4) and language attitudes expressed by the Miriwoong community (§2.5) will be discussed.

2.1 State of the art – Previous work on Miriwoong

This subchapter gives an overview of the literature that has been published about the Miriwoong language and culture so far. A valuable source of information in this regard is the literature about the Miriuwung-Gajerrong Native Title case. In the context of the claim, scholars from a variety of disciplines studied the anthropological, archaeological, ethnohistorical,[1] historical[2] and linguistic literature on the greater region around the area to which the Miriwoong people lay claim. Christensen points out that "the existing documentary materials [… were] incomplete and fragmentary", even if content-wise there was an "essential congruence of evidence" (2004:190).[3] Summaries of scientific works from the various disciplines and relevant quotes can be found in the Reasons For Judgment of the Native Title claim (Ben Ward & Ors v Western Australia & Ors [1998] FCA 1478 (24 November 1998)[4]).

In the following, the linguistic and anthropological studies that have been observed to touch on the area where Miriwoong people live today will be briefly mentioned. In terms of anthropological studies, prior to the Native Title claim there had been "very little research in this particular area of The Kimberley" (McIntyre & Doohan 2002:199). Notably Professor Elkin (1932, 1933) and Dr. Kaberry (1937b, 1938, 1939)[5] did research in the area in the 1920s and 1930s. However, they mainly wrote about the Lunga (i.e. Kija) 'tribe' and mentioned the Mirun/Mirung/Miriwun (i.e. Miriwoong) people only in passing. The articles are mainly concerned

---

[1] "[R]ecent ethnography in the region can be described as heritage and site survey work conducted in the context of development projects" (Reasons For Judgment, p.71).

[2] For example, Barker (2004:162) mentions historical passages to be found in the works of anthropologists Professor Ronald Berndt and Professor Kenneth Maddock.

[3] Christensen also mentions the "records left by Joseph Birdsell and Norman Tindale in connection with their 1950s work in the north-east Kimberley" and refers to them as "journals and correspondences" (2004:188f).

[4] https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/cth/FCA/1998/1478.html (accessed 2023-09-24).

[5] In addition to these published papers, Barker (2004:162f) points to genealogical charts and field notes produced by Dr. Kaberry in the 1930s as part of her PhD fieldwork.

with totemism and the kinship system.[6] In addition, Arthur Capell left his field notes from his work between 1938 and 1939 for posterity.

Concerning the Miriwoong language, albeit far from being well documented, several linguistic publications on Miriwoong exist to date. Frances Kofod commenced work with Miriwoong speakers in 1971. This work resulted in an MA Honours thesis on the phonology and morphology of Miriwoong (Kofod 1978), two linguistic articles on verb types (Kofod 1976a) and morphology (Kofod 1976b), a dictionary of 4000 words (Kofod 2009b), a shorter public version of which was released in 2017 (MDWg 2017, updated in 2019 (MDWg 2019)), and manuscripts on Miriwoong pronouns (Kofod in prep. (2017)) and Miriwoong verbs (Kofod in prep. (2020)). A descriptive grammar is being written (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).[7]

Further linguistic works on Miriwoong by Kofod include *A Miriwoong Alphabet Book*, a Miriwoong Toolbox database (Kofod 2023), the grammatical introduction to the 2009 version of the Miriwoong dictionary (Kofod 2009a) and other grammatical writings and linguistic presentations for MDWg, for example in the Linguistic Forum lecture series. Kofod has presented on Jarragan verbs, clitic pronouns, number and gender, among others, at several conferences including Kofod (1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1996d, 1997). Finally, Kofod was involved as an expert witness in the Miriuwung Gajerrong Native title claim. Most of these resources and the reports for the Native Title claim are not in the public domain.[8]

Before Kofod began working on the Jarragan languages, the Miriwoong language had been mentioned in various publications on Australian languages. Information about alternative names (see also §2.2.1), identification codes and current number and distribution of speakers (see also §2.2.4) from many early sources is accumulated in the AUSTLANG database, where Miriwoong is listed as K29.[9] In addition to word lists, and some transcripts by Cooling, the database lists the

---

[6] Elkin states that the "tribes of Eastern Kimberley […] have the sub-section system combined with a kinship system of the Aranda type (Elkin 1933:54).

[7] As stated in the frontmatter, the referencing of Frances Kofod's and Dr. Knut J. Olawsky's work as "in prep." signals that analyses quoted here reflect the state of the art at the time of writing. Since the analysis of Miriwoong grammar is ongoing, their analyses may have changed since.

[8] As described in §1.8, it was Kofod's intention in the 1990s to complete her PhD thesis comparing the three Jarragan languages. This was never finished, among other things due to a period of restrictions on the sharing of written Miriwoong. This situation changed enabling my own research to be undertaken with permission of MDWg and permission from Kofod, who allowed me to draw on her early research, recordings and transcriptions of Miriwoong language with many now deceased Miriwoong Elders (see §1.6). As stated on the webpage of MDWg, "Frances Kofod has been involved in many projects to do with language and culture in the East Kimberley during the past forty years, including extensive work with all Jarragan languages (Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng, and Gija). […] Frances still works part-time for MDWg, assisting with the Miriwoong Master-Apprentice program and working on grammar, dictionary and traditional ecological knowledge projects" (http://mirima.org.au/our-team, accessed 2018-12-10).

[9] See https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/k29 (accessed 2023-09-24). Further collections of previous work on Miriwoong are found in the OLAC (https://www.language-archives.org/language/mep, accessed 2020-02-29), glottolog (https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/miri1266, accessed 2023-09-24), and Endangered Languages Project (https://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/2549/bibliography, accessed 2023-09-24) records.

following under 'Material available on the language': Kaberry (1937a), Capell (1940) and Worms (1957). As Kofod (1978:2) explains, Kaberry was "[t]he first article to appear dealing with the Djeragan languages in general". Miriwoong nouns are discussed therein. Capell's article includes information about verb conjugation and number in the pronoun system; Worms lists a few Miriwoong terms. Kofod further mentions (Oates & Oates 1970) and (O'Grady et al. 1966), who devote a paragraph to gender, number and tense of Miriwoong nouns, verbs and pronouns.

2.2   Ethnographic information

To begin with, the Jarragan (Jarrakan) language family of which Miriwoong is a member will be presented. In the following section, a selection of linguistic features of Jarragan languages are compared to other non-Pama-Nyungan languages. Subsequently, the location where languages of the Jarragan family, and more specifically Miriwoong, are spoken, will be delineated. Following a discussion of the number of Miriwoong speakers, a description of relevant aspects of Miriwoong history will be provided.

2.2.1   The Jarragan language family

Miriwoong, Kija (Gija) and Gajirrabeng (Gajirrawoong/Gajerrong) are non-Pama-Nyungan languages of the Jarragan language family. Miriwoong and Kija are endangered (see §3.1.3 and §3.1.4), while Gajirrabeng is no longer spoken in natural contexts.[10] Miriwoong is the spelling of the language according to the current orthography. Alternative names and spellings include Miriwung (Kofod 1976a, 1976b, 1978); Miriuwung; Myiirng (Kofod 2009a:1); Miriwong, Mirriwong, Miriwun, Miriwu (of Kitja) (Tindale 1940); Moreng, Mirong (Tindale 1974); Mirung (Elkin 1933, Tindale 1974 and O'Grady et al. 1966); Merong, and Mireau (Worms 1949, 1953, 1957). Mariung (Oates & Oates 1975) is probably the same language as Miriwoong.[11]

The spelling "Kija" has been chosen for this Thesis as it is widely used in the literature (including Blythe & KLRC (2001), Blythe & Wightman (2003) and (Kofod 1996c)), and has been recommended as the preferred spelling by McGregor (2004:30) as it complies with the standard Kija orthography. It is also used officially – for example, in the ABS census. Note that the alternative spelling "Gija" – which corresponds to the standard Miriwoong orthography – is used in other works by Kofod (2003, 2009b) and by the Warmun Art Centre.[12]

---

[10] "Gajirrabeng […] has no living fluent speakers. […] There are now very few (c 5) people who have a hearing knowledge of Gajirrabeng" (Kofod, Frances. 2018-2019. Gajirrabeng Collection. https://elar.soas. ac.uk/Collection/MPI1234840 (accessed 2020-07-28), see also §3.1.4.

[11] See https://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/2549 (accessed 2023-09-25).

[12] https://warmunart.com.au/language/ (accessed 2020-02-29). Further alternative names for Kija include Gidja, Kidja, Ku:tji, Kuitji, Kuitj, Gi:dj, Kwitj, Gwidji, Guidj, Guwidji, Kisah, Keha, Kisha, Kityu, Liej, Lungga, Longga, Loonga, Langgu, Lunga, Lungu, Paljarri, Djarak, Tjarak, Waringari, Warrangari, Kutnalawaru, Miwa, Walki, Kitja (https://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/4210 (accessed 2023-09-25), see also

The spelling "Gajerrong" appears in the name of MG Corporation (Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgeb Noong Dawang[13]) and was used in the Native Title Claim (see below). In the literature "Gadjerong" is often found. According to Kofod both "Miriuwung" and "Gajerrong" are

> spelling[s] that [do] not follow the Miriwoong orthography or spelling system developed at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring in 1989. Gajerrong is a misspelling of Gajirrawoong, the Miriwoong name for the Gajirrabeng (Kofod 2009a:1).[14]

According to McGregor (2004:40) the name of the language family is derived from the Kija term *jarrak* 'language', 'talk' or 'speech'.[15] A few further little-documented languages and dialects have been hypothesised to have belonged to this family. The least is known about Walgi, potentially a dialect of Kija (ibid.). Today clarification seems no longer to be obtainable from Jarragan speakers and the only source of information is a wordlist published in 1897 by Ray (ibid.). Doolboong is a language that was apparently spoken north-west[16] of Gajirrabeng territory. Speakers of Gajirrabeng and Miriwoong affirm that it was similar to Gajirrabeng but no written materials are available that could be explored to verify its status as a Jarragan language (ibid.).

A complex picture arises when comparing different sources that mention Guluwaring (Kuluwarrang).[17] Most authors treat it as a dialect of Kija (e.g. McGregor 2004:40). Kofod,[18] for example, asserts that some Turkey Creek people say that Guluwaring is the Turkey Creek dialect of Kija. This assessment is also found in Blythe & Wightman (2003:70), who caution that not all speakers use the terms Guluwaring and Lungka, the name of another dialect of Kija (see below), in the same way.

---

http://www.ethnologue.com/language/gia/18 (accessed 2020-02-29)). According to Kofod, "[e]xisting linguistic and teaching materials have been produced in two slightly different orthographies"."[T]he one also used to write the related language Miriwoong" is "the one that Gija people familiar with written English tend to use […] if writing their own language." (Kofod, Frances. 2013. *The painter's eye, the painter's voice: language, art and landscape in the Gija world,* London: SOAS, Endangered Languages Archive, https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI118834 (accessed 2020-07-28).

[13] http://www.mgcorp.com.au/ (accessed 2023-09-25).

[14] Further alternative names for Gajirrabeng include Kajirrawung, Gadyerong, Gadyerrong, Gajirrawoong, Gajirrabeng, Gadjarawang, Ginmu (Tindale 1974), Kadjarong, Kadjerawang, Kadjeroen, Kadjerong (Tindale 1974), Kujera (Tindale 1974) and Gadjerawang.

[15] See Capell (1940:404). "Djeragan" is an earlier spelling for the language family (e.g. O'Grady et al. 1966:34). However, Tindale explains that "Djerag" is not – as previously assumed – a "tribal name" but the "native version" (1974:245) of the name of the Durack family, who settled in the eastern Kimberleys. The similarity is accidental and the language family term is not derived from the alleged tribal name but the Kija coverb (uninflecting verb) *jarrak* 'speak' or rather the noun *jarrakpu/jarrakpi/jarrakpe* 'word, story, utterance, language, meaning' (Blythe & KLRC 2001:64f). "Jerragan" rather than "Jerrakan" is used in this thesis as it complies with the Miriwoong orthography.

[16] (Kofod 2014 p.c.; Olawsky 2019 p.c.). On maps displaying the locations of Traditional languages, (the centre of) Doolboong country is placed in the north-west (e.g. on the AIATSIS map Horton 1996)) or the north-east (e.g. McGregor 1988, 2004; Shaw 1981).

[17] Alternative names include Woljamidi, Woljamiri, Molyamidi, Kuluwara, Kuluwaran, Guluwarin, Gooloowarrng, Kolaia, Arawari, Arawodi, Yamandil (Tindale 1974, see http://archives.samuseum.sa. gov.au/tindaletribes/arnga.htm (accessed 2020-02-29).

[18] Quoted in the AUSTLANG database: http://collections.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/k33 (accessed 2020-08-23). AIATSIS Code: K33, AIATSIS reference name: Kuluwarrang.

Shaw (1981), in contrast, who bases his account mainly on Tindale (1974), seems to imply a closer connection of Guluwaring to Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng (here spelt Gadjerong) than to Kija,[19] also in terms of the location claimed for Guluwaring (and the seemingly alternative term Arnga). However, in the course of the book Grant Ngabidj argues that the "Guluwaring spoke *durrugodurrugo* and were too far away from the Miriwong. They went with Lungga in the same way as Gadjerong and Miriwoong came together" (1981:95),[20] which confirms the connection of Guluwaring to Kija mentioned initially above. Interestingly, though, the location assumed for this variety by Shaw (following Tindale, i.e. northwest of Miriwoong/southwest of Gajirrabeng country) does not align with this relationship between Guluwaring and Lungka. Kija country is to the south of both Gajirrabeng and Miriwoong country, and Lungka is commonly understood to be the southern Halls Creek rather than the northern Turkey Creek dialect of Kija. Thus, Lungka is spoken even farther away from Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng territory than the northern Turkey Creek dialect (which has been called Guluwaring elsewhere, as the attentive reader will remember). It also needs to be taken into account that Kofod (l.c.) observes that some Miriwoong speakers prefer the term Guluwaring over the term Kija.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that Shaw names Guluwaring as one of the *intermediate* or *in-between* languages, i.e. languages that developed due to the interrelation between neighbouring language groups which are connected through trade, participation in each other's ceremonies and inter-marriage (Shaw 1981:183).

As mentioned above, Lungka is discussed in the literature as a further Jarragan variety. Blythe & Wightman (2003:70) state that Kofod called attention to a coverb meaning 'to go naked' which may be connected to the term Lunkga. Berndt stipulates that Lungka is the Jaru name for Kija (1975:123), which the Kija have accepted as an alternative name for themselves (ibid.). Blythe & Wightman (2003:70) observe that Halls Creek people use the term to refer to themselves and their dialect. It is thus treated here as the second major dialect of Kija after Guluwaring (following Blythe & KLRC 2001). This contrasts with earlier work by Phyllis Kaberry who uses Lungka as a cover term to refer to both the Kija language and 'tribe' (Kaberry 1937a:92).

Figure 2.1 below summarises the information on the Jarragan language family given above. The "main languages" in this family are Kija, Miriwoong, and Gajirrabeng (McGregor 2004:40). O'Grady et al. (1966:34) assigns Kija to the Kijic subgroup, and Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng to the Miriwoongic one. In the Kijic subgroup Walgi, Guluwaring, and Lungka are added as likely dialects of Kija. Doolboong is added via a dotted line which symbolises its unclear status as a Jarragan

---

[19] "Gadjerong, Miriwong and Guluwaring are *very closely* related" (1981:1, emphasis added). Note however that in the glossary it is stated that Guluwaring is "*closely* related to Miriwoong, *Gidja* and Gadjerong" (1981:180, emphasis added).
[20] In the glossary *durrugodurrugo* is marked as a Gajirrabeng (here spelt Gadjerong) term and explained as 'How the Guluwaring speak'.

language. In McGregor (1988:31) it is presumed to "possibly" belong to the Miriwoonic group. Note that the sign language Miriwoong Sign Language or Woorlab yarroondayan yoowoorriyang mayinggoorlng-berri discussed in Adone et al.'s dictionary (2018) is not considered in the graph.

```
Jarragan


Kijic            Miriwoonic - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -.


Kija        Miriwoong    Gajirrabeng         Doolboong
dialects:
Walgi
Guluwaring
Lungka
```
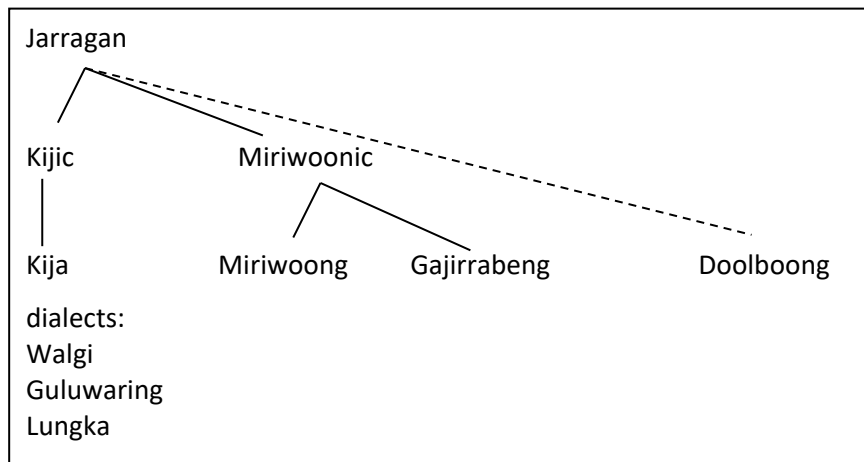
Figure 2.1 The Jarragan family according to McGregor (2004:40)

2.2.2   Non-Pama-Nyungan languages

The languages of the Jarragan family belong to the non-Pama-Nyungan languages (non-Pama languages for short). The Pama-Nyungan languages cover 9/10 of the continent (McGregor 2004:37), see Map 2.1, and are more similar among themselves than the non-Pama languages.

Map 2.1 The Non-Pama-Nyungan languages of Australia (McGregor 2004)

In contrast to the Pama-Nyungan languages, the non-Pama languages typically have prefixing in addition to suffixing morphology. In Jarragan pronominal prefixes cross-reference objects and/or subjects of the verb. A further feature that Jarragan languages share with other non-Pama languages is noun classes. Along with languages of the Worrorran language family,[21] nouns fall into different classes that are signalled by suffixes on the nouns, but also trigger agreement in gender on certain word classes such as demonstratives, pronominals and adjectives (Blythe & Wightman 2003:70 on Kija) and determine the form of pronominal prefixes and suffixes on verbs.

---

[21] According to McGregor & Rumsey (2009:51), apart from in Worrorran languages "in the immediate geographical region noun classes are found only in the Jarragan family, though they are found more widely in non-Pama-Nyungan languages in the Daly River and Arnhem Land regions, as well as in a scattering of Pama-Nyungan languages."

(In Worrorran there are more noun classes[22] than in Jarragan and they also determine the form of the pronominal prefixes cross-referencing the possessor on prefixing nouns, see §8.2.5) The aforementioned characteristics have already been observed for the Jarragan languages by Capell (1940), who classified the languages of the family as prefixing and dual[23] classifying languages.

The Jarragan family can be described as a typical non-Pama-Nyungan Kimberley language family in the following respects: With regard to phonology it shares some specifics with many Kimberley languages, such as having more vowels than are distinguished in the predominant Australian three-vowel-system: Apart from /i/, /a/ and /u/ the Jarragan languages have a mid-central vowel "the major allophone of which is [ə]" (McGregor 2004:91). However, Jarragan languages deviate from other non-Pama languages in that vowel length is not distinctive. The only other exception in this regard is Nyikina (2004:90). Moreover, for the pronunciation of consonants six places of articulation are differentiated phonologically in Jarragan and numerous non-Pama languages, while Pama-Nyungan languages do not distinguish dental stops and nasals, and therefore only have five places of articulation (2004:83f, McGregor & Rumsey 2009:23).

Several aspects of morphology and syntax are similar among non-Pama Kimberley languages. First of all, in terms of parts-of-speech McGregor observes that most Kimberley languages distinguish eight major ones, namely nominals, pronouns, inflecting verbs, uninflecting verbs, adverbs, particles, interjections, and ideophones (2004:101). Details on some of these with respect to Jarragan are given below. Prior to this it is important to discuss an additional category: One way in which the Jarragan family, along with Worrorran languages, is special regarding parts-of-speech is that among its nominals it has a class of adjectives, which pattern with nouns but differ from other nominals due to their ability to take a gender (or noun class) suffix (2004:102). There are reasons besides semantics to distinguish between adjectives and nouns. In the Jarragan language Miriwoong, for instance, there are morphosyntactic and syntactic clues such as the existence of suffixes that derive adjectives from other word classes, their inability to take some of the suffixes that are attested for nouns, and their ability to function as noun modifiers (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).

Free pronouns[24] in turn are considered separately from nouns by McGregor because in many Kimberley non-Pama languages they occur in at least two different forms, a cardinal form and a

---

[22] Rather than using the term *noun class* in Jarragan one could speak of (feminine and masculine) *gender* (see Blythe & Wightman (2003:70) who use the terms interchangeably). Often noun class is preferred if more than two or three (masculine, feminine, neuter/non-singular) noun classes are employed, as is the case in Worrorran languages, which have two or three inanimate classes and either a masculine/feminine or a humane/animate distinction (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:50).

[23] Note that in addition to the feminine and masculine noun classes/genders found in Miriwoong (and Gajirrabeng), Gija also has a neuter/plural class.

[24] According to a preliminary analysis of word classes in Miriwoong, in this Jarragan language, pronouns constitute a subgroup of nominals as well. They share syntactic features with other nominals in so far as

possessive form (2004:103). This is the case for Jarragan (see §9.2.3 for details on Miriwoong possessive pronouns). Another similarity among Australian Aboriginal languages in general is the form of the first person singular pronoun (McGregor 2004:111), which can be reconstructed as proto-Australian *ŋay (Dixon 1980:340, compare Miriwoong *ngayoo* and Kija *ngayin(ti)*).

In addition to the major word classes non-Pama languages of the Kimberley feature (i) bound pronouns (see the mention of pronominal prefixes above), (ii) pronoun enclitics on verbs and in some cases on nominals (McGregor 2004:120), which express "a wide range of different meanings" (2004:100), and (iii) definite determiners, the main type of which are demonstratives (2004:125). These demonstratives take different forms depending on the referent's proximity to the speaker and/or addressee (ibid.).

Jarragan languages share a feature that has been deemed pertinent for non-Pama Kimberley languages: the distinction between inflecting and uninflecting verbs (2004:103). There are always fewer verbs of the former type as compared to the latter, the former numbering from "about ten (Bunuba) to a several hundred members (Bardi, Nyulnyul, Ngarinyin)" (ibid.). McGregor & Rumsey (2009:67ff) compare the complex morphology of inflecting verbs from Worrorran and non-Worrorran languages including Jarragan. Among other things they observe that the relative ordering of subject and object in pronominal prefixes is quite complex in Bunuban and Jarragan as it depends on a person hierarchy. In addition, the morphology is less transparent due to root suppletion in Jarragan languages, which encode tense information within the stem (ibid.).

Secondly, Jarragan languages resemble other non-Pama languages of the Kimberley in their morphosyntax in that they have a rich inventory of inflections (McGregor 2004:99). Case marking, however, is not achieved by inflectional suffixes but by phrase-level enclitic postpositions (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:48). In Jarragan languages the locative seems to be the only word-level case inflection – a strategy employed widely in neighbouring Pama-Nyungan languages (ibid.). Unlike the other non-Pama languages of the Kimberley except Worrorran, Jarragan languages do not have ergative case marking (McGregor 2004:107). This means that subjects of transitive clauses do not receive a case marker that is different from the (potentially null) case marker for subjects of intransitive and objects of transitive clauses. However, they differ from Pama-Nyungan languages in a similar way as the other non-Pama languages that do have ergative case (namely Nyulnyulan and Bunuban): In contrast to the split system of many Australian Aboriginal languages, i.e. ergative/absolutive for nouns but nominative/accusative for pronouns, in Kimberley non-Pama languages nouns and free[25] pronouns pattern alike, i.e. both follow the ergative/absolutive or both the nominative/accusative system (2004:116).

---

they may function as the head of an NP, occur with an existential form, or have modifier function (Olawsky in prep. (2020); c.f. Kofod 1978, see also §4.1).

[25] In Kimberley languages "[e]ven if nouns and free pronouns follow the ergative system of case-marking, bound pronouns do not" (McGregor 2004:120).

Finally, in Jarragan as well as other non-Pama languages and more generally any non-configurational languages in Australia (Meakins & Nordlinger 2013:4), cross-referencing of nominals by pronominal enclitics makes it possible to omit the former. This is frequently done, especially in stories.

To conclude, Jarragan languages display many characteristics that are typical for non-Pama-Nyungan languages traditionally spoken in the Kimberley ranging from vowel and consonant inventory to functions expressed via inflection but represent exceptions in aspects such as the types of lexical categories they exhibit and case marking. They show exceptional complexities in areas such as the form of pronominal prefixes.

2.2.3 Location
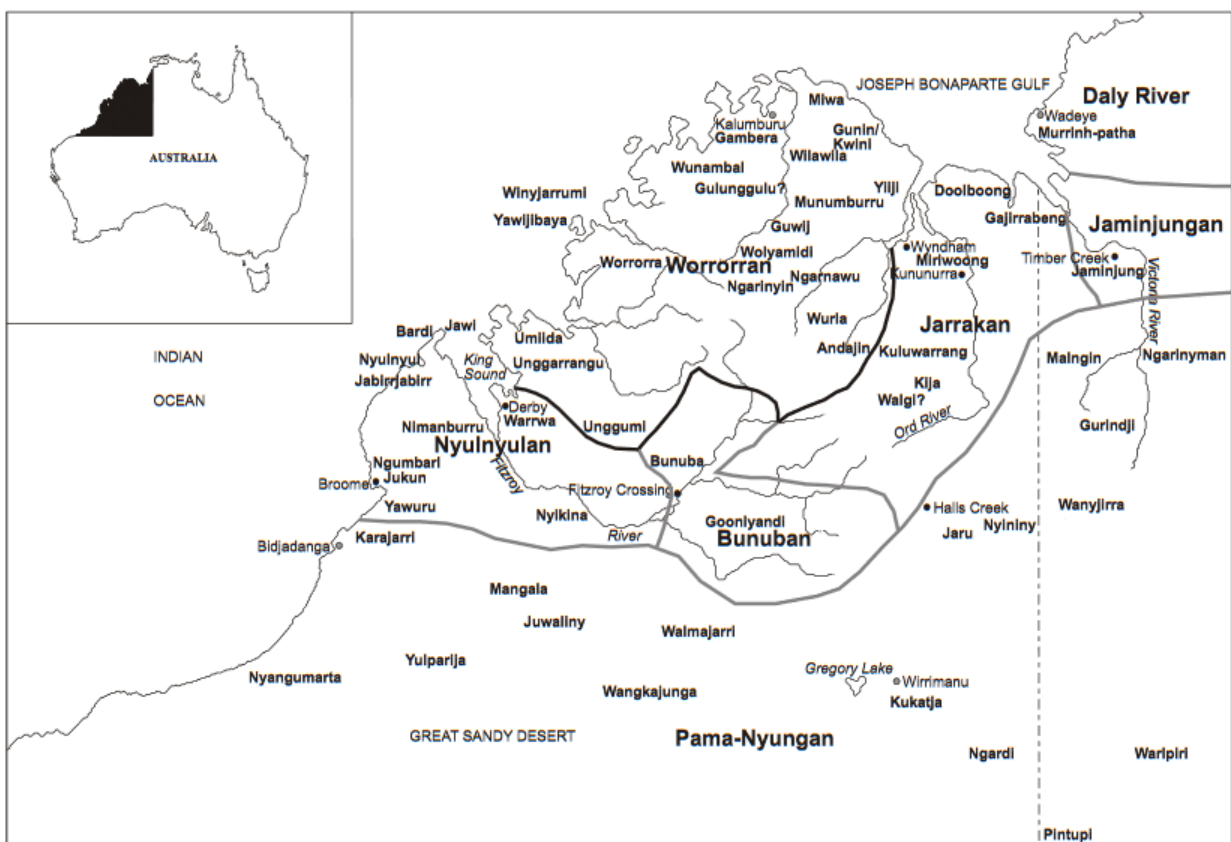
Map 2.2 The Jarragan family and surrounding language families (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:3)

Map 2.2 illustrates where Jarragan languages are traditionally spoken in the context of neighbouring language families. Jarragan country lies in the East Kimberley which is situated in the north-west of Australia. In McGregor's words, Jarragan territory comprises "a narrow belt extending north-east from near the junction of the Fitzroy and Margaret Rivers near Fitzroy Crossing to Wyndham, on Cambridge Gulf, near the Northern Territory border" (2004:40). The Ord and Keep Rivers flow through Jarragan territory.

In 1998 the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng people were granted ownership rights to "land and waters in the east Kimberley region of Western Australia and an adjacent portion of the Northern

Territory known today as the Keep River National Park" (Barker 2004:160) following a Native Title Claim,[26] a decision upheld in 2000 by the Full Court of the Federal Court after an appeal.[27] According to Christensen, the anthropologist in the 1998 Miriuwung Gajerrong claim, the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng "combined territories stretch across some 200 kilometres from their northern-most extremities, including seas and offshore islands, to their southernmost extremities south of the artificially created Lake Argyle" (2004:176). She goes on to state that "[t]he Cambridge Gulf in Western Australia constitutes, in broad terms, the westernmost point of their combined territories, while 200 kilometres or so away the Victoria River in the Northern Territory marks their easternmost extremity."[28]

Miriwoong country, specifically, lies in the Kununurra area in the north-east of Western Australia but also stretches eastward for about 100 kilometres beyond the Northern Territory border. In the western direction it continues for 20-30 kilometres beyond the Ord River (Olawsky 2013:43). Miriwoong country encompasses lands now covered by Lake Argyle (Olawsky 2010b:146). As Newry & Palmer (2003:102) explain, "Kununurra, the Lake Argyle and Lake Kununurra are in the heart of Miriwoong country". In the AIATSIS database[29] the location of the Miriwoong language is described in terms of pastoral stations (quoted from Kofod (1978:1), see Map 2.3 for the locations of those stations (Graham-Taylor 1978)): In the north(west), Carlton Hill homestead is still a part of Miriwoong country, in the east Newry Station is included, in the south-east it is Rosewood and Lissadell homestead in the south.[30] To the west "a line approximately that of the Hall's Creek road" is mentioned. It is added that House Roof Hill and Molly Spring Creek Yard mark the western boundary. Geographically speaking, the Ord and the Dunham Rivers as well as the Carr Boyd Ranges are listed as lying in Miriwoong country. The border is described as the point "[w]here the Ord River becomes salty at Carlton Crossing" (ibid.).

---

[26] *Ben Ward & Others v State of Western Australia & Others* (1998) 159 ALR 483; 1478 FCA (24 November 1998).

[27] *Western Australia v Ward* (2000) 99 FCR 316: (2000) 170 ALR 159: (2000) FCA 191; (2002) 191 ALR 1: (2002) HCA 28. The High Court heard an appeal against the Full Court's decision in 2002.

[28] According to Barker, who worked as a barrister in the claim, the area granted by Justice Lee in 1998 comprised land and waters in the East Kimberley and adjacent portions of the Northern Territory including Keep River National Park. Native Title was determined for both Miriwoong/Gajirrabeng and the Balangarra for Boorroonoong (Lacrosse Island), and for areas where roads and other improvements had been effectuated it was judged that total extinguishment of native title had occurred (2004:160). Note that Christensen points out that "the area to be claimed included much but by no means all of what was generally understood to be Miriuwung and Gajerrong country" (2004:178). For more details on the claim see §2.2.5 on the history of the Kimberley region.

[29] http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/main.php, AIATSIS Code: K29, AIATSIS reference name: Miriwoong.

[30] In Shaw (1981:35) Grant Ngabidj reports that Miriwoong people used to live in the areas of Newry, Argyle and Rosewood Stations when he was young. They used to be more to the south including Texas Downs, but due to depopulation Miriwoong people were mainly found in the areas further north at the time of writing (or rather speaking). In the glossary Miriwoong country is described as "centering on the Ord River valleys, including Argyle Downs and Ivanhoe Stations and spreading eastwards to Newry Station".
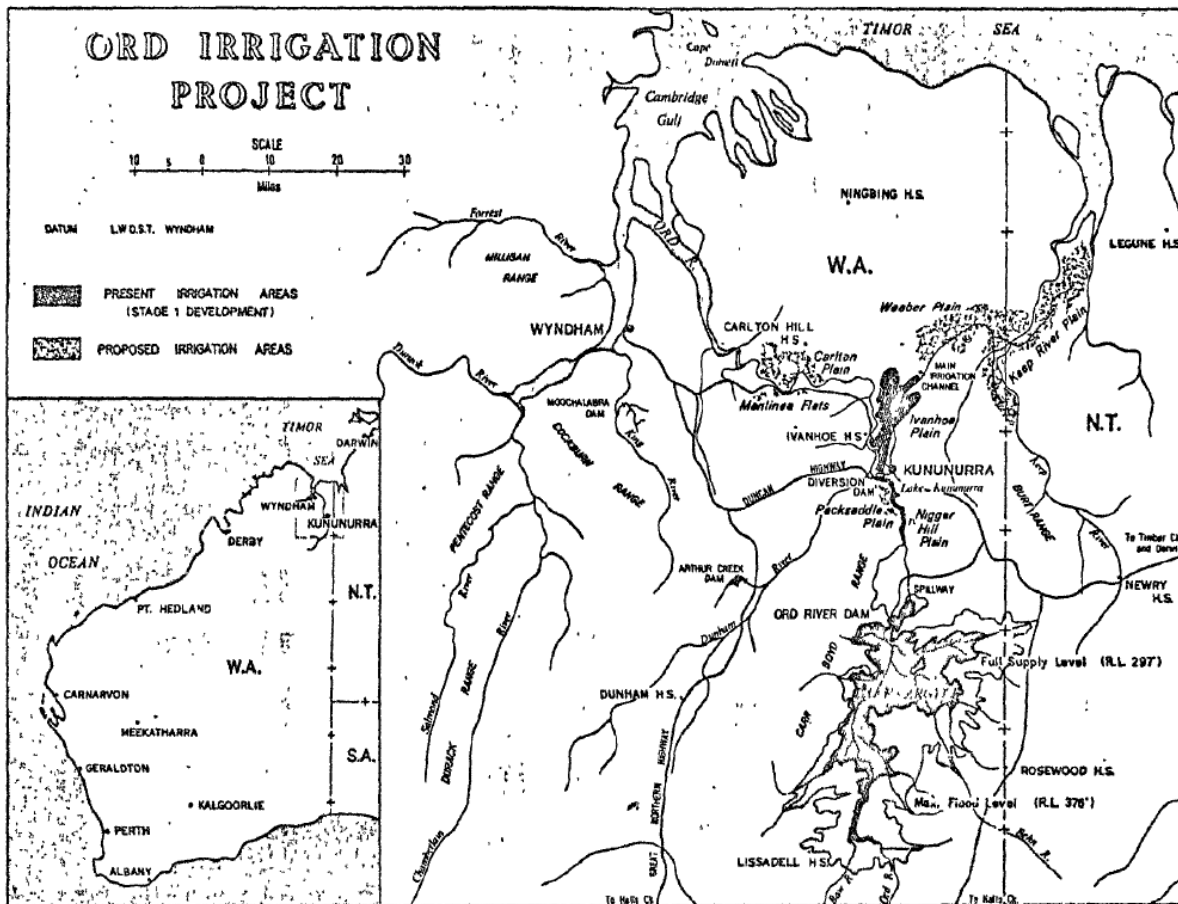
Source: *The Ord Irrigation Project*, P.W.D., Perth, August 1972, p. 3.

Map 2.3 Pastoral stations on Miriwoong country (Graham-Taylor 1978)

In a video from 2014 entitled *Welcome to Country*[31] Miriwoong Elders Agnes Armstrong and Button Jones explain that "Miriwoong country is from Argument Gap back to Legune, this side of Legune [Station] where the Northern Territory border is and back to Carlton [Station] and here in Ivanhoe Station and all around here, not far from Halls Creek turn-off right around back here [in Kununurra]".[32]

The Miriwoong population is not distributed equally over the territory described above. Kofod observes that "[t]oday most Miriwoong people live in and around Kununurra or on out-stations in the surrounding country" (2009a:1). More details are given in Christensen (2004:177), who relates that some of the Miriwoong "continue to live and work on pastoral stations (some now Aboriginal owned and run), others live in the small communities built over the last quarter of the twentieth

---

[31] The video is part of the iPhone application *Welcome to Country* by Weerianna Street Media. According to the app description "[t]he app. is part of WSM's 'Digital Dreamtime Project' and is proudly supported by the Australian Government and Woodside Energy / Pluto LNG (operated by Woodside in Joint Venture with Tokyo Gas and Kansai Electric)." http://welcometocountry.mobi (accessed 2017-10-09).

[32] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to treat the other Jarragan languages in equal detail. With respect to closely related Gajirrabeng, suffice it to quote that "Gajirrabeng country begins just north of Kununurra and stretches all the way to the coast and slightly towards the east, bordering Jaminjung and Ngarinman land." (Olawsky 2014:362), see also Map 2.3.

century in various parts of the territory." These locations are "generally situated on small government reserves or excisions from pastoral stations and national parks". Further, some Miriwoong people are said to live in Wyndham (ibid.). Newry & Palmer explain that the speakers of the Miriwoong language live "in the Kununurra area" or "in communities over the border in the Northern Territory" (2003:101).

2.2.4 Number of Miriwoong speakers

First of all, some background information about the Australian population will be given in order to put an estimate of the number of Miriwoong speakers into perspective. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' census (ABS 2016), there are 23,401,892 people in Australia, 649,167 (2.8%) of whom are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. In Kununurra (State Suburbs) 22.9% of the population of 5,308 people are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. In addition to Australian (33.0%), English (24.4%), Irish (6.8%) and Scottish (5.8%), Australian Aboriginal (5.1%) is among the most common ancestries in Kununurra (State Suburbs). As Christensen already stated in 2004, the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng nowadays are in the minority, although "away from the main township of Kununurra" they make up a large percentage of the population (2004:177). At the time she estimated that there are five to six hundred people of Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng descent, but explains the difficulties in assessing firm numbers: Not all Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng people identify as either one or the other, but prefer to refer to themselves as 'half-half' or 'mixed' between Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng or between one of those and "other language groupings found in the region, particularly [...] the Kija to the south, the Malngin to the south-east, the Ngarinyman to the west and south-west, and the Jaminjung to the east and north-east" (2004:176).[33] Similarly, Joolama estimates that there are around 1000 Miriwoong people in and around Kununurra, but who the children will identify with also needs to be taken into account (Newry 2015 p.c.).

A variety of factors contribute to the fact that it is difficult to state the number of speakers of Jarragan languages with any certainty. One obvious way to approach this question is to consult the data from the ABS census. However, it has been widely observed that census data on speaker numbers need to be interpreted with care.[34] The number and content of the questions asked, as well as the way they are asked, greatly influence the answers given and their interpretation.

---

[33] Christensen warns that "it seems likely that some of the people who now identify as Miriwoong and Gajerrong are descended from people identified in the past, at least in some circumstances, as Gooloowarrang, Doolboong, and Wardenybeng" (ibid.).

[34] McConvell & Thieberger observe that there are "issues surrounding the meaning of the responses" to the Australian census (2003:51), and warn that due to methodological choices, namely the projection of results from a sample of 17,500 Indigenous people "the ABS survey of 1994 (ABS 1996) [...] is clearly not a reliable source for numbers of language speakers" (2003:52). Furthermore, they find mismatches between figures reported in the 2001 census and other regional surveys (ibid.). Similarly, Newry & Palmer ascertain that "accurate census data are hard to come by" (2003:101).

When a person indicates in a census that he or she 'speaks' a certain language, this statement will most probably include a variety of factors: The person might assert a certain ancestry, specify the language he or she identifies with and/or list the language he or she knows best or uses most. The respondent's definition of a speaker of a language might therefore differ, for example, from that of a linguist, who tends to define speakers in terms of proficiency, fluency and frequent use, preferably in a variety of domains and functions.

Social and historical factors such as the prestige currently accorded to a language, language policies that either subdue or aim to maintain, stabilise and revitalise a language have been observed to lead to under-reporting or over-reporting of speaker numbers.

Moreover, demographic factors can influence an individual's estimation of whether he or she sees him/herself, his or her family and community members as speakers of the language: When the number of people who identify with a(n endangered) language decreases and only a few speakers with a full mastery of the language are left, the level of proficiency perceived to be required to count as a speaker of a language might diminish over time (Evans 2001:258).[35]

Further, McConvell & Thieberger (2003) explain that there are issues with comparing speaker numbers between censuses. First, there are differences between the censuses in the questions that were asked: In the censuses before 1996,[36] only one language-related question was asked, namely what language the respondent speaks at home. There was no other opportunity to state one's ethnic affiliation (2003:52). In fact, this question on the language spoken at home was designed as a surrogate for a direct question on ethnicity (ibid.). McConvell & Thieberger demonstrate that the decision to ask two rather than one language-related question in the 1994 survey (ABS 1996) probably had ramifications as to how the respondents understood and therefore answered these questions. McConvell & Thieberger interpret a difference in the percentage of residents who 'speak an Indigenous language' and 'speak mainly an Indigenous language at home' to mean that at least some respondents "interpreted the question 'do you speak a language other than English at home?' as 'can you speak an Indigenous language?' without qualification as to whether it is used at home" (2003:53).

---

[35] Evans explains what this could look like: "speaking a language gets redefined from having a full command of all registers, to having a good command of the language but some gaps in grammar and lexicon and a compressed stylistic range, to knowing a certain number of fixed phrases and words, to knowing a few score vocabulary items, down to remembering a couple of words with an anglicized pronunciation" (2001:258).

[36] According to the 'Data quality statement for Language spoken at home (LANP)' "[a] question relating to languages spoken was first asked in the 1933 Census, but not again until the 1976 Census. All censuses since then have included a similar question", http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2900.0main +features100622016 (accessed 2023-09-25). Only one answer, namely the language spoken most, is permitted per language-related question (ibid.). McConvell & Thieberger (2003:52) note that after some discussion in the early 1980s the wording which asks what language each respondent speaks at home was arrived at.

Second, it has become clear that not only these kinds of changes in the make-up of the survey need to be taken into account when comparing census data from different years but also changes in society. As mentioned above, the definition of who counts as a speaker can vary over time. Not only demographics play a role here, but also the trend towards more acceptance of Aboriginal languages in the wider society. Although senior speakers still remember and have told their families stories about the time when the use of an Aboriginal language was strongly discouraged, and in many cases even punished, the feeling of a 'shame job' is gradually subsiding (McConvell & Thieberger 2003:53) and instead concern about language shift and pride in one's ancestral language prevails. This process can be assumed to have been accelerated by the current need to prove an ongoing connection to customary practices during proceedings in relation to Native Title claims, which often involves demonstrating knowledge of the Traditional language (Evans 2001:260). A continuation of the use of the language can also be a factor in applications for resources for language maintenance and revitalisation, and for enforcing the right to interpreting in official situations such as at court (ibid.).

In summary, the prestige accorded to a language and its importance for identity construction, as well as the desire to stabilise and revitalise it, will probably result in the over-reporting of numbers of speakers of Traditional languages. This issue has been recognised, for example, in the National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS) report (Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies 2005). One of the languages for which this phenomenon is attested is Miriwoong: "the Miriwoong language […] was mentioned in the [State of Indigenous Languages] SOIL report [McConvell & Thieberger 2001] as a case of over-reporting in the 1996 census" (AIATSIS 2005:76). If this trend is assumed to have continued, this could explain why Miriwoong is one of the languages for which an increase in absolute numbers was registered from the 1996 to the 2001 census (McConvell & Thieberger 2003:53).

The aforementioned difficulties in assigning speaker numbers to languages are reflected in the fact that the figures reported for Miriwoong in the literature vary extensively. In the following, an overview of some of these figures will be given. They date from 1973 to 2017 and range from less than 5 to 300 speakers. First, numbers from the latest census and general overviews of Australian languages will be stated. These will be followed by claims from a report on the region and a Master's thesis on Miriwoong. Then the most recent figures will be listed and an evaluation of these in light of recent experience will be undertaken.

According to the 2016 ABS census, 2.2% of the population of Kununurra and surroundings ('State Suburbs' vs. 7.8% for the smaller 'Indigenous Areas')[37] speak Miriwoong at home as

---

[37] Here another difficulty in interpreting census figures arises: The areas for which data is aggregated (in the Quick Stats) does not correspond to boundaries that would be more interesting from an Indigenous (or anthropological/linguistic) perspective: The census area called 'Indigenous Areas' does not cover much territory beyond Kununurra and thus only a fraction of Miriwoong country, and the area called 'State

opposed to 76.4% who speak only English at home. This amounts to 114 (vs. 88) Miriwoong speakers. Other languages include German 0.8%, Mandarin 0.8%, Tagalog 0.5% and French 0.5%. In Oates & Oates' *The 1973 supplement to a revised linguistic survey of Australia*, 15 speakers were counted. Yallop reported about 300 speakers in the Kununurra area in his 1982 monograph on *Australian Aboriginal languages* (1982:42). Schmidt's (1990) report about *The loss of Australia's Aboriginal language heritage* lists 10-20 speakers. The NILS Report (AIATSIS 2005:215) officially counts 58 speakers and classifies Miriwoong as 'severely' to 'critically endangered' (based on the 'factors of language vitality' proposed by UNESCO, Brenzinger et al. 2003).

In 1978, Kofod found in her Master's Thesis that "about twenty old people speak the language well" (1978:1). Likewise, McGregor's regional study of the Kimberley languages finds that Miriwoong is spoken fluently by fewer than 20 individuals (2004:40).[38] One year earlier a member of the community published an article together with the linguist Keeley Palmer, which asserts that there are approximately 50 speakers (Newry & Palmer 2003:101). Most recently (2017), the current Senior Linguist and Manager of the MDWg Language and Culture Centre, Dr. Knut J. Olawsky, said in an interview[39] with Australia Plus that fewer than a handful of fully fluent speakers remain (see also MDWg (2019:142)). Olawsky stresses, however, that there are up to a hundred speakers who are bilingual to various degrees.[40]

This dire situation had also presented itself during the field trips undertaken for the project conducted for this thesis in 2014 and 2015. Only four Elders were available for the project to act as authorities on the intricacies of the complex morphosyntax of Miriwoong. In fact, one of them passed away during the course of the project. Sadly, this development was not too surprising, as the Elders are all well over 60 years of age (see also Olawsky 2010a, 2010b). Among the middle-aged generation there are the above-mentioned Aboriginal English and/or Kriol – Miriwoong bilinguals[41] who have passive knowledge and learn Miriwoong as a second language. Still, most Miriwoong know only those words frequently incorporated into their mother tongue, Kimberley Kriol (see §2.3.3.1).

Suburbs' still does not cover all of Miriwoong country in Western Australia and ignores Miriwoong territory that lies in the Northern Territory altogether.

[38] Since the information on Miriwoong grammar in McGregor (2004) is based on Kofod (1978), this number is probably based on her Master's Thesis as well.

[39] http://www.australiaplus.com/international/study-and-innovation/how-international-programs-are-help ing-preserve-indigenous-lang/8686752 (2017-07-07, accessed 2017-10-08).

[40] This situation is similar with respect to most Kimberley languages. Schultze-Berndt comments on her research on Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru that "[t]he actual number of remaining Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru speakers is very difficult to estimate, […] because middle-aged people are fluent in the traditional languages to varying degrees […]" (2000:14). Within the Jarragan family it has been claimed that Kija is "the most viable" as about a hundred speakers were counted by McGregor in 2004. Note however, that while McGregor numbered three or four Gajirrabeng speakers, Olawsky (2013:43) laments that the last speaker has died.

[41] Here, the term bilingual is used with the understanding that in fact in many cases the term multilingual would be more appropriate since most Aboriginal people are able to converse in several languages (see §2.3).

In light of this small number of Miriwoong speakers, it is clear that an investigation into different dialects of the Miriwoong language is no longer possible. However, there are hints that different varieties might have existed. This would accord with the assumptions voiced by Blythe & Wightman, who claim that different varieties of Kija were spoken on the different pastoral stations and came to be influenced by one another after Kija people moved from the stations into town so that the different varieties came into more permanent contact (2003:70). In the case of Miriwoong, dialectal differences are at least lexical in nature (Kofod 2014 p.c.). For instance, Kofod observes that the word for 'foot' was probably *yambalng* near Ivanhoe Station but *yamagang* near Newry Station (ibid.).[42]

2.2.5 Contact history

McGregor (2004) gives a detailed account of important aspects of the history of the Kimberley region. He states that it has been inhabited for at least 40,000 years and that there is evidence of occupation by the Miriwoong on the Ord River from 18,000 years ago (2004:9). Following largely friendly contact with the Macassan people, which possibly started as early as the 14th century (Walsh & Troy 2016:82), the first contact of Kimberley Aboriginal Australians with non-Indigenous people was in 1688 when William Dampier visited the area (McGregor 2004:9). Colonisation of the region started comparatively late (ibid.), but the effects were severe. In an ABC interview[43] Stuart Rintoul (1998) describes that by 1883 about 20 million hectares of the Kimberley had become subjected to pastoral leases. From the 1880s until about 1930 the pastoralists took massive violent action against the Aboriginal Australians who are the Traditional Owners of these lands. Rintoul and McGregor detail the reasons that motivated the newcomers. Being outnumbered and feeling unsafe (Rintoul 1998) prompted the wish to keep Aboriginal people away from their dwellings and areas of interest such as water resources (McGregor 2004:10). Moreover, the pastoralists wanted to prevent the Aboriginal population from spearing their cattle for food. Apart from shooting hundreds of Aboriginal men, women and even children (Rintoul 1998) they also forced individuals to work for them (McGregor 2004:10).

McGregor also explains the role of Christian missions and government reserves both in protecting and assimilating Aboriginal Australians (2004:10-12). Most notably, children were segregated from their families to keep them away from 'negative' influence. Along with active discouragement of the use of Traditional languages, this had significant effects on the transmission of culture and language.[44]

---

[42] Kofod (in prep. (2020:1)) gives details about the dialects of speakers recorded by her.
[43] http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/linguafranca/the-role-of-language/3521112#transcript (1998-12-05, accessed 2023-09-25). Stuart Rintoul is a senior writer with The Australian.
[44] Another factor that bore on language practices is that some Aboriginal people from different countries were forcibly brought to government reserves that did not lie on their traditional country, see §6.2.4.

In addition to pastoralists and pearlers, the 19th century also saw an influx of non-Indigenous people into the Kimberley in relation to mining. Shaw relates that around 1886 a short-lived gold rush near Hall's Creek encouraged prospectors to come into the East Kimberley from Broome and Derby but also via Wyndham (1992:14).

By the 1950s the original population of the Kimberley of probably around 10,000, 8,000 of whom lived in the East Kimberley (Shaw 1992:14 who quotes Elkin 1932:297), had been reduced significantly not only by shootings, massacres and the effects of land grab and enforced relocation, but also by introduced diseases such as leprosy and venereal disease (McGregor 2004:12).[45]

The Miriwoong people were additionally affected by the Ord Irrigation Scheme, which took shape from the late 1950s (Christensen 2004:176) and led to the establishment of the township of Kununurra and the flooding of a large area on their traditional country. The Ord River was dammed in two places; in 1967 the Diversion Dam was constructed (McGregor 2004:6) and 40 kilometres south of Kununurra a larger dam created Lake Argyle in 1969 (McIntyre & Doohan 2002:188). The two dams were built in places that are sacred to the Miriwoong people (Kofod 2009a:1), and Lake Argyle now covers important sacred sites (McGregor 2004:6). These changes to the landscape affect the Miriwoong people who have a deep connection to the land and feel the responsibility to maintain it (for a detailed discussion see §6.2). Kununurra town was built in 1963 (Christensen 2004:177) forty-five kilometres away from the Northern Territory border (Kofod 2009a:1) and attracted Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous people with employment opportunities, facilities for medical care, stores and the like. The Ord Irrigation Scheme was aimed at agricultural development of the region. Thus, the dams were put in place to supply water for farming on Miriwoong country and to the town of Kununurra. At the time there was no consultation or compensation scheme (ibid.), but following a Native Title Claim the Miriwoong are nowadays recognised as Traditional Owners.[46]

The Native Title process began by establishing and incorporating the Miriuwung Gajerrong Families Heritage Aboriginal Land Corporation (alias Miriuwung and Gajerrong Land Council) in 1979 and 1985 respectively (Christensen 2004:178). This Land Council made an Application for a Determination of Native Title on 6 April 1994 (McIntyre & Doohan 2002:188). Stage 1 of the claim,[47] which comprised 7900 square kilometres of Crown land in WA and NT including Keep River National Park, Lake Argyle and an Aboriginal pastoral station, was filed with the National Native Title Tribunal (Christensen 2004:179). In January 1995 the President of the National Native

---

[45] Grant Ngabidj also attributes the reduction in numbers to skirmishes among Aboriginal people (Shaw 1981:69).
[46] For details on the claim see Henderson and Nash (2002), Chapter 8; and Toussaint (2004), Chapter 15-17.
[47] Stages 2 and 3 were planned to comprise pastoral leases in WA and the NT respectively (Christensen 2004:179).

Title Tribunal referred the matter to the Federal Court. The claim was to be judged under the Native Title Act of 1993 and the Aboriginal Legal Service was chosen as the representative body for the first applicants (ibid.). An unsuccessful challenge of the Miriuwung and Gajerrong Land Council's application by the Northern Territory[48] had led to the decision that a group of applicants would act "on behalf of the Miriuwung and Gajerrong People". The second applicants, a separate group of people, were considered by Justice Lee to constitute three "estate groups" within the Keep River National Park and were treated as being part of the Miriwoong Gajirrabeng community which was granted Native Title as a whole (McIntyre & Doohan 2002:190). A group of Balangarra people acted as the third applicants "on behalf of the Balangarra peoples".[49] Their overlapping native title interests in Boorroonoong (Lacrosse Island) were recognised (ibid.). See Christensen (2004:179) for concessions that were made by the first applicants to other parties including the Kija during the trial process.

As stated above, Justice Lee decided in 1998 that Native Title was granted "with respect to most of their claim" (Toussaint 2004:6) so that the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng people's right to "possess, occupy, use and enjoy the relevant claimed area" (Barker 2004:161) was recognised. However, this decision was appealed. Opposition came from the WA and NT governments and powerful industry groups but was joined by the Kimberley Land Council and the Northern Land Council who sought to better represent their clients whom "they saw as disadvantaged or excluded" by the 1998 judgment. Consequently, both the area over which native title was to be recognised and the scope of the rights and interests to be granted were cut significantly (Christensen 2004:181f). Matters of law addressed in the judgment by the Full Court of the Federal Court such as issues with extinguishment of Native Title went before the High Court in 2002.

2.3 Languages around Kununurra

Aboriginal Australians are renowned for being multilinguals. They have been described as speaking two or three languages fluently with some individuals being able to converse in five or six (Hudson & McConvell 1984:24f, quoted by Blythe & Wightman 2003).[50] This section presents which languages were traditionally spoken in the vicinity of Miriwoong country and with which language groups the Miriwoong have been in contact. Moreover, it discusses which languages are spoken in Kununurra nowadays.

---

[48] *Northern Territory v Lane* (1995: ALR 544; 59 FCR 332).
[49] *Ben Ward and Ors v State Of Western Australia and Ors* [1998] FCA 1478; 159 ALR 483 (available online at https://jade.io/article/115958?at.hl=Ward+v+Western +Australia+(1998)+159+ALR+483, accessed 2017-10-18).
[50] This has been confirmed by DwN who acknowledges that his grandfather spoke six languages including Ngarinyman, Jaminjung and Miriwoong.

2.3.1 Traditional languages

2.3.1.1 *Languages spoken in geographical proximity*

Map 2.4 Traditional languages of the Kimberley area (McGregor 2004:xxvi)[51]

Map 2.4 indicates the approximate locations of Traditional languages in the Kimberley area of Australia. The red circle is centred on Kununurra, which lies in the heart of Miriwoong country, and encompasses an area created when moving outwards from there for about 200km.
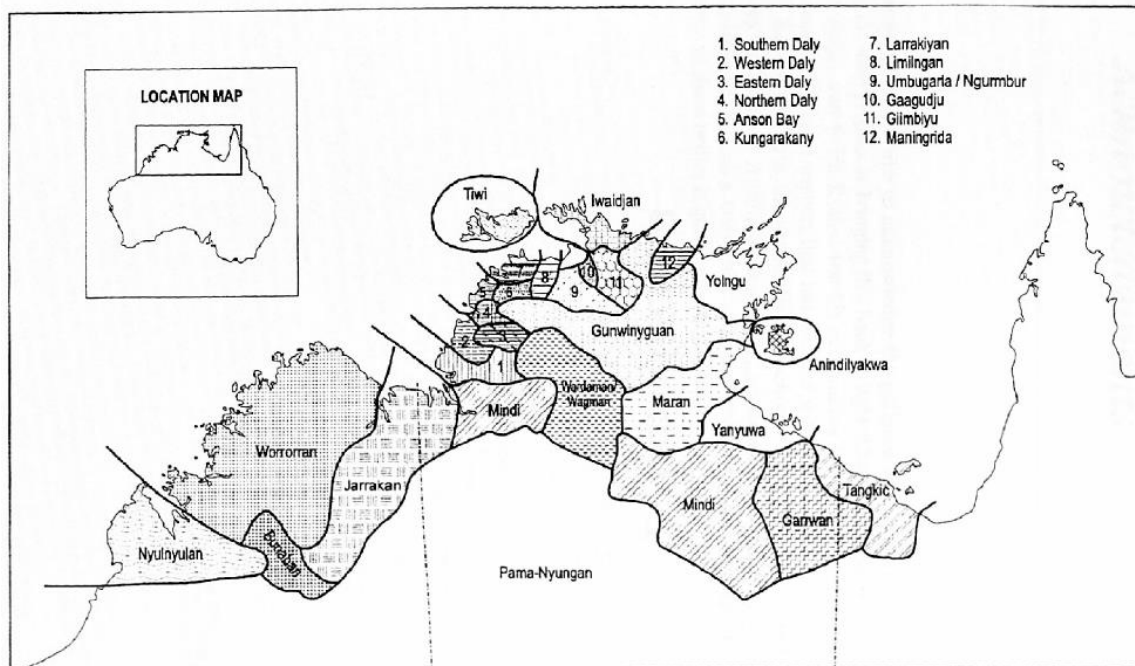
Map 2.5 The Non-Pama-Nyungan language families (Evans 2003b:2)

---

[51] There is one difference in this map as compared to McGregor (2004): Kwini was replaced by Gunin/Kwini.

32

In addition to the other Jarragan languages Kija (Gija), Gajirrabeng (Gajirrawoong) and potentially Kuluwarrang (Guluwaring) and Doolboong† (see §2.2), according to McGregor (2004) the following languages were traditionally spoken in these immediate surroundings of Kununurra (beginning from the north-east going south): Jaminjung, Malngin (possibly part of a dialect chain with Jaru, Gurindji (Ise 1999:ii), Bilinarra and Ngarinyman (Meakins & Nordlinger 2013)), Ngarinyin (and the respective varieties Andajin, Wurla/Walajangarri, Ngarnawu and Guwij),[52] Wolyamidi, Munumburru, Yiiji, Wilawila (a dialect of Ngarinyin or alternatively a member of the Wunambalic group), and Kwini (Gunin/Kwini).[53]

Map 2.5 shows the Jarragan language family in the context of the surrounding non-Pama-Nyungan language family (Evans 2003b:2). Contact with the Worrorran languages has been claimed for example by Kofod who states that the north-west Kimberley language Wunambal has "obvious close links" with Miriwoong (1978:173). McGregor & Rumsey (2009) provide information about lexico-statistical similarities between Worrorran and other languages including Miriwoong and Kija. They employ two different methods, a statistical one and a historical-comparative one. For the statistical method as many lexical items from a list of 100 basic vocabulary items as possible are identified for each language under discussion and the percentage of lexical correspondences between the languages is reported.[54] Apart from verifying the proposed Worrorran group with three subgroups, the statistical analysis also confirms that Kija and Miriwoong belong to one group (these are the only Jarragan languages included in the sample): For the Kija - Miriwoong pair 44% (32 out of 72) of the vocabulary items compared match, whereas the percentage is much lower when comparing the two languages to the other languages in the sample: The percentage is below 10% for Miriwoong with respect to all other languages (with the exception of the two Eastern Worrorran languages Munumburru (14%) and Wurla

---

[52] Where not indicated otherwise, statements about dialectal relationships are based on comments found in the AUSTLANG database (AIATSIS) which can be accessed online here: http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/ (accessed 2020-05-14).

[53] Note that maps of this kind are necessarily simplifications. The languages indicated on the map are spoken within areas rather than at a single fixed spot. These areas can be discontinuous and often overlap (see e.g. Rumsey 1993:193 concerning residency). They do not necessarily consist of the entire two-dimensional space between fixed borders but can be created by a collection of named places (Clendon 2009:347). The relationship between language and place is complex as sites within these places were in some cases created by ancestors speaking different varieties (Baymarrwaŋa & James 2014). See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the interrelationships between Aboriginal Australians, country and languages. For a list of preferred spellings of the languages depicted on the map see McGregor (2004:30f).

[54] The authors acknowledge that they do a "statistical examination of lexical resemblances and differences of a kind which is no substitute for the comparative method, but which [they] would argue can provide useful collateral support for it" (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:9). They caution that their statistical approach is not the same as lexicostatistics. They compare lexical items drawn from the basic vocabulary of the languages, which is more resistant to borrowing than non-basic vocabulary. When counting matches among the vocabulary items they do not distinguish between retentions, accidental similarities and borrowing.

(23%), which both neighbour on Miriwoong country)[55] and 15% or under for Kija with respect to the other languages, except for its direct neighbour Gooniyandi (31%) and Ngarinyin (19%).

Across the opposite – i.e. the eastern – border, the Mindi (Mirndi) languages are spoken. The family includes Jaminjungan and Barkly languages (Schultze-Berndt 2000:8). Among the former are Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru, which are considered dialects that were influenced by Miriwoong or Gajirrabeng and Murrinh-patha (in the case of Jaminjung) and Ngarinyman (in the case of Ngaliwurru, 2000:9). Schultze-Berndt indicates that the Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru people have had "ceremonial and inter-marital relationships with members of neighbouring language groups" including Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng (2000:11). This is argued to have resulted in a high degree of multilingualism, which is reflected in a high percentage of loanwords, and a high degree of structural convergence, across genetic boundaries" (ibid.). These kinds of contact have also been highlighted for Bunuban languages. McGregor (1990:9) notes that there has been "significant and important interaction" between the Bunuban language Gooniyandi and Kija (and other nearby groups).

Among the Pama-Nyungan languages adjacent to the Jarragan family are the Ngumpin languages. Speakers of Jarragan languages are said to have been in intimate contact with speakers of Ngumpin languages for hundreds or even thousands of years. McConvell assumes that they have communicated with the Ngumpin people by virtue of the Jarragan as well as the Ngumpin speakers being multilingual in Jarragan and Ngumpin languages (2003:88).

2.3.1.2 *Language Groups in Contact with the Miriwoong People*

In addition to having areal contact with geographically close languages, Miriwoong has traditionally been in contact with further languages on grounds of kinship ties and trade. This is the case, among others, for Murrinh-patha, Ngarinyman, and Wunambal.[56] In Newry & Palmer (2003) it is stated that Kija, which is closely related to Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng in terms of forming part of the same language family, has traditionally had less close links to these two languages than "groups to the north and east, particularly Ngarinyman, [Jaminjoong, Ngaliwoorroo] and Murrinh-batha". Those are linked to Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng "through marriage, stories, songs, dances" and between them artefacts are "shared and traded" (2003:101). This assessment can be verified by consulting texts from the Miriwoong Toolbox

---

[55] McGregor & Rumsey (2009:11) explain that the reported percentages could be higher for geographically close varieties than would be expected from actual genetic distance (whereas they could be lower than expected for genetically related but geographically distant varieties).

[56] In addition to this list, Newry (2015 p.c.) names Malngin and Nyinin (a dialect of Jaru). Note also the discussion in the Native Title claim report under the heading "Anthropological Evidence": *Ben Ward & Ors v Western Australia & Ors* [1998] FCA 1478 (24 November 1998), available online at www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/cth/FCA/1998/1478.html (accessed 2023-09-25). Here Nungali is also mentioned.

corpus (Kofod 2023) and oral histories from the area such as Shaw (1981), and it was also reflected in statements made by participants in the Miriwoong project.

The Toolbox database comprises texts about traditional trade recorded by Kofod. It is mentioned in the texts that there has been trade between the Miriwoong and the Ngarinyman and Murrinh-patha (called *Garramawoong* by the Miriwoong)[57]. The Murrinh-patha are said to have brought bamboo for the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng, and the Ngarinyman have traded spearheads (fastened on hardwood).[58] In addition, the Murrinh-patha are said to "pass on clap sticks" (DwN 2015 p.c.). Furthermore, pearl shells have been brought from downstream.[59] Apart from these material goods, stories and other types of abstract goods have been shared, as well (see also §6.2.1).[60] In another text,[61] the Wurla, Jaru and Yilngali[62] are asserted to be involved in *wirnan*.[63]

Kinship ties were dwelled upon during the project conducted for this thesis by three Miriwoong individuals: a young male adult, a middle-aged female adult, and a female Elder. The male consultant describes his mother as Miriwoong/Ngarinyman/Jaminjung and his father as Ngarinyman/Murrinh-patha, and the Elder narrates that her husband was Bilinarra (one of the languages of the Eastern Ngumpin *dialect chain*, which includes Gurindji, Malngin, Bilinarra and Ngarinyman, Meakins & Nordlinger 2013).

Shaw (1981) documents a variety of situations in which separate language groups would engage: To begin with, Law meetings[64] took place, for instance with Gajirrabeng, Miriwoong, Ngarinyman, Murrinh-patha and Yilngali people at Legune Station (1981:54). Moreover, at several

---

[57] Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF.

[58] Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF.

[59] Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF.

[60] McGregor describes that myths, rituals, and body designs "move" (1990:9) from Central Australia (2004:49) "in a direct line through the major Aboriginal communities of the southern Kimberley region, and in a westerly direction," while shells and shields coming from the west Kimberley and Dampier Land were traded in the opposite direction (1990:9). See Shaw (1992:47) for details concerning the Miriwoong: Peter Ngunung explains that "[t]he Miriwung people sold them [those big shells] this way [north] up through Gadjerung country."

[61] Elicitation Kofod [H139]:MM.

[62] Yilngali is potentially a name used by a neighbouring speech community to refer to Jaminjung (Schultze-Berndt 2000:7). Shaw (1981) mentions among other things the Mirima Council consisting of Yilngali-Miriwoong Elders. It is thus possible that Yilngali is a Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng name for the Jaminjung. However, at least nowadays Jaminjung is frequently used as a referential term by the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng.

[63] McGregor (1990:9) observes that in many Kimberley languages the "extensive network of trade and exchange" is termed *wurnan* (*wirnandi* in Gooniyandi). The term is also used with respect to giving food (cooked meat) to (female) relatives (Shaw 1981:83, here *winan* (*wirnan* in current Miriwoong orthography); see also the Toolbox text K94-16-Wirnan and §6.2.1). In the glossary in Shaw (1981:189) it is explained as a gift exchange and refers to either a person involved in *winan* or the trade-route. Note that the Wunan Foundation in Kununurra (with further offices in Broome and Halls Creek, wunan.org.au, accessed 2017-10-24) carries this term in its name.

[64] So-called *traditional Law* covers a wide array of Aboriginal cultural beliefs and practices (for a detailed explanation see §6.2.1). Another example from Shaw is a marriage Law "with blackfellas from Goose Hill, Ningbing, Legune, Argyle, Newry" (1981:84).

points in the oral history friendly contact between groups is hinted at in passing. For example, Grant Ngabidj comes across a camp of Gajirrabeng, Miriwoong and Wunambal people (1981:79).[65] On the other hand, the oral history also testifies to fights between groups. Several times reference is made to a number of language groups fighting against the Murrinh-patha and associated groups (1981:77/112/151). In several cases the Ngarinyman, Gajirrabeng and Miriwoong fought together and are grouped together as "countrymen" (1981:177), however, different alliances seem to have formed in different situations or over time. In Shaw (1992:45), for example, Peter Ngunung describes continuous fighting between Miriwoong and Jaminjung although the Jaminjung are on the same side with them against the Murrinh-patha following "[a] fight at Goose Hill over a woman" (1981:112). Stan Brumby gives details about a fight between Miriwoong and Kija (Shaw 1992:83f).

Languages Spoken Today

The effects of colonisation have led to major population movements[66] and the settlement of different language groups in towns. According to G. Newry (2002), Miriwoong is "the main language" in Kununurra but in addition several others are spoken. Besides Gajirrabeng and Kija she names Jaminjung, Murrinh-patha,[67] Ngarinyman, Gurindji, Jaru and Wunambal. In a *Language and Culture Awareness Course* booklet compiled by MDWg (MDWg 2012:15), the following additional languages are mentioned: Ngaliwurru, Ngu-ngaliwurru, Wurla, Bardi, Walmajarri, Arrernte, Warlpiri, and Nyungar.

During the course of the project for this thesis, the three Miriwoong individuals mentioned above discussed the languages spoken today around Kununurra and more specifically in the two town areas referred to as Garden Area and Reserve.[68] The languages enumerated by them are included in the lists above: All of them mentioned Ngarinyman and Gajerrong (Gajirrabeng) while the individual lists also included Jaru, Kija and Ngaliwurru. According to the senior speaker, Ngarinyman is spoken in the Reserve and "half of the Reserve speak Gajerrong-Miriwoong mix". Note that the latter could refer to Kriol (Olawsky 2015 p.c.).

---

[65] Similarly, in the above-mentioned Toolbox text Ngarinyman and Jaminjung people are described as walking eastward together after meeting with the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng on their country.

[66] For a map see Blythe & KLRC (2001: vi).

[67] In the linguistic literature these claims are confirmed; for instance, McGregor (2004:45) states that "[a]small number of speakers of Murrinh-patha (meaning 'language-good') and Jaminjung now reside in the eastern Kimberley region, in the vicinity of Kununurra." Information can also be found in oral histories such as Shaw (1992). For instance, when talking about the people in Kununurra, Peter Ngunung mentions the Guluwaring, the Murrinh-patha (here called "Garamau", a "variant of Murrinh-Patha" (Shaw 1981)) and Jaminjung (Djamindjung) (Shaw 1992:54).

[68] In the early days of Kununurra Aboriginal people who came to Kununurra settled in the area now known as *Reserve*. The name derives from the establishment of a camping reserve in 1973 by the Department for Community Welfare two kilometers north of Kununurra's centre (Shaw 1981:21 *My country of the pelican dreaming)*. The Aboriginal people arriving in Kununurra mainly came from the cattle stations Ivanhoe, Carlton Hill, Argyle, Newry and Rosewood (ibid.). Where the Garden Area is today there used to be a market garden which was started when the area of the Reserve was extended northward and west to an L-shape (Shaw 1981: 24).

2.3.2   Beyond Miriwoong: Factors influencing language choice

Even though Aboriginal Australians usually identify with a single language, traditionally they are nonetheless fluent in several of the languages with which they have been in close contact (Blythe & Wightman 2003:72 quoting Hudson & McConvell 1984:24f). Thus, in situations where different groups meet, the people involved can choose from their repertoire the language they want to use. Some of the factors involved will be briefly mentioned in this section.

In Evans' words, choosing a particular language or dialect "carries a high functional load, indexing the country and social identities of speakers and represented characters" (Evans 2003a:30). This seems to be important enough to allow for multi-lingual conversations in which each speaker makes use of his or her variety (i.e. the language or dialect they own, see §6.1): "Typically there is no etiquette that all participants in a conversation should speak the same language, and it is quite normal to witness multilingual conversations where each participant speaks their own language" (ibid.).

However, individuals may choose to speak another language in a given situation when this is deemed appropriate. Culturally relevant issues such as preferably speaking the language allotted by a Dreaming to the piece of land where one currently resides will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

Interestingly, it has been observed that code-switching, i.e. alternating between two languages (or dialects) within one conversation, is practiced to a much lesser degree than in comparable situations elsewhere in the world. Code-switching commonly takes place between a Traditional language and Kriol or Aboriginal English (e.g. Schultze-Berndt (2000:14) for Jaminjung and Kriol and McConvell & Meakins (2005) for Gurindji and Kriol), but seldom between Traditional languages (Adone 2016 p.c., cf. McGregor 2004:72). With respect to Miriwoong and neighbouring language groups, McConvell (1988) witnessed code-switching between Miriwoong and Gija as well as between other Traditional languages and dialects of the area, e.g. between Ngarinyman and Ngaliwurru (1988:100). Concerning Aboriginal English, he quotes Shaw's (1982) description of the insertion of Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng into Aboriginal English (McConvell 1988:99f).

Reasons for code-switching between Traditional languages include cultural and social causes such as when the different "legs" of certain song and myth cycles are told in a number of different languages (Evans 2003a:30), or when mutual solidarity is shown during ceremonies in relation to the funeral of an important Elder (Adone 2016 p.c.).

Further, there are numerous reasons for code-switching between a Traditional language and Kriol or Aboriginal English. The Miriwoong display some practices that are familiar from bilingual situations more generally, such as switching due to lexical gaps or accommodating one's speech to the interlocutors: Elders might speak exclusively in Miriwoong among themselves about particular domains, but start code-switching as soon as younger, English-dominant bilinguals enter the conversational scene. For example, the Elders ML and MAJ were observed to talk mainly

Miriwoong among themselves before the commencement of a MALLP (Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning Program) session but started to use more Kriol as soon as the Language Workers came into the room – these Language Workers would take part in the session as Apprentices, i.e. learners of Miriwoong. During breaks in between project sessions, ML and MAJ would speak mainly in Kriol but switch to Miriwoong for domains such as discussing fishing and fishing gear or inquiring about payments for their role in the project or pension payments. It frequently occurred that discussing whose turn it would be to be the next principal consultant for the project session took place in Miriwoong, as well.

2.3.3 Kriol, Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English

2.3.3.1 *Overview*

The Traditional languages mentioned in previous sections are no longer the only languages spoken in the Kimberley. Besides the languages of recent immigrants, which will not be discussed further in this thesis, an important role is played by Aboriginal English and Kriol. This section provides a brief introduction to these post-contact varieties.

As stated in the introduction, Kimberley Kriol is the first language (L1) of most younger Miriwoong people (Wurm 2007:518).[69] It is therefore used among the younger generations in everyday communication. With senior speakers often a 'heavier' (Hudson 1983:6) version of Kriol is used (cf. Olawsky 2010b:147), i.e. some Miriwoong vocabulary is inserted, especially everyday words such as *nalijang* 'tea' or *garram* 'salt'.

In communication with non-Aboriginal people 'Aboriginal English' is spoken. This term has been applied to a range of varieties of English spoken by Aboriginal Australians (Kaldor & Malcolm 1991:67). Eades (1996), among others, notes that there are considerable differences between mainstream (Standard) Australian English and Aboriginal English.

Standard (Australian) English is referred to by many Miriwoong people as 'High English',[70] indicating that their exposure to it is mainly connected to official (mainstream culture) domains such as administrative offices, medical facilities, legal issues and the like (see also McGregor, who uses the term to refer to "the specialised jargons of legal, medical, and administrative discourses" (2004:313)). The term also signals that Miriwoong people, like many other Aboriginal Australians, feel uncomfortable or insecure about Standard English, reflecting misunderstandings that occur on a regular basis (ibid.).[71] In recognition of this, Aboriginal Interpreting WA seeks to provide help

---

[69] See also the website of Aboriginal Interpreting WA, formerly known as Kimberley Interpreting Service (http://aiwaac.org.au): "Today, a majority of young regional Aboriginal people grow up speaking Kriol, only learning English at school" (accessed 2023-09-12).

[70] For references to this and other names for Standard Australian English see Kaldor & Malcolm (1991:70).

[71] Koch (1991) gives examples of how land claim hearings have benefitted greatly from clarifications by interpreters. Evans (2002:59) quotes excerpts from the transcript of the Croker sea claim (*Yamirr v The Northern Territory of Australia* [1998] 771 FCA (6 July 1998)) which the anthropologist Jeannie Devitt has

and support with language issues. Their slogan stresses the importance of interpretation: "Employing an interpreter ensures your message is delivered accurately in a culturally appropriate manner, leaving no room for misunderstanding because of a language barrier" (Aboriginal Interpreting WA).[72]

2.3.3.2 *Kriol*

In the following, further details about Kriol will be given. Kriol is a Creole language. According to Adone (2012) Creole languages emerge under "specific circumstances of language contact", namely during colonisation (2012:1). They are typically characterised by "an elaborate lexicon, derivational and some inflectional morphology, functional categories and an underlying word order" (2012:2). A Creole arises when the first generation of children acquires a Pidgin[73] as their first language (ibid.). It has been observed, however, that creolisation (i.e. the formation of a Creole from a Pidgin) can also take place over several generations and that both children and adults can be responsible for the process (see Adone (2012) for references).

According to Meakins (2014:375) Kriol is spoken as a first language by up to 30,000 people "across the Top End of Australia from western Cape York (Queensland) to Broome (Western Australia) and south to Tennant Creek (Northern Territory)". There are various dialectal variants, both on a regional and a social level (McGregor 2004:66). A Kriol utterance can therefore often be located on a continuum between basilectal ('heavy') Kriol, "which most resembles the previous Pidgin English" and is often enriched by the lexicon of a local Aboriginal language, and acrolectal Kriol, which is closer to Standard Australian English (ibid.).[74] Regional varieties of Kriol are often

---

identified as situations in which speakers of Aboriginal English were misunderstood by the transcriber. Mistakes in the transcribed utterances occurred on the level of pronunciation, syntax and lexicon. For example, *it call 'angbardi'* for Standard Australian English *it is called 'angbardi'* was transcribed as *eat cool angbardi*.

[72] Aboriginal Interpreting WA (AIWA, formerly Kimberley Interpreting Service) offers interpreting between English and "over 40 WA Aboriginal languages" or Kriol (http://aiwaac.org.au/index.html, accessed 2018-10-14).

[73] Adone explains that Pidgins are "speech forms that are essentially used as a means of communication among people who do not speak the same language" (2012:1), i.e. who do not have a language in common. There are no native speakers for any given Pidgin (ibid.). As McGregor notes, Pidgins are only used in "a limited variety of social contexts" and to communicate "restricted ranges of meanings" (2004:62). Meakins observes that they "typically emerge in situations of mass migrant labour, particularly forced slavery, and trade" (2014:364). In terms of structure they are more restricted than Creoles in the realms of the lexicon, morphology and functional categories (Adone 2012:2) and more variable (cf. Bakker 1994:27). Adone quotes Mühlhäusler (1986), who distinguishes three basic forms of Pidgins, namely jargons, stable Pidgins and expanded Pidgins (2012:1). In an alternative theory this process of stabilisation of a Pidgin through language change accounts for Creole genesis (see Adone (2012) for a historical account of competing theories).

[74] Bickerton (2016) attributes the term basilect to Stewart, but defines basilect, acrolect and mesolect as follows (for Guyanese Creole):
- *basilect* will be used to refer to that variety of Guyanese Creole most distinct from English,
- *acrolect* to refer to educated Guyanese English (a variety which differs from other standard varieties of the language only in a few phonological details and a handful of lexical items), and
- *mesolect* to refer to all intermediate varieties.

specified by referring to them by particular names such as Roper River/Ngukurr Kriol (NT) (Harris 1991; Munro 2000; Adone 2003b; Sandefur 1979), Fitzroy Valley or Kimberley Kriol (WA) (Hudson 1983), 'Westside Kriol' (NT) (Schultze-Berndt et al. 2013), or Ngan'giwatyfala or Daly River Kriol (NT) (Rhydwen 1993). Rhydwen points out that for socio-political factors the term Kriol when used by Aboriginal Australians often refers to the varieties spoken at Ngukurr and Barunga only (2003:155).

The Pidgin English varieties that preceded the development of Kriol did not only serve as means of communication with White and Asian farmers, miners, pearlers and gold-rushers but also came to be used as a lingua franca[75] between Aboriginal Australians (Meakins 2014:364, 367f) who do not speak each other's languages (McGregor 2004:65). The emergence of Kriol has been attributed to children subjected to the dormitory system in missions (Adone 2003a,[76] see also Meakins 2014:376 who summarises Harris 1986). As they came from different language backgrounds and would not yet have reached the adult's level of multilingualism,[77] they used and thereby contributed to the stabilisation of Pidgin English. When in the twentieth century these children adopted a Pidgin variety as their first language, it became a Creole.[78]

Harris (1993) explains the factors that are necessary for the genesis of a Creole. First, a "sudden and drastic social change" accompanied by a "severe disruption of normal language transmission" is required (1993:147f). This factor is fulfilled in the case of Kriol: Changes in the social lives of Aboriginal people came about through lethal conflicts with colonisers, dislocation to missions and stations and the like, as detailed above and in §2.2.5. As a result, contexts for natural language transmission changed or disappeared: McConvell notes in the context of Kimberley Aboriginal languages such as Kija that they – as elsewhere in Australia (see §3.1.1) – saw a "rapid decline" since the 1960s (1986:108). Second, Harris finds that a new community is crucial for Kriol genesis. This function is widely argued to have been fulfilled by the Anglican mission station established on the Roper River in 1908 (and later called Ngukurr).

Bickerton explains that "the term *mesolect* covers a broad range" and therefore justifies the use of the terms *lower mesolect*, *upper mesolect*, and *mid-mesolect* for "convenience of reference". He emphasises that these terms represent "sectors of a continuum and should in no circumstances be reified as discrete objects (in the way that languages and dialects are traditionally refied)" (Bickerton 1975:24).

[75] McGregor states that not only post-contact languages but also the Traditional languages Walmajarri, Gurindji and Murrinh-patha became lingua francas in various towns and cattle stations (2004:78). Walmajarri is spoken by "almost all Aborigines over the age of fifty" in the Fitzroy Crossing region as Bunuba, Gooniyandi, and Nyikina people use this language to communicate. Gurindji functions as a lingua franca in the large Vestey's cattle stations of the Northern Territory, and Murrinh-patha in the Roman Catholic mission in Wadeye (Port Keats) (ibid.).

[76] Adone's assessment is based on the testimony of G. Joshua.

[77] Remember also that the use of Aboriginal languages was actively discouraged and in many cases punished (see §2.2.5 on Contact History). Standard Australian English was taught instead.

[78] Meakins (2014:377) summarises Munro's (2000) alternative approach as follows: Adult learners gradually shaped Kriol over several generations as substrate features, i.e. features influenced by the learner's first languages, entered the language.

However, it is argued that several places, among them Moola Bulla reserve (Meakins 2014:378) and Barunga during World War II (Harris 1993:149), also fulfilled the criteria. Therefore, the so-called *multi-regional* hypothesis assumes that creolisation took place in different places (see Meakins (2014:377) and references given there). Rather than originating in Roper River Mission and subsequently spreading across northern Australia, in this view Pidgin English first spread and then acquired Kriol status at diverse locations.[79] Arguments in favour of this hypothesis are (i) the presence of Pidgin English on pastoral stations long before the founding of Roper River Mission, which makes creolisation in these places likely and (ii) the fact that conclusions are biased due to the amount of work that has mainly focused on the Kriol around Roper River rather than elsewhere (2014:378). In contrast, the structural similarities between Kriol varieties have been brought forward as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that creolisation took place in Roper River exclusively (Munro 2000, Adone 2015 p.c.).

According to Meakins (2014), the supporters of both hypotheses agree that all Kriol varieties can be traced back to New South Wales (NSW) Pidgin (2014:376),[80] which arose after first contact in the Port Jackson (Sydney) area. Through the pastoral industry as well as via stock routes and Afghan[81] camel teams, the pidgin was transported north both along the coast and within the interior. When spreading into Queensland it developed into Queensland Pidgin English, which in turn formed the basis of Roper River Kriol. For a map depicting the spread of pidgins at various points in time see Meakins (2014:363).

Meakins goes on to explain that further pidgins were formed independently but were "eventually replaced with varieties based on Queensland Pidgin English" (2014:372). Due to its potential influence on the Kriol variety now spoken on Miriwoong country, so-called Western Australian (WA) Pidgin English will be mentioned here. This variety originated around Perth and Freemantle when colonists from England arrived there in 1829 (ibid.). McGregor notes that this coastal pidgin came to Broome, Derby and Wyndham with the relocation of the pearling industry from the south (2004:62). He distinguishes this variety from an inland cattle station pidgin, which arose "slightly later, in the late 1870s and 1880s" (ibid.). He mentions that this latter variety was brought north by sheepmen who then settled in the West Kimberley. Interestingly, he observes that it differed little from the variety that arrived in the East Kimberley via cattle drovers from

---

[79] From these locations the emerging Kriol spread further. For example, the closing down of Moola Bulla – after being sold in 1955 by the government to private interests (Blythe & Wightman 2003:71) – is believed by Hudson to have led to the spread of Kriol to Fitzroy Crossing, since "a truckload of" Kriol-speaking children were brought there from the reserve (1983:13–15).

[80] Cf. South-east Australian Pidgin English (SEAPE) in Harris (1991:199).

[81] Walsh & Troy (2016:82) explain that not all cameleers referred to as 'Afghans' came from Afghanistan: "many came from parts of north-west India so that potential linguistic influences [on Australian Indigenous Languages] include Balochi, Pashto and Punjabi."

Queensland (compare Meakins above), and notes that some lexemes can be traced back to what Meakins calls New South Wales (NSW) Pidgin.

Initially, influences from the Nyungar language, which is traditionally spoken around Perth, could be attested in WA Pidgin English, but these are no longer found in later manifestations of the variety (Meakins 2014:373).[82] In contrast, these were increasingly found to display features from Eastern varieties (ibid.), which were probably brought by pastoralists migrating westward in northern Australia (ibid.).

Sociolinguistics of Kriol in north-western Australia

Sociolinguistic conditions under which Kriol is used are broached by Schultze-Berndt in the context of the Jaminjung, Ngaliwurru and Nungali people, who are neighbours of the Miriwoong and "traditionally occupied a contiguous area along both sides of the lower Victoria River" (2000:09). Schultze-Berndt asserts that Kriol is the language of everyday conversation "even among older people" (2000:14), who had not learned the Creole as their first language (L1).

The reasons for an adult's use of Kriol can be complex and varied. McGregor notes that in contrast to traditional languages, Kriol is viewed by some as the language of "freedom, wage labour, and hope of equality with whites" (2004:68 quoting Dalton et al. 1995:85) as it was spoken during droving expeditions and in the army. He also observes that Kriol could function as a "badge of identity" for Aboriginal people (2004:66). Furthermore, it has been claimed that Kriol replaced certain registers of traditional languages such as child-directed speech ('baby-talk', McConvell 1986:116). In this register the traditional language was simplified in order to allow children to acquire the language more easily. Since Kriol was perceived as a language that is easy to learn, it came to be taught to children instead. In addition, McConvell describes how code-switching is used to express social meanings (ibid.). For example, a command directed at a child can be reinforced by first issuing it in a Traditional language and then repeating it in Kriol (or the other way around). On the other hand, not all speakers of Traditional languages value and support Kriol to the same extent. Some view it as a major threat to their linguistic heritage (McGregor 2004:66).

Kununurra Kriol

So far the Kriol spoken by Miriwoong people is probably subsumed by most researchers under the label Kimberley Kriol, which refers to the variety described for Fitzroy Crossing by Hudson (1983). It is important to note, however, that the distance between Kununurra and Fitzroy Crossing is about as far as the distance from Kununurra to Katherine, where a separate variety called Westside Kriol has been described by Schultze-Berndt et al. (2013).[83] In addition, the languages

---

[82] Meakins gives two examples, namely verb final sentences and the use of *nothing* as a negator (ibid.).

[83] Westside Kriol is said to have been influenced by Jaminjung, Ngarinyman and Wardaman, which are traditionally spoken in a relatively small area east of Kununurra. It is to be assumed that the smaller region for Westside Kriol is to be explained by the authors' greater expertise in this area: They have based their analyses (among others) on Hudson (1983) for Kimberley Kriol and on their "own unpublished materials on

listed in this article as potentially providing a substrate influence on Kimberley Kriol, namely Walmajarri (spoken south of Fitzroy), Jaru (spoken near Halls Creek), Miriwoong and Kija (2013:241), cover a large area including the South and South-east Kimberley. Taking these areal considerations into account, and given the assertions by Miriwoong people that there are structural and lexical differences in their Kriol when compared to other varieties of Kriol – including assertions by a Language Worker who grew up north of Miriwoong country and learned another variety – it is worthwhile to explore further whether it is warranted to recognise a separate variety which could, for example, be called Kununurra Kriol.[84]

2.4 Language use among the Miriwoong people

This section serves to establish which languages are used in which situations by the Miriwoong nowadays. It relies on Indigenous knowledge, and therefore, in addition to consulting a written source published by a Miriwoong person, the section summarises what various members of the Miriwoong community have shared during the project about their sociolinguistic situation, i.e. who speaks which language to whom and when (Fishman 1965).

The thesis does not aim for a formal assessment of the speakers' proficiency in Miriwoong but seeks to demonstrate how community members experience the current use of the language, and what their attitudes and motivations are. Thus, a systematic sociolinguistic survey – a project in its own right – was not attempted within the scope of the project. Rather, informal interviews were conducted. This is more suitable especially for the Elders, who were not expected to feel comfortable and confident filling in a questionnaire.

Among other things, speakers were prompted for domains. They were asked, for example, what language is spoken at home as opposed to downtown at the shop, when joking or when talking about serious business, when telling off kids or when arguing. These questions were in part inspired by Rottet (2001). The aim was to find out in which domains Miriwoong is still spoken and where Kriol or Aboriginal English are more dominant. Additional domains and further aspects brought up by the participants during the conversations were also recorded.

As proficiency in Miriwoong is valued highly in the community and strongly linked to identity, it was to be expected that the views expressed in the interviews and conversations might paint a more positive picture than a formal assessment would generate. Regularly using Miriwoong words and phrases within conversation dominated by Kriol or Aboriginal English is not necessarily differentiated conceptually from speaking Miriwoong fluently in a linguistic sense (Olawsky

---

the Kriol spoken in Katherine and on a geographically intermediate variety, Westside Kriol spoken in the northern Victoria River District" (2013:242).

[84] Personal communication in 2015 indicated that this name would be accepted by the speakers concerned. Recently, the name has appeared in the literature, e.g. Adone et al. (2019).

2015 p.c.).[85] Therefore, some statements about the use of Miriwoong need to be understood against this background.

To begin with, the self-assessment by a female consultant from the Elder generation (PG) will be presented. When asked where and by whom Miriwoong is spoken, she asserted that "[a]ll the mob at the Reserve and Garden Area" speak the language. The follow-up question on whether this includes the young children as well was affirmed. The speaker gave examples such as being understood when asking for water, tea, sugar, damper or a cup in Miriwoong, explaining that "[t]hey will pick it up for you." Note that these examples are taken from everyday conversation and the circumstances provide a rather clear context.

Her assessment shows that one needs to differentiate between objective criteria for proficiency of a linguistic system and personal (or communal) feelings of ownership of a culture and language. What is emphasised by the Miriwoong person is the children's ability to use their passive knowledge of Miriwoong to engage in socially accepted and expected behaviour.

A somewhat different picture was given by a middle-aged female learner (IN) who conceded that some people who live downtown "think they can speak Miriwoong, but they only know a few words". Only the "old people" were regarded by her as fluent speakers who use words that even proficient language learners have difficulty understanding. The residence of Miriwoong speakers was also narrowed down to the Garden Area and half of the Reserve only by this individual. The view presented in G. Newry (2002) similarly acknowledges that not all Miriwoong individuals speak the language in all circumstances as "the younger kids hardly speak their own language in public"; Kriol or Aboriginal English is heard when they communicate amongst themselves.

Further, speakers were asked about domains in which the Miriwoong language is used today. According to the people interviewed, Miriwoong is spoken (i) during personal exchanges between Miriwoong-speaking individuals, regardless of whether (non-Miriwoong) non-speakers are present and whether the situation is informal/private or somewhat formal/public, (ii) when following cultural protocol, but (iii) not necessarily during official gatherings of Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng people. These findings are reflected in the following responses: A senior speaker (AA) endorsed that the language is used at home and both while joking and while talking seriously. She added that she speaks Miriwoong to the kids even if the police happen to be present. Downtown it depends, according to her, on someone being there who understands the language. For example, in a shop she might ask a fellow Miriwoong person 'What does it cost?' in Miriwoong. Likewise, the first consultant mentioned above (PG) endorsed that Miriwoong is not only spoken in the Reserve and Garden Area, but also when Miriwoong people meet downtown, as when the

---

[85] Thus, it is not advisable to simply ask 'When and where do you speak Miriwoong?' and take the replies as facts on proficiency. In order to answer this question accurately (in a linguistic sense) one would need to have a conception of what it means to speak Miriwoong in terms of fluency, grammaticality and domains (Olawsky 2015 p.c.).

sentence "*Ngoowaga-ngerri ngoonyjoonga, boonang*" 'I don't have (chewing) tobacco or ashes' is uttered. This is the typical answer to a frequent question during Miriwoong encounters, which can often be witnessed in basilectal ('heavy') Kriol: "*Any ngoonyjoo*?" 'Do you have any tobacco?' The senior speaker (AA) says that Miriwoong is also used to ask the ancestors for fish while fishing, a cultural practice which is still actively observed. In addition, the above-mentioned middle-aged female (IN) named art and storytelling as another aspect of Miriwoong life where the language is frequently spoken: At Waringarri Aboriginal Arts the stories illustrated in the paintings produced at this art centre are told. An Elder (ML) complained, however, that "town people" (i.e. people who live in the city centre rather than the Reserve or Garden Area) do not talk Miriwoong at MG [Miriwoong Gajerrong Corporation] meetings.

Finally, a middle-aged language learner (SS) commented regarding the usage of languages among the Miriwoong that they mix Kriol and English when they 'humbug' her for money (i.e. annoy and pressure her by persistently asking).

2.5   Language attitudes

Many statements described in the previous section allow for an interpretation of language attitudes. This will be ventured in this section. The first part focuses on Miriwoong and the second part on Kriol.

2.5.1   Miriwoong

The account of the frequency of usage and the level of competence of present-day Miriwoong people given by the Elder (PG, see above) paints a clear picture of her attitude toward the Miriwoong language. For her it is natural and desirable for the young children to be able to communicate in the language.

The speaker who mentioned speaking Miriwoong to her ancestors when going fishing (AA) shows that she regards the use of the language as both culturally appropriate in this situation and necessary for success.

Similarly, another speaker (ML) implied that not speaking Miriwoong at important meetings is unfavourable. From hearsay and – however scarce – personal experience it can added as background knowledge that at meetings that concern the community Elders are invited and welcomed, but that the discussion is not always held in a way (both linguistically and to some extent culturally) that Elders are actively included. To a major degree this is due to language barriers since Board members do not usually speak Miriwoong or Kriol but mainly English – in some cases 'High English'.

One of the female Language Workers (IN) related that she uses Miriwoong with her son downtown in the shop to see the reaction of other people. When (non-Indigenous) people stare at her because of this, she simply stares back. This shows that she takes pride in her language and

deliberately signals her Miriwoong heritage to the non-Indigenous society. She also speaks Miriwoong when she sees family members or Aboriginal people from other 'tribes', presumably to set herself apart from other language groups (cf. Melancon 2000) and clearly identify as Miriwoong. The speaker confided that she can get cross when people pretend (or even believe) they can speak Miriwoong although they cannot. She affirms that they should know some Miriwoong and assumes that those who know only a little must be in the process of learning, implying that every Miriwoong person will necessarily value the command of Miriwoong as important and desirable.

The statement by one of the senior speakers (AA) that she speaks Miriwoong to the children when police are present can be interpreted in a similar way. The speaker feels no shame to be speaking her language in front of the authorities. In addition, in these circumstances she might use her language for demarcation from non-Indigenous society.

In addition to the oral self-assessment interpreted above, written statements and actions by Miriwoong people can be understood as expressions of the value they accord their language. For example, G. Newry emphasises that "[t]he Miriwoong language and culture is still strong" (2002:26f). Moreover, a broad variety of revitalisation projects (for details see §3.3) are being carried out at MDWg, including the hosting of a Facebook page[86] where not only pride in achievements in terms of the revitalisation of the Miriwoong language is expressed, but where positive aspects of the maintenance of Indigenous languages in general are also being posted regularly.

2.5.2 Kimberley Kriol

The prestige ascribed to Kimberley Kriol is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is often referred to as "Broken Down English" in a clearly derogatory way. On the other hand, many speakers proudly identify as Miriwoong speakers if they are able to use 'heavy' Kriol. One speaker (007) stressed specifically that during her childhood she was brought up in Miriwoong, not Kriol, suggesting that she regretted having mainly been exposed to Kriol in later years. These observations suggest that Miriwoong enjoys great prestige, whereas Kriol receives more prestige the more influence from Miriwoong it exhibits.

Interestingly, when interviewed by Hannah Palombara on their use of the Kriol language, one of the Language Workers at the MDWg (JP) compared Kriol to the Jamaicans who "talk funny", showing that Creole languages are seen as deviant from mainstream English, but not necessarily in a negative way. The speaker added that he uses the language when joking around with his friends, for example with Lawford Benning, who was also an Apprentice in the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning Program. This shows that they feel most comfortable with Kriol. He clarifies

---

[86] Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring: https://www.facebook.com/mirima (accessed 2023-09-24).

that they also speak English, but mainly Kriol with each other: "when we're together we talk in the language, Kriol, English, mainly Kriol."[87]

To sum up, attitudes towards Miriwoong are consistently positive. It is desirable for children to speak the language and there are situations during which it is culturally appropriate to speak Miriwoong and where successful outcomes are tied to the language. Marking one's Miriwoong heritage via the use of the language fills Miriwoong people with pride. In contrast, feelings toward Kimberley Kriol are less straightforward. Kriol receives greater acceptance the closer it is to Miriwoong on the Kriol continuum.

---

[87] Palombara HL12-1.

3 LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

This chapter serves to shed light on language endangerment both in Australia generally and of the Miriwoong language and its family more specifically (§3.1). In §3.2, indicators of endangerment and vitality and the potential consequences of endangerment are discussed. §3.3 covers revitalisation efforts for the Miriwoong language.

3.1 The situation

3.1.1 Language endangerment in Australia

It has been estimated that 250 to 300 languages were spoken in Australia before colonisation – depending on where the line is drawn between language and dialect, this number can grow to 450 (Wurm 2007:436, Bowern 2018 p.c.). However, the decimation of the Indigenous population due to introduced diseases, dispossession, murder and cultural disruption (see also §2.2.5) have caused a dramatic decline in Traditional languages. According to the NILS 2 report (Marmion et al. 2014) 130 of them are no longer spoken. Of the 120 that are still spoken only 13 can be considered strong, i.e. they are still transmitted to children (Tsunoda 2006:20), while around 100 are critically to severely endangered (2014:xii). Very few languages have more than 1000 speakers, and many are left with only one or two (Tsunoda l.c.). Thus, in contrast to the situation reported in the first NILS report in 2005, now the majority of Traditional languages are no longer spoken. As mentioned in §2.3.3.2, the Kimberley saw an analogous loss of languages (McConvell 1986:108).

3.1.2 Indicators of language endangerment and vitality

A variety of factors are typically taken into account when determining the level of endangerment of a language. The number of speakers, for example, is a relevant indicator. However, it is difficult to state in general terms how many speakers are necessary for a language to remain strong. The figure depends on other factors such as the transmission of the language to younger generations. If transmission takes place, a relatively small figure such as 1000 speakers (or even considerably fewer, see AIATSIS 2005:126) does not necessarily mean that the language is endangered. If a language is not transmitted, a large figure of tens of thousands can nevertheless not be sufficient for long-term survival and the language concerned is potentially critically endangered within one generation. Tsunoda (2006:9) summarises further indicators that have been employed to classify languages in terms of the degree of their endangerment. In addition to the above-mentioned factors of (1.) number of (fluent/mother-tongue/first language) speakers and (2.) transmission to children, Tsunoda observes that some scales operate with (3.) age of speakers and (4.) functions of the language in the community/society. Fishman (1991:87–109), for example, focuses on the

fourth factor (Tsunoda 2006:10), while the Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2020) treats transmission to children as the "key factor".[1] Grenoble (2006) and Krauss (2007) use all the factors identified by Tsunoda (2006:12).[2]

In response to global language endangerment, linguists have also taken the opposite perspective and studied the factors which favour or disfavour language vitality. A synthesis of the sources named above, together with UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert group on Endangered Languages (Brenzinger et al. 2003), the NILS report (AIATSIS 2005), and Lewis (2009), results in the following list of indicators: (a) transmission to children, (b) language attitudes, (c) state of documentation and availability of educational materials, (d) total number of (fluent/mother-tongue/first language) speakers, (e) percentage of speakers within the community, (f) age of speakers, (g) functions of the language in the community/society, (h) response to new domains and media, (i) economic opportunity or the lack thereof, (j) governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies including the official recognition of languages within the nation or region, and (k) the use of second languages. Factors (a), (b), and (c) are argued to be most important, and factors (a), (b), (c), (g), (h), (i), (j) are those where support by a government is possible.

3.1.3 The situation of the Miriwoong language

In the following, the situation of the Miriwoong language will be summarised and its vitality assessed according to several scales. Miriwoong is a critically endangered language. A few speakers remain who have a good command of Miriwoong (factor 1) but most people who identify as Miriwoong have learned Kimberley Kriol as their first language (L1) and mainly converse in Kriol or Aboriginal English. Among the middle-aged generations many are bilingual in Miriwoong to various degrees (factor k). Most have a sound passive knowledge, while there are a few who have greater productive skills in the 40–60 age group. They are referred to in this thesis as senior speakers. However, as Miriwoong is not their primary language they do not often use language structures in context (Olawsky 2010a:147). The ability to carry out interactions fully in Miriwoong is restricted to a few elderly fluent speakers (ibid.). These are referred to in this thesis as Elders. Elders also use Kriol as their main language of communication both with younger Miriwoong people and also largely among each other in natural situations. As a result, apart from during language classes (details below) the language is rarely being transmitted to children (factor 2). Children mainly know Miriwoong words that they have learned via the 'heavy' (basilectal)

---

[1] 'Endangered Languages' page: https://www.ethnologue.com/endangered-languages (accessed 2020-06-21). Here details can be found on further relevant data the authors gather on the speakers and the community, such as "ethnic identity", "language attitudes", "the use of second languages", "official recognition of languages within the nation or region", and "economic opportunity or the lack thereof".

[2] Krauss' "schema for classifying languages according to degree of viability" (see below) transparently maps number and age of speakers onto endangerment categories in a table. In the text, Krauss also discusses intergenerational transmission, language use in educational and media domains (factor 4) as well as the role of state support for the language (2007:2).

variety of Kimberley Kriol (ibid.), such as words used frequently in the household; for example the Miriwoong counterparts of *water*, *tea*, *sugar*, *damper* (bread) or *cup* (see §2.4). Factors 1 and 3 from above, namely the number of Miriwoong speakers and their age, was discussed in more detail in §2.2.4: On the basis of the available written sources the NILS Report (AIATSIS 2005:215) registers 58 speakers, while newer sources number less than a handful of fully fluent speakers from the generation of 60 and older plus up to a hundred speakers from younger generations (Olawsky 2017).[3]

Speakers' attitudes toward Miriwoong are analysed in §2.5, they are consistently very positive. Many take pride in marking their Miriwoong heritage by using the language, and wish for their children to be able to speak the language. What nevertheless caused Miriwoong to become endangered was mentioned in several places throughout Chapter 2. Olawsky summarises that the erosion of the language can be traced back to multiple factors. In addition to "the general dominance of English in the region" today, since the colonial period, the Miriwoong people have endured circumstances which have made natural language use and transmission much more difficult if not impossible. Children were taken away from their parents (resulting in the so-called Stolen Generations) and on some pastoral stations the use of Traditional languages was forbidden. Conditions such as these have a bearing on the vitality of the language. Last but not least, the contact with the non-Indigenous world brought an armada of new concepts for which the Miriwoong people had no concepts and thus no terminology.[4] Before new words can be created and are accepted and used by the community, borrowing from English poses a potential threat to the Miriwoong language.

The functions of the language in the community/society (factor 4) will be dealt with below in §3.3.2 on the revitalisation of Miriwoong. Most importantly, Miriwoong is taught to a variety of age groups at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) and the language has also become part of the local school curriculum as a LOTE (Language Other Than English). MDWg also undertakes programmes for literacy development and programmes that promote the language in the media. The next paragraphs will assess how the situation described above can be characterised in terms of scales of language endangerment or rather language vitality.

First, according to Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) Miriwoong ranges between stage 7 and 8 (Olawsky 2010a:147). The scale runs from stage 8 to stage 1 and is a "quasi implicational" scale, i.e. higher scores imply (nearly) all of the lesser

---

[3] The latter is a quote from the current Senior Linguist and Manager of the MDWg Language and Culture Centre, Dr. Knut J. Olawsky. It stems from an interview with Australia Plus http://www.australiaplus.com/ international/study-and-innovation/how-international-programs-are-helping-preserve-indigenous-lang/ 8686752 (2017-07-07, accessed 2017-08-10).

[4] Ibid.

degrees of disruption as well (Fishman 1991:87). Stage 8 is verbalised as follows, where X is a placeholder for a language: "most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults". At this stage even the few remaining speakers have suffered attrition and are "very deficient in proficiency for the ordinary purposes of everyday discourse" (1991:88). It is possible to advance to lower scales of disruption by implementing preservation measures such as piecing together partial phonologies, grammars and lexicons. This is precisely what is being done in the case of the Miriwoong language by employees of the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg).

Stage 7 can be paraphrased as follows: "most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age" (1991:89). Therefore, to counter language shift, at this stage it is vital to achieve that younger generations use Xish as (one of) the language(s) of "normal socialization" (1991:90). Social events where language plays a crucial role such as concerts, performances, lectures or projects which foster active use of the language and its prestige such as periodic publications are helpful in reversing language shift as long as they target the child-bearing generation and their families rather than the older generations only. This way, intergenerational continuity is promoted (1991:92). Likewise, language classes for adults help to maintain the language but are not as important as "intergenerational language-in-culture use" (ibid.) when the aim is to reverse language shift. As will be described in more detail below, MDWg is active with respect to the advised measures: Language teaching targets all age groups from toddlers to adults above child-bearing age and both written and auditory resources are produced for families as target audiences.

Second, in 2017 the Ethnologue (Simons & Fennig 2017) classified Miriwoong as 8a, i.e. moribund, on a 13-point scale from 0 to 10 on the *Expanded* Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS, Lewis & Simons 2010). Languages classified as 8 or 9 are those whose few (if any) active speakers have passed the child-bearing age so that natural language transmission between the parent and child generation is no longer possible.[5] Thus, they are categorised as 'Dying'.[6] In 2020, this assessment was updated. Miriwoong is now classified as 8b, i.e. nearly extinct. With respect to 8b languages, the Ethnologue no longer refers to the remaining speakers as "active users" of the grandparent generation but simply "users" who "have little opportunity to use the language" (Eberhard et al. 2020). The place of Miriwoong in the Language Cloud,[7] which plots the

---

[5] 'Language Status' page: https://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status (accessed 2020-06-21).
[6] Note that some researchers, especially those interested in revitalisation of languages opt for terms that do not have discouraging connotations (see for example Krauss (2007:3) who criticises both *moribund* and *dying*, among others).
[7] 'Miriwung in the Language Cloud' page: http://www.ethnologue.com/cloud/mep (accessed 2017-12-31, 2020-06-21). Note that the webpage was later changed to https://www.ethnologue.com/language/mep/

number of first and second language speakers in relation to the EGIDS Level, is depicted in Graph 3.1. Miriwoong is represented by the red dot.
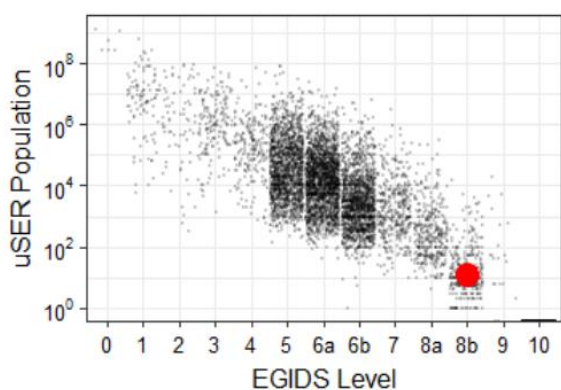
Graph 3.1 Miriwoong's place in the EGIDS Language Cloud (Eberhard et al. 2020)

In order to revitalise a 'dying' language, it is said to be necessary to implement strategies that target language acquisition in situations other than parents teaching their children (because this is no longer possible).[8] The recommendations for scale 7 languages on GIDS are thus similar to the ones for languages with the status 8 on EGIDS.

Third, Krauss (2007) is widely considered to have offered a helpful characterisation of endangered languages. According to his framework for classifying languages according to degree of viability Miriwoong is an *endangered* language of type *d* or even *d-*. It is *in decline* and more specifically *critically endangered*, as it is only spoken by a few people of the great-grandparental generation (2007:1). Table 3.1 depicts Krauss' "schema for classifying languages according to degree of viability, from *'safe'* to *extinct*" (ibid.).

---

and no longer depicts the language cloud (accessed 2023-09-14). The spelling of the language name was changed to Miriwoong.

[8] Note that in the Ethnologue the exact formulation used to express this is language transmission 'outside the home' ('Miriwung in the Language Cloud' page, see footnote 7). This is not considered convincing here as soon as the household comprises not just the nuclear family, i.e. parents and their children, but the grandparent generation as well. Nettle & Romaine formulate more precisely when they state that "[l]anguages are at risk when they are no longer transmitted naturally to children in the home by *parents or other caretakers*" (2000:8, emphasis added).

	'safe'		*a+*	
e n d a n g e r e d	*stable*		*a-*	all speak, children & up
	i n d e c l i n e	*instable; eroded*	*a*	some children speak; all children speak in some places
		definitively endangered	*b*	spoken only by parental generation and up
		severely endangered	*c*	spoken only by grandparental generation and up
		critically endangered	*d*	spoken only by very few, of great-grandparental generation
	extinct		*e*	no speakers

Table 3.1 Schema for classifying languages according to degree of viability (Krauss 2007:1)

Krauss proposes the finer grained classification of *d-* instead of simply *d* for languages with fewer than 10 speakers.[9] The remaining speakers are not only "at the very end of life expectancy", but possibly have "less than complete competence" (2007:6). Taking into account that the language is being revitalised, one could also venture to say that Miriwoong is becoming a *c* language. This would imply that the language is now used actively by the respective age group, i.e. 35-60, as a result of revitalisation.

Fourth, age groups are also central to the discussion on the State of Indigenous languages in Australia, to be found in the so-called SOIL report (McConvell & Thieberger 2001), which presents a variety of indicators to be taken into account when assessing the state of Indigenous Australian languages. Among other things, this report includes a classification based on the form of the curve that is created by plotting, for each of a total of six different age ranges, the proportion of speakers of the total population of that age group (2001:65). Kununurra is described as an area belonging to group 4. In group 4 regions, language ability decreases in one or more of the middle age groups but increases to some degree in younger speakers (2001:67). It is important to note, however, that the authors caution that this grouping might be due to over-reporting of numbers of young Miriwoong (and Kija) speakers in the 1996 ABS census (for a discussion of over-reporting see also §2.2.4). Thus, the Kununurra area potentially needs to be adjusted to group 2, i.e. showing a decline in language ability across all age groups (ibid.).

---

[9] The number of Miriwoong speakers was discussed in §2.2.4.

Note that the SOIL language endangerment indicator is compatible with the UNESCO indicator 'Intergenerational Language Transmission',[10] which is recommended with some modifications – including by incorporating some aspects from SOIL – in the NILS report (AIATSIS 2005:30) to become the "standard indicator for Australian endangered Indigenous languages" (ibid.). The NILS Endangerment Grade for Miriwoong is 0 (on a scale of 0 to 5), i.e. 'no longer fully spoken'.[11] NILS2, in turn, took a similar approach but "endeavoured to be clearer and more specific than NILS1" in its "descriptions of proficiency levels and frequency" (Marmion et al. 2014:58). Miriwoong is not discussed in NILS2.

The decline in language abilities in the middle-aged population reported for Kununurra in SOIL can be explained by a variety of factors. Besides the circumstances that have impinged on the general population (see above) they were particularly affected. As discussed in §2.2 on ethnographic aspects, many Miriwoong people moved to the surroundings of the newly-founded town of Kununurra from near-by pastoral stations in the mid-1960s – not least because of the introduction of equal pay in 1966, which caused many station owners to cease supporting dependents in the Indigenous camps near homesteads. This dislocation has had a negative effect on the young children and babies of the time, who are now aged 50+. Traditional life and, with it, traditional education, which was practiced in those camps and on country during so-called holiday time in the Wet Season, was disrupted. During this time families had travelled through country, visited relatives and carried out ceremonies. Interestingly, this age group and the generation of their children are the ones who are working hard to revitalise the language (for details see §3.3.2 below).

3.1.4   The situation of the Jarragan family

In the literature on Kimberley languages the situation of the Jarragan language family is described as follows. McConvell & Thieberger (2001) offer first-hand testimony from the 1980s and 1990s from when one of them observed that "few children spoke Kija except for a few words although

---

[10] The 2003 publication *Language Vitality and Endangerment* was devised by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages and describes six Major Evaluative Factors of Language Vitality. 'Intergenerational Language Transmission' is the first of these and ranges from 0 to 5 (Brenzinger et al. 2003:7).

[11] There are ten *NILS recommended language endangerment indicators*. The most important one is the first indicator, *Intergenerational Language Transmission*, which is the "most reliable and accurate measure of the vitality of languages" (2005:68). It is reported for Miriwoong above. The scale ranges from 0 'no longer fully spoken', via 1 'critically endangered', 2 'severely endangered', 3 'definitely endangered', and 4 'unsafe' to 5 'strong/safe' (AIATSIS 2005:190). The second indicator, *Absolute Number of Speakers,* is 2 'severely endangered' for Miriwoong. The NILS report also makes reference to the SOIL *Age Profile Endangerment Index*. This is reported as 0.96 for Miriwoong (and models "the percentage of speakers in the youngest generation [0‑19 years] divided by the percentage of speakers in the young adult generation [20‑39 years]"). This corresponds to 3 'definitely endangered' on the NILS scale (2005:75). However, the result is relegated to over-reporting for the youngest generation (see above) and thus corrected to 1 'critically endangered'.

many understood it to a certain extent" (2001:60). Some adults reported that Kija is spoken at their homes but the authors caution that some would speak Kija only some of the time and that strong identification with and loyalty to the language as well as the language programme in school could have led parents to overstate their children's use of Kija (ibid.). They compare the situation to the Miriwoong language and deem Kija to be in a more fortunate position (ibid.).

Blythe & Wightman (2003) make finer grained comments concerning different centres where Kija is spoken. They explain that Halls Creek Kija is in greater danger than Turkey Creek Kija as Moola Bulla reserve was established near Halls Creek. Moola Bulla did not only bring together Aboriginal Australians from different areas who traditionally spoke separate languages but also interfered in their lives to a major extent (2003:72).[12] In comparison, mainly Kija-speaking people lived in the Violet Valley reserve and they were allowed more freedom, e.g. it was possible to conduct ceremonies there (2003:71, quoting Jebb 2002:156). Accordingly, during a research project Blythe & Wightman observed that participants "connected with" Violet Valley surpassed those associated with Moola Bulla both in relation to language and Traditional knowledge about animals and plants (ibid.).

McGregor (2004) considers none of the Jarragan languages healthy as they are not learned and not used as "primary languages of communication" by children, even if the level of passive knowledge of some is high (2004:40). He classifies Miriwoong and Kija as *weakening*, Gajirrabeng as *dying* and Doolboong as *dead.* Wurm states that Gajirrabeng is spoken only by a few elderly speakers (2007:490) and that the Kija population is shifting to Kriol[13] as children are speaking it as their first language (L1) (2007:503).

However, according to newer sources, the last speaker of Gajirrabeng has already passed away (Olawsky 2013:43; Kofod 2018-2019,[14] see §2.2.1). According to Kofod, "[t]here are now very few (c 5) people who have a hearing knowledge of Gajirrabeng" (Kofod 2019-2019). She states that "[t]here is no reliable data on the number of ethnic Gajirrabeng people". In the 2016 census, "the group does not feature." People who identify as Gajirrabeng live "in the town of Kununurra and surroundings, i.e., outside their traditional lands."

With respect to Kija, Kofod reports that "800 or more" people identify as Kija today. They live in "Warmun Community (Turkey Creek), Kununurra, Halls Creek and some other small outstations including Bow River, Frog Hollow and Imintji". Of these ,"[o]nly people over sixty are fluent

---

[12] In addition to Kija people Jaru, Gooniyandi, Walmajarri, Kukatja, and Wanyjirra people also lived at Moola Bulla (2003:71). Shaw also names the Jarragan languages Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng, Kuluwarrang, as well as Wunambal and Jaru (1981:48). Among other things interference took the shape of discouraging the use of Traditional languages (ibid., quoting Achoo, et al. 1996:121, see also §2.2).

[13] McConvell (1986:108) also documents the shift and emphasises that it has been to Kriol, not Aboriginal English.

[14] Kofod, Frances M. 2018-2019. Gajirrabeng Collection. https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI1234840. (accessed 2020-07-28).

speakers […] and still frequently use [Kija] among themselves" (Kofod 2013).[15] In the 40-60 age-group some have "reasonable" fluency. Younger Kija people "do not use the language in their daily lives" but "frequently express pride in their country". The language is used in education during occasional language programs at local schools and is represented during "special "Gija Days" in Warmun and occasional broadcasts through the community radio station in Halls Creek" (ibid.).

To summarise, the situation of the whole language family is dire, ranging from the "sleeping beauty" (Zuckermann 2006:57) Gajirrabeng to Kija, the strongest of the Jarragan languages.

3.2   The consequences

In contact situations between speakers of different languages, the speakers of the more vulnerable language, i.e. often the language with fewer speakers, less resources and less economic and political power, and their descendants typically learn the foreign language and become bilingual (or multilingual). Depending on the situation and the people involved, they might shift toward the more dominant language and ultimately abandon their mother tongue (first language or L1). Thus, their language becomes endangered and potentially extinct. Alternatively or in addition, new languages such as Creoles and Mixed Languages may emerge.

The progression of endangerment (also called *language obsolescence*) cannot only be observed by counting dwindling numbers of speakers and domains in which the language is still spoken (Palosaari & Campbell 2011:110). The language itself often undergoes changes that differ in quantity and speed from changes in 'healthy' languages (Aikhenvald et al. 2004). In addition to lexical reduction, grammatical reduction (ibid., also called *simplification*, e.g. by McGregor (2002a)) can occur due to processes such as regularisation (ibid.) – e.g. via overgeneralising morphological rules or dropping allomorphs – or the loss of grammatical categories and syntactic options (Palosaari & Campbell 2011).[16] These kinds of changes can be driven by attrition (Janse 2003:xii), which often comes along with cultural loss: Discontinuation of traditional practices leads to a demise of traditional knowledge and exposure to certain vocabulary, genres and speech styles. Further drivers of change are an increase in loans and code-switches in younger generations and influences of (schooling in) the dominant language. This can lead, for example, to

---

[15] Kofod, Frances. 2013. The painter's eye, the painter's voice: language, art and landscape in the Gija world. London: SOAS, Endangered Languages Archive. https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI118834 (accessed 2020-07-28).

[16] Aikhenvald et al. (2004) quote a case where younger speakers no longer make use of traditional personal names and thus lose proficiency in the associated gender markers. In another case, the younger generation uses only the most frequent allomorph in the slot for the number and noun class marker. Palosaari & Campbell (2011:116) name the replacement of the morphological future in Pilpil (Uto-Aztecan language of El Salvador) with an analytic construction as an example: I-go I-pass 'I will pass', rather than I-pass-FUT 'I will pass'. The former used to be a marker of less prestigious speech. The loss of the morphological future – a feature of elevated speech styles – is an instance of *stylistic shrinkage*.

syntactic calquing, i.e. mirroring a construction from the dominant language, while idioms and expressions from the Traditional language fall into disuse (Aikhenvald et al. 2004:124).

Reasons for increased code-switching are manifold ranging from effects of attrition or imperfect learning (Palosaari & Campbell 2011:111), such as problems with word retrieval, via younger speakers wanting to avoid potential communication problems by using constructions from the dominant language that they are more familiar with or that are less ambiguous,[17] to a "fear of being ridiculed for their mistakes" when attempting to speak the Traditional language (Aikhenvald et al. 2004:124).

Higher degrees of variation are another indicator of language endangerment (Aikhenvald et al. 2004:116). Variation can have several causes. One such cause is dialect levelling, i.e. when speakers "spontaneously mix forms from what were previously distinct dialects" potentially leading to a "disruption of lexical and grammatical rules" that characterised the different varieties (Aikhenvald et al. 2004:120). Also, the speech of individual people can display variability when they become increasingly insecure with respect to the choice of the correct allomorph (ibid.). As a result, obligatory rules may become optional (Palosaari & Campbell 2011:112). A further cause is borrowing from the dominant language: As the borrowed structure does not always replace the original, alternative patterns become available so that variation both between and within speakers arises. McConvell emphasises that the latter phenomenon is particularly frequent in language shift situations (2005:103). Systematic variation, i.e. alternative patterns the choice among which can be predicted along or at least traced back to analysable factors,[18] is a feature of many non-endangered languages and is thus not a sign of endangerment *per se*. In the case of endangered languages, however, variation often remains unexplained as functional differences between variants cannot be found. Interestingly, McConvell established that possessive constructions apparently lend themselves easily to borrowing from another language (ibid.) As a result, speakers have a choice between alternative possessive constructions.[19]

---

[17] Aikhenvald et al. 2004 give the example of a construction in Manambu (spoken in the Sepik area of Papua New Guinea) that is ambiguous between 'I don't want', 'I don't like' and 'I refuse', which animates younger speakers to use the more specific Tok Pisin modal verb *laik* 'like' when they want to express the meaning 'I don't like'.

[18] Palosaari & Cambell (2011:111) explain that variability in healthy languages can be an expression of "social variables such as socioeconomic class, sex, ethnicity, etc", whereas variability in endangered languages "often does not bear the social meanings […] that it may elsewhere." In addition to this sociolinguistically induced variability, in healthy languages there can also be language-internal lexical, phonological or grammatical (i.e. morphological or syntactic) variation. Variants can, for example, be influenced (*constrained*) by the linguistic environment or the mode (speech vs. writing), or express a particular function. For instance, the past tense of *dream* has the regular variant *dreamed* and the irregular variant *dreamt.* The choice depends on factors such as the speaker's dialect (American vs. British, see Kortmann 2005), the construction in which it occurs (past participle vs. preterite, Levin (2009)), and whether the speaker perceives of the action as durational Rohdenburg (2003), quoting Quirk (1970).

[19] McConvell discusses two alternative possessive constructions in Australian Creoles: juxtaposition vs. the EMR-possessive with the marker *for* (where E= possesseE, M= Marker, and R= possessoR).

As this thesis is about possession, an example of variation from this area will be given. McGregor (2002) observes that in the language of one semi-speaker[20] of Warrwa (a Nyulnyulan language spoken in the Kimberley), the traditional system of nominal prefixes indicating the person and number of the possessor has been lost (see §8.2.5 for prefixes on nominals in Nyulnyulan and Worrorran languages with examples from Bardi). The speaker instead expressed possession phrasally (2002:160). Another semi-speaker, however, retained a small set of prefixing body-part terms. His speech showed individual variation: When referring to his foot, he used both an analytic phrasal variant *niyambala jana* (his/her:foot mine) and synthetic prefixing *ngayambala* (my:foot). His speech also exemplifies the loss of allomorphemes: For some nominals "only a subset of the person-number categories were represented by prefixed forms". Other categories were expressed by the third person singular prefix in combination with possessive pronouns (2002:161).

Further, an example of language change – more specifically morphological reduction – from the realm of possession will be given. In order to do so, the concept of inalienability needs to briefly introduced: As will be discussed in §7.2 in more detail, in many languages there is a distinction between *alienable* and *inalienable* possession. Alienable possession is the default category and typically refers to ownership of objects by human beings. Inalienable possession describes relationships between a possessor (PR) and a possessee (PE) where the PE cannot exist independently of or cannot easily be separated from the PR. Inalienable nouns usually belong to a small closed set and their relation to the PE is not formally marked or is expressed by less morphological marking than the alienable counterpart. It has been claimed that most Australian languages opt for the inalienable structural pattern when encoding body part relationships but for the alienable structure for kinship.

Coming back to language change, Meakins (2014:399f) observes that the alienable-inalienable distinction (see §7.2) was lost in a number of restructured varieties of Australian languages including Arabana, Areyonga Teenage Pitjantjatjara, Young People's Dyirbal, Jingulu, New Lardil and Paakantyi. [21] In Arabana (Pama-Nyungan, northern South Australia) and Paakantyi (Pama-Nyungan, Darling River, New South Wales) this change has been attributed to contact with English

---

[20] McGregor (2002) defines *semi-speakers* as follows: "individuals who are less than fully fluent in the language. Although they may have fairly extensive vocabularies, and might be able to produce sentence-sized utterances, considerable planning time might be required. Usually, they will not have control of different linguistic varieties, and would not be able to deploy them meaningfully in speech interactions" (2002:149). Note that several contemporary linguists avoid the term *semi-speaker* due to unwanted connotations.

[21] Arabana is a Palku language traditionally spoken in Lake Eyre Basin/SA. Pitjantjatjara is a Wati language traditionally spoken in the Western Desert. Dyirbal is a Dyirbalic language traditionally spoken in East Cape/QSL. Lardil is a Tangkic language traditionally spoken on the North Wellesley Islands/QSL. Paakantyi is traditionally spoken in Darling River/NSW. All of these languages belong to the Pama-Nyungan family. Jingulu is a West Barkly language traditionally spoken in Fitzmaurice/NT.

(Hercus 2005).[22] To illustrate this phenomenon with a concrete example, the changes from Traditional Dyirbal (TD) to Young People's Dyirbal (YD) will be described in more detail: Schmidt describes possession marking in TD as follows (1983:86ff): Inalienable possession is encoded by juxtaposition. Alienable possession is expressed in two ways: The simple genitive indicates actual possession (*-ŋu ~ -u*), the general genitive is used for a person who used to own something (*-mi*). In Young People's Dyirbal these distinctions are lost: Inalienable possession is not a separate category marked by juxtaposition but is marked by the simple genitive marker *-ŋu*. Thus, the alienability distinction is neutralised. This marker is also used in YD for general possession. Hence, only *-ŋu* is used for alienable possession and the simple/general distinction is collapsed. In addition, the phonological allomorph *-u* is not used in YD. Consequently, there is only one allomorph of one morpheme that is used in YD for all types of possession, see Table 3.2.

	Traditional Dyirbal	Young People's Dyirbal
alienable possession	general genitive: *-mi*	
	simple genitive: *-ŋu ~ -u*	*-ŋu*
inalienable possession	*-Ø*	

Table 3.2 Language change in possessive constructions in Dyirbal (adapted from Schmidt 1983:87)

To give another example, in the early literature on Nyulnyul (Nekes & Worms 1953:99) it is claimed that an encliticised form of the third person augmented pronoun *-yin* marks plural possessees in attributive possession, see in (2). McGregor (2002a) does no longer find evidence of this usage in the speech of the last fluent speakers and semi-speakers and thus attests a "reduction in the functional range" of the *-yin* morpheme induced by obsolescence (2002:162).

(1) Nekes & Worms (1953:99)   (Nyulnyul)

    baab   jin   -yirr[23]
    child   his/her they
    'his/her children'

---

[22] Hercus found, among other things, that under the influence of English proprietary sentences with the verb *have* (2005:33), the use of the 'having'-suffix (for details see §8.1.2, §8.1.3, §9.4.1) has been expanded. In Arabana it is now also employed for inalienable possessions (i.e. body parts), kinship terms (to express 'having children'), and separable body parts (e.g. false teeth). In Paakantyi the number distinction that used to be expressed by possessive suffixes in predicative possession (involving body parts and non-pronominal PRs) is now lost due to the replacement of the construction with the 'having'-suffix. Hercus further explains that "[a]s all modern Arabana speakers now have English as their first language, there can be little doubt that this change [i.e. using possessive adjectives not only for alienable but also inalienable relations at clause level] was initiated by the influence of English" (2005:32). She stresses that even "culturally very important linguistic features", i.e. the *identity-sensitive constructions* described by Hosokawa (1996) for Yawuru (a non-Pama-Nyungan Kimberley language, see also §9.2.2), were affected by influence from English (ibid.). However, note also McGregor's (2002:178f) warning that not all changes (in his case in obsolescent Kimberley languages) can (solely) be attributed to English influence.

[23] This gloss is McGregor's (2002) reconstructed phonemic representation in the accepted orthography. The original transcription in Nekes & Worms (1953) is bāb djen yēr.

The two examples of language change discussed above are attributed to obsolescence and the influence of the dominant language. By contrast, changes in the realm of possession can also come about "as a regular historical process" that is evident in several languages of a family and from before colonisation. The case of the loss of possessor prefixes referred to above also occurred in other Eastern Nyulnyulan languages and the Western Nyulnyulan language Nyulnyul. In the latter, the prefixes were reduced to an invariant (third person singular) prefix, which is used in combination with possessive pronouns (2002:159ff). McGregor concludes that possessive pronominal prefixing on nominals (as well as word order variation) is more susceptible to loss (in Nyulnyulan languages) than, for example, ergative marking (2002:178).

3.3 Revitalisation

3.3.1 The rationale for revitalisation

Like other Aboriginal Australians, the Miriwoong people strongly identify with the country they belong to and feel responsibility for, and the language and cultural knowledge associated with it (see §6.2.4). In an interview with Australia Plus[24] Olawsky warns that "[i]f someone loses their language, it will create an identity crisis. Especially if there's nothing else to fill that gap." Conversely, as soon as people reconnect with their language "with that identification comes a strength in personality and character." Being on country and learning one's ancestral language has been shown to increase physical and mental health and well-being, to have positive effects such as increased school attendance and better outcomes in education,[25] an increase in employment rates and a decrease in delinquency (AIATSIS 2005:36f; SCATSIA 2012:2/22/213; Marmion et al. 2014:30; Zuckermann et al. 2014:57ff; MDWg 2019:142; PM&C 2019:23).[26]

To achieve these improvements is paramount because to this day the situation of Indigenous people in Australia is worse compared to non-Indigenous Australians in all spheres of life, including physical and mental health, life expectancy and suicide rates. They fare worse with respect to standard of living, education levels, unemployment, homelessness, percentage of the population in the child protection and justice systems etc. (AIATSIS 2005:41; Simpson et al. 2009:7; Zuckermann et al. 2014:58; PM&C 2019:144 and others). Efforts to meliorate the situation of Aboriginal Australians and their languages are mandated by a variety of international Covenants, Conventions and Charters, for instance by articles 1 (all are free and equal in dignity),

---

[24] http://www.australiaplus.com/international/study-and-innovation/how-international-programs-are-helping-preserve-indigenous-lang/868675 (2017-07-07, accessed 2017-08-10)

[25] Improvements have been found for language-related skills such as literacy and Standard English proficiency (SCATSIA 2012:22) but also non-language subjects (Zuckermann et al. 2014:59).

[26] Learning an Indigenous language is also beneficial for non-Indigenous individuals and the society as a whole: Becoming bilingual has positive effects such as enhanced cognitive skills and a potential slowing of dementia (AIATSIS 2005:36; Simpson et al. 2009:8; Zuckermann et al. 2014:58) and enables learners to engage in intercultural and intergenerational communication.

3 (right to life), 22 (social and cultural rights indispensable for one's dignity), 23.1 (right to work and protection against unemployment), and 25.1 (right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family) of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948).[27] Undertaking steps to change the situation is referred to as Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage (SCATSIA 2012:2). Funding revitalisation and revival programmes for Indigenous languages will contribute to the Australian government's commitment to Close the Gap.

In addition to these benefits of revitalisation programmes for Indigenous people in Australia and world-wide, there are many further ethical/moral, epistemological, aesthetic, and utilitarian reasons for curbing language shift and increasing language vitality through revitalisation that are relevant globally not only for the members of language communities, but also the governments of the countries where these are located, and linguists and scientists from related fields (Grenoble & Whaley 1998; Zuckermann et al. 2014; Zuckermann & Walsh 2011). One aspect will be discussed in more detail here, namely the aim to preserve diversity.

When a language is no longer spoken, this also means the loss of the cultural system which it expresses (Grenoble & Whaley 1998). If linguistic and cultural diversity is to be preserved, immediate action is necessary: According to Skutnabb-Kangas, linguistic diversity is disappearing relatively even much faster than bio-diversity. Optimistically speaking, by 2100, 2% of the biological species but 50% of today's languages will have disappeared. Pessimistic predictions number disappearances at rates of 20% of all biological species and 90% of all languages (2003:35).

Skutnabb-Kangas highlights an interesting interrelation between linguistic diversity and biodiversity: "[L]inguistic and cultural diversity may be decisive mediating variables in sustaining biodiversity [as] all landscapes have been and are influenced by human action […]" (2003:37).[28] Likewise, biodiversity may be a decisive mediating variable in sustaining linguistic diversity as "local nature and people's detailed knowledge about it and use of have influenced the cultures, languages and cosmo-visions of the people […]" (ibid.). Skutnabb-Kangas draws the conclusion that as languages cease to be spoken, biodiversity is diminished (2003:39). This means that when languages are no longer transmitted, we human beings "seriously undermin[e] our chances of life on earth": Not only will there be less diversity of edible plants at our disposal but also less diversity of medicines (2003:40). The loss of nuances in knowledge about plants can happen very quickly. When youth are not raised bilingually but monolingually in a non-local language which does not have the vocabulary for those nuances, the knowledge is not fully transferred (2003:37).

---

[27] Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948) UNGA Res 217 A(III) (10 December 1948) UN Doc A/RES/3/217A.

[28] Skutnabb-Kangas refers to research by Terra-lingua (www.terralingua.org, accessed 2023-09-25), work by Maffi (1995) and a volume published by the United Nations Environmental Program (Posey 1999).

In this way, most of a farmer's knowledge of plants could disappear within one or two generations (2003:34 quoting Christie & Mooney 2000, Table 7.5).

According Skutnabb-Kangas, diversity should be protected because it provides flexibility and adaptability (2003:39). Again, she draws a comparison to biodiversity in order to make this point. Monocultures are vulnerable because they lack the genetic diversity which allows for adaptation to atmospheric and cultural changes and, thus, long term survival (ibid.). Transferring this scenario to linguistic diversity, Skutnabb-Kangas states that "language and cultural diversity maximizes chances of human success and adaptability" (ibid.).

3.3.2   Revitalisation of the Miriwoong language

When the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng people became aware that their languages are in danger they decided to take steps to counter language shift by recording, documenting, stabilising and developing the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng languages and culture (MDWg 2012:4; Olawsky 2014:362,364f). This section presents a short historical outline of their revitalisation work and goes into detail about what is being achieved at present. Many of the following facts and dates are taken from the *Language and Culture Awareness Course booklet* (MDWg 2012), which is disseminated by MDWg during their Cultural Awareness trainings for employees of local government departments, people working for non-profit organisations on Miriwoong country and other stakeholders who regularly engage with local Aboriginal people.

In the 1970s an initiative was started to teach Miriwoong informally at the Catholic School (MDWg 2012:10). The Mirima Council was incorporated in 1971 and in 1986 it received funds through ATSILIP (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Initiative Policy) to start a language programme with a qualified linguist (ibid.). Funding from the Argyle Social Impact Group made it possible to construct the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) in 1991 (ibid.).

To use the terminology applied in the Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2020), the centre's objective has been to *develop* the language by engaging in "on-going planned actions that language communities take to ensure that they can effectively use their languages to achieve their social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual goals."[29] One of the indicators listed as relevant for language development by the Ethnologue is the use of a writing system. With the assistance of Frances Kofod, a Miriwoong alphabet was created and her work at MDWg included the production of *A Miriwoong Alphabet Book*. The promotion of literacy in Miriwoong has since been one of MDWg's ambitions. Written materials such as illustrated booklets in and on Miriwoong are produced by the Indigenous Language Workers at MDWg; some of these are printed in a way that

---

[29] 'Language Development' page: https://www.ethnologue.com/language-development (accessed 2020-05-25).

allows audio-pens to read out the associated audio files.[30] Further, learners can refer to a community-internal dictionary (Kofod 2009b) – or the shorter *Miriwoong Woorlang Yawoorroonga-woorr* dictionary, which was published in 2019. Together with the Miriwoong texts collected by Frances Kofod, these written materials contribute to the body of Miriwoong literature, the existence of which is another indicator of development.

Among many other projects and services,[31] language classes are taught at MDWg both for young Miriwoong students and the public and a Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Program (MALLP, based on Hinton (1997)[32] and adapted to Australia in Olawsky (2013)) was initiated to enable Miriwoong adults to improve their language skills during sessions with senior speakers and Elders. MALLP also involves workshops for creating Miriwoong words for modern everyday items such as 'window', 'hand brake' etc., some of which were taken up to some extent by the speakers.[33] Olawsky gives the following example: *goolarn ngerregoowoong wilmoorrbang*, literally 'big brain with wires', was coined to be able to talk about computers in Miriwoong.[34] These kinds of activities contribute to the 'modernisation' of the language, which, according to the Ethnologue, language development primarily deals with – in addition to the above-mentioned graphisation (i.e. the development of a writing system) and standardisation (i.e. the development of a norm, l.c.). Moreover, the production of educational materials for the language classes by Indigenous staff contributes to indicators of vitality: factor c (availability of educational materials) and (i) economic opportunity. Successful language teaching has the potential to increase the percentage of speakers within the community (factor e) and to allows the language to be used in further functions in the community/society (factor g).

---

[30] Publications include booklets about cooking (Newry 2012), the traditional seasons (MDWg 2013), body parts (Newry 2013), animals (Galbat-Newry 2012; 2013), the country called *Woorrjilwarim* (Simon & Galbat nd.), the country called *Woorre-Woorrem* (Ningarmara & Dilyai 2014), family Newry (2015), native birds (Simon 2017), and the preparation of food (Ningarmara & Galbat-Newry 2019). In addition, the *Questions and Answers Book* (Boombi et al. 2014) entitled *Yangge Yindajgoo!,* a Language Nest publication entitled *Gooloo-gooloob Yarroondayan! – We are all Happy!* (Boombi et al. 2017), an adaptation of a Miriwoong Dreamtime story called *Goorrandalng thoon Jalin* (Bilminga 2017), a new edition of the Miriwoong Alphabet Book (Bilminga 2017), a children's picture book about weather seasons Bilminga (2019), and a children's story about a hungry spider Dingle (2021) appeared. For new publications see https://mirima.org.au/mdwg-work/resources/ (accessed 2023-09-14). In addition, ebooks such as Bryan Gallagher's 'Gabi Nembaya?' – Where Are You Going? and 'Jaloobbat Means Dipping' are released within the Learn Miriwoong app.

[31] The following are further services at MDWg: production and archiving of audio and audio-visual recordings of Miriwoong texts, language consultancy such as the translation of a name for a new local project or building, interpretative signage, dance performances, Welcome to Country, projects in collaboration with Waringarri Arts.

[32] See Hinton et al. (2018) on the current issues about MALLP in Australia and elsewhere.

[33] Obviously, other words were created in a natural context, e.g. by semantic extension such as *navam* 'cave' for 'shop', which was later replaced by *mayaroong* 'house', or *gerany* 'stone' for 'money'. Other devices typically used to create new words, among others, are derivation with the suffix *-ngoowing* 'similar too' or *-gerring* (used) for'.

[34] http://www.australiaplus.com/international/study-and-innovation/how-international-programs-are-help ing-preserve-indigenous-lang/8686752 (2017-07-07, accessed 2017-08-10). Olawsky warns that newly created words "may not survive if they don't enter local parlance".

Recently, another immersion-based programme for the very young called Language Nest (Grenoble & Whaley 2006) started. Its success since the pilot in 2013 and its official launch in 2014 in terms of the number of both Miriwoong and non-Miriwoong participants[35] and positive outcomes such as improved school attendance[36] has been recognised nationally. It would go too far to say that this programme or the public language classes contribute to the indicator of second language use of the Miriwoong language (factor k), although non-Indigenous children take part in the Language Nest and come to master Miriwoong words and phrases.

By contrast, Miriwoong is comparatively well positioned with respect to another indicator, namely the use of the language in the broadcast media. Miriwoong is not represented in the mass media to any substantial degree.[37] In 2013, however, radio broadcasting in Miriwoong was resumed in cooperation with the local radio station Waringarri Radio.[38] Initially, short segments consisting of five to ten Miriwoong sentences and their translations were broadcast several times a day for a week. Meanwhile the programme has developed into a bilingual show which aims at teaching aspects of Miriwoong culture and language each week. Video clips on the radio station's webpage are also part of the repertoire. In addition, there are now two mobile phone apps[39] for the language, which teach Miriwoong vocabulary and phrases. The Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Facebook page,[40] Instagram,[41] Twitter,[42] and Youtube[43] channels are actively used to promote language activities. The posts and comments on Facebook are mainly in English but Miriwoong is used as well, such as when the *Word of the Week* is presented or in a bilingual job

---

[35] According to the MDWg website over 400 children participate in Language Nest sessions each week, http://mirima.org.au/mdwg-work/language-nest/ (accessed 2020-05-25).

[36] In an interview with Kimberley Echo the Language Nest Facilitator at the time, Stephanie Woerde, argues that not only the participating children but the community as a whole benefit from the program as the experience that Miriwoong is continued in the young generation "sustains a strong sense of pride" (2015/10/20, Language program gets awards nod, accessed 2018-10-18). In an article for The Guardian Galbat-Newry, Language Worker at MDWg, lists further positive outcomes of speaking one's mother tongue and having a stronger connection to one's culture, such as better mental and physical health, and lower rates of substance abuse and youth suicide, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/sep/04/miriwoong-waniwoogeng-language-is-the-only-way-to-understand-our-ancient-culture (2016-09-03, accessed 2023-09-25). She refers the reader to the *Our Land Our Languages* report (SCATSIA 2012).

[37] The revitalization efforts at MDWg and have been featured in several local, regional, national, and international media, such as The Kimberley Echo, The West Australian, NITV, SBS, The Guardian and BBC World News, see https://mirima.org.au/news-events/media/ (accessed 2023-09-15). The Miriwoong language was occasionally represented, e.g. in a series by the Disney Channel called Spread the Word, see https://www.broomead.com.au/news/the-kimberley-echo/disney-spreads-word-ng-b881526803z (accessed 2023-09-15).

[38] http://www.waringarriradio.com.au/ (accessed 2018-01-22). A compilation of recordings appeared as a CD with transcriptions (MDWg 2015).

[39] The Miriwoong Mobile app can be found here: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.org.mirima.miriwoongapp (accessed 2023-09-14). For more information on the Learn Miriwoong! app see http://mirima.org.au/mdwg-work/miriwoong-app/ (accessed 2023-09-14). It can be found here: https://play. google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.org.mirima.learnmiriwoong (accessed 2023-09-14).

[40] https://www.facebook.com/mirima/ (accessed 2023-09-16).

[41] https://www.instagram.com/mdw_g (accessed 2023-09-16).

[42] https://twitter.com/mirima_language (accessed 2023-09-16).

[43] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn_fI0dShE9uBrTh6Zv0xCw (accessed 2023-09-16).

posting.[44] Youtube offers, among other things, educational videos for children and videos displaying cultural practices.

The final indicator of language development mentioned by the Ethnologue is the use of the language for governance functions. This is certainly not the case for Miriwoong. Nevertheless, a few more details will be said here about the role of the government in the revitalisation of Miriwoong, since both Ethnologue and UNESCO touch on this issue. The Ethnologue names the "official recognition of languages within the nation or region" as a factor used to determine language endangerment;[45] one of the UNESCO factors for assessing language endangerment and urgency of the need for documentation is spelt out as "governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use" (Brenzinger et al. 2003:13, UNESCO's factor 7, here referred to as factor j).[46] Miriwoong – or any other Aboriginal language for that matter – is not recognised as an official language; Standard Australian English is the *de facto* national language. Not enough interpreters are provided by government agencies and the courts, nor in the education and health sectors.[47] There are positive developments, however, concerning Aboriginal language classes in schools. Nationally, the Australian Curriculum includes a strand for indigenous languages[48] and locally Miriwoong has been part of the school curriculum as a LOTE (Language Other Than English) since 2018. This is made possible by MDWg – which is partly funded[49] by the Australian government. Through MDWg, the government helps "raising the profile and prestige" of Miriwoong (AIATSIS 2005:22).[50] Thus, with respect to UNESCO's factor 7 (see above) Miriwoong is rated between 3 'passive assimilation' and 4 'differentiated support' (on

---

[44] https://bit.ly/2RAtjZ0, posted 2018-09-27 (accessed 2018-11-05).

[45] On its 'Endangered Languages' page, see footnote 1 above.

[46] See also footnote 10 above.

[47] The provision of interpreters in these sectors is recommended by AIATSIS (2005:22). That interpretation and clarification is needed in court – not only for Traditional languages but also for Aboriginal English (Evans 2002) – in order to avoid misunderstandings, has been argued e.g. by Eades (1996). Training opportunities and funding are so far too limited for a comprehensive coverage for all Aboriginal languages and Kriol.

[48] https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-aboriginal-languages-and-torres-strait-islander-languages/ (accessed 2019-10-20). Karidakis & Kelly criticise that "[t]he current Australian Curriculum Framework for Australian languages (ACARA 2015) includes Australian languages in education; however, this effort is undermined by the national benchmark test NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) because it has been designed for students who speak Standard Australian English and ultimately disadvantages students who speak a traditional Aboriginal language, Aboriginal English, or Kriol" (2018:107).

[49] In addition, MDWg relies on donations and income from the services they provide. The LOTE classes are not sponsored by the government but are realised through MDWg's general funds and a small contribution by the school. MDWg is not the only institution that has had to grapple with limitations of government funding. Compare Tsunoda's assessment of KLRC (Kimberley Language Resource Centre, http://klrc.org.au) in 2006: "The funding for KLRC is insufficient and insecure." In this case the situation is particularly dire as KLRC's goal is to "cater for two dozen or more languages of [the] Kimberley" which are "as different from each other as, say, English and Russian" (2006:194).

[50] Note also that some local Aboriginal communities are sign-posted with their Miriwoong names and that in an increasing number of places around Kununurra bilingual signage informs about Miriwoong language and culture. The NILS report advises dual place-naming as one way of supporting Indigenous languages (2005:22).

a scale of 5). 'passive assimilation' means that "[t]he dominant group is indifferent as to whether or not minority languages are spoken", while 'differentiated support' means that "[t]he government encourages ethnolinguistic groups to maintain and use their languages, most often in private domains (as the home language) rather than in public domains (e.g. in schools)" (Brenzinger et al. 2003:13). Existing (albeit insufficient) funding schemes and "governmental actions such as the creation of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies" (Wurm 2007:463) can be argued to warrant the 4-rating. However, in the Miriwoong context it is not necessarily the case that "[s]ome of the domains of non-dominant language use enjoy high prestige (e.g. at ceremonial occasions)" (Brenzinger et al. 2003:13). This would also be required for a 4-rating. Even though corroborees are regularly performed at local public social events, the Miriwoong language and culture are not evidently held in high esteem by all members of the majority population. Table 3.3 below summarises the situation of Miriwoong regarding Ethnologue's indicators of language documentation.

Indicators of language documentation	Situation of the Miriwoong language
writing system	exists
literacy rates	developing for some members of the community
various kinds of literature	being produced but not yet abundant
broadcast media, new media	Miriwoong is increasingly present in local and new media
use as a second language	not used as a second language
use for governance functions	not used for governance

Table 3.3 Ethnologue's indicators of language documentation applied to Miriwoong

MDWg's achievements have been recognised in the form of awards. In addition to nominations for the WA Regional Achievement and Community Awards and the East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards in 2014 and 2015 respectively, in 2015 the centre was elected HESTA Community Sector Organisation of the Year for the Language Nest programme. In August 2017 it became the Outstanding Organisation Contributing to Community Life at the East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards. In 2018, MDWg was named finalist for the Curtin University Teaching Excellence Award and Jobeth Winton, member of MDWg's Miriwoong Language Nest team, was announced Younger Leader of the Year at the Third Sector Awards.[51] She is also a finalist in the 2019 Seven News Young Achiever Awards WA Flying Doctor Service Regional Service Award.[52]

---

[51] http://mirima.org.au/mdwg-work/, http://mirima.org.au/news/ (accessed 2020-05-25).
[52] https://jawun.org.au/2019/05/supporting-a-kimberley-language-organisation-to-tell-a-precious-story, (2019-06-10, accessed 2020-07-21).

This recognition shows that the Miriwoong community is taking important steps toward the revitalisation of the Miriwoong language and culture. However, one has to keep in mind that the bulk of the work is done by a number of individuals. The wider community expresses concern at the signs of language loss, but in line with what Schultze-Berndt (2000) observes for the Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru and Tsunoda for speakers of the languages of Halls Creek area (2006:194), active participation in revitalisation such as trying to increase one's command of the language by making use of the existing resources and programmes and teaching the language to one's children, is hindered by factors such as their "preoccupation with other battles – land claims and the protection of sacred sites, as well as simply overcoming the difficulties of daily life – and perhaps also to a general feeling of resignation" (Schultze-Berndt 2000:14).

3.4   Repercussions for the Miriwoong project

The analysis of possession in Miriwoong in subsequent chapters will in some cases be complicated by the presence of isolated examples of particular constructions in particular linguistic contexts. It will not always be possible to answer whether these constitute genuine alternatives to other constructions, exceptions to a rule, individual variation due to attrition or lack of regular exposure and practice, or the kind of speaker error that sometimes occurs with every speaker of every language, and whether they may be remnants of former dialectal variation or the result of natural language change in progress.

Checking these isolated examples against other types of data, e.g. from elicitation, or against the language of other speakers is difficult in the face of the small number of fluent speakers and the limited time during which these are available (due to commitments for other linguistic projects, personal responsibilities outside linguistics and health issues). Likewise, some hypotheses cannot easily be tested and a quantitative approach is not feasible for most research questions.

3.5   Conclusion

The situation of the Jarragan languages is dire, ranging from the "sleeping beauty" (Zuckermann 2006:57) Gajirrabeng to Kija, the strongest of the Jarragan languages, which is still *weakening*. Given the small number of speakers and the lack of transmission to the younger generation in natural contexts, the Miriwoong language is also severely threatened with extinction. On Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) Miriwoong ranges between stage 7 and 8 (i.e. the highest). For stage 8 languages it is said that it is possible to advance to lower scales of disruption by implementing preservation measures such as advancing the documentation of the language. This is being done in the case of the Miriwoong language at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg). On the 13-point

Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS, Eberhard et al. 2020), Miriwoong is classified as 8b, i.e. nearly extinct. This entails that the remaining speakers have little opportunity to use the language. In Krauss' (2007) schema of viability, Miriwoong is a language of type d or d-: It is in decline and critically endangered, as it is only spoken by a few people of the great-grandparental generation. The NILS Endangerment Grade for Miriwoong is 0 (on a scale of 0 to 5), i.e. 'no longer fully spoken'.

In addition to the number, age and percentage of speakers within the community, intergenerational transmission, and the state of documentation, further factors that support language vitality are discussed in this chapter: the availability of educational materials, functions of the language in the community/society, response to new domains and media, economic opportunity, language attitudes within the community, governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, and the use of second languages. Most of these factors can be positively influenced by revitalisation measures. With respect to Miriwoong, there are programmes that teach the language to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from a variety of age groups, including at the local school. MDWg offers career options for speakers interested in literacy development and the presence of the Miriwoong language in the broadcast media. Through its (partial) funding of MDWg, the Australian government helps to raise the profile and prestige of the Miriwoong language. The language attitudes of the speakers and learners toward the Miriwoong language are positive and Miriwoong people actively seek to initiate and participate in preservation and revitalisation efforts.

The revitalisation of endangered languages like Miriwoong is important. For individual speakers, losing one's ancestral language leads to an identity crisis, whereas learning it has been shown to increase physical and mental health and well-being, and to have positive effects such as better outcomes in education and employment. On a global scale, revitalisation enables linguistic and cultural diversity to be preserved.

This chapter serves to establish that endangered languages undergo changes that differ in quantity and speed from changes in 'healthy' languages and that higher degrees of variation are an indicator of language endangerment (Aikhenvald et al. 2004). Examples from the realm of possession are given: Nominal prefixes that used to indicate the person and number of the possessor in Traditional Warrwa (Nyulnyulan) were not always used by a semi-speaker, which led to variation. Morphological reduction in function and form was shown to lead to the loss of plural marking of possessees in Nyulnyul (Nyulnyulan) and the levelling of the alienable - inalienable contrast in several restructured varieties of Traditional Australian languages. The discussion of possessive constructions in Chapter 9 will point to areas where such structural changes may have occurred in Miriwoong.

4 SELECTED ASPECTS OF MIRIWOONG GRAMMAR

This chapter will inform about those aspects of Miriwoong grammar which need to be introduced in order to enable the reader to appreciate the discussion of possession. Some characteristics of Jarragan languages are already considered in §2.2.2 (see also Chapter 8). The discussion in this chapter pays attention specifically to the Miriwoong language. It focuses on those aspects of the grammar that are relevant for understanding the example sentences used in subsequent chapters to illustrate possessive structures in Miriwoong. Following a brief introduction to phonology and an overview of grammatical features of Miriwoong in §4.1 and some comments on terminology in §4.2, the most relevant aspects from the perspective of this thesis are discussed in more detail (§4.3).

4.1 Overview

In order to enable the reader to read Miriwoong example sentences, a few facts about Miriwoong phonology are in order (based on Olawsky in prep. (2020)).[1] The Miriwoong language makes use of 19 consonants. Nasal and stop consonants occur in six different positions (bilabial, apico-alveolar, apico-post-alveolar (retroflex), lamino-dental, lamino-palatal, and velar). Voicing is not a distinctive feature. There are three approximants (two glides plus the rhotic /ɹ/), three lateral approximants, and a flap or trill. Nine of these consonants are written as digraphs (retroflex nasal /ɳ/ (written <rn>), lamino-dental nasal /n̪/ (written <nh>), lamino-palatal nasal /ɲ/ (written <ny>), velar nasal /ŋ/ (written <ng>), retroflex stop /ɖ/ (written <rd>), lamino-dental stop /d̪/ (written as <th>), apico-alveolar trill /r/ (written as <rr>), retroflex lateral approximant /ɭ/ (written <rl>), lamino-palatal lateral approximant /ʎ/ (written <ly>). Miriwoong has four vowels: low front unrounded /a/ (written <a>), high front unrounded /i/ (written <i>), high back rounded /u/ (written <oo>), and central /ə/ (written <e>).[2]

In the following, selected aspects of Miriwoong grammar are introduced. To begin with, Miriwoong word classes are discussed. Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) lists nominals, verbs, adverbs, particles and interjections.[3] The class of verbs consists of inflecting verbs, which exhibit both

---

[1] As stated in the frontmatter, the referencing of Frances Kofod's and Dr. Knut J. Olawsky's work as "in prep." reflects that the analysis of Miriwoong grammar is ongoing and certain analyses may have changed since the time of writing.

[2] Instead of /ə/, Kofod (1978) used the symbol ʌ "in its American sense for a low-mid central vowel" (Dixon 2002:628). By having four vowels, Miriwoong sets itself apart from the about two-thirds of Australian languages which only have "the standard three" vowels "low *a*, high front unrounded *i* and high back (sometimes rounded, sometimes unrounded) *u*" (Dixon 2002:628f). Due to both regular alternations and speaker variation, Miriwoong vowels are pronounced differently in different contexts. Vowel length is not contrastive (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).

[3] Note that in §2.2.1 it was stated that McGregor (2004:101) also lists pronouns and ideophones among the eight major word classes that Kimberley languages typically exhibit. Pronouns are counted by Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) among the nominals.

pronominal prefixes and suffixes, and uninflecting verbs (also called *coverbs* or *preverbs*). The adverbs are asserted to include locational, temporal and manner adverbs plus a further subgroup of adverbs that do not fit into either of those subcategories (ibid). The class of nominals is the largest of the categories and comprises simple nouns, adjectives – including numeral and quantifying ones, demonstratives, possessive pronouns, cardinal pronouns, place names, person names and interrogatives (ibid.).

Virtually all nominals can take the locative marker and have the ability to function as a nominal head as well as a modifier.[4] Subtypes can be distinguished by (i) semantic considerations and (ii) morphological characteristics such as the degree of morphological transparency and the range of suffixes that the different subcategories take, e.g. *-yile* is only compatible with simple nouns and adjectives whereas the gender suffix can be found on simple nouns, adjectives, demonstratives, possessive pronouns and quantifiers[5] (ibid.). Since the nominals share many formal features, the subcategories cannot always be clearly delineated. Especially adjectives have very similar properties to simple nouns and are largely semantically defined.[6] In addition, word classes can be derived from each other in various ways, such as an uninflecting verb from a nominal via a suffix and vice versa. Thus, category boundaries are somewhat fuzzy.[7] Moreover, as a non-Pama-Nyungan language, Miriwoong makes use of both pronominal prefixes and suffixes. In addition, pronominal enclitics are used to express a variety of functions.

Second, a few words will be said about word order. Similar to most Australian languages (Dixon 1980:441, Koch 2007:38, McConvell 2003:79 on Kija), Miriwoong has a relatively free word order, even if a few rules and some preferred orders within clauses and phrases can be observed. For example, in negated clauses the particle *ngoowag* must precede the complex verb but need not immediately precede it (Kofod 1978:225); in complex predicates uninflecting verbs precede most inflecting verbs (if they are not in the imperative mood, Kofod 1978:222); in noun phrases adjectives preferably occur postnominally while other modifiers, including possessive pronouns, are preferred in prenominal position (Kofod 1978:52; Olawsky in prep. (2020):366, 372). A good

---

[4] This is the case for at least some members of each subclass (ibid.).

[5] In addition, one of the interrogatives meaning 'who' (third person singular) has two gender-specific forms, a feminine and a masculine variant. None of the other interrogatives are gender-specific (Kofod in prep. (2017)).

[6] In order to delineate adjectives from simple nouns, in addition to morphological criteria, Olawsky adduces their ability to function as a modifier of another noun: While adjectives regularly function as modifiers, the number of nouns doing so rather restricted and involves humans, animals and nature terms (Olawsky in prep. (2020)). Under this analysis only those nominals that can be used as modifiers are counted as adjectives.

[7] For a discussion of intermediate word classes see Walsh' (1996) description of Murrinh-Patha. He claims that in addition to nouns and verbs, whose characteristics can be analysed with the help of a template, the language also has vouns and nerbs, which have some characteristics of both nouns and verbs. Nerbs are more 'nouny' in that they can incorporate body parts and can be suffixed with a number indicator whereas vouns are more 'verby' in that they include auxiliaries but take no case markers.

example of free word order is the flexibility of placing either the PR or the PE first when the two are juxtaposed (Olawsky in prep. (2020:86)).

Third, some facts about Miriwoong morphology will be summarised. Nouns inflect for gender (masculine vs. feminine), where masculine is the default. As mentioned above, adjectives, possessive pronouns and some numerals and quantifiers, but also interrogatives agree with the gender of the noun they modify. Third person singular cardinal pronouns, demonstratives and pronoun prefixes and suffixes on verbs must take either their masculine or their feminine form to agree with the gender of the noun they refer to (Kofod 2009a).

Miriwoong inflecting verbs (IVs) inflect for person (first vs. second vs. third, inclusive vs. exclusive), number (with a singular vs. dual vs. non-singular distinction), gender (masculine vs. feminine), aspect (imperfective vs. remote past frequentative), and mood (realis vs. irrealis). Finally, the verb stem indicates tense (present vs. past[8] vs. future). Uninflecting verbs (UVs) can be reduplicated or suffixed by an aspectual suffix to encode repeated or continuous action.

Analysing the pronoun system in Miriwoong, Kofod (in prep. (2017)) states that the basic number distinction in Miriwoong is between singular and non-singular. In addition, dual is expressed by (i) the suffix -*warriny* on simple nouns and adjectives, (ii) the suffix -*boo* on cardinal pronouns and – in combination with the nominal suffix -*ng* as -*beng* – on nominal demonstratives and the interrogative *gawoothagibeng* 'who (dual)', (iii) the enclitic -*meleng* following verbs, pronominal enclitics, possessive pronouns and the numeral adjective *ganggoob* 'two' (and also sometimes on nouns), as well as (iv) via the choice of the pronominal prefix on inflecting verbs. Several of these options can occur in one clause. Kofod (in prep. (2017):3) explains that the term *non-singular* more accurately reflects Miriwoong grammar than the term *plural* for the following reasons: Firstly, the same nominal suffix is used for plural entities as for "unbounded mass nouns". Secondly, dual pronouns "are formed by the addition of a suffix" to the pronoun forms with (both singular and) plural reference. Moreover, Kofod asserts that "[t]he pronominal demonstratives *berrang*, *berraying* and *berring* are not really 'plural' but 'non-singular' […] or perhaps 'non- specific'" (in prep. (2017):59). She demonstrates that the pronoun system could more accurately be described using the system Minimal, Augmented, Augmented reduced to two (in prep. (2017), see §4.3.4 for details).

Third, a number of issues in Miriwoong morpho-syntax and syntax will be introduced. There is no marking of the core syntactic S, A and O functions on nominals.[9] Disambiguation of those functions is possible via the noun class system (masculine or feminine gender) or via discourse

---

[8] It has been claimed that the term *past* tense is a simplification with respect to Australian Aboriginal languages and that *anteriority* would be better suited (Adone p.c.).

[9] Thus, there is no ergative case-marking (see McGregor (2004:117), cf. 4.2.3). However, optional ergative marking has been claimed to be a feature of other Jarragan languages (by McConvell (2003:79) for Gajirrabeng (Kajirrawung) and by Tsunoda (1981:5) for Kija). Optional ergative marking has been described for Gooniyandi (McGregor 1990, 1992), which is spoken to the south-west of Jarragan country.

pragmatics (see McConvell 2003:79 on Kija). The locative *-m/ -em* is the only word-level case inflection. In addition, there are a number of case-marking morphemes (see §4.2.3). As Dixon (2002:666) observes, the Jarragan languages – including Miriwoong – "have perhaps the most highly fusional character in Australia." He holds responsible the "many phonological changes and truncations" that have applied both in proto-Jarragan and later in the individual languages.

Miriwoong has both head and dependent-marking (in the sense of Nichols 1986): Pronominal prefixes and suffixes on inflecting verbs marking core syntactic functions and pronominal enclitics on inflecting verbs marking oblique functions are instances of head-marking. Similarly, the possessee (i.e. the head) rather than the possessor (i.e. the dependent) is marked by the possessive suffixes *-ga* and *-ba.* However, locative case-marking on nouns is considered dependent-marking. In addition, in NPs usually the modifier (i.e. the dependent) is marked: Not only locative *-m* but also the existential marker occurs on the modifier, if one is present (Olawsky in prep. (2020):101). If a possessee is modified by an adjective, *-ba* attaches to that modifier. Gender suffixes on modifying adjectives and possessive pronouns as well as suffixes such as the instrumental *-berri* on modifying possessive pronouns (in prep. (2020):134) are also cases of dependent marking.

4.2 Terminology

4.2.1 Topic marker

The "most common suffix" in Miriwoong *-a/ -wa*[10] was originally termed the 'optional suffix' (Kofod 1978:130), as it "does not make any semantic difference", is not used in the citation form of a word and seems to be used for rhythmic reasons, "to aid the general flow the language" (ibid.). Kofod observes that it may follow "members of any word class" except pronominal enclitics and inflecting verbs.[11] In the Toolbox database (Kofod 2020), it is glossed as TOP for *topic marker*, as it was assumed to cover discourse-pragmatic functions. These have not yet been described for Miriwoong in any great detail, though. At least nowadays speaker preference also seems to be a factor: One younger speaker is reported to notoriously use it on virtually every

---

[10] The allomorph *-wa* occurs after vowels. There is also a rarer allomorph *-ya*. If *-a/ -wa/ -ya* is analysed as an enclitic (see below) the most common suffix in Miriwoong is the nominal suffix *-ng/-ny* followed by the locative *-m/ -em* (Olawsky in prep. (2020):190). Note that for ease of understanding for non-experts the symbol / rather than ~ is used for allomorphs in this thesis.

[11] Kofod (1978) writes that it can only be attached to inflecting verbs if these are first followed by the dual marker *-meleng* or the subordinating suffix *-nging/ -ging.* However, no examples with *-melenga* are found in the Toolbox database (Kofod 2015); Kofod (in prep. (2020):126) reports only three instances among more than 800 verbs suffixed with *-mele(ng)*. Note that the attachment of the subordinate marker *-ngi(ng)* results in nominalisation of inflecting verbs (see §10.5.4), which licences the attachment of *-a*. Further, Kofod states that the marker occurs in the form *-ja* on inflecting verbs when these are first followed by the past distant frequentative marker *-nyalinj/ -jaliny*. However, *-ja* is now analysed as an allomorph of the existential marker *-tha*, see §4.2.2 below.

word – a source of amusement for other speakers (JP 2013 p.c.). More recently, Olawsky (in prep. (2020)), calls it *emphatic* marker and treats it as an enclitic.

Not much is known at this stage about the nature of the 'emphasis' it would express, especially in opposition to other emphasis markers and intensifiers (like *-ga*,[12] *-iya* and potentially *-ra*[13] and *-tha* (see §4.2.2 below)). Therefore, in this thesis the traditional gloss TOP will be retained.

4.2.2   Existential marker

In this thesis, the morpheme *-tha/ -ja*[14] and its third singular masculine and third singular feminine counterparts *-ntha and -nyja* are generically referred to as the existential marker and glossed as EXST, EXST_m, and EXST_f respectively. At the current state of analysis, it is not clear whether there are in fact different types of this morpheme that cover different functions (Kofod 2013 p.c., Olawsky 2017 p.c.). In her Master's Thesis, Kofod describes an emphatic morpheme *-dha* and an existential morpheme *-nda/-ndja*. The latter has also been called 'stative' marker in early work on Miriwoong. Potentially there is a further type with the function of an adverbaliser (Olawsky 2017 p.c.). Recently, an analysis was suggested that differentiates an existential marker, which occurs on nominals (referred to as VC (verbless clause marker) by Olawsky (in prep. (2020))), from an emphatic marker (glossed EMPH1 (Kofod in prep. (2017)) or EMPH2 (Olawsky in prep. (2020))), which occurs on adverbs, particles, numeral adjectives, uninflecting verbs,[15] and nominals in sentences involving inflecting verbs, or on the inflecting verb itself. For the discussion of possessive constructions a differentiation does not seem necessary. Therefore, following the principle of Occam's Razor, in Chapter 9, a single morpheme will be assumed. The distinction will be invoked, however, in §10.5.6 on repercussions of the typological profile of possessive constructions in Miriwoong on other parts of the grammar.

4.2.3   Case-marking morpheme

In §8.2.4, McGregor's (2004) term *case-marking morpheme* is introduced. In order to allow for comparisons between Miriwoong and the languages discussed in Chapter 8, McGregor's selection of case-marking morphemes and his terminology is used in this section to describe case functions in Miriwoong.

---

[12] Emphatic *-ga* is homophonous with the relationship suffix *-ga*, which is discussed in §9.2.4, as well as purposive *-ga(ng)* (see §4.2.3).
[13] The sequential marker *-ra/ -era* is translated by Kofod (1978:153) as 'and then' or 'now'. It is treated by Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) as an enclitic.
[14] *-tha* is assimilated to *-ja* after palatal consonants.
[15] See also Kofod's specification that the emphatic marker is "frequent on coverbs when not combined with IV [inflecting verb] and also in some instances on QNF [quantifier], TEM [temporal] and LOC [locative] not seeming to be the EXST" (Kofod 2014 p.c., list of abbreviations).

In addition to the locative word-level case inflection *-m/ -em* ('in', 'at', 'on', 'near'), in Miriwoong, there are the following phrasal, peripheral clausal, and local peripheral case-marking morphemes:[16]

- comitative *-ba* 'with', 'having'
- privative *-yile* 'without', 'not having'
- purposive (/genitive) *-gerring* 'for'
- purposive (/dative) *-geny* 'for, in order to get'
- instrumental *-berri/ -birri/ -woorri* 'with' and *-deb* 'with spear'
- perlative (/locative) *-biny* 'along', 'at', 'in', 'through'
- allatives *-bag* and *-melig* '(back) to', 'into', 'onto', 'towards', etc.[17]
- ablative *-banjilng/ -banjelng/ -banyen* 'from', 'because of', 'after (in time)'

Comitative *-ba* and privative *-yile* are the most relevant for this thesis and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9. The others are briefly discussed here, mainly with respect to their analysis in McGregor (2004:135,141), which is based on Kofod (1978), and the differences to the current analysis in Kofod (in prep. (2017)) and Olawsky (in prep. (2020)).

Purposive *-gering* (SIC) is called *genitive* by McGregor, who states that "it is also used with a purposive sense" (2004:141). He claims that it indicates a benefactive or indirect object (e.g. 'wait for someone'), and means 'for' (e.g. 'I'll cook it for later') or 'until' when attached to temporal adverbs (e.g. 'keep it until tomorrow') (see Kofod 1978:142). This differs from the analysis in Olawsky (in prep. (2020)). While stating that *-gerring* usually follows uninflecting verbs, Kofod (1978:142) only gives examples where it occurs on other parts of speech. These are found to be exceptional by Olawsky. According to his semantic analysis of *-gerring* on uninflecting verbs, it has the following meanings (in prep. (2020):463):

- Intention (planning to do something)
- Purpose (wanting to do with a specific result in mind)
- Result (strategic action with an expected outcome)
- Function (what something will be used for)
- Suitability (similar to Function but more generic, mainly suitability for consumption)

The 'wait for' example mentioned above could be interpreted to correspond to the *Result* meaning, the 'cook for' example potentially to the *Function* meaning of *-gerring*. However, the 'keep until' example does not fit this analysis. In Olawsky, the example sentence in question is incidentally translated as 'keep *for* tomorrow'. In line with this, in Toolbox (Kofod 2020), no

---

[16] Note the terminological differences between authors. McConvell (2003:87) asserts that "[t]here are no dative or genitive case-markers in Jarragan languages." By *case-marker* he refers to case inflections, whereas McGregor (2004) uses *case-marking morpheme* or *case marker* to refer to postpositions/enclitics, see §8.2.4.

[17] *-bag* frequently carries the meaning 'back to'. Kofod (1978:139) hypothesises that *-bag* is borrowed from English *back*. She also lists the meaning 'away to'.

instances of *-gerring* with the meaning 'until' can be found. Note also Olawsky's analysis of *-boorriya* as a purposive/associative suffix, see §9.2.3.3.

Purposive *-geny* is called *dative* by McGregor (2004:141). In most cases its meaning involves acquiring or obtaining an item as a result of an effort (Olawsky (in prep. (2020):218)). McGregor claims that *-geny* also has the allative sense 'to(wards)' (see Kofod 1978:141). This is not reflected in Olawsky's analysis. He determines that *-geny* usually occurs with simple nouns and discusses a similar suffix *-ga(ng)*, which attaches to coverbs. *-ga(ng)* refers to a tool or instrument which is "used to (apply an action)" (in prep. (2020):309).

Instrumental *-berri* does not have a special status among the case-marking morphemes in McGregor (2004). According to Olawsky, it is different in that it does not attach to the nominal root but follows the nominal suffix *-ng/-ny*. In most examples (76%), however, "the [nominal] suffix is assimilated to [m] by the homorganic bilabial stop /b/ in *-berri*" (in prep. (2020):234).[18] In addition, *-berri* can follow the topic marker, thus it is analysed as an enclitic rather than a suffix (in prep. (2020):239) (see also §4.2.5).

Perlative *-biny* is referred to by McGregor as the postposition LOC$_2$. He claims that it is "sometimes used with an instrumental sense, and to mark the language in which a word is spoken or in which it belongs (e.g. 'speak in Miriwoong')" (2004:141, see Kofod 1978:136). McGregor states that there are occasional sequences of locative *-m* and LOC$_2$. In contrast to *-m*, *-biny* is not used to express temporal location (see Kofod 1978:134). Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) determines that *-biny* has two main functions:[19]

- movement or position along a location; also in scattered distribution
- the manner typical of a certain nominal entity such as 'according to', or 'in the way of …' (including language: 'in Miriwoong language'/ 'in white fella language' (i.e. English)/ 'in government 'language'')

The instrumental sense mentioned by McGregor must be seen as exceptional. Parallel examples to the utterance given in Kofod ('kill with stick') feature lexical items (*moonggerrb* 'hit/kill with stick') or *-berri*.

Of the allative suffixes *-bag* and *-melig*, the former is the more frequent one (Olawsky in prep. (2020)). They occur in almost identical contexts, except that only *-melig* is observed with place

---

[18] Kofod (1978:135,138) states that *-m* also occurs in a few cases before *-biny* and that *-ng* can be retained preceding *-bag* and *-melig* on possessive pronouns when preceded by the topic marker *-a*. She gives two examples of *-m* + *-biny*, one of which has since been reanalysed as a noun containing final /n/, the other of which is not found in the Toolbox database (Kofod 2015). One of her examples with possessive pronouns has since been reanalysed as a possessive pronoun with the optional possessive suffix *-nge* rather than *-ng* + *-a* (Kofod in prep. (2017)), the other is not included in Toolbox.

[19] In addition, an adjectival base suffixed with *-biny* takes on an adverbial meaning: *gerlga-biny* 'in a bad way' (Olawsky in prep. (2020):204), see 'in this way' in Kofod (1978:137)).

names (ibid.). As with the other case-marking morphemes, -*bag* marks the dependent, but it can optionally appear on both head noun and modifier.[20]

Ablative -*banjilng* "indicates the source of an entity, or origin of motion; sometimes it has the sense 'belonging' (e.g. 'she put on the things belonging to the turtle')" (McGregor 2004:144 quoting Kofod 1978:138). Olawsky explains that the difference between -*banjilng* / -*banjelng* on the one hand and -*banyen* on the other hand is "largely speaker-specific, i.e. probably based on different dialects of Miriwoong" (in prep. (2020):223). Locative -*m* is present in the majority of cases preceding -*banjelng*, particularly with simple nouns in locative contexts. Here -*m* is likely to be the locative marker – not an assimilated nominal marker as with -*berri* – and is required by the locative context on nouns that are not inherently locational or topographic (in prep. (2020):225). Olawsky notes that -*m* is not necessary with "more specific locational or directional suffixes […] (such as -*bag*, -*melig*, or -*biny*)" (in prep. (2020):194). Moreover, they observe that in addition to the directional meaning, -*banjilng* can have a grammatical function, "comparable to a case marker". When attached to a noun in sentences involving the verb SAY/DO and several participants, -*banjelng* marks the speaker. When attached to a pronoun or demonstrative, it marks the source/agent (in prep. (2020):225, Kofod in prep. (2017):12). It has been suggested that in these contexts -*banjelng* has the function fulfilled in other languages by an ergative marker (Kofod in prep. (2017)).

Of these case-marking morphemes only one is required per phrase (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:48). The locative -*m*, in contrast, usually follows each constituent of the noun phrase (Kofod 1978:133). To be precise, it is suffixed to the head noun and/or its dependent modifiers (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).

4.2.4 Inflecting verb and uninflecting verb/coverb

In an early publication on Miriwoong verbs (Kofod 1976b) the largely non-inflecting, (lexical) meaning-carrying open-class verb was referred to as 'verb particle' and contrasted with the inflecting, closed-class, semantically generic 'simple verb'. In Kofod's (1978) Master's Thesis the former was called the 'verb root' as opposed to the 'auxiliary' or 'simple verb'. In the introduction to the Miriwoong dictionary (Kofod 2009a) the more widely used term 'coverb' is chosen for the former, while 'simple verb' is retained for the latter. In the literature on Australian languages, the additional terms 'preverb' (e.g. Jones 1995), 'participle', 'base' or '(main) verb' on the one hand and 'finite verb', 'light verb' (Bowern 2012) or 'verb' on the other hand are found (see Schultze-Berndt (2003:146) for an overview of terminology including additional references).

Recently, it has been decided among linguists at MDWg to adopt the descriptive terms *uninflecting verb* (UV) and *inflecting verb* (IV) (see Kofod in prep. (2020), this terminology is used

---

[20] Olawsky (in prep. (2020):215) also gives an example where -*bag* marks the head noun and -*melig* the dependent possessive pronoun.

by (McGregor 2002b)). For the sake of consistency for descriptive materials on Miriwoong and because the terms are quite intuitive, this convention is followed in this thesis. However, since the designation *coverb* is used widely, including in earlier work on Miriwoong and for the neighbouring language Jaminjung (Schultze-Berndt 2000, who also uses 'generic verb' for inflecting verbs (2000:4)), it will be mentioned in addition to *UV* in several parts of this thesis.

When IVs occur on their own, they are referred to as *simple verbs* (Kofod in prep. (2020)). The combination of uninflecting and inflecting verbs is referred to as 'compound verb' (Kofod 1978:222) or usually as *complex predicate* (Kofod in prep. (2020)). The latter is used in this thesis.

4.2.5 Enclitic

Miriwoong grammar makes extensive use of pronominal enclitics. Cross-linguistically, clitics have some characteristics of free words and some of affixes (Navarro i Ferrando 2013). They cannot occur independently but must be attached to – i.e. cliticise to – a word, the so-called *host*. In contrast to *proclitics*, which precede their host, *enclitics* follow the word to which they cliticise (Vigario 2014b). Enclitics can be "rather free with respect to which items they attach to" (Navarro i Ferrando 2013) or more affix-like in being "bound to a specific morphosyntactic host" (Vigario 2014a). In McGregor's terms (1990:140) enclitics are "bound morphemes which do not form grammatical units with the forms to which they are attached". In contrast to postpositions and stem forming suffixes, which do so to a limited extent, "enclitics do not allow for recursive embedding" i.e. when attached to a grammatical unit they do not from a grammatical unit of the same rank (McGregor 1990:188). Enclitics always form a closed word class (Vigario 2014a). Enclitics are usually argued to be phonologically dependent on their host (e.g. Navarro i Ferrando 2013), i.e. there cannot be a pause between the host and the enclitic (ibid.), they do not bear primary stress (ibid.) and they tend to be shorter that minimal words (Vigario 2014a) and phonetically reduced (Koch 2016).[21] However, different types of clitics have been described in the literature. *Free clitics*, as opposed to *affixal clitics* and *internal clitics,* are external to the phonological word of the host, rather than being adjoined to it or incorporated into it (Vigario 2014a).

Miriwoong pronominal enclitics fit some but not all of the above criteria. They are closed class items, cannot occur in isolation and cliticise to a host. They are rather free with respect to the items they attach to. However, Kofod determines that they remain "phonologically separate" from the word to which they attach (in prep. (2017):24).[22] In the speech of one speaker recorded

---

[21] Koch (2016) speaks of reduction at the consonant or vowel level: "Assimilation auf konsonantischer Ebene oder Abschwächung des Stammvokals in der unbetonten Nebensilbe".
[22] Supplementary enclitics (to be discussed below) are similarly attached to the verb "without becoming [phonologically] part of it" (Kofod 2009a:29).

for this thesis, in fact, there tends to be a perceptible pause before pronominal enclitics.[23] In addition, most enclitics are not particularly short: Indirect Object enclitics consist of between two (e.g. =*ni* /ni/) and four sounds (e.g. =*woorri* /wuri/), Benefactive enclitics of between three (e.g. =*noong* /nuŋ/) and six (e.g. =*nenggoorr* /neŋgur/), and ablative enclitics of between four (=*noowa* /nuwa/) and six (e.g. =*woorroowa* /wuruwa/). They can occur in reduced form, as final [ŋ] can be dropped (e.g. =*noo* /nu/). The Miriwoong lexicon includes free lexemes of comparable length. Uninflecting verbs are minimally of monosyllabic CV structure, e.g. *roo* /ɹu/ 'grab, hold in hand', *thoo* /ḏu/ 'cool down', *woo* /wu/ 'be sad' (Olawsky in prep. (2020)). While these are rare (9 in total), slightly longer uninflecting verbs with a CVC syllable structure are rather common (ibid.).[24]

How the term clitic is applied can differ from one Australian language to the next. The behaviour of clitics in the non-Pama language Kayardild (Tangkic, traditionally spoken on the South Wellesley Islands, Evans 1995), for example, does not coincide entirely with that of Miriwoong enclitics. There are similarities: The Kayardild clitic =*(i)da* 'same' follows several different maximally inflected parts of speech (verbs, pronouns, noun/adjectives, and locationals, 1995:390). Pronominal enclitics in Miriwoong also follow inflecting verbs, a variety of nominals, and particles, which are inflected for person, number and gender. Non-singular enclitics can precede the dual enclitic =*meleng*, though. However, there are also differences between Kayardild clitics and Miriwoong pronominal enclitics: While the two Kayardild clitics =*ma* 'NOW' and =*(a)ka* 'FOCus' (except in one case) follow the nominative suffix, =*(i)da* replaces it. In Miriwoong, the nominal suffix -*ng*/-*ny* is retained with all pronominal enclitics. As in Miriwoong, though, Kayardild =*(i)da* follows other cases. Moreover, Evans assumes that =*(i)da* derives from a postposition rather than from a free pronoun, as is argued for bound pronouns (including enclitics) by McGregor (2004:120). Not only does Miriwoong not have adpositions (Olawsky in prep. (2020):71), its pronominal enclitics have obvious characteristics of pronouns: They have variants for different person and number combinations, which by and large follow the same system as Miriwoong cardinal pronouns (see §4.3.4 for details on free pronouns).[25]

Despite the deviations of pronominal enclitics in Miriwoong from prototypical clitics and clitics in other Australian languages, this thesis follows the tradition of calling the bound pronouns in question *enclitics*. In Kofod (1978) they are simply called benefactive, indirect object and ablative

---

[23] For example, there are pauses before the Benefactive enclitic in RG's speech when she completes the handbag task [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]. See also PG in example (8) below (Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-4]).

[24] Most Miriwoong words have two or more syllables (two syllables being typical for Australian languages, Dixon 2002:553). Most nominals (49%, which is the majority) are trisyllabic, less than 1% of them are monosyllabic (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).

[25] Further, Evans (1995) notes that =*(a)ka* may be used in songs and spells "for purely rhythmic purposes". The author of this thesis is not aware of a similar use of Miriwoong enclitics (in particular pronominal ones) in Miriwoong. Kofod might be referring to rhythm when she determines that the topic marker -*a* "seems to be included to aid the general flow [of] the language" (1978:130).

pronouns, but Dixon (2002:666), McConvell (2003) and Kofod (in prep. (2017)) refer to them as *enclitics*. To be precise, the term enclitic is used in this thesis for an element for which there is evidence

(i)   that it is used following several different word classes in the same function

(ii) that it follows the nominal suffix *-ng/-ny*,[26] the nominaliser *-ngi*,[27] case-marking morphemes[28] or the topic marker *-a*.[29]

The constraints in (ii) fit McConvell's claims that enclitics in Kija and the other Jarragan languages do not appear close to the nominal stem but occur on the outer periphery and follow discourse-pragmatic elements such as the topic marker (McConvell 2003:84).

4.3   Aspects of relevance for this thesis

4.3.1   Gender marking

In their citation form simple nouns, adjectives, demonstratives, possessive pronouns, and quantifiers occur with the nominal gender suffix *-ng* 'masculine' or *-ny* 'feminine' (Olawsky in prep. (2020):73). The vast majority of nouns are masculine, which makes *-ng* "the default form" (in prep. (2020):74). It is also used where gender is not specified such as with non-singular contexts (ibid.). New nouns also receive *-ng* (ibid.).

The feminine suffix *-ny* is not necessarily used with every feminine noun. Instead, the feminine noun could have no nominal suffix at all, such as *goorririj*, which is feminine by nature of being a vehicle, i.e. a car (Kofod 1978:122). Alternatively, feminine nouns could be marked by the *-ng* suffix. This is the case, for example, for kinship terms such as *ngajang*, which can either refer to the female relation 'father's mother' or to 'woman's son's child' (Kofod 2023), where the child can be of either sex. However, terms with fixed gender, such as *gawooleny* 'woman', also often receive *-ng* by default. Another example is constituted by nouns that denote feminine animals such as *nganalang* 'corella'. They either have fixed gender because they were females in the *ngarranggarni* (Dreaming) (in prep. (2020):74, for example *galaminang* 'echida/porcupine' is

---

[26] Remember from the discussion above that Olawsky (in prep. (2020):234) analyses *-woorri* (an allomorph of *-berri*) as an enclitic because it follows *-ng/-ny* rather than substituting the nominal suffix.

[27] Kofod (2013 p.c.) argues that the supplementary bound pronoun should be referred to as "enclitic" because it follows the nominaliser *-ngi(ng)*.

[28] Kofod (1978) includes example sentences in which the Benefactive enclitic (plus the existential marker) follows the purposive suffix *-gerring* (1978:56) and the Indirect Object enclitic follows locative *-biny* (1978:60). Similarly, Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) observes that *-a*, *-ra*, and *-ayi* are enclitics because they follow purposive *-gerring*.

[29] By this definition, the sequential marker *-ra* as well as the topic marker *-a* itself (see below for the terminology used in this case) are enclitics. This has been proposed by Olawsky (in prep. (2020)). Likewise, the dual marker *-meleng* is an enclitic rather than a suffix: "The morpheme *-mele-* behaves like an enclitic rather than a suffix. In some limited instances it is found affixed to nouns as well as following verbs and enclitics" (Kofod in prep. (2017):1). Thus, it follows not only different parts of speech but also other (non-singular pronominal) enclitics.

female (Narrative Kofod [H129-2]:MM)), or are assigned gender within a particular discourse context, reflecting their biological gender.[30] Other nouns, such as *jimbilang* 'stone spearhead', are grammatically feminine and are cross-referenced as such in the verb (Kofod 2014/08/12 p.c.).

At the same time, nouns ending in *ny* are not necessarily feminine. The *ny* can be part of the (masculine) stem as in *gerany* 'stone'. Likewise, nouns ending in *ng* are not necessarily masculine. Terms referring to animals could be marked by *-ng* by default rather than due to their masculine biological gender. Finally, paralleling *goorririj*, which is feminine but does not have a nominal ending, the masculine noun *gerdan* has neither *-ng* nor *-ny*.

In this thesis, the nominal suffix is glossed NOM. If a nominal denotes or refers to a human being or a kinship relation with fixed gender, the gloss will be NOM_m or NOM_f respectively. In addition, NOM_f is used when it can be deduced from an inflecting verb, a free pronoun, a demonstrative, quantifier, numeral, interrogative, or the context that the nominal is feminine.

Kofod (in prep. (2020)) discusses gender marking via pronominal affixes in detail: In addition to marking feminine gender in nominals, *-ny* also recurs in the "prefix to intransitive and reflexive/reciprocal verbs indicating a feminine singular subject and also as the first sound in the feminine singular imperfective pronoun suffix *-nyan*" (in prep. 2020:48). Kofod adds that feminine gender can also be signalled by *l*: "The phoneme 'l' occurs in the feminine demonstratives *ngelany* 'that (feminine)', *ngelayiny* 'this (feminine)' and *ngeliny* 'this proximate (feminine)'. It is also the feminine gender nominal suffix in Gija" (ibid.).

4.3.2   Uses of the existential marker

The existential marker *-tha/ -ja* has a third singular masculine allomorph *-ntha* and a third singular feminine allomorph *-nyja.* Alternatively, one could analyse the allomorphs as combinations of the nominal suffixes *-ng* (m.) and *-ny* (f.) plus the existential *-tha*, which is assimilated to *-ja* following *-ny.* (Assimilation also takes place if *ny* is not the feminine nominal suffix part of the stem of the preceding lexeme (Kofod 1978:152)). *-ng* in turn is assimilated to yield *-ntha* (Olawsky in prep. (2020):394). The existential marker occurs in sentences with an existential or equative/ identifying[31] meaning, functioning like a copula. The utterance (1) illustrates the equative meaning. It stems from picture description: A figure is identified as a(nother) cat. The (non-)existential function is exemplified in (2), where the *-tha* morpheme implies the existence of clouds, which is negated by *-yile* 'without'. These construction types are further discussed in §10.5.5.

The existential marker is also used in sentences that can be interpreted as having a possessive function: Utterance (3) is used in a narrative for the description of body parts of an animal. This

---

[30] Olawsky (in prep. (2020):74) assumes that "[f]eminine gender appears to be inherent to [...] animals if their sex is recognisable".

[31] Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) also uses the term *identity (relation)* for these kinds of sentences.

example and its alternative English rendering is discussed further in §9.2.1. In combination with possessive pronouns, as in (4), the state of affairs that something belongs to someone – here the plastic container to the addressee – is expressed.

(1) Picture description [MEP-20140808-MaJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Ngenjayinga biya ngirrngilin-tha.
ngenjayi-ng=a   biya   ngirrngili-**ntha**
this_one_m-NOM=TOP   also   cat-EXST_m
'This is also a cat.'

(2) Conversation Kofod [MALLP-15-Feb-2012-Talking about weather]

Ngoomel-yilen-tha.
ngoomel-yile-**ntha**
cloud-not_having-EXST_m
'There are no clouds.'

(3) Narrative Kofod [K94-2-PC-Kangaroos]:PC

Nyangooda woonanggoonga thoodben-tha.
nyangood=a   woonanggoo-ng=a   thoodbe-**ntha**
hill_kangaroo=TOP   forearm-NOM=TOP   short-EXST_m
'The hill kangaroo has short arms.'

(4) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-2]:MAJ

Berrayinga nyingiyan-thara, ngiyi?
berrayi-ng=a   nyingiya-**ntha**=ra   ngiyi
this_one/these-NOM=TOP   2sgPOSS-EXST_m=SEQ   yes
'This is yours [i.e. your plastic container], yes?'

The *-tha* morpheme is frequently combined with the Benefactive enclitic. Kofod (1978) distinguishes between two functions. First, when used as an emphatic, Kofod refers to the morpheme as the *relator* for the enclitic. Constructions of this type can have a possessive or a non-possessive interpretation. An example of a non-possessive meaning can be found in (5), which describes the emotional state of a group of people.[32] If this construction is in the third person singular, the Benefactive enclitic is left unexpressed, see (6), which indicates a physical state of a (female) person. Note that since the information that the subject is third person singular and feminine is not expressed by an enclitic (it would be *-joong* in this case), the feminine allomorph of the emphatic/existential marker is used to encode gender (and thereby person and number because gender is only encoded for third person singular).[33] This type of construction is further discussed in §10.5.6. Another example of a non-possessive meaning is shown in (7). This utterance is similar to (1) above in being equative.

---

[32] Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) refers to this construction as *attribution*.
[33] Hence, there is no clear division along the lines of the forms of the marker. This would be the case if the *-ntha* and *-nyja* variants were not used in emphatics contexts.

Examples (8) and (9) demonstrate possessive readings. The former demonstrates one possibility of encoding names,[34] the latter is a case of kinship possession. Alienable possession (as in *I have object X*) is also common (see §9.1.5). Note that in contrast to (5), in (9) the Benefactive enclitic does not refer to the subject but encodes the first person possessor. As expected, the existential agrees in gender (and number) with the nominal to which it attaches, i.e. the possessee *ngarrageny* 'mother'.

(5) Picture story [MEP-20140911-RG-circle-of-dirt-2]:RG

Ngoondengi-tha-yarr.
ngoondengi-**tha**=**yarr**
good-EXST=1nsexBEN
'We are well/good.'

(6) Kofod (2009a:15)

Doonggerrnginy-ja.
doonggerrngi-**nyja**
hungry-EXST_f
'She is hungry.'

(7) Spontaneous [MEP-20141005-MAJ-circle-of-dirt-2]:MAJ

Ah! Nyinge-nyinge-tha-ngany ngayoowara[aa].
ah   nyenge-nyenge-**tha**=**ngany**   ngayoo=a=ra
ah   being_a_nuisance-EXST=1sgBEN   1sgPN=TOP=SEQ
'Ah! I am a nuisance [because I accidentally pushed over the audio recorder].'

(8) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-4]:PG

Jangari-tha(.)-noong (.) yinginy (.) [Aboriginal name].
Jangari-**tha**=**noong**   yinginy   [Aboriginal name]
skin_name-EXST-3sgmBEN   name   Aboriginal_name
'His name is [Aboriginal name].'

(9) Conversation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

Ngiyi, ngarrageny-ja-ngany.
ngiyi   ngarrage-**nyja**=**ngany**
yes   mother-f-EXST=1sgBEN
'She is my mother.' [lit. 'She is (a) mother for me.']

Second, Kofod (1978) argues that utterances in which the marker *-tha* is combined with the Benefactive enclitic and used as an existential (as opposed to the emphatic) usually retain a benefactive interpretation, see (10). Possessive sentences often additionally include the 'having'-suffix *-ba*, see (11). For examples of the existential with *-ba* only see §9.1.8.

---

[34] Kofod (1978:59) determined that only the Indirect Object enclitic is used with names (see §4.3.5). Nowadays, "mostly younger speakers" also use the Benefactive enclitic (in prep. (2017):31).

(10) Kofod (1978:57)

Gerloon-thara-yoowoorr.
gerloo-**ntha**=ra=**yoowoorr**
water-EXST=SEQ=1nsincBEN
'There was/is water for us then.'

(11) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-2013-06-26]:MAJ

Nyengoowa yambarra joorrgooyile-ba-tha-ngoong, garliny.
nyengoo=a   yambarra   joorrgooyile-**ba-tha**=ngoong   garli-ny
2sgPN=TOP   hair   long-having-EXST=2sgBEN   daughter/niece-f
'Your hair is long, daughter.'
\q Can I say: Yambarrang jorrgooyileng-ngerri?

The *-tha* morpheme combines with further elements of the grammar. One more combination
will be relevant throughout this thesis, namely *-tha* plus the Indirect Object enclitic, as in (12).

(12) Kofod (1978:60)

Googben-tha-woorri.
googbe-**ntha**=**woorri**
forbidden-EXST_m=3nsIO
'It [i.e. the food] was forbidden [to] them.'

4.3.3   Inflecting verbs

Kofod claims that Miriwoong inflecting verbs "are among the most complex of any Australian
language" (in prep. (2020):1). Within the inflecting verbs, intransitive, transitive, middle and
reflexive/reciprocal verbs are distinguished. There are four morphologically intransitive verbs[35]
(BE/STAY, GO/COME, FALL/GO_DOWN, and BURN),[36] fourteen morphologically transitive verbs (GET, PUT,
BRING/TAKE, HIT, HIT2, SPEAR, BITE, EAT, HAVE, LEAVE, SWEAR, COOK, LEAD, and FOLLOW),[37] eight middle
verbs,[38] six of which correspond to transitive verbs (SAY/DO, FOLLOW_MID, DO (see GET), PLACE (see
PUT), GO_ALONG (see BRING/TAKE), BECOME (see HIT), BECOME2 (see HIT2) and GO THROUGH (see SPEAR)),
and seven reflexive/reciprocal verbs, six of which have similar stems to transitive verbs and one of
which is similar to an intransitive verb (GO_DOWN, DO_REFL, SAY_REFL, SPEAR_REFL, HIT/CUT_REFL,
BITE_REFL and SWEAR_REFL) (in prep. (2020):2). Verbs from the paradigms of intransitive BE/STAY and
GO/COME together with the middle SAY/DO and the transitives GET, PUT, BRING/TAKE and HIT are most
frequent (Kofod in prep. (2020):3).

---

[35] Kofod explains that "'Intransitive' and 'Middle' verbs frequently occur in sentences with nominal objects"
(in prep. (2020):5).
[36] Following Schultze-Berndt, small caps are used to label inflecting verbs in order to signal the generic
nature of the events after which they are named and because in complex predicates with uninflecting verbs
they "categorise events" (Schultze-Berndt 2000:83, on neighbouring Jaminjung).
[37] "An additional transitive, GIVE, has been recorded in two imperative forms only" (Kofod in prep.
(2020):2).
[38] Middle verbs were called 'pseudo-intransitives' in Kofod (1978:201).

Miriwoong is a prefixing language, i.e. inflecting verbs obligatorily contain pronominal prefixes and suffixes. Miriwoong prefixes indicate person and in some cases tense and mood, suffixes encode additional information about person, mood and aspect (in prep. (2020):2). Miriwoong uses the same system for pronouns as for nominals, namely a nominative-accusative system (Olawsky in prep. (2020):77, cf. Kofod in prep. (2020):62f[39]). There are three sets of pronominal affixes in Miriwoong (Kofod in prep. (2020):2): Intransitive and reflexive/reciprocal verbs contain a set of pronominal prefixes and suffixes cross-referencing the subject. Middle verbs take prefixes that are different from both the intransitive and transitive set and also cross-reference the subject (in prep. (2020)). Their suffixes are the same as for intransitive verbs (in prep. (2020):84). In transitive verbs, the subject and object are cross-referenced by a third set of pronominal affixes.

Nouns do not inflect for number, but singular or non-singular number can be deduced from the affixes on the inflecting verb (among other things). Mass nouns and nouns that are intrinsically dual or plural trigger non-singular cross-referencing (Kofod 1978:44).

In addition to cross-referencing via pronominal affixes, "pronominal enclitics […] may cross-reference a second or third participant in a clause" (Kofod in prep. (2020):6): For example, objects of middle verbs – which only cross-reference subjects but not objects in their pronominal prefixes (see above) – are expressed via pronominal enclitics (Kofod 2013 p.c.). Frequently, the middle verb SAY/DO encodes reported speech in this way (Kofod in prep. (2020):5). As further discussed in §4.3.5 below, "[i]n addition to pronominal prefixes marking S, A and O functions, the verb accepts pronominal enclitics for peripheral function […]" (Dixon 2002:666). Moreover, transitive verbs in some subject/object combinations require a compulsory supplementary enclitic (in prep. (2020):6) "to elucidate the subject or object" (Kofod in prep. (2017):1), see §4.3.5.2. Kofod explains that there is only one slot for pronominal enclitics following the verb (1978:207), so that the different functions compete.[40]

Each inflecting verb has separate stems for the three tenses present, past, and future. In all tenses, there is a distinction between realis and irrealis mood. In realis mood, a realis marker -[C]*a* follows the stem of the verb. Irrealis mood – signalled by the absence of the realis marker – is triggered by negation via the negative particle *ngoowa/ngoowag* 'not' and by hypothetical and interrogative mood, which are encoded by particles and adverbs like "*wanyja* 'might',

---

[39] Kofod observes that "[i]n some cases the prefix that is the subject in intransitives becomes the object prefix in transitive verbs" and concludes that "[t]his is reminiscent of systems where a form appearing as a subject in intransitive constructions in nominative-ergative systems appears as the object in transitive constructions" (Kofod in prep. (2020):62f).

[40] However, a "very small number of instances of two pronominal enclitics attached to the one host have been recorded" (Kofod in prep. (2017):50). Some combinations are difficult to define, in other cases different functions are combined, e.g. the function of marking additional arguments, which is discussed here, plus the possessive function discussed in §4.3.5 below in *[I was] looking for₁ my₂ bag*, in yet other cases the same function is expressed twice, as in *[We] talk to₁ you about₂ Eddie Mabo*, where two additional arguments are expressed.

the hypothetical *wanygoo* 'maybe', any interrogative or any word that bears the interrogative suffix *-goo/woo*" (in prep. (2020):7). The realis marker is also absent from IVs in imperative and hortative form (which are based on future stems), and IVs in subjunctive form (which is based on the present tense stem and indicated by the suffix *-goo/-woo*) (ibid.). Subordinate forms of the verb, which are marked with the nominalising subordinator *-ngi(ng)*, are also in the irrealis form.

4.3.4   Free pronouns

Miriwoong has both bound and free pronouns. Prefixes and suffixes on inflecting verbs (§4.3.3) and pronominal enclitics (§4.3.5) belong to the bound pronouns. In addition, there are cardinal (§4.3.4.1) and possessive (§4.3.4.2) free pronouns. Disjunctive pronouns ('is/are the one/ones that'), two types of reflexive pronouns ('(self) in turn' and 'by oneself') and two types of emphatic pronouns can be formed from the cardinal pronouns via the addition of suffixes (Kofod in prep. (2017)). Miriwoong free pronouns do not inflect for case; they have the same form whether they express the subject, the direct or indirect object (in prep. (2017):9).

4.3.4.1   *Cardinal pronouns*

There are nine different cardinal pronouns in Miriwoong. Seven of those also occur with the dual suffix *-boo* (Kofod in prep. (2017):1), as shown in Table 4.1.[41]

Gloss	Cardinal pronouns	Cardinal pronouns + dual suffix *-boo*
1sgPN	*ngayoo*	
2sgPN	*nyengoo*	
3sgmPN	*nawoo*	*nawooboo*
3sgfPN	*ngaloo*	*ngalooboo*
1dincPN	*yayi*	*yayiboo*
1nsincPN	*yoowoorroo*	*yoowoorrooboo*
1nsexPN	*yarroo*	*yarrooboo*
2nsPN	*nenggerroo*	*nenggerreboo*
3nsPN	*boorroo*	*boorrooboo*

Table 4.1 Miriwoong cardinal pronouns

The first person singular form *ngayoo* is typical for (both Pama-Nyungan and non-Pama-Nyungan) Australian languages. Dixon (1980:344) and Blake (1988:6) have reconstructed the proto-Australian first person singular pronoun as **ngay* (McGregor 2004:111). Note that Harvey (2003:477) argues that it is really prefixes rather than free pronouns that can be reconstructed for proto-non-Pama-Nyungan. In the case of the first person singular, the free form is identical or similar to the prefix in non-Pama-Nyungan languages.

---

[41] The following abbreviations are used in glosses: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, d = dual, ex = exclusive, f = feminine, inc = inclusive, m = masculine, ns = non-singular, PN = pronoun, sg = singular.

The table shows that all four non-singular cardinal pronouns include <rr>. The morpheme -*rr*[V] signals non-singular not only in Miriwoong pronouns (including pronominal prefixes and enclitics (Kofod in prep. (2020):15)) but also "in many of the languages of the top end of Australia" (Kofod in prep. (2017):3). For example, the table showing Nyikina free pronouns in McGregor (2004:114) exhibits <rr> in all Unit Augmented (i.e. Minimal plus one) and Augmented pronouns.[42] For a detailed discussion of -*rr*[V] see Dixon (2002:253) and Harvey (2003:482).

Further, the table reveals that -*boo* 'dual' can be attached to all non-singular forms. In addition, it was found to be used in "a number of" instances on the singular pronouns *ngaloo* and *nawoo* by speakers in the 1970s (Kofod in prep. (2017):4). The first person dual inclusive pronoun *yayi* 'you and me' is usually heard as *yayiboo*; this does not change the meaning, though (Kofod in prep. (2017):4). *yayi* is grammatically singular (in prep. (2017):8)[43] and already encodes dual meaning before the suffix is attached (in prep. (2017):6).

The inclusive - exclusive distinction is also relevant for the first person non-singular pronouns *yoowoorroo(boo)* (inclusive) and *yarroo(boo)* (exclusive). McGregor (2004:112) claims that in Miriwoong this contrast is optional because *yoowoorroo* can be used for both first person inclusive and exclusive. Note, however, that he analyses *yoowoorroo* as simply plural, *yarroo* as plural exclusive, *yayi* as plural inclusive, and *yayiboo* and *yayimeleng* as dual inclusive. Thus, he seems to assume a meaning difference between *yayi* and *yayiboo* (cf. Kofod in prep. (2017)).

As already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter above, Kofod argues convincingly that the pronoun system in Miriwoong is best analysed as a system with the categories Minimal, Augmented, and Augmented reduced to two. The Pronouns are arranged according to that system in Table 4.2. In McGregor's (2004) words,

> [a] MINIMAL category is one that contains the smallest number of individuals consistent with the category; an AUGMENTED category is one that involves additional members that could be removed without changing the category (McGregor 2004:113).

Kofod's system is based, she writes, on the system used by Thomas (1955) to describe the language Ilocano (spoken in the Philippines).[44] In Table 4.2, as usual, the letter <m> stands for 'masculine' and <f> for 'feminine' gender. In line with the Ilocano system, the numbers in the first column stand for the person category in the following way:

1	Speaker
1 + 2	Speaker-Hearer
2	Hearer
3	Neither

---

[42] McGregor gives Stokes (1982:154) as the original source for the table. In McGregor (2004) it is adapted to the modern orthography.

[43] As such, it does not include <rr>.

[44] Kofod (in prep. (2017):7) refers to McGregor (1989), who noted with respect to pronouns in Bunuban languages that "the 1st person dual inclusive 'you and me' in both free and bound forms is grammatically similar to the singular and that […] an arrangement of the pronouns in a four person system based on an Ilocano […] type described […] by Thomas (1955) more truly reflects the realities of the languages."

	Minimal (one entity)	**Augmented** (one entity plus more than one)	**Augmented reduced to two** (one entity plus one)
1	*ngayoo*	*yarroo*	*yarrooboo*
1+2	*yayi(boo)*	*yoowoorroo*	*yoowoorrooboo*
2	*nyengoo*	*nenggerroo*	*nenggerrooboo*
3m	*nawoo*	*boorroo*	*boorrooboo* *(nawooboo)*
3f	*ngaloo*	*boorroo*	*boorrooboo* *(ngalooboo)*

Table 4.2 Miriwoong cardinal pronouns – Ilocano system (adapted from Kofod in prep. (2017):8)

The table visualises that all (frequently used and non-redundant) dual pronouns in Miriwoong are based on the Augmented category (Kofod in prep. (2017):7). For example, in the first person category the Minimal pronoun is *ngayoo*, the Augmented pronoun is *yarroo* (note that together with all Augmented pronouns it exhibits <rr>) and the Augmented reduced to two pronoun is Augmented + *-boo*, i.e. *yarrooboo*. There is one exception: Despite the dual suffix, *yoowoorrooboo* does not mean 'we two' but 'we three', i.e. 'you two listeners and I' (Kofod in prep. (2017):6). Kofod explains that the reduction is to three rather than two because "the dual inclusive [is] already covered by *yayi/yayiboo*" (in prep. (2017):7, italics added).

Cardinal pronouns do not replace the noun they refer to but are used in addition to it, as in *Ngaloo goorabeny warlayi nyindanyan* (3sgfPN old_woman-f roast_something 3sgfS-go/come_PRES-REAL-3sgfIPF) 'She, the old woman is cooking' (Kofod in prep. (2017):9). When the utterance includes an inflecting verb, free cardinal pronouns are not compulsory because the prefixes and suffixes of the verb encode person, number, and gender information about the verb's arguments (in prep. (2017):8).

The topic marker *-a/ -wa*, often in combination with the sequential marker *-ra/ -era*, is frequently attached to Miriwoong cardinal pronouns (in prep. (2017):11).

4.3.4.2   *Possessive pronouns*

Miriwoong possessive pronouns are discussed in detail in §9.2.3. This section serves to establish their formation from the cardinal pronouns. McGregor observes that they are formed in a regular way, more so than in Worrorra, for instance, which in turn is more regular than Gooniyandi, which is again is more regular than Nyikina so that one has to speak of separate sets of cardinal and possessive pronouns in that language (2004:118). In Miriwoong, *-ya*[45] plus the nominal marker *-ng* (m.) or *-ny* (f.) is added to the root of the cardinal pronoun. The final /u/ (<oo>) of the cardinal root, where present, becomes /i/ (except in the first person minimal *ngayoo*, where it is dropped) (compare Olawsky in prep. (2020:132) and McGregor (2004:118)).

---

[45] McGregor observes that there is a homophonous -[*(i)*]*ya* on nouns which does not mark possession but intensifying meaning (McGregor 2004:118). Note that *-ya* is also an allomorph of the topic marker *-a* (§4.2.1).

For example, *nawoo > naw~~oo~~iyang > nawiyang, ngayoo >* nga~~yooy~~ang *> ngayang* or *yayi > yayiyang > yayiyang.* The second person minimal *nyengoo* is an exception in that there is a vowel change: *nyengoo > nyengiyang > nyingiyang.* As discussed in §9.2.3, there is an additional set of possessive pronouns, which is formed by adding *-nge* before the nominal suffix.

   Dual possessive pronouns can be formed in two ways: If the nominal marker is dropped, *-warriny* (used on nominals) is attached. If the nominal marker is retained, *-meleng* (used on verbs and when following the nominal marker) is chosen. The dual marker can only be attached to one of the third person Augmented reduced to two forms, namely *boorroo*, therefore, the gender distinction, which is present in the rare variants *nawooboo* and *ngalooboo* is lost in the possessive pronoun paradigm (compare McGregor 2004:118). Thus, the person and number system differs slightly from cardinal to possessive pronouns.

4.3.5   Pronominal enclitics

In Miriwoong there are three sets of pronominal enclitics, the Benefactive enclitics (BEN), the Indirect Object enclitics (IO) and the Ablative enclitics (ABL).[46] There are several forms within each set, which differ according to the person, number and gender of the entity which is referenced by the enclitic. According to McConvell, some of the pronominal enclitics are cognate with free pronouns in Miriwoong, Kija and Gooniyandi and more generally "with non-Pama-Nyungan pronouns, bound and free, across a wide area of northern Australia" (McConvell (2003:83) quoting Blake 1988 and Harvey 2003).

   Miriwoong enclitics "follow the same meaning set" as the cardinal pronouns (Kofod in prep. (2017):2). The paradigms for BEN, IO and ABL are given in Table 4.3. In the first column the system Minimal, Augmented, Augmented reduced to two, discussed in §4.3.4.1 above, is applied. The second column employs the abbreviations of the traditional singular/non-singular system, which will be used in the glosses of example sentences throughout this thesis for ease of understanding for the cursory reader. Note that all non-singular (or Augmented) pronominal enclitics include the *-rr[V]* morpheme mentioned in §4.3.4.1. The Ablative enclitics are derived from the Indirect Object enclitics by deleting final /i/ and adding /uwa/ (<oowa>), except in the second person singular (or minimal), where there is the vowel alternation /e/ to /i/ which is familiar from the formation of possessive pronouns described above.

---

[46] For a discussion of the defining criteria of Miriwoong enclitics see §4.2.5.

min/aug[47]	sg/ns[48]	Benefactive enclitics	Indirect Object enclitics	Ablative enclitics
1min	1sg	*-ngany/ -gany*	*-ngerri/ -gerri/ -ngirri*	*-ngerroowa*
2min	2sg	*-ngoong/ -ngoo/ -goong*	*-ninggi*	*-nengoowa*
3minm	3sgm	*-noong/ -noo/ -doo/ -doong*	*-ni/ -di*	*-noowa*
3minf	3sgf	*-joong/ -joo*	*-ji/ -jiyi*	*-joowa*
1+2min	1dinc	*-yayi*	*-yi/ -yiyi*	*-yoowa*
1auginc	1nsinc	*-yoowoorr*	*-yarri*	*-yarroowa*
1augex	1nsex	*-yarr*	*-yirri/ -jirri*	*-yirroowa*
2aug	2ns	*-nenggoorr*	*-narri*	*-narroowa*
3aug	3ns	*-woorr/ -boorr*	*-woorri[49]*	*-woorroowa/ -boorroowa*

Table 4.3 Benefactive, Indirect Object, and Ablative enclitics

The non-singular pronominal enclitics can be followed[50] by the dual marker *mele(ng)/ -bele(ng)*. This either refers to the duality of the entity which is cross-referenced by the enclitic (Kofod in prep. 2020:126), or – when the enclitic is attached to inflecting verbs – the duality of the subject or the object of the utterance (which are cross-referenced in the pronominal prefix of the verb, Kofod in prep. (2017):24).

One of the functions of pronominal enclitics in Miriwoong and the other Jarragan languages is to mark oblique arguments, i.e. argument functions other than S, A and O (McConvell 2003:79). McConvell (2003) claims that in this function they used to occur only on verbs (head-marking) but due to certain internal push and pull factors[51] now also occur on nominals (dependent-marking). This shift from head to dependent-marking is argued to constitute a counter-example to Nichols' (1986) claim of Headward Migration. McConvell states that in Miriwoong enclitic placement is freer than in other Jarragan languages with enclitics being found also "on more peripheral elements" (2003:84). Still, "Miriwoong Indirect Object and Ablative pronominal enclitics are most frequently attached to verbs" (Kofod in prep. (2017):25).

---

[47] The following abbreviations are used in this column: 1 = speaker, 2 = hearer, 3 = neither (speaker nor hearer), aug = augmented, ex = exclusive, f = feminine, inc = inclusive, m = masculine, min = minimal.

[48] The abbreviations used in glosses are: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, d = dual, ex = exclusive, f = feminine, inc = inclusive, m = masculine, ns = non-singular, PN = pronoun, sg = singular (see footnote 41).

[49] Olawsky also observes a variant *-berri*. *-woorri* is realised as such "without apparent trigger" (in prep. (2020):234). Note that instrumental *-berri* has an allomorph *-woorri*.

[50] "[I]n a small number of cases the oblique pronoun follows *-meleng*" rather than preceding it (Kofod in prep. (2020):133).

[51] The following factors are proposed: (i) Since there is only one enclitic slot following the verb, there is pressure to find another slot, namely on other elements of the sentence, to express additional oblique NPs (2003:77), for sentences such *as Go and hunt for some game for us* (2003:87); (ii) Elements other than oblique arguments compete for the one slot following verbs (2003:86): Enclitics cross-referencing arguments of transitive or middle verbs, i.e. core arguments, are placed following the verb under certain conditions (see below); (iii) Enclitics marking possession within the NP provide a model for such enclitic placement elsewhere in the sentence (2003:77).

In addition, postnominal pronominal enclitics are found on nominals in possessive NPs. McConvell argues that these are less integrated into the nominal morphology than the enclitics expressing oblique arguments of verbs as the former occur at the "outer periphery" of NPs[52] rather than before the dual marker as when following verbs (2003:84). When enclitics occur on nominals to express possession "[t]he dependent possessor may be omitted [...] leaving the head possessed nominal with the enclitic pronoun referring to the head" (2003:88). This is an instance of head-marking.

In the following paragraphs, more details will be given about the functions of the three pronominal enclitics. First, Ablative enclitics are discussed. The ABL enclitics can be translated as 'from', 'after or behind (in time or place)', 'because of', or 'resulting from' (Kofod in prep. (2017):46). Kofod observes that the concomitant meaning of 'after' in time and 'behind' in space is also found in the case-marking morpheme *-banjilng/ -banjelng/ -banyen* (see §4.2.3) and the adverb *gelengam*. In McConvell's words the Ablative enclitic expresses source and cause (2003:88).[53] He argues that whereas the oblique ABL enclitic operates in the clausal domain, possessive ABL are in the NP domain. The possessive use of the ABL enclitic in Kija is mentioned in §8.2.3. An example can be found in (13).

(13) (McConvell 2003:88)   (Kija)

Minyjuwu-m   ta-m=nuwa   warlu-m=ni   ta-m
teeth-N   that-N=**himABL**   snake-M   drop.out

perra-nhi=ngiyi.
they-do.PST=herLOC
'Those teeth from the snake came out of her (a woman).'

In Miriwoong, the Ablative enclitic is used in a few utterances that could be interpreted as possessive. However, this is not done systematically and very infrequently[54] and the meaning of the sentence can usually be related to one of the meanings of ABL listed above. Therefore, this function will not be further addressed in this thesis.

Second, the Indirect Object will be examined. As discussed in §4.3.3, pronominal enclitics can "reference persons or things that are additional to those arguments of the sentence cross referenced by prefixes to the verb" (Kofod in prep. (2017):25). Indirect Objects enclitics on speech verbs "reference a person spoken to" (ibid.).[55]

---

[52] The enclitics are said to "never [be attached] before other suffixes or enclitics" (2003:84).

[53] For Kija, he also lists accompaniment as a function of the ablative enclitic (and the locative enclitic, which corresponds to the Indirect Objects enclitic in Miriwoong).

[54] In the discussion (Chapter 10) the frequency of possessive constructions will be discussed. The Ablative enclitic did not occur in the sample used for that analysis.

[55] However, "there will be no pronominal clitic cross referencing an addressee when the speaker is alone speaking to herself" (Kofod in prep. (2020):86).

Further uses of the IO include that it is "nearly always" employed "when talking about weather or the changing time of the day" (in prep. (2017):32), its "second person idiomatic use" which is "reminiscent of English 'on you'", e.g. 'The dog bit my little boy on me.' (in prep. (2017):33), and its function to express "location or direction towards someone" (in prep. (2017):26), see §4.3.5.1 below and §9.4.3.

The indirect Object is central for this thesis as it is used to indicate possessive relations. Kofod observes that it is brought to bear when asking about or giving information about people's names (in prep. (2017):31). In addition, she argues that the IO encodes inalienable possession, in particular "parts of an entity". She gives example sentences that constitute attributive possession constructions (in prep. (2017):29). Together with the negative particle *ngoowag,* the IO expresses negative possession (in prep. (2017):32).[56]

Third, the Benefactive enclitic is discussed. When BEN is suffixed to an inflected verb or coverb, it carries a benefactive meaning (Kofod 1978:54). It can be attached to intransitive, middle and transitive verbs to "cross reference persons who either benefit directly from an action [...] or on whose account the action is taken" (Kofod in prep. (2017):34). With certain underspecified inflected transitive verbs the Benefactive enclitics can further specify number and in particular the inclusive/exclusive distinction of the verb's object – for details see the section on supplementary enclitics (§4.3.5.2) below. The first and second person enclitics are also frequent in verbless copular clauses (in prep. (2017):25), where they are combined with the existential suffix *-tha* or the interrogative suffix *-woo/ -goo* (in prep. (2017):37). As shown in example (5) above, for this construction they are often attached to adjectives.

On nominals, the Benefactive enclitic can carry possessive meaning (Kofod 1978:55), especially when preceded by the comitative suffix *-ba*(*ng*) or the privative suffix *-yile(ng)*[57] in combination with the existential marker, see §4.3.2. Kofod argues that BEN encodes alienable possession (in prep. (2017):29,42). On nouns, following the suffix *-ba* 'having' and the existential marker, positive possession is expressed; following the privative *-yile* 'not having' and the existential, it indicates negative possession (in prep. (2017):32,38). On adjectives, privative *-yile* in this construction means that "the referent does not have the quality referred to by the adjective" (in prep. (2017):39). In possessive questions *-ba* and *-woo* precede BEN. In addition to alienable possession, Kofod states, BEN often also indicates kinship possession ("possession of relatives",

---

[56] Comparing these uses to McConvell's discussion of the Locative enclitic in Kija, which corresponds to the IO in Miriwoong, one notices that, as in Miriwoong, the Locative enclitic expresses motion toward/contact with, the person to whom speech is addressed, and – "when used in the NP domain" – inalienable possession. In addition, in Kija it is used for accompaniment (2003:80).

[57] The nominal suffix *-ng/ -ny* of the comitative and privative suffixes is lost preceding *-tha* (Kofod 1978:55).

in prep. (2017):43) and ownership of country. The latter construction involves BEN in combination with locative -*m* and existential -*tha* (in prep. (2017):44).[58]

Note that in many languages, possession is expressed by case inflections (see Chapter 8 for a discussion of Australian languages). One could argue that pronominal enclitics in Miriwoong under certain circumstances do not inflect for case but constitute a case inflection. McConvell determines that "pronominal enclitics attached to NP's in Jarragan languages can only be said to *resemble* case-markers in some respects, not to have become case-markers" (2003:84).

4.3.5.1 *Locational meaning of the Indirect Object enclitic*

It was already mentioned in §4.1 and §4.2.3 above that Miriwoong features a locative case inflection -*m*. In the previous section the Indirect Object pronominal enclitic was argued to also express location or direction, see for instance (14), where the third person singular feminine Indirect Object enclitic follows the intransitive verb to express the movement of the subject towards Jadbarriya's mother. Direction is additionally marked in this utterance by the allative -*melig*. In (15) the IO is the only indication of allative meaning.

(14) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

> *Derreb, <elifala> ngeniya-ji ngana-melig, ngarrage-gany Jadbarriya.*
> derreb   <elifala>   ngeniya=ji   ngena-melig
> make_camp   early   1sgS-go/come_PST-REAL=**3sgfIO**   there-to
> ngarrage-ga-ny   a_name
> mother-REL-f   Jadbarriya
> 'I camped and early in the morning I went there to Jadbarriya's mother.'

(15) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

> *Berriyawoon-ninggi lenggoong.*
> berriyawoon=ninggi   lenggoong
> 3nsS-go/come_PST-REAL-3nsIPF=**2sgIO**   from_downstream
> 'It [i.e. that spirit woman] was going to you from downstream.'

It is interesting that locative meaning in Miriwoong can be both expressed by the nominal case inflection (i.e. dependent-marking) and by pronominal enclitics on verbs (i.e. head-marking). The locative function (including allative and ablative) is in the middle of Nichols' (1986) hierarchy which ranges from core to peripheral clausal functions and predicts that core cases tend to be head-marked and peripheral cases tend to be dependent-marked (see McConvell 2003:80f). By having both dependent and head-marking options for the middle of the hierarchy, only head-marking for functions higher up in the hierarchy and only dependent-marking for those below, Miriwoong confirms Nichols' hypothesis that "where both head marking and dependent marking exist in a language, head marking will occur at the end of a hierarchy which includes the core

---

[58] Comparing the uses of BEN to the corresponding enclitic in Kija, namely the Dative enclitic, it can be said that, as in Miriwoong, it has benefactive function and is used for alienable possession. In addition, McConvell lists its purposive function (2003:80). The latter is discussed for Miriwoong in §4.2.3.

argument functions, and dependent marking at the opposite end, of oblique, adjunct functions" (McConvell 2003:81). This hypothesis is also confirmed by the Jarragan language Kija and the two neighbouring non-Pama languages Ungarinyin and Gooniyandi, see Figure 4.1 (ibid.).

		Kija		Ungarinyin		Gooniyandi	
		HM[a]	DM[b]	HM[a]	DM[b]	HM[a]	DM[b]
S							
O							
A							
IO							
LOC (incl ALL, ABL)							
INST							

[a] affix/enclitic on v   [b] case suffix on NP   [c] optional ergative

Figure 4.1 Head and dependent-marking in Kija, Ungarinyin and Gooniyandi (McConvell 2003:81)

4.3.5.2   *Supplementary enclitics*

Since the prefixes in morphologically transitive verbs carry information about both the subject and the object, Kofod (1978) calls them prefix *clusters*. For those pronominal prefix clusters on transitive verbs that are underspecified (i.e. the same prefix can be used for different subject/object combinations),[59] supplementary enclitics[60] are used to further specify number distinctions of the object. For example, the prefix clusters *yin-* (2sS:1O), *ngen-* (3sS:1O) and *ngemberr-* (3nsS:1O) are underspecified for the number values of the first person object. The supplementary enclitic -*yayi* specifies that these second singular and third person subject prefixes refer to a dual inclusive object (1dincO). Instead, the supplementary enclitic -*yoowoorr* would be used for non-singular inclusive objects (1nsincO) and -*yarr* for non-singular excusive objects (1nsexO). If no supplementary enclitic is used, the object is interpreted as first person singular (1sO). These enclitics are homophonous with the benefactive enclitics.[61]

   The prefix clusters involving third person objects are specified for number and gender (the latter only when the object is third person singular). In these cases, it is the subjects rather than the objects which are cross-referenced by the supplementary enclitic, but only where the object is second person.

---

[59] In Kofod's words, the prefixes contain the following information: "When a[n] object occurs in the 1st person with a singular or non-singular subject or a second person object occurs with a non-singular subject, only the person of the object is indicated by the prefix" (1978:212).
[60] In her Master's Thesis Kofod refers to the supplementary enclitics as *obligatory* or *compulsory pronoun* suffixes (1978:207) in addition to *supplementary pronoun* (1978:208). Kofod (2009a:26,29f) terms them *supplementary pronouns*, Kofod (in prep. (2020):45) *compulsory enclitic pronouns*.
[61] This is the case for Miriwoong but not for Gajirrabeng and Gija (Kofod 2014 p.c.).

Here the non-homophonous supplementary enclitics *-nayi* and *-ngal* and *-woorr/boorr* are used. The non-singular enclitics specify the gender of the subject: *-nayi* is used for third singular masculine subjects (3sgmS), *-ngal* for third singular feminine subjects (3sgfS); *-woorr/-boorr* cross-references a third non-singular subject (Kofod 1978:207).

5 METHODOLOGY

For this thesis, a variety of methods were used to gather data. Besides consultation of the Miriwoong Toolbox corpus (Kofod 2020), language games including card games (§5.1) and picture stories (§5.2) form a major part of the data base, with elicitation (§5.3) being resorted to as well. Other types of methods include language tasks designed as alternatives for grammaticality judgements and staged communicative events.[1] Conversational data was considered through participation in Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning sessions.[2] Finally, interviews and informal conversations in English and/or Kriol[3] gave rise to information on sociolinguistic aspects, language attitudes and the cultural concept of possession (see §2.4 and §2.5). The different language tasks are summarised in Table 5.1. Following a discussion of these tasks, information will be given about the participants (§5.4).

Task		Section	Page
Card Games		5.1	105
	Have Game	5.1.1	108
	Belong Game	5.1.2	111
Picture Stories		5.2	116
	Story-Builder Action Cards	5.2.1	116
	Story of Dirt	5.2.2	118
	Blue Book	5.2.3	118
Elicitation		5.3	119
	Domains of Possession	5.3.1	121
	Negative Possession	5.3.2	125
	Forms of HAVE	5.3.3	125
	Family Relations	5.3.4	126
	Typological Predictions	5.3.5	126

Table 5.1 Language tasks employed during the Miriwoong project

---

[1] Here Himmelmann's terminology is used, which is quoted in Schultze-Berndt's (2000:20) account of neighbouring Jaminjung: "A substantial amount of data was not obtained by elicitation in the narrow sense, but comes from staged communicative events (in the terminology of Himmelmann 1998:185f). These include narratives that were prompted (e.g. when I asked a speaker to give an account of a trip just undertaken)". For this thesis these were recorded, for example, at the beginning of field trips when speakers were asked for a story connected to the present location, which resulted e.g. in personal stories by traditional owners of the country. These events allow speakers to activate and reconnect with their language but often also encompassed sentences about kinship possession, which could be used for the thesis.

[2] The language is very rarely used in natural conversation so that observation would not lead to a sufficient amount of data. The number of example sentences extracted from conversations for this study is not high enough to make any assertions about differences to other types of data. For details on MALLP see Olawsky (2013), where it is explained that "the model is aimed at developing new speakers of endangered languages where the natural process of language transfer has been disrupted" (2013:42). It "connects elders and young adults" to "create[s] a context of cultural and – partial – linguistic immersion […]" (2013:44).

[3] I conversed in a variety of near-native English which is located somewhere between Standard British and Standard Australian or occasionally – as Schultze-Berndt (2000:21) put it – in what I considered my best shot at Kriol, while my senior interview partners communicated in a Kriol situated around the middle of the acrolectal – basilectal scale and the younger generations mainly in Aboriginal English.

Initially, the Miriwoong Toolbox database created by Frances Kofod was primarily used for concordances. Sentences including morphemes that have been described as relevant for possession (Kofod 2009a, in prep. (2017)) such as *-ba* 'having' and the relational suffix *-ga(ng/ny)* as well as Benefactive and Indirect Object enclitics were extracted to understand the range of their uses.

The Toolbox corpus was also consulted for an analysis of possessive pronouns. Miriwoong has two versions of each possessive pronoun at its disposal, a shorter version and a longer version which features the suffix *-nge(ng/ny)*. For this thesis, apart from analysing spontaneous utterances such as *This is my sister*, assumptions voiced by Miriwoong speakers were noted[4] and taken as a starting point for an investigation of the data available both from the Toolbox corpus and from recent fieldwork. Around 100 utterances from Toolbox and around 250 utterances from my recordings were examined with respect to semantic and pragmatic constraints, the structural properties of the possessive (noun) phrase, and speaker preference. The data was evaluated against the notion of inalienability.

In addition to concordances, sentences with possessive meanings were identified while browsing through texts and transcriptions of elicitation sessions that form the Toolbox corpus. This was important in order to avoid overlooking further structures potentially used in possessive sentences as well as instances of zero marking.

Possessive meaning is here understood as a broadly defined semantic domain of possession including, among others, subdomains typically reported in the literature such as ownership, kinship, body parts and further part-whole relationships (for details see Chapter 7). Potential areas of cultural influence such as the possession of names or ownership of knowledge and country (see Chapter 6) were likewise included in the selection of data to be analysed. Semantic criteria such as control and permanent contact (to be developed in Chapter 7) were taken into account where appropriate.[5]

The approach taken can therefore be classified as top-down (Majid 2012), i.e. starting from the conceptual domain rather than the grammatical structures found in the language. As Stassen

---

[4] It is advised in the literature not to ask speakers for an analysis – because they are deemed unable to do so reliably (e.g. Chelliah & de Reuse 2011) – unless the researcher (i) knows that the speaker is capable of the task and (ii) does not take the answer at face-value and cross-checks it with other sources of data. In my opinion native speakers can offer valuable insights into their languages (and cultures) that can be difficult to achieve for linguists. In this project speakers who are known to have a lot of experience with linguistic work are regarded as participants in the project rather than as subjects of study and their input is valued. Joolama, for example, an interpreter and senior consultant who is accustomed to discuss the grammar of Miriwoong, no doubt has the necessary meta-linguistic awareness. He offers analyses on his own accord. Speakers' unsolicited input as well as their answers given during elicitation are both taken as evidence in their own right and used as ideas that could be investigated in the course of the project.

[5] Stassen (2009) bases his typology of predicative possession on these two factors arguing that possessive relationships can be defined in terms of the notions of Control and Permanent Contact. However, he narrows down the possessive constructions to be included in his typology by a variety of formal restrictions. For the in-depth description of all constructions in a single language this is not sufficient.

(2009, p.c.) summarised in a seminar on possession, this approach has been taken in all major typological studies in the last three decades. (Recently, mixed approaches are favoured which supplement semantic domain definitions by one or more criteria of a formal nature with the intention to keep the domain manageable (ibid.).)[6] The top-down approach is not without criticism. Majid (2012) stresses that one runs the risk of treating different grammatical encoding strategies as a unified construct where there is none for native speakers. Moreover, it is often claimed that a difference in formal marking necessarily goes along with a difference in meaning which would make it a strange endeavour to compare different constructions in one language which are all claimed to be possessive in function. However, the meaning differences might be more subtle than the general function of conveying (one type of) possession and there is also the contrary claim that "restrictions in morphosyntactic distributions can be due to grammatical arbitrariness, rather than meaning difference" (Majid 2012:60 quoting Kay 2006) and that "meaning and form class are not usually in perfect one-to-one relationship". Therefore, the top-down approach was chosen.

Whether an utterance encountered in the Toolbox corpus was counted as possessive was judged by considering:

(i) the context of the utterance (where applicable): Is there a variant of the same or similar content in the immediate context which is clearly possessive, e.g. since a possessive pronoun is used? (This is one of the language-internal tests Aikhenvald (2013:5) proposes can be used to distinguish between a possessive and a non-possessive reading of a given construction),[7]

(ii) a Kriol backtranslation or a comment by the speaker (where present),

(iii) Kofod's translations (where present), which in many cases are not literal but comprise further information deducible from the wider context such as the gender and number of non-overt participants etc.,

(iv) Kofod's notes, which sometimes contain information, among other things, on literal meanings.

The Toolbox corpus was consulted again when the frequency of possessive constructions was investigated. A selection of texts was analysed in more detail in order to determine how often a particular structure occurs in connected speech. The results were compared to findings from the other types of data generated through games, tasks, and elicitation for methodological triangulation. The toolbox (sub)corpus, thus, provided a "standard of comparison against which the naturalness of all other types of data [could be] evaluated" (Hellwig 2007:78).

---

[6] This assessment and part of the following discussion is about studies involving a large sample of languages, but it is presumed here that the line of argumentation can be fruitfully applied to the study of a variety of constructions in a single language.

[7] See §7.8 for a discussion of association vs. possession. Dixon (2009:263) suggests that one can also test whether it is possible to rephrase the construction as a predicative *have*-construction. In Miriwoong the HAVE-verb does not have an exclusively possessive meaning (as it can mean 'look after' as well) and it is comparatively rare (see §9.1.11). Where it occurs and where the meaning is possessive it is used as an indicator of a possessive environment as well.

The texts were chosen according to the following criteria: a variety of fluent speakers narrating connected speech without intervening elicitation. The latter was taken into consideration in order to exclude a possible influence of the contact language and minimise influence of the interaction with the researcher. The narratives stem from the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of genre, both Dreaming stories as well as personal narratives were selected. In addition, one narrative about a picture book (a children's book called *Greedy Goanna*) was included because the story contains comparatively many possessive constructions. The text comprises elicitation questions but the Miriwoong utterances do not seem to be based exclusively on the English utterances suggested for the pictures and there are stretches of uninterrupted Miriwoong language. Apart from the aforementioned considerations of text quality, practical reasons such as the availability of translations were taken into account as well.

To give an impression of the length of the 8 texts that were selected for analysis, a word count was undertaken. In total, 4690 words were processed. Since Miriwoong has a complex morphology, an additional word count was made after those elements that are separated from the previous element by a hyphen in Miriwoong orthography (i.e. the majority of suffixes and enclitics) were separated and counted as individual words. The number of words was thus increased by 1088 words, which raises the total to 5578. The analysis of these texts resulted in a selection of 100 example sentences that are marked for possession. This shows that overall frequency is not very high with 4 texts contributing only 4 or 5 possessive sentences.

This lack of frequency inspired the plan to verify and supplement the corpus data by data from language games and tasks designed to encourage the production of possessive constructions.[8] In addition, for the testing of hypotheses concerning patterns that surface more infrequently and for obtaining negative evidence focused elicitation was added.

This approach of combining a variety of methods is recommended in the literature on fieldwork (for example by Chelliah (2013:60), a step-by-step account of which methods were used at which stage of analysis is provided in Hellwig (2007)). In particular, it is argued that when relying mainly on a question-and-answer format, i.e. elicitation, one is faced with problems both in terms of quality of the resulting data and its interpretation, and practical issues. Hellwig warns, for example, that there is always the risk of misunderstanding between the consultant and the linguist (2007:75). It has been expressly proposed to employ translation exercises with caution: "since translation skills and proficiency in the contact language differ, the resulting data can be inaccurate, unidiomatic, or over-reliant on word-for-word translations" (Chelliah 2013:60).

---

[8] Hellwig argues that "large corpora are needed to adequately capture low-frequency phenomena" […] – a requirement that field-based corpora cannot fulfil" (2007:72).

Hellwig adds that translation equivalents "cannot capture the character of the language under investigation, because they operate within the concepts of another language" (2007:78).[9]

Practical issues with elicitation include cultural differences between the one asking and the one being asked: Chelliah (2013:60) cautions that direct questions have been observed to be interpreted as challenges (Milroy 1987:41–51). Similarly, in the Aboriginal context, direct questioning is not culturally appropriate (see MDWg (2012:26) for Miriwoong) and often does not lead to the production of data that the researcher is interested in (see Eades 1993).[10] For example, during my presence at Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg), I witnessed attempts to elicit Miriwoong questions. It was rather difficult to get Miriwoong Elders to translate questions into Miriwoong rather than offering the answers to those questions. A typical exchange looked similar to (1).

(1)

MDWg staff:	How do I say: *Where is the cup?* in Miriwoong?
Elder:	Jilam, indit? [On the ground, isn't that so?]
MDWg staff:	Yes, the cup is on the ground. How do you ask me where it is?
Elder:	Gardag jilam ginayin, ngiyi? [The cup is on the ground, isn't that so?]

In order to collect possessive questions for this thesis, I therefore decided not to rely on elicitation alone but also on language games which encourage the participants to utter questions, such as the Miriwoong equivalent of *How many crocodiles do you have?* (i.e. *How many cards depicting crocodiles do you have?*)

An alternative to language games could have been to conduct controlled experiments. However, it would have been impossible to adhere to the standards such experiments require

---

[9] See Mosel (2012:82) for a detailed summary that includes further aspects.

[10] Eades explains that instead of direct questioning "a range of indirect means of finding out information" is employed. For example, instead of asking *What did you do last night? Why didn't you do your homework?* Aboriginal people are said to "make a hinting statement and wait for a response" as in the following example (i). Alternatively, they "may volunteer information for confirmation or denial" as in (ii).

(i) "I'm wondering about what happened last night. I need to know about why you didn't do your homework."

(ii) "It seems as if everyone went to the creek after school. People might say that no-one likes the Maths teacher. (I think) maybe no-one likes the Maths teacher" (Eades 1993:185f).

Note that Moses & Wigglesworth (2008) studied the use of questions among Aboriginal preschool age children and their caregivers in a longitudinal study in order to test the often-stated observation that answering questions is not as familiar as a means of instruction for Aboriginal children as for non-Aboriginal children who are used to Western-style teaching, which relies heavily on the question-and-answer format. They find that Aboriginal children in Yakanarra are in fact "accustomed to being asked a variety of questions by adults, they are familiar with display questions [i.e. questions the answer to which is known to the person asking (2008:46)] and questions that are part of games; they understand the why questions; and they realise that questions expect a reply". The failure to respond to questions in the class-room situation is attributed not to difficulties with question per se but to difficulties with Standard English, which is a second language for the Aboriginal students (2008:52).

(compare Meakins' (2011:70) description of her methodology when researching Gurindji Kriol). To begin with, the number of confident speakers is too small to repeat an experiment with different participants frequently enough to make statistically relevant assertions about the results possible. Secondly, this shortage of participants on the one hand but also their active involvement in the project on the other hand[11] lead to the fact that not all stimuli were unfamiliar to all players when they were used in the recording sessions: Some games were repeated at later sessions to enhance the dataset.[12] Thus, the players had seen some of the stimuli before. In addition, it was often the very people who had given feedback on the cultural adequacy of the stimuli (see §5.1 below) and who helped to explain the procedure to the Elders who were also participants in the games. To them, most stimuli were not unfamiliar to begin with.

A method typically employed in typological research is the use of questionnaires. Accordingly, the research questions pursued in this thesis are not only influenced by propositions in the typological literature on possession such as Stassen 2009 and Heine 1997 but also by a questionnaire on possessive constructions in sign languages by Zeshan & Perniss (2008) and questionnaire-style guidelines for research on possession by Dixon and Aikhenvald (2016, based on Dixon's (2009) *Basic Linguistic Theory*, Volume 2, Chapter 16).

The following sections will go into detail about the methods mentioned above. In general, what worked best within the Miriwoong project was picture description and the telling of stories about stimuli. The description of the photos and drawings along the lines of *These are the cat's two feet, two hands. The cat has long claws.* accounted for major proportions of elicited speech. Descriptions were not primarily intended for many of the game stimuli but none-the-less resulted in valuable data, especially in the domain of body parts (see Schultze-Berndt (2000:20) who claims that "[a] number of nonverbal stimuli also elicited interesting data (sometimes in other areas than the stimuli were originally designed for)").

---

[11] This involvement of the Language Workers at MDWg was welcomed and encouraged. It is not only considered to be required ethically but also to enhance the quality of the stimuli which are more culturally and linguistically appropriate when they have been developed with the support of and/or incorporating feedback from community members (see also §5.1) below.

[12] In the repeated sessions different subsets of the pool of stimuli for a game were used (see the discussion of speaker fatigue below) but it was logistically impossible to make sure that every participant would see one subset on one occasion and an entirely different set at another occasion as the participant groups at each session were made up of varying subsets of participants.

5.1 Card games

Photo 5.1 AA, ML, IN, MJ, and SS (ltr) playing the Have game at Lake Argyle picnic area

In introductions to linguistic fieldwork "non-linguistic stimulus-driven tasks" are recommended as valuable resources that can help to elicit a large variety of constructions. These make use of pictorial stimuli such as line drawings, photographs or pictures and video-clips (Chelliah 2013:60; Chelliah & Reuse 2011:369). Examples of so-called *Pictorial Stimulus-Driven Elicitation* (rated at medium difficulty) are picture games, photo matching games and descriptions of wordless picture books for children (*ibid*.). In this section the focus lies on games that consist of cards depicting visual stimuli because these have been employed in the thesis. In the following section (§5.2), different kinds of non-linguistic stimulus-driven tasks are presented.

Eisenbeiss (2010) claims that games can be employed to study morpho-syntactic phenomena or semantic domains cross-linguistically and stresses that they are especially useful for testing low-frequency phenomena with a wide range of lexical elements. This is particularly interesting when not enough is known about the language to conduct experiments. She distinguishes different types of games, two of which are explained here:

(i) In director-matcher games one speaker, the so-called *matcher*, is directed by another speaker, the so-called *director*, to find a stimulus in a stimulus set or to perform an action on or with certain stimuli. For these tasks it is important that the matcher does not have the relevant

information which the director is supposed to verbally provide. It is thus helpful to create physical visual barriers[13] between the players.

(ii) Another type of game is referred to as co-player game. For this task two players solve a task together. Player A asks player B for particular stimuli one at a time. In the puzzle task (Eisenbeiss 2009), for example, the aim is to place puzzle pieces on a puzzle board. Player B has the pieces and player A the board, which depicts the same pictures as the pieces. Player A describes the piece he or she is currently seeking and requests it from the other player. Since the pictures on the pieces differ minimally from each other, these differences need to be expressed verbally in order to identify the piece being sought for player B.

Eliciting data with the help of games has several advantages. In comparison to free picture description, the interpretation of the speaker's responses might be "trickier", as they will not be "as standard" (Majid 2012:67). However, they will be linguistically rich: Since the speakers interact among each other without the interference of a (non-native) researcher and focus on the game rather than the elicitation situation, it is to be expected that natural language with minimal metalinguistic interference can be obtained. Moreover, Majid observes that "responses are clearly linked to stimuli and are therefore less ambiguous" (2012:56). Eisenbeiss (2010:21) notes that usually no training effects occur even if the games are played repeatedly (with flexible procedures and variable stimuli). Since they encourage the production of rich and varied data they can be used to study different phenomena by reanalysing the data that was gathered (ibid.). However, there are a few drawbacks as well. For example, Eisenbeiss cautions that data generated by games are hardly suitable for frequency analyses (2010:22).

It was decided that games should form the core of the documentation project undertaken for this thesis because they have the above-mentioned advantages but also because they were deemed suitable for the situation of Miriwoong learners at MDWg Language and Culture Centre. In an endangered language situation, it seems appropriate to create stimulus materials that can be used in excess of the period of the project and for a variety of purposes – be it for other games targeting data gathering, for other types of data gathering such as picture description, or alternatively for language learning. Since it is an established activity at MDWg to learn Miriwoong by playing language games the project aimed to foster this practice. When designing the stimuli, these secondary uses were kept in mind.

In addition, games were chosen because they yield data types that are desirable for the project. When stimuli pictures were freely described, this can be counted as (semi-)spontaneous data in the sense that it is not elicited via lexical or grammatical prompts. When the stimuli were

---

[13] Hence the alternative denomination *barrier game* used by used by speech therapists. A further alternative name for director-matcher tasks is *confederate description* (used for example for route description during map tasks) (Eisenbeiss 2018 p.c.).

used in a game where speakers communicated with each other, conversational data is recorded. This is of great value since in the endangered language situation there are no longer many situations in which conversations in the language happen.

The games used in the Miriwoong project are based upon existing materials which were mainly designed for language acquisition studies on possession such as Bevan (2010), Eisenbeiss (2009, 2011), Eisenbeiss et al. (1999) and Koch (2010). The tasks were adapted to suit adult learners and Elders. For example, the aforementioned puzzle task was transformed into card games (see §5.1.1 and §5.1.2). Moreover, the stimuli had to be adapted to the Miriwoong language. Many games available to the public and/or described in the literature contain pictures or drawing of objects that do not have names in Miriwoong. While it is an interesting and important task in itself to find Miriwoong words or description for these (see Schultze-Berndt 2000), this is not the focus of this project.[14] Therefore, critical objects were replaced, e.g. Bevan's balloons by traditional handbags.

To ensure that the stimuli in these games would be used widely and produce rich data, many aspects had to be taken into account.[15] To begin with, the stimuli were created to be maximally relevant for the local context. Where feasible, the stimuli depict photos of local fauna, flora, and people, or drawings familiar to Language Workers and Elders from booklets developed at MDWg. In addition to photos, drawings of people (Sardinha 2011b, see §5.2.1) were used. Photos of local people were expected to trigger the use of names,[16] which are likely to behave differently from nouns for concepts such as 'old man' or 'toddler'. Second, feedback on the stimuli was requested from the Language Workers at MDWg in order to make sure that the Elders would easily recognise what is depicted and that cultural oddities, unintentional insult or the violation of cultural taboos would not strain the researcher-consultant relationship and/or distract from the language task.[17] For example, it was avoided to depict only white people and the stimuli reflect, as

---

[14] This task is tackled at MDWg in Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning and Knowledge Cycle sessions. In fact, it also marginally surfaced when sentences like *We do not have koala bears on Miriwoong country, they do not have a Miriwoong name* were elicited for this thesis (see below). In the elicitation context, influence of the language of communication cannot be avoided. In the game context, by contrast, one aims at minimizing that influence as much as possible. Objects without Miriwoong names involve the danger of triggering undesired code-switching, this is another reason to replace those objects in the game stimuli.

[15] The first drafts produced before arriving at MDWg only contain pictures that are licensed under creative commons so that they can be archived and reused for other languages to allow for cross-linguistic comparison, if desired. Some of the later materials produced in the field contain pictures of culturally relevant objects and photos of people or their body parts (see below) and might need to be replaced by appropriate equivalents if used in another language group.

[16] The resulting data show that kinterms and personal pronouns were also used when participants discussed those photos.

[17] Potential areas of difficulties identified in the literature were taken into account. For example, comic strips were avoided as it was observed (for example by Eisenbeiss 2010) that it can be problematic to use them to elicit data if different conventions for depicting actions, noises etc. prevail in the community studied or if the speakers are unfamiliar with comics in general and lack the required 'world' knowledge. Since the project was based at MDWg, which is located in the town of Kununurra with its TV and internet access, this was not expected to be a major issue. However, it is also argued that adults can find them childish and that they might violate cultural taboos. Chelliah (2013:60) also cautions against presenting the

far as possible, relationships that are relevant to traditional or every-day life (e.g. aiming at *The clapsticks belong to the old man* or *The coolamon belongs to the young woman*). A surplus value of this approach is that stimuli created this way allow for discussions of cultural aspects of relevance for this thesis, namely traditional notions of personal possessions (to be discussed in Chapter 6). I learned, for instance, that Miriwoong women also have clapsticks but that they are different from the ones Miriwoong males use.

Further, practical advice for the characteristics of stimuli offered in the literature was heeded: Stimuli should be non-toxic, water-proof, easy to transport, easily replaceable and should involve a minimum of handling noise (Eisenbeiss 2010:24). If not photographed, the stimuli for this project were either created on a computer screen or scanned and were laminated after printing. This has proven worthwhile when they were taken to field sites near rivers.

The Language Workers did not only see the stimuli beforehand but also tested the procedure. During the sessions with the Elders they could then help to introduce and explain how the games work in order to ensure that the Elders would understand the rules and purposes of the games. In addition, when the games were played with Elders for the first time, as suggested in the literature (Majid 2012:66), there was a familiarisation phase. This phase gives speakers the chance to understand what is being asked of them and ensures that the data collected is actually about the stimuli depicted.[18] In the Miriwoong project, the familiarisation phase with the first draft of one of the sets of stimuli revealed that a mismatch between the background colour (which indicates matching pairs of cards) and the colour of the object depicted caused confusion. For example, when asked for a green handbag, a red handbag with a green background was selected in some instances. Therefore, in subsequent stimuli sets the colours were harmonised.[19]

For the sake of completeness it should be added that for picture description tasks it has been proposed that the number of stimuli should be limited to avoid speaker fatigue (Majid 2012:65) and that it is important not to mix different procedures such as linguistic and meta-linguistic ones in one session (2012:67). Tasks in the Miriwoong project either asked for linguistic responses or for meta-linguistic judgement. In order to avoid fatigue, not all the stimuli that were created for a game were used in every session with every speaker.

5.1.1 Have game

The Have card game is a co-player task which requires each player to collect pairs of matching cards. It is a form-focused task (Eisenbeiss 2010:21) that was designed to elicit the so-called

---

speaker with stimuli that are "too stylized or culturally foreign, as this can lead to speaker fatigue and confusion".

[18] Majid (2012:66) quotes a case in which the white band around the edge of a photograph rather than the content of the photograph was commented on.

[19] Similarly, a red circle as an indicator of the relevant body-part stimulated comments about 'the red thing' and was therefore replaced by an arrow. Due to the feedback that was collected on this early version of the stimuli, arrows were preferred for example over little handshapes with an extended index finger.

have-construction, i.e. sentences of the type exemplified in (2) (for details on this construction see §7.6). In (2)a) the speaker describes her card, in (2)b) she asks for a matching card. In (3) the players give negative answers.[20]

(2) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MaJ

a) *Ganiny-ba-tha-ngany*.
ganiny-ba-tha=ngany
digging_stick-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have a digging stick.'

b) *Ganiny-ba-ngoong*?
ganiny-ba=ngoong
digging_stick-having=2sgBEN
'Do you have a digging stick?'

(3) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MaJ

a) *Ngoowag, goornoorr-yile-tha-ngany.*
ngoowag   goornoorr-yile-tha=ngany.
no   dilly_bag-not_having-
'No, I do not have (a) dilly bag(s).'

b) *Ngoowaga-ngerri ganinya*.
ngoowaga=ngerri   ganiny=a
no=1sgIO   digging_stick=TOP
'I don't have a digging stick.'

The game was chosen for this project to examine (i) whether animacy has an impact on the choice of construction and (ii) how formal factors such as modification by numerals and attributes influence the possessive construction. Since many of the stimuli were also freely described, the data obtained was also used to test the hypothesis that (iii) the Indirect Object enclitic is used for inalienable possession (Kofod 1978, in prep. (2017)).

The stimuli for the Have game consist of cards that depict both inanimate objects and animates, i.e. animals. In a second, more complex version of the game, the stimuli are represented in different numbers, colours and conditions. For colours and numbers, restrictions imposed by the Miriwoong language needed to be kept in mind: There is no word for 'blue' and the number system consists of a word for 'one', a word for 'two', a word for 'three'/'a few' and marginally 'a handful' and 'many'.

---

[20] For a discussion of the example sentences in this and the following section see §10.3.1.

The following stimuli were chosen:

<u>Inanimate:</u> (stone) axe, didgeridoo, coolamon, dilly bag (handbag), digging stick, fighting stick,
glasses, shield, spear, house, car

<u>Animate:</u> fish, frog, bird, lizard, kangaroo, mouse, turtle, crocodile

<u>Modified:</u> kangaroo with joey, a coolamon loaded with food, a broken axe, dark glasses
(sun glasses)

The sentences in (4) illustrate modification with respect to colour (4)a) and quantity (4)b). The respective stimuli cards are shown in (5). Since it has been observed that these kinds of modifications are more likely to be verbalised if they are distinctive and necessary to solve the task (Eisenbeiss 2009:8), similar pairs of objects/animals were created that differ minimally from each other.[21] For example, one pair includes one green handbag each; a different one includes three green handbags each. In order to make clear that these contrasts exist, it is advisable to play the game first in the Memory® fashion (see (1.) below) and/or to have a familiarisation phase, which can be used for picture description.

(4) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:AA

   a) *Gamara-ba-ngoong* (.) *ngoojaleng*?
      gamara-ba=ngoong   ngoojale-ng
      long_necked_turtle-having=2sgBEN   green-NOM
      'Do you have green turtles?'

   b) *Derrmad-ba-ngoong merrgernem?*
      derrmad-ba=ngoong   merrgernem
      freshwater_crocodile-having=2sgBEN   three_times
      'Do you have three crocodiles?' [lit. 'Do you have crocodiles three times?']
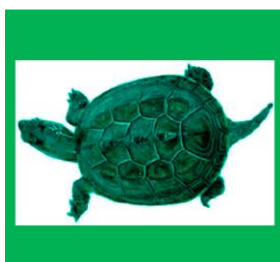
(5) a)   b)
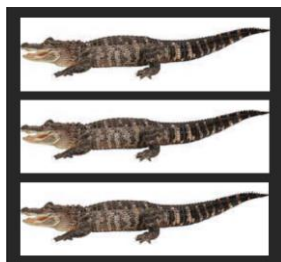
The Have game can be played in a number of ways. (1.) and (2.) describe the procedure used by the Miriwoong participants.

---

[21] A number of psycholinguistic studies have shown that during language tasks participants are more likely to produce NPs including adjectives when they are presented with visual stimuli that contain objects which minimally differ from one another. Brown-Schmidt & Tanenhaus (2006) show that scalar adjectives denoting contrasts in size are used to disambiguate between two objects which differ with respect to this contrast. They are used significantly more often in trials where there is a contrast compared to those where there is none. Note also the common ground studies on adjective use by Horton & Keysar (1996, involving adults) and Nadig & Sedivy (2002, involving children).

(1.) Memory®: The cards are shuffled and placed face down on a table. In a Memory®-type fashion the first player picks up two cards and tries to find a pair. Since this is a language game the cards are picked up so that the partner cannot see them. Instead of showing them to the others, (at first) the cards are described only: The player picks up the first card and says *I have X* (e.g. *I have a red handbag*). Similarly, the second card is picked up and the player says *I have X* (e.g. *I have a turtle*). He or she can then summarise *I have X and X, I win* or *I don't win.*[22] In this way the constructions of the type 1SG.SBJ.3SG/PL.OBJ are elicited.

(2.) Three cards each are handed to the players. Left over cards are placed in a deck in the middle of the table/floor. Participants aim at collecting pairs until all cards are played. One player asks another one: *Do you have X?* (e.g. *Do you have three yellow bags?*) If he/she does have it, they must say: *Yes, I have X* and give it to the one who asked. If they do not have it they can say *No, I don't have X*. The participant who asked unsuccessfully picks a card from the deck. It is the next player's turn. If a player has a matching pair, they can place the pair in front of them. When all cards are played and exchanged the player with the most pairs wins. In this way the constructions of the type 2SG.SBJ.3SG/PL.OBJ for possessive questions and 1SG.SBJ.3SG/PL.OBJ for negated or asserted possession are elicited.[23]

The stimuli used for the game along with the sources of those taken or adapted from the literature can be found in Appendix B.

5.1.2   Belong game

The Belong card game is a matcher-director task which requires the director to describe pairs of cards that the matcher needs to find and match. It can also be played as a co-player task when a group of speakers identify the matches together. It is a combination-oriented form-focused task (Eisenbeiss 2009:15) that was designed to elicit the so-called *belong*-construction (for details see §7.6), i.e. sentences of the type *The handbag belongs to the young girl* or *The horns belong to the bull.*[24] The disparity between these two sentences reflects that different kinds of hypotheses are pursued with this task. First, it was chosen for this project to test hypotheses about the semantics of possessive relationships. Should the data from this game mainly be characterised by the use of the Benefactive enclitic, this would endorse the hypothesis that the 'belong' meaning,[25] i.e.

---

[22] There is a lexicalised way of saying this in Miriwoong. There is no such idiom for *I have a pair*, which would have been an interesting alternative.

[23] A variant of (b) is 'Fishy fishy' (Go fish): All cards except one are distributed. Players take turns asking each other: "Fishy fishy, do you have X?" Because one card is missing one player loses.

[24] The meaning of *belong* in the second sentence is not that of ownership but rather of a whole standing in a relationship to its part. The English translation is meant to reflect the abstract type of the *belong*-construction (see below). These two different domains (ownership vs. part-whole) were elicited using two different sets of stimuli.

[25] Many languages have different verbs of possession that correlate with a difference in meaning and/or sentence structure, such as German *haben* 'have' vs. *gehören* 'belong' (see also §7.7). Since Miriwoong does

alienable possession or ownership, is expressed by this enclitic. However, the *belong*-construction is not only differentiated from the *have*-construction by its semantics but also – as will be expatiated in §7.6 – by the discourse status of the possessee (PE). In contrast to the *have*-construction the PE is foregrounded in the *belong*-construction (see among others Zeshan & Perniss 2008). Thus, a second research question, namely the influence of discourse status on possessive constructions, is tackled by this task. Third, the belong task is also a relevant source of data for the issue of inalienable possession as introduced in the description of the Have game above.

The variety of constructions used during the Belong game is presented below. In (6) and (7) the speaker asserts that a certain object (a house in (6) and a carved boab nut in (7)) belongs to a group of people (6) or a particular individual (7), who is indicated by pointing to a picture of that person. In (6), the owner is represented linguistically by a pronoun and a Benefactive enclitic is used to convey the possessive meaning. In (7) the latter is encoded by a possessive pronoun. In (8) the speaker narrows down her choice between the available potential owners by first stating that the glasses do not belong to one of the depicted persons, whom she indicates by pointing. This person is not expressed overtly in the sentence. As in (6), the Benefactive enclitic is used. In (9), the part-whole relationship between an ibis and a feather is established by an Indirect Object enclitic; the possessor was referred to via pointing in the preceding utterance and is left unexpressed.

(6)   Game [MEP-20140921-belong]:AA

Yawoorroobtha dawa-woorr.
yawoorroobtha   dawa=woorr
all   camp=3nsBEN
'The house belongs to them (big mob).'

(7)   Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]:PG[26]

Nawa gerdewoon ngaliyangeng.
naw(~~oo~~)=a   gerdewoon   ngaliyange-ng
3sgmPN=TOP   boab_nut   3sgfPOSS-TOP
'This boab nut is hers/belongs to her.'

(8)   Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]:PG

Ngoowaga-joong.
ngoowaga=joong
no=3sgfBEN
'They are not hers [i.e. glasses].'

---

not make such a distinction in terms of verbs it is interesting to see whether this could be one factor that influences the choice among enclitics.
[26] For further discussion of this utterance see also §9.2.3.

(9)   Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

> *Minjalng-ni*.
> minjal-ng=ni
> feather-NOM=3sgmIO
> 'The feather belongs to him [i.e. the ibis].'

Similar to the Have game, the set of cards consists of matching pairs. However, the pairs of cards do not necessarily depict the same entities; one shows a possessor (PR) and another one shows a possessee (PE) that matches the PR in some way. As for the *have*-construction, the factor of animacy is reflected in the stimuli. In the first set of stimuli (A), the cards depict human beings as possessors and a variety of belongings as possessees, see (10)a. In contrast to the Have game, in this game, no background colours for matching cards are used since different combinations are possible and a discussion about these options is welcomed. The stimuli chosen for this task were the following:

Stimulus set A:
Possessors: Aboriginal person, White person, boy, girl, young man, young woman, old man, old woman;
Belongings: clapsticks, coolamon, didgeridoo, digging stick, dilly bag, spear, spear thrower (white), spear thrower (brown), carved boab nut, dance attire, car, glasses, handbag, house

A second set of stimuli (B) has three subsets. Subset B(i) comprises human beings and their body parts, animals and their body parts, plants and their parts and objects and their parts. Rather than depicting the animal body parts in isolation on the second card of the pair,[27] the picture or drawing is the same on both cards and on the second the part is indicated – in accordance with the Language Worker's preferences – by a little red arrow, see (10)b. In order to make the discussion about human body parts interesting, pictures of different Language Workers as well as myself were taken. On the second card the body parts are presented in isolation and players had to guess which body part belongs to whom. With the purpose of finding out whether there is a difference in linguistic encoding, a second subset B(ii) depicts some (broadly defined) body parts that can be shed or cut (without causing any harm to the PR), namely an ibis and a feather, human finger nails, human hair and a gecko's tail, see (10)c. In addition, a third subset B(iii) was added in order to be in a position to compare relationships that are most likely possessive (i.e. alienable possession in stimulus set (A) and part-whole relations in the first two subsets of set (B)) to relationships that need not be interpreted as possessive, such as kinship (i.e. the offspring) of animals, country ownership, or associative relationships (see §7.8), such as a spear-thrower and a spear, see (10)d. The sentences aimed at in this task were the following:

---

[27] In some cases, a body part in isolation could have been difficult to recognise, such as the horns of a bull.

Stimulus Set B:

Subset B(i):
Human PR – body part:
The knee/ leg/ arm/ foot/ hand belongs to the man/woman.
Animate PR – body part:
The tail belongs to the dog/ kangaroo/ lizard.
The head belongs to the horse.
The claws belong to the kangaroo/ cat.
The horns belong to the bull.
The prickles belong to the echidna.
The turtle shell belongs to the turtle.
The fin/scales belong/s to the fish.
The wing belongs to the kite.
Plant whole – part:
The bark belongs to the tree.
The branches belong to the tree.
Inanimate whole – part:
The wheels belong to the car.

Subset B(ii):
Animate PR – body part – severed:
The feather belongs to the ibis.
The hair belongs to the woman.
The finger nails belong to the woman.
The tail (severed) belongs to the gecko.

Subset B(iii):
Animate PR – kinship:
The joey belongs to the kangaroo. (The kangaroo has a joey.)
The calf belongs to the cow.
The puppies belong to the dog.
Animate PR – other:
The spider web belongs to the spider.
The nest belongs to the bird.
The bower belongs to the bower bird.
The country belongs to the old woman.
Inanimate PR – other:
The water lily belongs to the billabong. (The water lily is associated with the billabong.)
The spear belongs to the spear-thrower.

(10) a)

b)

c)

d)
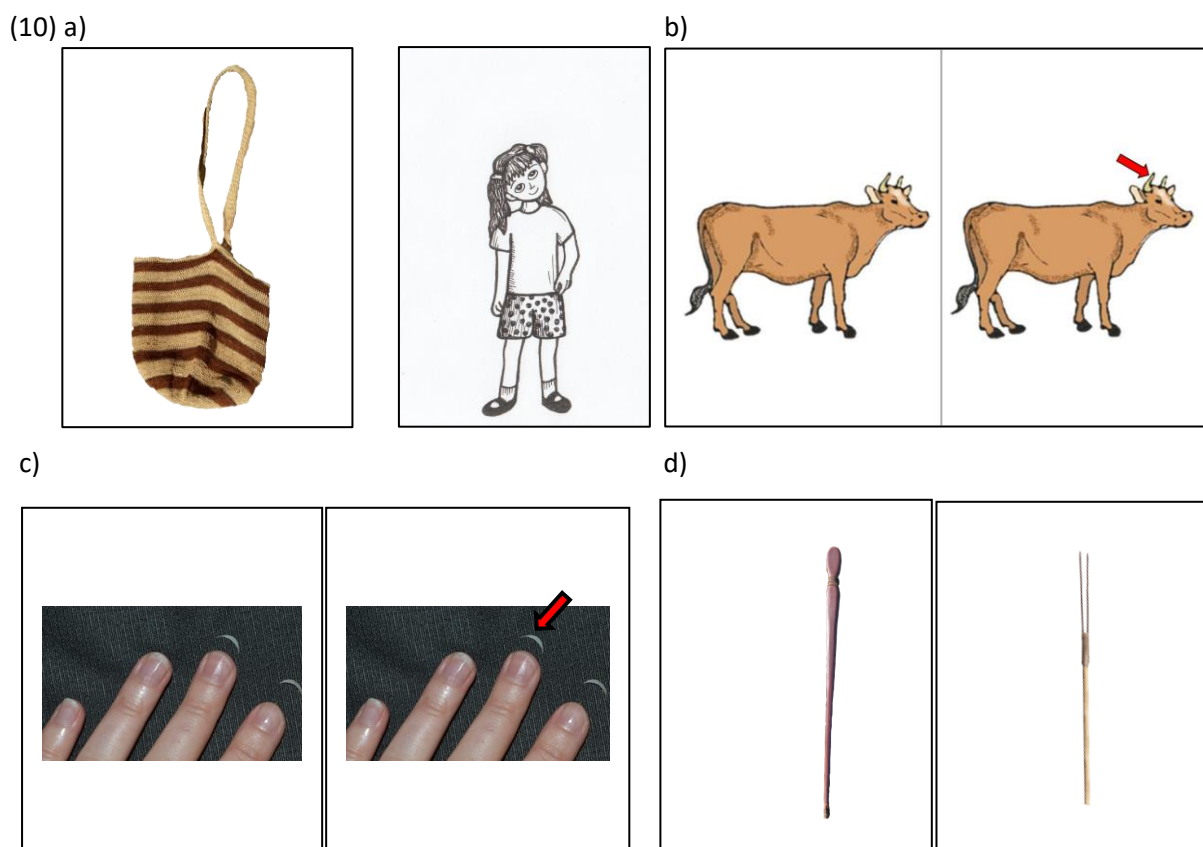
The game was played in the following ways:

(1.) For the director-matcher variant of the game, there is a visual barrier between the two players. The director receives the matched pairs, while the matcher has all PRs lying face-up in front of him or her and receives a shuffled deck of PEs. The director describes the pairs for the matcher one at a time who can then match his PEs to the PRs accordingly. At the end the two players compare their matches.

(2.) As a co-player task for stimulus set (i): Elicitation: The researcher asks a (group of) speaker(s) to combine the objects (PEs) with the people (PRs) by saying *Please tell me in Miriwoong, who you think these objects belong to?* The motivation for speakers in this case is the information gap of the researcher who does not know about potential cultural limitations (such as that didgeridoos are played by men only).

Note that in both variants of the game, the PE needs to be matched with the PR (not the other way around) because the aim is to get *belong*-constructions of the type *The horns belong to the bull*, rather than *have*-constructions such as *The bull has horns*.[28]

The stimuli used for the game along with the sources of those taken or adapted from the literature can be found in Appendix B.

---

[28] The game database also includes *have*-constructions that were uttered in response to these stimuli. The Belong game did result mainly in *belong*-constructions, though, see §10.3.

5.2 Picture stories

Telling stories about picture stimuli belongs to the aforementioned non-linguistic stimulus-driven tasks. They are a useful tool for documentation projects as they produce semi-spontaneous data but by choosing the pictures the linguist has a higher degree of control than is the case with entirely spontaneous natural data.[29] Accordingly, for the current project stimuli sets have been chosen that are expected to encourage the production of free-flowing narratives which contain possessive constructions.

5.2.1 Story-Builder Action Cards

An interesting resource for picture story tasks is the set of Story-Builder Picture Cards for Language Activities (Sardinha 2011b, 2011a). It can be used to elicit freely narrated stories made up by the speakers while playing the language game. The Story-Builder Cards were chosen for this project because they offer the following advantages for fieldwork (User Manual, Sardinha 2011b):[30] (i) Being picture-based, they allow for monolingual language production without interference from the meta-language English. (ii) For the same reason, they are suitable for cross-linguistic comparison. Point (i) can be confirmed for the Miriwoong project: As Language Workers took part in the sessions, some code-switching to Kriol occurred. When it was an Elder's turn to tell her version of the story for a set of cards, though, a monolingual story was produced, which was subsequently written down and taught to the Language Workers. A further advantage of the resource is that minimal preparation is required, so that the game could easily be interspersed when speakers were available at the office or in between elicitation sessions during fieldtrips. As promised in the manual, the Miriwoong consultants enjoyed working with the cards.

The card deck consists of so-called Action cards and Character cards. The characters depicted on the Action cards are androgynous to allow for a variety of actors but the Character cards can be used to decide whether in any given story the characters are male or female, children or adults. Smaller tokens of the Character cards can be placed on the Action cards in order to identify the actors. For this project, from the full set of Action cards those which illustrate human beings using and trading cultural or everyday objects were chosen, i.e. actions that could belong to the realm of possession, namely 'trade/exchange', 'give/pass', 'buy/sell/pay', 'hide', 'search for', 'break/shatter (by accident)'. For example, RG used the three Action cards in (11) to tell the Miriwoong story in (12). Relevant for the realm of possession are the parts marked in bold face.

---

[29] Also called *naturalistic*, e.g. by Eisenbeiss (2010). The User Manual of the Story-Builder Picture Cards (see below) explains that "Story-builder helps to elicit spontaneous, natural speech with one or more speakers."
[30] Revised: August 23, 2011.

(11)

(12) Picture Story [MEP-ROP-20140903-RG-IN-SS-RoB-story-builder-6]:RG

a) *Geriya ngenjaying marranbalang.*
   ge-ri-ya   ngenjayi-ng   marranbala-ng
   3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL   this_one_m-m   white_person-m
   'This white person came.'

b) *Garbbe geniya (.) jalyngeng mayeng (.) woothoo-woothoong boorriyang.*
   garbbe   ge-ni-ya   jalynge-ng   mayi-ng
   picking_up   3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL   sweet-NOM   food-NOM

   woothoo-woothoo-ng   boorriya-ng
   RED-children-NOM   theirs-NOM
   'He **bought** sweet food [i.e. lollies] **for his children**.' (Kriol backtranslation ROB: *[…]
   loli fo dem woothoong.*)

c) *Jama ngenjayinga (.) geriya woorlajib (.) nawoo jalyngeng mayeng (.) nawoo woothoong.*
   jama   ngenjayi-ng=a   ge-ri-ya   **woorlajib**   nawoo
   then   this_one_m-m=TOP   3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL   hide   3sgmPN

   jalynge-ng   mayi-ng   nawoo   woothoo-ng
   sweet-NOM   food-NOM   3sgmPN   little-m
   'Then this one **hid** those lollies, this child.'

d) *Jama nawoo woothoong geriya woorlaj (..) bib gemantha (.) nawoo jalyngeng (.) woorlaj
   gilanda.*
   jama   nawoo   woothoo-ng   ge-ri-ya   **woorlaj**   bib
   then   3sgmPN   little-m   3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL   hide   pick_up

   ge-man-tha   nawoo   jalynge-ng   **woorlaj**   g(i)-lan-da.
   3sgS:3sgmO-get_PST-REAL   3sgmPN   sweet-NOM   hide   3sgS:3sgmO-put_PST-REAL
   'Then this child **hid** it, grabbed it, this sweet (one), **hid** it.'

e) *Ngenam gilanda woorlaj (..) nawam dawam.* […]
   ngena-m   g(i)-lan-da   woorlaj   **naw(oo)-a-m**   **dawa-m**
   there-LOC   3sgS:3sgmO-put_PST-REAL   hide   3sgmPN-TOP-LOC   camp-LOC
   'He hid it there **in his house**.' (Kriol backtranslation RG: *I bin go haidim in im pleis.*)

Several procedures can be followed when narrating stories with these cards.[31] The ones used in the course of this project are described here. First, the group decides whether one person tells a story to the others or whether the group tells a story together by taking turns. Second, the cards can either be displayed openly for the player(s) to choose from and/or order according to their wishes or they can be put into a deck that the player(s) pick from one by one as they go along. Finally, players who finished a story can be encouraged to reorder their cards for the purpose of telling a new story. It is allowed to add cards or discard some for this purpose. In one session, the Action cards encouraged the speakers to act out a role-play.

5.2.2   Story of Dirt

A resource more specifically created for possessive constructions (among others) is the Story of Dirt story book stimulus (Eisenbeiss et al. 1999). It is a meaning-focused task (Eisenbeiss 2010) designed to elicit constructions of the type *The cat hits the dog on the nose, The dog sprays water on the girl's leg (when/because he shakes himself).*

Although the manual states that "[t]he drawings were not intended to make a good narrative, though we aimed as far as possible to give it some story line", Miriwoong speakers readily told stories about the images.[32] There are always two images which belong together and differ minimally from each other. Sometimes the speakers were made aware of these differences in order to elicit further and richer data. Since the story book is quite long, the story had to be divided into separate sessions and was not finished.

5.2.3   Blue Book

During my stay at MDWg in 2015, Dr. Candide Simard, who researches information structure in the neighbouring language Jaminjung, presented her current results and the elicitation materials she used at the Mirima Linguistic Forum.[33] She kindly shared with me her stimuli. Miriwoong speakers enjoyed describing the pictures in the Blue Book. Some of the pictures are sufficiently detailed to allow the speaker to utter a series of utterances, i.e. a small story, about them. The

---

[31] For details on how the cards can be used as pedagogical tools by playing a Multi-Player Competitive Game or a Cooperative Group Game or by performing an Individual language-learning exercise see Sardinha (2011a). The User Manual suggests the following research topics to be investigated: argument structure, referent-tracking, discourse-level properties: causality within stories; also gestures, focus, narrative structure, intonation, etc. It is argued that these can be elicited well because the cards "create discourse contexts". Because these are "constructed visually, they delimit their own spatiotemporal framework" so that "language consultants are less likely to be influenced or confused by contexts introduced previously [during elicitation]" (Sardinha (2011b), User Manual). The Story-Builder cards have been used for example by Neveu (2016) for research on home sign and by Sardinha (2017) for Kʷak̓ʷala Object Case. On the webpage (www.story-builder.ca, accessed 2023-09-24) a number of educational programs which use the Story-Builder Cards are listed.

[32] Other possible uses of the story such as retelling the story from memory were not pursued for this thesis. The reader is invited to refer to the manual for details.

[33] The Mirima Linguistic Forum is a lecture series at MDWg aiming to bring together people with an academic interest in Indigenous studies.

pictures are not designed to elicit possession but include situations that invite possessive constructions such as *This man has a white dog, that man has a black dog*. In addition, the data collected with these stimuli are used to describe associative relationships, such as *The man with the boomerang*, see §9.4.1.

5.3 Elicitation

In the experience of the Miriwoong community "[e]licitation is when a linguist is trying to learn the language in different ways" (Newry 2002:34). This definition neatly illustrates that a wide range of activities can be subsumed under the label elicitation (see also Chelliah & de Reuse's assessment that the term is vague (2011:361)). In this project the term is used to mean sessions during which speakers of the language answered questions about the grammar of their language or took part in certain language tasks. Elicitation was intended as an additional data source for those research questions and aspects of the research agenda that could not be answered by consulting the corpus and cannot easily be tackled by language games.

More specifically, speakers were requested to discuss possible translations in domains that were not covered by the language games (§5.3.1), to manipulate data in certain ways (§5.3.2) so that hypotheses could be verified or falsified, to creatively make up sentences around a lexical prompt (§5.3.3), to narrate about their kinship relations (§5.3.4) and to describe pictures and short videos (§5.3.5). Finally, some sessions were devoted to what Chelliah & de Reuse call Review Elicitation or Cross-interrogation elicitation (Chelliah & de Reuse 2011:378) to check notes and transcriptions already elicited.

Wherever possible a discussion among a group of speakers was preferred over a one-on-one situation with the researcher. Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning sessions (later restructured and renamed Knowledge Cycle) at MDWg or field trips to country presented a good opportunity.[34]

Creating Miriwoong sentences which illustrate the aspects of possession which I am interested in and asking for grammaticality judgements (also called acceptability judgements) was avoided for a number of reasons. Problems typically associated with this type of elicitation are outlined in the following. To begin with, it was already mentioned in the context of translation exercises that

---

[34] Since the fluent speakers of Miriwoong are all elderly, sessions with the full group were usually rather short and were followed by sessions with smaller groups or periods where one or two individuals were most active as group members took turns participating and having breaks. Since language games require several players these were often given precedence for the full-group sessions. It was also the case that for some sessions only a single speaker was available while other project participants were otherwise occupied or unavailable due to health issues. In an attempt to learn as much as possible about Miriwoong and to document as much as possible of this endangered language, these opportunities were seized and the sessions recorded nonetheless.

direct questioning may not be culturally appropriate.[35] Especially either-or questions (as in: *Is this sentence acceptable or not?*) according to Eades (1993) are not part of the grammar of many Aboriginal languages and can thus be confusing to Aboriginal Australians.

A further issue with asking for judgements is that consultants might be too polite to say that a sentence constructed by the linguist is ungrammatical (Bowern 2008:78–80) (even when precautions are taken such as asking whether (and when) a fluent speaker would use such a sentence rather than asking for correctness and including sentences that are obviously quite ungrammatical, ibid.). In a similar line of argumentation Dixon (2007) warns that a consultant who agrees to a sentence might do so because he or she wishes to please the linguist or wants to avoid the uncomfortable situation of being questioned (or in more positive terms wants to create an atmosphere of "working well together" (Chelliah & de Reuse 2011:376)). Thus, rather than asking for a yes-or-no answer alone, Dixon (2007) recommends requesting that the speaker repeat the sentence and to pay attention to potential changes that the speaker makes.

Moreover, it was observed that speakers focused on the truth value of a statement rather than its grammaticality so that the linguist runs the risk of unintentionally embarrassing the consultant with certain semantic contents (Chelliah & de Reuse 2011:376).

In addition, it has been widely stressed that judgements, if obtained, are not reliable. Chelliah (2013:60), for instance, notes that grammaticality judgement "works well for very predictable and simple structures. Once the structures are even slightly unusual or pragmatically marked, judgments begin to vary across speakers". Reasons include that consultants might have a variable degree of understanding of the difference between prescriptive and descriptive acceptability. An utterance could be rated comparatively low or unacceptable, not because it is ungrammatical, but because it is the 'wrong' register (Bowern 2008:78-80). Alternatively, semantically odd sentences (in terms of real-world likelihood) could be rejected (ibid.). In contrast, speakers could rate sentences too positively because they take understandability rather than grammaticality as the point of comparison (Crowley & Thieberger 2007:102f). What is more, a sentence could be accepted because it is grammatical in a real-world situation other than that which the researcher is envisaging (ibid.). This is one of the reasons why it is helpful to provide a context, especially for complicated sentences (Dixon 2007).

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that consultants might in fact correctly rate a sentence as ungrammatical only that it is ungrammatical in an aspect not being looked at by the fieldworker. (In this situation it could help to ask speakers to fix the sentence so that it becomes clear what is wrong with the sentence (Bowern 2008:78-80).)

---

[35] Therefore, as much as possible, elicitation sessions were set up as discussions rather than question-answer formats. Time was allowed to think about and discuss the issues at hand and the opportunity was given to come back to certain questions at a later occasion.

As a result of these issues it is possible that judgements do not only differ between speakers but even from one session to the next with the same speaker if they are repeated (Chelliah & de Reuse 2011:357). Schütze & Sprouse (2013) explain that this has been attributed to the assessment that judgements are "not psychologically real" and that the meta-linguistic awareness needed to master this task cannot be taken for granted (in other words "people do not know what they do and do not say", Chelliah & de Reuse 2011).[36]

Finally, in a situation of severe language endangerment the problems with grammaticality judgements are typically amplified. If only a few speakers with the required high level of proficiency are left, it becomes difficult to replicate judgements over several sessions or with several speakers. Also, the recording of culturally relevant natural data usually takes precedence.[37]

5.3.1 Domains of possession

One of the goals of the thesis is to analyse whether the choice of a particular possessive encoding strategy is influenced by the semantic domain that the speaker is talking about. In the following sections, details on research questions with respect to specific domains, and the methods used to answer these, are addressed.

5.3.1.1 *Abstract Possession*

As it is already established that talking in Miriwoong about one's physical condition involves a construction that is also used for possession,[38] it is interesting to investigate how marginally possessive domains such as abstract possession (Stassen 2009) are expressed. Sentences of this type which are discussed in the literature were presented to a group of Miriwoong speakers and it was asked how they would express a similar meaning in their language. This was not an easy task because many abstract nouns that appeared in the English sentences do not exist in Miriwoong.[39]

For example, the sentence *I have an idea* (2009:19) inspired a vivid discussion that was taken up again in a later session. The Miriwoong concept that comes closest seems to be that of a

---

[36] This difficulty is aggravated if instead of asking for an either/or judgement (acceptable or not) speakers are asked to rate sentences on a (3/5/7-point scale). This is typically done when researching specific constructions in better-described languages.

[37] For circumstances under which grammaticality judgements can be used (e.g. when there are sufficient data sets for statistical analysis) and the advantages that they can have see Schütze & Sprouse (2013). For useful tips on when and how to ask for judgements see Crowley & Thieberger (2007:102f). How they can be implicitly applied for the description of an endangered language see for example Schultze-Berndt (2000), where they are compellingly called *acceptability* judgements. For a list of references that discuss introspection more generally see Chelliah & de Reuse (2011:376).

[38] The construction existential marker + Benefactive enclitic is used for sentences such as *I am not feeling well*, *I am sore* or in combination with a coverb for sentences such as *My hand is hurting*. This encoding strategy is also used for alienable possession as in *I have two clapsticks*, see §4.3.2 and §9.1.5.

[39] Even if they did, translating abstract concepts is a difficult endeavour especially if one is not a native speaker of both languages and might not understand the abstract concept to be translated in its full complexity.

knowledgeable person, an Elder who knows about country and is a teacher. The following abstract possessive sentences were also mooted: *We have problems with our car*, *A mother's love for her child […], Our faith is strong, DwN has a missing finger* (adapted from Heine 1997:34). Where possible the sentences formed part of the routine of the session such as *Do you have a story (for this place)?*

It occurred in some cases that the sentence being elicited sounds strange in English. For example, in the realm of (the abstract possession of) psychological and mental states (i.e. feelings or thoughts) a sentence such as *I have fear* (Zeshan & Perniss 2008:267) is not used by native speakers of English. It is not grammatical to use a possessive construction with this particular abstract noun. It was still attempted to elicit this sentence as its counterpart is acceptable in other languages such as German, where *Ich habe Angst* is perfectly fine and the usual way of expressing the meaning of *I am afraid*.[40] In fact, the literal translation of the latter, *Ich bin ängstlich,* has different semantics in German and is typically used to describe a character trait rather than a state. These sentences were included in order to not only ask for constructions that are grammatical in English. It was hoped that this approach would show the participants that I am equally interested in constructions that cannot be easily rendered in English.

5.3.1.2 *Physical possession*

With respect to the domain of physical possession sentences such as *I have many spears at home* or *I have many rings* (alienable possession) were contrasted with sentences such as *I have a spear in my hand* or *I have rings on my fingers* (physical possession). It was attempted to use the context of the sessions to get these types of sentences rather naturally. For example, it was asked how the linguist could request paper from an intern present at the session: How could one ask her *Do you have (a sheet of) paper?*

5.3.1.3 *Inalienable Possession*

With the intention to verify the hypothesis expressed by Kofod (1978, in prep. (2017)) that inalienable possession is expressed by the Indirect Object enclitic in attributive sentences and to test whether this also holds for predicative sentences it was decided to choose utterances featuring enclitics from the corpus and to check with speakers whether the alternative enclitic is also possible. Sentences attested in the corpus were used rather than asking for judgements of sentences constructed freely by the researcher in order to avoid the pitfalls associated with this type of elicitation discussed above. However, for two of the tasks the utterances from the corpus were modified slightly in order to fit the task.

---

[40] See also *I am in pain* vs. German *Ich habe Schmerzen* (literally 'I have pain'). Other expressions of physical states with abstract nouns do use a predicative possessive construction in English, such as *I have a cold.* This sentence was also discussed in an elicitation session.

(i) In one set of elicitation sentences, the final enclitic was left out, and the speakers were asked to complete the sentence. Therefore, sometimes the word order had to be changed for the enclitic to occur last.[41]

(ii) For another set of elicitation sentences, the speakers were asked to either repeat or correct the sentences, which the researcher – as a "learner of the language" – had "made up". The sentences from the corpus that were suitable for this task were all of the attributive, not the predicative, sentence type. Hence, they were modified in that the sentence type was changed. This was achieved by deleting the main predication of the attributive sentence and – for the sentence to make sense semantically – adding a modifying adjective, a quantifier, or a demonstrative. For example, rather than (13) from Kofod (in prep. (2017)), (14) was asked of the Miriwoong speakers.[42]

(13) Elicitation Kofod [H128]:MM

Berradben-nginga jab-jab goorrindawoon bernnganga-ni nawa marlawarna, […]
berradben-ngi-ng=a   jab-jab
3nsS-go/come_PRS_IRR-3nsIPF-SUB-NOM=TOP   RED-chop

goorrindawoon   bernnga-ng=a=ni
3nsS:3sgmO-hit_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF   bark-NOM=TOP=3sgmIO

naw(oo)=a   marlawarn=a
3sgPN=TOP   river_mangrove=TOP
'When they go, they cut the bark of the river mangrove, […]'

(14)

Bernnganga-ni nawa marlawarna ngoondengi-ntha.
bernnga-ng=a=ni   naw(oo)=a   marlawarn=a   **ngoondengi-ntha**
bark-NOM=TOP=3sgmIO   3sgPN=TOP   river_mangrove=TOP   good-EXST
'The bark of the river mangrove is good.'

Asking from the perspective of a learner who is taught the language by the language experts, and requesting the speakers to improve the sentences rather than rating them, created a more pleasant atmosphere from a social point of view, and the results are likely to be more reliable. In addition, this approach avoids direct questions.[43]

---

[41] This is where it often occurs in short utterances of the types used for the task.

[42] The introduction to this part of the elicitation session was the following: "I am trying to learn the sentences in Miriwoong. If they are good, please repeat them for me. If they are not so good or wrong, please tell me how to make them better!"

[43] Some of the difficulties with judgement tasks discussed above can be alleviated by giving the speaker two sentences which differ minimally from one another, namely with respect to the topic the researcher is interested in. For example, it would be possible to ask whether the corpus sentence with the Benefactive enclitic is better than a modified sentence with the corresponding Indirect Object enclitic. Note that asking which of the two sentences is better, still constitutes an either-or question. Moreover, Ionin & Zyzik (2014) discuss advantages and disadvantages of preference tasks (in comparison with grammaticality judgement tasks): Since the two options presented to the speaker make the targeted contrast salient it is likely that the speaker rejects one of them due to this targeted aspect of the sentence. However, the response is probably

(iii) For a third set of elicitation sentences, the speakers were again asked to either repeat or correct the sentences. For this task, the enclitic in the elicitation sentences had been replaced by its counterpart (e.g. a second person non-singular Benefactive enclitic was replaced by a second person non-singular Indirect Object enclitic). It was also inquired whether the meaning of the modified sentence is still possessive by asking the Miriwoong speakers whether the translation taken from the corpus is the correct translation for the modified sentence. For example, rather than (15) from the corpus, (16) was given to the speakers.

(15) Elicitation Kofod [H112]:MM

> *Gaboongerreg-goong woorlalenga?*
> gaboongerreg=n̶goong   woorlale-ng=a
> how_many=2sgBEN   child-NOM=TOP
> \r 'Hau meni kid yu gadim?'

(16)

 a) *Gaboongerreg-ninggi woorlalenga?*
   gaboongerreg=**ninggi**   woorlale-ng=a
   how_many=2sgIO   child-NOM=TOP

 b) That means 'How many children do you have'?

In the literature, a task like (i) is called, for example, a *sentence completion* task (Mosel 2012). Eisenbeiss (2010) defines sentence completion as one type of *elicited production.* In another taxonomy, Chelliah & de Reuse (2011) list *Paradigmatic Substitution Elicitation* as one variety of *Target Language Manipulation Elicitation*: The fieldworker "deletes a word or constituent from the sentence, and asks for another word or constituent that can fit that slot" (2011:371). This is claimed to be an easy task (for consultants and the fieldworker). However, in a similar subtype named *Fieldworker-Driven Transformational Elicitation* the "fieldworker begins with a sentence in the target language and modifies it in some way, such as moving a constituent" (2011:371). This is deemed a difficult task because in the following the fieldworker asks for a grammaticality judgment.

The tasks chosen for this thesis are somewhere between these two types described by Chelliah & de Reuse. On the one hand, for tasks (i) and (ii) the original sentences were changed slightly. On the other hand, only for (ii) and (iii) the consultants were "asked to react to [the modified sentence], or correct it" (ibid.); and I avoided to ask them to judge the sentences.[44]

---

influenced by metalinguistic knowledge rather than intuitions and from the response it does not become clear whether the nonpreferred option is unacceptable or only nonpreferred.
[44] Task (iii) could potentially also be subsumed under the label *substitution technique* (Mosel 2012). However, according to Mosel, during these tasks it is the speaker who is asked to substitute an element. In the procedure described here, it is the linguist who does the substitution. Further, task (iii) is arguably an instance of *Corrective Elicitation*, a task rated as difficult by Chelliah & de Reuse (2011:373), with the difference that the sentences created by substituting the enclitics are not necessarily wrong.

In the context of Australian languages, names of people and objects are often discussed as inalienable possessions (Dixon 2002:394).[45] For example, this is the case for Yawuru (Chappell & McGregor 1996a:12) and Jaru (Tsunoda 1981:194). According to Meakins (2011:215, quoting McConvell 1996:93), while Warlpiri is another example, in Gurindji the counterpart of 'name' is an alienable noun. Likewise, Kriol uses the alienable construction for the possession of names (2011:232). However, Gurindji Kriol is another example of a language that extents inalienability to names (2011:212).

To supplement the Miriwoong corpus data on names, field trips were opened by the question of the name of the place. In addition, it was inquired how to talk about entities that do not have names in Miriwoong, e.g. *We do not have koala bears on Miriwoong country, they do not have a Miriwoong name* (see Footnote 14 above). Again, references to the current situation were made, e.g. by introducing the linguist's headphones into the discussion.

5.3.2 Negative possession

In order to generate data on negative possession, speakers were asked to produce the opposite of possessive sentences which were selected from the Toolbox corpus. This technique is called *transformational elicitation* by Mosel (2012), *Data manipulation* by Bowern (2008:81f) and *elicited production* by Eisenbeiss (2010, see Footnote 47 above). It is a method which was also adopted to elicit positive possessive sentences in addition to the methods described in the previous sections: Speakers were given negative possessive sentences from the corpus and asked what they would say if the possessive relationship were, in fact, to hold.

Further data was gathered via translation exercises. As much as possible the current surroundings were taken into account (e.g. *My backpack (over there) is old*, *I don't have a new backpack*) or pictorial stimuli were used to support the elicitation questions (e.g. The prompt *I have two legs, She has two legs, We all have two legs* was accompanied by a picture of a fish to elicit *The fish doesn't have (two) legs*).

5.3.3 Forms of HAVE

An analysis of Kofod's corpus data reveals that the HAVE-verb is used in a number of domains, such as alienable and abstract possession, and kinship. Since the HAVE-verb does not occur very frequently in the Miriwoong database (it is encountered 112 times[46]), for some domains few examples can be found. Thus, conclusions about the use of the verb in these domains are more conservative. For example, it could not be assessed on the basis of the corpus data alone whether the HAVE-verb is systematically used for part-whole possession. In order to expand the database,

---

[45] To be precise, Dixon states that 'name' is treated like a body part.
[46] The number of occurrences of a single form ranges from 1 to 13 with a median of 2. On the frequency of the HAVE-verb see also §9.1.11.

therefore, the technique called *eliciting examples* (Mosel 2012) was used: Speakers were asked for sentences in which a particular form of the verb could occur.[47] Since the domains of usage rather than the forms themselves are the focus of the task, the forms of the verb can be provided. For example, the speakers were asked to form a sentence with *gemoorlindayin* ('3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF'). It is assumed that this technique is easier for the speakers than a translation task as passive knowledge on the usage of the verb is likely to be greater than active knowledge of the verb forms, especially for younger speakers. Even fluent speakers have been observed to occasionally stumble on verb forms of HAVE when producing them (mainly during elicitation but also during natural speech). In order to reduce task difficulty, therefore, more frequent verb forms such as *gemoorlindayin* 'He has him/it' (6 occurrences in Toolbox) and *benemoorlindanyan* 'She has them' (8 occurrences in Toolbox) were chosen. Schultze-Berndt (2000:22) employed a similar task when researching possible verb-coverb combinations (also called *inflecting verbs* and *uninflecting verbs* respectively, see §4.2.4). By prompting with a coverb she was able to elicit utterances containing these as well as a list of possible combinations with inflecting verbs.

5.3.4 Family relations

Narrations about speakers' biographies as well as constructions involving kinship relations, such as *I have three younger sisters*, were elicited by asking participants to draw and describe (real and fictitious) family trees, see Zeshan & Perniss (2008) for a director-matcher task involving family trees. As an incentive for the speakers in the current project it was offered to digitally represent and subsequently print the family trees collected in the KinOath program (Withers 2014).

5.3.5 Typological predictions

Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession will be introduced in §7.9 and discussed in more detail with respect to Australian languages in §8.1.3. Stassen found a correlation between possessive constructions and temporal sequencing: He makes predictions in the form of implicational statements with respect to utterances about situations in which two different subjects simultaneously perform actions. In the Miriwoong corpus very few sentences of this type were found. In order to elicit complex sentences of the relevant type, questions about the situational context were asked where the context allowed this to be done as naturally as possible. For example, during a field trip, speakers were asked to describe the situation with sentences such as *I am sitting here, my sister is sitting over there.* In addition, photos and videos depicting

---

[47] See also Chelliah (2013:60) who warns that the results need to be compared to natural data "as speakers tend to produce syntactically simple or pragmatically neutral constructions when responding to such tasks". For the purposes of this study this is not problematic, though. Eisenbeiss' (2010:25) *elicited production,* which involves producing forms in response to prompts, is similar. However, it is mentioned in the context of experiments that investigate language acquisition.

short scenes, such as *Nalyirri is sitting cross-legged and Jalyirri is sitting with his legs outstretched* and *When Jalyirri arrives, Nalyirri leaves* were created. The results are discussed in §10.5.3 and §10.5.4.

5.4 Participants

Table 5.2 provides some information on the 21 people who participated in some way in the Miriwoong project. The first column lists the abbreviation or number code the participants have chosen to use for this thesis. The column 'Age' classifies each speaker into either 'young adult' (1 participant), middle-aged' (10 participants), 'senior' (2 participants) or 'Elder' (8 participants). The column 'Experience with the Miriwoong language' indicates that 11 of the participants are learners of the language (including 3 experienced learners) and 10 are speakers (including 2 passive speakers and 3 fluent speakers). 5 of the participants are male (2 middle-aged learners and 1 Elder and 1 senior speaker). In this thesis, senior speakers and Elders are also referred to as Masters (LM, a term inspired by the Master-Apprentice-Language-Learning-Project). In addition to the Masters, the column 'Profession' also lists who is or was employed at MDWg as Language Worker (LW) or Language Engagement Officer (LEO) and who is or was an Apprentice. LWs, LEOs and Apprentices participated in the games and in elicitation sessions and helped with the explanations of the rules and with translations into English. The column 'Language group affiliations' includes the languages each speaker identifies with and languages spoken by parents and grand-parents. The final column lists the information on the countries where the participants were born, grew up and have their main residence, and on places to which they have ownership ties.

The information given, especially about language group affiliations and country ownership and residence, is not meant to be exhaustive; listed is the information shared by the participants throughout the project and in publications available at MDWg. The column 'Experience with the Miriwoong language' is not based on a formal assessment but observations such as the ease of production of full sentences, spontaneous use of language and the confident use of challenging aspects of Miriwoong grammar, such as inflecting verbs.

The example sentences given in this thesis stem from senior speakers and Elders.

Participant - Abbreviation	Age	Experience with the Miriwoong language	Language group affiliations	Profession	Residence when young/ main residence/ country ownership
007†	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong	LEO; former child care worker	Kununurra; Keep River National Park, Bucket Spring, Cave Spring
AA	senior	speaker	Miriwoong, Ngarinyman	LA, artist	grew up at Ivanhoe Station
AC†	middle-aged	experienced learner	Miriwoong	former LW	
BJ†	Elder	speaker	Miriwoong	LM	grew up at Newry Station; Argyle Station
DN/Joolama	senior	speaker	Miriwoong, Ngarinyman	Director of Mirima Council, Senior Language and Culture Consultant	grew up at Newry Station; Kununurra; Keep River, Bucket Spring, Bubble Bubble, Police Hole; Molly Springs
DWN	young adult	learner	Miriwoong, Ngarinyman; Jaminjung, Murrin-patha, Gajirrabeng	former LW	grew up in Keep River National Park; Kununurra; Ivanhoe Range
GN	middle-aged	experienced learner	Miriwoong	LW, interpreter, LA	Kununurra; Ivanhoe Range; Molly Springs
IN	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong; Ngarinyman	LW, interpreter, LA	grew up on Dingo Spring/ Ivanhoe Station; Kununurra; Flying Fox; Newry Station
JBL	middle-aged	experienced learner (Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng)	Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng; Ngaliwurru, Jaminjung	former LW	born on Carlton Hill Station; Ningbingi
JP	middle-aged	learner (Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng)	Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng; Waranybeng, Jaminjung, Ngarinyman	LW	grew up at Bubble Bubble; Kununurra
LBE	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong	former LA, MG Corporation Executive Chair	Kununurra

Participant - Abbreviation	Age	Experience with Miriwoong	Language group affiliations	Profession	Residence when young/ main residence/ country ownership
MAJ	Elder	fluent speaker	Miriwoong	LM	born at Bubble Bubble; Newry Station; Legune Station; Emu Creek; Keep River, Bucket Springs
ML	Elder	fluent speaker	Miriwoong	LM, artist	Newry Station; Kununurra
ND†	Elder	fluent speaker	Miriwoong	former LM	Ivanhoe Station; Kununurra; Flying Fox
PG†	Elder	speaker	Miriwoong	LM	born on Ivanhoe Station; Newry Station; Kununurra; Molly Springs
PHN	Elder	passive speaker	Miriwoong	retired	Ivanhoe Station; Kununurra; Flying Fox
PS	Elder	passive speaker	Miriwoong	retired	Ivanhoe Station; Molly Springs
RBI	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong	LEO	Kununurra
RG	Elder	speaker	Miriwoong; Jaminjung	retired	Kununurra
ROB	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong	LW, LEO; former child care worker	Kununurra; Keep River National Park, Bucket Spring, Cave Spring
SS	middle-aged	learner	Miriwoong	LW	Kununurra; Police Hole; Newry Station

Table 5.2 Participants in the Miriwoong project

6   THE CULTURAL CONCEPT OF POSSESSION

The concept of possession seems to be universal. Seiler (1981:1) observes that it is "fundamental in human life" (as well as in human language) and Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976:561) concede that possession is diverse, but none the less "ubiquitous". Chapter 7 will serve to establish that possession in this thesis is viewed as a social concept following for example Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976) who claim that possession is "embodied in [a people's] conventions and forms of social behaviour" (1976:558). Thus, there are expected to be different conceptualisations of ownership, kinship and other domains relevant for possession. The linguistic expression of possession is seen as cross-culturally variable with culture influencing some of its subdomains such as the range of entities that can or cannot be 'possessed' (Stassen 2009:8). As a starting point for Chapter 7, in this chapter the characteristics of possession as prototypically understood by Western societies will be addressed. The chapter then explores in how far Indigenous views and practices can differ from Western perceptions and presents some findings on Miriwoong culture.

It will be argued that linguistic structures used to indicate possession can be influenced by a language group's cultural beliefs and practices. Aikhenvald (2013:1) explains that "underlying social institutions, concepts, and attitudes may correlate with the expression of possession" comparing the area of possession to different linguistic fields in which a correlation with "cultural values, social hierarchies and their conceptualization" has been found: She outlines that gender systems and noun classes allow for insights into cultural stereotypes and "patterns of human perception" while demonstratives in some languages render it possible to draw inferences about the geography that surrounds speakers (ibid.). Kofod (2003) uses examples from Kija to show that in Jarragan languages the latter is true. She presents a correlation between the landscape, which is "typified by dramatic ranges cut by rivers", and the sophisticated system of directional nominals, which in addition to (movement based) compass directionals consists of directionals that specify whether movement is uphill or downhill, upstream or downstream (2003:41).

6.1   Researching the concept of possession

In order to examine the cultural concept of possession in a society one can look at social or cultural conventions (terminology used by Stassen 2009:8) which pertain to the establishment, alteration or termination of a possessive relationship such as theft, inheritance, donation, or acquisition (Heine 2001:311). In other words, one examines "the interrelations between having, buying, giving, and so forth" (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:558).

Looking at these aspects, what is mainly covered so far is prototypical possession from a Western,[1] non-Indigenous perspective, namely *legal ownership*. Chapter 7 will cover this and other types of possession in greater detail. In short, possession in this sense typically involves a human being who acquired a concrete inanimate physical object exclusively for a prolonged period of time; the possessed item is of a certain material or sentimental value and usually located in spatial proximity to the owner (Taylor 1996:340).

In addition to studying the above-mentioned social or cultural conventions it is worthwhile to explore a society's belief systems because these, along with world knowledge, determine whether or not one is dealing with possession in a given situation (Hawkins 1981:258).

Further, it is important not only to look at the transfer and trade of material objects but also at more abstract possessions. Especially in the Aboriginal context ownership of knowledge and ownership of language need to be taken into account. James (2016/09 p.c.) has called knowledge a currency in the Indigenous Australian context because it is not freely given nor sought but has to be earned (for example in exchange for different pieces of information, for stories, songs, rituals and the like (James & Baymarrwaŋa 2016)). Walsh (2002:233) characterises language ownership as follows: Indigenous Australians own language by birthright; ownership is non-voluntary, permanent and rule-governed. Aikhenvald (2013:51) adds that – in contrast to Western conceptions – ownership is non-controllable. This concept of language ownership will be examined further in the following section.

6.1.1 Language ownership

Prior to exploring in which areas of grammar the social and cultural conventions mentioned above can be expected to be reflected, a more detailed discussion of language and land ownership is in order. It should be noted that some scholars working in the Australian context (e.g. Rumsey 1993:199) stress the distinction between language usership and ownership (introduced by Sutton & Palmer in 1980) in order to show that fluency in a language does not necessarily equate with ownership (see also Aikhenvald 2013:51) just as limited fluency does not prevent from identification with and ownership of a language (Zuckermann & Walsh 2011:113).[2]

In fact, ownership of language is a complex matter from an Aboriginal perspective. One of the factors involved in Aboriginal Australian's language identity construction is filiation, i.e. "links through one or both parents" (Rumsey 1993:200). Aikhenvald (2013:51f) describes how in some

---

[1] The emphasis here is on *legal*. By using the description 'Western' as a simplified abbreviation it is not intended to exclude similar systems. Keen (2013), for example, describes that in "traditional" China the system was similar in that there was exclusive possession of tracts of land on the level of the family. The authorities took note of these possessions and legal actions such as selling were governed by written laws. In the remainder of the chapter the terms 'possession' or 'legal ownership' will be preferred.

[2] Aikhenvald (2013:51) argues that non-fluency is a factor that only plays a role due to "the rampant language loss" since colonial times.

societies one's own language is determined primarily by one's father's language and explains that this is similar in the Australian Aboriginal context. For the Miriwoong people sociolinguistic questionnaires (2014) have revealed that further kin relations such as one's mother's language are relevant for identity construction (see §6.2 below).

Another primary factor is the connection between languages and territory. McGregor (2004:294) informs the reader that "[i]n Aboriginal conception, there is a close tie between language and land. […] 'Ownership' of language thus correlates with 'ownership' of territory […] and languages are **not** regarded as the property of speakers" (emphasis added). What is meant here is that there is no direct connection between the language and the people, but the relationship is mediated by the country[3] to which both people and languages belong, people and the language are connected indirectly. Since individuals are part of social groups such as clans, on which land ownership relies, both factors just mentioned are interconnected. Evans visualises the interrelationship as in (1) (Evans 2003a:29), where "other social groups" includes "higher-order groupings like moieties, which in many areas are aggregated from clans with fixed moiety affiliations" (ibid.).

(1)   individual <-> clan or other social group <-> land <-> language

Ruth Singer (2016 p.c.) observes that this configuration also explains why an individual owns a language if he or she has not learned to fluently speak it: The connection through the social group legitimises ownership. She also addresses consequences of cultural loss: Language shift is reinforced by loss of social norms such as clan structure because the clan - language connection is weakened.

The connection between the country and the language is believed to have come about in the Dreaming (also called Creation Time or Ngarranggarni by Miriwoong people) through Dreamtime Beings (or Dreamings/Dreamtime ancestors) who planted languages in places where they lived or at certain sites along their paths as they travelled through country (McConvell 2004:38). Bentley James (2015) demonstrates for the Yolŋu that land ownership and thereby ultimately language ownership was given to the clans by the *wangarr* (creator/ ancestor spirits). The Yolŋu concept of *märr* "comprises the inalienable connection between kinds of ancestors, people, stories, language, and place" (2015:257). As Aikhenvald (2013:51) puts it "each language is intrinsically linked to the land where one's ancestors had dwelt or moved through". Therefore, an individual's ownership of a language is obtained beyond their control and permanently by birthright (ibid.).

---

[3] The term *country* is here not used in the limited (Western) interpretation of nation-state but in a wider sense used by many Australian Aboriginal people and anthropologists and linguists working in Australia for the stretch of land that a social group identifies with. Alternatively, the terms *land*, *territory* are used. They are understood here as being largely interchangeable. The difference between the Western nation state and this understanding of country is reflected in utterances by Miriwoong people such as *This is Miriwoong country.*

Evans (2003a) outlines that there are song and myth cycles which implicitly demonstrate the process. Dreamings speak a certain language while travelling on the country and due to certain features of the land (James 2016/09 p.c.) start speaking a separate dialect or language (Evans 2003a:30). These two areas are then to become the territories that two separate clans identify with. Evans adds that the switch of variety is sometimes used metonymically to signal a character's movement to another location, which is not otherwise mentioned (ibid.). In this way even mixed languages are accounted for (i.e. Dreamings are confused by noises in the surroundings and begin mixing languages (James 2016/09 p.c.)).

Sufficient fluency provided, this practice is also found in sociolinguistic practices today. For example, speakers start to speak another language when entering a different country (or *estate*[4]) (Olawsky 2015 p.c.) or when speaking to particular sites they are passing or visiting in the appropriate local language (McConvell 2004:38). Evans names wells or dangerous places as examples of the latter (2003a:29).[5]

6.1.2   Land ownership

> *[The colonisers] saw land as a commodity, a possession, to be exploited and, when its usefulness was exhausted, to be disposed of. For the Gumilaroi, like other Indigenous people, land, more precisely country, is the source of life and identity, not to be traded or, for that matter, surrendered, for with it would go the soul and spirit of its people.*
>
> Bob Morgan (In *Heartsick for Country – Stories of Love, Spirit and Creation*
> edited by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina)

In the previous section it was argued that the identification of Aboriginal people with their languages and country is a complex matter. According to Rumsey (1993), in Australian Aboriginal societies it is not simply the case that a group of people (or 'tribe') is defined by the language they speak and the country they occupy (1993:199). This is actually the Western system: I am German because I live in Germany and speak German. In colonial times moving to a new place would have involved invading the land and proclaiming it a new part of one's home country. (Note that nowadays the Western system has also changed in that there is mobility other than invasion and I would still consider myself German if I moved to another country.)[6]

---

[4] The term *estate* is used e.g. by James (2015) for a region of different dreaming sites associated with a clan. Olawsky (2015 p.c.) gives the example of a switch when crossing from an area associated with Miriwoong to Gajirrabeng country.

[5] Evans (2003a) describes in detail the many ways in which language choice is influenced by sociolinguistic patterns. For example, patrilects are used to signal clan-membership. Maintenance of language choice practices (and ultimately language diversity) is achieved by requirements such as widows being expected to speak their deceased husband's variety.

[6] The point of comparison here needs to be between Germany as a nation-state and one of the countries in Australia, such as Miriwoong country or Gija country, not Australia as a nation-state. While the I might identify as a *Westfälin* in addition to my primary identity as a German because I was born and raised in the respective region of Germany, Aboriginal Australians first and foremost identify with their Aboriginal language and country, not with Australia. "This continent, named Australia by Captain Matthew Flinders

There are several arguments why this interpretation of the language, people, country relationship is not the Aboriginal way: First of all, one language cannot easily be connected to one population because – as is widely known – every Aboriginal person is traditionally fluent in more than one language (e.g. Rumsey 1993:195), including sign languages. On the other hand, partial or non-speakers (at least today) easily identify with a language in Aboriginal society. Secondly, one language cannot be identified by making reference to the piece of land that a group of people occupies because in Aboriginal culture there is more residential mobility than in Western societies (1993:194). Rumsey summarises that the Miriwoong people[7] are *Miriwoong* not because they *speak* Miriwoong but because they are linked to *places* to which the Miriwoong language is also linked (1993:199). Note that this link of the language to the country was attributed above to Dreamtime beings, who in turn inspire cultural practices such as inheritance of ownership rights to country via kinship relationships. Rumsey concludes that the names for Aboriginal languages seem to identify them clearly with tribal territories, but that it is not possible to delimit any "clear-cut, non-overlapping groups of people on the basis of the languages they speak" (1993:195).[8]

Focusing now on the land rather than language ownership, some Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander People's views on their relation to country will be presented. To a large extent the following draws on the collection of articles and oral histories in *Heartsick for Country* (edited by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina, first published 2008).

To begin with, the Indigenous scholar Moreton-Robinson (2004:3) stresses that "Indigenous people are the human manifestations of the land and creator beings, they carry title to the land through and on their bodies." Here, ownership rights are justified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People being equated with both the Dreamtime ancestors and the land itself. No acquisition through some sort of transaction (c.f. Taylor 1996:340) is needed and it is not possible for a living person to permanently and legally transfer country.

Nor is acquisition possible because country cannot be reduced to something that is legally transferable. The concept is all-encompassing:

> This is because country is far more than what can be seen with physical eyes […] Our feelings encompass everything that country is and includes the water and the stars, the plants and animals, the Creator ancestors and all the spiritual beings tied to our country; the songs, dances, pictures, stories, dreams, visions and experiences of country; and everything on every level and in every dimension that has a life in our country (Morgan, Sally 2008:263).

Bob Morgan (2008) presents the Indigenous conception of possession of country implicitly by criticizing the Western notion as he sees it judging from the actions taken during colonisation: "They saw land as a commodity, a possession, to be exploited and, when its usefulness was

---

early in the nineteenth century, is a land of many countries – and for every country, there is a people" (Kwaymullina 2008:7).

[7] In the original Rumsey uses Jawoyn as an example.

[8] For a criticism of Rumsey, which is relevant primarily in the realm of Native Title Claims, see McConvell (2004:42f).

exhausted, to be disposed of". He goes on to contrast this with how the Gumilaroi and other Indigenous people conceive country: "country[,] is the source of life and identity, not to be traded or, for that matter, surrendered, for with it would go the soul and spirit of its people" (2008:208). Both parts of the quote show that for Indigenous Australians the concept of possession in the prototypical Western sense is not applied to country. The equation of country and people is again alluded to in the final clause.[9]

The feeling described by many authors is not that of an owner to whom the country belongs but, conversely, someone who belongs *to* the country: "Our country is the home of our ancestral spirits, the place of our belonging" (Morgan, Sally 2008:263). Collard characterises this feeling as spiritual (2008:69). The role Aboriginal Australians assume for themselves is not that of a legal owner, either. Instead they have "exerted authority, custodianship and ownership over the continent as a whole" (Morgan, Sally 2008:276). Morgan contrasts this with the *physical* dispossession executed by Arthur, the "first governor of the land named New South Wales by Cook" (ibid.). Note that the term ownership is used by Morgan but in a semantically shifted way as it certainly does not seem to mean legal ownership.

This does not mean that there are no rules or systems to decide and manage which tract of land is inherited by whom. Who becomes the responsible Carer of Country (Watson 2008:82) for specific sites is subject to a complex Law[10]: "Every part of the continent comes under the jurisdiction of Aboriginal peoples and their distinct laws, and every part has an Aboriginal language name" (Watson 2008:92). Filiation was named above as one relevant aspect within that Law. In fact, the relationship of an individual to his or her country has been described as a kinship relationship: "In their language, the British described and catalogued the land as an object, not as grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, sister, brother and family" (Kwaymullina 2008:11).

The views presented here are taken to be at least as valid as findings published by anthropologists or linguists, especially if they are based on stories or oral histories passed down in the family. Since for the time of early colonisation in some areas there are no reliable written records and there are none from before that period, oral histories are the best source to draw on. Along with songs and dances they were the established form of knowledge storage and transfer for hundreds of generations so that their importance and quality cannot be underestimated. This has been given credit in Native Title claims, where anthropological, linguistic, historical, and

---

[9] This belief is taken as far as claiming a connection between poor Aboriginal health and environmental devastation (Watson 2008:82). Similarly, Read (2017:31f) finds a correlation between a continuing connection to place and an intact sense of identity and belonging.

[10] The term 'Law' does not refer to the legal concept as it is used in Western society but refers more broadly to "the body of customs and practices that [Indigenous Australians such as the] Murrinh-Patha adhere to" Walsh (1996:376). According to McConvell (2004:39) Indigenous lexemes for 'law' "encompass a wider field of what people refer to as 'custom' and 'lore' including proper behaviours between kin, such as avoidance of certain in-laws and siblings, ceremonial and spiritual responsibility and Indigenous knowledge of the environment and its management."

further experts were heard in addition to oral testimony by the claimants (Barker 2004). Barker even acknowledges that oral testimony by the claimants is more important than the reports and statements by the expert witnesses because only they can prove what is required for the granting of Native Title, namely that they *currently* enjoy their rights "under traditionally based laws and customs" (2004:175).

It needs to be taken into account, though, that there have been claims that Indigenous views have changed to some extent when adapting to new realities after European contact. Exploitation of natural resources such as gas, oil and timber since European contact, for example (see Wood 2013 about the Kamula), and the necessity to deal with Western systems of land ownership in order to ensure survival can corrupt Indigenous notions of belonging, spiritual association and identification by overriding them with Western conceptions of controlled ownership (Aikhenvald 2013:52; Dixon 2013:307). Interestingly, concerning language ownership, James (2015) offers an assessment which is in a sense opposite to the one described by Aikhenvald: Where ownership (or possession) of valuables might become more important to younger generations of Indigenous people, language ownership (in the non-Western interpretation) today "is less apparent in the modern community setting" and "has a far greater significance for an older generation, those having grown up in close connection with their *bäpurru* country, or living on the homelands" (2015:245). Overall, James states, the foundations of the system of language ownership, i.e. "the idea of language connections to ancestral power" are nevertheless evident in the "ritual sphere" (ibid.).

Since the authors represented in *Heartsick for Country* are not from the Kimberley area and most showcase pan-Australian beliefs,[11] an author familiar with the region where Miriwoong is spoken will be taken into consideration as well. Bruce Shaw has collected and published oral histories such as *When the Dust Come in Between* (1992). The quality of his work has been accredited in the Miriwoong Gajerrong Native Title claim. A quote from Stan Brumby (a Kija man) shows that the connection with country was seen as exclusive for a 'tribe', since there could be a fight if two 'tribes' claimed an area around the border between their territories for themselves.

> They fought for the country where this Dream was travelling, the Kangaroo. One mob might have one country and another mob might want to take that country, that's it. That's right, people fought for bits of country. Where one tribe's country crossed over to the other's. They fought over that Thing (Shaw 1992:83f).

The idea that one has a country that one belongs to even if one leaves it to live somewhere else is also represented: Peter Ngunung (A Murrin-patha/Jaminjung man) states: "This country [Kununurra] is better than my country" (Shaw 1992:45).

---

[11] Contrasting a 'Western' with an 'Aboriginal' perception of possession necessarily glosses over differences that are likely to exist between groups subsumed under those somewhat artificial labels. The aim of the preceding paragraphs is to point to some key differences, without claiming that every individual in all of the implied subgroups necessarily shares all and only those views.

6.2 The culture of possession among the Miriwoong people

In this section aspects of the concept of possession described above will be applied to Miriwoong. The line of argument will largely follow that in §6.1. The content relies on articles published in the proceedings of the seventh FEL conference (Kofod 2003; Newry & Palmer 2003), as well as on the data gathered during the two fieldtrips dedicated to documenting linguistic structures marking possession in Miriwoong. During these trips, information on the culture of possession was recorded as well. This chapter constitutes a summary of the information shared by the Miriwoong people, among them Joolama and PG. Thereby, credit is given to Indigenous knowledge. A detailed treatment of factors traditionally involved in land tenure in the Miriwoong and Gajirrabeng community from the perspective of Native Title research can be found in McIntyre & Doohan (2002).

6.2.1 Social and cultural conventions

It was established in §6.1 above that possession in daily life could be understood by examining cultural conventions such as inheritance or acquisition, and relations between having, giving, and so forth. In the following, some anecdotes pertaining to these conventions shared in the course of the project will be described.

To begin with, I enquired about the Miriwoong's concept of having something. I wondered what Miriwoong people conceptualise as belonging to them. When asked whether there was something in the Miriwoong culture that belongs to an individual rather than the family group or wider community, for example, Joolama discussed spears (Joolama 2014/07 p.c., 2014/08 p.c.). Since they are manufactured specifically for the height and stature of a single man[12] they do not lend themselves for borrowing. In exceptional cases, such as when someone else's spears broke or are currently unavailable during hunting, the owner might lend a spear to the other person. However, this would only take place with a *jimarring* 'best friend and age-mate from child-hood' (Joolama 2014/07 p.c.) or a father or uncle (Joolama 2014/08 p.c.). He explains that this is due to the fact that one would feel that the new user would never "do it right", comparing the situation to lending a car. What Joolama presumably refers to here is that another driver will arrange the seat and mirrors according to their needs, leaving the owner with an altered car. Alternatively or in addition, he might refer to the owner's worry that the borrower will not properly handle or care for the car (or spear). The restriction to a small group of acceptable receivers or borrowers can be interpreted as a sign of the existence of some sense of personal possession, at least when the act of manufacturing of the borrowed item is connected to the original user.

---

[12] The *ngawaleng* 'woomera' (i.e. spear thrower) is fashioned to fit smoothly into the user's hand and its length is appropriate for the user's arms.

Similarly, for the women interviewed, when they had acquired tobacco or ashes, in principle they felt that this should be shared among the "old people" but overheard conversations and complaints revealed that there was some indication of personal possession in an almost prototypically Western sense. This is also supported by the fact that, along with money, tobacco and ashes were named among the items typically to be found in a woman's handbag ([MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]:PG). Concerning the traditional dilly bags Joolama (2014/07 p.c.) elucidates that men and woman were carrying their important possessions in them. They did not give their dilly bag to anybody else. In order to protect it from children's reach they rather hung it up in a tree so the children would not get to it. Joolama compared the bag to the golden card (i.e. credit card) as used today. This assertion bespeaks that – contrary to what has been claimed above for language and land ownership – there is an element of control involved in the Miriwoong conception of ownership.

Moreover, regarding **inheritance**, in the Aboriginal context we can only speak metaphorically about this concept. Traditionally, not many artefacts or items of 'material' value[13] existed because the Aboriginal lifestyle was not aimed at increasing wealth. Items used by individuals such as dilly bags, coolamons, digging sticks, stone tools, spears and woomeras, which might qualify as personal possessions, were most likely not bequeathed to children or others because social protocol after a death requires that these are burnt. Therefore, what children do inherit[14] from their parents is language and cultural knowledge via transmittance in the appropriate cultural context (Newry & Palmer 2003:104). This will be dealt with in more depth below. Likewise, land ownership will be further discussed below. As previous sections demonstrated it is believed that country cannot be owned and therefore cannot be sold or inherited in a legal Western sense.

Giving and receiving of goods, in contrast, has been an important part of Miriwoong culture and Aboriginal society as a whole. As detailed in §2.3.1.2, trade between 'tribes' was as wide-spread as it was critical for survival. The Miriwoong received good-quality bamboo for spears from the Murrinh-patha, for example ([K-94-16-Wirnan]:BF), and were part of a trade route for shells. More abstract goods, such as the knowledge about and the right to perform certain songs and

---

[13] It would be interesting to look at items of cultural value, e.g. artefacts used in important rituals and dances. As far as I am aware from public displays of corroborees some are made for the immediate need for a specific dance while others, such as didgeridoos and clap sticks might be stored in a communal space such as the Language Centre or the Art Centre and reused when needed. Whether this practice is followed for secret ceremonies and whether it is representative of the traditional practice is beyond my expertise. These intricacies cannot be covered in this thesis. Their study falls into the realm of anthropology and knowledge about sacred items is, if shared at all with outsiders, not freely made available to a researcher at the start of her relationship with a people.

[14] This is not to say that language transfer is not different from legal inheritance of objects and resources in a further way even from a Western perspective: When language is taught, possession does not get transferred from the teacher to the student because the teacher still knows and has the right to use the language and, therefore, remains an owner.

ceremonies,[15] are also the object of trade. Remember that it was alleged above that knowledge functions as a sort of currency among Indigenous Australians. This is certainly true for the Miriwoong people. I was aware of this practice and have respected it from the beginning of my linguistic work with the Miriwoong. The basis for my work is an agreement negotiated with the Mirima Council, which requires, among many other things, that each participant be consulted on the question of which of the information offered could be used in which way and whether distribution of this knowledge would be allowed and, if so, in which way. Moreover, in return for their time and wisdom, I offered several training courses tailored to the needs of Language Workers at MDWg.

Joolama (2015 p.c.) goes into detail of how the exchange of (concrete) goods *within* the Miriwoong/Gajirrabeng 'tribe' is regulated by kinship relations:

- Ego can tell his sister's grandchildren's spouses (SiChChWi/Hu) *boonkali* to give him things ("they look after me").[16]

- Ego can**not** tell SiSo *Galing* and SiDa *Galiny* (where Si = FaDa or FaBrDa) to give him anything (except food).

- Ego can ask WiFa *Lambarra* and WiMo *Bajoog* for things, but they do not need to give them to Ego; Ego already has their daughter).

For certain relationships, the giving of goods implies specific intentions. For example, if a female person gives something to a classificatory, i.e. potential, *lambarra,* it means that she wants to marry their son. When the idea of giving (a picture of) a water lily (as a present) to somebody was raised during another elicitation session, the response was that one can only give presents to certain relations: *gagoong* (FaFa), *ngajang* (FaMo), *jawoojing* (MoFa), *gagayi* (MoMo). Interestingly, these will be presented again below as relevant for determining land ownership.

The distribution of food that was gathered or hunted is also subject to intricate social rules that allow for the survival of the whole group. This differs markedly from modern Western practices where the hunter's immediate family would profit from a successful hunt but where the hunter would be seen as the owner and others would need to negotiate a price if game was to be shared. According to Joolama (ibid.) food distribution in Miriwoong society follows the rules below:

---

[15] In the Aboriginal context one often refers to traditional Law, which covers a wide array of cultural beliefs and practices. A description of Miriwoong customary Law with all its facets, such as creation stories and songs, rules of descent, and the kinship system, is an ultimately anthropological goal that cannot be achieved within the scope of this thesis. Some elements shared with me during conversations and while discussing a short informal sociolinguistic questionnaire are presented in this chapter.

[16] Ego refers to a male individual who is taken as a point of departure for kinship relations in the anthropological tradition. The following abbreviations are used: Mo = mother, Fa = father, Br = brother, Si = sister, Da = daughter, So = son, Ch = child, Wi = wife, Hu = husband. The kinship terms are combined to express kin relations. FaBrDa, for example, reads as father's brother's daughter. / symbols either/or, e.g. SiChChWi/Hu = sister's grandchild's wife or husband. These two-letter abbreviations have been chosen over single-letter systems since they seem more intuitive to the non-specialist reader.

- Ego must feed WiFa *Lambarra* and WiMo *Bajoog* (Ego can ask them for food but they don't need to give them to Ego, see above: Ego already has their daughter)

- Ego is fed by SoWi *Lambarra* and DaHu *Lambarra* as well as BrSoWi *Lambarra* and BrDaHu *Lambarra* (where So/Da = WiCh or WiSiCh)

- Ego is fed by SiSo *Galing* and SiDa *Galiny* (where Si = FaDa or FaBrDa)

I also inquired how objects that were introduced into the Miriwoong culture after colonisation are seen with respect to possession. The following discussion starts with items that have been with Aboriginal people for several generations and goes on to provide details on those that have been introduced quite recently. First, PS and PG note that one's dog is a personal possession in the sense that others are expected to bring back one's dog when they find it since it is not theirs. However, one would need to verify to what extent dogs are actually rather seen as children than as possessions: Kofod pointed out that some Miriwoong people give their dogs the skin names appropriate for their children (Kofod 2013/09 p.c., GN 2016/06 p.c.).[17] With regard to clothes, Joolama (2014 p.c.) declares that one does not lend or borrow them, they belong to oneself. Blankets seem to be personal as well. However, here the evidence could rather display a division between genders rather than between an individual and others and/or reflect avoidance relations: AA implies that a blanket is not shared by a female with her brother: When asked to translate the sentence *The blanket doesn't belong to my brother* in her translation she spontaneously added 'It's mine' [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]. In my experience, blankets are shared among women who share a tent during field trips. Differences between the gender might bear on further aspects as well. IN (2014 p.c.), for instance, finds that clothes can be borrowed – contrary to what Joolama claimed above.[18]

As for newer items, mobile phones are regarded as a personal possession (ibid.). Joolama's (2014 p.c.) line of argumentation is that they are easily available and therefore everyone can get their own one. IN also explains that personal data is stored on your phone (2014 p.c.). Even more vehemently one's bed was presented by Joolama as a personal possession: "everyone has their own bed and their things there, nobody is allowed to touch it. If your children do, you tell them off; if someone else's children do, you tell their parents" (2014 p.c.). At first, this might seem surprising since in several houses I have seen in and around Kununurra there was only one proper bed for an elderly person and some mattresses used by several people. On the other hand, overcrowding and poor housing conditions were lamented as two of the major problems for Aboriginal people in Kununurra. These complaints were formulated during meetings with

---

[17] Quoting Kaberry (1937b), Kofod (2003:45) asserts that "every Aboriginal person in the East Kimberley is born into one of eight different skin groups or subsections". For some languages, but not Miriwoong, "each person has a subsection totem" "associated with them" (1937b:440). Note that for traditional (i.e. non-introduced) species, animals can have skin names because Dreamings, who have skin names, travelled the land in human form but also transformed into animals (Blythe & Wightman 2003:74).

[18] More people would need to be interviewed to be able to draw more instructive conclusions.

government representatives, who visited the community to consult the people. In 2013, I witnessed some of those encounters, for example during a meeting of the Mirima Council. Accordingly, Joolama's assertions might constitute a personal opinion or a description of a desired state of affairs. In contrast to beds, tents can be lent to a family member (ibid.). During camping trips with Miriwoong women, I witnessed that the women readily used the tents provided but everyone brought their own blanket. As mentioned above, blankets were readily shared, for instance in the event that someone forgot theirs.

In terms of who prospective borrowers of items of material value such as credit cards or cars are, Joolama answered that it depends on whom you trust in your family group and how people have behaved in the past. For example, if someone borrowed a car and did not bring it back for weeks (which was apparently happening at the time with some people in the community) they might not get the car the next time. This seems like a common sense sentiment that mainstream Australians would be familiar with. In addition to family members, there are usually good relationships with neighbours and whether one lends them something depends on the same principle. Quite probably even with state housing traditional rules as to who lives where are followed to some extent, though, and therefore who becomes neighbours is not purely determined by chance. The nature of the relationship between neighbours is, thus, influenced by more complex principles including kinship.

When asked about status symbols such as expensive watches worn in Europe to show that one is wealthy and whether there was something comparable in the Miriwoong community, Joolama says that there are some rich family groups who get a lot of royalties [from the Native Title case] but that other family groups do not really care about such symbols (ibid.). The awareness that differences in wealth are there seems to be present in the community, however. Joolama states that when those richer family groups ask others for something, they do not get it.

In order to find out more about potential possessions, AA was asked for which types of possessions a particular linguistic structure recorded in an earlier session could be used. In this earlier session MAJ had uttered sentences such as *Galany-joo ngaloo goorroorij* 'Who (f.) does this car belong to' and *Garnang-noo nawoo gardag* 'Who (m.) does this cup belong to', which can be analysed by the structure in (2).

(2)   INT=BEN   PN   PE

AA states that you could ask for "anything you own" or "anything [a] person gat" and gives the following as examples: "all the thing what you using for cooking and sleeping and changing" such as swags, cups, blankets, dishes and also food [MEP-20140920-elicitation-2].

6.2.2 Concepts and lexical items

Contrary to what one would expect from the discussion in §6.2.1 above, Joolama (2015 p.c.) stipulates that there is no concept of borrowing in the Miriwoong culture: If something is given to you, it is for you to keep. For example, if you are in trouble and need to defend yourself, your male *ngajang* ('father's uncle') would give you a boomerang. Joolama underlines his argument with the Miriwoong structures that the one giving the boomerang would use and that allegedly show that possession of the given item passes onto the receiver: "They could say: *Warany, nyingiyantha berrayinga*. ['Ok then, this one is yours'].

However, for the spear example quoted in the previous section he stresses that one can only give spears to one's family members and only for using them, not for owning them (Joolama p.c. 2014). This statement is apparently at odds with his before-mentioned claim – as is the assertion that a male *ngajang* gives you something if the postulate that one can only give to the relations named above is accepted. However, it is to be assumed that there is a difference between giving as a present and providing with something for reasons of looking after someone: Your *ngajang* is supposed to look after you.

Not only does Joolama claim that there is no lexical item with a meaning similar to English *own* or *owner*, he also asserts that lexemes connected to possession are not used to mean (legal) ownership in the English sense of the term. Concerning possessive pronouns he states: "We can say *Ngayangeng dawang* ('my country') but that does not mean we own the country." When asked about enclitics that are used in possessive sentences, such as the Benefactive enclitic *-ngany* 'for me' and the Indirect Object enclitic *-ngerri* 'to me' Joolama affirms that they do not mean ownership, either.

Not having a lexical item for a certain concept in a particular language does not imply that the speakers of that language do not have that concept (Cruse 2011:169–172). Rather, there might be a lexical gap in the language and speakers communicate the concept in different ways. Nevertheless, it seems interesting to investigate further whether lexical items exist in Miriwoong for concepts related to possession, such as 'borrow', 'share', 'exchange', 'give as a present' and the like and how they are used.

To begin with, a lexical item meaning something similar to the English term 'borrow' has indeed not been found in the public dictionary or the Toolbox database (Kofod 2023) and was not used during the picture description session when the Story-Builder Action Cards were used (see §5.2.1 on methodology).

With respect to the concept 'share', according to Joolama the coverb (uninflecting verb, see §4.2.4) *linab* is closest in its meaning to the English term and can be used both with ephemeral items such as food (which will be eaten and thus gone after distribution) and those kinds of items that are shared in the sense of lending, thus being expected to be given back, such as a car

(Olawsky 2019/06 p.c.). *linab* is not yet recorded with the meaning 'share' in Toolbox (Kofod 2023), where it is so far listed as 'be remembering' in combination with the inflecting verb BE/STAY (for details on inflecting verbs, see §4.2.4, §4.3.3). In addition, *lina* is listed in Toolbox[19] as *lina* + FALL/GO_DOWN meaning 'remember', and *lina-linab* + BE/STAY is recorded with the meaning 'be remembering/thinking'. Related to *linab* 'share' is the term *linawoong*, which refers to a person who generously shares or gives (Olawsky 2019/06 p.c.). *linawoong* is translated as 'someone who always gives/pays attention'. In the Toolbox corpus (Kofod 2020), it occurs once, in a text from a MALLP session, see (3):

(3) Narrative [Radio Sentences-2014-09-01-yawardang-horse]

Wiring-banjelnga-ni yawardang, ranggawoon-tha, linawoong.
wiring-banjilng=a=ni   yawarda-ng
whistle-from=TOP=3sgmIO   horse-NOM

rangga-woo-ntha   **linawoo-ng**
listen-that_kind-EXST_m   **giver**-m
'Whistle to the horse, he is a good listener and will easily pay attention to you.'

Another lexical item relevant for the discussion of possessive concepts is *ngenja* (alternatively *nganja*), which describes the transfer of items, see e.g. (4). According to Joolama, this coverb (uninflecting verb) is used for the "actual act of physically handing over something" (Olawsky 2019/06 p.c.).

(4) Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF

"Ngiyi. Warany! Wiri barrenggoo ngenja barranggoo-woorri!"
ngiyi   warany   wiri   barrenggoo
yes   alright   divide   2nsS:3sgO_IMP-get-IMP

ngenja   **barranggoo**=woorri
give   2nsS_IMP-**say/do**-IMP=3nsIO
'"Yes! Alright! You all split up and give the things out to the other people!"
[the Miriwoong told the Gajirrawoong].'

In Toolbox (Kofod 2020) the coverb *ngenja/nganja* is found with several inflecting verbs (IVs):

ngenja/nganja + SAY/DO
ngenja/nganja without IV
ngenja + PUT
nganja + GET
ngenjajib + BE/STAY
nganjajib + GO/COME
nganjajib + TELL_EACH_OTHER

Most of these constructions occur in narratives or in both narratives and elicitation. An exception is *ngenja* + PUT, which only occurs once in an elicited session. *nganjajib* + BE/STAY and *nganjajib* +

---

[19] Unless otherwise indicated, the lexemes discussed in this Chapter including their translations and (where applicable) combinations with inflecting verbs stem from Kofod (2020).

GO/COME are likewise not very frequent, with *ngenjajib* + BE/STAY being more so. *nganja* + GET was only found in one narrative. Both alternatives without IV are moderately frequent. Most frequent is *ngenja/nganja* + SAY/DO. Table 6.1 shows the contexts in which the constructions are used, i.e. the entity being given. Some empty cells could obviously be due to low frequency. For example, the only occurrence of *ngenja* + PUT analysed here necessarily leaves all cells but the one for alienable possession empty. Still, it is interesting to see that alienable possessions and food/water are possible for all more frequent constructions, while the category land (title) is more restricted – supposedly due to its more abstract nature; only in the context of Native Title is *nganja(jib)* used with land. For the categories land (title) and intangibles the claim by Joolama that *ngenja* is used for a physical transfer (see above) needs to be revisited, even though in the case of the transfer of information *nganja* arguably refers to the paper on which the information was written, in this case (a report on) stories about country to be given to a Native Title Judge.

	food, water	consumables (tobacco, remedies)	alienable possessions	trade items, presents	land, land title	intangibles (knowledge, information)
ngenja/nganja + SAY/DO	x	x	x	x	x (*nganja* only)	x (*nganja* only)
ngenja/nganja without IV	x		x (*ngenja* only)	x (*nganja* only)		x (*nganja* only)
ngenja + PUT			x			
nganja + GET	x	x				
ngenjajib/nganjajib + BE/STAY	x (*ngenjajib* only)	x (*nganjajib* only)	x (*nganjajib* only)		x (*nganjajib* only)	
nganjajib + GO/COME				x		
nganjajib + TELL_EACH_OTHER				x		x

Table 6.1 Contexts in which the uninflecting verb *ngenja* and its variants are used

Some examples sentences are given below. They are chosen for their culturally illustrative content. The construction *ngenja* + SAY/DO is exemplified in (5). The coverb *ngenja* precedes the third person singular middle verb SAY/DO, which carries the first person singular Indirect Object enclitic. The person the sentence is about, i.e. the one who was asked but did not want to give a spear, is apparently not a *linawoong*. The Kriol translation *I bin gridi la mi* [i.e. 'he didn't want to give it to me]' suggests that the person asked stood in a relationship to the speaker which would allow the transfer to take place but decided not to comply. The Miriwoong sentence and its Kriol translation do not seem to directly reflect the elicitation question.

145

(5) Elicitation Kofod [H113]:MM

Yangge nilanda doowoon-geny ngoowag ngenja wooma-ngerri gerrijbib-ngerri.

yangge	nilanda	doowoon-geny	ngoowag
ask	1sgS:3sgmO-put_PST-REAL	spear-PURP1	no

ngenja	**wooma**=ngerri	gerrijbib=ngerri
give	3sgS_MID-**say/do**_PST_IRR=1sgIO	finish=1sgIO

\r 'Ai bin ask fo spiya i neba gib mi, i bin gridi la mi, wel i kant gib mi neba maind.'

\q He gave them his only spear and now he has none.

This construction type was also recorded during the Picture description game with the Story-Builder Action Cards (see §5.2.1 on methodology). In (6), the coverb *ngenja* precedes the third singular middle verb SAY/DO, which is followed by the feminine third singular Indirect Object enclitic -*ji*.

(6) Picture Story [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-story-builder-1]:MAJ

Ngenjaying ngenja woomaya-ji ngelayiny ngelayiny.

ngenjayi-ng	ngenja	woomaya=ji
this_one_m-NOM	give	3sgS_MID-**say/do**_PST-REAL=3sgfIO

ngelayi-ny	ngelayi-ny
this_one_f-f	this_one_f-f

'She gave this to her, this one (f.) to this one (f.).'

A second construction type is exemplified in (7). It was chosen because of its translation as 'share'. Again, the coverb *ngenjajib* precedes the IV, in this case a third person singular feminine intransitive BE/STAY verb. As in the previous two sentences, the IV is followed by an Indirect Object enclitic, here in its third person non-singular variant.

(7) Kofod [Woorrjilwarim-MDWG-2012]

Gagayi nganjajib nyinanyan-woorri theniyinhang.

gagayi	nganjajib
grandmother	giving

nyinanyan=woorri	theniyinha-ng
3sgfS-**be/stay**_PRS-REAL-3sfIPF=3nsIO	everything-NOM

'Granny **shares** many things with them.'

In addition to the constructions listed so far, there is a Toolbox record for *nganja* + SAY_REFL. The example sentence given therein is (8).

(8) Kofod [Dictionary-Sentences-Part-2]:MM

Ngenja-nyaliny berrilin-nyaliny-ja-meleng.

ngenja-nyaliny	**berrilin**-nyaliny-ja=meleng
give-DPF	3nsS-**tell_each_other**_PST_IRR-DPF-EXST=du

'They always used to give each other presents.'

146

In the narrative about *wirnan* (trade) another coverb is used which is translated as 'divide up' and 'share out' and recorded in Toolbox as 'divide': In (9) *galberrg* is combined with the inflected verb BE/STAY.

(9) Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF

Galberrg berrang:::,[20] *ngoorroo-yam galberrg ginayin Miriwoong, Gajirrawoon-tha [...]*
galberrg   berra-ng   ngoorroo-iya-m   **galberrg**
divide   that_one/those-NOM   that_one-INTS-LOC   **divide**

ginayin   Miriwoo-ng
3sgmS-**be/stay**_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   person_belonging_to_Miriwoong-NOM

Gajirrawoo-ntha
language_name-EXST_m
'Then it was **divided up** there; it was **shared out** between the Miriwoong and Gajirrawoong, [and the downstream mob, the Boogayingarri and the Woorla.]'

In the Toolbox database, a further coverb which belongs to the realm of giving is found, namely *miwoolbi* + WOUND 'give something to someone'. The difference to *ngenja* is not clear, as there are only one example sentence in the Toolbox record (10) and one occurrence in a text ([Miri-Tape-6-1974]:MM), which is not translated. The coverb is related to the nominal *miwoolng* 'things, possessions'.

(10) Kofod [K93-16]:MM

Miwoolbi nyimberrawoonda-meleng.
miwoolbi   nyimberrawoonda=meleng
give   3nsS:3sgfO-**wound**_PST-REAL=du
'They two gave her everything.'

The coverb *beri* has a more specific meaning than simple transfer, namely 'take/bring back somewhere' or 'get back from/give back to somebody'. The former meaning arises with *beri* + BRING/TAKE, as in (11) and (12),[21] and *beri* + PUT, as in (13); the latter with *beri* + GET, as in (14), and *beri* + HIT as in (15). Note that a more frequent meaning of *beri*, which is non-possessive, is a person (or car) going back or returning. For this interpretation, the coverb is combined with FALL/GO_DOWN, BECOME_2 or GO/COME.

---

[20] *:::* stands for lengthening of the final vowel. According to Kofod, this is a typical feature of narratives (in prep. (2020):116).
[21] There is also a possibly related coverb *beriwoorr* + BRING/TAKE 'take back', which is not further discussed here.

(11) Elicitation Kofod [H130]:MM

Boorrooboo balaj goorrida-meleng dawarrg wanim beri goorranyja-meleng.

boorroo-boo	balaj	goorrida=meleng
3nsPN-du	see	3nsS:3sgmO-hit_PST-REAL=du

dawarrg	wanim	**beri**
goanna_species	then	**take_back**

goowoorranyja=meleng
3nsS:3sgmO-**bring/take**_PST-REAL=du

'The two of them found a big goanna and brought him back.'
\q Those two caught two goannas and brought them back to the camp.

(12) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

"Beri boowoogoo ngalengge-bag."

beri	**boowoogoo**	ngalengge-bag
take_back	2sgS:3sgO_IMP-**take-**IMP	salt_water-to

'"Take it [i.e. the water/rain] back to the salt water" [the rain maker said to the rainbow snake Namij].'

(13) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

"Lale beri barrajgoo!" woomberremendawoon berringara <jambala> garni, ni:::
nawara jawalenga.

lale	**beri**	**barrajgoo**
just	**put_back**	2nsS:3sgO_IMP-**put-**IMP

woomberremendawoon	berri-ng=a=ra
3nsS_MID-say/do_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF	this_one/these_here-NOM=TOP=then

<jambala>	garni	=ni
some_people	INT_PRT	=3smIO

naw(oo)=a=ra	jawale-ng=a
3sgmPN=TOP=SEQ	man-NOM=TOP

'"You better sing it back [i.e. the cloud/rain]!" some of them say, isn't that right, to that man [i.e. the rain maker].'[22]

(12) and (13) are taken from a story about rainmaking in which the rain maker performs a ritual that causes so much rain that a flood results. He is then made to ask the rainbow snake to stop the rain by taking it back to a dreaming place near the sea. The meaning 'get back', see (14) and (15), mainly appears in the text Mabo-Complete-Edit in the context of getting land back from the government.

---

[22] In the Toolbox record the coverb is translated as '**sing** it back'. Note that this sentence is a good illustration of the enclitic nature of the third person singular masculine Indirect Object enclitic *=ni*. It is not attached to the verb but follows the interrogative particle *garni*. Kofod separates *garni* and *=ni* with a comma (Kofod 2023) and notes that *=ni* is "usually […] pronounced separately from any word – it is as though [the speaker] inserted *'berringara jambala garni'* between the verb *woomberramendawoon* and the *-ni*" (Kofod 2015).

(14) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF

Beri goorrinda boorriyanga dawanga.
beri   **goorrinda**   boorriya-ng=a   dawa-ng=a
get_back   3nsS:3sgmO-**get**_FUT-REAL   3nsPOSS-NOM=TOP   country-NOM=TOP
'They will get their country back.'
\q The Native Title Act was made to help blackfellas get their country back, where this is possible.

(15) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:SD

Wanygelany beri yamberrinkoo-woorri woorlab yarrin-nginga-woorri Government-a.
wanygelany   **beri**   **yamberrinkoo**=woorri
hypothetically   **get_back**   1nsincS:3nsO-**hit**_FUT-SUBJ=3nsIO

woorlab   yarren-ngi-ng=a=woorri   Government=a
talking   1nsincS-be/stay_FUT_IRR-SUB-NOM=TOP=3nsIO   government=TOP
'In this way we might get it [i.e. the country] back if we talk to the Government.'

The coverb *beri* can also be combined with SAY/DO to mean 'returned/be back'. Two sentences will be shown below as they refer to a (desired) future possessive state.

(16) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:SD

Berrayingarriga-yam-tha woorlanga woorlab yarren-ngim-berri wanygelany dawanga beri yarrinkoo-woorri.
berrayingarriga-iya-m-tha   woorla-ng=a   woorlab
this_side-INTS-LOC-EXST   story-NOM=TOP   talking

yarren-ngi-m=berri
1nsincS-be/stay_FUT_IRR-SUB-LOC=3nsIO

wanygelany   dawa-ng=a
hypothetically   country-NOM=TOP

beri   **yarrenkoo**=berri
get_back   1nsincS-**be/stay**_FUT_IRR-**HORT**=with
'These are the kind of stories we have to tell them if we **want** our country **back**.'

(17) Kofod [H136A]:MM

Beri nyimben-nging warany dawam nyimbiyinda-woorri gooroo-goorang.
beri   **nyimben**-ngi-ng   warany
returned/be_back   3sgfS_**FUT-be/stay**_FUT-SUB-NOM   alright

dawa-m   nyimbiyinda=woorri   gooroo-goora-ng
camp-LOC   3sgfS_FUT-be/stay_FUT-REAL=3nsIO   RED-old_man-NOM
'When it [i.e. the car] comes back, it will stay in the camp for the old people.'

It is worthwhile to mention further Miriwoong coverbs in addition to the possessive concepts mentioned above, i.e. 'borrow', 'share', 'exchange', 'give as a present'. In his chapter on *Deontological Entailments of Possession Relations*, Keen (2013) names the 'lexicalisation of wrong action' as one of the possible expressions of deontic norms. Deontic norms "govern possession

relations and give them their content" in that they "create obligations and grant permissions" with respect to the PR in relation to the PE (2013:202). In Miriwoong, the coverbs *thawoorrb* 'steal', *wala* 'take away from somebody using threat or aggression', and *thoorroob* 'grab/snatch' exemplify the lexicalisation of wrong action.[23]

thawoorrb was used by Joolama (2014/08 p.c., see Fieldnotebook 2014-1, p. 39) during a discussion about lending possessions to a *jimarri* 'best friend' and about children who steal. In Toolbox (Kofod 2020), *thawoorrb* is recorded with BE/STAY and with GET. The related coverb *thawoorrwany* + GO/COME 'go stealing' and the related nominal *thawoorrang* 'thief' are also listed.

The second coverb, *wala,* is combined with GET or HIT and glossed as 'take from someone' or 'hassle someone to get something'. It occurs in Toolbox only in one MALLP session, see (18) for the *wala* + GET.[24] In addition, in the Toolbox record, *wala* + SAY/DO is listed with the gloss 'take from someone using force'. A similar meaning is reflected in *walaji* + FIGHT_REFL 'stand over violently to get something' and *walajing* 'person using standover tactics', i.e. 'a person who gets what he wants by violence'. In the Toolbox record it is stated that *walaji* is often used in Kriol expressions such as *I mait walaji la mi*, meaning 'He might come up behind and kill me'. (19) shows that fighting kangaroos can *walaji* in addition to humans. *wala* + WOUND 'get lot' (as in 'catch a lot of fish'), in contrast, is non-possessive in meaning.

(18) [MALLP-2013-Jan-Feb]

   a) *Wala nemenkoo-nayi ngenja bamoo-ni.*
       wala   **nemenkoo**=**nayi**
       take_from_someone   3sgS:2sgO-**get**_PRS-SUBJ=3sgmS:2O

       ngenja   bamoo=ni
       give   2sgS_IMP-say/do-IMP=3sgmIO
       'He might get it from you. Give him something.'

   b) *Wala nembinkoo-ngal, woorlaj bajgoo-ji.*
       wala   **nembinkoo**=**ngal**
       hassle_someone_to_get_something   3sgS:2sgO-FUT-**get**_FUT-HORT=3sfS:2O

       woorlaj   bajgoo=ji
       hide   2sgS:3sgO_IMP-put_IMP=3sgfIO
       'She might hassle you, hide it on her.'

---

[23] Additional ways of expressing deontic norms are, for example, the use of deontic modals (modal verbal auxiliaries) such as *should* or *must,* hortative inflection, or imperative mood (Keen 2013:203). In Miriwoong, the morpheme -*goo/woo* following intransitive verb stems expresses Imperative/Hortative/Optative (Kofod p.c.).

[24] In (18)a) the coverb *ngenja*, which was discussed above, is also present. For more discussion of *woorlaj* in (18)b) see below.

(19) Narrative [Radio Sentences-2014-08-25-jiyirreng-kangaroo]

Jiyirreng walajib berrawariyandawoon gawoole-berroowa, dawa-berroowa.
jiyirre-ng   **walaji**-be
kangaroo-NOM   stand_over_violently-CNT

berrawariyandawoon   gawoole=woorroowa   dawa=woorroowa
3nsS-**fight_REFL**_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF   woman=3nsABL   country=3nsABL
'Kangaroos fight with each other over females and territory.'

The third 'lexicalisation of wrong action' is the coverb *thoorroob*. It can simply mean 'pick up' but in combination with GET or BRING/TAKE it can mean 'snatch' or 'grab (offensively)', as in (20).

(20) Narrative [MALLP-2013-Jan-Feb]

Thoorroob gemenkoo-ninggi nawa gerany.
thoorroob **gemenkoo**=ninggi   naw(oo)=a   gerany
grab   3sgS:3sgmO-**get**_PRS-SUBJ=2sgIO   3sgmPN=TOP money
'He might snatch that money off you.'

As described in §5.2.1 on methodology, the Story-Builder Action Cards were used in a picture story game in order to elicit utterances that could belong to the realm of possession. In addition to the above-mentioned actions, i.e. 'trade/exchange', 'give/pass', in the game stimuli further actions are depicted, namely 'buy/sell/pay', 'hide', 'search for', and 'break/shatter (by accident)'. In the following, the coverbs used when telling stories about these cards will be listed.

The coverbs *garbbe* + BE/STAY 'be picking up' and *bib* + GET 'pick up'/'take'/'grab' or + GO/COME 'go get'[25] were used to describe the picture depicting a person buying something at a store (card 7). On card 8, someone hides something under a bed. This card is described using the coverbs *woorlaj*/*woorlajib*, see example (12)c in the methodology chapter, repeated here as (21). *woorlaj* is combined with PUT 'hide something', both *woorlaj* and *woorlajib* with GO/COME.[26] During the story part about this picture, *bib* is also used in the sense of 'grab'. The notion of searching for something (card 26) was expressed with the help of the coverb *derdbany* + GO/COME. For the sake of completeness, the following further coverbs were used in the stories: *roo* + GET was used in the sense of 'hold' and *lawoorr* + GET as 'cradle in arm'; 'hold tight' was expressed as *badag* + GET.

---

[25] *bib* + GO/COME is not listed in Toolbox (Kofod 2023). Potentially, the relevant utterances consist of two clauses: He went, he bought sweets. The second clause and thus the coverb *bib* would then not include an inflected verb.

[26] In Toolbox (Kofod 2023), only *woorlaji* is combined with GO/COME to mean 'hide'. Again, the speaker might have uttered two clauses, see the previous footnote.

(21) Picture Story [MEP-ROP-20140903-RG-IN-SS-RoB-story-builder-6]:RG

Jama ngenjayinga (.) geriya woorlajib (.) nawoo jalyngeng mayeng (.) nawoo woothoong.

jama	ngenjayi-ng-a	ge-ri-ya	woorlajib
then	this_one_m-m-TOP	3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL	hide

nawoo	jalynge-ng	mayi-ng	nawoo	woothoo-ng
3sgmPN	sweet-NOM	food-NOM	3sgmPN	little-m

'Then this one **hid** those lollies, this child.'

In Toolbox, *badag* + WOUND is also recorded as 'hold on tight'. With GET it can be used in the context of Native Title as 'hold on tight to one's country'.

Finally, lexical items belonging to the realm of possession can be found among other lexical categories. The concept of a proper possessive relationship can be expressed with the nominal *bawadang* 'having/keeping the right one, important one belonging to someone', pointed out by DwN (p.c., see Fieldnotebook 2014-1, p.11) and found in Toolbox in the utterance in (22). With respect to land ownership, the nominal *dawawang* (Kija *daawany,* Kofod 2003:46) means 'country owner', see (23). A *ninggoowoong* is a 'fellow country man', a 'relation'. The morpheme *-ngarriwoo* means 'person belonging to country', see (24). 'Someone who does not belong to the country', a 'stranger' is called *gamaliwang*. Note also the coverb *marlangeb* + GO/COME 'go to someone else's country'. Also connected to ownership of country is the nominal *barnange(m)* 'one's own important camping place', see (25).

(22) Elicitation Kofod [H136A]:MM

Bawadan-tha-ngany.
bawada-ntha=ngany
important-EXST_m=1sgBEN
'This is the right one for me, the main one.'

(23) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]

Dawawan-thara boorroowara.

dawawa-ntha=ra	boorroo=a=ra
country_owner-EXIST_m=SEQ	3nsPN=TOP=SEQ

'They are the real owners of the country.'

(24) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

Barrberrm, [name]-ngarriwoong, [name]-ngarriwoong […]

Barrberrm	[name]-**ngarriwoo**-ng
place_name	a_name-person_belonging_to_country-NOM

[name]-**ngarriwoo**-ng
a_name-person_belonging_to_country-NOM
'The place called Barrberrm belongs to [name], [name] […].'

(25) Narrative [H129-1]:MM

Barnange-ngany ngayanga goorroombarna barnangen-tha-ngany ngenamara.
barnange=ngany   ngaya-ng=a   goorroombarn=a
own_important_camp=1sgBEN   1sgPOSS-NOM=TOP   rock_wallaby=TOP

barnange-ntha=ngany   ngena-m=a=ra
own_important_camp-EXST_m=1sgBEN   there-LOC=TOP=SEQ
'It is my own hunting place, my own rock wallaby hunting place over there.'

The Toolbox database (Kofod 2020) contains several lexical items that are interesting from an anthropological point of view as they convey aspects of identification with country and land ownership. Table 6.2 lists coverbs (uninflecting verbs) that carry meanings connected to the dreamtime and spirits, and Caring for Country.

wooloorr + BE/STAY	'die out and stay in country as spirit'
mama + BECOME or FALL/GO_DOWN or PUT (also: *mamagboo* + PUT)	'become part of country forever', 'turn to stone in dreamtime' ('put in place forever in dreamtime')
wamarra + FALL/GO_DOWN (also: *wamarrawany* + GO/COME)	'become a part of something from dreaming', 'be in the dreaming, be a permanent spirit in the country, become the country as it exists today as a result of something that happened in dreamtime, become part of something forever in dreamtime' ('be in country from dreaming')
goonheny + GET	'hold country, look after country/children'
woonjoo + DO_REFL	'look after self, care for own country, watch self'

Table 6.2 Miriwoong uninflecting verbs that convey aspects of land ownership

Further, the meaning of the nominal *ganambaying* 'own father who found one's spirit', see (26), hints at the connection between kinship and land ownership. Kaberry (1935) writes about the Forrest River and Lyne River 'tribes'' belief that a father finds his child's spirit in a pool on his country (in the form of a spirit child or an animal or fish in the pool).[27] The Forrest River and Lyne River Tribes' country lies in the East Kimberley, west of Miriwoong country. Kaberry states that the finding of a woman's spirit "establishes a relationship between her and the pool where she was found, or her spirit centre, that is not even severed at death" (1935:416). Note also that the name the father gives to the child "is very often that of the place where a child was found" (1935:418).

---

[27] The spirit-children were placed in the various pools by Kaleru, the rainbow serpent (Kaberry 1935:442).

(26) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]

Ngalengge-melig-ara, marram-anyja berri-meleng, genambaying thoon ngarrage-gany.
ngalengge-melig=ra   marram-anyja   berri=meleng
salt_water-to=then   go_far-maybe   3nsS-go/come_PST_IRR=du

ganambayi-ng   thoon   ngarrage-ga-ny
own_father-NOM   and   mother-REL-f
'Her mother and father must have gone away back to the sea then.'

In (26), the narrator choses the nominal *ganambaying* over *ngaba-gang* 'her father', i.e. the common term for 'father' combined with the relational suffix -*ga* (see §9.2.4), as in the remainder of the story. An explanation for this choice could be that she wants to emphasise the relationship between one of the main characters, the snake of Namij skin, and her father. While the social role of father can be filled by more than one person in Miriwoong families, such as by the father's brother, the spirit is found by an individual.[28]

6.2.3   Cultural beliefs and practices

In addition to the social and cultural conventions it was advised in §6.1 above that a researcher interested in possession should investigate cultural beliefs and practices. It was already mentioned that an in-depth description of this anthropological topic is not aimed for here. One aspect, namely **the concept of *gooning***, will be presented here as it was taught to me by the Miriwoong people and deemed central to and instructive for understanding land ownership (see details on the latter in the next section).

Gooning means 'totem' or literally 'dream'. According to Stephanie Woerde (2012a, 2012b, 2016 p.c.), each Miriwoong person has at least one *gooning* which is passed down to them through either side of their family (Kaberry 1938:284). It is important to one's identity as it is tied to the philosophy of Caring for Country. *Gooning* is a concept that exemplifies the above-mentioned unity of language, land and people (see §6.1.1). It was mentioned in conversations with Miriwoong people that a *gooning* can be both an animal and a place. As Joolama (2015 p.c.) puts it: *gooning* is "a place where I can get anything I like and use it. I feel sorry for the animal and avoid it." This entails that Miriwoong people respect and care for the animal and the place. He also explains that if one sees the animal unexpectedly or hurt, this is a warning or a sign that something bad happened, for example to one's family. Woerde also describes that a *gooning* is often an actual physical feature of landscape and that Miriwoong people can go wherever the animal species represented by that *gooning* dwells.

---

[28] Kaberry notes further complexities among the Forrest River and Lyne River 'tribes': "Generally the spiritual genitor (finder of the child) and pater (social father) are one and the same person, but if the genitor chooses to hand over the spirit child to a tribal brother, or if his wife runs away with another man while pregnant, then it is the pater who bestows on the child his own totems, and the right to live and hunt in his own horde country" (1935:416).

Joolama made it clear that one should not say 'My *gooning',* but 'The *gooning* I am part of', thereby stressing that Miriwoong people do not 'own' country in a Western sense. However, one can say that borders between pieces of land that one family belongs to and another piece of land that another family belongs to can be attributed to the *gooning* existing in different places.

6.2.4   Language and land ownership

Dawanga woorlab yirrandayin-ni, dawawa-tha-yarr. We talk to the country, we belong to the country.
Woonjoo yirremendayin Dawang yarriyangeng. We look after our country.
(Simon & Galbat nd.)

In earlier sections of this chapter, the close relationship between people, language, and country was demonstrated. For the Miriwoong as well there is an "unbreakable link between language, land and cultural identity" (Newry & Palmer 2003:103). It was also discussed that there is a distinction between language usership and language ownership. This can be found in Newry & Palmer's statement that "you may learn the language but that does not make you a Miriwoong person" (2003:104, Joolama 2014 p.c.). Additionally, it was claimed that in the Aboriginal view owning country is better described as belonging to country. Joolama (2015 p.c.) expresses this idea in the following ways: "We can say *Ngayangeng dawang* ['My country'] but that does not mean we own the country." "We are part of the country." "We respect the country." "What we get from the country [e.g. bush food and game] is ours but we don't own it." It is a "belonging of country". Joolama alludes to birds that come back to the same tree to find food every year. Other birds go to other trees but none of them owns 'their' tree. Besides being revealing about the concept of land ownership, this allegory also shows that the Miriwoong see themselves as part of the creation in similar ways to other wildlife. After all, the Dreamings who created the landscape have human and animal forms and each person has an animal totem or *gooning* (see §6.2.2 above).

6.2.4.1   *Language identity through kinship*
In their article about Kija and Jaru links between language, identity and the land, Blythe & Wightman summarise that "[u]ndoubtedly, the reasons that people associate themselves with a given language group are varied and complex. However, it seems clear that cultural variables such as the mythological landscape, land tenure, and kin are important factors" (2003:72).

In the following, these factors will be discussed in more detail for Kija's sister language Miriwoong. To start with, it was said in §6.1.1 above that language identity is inherited through filiation, i.e. links through one or both parents (Rumsey 1993:200). That identification with a language among the Miriwoong is indeed connected to kinship relations was confirmed by conversations about identity and the discussion of family trees with DwN, among others. DwN stated that he identifies with Miriwoong and Ngarinyman and indicated the languages of his

parents and grandparents. He will serve as an example to show that both descent lines (mother's and father's) are relevant for Miriwoong people. Looking at his parents, the identification with Miriwoong stems from his mother since his father does not include Miriwoong among his languages. Ngarinyman was listed for both parents so that in this regard there is no conclusive evidence. In the grandparent generation his FaFa was a white man and can therefore not be taken into consideration. His Miriwoong identity could stem from his MoFa or MoMo, his Ngarinyman one from MoFa or FaMo.[29]

Joolama (2015 p.c.) explained to me – and this was consistent with other Miriwoong people – that language and land ownership is inherited in terms of kinship in a very specific order. First, one looks to one's father's father or *gagoong*. Next in line is one's mother's father or *jawoojing;* then one's father's mother or *ngajang* and finally one's mother's mother or *gagayi*. This order is represented in Figure 5.1 below, where the inner-most ring symbolises the relation who primarily bequeaths ownership rights. The bold-face highlights that there appears to be a male-first policy.
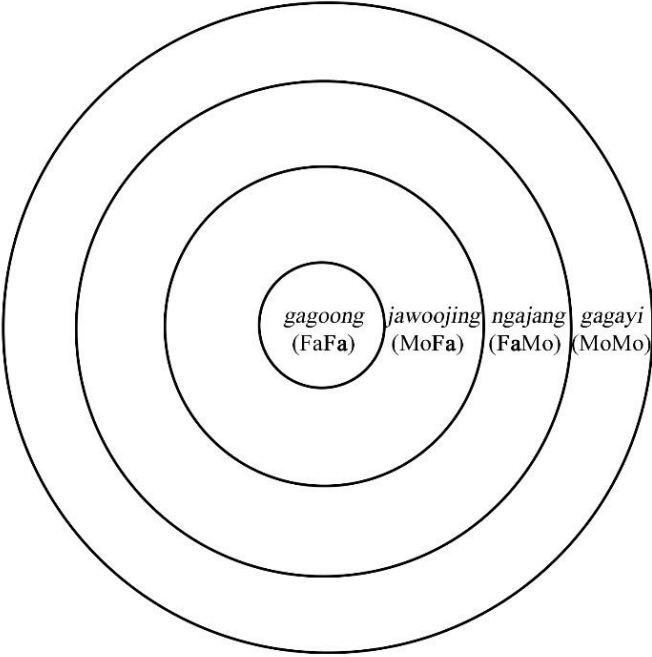
Figure 6.1 Language and Land ownership as determined by kinship relations (Joolama 2015 p.c.)

This order apparently diverges for different language groups, for example in Jaminjung and Ngarinyman, one's *jawoojing* comes first (ibid.). Blythe & Wightman (2003) likewise report that one's association with a language group could rely on principles that differ from group to group: Kija language identity is determined by the patrilineal 'horde' while Jaru identity is based on the

---

[29] These relationships are also relevant for Native Title claims. French (2004:90) quotes the Full Court of the Federal Court in *Western Australia v Ward,* which states that biological descent from land owners as a requirement for the existence of Native Title is not limited to patrilineal descent. "[A] whole range of relationships may lead to membership of the community, including 'father's country', 'father's mother's country', 'mother's country', 'mother's mother's country', 'regent's country'."

place where oneself or one's parents were born (2003:72). The latter is also suggested to be relevant for Miriwoong below. According to Blythe & Wightman the former was claimed by early ethnographers like Phyllis Kaberry, who described a patrilineal 'horde' in 1939 as being tied to a named, well-defined area or *nawarram taam* (1939:30f), literally big or important country (1939:184). Being a member of a horde that lies in Kija country presumably justifies one's association with the Kija language (Blythe & Wightman 2003:72).

It is interesting at this point to look at other cultural practices that are connected to kinship in a similar way: For example one's father's father gives names to boys, and one's father's father's sister gives names to girls and teaches them about country.

6.2.4.2 *Connection between language and territory*

In order to further explore the connection between the Miriwoong language and territory, the next section will survey the above-mentioned criterion of one's birthplace for the subject matter of land and language ownership. This will be followed by details on the request that Miriwoong should be spoken and taught on Miriwoong country and a treatment of the rights of land owners.

PG (2015 p.c.), among others, relates that the place where one is born and grows up is relevant to the question of which country is considered one's own (see also McIntyre & Doohan 2002:200). In her personal account she refers to the Cattle Station she grew up on, which was founded on Miriwoong country. Blythe and Wightman (2003:72) point out that nowadays more births take place in town hospitals rather than on country. Originally, without stations and hospitals the factor of the birthplace might have come into play more transparently, for example it would presumably be central if one was born near a *gooning* (see §6.2.2 above) or sacred site. In the context of Native Title claims a further aspect is mentioned. In addition to the place where a baby is born, the conception of that baby can be vital: French (2004:90, see Footnote 29) quotes the Full Court which states that proving biological descent is not limited to proving patrilineal descent; spiritual conception or birth within the claimed area is also accepted.

Apart from the detachment from traditional country during delivery due to the availability of medical assistance in towns, there are further issues with the criterion of the birth-place that came into existence because of colonisation. Not only have pastoral stations, Government reserves and missions drawn Indigenous people in search of protection, medical assistance or labour from all corners of a territory onto one spot, in some cases people from different countries were forced onto stations that did not lie on their traditional country. For example, Aboriginal people from various areas were brought to Moola Bulla for training or punishment (Blythe & Wightman 2003:71). The location of this Government Station was on the traditional country of many speakers of Halls Creek Kija (2003:75). Being born on such a Station far from one's parents' country would make is difficult to reconcile one's birth-place with one's language and country.

It is even more difficult for members of the so-called Stolen Generations – Aboriginal children have been taken away from their families to be brought up in missions or white families for various reasons such as assimilation or protection from alleged neglect and child abuse or to provide them with better living conditions and a supposedly better future. If they do not even know their family members because they were taken away very early and records of the removal were destroyed,[30] it must be difficult to determine one's language and country and therefore where one belongs.

6.2.4.3 *Language learning on country*

Due to the link between land, language, and cultural identity, Miriwoong people prefer teaching and acquisition of linguistic and cultural knowledge to take place on Miriwoong country and in a way that approximates their traditional ways. Newry & Palmer (2003) relate that, traditionally, languages have been learned within a family group. The mother is described to be the primary caregiver at first, but with the onset of language a boy's father and his brothers or a girl's father's sisters are said to become more important. Later, the grandparents are said to be primarily responsible. Information is argued to be revealed at the appropriate stages of development of the child (ibid.).

Traditionally, both Miriwoong people and visitors would be expected to speak Miriwoong on Miriwoong country. Nowadays it is still noticeable that outside the town of Kununurra the Miriwoong language has a stronger presence. In smaller Aboriginal communities and outstations or fishing spots and camping places on country more Miriwoong is spoken and with higher fluency and richness in vocabulary. When travelling through country, pieces of cultural knowledge, such as the healing power of a particular plant, are a common topic of conversation.[31]

The directive to speak the language appropriate to the country where one is currently situated applies to other Indigenous languages traditionally spoken in the vicinity as well. However, Olawsky (2015 p.c.) made an interesting observation during a fieldtrip to Doolboong country. The language is no longer spoken. This apparently led to the situation that it was legitimate to teach the participating Rangers Gajirrabeng there.

6.2.4.4 *Rights of a land owner*

Newry & Palmer (2003) specifically address that ownership of land includes certain rights and entails language ownership:

---

[30] For a treatment of assimilation and the destruction of records see Read (2017:66f and 2017:70 respectively).

[31] This is why I conducted field trips to gather linguistic and cultural data. See also Blythe & Wightman (2003:71) who find a correlation between the level of TEK (i.e. traditional ecological knowledge) and the amount of Traditional language spoken and observe that "[a] short drive out of town is usually enough for them to recommence speaking Jaru or Kija and for the TEK to return" (2003:72).

>*Dawawang* (traditional owners) of areas or estates of country have rights and responsibilities for those estates. These include the right to tell and paint the stories that belong to those areas: ownership of an area […] in turn leads to a sense of ownership of the language that is part of the stories (2003:104).

The authors also explain the difference between publishing language materials and selling a painting: Only those with the right to know will understand the deeper levels of meaning of a painting: "Paintings are able to operate in both the public and private domain" (ibid.). In language resources the content is more explicit and therefore needs to be restricted to a greater extent than paintings.

6.2.4.5 *The role of the Dreaming in language and land ownership*

In the East Kimberley region, the Dreaming or Dreamtime is called *Ngarranggarni* (Blythe & Wightman 2003:72, here spelt *Ngarrangkarni*). Frances Kofod is an expert for Miriwoong Dreaming stories. She has devoted much of her career in linguistics to the Jarragan language family, which Miriwoong belongs to. She published on issues of language and country in 2003, taking Kija, the sister language of Miriwoong, as a point of departure. Besides arguing that the language reflects aspects of and the people's connections to country she presents a Dreaming story that shows the concept of belonging to country as well as the tight connection between language, country and kinship (Kofod 2003:46): In a Kija Dreaming story one Dreaming (Water Python) meets another (King Brown) and wants to find out the latter's language and skin: He therefore asks the other Dreaming: "Where do you *belong*?", see (27). Then, both "declare their identity in terms of language and kinship" (ibid.), i.e. they state the languages they speak and the skin names they have.

(27) Kofod (2003:46)   (Kija)

   "Gayi-ngarna-ne-ngu?"
   gayi-ngarna-ne-**ngu**
   where-DENIZEN[32]-LOC-**2sBENE**
   '[The Jungurra man said to the other:] "Where do you belong?"'

Blythe & Wightman (2003:72) affirm that there is a Kija Dreaming story that exemplifies one of two types of Dreaming stories described in (Sutton 1997:222). In the first type Dreamings switch languages while travelling the country, in the example at hand a Dreaming speaks Kija while passing through Kija country but switches to the language of the neighbouring territory upon leaving it. However, this story is "not in the public domain" (2003:72). The second type was described in §6.1 above. In these stories language and culture are allotted to groups of people by Dreamings, who travelled the land in human form. As humans they had husbands and wives, parents and children (2003:74), thus, they created the relationships between humans. A Kija

---

[32] Blythe & Wightman (2003) explain that the suffix is used in Gija and Jaru productively "to describe oneself in terms of one's traditional country." It means denizen (2003:72). In Miriwoong the suffix is used as well (Kofod 2020). McGregor glosses Gooniyandi *-ngarna* as 'inhabitant or dweller of' (1990:231).

example of this second type is the eagle hawk and kangaroo story for Halls Creek as told by Stan Brumby (published in Achoo et al. 1996:3-5), which "in part account[s] for why Kija is spoken to the north of the town and Jaru to the south" (Blythe & Wightman 2003:72).

Dreaming stories have many more functions than were mentioned so far. Blythe & McKenna Brown summarise that they "recount the creation of the land and explain, amongst other things, topographical features, animal behaviour and language distribution" (2003:7). They also have relevance for Indigenous people today: Since Dreamings have turned into features of the land, they are still present. Therefore, Blythe & Wightman (2003:74) explain, strangers need to follow certain protocols when in foreign country because spirits and "Dreamtime creator spirits" can be malevolent. At the same time, when they are benevolent, one can ask them to be looked after, or ask them for favours such as a good catch of fish. Acts of Caring for Country, such as performing the appropriate rituals, are reciprocated by the good-will of the Dreamings (ibid.).

6.2.4.6 *Sociolinguistics practices*

Rumsey was quoted above as saying that a people identifies with an ethnonym not because they *speak* a certain language but because they are linked to *places* to which the language is also linked (1993:199). This is also reflected in Miriwoong sociolinguistic practices. In conversations about language use among the Miriwoong with Joolama it became clear that they – as well as other Aboriginal people – choose the language they are currently speaking according to their current location: Joolama's father's sisters identify as Miriwoong and Ngarinyman but speak their husbands languages (which are Warranybeng and Gajeroong) when they are currently on their husbands' country. This accords with Kofod's evidence in the Native Title case that "elder Miriuwung and Gajerrong people […] observed traditional laws relating to language such as switching to the correct language when travelling in the "country" to which the language "belongs"" (*Ben Ward & Ors v Western Australia & Ors* [1998] FCA 1478 (24 November 1998), p. 65).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter serves to establish that possession is a universal concept, which is viewed in this thesis as a social one. It was argued that in order to study this concept in a particular culture, such as the Miriwoong culture, one should not only look at transactions of material goods. This would limit the discussion to *legal ownership* as prototypically practiced by Western societies. In addition, it is fruitful to research cultural conventions and the society's belief system.

The chapter is devoted to the close tie between people, language and land in Aboriginal societies. The relationship between the people and their languages was shown to be mediated by the country to which both people and languages belong. The connection between the country

and the language is believed to have come about through Dreamtime Beings who planted languages and also inspired cultural practices pertaining to language and land ownership. More specifically, filiation and one's birthplace are factors involved in Aboriginal Australian's identity construction.

The concept of ownership of land is also referred to in the literature written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as *authority*, *jurisdiction* and *custodianship* over country. In that literature, ownership rights are portrayed as being subject to a complex Law. They are justified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People being equated with both the Dreamtime ancestors and the land itself. In their view, country cannot be reduced to something that a person could legally transfer or trade for.

§6.2 attempts to demonstrate that the concept of possession among the Miriwoong is fairly similar to what was described in §6.1 for Indigenous societies but that some particularities can be found. It became apparent that there are practices of borrowing and sharing, but that there are also objects that are felt to be more personally owned than others, reminding the observer of the Western view on possession. It was discussed that the Miriwoong lexicon contains items such as *linab*, which comes close in meaning to the English term *share*, while a term for 'borrow' could not be found. There is a variety of UVs for meanings like 'give' or 'distribute'. The lexicon was further examined for lexicalisations of wrong action, such as *thawoorrb* 'steal', and lexical items connected to possession in general, such as *bawadang* 'having/keeping the right one' and the concept of land ownership in particular, such as *-ngarriwoong* 'person belonging to country'.

Miriwoong language identity as well as ownership of language and country is determined by a complex set of aspects including descent and kinship, one's birthplace and social beliefs and practices such as *gooning*, which are codified in Dreaming stories. Ownership of language and country is characterised by being acquired by birthright and by being permanent. However, contrary to what has been claimed (by Aikhenvald (2013:51), see §6.1), this does not mean that there is a lack of control. There are certain protocols regarding language ownership which are important to Miriwoong people. They prefer language learning to take place in the appropriate traditional way, i.e. in the family context and on Miriwoong country. With respect to non-Indigenous people, the Miriwoong people decide who is eligible for being taught the language and who gets permission to do research. In addition, certain possessions, such as women's dillybags, are considered personal possessions and protected from the reach of others.

7 THE TYPOLOGY OF POSSESSION

This chapter will introduce the concept of possession. The literature on the topic is vast and no attempt is made here at an exhaustive summary. Central terminology and aspects relevant for the analysis of Miriwoong and Kriol will be introduced. This chapter largely refrains from giving concrete examples from the world's languages as these can be found in the relevant literature quoted here[1] and as this thesis focuses on possession in Australian languages more specifically in Chapter 8.

It is widely agreed[2] that the concept of possession is universal (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:561) and that conventionalised linguistic expressions are used to convey this notion in all languages (Aikhenvald 2013:2; Heine 1997:2; Langacker 1995:51; Stassen 2009:7). At the same time, it is complex and difficult to define (Stassen 2009:10). In the following, different types[3] of possession as described in the literature will be presented, taking as a starting point the notion of prototypical possession.

7.1 Prototypical possession

In linguistics, the term *possession* in its core sense describes a relationship between two nominals. One of these nominals refers to an entity that possesses another entity, namely the possessor (PR), and the other represents the entity being possessed, namely the possessee (PE).[4] Prototypically, the PR is a specific human being who owns a concrete inanimate physical object in a legal sense of ownership. Among others, Taylor (1996:340) lists further typical characteristics of a possessive relationship:

- The relationship between PR and PE is usually exclusive, in that there is only one PR for any PE and access rights to a particular PE are generally confined to one sole PR.
- These access rights are acquired through some kind of transaction.
- The PE is typically owned by the PR for an extended period of time.
- The PE is ordinarily in spatial vicinity of the PR, i.e. it is located near the PR.
- The PE is ascribed a certain material or sentimental value.

---

[1] Aikhenvald (2013) is to be recommended both for her treatment of a wide range of languages and a list of "must-reads" in the literature about possession (2013:2).

[2] Zygmunt Frajzyngier (2014 p.c.) claims that Wandala does not encode possession since there is no separate formal marking for it in the language and a function should only be assumed if it is encoded in a language. In his chapter in *Possession and Ownership* (2013) he shows that there is no dedicated marking for attributive possession. Note, however, that there is indeed a formal means to express predicative possession.

[3] What is referred to by *types* here is to be understood in the sense of Heine's (2001) *notions*. The term notion will be used here in a broader sense. Type is used, for example, by Herslund & Baron (2001).

[4] In the literature the possessee is frequently referred to as the *possessed* or the *possessum*.

A relationship that fulfils most or all of these characteristics is called *alienable* possession. This term is used throughout the thesis since it is used most widely (Stassen 2009).[5] It should be noted, however, that the literature on possession is quite extensive, which has lead to a plethora of ways of describing similar phenomena. Alienable possession is for example termed *established* possession by Seiler (1981). Further terms will be introduced in the next section when discussing *inalienable* possession.

It has to be noted that these characteristics of prototypical possession circumscribe legal ownership as practiced in most Western cultures (Heine 1997:34). In the Australian Aboriginal context, the origin of possession as grounded in a transaction, and the exclusiveness presupposition have to be viewed with caution, at least with respect to the ownership of language and land.[6]

7.2 Inalienable possession

Even if not all of the characteristics named in the section above hold true, a relationship between two nominals or a pronominal and a nominal element can still be viewed as (prototypically) possessive. The relationship between relatives (*The girl's mother*) or between human beings or animals and their body parts (*The legs of the spider*), are often subsumed under the term *inalienable possession* (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001:961).[7] Many authors also include wholes and their parts (*The roof of the house*) among prototypical possession (e.g. Langacker 1995:59: "ownership, kinship, and part/whole relationship are prototypical for possessive"). Apart from relational nouns, such as kin terms, and meronyms, such as body parts, Nikolaeva & Spencer (2010:5) also name topological nouns as forming part of the inalienable category. While Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976:562) had grouped partonymic and kin relations among the inalienables and locative relations among the alienables, Heine (1997:11) agrees with Nikolaeva & Spencer in naming spatial relations among the categories typically "associated with" inalienability. Stassen (2009:18) adds that by extension, social relations (*The teacher's name, The student's friend*) and artefacts ("implements of material culture": *The hunter's bow, The women's clothing*), among others, can form part of the class of inalienably possessed PEs.

There are different approaches to the question whether a particular domain is counted among the inalienable relationships. From a semantic point of view it was argued that an inalienable relationship is more durative (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:563), intrinsic, intimate, and obligatory

---

[5] Nichols (1988) specifies that the term is used by linguists describing North American and Pacific languages and that contemporary Soviet grammars apply the Russian equivalent whereas early North American grammars employed different labels (see also the discussion below on *inalienable* possession).
[6] For details refer to Chapter 6 on the culture of possession.
[7] Seiler (1981:2) notes that the inalienable vs. alienable opposition has been proposed at least as early as in L. Levy-Bruhl's famous study on the expression of possession in the Melanesian languages (1914:96ff). Nichols (1988:561) summarises alternative labels used in the literature.

(Aikhenvald 2013:4) or inherent (the latter term is used by Seiler 1981, Bendix 1966, Dixon 1910:323 and Kroeber & Grace 1960) than is the case with alienable possession. Nichols also states that the term *inalienable* is applied if the relationship is – among others – "inborn" (1988:561). Heine stresses that the PE cannot easily be separated from the PR (1997:34). Crowley (1996:428, cited by Hendriks 2008:58) adds a further dimension by explaining that an inalienable relationship holds, if the possessee cannot exist independently of the possessor. A further semantic factor mentioned by (Chappell & McGregor 1996a:4) is whether an entity is "essential for one's livelihood or survival." They also count inextricable or unchangeable relationship between PR and PE inalienable (ibid.). In addition, Chappell & McGregor dub an additional domain *inherent* and therefore inalienable, namely that of spatial relations (ibid.). Interestingly, however, the term *inherent* is sometimes used for the opposite of inalienable possession: What Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976:558) call "inherent" (contrasting it with "accidental" and "physical" possession) is actually their term for alienable possession (see also Heine 1997:34).

Other scholars deny that the two categories can be explained in semantic terms. Nikolaeva & Spencer (2010:5), for instance, claim that "[t]here does not seem to be any clear semantic basis for the alienable/inalienable opposition in a cross-linguistic sense". Nichols (1988:582) agrees that "[t]here is no invariant semantic content to 'alienability'". The opposition between alienable and inalienable is then characterised as a formal rather than semantic split in the marking of adnominal (attributive) constructions. Nichols gives a historical explanation of the synchronic distribution: Nouns which are most often possessed are associated with the "more fused or archaic of the two marking types" (1988:582). Inalienability is in this case a question of belonging to a structural type, such as a "closed set of bound nouns" (1988:568).

Similarly, Heine (1997:11) summarises Nichols' (1992:121) line of argument by saying that kin terms, part/wholes and/or body parts are often in the inalienable category because they are the "nouns which are most likely to occur possessed in discourse" leading to their grammaticalisation into inalienable structures. This notion of discourse frequency was already mentioned in 1991 by Langacker. He lists kin terms and part/wholes, but (instead of body parts, see above) mentions ownership because he is talking about possession in general, i.e. alienable possession as well. These three "are prototypical for possessive because […] they are salient and ubiquitous in our experience" (1991:169). A point potentially in favour of the grammaticalisation interpretation is the observation by Nichols (1988:562) that inalienable nouns "virtually always" belong to a small, closed set whereas the set containing alienable nouns is open.

From a language internal and structural rather than semantic point of view the distinction between alienable and inalienable is made by looking at which types of relationships are marked alike. Inalienability is often expressed by a lack of overt formal marking (i.e. via juxtaposition of PR and PE, see Chappell & McGregor 1996:4) whereas alienable relationships receive dedicated

constructions. It is also possible for the inalienable strategy to require less morphological marking (Nikolaeva & Spencer 2010:7) or to be more bound (Ultan 1978:26). This could be explained by grammaticalisation (in particular erosion) or iconicity: Relationships between a PR and a PE that are closer and less separable are realised by juxtaposing the referring expressions without intervening elements (see Haiman 1983:793ff who claims that conceptually close relationships receive simpler or tighter (less "bulky") grammatical marking). Economy could also be a factor: If inalienable relationships are (more) frequent in discourse (see Heine 1997:11 above), less marking is more efficient.

Another approach to the (in)alienability distinction is to devise hierarchies aiming at cross-linguistic validity. Chappell & McGregor (1996a:8) give an overview of hierarchies based on empirical data.[8] For example, Nichols (1988:572) presents the following implicational hierarchy:

Kin terms and/or body parts	>	Part-whole and/or spatial relations	>	Culturally basic possessed items (clothing, tools, domestic animals)

Figure 7.1 Inalienability Hierarchy (Nichols 1988)

Nichols predicts that a language which includes a domain in the middle or on the right-hand side of the hierarchy among the inalienable category will also include all elements to the left of that domain. It is important to note, however, that these hierarchies have been criticised for not being without counter-examples. For example, Chappell & McGregor (1996:8) argue that "spatial orientation terms" need to be included within the left-most category with kin terms and body parts in an either/or fashion since in some languages (they name Ewe (Niger-Congo, Ameka 1996) and Mandarin (Chappell & Thompson 1992) these terms are "the most inalienable".

An explanation of differences between alienable and inalienable possession on the level of the lexemes involved is presented by Löbner (2011). Here, the hypothesis is put forward that all nouns are either [+R] (i.e. 'relational')[9] or [-R]. [+R] nouns, then, are typically inalienably possessed: While [+R] nouns such as *tooth* in *tooth of a dog* is responsible for the relation between the possessee and the possessor such that the former is a tooth of the latter, sortal

---

[8] They list and briefly introduce Haiman (1985:136), Nichols (1988:572 and 1992:160), Chappell & McGregor (1989:26) and Seiler (1983:13).

[9] Löbner distinguishes sortal, individual, relational, and functional nouns. He explains that [+R] is a lexical property of relational and functional nouns, i.e. nouns with an "additional 'possessor' argument" (2010:5). "[R]elational nouns proper include most kinship terms, terms for nonunique parts, and a broad variety of deverbal nouns. […] Functional nouns include relational role terms such as *mother*, *author*, *president*; terms for unique parts such as *head*, *top*, *cover*; and terms for abstract aspects, or dimensions: *age*, *size*, *price*, *meaning*, *name*, *odor*" (2010:3). Nikolaeva & Spencer (2010:5) explain that the relational noun *wife* in *John's wife* biases an interpretation of inalienable possession as opposed to non-relational *woman* in *John's woman.* In some languages it is possible to use the same non-relational noun both in the alienable and the inalienable construction. In this case two different meaning arise, for example *my liver* (body part) vs. *my liver* (food) in the Papua New Guinean language Patpatar (quoted in Chappell & McGregor 1996:3).

nouns such as the [–R] *stone* in *my stone* does not have a predefined possessor and can therefore (in isolation) mean various things (such as "'the stone I am holding in my hand', 'the stone I threw', 'the stone I am carving', 'the stone I am sitting on' […] etc.").[10]

To conclude the discussion on the terms alienable and inalienable it seems wise to summarise, in Nichols' (1988:561) words, that they refer to both semantically and formally highly variable concepts. A further argument in favour of this claim is that McConvell (2005) showed for Tariana (Arawakan) that the language borrowed a strategy (namely juxtaposition) expressing inalienable relations in the source language but uses it for alienable relations. Hence, inalienable domains cannot be universal but vary across languages.

Possession in Australian languages will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8. A few words will suffice to introduce the topic here: It has been claimed that most Australian languages opt for the inalienable structural pattern when encoding body part relationships but for the alienable structure for kinship (Dixon 1980:293). In the same vein, Heine (1997:11) asserts that concerning the "three core domains (a) kinship, (b) body parts, and (c) spatial relations" Australian languages – in contrast to other languages such as Paamese or Tinrin – count (b) but not (a) as inalienable. Chappell & McGregor (1996:12) add that in Yawuru culture certain entities such as names, shadows, footprints, personal Dreamings are considered inalienable "by extension" from inalienable part-whole relations. Similarly, Dixon (2002:394) states that in Australian languages parts of plants and implements as well as 'name', 'smell', 'track' and 'camp' are treated like body parts.

7.3   Non-prototypical possession

In the first section of this chapter the properties of prototypical possession were introduced. There are many instances where one or several formal pattern(s) for possession are used for relationships that do not conform to these characteristics. These can still be counted among possessive relationships if they can be described in terms of the most important defining criteria for possession. Heine (1997:3) summarises that in the literature these have been argued to be control and contiguity of location or spatial proximity. Further relevant considerations for this assessment are the discourse situation at the moment of utterance and the speaker's encyclopaedic knowledge about possible relationships between entities (ibid.).

For inalienable relations, some definitions of control pose problems, however. Heine comments that the PR can manipulate his or her body parts but cannot discontinue the possessive relationship – which in this case is not one of ownership, i.e. the PR cannot sell, lend or lose the PE. (In case of the latter at least not without being harmed). Similarly, it seems counter-intuitive

---

[10] For a discussion of the vague meaning of attributive constructions see the next section.

to understand a kinship relation as one that can be manipulated or easily severed (unless the kinship PE dies).

In §7.5 below the typology advanced by Stassen (2009) will be presented in greater detail. It makes use of the two main factors named above, called *Control* and *Permanent Contact,* to distinguish between four types of predicative possession. Here, inalienable possession will be characterised by a lack of control of the PR over the PE and a definition of control by Evans (1995) will be presented. The role of location with respect to possession is further discussed in §7.7. As a prerequisite for the treatment of Stassen's typology, the next section will introduce the dichotomy between attributive and predicative possession.

7.4   Attributive and predicative possession

When describing possessive constructions in a language one of the most salient oppositions to be taken into account is the dichotomy of attributive (also called *nominal* or *adnominal*, see Heine 1997:25f) and predicative possession which is present in every language considered so far (ibid.). The term *predicative* possession refers to the situation where the possessive relationship forms the main predication of the sentence, i.e. the possession of the PE by the PR is what the sentence is about. In contrast, in *attributive* possession the PR and the PE form a single NP and there is a predication about this NP beyond the possessive relation.

(1) Predicative possession:
   Jamy has a cup.   (own data)
   The sentence tells us that Jamy (the PR) owns a cup (the PE).

(2) Attributive possession:
   Jamy's cup is green.   (own data)[11]
   This sentence tells us that Jamy (the PR) owns a cup (the PE) and that this cup is green.
   There is thus further information apart from the relationship between Jamy and the cup.

(1) typically expresses ownership or temporary possession (see below) whereas the noun phrase (NP) in (2) can be interpreted differently, e.g. 'the cup that Jamy intends to buy', 'the cup Jamy is always talking about', 'the cup that was designed by Jamy' (cf. Stassen 2009:27). Accordingly, some *associative* relation can be established between *Jamy* and *cup* which is not possessive.[12]

---

[11] In the following, if not otherwise indicated, the examples are to be understood as own data.
[12] For more possible meanings see e.g. Nikolaeva & Spencer (2010:5 *The book that John wrote/stole/wants to buy/has been given to review*), Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001:964), who lists among others: location ('London's banks'), time ('yesterday's magazine'), authorship ('Mozart's symphonies'), quality ('a man of power'), or in particular Langacker (1995:56f) who lists 18 different potential types of relationships between a PR and a PE: the possessee may be: a. something owned *(his Porsche)* b. a relative *(your aunt),* c. a part *(my knee),* d. an unowned possession *(the baby's crib),* e. something manipulated *(her rook),* f. an associated individual *(our waiter),* g. a larger assembly *(their group),* h. something at one's disposal *(my office),* i. a physical quality *(his height),* j. a mental quality *(her equanimity),* k. a permanent location *(our neighbourhood),* l. a transient location *(my spot),* m. a situation *(your predicament),* n. an action carried out

Structurally, attributive possession differs from predicative possession in that it a) includes presupposed instead of asserted information (see (3), where the predication of being short presupposes the kinship relation between the speaker and his or her brothers), b) makes use of phrasal rather than clausal syntax (see (4), where *My hand* forms a noun phrase which is further described (or *modified*) by the following copula + adjective construction forming an equative sentence) and c) has object-like, time-stable, not event-like content (Heine 1997:26).

(3) *My two brothers are short.*   vs.   *I have two brothers*.

(4) *[My hand] is dirty.*   vs.   *[I have a dirty hand.]*

It has been argued that attributive constructions are "included in, or derived from" predicative constructions (Heine 2001:315f). Note however, that from a semantic and pragmatic point of view not all attributive phrases can be transformed into predicative constructions. In English, for example, it is semantically and culturally odd to utter (5)b) or (6)b) instead of the attributive variants in the (5)a) and (6)a) because the sentences do not convey unexpected information. In Heine's (1997:21) words they do not contain much information and are instances of necessary possession.[13] Dixon (2009) demonstrates that the oddness disappears if such information is added to the utterance, e.g. by adding a modifier as in (5)c and (6)c). There seem to be typological differences, though. While a predicative construction with the abstract noun *fear* is ungrammatical in English (7)b), the German equivalent in (7)c) is perfectly acceptable (see Zeshan & Perniss 2008:267).

(5)
 a) *my father*
 b) *# I have a father.*
 c) *I have an old father.*

(6)
 a) *my hands*
 b) *# I have hands.*
 c) *I have small hands.*

(7)
 a) *my (biggest) fear*
 b) ** I have fear.*
 c) *Ich habe Angst.*

(Oswald's assassination), o. an action undergone *(Kennedy's assassination),* p. something selected *(your candidate* [i.e., the one you back]), q. something fulfilling a certain function *(our bus),* r. something hosted *(the dog's flea)*. See also §7.8 below.

[13] "A necessarily possessed item is one that is found obligatorily on any conceivable possessor, while not every possessor requires an optionally possessed item. Necessary possession is associated with terms for ascending kinship notions" and "body part (part whole) […] relationship[s]" (Heine 1997:20f).

7.5   A typology of predicative possession

When presenting the notion of prototypical possession, Stassen (2009:10f) refers to the assessment of laymen who would interpret alienable possession as in *John has a motorcycle* as prototypical, but would not do so for kinship as in *Frank has a sister*, body parts relations as in *A spider has six* [sic] *legs*, temporary possession as in *Mandy has a basket on her lap*, or physical states as in *Bill has the flu.* In the following, the latter relations will be examined in more detail.

In order to include all these relationships in a typology of possession, Stassen (2009) breaks them down into two factors, namely location and control (cp. §7.3). Among others Stassen (2009:15) argues that "[a] prototypical case of possession is characterized by the presence of two entities (Possessor and Possessee) such that

(i)   The Possessor and the Possessee are in some relatively enduring locational relation &

(ii)   The Possessor exerts control over the Possessee and is typically human"

The notion of control in possessive constructions has been defined by Evans (1995) when describing the Proprietive (in opposition to the related Associative case) in the Australian language Kayardild (traditionally spoken on the South Wellesley Islands off the coast of northwest Queensland) as follows:

X (possessor) can expect Y (Possessee) to be in the same place as X when X wants,

and X can do with Y what X wants (Evans 1995:146)

In this definition control over a PE includes the situation where the PE is not presently within physical reach of the PR, i.e. the PR may have left the PE in question at home, or lent it to someone (ibid.). In Stassen's words, The PR determines the whereabouts of the PE and what happens to it, the PR is in power. The PR also decides whether the possessive relationship is continued or terminated (Stassen 2009:14, for details see below).

In §7.1 above a human possessor was listed as a requirement for prototypical possession. If we accept control as a parameter in the semantics of possession, this (+human) status of the PR follows from the fact that in possessive relations one of the participants has control over the other and in general it is only humans that can exert control.

Stassen categorises predicative possession by using the binary features *Control* and *Permanent Contact* to differentiate between *Alienable*, *Inalienable*, *Temporary* and *Abstract* possession. Table 7.1 presents these four types of possession.

Type of Possession	Permanent Contact	Control	Example
Alienable	+	+	*I have a car.*
Inalienable	+	-	*I have a sister.* *Everybody has two arms and legs.*
Temporary	-	+	*Look out! He has a knife!*
Abstract	-	-	*I have an idea.* *I have a cold.* (marginal)

Table 7.1 Types of possession using the factors Contact and Control

According to Stassen, in Alienable possession the relation between PR and PE is relatively time-stable (+Permanent Contact) but can be terminated by actions carried out by the PR (Stassen 2009:15), e.g. selling (+Control). The relation can also cease to exist against the will of the PR, e.g. if the PE is stolen. Thus, in alienable possession the PE 'belongs to' the PE in a judicial sense. As outlined in §7.1 above, this type is considered the most prototypical case of possession. Stassen stipulates that this concept of 'ownership' is seemingly cross-culturally universal (ibid.).

As discussed in §7.2, Inalienable possession typically covers the relation between kinship members (*I have a sister*) as well as human beings and their body parts (*Everybody has two arms and legs*).[14] The PR is in permanent contact with the PE since human beings cannot be separated from their body parts and family members "for as long as they (or their body parts and family members) exist" (Stassen 2009:18, see also §7.4). This is also the explanation for the -Control feature: According to Stassen's definition the PR does not have control over the PE in that "under normal, everyday-life conditions" the PR is not able to

(i)   determine the whereabouts
(ii) decide to be separated from or sever the relation with them out of their own volition (in ownership terms the PR cannot sell, lend or lose them)
(iii) decide to let other organisms make use of them" (ibid.).

For Temporary possession in Stassen's sense it is not important whether the PE is associated with the PR for a certain amount of time. What matters is that the PE is available for the PR, who exerts control over it. Stassen (2009:19) gives the example of someone shouting *Look out! That guy has a knife!* He argues convincingly that the speaker is more concerned with warning people in the vicinity that a potentially dangerous person has a knife "at his disposal" than with informing listeners about the owner of the knife in question. The latter is "largely irrelevant" (ibid.). The feature Permanent Contact has a negative value for Temporary Possession because "contact

---

[14] By extension Inalienable possession can encode a number of further relations such as part-whole relationships but there is cross-linguistic variation in the set of possible PEs (see §7.2).

between the 'possessor' and the 'possessee' is typically seen as accidental, or at least as **not necessarily** permanent." (ibid., emphasis added).

Note, however, the slight differences in usage of the term Temporary possession in the literature. Heine (1997:34) does make specific reference to the time of contact involved. He stresses that temporary possession is characterised by the PR being able to dispose of the PE "for a limited time" but not claiming ownership. He gives the example in (8) where Judy alienably possesses, i.e. owns, a car, which is temporarily possessed by the speaker.

(8) ***I have a car*** *that I use to go to the office, but it belongs to Judy.* (Heine 1997:34)

Zeshan & Perniss (2008), for example, also apply Temporary possession to inalienable possessors such as in *The meeting room has 25 chairs in it*, *The printer has enough paper* and *In autumn the trees have colourful leaves* (2008:269). In this case it is difficult to argue that the PRs (the meeting room, the printer and the trees respectively) have control over the PEs (the chairs, the paper and the leaves).

Conversely, it is equally important to note that concepts congruent with Stassen's Temporary possession have been termed differently by other authors: Miller & Johnson-Laird's Accidental possession (1976:565) seems to be quite similar in stressing the *possibility* of usage of a PE by a PR. Both Heine (1997:34) and Miller & Johnson-Laird, on the other hand, describe Physical possession as the relationship between a PR and PE which are "physically associated" with each other *at reference time*. Example (9) illustrates this type of possession.

(9) *I want to fill in this form; do you have a pen?* (Heine 1997:34)

In (9) it is not important whether the addressee permanently owns a pen. In order to lend it the PR has to be in control of it, though. This means that the addressee must be able, at the moment of the utterance, to hand over any pen [i.e. exert control over it] irrespective of the question of ownership of the pen. Control is an important factor, as in Temporary Possession, but the stress concerning Physical possession is on the reference time.

The differences between Alienable, Temporary and Physical Possession are summarised nicely in a sentence (10) given by Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976:565, here called Inherent, Accidental, and Physical). In (10) some male person stands in an Alienable relationship to an umbrella, i.e. he owns it. He has lent it to a female and thereby grants her Temporary Possession. At the moment of utterance the latter does not have the umbrella at her disposal, which means that she is not currently in Physical Possession of it.

(10) *He owns an umbrella, but she's borrowed it, though she doesn't have it with her.* (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:565)

Finally, the fourth type of possession in Stassen's typology is Abstract possession. When it comes to this type, the PE is not a physical object. It is rather a physical or mental state (*I have an*

idea, He has no time).[15] Thus, the PR cannot be in permanent contact to the PE and has no control over it. Heine specifies that in Abstract possession the PE is not tangible or visible (1997:34). Therefore, the negation of possession can be counted as an instance of Abstract possession as in (11), where the lack of a tooth is structurally expressed by the positive possession of an abstract entity, a missing tooth. This is also called specifying possession (1997:191).

> (11) *I have a missing tooth.*   (Heine 1997:35)

It is noted in Table 7.1 above that Abstract possession is to be interpreted as a marginal case of possession. Stassen (2009:20) specifically states that while Alienable possession can be considered a central aspect of the conceptual space of possession, Abstract possession is peripheral. Sentences such as (12), which represent a PR in a certain physical state and therefore are analysed as Abstract are considered to be "not clearly of the possessive kind" (ibid.)

> (12)   (Herslund & Baron 2001:3)
>   a) *Mary has a cold.*
>   b) *Mary's cold*

Herslund & Baron (2001:3) argue in a similar vain. They argue that (12)a) is different from core possession in that this sentence denotes one entity in a certain state (*[Mary] has a cold*) instead of a stative relation between two distinct entities. The latter is the case for prototypically possessive sentences such as *[Mary] has [a cat]* (ibid.). In sentences denoting Abstract possession such as (12)a), they argue, the possessee "merges with the verb to form a verbo-nominal predicate" (ibid.).

Nevertheless, Herslund & Baron make the interesting observation that for Abstract constructions there is still an attributive equivalent, as is the case for the other core types of possession, see (12)b).

In order to show that this typology of predicative possession, namely Alienable vs. Inalienable vs. Temporary vs. Abstract Possession, is psychologically plausible, the following paragraph will demonstrate consequences for the interpretation of different types of possessive sentences. Herslund & Baron (2001:2) present that the interpretation of Inalienable possession is more straight-forward than Alienable possession and the interpretation of both more so than for Temporary possession. They explain that the relation between a PR and a PE "is often deducible from the combined lexical content of the PR and the PE nouns" (ibid.). Comparing predicative with attributive constructions, they illustrate that for some combinations the possessive relationship is clear, such as for *Mary's daughter*, which carries the same semantic content as *Mary has a daughter* because the noun *daughter,* due to its semantics, is a prime candidate for Inalienable

---

[15] Examples adapted from Stassen (2009:19) and Heine (1997:33).

possession. For other combinations of PR and PE nouns, the relationship is less obvious,[16] and several types of possession are potential interpretations of the respective attributive phrase: Temporary possession is often a secondary or alternative interpretation as compared to Alienable possession. For example, *Mary has a pen* (ibid.) can mean that Mary owns the pen (Alienable possession), but the sentence could also refer to a pen that is available on her desk (Temporary possession). Again, the semantics of the nouns involved is crucial: A pen is more easily temporarily possessed than a house (except maybe in the case of a staff-member of a holiday apartment rental agency who might utter a sentence like *I have an apartment for you for the week-end)*. Therefore, for *Mary's house* the Alienable reading is more likely.[17]

In the literature many more distinctions between types of possession can be found. One of the most well-known typologies is the one by Heine (1997:34) depicted in Table 7.2 below. The first four columns are familiar from Stassen's (2009) typology as discussed in §7.5: Heine's Physical possession was contrasted there already with his Temporary possession. What is described above as Alienable possession is here called Permanent possession. Inalienable and Abstract possession refer to similar relationships in both frameworks. In addition to the types characterised by Stassen (2009) Heine describes the following ones: Inanimate inalienable (i.e. part-whole) possession refers to the situation where the PR is inanimate and the PR and the PE are inseparable (*My study has three windows*, *That tree has few branches*). For Inanimate alienable possession (*That tree has crows on it*) the PR is also inanimate, but the PE is separable from the PR. Table 7.2 presents the relevant features which distinguish the different types of possession.

---

[16] The multitude of possible interpretations of seemingly Alienable phrases was already presented in §7.4 above (where *Jamie's cup* is used as an example). Here the focus is on the Temporary interpretation of predicative constructions.

[17] This paragraph wants to demonstrate that the different types of possession are psychologically real, i.e. distinct from one another in the human brain since they differ in their likelihood of interpretation for a certain PR PE combination. This is not to say that in a concrete situation an addressee interpreting an utterance does not use context and general knowledge to decide among alternative interpretations.

	Physical	Temporary	Permanent	Inalienable	Abstract	Inanimate inalienable	Inanimate alienable
PR = human	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
PE = concrete item	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
PR has right to use PE	+	+	+	+/-	-	-	-
Spatial proximity PR and PE	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+
no temporal limit for possession	-	-	+	+	+/-	+	-

Table 7.2 Further types of possession following Heine (1997)

These types of possession are related by Heine (1997:92) to the source schemas he describes at length in his 1997 monograph. Here he argues that semantically concrete source concepts develop into grammatical categories (1997:6). The choice among the sources for a given possessive construction is determined by "universal ways of conceptualization" and influenced by factors such as areal forces (ibid.). The source schemas are summarised in Table 7.3 below. The correlations between these schemas and the possessive types listed above are depicted in Table 7.4. The correspondences do not constitute hard-and-fast rules but "probabilistic generalizations" (1997:92).

Formula	Source schema
X takes Y	Action
Y is located at X	Location
Y exists for/to X	Goal
X's Y exists	Genitive
X is with Y	Companion Schema
As for X, Y exists	Topic Schema

Table 7.3 Heine's (1997) source s,chemas

Source schema	Type of possession
Location	Physical/Temporary possession
Genitive/Goal/Topic	Permanent/Inalienable
Companion	Physical/Temporary or generally Alienable
Genitive/Goal/Topic	not with Physical possession

Table 7.4 Correlation source schema – type of possession

To sum up, the notions of control and (permanent) contact can be used to differentiate between different types of possession. The types that will commonly be used in this thesis are the following: Alienable possession involves both +Control and +Contact and can be understood as prototypical ownership. Inalienable possession of body parts, kinship and part-whole relationships involves +Contact but -Control. Temporary possession (in Heine's sense) covers possibility and therefore both limited contact and limited control whereas physical possession is reserved for possession at reference time (+Control, -Contact).

7.6   *Have* vs. *Belong*-construction

In §7.4 the difference between attributive and predicative possession was explained. Within the predicative domain there is the distinction between *have* and *belong*-constructions (see Figure 7.2). Together with attributive possession these two have been called a universal threefold distinction (Heine 1997:226); see also the distinction into A-Possessive (attributive possession) vs. B-Possessive (*belong*-construction) and H-Possessive (*have-construction*) in Heine & Kuteva (2002:24).
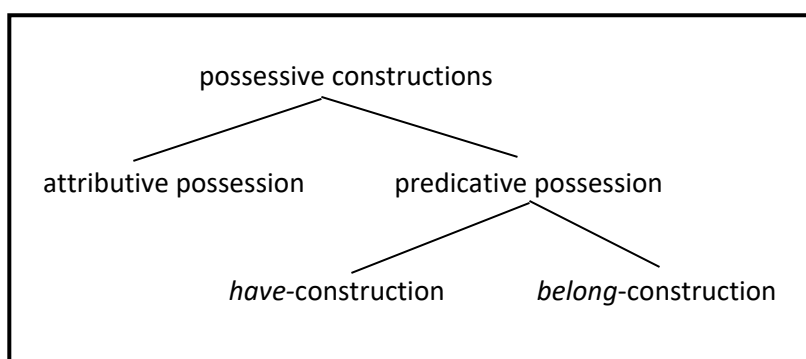
Figure 7.2 *Have* and *belong*-constructions

The difference between the *have* and the *belong*-constructions has been described in various ways. Semantically, in English, the *belong*-construction is favoured in alienable possession (13) (Heine 1997:32,89) and is questionable in other domains such as body part relations (14) or kinship (15).

(13)
   a)   *The car belongs to her.*
   b)   *She has a car.*

(14)
   a)   ?*The two legs belong to her.*
   b)   *She has two legs.*

(15)
   a)   ?*The sister belongs to her.*
   b)   *She has a sister.*

However, it has been argued that semantics is not the decisive factor, especially in cross-linguistic comparison. Typically, *have*-constructions are described as featuring a PR (here *The girl*) functioning as the (discourse) topic[18] and grammatical subject (16), whereas it is the PE (here *The red bag*) which functions as topic and subject in *belong*-constructions (17) (Herslund & Baron 2001:9).

(16) *The girl has a red bag.*

(17)
   a) *The red bag belongs to the girl.*
   b) *The red bag is hers.*

It needs to be kept in mind that English has a rather strict word order with the subject usually preceding the direct object. This leads to the situation that in *have*-constructions the PR precedes the PE, whereas in *belong*-constructions the PE precedes the PR. This should not be taken as universally applicable, however: In languages with freer word order (which nonetheless do not necessarily mark subjects and direct objects morphologically) word order cannot be a decisive factor in distinguishing *have* from *belong*-constructions.[19]

Zeshan & Perniss (2008:4) stress information status as the most relevant issue. They demonstrate in the context of sign languages (which are among those languages that do not mark subjects or objects morphologically) that the main difference between *have* and *belong*-constructions lies in the placement of emphasis: If emphasis[20] is on the PE (typically by virtue of it being definite and in subject position, ibid.), the result is a *belong*-construction. In *have*-constructions, in contrast, emphasis is on the PR (due to its subject role in the clause and the indefiniteness of the possessee, ibid.).

Thus, a second major factor, which is widely discussed in the literature, is the (in)definiteness of the NPs involved.[21] *Have*-constructions are characterised by indefinite PEs (Heine 1997:35, see (16)). Heine curtails this statement, however. He demonstrates that it holds true for alienable, but not necessarily for physical or temporary possession because the use of a definite PE may result in instances of the latter as in (18).

(18)   (Heine 1997:35)
   a) *Judy has a car.* (ownership)
   b) *Judy has the car.* (temporary possession)

---

[18] Stassen (2009:28) specifies that topic here refers to the discourse topic in the sense of Hornby (1971), i.e. in *have*-constructions the possessor NP indicates 'what the sentence is about', and can therefore be expected to represent 'given' information.

[19] In fact, Heine (1997:30) warns that "many 'have' constructions in the languages of the word involve the constituent order possessee-possessor rather than the reverse".

[20] Zeshan & Perniss reify their notion of emphasis by referring to Heine (1997), for whom – in their words – in *have*-constructions the possessum (i.e. the PE) is subordinate to the "more important and emphasized possessor" (2008:4). Heine (1997:29) writes that in *have*-constructions the PR is "paramount".

[21] Stassen (2009:28) makes this aspect quite explicit by calling the two constructions definite and indefinite possession.

The typical distribution of definiteness of the NPs for *have* and *belong*-constructions is summarised in Table 7.5 (Heine 1997:30) below. For *have*-constructions the distribution of definiteness seems more determined – with the PR definite and the PE indefinite – than for *belong*-constructions, where the main factor seems to be that the PE is definite, while the PR is likely definite but can be indefinite, too.

	have		belong	
	PR	PE	PR	PE
definite	+	-	+/-	+
indefinite	-	+	+/-	+/-

Table 7.5 Summary: Definiteness in *have* and *belong*-constructions

According to Heine (2001:312) possessive constructions evolve from the source schemas listed in Table 7.3 above via grammaticalisation. Table 7.6 below presents the correspondences of source schemas to *have* and *belong*-constructions. The Location, Genitive, Topic and Companion schemas clearly correlate with the *have*-construction, while the Equation schema leads to *belong*-constructions exclusively. The Action and Goal schemas can be grammaticalised into both *have* and *belong*-constructions. In case of the former a prediction is possible: If the verb takes a human complement, a *belong*-construction results; a human subject and an inanimate object yield a *have*-construction.

Source Schema	have	belong
Action	+	+
Location	+	-
Companion	+	-
Genitive	+	-
Goal	+	+
Topic	+	-
Equation	-	+

Table 7.6 Source schemas for *have* and *belong*-constructions

7.7   Possession as a cognitive domain

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter it is difficult to define possession cross-linguistically since there is no one-to-one correspondence between a linguistic construction and the notion of possession: Herslund & Baron explain that there are no constructions that exclusively encode possession (2001:1). Moreover, in many languages several different constructions qualify as possessive. In the following, some attempts at a definition of possession will be presented and it will be discussed in how far possession is seen as an independent cognitive domain.

Possession is regarded as a semantic concept within the class of cognitive entities known as *relations*. It involves an asymmetric relation of belonging between the two entities (or

"substances", see Seiler 1983:4) PR and PE (Stassen 2009:11). A substantial body of literature addresses possession as one of the bio-cultural concepts (Seiler 1983) while others argue that it is a social concept (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976). Seiler emphasises the (relationships between the) entities involved, namely kinsmen, body parts and parts of an organism, material belongings, cultural and intellectual products (Seiler 1983:4). Miller & Johnson-Laird, in contrast, stress that possession is part of a people's culture in that it is "embodied in their conventions and forms of social behaviour rather than in their mental lexicons" without them necessarily having to "grasp" the conceptual core of possession (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:558). In this thesis possession is viewed as a social concept in so far as it is expected to be cross-culturally variable with culture influencing some of its subdomains. It was already discussed above that the number and range of members of a (potentially formally distinguished) inalienability category varies across languages. Certainly, there are also differences, for example, in the range of objects that can or cannot be 'possessed' in one language as compared to another (Stassen 2009:8).

It is debated in the literature whether possession is an independent cognitive domain. It has been explained in terms of or subsumed under other domains such as location (Stassen 2009:5) and has been argued to be a historical source of existentials (2009:6).[22] To exemplify the latter, Stassen cites examples from French, Serbo-Croatian and Swahili (ibid.). He shows, for example, that the possessive construction with the verb *avoir* 'have' in French (19)a) is the source of the existential *il y a* construction (19)b).

(19) (Stassen 2009:5)[23]   (French)

a) *Il   a   un   cheval.*
    he   has   a   horse
    'He has a horse.'

b) *Il   y   a   des   gens   qui   fument.*
    it   there   has   INDEF   people   who   smoke
    'There are people who smoke.'

The relationship between the locative, existential, and possessive domains is prominently discussed with reference to sign languages. Sign linguists such as Zeshan (2008) claim that in most sign languages certain particles are used to express both existence and predicative possession. She names sign languages in India/Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, USA, UK, Catalonia, Germany, Jordan, Iran and China (2008:683). Chen Pichler et al. (2008), for example, have offered evidence for a connection between possession, location and existence in ASL, ÖGS and HZJ. They argue that in these languages locative structures underlie both possessive and existential structures. To substantiate their assertions they present the following facts: (i) there is some justification to the

---

[22] In a footnote Stassen names further constructions that have been argued to have arisen from possessive constructions via grammaticalisation, such as the marking of conditional clauses or future tense (2009:6).
[23] The glossing is retained from the original.

claim that some of the possessive predicates used in these languages were derived from locative signs; (ii) possession and existence can in all three sign languages be expressed with the help of personal pronouns and other locative index signs, which include information on the location of the PR/subject; (iii) at least in ASL the sign signalling the PR can be displaced towards the location of PR.

Herslund & Baron (2001) present the rationale behind assuming a close connection between possession and location: The PR and the PE are interpreted as such because of their relation to each other. The existence of a possessor necessarily presupposes the existence of a possessee and vice versa. This makes the possessive relation a "strictly binary" one (2001:5). When comparing this characteristic to the Agent(-Patient) role schema on the one hand and the Location(-Argument) and Experiencer(-Stimulus) role schema on the other hand, one notices that possession has more in common with the latter, which are also necessarily binary.[24] Furthermore, since Location is "the simplest and most primitive and concrete notion, [and] seems more basic", possession is seen as "'sophisticated' Location" (ibid.).

Heine (1997:41) and Stassen (2009) give detailed overviews of the different claims concerning the relation between possession and location: Heine gives sources for the assumption that possession a) is location (Clark 1978:89), that it b) is included in location (Lyons 1977:474,722) and that it is c) synchronically, diachronically and ontogenetically derived from location (Clark 1978:90). Stassen adds that there are proponents within the framework of generative syntax, notably Freeze (1992), who advocates the analysis that the PR is a [+human] location for the PE (Chen Pichler et al. 2008:451f).

Note that in Langacker's reference point analysis – which is couched in terms of Cognitive Grammar – rather than possessive constructions per se, only BE-type clausal possessives are similar to locatives with respect to their schematic description (2003:8): As per the reference point analysis, a conceptualizer (C) who is confronted with a possessive construction traces a mental path from the reference point (R), which is the possessor nominal, to the target (T) in order to interpret the possessed nominal (i.e. T) (2003:4). In BE-type possessives (as opposed to HAVE-type possessives) the target T is the subject and there is no direct object (2003:7). BE-type predicates commonly derive from posture verbs (2003:8). BE-type possessives and locatives can be described by a reference point schema which is "essentially the same" (2003:10). The difference between the two lies in their correspondence to "conceptual archetypes" (ibid.). "For

---

[24] Herslund & Baron use the sentences *Peter jumps* (Peter is an agent without there being a patient) and *The water evaporates* (the water is a patient in no need of an explicit agent) to show that "the Agent schema can be non-binary" (2001:5). The Location and Experiencer schemas are binary because a) something is not a place (in their definition of place) unless something is placed there (the table in *The book is on the table* is not a location per se, unless the book is positioned onto it) and b) an "objectively occurring physical phenomenon" only becomes a stimulus if an entity is present to experience it (ibid.).

locatives the primary archetype is merely that of something *being* – more specifically standing, sitting, or lying – *in a certain place*. […]" For possessives the archetypes are "the conception of R *controlling* T […]" (2003:10, emphasis added).

The distinction between BE-type and HAVE-type possessives is reminiscent of the distinctions made above between *have* and *belong*-constructions. In Herslund & Baron, however, the latter are both argued to be basically locative (2001:5-8). Among other types of supporting evidence, the following example sentences are claimed to illustrate that *have* as well as *belong*-constructions are locative in nature: The answer to a question about the location of someone can be a possessive construction using the verb *have* as in (20). A "sub-place" can be added to possessive part-whole relationships, as in (21).

(20) A: *Where are the children?*   (Herslund & Baron 2001:7)
     B: *John **has** them*.

(21) *The bank **has** a branch in Bristol.*   (Herslund & Baron 2001:8)

This evidence notwithstanding, there are *have*-constructions that are semantically not – or at least not primarily – locational. Langacker draws attention to the fact that possessive verbs like Spanish *tener* (< Latin *tenere* 'hold, keep, grasp') have not grammaticised from lexical sources that are inherently locational, but from agentive lexical verbs "designating physical occurrences in which the subject manipulates or otherwise acts on an object" (Langacker 2003:2).

Langacker is not the only one who is not convinced that possession as a domain can be explained in terms of or reduced to location. Seiler (1981, 1983) strongly opposes the assumption that possession *is* location and adds several noteworthy aspects to the discussion. For example, he notes that the choice of the verb of possession influences the degree of implied contact. He states – unfortunately without much comment or context[25] – that the German possessive verb *haben* implies contact, while *gehören* does not (1981:90). If not all possessive verbs imply contact and thus location, this is a counter-argument to the claim that all possessives can be reduced to location.[26] Note that it was argued above that the *have*-strategy can be used for temporary and abstract possession, which – according to the typology presented above – do not necessarily

---

[25] As a native speaker the author of this thesis cannot confirm this assumption according to her intuitions.
[26] In Langacker's (2003) reference point analysis *haben* would be used in a HAVE-type possessive, whereas *gehören* would be used in a BE-type possessive, as in a construction with *gehören*, such as *Das Buch gehört mir* [lit. 'The book belongs me.'] the subject is the possessed trajector T rather than the possessor R. According to Langacker, BE-possessives are similar to locatives whereas HAVE-possessives are not. Thus, Langacker's and Seiler's analyses do not seem to align in that *gehören* rather than *haben* would be a better candidate for a connection to location in Langacker's analysis. However, both authors discuss possessive verbs to call into question the assumption that all possession is merely a special kind of possession: Langacker refers to agentive possessive verbs such as *have, grab, hold, get, find* etc. (2003:2/7) to show that not all possessive constructions derive from *locative* lexical sources (2003:8); see also the discussion of Spanish *tener* above.

imply (permanent)[27] contact (see §7.5 above). In the German *have*-construction *haben* would be used. The range of possible types of possession covered by this construction parallels English: *Er hat ein Messer!* (temporary) *Ich habe eine Idee* (abstract). In contrast, the *belong*-construction – which in German uses *gehören* – has been argued above to correlate with alienable possession, which does imply contact. Hence, while acknowledging the difference in implied contact between *haben* and *gehören*, this thesis does not confirm Seiler's mapping.

Even more interestingly, Seiler stresses that the connection between existence and location is cross-linguistically plausible but not necessary (1981:91). Instead of using the same predicates as in locational (existential) constructions some languages use predicates that do not imply the meaning 'exist *in space*'. Cahuilla (Uto-Aztecan), for example, is claimed to express possession using the predicates 'live'[28] or 'be in some way' (1981:91f).[29]

Finally, Seiler argues that it is precisely the bio-cultural nature of possession which delimits it from other kinds of relationship between nominals such as location and valence (1983:4). He defines the latter as "the relationship between an action or process or state and its participants". In contrast to the binary possessive relation (see above), the number of participants relevant for valence "can range from zero to three or four" (ibid.).

To conclude, many languages have been found to employ similar constructions for locationals, existentials and possessives. However, taking into account empirical evidence from a variety of languages, counter-arguments to the claim that all possessive constructions are derived from or can be reduced to location can be found. As the "parallelism between locational and possessive encoding" cannot be found in every language, it cannot be called universal (Stassen 2009:13). Attempts to subsume possession under location are thus not accepted as theoretically convincing in this thesis. Further, the finding that some existential constructions are derived from possessive constructions, does not preclude the possibility to assert existence independently of possession. Thus, possession and existence as well as location are conceived of as separate cognitive domains in this thesis.

7.8   How to delimit possession

When moving away from prototypical possession as described in §7.1 above, one quickly arrives at constructions that are classified as (non-prototypical) possession in the analysis of some languages by some authors, whereas similar constructions in different languages are not. In these latter languages the non-core possessive functions are often referred to as *relational* or

---

[27] Seiler (1981) might, of course, refer to physical contact, instead. Still, in abstract possession there does not seem to be a reason to postulate either permanent or physical contact.

[28] Judging from Seiler's line of argumentation 'live' is here assumed to be understood as synonymous to 'be alive', not as implying a location as in 'live somewhere'. Seiler does not elaborate on this issue, however.

[29] Apparently, this construction is formed by prefixing either an interrogative or indefinite to a verb stem "of little semantic content" (ibid.).

associative (see e.g. Heine 1997:2). This is also often true for additional functions of a possessive construction. The notion of association was briefly introduced in §7.4 above on the difference between attributive and predicative possession since attributive constructions typically allow for a wider range of interpretations including association.

In the context of possession "and similar relations" Aikhenvald mentions association and identification as concomitant to ownership (2013:2). She stresses that a certain NP structure in a given language can cover modification (2013:4,44), quantification, time (2013:5), and material (2013:52). She goes on to list "the expression of subject and object, benefactives, locatives and so on" (2013:1) as non-possessive functions and argues that "[p]ossession, purpose, and benefaction are often expressed in a similar way" (2013:41). Aikhenvald lists the following as examples of association (2013:5). In English as well as in other languages, these are non-core-possessive in function but use patterns that are also employed for core-possessive functions, here the *'s-*, the *of-* and the *with*-strategy:

(i)   association in general (*Paul's dentist*),

(ii)   orientation and location based on extension of a part-whole relation or reinterpretation of a body part[30] (*top of the mountain, bottom of the pile*), and

(iii)   attribution and properties in general (*John's temper, the age of the fossil*) (see Dixon 2009:262–3).

Following Heine (2001:312,316) one should add:

(iv)   accompaniment (*The man is sitting with his wife.*)   (Dixon 2002:140)[31]

(v)   partitivity (*a kilo of sugar*)   (Aikhenvald 2013:5)

A further associative notion potentially expressed by a possessive construction is

(vi)   instrument (*The man hunts with a spear.*)   (cf. Dixon 2002:140)

Aikhenvald (2013:5) suggests that one should (develop and) apply language-internal tests in order to distinguish between a possessive and a non-possessive reading of a given construction. For example, the *of*-structure in English is used widely, but one can only rephrase it as a predicative *have*-construction if a possessive meaning is intended (ibid.). In contrast to the possessive NP in (22)a) the internally quantified NP in 0a) cannot be resolved into a *have*-structure (see 0b). Similarly, only a possessive construction should be rephraseable with an alternative possessive construction (should the language have one) or a construction involving a

---

[30] Verbs of possession have also been observed to be derived in many cases from actions carried out with body parts, e.g. German *besitzen* 'possess' from *sitzen* 'sit', or *have*-verbs grammaticalised from 'take', 'hold', 'seize', 'grasp' (Seiler 1981:136). What Stassen incidentally stresses (2001:955) with respect to these verbs is that they denote some sort of physical control or handling, which for him is a necessary component of some subtypes of possession.

[31] Dixon (2002) distinguishes several types of accompaniment (using the following factors: a person is at rest or moving, assisted or not assisted in their movement by some entity, accompanied by something animate or inanimate), and subsumes instrument under accompaniment.

possessive pronoun. In the English examples below the possessive pronoun *its* can refer to castle (22)c) but not to *tea* 0c). In the d) examples, which involve the alternative possessive structure with an *'s*, only the former is grammatical. Incidentally, in order for the examples in 0 to parallel the ones in (22) more closely, the internal quantification could be left out. The results are the same, see a).

(22)
  a) *the spire of the castle*   (own data)
  b) *The castle has a spire.*
  c) *its spire*
  d) *the castle's spire*

(23)
  a) *two cups of tea*   (Dixon 2009:263)
  b) **The tea has two cups.*
  c) *#its two cups*
  d) **tea's two cups*

(24)
  a) *a cup of tea*   (adapted from Dixon 2009:263)
  b) **The tea has a cup.*
  c) *#its cup*
  d) **tea's cup*

To conclude, in order to discern what to count as possession in a given language, the researcher has to use both semantic criteria (such as control and permanent contact) to identify potential structures and apply language-internal tests to distinguish possessive uses of these constructions from non-possessive ones.

7.9 Typological predictions

Several authors have analysed samples of unrelated and areally spread languages in order to arrive at general assumptions and predictions concerning possession. As described in previous sections, both Heine (1997) and Stassen (2009) assume several types of possession. Within predicative alienable possession, Stassen describes four subtypes called the Topic, With, Locational and Have-Possessives. He makes specific predictions about repercussions in other parts of the grammar (namely nominal predication and temporal sequencing) depending on which of these types the language uses. Similarly, Nikolaeva & Spencer (2010) observe a relationship between structural choices in possessive constructions and attributive modification.

Moreover, Aikhenvald (2013) and Stassen (2009) make very specific predictions concerning possessive constructions and the domains in which they are used: Stassen (2009:63) observes that the *have*-verb can be predicted to be also used in temporary possession once it is established that it is used in alienable possession. Aikhenvald assumes that – if there is an alternative predicative construction, e.g. using an existential or copula instead of a *have*-verb – this alternative will rather

be used with part-whole relationships and kinship as well as for permanent possessions, while the *have*-verb is used with ownership, or for less time-stable relationships (Aikhenvald 2013:33).

Stassen's typological predictions will be introduced in this section. In order to be able to do so, the four possessive construction types mentioned above need to be discussed in more detail. It is also vital to explain the restrictions he imposed on his data corpus so that the predictions can be understood in the right light: Stassen decided to limit the sample to sentences which display positive indefinite possession, include topical PRs and non-modified and non-quantified[32] possessee NPs and, where possible,[33] involve full NPs for both PR and PE rather than pronominals. 'Positive' possession here refers to the opposite of 'negative' possession as in *I do **not** have X*; 'indefinite' refers to the *have* as opposed to the *belong*-construction (see Footnote 21). When these restrictions are adhered to, the sample reveals four major construction types, namely Topic, With, Locational and Have-Possessives. These are presented schematically below. For each type, the construction in the form it would take in English is given in italics.

(i) TOPIC possessive: 'X$_{Top}$, Y is/exists', (*As for) PR, PE is/exists.*

Prototypically:

PR$_{TOP}$, PE   BE

Subj
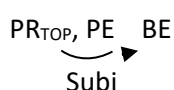
(ii) WITH possessive: 'X is/exists with Y', *PR is/exists with a PE.*

Prototypically:

PR PE$_{OBL}$ BE
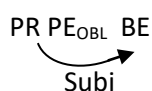
Subj   OBL: often a complement, expressed by *with* in its accompanying, non-instrumental sense

(iii) LOC possessive: 'at/to-X is/exists Y', *At/to PR, (there) is/exists a PE.*

Prototypically:

PR$_{LOC}$ PE BE

Subj
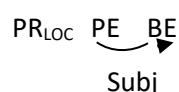
(iv) HAVE possessive: 'X has Y', *PR has a PE.*

Prototypically:

PR$_{SUBJ}$ PE$_{DO}$ HAVE

---

[32] Stassen (2009:30) explains that this decision helps to avoid the phenomenon of "Quantifier/Modifier-Raising" to be found in some languages: The modifier or quantifier is constructed "as (part of) the main predicate […], with the possessee NP as the subject. The possessor NP is […] constructed as an attributive possessive noun phrase to the possessee NP. In short, a sentence like *John has five motorcycles* in such languages has a form like *John's motorcycles are five*."

[33] Citing DuBois (1987), Stassen explains that it is in fact difficult to exclude sentences with at least one pronominal consistently because of a general tendency of languages to prefer sentences with only one full NP.

Stassen (2001, 2009) gives a range of examples from various languages for these four subtypes explaining where they can be found among the world's languages. The Have-Possessive, for example, is found on every continent (2009:64) but as a primary or at least prominent encoding option only appears in western and some eastern branches of modern Indo-European as well as a number of African language families (2001:995). The With-Possessive, in contrast, is found in the Eastern Austronesian and Papuan area, the northern part of South America, and sub-Saharan Africa. In other places it underwent grammaticalisation processes (2009:55f). Stassen also addresses the relationship between these subtypes, alienability, and the types of possession in his typology (see §7.5):

[T]he *with*-strategy […] is found significantly more than other strategies when it comes to encoding temporary possession, and is infrequent as an encoding option of inalienable possession. Conversely, Heine (1997:92-3) suggests that the topic-strategy […] is very seldom employed for the expression of temporary possession but is likely to be associated with alienable and inalienable possession. (2009:25)

It will be shown in Chapter 8 that mainly the With and the Have-Possessives and to some extent the Topic-Possessive are relevant for Australian languages; Chapter 9 will examine examples of the With and Have-Possessive from Miriwoong. The typological predictions associated with the With and Have-types are explained below. They are formulated in the form of implicational statements.

(i) With-Possessive

Claim I: If a language has a With-Possessive, it will have deranking of simultaneous different-subject sequences (2009:274,404).

Explanation: In sentences in which two actions happen simultaneously but are carried out by different subjects, the predicates are claimed not to have the same structural rank, e.g. the predicate in the subordinate clause is non-finite or intransitivised.

Claim II: If a language has a predicativised With-Possessive of the copular variant, its predicative adjectives are nouny (2009:141), i.e. adjectives in sentences such as (25) behave like predicative nouns (i.e. like nouns in sentences such as (27) below), not like verbs (by having tense/aspect marking).

(25) *The anthill is large.*

(ii) Have-Possessive

Claim: If a language has a Have-Possessive, it has

a. balanced encoding of simultaneous different-subject sequences, and

b. shared encoding of copular and locative/existential sentences

(2009:274,594).

Explanation: A Have-Possessive language is said to use the same encoding strategy for locative sentences, e.g. (25) as for copular sentences, cf. (26). Moreover, sentences in simultaneous different-subject sequences are claimed to have the same structural rank, e.g. both are main predicates.

(26) *Tom is at school.*

(27) *Tom is an artist.*

7.10 Conclusion

The concept of possession is universal. The literature addresses this semantic notion as a bio-cultural (Seiler 1983) or social one (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976). Possession is embodied in conventions and forms of social behaviour (ibid.) and thus cross-culturally variable. For example, a particular language group's culture is expected to influence certain aspects of possessive constructions, such as the range of objects that can or cannot be 'possessed' (Stassen 2009:8).

It is debated in the literature whether possession is an independent cognitive domain. It has been explained in terms of or subsumed under other domains such as location and has been argued to be a historical source of existentials (ibid.). Logical arguments have been put forward to support these kinds of claims, such as that possessive relationships have in common with locative relationships that they are binary: The existence of a possessor necessarily presupposes the existence of a possessee and vice versa Herslund & Baron (2001). Further, sign languages offer supportive data for the claim of a relationship between the locative, existential, and possessive domains such as possessive predicates deriving from a locative source and the use of locative index signs for both possession and existence (Chen Pichler et al. 2008). Counter-arguments for the claim that possession can be reduced to location include that not all subtypes of possessives are similar to locatives and that some languages make use of possessive verbs that derive from agentive rather than locative lexical verbs (Langacker 2003). In this thesis, possession, existence and location are conceived of as separate cognitive domains.

In many languages, *associative* relationships can be expressed with the same constructions as possessive ones. The range of functions subsumed under association includes orientation, attribution, accompaniment, partitivity and instrument. In order to distinguish a possessive from an associative reading of a given construction, it is necessary to employ language-internal tests, e.g. trying to rephrase a construction with an alternative possessive construction (Aikhenvald 2013).

The term *possession* is used for the relationship between a possessor (PR) and the entity being possessed by the PR, namely the possessee (PE). Prototypically, the PR is a specific human being who owns a concrete inanimate physical object in a legal sense of ownership (Taylor 1996). This

relationship is called *alienable* possession. Its counterpart, *inalienable* possession, is usually claimed to include at least relationships between human beings or animals and their body parts and more generally relationships between wholes and their parts. Relations between relatives are often counted among inalienable relations but have been found to be treated like alienable possessions in Australian languages (Dixon 1980, Heine 1997). Definitions of the inalienable category have been attempted from a semantic point of view and from a formal perspective. Moreover, hierarchies of (in)alienability have been proposed (Chappell & McGregor 1996, Nichols 1988).

Relationships between entities are considered to constitute (non-prototypical) possession if they fit the most important defining criteria for possession, i.e. control and permanent contact. In Stassen's (2009) typology, Alienable Possession is characterised by +Permanent Contact and +Control, Inalienable Possession by +Permanent Contact but -Control, Temporary Possession by -Permanent Contact and +Control, and Abstract Possession by -Permanent Contact and -Control. It is important to be aware that the terminology used in the field of possession is not always straight-forward: There are differences in the interpretation of the term Temporary possession and further names are used for the similar concepts.

In the literature many more than Stassen's four distinctions between types of possession can be found. Heine (1997) distinguishes Inanimate inalienable (i.e. part-whole) possession, which refers to the situation where the PR is inanimate and the PR and the PE are inseparable, from Inanimate alienable possession, where the PE is separable from the PR. He takes a grammaticalisation approach and relates his types of possession to source schemas. The types that will commonly be used in this thesis are the following: Alienable possession, Inalienable possession of body parts, kinship and part-whole relationships, Temporary possession (in Heine's sense) and Physical possession.

To conclude, in order to discern what to count as possession in a given language, the researcher has to use both semantic criteria (such as control and permanent contact) to identify potential structures and apply language-internal tests to distinguish possessive uses of these constructions from non-possessive ones.

This chapter introduces important concepts from the field of possession: There is a universal dichotomy between attributive and predicative possession: In attributive possession the PR and the PE form a single NP, in predicative possession the possessive relationship forms the main predication of the sentence. There are correspondences with particular domains: Predicative possession typically expresses ownership or temporary possession whereas attributive possession constructions can have many different interpretations (Stassen 2009).

Within predicative possession, there is a distinction between *have* and *belong*-constructions. The difference has been described in various ways. From a semantic perspective, the English

belong-construction is preferred for alienable possession but questionable for body part relations and kinship possession (Heine 1997). From the point of view of information structure, the discourse topic and grammatical subject is the PR in *have*-constructions but the PE in *belong*-constructions (Herslund & Baron 2001); emphasis is on the PE in *belong*-constructions but on the PR in *have*-constructions (Zeshan & Perniss 2008); the PE is indefinite in *have*-constructions (at least with respect to alienable possession), but definite in *belong*-constructions (Heine 1997).

Finally, this chapter portrays Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession. He describes four subtypes of positive indefinite predicative alienable possession involving ideally full NPs for both topical PRs and non-modified and non-quantified possessee NPs: the Topic, With, Locational and Have-Possessives. He makes predictions about repercussions in other parts of the grammar, namely nominal predication and temporal sequencing: Depending on the possessive construction used, the language will have either balanced encoding or deranking of simultaneous different-subject sequences and will have shared encoding of copular and locative/existential sentences and 'nouny' predicative adjectives.
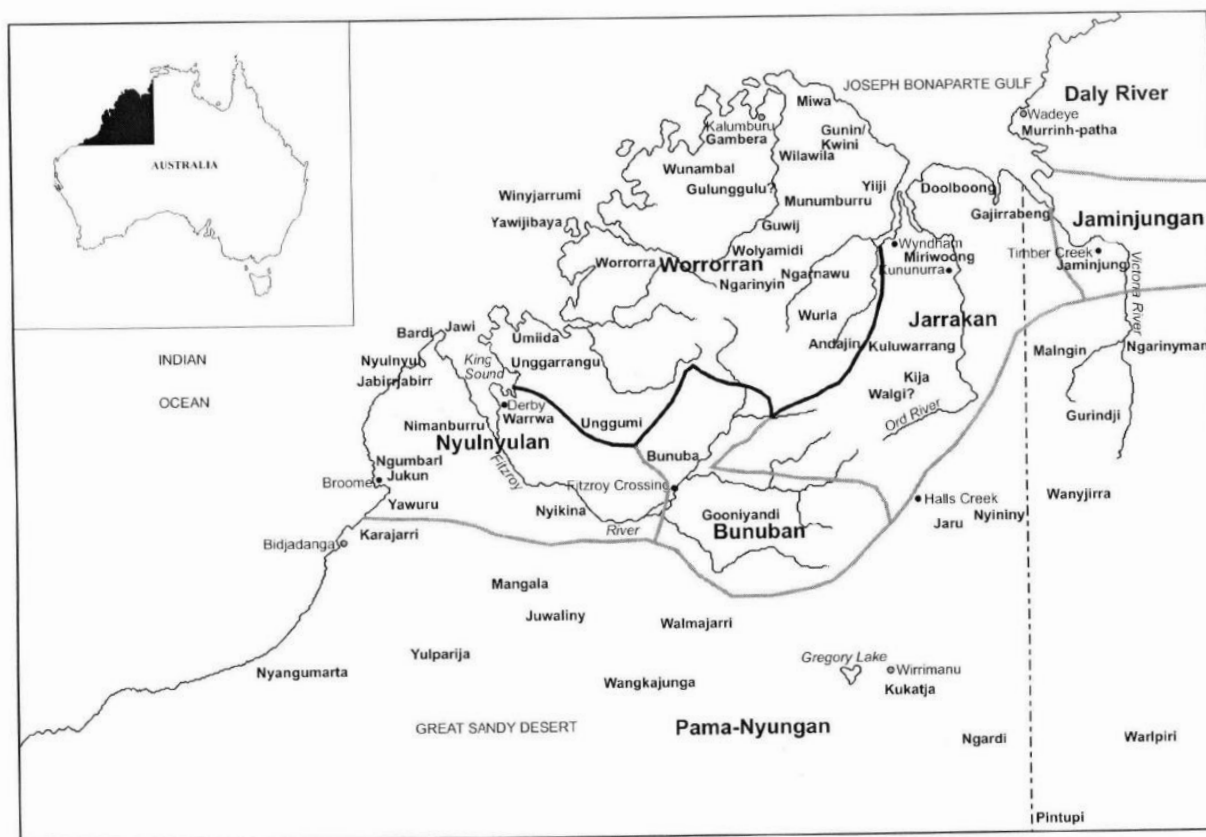
Map 8.1 Languages in the Kimberley region (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:3)

As a reminder from §2.2.3, Map 8.1 depicts Traditional languages of the Kimberley region. Following an introduction to possession in Australian languages in general (§8.1), in this chapter, possession in non-Pama-Nyungan Kimberley languages will be discussed (§8.2). The chapter is devoted to attributive and predicative possession and case in Australian as well as Kimberley languages and goes into detail about alienability, bound pronouns and derivational suffixes in non-Pama Kimberley languages.

8.1   Australian languages

8.1.1   Attributive possession in Australian languages

According to Dixon (1980, 2002, 2009), there are two major types of possessive constructions in Australian languages. The first type contains a noun phrase referring to the possessor (PR), which is marked by a genitive suffix, and an unmarked NP for the possessee (PE). The possessor NP can be a noun or a pronoun. This type is used for ownership and kinship relations. The second type comprises two juxtaposed NPs, one for the PR and one for the PE. This construction is used in many Australian languages for part-whole relationships between PR and PE, for association (e.g.

when the PE is a name) and for attributes (e.g. when the PE is an illness). Examples of the two construction types from Warrgamay (Pama-Nyungan) are shown in (1). (1)a) expresses alienable possession, thus the PR *djambi* 'old woman' is marked by the GENitive marker *-ŋu*. (1)b) communicates a part-whole relationship between the unmarked PR *djambi* 'old woman' and her *binganj* 'foot'.[1]

(1) Dixon (2002:138)   (Warrgamay)

a) *ŋadja   djambi-**ŋu**   bada   ŋunda-y*
   1sgA   old.woman-GEN   dog   see-UNMARKED
   'I saw the old woman's dog'

b) *ŋadja   djambi   binganj   ŋunda-y*
   1sgA   old.woman   foot   see-UNMARKED
   'I saw the old woman's foot'

Dixon (2002:138) argues that *bada* 'dog' is the head of the phrase *djambi-ŋu bada* in (1)a) whereas *djambi* 'old woman' is the head of *djambi binganj* in (1)b). The relevance of this is more obvious in languages with noun classes/genders, where the head determines the noun class of the whole NP. If Warrgamay had a feminine gender and *djambi* were feminine, for example, the noun for 'foot' would also take the feminine form (compare Dixon 2009:279). In languages with cross-referencing, the head is cross-referenced as a bound pronoun on the inflecting verb (if present) (Dixon 2002:59). If the language has case agreement, the case of the head PE will be added to the PR (1980:293).

Note that while in 2002 Dixon speaks of a semantic similarity between part-whole constructions and generic-noun-plus-specific-noun constructions (2002:60,138), in 2009 he doubts whether body-part constructions should be called possession as the body part noun "simply provides further specification of the NP head" (2009:284).[2] An example of a generic-noun-plus-specific-noun construction in Yir-Yoront (Pama-Nyungan) is given in (2)b). (2)c) shows that this construction type can be combined with the body part construction. In this thesis, the two constructions are understood as similar but separate for reasons to be discussed in §8.2.1.

(2) Dixon (2002:60)   (Yir-Yoront)

a) *minh*
   'game animal' (generic noun)

---

[1] Example sentences in this chapter are presented using the orthography of the original source. The glosses are largely left as they appear in the source; minor changes are sometimes made to allow for easier understanding. Where the source does not include a gloss, it is provided by the author of this thesis to the best of her abilities, following, where possible, the conventions used for Miriwoong elsewhere in the thesis.
[2] Compare also Heine's term *specification* (1997:156f): Two juxtaposed noun phrases, where one (usually the second) specifies (i.e. narrows down potential referents of) the other (usually the first), lays emphasis on it, and makes it more recoverable in the following discourse. It is claimed to be a "source pattern" for attributive possession (1997:161) and may develop into a either *possessor specification* or *possessee specification* (1997:157f).

b) *minh themthem*
'brush turkey (Alectura lathami)' (adding a specific noun)

c) *minh themthem mau*
'brush turkey's feather' (adding a part noun)

Remember from §7.2 on inalienable possession that cross-linguistically there is usually a divide between constructions for alienable and constructions for inalienable possession and that kinship relations are often counted among the inalienable relations. As stated above, in most Australian languages, this is not the case. A kin relation is expressed by the construction in (1)a), see (3), again from Warrgamay, where *ŋulmburu* 'woman' (and the modifying adjective *wurrbi* 'big') are marked with the GENitive case.

(3)   Dixon (1980:293)   (Warrgamay)

*ŋulmburu-**ŋu**-Ø*   *wurrbi-**ŋu**-Ø*   *wirru-Ø*
woman-GEN-ABS   big-GEN-ABS   husband-ABS

nyagarram-Ø   *gaga-ma*
small-ABS   go-FUT
'The large woman's small husband will go.'

It is worthwhile to call attention to the fact that Dixon focuses mainly on Pama-Nyungan languages in his work. McGregor, by contrast, has done most of his field-work on Kimberley languages, most of which are non-Pama-Nyungan languages. Thus, his account of the most common possessive constructions differs from Dixon's. First, the DATive rather than the genitive case is claimed to be used for the expression of possession. Second, he gives more weight to the ubiquity of possessive pronouns. Hence, in McGregor's (2004:156) words, "the most common ways of indicating possession within NPs in Australian languages" are:

(i)   a possessive pronoun indicating the PR + a nominal specifying the PE, see (4)a);

(ii) a dative marked NP designating the PR + a nominal specifying the PE, see (4)b)

(4)   McGregor (1990:157)   (Gooniyandi)

a) ***ngarragi***   *riwi/marla*
my   country/hand
'my country/hand'

b) *ngoorroo-**yoo***   *yoowooloo*   *tharra/marla*
that-DAT   man   dog/hand
'that man's dog/hand'

Third, as the alternative PE nouns in (4) show, the distinction observed by Dixon between body parts (*marla* 'hand') and other kinds of possessions (*riwi* 'country' and *tharra* 'dog'), does not hold in Gooniyandi (Bunuban) – at least not for animate PRs (for further information see the discussion of the classification construction in Gooniyandi in §8.2.1).

In the examples listed so far, the PR precedes the PE. This is in line with Dixon's generalisation that the order in the NP is usually as follows: PR > PE > adjective (1980:442). McGregor (1990) offers a detailed discussion of word order in Gooniyandi NPs (including non-possessive ones), which is not restricted to the order of the PR and PE referents in any given sentence but analyses possible orders with respect to the functions that words and phrases have. These functions occur in the order Deictic>Quantifier>Classifier>Entity>Qualifier.

(5) McGregor (2004:119)   (Gooniyandi)

ngarragi   thaarra
my   dog
'my dog'

(6) McGregor (1990:266)   (Gooniyandi)

*thadda   **ngaddagi**[3]*
dog   my
'my dog'

The word order is PR > PE in (5), where the Entity *tharra* 'dog' is preceded by the Deictic[4] *ngarragi* 'my'. When the PR has the function of a Qualifier,[5] however, the order is PE > PR, as in (6). Note also the correlation with discourse pragmatics: When the possessive pronoun occurs initially, "the referent [of the PE] is assumed by the speaker to be known to, and readily identifiable by the hearer, through its being someone's possession" (1990:270).

8.1.2   Case in Australian languages

Above, genitive and dative case have been found to be relevant for possession in Australian languages. Hereinafter, further issues pertaining to case will be discussed. Following a description of the proto-Australian case system (1980:311ff),[6] Dixon observes that non-Pama-Nyungan languages have "undergone the most dramatic changes from the pA [i.e. proto-Australian case] system. There have been a number of phonological shifts and also the development of complex verbal structures, leading to the dropping out of use of core syntactic cases" (1980:316). This loss of cases is the opposite of what Dixon generally claims for Australian languages:

> It seems that there has been a tendency in Australian languages towards developing more complex case systems – according inflectional status to what were originally post-inflectional increments […], deriving new inflections from former postpositions. […] Generally, it seems that each language has expanded and added to the original pA system in its own individual manner (ibid.).

---

[3] <dd> in McGregor (1990) is written <rr> in McGregor (2004).

[4] The role of a Deictic is also filled by demonstrative pronouns (McGregor 1990:129).

[5] The role of Qualifier is also filled by the specific noun in generic-specific constructions, such as *woman* in *two white.person woman, bush.dweller* in *that two man bush.dweller,* and *hunter* in *my dog hunter*. In phrases such as 'many people', *many* is the Qualifier in *man many* (McGregor 1990:254).

[6] Dixon reconstructs four case forms: Absolute *-Ø, Locative *-la, Ergative *-lu, Purposive *-gu) (1980:320). In 2002, Dixon adds *-dhu for Ergative and *-dha for Locative.

A further aspect relevant for the number of cases in individual languages is the fact that there is case syncretism, i.e. several case functions are expressed by a single form. Aikhenvald states that "[i]n many languages of the world, genitive – the case typically marking Possessor in a possessive construction – and dative – the case marking purpose and beneficiary – share the form. This type of case syncretism is found in many Australian languages (see Dixon 2002:167)" (2013:41). To be precise, Dixon lists 14 major case functions that are covered by only eight to ten different markers in most languages (2002:152). While there is some recurrent overlap, such as that dative and/or purposive and genitive are commonly expressed by the same means – both are "realised by *-gu* (=*ku*) [sometimes plus additional material for the genitive] in languages from all parts of the continent" – it is not the same sets of cases that are covered by one inflection only in all languages; "different [case] functions fall together in different languages" (1980:305,310).[7]

In the following, more details will be given about the cases that are relevant for possession and related functions. To begin with, more will be said about the genitive. Dixon presents the genitive as an addition to the core and peripheral case functions absolutive, ergative, locative, allative, ablative, dative, purposive, causal, instrumental and aversive (Dixon 1980:300). Genitive is introduced as a suffix that marks a PR of something alienably owned. In modern Australian languages the PR is claimed to behave like an adjective in that it modifies the PE (i.e. the head) and agrees in case (i.e. ERGative or ABSolutive) with the PE (1980:300,321). Case inflections follow the genitive marker, see *wagaal-ni* and *wagal-ni-ŋgu* 'wife's' in (7) from Yidiñ (Pama-Nyungan). This contrasts with the before-mentioned cases, none of which can be followed by a case. In this regard, Dixon compares the genitive with the derivational comitative ('with') and privative ('without') affixes (see below) and draws attention to the "controversial question" of whether the genitive should be analysed as an inflectional or a derivational affix in Australian languages (1980:300).

(7) Dixon (1980:300)   (Yidiñ)

a) *mujam-bu*   *wagaal-**ni**-**Ø***   *gudaaga-Ø*   *wawa-l*
   mother-ERG   wife-GEN-ABS   dog-ABS   look at-PRES
   'Mother is looking at [my] wife's dog.'

b) *wagal-**ni**-**ŋgu***   *gudaga-ŋgu*   *mujam-Ø*   *baja-l*
   wife-GEN-ERG   dog-ERG   mother-ABS   bite-PRES
   '[My] wife's dog is biting mother.'

---

[7] Dixon (2002) stresses that the forms are homonymous, i.e. while the form of a suffix may be the same for different functions, "the functions themselves can still in most cases be distinguished." For example, if not distinguishable on common nouns, they can be distinguished on pronouns, interrogatives, demonstratives, or proper nouns (2002:172). The distinction can also become obvious in differential grammatical treatment, for example while only an NP with ergative function may be cross-referenced on the verb, only an NP with instrumental function may be "brought into O function by an applicative derivation" (2002:175).

Secondly, the instrumental is employed to describe the use of a weapon or tool (e.g. 'he hit it *with a club'*), generally also for the use of body parts ('the crocodile held me *with its claws'*) (Dixon 2002:135). It may also, in some languages, be used to mark for instance the material out of which something is made ('house *out of bark'*) (other languages use the ablative, causal or comitative for this purpose (2002:136)) or the language spoken in (Schultze-Berndt 2000:61).

The instrumental is not always expressed by a separate marker. Nyulnyulan and Jarragan languages have an instrumental marker (McGregor & Rumsey 2009:48), but in most Australian languages this function is covered by the ergative (for body-part and hand-held instruments) and/or comitative (for other types of instrument), or by the locative (McGregor 2004:138,142). In about 150 languages (i.e. 90% of those that have an ergative suffix/enclitic) instrumental case is expressed by the same marker as ergative case (Dixon 2002:165). Only in a "sprinkling of languages" (2002:166) the instrumental has the same form as the locative. There are non-Pama-Nyungan languages that have lost the ergative case suffix or only use it "when ambiguity would otherwise result" (Dixon 1980:316). In the languages that have lost the case form for ergative marking, it is also no longer used for the instrumental function. Instead, a new instrumental clitic or adposition has developed.

Thirdly, the dative is used for peripheral arguments, such as the second argument of an intransitive verb ('cry for X', 'laugh at X', 'be sorry for X') and the third argument of a transitive verb such as 'give' (typically marking the recipient), 'tell' (marking the addressee) or 'show' (marking the experiencer) (Dixon 2002:134). The dative can also mark the stimulus e.g. of fear (Schultze-Berndt (2000:56). Most relevant for this thesis is its function to mark a beneficiary ('a shelter *for the children'*) (Dixon 2002:134).

In most languages the dative has the same form as the purposive (ibid.). The function of the latter is to mark other peripheral arguments, such as "the goal of an activity, e.g. 'go out *for* (i.e. to catch) *kangaroos'* or 'call somebody *for* (i.e. to eat) *food"*. The purposive marker occurs both on nouns and verbs, e.g. 'set a trap *for fish'* (suffix on the noun 'fish') vs. 'set a trap *to catch fish'* (suffix on the verb 'catch') (2002:134).

Fourthly, the comitative has a wide range of meanings and its semantic scope varies across languages (Dixon 2002:140). It is also called proprietive or associative or referred to as the 'having'-suffix, as it is often glossed accordingly (2002:141, for papers on the 'having'-suffix in 50 Australian languages see Dixon 1976). For example, the physical appearance of a man could be described by attaching the suffix to the nominal for 'moustache', as in 'moustache-*having'*. Dixon groups the possible meanings of the comitative into three categories, namely Attributes, Accompaniment and Temporal. In addition to physical appearance, alienable possessions of a person, e.g. 'yamstick-*having'*, belong to the category Attributes. Accompaniment comprises situations such as a person in motion with something that does or does not assist their motion

(e.g. 'man walking.stick-*having* is climbing', 'man boomerang-*having* is going') or a person at rest with something inanimate or human (e.g. 'man boomerang-*having* is sitting', 'man wife-*having* is sitting'). The Temporal category is exemplified by 'we wintertime-*having* go to coast' (i.e. 'we go to the coast in wintertime'). As was stated above, instrumental meaning (here counted as Accompaniment) is in some languages expressed by the comitative. The comitative reading of a sentence like *The man hit the dog with a stick* is: '[man with stick]$_A$ hit dog' (where A = agent); the INSTRumental reading of the same sentence is: 'man$_A$ hit dog with stick$_{INST}$' (ibid.).

The comitative can go on the noun it modifies, its modifying adjective (Dixon 1980:324), on a 'noun marker', or all the words in an NP (2013:292). It is often found in adjectival expressions, such as 'sickness-having' for 'sick' or 'stomach-having' for 'pregnant' (2002:141), but also in verbless clauses (2013:292). A comitative marker is often found in language names signalling a feature of the language (Dixon 1980:324). Ngaliwurru, for example, contains the comitative -*wurru*. The meaning of *ngali* is unclear, but it is familiar from the language name Nungali, where *ngali* is preceded by the noun class prefix *nu-* (Schultze-Berndt 2000:8). Some languages have more than one 'having'-suffix, e.g. '*with* X' (neutral) vs. '*with many* X' vs. '*with big* X' (2002:141).

Above, Dixon (1980) was quoted calling the comitative derivational. While acknowledging that this is an appropriate analysis for some of its uses, McGregor observes that (in Gooniyandi) it regularly attaches to a full NP without evidence that the constituent that it attaches to "becomes a new lexical item" (1990:175). In this productive use of the morpheme he therefore refers to it as a case-marking postposition (see §8.2.4).

Finally, the privative (or deprivative) marks the "lack of something, or 'not having' something" (Aikhenvald 2013:27), e.g. **'**sit around fire-*privative*', 'the child came mother-*privative*', 'hair-*privative*' (i.e. 'bald') (Dixon 2002:141). This "negative correspondent" of the comitative has almost the same semantic range as the comitative except for the category Temporal and weapons as instruments (ibid.). Like the comitative, it can attach to the noun it modifies and its modifying adjective and derives adjectival stems from nominal roots (Dixon 1980:324).

8.1.3 Predicative possession in Australian languages

So far, the focus has mainly been on attributive possession in Australian languages. In the following, some perspectives on predicative possession will be discussed. Heine (1997) makes an interesting observation about Australian languages. He explains that it is possible in the world's languages for possessive constructions to express so-called "situation types": present vs. former possession, communal vs. individual possession, passive/subordinate possession (i.e. the PR is a patient/target/involuntary experiencer), direct (i.e. canonical possession or ownership) vs. descriptive attributive possession (i.e. the PR expresses quality-like concepts such as use, content, type, material), among others (1997:23f). He goes on to specify that languages from Australia and

the Pacific are particularly rich in these conceptual taxonomies (1997:24): Possessive constructions in particular languages can be found to distinguish as many as 6 or more categories.

Concerning the use of possessive verbs in predicative possession Dixon (2013) claims that there is no verb meaning 'have', 'own', 'possess', 'belong', or 'lack' in many Australian languages. Instead, in some languages a copular construction is used, as in 'A black dog *is to* John'. However, an overt copula is lacking in "a fair few languages", which resort to verbless clauses (2013:291). As pointed out by McGregor (2001), though, "a fair number" of Australian languages do have one or more verbs "that in certain environments admit a 'have' interpretation" (2001:81). For examples from Kimberley languages, see §8.2.2.

Stassen's (2009) typology of positive indefinite (non-modified and non-quantified) predicative possession was discussed in §7.9. It was claimed there that the With and Have-Possessives and to a lesser extent the Topic-Possessive are relevant for Australian languages. 13 out of the 22 Australian languages that Stassen analysed have a With-Possessive and Stassen assumes that the number of languages with this type would be even higher if more Australian languages had been included in his language sample (2009:154). However, among the non-Pama-Nyungan languages "quite a few cases" of the Have-Possessive and "several instances" of the Topic-Possessive are found (Stassen 2009:153). Thus, more will be said about these three types here.

The WITH possessive is defined as follows (2009:54):
  i.   The construction contains a locative/existential predicate, in the form of a verb with the rough meaning of 'to be'.
 ii.   The possessor NP is constructed as the *grammatical subject* of the predicate.
iii.   The possessee NP is constructed in some *oblique, adverbial case form.*

The Australian With-Possessive takes the form of "the so-called 'proprietive' construction" (2009:596). It exhibits a 'having'-suffix which derives adjectival stems from any nominal roots (2009:154, compare the discussion of the comitative above). The PE, together with its suffix, has the syntactic function of a predicate adjective and is constructed with a zero-copula rather than a locative/existential predicate. Therefore, it is considered as the so-called copular subtype[8] of the With-Possessive (ibid.). Stassen claims that this subtype emerged through a process called predicativisation, whereby a reanalysis of the categorial and syntactic status of the possessee phrase lead to its being reanalysed as the 'property-indicating' predicate of a possessive construction (2009:137). This process "may have progressed further in some languages than in others" (2009:407). Stassen presents an example from Kayardild (a Tangkic language, quoted

---

[8] Stassen describes the copular variant of the With-Possessive as follows: "The possessee-phrase is constructed as part of a nonverbal predicate [..., i.e.] it takes on syntactic status of the complement of a copular item [..., i.e.] a copular verb, a copular particle, or as a zero element" (2009:140).

from Evans 1995), see (8). The PROPrietive suffix occurs on the nominal *maku* 'woman' and the modifier *jangka* 'other'. The subject is a pronoun in the nominative.

(8) Evans (1995:317)   (Kayardild)

> *Nyingka*   *jangka-**wuru***   *maku-**uru***
> 2sg-NOM   other-PROP   woman-PROP
> 'You've got another woman'

The HAVE possessive is defined as follows (2009:62):

i.   The construction contains a transitive predicate.

ii.   The possessor NP is constructed as the *subject/agent*.

iii. The possessee NP is constructed as the *direct object/patient*.

In at least some Australian languages the predicate, i.e. the respective *have*-verb, likely arose from a verb meaning 'to hold' or 'to grasp' (Stassen 2009:596 citing McGregor 2001:82). However, the verbs have expanded their meaning and now cover more semantic nuances of possession than just temporary possession (ibid.). Stassen chose the Kimberley language Gooniyandi to exemplify the Have-Possessive (Bunuban, quoted from McGregor 1990), see (9) and (10). The inflected verb in Gooniyandi is glossed as 'hold' and cross-references both the subject/agent and direct object/patient. It expresses kinship possession (9) and alienable possession (10). Further Australian languages with the Have-Possessive are Limilngan (Limilngan language family) and Nyulnyul (Nyulnyulan, quoted from McGregor 2001), see (11). In Nyulnyul the inflected verb has a more abstract meaning (see §8.2.2) and is glossed 'have'. It cross-references the subject/agent. In (11), it encodes alienable possession.

(9) McGregor (1990:153)   (Gooniyandi)

> *Yiniga*   *mawoolyi*   ***gooddijgoonjoonaddi***
> how.many   children   you.hold.them
> 'How many children do you have?'

(10) McGregor (1990:492)[9]   (Gooniyandi)

> *Nganyi*   *marlami*   ***goorijgila***   *yawarda*
> I   not   I.hold.it   horse
> 'I haven't got a horse.'

(11) McGregor (2001:73)[10]   (Nyulnyul)

> *Warinyjirr*   *jumbarrirri-manyjin*   ***nga-bukand-in***
> One   knife-only   1SG.NOM-have-PRES
> 'I only have one knife.'

---

[9] McGregor specifies that *marlami* is used in a phrasal role in this sentence. He observes that the "NP in which *marlami* 'nothing, without' occurs is subject to ellipsis and splitting." In this particular case, the phrase "has been split" (1990:492), otherwise *marlami* would follow the Entity *yawarda* 'horse'.
[10] Stassen quotes from McGregor, who in turn quotes Nekes et al. (1953:503,686,715).

The TOPIC possessive is defined as follows (2009:58):

i. The construction contains a locative/existential predicate, in the form of a verb with the rough meaning of 'to be'.

ii. The possessee NP is constructed as the *grammatical subject* of the predicate.

iii. The possessor NP is constructed as the *sentence topic* of the sentence.

It was mentioned above that the Topic-Possessive is "a minor option" in Australia (2009:485). In Stassen's language sample, four languages (all non-Pama-Nyungan) make use of it. In all four, it is of the juxta-posed zero-type (ibid.). Most languages have additional alternative possessive constructions as the zero-type Topic-Possessive lacks a verbal predicate and is, thus, potentially ambiguous between a possessive and a copular reading (ibid.). Gooniyandi, for example also has a standard Topic-Possessive (ibid.). Its zero-type construction is illustrated in (12). World and cultural knowledge should rule out the alternative copular reading 'I am not a motorcar' in most contexts. (13) exemplifies the standard variant of the Topic-Possessive: The posture verb 'sit' instantiates the predicate.

(12) McGregor (1990:490)   (Gooniyandi)

Nganyi   marlami   moodiga
I   not   motorcar
'I have no car.'[11]

(13) McGregor (1990:496)   (Gooniyandi)

*Woomoorla   thadda   **rooginygiri***
not   dog   I.sit
'I have no dog.'

In §7.9 the typological predications for the With and Have-Possessives were explained. They are repeated here:

HAVE Possessive

Claim: If a language has a Have-Possessive, it has

a. balanced encoding of simultaneous different-subject sequences, and

b. shared encoding of copular and locative/existential sentences.

WITH Possessive:

Claim I: If a language has a With-Possessive,

c. it will have deranking of simultaneous different-subject sequences.

Claim II: If a language has a (predicativised) With-Possessive of the copular variant,

d. its predicative adjectives are nouny.

---

[11] McGregor explains that the word order in this utterance is unusual: "The usual word order is for *marlami* 'nothing, without' to follow the Entity nominal." As in the utterance with *marlami* above (exemplifying the HAVE possessive), *marlami* here realises a phrasal role (McGregor 1990:490).

With respect to the Australian languages in his sample, Stassen's sample confirms both claims for languages with Have-Possessives by asserting that

a. balancing is the preferred strategy to encode simultaneous different-subject sequences: Australian languages favour (asyndetic) coordination of main sentences over subordination of clauses (2009:596).

b. all have shared encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences. In most cases, this involves zero-encoding (ibid.).

With respect to the Australian languages that have a Have-Possessive in addition to their With-Possessive, he also confirms claim I for With-Possessives by asserting that

c. in addition to their balancing options they also have deranked predicates. Subordination of finite clauses is realised by means of subordinating conjunctions (2009:596).

These claims can be illustrated with the help of examples sentences form Gooniyandi, Kayardild and Pitjantjatjara. First, the balancing strategy for simultaneous different-subject sequences will be addressed. Befitting its Have-Possessive, Gooniyandi has balanced clauses, which are realised by means of asyndetic coordination, i.e. two finite clauses are juxtaposed to one another without any indication of the semantic relationship between them, see (14) and (15). There is no evidence that the verb in the second clause is deranked, such as by being stripped of its tense-marking or being marked for nominalisation (ibid.)

(14) McGregor (1990:424)   (Gooniyandi)

Nginyji   lililoowa   wardbiri   nganyi   ngirndangaddi   wardjawingi
you   west   you.will.go I   this.way   I.will.go
'You go the west way, and I'll go this way.'

(15) McGregor (1990:429)   (Gooniyandi)

Boolga-ngga   wardjiwiddangi   bidiyooddoo   mooyoo   bagiwiddi
old.man-ERG   he.went.to.them   they.two   sleep   they.lay
'The old man went up to them as they slept.'

Befitting its With-Possessive, Kayardild, by contrast, has deranking "in the form of an absolute construction" (2009:414), see (16) and (17). There is no subordinating conjunction, but the subordinate clause is marked by LOCative/OBLique case.

(16) Evans (1995:496)   (Kayardild)

*Yiiwi-ja   bi-l-d,   nga-ku-rr-a   kabathaa-**th.iya**   yakuri-y*
sleep-ACT   3pl-NOM   1INC-du-NOM   hunt-IMMED.LOC   fish-LOC
'They are sleeping, as we hunt for fish'

(17) Evans (1995:522)   (Kayardild)

Niya	*rajurri-nangku*	*thubun-**inja***	*ngamathuwalath-**inja***	*raba-tharra-**nth***
3sgNOM	walk-NEG.POT	hoof-OBL	bullock-OBL	tread-PST-OBL

'He won't be able to walk, because/after a bullock trampled him'[12]

Second, Gooniyandi will be examined with respect to its encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences. Also befitting its Have-Possessive, Gooniyandi has shared encoding: In none of the sentences below there is a copula. In the equative/identifying (copular) construction in (18), the two nominals are juxtaposed. In the locational/existential sentences in (19) and (20) the location is indicated by a locative marker on the nominal expressing the location.

(18) McGregor (1990:395)   (Gooniyandi)

Goornboo	*woobgali*
Woman	cook

'The woman is a cook.'

(19) McGregor (1990:302)   (Gooniyandi)

Ngaddagi	*ngaaddi*	*gilirni-**ya***	*babaabiddi*
my	stone	grass-LOC	inside

'My money is in the grass.'

(20) McGregor (1990:304)   (Gooniyandi)

Biliga	*gamba-**ya***	*yoonggoo*	*nyamani*	*giddaabingaddi*
middle	water-LOC	scrub	big	long

'In the middle of the water there is some big scrub.'

There is an alternative construction for locational/existential sentences in Gooniyandi: They can be encoded with posture verbs, see (21).

(21) McGregor (1990:313)   (Gooniyandi)

a)
Babligaj-ja	***warangji***
pub-LOC	she.sat

'She was at the pub.'

b)
Ngamoo	*yoowooloo-moowa*	***warangbiddi***
before	man-only	they.sat

'Before there were only Aborigines.'

This alternative is in line with the typological predictions for the copular variant of the With-Possessive, namely that zero encoding is found with copular sentences but not with locational/existential sentences (Stassen 2009:144).

With respect to claim d. (i.e. in languages with predicativised With-Possessives predicative adjectives are nouny) Stassen explains: As stated above, due to a grammaticalisation process possessee phrases in With-Possessives of the copular variant are 'property-indicating' (2009:142).

---

[12] Stassen observes that "the subject of the deranked predicate appears to agree in case-marking with the predicate" (2009:414).

Therefore, their morphosyntactic behaviour can be predicted from the composition of constructions including (likewise property-indicating) predicative adjectives (2009:137). In Australian languages, sentences with predicative adjectives involve a zero copula. Coincidentally, constructions including predicative nouns also lack copulas. Thus, in this regard predicative adjectives behave in the same way as predicative nouns. Pitjantjatjara (Pama-Nyungan) is a language that illustrates that Australian languages fulfill the prediction of 'nouny' predicative adjectives (2009:142) in this way: Both the predicative adjective *pulkanya* 'large' in (22) and the predicative noun *ngalyayala* 'doctor' in (23) are juxtaposed to the respective noun they modify, without the presence of a copula and without any verbal morphology on the predicative adjective.

(22) Douglas (1957: 55)   (Pitjantjatjara)

    Lampi   pulkanya
    ant.hill   large
    'The ant-hill is large'

(23) Douglas (1957: 55)   (Pitjantjatjara)

    Wati   ngalyayala
    Man   doctor
    'The man is a doctor'

The above-mentioned grammaticalisation process is argued to also affect the status of the marking element, i.e. the 'having'-suffix (or comitative marker): It is reanalysed as an adjective-forming derivational affix. It will be discussed in more detail below that the comitative is in fact both used in possessive constructions and has derivational uses in many Australian languages. Note also that in Australian languages adjectives and nouns are usually considered joined members of the class of nominals since they display similar morphological and syntactic behaviour. Thus, it is not surprising that predicative adjective and predicative noun constructions are found to be similar.

8.2 Non-Pama-Nyungan Kimberley languages

8.2.1 Attributive possession in Kimberley languages

To begin with, McGregor describes three types of attributive possessive marking in Kimberley languages (2004:156f):

(i)   a possessive pronoun indicating the PR + a nominal specifying the PE

(ii)   a dative- or genitive-marked NP designating the PR + a nominal specifying the PE

(iii)   an unmarked possessor NP + a possessive pronoun + a nominal denoting the PE

(i) and (ii) are claimed to be most common. (i) is exemplified by sentence (24) from Gunin/Kwini (Worrorran). The possessive NP in the characterising clause[13] contains a possessive pronoun, which is derived from the cardinal pronoun by attaching the third person genitive suffix -*ningga* (McGregor 2008:307), and the PE nominal *muru* 'face'.

    (24) McGregor (2004:219)   (Gunin/Kwini)

bini-ningga	*muru*	*sheep*	*maniye*
he-GEN	face	sheep	like

    'His face is like a sheep's.'

Construction (ii) is illustrated in (25), from Ngarinyin (Worrorran). The unmarked PE *modaga* 'car' is followed by the genitive-marked PR *polijman*.

    (25) McGregor (2004:140)   (Ngarinyin)

modaga	*polijman-**nangga***
car	policeman-GEN

    'a policeman's car'

The possessive pronoun in (iii) "serves as a type of linker" (2004:157). An example from Nyulnyul (Nyulnyulan) is given in (26), where the possessor NP *bin wamb* 'this man' and the possessee NP (*ni-*)*marl* '(his) hand' (for possessor prefixes on nouns see §8.2.5 below) are followed by the possessive pronoun *jin* 'his':

    (26) McGregor (2004:157)   (Nyulnyul)

bin	*wamb*	*ni-marl*	***jin***
this	man	his-hand	his

    'this man's hand'

Kimberley languages differ in whether they exhibit only two or all three of these construction types. Which of the constructions is chosen for a particular utterance depends on "inherent characteristics of the possessor" (2004:157). In Ngarinyin, for instance, (with non-pronominal PRs) type (ii) is used (as shown above) unless the PR is a personal name, in which case (iii) is applied.

In nested constructions, two types can be combined. Type (i) and (ii) are found in the following sentence from Ngaliwurru (Jaminjungan): A possessive pronoun precedes the unmarked PE *wanag* 'bag' (type i), which is further specified by a PR marked possessive/dative (type ii).

    (27) Bolt et. al (1971:84)   (Ngaliwurru)

yundyu	***ŋargina-nu***	*gud^yadiŋ-**gu***	*wanag*
this	my-poss	mother-poss	bag

    'This is my mother's bag'

Types (ii) and (iii) are combined in (28) from Gooniyandi (Bununban): The dative-marked possessor phrase *ngooddoo-yoo yoowooloo* ('that man's') and the unmarked PE *thodda* 'dog'

---

[13] According to McGregor "characterising clauses 'characterise' an entity in terms of some property, quality, location, use, etc." (1990:298).

(type ii) are linked by the third person singular possessive pronoun[14] *nhoowoo* (type iii). According to McGregor's (1990) analysis, the topic *that man's wife* is followed by the rheme *her dog.*[15]

(28) McGregor (1990:373)   (Gooniyandi)

ngooddoo-yoo	*yoowooloo*	*garingi*	*ngirndaji*	*nhoowoo*	*thodda*
that-DAT	man	wife	this	3sg.POSS	dog

'This is that man's wife's dog.'

Types (i) and (iii) can also be combined, see (29): The unmarked possessor NP *ngaddagi ngaddanyi* 'my mother' containing the first person singular possessive pronoun *ngaddagi* (type i), is linked with the help of the third person singular possessive pronoun *nhoowoo* to the PE *ngaja* 'brother' (type iii), which is followed by the predicate *ngaddagi nyaanyil* 'my uncle' (again type i). McGregor (1990) argues that such constructions contain a topic and a theme. As shown by the slashes, the topic (*ngaddagi ngaddanyi* 'my mother') and the theme (*ngaja* 'brother') have their own intonation contours. According to McGregor's (1990) analysis, *ngaja nhoowoo* 'brother her' and *ngaddagi nyaanyil* 'my uncle' form a characterising clause.

(29) McGregor (1990:372)   (Gooniyandi)

ngaddagi	*ngaddanyi /*	*ngaja*	*nhoowoo /*	*ngaddagi*	*nyaanyil*
1sg.POSS	mother	brother	3sg.POSS	1sg.POSS	uncle

'My mother's brother is my uncle.'

In addition to the three construction types for attributive possession discussed above, a further construction should be mentioned that could at first sight be interpreted to be possessive in nature. McGregor (1990:260ff) calls the juxtaposition of two nominals *classification*: "The Classifier indicates the type of thing referred to by the phrase, specifying that it is a member of a particular subset of the items denoted by the Entity nominal." This phenomenon is also discussed by Heine (1997). He attributes the term to Chappell & McGregor (1989) who define classification as the phenomenon "whereby the dependent nominal indicates the type of entity that is being referred to by the head noun" and explain that it is a third construction in addition to alienable and inalienable possession (1989:28).[16]

There are nine different types of classification in Gooniyandi. For example, in (30) the Classifier *gamba* 'water' indicates the generic type of which the Entity *yiwindi* 'rain' is a specific example.

---

[14] McGregor distinguishes *nominative* (i.e. cardinal) from *oblique* (i.e.) possessive pronouns (1990:170). The latter are not formed in a regular way from the former, there are two separate sets (ibid.). However, all but one of the possessive pronouns exhibit the apparent possessive suffix *-angi* (2004:118)*.* A gender distinction is not made in Gooniyandi pronouns (see also McGregor 2004:110).

[15] McGregor explains that it is unusual in Gooniyandi for a rheme rather than a theme to follow the topic (1990:373). See below for an utterance where a topic precedes a theme.

[16] According to Chappell & McGregor, classification has the following characteristics: Typically, the head follows the dependent. Both are nouns and only the head is referential. Classification expresses not only generic-specific, but also function-form, use-item, status-holder, slot-filler, and role-occupant (1989:29).

(30) McGregor (1990:161)   (Gooniyandi)

gamba   yiwindi   jigjigji
water   rain   it:spotted
'Rain spotted the ground.'

In this sentence, there is no apparent semantic overlap with possession. However, in Gooniyandi, classification is also the "usual way of indicating the part-whole relation for inanimates, such as tools, topographical features, etc., and also parts of plants" (McGregor 1990:261), see (31). In contrast to other Australian languages (Dixon 1980:293), in these cases, the classification construction is argued not to express possession, either (1990:252f).

(31) McGregor (1990:161)   (Gooniyandi)

jinali   jalgoodoo
spear   shaft
'shaft of a spear'

Classification can also be used with animals but only in special circumstances (1990:261). In (32), the body part *nyawa* 'tail' is classified by the whole, i.e. *thiddo* 'kangaroo'. 'kangaroo tail' is here not interpreted as 'kangaroo's tail' (i.e. inalienable possession) but as 'kangaroo tail', i.e. a type of food. Usually, body parts of animals are treated as a possessions and dative marking is employed.

(32) McGregor (1990:253)   (Gooniyandi)

thiddoo   nyawa
kangaroo   tail
'kangaroo tail' [interpreted as food]

Constructions involving humans and their body parts can also be analysed as classification, if no dative marker is used. The characterising clause *manili thigi* 'nose short' in (33) is preceded by the topic *goornboo* 'woman'. *goornboo* 'woman' and *manili* 'nose' do not form an NP.

(33) McGregor (1990:372)   (Gooniyandi)

goornboo   manili   thigi
woman   nose   short
'The woman has a short nose.'

Classification constructions are similar to the generic-noun-plus-specific-noun constructions discussed in §8.1 above. Generic-noun-plus-specific-noun constructions and classification have a wider semantic range and are treated differently in Gooniyandi from body part constructions, which are generally marked by the dative. Thus, generic-noun-plus-specific-noun constructions and classification on the one hand and part-whole constructions including body parts on the other are treated as two separate constructions in this thesis.

McGregor establishes that non-Pama Kimberley languages commonly use nominal clauses to express predicative possession (2004:220). These do not include VPs but one or more NPs. There are two main variants:

(I)   an NP referring to the PR followed by a comitative PP representing the PE

-> *have*-construction (see §7.6)

(II)   an NP denoting the PE followed by a dative or genitive NP representing the PR

-> *belong*-construction (see §7.6)

In Gooniyandi (Bununban), type (I) looks like the sentence in (34). The PE *jiginya* 'child' is marked with the COMITative.

(34) McGregor (1990:302)   (Gooniyandi)

*niyaji   goornboo   jiginya-**ngaddi***
this   woman   child-COMIT
'This woman has a child.'/'This woman is with child (i.e. is pregnant).'[17]

Nyikina (Nyulnyulan) illustrates type II. In (35), the PE *kamirri yila* 'that dog' is followed by the DATive-marked PR *marnin-ji* 'woman's'.

(35) McGregor (2004:220)   (Nyikina)

*kamirri   yila   marnin-**ji***
that   dog   woman-DAT
'That dog is the woman's.' Or 'That dog belongs to the woman.'

In addition, there are two further variants in Nyulnyulan languages:

(III)   a possessive pronoun intervenes between the two unmarked NPs

(IV)   two unmarked NPs for the PE and the PR + an intervening NP denoting a quality displayed by the PE + an optional possessive pronoun

Type III is found in Nyulnyul (Nyulnyulan). In (36), the possessive pronoun *jirr* 'their' is used to express the predicative possession relation between the PR *kujarr wamb* 'two man' and the PE *ina bur* 'this camp'.

(36) McGregor (2004:221)   (Nyulnyul)

*ina   bur   **jirr**   kujarr   wamb*
this   camp   their   two   man
'This camp belongs to the two men.'

Constructions like these are also found in most Western Nyulnyulan languages, such as Bardi and Warrwa as well as in languages from other families, namely in Gooniyandi (Bunuban), and Gunin/Kwini (Worrorran) (McGregor 2004:221). Bardi also exemplifies type IV, see (37):

---

[17] The alternative translations highlight that due to the nature of the comitative marker the utterance is ambiguous between an intensive characterising clause ('This woman is with child (i.e. is pregnant)') and a circumstantial characterising clause ('This woman has a child') (McGregor 1990).

In addition to the PR *nyoongool aamba* 'old man', the PE *jidi* 'beard' and the possessive pronoun *jinarr*,[18] *niwandi* 'long' expresses a quality of the PE.

(37) McGregor (2004:221)   (Bardi)

nyoongool	*aamba*	*niwandi*	***jinarr***	*jiidi*
old	man	long	3minOBL.EMP	beard

'The old man has a long beard.'

As mentioned above in §8.1.3, in addition to these four types of nominal clauses, in a "fair number of Kimberley languages" verbal clauses are used to express predicative possession (McGregor 2004:228). Different kinds of verbal predicates can be used. Nyulnyulan languages have the option to express possession with a BE-verb,[19] see (38) and (39). In the example from Jabirrjabirr (Nyulnyulan), the inflected verb (IV) is transitive and marked by the APPlicative.[20] In Warrwa, the IV is intransitive and accompanied by a COMitative-marked numeral, which is part of the possessee NP. Note that (39) is a good example of the With-Possessive in Stassen's typology: The PR *kulurr wamba* 'hawk man' is "constructed as the subject/agent" by virtue of being cross-referenced on the verb, the PE *kujarra-warri yiri* 'two women' is "constructed as the direct object/patient" by virtue of being marked as an "oblique, adverbial case form", namely the comitative, and the "locative/existential predicate has the rough meaning of 'to be'" (Stassen 2009:54).

(38) McGregor (2004:229)   (Jabirrjabirr)

ibal-in	*i-**n**-in-**ang***	*bukiyan*	*bukijamaniman*
father-ERG	3sgSUB-be-PRES-APP	things	all:kinds

'Father has many things of all kinds.'

(39) McGregor (2004:229)   (Warrwa)

kulurr	*wamba,*	*i-**nga**-na*	*kujarra-**warri***	*yiri*	*nyin-kardiny,*
hawk	man	3minSUB-be-IMP	two-COM	woman	this-side

'The hawk man had two wives on this side of the river.'

Another option in all Nyulnyulan languages except Yawuru is to use a possessive *have*-verb in their verbal possessive clauses (McGregor 2004:228). In some Kimberley languages, the *have*-verb's primary meaning is lexical – such as 'hold' in Gooniyandi (Bunuban). In Nyulnyulan languages, by contrast, the *have*-verb is like the English possessive verb *have* in the sense of

---

[18] In Bardi there are free possessive pronouns (also called *OBLique* pronouns) and clitics that are used as PE markers (Bowern 2012:301). As compound pronouns (i.e. combinations of free pronouns and clitics) they specify information for the person and number of both PR and PE. For some free possessive pronouns there are short and long variants. These forms can be analysed as "contractions of the free [cardinal] pronoun and the possessive pronoun" (2012:302).

[19] The possessive verb used in a particular language will be referred to in capitals.

[20] "The applicative voice is a grammatical voice which promotes an oblique argument of a verb to the (core) patient argument, and indicates the oblique role within the meaning of the verb." General Ontology for Linguistic Description (GOLD), 2010, Applicative Voice, http://linguistics-ontology.org/gold/2010/Applicative Voice (accessed 2020-04-13).

carrying a more abstract possessive meaning. The meanings 'hold' and 'keep' are expressed by a different verb in Nyulnyulan or "superimposed from the surrounding discourse and environment" (McGregor 2001:80f). In (40), the IV HAVE in Nyikina (Nyulnyulan) expresses alienable possession. The implicit PR and the possessee NP *manja yila* 'many dogs' are cross-referenced on the verb.

(40) McGregor (2004:228)   (Nyikina)

> *nga-m-**bika**-ny-jarr-irr*   *manja   yila*
> 1minSUB-nasal-have-PA-REL-3augOBJ   many   dog
> 'I used to have lots of dogs.'

Such *have*-verbs are also found in languages from other language families, for example Kija (Jarragan) and Jaminjung[21] (Jaminjungan). In (41), the Kija HAVE-verb expresses predicative temporary possession and is accompanied by the possessive pronoun *nyingangkurru-* 'yours', which encodes the PR in the attributive possessive relation to the PE *merrejinpu* 'medicine'.

(41) Blythe (2001:21)   (Kija)

> ***Nyingangkurru**-m*   *merrejinpu*   ***junamurlunhama**?*
> your-N   medicine   have you(sg) got them/some
> 'Have you got your medicine?'

(42) Schultze-Berndt (2000:74, Topological Relations Picture book, DR, NGA109)

> *thanggagu*   *marnal-ni*   *janga*   *gana-**ma**-ya*
> above   ankle-LOC   sore   3sg:3sg-HAVE-PRS
> 'on top of the ankle he has got a sore'   (Jaminjung)

(42) illustrates the *have*-verb in Jaminjung. *-ma* is the present tense stem of the HAVE-verb *-muwa*, which could be related to a common Australian verb form *-ma(a)-n* described by Dixon (1980:405). The original meaning of *-ma(a)-n* may have been 'hold in hand'.

8.2.3   Alienability in Kimberley languages

Regarding alienability, McGregor holds that in most Kimberley languages "there is no distinction between alienable and inalienable possession at NP level" (1990:157). He gives an example from Gooniyandi, where the dative marker is used both on the noun for 'dog' and the noun for the body part 'hand' to express possession (see (4) above), to show that "the same constructions are used irrespective of the nature of the possessed item". However, he concedes that "[a] few cases are reported in the literature in which inalienable possession is expressed by an NP in which the possessor and possessed nominals have the same case-marking (2004:329)."

Also, McGregor recognises that the concept of inalienability is sometimes relevant at word level (2004:329). This is the case, for instance, in Bardi (as well as all other Worrorran and

---

[21] As Schultze-Berndt (2000) does not always differentiate in her work between the closely related dialects Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru (2000:4,7), in examples quoted from her thesis, Jaminjung is to be understood to mean Jaminjung and/or Ngaliwurru.

Western Nyulnyulan languages (McGregor 2004:143)), where pronoun prefixes (see §8.2.5 below) are used on inalienable nouns only (Bowern 2012:154).

In addition, inalienability is relevant on the clausal level. In predicative possession different possessive clause types are used in some languages for alienable vs. inalienable possession. In Nyulnyulan languages the *have*-type possessive construction with a comitative-marked PE (type I) is used only for inalienable possession whereas the *belong*-type construction with a dative-marked PR (type II) is employed for alienable possession (McGregor 2004:220f). Moreover, the possessive pronoun between the unmarked PR and PE NPs in the type IV possessive construction used in Nyulnyulan languages can only be left out when the utterance is about inalienable relations (2004:221). In Kija (Jarragan), McConvell (2003:80,88) argues, locative pronominal enclitics mark inalienable possession (most commonly body parts (KLRC 1996:22)) whereas dative pronominal enclitics mark alienable possession. Possessive constructions involving enclitics rather than dative or genitive case inflections have not been discussed so far (for more information on enclitics see §8.2.4 below). Examples from Kija are given in (43): Inalienable possession is marked by the third person masculine LOCative enclitic on the PE *therlam* 'back' in (43)a; the alienable relationship between the PR *ngalim* 'women' and the PE *mayaru* 'house' is marked in (43)b with the third person Neuter/PLural DATive enclitic *-purru* on the first element (2003:87), i.e. in this utterance the PR.[22]

(43) KLRC (1996:22)[23]   (Kija)

  a) *therla-m=**rni**   lalangkarra-ny*
      back-N=LOC.m   crocodile-m
      'the male crocodile's back'

  b) *ngali-m=**purru**   mayaru*
      woman-PL=DAT.N/PL   house
      'the women's house'

Further, external possession constructions are considered to be relevant only for inalienable possessive relationships (2004:232).[24] In these constructions the PR and the PE are expressed in different NPs, i.e. the possessor NP is external to the possessee NP and is treated as an additional core argument (Payne & Barshi 1999:5, Schultze-Berndt 2000:184), e.g. by virtue of being cross-referenced on the verb with a bound pronoun instead of the PE (McGregor 2004:230,332). The most wide-spread type of external possession (McGregor 2004:230f) is illustrated by examples

---

[22] McConvell states that there is a third possessive construction, the so-called source-possessive, which is encoded by ablative enclitics (2003:88). The possessive enclitics are "in the NP domain" whereas the oblique (ablative) enclitics are "in the clausal domain" (ibid.).

[23] The glosses of example sentences from this source are provided by the author of this thesis.

[24] External possession constructions are commonly used to express that an animate being is affected by (the result of) an action taken at the location of that person's or animal's body part (McGregor 1999).

from Jaminjung (Jaminjungan):[25] In (44), the (unexpressed) PR, namely the speaker, is cross-referenced on the verb. In (45), the first person free (cardinal)[26] pronoun *ngayug* is cross-referenced in addition to the ERGative-marked agent *warrij* 'crocodile'. The PE agrees in case (absolutive) with the PR (Schultze-Berndt 2000:184).

(44) Schultze-Berndt (2000:184) (MW, CHE113)   (Jaminjung)

 lum   ***nga**-ngga*   *wirlga*
 swell.up   1sg-GO.PRS   foot
 'my foot is swelling up'

(45) Schultze-Berndt (2000:184) (fieldnotes J. Bolt)   (Jaminjung)

 warrij-di   ***gan**-ba*   *bunu*   ***ngayug***
 freshwater.crocodile-ERG 3sg:1sg-BITE.PST   bone   1sg
 'a crocodile bit my leg' [lit. 'a crocodile bit me leg']

Gooniyandi (Bunuban) represents another type of external possession mentioned by McGregor (2004:230f) as occurring in Kimberley languages, namely ablative-marked PEs. Rather than 'raising' the PR to become a core argument, another option to construct external possession is by demoting the PE from the status of primary clause member by oblique marking (Payne & Barshi 1999). In (46) it is not clear whether the third person singular object bound pronoun refers to the PE 'tail' or the (non-overt) owner of the tail. However, the PE is marked with ABLative2 -*yangga* and therefore not a core-participant of the clause.

(46) McGregor (1990:183)   (Gooniyandi)

 *nyawa-**yangga*** *riddwa*
 tail-ABL2   you:will:pull:**it**
 'Pull it by the tail.'

8.2.4 Case in Kimberley languages

Since McGregor's type (ii) possessive constructions involve dative or genitive marking, the following discussion serves to clarify terminology and give an overview of case functions and their realisation in non-Pama Kimberley languages. McGregor claims that most Kimberley languages have "ten or so" *case-marking morphemes* (or *case markers*), which are usually phrase-level *postpositions* (2004:133). He argues that in most (if not all) Kimberley languages they are not inflections, as they occur one per NP, i.e. they "belong to whole phrases", and because they do not give rise to inflected forms of nouns (2004:99). They attach at the end of a word, hence *post*positions (2004:100). Ngarinyin and other Worrorran languages position case-marking morphemes at the end of a phrase. In Nyulnyulan languages and Bunuba (Bunuban) the case

---

[25] Schultze-Berndt calls this construction *Part-Whole construction*. She refrains from calling it *possessor raising* (i.e. an alternative name for external possession along with *possessor ascension* (McGregor 2004:332)) since *raising* is a process-oriented term and the verb's argument structure does not have to be changed in Jaminjung.

[26] In Schultze-Berndt's (2000) terminology, *ngayug* is the *absolutive* stem of the first singular free pronoun.

marker is generally attached to the first word of a phrase; in Gooniyandi (Bunuban) it goes on the word that is considered to be the most important, irrespective of position (2004:99,135-139).

McGregor equates case markers with enclitics (2004:100). According to Schultze-Berndt, the distinction between postpositions and enclitics is "only one of degree of grammaticalization" (2000:52). For Jaminjung (Jaminjungan) she treats case markers as inflectional suffixes, although they have some properties that would justify considering them postpositions: In addition to the fact that the inflectional suffixes may have scope over a whole noun phrase (as stated above by McGregor for most Kimberley languages), there may (occasionally) be a pause between the inflectional suffix and the noun (ibid.).

McConvell (2003) also makes statements about non-Pama-Nyungan case-marking morphemes that can bear on the question of whether the case markers in particular languages are best analysed as inflectional suffixes or enclitics. In accordance with McConvell's analysis, in contrast to enclitics, case suffixes in non-Pama-Nyungan languages in general and Jarragan languages in particular "attach directly to the stem of the noun, rather than following the gender suffix" (2003:83); enclitics follow both the gender suffix and "discourse-pragmatic elements" such as the topic marker (2003:84).

McGregor observes that there are fewer case-marking morphemes in languages in which they are word-inflections rather than postpositions (2004:133). In general, absolutive, genitive and causal "rarely have separate markers" (2004:134). Table 8.1 below (adapted from McGregor 2004:135) gives an overview of case markers in four Kimberley languages. Each language represents one language family. The table shows that there are not many recurrent forms among the languages (McGregor 2004:143). An exception is the pan-Australian -*gu* (-*ku*) for dative, which was mentioned in §8.1.2 on Australian languages above. The table is also instructive when compared to the four case forms reconstructed by Dixon (1980:320) (i.e. Absolutive *-Ø, Locative *-*la*, Ergative *-*lu*, Purposive *-*gu*). Apparently, these are proto-Pama-Nyungan case markers, rather than proto-Australian case markers. Solely the Purposive proto-form is similar to some of the dative forms of the Kimberley languages portrayed in the table (McGregor 2004:143). McGregor hypothesises that the Purposive has potentially been recently borrowed into some non-Pama-Nyungan languages.

Marker	Bunuba	Warrwa	Ngarinyin	Miriwoong
ergative	-*ingga*	-*na* ~ -*ma* ~ -*nma*		
absolutive				
instrumental	(-*ngarri*) -(*i*)*nga*	-*ngany*	-*nyine* ~ -*nyinengga*	-*berri*, -*theb*
dative	-*gu* ~ -*u*	-*yi* ~ -*ji*	-*gu*	-*geny*
genitive			-*nangga*	-*gering*
locative	-*yuwa* ~ -*juwa*	-*n* ~ -*an* ~ -*ana* ~ -*kann* ~ -*wan*	-*ra* ~ -*rda* ~ -*da*	-*m* ~ -*em*
locative₂			-*nguda*	-*biny*
allative	-*yawu* ~ -*jawu*	-*ngana*	-*biyny*	-*bag*
allative₂			-*yu* ~ -*ju*	-*melig*
ablative	-*nhingi* ~ -*nhi*	-*nkawu* ~ -*kawu*	(-*nangga*)	-*banjilng*
ablative₂		-*yunu* ~ -*junu*		
perlative	-*binyi* ~ -*bilinyi*	-*marru*		
comitative	-*ngarri*	-*barri*	-*gurde*	-*bang*
comitative₂	-*guda*	-*nyarri*		
causal	-*winyja*			

Table 8.1 Case markers in non-Pama Kimberley languages (adapted from McGregor 2004:135)

Table 8.2 (adapted from McGregor & Rumsey 2009:49) is additionally included, as the languages listed are discussed in this chapter. Note that McConvell determines that there are no allomorphs for different genders/noun classes for non-Pama-Nyungan case markers, i.e. they are invariant except for phonologically conditioned allomorphs (2003:84).

	LOC	ABL	ALL	DAT	GEN	INS	COM1	COM2
Bunuba	-*yuwa* ~ -*juwa*	-*nhingi* ~ -*nhi*	-*yawu* ~ -*jawu*	-*gu* ~ -*u*			-*guda*	-*ngarri*
Gooniyandi	-*ya* ~ -*ja*	-*nhingi* ~ -*yangga*	-*yirra* ~ -*jirra*	-*yoo* ~ -*joo*				-*ngarri*
Warrwa	-*n* ~-*an* ~ -*kan*	-*kawu*	-*ngana*	-*yi* ~ -*ji*		-*ngany*	-*nyarri*	-*barri*
Nyikina	-*an* ~ -*kan*	-*kaboo* ~ -*aboo*	-*ngana*	-*yi* ~ -*ji*		-*ngany*		-*barri*
Nyulnyul	-*uk* ~ -*ik*	-*kun* ~ -*ikun*	-*ung*	-*ij*		-*ang*	-*nyirr* ~ -*inyirr*	
Miriwoong	-*m* ~ -*em*, -*biny*	-*banjilng*	-*bag*, -*melig*	-*geny*	-*gering*	-*berri*, -*theb*		-*bang*

Table 8.2 Case markers in non-Pama Kimberley languages II (adapt. from McGregor & Rumsey 2009:49)

8.2.5 Bound pronouns in Kimberley languages

There are enclitics in non-Pama Kimberley languages that have nothing to do with the case markers discussed above. Nyulnyulan, Worrorran, Bunuban and Jarragan languages have *enclitic oblique pronouns* that indicate indirect objects, recipients, beneficiaries etc. They are similar in form to free possessive pronouns (McGregor 2004:122). Kija (Jarragan) enclitics have been argued to mark alienable vs. inalienable possession (see §8.2.3).

Oblique pronouns form one of several types of bound pronouns found in non-Pama-Nyungan languages traditionally spoken in the Kimberley. These are prefixes, suffixes, and/or enclitics to verbs and occasionally nouns (2004:119f). To shed light on similarities between different kinds of pronouns, Warrwa (Nyulnyulan) pronouns are provided below to serve as an example.

| | Free cardinal | Prefixes subject | Enclitics | | Free possessive |
			Object	Oblique	
1	*ngayu*	*nga- ~ ka- ~ ya-*	*-ngay(u)*	*-janu*	*ngajanu*
1 3 …	*yarra*	*nga- ~ ka- ~ ya-…-rr-*	*-yarr(a)*	*-jarra*	*jarra*
1 2	*yawu*	*ya-*	*-yawu()*	*-jawu*	*jawu*
1 2 3 …	*yadirr*	*ya-…-rr-*	*-yadirr*	*-jadirr*	*jadirr*
2	*juwa*	*mi- ~ wa- ~ nga-*	*-ju(wa) ~ -yu*	*-jiya*	*jiya*
2 3 …	*kurra*	*ku- ~ wa*	*-kurra*	*-jungkurr*	*jungkarra*
3	*kinya*	*Ø ~ i- ~ ngi- ~ ku- ~ wi-*	*-Ø*	*-jina ~ -yina*	*jina*
3 3 …	*yirra*	*ngi- ~ i- ~ ku- ~ wi-…-rr-*	*-yirr(a) ~ -jirr*	*-jirra*	*jirra*

Table 8.3 Warrwa pronouns (McGregor 2004:123)

In addition to Warrwa's free cardinal and possessive pronouns, Table 8.3 shows three kinds of bound pronouns. The column 'Prefixes subject' presents prefixes that occur on verbs and encode the subject. *Object enclitics* in Nyulnyulan languages indicate the object of a transitive verb (McGregor 2004: 122) while the *oblique enclitics* (mentioned above) represent indirect objects (e.g. addressees in clauses of speaking), recipients, beneficiaries, and the like (2004:123). When comparing the forms of the different kinds of pronouns in Warrwa, one notices that the object enclitics and pronoun prefixes clearly resemble the cardinal pronouns whereas the oblique enclitics are similar to the possessive pronouns. Historically, both prefixes and enclitics probably derive from free pronouns (2004:122f).

It was mentioned above that there are also prefixes and suffixes on nouns. In Western Nyulnyulan and in all Worrorran languages they can be used to indicate a possessor (2004:132). Usually the number of nouns that can take possessive affixes is small and restricted to central body parts, personal representations (e.g. names, footprints), kinship relations, and in some languages inalienable abstract terms, such as *+moonggoon* 'knowledge' in Bardi (McGregor 2004:132,143, Bowern 2012:153). Their form is similar to the pronoun prefixes to intransitive verbs or the oblique enclitics to verbs, for prefixes and suffixes to nouns respectively (2004:132). Table 8.4 gives some examples of pronominal prefixes on Bardi (Nyulnyulan) nominals. The prefixes can also go on other nominals such as adjectives in Worrorran languages and are considered inflections (2004:143).

Stem	Stem + third singular prefix	Gloss
+alma	***n**alma*	head
+roonggooroongg	***noo**roonggooroongg*	navel
+jambal(a)	*niimbala*	foot

Table 8.4 Pronominal prefixes in Bardi

Usually, the prefix is obligatory on prefixing nouns. In Bardi, however, a few prefixing nouns can be used without the suffix, resulting in a change in meaning, see Table 8.5. This is not the case in other Nyulnyulan languages (2012:155).

Inalienable Stem	Gloss		Alienable Term	Gloss
+alma	head		*alma*	attentiveness

Table 8.5 Prefixing noun in Bardi with and without pronominal prefix

Ngarinyin (Worrorran) is a language with pronominal possessor suffixes on kin terms. There are different forms of the suffix, the appropriate one is chosen according to the person of the PR and the number of the PE:

(47) McGregor (2004:146)   (Ngarinyin)

    *gurndi-**ngi*** 'my husband' vs. *gurndi-**ngirri*** 'my husbands',

    *gurndi-**ni*** 'your husband' vs. *gurndi-**nirri*** 'your husbands'

8.2.6 Derivational suffixes in Kimberley languages

Most non-Pama Kimberley languages have an inventory of suffixes that are considered derivational rather than inflectional (McGregor 2004:150). Firstly, case-marking morphemes like the comitative and the ablative (see above) are derivational suffixes in some languages or have derivational uses in addition to their functions as postpositions (ibid.) For example, the Gooniyandi (Bunuban) ABLative1 postposition *-nhingi* can be used derivationally, as in *wayandi-nhingi* (fire-ABL1), a nickname for a man who had rolled into a fire when he was a child. Second, the reverse meaning of the comitative, namely the privative, was also already mentioned above among derivational affixes. It means 'without', 'lacking' or '-less' and is used in a number of Kimberley languages (2004:151). In Jaminjung (Jaminjungan), for example, *-marnany* marks PRIVative:

(48) Schultze-Berndt (2000:63) (DB, D13048)   (Jaminjung)

    *wagurra-**marnany**   yiga   yirrag*
    rock-PRIV   BUT   1pl.excl.OBL
    'but we (have) no money', 'but we (are) money-less'

Third, associative suffixes are common among languages of the Kimberley. Such derivational suffixes can be glossed as 'characterised by, closely associated with (a thing, an activity, a place…)' (McGregor 2004:150). For example, there are two associative suffixes in Jaminjung, the

'Function'/POSSessive -*gina* and the ASSOCiative -*ngarna*. -*gina* derives nominals that are related to the base through its function. Introduced artefacts are productively named with the help of -*gina*. It is attached, for instance, to *wulngan* 'sun/day' to derive 'sun cream' (and also 'watch').[27] -*ngarna* derives nominals habitually associated with the entity, place, or action referred to by the base. A wide range of associative relationships can be expressed, ranging from *garrij-ngarna-wu* (cold/school-ASSOC-DAT) 'school-attending' to *nambul-ngarna-gina* (louse-ASSOC-POSS) 'louse-having' (Schultze-Berndt 2000:51).[28]

Often, the association comes about through habitual active involvement and/or expert-hood (compare the 'agentive' -*er* suffix in English *baker*, *teacher*, *boiler*…) (McGregor 2004:150). Yawuru (Nyulnyulan), for example, has three agentive suffixes, -*jinaburu* (as in *jalangardijinaburu* (goanna-AG) 'good goanna bunter' or *niminy-jinaburu* (eye-AG) 'glasses'), -*dany* (as in *warli-dany* (meat-AG) 'good hunter'), and -*ngurru* (as in *janka-ngurru* (cure-AG) 'healer, medicine man') (ibid.).[29]

Fourth, in most non-Pama Kimberley languages particular derivational suffixes are found on kinship terms. Kija (Jarragan), for instance, exhibits the POSSessive suffix -*ka*. As the examples show, gender agreement is with the PE: In (49), the PE is female, so that the feminine gender suffix follows -*ka* whereas in (50) the PE is male, so that the masculine gender suffix is attached.

(49) Blythe & KLRC (2001:68)   (Kija)

    *kura-**ka**-l*
    mother-3.POSS-f
    'his/her mother'

(50) Blythe & KLRC (2001:73)   (Kija)

    *ngapu-**ka**-ny*
    father-3.POSS-m
    'his/her father'

Usually, there is only a suffix for third person, sometimes also for second person – as in Gooniyandi and Jaminjung – but never for a first person possessor (2004:151). In Gooniyandi -*wa* ('his, her, their') and -*badi* ~ -*wadi* ('yours') occur on over twenty kin-terms plus a few exceptions such as *jaliji* 'peer, agemate' and *naddoogoo* 'namesake' (McGregor 1990:233f, 2004:151).

---

[27] -*gina* also functions as an adnominal and adverbal case, marking possession as well as (intended) function (Schultze-Berndt 2000:51). It emphasises the function for the possessor, as in *mangarra waitbala-gina* 'whitefellow's (= imported) vegetable food', or marks the inalienable possessor of body parts (2000:61).
[28] The ASSOCiative and the 'Function'/POSSessive are also found as nominalisers on (uninflecting) coverbs (2000:50).
[29] -*dany* and -*ngurru* appear in names for animal and plant species and places, where they are unanalysable roots (ibid.).

(51) McGregor (1990:234) (see also McGregor 2004:151)   (Gooniyandi)

 *ngaboo-**wa***
 father-3.GEN
 'his/her/their father'

(52) McGregor (1990:234)   (Gooniyandi)

 *ngaboo-**wadi***
 father-2.GEN
 'your father'

Almost all languages have a *dyadic* suffix, which verbalises a kinship relationship between two people. For example, *ngaboo-**langi*** (father-DY) means 'father and son (or daughter)' in Gooniyandi, *nyanyi-**langi*** (uncle-DY) means 'a pair in the uncle-nephew relation' (McGregor 1990:234). Derivational suffixes on kinship terms are dissimilar to free and bound pronouns in the respective language and are distinct from the full sets of bound possessive pronominal inflections in languages such as Ngarinyin (Worrorran) (2004:329).

Fifth, there are suffixes that are interesting when researching specific aspects of possession, such as body part possession or culturally relevant issues such as land ownership (see Chapter 6). Naturally, these often have a limited distribution (2004:152). To name but a few, in Gooniyandi and Bunuba *-wanggoo* and *-wanggu* respectively mean 'person associated with a place, countryman'; *-warrawarra* means 'everyone belonging to a place' in both languages. Ngarinyin *-mardi* means 'place of' (ibid.). Kija features *-wa* (+ BENEfactive enclitic) for 'belonging to country', see (53) and *-kiny ~ -kil ~ -kim* for 'someone having big (body part)'.

(53) Kofod (2003:46)   (Kija)

 *Daa-**wa**-m-burru*   *ngardawu* *nyimb-irn*
 country-belonging-ns-3ns.BENE cry   3sfS.FUT-SAY.FUT
 '[When we die, the country speaks, it cries from up on top.] It cries for the people belonging to the country.'

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter discusses Dixon's (1980, 2002, 2009) analysis of possessive constructions in Australian languages and McGregor's (2004) findings about possessive constructions in Kimberley languages. When these are conflated, it can be established that there are four types of attributive possessive constructions in Australian languages. The first type contains a possessive pronoun indicating the PR and a nominal specifying the PE. The second type comprises a noun phrase referring to the possessor (PR), which is marked by a genitive or dative suffix, and an unmarked NP for the possessee (PE). This type is used for ownership and kinship relations. In the third type, a possessive pronoun is used in addition to the possessee and possessor NPs. Two NPs – one for

the PR and one for the PE – are juxtaposed to form the fourth type. This type is used in many languages for part-whole relationships but is also used for non-possessive relations.

Although many Australian languages allegedly lack possessive verbs in predicative possession, several non-Pama Kimberley languages are found to use them in addition to copular constructions and/or verbless nominal clauses. There are four types of the latter. The *have*-construction is formed by a comitative-marked PE while the *belong*-construction is formed by a dative- or genitive-marked PR. The third type is characterised by a possessive pronoun in addition to the two unmarked possessor and possessee NPs. The fourth type differs from the third by the inclusion of a quality of the PE and the optionality of the possessive pronoun.

The With, Have and to a lesser extent the Topic-Possessive from Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession are shown in this chapter to be relevant for Australian languages. In the Australian With-Possessive, the PE exhibits a 'having'-suffix, has the syntactic function of a predicate adjective and is constructed with a zero-copula. The Have-Possessive contains an inflected verb and covers more semantic nuances of possession than just temporary possession. The Australian Topic-Possessive is of the juxta-posed zero-type. The typological predictions associated with the With and Have-Possessives about simultaneous different-subject sequences, the encoding of copular and locative/existential sentences and predicative adjectives are proven to be confirmed with data from Australian languages.

Several issues concerning case are discussed in this chapter, such as the functions of possession-related cases and case syncretism. For example, it is determined that genitive and dative share the form in many Australian languages. Most Kimberley languages are argued to have about ten *case-marking morphemes* (or *case markers*), which are usually phrase-level *postpositions* or *enclitics*. There are not many recurrent forms among the case markers in non-Pama languages of the Kimberley.

This chapter determines that some devices are used in several functions: For example, the comitative is used both as a case-marking postposition in nominal clauses expressing predicative have-constructions and derivationally. According to Stassen (2009) it is reanalysed as an adjective-forming derivational affix through grammaticalisation.

Several types of bound pronouns in non-Pama-Nyungan languages are discussed in this chapter. *Enclitic oblique pronouns* are argued to indicate indirect objects, recipients and beneficiaries, and to mark possession in Kija (Jarragan). Prefixes and suffixes on nouns denoting body parts and kinship terms are established to indicate a possessor In Western Nyulnyulan and in all Worrorran languages.

Depending on the language under discussion, alienability is found to be a relevant concept in Kimberley languages at word, NP, and/or clausal level. Alienability can be reflected by case-marking, pronoun prefixes and/or the choice of the predicative possessive construction

(*have* vs. *belong*-construction, optionality of the possessive pronoun in a type (iv) construction, locative vs. dative enclitics, external possession).

The chapter closes by providing a description of possession-related derivational suffixes, including comitative, privative, associative and kinship suffixes.

9   Possession in Miriwoong

As discussed in Chapter 7, the term *possession* refers to relationships between a *Possessor* (PR) and a *Possessee* (PE). The PR is typically[1] a human being and the PE an object that is owned by this human being, as in (1).

(1) *The woman has a cup.*

         PR   PE

In many languages the PE does not have to be a concrete object but can be more abstract such as in *I have **an idea***. In Miriwoong it is possible to 'have law', for example (see §9.1.11.2.4). One also talks about *possession* if the PR and the PE are family members as in (2). In addition, the PR can be a human being (3) or an object (4) that has one or several parts.

(2) *The woman has two sisters.*

(3) *The woman has two arms.*

(4) *The cup has a handle.*

If the possessive relationship forms the main predication of the sentence, i.e. the possession of the PE by the PR is what the sentence is about, this is called *predicative* possession. In contrast, in *attributive* possession (also called *adnominal* possession, see Chapter 7) the PR and the PE form a single NP and there is a predication about this NP beyond the possessive relation.

(5) Predicative possession:

   Jamy has a cup.

   The sentence indicates that Jamy (the PR) owns a cup (the PE).

(6) Attributive possession:

   Jamy's cup is green.

   This sentence indicates that Jamy (the PR) owns a cup (the PE) and that this cup is green. There is thus further information apart from the relationship between Jamy and the cup.

Predicative and attributive possession constructions in Miriwoong are treated in two different sections of this chapter. There are two reasons for this, the first being a semantic one: (1) typically expresses legal ownership (or *alienable* possession, see §9.1.11.2.1) or *temporary* possession (see §9.1.11.2.5), whereas the noun phrase (NP) in (2) can be interpreted differently, e.g. 'the cup that Jamy intends to buy', 'the cup Jamy is always talking about', 'the cup that was designed by Jamy' (compare Stassen 2009:27). Accordingly, some *associative* relation can be established between *Jamy* and *cup* which is not possessive (see Chapter 7). In order to be sure to cover all structures

---

[1] See for example Seiler (1981) and Taylor (1996:340) for details on characteristics of prototypical possessive relationships. Standard sources on possession include Heine (1997), Aikhenvald & Dixon (2013), and – for Australian languages – Dixon (2002).

that definitely express possession in Miriwoong (as opposed to potential cases of association) the discussion starts with predicative constructions.

The second reason is that in a number of languages the attributive possession construction has been derived from the predicative possession construction by grammaticalisation and reanalysis, while in many other languages the constructions are based on different morphosyntactic patterns (ibid.). To enable comparisons, it is, thus, helpful to study the two types of possessive constructions separately.

Possession can be expressed in various ways in Miriwoong. One option is to place the PR and the PE in juxtaposition. The language also employs devices that are used elsewhere in the grammar, such as enclitics, to mark possessive relationships. In addition, there is a specialised suffix *-ba* used for possession and association and the morpheme *-ga* for kinship possession.

These devices will be described in more detail in this chapter. It is structured as follows: §9.1 focuses on predicative possession. The linguistic structures used to encode it include juxtaposition (§9.1.1) the *Indirect Object enclitic* (§9.1.2 and §9.1.3), the *Benefactive enclitic* (§9.1.4, §9.1.5, and §9.1.6), the suffixes *-ba* (§9.1.7, §9.1.8, and §9.1.9) and *-yile* (§9.1.10) and the verb HAVE (§9.1.11). The following §9.2 on attributive possession goes into detail on juxtaposition (§9.2.1), cardinal pronouns (§9.2.2), possessive pronouns (§9.2.3), the suffixes *-ga* (§9.2.4) and both enclitics (§9.2.5 and §9.2.7). In both sections, the order of the presentation of these options is, where possible, from least morphologically complex constructions (starting with no dedicated possessive morphology, i.e. juxtaposition) to more complex ones (i.e. involving more than one morpheme). Prototypical constructions are discussed in §1.3, frequency in §10.1. Attributive and predicative possession are compared in §9.3. Finally, §9.4 examines associative and comitative functions of *-ba* (§9.4.1) and discusses connections between possession, existence and location (§9.4.2, §9.4.3, and §9.4.4).

9.1 Predicative Possession

The following section explores predicative possession in Miriwoong. To begin with, some examples will be given in which the possessive relationship between the PR and the PE is not overtly expressed (§9.1.1). Subsequently, different means of overt possession marking will be introduced: One option for expressing predicative possession is the *Indirect Object enclitic* (§9.1.2). It can be combined with the existential marker (§9.1.3). §9.1.3.1 and §9.1.3.2 are about its use in questions and negated sentences. Another option is the *Benefactive enclitic* (§9.1.4), which can also be combined with the existential (see §9.1.5). The existential is optional (§9.1.5.1) and does not occur in questions (§9.1.5.2). The combination of the Benefactive enclitic with possessive pronouns is discussed in §9.1.6. A third option to mark predicative possession is the suffix *-ba* (§9.1.7). It can be combined with the existential, as well (§9.1.8). Again, the existential is

optional (§9.1.8.1). *-ba* is often combined with the Benefactive enclitic and the existential (§9.1.9) unless in questions, where the latter is absent (§9.1.9.1). The semantic counterpart of *-ba*, i.e. *-yile*, is presented in §9.1.10. Finally, the verb HAVE (§9.1.11) is employed for the expression of predicative possession. In §9.1.13 the different strategies described in the previous sections are compared and examples obtained during recent elicitation are discussed.

9.1.1 Possession without overt marking

As in many languages the possessive relationship between the PR and the PE does not necessarily need to be expressed overtly in the sentence but can be inferred from context as in (7).[2] In both word order variants of the sentence the part-whole relationship between the animate PR *gemalang* and the PE *goolyawoorrng* 'leafy branches' is not overtly marked.

(7) Conversation Kofod [MALLP-22-Feb-2012][3]

a) *Gemalang joorrgoo-yilen-tha bardingoowing goolyawoorrng.*
gemala-ng	joorrgooyile-ntha	bardi-ngoowi-ng	goolyawoorr-ng
plant_species-NOM	long-EXST_m	bush_potato-that_kind-NOM	leafy_twigs-NOM

b) *Gemalang joorrgoo-yilen-tha goolyawoorrng bardingoowing.*
gemala-ng	joorrgooyile-ntha	goolyawoorr-ng	bardi-ngoowi-ng
plant_species-NOM	long-EXST_m	leafy_twigs-NOM	bush_potato-that kind-NOM

'The gemalang is long, it has leaves like a bush potato.'
\r 'Da gemalang is a longwan, goda lif laik barding.' [4]

Example (7) involves a part-whole relationship. A single example involving alienable possession was also elicited during a picture-pairing task, see (8), where PE and PR are juxtaposed. Potentially, however, this is a case of ellipsis, for example from a sentence using the Benefactive enclitic (see §9.1.4). In the Toolbox database, utterance (9) can be found. It is about alienable possession with respect to the *garrimarlang* Dreaming. The PE *gerewoolng* 'egg' and the PR *garrimarlang* 'rainbow snake' are, again, juxtaposed.

---

[2] See also §9.2.1 for a discussion of juxtaposition of PR and PE in sentences which are ambiguous between an attributive and a predicative reading (e.g. 'This snake had big bulging eyes' vs. 'The eyes of the snake are big and bulging').

[3] As stated in the frontmatter, example sentences headed by "Kofod" stem from her Toolbox texts (Kofod 2023), but the abbreviations and glossing conventions in the interlinear glosses have been homogenised and updated to oblige with conventions communicated to me by MDWg in 2015.

[4] \r is an abbreviation for Kriol. What follows \r was given by a Miriwoong speaker as the translation of the Miriwoong utterance.

(8) Game [MEP-20140921-belong]:AA

Gooloomboonga jawaleng.
Gooloomboo-ng=a   jawale-ng
didgeridoo-NOM=TOP man-NOM
'The didgeridoo belongs to the man'
\r 'I bilong tu dis fella iya.'
\q Where do you think this one belongs to?[5]

(9) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

<An> ngalyarrng <there too> gerewoolnga; gerewoolnga garrimalang.
<and>   ngalyarr-ng   <there>   <too>   gerewool-ng=a
and   egg-NOM   there   too   egg-NOM=TOP

gerewool-ng=a   garrimarla-ng
egg-NOM=TOP   rainbow_snake-NOM
'[There were lots of caves there along the Eastern side.] And [there were] eggs there too, eggs belonging to the rainbow snake.'

9.1.2   Indirect Object enclitic

The *Indirect Object enclitic* (IO) has several functions in Miriwoong, see §4.3.5. It is used for location/direction, referencing a person spoken to, talking about the weather and the time of day, and prohibition. In addition, there is an idiomatic use 'on you' or 'on me' (Kofod in prep. (2017)).[6] When used to express predicative possession, the Indirect Object enclitic can be attached to nouns, numeral adjectives, interrogatives, the interrogative particle *garni* and the negative particle *ngoowag*. Its form varies according to person (first, second or third and inclusive or exclusive[7]) and number (minimal (singular) or augmented (non-singular)). Dual number is expressed by adding the enclitic *-meleng* to the augmented (non-singular) forms (see §4.3.5). Depending on which form the enclitic takes, a different possessor is expressed in the sentence. Table 9.1 displays the different variants of the Indirect Object enclitic. The primary variant is given first, and allomorphs are listed following slashes.[8] The IO can be the only indication of the PR in a given utterance.

---

[5] \q is an abbreviation for '(elicitation) question'.

[6] As stated in the frontmatter, the referencing of Frances Kofod's and Dr. Knut J. Olawsky's work as "in prep." reflects that the analysis of Miriwoong grammar is ongoing and certain analyses may have changed since the time of writing.

[7] *Inclusive* means that the listener is included, whereas the term *exclusive* is used when the listener is not included. For example, if I am in a room with my two sisters and a friend, and I say *We are going swimming* to my friend, in Miriwoong I can make a distinction between either (a) me and my sisters or (b) me, my sisters and also you, my friend.

[8] The allomorphs have been identified in 2013 by searching through texts included in Kofod's Toolbox database for "indirect obj pn" and "object pn". According to Kofod, "the versions of the enclitics beginning with stops [...] are covered by the rule that nasals following stops usually become stops. [...] *-narri* becoming *-darri* [...] should [also] be possible" (2020/07/27 p.c.).

Indirect Object enclitic	Gloss	Approximate Translation
-ngerri/ -gerri/ -ngirri	1sgIO	'to me'
-ninggi	2sgIO	'to you (sg)'
-ni/ -di	3sgmIO	'to him/it (masculine)'
-ji/ -jiyi	3sgfIO	'to her/it (feminine)'
-yi/ -yiyi	1dincIO	'to you (sg) and me'
-yarri	1nsincIO	'to all of us (inclusive)'
-yirri/ -jirri	1nsexIO	'to us (exclusive)'
-narri	2nsIO	'to you (pl)'
-woorri[9]	3nsIO	'to all of them'

Table 9.1 Miriwoong Indirect Object enclitics

It seems that there is a correlation in the realm of positive predicative possession between the Indirect Object enclitic and quantified statements. Out of 24 modified sentences, 11 employ the IO.[10] Seven of these stem from elicitation and four from games. The modification pattern was also confirmed in grammaticality judgements. In five sentences the IO appears on the modifier as in (10), in other cases it is attached to the PE, as in (11). Semantically, one can express the possession of body parts using IOs, see (10). Apart from that, two examples of kinship possession were elicited, one of them is given in (11).

(10) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:PG

> *Ganggoobeleng-ngerri mayinggoorlng.*
> ganggoobele-ng=**ngerri**   mayinggoorl-ng
> two-NOM=1sgIO   hand-NOM
> 'I have two hands.'

(11) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:PG

> *Ganggoob woothoo-woothoong-ngerri.*
> ganggoob   woothoo-woothoo-ng=**ngerri**
> two   RED-child-NOM=1sgIO
> 'I have two children.'

---

[9] Olawsky also observes a variant *-berri*. *-woorri* is realised as such "without apparent trigger" (in prep. (2020):234). Note that instrumental *-berri* has an allomorph *-woorri*.

[10] Only two counter-examples – i.e. non-modified sentences with IO – of dubious status were found. One is discussed under attributive possession, the other has unexpected morphology and was uttered by a non-fluent speaker. The other patterns found in the game data were possessive pronouns (2 instances), *-ba* (+EXST) +BEN (3 instances), the HAVE verb (2 instances) and BEN only (1 instance from elicitation).

The IO can optionally be combined with the existential marker (EXST), as in (12).[11] The existential agrees with the PE: If the PE is third singular, the EXST takes its masculine or feminine form, see (13) and (14). Utterance (12) expresses body parts possession. Several examples with different kinds of body parts can be found. The IO is also used with EXST to express the names of an object as in (13).[12] Among the few examples where the IO is used for alienable possession there is an occurrence of the combination of the existential plus IO, see (14). Note that in these examples the IO is attached to the numeral adjectives *jerrawoonhiyany* 'one' or *ganggoobeleng* 'two', which in turn agree with the PE.

(12) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:PG

> *Ganggoob-tha-ngerri ngayoowa mayinggoorlng.*
> ganggoob-**tha**=**ngerri**   ngayoo=a   mayinggoorl-ng
> two-EXST=1sgIO   1sgPN=TOP   hand-NOM
> 'I have two hands.'

(13) Narrative Kofod [H131-5]:MM

> *Ganggoobelen-tha-ni yinginya, yawoony, lamboong.*
> ganggoobele-**ntha**=**ni**   yinginy=a   yawoony   lamboo-ng
> two-EXST_m=3sgmIO name=TOP   coolamon   coolamon-NOM
> 'The coolamon has two names, "yawoony" and "lamboong".'

(14) Spontaneous [MEP-20141005-MAJ-checking-sentences]:MAJ

> *Ngayoowa jerrawoonhiyany-ja-ngerri joolanga, jerrawoonhiyany thegoobeliny.*
> ngayoo=a   jerrawoonhiya-**nyja**=**ngerri**   joola-ng=a[13]
> 1sgPN=TOP   one-EXST_f=1sgIO   dog-NOM=TOP
>
> jerrawoonhiya-ny   thegoobeli-ny
> one-f   black-f
> 'I have one dog, one black one.'

---

[11] In this thesis the morpheme *-tha* and its third singular masculine and third singular feminine counterparts *-ntha and -nyja* are generically referred to as the existential marker and glossed as EXST. As discussed in §4.2.2, recently it has been suggested to differentiate an EXST from an EMPH1 (Kofod (in prep. (2017)), also EMPH2 in Olawsky (in prep. (2020))). For the characterisation of examples (12) - (14) this discussion is of no immediate concern. Alternatively, it could be said here that a combination of the emphatic marker and the IO is possible.

[12] See §1.2 for the possession of names by people, animals and places. The examples found were all of the type *The name of X is Y*, accordingly they are treated as examples of attributive possession.

[13] The PE *joolang* does not carry the feminine gender suffix. That the dog is female is clear from the gender agreement on the adjectives.

9.1.3.1 *Questions*

The IO can also be used in questions using interrogatives, see (15), (16) and (17). In this case the existential marker is not used.

(15) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

Gaboongerreg moorlng-ninggi?
gaboongerreg   moorl-ng=**ninggi**
how_many   eye-NOM=2sgIO
'How many eyes do you have?'

(16) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

Gaboongerreg-ninggi moorlng?
gaboongerreg=**ninggi**   moorl-ng
how_many=2sgIO   eye-NOM
'How many eyes do you have?'

(17) Elicitation Kofod [H116]:MM

Ngarrang! Mayeng garni-ninggi?
ngarrang   maye-ng   garni=**ninggi**
mum   food-NOM   INT=2sgIO
'Mum! Do you have any food?'

9.1.3.2 *Negation*

To negate the existence of something – especially if one wants to point out that someone does not have any food – the negative particle *ngoowag(a)*[14] plus the IO can be used as in (18) and (19). The existential marker is not used in this context.

(18) Elicitation Kofod [H116]:MM

Mayi-geny yangge nilindayin ngayang bariyeng. Ngoowaga-ni.
mayi-geny   yangge   ni-lin-da-yin
food-PURP1   ask   1sgS:3sgmO-put_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF

ngaya-ng   bariyi-ng   **ngoowaga**=ni
1sgPOSS-m   younger_sibling-m   no=3sgmIO
'I asked my brother for food. He didn't have any.'

(19) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:PG

Ngoowaga-ngerri garnbija ngenam dawa-melig. Ngoowaga-ngerri dawa-melig garnbij.
ngoowaga=**ngerri**   garnbij=a   ngena-m   dawa-melig
no=1sgIO   clapsticks=TOP   there-LOC   home-ALL

ngoowaga=**ngerri**   dawa-melig   garnbij
no=1sgIO   home-ALL   clapsticks
'I don't have clapsticks there at home. I don't have clapsticks at home.'

---

[14] *ngoowag* is often followed by -*a,* which might be the topic marker or an epenthetic vowel (Kofod 2013/09 p.c.).

The *Benefactive enclitic* (BEN) is also used for several purposes throughout the grammar of Miriwoong (see §4.3.5). As the name implies, it cross-references persons who benefit from an action or on whose account an action is taken. Benefactive enclitics also often occur in verbless equative/identifying copular clauses. One of its functions is to express possession. Like the Indirect Object enclitic it is attached to different types of words, namely nouns, adjectives, interrogatives, numeral adjectives, demonstratives, possessive pronouns (see §9.1.6), and in a few cases with verbs. As for the IO, it cross-references the possessor and its form varies according to person and number, see Table 9.2.[15] The Benefactive enclitic can be the only overt expression of the PR. If an overt PR is present, the enclitic can also be attached to it (see (22)).

Benefactive enclitic	Gloss	Approximate translation
-ngany/ -gany	1sgBEN	'for me'
-ngoong/ -ngoo/ -goong	2sgBEN	'for you (sg)'
-noong/ -noo/ -doong/ -doo	3sgmBEN	'for him/it (masculine)'
-joong/ -joo	3sgfBEN	'for her/it (feminine)'
-yayi	1dincBEN	'for you (sg) and me'
-yoowoorr	1nsincBEN	'for all of us (inclusive)'
-yarr	1nsexBEN	'for us (exclusive)'
-nenggoorr	2nsBEN	'for you all'
-woorr/ -boorr	3nsBEN	'for all of them'

Table 9.2 Miriwoong Benefactive enclitics

9.1.5   Existential + Benefactive

BEN is usually combined with the existential marker (EXST) as in (20), (21) and (22). The existential agrees in gender (and number) with the nominal to which it attaches. In (20) and (21) this is the PE, but in (22) it is the PR.[16]

(20) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:PG

Ganggoobeleng garnbij-tha-ngany.
ganggoobele-ng   garnbij-**tha**=**ngany**
two-NOM   clapsticks-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have two clapsticks.'

---

[15] The allomorphs given following the slashes were determined in the same way as for the Indirect Object enclitic, i.e. by going through texts included in the Toolbox database in 2013. According to Kofod, "the versions of the enclitics beginning with stops […] are covered by the rule that nasals following stops usually become stops. […] *-nenggoorr* becoming *-denggoorr* […] should [also] be possible" (2020/07/27 p.c.).

[16] Compare the example sentences in §9.1.3, where agreement is with the PE because the existential attaches to numeral adjectives, which agree with the PE.

(21) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

Dawan-tha-woorr-meleng.
dawa-**ntha**=**woorr**=meleng
camp-EXST_m=3nsBEN=du
'The house belongs to them two.'
\q (Who is that for?) That's the house of the two of them?

(22) Elicitation Kofod [H136A]:MM

Gooroo-gooran-tha-woorr ngaloo […].
gooroo-goora-**ntha**=**woorr**   ngaloo
RED-old_man-EXST=3nsBEN   3sgfPN
'It [i.e. the car (feminine)] belongs to the old people [not the white people].'

9.1.5.1   *Benefactive without existential*

Some sentences are possible with or without the existential marker without an apparent change in meaning. In (23), the speaker utters a translation first with the EXST, then without. (EXST+) BEN occurs on the modifier in a) but on the PE noun in b). Likewise, example (24), which uses the existential marker, has a very similar meaning to (25), which does not. BEN occurs on the PE in (25) but on the numeral adjective which modifies the PR in (24). Note that in the latter utterance, the second BEN -*noong* represents the idea that your house belongs to you but that you belong to the place as well (Kofod 2013/09 p.c.).

(23) Elicitation Kofod [H110]:MM

  a) *Ngerragoowiyatha-ngoo goornoorrng.*
    ngerregoowiya-**tha**=**ngoo**(ng)   goornoorr-ng
    all-EXST=2sgBEN   bag-NOM
    'All bags belong to you.'
    \q All of these bags belong to you.

  b) *Ngerragoowiya goornoorr-ngoong.*
    ngerregoowiya   goornoorr=**ngoong**
    all   bag=2sgBEN
    'All bags belong to you.'

(24) Elicitation Kofod [H130]:MM

Yarroo merrgern-tha-yarr-noong ngenjayinga mayaroonga.
yarroo   merrgern-**tha**=**yarr**=**noong**   ngenjayi-ng=a   mayaroo-ng=a
1nsexPN   three-EXST-1nsexBEN=3sgmBEN   this_one_m-NOM=TOP   house-NOM=TOP
'This house belongs to the three of us.'

(25) Elicitation Kofod [H130]:MM

Nawoo mayaroong-woorr boorroo merrgern.
nawoo   mayaroo-ng=**woorr**   boorroo   merrgern
3sgmPN   house=3nsBEN   3nsPN   three
'That house belongs to those three men.'

Further examples without the existential marker are given in (26) and (27) . In the former, the subject is *miwoolng* 'swag'; it is accompanied by the demonstrative *ngelayiny(a)*. In (27), one can tell that *gerloong(a)* 'rain' is the subject because it is specified by the demonstrative *berraying(a)*, which is used for non-singular referents and mass nouns. Note that these examples (and others with the same structure) translate as 'belong to'.

(26) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-3]:AA

> *Miwoolng ngelayinya-joong.*[17]
> miwoolng   ngelayi-ny=a=**joong**
> swag_f   this_f-f=TOP=3sgfBEN
> 'This swag belongs to her.'

(27) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

> *Berrayinga, ngarranggarni, garrimarlang-joong berrayingara gerloonga, jadang.*
> berrayi-ng=a   ngarranggarni   garrimarla-ng=**joong**
> this-NOM=TOP   dreaming   rainbow_snake-NOM=3sgfBEN
>
> berrayi-ng=a=ra   gerloo-ng=a   jada-ng
> this-NOM=TOP=SEQ   rain-NOM=TOP   rain-NOM
> 'This is a creation time thing, the way this rain belongs to the rainbow snake.'

9.1.5.2 *Questions*

The Benefactive enclitic can be attached to interrogatives to form possessive questions. In this context the existential marker is not needed, see (28). If the PR is being inquired, in Miriwoong the Benefactive enclitic is suffixed to the pronominal interrogative *garnang* 'who' (29). If the sex of the owner is known or expected to be female, BEN can be used in the appropriate feminine variant and attached to *galany* 'who (f.)'.

(28) Elicitation Kofod [H112]:MM

> *Gaboongerreg-goong woorlalenga?*
> gaboongerreg=ŋ**goong**   woorlale-ng=a
> how_many=2sgBEN   children-NOM=TOP
> 'How many children do you have?'

(29) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

> *Garna-noo nawa garnbija?*
> garna=**noo**(ng)   naw(oo)=a   garnbij=a
> who=2sgBEN   3sgmPN=TOP   clapsticks=TOP
> 'Whose are these clapsticks?'/ 'Who do these clapsticks belong to?'

9.1.6 Benefactive + possessive pronoun

An interesting construction is the combination of a Benefactive enclitic (the existential marker) and a possessive pronoun.[18] The possessive relationship seems to be expressed twice. Examples

---

[17] The noun *miwoolng* is feminine because "many introduced objects including cars, blankets, tea and hats are usually treated as feminine" (Kofod 2013/10 p.c.).

often involve talking about country, as in (30). (31) is about kinship possession, (32) about alienable possession. Those three sentences differ from sentences such as (33) in that, in the latter, the possessive pronoun and BEN do not have the same reference and do, thus, not have the same person and number. In (30), (31), and (32), both possessive pronoun and BEN refer to the PR; in (33) the possessive pronoun refers to the PR in the kinship relation between the speaker and her brother while BEN encodes the alienable relationship between the brother and the non-overt PE. Note that (30) and (32) carry an existential marker but (31) and (33) do not. Moreover, (31) includes the dual marker *-mele* following BEN.

This phenomenon of combining the Benefactive enclitic with a possessive pronoun will also be discussed in the section on attributive possession (§9.2.9).

(30) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:SD[19]

Berrayinga dawanga yoowoorriyan-tha-yoowoorr, ngenayima.
berrayi-ng=a   dawa-ng=a   **yoowoorriya-ntha=yoowoorr**   ngenayi-m=a
this-NOM=TOP   country-NOM=TOP   1nsincPOSS-EXST_m=1nsincBEN   here-LOC=TOP
'This **country** here is ours (belongs to all of us).'

(31) Narrative Kofod [H131-10]:MM

Wantha bemberramantha boorriyanga-woorr-mele woorlalenga.
wantha   bemberra-man-tha   **boorriya-ng=a=woorr**=mele   woorlale-ng=a
get_a_lot   3nsS:3nsO-get_PST-REAL   3nsPOSS-NOM=TOP=3nsBEN=du   child-NOM=TOP
'The two of them have lots of **children**.'

(32) Elicitation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

Ngayangtha-ngany ngenjayinga, ngiyi.
ngaya-n(g)tha=ngany   ngenjayi-ng=a   ngiyi
1sgPOSS-EXST_m=1sgBEN   this_one_m-NOM=TOP   yes
'It [i.e. the coolamon] is mine, this one, yes.'

(33) Elicitation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

Ngayange-noo bariying berrayinga.
ngayange=noo(~~ng~~)   bariyi-ng   berrayi-ng=a
1sgPOSS=3sgmBEN   younger_sibling-m   this_one/these-NOM=TOP
'This is my brother's.'
\q This one, he belongs to my brother.

The sections on the Indirect Object Enclitic and the Benefactive Enclitic above have focussed mainly on the form of the enclitics. A summary of all strategies for marking predicative possession in §9.1.13 will map out the differences in their semantics.

---

[18] For a discussion of possessive pronouns expressing predicative possession by themselves see §9.1.12. A more comprehensive treatment of possessive pronouns is offered in §9.2.3 on attributive possession.
[19] In Toolbox (Kofod 2023) this utterance is analysed as a larger utterance: [Let the Judge listen to all these stories for] this country of ours here. Under this analysis the example sentence illustrates the attributive counterpart of the BEN + possessive pronoun construction discussed in §9.2.9.

9.1.7 Constructions involving -*ba*

As discussed in Chapter 8, many Australian languages have a 'having'-suffix, which has also been referred to by *comitative* (Dixon 2002:149), *proprietive* (e.g. by Walsh 1996 for Murrinh-Patha), or *associative* (Dixon 2002:141). The Miriwoong suffix -*ba* can roughly be translated as 'with' or 'having'. With the latter meaning it is used on nouns expressing a PE and on adjectives that quantify or qualify a PE. These possessive uses of -*ba* are discussed below; for non-possessive uses see §9.4.

9.1.8 Ba + existential

With third person possessors, the suffix -*ba* occurs in combination with the existential marker as in (34) to (36). Note that the existential agrees with the subject, i.e. the PR: In (34) and (35) it takes the feminine form -*nyja*, in (36) the masculine form -*ntha*. These forms could be interpreted as combinations of the nominal suffixes -*ng* (m.) and -*ny* (f.) plus the existential -*tha*, which is assimilated to -*ja* following -*ny*. -*ng* in turn is assimilated to yield -*ntha* (Olawsky in prep. (2020):394). As (37) shows, nowadays not all speakers always assimilate -*ng* + -*tha* to -*ntha* (ibid.). This could be a sign of language change.[20] (36) shows that -*ba* appears on the adjective modifying the PE.

(34) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-5]:ND

> *Goorroorij-bany-ja ngaloowa.*
> goorroorij-**ba**-**nyja**   ngaloo-wa
> car-having-EXST_f   3sgfPN=TOP
> 'She has a car.'

(35) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-3]:AA

> *Miwoolng-bany-ja ngaloowa gawooleny.*
> miwool-**ba**-**nyja**   ngaloo-wa   gawoole-ny
> swag-having-EXST_f   3sgfPN=TOP   woman-f
> 'The woman has a swag.'

(36) Elicitation Kofod [H131-1]:MM

> *Boorroo goorang wariwoo-ban-tha joolang namboorroong-warriny.*
> boorroo   goora-ng   wariwoo-**ba**-**ntha**   joola-ng   namboorroo-ng-warriny
> 3nsPN   old_man-m   aggressive-having-EXST_m   dog-NOM   very_big-NOM-du
> 'That old man has two big cheeky dogs.'

---

[20] Note that not only younger speakers use an unassimilated nominal suffix between -*ba* and the existential. The present example stems from an Elder and the data collected for this thesis also includes sentences from another Elder (ND) who sometimes used the unassimilated form. Thus, this change seems to have already begun when they were younger.

(37) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Yamaga-bang-tha nawa jawalenga.
yamaga-**ba**-(**n**)**tha**   naw(~~oo~~)=a   jawale-ng=a
foot-having-EXST_m   3sgmPN=TOP   man-m=TOP
'He has legs that man.'
\q Jawaleng yamaga-bang?

9.1.8.1   *Ba without existential*

The existential marker is optional, as sentences with *-ba* that do not contain an existential marker are possible. *-ba* can be used to express kinship possession as in (38), including animal offspring as in (39), part-whole relationships as in (40), temporary possession as in (41), and body parts possession, as in (42). As (39) and (42) show, gender agreement is shown by the nominal suffix.[21]

(38) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete Edit]:SD

Woorlale yawoorroo-bang garni?[22]
woorlale   yawoorroo-**ba**-ng   garni
child   many-having-NOM   INT_PRT
'They have lots of children, isn't that right?'

(39) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Ngelayiny woorlale-bany jiyirreng.
ngelayi-ny   woorlale-**ba**-ny   jiyirre-ng
this_one_f-f   child-having-f   kangaroo-NOM
'This kangaroo has a baby.'

(40) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Goorroorij nawa yamaga-bang.
goorroorij   naw(~~oo~~)=a   yamaga-**ba**-ng
car   3sgmPN=TOP   foot-having-m
'That car has wheels.'
\q Do you remember how we translated the word *wheels* in the MALLP session on cars?

(41) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Gooleng bare ginayin goolyawoorr-bang.
goole-ng   bare   g(i)-n-a-yin   goolyawoorr-**ba**-ng
tree-NOM   stand   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   leafy_branch-having-NOM
'The tree has leaves [i.e. leafy branches].'
\r Dat min wi sei: 'Dat tri gadim lif, big mob lif.'
\q The tree has many leaves.

(42) Elicitation Kofod [Miri-2010-May-12]:JB

Ngelayiny joorrgooyile-bany yambarrang.
ngelayi-ny   joorrgooyile-**ba**-ny   yambarra-ng
this_one_f-f   long-having-f   hair-NOM
'She has long hair.'
\q That girl has beautiful long hair.

---

[21] As cars are feminine in gender (see §4.3.1), a feminine nominal suffix should be possible in utterance (40).
[22] See also: RTh-K86-3-1-T0178.

9.1.9 Ba + existential + Benefactive

The most frequently used option with second and third person possessors to express predicative possession during elicitation sessions is the combination of *-ba*, the existential and the Benefactive enclitic, see for example (43) for body parts possession, (44) for alienable possession and (45) for temporary possession. If there is more than one way of translating an English sentence, this combination is usually among them, and in most contexts it is the preferred option.

(43) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

> *Yawoorroobtha yambal-ba-tha-yoowoorr.[23]*
> yawoorroobtha   yambal-**ba**-**tha**=**yoowoorr**
> all   feet-having-EXST=1nsincBEN
> 'We all have feet.'

(44) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-5]:AA

> *Nyengoowa goorroorij-ba-tha-ngoong.*
> nyengoo=a   goorroorij-**ba**-**tha**=**ngoong**
> 2sgPN=TOP   car-having-EXST=2sgBEN
> 'You have a car.'

(45) Spontaneous [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:AA

> *Jilging-ba-tha-ngoong goonda-goondarring-gerring?*
> jilgi(-ng)-**ba**-**tha**=**ngoong**   goonda-goondarri-ng-gerring
> prawn(-NOM)-having-EXST=2sgBEN   RED-fish-NOM-PURP2
> 'Do you have prawns for fishing?'

9.1.9.1 *Questions*

The combination of *-ba* and BEN can be attached to a PE noun to form predicative possessive yes/no-questions. The existential marker is not used in this context, see (46)-(48). (48) additionally carries the interrogative suffix *-woo*.[24] The use of *-woo* is restricted to animates, see §10.3.1.1. Both constructions were also used in the game data, see (49) and (50). As the pitch contours for these utterances below show, when speakers utter the construction *-ba* + BEN, their pitch rises on BEN (Figure 9.1). By contrast, the construction *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN is spoken with a falling intonation (Figure 9.2). The two contours are compared in Figure 9.3. This intonation pattern is not specific to the game data. The utterances in (46) and (47) were also uttered with a rising intonation.

---

[23] This is an interesting sentence taken, among others, from elicitation session MEP-20130727-possession-4. Various instances were uttered by two different speakers in different circumstances. According to the Toolbox dictionary (Kofod 2023) *yawoorroo* means 'many' or 'all' and *yawoorroobtha* 'all'. Both with *yawoorroo* and *yawoorroobtha* the utterance was offered as a translation for 'Everybody has feet' and was translated back as 'We all have feet'. That this sentence already has an existential marker on the PE probably indicates that the *-tha* is part of and therefore modifying the meaning of the quantifier rather than functioning as an existential. Kofod assumes that the *-tha* in *yawooroobtha* is emphatic (2013/09 p.c.).

[24] *-woo* is an allomorph of *-goo* (Kofod 2020, see §4.3.5). In the following it appears as *-woo* in the text and the glosses because in the relevant context it takes that form.

(46) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:PG

> *Ngoonyjoo-ba-ngoong?*
> ngoonyjoo-**ba**=**ngoong**
> tobacco-having=2sgBEN
> 'Do you have tobacco?'

(47) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:AA

> *Mayinggoorlng-ba-ngoong?*
> mayinggoorl-**ba**=**ngoong**
> hand-having=2sgBEN
> 'Do you have hands?'

(48) Elicitation Kofod [H112]:MM

> *Ngajiny-bawoo-ngoong?*
> ngaji-ny-ba-**woo**=**ngoong**
> older_sibling-f-having-INT=2sgBEN
> 'Do you have an older sister?'

(49) Game [MEP-20140920-have-3]:MAJ

> *Goordi-ba-ngoong?*
> goordi-**ba**=**ngoong**
> goanna-having=2sgBEN
> 'Do you have a goanna?'

(50) Game [MEP-20140920-have-3]:MAJ

> *Goordi-bawoo-ngoong?*
> goordi-ba-**woo**=**ngoong**
> goanna-having-INT=2sgBEN
> 'Do you have a goanna?'
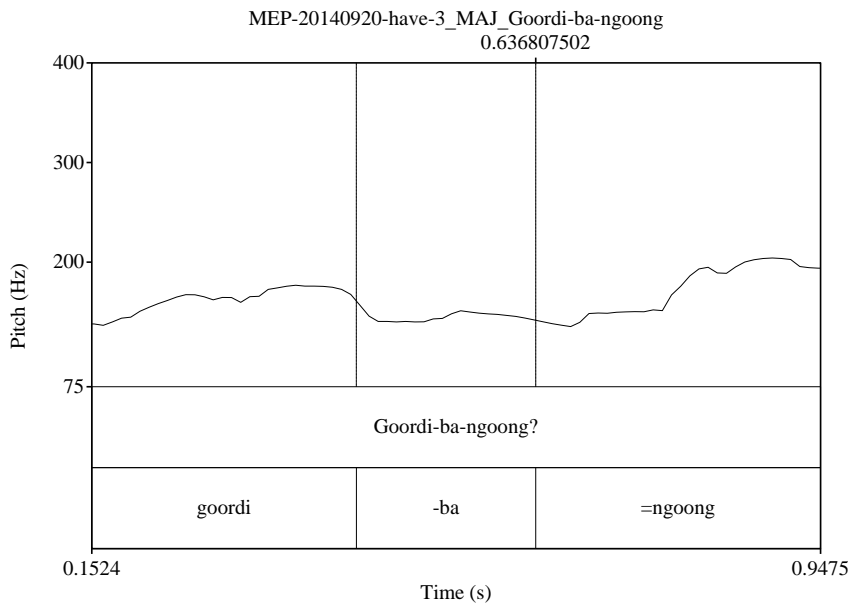
Figure 9.1 Pitch contour -ba + BEN

MEP-20140920-have-3_MAJ_Goordi-ba-woo-ngoong
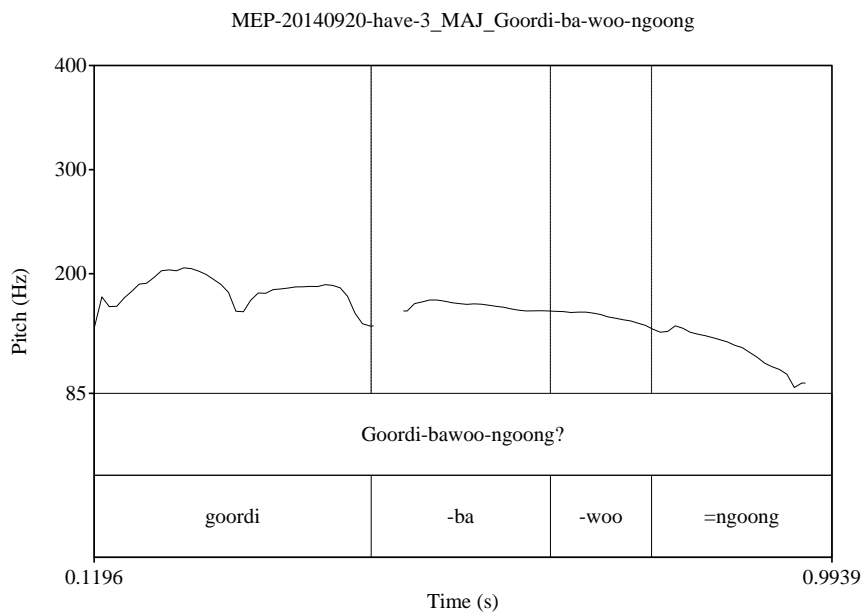
Figure 9.2 Pitch contour -ba + -woo + BEN

MEP-20140920-have-3_MAJ_Goordi-ba-woo-ngoong
MEP-20140920-have-3_MAJ_Goordi-ba-ngoong
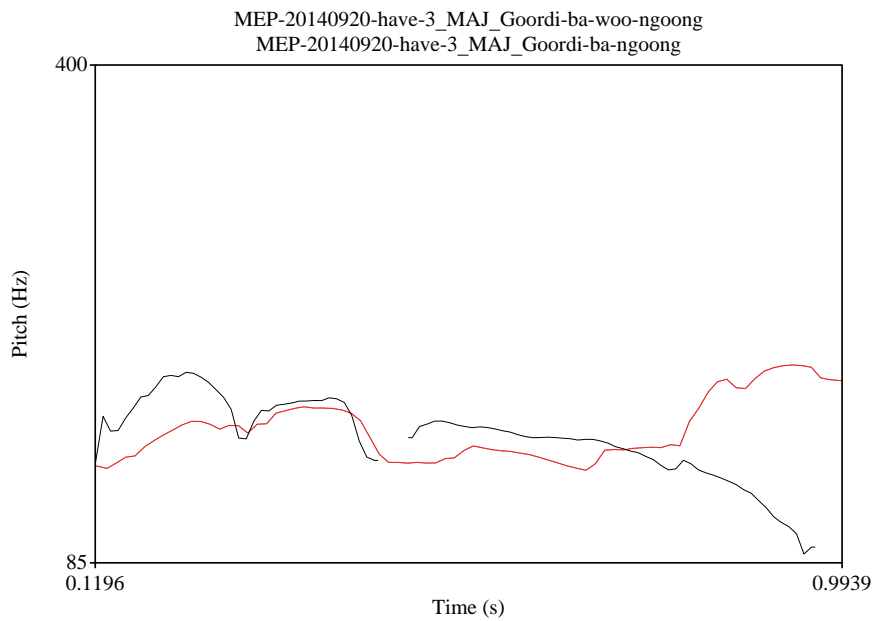
Figure 9.3 Pitch contours compared

Note that the *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN but not the *-ba* + BEN construction confirm Kofod's observations about question intonation (1978:32): "Questions are usually spoken, in a rising tone with a marked fall on the last stressed syllable."[25] This is illustrated in (51) (ibid.).

(51)

a) //ǵabi ýaȓaŋ//   'What will we do?'

---

[25] For non-interrogative simple sentences, she observes that "[t]he usual intonation pattern […] is a gradual rise at the beginning with a gradual fall to the end" (1978:32), see also §10.5.3.

b) //ǵʌluŋ–a   ǵama   bʌnʌɲun–ǵʌn // 'Where did he drink the water?'

9.1.10 Constructions involving -*yile*

The opposite of possession, the so-called *privative* (see Chapter 8), can be expressed using the suffix -*yile* 'not having', 'without'. Below -*yile* is shown to cover body parts (52), temporary possession (54),[26] kinship (57) and (the absence of) food (55). In a game situation the suffix was used to denote negated alienable possession of concrete objects (56).[27] Thus, -*yile* is compatible with both mass nouns, such as food in (55) and count nouns such as bags in (56). As becomes obvious from the examples, the existential marker often occurs with the suffix. Moreover, the Benefactive enclitic accompanies -*yile* in a number of sentences, such as (55) - (57). The presence of the unassimilated nominal ending in sentence (54), i.e. -*yileng-tha* as opposed to -*yilen-tha,* parallels the phenomenon discussed for -*ba* above. The opposite nature of -*yile* and -*ba* is highlighted by (53). There are, however, isolated cases where -*ba* and -*yile* occur together in one utterance, as in (58). It is unclear why the locative marker follows -*yile*. Maybe the translation should be 'We don't have a tomahawk here (with us)', but this is at least not the case in the Kriol translation.

(52) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-3]:AA

Jigeng derriny-yileng.
jige-ng   derriny-**yile**-ng
bird-NOM   tooth-not_having-NOM
'Birds don't have teeth.'

(53) Elicitation Kofod [H110]:MM

Ngoowag-anyja miwool-yileng, boogoo wanyja miwool-bang.
ngoowag-anyja   miwool-**yile**-ng   boogoo   wanyja   miwool-**ba**-ng
no-maybe   things-not_having-NOM   just   maybe   things-having-NOM
'Maybe he has nothing, but maybe he has something.'
\r 'I mait bi nomo gat meni ternat ai don jing i gadim.'

(54) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-4]:AA

Goolyawoorr-yileng-tha gerdewoona.
goolyawoorr-**yile**-n(g)tha   gerdewoon=a
leafy_twigs-not_having-EXST_m   boab=TOP
'The boab tree doesn't have leaves.'

---

[26] This sentence is not about part-whole possession in the sense of descriptions that hold true regardless of the circumstances of utterance as in dictionary-type (semantic) definitions such as *Trees have branches*. Here, the current season renders true the statement that the tree being referred to does not have any leaves. As discussed in §7.5, in line with Heine (1997) and Zeshan & Perniss (2008) this situation is classified as temporary possession. Note, however, that Stassen (2009) defines temporary possession as +Control and -Permanent Contact. It is debatable whether a tree has control over its leaves in Stassen's sense.
[27] The objects were depicted on cards which, in the course of the game, were obtained from fellow players by asking for them.

(55) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:AA

    Mayi-yile-tha-ngany.
    mayi-**yile**-tha=ngany
    food-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN
    'I don't have food.'
    \q We all have tucker.

(56) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

    Ngoowag, goornoorr-yile-tha-ngany.
    ngoowag   goornoorr-**yile**-tha=ngany
    no   bag-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN
    'No, I don't have bags.'

(57) Elicitation Kofod [H120-2]:MM

    Ngoowag bariyi-yile-tha-ngany, *[...].*
    ngoowag   bariyi-**yile**-tha=ngany
    no   younger_sibling-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN
    'No, I don't have a younger sibling (i.e. brother), [...].'
    \q No, I haven't any brothers just one sister.

(58) Elicitation Kofod [H129-2]:MM

    Ngoowa wanyja yarreng, ngoowaga lijboorrga-ba-yilem-tha.
    ngoowa   wanyja   yarreng   ngoowaga
    not   maybe   1nsincS:3sgO-get_FUT_IRR   no

    lijboorrg-a-**ba**-**yile**-m-tha
    axe-TOP-having-not_having-LOC-EXST
    \t I don't think we'll get it, we have no tomahawk.
    \r 'Ai don jing wil gedim wi gat no tomiyauk.'
    \q We will get him out of the hole.

The suffix *-yile* also appears in sentences that include an inflecting verb. The IV in those sentences is in the realis rather than irrealis mood. Thus, *-yile* is a semantic negation ('without') but not a grammatical one (Olawsky 2019 p.c.); grammatical negation triggers irrealis mood in Miriwoong (see §4.3.3).

(59) Narrative Kofod [MALLP-6-June-2012]

    Marlal boona-yileng dawa-bag beri yirriya-meleng.
    marlal   boona-**yile**-ng   dawa-bag   beri
    empty_handed   ashes-not_having-NOM   camp-to   return

    yirr-i-ya=meleng
    1nsexS-go/come_PST-**REAL**=du
    'We went back home empty-handed without ashes.'

9.1.11 The HAVE-verb

HAVE is a *transitive* verb. Transitive verbs are used "when two [people or] animals are present in a sentence. It's when one [of them] is doing something to the other" (Galbat-Newry 2013:26). HAVE has several meanings. Examples with the non-possessive meaning 'look after' can be found in §9.1.11.1. The possessive meanings of HAVE are discussed in §9.1.11.2.1 through §9.1.11.2.6. The combination of HAVE with an uninflecting verb is discussed in §9.1.11.2.7.

Similar to the other Miriwoong inflecting verbs (§4.1, §4.3.3), HAVE is attested in the Toolbox corpus in a myriad of different forms, as different specifications of the following categories lead to different verb forms: The suppletive verb stem indicates present, past or future tense. Prefixes, suffixes, and pronominal enclitics take specific forms for different combinations of the person, number and gender values first, second or third, inclusive or exclusive, singular, dual or non-singular, masculine or feminine. In addition, tense, mood and aspect are encoded by prefixes and suffixes.

For example, one of the forms that occurs comparatively frequently in the Toolbox corpus (i.e. 6 occurrences) and is also attested twice in the data collected for this thesis is *nemenemoorlindayin*, see (60). The most frequent from in my data from elicitation and games (15 occurrences, plus 3 in Toolbox) is *nemoorlindayin*, see (61).[28]

(60) *nemenemoorlindayin*

    nemen(e)-moorlin-da-yin
    1sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
    'I have them/it (non-singular)'

(61) *nemoorlindayin*

    n(e)-moorlin-da-yin
    1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
    'I have/keep him/it (masculine)'

The forms in (60) and (61) are both present tense, realis mood and imperfective aspect. The present tense stem *-moorlin-* is preceded by the pronominal prefixes of transitive verbs, here *nemen-* and *n-* plus epenthetic vowels. The stem is followed by the realis marker *-da* and a suffix encoding imperfective aspect and pronominal information. The latter is compulsory in the present tense (Kofod 2013 p.c., Kofod in prep. (2020):7). The HAVE-verb in the present irrealis tense (and imperfective aspect) can be formed by subtracting the realis marker *-da*.[29]

---

[28] This is to be expected since many occurrences were either uttered during discussions about one's family (e.g. *I have a little sister*), or in the Have game (*I have* (a card which depicts) *a mouse*). Likewise, the plural form occurred for example as *I have two older sisters, I have* (a card which depicts) *three mice* and during discussions of one's body parts (e.g. *I have two eyes*).

[29] The absence of the realis marker seems to trigger some assimilation processes such as *nemoorlindayin* becoming *nemoorlinken* '1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-1sgIPF' [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-9], see Kofod's explanation that "[f]ollowing the consonants 'rd' and 'n' in [the intransitive verbs] FALL/GO_DOWN and BURN, *-yin* becomes *–gen*" (in prep. (2020):29). Further candidates include *dawoon > ben* as is *bemberr(a)-*

When the verb appears in the past tense and realis mood, the past tense stem *-moorlooward-* is preceded by the pronominal prefixes familiar from the present tense form above and followed by the realis marker *-a* and optionally by a suffix encoding imperfective aspect and pronominal information. The HAVE-verb in the past irrealis tense (and imperfective aspect) can be formed by subtracting the realis marker *-a*.

To yield a future realis form, the future tense stem *-moorloo-* is preceded by pronominal prefixes which are different from the prefixes mentioned above for present and past tense stems and by a secondary future realis prefix *-i/wi-*. The stem is followed by the realis marker *-ya* and optionally by a suffix encoding imperfective aspect and pronominal information. The attachment of the realis marker *-ya* apparently effectuates the final segment of the stem, namely *-oo* to be elided and an *-i* to be added through epenthesis. Only two forms in the corpus are glossed as future irrealis.

Finally, there are some forms of the HAVE-verb that make use of the future stem. In the future tense, first person irrealis mood has a hortative reading and 2nd and 3rd person an imperative reading.

The HAVE-verb is not attested in the Toolbox corpus in all its possible forms, there are gaps in the paradigms. This is not surprising because the many possible combinations of stems with pronominal affixes and tense, mood and aspect affixes[30] lead to very many different forms for each inflected verb (Kofod in prep. (2020)). In addition, the HAVE-verb occurs with lower frequency as compared to other Miriwoong IVs: Of the 14 inflecting verbs it occupies rank 8 in terms of frequency (followed only by COOK, BITE, GIVE, LEAVE, SWEAR and LEAD, Kofod in prep. (2020):71). In comparison with all verbs it is on rank 13 of 33 verbs, which equals less than one percent of verbs (Kofod in prep. (2020):4). Thus, it has not been recorded in the relevant environments in natural language data. Due to the high number of forms, and taking into account the endangered language situation, not all forms have been elicited, either. In some cases there are too many gaps to make informed guesses of what the form probably looks like, since a comparison to different parts of the HAVE paradigm or the same paradigm for a different verb are not possible in a reliable way. The interested reader is referred to Kofod's work on Miriwoong verbs (in prep. (2020)).

---

moorlin-ben-nging '3nsS:3nsO-have_PRS-3nsIPF-SUB'. In this case assimilation takes place because the stem *-moorlin-* is no longer followed by a vowel (*moorlin**w**oon* instead of *moorlin**da**woon*), thus *moorlin**ben*** is formed (see Kofod in prep. (2020):29: "The third person non-singular suffix *–woon* becomes *–ben* following 'rd' or 'n').

[30] "Because of the number of possible combinations of tense, mood and aspect affixes Miriwoong verbs may be found in up to twenty-six different forms for each subject or subject/object combination. [...] A possible 49 subject/object combinations for transitive verbs multiplied by a possible 24 forms for each combination gives 1,176 possible forms for each." (Kofod in prep. (2020):71). Kofod explains that the missing forms in the paradigms are difficult to elicit as the small semantic distinctions cannot be expressed in the language of elicitation.

9.1.11.1 *Non-possessive uses of the HAVE-verb*

As discussed in §8.2.2, in Nyulnyulan languages, Kija (Jarragan), and Jaminjung (Jaminjungan) the possessive verb carries an abstract possessive meaning and additional lexical meanings are induced by cultural knowledge, and the surrounding discourse and environment. This seems to be the case for Miriwoong as well. Note that the meaning 'hold' is expressed by a combination of the verb have and an uninflecting verb, see §9.1.11.2.7.

The verb HAVE is often used in the meaning 'looking after'. (62) is an utterance taken from the story about the Blue tongue and the Frill-necked lizard. It is about a grandmother who used to look after her grandchildren. This time she sends them away with their parents, though.

(62) Narrative Kofod[31] [DD-K90-17-T0040]:DD

> *Benemoorloowardanyan.*
> **bene-moorlooward-a-nyan**
> 3sgS:3nsO-have_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF
> 'She (i.e. the grandmother) used to **look after** them.'

In utterance (63) the owners of a homestead allow two aboriginal children to stay on the station. They will look after the children by providing them with rations. The translation is given as *keep*.

(63) Narrative Kofod [H131-10]:MM

> *Nandimoorliya-wayi ngenayijiyam."*
> **nandi-moorl(oo)-(i)ya**-nenggoorr-ayi   ngenayijiya-m
> 1sgS:2nsO-have_FUT-REAL=2nsO-like_that   right_here-LOC
> 'I will keep you all here like that.'

In (64), the elicitation question (\q *I gave birth to two children but my sister raised them*) was translated suing the HAVE-verb plus the Benefactive enclitic. The verb is back-translated as 'look after' (\r *Aim lukin afta mai sista kids*), the kinship relation between the speaker and her sister is expressed by the third person feminine Benefactive enclitic *-joong*.

---

[31] Recorded by Jan Griffiths.

(64) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:AA

*Ganggoob woothoo-woothoong (.) nemoorlindayin(.)-joong ngayangeny ngajiny <or>
booloongoony.*

ganggoob	woothoo-woothoo-ng	**ne-moorlin-da-yin**=joong
two	RED-child-NOM	1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF=3sgfBEN

ngayange-ny	ngaji-ny	<or>	booloongoo-ny
1sgPOSS-f	older_sibling-f	or	sibling_just_older-f

'I look after her two children, my older sister.'[32]
\q I gave birth to two children but my sister raised them.
\r 'Aim lukin afta mai sista kids.'

Not only utterances involving children are translated as 'look after'. Utterance (65) by AA about a swag was translated by PG with 'look after'. The elicitation session started with the English elicitation prompts *The man has a swag* (i.e. a *have*-construction) and *The swag belongs to the man* (i.e. a *belong*-construction, see §7.6). These were translated using *-ba* + EXST and the Benefactive enclitic respectively. When a form of HAVE was introduced as a potential alternative (\q *How about: Gawooleng miwoolng gemoorloowardanyan*) the Benefactive enclitic *-joong* was added to the HAVE-verb and then translated first by a possessive verb (\rPG *Dat min: I bin abum dat sweg fo dat men, dat wuman*) but then by 'look after' (\rAA *It's laik yu sei: Did you look after her swag*). When asked about a masculine subject - masculine object combination (\q *He's looking after that man's swag.*) the sentence was translated into Miriwoong using the HAVE-verb and back-translated by PG using 'look after' see (65).

(65) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-3]:AA

Gemoorlindayin miwoolnga-noong nawoo jawaleng.

ge-moorlin-da-yin	miwool-ng=a=noong	nawoo	jawale-ng
3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF	things-NOM=TOP=3sgmBEN	3sgmPN	man-m

'He is looking after that man's swag.'
\q He's looking after that man's swag.
\r 'I gat dat sweg fo dat men, i luk afta.'

9.1.11.2 *Possessive uses of the HAVE-verb*

The verb HAVE can express various different types of possessive relationships. It can be used if the PE is a concrete object (§9.1.11.2.1), a family member (§9.1.11.2.2) or an abstract entity (§9.1.11.2.4). One can exploit the verb HAVE also to talk about temporary (§9.1.11.2.5) and more time-stable possession (§9.1.11.2.6).

---

[32] The Toolbox database (Kofod 2023) lists the form *nemenemoorlindayin* for first person singular subject and third non-singular object. In several sessions speakers use the third singular object prefix *ne-*. *nemene-* is also used, e.g. by ND: *Ganggoob-tha nemenemoorloondayin*. 'I have two [children].' [MEP-20130727-possession-8] and MAJ: *Gaboongerreg nemenemoorloonken berrayinga?* 'How many [turtles] do I have?' [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-9].

9.1.11.2.1 The domain of Alienable possession

Ownership of tangible objects is called *alienable* possession. For this type of possession, the relation between the PR and the PE is relatively time-stable but can be severed by the PR, who is in control of the PE (Stassen 2009, see Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion). For example, the PR can sell or lend the PE and thus be no longer in possession of it. The relation can also cease to exist against the will of the PR, e.g. if the PE is stolen. Thus, in alienable possession the PE 'belongs to' the PE in a judicial sense. This concept of 'ownership' seems to be cross-culturally universal (ibid.) and is often seen as the prototypical case of possession. In Miriwoong all kinds of objects can be possessed, e.g. ashes (66), trucks (67) or spears (68). Regularly one talks about having food by using HAVE, such as in (69). Ownership of pet animals is also expressed with HAVE, see (70).

(66) Elicitation Kofod [H131-7-8]:MM

Ngoondenging nemoorlindayin boonang.
ngoondengi-ng **ne**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin** boona-ng
good-NOM 1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF ashes-NOM
'I have good **ashes**.'

(67) Elicitation Kofod [H131-17-18]:MM

Woojegale-warriny ganggoob yirramoorlindayin.
woojegale-warriny ganggoob **yirra**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin**
car-du two 1nsexS:3sgO-have_PRS-REAL-1nsexIPF
'We have two **trucks.**'

(68) Elicitation Kofod [H122-1]:MM

Ngayoo merrgern doowoon nemenemoorlindayin ngayam.
ngayoo merrgern doowoon **nemene**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin** ngaya-m
1sgPN three spear 1sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF 1sgPOSS-LOC
'I have three **spears** at my place.'

(69) Elicitation Kofod [H116]:MM

Mayeng woothoong nemenemoorlindayin.
mayi-ng woothoo-ng **nemene**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin**
food-NOM small-NOM 1sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
'I have only a little bit of **bread.**'

(70) Personal narrative [MEP-20141005-MAJ-checking-sentences]:MAJ

Nyiloomoorlindayin <Chihuahua>.
nyile-moorlin-da-yin Chihuahua
1sgS:3sgfO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
'I have a Chihuahua.'

If one wants to talk about family members, the verb HAVE can be employed as well, see (71) -

(73).[33]

(71) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:AA

Nemoorlindayin bariying.[34]
ne-moorlin-**da**-**yin**   bariyi-ng
1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   younger_sibling-m
'I have a younger **brother.**'

(72) Elicitation [MEP-20150907-checking-sentences]: PG

Jerrawoonhiyang gemoorloondanyan.
jerrawoonhiya-ng   ***ge**-moorlin-**da**-nyan*
one-m   3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF
'She has one [son].'

(73) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:AA

Gagayi, jawoojing, jawoojiny, bajoorroony, nemenemoorlindayin dawa,
dawawanga ngenayi-ngarnang.
gagayi   jawooji-ng   jawooji-ny   bajoorroo-ny
grandfather(MF)-m   grandfather(MFS)-f   mother_in_law -f   grandmother(MM)

nemene-moorlin-**da**-**yin**   dawa   dawawa-ng=a
1sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   country   country_owner-NOM=TOP

ngenayi-ngarna-ng
here-dweller-NOM
'[I am a country owner because] I have **grandmothers (maternal), grandfathers (maternal),
maternal grandfather's sisters and mothers-in-law**, who were country-owners from here.'

If animals have babies the verb HAVE can also be used, see (74). That a dog is treated the same as a human being linguistically does not necessarily need to mean that the domain of animals in general can be expressed with the HAVE-verb. In this case the use of the verb could be due to the fact that culturally dogs are seen as part of the family. Some have been reported to give them skin names[35] appropriate for the children of the owner (Kofod 2013/09 p.c., GN 2016/06 p.c.). The have verb is certainly not the only construction used with the offspring of either humans or animals. A construction with *-ba* + EXST is frequent. In (75) *-bany-ja* follows *woothoong* 'child'. Alternatively, *-bany-ja* is suffixed to *goolaleng* 'toddler'. The same construction can be used for cats and kittens ('The cat has babies') and humans ('The woman has babies') (Olawsky 2019/06 p.c.).

---

[33] For more example sentences see §1.3 and §10.5.2
[34] Interestingly, the verb in the form for a male object is uttered both with the feminine and masculine form of 'younger_sibling' by PG, ND and AA.
[35] For information on skin names see footnote 17 in Chapter 6

(74) Elicitation Kofod [H128]:MM

Boorrooboo ngaloo joolany ganggoobeleng warlagi-warriny benemoorlindanyan.
boorroo-boo   ngaloo   joola-ny   ganggoobele-ng
3nsPN-du   3sgfPN   dog-f   two-NOM

warlagi-warriny   **bene**-**moorlin**-**da**-**nyan**
puppy-du   3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF
'That dog has two **puppies.**'

(75) Elicitation Olawsky [DN-06/2019]:DN

Woothoo-bany-ja ngaloo(-wa) joolany.
woothoo-**ba**-**nyja**   ngaloo(=a)   joola-ny
child-having-EXST_f   3sgfPN(=TOP)   dog-f
'The dog has babies.'

The following constructions are found in the Belong game database (see also §10.3.2.6): BEN (n=2), possessive pronouns (n=2), *-ba* (n=2, i.e. 1x ba + EXST and 1x bang), IO (n=1). Examples for the use of *-ba*, BEN and possessive pronouns and are given in (76) and (77).

(76) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Woorlale-bany-ja, berrayi woorlalen-tha-joong.
woorlale-**ba**-**nyja**   berrayi   woorlale-**ntha**=**joong**
child-having-EXST_f   this_one/these   child-EXST_m=3sgfBEN
'She [i.e. the kangaroo] has a baby, this is her baby.'

(77) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Jige boorriyang ngalyarrng.
jige   **boorriya**-**ng**   ngalyarr-ng
bird   3nsPOSS-NOM   egg-NOM
'A bird's eggs.'[36]

9.1.11.2.3 The body parts domain

During elicitation, body parts of human beings and animals were usually talked about using *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) or the Indirect Object enclitic. When prompted for a form of the HAVE-verb, such sentences were also formed. In both (78) and (79) the verb form for a singular object is used, although a non-singular form might be expected. In (79), the HAVE-verb is combined with an Indirect Object enclitic.

(78) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Nawa joolang gemoorlindayin biyirdeng.
naw(oo)=a   joola-ng   **ge**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin**   biyirde-ng
3sgmPN=TOP   dog-NOM   3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF   thigh-NOM
'That dog has a leg.'
\q The dog has [four] legs. […] [You said] Joolang biyirde-bang. Can I also say:
Gemoorlindayin joolang yamagang?

---

[36] McGregor (1990:182) calls this the "animate source of a bodily product**,** e.g. *gambinyi jirigi-nhingi* (egg bird-ABL1) 'a bird's egg'."

(79) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:PG

> *Gemoorloondanyan-ji mayinggoorlng.*
> **ge-moorlin-da-nyan**=ji   mayinggoorl-ng
> 3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF=3sgfIO   hand-NOM
> 'She has a hand.'
> \q She has two hands. […] [Asks whether she understood correctly:] Mayinggoorlng
> gemoorlindayin-ji?

An example that was found in the corpus, interestingly, had a more abstract interpretation. In example (80), the speaker explains that she has knowledge of her country. In Miriwoong having knowledge can be expressed by 'having [good] ears'.

(80) Personal narrative Kofod[37] [WDB-2-ML]:ML

> *[I bin abum] ngarnderrang nemoorloowarda dawanga.*
> ngarnderra-ng   **ne-moorlooward-a**   dawa-ng=a
> ears-NOM   1sgS:3sgmO-have_PST-REAL   country-NOM=TOP
> 'I had the **knowledge** of the country.'

9.1.11.2.4 The domain of Abstract possession

The above examples are all about concrete things in the world around us. Abstract entities such as law and dreaming places can also be possessed. The examples (81) and (82) are taken from Mabo Complete Edit (Kofod 2023), a text about the land claim of the Miriwoong people. In example (81) the Miriwoong explain to the Perth government that they have had their own Law for a long time. Two utterances later (82) the government representatives agree. The noun *law* appears in (82) and (83) as a loan from English. In the former it receives the Miriwoong noun suffix *-ng* and the topic marker *-a,* whereas in the latter it stays at it is. (82) contains a possessive pronoun to mean 'own' but in (83) this is also borrowed from English.

(81) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF

> *Ngoowag! Yamberramoorloowarda gerlileb-tha yarroowa.*
> ngoowag   **yamberra-moorlooward-a**   gerlileb-tha   yarroo=a
> no   1nsexS:3nsO-have_PST-REAL   for_a_long_time-EMPH1   1nsexPN=TOP
> 'Oh no! We have had it [i.e. our own **law**] for a long time.'

(82) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF

> *Jamberramoorloowardanan warany law-nga gerlileb-tha, nenggerriyang.*
> **jamberra-moorlooward-a-nan**   warany   law-ng=a
> 2nsS:3nsO-have_PST-REAL-2IPF   alright   law-NOM=TOP
>
> gerlileb-tha   nenggerriya-ng
> for_a_long_time-EMPH1   2nsPOSS-NOM
> 'Alright you all do have your own **law** from early days.'

---

(83) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF

Berraying <own law> yarremoorlindayin, ngarranggarni theniyinhang […].
berrayi-ng   <own>   <law>   **yarre**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin**
this-NOM   own   law   1nsS:3sgO-have_PRS-REAL-1ns

ngarranggarni   theniyinha-ng
dreaming   everything-NOM
'We have our own law [here] and all kinds of dreaming places [in our country].'

In example (83) the Miriwoong talk about possessing their Law as well as dreaming places on their country, for another example of the use of the verb HAVE to express the latter see (84). The following example (85) shows that the possession of something given to the people during the Dreamtime is also expressed by this verb:[38] Having been given to them during the Dreamtime, the Miriwoong have lice for good, they are inseparable from them. (One could say that the Miriwoong *inalienably* possess the lice. A distinction between alienable and inalienable uses of the HAVE-verb seems unnecessary, since it is used both for domains that correspond to alienable possession in other languages (compare §9.1.11.2.1) and domains that correspond to inalienable possession.) On the other hand, in a description of a person who currently has lice, not the HAVE-verb but the *-ba* + EXST + BEN (see §9.1.9) construction was used – at least by a speaker of the younger generation.

(84) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF

Ngarranggarni barleg yamberremoorlindayan dawang yoowoorriyam.
ngarranggarni   barleg   **yamberre**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yan**
dreaming   mixed   1nsincS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-1incIPF

dawa-ng   yoowoorriya-m
country-NOM   1nsincPOSS-LOC
'We have lots of **dreaming places** here in our own country.'

(85) Narrative Kofod [H131-9]:MM

Goorroomoorlindawoonra wanewoogeng.
goorroo-**moorlin**-**da**-**woon**=ra   wanewooge-ng
3nsS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF=SEQ   always-NOM
'They have them [i.e. lice] for good now.'

(86) Elicitation Kofod [Miri-2010-May-12]:JB

Yigarrb ngenandayin yalale-ba-tha-ngany gemerndema, yambarram.
yigarrb   ngena-n-da-yin   yalale-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
be_scratching   1sgS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   louse-having-EXST=1sgBEN

gemernde-m=a   yambarra-m
head-LOC=TOP   hair-LOC
'I am scratching, I have **lice** in the hair on my head.'

---

[38] One instance of the BRING/TAKE-verb was also found.

9.1.11.2.5 The domain of Temporary possession

If a PE is possessed by the PR for a limited amount of time, this is called *temporary* possession (Heine 1997:34). The PR usually exerts control over the PE (Stassen 2009, cf. Zeshan & Perniss 2008). For example, if one has something stuck in one's foot as in (87), one probably takes it out as soon as possible. Likewise, clothes or body decorations (see (88)) are not connected to someone forever. The PR is in control of them because he or she can take them off or alter them – in contrast to, for example, his or her arms and legs (which are *inalienably* possessed).

(87) Elicitation Kofod [H131-1]:MM

> *Gooleng ngenanganyboorda yambalng ngenjayijiyantha tharrmalb nemoorlindayin.*
> goole-ng   ngena-nganyboord-a   yambal-ng
> stick-NOM   3sgS:1sgO-spear_PST-REAL   foot-NOM
>
> ngenjayi-jiya-ntha   tharrmalb   **ne**-**moorlin**-**da**-**yin**
> this_m-INTS-EXST_m   sticking_out   1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
> 'A **stick** poked me in the foot and I have it stuck in me.'

(88) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-3-T0469]:BF

> *Thamberalng gimoorloowarda ngenayimara goomoondoongama, gelenga-biny thoowoom.*
> thamberal-ng   **g**-**i**-**moorlooward**-**a**   ngenayi-m=ra
> star-NOM   3sgS:3sgmO-HYPO-have_PST-REAL   here-LOC=SEQ
>
> goomoondoonga-m=a   gelenga-biny   thoowoo-m
> paperbark_headdress-LOC=TOP   behind-along   nape_of_neck -LOC
> 'He was supposed to have a star here then on his paperbark headdress behind at the nape of his neck.'

That the HAVE-verb is used for both alienable possession (§9.1.11.2.1) and temporary possession in Miriwoong confirms Stassen's typological prediction that a *have*-verb will also be used for temporary possession if it is used for alienable possession (2009:63).

9.1.11.2.6 The meaning 'keep'

In contrast to the temporary possession discussed in §9.1.11.2.5 above, HAVE can mean 'keep', i.e. a relationship that last for a longer period of time. Sentence (89) is about keeping in mind words which someone has once learned.

(89) Personal narrative Kofod [H131-12]:MM

> *Benendanyan-ra-ngerroowa woorlanga wanewooge benemoorlindanyan-ngerroowa.*
> ben-en-da-nyan=ra=ngerroowa   woorla-ng=a
> 3sgS:3nsO-bring/take_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF=SEQ=1sgABL   word-NOM=TOP
>
> waniwooge   **bene**-**moorlin**-**da**-**nyan**=ngerroowa
> always   3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF=1sgABL
> 'She took the words from me and keeps them always.'

9.1.11.2.7 The HAVE-verb in combination with uninflecting verbs (complex predicates)

In all examples above the HAVE-verb is the only verb in the clause[39] and forms the main predication. Alternatively, but less frequently, it is combined with an uninflecting verb (UV, also called *coverb*) (Kofod in prep. (2020):71). The meanings of these constructions vary and are not necessarily possessive. For example, the following are possible: 'keep hidden' (90), 'hold' (91) or 'love'(92). In (90) the eagle takes revenge by hiding a little bone (i.e. a fibula) underneath a blanket so that his enemy, the egret, will be poked by it when he sits down.

(90) Narrative Kofod [H138B]:MM

Banjan wilan, nawa jaganya gilandayin gemoorloowardayin woorlaj, warrarnang, goorilinging ngenjayinga.

banjan	w(i)-lan	naw(ᵒᵒ)=a	jagany=a
be_spread_out	3sg_MID-be_put_PST_IRR	3sgmPN=TOP	fibula=TOP

g(i)-lan-da-yin	**g(e)-moorlooward-a-yin**	**woorlaj**
3sgS:3sgmO-put_PST-REAL-3sgmIPF	3sgS:3sgmO-have_PST-REAL-3sgmIPF	hide

warrarna-ng	goorili-ngi-ng	ngenjayi-ng=a
wedge_tailed_eagle-NOM	nose_peg-that_kind-NOM	this_one_m-m=TOP

'He put that little bone **keeping it hidden.**'

(91) Elicitation Kofod [H131-14]:MM

Gooleng roo jirri gemoorloowardayin, thoorroob ganyja-ni jerrawoom-banjilng.

goole-ng	roo	**jirri**	**g(e)-moorlooward-a-yin**
stick-NOM	hold	hold_up_show	3sgS:3sgmO-have_PST-REAL-3sgIPF

thoorroob	g-any-ja=ni	jerrawoo-m-banjilng
grab	3sgS:3sgmO-bring/take_PST-REAL=3sgmIO	another-LOC-from

'He was **holding** it, the other one grabbed it from him.'

(92) Elicitation Kofod [Dictionary Sentences]:BF

Doorrwajib noomoorloo.

doorrwajib	**noo-moorloo**
love	1sgS:3sgmO-have_HORT

'I love him. / I want to keep him.'

9.1.12 Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns will be discussed in greater detail in §9.2.3. However, since several utterances including possessive pronouns are best interpreted as *belong*-constructions (see §7.6) and, thus, as predicative possession, these kinds of utterances will be mentioned here.

The possessive pronoun in (93) does not modify a PE but stands on its own as the head of the sentence (see also Olawsky in prep. (2020):131ff, 357). An existential marker is attached to the

---

[39] A *clause* often coincides with the sentence, but a sentence can be made up of several clauses which can be separated by a short intonational break. For example, *The man is tall* is both a sentence and a clause. *The man, who is tall, is swimming* is a sentence which consists of the clause *The man is swimming* and the clause *[The man] who is tall.*

possessive pronoun and adds the equative/identifying meaning 'it is'. For a discussion of -*ngtha* as opposed to -*ntha* see §9.1.8. In (94), the possessive pronoun predicates the possessive relationship between the PE *gerdewoon* 'boab nut' and an otherwise non-overt PR. An existential marker is not present. As (95) clearly shows, the existential marker is not obligatory: It appears in the first but not the second clause, see also (96).

(93) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:AA

> *Ngayangeng-tha.*
> **ngayange**-n(g)tha
> 1sgPOSS-EXST_m
> 'It [i.e. the blanket] is mine.'
> \q And if it doesn't belong to my brother? If it's mine.

(94) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]:PG

> *Nawa gerdewoon ngaliyangeng. Birrgamib nyiniya.*
> naw(~~oo~~)=a   gerdewoon   **ngaliyange**-ng   birrgamib   nyiniya
> 3sgmPN=TOP   boab   3sgfPOSS-NOM   be_making   3sgfS-be/stay-PST-REAL
> 'This boab nut is hers. She made it.'
> \q That's hers, that's her gerdewoon.

(95) Elicitation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

> *Nyingiyan-tha, ngenjayingara nyingiyangeng.*
> **nyingiya**-ntha   ngenjayi-ng-a=ra   **nyingiyange**-ng
> 2sgPOSS-EXST_m   this_one_m-m-NOM=SEQ   2sgPOSS-NOM
> 'It [i.e. the coolamon?] is yours, this now is yours.'

(96) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

> *Biyirdeng ngaliyangeng.*
> biyirde-ng   **ngaliyange**-ng
> leg-NOM   3sgfPOSS-NOM
> 'The leg is hers.'

9.1.13   Comparison of constructions for the expression of positive predicative possession

In this section, the use of the IO and BEN enclitics will be compared to the use of the construction -*ba* (+ EXST) (+BEN) and the HAVE-verb. Constructions with possessive pronouns and -*yile* are included in the comparison of predicative possession and attributive possession in §9.3. The comparison in this section focusses on overt positive possession, i.e. it concentrates on sentences that are not negated: The discussion covers sentences like *I have a brother* but not sentences like *I **don't** have brothers*. Sentences without overt marking (i.e. juxtaposition) and questions are also not included.

Looking at the Toolbox corpus (Kofod 2020),[40] one finds that kinship and alienable possession can be expressed in three out of four ways, namely by the Benefactive enclitic, by the Benefactive enclitic + -*ba* and by the verb HAVE. For talking about names of objects, the Indirect Object enclitic

---

[40] The Toolbox corpus includes transcriptions of narratives and elicitation.

was used exclusively. Positive temporary and abstract possession can only be found in sentences that include the verb HAVE. An overview of these findings is given in Table 9.3.

	(EXST +) IO	(EXST +) BEN	*-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	HAVE
names	√			
body parts		[41]	[42]	
kinship			√	√
alienable		√	√	√
part-whole				
temporary				√
abstract				√

Table 9.3 Comparison of constructions for predicative possession in the corpus

Additional elicitation sessions have been conducted for this thesis in order to test whether data for the empty cells in this table can be found. For example, it was investigated, whether utterances about body parts using the Indirect Object enclitic, the Benefactive enclitic, the suffix *-ba* or the verb HAVE can be elicited. Likewise, it was explored how part-whole relationships are expressed in Miriwoong and if HAVE can be used in one of the remaining domains (i.e. for names, for body parts and for part-whole relationships). The results are presented in Table 9.4 below. It turns out that the possession of body parts can be expressed using both the Indirect and the Benefactive enclitic. Some examples with HAVE could be elicited as well, but they were rarely spontaneously uttered and some confusion about the correct form of the verb arose. The HAVE-verb was also elicited with part-whole relationships, but these were more commonly expressed by *-ba* rather than HAVE.[43] One example of kinship possession with the Indirect Object enclitic was found. Examples for the different additional constructions are given below. Note that empty cells indicate that no evidence of the construction has been found, not necessarily that there is negative evidence, i.e. evidence that such a construction is not possible in the respective domain.

---

[41] One example using EXST + BEN on an adjective is found: 'I have bad eyes' [LMC-12-15-19-22-23-24].

[42] There are a few examples where *-ba* and the Benefactive enclitic are found on adjectives: 'She has short hair', 'I have grey hair'. Mainly these describe the state of the body part: 'My hand is sore', 'My feet are no good'.

[43] The fact that in Miriwoong the construction *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) is preferred over the HAVE-verb for part-whole possession confirms Aikhenvald's observation that if there is an alternative to marking predicative possession with a *have*-verb, that alternative will rather be used with part-whole relationships, kinship, and permanent possessions, while the *have*-verb is used for alienable possession or for less time-stable relationships (Aikhenvald 2013:33). The other domains she mentions are expressed in Miriwoong by both constructions.

	(EXST +) IO	(EXST+) BEN	*-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	HAVE
names	√			
body parts	√	44	√	?
kinship	(√)	?45	√	√
alienable		√	√	√
part-whole			√	(√)
temporary			√	√
abstract				√

Table 9.4 Comparison of constructions for predicative possession after elicitation

Examples (10) and (12) above showed how body parts can be expressed using the Indirect Object enclitic. They are repeated here as (97) and (98).

(97) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:PG

Ganggoobeleng-ngerri mayinggoorlng.
ganggoobele-ng=**ngerri**   mayinggoorl-ng
two-NOM=1sgIO   hand-NOM
'I have two hands.'

(98) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:PG

Ganggoobtha-ngerri ngayoowa mayinggoorlng.
ganggoob-tha=**ngerri**   ngayoo=a   mayinggoorl-ng
two-EXST=1sgIO   1sgPN=TOP hand-NOM
'I have two hands.'

(99) to (101) are examples of sentences that express the possession of body parts using *-ba* + EXST + BEN.

(99) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-2013-06-26]:MAJ

Mayinggoorlng merrngern-ba-tha-ngany.
mayinggoorl-ng   merrngern-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
hand-NOM   three-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have three fingers.'

(100) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-26-06-2013]:MAJ

Nyoomboorr-ba-tha-yoowoorr.
nyoomboorr-**ba**-**tha**=**yoowoorr**
nose-having-EXST=1nsincBEN
'We all have a nose.'

---

[44] Two more examples using EXST + BEN on an adjective were found: 'I have bad eyes' ([MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-stories-1]:MAJ), 'I have two good eyes.' ([MEP-20130805-possession-1]:AA).

[45] One instance was elicited but the speaker seemed hesitant and first gave a construction with *-ba* + EXST + BEN: bariyi-ng woothoo=ngany (younger_sibling-NOM little=1sgBEN) 'I have a little brother' ([MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:AA).

(101) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

Ganggoobeleng yambalng-ba-tha-ngany.
ganggoobele-ng   yambal-ng-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
two-NOM   foot-NOM-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have two feet.'

Examples with the verb HAVE include utterances such as (102), repeated here from (78). As was said above, it was not spontaneously offered but followed a prompt.

(102) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Nawa joolang gemoorlindayin biyirdeng.
naw(oo)=a   joola-ng   **ge-moorlin-da-yin**   biyirde-ng
3sgmPN=TOP   dog-NOM   3sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF   thigh-NOM
'That dog has a leg.'
\q The dog has [four] legs. […] [You said] Joolang biyirde-bang. Can I also say: Gemoorlindayin joolang yamagang?

The expression of temporary possession (103) and part-whole relationships (104) using *-ba* is exemplified below (the sentences are repeated here from (41) and (11) above).

(103) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Gooleng bare ginayin goolyawoorr-bang.
goole-ng   bare   g(i)-n-a-yin   goolyawoorr-**ba**-ng
tree-NOM   stand   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   leafy_branch-having-NOM
'[In the wet season] The tree has leaves [i.e. leafy branches].'
\r Dat min wi sei: 'Dat tri gadim lif, big mob lif.' […] Ai bin sei dat wet taim […]
\q The tree has many leaves. [46]

(104) Elicitation [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

Goorroorij nawa yamaga-bang.
goorroorij   naw(oo)=a   yamaga-**ba**-ng
car   3sgmPN=TOP   foot-having-m
'That car has wheels.'
\q Do you remember how we translated the word *wheels* in the MALLP session on cars?

Kinship possession with the IO was discussed in (11), repeated here as (105).

(105) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:PG

Ganggoob woothoo-woothoong-ngerri.
ganggoob   woothoo-woothoo-ng=**ngerri**
two   RED-child-NOM=1sgIO
'I have two children.'

To conclude, many types of predicative possession can be expressed in Miriwoong and there are several different encoding strategies. Due to overlap, one cannot establish a one-to-one correspondence between a specific domain and a specific construction, but some observations

---

[46] A side note on the semantics of these examples: The English sentences that the speaker was asked to translate included the quantifier *many*. This is also reflected in the Kriol back-translation but does not surface in the Miriwoong sentence. Later in the session, when asked whether there is a word for big boab trees that have several trunks, the response includes the word *yawoorroong* 'many'.

can be made: Both enclitics on their own (+/- EXST) are more restricted in terms of the domains they cover than *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) and HAVE. The Indirect Object enclitic is the only option for names and is also used to a limited extent for body parts and kinship. The Benefactive enclitic, on the other hand, is mainly used for alienable possession and to some degree also with kinship. In addition, IO is used in sentences negated with *ngoowag*. Kinship and body parts are preferably expressed by *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN), which − like HAVE − also covers part-whole and temporary possession. Abstract possession so far is only attested with HAVE.

9.2 Attributive possession

Several patterns are relevant for attributive possession in Miriwoong: juxtaposition (§9.2.1), cardinal (§9.2.2) and possessive pronouns (§9.2.3) and the suffix *-ga* for kinship possession (§9.2.4). The reader will be familiar with additional ones from the previous chapter, including IO (§9.2.5, §9.2.6) and BEN (§9.2.7, §9.2.8).

There have been claims in the literature about attributive possession in Miriwoong and the Jarragan family. Kofod for instance hypothesises that there is an inalienability split and that Indirect Object enclitics express inalienable possession as opposed to BEN enclitics, which express alienable possession (1978:58, in prep. (2017):29). Concerning possessive marking in Jarragan NPs McConvell (2003:87) also assumes a distinction between inalienable possession, encoded by Locative enclitics, and alienable possession, marked by Dative enclitics (2003:80, see §8.2.3). These enclitics are attached to nominals rather than verbs.[47] McConvell claims that

> [t]here are no dative or genitive case-markers in Jarragan languages. The possessed and possessor in such NPs may occur in either order, with no resulting difference in meaning, and the enclitic is attached to the first element, whichever that happens to be (ibid.).

McConvell adds that this forms a "potential source of ambiguity" to be resolved by interpreting the context. Reference will be made to these claims when presenting the different constructions below.

9.2.1 Possession without overt marking

Possession in Miriwoong can be expressed by means of juxtaposition, i.e. by simply concatenating the PR element and the PE element (not necessarily in that order and often with intervening modifiers) without any overt possessive marker. In all examples of this type the ambiguity which could result from this free order of PR and PE can be easily resolved by world knowledge. The PR is the animate whole with respect to a (broadly defined) body part PE or a typical human owner of an inanimate object PE.

---

[47] McConvell (2003) argues that enclitics originally (i.e. in proto non-Pama-Nyungan) marked oblique NPs on verbs but migrated, i.e. came to also be attached to nominals as a result of a diachronic change.

Example (106) illustrates the former case. It was discussed in §4.3.2 about the existential marker. It is repeated here to show how the possessor *nyangood* 'hill kangaroo' (+TOP) can be used alongside the possessee *woonanggoong* 'forearm' (+TOP) to mean 'the hill kangaroo's arms'/'the arms of the hill kangaroo'. No further marking is needed to express the body part relationship between PR and PE. The predicate is composed of an adjective and the existential marker. Since there is no explicit possessive marker that would identify the construction as either attributive or predicative, such as a possessive pronoun for an attributive construction, the sentence – and others like it – is ambiguous between a predicative reading 'The hill kangaroo has short arms' and an attributive reading 'The arms of the hill kangaroo are short'/'The hill kangaroo's arms are short' (see Hendriks (2008) who argues for an ambiguity between attributive and predicative translations of LIU[48] modified *have*-constructions.)

(106) Narrative Kofod [K94-2-PC-Kangaroos]:PC

Nyangooda woonanggoonga thoodbentha.
nyangood=a   woonanggoo-ng=a   thoodbe-ntha
hill_kangaroo=TOP   forearm-NOM=TOP   short-EXST_m
'The hill kangaroo has short arms.'[49]

There are further examples without overt possessive marking in the corpus. In (107) a spiritual being is described as having (made) big and long footprints. Three adjectives are used, one within the clause, the other two after an intonation break, but there is no formal marking of the possessive relationship.

(107) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

Nawara jawalenga ngerregoowoonga yambalng, namboorrinygarring joorrgoowiyileng.
naw(oo)=a=ra   jawale-ng=a   ngerregoo-woo-ng=a   yambal-ng
3sgmPN=TOP=SEQ   man-NOM=TOP   big-that_kind-NOM=TOP   footprint-NOM

namboorrinygarri-ng   joorrgooyile-ng
very_big-NOM   long-NOM
'The man's footprints were very big long ones.'

In (108) the PR is represented by a demonstrative pronoun and named overtly after an intonation break (symbolised here by the comma). The PE is modified by the two adjectives *berdboowoong* 'bulging' and *ngerregoowoong* 'big', one of which occurs before the PE and the other one after the demonstrative referring to the PR. Note that in (108) the order within the possessive noun phrase is PE PR, i.e. the opposite of (106).

---

[48] Levantine Arabic Sign Language. Hendriks (2008:68) uses the example MOTHER APRON PINK DARK which could be translated as 'The mother has a purple apron' or 'The mother's apron is purple'.
[49] The translation in this and the next example is the original one from the Toolbox database (Kofod 2023).

(108) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Berdboowoong moorlnga berraying ngerregoowoong, nganjoowarrng.
berdboo-ng   moorl-ng=a   berrayi-ng   ngerregoo-woo-ng   nganjoowarr-ng
bulging-NOM   eye-NOM=TOP   this-NOM   big-that_kind-NOM   snake-NOM
'This snake had big bulging eyes'/ 'The snake's eyes are big and bulging.'[50]

If the attributive/ambiguous juxtaposition construction is only found with body parts (as above) or other relations typically identified as inalienable,[51] this is strong evidence for an inalienability opposition. There are only two examples involving juxtaposition to express alienable possession, but these are predicative, see (8) and (9) above. The former is repeated here as (109). Since there is no further predication in the sentence, the PE is marked as topic, and the sentence was uttered in a picture pairing game in response to the question *Where do you think this one* **belongs** *to?* the author classifies this structure as a predicative belong construction. The Kriol translation supports this. The utterance is, thus, not a counter-example for the inalienability hypothesis.

(109) Elicitation (game) [MEP-20140921-belong]:AA

Gooloomboonga jawaleng.
gooloomboo-ng=a   jawale-ng
didgeridoo-NOM=TOP   man-NOM
'The digeridoo belongs to the man.'
\r I bilong tu dis fella iya.

New elicitation data on attributive possession from 2015 reveals that the same speaker, by way of exception, also uses juxtaposition with the part-whole, i.e. inalienable, relation between a tree and its flowers. With respect to kinship, results are inconsistent. In conclusion, it seems safe to say that juxtaposition is mainly reserved for inalienable relationships.

9.2.2 Cardinal pronouns

Miriwoong has dedicated possessive pronouns for the expression of possessive sentences (see §9.2.3) but it is also possible to use cardinal pronouns. Some examples will be discussed in this section. In sentences involving cardinal pronouns as PRs, so far only the PR PE order (i.e. pronoun - possessee) is attested. (110) is from the same source as (107) above. Again, it involves a body part,[52] namely the footprints of a woman. The PR *ngaloo* '3sgfPN' is a cardinal pronoun and precedes the PE *yambalng* 'footprint'.

---

[50] In the Toolbox database (Kofod 2015), the attributive reading is found. Kofod (2023) translates as 'The snake had these big bulging eyes.', i.e. with a predicative reading and different reference of the demonstrative. The utterance would then fit into §9.1.1.

[51] Olawsky (in prep. (2020):85) lists, for example, *yinginya ngabanga-ngoong* (yinginy-a ngaba-ng-a=ngoong) 'your **father's name**' (names can be treated as an extension of body parts, see §7.2), *boolming jigeng* (boolmi-ng jige-ng) 'bird's nest' (see also §9.2.3.4), but also *ngalyarrng wanggereng* (ngalyarr-ng wanggere-ng) 'crow's egg' (compare §9.1.11.2.2, §10.3.2.6).

[52] It will be discussed in the next section that footprints are counted among body parts in other languages such as Yawuru (Hosokawa 1996:184).

(110) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

Ngaloo woothoo-woothoony yambalng gele-gelengam nyindiya-noowa booyi.
ngaloo woothoo-woothoo-ng yambal-ng gele-gelenga-m
3sgfPN RED-little-m track-NOM RED-behind-LOC

nyin-di-ya=noowa booyi
3sfS-go/come_PST-REAL=3sgmABL keep_going
'Her little footprints kept going all along behind him.'

During a picture-pairing game the question in (111) was uttered. As in the example from narration above (see (110)), the PR is human and precedes the PE, which is a body part. The picture stimulus shows a photo of a human hand and the speaker tries to identify the possessor.

(111) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Berraying nyengoo mayinggoorlng, ngiyi? Nyengoo.
berrayi-ng **nyengoo** mayinggoorl-ng ngiyi nyengoo
this-NOM 2sgPN hand-NOM yes 2sgPN
'This is your hand, yes? Yours.'

The topic marker may be attached to the cardinal pronoun, see (112). This sentence stems from picture description using stimuli pictures from a picture-pairing task. (113) shows that cardinal pronouns marked as topic can also be used with kinship terms in possessive function. The latter stems from a conversation about skin relations. Note that the speaker who uttered (113) talked in Kriol during major stretches of the conversation.

(112) Picture description [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]:PG

Gerlgang nyengoowa moorlng.
gerlga-ng **nyengoo**=a moorl-ng
bad-NOM 2sgPN=TOP eye-NOM
'Your eyes are bad.'

(113) Conversation [MEP-20141001-PG-family-1]:PS

Joolama nyengoowa woorlalengna gernding.
Joolama **nyengoo**=a woorlale-ng=(n)a gerndi-ng.
skin_name 2sgPN=TOP child-NOM=TOP boy-NOM
'Your male children are Joolama [skin].'

In the Toolbox database (Kofod 2020) there are a few instances of a cardinal pronoun being used in a possessive context. The first person cardinal pronoun with the topic marker expresses the possession of a name in (114). This is just one way to talk about names in Miriwoong and by far not the most common one.[53] In contrast to the examples above, (114) has PE PR order.

---

[53] Kofod (in prep. (2017)) argues that traditionally the Indirect Object enclitic was used exclusively but that nowadays the Benefactive enclitic can be used as well. The possessive pronoun is an alternative.

(114) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-2-T0468]:BF

> *Yinginya nyengoowa Frances.*
> yinginy=a **nyengoo=a** [name]
> name=TOP 2sgPN=TOP a_name
> 'Your name is Frances.'

During two elicitation sessions[54] different speakers were asked to comment on sentences including cardinal pronouns as PRs and PEs from different semantic domains, namely alienable, kinship and abstract possession. Interestingly, RG rejected and corrected all sentences to the possessive pronoun and the group of speakers (ML, PG, AA, MAJ) rejected all sentences except the one shown in (111) which was introduced by the researcher to have been originally uttered by MAJ. PG also accepted the sentence with the abstract PE *language*, but MAJ backtranslated with the possessive pronoun. When the researcher inquired whether the sentence is really only possible not with the cardinal pronoun *nenggerroo* but with the phonetically similar Benefactive enclitic *nenggoorr*, they agreed.

To conclude, using the cardinal pronoun instead of the possessive pronoun is a marginal phenomenon mainly confined to the domain of body parts and the relationship between individuals and their names.

9.2.2.1 *Sentences with nawoo, ngaloo and boorroo*

In the context of attributive possession, the third singular masculine pronoun *nawoo* appears in many sentences to be used to signal a before-mentioned, known, or definite discourse participant.[55] It seems possible to also use the third singular feminine pronoun *ngaloo*, and the third non-singular pronoun *boorroo* in this way. Since not much work has been done on Miriwoong information structure, no detailed or quantified analysis of the discourse function of third person cardinal pronouns can be given here. A few examples will need to suffice. Sentence (115) illustrates that *nawoo* refers to the PE *ganiny* 'digging stick' rather than to a non-overt actor since the verb co-references a female subject, whereas *nawoo* has masculine reference. The sentence was translated as 'She took her digging stick in with her'. Presumably, on grounds of no possessive relationship being otherwise marked, one could translate as 'She took **that** digging stick with her'.

---

[54] [MEP-20150919-MAJ-ML-PG-AA-have-possession], [MEP-20150906-RG-possession].

[55] It was mentioned in §4.3.4.1 that Kofod observes that cardinal pronouns do not replace the noun they refer to but are used in addition to it. She claims that they are "included for emphasis" and that "[t]heir use could be related to topic, focus or deixis." Olawsky (in prep. (2020) states that "the pronouns *nawoo* 'he', *ngaloo* 'she', and *boorroo* 'they' can modify a noun as part of the discourse, potentially with an anaphoric function. Their translation though is as 'that', similar to the "unnamed" adjective *ngoorroong* and to demonstratives, but without any deictic reference." Ringel & Armstrong (2017) discuss the role of pronominal demonstratives (see the use of *ngelany* in (121)) and third person cardinal pronouns in marking definiteness. Miriwoong is not the only Kimberley language that expresses definiteness: McGregor observes that in many Kimberley languages definite determiners are used for things mentioned earlier in the discourse (2004:126).

(115) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]:GNy

Nawoo ganiny wililij ganyjanyan wootheb.
nawoo   ganiny   wililij
3sgmPN   digging_stick   make_track

g-any-ja-nyan   wootheb
3sgS:3sgmO-bring/take_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF   take_inside
'She took **her** digging stick in with her.'

In example (115) above, *nawoo*, thus, is part of the object NP: [*nawoo ganiny*]. In other sentences it is part of the subject NP as in [*ngaloo woorrmooloonya*] in (116) and [*nawoo ngoolga(-gang)*] in (117). Note that (116) includes the feminine counterpart of *nawoo*, namely *ngaloo* 'she/her'. In contrast to the sentences with cardinal pronouns above, here we find PE PR order.

(116) Elicitation Kofod [H121]:MM

Yambarra-gali-yany-goo ngaloo woorrmooloonya.
yambarra-gale-iya-ny-goo   **ngaloo**   woorrmooloo-ny=a
hair-good_at-INTS-f-INT   3sgfPN   woman-f=TOP
'That woman has long [lit. good] hair.'/'That woman's hair is long.'
\q That girl has very long hair.

(117) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

"Yambalngara nawoo ngoolnga-gang balaj yirrida ga namboorringgarring."
woomberramaya.
yambal-ng=a=ra   **nawoo**   ngoolnga-ga-ng   balaj   yirr-id-a
track-NOM=TOP=SEQ   3sgmPN   spouse-REL-m   see   1nsS:3sgO-hit_PST-REAL

ga   namboorrinygarri-ng   woomberra-ma-ya
exclamation_surprise   very_big-NOM   3ns_MID-say/do_PST-REAL
'We saw her husband's great big footprints.'

An example from the data gathered for this thesis will serve to illustrate what is meant by definiteness here. In (118), the referent, i.e. the addressee's handbag, is definite in that the speaker has a certain one in mind, namely the one depicted on the stimulus picture. Through the presence of the stimulus, the handbag is discourse salient.[56] In this utterance *nawoo* is used in addition to the possessive pronoun *nyingiyang*. In similar utterances the possessive pronoun usually stands on its own, see for instance (124) in §9.2.3 below.

(118) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-3]:ML

Nawoo woothoong nyingiyang jooloo-joolooj-be-gerring.
nawoo   woothoo-ng   **nyingiya-ng**   jooloo-joolooj-be-gerring
3sgmPN   small-NOM   2sgPOSS-NOM   carry_under_arm-RED-CTN-PURP2
'Your little [one, i.e. handbag] for carrying under your arm.'

---

[56] Note that the handbag in not specific (in the sense of Enç (1991)): It is not one of a subset, and there is no involvement of a verb of assigning, giving, or appointing.

Relevant utterances with *boorroo* can be found in (36), (122), and (206). The analysis that the third person cardinal pronouns signal some sort of topicality is made plausible by the fact that often, as in (119), the cardinal pronoun *nawoo* is combined with the topic marker *-a/ -wa* to yield *naw(oo)a*. Note that in this sentence *nawa* represents the PR (which is not also present as an overt noun) and precedes the PE *gelalbang* 'lower leg'.

(119) Elicitation Kofod [H121]:MM

> *Nawa gelalbang joorrgooyil-iyang-goo.*
> **naw**(ꝏ)=**a**   gelalba-ng   joorrgooyile-iya-ng-goo
> 3sgmPN=TOP   lower_leg-NOM   long-INTS-NOM-INT
> 'The legs of that one are long.'/'That one has long legs.'
> \q That man has very long legs.

At this point, a short excursion into the topic of body parts is in order. In sentence (119) from the corpus the PR is a human being and the PE is a body part, namely a prototypical body part – a limb. In (116), in contrast, the PE *yambarrang* 'hair' is temporary (or *replaceable* in Evans's (1996:92) terminology). Some languages draw a distinction, for example between those body parts that are rather temporary and subject to control (e.g. finger nails can be cut off) and those which are not (e.g. arms are attached to the body unless violence is exerted), using different constructions for each group: Hair is treated differently from other body parts in Tariana, an Arawak language spoken in Brazil (Aikhenvald 2013:12). Nails do not enter constructions reserved for body-parts (and terms for personal representations (Chappell & McGregor 1996:12) and some other culturally-determined, identity-sensitive terms) in Yawuru, a non-Pama-Nyungan language spoken in the Kimberley (Hosokawa 1996:182). In Miriwoong, apparently, the same construction can be used (see also §9.2.1 and §9.2.2 above, and §10.3.2). (117) (like (110) above) is an example involving footprints, which are treated as body parts in some languages (see e.g. Hosokawa (1996:184) on Yawuru). In this sentence there are two possessive relationships. The one relevant for the discussion at hand is between the husband (PR) and the footprints (PE); the second is between an unspecified female PR and her husband (PE), marked by the kinship marker (see §9.2.4).

Coming back to personal pronouns, due to its function and the observation that it often occurs between the PE and the PR *nawoo* could be regarded as a POSS marker. However, prototypical POSS markers would be invariant,[57] whereas (116) shows that the feminine pronoun is also used in this way (Olawsky 2014 p.c.). On the other hand, the combination of *ngaloo* and the topic marker does not result in *ngala* but the regular *ngaloowa*. Similarly, *boorroo* + TOP becomes *boorroowa*.

---

[57] McConvell (2003:83) argues that (inflectional) case markers (on nominals) in non-Pama-Nyungan languages "are invariant or have phonologically conditioned allomorphs, not forms varying according to the gender of the noun." An example from Miriwoong is the locative case-marker *-m/ -em*, which only has these two variants, depending on whether it occurs following a consonant (*-em*) or a vowel (*-m*).

Once more is known about word order tendencies and information structure in Miriwoong, it could be worthwhile to look at word order frequencies in clauses involving *nawoo/nawa* and determine whether one would find convincing evidence for a grammaticalisation of the cardinal pronoun + topic marker combination into a discourse marker.

9.2.3   **Possessive pronouns**

Possessive pronouns are free pronouns in Miriwoong.[58] They represent the Possessor and reflect number and person distinctions. There are two different sets of possessive pronouns. The complete paradigm of the first set can be found in Table 9.5. The terms *Minimal* 'one entity' and *Augmentative* 'one entity plus more than one' roughly correspond to singular and plural (or rather non-singular), for a discussion see §4.3.4.1 on cardinal pronouns.[59] The letters <m> 'masculine' and <f> 'feminine' in the first column of the table indicate the gender of the possessor, the numbers stand for the person category in the following way:

1	Speaker
1 + 2	Speaker-Hearer
2	Hearer
3	Neither

All possessive pronoun forms are presented in their masculine and their feminine form, i.e. ending in the masculine suffix *-ng* or the feminine suffix *-ny* (details in §9.2.3.1.1 below). The second set is formed by adding the suffix *-nge* to the first set preceding the nominal suffix, see Table 9.6. Henceforth this additional suffix will be called the *optional possessive suffix*.

Kofod (in prep. (2017)) finds that adjectives can be derived from coverbs (uninflecting verbs) by use of the suffix *-ngi(ng/-ny)* 'that kind of a one'. As this suffix is "sometimes pronounced *-ngeng/ -ngeny",* she supposes that the latter suffix is the same as the optional possessive suffix (in prep. (2017):22).

	Minimal	Augmented
1	ngayang, ngayany	yarriyang, yarriyany
1 + 2	yayiyang, yayiyany	yoowoorriyang, yoowoorriyany
2	nyingiyang, nyingiyany	nenggerriyang, nenggerriyany
3m	nawiyang, nawiyany	boorriyang, boorriyany
3f	ngaliyang, ngaliyany	

Table 9.5 Possessive pronouns in Miriwoong without optional possessive suffix

---

[58] For a discussion of free Miriwoong cardinal pronouns and the formation of possessive pronouns from these see §4.3.4.

[59] There you can also find the explanation that first person dual inclusive (i.e. speaker and hearer) is grammatically singular. Hence, *yayiyang/ny* is classified as Minimal in this table.

	Minimal	Augmented
1	ngaya**nge**ng, ngaya**nge**ny	yarriya**nge**ng, yarriya**nge**ny
1 + 2	yayiya**nge**ng, yayiya**nge**ny	yoowoorriya**nge**ng, yoowoorriya**nge**ny
2	nyingiya**nge**ng, nyingiya**nge**ny	nenggerriya**nge**ng, nenggerriya**nge**ny
3m	nawia**nge**ng, nawiya**nge**ny	boorriya**nge**ng, boorriya**nge**ny
3f	ngaliya**nge**ng, ngaliya**nge**ny	

Table 9.6 Possessive pronouns in Miriwoong with optional possessive suffix *-nge*

To get an impression of the frequency of each possessive pronoun, a sample of 91 sentences with possessive pronouns (including both variants with and without the optional possessive suffix) was analysed. The sample was drawn from a variety of texts (26% elicitation and 74% narratives) taken from the Toolbox database. In 76 sentences the possessive pronouns have a straight-forward possessive interpretation and are included in the frequency analysis. Table 9.7 lists the number of occurrences in total numbers and in percent in order of frequency. In brackets the number of examples from elicitation is given.

Number/Person[60]	Occurrences	in %
1sg	33 (15)	43
3sgf	16	21
3sgm	10 (3)	13
3ns	9	12
2sg	3 (1)	4
1nsinc	2	3
1nsex	2	3
2ns	1	1

Table 9.7 Percentage of occurrences of different forms of the possessive pronoun in Miriwoong

Note that in this table the dual form *yayiyang/ny* is missing. This is not to say that it does not occur at all. It is very infrequent, though. It is not part of the sample and a search in the remaining Toolbox database resulted in only two occurrences.

9.2.3.1.1   Gender and number marking

Miriwoong possessive pronouns encode first, second and third person and Minimal and Augmented number of the Possessor (see the paradigms in Table 9.5 and Table 9.6 above). Like Miriwoong adjectives, possessive pronouns agree in gender and number with the possessee in the possessive phrase. The gender distinction can be seen by comparing (120) and (121).

In (120) there is concord between the possessive pronoun (i.e. the Possessor) *ngayang* 'my' and the masculine Possessee *garling* 'nephew'. Both carry the suffix *-ng*. In (121) there is concord between the possessive pronoun and the feminine Possessee *garliny* 'daughter' or 'niece'. Both

---

[60] When glossing possessive pronouns in example sentences, the categories singular (sg), non-singular (ns), inc (inclusive), ex (exclusive), and d (dual) are used.

carry the feminine suffix *-ny*. That the subject is feminine can be verified by the cross-referencing in the verb. (Both the bound pronominal prefix *-ny(i)* and the bound pronominal suffix *-nyan* take the feminine form.) (122) shows that the possessive pronoun may also agree in dual number. The dual suffix *-warriny* marks both the possessive pronoun *ngayange* and the possessee *woothoo*.[61] Dual is encoded in the verb via the suffix *-mele*.

(120) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-2]:AA

Ngayang garling.
ngaya-ng   garli-**ng**
1sgPOSS-m   son/nephew-m
'(That's) My nephew.'
\r 'Dat mai nephew.'
\q How is that in Miriwoong: That's my nephew?

(121) Elicitation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:AA

Ngayangeny garliny ngelany looloo nyinanyan.
ngayange-ny   garli-**ny**   ngela-**ny**   looloo
1sgPOSS-f   daughter/niece-f   that f-f   sitting

ny(i)-n-a-nyan.
3sg**f**S-be/stay-PRES-REAL-3sg**f**IPF
'My daughter is sitting over there.' [lit. '[My daughter over there] is sitting.']

(122) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-5-T0471]:BF

Yoonbiga-mele boorrooba woothoo-warriny, ngayange-warriny.
yoonbiga=**mele**   boorroo-b(~~oo~~)=a
1dincS:3nsO_FUT-take_FUT-REAL=du   3nsPN-du=TOP

woothoo-**warriny**   **ngayange**-**warriny**
little-du   1sgPOSS-du
'You and I will take those two little ones, my two grandchildren.'

Where the possessive phrase includes an adjective, this adjective agrees in gender as well, see (123): All elements of the possessive phrase *ngayany ngajiny ngerregoowoony* carry the feminine suffix *-ny*.

(123) Personal narrative Kofod [WDB-2-ML]:ML

Ngayany ngajiny ngerregoowoony [name].
ngaya-ny   ngaji-**ny**   ngerregoo-woo-**ny**   [name].
1sgPOSS-f   older_sibling-f   big-that_kind-f   a_name
'My big sister is [name].'

---

[61] The adjective *woothoong* 'little' is here used as a noun 'little ones', i.e. 'children' in combination with the personal pronoun *boorroo,* which is also marked as dual by the corresponding dual marker *-boo*.

As discussed in §4.3.1, however, the feminine suffix is not necessarily used with every feminine noun.[62] Therefore, we find sentences in which on first sight there is no gender concord between noun and possessive pronoun[63] as the feminine suffix is present on the possessive pronoun only, see (124). One can, however, deduce the gender of *jimbilang* by looking at the verb *nyida* 'he/it hit **her**/it(**f.**)'.

(124) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]:GNy

Jid nyida nawiyangenya jimbilanga ngoolnga-ganga […].

jed	ny-id-a	**nawiyange-ny=a**	jimbila-ng=a
drop	3sgS:3sgfO-hit_PST-REAL	3sgmPOSS-f=TOP	stone_spearhead-NOM=TOP

ngoolnga-ga-ng=a
spouse-REL-m-TOP

'She dropped her husband's spearheads […].'

In summary, we find that the feminine nominal ending usually appears on both the feminine noun and the possessive pronoun (see (121) above) but can also appear on the possessive pronoun only.[64] The possessive pronoun occurs without the nominal suffix as well. Both in the data collected by Kofod (2023) and the data gathered for this thesis there are sentences where it is missing. These instances are discussed in the following section.

9.2.3.2 *Possessive pronouns without nominal suffix*

Where possessive pronouns are combined with suffixes such as locative *-m,* allative *-bag* 'to(ward)', or the existential marker[65] the final *-ng* or *-ny* is absent, e.g. *ngayam* 'at my place', *nawiya-bag* 'to his place' (Kofod in prep. (2017):22), *ngayantha* 'it is mine' ([MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-6]:MAJ). Before *-berri* 'with' the nominal suffix is retained but assimilated (2013 p.c., Olawsky in prep. (2020):234), as in *ngaliyangem-berri* 'with/using hers' (Kofod in prep. (2017):22). In addition to these cases where the nominal suffix is absent preceding certain suffixes, in the Toolbox database one can find sentences that include possessive pronouns without any suffix, i.e. they carry neither one of the suffixes named above, nor the nominal suffix *-ng/ny*, see *ngaya* 'my' in (125). In this utterance the PE noun *yawarda* 'horse' does not carry a nominal suffix either.

---

[62] Conversely, (the stem of) some nouns end(s) in *ny* but (they) are masculine. In possessive phrases the possessive pronouns carry the *-ng* suffix as expected, e.g. *ngayangeng gerany* 'my money' ([MEP-20140921-elicitation-5]: ML).

[63] Compare the situation of adjectives modifying feminine nouns without *-ny* suffix.

[64] Many sentences do not have an overt possessee so that nothing can be said about gender concord. Interestingly, there were also very few cases that constitute the opposite of what was described above: a feminine suffix on the feminine noun but not on the possessive pronoun, such as *ngajiny ngaliyangeng* 'my older sister' ([MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ). It is unclear why this should occur. Due to the small number of examples this combination of suffixes will be ignored here.

[65] Kofod states that she has recorded possessive pronouns "with most of the […] suffixes" also found with other nominals (in prep. (2017):22).

(125) Elicitation Kofod [H116]:MM

> *Ngaya yawarda gerlgan-tha woothelen-tha.*
> **ngaya** yawarda gerlga-ntha woothele-ntha
> 1sgPOSS horse bad-EXST_m slow-EXST_m
> 'My horse is no good, he can't run much.'

The data set for the current analysis includes 9 relevant utterances that were gathered for this thesis (out of 210 sentences, i.e. 4%). The possessive pronouns without nominal suffix occurred in

- 1sg (without the possessive suffix *-nge*): *ngaya*, see (126)

- 2sg (without the possessive suffix): *nyingiya*, see (127)

- 3sgm (both with and without the possessive suffix): *nawiya*, *nawiyange*, see (128)

- 3sgf (with the possessive suffix): *ngaliyange*, see (129)

(126) Game [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-2]:MAJ

> *Ngenjayi ngaya garling, ngenjayi ngayang garling.*
> ngenjayi **ngaya** garli-ng ngenjayi **ngaya**-ng garli-ng
> this_one_m 1sgPOSS son/nephew-m this_one_m 1sgPOSS-m son/nephew-m
> 'This is my son, this is [also] my son.'
> \q How about this one?

(127) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

> *Berraying nyingiya gardag?*
> berrayi-ng **nyingiya** gardag
> this_one/these-NOM 2sgPOSS cup
> 'Is this your cup?'

(128) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-3]:MAJ

> *Gerliwany girayin ngenjayi joolang nawiyange gerliwany girayin biya nawoo.*
> gerliwany gi-r-a-yin ngenjayi joola-ng
> walking 3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF this_m dog-NOM
>
> **nawiyange** gerliwany gi-r-a-yin biya nawoo
> 3sgmPOSS walking 3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF also 3sgmPN
> 'He is walking, that dog of his, he is walking too, that one.'

(129) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-4]:MAJ

> *Ngelayiny dawang ngaliyange berrayi thoorrgib nyinanyan.*
> ngelayi-ny dawa-ng **ngaliya** berrayi thoorrgib
> this_one_f-f camp-NOM 3sgfPOSS here cooking_on_coals
>
> nyi-n-a-nyan
> 3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF
> 'This is her house, she is cooking here.'[66]

---

[66] MAJ describes several aspects of a larger picture. A more accurate translation could be: 'With respect to this one, (that is) her house, she is cooking (in) there.'

In (126) the nominal suffix is absent from the first possessive pronoun but attached to the second one. In both cases the PE noun *garling* 'son' carries the nominal suffix, but it is absent from the demonstratives. In (127), the demonstrative carries the nominal suffix but in (128) it does not. The nominal suffix is present on the PE noun in (128) and (129); *gardag* 'cup' in (127) does not take one.

From the Toolbox data we can add the following to the list:

- 1nsinc: *yoowoorriya*

potentially:

- 3pl: *boorriya*

but apparently not:

- 1nsex: *yarriya*

- 2ns: *nenggerriya*

It remains unclear whether there is a restriction of some kind on 1plex and 2pl responsible for the non-occurrence of the suffix-less variant. With regards to the former the absence might be explained by the fact that the form *yarriya* (which results if the nominal suffix is deleted from *yarriyang* 'ours') is a Miriwoong verb meaning 'we will all fall' (1nsincS-fall/go_down-FUT-REAL). One also needs to take into account that both *yarriya(nge)ng/ny* and *nenggerriya(nge)ng/ny* are infrequent in general. Therefore, the suffix-less forms might simply not have found their way into the sample.

Note that the possessive pronoun without a nominal suffix is glossed elsewhere as the disjunctive pronoun, see *nawiya* analysed as *nawiyatha* without overt *-tha* in (130). In these kinds of examples, no possessive meaning can be inferred. Thus, the similarity of *nawiya* < *nawiyatha* and *nawiya* < *nawiyang* is probably coincidental (Olawsky 2013 p.c.).

(130) Narrative Kofod [H131-10]:MM

> *Nawiya wooje-nyaliny wooma-nyalinya marram.*
> **nawiya**(~~tha~~)   wooj~~oo~~(i)-nyaliny   wooma-nyaliny=a   marram
> 3sgmDSJ   run-DPF   3sgS_MID-say/do_PST_IRR-DPF=TOP go_away
> 'And that one, he used to run away'

9.2.3.3 *Functions of boorriyang*

The third person augmented (non-singular) possessive pronoun *boorriyang* is sometimes used with singular rather than non-singular reference, i.e. if the PR is a singular entity and there are several PEs. (131) was uttered when pointing to a drawing of one bird with three eggs. MAJ used two different lexical items for 'egg', *gerewoolng* and *ngalyarrng*.

266

(131) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

> *[Gerewooln-thara, ngalyarrng.] Jige boorriyang ngalyarrng.*
> gerewool-ntha=ra   ngalyarr-ng   jige   **boorriya**-ng   ngalyarr-ng
> [egg-EXST_m=SEQ   egg-NOM]   bird   3nsPOSS-NOM   egg-NOM
> '[They are the eggs, eggs.] The bird's eggs'

In addition, *boorriyang* can be used as a derivational suffix for word formation. For example, it was used in many instances suffixed to the noun *moorlng* 'eye' when referring to glasses. Note also the Kriol term *ai glas*. Speaking in favour of an analysis as a derivational suffix is the fact that the nominal suffix *-ng* is usually dropped, giving *moorl-boorriyang*, see (132) and (133).[67] Another example is the neologism *ngarnderra-boorriyang* for 'earphones' ([MEP-20140921-elicitation-2]:AA).[68]

(132) Picture description [MEP-20140808-MaJ-description-stimuli-5]:MAJ

> *Moorl-boorriyang ngenayim wootheb wayini.*
> moorl-**boorriya**-ng   ngenayi-m   wootheb   wayini
> eye-3nsPOSS-NOM   here-LOC   put_inside   like
> 'Put the glasses here [on the eyes] like this.'

(133) Game [MEP-20140921-belong]:AA+ML

> *Moorl-boorriyangeny-joong.*
> moorl-**boorriyange**-ny=joong
> eye-3nsPOSS-f=3sgfBEN
> 'The glasses are hers.'

(133) exhibits the feminine possessive pronoun with the optional possessive suffix. The utterance is interesting as the possessive relationship is not expressed by *boorriyangeny* but by the Benefactive enclitic.

One could argue that phrases such as *Marranbala-boorriyang mayeng* 'white fella food' ([MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-1]:PG) also represent instances of derivation. This pattern is very close to the English *s*-genitive in that we have the following order:

PR   possessive marker   PE

This is the "RME pattern" described in McConvell (2005:96) for Kriol. Further investigation is needed to decide whether this structure came about due to language contact with English and/or Kriol.

---

[67] The absence of the nominal marker shows that the analysis is not *moorl boorriyang*, i.e. a noun plus a free possessive pronoun with the translation 'their eyes'. However, it is not a sufficient criterion of derivation since the nominal marker is also absent preceding inflection suffixes, see above.

[68] Olawsky (in prep. (2020):167) observes that *boorriyang* contributes a purposive meaning and list further "recent addition of nouns to the Miriwoong lexicon":
- *mayi-boorriyang banjang* 'table' (lit. 'blanket for food')
- *genkale-boorriyang* 'fan' (lit. 'for wind')
- *googe-boorriyang merndang* 'toilet paper' (lit. 'paper for faeces')
- *gerloo-boorriyang gardag ngerregoowoong* 'water tower' (lit. 'big cup for water')
- *gerany-boorriyang* 'ATM' (lit. 'for money')
- *nhang-nhangbe-gerring merndang-boorriyang* 'stapler' (lit. 'for paper for making it stick together')

Another use of the possessive pronoun is a benefactive one. See (7) where *boorriyang* does not imply the meaning 'their children' but 'for the children'.

(134) Picture story [MEP-ROP-20140903-RG-IN-SS-RoB-story-builder-6]:RG

> *Garrbbe geniya jalyngeng mayeng (..) woothoo-woothoong boorriyang.*
> garrbbe   ge-ni-ya   jalynge-ng
> picking_up   3sgmS-be/stay-PST-REAL   sweet-NOM
>
> maye-ng   woothoo-woothoo-ng   **boorriya**-ng
> food-NOM   RED-child-NOM   3nsPOSS-NOM
> 'He bought sweet food [i.e. lollies] for his[69] kids.'

Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) refers to *-boorriya* as a purposive/associative suffix that can optionally be used to mark the possessor and thereby disambiguate noun phrases that are not otherwise marked for possession. This is relevant in utterances where the context does not clearly identify one nominal as PR and the other as PE, because the two nominals can occur in either order.[70] (135) exemplifies a purposive use of *-boorriya*. In this utterance it is followed by a locative and a topic marker.

(135) Narrative Kofod [H129-1]:MM[71]

> *Joonba-boorriyama berraminda woorrmooloonga woorrb berroowarda […]*
> joonba-**boorriya**-m=a   berra-min-da   jawale-ntha
> song_and_dance_style-3nsPOSS-LOC=TOP   3nsS-do_to_self_PST-REAL   man-EXST_m
>
> woorrmooloo-ng=a   woorrb   berra(oo)-ward-a
> woman-NOM=TOP   sit_ns   3nsS-fall/go_down_PAST-REAL
> 'All the men and women were sitting there for the Joonba performance […]'
> i.e. 'They were sitting there with the purpose or goal of performing.'

For younger speakers the purposive meaning could have become the primary one: When asked for a backtranslation for *Goordangalang boorriyang* (arm-NOM 3nsPOSS-NOM) when checking sentences, it was not translated by AA as possessive – although originally the utterance was used with the meaning '(This is) Its arm/(These are) Its arms'[72] – but as "that for the arm", "maybe watch" ([MEP-20140921-elicitation-1]:AA).

---

[69] The translation here might also be 'for *the* children'. RG was telling a story about a character buying something at a store. The drawings used for the scene were taken from the Story-Builder Action Cards by Sardinha (2011b), see §5.2.1. No background information is given by RG on this person.

[70] Further, *-boorriya* is argued to be set apart from possessive pronouns by the fact that – in contrast to the latter – it occurs more often without the existential marker.

[71] Kofod (2023) analyses *Joonba* and *boorriyama* as separate words in this utterance.

[72] The number for the PR(s) in this utterance is unclear since MAJ is looking at two pictures of one cat each. She does, however, point to just one of the pictures (and then her own arm). MAJ also uses *boorriyany* in one instance: *Goordangala boorriyany ngenayim (.) berringara.* 'Her [i.e. the cat's] arm here, this one right here.' [MEP-20140808-MaJ-description-stimuli-1].

9.2.3.4   *Optional possessive suffix*

Several functions were proposed for the optional possessive suffix (Kofod p.c., Newry p.c., Olawsky p.c.). This section will present the relevant data and argue in terms of an inalienability opposition, although one cannot speak of a clear-cut differentiation. Rather, there are several semantic domains that allow for the suffix to be used but these domains do not represent necessary or sufficient conditions for the use of the suffix. Other factors seem to come into play, such as speaker preference and pragmatics.

Speaker preference

Speakers seem to differ in how often they employ the optional possessive suffix. A sample of 229 utterances with possessive pronouns from the data recorded for this thesis that out of the utterances selected,[73] reveals the following pattern: PG uses the suffix in 6 out of the 34 utterances she contributes to the sample, i.e. in 17.7% of her utterances. This shows that she has a clear preference for the suffix-less variant. Similarly, MAJ uses the suffix in only 27 of her 128 utterances (21.1%). This preference is less pronounced for RG, who uses it in 2 out of 6 utterances (33.3%, note however the small number of utterances which make the calculated percentage less informative). AA, on the other hand, does not show a pronounced preference with 15 out of 35 utterances with the suffix (42,9%). The preference is reversed for ML, who suffixes 16 out of 26 possessive pronouns (61,5%). Thus, there is no clear-cut distinction between Elders (PG, MAJ, ML) and senior speakers (AA). The question also remains how each of these speakers in a particular utterance chooses which of the two variants to use. Therefore, the next section will look at the data in more detail and discuss semantic domains.

Pragmatic constraints

The preceding chapter discussed in which semantic domains the possessive suffix can be used. This chapter outlines how pragmatic context and intentions might influence the choice of the possessive pronoun opted for during conversation.

One factor that influences the choice of the possessive suffix seems to be the use of more forceful speech, when a speaker is trying to get a point across. In a group situation during fieldwork MAJ was telling the listeners that she used to craft several artefacts. Among other things she gave away a coolamon to a white woman once. Asked what she would say when giving a present, she offered two different structures, one involving a Benefactive enclitic (see §9.1.4) and the other involving both variants of the possessive pronoun. When another speaker asked her again to translate from the Kriol *Dis ting bela yu na* she uttered the sequence of sentences in

---

[73] It is described in Chapter 5 that the analysis of possessive pronouns is based on around 100 utterances from Toolbox and around 250 utterances from the data recorded for this thesis. For the speaker preference analysis out of the latter some were excluded. In one case the speaker was a language learner and contributed only 2 utterances; other utterances were excluded because they included Kriol material.

(136). Note that in (136)a), BEN is attached to the possessive pronoun (following the existential marker and the sequential marker). For more examples of BEN on possessive pronouns see §9.1.6 and §9.2.9. Note also that the utterances in (136)a) and (136)b) are instances of the predicative use of possessive pronouns (§9.1.11).

(136) Elicitation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

   a) *Nyingiyan-thara-ngoo berrayi-ng-a.*
       nyingiya-ntha=ra=ngoo   berrayi-ng=a
       2sgPOSS-EXST_m=SEQ=2sgBEN   this-NOM=TOP
       'This is yours now.'
       \r 'Dis ting bela yu na.'

   b) *Ngenja ngelemendayin-ninggi.*
       ngenja   ngela-men-da-yin=ninggi
       give   1sgS_MID-say/do_PST-REAL-1sgIPF=2sgIO
       'I am giving it to you.'

   c) *Nyingiyangeng, ngenja ngelemendayin-ninggi.* [louder]
       nyingiyange-ng   ngenja   ngela-men-da-yin=ninggi
       2sgPOSS-NOM   give   1sgS_MID-say/do_PST-REAL-1sgIPF=2sgIO
       'This is yours. I am giving it to you.'

One situation that occurred repeatedly during fieldwork was that a speaker would repeat what they had just said because they noticed I had not understood them clearly the first time or because I asked them to. It this situation it frequently happened that the speaker did not repeat the exact sentence but a variant of it - changing the word order, replacing lexical items or using a different morphological structure. In the case of possessive pronouns this also included adding the suffix that was not present at first mention. One can, thus, argue that more careful speech – which was sometimes accompanied by the use of more force/emphasis – promotes the choice of the possessive suffix. Olawsky (2016 p.c.) observes that Miriwoong has a variety of emphasis markers (see Chapter 4) and suggests that the optional possessive suffix --*nge* could be analysed as an emphasis marker only used in the realm of possession.

Semantic domains

During both elicitation and narration there were parallel utterances used by the same speaker within one discourse context in which the optional possessive suffix was used in one but not the other utterance. Even within one utterance, if the possessive pronoun appeared twice, it could carry the suffix once only as is (137), repeated here from (95) in §9.1.12.

(137) Elicitation [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

   Nyingiyan-tha, ngenjayingara nyingiyangeng.
   nyingiya-ntha   ngenjayi-ng-a=ra   **nyingiyange**-ng
   2sgPOSS-EXST_m   this_one_m-m-NOM=SEQ   2sgPOSS-NOM
   'It [i.e. the coolamon?] is yours, this now is yours.'

Since in these cases the speaker, the context and the discourse topic were the same, this shows that there can be no complementary distribution between the possessive pronoun set which includes the possessive suffix and the set that does not.

In order to find out whether there are any semantic restrictions on the optional possessive suffix, this section reviews semantic domains in which the suffix was found to appear. To begin with, the possessive suffix is used in utterances involving a prototype domain of inalienability, namely body parts, see (138)and (139), repeated here from (96). The former does not include the possessive suffix, while the latter does.

(138) Elicitation Kofod [Miri-2010-May-12]:JB

[…] ngayang yamaganga ngabbe ginayin.
ngaya-ng   yamaga-ng=a   ngabbe   ginayin
1sgPOSS-NOM   foot-NOM=TOP   be_hurting   3sgmS-be/stay_PRES-REAL-3sgmIPF
'[I walked so far] my feet are tired.'

(139) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

Biyirdeng ngaliyangeng.
biyirde-ng   **ngaliyange**-ng
leg-NOM   3sgfPOSS-NOM
'The leg is hers.'

Another domain frequently counted as inalienable in languages with an alienability contrast is kinship possession. Again, in Miriwoong kinship relations can be expressed either without, see (120) above, repeated here as (140)a) or with the suffix, see (140)b).

(140) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-2]:AA

a) *Ngayang garling.*
   ngaya-ng   garli-ng
   1sgPOSS-m   son/nephew-m

b) *Ngayangeng garling.*
   ngayange-ng   garli-ng
   1sgPOSS-m   son/nephew-m

'(That's) My nephew.'

\r 'Dat mai nephew.'
\q How is that in Miriwoong: That's my nephew?

It was analysed whether the possessive suffix is possible with different kinds of kinship relations: The suffix was found with

- children: *woothoo-woothoong nawiyangeng* 'his children'   [Narrative Kofod][74]

- countrymen: *ninggoowoong yarriyangeng* 'their countrymen'   [Narrative Kofod]

- father: *ngabang yoowoorriyangeng* 'our father'   [Narrative Kofod]

- spouse: *ngayangenga ngoolnganga* 'my husband'   [Narrative Kofod]

- siblings (younger/just older/older):

  Ngayangeny bariyiny. 'My sister.'   [Elicitation: MAJ]
  Ngayangeny booloongoony [...]. 'My older sibling [...].'   [Elicitation: AA]
  Ngajiny ngaliyangeng. 'My sister.'   [Elicitation: MAJ]

- cousin: *Thamany ngayangeng [...].* 'My cousin [...].'   [Personal narrative: MAJ]

- grandmother/grandchild: [Elicitation: MAJ]

  [...] ngajang ngayangeny. '[...] my grandmother/grandchild.'

Examples with siblings, cousins and grandparent/grandchild appear only in the data collected for this thesis. For the following kinship relations, possessive pronouns were only attested without the possessive suffix.

- mother
- in-laws

Concerning the combination of the first person possessive pronouns and *ngabang* 'father' it needs to be investigated, in how far the differentiation between the biological father and the circumlocution for God plays a role in the choice of the possessive suffix (Olawsky 2013/09/11 p.c.)

Apart from body parts and kinship, the first hypothesis for an explanation of the possessive suffix that comes to mind is that the suffix has an additional meaning, such as adding 'own' as in 'someone's own X'. In the Toolbox database (Kofod 2023) one finds examples such as (141), where the free translation includes 'own', more specifically a boy's own breast milk. Note that the possessive pronoun does not only carry the possessive suffix but also the intensifier *-iya*, which might in fact be responsible for the translation chosen.[75]

---

[74] All four, i.e. children, countrymen, father, spouse, are taken from the narrative [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh.
[75] See also utterance (82) in §9.1.11.2.4 above: The concept of having Law is expressed by the HAVE-verb, and a possessive pronoun is added to achieve the meaning 'your own law'.

(141) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-5-T0471]:BF

Ngoowa ngerregoo woombej, ngabeleng goowanggoo nawiyangiyang.
ngoowa   ngerregoo   woombej
not   become_big   3sgS_MID-become_FUT-IRR

ngabele-ng   goowanggoo   **nawiyange-iya**-ng
breast-NOM   3sgS:3sgmO_HORT-eat_FUT-HORT   3sgmPOSS-INTS-m
'He will not grow big (on bottle milk), let him have his own breast milk.'

The data set includes an instance where a speaker uses the Kriol sentence *Yu bin baiyim gat yu ron gerany* 'You bought it with your own money', which includes the Kriol counterpart of Standard Australian English *own,* and subsequently translates it into Miriwoong. However, she did not use the suffix, see (142). Interestingly, just after this utterance she repeated the possessive phrase as *ngayangeng gerany*, i.e. she used the possessive suffix.

(142) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-5]:ML

Bib ngelemantha ngelayinya goorroorija ngayam-berri gerany.
bib   ngela-man-tha   ngelayi-ny=a   goorroorij=a
pick_up   1sgS_MID-do_PST-REAL   this_one_f-f=TOP   car=TOP

ngaya-(n̶g̶)m=berri   gerany
1sgPOSS-NOM-INST   money
'I bought this car with my own money.'
\r Yu bin baiyim [i.e. the car] gat yu ron gerany.
\q How would I say that? If I bought a car.

In the database one can also find the suffix when the speaker talks about painting their own country, as in (143).

(143) Narrative Kofod [Yamboong-2001-April-05]:AA

Ngenjang dawang ngayangeng birrgamib ngeniya.
ngenja-ng   dawa-ng   **ngayange**-ng   birrgamib   ngeniya
that-NOM   country-NOM   1sgPOSS-NOM   be_making   1sgS-be/stay_PST-REAL
'That is my country that I painted [lit. made].'

With this in mind, speakers were asked about artefacts that Miriwoong people traditionally create. For example, pictures of a coolamon, spears or carved boab nuts were shown. In this context, the suffix could again be used, as can be seen in (144) (and (94) in §9.1.12).

(144) Game [MEP-20140921-belong]:ML

Lamboong-anyja birrgamib nyini ngaliyangeng.
lamboo-ng-anyja   birrgamib   nyini   **ngaliyange**-ng
coolamon-NOM-maybe   be_making   3sgfS-be/stay_PST-IRR   3sgfPOSS-NOM
'Maybe she made her [own?] coolamon.'
\q How can we say: The lamboong belongs to the woman?

Not only artefacts created by human beings could be described using the suffix. Animals seem to be perceived as creators as well. When a photo of a bower bird and its intricate nest[76] was shown to speakers, they produced the possessive suffix as well, see (145).

(145) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-8]:MAJ

Nawiyange dawang birrgamib geniya.
nawiyange   dawa-ng   birrgamib   ge-ni-ya
3sgmPOSS   camp-NOM   be_making   3sgmS-be/stay-PST-REAL
'He [the bower bird] made his camp [i.e. nest].'

Apart from the meaning 'own' there are several semantic domains in which the possessive suffix can be used. First, speakers expressed the intuition that the suffix can be used in a situation of prolonged and personal rather than temporary (i.e. non time-stable) possession. For instance, based on the example of a mandarin orange, which might belong to you but – in contrast to (a packet of) tobacco – be eaten up or rot quickly, Joolama (2014 p.c.) explained that the suffix can be used in the latter but not the former case. Joolama adds that spears, which are usually made for one person specifically and belong to that person alone, can be referred to by the possessive suffix. Second, to come back to the example of food, it seems to be possible to talk about (the concept of) food with the help of the possessive suffix. Following (144) above, ML adds that the coolamon was made (as a carrier) for her food, see (146).

(146) Game [MEP-20140921-belong]:ML

[Lamboong-anyja birrgamib nyini ngaliyangeng. [...]] Maye-geny. Mayeng ngaliyangeng.
maye-geny   maye-ng   **ngaliyange**-ng
food-PURP1   food-NOM   3sgfPOSS-NOM
'for her food'

Food being a possession that is of great importance to (the survival of) the Miriwoong people, the utterance inspired an enquiry into several possessions that are likely to be of great cultural value to the Miriwoong people. For example, the ownership of country can be expressed via the suffixed possessive pronoun, see (147) and (143) above.

(147) Conversation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:ML

Ngoowa ngayangeng dawang.
ngoowa   **ngayange**-ng   dawa-ng
not   1sgPOSS-NOM   country-NOM
'It is not my country.'
\q Do you have a story for this place?

Not only traditionally important artefacts were referred to by the possessive suffix, also modern valuable belongings such as one's car (compare (142) above) or one's handbag (148) were described in this way. Nonetheless, several instances were found in which (modern)

---

[76] Male bower birds build artistic nests on the ground for courtship. They collect colourful items – the colours they prefer depend on the species – to decorate it, as well.

everyday items such as clothes (149) and blankets (see (93) in §9.1.12) were talked about by means of the suffix as well. Note however, that both clothes and blankets could be conceptualised as belonging to the personal domain in the sense of Bally (1996): "The personal domain includes or can include objects and beings associated with a person in an habitual, intimate or organic way (e.g. the body and its parts, clothes, the family, etc.). […] "The extent of the domain is determined by the cultural outlook of each linguistic group" (1996:33).

(148) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-3]: PG

Doobooolooj ngaliyangeng (..) jalalang-gerring (..) lawadem.
doobooolooj   **ngaliyange**-ng   jalalang-gerring   lawade-m
bag   3sgfPOSS-NOM   be_hanging-PURP2   shoulder_blade-LOC
'Her handbag is for carrying on the shoulder.'
\q How about these ones and [name]?

(149) Picture story [MEP-20140915-RG-circle-of-dirt-1]:RG

Waboo-wabang ngaliyangeng.
waboo-waba-ng   **ngaliyange**-ng
RED-clothes/dress-NOM   3sgfPOSS
'Her dress.'
\q Where is she cleaning herself?

One further semantic domain is the realm of abstract concepts. Above it was already stated that the Miriwoong people talk about the abstract cover term for 'food' as well as the concept of 'country' by means of the possessive suffix. There are further abstract notions such as *woorlang* 'word, story, language', which are repeatedly combined with possessive pronouns. Example (150) illustrates the use of *woorlang* with the meaning 'language'.

(150) Elicitation [MEP-20150919-MAJ-ML-PG-AA-pronouns]:MAJ

Berrayinga nyingiyange Miriwoonga. Nyingiyangeng woorlang.
berrayi-ng=a   **nyingiyange**   Miriwoo-ng=a
this_one/these-NOM=TOP   2sgPOSS   language_name-NOM=TOP

nyingiyange-ng   woorla-ng
2sgPOSS-NOM   language-NOM
'This is your Miriwoong. Your language.'
\rAA 'Dis is your language', yu pudum in Miriwoong!

In summary, one can attest that the possessive suffix can be used in prototypically inalienable domains such as body parts and kinship terms and also in many domains that can be construed as in some way important to Miriwoong survival and culture, such as food and everyday items, artefacts and art or valuables. If one wants to uphold the analysis that the possessive pronoun is used in inalienable possession, this category needs to interpreted rather broadly. However, in comparison with other languages in which there are inalienability contrasts this is not surprising. The inalienable class is often not confined to a specific set of coherent semantic domains in a clear-cut fashion. Rather, one needs to make reference to "traditional attitudes to ownership"

and "cultural and religious practices" or cultural significance (Aikhenvald 2013:12) that explain the classification of exceptional cases as inalienable. For example, in Mussau-Emira (a Jukunoid language spoken in Papua New Guinea) a canoe is treated as intimately associated with a person and is therefore directly possessed,[77] i.e. canoes occur in the same construction as kinship terms, human body parts, 'name', and a number of concepts similarly intimately associated with the person, namely 'knife' or 'house' (ibid.). Conversely, in Hone (an Oceanic language spoken in Nigeria), words for male body effluvia and sexual organs cannot be possessed, that is they do not occur with a possessive suffix, because they are tabooed (2013:16).

9.2.4   Relationship suffix -*ga*

Kinship relations can be expressed in Miriwoong with the help of the specialised morpheme -*ga*(*ng/ny*).[78] In Kofod's Master's Thesis it is labelled "relative possessive" (1978:15), in this thesis it is called *relationship suffix* (based on Olawsky (in prep. (2020)) and glossed REL. Its range encompasses family members including blood relationships (i.e. *consanguineal* kin) (151) and *affinal* relatives, i.e. spouses (152), (153) and in-laws (155). This morpheme is confined to attributive possession and is thus in complementary distribution with -*ba*, which covers kinship in predicative possession (see §9.1.8.1).

As already observed by Kofod (1978:144), the suffix always appears on the PE, even if an overt PR is present in the sentence. Thus, marking with the relationship suffix is an instance of head-marking. Although -*ga* itself is invariant for gender, via addition of the nominal suffix the gender of the PE is signalled. In combination with the masculine nominal suffix it appears as -*gang*, with the feminine variant as -*gany.* Thus, -*ga* plus nominal suffix behaves similarly to possessive pronouns in that there is agreement with the PE, not the PR, as in ngayange-**ny** garli-**ny** (mine-f daughter/niece-f) 'my daughter' ([MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:AA) (see (121) in §9.2.3.1.1). The cognate in Kija, namely -*ka*, was discussed in §8.2.6

(151) Game [MEP-20140817-MAJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

> *Bariyi-gang, ngiyi?*
> bariyi-**ga**-ng   ngiyi
> younger_brother-REL-m   yes
> 'Her brother, yes?'

---

[77] A possessive suffix attaches directly to the noun, no additional marker is needed (ibid.).
[78] Note that this is a separate morpheme from both homophonous emphatic marker -*ga* and purposive -*ga(ng)* (see §4.2.3).

(152) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

Woorrngib geniyayin Joonbang nawara ngoolnga-gang.
woorrngib   ge-ni-ya-yin   joonba-ng
be_singing   3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3sgmIPF   song_and_dance_style -NOM

naw(oo)=a=ra   ngoolnga-**ga**-ng
3sgmPN=TOP=SEQ   spouse-REL -m
'Her husband was singing Joonba.'

(153) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Mage-gany nyindiya nyoorinybe.
mage-**ga**-ny   nyin-di-ya   nyooriny-be
wife-REL-f   3sgfS-go/come_PST-REAL   crying-CNT
'His wife came along crying.'

(154) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

Garli-gang, garli-gany, ngoolnga-bang-anyjara.
garli-**ga**-ng   garli-**ga**-ny   ngoolnga-ba-ng-anyja=ra
son/nephew-REL-m   daughter/niece-REL-f   spouse-having-NOM-maybe=SEQ
'Her sons and daughters must be married now [lit. must have spouses now].'

(155) Elicitation Kofod [H112]:MM

Bajoorroo-gany ngenjaying.
bajoorroo-**ga**-ny   ngenjayi-ng
mother_in_law-REL-f   this_m-m
'She is the mother-in-law of this one.'
\q She is his wife's mother.

(156) Spontaneous [MEP-20150912-ML-AA-possession-1]:AA

Ngaba-ganga-joong ngarrage-gany.
ngaba-**ga**-ng=a=joong   ngarrage-**ga**-ny
father-REL-m=TOP=3sgfBEN   mother-REL-f
'Her father's mother.'
\r 'Her grandmother, her father's mother.'

(157) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

*Geriya nawara joowinyina ngenayim-ji; moondoorroong goowarda ngaliyangiyam
ngarrage-gany.*
ge-ri-ya   naw(oo)=a=ra   joowinyin=a
3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL   3sgmPN=TOP=SEQ   salt_water_crocodile=TOP

ngenayi-m=ji   moondoorroong   g(oo)-ward-a
here-LOC=3sgfIO   stomach_down   3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL

ngaliya-iya-m   ngarrage-**ga**-ny
3sgfPOSS-INTS-LOC   mother-REL-f
'The crocodile went here to her and lay stomach down on his mother's (belly).'

(151) through (154) illustrate well the gender agreement mentioned above, i.e. agreement
with the PE: A female PR with a male relative, i.e. 'her brother' and 'her husband', receives the

-*ng* ending, while a male PR with a female relative, i.e. 'his wife' receives the feminine -*ny* ending. The female PR in (154) has both sons (marked with -*ng*) and daughters (marked with -*ny*). This sentence also illustrates the difference between -*ba* and -*ga*: -*ga* indicates the attributive kinship relationship between the PR and the PEs, -*ba* the predicative kinship relation between the PEs and their spouses. Gender agreement is also maintained in nested kinship possession as in (156), where a single feminine referent is described in terms of two relations (although Miriwoong has a lexical item for father's mother, namely *ngajang*). Utterance (157) shows that -*ga* is also used in Dreaming stories and thus with classificatory kin. It is used with skin names, as well.[79]

Interestingly, the relationship suffix (henceforth alternatively referred to as REL) is also used in one narrative with a loan word from English, namely *mate*. The speaker seems to use the suffix to talk about the relationship among friends, not kin. This can be deduced from the utterance in (158): Following the loan, the Miriwoong counterpart of 'friend', namely *jaliji(ng)*, is also marked by REL. Note that both *mate* and *jaliji(ng)* are marked by both REL and the Benefactive enclitic -*noong* (see below).

(158) Narrative Kofod [H131-9]:MM

> *"Warrgeb berrandawoonra barroowarroo berrinda Joonbanga." woomaya-ni*
> *mate-ga-noong, jaliji-gang-noong.*
> warrgeb   berra-n-da-woon=ra   barroowarroo
> be_dancing   3nsS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF=SEQ   paint_up
>
> berri-n-da   joonba-ng=a
> 3nsS-be/stay_FUT-REAL   song_and_dance_style-NOM=TOP
>
> woo-ma-ya=ni   **mate-ga**=noong   **jaliji-ga**-ng=noong
> 3sgS-say/do_PST-REAL=3sgmIO   mate-REL=3sgmBEN   friend-REL-NOM=3sgmBEN
> '"They are dancing now, they will be painting up for a Joonba ceremony." he said to his mate, to his friend.'

In terms of structure the relationship suffix was listed by Kofod (1978:144) to be combined with the existential -*ntha*/ -*nyja*, the privative -*yileng*, the sequential -*ra*, the intensifying -*ya*, the dual -*meleng* and the Indirect Object enclitic pronoun -*ji* 'to her'. In combination with the existential, equative sentences are formed with the existential functioning as a copula (see §9.2.4.1). In addition, the Toolbox database (Kofod 2020) includes combinations of -*ga* with the topic marker -*a* (e.g. following the feminine nominal marker -*ny* in [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]), the suffix -*anyja* 'maybe' (e.g. following the feminine nominal marker -*ny* in [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]) and the suffix -*ayi* 'like that' (directly following -*ga* (which is in turn preceded by another instance of -*ga* + the dual -*mele*) in [08-01-BF-T0547]).

Also not yet mentioned by Kofod (1978) is the combination of REL and BEN, which is found seven times in the database. In (159) BEN is adjoined to -*ga* without an intervening overt nominal

---

[79] [MALLP-22-Aug-2012].

suffix. In (160), by contrast, the feminine nominal suffix is present. In both sentences BEN references the PR. In the former, *-ngoo* cross-references the second person PR who is not the subject in the following clause. In the latter, *-woorr* marks the otherwise unmentioned PR as non-singular, in accordance with the following dual marker *-mele*.[80] Since REL inflects for the gender of the PE, not the PR, and does not inflect for person[81] or number, BEN helps to specify the PR.

(159) Narrative Kofod [H138B]:MM

Ngaga, ngenja-yijiyen-tha ngoolnga-ga-ngoo, beri goowarda.
ngaga   ngenja-ijiya-ntha   ngoolnga-**ga**=**ngoo**(n̶g̶)
well_then   that-INTS-EXST_m   brother-in-law-REL=2sgBEN

beri   g(oo)-ward-a
return   3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL
'That is your brother-in-law, he came back.'

(160) Elicitation Kofod [MALLP-22-Aug-2012]

Galany ngarrage-gany-woorr-meleng boorrooboowa?
gala-ny   ngarrage-**ga**-**ny**=woorr=meleng   boorroo-boo=a
who_f-f   mother-REL-f=3nsBEN=du   3nsPN-du=TOP
'Who is the mother of those two [babies in photo]?'

An interesting example can be found in (161). The sentence has one PR, i.e. the actor of the inflecting verb *wooma*, which is encoded in its pronominal prefix, and two PEs, i.e. *ngarrageny* 'mother' and *ngabang* 'father'. One PE is marked by REL, whereas the other is marked by REL followed by BEN. The Indirect Object enclitic *-woorri* refers to *ngarrageny* and *ngabang* as the objects of the middle verb *wooma*, a speech verb (see §4.3.5). BEN is used to clarify that the PR has feminine gender, which is underspecified in the verb. In (158) above, it is the masculine gender of the addressee of the speech verb which is expressed by the Benefactive enclitic *-noong*.

(161) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Wanyja wooma-woorri-meleng ngarrage-gany-joo ngaba-gang.
wanyja   woo-ma=woorri=meleng
maybe   3sS-say/do_PST_IRR=3nsIO=du

ngarrage-**ga**-ny=**joong**   ngaba-**ga**-ng
mother-REL-f=3sgfBEN   father-REL-NOM
'This is what she may have told her mother and father.'

In the example (158) above including REL with an English loan, viz. *mate-ga-noong*, there is no nominal suffix following *-ga*. The only other occurrence of *mate* + REL + BEN includes the nominal suffix and a topic marker: *mate-gang-a-noong.*

---

[80] There is no BEN for second person dual. As observed by Kofod (in prep. (2017):24), "[w]hen speaking about two people or things the dual suffix *-meleng* usually follows the plural form [of pronominal enclitics]".
[81] The default interpretation is third person. First and second person are usually expressed with possessive pronouns.

As mentioned above, the relationship suffix (REL) forms equative sentences if combined with the existential marker *-ntha/ -nyja* as in (162). In (163) it is additionally followed by the so-called sequential marker *-ra,* which is a suffix that appears in various combinations with other morphemes elsewhere in the grammar.

(162) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Ngarrage-gany-ja.
ngarrage-**ga**-**nyja**
mother-REL-EXST_f
'She was his mother.'

(163) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Garli-gan-thara nawara joowinyin.
garli-**ga**-ntha=**ra**   naw(oo)=a=ra   joowinyin
son/nephew-REL-EXST_m=SEQ   3sgmPN=TOP=SEQ   salt_water_crocodile
'That crocodile was her son.'

9.2.4.2 *Gajirrabeng counterpart -joorroony*

The relationship suffix has a counterpart in Gajirrabeng (Kofod 2013 p.c.), namely *-joorroong/ -joorroony* which is occasionally[82] found in Miriwoong interaction and narrative as well. Two examples involving kin relationships are found in (164) and (165).

(164) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Biya ngaloo gawooliny bare nyiniyanyan naw, Namija ngaloo woothoo-joorroony.
biya   ngaloo   gawoole-ny   bare   nyi-ni-ya-nyan   naw
also   3sgfPN   woman-f   stand   3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF   now

Namij=a   ngaloo   woothoo-**joorroo**-ny
skin_name=TOP   3sgfPN   little/child-REL-f
'And then the young one stood up too, that little one, Namij, their daughter.'

(165) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

Beniyawoon jawaleng, gawoolenga woorlalenga, mage-joorroony ngaliyangeng,
be-ni-ya-woon   jawale-ng   gawoole-ng=a
3nsS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3nsIPF   man-NOM   woman-NOM=TOP

woorlale-ng=a   mage-**joorroo**-ny   ngaliyange-ng
toddler-NOM=TOP   wife-REL-f   3sgfPOSS-NOM
'Lots of men and women were there including his wife.'

9.2.5 Indirect Object enclitic

In its attributive use the Indirect Object enclitic (IO) can be attached to nouns, demonstratives, interrogatives, the interrogatives *thena* and *gaboo*, the negative particle *ngoowag(a)* and inflecting verbs.

---

[82] The author identified 9 utterances in Toolbox and recorded 2 instances herself.

9.2.5.1 *Names*

One way of talking about the possession of names in Miriwoong is using the Indirect Object enclitic. In this manner, the name of a person (166) - (168) or a place (169) can be expressed. During language sessions with the author the Miriwoong people used the Indirect or the Benefactive enclitic (see §9.2.7.1) to talk about names. Traditionally, the Indirect Object enclitic was the only option (Kofod 2013/05 p.c.). In her Master's Thesis Kofod states that "[t]he possession of the name is always indicated by the use of the indirect object pronoun suffixed to the noun /yinginja/ 'name' or to an adjectival qualifying /yinginja/" (1978:59).

In its function to signal the relationship between a PR and a name, the IO appears on nouns, especially the noun *yinginy* 'name', see (166) for a third person singular PR and (167) for a second person singular PR, or on interrogatives (168).

(166) Kofod (in prep. (2017):31)

> *Yinginya-ni John.*
> yinginy=a=**ni**   John
> name=TOP=3sgIO   John
> 'His name is John.'

(167) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-3-T0469]: BF

> *Yinginya-ninggi Frances.*
> yinginy=a=**ninggi**   Frances
> name=TOP=2sgIO   Frances
> 'Your name is Frances.'

(168) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MAJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-2]:MAJ

> *Gaboob-ni yinginya?*[83]
> gaboo=**ni**   yinginy=a
> what=3sgmIO   name=TOP
> 'What is his name?'

(169) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

> *Yinginya-ni Wab-wooma-ngim-thara.*
> yinginy=a-**ni**   [name]-tha=ra
> name=TOP-3sgmIO   place_name-EXST=SEQ
> 'The name of the place is Wabwoomangim.'

---

[83] There are examples with IO on interrogatives in the Toolbox database as well, for example in H112:MM (\ref .016) or H113:MM (both elicitation).

9.2.5.2   *Part-whole*

Apart from being used to attribute a name to a certain PR, one of the Indirect Object enclitic's main functions is to express inalienable relationships between PRs and PEs. An example cited by Kofod (in prep. (2017))[84] to illustrate inalienable part-whole relationships can be found in (170). The PE *ganjing* 'seed' is suffixed with the IO because it is part of the (edible) cycad palm.

(170) Narrative dictation Kofod [H131-3]:MM

Delwijbe warany ganjing-ni nawoo mayeng ngamoowaleng wanim ramam yoothe goorroomendawoon warany ngelam-berri.

delwijbe	warany	ganji-ng=**ni**	nawoo[85]
hitting_with_stone	alright	seed-NOM=3sgmIO	3sgmPN

mayi-ng	ngamoowale-ng	wanim	rama-m
food-NOM	cycad-NOM	then	grass-LOC

yoothe	goorroo-men-da-woon	warany	ngela-(ng̶)m=berri
roll_up	3nsS:3sgmO-get_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF	alright	string-NOM=INST

'Then they get the seeds of the cycad palm and wrap them up in grass and tie them up with string.'

This function of the IO is confirmed by the author's data on parts and wholes of objects generated during games. When uttering (171), MAJ is matching a drawing of a wheel with one of a car. She marks the PE with the IO to express the relationship between the two. In (172), a picture containing three stone axes is described. The speaker notes that they have wooden shafts, again by suffixing the PE with an IO.

(171) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Yamagang-ji woojoogaleny.

yamaga-ng=**ji**	woojoogale-ny
tire-NOM=3sgmIO	car-f

'The tires [lit. feet] of the car [lit. one who is running fast].'

(172) Game [MEP-20140924-have-memory-1]:MAJ

Merrgerne lamboora menkerrnging, goolenga-ji.[86]

merrgerne	lamboora	menkerrngi-ng	goole-ng=a=**ji**
three_times	axe	broken-NOM	stick-NOM=TOP=3sgfIO

'three axes with broken shafts'

---

[84] "As described in my original dissertation (Kofod 1978:58) the indirect object enclitics are used to mark possession inalienable possession showing parts of an entity" (Kofod in prep. (2017):29).

[85] The status of *nawoo* in clauses such as these is discussed in §9.2.2.1.

[86] In Toolbox (Kofod 2023), *merrgernem* is listed as 'for three nights'/ 'three nights ago'/ 'three times'. Since the game database includes utterances with *merrgerne* and *merrgerneng*, here and elsewhere the interpretation *merrgerne* = *merrgernem* minus -*m* 'LOC' is chosen. Olawsky (in prep. (2020):197) states that "[w]ith some adverbs […] -*m* can have a temporal reference".

9.2.5.3 *Body parts*

Typically, the Indirect Object enclitic is used for a different type of inalienable relationship, namely between animate possessors and their body parts. In most cases the IO is attached to the PE (175), (176), but it can also be suffixed to a demonstrative (173), (174). In negated sentences, as expected, it is found on the negative particle *ngoowag(a)* (177). Note that in (175) the IO is attached to the first of the two nominals, namely the PE *thoowerndeng* 'mouth' (cf. McConvell 2003:88).

(173) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Rarnderrnga berraying-ni.
rarnderr-ng=a   berrayi-ng=**ni**
claw-NOM=TOP   this_one/these-NOM=3sgmIO
'This is his claw.'[87]

(174) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-1]:AA

Ngirrngiling thoowerndeng ngenjaying-ni.
ngirrngili-ng   thoowernde-ng   ngenjayi-ng=**ni**
cat-NOM   mouth-NOM   this_one_m-NOM=3sgmIO
'This is the cat's mouth.'
\q This is his mouth.

(175) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-1]:AA

Ngenjayinga thoowerndenga-ni ngirrngiling.
ngenjayi-ng=a   thoowernde-ng=a=**ni**   ngirrngili-ng
this_one_m-NOM=TOP   mouth-NOM=TOP=3sgmIO   cat-NOM
'This is the cat's mouth.'
\q It's the cat's mouth.

(176) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-1]:AA

Goordangalang-ji ngirrngiling.
goordangala-ng=**ji**   ngirrngili-ng
arm-NOM=3sgfIO   cat-NOM
'It's the cat's arms.'
\q Goordangalang boorriyang 'It's the cat's arms.'

(177) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-3]:AA

Yawoorroong goondarring ngoowaga-woorri biyirdenga.
yawoorroo-ng   goondarri-ng   ngoowaga=**woorri**   biyirde-ng=a
all-NOM   fish-NOM   no=3nsIO   leg-NOM=TOP
'All fish do not have feet.'

Kofod notes that in "various examples in the data the indirect object pronoun cross referenc[es] a body part that has been affected" (Kofod 2013/09/11 p.c.). I assume that there is a correlation with the IO appearing on the verb in (178) and (180) rather than the PE noun

---

[87] *berraying* is the non-singular variant of the demonstrative pronoun. It is also used for non-specific reference. It is often heard during picture description even when pointing at one body part only.

(see (179)). In examples like (179) the fact that the predicate is a reflexive rather than an intransitive or transitive verb[88] is probably relevant.[89] Kofod further hypothesises that "[i]t could also be said that the IO in that example [(178)] is locative as well as possessive according to the many functions possible for this enclitic set" (ibid.), see also §9.4.3.

(178) Kofod [K92-13]

Bejerrmaling tharrmarral-malb goowarda-ni yamagam.
bejerrmali-ng   tharrmarral-malb   g(oo)-ward-a=**ni**   yamaga-m
prickle-NOM   stick_into   3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL=3sgmIO   foot-LOC
'The prickles stuck in his foot.'

(179) Kofod (1978:58, in prep. (2017):30)

Nawoo goowayinda biya yambalng-ni goowindayin.
nawoo   goo-wayin-da   biya   yambal-ng=**ni**
3sgmPN   3sgmS-cut_REFL_PST-REAL   also   foot-NOM=3sgmIO

goo-win-da-yin
3sgmS-cut_REFL_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
'He cut himself, he is cutting his foot.'

(180) Kofod [Dictionary-sentences]:LB

Bel geniya-ji thoowerndem.
bel   ga-ni-ya=**ji**   thoowernde-m
burst   3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL=3sgfIO   mouth-LOC
'It burst in her mouth.'

9.2.5.4 *Alienable*

In the previous sections it was outlined that the Indirect Object enclitic is used for inalienable domains such as part-whole and body-part relationships. However, this correlation is not exclusive, alienable relations between a PR and a PE can be signalled via the IO as well.

(181) Game [MEP-20140817-MAJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

Wilmoorrban-tha berrayinga-ni.
wilmoorr-ba-ntha   berrayi-ng=a=**ni**
fish_spear-having-EXST_m   this_one/these-NOM=TOP-=3sgmIO
'This is his fish **spear.**'

In this case (181) one could argue that the item (i.e. the fish spear) is of special personal, probably cultural value (see §7.2, §9.2.3.4) and is therefore counted among inalienably possessed

---

[88] The corresponding transitive verb here is HIT 2/WOUND.

[89] Aikhenvald (2013:37) states that "[g]rammaticalized external possession is a further means of setting body parts and whole-part relationships apart from other types of relationships". Thus, if present, external possession constructions would be another hint at an inalienability opposition in Miriwoong. Heine (1997:163) argues that in what he calls *possessor ascension*, the PR, not the PE, is more affected. In Miriwoong, however, the body part, not the owner (i.e. the PR), seems to be affected. This becomes obvious in sentences about external body parts, e.g. gaberr noowiyabtha=**ni** rarnderr-ng (cut 1sgS:3sgmO-cut_FUT-REAL=3sgmIO nail-NOM) 'I will cut his nails'. As in examples (178) and (180), the IO appears on the verb.

PEs. A further example is shown in (182) . One could ask whether animals, in particular dogs, are possessed rather as alienable objects or as kinship in Miriwoong society. A hint at the latter is the fact that animals have been noticed to be referred to by appropriate skin names (in relation to their owners, Kofod 2013 p.c.). That kinship relationships can be expressed using the existential marker plus IO is shown below. To conclude, the utterances that include the IO in alienable environment are few and can potentially be explained by cultural factors.

(182) Picture story [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-3]:ML

Gerliwany joolang-ni nawoo (..) joolang (..) jada-jadab girayin.
gerliwany   joolang=**ni**   nawoo   joola-ng
walking   dog-NOM=3sgmIO   3sgmPN   dog-NOM

jada-jadab   gi-r-a-yin
stab_ground   3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
'He is walking his dog, that dog, he is going along stabbing the ground with a stick.'

9.2.6   Existential + Indirect Object

As noted in §9.1.3 above, the Indirect Object enclitic occurs in combination with the existential marker. In the following, examples from the domains of names, body parts, kinship and alienable possession will be discussed.

9.2.6.1   *Name*

In addition to expressing names of people and places by itself (see above), in combination with the existential marker the IO can encode names of animals (183) or objects (184). In the latter sentence the sequential marker appears between the existential and the IO.

(183) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MAJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

Yinginy-ja-ni nawoora jigenga?
yinginy-**ja**=**ni**   nawoo=ra   jige-ng=a?
name-EXST=3sgmIO   3sgmPN=SEQ   bird-NOM=TOP
'(What is) the name of this bird now?'[90]

(184) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-3-T0469]:BF

Yinginya thoolnginy yarranggoo-ni ngena. Yinginya thoolnginy-jara-ni.
yinginy=a   thoolngi-ny   yarr-ang-goo=ni
name=TOP   cigarette-f   1nsinc_MID-say/do-HORT=3sgmIO

ngena   yinginy=a   thoolnginy-**tha**=ra=**ni**
there   name=TOP   cigarette-EXST=SEQ=3sgmIO
'[We should call [it] there [by the] name [of] cigarette.] Its name now is cigarette.'

In the first clause in (184), the enclitic cross-references *thoolnginy* rather than marking possession. Cross-reference by enclitics is a typical feature of middle verbs, especially speech

---

[90] MAJ is listening to a bird's call and asking herself what the name for that bird is.

verbs (Kofod 2014 p.c.).[91] In the second clause, however, the IO marks the PR. Note that the IO is suffixed to the PR *thoolnginy* 'cigarette', not the Miriwoong lexical item for 'name', which is the PE. Thus, it marks the second nominal, which contradicts McConvell's (2003:80) claim that "the enclitic is attached to the first element, whichever that happens to be".

9.2.6.2 *Body parts*

The IO can be combined with the existential in order to indicate body parts, see (185) - (188).

(185) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Moorlntha-ni berringara.
moorl-**ntha**=**ni**   berri-ng=a=ra
eye-EXST_m=3sgmIO   this_one/these_here-NOM=TOP=SEQ
'These here now are his eyes.'
\q Gaboongerreg moorlng?

(186) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Bandarramalntha-ji, berrayinga bandarramalng.
bandarramal-**ntha**=**ji**   berrayi-ng=a   bandarramal-ng
horn-EXST_m=3sgfIO   these-NOM=TOP   horn-NOM
'These are her horns, these are horns.'

(187) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:MAJ

Nyoowiln-tha-ni berrayinga.
nyoowil-**ntha**=**ni**   berrayi-ng=a
tail-EXST_m=3sgmIO   these-NOM=TOP
'That's his [i.e. the fish's] tail.'

(188) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:MAJ

Wajanyja-ni berrayinga, wajany.
wajany-**ja**=**ni**   berrayi-ng=a   wajany
fin-EXST=3sgmIO   these-NOM=TOP   fin
'This is his fin, fin.'

9.2.6.3 *Kinship*

Finally, there are rare cases in which the Indirect Object enclitic is found in the kinship domain. Probably these represent special cases such as metaphorical language only and the use of the IO for kinship relations can be excluded. In (189), for example, a willy-willy is chased away by chanting "This is your mother-in-law here" into its direction. No real kinship relation is involved.

---

[91] Kofod (in prep. (2017)) states that pronominal enclitics are "frequently found attached to verbs cross-referencing a second or third participant in an event" (in prep. (2017):24). Concerning "Indirect Object Enclitics" she asserts that they "are used in a number of contexts. They may follow verbs to cross reference persons or things that are additional to those arguments of the sentence cross referenced by prefixes to the verb." (in prep. (2017):25).

(189) Narrative Kofod [BF-K93-35-1-T0131-Willy-willy]:BF

> *"Gardawoo gardawoo thamboorroonya ngelayijiyany-ja-ninggi!"*
> gardawoo gardawoo thamboorroo-ny=a   ngelayijiya-**nyja**=**ninggi**
> look_out look_out mother_in_law-f=TOP   this_one_f_INTS-EXST_f=2sgIO
> '"Look out, look out, this is your mother-in-law here!"'

9.2.7   Benefactive enclitic

The Benefactive enclitic is used widely in attributive possession. In the following sections, its function in the domains of names, body parts, country, alienable possession, and kinship relations is described. To express these, BEN appears on nouns, adjectives, demonstratives, the interrogative *thena,* possessive pronouns and in some cases additionally on inflecting verbs.

9.2.7.1   *Names*

As was mentioned in §9.2.5.1 above, in more recent times, in addition to the IO, BEN is used to talk about names for people (190) and country (i.e. places). The latter occurs both in negated statements (191) and questions (191). Moreover, the Miriwoong name (i.e. translation) for specific animals can be ascribed by the use of BEN (193) and one can talk about the names of objects (194).

(190) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-2-T0468]:BF

> *Thena-ngoong yinginya?*
> thena=**ngoong**   yinginy=a
> what=2sgBEN   name=TOP
> 'What's your name?'
> \q How do I say "What's your name?"

(191) Conversation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:PG

> *Yinginya-noong dawanga ngoowa binarri-ngany.*
> yinginy=a=**noong**   dawa-ng=a   ngoowa   binarri=ngany
> name=TOP=3sgmBEN   country-NOM=TOP   not   knowing=1sgBEN
> 'I don't know the name of the country.'

(192) Elicitation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:PG

> *Thenanganygoo yinginya-noong ngenjaying <naw> dawang.*
> thenanganygoo   yinginy=a=**noong**   ngenjayi-ng   <naw>   dawa-ng
> something   name=TOP=3sgmBEN   this_one_m-NOM   now   country-NOM
> 'What is the name of this country?'
> \q The old people have knowledge.
> \rAA Da ol pipul tok tu da kantri.

(193) Elicitation Kofod [Miri-2010-May-12] :JB

> *Yinginy-joong ngaloowara yalaleng doomoonkoong. [92]*
> yinginy=**joong**   ngaloo=a=ra
> name=3sgfBEN   3sgfPN=TOP=SEQ
>
> yalale-ng   doomoonkoo-ng
> louse-NOM   lice-NOM
> 'Her names are yalaleng and doomoonkoong.'

(194) Elicitation [MEP-20140921-elicitation-2]:ML

> *Yinginy-noong nawa lamboo-ng.*
> yinginy=**noong**   naw(oo)=a   lamboo-ng
> name=3sgmBEN   3sgmPN=TOP   coolamon-NOM
> 'Its name is coolamon.'
> \q Thena-noong yinginya?

9.2.7.2   *Body parts*

During picture description and in the course of picture card game sessions it became obvious that the Benefactive enclitic is sometimes used to express the PR of a body part. This renders a distinction between the Benefactive and the Indirect Object enclitic along the lines of the domain of body parts (a typical inalienable category) less clear-cut.[93]

In (195) and (196)[94] BEN appears on the body part, which can be referred to by a non-specific demonstrative (196). It thus appears on the second nominal (cf. McConvell 2003:88).

(195) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

> *Ngelayiny (.) biyirdenga-joong.*
> ngelayi-ny   biyirde-ng=a=**joong**
> this_one_f-f   leg-NOM=TOP=3sgfBEN
> 'This one, the leg belongs to her.'

(196) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

> *Ngelayinya biyirdenga-joong berrayinga.[95]*
> ngelayi-ny=a   biyirde-ng=a=**joong**   berrayi-ng=a
> this_one_f-f=TOP   leg-NOM=TOP=3sgfBEN   this_one/these-NOM=TOP
> 'This one, the leg is hers, this one.'

---

[92] This sentence was uttered in the context of discussing two Miriwoong words for lice.
[93] Note that in predicative possession there are further examples where the combination of *-ba*, the existential and BEN is used with body parts.
[94] The speaker was looking at a picture of a leg and asked to identify the matching picture, i.e. its owner in a group of cards depicting – among other things such as animals and objects – various familiar people.
[95] As *berrayi* or *berrayim* the demonstrative can also have locative function and could thus be glossed as 'here'. An alternative translation, then, would be 'This one, the leg here belongs to her'.

9.2.7.3   *Country*

It was shown in example (169) that the name of a place can be expressed with the help of an Indirect Object enclitic; examples (191) and (192) exemplify the same for BEN. However, the possession of country is also conveyed by BEN, see (197).

(197) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:SD

Berrayinga-woorr dawang woomberramaya, […]
berrayi-ng=a=**woorr**   dawa-ng   woomberra-ma-ya
this-m=TOP=3nsBEN   country-m   3ns_MID-say/do_PST-REAL
'[The Perth Government] said that this is their country.'

9.2.7.4   *Alienable*

Attributive alienable possession is mainly expressed in Miriwoong by attaching the Benefactive enclitic to the PE or a modifier of the PE. A prototypical example can be found in (198). Example (199) stems from a matching game that requires the speakers to decide who is the likely possessor of certain possessions. In this case MAJ decided that the drawing of the house should be matched with two of the PR cards, a girl and a woman. As (200) and (201) show, BEN can occur on the demonstrative or the PE.

(198) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-3]:AA

Ngenjayinga miwoolng-noong Jangari.
ngenjayi-ng=a   miwool-ng=**noong**   Jangari
this_one-NOM=TOP   swag-NOM=3sgmBEN   skin_name
'That's Jangari's swag.'

(199) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA- possession-7]:MAJ

Ngelayiny ngelayiny-boorr-mele boorroowa dawanga-woorr-meleng.
ngelayi-ny   ngelayi-ny=**woorr**=mele   boorroo=a[96]   dawa-ng=a=**woorr**=meleng
this_one_f-f   this_one_f-f-3nsBEN=du   3nsPN=TOP   camp-NOM=TOP-3nsBEN=du
'This one, this one, as for them, it is their house.'[97]
\q Who is that for?

---

[96] An alternative analysis would be ngelayi-ny=woorr=mele=boorroowa, i.e. the third person augmented (non-singular) Ablative enclitic, rather than ngelayi-ny=woorr=mele boorroo-(w)a, i.e. the free cardinal pronoun plus the topic marker. However, the intonation and gestures (i.e. pointing to the girl and the woman in turn) suggest the analysis adopted here. -*boorr* is interpreted as an allomorph of -*woorr*, which is repeated from the occurrence on the PE in accordance with what is claimed for IO by Kofod (in prep. (2017):28) (namely that outside the context of possession the IO can be repeated on a second element: -*narri* appears on the verb and the demonstrative in: ngerregoowiya yirra-(ɼ)-da-yin=**narri** ngenayi-bag-a=**narri** (all 1nsexS-go/come_PRS-REAL-1nsexIPF=2nsIO) 'We are all coming here to all of you').

[97] It was argued in §9.2.1 above that in possessive sentences with juxtaposition there is ambiguity between an attributive and a predicative reading such as *The hill kangaroo's arms are short* vs. *The hill kangaroo has short arms.* Similarly, it is difficult to decide for this sentence whether the translation should be attributive: 'This one, this one, the house of the two of them' or rather 'This one, this one, as for them, it is their house' or predicative: 'This one, this one, the house belongs to the two of them'. The target construction in the situation of utterance was the (predicative) *belong*-construction.

(200) Game (elicited) [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-2]:MAJ

Ngenjayi-noo berrayingara goorririja.
ngenjayi=**noo**(~~ng~~)   berrayi-ng=a=ra   goorroorij=a
this_one_m=3sgmBEN   this_one/these-NOM=TOP=SEQ   car=TOP
'It is his, this car.'

(201) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-3]:AA

Ngenjayingtha geranya-ngoong.
ngenjayi-n(g)tha   gerany=a=**ngoong**
this_one_m-EXST_m   money=TOP=2sgBEN
'This is your money.'
\q [Throws some coins on the ground] There's money there on the ground.

Possession can be marked twice in one sentence, once through BEN and once via the possessive pronoun. Below, two examples where both occur in one clause to express alienable possession are given. For the construction where BEN occurs directly on a possessive pronoun see §9.2.9. In (202), the third person singular masculine Benefactive enclitic *-noong* occurs on the demonstrative in addition to the corresponding possessive pronoun *nawiyangeng*. In (203), *-noong* is suffixed to the IO expressing the first person singular indirect object of the sentence. The possessive pronoun *nawiyany* (here without the optional possessive suffix and with a feminine nominal suffix) is also present.

(202) [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-3]:MAJ

Berrayi-noo joolang nawiyangeng.
berrayi=**noong**   joola-ng   **nawiyange-ng**
this_one/these=3sgmBEN   dog-NOM   3sgmPOSS-NOM
'This is his dog.'

(203) Elicitation Kofod [H108-1]:MM

Jirri warragang-ngerri-noong nawiyany.
jirri   warraga-ng=ngerri=**noong**   **nawiya-ny**[98]
show   boomerang-NOM=1sgIO=3sgmBEN   3sgmPOSS-f
'He showed me his boomerang.'
\r 'I bin sho mi bela im bumareing fo imselp.'

9.2.7.5 *Kinship*

A further domain in which BEN is used is kinship possession. In (204) the second person singular Benefactive enclitic pronoun appears on the PE *ngarrageny* 'mother' and on the intransitive inflecting verb *nyinanyan*. The second BEN cross-references an additional argument of the verb 'call', namely the direct object, which has the same referent as the PR in 'your mother'. Note also the benefactive meaning component of the BEN on the IV: Compare English *Your mother is calling out **for** you*. Potentially, the addressee has a benefit from the call, e.g. by being warned against

---

[98] The feminine nominal suffix agrees with the feminine noun *warragang*.

something. Sentence (205) does not include an inflecting verb but an existential marker on the demonstrative. The existential marker here has the function of a copula ('this *is*').

(204) Elicitation Kofod [H121]:MM

> *Ngarrage-ngoo bawoo-wawoob nyinanyan-ngoong.*
> ngarrage=**ngoo**(n̶g̶)   bawoob-wawoob   ny(i)-n-a-nyan=ngoong
> mother=2sgBEN   RED-calling_out   3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF=2sgBEN
> 'Your mother is calling you.'

(205) Narrative Kofod [H131-10]:MM

> *Waranyjara ngerrerregoo boontha*, "*Ngaga ngenjayiyantha ngabijenga-yoowoorr.*"
> warany-ja-ra   ngerregoo   boontha
> alright-EXST=SEQ   many   arrive
>
> ngaga   ngenjayi-iya-ntha   ngabeje-ng=a=**yoowoorr**
> well_then   this_m-INTS-EXST_m   uncle-NOM=TOP=1nsincBEN
> 'Then a lot of people came [and said]: "Well then, this is our uncle".'

Further, it is possible to mark possession twice, i.e. both with BEN on the PE and in the form of a possessive pronoun, as in the second sentence in (206). Since the two sentences in (206) are very similar but differ in the absence vs. presence of the possessive pronoun, it is assumed that the pronoun is inserted for emphasis on the kinship relationship. In the second sentence, as in (204), the Benefactive enclitic occurs on the inflected verb, here *nemendija*, in addition to the BEN on the PE, here *woorrmooloong* 'woman'. In (206), the verb is transitive, but – as above – the PR is not encoded in the verb's pronominal prefix and is thus encoded by the enclitic. A second example including both BEN and a possessive pronoun in one sentence can be found in (207).

(206) Elicitation Kofod [H116]:MM

> *Ngooboorram-tha balaj demendija boorroowara woorrmooloonga-noonggoorr. Balaj nemindija-noonggoorr nenggerriyanga woorrmooloonga-noonggoorr gerag ngooboorram.*
> ngooboorram-tha   balaj   nemend-ij-a   boorroo=a=ra
> tomorrow-EXST   see   1sgS:3nsO_FUT-hit_FUT-REAL   3nsPN=TOP=SEQ
>
> woorrmooloo-ng=a=**nenggoorr**   balaj   nemend-ij-a=nenggoorr
> woman-NOM=TOP=2nsBEN   see   1sgS:3nsO_FUT-hit_FUT-REAL=2nsBEN
>
> **nenggerriya**-**ng**=**a**   woorrmooloo-ng=a=**nenggoorr**   gerag   ngooboorram
> 2nsPOSS-NOM=TOP   woman-NOM=TOP=2nsBEN   later   tomorrow
> 'Tomorrow I will see your women. I will see your women later tomorrow.'
> \q I'll see all of those girls tomorrow.
> \r 'Ail siim yu fella waif tumorro moning. Aim goin tu si ola gel blanga yu tumorro.'

(207) Elicitation Kofod [H119-1]:MM

Nyingiyang ngaba-ngoo geri-woo, mayi-geny, nawan-geny.
nyingiya-**ng**	ngaba=**ngoo**(ng)	ge-ri-goo	mayi-geny
2sgPOSS-m	father=2sgBEN	3smS-come/go_PST_IRR-INT	food-PURP1

nawan-geny
cave/shop-PUPR1
'Did your father go to the shop for food?'

9.2.7.6   *Abstract possession*

Not much is known yet about abstract possession in Miriwoong. When abstracts nouns were the topic of elicitation sessions, usually the Miriwoong counterparts did not constitute possessive constructions. For example, as in English, there is no possessive construction involving an abstract noun *fear* (as in *I have fear*). Instead, the Miriwoong counterpart of *I am afraid* was formed using the construction adjective + EXST + BEN, see (208). One of the few utterances with an abstract noun[99] is shown in (209). Here, the Benefactive enclitic *-yoowoorr* encodes a possessive construction involving the abstract noun *language*.

(208) Elicitation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-4]:PG

Jilba-tha-ngany.
jilba-**tha**=**ngany**
frightened-EXST=1sgBEN
'I am afraid.'

(209) Elicitation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:AA

Woorla-woorlab yirrandayin-ninggi woorlanga-yoowoorr Miring.
woorlab	yirrandayin=ninggi
talking	1nsexS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-1exIPF =2sgIO

woorla-ng=a=**yoowoorr**	Miri-ng
language-NOM=TOP=1nsincBEN	Miriwoong_language
'We are talking to you our Miri language.'	

9.2.8   Existential + Benefactive

As noted in §9.1.5 above, the Benefactive enclitic is often preceded by the existential marker. In the following, examples from the domains of names, country, alienable possession and kinship relations will be discussed.

---

[99] In the Toolbox database another example with the noun language is found, here with the third person masculine BEN: woorla-ng=a=noong (language-NOM=TOP=3sgmBEN) '[When you pull him out of the water, he makes a 'ngoog-ngoogbe' noise -] his language.' ([MALLP-2013-12-11]).

9.2.8.1 *Names*

In presenting oneself and others, usually the existential marker is inserted before BEN, as in (210).

(210) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-2-T0468]:BF

> *Ngayoowa [name]-tha-ngany yinginya.*
> ngayoo=a   [name]-**tha**=**ngany**   yinginy=a
> 1sgPN=TOP   a_name-EXST=1sgBEN   name=TOP
> 'My name is [name].'

9.2.8.2 *Country*

The existential marker may also be present when talking about country. Interestingly, the locative marker -*m* precedes the existential in (211) and (212). The data collected so far indicates that the possession of country is not being conveyed by the IO. Assuming a differential usage between BEN and IO along the lines of alienability (see §10.3.2.2 for confirmation), one would expect the IO to be used: Taking into account the relationship of the Miriwoong people to their country (§6.2.4), one would assume that country is an inalienable concept. In Miriwoong culture one does not control[100] the country in the sense of being able or willing to sever the possessive relationship or to lend it to others (Stassen 2009:14f). Maybe what ways more is the benefactive meaning component of BEN: The country provides for me, see also §9.2.9.

(211) Kofod (in prep. (2017):44)

> *Dawam-tha-yarr yarroondayan menewooleng, wanewoogenga.*
> dawa-m-**tha**=**yarr**   yarroo-n-da-yan
> country-LOC-EXST=1nsexBEN   1nsincS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-1nsincIPF
>
> menewoole-ng   wanewooge-ng=a
> continuously-NOM   always-NOM=TOP
> 'This is our country we stay here always forever.'

(212) Kofod (in prep. (2017):44)

> *Ngoondengim-**tha**-**yarr** dawanga Miriwoonga berrayinga.*
> ngoondengi-m-tha=yarr   dawa-ng=a   Miriwoo-ng=a
> good-LOC-EXST=1nsexBEN   country-NOM=TOP   language_name-NOM=TOP
>
> berrayi-ng=a
> here/this-NOM=TOP
> 'Our Miriwoong country here is a good place.'/ 'This Miriwoong country is a good place for us.'

---

[100] This interpretation is inspired by Stassen's (2009) interpretation of inalienable possession – in his typology of predicative possession – as +Permanent Contact and -Control, see §7.2.

With respect to alienable possession, once more the existential marker potentially precedes the enclitic, as in (213) to (214). In the latter, the existential clearly means 'there is'.

(213) Elicitation Kofod [H129-1]:MM

Ngelayiny ngoondenginy-ja-ngany.
ngelayi-ny   ngoondengi-**nyja**=**ngany**[101]
this_one_f-f   good-EXST_f=1sgBEN
'This is my good [axe]'
\q I've got a very good one.
\r 'Gud wan fo mi.'

(214) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

"Gerloontha-yoowoorr, gerloong jadang geriya, gerloowirr" woomberramaya.
gerloo-**ntha**=**yoowoorr**   gerloo-ng   jada-ng   ge-ri-ya
rain-EXST_m=1nsincBEN   water-NOM   rain-NOM   3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL

gerloowirr   woomberra-ma-ya
up   3ns_MID-say/do_PST-REAL
'"There is our water, the rain went up there." they said.'

9.2.8.4 *Kinship*

Finally, the Benefactive enclitic can be preceded by an existential marker when it encodes kinship relations. The existential marker in (215)[102] is assimilated to *-ja* due to the final *ny* [ɲ] in *thamany*, which is part of the noun rather than the feminine nominal suffix. As above, double marking with BEN and possessive pronoun is possible (216).

(215) Game [MEP-20140817-MAJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-2]:MAJ

Thamanyja-ngany ngayoowa.
thamany-**ja**=**ngany**   ngayoo=a
cousin_brother-EXST=1sgBEN   1sgPN=TOP
'This is my cousin-brother.'

(216) Elicitation Kofod [H136A]:MM

Ngaloo goorabeny nanygoo ngenamantha ngayoo ngaloo ngayany goorabeny ngarragenyja-nganyera ngayoo.
ngaloo   goorabe-ny   nanygoo   ngena-man-tha   ngayoo
3sgfPN   old_woman-f   nurture_growth_of_child   3sgS:1sgO-get_PST-REAL   1sgPN

ngaloo   **ngaya**-ny   goorabe-ny   ngarrage-**nyja**=**ngany**-(e)ra   ngayoo
3sgfPN   1sgPOSS-f   old_woman-f   mother-EXST_f=1sgBEN=SEQ   1sgPN
'That old woman raised me, she is my old woman, my mother then.'
\q That old woman is the one that grew me up.

---

[101] The adjective agrees in gender with the non-overt feminine PE 'axe'. The existential marker, thus, appears in its third person feminine form. Kofod (2023) translates as 'This one (feminine) is good for me.', i.e. with benefactive rather than possessive meaning.
[102] During a picture matching game MAJ is pointing at a photo of a male speaker.

9.2.9 Benefactive + possessive pronoun

The presence of both a possessive pronoun and BEN in one sentence was already noted in the sections on alienable possession and kinship relationships above (§9.2.7.4, §9.2.7.5). In the examples in this section, the Benefactive enclitic is suffixed to the possessive pronoun, i.e. the PR, not the PE. This section is, thus, the attributive counterpart to the predicative construction described in §9.1.6. In (217), it is emphasised that an artifact, namely a carved boab nut, changes the owner. (219) exemplifies alienable possession. Kofod noted that this construction is most frequent in connection with country (Kofod 2013/09/12 p.c.), where it means, for example, 'my country (which provides) for me' (218).

(217) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

Ngelayiny birrga gemanthayin, nyingiyan-thara-ngoo nawa gerdewoona.
ngelayi-ny birrga ge-man-tha-yin
this_one_f-f make 3sgS:3sgmO-get_PST-REAL-3sgmIPF

nyingiya-ntha=ra=**ngoo**(~~ng~~) naw(~~oo~~)=a gerdewoon=a
2sgPOSS-EXST_m=SEQ=2sgBEN 3sgmPN=TOP boab=TOP
'He made it, it is yours now that boab nut.'

(218) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-26-06-2013]:MAJ

Ngayange-gany dawang.
ngayange=(~~n~~)**gany** dawa-ng
1sgPOSS=1sgBEN country-NOM
'My country.'

(219) Elicitation Kofod [H113]:MM

Goornoorrng benendanyan ngaliya-joong.
goornoorr-ng ben-en-da-nyan   **ngaliya**=**joong**
bag-NOM 3sgS:3nsO-bring/take_PRS-REAL-3sfIPF 3sgfPOSS=3sgfBEN
'She is carrying her own bags.'
\r 'Im kerriim im on beg.'

9.2.10 Comparison of constructions for the expression of positive attributive possession

Table 9.8 compares the constructions with overt markers that have been shown in §9.2 to be used for attributive possession.[103] Possessive pronouns are used in almost all domains, with the exception of part-whole relations. The exceptional use of cardinal pronouns for attributive possession is reflected in the restriction to the domains of body parts and names. The function of *-ga* is to indicate kinship possession. Such being the case, it is not surprising that no other domains are attested. The IO and BEN are found in similar domains. Part-whole relationships are

---

[103] Possessive pronouns have not primarily been discussed with respect to all the semantic domains they cover, therefore not all the domains mentioned in the table are exemplified in the text. They are attested in the database in all the domains indicated here, though.

confined to the Indirect Object enclitic, however. Abstract possession has so far only been found with the Benefactive enclitic, but this might change when more data become available.

	cardinal pronouns	possessive pronouns	-ga	(EXST +) IO	(EXST +) BEN
names	√	√		√	√
body parts	√	√		√	√
kinship		√	√	√	√
alienable	104	√		√	√
part-whole				**√**	105
temporary		√			
abstract		√			**√**

Table 9.8 Comparison of constructions for attributive possession
(domains expressed only by either IO or BEN marked in bold)

Some further distinctions become visible when the domains are broken down for BEN and IO with or without the existential marker. As Table 9.9 shows, kinship is not attested with IO without the EXST. Remember that kinship with IO is rare in general, so this might be the reason. Alienable possession and part-whole relations, on the other hand, are only found with IO without the existential. With respect to BEN, body parts are not attested in combination with EXST. Vice versa, abstract possession so far is only found without it.

	IO	EXST + IO	BEN	EXST + BEN
names	√	√	√	√
body parts	√	√	**√**	
kinship		**√**	√	√
alienable	**√**		√	√
part-whole	**√**			
temporary				
abstract			**√**	

Table 9.9 Comparison of +/- EXST with enclitics
(domains confined to presence or absence of EXST marked in bold)

9.3 Attributive and predicative possession compared

In this section the findings for attributive and predicative possession are compared. There are similarities and differences between the two. A construction without overt possessive marking is possible for both. As Table 9.10 shows, (EXST +) IO, (EXST +) BEN, and possessive pronouns are, likewise, used in both alienable and predicative possession. In this table, the letter A marks those constructions used in attributive possession, whereas P marks those used in predicative

---

[104] In §9.2.2.1 an example of the cardinal pronoun in its use as a discourse marker is given.

[105] There is one example in my data: maye-ng=a=joong boodbara-ng jalynge-ng (food-NOM=TOP=3sgfBEN conkerberry-NOM sweet-NOM 'The fruit [lit. non-meat food] of the boodbarang is sweet' ([MEP-20150912-ML-AA-possession-1]:AA). \q The fruit of the boodbarang are sweet.

possession. In this way, the contrasts between attributive and predicative possession are visualised: Cardinal pronouns and -*ga* are restricted to attributive possession; -*yile*, -*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN), and the verb HAVE are restricted to predicative possession. With respect to kinship possession, -*ga* and -*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) are, thus, in complementary distribution. -*ba* and -*yile* cover almost identical domains, but part-whole has not been found with -*yile*.

Looking at (EXST +) IO, it is noticeable that it is less restricted in attributive possession than in predicative possession: In addition to names, body parts and kinship, in attributive possession it is also used to express alienable and part-whole possession. This is even more pronounced for (EXST +) BEN, which is used attributively not only with alienable possession, but also with names, body parts, abstract possession, and – much more frequently than in predicative possession and in statements in addition to questions – for kinship. At least nowadays the domain of names is, thus, no longer expressed exclusively by the IO in attributive possession. Possessive pronouns have also been found with more domains in their attributive use as opposed to their predicative use. In the latter, so far it has only been found with the body parts, kinship, and alienable domains, while in attributive possession it covers all domains except part-whole.

	cardinal pronouns	possessive pronouns	-*ga*	-*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	-*yile* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	(EXST +) IO	(EXST +) BEN	HAVE
names	A	A				A/**P**	**A**	
body parts	A	A/P		P	P	A/**P**	**A**	
kinship		A/P	**A**	**P**	P	A/**(P)**	**A**	P
alienable		A/P		P	P	A	A/**P**	P
part-whole				**P**		**A**		(P)
temporary		A		P	P			P
abstract		A					**A**	P

Table 9.10 Comparison of constructions for attributive (A) and predicative (P) possession
(complementary distribution between -*ga* and -*ba* and -*ba* and -*yile* and
differences between IO and BEN wrt attributive vs. predicative possession in bold)

§9.1 and §9.2 inform about the word classes to which the bound elements used in Miriwoong for possession are attached. A comparison is presented in Table 9.11. It is evident that neither (EXST +) IO nor (EXST +) BEN are attached to quantifying adjectives, this seems to be reserved for -*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN). Both attach to numeral adjectives only in predicative possession. In contrast to (EXST +) BEN, (EXST +) IO does not attach to other adjectives. The only other construction to attach to these is again -*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN). Note that -*yile* in this context does not yield a possessive construction but expresses a physical state as in boorralmawoo-yile-tha=ngany (hungry-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN) 'He is full.' [lit. 'He is not hungry.'] (Elicitation Kofod [H107]:MM), see also §9.4.1.

Accordingly, ngoondengi-yile-tha=ngany (good-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN) means 'I'm not good.' rather than 'I don't have a good one.' (Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-2013-06-26]:MAJ).

When comparing (EXST +) IO and (EXST +) BEN with respect to predicative possession, one notices that the former does not attach to demonstratives or verbs (in addition to adjectives, see above). It also does not attach to possessive pronouns, but these seem to be restricted to (EXST +) BEN for both alienable and predicative possession. By contrast, negated possession with the negative particle *ngoowag(a)* is restricted to (EXST +) IO in both predicative and attributive possession. Further, both (EXST +) IO and (EXST +) BEN attach to numeral adjectives only in predicative possession. This fits the statement in §9.1 that there is a correlation between positive predicative possession with (EXST +) IO and quantified sentences.

	-ga	*-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	*-yile* (+ EXST) (+ BEN)	(EXST +) IO	(EXST +) BEN
nouns	A	P	P	A/P	A/P
adjective		P			**A/P**
demonstrative				A	A/**P**
numeral adjective				P	P
quantifying adjective		P			
interrogative				A/P	A/P
negative particle				**A/P**	
verb				A	(A)/**(P)**
possessive pronoun					**A/P**

Table 9.11 Word classes to which bound elements attach to express possession
(A for attributive and P for predicative possession,
differences between IO and BEN wrt attributive vs. predicative possession in bold)

9.4 Cognitive domains – Possession vs. association, existence, and location

9.4.1 Non-possessive functions of *-ba* – The comitative 'having'-suffix in Miriwoong

In §9.1.7 - §9.1.9 it was shown that the suffix *-ba* is used for predicative possession. However, *-ba* and its allomorphs *-wang* and *-gang* can also be employed for associative relationships, see (220).

(220) Narrative Kofod [LB-K89-16-T0014]:LB

Boorroo berriya bib-joowa thalenga goornoorr-bang.
boorroo   berr-i-ya   bib=joowa
3nsPN   3nsS-go/come_PST-REAL   pick_up=3sgfABL

thale-ng=a   goornoorr-**ba**-ng
bone-NOM=TOP   bag-having-NOM
'They all picked up the **bag with the bones** she had left.'[106]

---

[106] Kofod (2023) adds a comma between *thalenga* and *goornoorr-bang* and translates as 'the bones she had left, together with the bag'.

The tests to distinguish possession from association (see §7.8) would not work: *-ba* cannot be replaced by a possessive construction such as one involving a possessive pronoun (221), IO (222), or BEN (223).

(221) *[Boorroo-boorriya bib-joowa] thalenga goornoorrng nawiyang.*

thale-ng=a	goornoorr-ng	**nawiya**-ng
bone-NOM=TOP	bag-NOM	3sgmPOSS-NOM

(222) *[Boorroo-boorriya bib-joowa] thalenga goornoorrng-ni.*

thale-ng=a	goornoorr-ng=**ni**
bone-NOM=TOP	bag-NOM=3sgmIO

(223) *[Boorroo-boorriya bib-joowa] thalenga goornoorrng-noong.*

thale-ng=a	goornoorr-ng=**noong**
bone-NOM=TOP	bag-NOM=3sgmBEN

Similarly, 'rain with wind' (224) and 'creek with water' (225) are associative relationships. Note that judging from the utterances in (224) and (225) and from possessive sentences involving *-ba* (see §9.1.7) – where the suffix occurs on the possessee – *-ba* in (220) would be expected on *thaleng* 'bone' rather than *goornoorrng* 'bag' (see also Olawsky in prep. (2020):161).

(224) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K89-6-T0006]:RTh

"Jadanga ngerregoowoong goowarda-yarri, goornkiri-bang."

jada-ng=a	ngerregoo-woo-ng	g(oo)-ward-a=yarri
rain-NOM=TOP	big-that_kind-NOM	3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL=1nsincIO

goornkiri-**ba**-ng
wind-having-NOM
'"Big rain fell on us, with big wind."'

(225) Narrative Kofod [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF

"Ngenjayentha gilijinga gerloo-banga, booyi!"

ngenjayi-ntha	giliji-ng=a	gerloo-**ba**-ng=a	booyi
this_m-EXST_m	creek-NOM=TOP	water-having-NOM=TOP	keep_going

'"Here is a creek with water, keep going (to it)!" [they would say.]'

As in other Australian languages (see §8.1.2), the comitative 'having'-suffix in Miriwoong, i.e. *-ba* (Kofod 1978), is employed for a variety of functions in addition to alienable possession (§9.1.7) and the kind of associative relationship exemplified above. In the following, Dixon's (2002) types of comitative relations that can be expressed with Australian 'having'-suffixes will be analysed for Miriwoong. Dixon distinguishes three sets of meanings of the comitative, namely Accompaniment, Attributes and Temporal.

To begin with, the use of *-ba* for Accompaniment, more specifically the subtype "person in motion, with human(s)" (Dixon 2002:140), is illustrated in (226): *-ba* expresses that the speaker and the other referents of the bound pronoun in *yirriya* are accompanied by their husbands. In

(227), several family groups start moving and each of the adults has children sitting across their shoulders. Note that in (226) the nominal suffix is omitted following *-ba*. According to Olawsky, this is "a relatively common occurrence and could be attributed to speaker preference or variation, without any specific functional load" (in prep. (2020):162).

(226) Personal narrative Kofod [WDB-2-ML]:ML

[Boorrb berroowardara gooroo-gooranga,] yawib-yawib yirriya wiri-wiri, ngoolnga-ba.
yawib-yawib   yirr-i-ya   wiri-wiri   ngoolnga-**ba**
RED-all_leave   1nsexS-go/come_PST-REAL   RED-separate   spouse-having
'[After the old men passed away] we all split up and went away with our husbands.'

(227) Narrative Kofod [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF

Ngoorroong barleg woothoo-woothoo-bang.
ngoorroo-ng   barleg   woothoo-woothoo-**ba**-ng
that_one-NOM   mixed   RED-children-having-NOM
'[Lots of people (would) set off and go away.] Mixed up with/together with that thing, with the children. [(With the children) sitting across their shoulders and spears carried on one shoulder in bundles.]'

In Miriwoong there are also instances of *-ba* for 'person in motion, with *animate(s)'*. This is not listed by Dixon (2002:140) as one of the subtypes of Accompaniment. Arguably, these cases can be subsumed under alienable possession, which Dixon lists as a subtype of the category Attributes (see below for further subtypes).[107] In (228), a non-overt feminine subject is accompanied by goats. Two dogs are the accompanying animals in (229). Here, the feminine suffix *-ny* follows *-ba* as the subject is female. It is unclear why *-ny* is not used in (228) as well.[108] As observed by Olawsky (in prep. (2020)), *-ba* almost always occurs on the modifier, in (229) this is the numeral adjective *ganggoobele* 'two'. With singular number, as in (230), *-ba* occurs on *joolang* 'dog'. This is another example of a missing nominal suffix.

---

[107] Alternatively, Dixon might subsume those sentences under "person in motion with something that does not assist their motion" (2002:141, see below), as here - in contrast to other subtypes - he does not specifically limit to either animate or inanimate 'somethings'. The example given is inanimate, though: 'man boomerang-HAVING is going'. From a semantic point of view, it seems counter-intuitive to categorise dog or goats as 'somethings' that do not assist in motion. With respect to horses it might be sensible to make a distinction for whether they assist in motion (i.e. whether someone rides a horse) or not (i.e. someone leads a horse). In Miriwoong, riding a horse can be expressed using *-ba*: yawarda-ba yirriyayinde [...] (horse-having 1nsexS-go/come_PST-REAL-IPF-CNT) 'We used to go riding horses [...]'.

[108] This is not the only example where the feminine suffix is not found where it would be expected. In several cases the nominal suffix is left out altogether or replaced by the suffix *-iya* 'INTS'. In at least one other case (236) (Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB) *-ng* occurs with a female subject: maloomboo-ba-ng   boogoo   wija   nyanyja   [name]   (swimming_log-having-NOM   just swimming_taking_something   3sgS:3sgfO-bring/take_PST-REAL   a_name) '[A female name] just took it across swimming with the log.' In addition, the feminine suffix occurs not following *-ba* directly but following the existential marker as *-nyja* 'EXST_f' (see §9.1.8).

(228) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-1-T0178]:RTh

Minggajing-bang nyindiya gerloowirr:::, berdij, jooboolem berram.

minggajing-**ba**-ng	nyin-di-ya	gerloowirr	berdij
goat-NOM-having-NOM	3sgfS-go/come_PST-REAL	up	climb

joobooloo-m	berra-m
little_ridge-LOC	there-LOC

'She climbed up with the nanny-goats to those little ridges.'

(229) Picture story [MEP-20141005-MAJ-circle-of-dirt-1]:MAJ

Ngeliny joola ganggoobele-bany gerliwany nyindanyan ngenayim.

ngeli-ny	joola(ng)	ganggoobele-**ba**-ny	gerliwany
this_one_here_f-f	dog	two-having-f	walking

nyin-d-a-nyan	ngenayi-m
3sgfS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF	here-LOC

'This one is walking here with two dogs.'

(230) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-3]:MAJ

Nawiyangeng joolang. Joola-ba girayin gerliwany.

nawiyange-ng	joolang
3sgmPOSS-NOM	dog

joola-**ba**	girayin	gerliwany
dog-having	3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	walking

'His dog. He is walking with [his] dog.'

In contrast to the associative sentences above, these *-ba*-constructions are clearly possessive, as the presence of the possessive pronoun in the preceding (230) and following context (231)[109] shows.

(231) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-3]:MAJ

Gerliwany girayin ngenjayi joolang nawiyange gerliwany girayin biya nawoo.

gerliwany	gi-r-a-yin	ngenjayi	joola-ng
walking	3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	this_m	dog-NOM

nawiyange	gerliwany	gi-r-a-yin	biya	nawoo
3sgmPOSS	walking	3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	also	3sgmPN

'He is walking, that dog of his, he is walking too, that one.'

A further subtype of Accompaniment often expressed with the 'having'-suffix in Australian languages is "person at rest, with something inanimate" (Dixon 2002:140). (232) and (233) exemplify this type.

---

[109] This utterance is repeated here from (128) in §9.2.3.

(232) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-4]:PG

> *Goorroobardoo-bang bare ginayin.*
> goorroobardoo-**ba**-ng   bare   ginayin
> boomerang-having-NOM   be_standing   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
> 'He is standing with a boomerang.'

(233) Picture description [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-4]:MAJ

> *Ngenjaying goorang goorroobardoo-bang joola nawiyangeng.*
> ngenjayi-ng   goora-ng   goorroobardoo-**ba**-ng   joola nawiyange-ng
> this_one_m-m   old_man-m   boomerang-having-NOM   dog   3sgmPOSS-m
> 'This old man with a boomerang, [it is] his dog.'

Apart from cultural knowledge of who typically owns what, possessive tests can clarify whether alienable possession is implied in these sentences or not. One could ask, for example: Goorroobardoo-ng nawiya-ntha? (boomerang-NOM 3sgmPOSS-EXST_m) or Goorroobardoo-ng=noong? (boomerang-NOM=3sgmBEN) 'Is it his boomerang?'.

The third subtype of Accompaniment in Dixon's analysis is "person in motion with something [inanimate] that does not assist their motion" (Dixon 2002:140): In Miriwoong, many instances of this type can be found. Utterance (234), for instance, describes that the Miriwoong people used to be visited by people who carried pearl shells for trade with them. In this utterance -*ba* is followed by the topic marker -*(y)a*.[110] In (235), the protagonist carries an axe that she uses to collect honey. Here, the nominal suffix is again absent.

(234) Narrative Kofod [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF

> *Miriwoong woolangem beniyawoon, dawam, lenggoog, jagooli-baya berriyawoonde*
> *looloo, ngenayim-woorri, wayana.*
> Miriwoo-ng   woolange-m   be-ni-ya-woon
> person_belonging_to_Miriwoong-NOM   go-ahead-LOC   3nsS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3nsIPF
>
> dawa-m   lenggoog   jagooli-**ba**=iya
> camp-LOC   come_up_river_from_downstream   pearl_shell-having=TOP
>
> berr-i-ya-woon-de   looloo   ngenayi-m=woorri   wayana
> 3nsS-go/come_PST-REAL-3nsIPF-CNT   sitting   here-LOC=3nsIO   meet
> 'The Miriwoong were sitting down first and they [i.e. the Bayimbarr, Woorla(ja) and Boogayingarri people] used to come from downstream having [i.e. bringing] pearl shell and used to sit down with them (at their place) and meet up.'

---

[110] Note that -*ya* is an allomorph both of -*iya* 'INTS' and -*a* 'TOP'.

(235) Narrative Kofod [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF

> *Yinkiwanyera:::, woonaya-ba:::, balaj ngareng, thoowena ngareng, lamoorrnga.*
> yinkiwany=ra   woonaya-**ba**   balaj ngare-ng   thoowen=a
> go_looking_for=SEQ   stone_axe-having   find   bush_honey-NOM   tea_tree=TOP
>
> ngare-ng   lamoorr-ng=a
> bush_honey-NOM   hollow_log-NOM=TOP
> '(She) keeps going looking carrying an axe, finds honey in a tea tree in a hollow in
> the tree.'

Dixon also lists the type "person in motion with something inanimate that *does* assist their motion" (2002:141, emphasis added). A hollow log can be used to assist in crossing a river, as described in (236). Similarly, *-ba* is used when going by boat (237) or car (238). In (237), *-ba* is followed by the masculine existential marker *-ntha*. This construction is usually translated as 'He has X' or 'There are X' (Olawsky in prep. (2020):161, see also §9.1.8) but due to the presence of the predicate *geriya*, this interpretation is not possible here. In (238) there is no nominal suffix.

(236) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

> *Maloomboobang, boogoo wija nyanyja, [name].*
> maloomboo-**ba**-ng   boogoo   wija
> swimming_log-having-NOM   just   swimming_taking_something
>
> ny-any-ja   [name]
> 3sgS:3sgfO-bring/take_PST-REAL   a_female_name
> 'She just took it across swimming with the log.'

(237) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

> *Ngayang bariyeng geriya-ngany, bib, gadim bowood-ban-tha geriya-ngany.*
> ngaya-ng   bariyi-ng   ge-ri-ya=ngany   bib
> 1sgPOSS-m   younger_sibling-m 3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL=1sgBEN pick_up
>
> <gadim>   bowood-**ba**-ntha   ge-ri-ya=ngany
> with/using   boat-having-EXST_m   3sgmS-go/come_PST-REAL=1sgBEN
> 'My younger brother came to get me, it was with a boat that he came for me.'

(238) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

> *Modiga-ba doo yirriya wooraj, ngenayi-bag, dawoon-melig.*
> modiga-**ba**   doo   yirriya   wooraj
> motor_car-having   set_off   1nsexS-go/come_PST-REAL   come_towards
>
> ngenayi-bag   dawoon-melig
> here-to   town-to
> 'We set off this way to town here by car.'

Dixon also counts the use of an instrument as a subtype of Accompaniment. In Miriwoong, the Indirect Object enclitic (Kofod 1978:59)[111] or the enclitic *-berri* is used for that purpose; for examples with *-berri* see (239), (240) and (241). However, in exceptional cases *-ba* is also used, see (242). In the latter, *-ba* is followed by the intensifier *-iya*. Body part instruments[112] can be expressed with either *-berri* or *-ba*, see (243) and (244) respectively.

(239) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]:GNy

Goondarringa theb-thebbe-nging ramam-berri, jalareng, tharimbageng.
goondarri-ng=a   theb-thebbe-ngi-ng   rama-(ng)m=**berri**   jalare-ng   tharimbage-ng
fish-NOM=TOP   RED-block-SUB-NOM   grass-NOM=INST   egret-NOM   jabiru-NOM
'When the egret and the jabiru were blocking off fish with grass.'

(240) Conversation Kofod [BF-K93-35-1-T0131-Willy-willy]:BF

Boogootha joong-berri <ngandem-weyi> girayin.
boogoo-tha   joong=**berri**   <ngandem-weyi>   girayin
just-EMPH1   song=INST   hunt_away   3sgmS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
'It is just hunted away with a song.'

(241) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]:GNy

Benkoowoolenga-woorri benkoo
benkoowoole-ng=a=**berri**   benkoo
hot_earth-NOM=TOP=INST cook_in_coals
'She used the hot sand to cook them.'

(242) Personal narrative Kofod [LB-K89-16-T0014]:LB

Berrayi benkoomib nyiniyanyan, ngarrarayanyanoo warrela nyimberranyja jibinggoorrbaya.
berrayi   benkoomib   nyiniyanyan   ngarrara-iya-ny=a=noong
here   be_cooking   3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF   selfish-INTS-f=TOP=3sgmBEN

warrela   nyimberranyja   jibinggoorr-**ba**-iya
burn_grass   3nsS:3sgfO-bring/take_PST-REAL   tree_species_with_poison_wood-having-INTS
'Here she was cooking them a cruel one like a murderer and they burned the ground with(?) the poison tree wood.'

---

[111] In both examples given by Kofod (1978) the IO could alternatively be interpreted as having locational meaning (see §4.3.5.1, §9.4.3), but then it would be unclear where the instrumental meaning comes from: 'I will cook the stones with bauhinia wood' could be interpreted as 'I will cook *on* the stones with? bauhinia wood'. The second example is already translated with locational meaning as 'I swim *in* the river with? a log'. It would be classified as Accompaniment in the current analysis, see (236). In Kofod (in prep. (2017):27) it is, in fact, used as an illustration of the locational use of the Indirect Object enclitic and translated as 'I'm swimming in the river *on*/using a hollow log.' There is also an isolated example of [*goole-m*]-*biny* 'with a stick', which is mentioned in Kofod and quoted by McGregor (2004). However, the example sentence given by Kofod (1978:136) is not found in Toolbox (2015), where 'with a stick' is expressed via lexical items (*moonggerrb* = hit/kill with stick) or with *-berri*. Note that *-m* usually only precedes *-berri*, not *-biny*, as the latter replaces rather than assimilates the nominal suffix (see §4.2.3).

[112] It was mentioned in Chapter 8 that in some Australian languages body part instruments take ERGative case. Miriwoong does not have an ergative case inflection. However, ablative *-banjelng* was found to have some functions expressed in other languages by ergative case (see §4.2.3). It can also be used to mark body part instruments: thoowernde-m-banjilng (mouth-LOC-from) '[making a clapping noise] with their mouths' ([2017-07-21-DN-Bilbiljing]:DN).

(243) Picture story [MEP-20141005-MAJ-circle-of-dirt-2]:MAJ

Therriny-berri rerroob ganyja goowoordanda.
therriny=**berri** rerroob ganyja   goowoordanda
tooth-INST   pull   3sgS:3sgmO-bring/take_PST-REAL 3sgS:3sgmO-bite_PST-REAL
'He [i.e. the cat] pulled with his teeth, he bit it [i.e. the dog's tail].'

(244) Picture story [MEP-20140915-RG-circle-of-dirt-1]:RG

Menhangeb [...] menhangeb ginayin-ji moowoolem (..) thalala-bang ngenjayinga joolang.
menhangeb menhangeb ginayin=ji   moowoole-m
licking   licking   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF=3sgfIO face-LOC

thalala-**ba**-ng   ngenjayi-ng=a   joola-ng
tongue-having-NOM   this_one_m-NOM=TOP dog-NOM
'Licking, he is licking her on the forehead with [his] tongue, that dog.'

Secondly, the range of meanings of the Australian comitative according to Dixon (2002) also includes the set of Temporal meanings. This type is exemplified by "we wintertime-*having* go to coast" (i.e. 'we go to the coast in wintertime') (2002:140). In Miriwoong, *-ba* is not used in this context.[113] Instead, time-related meanings are expressed by *-mageny*. This is reflected in the names for the seasons: *nyinggiyi-mageny* 'wet season' (MDWg 2013:3), *jaloorr-mageny* 'the time of rain' (2013:4), *warnka-mageny* 'cold season' (2013:21), *boornbe-mageny* 'hot weather time' (2013:43). In addition, *-mageny* occurs, for example, on nominals to indicate the time of day (245) or a period in one's life (246).

(245) Conversation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-5]: MAJ

Joowoolyem-mageny [...]
joowooly-m-**mageny**
cool_down-LOC-in_the_time_of
'When it cools down [...]'

(246) Personal narrative [MEP-20140920-elicitation-1]:AA

Woothoo-mageny gerlilib ngeniya.
woothoo-**mageny**   gerlilib   ngeniya
small-in_the_time_of walking_about 1sgS-go/come_PST-REAL
'I walked around when I was little.'

Thirdly, Dixon (2002) argues that Attributes can be expressed with the 'having'-suffix. One of the subtypes is Physical characteristics. Dixon's example is 'having a moustache' (2002:140). This is rendered in Miriwoong with *-ba*. As (247) shows, nowadays not all speakers always assimilate *-ng + -tha* to *-ntha* but keep the nominal suffix (see Olawsky in prep. (2020):394). Similarly, a person's clothes are referred to with *-ba*, see (248) and (249). Note that in the former *-ba* is again attached to the modifier, here the adjective *biligirrimawoong* 'white'. In the latter it is followed by the existential.

---

[113] Note however lexical items such as *ngajgegbany* 'be full moon'.

(247) Elicitation [2014-08-22-DN]:DN

> *Jawalenga thawoorre-bang-tha waniya.*
> jawale-ng=a   thawoore-**ba**-n(g)tha   waniya
> man-m=TOP   beard-having-EXST_m   like_that
> 'A man has a beard like that.'

(248) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-4]:PG

> *Jangari ngenjayinga bare ginayin biligirrimawoo-bang waboo-wabang.*
> Jangari   ngenjayi-ng=a   bare   ginayin
> skin_name   this_one_m-m=TOP   be_standing   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
>
> biligirrimawoo-**ba**-ng   waboo-waba-ng
> white-having-NOM   RED-clothes/dress-NOM
> 'This [skin name] is standing there with white clothes [on]'

(249) [MEP-20141004-ML-PG-information-structure-4]:MAJ

> *Ngenjayinga warnbagoo-ban-tha.*
> ngenjayi-ng=a   warnbagoo-**ba**-ntha
> this_one_m-m=TOP   white-having-EXST_m
> 'This one has [i.e. wears] white [clothes].'

A further subtype of Attributes is the mental or corporeal state of a person (ibid.). Sentences (250) and (251) describe the female subject as being in the corporeal state of being sick, i.e. having a cold. In Stassen's (2009) typology, these utterances would be considered instances of Abstract possession as the PR has neither permanent contact to the PE nor control over the PE (see §7.5).[114]

(250) Elicitation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-5]:MAJ

> *Nyinanyan joowardbe ngaloo-woo-bany-ja.*
> nyinanyan   joowardbe   ngaloo-woo-**ba**-nyja
> 3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF   sick   3sgfPN-that_kind-having-EXST_f
> 'She has a cold.' [lit. 'She is a cold-having one.']
> \q Joowardbe-tha-joong 'She has a cold'?

(251) Elicitation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-5]:PG

> *Ngentherr-bany, ngentherrb nyinanyan.*
> ngentherr-**ba**-ny   ngentherrb   nyinanyan
> cold_sickness-having-f   be_coughing   3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF
> 'She has a cold, she is coughing.'

In this context it should be mentioned that the Miriwoong 'having'-suffix also has derivational uses. That this is typical for the Australian comitative has been observed in Chapter 8. For example, 'having a cold' can be expressed by *genthoorrbang,* which is derived from the noun *genthoorrng* 'cold'. *garr-garrilibang* or alternatively *garriboolgang* 'grey haired' are derived from the (reduplicated) *garriling* 'grey hair'. *garrnganbang* 'bleeding' originates in *garrngan* 'blood'

---

[114] In §10.5.6 it will be shown that sentences like 'My father is very strong.', 'He/She is hungry.' are expressed with the existential or the existential plus the Benefactive enclitic.

(Olawsky in prep. (2020):331). In addition to these adjective-forming derivations expressing Attributes, *-ba* also forms nouns from nouns (ibid.) and potentially nominals from uninflecting verbs. The former is pervasive with terms for introduced concepts and with loans (in prep. (2020):160), e.g. *bandarramalbang* 'horned animal' (i.e. 'goat' or 'bullock') < *bandarramal* 'horn'; *jendoobang* 'rope having one' < *jendoong* 'string' or *ngerlabang* 'string having one' < *ngerlang* 'string' for 'policeman'; *yawa-yawardabang* 'stockmen' < *yawardang* 'horse'; *wayabang* 'having wire' and *lawbang* 'having law'. The latter could be assumed for the adjective *jilbang* 'frightened' < *jil* 'be angry with each other' and the noun *waribang* 'fighting' < *wari* 'fight/argue/tell off'.[115]

For Miriwoong, one could add to the subtype mental or corporeal state of a person the corporeal state of an animal, which can also be expressed with *-ba*, as in (252).

(252) Elicited Narrative Kofod [K92-4-Greedy-Goanna]:BF

> *Meloonggoo-ban-tha ngenjayinga goordinga, ngoowa gerlgang.*
> meloonggoo-**ba**-ntha   ngenjayi-ng=a   goordi-ng=a   ngoowa   gerlga-ng
> fat-having-EXST_m   this_one_m-NOM=TOP goanna-NOM=TOP not   thin-NOM
> 'This goanna is really fat, not a skinny one. [said the man].'

Finally, isolated cases of *-ba* can be found where the suffix apparently has meanings that are not listed in Dixon (2002). The translation of (253) is not entirely clear, but *-ba* is found on *yiloo* 'downstream' preceding the existential marker and could be somehow connected to directional meaning. In (254) and (255) *-ba* seems to occur with perfective meaning. In the former it is combined with the existential and the Benefactive enclitic. Out of context one would be tempted to interpret *wajama* as *wajamang* 'fishing line' and translate as 'Do you have a small fishing line?', but the context clearly shows that the speaker and her conversation partners are discussing using a small fish that was already caught as bait for further fishing. MAJ's previous sentence is: *[name], boowoonggoo-ngany goondarring ngoorroonga boore bemendijgoo-ngany*! '[name], give me that fish, the spangled grunter!'. In the preceding context of (255), a man is narrated to go hunting. Thus, the interpretation of the utterance must be either that the sentence is elliptic and that the man has kangaroo *in his belly* or that *-ba* – in the absence of an inflecting verb that could do so – expresses perfective aspect and he sleeps *having eaten* kangaroo and honey.

---

[115] Compare *wariyileng* 'not causing fighting' < *wari* 'fight'.

(253) Elicitation Kofod [H111]:MM

Yiloo girayin nawoo jawaleng jerrawiyang yiloongoogban-tha.
yiloo   girayin   nawoo
down   3smS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   3sgmPE

jawale-ng   jerrawiya-ng   yiloo-ngoog-**ba**-ntha
man-m   one-m   downstream-?-having-EXST_m
\r 'Dat men i gowin daun tu riba en i olawei bi gowin daun lo daun.'
\q That man ran towards the river.

(254) Conversation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:MAJ

Wajama woothoo-ba-tha-ngoong?
wajamab   woothoo-**ba**-tha=ngoong
be_fishing   small-having-EXST=2sgBEN
'Have you fished a small one [i.e. a small fish to be used as bait]?'
\r Yu gat a woothoong, indit?

(255) Narrative Kofod [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF

Jiyirre-baya ngare-baya yoog.
jiyirre-**ba**-iya   ngare-**ba**-iya   yoog
kangaroo-having-INTS bush_honey-having-INTS be_lying_down
'Sleep with kangaroo and honey.'

To summarise, the Miriwoong 'having'-suffix *-ba* covers associative relationships and at least the following comitative meanings typical for Australian languages (compare Dixon 2002:140):

I. Accompaniment
  - person in motion, with human(s)
  - person in motion, with animate(s)
  - person at rest, with something inanimate
  - person in motion with something (inanimate) that does not assist their motion
  - person in motion with something inanimate that does assist their motion
  - exceptionally for instruments, including body part instruments

II. Attributes
  - alienable possession
  - physical characteristics
  - mental or corporeal state of a person
  - corporeal state of an animal

By contrast, *-ba* is not used with III. Temporal. However, it seems to be used for additional purposes such as directional meaning and perfective aspect.

Dixon claims that "the semantic range of privative generally covers almost the semantic range of comitative in that language" (2002:141). It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse all meanings discussed above with respect to privative *-yile*. Suffice it to say that some meanings that can be expressed by *-ba* have also been recorded with *-yile*. Negated association between a truck and its (former) cargo is exemplified by (256), the corporeal state of a person by (257).

(256) Elicitation Kofod [2019-6-21-AA-Animation]:AA

Beri nyindanyan ngarin-yileny, nyindanyan boolgoowoong.
beri   nyin-d-a-nyan   ngarin-**yile**-ny   boolgoowoo-ng
return   3sgfS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF   meat-not_having-f   poor_thing-NOM
'[The truck] was coming back empty, without any bullocks, poor things.'

(257) Elicitation Kofod [H138A]:MM

Dengerenge-tha-ngany, nganyge-yile-tha-ngany.
dengerenge-tha=ngany   nganyge-**yile**-tha-ngany
short_breath-EXST=1sgBEN   breath-not_having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I'm short of breath, I have no breath.'

Like comitative *-ba*, privative *-yile* has derivational functions (see Chapter 8 on derivational functions of the Australian privative). In Miriwoong, we find derivations of adjectives from nouns, nominals from uninflecting verbs, and potentially uninflecting verbs from uninflecting verbs, e.g. *miwoolyileng* 'having nothing' < *miwoolng* 'things, possessions', *ngarnderrayileng* 'deaf' < *ngarnderrang* 'ear', *moorlgaliyileng* 'blind' < *moorlng* 'eye'; *yoolga-yileng* 'too heavy to carry' < *yool* 'carry on shoulder', *berlebgayileng* 'permanent arrangement' < *berleb* 'drop, let slip out of fingers'; *wari-yileng* 'not causing fighting' < *wari* 'fight/argue/tell off'.[116] Usually, *-yile* has the semantics of 'lacking', 'not being able to do/use', 'being the opposite of X' etc., see also the Toolbox entries for *binarriyileng* 'not knowing' < *binarring* 'knowing', *boorralmawooyileng* 'hungry' < *boorralmawoong* 'have full stomach', *ngoondengiyileng* 'no good' < *ngoondenging* 'good/well', *thelmayileng* 'weak' < *thelmang* 'strong'. In *waboolyileng* 'fatally wounded' < *wabool* 'wound', however, there seems to be an intensifying meaning.

9.4.2 Existence

It was argued in Chapter 7 that there is a plausible (but not necessary) connection between possession and existence. Existence can be expressed with the existential marker, as in (258), (259) and (260).

(258) Narrative Kofod [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF

Ngerregoowoontha ngarenga, ngoondengintha ngena.
ngerregoo-woo-**ntha**   ngare-ng=a   ngoondengi-ntha ngena
big-that_kind-EXST_m   bush_honey-NOM=TOP good-EXST   there
'There is lots of honey, it is good there.'

(259) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

Woorriben-thara.
woorribe-**ntha**=ra
magpie_lark-EXST_m=SEQ
'There are magpie larks.'

---

[116] Compare *waribang* 'fighting'.

(260) Game [MEP-20140924-have-memory-2]:MAJ

> *Merrgern-tha beg-beg-ngi lamboora.*
> merrgern-**tha**   beg-beg-ngi   lamboora
> three-EXST   RED-break-that_kind   axe
> 'There are three broken axes.'

The existential marker has also been shown to occur in possessive sentences, namely in combination with *-ba* (§9.1.8), IO (§9.1.3, §9.2.5), BEN (§9.1.5, §9.2.8), *-ga* (§9.2.4.1), and between *-ba* and BEN (§9.1.9). All of these markers can occur by themselves as well. Thus, there is overlap between existence and possession marking in Miriwoong, but the domains can be seen as separate.

9.4.3 Locational uses of IO

In Chapter 7 it is debated whether possession and location are two distinct domains. In Miriwoong there are clearly locational constructions involving the Indirect Object enclitic (see §4.3.5.1) and clearly possessive constructions (see §9.1.2, §9.1.3, §9.2.5, §9.2.6). However, some uses of the Indirect Object enclitic do not allow for a clear-cut distinction. In (261), the Indirect Object enclitic has a locational or rather directional meaning ('put *into* the stomach'), but the relation between the *galaminang* 'echidna/porcupine' and (its) *rarring* 'stomach' is not otherwise marked. Similarly, in (262), both the direction ('on(to) the lap) and the relation between speaker and body part are expressed by the Indirect Object enclitic. That the enclitic expresses possession in addition to location/direction is clear from the fact that in both sentences the variant of the enclitic is chosen which matches the person and number – and in (261) also the gender – of the possessor.

(261) Elicitation Kofod [H117]:MM

> *Goorang gerany gilanda-ji rarring galaminang.*
> goora-ng   gerany g(i)-lan-da=**ji**   rarri-ng   galamina-ng
> old man-m   stone   3sgS:3sgmO-put_PST/REAL=3sgfIO   stomach-NOM   echidna-f
> \r 'I bin pudim dat ston langa porcupine gats.'
> \q The old man put the hot stones in the porcupine.

(262) Elicitation Kofod [H129-1]:MM, (Kofod in prep. (2017):26)

> *Jamerrng looloo boowiwoo-ngerri*
> jamerr-ng   looloo   boo-wi-woo=**ngerri**
> lap-NOM   sit_down   2sgS_IMP-fall/go_down_FUT-IMP=1sgIO
> 'Sit down on my lap.'

Locational rather than directional meaning in combination with body part possession is exemplified by (263). The first enclitic *-ngerri* expresses direction only ('bring her *to me*'), but the second expresses both location ('on/with/at') and body part possession ('*her* feet'). Similarly, the IO in (264), together with the locative marker *-m*, marks location '*on* his head'. In contrast to the

examples above, which express direction, the IO in these two examples appears on the PE noun rather than an inflected verb.

(263) Personal narrative Kofod [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB

[Ngelayinya [name] ngalayawoo nyaman woolgoomen, [Aboriginal name],] nyanyja-ngerri looloo nyilanda yambal-ji.

nyanyja=ngerri	looloo	nyilanda
3sgS:3sgfO-bring/take_PST-REAL=1sgIO	sit_holding	3sgS:3sfO-put_PST-REAL

yambal=**ji**
foot=3sgfIO
'[This [name], the old woman called [Aboriginal name]] brought her to me and put her down on/with/at her feet.'

(264) Picture story [MEP-20141005-MAJ-circle-of-dirt-2]:AA

Berrayi gemerndem-ni nhoonbang.

berrayi	gemernde-m=**ni**	nhoonba-ng
these_here	head-LOC=3sgmIO	mud-NOM

'This is mud on his head.'

Note, however, that body parts possession is not always expressed overtly, even if no IO is involved, as in (265) and (266), see also §9.2.1. Neither the relation between the subject and (his) hand nor (his) eyes is marked in the former utterance. In the latter, the subject's arm is not marked, either. If not for the possessor-specific variant of the enclitic, an argument could, thus, be made that in the examples above, the IO marks location or direction only.

(265) Elicitation Kofod [H131-1]:MM

Ginayin miwoondelg mayinggoorlm-berri gemiyandayin moorlng.

ginayin	miwoondelg	mayinggoorl-(~~ng~~)m=berri
3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3smgIPF	tears_coming	hand-NOM=INST

gemiyandayin	moorl-ng
3sgmS-do_to_self_PRS-REAL-IPF	eye-NOM

'He is rubbing his eye with his hand.' [lit. 'He makes tears come (from) his eyes with his hand.']

(266) Elicitation Kofod [H112]:MM

Beg goowarda goordangalang.

beg	g(oo)-ward-a	goordangala-ng
break	3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL	arm-NOM

'He broke his arm.'[117]

Throughout this chapter a variety of possible markers of body parts possession were discussed. In addition to the IO, these are – for predicative possession – *-ba* + EXST + BEN (§9.1.9), *-yile* (§9.1.10) and to a certain degree HAVE (§9.1.11.2.3), and – for attributive possession – juxtaposition (§9.2.1), cardinal pronouns (§9.2.2), and BEN (§9.2.7.2). The use of possessive

---

[117] This utterance shows that affected body parts are not necessarily marked by the IO (compare §9.2.5.3).

pronouns is also acceptable (§9.2.3.4). Two more examples of the latter are given here. In (267) (repeated from (157)), a possessive pronoun is used instead of the body part. Note that the use of the gender-specific possessive pronoun makes it clear that the utterance is about the mother's not the crocodile's belly. In (268), MAJ is joking around with the stimulus, pretending to put her head into the headdress depicted on the stimulus picture. The utterance is elliptic as it includes an uninflecting verb but no inflecting verb. Location is expressed in both utterances by the locative marker *-m* on the pronoun.

(267) Narrative Kofod [RTh-K86-3-2-T0178]:RTh

[…] moondoorroong goowarda ngaliyangiyam ngarrage-gany.

moondoorroong	g(oo)-ward-a	**ngaliya-iya-m**	ngarrage-ga-ny
stomach_down	3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL	3sgfPOSS-INTS-LOC	mother-REL-f

'[The crocodile went here to her and] lay stomach down on his mother's (belly).'

(268) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

Wootheb ngayangem gemerndeng.

wootheb	**ngayange-m**	gemernde-ng
put_inside	1sgPOSS-LOC	head-NOM

'[I] put my head inside [the joonba headdress].'

To conclude, location/direction and possession are two distinct domains in Miriwoong with separate marking patterns. In the case of the Indirect Object, however, there is some overlap.

9.4.4 Possession, location, and existence with the existential marker

It is worthwhile to mention at this point that a prediction with respect to the marking of possession, location, and existence formulated by Bickerton (1981:245) (see also the revised edition 2016:212–220) and quoted by Heine (1997:204), is not contradicted by Miriwoong. Based on a sample of "fifty-odd" languages analysed by Clark (1970), Bickerton predicts that no language can use the same morpheme to express ownership and existence unless that morpheme is also used to express location or possession;[118] where, essentially, ownership (*X is Z's*) refers to what in this thesis is called *belong*-constructions, and possession (*Z has X*) refers to what is here called *have*-constructions.

(269) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

Dawan-tha-woorr-meleng.

dawa-**ntha**=**woorr**=meleng
camp-EXST_m=3nsBEN=du

'It is the house of the two of them.'/'The house belongs to them two.'
\q (Who is that for?) That's the house of the two of them?

---

[118] Bickerton restricts the prediction to "only the primary (shortest, simplest, most frequently used) morphemes in each language – e.g., not allowing *exist* to substitute for *there IS*, or *possess* for *have*" (2016:212). A second prediction was refuted by Heine with counter-examples from Ewe and Hausa (Heine 1997:204f): No language can use the same morpheme to express location and possession unless that morpheme is also used to express existence and ownership. Since Miriwoong uses the existential marker in all relations, this prediction is not contradicted by Miriwoong, either.

(270) Spontaneous [MEP-20140817-MaJ-PicturePairing-people-alienable-1]:MAJ

Woorriben-thara.
Woorribe-**ntha**=ra
magpie_lark-EXST_m=SEQ
'There are magpie larks.'

(271) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-5-T0471]:BF

Gerloonga marramtha.
gerloo-ng=a   marram-**tha**
water-NOM=TOP   far_away-EXST
'The water is far away.'

(272) Conversation Kofod [MALLP-22-Feb-2012]

Gemalang joorrgoo-yilen-tha bardingoowing goolyawoorrng.
gemala-ng   joorrgooyile-**ntha**   bardi-ngoowi-ng
plant_species-NOM   long-EXST_m   bush_potato-that_kind-NOM

goolyawoorr-ng
leafy_twigs-NOM
'The gemalang is long, it has leaves like a bush potato.'
\r 'Da gemalang is a longwan, goda lif laik barding.'

When looking at Miriwoong verbless clauses, the existential marker is found in all four constructions: The fact that the existential marker is used in the context of ownership, i.e. the *belong*-construction (see §9.1.5), is exemplified by the construction EXST + BEN in (269), repeated above from (21). That the existential marker is also used for existence (see §9.4.2) is shown in (270), repeated above from (259). Location is not typically expressed by the existential marker, but this is possible, see (271). Finally, possession, i.e. the *have*-construction, was shown to be expressed either by the existential marker only, as in utterance (7) (§9.1.1), repeated above as (272), or in combination with a variety of other possession markers.

10 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results from the frequency analysis (§10.1), from the Have and Belong card games (§10.3), and from the language task with the Story Builder Action Cards (§10.4) are discussed. In §10.5, the Miriwoong With- and Have-Possessives are introduced and the typological predictions for these are discussed.

10.1 Results from the frequency analysis

In Chapter 5 it is announced that an analysis of the frequency of possessive constructions in selected texts from the Miriwoong corpus (Kofod 2023) will provide a "standard of comparison against which the naturalness of all other types of data [can be] evaluated" (Hellwig 2007:78).

The texts were chosen according to the following criteria: a variety of fluent speakers narrating connected speech without intervening elicitation in the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of genre, both Dreaming stories as well as personal narratives were selected. In addition, one narrative about a picture book (a children's book called *Greedy Goanna*) was included because the story contains comparatively many possessive constructions.[1]

To give an impression of the length of the 8 texts that were selected for analysis, a word count was undertaken. In total, 4690 words were processed. An additional word count was made after those elements that are separated from the previous element by a hyphen in Miriwoong orthography (i.e. the majority of suffixes and enclitics) were counted as individual words. The number of words, thus, rose to a total to 5578. The analysis of these texts resulted in a collection of 100 sentences that are overtly marked for possession. This shows that overall frequency is not very high with 4 texts contributing only 4 or 5 possessive sentences. In addition to these possessive sentences, the sample includes 16 comitative utterances (including accompaniment using *-ba(ng/ny)* (n=7) and instrumental using *-ba* (+EXST) (n=3) or *-berri* (n=6)) and 4 associative utterances using *-ba(ng)*. These are not further discussed here.

In the texts, seven different overt possessive constructions are found – no marking (juxtaposition) is excluded from the analysis. Table 10.1 presents the number of occurrences for each of these. The most common strategy in the selected narratives is the use of possessive pronouns; they are used in the absolute majority of the possessive sentences (52%). The relationship suffix *-ga* and the (existential marker plus the) Benefactive enclitic are moderately frequent. They are followed by the 'having'-suffix *-ba* (plus the existential marker) and (the existential marker plus) the Indirect Object enclitic. Both the HAVE-verb and privative *-yile* occur

---

[1] The following texts were selected: [LB-K89-16-T0014]:LB (4 utterances), [K89-6-T0006-RTh]:RTh (13 utterances), [GNy-K89-1-T0001]:GNy (22 utterances), [K92-4-Greedy-Goanna]:BF (16 utterances), [BF-K93-35-1-BF-Willy-willy]:BF (5 utterances), [K94-16-Wirnan]:BF (5 utterances), [K95-3-Boorrewi-T0147]:DB (30 utterances), and the beginning of [K89-18-1-T0016]:BF (5 utterances).

only once in the sample. Cardinal pronouns (§9.2.2) and the construction *-ba* (+ EXST) +BEN (§9.1.9) do not surface in the sample.

construction	occurrences
poss pn	52
-ga	19
(EXST +) BEN	14
-ba (+ EXST)	7
(EXST +) IO	6
HAVE	1
-yile	1
sum	100

Table 10.1 Frequency of possessive construction in Miriwoong narratives

Table 10.2 breaks the numbers down to the domains in which the constructions were used. Kinship relations are mainly expressed by a possessive pronoun (n=22, 44%) or the relationship suffix *-ga* (n=19, 38%) and also by BEN (n=5, 10%), *-ba* (+EXST) (n=2, 4%), and IO (n=1, 2%). They can be negated using *-yile* (n=1, 2%). Interestingly, alienable possession is distributed over all constructions (except *-ga*, which only marks kinship, and *-yile*, for which only 1 utterance in total is included in the sample). Possessive pronouns (n=12, 46%), (EXST +) BEN (n=6, 23%), and *-ba* (+ EXST) (n=3, 12%) were expected to be found with alienable possession, but the IO has been claimed to express inalienable possession (Kofod 1978:58, in prep. (2017):29). In this sample, 4 utterances (15%) in which it marks alienable possession were found, 2 for attributive, and 2 for predicative possession. The use of (EXST +) IO with kinship is also notable as the inalienable category has been claimed not to include kinship in Australian languages (Dixon 1980, Heine 1997). In addition to alienable possession and kinship, (EXST +) IO once marks body parts (n=1, 50%). Note that for the latter, many more utterances can be found in different texts and especially in data from picture description (see also §10.3.2.4). Further domains covered by possessive pronouns that were not yet mentioned are body parts (n=1, 50%), abstract possession (n=2, 100%), camp/home (n=11, 79%), and country/dreaming place (n=4, 100%). In sum, they are attested with all domains except temporary and part-whole. For the former, only one utterance with (EXST +) BEN and for the latter, only one with *-ba* (+ EXST) appear in the sample. The domain camp/home is also expressed with (EXST +) BEN (n=2, 14%).[2]

---

[2] Percentages are rounded.

	poss pn	-ga	-ba (+ EXST)	-yile	(EXST +) IO	(EXST +) BEN	HAVE	sum
body part	1				1			2
kinship	22	19	2	1	**1**	5		50
alienable	12		3		**4**	6	1	26
part-whole			1					1
temporary						1		1
abstract	2							2
camp/home	11		1			2		14
country/dreaming place	4							4
sum	52	19	7	1	6	14	1	100

Table 10.2 Frequency of possessive construction in Miriwoong narratives: Domains
(unexpected findings in bold)

Table 10.3 focuses on the possessive pronouns and provides the numbers for those with and without the optional possessive suffix (see §9.2.3). In 19% of the utterances including possessive pronouns, the suffix is used. In the realm of kinship possession, there is a clear preference for the use of possessive pronouns without the suffix (n=19, 86%). Similarly, the concepts camp and home are referred to 11 times without the suffix and are not referred to with the suffix. The domain country occurs only once with the suffix (25%) and 3 times without it (75%). For the other domains, no clear pattern emerges: Since the sample includes only one utterance from the domain of body parts, no robust conclusions can be drawn. This is also the case for abstract possession, where 1 utterance includes the suffix and 1 does not. With alienable possession, there is also no strong preference: In the sample, the suffix is present (n=5, 42%) and absent (n= 7, 58%) in comparable quantities.

In §9.2.3 it is argued that the use of the suffix is influenced, among other things, by inalienability. The preference for suffix-less possessive pronouns for kinship relations found in the sample is indicative of a correlation of the absence of the suffix with alienability since kinship is expected to pattern with alienable constructions in Australian languages (see above). If this argument is maintained, the domains of camp, home, country and dreaming place need to be considered as alienable rather than inalienable as they are only or preferably expressed without the suffix. Remember also from above that (EXST +) IO is not used with either domain, while (EXST +) BEN appears with camp/home. The analysis of the game data below will show correlations between alienable possession and the Benefactive enclitic and inalienable possession and the Indirect Object enclitic (§10.3.2.2). Thus, the use of BEN for camp/home is another argument for counting is as an alienable domain.

	poss pn without optional possessive suffix	poss pn with optional possessive suffix	sum
body part	1		1
kinship	19	3	22
alienable	7	5	12
part-whole			
temporary			
abstract	1	1	2
camp/home	11		11
country/dreaming place	3	1	4
sum	42	10	52

Table 10.3 Possessive pronouns in narratives: Domains with and without the optional suffix

An interesting finding in support of the analysis that the kinship domain patterns with the alienable domain and that both correlate with an absence of the optional possessive suffix comes from possessive pronouns lacking a nominal suffix. As shown in Table 10.4, the phenomenon of dropping the nominal suffix is only observed with possessive pronouns without the optional possessive suffix and when these are used for alienable possession or kinship. However, the number of occurrences in the sample is generally quite small (n=3).

	poss pn without optional possessive suffix + without a nominal suffix	poss pn with optional possessive suffix + without a nominal suffix
body part		
kinship	1	
alienable	2	
part-whole		
temporary		
abstract		
camp/home		
country/dreaming place		
sum	3	

Table 10.4 Possessive pronouns in narratives without nominal suffix

To give an impression of how sentences with possessive pronouns are constructed in the sample, Table 10.5 gives information about the order of the possessive pronoun (POSS) and the possessee (PE). Of the sentences with possessive pronouns and overt PEs in the sample, 30 utterances (60%) have the following order: The possessive pronoun precedes the possessee. The absolute majority (83%) of possessive pronouns in this configuration does not carry an optional

suffix. In the remaining 20 utterances (40%), the possessive pronoun follows the possessee. It is again the absolute majority (75%) that does not carry an optional suffix in this configuration.

The observed distribution of 60% POSS PE and 40% PE POSS order confirms the claim in §4.1 that in noun phrases adjectives preferably occur postnominally while other modifiers, including possessive pronouns, are preferred in prenominal position. The optional possessive suffix does not bear on this.

The only domains where the PE POSS order is more common that the POSS PE order are alienable possession, abstract possession and camp/home. The latter occurs only with possessive pronouns without the optional suffix. For alienable possession, the preference is marginal and the PE POSS order is only more common for possessive pronouns with the optional suffix. If the presence vs. absence of the suffix is ignored, both orders are equally common. For abstract possession there are only two instances, both in PE POSS order, one with, one without the suffix.

	without optional suffix			with optional suffix		
	POSS PE order	PE POSS order	sum	POSS PE order	PE POSS order	sum
body part		1	1			
kinship	16	2	18[3]	2	1	3
alienable	4	3	7	2	**3**	5
part-whole						
temporary						
abstract		**1**	1		**1**	1
camp/home	3	**7**	10[4]			
country/dreaming place	2	1	3	1		1
sum	25	15	40	5	5	10

Table 10.5 Possessive pronouns in narratives: Order of possessive pronoun and possessee
(exceptions to preferred POSS PE order in bold)

10.1.1 Summary and conclusion

An analysis of the frequency of possessive utterances in a selection of narratives from the 1980s and 1990s reveals unexpected uses of IO, i.e. domains other than body parts: Kinship possession is not only expressed with (in order of frequency) possessive prounouns, -*ga*, (EXST+) BEN, and -*ba* (+EXST) but also marginally with (EXST+) IO. Alienable possession is not only indicated with possessive prounouns, (EXST+) BEN, -*ba* (+EXST), and HAVE but also with medial frequency with (EXST +) IO.

An investigation of the presence vs. absence of the optional suffix in possessive pronouns in these narratives shows that the suffix is used in 19% of the utterances with possessive pronouns. For kinship possession and the domain camp/home there is a clear preference not to use the

---

[3] In one utterance there is no PE; the possessive pronoun stands by itself.
[4] In one utterance there is no PE; the possessive pronoun stands by itself.

suffix. While there is no clear correlation of the suffix with inalienable possession, there is evidence of a correlation of a missing suffix with alienability. Under this analysis, the domains camp/home, country/dreaming place as well as kinship are treated like alienable possessions. Fittingly, camp/home is not referred to with IO – which is found to be correlated with inalienable possession in the game data (§10.3.2.2) – but BEN – which is found to be correlated with alienable possession – or -*ba* (+EXST).
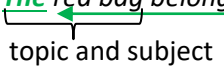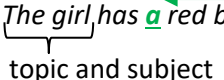
In the majority of utterances (60%), the possessive pronoun precedes the possessee. This does not bear on the distribution of the optional suffix. Alienable possession is the only domain where the preferred order differs with the presence or absence of the suffix: POSS PE is preferred without the suffix while PE POSS is preferred with the suffix. However, the four +/- suffix and POSS PE vs. PE POSS combinations occur in relatively similar frequency, so that more data might lead to a clearer picture.

10.2 Results from card games

In this section, the results from the card games designed to elicit *have* and *belong*-constructions will be discussed. These constructions were described in §7.6, where, cross-linguistically speaking, the following factors have been found to influence the choice between a *have* and a *belong*-construction (Baron et al. 2001; Heine 1997; Zeshan & Perniss 2008):

(i)   the semantic domain of possession

(ii)   subjecthood of possessor (PR) and possessee (PE)

(iii)   information structure (topic and emphasis)

(iv)   definiteness of PR and PE

In English, for instance, with respect to alienable possession, in *belong*-constructions the definite PE is the grammatical subject and topic, see (1). By contrast, in *have*-constructions the definite PR is subject and topic while the PE is usually indefinite, see (2).

(1) ***The*** *red bag belongs to the girl.*   -> emphasis on PE

  topic and subject

(2) *The girl has **a** red bag.*   -> emphasis on PR

  topic and subject

It has to be kept in mind that in Miriwoong, not all factors listed above can be adduced in order to decide whether a specific utterance is an instance of a *have* or a *belong*-construction. To begin with, determining the subject of an utterance is not a straight-forward task as subjects are not morphologically marked in Miriwoong. Word order does not give conclusive clues, because Miriwoong word order is rather free. Further, Miriwoong information structure has not been studied in any great detail yet. What is known is that there is not a morphological marker that

marks one constituent as the discourse topic. In addition, topics are often dropped. Following Stassen (2009:28), the topic is here understood as "what the sentence is about" or rather "what the speaker is talking about" (Hornby 1971:1975); frequently it represents *given* information, i.e. the topic is "known from either the linguistic or the behavioral context and represents information which the speaker and hearer already share at the time the sentence is spoken" (ibid.). The marker *-a* in Miriwoong is frequently referred to as a *topic marker*, see §4.2.1. However, it has been notoriously difficult to find restrictions on its application. It appears on almost all lexical categories, can be left out without an apparent change in meaning and is used more frequently by some speakers than others.

Finally, there seem to be some means by which definiteness can be expressed or these might at least be emerging (Ringel & Armstrong 2017), but there are no articles in Miriwoong and, again, there is no morphological or syntactic marking that conclusively marks an NP as definite or indefinite.

After taking the immediate context and gestures (e.g. pointing gestures to certain (parts of) stimuli) into account and looking at the available evidence, all that can be said concerning any one utterance is that everything points to the utterance being either a *have* or a *belong*-construction.

10.3 Have and Belong game

The first hypothesis which can be affirmed with certainty when looking at the data is that card games can be successfully used to elicit possessive constructions. In 4 hours of recording 173 possessive sentences can be identified. The Have game successfully triggered *have*-constructions; 100% of the *have* and *belong*-constructions identified were of the *have* type. The Belong game triggers mainly *belong*-constructions; 90% of *have* and *belong*-constructions uttered during the game were *belong*-constructions. If all possessive sentences uttered during the games are counted, 97% of the utterances were *have*-constructions during the Have game and 33% were *belong*-constructions during the Belong game, the majority being attributive sentences that are neither *have* nor *belong*-constructions. If only the sessions are included where engagement with the stimuli was in a game-like fashion between speakers (instead of a rather picture description-like fashion under some involvement of the researcher), the percentage of *belong*-constructions is elevated to 65%.

10.3.1 Have game

10.3.1.1 *Animacy and negation*

Concerning the Have game, the data was analysed in order to investigate (i) a potential influence of the animacy of the PE and potential effects on the choice of construction depending on the presence of (ii) modification (number, well-formedness, colour, and/or size) and/or (iii) negation.

To begin with, Table 10.6 presents the possessive constructions that were used during the Have game, arranged according to the animacy of the PE and the polarity and force of the utterance. With respect to positive statements no clear conclusions can be drawn as a variety of constructions are possible and none of these is clearly preferred. More data might give a clearer picture. In positive questions, by contrast, the *-ba* + Benefactive enclitic (henceforth BEN) (94% for inanimate, 61% for animate) and *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN (30%, only for animate, see below) constructions are preferred over the alternatives. In negative statements the Indirect Object enclitic (henceforth IO) is the most frequent construction (88% for inanimate, 100% for animate). It can be concluded that negation has an impact on the construction: As expected, the Indirect Object enclitic correlates with negation irrespective of animacy. Animacy does seem to play a role in questions, however. With animate PEs not only the *-ba* + BEN construction is possible – as with inanimate PEs – but also the *-ba* + *-**woo*** + BEN construction. In order to show overall frequencies more clearly, Table 10.7 presents the synthesis of constructions used in statements and questions. The *-ba* + BEN construction is found in 67% of all constructions with inanimate PEs and in 62% with animate PEs. The number of *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN constructions adds up to 27%.

		Animacy			
		inanimate PE		animate PE	
		statements	questions	statements	questions
Polarity	positive	IO			
		-bang (modified)			
			-ba + BEN		**-ba + BEN**
					-ba + -woo + BEN
		-ba + EXST + BEN			(*-ba* + EXST + BEN)
				BEN (human)	
		HAVE	(HAVE)	HAVE	(HAVE)
	negative	**IO**		**IO**	
		-yile + EXST + BEN			

Table 10.6 Constructions used in Have game – statements vs. questions
        (preferred constructions in bold)

Polarity		Animacy	
		inanimate PE	animate PE
		statements + questions	statements + questions
Polarity	positive	***-ba* + BEN**	***-ba* + BEN**
			***-ba* + *-woo* + BEN**
		-ba + EXST + BEN	
		HAVE	HAVE
			BEN (human)
		IO	
		-bang (modified)	
	negative	**IO**	**IO**
		-yile + EXST + BEN	

Table 10.7 Constructions used in Have game – statements & questions
(preferred constructions in bold)

Examples of the most frequent constructions are given below. In (3) (repeated here from example (2)b in Chapter 5 on methodology) the *-ba* + BEN construction is used. *-ba* 'having' attaches to the inanimate PE noun *ganiny* 'digging stick' and is followed by the second singular Benefactive enclitic *-ngoong*. (4) exemplifies the construction *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN. The animate PE *gamarang* 'turtle' is followed by *-ba,* the interrogative particle *-woo* and the second singular Benefactive enclitic. Note that the nominal suffix is usually absent before *-ba*.[5] The negated statement in (5) (repeated here from example (3)b in Chapter 5) illustrates the use of the first person singular Indirect Object enclitic *-ngerri*. It follows the negative particle *ngoowaga,* while the inanimate PE noun *ganiny* stands by itself, being followed by the topic marker only (see above). That this marker is optional can be deduced from (6)a and b.

(3) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

Ganiny-ba-ngoong?
ganiny-**ba**=**ngoong**
digging_stick-having=2sgBEN
'Do you have a digging stick?'

(4) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

Gamara-ba-woo-ngoong?
gamara-**ba**-**woo**=**ngoong**?
turtle-having-INT=2sgBEN
'Do you have turtles?'

---

[5] The <ny> in *ganiny* is not a feminine gender suffix but part of the lexical stem. *ganiny* does not take a nominal suffix and thus cannot drop one. Similarly, *ngaljan* 'frog' does not take a gender or nominal suffix. Younger speakers sometimes do not drop the *-ng* suffix, but in the game corpus there is only one instance where ML does not drop it: *Lamboong-ba-ngoong?* ([MEP-20140920-have-1]). Elsewhere the *-ng* is dropped with *lamboong* 'coolamon': *Lamboo-ba-ngoong?* ([MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-5]: PG).

(5) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

Ngoowaga-ngerri ganinya.
ngoowaga=**ngerri**   ganiny=a
no=1sgIO   digging_stick=TOP
'I don't have a digging stick.'

(6) Game [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-5]:AA

a) Ngoowaga-*ngerri (.) gamaranga.*
   ngoowaga=**ngerri**   gamara-ng=a
   no=1sgIO   turtle-NOM=TOP
   'I don't have turtles.'

b) *Ngoowaga-ngerri gamarang.*
   ngoowaga=**ngerri**   gamara-ng
   no=1sgIO   turtle-NOM
   'I don't have turtles.'

10.3.1.2 *Modification*

Further, the constructions used in modified utterances are visualised in Table 10.8. The corpus of Have game sentences does not include modified statements with animate PEs, therefore the corresponding cells are empty. Negated modified sentences did not occur in the game data, either.

	Animacy			
	inanimate PE		animate PE	
	modified statements	**modified** questions	**modified** statements	**modified** questions
Positive polarity		*-ba* + BEN		*-ba* + BEN
	-bang			
	IO	IO		

Table 10.8 Constructions used in Have game – modified sentences
        (preferred constructions in bold)

Regarding questions, no influence of modification can be detected. As in unmodified questions, the *-ba* + BEN construction is used. As shown in (7) and (8) (repeated here from (4)a) and b) in Chapter 5 on methodology), colour terms and numerals do not form part of the possessive construction. One example, which was not included in the sample of modified sentences because it followed a grammatical prompt by the researcher, shows that instead of being attached to the PE noun, the possessive construction could in principle be attached to the modifier, as in (9). Note that the construction in (9) is *-ba* + **EXST** + BEN rather than *-ba* + BEN, thus it parallels (10) (repeated here from example (2) in Chapter 5) more closely than (7) or (8).

(7) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:AA

Gamara-ba-ngoong ngoojaleng?
gamara-**ba**=**ngoong**   **ngoojale**-**ng**
long_necked_turtle-having=2sgBEN   green-NOM
'Do you have a green turtle?'

(8) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:AA

Derrmad-ba-ngoong merrgernem?
derrmad-**ba**=**ngoong**   **merrgernem**
freshwater_crocodile-having=2sgBEN   three_times
'Do you have three crocodiles?'

(9) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-9]:AA

Ngiyi, gamarang merrgerne-ba-tha-ngany.
ngiyi   gamara-ng   **merrgerne**-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**.
yes   turtle-NOM   three_times-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'Yes, I have three turtles.'

(10) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

Ganiny-ba-tha-ngany.
ganiny-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
digging_stick-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have (a) digging stick(s).'

Examples of modified questions with the IO can be found in (11). Again, no influence of modification can be detected, as the numeral is added to the sentence without causing a change to the construction, see the parallel utterance with (11)a and without the numeral (11)b. In this session the possessive question is constructed by suffixing the Indirect Object enclitic to the question word *gama* 'where'.

(11) Game [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-5]:AA

a) *Gama-**ninggi** goornoorrng **merrgernem**?*
gama=**ninggi**   goornoorr-ng   **merrgernem**
where=2sgIO   bag-NOM   three_times
'Where are your three bags?' [lit. 'Where is your bag three times?']

b) *Gama-**ninggi** goornoorrnga <you talk la im>.*
gama=ninggi   goornoorr-ng=a   <you talk la him>
where=2sgIO   bag-NOM=TOP   you say to him
'"Where is your bag" you say to her.'

As for modified statements, two of the constructions found in the previous tables, namely *-bang* and IO, are attested. However, the low number of examples – only 6 utterances can be counted as modified *have*-constructions – does not warrant the conclusion that the alternative constructions used for unmodified statements are disallowed in modified statements. As in modified questions that include the IO, in modified descriptive statements including the IO a numeral does not cause a change in the construction, see (12)a) (repeated here from (172)),

where the IO is suffixed to the nominal as expected. The utterance exemplifies part-whole relationships with IO, see also the discussion about animacy in §10.3.2.4. (12)b) shows that a modification with an adjective, here *ngoondenging* 'good', can be expressed using *-bang.*

(12) Game [MEP-20140924-have-memory-1]:AA

a) *Merrgerne lamboora menkerrnging (.) goolenga-ji.*
merrgerne	lamboora	**menkerrngi**-ng	goole-ng=a=**ji**
three_times	axe	broken-NOM	stick-NOM=TOP=3sgfIO

'Three axes with broken shafts.'

b) *Merrgerneng (..) lamboorang goole-bang ngoondenging.*
merrgerne-ng	lamboora-ng	goole-**ba**-**ng**	**ngoondengi**-**ng**
three_times_NOM	axe-NOM	stick-having-NOM	good-NOM

'Three axes with good shafts.'

10.3.1.3 *Association*

In the Have game database, utterances featuring *-bang* can be found that indicate associative relationships: In (13) the speaker describes a card by saying that there is food on a coolamon. (14) is a similar example, but on that speaker's card there are three coolamon. The comparison between (13) and (14) shows that the modification with a numeral does not trigger a change in the construction: In both the unmodified and the modified utterance, *-bang* is attached to the nominal *mayeng* 'food', which functions as a modifier for the nominal *lamboong* 'coolamon'. *-bang* in this utterance, thus, behaves similarly as in the modified *have*-construction in (12)b) above. The 4 associative sentences in the sample of narratives from the 1980s and 1990s (§10.1) also all make use of *-ba* or *-bang*.

(13) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-1]:PG

Maye-bang ginayin lamboong.
maye-**ba**-**ng**	ginayin	lamboo-ng
food-having-NOM	3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	coolamon-NOM

'There is a coolamon with food on it.'

(14) Game [MEP-20140924-have-memory-1]:RG

Ngenjaying merrgern lamboong maye-bang.
ngenjayi-ng	**merrgern**	lamboo-ng	**maye**-**ba**-**ng**
this_one_m-NOM	three	coolamon-NOM	food-having-NOM

'These are three coolamon with food on them.'

10.3.2 Belong game

10.3.2.1 *BEN in belong-constructions*

The Belong game can be used to investigate several hypotheses concerning possessive constructions. One of the central research questions that inspired the game was whether there is a correlation between the *belong*-construction and the Benefactive enclitic. This can be answered

in the positive. All the utterances in the game corpus that make use of BEN by itself (n=12) are *belong*-constructions. For an example of this construction see (15). The third singular feminine Benefactive enclitic is attached to the PE noun *biyirdeng* 'leg'. Conversely, of the 21 utterances clearly identified as *belong*-constructions 52% use BEN (n=11). In 33% of the remaining utterances possessive pronouns are used (n=7), which do not bear on the opposition between Indirect Object and Benefactive Enclitic – the distribution of which is one of the concerns of this thesis. In addition, juxtaposition (n=1) and a possessive interrogative (n=1) occur in *belong*-constructions. The Indirect Object enclitic occurs only once (5%). In sum, it can be said that *belong*-constructions favour the use of the Benefactive enclitic.

(15) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

> *Ngelayiny (.) biyirdenga-joong.*
> ngelayi-ny   biyirde-ng=a=**joong**
> this_one_f-f   leg-NOM=TOP=3sgfBEN
> 'This one [f.], the leg belongs to her.'

10.3.2.2   *BEN vs. IO in alienable vs. inalienable constructions*

Having established that the Benefactive enclitic is used in *belong*-constructions, the next step is to look at particular domains. Is the Benefactive enclitic only or mainly used for alienable possession? In the *belong*-constructions in the game corpus, BEN is used for alienable possession (n=6, including the possession of a house and an artefact)[6] but also for body parts (n=4). A survey of all alienable possessive sentences in the game corpus (n=78) results in the following picture: (i) In statements, apart from possessive pronouns (n=15) there are 9 constructions that involve BEN (incl. the 6 BEN mentioned previously, 1x *-ba* + EXST + BEN, 1x *-yile* + EXST + BEN, i.e. BEN is used in 24% of the utterances), the HAVE-verb is used 2 times, and 11 utterances (30%) feature the Indirect Object enclitic. Note, however, that almost all utterances involving the IO are negated, whereas only one of the BEN-involving constructions is. The Have game also revealed a correlation between negation and IO. If these negated utterances are excluded, the picture for statements is as follows: 8 out of 22 utterances (36%) involve BEN, 1 involves the IO (5%). (ii) In questions, the HAVE-verb is used 2 times, but all other constructions involve BEN: 31x *-ba* + BEN (incl. 2x INT + *-ba* + BEN), 7x *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN, and 1x *-ba* + EXST + BEN. The Indirect Object is not used at all in questions (see also Table 10.6 which shows that IO is not used in questions in the

---

[6] These have been coded separately because they could potentially fall within the inalienable category due to their cultural relevance. Heine (1997:11) states that "[t]he way inalienability is defined in a given case or in a given language is largely dependent on culture specific conventions. Aikhenvald (2013:4) lists specific examples: "Culturally important objects-'name', 'house', or 'canoe' in river-dwelling or maritime cultures-may also fall within the realm of inalienably, or obligatorily, possessed items." From the data under discussion, it does not seem to be the case that 'house' or artefacts are treated differently from other alienable possessions with respect to enclitics, though.

Have game either). In sum, the Benefactive enclitic is not the preferred choice for alienable possession constructions. However, constructions involving BEN rather than the IO are used in alienable possessive sentences with positive polarity and in alienable possessive questions. This finding confirms Heine's (1997) observation that *belong*-constructions "tend to be associated only with one possessive notion" as their primary or only meaning (1997:32), usually ownership, i.e. alienable possession.

The reverse question is whether the Indirect Object enclitic is preferably used for inalienable possession. The analysis of the game corpus reveals that in the 9 *belong*-constructions that were coded as inalienable possession (including part-whole relationships, body parts and kinship), the Indirect Object is used only once. In addition, in 4 utterances BEN is used, in 4 a possessive pronoun and in 1 a question word. Most utterances are about body parts, 1 is about animal offspring (BEN). In the literature an inalienability split is usually expected in attributive rather than predicative possession. Therefore, the attributive sentences were analysed as well. In fact, the picture looks different if all inalienable sentences in the game corpus are analysed, i.e. including both utterances that cannot irrefutably be classified as *belong*-constructions and utterances expressing attributive possession. The former include 2 (EXST +) Indirect Object-marked utterances about body parts. The latter comprise 24 utterances with (EXST +) IO: 20 out of 31 sentences about body parts (30%), none out of 7 sentences about kinship, 4 out of 6 about part-whole relationships (67%) use the IO. Only one doubtful *belong*-construction uses BEN (body part) and only two of the attributive sentences do (kinship, EXST + BEN). In sum, out of 58 utterances classified as inalienable possession, 48% (n=28) use (EXST +) IO but only 12% (n=7) use (EXST +) BEN. Thus, with respect to inalienable sentences, while BEN is used preferably in *belong*-constructions, the IO is employed considerably more for inalienable possession in the entire game corpus. In fact, it is used in the majority of all inalienable utterances in the corpus: The constructions used apart from IO and BEN are -*bang* (n=4, 6%), personal pronoun (n=4, 6%), possessive pronoun (n=11, 18%), INT (n=4, 6%), and −*ba* + EXST (n=1, 2%).

The fact that the correlation between the IO and inalienable possession holds for body parts and part-whole relationships but not for kinship is in line with expectations expressed for Australian languages in the literature (Dixon 1980:293, Heine 1997:11). Miriwoong behaves similar to Gurindji, for example, where only body parts are treated as inalienable in that PR and PE are juxtaposed, i.e. no possessive marking occurs, whereas kinship is treated as alienable, i.e. is marked with the dative (Meakins 2011). For Kriol it has been observed that the alignment of domains and alienability is different: Both kinship and body parts are treated as inalienable, i.e. PR and PE are juxtaposed, whereas with other nouns possession is expressed via post- or preposed dative prepositions (Munro 2005:180ff).

Thus, Stassen's (2009) typology for alienable vs. inalienable domains along the dimensions +/-Control and +/-Contact applies for Kriol but not Australian languages such as Miriwoong and Gurindji: As discussed in §7.5, according to Stassen, alienable possession is characterised by +(Permanent) Contact and +Control. Inalienable possession is considered to be +Contact and -Control. Kinship relations, like body part and part-whole relations, belong to the inalienable domains as the PR does not have control over the PE, i.e. the PR is not able to determine the PE's whereabouts (relevant for kinship), terminate the relationship with the PE (the PR cannot sell, lend or lose the PE; relevant for kinship, body part and part-whole relations), or decide to let other organisms make use of the PE (relevant for kinship, body part and part-whole relations) (Stassen 2009:18). However, the game data show that in Miriwoong kinship is treated differently from body part and part-whole relations.

10.3.2.3 *Part-whole relations with -ba*

Another hypothesis that the Belong game aims to verify is that part-whole relationships, i.e. relationships between inanimate objects or plants as PRs and their parts as PEs, can be expressed using *-ba.* The game data show that this is indeed one of the possibilities (see also §10.1). Out of 6 (attributive) sentences 2 use *-bang*, as in (12)c), repeated here as (16), and 4 use (EXST +) Indirect Object enclitic. In (16), *-bang* is attached to the nominal *gooleng* 'stick', whose nominal suffix was dropped. *gooleng* is modified by the adjective *ngoondenging* 'good'.

(16) Game [MEP-20140924-have-memory-1]:AA

Merrgerneng (..) lamboorang goole-bang ngoondenging.
merrgerne-ng   lamboora-ng   goole-**ba**-**ng**   ngoondengi-ng
three-NOM   axe-NOM   stick-having-NOM   good-m
'Three axes with good wooden shafts.'

10.3.2.4 *Part-whole relations: Animacy*

Another research question the Belong game aims at is the question whether animacy plays a role with respect to part-whole relationships, i.e. do descriptions of human body parts differ from descriptions of animal body parts and/or parts of plants or inanimate objects?

animacy

body parts			
animate			
human PR	animal as PR	plants as whole	inanimate objects as whole
IO (n=4)	**IO** (n=10)		**IO** (n=2)
EXST + IO (n=1)	**EXST + IO** (n=8)		**EXST + IO** (n=1)
poss pn (n=5)	poss pn (n=2)		
BEN (n=4)			
pers pn (n=4)			
INT (n=4)			
-bang (n=1)		*-bang* (n=1)	*-bang* (n=1)

Table 10.9 Results of Belong game with respect to animacy of part-whole relations
(preferred constructions in bold)

Table 10.9 shows that there is more variety in the constructions used for human body parts than for animal body parts. Further, there is a clear preference to use (EXST +) IO when discussing animal body parts (10x IO plus 8x EXST + IO, i.e. 18 out of 20 utterances, i.e. 90%, see e.g. (21)), whereas (EXST +) IO is used in only 5 out of 23 sentences (22%) about human body parts (17). Further options for expressing the relationship between a human PR and his or her body parts are possessive (19) and personal pronouns (20), BEN (18) and *-bang*. The constructions with personal pronouns and BEN are unique to these human PR - body part relations. In addition, 4 possessive questions about human body parts using question words are found in the Belong game database. The possessive pronoun construction is also found with animal PRs (22), *-bang* also with plants and their parts (23) and inanimate entities and their parts. The latter relationship is mainly expressed using (EXST +) IO, see (24).

For comparisons between body parts and animate part-whole relations or animate relations and inanimate part-whole relations there is not enough data. It can be observed, however, that the IO seems to be the preferred or one of the preferred options in all part-whole relationships. The findings match the data from the frequency analysis of narratives (§10.1): The body part domain is expressed in that sample with possessive pronouns or the IO, the part-whole domain with *-bang*.

(17) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Berrayi biyirdeng-ji.
berrayi   biyirde-ng=**ji**
this_one/these   thigh-NOM=3sgfIO
'This is her leg.'

(18) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

Ngelayiny (.) biyirdenga-joong.
ngelayi-ny   biyirde-ng=a=**joong**
this_one_f-f   thigh-NOM=TOP=3sgfBEN
'This is her leg.'

(19) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:MAJ

Ngeliny ngaliyam boorroowa biyirdenga, ngiyi?
ngeli-ny   **ngaliya**-m   boorroo=a   biyirde-ng=a   ngiyi
this_one_here_f-f   3sgfPOSS-LOC   3nsPN=TOP   thigh-NOM=TOP   yes
'This here is her leg, yes?'

(20) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Berraying nyengoo mayinggoorlng, ngiyi? Nyengoo.
berrayi-ng   **nyengoo**   mayinggoorl-ng   ngiyi   nyengoo
this_one/these-NOM   2sgPN   hand-NOM   yes   2sgPN
'This is your hand, yes? Yours.'

(21) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Bandarramaln-tha-ji, berrayinga bandarramalng.
bandarramal-ntha=**ji**   berrayi-ng=a   bandarramal-ng
horn-EXST_m=3sgfIO   this_one/these=TOP   horn-NOM
'These are her horns, these are horns.'

(22) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Goordangala boorriyany ngenayim (.) berringara.
goordangala   **boorriya**-ny   ngenayi-m   berri-ng=ra
arm   3nsPOSS-f   here-LOC   this_one/these_here-NOM=then
'Her [i.e. the cat's] arm here, this one right here.'

(23) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

Yibooboo (..) yawoorroo-bang.
yibooboo   yawoorroo-**ba**-**ng**
waterlily_flower   many-having-NOM
'They [i.e. the waterlilies] have a lot of flowers.'

(24) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Yamagang-ji woojoogaleny?
yamaga-ng=**ji**   woojegale-ny
foot-NOM=3sgfIO   car/truck/motor_bike-f
'A tire of a car?'

The fact that BEN is found with (human) body parts as in (18) was not expected from previous data and previous analyses. In the Toolbox corpus (Kofod 2020), body parts are found with BEN only in combination with the existential marker and only if a condition of the body part is expressed with the help of an adjective, see e.g. (25).

331

(25) Elicitation Kofod [H139]:MM

> *Gerlga-tha-ngany yambalng.*
> gerlga-**tha**=**ngany**   yambal-ng
> bad-EXST=1sgBEN   foot-NOM
> 'My feet are no good.'

According to Kofod "usually, in the speech of fluent full speakers, inalienable possession e.g. *nyawang-ni* 'his/its tail' is cross-referenced by the 'IO' set of enclitics and alienable possession e.g. *goording-ngoong* 'your goanna' is cross referenced by the benefactive" (Kofod 2015/03 p.c., compare also her thesis (Kofod 1978), the introduction to the dictionary (Kofod 2009a), and her manuscript on pronouns (Kofod in prep. (2017))).

However, the four instances of BEN found in the game data are not the only instances of BEN with human body parts in my Miriwoong corpus. Another construction involving BEN can be found rather consistently with general predicative statements of the type 'Everybody has body part Y' and also with more specific predicative utterances of the type 'Person X has body part(s) Y': *-ba* + EXST + BEN is used as in (26).[7] This construction is also possible when the possessive predication is modified: In these sentences *-ba* + EXST + BEN is usually suffixed to the nominal (27) or in some cases to the modifier as in (28).

(26) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-26-06-2013]:MAJ

> *Nyoomboorr-ba-tha-yoowoorr.*
> nyoomboorr-**ba**-**tha**=**yoowoorr**
> nose-having-EXST=1nsincBEN
> 'We (all) have a nose.'
> \q Everybody has a nose.

(27) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

> *Ganggoobeleng yambal-ba-tha-ngany.*
> ganggoobele-ng   yambal-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
> two-NOM   foot-having-EXST=1sgBEN
> 'I have two feet.'
> \q Yambalng-bele-ba-ngerri (SIC), I have two feet.

(28) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-26-06-2013]:MAJ

> *Mayinggoorlng merrgern-ba-tha-ngany.*
> mayinggoorl-ng   merrgern-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
> hand-NOM   three-having-EXST=1sgBEN
> 'I have three fingers.' [because one was cut off, lit. 'three' or 'a few']

Alternatively, *-bang/ny* (see (29) and (30)) or *-ba* +EXST (31) is used in this context. *-ba* appears on the nominal (29)/(31) or an adjective modifying that nominal (30).

---

[7] The utterances from session [MAJ-26-06-2013] stem from a joint elicitation session with Kofod and two interns of MDWg including myself.

(29) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:AA/PG

> *Yawoorroong/Yawoorroobtha mayinggoorlng-bang.*
> yawoorroo-ng   yawoorroobtha   mayinggoorl-ng-**ba**-**ng**
> many-NOM   all   hand-NOM-having-NOM
> 'All (of us) have hands/Everybody has hands.'
> \q Everybody has hands.

(30) Elicitation Kofod, Murmann, Herz [MAJ-26-06-2013]:MAJ

> *Ngelayiny ngayangeny garliny, joorgooyile-bany yambarrang.*
> ngelayi-ny   ngayange-ny   garli-ny   joorrgooyile-**ba**-**ny**   yambarra-ng
> this_one_f-f   1sgPOSS-f   daughter/niece-f   long-having-f   hair-NOM
> 'That one is my daughter, she has long hair.'

(31) [MEP-20130806-possession-3]:PG

> *Yamaga-ban-tha nawa jawaleng.*
> yamaga-**ba**-**ntha**   nawa   jawale-ng
> foot-having-EXST_m   3sgmPN=TOP   man-NOM
> 'The man has legs.'
> \q Jawaleng yamaga-bang.

Interestingly, no instances have yet been found, in Toolbox (Kofod 2020) or my data, where the IO is used in these kinds of general predicative sentences ('Everybody has body part Y'), except in negated sentences. For the latter, see (32). In specific predicative sentences ('Person X has body part(s) Y') – such as (33), including in questions – such as in (34), the IO can be used.

(32) [MEP-20140921-elicitation-3]:AA

> *Yawoorroong goondarring ngoowaga-woorri biyirdenga.*
> yawoorroo-ng   goondarri-ng   ngoowaga=**woorri**   biyirde-ng=a
> all-NOM   fish-NOM   no=3nsIO   thigh-NOM=TOP
> 'All fish do not have feet.'
> \q Everyone has two legs, but this one [pointing to a picture of a fish), he doesn't have two legs.

(33) Elicitation [MEP-20130805-possession-1]:AA

> *Ngelayinya ganggoobtha-ji mayinggoorlng.*
> ngelayi-ny=a   ganggoob-tha=**ji**   mayinggoorl-ng
> this_one_f-f=TOP   two-EXST=3sgfIO   hand-NOM
> 'This one (f.) has two hands.'
> \q She has two hands.

(34) Conversation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]: ND

> *Gaboongerreg moorlng-ninggi?*
> gaboongerreg   moorl-ng=**ninggi**
> how_many   eye-NOM=2sgIO
> 'How many eyes do you have?'

10.3.2.5   *Body parts: Difference between permanently attached and separable*

In the literature, different categories of body parts are discussed. Dixon (2002:487), for instance, distinguishes between *interior* body parts (heart, liver, blood, eye, throat) and *exterior* body parts (head, hand, nose, ear, etc.) with respect to noun classes in Nungali (Jaminjungan, spoken in NT/Australia, see §2.3.1.1). McKay differentiates *internal* organs from *external* body parts in the Arnhem Land language Njébbana (Chappell & McGregor 1996b:14). Meakins (2011:210) not only includes *actual* parts of the body (hands, feet) but also bodily products (tears, faeces) in her discussion of body parts in Gurindji Kriol (spoken in NT/Australia, see §2.3.1.1). According to Thompson (1996:655–661), in Koyukon (Athabaskan, spoken in the United States of America, Alaska and Hawaii) there can be an alienability split within the domain of body parts in terms of 'separability'. While most body parts are inalienable, some 'separable' body parts (blood, excrement, urine, tears, milk) and certain temporary or 'abnormal' parts of the body (wart, boil, scab, hair) are not (Aikhenvald 2013:13). Aikhenvald further notes that in Tariana, an Arawak language spoken in Brazil, hair is distinguished from all other body parts in that all others are inalienably possessed (2013:12). Internal or abnormal body parts are not discussed here as they were not appropriate for the game. The notion of separability, however, inspired the idea to analyse whether there is justification for different categories of body parts along these lines in Miriwoong. With Stassen's (2009) typology in mind, it could be argued that there are body parts which are less clearly inalienable (+Permanent Contact -Control) than others. For example, feathers and hair are less permanently attached to the body than limbs. A gecko is in less permanent contact with and in more control over its tail than a human being over his/her hand.[8] Is such a body part relationship therefore treated differently from other body part relations in Miriwoong?

The Belong game includes stimuli that aim at data that can tackle the research question whether body parts that are permanently attached to the PR are encoded differently from body parts that can be shed or cut (without causing any harm to the PR). The stimuli are listed in Table 10.10 below.[9]

---

[8] Control in this case is not understood in the sense of being able to control the movements of the body part but as being able to effect a (relatively harmless) separation from that part. See Heine (1997:3) for a literature review on interpretations of control as manipulation or discontinuity of ownership with respect to body parts.

[9] In addition to the distinctions made in the methodology chapter, in the game corpus the body parts where additionally coded for those that are necessarily attached to the PR, such as limbs, as opposed to those that the PR can lose without being severely harmed, such as horns, claws and scales. For the analysis of the data this distinction turns out not to be necessary as the analysis does not have to be amended if it is maintained: In the game corpus 2 sentences fall into the category 'detachment does not severely hurt PR' (horns, scales). In both sentences the IO is used. Since the IO is the only option in the 'separable' category and the preferred option in the 'permanently attached' category, the 'detachment does not severely hurt PR' category will be included in the category 'permanently attached'. This result is in line with Thompson who observes that "[i]tems which are closely associated with a possessor, such as antlers, dens or dandruff"

Body parts	
permanently attached	**separable**
arm/ foot/ hand /knee/ leg/ (person A/B/C/D/E)	feather (bird)
head (horse)	hair (woman)
tail (dog/ kangaroo/ lizard)	finger nails (woman)
turtle shell (turtle)	tail (severed) (gecko)
wing (kite)	
fin (fish)	
prickles (echidna)	
scales (fish)	
claws (kangaroo/ cat)	
horns (bull)	

Table 10.10 Belong game stimuli: Permanently attached vs. separable body parts

Table 10.11 shows the constructions used in the Belong game for attached vs. separable body parts. In the game corpus, only two possessive utterances are made about separable body parts. Both are about *minjalng* 'feather'. Both sentences contain the IO. In the attached category, the variety is high, with IO, BEN, possessive pronoun, personal pronoun, possessive interrogatives and -*bang* all possible. The Indirect Object is the preferred option. Thus, as far as these data are concerned, no distinction into separate categories of body parts is warranted.

Body parts	
attached	**separable**
IO (n=21)	**EXST + IO** (n=2)
BEN (n=4)	
poss pn (n=6)	
pers pn (n=4)	
INT (n=4)	
bang (n=1)	

Table 10.11 Attached vs. severed body parts
          (preferred constructions in bold)

The results are more interesting when the data is aggregated according to whether the constructions were used in a *belong*-construction or in attributive possession, as shown in Table 10.12. Here, a differential use of BEN and IO within the 'attached' category can be observed: BEN occurs in *belong*-constructions, (EXST +) IO – with one exception – only in attributive constructions. As mentioned above, this is not surprising considering the assumption that inalienability is relevant for attributive rather than predicative possession. The two occurrences of IO in *belong*-constructions in the 'separable' category arguably constitute a counter-argument to

---

tend to fall into the same category as items which are not detachable from a body, such as hands and feet, namely the inalienable category, "even if they are detachable or separate" (1996:674).

this generalisation. Note, however, that these two are the ones mentioned above as being in the belong category only tentatively.

Body parts			
attached		**separable**	
BELONG	attributive	BELONG	attributive
BEN (n=4)			
IO (n=1)	**IO** (n=16)		
	EXST + IO (n=8)	**EXST + IO** (n=2)	
INT (n=1)	INT (n=3)		
poss pn (n=3)	poss pn (n=3)		
pers pn (n=1)	pers pn (n=3)		
	bang (n=1)		

Table 10.12 Attached vs. severed body parts in belong-constructions
(preferred constructions in bold)

In order to verify that no distinction is necessary between attached and separable body parts (and that the mode of presentation of the stimuli, i.e. body part attached and indicated by a circle or an arrow vs. presented in isolation, is not relevant) the issue of a lizard's tail was looked at more closely, taking not only game data but also elicited data from a picture description session into account.

(35) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

   a) MAJ (looking at the drawing of a tail by itself):

   Thena berrayinga? 'What is this?'

   GN: What that tail? I forget that name.

   MAJ: *Nyawang-**ni**.* 'His tail.'

   *Ngoorroonga goording-**noong** [...].* 'It belongs to some goanna.'

   Ah, nawa ngoorroong melooroomboong? 'Ah is it some gecko?'

   Beg goowarda menkerrdem(?). 'It broke and fell off.'

   b) MAJ (looking at the drawing of the gecko without a tail):

   Ngenjayi <naw> nawoo ngoowa goording ngejing-gelaj gelengoo beg goolmaning(?), garni? 'This one, now, that is not a goanna, this one here looks like it is broken, now, right?'

   c) MAJ (asked about the tail of a frill-necked lizard, indicated by an arrow):

   *Nyoowil-ntha-**ni** berraying, berrayi (.) yamagang.* 'His [i.e. the frill-necked lizard's] tail is here, here is the foot.'

(36) Picture Description [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-6]:MAJ

    MAJ (looking at a drawing of a gecko with a missing tail):

    *Berraying-**ni** nyawa-ntha beg goowarda berraying (?).* 'This is his tail, this broke off.'

The data shows that no matter whether a tail is depicted as attached to the (frill-necked) lizard (on a photo with an arrow indicating the tail), depicted as severed in isolation (as a drawing of a gecko's tail) or the gecko is depicted as a drawing without its tail, the IO is used in attributive possession, see (35)a) and c) and (36). In (35)a), the third person singular masculine Indirect Object enclitic *-ni* is attached to the PE nominal *nyawang* 'tail', in c) to the alternative lexeme *nyoowilng*, but without a nominal suffix and an intervening EXST marker. In (36) *-ni* is attached to the proximate demonstrative *berraying* 'this non-singular/unspecific'. In (35)a) the speaker assumes that the PR is a goanna, who does not shed his tail, but then realises that the tail must belong to a gecko, who can shed his tail. c) is about a frill-necked lizard, who does not shed his tail, either. In (36) the drawing had been identified as a painted lizard earlier in the session. Thus, the IO is used with lizards and goannas who do not shed their tails. BEN is possible when it is expressed that the tail belongs to (needs to be matched with) the PR (here a goanna), i.e. in a *belong*-construction, see (35)a), where the third person singular masculine Benefactive enclitic *-noong* is attached to PR nominal *goording* 'goanna'. To conclude, all body parts can be marked by IO in attributive possession and no separate categories of permanently attached vs. separable are necessary.

10.3.2.6 *Animal offspring*

The Belong game aims to verify that relationships between animals and their offspring are treated as possessive relationships and allows for comparisons with human kinship relations. The following constructions expressing animal offspring are found in the Belong game database: non-possessive, e.g. (37); attributive possession: BEN (n=1), possessive pronoun (n=3); predicative possession: EXST + BEN (n=2), *-ba* + EXST (n=1), *-bang* (n=1). Examples for the use of *-ba* + EXST, EXST + BEN, and possessive pronouns are given in (38) and (39).

(37) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

    Ngelayiny namboorriny therajbe nyiniya.
    ngelayi-ny   namboorri-ny   therajbe   nyiniya
    this_one_f-f   mother-f   lay_eggs   3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL
    'This mother animal laid the eggs. '
    \r 'Dis wan matha wan bin laim dat eig.'

(38) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

    Woorlale-bany-ja, berrayi woorlalen-tha-joong.
    woorlale-**ba**-**nyja**   berrayi   woorlale-**ntha**=**joong**
    child-having-EXST_f   this_one/these   child-EXST_m=3sgfBEN
    'She [i.e. the kangaroo] has a baby, this is her baby.'

(39) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

> *Jige boorriyang ngalyarrng.*
> jige   **boorriya-ng**   ngalyarr-ng
> bird   3nsPOSS-NOM   egg-NOM
> 'A bird's eggs.'

These results show that possessive constructions are used when speaking about the offspring of animals, but they do not lend themselves to verify that the HAVE-verb can be used. An utterance containing this verb can be found in the Toolbox database (Kofod 2023), see (40), another one in the Miriwoong corpus collected for this thesis, see (41).

(40) Elicitation Kofod [H128]:MM

> *Boorrooboo ngaloo joolany ganggoobeleng warlagi-warriny benemoorlindanyan.*
> boorroo-boo   ngaloo   joola-ny   ganggoobele-ng   warlagi-warriny
> 3nsPN-du   3sgfPN   dog-f   two-NOM   puppy-du
>
> benemoorlindanyan
> 3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF
> 'That dog has two **puppies.**'

(41) Spontaneous [MEP-20141005-MAJ-checking-sentences]:MAJ

> *Ngoowa benemoorlinda ngaloo woothoo-woothoonga joolanga ngoowag.*
> ngoowa   **benemoorlinda**   ngaloo   woothoo-woothoo-ng=a
> not   3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL   3sgfPN   RED-little-NOM=TOP
>
> joola-ng=a   ngoowag
> dog-NOM=TOP   no
> 'This dog doesn't have any puppies.'

In an elicitation session, Joolama asserted that in sentences about the offspring of dogs, cats and humans *-bany* is used (Olawsky 2019 p.c.), see (42).

(42) Elicitation Olawsky [2019]

> *Woothoo-bany-ja ngaloo(wa) joolany.*
> woothoo-**ba-nyja**   ngaloo(=a)   joola-ny
> little-having-EXST_f   3sgfPN(=TOP)   dog-f
> 'This dog has puppies.'

For human offspring, by comparison, in predicative sentences the verb HAVE (n=2, see e.g. (43)) and *-ba* + EXST + BEN (44) can be used, as data from the Miriwoong corpus show. In one case the IO expresses kinship possession, see (45). Apart from possessive pronouns (n=9, see e.g. (46)) and the relationship suffix *-ga* (47), attributive possession sentences can be formed using BEN (n=3, see e.g. (48)). Also note example (49) from a narrative, where *-ba* is used by itself. Negated possession was expressed using IO (50) or –*ba* + BEN (51).

(43) Conversation [MEP-20141001-PG-ML-family]:ML

Ngenayima nemoorlindayin jerrawoonhiyang.
ngenayi-m=a **nemoorlindayin**   jerrawoonhiya-ng
here-LOC=TOP 1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF one-NOM
'Here I have one [son].'

(44) Elicitation [MEP-20150912-ML-AA-possession-3]: AA

Ganggoobeleny gawooleny-ba-tha-ngany.
ganggoobele-ny   gawoole-ny-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
two-f   woman-f-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have two daughters.'
\q Ngayoo ganggoob woothoo-woothoong-[...] 'I have two children.'

(45) Elicitation [MEP-20130727-possession-8]:PG

Ganggoob woothoo-woothoong-ngerri.
ganggoob   woothoo-woothoo-ng=**ngerri**
two   RED-child-NOM=1sgIO
'I have two children.'
\q Ngayoo ganggoob woothoo-woothoong-[...] 'I have two children.'

(46) Conversation [MEP-20141001-PG-ML-family]:PG

Yinginy-noong nawa garling nyingiyang.
yinginy=noong   naw(oo)=a   garli-ng   **nyingiya**-ng
name=3sgmBEN   3sgmPN=TOP   son/nephew-m 2sgPOSS-m
'His name, that son of yours.'

(47) Personal Narrative [MEP-20141005-MAJ-family-2]:MAJ

Ngaba-ganga (.) ngayang garling, ngaba-gang.
ngaba-**ga**-**ng**=a   ngaya-ng   garli-ng   ngaba-**ga**-**ng**
father-REL-m=TOP   1sgPOSS-m   son/nephew-m   father-REL-m
'His father is my garling.'
\q What about your garling and garliny? [name]? He your garling?

(48) Elicitation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-5]:PG

Woorlaleng(.)-joong (..) ngaloowa (..) gawooleny.
woorlale-ng=**joong**   ngaloo=a   gawoole-ny
child-NOM=3sgfBEN   3sgfPN=TOP   woman-f
'The children of that woman.'
\q Contexts for *benemoorlindanyan*: What does the woman have? A dog? A car? Children?

(49) Narrative [MEP-20140921-ML-devil-devil-story-SS]: ML

Jama woorlale-ba woomberrida-meleng yawoorroong <naw>.
jamang   woorlale-**ba**   woomberrida=meleng   yawoorroo-ng   <naw>
then   child-having   3nsS_MID-become_PST-REAL=du   many-NOM   now
'Then they had many children.' [lit. 'Then they two became child-having, many, then.']

(50) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-3]:AA

Ngoowaga-ngerri woorlalenga.
ngoowaga=**ngerri**   woorlale-ng=a
no=1sgIO   child-m=TOP
'I don't have any children.'
\q I don't have any children yet so I'm not a mother.

(51) Elicitation [MEP-20140920-elicitation-3]: AA

Ngoowa woorlale-ba-ngany.
ngoowa   woorlale-**ba**=**ngany**
not   child-having=1sgBEN
'I don't have children.'
\q I don't have any children yet so I'm not a mother.

Comparing the data from animal offspring with human offspring we find that *-ba* + EXST + BEN (in predicative possession) and *-ga*, IO, and *-ba* + BEN (in attributive possession) are unique to human offspring, while EXST + BEN (predicative possession) is only found with animal offspring. Interestingly, *-ba(ng)* appears in predicative sentences about animal offspring but in attributive sentences in human offspring. That the relationship suffix *-ga* is not found with animals was expected. Due to the small number of examples on animal offspring, no firm conclusions can be drawn concerning the remaining constructions.

For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that – even though kinship of human beings was not explicitly tested in the Belong game – 3 utterances about kinship relationships in general appear in the Belong game corpus. In all cases, possessive pronouns are used, see for instance (52).

(52) Game [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-4]: PG

Bare ginayin, ngenjayinga gagayi ngayang.
bare   ginayin
be_standing   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF

ngenjayi-ng=a   gagayi   **ngaya**-**ng**
this_one_m-m=TOP   woman's_daughter's_child   1sgPOSS-m
'He is standing, this is my grandson.'

10.3.2.7 *Association and non-prototypical possession*

The picture pairs depicting (i) a billabong and a close-up of a water lily, and (ii) a spear and a spear-thrower were aimed at utterances that establish a relation between the two cards of the pair (*The water lily belongs to/is associated with the billabong*; *The spear belongs to/is associated with the spear-thrower*) or an associative relationship of the attribution/properties/ accompaniment type (*the billabong with water lilies, the spear-thrower with a spear*, see §7.8).

One utterance of the latter kind is found in the Belong game corpus. It is shown in (53) to make use of *-bang*.

(53) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-3]:MAJ

Gama boorroowa dawang gerloowoorr-banga?
gama   boorroo=a   dawa-ng   gerloowoorr-**ba**-**ng**=a
where   3nsPN=TOP   place-NOM   waterlily_root-having-NOM=TOP
'Where is that place that has water lilies?' / 'Where is that place with water lilies?'
\rRG 'Wea dat pleis wea yu gat big mob wodalili?'

In addition, the cards triggered utterances about a part-whole relationship (54), featuring *-bang*, and a particular person's garden pond (55), containing the HAVE-verb.

(54) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:ML

Yibooboo (..) yawoorroo-bang.
yibooboo   yawoorroo-**ba**-**ng**
waterlily_flower   many-having-NOM
'They [i.e. the waterlilies] have a lot of flowers.'

(55) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:MAJ

Yawoorroong-ni (..) berraying ngarrigam (.) gerloowoorrnga benemoorlindayin.
yawoorroo-ng=ni   berrayi-ng   ngarriga-m
many-NOM=3sgmIO   these_here-NOM   that_kind-LOC

gerloowoorr-ng=a   **benemoorlindayin**
waterlily_root-NOM=TOP   3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
'She has many of that kind of water lily flower.'

The picture pairs depicting (i) a spider and the spider in its web, (ii) a bird and a nest with three eggs in it, (iii) a woman and a place on country could be interpreted as association of the general type (see §7.8). In contrast to the previous pairs, however, in these pairs there is an animate being who could function as the possessor. Only one of them triggered a response that is relevant for the current analysis. The stimulus picture pair with a spider and a spider in its web was described by the sentences in (56) and (57). The first utterance in (56) can be interpreted as establishing an associative relation between the two cards/entities or a possessive relation between the PR *spider* and the PE *spider web*. Two possessive constructions are used, BEN in (56) and a possessive pronoun in (57). This is probably the case because the assertion made is a relational one between the PR, who is responsible for the existence of the PE, and the PE. There is an intrinsic connection between PR and PE, the spider even uses its bodily functions to create the web. The possibility of (57), i.e. the rephrasing with a possessive pronoun, can be used as a language-internal test for possessive as opposed to associative relationships (see §7.8).

(56) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Dawa berrayinga-noong. Birrgamib geniya dawang.
dawa   berrayi-ng=a=**noong**
place   this_one/these-NOM=TOP=3sgmBEN

birrgamib   ge-ni-ya   dawa-ng
be_making   3sgmS-be/stay_PST-REAL   place-NOM
'This house belongs to him [i.e. the spider]. He made the house.'

(57) Game [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-2]:MAJ

Birrgamib ginayin dawa nawiya berrixxx benilanda ngenjinga.
birrgamib   ginayin   dawa   **nawiya**
be_making   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   place   3sgmPOSS

berri-xxx   benilanda   ngenji-ng=a
3nsS-go/come_PST-IRR-xxx   3sgS:3nsO-put_PST-REAL   this_m-NOM=TOP
'He [i.e. the spider] is making his house [i.e. web], this one here is putting xxx.'

Similarly, a possessive relationship could be invoked when describing the relationship between the picture of the bird and the picture of the bird's nest. In the Belong game database there is only an utterance with a possessive pronoun, i.e. of the type in (57), see (58), not of type (56).

(58) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Birrgamib nyiniya berrayi dawam ngaliyangeng.
birrgamib   nyiniya   berrayi   dawa-m   **ngaliyange-ng**
be_making   3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL   this_one/these   place-LOC   3sgfPOSS-m
'She [i.e. the bird] made this one, her house.'

In addition to possessive sentences, sentences of the following kind were uttered in response to this stimulus pair: 'This is a honey eater', 'He made that nest from twigs'. Interestingly, in some cases the relationship between the bird and the eggs, which are visible in the nest, was thematised. Again, in a clearly possessive sentence (59)b the possessive pronoun is used, while an utterance that could either be possessive or focus on the association between the two cards (59)a, features BEN.[10]

(59) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

  a) *Berraying merrgern-joong.*
    berrayi-ng   merrgern=**joong**
    this_one/these-NOM   three=3sgfBEN
    'These three [eggs] belong to her [i.e. the bird].'

---

[10] The sentences about birds and their eggs have been included in the discussion about animal offspring above. Note that BEN is one of the options in these sentences.

b) *Jigeng ngenjayinga. Ngawoonga xxx nawiyanya ngalyarrnga berrayi, berrayi*.

jige-ng	ngenjayi-ng=a	ngawoo-ng=a	xxx
bird-NOM	this_one_m-NOM=TOP	hey-NOM=TOP	***

nawiya-ny=a	ngalyarr-ng=a	berrayi	berrayi
3sgmPOSS-f=TOP	egg-NOM=TOP	this_one/these	this_one/these

'This bird, these are his eggs.'

The results can be verified when searching the author's entire corpus for utterances about birds and their nests. Here 2 more utterances with possessive pronouns and 1 with BEN in the second half and juxtaposition of PR and PE in the first half of the utterance are found (*Joowijgarneng dawang, dawang-**noo** joowijgarneng*. 'Bower bird house, the bower bird's house').

In sum, the Belong game corpus contains one utterance for an associative relationship; *-bang* is used to express it. In addition, BEN is used in possessive utterances about those stimulus cards that involve animate PRs but neither body parts, nor part-whole relations, nor prototypical alienable possessions but something that the PR made.

10.3.3 Summary and conclusion

This chapter on the analysis of the data from the Have and Belong card games illustrates that possessive constructions can be triggered by language games; the Have game was successfully utilised to trigger *have*-constructions, the Belong game mainly prompted *belong*-constructions. The results show that factors such as the animacy of the stimuli influence the construction used: In the Have game, the construction *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN is used only in questions with animate PEs. Negation also plays a role in the choice of construction, as there is a correlation between negation and the Indirect Object enclitic. Modification, by contrast, apparently does not have an influence on possessive constructions.

The analysis of the Belong game serves to establish that *belong*-constructions favour the use of the Benefactive enclitic. For *belong*-constructions it is neither the case that BEN always expresses alienable possession, nor that the IO always expresses inalienable possession. However, in alienable possessive sentences with positive polarity and in alienable possessive questions BEN rather than IO is used. In addition, the data suggest a tendency for the use of IO for inalienable possession in attributive sentences concerning the body-parts and part-whole domains, but not the kinship domain. This distribution of marking over domains is in line with the literature on Australian languages but not Stassen's typology for alienable vs. inalienable possession along the features +/-Control and +/-Permanent Contact. In the latter, both body part and kinship relations are analysed as being defined by +Permanent Contact -Control, i.e. inalienable possession.

Secondly, the Belong game data reveal that the *-ba* construction is one of the possibilities to express part-whole relationships between animate and inanimate PRs and their parts. With respect to body parts, a differential use of BEN and IO within the 'attached' category can be

observed: BEN occurs in *belong*-constructions, the IO – with one exception – only in attributive constructions. This is not surprising considering the assumption that inalienability is relevant for attributive rather than predicative possession. It can, therefore, be concluded that no separate categories of permanently attached vs. separable body parts are necessary to describe Miriwoong data on body parts. Looking more closely at animacy differences, the following picture emerges: While the IO is clearly preferred when discussing animal body parts, there is more variety in the constructions used for human body parts. IO seems to be the preferred or one of the preferred options in all relationships between wholes and their parts (including body parts), though.

Thirdly, the Belong game provides evidence that animals and their offspring are treated as possessive relationships. There are constructions that are used with the offspring of animals only or with the offspring of human beings only, for example the relationship suffix *-ga* is not found with animals, EXST + BEN (predicative possession) is only found with animal offspring.

Fourthly, it can be observed than stimulus cards that invoke a relationship between an animate PR and a PE that is neither a body/plant/object part, nor a prototypical alienable possession but something that the PR made, namely a web or a nest, is described in two different ways: For a clearly possessive sentence the possessive pronoun is used, while an utterance that could either be possessive or focus on the association between the two cards, features BEN.

Table 10.13 provides a summary of the different relationships between PRs and PEs that are covered by the Have and Belong games. The top row is divided for human vs. animate vs. inanimate PRs, the left-hand column for human vs. animate vs. inanimate PEs.

PE \ PR	human	animate	inanimate
human	<u>body parts</u>: (EXST +) IO, poss pn, BEN, pers pn, *-bang* <u>kinship</u>: poss pn *-ga*		
animate		<u>body parts</u>: (EXST +) IO, poss pn <u>plant parts</u>: *-bang* <u>animal offspring</u>: (EXST +) BEN, *-ba* + EXST, *-bang* poss pn	
inanimate	<u>alienable possession</u>: poss pn, (EXST +) BEN, *-ba* + EXST + BEN, HAVE, <u>negation</u>: IO, *-yile* + EXST + BEN	<u>web/nest</u>: BEN, poss pn	<u>part-whole</u>: *-bang*, IO <u>association</u>: *–bang* BEN

Table 10.13 Relationships between PRs and PEs covered by the Have and Belong games

10.4 Results from language tasks

In §5.2.1 the Story-Builder Action Cards were introduced. It was explained that they can be used to elicit freely narrated stories made up by the speakers while playing the language game. From the full set of Action cards those which illustrate human beings using and trading cultural or everyday objects were chosen, i.e. actions that could belong to the realm of possession, namely 'trade/exchange', 'give/pass', 'buy/sell/pay', 'hide', 'search for', 'break/shatter (by accident)'.

During the sessions in which the Story-Builder Action Cards were used (i.e. four hours of recordings), 19 possessive utterances were produced. In 13 of these (68%) the HAVE-verb is used, including 4 utterances with the additional UV *roo* 'hold' or *ngamerrberr* 'hold [child] at the side of the body'. In 4 utterances (21%) the suffix *-ba* occurred, in 1 instance with the existential as *-ba-n-tha*. The possessive pronoun was found in combination with the existential in 2 utterances (11%). An overview of the constructions used in the stories can be found in Table 10.14.

		Animacy
		inanimate PE
		statements + questions
Polarity	positive	**HAVE**
		-ba (+EXST)
		poss pn (+EXST)

Table 10.14 Constructions used in Story-Builder stories
(preferred constructions in bold)

In comparison with the constructions used in the Have and Belong games, the variety is markedly reduced. Neither the Indirect Object, nor the Benefactive enclitic is used. Rather than *-ba* + EXST as most frequent construction in the game data, the HAVE-verb is most prominent in the stories, irrespective of whether one looks at questions and statements separately or together. All questions in the story corpus are formed with the HAVE-verb (without additional UVs), but in statements they are also in the majority (n=8, 42% of all utterances).

The comparatively frequent use of the HAVE-verb in the Story-Builder Action Card stories contrast with its generally rather infrequent use: According to Kofod (in prep. (2020):71), it is only on rank 8 of the 14 inflecting verbs with respect to frequency. In the Miriwoong corpus it occurs 112 times. In the Have and Belong games it occurs in only 4 statements and 2 questions (2% and 1% of all possessive utterances in the game corpus respectively).

On the one hand, this disparity has to do with the considerably smaller number of utterances in the story corpus as opposed to the game corpus. On the other hand, it is likely to also be due to the difference in task. Games aim at conversational data, in the case of the Have game in a question-answer format, whereas the Story-Builder Task aims at storytelling, i.e. at semi-spontaneous data in the form of short narratives. In comparison with the frequency data from Toolbox narratives (§10.1), the quantity of utterances with the verb HAVE is still high. This shows that the Story Builder Action Cards are a good resource when the aim is to trigger this infrequent construction.

However, it follows from the stimuli, which depict the handling of single (unidentified abstract) objects, that no animate PEs occur and no modifications in terms of the number of objects or their colour were expressed. In the Have game, contrasts in these areas made it necessary for the speakers to refer to quantity, colours, and characteristics. The Action cards, by contrast, make it possible to imagine a new item in each story, without the need to differentiate between similar items. Moreover, there are no negated sentences in the story corpus. Thus, no comparison can be drawn between game data and story data with respect to animacy, modification and polarity.

Since no enclitics are used in the stories, a comparison to the game data of preferences in *belong*-constructions or with respect to the inalienable domain is not possible. Moreover, the

stories do not feature part-whole relationships, therefore, there is no data for the question whether *-ba* is used with these. Associative relationships are not found in the stories, either.

10.5 Miriwoong from a typological perspective

In §8.1.3, the typology of predicative possession formulated by Stassen (2009) was presented, and example sentences from Australian languages were discussed. This Chapter portrays the With-Possessive (§10.5.1) and the Have-Possessive (§10.5.2) in the Miriwoong language. Furthermore, the typological predictions discussed with respect to Australian languages in Chapter 8 will be evaluated with data from Miriwoong (§10.5.3-§10.5.6).

10.5.1 The With-Possessive in Miriwoong

To begin with, the definition of the With-Possessive is repeated here:

Definition of the WITH possessive (2009:54):

i.   The construction contains a locative/existential predicate, in the form of a verb with the rough meaning of 'to be'.

ii. The possessor NP is constructed as the *grammatical subject* of the predicate.

iii. The possessee NP is constructed in some *oblique, adverbial case form.*

The Australian With-Possessive takes the form of "the so-called 'proprietive' construction" (2009:596). It exhibits a 'having'-suffix which derives adjectival stems from any nominal roots (2009:154). The PE, together with its suffix, has the syntactic function of a predicate adjective and is constructed with a zero-copula, rather than a locative/existential predicate. Therefore, it is considered as the so-called copular subtype. Example (8) from Chapter 8 is repeated here for convenience.

(60) Evans (1995:317)   (Kayardild)

*Nyingka   jangka-**wuru**   maku-**uru***
2sg-NOM   other-PROP   woman-PROP
'You've got another woman'

In Miriwoong the *oblique, adverbial case form* on the possessee is the 'having'-suffix *-ba*. In (61) it is attached to the PE *lamboo(ng)* 'coolamon' and followed by the feminine nominal suffix *-ny*, which agrees in gender with the subject *gawooleny* 'woman'. The latter is not otherwise discernible as the subject as there is no inflecting verb in this utterance which could cross-reference it by a bound pronoun. As expected for Australian languages, there is no copula in (61). Frequently, however, the existential marker *-tha* (*-ja* following palatals) is additionally added, see *woorlale-bany-ja* 'child-having' in (62). This morpheme is glossed as VC for 'verbless clause' by Olawsky (in prep. (2020)). He asserts that it "has a variety of functions typically associated with

copulas" (in prep. (2020):386)[11] but does not analyse it as a copula: "Miriwoong does not have a copula verb" (ibid.).[12]

<u>With-Possessive with 'having'-suffix</u>

(61) Picture story [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-story-builder-1]:PG

Gawooleny lamboo-bany.
gawoole-ny   lamboo-**ba**-ny
woman-f   coolamon-having-f
'The woman has a coolamon.'

<u>With-Possessive with 'having'-suffix and existential marker</u>

(62) Picture description [MEP-20140916-MAJ-ML-belong-1]:MAJ

Woorlale-bany-ja, berrayi woorlalen-tha-joong.
woorlale-**ba**-**nyja**   berrayi   woorlale-ntha=joong
child-having-EXST_f   this_one/these   child-EXST_m=3sgfBEN
'She [i.e. the kangaroo] has a baby, this is her baby.'

As discussed in §9.1.9, possession can also be expressed in Miriwoong with the help of the combination of the 'having'-suffix *-ba*, the existential marker and the Benefactive enclitic (BEN). In (63) the PE *ganiny* 'digging stick' is followed by *-ba*, the existential marker, and the first person singular Benefactive enclitic *-ngany* which encodes the subject (or rather the possessor).

<u>With-Possessive with 'having'-suffix, existential marker, and BEN</u>

(63) Game [MEP-20140920-have-1]:MAJ

Ganiny-ba-tha-ngany.
ganiny-**ba**-**tha**=**ngany**
digging_stick-having-EXST=1sgBEN
'I have a digging stick.'

Note that the Benefactive enclitic also occurs in the second clause in (62), in that case in the third person feminine variant *-joong*. Its role in possessive sentences could be considered another instance of an *oblique case form* used to form the With-Possessive if one takes into account McGregor's (2004) finding that in many Kimberley language there are *oblique* enclitic pronouns that indicate indirect objects, recipients, beneficiaries etc. (McGregor 2004:122). He asserts that these are similar in form to free possessive pronouns (ibid.)[13] In Miriwoong the possessive

---

[11] The existential occurs with affirmative function for identity, attribution, possession, benefaction, and existence (2020:401)

[12] Olawsky (in prep. (2020):386) quotes Dixon (2009), who observes that "a number of languages have a special existential marker 'there is'" and recommends in relation to existence that "this should not be considered a type of copula" (2009:160).

[13] Note that in Miriwoong, possessive pronouns are formed regularly from cardinal pronouns. Similarity with oblique pronouns could, thus, equally well be claimed for cardinal pronouns. The observation by McGregor (2004:122) that in Worrorran, Bunuban (and Jarragan) languages oblique enclitics resemble possessive pronouns whereas object enclitics and pronoun prefixes resemble cardinal pronouns is more

pronoun corresponding in number and person to -*ngany* in (63) is **nga**yang, for -*woorr* ~ -*boorr* in (64) it is **boorr**iyang, but for -*joong* in (62) it is *ngaliyang*. In (64) the third person masculine existential marker and the third person augmented (non-singular) Benefactive enclitic -*woorr* directly follow the PE *dawa(ng)* 'house' without an intervening -*ba*. -*woorr* is then ensued by a dual marker because there are two PRs.

Possessive with existential marker and Benefactive enclitic

(64) Game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-7]:MAJ

Dawan-tha-woorr-meleng.
dawa-**ntha**=**woorr**=meleng
camp-EXST_m=3nsBEN=du
'The house belongs to them two.'

However, Stassen would not count this construction as a With-Possessive since it is a *belong*-construction rather than a *have*-construction and he restricts his typology to indefinite possession, i.e. *have*-constructions (see §7.9).[14]

Beyond the Benefactive enclitics, another set of oblique enclitics is used in possession in Miriwoong. In (65) the Indirect Object enclitic -*ni* cliticised to the demonstrative pronoun represents a masculine third person PR. For Indirect Object enclitic pronouns the similarity to possessive pronouns is less transparent. The corresponding possessive pronoun for the IO -*ni* is **na**wiyang. Both sets of enclitics are compared to possessive pronouns in Table 10.15.

	Indirect Object enclitics	**Benefactive enclitics**	**Possessive pronouns**
1sg	-**ng**erri/ -gerri/ -**ng**irri	-**nga**ny/ -gany	**nga**yang
2sg	-ninggi	-ngoong/ -ngoo/ -goong	nyingiyang
3sgm	-**n**i/ -di	-**n**oong/ -noo/ -doo/ -doong	**na**wiyang
3sgf	-ji/ -jiyi	-joong/ -joo	ngaliyang
1dinc	-**y**i/ -**y**iyi	-**yayi**	**yayi**yang
1nsinc	-**y**arri	-**yoowoorr**	**yoowoorr**iyang
1nsex	-**y**irri/ -jirri	-**yarr**	**yarr**iyang
2ns	-**n**arri	-**nengg**oorr	**nengg**erriyang
3ns	-**w**oorri	-**w**oorr/ -**boorr**	**boorr**iyang

Table 10.15 Indirect Object and Benefactive enclitics and possessive pronouns compared

---

relevant for languages where possessive pronouns are less similar to possessive pronouns and constitute their own set (see §8.2.5 for a discussion of Warrwa pronouns).
[14] Remember that in §10.3.2.1 above it was stated that all utterances in the game corpus that make use of BEN by itself were found to be *belong*-constructions.

(65) Game [MEP-20140808-MAJ-description-stimuli-1]:MAJ

Rarnderrnga berraying-ni.
rarnderr-ng=a   berrayi-ng=**ni**
nail-NOM=TOP   this_one/these-NOM=3sgmIO
'These are its claws. ~ This is its claw.'

This sentence is not a With-Possessive in Stassen's sense, either: Even if it were considered predicative (i.e. translated as *These claws are his/hers*) it would be a *belong*-construction rather than a *have*-construction. In addition, the construction with an IO would be atypical for With-Possessives, as it occurs (among others) with body parts, i.e. inalienable possession (see also §10.3.2.2), whereas "[t]he *with*-strategy […] is infrequent as an encoding option of inalienable possession" (Stassen 2009:25). Note, however, that the With-Possessive with *-ba* (+EXST) (+ BEN) (as in (63)) is found in §9.1.13 to also be used with body parts and part-whole relations. The Miriwoong With-Possessive, thus, seems to be exceptional in this regard; and the finding that IO occurs with inalienable possession by itself would not prevent it from being analysed as a With-Possessive.

10.5.2 **The Have-Possessive in Miriwoong**

Secondly, the definition of the Have-Possessive and example (9) from §8.1.3 will be repeated here:

<u>Definition of the HAVE possessive</u> (Stassen 2009:62):

iv.   The construction contains a transitive predicate.

v.   The possessor NP is constructed as the *subject/agent*.

vi.   The possessee NP is constructed as the *direct object/patient*.

(66) McGregor (1990:153)   (Gooniyandi)

Yiniga   *mawoolyi*   ***gooddijgoonjoonaddi***
how.many   children   you.hold.them
'How many children do you have?'

Miriwoong uses the transitive HAVE-verb to encode the Have-Possessive. As in many non-Pama-Nyungan languages (see §8.1.3), the *subject/agent* and the *direct object/patient* are cross-referenced by pronominal affixes on the verb. The inflecting verb HAVE in Miriwoong is often translated as 'keep', 'look after' – especially in the sense of 'looking after children' – but can also be used with a more abstract meaning to express kinship, body part, abstract and alienable possession in addition to temporary possession.

In (67), the suffix *-yin* expresses first person subject (i.e. the speaker) in addition to imperfective aspect and the prefix *ne-* encodes first person subject and third person singular

masculine object (i.e. two playing cards).[15] In (68) the speaker enquires what a figure depicted on a Story-Builder card might be holding. The suffix *-ken* (the allomorph of *-yin* following [n]) marks imperfective aspect and a third person singular masculine subject. The prefix *bene-* also refers to the subject *ngenjaying* 'this one' and at the same time to an unspecified object, the identity of which is asked about by the speaker. The question in (69) is about the number of turtles that are depicted on the playing card the speaker is holding. As in (67), *-ken* stands for first person subject and imperfective aspect. The prefix *nemene-* is used because the object is non-singular. In (70), the same verb form as in (67) is used to express kinship. As shown by the examples below, the suffix *-yin* (and assimilated *-ken*) is used both for third singular masculine subjects and for first singular subjects.[16]

(67) Conversation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-story-builder-2]:ML

> *Ganggoob nemoorlindayin.*
> ganggoob   **ne-moorlin-da-yin**
> two   1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF
> 'I have two [cards].'
> \r Well I got two more here.

(68) Picture story [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-story-builder-2]:ML

> *Ngenjayinga thena benemoorlinken?*
> ngenjayi-ng=a   thena   **bene-moorlin-ken**
> this_one_m-m=TOP   what   3sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-3sgmIPF
> 'What does this one have?'

(69) Have game [MEP-20140823-MAJ-AA-possession-9]:MAJ

> *Gaboongerreg nemenemoorloonken berrayinga?*
> gaboongerreg   **nemene-moorlin-ken**
> how_many   1sgS:3nsO-have_PRS-1sgIPF
> 'How many [turtles] do I have?'

(70) Conversation [MEP-20141001-PG-ML-family]:ML

> *Jerrawoonhiya nemoorloondayin ngenayim, jerrawoong goowarda.*
> jerrawoonhiya   **ne-moorlin-da-yin**   ngenayi-m
> one   1sgS:3sgmO-have_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   here-LOC
>
> jerrawoo-ng   g(oo)-ward-a
> another/different-m 3sgmS-fall/go_down_PST-REAL
> 'I have one [son] here, the other died.'

---

[15] The Toolbox database (Kofod 2023) lists the form *nemene-moorlin-da-yin* for first person singular subject and third non-singular object. In several sessions, speakers use the third singular object prefix *ne-*. *nemene-* is also used, e.g. by ND: *Ganggoob-tha nemenemoorloondayin*. 'I have two [children]' [MEP-20130727-possession-8], and MAJ: see (69).

[16] With first person subjects in combination with second person object *-nan* used to be used (Kofod in prep. (2020):7/49). In addition, *-yin* is used with first person non-singular exclusive subjects (Kofod in prep. 2020).

10.5.3 First typological prediction for the Have-Possessive

It is possible to confirm Stassen's first typological claim for Have-Possessives for Miriwoong by asserting that

a. balancing is used as a strategy to encode simultaneous different-subject sequences.

Simultaneous different subject sequences are expressed in Miriwoong with the help of two finite predicates – one in the main clause and one in the subordinated clause. Like other Australian languages (2009:596, compare the example from Gooniyandi in §8.1.3), Miriwoong has asyndetic coordination of main sentences, i.e. "main clauses are linked without a verbal sign" (Skibitzki 2016). In (71), from a narrative, two finite clauses are juxtaposed to one another without an intervening subordinating marker on the verbal form (cf. 2009:407) and without any indication of the semantic relationship between them. There is no evidence that the verb in the second clause is deranked, such as by being stripped of its tense-marking or being marked for nominalisation (ibid.). In fact, in this utterance, the verb form is exactly the same in the first clause as in the second, namely the middle verb *woomantha*. The verb consists of a third singular subject prefix *woo-*, the past tense stem of the DO-verb, i.e. *-man-*, and the realis marker *-tha*. In addition, both clauses include a locative demonstrative and the uninflecting verb *mardi* 'wait to ambush' or 'wait with a spear'. In the second clause, the location is additionally expressed by *jerrawoo(ng)* 'another' plus the locative marker *-m*.

(71) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]

Ngenim mardi woomantha, ngenam mardi woomantha jerrawoom.

ngeni-m	mardi	**woo-man-tha**	ngena-m
there-LOC	wait_to_ambush	3sgS_MID-do_PST_REAL	there-LOC

mardi	**woo-man-tha**	jerrawoo-m
wait_to_ambush	3sgS_MID-do_PST_REAL	another-LOC

'One [brother] was waiting with a spear [to kill her] here, the other was waiting with a spear there on the other side.'

This pattern was also used in elicitation and picture description. In utterance (72), the third person singular feminine intransitive BE/STAY-verb *nyinanyan* was used in both clauses, in both cases in combination with the uninflecting verb *looloo* 'sit'. The respective subjects are overtly expressed as *ngayangeny booloongoony* 'my older sister' and *ngayangeny garliny* 'my daughter'. In (73), *nyinanyan* is used in the second clause, while the third person masculine BE/STAY-verb *ginayin* is used in the first. Here, the uninflecting verbs differ as well. In the first clause *yadageb* 'be sitting with straight legs' is found, in the second it is again *looloo*. The subjects are *Namirra* and *Jalyirri*. The utterance in (73) is a description of the picture stimulus in Figure 10.1.

(72) Elicitation [MEP-20140906-MAJ-PG-AA-possession-1]:AA

Ngayangeny booloongoony looloo nyinanyan doongoonem ngenam, ngayangeny garliny ngelany looloo nyinanyan.

ngayange-ny	booloongoo-ny	looloo	**nyi-n-a-nyan**
1sgPOSS-f	sibling_just_older-f	sitting	3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF

doongoon-m	ngena-m	ngayange-ny	garli-ny
side-LOC	there-LOC	1sgPOSS-f	daughter/niece-f

ngela-ny	looloo	**nyi-n-a-nyan**
that_one_f-f	sitting	3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF

'My older sister is sitting at the side over there, my daughter is sitting (over there).'
\q My sister is sitting there, I'm sitting here.

(73) Picture description [MEP-20150914-elicitation-videos-1]:ML

Yadageb ginayin Jalyirrina, Namirra-nyja looloo nyinanyan.

yadageb	**gi-n-a-yin**	Jalyirri=a
be_sitting_with_straight_legs	3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	skin_name=TOP

Namirra-nyja	looloo	**nyi-n-a-nyan**
skin_name-EXST_f	sitting	3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF

'[skin name] is sitting with straight legs, [skin name] is sitting.'

Figure 10.1 Jalyirri (Tobias Ringel) and Namirra (Christina Ringel, née Murmann)

In both (72) and (73) there is a pause between the two clauses. The pitch contour is shown in Figure 10.2 to Figure 10.5. It is rather in line with the intonation pattern described by Kofod for (two) simple sentences rather than for complex sentences. For non-interrogative simple

sentences, she observes that "[t]he usual intonation pattern […] is a gradual rise at the beginning with a gradual fall to the end" (1978:32), see (74) (ibid.).

(74) //ŋarin-a ŋʌřg bʌřʌrandàwun //   'The meat is cooking'

In complex sentences, by contrast, "the first clause usually ends in a rising tone and a pause and the second clause ends in a falling tone", see (75) (ibid.).

//duwun lagud   / du   bʌřiya–mʌlʌŋ   //
spear pick up   set off they went dual

(75)   'Having picked up (their) spears, they dual set off.'

Note, however, that this sentence exemplifies a same subject temporal sequence, not a simultaneous different subject sequence. The rising tone could be connected to the fact that the subject is the same in both clauses. An argument in favour of this hypothesis is the finding that "[t]his pattern is also observed at the level of a topic chain in narrative, where a series of phrases or clauses are spoken with a rising intonation, followed by a pause and a concluding, falling intonation" (ibid.).
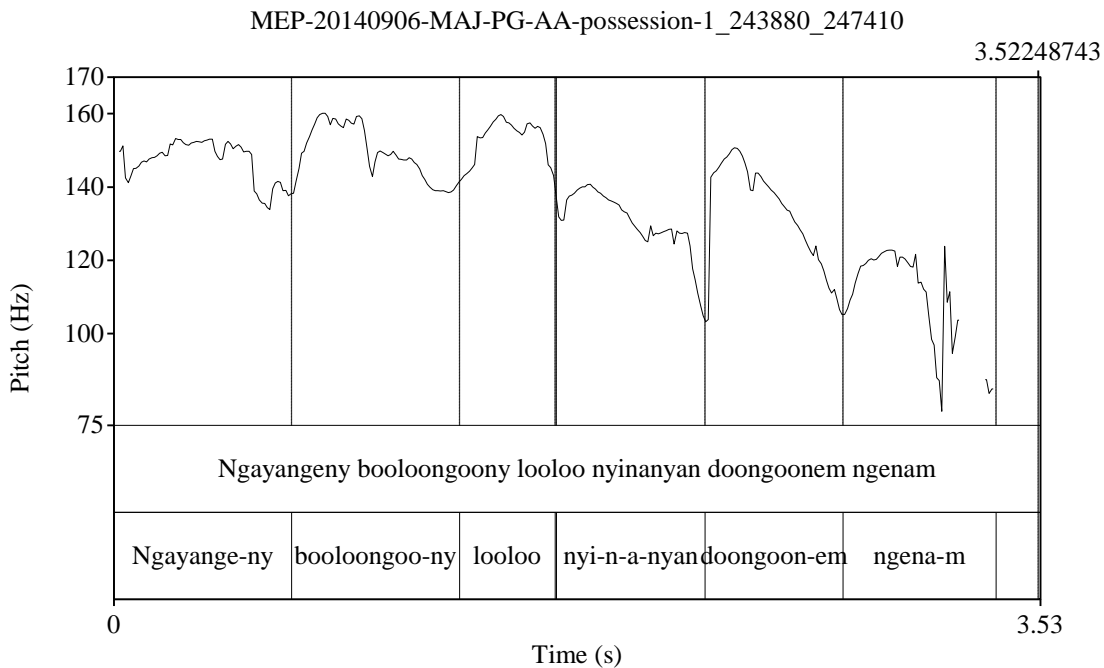
Figure 10.2 Pitch contour 1a
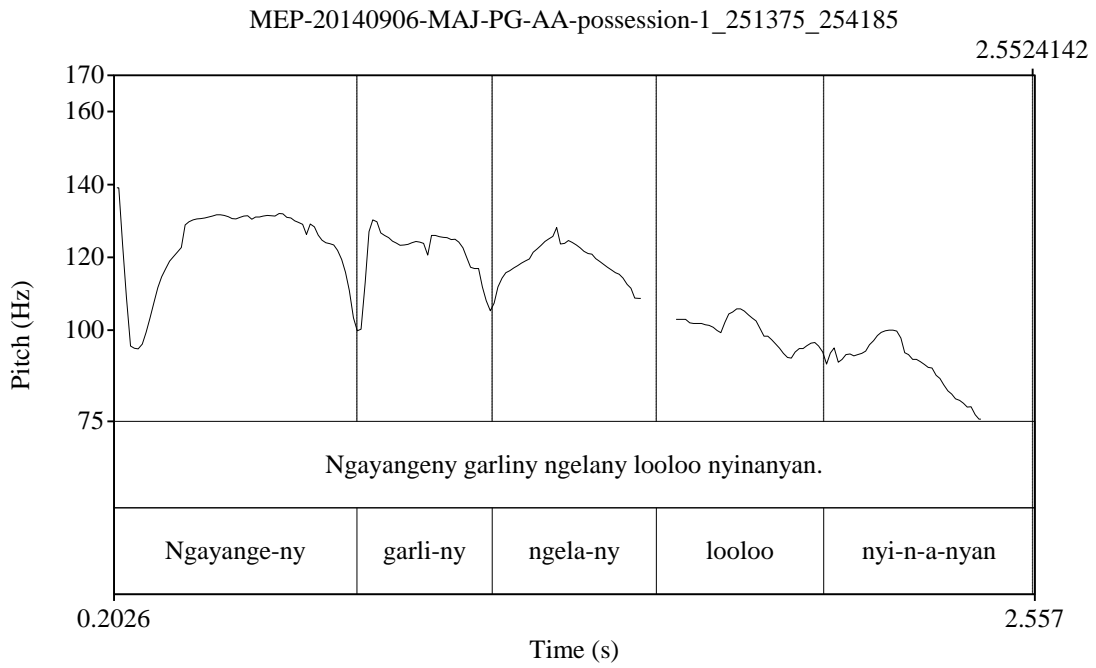
Figure 10.3 Pitch contour 1b
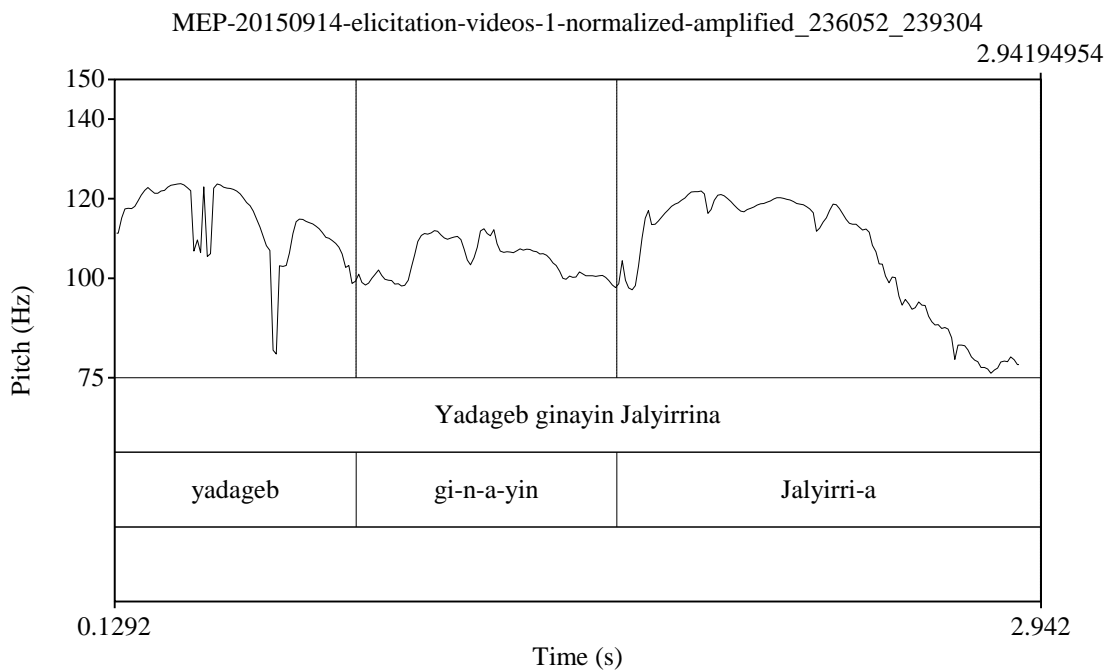
Figure 10.4 Pitch contour 2a

2.65784337

Figure 10.5 Pitch contour 2b

(76) illustrates a more complex situation: Two people are carrying out several actions. As in the examples above, there does not appear to be any subordinating conjunction and the verbs do not exhibit any unusual morphology. In the first clause, the subject is not expressed by its own nominal; it appears as a third singular feminine (subject and third singular masculine object) prefix and a (third singular feminine imperfective) suffix on the transitive GET-verb *gemendanyan*. This verb is accompanied by the uninflecting verb *gawawoog* 'clean'. The same subject carries out an additional action, namely *joorroo* 'pour' and *joolarrgeb* 'be throwing down'. These uninflecting verbs form a complex predicate with the verb *nyinanyan*, which, interestingly, is an intransitive BE/STAY-verb (see also the example sentences above).[17] This could have to do with the suffix *-woo* (~ *-goo*), which nominalises the uninflecting verb, yielding '(she is) a pouring one'. In the second clause, the speaker surfaces twice as *ngayoo* 'I' and in the prefixes and imperfective suffixes of the intransitive verb *ngenandayin* and the transitive verb *niyindayin*. In this clause the complex predicate is formed with the uninflecting verbs *nyanajbe* 'be smashing' and *nhem* 'squeeze together'.

---

[17] Kofod's monograph on verbs (in prep. (2020)) will include a chapter on valency.

(76) Kofod [Dictionary-Sentences-Part-2]

Gawawoog gemendanyan joorroo-joorroo-woo joolarrgeb nyinanyan, ngayoo nyanajbe ngenandayinera nhem-nhem niyindayin yage ngayoowa.

gawawoog	**ge-men-da-nyan**	joorroo-joorroo-woo
clean	3sgS:3sgmO-get_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF	RED-pour_out-that_kind

joolarrgeb	**nyi-n-a-nyan**
be_throwing_down	3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF

ngayoo	nyanajbe	**ngena-n-da-yin**=ra	nhem-nhem
1sgPN	be_mashing	1sgS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF=SEQ	RED-squeeze_together

n-iyin-da-yin	yage	ngayoo=a
1sgS:3sgmO-hit_PRS-REAL-IPF	other	1sgPN=TOP

'She is cleaning it and pouring out the rubbish and throwing it away, while I am mashing it up and squeezing it into balls.'

In (77), there is a difference between the two clauses in that due to the meaning, the first clause consists of only the intransitive BE/STAY-verb *nyiniyanyande,* while the second comprises both the intransitive verb *berriyawoonde* and the uninflecting verb *boontha* 'come out'.

(77) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]

Nyiniyanyande gelenga berriyawoonde-ji boontha. Ganggoobtha.

nyi-ni-ya-nyan-de	gelenga
3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF-CNT	come_later

berr-i-ya-woon-de=ji	boontha	ganggoob-tha
3nsS-go/come_PST-REAL-3nsIPF-CNT=3sgfIO	come_out	two-EXST

'She stayed there and two more came to her.'

A difference in the number of inflecting and uninflecting verbs could be due to ellipsis. In (78), there is no inflecting verb in the first clause, in (79) there is none in the second. An extreme case of ellipsis is shown in (80). Here, each of the two clauses consists of a single uninflecting verb.[18]

(78) Kofod [2018-1-29-MAJ-Wab-wooma-ngim]:MAJ

Derdbe-wayi wab nyiniya.

derdbe-ayi	wab	**nyi-ni-ya**
look_at-like_that	look_back	3sgfS-be/stay_PST-REAL

'He watched like that, she looked back.'

(79) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]

Ngiyi gerarr benidanyan-meleng, warra-warralabera:::[19]

ngiyi	gerarr	**benidanyan**=meleng	warra-warralab=ra
yes	crawl	3sS3nsO-hit_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF=du	be_lighting_fires=SEQ

'Yes, she crawled along killing them when they were burning off the grass then.'

---

[18] Strictly speaking this is not a *simultaneous* different subject sequence as the two actions are likely to occur one after the other. The example sentence is mainly included here to illustrate ellipsis.

[19] According to Kofod, lengthening of the final vowel is a typical feature of narratives (in prep. (2020):116).

(80) Narrative Kofod [GNy-K89-1-T0001]

> *Wirra, thaloorrb.*
> wirra   thaloorrb
> peep_over   poked_in_eye
> 'He peeped around and [she] poked [him] in the eye.'

10.5.4   First typological prediction for the With-Possessive

Further, Claim I for With-Possessives can be confirmed for Miriwoong since

   c. in addition to its balancing option, Miriwoong also has deranked predicates: The subordination of finite clauses is realised by means of a subordinating conjunction (Stassen 2009:596) whereby the verb is marked for nominalisation (2009:407).

The suffix -*nging* (i.e. -*ngi* / -*gi* plus nominal suffix -*ng*) is attached to the IV in the temporal clause; it "nominalises the verb" (Kofod in prep. (2020):13). In (81), the temporal clause features the nominalised IV *yaniyan-ngi*. The IV in the main clause is *ngenamoorloowardanyan-yoowoor* (where -*yoowoorr* is a supplementary enclitic). The form *yaniyan* rather than *yaniyayan* illustrates that -*ngi* attaches to the irrealis form.

(81) Kofod (1978:196)

> *Yoowoorroo woothoo-woothoo-ya yaniyan-nging, ngaloowa goorabenya*
> *ngenamooloowardanyan-yoowoorr.*
> yoowoorroo   woothoo-woothoo-iya   **ya-ni-yan-ngi-ng**
> 1nsincPN   RED-child-INTS   1dincS-be/stay_PST_IRR-1incIPF-SUB-NOM
>
> ngaloo=a   goorabe-ny=a   **ngena-moorlooward-a-nyan=yoowoorr**
> 3sgfPN=TOP   old_woman-f=TOP   3sgS:1O-have/keep_PST-REAL-3sgfIPF=1nsincO
> 'When we were children that old woman used to keep (look after) us.'[20]

   The construction is not only used with states, but also actions, see (82): The temporal clause consists of the nominalised IV *berremooriyanben-ngi* only, i.e. the subject is not expressed by an overt nominal. The main clause contains the IV *girayin* and its subject argument *jerrawoong* 'another one', the referent of which is different from the referent of the subject of the temporal clause. Following a pause, the inflected verb *ginayin* and the uninflecting verb *boontha* are added to the main clause. The pitch contour is shown in Figure 10.6: In the subordinate clause the pitch does not rise and fall as in simple sentences (see above) but falls and rises. The rise is predicted for complex sentences (at least in same subject sequences, see above). Following a very short pause, the main clause starts with higher pitch than the subordinate clause. During the main clause the pitch falls – as expected for complex sentences – but does not fall as far as at the end

---

[20] There are further options to express the temporal clause *When we were children*, e.g. using -*mageny* (Kofod 1978:65) or -*winy* (Kofod 1979:156) on the argument *children*. These are not discussed further here as they do not include a verb in the temporal clause and are thus probably considered are further option of deranking, not of balancing. Thus, they strengthen the argument made here.

of the sentences discussed above (which resemble simple sentences) until the end of the second pair of inflecting and uninflecting verb. The latter starts with a high rise.

(82) Elicitation Kofod [Mabo-Complete-Edit]:BF, (in prep. (2020):122)

Berremooriyanben-nginga, jama jerrawoong girayin, boontha ginayin […].
berre-mooriyan-ben-ngi-ng=a   jama   jerrawoo-ng
3nsS-argue_PRS_IRR-3nsIPF-SUB-NOM=TOP   then   another-m

gi-r-a-yin   boontha   ginayin
3sgS-go/come_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   arrive   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF
'When they are arguing another one comes [and cuts across their argument].'

4.56539144

Berremooriyanben-nginga, jama jerrawoong girayin, boontha girayin

berre-mooriyan-ben-ngi-ng-a jama jerrawoo-ng girayin   boontha ginayin

Figure 10.6 Pitch contour 3

It is possible for both clauses to contain an uninflecting verb in addition to their IVs. In (83), the temporal clause features the IV *ngeniyin-ngi* and the UV *yoog* 'sleep'. The main clause comprises the IV *beniyawoon* and the UV *thawoorr* 'steal' (which is followed by the continuous marker *-be*). In (84), the temporal clause follows the main clause. The former includes the nominalised IV *beniwoon-ngi* and the UV *nyeb* 'close/block' (followed by purposive *-gerri* and the nominal suffix *-ng*), the latter the IV *beniyawoon* and the reduplicated UV *derreb* 'camp'. In (85), the UV *jawoolag* 'many talk' and the IV *yirrama-ngi* are found in the subordinate clause, while the main clause exhibits the IV *woomaya* and the UV *wooje* 'run'.

(83) Kofod [Dictionary-Sentences-Part-2]:MM, (1978:132)

Ngayoo yoog ngeniyin-nginga, wanim thawoorrb beniyawoon-ngerri.

ngayoo	yoog	**ngeniyin**-**ngi**-**ng**=a
1sgPN	be_sleeping	1sgS-be/stay_PST_IRR-1sgIPF-SUB-NOM=TOP

wanim	thawoorrb	**be-ni-ya-woon**=ngerri
then	steal	3nsS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3nsIPF=1sgIO

'While I was sleeping, they stole it (i.e. my food) from me.'

(84) Kofod [MALLP-AA-MAJ-ML-PG-BJ-2013-03-27], (in prep. (2020):121)

Derre-rerrebe beniyawoon birrgamib. beniwoon-nging nyeb-gerring gerloong Darram.

derre-rerrebe	**be-ni-ya-woon**	birrgamib
be_camping	3nsS-be/stay_PST-REAL-3nsIPF	be_making

be-ni-woon-ngi-ng	nyeb-gerring	gerloo-ng
3nsS-be/stay_PST_IRR-3nsIPF-SUB-NOM	close/block_up-PURP2	water-NOM

Darram
place_name

'They were camping there when they were making the dam at Darram (Bandicoot Bar)
[for the closing of the water].'

(85) Elicitation Kofod [H128]:MM, (in prep. (2020):124)

Boorroo woorlaleng jawoolag berriwoon-ngi-ya-ntha goordinga marram wooje woomaya.

boorroo	woorlale-ng	jawoolag
3nsPN	child-NOM	come_talking

berri-woon-ngi-iya-tha	goordi-ng=a	marram
3nsS-go/come_PST_IRR-3nsIPF-SUB-INTS-EXST	goanna-NOM=TOP	go_away

wooje	**woo-ma-ya**
run	3sgS_MID-say/do_PST-REAL

'It was when/because those children were all talking so much the goanna ran away.'

The following observations are evidence that *-nging* is a nominaliser: "subordinate verbs often include the nominal topic marker *-a*" (Kofod in prep. (2020):121), see (82) and (83). In addition, further nominal suffixes can be attached to *-ngi*, such as the locative *-m* (replacing the nominal suffix *-ng*)[21] and the nominal intensifier *-iya* (inserted before *-ng*), which in turn can be followed by the existential suffix, see *-ntha* in (85) (in prep. (2020):122–124).[22] *-ngi* is not normally found with the feminine nominal marker (yielding *-nginy*, Olawsky in prep. (2020):430). This could be interpreted as an effect of grammaticalisation.

---

[21] Kofod observes that the locative marker often follows *-ngi* in place names (in prep. (2020):123).

[22] There is further evidence that *-nging* nominalises the verb: Olawsky (in prep. (2020):430) explains that *-nging* does not only occur in temporal clauses but also in relative, conditional, locative, and potentially complement clauses. The function as a complement clause is listed as another characteristic of nominalised verbs by Nordlinger (2001:3). Olawsky specifically states that in Miriwoong "[e]specially relative clauses, […] can be argued to have nominal character" (in prep. (2020):451).

According to Nordlinger (2001), case-marking on verbs, together with other nominal characteristics, is a sign of their being nominalised (2001:3).[23] In addition to the locative, the perlative *-biny*[24] is found following *-ngi* (Olawsky in prep. (2020):154):

(86) Narrative Kofod [BF-K-93-35-Willy-willy]:BF

> *[…] jigana geri-ngi-biny [...]*
> jigana   geri-ngi-**biny**
> willy-willy   3sgm_go/come_PST_IRR-NML-PER
> '[He followed it (by pointing the didgeridoo towards it) putting it right up like that] along where the willy-willy went.'

Remember that in §8.1.3 locative marking on the verb in the subordinated clause in Kayardild was argued to be a sign of deranking.

10.5.5 Second typological prediction for the Have-Possessive

The second typological claim for Have-Possessives can be confirmed for Miriwoong since the language has

b. shared encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences.

Stassen asserts that in most Australian languages this encoding involves zero-encoding (2009:596), i.e. the juxtaposition of elements of the sentence without an overt element such as a copular verb or particle (2009:140) that links them (see the example from Gooniyandi in §8.1.3). In Miriwoong, however, this is not always the case: In both the copular and locational/existential constructions in (87) to (90) below, the existential marker *-tha* (*-ja* following palatals, see above) is used. In the equative/identifying (copular) construction in (87), the feminine existential marker *-nyja* (i.e. the feminine nominal marker *-ny* + existential *-tha*) occurs on the nominal *baramanbe(ng)* 'sorcerer'. In the locational/existential sentence in (88), the masculine variant of the existential, *-ntha* (i.e. masculine nominal marker *-ng* + existential *-tha*) is found on the modifier *yawoorroo(ng)* 'many/all'. Similarly, in (89) the existential occurs on *marram* 'far away'.

Copular sentence with existential marker

(87) Kofod (1978:152)

> *Baramanbeny-ja ngaloo.*
> baramanbe-**nyja**   ngaloo
> sorcerer-EXST_f   she
> 'She was a sorceress.'

---

[23] Nordlinger (2001) is mainly concerned with non-finite verbs in Pama-Nyungan languages but does not exclude that finite verbs in non-Pama-Nyungan languages can be nominalised in the sense of 'having characteristics of nominals' (rather than 'having characteristics of nouns' as the term is usually understood typologically).

[24] *-biny* is referred to as the locative$_2$ post-position by McGregor (2004:141).

Locative/existential sentence with existential marker

(88) Olawsky (in prep. (2020):101)

Yawoorroon-tha dawa-moonggooja berrayinga.
yawoorroo-**ntha**   dawa-moonggooj=a   berrayi-ng=a
all/many-EXST_m   country-boss_of=TOP   this_one/these-NOM=TOP
'There are lots of proper country owners here.'

(89) Kofod [BF-06-5-T0471]:BF, (Olawsky in prep. (2020):400)

Gerloonga marram-tha.
gerloo-ng=a   marram-**tha**
water-NOM=TOP   far_away-EXST
'The water is far away.'

Thus, the encoding is the same for copular and locative/existential constructions. The location can be indicated by a locative marker in addition to the existential marker: In (90), the locative marker *-m* on the nominal expressing the location, namely *gerloo(ng)* 'water', precedes the existential *-tha*.

(90) Kofod (1978:172)

Gerloo-yam-tha.
gerloo-iya-**m-tha**
water-INTS-LOC-EXST
'It is right in the water.'

However, juxtaposition without the existential marker is also possible in these constructions in Miriwoong. According to Olawsky, the existential marker is not obligatory in any of the contexts where it is found (in prep. (2020):412). In copular sentences expressing identity, "simple apposition is always possible, and no marking is required" (in prep. (2020):387). An example without the existential is presented in (91): The nominal *yalaleng* 'louse' and the pronominal *ngaloo* 'she' are juxtaposed. With this type of construction, sentences without the marker are as common as those with the marker (in prep. (2020):388). In fact, in sentences that negate identity (ibid.) and identifying sentences of the type *This is a dog* (in prep. (2020):390), the existential marker is disallowed.

(91) Kofod [SD-K89-14-1-T0013]:SD, (Olawsky 2020:388)

Yalalenga ngaloo.
yalale-ng=a   ngaloo
louse-NOM=TOP   3sgfPN
'She is a louse woman.'

The existential marker is also rare in locational sentences (such as (89) above, in prep. (2020):400) and negative existence precludes the use of the marker (in prep. (2020):399). By contrast, in sentences expressing existence (such as (88) above) the presence of the existential marker is the norm (in prep. (2020):401). To sum up, as in other Australian languages, copular and locative/existential constructions are treated alike. Zero encoding without the existential is an

option but in affirmative copular and existential sentences the use of the existential marker is frequently found.

There is yet another alternative for locational/existential sentences: They can be encoded with posture verbs and/or the BE/STAY-verb. For locational sentences, this is the most common option in Miriwoong (in prep. (2020):400). This alternative is in line with the typological predictions for the copular variant of the With-Possessive (which is in a sense the opposite of the prediction for Have-Possessives), namely that the lack of a verbal predicate is found with copular sentences but not with locational/existential sentences (Stassen 2009:144). In utterance (92), the third person singular BE/STAY-IV *ginayin*, together with the locative marker *-m* encodes that the *gijal(ng)* 'raw meat' is located on the *mernda(ng)* 'paperbark'. Utterance (93) predicates that *theniyinhang goondarring* 'all kinds of fish' are located in *ngenjaying gerloo(ng)* 'this water' with the help of the third person non-singular BE/STAY-IV *berrandawoon* and the locative marker *-m* on *gerloo(ng)*. In (94) the location of the *gooloomboo(ng)* 'didgeridoo' is implicit.

Locative/existential sentence with inflected verb

(92) Newry (2012:2)

Gijalng ngarin ginayin merndam.
gijal-ng	ngarin	**gi-n-a-yin**	mernda-m
raw-NOM	meat	3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	paperbark-LOC

'Raw meat is on the paperbark (sheet).'

(93) Ningarmara & Dilyai (2014:17)

Ngenjaying gerloom goondarring theniyinhang berrandawoon […]
ngenjayi-ng	gerloo-**m**	goondarri-ng	theniyinha-ng
this_one_m-NOM	water-LOC	fish-NOM	all_kinds-NOM

berra-n-da-woon […]
3nsS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3nsIPF
'In this water there are all kinds of fish […].'

(94) Picture description [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-1]:PG

Gooloomboong ginayin jerrawoonhiyang.
gooloomboo-ng	**gi-n-a-yin**	jerrawoonhiya-ng
didgeridoo-NOM	3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF	one-NOM

'There is one didgeridoo [on the picture].'

Locative sentence with inflected verb and posture verb

(95) Galbat-Newry (2013:13)

Jigeng looloo nyinanyan geranyem.
jige-ng	**looloo**	**nyi-n-a-nyan**	gerany-**em**
bird-NOM	be_sitting	3sgfS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgfIPF	stone-LOC

'The bird is sitting on the rock.'

(96) Picture Description [MEP-20140904-PG-SS-have-belong-4]:PG

Bare ginayin wilid.
bare   **gi-n-a-yin**   wilid
be_standing   3sgmS-be/stay_PRS-REAL-3sgmIPF   wattle_species
'There is wood for spears [on the picture].'

In addition to the third person singular feminine IV *nyinanyan* and the locative marker, in (95) the posture verb *looloo* 'sit' establishes the location of the (female) *jige(ng)* 'bird' on the *gerany* 'stone'. In this sentence the locative marker occurs as the allomorph *-em*, which is used following consonants. It attaches to a consonant since the *ny* in *gerany* is not the feminine nominal marker – which would be replaced by the locative – but part of the stem. (94) showcases another posture verb, namely *bare* 'stand'. Again, the location of the *wilid* 'branches from a wattle tree' (i.e. on the picture) is implicit.

10.5.6 Second typological prediction for the With-Possessive

Finally, with respect to With-Possessives, Stassen explains that the copular variant is 'property-indicating'. Sentences with (also property-indicating) predicative adjectives in Miriwoong involve an existential marker. Coincidentally, constructions including predicative nouns also feature existential markers (see (87) above and (101) below). Thus, in this regard predicative adjectives behave in the same way as predicative nouns: The existential is attached both to the predicative adjective and the predicative noun. In (97), the existential is found on *ngerregoowoo(ng)* 'big', which functions in this utterance as a predicative adjective modifying *boorrooboo woothoo-warriny* 'two little children'. Similarly, in (98) the existential attaches to thelmagale(ng) 'strong', the predicative adjective modifying *ngayang ngabang* 'my father'. In the subsequent sentence the modified entity is inanimate: In (99), *gerloong* 'water' is predicated to be *warnka(ng)* 'cold'.

Predicative adjective with existential marker

(97) Kofod (1978:87)

Boorooboo woothoo-warriny ngoowagara ngerregoowoon-tha.
boorooboo   woothoo-warriny   ngoowaga=ra   ngerregoowoo-**ntha**
3nsPN   child-du   indeed=SEQ   big-EXST_m
'Those children are big indeed!'

(98) Kofod [Dictionary-Sentences], (1978:164)

Ngayang ngabang thelmagalijiyan-tha.
ngaya-ng   ngaba-ng   thelma-gale-ijiya-**ntha**
1sgPOSS-m   father-m   strong-good_at-INTS-EXST_m
'My father is very strong.'

(99) Elicitation Kofod [BF-06-3-T0469]:BF, (Olawsky in prep. (2020):390)

Gerloonga warnkan-tha.
gerloo-ng=a   warnka-**ntha**
water-NOM=TOP   cold-EXST_m
'The water is cold.'

The existential is also used when the modified entity is implicit, see (100). It is combined with the Benefactive enclitic in the first (a)) and second person (b)). In third person BEN is optional, see c), where its form would be *-noong* for the third singular masculine variant and d), where it would be *-joong* for the third singular feminine variant. The same behaviour is found with predicative nouns, see (101) and (102) for first person and (103) for third person masculine.

Predicative adjective with existential marker and Benefactive enclitic

(100) Kofod (2009a:15)

a) *Doonggerrngi-tha-ngany.*
doonggerrngi-**tha**=**ngany**
hungry-EXST=1sgBEN
'I am hungry.'

b) *Doonggerrngi-tha-ngoong.*
doonggerrngi-**tha**=**ngoong**
hungry-EXST=2sgBEN
'You are hungry.'

c) *Doonggerrngin-tha.*
doonggerrngi-**ntha**
hungry-EXST_m
'He is hungry.'

d) *Doonggerrnginy-ja.*
doonggerrngi-**nyja**
hungry-EXST_f
'She is hungry.'

Predicative noun with existential marker and Benefactive enclitic

(101) Kofod (in prep. (2017):42)

Gooroo-goora-tha-ngany.
gooroo-goora-**tha**=**ngany**
RED-old_man-EXST=1sgBEN
'I am an old man.'

(102) Conversation [MEP-20130727-possession-4]:ND

Dawawa-tha-ngany.
dawawa-**tha**=**ngany**
country_owner-EXST=1sgBEN
'I am a country owner.'

(103) Kofod (2009a:15)

Jawalen-tha.
jawale-ntha
man-EXST_m
'He is/was a man.'

As the data discussed above show, Claim II for (predicativised) With-Possessives of the copular variant can be confirmed for Miriwoong as

d. its predicative adjectives are nouny.

There is no verbal morphology on the predicative adjective and – like predicative nouns – they employ the existential marker. One could argue that the use of the existential marker is a nouny feature, as it is used only on nominals (Olawsky in prep. (2020):406), where it is also relevant for the encoding of possession and benefaction (in prep. (2020):401). A homophonous marker that occurs on adverbs, particles, numeral adjectives, uninflecting verbs, and nominals in sentences involving inflecting verbs,[25] or on the inflecting verb itself can be analysed as an emphatic marker (Olawsky in prep. (2020)).[26]

Note that in employing the existential marker, Miriwoong behaves differently from other Australian languages which simply juxtapose the subject and the predicative adjective or predicative noun without any overt morphology (Stassen 2009:154, see the Pitjantjatjara examples discussed in §8.1.3). According to Olawsky (in prep. (2020)), there are instances of this type of construction in the Miriwoong data as well but they are rare (in prep. (2020):390). In addition, there is another alternative in Miriwoong, namely predicating a quality of a non-overt subject with the help of an inflecting verb, see (104) and (105). Again, this is rare (in prep. (2020):391).

(104) Elicitation [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-elicitation-5]:ML

Yawoorroobtha jilbab yarroondayan.

yawoorroobtha	jilbab	**yarroondayan**
all	be-frightened	1nsincS-be/stay_PRES-REAL-1incIPF

'We are all afraid.'
\q We all have fear.[27] If I have fear: Ngayoowa jilba-tha-ngany.

---

[25] Note that in example (85) above, the existential is attached to an inflecting verb which is *nominalised* due to the subordinate marker *-ngi*.

[26] Miriwoong has a variety of emphatic markers, including the intensifier *-iya* in examples (81) and (85) and the emphatic *-ga*.

[27] In this elicitation session, abstract possession was elicited. In some languages, such as German, the equivalent of *I have fear* is grammatical: *Ich habe Angst* (see §7.4).

(105) Personal narrative [MEP-20141004-MAJ-ML-PG-stories-1]:MAJ

    <Olgamen> ngelindayin gelengoo.
    <olgamen>   **ngelindayin**   gelengoo
    old_woman   1sgS_MID-become_PRS-REAL-1sgIPF   now
    'Now I am becoming an old woman.'

Similarly, it was shown above that Miriwoong does not only have the zero-type in copular and locational/existential sentences. Thus, in this respect it also differs from other Australian languages, which are predicted to have shared encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences, which "in most cases" involves zero-encoding (2009:596).

10.5.7 Summary and conclusion

Miriwoong data can be analysed in terms of Stassen's (2009) typology for positive indefinite non-modified and non-quantified predicative possession: Certain utterances with *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) are instances of the With-Possessive, while utterances with the HAVE-verb instantiate the Have-Possessive. If one were to expand Stassen's typology to belong-constructions, Miriwoong Benefactive enclitics in combination with the existential marker could also be considered to form a With-Possessive. In addition, Indirect Object enclitics could be counted as a relevant marker, even though the resulting With-Possessive is exceptional in that it covers inalienable possession.

Thus, Stassen's observation that the Have-Possessive and the With-Possessives are the two main types in the Australian languages in his sample is reinforced by data from Miriwoong. Likewise, the associated typological predictions are fulfilled: In order to encode simultaneous different-subject sequences, Miriwoong links clauses without an intervening subordinating marker and uses finite predicates in both the main and the subordinate clause, i.e. a balancing strategy. Alternatively, subordination of finite clauses is realised by means of a subordinating conjunction and a verb that is marked for nominalisation, i.e. Miriwoong has deranked predicates. These two options are predicted for the Have -Possessive and the With-Possessive respectively. Further, as predicted for languages with a Have-Possessive, Miriwoong has shared encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences – both are encoded by juxtaposition or using the existential marker. An alternative for locational/existential but not copular sentences is that they can be encoded with posture verbs and/or the BE/STAY-verb. This encoding difference is predicted for languages with the copular variant of the With-Possessive, i.e. for Miriwoong. Moreover, utterances with property-indicating predicative adjectives – like utterances with predicative nouns – in Miriwoong typically involve an existential marker. Thus, the prediction that predicative adjectives are nouny in languages with With-Possessives is fulfiled.

11 CONCLUSION

The overarching aim of this thesis is to advance the documentation of the Miriwoong language; thereby contributing to a more extensive description of this critically endangered language. The thesis discusses how the universal concept of possession is expressed in Miriwoong.

Possession is defined as the relationship between a possessor (PR) and the entity being possessed by the PR, namely the possessee (PE). Different types of possessive relationships can be described using the defining criteria +/-Control and +/-Permanent Contact (Stassen 2009). Prototypically, the PR is a specific human being who owns a concrete inanimate physical object in a legal sense of ownership (Taylor 1996). This relationship is called alienable possession. Its counterpart, inalienable possession, is usually claimed to include at least relationships between human beings or animals and their body parts and more generally relationships between wholes and their parts. Relations between relatives are often counted among inalienable relations but have been found to be treated like alienable possessions in Australian languages (Dixon 1980, Heine 1997). Possession is viewed this thesis is as a social concept that is embodied in conventions and forms of social behaviour (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976).

In addition to corpus data provided by Frances Kofod, the findings about possessive constructions in Miriwoong are based on the author's data from language games and tasks. The results were evaluated in light of claims about Australian languages and typological predictions for languages in general. In the following, the answers to the main research questions pursued in this thesis are summarised. Finally, an outlook for future research will be given.

1. Which structural patterns are employed to express possession and what are the determining factors for the choice between alternatives?

There is a variety of strategies in Miriwoong that are employed to express possession:

- no marking (juxtaposition)

- cardinal pronouns

- possessive pronouns (incl. a short variant and a long variant ending in *-nge(ng/ny)*)

- relationship suffix *-ga*

- proprietive *-ba* (+ EXST) (+BEN)

- privative *-yile*

- (EXST +) IO

- (EXST +) BEN

- verb HAVE

The choice of construction is influenced by a number of factors:

- animacy

- semantic domains

- negation

- structural make-up of the sentence

1a. How frequent are these constructions in narratives?

The most common strategy for overtly marking possession in a selection of narratives from the 1980s and 1990s is the use of possessive pronouns; they occur in the absolute majority of possessive sentences (52%). The relationship suffix *-ga* and (the existential marker (EXST) plus) the Benefactive enclitic (BEN) are moderately frequent (19% and 14% respectively). They are followed by the 'having'-suffix *-ba* (plus the existential marker) (7%) and (the existential marker plus) the Indirect Object enclitic (IO, 6%). Both the HAVE-verb and privative suffix *-yile* occur only once in a sample of one hundred possessive utterances. Cardinal pronouns (§9.2.2) and the construction *-ba* (+ EXST) +BEN (§9.1.9) do not surface in the sample.

1b. Are there semantic differences?

The data from the Have and Belong games reveal that the animacy of the PE has an influence on the choice of construction: For possessive questions there is an animacy constraint (§10.3.1.1): In contrast to *-ba* + BEN, *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN is only attested with animate PEs. The intonation

contour of the two constructions differs: The pitch rises on BEN for *-ba* + BEN but the utterance has falling pitch for *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN (§9.1.9.1).

In addition, there is an influence of animacy in the realm of body-parts (§10.3.2.4): The IO is generally the preferred option or one of the preferred options for expressing part-whole relations including body parts. The preference for the IO is pronounced for animal body parts, while there is more variety in the constructions used for human body parts.

1c. Do some structures correlate with certain domains?

There are differences between semantic domains both (i) within predicative (§9.1.13) and attributive possession (§9.2.10) respectively and (ii) between predicative and attributive possession (§9.3): (i) Within predicative possession (EXST +) BEN is mainly used for alienable possession, while (EXST +) IO is mainly used for names and to a lesser degree for body parts and kinship. (i) Also within predicative possession, *-ba* and *-yile* are counterparts that cover essentially the same domains, with the exception that *-yile* is not attested with part-whole relations. (i) Within attributive possession, IO and BEN cover similar domains except for part-whole relationships, which are expressed by (EXST +) IO only, and abstract possession, for which so far only constructions involving BEN have been found. (ii) Comparing predicative and attributive possession, (EXST +) IO and (EXST +) BEN are less restricted in attributive possession than in predicative possession: In addition to the domains listed for predicative possession above (i.e. names, body parts and kinship), in attributive possession (EXST +) IO also expresses alienable and part-whole possession. (EXST +) BEN is used attributively also with names, body parts, abstract possession, and – much more frequently than in predicative possession – for kinship. (ii) Cardinal pronouns are restricted to attributive possession. Finally, (ii) with respect to kinship possession there is a complementary distribution between *-ba* and *-ga*: *-ba* is used for predicative possession, *-ga* for attributive possession.

1d. What influence does the structural make-up of the sentence have on the choice of construction?

The data from the Have and Belong games reveal that negation determines which strategy is used (§10.3.1.1, §10.3.2.2), whereas modification does not (§10.3.1.2): There is a correlation between negation and the Indirect Object enclitic. In addition, in the entire corpus collected for this thesis, a correlation between IO and quantification was found.

Moreover, for certain markers there are restrictions for the word classes to which they attach (§9.3): Neither (EXST +) IO nor (EXST +) BEN are attached to quantifying adjectives, this seems to be reserved for *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN). Both attach to numeral adjectives only in predicative

possession. In contrast to (EXST +) BEN, (EXST +) IO does not attach to other adjectives. The only other construction to attach to these is again *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN). In addition to nouns, *-ba* can be attached to adjectives and quantifying adjectives to express predicative possession. By contrast, *-yile* occurs only with nouns. In combination with adjectives it has a non-possessive meaning.

Further, different semantic domains are attested with and without the EXST in combination with IO and BEN in positive attributive possession (§9.2.10): Kinship is not attested with IO without the EXST. Alienable possession and part-whole relations, on the other hand, are only found with IO without the existential. With respect to BEN, body parts are not attested in combination with EXST. Vice versa, abstract possession so far is only found without it.

2. Evaluation of findings in light of claims about Australian languages

Below, the data on Miriwoong possession is evaluated in light of claims about Australian languages concerning the notion of inalienability, possible structural types and the famous comitative ('having')-construction.

2a. Does inalienability play a role in Miriwoong grammar?

Dixon claims that "[a]lmost all Australian languages have two distinct ways of indicating possession": A genitive suffix for alienable possession and kinship and apposing possessor and possessed noun for "inalienable possession - something being an inseparable part of something else" (1980:293). However, McGregor holds that in most Kimberley languages, "there is no distinction between alienable and inalienable possession at NP level" (1990:157).

In Miriwoong there is not a clear-cut distinction as in other Australian languages, but there are some indications that the notion of inalienability plays a role: To begin with, an analysis of the game data yields correlations between alienable possession and the Benefactive enclitic and inalienable possession and the Indirect Object enclitic (§10.3.2.2): In alienable possessive sentences with positive polarity and in alienable possessive questions BEN rather than IO is used. In attributive sentences the game data suggest a tendency for the use of IO for inalienable possession with respect to the body-parts and part-whole domains, but not the kinship domain. This distribution of marking over domains is in line with claims about Australian languages (Dixon 1980:293, Heine 1997) but not Stassen's (2009) typology for alienable vs. inalienable possession along the features +/-Control and +/-Permanent Contact: In the latter, both body part and kinship relations are analysed as being defined by +Permanent Contact and -Control, i.e. inalienable possession.

These findings from the game data are only partly reflected in the frequency analysis of a sample of narratives from the 1980s and 1990s (§10.1). As expected, the inalienable category of body parts was expressed in this sample with the IO (1 utterance, i.e. 50%), not BEN. However, in four utterances from the sample the IO also marks alienable possession (15%, as compared to 23% with BEN). In addition, the IO was found in one case with kinship possession (2%, as opposed to 25% with BEN). The latter is notable as the kinship category has been claimed to pattern with alienable rather than inalienable construction in Australian languages (see above).

Secondly, inalienability is claimed in this thesis to play a role in the choice between the short variant of possessive pronouns and the long variant, which includes the optional possessive suffix -*nge*. Many domains in which the suffix is used can be classified as inalienable if that category is interpreted rather broadly (§9.2.3.4, cf. 5 below). However, the optional possessive suffix in possessive pronouns is also used with alienable possession and kinship (§9.2.3.1.1). In the sample of narratives mentioned above, possessive pronouns are clearly preferred without the suffix when they express kinship. This is indicative of a correlation of the absence of the suffix with alienability since in Australian languages kinship is expected to be encoded by the same strategies as alienable, not inalienable possession (see above). In other alienable contexts, though, there is no obvious pattern. In the sample, the suffix is present and absent in almost equal quantities.

To conclude, the distribution of enclitics in the game data suggests a differential use of the BEN and IO along the lines of alienability, but the frequency data show that there are exceptions. For the choice between the long and the short variants of possessive pronouns, inalienability can only be one among several factors (see also §9.2.3.4, where speaker preference and pragmatics are found to also play a role).

2b. Which of the four types of attributive possessive constructions found in Australian languages is used in Miriwoong?

A synthesis of the attributive possessive constructions described by McGregor (2004) and Dixon (1980, 2002, 2009) results in four types (§8.1.1, §8.1.2). The **first** type contains a possessive pronoun indicating the PR and a nominal specifying the PE. Miriwoong makes extensive use of this type (see §9.2.3). The **second** type comprises a noun phrase referring to the possessor (PR), which is marked by a genitive or dative suffix, and an unmarked NP for the possessee (PE). Miriwoong does not have a genitive or dative case inflection. Even if BEN and IO are analysed as similar to case markers, they are often attached to the PE and represent the only referent of the PR. The strategy in Miriwoong that comes closest to this pattern is the marking of PRs with -*boorriya* in NPs not otherwise marked for possession (§9.2.3.3). In the **third** type, a possessive pronoun is used in addition to the possessee and possessor NPs. This construction is not used in Miriwoong.

In the **fourth** type, two NPs – one for the PR and one for the PE – are juxtaposed to express part-whole relations. In Miriwoong this construction is possible, at least with intervening modifiers (§9.2.1).

2c. Which of the four verbless nominal clauses
found in Australian languages is used in Miriwoong?

A synthesis of the predicative verbless nominal clauses discussed by McGregor (2004) and Dixon (1980, 2002, 2009), again, yields four types (§8.2.1, §8.2.2): The **first** type is a *have*-construction formed by a comitative-marked PE. This type is used extensively in Miriwoong and is argued to constitute a With-Possessive in Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession (see 3c below). The **second** type is a *belong*-construction formed by a dative- or genitive-marked PR. As discussed above, Miriwoong does not have dative or genitive case inflections and, thus, does not feature this type. In Miriwoong, mainly the Benefactive enclitic and alternatively possessive pronouns or juxtaposition are used for *belong*-constructions in game situations. The **third** type is characterised by a possessive pronoun in addition to the two unmarked possessor and possessee NPs. This type does not occur in Miriwoong, either. As discussed in §9.1.12, possessive pronouns are used predicatively, but the PR is not additionally present. The **fourth** type differs from the third by the inclusion of a quality of the PE and the optionality of the possessive pronoun. Miriwoong, again, does not make use of this strategy. It is seldom for both PE and PR to be overtly present. A quality of a PE is expressed by the construction *-ba* (+ EXST + BEN).

Although many Australian languages allegedly lack **possessive verbs** in predicative possession, Miriwoong – like several other non-Pama Kimberley languages – uses one (§9.1.11) in addition to verbless nominal clauses. Sentences formed with the HAVE-verb are argued to constitute a Have-Possessive in Stassen's typology (§10.5.2). As in Nyulnyulan languages, Kija (Jarragan), and Jaminjung (Jaminjungan) (McGregor 2001:80f), the Miriwoong possessive verb carries an abstract possessive meaning; additional lexical meanings are induced by cultural knowledge, and the surrounding discourse and environment.

2d. Does Miriwoong have a comitative marker?

The Miriwoong comitative marker *-ba* is typical for Australian languages (Dixon 2002) in that it covers a wide variety of meanings. In addition to a several possessive domains including body parts, kinship relations, alienable, part-whole, and temporary possession (§9.1.7 - §9.1.9), it is employed for association, accompaniment, (further) attributes (§9.4.1), and existence (§9.4.2).

3. Evaluation of findings in light of typological predictions

In addition to claims about possession in Australian languages, general claims in the typological literature on possession concerning its status as a separate domain and the distinction between attributive and predicative possession were discussed with respect to data on Miriwoong. It is possible to analyse Miriwoong utterances expressing predicative possession in terms of Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession.

3a. Is possession a separate domain in Miriwoong?

Possession is a separate cognitive domain in Miriwoong, but there is some overlap with location (which can be expressed by IO (§9.4.3)) and existence (which can be expressed by -*ba* and EXST (§9.4.2)). The existential marker is involved in all of these domains (§9.4.4).

3b. Is it valid to draw a distinction
between predicative possession and attributive possession?

It is valid to distinguish between predicative possession and attributive possession in Miriwoong. There are constructions that are limited to either attributive (cardinal pronouns, -*ga*) or predicative possession (-*ba*, -*yile*, verb HAVE) (§9.3, see also 1c above). In addition, as discussed in 1d above, there are structural constraints that are specific to one of the two: (EXST +) IO and (EXST +) BEN attach to numeral adjectives only in predicative possession. As discussed in 1c above, there are differences in regard to semantic domains: -*ba* and -*ga* are in complementary distribution with respect to kinship possession. (EXST +) IO and (EXST +) BEN are less restricted in terms of the semantic domains that they express in attributive possession than in predicative possession. However, this finding does not fully confirm Stassen's (2009) claim that predicative possession typically expresses ownership or temporary possession whereas attributive possession constructions can have many different interpretations. Ownership, i.e. alienable possession, and temporary possession are indeed expressed via predicative structures in Miriwoong. In addition, though, it is also common to predicate kinship relations, part-whole relations, names, and abstract possession.

3c. Does Miriwoong confirm Stassen's (2009) typology of predicative possession?

Miriwoong has a With-Possessive (§10.5.1), which involves the comitative -*ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN), and a Have-Possessive (§10.5.2), which involves the HAVE-verb. Several typological predications about the applications of these constructions are met: First, as predicted by Stassen (2009:63),

the Miriwoong Have-Possessive is used – among other domains – for both temporary and alienable possession (§9.1.11.2). Second, as predicted by Aikhenvald (2013:33), *-ba* (+ EXST) (+ BEN) is preferred over the HAVE-verb for part-whole possession (§9.1.8.1). Third, in Miriwoong the With-Possessive encodes temporary possession (§9.1.8, §9.1.9). This is claimed by Stassen to be typical for this strategy (2009:25). However, it is also used for body parts and part-whole relations, i.e. inalienable possession, which Stassen finds to be infrequent in his sample (ibid.).

In addition, data from Miriwoong confirms the typological predictions for other parts of the grammar of a language postulated by Stassen (2009) to be connected to the With-Possessive and the Have-Possessive (§10.5.3 - §10.5.6):

- Miriwoong uses a balancing strategy to encode simultaneous different-subject sequences.

- In addition to its balancing option, Miriwoong also has deranked predicates: The sub-ordination of finite clauses is realised by means of a subordinating conjunction whereby the verb is marked for nominalisation.

- Miriwoong has shared encoding of copular and locational/existential sentences.

- Predicative adjectives are nouny in Miriwoong.

Stassen based his typology, of which the With-Possessive and the Have-Possessive are part, only on *have*-constructions. Heine (1997) also makes typological predictions for *belong*-constructions: These "tend to be associated only with one possessive notion" as their primary or only meaning (1997:32), usually ownership. This can be confirmed for Miriwoong: The use of BEN is correlated with *belong*-constructions (§10.3.2.1) and in predicative possession, (EXST +) BEN is mainly used for alienable possession, i.e. ownership (§9.1.13).

To conclude, Miriwoong data can be analysed with reference to the types of predicative possession constructions described by Stassen (2009). Most claims about their uses also fit the Miriwoong data. However, it was discussed in 2a above that Stassen's characterisation of kinship possession in terms of the features +/-Control and +/-Permanent Contact does not reflect the situation in Miriwoong and other Australian languages.

4. Does the endangerment of Miriwoong lead to structural changes?

Miriwoong is ranked as a critically endangered on several scales of endangerment and vitality, which take into account factors such as absolute number of fluent speakers, age and percentage of speakers within the community, functions of the language in the community, and intergenerational transmission (§3.1.3). Endangered languages undergo changes that differ in quantity and speed from changes in 'healthy' languages (Aikhenvald et al. 2004, §3.2). Areas of

Miriwoong grammar that relate to possession and can be argued to be affected by such changes are:

(i) the levelling of a clear-cut distinction between the Indirect Object enclitic (IO) and the Benefactive enclitic (BEN) when referring to names: While nowadays BEN is also used (§9.2.7.1, §9.2.8.1), Kofod (1978, 2013/5 p.c.) claims that the IO used to be employed to the exclusion of BEN.

(ii) the potential levelling of a differential use of the optional possessive suffix on possessive pronouns: The short and the long variant of possessive pronouns can be used interchangeably. Some factors have been identified in §9.2.3 that nowadays influence the choice (semantic domains, pragmatics, speaker preference). It is possible that this distinction used to be more clear-cut in the period predating the first recordings made by Kofod in the 1970s.

(iii) the shift of the primary meaning of *boorriyang* '3nsPOSS' from possessive to purposive at least in one senior speaker observed during elicitation (§9.2.3.3): The recent use of *boorriyang* in word formation for modern concepts such as *moorl-boorriyang* 'glasses' seems to have led to this semantic change.

The first two structural changes might be the product of natural language change. The third, however, is clearly induced or at least accelerated by the advance of the English language and Western culture with its modern concepts and terms.

5. Does Miriwoong culture influence the language?

Language and land ownership are an important part of Miriwoong culture. Miriwoong language identity as well as ownership of language and country is determined by a complex set of aspects including descent and kinship, one's birthplace and social beliefs and practices such as *gooning*, which are codified in Dreaming stories (§6.2).

It is therefore investigated in this thesis whether there is a special treatment of the concepts of country and language in the Miriwoong lexicon and grammar. An argument in favour of this assumption is that the Miriwoong language disposes of a long list of lexical items with meanings relating to country (§6.2.2). The analysis of an uninflecting verb of transfer (*ngenja* and variants) exemplifies that the compatibility of such lexical items with the concept of land (title) can differ from other domains. (A variant of) *ngenja* is used with land in the context of Native Title, but it is more restricted in this context with respect to the inflecting verbs it combines with as opposed to alienable possessions and food or water.

One could expect that Miriwoong treats country and language as inalienable concepts (i.e. +Permanent Contact and +Control): In Miriwoong culture there is a close tie between people,

language and land (+Permanent Contact), but one does not control the country in the sense of being able or willing to sever the possessive relationship or to lend it to others (-Control, cp. Stassen 2009:14f).

One of the areas of the grammar of Miriwoong where the concepts of country and language are relevant and where one could argue in terms of inalienability is possessive pronouns: The long variant of the possessive pronoun can be used with a number of inalienable domains (see 2a above) and also to refer to one's country and countrymen, and to somebody's (Miriwoong) language (§9.2.3.4). However, in a sample of narratives from the 1980s and 1990s, with the concepts country and dreaming place, possessive pronouns occur three times without the suffix and only once with the suffix (§10.1). In addition, the use of the optional possessive suffix is also possible with alienable possession and kinship (§9.2.3.1.1, §10.1).

Another area where inalienability is argued to play a role is that of enclitics. Invoking the differential usage between BEN and IO along the lines of alienability (see 2a), one would expect the IO to be used when encoding possessive relationships about country and language. However, the possession of country (§9.2.8.2) and language (§9.2.7.6) is expressed with BEN rather than IO.

Moreover, it is the BEN enclitics that can be hosted by possessive pronouns of the same person, number, and gender (§9.1.6, §9.2.9). Examples often involve talking about country – but also kinship and alienable possession. According to Kofod (2013/09/12 p.c.), BEN in this context retains a benefactive meaning, e.g. *ngayange-gany dawang* 'my country (which provides) for me'. Note also that the relationship of the Miriwoong people to their country has been described as *belonging to* country (Simon & Galbat nd.). BEN is the enclitic that correlates with the 'belong' meaning (§10.3.2.1).

Taken together, these arguments suggest that the meaning of the Benefactive enclitic is the decisive factor for its choice rather than country being an inalienable concept with respect to the features Control and Permanent Contact. It needs to be investigated further if the use of BEN with the concept language is similarly licenced on semantic grounds.

To conclude, reflexes of Miriwoong culture are visible in its lexicon. The grammar exhibits constructions that are used – even though not uniquely – with the concepts of language and country. The importance of these concepts in Miriwoong culture is, thus, not reflected by grouping them into an inalienable category that is clearly delimited via marking not used for the alienable category.

6. Summary of results from games and language tasks

The Have game was successfully utilised to trigger *have*-constructions and the Belong game mainly prompted *belong*-constructions (§10.3). The main results are summarised in this section:

- As discussed in 1b and 1d above, negation and animacy but not modification have an influence on which construction is used: There is a correlation between negation and the Indirect Object enclitic. The construction *-ba* + *-woo* + BEN is used only in questions with animate PEs. IO is the preferred or one of the preferred options for expressing part-whole relations including body parts, the preference for the IO being more pronounced for animal body parts as opposed to human body parts.

- No separate categories for different types of body parts (e.g. limbs vs. internal organs, see §9.2.2.1) or permanently attached vs. separable body parts are necessary to describe Miriwoong data on body parts.

- *-ba* is confirmed as one of the possibilities to express part-whole relationships between animate and inanimate PRs and their parts (§10.3.2.3).

- Animals and their offspring are treated as possessive relationships (§10.3.2.6).

- As discussed in 2a above, the game data confirm a distinction between the Benefactive enclitic and the Indirect Object enclitic along the lines of inalienability: BEN correlates with alienable possession and IO with inalienable possession.

- *-ba* is used during games for associative relationships; the use of *-ba* for association was also mentioned in 2d above.

- When the PE is something that the PR made, namely a net or a nest, utterances that could either be possessive or focus on the association between the two cards, feature BEN. For clearly possessive sentences the possessive pronoun is used in this context.

The Story-Builder Action Cards were successfully employed to trigger stories. As compared to the game data there is a markedly reduced variety of constructions. The HAVE-verb is used comparatively frequently. This is likely to be due to the difference in task. While games aim at conversational data, the Story-Builder Task aims at storytelling, i.e. at semi-spontaneous data in the form of short narratives. However, in comparison with the frequency data from Toolbox narratives (§10.1), the quantity of utterances with the verb HAVE is still high. This shows that the Story-Builder Action Cards are a good resource when the aim is to trigger this infrequent construction.

7. Outlook

Some areas have received more scrutiny than others in this thesis. A topic that has been mentioned but not discussed in greater detail is that of external possession (also called *possessor raising* or *possessor ascension*). So far, the data indicates that Miriwoong speakers do not use a separate construction in contexts where speakers of other Australian languages have been found to use an external possession construction that differs from the constructions employed for other (internal) possessive sentences. However, the topic deserves a comprehensive discussion in a future publication.

Moreover, the qualitative description of possessive constructions in Miriwoong that this thesis provides has laid the groundwork for further investigation to be undertaken. Having established that attributive possession and predicative possession need to be discussed separately, the next step is to understand whether the constructions used in Miriwoong for attributive possession have been derived from those used for predicative possession by grammaticalisation and reanalysis.

The most promising areas that have been identified in this thesis as calling for further research are the study of information structure, and historical and comparative work on structural changes in the realm of possession.

Concerning information structure, it would be worthwhile to look in more detail at clauses involving *nawoo/nawa* to determine whether convincing evidence can be found for a grammaticalisation of the cardinal pronoun + topic marker combination into a discourse marker. The occurrence of *nawoo/nawa* in different text types, including personal and Dreaming narratives, conversations and picture description should be compared. The study of word order frequencies and the role of definiteness could be starting point.

With respect to structural changes, future research should verify whether the levelling of the usage of enclitics and short vs. long forms of possessive pronouns can be assumed to be due to natural language change or whether it is induced or accelerated by language endangerment. This could be achieved by assessing whether comparable changes occur in other Jarragan languages (see McGregor 2002a), or whether Traditional languages that Miriwoong has been in contact with might be plausible models for the observed changes.

DATA SHARING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN CHRISTINA MURMANN AND MIRIWOONG PARTICIPANTS

As part of her research/study on Miriwoong, Christina Murmann wants to ensure that all participants understand and agree to how the knowledge of Miriwoong that they share will be used. On the following pages you can indicate in what ways you want to participate in the project and how you want any knowledge learnt from this to be used.

DEFINITIONS

This is an explanation of some of the words used in the agreement. These words describe the ways of academic work and what university students need to do in order to pass their exams and become successful researchers. Every word in bold face will be explained.

- **Research**: Linguists want to find out as much as they can about many different topics in many different languages. To do this they listen to how speakers of a language talk and they ask the speakers questions about the language. This is called doing linguistic **Research**.
What linguists learn about the language in this way they share with other linguists. They can then compare it with what others have found out about different languages. They can also discuss their research with others to make it better.
Linguists can share their findings during a conference where they meet other linguists. At such a conference they can show slides in a **Conference Talk**, or show their results on a **Poster.**
Sometimes the presentation is printed in a journal or book as a **Scientific Paper.** Linguists can also **publish Scientific Papers** directly or write grammars. All of this is part of what is called linguistic **Research**.
Students of linguistics usually have smaller projects on one shorter topic. At the end of their studies they write a **Thesis** on this project to get a **Degree**. When they finished studying and want to teach at university they need to become professors. The first step for that is to have a bigger project and write a **Dissertation** on this bigger topic. They get a **Degree** for this as well.

- **Publish/Publisher:** To publish an article or book means to print it in a book or journal. This book can be bought by anyone who is interested in the book. Often libraries buy books that contain information on languages. Linguists and students can then borrow the books and read them. Alternatively, one can publish online. This means that everyone can read the article or book on the internet. Sometimes you have to pay to read it, sometimes it is free. Linguists normally do not make financial profit from **Publishing** - sometimes they need to pay the **Publisher** to get their work printed.

- **Conference Talk:** Students and linguists go to conferences to share what they have found out during their projects so far. Usually they have between 20 and 40 minutes to show and explain slides. After that the listeners can ask questions and discuss the findings.

- **Posters:** Students and linguists go to conferences to share what they have found out during their projects so far. If they do not speak about their findings during a **Conference Talk,** they can print a **Poster** with information on the project. Other students and linguists at the conference can look at the poster and ask questions.

- Scientific Papers: If the presentation at a **Conference Talk** or a **Poster** is very successful, it can be written up in an article. All articles from the conference are put into a book. Other linguists can buy the book or borrow it from libraries. Alternatively, people who **publish** books sometimes ask students to send them articles on particular topics. If the article of a student is good enough and is selected by the **publisher** it is printed and sold as a book together with similar articles.

- Example Sentences: In a **Publication** or during a **Conference Talk** linguists often present interesting facts about one or several languages. For example, they might explain how people talk about body parts in English as compared to German. The listeners want to know what the linguist found out but they only truly understand what he or she is talking about if they can look at some examples. For English and German the linguist could explain that a very similar verb is used in both languages to talk about body parts and then show the two sentences:
 Everyone <u>has</u> two arms.
Jeder <u>hat</u> zwei Arme.

Most Miriwoong **Example Sentences** used by a linguist will come from MDWg consultants and their contribution will be acknowledged by identifying them, if they agree.

- Project Data: If a linguist makes a project on a language they usually collect data. This means that they write down **Example Sentences**, record speakers while they are saying these sentences and take pictures or make videos.

- Author: If a linguist has done a project on a language and writes a **Scientific Paper**, gives a **Conference Talk**, or presents a **Poster**, he or she is called the author because they wrote down all the findings of the project. The author might refer to cultural knowledge and use **Example Sentences** of a language. The property of this knowledge still lies with the speaker or the community.

- Co-author: If one or a few speakers have shared the majority of the **Example Sentences** and helped the linguist considerably with ideas and findings, they can be **Co-authors** of a **Scientific Paper**, a **Conference Talk**, or a **Poster**, if they want to. This means that on the print-out of the **Poster** or in the book that includes the article, their name will appear together with the author's name. In a library students and linguists will find the book if they ask for the name.

- Thesis: Students choose a topic they learned about in University classes and find interesting. They try to find out about the topic as much as possible and then write up what they find in a long article. Christina Murmann wrote 69 pages on German Sign Language, for example. The thesis is graded by the supervisors. If they accept the thesis, the student gets a **Degree**.

- Degree: After studying at University for a number of years, a student can write an article about a specific topic, the so-called **Thesis**. If the thesis is good enough, the student gets a **Degree**. Ms Murmann first got the degree 'Bachelor' and then the degree 'Master'. Now she wants to become a 'Doctor' (PhD).

- **Dissertation**: Ms Murmann studied Languages at University. At the end of her studies she wrote her Master's Thesis. Now she may call herself 'Master of Arts' and is allowed to write a so-called **Dissertation**.
A dissertation is much longer than a thesis. It is read by two supervisors. After they have accepted it, it will be printed as a book. Other people can buy the book or borrow it from a library to look at. These people will be mainly linguists who are interested in many languages. At some universities the dissertation can be published online as well.

FORM 1: DATA **S**HARING IN THE MIRIWOONG DOCUMENTATION PROJECT – **P**ARTICIPANTS

PROJECT PARTICIPATION:

I want to take part in the project on possession in Miriwoong. (Tick one)
     o YES   o NO

I give permission that during language sessions I am recorded. (Tick one or both)
     o on an audio recorder
     o on a video camera

DATA SHARING IN MS MURMANN'S RESEARCH:

I give permission that example sentences are used in Ms Murmann's research on possession in Miriwoong.
     o YES   o NO (→ If "No": Thank you for participating in this survey. Good-bye.)

If YES:
If my examples are used in publications I want the readers to know that I have given the examples to Ms Murmann.
     o YES   o NO

If YES,
     o I don't want my name to be used
     o I want to use an abbreviation for my name
     o I want the following name to be used: _____

DATA SHARING IN SCIENTIFIC PAPERS AND CONFERENCE TALKS OR POSTERS:

If Ms Murmann wants to publish scientific papers or give talks that contain my language examples, she will ask for my written permission first.

I agree in principle that she may use written language data for papers and talks.
     o YES   o NO

If YES:
In such papers or talks
     o I don't want my name to be used.
     o I want to use an abbreviation.
     o I want the following name to be used:

_____

     o I want a photo of me to be used.

     o I want audio recordings of the
examples to be played.

If NO:
     o I do not want my example sentences
       to be used for: ___ years and ___ months
     o I do not want the following people
       to have access to my examples:

_____

I am interested in principle to be a co-author of a paper, talk or poster.
     o YES   o NO

DATA SHARING ON THE INTERNET:

I give permission for conference papers and talks that include my data to be published on the internet. I know that if I agree, people I do not know can download the papers and talks and save them on their computers. Even if I change my mind later and ask that the papers and talks are deleted, these people might still have a copy.

      o YES   o NO

DATA ARCHIVING:

Ms Murmann will keep all Miriwoong language data in the MDWg archive and possibly in other archives outside of MDWg, for example the AIATSIS language archive in Australia or the MPI archive in the Netherlands. The reason for this is that language data should be kept safe so that Miriwoong people can view and listen to recordings and learn about the Miriwoong language now and in the future.

Other people might be interested in the data, such as linguists who would like to compare Miriwoong to other languages. They will have to ask permission from the Miriwoong participants (or MDWg) before they are allowed to see the data. They will write to Ms Murmann and she will ask the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring to get permission.

I agree that my audio and video recordings are put in an archive.

      o YES   o NO

I give permission that traditional owners of the Miriwoong country and language have access to this data.

      o YES   o NO

                    ↓

                 If NO

                 I do not want the following people to see and listen to my recordings:_____

I give permission that other linguists may apply for access to the data.

      o YES   o NO

I know that when I die my family can tell Ms Murmann that for a certain time nobody is allowed to see and listen to my recordings or pictures. My family will tell Ms Murmann how long this time will be. They can make the period longer at any time.

      o YES   o NO

Name: _____

Signature:_____

I am aware that the goal of the project is that Ms Murmann document the topic of possession in Miriwoong.
     o YES   o NO

I am aware that the project is funded by the Foundation for Endangered Languages and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).
     o YES   o NO

I freely chose to take part in the project and I know that I can stop to participate at any stage without telling Ms Murmann or anyone else why.
     o YES   o NO

I am aware that all video and audio recordings and linguistic and sociolinguistic data belong to the community (see also the *Language and cultural information sharing agreement* between Ms Murmann and Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring).
     o YES   o NO

I am aware that for any recording I am free to allow only certain people to view and listen to it, for example only Miriwoong people and linguists or only Miriwoong people or only women.
     o YES   o NO

I know that I have the right to see any results from the documentation project undertaken by Ms Murmann.
     o YES   o NO

Ms Murmann understands that there are culturally relevant issues, for example that I cannot work with certain people or in certain environments, or that certain names cannot be used.
     o YES   o NO

I know that if there is a conflict with Ms Murmann or other participants in the project I can talk to a relevant representative from MDWg to help to solve the conflict.
     o YES   o NO

I know that in case I stop working in the project the insight Ms Murmann has gained from my participation so far can still be used in her dissertation. I know that I can tell her not to use my data, but I will do so in writing. I will write down for how long my data shall not be used.
     o YES   o NO

I know that Christina Murmann can be contacted through MDWg.
     o YES   o NO

Name: _____

Signature:_____

The Miriwoong documentation project will be good for the language community in many ways.

- Language consultants will be paid for language sessions like they are usually paid by the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring.

- Ms Murmann will offer training in task design, transcription in ELAN and analysis in Toolbox to language workers. This training can be useful for projects such as audio booklets and the weekly radio program. The training can also be helpful for other projects in the future.

- During the documentation project audio and video recordings will be produced and tasks and language games will be used. They can also be used for language learning for example in the Master-Apprentice-Program or in the public language classes.

- The Miriwoong will be involved in all phases of the project. You will decide who should take part in training and transcription and translation work. You will also decide who will talk to Ms Murmann about Miriwoong culture, in particular the concept of possession. Ms Murmann will respect what you would like to share about your culture and what you would like to keep to yourselves.

- The publication of Ms Murmann's research on Miriwoong will likely be good for the community because a detailed description of the language can help to convince Miriwoong families and outsiders to have a more positive view on the language. It can help to convince families to speak their language more often.

- Whenever drafts of publications that talk about the Miriwoong language and the Miriwoong culture are finished, Ms Murmann will send them to the Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring so that the Miriwoong people can give her their opinion and tell her if something needs to be changed.

- The names of language consultants who have contributed to the Miriwoong documentation project will be shown in the publications unless individuals prefer not to be named or to use nick names or abbreviations (see also DATA SHARING IN MS MURMANN'S RESEARCH and DATA SHARING IN SCIENTIFIC PAPERS AND CONFERENCE TALKS OR POSTERS).

I have read and understood how and why the documentation project is good for the Miriwoong community. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and give comments.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix B: Stimuli[1]

B.1. Stimuli used for language games

B.1.1 Have game
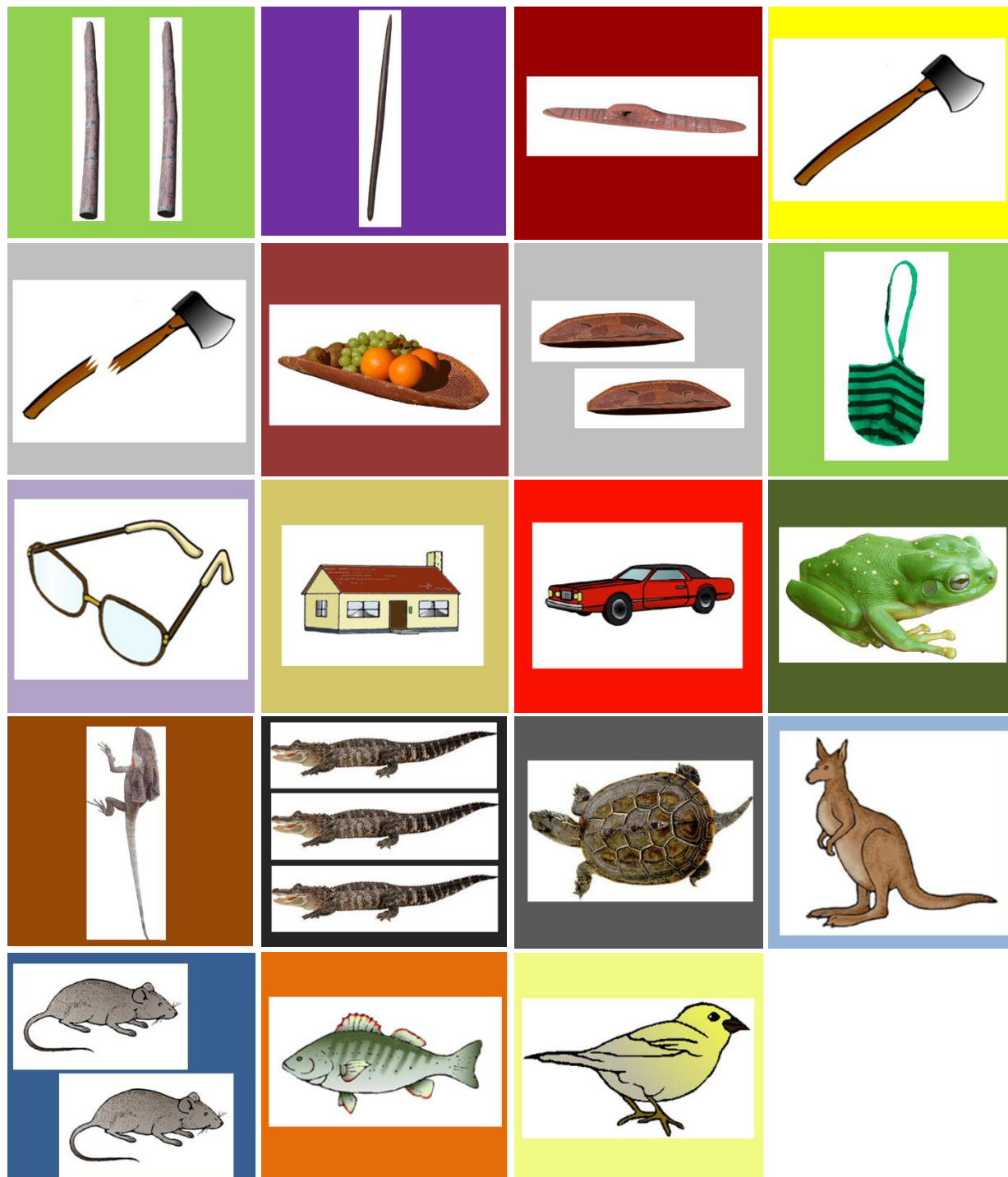
[1] For sources and licences of all pictures and drawings used for the stimuli see appendix B.3 below.

389
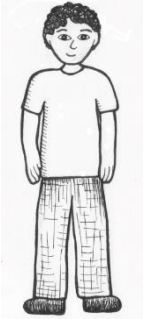
On additional cards the stimuli varied with respect to colour, number, and size. Variations are signalled by a shaded background colour. Examples:

B.1.2 Belong game

B.1.2.1 Picture pairing - Alienable possessions (Stimulus set A)

o   Possessors

B.1.2.2 Picture pairing - Part-whole relations (Stimulus set B))

- Subset (i): Part-whole relations
  - Human PR - Body part

393

o   Animate PR - Body part

o   Plant whole - part

o   Inanimate whole - part

- Subset (ii): Body parts that can be shed or cut

    o   Animate PR - body part - severed
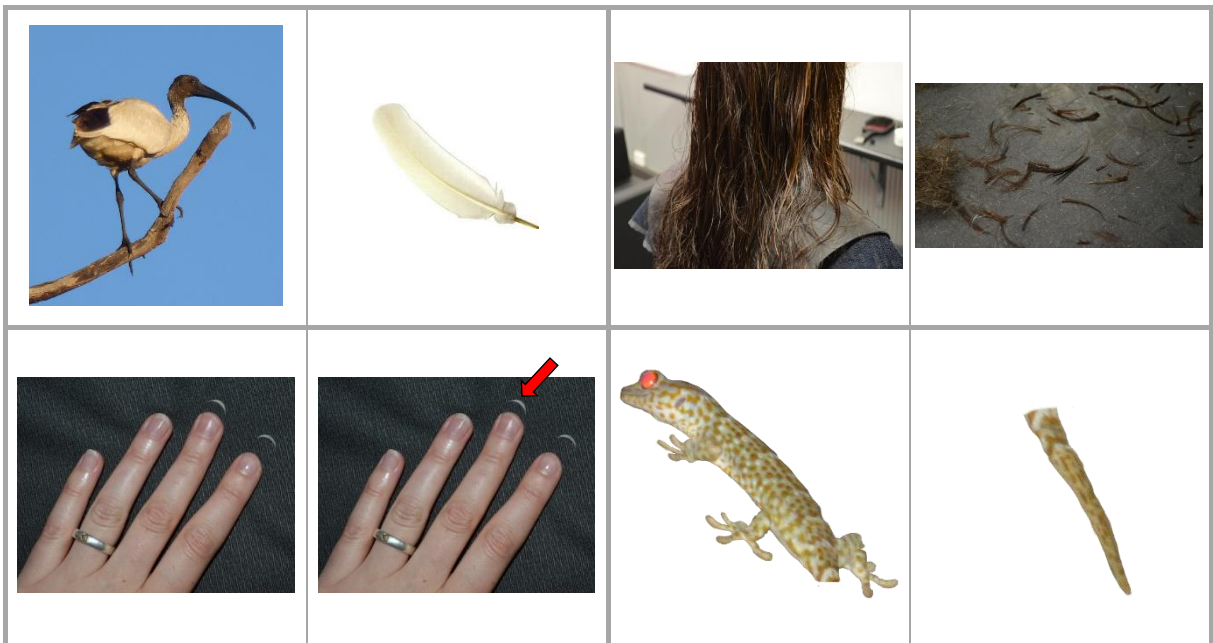
- Subset (iii): Potentially non-possessive relations
  - Animate PR - kinship
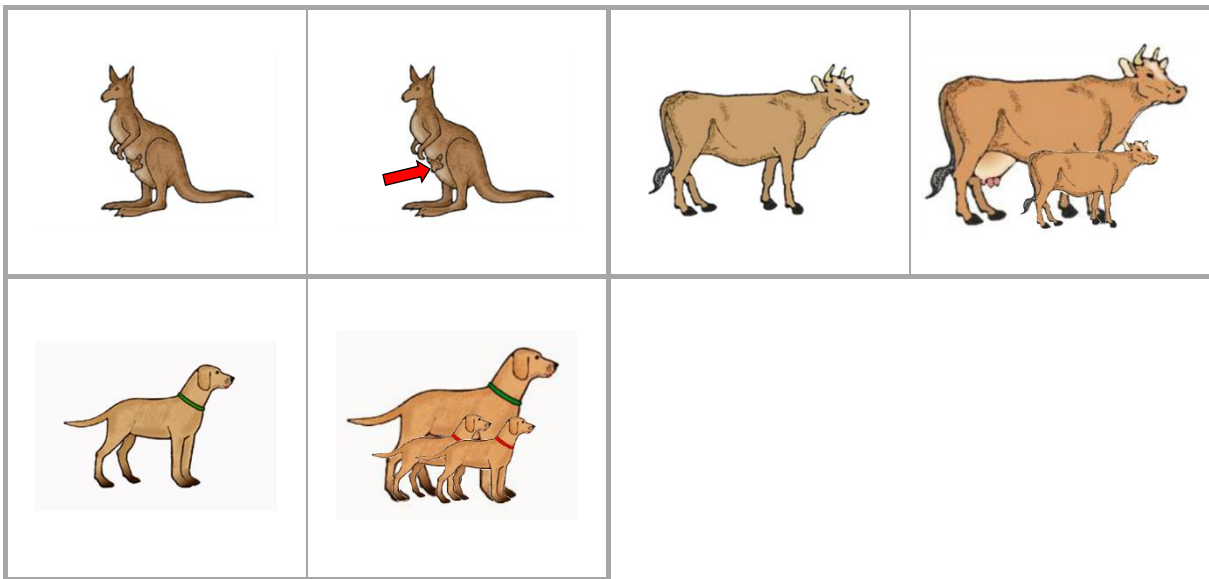
  - Animate PR - other

  - Inanimate PR - other

B.1.3 Story Builder Action Cards

o Character Cards
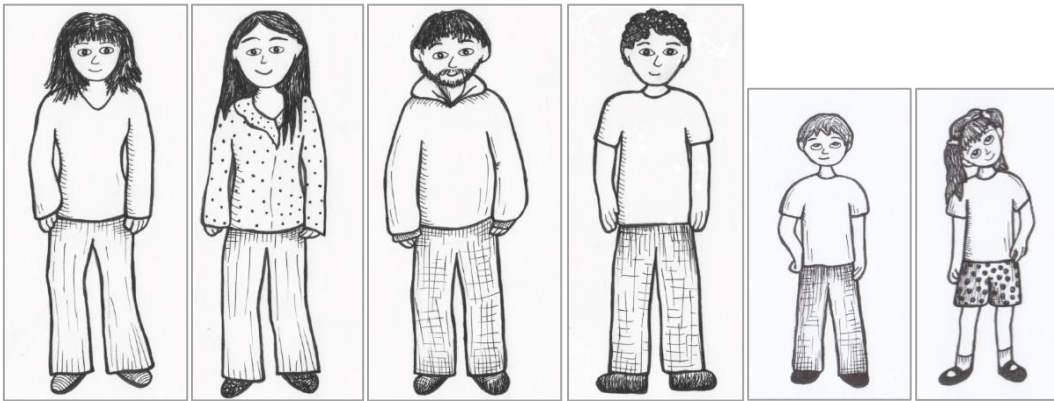
o Action Cards
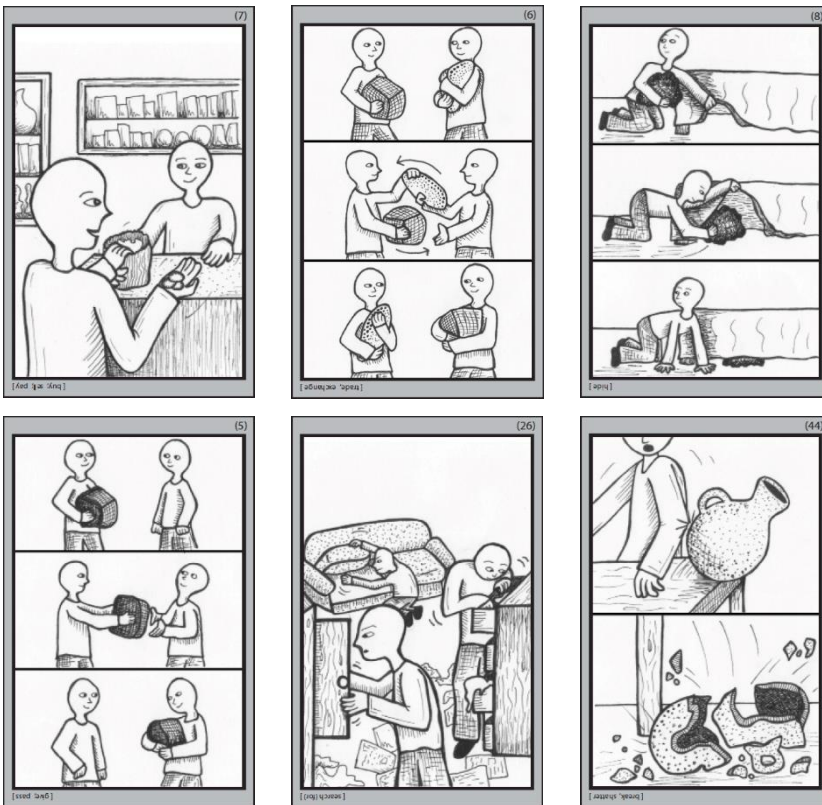
B.2 Stimuli used for typological predictions

Elicitation photo and still from elicitation video on simultaneous different subject sequences

B.3 Sources for picture stimuli

Final selection

Rossion & Pourtois 2004 (available under GNU Free Documentation License 1.3 or later) [2]
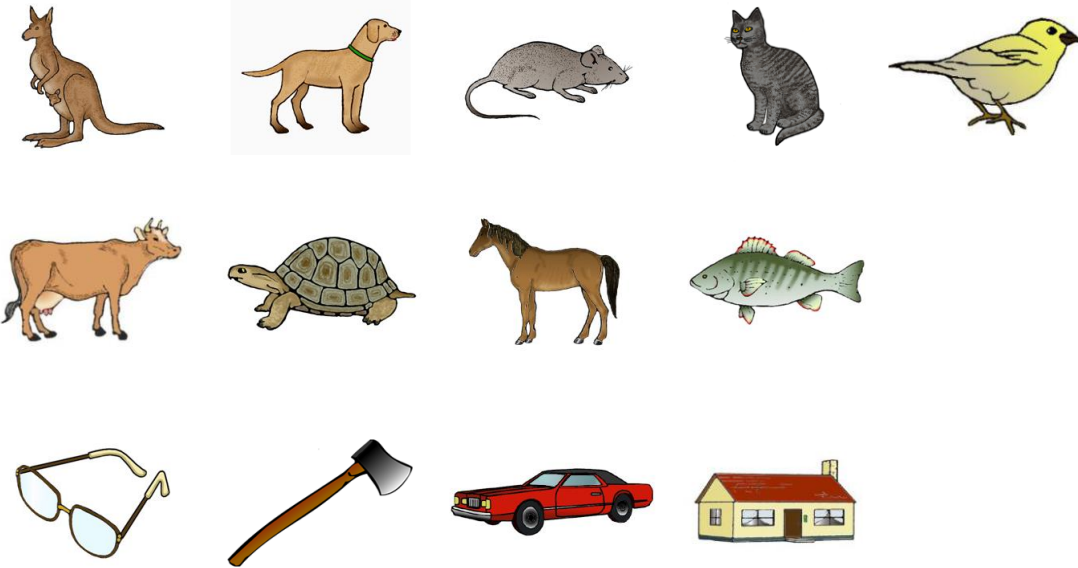
- o   Modifications by Ringel (cc)(i)(o) [3]

[2] Licence available at http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html (accessed 2023-09-25).

[3] Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0, available at https://creative commons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/, accessed 2023-09-25).

Bates et al. 2003 (publicly available as freeware)
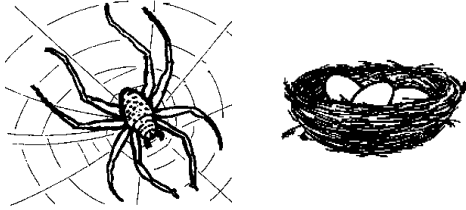
- o   Modifications by Ringel (©①②)[4]

Naor-Raz et al. 2003 (available under GNU Free Documentation License 1.3 or later)

- o   Modifications by Ringel (©①②)
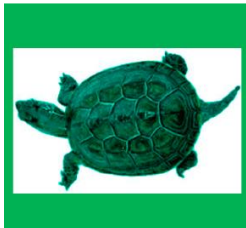
Microsoft Word® clipart
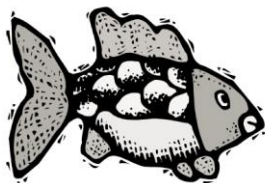
Katie Sardinha 2011b (CC BY-NC-SA)[5]

    o   Character Cards
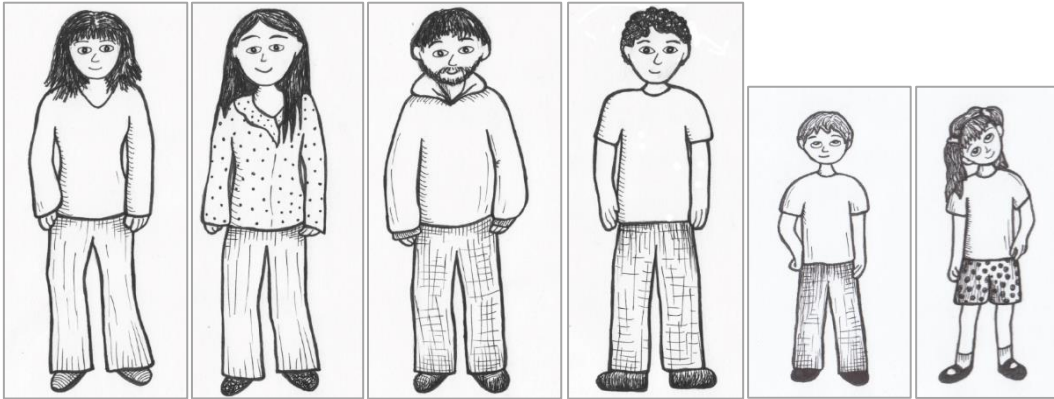
    o   Action Cards
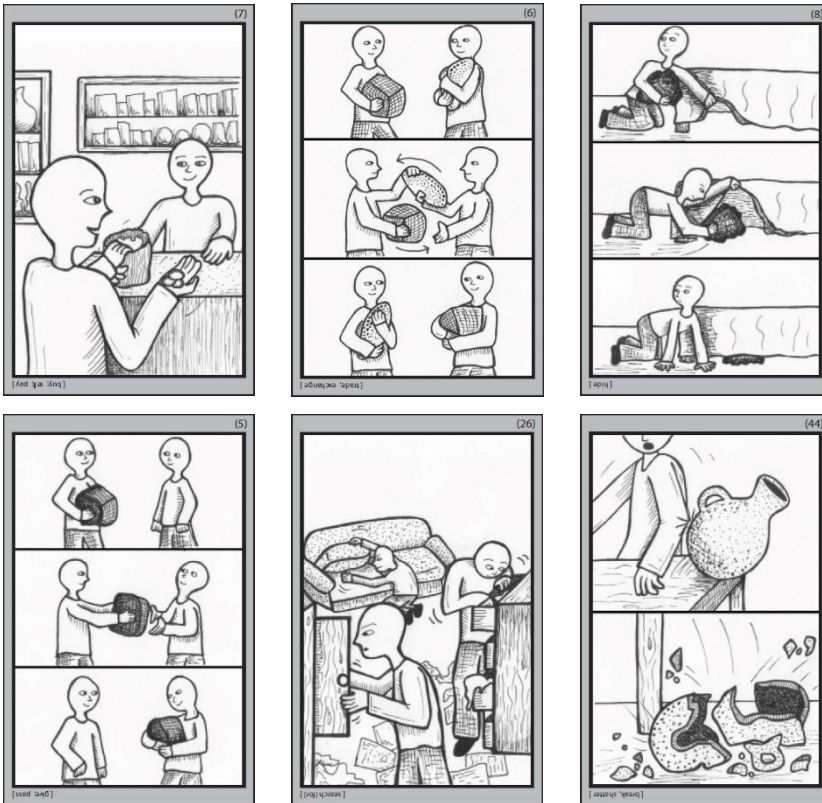
[5] Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/ (accessed 2023-10-01).

o   Photos of artefacts taken by Ringel at MDWg (CC BY-NC-SA)[6]

o   Photos taken by Ringel (CC BY-NC-SA) [7]

Photo of
a young
Miriwoong
woman

Photo of
another
young
Miriwoong
woman

© 2005

© 2011

© 2013

© 2005

© 2011

© 2013

© 2011

Bates et al. 2003

Naor-Raz et al. 2003
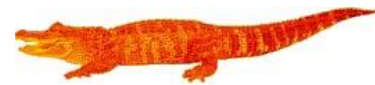
Rossion & Pourtois 2004
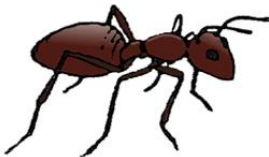
○   Modifications by Ringel (©①②)[8]

---

[8] Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0, available at https://creative commons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/, accessed 2023-09-25).

REFERENCES

ABS. 2016. *Cultural diversity in Australia: Reflecting the nation: Stories from the 2011 census*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2071.0main+features902012-2013, Accessed February 12, 2018.

Achoo, H., et al. 1996. *Moola Bulla: In the shadow of the mountain*. Broome: Magabala.

Adone, Dany. 2003a. *A cognitive theory of Creole genesis*. (Habilitätsschrift.)

Adone, Dany. 2003b. "Restricted verb movement in Ngukurr Kriol". *Recent development in Creole studies*. (Linguistische Arbeiten 472.) ed. by Dany Adone, 91–107. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer.

Adone, Dany. 2012. *The acquisition of Creole languages: How children surpass their input*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adone, Dany, Agnes Armstrong & Knut J. Olawsky. 2018. *Miriwoong Sign Language Dictionary*. Köln: Cologne University Press.

Adone, Dany M. C., Thomas Batchelor, Rozanne Bilminga, Melanie A. Brueck, Bryan Gallagher & Jimmy Paddy. 2019. ""Caring for dat land…, as mob bin teik keya of dat Kantri longtaim"". *Fire, Water and Land in Indigenous Australia* ed. by Dany M. C. Adone & Melanie A. Brueck, 81–97. University of Cologne Press.

AIATSIS. 2005. *National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS) report 2005*. Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies. Canberra: Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2013. "Possession and ownership: A cross linguistic perspective". Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013. 1–64.

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. & R. M. W. Dixon, eds. 2013. *Possession and ownership: A cross-linguistic typology*. (Explorations in Linguistic Typology 6.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y., Osamu Sakiyama & Fubito Endo. 2004. "Language endangerment in the Sepik area of Papua New Guinea". *Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim - Lectures on Endangered Languages* 5.97–142.

Ameka, Felix. 1996. "Body parts in Ewe grammar". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 783–840.

Austin, Peter K. & Julia Sallabank. 2011. "Introduction". *The Cambridge handbook of endangered languages*. (Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics.) ed. by Peter K. Austin & Julia Sallabank, 1–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bakker, Peter. 1994. "Pidgins". *Pidgins and creoles: An introduction*. (Creole Language Library 15.) ed. by Jacques Arends, Pieter Muysken & Norval Smith, 25–39. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Bally, Charles. 1996. "The expression of concepts of the personal domain and indivisibility in Indo-European languages". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 31–64.

Barker, Michael Q. C. 2004. "Working as a barrister on the Miriuwung Gajerrong Native Title claim". Toussaint 2004. 159–175.

Baron, Irène, Michael Herslund & Finn SØerensen, eds. 2001. *Dimensions of possession*. (Typological Studies in Language 47.) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Bates, Elizabeth, Simona D'Amico, Thomas Jacobsen, Anna Székely, Elena Andonova, Antonella Devescovi, Dan Herron, Ching C. Lu, Thomas Pechmann, Csaba Pléh, Nicole Wicha, Kara Federmeier, Irini Gerdjikova, Gabriel Gutierrez, Daisy Hung, Jeanne Hsu, Gowri Iyer, Katherine Kohnert, Teodora Mehotcheva, Araceli Orozco-Figueroa, Angela Tzeng & Ovid Tzeng. 2003. "Timed picture naming in seven languages". Stimuli available online: https://crl.ucsd.edu/experiments/ipnp/method/getpics/getpics.html. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review - A Journal of the Psychonomic Society, Inc* 10:2.344–380.

Baymarrwaŋa, Laurie & Bentley James. 2014. *Yan-nhaŋu atlas and illustrated dictionary of the Crocodile Islands*. Singapore & Sydney Australia: Tien wah press.

Bendix, Edward H. 1966. *Componential analysis of general vocabulary: The semantic structure of a set of verbs in English, Hindi, and Japanese*. (Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics 41.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Berndt, Ronald M. 1975. "Life in death: a Lungga (Gidja) mythic corollary". *Explorations in the anthropology of religion: Essays in honour of Jan van Baal*. (Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Leiden - Verhandelingen 74.) ed. by Walter E. A. van Beek, 121–146. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Bevan, M. 2010. *Semi-structured elicitation of possessive constructions in children of pre-school age*. University of Essex. (Undergraduate dissertation.)

Bickerton, Derek. 1981. *Roots of language*. (Language & species.) Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, Inc.

Bickerton, Derek. 2016. *Roots of Language*. (Classics in Linguistics 3.) Berlin: Language Science Press.

Bilminga, Julie. 2017. *Goorandalng thoon Jalin - The Brolga and the Kangaroo: A dreamtime story as told by Blanche Barney, adapted by Julie Bilminga*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Bilminga, Rozanne. 2019. *Merrgernem Ngandoongoorroom - In Three Skies*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Blake, Barry J. 1988. "Redefining Pama Nyungan: Towards the prehistory of Australian languages". *Aboriginal Linguistics* 1.1–90.

Blythe, Joseph & KLRC. 2001. *Yuwurriyangem Kijam: Our language Kija: A phrasebook of the Kija language*. Halls Creek: Kimberley Language Resource Centre.

Blythe, Joseph & R. McKenna Brown. 2003. "Maintaining the links: Language, identity and the land". *Maintaining the links: Language, identity and the land*. Proceedings of the seventh FEL conference, *Broome, Western Australia, 22-24 September 2003* ed. by Joseph Blythe & R. McKenna Brown, 7–10. Broome.

Blythe, Joseph & Glenn Wightman. 2003. "The role of animals and plants in maintaining the links". *Maintaining the links: Language, identity and the land*. Proceedings of the seventh FEL conference, *Broome, Western Australia, 22-24 September 2003* ed. by Joseph Blythe & R. McKenna Brown, 69–77. Broome.

Boombi, Rita, Rosemary Boombi, Rozanne Bilminga, Stephanie Woerde & Frances M. Kofod. 2017. *Gooloo-gooloob yarroondayan! - We are all happy!* Kununurra: MDWg.

Boombi, Rita, Rosemary Boombi, Stephanie Woerde, Glennis Galbat-Newry, Frances M. Kofod & Knut J. Olawsky. 2014. *Yangge yindajgoo! - Ask me!: A Miriwoong questions and answers book for kids and their families*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Bowern, Claire. 2008. *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide*. Basingstoke England, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bowern, Claire. 2012. *A grammar of Bardi*. (Mouton Grammar Library 57.) Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.

Brenzinger, Matthias, Tjeerd de Graaf, Arienne M. Dwyer, Colette Grinevald, Michael Krauss, Osahito Miyaoka, Nicholas Ostler, Osamu Sakiyama, María E. Villalón, Akira Y. Yamamoto & Ofelia Zepeda. 2003. "Language vitality and endangerment". (International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages.), March 2003. http://portal.unesco.org /culture/es/files/35646/12007687933Language_Vitality_and_Endangerment.pdf/Language%2 BVitality%2Band%2BEndangerment.pdf (Accessed 2018-02-18.)

Brown, Connor, Iris Menzies & Alex Stephenson. 2022. "Proposal for a Kununurra Kriol Orthography", MDWg, Kununurra, 2022.

Brown-Schmidt, Sarah. & Michael K. Tanenhaus. 2006. "Watching the eyes when talking about size: An investigation of message formulation and utterance planning". *Journal of Memory and Language* 54:4.592–609.

Capell, A. 1940. "The classification of languages in North and North-West Australia (Continued)". *Oceania* 10:4.404–433.

Chappell, Hilary & William B. McGregor. 1989. "Alienability, inalienability and nominal classification". *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society (BLS)* 15.24–36.

Chappell, Hilary & William B. McGregor. 1996a. "Prolegomena to a theory of inalienability". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 3–29.

Chappell, Hilary & William B. McGregor, eds. 1996b. *The grammar of inalienability: A typological perspective on body part terms and the part-whole relation*. (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 14.) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Chappell, Hilary & Sandra A. Thompson. 1992. "The semantics and pragmatics of associative de in Mandarin Discourse". *Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale (CLAO)* 21:2.199–229.

Chelliah, Shobhana L. 2013. "Fieldwork for language description". *Research methods in linguistics* ed. by Robert J. Podesva & Devyani Sharma, 51–73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chelliah, Shobhana L. & Willem J. Reuse. 2011. *Handbook of descriptive linguistic fieldwork*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Chen Pichler, Deborah, Katharina Schalber, Julie Hochgesang, Marina Milković, Ronnie B. Wilbur, Martina Vulje & Ljubica Pribanić. 2008. "Possession and existence in three sign languages". *Sign languages: Spinning and unraveling the past, present and future*. 9th Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research Conference (TISLR9), *Florianopolis, Brazil, December 2006* ed. by R. M. de Quadros. Petropolis: Editora Arara Azul.

Christensen, Will. 2004. "Working as an anthropologist on the Miriuwung Gajerrong Native Title claim". Toussaint 2004. 176–194.

Christie, Jean & Pat Mooney. 2000. "Rural societies and the logic of generosity". *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*.320–321.

Clark, Eve V. 1970. "Locationals: A study of'existential,' 'locative,' and 'possessive' sentences". *Stanford University Working Papers in Language Universals* 3.1–36.

Clark, Eve V. 1978. "Locationals: Existential, Locative Possessive constructions". *Universals of human language: Syntax*. (Universals of Human Language 4.) ed. by Joseph H. Greenberg, Charles A. Ferguson & Edith A. Moravcsik. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Clendon, Mark. 2009. "Dog-people: The meaning of a north Kimberley story". *Aboriginal placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. (Aboriginal History Monograph 19.) ed. by Luise A. Hercus & Harold J. Koch, 347–357. Canberra: ANU E Press.

Collard, Len. 2008. "Kura, Yeye, boorda 'from the past, today and the future'". *Heartsick for country: Stories of love, spirit and creation* ed. by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina, 60–80. Chicago: Fremantle Press.

Crowley, Terry. 1996. "Inalienable possession in Paamese". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 383–432.

Crowley, Terry & Nick Thieberger. 2007. *Field linguistics: A beginner's guide*. (Oxford Linguistics.) Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Cruse, David A. 2011. *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. (Oxford Textbooks in Linguistics.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dalton, Lorraine, Sandra Edwards, Rosaleen Farquarson, Sarah Oscar & Patrick McConvell. 1995. "Gurindji children's language and language maintenance". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 113:1.83–98.

Dingle, Angela. 2021. *Doonggerrnging Manggatheng - The Hungry Spider*. MDWg.

Dixon, R. M. W., ed. 1976. *Grammatical categories in Australian languages*. (Linguistic Series - Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies 22.) New York: Humanities Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. 1980. *The languages of Australia*. (Cambridge Library Collection - Linguistics.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. 2002. *Australian languages: Their nature and development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. 2007. "Field linguistics: a minor manual". *Sprachtypologie und Universailienforschung (STUF)* 60:1.12–31.

Dixon, R. M. W. 2009. *Basic Linguistic Theory, 2: Grammatical topics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dixon, R. M. W. 2013. "Possession and also ownership vignettes". Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013. 291–308.

Dixon, Roland B. 1910. *The Chimariko Indians and their language*. (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 5,5.) Berkeley: The University Press.

Drude, Sebastian & Rose Costa. 2011. *Bulk file name standardization and metadata production*. Dobes Workshop.

Dryer, Matthew S. & Martin Haspelmath. 2013. *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Available online at http://wals.info, Accessed August 18, 2020.

DuBois, J. 1987. "The discourse base for ergativity". *Language* 63:4.905-855.

Eades, Diana. 1993. "Language and the Law: White Australia v Nancy". *Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia* ed. by Michael J. Walsh & Colin Yallop, 181–190. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Eades, Diana. 1996. "Aboriginal English". *Atlas of languages of intercultural communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas* ed. by Stephen A. Wurm, 133–141. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig. 2020. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. Twenty-third edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. (http://www.ethnologue.com) (Accessed 2020-05-19.)

Eisenbeiss, Sonja. 2009. "Contrast is the name of the game: Contrast-based semi-structured elicitation techniques for studies on children's language acquisition research". *Essex Research Reports in Linguistics* 57:7.

Eisenbeiss, Sonja. 2010. "Production methods in language acquisition". *Experimental methods in language acquisition research*. (Language Learning & Language Teaching.) ed. by Elma Blom & Sharon Unsworth, vol. 27, 11–34. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Benjamins.

Eisenbeiss, Sonja. 2011. "An elicitation tool kit for studies on case marking and its acquisition". *Essex Research Reports in Linguistics* 60:1.

Eisenbeiss, Sonja, William B. McGregor & Claudia M. Schmidt. 1999. "Story book stimulus for the elicitation of external possessor constructions and dative constructions ('the circle of dirt')". *Manual for the 1999 field season: Version 1.0* ed. by David Wilkins. Nijmegen: Max Planck Inst. Language and Cognition Group.

ELAN. 2020. Nijmegen: Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.

Elkin, A. P. 1932. "Social organization in the Kimberley division, North-Western Australia". *Oceania* 2:3.296–333.

Elkin, A. P. 1933. "Totemism in North-Western Australia: The Kimberley division (Part II.-Continued)". *Oceania* 4:1.54–64.

Evans, Nicholas D. 1995. *A grammar of Kayardild: With historical comparative notes on Tangkic*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Evans, Nicholas D. 1996. "The syntax and semantics of body part incorporation in Mayali". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 65–109.

Evans, Nicholas D. 2001. "The last speaker is dead-long live the last speaker!". *Linguistic fieldwork* ed. by Paul Newman & Martha S. Ratliff, 250–281. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, Nicholas D. 2002. "Country and the word: Linguistic evidence in the Croker sea claim". Henderson & Nash 2002. 53–99.

Evans, Nicholas D. 2003a. "Context, culture, and structuration in the languages of Australia". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32:1.13–40.

Evans, Nicholas D., ed. 2003b. *The non-Pama-Nyungan languages of northern Australia: Comparative studies of the continent's most linguistically complex region*. (Pacific linguistics 552.) Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1965. "Who speaks what language to whom and when?". *La Linguistique* 2.67–88.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1991. *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. (Multilingual Matters 76.) Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Frajzyngier, Zygmunt. 2013. "Possession in Wandala". Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013. 243–260.

Freeze, Ray. 1992. "Existentials and other locatives". *Language - Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 68:3.553–595.

French, Robert. 2004. "The evolving law of Native Title". Toussaint 2004. 86–96.

Galbat-Newry, Glennis. 2012. *Woorlab yarrenkoo Miriwoong! - Let's all speak Miriwoong!: Miriwoong animals*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Galbat-Newry, Glennis. 2013. *Woorlab barrenkoonan Miriwoong! - Keep talking Miriwoong!: Miriwoong animals 2*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Graham-Taylor, Susan. 1978. *A history of the Ord River Scheme: A study in incrementalism*. Murdoch University. (Doctoral dissertation).

Grenoble, Lenore A. & Lindsay J. Whaley. 1998. *Endangered languages: Language loss and community response*. Cambridge England, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grenoble, Lenore A. & Lindsay J. Whaley. 2006. *Saving languages: An introduction to language revitalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haiman, John. 1983. "Iconic and economic motivation". *Language* 59:4.781–819.

Haiman, John, ed. 1985. *Iconicity in syntax*. Proceedings of a symposium on iconicity in syntax. (Typological Studies in Language 6.) *(Stanford, 24 June 1983)*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Harris, John W. 1986. *Northern Territory pidgins and the origin of Kriol*. (Pacific linguistics Series C, Books 89.) Canberra: Dept. of Linguistics Research School of Pacific Studies.

Harris, John W. 1991. "Kriol: The creation of a new language". *Language in Australia* ed. by Suzanne Romaine, 195–203. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harris, John W. 1993. "Losing and gaining a language: The story of Kriol in the Northern Territory". *Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia* ed. by Michael J. Walsh & Colin Yallop, 145–154. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Harvey, Mark. 2003. "Reconstruction of pronominals among the non-Pama-Nyungan". Evans 2003. 475–513.

Hawkins, Roger. 1981. "Towards an account of the possessive constructions: NP's N and the N of NP". *Journal of Linguistics* 17:2.247–269.

Heine, Bernd. 1997. *Possession: Cognitive sources, forces and grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heine, Bernd. 2001. "Ways of explaining possession". Baron, Herslund & SØerensen 2001. 311–328.

Heine, Bernd & Tania Kuteva. 2002. *World lexicon of grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hellwig, Birgit. 2007. "Fieldwork among the Goemai in Nigeria: Discovering the grammar of property expressions". *STUF - Language Typology and Universals* 60:1.67–80.

Henderson, John & David Nash, eds. 2002. *Language in Native Title*. Canberra: AIATSIS.

Hendriks, Bernadet. 2008. "I have therefore I exist: Possession in Jordanian Sign Language". Zeshan & Perniss 2008. 55–70.

Hercus, Luise. 2005. "The influence of English on possessive systems as shown in two Aboriginal languages, Arabana (northern SA) and Paakantyi (Darling River, NSW)". *Monash University Linguistics Papers* 4.29–41.

Herslund, Michael & Irène Baron. 2001. "Introduction". Baron, Herslund & SØerensen 2001. 1–25.

Himmelmann, Nikolaus P. 1998. "Documentary and descriptive linguistics". *Linguistics* 36:353.161–195.

Hinton, Leanne. 1997. "Survival of endangered languages: The Californian master–apprentice program". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*.177–191.

Hinton, Leanne, Margaret Florey, Suzanne Gessner & Jacob Manatowa-Bailey. 2018. "The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program". *The Routledge handbook of language revitalization*. (Routledge Handbooks.) ed. by Leanne Hinton, Leena Huss & Gerald Roche, 127–136. New York: Routledge.

Hornby, Peter A. 1971. "Surface structure and the topic-comment distinction: A developmental dtudy". *Child Development* 42:6.1975.

Horton, David R. 1996. *AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia*. Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS, Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz.

Horton, William S. & Boaz Keysar. 1996. "When do speakers take into account common ground?". *Cognition* 59:1.91–117.

Hosokawa, Komei. 1996. ""My face am burning!": Quasi-passive, body parts, and related issues in Yawuru grammar and cultural concepts". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 155–192.

Hudson, Joyce. 1983. *Grammatical and semantic aspects of Fitzroy Valley Kriol*. (Work papers of SIL-AAB - Series A 8.) Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines Branch.

Hudson, Joyce & Patrick McConvell. 1984. "Keeping language strong: Report of the pilot study for the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (long version)", KLRC, WA, 1984.

Ionin, Tania & Eve Zyzik. 2014. "Judgment and interpretation tasks in second language research". *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 34.37–64.

Ise, Megumi. 1999. *Grammatical sketch of the Malngin language*, Hokkaido University, (Doctoral dissertation.)

James, Bentley. 2015. "The language of 'Spiritual Power': From Mana to Märr on the Crocodile Islands". *Strings of connectedness: Essays in honour of Ian Keen* ed. by Peter Toner, 235–261. Australian National University.

James, Bentley & Laurie Baymarrwaŋa. 2016. *Ancestral voices in the wind: Strategies for the intergenerational transmission of Yan-nhangu*. University of Cologne.

Janse, Mark. 2003. "Introduction: Language Death and Language Maintenance: Problems and Prospects". *Language death and language maintenance: Theoretical, practical, and descriptive approaches*. (Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science - Series IV - Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 240.) ed. by Mark Janse & Sijmen Tol, ix–xvii. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Jebb, Mary A. 2002. *Blood, sweat and welfare: A history of white bosses and aboriginal pastoral workers*. Crawley: University of Western Australia Press.

Jones, Caroline. 1995. *Draft sketch grammar of Ngarinyman*. (Unpublished).

Kaberry, Phyllis M. 1935. "The Forrest river and Lyne river tribes of north-west Australia: A report on field work". *Oceania* 5:4.408–436.

Kaberry, Phyllis M. 1937a. "Notes on the languages of East Kimberley, North-West Australia". *Oceania* 8:1.90–103.

Kaberry, Phyllis M. 1937b. "Subsections in the East and South Kimberley tribes of North-West Australia". *Oceania* 7:4.436–458.

Kaberry, Phyllis M. 1938. "Totemism in East and South Kimberley, North-West Australia". *Oceania* 8:3.265–288.

Kaberry, Phyllis M. 1939. *Aboriginal woman, sacred and profane*. George Routledge & Sons.

Kaldor, Susan & Ian G. Malcolm. 1991. "Aboriginal english: An overview". *Language in Australia* ed. by Suzanne Romaine, 67–83. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karidakis, Maria & Barbara Kelly. 2018. "Trends in Indigenous language usage". *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 38:1.105–126.

Kay, Paul. 2006. "Methodological issues in cross-language colour naming". *Language, culture, and society: Key topics in linguistic anthropology* ed. by Christine Jourdan & Kevin Tuite, 115–134. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keen, Ian. 2013. "The language of possession: Three case studies". *Language in Society* 42:2.187–214.

KLRC. 1996. *Introduction to the Kija language*. Halls Creek: Kimberley Language Resource Centre.

Koch, Günter. 2016. "Enklitikon". https://db.degruyter.com/view/WSK/wsk_id_wsk_artikel_artikel_16851 (Accessed 2020-08-06). *Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online* ed. by Stefan J. Schierholz. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Koch, Harold J. 1991. "Language and communication in Aboriginal land claim hearings". *Language in Australia* ed. by Suzanne Romaine, 94–103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Koch, Harold J. 2007. "An overview of Australian traditional languages". *The habitat of Australia's Aboriginal languages*. (Trends in Linguistics - Studies and Monographs 179.) ed. by Gerhard Leitner & Ian G. Malcolm. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter Mouton.

Koch, N. 2010. *Possessive constructions in English child language: S-genitive and of-genitive*, University of Stuttgart, (MA dissertation.)

Kofod, Frances M. 1976a. "Miriwung". Dixon 1976. 584–586.

Kofod, Frances M. 1976b. "Simple and compound verbs: Conjugation by auxiliaries in Australian verbal systems - Miriwung". Dixon 1976. 646–653.

Kofod, Frances M. 1978. *The Miriwung language (East Kimberley): A phonological and morphological study*. University of New England. (Unpublished Master's Thesis.)

Kofod, Frances M. 1994a. "Clitic pronouns in Jarragan languages". Conference paper. *Annual meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society*. Melbourne.

Kofod, Frances M. 1994b. "Transitivity and definiteness in Jarragan languages". Conference paper. *Australian Linguistic Society Conference*, vol. 2.

Kofod, Frances M. 1994c. "Transitivity and indefiniteness in the Jarragan languages". Conference paper. *Top End Linguistics Circle Meeting, Darwin*.

Kofod, Frances M. 1995. "Miriwoong and Gija speech verbs". Conference paper. *Top End Linguistics Circle Meeting, Darwin*.

Kofod, Frances M. 1996a. "Inverse with second person objects in Jarragan languages". Conference paper. *Top End Linguistics Circle Meeting, Darwin*.

Kofod, Frances M. 1996b. "Jarragan verb stems (or Jarragan gender/number)". Conference paper. *Top End Linguistics Circle Meeting, Darwin*.

Kofod, Frances M. 1996c. *Kija learner's grammar*. Halls Creek: Kimberley Language Resource Centre (Unpublished Manuscript.)

Kofod, Frances M. 1996d. "Verb stems in Jarragan languages of the East Kimberley". *Annual Meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society, Canberra*.

Kofod, Frances M. 1997. "Middle verbs in Jarragan languages". *Top End Linguistics Circle Meeting, Darwin*.

Kofod, Frances M. 2003. "My relations, my country: Language, identity and the land in the East Kimberley of Western Australia". *Maintaining the links: Language, identity and the land*. Proceedings of the seventh FEL conference, *Broome, Western Australia, 22-24 September 2003* ed. by Joseph Blythe & R. McKenna Brown, 41–47. Broome.

Kofod, Frances M. 2009a. "Introduction to Miriwoong grammar". Kofod 2009. 1–36.

Kofod, Frances M., ed. 2009b. *Miriwoong yirrgeb yarrenkoo ngerragoowiya menewoolbtha: Miriwoong dictionary*. Kununurra: MDWg. (Unpublished Manuscript).

Kofod, Frances M. 2013. "The painter's eye, the painter's voice: Language, art and landscape in the Gija world", London: SOAS, Endangered Languages Archive, 2013. https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI118834, Accessed July 28, 2020.

Kofod, Frances M. 2015. *Miriwoong lexical and text database. (Unpublished Toolbox files.)*

Kofod, Frances M. in prep. (2017). *Miriwoong pronouns. Gaboongerreg? Thenangoowing?* (Unpublished Manuscript.)

Kofod, Frances M. 2018-2019. "Gajirrabeng Collection", 2018-2019. https://elar.soas.ac.uk /Collection/MPI1234840, Accessed July 28, 2020.

Kofod, Frances M. 2020. *Miriwoong lexical and text database. (Unpublished Toolbox files.)*

Kofod, Frances M. in prep. (2020). *Miriwoong verbs.* (Unpublished Manuscript.)

Kofod, Frances M. 2023. *Miriwoong lexical and text database. (Unpublished Toolbox files.)*

Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Maria. 2001. "Adnominal possession". *Language Typology and Language Universals / Sprachtypologie und sprachliche Universalien / La typologie des langues et les universaux linguistiques*. 2. Halbband. (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science 20.) ed. by Martin Haspelmath, Ekkehard König, Wulf Oesterreicher & Wolfgang Raible, 960–970. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Kortmann, Bernd. 2005. *English linguistics: Essentials*. (Studium kompakt : Anglistik, Amerikanistik.) Berlin: Cornelsen.

Krauss, Michael. 2007. "Classification and terminology for degrees of endangerment". *Language diversity endangered*. (Trends in Linguistics - Studies and Monographs 181.) ed. by Matthias Brenzinger, 1–8. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kroeber, Alfred L. & George W. Grace. 1960. *The Sparkman grammar of Luiseño*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kwaymullina, Ambelin. 2008. "Introduction". *Heartsick for country: Stories of love, spirit and creation* ed. by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina, 6–20. Chicago: Fremantle Press.

Langacker, Ronald W. 1991. *Foundations of cognitive grammar*. Descriptive application. (2.) Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Langacker, Ronald W. 1995. "Possession and possessive constructions". *Language and the cognitive construal of the world*. (Trends in Linguistics - Studies and Monographs 82.) ed. by John R. Taylor, 51–79. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Langacker, Ronald W. 2003. "Strategies of clausal possession". *International Journal of English Studies (IJES)* 3:2.1–24.

Levin, Magnus. 2009. "The formation of the preterite and the past participle". *One language, two grammars? Differences between British and American English*. (Studies in English language.) ed. by Günter Rohdenburg, 60–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. 1914. *L'expression de la possession dans les langues mélanésiennes*. Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion.

Lewis, M. P. 2009. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. Dallas, Tex. SIL International.

Lewis, M. P. & Gary F. Simons. 2010. "Assessing endangerment: Expanding Fishman's GIDS". *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* 55:2.103–120.

Löbner, Sebastian. 2011. "Concept types and determination". *Journal of Semantics* 28:3.279–333.

Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics*. Cambridge u. a.

Maffi, Luisa. 1995. "A linguistic analysis of Tzeltal Maya ethnosymptomatology".

Majid, Asifa. 2012. "A guide to stimulus-based elicitation for semantic categories". *The Oxford handbook of linguistic fieldwork*. (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics.) ed. by Nick Thieberger, 54–71. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marmion, Doug, Kazuko Obata & Jakelin Troy. 2014. *Community, identity, wellbeing: The report of the second National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS 2)*. Canberra.

McConvell, Patrick. 1986. "Aboriginal language programmes and language maintenance in the Kimberley". *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics. Supplement Series* 3:1.108–122.

McConvell, Patrick. 1988. "Mix-im-up: Aboriginal codeswitching, old and new". *Codeswitching: Anthropological and sociolinguistic perspectives*. (Contributions to the Sociology of Language 48.) ed. by Monica Heller. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

McConvell, Patrick. 1996. *Gurindji grammar*. Canberra. (Unpublished manuscript.)

McConvell, Patrick. 2003. "Headward migration: A Kimberley counter-example". Evans 2003. 75–92.

McConvell, Patrick. 2004. "A short ride on a time machine: Linguistics, cultural history and Native Title". Toussaint 2004. 34–49.

McConvell, Patrick. 2005. "Language contact interaction and possessive variation". *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies* 4.2.87–105.

McConvell, Patrick & Felicity Meakins. 2005. "Gurindji Kriol: A mixed language emerges from code-switching". *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 25:1.9–30.

McConvell, Patrick & Nick Thieberger. 2001. "State of Indigenous languages in Australia - 2001". Australia State of the Environment Second Technical Paper Series 2 (Natural and Cultural Heritage). Department of the Environment and Heritage, Canberra, 2001.

McConvell, Patrick & Nick Thieberger. 2003. "Language data assessment at the national level: Learning from the state of the environment process in Australia". *Maintaining the links: Language, identity and the land*. Proceedings of the seventh FEL conference, *Broome, Western Australia, 22-24 September 2003* ed. by Joseph Blythe & R. McKenna Brown, 51–57. Broome.

McGregor, William B. 1988. *Handbook of Kimberley languages*. (Pacific linguistics Series C - Books 105.) Canberra, A.C.T., Australia: Deptartment of Linguistics Research School of Pacific Studies Australian National University.

McGregor, William B. 1989. "Greenberg on the first person inclusive dual: Evidence from some Australian languages". *Studies in Language* 13:2.437–451.

McGregor, William B. 1990. *A functional grammar of Gooniyandi*. (Studies in Language Companion Series 22.) Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins.

McGregor, William B. 1999. "External possession constructions in Nyulnyulan languages". *External possession*. (Typological Studies in Language 39.) ed. by Doris L. Payne & Immanuel Barshi, vol. 39, 429–448. John Benjamins Publishing.

McGregor, William B. 2001. "The verb HAVE in Nyulnyulan languages". Baron, Herslund & SØerensen 2001. 67–84.

McGregor, William B. 2002a. "Structural changes in language obsolescence: A Kimberley (Australia) perspective". *SKY Journal of Linguistics* 15.145–185.

McGregor, William B. 2002b. *Verb classification in Australian languages*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

McGregor, William B. 2004. *The languages of the Kimberley, Western Australia*. (vol. 1, General Information. Pacific Linguistics Series C 105.) London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

McGregor, William B. 2008. "Indexicals as sources of case markers in Australian languages". *Interdependence of diachronic and synchronic analyses*. (Studies in Language Companion Series 103.) ed. by Folke Josephson & Ingmar Söhrman, vol. 103, 299–321. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

McGregor, William B. & Alan Rumsey. 2009. *Worrorran revisited: The case for genetic relations among languages of the Northern Kimberley region of Western Australia*. (Studies in Language Change 4.) Canberra: Pacific Linguistics Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

McIntyre, Greg & Kim Doohan. 2002. "Labels, language and Native Title groups: The Miriuwung-Gajerrong case". Henderson & Nash 2002. 187–204.

MDWg. 2012. *Language and culture awareness course*. Kununurra.

MDWg. 2013. *Miriwoong seasonal calendar*. Kununurra.

MDWg. 2015. *Woorlab yarrenkoo Miriwoong - Let's speak Miriwoong: Best of Miriwoong word of the week*. Kununurra.

MDWg. 2017. *Miriwoong woorlang yawoorroonga-woorr - A Miriwoong lexicon for all*. Kununurra.

MDWg. 2019. *Miriwoong woorlang yawoorroonga-woorr - A Miriwoong lexicon for all*. Kununurra.

Meakins, Felicity. 2011. *Case-marking in contact: The development and function of case morphology in Gurindji Kriol*. (Creole Language Library 39.) Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Meakins, Felicity. 2014. "Language contact varieties". *The languages and linguistics of Australia: A comprehensive guide*. (The World of Linguistics 3.) ed. by Harold J. Koch & Rachel Nordlinger. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.

Meakins, Felicity & Rachel Nordlinger. 2013. *A grammar of Bilinarra: An Australian Aboriginal language of the Northern Territory*. (Pacific Linguistics 640.) Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Melancon, Megan E. 2000. *The sociolinguistic situation of creoles in South Louisiana: Identity, characteristics, attitudes*, Lousiana: State University, (Doctoral dissertation.)

Miller, George A. & Philip N. Johnson-Laird. 1976. *Language and perception*. Cambridge University Press.

Milroy, Lesley. 1987. *Observing and analysing natural language: A critical account of sociolinguistic method*. (Language in Society 12.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. 2004. "The possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty: The High Court and the Yorta Yorta decision". *Borderlands* 3:2.

Morgan, Bob. 2008. "Country: A journey to cultural and spiritual healing". *Heartsick for country: Stories of love, spirit and creation* ed. by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina, 202–220. Chicago: Fremantle Press.

Morgan, Sally. 2008. "The balance for the world". *Heartsick for country: Stories of love, spirit and creation* ed. by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina, 254–278. Chicago: Fremantle Press.

Mosel, Ulrike. 2012. "Morphosyntactic analysis in the field: A guide to the guides". *The Oxford handbook of linguistic fieldwork*. (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics.) ed. by Nick Thieberger, 72–89. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moses, Karin & Gillian Wigglesworth. 2008. "The silence of the frogs: Dysfunctional discourse in the 'English-Only' Aboriginal classroom". *Children's language and multilingualism: Indigenous language use at home and school* ed. by Jane Simpson & Gillian Wigglesworth, 129–153. London: Continuum.

Mühlhäusler, Peter. 1986. *Pidgin & Creole linguistics*. (Language in Society 11.) Oxford: Blackwell.

Munro, Jennifer M. 2000. "Kriol on the Move: A case of language spread and shift in Northern Australia". *Process of language contact: Studies from Australia and the South Pacific*. (Champs Linguistiques.) ed. by Jeff Siegel. Quebec: Fides.

Munro, Jennifer M. 2005. *Substrate language influence in Kriol: The application of transfer constraints to language contact in northern Australia*. Biddeford: University of New England. (Doctoral dissertation.)

Nadig, Aparna S. & Julie C. Sedivy. 2002. "Evidence of perspective-taking constraints in children's on-line reference resolution". *Psychological Science* 13:4.329–336.

Naor-Raz, Galit, Michael J. Tarr & Daniel Kersten. 2003. "Is color an intrinsic property of object representation?". Stimuli available online: http://wiki.cnbc.cmu.edu/Objects. *Perception* 32:6.667–680.

Navarro i Ferrando, Ignasi. 2013. "clitic". Retrieved 2020-07-08, from
    https://db.degruyter.com/view/WSK/wsk_id860b3e14-05b1-4ce9-8c27-005ed78e4f34.
    Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online. Berlin, Boston: de
    Gruyter Mouton.

Nekes, Hermann, Ernest A. Worms & William B. McGregor, eds. 2006. *Australian languages*.
    (Trends in Linguistics - Documentation 24.) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Nekes, Hermann. & Ernest A. Worms. 1953. *Australian languages*. Fribourg Switzerland:
    Anthropos Institut.

Nettle, Daniel & Suzanne Romaine. 2000. *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's
    languages*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Neveu, Grace K. 2016. *Sign order and argument structure in a Peruvian home sign system*, The
    University of Texas at Austin.

Newry, David & Keeley Palmer. 2003. "'Whose language is it anyway?' Rights to restrict access to
    endangered languages: A north-east Kimberley example". *Maintaining the links: Language,
    identity and the land*. Proceedings of the seventh FEL conference, *Broome, Western Australia,
    22-24 September 2003* ed. by Joseph Blythe & R. McKenna Brown, 101–106. Broome.

Newry, Dwayne. 2012. *Warlayi - Cooking meat in the earth oven*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Newry, Dwayne. 2013. *Jawaleng gawooleny. Jooroobtha berrandawoon-meleng - Miriwoong body
    parts*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Newry, Dwayne. 2015. *Ninggoowoong boorriyang merndang - Family book*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Newry, Glennis. 2002. "Mirima Dawang Woorlag-gerring Language and Culture Centre".
    Ngoonjook - A Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues 21.26–49.

Nichols, Johanna. 1986. "Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar". *Language* 62:1.56–
    119.

Nichols, Johanna. 1988. "On alienable and inalienable possession". *In honor of Mary Haas: From
    the Haas Festival conference on Native American linguistics* ed. by Mary R. Haas & William
    Shipley. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Nichols, Johanna. 1992. *Linguistic diversity in space and time*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nikolaeva, Irina & Andrew Spencer. 2010. "The possession-modification scale: A universal of
    nominal morphosyntax". *SOAS/University of Essex. (Unpublished Manuscript.)*

Ningarmara, Ingrid & Nancy Dilyai. 2014. *Ngayangeng dawang Woorre-Woorrem: My country
    Flying Fox*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Ningarmara, Ingrid & Glennis Galbat-Newry. 2019. *Jangeb yarrenkoo - Let's eat!: A Miriwoong
    cooking book*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Nordlinger, Rachel. 2001. "Non-finite subordinate verbs in Australian Aboriginal languages: Are nominalised verbs really nominalised?". *Proceedings of the 2001 conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*.

Oates, William J. & Lynette F. Oates. 1970. *A revised linguistic survey of Australia*. (Australian Aboriginal Studies Linguistic Series 12.) Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Oates, William J. & Lynette F. Oates. 1975. *The 1973 supplement to A Revised Linguistic Survey of Australia [by] WJ Oates [and] Lynette F. Oates*. Armidale Christian Book Centre.

O'Grady, Geoffrey N., C. F. Voegelin & F. M. Voegelin. 1966. "Languages of the world: Indo-Pacific Fascicle Six". *Anthropological Linguistics* 8:2.1–197.

Olawsky, Knut J. 2010a. "Going public with language: Involving the wider community in language revitalisation". *Re-awakening languages: Theory and practice in the revitalisation of Australia's Indigenous languages* ed. by John Hobson, Kevin Lowe, Susan Poetsch & Michael J. Walsh, 75–83. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Olawsky, Knut J. 2010b. "Revitalisation strategies for Miriwoong". *Re-awakening languages: Theory and practice in the revitalisation of Australia's Indigenous languages* ed. by John Hobson, Kevin Lowe, Susan Poetsch & Michael J. Walsh, 146–154. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Olawsky, Knut J. 2013. "The Master-Apprentice language learning program down under: Experience and adaptation in an Australian context". *Language Documentation & Conservation* 7.

Olawsky, Knut J. 2014. "Between duty statement and reality: The 'Linguist/Coordinator' at an Australian Indigenous language centre". *Language Documentation & Conservation ; 8* 8.361–383.

Olawsky, Knut J., ed. in prep. (2020). *Miriwoong grammar*. With the assistance of Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre. Kununurra: MDWg.

Palosaari, Naomi & Lyle Campbell. 2011. "Structural aspects of language endangerment". *The Cambridge handbook of endangered languages*. (Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics.) ed. by Peter K. Austin & Julia Sallabank, 100–119. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Payne, Doris L. & Immanuel Barshi. 1999. "External possession: What, where, how, and why". *External possession*. (Typological Studies in Language 39.) ed. by Doris L. Payne & Immanuel Barshi, 3–29. John Benjamins Publishing.

PM&C. 2019. "Closing the Gap Report 2019", Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019.

Posey, Darrell A. 1999. *Cultural and spiritual values of biodiversity*. Intermediate Technology London.

Quirk, Randolph. 1970. "Aspect and variant inflection in English verbs". *Language* 46:2.300–311.

Ray, Sidney H. 1898. "Note on the Languages of North-West Australia". *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 27.346.

Read, Paul. 2017. "Remembering Aboriginal Sydney". *Migrant nation: Australian culture, society and identity* ed. by Paul L. Arthur, 28–51. Anthem Press.

Rhydwen, Mari. 1993. "Kriol: The creation of a written language and a tool of colonisation". *Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia* ed. by Michael J. Walsh & Colin Yallop, 155–168. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Ringel, Christina & Agnes Armstrong. 2017. *Relating definiteness and exhaustivity to possession in an endangered Indigenous language of Australia*. (= *Societas Linguistica Europaea 50*.) Zurich.

Ringel, Christina & David Newry. 2018. "The Miriwoong perspective on land rights". *Nature and environment in Australia*. (KOALAS 13.) ed. by Beate Neumeier, Boris Braun & Victoria Herche, 119–137. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Rohdenburg, Günter. 2003. "Aspects of grammatical iconicity in English". *From sign to signing* ed. by Wolfgang G. Müller & Olga Fischer, 263–285. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Rossion, Bruno & Gilles Pourtois. 2004. "Revisiting Snodgrass and Vanderwart's object pictorial set: The role of surface detail in basic-level object recognition". Stimuli available online: https://wiki.cnbc.cmu.edu/Objects. *Perception* 33:2.217–236.

Rottet, Kevin J. 2001. *Language shift in the coastal marshes of Louisiana*. (Studies in Ethnolinguistics 8.) New York a.o. Lang.

Rumsey, Alan. 1993. "Language and territoriality in Aboriginal Australia". *Language and culture in Aboriginal Australia* ed. by Michael J. Walsh & Colin Yallop, 191–206. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Sandefur, John R. 1979. *An Australian Creole in the Northern Territory: A description of Ngukurr-Bamyili dialects, part 1*. (Work papers of SIL-AAB - Series B 3.) Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics Australian Aborigines Branch.

Sandefur, John R. & Joy L. Sandefur. 1979. *Beginnings of a Ngukurr-Bamyili Creole dictionary*. (Work papers of SIL-AAB. Series B 4.) Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics Australian Aborigines Branch.

Sardinha, Katherine. 2017. *The semantics of Kʷakʼʷala object case*, University of California Berkeley.

Sardinha, Katie. 2011a. *Story-builder: A Language Tool for Linguistic Fieldwork and Second Language Learning*. University of British Columbia. (Student paper.)

Sardinha, Katie. 2011b. *Story-builder: Picture cards for language activities*. (http://www.story-builder.ca) (Accessed 2014-04-14.)

SCATSIA. 2012. "Our Land Our Languages", Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2012.

Schmidt, Annette. 1983. *Young People's Dyirbal: An example of language death from Australia*, The Australian National University, (Doctoral dissertation.)

Schmidt, Annette. 1990. *The loss of Australia's Aboriginal language heritage*. (The Institute Report Series.) Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Schultze-Berndt, Eva. 2000. *Simple and complex verbs in Jaminjung: A study of event categorisation in an Australian language*, Nijmegen: Catholic University, (Doctoral dissertation.)

Schultze-Berndt, Eva. 2003. "Preverbs as an open word class in Northern Australian languages: Synchronic and diachronic correlates". *Yearbook of morphology 2003* ed. by Geert Booij & Jaap van Marle, 145–177. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Schultze-Berndt, Eva, Felicity Meakins & Denise Angelo. 2013. "Kriol".

Schütze, Carson T. & Jon Sprouse. 2013. "Judgment data". *Research methods in linguistics* ed. by Robert J. Podesva & Devyani Sharma, 27–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seiler, Hansjakob. 1981. *Possession: As an operational dimension of language*. Köln: Arbeiten des Kölner Universalien-Projekts.

Seiler, Hansjakob. 1983. *Possession as an operational dimension of language*. (Language Universals Series 2.) Tübingen: Narr.

Shaw, Bruce. 1981. *My country of the pelican dreaming*.

Shaw, Bruce. 1992. *When the dust come in between: Aboriginal viewpoints in the East Kimberley prior to 1982*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

SIL-AAIB. 1996. *Kriol Dictionary: With Kriol to English and English to Kriol*. Reprinted from 1986. Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics Australian Aborigines Branch.

Simon, Sylvia. 2017. *Jigeng - Birds*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Simon, Sylvia & Paulina Galbat. nd. *Woorrijilwarim – Molly Springs*.

Simons, Gary F. & Charles D. Fennig. 2017. *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. Twentieth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. (http://www.ethnologue.com) (Accessed 2017-10-30.)

Simpson, Jane, Jo Caffery & Patrick McConvell. 2009. "Gaps in Australia's Indigenous language policy: Dismantling bilingual education in the Northern Territory", AIATSIS, Canberra, 2009.

Skibitzki, Bernd. 2016. "Asyndetische Satzverbindung". https://www.degruyter.com/database/WSK/entry/wsk_id_wsk_artikel_artikel_8743/html. Accessed 2023-09-30. *Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online* ed. by Stefan J. Schierholz. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. 2003. "Linguistic diversity and biodiversity: The threat from killer languages". *The politics of English as a world language: New horizons in postcolonial cultural studies*. (ASNEL Papers 7.) ed. by Christian Mair, 31–52. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Stassen, Leon. 2001. "Predicative possession". *Language Typology and Language Universals / Sprachtypologie und sprachliche Universalien / La typologie des langues et les universaux linguistiques*. 2. Halbband. (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science 20.) ed. by Martin Haspelmath, Ekkehard König, Wulf Oesterreicher & Wolfgang Raible, 954–960. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Stassen, Leon. 2009. *Predicative possession*. (Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory.) New York: Oxford University Press.

Stokes, Bronwyn. 1982. "A description of Nyigina: A language of the West Kimberley, Western Australia".

Sutton, Peter. 1997. "Materialism, sacred myth and pluralism". *Scholar and sceptic, Australian Aboriginal studies in honour of LR Hiatt* ed. by Francesca Merlan, J. Morton & Alan Rumsey, 211–242. Aboriginal Studies Press.

Sutton, Peter & Arthur B. Palmer. 1980. *Daly River (Malak Malak) land claim*. Northern Land Council.

Taylor, John R. 1996. *Possessives in English: An exploration in cognitive grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Thomas, David. 1955. "Three analyses of the Ilocano pronoun system". *WORD* 11:2.204–208.

Thompson, Chad. 1996. "On the grammar of body parts in Koyukon Athabaskan". Chappell & McGregor 1996. 651–676.

Tindale, Norman B. 1940. *Map showing the distribution of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia*. Adelaide: Govt. Photolithographer.

Tindale, Norman B. 1974. *Aboriginal tribes of Australia: Their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits and proper names*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Toussaint, Sandy, ed. 2004. *Crossing boundaries: Cultural, legal, historical and practice issues in native title*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Tsunoda, Tasaku. 1981. *The Djaru language of Kimberley, Western Australia*. (Pacific linguistics Series B 78.) Canberra: National University.

Tsunoda, Tasaku. 2006. *Language endangerment and language revitalization: An introduction*. (Mouton Textbook.) Hanover, Boston, Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton; Knowledge Unlatched.

Ultan, Russell. 1978. "Toward a typology of substantival possession". *Universals of human language: Syntax*. (Universals of Human Language 4.) ed. by Joseph H. Greenberg, Charles A. Ferguson & Edith A. Moravcsik, 11–50. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Vigario, Marina. 2014a. "clitic". Retrieved 2020-07-08, from

https://db.degruyter.com/view/WSK/wsk_id74cbffb1-ce9e-4aa7-9579-9340b973be00.

Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online. Berlin, Boston: de

Gruyter Mouton.

Vigario, Marina. 2014b. "enclitic". *Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*

(WSK) Online, Retrieved 2020-07-08, from

https://db.degruyter.com/view/WSK/wsk_id3f604967-226f-4b69-b0ec-59d7d65087d6. Berlin,

Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Walsh, Michael J. 1996. "Body parts in Murrinh-Patha: Incorporation, grammar and metaphor".

Chappell & McGregor 1996. 327–380.

Walsh, Michael J. 2002. "Language ownership: A key issue for Native Title". Henderson & Nash

2002. 231–244.

Walsh, Michael J. & Jakelin Troy. 2016. "A torrent of tongues: Asian and European influences on

Australian Indigenous languages". *Language colonization and endangerment: Long-term*

effects, echoes and reactions. Proceedings of the 20th FEL Conference, 9-12 December 2016,

University of Hyderabad, India ed. by Nicholas Ostler & Panchanan Mohanty, 82–87.

Watson, Irene. 2008. "De-colonising the space: Dreaming back to Country". *Heartsick for country:*

Stories of love, spirit and creation ed. by Sally Morgan, Tjalaminu Mia & Blaze Kwaymullina,

82–100. Chicago: Fremantle Press.

Withers, Peter. 2014. *KinOath Kinship Archiver*. LINDAT/CLARIN digital library at Institute of

Formal and Applied Linguistics (ÚFAL), Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University:

(http://hdl.handle.net/11372/LRT-1213) (Accessed 2020-05-18.)

Woerde, Stephanie. 2012a. *'What's in a name?': Miriwoong naming practices and non-Miriwoong*

processes of identification documentation. Sydney: Macquarie University. (Unpublished

Honours Thesis.)

Woerde, Stephanie. 2012b. *Miriwoong naming practices*. Kununurra: MDWg.

Wood, Michael. 2013. "Spirits of the forest, the wind, and new wealth: Defining some of the

possibilities, and limits, of Kamula possession". Aikhenvald & Dixon 2013. 261–273.

Worms, Ernest A. 1949. *An Australian migratory myth*. Washington: Catholic Anthropological

Conference.

Worms, Ernest A. 1957. "Australian mythological terms: Their etymology and dispersion".

Anthropos 52:5/6.732–768.

Wurm, Stephen A. 2007. "Australasia and the Pacific". *Encyclopedia of the world's endangered*

languages. (Routledge Language - Reference.) ed. by Christopher Moseley, 424–577. London:

Routledge.

Yallop, Colin. 1982. *Australian Aboriginal languages*. (Language Library.) London: André Deutsch.

Zeshan, Ulrike. 2008. "Roots, leaves and branches: The typology of sign languages". *Sign Languages: Spinning and unraveling the past, present and future (Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research Conference (TISLR9)), Florianopolis, Brazil, December 2006* ed. by R. M. de Quadros, 671–695. Petrópolis: Editora Arara Azul.

Zeshan, Ulrike & Pamela Perniss, eds. 2008. *Possessive and existential constructions in sign languages*. Nijmegen: Ishara Press.

Zuckermann, Ghil'ad. 2006. "A new vision for Israeli Hebrew: Theoretical and practical implications of analyzing Israel's main language as a semi-engineered Semito-European hybrid language". *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5:1.57–71.

Zuckermann, Ghil'ad, Shiori Shakuto-Neoh & Giovanni M. Quer. 2014. "Native Tongue Title: Compensation for the loss of Aboriginal languages". *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1.55–71.

Zuckermann, Ghil'ad & Michael J. Walsh. 2011. "Stop, revive, survive: Lessons from the Hebrew revival applicable to the reclamation, maintenance and empowerment of Aboriginal languages and cultures". *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 31:1.111–127.