



# Difference and repetition in language shift to a creole. The expression of emotions

Maïa Ponsonnet

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# Difference and Repetition in Language Shift to a Creole

In today's global commerce and communication, linguistic diversity is in steady decline across the world as speakers of smaller languages adopt dominant forms. While this phenomenon, known as 'language shift', is usually regarded as a loss, this book adopts a different angle and addresses the following questions:

- What difference does using a new language make to the way speakers communicate in everyday life?
- Can the grammatical and lexical architectures of individual languages influence what speakers express?
- In other words, to what extent does adopting a new language alter speakers' day-to-day communication practices, and in turn, perhaps, their social life and world views?

To answer these questions, this book studies the expression of emotions in two languages on each side of a shift: Kriol, an English-based creole spoken in northern Australia, and Dalabon (Gunwinyguan, non-Pama-Nyungan), an Australian Aboriginal language that is being replaced by Kriol.

This volume is the first to explore the influence of the formal properties of language on the expression of emotions, as well as the first to describe the linguistic encoding of emotions in a creole language. The cross-disciplinary approach will appeal to linguists, psychologists, anthropologists, and other social scientists.

**Maïa Ponsonnet** is an anthropological linguist currently based at The University of Western Australia in Perth. She holds a PhD in linguistics from the Australian National University (Canberra, 2014), with additional background in philosophy (PhD Université Paris-8, 2005). She has extensive experience working with speakers of Indigenous languages in communities of inland Arnhem Land, in the Top End of Australia. In line with her combined linguistic, philosophical, and anthropological interests, Maïa Ponsonnet's research concerns the role of language in humans' lives, and in particular how language may channel or modify people's experience and management of emotions.

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# Difference and Repetition in Language Shift to a Creole

The Expression of Emotions

Maïa Ponsonnet

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# Preface

In our time of ‘global’ commerce and communication, the pace at which human communities abandon languages to adopt others that are closer to numerically and/or politically dominant forms is presumably higher than ever before. Much has been written about the demographic, geographic, and ideological drivers of this linguistic phenomenon known as ‘language shift’, albeit mostly within a framework where it is unquestionably regarded as a loss. This stance is reflected in folk assumptions, whereby ‘losing one’s language’ is often equated with ‘losing one’s culture’.

This book approaches language shift from a different angle, asking seemingly simple questions: what difference does it make, in terms of the way speakers communicate, to use a new language? Where do the differences between the former and the novel linguistic tools result in significant changes in what speakers can or cannot say, or in when and how they say it? How firmly do the grammatical and lexical architectures of individual languages influence what speakers can express, the messages they can articulate, and in general how they talk about the world and communicate with each other? In other words, to what extent does adopting a new language alter speakers’ day-to-day communication practices, and perhaps, in turn, their social life and ‘world views’?

These questions are addressed through the case study of a particular instance of language shift, and a particular semantic domain. The two languages on each side of the shift in question are Kriol, an English-based creole spoken in the north of Australia; and Dalabon (Gunwinyguan, non-Pama-Nyungan), one of the Australian Aboriginal languages that is being replaced by Kriol. The semantic domain considered for this case study is that of emotions, which offers a large set of semiotically and socially rich linguistic devices.

The systematic comparison of linguistic resources to express emotions on each side of this language shift is that language is highly plastic, so that speakers are able to shape their new linguistic code in ways that let them convey the contents they want. This is apparent for instance from the study of the Kriol lexicon, where we observe that speakers easily re-package old meanings under the guise of new word-forms. Another example of the plasticity of language is speakers’ ability to circumvent the absence of certain tools by modulating and expanding the functions of other tools, recruited from all sorts of possible sources. This will be

illustrated with respect to the functions of Dalabon morphological diminutives, a tool that Kriol does not have. Overall, linguistic plasticity means that equipped with a new linguistic code, a community of speakers is likely to bend their new tool so that it fulfils their needs for communication.

Along the systematic comparison of Kriol and Dalabon, we will also encounter some linguistic features that, in spite of the plasticity of language, have not ‘bent’ to reflect speakers’ shared representations. In the domain of emotions, this is evident with respect to figurative expressions. The figurative association of emotions with the belly in particular, which is prevalent in Dalabon, is relatively backgrounded in Kriol. At the same time, there is good evidence that Kriol speakers maintain a *conceptual* association between emotions and the belly, in spite of this association being linguistically backgrounded in their new language. In other words, linguistic alteration does not always entail modifications in speakers’ shared representations.

By and large, in the case under scrutiny, using a new language does not seem to have an enormous impact on the way speakers communicate and represent the world. Notwithstanding other modes of attachments to one’s language – be they aesthetical, ideological etc. – such a conclusion may shed a soothing light on language ‘loss’: communities who have already shifted to a new language, or face an imminent transition, should not necessarily feel that this loss threatens their identities or shared values.

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Many years have passed since I first discovered the existence of Kriol in 1998, and too many people have encouraged and supported my work for me to cite them all here. Among the many friends and colleagues who, directly or indirectly, contributed ideas to this book are Denise Angelo, Monika Bednarek, Laurent Benaim, Steven Bird, Joe Blythe, Estelle Castro, Erika Charola, Gillian Cowlshaw, Sarah Cutfield, Eleonora Deak, Greg Dickson, Mark Ellison, Nicholas Evans, Alex François, François Giner, Barbara Glowczewski, Pierre Grundmann, Salome Harris, Sebastian Harris, Ahmar Mahboob, Patrick McConvell, Felicity Meakins, Luisa Miceli, Daniel Midgley, David Nash, Marie-Ève Ritz, Dean Rickles, Celeste Rodriguez Louro, Eva Schultze-Berndt, Jane Simpson, Denise Smith-Ali, Jaki Troy, Marine Vuillermet, Anna Wierzbicka and David Wilkins. I am particularly grateful to Evangelia Adamou, Mark Ellison and Marie-Ève Ritz for their comments on earlier versions of the manuscript.

The core of the data and research for this work was produced as part of an ASLAN post-doctoral project hosted by the CNRS lab Dynamique Du Langage (Lyon) between 2013 and 2015. I am unspeakably grateful to my Dynamique Du Langage colleagues for their practical and intellectual support – in particular to Antoine Guillaume and Françoise Rose for day-to-day company and advice – and to Colette Grinevald and François Pellegrino for believing in this project in the first place.

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# Orthographic conventions

## Kriol

Table 1 Kriol consonants and their orthographic notation.

	<i>bi-labial</i>	<i>labio-dental</i>	<i>apico-alveolar</i>	<i>lamino-palatal</i>	<i>dorso-velar</i>	<i>glottal</i>
short plosive	b	p		d	t	
fricative			f	s	sh	h
nasal		m		n	ny	
lateral				l		
trill				rr		
approximant		w		r	y	

Table 2 Kriol vowels and diphtongues and their orthographic notation.

	<i>Front</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>back</i>
high	i		u
mid	e		o
low		A	
diphtongues		ei ai ou oi au	

## Dalabon

Table 1 Dalabon consonants and their orthographic notation.

	<i>bi-labial</i>	<i>apico-alveolar</i>	<i>apico-post-alveolar (retroflex)</i>	<i>lamino-palatal</i>	<i>dorso-velar</i>	<i>glottal</i>
short plosive	b	D	rd	dj	k	h
long plosive	bb	dd	rdd	djdj	Kk	
nasal	m	N	rn	nj	Ng	
lateral		L	rl			
trill		rr				
approximant	w		r	y		
fricative						H <sup>1</sup>

*Table 2* Dalabon vowels and their orthographic notation.

	<i>Front</i>		<i>Central</i>	<i>back</i>
<b>high</b>	i		ũ	u
<b>mid</b>		e		o
<b>low</b>			a	

*Table 3* Dalabon diphthongs and their orthographic notation.

<i>final target</i>	<i>initial target</i>				
	<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>
<b>w [u]</b>	iw	cw	aw	ow	
<b>y [i]</b>	iy	ey	ay	oy	uy

**Note**

1 ‘H’ represents the realization of the glottal stop as a voiceless nasal when adjacent to a nasal consonant. The sound is probably not a phoneme, but it has become very systematic within some words. See Ponsonnet (2014a:xxvi) for further discussion).

# Abbreviations

## Interlinear abbreviations not listed in the Leipzig rules

↑: pitch raises  
↓: pitch drops  
adj: adjective  
ADV: adverbializer  
APPR: apprehensive mood  
approb: approbation  
comp: compassion  
CONJ: conjunction  
CONT: continuous aspect  
CSTVZR: causativizer  
DIM: diminutive  
DISSAT: dissatisfaction  
EMPH: emphasis  
exclm: exclamative  
FILL: morphological filler  
h: higher animacy  
HAB: habitual  
HESIT: hesitation  
IMPOSS: modal impossibility  
INCH: inchoative marker  
INTERR: interrogative  
INTJ: interjection  
NECESS: modal necessity  
OBLIG: modal obligation  
PIPFV: past imperfective  
POSSB: modal possibility  
PPFV: past perfective  
PRIV: privative suffix  
R: realis mood  
REDUP: reduplication  
RR: reflexive/reciprocal

xvi *Abbreviations*

SEQ: sequential

sg: singular

SHIFT: nominal shifter

SUB: subordinate marker

TR: transitive marker

VBLZR: verbalizer

**Data types**

[ContEl] contextualized elicitation

[ConvEl] conversation in the course of elicitation

[El] standard elicitation

[Narr] narratives

[RPF] comment on *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce 2002)

[S&D] comment on *Samson and Delilah* (Thornton 2009)

[Stim] response to elicitation stimuli

[TC] comment on *Ten Canoes* (De Heer & Djigirr 2006)

# Recording codes

For the data collected after 2010, the codes can be interpreted as follows:

*Data collected between 2010 and 2018:*

KRL_20110613_002_ND_LB	027	(LB)	[Stim]
LLL_yyyymmdd_###_SS_SS	annot	(SS)	[data.type]

The three letters at the beginning of each recording code stand for the language (DAL for Dalabon, KRL for Kriol).

‘####’ are meaningless file numbers.

‘SS’ means speakers’ initials.

‘annot’ means the annotation number in ELAN.

The ‘data type’ is indicative of the context in which the data was collected (see abbreviations above).

A handful of examples collected before 2009 follow different patterns.

Data recorded between 2010 and 2012 are archived with ELAR, the Endangered Languages Archive (Endangered Languages Documentation Program, hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies, London):

<http://clar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/ponsonnet2012dalabon>

All the data collected until 2015 included are archived with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies, Canberra, audio-visual archives:

[www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/ava.html](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/ava.html)

# Speakers

The table below presents the linguistic backgrounds of the speakers who contributed significant data to the study (a handful of non-standard speakers who contributed very little were not included). The rank in the list reflects the amount of data collected.

<i>initials</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>native language(s)</i>	<i>other language(s)</i>	<i>recent residence</i>	<i>data collected</i>
† LB	1951	Kriol, Dalabon	English, near native (secondary education in English).	Beswick	Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based and direct elicitation.
IA	c. 1989	Kriol	English, very fluent, with rare non-standard features (some primary education in English).	Beswick, Weemol	Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based and direct elicitation
QB	c. 1950	Kriol, Kunwinjku	English, near native (full secondary education in English).	Barunga, Oenpelli, Katherine	Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based and direct elicitation.
MJ	1976	Kriol	English, near native (full secondary education in English). Kunwinjku, fluent but limited vocabulary. Dalabon, simple conversation. Warlpiri (level unknown).	Barunga, Oenpelli, Katherine	Extensive: narratives, stimuli-based elicitation.

<i>initials</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>native language(s)</i>	<i>other language(s)</i>	<i>recent residence</i>	<i>data collected</i>
<b>AA</b>	c. 1988	Kriol	English, very fluent, with some non-standard features.	Beswick, Weemol	Narratives, stimuli-based elicitation.
<b>TM</b>	c. 1985	Kriol	English, probably near native (full primary education in English).	Beswick, Weemol.	Narratives, stimuli-based and direct elicitation.
<b>ABM</b>	1994	Kriol	English, near native (primary education in English)	Beswick	Conversation, stimuli-based elicitation and direct lexical elicitation.
<b>JJA</b>	1963	Kriol	Dalabon, simple conversation. English, fluent with significant non-standard features (e.g. gender of 3rd pers. pr.).	Weemol, Beswick	Narratives, stimuli-based and direct elicitation.
<b>BB</b>	1971	Kriol	English, very fluent (some secondary education in English), exact level unknown. Some notions of Dalabon (reports passive knowledge, pronounces some words).	Beswick	Narratives, direct elicitation.
<b>JBe</b>	1991	Kriol	English (exact level unknown).	Beswick	Narratives, direct elicitation.
<b>PA</b>	2001	Kriol	English, fluent (exact level not known).	Beswick, Weemol	Narratives and stimuli-based elicitation.
<b>† MT</b>	c.1940	Dalabon	Kriol, very fluent with non-standard features. English with many non-standard features, often returns to Kriol.	Weemol	Narratives and stimuli-based elicitation.

<i>initials</i>	<i>DOB</i>	<i>native language(s)</i>	<i>other language(s)</i>	<i>recent residence</i>	<i>data collected</i>
<b>JP</b>	c.1983	Kriol	English, level not known.	Weemol, Manyallaluk	Stimuli-based elicitation.
<b>† ND</b>	c. 1945	Dalabon	Kriol, fluent with non-standard features. Probably some English, level not known.	Beswick	Stimuli-based sessions.
<b>JBr</b>	c.1960	Kriol	English, probably near native. Dalabon, able to form sentences but not conversational.	Weemol	Narratives and direct lexical elicitation.
<b>DC</b>	c.1940	Rembarrnga	Dalabon, near native. Kriol, fluent with non-standard features.	Bulman	Conversations.
<b>KBM</b>	1995	Kriol	English, level not known.	Beswick	Stimuli-based elicitation and lexical direct elicitation.
<b>DJ</b>	c.1982	Dalabon, Kunwinjku	English, level not known.	Jabiru, Barunga	Stimuli-based elicitation.

# 1 Introduction

In our time of ‘global’ commerce and communication, the pace at which human communities abandon languages to adopt others that are closer to numerically and/or politically dominant forms is presumably higher than ever before. This phenomenon, usually referred to as ‘language shift’, is now so widespread that we observe a steep decrease in the number of languages spoken across the world. Much has been written about the drivers of this linguistic trend, exploring the demographic, geographic, or ideological factors that bring people to embrace a new lexico-grammatical code (Fishman 1991; Kulick 1992; Patriarca & Heinsalu 2009; Gafaranga 2011; Prochazka & Vogl 2017). Language shift has also attracted much attention from the point of view of linguistic diversity, where *shift* has often been assimilated with *loss*, both from a global and from a local perspective. From a global point of view, language shift reduces the number of languages human beings actively speak on the planet (Evans 2009); from a local point of view, shifting communities leave behind ancestral tools typically regarded as the repositories of historical and cultural values (Fishman 1991; Hinton & Hale 2001). Although the scientific jury is still out on how language relates to what people think and do (Whorf 1956; Lucy 1992), it has become a kind of popular truth that ‘language is culture’, and that ‘losing one’s language is losing one’s culture’ (Hill 2002; Foley 2005).

This book approaches language shift from a different angle, asking seemingly simple questions: what difference does it make, in terms of the way speakers communicate, to use a new lexico-grammatical code? Where do the differences between the former and the novel linguistic tools result in significant changes in what speakers can or cannot say, or in when and how they say it? How firmly do the grammatical and lexical architectures of individual languages determine what speakers can express, the messages they can articulate, and in general how they talk about the world and communicate with each other? In other words, this volume questions the extent to which adopting a new language alters speakers’ day-to-day communication practices, and perhaps, in turn, their social life and ‘world views’.

Here I will approach these questions through the case study of a particular instance of language shift, and a particular semantic domain. The two languages on each side of the shift in question are Kriol, an English-based creole spoken in the north of Australia; and Dalabon (Gunwinyguan, non-Pama-Nyungan),

## 2 Introduction

one of the Australian Aboriginal languages that is being replaced by Kriol. The semantic domain considered for this case study is that of emotions, which offers a large set of semiotically and socially rich linguistic devices. The following introduction unpacks the methods and theoretical underpinnings of the case study, specifically the relation between language and ‘culture’.

### 1. Language, culture, linguistic relativity and linguistic diversity

#### 1.1 *Historical development of the language/culture association*

In folk and institutional discourse, languages are typically regarded as reflexes of unitary ‘cultures’ understood as unified sets of beliefs and practices (Jaffe 2007:62). This, in turn, entails that language shift comes hand-in-hand with a shift in ‘culture’. This idea of a close association between language and ‘culture’ has multiple origins, and its first historical occurrences in Western philology are not rooted in the discipline of linguistics. In linguistic scholarship, this association is often traced back to 18th century German philosophers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder (2002/1772), who defends a three-fold association between peoples, cultures and languages (see for instance Lucy 1992:1; Foley 2005; Sidel & Enfield 2012:304). As Foley (2005) (along with many others) points out, the language/culture equation in its raw form reflects a naïve conception of languages as unitary and stable – what Silverstein (1996) for instance called a ‘monoglot ideology’; in reality, human languages are porous and constantly changing (Foley 2005; Di Carlo & Good 2014). On the other side of the language/culture equation, the word ‘culture’ runs into comparable and perhaps deeper conceptual and ideological flaws, as human communities are not uniform in their practices and beliefs either (see for instance Strathern 1995; Kuper 1999; Moore 2004; Muelhmann 2014 and Section 3).

Beyond these pre-theoretical perceptions, linguistics as a science has articulated plausible hypotheses about the relations between language, culture, and thought. The reflection began in the 19th century with the German scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt (e.g. 1999/1836) and the notion of ‘world-view’, but it was not until the 20th century that linguists came to present a clear, potentially falsifiable scientific hypothesis about the influence of language upon thought and culture. What is nowadays broadly referred to in linguistics and other disciplines such as anthropology or philosophy as the ‘linguistic relativity hypothesis’ is explicitly attributed to Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), himself elaborating from Franz Boas (e.g. 1911) and Edward Sapir (e.g. 1921) (the hypothesis is also known as the ‘Sapir-Whorf hypothesis’). This hypothesis is key to perceptions of language shift, because it implies that adopting a new language should lead speakers to also abandon their ‘culture’, given that ‘culture’ – the way people think and behave (see Section 3) – is constrained by linguistic forms.

Whorf’s discussion and formulation laid out the background, premises, and potential implications of the linguistic relativity hypothesis, and was based on

*some* empirical observations (relative to the Hopi language in particular). Yet, Whorf's claims were not yet anchored in systematic scientific testing. In the second half of the 20th century and in recent decades, linguists (in particular anthropological linguists and psycholinguists) have endeavoured to refine the theoretical articulation and background of the hypothesis (Lucy 1992, 1996; Boroditsky & Gaby 2010; Boroditsky 2011; Sidnell & Enfield 2012; Enfield 2015b; Cibelli et al. 2016) and to test it against sound empirical grounds (Levinson & Gumperz 1996; Levinson 2003; Malt & Wolff 2010; Malt et al. 2011). I will return to the question of the 'state of the art' on these matters in Section 3, but in any case, all this is presently work in progress. There is currently little scientific consensus about the correlations between language, culture, and thought, let alone any causal directionality.

AuQ1

## 1.2 *Popular discourses*

While scientific enquiry strives to understand these correlations, their raw pre-scientific version – where language and culture are simply assimilated to each other – is often embraced in public discussions and institutional discourse and policies. Of course, in large Western countries where nation states have swept multilingualism away (Foley 2005), many people remain fundamentally uneducated about the benefits of linguistic diversity – or more broadly speaking, about what it involves to speak different languages. At the same time, within my own 'Western mainstream' social network, the vast majority of the non-linguists I discuss these matters with (and this represents quite a few) expresses strong convictions about the close association between language and culture. As pointed out by Minasyan (2014:12), 'almost every document dealing with languages or multilingualism produced by UNESCO in the first decade of the 21st century states that languages are more than communication tools, as they reflect our ways of being and conceptualizing the world' (see also Heller & Duchêne 2007:1). Minasyan explicitly traces this back to the linguistic relativity hypothesis, and identifies, within UNESCO's official literature, some specific inputs from linguists who appear to endorse the equation (or close association) between language and thought, and/or language and culture (see also Jaffe 2007:61–62).<sup>1</sup> In 2019, a very comparable rhetoric was deployed around the UNESCO-orchestrated International Year for Indigenous Languages. The related Action Plan, for instance, states that Indigenous languages are 'cultural treasures' that 'foster and promote unique local cultures, customs and values' (UNESCO 2018:2). Languages presumably foster local cultures and values to the extent that they encode them, and therefore support them (Cash Cash 2018). Yet, this emphatic 'hypervalorization' (Hill 2002:123–125) also masks the fact there is actually no scientific consensus about the extent to which languages 'promote' these matters. A vast proportion of the academic linguistic community rallies behind UNESCO's communication. Although linguists are, as scientists, well aware of the complexity of the relationship between language and culture, we also occasionally choose to encourage putting complexity under the carpet when, as we shall see below, there are valuable reasons to do so.

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Another dimension that gets obscured when a simplified version of the language/culture association is embraced is the directionality of the connection between the two. The linguistic relativity hypothesis postulates that language influences culture (Section 3), but strictly speaking, claims that language and culture are intertwined also entail the converse hypothesis: namely, that culture influences language. In discussions with non-linguists, my impression is usually that (very understandably) they have not reflected on the language/culture association far enough to have an articulate opinion about its directionality. As for institutional statements such as UNESCO's, on the other hand, they usually avoid the problem by presenting language as the package and carrier of cultural knowledge.<sup>2</sup> This is relatively uncontroversial as well as non-committal with respect to the directionality of the influence between language and culture: it suggests that language must have some impact upon the cultural features it encodes, but remains compatible with the idea that culture shapes language. However, if language is shaped by culture, the preservation of minority languages becomes less of a priority, because in language shift Indigenous groups should naturally re-package their cultural attributes into new but equivalent linguistic expressions. Ultimately, linguistic relativity, i.e. the idea that language influences culture, stands as the best argument when seeking to recruit much needed support to help human minorities preserve their own languages, because it suggests that language shift causes cultural loss.

## 2. Language/culture equation and ethics

### 2.1 *The dangers of praise*

The promotion of a simplified equation between language and culture, in place of sophisticated scientific hypotheses, serves evident purposes as an effective strategy to promote – and fund – the preservation of minority languages and linguistic diversity. In a context where many communities across the world shift to new languages, leaving older languages dormant as a result, presenting individual languages as crucial cultural assets can be salutary. Language shift often results from deeply harmful political pressures and persecutions. In colonized countries like Australia, many Indigenous groups were decimated by colonial violence, their languages have been actively repressed, and the Indigenous population still suffers drastic disadvantages in present days. In Australia and elsewhere, language maintenance and reclamation are a response to historical trauma and a political act of resistance. Speakers of minority languages and their descendants are often very attached to their heritage language for ideological, political, aesthetical and emotional reasons (Fishman 1991; Hinton & Hale 2001; Wilce 2009). Minority-language speakers frequently embrace the language/culture association themselves, as it offers welcome validation of their linguistic attachment (e.g. Dickson (2015:360–361) in the Australian context). By and large, linguists' communication around language endangerment,

including promoting a close association between language and culture, has followed the needs of minority groups, and proven relatively successful when it came to raising public and institutional awareness about language loss. Unfortunately, this strategy has its downsides as well.

Equating language and culture poses a number of problems for the communities who have already shifted to a new language or are evidently about to do so (see for instance Hill 2002; Blommaert 2006; Jaffe 2007). A major ethical downside lies in the stereotypes and stigma associated with cultural loss – which, if we embrace the close association between language and culture, derives very directly from language shift.

All around the world, and particularly in colonized countries where minority languages are autochthonous, this implication feeds derogatory perceptions of contemporary Indigenous peoples as ‘inauthentic’, ‘acculturated’ and therefore unanchored and illegitimate (see for instance Eades (1988), Keefe (1988), Cowlishaw (2009, 2012; and for examples in popular discourse, see for example the Australian Museum website,)<sup>3</sup> echoing responses that I regularly witness myself. With respect to creole languages in particular, the language/culture equation combines with an ideology of purity that motivates the repression of ‘cross-breed’ idioms, and often portrays their speakers as disoriented in-betweens that cannot fully master *any* linguistic or cultural code (Jourdan 1990, 2001, 2013; Rhydwen 1995, 1996; Ponsonnet 2010a; Barsony 2013; Levisen 2016). When internalized by those speakers who have adopted a new language themselves, all these ideologies represent significant threats to their well-being and sense of self, triggering emotional insecurity about one’s identity, and undermining feelings of shame (Ponsonnet 2010a).

Often, negative perceptions also translate into lesser access to Indigenous rights. In Australia for instance, the ideology that links language and culture has a legal correlate in the processes imposed upon Indigenous groups who reclaim ownership of their land in a legal framework called ‘Native Title’ (French & Lane 2002; Henderson & Nash 2002; Walsh 2010; Vincent 2017). Under the Native Title Act (Commonwealth 1993), the recognition of Indigenous land rights is conditional upon the claimants demonstrating continuity in their traditional laws and customs (in other words, ‘cultural’ continuity), as established by non-Indigenous courts. Linguistic continuity is regarded as evidence of continuity of ‘laws and customs’ and may therefore count in favor of claimants. But unfortunately, as discussed by Boynton (2014), in a country where a majority of Indigenous groups use English varieties, using language preservation as evidence of cultural continuity is more often to the claimants’ disadvantage. The root of the problem here is of course the continuity requirement – since after all, it is unclear why having adopted different ‘laws and customs’ should cancel Indigenous rights to the land they own. But within the scope of this requirement, postulating that language is inseparable from culture exacerbates disadvantages for groups who have shifted to English, because it entails that a shift in language corresponds to a shift in culture.

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### 2.2 A dilemma?

This complex situation leaves communities, language activists, linguists and language workers with something close to an ideological dilemma. On the one hand, language shift is not a benign change, especially not when associated with the traumas of colonialization where it is effectively a loss resulting from a theft. From this point of view, emphasizing the association between language and culture has proven effective to help communities who wish to maintain or reclaim heritage languages. At the same time, many minority groups around the world suffer the negative consequences of naïve representations of language shift inspired by the language/culture equation – which itself lacks firm scientific grounds.

For linguists or language activists, this tension does not necessarily crystallize into practical dilemmas, because it is entirely possible to support the communities who wish to maintain their traditional languages, without condemning those who have shifted to a new language. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous sections, the ideological paradox does create difficulties elsewhere, for instance at the levels of public perceptions or language policies. There is certainly no quick fix to this tension, but in this volume I try to shed some light on and identify some practical solutions to the problems it raises, by evaluating the impact of language shift on what people say, think and do through the lens of a case study. In the next section, I set some of the theoretical ground of the study by presenting current research around linguistic relativity and adjacent hypotheses, with a view to clarifying how these scientific developments reflect upon the question of language shift.

## 3. Linguistic relativity: state-of-the-art

### 3.1 *Those in favor...*

Whorf's historical formulation of the linguistic relativity hypothesis was inspired by his analysis of the Hopi language (Uto-Aztecan, Arizona), on the basis of which he postulated two correlations (1956:138). Firstly, Whorf suggested that fundamental concepts such as 'time', 'matter' and to some extent 'space' are conditioned by the structure of the particular language used to talk about them. This postulates a correlation between particular lexico-grammatical codes on the one hand, and 'conceptual representations' (in the broad sense of the conceptual<sup>4</sup> reflexes of linguistic forms) – i.e. thought – on the other hand. Secondly, Whorf hypothesized an influence between linguistic structures and 'cultural and behavioral norms' – i.e. practices and habits. In sum, Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis concerns the influence of the properties of particular lexico-grammatical codes upon what may be loosely be referred to as 'culture' – what people think and do. As such, this hypothesis is central to the perception of language shift: if it is correct, then people who shift to a new language are bound to alter at least some aspects of their 'culture' sooner or later.

While Whorf's discussion of Hopi linguistic structures did not amount to an empirical demonstration, it was rich and thorough enough to feed an enormous

amount of linguistic research and theorization around his original hypothesis (Lucy 1992). Since Whorf's foundational publications, many language scholars have proposed further elaborations of, and evidence for or against, the linguistic relativity hypothesis. Responding directly to the need for further cross-linguistic empirical testing against non-linguistic evidence (as opposed to language-internal observations, Lucy (1996)), teams of psycholinguists have implemented experimental protocols involving several (sometimes many) languages. These experiments have produced conflicting results.

Perhaps the most oft-cited research on this question is Levinson (2003), whose teams tested spacial-orientation behaviors against linguistic tools for spacial descriptions. Languages across the world offer different devices for speakers to communicate about space. In some, cardinal directions, such as 'north' or 'east', which provide an *absolute* frame of reference independent of the orientation of the speaker or interlocutor, are dominant. In others, *relative* directions such as left and right are preferred. A well-known task (often called 'Animals in a Row') showed that when presented with a row of three different animal figurines, then asked to turn around and recreate the same row, speakers order the animals differently depending on the dominant frame of reference (absolute or relative) of the language(s) they know (see also for instance Pederson et al. 1998; Majid et al. 2004; Bohnemeyer 2008; Boroditsky & Gaby 2010). The conclusions of this and other comparable tasks applied across languages suggest correlations between linguistic structures and spatial cognition, thus supporting the linguistic relativity hypothesis in the domain of descriptions of space.

Applied to language shift, these conclusions predict that shifting to a language that offers different linguistic tools may lead speakers to modify their behaviors accordingly. But this prediction does not always hold. Adamou and Shen's (2017) have shown that in communities that shifted from Ixcatecs (Otomanguan, Mexico) to Spanish, contemporary Spanish speakers retain cognitive representations of space matching the Ixcatecs linguistic framework. In cases where speakers' cognitive framework (as indicated by their behaviors in experimental tasks) does shift along with language, as reported by Meakins, Jones and Algy (2016) for Australian communities having shifted from Gurinji to Gurinji Kriol, we cannot tell whether the cognitive shift is triggered by language shift, or by the concomittant shift in lifestyle and practices.

### 3.2 ... And those against

Expanding upon Levison's (2003) own discussions, the above conclusions are mitigated by more recent research in the same semantic domain of space. For example, studies by Dasen and Mishra (2010) and Palmer et al. (2017) take into account a broader array of parameters including the physical environment in which languages are used, as well as the lifestyle of their speakers (see also Bohnemeyer et al. 2014; Hoffmann 2019; Calderon, De Pascale & Adamou 2019). In these more inclusive frameworks, the results suggest complex correlations where language is also influenced by environmental factors, and by speakers' lifestyle.

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Altogether, these results temper the correlation between linguistic structures, cognition and practices with respect to spacial descriptions. Applied to the question of the impact of language shift, these studies suggest that when a community shifts to a new lexico-grammatical code while maintaining their lifestyle, the new code may bend under the influence of the lifestyle. The extent to and specific ways in which lifestyle shapes language is yet to be explored.

Some of the research carried out within a more restrained experimental psycholinguistic framework also tends to invalidate the linguistic relativity hypothesis. Malt et al. (2011), for instance, present an experiment where they asked speakers of four different languages to sort out video clips showing instances of human locomotion. Participants watched people walking or running in diverse ways in a series of clips, and sorted the clips based on how similar or dissimilar they judged the gaits to be. The sorting task was understood to reflect the conceptual distinctions that were relevant to them cognitively. Although the four languages included in the experiment<sup>5</sup> have very different sets of words and lexical categories to describe gaits, and thus ‘cut out reality at different joints’, this diversity was not reflected in the way speakers sorted the videos. This contradicts the linguistic relativity hypothesis by showing that the lexical categories set by particular languages do not necessarily correspond to speakers’ conceptual distinctions. In other words, this experiment suggests a bare lack of correlation between language and thought. In the context of language shift, this would imply that adopting a new language does not alter the way speakers construe real-world categories (see also Malt & Wolff 2010; Papafragou et al. 2006).

### 3.3 *A long way to go*

Based on the above, it seems that although we do have scientific evidence in favor of linguistic relativity with respect to certain aspects of language and certain domains of meaning, a lot remains to be answered about the extent of the phenomenon. Firstly, although languages across the world do feature many potential loci of linguistic relativity, few of these loci have been empirically tested like space has. The correlations between Japanese honorifics (Tokunaga 1988:89–91) and a potential culture-specific social orientation, or between extensive systems of grammatical evidentiality<sup>6</sup> (Chafe & Nichols 1986; Papafragou et al. 2007) and certain approaches to information management for instance, seem intuitively plausible, but have never been demonstrated.

It is easy to imagine how linguistic differences around honorifics and evidentials could ramify into complex social and cognitive consequences, but these have never been explored, even less quantified; and in fact, these ramifications have not been fully explored for space either. In this respect, the research embracing broader ecological frameworks is still essentially under development (Dasen & Chandra Mishra 2010; Palmer et al. 2017), and the narrower psycholinguistic studies like the ones presented above do not address the question of the impact of language shift very directly. Instead, what these studies question is the linguistic relativity hypothesis as a potential dispositive in human cognition. This is also very apparent in studies

around color naming and perception, another semantic field where linguistic relativity has been extensively explored (Berlin & Kay 1969; Roberson et al. 2005; Wright, Davies & Franklin 2015). The tasks and semantic domains such studies consider are tailored to answer a very valid question about human psychology, and as a result are generally too specific to shed much light on what changes when humans adopt a new language as an alternative tool for communication in daily life. Apart from some rare and relatively isolated attempts (Woodbury 1993), this latter question is rarely tackled directly. More empirical studies are thus needed to assess the impact of culturally significant potential loci of linguistic relativity – such as honorifics or evidentiality – and identify more of them.

Our argument so far is somewhat inconclusive. On the one hand, linguistic diversity and language shift are understood in miscellaneous contexts – including applied, institutional contexts – under the umbrella of a paramount association between language and culture, supported by the shadow of linguistic relativity as a scientific hypothesis (Section 1). On the other hand, core scientific research on and around linguistic relativity remains too fragmentary to help us understand the implications of language shift and linguistic diversity with respect to cultural diversity. In the following section, I review some of the literature that does directly address the question of the impact of language shift.

## 4. Capturing the impact of language shift

### 4.1 *Continuity in rules of language use*

There exist a few published studies that explicitly discuss the significance of linguistic diversity, and/or compare languages on each side of language shift. In particular, a number of authors have reported continuity in the way speakers *use* language before and after the shift.

In previous paragraphs I have used the expression ‘lexico-grammatical code’ to refer to the set of rules that broadly dictate, in a given language, how to produce sounds that convey meanings. Such grammatical rules are not actually sufficient in themselves to determine how people speak. In addition, speakers follow ‘pragmatic’ conventions that orchestrate language use: when to use a higher or lower register, how to organize an acceptable conversation, in which order of events the narrative should be presented etc. Speakers within one ‘community of practice’ also share habits about when and why they use language. Do they have long conversations, or do they prefer to use language essentially to provide crucial information? Do they spontaneously speak to strangers? Are they inclined to verbally express affection? Or make jokes? Hymes (1972) coined the expression ‘ethnography of speaking’ to refer to such shared practices.

Several authors have shown that pragmatic conventions and the ethnography of speaking can be maintained when speakers shift to a new lexico-grammatical code; in a sense, the rules of language use appear to be independent of which lexico-grammatical code is in use. With respect to Australian languages in particular, Eades (1988) discusses the continuity of rules of politeness and interpersonal

interactions between southeast Queensland Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal English, and Nicholls (2013) illustrates how Kriol conversations rely upon pragmatic principles at play in other northern Australian languages. Elsewhere in the world, Kwachka and Basham (1990) and Kwachka (1992), for instance, have also reported continuity in the organization of discourse and narratives between Yup'ik/Inupiaq Eskimo and the variety of English used by Yup'ik/Inupiaq Eskimo speakers. All these studies illustrate the lesser impact of language shift on language use.

#### *4.2 Discontinuity in semiotic properties*

Responding directly to Eades (1988), Kwachka and Basham (1990) and Kwachka (1992), Woodbury (1998) takes the opposite stance, highlighting discrepancies between communication in Cup'ik (Yup'ik Eskimo) and in English as used by native speakers of Cup'ik. Woodbury's study focuses on the large set of high frequency affective suffixes which greatly contribute to the expressive coloring of Cup'ik discourse. In English translations, the suffixes in question are rendered by free adjectives, but Woodbury argues that free words fail to reproduce the communicative effect of Cup'ik suffixes. This is largely due to differences in the linguistic properties of suffixes compared to adjectives. Cup'ik affective suffixes attach to a diverse range of phrases in a sentence, and they fuse discretely with these phrases, so that according to Woodbury they can be repeated again and again throughout a text without breaching stylistic elegance. English adjectives, on the other hand, can only modify nouns, and being free standing words they do not blend in as naturally, therefore, they cannot be multiplied to the same extent.

Here, the impact of language shift pointed out by Woodbury results from discrepancies in the semiotic properties of the devices used to express the same thing in the former lexico-grammatical code and in the new one respectively (see Grace (1981) on the notion of 'content form'). Such discrepancies will be discussed in Chapter 6 in particular, also dealing with affective morphology. In another piece, Woodbury (1993) presents an equivalent argument relative to the demonstrative system in Yup'ik (Central Alaskan Yupik Eskimo), and Mithun (1998) offers similar discussions on Central Pomo (Pomoan, California) and Mohawk (Iroquoian, Quebec). Yet, the literature that tackles language shift from this perspective remains scarce. Carrying out comparable analyses in a larger number of language-shift situations would presumably help us circumscribe the potential loci of impact of these shifts.

#### *4.3 Systematic studies on Kriol*

In several of the publications cited above, authors approach the question of the impact of language shift with a relatively clear agenda. That is, they either list examples of what is maintained in an attempt to minimize the significance of language shift, or focus on what is 'lost' in order to demonstrate the impact of the phenomenon. As one would expect, studies that do not start with one or the

other assumption – like Hoffmann (2012) or Dickson (2015) with respect to the Australian shift to Kriol in particular – offer much more nuanced evaluations of the impact of language shift.

Hoffmann (2012) presents a systematic analysis of the lexico-grammatical resources available in Jaminjung (Jaminjunguan, non-Pama-Nyungan, Victoria River District) and in Kriol to talk about motion and travel, and how they play out in language use. Her study highlights both differences and similarities between Jaminjung and Kriol, in both the lexico-grammatical code and rules of language use. However, given that her research questions are not framed in terms of the impact of language shift, and because the discussion of motion and travel is relatively abstract, it is harder to extract explicit generalizations about what shifting to a new lexico-grammatical code implies for communication in speakers' everyday lives.

Dickson's (2015) study focuses primarily on lexical distinctions, lexical knowledge and their relation with cultural knowledge – thus very directly addressing the question of the relation between language and culture (see Section 1). Lexico-grammatical categories are probably the most obvious locus of discrepancies between languages in terms of communication potential (Slobin 1996), yet they are rarely directly addressed in existing discussions of language shift (but see Chapter 4). Comparing lexical categories in Marra (Marran, non-Pama-Nyungan, Roper River Region) and Kriol, Dickson (2015) observes some dilution of the finer-grained categories in domains like kinship and ethnobiology. However, in other domains – perhaps less characteristically associated with the pre-colonial life-style of Marra speakers – Dickson reports more instances of lexical maintenance. Overall, the study shows that lexical knowledge is not a direct reflection of cultural knowledge, and that lifestyle is probably a stronger determinant of cultural knowledge than the lexico-grammatical code (see Malt et al. 2011; Meakins, Jones & Algy 2016).

Apart from focusing on a different semantic domain, the angle I take on language shift differs from both Hoffman's (2012) and Dickson's (2015) approach – which themselves differ markedly from each other. Yet, these studies complement one another, and altogether cover enough ground to brush a relatively precise picture of the significance of the shift to Australian Kriol.

## 5. Case study: the linguistic encoding of emotions in Kriol

In this volume, I approach the question of the implications of language shift from the vantage point of the semantic domain of emotions, asking whether the adoption of a new lexico-grammatical code results in significant differences in the way speakers communicate around this semantic domain. In other words, to what extent are the languages on each side of a language shift functionally commensurate? Throughout the chapters, the linguistic encoding of emotions is compared systematically in Kriol and Dalabon, two northern Australian languages on each side of a language shift. The newly adopted language, Kriol, is

an English-lexified creole spoken by 20 to 30,000 speakers in central northern Australia (Lee & Obata 2010). The other language, Dalabon, a non-Pama-Nyungan language of the Gunwinyguan family from central Arnhem land in the Australian Top End, is critically endangered and one of the many languages that Kriol replaces. Other Australian languages are considered as well where possible and appropriate. The language ecology of the Gunwinyguan region and the history of Kriol will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, along with the first-hand data upon which the study is based and other methodological matters. Before that, below, I discuss the status of creole languages with respect to the broader question of language shift.

### *5.1 Creole languages and English varieties*

At first sight, language shifts to creoles may appear like very special cases of language shift. Indeed, a larger number of groups and people around the world have shifted more radically to the dominant languages themselves (English, Spanish etc.), not to creoles. Linguists define creoles as languages that have emerged as a result of the contact between two or more groups (which is why creoles form part of what linguists call ‘contact languages’). In the most typical situation, one of the groups in question is politically dominant, and its language is called the ‘superstrate’ language; while the language(s) of the other group(s) are called ‘substrate’ languages. Among the most prototypical contexts of creolization are the situation of slaves on plantations (e.g. creoles of the Caribbean region), as well as colonial frontiers all over the world. In a majority of cases (but not all, e.g. Juba Arabic), the superstrate or dominant language is a European language – English (e.g. Kriol in Australia, Bislama in Vanuatu, Hawaiian Creole), French (e.g. Antillean Creole, Haitian Creole), Portuguese (e.g. Ceylonese Portuguese Creole, Macanese Patois in Macau), etc.

In creole languages, the forms of most words are borrowed (with heavy phonological modifications) from the superstrate language or ‘lexifier’, and so are – usually – the most salient features of the syntax such as basic word order (see 2.1 in Chapter 3 for additional discussion on superstrate and substrate influences). As a result, the resemblances between creoles and their lexifiers are normally quite evident. From the linguistic point of view, although creoles usually retain some features from their substrate languages, they are strongly influenced by their lexifier (see 2.1 in Chapter 3). Nevertheless, a creole is by definition not mutually intelligible with its lexifier, otherwise it would be regarded as a variety of it rather than a different language. Adopting a creole thus implies creating a new language, and from the point of view of ideologies and identities, this is very different from adopting someone else’s language. In line with this observation, as will be discussed in 1.1 in Chapter 3, the Kriol speakers I work with are proud of their language and consider it their own. To that extent, shifts to creoles are indeed special cases of language shift.

On the other hand, there is a sense in which all adopted varieties are modified compared to their original source. Around the world, varieties of English

called World Englishes for instance (e.g. Singlish in Singapore, Pakistani English, see Mahboob and Li (2012:Chap 7)) are known to differ from English in significant and regular ways, in spite of being mutually intelligible with more 'standard' varieties such as British or American English. Within Australia, Aboriginal English, a variety of English spoken by Indigenous populations across the continent, illustrates just this situation (Eades 1988; Harkins 1994; Malcolm 2018). Here again, a defining difference between Kriol (and other creole languages around the country<sup>7</sup>) and Aboriginal English is that the latter is mutually intelligible with English, while the former is not. However, although in many cases it is easy to differentiate between Kriol and Aboriginal English (due to characteristic forms, constructions that obstruct mutual intelligibility, etc.), there are also many cases where it is hard to decide whether the language spoken by a group, or a sequence spoken by an individual, is one or the other. In other words, Kriol and Aboriginal English can also be seen as the opposite ends of a continuum. From this point of view, creoles are a good choice to study the consequences of language shift – not that all varieties of English are creoles, but because it is a probably not the case that any human group can adopt the language of another group without modifying it. For many of the linguistic features that will be considered in this volume, we may very well imagine that Aboriginal English aligns with Kriol rather than with standard Australian English, but in Kriol the differences with English are more evident, which is a methodological advantage in this study.

These remarks highlight an important disparity between the present study on the one hand, and research on bilingualism (Panayotou 2004; Pavlenko 2006, 2014; Miceli & Ellison 2017) and translation (e.g. Weissbort & Eysteinsson 2006; Nord Milton 2018) on the other hand. While these domains of enquiry certainly form part of the theoretical background of this volume, the situations they are concerned with differ fundamentally from situations of language shift. In a standard translation context, both the original and the target languages of the bilingual individual are anchored in a community of speakers and in sustained conventional usages. In the language-shift situation, by contrast, the new language can be modified for in-group communication, as it is not anchored in such conventions. That is, speakers are free to redefine the linguistic tools at their disposal, and create a new variety.

In other words, if I am trying to translate French into English and insist on using 'piece' for 'coin', this is unlikely to result in successful communication with speakers of English, and in any case will not constitute orthodox communication. Eventhough *pièce* means 'coin' in French, the English-speaking community I am trying to communicate with agrees upon a different convention. By contrast, if an Indigenous group decide to adopt English instead of an Australian language to communicate among themselves, they may choose to use 'kill' to mean 'hit',<sup>8</sup> and communicate successfully on the basis of this new convention, thus establishing a new local orthodoxy. Because of this key difference, the results of studies on bilingualism and translation do not shed a direct light onto the questions I am asking about language shift.

**5.2 *Methods and primary questions***

I chose to focus on the linguistic encoding of emotions for this case study because short of covering the entire of scope of what can be expressed in human languages, this semantic domain provides a diverse, linguistically rich and socio-culturally significant sample. In this volume, I define emotions as internal (private) states that have a cognitive dimension (contrary to sensations, e.g. hunger or pain) and a purely subjective dimension (contrary to purely ‘intellectual’ states such as knowing). This covers the classic ‘primary’ emotions like anger, sadness, surprise etc.; as well as more complex, social emotions such as shame or guilt; and I also include moods and states such as depression or nostalgia. A discussion of this definition and of its implications is offered in Chapter 2. For the moment, we can note that emotions pervade humans’ everyday lives and are eminently social phenomena, involving complex interactions – many of them relying on language – between people. Linguistically, emotions afford us observations about a range of resources including lexical resources across word classes, figurative language, as well as expressive resources such as interjections, prosody or evaluative morphology, and more.

Comparing languages is a delicate exercise (Dixon 2016), but one that makes sense when anchored in the language-shift situation, where we can compare how speakers use each language in similar contexts to talk about the same things – as repeatedly illustrated in my corpora (see Section 3 in Chapter 3). Methodologically, the case study presented here is anchored in Ponsonnet’s (2014a) detailed descriptions of the linguistic encoding of emotions in Dalabon – supplemented by data on neighboring Gunwinyguan languages, and other Australian languages, see Chapter 3. Chapter after chapter, particular linguistic resources (words, intonation contours, diminutive suffixes) that encode emotions in Dalabon will be considered one by one and compared systematically to the resources found in Kriol, to evaluate functional commensurability – that is, whether Kriol offers tools that can express the same meanings, in comparable grammatical contexts, as Dalabon. In addition, corpus examples will be used to evaluate whether the tools in question are used in comparable real-world contexts.

Via the comparison of specific linguistic resources across the two languages, the study will systematically assess whether differences in the respective lexico-grammatical codes set by Kriol and Dalabon force or encourage speakers to package information in significantly different ways, resulting in differences in communication (Grace 1981; Simpson 2002:190). As suggested by Woodbury’s (1998) comparison between the affective suffixes of Cup’ik and their English translation (see 4.2), the morphosyntactic properties that condition the occurrence of linguistic tools and govern their positioning in a clause could result in messages that effectively communicate subtly different perspectives on events. In addition to nuances in morphosyntactic properties, the semantic categories encoded in each lexico-grammatical code may bring speakers to preferentially describe different aspects of the events they talk about – as pointed out by Slobin (1996). Therefore, the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of Kriol and Dalabon linguistic resources will be our main foci of comparison.

Given the nature of the exercise, the details of the methods will become clear as the analyses unfold, but for now we can consider the sort of questions I will ask. For instance, do the lexical categories of Kriol and Dalabon allow speakers to package messages in the same way in both languages, describing the same situations? Kriol and Dalabon have very similar conventionalized intonation patterns, but are they used to express the same things? Where a resource present in Dalabon is absent in Kriol – as with morphological diminutive – is it functionally replaced? Do Kriol and Dalabon offer similar metaphors to talk about emotions? Of course, it will not be possible to cover each and every one of the linguistic resources capable of conveying emotional meanings in Dalabon or in Kriol – as this would cover the entire language – but I will deal with the most significant ones.

The bulk of the empirical data upon which this study is based is linguistic in nature, and therefore primarily offers insights onto what each language allows speakers to communicate – as opposed to the way each language brings its speakers to construe the world. However, where possible, additional para-linguistic or ethnographic observations will allow me to comment on how linguistic differences may modify (or not) speakers' representations, or 'thought'. With respect to figurative language in particular, it is possible to articulate some hypotheses in this respect on the basis of the observation of gestures. Such insights will remain speculative, but I will endeavour to articulate concrete suggestions for further testing, thus suggesting research pathways towards deeper insight into the impact of language shift.

### 5.3 *An angle on linguistic relativity*

The respective profiles of Kriol and Dalabon also make this particular occurrence of language shift an excellent case to explore the impact of adopting a new lexico-grammatical code. The two languages on each side of this shift display contrasted typological profiles, i.e. very different core linguistic architectures. Dalabon, like all the languages of the Gunwinyguan family, is 'polysynthetic' (Evans 2017). This means that it uses long words made up of a large number of 'morphemes' – small units that group together to form words. This can be observed in (1), where a whole English sentence is expressed by what can be analyzed as a single Dalabon word with five affixes (prefixes and suffixes) (Dixon & Aikhenvald 2002; Evans, Fletcher & Ross 2008). Kriol, on the other hand, like most creoles, is largely 'isolating', which means that many words are made up of a single morpheme, without additional pieces added to them. This is illustrated in (2), where Kriol uses five words, none of them carrying affixes, to express the same meaning as Dalabon expresses in one word in (1).

(Dalabon)

- (1) *bala-b-dja-djarrk-bo-ng*  
 3pl-R-FOC-together-go-PPFV  
 pref-pref-pref-pref-root-suff  
 'They just left together.'

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(Kriol)

- (2) *dei bin jis go gija*  
 3pl.S PST FOC go together  
 ‘They just left together.’

Based on this major contrast in their respective morphological profiles, Kriol and Dalabon differ greatly with respect to how they allow speakers to package information. They impose different types of linguistic resources, with different semiotic properties, resulting in structurally different linguistic organization. In terms of linguistic architecture – the core structuring principles of the lexico-grammatical code – there are enormous differences between the two languages on each side of the language shift considered in this study.

In this situation, we could expect that the typological contrast between the two languages may result in some significant functional incommensurability, i.e. mismatches between what speakers can say to communicate about the world using each language. This expectation, however, is not systematically borne out. There are indeed some cases where the morphological distance between Kriol and Dalabon seems to make a difference as to how speakers describe the world. This is the case for instance with figurative representations of emotions, where the prevalence of body-based metaphors that Dalabon shares with many other Australian languages is not matched in Kriol (Chapter 7). But in many cases, speakers actually find ways around linguistic differences. For example, diminutive suffixes that express compassion and endearment are pervasive in Dalabon; Kriol does not have such suffixes at all, but it offers an array of alternative resources that seem to bear the same functional load as the Dalabon suffixes (Chapter 6). In addition, where the lexico-grammatical code seems to make a difference in the way speakers describe the world – like with figurative representations of emotions – it is not clear that this corresponds to a difference in conceptualization (see Chapter 8 on gestures).

Thus, while shifting to a language with very different linguistic properties does seem to have *some* consequences upon the way speakers communicate about emotions, in many cases such consequences are superficial, or cancelled altogether. This sheds some light onto the more general issue of whether language influences thoughts and practices (‘culture’), i.e. linguistic relativity; or whether, perhaps, the influence goes the other way, i.e. from culture to language as suggested in 1.2. In the case under consideration, with respect to a core aspect of human experience such as emotions, it appears that the architecture of the lexico-grammatical code with which speakers communicate has relatively limited impact on what they express and how they communicate. This is a sideways perspective that does not, in itself, rule out the possibility that the properties of a language may influence some of its speakers’ representations and practices. But it does seem that in language shift, cultural pressures are often strong enough to bend the linguistic code, rather than the opposite (as also suggested by Palmer et al. (2017) for instance, see Section 3).

### 5.4 An overview of the results

An important observation in this study is that, as pointed out above, there is a good deal of functional commensurability between the linguistic devices respectively available in Kriol and Dalabon to talk about emotions. Beyond this very general characterisation, the results of the case study are a lot more nuanced, as one would expect. This section brushes an overview of the main findings and take-home points presented in the volume, structuring them around four major observations and what they tell us about actual situations of language shift.

The first two observations relate to continuity. First, semantics is very malleable, as well as – unsurprisingly – largely independent from forms. As discussed in Chapter 4, although the form (i.e. phonological make-up) of most Kriol words derives from English etymologies, their meanings often match the meaning of Dalabon words: in language shift, changes in *signifiers* are not necessarily accompanied by changes in *signified*. And conversely, we also find cases where the *signified* has shifted while the *signifier* has not. This is the case with conventionalized prosodic contours, presented in Chapter 5, where we find the exact same melodic contour in Kriol and in Dalabon, albeit with slightly different meanings. This suggests that in language shift, shifts in *signifier* and shifts in *signified* are actually independent of each other. In other words semantics is plastic and not heavily constrained by form. While this conclusion is relatively intuitive, with respect to language shift it is also a good reminder that a ‘loss’ in form does not necessarily reflect a ‘loss’ in the meanings that the forms can express.

Second, also in the realm of continuity, we find that where the new lexico-grammatical code lacks a resource that existed in the former one, there is great scope for speakers of the new language to modulate its code, and their usage of this code, in order to fill in functional ‘gaps’. This is illustrated in Chapter 6, where we observe that Kriol speakers have expanded the usage of a number of tools to cover the functions of the ubiquitous Dalabon diminutive suffixes – which Kriol does not have. That is, as is also intuitive, speakers are able to push their language towards the communicative functions that are useful to them. In a sense, this tells us again that semantics, and function, are very plastic. In the context of language shift, speakers tend to exploit this plasticity to create functional convergence with the former language. In practice, this also suggests that we should not conclude too promptly from the absence of a given construction in the new lexico-grammatical code to an actual functional gap in the new language.

Third, we also observe that some things do change. In the case of the domain of emotions in Kriol, the most significant contrast with Dalabon, by far, has to do with figurative representations. I show in Chapter 7 that the prevalent figurative association between emotions and the body (particularly the belly) that is firmly entrenched in Dalabon and in many other Australian languages is absent in Kriol. The exact reasons for this remain a matter for future investigation, but it is possible that the dynamics of contact that fostered language shift, and/or differences between the morphological profiles of the languages at stake (5.3), may have played a role. Thus, this seems to be a case where purely linguistic factors,

including the distance between the core structuring principles of the lexico-grammatical codes, result in notable differences on each side of language shift. For language communities seeking to maintain or revitalize their ‘traditional’ practices, identifying where language shift has brought significant differences may be useful. For instance, should Kriol speakers ever find it relevant to speak in a more ‘Dalabon’ or ‘Indigenous’ style, a simple and affordable option may consist in re-inserting body-based emotion metaphors into Kriol.

The fourth and last observation also has to do with change, but tempers the significance of linguistic change by questioning its conceptual correlates. There is explicit evidence that in spite of its lower incidence in Kriol lexicalized metaphors, the typically Australian figurative association between emotions and the body is conceptually embraced by Kriol speakers. This is supported by the free metaphors they use, how they gesture (Chapter 8) and confirmed by their metalinguistic statements. The analysis of all these features indicates that the figurative association between emotions and the body, although not imposed by strict linguistic conventions as it is in Dalabon, is conceptually active enough that it surfaces in Kriol wherever linguistic conventions are relaxed. This demonstrates that conceptual representations of emotions can persist independently of core linguistic conventions. Therefore, at least a for few generations after language shift, its speakers can continue to embrace the same ‘world views’ even when these are no longer reflected in linguistic figurative representations.

The organization of the volume follows the above presentation of the results. Chapter 4 compares the Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica, showing that in language shift, meanings can persist while the forms change. Chapter 5 takes a close look at conventionalized prosodic contours, showing that conversely, its meaning evolves through language shift while its form remains the same – which together with Chapter 4 illustrates the dissociation between meaning and form in language shift. Chapter 6 examines what happens when a resource that is prevalent in Dalabon is lacking in Kriol, reflecting the contrast in the respective morphological profiles of the two languages. Where Dalabon makes extensive use of evaluative morphology, namely compassionate suffixes, in Kriol there are no such suffixes but other resources have taken over to express compassion, showing that forms are not an insurmountable obstacle to speakers’ communicative needs. The most remarkable discrepancy between Kriol and Dalabon is discussed in Chapter 7, which shows that figurative representations that associate emotions with the body are not privileged in Kriol, while they are in Dalabon. Finally, Chapter 8 draws from the analysis of Kriol gestures to suggest that this difference in conventionalized, linguistic, figurative representations, may for the moment be of little consequence upon speakers’ representations of emotions.

Before we engage in these demonstrations, Chapters 2 and 3 offer further introductory material. Chapter 2 clarifies the concept of ‘emotion’, including its definition and the relation of emotions to language. Chapter 3 presents the data, the languages, their ecology and how this work articulates with research on creoles and other contact languages.

## Notes

- 1 Minasyan cites the UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (1996 and 2001), as well as a paper by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group, both authored by prominent linguists. I have deliberately omitted names here, because there is little doubt that many linguists have explicitly or implicitly endorsed correlations between language and culture when addressing the public or policy makers. They have done so in the interest of a number of communities, including speakers' communities, and pointing to individuals in the present context would be short-sighted and counterproductive.
- 2 E.g. 'People [. . .] embed in languages their history, traditions, memory, traditional knowledge, unique modes of thinking, meaning and expression. . . ' (UNESCO 2018:2).
- 3 <https://australianmuseum.net.au/aboriginal-indigenous-australians>
- 4 I use the term 'conceptual' rather than 'cognitive' because I refer to (potentially shared) representations rather than actual mechanisms of the brain, about which I will not be making any claim in this volume.
- 5 Dutch, English, Japanese and Spanish.
- 6 Evidentials specify the source of the speaker's knowledge. In some languages, this source has to be specified in all declarative clauses. In other words, I cannot say 'John came back home' without specifying whether I saw him come home, someone told me, I infer it from the shoes on the door step etc.
- 7 For instance Yumplatok, spoken in the Torres Strait Islands.
- 8 Many Australian languages have one single word to say 'hit' and 'kill'.

## 2 Emotions

Now that the overarching questions raised by this study have been articulated in the previous chapter, this chapter and the following present additional contextualizing information: first on emotions, and on the linguistic context and methods in Chapter 3. Later, I will discuss my definition of emotions in Section 1, and offer a very brief overview of the current views and debates around emotions across disciplines in Section 2. Finally, Section 3 highlights the depth of the relationship between language and emotions, and Section 4 clarifies some important distinctions and terms with respect to the linguistic encoding of emotions.

### 1. Defining emotions

As briefly stated in Chapter 1 (5.2), for the purpose of this study I define emotions as internal or *private* states<sup>1</sup> that have a *cognitive* dimension (contrary to sensations, e.g. hunger or pain) as well as a *purely subjective* dimension (contrary to purely ‘intellectual’ states such as knowing)<sup>2</sup> – this covers for instance anger, surprise, shame etc. Before I spell out the criteria behind this definition, it is useful to point out that like most scientific definitions, mine is partly arbitrary. It does not seek to reflect or identify anything like an ‘essential nature’ of emotions. As a matter of fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that such an ‘essential nature’ does not exist: neurological observations show that what we call ‘emotions’ in everyday language – either as a generic category, or as specific types such as ‘anger’ etc. – cannot be matched with any unitary phenomena identifiable in the real world (see Section 2). As famously illustrated by Wittgenstein (1953) with the concept of game, this situation is the norm and does not raise any difficulty when it comes to using the word ‘emotions’ in everyday English. Scientific studies, on the other hand, require more precision, hence the need to state clear definitions. Such scientific definitions do not need to strictly align with everyday language, although it is probably better if they are not entirely at odds with it (Putnam 1975; Wierzbicka 1999, 2010), nor do these definitions target an (illusory) underlying essence (Izard 2010; Widen & Russell 2010; Wierzbicka 2010). As pointed out by Scarantino (2012:365–366) and Majid (2012b:380), scientific definitions are prescriptive rather than descriptive: they define their object rather than describe it. In the context of a broad lack of

consensus in scientific definitions of emotions (Izard 2010), here I have chosen one that aligns reasonably well with the everyday use of the word, and importantly, fits the purpose of this work by allowing me to isolate an extensive yet manageable range of linguistic features.

### *1.1 Emotions as private states*

Perhaps the most essential property of emotions in my definition is that they are ‘psychological’ states – i.e. internal, private states. This matches the everyday use of the term in English, and is not at odds with Kriol or Dalabon speakers’ conceptual representations (see Ponsonnet (2014a:9–13) for a discussion of ‘private states’ and of the body-mind distinction in Dalabon). Being private, emotions are not directly observable, yet they are often accompanied by visible manifestations or symptoms (Wierzbicka 1999; Damasio 1999): behaviors, verbal responses, reflex and voluntary expressions, visible physiological reactions such as blushing etc. In everyday life, these observable phenomena constitute our only direct source of information about other people’s internal states. Emotions are also often accompanied by physiological responses which may not be perceptible by others but trigger interoception (the sensations of one’s organs, blood pressure level etc.). I do not differentiate between emotions and feelings (Scherer 2013), nor between emotions and affects (Masumi 1995).<sup>3</sup>

With this definition, linguistic devices that denote behaviors fall out of the strict scope of this study – which contributes to limiting its scale to an appropriate size. Behaviors and their linguistic descriptions will of course be considered where evidently relevant (which is frequent, given their close acquaintance with emotions defined as private states). But in general, linguistic expressions denoting behaviors only will not be regarded as emotional linguistic devices. For instance, I will consider that an expression meaning ‘to argue’ does not denote an emotion but a behavior – while an expression meaning ‘feel angry’ does denote an emotional, internal state.

Defining emotions as private states is not sufficient to capture the sense of what is usually called ‘emotions’ in English, because private states also include purely intellectual states and processes such as knowing, thinking etc.<sup>4</sup> Additional defining properties are outlined in the following sections, several of them shared with Ortony et al.’s (1987) now ‘classic’ criteria.

### *1.2 Cognitive dimension: emotions vs sensations*

In my framework, emotions differ from pure sensations in that the former imply some cognitive representation of a state of affairs in the world. By contrast, sensations such as pain, hunger, tickling etc., result from purely physical triggers and involve no cognitive grasp. That is, I can feel pain in my finger without establishing a representation of the needle jabbing it; by contrast, I cannot feel disappointed without accessing some representation of what I am disappointed about.

### 1.3 *Emotional vs intellectual states*

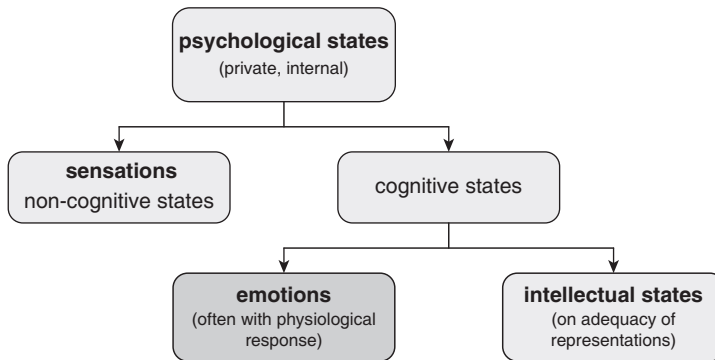
I also distinguish emotions from what I call intellectual states – for instance ‘to know’, ‘to agree’ etc. Both emotions and intellectual states have a cognitive dimension, but intellectual states concern *only* the establishment of appropriate ‘representations’ of the world (Ikegami & Zlatev 2007:200), and nothing else. Emotional states, by contrast, involve an additional, purely subjective ‘appraisal’ component (Scherer 2013). When I believe that something is true (an intellectual state), I posit the validity of a certain state of affairs in the world. When I enjoy something, my attitude is not just about whether this state of affairs is true or false, real or not; it is also about my feeling comfortable with it or not, wanting more of it or not etc. Of course, judgments and representations of the world play an important part in emotional states, and conversely emotions influence our judgements (see for instance Nussbaum (2001)), but this does not cancel the conceptual difference between intellectual and emotional states.

### 1.4 *Emotions, moods and dispositions*

Authors interested in the physiological dimension of emotions (i.e. bodily responses) are often inclined to define them as shorter episodes, with a brief onset and an altogether fast cycle (Ortony, Clore & Foss 1987:354ff; Ekman 1992:86, 175). In the perspective of my interest in emotions understood broadly as cognitive internal states, brevity is less relevant, and therefore I include in my definition durable states that may be devoid of clear physiological counterparts. Moods, such as feeling cheerful, depressed, etc., and emotional dispositions, i.e. one’s propensity to experience a certain emotion (being sensitive, being irritable), will be included as well. This is further justified by the fact that in Dalabon at least, a significant number of emotional words colexify<sup>5</sup> emotional states and emotional dispositions.

### 1.5 *Summary*

To summarize, for the purpose of this study I chose to define emotions as cognitive internal states featuring a subjective dimension of ‘appraisal’. Emotions are thus distinct from their behavioral symptoms; they differ from sensations as well as from intellectual states (or judgements); they are often accompanied by bodily responses, but this is not an indispensable property in my definition. A diagrammatic representation of these criteria and distinctions is presented in Fig. 1. Like most definitions, this one is not without leaks. It may for example be difficult to decide whether doubt is an emotion or an intellectual state. But in conducting linguistic analyses on Dalabon, Kriol and neighboring languages, I have found that borderline cases were few and did not raise major difficulties, as they can simply be included for the sake of exhaustivity. Overall, the definition presented above provided sufficient methodological guidelines to carry out



*Figure 2.1* Diagrammatic representation of the definition of emotions used in this study.

linguistic data-collection and analysis (see Ponsonnet (2014a:5–6) on the question of borderline cases, and (2014a:12) on linguistic tests).

## 2. Universalism and constructivism

Emotions have long been a topic of intellectual and scientific exploration, with early interest originally from philosophers (Descartes 1649; Spinoza 1677/1992; Hume 1740; James 1884, 1890; Aristotle *De anima/On the soul*), as well as from medical circles (see Dixon (2012) for a concise history of modern medical discourse on emotions). In the last 50 years or so, research on emotions has intensified, with works flourishing in a number of disciplines including psychology, anthropology, linguistics and more. Some facts are now well established: for instance, we know that emotions correspond to complex neurological processes typically involving the part of the brain called the amygdala and the limbic system, and triggering responses from the autonomic nervous system. Linguistic and anthropological research tells us that languages can label emotions in different ways, and that human groups vary with respect to which emotions they tend to focus on in discourse and in practice. Yet, a lot remains to be discovered, and in particular the extent to which emotions are determined by human physiology, which would make them universal, or by the social and linguistic context in which people live, in which case they would be culturally constructed.

A few decades ago, psychologists taking a relatively early interest in emotions sought to identify a set of ‘primary’ emotions (typically anger, surprise, sadness, joy, disgust and fear), each of them defined by a unified pattern of physiological and neurological activity (Izard 1977; Ekman 1992; and Docter 2015 in popular culture). In this framework, primary emotions were construed as universal products of human evolution, and each of them was supposed to correspond to the same physiological and neurological pattern in all humans across cultures. In more

recent years, however, this theory has largely been superseded by psychological models allowing for more complexity and variation. Under these new ‘constructivist’ models, ‘primary’ emotions are backgrounded or altogether replaced by notions of emotions viewed as multi-dimensional events determined, in part, by cognitive processes rather than by purely emotional, quasi-reflex, neurophysiological dispositive (Scherer, Shorr and Johnstone 2001; Mesquita 2003; Boiger and Mesquita 2012). In this framework, the ‘organic substrate’ of emotions does not present naturally established unitary patterns. That is, the set of emotions and events we describe as ‘fear’ in English does not correspond to one single physiological or neurological pattern, but may instead correspond to a diversity of phenomena, the unity of which is largely cognitively constructed. Based on such models, most authors concur that emotions are not strictly universal but allow for some degree of cross-cultural variation.

This, indeed, matches empirical observation. Anthropological research has long confirmed that people in different human groups deal with emotional experience in different ways (Myers 1979, 1986; Levy 1984; Lutz 1986; Rosaldo 2013), and different languages also offer very different means to talk about it (see Heelas 1986; Wierzbicka 1999, among many others). On this basis, the dominant understanding of emotions in social sciences is also a constructionist model, where human emotional experience is not determined physiologically or neurologically, but instead is seen as the culturally variable product of social and linguistic norms (Harré 1986; Scherer, Shorr & Johnstone 2001).

In this volume, I will assume that emotional experience involves both some physiological and neurological mechanisms, which – for some of them – may be universal, and the cognitive organization of these mechanisms into experience, governed by culturally specific social and linguistic norms. Such a middle road has been adopted by a number of authors in the past, including some psychologists (e.g. Russell 1991), some anthropologists (e.g. Levy 1973, 1984) and some linguists (e.g. Wierzbicka 1999:25).

### 3. Language and emotions

Given the above, constructivist perspectives on emotions naturally assign a prominent role to language in shaping our concepts of emotions. This role has been recognized not only by linguists and social scientists (Levy 1973, 1984; Harré 1986; Wierzbicka 1999; Pavlenko 2014:Chap 7), but also by psychologists (Feldman Barrett 2009; Laible & Song 2006; Lindquist & Gendron 2013). Therefore, with respect to linguistic relativity and the question of the influence of linguistic structures upon thought and practices, emotions represent a privileged domain of investigation, as one of the domains where the properties of particular lexico-grammatical codes may have the greatest impact (Ponsonnet accepted).

The exact nature and extent of the role of language in shaping emotional concepts, experience and practices around emotions is not directly tackled in this study, as it requires some experimental testing to start with. But it is interesting to observe that in spite of the pivotal role of language in this domain, when

shifting to a new lexico-grammatical code speakers maintain a great deal of functional equivalence between what they can say and express about emotions. This does not necessarily imply that language has no role at all in determining representations, experience and practices, but perhaps that ‘cultural’ patterns relative to emotions are in themselves quite entrenched and persistent amongst human groups (Ponsonnet accepted). Aside from being an observation about language shift, this is also an observation about emotions: they may be central enough to a group’s values to resist contextual changes, including changes in the lexico-grammatical code. This, again, is a matter for future investigation.

#### 4. Semiotic diversity: descriptive vs expressive resources

A significant advantage of the semantic domain of emotions with respect to the questions tackled in this volume is its semiotic diversity. In this section, I highlight some of the semiotic nuances I will be relying upon in the rest of the volume, and clarify the terminology I will be using when talking about them.

Linguists who have studied the linguistic encoding of emotions (for instance Irvine (1982:31–32), Besnier (1990:419), Bednarek (2008), Foolen (2012:350), Majid (2012a:432), Ponsonnet (2014a:21–22), among many others) have often relied upon a distinction between two types of linguistic resources: descriptive resources ones (mostly the lexicon, e.g. ‘she is *impressed*’), and expressive ones (for instance interjections, e.g. ‘*wow!*’). Authors suggest various labels for these categories, emphasizing slightly different contrasts. The ‘expressive’ function (Jakobson 1960:354; Leech 1974:10–27) is alternatively called ‘emotive’, ‘affective’ (Lyons 1977), contrasting with denotational, descriptive, social components of language (Lyons 1977), or other functions such as referential, metalingual, poetic, phatic, conative (Jakobson 1960), informative, directive and aesthetic (Leech 1974). (See Besnier (1990) for a review on such partitions.) Throughout the volume I will talk about ‘expressive’ linguistic resources, contrasting them with ‘descriptive’ linguistic resources.

A basic criterion that differentiates between descriptive and expressive linguistic resources is the semiotic status of the linguistic devices in question. Expressive emotional forms, for instance ‘*wow!*’, are those that can, at least to some extent, be regarded as causal effects of a state experienced by the speaker at the time of utterance (i.e. I say ‘wow’ because I feel impressed). Semiotically, these resources convey their meaning by indexing the speaker’s state, in Peirce’s (1955) sense of ‘index’. As a consequence of being indexical, expressive resources can never allude to a state of someone other than the speaker,<sup>6</sup> or to a state experienced by the speaker in the past or future. Descriptive resources, on the other hand – for instance ‘she is *impressed*’ – are not bound to the speaker’s emotional state in this way. They can therefore refer to states experienced at any point in time, by the speaker or by others.

Descriptive resources consist mostly of lexical resources, i.e. words, and some constructions. Expressive resources on the other hand include a broader array of tools such as morphology (typically expressive and evaluative morphology, see

Chapter 6), prosody (see Chapter 5), interjections<sup>7</sup> (see Chapters 4 and 6) as well as modalities, contrastive syntactic constructions, and more (see Besnier (1990) and Majid (2012b) for reviews). Following Foolen (2012:357–360), I also include figurative language among expressive resources. Because they draw from a diverse range of linguistic tools, and because of their peculiar semiotic status, expressive resources offer a rich insight into how the shift to a new linguistic code impacts what speakers can say and express.

There is of course a lot more to say about emotions and the linguistic encoding of emotions than could fit in this brief introduction, and in this respect I can only refer the reader to the vast literature referenced at the end of this volume (see also Ponsonnet accepted). For the purpose of this book, the definitions, distinctions and concept provided above will suffice to follow the arguments, and I will now move on to the discussion of the linguistic context and methodology.

## Notes

- 1 In Wittgenstein's (1953) sense of the term 'private'.
- 2 This is the same definition as the one used in Ponsonnet (2014a:5–17), which also offers a longer discussion.
- 3 I will therefore primarily use the term 'emotions', but may occasionally alternate with 'feelings' or 'affects'.
- 4 Considering all private states under the same study would make sense but render the scope unmanageable.
- 5 'Colexify' means that they have both the senses in question.
- 6 Except the 'reported speaker' in reported speech.
- 7 Interjections form part of a language's lexicon, yet they function expressively.

### 3 Linguistic context and methods

This third and last introductory chapter presents the linguistic, sociolinguistic and methodological information that forms the background of the volume. Section 1 offers overviews of the languages under consideration and their ecologies. Section 2 situates the book with respect to some current debates in creolistics. Finally, Section 3 presents the corpora upon which this study is based, along with some discussion of data-collection methodology.

#### 1. The languages and their ecology

The languages under scrutiny in this study are spoken in the Australian Top End (a peninsula to the north of the Northern Territory), and more specifically in central Arnhem Land, a region located to the north-eastern end of the Top End peninsula. In Australia, Arnhem Land is often characterized as an ‘Indigenous bastion’. Inland Arnhem Land was only colonized relatively late, in the first decades of the 20th century. In the 1970s, the Aboriginal Land Right Act (Commonwealth of Australia 1976) legally acknowledged local Indigenous groups as land owners, which gave them the means to protect their country from demographic invasion and mass economical development. Linguistically, this relative protection did not strictly correlate with the preservation of Indigenous languages. Groups living in northern and eastern Arnhem Land, closer to the coasts, have mostly maintained their traditional languages (the largest and most vital being the Pama-Nyungan Yolngu Matha dialects and the non-Pama-Nyungan Bininj Gun-wok dialects). Groups living further from the coasts, in central and western Arnhem Land, who suffered a more sudden and more abrupt process of colonization, have adopted Kriol, an English-based creole.

##### 1.1 *Kriol*

Kriol is now spoken by several thousands of Indigenous people – at least 6,000, and possibly as many as 20 to 30,000 (Marmion, Kazuko & Troy 2014:18) – across a vast portion of central northern Australia (see Fig. 1). Linguists recognize several varieties of Kriol, and in this work I focus on the variety spoken in the Indigenous communities of Beswick/Wugularr and Bamiyili/Barunga, to the



Figure 3.1 Geographic distribution of Kriol.

east of the town of Katherine (see Fig. 3 in 2.1). This variety is usually labelled ‘Barunga Kriol’ (Sandefur 1986), while notable other varieties are for instance Roper Kriol, to the south-east near the community of Ngukurr close to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and Westside Kriol, to the west of Katherine (Meakins 2014:379–380). There are attested lexical differences between the varieties (see Chapter 4 as well as Dickson (2015)), and it is likely that further nuances exist, in particular in the domain of emotions. Yet, the varieties are mutually intelligible, share the bulk of their grammar, and are therefore one and the same language. Reflecting this linguistic fabric, in this volume I will generally talk about Kriol, and will only use more specific labels when discussing varietal contrasts.

The Barunga region numbers a few thousand Kriol speakers, living mostly in the Indigenous communities of Barunga (pop. c.300), Beswick/Wugularr (pop. c.500), and other nearby Aboriginal ‘remote communities’ about an hour’s drive to the east of the town of Katherine (pop. c.6,000). People living in Bulman/Gulin Gulin and Weemol/Mardrulk, located a couple of hours’ drive further east along the same (unsealed) road (pop c.280 combined), also speak the same variety of Kriol. Indigenous remote communities in this region of Australia are equipped with core facilities such as schools, basic health services, small supermarkets etc. Many of these services are at least partly staffed by mainstream Australians, who usually interact with the local population in English. However, apart from these contexts, as well as television, Kriol is the main daily language of all inhabitants in these communities. Other Australian languages are not very actively spoken in the Barunga region (see 1.3 below).

As expected for a creole (see 5.1 in Chapter 1), the core grammatical organization of Kriol reflects much of that of its lexifier, i.e. English. Kriol is an SVO language and is relatively isolating (although there is some verbal morphology). Kriol phonology draws both from Australian languages and from English and allows for significant phonetic variation in realization across generations and

across individual speakers (Baker, Bundgaard-Nielsen & Graetzer 2014); orthographic conventions are presented at the beginning of the volume (p. XXX). The grammatical properties of Kriol that are relevant to the arguments in the volume will be presented as we go along, but Sandefur (1979) offers a preliminary grammatical analysis of the Barunga and Roper varieties (see also Schultze-Berndt, Meakins and Angelo (2013) for an overview). Further topical discussions of Kriol grammar can be found for instance in Nicholls (2009), Hoffman (2012), Ponsonnet (2016a, 2018a), Phillips (2018), Batchelor, Jones & Ponsonnet (submitted).<sup>1</sup> Lee's (2004) dictionary, as well as Ponsonnet (2009, 2012) and Dickson (2015), offer documentation and analyses of the Kriol lexicon.

Like many creoles around the world, Kriol initially attracted negative perceptions as a 'bastardized' language. Speakers report that in the decades following the adoption of Kriol, children were not allowed to use it at school (Rhydwen 1995). Yet, instead of internalizing these perceptions, Kriol speakers around Barunga were relatively prompt to adopt more positive attitudes. In the 1960s, perhaps under the influence of missionary linguists (Harris 1986; Sandefur 1979, 1986), many Kriol speakers came to embrace and proclaim Kriol as a full-fledged language independent from English and from other Australian languages. In the 1970s and 1980s, a Kriol-English bilingual program helped improve Kriol literacy, thus further enhancing the status of Kriol. Nowadays, negative perceptions of Kriol as an unfortunate mix with English, or as a 'killer language' responsible for the decline of other Australian languages, are rare amongst Kriol speakers in the Barunga region.<sup>2</sup> When questioned on how they feel about the status of Dalabon, for instance, Kriol speakers express some regret that the upcoming generation will (most likely) not acquire any significant mastery of their heritage language, but they usually immediately emphasize the value of Kriol and their attachment to it. As discussed in Ponsonnet (2010a), Kriol is valued as an everyday tool for communication with broader reach than Dalabon, for its historical association with an era of resistance and cultural renewal that immediately followed violent colonization, and for its distinctive Aboriginality which automatically differentiates its speakers from mainstream Australians. My own motivations for studying Kriol and writing this book are partly a response to Kriol speakers' assertively positive views on their own language.

Beyond the speakers' communities, the status of Kriol is ambivalent. Generally speaking, Indigenous languages do not enjoy much recognition in Australia. They have no official status and are explicitly excluded from official educational curricula. Some services such as interpreters services are available, but in general funding opportunities for language maintenance or revitalization are scarce and not very well identified (Mahboob et al. 2017). Although it numbers disproportionately more speakers than the next largest Indigenous languages (at least 6,000 speakers of Kriol, and probably many more, vs about 2,500 for Warlpiri or Yolngu Matha (Lee & Obata 2010; Marmion, Kazuko & Troy 2014)), Kriol does not fare any better in official recognition. Besides, Kriol still suffers from the relative 'invisibility' that derives from its resemblance with English (see for instance Sellwood and Angelo (2013) with respect to education). As a matter

of fact, most of the mainstream Australians I speak to in my everyday life are squarely unaware of the existence of Kriol.

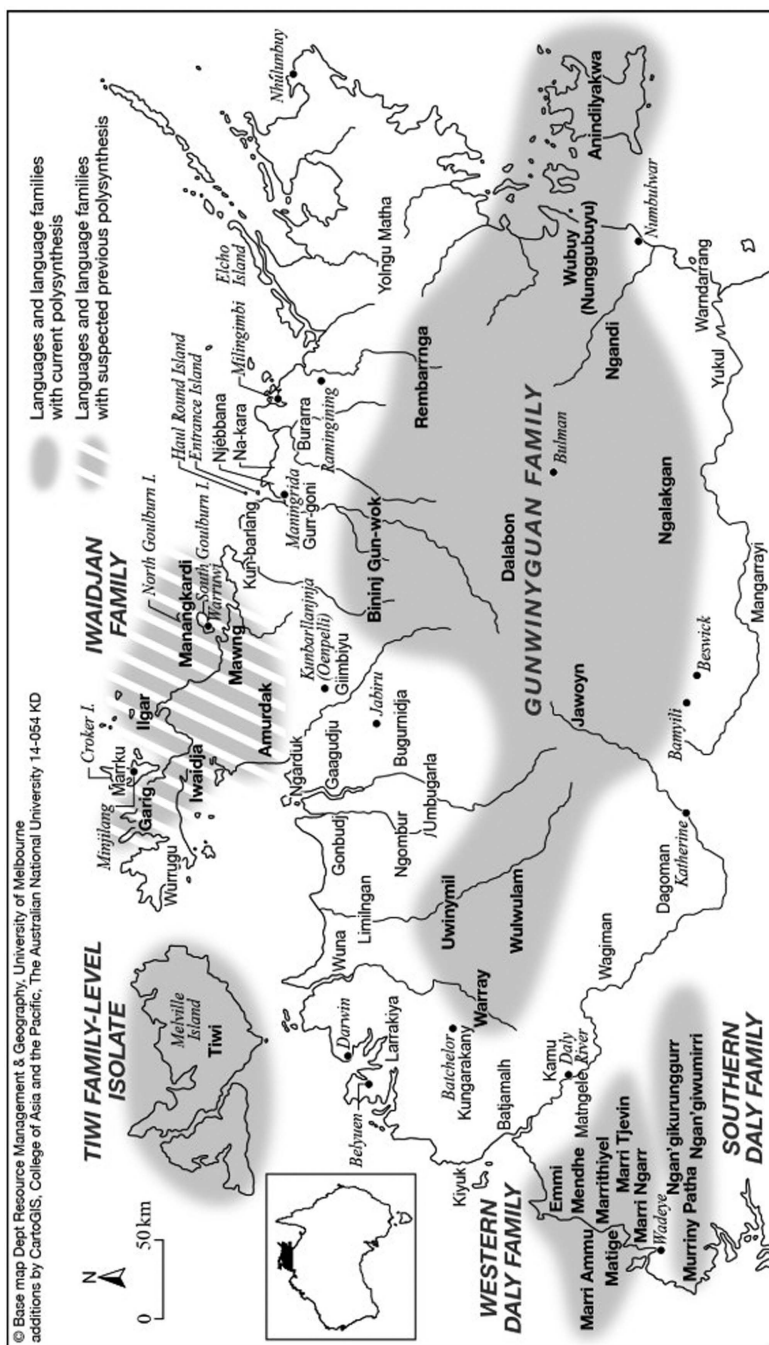
## 1.2 *Gunwinyguan languages*

At least four languages were commonly spoken in the Barunga region and around before colonization began: Dalabon (Evans & Merlan 2003; Evans, Brown & Corbett 2001; Evans, Merlan & Tukumba 2004), Jawoyn (Merlan & Jacq 2005a), Rembarrnga (McKay 1975; Saulwick 2003a, 2003b) and Bininj Gun-wok (Evans 2003). Bininj Gun-wok is a dialect chain, of which the Kunwinjku/Mayali and Kune varieties were – and to some extent still are – spoken in the region, as shown on Fig. 2. Whether in precolonial times or in more recent years, speakers of Dalabon, Jawoyn, Rembarrnga and Kune or Mayali have always belonged to a relatively unified ‘cultural region’. These language groups share many narratives and rituals; they intermarry and function within the same kinship and social networks. In this part of Australia, language affiliations are intertwined with ethnic affiliations, so that people continue to identify with the names of their ancestors’ languages even when they do not speak them. Thus, Kriol speakers in the Barunga region identify as Dalabon, Jawoyn, Rembarrnga, Kune etc. No one identifies as ‘Kriol’, because this is not an ethnic name, yet as discussed above it is a strong identity marker compared to mainstream Australians, as well as compared to Indigenous groups who have not adopted Kriol (see 1.1).

All languages in the (non-Pama-Nyungan) Gunwinyguan family are head-marking and highly polysynthetic – a profile which, as discussed in 5.3 in Chapter 1, contrasts strongly with that of Kriol. Dalabon will be our point of comparison with Kriol, and Ponsonnet (2014a:60–72) offers a précis of Dalabon grammar tailored to the analysis of the linguistic encoding of emotions – but for ease of reading, in the present volume relevant grammatical features will be explained as we go along. The orthography is presented on p. XXX at the beginning of the book. Published and first-hand data from Jawoyn, Rembarrnga and Bininj Gun-wok (see 3.4) will regularly be called upon throughout the book, so as to set the comparison between Kriol and Dalabon within a broader regional context.

## 1.3 *Language ecology*

Prior to colonization, intense multilingualism was prevalent in the Barunga region (like in most parts of Australia), with most people speaking at least two languages, and often more – their mother’s language, their father’s language, as well as their grandparents’ or spouse(s)’s languages if applicable (Simpson & Wigglesworth 2019:70). Nowadays, this type of multilingualism is in decline in Kriol-speaking communities. Older speakers (born before in the early 1950s or earlier) tend to be fluent in at least one Gunwinyguan language, but mastery decreases with generations. Speakers born earlier than 1970 are usually semi-speakers of a Gunwinyguan language; most younger speakers of Kriol have some



exposure to Gunwinyguan languages, but the knowledge of those who do not have family further north is often limited to a couple of words.

In line with these observations, three of the Gunwinyguan languages mentioned above are severely or even critically endangered. At the time of writing, Jawoyn has a few semi-speakers left; Dalabon has a handful of speakers, all elderly, as well as semi-speakers and Rembarrnga probably has a dozen speakers along with many semi-speakers. The descendants of the speakers of these groups have shifted to Kriol. The situation is very different with Bininj Gun-wok dialects. While they are not very actively spoken in the Barunga region, they are still used on a daily basis and acquired by children in communities to the north (for instance Oenpelli, Jabiru, Maningrida). As a result, native speakers of Kriol with family ties in these communities often master one of the Bininj Gun-wok dialects (Kunwinjku/Mayali or Kune), which contributes to maintaining a certain level of multilingualism in the Barunga region. In the codes of the examples presented throughout the volume, the initials of the speakers who master at least one Gunwinyguan language are tagged with an asterisk. In addition, all adult Kriol speakers speak English, with miscellaneous levels of mastery. Very old speakers (born before the Second World War) use a less canonical variety as they did not attend school. The following generations, on the other hand, have been schooled in English, but children rarely speak much of it before they spend time in the classroom. (See p. XXX for more details about individual speakers' linguistic background.)

Apart from English and Gunwinyguan languages, there is also some contact with more distant Australian languages. Nowadays, Kriol speakers from the Barunga region increasingly spend time or even live more or less permanently in the town of Katherine, where many Indigenous groups converge (Merlan 1998). There are occasional intermarriages with more distant groups such as the Yolngu to the east or the Warlpiri to the south. All these contexts foster language contact between Kriol speakers and speakers of distant traditional Australian languages, as well as with speakers of other varieties of Kriol (see Simpson and Wigglesworth (2019:73), as well as Ponsonnet (2016a) about changes potentially induced by such contacts).

## 2. Language shift and contact languages

### 2.1 *Resemblances vs influences*

As stated in Chapter 1 (5.1), creoles are defined as contact languages, resulting from the co-presence of a politically dominant or 'superstrate' language on the one hand, and 'substrate' languages, i.e. smaller local languages, on the other hand. The factors that influence the formation of creoles are complex and have been a matter of intense debate. Some authors have argued that creoles are mostly determined by universal tendencies (Bickerton 1977, 1984); others that the 'dominant' language or superstrate – here, English – plays a prevalent role (Mufwene 2001; DeGraff 2003, among others); and yet others have shown that substrate languages, i.e. the ancestral languages of creole speakers, also exert significant influence (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Lefebvre 2009; Siegel 2008, among others).

The purpose of the comparison carried out throughout this volume, between Kriol and one of his substrate languages – Dalabon – is *not* to evaluate specific substrate influences upon Kriol. This would entail establishing from which Australian language(s) individual features have been borrowed. Instead, as presented in Chapter 1, I seek to assess how using Kriol rather than Dalabon impacts what speakers can say and express about emotions. As I explore this question, I will systematically compare features of Kriol with features of Dalabon, and indeed identify a number of resemblances between the two languages. But *resemblance* – properties shared in synchrony – is not *influence* – a diachronic process. In some cases, synchronic resemblances may indeed reflect diachronic influences, but it is not my purpose here to gauge the substrate influence of Dalabon upon Kriol. First, this would not answer my question about the impact of language shift; and second, given the complexity of the history of Kriol, the question of the influence of Dalabon upon Kriol is far too intricate to be disentangled on the basis of what we currently know.

## 2.2 *The complexities of Kriol genesis*

As pointed out by Meakins (2014:376–380), the details of the complex genesis of Kriol remain a matter of debate. Most authors agree that like many creoles, Kriol developed from pidgins. Pidgins are limited codes used solely in the context of communication between language groups, while creoles have developed as full languages native to a community. Kriol varieties emerged in the 20th century, expanding from the Northern Territory Pidgin, a pidgin inspired by earlier pidgins that had travelled to the north of Australia from the southern parts of the continents (Troy 1990, 1994). These pidgins travelled with settlers progressing towards the north of the continent via several routes (Fig. 3), picking up influences from various Australian Aboriginal languages along the way (Koch 2000; Simpson 2000; Mühlhäusler 2008). Looking on Fig. 3 at the progression of miscellaneous pidgins that influenced the Northern Territory Pidgin which finally became Kriol, all creole varieties must have received some influence from a selection of Australian languages both from the center of the continent and from along the east coast, including New South Wales and Queensland languages. Indeed, lexical influences from the Sydney language are well attested (see Chapter 4).

Indigenous communities in the Barunga region shifted to Kriol after the Second World War (Sandefur 1986:21) – i.e. some decades after Kriol had been adopted in Ngukurr/Roper, which is the earliest reported occurrence. It has not yet been demonstrated that the varieties of Kriol spoken across central northern Australia result from one and the same creole language having diffused throughout the Kriol areas. As pointed out by Meakins (2014:377), distinct varieties of Kriol may have resulted from multiple creolization processes. Whether Kriol was created once – say, in Ngukurr/Roper – and then diffused, or whether it resulted from several isolated creolization phenomena makes a significant difference to the role the particular Australian languages spoken in each region may have played. If Kriol diffused from Ngukurr/Roper, then the languages spoken in this region

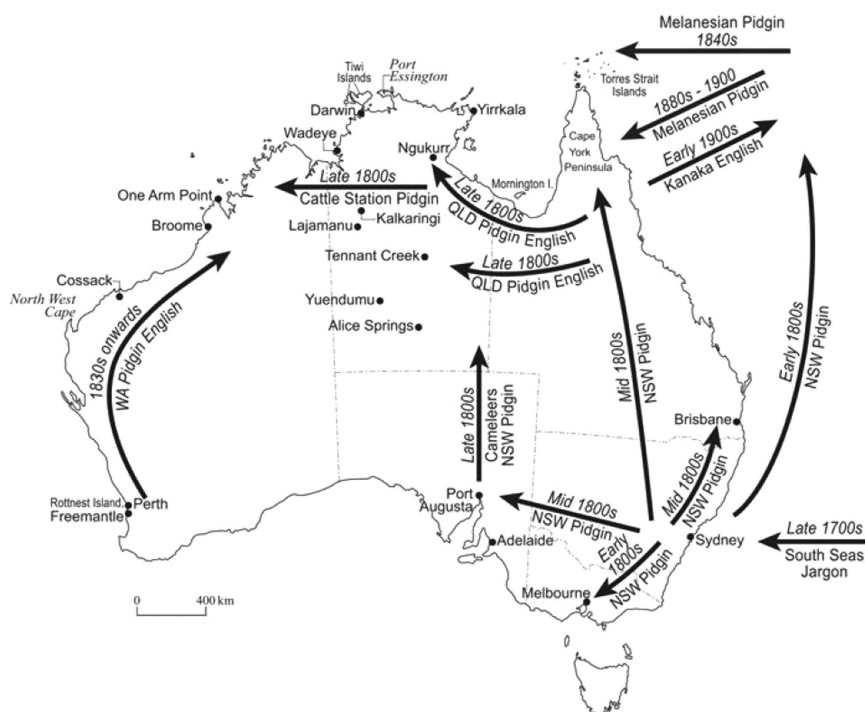


Figure 3.3 Australian contact languages and their diffusion.

Source: (Meakins 2014:367).

must have had a stronger influence across varieties (as discussed by Munro 2000, 2004); in the alternative scenario, where each variety emerged somewhat independently, a language like Dalabon would have weighed a lot more upon the variety created in the Barunga region than in the other scenario. In the face of such uncertainties, combined with the diverse Australian influence potentially imprinted via the pidgins, plus ongoing contemporary contact highlighted in 1.3, disentangling local substrate influences from more distant Australian influences is practically impossible. In this book, I use the term ‘substrate’ to refer to the Australian languages that were replaced by miscellaneous Kriol varieties, but this label conveys no implications about the actual influence of these languages upon Kriol.

### 2.3 Australian influences

Given this complex dynamic of contact around Kriol, it is evident that comparing Kriol with Dalabon tells us practically nothing about the exact role played by Dalabon in shaping up Kriol. On the other hand, in several occasions across the

volume, we will observe that Kriol aligns with Dalabon, against English, with respect to features that Dalabon shares with a number of other Australian languages. Sometimes the features in question appear to be Gunwinyguan features, suggesting some regional influence specific to the Barunga region (see Chapter 4 for examples of lexical calques for instance). In other instances, like with compassionate interjections (Chapters 4 and 6) or emotion metaphors involving the belly (Chapters 7 and 8), Kriol clearly follows broader continental tendencies. The observation that Kriol has a fairly Australian ‘profile’ in a number of respects is clearly significant when assessing the impact of language shift upon the way speakers express themselves and communicate. It contributes to show that language shift does not necessarily come hand in hand with cultural shift, as discussed in Chapter 1.

### 3. The data

#### 3.1 *Personal background*

Recording people talking about or expressing emotions is a delicate matter, for evident reasons: emotions are personal, they often touch upon very private aspects of people’s lives; expressing them may require a certain degree of intimacy with the interlocutor as well as some spontaneity. Language documentation involves recording, which is in itself an obvious obstacle to privacy, intimacy and spontaneity. Apart from adequate data-collection methodology (see below), my extensive personal history with the speakers I worked with was key in overcoming these difficulties. My initial connection with people in the Barunga region dates back to 1997, when at the age of twenty-two I came to work seasonally near the Weemol community. As part of this non-academic employment, for the following six years I spent eight months of each year living near Weemol. Since 2003, I have visited the region practically every year for several weeks, carrying out successive language-documentation projects and fieldwork<sup>3</sup> (once I had shifted to an academic career) with a number of families from Barunga, Beswick/Wugularr, Bulman/Gulin Gulin and Weemol. Whether in Kriol, Dalabon or other Gunwinyguan languages, I usually record speakers who I have known for many years, if not decades, and some of them since their early childhood. As a matter of fact, many of them clearly take the language-documentation context as an opportunity to confide, to me at the same time as to a virtual broader audience when the microphone is on.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3.2 *Data collection methods*

The comparison between Kriol and Dalabon presented in this book is based on first-hand data. With both languages, data collection relied on a range of methods and stimuli designed to target the emotional domain and to elicit natural emotional speech. These included for instance personal and biographical narratives,

for which my personal acquaintance with the speakers was of great help; as well as a range of stimuli-based tasks featuring, among others: miscellaneous picture-based narratives (San Roque et al. 2012), a story book (*Frog Where Are You*, Mayer 2003), tailored visual stimuli created for the purpose of elicitation, video clips extracted from the *Mind Reading* videos (Baron-Cohen 2004) and a range of Australian feature films (see Ponsonnet 2014b for a methodological report). Throughout the volume, the language examples are tagged to indicate how they were collected – as part of a narrative, a comment on a stimulus, on a movie etc. (See abbreviations p. XXX.)

Watching feature films with speakers and recording their comments provided quasi-spontaneous, well-contextualized data, including a great deal of expressive resources (Ponsonnet 2014b). Two movies feature prominently in the data presented here. *Rabbit-proof Fence* (Noyce 2002) tells the story of children taken away from their parents as part of what is called the Stolen Generation (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997), i.e. the forced removal of Indigenous children from their parents that resulted from government policies in place during most of the 20th century in Australia. *Rabbit-proof Fence* recounts how three children ran away from an orphanage and walked across the continent back to their families. It was well-known to Kriol and Dalabon speakers before we watched it together. The other oft-cited movie is *Samson and Delilah* (Thornton 2009), which was also known to some speakers prior to watching it with me. We only ever watched the first 30 minutes, which present a complicated love story between two young adults in a remote Indigenous community in Central Australia.<sup>5</sup>

Using the same methods and stimuli to collect data in Kriol and in Dalabon resulted in high levels of comparability across the two languages. As we will see in the next chapter when discussing the lexicon, it makes it possible to analyze the responses of speakers to the exact same context in each language.

### 3.3 *Kriol and Dalabon corpora*

My main Kriol corpus comprises ~20 transcribed hours collected in the communities of Barunga, Beswick/Wugularr, Bulman/Gulin Gulin and Weemol between 2014 and 2016, with 20 female speakers between 13 and 80 years old (further details are provided on p. XXX).<sup>6</sup> About half of them have significant mastery of either Dalabon and/or another Gunwinyguan languages, and all of them are fluent in English (1.3). The Dalabon data, collected between 2007 and 2012 mostly with four elderly female Dalabon speakers is larger, with about 60 transcribed hours. The analyses extracted from this Dalabon corpus have largely been published elsewhere (Ponsonnet 2014a) and will only be summarized here for the purpose of the comparison with Kriol.

As pointed out above, the Kriol and Dalabon corpora are highly comparable, as they result from the same documentation methods and stimuli. The Dalabon corpus is larger but it is also more diverse, i.e. less focused on emotions, while the Kriol corpus is more specialized. Both corpora share a gender bias towards female speakers, reflecting cultural gender separations that make it less appropriate for

a female linguist to work with males (see Ponsonnet accepted), as well as, for Dalabon, the demographics of remaining speakers at the time of documentation.

The quantitative comparisons (in Chapters 5 and 6 in particular) were carried out on the basis of smaller, highly comparable datasets focused on the most naturalistic and emotionally rich material (a bit more than seven hours in each language). Each of these two datasets comprises a selection of recordings based on diverse data-collection methods, in similar proportions for each language. This includes about 5 hours of comments on the same movies, as well as between 90 and 120 min of narratives, and some stimuli-based elicitation (with comparable stimuli in each language). Ideally, future studies should further develop the quantitative dimension of the comparison between Kriol and Dalabon.

### 3.4 Other languages

Although this work focuses on Dalabon as a privileged point of comparison with Kriol, other Australian languages – in particular other languages of the Gunwinyguan family – are called upon as often as possible. There exists no Australian language with the same level of documentation of emotions as in Dalabon, yet we do have some coverage for some of them. For Gunwinyguan languages spoken in the Barunga region – Jawoyn, Rembarrnga and Bininj Gun-wok dialects – I have been able to access extensive (published or unpublished) material (see 3.4) including detailed dictionaries (Merlan & Jacq 2005a, 2005b; Saulwick 2003a; Garde 2011). Between 2014 and 2017, I have also collected first-hand data on emotions in all these languages (albeit only very marginally for Jawoyn). My Bininj Gun-wok corpus (Kunwinjku and Kune) comprises about 4 transcribed hours recorded with 6 female speakers between 35 and 70 years of age. My Rembarrnga corpus comprises nearly nine hours recorded with three mature female speakers. Built using the same documentation methods as for Kriol and Dalabon, these corpora are also highly comparable, and are very good sources with respect to emotion words and metaphors in particular.

Beyond the Gunwinyguan region, data and analyses of various aspects of the linguistic encoding of emotions are available for a handful of Australian languages such as Kaytetye (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia, Turpin (Turpin 2002, 2011)), Kukatja (Pama-Nyungan, Wati, Western Desert, Peile (1997)) Kuuk Thaayorre (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape York Peninsula, Gaby (2008)). Usually, where a sizeable dictionary is available, it is possible to extract information about emotion words and metaphors, and in this respect the present volume refers to typological studies carried out in parallel to this case study (Ponsonnet 2016b; Laginha & Ponsonnet submitted).

## Notes

- 1 See also Hudson (1985) on the Kimberley variety.
- 2 They may be somewhat more prevalent in other Indigenous communities in Northern Australia (Meakins 2008).

### 38 *Linguistic context and methods*

- 3 Data collection was funded successively by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander /Studies (Grants G2009/7439 and G2007/7242), by the Endangered Language Project of the Hans Rausing Foundation (IGS0125, 2010–2012), by a fellowship (2014–2015) under the ASLAN project (ANR-10-LABX-0081) of Université de Lyon within the program “Investissements d’Avenir” (ANR-11-IDEX-0007) of the French government (National Research Agency, ANR) and by the Australian Research Council (DECRA160100216).
- 4 Issues of privacy are discussed systematically, and of course all the material presented in this work is safe in this respect.
- 5 Speakers deemed the rest of the movie too dark and did not wish to comment on it.
- 6 Since Kriol was often used as an interlanguage when documenting Dalabon, the Dalabon corpus also contains some valuable Kriol data, albeit mostly from older speakers.

## 4 Emotion lexica

### Different forms, same meanings

By definition, creoles borrow lexical forms from their lexifiers – i.e. superstrate, or politically dominant languages (Chapter 1, 5.1, Chapter 3, 2.1). Shifting to a creole thus implies a massive shift in word-forms, and accordingly most Kriol emotion words have an English etymon: they resemble English from the point of view of their phonological make-up. But does this massive shift in forms correspond to a comparable shift in the semantics of creole words? Or do Kriol speakers use words with comparable meanings to the words in their previous language, irrespective of the adoption of new forms?

The question of whether creoles borrow lexical meanings from their lexifiers has received surprisingly little research attention – instead, the attention has so far focused on the etymology of creole lexemes, i.e. the source of their phonological make-up. A number of linguistic studies concentrate on substrate etyma, i.e. where lexical forms are borrowed from substrate languages rather than from the superstrate language. Dickson (2015), for instance, systematically lists and analyzes a significant number Kriol words borrowed from Australian languages rather than English (see also Holm (2000), Mühlhäusler (2011), and Farquharson (2012)). Calqued figurative expressions, where the creole mirrors word-for-word the structure of an expression found in the substrate, have occasionally been briefly documented (Holm 1988:86; Lefebvre 2004:183–185, 205), but the semantics of these calques is usually not in focus: authors tend to list calqued forms without much discussion of their meanings. Semantics as such is certainly at the core of many descriptions and studies of creole languages, but most of the research in this direction concerns grammatical words, i.e. items that belong to closed word classes (prepositions, tense-aspect-mood auxiliaries etc.). In fact, ‘relexification’ theories (Lefebvre 1986; Muysken 1981) usually concern closed classes of words and morphemes: they deal with grammatical functions rather than with the lexicon. Overall, and in spite of Holm’s (1988) early observation that ‘while the number of actual words in the creole lexicons that can be traced to African [substrate] languages is relatively small, the influence of these languages is much more extensive in the semantic range of creole words’, I have not been able to identify studies that compare the semantics of creole lexemes with that of substrate lexemes in much detail.<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the respective emotion lexica of Kriol and Dalabon suggests that while Kriol speakers have massively replaced Australian lexical forms with English-like forms, they have been able to do so without modifying the meanings expressed in Australian languages to the same extent. Pre-analytically, the Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica convey an impression of resemblance. This is perhaps a familiar impression for those acquainted with both a creole and one of its substrates, but the exact nature of actual resemblances is not immediately evident. A lot of them are much more subtle than a simple substrate etymology (where a lexical form comes from the substrate) or than a plain semantic identity between a creole word and a substrate word. In this chapter, I show that Kriol and Dalabon emotion words share a significant number of lexical features, and I spell out which specific properties they share. This thorough lexical analysis indicates that in this case of language shift, meanings – lexical categories and properties – are maintained to a significant extent in spite of the shift to new word forms.

In many situations, this allows speakers to craft very comparable messages in Kriol as in Dalabon – which minimizes the impact of language shift on what speakers can say and express. Words are crucial components of linguistic messages, and the fact that words package meaning into the same semantic categories is key to speakers articulating similar messages: working with the same components, speakers are more likely to produce the same wholes. Therefore, if a significant proportion of lexical tools is preserved when a community shifts to a new language, speakers should be able to elaborate comparable messages and achieve comparable linguistic communication in the new language as in the one previously in use. For instance, shared lexical tools tend to prevent evident mismatches such as lexical ‘gaps’ (Matras 2009), where ‘gaps’ are words that exist in one language but do not find an adequate translation in the other (see for instance Wierzbicka (1999:26–31) or Besmeres (2006:40)). More generally and more subtly, in the case under consideration the properties that Kriol lexemes share with Dalabon allow speakers to produce very similar descriptions of the world’s events in both languages. Parallel examples like (1) and (2) below illustrate just this: several years apart, two speakers who rarely talked to each other offered very similar descriptions of two very comparable visual stimuli, one in Kriol and one in Dalabon. Both speakers described someone sulking and for this reason sitting apart from a group (Fig. 1a and 1b respectively), and in both languages lexemes describing the posture convey emotional connotations (5.4).

(Kriol) 20140327c\_001\_LB\*\_ND\* 09 (LB\*) [Stim]

[Describing the characters on Fig. 1a, two of them laughing together and a third one sitting apart.]

- (1) *Im salki-wan na tubala*  
       3sg sulky-SHIFT EMPH 3du  
*yuluk mami im jukdan darrei miself*[. . .].  
       look mother 3sg bend.over there alone  
       ‘She’s sulking at the other two, look mummy, she’s bending down there on her own.’

(Dalabon) 20110523b\_005\_MT\* 035 [Stim]

[Describing the characters on Fig. 1b, where the author is sitting apart from a group of characters sitting and laughing together.]

- (2) *Nunda njing dja-b-dja-djud-kurlkurlka-n kardu narra-b-du-rru-ninj*  
 DEM 2sg 2sg-R-FOC-neck-bend-PRS maybe 2du-R-scold-RR-PPFV  
*wanjh dja-b-yolh-weh-mu-n.*  
 CONJ 2sg-R-feelings-bad-INCH-PRS  
 ‘And you, you are bending down, you two might have been arguing and that’s why you are sad.’



Figure 4.1a & 4.1b Pictures used in elicitation.

Note that the character’s bending is not particularly marked on either of the pictures. A more salient feature is that they are sitting apart from the group. However, the speakers described them as bending down in both Dalabon and Kriol.<sup>2</sup> This correlates with the fact that in each language, a lexeme is available for speakers to produce descriptions that invite interpretations of emotions in terms of salient accompanying body postures, namely bending down for sulking.

With this example and others along the same lines, the data considered in this chapter indicate that the lexical resemblance between the two languages under investigation results in a great deal of functional commensurability between them. While quantitative studies are needed to confirm this observation, pairs of examples repeatedly suggest that the lexical tools of Kriol and Dalabon do often channel comparable messages. Given the resemblances between the lexical tools available to talk about emotions in Kriol and in Dalabon, language shift has a limited impact in terms of packaging contents in discourse, and upon what messages eventually get articulated. This said, the comparison between the Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica also reveals significant differences, which will be discussed as well. After presenting the overall structure of the Dalabon lexicon in Section 1, I compare it with the structure of the Kriol lexicon in Section 2. At this general level, Kriol mostly seems to align with cross-linguistic tendencies, but as discussed in Section 3, in-depth analysis reveals a wealth of subtle but functionally significant resemblances between Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexemes. These are presented in Sections 4 (resemblances in form), 5 (resemblances in semantics) and 6 (resemblances in combinatorics); and

then summarized in Section 7. Finally, Section 8 discusses some notable lexical differences.

## 1. The Dalabon emotion lexicon: overview

The Dalabon emotion lexicon has been described in detail by Ponsonnet (2014a), which includes an emotion glossary.<sup>3</sup> This section is therefore only a summary. Emotions are an extensive lexical domain in Dalabon, with more than 160 lexemes documented so far. Across word classes, some of the most richly lexicalized emotions are interpersonal or ‘other-oriented’ emotions such as ‘shame’ (or more accurately, the fear of other people or ‘social fear’, see 5.1), compassion, emotions related to mourning, as well as anger and jealousy. Other well-lexicalized emotions are ‘self-oriented’ (i.e. not oriented toward others, see 8.2), for instance surprise, motivation and boredom.

In terms of frequency, three generic terms are prevalent, namely *djare* ‘like, love/want’, followed by the pair of opposites *yolh-mon* ‘feel good, be pleased, feel like, be nice’ and *yolh-weh* ‘feel bad (emotional or physical), be upset with s.b., be bad-tempered’. Matching a well-established cross-linguistic tendency to express negative rather than positive emotions (Averill 1980; Wierzbicka 1999:50; Bugenhagen 2001:95; Schrauf & Sanchez 2004), Dalabon words denoting negative emotions tend to be more frequent than the ones denoting positive emotions. Frequent negative terms include a word denoting emotional pain (‘suffering emotionally’), as well as words denoting negative emotions in association with negative social interactions (‘be sulky’, ‘be angry’ etc.)

The vast majority of Dalabon emotion lexemes are verbs and adjectives. In other words, emotions are described using predicates<sup>4</sup> – most frequently, intransitive predicates where the sole argument is the experiencer. Among these, there are three times as many verbs as adjectives, and verbs are also better represented than adjectives amongst frequent lexemes (Ponsonnet 2014a:180). Remarkably, there are only two full-fledged emotion nouns (Ponsonnet 2014a, 2016a): *yirru* ‘conflict, anger’ and *yolh-no* ‘pep, feelings’ (see 8.1). Another notable feature is that Dalabon closely associates emotions with the body. A large proportion of the emotion verbs and adjectives are compound predicates that involve a body part, and often yield body-based metaphors. For instance, the compound *kangu-yowyow(mu)*, literally ‘belly’+‘flow:REDUP’, has a strictly emotional meaning (as opposed to a physical meaning): ‘feel good, be nice’. Body-based emotional expressions are cross-linguistically common, if not universal (Sharifian et al. 2008; Wierzbicka 1999; Ogarkova 2013:50). However, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, the number of body-based compound predicates in Dalabon, and the diversity of body parts involved, makes this feature particularly prominent.

## 2. The Kriol emotion lexicon: overview

Kriol also has an extensive emotion lexicon, with about 60 well-attested lexemes so far, about 40 more to be further attested, and presumably a significant number

yet to be documented.<sup>5</sup> Due to differences in the extent of documentation, it is difficult to compare the overall size of the Kriol and Dalabon lexica. My Kriol corpus contains a lower number of distinct lexemes (i.e. fewer entries in the Kriol glossary than in the Dalabon one), but this aligns with its smaller size.<sup>6</sup> The range of emotion categories lexicalized in Kriol is comparable to the categories lexicalized in Dalabon, including in particular other-oriented emotions such as shame (5.1), compassion (5.1, 6.1, 6.2), anger and jealousy. These are all cornerstones of the Dalabon emotional etiquette (Ponsonnet 2014a:184–219), but since these categories are also lexicalized in English, as well as in many other languages in the world, this resemblance between Kriol and Dalabon is not very remarkable.

The distributions of frequent emotion lexemes are very similar across the two languages, but this is also likely to match a cross-linguistically widespread pattern. Kriol aligns with Dalabon, English and other languages in the world (Russell 1980; Mathieu 2000) in lexicalizing a range of ‘primary’ emotions (Ekman 1992) such as anger, surprise and fear, and in having more common words for negative emotions than for positive emotions. The three most frequent emotion words have the same semantics in Kriol and in Dalabon (Ponsonnet 2014a:180). The most frequent one means ‘like’ or ‘want’ (v.t. *wandi* ‘want’ in Kriol, followed by v.t. *laikim* ‘like’, together covering the meanings of adj. *djare* ‘like, want’ in Dalabon). In both languages as well as in English, these verbs are used to discuss intentions and prospective actions (e.g. ‘I want/would like to go tomorrow’), which boosts their frequency. The second and third most frequent words are respectively a generic term for positive emotions (adj. *hapi* in Kriol, adj. *yolh-mon* in Dalabon) and a generic term for negative emotions (adj. *sed* in Kriol, adj. *yolh-weh* in Dalabon). Unfortunately, in the absence of data on the frequency of emotion words for other languages – starting with English – it is not possible to confirm whether Kriol and Dalabon align with English and/or other languages in this respect.

A notable difference between the two languages is that the Kriol emotion lexicon does not present the same word-class distribution as observed for Dalabon, where verbs are prevalent and nouns are so scarce. Kriol has more nouns than Dalabon, and seems to be in the course of borrowing more (see 4.2 in Chapter 7). Kriol is also more like English in that it uses a larger number of adjectives. About half of the 30 most frequent emotion lexemes are adjectives – often used in predicative positions, but not only (see 8.2). Just like English, Kriol has a semantically generic verb *fil* ‘feel’ which enters into productive constructions with emotion and sensation adjectives (*fil sed* ‘feel sad’, *fil kol* ‘feel cold’). Unlike Dalabon, Kriol does not have a large cohort of emotional collocations involving body parts. These differences and their consequences in terms of communication will be explored further in Section 8 below, as well as in Chapter 7.

Such a birds-eye view of the Kriol emotion lexicon does not highlight remarkable resemblances with Dalabon. With respect to broad and/or frequent categories, their shared features are probably cross-linguistically neutral (but even then, they would still contribute to functional equivalence). With respect to word-class distributions, Kriol is more like English than Dalabon, and again, is

likely to follow a cross-linguistically prevalent pattern. By contrast, as I will now show, thorough analyses of specific lexical categories and properties of the Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica reveal a great deal of lexical resemblances between the two languages. In total, 28 Kriol emotion lexemes (often relatively frequent ones) display a clearly identifiable resemblance to Dalabon lexemes, and the figure rises if resemblances with Australian languages other than Dalabon are taken into account. By and large, resemblances with Dalabon and other Australian languages represent about half of the 60+ common lexemes documented for the emotion lexicon in Kriol, hence a significant resemblance between Kriol and the Australian languages it replaces.

### 3. Subtle resemblances

The above observations aid in explaining why the ‘impression of resemblance’ between the Kriol and the Dalabon emotion lexica can be difficult to nail down: it does not lie in general, structural properties of the Kriol lexicon, but in the nitty-gritty semantic properties of individual lexemes. In addition, some of these shared lexical properties are even more ‘hidden’ than others. Indeed, resemblances can be ordered along a cline of overtness (in Whorf’s (1956) sense of the word), where the most overt resemblances are the most immediately apparent, and the most covert ones are less noticeable because they are only revealed in a smaller number of linguistic contexts.

Overtness and covertness are significant with respect to the study of language shift to a creole, because they have socio-linguistic consequences. Overt resemblances can constitute markers of identity that visibly distance the creole from its superstrate and reinforce its affiliation with the substrates. Covert resemblances, on the other hand, can go unnoticed by both creole speakers and others, so that their affiliation with the substrates remains clandestine, so to say. This can in fact be a crucial advantage in a context where affiliation with traditional languages may be discriminated against, for instance where Indigenous identity is stigmatized. On the other hand, as alluded to in 2.1 in Chapter 1, populations that have shifted to a new language are often required by colonial institutions to provide evidence of their Indigenous identities, and in these situations shedding light upon less-apparent lexical resemblances between the old and the new lexico-grammatical codes could be very helpful. In addition, any semantic resemblance between a creole and its substrates that remains covert is also more likely to trigger misunderstanding in communication with speakers of the dominant group, which has evident practical and political consequences (for instance in educational, medical or legal contexts).

In this chapter, I group the lexical properties shared by the Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica under types, and present them from the most overt to the most covert.<sup>7</sup> Of course, linguistic reality is not as clear-cut as the list of types this chapter delineates: each individual lexical resemblance is in fact subtly different from the others, and some cases may fall within different types depending on the way we consider them. My typology is therefore partly artificial, but this has heuristic

benefits. Throughout, I only discuss properties that are shared between Kriol and Dalabon to the exclusion of English. There are many more resemblances that are in fact common to the three languages (and perhaps cross-linguistically widespread), but these are less relevant to the present discussion.

Resemblances in forms, or substrate etymologies, are presented in Section 4. They are the most immediately perceptible resemblances. While resemblances in form often coincide with resemblances in meaning (Dickson 2015), there are many resemblances in meaning that do not coincide with resemblances in form, and these are more covert. Resemblances in meanings and their subtypes are discussed in Section 5. Finally, the most covert resemblances concern the combinatorics of the lexemes, i.e. the way they combine with other lexemes and behave syntactically. Resemblances in combinatorics, presented in Section 6, are neither flagged by an unusual noticeable form, nor encapsulated within just one form (as semantic resemblances are). Instead, they surface only in particular constructions, and for this reason they are more likely to remain unnoticed.

## 4. Resemblances in form

### 4.1 Australian etymologies

The most overt – i.e. the most easily identifiable – category of lexical resemblance observed between Kriol and Dalabon are resemblances in form, i.e. when a Kriol word has a Dalabon cognate. Table 4.1 presents Kriol lexemes with Australian etyma, and the numbers indicate that resemblances between Kriol and specifically Dalabon forms are relatively marginal: only *yalala* ‘feel emotionally good, feel physically relieved’ and perhaps *bandabeng* ‘flirtatious, sexy’ have Dalabon correspondences. The list of lexemes with Australian etyma is somewhat longer, but in any case, in Kriol as it is spoken in the Barunga region, the only emotional lexeme with Australian etymology that occurs with reasonable frequency is *gula* ‘trouble, conflict, anger, aggression’ (from the Sydney language *gulara*, Troy 1994:Appendix 21). All the other lexemes listed in Table 4.1 are rare and/or not fully attested. A significant proportion is probably more characteristic of the Roper region, to the south-east of the Barunga region (Lee’s (2004) online Kriol dictionary, Dickson (2015)). Most speakers in the Barunga region recognized these lexemes in elicitation and explicitly assigned them to the Roper Kriol variety. They knew their meanings but did not use them spontaneously.

Apart from *warlwarl* ‘covet’ and *yalala* ‘feel better’, all the lexemes listed in Table 4.1 lack a good equivalent in English. The word *gula* ‘trouble, conflict, anger’ corresponds quite neatly to *yirru* ‘conflict, anger’ in Dalabon (Ponsonnet 2014a:Chap 9; Ponsonnet 2017), and is therefore also listed among plain semantic resemblances in 5.1.<sup>8</sup> Nouns with very comparable semantics are in fact remarkably common across Australian Aboriginal languages (Ponsonnet 2016a), so that in this case an Australian form has been elected to match a typically Australian concept.<sup>9</sup>

Table 4.1 Kriol emotion words with Australian etyma.

<i>Kriol</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>Australian etyma or cognates</i>	<i>references and notes</i>
<b>FULLY ATTESTED IN THE BARUNGA REGION</b>			
<i>gula</i> (n.)	trouble, conflict, anger, aggression	Sydney language <i>gulara</i> 'angry, offended'	Troy (1994:App 21)
<i>juljul</i> (adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	?	
<i>warlwarl</i> (v.i.)	covet	Marra (Marran, Roper region) <i>warl-</i> to strongly desire, to crave; Ngalakgan (Gunwinyguan) <i>warl-ga-</i> 'to love, to be very fond of'	Dickson (2015:421), Heath (1981:478)
<i>yalala</i>	feel good emotionally, feel relieved physically	Dalabon <i>yolh-</i> <i>yalala (mu)</i> 'rest, feel emotionally good'; Marra (Marran, Roper region) <i>yalala-</i> 'to be happy'; Ngalakgan: <i>yalala-</i> 'to get better, to be alright'	Dickson (2015:422), Merlan (1983:216)
<b>FROM OTHER VARIETIES</b>			
<i>bandabeng</i> (?adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	Dalabon <i>nguh-beng</i> 'flirtatious, sexy', <i>beng-no</i> 'rude, swearing'	
<i>dedjwala</i> (?adj.)	glutton; greedy, selfish	Bininj Gun-wok (Gunwinyguan) <i>dedj-</i> <i>walah</i> 'glutton, greedy'	Garde (2011)
<i>grih</i> (?v.i.)	feel uncomfortable in someone's presence	?	assigned by speakers to the Roper variety
<i>guliya</i> (?adj.)	greedy, selfish	?	assigned by speakers to the Roper variety
<i>jinggali</i> (?adj.)	be happy; be proud, show off; be sexy, try to seduce	?	assigned by older speakers to the Roper variety; younger speakers did not know the word
<i>kaya</i> (y) (?adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	?	assigned by speakers to the Roper variety
<i>nyangarri</i> (v.i./t.)	be selfish, refuse to share	Alawa (Marran, Roper region)	Dickson (2015:190) assigned by speakers to the Roper variety
<i>nyinggaya</i> (n.)	life spirit, feeling, premonition (see 8.1)	Marra, Alawa (Marran, Roper region)	Dickson (2015:136, 422)

A significant proportion of the Kriol words with Australian forms relates to two concepts that are culturally salient in the Kriol-speaking context and lack a good translation in English. Four of the terms in Table 4.1 describe flirtatious female behaviors that are typically stigmatized (albeit reclaimed by some young women): be flirtatious, want to seduce, intentionally make oneself look sexually desirable (*juljul*, *bandabeng*, *jinggali*, *kaya(y)*). The most standard Kriol term for this behavior has an English origin: *seksi*. This is not a straightforward equivalent of the English *sexy*, since the Kriol word targets the intention to seduce and associated behavior (which is reprehensible for most), while in English *sexy* is primarily an evaluation of one's physical attractiveness. There is actually no strict equivalent translation of these Kriol words in Dalabon either, but there is significant partial semantic overlap (5.3) with some Dalabon lexemes that express the same negative perspective on seduction (see also 5.2 with respect to perspectives on seduction, and Cowlishaw (1978, 1979), Merlan (1992), Ponsonnet (submitted) on gender relations in this part of Australia).

Three other words with Australian etyma, *dedjwala*, *guliya*, *nyanggarri*, describe people who selfishly avoid/refuse to share – as typically happens with food. Here again, the most common word to express this concept is the English-derived *gridi*. *Gridi* matches Dalabon *yi-mon* (see 5.1) but differs from *greedy* in English to the extent that *greedy* targets the desire to have more rather than reluctance to share. Like the *seksi* set of synonyms above, the *gridi* set denotes a prototypical behavior condemned by salient cultural values. As will be discussed below, giving is a focal moral imperative amongst Australian Indigenous groups (5.1, and further in Chapter 6 for instance, (Myers 1986; Ponsonnet 2014a:184–199), and therefore reluctance to share is a core failure.

In total, seven of the thirteen Kriol emotion words with Australian etymologies relate to socially condemned behaviors that are not lexicalized in English – but are plainly or partially lexicalized in Dalabon and have significance in a number of Australian Indigenous communities. The lexemes with Australian etymologies are synonyms for more frequent English-derived words – *seksi* and *gridi* – which are only false friends of their English etyma. It is possible that the English-derived words are more recent additions, and that at earlier stages in the development of Kriol, speakers preferred to borrow Australian forms for these concepts that are salient in the local ethics but lack a strict English equivalent. Irrespective of the historical process, in synchrony this results in a concentration of Australian etymologies around culturally specific concepts, reflecting their local cultural flavor.

## 4.2 Calques

Beyond etymological sourcing, another type of resemblance within the category of resemblances in forms is ‘calquing’. Holm (1988) defines calquing as ‘a process whereby words or idioms in one language are translated word-for-word (or even morpheme by morpheme) into another’ (Ross 2007:121–125; Crowley & Bower 2010:267). Of course, the meaning assigned to the compound expression is also copied, or at least inspired from the substrate form. This is a

well-identified language-contact phenomenon (considered in Weinreich's (1953) typology of lexical influences) and although it has attracted less attention than direct substrate influence, calquing from substrate languages has been reported for several creole languages (Lefebvre 1998:334–348; Lefebvre 2004:183–185, 205; Ameka 2015; Holm 1988).

Table 4.2 lists six Kriol emotional expressions with Dalabon equivalents. As discussed earlier (2.1 and 2.2 in Chapter 3), in most cases it not possible to determine the exact source of the borrowing: they may have originally been borrowed from other Australian languages, rather than from Dalabon or other Gunwinyguan languages for instance. This explains why some of these calques differ slightly in structure or meaning compared to the Dalabon expressions. The expressions in the lower part of Table 2 ('Others') do not relate to attested lexemes, but are likely to have either been calqued from unrecorded expressions, or inspired by Australian metaphors even if the form is not an exact calque (see Chapter 7).

As will be discussed at length in 3.1 in Chapter 7, several of the collocations listed in Table 4.2 instantiate body-based emotion tropes that are widespread in Dalabon. In Kriol, on the other hand, collocations including *binji* 'belly' are relatively prevalent, but all the other collocations listed in Table 4.2 are extremely rare. Irrespective of their frequency, these resemblances with Dalabon are easily noticeable because they are encapsulated in the very form of lexicalized expressions, and in this way contribute an Australian 'flavor' (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Overall, resemblances in forms between Kriol and Dalabon contribute to Kriol sounding more 'Australian', and this happens in particular with respect to typically Australian themes and values. This effect is, however, relatively limited, because although Tables 4.1 and 4.2 above list a significant number of Kriol lexemes and expressions, most of them are actually quite infrequent, at least in the Barunga region. However, a number of these expressions also present resemblances in meaning with Dalabon expressions, and this has a deeper effect upon what speakers can say and express about emotions in Kriol.

## 5. Resemblances in semantics

Measuring semantic resemblances between lexemes is a notoriously delicate problem (see for instance Cruse (1986:265ff), or Youn et al. (2015) for a quantitative discussion), which possibly becomes even more delicate when comparing across languages rather than within a single language. In the interest of space and clarity, I will focus on specific examples that highlight semantic proximity between Kriol and Dalabon, especially the cases that are the most explicit and the most enlightening with respect to language shift. This includes several culturally specific and socially significant emotions such as the local concept of 'shame' (or social fear) (5.1), compassion (5.1, 6.1, 6.2) – both of which regulate social interactions – attitudes relative to sexual seduction, or the relation of emotions with bodily postures (5.4).

In spite of being less immediately apparent than resemblances in forms, semantic resemblances are very significant in terms of functional equivalence. Within semantic resemblances, some are more apparent than others, and the order of

Table 4.2 Kriol emotional expressions with Dalabon and/or Australian equivalents.

language	collocation	literal sense	meaning	etymology
<b>CALQUES WITH CLEAR DALABON EQUIVALENTS</b>				
Kriol	<i>big as</i> (adj.)	'big' + 'arse'	selfish, greedy	<i>big, arse</i>
Dalabon	<i>dedj boyenji</i> (adj.)	'tail, bum' + 'big'	selfish, greedy	attested elsewhere, e.g. Warlpiri (Swartz 2012)
Kriol	<i>gud/nogud binji</i> (adj.)	'good'/'bad' + 'belly'	feel good/bad, be happy/unhappy, be in a good/bad mood	<i>good</i> , plus Sydney language <i>bindhi</i> (Troy 1994)
Dalabon	<i>kangu-mon, kangu-web-mun</i> (adj.)	'belly' + 'good'/'bad'	feel fine/bad, be good-tempered/angry	
Kriol	<i>hatkrek</i> (v.i.)	'heart' + 'crack'	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	<i>heart, crack</i>
Dalabon	<i>kangu-barrh(mu)</i> (v.i.)	'belly' + 'crack'	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	
Kriol	<i>jelop nos</i> (?adj.)	'swell' + 'nose'	be snobbish, cold to someone	<i>swell up, nose</i>
Dalabon	<i>standap nos</i> (?adj.) <i>dje-brub(mu)</i> (v.i.)	'stand' + 'nose' 'nose/nostrils/face' + 'blow', SWELL'	be sulky, be sad/put on a sad face, a rictus	<i>stand up, nose</i>
<b>OTHERS</b>				
Kriol	<i>gula jampap</i> (v.i.)	'trouble, conflict, anger, aggression' + 'jump'	be angry	Sydney language <i>gularn</i> (Troy 1994), <i>jump up</i>
Dalabon	ANGER IS LIKE A LIVELY ENTITY e.g. <i>yirru-ngurd(mu)</i> (v.i.)	'conflict, anger' + 'be(come) quiet' ANGER IS LIKE A LIVELY ENTITY metaphors	calm down after being angry	Ponsonnet al. (2014:310)
Kriol	<i>wan gats/binji</i> (?adj.)	'one' + 'belly/guts'	have a strong and determined temperament	<i>one, guts</i> , Sydney language <i>bindhi</i> (Troy 1994: App 21)
Warlpiri, other languages of Western and Central Australia	HESITATING IS LIKE HAVING A SPLIT BELLY, e.g. <i>miyalu-jarra</i> (?adj.)	'stomach' + 'two'	'in two minds'	Laughren & Ponsonnet (in prep.) and David Wilkins pers. com. Dec 2015

presentation in this section roughly reflects these differences – from the most to the least obvious cases. The simplest and most apparent type of semantic resemblance is plain semantic identity, i.e. when a Kriol lexeme has the same denotation and occurs in the same contexts as a Dalabon lexeme (5.1). Other types of semantic resemblances are common patterns of colexification (5.2), partial semantic overlap (5.3), the emotional connotations of lexemes (5.4), as well as common lexical gaps (5.5).

### 5.1 Plain semantic resemblance

The simplest type of semantic resemblance is of course when a Kriol lexeme shares the same meaning as a Dalabon lexeme. Table 4.3 lists eleven Kriol words or expressions that match the semantics of a Dalabon word and lack an English equivalent.<sup>10</sup> As we can see, only two of them (*gula* and *hatkrek*, see Section 4) display a formal resemblance with Dalabon/Australian lexemes; the vast majority of them do not bear their acquaintance with Dalabon lexemes on their sleeves at all.

The most complete resemblance is well illustrated by the Kriol words *sheim* (adj.) and *sheim mijelp* (v.i.)<sup>11</sup> on the one hand, and Dalabon *yer(mu)* (v.i.) ‘avoid interactions with others because of fear’ on the other hand. These words denote avoidance behaviors – such as not speak to others, avoid being seen by others etc. – caused by the fear of others (feeling uncomfortable, shy etc.) or by respect for others (which is akin to fear on some levels).

This family of emotions is distinct from *shame* in English (which is more closely related to self-evaluation) and has been identified as a key regulator of social interactions in the Barunga region (Ponsonnet 2014a:188–190) and in Australian Aboriginal communities more generally (see for instance Hiatt 1978; Myers 1979, 1986; Harkins 1990). In line with this social pattern, many Australian Aboriginal groups have words covering social fear and respect<sup>12</sup> – resembling Kriol *sheim* (*mijelp*) and Dalabon *yer(mu)*, albeit not necessarily semantically identical. *Sheim* (*mijelp*) offers a precise Kriol equivalent for Dalabon *yer(mu)*, thus lexicalizing a socially central emotional category that lacks an equivalent in English.

The following examples illustrate the semantic parallels between Kriol *sheim* (*mijelp*) and Dalabon *yer(mu)*, ‘avoid interactions with others because of fear’, where the behavioral dimension of avoidance is the key difference with English. The semantic components – avoidance and fear – are illustrated in (3) and (4) for Kriol and in (5) and (6) for Dalabon.

(Kriol) 20150817b\_004\_BB\_TM\_JBe 37 (JBe) [ContEI]

[Feeling uncomfortable about own behavior while drunk.]

- (3) [ . . . ] *Kaja*            *bala*            *aim*            *sheim*            *na*  
                  INTJ.dissat    INTJ.comp    1sg.S>adj    ashamed/shy    EMPH  
*ai*            *kan*            *wokeraun.*  
 1sg.S    IMPOSS    walk.around  
 ‘[ . . . ] Too bad poor me I’m ashamed now I can’t walk around  
 [in the community because I couldn’t stand people looking at me].’

Table 4.3 Kriol emotion lexemes displaying plain semantic resemblance with Dalabon emotion lexemes. Sori and marrbun ‘indulge someone with something out of compassion’ are also discussed in 6.1.

<i>Kriol</i>	<i>p.o.s</i>	<i>etymology</i>	<i>Dalabon</i>	<i>p.o.s.</i>	<i>shared meaning</i>
<i>bobala/bala</i>	intj.	<i>poor fellow</i>	<i>web-no</i>	intj.	compassionate interjection: ‘poor thing’, ‘oh dear’, ‘oh no’ . . .
<i>gede shok</i>	coll. v.i.	<i>get a shock</i>	<i>kangu-barrh(mu)</i>	v.i.	be surprised (can be positive or neutral); undergo emotional shock
<i>gridi</i>	adj.	<i>greedy</i>	<i>yi-dih</i>	adj.	be selfish, stingy, not inclined to share
<i>gula</i>	n.	<i>gulara</i> , Sydney language, see 4.1	<i>yirru</i>	n.	conflict, trouble, anger
<i>hatkrek</i>	v.i.	<i>heart crack(s)</i>	<i>kangu-barrh(mu)</i>	vi.	be surprised (can be positive or neutral); undergo emotional shock
<i>beit</i>	v.t.	<i>hate</i>	<i>ngurrng-dung</i> , <i>njirrhmiwon</i> , <i>kangu-dinjirr(mu)</i>	v.t.	have resentment, have negative feeling for someone (contextual)
<i>laik</i>	v.t.	<i>like (v.t.)</i>	<i>djare</i>	adj.	like (food, people, to do something; friendship, romantic or sexually oriented attraction)
<i>sheim</i>	adj.	<i>shame</i> , <i>ashamed</i>	<i>yer(mu)</i>	v.i.	avoid interactions for fear of others
<i>sheim mijelp</i>	v.i.	<i>shame</i> , <i>ashamed</i> , <i>myself</i>	<i>yer(mu)</i>	v.i.	avoid interactions for fear of others
<i>sori</i>	v.t.	<i>sorry</i>	<i>marrbun</i>	v.dt.	indulge someone with something out of compassion
<i>tjiki</i>	adj.	<i>cheeky</i>	<i>yirru-mon</i>	adj.	likely to cause harm: aggressive, harmful, dangerous, poisonous

Note: The semantic equivalence between the form *gula* in Kriol and *yirru* in Dalabon is only complete when *gula* is a noun. *Gula* can also be an intransitive verb ‘argue’, and in this case its sense does not coincide with the sense of the Dalabon intransitive verb *yirru-mun* ‘be/get angry (emotion and/or behavior)’.

(Kriol) 20140326a\_005\_MJ\*\_QB\* 059 (MJ\*) [Narr]

[When meeting a malevolent spirit at night in the bush.]

- (4) *If yumob luk blakbala, yu goda abtu*  
 If 2pl look revenge.being 2pl FUT NECESS  
 [. . .] *yu cof en im sheim mijelb den.*  
 2sg cough and 3sg shy.away RR then

‘If you see a revenge being, you’ll have to . . . you cough and he runs away from you [because your coughing scares him].’

(Dalabon) 20120709b\_000\_MT\* 013 [ContEl]

[About the speaker’s granddaughter talking to the receptionist at a hotel in Katherine.]

- (5) *Ka-h-yer-minj malung, bah ka-h-dja-yenjdju.*  
 3sg-R-shy.away-PPFV before but 3sg-R-FOC-talk:PPFV  
 ‘She was ashamed and not willing to talk first, but she spoke.’

(Dalabon) 20110518b\_004\_LB\*\_ND\* 60 (ND\*) [Stim]

[Commenting on the picture of a simplified face with a distorted mouth, looking emotionally uncomfortable.]

- (6) *Nunda ka-h-yer-mu. Bula-h-bu-yan kardu.*  
 DEM 3sg-R-shy.away-PRS 3pl>3-R-hit-FUT maybe  
 ‘This one is feeling uncomfortable with respect to other people [afraid of others]. They might hit him.’

Examples (4) clearly highlights the semantic discrepancy between *sheim* (*mijelp*) and its English etymologies *shame* (n. or v.i.) and *ashamed* (adj.). In (3) and (5) – like in many other contexts – these words would be acceptable English translations, and the nuance between *sheim* (*mijelp*) and *shame/ashamed* would go unnoticed. However, using *shame* or *ashamed* to translate (4), where *sheim* means ‘running away’ (i.e. an avoidance behavior), would not make sense. The example demonstrates that like *yer(mu)* in Dalabon, *sheim* (*mijelp*) is not about self-esteem, but about fear and how it governs relationships with others. This enables Kriol speakers to refer to the same interactions, with a very comparable lexical tool, as Dalabon speakers would.

Another important lexical resemblance between Kriol and Dalabon is the existence, in each language, of an interjection specialized for compassion – roughly defined as feeling bad when something bad happens to someone else, i.e. by empathy for loved ones. As stated in Chapter 2 (Section 4), interjections are expressive, i.e., they index an internal state of the speaker. Their semantics is remarkably versatile, as expected since interjections can typically express a broad range of emotions. It is nevertheless possible to compare the *range* of emotions expressed by two interjections, and in this respect, Kriol *bobala* (abridged as *bala*, <Eng. *poor fellow*) and Dalabon *web-no* (also an adjective meaning ‘bad’, see Ponsonnet 2014a:118–121) are very similar. Both are frequent interjections

that are used predominantly to express compassion, as in the following parallel examples:

(Dalabon) 20120720\_003\_LB\* 121 [S&D]

- (7) *Ka-h-yolh-weh-minj*      *weh-no*.  
 3sg-R-feelings-bad-PIPFV    INTJ.comp  
 ‘He’s upset poor thing.’

(Kriol) 20140328a\_003\_LB\*\_ND\* 066 (LB\*) [RPF]

- (8) na      ?yuluk?    *tubala*    *nogud*    *binji*    *bla*    *im*    *bobala*.  
 EMPH    ?CONT?    3du      bad      belly    DAT    3sg    INTJ.comp  
 ‘?Look now,? they two are upset about her poor thing.’

Both Kriol *bobala* and Dalabon *weh-no* can also express a range of emotions that relate to compassion, such as endearment when witnessing other people being compassionate with one another (see Chapters 5 and 6) and sympathetic emotions (e.g. relief or joy for others). There are some nuances between the two interjections with respect to the respective frequency of each emotional category, as well as with respect to marginal categories such as endearment (see Chapters 5 and 6), but overall, *bobala* and *weh-no* display very comparable profiles. Dalabon also has another interjection, *yowyow* (Ponsonnet 2014a:117–126), which can also express compassion in a similar fashion (although *bobala* and *weh-no* are semantically more alike).

While there is no clear equivalent for these interjections in English, a significant proportion of Australian languages have a compassionate interjection (Ponsonnet accepted).<sup>13</sup> In line with this linguistic observation, compassion has been described as a touchstone of the emotional moral order among some Australian Aboriginal communities (Myers (1979, 1986) about the Pintupi in the Western Desert, Turner (2010:109) about the Arrernte in Central Australia, Ponsonnet (2014a:188–190, 2018a, 2018b) about the Gunwinyguan region). In these cultural contexts, compassion, seen as the emotion that ensures social cohesion, is emphatically approved and encouraged (more than among my mainstream Western networks for instance). One owes compassion to others and must make sure to express it (Ponsonnet 2018a); conversely compassion is expected from others, and receiving compassion is interpreted as a proxy for personal value and social status (Ponsonnet 2018b). Chapter after chapter in this volume, we will repeatedly find that linguistic resources expressing compassion are very prominent in both Kriol and Dalabon. Here again, Kriol aligns with many Australian languages in the linguistic encoding of a morally prevalent emotion.

## 5.2 Patterns of colexification

The term colexification refers to the fact that a word has two or more distinct meanings, independent of the somewhat technical distinction between polysemy

and monosemy (François 2008).<sup>14</sup> The notion of ‘common pattern of colexification’ concerns pairs of words that encapsulate the same set of senses (see Heine and Kuteva (2005:100–103) for a discussion of polysemy copying in contact). For instance, *foot* in English refers both to a body part and a unit of measure; and in French, *piéd* also refers to both the body part and the unit of measure, so that *foot* and *piéd* can be said to share a common pattern of colexification. In the case under consideration, an interesting illustration is with the Kriol verbal collocation *laikim mijelp* ‘feel good/show off, parade around/seduce, flirt’, which displays a three-fold colexification very comparable to its Dalabon analogue, the intransitive verb *kol(mu)*.

Kriol *laikim mijelp* (lit. ‘like oneself’, <Eng. *like* + *myself*) and Dalabon *kol(mu)* both colexify an emotional sense of feeling good, as well as two behavioral senses with emotional connotations: attitudes of seduction, and showing off. In spite of nuances, each of the three meanings is clearly recognizable in both languages. With the first ‘feel good’ sense, Kriol *laikim mijelp* means ‘have a good time, enjoy oneself, be happy’ (9) while *kol(mu)* means ‘feel cheerful, laugh’ (10).

(Kriol) 20140325a\_000\_QB\* 386 [Narr]

[Some time out bushS.]

- (9) *Mibala bin idim-bat bigibigi en den . . .* [...]   
 1pl.excl PST eat-CONT wild.pig and then   
*Wi Bin jis . . . laik-im-bat mijelb yuno, oh . . .*   
 1pl PST just like-TR-CONT RR CONJ INTJ.exclm   
 ‘We ate some wild pig and then . . . We were just having a good time you know, oh. . .’

(Dalabon) 20110523a\_000\_MT\* 059 [El]

- (10) *Mak ka-kakku-yolh-burrama.*   
 NEG 3sg-really-feelings-good   
*Ka-b-dje-kol-mu, bah buyirrhwalungb*   
 3sg-R-cheerful-PRS but inside   
*mak ka-kakku-dje-kol-mu kahke.*   
 NEG 3sg-really-nose/face-cheerful-PRS NEG   
 ‘She’s not really feeling good. She looks cheerful, but deep inside she’s not really cheerful.’

With the seduction sense, both *la ikim mijelp* and *kol(mu)* can mean to flirt, as in (11) and (12) below, but *laikim mijelp* refers more specifically to ‘parading around’ (see 4.1 above, and further discussion below). Indeed, the first sense cited by speakers in direct elicitation is the behavior of young women who dress up and walk around the community, presumably to attract men (see 4.1 on attitudes relative to seduction). Although this attitude is canonically disapproved, we see in example (11) that some speakers – here a woman in her early 30s who

expressed pride in taking care of herself and looking good – presented herself as actively and strategically seeking sexual interactions.

(Kriol) 20140326b\_002\_IA 077 [ContEl]

[When attracted by a boy.]

- (11) *Ai goda laik-im mijelb beddam.*  
 1sg.S FUT like-TR RR first  
*Ai goda laik-im mijelb brabli-wei*  
 1sg.S FUT like-TR RR properly-ADV  
*blanga dat men ba ask-im im banga abe deit.*  
 DAT DET man DAT ask-TR 3sg DAT have date  
 ‘I’ll make myself look good first. I’ll really chat that man up to ask him for a date.’

In Dalabon, *kol(mu)* means ‘pretend, seduce’ more generally, but the ‘parade around’ sense is also included. As illustrated in (12), *kol(mu)* can be used with respect to young people walking the streets flirting with each other.

- (12) *Yawurrinj biyi, kirdikird=wurd yawk-no,*  
 young.man man woman=DIM young.woman-FILL  
*bale-bobo-n bala-h-wawa-rru-n.*  
 3pl:SUB-go:REDUP-PRS 3pl-R-follow:REDUP-RR-PRS  
*Nunh kanh bala-h-dje-kol-mu.*  
 DEM DEM 3pl-R-nose/face-pretend-PRS  
 flirt  
*Bala-h-marnu-dje-kol-murru-n.*  
 3pl-R-BEN-nose/face-pretend-RR-PRS  
 flirt  
*Kardu mararradj wubulu-yidjnja-n.*  
 maybe lover APPR:3pl>3-have-PRS  
 ‘Young men, men, young women, teenage girls, when they go around and follow each other. That’s when they’re flirting. They try and seduce each other. They might end up with a lover.’

Finally, *laikim mijelp* can also means ‘show off’, as in ‘parading around’ independently of flirtation, as in (13). The example is a comment on a scene of the movie *Samson and Delilah* (Thornton 2009), where the hero walks along the streets of the community with a kangaroo he has just killed on his shoulders. This sense was not directly illustrated with Dalabon *kol(mu)*, but it was mentioned in metalinguistic comments,<sup>15</sup> for instance about a child ‘showing off’ when they make themselves entertaining in order to remain a focus of attention.

(Kriol) 20140409a\_001\_TM\_LB\* 097 (LB\*) [S&D]

- (13) *Im rili hapi na im-in kil-im keingguru.*  
 3sg really feel.good EMPH 3sg-PST hit/kill-TR kangaroo

*Im laik-im mijelb.*

3sg like-TR RR

‘He’s really happy indeed he’s killed a kangaroo.

He’s parading around, showing off.’

Thus, the Kriol verb *laikim mijelp* does not offer a full semantic match with Dalabon *kol(mu)*, but the pair displays very close patterns of colexification. Both items combine a ‘feel good’ sense with a ‘seduction’ sense and a ‘showing off’ sense – a pattern of colexification absent in English.

The lexical association of flirtatious behavior with excessive attention-seeking (‘showing off’) is attested in some other Australian languages across the continent. Locally, the Rembarrnga word *kol* displays the same triple colexification as Kriol *laikim mijelp* and its Dalabon cognate *kol(mu)* (Saulwick 2003a:102). Comparable colexifications are found much further away, in etymologically unrelated lexical items, for instance in Wembawemba in Victoria (Pama-Nyungan, Kulinic), where the intransitive verb *tyilka* is reported to colexify ‘show off, be pleased, be flashy or cheeky’ (Hercus 1992). Comparable colexifications are also attested in Ngankikurungkurr in the Daly River region (Daly, non-Pama-Nyungan; Hoddinott and Kofod (1988)), Jingulu in the Barkly Tablelands (West Barkly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Pensalfini (2003)), or Wiradjuri in New South Wales (Pama-Nyungan, Wiradjuric; Grant & Rudder).<sup>16</sup> These lexical devices seem to reflect representations and/or practices of seduction shared by some Indigenous groups across the Australian continent, including by communities that have shifted to Kriol or to English.

### 5.3 *Partial semantic overlap*

Further down along the scale of overttness, we find cases of partial semantic overlap between a Kriol and a Dalabon word, i.e. two words that do not match as closely as the pairs discussed in 5.1, but overlap in some, or just one, of their senses. The clearest example concerns the Dalabon word *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’,<sup>17</sup> which colexifies negative emotions with hesitation and confusion, especially in emotionally tinted states of obsession (Ponsonnet 2011). As illustrated in (14), *njirrk(mu)* often describes people who brood over remorse when they feel guilty about something and/or cannot come to terms with a situation.

(Dalabon) 2008/30005/8’ (LB\*) [EI]

(14) *Kardu bunu burra-b-marnu-bun-inj, be-burrng,*  
maybe 3du 3du>3-R-BEN-hit-PIPFV male’s.child-3du.POSS

*o kanb eksiden-kun bala-b-eksiden-hm-inj . . .*

or DEM accident-GEN 3pl-R-accident-VBLZR-PRS

*Bala-b-dja-njirrk-mu yelek.*

3pl-R-SEQ-brood.over-PRS wait

‘Perhaps they (two) bashed their son, or about an accident, they had an accident. They keep brooding over it still.’

There is no clear equivalent for *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’ in English, and no Kriol lexeme captures exactly and only this meaning. However, there are several ways to express the same meaning in Kriol, albeit with words that have other primary senses (for instance the expression *kan get oba* ‘can’t get over’ when used in contexts of mourning, see Table 4.5 in Section 7). A very frequent and standardized equivalent of *njirrk(mu)* is *jinggebat*,<sup>18</sup> the semi-lexicalized<sup>19</sup> continuous forms of *think* ‘think’: ‘think’+ the continuous suffix *-bat* (see Sandefur 1979:119–123; Ponsonnet 2018c:240–242). The semantic resemblance between Kriol *think* ‘think’ and Dalabon *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’ is far from complete. As I will now show, the two lexemes only display a very partial semantic overlap, limited to some inflected forms of *think*, and only in some contexts. However, this overlap represents an important resemblance, because it provides Kriol speakers with a functional equivalent to the Dalabon-specific lexical category *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’. Kriol speakers use *jinggebat* in contexts where *njirrk(mu)* would have been used in Dalabon, thus expressing the same semantic content as with *njirrk(mu)* by means of just one word, as opposed to a paraphrase. In other words, the specialization of the continuous forms of *think* ‘think’ that I will now present fills in a lexical gap and brings the Kriol lexicon closer to the Dalabon lexicon in terms of its capacity to communicate contents.

Like its base form *think* (<Eng. *think*), *jinggebat* often denotes intellectual processes of thought.<sup>20</sup> This usually applies if the content of thought is specified: when *jinggebat* is used to introduce reported speech (‘he was thinking: “. . . ”’), or when one thinks ‘about x’. When the target of the thoughts is a person, there are usually negative connotations – because thinking about someone often coincides pragmatically with worrying or feeling sad about them. In such cases, the verb *jinggebat* translates better in English as ‘feel sad/concerned about’ than as ‘think about’.

When the content of thought remains unspecified (no object, or vague object such as *samthing* ‘something’), *jinggebat* has the same sense as *njirrk(mu)* in Dalabon. In such cases, *jinggebat* denotes an enduring meditative activity. In a vast majority of cases there are strong negative connotations of feeling worried, or preoccupied. Indeed, semantic extensions from ‘thinking’ to ‘worrying’ are common among Australian languages. In (15), this involves remorse, regrets and confusion. The example was a comment on Fig. 2, one of the vignettes of a story presented under the form of drawings for the purpose of elicitation. Both the message and the context in (15) bear obvious resemblances with the use of Dalabon *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’ in (14).

- (Kriol) 20140326a\_001\_MJ\*\_QB\* 100 (MJ\*) [Stim]  
 [About a man bitterly reflecting upon his past with his ex-wife.]  
 (15) *Im-in teik-id-ewei im kids tu*  
       3sg-PST take-TR-away 3sg.POSS children too  
       *en laik im jingge-bat yuno.*  
       and CONJ 3sg think-CONT CONJ

so      im-in      insaid      nanga      dat      sal  
 CONJ   3sg-PST   inside   LOC   DET   cell  
 think-ing   rili   had   bobala.  
 think-CONT   really   hard   INTJ.comp

‘She [his ex-wife] took away his kids too and like he’s thinking you know. So he’s inside there in this cell, thinking really hard/brooding over, poor thing.’

*Jinggebat* is used very regularly in contexts comparable to (14) and (15), and more generally, speakers use it very systematically in contexts where *njirrk(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’ would be expected in Dalabon. Thus, *jinggebat*, an inflected form of *think* ‘think’, encapsulates a concept that is lexicalized by an individual word in Dalabon. As such, *jinggebat* allows Kriol speakers



Figure 4.2 Picture from the Family Problems Picture Task.

Source: (San Roque et al. 2012) used in elicitation.

to identify and refer to a certain type of emotional state with just one word, as it happens in Dalabon – but not in English. While the semantic overlap between Dalabon *njirr(kmu)* and Kriol *think* remains partial, in terms of usage and functional impact, *jinggebat* profiles a certain type of emotional states in exactly the same way as *njirr(kmu)* does in Dalabon. Thanks to this partial semantic overlap, translation gaps are avoided (Wierzbicka 1999:24–31), and speakers can articulate statements like the one in (15), inviting the addressee to construe the emotional state under scrutiny in the same way as the Dalabon statement in (14) does. As evident in both examples, the emotional state in question is highly dependent on interpersonal interactions, and therefore Kriol and Dalabon offer lexical tools that allow speakers to present the emotional dimension of social ties in very similar ways, thus reducing the impact of language shift.

#### 5.4 Emotional connotations

Kriol and Dalabon lexemes can also share emotional connotations, when lexemes do not denote an emotional state as such, but occur in comparable emotional contexts. Such a pattern of resemblance is very clear with the Kriol intransitive verb *jukdan* ‘bend over’ (<Eng. *shook, down*). Strictly speaking, *jukdan* refers to body postures rather than emotions, yet, it often occurs where a body posture is the symptom of an emotional state. The exact same pattern of emotional connotation is found in Dalabon with the intransitive verbs *djud-kurkkurkkan* and *djud-kurl(mu)*, literally ‘nape of neck’+BEND (and see also Jawoyn v. *bam-gul-ma* ‘head’+‘bend, bow’, ‘to worry about’). The resemblance is apparent when we compare (1) and (2) (repeated from the introduction):

(Kriol) 20140327c\_001\_LB\*\_ND\* 09 (LB\*) [Stim]

[Describing the characters on a photo, two of them laughing together and a third one sitting apart.]

- (1) *Im salki-wan na tubala*  
 3sg sulky-SHIFT EMPH 3du  
*yuluk mami im jukdan darrei miself* [. . .].  
 look mother 3sg bend.over there alone  
 ‘She’s sulking at the other two, look mum, she’s bending down there on her own.’

(Dalabon) 20110523b\_005\_MT\* 035 [Stim]

[Describing the characters on a photo where the author is sitting apart from a group of characters sitting and laughing together.]

- (2) *Nunda njing dja-h-dja-djud-kurkkurkka-n kardu narra-h-du-rru-ninj*  
 DEM 2sg 2sg-R-FOC-neck-bend-PRS maybe 2du-R-scold-RR-PPFV  
*wanjh dja-h-yolh-weh-mu-n.*  
 CONJ 2sg-R-feelings-bad-INCH-PRS  
 ‘And you, you are bending down, you two might have been arguing and that’s why you are sad.’

As already noted in the introduction to this chapter, (1) and (2) describe photos where the characters' postures are not particularly salient: it is not clear that English speakers would necessarily choose to point out to this aspect of the pictures, rather than to the fact that the characters are sitting apart from the group. However, the resemblance between (1) and (2) suggests that it is a natural trend for speakers of both Kriol and Dalabon to refer to bodily postures – and bending down in particular – to describe emotions (see Chapter 7, Section 2 and Ponsonnet (2014c)).<sup>21</sup>

### 5.5 *Lexical gaps*

The last type of lexical resemblance between Kriol and Dalabon in the domain of emotions has to do with lexical gaps. Lexical gaps are another slippery matter. First, they are always defined in comparison with another language (here, by default, English). Secondly, the absence of a dedicated lexeme clearly assigned to a concept does not imply that this concept cannot be expressed by another lexeme (for instance, a superordinate – e.g. 'be (very) angry' for 'be furious'). Nevertheless, systematic investigation of the emotion lexicon in Dalabon suggests that disgust and pride,<sup>22</sup> for instance, are two key emotion concepts<sup>23</sup> not very clearly lexicalized in this language. The investigation of these concepts in Kriol revealed that they are not clearly lexicalized there either.

## 6. Resemblances in combinatorics

As discussed by Evans (2010:506), the meaning of a word is partly defined by its combinatorics, i.e. the rules of language that 'give information about how [a word] combine[s] with other [words]'. Here resemblances in combinatorics apply when a Kriol lexeme differs from English and pairs up with Dalabon with respect to syntactic behavior, i.e. which participants<sup>24</sup> of the event – i.e. subject, object etc. – a verb codes for and how (which is one aspect of combinatorics). These resemblances concern the subcategorization of core arguments (the participants that a verb codes for obligatorily), discussed in 6.1, as well as the semantics of non-core arguments (optional participants), discussed in 6.2. These syntactic resemblances are the most covert of all: they only become apparent in contexts where the relevant arguments are expressed. Nevertheless, as we shall see the resemblances between Dalabon and Kriol encapsulate important shared patterns of representation in the realm of interpersonal emotions such as compassion and its equation with sharing, as well as the emotional consequences of affection for others.

### 6.1 *Core-argument structure*

For our purposes, core arguments can be defined as the participants a verb automatically opens slots for. In English, for instance, the verb *build* automatically opens slots for a subject, who does the action; and an object, who undergoes the action. Verbs with two core arguments are called 'transitive'. A verb like *walk*,

on the other hand, only opens one obligatory slot, for a subject: it is ‘intransitive’. Some Kriol verbs with English etymologies ‘subcategorize’ arguments in the same way as their Dalabon translation rather than their English etymon, i.e. the participants they code for are the same as in Dalabon. The fact that a pair of verbs shares the same argument subcategorization does not preclude that they also share their semantics, and indeed the verbs discussed below share both (see Table 4.3 in 5.1).

A good example is the transitive verb *sori* (<Eng. *sorry*), which means ‘indulge’, ‘give (something) to someone (out of compassion)’. Unlike its English etymology, the form *sori* has both an adjectival use (with one single participant: a subject) and a transitive use (two participants: a subject and an object). In its transitive use, Kriol *sori* matches a Dalabon verb, *marrbun* ‘indulge someone with something (out of compassion)’. Looking solely at its adjectival use, however, *sori* seems semantically very close to its English etymology. Like *sorry* in English, *sori* can have an apologetic sense<sup>25</sup> or mean ‘sad’ (‘feel sorry’).<sup>26</sup> In this latter sense, *sori* is commonly found in secondary-predicate constructions with the verb *fil* ‘feel’, and regularly relates to compassion, especially in indirect-object constructions: *fil sori la/na* and *fil sori bla*, ‘feel sorry for’ (introduced by the locative preposition *la/na* or the dative preposition *bla/ba*). This is illustrated in (16). As we saw in 5.1, compassion is a morally and socially structuring emotion many Australian groups (including the Dalabon group).

(Kriol) 20140406a\_003\_MJ\* 58 [RPF]

[In the movie *Rabbit-proof Fence*, a man who is chasing children eventually lets them go.]

- (16) *Bobala im fil sori na olebat yuno.*  
 INTJ.comp 3sg feel sorry LOC 3pl CONJ  
 ‘Good on him, he’s got compassion/mercy for them you know.’

In addition to these English-like senses and constructions, *sori* can be used as a fully transitive verb, including a direct object,<sup>27</sup> plus an indirect object introduced by a ‘dative’ preposition (either *bla/ba* or *fo*) encoding a third participant. In such constructions, the verb means ‘indulge someone with something (out of compassion)’, as in (17). Usually, the gift is one of food, tobacco, or other supplies commonly exchanged in the course of everyday life in Kriol speaking communities.

(Kriol) KRL\_20161220\_002\_AA\_IA 069 (AA) [RPF]

[In the movie *Rabbit-proof Fence*, a women gives food to starving children.]

- (17) *Im-in sori olebat fo daga.*  
 3SG-PST indulge 3pl DAT food  
 ‘She indulged them with some food [out of compassion].’

Thus, in Kriol the intransitive use of *sori* describes feelings of compassion, while its transitive use describes the act of providing core resources. In the cultural context at stake, generosity and sharing are conventionally regarded as evidence

of (socially encouraged) compassionate feelings (see Ponsonnet 2014a:196–199; Myers 1979:355–358, 1986:113–117). As a result, providing resources and material support – ‘sharing and caring’ – is regarded as embodied compassion, so to say. Therefore the linguistic association between compassion and gift encapsulated by the intransitive and transitive use of *sori* is very natural within this social system.<sup>28</sup>

Returning to *sori*, it is evident that the transitive use and meaning of *sori* are not at all matched by *sorry* in English – where *sorry* is used exclusively as an adjective as opposed to a verb. Instead, *sori* as a transitive verb has a lot in common with the Dalabon (di)transitive<sup>29</sup> verb *marrbun* ‘feel sorry, compassionate for/indulge someone with something (out of compassion)’. *Marrbun* shares both senses of *sori* (the pair is listed as a ‘plain semantic resemblance’ in Table 4.3, 5.1). The Kriol example in (16), where the adjective *sori* means ‘feel sorry, compassionate’, is mirrored in (18), where *marrbun* is an intransitive verb with only one object, and conveys connotations of mercy. And the Kriol example in (17) is mirrored in (19) with the ditransitive use of *marrbun* meaning ‘indulge someone with something’, where both verbs have three participants.

(Dalabon) 20120721\_003\_LB\* 173 [RPF]

[A man who is chasing the children heroines eventually decides to let them go.]

- (18) *Bulu ka-h-marrbo-ng.*  
3pl 3sg>3-R-feel.sorry.for-PPFV  
‘He’s got compassion/mercy for them.’

(Dalabon) 20120721\_001\_LB\* 49 [RPF]

- (19) *Bulu ka-h-ngabbo-ng, mey bulu ka-h-marrbo-ng.*<sup>30</sup>  
3pl 3sg>3-R-give-PPFV food 3pl 3sg>3-R-indulge-PPFV  
‘He gave them [something], he indulged them with some food.’

Table 4.4 shows that apart from a difference in their formal treatment of their third argument (or second object), the Kriol transitive verb *sori* and the Dalabon ditransitive verb *marrbun* display very similar argument mapping, with identical semantics.

Table 4.4 Subcategorization patterns of *sori* (v.t.) and *marrbun* (v.dt.).

	<i>Kriol sori</i>	<i>Dalabon marrbun</i>
<b>S</b>	EXPERIENCER of the emotion	EXPERIENCER of the emotion
<b>O</b>	STIMULUS of the emotion / RECIPIENT of the gift	STIMULUS of the emotion / RECIPIENT of the gift
<b>O2</b>		THEME (gift)
<b>DATIVE</b>	THEME (gift)	

Here again, we observe remarkable similarity between the Kriol utterances in (16) and (17) and the Dalabon ones in (18) and (19). Both languages offer a lexical means to describe an act of giving as an act of compassion, thus linguistically sanctioning a well-entrenched conceptual association with high moral stakes. In addition, given the resemblance in argument mapping, both *sori* ‘indulge someone (with something out of compassion)’ and *marrbun* ‘indulge someone with something (out of compassion)’ describe givers as experiencers of emotions and recipients of goods as stimuli of compassion. Thus, the lexemes in each language assign similar roles to each participant in these emotionally loaded social interactions.

## 6.2 The semantics of non-core arguments

Putting things simply, non-core arguments can be characterized as additional participants that are less automatically coded for by the verb, and usually require some formal link with the verb such as a preposition. For instance, in ‘Jane talks to David’, ‘to David’ is a non-core argument. Some Kriol emotional verbs or adjectives share their semantics and the core arguments they automatically code for with English, but semantic resemblances with Dalabon become evident when non-core arguments – i.e. any other arguments than subject and direct object – are taken into account. The intransitive verb *wori* (<Eng. *worry*) and the semantics of its dative arguments are a case in point. When used intransitively, i.e. with only a subject,<sup>31</sup> *wori* adequately translates as ‘worry, be preoccupied’ and thus seems semantically equivalent to its English etymon. *Wori* is sometimes used as a near-synonym of *jinggebat*, i.e. close in meaning to the Dalabon *njirrku(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’, discussed in 5.3.

(Kriol) 20140328c\_006\_IA 044 [Narr]

(20) *Bat festam mela bin mub iya . . .*  
but initially 1pl.excl PST move here

*Bat ai bin oles apset.*  
but 1sg.S PST HAB upset

*Ai bin oles wori en apset. [. . .]*  
1sg.S PST HAB feel.bad and upset

‘But in the early days of our moving here . . . But I was always upset.  
I was always worried, and upset. . .’

However, when a dative participant is added, i.e. a participant introduced by a dative preposition – either *bla/ba* or *fo* – the verb *wori* denotes grief rather than more general or benign preoccupations. Its meaning then matches that of the Dalabon lexeme *kangu-darr(mu)* ‘belly’+‘?’, ‘feel bad when missing someone/grieving for someone’. *Wori* with dative participant is typically used when someone is sick, or when someone is away. The latter applies in the first line of (21): the grandfather in question had been away for a while and had given no news.

(Kriol) 20140401a\_002\_MT\* 036 [Narr]

[About a teenage boy's classificatory grandfather who has left and gives no news, and the boy's recently deceased biological father.]

- (21) *Bikos im-in wori*  
 because 3sg-PST feel.bad  
*ba olmen grenpa [first name] matbi.*  
 DAT old.man grandfather [proper.name] POSSB  
*bad athawei matbi*  
 but otherwise POSSB  
*im-in wori ba im ded tu.*  
 3sg-PST feel.bad DAT 3sg.POSS father too  
 'Because he was missing his grandfather [first name] [who has left and isn't giving news] perhaps. Or, otherwise, he may have been grieving for his father [who passed away a year ago].'

In this context, *wori* could translate as 'worry (be preoccupied)' for someone as well as 'miss' or 'grieve'. Further, *wori* can also be used to talk about people who are deceased, in which case it cannot mean 'be preoccupied for the person'.<sup>32</sup> This is the case in the second line of (21), where the father in question was actually deceased. In this case, *wori* better translates as 'miss, grieve about someone who is not here (whatever the reason of the absence)'.

Thus, while *wori* alone can indeed mean 'be preoccupied', *wori* followed by a dative participant means 'miss, grieve', and a better gloss for *wori* is the more generic 'feel bad about a beloved person (missing, grieving)'. Indeed, the meaning 'miss, grieve' often applies even when no dative participant is overtly expressed. In the third line of (22), an implicit dative participant is provided by the linguistic context in the previous sentence in line 1, but in many occasions the real-world context alone imposes the sense 'miss, grieve'.

(Kriol) 20140401a\_002\_MT\* 066 [Narr]

- (22) MT *Oh tumatj kid dei bin wori fo dat lil olmen bobala.*  
 INTJ.excl a.lot child 3pl PST feel.bad DAT DET DIM man INTJ.comp  
 MP *Dei bin sed bla im o. . .*  
 3pl PST sad DAT 3sg or  
 MT *Kaja dei bin wori yeah!*  
 INTJ.ctrry 3pl PST feel.bad INTJ.approb  
 'MT Oh, many kids have been missing this good old man, poor thing.  
 MP They've been sad about him or. . .  
 MT Ah but, they've been missing [him] yeah!'

The senses of *wori* followed by dative participant are matched in Dalabon by the intransitive verb *kangu-darr(mu)* 'feel bad when missing someone/grieving for someone', in particular when it has participants akin to indirect objects. This is illustrated in (23), where the verb has a genitive adjunct and denotes grief; and

in (24), where the verb has a benefactive object, with the sense ‘miss someone’. This semantic resemblance between Kriol *wori* and Dalabon *kangu-darr(mu)* is covert. It is revealed by the presence of a dative participant in certain contexts, but there are many occurrences where a second-language learner of Kriol could mistakenly equate *wori* with its English etymology, because the translation ‘be preoccupied’ would appear acceptable.

(Dalabon) 20120708a\_000\_MT\* 053 [ContEI]

[About a recently deceased aunt (mother’s sister).]

- (23) *Buyirrhwalung nga-b-dja-kangu-darr-minj murlah-ngan-kun.*  
 inside 1sg-R-FOC-belly-DARR-PPFV mother’s.sister-1sg.POSS-GEN  
 feel.bad  
*mak nga-bengwudj-mi.*  
 NEG 1sg-forget-IRR  
 ‘Deep inside I was still grieving for my mother’s sister [who had passed away].  
 I had not forgotten.’

(Dalabon) 2008/30036–17’ (MT\*) [ContEI]

- (24) *Maia, derrh-no dja-b-bo-niyan . . .*  
 proper.name tomorrow 2sg-R-go-FUT  
*Djila-b-karra-marnu-kangu-darr-miyan.*  
 1pl>2-R-all-BEN-belly-DARR-FUT  
 feel.bad  
 ‘Maia, you’re leaving tomorrow. . . . We’re all going to miss you.’

Here again, the respective lexical resources of Kriol and Dalabon allow speakers to depict emotional situations and the associated interpersonal relationships in similar ways. Interestingly, this is yet another resemblance around the notion of compassion – since *wori* and *kangu-darr(mu)* both describe feeling bad for others, which is the definition of compassion. Both Kriol and Dalabon allow speakers to use a single verb to talk about several types of negative feelings caused by one’s attachment to another person – whether one worries about them, misses them or grieves for them. In both languages, the person in question is represented as an indirect object (or equivalent), and the experiencer of the negative emotion as an intransitive subject.

Remaining in the domain of emotional attachment to others, the Kriol adjective *hapi* (<Eng. *happy*), ‘feel good’ also reveals resemblances with Dalabon when it occurs with a dative participant. In its standard adjectival use, *hapi* is closer in meaning to its English etymon than to comparable Dalabon lexemes meaning ‘feel good’. However, when Kriol *hapi* ‘feel good’ receives a dative participant, it patterns semantically like Dalabon lexemes. In English, *x is happy for y* means ‘something good happened to y and x is happy because y is happy’. In Kriol, the default meaning of the literal equivalent *x im hapi bla y*

is ‘x is happy because of y’, i.e. ‘x feels good about y [e.g. y being around]’ in the sense of ‘x likes y’. This concurs with the standard semantics of non-core arguments for Dalabon emotion predicates: benefactive objects (the syntactic status of which compares with that of dative participants, see Ponsonnet (2014a:163–165)) typically refer to animate stimuli, i.e. to persons that trigger the emotions described by the predicates (as with *wori bla* above). Here again, Kriol patterns like Dalabon with respect to the linguistic representation of interpersonal affection.

## 7. Summary of resemblances

In total, 28 Kriol emotion words share some clearly identifiable properties with Dalabon (exclusive of properties that are also shared with English), or with other Australian languages. This is more than a third of all fully attested lexemes in this semantic domain – a significant proportion that explains the impression of resemblance between the two languages. The ordered list presented in Table 4.5 shows that two-thirds of these resemblances relate to semantics and combinatorics, as opposed to resemblances in form (etymologies and calques). That is, immediately perceptible resemblances are in fact a minority: most of the resemblances are covert and can only be revealed by deeper analysis (or a better knowledge) of both Kriol and Dalabon. Also, semantic resemblances result in greater functional proximity between Kriol and Dalabon. Importantly, even partial semantic resemblances can achieve significant functional equivalence, as shown with *jinggebat*, the continuous form of *think* ‘think’, and *njirrku(mu)* ‘be upset, be confused, brood over’ (5.3).

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, given that words are a key tool in elaborating the content of linguistic messages, the lexical features shared by Kriol and Dalabon are most likely to minimize the impact of language shift on what speakers can say and how they communicate. Indeed, the data considered in this study suggests that the lexical resemblances between the two languages under investigation result in a great deal of functional commensurability between them. While a dedicated quantitative study would be needed to confirm this observation, the pairs of parallel examples presented throughout the chapter showed that lexical resources allowed speakers to discuss emotional categories and related behaviors in similar terms in both languages.

Many of the lexical and semantic resemblances highlighted above are particularly significant with respect to the effect of language shift because they target morally salient emotions that play a prominent role in local/Australian Indigenous social organizations. This includes compassion and related obligation to express affection and to share goods; the local concept of *sheim* that regulates social interactions; emotions related to interpersonal attachment including grief and self-blame; sexual inclinations, sexualized behaviors and their social evaluation and more. Overall, lexical resemblances between Kriol and Dalabon contribute significantly to depicting interpersonal interactions in the same ways in the two languages on each side of this language shift.

Table 4.5 Kriol emotion lexemes that share some properties with Dalabon emotion lexemes.

AUSTRALIAN ETYMOLOGIES			
Kriol	meaning	origin	
<i>gula</i> (n.)	trouble, conflict, anger, aggression	Sydney language <i>gulara</i> ‘angry, offended’	
<i>juljul</i> (adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	?	
<i>warlwarl</i> (v.i.)	covet	Marra (Marran, Roper region) <i>warl-</i> , to strongly desire, to crave; Ngalakgan (Gunwinyguan) <i>warl-ga-</i> ‘to love, to be very fond of’	
<i>yalala</i> (adj.)	feel good emotionally, feel relieved physically	Dalabon <i>yolh-yalala</i> ( <i>mu</i> ) ‘rest, feel emotionally good’; Marra (Roper region) <i>yalala-</i> ‘to be happy’; Ngalakgan: <i>yalala-</i> ‘to get better, to be alright’	
Kriol	meaning	etymology	Dalabon match
CALQUES			
<i>big as</i> (adj.)	selfish, greedy	<i>big, arse</i>	<i>dedj-boyenj</i> , adj. ‘tail, bum’+‘big’
<i>gud/nogud binji</i> (adj.)	feel good/bad, be happy/unhappy, be in a good/bad mood	<i>good, no</i> ; Sydney language <i>bindhi</i>	<i>kangu-mon</i> , <i>kangu-weh-mun</i> , adj. ‘belly’+ ‘good’/‘bad’
<i>hatkrek</i> (v.i.)	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	<i>heart, crack</i>	<i>kangu-barrh</i> ( <i>mu</i> ), v.i. ‘belly’+‘crack’
<i>jelop nos</i> (?adj.)	be snobbish, cold to someone	<i>swell up, nose</i>	<i>dje-bruh</i> ( <i>mu</i> ), v.i. ‘nose/nostrils/face’+‘blow, SWELL’
<i>standap nos</i> (?adj.)	be snobbish, cold to someone	<i>stand up, nose</i>	<i>dje-bruh</i> ( <i>mu</i> ), v.i. ‘nose/nostrils/face’+‘blow, SWELL’
PLAIN SEMANTIC RESEMBLANCE			
<i>bobala/bala</i> (intj.)	compassionate interjection: ‘poor thing’, ‘oh dear’, ‘oh no’ . . .	<i>poor fellow</i>	<i>weh-no</i> , intj.
<i>gede shok</i> (v.i.)	be surprised (can be positive or neutral)/undergo emotional shock	<i>get a shock</i>	<i>kangu-barrh</i> ( <i>mu</i> ), v.i.

(Continued)

Table 4.5 (Continued)

PLAIN SEMANTIC RESEMBLANCE			
<i>gridi</i> (n.)	be selfish, stingy, not inclined to share	greedy	<i>yi-dih</i> , adj.
<i>gula</i> (n.)	trouble, conflict, anger, aggression	Sydney language <i>gulara</i>	<i>yirru</i> , n.
<i>hatkrek</i> (v.i.)	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	<i>heart, crack</i>	<i>kangu-barrh(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>heit</i> (v.t.)	have resentment, have negative feeling for someone (contextual)	<i>hate</i>	<i>ngurrng-dung</i> , v.t., <i>njirrhmiwon</i> , v.t., <i>kangu-dinjirr(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>laik</i> (v.t.)	like (food, people, to do something; friendship, romantic or sexually oriented interest)	<i>like</i> (v.t.)	<i>djare</i> , adj.
<i>sheim</i> (adj.)	avoid interactions for fear of others	<i>shame, ashamed</i>	<i>yer(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>sheim mijelp</i> (v.i.)	avoid interactions for fear of others	<i>shame, ashamed, myself</i>	<i>yer(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>ri</i> (v.t.)	indulge someone with something (out of compassion)	<i>sorry</i>	<i>marrbun</i> , v.dt.
<i>tjiki</i> (adj.)	likely to cause harm: aggressive, harmful, dangerous, poisonous	<i>cheeky</i>	<i>yirru-mon</i> , adj.
PATTERNS OF COLEXIFICATION			
<i>laikim mijelp</i> (v.i.)	feel good/show off, parade around/seduce, flirt	<i>like</i> (v.t.), <i>myself</i>	<i>kol(mu)</i> , v.i.
PARTIAL SEMANTIC OVERLAP			
<i>jinggebat</i> (v.i.) continuous form	brood over, think for a long time about something negative	<i>think, about</i>	<i>njirrk(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>juljul</i> (adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	?	<i>nguh-beng</i> , adj.
<i>kan get oba</i> (v.i.)	be unable to come to terms with an emotionally difficult situation, typically in mourning	<i>can't get over</i>	<i>njirrk(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>seksi</i> (adj.)	flirtatious, sexy	<i>sexy</i>	<i>nguh-beng</i> , adj.

## EMOTIONAL CONNOTATIONS

<i>jukdan</i> (v.i.)	bend over (often because of being sad or upset)	<i>shook, down</i>	<i>djud-kurllkurllkan, djud-kurl(mu),</i> v.i.
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## SUBCATEGORIZATION (CORE ARGUMENTS)

<i>boring</i> (adj.)	boring, bored	<i>boring</i>	<i>warndih</i> , adj.
<i>sheim mijelp</i> (v.i.)	avoid interactions for fear of others	<i>shame, ashamed, myself</i>	<i>yer(mu)</i> , v.i.
<i>sori</i> (v.t.)	indulge someone with something (out of compassion)	<i>sorry</i>	<i>marrbun</i> , v.dt
<i>sori mijelp</i> (v.i.)	feel sorrowful, desperate/feel sheepish	<i>sorry, myself</i>	<i>marrburrun</i> , v.rr.

## SEMANTICS OF NON-CORE ARGUMENTS

<i>hapi (bla)</i> (adj.)	feel good + DAT: like someone	<i>happy</i>	<i>yolb-mon</i> , adj.
<i>wori (bla)</i> (v.i.)	worry + DAT: feel bad when, missing someone/grieving for someone	<i>worry</i>	<i>kangu-darr(mu),</i> v.i.

## 8. Lexical mismatches between Kriol and Dalabon

Focusing on resemblances between two languages, like I have done in this chapter so far, obviously brings the risk of overlooking differences. The notable semantic and lexical similarities observed between Kriol and Dalabon certainly do not rule out important differences, running ‘orthogonal’ to the resemblances, so to say. The most significant of these differences, related to word-class distribution in the Kriol emotion lexicon, have already been touched upon in Section 2 and will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7, where their consequences on figurative language are discussed. Here, in the interest of a balanced account of resemblances *and* differences, I highlight a few salient semantic mismatches between Kriol and Dalabon that weigh against the similarities analyzed in previous sections.

## 8.1 Lexical categories

Firstly, a number of the Dalabon emotion lexemes do not find a good lexeme-based translation in Kriol.<sup>33</sup> Among other mismatches, a remarkable absence is that of a good translation for the Dalabon noun *yolb-no* ‘pep, feelings’, which refers to one’s inner feelings, life force, energy and motivation, inclinations and desires (Ponsonnet 2010b, 2014a:281–292, 2016a:233–235). This meaning

is not assigned to any lexeme or collocation in Kriol. The noun *filing* (<Eng. *feeling*) refers to inner feelings and inclinations, as well as to intuitions, as *feeling* does in English. *Filing* does not encapsulate the more culturally specific notion of life force and energy.<sup>34</sup> The absence of a good match for this Dalabon concept in Kriol is all the more significant in this concept, or comparable ones, appear to be lexicalized in many Australian Aboriginal languages (Ponsonnet 2016a).

Another notable absence concerns the Dalabon verb *kodj-dadj(mu)* ‘head’+‘be cut, end’, ‘become upset and interrupt social interactions’. This semantically specific lexeme that describes an emotional state along with its social consequences is frequent in Dalabon, and also has frequent equivalents in neighboring languages (*kodj-dadjme* ‘head’+‘be cut’ in Biniṅ Gun-wok, *bam-dadjmay* ‘head’+‘cut’ in Jawoyn and *djarra-doerlh* ‘head’+‘cut’ in Rembarrnga). Yet, Kriol does not have an equivalent lexeme. Some older speakers actually borrow *kodj-dadj(mu)* when they speak Kriol, but in spite of the prevalence of this word and corresponding concept in Dalabon descriptions of emotions, I found no equivalent in the speech of younger speakers. A plausible explanation is that this meaning does not appear to be lexicalized in many Australian languages outside of the Gunwinyguan region.<sup>35</sup>

Conversely, a number of Kriol emotion lexemes encode concepts that are not as clearly lexicalized in Dalabon: we saw in 5.5 that some semantic gaps identified in Dalabon are matched in Kriol, but this is not systematic. For instance, Kriol has a lexeme *lab* (<Eng. *love*), which is used both as a noun or as a verb, to talk about romantic love. In Dalabon, the concept of love can be expressed by a number of verbs and adjectives, but there is no overt lexical distinction between *like* (mild appreciation and affection, mild sexual attraction) and *love* (stronger affection, strong desire, romantic attachment). Here Kriol lexical distinctions are closer to English.

## 8.2 Structural differences

It was shown in 5.2 that some relatively specific patterns of colexification (i.e. when words have several meanings) observed in Dalabon can be matched in Kriol. This is not systematically the case though, and importantly, one of the few widespread patterns of colexification that structures the Dalabon emotion lexicon is not as well represented in Kriol, namely the tendency to colexify ‘other-oriented’ and ‘self-oriented’ emotional states. ‘Other-oriented’ emotional states target a stimulus: for instance ‘hate’, which denotes negative feelings *oriented toward someone* (Ponsonnet 2014a:75–77, 187–190). ‘Self-oriented’ emotional states, by contrast, have no evident stimulus or source: the word ‘sad’ denotes self-oriented negative feelings. Many Dalabon lexemes colexify other- and self-oriented states. For instance, *kangu-yowyow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow+REDUP’ means both ‘be pleased’ (self-oriented) as well as ‘be kind’ (other-oriented). While this pattern of colexification is relatively pervasive in Dalabon, it is not in Kriol.<sup>36</sup>

Another structural mismatch between Kriol and Dalabon has to do with selectional restrictions, i.e. the way words can felicitously combine together or not depending on their semantics (for instance, the English verb ‘drink’ must be followed by a noun that denotes a liquid). In particular, the selectional restrictions on emotional adjectives are stricter in Dalabon than they are in Kriol. In Dalabon, an emotional adjective always qualifies the experiencer, i.e. the person experiencing the emotion – as opposed to the stimulus that triggers the emotion. That is, in Dalabon, it is not possible to qualify a story or a piece of music as ‘sad’ for instance. In Kriol, by contrast, emotional adjectives can qualify stimuli: *‘im rili sed dis mubi’*, ‘this movie is really sad’, where ‘sad’ refers to the capacity of triggering sadness, not to the state of ‘being sad’ in the sense of experiencing sadness (a movie cannot experience sadness). This usage of *sed* ‘sad’ is relatively unusual in Kriol, but it is acceptable, whereas in Dalabon it is simply impossible – only animate beings can be described as ‘sad’.

## 9. Conclusions

The Kriol and Dalabon emotion lexica display significant differences in their general structure, in particular word-class distributions and properties. However, fine-grained analysis of individual items in these lexica reveals a significant degree of lexical and semantic resemblance between the two languages with respect to the vocabulary of emotions. Resemblances in form tend to concentrate around culturally specific attitudes and emotions, yet they remain relatively marginal altogether (at least in the Barunga variety). The bulk of the similarities lies in more subtle resemblances in semantics and combinatorics, where Kriol combines English-like forms with Dalabon/Australian-like meanings. This combination reminds us that semantics is plastic, and not constrained by form: in the case of language shift under consideration, the massive replacement of lexical forms that results from the adoption of a creole is not accompanied by a corresponding shift in meanings. Instead, creole speakers often pair up new forms with meanings encountered in the language spoken by their ascendants. As a result of this semantic plasticity, through language shift Kriol and Dalabon maintain a great deal of functional equivalence, so that speakers can often express the same contents structured with comparable lexical tools.

## Notes

- 1 Beyond creole studies, studies in language contact tend to say little about lexical semantics, as often pointed out by the few authors who have written on the matter (Weinreich (1953:47–53), Talmy (1982), Ameka and Wilkins (1996)).
- 2 The author of (1) also speaks Dalabon, however her Kriol is very standard, and is her primary language. Therefore, her usage of *jukdan* is not likely to be unorthodox or influenced by her Dalabon.

- 3 Also available at: [www.academia.edu/7615237/Dalabon\\_Emotion\\_Glossary\\_June\\_2014\\_](http://www.academia.edu/7615237/Dalabon_Emotion_Glossary_June_2014_)
- 4 Adjectives rarely function as modifiers.
- 5 See [xxxxxx link to be up-dated] for a systematic description.
- 6 On the other hand, the total number of tokens of emotion words (i.e. including repetitions of the same lexemes) is proportionally higher in the Kriol corpus than in the Dalabon corpus, reflecting the specialization of the Kriol corpus on emotions (Chapter 3, 3.2).
- 7 There are some overlaps with Talmy's (1982) typology of interferences between semantic systems in contact. My enterprise is different as I deal with lexical resemblances rather than with entire semantic systems, and because Talmy's discussion revolves around the question of contact. Yet, his notion of 'individual resemblances of morphemes' (1982:235) compares with my 'plain semantic resemblances'; his 'grouping of meanings under a single morpheme' (1982:236) with my 'common patterns of colexification'; and his notion of 'hybrid formation' (1982:239) could apply to the discussion of *wori* 'worry, miss, grieve' in 6.2.
- 8 The semantic equivalence between the form *gula* in Kriol and *yirru* in Dalabon is only complete when *gula* is a noun. *Gula* can also be an intransitive verb 'argue', and in this case its sense does not coincide with the sense of the Dalabon intransitive verb *yirru-mun* 'be/get angry (emotion and/or behavior)'.
- 9 There is no well-attested Kriol noun derived from the English 'anger' (see 4.2 in Chapter 7 on the borrowing of nouns).
- 10 More cases may be added, depending on how strict one wants to be when assessing differences with English. Note that while some of the lexemes listed here may reflect cross-linguistically common lexical categories (e.g. the colexification of 'like' and 'love'), the majority clearly does not. Therefore, many of the resemblances listed here suggest Australian Aboriginal influence.
- 11 *Sheim mijelp* is a lexicalized middle construction, the meaning of which is very close to that of the bare adjective *sheim*. See Ponsonnet (2016c) for an account of the differences between the two.
- 12 For instance: Martuthunira in the Pilbara (Pama-Nyungan, Ngayarda; Dench (1995)); Pintupi in the Western Desert (Pama-Nyungan, Western Desert; Myers (1986:120)); Kaytetye in Central Australia (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic; Turpin (2011:378)); Ngiyambaa, Central New South Wales (Pama-Nyungan, Wiradhuric; Kennedy and Donaldson (1982:5)).
- 13 In Gunwinyguan languages neighboring Dalabon: *warre* in Bininj Gun-wok, *warang* in Rembarnga, *djidwarr* in Jawoyn (Merlan 2016). Elsewhere, some languages (among many others) where compassionate interjections are reported are: Badjala (Pama-Nyungan, Waka-Gabi, South Queensland Coast, Bell (2004)), Warlpiri (Pama-Nyungan, Ngumpin-Yapa, Central Desert, Laughren (2005)), Wik (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape-York, Sutton (1978)). Echoing the etymology of *bobala*, Australian compassionate interjections are regularly glossed as 'poor fellow' or 'poor thing' in the literature, e.g. in Gurindji (Pama-Nyungan, Ngumpin-Yapa, Victoria River District, Meakins et al. (2013)), Murrinh Patha (Daly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Daly River, Blythe (2017)), Nyulnyul (Nyulnyulan, non-Pama-Nyungan, Dampier Peninsula, McGregor (2011)), Yanyuwa (Pama-nyungan, Yanyuwan, Gulf of Carpentaria Coast, Bradley and Kirton (1992)).
- 14 To illustrate the polysemy/monosemy distinction with English: *chair* is polysemous, denoting either a seat or the member of a board, which are two different concepts; while *cousin* is monosemous, denoting either a male or a female cousin, which both fall under the same concept of cousin. Both *chair* and

*cousin* can be said to *colexify* seat/member of a board and male/female cousin respectively.

- 15 Entirely independent of elicitation on *laikim mijelp*.
- 16 Ngankikurungkurr has *ge(rr)-ket* ‘be proud of/ fond of (child), be jealous’; Jingulu has *jingkarli* ‘confident, proud, happy, ecstatic’; in Wiradjuri in the words for ‘proud’ and ‘charming’ are cognates (respectively *dyiramadilinya* ‘proud’, *dyiramil* ‘charming’). Musharbash (2010:280) also reports the use of *loverboy* and *lovergirl* in Aboriginal English as spoken the Warlpiri region (Pama-Nyungan, Ngumpin-Yapa, Central Australia), referring to young men and women dressed up with fancy clothes and openly signalling sexual interests (the concept does not seem to be lexicalized in Warlpiri (Laugren, pers. com. April 2018)).
- 17 Dickson (2015:200) reports the cognate *nyirrk* ‘fixate’ in Roper Kriol, but this word is not used in Kriol as spoken in the Barunga region.
- 18 Also the less frequent *thingking*, an alternative continuous form.
- 19 Here ‘lexicalized’ means that the form has conventionalized some irregularities. In this case, the first consonant is stabilized as [j̥j̥] (vs. a predominant [d] in the base form). In addition, the epenthetic vowel inserted between the verb root and the continuous suffix *-bat* is also very stable. It breaks an infelicitous consonant cluster [kb]. Voicing ([k] > [g]) is expected in word-internal position.
- 20 The following account of *jinggebat* is broadly valid for *thingking* as well.
- 21 *Jukdan* ‘bend over’ was also used to translate the Dalabon verb *kodj-dadj(mu)* ‘head’+‘be cut, end’, which means ‘become upset and interrupt social interactions’ (see 8.1) and does not denote a posture at all in synchrony.
- 22 Justified pride, which is different from the excessive pride associated with ‘showing off’ (5.2).
- 23 Disgust is often listed among basic emotions, see Ekman (1992) (see also Chapter 2, Section 2).
- 24 In this technical sense, ‘participant’ includes inanimate entities.
- 25 This is rarer and preferably expressed as an interjection: ‘Sori!’, ‘sei ‘sori’ ‘say ‘sorry’.
- 26 In this sense, *sori* can occasionally receive verbal morphology (e.g. Ponsonnet 2018c:239).
- 27 Direct objects are usually those that follow the verb directly. Objects introduced by a preposition are indirect and are not *core* arguments. Transitive verbs are usually defined as verbs that can take such direct objects, as opposed to indirect objects.
- 28 Compassion is itself a proxy for affection and consideration, and this three-fold equation between compassion, affection and sharing is also reflected in the fact that some Kriol speakers use *lobyu* (Eng. <‘love you’) for ‘thank you’.
- 29 A ditransitive verb codes for three obligatory participants: a subject and two direct objects. Across the world’s languages, verbs meaning ‘give’ are usually ditransitive: ‘Jane gives David a book.’
- 30 The prosodic treatment of *mey* ‘food’ makes it clear that it is the object of the second clause headed by *marrbun* ‘indulge’, not of the first clause headed by *ngabbun* ‘give’.
- 31 Or with vague inanimate dative participants (e.g. *wori fo samthing* ‘worry about something’).
- 32 Local beliefs about after-death would not legitimate such preoccupations.
- 33 Sometimes this may be due to insufficient documentation, but in many cases I enquired systematically.
- 34 The noun *wil* (see Table 2 in Chapter 7, 4.2) was used in this sense, but only idiosyncratically and by older speakers. The word *nyingaya* is reported to mean

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‘spirit, intuition’ in the Roper Kriol variety (Dickson 2015:136), but it was not used spontaneously in the Barunga region.

- 35 Under Siegel’s (2008) reinforcement principle (see Chapter 7, 3.2), this would explain why this remains a gap in Kriol.
- 36 The few Kriol lexemes that display this colexification are those with an English etymon or translation that also displays this colexification – for instance *apset*, which is very close in meaning to its etymon ‘upset’.

## 5 Highly conventionalized prosodic contours

### Same forms, different meanings

Having discussed *descriptive* tools to talk about emotions – i.e. the emotion lexicon – in Chapter 4, the following chapters will deal with *expressive* resources, starting with prosody. In the present chapter I consider an aspect of emotional language that is rarely discussed in much detail – whether in creole languages and elsewhere – namely conventionalized prosodic contours (e.g. Bolinger 1978, 1986; Fonagy & Magdics 1963). Unfortunately, I will not be able to present and analyze the entire range of such contours in Kriol. Given the very limited knowledge we currently have of such emotional features in other languages (English, Australian languages, or other languages in the world), providing a full description for Kriol in the context of this book would be difficult. Instead, this chapter focuses on a single but very remarkable emotional prosodic contour that is salient in both Kriol and Dalabon, as well as in other languages of the region. This is not a discrete modulation that speakers produce more or less spontaneously or subconsciously, but a highly conventionalized melodic feature, so marked in its form that its production is largely intended and performed (Omondi 1997; Ponsonnet 2018b). This could compare to the voluntarily amplified intonation French speakers adopt with the interjection *oh la la*, or to the way people say *aaaaaww* to express endearment in English.

In Dalabon, the highly conventionalized contour under consideration here is used primarily to express compassion. The comparison with how the same contour is used in Kriol sheds an interesting light upon the consequences of language shift, because the situation is converse to the one we observed with the lexicon. Chapter 4 showed that with words, many Dalabon (or more broadly Australian) meanings are preserved through language shift in spite of a massive replacement in forms. In the case of the prosodic contour discussed in this chapter, it is the form that is preserved through language shift, while the expressive meaning of this contour seems to be changing, at least for younger Kriol speakers who do not master another Aboriginal language. This further highlights the independence between form and meaning, and gives an opportunity to question the triggers of a change in meaning that is not driven by a change in form.

The chapter starts with a description of the highly conventional melodic contour used to express compassion and related emotions in Dalabon and other

languages from the Gunwinyguan region, in Section 1. Section 2 then presents a formally identical contour in Kriol, and highlights that it is used in slightly different contexts compared to Dalabon. In Kriol, this melodic contour is evolving from expressing mostly compassion, and secondarily endearment in the speech of older speakers; to expressing endearment primarily in the speech of younger speakers who do not speak another Australian language. Finally, Section 3 discusses the conditions and consequences of this change, and what it tells us about the impact of language shift.

## 1. Conventionalized ‘compassionate’ contour in Dalabon

In this section I present the form and meaning of a frequent and very distinctive prosodic contour used by Dalabon speakers, mostly to express compassion. I focus on information relevant to the comparison with Kriol, but further details may be found in Ponsonnet (2014a:128–133, 2018b). This ‘compassionate’ contour is described here for Dalabon, but it is also found in (at least some) Gunwinyguan languages neighboring Dalabon, albeit with differences in frequency. It is very frequent in Kunwinjku for instance, but seemingly quite marginal in Rembarrnga. In my corpus, Kunwinjku speakers use the contour with the same meanings as in Dalabon, namely revolving around the expression of compassion.

### 1.1 *Form*

The contour considered in this chapter contrasts very clearly with the unmarked intonation contour of Dalabon affirmative clauses. Evans, Fletcher and Ross (2008) and Ross (2011:96–101) indicate that standard Dalabon intonation phrases typically display a ‘hat pattern’ (rise and fall,<sup>1</sup> or a flat ‘plateau contour’). By contrast, the expressive contour I discuss below starts with an initial high or very high pitch (above the speaker’s usual range) on the first morpheme(s) of the intonation unit, which usually coincides with a clause and often begins with an interjection.<sup>2</sup> Then the pitch falls abruptly on the following syllable(s)/morpheme(s), below the speaker’s usual range. After this fall the pitch returns to the average range, reaching a plateau which often coincides with the predicate of a clause. The last or penultimate syllable of the phrase can be lengthened. Finally, the pitch drops again slightly at the end of the phrase, which marks the full realization of the contour in its prototypical form. The contour frequently ends with an interjection. Example (1) offers a prototypical realization, with the corresponding pitch trace in Fig. 1 (obtained from the Praat software, which extracts acoustic parameters such as formants, intensity etc.<sup>3</sup>).

- AuQ4 (Dalabon) 20120705b\_005\_MT\* 140 [RPF] [link to book webpage]<sup>4</sup>
- (1) ↑?      *bulu*      ↓ *bula-h-yaw-ngabb-ong=wurd.*  
       ?        3pl        3pl>3-R-little.one-give-PPFV=DIM  
       ‘? they gave [a bit of food] to the poor children.’

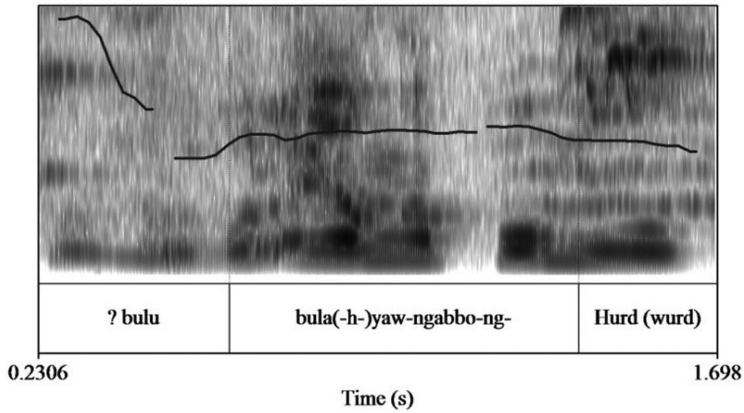


Figure 5.1 Pitch trace of (1).

The pattern is often realized over a whole clause, i.e. typically between one and three polymorphemic words including a verb complex. The clause can also be longer, and speakers sometimes line up several consecutive realizations of this contour, extending it to coordinate clauses. The most prototypical realizations – i.e. the ones with the clearest melodic pitch – tend to occur with simple clauses numbering between two and ten syllables. Longer clauses also regularly carry ‘compassionate’ contours, but the realizations are often less prototypical, perhaps because the length disrupts speakers’ fluency. In my corpus, the clauses supporting the contour usually described an event in the third person, but this may be a bias of the elicitation tasks, and there is some variation anyway. Apart from verbal clauses, the ‘compassionate’ contour can also occur with presentative noun phrases. Irrespective of the type of clause, the contour often (but not always) starts with an interjection, which receives the initial high pitch.

## 1.2 Meaning

The most common context of occurrence of the contour relates to compassion, i.e. when the speaker feels bad because something bad is happening to someone else for whom they have sympathy. As discussed in 5.1 in Chapter 4, compassion is key to the local moral order; echoing this social parameter, the expression of compassion accounts for nearly half of the tokens of the contours in my balanced dataset for Dalabon. In (2), the speaker commented on a movie where the young hero – for whom she had a lot of sympathy – was seen leaving his family group, sulking. The contour expresses that the speaker feels sad because the character feels sad.

(Dalabon) 20120713a\_001\_MT\* 065 [TC] [link to book webpage]

(2) *Ka-h-↑bal-↓bon-wu::rd.*

3sg-R-directly-go-DIM

‘He takes off poor thing [because he is sulking].’

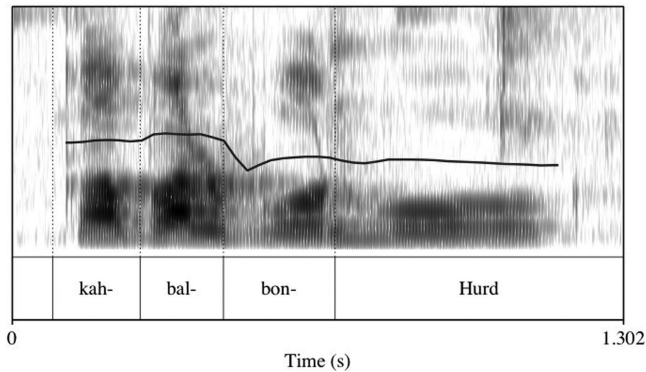


Figure 5.2 Pitch trace of (2).

Dalabon speakers also frequently use the ‘compassionate’ contour to express their approval and endearment when witnessing people being affectionate and compassionate with each other. The most typical and expected demonstration of compassion is for instance grief, but also sharing with and taking care of others, i.e. providing material support: such behaviors are regarded as evidence of compassion and affection.<sup>5</sup> In line with this association, the ‘compassionate’ contour often expresses approval and endearment when the speaker witnesses other people sharing with or taking care of each other. Example (3) describes the main female character of a movie looking after her grandmother, and the contour starts as the comment on the caring event begins. These contexts where speakers express their approval of compassionate behaviors account for a bit less than half of the occurrences of the compassionate contour in the emotion-focused dataset.

(Dalabon) 20120719a\_001\_MT\* 209 [S&D] [link to book webpage]

- (3) *Ka-b-yaw-men-burram* – –  
 3sg-R-little.one-ideas-good  
 ↑ *Mimal* ↓ *buka-b* ↑ *marnu-worrhworr-mu*.  
 fire 3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-prepare.fire:REDUP-PRS  
 ‘This young one is really good- she’s making fire for her [for her grand mother]!’

Other contexts of occurrence included relief for others (the speaker feels good about something good that happens to someone *who was in a dire situation before*), which relates to compassion; nostalgia, often tinted with compassion (for instance talking about long-deceased relatives); as well as witnessing endearing intimacy or daily routines (see Section 1 in Chapter 6). However, these contexts remained secondary, as compassion and witnessing/approving considered together accounted for the vast majority of the tokens in the representative data set chosen to quantify the occurrences of the compassionate contour in Dalabon (see Ponsonnet 2014a:58–59).

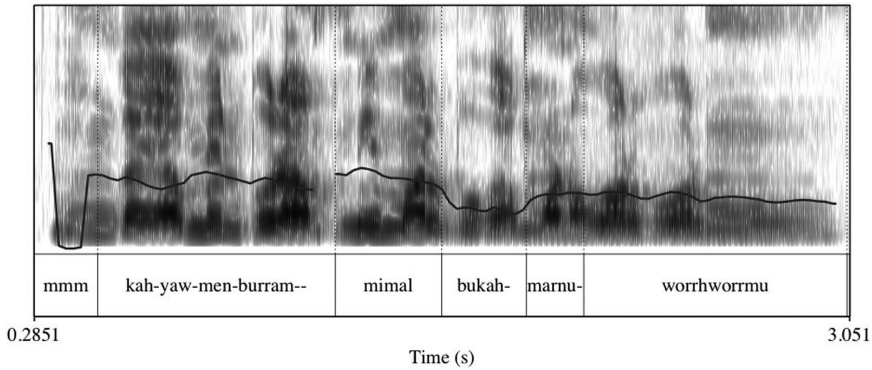


Figure 5.3 Pitch trace of (3).

## 2. Conventionalized emotional contours in Kriol

### 2.1 Form

On the other side of language shift, do Kriol speakers also use the same ‘compassionate’ contour as in Dalabon? The answer is somewhat complex, because they do produce the same melodic contour, yet its meaning seems to be evolving. This formally identical contour is illustrated in (4), which is one of the most prototypical realizations found in any of my corpora across all languages. In Kriol like in Dalabon, the contour often starts with an interjection that receives the high-pitch peak, but this is not systematic. The melody then unfolds across the clause, and can be continued, usually with some reset, over a number of adjuncts, coordinate clauses etc. None of this differs from the Dalabon patterns.

(Kriol) 20140328d\_000\_ABM 177 [Stim] [link to book webpage]

- (4) ↑Bala,                      ↓nena                      ↑Lorna . . . !  
       intj.compass        grandma        proper.name  
       ‘Oh, grandma Lorna. . .!’

The occurrence of this Australian form in Kriol is expected, if we consider that linguistic boundaries are more porous with respect to prosody than with most other aspects of language. Transfer of prosodic features between L1 and L2 is an attested phenomenon (see for instance Delais-Roussarie, Herment & Avanzi 2015). Indeed, my data confirms that multilingual speakers can export melodic contours from their dominant language to the rest of their repertoire without any sense of linguistic transgression. For instance, Kunwinjku appears to have a broader range of expressive contours than Dalabon, and Kunwinjku speakers who also know Dalabon import such contours when they speak Dalabon without

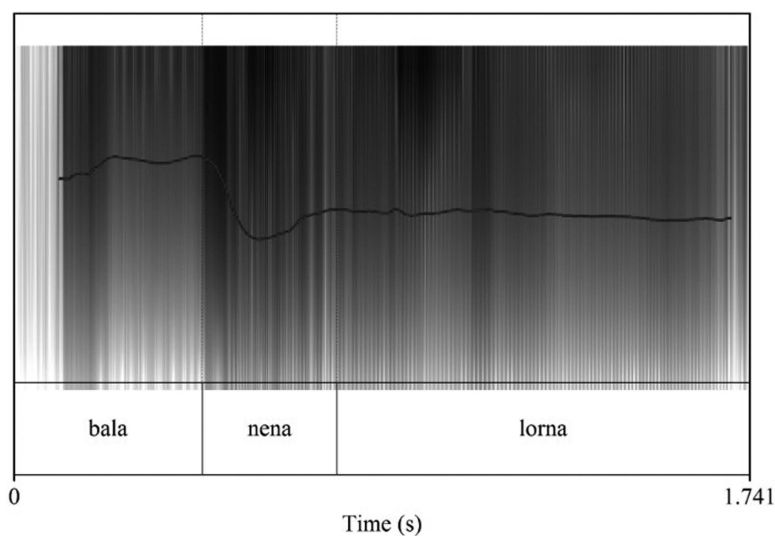


Figure 5.4 Pitch trace of (4).

flagging them as mistakes or borrowings (see also Goodwin, Goodwin and Yae-ger-Dror (2002) for a comparable observation). With lexical forms, on the other hand, language boundaries are not as fluid, and even with expressive forms such as interjections, multilingual speakers tend to self-correct when they transfer them from one language to another. Given this transferability, prosodic features are prone to diffuse in contact situations, and it is easy to see how Kriol could have borrowed expressive contours either from Gunwinyguan languages, and/or from other Australian languages if some of them happened to display the same form.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the form of this melodic contour has been maintained through language shift – its meaning (i.e. its context of use), however, seems to be changing.

## 2.2 *Meaning and generational variation*

There is variation in the way speakers use this contour in Kriol, apparently depending on which languages a given speaker knows. In my corpus, speakers of Dalabon and Kunwinjku all use the contour predominantly to express compassion – whether they are speaking in Dalabon, Kunwinjku or Kriol.

- (Kriol) 20140328a\_003\_LB\*\_ND\* 066 (LB\*) [RPF] [link to book webpage]  
 (5) ↑Na ?yuluk? ↓*tubala* ↑*nogud* *binji* *bla* *im* ↓*bobala*.  
 EMPH ?CONJ? 3du bad belly DAT 3sg INTJ.comp  
 ‘?Look now,? they two are upset about her poor thing.’

By contrast, speakers of Kriol who do not speak another Australian language displayed a slightly different range of contexts, using the contour mostly to

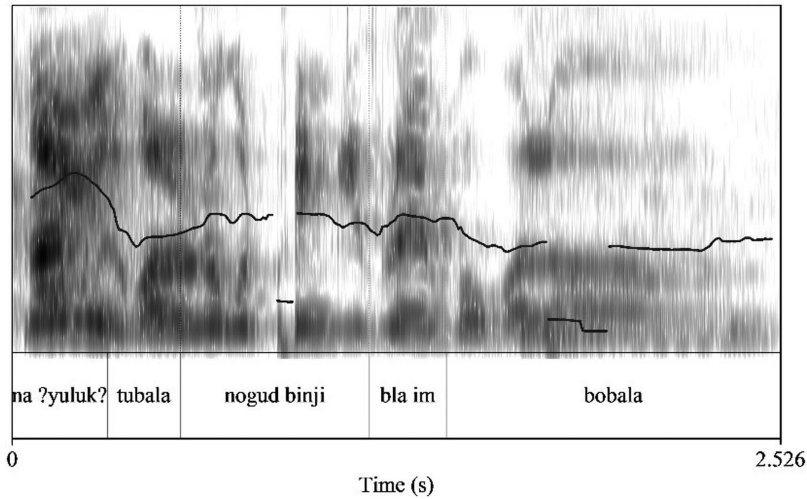


Figure 5.5 Pitch trace of (5).

express pure endearment as well as nostalgia, and only very exceptionally compassion. Kriol speakers who do not speak another Australian language are typically younger speakers, yet in my data the key difference seems to be the mastery of another Aboriginal language. Nevertheless, the divide in the use of the ‘compassionate’ contour is, in practice, largely generational: in this project, only one of the Kriol speakers under 35 y.o. mastered another Australian language, while the quasi-totality of Kriol speakers above that age except one did master another Aboriginal language.<sup>7</sup>

Younger Kriol speakers mostly used this expressive contour when looking at old photographs. The prototypical realization presented in (4) in 2.1 is the speaker’s response to a photograph of one of her grandmothers. Since the grandmother was deceased at the time of recording, the contour also expresses compassion and grief, and this can be said of many of the occurrences of the contour when observing souvenir photos. Old photographs often feature people who are no longer alive – especially those who are already old in the photos – and as such they can trigger empathetic, compassionate emotions (feeling bad about someone). In this context, images of older relatives regularly prompted the use of the contour by younger speakers, and this may be read as an expression of compassion for old-age, where endearment and compassion are hard to dissociate.

However, example (6) indicates that the contour can actually express endearment or nostalgia independently of compassion and grief. It was uttered when looking at photographs taken about fifteen years earlier, featuring two little boys closely related to the speaker. In this case, the boys on the photograph were healthy adults living in the vicinity of the speaker at the time of recording, so that compassion or grief were irrelevant.

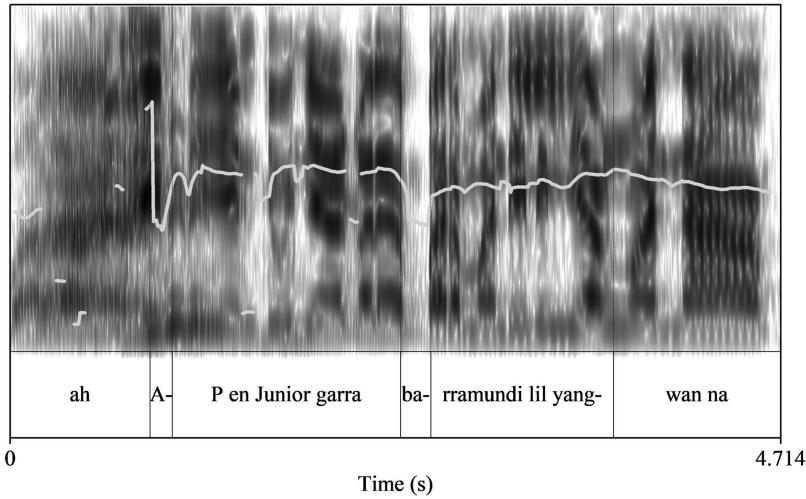


Figure 5.6 Pitch trace of (6).

(Kriol) 20140328c\_000\_AA\_IA 072 (IA) [Stim] [link to book webpage]

- (6)  $\uparrow A:h,$   $\downarrow A\uparrow P$  *en* *Junior*  
 INTJ.com prop.name and prop.name  
*garra*  $\downarrow ba\uparrow rramandi$  *lil* *yang*  $\downarrow wan$  *na.*  
 with fish.species DIM young.SHIFT EMPH  
 ‘Ah, AP and Junior with a barramundi, a little young one indeed.’

The usage illustrated in example (6) matches the daily (and unfortunately unrecorded) use of the contour by Kriol speakers when presented/talking about babies, infants and young children in everyday life. I have observed that in general, among Kriol-speaking communities, elderly people can attract the same type of endeared linguistic responses as babies and young children, except that these linguistic responses are not produced when the elderly person is actually present – while with babies and children, they often are.

Such endeared usages of the contour are attested for Kriol speakers irrespective of their age and of the range of languages they know. But Kriol speakers who master another Australian language also (in fact mostly) used the contour in contexts where compassion was prevalent, while younger speakers did *not* do so.<sup>8</sup> Across generations, Kriol speakers recorded comparable sets of stimuli-based tasks featuring pictures, video clips and films (see 3.3 in Chapter 3). Comments on the movie *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Noyce 2002) and the *Frog Where Are You* children book (Mayer 2003), in particular, were recorded by a significant number of speakers of all ages. When commenting on such stimuli involving fiction, older Kriol speakers regularly used the conventional ‘compassionate’ contour mostly to express compassion when beloved characters suffered misadventures,

and occasionally to express endearment only. By contrast, younger Kriol speakers who do not know another Australian language virtually never used the contour to express compassion relative to the characters' misadventures. In such contexts, they used the compassionate interjections *bobala* or *bala* (<Eng. 'poor fellow', see 5.1 in Chapter 4), as well as English-like melodic modulations with a lesser degree of conventionalization. The use of the highly conventionalized contour by younger Kriol speakers was mostly limited to responses to souvenir photographs, as well as to real-life contexts, typically with children, babies etc. – rather than the broader range of stimuli where older speakers used them.

### *2.3 Acquisition process or generational shift?*

Summarizing the above, it appears that Kriol speakers across generations use a contour with the same melody, but older speakers use it predominantly in compassionate contexts, while younger speakers use it primarily to express endearment. Like with any generational divide, this could reflect either a linguistic change that will endure as the younger generation grows older, or a lag in the acquisition of certain linguistic traits. In other words, younger Kriol speakers who used the conventionalized contour for endearment in my recordings may come to use it for compassion as they grow older. But this seems less likely for several reasons.

I have not observed that among Kriol-speaking communities, people only come to experience and articulate compassion later in life. As mentioned above, younger Kriol speakers did express compassion when commenting on fictional stimuli – albeit using other linguistic resources. Another possibility is that what speakers acquire at a later age is not the need to express compassion, but the ability to express it using a relatively complex melodic contour. Indeed, the way some younger Kriol speakers use the conventionalized contour does seem constrained by limitations in their fluency. While these speakers are adults with native competence in Kriol, most of them are not yet accomplished orators and performers.<sup>9</sup> The highly distinctive pitch variation that characterizes this contour is not easy to produce, and speakers of all ages struggle to realize it upon request in elicitation, or even in translation. Embedding the contour in a spontaneous, fluid performance seems to facilitate its realization, and the most confident performers and story tellers use the contour more than others. As noted in 1.1 about Dalabon, speakers also tend to produce neater melodic contours in shorter clauses. In my corpus, on an average younger Kriol speakers produced successful occurrences of the contour with shorter clauses than mature speakers.<sup>10</sup> Overall, younger Kriol speakers seemed most comfortable using the contour with very simple presentative clauses featuring an interjection and a proper noun, as in (4) above (2.1). This suggests that the linguistic context in which younger speakers used the conventionalized contour was partly determined by their degrees of language proficiency and prosodic fluency.

On the other hand, such limitations do not preclude using the conventionalized contour to express compassion while commenting on fictional stimuli, since this can be done with very short utterances. This is well illustrated in (7), where

a middle-aged Kriol speaker who is bilingual in Kunwinjku and fluent in Dalabon expresses compassion for a character of a movie, using a short six-syllable phrase starting with an interjection.

(Kriol) 20140406a\_000\_MJ\* 061 [RPF] [link to book webpage]

(Pitch track unretrievable due to background noise.)

(7)   ↑*Bala*                   ↓*ba*                   ↑*im*                   ↓*mami!*  
           INTJ.comp            DAT               3sg.POSS           mother  
           ‘[She’s crying] poor thing for her mother.’

The form of this token falls neatly within the range of what other younger speakers produce very comfortably. Yet, the younger speakers of Kriol who do not master another Australian language did not use the contour in these contexts although they watched the same movie. At least one of them is a very confident performer who used the contour with clauses of comparable length and complexity as middle-aged and senior adults (see example (6) in 2.2). When commenting on fictional stimuli, this speaker expressed compassion using a diversity of elaborate contours – but did not produce the conventionalized contour in strictly compassionate contexts. Thus the drift in the contexts where this contour is used does not seem to result from younger speakers being less proficient in producing it, or being less confident performers. It is therefore unlikely that younger Kriol speakers who do not speak another Australian language will start using the contour in purely compassionate contexts as they grow older. Instead, we are probably facing a more permanent change in the semantics of this conventionalized prosodic tool.

This situation is complex and somewhat difficult to interpret. It appears that the highly conventionalized ‘compassionate’ contour that is so prevalent in Dalabon was originally fully matched in early Kriol, with all speakers initially using the same form and the same meaning in Kriol as in Dalabon (which is not surprising given that they were all bilingual with another Australian language). In the variety of Kriol spoken by most in younger generations, on the other hand, the form remains but the meaning is evolving, as part of what seems to be a standard process of language-internal semantic change, the cultural impact of which may be tested experimentally in future research. In the next section I attempt to address some of the conditions and implications of this change.

### 3. Conventionalized emotional contours and language shift

#### 3.1 *On the consequences of semantic change*

Contrary to what we observed with the lexicon in Chapter 4 – where adopting a new language involves a massive shift in forms, but a less extensive shift in meaning – with this conventionalized emotional contour the form remains, but the meaning has changed (as least in the speech of the upcoming Kriol-only

generation). Given that prosodic features easily trespass linguistic boundaries, it is not surprising that the form remains. The shift in meaning, on the other hand, is harder to interpret. As pointed out above, it does not imply that younger Kriol speakers do not express compassion, but only that they do not express it using a highly conventionalized contour. Instead, they recruit interjections and other – less-conventionalized and mostly English-like – prosodic features.

It is difficult to speculate on what the consequences of this may be in terms of communication, but we can observe that the tools used by younger Kriol speakers to express compassion lack the ‘expressive salience’ of the conventionalized contour. This refers to its high perceptual salience, and corresponding potential to trigger empathy in the addressee. Future research should be able to test experimentally whether discourse featuring ‘expressively salient’ contours provokes compassion in the addressee to a higher degree than discourse where compassion is expressed by interjections and less salient prosodic devices. This can be done by assessing which emotions persist through communication chains where speakers retell the same story time after time (see for instance Bebbington et al. 2017; Fay et al. 2018). Such communication-chain experiments could give us some measure of the difference between Kriol (as spoken by younger generations) and Dalabon.

Another property of the ‘compassionate’ conventionalized contour that is not matched by interjections and less salient prosodic features is its cultural distinctiveness. The conventionalized contour is easily noticeable as a non-English feature, even for people who don’t understand Kriol, and given its frequency it can be regarded as characteristic of Indigenous Australian languages in this region. Its use to express compassion matches the cultural status of this emotional state as a key feature of the local social organization. By contrast, when expressed by interjections and other prosodic contours, compassion is deprived of such a perceptible index. Younger Kriol speakers still make extensive use of this very remarkable melodic contour, but they tend to do this when they experience endearment and nostalgia, which are culturally neutral, rather than when they experience compassion, which is distinctively central in their own social system. The intentions and effects profiled here could be explored by measuring speakers’ tendency to use the contour or not depending on whether their audience is more or less local or mainstream, and by collecting judgements on what sounds more or less ‘Indigenous’ to various audiences.

### *3.2 The role of language*

Irrespective of the degree of significance of this change in the use of the conventionalized emotional contour, how this change relates to language shift is another question. The evolution in the way Kriol speakers use this prosodic device is not directly imposed by the shift to a new lexico-grammatical code. Since the form of the contour remains the same in Kriol as in Dalabon, its restriction to endearment and nostalgia results from the speakers’ choices, rather than from linguistic constraints induced by language shift.

There is a caveat here, around the observation that mastering another Australian language seems to block the semantic drift of the contour amongst younger Kriol speakers. This suggests that somehow, an older, better-established lexicogrammatical code may act as a frame that constrains the semantic evolution of prosodic features – perhaps due to more entrenched linguistic practices around these prosodic features within a community? This is also worth further exploration, including primarily confirming the effect of mastering another Australian language against a larger cohort of speakers.

#### 4. Conclusion

This chapter considered the impact of language shift from the point of view of expressive prosodic resources. Prosodic resources are less dependent upon lexicogrammatical rules than some other linguistic devices, and as such, it is not surprising that they persist through language shift. In the case at stake, we observe that a perceptually salient, highly conventionalized melodic contour used in Dalabon to express compassion is also found in Kriol. However, while older Kriol speakers (who master other Australian Indigenous languages) use this contour mostly to express compassion as they do in Dalabon, younger Kriol speakers (who do not master another Australian Indigenous language) use it to express nostalgic endearment.

The triggers and consequences of this semantic change are a matter for further investigation, but it reminds us that a community can preserve a linguistic form without preserving its meanings and expressive values. Combined with the insights provided by the analysis of the lexicon in Chapter 4, this comparison further emphasizes the dissociation between form and meaning in language shift: forms can change while meanings remain, and conversely, meanings can change while forms remain. This is evidently not a discovery but simply a reminder of the Saussurian insight that signs are arbitrary. Yet, keeping this simple linguistic observation in mind may be useful when we consider actual situations of language shift. The study of the Kriol emotion lexicon in Chapter 4 suggested that a community that has adopted a new language may use forms that sound very different from older ones, but this does not mean that the older meanings and communicative functions are lost. Instead, older meanings and functions can often hide behind new forms. In this chapter, the case of emotional prosodic contours shows that meanings and communicative functions may not necessarily be preserved just because an older form is preserved. It may facilitate it: as discussed in 4.1 in Chapter 4, it is often the case that Kriol words with Australian etymology also have Australian meanings. But speakers are always free to modify the meaning of linguistic forms, and therefore enforcing the use of an older form does not warrant the maintenance of older meanings.

In sum, when concerned about the impact of language shift in terms of what ideas a community can communicate, we should perhaps not be too worried about new forms – they may actually encapsulate ‘traditional’ ideas. Nor should we necessarily assume that using an old form necessarily preserves an older practice

or conceptual category. Old forms usually present the great advantage that they *sound* different, by virtue of which they achieve a lot in the political realm of visibility. When it comes to perpetuating the ideas and values conveyed by the older language, on the other hand, older forms cannot necessarily be trusted, because fortunately they do not prevent speakers from evolving new ideas.

## Notes

- 1 Described by Bolinger (1986:47–50) as the unmarked contour for English.
- 2 This cannot be mistaken with a focus function, which in Dalabon is marked by amplitude and higher pitch as well (Cutfield 2011:59), but the pitch raise is vastly more significant in the compassionate contour.
- 3 [www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/](http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/)
- 4 The examples are available as audio files on xxxxxx
- 5 And are lexically associated with compassion, see the analysis of *sori* and *marrbun* ‘indulge someone with something out of compassion’ in Section 6 of Chapter 4.
- 6 Very little has been published on conventionalized expressive contours in Australian languages so far. Linguists specializing in languages from other parts of the continent report that the Gunwinyguan contour sounds familiar, but it remains unclear whether the exact same form actually occurs elsewhere.
- 7 The speaker who was under 35 y.o. and mastered another Australian language (Kunwinjku) used the contour in compassionate contexts.
- 8 Apart from the one who also knows Kunwinju.
- 9 Although I have not found any literature on the acquisition and performance of highly conventionalized prosodic contours like this one, we know that even simple prosodic features related to information structure can be acquired very late (see Speer & Ito 2009:91).
- 10 With younger speakers, formally successful tokens typically numbered six syllables, and always included initial interjections. Mature Kriol speakers’ prototypical tokens, on the other hand, rarely numbered fewer than eight syllables (around eleven on average), and only one in three started with an interjection.

## 6 Evaluative morphology

### Replacing absent linguistic resources

Following the discussion of prosodic features in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 continues the investigation of expressive resources, now turning to morphology. Morphology is a focal point in the shift from Dalabon to Kriol, because as explained in Chapter 1 (5.3), it crystalizes major contrasts in the respective linguistic architectures of the two languages. While Dalabon is highly polysynthetic (i.e. has a very developed morphology), Kriol – like most creoles and like English – has relatively little. This comes hand-in-hand with significant differences between emotional resources in each language.

For instance, Dalabon encodes moods morphologically, and this includes the apprehensive mood. Expressed as a distinct set of verbal person prefixes (Evans, Merlan & Tukumba 2004:xxx), this mood allows speakers to express fear, apprehension or general dispreference for the event described by a clause (Vuillermet 2018).

(Dalabon) 20100720b\_012\_MT\* 46 [EI]

[What happens if you eat a poisonous plant.]

(1) *Wungarru-do-n.*

APPR:1pl.incl-die-PRS

‘We might die [and that’s bad].’

Unsurprisingly given its morphological make-up, Kriol does not have a set of apprehensive affixes. However, as shown by Angelo and Schultze-Berndt (2016), the same modality with apprehensive semantics is expressed by the free modal particle *bambai* (<Eng. *by-and-by*). In line with its etymology, *bambai* also encodes temporal succession, a common semantic trait of apprehensive markers (Vuillermet 2018). Kriol *bambai* matches the function of the Dalabon apprehensive so well that speakers use it systematically to translate the Dalabon apprehensive mood: the functions fulfilled by morphology in Dalabon are fulfilled by a free word in Kriol. This is illustrated here with (2), which is the speaker’s own Kriol translation of (1). Such translations or pairs of equivalent clauses are frequent across my corpora.

(Kriol) MT\*’s translation of 20100720b\_012\_MT\* 46

(2) *Bambai*                      *wi*                      *dai.*

MOD:SEQ/APPR              1pl              die(:PRS)

‘(Then) we might die [and that’s bad].’

Since the Kriol modal particle *bambai* has been analyzed in some details by Angelo and Schultze-Berndt (2016) – including comparison with Australian Indigenous languages – I will not discuss it further here. Instead, the present chapter explores a more complex case: that of evaluative morphology, where the function of the ‘missing’ morphological resources has not been replaced by one single device in Kriol, but by a range of expressive options.

Evaluative morphology is the label used to refer to morphological devices that express evaluative meanings – whether quantitative (small/large size, amount, duration . . .) or qualitative (good or bad) (Grandi & Körtvélyessy 2015:13). Evaluative morphology displays relatively consistent linguistic and semantic properties extensions cross-linguistically (Jurafsky 1996; Bauer 1997), and with respect to emotions in particular, they typically encode comparable ranges of expressive meanings across languages (Ponsonnet 2018d). Evaluative morphology is particularly interesting in the shift from Dalabon to Kriol, because it is available and overwhelmingly frequent in Dalabon, as expected in a polysynthetic language; but absent in Kriol, as expected in a relatively isolating language.

In this chapter, I will show that the absence of evaluative morphology in Kriol does not necessarily result in obvious differences in what speakers can express compared to Dalabon. Instead, Kriol speakers have developed other linguistic devices, recruited from a diverse range of sources, in order to cover the expressive functions fulfilled by morphological diminutives in Dalabon. Alternative expressive solutions include resources borrowed directly from English (the diminutive and affectionate adjectives *lil* ‘little’ and *ol* ‘old’); resources inspired from typically Australian devices that also exist in Dalabon, with expanded usage (compassionate interjections); morphological resources present in Kriol as well as in other Australian languages, with innovative modulations (reduplication). Equipped with these resources, Kriol speakers can express the range of values covered by morphological diminutives in Dalabon, in comparable contexts. While the exact natures of the resources used to express the same emotions in Kriol and in Dalabon could still make a difference as to the messages conveyed and when they are conveyed, the case shows that linguistic resources are plastic, and that speakers who have shifted to a new lexico-grammatical code are able to develop the tools they need to convey the meanings they want to express.

Dalabon morphological diminutives will be presented in Section 1, including discussion of their meanings and distribution. Section 2 introduces the question of the absence of evaluative affixes in Kriol, and the following sections analyze their functional equivalents. Adjectival diminutives are discussed in Section 3, compassionate interjections in Section 4, and reduplication in Section 5.

## 1. Evaluative morphology in Dalabon

Being polysynthetic, Dalabon is morphologically rich and it is therefore unsurprising that it uses morphology to express evaluation. Two diminutives are attested: a clitic,<sup>1</sup> *=wurd* (etymologically related to the nouns *wurd* ‘female child’ and *wurdurd* ‘child’), and a verbal prefix *yaw-* (related to the adjective/noun *yaw-no*

‘little’). These diminutives are discussed in detail by Ponsonnet (2014a:81–109) (see also Ponsonnet 2015), and the sections below present a summary of this discussion, emphasizing the points that are relevant for the comparison with Kriol. Like in many diminutives across the world’s languages, *=wurd* and *yaw-* have denotational senses, where they respectively qualify age and size (i.e. *=wurd* means ‘young’ and *yaw-* means ‘little’). In addition, they also have expressive values and pragmatic functions. These functions are the same for *=wurd* and for *yaw-*. For convenience, the discussion below focuses on *=wurd* because it is more frequent, but the semantic observations apply to both devices.

Dalabon *=wurd* mostly expresses three types of positive emotions. These are not necessarily disjoint in practice, but can be characterized as follows:

- Affection for someone, like with most diminutives across the world.
- Compassion and related emotions or ‘second-degree compassion’: expressing compassion for someone or expressing endearment when witnessing compassion, i.e. people suffering for each other or providing material support to each other.
- Endearment when witnessing personal, intimate routines.

Affection is the most commonly attested emotional extension for diminutives across the world (Ponsonnet 2018a:23–24), and indeed in Dalabon nouns that designate persons and animals are frequently diminutivized to reflect the speaker’s affection (accounting for about 20% of occurrences in the Dalabon dataset). However, as with the conventionalized prosodic contour described in Chapter 5, the most frequent emotional connotation of Dalabon diminutives in my quantitative dataset is compassion, accounting altogether for about 60% of the tokens. The compassionate contexts in question are reminiscent of those described for the Dalabon conventionalized prosodic contour in 1.2 in Chapter 5. Compassion for someone going through hardship is illustrated in (3), and the speaker’s endearment when witnessing people taking care of each other (or ‘second-degree’ compassion, since taking care of someone is regarded as evidence of compassion) is illustrated in (4).

(Dalabon) 20120713a\_002\_MT\* 174 [TC]

(3) *Wa:h ka-h-rakka-ng=wurd.*

INTJ.surprise 3sg-R-fall-PPFV=DIM

‘Oh, he fell over poor thing.’

MT’s Kriol translation: ‘*Bobala imin boldan.*’

(Dalabon) 20120719a\_001\_MT\* 205 [S&D]

[About the heroine providing daily care for her grandmother.]

(4) *Kanh kirdikird=wurd*

DEM female.human=DIM

*buka-h-naHna-n kakkak-no.*

3sg>3sg.h-R-sec:REDUP-PRS parallel.grandparent-3sg.POSS

look.after

‘This little young woman looks after her grandmother.’

Finally, diminutives are also used when talking about intimate routines (see Ponsonnet 2018a:32–33 about the typological status of this context), i.e. daily habits that one usually enjoys on one's own. In my corpus this represents about 10% of all occurrences,<sup>2</sup> applied for instance with someone listening to music before going to sleep, combing their hair softly and with care, or sitting by a fire alone in the dark as in (5) – a comment on the scene of the movie *Samson and Delilah* (Thornton 2009) illustrated in Fig. 1.

(Dalabon) 20120720\_003\_LB\* 075 [S&D]

- (5) *Mimal ka-h-marnu-rurung* . . .<sup>3</sup>  
 fire 3sg>3-ben-burn:redup:prs  
*Kanb kirdikird=wurd* . . .  
 dem female.human=dim  
 'Her fire is burning for her . . .  
 The little young woman . . .'

Emotional contexts of all three types – compassion, affection and intimate routines – are attested for diminutives in other languages in the world (Ponsonnet 2018a), but affection is often more frequent than compassion, whereas in Dalabon it is compassion that is more frequent. Unlike many diminutives around the world, Dalabon diminutives do not express negative emotions such as contempt (Ponsonnet 2018a:25). Data recently collected on other languages in the same geographical area suggest that the particular three-fold combination of affection, compassion and intimate routines is characteristic of diminutives in this region of Australia, for instance in Rembarrnga and Bininj Gun-wok dialects (Ponsonnet in press).



Figure 6.1 Delilah watching her fire in the night.

In addition, and again like many diminutives around the world, Dalabon diminutives have pragmatic effects. This is typically for minimizing the negative aspect of a situation, as in (6); the proportions of a request ('give me a little bit of . . .'); the speaker's benefits ('I make a little money with this job') etc.

(Dalabon) 20110530\_004\_MT\* 57 [ConvEI]

[As we were sitting in a park recording Dalabon, a police car came around and looped towards us, then turned away again before reaching us.]

- (6) *Kardu ngorr bula-b-kurlhkurhka=wurd.*  
 maybe 1pl.incl 3pl>1-r-visit:redup:prs=dim  
*Yow, bah ngorr bula-b-na-ng.*  
 intj.approb. but 1pl.incl 3pl>1-r-see-ppfv  
*Kardu bala-b-men-yin djehmeng*  
 maybe 3pl-r-ideas-say/do:prs as.if  
 reckon  
*kardu ngungurru-kolh-ngu-n wah.*  
 maybe appr:1pl.incl>3-liquid-eat-prs water/alcohol  
 'It seems that they [the police patrol] are coming a little towards us. Yeah,  
 and they saw us. Perhaps they believe we might be drinking alcohol.'

Diminutives are a prevalent expressive resource in Dalabon. They occur with remarkable frequency in my corpus, which averages a diminutive every six minutes at least. As discussed in 3.3 in Chapter 3, my corpus is nearly exclusively focused on female speech, and it is likely that male Dalabon speakers used fewer diminutives, but Dalabon diminutives are also attested in male speech (Ponsonnet accepted). In terms of genre, they are not limited to children-oriented contexts, and instead occur in a broad range of narratives and descriptions.

Importantly, the high distributional flexibility of the clitic =*wurd* makes it an ubiquitous expressive tool. =*Wurd* affords a very large range of hosts including at least nouns, verb complexes, adjectives, pronouns, demonstratives, numerals, adverbs and interjections. While nouns and verb complexes (illustrated in the examples above) are the most frequent hosts, it seems that given an adequate semantic context, most word classes can receive the diminutive enclitic. When =*wurd* occurs on animate nouns, it naturally qualifies the referent of this nominal, and the emotional connotations then also relate to this nominal. However, in the relatively frequent case where =*wurd* occurs on a verb complex, its semantic scope is often better interpreted as the entire event. This is the case in (6) above, where the speaker seeks to minimize the negative dimension of a police check; or in (3) (in Section 1), where the diminutive is a response to the character's fall rather than an appreciation of the character himself. The same observations apply to the verbal *yaww*-, which occurs only in verb complexes. Thus, the distributional flexibility of Dalabon diminutives correlates with semantic flexibility, and these properties explain their prevalence in Dalabon speech.

Note, however, that contrary to many languages across the world, Dalabon speakers do not accumulate a large number of diminutives within the same sentence. Occasionally, two entities within the same NP can both be diminutivized,

for instance *biyi=wurd* ‘little boy’ and *kirdird=wurd* ‘little girl’, but this is relatively rare. My corpus contains no occurrence of two diminutivized NPs in the same clause, although this is well attested in many other languages across the world (e.g. Dutch ‘*Het broertje en zusje spelen met de treintjes en autootjes.*’, ‘The little brother and the little sister are playing with the little trains and little cars.’). Nominal and verbal diminutivization do not naturally combine within the same clause either.

Far from being specific to Dalabon, morphological diminutives are also prevalent in neighboring Gunwinyguan languages such as Rembarrnga and Bininj Gun-wok dialects, and among other languages of the family (e.g. Wubuy, Heath 1982:233, 1984:492), and perhaps further (Ponsonnet & Evans 2015). My data for Bininj Gun-wok dialects and Rembarrnga suggest that the particular three-fold combination of affection, compassion and intimate routines is characteristic of diminutives in this region of Australia (Ponsonnet accepted). Diminutives are also attested in some other languages in the rest of the continent (albeit the details of their semantics are rarely known), but known to be absent in others.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Functional equivalents in Kriol

As is typical for a creole language, Kriol is relatively isolating, i.e. does not have a very large amount of morphology, and unsurprisingly does not have a morphological diminutive.<sup>5</sup> In other words, one of the expressive resources that is the most widespread in Dalabon is absent in Kriol. What are the consequences of this mismatch? Are the expressive functions covered by Dalabon affective suffixes ‘dropped’, left unexpressed, in Kriol? As discussed in Chapter 1 (4.2), this is the conclusion reached by Woodbury (1998), who tackled a very comparable question through the lens of the English translations of texts in Cup’ik (Yup’ik Eskimo, Alaska). Cup’ik has a number of affective affixes which – like Dalabon diminutives, or perhaps more – are pervasive and distributionally ubiquitous. English does not offer comparable morphological tools, and Woodbury considers how an experienced bilingual speaker deals with these affixes when translating a Cup’ik text into English. The study reports some attempts to render the flavor of some of the affective affixes using the adjective ‘poor’ in English, but concludes that overall, the semantic and stylistic effects of this adjective do not compare with that of the Cup’ik affixes, either in quantity or in quality. Woodbury’s conclusion is that in spite of the translator’s attempt to innovate and replace the Cup’ik affective affixes by English adjectives, their effect is ultimately ‘lost in translation’.

I have not considered systematic translations of short texts like Woodbury did, but instead broader equivalences between languages and corpora. On this basis, my observations concerning the rendering of Dalabon diminutives into Kriol corroborate Woodbury’s with respect to innovation: Kriol speakers do use some etymologically English forms to cover the meanings and functions of diminutives in Dalabon. However, contrary to Woodbury, I also find that Kriol speakers recruit tools from a range of different sources to innovate a number of resources

that, ultimately, do cover the functions of Dalabon morphological diminutives to a significant extent. By and large, the functions of the Dalabon diminutives are largely mirrored in Kriol.

I have identified three main Kriol linguistic resources that are used in contexts comparable to Dalabon diminutives, and each of them has a different type of historical source. Kriol speakers make abundant use of lexical diminutives and other evaluative adjectives or adverbs, originally borrowed from English – *lil* and *lilbit* (<Eng. ‘little’, ‘bit’), *ol* (<Eng. ‘old’)) (Section 3). Another very widespread Kriol resource is the compassionate interjection *bobala* (<Eng. ‘poor fellow’), which in spite of its English etymology matches the functions of Dalabon/Australian interjections (Section 4). Finally, Kriol reduplication also fulfills some of the functions of the Dalabon diminutives – a function matching that of Dalabon reduplication itself, albeit further developed in Kriol (Section 5).

### 3. Lexical diminutives

In many languages – starting with English (Schneider 2003) – lexical diminutives fulfill similar roles to morphological diminutives in the languages that have them. In Kriol, the adjective *lil* (<Eng. ‘little’) is an obvious candidate for functional equivalence with Dalabon morphological diminutives. While Kriol does not offer a clear neutral synonym like English does with *small* (Schneider 2003:126–127), there are other, less marked ways to express small size (e.g. adjective *shot* ‘short’ for height), and *lil* is the only one to attract emotional connotations. These emotional connotations are illustrated in (7), where *lil* is used to describe the same character in the same scene of the same movie where the same speaker used a morphological diminutive in Dalabon two years earlier (example (4), Section 1).

(Kriol) 20140409a\_003\_TM\_LB\* 008 (LB\*) [S&D]

- (7) *Dat lil yanggerl.*  
 DET DIM young.woman  
*Im meig-im-bat faya. Ba im nena.*  
 3sg make-TR-CONT fire DAT 3sg.POSS grandmother  
 ‘This little young woman. She’s making fire. For her grandmother.’

Both the prosodic pattern and the distribution of *lil* confirm that it is not an affix or clitic but an independent word. Like many Kriol adjectives, *lil* is predominantly used as a modifier of nouns, and can also be used predicatively (in which case it is obligatorily followed by the particle *wan*, like other Kriol adjectives). *Lil* occasionally reduplicates (e.g. *im lilil but* ‘his tiny little shoes (of a child)’), which is also a standard property for Kriol adjectives.<sup>6</sup>

#### 3.1 Affection

Like its English etymon *little* (Schneider 2003:131–134), Kriol *lil* frequently expresses affection and endearment for persons and things, which are also



Figure 6.1 Delilah watching her fire in the night.

salient emotional values for the diminutives in Dalabon. In (8), *lil* qualifies a teddy bear that a character on a video is nursing like a baby, as well as the teddy bear's body parts and belongings. The diminutivization of body parts and belongings of small and/or endearing animate referents seems acceptable in English (although not listed among the main functions of *little* by Schneider (2003:131–134)), and is well attested with =*wurd* in Dalabon, but seems even more frequent in Kriol.

(Kriol) 20140328c\_002\_AA\_IA 078 (IA) [Stim]

- (8) *Im lukinad-bat dat lil tedibe*  
 3sg look-CONT DET DIM teddy.bear  
*im-in bagim-bat na im,*  
 3sg-PST hug-CONT LOC/ALL 3sg  
*tatjim-bat na im, lil wuli-wan, meik im ladan.*  
 touch-CONT LOC/ALL 3sg DIM wooly-SHIFT make 3sg lay.down  
*Im-in nes-im im, holum ba im lil irruwul, bingga,*  
 3sg-PST nurse-TR 3sg hold DAT 3sg DIM ear finger  
*lil tjet ba im.*  
 DIM shirt DAT 3sg  
 'She's looking at the little teddy bear, patting him, little soft one, make him lay down. She was nursing him, touching his little ears, hands, his little shirt.'

*Lil* forms lexicalized single-word compounds with some of its most frequent heads: *lilboi* 'little boy', *lilgel* 'little girl', which speakers pronounce as a single

word (as evident from the stress pattern; see Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994:114ff; Schneider 2003:129 for comparable patterns in English). The high frequency of these diminutivized expressions matches English as well as Dalabon, where the compound *wurdurd*=*wurd* ‘child’+DIM is particularly frequent.

In Kriol, *lil* does sometimes qualify people who are not young (see for instance example (22) in 6.2, Chapter 4), while =*wurd* in Dalabon hardly ever does (Ponsonnet 2014a:92). Yet, in such contexts, Kriol speakers more often express affection and respect using the adjective *ol* ‘old’, which also matches the English usage (Schneider 2003:134–135).

(Kriol) 20140325b\_001 LB\* 39 [Narr]

- (9) *Olmen ol Sandy Wilika, dei bin ged-im.*  
 old.man DIM proper.name 3pl PST get-TR  
 ‘Old man, old Sandy Wilika [community elder], they’d asked him [to act as Father Christmas].’

### 3.2 *Intimate routines*

Like Dalabon diminutives, *lil* is well attested in descriptions of intimate spaces and routines. In (10), the speaker is commenting on *Samson & Delilah*’s female character’s personal evening habit (listening to music in her car). This is the same character as in example (4) in Section 1, whose evening habits were also described using a diminutive in Dalabon. Like the affectionate context presented earlier, this context would also be acceptable for *little* in English.

(Kriol) 20140409a\_003\_TM\_LB\* 081 (LB\*) [S&D]

- (10) *Bla im myusik, im lil-wan,*  
 DAT 3sg music 3sg little-SHIFT  
*dat lil spenish myusik bla im . . .*  
 DET DIM spanish music DAT 3sg  
*Nanga murdega.*  
 LOC car  
 ‘As for her music, it’s low, her little Spanish music. . . . Inside her car.’

### 3.3 *Compassion*

The diminutive adjective *lil* occasionally endorses compassionate connotations, however this usually occurred in association with other functions. For instance, the diminutive qualification of shared intimate spaces combined with the expression of endearment when witnessing people supporting each other (second degree compassion; see also (3) in Section 7). This is articulated explicitly in the following example, where the speakers explain why the children in *Rabbit-proof Fence* prefer to sleep in the same bed in the dorm:

(Kriol) 20140407a\_000\_MJ\*\_QB\* 106 [RPF]

- (11) MJ *Dei yujuli slip nanga lil bampi en . . .*  
           3pl usually slip LOC DIM humpy and  
       QB *Oletam tugetha. Tugethanes.*  
           all.the.time together togetherness  
       ‘MJ They usually sleep in little humpies and. . .  
       QB Always together. Togetherness.’

On the other hand, strict compassion – feeling sorry for someone – which is the most prominent emotional value of Dalabon diminutives, is only marginally attested for the Kriol expressive adjectives *lil* and *ol*. *Ol* does have occasional compassionate connotations, but these are usually pragmatically derived from the age of the referent (see 2.2 in Chapter 5). As for *lil*, compassionate occurrences are only occasional in my corpus, and limited to speakers who are also fluent in Dalabon, as illustrated in (12). As with conventionalized contours (Chapter 5), the prototypical compassionate use of diminutives is not perpetuated by younger speakers, whose use of *lil* seems more aligned with the English *little*.

(Kriol) 20140408a\_001\_LB\* 018 [Stim]

[Realized with a compassionate contour; the character is neither a child nor an old person.]

- (12) *En im luk se:d bala*  
       and 3sg look sad INTJ.COMP  
       *dat lil feis bla im . . .*  
       DET DIM face DAT 3sg  
       ‘And she looks sad poor thing, her poor little face. . .’

Indeed, compassionate contexts are not very natural for *little* in English either, where the adjective *poor* or the combination *poor little* are preferred (Schneider 2003:123). There is no adjective equivalent to *poor* in this sense in Kriol, but this English adjective is the etymological source of the compassionate interjections *bobala* and *bala* (<Eng. ‘poor fellow’), discussed in Section 4 (see also 5.1 in Chapter 4).

### 3.4 Distribution

Apart from this divergence in semantics – the backgrounding of compassionate connotations – another important difference between *lil* in Kriol and Dalabon morphological diminutives is their respective distribution – i.e. the range of parts of speech they interact with, their frequency etc. *Lil* is frequent on nouns, and as illustrated in (8) above (3.1) it may spread quite pervasively to several nouns in the same utterance – which does not occur with Dalabon morphological diminutives (Section 1). On the other hand, in Dalabon *=wurd* is not limited to nouns, but can also occur on most other parts of speech and is relatively frequent on verb complexes (see Section 1 as well as Ponsonnet 2014a:81–82; Ponsonnet

accepted). In addition, the verbal prefix *yaw-* also occurs on verb complexes. Altogether, Dalabon is well equipped to diminutivize all sorts of nominal and verbal phrases. The Kriol adjective *lil*, on the other hand, does not afford the same distributional flexibility. As a diminutive adjective, *lil* can only modify nouns<sup>7</sup> (and so does *ol* ‘old’). With verbs and predicative adjectives, Kriol speakers use the adverbial *lilbit* ‘a little bit’, and like in many languages this diminutive adverb fulfills pragmatic minimizing functions comparable to those attested for Dalabon diminutives (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994; Schneider 2003:37–54). In (13), *lilbit* minimizes the negative aspect of the event described by the predicative adjective. Yet, *lilbit* does not express emotional values like *=wurd* does when encliticized to verb complexes in Dalabon (see (3) in Section 1).

(Kriol) 20140325a\_000\_QB\* 822 [Narr]

- (13) *Bikos imin sabi laik mi lilbit med-wan*  
 because 3sg-PST know CONJ 1sg a.little.bit hot.tempered-SHIFT  
 ‘Because he knew that I was like, a bit uncontrollable.’

### 3.5 *Mismatches*

Overall, the Kriol adjectives *lil* and *ol*, and adverb *lilbit*, resemble their English etymon more closely than Dalabon morphological diminutives, especially in younger speakers’ speech. The Kriol and Dalabon diminutives share the functions of expressing affection and pragmatic minimization, but this leaves out the main function of Dalabon morphological diminutives: expressing compassion. Mostly, *lil* fulfills those of the functions of the Dalabon diminutives that overlap with the English lexical diminutive. Besides, given their grammatical nature and properties, *lil* and *ol* can only express emotions relative to the referents of nouns (and the adverbial *lilbit* does not have emotional values). Dalabon morphological diminutives, on the other hand, do frequently endorse emotional values when they occur on verb complexes. This enables them to express compassion as well as other emotions with respect to events rather than targeting a specific participant, and generally makes their expressive functions much more flexible and ubiquitous. As I will now show, in order to express compassion in a broader range of contexts, Kriol speakers rely upon linguistic resources less directly sourced from English, namely compassionate interjection and reduplication.

## 4. Compassionate interjections

### 4.1 *Convergence in semantics*

Across generations, the primary resources recruited by Kriol speakers to express compassion are the interjections *bobala* and its abridged form *bala* (<Eng. ‘poor fellow’), which, as discussed in 5.1 in Chapter 4, are semantically akin to interjections found in Dalabon and other Australian languages. The compassionate

meaning of these Kriol interjections is illustrated in (14), a comment on a scene of the movie *Rabbit-proof Fence* (Noyce 2002), where a grandmother is hitting herself on the head with a stone<sup>8</sup> after her three granddaughters have been forcibly taken away from her. Of all the stimuli I used in elicitation, this was one of the scenes that attracted the most expressive resources across speakers and languages. Here, in addition to the interjection, the speaker uses the conventionalized contour described in Chapter 5, and the affectionate adjective *ol* (3.1) also adds to the expressive tone.

(Kriol) 20140407a\_000\_MJ\*\_QB\* 045 (MJ\*) [RPF]

- (14) *Ol nena-wan bala im kil-im-bat mijelb ba olebat!*  
 old grandmother-RLTN INTJ.comp 3sg hit/kill-TR-CONT RR DAT 3pl  
 ‘The old grandmother poor thing, she is hitting herself for them!’

I have not been able to identify any semantic or distributional nuance between *bobala* and *bala*. Young speakers use *bala* more than *bobala*, which suggests that the shorter form is replacing the longer one.

#### 4.2 Convergence in distribution

Both forms are distributionally flexible, with frequent occurrences at the beginning and end of clauses (15), but also clause-internal occurrences (14). Given this flexibility, the scope of these interjections can be either an individual participant, or an entire event. The former is illustrated in (14) above, where *bala* belongs to the same intonational phrase as *ol nena wan* ‘the old grandmother’, in line with the fact that this participant is the object of compassion. In (15) on the other hand, the interjections frame the utterance at each end, thus spreading their expressive value upon the whole clause and the event it describes. This degree of flexibility compares with that of morphological diminutives in Dalabon, which can occur on most parts of speech and are frequent on verb complexes, where they expressively color entire event descriptions (Section 1). While the doubling of *(bo)bala* to frame an utterance at its beginning and end is well attested, the co-occurrence of more than two tokens within a single utterance is not attested in my data.

(Kriol) 20140406a\_002\_MJ\* 33 [RPF]

- (15) *Oh bobala garra ole kat na im fut bala.*  
 INTJ.excl INTJ.comp with DET cut LOC 3sg.POSS foot INTJ.comp  
 ‘Oh dear, with all the cuts in her foot poor thing.’

The interjection *(bo)bala* has very high frequency in Kriol, with more than one occurrence every two minutes in the emotion-focused dataset (Chapter 3, 3.3). This is more frequent than both Dalabon morphological diminutives and Dalabon compassionate interjections (Ponsonnet 2014a:109–126) in the Dalabon

dataset, where I found one diminutive every five or six minutes, and one compassionate interjection every four minutes. Remarkably, the frequency of diminutives and compassionate interjections combined in the Dalabon dataset is very comparable to the frequency of compassionate interjections alone in the Kriol dataset (one every 1.51 and 1.61 minutes respectively). This supports the hypothesis that compassionate interjections fulfill the same expressive functions in Kriol as morphological diminutives in Dalabon. In line with this observation, bilingual speakers typically use *(bo)bala* when prompted to translate Dalabon utterances featuring *=wurd*, as illustrated with example (3) (repeated from Section 1 for convenience).

(Dalabon) 20120713a\_002\_MT\* 174 [TC]

- (3) *Wa:h*                      *ka-b-rakka-ng=wurd*.  
 INTJ.surprise      3sg-R-fall-PPFV=DIM  
 MT's Kriol translation: *Bobala*              *im-in*              *boldan*.  
    INTJ.comp      3sg-PST      fall  
 'Oh, he fell over poor thing.'

#### 4.3 Possible divergence?

Being syntactically mobile yet typically restricted to a maximum of two occurrences in the same utterance, Kriol compassionate interjections share the same distributional properties as Dalabon morphological diminutives. Yet, cross-linguistically interjections and morphological diminutives do not behave in the same way. In particular, interjections are more flexible than morphological diminutives to the extent that they can form single-word utterances – which morphological diminutives cannot do, tight as they are to the overt expression of their heads (Grandi & Körtvélyessy 2015:13). As a result, an interjection can express the speaker's stance about someone or something without mentioning them, whereas with diminutives, the expression of the speaker's emotional attitude can only be a side comment added to a description of what triggers the emotion. In this sense, interjections can do something that diminutives cannot do. It is conceivable that as Sidnell and Enfield (2012:320) have argued, such a relatively subtle difference in the linguistic devices languages offer or favor can cumulate to become significant. This could be quantified in future research by measuring how interjections and diminutives respectively support the transmission of emotional perspectives along communication chains where a number of speakers have to retell the same story one after the other (Bebbington et al. 2017; Fay et al. 2018).

Irrespective of what such a study may reveal, the absence of diminutives in Kriol is not very likely to result in much functional difference with Dalabon, because both languages have interjections, i.e. both have tools to form single-word utterances. In other words, Kriol and Dalabon both feature tools that cover a comparable range of functions when it comes to expressing compassion, irrespective

of the absence of morphological diminutives in Kriol. The frequency of compassionate interjections in Kriol corroborates that indeed, they occur in contexts where diminutives may have been used in Dalabon: Kriol speakers respond to the absence of morphological diminutives in their language by using compassionate interjections more extensively. That is, the functions of diminutives are largely covered by extending the use of a device that is also found, with similar functions, in Dalabon – as in many Australian languages.

## 5. Reduplication

A third device used by Kriol speakers to ‘replace’ Dalabon morphological diminutives is reduplication. Like compassionate interjections, reduplication occurs in Dalabon as well, with some expressive connotations – but Kriol reduplication extends to expressive functions and patterns that are not attested for Dalabon reduplication.

Reduplication and morphological diminutives are traditionally grouped together as evaluative morphology – i.e. morphological devices with evaluative semantics (Schneider 2003:7; Grandi & Körtvélyessy 2015). Indeed, Moravcsik’s (1978) early typology of reduplication mentions augmentation of quantity<sup>9</sup> (1978:317) as well as diminution or attenuation (1978:322) among the most typologically prevalent functions of reduplication. In addition, and although this dimension has attracted less attention, in many languages reduplication also has expressive values (Moravcsik 1978; Morgenstern & Michaud 2007; Dingemanse 2015; Kallergi 2015; Kouwenberg & LaCharité 2015; Ponsonnet 2018a). While creole languages are typically poor in affixes and clitics, many of them do feature productive reduplication (Kouwenberg 2003), so that this is often the only type of evaluative morphology a creole has – as is indeed the case in Kriol.

Kriol reduplication applies primarily to adjectives and verbs (together labelled verbal reduplication, 5.1); but also to some extent to nouns (nominal reduplication, 5.2).<sup>10</sup> The expressive functions of Kriol reduplication are attested with all word classes. Verbal reduplication is primarily aspectual with *some* expressive connotations, but with nominal reduplication expressive values are prevalent. The respective expressive connotations of Kriol and Dalabon verbal reduplication are semantically comparable, albeit somewhat more limited in Dalabon. But the main difference is with nominal reduplication: in Kriol, it is (semi-) productive and primarily expressive; Dalabon nouns, on the other hand, do not reduplicate productively. Expressive nominal reduplication is in fact rare in Australian languages more generally, and seems partly innovative in Kriol.

### 5.1 Verbal reduplication

In line with many of the languages accounted for in Fabricius’s (1998:136ff) typological study of reduplication in Australian languages, Kriol verbal reduplication primarily encodes aspectual values – namely, continuous aspect. In addition,

the aspectual usage has expressive connotations. In this section, I discuss the distribution of Kriol verbal reduplication and show that speakers use it more frequently when talking about (or with) endearing children (see Morgerstein and Michaud (2007) on the pragmatic association of reduplication with children), and when compassion is involved – which matches the functions of morphological diminutives in Dalabon (see Ponsonnet (2018a) for a more detailed discussion).

### 5.1.1 *Aspectual meanings and distribution*

Kriol verbal reduplication is primarily a marker of atelicity (Ponsonnet 2018a:236–242), as illustrated by the contrast between (16), where a simple ‘for’ describes a telic event; and (17), where a reduplicated ‘for’ describes an atelic event. Reduplication usually describes durative events, but habitual events are not excluded.<sup>11</sup> In many instances, reduplication may be intended to emphasize that the event lasted for a relatively long time, but this is a connotation rather than a strict semantic value, as there are many examples where this interpretation does not apply.

(Kriol) 20140328b\_001\_AA 51 [Stim]

- (16) *Madi ai gobak en tok na im [ . . . ].*  
 maybe 1sg return and talk LOC 3sg  
 ‘I might go back and talk to him [ . . . ].’

(Kriol) 20140409a\_001\_TM\_LB\* 007 (LB\*) [S&D]

[The characters are slowly walking back home.]

- (17) *Tubala gobakgobak la kemp na.*  
 3du return:REDUP LOC home EMPH  
 ‘They (two) are going back home now.’

The atelicity of an event, however, is a necessary but insufficient condition for using reduplication: there are a plethora of contexts that are potentially compatible with atelicity, in which reduplication does not occur. Firstly, although verbal reduplication is relatively productive in Kriol, there are some lexical restrictions. At the phonological level, words that start with an open syllable or have more than two syllables never reduplicate. At the semantic/syntactic level, only intransitive predicates can reduplicate (i.e. intransitive verbs and adjectives). Besides, even among the verbs that match these constraints, some reduplicate much more frequently than others. Altogether, although verbal reduplication is very frequent in Kriol speech, in my corpus less than two dozen predicates reduplicate regularly. In addition, there are also grammatical restrictions. For instance, reduplication is not accepted in serial clauses with *meik* ‘make’ (*yu bin meik im krai* ‘you made him cry’, not \**yu bin meik im kraikrai*).

Finally, even when a lexically reduplicable predicate occurs in the adequate grammatical and semantic context, not all descriptions of atelic events attract reduplicated predicates. Reduplication is most frequent on predicates that are

atelic by default (states and activities), where it is semantically redundant: it simply flags an atelic reading that is already available with the simple predicate. This is evident in (18), where the predicate occurs in both simple and reduplicated forms to denote a single atelic event in progress. This shows that speakers' choice to use reduplication must be motivated by other parameters than the atelicity of the event.

(Kriol) 20140406a\_001\_MJ\* 060 (DB\*) [RPF]

- (18) *Dem ran na bala,*  
 3pl run EMPH INTJ.endear  
*yu luk bala dei ranran!*  
 2sg look INTJ.endear 3pl run:REDUP  
 'They're running there oh no, look poor things they are running!'

The need for additional motivations is all the more significant in that Kriol actually offers several alternative morphological options to express atelicity, namely the verbal suffixes *-bat* and *-ing* (Sandefur 1979:119–121; Ponsonnet 2018a:240–242). The suffix *-ing*, which is somewhat acrolectal, is neither frequent nor fully productive. The suffix *-bat*, on the other hand, is more productive and more frequent than reduplication. While reduplication is subject to many lexical and grammatical constraints, *-bat* can occur on most verbs and adjectives, as illustrated in (19) with the transitive verb *stilim* 'steal' (which would resist reduplication, being transitive). The suffix *-bat* is the most frequent way to express or emphasize that an event is atelic.<sup>12</sup>

(Kriol) 20150819a\_000\_BB\_JBe 243 (BB) [El]

- (19) *Im-in go la jeil bikos im-in stil-im-bat oldei.*  
 3sg-PST go LOC jail because 3sg-PST steal-TR-CONT all.the.time  
 'He went to jail because he kept stealing all the time.'

Thus, when choosing whether to use reduplication, Kriol speakers usually face several alternatives. They may choose to simply not use reduplication when it is redundant (and use a simple predicate), or select another of the multiple constructions that encode atelicity.

### 5.1.2 Expressive connotations

With some predicates at least, there are indications that speakers' choice to use reduplication is partly governed by the pragmatic context and its emotional coloring, so that reduplication connotes some of the values covered by Dalabon morphological diminutives. The association of reduplication with children is a widespread phenomenon – presumably because reduplicated forms may be evocative of early linguistic productions by infants (Morgenstern & Michaud 2007). In line with this trend, a significant proportion of the verbs that frequently reduplicate in my Kriol corpus denote potentially endearing activities

typically undertaken by children, or associated with children in adults' perceptions: for instance *bogi* 'swim, bath', *krai* 'cry', *kraul* 'crawl' (of baby), *plei* 'play', *ran* 'run', *slip* 'sleep', *wardu* 'rock a baby', *kis* 'kiss', *sheim* adj. 'be shy'. With at least some of these verbs, the use of reduplication is favored both by the presence of children, thus connoting endearment, and by contexts that elicit compassion and endearment when witnessing compassion (people caring for each other, see 5.1 in Chapter 4). Both these contexts are covered by morphological diminutives in Dalabon (see Ponsonnet (2018a:243–255) for more detailed discussions).

*Ran* 'run', for instance, which is atelic by default, occurred 48 times in my entire corpus<sup>13</sup> to discuss diverse people and animals, including 24 occurrences where reduplication would have been grammatically and semantically acceptable. The verb was effectively reduplicated nine times. All of these tokens described children, and six of them (or two-thirds) involved a child or children in a dire situation likely to elicit the speaker's compassion. By contrast, many of the tokens that were not reduplicated did not involve children, and less than half occurred in contexts compatible with compassion. In addition, several of the reduplicated tokens occurred in response to particularly distressing situations, and correlated with other expressive prosodic features (e.g. compassionate interjections, Section 4 above and 5.1 in Chapter 4). For instance, reduplicated forms of *ran* occurred several times in speakers' comments on the movie *Rabbit-proof Fence* (Noyce 2002). In (20), the speaker comments on the young heroines (~6 to 13 y.o.) fleeing away from a nasty place. This is a context where morphological diminutives were used in Dalabon, as illustrated in (21), which also features reduplication<sup>14</sup> and attracted a compassionate prosodic contour as well (Chapter 5).

(Kriol) 20140406a\_001\_MJ\* 060 (DB\*) [RPF]

[Addressing her ~18-month-old daughter, with emotional intonation contours and some articulatory features of baby talk.]

- (20) *Dem ran na bala,*  
       3pl run EMPH INTJ.endear  
*yu luk bala dei ranran!*  
       2sg look INTJ.endear 3pl run:REDUP  
       'They're running there oh no, look poor things they are running!'

(Dalabon) 20120721\_001\_LB\* 02 [RPF]

- (21) *Bala-b-yaw-kurllkurl-mu bala-b-yaw-wurdiwurdi.*  
       3pl-R-DIM-run-PRS 3pl-R-DIM-run.away:REDUP  
       'They're running poor things, oh dear they're running away.'

Comparable observations apply with the verb *slip* 'sleep', which occurred 115 times in the entire corpus to describe sleeping activities in all sorts of contexts,

where either adults or children were sleeping. Of these, 51 occurrences qualified semantically and grammatically for reduplication, and *slip* was effectively reduplicated 7 times. All these occurrences but one involved children either as participants to the event described (usually, the sleepers), and/or as addressees. The one occurrence that did not involve children was a negative imperative, a context in which reduplication is prevalent.<sup>15</sup> In addition, four of the seven reduplicated tokens of *slip* occurred in a context where a morphological diminutive would be expected in Dalabon: three when the sleeping children were in dire situations – indexing compassion – and supporting each other in these situations – indexing endearment when witnessing compassion – and one describing a little boy sleeping with his pet dog. Non-reduplicated occurrences did also feature these contexts, albeit in lesser proportion (less than half), and described events where the emotional coloring was less clear. Like with *ran* ‘run’, reduplication of *slip* ‘sleep’ often co-occurred with other expressive features, sometimes combining with conventionalized compassionate contours (Chapter 5) and/or compassionate interjections (Section 4 above, 5.1 in Chapter 4). In (22), also a comment on *Rabbit-proof Fence*, the speaker describes children who have been forcibly taken away from their family and sleep in a dormitory away from home. She combines a compassionate interjection, a prototypically compassionate prosodic contour, and a reduplicated verb. Example (23) is a Dalabon comment by the same speaker on the same children, also sleeping together in a dire situation, and featuring a diminutive along with a compassionate prosodic contour.

(Kriol) 20140329b\_001\_LB\* 050 [RPF]

- (22) *Bobala, dei ol slipslip na,*  
 INTJ.comp 3pl all sleep:REDUP EMPH  
*langa bed im-in naitaim bla olebat . . .*  
 LOC bed 3sg-PST night DAT 3pl  
*La dat hom na.*  
 LOC DET orphanage EMPH  
 ‘Oh poor things, they’re all sleeping, they’re in bed, night has fallen on them, in this orphanage there.’

(Dalabon) 20120721\_001\_LB\* 15 [RPF]

- (23) *Bala-b-yaw-njengu:yu . . . Mimal-dih!*  
 3pl-R-DIM-sleep:PRS fire-PRIV  
 ‘They’re sleeping nicely. . . Without a fire!’

These expressive motivations associated with the use of verbs like *ran* ‘run’ or *slip* ‘sleep’ do not govern or explain the entire distribution of reduplication in discourse for all predicates. The figures suggest tendencies rather than strict preferences, and although the trends are relatively clear, but these would require a very extensive corpus to be confirmed statistically. In other words,

Kriol reduplication yields expressive connotations rather than full-fledged expressive semantic content, but as shown in the examples above, this nevertheless contributes to functional equivalence between Kriol reduplication and Dalabon diminutives.

Dalabon verbal reduplication has some expressive connotations as well, however these seem less prevalent than in Kriol. Dalabon reduplication is also limited to certain verbs, but the set of verbs that reduplicate, and the principles that define this set, differ from Kriol.<sup>16</sup> As a result, it occurs with few of the children-oriented activities which attracted expressive reduplication in Kriol, such as running or sleeping, and the verbs that frequently reduplicate in Dalabon are not very conducive to expressive connotations. Quantification is difficult given a low number of comparable tokens in each language, but in Kriol the expressive connotations of reduplication are easily detectable from qualitative inspection, while this is hardly the case in Dalabon. In addition, the expressive connotations are even clearer in Kriol with nominal reduplication.

## 5.2 *Nominal reduplication*

As in other Australian languages, Kriol reduplication is predominantly verbal, and nominal reduplication has relatively low incidence in my corpus. Nevertheless, contrary to what we observe in Dalabon, it is not strictly lexical: Kriol nominal reduplication enjoys some degree of productivity, particularly with nouns referring to humans and other animates. Kriol nominal reduplication does not encode plural or increase in quantity: it is not quantitative but purely qualitative, either expressing affection, or flagging “pretense” activities in the context of games and imitations. This “pretense” function of nominal reduplication (which was relatively rare in my corpus) will not be discussed here (but see Ponsonnet 2018a:234–235). It does not match a typical function of diminutives, but is reported for reduplication in other languages (Moravcsik 1978:323), including at least one creole (den Besten, Luijks & Roberge 2003:276) and three Australian languages<sup>17</sup> (Fabricius 1998:103). Here I discuss the affective use of Kriol nominal reduplication, which is also its most common use.

### 5.2.1 *Expressing affection*

Nominal reduplication expresses affection when it occurs on nouns referring to persons or animals – usually pets – where the referent is the object of affection. Example (24) reduplicates a kin term and (25) a proper noun (which is not lexically reduplicated, i.e. the standard form is *Pino*).

(Kriol) 20140327c\_003\_ND\*\_LB\* 10 (ND) [Narr]

- |      |                |             |            |
|------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| (24) | <i>Munlait</i> | <i>taim</i> | <i>tu!</i> |
|      | moon.light     | time        | too        |

*Komon sonson yu labta wok!*  
 come.on son:REDUP 2sg OBLIG walk

‘And the moon was up then! Come on my son you must move on!’

(Kriol) 20140328d\_000\_ABM 122 [Stim]

[Looking at a photo taken eight years earlier, showing a child now in her early teens.]

- (25) ABM *Bala grenpa Philip . . .*  
 INTJ.ender grandfather proper.name  
 MP: *En lil Pino.*  
 and little proper.name  
 ABM *Garra lil Pinopino tu . . .*  
 COM little proper.name:REDUP too  
 ‘ABM: Oh, grandpa Philip. . .  
 MP: And little Pino.  
 ABM: With little Pinopino too. . .’

Affective reduplication also occurred on some common nouns, typically when referring to endearing animals, with a few animal nouns affording optional reduplication. This is illustrated in (26) with *frogfrog* vs *frog* for ‘frog’, in direct reported speech from a little boy looking for his beloved pet frog (*Frog, where are you?* picture task, see 3.2 in Chapter 3).

(Kriol) 20140407a\_006\_MJ\*\_QB\*S 016 (MJ\*) [Stim]

- (26) *Wujei main frogfrog bobala?*  
 where 1sg.POSS frog.REDUP INTJ.comp  
 ‘Oh no, where’s my little frog?’

These affective uses of nominal reduplication in Kriol compare with that of diminutives, and in fact often combine with adjectival diminutives: in *Frog Where Are You?* narratives, where reduplication was overwhelmingly frequent on the three main protagonists (the child, his pet dog, his pet frog), Kriol speakers used alternatively *lil frog*, *frogfrog* and *lil frogfrog*, for instance. In the Dalabon version recorded for this narrative, the frog was often referred to as *djahdi=wurd*, ‘frog’+DIM.

### 5.2.2 Pragmatic attenuation

Occasionally, the affective dimension of reduplication combined with pragmatic attenuation, as is also observed with diminutives. In (27), the reduplication of a noun referring to a child’s body part conveys affection, thus softening the reprimand. This effect correlates with an effect of pragmatic attenuation observed

with verbal reduplication in imperatives (e.g. *yu pleiplei*, ‘you go and play’, *nomo sheimsheim* ‘don’t be shy’, see Ponsonnet (2018a:235–236)), which is also a typical effect of diminutives.

(Kriol) 20140407b\_000 034 [ConvEI]

[A 30-year-old mother yelling at her son who insists on sitting on her lap while she is working on a transcription with the author. She is very loud and sounds infuriated in the first line; milder in the second line; and soft in the third line. She concludes her statement with a reduplicated noun that sounds like an afterthought.]

- (27) *Mah guwei wi nomo wandi nesim-bat katjinga!*  
 INTJ.const go.away 1pl NEG want cuddle-CONT INTJ.dissat  
*Stop sidan-bat na wi lap yu got yu on . . .*  
 stop sit/be-CONT LOC 1pl.POSS lap 2sg have 2sg.POSS own  
*Yu got yu on bam tu sidan. Bambam . . .*  
 2sg have 2sg.POSS own bum PURP sit/be bum:REDUP  
 ‘[loud and infuriated] Now go away, we don’t want to cuddle you for God’s sake! [milder] Stop sitting on our laps, you have your own. . . . [soft] You have your own bum to sit on. Your little bum.’

Affection and pragmatic attenuation mediated by endearment are among common expressive values of morphological diminutives in Dalabon (Section 1). To that extent, here again reduplication provides Kriol speakers with morphological means to express some of the expressive values that would be expressed by morphological diminutives in Dalabon.

### 5.2.3 *Trends and innovation*

Although reduplication is a common morphological feature of creoles, Kriol verbal reduplication was most likely influenced by Australian languages: its semantic profile is quite typically Australian (Fabricius 1998:136ff). Kriol nominal reduplication, on the other hand, and more precisely its specialization towards expressive functions, diverges from the most prototypical profiles of Australian reduplication.

Nominal reduplication is rarely very productive in Australian languages, but is instead restricted to humans or sometimes animates (Fabricius 1998:88–102); in terms of its productivity, Kriol nominal reduplication aligns reasonably well with this Australian pattern. Its semantic, on the other hand, is not typically Australian. Kriol nominal reduplication is purely qualitative as opposed to quantitative, i.e. it does not express plural for instance, but focuses on affection. By contrast, in other Australian languages such affective meanings are only marginal, and quantitative meanings are prevalent. Fabricius’s (1998:106) typological study reports such affective meanings for just one language (Arrernte, Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia; Wilkins 1989:147ff) among a 120-language sample, and even then there are other prevalent meanings, including pluralization. Thus,

compared to the Australian trend that Kriol reduplication otherwise follows, the specialization of nominal reduplication toward expressive meanings represents a Kriol innovation. This innovation precisely serves to cover the same functions as morphological diminutives do in Dalabon and other Gunwinyguan languages.

## 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we considered a case where a prominent expressive resource of the lexico-grammatical code used before language shift is no longer available in the new code, after language shift. Mirroring the marked discrepancy between the respective morphological profiles of the two languages in question – Kriol being largely isolating and Dalabon polysynthetic – Dalabon makes extensive use of morphological diminutives, which are not available in Kriol. But far from being ‘lost in translation’, we find that the expressive values of Dalabon morphological diminutives are covered in Kriol by a number of resources.

Kriol speakers do have linguistic resources to express all the contexts covered by Dalabon diminutives – namely affection and endearment, compassion, endearment when witnessing compassion and intimate routines, and pragmatic attenuation. To cover this semantic range, Kriol speakers exploit resources from remarkably diverse origins. Adjectival diminutives with straightforward English etymologies are recruited to express affection and endearment (including in relation with intimate routines) – a value common to Dalabon morphological diminutives and English adjectival diminutives. In addition, some older speakers extend these diminutives to compassionate contexts – although this is not a common trend among younger speakers. The most common way to express compassion in Kriol is via a typically Australian linguistic device: a compassionate interjection (Ponsonnet accepted). While the form of Kriol interjections *bobala* and *bala* is inspired by English words (<Eng. *poor fellow*), the semantic profile of compassionate interjections is typically Australian. Finally, alternative morphological resources are also recruited to express some of the values covered by Dalabon morphological diminutives: the expressive connotations of reduplication, which are hardly detectable in Dalabon, are further exploited in Kriol to express affection as well as compassion, and endearment when witnessing compassion.

It is possible that expressing these semantic categories by means other than morphological diminutives does introduce some subtle differences in communication. For instance, the fact that with morphological diminutives expressive content is necessarily concomitant with the description of someone or something (while interjections can stand as full utterances on their own, thus only expressing the speaker’s evaluation) could make a difference as to the contexts where they are used. Semantic and pragmatic groupings in categories could also introduce differences (see 5.2 in Chapter 1): in Dalabon, the emotional values of endearment, compassion, and related contexts, were all taken charge of by the same morphological devices, while in Kriol they are scattered across several resources of different types. While they probably remain relatively subtle in themselves,

such nuances could generate differences on a broader scale, modifying communication habits on the long term. This remains to be tested in future, experimental research. At the scale of individual interactions, on the other hand, it is hard to articulate how exactly these nuances could create significant differences in communication.

As they continue to express the same contents as their ascendants did with a different language, Kriol speakers seem to develop the linguistic resources they need to do so. This suggests that, as previously observed by Hoffman (2012), Nicholls (2013) and Dickson (2015), the content of discourse is determined by the needs of the speakers' interactional context, rather than by morphosyntactic parameters. In other words, in the case at stake, 'cultural' parameters (lifestyle etc.) determine the lexico-grammatical code, rather than the opposite. Speakers resort to all sorts of possible means to achieve suitable communication: direct borrowings from English, semantic borrowings from Australian languages, expansion of existing resources and innovative semantic extensions in the case of reduplication. This set of strategies demonstrates once again that language is a remarkably plastic and adaptable tool, and that speakers afford a wide range of means to develop resources that express what they wish to express. The nature of the resources and their forms may differ but – at least with respect to a culturally loaded domain like emotions – the language and its lexico-grammatical rules seem to obey speakers' needs to say and express certain things, rather than the opposite.

## Notes

- 1 'Clitic' refers to elements which, like affixes, must attach to other linguistic forms. Clitics and affixes have slightly different properties, but these are not crucial to the present discussion.
- 2 The percentages do not add up to 100% because some tokens occurred in emotionally neutral contexts (see Ponsonnet accepted).
- 3 In this example, the use of the person prefix *buka-*, indexing an agent lower in animacy than its patient, would be expected, but the speaker used *ka-*.
- 4 E.g. Jingulu in the Barkly Tablelands (West Barkly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Pensalfini 2015:416), Yukulka, Lardil and Kayardild near the Gulf of Carpentaria (Pama-Nyungan, Tangkic, Round 2015), Gurindji in the Victoria River District (Pama-Nyungan, Ngumpin-Yapa, McConvell pers.com. Sep 12).
- 5 This can relatively easily be explained based on the constraints on the mechanisms of transfer proposed by Siegel (2007, 2008), which are summarized in 3.2 in Chapter 7. Since English does not have productive diminutive affixes or clitics, the meanings and functions of Australian diminutives had no superstrate form to transfer to (Siegel's (2008:148ff) availability constraint). In addition, Siegel's (2008:148ff) reinforcement principle, which states that the resources present in a larger number of substrate languages tend to transfer, may also have played against the emergence of a diminutive in Kriol, since not all Australian languages have diminutives.
- 6 And is observed with Rembarnga morphological diminutive suffixes as well (Ponsonnet accepted) (but not with Dalabon diminutives).
- 7 Its predicative usage is descriptive rather than evaluative.
- 8 A customary response to grief, see Section 6 in Chapter 4 and Ponsonnet (2018b).
- 9 Oreferents or of events, in the case of aspectual functions.

- 10 Lexically reduplicated forms will not be discussed here, but see Cutfield (2016:2012), Ponsonnet (2018a:233–235).
- 11 Also distributed iteration, in just one, very emotional occurrence in my corpus.
- 12 The suffix *-bat* can also combine with reduplication, so that some inherently atelic predicates like *smail* ‘smile’ offer five possible forms compatible with an atelic reading: the simple form *smail*, the bare reduplicated form *smailsmail*, the suffixed form *smailbat*, the combined form *smailsmailbat*, and another suffixed form *smailing*. The semantic nuances between each of these forms is a question for future research.
- 13 Here I used the entire corpus as the reduced dataset would not have contained enough tokens (and comparison with Dalabon was not needed).
- 14 Note that while *wurdiwurdi* is a genuine grammatical reduplication of *wurdi*(*mu*) ‘run away’, in Dalabon, *kurlkkurl*(*mu*) is the lexical form of the verb ‘run’: \**kurl*(*mu*) does not exist, and the full form *kurlkkurl*(*mu*) does not productively reduplicate either. With Kriol *ran* on the other hand, reduplication is a grammatical process.
- 15 Presumably with pragmatic softening functions, which is also a function of Dalabon morphological diminutives (see Ponsonnet 2018a:235).
- 16 A detailed study of Dalabon reduplication is needed before we can assess why certain verbs reduplicate and others do not.
- 17 Arrernte (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia), Bandjalang (Pama-Nyungan, Bandjalangic, north coast of New South Wales), Yankunytjatjara (Pama-Nyungan, Wati, Western Desert).

## 7 Figurative language

### A difference

We saw in previous chapters that in many respects, Kriol offers tools that allow its speakers to convey the same contents as in Dalabon, often with commensurate packaging. Given the lexical resemblances between Dalabon and Kriol, very comparable messages can be conveyed in both languages (Chapter 4). Where Kriol ‘lacks’ some of the linguistic devices that are widespread in Dalabon – like in the case of diminutives (Chapter 6) – alternative forms are recruited to convey comparable contents, so that the potential impact of language shift on what speakers can say is not immediately evident.

By contrast, in the present chapter I will show that language shift has had a much stronger impact on figurative representations of emotions. Specifically, while Dalabon figurative representations of emotions impose a strong linguistic association between emotions and the body, this association is only marginal in Kriol. This observation will be nuanced in the view of further elements presented in Chapter 8, but for the moment I will explain how and why Kriol compares with English rather than Dalabon (or other Australian languages) with respect to figurative representations of emotions.

In order to set the theoretical background for this chapter and the next, Section 1 introduces some simple notions and definitions about figurative language. Then Section 2 presents an overview of figurative representations of emotions in Dalabon, highlighting the prevalence of the figurative association between emotions and the body in this language. This is only a summary, as these aspects of the Dalabon language are discussed in detail in Ponsonnet (2014a:Chap 7–10). Section 3 considers the realization of the body/emotion association in Kriol, showing how and why it is not nearly as widespread as in Dalabon.

#### 1. Some definitions

Following the now classic definition from cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2000; Kövecses 2002), I use the expression ‘figurative language’ to refer to linguistic expressions that talk about something using a linguistic form that primarily (or ‘literally’) describes something else. For instance, an expression like ‘boiling anger’ describes an anger as a boiling liquid – which, strictly speaking, it is not. The sentence thus instantiates a linguistic

metaphor that we can formalize as *ANGER IS A FLUID* (Kövecses 1995; Geeraerts & Gevaert 2008; Gevaert 2005; Ponsonnet 2017). Linguistic metaphors can relate to conceptual metaphors, i.e. to corresponding representations in the mind of speakers – here, the conceptual comparison between anger and a fluid.

There is no one-to-one association between the linguistic metaphors used in a given language, and the conceptual associations that are relevant or ‘active’ in speakers’ mind. Some linguistic metaphors are so deeply conventionalized that speakers no longer ‘hear’ them: they are ‘frozen’. For instance, when I talk about ‘sitting at the back of the room’ in English, I use a word which also refers to a body part. However, this expression is so linguistically entrenched that using ‘back’ in this way does not activate a representation of the room as an animal with a back. In other cases, however, like with the expression ‘broken-hearted’, conventionalization does not block the conceptual association. This linguistic metaphor is still ‘active’, as is evident for instance from the fact that English speakers are likely to put their hands on their heart when using this collocation (Goatly 1997; Goddard 2004; Ponsonnet 2014a:Chap 7; Enfield 2015b:Chap 3 for further discussion). The evidence for whether a linguistic metaphor is frozen or active is typically para-linguistic (e.g. gestures), metalinguistic (e.g. translations) or extra-linguistic (e.g. artistic representations).

In the following chapters, along with the term ‘metaphor’ I will also be using the term ‘metonymy’. While metaphors associate two things – e.g. anger and a fluid – on the basis of some resemblance between the two, metonymies associate two things on the basis of the proximity or juxtaposition between the two. The juxtaposition can be spatial or temporal, which makes metonymy a very broad concept (see for instance Goossens 1990; Dirven 1993; Radden & Kövecses 1998; Barcelona 2000). Linguistic associations between a whole and its parts, (e.g. talking about ‘wheels’ for a car), an effect and its cause (e.g. ‘a cold’ is the label of the state one is in after having been exposed to cold temperatures) are both metonymies. In the following chapters, I use the word ‘trope’ to refer to figurative expressions in general, including metaphors and metonymies. The distinction between the two is not crucial for the argument being unfolded here, but I will mention nuances for those readers who may be interested.

## 2. The body in Dalabon descriptions of emotions

### 2.1 *Body-based emotional compounds*

As already alluded to in Chapter 4 when discussing the Dalabon emotion lexicon, and as analyzed in details by Ponsonnet (2014a, 2014c), one of the most remarkable features of Dalabon descriptions of emotions is how intertwined they are with descriptions of the body. A large proportion of the verbs and adjectives available to talk about emotions in this language are compound predicates that involve a body part. This is illustrated in (1) with *dalū-yer(mu)* ‘mouth’+‘shy/ashamed’, literally ‘be shy/ashamed from the mouth’, meaning ‘be too shy to

talk'; and in (2) with *kangu-yowyow(mu)* 'belly'+ 'flow:REDUP', literally 'have a flowing belly', meaning 'feel good, be nice'.

(Dalabon) 20111207a\_001\_MT\* 48 [EI]

- (1) *Nunb wurdurd mak dja-marnu-yenjdju-ngiyan delebon-walung [...].*  
 DEM child NEG 3sg>1sg-BEN-talk-FUT telephone-ABL  
*Ka-b-dalu-yer-mu.*  
 3sg-R-mouth-shy.away-PRS  
 too.shy.to.talk  
 'This child won't speak to you over the phone. He's too shy too talk [he's shy from the mouth].'

(Dalabon) 20120706b\_005\_MT\* 095 [ContEI]

- (2) *Delegram buka-b-marnu-burlb-miyan,*  
 message 3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-come.out-FUT  
*mulah-no-kun ka-b-lng-kangu-yowyow-miyan.*  
 mother's.sister-3sg.POSS-GEN 3sg-R-SEQ-belly-flow:REDUP-FUT  
 feel.good  
 'She'll get a message, and she will be pleased [belly-flowing] about her mother's sister.'

Such compounds result from constructions called 'noun incorporation', which have become lexicalized, i.e. have lost their literal meaning to endorse a figurative meaning. Noun incorporation is a grammatical construction whereby nouns are inserted into verbs. This compares to what we observe in a compound like *house-hunting* in English, but English only has a few expressions of this type – whereas in polysynthetic languages like Dalabon, many more noun-verb combinations are valid, and noun incorporation is very frequent in speech. In Dalabon, body-part nouns belong to the most incorporable nominal subclass (Ponsonnet 2015b), and as a result, verb complexes and lexicalized compounds of the form [body part noun+predicate] are overwhelmingly frequent. Many of these compounds relate semantically to emotions, as is the case with *dalu-yer(mu)* 'mouth'+ 'shy/ashamed' (1) and *kangu-yowyow(mu)* 'belly'+ 'flow:REDUP', 'feel good, be nice' (2).

Such lexicalized emotional compounds are always figurative to some extent, i.e. they encapsulate tropes – metonymies or metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2002). However, they can associate emotions with the body in at least two quite different ways. A significant proportion of these [body part noun+predicate] compounds take part in extensive networks of tropes involving elaborate metaphors, which will be discussed in 2.2. Another significant proportion of them, on the other hand, are only secondarily figurative, and instead are better understood as primarily descriptive. For example, *dalu-yer(mu)* 'mouth'+ 'shy/ashamed', 'be too shy to talk', may be interpreted as metonymic, where the mouth is construed as the experiencer of shame, but since this metonymy does not ramify into other tropes, this is not

a very fruitful interpretation. It is more insightful to consider that the compound *dalu-yer(mu)* ‘mouth’+‘shy/ashamed’, ‘be too shy to talk’ relies upon a descriptive association between a given emotion and the body part that is salient in the corresponding behavior – here, the mouth when one is too shy to talk. Another example is *langu-yirru-mun* ‘hand/fingers’+‘be/become angry’ means ‘gesticulating in anger’, where the compound highlights the role of the hands when one gesticulates in anger.

Less than a dozen compounds of this second, less figurative type are fully lexicalized, but the principle is semi-productive, so that speakers can introduce new collocations: for instance, *dje-yirru-mun* ‘face/nose’+‘be/become angry’ for someone with angry facial expression, *mumu-yirru-mun* ‘eyes’+‘be/become angry’ for someone with an angry look etc. The body parts involved in such compounds are mostly visible ones – as opposed to organs – featuring for instance *berru* ‘chest’, associated with emotions experienced via social interactions (especially taboo ones); *kodj* ‘head’, with respect to conjugal interactions (Ponsonnet 2009:20–23); *mud* ‘body hair’ for fear; *mumu* ‘eyes’ for sexual desire; and more. (See Ponsonnet (2014a:Chap 10, 2014c) for a detailed discussion.)

In Dalabon, these descriptive emotional compounds establish a strong linguistic association between emotions and the body parts involved in corresponding emotional behaviors – in other words, between emotions and the body. Such compounds are, however, practically absent from Kriol, and for this reason will not be further discussed here. By contrast, the other type of compounds, which are primarily figurative (like *kangu-yowyow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow:REDUP’, ‘feel good, be nice’), are partly matched in Kriol. Such figurative predicates, and their Kriol counterparts, will be in focus in this chapter, and the Dalabon tropes in question are presented in more detail in the following paragraphs.

## 2.2 Body-based metaphors

*Kangu-yowyow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow:REDUP’, ‘feel good, be nice’ (example (2) above) and other compounds of the same type produce rich networks of emotional tropes in Dalabon. In the case of *kangu-yowyow(mu)*, the metaphor is FEELING GOOD EMOTIONALLY IS LIKE HAVING A FLOWING BELLY, which is a specific instantiation of the more general metaphor FEELING EMOTIONALLY BAD IS LIKE HAVING A HARD BELLY – where flowing is the opposite of hard (see Ponsonnet [2014a:245–248]). Dalabon has at least sixty body-based figurative emotional compounds of this type: more than forty feature *kangu* ‘belly’, and another fifteen or so feature *ngerh* or *ngurlk*, related to the heart. Both sets are organized into conceptually coherent networks of metonymies and metaphors analyzed in details in Ponsonnet (2014a:Chap 8). Here, I present a summary that will help compare with Kriol.

Belly-based compounds typically describe moods and emotions resulting from interpersonal interactions (Ponsonnet 2010c). Many of them metonymically



represents about fifteen figurative body-based emotional compounds. Between belly-based and heart-based compounds, body-based figurative compounds represent at least a third of the c.160 emotion lexemes, if not more (and to this can be added the descriptive compounds presented in 2.1). These compound predicates are ‘lexicalized tropes’, and as such form part of a conventional repertoire of tropes known and available to all Dalabon speakers. Dalabon speakers make little use of ‘free’ tropes,<sup>1</sup> i.e. tropes that are not encapsulated by lexicalized compounds.<sup>2</sup>

As discussed in Section 1, not every trope reflects ‘active’ representations, i.e. representations consciously embraced by speakers; and the best evidence for whether a trope is ‘active’ or ‘frozen’ comes from non-linguistic evidence. There is indeed rich evidence that the conceptual representations reflected in lexicalized body-based compounds in Dalabon are conceptually active for speakers. For instance, speakers often translate these compounds literally into Kriol although there exists no corresponding conventionalized Kriol expression (see Chapter 4); when talking about emotions, gestures can involve the belly (see Chapter 8). Further, there exists a Dalabon ritual designed to control the emotions of infants, that relies almost entirely on the symbolism of the resistance/malleability of the belly, i.e. the most salient belly-based metaphor. Thus, in Dalabon, body-based metonymies and metaphors for emotions are prominent both in linguistic frequency and in conceptual and cultural relevance.

### 2.3 *Emotions and the body in Australia*

Emotional collocations involving body parts are very common across the world’s language: in fact, most languages in the world – if not all – have at least some such expressions (Sharifian et al. 2008; Wierzbicka 1999; Ogarkova 2013:50). However, in Dalabon, the number of body-based compound predicates (and their frequency) makes this feature particularly prominent – about sixty compounds in Dalabon, vs a handful in English (see Kövecses 2000:169–170 for instance). In this respect, Dalabon competes with Southeast Asian languages, where body-based descriptions of emotions are reported to be ‘essential’ and remarkably widespread. Vittrant (2013) studied such expressions in Burmese, and reports fifteen expressions with the liver and thirty with the heart, plus twenty with the foot and the hand – which is commensurable with the Dalabon figures. In addition, Dalabon belly-based emotional compounds are not only a large cohort: several of them are also common in ordinary speech. As a result, the associated tropes pervade ordinary Dalabon speech.

Far from being specific to Dalabon, this characteristic is broadly shared across the Australian continent (Laginha & Ponsonnet in prep.). The other Gunwinyguan languages from the Barunga region also have a large number of emotional compounds featuring body parts (see Garde [2011] for Bininj Gun-wok, Merlan and Jacq (2005a, 2005b) for Jawoyn, and Saulwick [2003a] for Rembarrnga, complemented by my own data). In Rembarrnga, the heart and the belly seem to have equal status as seats of emotions, while in Bininj Gun-wok and Jawoyn

the heart appears to be dominant. As for more distant languages, Turpin (2002) reports figurative roles for the belly and the throat in Kaytetye (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia), and Gaby (2008) reports figurative roles for the belly and the heart in Kuuk Thaayorre (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape York Peninsula).<sup>3</sup> Laginha & Ponsonnet (in prep.) found body-based expressions for emotions (primarily with the belly) in 53 of the 69 languages they surveyed.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Dalabon is representative of Australian Aboriginal languages generally, especially by contrast with English, when it comes to the figurative roles of body parts – the belly in particular – in descriptions of emotions.

## 2.4 *Emotion nouns and generic metaphors*

In addition to primarily descriptive compounds like *dalū-yer(mu)* ‘mouth’+‘shy/ashamed’ (see (1) in 2.1), and primarily figurative ones like *kangu-yowwow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow:REDUP’, ‘feel good, be nice’ (see (2) in 2.1), Dalabon associates emotions with bodily states of the person in yet another way, namely the range of generic emotion tropes available to describe emotions. Metaphors that describe emotions as entities independent of the person – for instance as an enemy, as in English ‘to fight one’s fears’ – or even more generally as an inanimate entity external to the person – as in English ‘to find love’ – are virtually absent in Dalabon. This absence is cross-linguistically remarkable. Apart from English (Kövecses 2000:169–170), many other languages across the world have such metaphors,<sup>5</sup> including some Australian languages such as Murrinh Patha (Daly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Daly River, Walsh (1987)), Mawng (Iwaidjan, non-Pama-Nyungan, Goulburn Island, Arnhem Land, Singer (2006:216–220) and other Iwaidjan languages (Evans 2004). In Dalabon, on the other hand, tropes mostly represent emotions as states of the person. In addition to bodily-state tropes illustrated in 2.2, Dalabon also has metaphorical predicates which do not specifically involve the body, as illustrated with *yirru-burlh(mu)* ‘conflict, anger’+‘come out’, ‘be(come) angry’ in (5):

(Dalabon) 20120707a\_000\_MT\* 058 [Stim]

(5) *Barra-h-yirru-burlh-minj* [. . .].

3du-R-conflict/anger-come.out-PPFV

be(come).angry

*Buka-h-marnu-kangu-darridjdarridj-mu.*

3sg>3sg.h-R-BEN-belly-shake.in.agony:REDUP-PRS

be.furious

‘They got angry [their anger came out]. He is furious against her [he shakes in agony from the belly for her].’

But given its argument structure, *yirru-burlh(mu)* ‘conflict, anger’+‘come out’, ‘be(come) angry’ does not represent anger as an entity independent of the person. The predicate encodes the experiencer of the emotion as its first and only argument ((*barra-*, 3du in (5)), and the anger is represented as an incorporated

noun. Dalabon nouns that incorporate in comparable constructions and with comparable argument coding are normally body parts or other inalienable parts of the person (Ponsonnet 2015). Therefore, with the predicate *yirru-burlh(mu)* ‘conflict, anger’+‘come out’, ‘be(come) angry’, the emotion is still represented metaphorically as a part of the person that ‘comes out’ of them: compare for instance *yirru-burlh(mu)* ‘conflict, anger’+‘come out’ and *djen-burlh(mu)* ‘tongue’+‘come out’, ‘(person) to stick tongue out’ (see Ponsonnet (2014a:302–305) for a detailed discussion).

A structural correlate of this prevalence of state-of-the-person tropes for emotions is that Dalabon – like other Australian languages, see Ponsonnet (2016b) – has very few emotion nouns. Metaphors that represent emotions as an entity independent of the person, – like ‘to fight one’s fears’ or ‘to find love’ in English – normally require an emotion noun to be formulated. As discussed in Section 2 of Chapter 4, Dalabon has only two well-attested emotion nouns, *yolh-no* ‘pep, feelings’ and *yirru* ‘conflict, anger’ (see also Ponsonnet 2014a:150). In addition, the morphosyntactic characteristics of one them, *yolh-no*, preclude it from representing emotions as independent entities. Indeed, it is morphosyntactically inalienable and obligatorily possessed (Ponsonnet 2015:21–25): due to these grammatical constraints, it can only be represented linguistically as a possession or part of persons (and potentially other animates). *Yirru* ‘conflict, anger’ is not grammatically inalienable, however it behaves as if it were in emotional compounds like *yirru-burlh(mu)* ‘conflict, anger’+‘come out’, ‘be(come) angry’ in (5); and when occurring outside of such compounds, it tends to mean ‘conflict’ rather than ‘anger’ (i.e. not an emotion). In the absence of further emotion nouns, the Dalabon language can hardly articulate emotion metaphors where emotions are depicted as entities independent of the person. Instead, it fosters extensive networks of tropes representing emotions as states of the person – in particular, bodily-state tropes that feed the linguistic association between emotions and the body.

## 2.5 Emotions and the body in language shift

Is this prevalent association between emotions of the body matched in Kriol? Does Kriol make use of the body in figurative representation of emotions as extensively as Dalabon does? The short answer to these two questions is no, and this is probably the most salient difference between Kriol and Dalabon with respect to the linguistic encoding of emotions. None of the features identified above – descriptive body-based compounds (2.1), high incidence of body-based linguistic tropes (2.1 to 2.4), and the absence of metaphors that represent emotions as entities independent of the person – is significantly matched in Kriol.

The longer answer to the same questions, on the other hand, is that in spite of not being inscribed in the most conventionalized aspects of the language, the body-emotion association is not entirely absent in Kriol. Instead, it does surface where speakers are less constrained by linguistic conventions: in non-conventionalized tropes, as well as in metaphorical gestures. Indeed, Kriol speakers do create

some ‘free’ – non-lexicalized – body-based metaphors; and some of the gestures they use when talking about emotions can be traced back directly to Dalabon body-based metaphors. While these linguistic instantiations of the body-emotion association are far less frequent in Kriol than in Dalabon, they do show that Kriol speakers endorse this association conceptually.

I will return to the question of the status of *conceptual* representations of emotions in Chapter 8, but before I do so, in the present chapter I describe and explain what *linguistic* tropes are observed in Kriol, showing how the body/emotion association is by and large far less entrenched than in Dalabon. The difference between figurative representations of emotions in Kriol and Dalabon correlates with differences in the emotion lexica, namely the much lower number of emotional collocations involving body parts (see 4.2 in Chapter 4) and the fact that Kriol has more emotion nouns than Dalabon (Section 2 in Chapter 4). In the chapter below, Section 3 deals with body-based collocations in Kriol. We will see in 3.1 that they are not entirely unattested: there are about half a dozen of them, all clearly derived from Australian expressions. Yet, half a dozen is a much smaller number than the sixty-plus compounds attested in Dalabon, and 3.2 explores the possible linguistic factors limiting Australian influence in this respect. Section 4 discusses Kriol free metaphors, i.e. metaphors that are not encapsulated in lexicalized expressions but created by speakers as they talk. Kriol speakers use far fewer metaphors that depict emotions as states of the body than Dalabon speakers; and unlike Dalabon speakers, Kriol speakers regularly talk about emotions as entities independent of the person (4.1). Section 4.2 shows how this correlates with Kriol speakers having many more emotion nouns at their disposal than Dalabon speakers.

### 3. Lexicalized metaphors for emotions in Kriol

#### 3.1 *Body-based emotional collocations*

We saw in Section 2 that figurative compounds which metaphorically associate emotions with the body represent at least a third of the Dalabon emotion lexicon. Adding descriptive body-based compounds, like *daluy-er(mu)* ‘mouth’+‘shy/ashamed’, literally ‘be shy/ashamed from the mouth’, practically half of the Dalabon emotion lexemes involve some kind of association between emotions and the body. By contrast, Kriol does not have a large number of lexicalized expressions associating the body and emotions. Table 7.1, repeated from 4.2 in Chapter 4, lists six emotional expressions involving body part nouns with a clear Dalabon equivalent, plus two that do not find a straightforward equivalent in Dalabon, but are likely to have equivalents in other Australian languages, or at least be inspired by Australian tropes. This section offers a brief discussion of the possible origins of these Kriol collocations, before moving on to why there are so few of them in 3.2.

None of the Kriol emotional collocations listed in Table 7.1 corresponds to any English collocation or trope. By contrast, Australian influence can be identified

Table 7.1 Kriol emotional expressions with Dalabon and/or Australian equivalents (repeated from 4.2 in Chapter 4).

language	collocation	literal sense	Meaning	etymology
<b>CALQUES WITH CLEAR DALABON EQUIVALENTS</b>				
Kriol	<i>big as</i> , adj.	'big' + 'arse'	selfish, greedy	<i>big</i> , <i>arse</i>
Dalabon	<i>deɟi boyenɟ</i> , adj.	'tail, bum' + 'big'	selfish, greedy	attested elsewhere, e.g. Warlpiri (Swartz 2012)
Kriol	<i>gud/nogud binji</i> , adj.	'good'/'bad' + 'belly'	feel good/bad, be happy/unhappy, be in a good/bad mood	<i>good</i> , plus Sydney language <i>bindhi</i> (Troy 1994)
Dalabon	<i>kangu-mon, kangu-weh-mun</i> , adj.	'belly' + 'good'/'bad'	feel fine/bad, be good-tempered/angry	
Kriol	<i>hatkreɟ</i> , v.i.	'heart' + 'crack'	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	<i>heart</i> , <i>crack</i>
Dalabon	<i>kangu-barɾh(mu)</i> , v.i.	'belly' + 'crack'	be surprised, undergo an emotional shock	
Kriol	<i>jeɽop nos</i> , ?adj.	'swell' + 'nose'	be snobbish, cold to someone	<i>swell up</i> , <i>nose</i>
Dalabon	<i>standap nos</i> , ?adj. <i>dje-bruh(mu)</i> , v.i.	'stand' + 'nose' 'nose'/'nostrils'/'face' + 'blow, SWELL'	be sulky, be sad/put on a sad face, a rictus	<i>stand up</i> , <i>nose</i>
<b>OTHERS</b>				
Kriol	<i>gula jampap</i> , v.i.	'trouble, conflict, anger, aggression' + 'jump'	be angry	Sydney language <i>gulara</i> (Troy 1994), <i>jump up</i>
Dalabon	ANGER IS LIKE A LIVELY ENTITY e.g. <i>yirru-ngurd(mu)</i> , v.i.	<i>yirru-ngurd(mu)</i> , 'conflict, anger' + 'be(come) quiet'	calm down after being angry	Ponsonnet (2014a:310)
Kriol	<i>wan gats/binji</i> , ?adj.	ANGER IS LIKE A LIVELY ENTITY metaphors 'one' + 'belly'/'guts'	have a strong and determined temperament in two minds	<i>one</i> , <i>guts</i> , Sydney language <i>bindhi</i> (Troy 1994:App 21)
Warlpiri, other languages of Western and Central Australia	HESITATING IS LIKE HAVING A SPLIT BELLY, e.g. <i>miyalu-jarra</i> , ?adj.	'stomach' + 'two'		Laughren & Ponsonnet (in prep.), and David Wilkins pers. com. Dec 2015

for each of them, sometimes possibly at a local level from Gunwinyguan languages, or at a broader level with comparable collocations attested in more distant languages. In some cases, strictly equivalent forms were found, suggesting that the Kriol form is probably a direct calque from an Australian expression. In other cases, I have only been able to identify resembling expressions rather than strictly equivalent ones – which suggests either that the Australian expressions corresponding to the Kriol one have not yet been identified, or that Kriol has borrowed a trope but slightly modified its linguistic realization.

Several of the collocations listed in Table 7.1 instantiate body-based emotion tropes relating to the belly, as in *gud binji* ‘good’+‘belly’, ‘feel good’, and *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’. While *gud* and *nogud* have English etyma (<‘good’ and ‘no good’), *binji*<sup>6</sup> reflects an Australian root. *Bindhi* ‘stomach’ is reported in the Sydney language (Troy 1994:App 21), and *binji* means ‘belly’ in Kriol. Collocations reading literally as ‘good belly’ or ‘bad belly’ occur in Dalabon (see Table 7.1), and are in fact used all over the continent to describe positive and negative emotions respectively: they are the most frequent realization of the metonymy that represents the belly as a seat of emotions (Laginha & Ponsonnet in prep.). As will be further discussed in Section 2 of Chapter 8, in Kriol the generic collocations *gud binji* ‘good’+‘belly’, ‘feel good’, and *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’, are by far the most frequent among the body-based emotional collocations listed in Table 7.1.

The third Kriol collocation that involves the belly, *wan gats/binji* ‘one’+‘belly’, ‘be determined’, encapsulates a division metaphor. This metaphor is not attested as such in Dalabon or in the Gunwinyguan region, but it is found in several other regions of the continent, with very good matches in Central Australia in particular.<sup>7</sup>

*Hatkrek* ‘heart’+‘crack’, ‘be very surprised, be shocked’ represents the heart as the seat of emotions, which is also very common in Dalabon and in other Gunwinyguan languages (2.2).<sup>8</sup> It is not uncommon for Kriol speakers to use the noun (*h*)*at* ‘heart’ to refer explicitly to the seat of emotions, whether in Kriol speech or when translating Australian languages into Kriol. *Hatkrek* finds full or very close matches in each of the four Gunwinyguan languages of the Barunga region. Obviously, the heart/emotion association is also prevalent in English, but the particular mapping of the Kriol expression clearly resembles those found in local languages: Dalabon has *kangu-barrh(mu)* ‘belly’+‘crack’, ‘be surprised, undergo emotional shock’; Bininj Gun-wok has *kange-bakme* ‘seat of emotions, heart’+‘break’, ‘be shocked’ (Garde 2011);<sup>9</sup> (Ponsonnet 2014a); Rembarrnga has *ngerh-bowh* ‘heart’+‘crack’, ‘have a shock’ (from my own 2014 data), and Jawoyn has *tor-war’-mang* ‘heart’+‘lift/blaze’, ‘be startled, have a shock’ (Merlan & Jacq 2005b). Such close matches for *hatkrek* are not as well attested elsewhere in Australia (Laginha & Ponsonnet in prep.),<sup>10</sup> and since the collocation seems more prevalent in the Barunga variety of Kriol than in other Kriol varieties,<sup>11</sup> this collocation may have been calqued directly from Gunwinyguan languages.<sup>12</sup>

The Kriol collocations *big as* ‘big’+‘arse’, ‘selfish, greedy’, *jelop nos* ‘swell’+‘nose’ and *stendap nos* ‘stand up’+‘nose’, ‘be snobbish, cold’ also find good matches in

Dalabon and neighboring languages, and they have correspondences in the rest of the continent as well. In Dalabon, the emotional compounds involving the nose or face (expressed with the same word) and the buttocks do not partake in extensive metaphorical networks like the ones around the belly and the heart, but they nevertheless associate emotions with the body. Associations between greed and buttocks are found in Dalabon and Bininj Gun-wok (*dedj-warlah* ‘wide bum’, ‘greedy, glutton’, Garde (2011)) in the Gunwinyguan region, but also in Western and Central Australia – although here again, the matches are not as straightforward as with Gunwinyguan languages.<sup>13</sup>

As for expressions involving the nose, apart from Dalabon *dje-bruH(mu)* ‘nose/nostrils/face’+ ‘blow, SWELL’, ‘be sulky, sad/put on a sad face, a rictus’, in the Gunwinyguan region we also find *keb-burlme*<sup>14</sup> ‘nose/face’, ‘swell’ with the same meaning in Bininj Gun-wok; and in Jawoyn *kemo-bur’-mang* ‘nose’+‘swell up’, also ‘be sulky’ (Merlan & Jacq 2005a:77)). Expressions meaning ‘big nose’ map to negative social emotions in Central Australian languages as well, and expressions of the form ‘put nose up’ denote negative emotions in a number of languages across the continent,<sup>15</sup> matching Kriol *stendap nos* ‘stand up’+‘nose’. Although English does associate ‘turn one’s nose up’ with being reluctant, the association between the nose and negative emotions is much more likely to result from Australian influence, whether this results from local pressures from Gunwinyguan languages, or from more distant influence.

### 3.2 Lesser incidence

As evident from the above discussion, the Kriol emotion lexicon does contain emotion collocations that reflect the same association between emotions and the body as observed in Dalabon and many other Australian languages. Encapsulated in the form of lexicalized expressions, these resemblances with Dalabon are easily noticeable – and thus very salient in speakers’ metalinguistic representations, as will be further discussed in Chapter 8. The linguistic incidence of these body-based emotional collocations, however, is much weaker than in Dalabon.

A first, flagrant observation is that eight body-based emotional collocations is a very low figure compared to the several dozens attested in Dalabon.<sup>16</sup> Besides, most of these Kriol collocations are very marginal in frequency. The generic belly collocations *gud binji* ‘good’+‘belly’, ‘feel good’, and *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’ are the only ones with significant incidence in my corpus. They are by no means the most frequent terms for generic emotions though: words with English etymologies such as *hapi* ‘happy’, *sed* ‘sad’ or *apset* ‘upset’ are preferred, especially by younger speakers. Yet, *gud binji* and *nogud binji* remain common, everyday terms across generations.

All the other collocations are extremely marginal, in particular in the speech of younger speakers. *Wan gats/binji* ‘one’+‘belly’, ‘be determined’ did not occur spontaneously in my own corpus at all, but speakers across generations did recognize this expression when I questioned them about it (after retrieving it from Lee’s (2004) dictionary). Other expressions, like *jelop nos* ‘swell’+‘nose’,

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‘be snobbish, cold’ or *batkre* ‘heart’+‘crack’, ‘be very surprised, be shocked’, were used very occasionally by older speakers. They were also recognized, but never used spontaneously by younger speakers. By and large, apart from *gud binji* ‘good’+‘belly’, ‘feel good’, and *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’, body-based collocations are extremely marginal in the Kriol lexicon, and even *gud binji* and *nogud binji* may be in decline. In other words, the linguistic inscription of the body/emotion association in Kriol remains very marginal compared to Dalabon. In fact, in this respect Kriol is more akin to English, where there is only a handful of relatively marginal body-based emotional collocations.

The discrepancy between Kriol and Dalabon in this respect is somewhat puzzling. Indeed, creole languages across the world have been reported to calque compound expressions from their substrates. For instance, Holm (1988:1986) and Lefebvre (2004:183–185, 205) list some idiomatic tropes of Atlantic Creoles that presumably result from substrate influence, and Ameka (2015) offers comparable reports for Ghanaian English. This is not inconsistent with our observations: it is possible that the phenomena alluded to by these authors are in fact limited to a few expressions, like in Kriol. In the absence of any other extensive studies on figurative language in creoles, we cannot conclude that Kriol is an exception.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, the discrepancy between Kriol and Dalabon with respect to figurative representations of emotions is somewhat surprising to the extent that it contrasts with the significant convergence in lexical semantics (Chapter 4).

This discrepancy could be explained with reference to the principles of creole substrate transfer identified by Siegel (2008:105–234). One of these principles, called the ‘availability constraint’, states that a function can only transfer from substrate languages into a creole if the superstrate offers a form that can be adequately reanalyzed. While Siegel’s theory primarily concerns grammatical features, the same constraint may apply here. Indeed, it is not clear which English forms could have been productively reinterpreted to support the development of body-based tropes in Kriol, and this may contribute to explain their small number. Yet, the existence of the eight lexicalized collocations discussed in the above sections demonstrates that the absence of English target for transfer did not entirely preclude the calquing of Australian expressions into Kriol. That is, the Kriol form *jelop nos* (‘be snobbish’), for example, cannot have been inspired by an English form ‘swell up nose’, given that this expression is not a common occurrence in the English language. The form was nevertheless calqued from Australian languages – but somehow, very few such calques did make it into Kriol.

This limitation could have grammatical underpinnings. We saw in 2.2 that in Dalabon, the main linguistic channel of expression of the body/emotion association is via lexicalized compounds of the form [body part noun+predicate] that result from noun-incorporation constructions. All languages in the world have compounds, but in Dalabon (and other Gunwinyguan languages), productive noun incorporation offers large numbers of ‘lexicalizable’ forms in this fashion. This may have favored the development of such a large cohort of emotional

compounds in Dalabon. Kriol, on the other hand, does not have noun incorporation. This is not at all surprising: noun incorporation as a productive grammatical process is typical of polysynthetic languages like Dalabon, and uncommon in isolating languages like Kriol. Instead of noun incorporation, most of the calques listed in Table 7.1 in 3.1 do correspond to a valid Kriol construction where the predicate is a body part noun modified by an adjective. That is, the structure of a clause is then [subject+adjective+body part], as in (6).

(Kriol) 230909\_75OK 0784 (QB\*) [El]

- (6) *Dat min yu nogud ais hei . . .*  
 DEM mean 2sg bad eyes CONJ  
 ‘It means ‘your eyes are no good’ hey.’

*Nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’ is built on the exact same model as *nogud ais* ‘bad eyes’ in (6), and so is *gud binji* and several other calques listed in Table 7.1 (3.1). These are therefore lexicalized versions of a well-formed Kriol construction. However, this construction is rare outside of lexicalized expressions, and certainly far less productive than noun incorporation in Dalabon – which is default if not obligatory for body part nouns in many contexts (Ponsonnet 2015). The lower productivity of the Kriol construction, and the absence of a more productive process providing candidates for lexicalization, may contribute to explain why Kriol has not developed a larger number of body-based emotion collocations.

To summarize, although Kriol speakers have created and adopted some body-based emotional collocations, Kriol does not offer any obvious construction productively providing their forms, like noun incorporation does in Dalabon. To that extent, the mismatch between the isolating morphological profile of Kriol – with no clear noun-incorporation option – and the polysynthetic morphological profile of Gunwinyguan languages may have contributed to prevent the massive development of Australian-like body-based emotional collocations in Kriol. This hypothesis cannot stand as a unique and sufficient explanation for the figurative mismatch between the Kriol and Dalabon, since many Australian languages display a large number of body-based emotional compounds although they are not polysynthetic and do not feature noun incorporation (e.g. Pama-Nyungan languages of Central Australia, see Laginha & Ponsonnet (in prep.)). Yet, the morphological discrepancy between Kriol and polysynthetic Gunwinyguan languages may have been an obstacle to further calquing. Extensive comparative research will be needed to test the role of morphological profiles and grammatical properties in this process (see Ponsonnet, Hoffman & O’Keeffe, in prep.).

Another principle of transfer proposed by Siegel (2008), called the ‘reinforcement principle’, may contribute to explain both that few body-based emotion collocations have been calqued in Kriol, and *which ones* have been calqued. This principle states that in the process of creolization, the features that transfer from substrate languages to the creole are those that are shared by a large number of

substrate languages (see also Munro 2004). Indeed, expressions mapping ‘good/bad belly’ with positive/negative emotions are the most frequent body-based emotional tropes on the continent,<sup>18</sup> and this could explain why *gud/nogud binji* ‘good/bad belly’, ‘feel good/bad’ are precisely the only collocations with significant currency in contemporary Kriol (at least in the Barunga region). More specific metaphors with the belly, and tropes involving other body parts, are less widespread across Australian Aboriginal languages, and were therefore less likely to transfer to Kriol.

As already noted, the comparison between Dalabon and Kriol alone does not suffice to draw firm conclusions here, and further data on emotional tropes in Australian Aboriginal languages is needed before the above hypotheses can be refined and tested. Nevertheless, the present comparison suggests that purely linguistic factors such as the grammatical features of the languages at play and principles of borrowing have contributed to limit the number of body-based emotion tropes that persisted through language shift, and to determine which of them have persisted.

## 4. Free emotion metaphors in Kriol

### 4.1 *Lesser incidence*

The previous section has discussed lexicalized emotion tropes, where we saw that Kriol has far fewer body-based emotional collocations than Dalabon. The present section considers non-lexicalized tropes, i.e. ‘free’ tropes that are not embedded in lexicalized collocations. Such ‘free’ tropes are more frequent in Kriol than in Dalabon – where they are actually quite rare (see 2.2). Contrary to what I observed with Dalabon, in Kriol some of these free tropes appear to be full-fledged one-off creations (i.e. they occurred only once and bore no resemblance with any other one) rather than recurring conventionalized themes. Thus, they can be regarded as speakers’ on line creations, reflecting active conceptual representations.

Some of these Kriol free tropes do depict emotions as associated with the body. This is illustrated in (7), where the strength of the belly is associated with emotional strength, as well as in (8), where the belly is explicitly treated as a locus or container of emotions.

(Kriol) 20150819b\_002\_JBe 087 [Narr]

- (7) *Dadsdewei ai bin meikim gud fling ba . . .*  
 like.this 1sg.S PST make-TR good feeling DAT  
*from tok-ing la fon, Ebri dei . . .*  
 ABL talk-CONT LOC telephone Every day  
*Kip im strong . . . Strong-bala-wan binji . . .*  
 keep 3sg strong . . . strong-INDIV-SHIFT belly . . .  
 ‘This is how I made [her] feel good . . . from talking on the phone, every day . . .  
 Keep her strong. . . Emotionally strong [strong from the belly].’

(Kriol) 20140326a\_000\_MJ\*\_QB\* 128 (MJ\*) [Stim]

- (8) *Im-in daimap mijelb binji na.*  
 3sg-pst tie ref/rec belly emph  
*Im-in fil nogud na im binji, ba im . . .*  
 3sg-pst feel bad loc 3sg.poss belly dat 3sg.poss  
*ba im ekshen wana im-in du . . .*  
 dat 3sg.poss actions what 3sg-pst do  
 ‘She’s tied up in the belly [she is anxious] indeed.  
 She was feeling bad in her belly, because of her . . . because of her actions,  
 what she did . . .’

In licensing the use of such metaphors, Kriol resembles Dalabon and the majority of Australian languages: the belly is an acceptable figurative seat of emotions. In addition, more elaborate free metaphors that closely matched Dalabon lexical metaphors occasionally occurred in my corpus. In (6) and (8) above, negative emotions are represented as a tied belly, and in (9) below, emotional relief is represented as an opening of the heart.

(Kriol) 20150819b\_000\_BB 090 [Narr]

- (9) *Main hat bin opin na,*  
 1sg.POSS heart PST open EMPH  
*wen ai bin kamat from dat shop*  
 when 1sg.S PST go.out ABL DET shop  
*en ai bin luk im deya, im-in gedof.*  
 and 1sg.S PST look 3sg there 3sg-PST get.off  
 ‘My heart opened [I was very pleased] then, when I came out from the  
 shop and I saw her there, she had got off [the bus].’

Metaphors representing negative emotions as a tied organ and positive emotions as an open/accessible organ exist in Dalabon and are also attested in some other Australian languages. The tied-belly metaphor in (8) falls under the ‘resistance of the belly’ metaphor illustrated in 2.2. It also echoes the Dalabon compounds *yolb-dukkarrun* ‘pep, feeling’+‘tie:REFL’, literally ‘entangled/tied feelings’, ‘be chronically anxious, depressive’.<sup>19</sup> As for the opening of the heart metaphor, it falls under the accessibility metaphor, which applies to the belly rather than the heart in Dalabon: for instance *kangu-muk(mu)* ‘belly’+‘be covered, inaccessible’, ‘feel terrible’, which a Dalabon speaker once translated in Kriol using *shat* ‘shut’. Like with the lexical tropes discussed in 3.1, the free metaphors illustrated here reflect Australian influence, since they are conceptually much closer to Dalabon and other Australian metaphors than to English metaphors.

Yet again, like with lexical metaphors (Section 3), in spite of these attestations body-based free tropes in Kriol remain relatively marginal compared to Dalabon. My Kriol corpus contains nearly three times fewer body-based than non-body-based free emotion tropes.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the metaphors that displayed

the most significant proximity with Dalabon – such as those presented in (8) and (9) above – were uttered by mature speakers who have some mastery of or exposure to local Australian languages. Younger speakers with less knowledge of Australian Aboriginal languages did not produce Dalabon-like body-based emotion metaphors in my data.

Accordingly, and by contrast with Dalabon where the vast majority of emotion tropes, with few exceptions, associate emotions with the body, in my corpus Kriol speakers often created emotion tropes that did *not* relate to the body at all. Instead, emotions were then represented as things independent of the person. For instance, in (10) an emotion is treated as a thing that the experiencer has, and in (11) as a thing that the experiencer sees.

(Kriol) 20150819b\_002\_JBe 046 [Narr]

- (10) *Ai nomo bin ab-u dat . . . wori,*  
 1sg.S NEG PST have-TR DET concern  
*nogud-wan binji banga dat lil gel.*  
 bad-SHIFT belly DAT DET little girl  
 Lit. ‘I didn’t have any concern, bad belly for this little girl.’  
 Free ‘I wasn’t worried for this little girl.’

(Kriol) 20140326b\_002\_IA 107 [El]

- (11) *Yeah dat bi . . . am sodobe fright deya,*  
 yeah DEM COP HESIT CONJ fright/surprise there  
*yu goda luk dat fright.*  
 2sg FUT look DET fright/surprise  
 ‘Yeah, this would be like um, like a fright, you’ll see the fright [get a fright].’

As discussed in 2.4, such emotion-as-independent-entity metaphors are virtually absent in Dalabon, but in Kriol they represent about a third of the free tropes in my corpus. While the clearest tokens occurred in younger speakers’ speech – as in (10) and (11) – such metaphors also occurred in the speech of older speakers with high fluency in Dalabon or another Australian language.

To summarize, the examination of the free tropes employed by Kriol speakers supports the same conclusions as the discussion of lexicalized body-based collocations. On the one hand, there are some resemblances between Kriol free tropes and Dalabon lexicalized tropes, and these resemblances reflect Australian influence. The figurative association between emotions and the belly, in particular, is a typically Australian feature. On the other hand, the linguistic incidence of the body/emotion association is not nearly as remarkable in Kriol as it is in Dalabon, and Kriol speakers also create metaphors where emotions are not represented as a part of the body or person. Overall, with respect to emotion tropes, Kriol probably resembles English more than it resembles Dalabon or many other Australian languages.

## 4.2 The role of emotion nouns

Although free metaphors are of course not as determined by lexical borrowings as body-based collocations (which are inherently lexical), the range of metaphors that speakers use in Kriol is nevertheless partly determined by the words available to them. A case in point here is emotion nouns. As discussed in 2.4, metaphors that represent emotions as entities independent of the person ('fight one's fears', 'find love' etc.) require emotion nouns. In the Kriol example in (11) above for instance, fright is depicted as an independent entity – something the experiencer can see – using the noun *frait*. As pointed out in Chapter 4, Dalabon has remarkably few emotion nouns: only two are fully attested, plus another six very occasional, possibly innovative noun forms (Ponsonnet 2014a:150). In this respect,

Table 7.2 Emotion nouns attested in the full Kriol corpus.

	meaning noun	tokens	remarks
<i>dipreshen</i>	depression	2	within the same conversation
<i>eingga</i>	anger	2	
<i>fan</i>	fun	8	collocation <i>abum fan</i>
<i>filing</i>	feeling, esp. of compassion; premonition	28	
<i>fir</i>	fear	1	
<i>frait</i>	surprise	2	1 speaker
<i>gratj</i>	grudge	2	1 speaker
<i>gridines</i>	greediness	1	
<i>gula</i>	trouble, fight, argument aggression	6	homophonous verb more frequent
<i>hapines</i>	positive emotions	1	
<i>heit, heitnes</i>	negative feelings towards somebody	3	same older speaker
<i>hop</i>	hope	1	older speaker
<i>jelasi</i>	jealousy	1	
<i>lab</i>	love (romantic, sexually oriented)	15	often in collocation: <i>lab stori, lab tok</i>
<i>nyingaya</i>	feeling part of the person	1	said to be from the Roper variety (Ngukurr region)
<i>sadness</i>	sadness	1	
<i>seprais</i>	surprise	3	2 tokens by same speaker, same sequence homophonous verb more frequent
<i>shok</i>	emotional shock i.e. strong, negative surprise	7	collocation <i>gede shok</i>
<i>sheim</i>	respect	1	older speaker homophonous verb more frequent

(Continued)

Table 7.2 (Continued)

	<i>meaning noun</i>	<i>tokens</i>	<i>remarks</i>
<i>stres</i>	pressure (social, family)	7	all by younger speakers
<i>tugethanes</i>	emotional closeness	1	older speaker (may be behavioral)
<i>wil</i>	life energy, part of person that determines intuitions and inclinations	3	older speakers only
<i>wori, worines</i>	deep concern	6	

Dalabon is representative of what appears to be a broader Australian tendency: Ponsonnet's (2016b) preliminary study suggests that Australian languages often have fewer than five emotion nouns, and rarely more than ten<sup>21</sup> (compare with Mathieu's (2000) figure of 315 for French, for instance). Contrasting with Dalabon, my Kriol corpus contains 25 nouns in total, listed in Table 7.2.

Among them, eighteen occurred extremely occasionally and are better treated as English borrowings; another two occurred exclusively within collocations. Once these are set apart, a total of five nouns can be considered full-fledged, common Kriol nouns. These figures are significantly higher than the Dalabon ones, both in terms of well-established nouns (five vs two) and in terms of marginal forms (twenty vs six). The total of 25 nouns encountered in my Kriol corpus suggests that the practice of borrowing nouns, mostly from English, is widespread: all speakers, across generations, did borrow some English noun(s).

This trend is easy to explain. Given that emotion nouns are readily available in English, Kriol speakers have no reasons not to borrow them like they do with other English words. In addition, this is in line with a well-identified cross-linguistic pattern whereby nouns are the most easily borrowed of all word classes (Matras 2009).<sup>22</sup> Some of the properties of Kriol grammar also favor the creation of nouns. Interestingly, among the few morphological devices available in Kriol we find the suffix *-nes*, used as a semi-productive nominalizer (e.g. *heit/heitnes* for 'hatred' in Table 7.2). Dalabon, by contrast and perhaps paradoxically for a polysynthetic language, does not have a productive nominalizer.<sup>23</sup> As a result, it is easier to create emotion nouns in Kriol than in Dalabon. Thus, given the standard dynamics of contact and Kriol grammatical resources, it seems likely that more emotion nouns will be adopted into Kriol in the relatively near future. A correlate of this lexical shift is that Kriol allows its speakers to figuratively depict emotions as entities independent of the person – and indeed, irrespective of their age or linguistic background, speakers do so much more regularly in Kriol than in Dalabon.

## 5. Conclusion

We had seen in previous chapters that in the shift from Dalabon to Kriol, the range of what speakers can express linguistically with respect to emotions was held relatively constant. The new language affords comparable semantic contents

as the former one; and although the linguistic package of these contents may occasionally vary, it is not yet clear whether this variation in form has any impact on the way speakers can actually communicate, and what this impact is.

With respect to figurative language, the conclusions differ: we observe a relatively clear shift in the dominant figurative patterns in Kriol, compared to Dalabon. Dalabon figurative representations of emotions predominantly associate them with the body – representing emotions as bodily states via body-based compounds, and more generally as states of the person rather than independent entities. By contrast, the linguistic association between emotions and the body is not nearly as entrenched linguistically in Kriol. Contrary to Dalabon, Kriol does not have a large cohort of body-based emotional collocations. It does preserve a few lexicalized tropes – probably selected among those that recur across the continent – and the belly maintains its role as a seat of emotions. But this figurative pattern is relatively marginal, both in terms of the number of lexicalized collocations, and in terms of their frequency in speech. Non-lexicalized, free tropes are more frequent in Kriol than in Dalabon. Here too, Australian influence is detectable, in particular with respect to belly-based metaphors, yet again the linguistic prevalence of the figurative association between emotions and the body is relatively marginal compared to Dalabon and many Australian languages. Kriol speakers use fewer body-based free tropes than non-body-based free tropes for emotions, and they also often depict emotions as entities independent of the person.

Purely linguistic factors may contribute to explain why Kriol does not reflect a typically Australian profile when it comes to figurative representations of emotions. The morphological profile of Kriol, and in particular the fact that noun incorporation is not productive in this language, may have combined with principles of transfer in contact situations to select a small number of lexicalized figurative expressions. The dynamics of contact is also largely responsible for the increased availability of emotion nouns borrowed from English, which in turn allows the representation of emotions as independent entities.

Based on a handful of Australian languages only, these observations are suggestive rather than conclusive: further research will be required before we can fully explain this shift in figurative representations of emotions. It also remains unclear whether these figurative differences between Kriol and Dalabon reflect a more general tendency for creoles to depart from substrate languages in this respect, or whether Kriol is an exception. Irrespective of these open questions, in the situation under consideration figurative language is the aspect of the linguistic encoding of emotions that has undergone the heaviest modifications through language shift. But as we will now see in Chapter 8, this significant shift in *linguistic* representations of emotions does not necessarily correspond to a profound shift in shared *conceptual* representations of emotions.

## Notes

- 1 As some other Aboriginal languages such as Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (Pama-Nyungan, Wati, Western Desert, [Goddard 2004:1217]).

- 2 Here I label ‘free trope’ any trope that is not encapsulated within a lexicalized expression, independently of its degree of conventionalization. As a matter of fact, the very few ‘free’ emotion metaphors present in my Dalabon corpus are also quite conventional (but as we shall see in 4.1, things are different in Kriol).
- 3 See also Walsh (1996) for Murrinh Patha (Daly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Daly River), Goddard (1994) for Yankunytjatjara (Pama-Nyungan, Wati, Western Desert), among others.
- 4 It is not clear that body-based emotional expressions are absent in the sixteen languages where they are not reported: they may have been overlooked or omitted by the descriptors.
- 5 To cite just a few across continents: Oneida (Iroquoian, Canada, United States, Michelson (2002:202)), Zulu (Bantu, South Africa, Taylor and Mbense (1998:210), Gbaya (Ubangian, Cameroon, Roulon-Doko (2013), Koromu (Papuan, Papua New Guinea, Priestley (2002))).
- 6 *Binji* is realized as [binjji] or [binjji]. An alternative and possibly more accurate spelling may be *binyji*, but it is commonly spelt *binji* and I chose to follow the standard spelling.
- 7 Warlpiri (Pama-Nyungan, Ngumpin-Yapa, Laughren (2005)) and Kaytetye (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Turpin (2011)).
- 8 Including Rembarnga, Bininj Gun-wok, Jawoyn, but also for instance Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Bednall (in prep.)).
- 9 Comparing Dalabon *kangu-barrh(mu)* ‘belly’+‘crack’, ‘be surprised, undergo emotional shock’ with Bininj Gun-wok *kange-bakme* ‘seat of emotions, heart’+‘break’, ‘be shocked’ suggests that body part/emotion associations can undergo fast evolution. In these two adjacent and genetically very close languages, the same root represents the seat of emotions, but it links them figuratively with the heart in one language, and with the belly in the other (presumably due to fast semantic shift in the body part domain, see Wilkins [1996]).
- 10 Although some languages outside of the Kriol area have split/torn-belly metaphors for the same meaning ‘undergo emotional shock (in particular when hearing bad news)’, e.g. Yolngu Matha (Pama-Nyungan, Yolngu, eastern Arnhem Land, Zorc and Bowern (2012)), Wik Mungkan (Pama-Nyungan, Paman, Cape York Peninsula, Kilham et al. (2011)).
- 11 *Hatkre* is not reported in Kriol varieties spoken to the east and south of the Barunga region (Salome Harris pers. com. Dec 2015 for Roper Kriol, Jane Simpson Jan 2016 for southern varieties). It is reported in western varieties (Erika Charola, Felicity Meakins and Eva Schultze-Berndt pers. com. Dec 2015), but the Australian languages of this area do not feature expressions ‘heart/belly crack/break’ expressions (Erika Charola, Patrick McConvell and Felicity Meakins pers. com. Dec 2015).
- 12 Note also that *hatkre* is the only Kriol calque where the order is [noun+predicate] instead of [predicate+noun]. [Noun+predicate] precisely happens to be the order of elements in Gunwinyguan noun incorporation.
- 13 E.g. Kija (non-Pama-Nyungan, Djeragan, Kimberley, Kofod & Crane (in prep.)), Kukatja (Pama-Nyungan, Wati, Western Desert, Peile (1997)), Ngarla (Pama-Nyungan, Ngaryarda, Pilbara, Geytenbeek (2008)), and in Central Australia, Arrernte (Pama-Nyungan, Arandic, Central Australia, Henderson (1994)).
- 14 Pronounced *keb-burme* in the Kunwinjku dialect, but *keb-burlme* in Kune (my own data).
- 15 ‘Nose up’ for negative emotions is found in Yolngu Matha (Pama-Nyungan, Yolngu, eastern Arnhem Land, Zorc and Bowern (2012)). Further associations between the nose and negative feelings are attested in Ngankikurungkurr (Daly, non-Pama-Nyungan, Daly River, Hoddinott and Kofod (1988)), Woiwurrung

- (Pama-Nyungan, Kulin, Victoria, Blake (1991)), Mayi languages (Pama-Nyungan, North Queensland, Breen (1981)).
- 16 The smaller size of my Kriol corpus cannot account for this difference, given that the number of emotion lexemes attested in Kriol (see Chapter 4) is not uncommensurate with the size of the Dalabon emotion lexicon.
  - 17 Levisen's (2016) study of emotions in Bislama makes no mention of body-based collocations, although they are reported to be frequent in at least some languages of Vanuatu (e.g. Daakaka, Oceanic, Ambrym, von Prince (2017)).
  - 18 Belly-based metaphors are attested in 23 of the 69 languages surveyed by Laginha & Ponsonnet (in prep.), which represents more than half of the 52 languages featuring body-based emotional collocations in this sample. Among these 23 languages, 11 (or about half) have a good/bad belly collocation mapping to positive or negative emotions.
  - 19 Comparable metaphors involving tied or entangled organs and feelings are also attested in Bininj Gun-wok and Rembarrnga in the Gunwinyguan family (Ponsonnet's unpublished data), as well as in eastern Arnhem Land in Djinang (Pama-Nyungan, Yolngu, Waters (1983)) and Yolngu Matha (Pama-Nyungan, Yolngu, Zorc and Bower (2012)) in eastern Arnhem Land.
  - 20 Although it is difficult to count tropes given that it is often hard to decide how many of them are included in one construction, my estimate is fewer than 20 body-based vs more than 56 others.
  - 21 More recent work-in-progress confirms this observation.
  - 22 This trend is usually explained by the high referentiality of nouns, but this does not apply in the domain of emotions.
  - 23 Some neighboring Gunwinyguan languages do, e.g. Bininj Gun-wok (Evans 2003:219).

## 8 Figurative language beyond linguistic conventions

### Different language, same concepts?

Chapter 7 has highlighted what is probably the most significant difference between Kriol and Dalabon with respect to the linguistic encoding of emotions: the drastic asymmetry in the number and frequency of body-based emotional tropes, where Kriol tends to compare with English rather than with Dalabon or other Australian languages. Yet, it is certainly not the case that figurative representations of emotions involving the body and the belly are entirely absent. As we saw, tropes inspired from Dalabon and other Australian languages occur in Kriol not only as lexicalized metaphors, but also as free metaphors. Even though their numbers are low compared to Dalabon, the fact that they do occur, including in free metaphors where speakers afford some creativity, suggests that these tropes illustrate active conceptual representations.

The present chapter further explores the conceptual status of body-based tropes in Kriol, and shows that their much lower linguistic incidence does not appear to correspond to a comparable shift in speakers' conceptual representations of emotions. Instead, from the point of view of shared conceptual representations of emotions and their relation to the body, Kriol speakers may remain closer to a Dalabon or Australian profile. Indeed, Kriol speakers seem inclined to use Dalabon-/Australian-like tropes for emotions wherever they are less bound by linguistic conventions. Section 1 illustrates this looking at gestures, and Section 2 will discuss evidence from metalinguistic discussions where speakers explicitly embrace and emphasize the conceptual association between emotions and the belly.

#### 1. Gestures, emotions and the body in Kriol

Like many people in the world, Kriol speakers produce gestures involving the belly and the heart when talking about emotions. As we shall see, some of these gestures are clearly metaphorical, and some relate specifically to metaphors attested in Dalabon and other Gunwinyguan languages. Gestures are thus another linguistic domain where Kriol speakers figuratively associate emotions with the body in a way that compares with Dalabon and other Australian languages rather than with English. This confirms that the figurative

representations in question tend to surface where linguistic conventions are looser, which in turn indicates that Kriol speakers endorse the conceptual associations that underpin these body/emotion associations. In this section, I discuss some of the gesturing patterns used by Kriol speakers when talking about emotion, showing how some of them – involving the heart – compare with English as well as Australian languages, while others – involving the belly – are unmistakably inspired by Australian languages.

Given the prominence of body-related emotional expressions across the world, it is unsurprising that corresponding gestures will occur in many languages. However, little is known at this stage about the use of gestures in discourse about emotions (Kipp & Martin 2009), let alone the use of metaphorical gestures in this domain. Outside of this particular semantic domain there exist studies of metaphorical gestures (Cienki & Müller 2008a, 2008b), but body-related metaphorical gestures have, to my knowledge, mostly been left aside. This section will therefore focus on Kriol and Dalabon, with little comparative input from other languages in Australia and across the world.

More research is needed into the respective gesturing styles of Kriol and Dalabon, but a preliminary observation is that they display important differences in this respect. There are *some* recorded instances of emotion-related gesturing in Dalabon (see 1.2), but in general, in my corpora, Kriol speech is accompanied by more gestures, and broader movements, than Dalabon speech.<sup>1</sup> When talking about emotions, most Kriol speakers produced conventionalized gestures involving the heart or upper chest (23 gesturing sequences in my corpus), and sometimes the belly (7 gesturing sequences), or both (the whole abdomen). In 1.1, I discuss emotion-related gestures that involve the heart only, and in 1.2, those that involve the belly or the whole abdomen. Remarkably, the latter include some metaphorical gestures that reflect metaphors unattested in verbal Kriol, but attested in Dalabon and other neighboring Australian languages. Sections 1.3 and 1.4 respectively discuss possible mechanisms for the borrowing of gestures, and the consequences of these observations with respect to the impact of language shift.

### 1.1 Heart-related gestures

In Kriol gestures, the heart was the most frequent bodily association with emotions – more frequent than the belly association, although the belly prevails over the heart in lexicalized collocations. Heart-related gestures are inherently indexical to the extent that they point at an organ, but in Kriol their locations and hand shapes are regular enough to consider these gestures conventionalized. When talking about emotions, Kriol speakers sometimes pointed to the left of the breast, not far from the actual location of the heart, as in (1), but they usually pointed to more central areas, on or above the breast ((1) and (2)). The hand was often entirely and very neatly open, with spread fingers, although there were also slacker movements (3). The hand was usually laid still on the chest for

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a few seconds, or – more rarely – it tapped the chest a couple of times (especially when reinforcing container metaphors, see below). Among the Gunwinyguan family, comparable gestures were also observed with speakers of Rembarrnga and Kunwinjku.

(Kriol) 20140328c\_005\_AA 51 [Narr]

- (1) AA *Laik dei bin tok-ebat im en den meik,*  
 CONJ 3pl.S PST talk-CONT 3sg and then make  
*am mam en dad en mi a . . .* [searching for word]  
 HESIT mum and dad and 1sg HESIT  
 [hand on heart]

IA *Apset.*  
 upset

AA *Apset en yuno krai.*  
 upset and CONJ cry  
 [hand on heart]

‘AA Like, they were talking about him and this made, um Mum and Dad and myself um. . .

IA Upset.

AA Upset and you know, cry.’



*Figure 8.1* Speaker resting hand on heart while searching for an emotion word.

(Kriol) 20140326b\_002\_IA 065 [El]

- (2) *Yeah ai fil, am . . . ai fil hapi na.*  
 yeah 1sg.S feel HESIT 1sg feel happy EMPH  
 [hand on chest all along]  
 ‘Yeah, I feel, I feel happy that’s it.’



Figure 8.2 Speaker resting hand on chest while defining an emotion word.

(Kriol) 20140407a\_001\_MJ\*\_QB\* 069 [RPF]

(3) *Laik im garra filing . . .*

CONJ 3sg have feelings

[hand on chest all along]

‘Like she has a feeling (premonition).’



Figure 8.3 Speaker resting hand on chest while unfolding a dramatic moment in a narrative.

Heart-related gestures occurred when discussing a broad range of positive and negative emotions including anger, compassion, fear, love, surprise and more. Most heart-related gestures co-occurred with an emotional word (20 occurrences

out of 23), which often constituted the chronological starting point of the gesture. Speakers typically gestured toward their heart or chest when reaching an emotional climax in narratives; when searching for an emotion word (1) or when asked to define an emotion word (3), in which case speakers relied on gestures to convey expressive content. At other times, gestures were more controlled, and intended for stylistic effects (2).

In just three occurrences the heart was verbally mentioned, so that the gesture simply repeated the heart/emotion association already established in speech by pointing at the source domain of the trope (Cienki & Müller 2008b:487–488). In most cases (all the above examples), however, the heart/emotion association was established by the gesture alone (Cienki & Müller 2008b:488–491). In some cases, the gesture complemented a verbal metaphor in a relatively explicit way, conveying a container metaphor: in (2), the speaker used a verbal metaphor of attribution, *A FEELING IS LIKE SOMETHING ONE HAS*, while the gesture suggested a container metaphor, *A FEELING IS LIKE SOMETHING ONE HAS IN ONE'S HEART/CHEST*. In this case, gestures contributed a more specific figurative association between emotions and the heart or chest. The tropes encapsulated in Kriol heart-related gestures were largely consistent with English, and indeed the particular realization of the gestures themselves seemed comparable to what may be observed in English.

## 1.2 *Belly-related gestures*

Only 7 gesturing sequences of my Kriol corpus involved the belly alone, vs 23 for the heart. In addition, there were gestures involving both the belly and the rest of the abdomen (see below). Like heart-related gestures, belly-related gestures occurred in emotional narratives, with stylistic or expressive effects, and when searching for words while giving a definition. Unlike with the heart, speakers mostly used belly-related gestures when the belly was explicitly mentioned (all sequences but one), so that in most instances the gestures flagged verbal metaphors. In line with their smaller number, belly-related gestures occurred in a more consistent range of contexts than heart-related gestures: with generic emotions ('feel') or with negative emotions (self-oriented: worrying, other oriented: lack of generosity). Contrary to heart-related gestures where the hand was usually static, gestures involving the belly were more dynamic, and featured more diverse hand trajectories. In several instances, the movements of the hand(s) on or in front of the belly conveyed metaphors. Interestingly, the metaphors in question did not always match metaphors attested as verbal metaphors in Kriol; instead, several of them matched metaphors attested in Dalabon and other neighboring Australian languages.

The clearest case was a metaphorical sequence in a short Kriol narrative about the emotional relief felt when talking to a close relative. The gestures, rendered in Fig. 4, involved the belly and the rest of the abdomen, with flat open hands moving together downwards from the upper chest to the bottom of the belly, at some distance from the body. The hands were then brought back up and the downwards movement was repeated seven times, while the process leading to emotional relief was being verbally unfolded. Some of the downwards

movements were synchronized with the words *gud*, *gudwan* ('good', for feel good) and *sedeldan* 'calm down' (<Eng. *settle down*).

(Kriol) 20140326b\_002\_IA 151 [ContEl]

- (4) IA [Ai] *wandi tel-i dat olgemen ba kam, en selimdan mi.*  
 1sg.S want tell-TR DET woman DAT come and calm.down 1sg  
 [2 downwards gestures further from trunk]  
*Im tok, oh, yu don't need to agumen garra yu femili said,*  
 3sg tok oh [Eng.] argue COM 2sg.POSS side  
*en lakijat yuno. En im meik-im mi fil, ebrithing, yuno...*  
 and CONJ CONJ and 3sg make-TR 3sg feel everything CONJ  
 [cycles of downwards movements starting]  
*Im meik-i fil-im ebrithing, gud na, yeah gud-wan.*  
 3sg make-TR feel-TR everything good EMPH yeah good-SHFT  
 MP *Im sedeldan...*  
 3sg calm.down  
 IA *Im sedeldan.*  
 3sg calm.down  
 'IA I should tell that woman to come and make me feel appeased. She says, 'oh, you don't have to argue with your family', and things like that you know. And she makes me feel, everything, you know... She makes me feel good all the way, yeah, good.  
 MP It calms down...  
 IA It calms down...'



Figure 8.4 One cycle of the metaphorical gesture feeling relieved is like having something go through one's abdomen.

The metaphor encapsulated in this sequence of gestures is FEELING RELIEVED IS LIKE HAVING SOMETHING GO THROUGH ONE'S ABDOMEN. The metaphor is relatively intuitive, but it does not match any verbal metaphor attested in Kriol (or in English), whether lexicalized or not. On the other hand, a very similar

metaphor is attested in several Dalabon lexicalized compounds, for instance *kangu-yowyow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow’, as well as others as listed in (5). Comparable compounds are attested in the neighboring Gunwinyguan languages.<sup>2</sup>

- (5) Dalabon compounds conveying the metaphor  
feeling good/relieved is like having a flowing abdomen  
*kangu-yord(mu)* ‘belly’+‘clear way, body fluid be released’, ‘get rid of negative feelings’  
*kangu-yowyow(mu)* ‘belly’+‘flow’, ‘feel good, be nice’  
*kangu-yurd(mu)* ‘belly’+‘run, flow’, ‘feel good’

These compounds linguistically represent positive emotions as a flowing belly, consistent with the general metaphor of the resistance of the belly (see 2.2 in Chapter 7): a belly that does not resist is fluid. Fluidity, in turn, is evocative of downwards movement like the one enacted by the speaker in (6). Although speakers in the Dalabon corpus did not gesture much, precisely this metaphor was enacted in gestures by the most proficient Dalabon speaker.<sup>3</sup> Here, the sequence occurred in a narrative about emotional redemption: someone who is emotionally unwell finds peace and stability when turning to God.<sup>4</sup> The sequence is presented below in snapshots (a-e) in Fig. 5 (the final stage of this gesture will be discussed further below). The speaker moved her right hand from the very top of her chest just below the neck, down to the lower part of her belly, in a swift movement. This gestural metaphor accompanied the metaphorical compound *kangu-yurd(mu)* ‘belly’+‘run/flow’, ‘feel good’, used when describing emotional relief, i.e. feeling good after feeling bad.

(Dalabon) DAL\_2012\_06\_13\_05\_SC\_VID – 4’50 (MT\*) [Stim]

- (6) [photos c, d, e, f]  
*Nga-h-lng-kangu-yurd-miyan,*  
1sg-R-SEQ-belly-run-FUT  
feel.good  
*mak nga-wob-kangu-dinjirr-miyan.*  
NEG 1sg-a.bit-belly-HATE-FUT  
‘I’ll ask God, and I’ll feel good then [I will flow from the belly, I will belly-run], I won’t be mean again [I won’t have bad feelings from the belly].’

Comparable metaphorical gestures are also attested with speakers of the Kunwinjku dialect of Bininj Gun-wok, in association with the equivalent lexical metaphors, *kange-yerrk(me)* ‘heart’+‘detach, become loose, remove’, ‘feel relieved’.<sup>5</sup> With respect to the gesturing style of these realizations, Dalabon and Kunwinjku were much closer to each other, and both differed from Kriol. But in spite of very different realizations, there are important conceptual similarities between the Dalabon gestures in (6) and the Kriol gestures in (4). Both sequences evoke downwards movement through the belly, and therefore they both instantiate the same metaphor: FEELING RELIEVED IS LIKE HAVING SOMETHING GO THROUGH ONE’S



Figure 8.5 Dalabon metaphorical gesture.

**ABDOMEN.** In Dalabon, this metaphor accompanies a conventional verbal metaphor encapsulated in the lexicalized verbal compound *kangu-yurd(mu)* ‘belly’+‘run/flow’, ‘feel good’. In Kriol, on the other hand, the metaphorical gesture does not accompany a verbal metaphor: it is the sole expression of a metaphor that is not attested as a verbal metaphor anywhere in my corpus. This suggests that Kriol speakers’ gestures can reflect Australian body-based emotion metaphors, even when these metaphors are not reflected in Kriol lexicalized emotion collocations, or attested in Kriol speech at all.<sup>6</sup>

While the gestural sequence discussed above is the clearest to illustrate how Kriol speakers produce gestures that match verbal metaphors found in Dalabon – and other Gunwinyguan languages – rather than in Kriol, the case is not unique. In another case, involving another young Kriol speaker and a different metaphor, the speaker moved her open, flat right hand twice, from left to right, on her lower belly, as she used the word *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’ in a narrative about family distress. This gesture, which occurred twice in the two-minute-long

narrative, evokes a physical barrier and echoes the metaphorical Dalabon compound *kangu-kurdub(mu)* ‘belly’+‘blocked’, ‘feel anxious’. As in the previous case, I have found no comparable verbal metaphor in Kriol.

In yet another gestural metaphor, a Kriol speaker moved her hand in small circles towards the higher part of her belly. This gesture was used twice by two different speakers when talking about emotional concerns. One of the occurrences (not presented here) was in conjunction with the word *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel bad’, with no other verbal metaphor. In (7), the circling gesture accompanied a verbal metaphor FEELING CONCERNED IS LIKE HAVING A TWISTED BELLY, but the twist metaphor was only approximately reflected in the circling gesture.

(Kriol) 20140326a\_001\_MJ\*\_QB\* 185 (MJ\*) [Stim]

- (7) *Im-in fil-ing nogud na . . .*  
       3sg-pst feel-cont bad emph  
*Ba im binji bin twist-ing na laik . . .*  
       dat 3sg belly pst twist-cont emph conj  
*Im-in fil nogud.*  
       3sg-pst feel bad  
       ‘She was feeling bad then. . . . Her belly was twisting indeed like. . . .  
       She was feeling bad.’

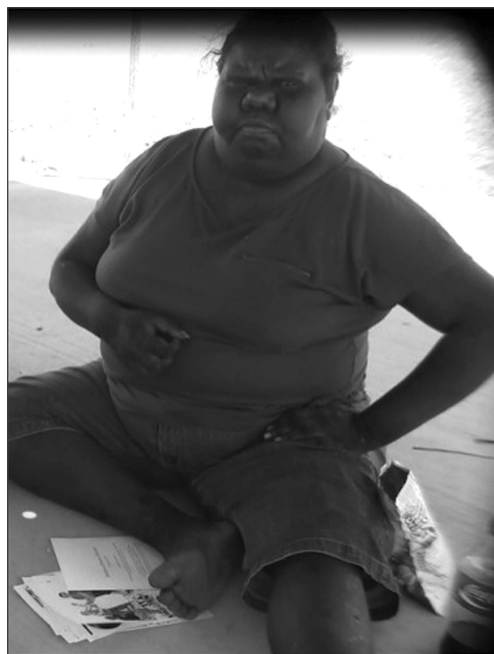


Figure 8.6 Metaphorical gesture for negative feelings.

For this gestural metaphor also, there exists a Dalabon lexicalized emotional compound that associates circling with negative emotions. *Yolh-boled(mu)* ‘pep, feelings’+‘turn’ means ‘have a tantrum, be capricious/feel negative about someone close’. *Boled(mu)* can mean ‘turn around’ or ‘turn on oneself’, thus linking circling movements with negative emotions. Furthermore, the corresponding belly-based gesture is also attested in Dalabon. In (6) above, after the FEELING RELIEVED IS LIKE HAVING SOMETHING GO THROUGH ONE’S ABDOMEN sequence, the speaker explains that the character will no longer feel bad. As she says this, she moves her hand back onto the higher part of her belly and sketches a circling movement. This movement is very similar to the belly-related gesture observed in Kriol in conjunction with the twisted-belly metaphor (7). This is thus another instance of a Kriol metaphorical gesture matching a Dalabon metaphorical gesture. In this case, the gesture in Kriol accompanied a verbal metaphor that came close to the gestural metaphor: ‘twisting belly’ in verbal metaphor, ‘turning belly’ in gestural metaphor. Yet, a Dalabon lexicalized expression offers an even better match (turning feelings for negative feelings), and the Kriol gesture is remarkably similar to the Dalabon gesture.

The above data shows that in several instances in my Kriol corpus, gestural metaphors come closer to Dalabon verbal metaphors than to Kriol ones. In two of the cases presented above, the speakers’ gestural metaphors are not matched verbally in Kriol, but they do pair up quite neatly with lexicalized metaphors attested in Dalabon and other Gunwinyguan languages.

### 1.3 Gestures, metaphors and contact

With the above cases, we find that Kriol metaphorical gestures can convey metaphors that were inspired (more or less directly) by the verbal metaphors of some Australian Aboriginal languages, but no longer correspond to attested verbal metaphors in Kriol. In other words, here metaphors seem more persistent in gestures than in speech. This is in line with Cienki and Müller’s (2008b:491–492) observation that some metaphors can persist in gestures even though they are no longer perceptible as verbal metaphors, because their carrier expression has become opaque. For instance, the German word *Depressivität* ‘depression’ relates etymologically to the metaphor SAD IS DOWN; but this is now opaque for most German speakers. Nevertheless, German speakers produce metaphorical gestures of the type SAD IS DOWN when using the word *Depressivität*. That is, gestures can retain metaphors that have become verbally opaque. The case of Kriol belly-based gestural metaphors is different however, because in at least some cases there is not even a trace of the original metaphor in the spoken language. This confirms and reinforces the observation that gestures are prone to persisting through language change and language shift. This may result from their iconic dimension: they can remain conceptually interpretable independently of linguistic transformations.

In terms of contact and diffusion mechanisms, the persistence of Australian metaphors in Kriol gestures could be explained in several ways, involving miscellaneous degrees of conceptual processing of the metaphors vs blind imitation. Presumably, early speakers of Kriol, who all knew some Australian Aboriginal

languages, would have retained some conceptual representations corresponding to Australian emotion metaphors, and projected these conceptual representations into Kriol gestures. Another possibility is that Kriol speakers who do not know any Gunwinyguan language imitate Gunwinyguan metaphorical gestures. Given that the realizations vary in style within Kriol as well as compared to Dalabon (and Kunwinjku), blind imitation is less likely. Instead, the iconicity of gestures presumably favors their adoption from a language one does not understand: young Kriol speakers witnessing their parents or grandparents speaking another Australian language may have been able to grasp what the gestures meant, even when much of the speech may have remained opaque. These borrowing scenarios are not exclusive of one another. Since blind imitation is the least likely, they overall imply that Kriol metaphorical gestures correspond to actual conceptual representations for Kriol speakers, whether these representations were maintained by bilingual speakers, or whether they were transmitted to monolingual speakers thanks to the interpretable iconic dimension of gestures.

### *1.4 Gestures, metaphors and language shift*

The above analysis of Kriol gestures further illustrates that figurative body/emotion associations, in spite of being overall less widespread in Kriol than in Dalabon and other Australian languages, still surface where Kriol speakers are less constrained by linguistic conventions. This is the case with gestures, which are also known for their acquaintances with conceptual representations and cognitive processes (Enfield 2009:Chap 5 and 6; Kita & Alibali 2017). This further demonstrates that *conceptual* figurative representations are still active for Kriol speakers, independently of their lesser *linguistic* salience. Coming back to the question of language shift, Kriol gestural metaphors reveal that even a couple of generations after a community has shifted to a new language, some of its speakers can continue to endorse certain conceptual representations pertaining to the former language, even when these representations are no longer linguistically prevalent in the new lexico-grammatical code they have shifted to.

Whether these ‘residual’ conceptual representations will persist over time and generations is a question for future research and observation. It is possible that substantial linguistic realization is actually a condition for their long term maintenance, especially in a situation of relatively intense contact with a dominant language and its population. Nevertheless, in the case under consideration, the effect of language shift upon *conceptual* representations of emotions is at any rate considerably delayed compared to the effect of language shift upon *linguistic* figurative representations of emotions.

## **2. Metalinguistic significance of the belly/emotion association**

Not only do body-based and in particular belly-based tropes occur where Kriol speakers are able to distance themselves from linguistic conventions; they also

seem to be at the forefront of their minds and metalinguistic representations. Firstly, there is some linguistic evidence that these collocations are not entirely frozen, and that speakers do perceive their literal meaning (and therefore access the conceptual representations behind these lexical expressions). For instance, semantically equivalent alternatives licensed by the conceptual coherence of the trope occurred occasionally – e.g. *rabislwan binji* ‘worthless’+‘belly’, as an alternative to the lexicalized *nogud binji* ‘bad’+‘belly’, ‘feeling bad’.

More importantly, the conceptual relevance of the belly as a seat of emotion surfaced explicitly in metalinguistic comments. In a semi-formal task recorded with eight Kriol/Dalabon bilingual speakers, participants were asked to locate ‘feelings’ on the X-ray-style<sup>7</sup> drawing of a human body (Kriol *filing*, see 8.1 in Chapter 4, Dalabon *yolb-no*, Ponsonnet (2010c, 2014d, 2016b)). In this context, speakers whose Kriol was dominant over Dalabon showed a greater tendency to locate ‘feelings’ in the belly – while Dalabon speakers often located them in the head/brain (see Ponsonnet 2009). This confirms that Kriol speakers are particularly receptive to the conceptual representations encapsulated in collocations such as *gud binji* and *nogud binji* ‘good/bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel good/bad’.

Furthermore, Kriol speakers’ metalinguistic perceptions about the collocations *gud binji* and *nogud binji* ‘good/bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel good/bad’ suggest that the conceptual association between emotions and the belly is not only accessible to speakers, but in fact salient in their metalinguistic representations. Kriol speakers across generations treated *gud binji* and *nogud binji* as earmarks of the Kriol language. As was briefly discussed in 3.1 in Chapter 7, although *gud binji* and *nogud binji* are the only body-based collocations with some frequency in my Kriol corpus, they are not that frequent in actual speech; in fact, they are relatively rare in the speech of younger speakers. Nevertheless, there were claims that *gud binji* and *nogud binji* were very common emotion terms, as illustrated in (8). Another instance of metalinguistic salience is presented in (9), an excerpt from a metalinguistic conversation about emotion words in Kriol, where *gud binji* and *nogud binji* were the very first words cited by the consultant.

(Kriol) 20140402b\_000\_JB 016 [EI]

[Answering an explicit question about a heart metaphor in Barunga Kriol.]

- (8) *Wi yus-im-bat nogud binji ole taim.*  
 Ipl use-TR-CONT bad belly always  
 feel.bad

‘We’re always using *nogud binji*.’

(Kriol) 20140326a\_002\_MJ\*\_QB\* 03 [EI]

[Openly enquiring about emotion words in Barunga Kriol.]

- (9) *Yeab oni lilbit from wanim Kriol mela god-um ba ...*  
 Yeah only a.little from HESIT Kriol Ipl.excl have-TR DAT  
*feelings laik ba meik-im ... ba sei ...*  
 [Engl] CONJ DAT make-TR DAT say

*gud binji*    *wen*    *yu*    *hapi*,    *en*    *nogud binji*    *wen*    *yu*    *sed* . . .  
 good belly    when    2sg    happy    and    bad belly    when    2sg    sad  
 feel.good    feel.bad

‘Yeah, we have only a few in what-you-call-it Kriol for . . . feelings like to do. . .

to say. . . *gud binji* when you’re happy, *nogud binji* when you’re sad.’

In elicitation sessions, some consultants suggested that *nogud binji* should replace terms such as *sed* ‘sad’ or *apset* ‘upset’, which are in fact more frequent Kriol words, but sound more English. I have also observed that the expressions *gud binji* and *nogud binji*, as well as the word *binji* itself, often count among the few Kriol words known to non-Indigenous Australians who work in Aboriginal communities (at the clinic for instance). These ‘strangers’ also tend to use these expressions as emphatic Kriol tokens, presumably as a sign of good will.

The metalinguistic emphasis on *gud binji* and *nogud binji* ‘good/bad’+‘belly’, ‘feel good/bad’ reflects a form of linguistic purism that seems to relay a claim for cultural particularism. The belly/emotion association is not particularly well represented in English, where the few emotional expressions involving the belly/abdominal organs tend to relate to specific emotions such as courage (‘to have guts’) or intuition (‘gut feeling’). By contrast, as discussed in Chapter 7 (2.3), the belly supports dominant tropes not only in Dalabon, but also in a significant proportion of Australian languages. The figurative association between the belly and emotions thus reflects influence from Australian Aboriginal languages, local and distant, as opposed to English influence. This could explain why *gud binji* and *nogud binji* are treated metalinguistically as linguistic and cultural tokens: they are symbols of the local Indigenous identity, contrasting with mainstream Australia. Speakers’ metalinguistic emphasis on these expressions can thus be regarded as a claim for cultural difference, irrespective of the actual linguistic prevalence of these items.

Overall, it seems that the association between emotions and the body – the belly in particular – is more prominent in Kriol speakers’ mind than in the actual linguistic representations conventionalized in their language. This in turn gives further weight to the hypothesis, presented in 3.2 in Chapter 7, that the relative scarcity of the body/emotion association in the Kriol language itself results from strictly linguistic pressures – in this case, the morphological profile of Kriol and the mechanisms of substrate transfer. Since Kriol speakers seem willing to use and emphasize the figurative association between the body and emotion whenever they can, the relative linguistic scarcity of this association is unlikely to reflect changing worldviews, and is instead better explained by linguistic pressures.

### 3. Conclusion

We had seen in Chapter 7 that tropes associating emotions with the body have far less linguistic incidence in Kriol than in Dalabon. They are not entirely absent though: Kriol does feature a small number of lexicalized body-based emotion

collocations, and Kriol speakers also produce free body-based metaphors that are often quite Dalabon/Australian-like. But the number and frequency of these body-based metaphors is incomparably lower in Kriol than in Dalabon.

Following these observations on *linguistic* figurative representations, in the present chapter I turned to the question of the *conceptual* correlates of these linguistic tropes. The occurrence of free (as opposed to fully conventionalized) body-based tropes, discussed in Chapter 7, already indicated that Kriol speakers endorse the conceptual representations behind these tropes, but there is additional evidence. The analysis of gestures related to emotions further demonstrates the conceptual relevance of the belly/emotion association, as Kriol speakers use metaphorical gestures that are not attested as verbal metaphors in Kriol, but actually reflect Dalabon metaphors. It thus seems that in general, although the figurative association between the body and emotions is not prevalent in the Kriol lexico-grammatical code, speakers tend to use these metaphors in contexts where linguistic conventions are relaxed. This is also in line with speakers' explicit descriptions of the belly as a seat of emotions, and with their emphasis on the role of belly-based lexicalized tropes in the Kriol lexicon.

This analysis of figurative representations of emotions in Kriol and Dalabon suggests that, in the context of language shift, *conceptual* figurative representations of emotions are not immediately dependent upon linguistic forms: conceptual representations can persist when their linguistic instantiations have largely disappeared. Reciprocally, the fact that speakers continue to endorse certain conceptual representations in the context of a cultural shift does not imply that these representations will necessarily surface linguistically. Overall, in language shift, conceptual and linguistic representations may simply be independent of each other. Linguistic figurative representations of emotions appear to be sensitive to linguistic parameters such as the dynamics of language contact, or the typological profiles of the languages in co-presence. But the linguistic changes induced by these pressures do not necessarily translate into changes at the level of speakers' shared representations. In other words, this is a situation where linguistic relativity – the influence of language upon thought, see Chapter 1 – does not apply.

Whether the same conceptual representations will persist through time is a question for future observation. Given that the conceptual association between the body and emotions is not strongly supported linguistically, will future generations of Kriol speakers continue to perceive emotions as strongly connected with the belly? Will they continue to create tropes and gestures that instantiate these associations? Or will these conceptual associations and their linguistic output eventually shrink, if they actually depend upon a larger number of linguistic instantiations to nourish them over time? In practical terms, this may also raise the question of deliberate 'language bending'. Should Kriol speakers wish to nurture the conceptual association between emotions and the belly, they may be willing to actively reintroduce a larger number of chosen body-based emotion tropes in their language. Since this is one of the main divergences between Kriol and Dalabon/Australian languages in the domain of emotions, this would make Kriol sound significantly more Australian. Such 'conceptual maintenance'

or ‘conceptual revitalization’ would be very effort-effective, as it could operate via targeted linguistic forms, without the need to revitalize an entire lexicogrammatical code.

## Notes

- 1 While some Australian languages have fairly developed sign languages (Kendon 1988), Dalabon only has a more limited system of signs for communication at a distance. Speakers of Kriol who cannot speak Dalabon do not, to my knowledge, master these signs.
- 2 Bininj Gun-wok: *kange-yerrk(me)* ‘heart’+‘detach, become loose, remove’, ‘feel relieved’; Jawoyn: *nguddu-yowwomamang* ‘heart’+‘flow, run’; Rembarrnga *kangayurd* ‘heart’+‘run’. (From my own data.)
- 3 She also speaks Kriol as a second language, but Dalabon is her native language and her Kriol is not standard.
- 4 This sequence was videoed by Sarah Cutfield on behalf of Nick Evans, as part of a Family Problems Picture Task elicitation (San Roque et al. 2012). I thank them for sharing the data with me.
- 5 A similar compound is attested in Dalabon: *kangu-yerrk(mu)* ‘belly’+‘slip, be released’, ‘feel better, get rid of resentment’(Ponsonnet 2014a:424).
- 6 It is likely that Kriol speakers may accept or repeat this metaphor if suggested, but it is not lexicalized as it is in Dalabon and other Gunwinyguan languages, and it did not occur spontaneously either.
- 7 For example showing internal organs, as is often the case on Arnhem Land traditional paintings.

# Conclusion

What have we learned from this comparison between the recently adopted Kriol, and Dalabon, one of the languages being replaced by Kriol? A salient observation, throughout the chapters, was that language is highly plastic and that in a situation of language shift, speakers are creative enough to shape their new linguistic code in ways that will let them convey the contents they want. This is apparent from the study of the Kriol lexicon in Chapter 4, where we observed that speakers easily re-package old meanings under the guise of new word forms. Another example of the plasticity of language is speakers' ability to circumvent the absence of certain tools by modulating and expanding the functions of other tools, recruited from all sorts of possible sources. This was illustrated in Chapter 6, when we examined how the functions covered by Dalabon morphological diminutives are covered in Kriol, given that Kriol does not have morphological diminutives. With respect to language shift, linguistic plasticity means that, equipped with a new lexico-grammatical code, a community is likely to bend the new linguistic tool so that it fulfils their needs for communication. *Prima facie*, this implies that the shift may not have a very significant impact on what speakers can say and how they describe the world. This observation largely aligns with previous studies of language shift on the Australian continent (Meakins 2011; Hoffman 2012; Dickson 2015). At the same time, it also calls for significant qualification.

We did encounter some linguistic features that have not 'bent' to reflect speakers' shared representations. In the domain of emotions, this is evident with respect to figurative expressions, discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. There is good evidence that Kriol speakers construe the belly as a seat of emotions, like their Dalabon-speaking ascendants did, and that they are inclined to emphasize this representation. However, it is not nearly as clearly reflected in the Kriol language as it is in the Dalabon language, or in many other Australian languages: representations that associate the emotions with the body are relatively marginal in Kriol. Here, it seems that purely linguistic pressures may indeed constrain the communication tools available to Kriol speakers. On the other hand, the fact that speakers maintain certain conceptual representations independently of the linguistic instantiation of these representations is another indication of the lower impact of language shift. But we need broader time-depth before we can be sure

that the conceptual representations in question will endure in the longer term, in the absence of their linguistic reflexes.

Another caveat to the observation that the plasticity of language suppresses the impact of language shift is methodological. The empirical comparison between Kriol and Dalabon presented in this volume has successfully identified a number of loci of convergence or divergence between the two languages, evaluating these on the basis of comparable corpora. This gives us directions for future research that will quantify and test the potential effect of these convergences and divergences on a broader scale of communication. This includes for example quantifying the influence of lexical resemblances upon the production of structurally equivalent messages; testing whether expressing compassion via a prosodic contour, a morphological diminutive or an interjection modifies the extent to which compassion is communicated; comparing the behavioral responses of Kriol speakers with that of speakers of Australian languages with prevalent body-based metaphors to assess the degree of conceptual association of emotions with bodily symptoms etc. Apart from this experimental testing, more empirical studies are also needed on cases of language shift that involve linguistic tools likely to impact communication practices and shared representations: for instance honorifics, kinship-based grammatical rules or evidentiality systems which force speakers to flag the source of their knowledge as they describe an event. All these questions would be excellent avenues to test the influence of language upon what people can say, think or do – i.e. the linguistic relativity hypothesis – in a way that would also be relevant to actual situations of language shift.

Despite these caveats and calls for further research, this study contributes empirical evidence to further demonstrate that – contrary to some (often implicit) popular beliefs – losing one's language does not imply losing one's 'culture'. The comparison between Kriol and Dalabon suggests that 'culture' is the leading force, at least in a socially oriented domain like emotions. I have repeatedly observed that language adapts to what speakers need to say, and that altered linguistic representations do not necessarily result in altered conceptual representations. Further, we also observed that in the case of compassionate contours for instance, cultural change seemed to operate independently from linguistic change. By and large, in the case under scrutiny, using a new language they speak does not have an enormous impact on the way speakers communicate.

This sheds a soothing light on language 'loss', as the communities who have already shifted to a new language, or face an imminent transition, have *a priori* no reason to fear for their identity or values in this process. At the same time, our conclusion by no means cancels the value of linguistic diversity or the importance of supporting the communities who wish to maintain their own language in spite of increasing pressures. Even where a new linguistic code may fulfil comparable purposes as an older one in terms of communication, there are many other reasons why people may be attached to a language and seek to preserve it. The roots of this attachment can be emotional and aesthetic. Each language in the world has its unique sonority, which can never be matched by any other one, and for its speakers encapsulates a life of memories. Language maintenance is also political.

Because language shift usually results from oppression – be it brutal repression, or more subtle pressures – some communities experience language maintenance as a strong and empowering political signal. From a scientific point of view, seeing languages as complex tools shaped by each human group to describe the world in the way that suits them makes linguistic diversity worthy of interest, as it tells us about the myriad ways humans seek to describe the world. With this in mind, it may also be useful to remember that the deepest diversity probably lies in meanings rather than in forms, and that as this study has shown, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the realm of forms and that of meanings.

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