

Gurindji Kriol: A Mixed Language Emerges from Code-switching

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1. Introduction

Bakker (2003: 129) claims that ‘mixed languages’ do not arise from code-switching. The language spoken most frequently by Gurindji people between the ages of 3 and about 45, termed ‘Gurindji Kriol’ here, is a counter-example to this generalization. This language is made up of elements of Kriol, an English based creole spoken across the middle of the Northern Territory of Australia; and Gurindji, the traditional language of a group in the west of this region (Dalton *et al.* 1995; McConvell 2002). The previous generation spoke both these languages fluently, but the most prevalent type of speech involved intersentential and intrasentential code-switching. While choice of language in code-switching among middle-aged and older people in the 1970s–80s was influenced by social meaning and discourse considerations (McConvell 1988, 1994), there was a tendency for a particular split pattern of language assignment to be used: Kriol provided most of the syntax, and the tense–aspect–mood and transitivity morphology, and Gurindji the case-morphology on nouns and pronouns, as well as much of the nominal lexicon and many of the coverbs taking the role of verbs. This is the conventionalized pattern that has stabilized in Gurindji Kriol, and we hypothesize that this is due to the most frequent and salient input to child learners from adults in the 1960s–80s, combined with declining proficiency in traditional Gurindji among most young people.

In what follows we shall first sketch out the main features of Gurindji Kriol, in Section 2.1. In Section 2.2, we examine how a mixed language is defined, and the reasons why Gurindji Kriol is appropriately classified as a mixed language. Section 3 looks at the transition between code-switching and a mixed language, and the dominant view that there are no documented examples of such a transition. Section 4 demonstrates that the history of Gurindji speech over the last 30 years provides the required documentation of the transition from code-switching to a mixed language. Three periods are covered: code-switching patterns among Gurindji adults in the 1970s (Section 4.1); mixed speech among Gurindji children in the 1980s (Section 4.2)

and Gurindji Kriol as used by young and middle-aged people in the 1990s–2000s drawing on the independent work of Charola (2002) and Meakins (Meakins & O’Shannessy 2004), who is currently working on language acquisition by Gurindji children (Section 4.3). In each section related to each period/age group there is a focus on specific features as examples of patterns which are changing: (a) how verbal tense, mood and aspect is expressed; (b) how subject/object NP’s are identified (by word order and/or by case-marking, especially ergative); and (c) how locations are expressed (by case-marking and/or by prepositions). Section 5 concludes that Gurindji Kriol is a mixed language resulting from pervasive structured code-switching in the previous generation.

2. Gurindji Kriol, a Mixed Language

2.1. The Origin and Character of Gurindji Kriol

Gurindji Kriol arose from contact between white pastoralists who spoke English, and the Gurindji, the traditional owners of the country the pastoralists colonized. After the initial conflict period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Gurindji people worked on the cattle stations as kitchen hands and stockmen. The lingua franca between the two groups was an English based pidgin which had spread initially from the east, and developed into the language now known as Kriol. The Gurindji, who already spoke a number of the related neighbouring languages, added Kriol to this repertoire and their code-switching practices. Nowadays all Gurindji people speak Gurindji Kriol, and few speak Kriol without a mixture of Gurindji. Older people also speak Gurindji and younger speakers have a reasonable passive knowledge of Gurindji. Gurindji has become an endangered language, with only 175 speakers remaining out of a total population of around 700 (Lee & Dickson 2003). The estimate of 175 speakers is probably generous given that the survey did not include Gurindji Kriol, and Kriol has a low prestige status compared with Gurindji. Gurindji Kriol is the language transmitted to the new generation at present. It is also being adopted by neighbouring groups in the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory.

Gurindji Kriol exhibits a split between the verbal and nominal systems, as do other mixed languages like Michif (Bakker 1997). However, the source language for each component is the reverse of Michif, where the old language, Cree, is the source of the verbal system and the new language, French, the source of nominal systems. In Gurindji, basic verbs such as ‘go’ and ‘sit’, the tense–aspect–mood system and transitive morphology are derived from Kriol, whereas emphatic pronouns, possessive pronouns, case markers and nominal derivational morphology have been transplanted from Gurindji relatively intact, but with some innovations. Demonstratives, nouns, verbs and adpositions are adopted from both languages, however some generalizations can be made about their distribution (see Figure 1).

SOLELY KRIOL		SOLELY GURINDJI		
non-emphatic pronouns	temporals	adjectives	possessive pros	emphatic pronouns
demonstratives	directionals	N-people	in-law kin	emphatic demonstratives
V-basic	colours	N-animals	N-body parts	V-bodily functions
conjunctions	close kin	N-food,	in-law kin	grandparent kin
counting numbers		fire, cook	V-state	N-plants
		quantifiers	V-motion	
		interjections	V-impact	
			adverbs	

Figure 1 Distribution of Kriol and Gurindji elements in Gurindji Kriol

The following short excerpt of a Gurindji Kriol story (1) illustrates some of these features. Gurindji elements are in italics:

- (1) Gurindji Kriol 2002
- (a) *nyawa-ma* wan *karu* bin plei-bat pak-ta *nyanuny warlaku-yawung-ma*.
 this-TOP One child PST play-CONT park-LOC 3sg.DAT dog-HAVING-TOP
 ‘This one kid was playing at the park with his dog.’
- (b) tu-bala bin plei-bat. I bin tok-in la im
 two-NUM PST PST play-CONT. 3sg PST talk-PROG PREP 3sg
 ‘The two of them were playing and the kid said to him.’
- (c) “kamon *warlaku partaj ngayiny* leg-ta . . .
 come.on dog go.up 1sg.DAT leg-LOC
 ‘Come on dog jump up on my leg . . .’
- (d) *Ngali* plei-bat *nyawa-ngka*.
 1sg.inc play-CONT this-LOC
 ‘You and me can play here’”

In this excerpt, most of the verb phrase morphology is derived from Kriol—past tense ‘bin’, continuative ‘-bat’; ‘-in’ from English ‘-ing’ was not originally part of the regional Kriol but is now being incorporated. Elements from Gurindji are emphatic pronouns such as *ngali*, possessive pronouns *nyanuny*, locative markers *-ta*, proprietives *-yawung* and demonstratives *nyawa*. Both languages contribute content words—Gurindji: *warlaku*, *karu*, *partaj*; and Kriol: ‘plei’, ‘tok’, ‘leg’. Within Gurindji words and phrases, the grammar does not necessarily match the old Gurindji exactly. For instance, traditionally *nyawa-ngka* would have been *murla-ngka* with a suppletive stem for ‘this, here’ when case-marked. In traditional Gurindji too, case marking and

some derivational marking (like the proprietive) would spread across all elements of the noun phrase so for instance *ngayiny* in 1(c) above would have been *ngayiny-ja* ‘my-LOC’ in agreement with the following noun.

2.2. *Gurindji Kriol—A Mixed Language?*

There is no real consensus on how a mixed language should be defined, or indeed which languages qualify. For instance, Bakker (2003: 109) includes Media Lengua as a member of his most common group of mixed languages, ‘intertwined languages’, and Backus (2003: 265) sees the split between ‘content’ and ‘grammar’ as found in Media Lengua as the defining characteristic of mixed languages. On the other hand, for Myers-Scotton, Media Lengua does not qualify at all (Myers-Scotton 2003: 91), although in previous work languages with lexicon/grammar splits like Media Lengua came under the ‘strong definition’ of ‘split languages’ (Myers-Scotton 2002: 249, 271).

Despite the disparity between definitions, a number of key features are prominent in the mixed language literature. Some common criteria for mixed languages have been extracted mainly from Matras and Bakker’s recent summary (2003, discussed in Meakins 2004) and placed in the following table (Table 1), with an indication of whether the criteria are met for three languages: Michif (Bakker 1997), viewed by some as a prototypical mixed language; Gurindji Kriol, the topic of this paper; and Media Lengua (Muysken 1997), whose split in source languages (Spanish lexicon and Quechua grammar) is seen as characteristic of mixed languages by some authors. Additionally, in the shaded rows are criteria proposed by Myers-Scotton for ‘split languages’ (2003: 91).

It can readily be seen from the table that Gurindji Kriol meets almost all the criteria of a mixed language completely, and is closer to being a prototypical mixed language than Media Lengua. Below we discuss further characteristics of mixed languagehood which are displayed by Gurindji Kriol.

Bakker (2003: 126) argues that mixed languages exist as autonomous systems distinct from their component languages. Autonomy is measured by the distinct grammatical and communicative functions, and the relative social status of the mixed and component languages. Michif ranks highly here, as speakers today usually know neither of the source languages, Cree or French. This situation is fairly rare, and insisting on this degree of independence would restrict the class of mixed languages to a very few, perhaps one.

In the case of Gurindji Kriol, the mixed language exists independently of Gurindji or Kriol. Socially, it is the language of everyday use, and may be found in a large number of domains, including the home, community shop, and council office. Gurindji is only found in the home, spoken conversationally by older people, in traditional ceremony and some Christian ceremonies. Younger Gurindji Kriol speakers generally do not speak Gurindji although they may understand it to some extent. Kriol, without Gurindji mixing, is not used at all within the community but

Table 1 Criteria for being a ‘mixed language’

	Ref	Criterion	Michif	Gurindji Kriol	Media Lengua
Current socio-linguistics: autonomy/ languageness	M&B:2	Independent of both source languages	completely	partially	no
	M&B:3	Separate ethnic group	yes	no	no
	M&B:1	Native language of community of speakers	yes	yes	?L1 and L2
Changes/ evidence it is not CS	M&B:4	New language adapted to old	?yes	yes*	yes
	M&B:4	Innovation in mixed variety	?yes	yes	yes
	M&B:11	Insertions from new language optional**	?no	?no**	?no
Source split	M&B:1	Etymological split dominant, not marginal	yes	yes	lexicon/ grammar relexification
	M&B:1	More than one linguistic parent	yes	yes	
Myers-Scotton ‘split languages’	MS:91	Grammatical structure from both sources	yes	yes	no
	MS:91	Composite structure in at least one component	?yes	?yes	no
Origin socio-linguistics	M&B:1	Emerged from bilingualism	yes	yes	yes

Notes: M&B—Matras & Bakker (2003); MS—Myers-Scotton (2003).

* Kriol is already partially adapted to local indigenous languages.

** Choice of vocabulary may have stylistic effects.

may be used with Aboriginal people from other groups. English now occupies the official domains such as meetings and schooling.

Gurindji Kriol is now the native and predominant language of an entire community, and is spreading beyond that community. Whether they are of ‘mixed’ parentage or not, speakers do not identify themselves as an ethnic group separate from the Gurindji, and usually call the language they speak ‘Gurindji’. In this respect they are like Mednyj Aleut speakers (Matras & Bakker 2003: 3). Media Lengua speakers also identify as Quechua although they have a name for the variety they speak—mainly as a second language, alongside Spanish and/or Quechua. ‘Gurindji Kriol’ was chosen as a name by a meeting of speakers but is not in general use.

Moving to the second set of criteria in the table, the linguistic development of Gurindji Kriol has also progressed separately, with few influences back into Gurindji. Innovations have taken place in Gurindji Kriol but these have not led to similar changes in Gurindji. For instance, dative allomorphy in Gurindji Kriol has developed into a three way distinction between *-tu/-u/-yu* which differs from the two way

allomorphy which remains unchanged in Gurindji *-wu/ku*. These are elements which are not found in either of the contributing languages. Other innovations in Gurindji Kriol, such as change in the function of the ergative suffix, are detailed below.

One of the key questions in the whole debate is how mixed languages can be distinguished from code-switching or code-mixing. This obviously arises more acutely in cases where speakers of the mixed code also have command of the two source languages. Command of Gurindji is limited on the part of younger Gurindji Kriol speakers, so for instance they cannot generally insert any Gurindji phrase which involves such elements as pronominal enclitics and inflected verbs. Matras and Bakker emphasize the optionality of insertion of phrases in code-mixing as opposed to the conventionalized assignment of elements from the different source languages. Along with this reduction in optionality goes the reduction in social meaning and discourse framing functions pointed to in regard to the Gurindji Kriol code-switching of the older generation (McConvell 1988).

In relation to the split in the mixture in Gurindji Kriol we have mentioned that grammatically it is primarily between Kriol verbal and tense–aspect–mood elements and Gurindji nominal morphology. There is an interesting generalization to be made here, which relates to the different ‘centres of gravity’ that different languages have for their grammatical systems. For head-marking verb-coding languages, the ‘centre of gravity’ is the verb; for dependent-marking noun-coding languages the ‘centre of gravity’ is in the nominal arguments. When a ‘turnover’ or change of Matrix Language (ML) [as Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998) calls the language which sets the grammatical frame of clauses] is in progress the ‘centre of gravity’ resists the substitution of the new language longer (McConvell 1997, 2002). The corollary of this is the following:

Hypothesis about ‘split’ ML turnover (McConvell 2002: 345)

- (a) head-marking verb-coding languages retain verbal grammar from the old language after nominal grammar has turned over to the new language; this situation when frozen between the two stages gives a Tiwi/Michif-type mixed language;
- (b) dependent-marking noun-coding languages retain nominal grammar from the old language after verbal grammar has turned over to the new language; this situation when frozen between the two stages gives a Gurindji Kriol/Mednyj Aleut-type language.

A similar hypothesis not referring to Australian languages was published by Dimmendaal (1998) and cited by Myers-Scotton (2002: 256).

The presence of rarely borrowed grammatical morphemes in mixed languages has been widely noted. Myers-Scotton (2003) formalizes this observation, suggesting that the defining feature of a mixed language is the presence of late system morphemes from the former Embedded Language (EL) in the Matrix Language (ML). The ML is the contributing language which sets the grammatical frame. In the case of Gurindji Kriol the ML is Kriol, because the main system of verbs and

tense–aspect–mood auxiliaries as well as word order is that of Kriol, with Gurindji embedded within this frame. Myers-Scotton defines late system morphemes as those morphemes which do not assign thematic roles or convey conceptual information. These later system morphemes may be assigned within their maximal projection (bridge late system morphemes), such as the possessive ‘of’, or they may be assigned from outside their maximal projection (outsider late system morphemes), such as case markers (Myers-Scotton & Jake 2000: 1063–1064). The example of Gurindji Kriol would qualify as a mixed language under this definition, since it has (late system) grammatical morphemes such as case markers from Gurindji operating in the nominal domain, as well as providing the frame in that domain. Myers-Scotton’s second criterion in Table 1, that ‘split languages’ should have composite structure in at least one entire component, is harder to interpret, but the retention of Gurindji-style compound verb structures alongside the use of Gurindji coversbs as Gurindji Kriol verbs (Types III and IV in Section 4.3.1 below) may be an instance of this.

Further evidence of the autonomous nature of a mixed language may be found in intergenerational transmission. If a mixed language functions socially and grammatically independently of its contributing languages, the mixed language may be transmitted to the next generation independently of its component languages. Gurindji Kriol was formed in the 1960s–70s as the children were exposed to pervasive Gurindji Kriol code-switching. In the 1990s and today, young children are learning Gurindji Kriol as a single language from caregivers who were the first to acquire it as a first language, and from older children. The mixed language is being learnt by the younger generations, but neither Kriol nor Gurindji is being transmitted, although some passive knowledge of Gurindji does exist in these generations.

Another possible criterion for regarding a variety as a mixed language which is not explicit in the table, but implied by the use of the term ‘conventionalized’, is an increase in homogeneity and stability as compared to code-mixing or ‘composite code-switching’. One must bear in mind though that all languages exhibit levels of variation which are not always reflected in formal descriptions or the selection of exemplary text materials.

Thomason (2001: 204) writes that heterogeneity is actually the norm in most language contact situations. Gurindji Kriol certainly has significant variation within it. For example, a simple Swadesh list count reveals that a third of content words in Gurindji Kriol come from Gurindji and a third from Kriol. The remaining third consists of words where both forms exist equally, and where the choice of word may be governed by register choices. This must be understood in the context that many synonyms for common items are present also in traditional Australian indigenous languages, often ad-hoc borrowings from neighbouring languages. We would argue for Gurindji Kriol that the degree of variation does not exclude it from the category of mixed language. There is evidence that homogeneity and stability has increased in

Gurindji Kriol, for instance the tendency for locational marking from Kriol and Gurindji sources to become functionally specialized, described in Section 4.3.3.

The last item in the table concerns the sociolinguistics of the genesis of mixed languages, and a background of bilingualism is recognized here, uncontroversially, for Gurindji Kriol and more generally. Much more controversial is the hypothesis of Thomason (2003: 32) that mixed languages are the products of conscious invention or deliberate decision-making on the part of the bilingual community. There is no evidence for this in the case of Gurindji Kriol.

3. Transition in Transmission: From Code-switching to Mixed Language

Much of the debate surrounding mixed languages revolves around a small handful of examples which everyone admits are in the special category of mixed languages, primarily Michif (Bakker 1997), Mednyj Aleut (Golovko 1994), and Mbugu (Mous 2003). When we try to investigate the *origins* of such mixed languages, we run into problems because there are very few, if any, accounts of the type of language spoken at the time of their genesis, which is typically at least around 100 years ago. Studies have been made of contemporary transitions in some groups of speakers between code-switching and mixed speech (e.g. Maschler 1998) but these do not amount to defining a historical change in a whole speech community.

Bakker (2003: 129ff) musters arguments for the case that mixed languages do not arise from code-switching. In the following, Bakker's arguments are listed and refuted.

1. There is less lexical material from a second language in code-switching than in a mixed language.

As with other arguments, this seems to assume some paradigm case of code-switching when in fact code-switching varies widely especially in regard to dimensions like how much of the lexicon of each language is inserted. A major reference is to Backus' work on Dutch–Turkish immigrant code-switching (2003) which cannot be said to be typical of all cases, and is certainly very different from the situation of Gurindji Kriol. Backus (2003: 264) predicts that neither Dutch–Turkish code-switching, nor his other example, Mexicano (Nahuatl)–Spanish, will ever yield a mixed-language outcome, but unfortunately he adds the sweeping statement that it would never occur elsewhere either. There also seems to be an assumption here and in the next argument that the bulk of the lexicon should be drawn from the new or colonial language in a mixed language, as in the Media Lengua case, but this is surely not criterial, and not very applicable even to Michif.

2. *Lexical material inserted in code-switching is 'cultural'.*

This is probably a general tendency, but even in classic bilingual Gurindji code-switching of the 1970s common lexical items like body parts could occur in either language.

3. *No documentation of a transition from code-switching to mixed language.*

Such documentation is provided here and has been available for a number of years.

4. *Mixed languages are insertional whereas code-switching varies according to language typology (agglutinative languages have insertional and flectional languages alternational).*

The generalization seems doubtful and rests on a typological distinction which is hard to operationalize—many languages are partially agglutinative and partially flectional (Plank 1999). In the case of Gurindji Kriol the earlier code-switching was both alternational and insertional (as shown below) but the mixed language continued an insertional pattern when the input was acquired and regularized by children. The alternational pattern was no longer available to them as they did not acquire full Gurindji grammar. This seems a quite natural process and is unlikely to be unique.

5. *Where both code-switching and a mixed language are documented in the same language pair they are completely different.*

Again this does not ring true for Gurindji Kriol code-switching and the Gurindji Kriol mixed language, where the most common configuration of code-switching set the pattern for the mixed language.

6. *Code-switching and mixed languages come about in different social circumstances: the latter where a new ethnic group is emerging.*

The emergence of a new ethnic group is not necessary for mixed language development unless an extremely restrictive definition is adopted.

A number of researchers claim, in contrast to Bakker, that code-switching has been involved in the genesis of mixed languages, e.g. Gardner-Chloros (1987). Peter Auer writes that proposals that code-switching was involved with mixed language genesis are 'plausible guesses rather than empirically based' (1998: 16), and Myers-Scotton (2002: 249) calls for longitudinal evidence of a grammatical turnover in from code-switching to mixed language genesis, but does not believe such evidence is readily available.

In fact there is at least one reasonably well documented case of the transition between pervasive code-switching in a community with the outcome in the next generations being a mixed language, that of Gurindji Kriol, referred to as Gurindji Children's Language in an earlier study (Dalton *et al.* 1995). Section 4 presents the empirical evidence for this claim.

4. The Transition to Gurindji Kriol from Code-switching

4.1. *Gurindji Adult Code-switching, 1970s*

The predominant mode of communication among adults when McConvell first started working among Gurindji people in 1974 was pervasive code-switching mainly between Gurindji and Kriol, with more standard Australian English and some other Aboriginal languages occasionally interspersed. In adult CS, the question of the ML (matrix language) had not been settled definitively. Both Gurindji and Kriol were found as MLs and the choice of ML often had social meaning. McConvell interpreted the language choice in terms of a nested configuration of social arenas (1988: 131). McConvell (1994) uses a discourse–frame approach stemming from Goffman (1974) for the use of Kriol as a ‘voice of authority’ to frame narrative.

The example (2) below is typical of ‘expressive’ switching where the ‘business end’ of the butchering and distribution of meat that participants are directing is in Kriol or English, but the back-channelling of jokes related to kinship ties is in Gurindji (McConvell 1988: 131–132). More acrolectal (English or English-like) forms are not distinguished here from more basilectal Kriol forms and all are transcribed using the Kriol orthography; Gurindji is written in italics.

- (2) G: ail teik-im botum an go bek *ngalking-ku* *kungulu-yawung*
 I'll take-TRN bottom and go back greedy-DAT blood-HAVING
 'I'll take the bottom and go back. Bloody meat is for greedy people.'
- J: ail av-im *kungulu-yawung*; *nyuntu marntaj*
 I'll have-TRN blood-HAVING 2sg alright
 'I'll have the bloody meat. You are OK (to go) [joking].'

4.1.1. *Proportion of languages in 1970s code-switching*

The text of the transcript of the film *Killer* [male Gurindji in the age range 30–55 conversing while butchering a cow in 1975, from which example (2) above is drawn] provides a typical example of adult code-switching at that period—G's contribution is alternational and J's insertional with the auxiliary and verb in Kriol.

There are 395 clauses (CPs) in the text which can be divided into Gurindji (G); Kriol/English (K/E) and Mixed Gurindji/Kriol (M). The break up of the text is as given in Table 2.

Of the mixed clauses, most clearly have either Gurindji or Kriol as the Matrix Language—the language which controls the morphosyntactic frame. As a rule of

Table 2 Proportion of different languages in adult code-switching text

Language	Gurindji	Kriol/English	Mixed	Total
Number of clauses	141	124	130	395
Percentage (approx)	36%	31%	33%	100%

thumb, those clauses with Kriol tense–aspect–mood elements such as the past auxiliary ‘bin’ have Kriol ML and those with Gurindji auxiliaries, pronominal enclitics and TAM inflections on the verb have Gurindji ML. With copular clauses, with no verb, the decision is sometimes not so clear, but space limitations do not permit further discussion here.

The break up of the ‘mixed clauses’ as to Matrix Language (ML) is as shown in Table 3.

The number of clearly Kriol ML clauses is well over half the total of mixed clauses and over twice the number of Gurindji ML clauses.

This is typical of the kind of input Gurindji children growing up in the 1960s–70s would have been exposed to, and that this preponderance of Kriol ML in the pervasive code-switching speech of young and middle-aged adults played a strong role in the development of the mixed language by the next generation. At the same time young people growing up in this generation were also exposed to Kriol speaking peers in the region.

4.1.2. Verb phrase structure in mixed clauses

There was a tendency for Kriol to take the role of Matrix Language predominantly in the verbal domain—this is illustrated in J’s contribution in example (2) above where the auxiliary and verb (with transitive marking ‘-im’) are in Kriol, and the object NP is in Gurindji. In examples (3) and (4) below (McConvell 1994) the verb itself with pronouns and some modifiers are in Kriol but noun phrase object phrases are in Gurindji.

- (3) *karla-rni-yin tu skin-im parntara-rni*
 west-UP-FROM too skin-TRN whole-ONLY
 ‘Skin the whole lot from the upper west too.’

Table 3 MLs in mixed clauses

ML	Gurindji	Kriol	Ambiguous
Copular	13	15	16
Verbal	23	63	
Total	36	78	16
Percentage	28%	60%	12%

- (4) *Warlawurru-lu im bin stat laik that ngumpit-ku na*
Eagle-ERG he started like that person-DAT FOC
 ‘It was Eagle who introduced those practices to the Aborigines.’

Verbs in the Kriol ML clauses are mainly English-derived roots; no English inflections are found as tense, aspect and mood is marked by Kriol auxiliaries and enclitics. In the vast majority of cases the verbs have the suffix –im if transitive [e.g. ‘av-im’ in (1), ‘skin-im’ in (3) above; ‘kat-im’ in (5) below], although an acrolectal variant without –im is also encountered. This is not the same as the homophonous third person object pronoun as both can occur together. As in Gurindji, third person object pronouns are not obligatorily present, and when it is absent, the transitive suffix implies a pronominal object.

In the adult CS of this time there are also many clauses with Gurindji matrix language and Gurindji inflected verbs, auxiliaries and pronominal enclitics. If Kriol verbs are used in these Gurindji ML clauses, they are assimilated, together with the transitive suffix, to the coverb word class and require an ancillary or light verb to accompany them—for ‘kat-im’, for instance, the verb is *pa-* ‘hit’:

- (5) *Niyan kat-im parra = yi ngapu*
Flesh cut-TRN hit-1sgObj father
 ‘Cut meat for me Dad.’

Gurindji coverbs were also used as verbs in mixed speech with Kriol ML in the 1970s–80s, prefiguring their wholesale adoption as main verbs in Gurindji Kriol (Charola 2002).

4.1.3. Ergative case marking on transitive subjects

Ergative case marking is retained on subjects of transitive verbs in Kriol ML sentences as exemplified in example (4) above and (6) below. The case system is also used in Gurindji Kriol, but the ergative has begun to change function more recently as discussed below.

- (6) *Kaa-rni-mpal said orait yu tufela kat-im ngaji-rlang-kulu*
east-UP-ACROSS side alright you two cut-TRN father-DYAD-ERG
 ‘You two father & son cut it across the east.’

4.1.4. Locational and directional expressions in Gurindji

Karlarniyin and *kaarnimpal* in examples (3) and (6) above illustrate the fact that directional terms drawn from the extensive spatial vocabulary of Gurindji were common in adult code-switching. Locational case marking on nouns is also common even in clauses with a Kriol matrix as in example (7). Some of the absolute spatial references and much of the case marking have been preserved in Gurindji Kriol.

- (7) *wi go karrowarra pinka-kurra intit?*
we go east creek-ALL TAG
 ‘We’re going east to the creek, aren’t we?’

Gurindji case marking on locationals is not an obligatory insertion—Kriol locative/allative preposition (with no case-marking) can equally be used, as in example (8). This alternation seems to be regularizing in Gurindji Kriol and is discussed below.

- (8) putum langa *kurririj*
 put.TRN PREP car
 ‘Put it in the car.’

4.2. Gurindji Children’s Language in the 1980s

While Kriol appeared to be dominant among the children in the 1970s, McConvell was aware that at least some children could understand Gurindji well and reported groups of teenage girls speaking Gurindji to each other under certain circumstances (Dalton *et al.* 1995).

In 1988 he undertook a short project with Gurindji students at Batchelor College to try to get a rough idea of what kind of language young Gurindji children were speaking and what they could understand. The results indicated that the children were speaking a kind of language which mixed elements of traditional Gurindji with Kriol, with some innovation, but that the Gurindji elements were so prominent that their language could not really just be called a dialect of Kriol. The position was taken that Gurindji Children’s Language (GCL) was a mixed language. Lexicon was drawn from both Gurindji and Kriol. A brief description of some points of GCL grammar as recorded in 1988 follows (Dalton *et al.* 1995).

4.2.1. Verb phrase in 1980s children’s language

GCL’s way of expressing tense and aspect is drawn from Kriol, e.g. ‘bin’ for past tense in example (9a) below. The Gurindji verb suffixes [e.g. past *-ni* in (9c)] used for these functions were not used by GCL speakers. Also missing was the Gurindji pronominal clitic marking like = *rna* [first person subject in (9c)] usually attached to catalysts like *ngu* = . In traditional Gurindji the pronominal clitics are usually used instead of free pronouns and also to mark number of subject and objects since this is usually not marked on the noun phrase itself. However while the pronoun system of Kriol is adopted, the traditional Gurindji free pronoun forms are used by children, like *ngayu* in example (9a):

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|------------------------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| (9) | (a) | Gurindji Children’s Language (GCL) | | | |
| | | <i>ngayu-ngku</i> | bin | kej-im | <i>karnti</i> |
| | | 1sg-ERG | PST | get-TRN | stick |
| | (b) | Alternative GCL | | | |
| | | ai bin | kej-im | <i>karnti</i> | |
| | | 1sg PST | get TRN | stick | |

- (c) Traditional Gurindji
 (*ngayu*)
 1sg
 'I got a stick.'
- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>ngu = rna</i> | <i>karnti warrkuj</i> | <i>ma-ni</i> |
| AUX = 1sg | stick get | get-PST |

As can be seen from the Traditional Gurindji equivalent of 'get' in example (9c) above, most TG verbs are compounds consisting of a coverb, e.g. *warrkuj* 'get' with an ancillary verb, in this case *ma-* 'get'. For intransitive verbs, common Gurindji coverbs were used by children as verbs in GCL, e.g. *kutij* (stand up) as in example (14); *makin* (sleep); *lungkarra* (cry). The traditional forms with Gurindji ancillary verbs were not used by children. For transitive verbs, the choice was mainly Kriol/English verbs with the transitive suffix '-im'.

- (10) (a) Gurindji Children's Language
Nangala
 [subsection]
- | | |
|-----|--------------|
| bin | <i>kutij</i> |
| PST | stand |
- (b) Traditional Gurindji
Nangala
 [subsection]
 'Nangala stood up.'
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| <i>kutij</i> | <i>karri-nya</i> |
| stand | be-PST |

4.2.2. Ergative marking of transitive subjects

One of the striking aspects of GCL is the use of Gurindji case suffixes on nouns and pronouns, including ergative marking for transitive subjects. A change which has been made by the generation growing up in the 1980s is the extension of ergative marking to transitive subject pronouns as well as nouns, e.g. *ngayu-ngku* I-ERG in example (9a) above. Older people cited this particularly as an example of 'wrong' speaking of Gurindji by children. Previously Gurindji pronouns had no case marking for either subject or direct, as in the Traditional Gurindji equivalent example (9b). The pronoun *ngayu* (1sg) in brackets is optional, as independent pronouns are not necessary because of bound pronouns like = *rna* which children no longer use. Kriol forms of pronominal subject marking are also found in GCL, e.g. example (9b).

The allomorphy of a number of the case suffixes had changed from the traditional patterns by the 1980s. Among these are the ergative which used to have allomorphs – *ngku* for vowel-final disyllables and –*lu* for stems with more than two morae: in GCL this had been levelled to –*ngku* for all vowel-final stems as shown in *Nangala-ngku* in example (11a) below.

4.2.3. Locational marking

The Gurindji locational case markers [like –*ngka* in (11a)] were still heavily used in GCL in the 1980s probably in preference to Kriol prepositional marking with 'la/langa'.

- (11) (a) Gurindji Children’s Language
Nangala-ngku put-im *ngawa-ngka*
 [subject]-ERG put-TRN water-LOC
- (b) Traditional Gurindji
Nangala-lu *yuwa-nana* *ngawa-ngka*
 [subject]-ERG put-PRES water-LOC
 ‘Nangala is putting it in the water.’

4.3. *Gurindji Kriol Today*

4.3.1. *The verbal structure of Gurindji Kriol*

In 1996–2001 Erika Charola worked with the Gurindji community. Her Honours thesis (Charola 2002) focuses on the verbal complex in the mixed speech of young people (15–35 at the time) comparing it with the language spoken by people over 60. She finds that, as compared to the language recorded by McConvell in the 1970s–80s ‘language mixing patterns of adults appear to have changed significantly and also stabilised’ (2002: 3).

The provider of the grammatical framework of the Gurindji Kriol of the younger group studied by Charola (born roughly between 1960 and 1985) is Kriol, in the sense that the tense–aspect–mood auxiliary forms are from Kriol. Gurindji catalysts, bound pronouns and inflected verb forms are no longer used. Charola includes the traditional Gurindji utterances with catalysts, bound pronouns and inflected verbs used by the older speakers in her intergenerational comparison, but the analysis of the texts shows that virtually none of these features were ever used by young people (see further below).

There are several options for the verbal complex (Charola 2002: 65); here we just enumerate those which have made the transition to the Kriol grammatical framework, Gurindji Kriol. Examples are given below (numbering changed).

I. Kriol main verb

- (12) im-in faind-im rein *karlanin*
 3sg-PST find-TRN rain west.ABL
 ‘He found rain coming from the west.’

II. Kriol main verb + Kriol modifier

- (13) imin buldan spilim
 PRO.3SG-PAST fall spill
 (the milk) spilled.

This is similar to the verb–coverb structure of Gurindji (and other languages in the area) and may have resulted from some influence of the local language structures on the Kriol.

III. Kriol main verb + modifying verb (Gurindji co-verb)

The Gurindji coverb always follows the Kriol verb and its object pronouns. This order contrasts with the traditional Gurindji order where coverbs more often precede than follow verbs [as in (10b)]. The clash of ordering constraints in the two languages was resolved in favour of the optional post-verbal order which does not clash with Kriol ML syntax.

- (14) (a) Gurindji Kriol
 jei bin gun rarra^j
 3pl PST go run
 ‘They went running/They ran.’
- (b) Traditional Gurindji
 ngu = lu rarra^j ya-ni
 CAT 3pls run go PST
 ‘They ran.’

IV. Gurindji main verb (co-verb)

- (15) jei bin rarra^j
 3pls PST run
 They ran.
- (16) najawan-tu im-in jawurra karu
 another.one-ERG 3SG-PST steal kid
 Another one, he stole a child.

V. Gurindji main verb (coverb) + locative suffix

- (17) nyawa-ma ola karu warrkap-ta
 this-TOP PL kid dance-LOC
 Here the kids are dancing.

This is an innovation in Gurindji Kriol; equivalents in traditional Gurindji (even with the older people’s locative –*kula*) are ungrammatical. The following is an example of a synonymous sentence in traditional Gurindji. ‘Kids’ takes an ergative marker due to the transitive inflecting verb, ‘leave’.

- (18) karu-walija-rlu warrkap ngu = lu wanyja-nana.
 child-PAUC-ERG dance CAT = 3pl leave-PRS
 ‘The kids are dancing.’

The source of LOC appearing on a verb in the main clause in Gurindji Kriol is a non-finite type of subordination in traditional Gurindji which involves suffixing locative case to a coverb without an accompanying verb as in:

- (19) *karu ngu = lu pinka-ka karri-nyana warrkap-kula*
 child CAT 3pl creek LOC be-PRES dance LOC
 ‘The children are in the creek dancing.’

Table 4 below sets out the percentage of each verbal type used by young people and old people over the text corpus (14 speakers) (Charola 2002: 66–67, adapted).

The absence of the Gurindji inflecting verb in the speech of young people is the most notable difference between the speech of young and old people. The main forms used by young people are Kriol main verbs (I) or Gurindji main verbs (coverbs) (IV) used without modification, and the Kriol main verb with a Gurindji modifier (coverb) (III) as exemplified above. These, together with the innovated form (V) with locative marking on the co/verb, are the forms that constitute the Gurindji Kriol mixed language verb structure. Gurindji Kriol’s distinct use of Kriol verbal morphology reflects the strong tendency for Kriol to take the role of the ML in the verbal domain in the adult code-switching data of the 1970s.

4.3.2. *Ergative marking in Gurindji Kriol*

Following on from Erika Charola, Felicity Meakins began her work in the Victoria River district in 2001. Currently she is conducting a longitudinal study into the acquisition of Gurindji Kriol by children at Kalkarindji, with particular reference to Gurindji Kriol’s nominal morphology. This study involves recording eight different children and their families, at six monthly intervals, from the age of 12 months through to four years. Currently the data is both conversational (child directed and adult speech) and narrative (derived from reading picture books to adults and children). The conversational data can be compared to McConvell’s 1975 *Killer* transcript (referred to in Section 4.1.1), and the narrative data is similar to Charola’s 2002 data.

By 1975, a tendency towards Kriol word order (SVO) had emerged, at least where the subjects were Kriol nominals. As code-switching gave way to a mixed language among children growing up in the 1970s–80s, agency tended to be indicated by the preverbal position in unmarked situations, although word order was also influenced by pragmatic factors. Ergative marking tended to appear where the structure did not follow the SVO patterning.

Table 4 Numbers of clauses of each verbal type

	I	II	III	IV+V	VI
Young people	64	2	10	24	0
Old people	34	1	5	9	41

- I main Kriol verb
- II main Kriol verb + Kriol modifier
- III main Kriol verb + Gurindji modifier
- IV main Gurindji verb (coverb)
- V main Gurindji verb (coverb) + locative suffix
- VI traditional Gurindji inflecting verb (with/out coverb)

This tendency towards a relatively fixed word order seems to have gone hand in hand with reanalysis of the ergative case marker *-ngku/-tu* by the younger generations. Indeed in the 2003 data, ergative markers appear less regularly in SVO structures. However the move towards a more rigid word order has not seen a disappearance of the ergative case marker, but has perhaps initiated a shift in its function, to a more pragmatic use.

One exception seems to be when the subject is an inanimate agent. This Gurindji Kriol construction patterns closely with the traditional Gurindji structure (cf. O'Shannessy this issue for similar developments in Light Warlpiri).

- (20) *paka-ngku turrp im fut-ta*
 prickle-ERG poke 3sg foot-LOC
 'He is standing on a prickle.'

The following is another SVO construction where the ergative appears. It was first noticed by Dalton *et al.* [1995; see example (9a)] and perhaps provides a clue to the shift in the analysis of this case marker.

- (21) *ma yu purrum kuya ngayu-ngku purrum kuya*
 DIS 2sg put.TRN thus 1sg-ERG put.TRN thus
 'You put it like this, I put it like this.'

In this example, the ergative appears on the free 1sg pronoun, and the Kriol pronoun 'ai' does not occur. This construction deviates from the Gurindji pronoun system where the free pronouns did not inflect for ergative case. Yet the ergative marking appears quite regularly in Gurindji Kriol on free pronouns. Interestingly, in Gurindji Kriol the function of these free Gurindji pronouns has remained quite similar to their function in Traditional Gurindji, in marking topic, contrast and focus. Kriol pronouns have taken on the function of Gurindji bound pronouns with regard to *indicating* actors, whereas the Gurindji free pronouns have continued to be used in the focus and topic positions to *emphasize* actors. In this case the function is that of contrastive topic which seems to require omission of the Kriol pronoun [see McConvell (1996: 319–321) for the special contrastive topic construction of traditional Gurindji].

The free pronouns have added a discourse pragmatic function to their grammatical function. This shift towards a more pragmatic function is evident in other structures:

- (22) *det kaya-ngku i garra kil-im yu.*
 DEM devil-ERG 3sg FUT hit-TRN 2sg
 'The devil (kangaroo puppet), he's going to hit you.'

- (23) *i garra karturl yu nyawa-ngku*
 3sg FUT bite 2sg DEM-ERG
 'He will bite you, this one'

In the first example, the ergative is marked on the left hand topical subject which appears before the Kriol subject pronoun ‘i’. In the second example, the right hand subject, which is marked ergative, is sentence final.

Perhaps most interesting is the appearance of the ergative marker on a number of subjects of intransitives. This seems to mirror the shift of ergative marking towards a discourse-pragmatic function perhaps related to focus, as noted by Pensalfini for Jingili (1999) and O’Shannessy for Light Warlpiri (this issue).

- (24) ma! Ma yu garra toktok na yu garra toktok *nyuntu-ngku* toktok.
 DIS DIS 2sg FUT talk.REDUP DIS 2sg FUT talk 2sg-ERG talk.REDUP
 ‘You have to talk! You have to talk! You now, talk!’

- (25) jat *Jangala-ngku* buldan.
 DEM [subsect]-ERG fall.down
 ‘That Jangala falls down.’

Throughout these examples, there appears to be a shift in the analysis of the ergative marker. The ergative does not appear to mark agency, however the move towards a more rigid word order has not seen a disappearance of the ergative case marker, but has perhaps initiated a shift in its function, to a more pragmatic use. Whilst examples do exist of a more traditional use of the ergative, these appear mostly with older speakers, suggesting a change in progress.

4.3.3. Locational phrases in Gurindji Kriol

While there has been quite a dramatic shift in the ergative case marking system, more conservative changes are evident in the locational phrases. In McConvell’s 1975 data, Kriol and Gurindji locational markers seemed to be in free variation, and related to code-switching. A stronger patterning is now evident. There is a tendency for Gurindji locatives *-ngka/-ta* to be found on adjuncts, whilst the Kriol preposition ‘la(nga)’ is evident where the verb subcategorizes for a PP complement.

- (26) wanbala bin jak *nyanuny* shanghai *janyja-ngka*
 one-NMZR PST throw 3sg-DAT shanghai ground-LOC
 ‘One of them chucked his shanghai on the ground.’

- (27) send-im la Melbourne
 send-TRN PREP Melbourne
 ‘Send it to Melbourne’

This split system seems to be a tendency rather than a categorical rule. Example (28) occurs in parallel circumstances as the Kriol ‘la(nga)’ preposition in example (27), although arguably ‘send’ obligatorily requires a goal where ‘go’ does not. The Kriol preposition does not distinguish allative and locative.

- (28) dey-rra gu *karnti-yirri*
 3pl-FUT Go tree-ALL
 ‘They will go to the tree.’

Charola (2002) also provides examples where both a preposition and a case suffix are used as in example (29a) [cf. Myers-Scotton (2003: 81) on double-marking]. However of the seven elicitations of this sentence, six of the seven use the locative case marking not the preposition (29b). Example (29a) is the exception.

- (29) (a) det *warlaku* bin gu, *ngalyak* *im* *langa* *wartan-ta*
 DEM dog PST go lick 3sg PREP hand-LOC
 ‘The dog went and licked him on the hand.’
- (b) *imin* ... *ngalyakap* *im* *wartan-ta*
 3g.PST lick 3sg Hand-LOC
 ‘He licked him on the hand.’

The tendency for the Kriol prepositions to appear in complements, and for Gurindji locative markers to appear in the adjunct position may be related to the domain split between Kriol and Gurindji. Complements are subcategorized for by the verbs, hence Kriol patterning can be expected here. Similarly, because adjuncts are not determined by the verbal structure, locational markers follow the Gurindji nominal patterning. It must be noted however that these patterns are merely tendencies and variation does exist.

5. Conclusions

This paper has gone some way to providing the diachronic empirical evidence that has eluded the theories which link code-switching with mixed language genesis. In our data, there are clear parallels between the nature of the Gurindji code-switching of the 1970s to the mixed language that younger and middle-aged Gurindji speak 30 years later. In particular, in the 1970s, Kriol verbal structure was beginning to dominate the mixed Gurindji–Kriol clauses. However if a turnover was progressing, it was arrested before Kriol nominal structures could fully replace the Gurindji nominal and pronominal morphology.

Coupled with McConvell’s typological explanations for why the Gurindji elements may have been retained, some socio-historical evidence might be relevant to why full language shift did not take place. In 1966 the Gurindji went on strike from the cattle stations where they had worked and the long-standing dispute over wages and conditions revealed itself as a struggle for land rights. The year 1975 saw the hand back of traditional lands to the Gurindji by the then Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, a highly significant step for post-colonial law and history and for the Gurindji themselves. It is possible that the pride associated with these momentous events and the resultant desire to mark Gurindji identity linguistically may have affected the course of language shift and motivated the maintenance of a mixed language.

The preliminary evidence seems to suggest that Gurindji children today are acquiring essentially the same Gurindji Kriol as their parental generation, a language very different from either traditional Gurindji, or the Kriol now spoken by many neighbouring groups.

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