

**Referring Expressions and Referential Practice
in Roper Kriol
(Northern Territory, Australia)**

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Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in the preparing of this thesis, and all resources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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Signature

Abstract

In this thesis I describe aspects of referring expressions and referential practice in an English-lexified creole language spoken in the Ngukurr Aboriginal community, in the Northern Territory of Australia. Kriol has substrate influences from seven traditional Aboriginal languages. Dialects of Kriol are spoken in Aboriginal communities across the Top End of Australia; with estimates suggesting more than 20,000 people speak it as a first language. The language has a low status and in many contexts, such as health, medical and legal contexts, it frequently goes unrecognised as a legitimate language requiring interpreters. There is no comprehensive grammar of Kriol and as yet, there have been few in-depth studies into its structure and use.

I investigate referential expressions in Kriol from various perspectives, using tools from a range of theoretical frameworks and research traditions, including descriptive linguistics, discourse analysis, information structure, and ethnopragmatics. The thesis provides an integrated description of how referential expressions are structured and how they are used in spontaneous talk to meet communicative needs. A further goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that there is significant continuity of referring strategies from Kriol's Aboriginal substrate languages. The data used in this study consists of a corpus of spontaneous discourse between two or more speakers, elicited material, and consultation with Elders on cultural issues relevant to language use.

Chapter One provides an overview of Kriol, its speakers and the Ngukurr community. I discuss the development of Kriol; of particular significance is that it developed over a number of generations, enabling the possibility of continuity of cultural speech practices. Chapter Two provides a sketch of Kriol grammar, as well as an introduction to interactional style in Aboriginal languages. Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the Kriol noun phrase, as well as possessive and inclusory pronominal constructions. Chapter Four draws on interactional data to describe the distribution and function of a determiner, *det*. Chapter Five examines clause-level phenomena involving referring expressions in Kriol using tools from the theory of information structure.

Chapter Six is a description of aspects of communicative practice in Kriol, in particular, person reference and information exchange.

Each chapter contributes original description of the Kriol language. By combining a number of theoretical perspectives, the thesis offers an integrated description of the structure and function of referring expressions.

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In loving memory of †Norma Nangala Joshua

Table of Contents

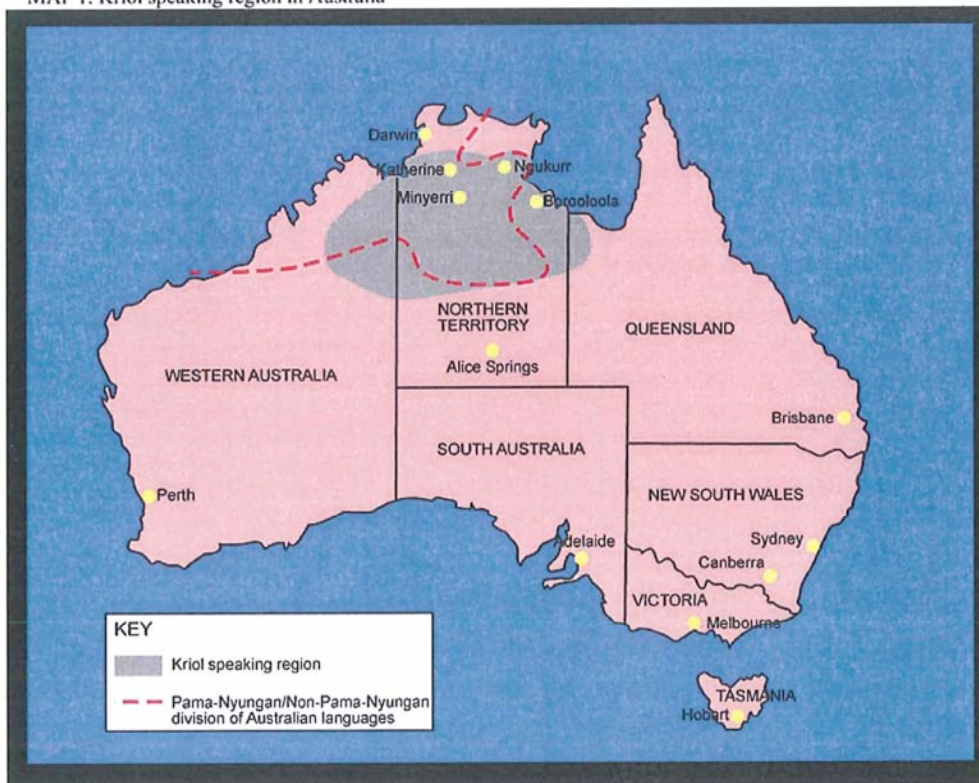
Abstract.....	<i>i</i>
Acknowledgements.....	<i>iii</i>
Maps.....	<i>x</i>
Tables and figures.....	<i>xi</i>
Abbreviations and symbols	<i>xii</i>
Chapter One: A multifaceted approach to describing referring expressions	1
1.1 Aims of this thesis.....	1
1.2 Socio-historical context.....	6
1.2.1 The emergence of Kriol and superstrate influences	7
1.2.2 Substrate influences	9
1.2.3 Languages in Ngukurr.....	9
1.2.4 Socio-economic situation of Kriol speakers	11
1.3 Data collection and fieldwork.....	12
1.3.1 Difficulties with data collection	14
1.3.2 Transcription of the data	15
1.4 Thesis overview	17
Chapter Two: An overview of Kriol	21
2.1 Basic description of Kriol.....	21
2.1.1 Kriol orthography	21
2.1.2 The Kriol continuum.....	22
2.2 A short description of Kriol grammar	23
2.2.1 Noun phrase constituents	24
2.2.2 The verb complex	26
2.2.3 Adverbs	32
2.2.4 Prepositions	33
2.2.5 Discourse particles, tags and exclamations.....	34
2.2.6 The transitive suffix <i>-im</i> and third person object ellipsis.....	36

2.3 Kriol and conversational style	38
2.3.1 Dyadic, continuous style of conversation	39
2.3.2 Kinship and person reference	40
2.3.3 “Vagueness” and “circumspection”	41
2.4 Summary	42
Chapter Three: The noun phrase in Kriol	43
3.1 The Kriol noun phrase	44
3.1.1 Modifiers as fused heads of NPs	45
3.1.2 Constituent order in the NP	50
3.2 Noun phrase features	53
3.2.1 Number	53
3.2.2 Specificity and definiteness	58
3.3 Word Classes	61
3.3.1. Nouns	61
3.3.2 Adjectives	67
3.3.3 Determiners	71
3.3.4 Article-like determiners	72
3.3.5 Quantifiers	73
3.3.6 Personal pronouns	74
3.4 Complex NPs and possessive constructions	81
3.4.1 Inclusive pronominal constructions	81
3.4.2 Other pronominal constructions	83
3.4.3 Possessive constructions	84
3.4.4 Determiners and possessive constructions	87
3.4.5 Co-ordination	89
3.6 Summary	89

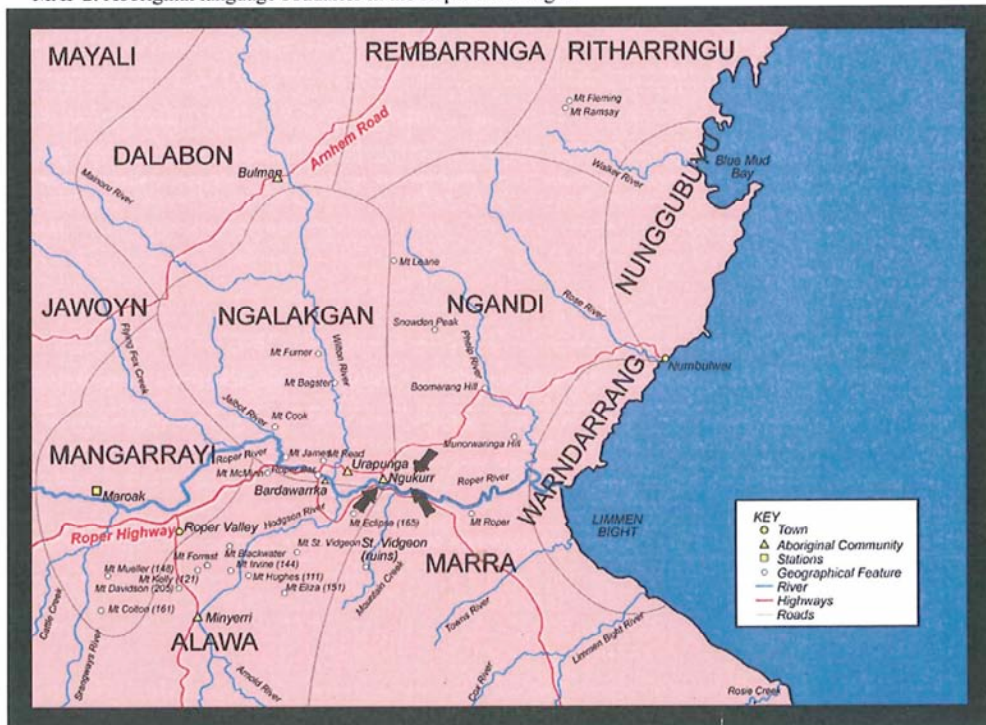
Chapter Four: Determiner <i>det</i>	91
4.1 Demonstratives in Kriol.....	92
4.2 Semantics of <i>det</i>	95
4.2.1 <i>Det</i> as an article.....	96
4.2.2 <i>Det</i> and topicality.....	101
4.2.3 <i>Det</i> as a “recognitional determiner”	104
4.3 <i>Det</i> and creole article systems.....	107
4.3.1 <i>Det</i> and the specific/non-specific distinction	107
4.4 <i>Det</i> and the substrate languages.....	112
4.5 <i>Det</i> and the continuity of Aboriginal discourse practices	115
4.6 Summary.....	119
Chapter Five: Referring expressions and information structure	120
5.1. Concepts used in the study of information structure.....	122
5.1.1 Topic and topic prominence.....	122
5.1.2 Focus.....	126
5.1.3 “Activation state”: Given and new	127
5.2 Left and right-dislocated NPs: An analysis of activation state.....	129
5.2.1 Right-dislocated NPs	129
5.2.2 Left-dislocated NPs	132
5.3 A quantitative study of left and right-dislocated NPs	136
5.3.1 Results.....	142
5.3.2 Discourse types.....	144
5.4 Further features of information structure.....	146
5.4.1 First position: Word order and fronting.....	146
5.4.2 The clitic <i>na</i>	150
5.5 Summary.....	156

Chapter Six: Aspects of communicative practice.....	157
6.1 Communicative norms and cultural scripts	160
6.1.2 Kinship/togetherness as a cultural value in Ngukurr.....	162
6.2 Person reference in interaction.....	166
6.2.1 Theoretical concepts relevant to person reference	167
6.2.2 Forms of person reference.....	169
6.2.3 Person reference without names.....	174
6.2.4 Cultural scripts for person reference without names	177
6.3 “Doing” person reference in Kriol.....	179
6.3.1 An identification scenario	179
6.3.2 A guide to achieving person reference	183
6.4 Information exchange.....	186
6.4.1 Secret/sacred knowledge.....	188
6.4.2 Eliciting information <i>gudwei</i> in Kriol.....	191
6.5 Discussion.....	194
 Chapter Seven: Summary.....	 197
 References.....	 201
 Appendix 1: Classificatory Kinship System in Ngukurr.....	 217
Appendix 2: Semantic primes in Kriol and English.....	218
Appendix 3: Transcripts of Kriol data.....	219

MAP 1: Kriol speaking region in Australia



MAP 2: Aboriginal language boudaries in the Roper River region



Map from Munro (2004) and created by Luke Lynam

Tables and Figures

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Overview of discourse data corpus.....	13
Table 2.1 Kriol orthography – consonants	22
Table 2.2 Kriol orthography – vowels	22
Table 2.3 Demonstratives in Kriol.....	26
Table 2.4 Recognitional and indefinite determiners	26
Table 2.5 Kriol personal pronouns.....	26
Table 2.6 Kriol tense-marking words.....	29
Table 3.1 Position of determiners in the NP.....	44
Table 3.2 Position of intensifiers in the adjective phrase.....	44
Table 3.3 Kriol kinterms	64
Table 3.4 Word classes with lexicalised <i>-bala</i>	71
Table 3.5 Demonstratives in Kriol.....	71
Table 3.6 Recognitional and indefinite determiners (Table 2.4).....	73
Table 3.7 Personal pronouns (reproduced from Table 2.5).....	74
Table 4.1 Pronominal and adnominal demonstratives	93
Table 4.2 Frequency of <i>det</i> and deictic demonstratives in 13 min. conversation..	101
Table 5.1 Activation state and right and left-dislocated NPs	143
Table 6.1 Sample of second and third person recognitional referring terms	176

List of Figures

Fig 1.1 A schematic representation of theories and research traditions.....	5
Fig. 2.1 Speech styles in Anglo and Aboriginal Australia.....	39
Fig. 5.1 Schematic summary of the roles of left and right dislocated NPs	136
Fig. 5.2 English Givenness Hierarchy.....	137
Fig. 5.3 Kriol Givenness Hierarchy	138
Fig. 6.1 Ngukurr Council logo.....	163

Abbreviations and Symbols

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABIL	abilative
ADJ	adjective
COLL	collective
COM	complementiser
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DESID	desiderative
DET	determiner
DIR	directive
DIST	distal
DU	dual
DUR	durative
DSTR	distributive
EM	emphatic
EPIPH	epithet
EXC	exclamation
EXCL	exclusive
FUT	future
HAB	habitual
IMP	imperative
IN	inclusive
INDEF	indefinite
INST	instrumental
INT	intensifier
IU	intonation unit

LOC	locative
MOD	modifier
N	noun or part of the NP that can act as head of the NP
NEG	negative, negation
NP	noun phrase
OBLIG	obligative
PRT	particle
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PROX	proximal
PST	past
PURP	purposive
Q	question marker
QUOT	quotative
REC	recognitional article
SG	singular
TRS	transitive

Symbols

.	divides components of a portmanteau morpheme
-	morpheme boundary
~	reduplication
∅	zero realisation
[]	optional element
*	ungrammatical
?	uncertain grammaticality
:	extended duration of previous vowel

Discourse Transcription Abbreviations and Symbols

Found on examples with multiple speakers and two or more intonation units.

-	truncated word
.	final intonation
,	continued intonation
?	rising intonation (appeal)
(1.2)	1.2 second pause
...	medium pause
..	short pause
1.B	speaker B, first line of transcription
2.B	speaker B, second line of transcription
<E E>	distinct codeswitch to English
<X>	indecipherable utterance, one syllable
<XX>	indecipherable utterance, two syllables
<Q Q>	quotation quality
<C C>	creaky voice quality
<L L>	lento, slow speech
<F F>	forte, loud
<P P>	soft
(text)	word not included in original utterance, but necessary for free translation
CAPS	capitalisation indicates emphasis
^	stress/emphasis
<(Hx)>	exhalation
@	laughter