

## Chapter 5

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### *Gun.gunma*

#### 5.1 Introduction

Many speakers of Australian languages are able to employ a number of speech registers within the everyday language of their speech community. One such register, an avoidance register (or mother-in-law language (Capell 1962; Dixon 1972, 1977), occurs in Bunuba. It is called *Gun.gunma*. The prior descriptions by Rumsey (1982b, 2000:123-8) are based on research he carried out prior to the publication of his description in 1982. Rumsey (2000) includes a summary of this work, and an updated analysis, in the context of his wider sketch grammar of Bunuba. During my field work in 1997 and 1998 I recorded three *Gun.gunma* texts by Bunuba speakers and analysed these alongside a text recorded by Rumsey (1982b) and also from Rumsey's field notes kindly provided by him.

This chapter outlines the linguistic structure of the register (based on my original field work), much of which concurs with Rumsey's previous work, but then provides an interpretation of the function of *Gun.gunma* which fits into the wider typological literature on detransitivising strategies and the semantic/pragmatic effects of such strategies. The Bunuba avoidance register, I suggest, employs a linguistic strategy similar to an antipassive construction which performs the function of engaging in respectful discourse with the addressee. This is brought about by creating intransitive *Gun.gunma* verbs in place of the formally transitive verbs in Everyday Bunuba.

In most avoidance registers, the phonology is exactly the same as that of the everyday language and the grammar varies only a little (Dixon 1972; Haviland 1979). It is most commonly through the lexicon that speech communities vary their everyday language, marking language use in specific circumstances as the avoidance way-of-speaking. Some avoidance registers, however, show certain grammatical differences from the everyday language. Such grammatical differences are a major focus of this chapter.

Although much of the structure of Gun.gunma is derived directly from Bunuba forms, Gun.gunma has its own lexicon and grammar which are distinct from those of Bunuba. These differences are outlined below:

Gun.gunma vs Bunuba:

- reduced lexicon
  - a complete one-to-one substitution of the Bunuba form in Gun.gunma
  - a many-to-one substitution of Bunuba forms by only one form in Gun.gunma
  - a Bunuba form which has no equivalent in Gun.gunma
- reduced grammatical structure
  - a many-to-one reduction of ten auxiliary verbs in Bunuba to only one in Gun.gunma
  - no reflexive/reciprocal construction in Gun.gunma to the equivalent Bunuba construction

There is an avoidance way-of-speaking which is referred to here as *Majaliway*. If a speaker wishes (or needs) to mark language use as avoidance, s/he speaks in a *Majaliway* way. This term can be glossed as follows: *majali-way* [mother.in.law-PAIR] ‘pair of people in mother-in-law relationship to one another’. Speakers themselves generally refer to the avoidance register as Gun.gunma, but I am making the distinction between the avoidance way-of-speaking *Majaliway*. That is, in speaking *Majaliway* a speaker employs some of the features of the avoidance register, through the lexicon or grammatical structure of Gun.gunma, but mixes this register with Bunuba grammar and lexicon. The amount of Gun.gunma in relation to the amount of Bunuba is dependent upon the degree of avoidance which needs to be shown between two interlocutors. Rumsey reflects on the use of the avoidance register as follows:

Considerations of form and use alike support the conclusion that avoidance speech was not an all-or-nothing, mechanical reflex of some entirely predetermined interaction type... but was used in varying measure as a part of the means for constituting the relationship between the interactants as one of ‘avoidance’ or potential ‘affinehood’.  
(Rumsey 1982b:160)

This comment indicates that (even as long as 20 years ago) the presence of Bunuba features was acceptable in *Majaliway*. It seems that as long as enough Gun.gunma lexicon and structure is scattered throughout the conversation, a person is speaking *Majaliway*. The number of Gun.gunma features seems to depend on the relationship between the two speech participants, and so the ratio of Gun.gunma to Bunuba features depends on the relationship between the interlocutors rather than an all-or-nothing use of Gun.gunma features. The speech of participants in a higher degree of avoidance will display more Gun.gunma forms than that of participants in a lower degree of avoidance.<sup>1</sup>

The key terms used in this chapter are defined here:

- Bunuba            The language described in this thesis used by speakers in all functions of language use

- Gun.gunma      The lexical and grammatical resources available to and employed by a Bunuba speaker when wishing to indicate an avoidance way-of-speaking
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- Majaliway      The avoidance way-of-speaking which incorporates both Bunuba and Gun.gunma lexicon and grammar to varying degrees

Gun.gunma differs from the Everyday Bunuba in ways that are similar to other avoidance languages around Australia (Dixon 1980:58-65). Gun.gunma vocabulary is reduced in size since many words in Bunuba may be conveyed through the use of a single Gun.gunma word. This many-to-one relationship between Gun.gunma and Bunuba lexicon occurs in both the open word classes of nominals and coverbs, and the closed sub-class of auxiliary roots. One-to-one substitutions of Gun.gunma forms for Bunuba lexicon also occurs in the open word classes of nominals and coverbs, and in the closed word classes of particles. There are also certain peculiarities of Gun.gunma which make it a little different from other avoidance registers in Australia (Rumsey 1982b, 2000). These differences concern the Gun.gunma verb. Strikingly, there is only one auxiliary verb in Gun.gunma, and it is formally intransitive. Gun.gunma verbal constructions with this single intransitive auxiliary substitute for all of the ten everyday auxiliary constructions, both transitive and intransitive. A complete description of this construction is undertaken in §5.3.

The origins of the term Gun.gunma are unclear but perhaps evidence from neighbouring Gooniyandi can shed some light on this. In Gooniyandi, there is no specific term for the avoidance variety used by speakers of that language, but there is “a verb *goon-* meaning ‘to speak shamefacedly, to avoid speaking directly to’” (McGregor 1989:633, 1990:17). As discussed below (§5.2), borrowings may readily be incorporated into the avoidance register of a neighbouring language (Dixon 1980; Haviland 1979; Evans forthcoming), so perhaps the very name of the avoidance register lexicon was a borrowing as well. The cognate coverb *gun* is not attested in Bunuba, other than in the name of the avoidance register. Therefore, the following analysis of the term Gun.gunma is proposed:

- 5-1    *Gun.gunma.*  
       gun-gun-ø-ma  
       RED-speak.shamefacedly-3sgS-MA  
       S/he talks shamefacedly (or carefully).<sup>2</sup>

#### *Sociolinguistic factors*

Prototypically, speakers of Majaliway would be the pair: wife’s mother and daughter’s husband, that is, a mother-in-law and son-in-law pair. Other classificatory relationships which require speech participants to use Majaliway are the following: MoBroDa<->FaSiSo; MoMoBrDaDa<->MoFaSiDaSo; marriageable cousins (that is, distant cross-cross cousins) (Rumsey 1982b:161). Majaliway is used reciprocally by both members of the avoidance relationship.

Traditionally, the avoidance relationship pair may not have actually spoken directly to each other but rather if a man's mother-in-law were nearby, for example, he may have used Majaliway if she were within earshot (Rumsey 2000:124),<sup>3</sup> in order to indicate that he was aware of her presence and was showing due respect. However, in less strict avoidance relationships, conversations in Majaliway could occur. The Gun.gunma lexicon and grammatical features would indicate clearly that the avoidance way-of-speaking was being employed. There are also paralinguistic ways by which interlocutors can mark their language use as Majaliway, by speaking quietly and slowly, by not facing each other directly and by averting their gaze (Rumsey 1982b, 2000). This is in contrast to the way they would speak and behave if they were talking to someone with whom they were not in an avoidance relationship with. These kinds of practices are common in avoidance languages across Australia (Dixon 1980; Haviland 1979; Goddard 1992).

#### *Majaliway today*

Few Bunuba speakers are able to speak Majaliway today. Majaliway is no longer used spontaneously but is still remembered by those speakers in their 60s. Since few younger people are learning Bunuba as a first language, Majaliway is unlikely to be passed on to future generations. Also, the social structures which required the use of Majaliway are not as strong as they once were. With the coming of Europeans and the resulting cross-cultural marriages, for example, the relationships that require Majaliway to be used have become blurred. I was told by the older Bunuba speakers with whom I worked that today, the younger generations do not know Majaliway and "they just go up to anybody and ask them for tobacco or anything".

For my research, Billy Oscar and Nancy Rogers are the only people who have been willing to be tape-recorded using Majaliway. However, some Bunuba elders have been able to help me transcribe and translate the few Majaliway recordings I have made. Although Molly Jalakbiya was an older Bunuba speaker, she claimed not to have known Majaliway well enough to speak it. Perhaps for some reason she was not exposed to Majaliway at the appropriate learning period in her life.<sup>4</sup> She did understand it though, and helped me work on Majaliway transcripts without any more problems than would have arisen if I had been transcribing and translating Bunuba.

Speakers' attitudes towards or knowledge of Gun.gunma lexicon and grammar show that the avoidance register is perceived as quite a distinct language from Bunuba. Conversational reference to the avoidance register provides anecdotal evidence that Gun.gunma has not been used or talked about very much, perhaps for a long time. For example, when we would begin to work on the transcripts I would explain that we would be looking at Gun.gunma. Jalakbiya often referred to it as Unggumi by mistake, correcting herself, having remembered that this was not the name for the avoidance register. Rather, it is a non-Pama-Nyungan language that

was directly to the north-west of Bunuba country (Map 2) which is probably no longer spoken (McGregor 1988:92).

## 5.2 Description of Gun.gunma

As described above, a speaker wishing to mark language use as avoidance must include at least some Gun.gunma features together with Bunuba features in order to speak in a Majaliway way.

### *Gun.gunma phonology/phonotactics and morphology*

The phonological inventory of Gun.gunma is the same as that of Bunuba (Tables 2-1 and 2-2). The phonotactics of Bunuba (consonant clusters and syllable structures) also apply, except in regard to the length of words. Gun.gunma words, particularly nominals, tend to be longer than their Bunuba counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Some examples follow. Throughout this thesis, all Gun.gunma lexicon is marked as such by appearing in **bold** text.

|                 |                     |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Bunuba:         | Gun.gunma:          |                     |
| <i>buga</i>     | <b>(y)imanjarri</b> | ‘child/little(one)’ |
| <i>winthali</i> | <b>wulmanthi</b>    | ‘fire/firewood’     |
| <i>mayi</i>     | <b>mangarrinyi</b>  | ‘food’              |
| <i>wadba</i>    | <b>wanyala</b>      | ‘take’              |

Case markers as well as other nominal and verbal affixes and enclitics are used in Gun.gunma as they are in Bunuba. There are no specifically Gun.gunma nominal endings, verbal affixes, or enclitics. This is another common feature of avoidance languages (Dixon 1977:504; Evans forthcoming:33). However, there are some major differences between the verbal structure of Gun.gunma and that of Bunuba and this is discussed in §5.3.

### *Gun.gunma lexicon*

It is in the lexicon that one of the major differences between Gun.gunma and Bunuba can be seen. For most words in Bunuba, there is a substitute Gun.gunma form. These substitute forms occur in both open and closed word classes. There may be a one-to-one substitution of a Bunuba word with a Gun.gunma word, or a many-to-one substitution of Bunuba words with a single Gun.gunma form. There are also some Bunuba words which seem not to have any Gun.gunma equivalent at all. These words include sensitive body part terms, reference to sexual acts and bodily functions (Rumsey 1982b:166).

Gun.gunma vocabulary is similar to the avoidance register of Dyirbal described by Dixon where “every single lexical word, except a few kin terms, has a different form in the Jajuy (avoidance) and Guwal (everyday) styles” (1980:61), rather than there just being a few marked lexical items. However, as Dixon (1980) points out, this does not mean that Jajuy and Guwal

have similarly sized vocabularies, because of the many-to-one substitutions. This many-to-one relationship holds for the open word classes of nominals and coverbs (see below), as well as the closed class of auxiliary roots (§5.3.1). Firstly, some examples of this many-to-one open word class substitute lexicon follow:

Nominals (Rumsey 1982b:165):

|     |                       |                 |                     |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 5-2 | Bunuba form:          | Gun.gunma form: | Translation:        |
|     | <i>jinali</i>         |                 | spear               |
|     | <i>gilini</i>         |                 | toy spear           |
|     | <i>lambarrambarra</i> | <i>jimara</i>   | toy spear           |
|     | <i>jabiri</i>         |                 | iron-tipped spear   |
|     | <i>jimbila</i>        |                 | glass/quartz tipped |
|     | <i>warrba</i>         |                 | barbed spear        |

Coverbs:

|     |               |                 |              |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 5-3 | Bunuba form:  | Gun.gunma form: | Translation: |
|     | <i>nganja</i> |                 | bite         |
|     | <i>wurrga</i> |                 | put          |
|     | <i>wadba</i>  | <i>wanyala</i>  | get/take     |
|     | <i>garra</i>  |                 | throw        |

Examples of one-to-one substitution also occur in both open and closed word classes.

|     |               |                 |                |                       |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 5-4 | Bunuba form:  | Gun.gunma form: | Translation:   | Word class:           |
|     | <i>garuwa</i> | <i>ngawagi</i>  | water          | nominal (open)        |
|     | <i>yatha</i>  | <i>thanya</i>   | sit            | coverb (open)         |
|     | <i>ngayi</i>  | <i>wumilayi</i> | no/not/nothing | neg.particle (closed) |

See Rumsey (1982b) for discussion of the word replacement strategies exemplified here. Some particles in Bunuba have a substitute Gun.gunma form. In Bunuba *ngayi* ‘no’, ‘not’ or ‘nothing’ was replaced by *wumilayi* in one of the Majaliway texts I recorded (also see Rumsey 2000). The Bunuba negative mode particle *ngayi* also occurs in Majaliway texts, so the Gun.gunma form is not exclusively used in the avoidance way-of-speaking.<sup>6</sup> Rumsey documents another specifically Gun.gunma form of Bunuba lexicon from a closed class (1982b:169).

|     |                |                 |              |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 5-5 | Bunuba form:   | Gun.gunma form: | Translation: |
|     | <i>yaninja</i> | <i>ngajarri</i> | ok/alright   |

An example from a Majaliway text of the negative particle follows:

|     |   |                             |                                  |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 5-6 | <i>Wumilayali</i>                                 | <i>ngarragi minjiwurru.</i> | [ <i>ngayi</i> ‘no/not/nothing’] |
|     | <i>wumilayi-ali</i>                               | <i>ngarragi minjiwurru</i>  |                                  |
|     | <b>nothing</b> -DIR                               | Isg.OBL tobacco             |                                  |
|     | I haven’t got any tobacco here. (NR/MJ1;1/97;2.9) |                             |                                  |

*Origins of Gun.gunma lexicon*

The origin of some of the avoidance register lexicon could be borrowing from neighbouring languages or dialects of the same language (Dixon 1980; Haviland 1979). Cognates for some of the Gun.gunma forms can be found in Gooniyandi, both from its everyday language and some items from its avoidance register. As mentioned, Gooniyandi is genetically the closest language to Bunuba and is located directly to the south-east (see Map 2).

The Bunuba and Gooniyandi communities are closely linked socially and, although Bunuba and Gooniyandi are quite distinct languages, they are very similar in structure. There is a 40-45% cognacy rate in the everyday lexicons of these languages (§1.2). There are also some Gun.gunma words with cognates with Ungarinyin lexicon. Ungarinyin is located directly to the north of Bunuba country and although the languages are quite distinct, the two language groups have enjoyed close social contact for many years. The cognates from other languages tend to be in the class of nominals, although there are also a few instances of coverb cognates with Ungarinyin. Appendix 5 lists the cognates which I have identified from various sources of languages which neighbour Bunuba country. This appendix shows all the attested substitute Gun.gunma forms. These are compiled from both my work and Rumsey's (1982b, 2000) grammar of Bunuba. The list is exhaustive to date but I assume that there are other Gun.gunma coverbs which have not yet been documented.

Gooniyandi and Ungarinyin are languages with which the Bunuba community was in social contact many years ago. It is only in more recent years that the community has come into contact with the desert tribes, for example, the Walmajarri and Wangkajunga. It seems that the transmission of Gun.gunma grammar was already threatened by the time these language groups congregated in Fitzroy Crossing in the early 1960s and so only a few words from these languages seem to be incorporated into the Gun.gunma lexicon. From this, it can be seen that Gun.gunma displays evidence of the social interaction of the Bunuba community before the demise of this register. The break down of social structures of the community was brought about by contact with Europeans, beginning just over one hundred years ago. Because of this, Gun.gunma provides us with a "repository of social history" (as described by Haviland (1979:210) for Guugu Yimidhirr) prior to European contact since some of its lexicon is cognate with neighbouring languages.<sup>7</sup>

### **5.3 Gun.gunma verb morphology**

The major difference between Bunuba and Gun.gunma occurs in the verbal structure. The specifically Gun.gunma MAL+NI auxiliary verbal structure may replace any Bunuba auxiliary verb.<sup>8</sup> This includes both transitive and intransitive Bunuba auxiliaries, whereas MAL+NI is formally intransitive.

There are various strategies for marking a verb as the avoidance way-of-speaking. A Gun.gunma coverb may co-occur with a Bunuba auxiliary; or a Bunuba coverb may co-occur with the Gun.gunma auxiliary; or both a Gun.gunma coverb may occur with the Gun.gunma auxiliary. Alternatively, a verb in Majaliway may be structured in exactly the same way as it would be in Bunuba; that is, it can be an unmarked avoidance verb, allowing other elements of the clause (such as substitute nominals) to signal Majaliway status. Examples of each of these strategies follow:

Gun.gunma coverb + Bunuba auxiliary:

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 5-7 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Wad birra.</i><br>wad(ga/ba) wurr-ra<br>take 3nsgA>3sgO-RA2<br>They take it. (NR1.17) | Gun.gunma form:<br><b><i>Biryi wurra.</i></b><br>biryi wurr-ra<br>take.GG 3nsgA>3sgO-RA2<br>They take it. (NR/BO;2/98;8.46) |
|-----|--|---|

Bunuba coverb + MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary:

|     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 5-8 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Wulala yirrayntha.</i><br>wulala yirr-ra-y-ntha<br>talk 1R.S-RA-PAST-dl<br>We two were talking. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.44) | Gun.gunma form:<br><i>Wulala malgiyidiyntha.</i><br>wulala mal-(g)iy-yiyirr-ni-y-ntha<br>talk GG-IRR-1R.S-PAST-NI-PAST-dl<br>We two were talking. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.47) |
| 5-9 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Manja wurrmangarri.</i><br>manja wurr-ma-ngarri<br>make 3nsgA>3sgO-MA2-CTV<br>They would make it. (MJ/BO1;2/98.38) | Gun.gunma form:<br><i>Manja malbudiyngarri.</i><br>manja mal-wurr-ni-y-ngarri<br>make GG-3nsgS-NI-PAST-CTV<br>They would make. (MJ/BO1;2/98.38)                      |

Gun.gunma coverb + MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary:

|      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 5-10 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Nga giray.</i><br>nga(g) gi-ø-ra-y<br>burn ins-3sgS-ins-RA-PAST<br>It burned. (MJ7;1/97;6.52))        | Gun.gunma form:<br><b><i>Duwi maniy.</i></b><br>duwi mal-ø-ni-y<br>burn.GG GG-3sgS-NI-PAST<br>It burned. (MJ/BO;2/98;8.71)              |
| 5-11 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Ngangga wuyha.</i><br>ngangga wu-ø-yha<br>give FUT-2sgA>3sgO-FUT-YHA<br>You give her. (MO1;1/97;2.29) | Gun.gunma form:<br><b><i>Yilgayha malbuni.</i></b><br>yilgayha mal-wu-ø-ni<br>give.GG GG-FUT-2sgS-FUT-NI<br>You give. (MJ/BO;2/98;8.70) |

The MAL+NI specifically Gun.gunma auxiliary does not occur a great number of times in the texts (about 18% of the possible number of times; see Table 5-2). In fact, in one of the Majaliway texts I have analysed, there is not a single occurrence of the MAL+NI auxiliary. The speaker obviously knew this verbal structure since she used the construction in another text in which she participated. Throughout the text without a MAL+NI example, the speaker rather uses Gun.gunma nominal and coverb forms to indicate that she is speaking the avoidance

way-of-speaking, Majaliway. However, the fact that there is such a grammatical feature which derives a Gun.gunma verb from any of the Bunuba verb complexes is a most interesting feature of Gun.gunma which sets it aside from most of the avoidance languages of Australia.<sup>9</sup>

That the Gun.gunma auxiliary occurs only in a complex verb construction is also of interest. Additionally, there are only two instances of simple verb structures in any of the Majaliway texts. An explanation of the motivation of this phenomenon is discussed in §5.3.3 and is followed by a discussion of the role and function of the MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary.

**5.3.1 Gun.gunma MAL+NI auxiliary**

The Gun.gunma verb can only be a complex verb. Also, the MAL+NI auxiliary is formally intransitive and so only intransitive pronominal prefixes can occur.<sup>10</sup> The *mal-* prefix is inserted in the left-most position within the auxiliary as a prefix to the auxiliary root (Figure 5-1). When this Gun.gunma verb occurs, the coverb, TAM affixes, a subject pronominal prefix, the *mal-* prefix and the NI auxiliary root, are all obligatory elements. Since the MAL+NI auxiliary is already formally intransitive, reflexive/reciprocal suffixing is incompatible with this verbal construction (§5.4.2). Figure 5-1 shows the Gun.gunma verb structure. The components in brackets are optional:

Figure 5-1: Gun.gunma verb template

cv ~ cv.GG(asp)=(enclitics) MAL+T/M-S-NI-T/M-(NUM)-(SUB)-(DIR)-(HAB)-(OBL)=(enclitics)

Although Everyday Bunuba has ten auxiliary roots, there is only one auxiliary root in Gun.gunma, namely, NI.

Table 5-1: Auxiliary roots in Bunuba vs Gun.gunma

| Bunuba | Gun.gunma |
|--------|-----------|
| RA     | NI        |
| RA2    |           |
| MA     |           |
| MA2    |           |
| NI     |           |
| YHA    |           |
| WU     |           |
| WU2    |           |
| NGARRI |           |
| NA     |           |

There is also a formal marker of the Gun.gunma auxiliary which has the form *mal-* (see Rumsey 1982b and 2000). The auxiliary marker MAL and the auxiliary root NI are separated

by the pronominal prefix, but as these morphemes must co-occur they are represented as MAL+NI. The function of the MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary is described in §5.3.4.

Is the NI auxiliary root in Bunuba comparable to the NI form in MAL+NI in Gun.gunma? Morphophonologically, NI behaves in the same way within the MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary as it does in the Everyday Bunuba auxiliary. The only difference is when the Gun.gunma verb is in the present indicative T/M and when the person/number category is 3sgS (i.e.,  $\emptyset$ ). In this environment, the present tense marker is *ga-* instead of *gi-* (Rumsey 2000:126). It is also the case that the T/M marking of the MAL+NI auxiliary is more specific in its T/M marking than any of the Everyday Bunuba auxiliary roots. Rumsey states that this is exceptional for an avoidance register since the tendency in such registers is to be less specific rather than more specific (Rumsey 2000:127). However, the similarities between the NI auxiliary root in Everyday Bunuba and the NI root in the MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary are sufficient to identify them as the same morpheme performing a specialised function. The semantics of NI also lends itself to performing such a function (§5.4.1).

Table 5-2 shows the frequency of occurrence of the ten auxiliary roots in Bunuba, Majaliway and Gun.gunma. It shows that all the Bunuba auxiliary roots except for NA may occur in Majaliway, but the only auxiliary which can occur in Gun.gunma is the MAL+NI construction.<sup>11</sup>

Table 5-2: Frequency of auxiliary roots in all speech styles

| Auxiliary roots | % in Bunuba | % in Majaliway | % in Gun.gunma | Telicity |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| MA              | 10          | 3              | 0              | +        |
| MA2             | 9           | 1              | 0              | +        |
| RA              | 16          | 45             | 0              | -        |
| RA2             | 20          | 13             | 0              | -        |
| WU              | 5           | 2              | 0              | +        |
| WU2             | 12          | 7              | 0              | +        |
| NI              | 10          | 2              | 0              | +        |
| YHA             | 12          | 7              | 0              | +        |
| NGARRI          | 5           | 1              | 0              | +        |
| NA              | 1           | 0              | 0              | +        |
| MAL+NI          | 0           | 18             | 100            | +/-(?)   |

### 5.3.2 *Gun.gunma pronominal marking*

Since the MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary is formally intransitive it only allows an S in the pronominal prefix position. The forms of S which occur in this position are the same as those for the NI auxiliary root in Everyday Bunuba presented in Table 3-7. OBLique pronominal suffixes are also employed in Gun.gunma from the set which are used in Everyday Bunuba (Table 2-5).

There is, however, one situation where number is used within the MAL+NI auxiliary in an unusual way from Everyday Bunuba. In Gun.gunma, the 2nd person singular pronominals are obligatorily replaced by a 2nd person NON-SINGULAR form if the referent is in an avoidance relationship with the speaker. That is, it is only if the referent is in an avoidance relationship with the speaker that the substitution will occur. This process of replacement of 2sg pronominals with 2nsg ones is a common feature amongst avoidance registers in Australia (Haviland 1979; Dixon 1980; Rumsey 1982b; Tsunoda 1981).<sup>12</sup>

Rumsey (1982b, 2000) suggests that this use of the non-singular form is analogous to the *tu/vous* pronominal system in languages such as French (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960), where the different forms are used by people in different power relationships or as an extension of power, for the purpose of showing respect. It seems that the use of the non-singular pronouns in reference to the partner in the avoidance relationship marks the speech as highly respectful and distancing (Tsunoda 1981; Rumsey 2000). Some examples of this pronominal substitution in Gun.gunma follow:

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 5-12 | Bunuba form:<br><i>Wu<del>l</del>ala wura.</i><br>wu <del>l</del> a-la wu- $\emptyset$ -ra<br>talk-RED FUT-2sgS.FUT-RA<br>You (sg) talk. (BO.2001)  | Gun.gunma form:<br><i>Yalayalan bunggurra.</i><br>yala-yalan.GG wu- <u>nggurr</u> -ra<br>RED-talk FUT-2nsgS.NONPAST-RA<br><u>You (nsg)</u> talk. (i.e., you (sg) talk).<br>(NR/MJ1;1/97;2.21) |
| 5-13 | <i>Ngaayawuma birayla anggurrangarri</i><br><u>ngaa</u> -yawu=ma birayla (g)a- <u>nggurr</u> -ra- <u>ngarri</u><br>I/I.PRO-TO=I/I emerge IRR-2nsgS.NONPAST-RA-CTV   |   |
|      | <i>lamayjga wundumanya?</i><br>lamayjga wurr<n<d-u-ma-nya<br>pick.up 3nsgO<INV<3nsgA-ins-MA2-SUB<br>Where do you (sg) come out when <u>they</u> pick them up (i.e., to pick me up)?<br>(Rumsey 1982b:171) |   |

Example 5-13 also shows the replacement of a singular pronoun with a non-singular form when the speaker of this sentence refers to himself. That is, the speaker says ‘They pick them up’ when referring to himself. Rumsey explains that the speaker of this utterance really means ‘you will pick me up’ (1982b:173). Replacement of non-singular forms in Gun.gunma for singular ones in Bunuba is a regular feature only in the 2nd person category, but as the example above shows, it is also possible in other person/number categories.<sup>13</sup>

To place this strategy in cross-linguistic context, reference to the passive and other related constructions discussed by Shibatani provides some assistance:

A universal characteristic of honorific speech lies in its indirectness; and one of the clear manifestations of this is avoidance of singling out of an agent which refers to the addressee, the speaker, or the person mentioned in the sentence. Defocusing of an agent in some way is thus an integral component of the honorific mechanism.

One frequent method of agent defocusing is the use of plural forms, even in reference to a singular agent. (Shibatani 1985:838)

The use of a 2nd person non-singular pronominal is common amongst avoidance registers in Australian languages (Haviland 1979; Dixon 1980; Rumsey 1982b), though it is reported not to occur in at least one Australian language, Mayali (Evans forthcoming).

### 5.3.3 *Simple vs complex verbs*

In the data available to me, there are only two occasions where a simple verb construction occurs in the Majaliway texts. Though in Everyday Bunuba, the MA auxiliary root may form simple or complex verb constructions, in Majaliway it normally forms only complex verbs. The only exceptions are two occasions in a text recorded by Rumsey (1982b:lns 5, 7). The most common function of MA as a simple verb is in the MA:SAY framing complex sentence construction in Bunuba (§4.2.4). In the Majaliway texts I recorded, however, these verbs are replaced by a complex verb which comprises a Gun.gunma substitute coverb and a Bunuba auxiliary containing the RA auxiliary root. Complex verbs containing MA do occur in Majaliway, however.

In Majaliway, speech act verbs are mostly complex, and if complex, always occur with the RA auxiliary root. Perhaps the telicity of an auxiliary root is a factor in the choice between Bunuba verbs and verbs used in Majaliway (RA and RA2 are the only atelic auxiliary roots in Bunuba). Is an atelic verb less intimate, or less direct than a telic verb? This requires further investigation.

Some examples of these verbs follow and are compared with their Bunuba counterparts:<sup>14</sup>

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 5-14 Bunuba:<br><i>Miyngarri.</i><br>ø-ma-iy- <u>ngarri</u><br>3sgS-MA:SAY-PAST-CTV<br>He would say. (BO2.37)                         | Gun.gunma:<br><b><i>Gamal</i></b> <i>jayngarri.</i><br>gamal ø-ra-y- <u>ngarri</u><br>say.GG 3sgS-RA-PAST-CTV<br>He would say. (NR/BO;2/98;8.63)                        |
| 5-15 Bunuba:<br><i>Gilima.</i><br>gi-li-ma<br>PRES-1sgS-MA:SAY<br>I am saying. (RM1.16)   | Gun.gunma:<br><b><i>Gamal</i></b> <i>gingira.</i><br>gamal gi- <u>ngi</u> -ra<br>say.GG PRES-1sgS-RA<br>I am saying (NR/MJ1;1/97;2.19)                                  |
| 5-16 Bunuba:<br><i>Miynhingarri.</i><br>ø-ma-iy-nhi- <u>ngarri</u><br>3sgS-MA:SAY-PAST-3sg.OBL-CTV<br>He would say to her. (MJ10.1,2) | Gun.gunma:<br><b><i>Gamal</i></b> <i>jaynhingarri.</i><br>gamal ø-ra-y-nhi- <u>ngarri</u><br>say.GG 3sgS-RA-PAST-3sg.OBL-CTV<br>He would say to her. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.76) |

Table 5-3 outlines the frequency of the occurrence of telic and atelic auxiliary roots in Bunuba, Majaliway and Gun.gunma:

Table 5-3: Frequency of telic vs atelic auxiliary roots<sup>15</sup>

|        | % in Bunuba | % in Majaliway | % in Gun.gunma |
|--------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| Telic  | 64          | 52             | 100            |
| Atelic | 36          | 48             | 0              |

Table 5-3 indicates that the frequency with which atelic verbs occur in Majaliway is almost 10% greater than their frequency in Bunuba. This can be directly attributed to the common occurrence in everyday Bunuba texts of the telic auxiliary MA, which is the only speech act verb which can frame reported speech in that language. In Majaliway, the function of reporting speech is based most commonly on the use of the complex verb *gamal*+RA: ‘say’+RA.

### 5.3.4 *Argument structure of Gun.gunma compared with Bunuba*

In this section we move on from the view that the marking of Majaliway is purely a matter of lexical replacement of the coverb. The position presented in the following discussion is that there is a syntactic process taking place which involves valence rearranging strategies for pragmatic purposes. We will focus our attention on the auxiliary for it is within the auxiliary that valence rearranging strategies are effected.

The MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary is intransitive, yet can substitute Bunuba auxiliaries which are either intransitive or transitive. Secondly, there is no Gun.gunma reflexive/reciprocal construction. To use such a construction in Majaliway a speaker must employ purely Bunuba strategies. Therefore, it is suggested here that transitivity is considered pragmatically inappropriate in Gun.gunma and so is avoided through syntactic methods.<sup>16</sup>

The Gun.gunma auxiliary must be viewed as being in some way related to a Bunuba counterpart. In Rumsey (1982b, 2000) comparisons are given between a Bunuba form and its Gun.gunma counterpart. It is implicit that the Gun.gunma form is somehow derived from or related to the Bunuba form. Example 5-17 from Rumsey shows this:

#### 5-17 Everyday Expression:

- a) *ngayi*      *mindija*      *aluma*  
*ngayi*      *mindija*      a-li-ma  
no/not      believe      IRR-3sgO<1sgA-MA2  
I couldn’t believe it. (Rumsey 2000:126, ex. 265)

#### Gun.gunma Expression:

- b) *ngayi*      *mindija*      *malguwunguniy*  
*ngayi*      *mindija*      mal-guwu-ng-u-ni-y  
no.not      believe      GG-IRR-1sgS-ins-NI-PAST  
I couldn’t believe [it]. (Rumsey 2000:126, ex. 265)

Rumsey goes on to say:

One way in which the Gun.gunma auxiliary behaves [...] is in its marking of valency relations. Note that in (265) [5-17a) and b)], the Gun.gunma auxiliary replaces a bivalent root even though it is itself monovalent. This happens quite often in Gun.gunma [...]. In this particular example it means that the object is simply not cross-referenced in the Gun.gunma utterance. Often in such Gun.gunma verb complexes the object does get cross-referenced, using an optional OBLique pronominal suffix... (Rumsey 2000:127).

Like Rumsey I view the Everyday Bunuba verb as the basic form of the Gun.gunma equivalent, often resulting in valence rearranging from a transitive form in Everyday Bunuba to an intransitive form in Gun.gunma. The semantic/pragmatic motivations for this are discussed below (§5.3.5).

### 5.3.5 *Bunuba transitive – Gun.gunma intransitive verb types*

If we view a transitive Bunuba verb as the form to which the Gun.gunma verb is related, we can see a manipulation in the valency from transitive to intransitive. So, when an everyday Bunuba auxiliary would be transitive, bearing a pronominal prefix indexing both A and O, the Gun.gunma equivalent with MAL+NI will take an S prefix. Examples 5-18 to 5-20 are of this nature.

| Bunuba form:  | Gun.gunma form:   |
|---|---|
| 5-18 a) <i>Manja wurrmangarri.</i><br>manja wurr>ø-ma-ngarri<br>make 3nsgA>3sgO-MA2-CTV<br>They would make it. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.37) | b) <i>Manja malbudyngarri.</i><br>manja mal-wurr-ni-y-ngarri<br>make GG-3sgS-NI-PAST-CTV<br>They would make. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.37)       |
| 5-19 a) <i>Ngangga wuyha.</i><br>ngangga wu-ø-yha<br>give FUT-2sgA>3sgO.FUT-YHA<br>You give her. (MO1;1/97;2.29)                  | b) <i>Yilgiyha malbuni.</i><br>yilgiyha mal-wu-ø-ni<br>give.GG GG-FUT-2sgS.FUT-NI<br>You give. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.70)                     |
| 5-20 a) <i>Wirama wurrangarri.</i><br>wirama wurr>ø-ra-ngarri<br>gather 3nsgA>3sgO-RA2-CTV<br>They would gather it. (MJ1.1)       | b) <i>Wirama malbudyngarri.</i><br>wirama mal-wurr-ni-y-ngarri<br>gather GG-3nsgS-NI-PAST-CTV<br>They would gather. (NR/BO;2/98;8.45) |

In the above examples, it is difficult to see this clearly because the pronominal prefix in each pair of examples is the same whether the verb complex is transitive or intransitive.<sup>17</sup> In fact, in all of MAL+NI examples I recorded, the transitivity of the pronominal prefixes is always ambiguous. How then is it known that the MAL+NI auxiliary is actually intransitive when the available formal evidence makes it difficult to draw such a conclusion?<sup>18</sup> There are some examples of MAL+NI verb complexes from Rumsey's data which show more clearly transitive *vs* intransitive pronominal prefixes between each verb pairing (1982b, 2000).

- 5-21 a) Bunuba form:  
*Dawungga indjumanya.*  
 dawungga inj-u-ma-nya /inj/-  
 like 2sgA.PRES>3sgO-ins-MA2-SUB 2sgA.PRES>3sgO  
 if you would prefer it (Rumsey 1982b:171)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*Dawungga malgunngudinya.*  
 dawungga mal-guw(u)-nggurr-ni-nya /ngurr/-  
 like GG-IRR-2nsgS.NONPAST-NI-SUB 2nsgS.NONPAST  
 if that's what you'd prefer. (Rumsey 1982b:171)
- 5-22 a) Bunuba form:  
*Dawungga walumanya.*  
 dawungga wu-li-ma-nya /li/-  
 like FUT-1sgA>3sgO-MA2-SUB 1sgA>3sgO  
 If I feel like it. (Rumsey 1982b:170)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*Dawungga malbungininya.*  
 dawungga mal-wu-ngi-ni-nya /ngi/-  
 like GG-FUT-1sgS-NI-SUB 1sgS  
 If I feel like. (Rumsey 1982b:170)

In all of these examples we can say that A is demoted to S and that O is no longer (overtly) present. The O of the transitive verb has become a non-core, optionally marked participant in the Gun.gunma construction (and in the examples above is actually not present). The examples above do not show the oblique marking, however, such examples do occur.

- 5-23 a) Bunuba form:  
*Ngangga yhangarri.*  
 ngangga ø-yha-ngarri  
 give 3sgO<3sgA-YHA-CTV 3sgO →  
 He'd give her. (MJ10.12)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*Yilgiyha maniyngarrinhi.*  
 yilgiyha mal-ø-ni-y-ngarri-nhi  
 give.GG GG-3sgS-NI-PAST-CTV-3sg.OBL → 3sg.OBL  
 He'd give to her. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.71)
- 5-24 a) Bunuba form:  
*Lamayjga winya.*  
 lamayjga wu-iny-yha  
 pick.up FUT-1sgA>2sgO.NONPAST-YHA 2sgO →  
 I'll pick you up. (Rumsey 1982b:171, ln22)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*Lamayjga malbunginiyinggirangi.*  
 lamayjga mal-wu-ngi-ni-yinggirangi  
 pick.up GG-FUT-1sgS-NI-2nsg.OBL → 2nsg.OBL  
 I'll pick up (of) you. (Rumsey 1982b:171, ln22)<sup>19</sup>

In example (5-24b), the speaker is saying ‘I’ll pick you up’ but uses the MAL+NI intransitive Gun.gunma auxiliary. The O of the English translation is an oblique argument in the Gun.gunma verb. Only peripheral arguments occur in this oblique pronominal suffixing position in Bunuba.

Further evidence for the valency manipulation approach is the use of the ergative marker *-ingga* which on two occasions co-occurs with a MAL+NI Gun.gunma intransitive auxiliary. That is, the transitivity of the MAL+NI auxiliary of its Everyday Bunuba counterpart is recoverable due to the overt NP being ergatively marked.

5-25 *dawungga malgunggudinya yinggirringga.*  
*dawungga mal-guw(u)-nggurr-ni-nya yinggirri-ingga*  
 like GG-IRR-2nsgS.NONPAST-NI-SUB 2nsgS-ERG  
 (I could just as well come out to you) if that’s what you’d prefer. (Rumsey 1982b:171, ln16)

5-26 *Ngalaayingga wundayga malbidiynggarri.*  
*ngalaa-ingga wundayga.GG mal-wurr-ni-y-g(V)-nggarri*  
 another.lot-ERG spear GG-3nsgS-NI-PAST-pl-CTV  
 Another lot would all go spearing. (NR/BO;2/98;8.174)

In both examples, the MAL+NI auxiliary occurs with what are recoverable as transitive auxiliary verbs in Everyday Bunuba. Firstly, the coverb *dawungga* ‘like’ normally co-occurs with the MA2 root and the Everyday Bunuba coverb for ‘spear’ *wudijga* normally co-occurs with RA2. Secondly, the overt subject NPs occur with the ergative case marker *-ingga*, whose main function is to mark transitive subject NPs.

### 5.3.6 Bunuba intransitive – Gun.gunma intransitive verb types

Of course, intransitive verbs in Everyday Bunuba also have intransitive counterparts in Gun.gunma. Only when transitive verb is converted into an intransitive verb can one consider a valency manipulation to have taken place (§5.3.5, above). Nevertheless both transitive and intransitive Bunuba verbs are morphologically marked in the same way when they occur in their Gun.gunma versions, both occurring with prefix *mal-*. Some examples of intransitive Gun.gunma verbs which have been formed from intransitive Bunuba verbs follow:

- 5-27 a) Bunuba form:  
*Girrgara wurraygi.*  
*girrgara wurr-ra-y-g(v)*  
 run 3nsgS-RA-PAST-pl  
 They all ran. (RM1.48)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*Girrgara malbudygi.*  
*girrgara mal-wurr-ni-y-g(v)*  
 run GG-3nsgS-NI-PAST-pl  
 They all ran. (MJ/BO1;2/98;8.6)
- 5-28 a) Bunuba form:  
*yatha wurraynyanggarri*  
*yatha wurr-ra-y-nya-nggarri*  
 stay 3nsgS-RA-PAST-SUB-CTV  
 where they would stay. (BO,MJ)
- b) Gun.gunma form:  
*thanya malbidiynggarri*  
*thanya mal-wurr-ni-y-nya-nggarri*  
 stay.GG GG-3nsgS-NI-PAST-SUB-CTV  
 where they would stay. (NR/BO;2/98.8)

#### 5.4 Antipassive constructions - a similarity

Avoidance languages are different from their everyday counterparts in ways which render them less direct or less intimate. Employing the Gun.gunma MAL+NI auxiliary is one strategy for distancing a speaker from the addressee, if the latter is in an avoidance relationship with the speaker. This distancing may be achieved through linguistic means by manipulating the valency of the Bunuba verb, when it is used in Majaliway.

It is suggested here that the examples of the MAL+NI verbal construction show considerable formal similarities to an antipassive construction, according to criteria set out by Dixon and Aikhenvald (2000:9). The following is an outline of what they consider to be a prototypical antipassive construction:

- (a) Antipassive applies to an underlying transitive clause and forms a derived intransitive.
- (b) The underlying A becomes S of the antipassive.
- (c) The underlying O argument goes into a peripheral function, being marked by a non-core case, adposition, etc.; this argument can be omitted, although there is always the option of including it.
- (d) There is some explicit formal marking of an antipassive construction (same basic possibilities as for passive).

Cross-linguistically, the function of the antipassive construction in Australian languages has been presented as follows:

we can characterise antipassive constructions in the following terms: they have missing or 'non-distinct' objects, their subjects are consequently typically less agentive, and they have less-transitive, or intransitive, verbs. (Terrill 1997:82)

When an Everyday Bunuba verb is transitive, the Gun.gunma auxiliary can be viewed as similar to an antipassive construction. That is, it is employed to show deference to the addressee by deagentivising A and demoting it to S, and by pushing out the O to an optional non-core role.

If these considerations are convincing and there is truly an antipassive-like construction in Gun.gunma, why is there no such construction in Bunuba? The answer may have to do with the nature of an avoidance register. If the role of such a register is to distance oneself linguistically from an avoidance relative, then the antipassive-like construction is ideally suited to this function.

In most Australian languages with antipassives, such a construction is a syntactic device used to feed a 'syntactic pivot' in ergative/absolutive languages (Dixon 1995[1994]). However, this is not the reason for the related construction in Gun.gunma. To see why, we need to take a wider perspective. In many languages, there is a way of formally indicating that a non-prototypical A is acting on a non-prototypical O, e.g. an A lower on an animacy or participant hierarchy acting on an O which ranks higher on the hierarchy.

- Ergative marking only when the A is highly agentive (Alexandra Aikhenvald pers.com.). Alternatively, agentive marking when an A is low in animacy and performs an action on a higher, animate A (as Bunuba does (§2.11.1.1)).
- An antipassive construction is used in some languages when 3rd person acts on 1st person (e.g., Yukulta: Keen 1983:236)
- Inverse marking within the pronominal system when an A which is low in animacy/agency acts on a higher O (Gildea 1994, and Bunuba: (§3.8.3))

Strikingly, these are also cross-linguistic strategies for politeness. It is quite widely attested that transitivity-reducing strategies may be employed for the purpose of respect; cf. the discussion by Shibatani (1985) on the correlation between transitivity-reducing strategies such as the following and the passive:

- reflexive-reciprocals
- spontaneous
- potential
- honorific constructions

In many languages all of these constructions may be marked in exactly the same way. The role of the passive construction is said to ‘defocus’ the agent. Shibatani refers to a ‘hierarchy of focus’ where the focus decreases along the hierarchy of grammatical relations:

Figure 5-2: Hierarchy focus of grammatical relations

S > Direct O > Indirect O > OBL O

In Gun.gunma, it seems that one strategy for marking politeness is through valency manipulation which is similar to the process of an antipassive construction in other languages which have this construction type. Givón (1990:567) identifies that the detransitivising strategy of an antipassive construction has the pragmatic effect of downgrading the patient thus making it thematically unimportant. The effect of the action carried out on the patient is no longer focused on, “[a]nd the unimportant patient is more likely to be non-referring and unindividuated, thus less salient” (Givón 1990:567).

If the role of an avoidance register is to distance the speaker linguistically from an avoidance relative, then an antipassive construction is ideally suited to this function. Perhaps Gun.gunma has employed a similar strategy in marking the auxiliary as less direct. Both effects of using the MAL+NI auxiliary—deagentivising A by making it S; and defocusing O by making it oblique and optional—can be thought of as fulfilling the purpose of a respect register in creating ‘social distance’ by implying ‘non-effective activity’.<sup>20</sup>

### 5.4.1 Why the NI verb root?

Though there is only one auxiliary root in Gun.gunma, in the avoidance way-of-speaking, Majaliway, all the auxiliary roots other than NA have been attested (cf. Table 6-2). Any Bunuba auxiliary root which also occurs in Majaliway maintains its semantics as described previously. Some examples of verbs occurring in Majaliway texts follow:

Bunuba coverb + Bunuba auxiliary (i.e., unmarked for avoidance)

5-29 NI: BE(COME)

*Nyajindi*    *mula*        *niynyangarri*:  
 miyha        *mula*         $\emptyset$ -ni-y-nya-ngarri  
 meat         cooked        3sgS-NI-PAST-SUB-CTV  
 When the meat was cooked: (NR/BO;2/98;8.207)

5-30 MA2: DO SOMETHING WITH BODY TO X

*Balarayawu*    *garra*        *wurrmangarri*.  
 balara-yawu    *garra*        *wurr-ma-ngarri*  
 outside-to     chuck        3sgO.NONPAST<3nsgA-MA2-CTV  
 They would chuck it outside. (NR/BO;2/98;8.33)

Substitute Gun.gunma coverb + Bunuba auxiliary

5-31 RA: DO SOMETHING WITH BODY OVER TIME

*Mirra*        *gira*.                                [*baga*+RA ‘lie/be’]  
 mirra        *gi- $\emptyset$ -ra*  
 lie/be.GG    PRES-3sgS-RA  
 It lies there./It is there. (MJ/BO;2/98;8.13)

5-32 WU: ORIENTED MOTION - SOURCE

*Tharraman.ga*    *waniy*.                                [*wurrba*+NI ‘sit.down’]  
 tharraman.ga     $\emptyset$ -wu-aniy  
 sit.GG            3sgS-WU-PAST  
 It sat down. (NR/BO;2/98;8.183)

If, as discussed above, the Bunuba auxiliary roots which occur in Majaliway maintain their semantics in both speech styles, why is the specific MAL+NI Gun.gunma auxiliary employed? All MAL+NI verbs have Bunuba equivalents. It has been attested that most of the Bunuba auxiliary roots can be replaced by the MAL+NI auxiliary. There is no example of a typically MA complex verb in Bunuba that is replaced by the MAL+NI auxiliary; however, the other three Bunuba intransitive auxiliary roots (NI, RA and WU) have corresponding MAL+NI constructions. The *mal-* Gun.gunma auxiliary prefix is employed in some Majaliway verb complexes but it must co-occur with the NI auxiliary root. The MAL+NI combination is made up of separate morphemes within the Gun.gunma auxiliary.<sup>21</sup> The following question needs to be answered:

- Why does MAL not occur alone to mark any Bunuba auxiliary as in Gun.gunma?

As was described in §4.6.1, perhaps NI is used in conjunction with the specific Gun.Gunma prefix *mal-* for the following reasons:

- 1) Any well formed Bunuba verb must contain an auxiliary root.
- 2) NI is one of the two auxiliary roots which derive nominals and some adverbs into verbs and which allow borrowings from English/Kriol to occur as coverbs. That is, NI acts as a default derivational auxiliary root on some occasions.
- 3) In Bunuba, NI is the only intransitive derivational auxiliary root, whereas YHA is its transitive counterpart. If any auxiliary root is to perform a valence manipulation role, then it must be an intransitive auxiliary root, not a transitive one.

It is suggested here that, on the basis of derivational processes and the formal transitivity of the NI auxiliary root, this explains why NI is the only auxiliary root which combines with the Gun.gunma morpheme *mal-* to form the specifically Gun.gunma auxiliary, MAL+NI.

#### 5.4.2 *Reflexive/reciprocal constructions in Gun.gunma*

In many Australian languages which have the antipassive construction, the same morphological marking is used for the reflexive and reciprocal construction (Terrill 1997). This is a more far-reaching statement when the morphology used to mark passive constructions is compared with the marking of reflexive, reciprocal, spontaneous, honorific and potential constructions in languages of the world (Shibatani 1985). In many languages, the same morphology is used to mark a number of these constructions rather than marking each of them in different ways.<sup>22</sup> The passive and antipassive construction are extremely similar to each other, and in many ways they can be considered formally as the mirror image of one another (Givón 1990:624, Dixon and Aikhenvald 2000).

If a reflexive/reciprocal (R/R) construction is required in Majaliway, the marking of such a construction is the same as that used in Bunuba. That is, there is no way a speaker is able to draw on the morpho-syntactic resources of Gun.gunma to form an R/R construction in Majaliway.

As discussed previously, R/R constructions in Bunuba are formed through the use of one of four formally transitive auxiliary roots: MA2; RA2; WU2; and NGARRI, or the formally R/R verb root NA (which has not been found to occur in Majaliway). These auxiliary roots are formally transitive whereas the single Gun.gunma auxiliary root, NI, is formally intransitive. Therefore, quite clearly, speakers do not have the appropriate tools available to them from the avoidance register verbal morphology to form an R/R construction. Speakers must therefore revert to the Bunuba strategy for such constructions. This is not to say that a speaker is unable to mark an R/R verb as the Majaliway way-of-speaking. A Gun.gunma coverb could substitute for the Bunuba coverb, but the speaker would be forced to employ a Bunuba auxiliary to mark the verb as an R/R construction. The following pairs of examples show that a speaker may use

the Gun.gunma MAL+NI auxiliary construction, but when an R/R construction is required, the Bunuba strategy for making a verb R/R is employed instead:

Valency manipulation:

5-33 transitive → intransitive

Bunuba form:

*Ngangga wudanggarri.*

*ngangga wurr-yha-ngarri*

give 3nsgA>3sgO-YHA-CTV

They would give her. (BO2.50)

Gun.gunma form:

*Yilgiyha malbudiyngarri.*

*yilgiyha mal-wurr-ni-y-ngarri*

give.GG AP-3nsgS-NI-PAST-CTV

They would give. (NR/BO;2/98.221)

Reflexive/Reciprocal

5-34 = Transitivity =

Bunuba form:

*Ngangga wudayningarri.*

*ngangga wurr-yha-(v)y-ni-ngarri*

give 3nsgS-YHA-R/R-PAST-CTV

They would give each other. (BO.2001)

Gun.gunma form:

*Yilgiyha wudayningarri.*

*yilgiyha wurr-yha-(v)y-ni-ngarri*

give.GG 3nsgS-YHA-R/R-PAST-CTV

They would give each other.

(NR/BO;2/98.223)

1 Dixon describes the fact that a continuum of avoidance behaviour may have existed “depending on the relationship of the participants” (1980:60). From this it can be inferred that the number of Gun.gunma features occurring within an utterance is dependent upon the strength of the avoidance relationship between two interlocuters. However, if no Gun.gunma lexicon or grammar is employed, then a speaker is no longer speaking Majaliway but rather, Bunuba. The continuum theory applies only if the minimum criterion of speaking Majaliway is something like: ‘at least one Gun.gunma feature per clause’ (see below).

2 See Goddard 1992 for comments on the term ‘shamefacedly’ in the Australian context.

3 This is said to be the case in other avoidance languages such as Dyirbal (Dixon 1972) and Djaru (Tsunoda 1981).

4 It is difficult to say at what stage Majaliway may have been traditionally acquired by the Bunuba speakers who still know this language. Dixon suggests that avoidance languages are learned in the same way as the everyday language, perhaps a little later than the latter (a year or two) (1980:60). On the other hand, Haviland suggests that the avoidance register of Guugu Yimidhirr was learned by speakers as old as in their twenties (1979).

5 McGregor states that Gooniyandi avoidance lexemes not only tend to be longer but also tend to have a higher proportion of consonant clusters than the everyday lexicon (1989:639). This seems not to be the case for the Gun.gunma lexicon in comparison with the everyday Bunuba lexicon.

6 The word *wumilayi* is a cognate form in Gooniyandi avoidance lexicon (McGregor 1990:19). The word means the same in both languages: ‘no, not, nothing’ (and ‘without’ in Gooniyandi).

7 Haviland (1979) discusses the use of taboo words in Aboriginal languages and how a language borrows words from neighbouring languages to fill these gaps. I suggest that the borrowing that went on to provide vocabulary for Gun.gunma gives us some similar information about the social interaction of the Bunuba community.

8 One exception should be noted: in the simple verb construction MA is not replaced by the Gun.gunma MAL+NI auxiliary. This actually raises the issue of whether the MAL element could be analysed as a suffix to the coverb, rather than as a prefix to the auxiliary, as assumed in Rumsey (2000) and previous work. The point is that if MAL were a coverb suffix, its non-occurrence with simple MA would make sense (since with simple MA there is no coverb). Further research is required on this issue.

9 That a morpheme is inserted into the verb complex to mark the auxiliary verb as a specifically avoidance verb complex is not a feature unique to Bunuba. Evans (forthcoming) describes the semi-productive process of forming Gun-gurrng (the avoidance register of Mayali) verbs from everyday verbs “*bonghme* may replace the thematic *bun...*; *bongh* may come between the prebound and the thematic...; or appear as part of a different verb”. For example:

|                    |                        |              |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| ordinary language  | Gun-gurrng             |              |
| <i>bun</i>         | <i>bonghme</i>         | ‘hit, kill’  |
| <i>djirridjbun</i> | <i>djirridjbonghme</i> | ‘wash’       |
| <i>ngalge</i>      | <i>ngalbonghge</i>     | ‘find’       |
| <i>garrme</i>      | <i>walebonghme</i>     | ‘hold, have’ |

Also, in Djaru there is a specific avoidance register verb which must be used when an utterance refers to an avoidance relationship participant (Tsunoda 1981). The Avoidance Language of Djaru is grammatically different from the Ordinary Language in one respect: every verb clause must involve the avoidance verb **luwany-** (1981:215). This verb is the Ordinary Language transitive verb meaning ‘shoot’. Any verb in the Avoidance Language, whether it is transitive or intransitive in the Ordinary Language, is replaced by this specific Avoidance

Language verb if reference is made to an avoidance relationship participant in the utterance. This can be viewed as lexical substitution compared with the productive morphological marking as in Gun.gunma.

10 In Gooniyandi, Bunuba's closest relative, the strategy for marking a verb as 'avoidance' is somewhat different from Bunuba. Gooniyandi does not have a specifically avoidance auxiliary but does have avoidance substitute coverbs (McGregor 1989). In Gooniyandi a particular avoidance coverb may co-occur with a larger range of everyday roots than its equivalent can in the everyday use of Gooniyandi. In Gooniyandi, other than differences in coverb-auxiliary root collocations, a substitute coverb occurs with an everyday auxiliary root marking a verb as 'avoidance'.

11 In Table 5-2, the occurrence of NI and MAL+NI is separated in the three categories since it is possible for NI to occur in Majaliway as an 'unmarked for avoidance' form of the auxiliary verb, whereas its co-occurrence with MAL is formally marked for avoidance (and is in fact, the only auxiliary verb construction available in Gun.gunma). When NI occurs in Bunuba or Majaliway without the accompanying Gun.gunma prefix *mal-* it is functionally different from its co-occurrence with this prefix.

12 In Djaru, not only do the 2nd person pronouns become plural, but the 3rd person pronouns may also be plural in the avoidance register of the language. The substitution occurs only when the pronominals are used in reference to the *majili*, the avoidance relationship participant. (Tsunoda 1981:215).

13 In the avoidance code of Gooniyandi non-singular forms of both second person and also third person pronominals may be used if reference is to the avoidance relative: "Furthermore, in reference to a *maddiyali*, *bidi* 'they' is normally used, rather than the singular *niyi* 'he, she, it'" (1989:643). Also, see Appendix 1, Text 3, line 81.

14 The substitute coverb *gamal* is cognate with a specifically avoidance language preverb in Djaru (Tsunoda 1981:217).

15 These statistics are based on the premise that the telicity of a auxiliary root in Bunuba is the same as the telicity of that auxiliary root when it occurs in Majaliway. This assumption may need to be revised following further research.

16 In Rumsey (1982b:178) the purpose of such a construction is put down to the allowing for certain kinds of vagueness which is not possible in Everyday Bunuba. Although this strategy is aligned to Brown and Levinson's strategies for marking language use as polite, I try to explain in a more systematic way that the linguistic strategy of valence manipulation actually performs the role of semantic/pragmatic respect.

17 That is, the underlying pronominal prefix form is homophonous in each person/number category pairing: /wurr/- in 5-18; /ø/- in 5-19; and /wurr/- again in 5-20.

18 The auxiliary root is also formal evidence that an auxiliary is transitive or intransitive but this is not always clear since there are homophonous morphemes such as MA and MA2 which differ in transitivity. However, along with pronominal prefixes, T/M marking helps in identifying transitive and intransitive auxiliary roots from one another (see Chapter 3).

19 Note the use of the 2nsg.OBL pronominal suffix in reference to a 2sg referent. This is in keeping with the distancing strategies of avoidance languages and is discussed in §5.3.2.

20 But note this possible counter-example to the arguments for an antipassive construction:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Bunuba form:<br/> <i>Jirrbala</i>      <i>anbu.</i><br/> jirrbala      arr&lt;n&lt;∅-wu<br/> pain          1U.S(?)O&lt;INV&lt;3sgA-WU2<br/> I'm in pain. (lit. it pains me) (Rumsey 2000:128, ex.270)</p> | <p>Gun.gunma form:<br/> <i>Jirrbala</i>      <i>malgingini.</i><br/> jirrbala      mal-(g)i-<u>ngi</u>-ni<br/> pain          AP-PRES-1sgS-NI<br/> I'm in pain. (Rumsey 2000:128, ex.270)</p> |
|--|--|

In the Gun.gunma example it is the A which has been bumped out and not the O as has been the case in all previous examples. It seems that these 'impersonal verbs' are treated differently when an antipassive-like construction is derived from the original transitive Bunuba verb. In such verbs the A is always 3sg and thus ∅-.

21 It is only when the 3sgS or 2sgS.FUTURE pronominal prefixes occur that MAL immediately precedes NI because these prefixes are ∅-. In all other person/number categories MAL and NI are separated by an overt pronominal prefix.

22 Examples from Shibatani (1985:822-3) show that the same morphological marker *-(r)are* in Japanese can be used to mark four different constructions: passive; potential; honorific; and spontaneous.