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ABSTRACT

Five studies of aboriginal language use in Australia's Northern Territory include: (1) "Yanyuwa--A Dying Language" (Jean F. Kirton), which outlines the factors contributing to the demise of the use of Yanyuwa since 1963 and the trend toward use of Kriol; (2) "Kriol in the Barkly Tableland" (Phillip L. Graber), presenting sociolinguistic and linguistic observations about the language use of aboriginal people in eight Kriol-speaking communities; (3) "Sociolinguistic Survey Report: Daly River Region Languages" (S. James Ellis), discussing sociological conditions of each Daly River area language; (4) "Sociolinguistic Survey Report: Wagalt Region Languages" (S. James Ellis), describing the population centers, sociological conditions of vernacular languages and the Belyuen Creole, and language attitudes in that area; and (5) "Tiwi: A Language Struggling to Survive" (Jenny Lee), chronicling Tiwi's history, Tiwi life today, the present language situation and the nature of change within it, and factors influencing the language's survival or revival. (MSE)

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ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE USE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: 5 REPORTS

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FOREWORD

WORK PAPERS OF SIL-AAIB

These work papers are being produced in two series by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines and Islanders Branch in order to make results of SIL research in Australia more widely available. In general, Series A contains linguistic papers which are more technical, while Series B contains language learning, anthropology and literacy material aimed at a broader audience.

The work papers reflect both past and current research projects by SIL members; however, some papers by other than SIL members are included.

Because of the preliminary nature of most of the material, these volumes are circulated on a limited basis. It is hoped that their contents will prove of interest primarily to those concerned with Aboriginal and Islander studies, and that comment on their contents will be forthcoming from readers.

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A list of the volumes in both series, with their prices, is given in the back of this volume. You may order individual volumes, place a standing order or request notification of all publications by writing to the address indicated.

B. M. Larrimore
Editor, Series A

S. K. Hargrave
Editor, Series B

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TIWI: A LANGUAGE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE
by Jenny Lee

INTRODUCTION

This is the second volume of language surveys produced by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines and Islanders Branch. The first, appearing in WORK PAPERS OF SIL-AAB Series B Volume 11, presented three different types of survey: inherent (or mutual) intelligibility between some Western Desert languages, a preliminary general survey in central Northern Territory, and a sociolinguistic survey focusing on language usage and attitudes in a specific Queensland community. The articles in this volume again represent several types of language survey.

Jean Kirton's article is quite unique in some ways. It is a diachronic study of a linguistic community which is in the process of replacing one language, Yanyuwa, with other languages, particularly Kriol and English.

Phil Graber has focused on a specific language, Kriol. He has built on the earlier survey work of Dave Glasgow in an attempt to determine the extent to which Kriol is used in the Barkly Tableland of the Northern Territory. In contrast to a more general type of survey, this was a type of dialect survey aimed at trying to determine the boundaries of Kriol within the Tableland.

The surveys by Jim Ellis of the Daly River and Wagait regions are of a general sociolinguistic nature. The purpose of these surveys was to determine what languages are spoken in the various communities in this area of the Northern Territory, and the relative strength of each of the languages.

Language survey, especially when trying to evaluate language use and attitudes, is by its very nature an inexact science. The number of factors which influence the findings of any given survey are many. A person's conscious or unconscious attitudes toward his own language and other surrounding Aboriginal languages will affect his response. Attitudes toward researchers will also have a profound effect on responses. The researcher's knowledge of the area and the methods used will affect the findings.

The greatest hurdle that must be overcome in language investigation is that of the researcher's paradox. The ideal context in which to evaluate language use is a natural social setting amongst users of the language. However, it is impossible for the researcher to observe language use without actually being there. With the introduction of a researcher into the community, it is no longer a natural social setting unless that researcher is considered as part of the community. The

researcher is faced with the paradox of trying to observe what happens when he is not there!

In Jean Kirton's situation, this hurdle has been overcome to a large extent. Since she has lived and worked with speakers of Yanyuwa in Borroloola since the mid-1960s, she is in fact a part of the Yanyuwa community.

To minimize the impact of being outsiders in Aboriginal communities, the Kriol survey team comprised several Kriol speakers from Ngukurr. It was these men who carried out a great deal of the actual survey work in the Tableland communities.

In spite of the drawbacks and limitations of any survey, the surveys which are included in this volume help to give us a somewhat clearer understanding of the use of Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory.

Research reported in this volume was partially funded by the Research Fund of the Australian Aborigines and Islanders Branch.

Michael J. Ray
Volume Editor

NOTE: After M. Ray had written this Introduction and departed overseas, an additional paper became available. We are happy to include Jenny Lee's paper on Tiwi language change in this series volume.

Work Papers of SIL-AAIB
Series B Volume 13
May 1988

YANYUWA -- A DYING LANGUAGE

Jean F. Kirton

0. INTRODUCTION

Yanyuwa[1] is a dying language. If any factors should contribute to its reviving, the writer will rejoice indeed, as at this time the factors contributing to its loss seem too strong to be overcome. Yanyuwa, along with other minority languages in multilingual situations around the world, is dying.

The term 'dying' refers to that 'point of no return... which we can recognise in language shift, where the association of the younger generation with the new language is so strong, and the opportunity and motivation for acquisition of the old language so weak, that the shift is irretrievable' (McConvell 1986:18).

The purpose of this paper is to consider the changes which have led to the present situation, and especially to look at the changes which have taken place since 1963--the year in which the writer commenced her work with the Yanyuwa people at Borroloola.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1985 Borroloola celebrated its centenary as a gazetted Australian town, and so Yanyuwa speakers have had an ongoing contact with English for a little over 100 years. There were earlier contacts with the Macassans, but those periodic contacts had little effect on the language beyond adding a few items of vocabulary. It was the impact of the coming of the white man, the necessity to communicate with him, and the consequent progressive disruption of the Yanyuwa social situation which has been leading steadily towards the death of the language. The

pressures towards learning English and the pressures against learning Yanyuwa have been steadily mounting, and the writer seeks to document those factors which have brought about these pressures in the Yanyuwa people's situation.

Traditionally the Yanyuwa community was a multilingual community. The Yanyuwa people were technically those whose fathers were Yanyuwa. The probability is that their mothers were not. They were likely to have been Garawa or Mara (or from other neighbouring groups then existent). The children first learnt the language of their mothers and the women around them. The boys had maximum exposure to their fathers' language--the language essential for ceremonial life--when they were initiated. The girls learnt their husbands' language at marriage if they married non-Yanyuwa. In traditional times, contact with these other Aboriginal languages led to the developing of mutilingual skills.

Towards the end of last century, the town of Borroloola was founded and developed. It became a supply centre for the white settlers on cattle stations in the area. Supply boats travelled up the McArthur River several times a year. The Centenary Souvenir Brochure records:

> By the turn of the century it was one of the larger and more colourful frontier towns in the north, with a population of around 1,000.[2] Hundreds of people passed through each week on their way to the goldfields in the north, and the police were kept busy with trigger-happy fortune hunters and cattle duffers (that is, cattle thieves).

And so the Yanyuwa have had something over a century of association with the white man and with the English language.

Early this century, about ten of the more adventurous young Yanyuwa men from the Yanyuwa families on the Sir Edward Pellew Islands worked on a cargo boat and at diving for trepang in the coastal area of North Australia and beyond. Other Yanyuwa worked on cattle stations or at jobs associated with the Borroloola town community while the town thrived. From these various contacts the Yanyuwa added Pidgin English, and later the developing creole language[3] (now named Kriol), to their language knowledge.

Two factors in particular hindered their learning Standard English. The people did not have the opportunity to put their language-learning abilities to the test. Traditionally they had learnt by sitting in a communal situation and listening to conversations and to story-telling sessions around them. It is unlikely that there were comparable gatherings of English speakers, and if there had been, it is unlikely that Aborigines would have been free to join such groups night after

night. In addition, the nature of the English phonology, grammar and semantics made the gap between the two languages a formidable one to bridge.

As in other parts of the Northern Territory, a number of Aboriginal people in the area were killed by whites over a period of time.[4] One elderly Yanyuwa man, whose own father and uncle were among the casualties, in the mid 1960s spoke of three factors contributing to the termination of the white man's killing of his people: (i) the Aboriginal women slept with the white man and this contributed to the reconciliation of the races; (ii) the Aborigines worked at learning English, and the increased ability to commuicate contributed to improved relations; (iii) in addition, the government instructed the white men to cease killing Aborigines and to put them to work instead. In the people's own view of their history, the learning of the white man's language was closely related to survival.

2. THE SITUATION IN 1963

When the writer arrived at Borroloola to commence work in 1963, Yanyuwa was the dominant language. By that time Borroloola was a 'ghost town'. The white population was reduced to about a dozen adults and some children, and their housing ranged from corrugated iron houses to Roger Jose's famed dwelling constructed from two galvanised iron water tanks. These people were associated with the Welfare Department, the Aborigines Inland Mission (A.I.M.), the one general store/post office facility, or were crocodile shooters, casual workers or hermits. The road to Borroloola was one of gravel or dirt at best, of fine 'bull dust' or mud at worst. People needed strong motivation to use it.

The main population of Borroloola in 1963 was the Aboriginal community who then lived in their camp at Malandarri on the eastern side of the McArthur River. (The 'town' was on the western side.) The central camp area belonged to the Yanyuwa group. A small group of Mara lived to the north and a larger group of Garawa to the south. The numbers swelled each wet season when the cattle station workers returned from their seasonal work.

At that time, Yanyuwa was the dominant language because the Yanyuwa people were the dominant people. Three factors gave them this dominance: (i) they were in their own area while the others were 'outsiders'; (ii) the Yanyuwa (according to the report of anthropologists who have worked here through the years) were, and have continued to be, the recognised leaders in the ceremonial life of the area; (iii) the Yanyuwa were the group who related most easily to the white man because their previous cross-cultural contacts with the

Macassans had given them confidence in meeting with newcomers, and there was less loss of life in their encounters It may be that the very character of the Yanyuwa would also tend towards domination.

The Yanyuwa spoke both Yanyuwa and Kriol among themselves at that time. In addition, the men usually had at least a passive knowledge of Garawa or Mara or both. The women usually spoke their husbands' language as well as their own. Some of the women had lived or worked in association with English speakers at the cattle station homesteads in the area. The women generally tended to have more communication with the local white people, and so their English was more comprehensible to non-Aborigines.

At the Aborigines' request, the A.I.M. missionaries had provided schooling for the children and some classes for adults for about ten years prior to this time. This had given an opportunity for some of the younger members of the community to move further towards Standard English.[5] A Welfare officer had transferred the school to Welfare control at some time prior to August 1963. He had placed the school in charge of an Aboriginal woman whose own education had been limited, and so the 'school' had tended to become a child-minding centre.

This, then, was the situation in 1963. The Yanyuwa people were small in number, about 150, but their language was the main language of the camp community. The people recognized a necessity for the children to know English also, and the parents tended to speak to the children in Kriol when they addressed them directly[6]. In the years that followed, a number of factors contributed to changing the social situation at Borroloola, the main environment of the Yanyuwa language by this time.

3. FACTORS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGE, 1963-1986

The writer has had an ongoing contact with the Yanyuwa people and language through the period 1963-1986. There have been times of absence in relation to work or holiday, and three periods of about a year for renewing contacts with family and with the Christian constituency who have provided financial and prayer support. There was a 4-year absence when she returned home because of parental need. In that 4-year period, the accumulated effects of a whole range of factors became more evident. In the year following her return in mid-1984, it was obvious that the language situation must be reassessed, and she reached the conclusion that Yanyuwa was dying.

A number of factors have predictably led to this state of the language. They include the disbanding of the camp which fostered communal life and language, unemployment leading to the advent of 'outside' Aborigines coming into the community, the education system for the young people,

increased mobility of Aboriginal people, the loss of the expectation that wives would learn their Yanyuwa husbands' language, changes in other aspects of the culture and in the very nature of the town of Borroloola, disruption to social life and communication because of increasing alcoholism, and pressures from the powerful media of television and video.

3.1 THE DISBANDING OF THE MAIN CAMP

In 1963 the main Aboriginal camp was at Malandarri above the eastern bank of the McArthur River. There was a single large camp and this fostered communal life and the acquisition of traditional language. Although a government officer was appointed to Borroloola to maintain a local authority since its establishment as a 'town' (either a policeman or a Welfare officer), the Aboriginal camp was the people's own domain and under their control. Even though the parents spoke Kriol to their children, the children were constantly exposed to hearing Yanyuwa when it was used in adult communication. At that time the Yanyuwa children were obtaining a passive knowledge of Yanyuwa which many later extended into an active use after they entered the circle of Yanyuwa-speaking adults.

In 1969, a Yanyuwa family then resident in Darwin flew back home for that year's Borroloola Races. They brought with them from Darwin a virulent form of influenza which rapidly spread throughout the communal camp, packed as it was with visitors. Within one month there were eight deaths in the Borroloola area. After the first deaths at Malandarri, the camp there was disbanded. The Garawa remained on the eastern side of the river but moved south. The Yanyuwa and Mara crossed the river and several scattered camps were set up. As more deaths occurred, these new camps were abandoned and the people moved again. Finally, more permanent camps were established in the new scattered locations.

A major flooding of many of the new camp areas in 1974 led to further moves. Government housing projects (commenced early in the 1970s) have continued the pattern of the Yanyuwa living in varied locations, although they have tended to group together in their areas. This dispersion of the community, combined with the inter-marriage of the Yanyuwa with those of other language groups, resulted in less use of Yanyuwa in the camps and more frequent resorting to Kriol in many instances.

The youngest people currently speaking Yanyuwa well, with few exceptions, are those who spent their early childhood years at Malandarri (or on cattle stations in family groups, returning to Malandarri each wet season.) In families with older members from

Malandarri and younger members born too late to be part of that community, the younger members of the family have never mastered the language. Other influences coincided with that event (as will be seen below), but the move out from a single large camp dealt a sharp blow to the language. (The 'few exceptions' are the young adults who have confident parents with strong traditional roots, parents who continued to speak Yanyuwa to each other and to others in their new camp areas.)

3.2 CHANGES IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Through the years a number of financial considerations have led to an increasing flow of Aborigines from the cattle stations in the surrounding area and into the Borroloola community. When there was the requirement that Aborigines be paid wages equal to those of whites, the process began. At that time the cattle station owners could afford to keep only their best Aboriginal stockmen, and the remainder (along with the various extended family members who had accompanied them) returned to Borroloola. This first return was by those who normally returned every wet season and so they belonged to the community. The only problem at this time was one of unemployment.

Since then, however, two factors have led to the steady increase in the extent to which other Aborigines have come into the community, Aborigines whose lives had formerly centered on the cattle station communities: (i) tight financial times for station owners, brought about by changes in the world beef market and periods of drought, have led to the termination of employment of Aborigines; (ii) the use of helicopters for mustering cattle has made additional Aboriginal stockmen redundant. Each fresh influx of Aboriginal people from the cattle stations brought those whose connection with the Yanyuwa community was increasingly remote. These changes in the cattle industry resulted in an increased number of Aborigin at Borroloola who had no knowledge of Yanyuwa.

3.3 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In the mid-1960s the first government school was opened at Borroloola. It commenced with a single caravan classroom and one teacher. It has developed until a cluster of permanent buildings have been established and the staff has steadily increased in both white teachers and Aboriginal teaching assistants. Once Kormilda College was established in Darwin, increasing numbers of Borroloola students moved off to post-primary education there, a thousand or so kilometres from home.

Two school-associated factors have contributed to language loss for the Yanyuwa. The first is the pressure of English which, with very rare

exceptions, is the only language heard at the schools. Few teachers have actively discouraged the use of Aboriginal languages but the very system itself has taught the children that English is the priority language and that Aboriginal languages are an 'optional extra'. The second factor has been the removal of the teenagers from their language community for their post-primary education.

The post-primary students relate most readily to their fellow-students and to Darwin activities. Ties with their home community and language are weakened. This period of association with young people from 'foreign' areas has also resulted in some marriages for the Yanyuwa young people outside the community. These marriages have either taken them to a distant community and cut them off from their language totally, or they have brought more non-Yanyuwa people back into the home community. This has contributed to a breakdown of the former system where marriage was into communities where there was reciprocal language knowledge and use.

The education system, however unwittingly, has contributed to language loss. At the time when young people are most receptive to learning, they are absent from the Yanyuwa language environment for significant periods for primary school and even more for post-primary. At the time when they are beginning to think of marriage partners, they are surrounded by 'foreigners' at their Darwin college.

The educators of children are not alone in their promotion of the English language. Cattle station people, mission staff, government staff--virtually everyone has contributed to the pressure from English. Indeed, a few teachers stand out as exceptions and have encouraged the children in their knowledge of their Aboriginal language. But the education system has been singled out because the impact it makes on the community is greater than that of any other.

3.4 CHANGES IN LINGUISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Traditionally, when an Aboriginal girl married, she was expected to learn the language of her husband. Now there is no such requirement. Kriol or Aboriginal English provides a common language for husband and wife. (Some young people have come from other Kriol-speaking communities. Others come from areas where Aboriginal English[7] is spoken.) A lingua franca has removed the necessity for wives to learn Yanyuwa, if they come from outside the community.

In recent years, every young Yanyuwa married man has espoused a wife who has no knowledge of Yanyuwa. The children hear no Yanyuwa from their

mothers and will probably hear little from their fathers. This would seem to spell the death of the language.

In earlier years, this potential problem was becoming apparent but at that time there were a significant number of Yanyuwa grandparents who were maintaining a Yanyuwa language environment. The number of Yanyuwa-speaking grandparents is steadily diminishing.

3.5 CHANGES IN ABORIGINAL MOBILITY PATTERNS

Through the years the transport system of the Yanyuwa people has changed radically. In 1963 the people travelled in their area on foot or by canoe. As the years progressed, some cheap second-hand vehicles began to make their appearance as well as some aluminium dinghies. In more recent years the cars have improved in quality and quantity to the extent that everyone now has access to a relative's if they do not have one of their own, and many of the vehicles are obtained new. Similar changes have occurred in neighbouring communities.

People from the Yanyuwa community are mobile for a number of reasons. Some find employment in other areas. More go out for training of many kinds. Those employed by the school or the Health Centre have periodic opportunities for in-service training at larger centres. The Yanyuwa go out to the larger centres to share in political, cultural and Christian activities. Expense money for conferences or holiday travel enables some of the government employees to travel throughout Australia and sometimes overseas. Family members in other parts of the Northern Territory and in other states of Australia draw their Borroloola relatives for visits. The Yanyuwa spend more time out of their language area than previously.

One factor has drawn mobilised Aborigines from surrounding areas into Borroloola. Most of these communities do not have ready access to unlimited quantities of alcohol. At Borroloola there is a hotel facility within easy walking distance of the various Aboriginal residential areas with liquor on sale seven days a week. This is an attraction to many Aborigines to visit Borroloola, and some remain to add to the numbers who do not understand Yanyuwa.

3.6 CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY AND VALUES OF THE YANYUWA

In 1963 the Yanyuwa people resident at Malandarri were still oriented towards a traditional pattern of living. The days were given to hunting and food-gathering and the evenings were given to corroboree dancing, story-telling, or talking around the camp-fires. At that time the

Welfare officer distributed rations each week, but in accordance with traditional eating patterns, the food was steadily eaten until it was finished. Food given out on Friday was finished on Monday. Hunting and gathering expeditions resumed on Tuesday. (If individual families endeavoured to make their supplies last through the week, they were soon discouraged by the demands of other relatives who had no such goals.)

At that time, the adults and children were satisfied by either 'whitefella tucker' or by bush foods. But this was to change. Over the next few years legislation brought Aborigines out of wardship and a ration system into citizenship and a financial economy. As more money became available, the necessity to hunt for food ceased, and hunting and food-gathering became holiday activities. When the government school was first set up, a midday meal was provided for the children. For these various reasons, 'whitefella tucker' became the normal food of the younger members of the community.

Early in 1976 there was a breakdown in the transport system which kept the Borroloola store supplied. Bread, flour, cereals, sugar and various other basic foods ran out, and these things remained unobtainable for a week or so. When the writer shared a few kilos of flour with a few of the nearby families, she was quite unprepared for the gratitude expressed by the Yanyuwa pastor--gratitude quite out of proportion to the small gift of food. But he explained why the gift was of such value to him. He and his wife were well satisfied with the foods they could readily obtain from the bush but their children were not. They had become accustomed to food from the store and were pleading for bread or for damper (a flat scone-like cake made from flour). The children's hunger was not satisfied by unfamiliar bush foods, and that gift of flour had met a need of the pastor's children.

This increasing dependence on store foods is indicative of other dependencies on western commodities: petrol for vehicles, medical treatment at the Health Centre, and so on. These factors have largely negated the hoped-for benefits that the outstation movement may have brought, in providing a new nurturing ground for the Yanyuwa language.

Parents have worked hard to obtain traditional land and outstation facilities there. They have been motivated by a deep concern to remove their sons and daughters from access to alcohol and to encourage them back to a more traditional life-style. The adults' hope for at least some of the outstations had been to set up more traditionally oriented schools, with Yanyuwa language used and cultural skills taught to their children. But in many instances the sons and daughters have changed values and do not share the motivation of their parents. Their concern is to keep returning to Borroloola and to their peers and the facilities there.

A few of the outstations have been more strongly established than the others. Of these, the writer is aware of only one where there has been a positive contribution to the maintenance of the Yanyuwa language. For the remainder of the Yanyuwa, the earlier move into a western economy has been accompanied by a move towards western values and life-style and language.

Even at this one outstation, Wandangulla, the children's knowledge of Yanyuwa is restricted to certain vocabulary areas. Of the senior grandparents there, the grandfather uses primarily Garawa and the grandmother Yanyuwa. John Bradley reports that in his repeated visits there (in association with his Sacred Sites Authority work), he has observed that the children use a basic Kriol into which they have incorporated Yanyuwa nouns (for such categories as bush foods and body-parts), and Garawa verb forms (which are considerably simpler than Yanyuwa's prefixed forms).

This situation at Wandangulla illustrates two further factors. One is a measure of confusion in the children's identifying with one specific linguistic group. The other is the very nature of Yanyuwa itself. It is one of the prefixing, noun-classifying Australian languages, which makes it one of the more daunting to learn. In addition, it is the only one of these which has separate dialects for male and for female speakers, which compounds the difficulty.[8]

3.7 CHANGES IN THE SOURCES OF POWER AND STATUS

A study on the politics of Borroloola and four other Aboriginal settlements has been written up by Rolf Gerritsen (1981). He describes how the five communities are controlled by small dominant groups who appropriate a disproportionate share of the benefits from the public sector. He writes of these 'dominant men' who obtain their power from three sources, of which only the first is a traditional source: (i) 'ceremonial attainment' which is associated with affiliation to a group which 'owns' or 'controls' a particular ceremony; (ii) 'land power' which is 'a modern power' associated with recognised ownership of reclaimed traditional land, and (iii) '**munanga** ("whiteman") power' which is associated with a knowledge of English and of the European bureaucratic systems.

Gerritsen writes that the power of the 'dominant men' is gained from varying mixtures of power from the above three sources, but that '**munanga** power is vital'. The changes in the cultural economy have resulted in finances gaining a significant cultural value. It is the 'dominant men' who understand how to obtain finances for themselves and

for others and this indeed places considerable power within their control.

The writer has observed this same phenomeon. The fact that this power has a close association with 'control of European language' gives another strong motivation for mastery of English. This contributes an additional pressure to push Yanyuwa into the background.

3.8 CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF BORROLOOLA

Through the years since 1963, the white population of Borroloola has steadily increased. At first the increase mainly related to government staff who provided services for the Aboriginal people. The school staff grew with the enlarging community. Police replaced the Welfare officer when it was rightly predicted that the availability of alcohol to the entire population would necessitate their presence. A Social Services staff was required. A Health Centre was established and a resident staff appointed. At that stage the Aboriginal people were still largely the focal point of the community but this then changed.

In 1968 the main access road to Borroloola from the Stuart Highway (going south from Darwin through the centre of Australia) was sealed. About the same time the road south to the Barkly Highway (crossing the country from the east to meet the Stuart Highway) was also sealed. Borroloola quite rapidly became one of the major stops on an outback tourist route. It also became a more attractive resort for fishermen. The 1985 Centenary Souvenir Brochure states: 'Borroloola currently claims around 8,000 visitors a year'.

The white people in the community have increased in number and the focus of major interest has turned away from the Aboriginal people (as a group with need for cross-cultural assistance). The writer's impression is that they are now seen more as consumers--or perhaps as a hindrance to the development of the area. Certainly there has been a marked change in racial attitudes in the community as a whole.

These changes have led to the Aboriginal people being exposed to even greater social pressures from the dominant national culture. Although the Europeans are a minority group numerically, their better education, greater financial resources (or understanding of finances and ability to handle them, at least), and their facility in their own language and cultural system have given them a strong social advantage. The Aboriginal people have become increasingly aware of cultural pressure being exerted on them.

The increased European presence has been accompanied by the growth of an increased number of associations, meetings relating to town management (and now a newly-elected town council), hearings relating to new liquor licence applications, parent-teacher meetings, and so on. For the Yanyuwa and other local Aboriginal people to have meaningful involvement, there is increasingly a need for better ability to comprehend and communicate in English. It has been assumed by Europeans and Aborigines through the years that English is the appropriate language for such activities, and that assumption is still there. (The Aborigines are aware that any weakness in the area of English skills places them at a disadvantage.)

Places, such an Njawuma, that were regularly frequented by the Yanyuwa for camping out on hunting trips have been taken over by local European clubs or by tourists. The Yanyuwa no longer feel comfortable to visit these places and now avoid them. Some of the islands, which provided a place of refuge for the people in past years, are now open to the tourists. The Yanyuwa had no way of knowing that among the visitors would be those who would disregard the bounds set, and worse, would desecrate areas sacred to them, even the burial places of their kinsmen.

Linguistically, socially, and emotionally, they have come under pressures. To an increasing extent, they have lost control in areas where, a few decades ago, they were the authority. Sometimes they can still exert their former dominance but they cannot rely on doing so. In ceremonial areas they are decision-makers still. But when there is a move into areas of 'politics', 'democratic processes' or 'group representation', then they are now one of many voices, even within the Aboriginal community.

As consciousness of the Aboriginal-European dichotomy has been strengthening, it seems that there has been an accompanying weakening of the distinctions which have marked the separate identity of Yanyuwa, Garawa, Mara and other Aboriginal groups. This social situation has put the Yanyuwa language under stress in two ways. There is pressure towards English from the white community presence, and the need for the Aborigines to identify as a unit is bringing pressure towards the use of Kriol (or Aboriginal English for non-speakers of Kriol) as a lingua franca.

3.9 THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL

The one feature of citizenship that the Borroloola Aboriginal community clearly understood (when legislation incorporated them with the rest of Australia's citizens in 1964) was that they were free to purchase and to drink alcohol. Some of the men had met with it already. The ten who

helped man the cargo boat in the northern waters had been given a rum ration along with the whites on the crew (the issue was given immediately prior to their settling to sleep). Others had been slipped some beer or spirits by one or two of the whites, or by kinsmen whose white paternity allowed them to obtain it legally. And so there were already those who had a taste for alcohol.

The local Welfare officer had planned that there would be some education on the use of alcohol before he notified the Aborigines of their new freedom, but the news arrived from other sources ahead of the planned 'education'. The day that the Aborigines began drinking alcohol, the corroboree dancing in the camp, at the close of each day, ceased. The rhythmic droning of the didgeridoo, the skill of the dance, the identifying of the onlookers with their performing kinsmen, the recounting of the highlights of the dancing the next day--all of this ceased with the arrival of alcohol. From that time to this, dancing has become an event for the rare occasions when a performance is required for visitors or for ceremonial purposes.

At first it was only a proportion of the male Yanyuwa who drank regularly, and at that time the community was horrified to see drunken women among some of the newcomers from more distant cattle station areas. The Yanyuwa were aghast to see drunken mothers neglecting their children.

On the writer's return to Borroloola in 1984, she was aghast to see Yanyuwa women drinking and neglecting their children, and that this was accepted as a normal thing by most of the community. It was also the norm for the teenagers returning from Kormilda College to join the drinking groups. Increasingly it has become the pattern for a large number receiving their fortnightly cheques to buy one supply of food and then to join their 'mates' in steadily drinking their way through as many cartons of beer as their money will buy. (Some do not even make that initial purchase of food.)

Some mothers with a number of children had earlier withstood the pressures to drink, but the stress from their husbands' drinking habit was too great for them to cope with, and they found a way of escape only in turning to alcohol themselves.

This disruption, first to the normal evening activities in the camp social life at Malandarri and later to the normal family social life, has been a further blow to the sharing of Yanyuwa with the children and the young people. The language of the drinking groups is no traditional language. It is usually some form of English or Kriol, and it not infrequently includes a high proportion of English swearing and obscenities. These English-related languages and this vocabulary is the

norm for children who accompany their parents to the hotel and to the drinking groups. Alcohol brought immediate devastation to the cultural life of the Yanyuwa and it has subsequently contributed to language loss also.

3.10 MEDIA PRESSURE

In the 1960s there was little evidence of radios in the Aboriginal camp. During the 1970s portable radios and cassette players began appearing in increasing numbers. It was during the writer's 1980-1984 absence that a television receiver was erected at Borroloola and television and video became established as a regular feature of life through the Aboriginal camps and homes.

In 1985 an anthropologist, Wayne Dye, visited Darwin to give seminars on various topics. In one of these seminars he spoke on the effect of the impact of television and video on minority languages around the world. Although his basic work has been done in Papua New Guinea, he has visited diverse minority language areas on the continents of Africa, Asia and America in his role as an international consultant with the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

He reported that around the world, the advent of television and video has accelerated the process of language loss among the smaller minority groups. Through these media the national languages have gained in status and the indigenous languages have consequently suffered. Borroloola and several other Australian centres are providing evidence of this same phenomenon in this country. Yanyuwa is a victim.

4. INEFFECTUAL COUNTER-INFLUENCES

There have been a few counter-influences which have promoted or encouraged the retaining of the language, but they have been too weak or too late to be effective. There has been a positive interest shown in the language by a few linguistic workers, anthropologists and members of the government staff. But this positive affirmation of the language could not outweigh the negative pressures so strong against it.

One local headmaster was at first under the impression that the Aboriginal children did not speak any traditional language. After the writer's return from a year away, he commented on hearing children using their Aboriginal languages in the school playground for the first time. The presence of a linguistic field worker in the community affirmed the children sufficiently that they were no longer ashamed of using their

language, but it was insufficient to provide motivation for the Yanyuwa children to move into their language in any depth.

In the 1970s legislation was passed which opened the way for Aborigines to make claims for traditional land. It required traditional owners to validate such claims with cultural evidence of ownership such as song cycles, traditional ceremonies and mythology associated with the areas. This, together with the coming of several anthropologists into the area during that decade, led to a resurgence of cultural activity.

Ceremonies, which had been becoming shorter and simpler and performed less frequently, were restored to their fuller performance and were again held regularly. Other ceremonies which had ceased were recommenced. There was a new push to ensure that all the boys were initiated, and then to ensure that the initiated groups were trained in their semimoiety ceremonies. Traditional ceremonies are strongly linked to traditional language and so this situation may have been expected to promote knowledge and use of Yanyuwa. However, Kriol was already in use as a lingua franca for inter-community ceremonies and this allowed for communication without resort to Yanyuwa necessarily. And now that land has been regained and there are changes in the political climate relating to this issue, it seems unlikely that the cultural momentum of the 1970s will be retained.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Yanyuwa was still being spoken by the parents and grandparents in the camp. This use was sufficient pressure on young people with a passive knowledge of Yanyuwa to actively use their language. By the 1980s the ranks of the older Yanyuwa speakers are thinning. Their place is being taken by those who have entered the community from outside or by those who are growing up without a speaking knowledge of Yanyuwa.

A group of Yanyuwa grandmothers have begun to react against the lessened use of Yanyuwa in their community. This group includes several leaders in the women's ceremonies, and two of them are involved on education staff. This group has begun to use Yanyuwa again in speaking to the children and has worked to promote some language maintenance in cultural sessions at the school. They have strongly ecouraged the use of traditional languages by the women in the outstation communities (extended family groups who have returned to traditional land areas). If any influence could contribute to the recovery of Yanyuwa, this would be the most likely one to accomplish it.

But there seems little hope of any work in the Borroloola school being effective in the recovery of Yanyuwa. The children are from Yanyuwa, Garawa, Mara and Kudanji groups, and from families who have no traditional Aboriginal language. In attempts to promote traditional

language use thus far, Yanyuwa or Garawa have been used with groups which included numbers of children who understood neither language. This has tended to alienate these children. For any measure of success in such an endeavour, it would be necessary to have a separate teacher to work with each language group. There are not the teachers for this, nor has there been enough community interest to provide members to train to accomplish the task.

The children at the outstations are too few and their local non-Yanyuwa-speaking contemporaries are too many to give much hope of long-term changes coming from that source either.

5. THE MOVE FROM YANYUWA TOWARDS KRIOL

In 1963 when the writer first arrived in the community, the Aboriginal creole was in extensive use as one of the alternatives to Yanyuwa, especially in communication with the non-Yanyuwa.

During a period in Darwin in 1971, the writer was surprised to discover that Kriol was already the mother tongue of children from the Borroloola community. She had earlier observed that parents used Kriol almost exclusively with their children during her visits to the camp. In Darwin she shared a unit with a Yanyuwa mother and her two sons, aged about four and ten years. During that 7-week period the Yanyuwa family group was never once heard to speak Yanyuwa among themselves. Only Kriol was used. The mother always spoke Yanyuwa to the writer. The 10-year-old responded to white social attitudes to Kriol and also talked to her in Yanyuwa (but not to his mother or brother). The 4-year-old was blissfully unaware that anyone disapproved of Kriol and he chatted quite happily to the writer in it. Kriol was the mother tongue of the two boys. (The mother and older boy spoke their best English in any contact with other Europeans.)

Parents early became aware that their children must know English to function well in the society around them. The English they spoke was the creole English of their people and so it was Kriol that they taught their children. Kriol was certainly the mother tongue of the children in 1963, and at that time Kriol was the primary language of children in their early teens. This shows that Kriol has been the mother tongue of Yanyuwa children from at least 1950.

As the proportion of 'outsiders' in the Borroloola Aboriginal community has increased, Kriol has strengthened as the lingua franca of the area. It is the one Aboriginal language which remains to those who have lost their traditional language. Kriol reflects the traditional sound system and grammar; but, more than that, its semantic system facilitates

expression of the Aboriginal world view. Although the writer sorrows to see such extensive evidence that Yanyuwa is dying, she is thankful that at least Kriol is alive and well and that this language remains for the Yanyuwa to give expression to their thoughts and feelings.

6. CONCLUSION

No one of the factors considered above has caused the death of the Yanyuwa language. The language is dying because of the total effect of an ever-increasing number of factors putting pressure on a language which has always been vulnerable because of the small number of its speakers. Changes to culture and to language were slower at first and were therefore less perceptible. Later the changes which were in progress became increasingly visible. During the years 1980-1984, the changes accelerated more rapidly still as Borroloola changed from being a small outback rural centre to being a small tourist town, as television and video made their debut, and as the influx of whites and 'foreign' Aborigines increased to make Yanyuwa speakers a minority group in their own area. The reality of the situation has become inescapable. Yanyuwa is dying.

NOTES

1. Yanyuwa (also known by its Garawa name 'Yanyula', its Mara name 'Wadirri', and variants of these three names), is a language spoken by about 90 adults, in an area around Borroloola (about 50 kms from the coast in the north-east corner of Australia's Northern Territory). The writer has been working with the Yanyuwa under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics since 1963, primarily at Borroloola, but with 8 months spent with the Yanyuwa at Doomadgee in 1967-68. She is indebted to Dehne McLaughlin (in earlier years) and John Bradley for any knowledge of affairs concerning ceremonies in the area.

2. Richard Baker (University of Adelaide), who has been doing historical research of the area, pointed out to the writer that the 'population of around 1,000' in fact applied to the late 1880s, and that the final decade of the nineteenth century saw the commencement of the major decline in population. He also pointed out the effects of Macassan experience (see section 2 paragraph 3).

3. It is the writer's impression that in her earlier years with the Yanyuwa, they were not consciously aware of English and Kriol being separate languages but saw them, rather, as being different registers of

English. She suspects that children commencing school are not conscious that the Kriol they speak is not English.

4. The writer is not aware of the numbers destroyed from the language groups in the area. The impression gathered is that the Binbinga suffered the greatest losses, and that there were more losses among the inland Garawa people than the Yanyuwa. Richard Baker points out that the Yanyuwa's island and coastal territory was not attractive to settlers and that there was consequently less conflict for them (private communication).

5. The missionary at that time, Mr. M. Pattemore, reports that he was expressly asked by the people to teach the children English.

6. John Bradley (Sacred Sites Authority), a Yanyuwa researcher, reports how recently a Yanyuwa grandmother broke down and wept in his presence. The reason she gave for her distress was her new consciousness that she herself had contributed to the loss of Yanyuwa by not teaching it to her family, but had rather worked at teaching them 'English'.

7. For the distinction between Kriol and Aboriginal English, see Sandefur 1986:25-30.

8. This phenomenon will be discussed in separate papers in preparation by Bradley and by Kirton.

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KRIOL IN THE BARKLY TABLELAND

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0. INTRODUCTION

Until the publication of Glasgow's (1984) survey report, the availability of information on the pidgin/creole situation in the Barkly Tableland was limited to the scattered comments of a few writers. Chadwick (1975) reported that older speakers of Djingili in the Newcastle Waters, Beetaloo, and Elliott areas 'used a kind of Pidgin which is well known in North Australia'.

A pidgin, according to DeCamp (1971:15) is 'a contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers. It is used in trading or in any situation requiring communication between persons who do not speak each other's native languages.' A creole, on the other hand, 'is the native language of most of its speakers'.

Surveys in the Kimberley in Western Australia (Sandefur and Sandefur 1980) and in northwestern Queensland (Sandefur et al. 1982) indicate that this well known Pidgin is in fact Kriol. Kriol, according to Sandefur (1986), is a creole with many variations which developed with influences from several pidgins and is spoken across north Australia from the Fitzroy Valley of Western Australia to northwest Queensland. Sandefur (1982) concluded from these surveys that Kriol must be spoken right through the Barkly Tableland.

In April and May of 1983, Glasgow surveyed the central Northern Territory in order to determine the main languages used by Aboriginal

people in everyday communication. He found that Kriol is the main Aboriginal language of the Barkly Tableland area, including communities, or 'camps', at Elliott, Newcastle Waters, Beetaloo, Anthony's Lagoon, Brunette Downs, Alexandria Alroy Downs, Banka Banka, Tennant Creek (except for the Alyawarra people), and Rockhampton Downs (except for the older people). He estimated that at least 2000 people in this area communicate more effectively in Kriol than in any other language. This paper reports on a survey which sought to add to these findings.

The follow-up survey was conducted during the first half of June 1985. Its purpose was to extend work initiated by Glasgow on the extent of Kriol in the Barkly Tableland area, to collect Kriol data, and to determine where, or if, SIL should work with Kriol in the Tableland.

1. THE SURVEY TEAM

John Sandefur and I were the non-Aboriginal members of the survey team. Sandefur has been involved in the SIL Kriol Bible translation project at Ngukurr (Roper River) over the past 12 years. In addition he has given linguistic input to the Kriol bilingual educational program at Barunga (formerly Bamyili), and conducted various surveys in search of Kriol across north Australia. I have spent time at Ngukurr learning Kriol and have continued analysis of the language begun by Sandefur.

The Aboriginal co-surveyors were all from Ngukurr. These included Wallace Dennis, Ishmael Andrews, and William Hall. Dennis, a pensioner and former stockman, was involved in cattle drives from the north to Alice Springs, right through the Tableland. He speaks no English, and has been involved in previous surveys in the Kimberley and in Queensland. Andrews is one of the translators of the Kriol Bible project, and therefore linguistically sophisticated. He had had no previous contact with the Barkly Region. Hall is the son of a stockman working in the Tableland. He worked as a stockman himself in the MacArthur River area. He is an outgoing person who initiated many conversations during the course of the survey. It was essential to include these Aboriginal men in the survey team in order to overcome the obstacles which present themselves to an 'outsider' trying to hear a creole language.

2. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

It is well known (e.g. Sandefur 1982) that there are several obstacles to collecting pidgin or creole language data. The presence of negative attitudes toward a language such as Kriol is common. Where not only whites but Kriol speakers themselves believe that the language is

'rubbish' or 'bastardized English', the chances of recording or even hearing the language are diminished, especially in the presence of whites. Such attitudes cause speakers of a pidgin or creole to deny that they speak it.

Some speakers of Kriol do not realize that what they speak is Kriol. They mistakenly believe that they are using English when they speak Kriol. Many Aborigines who are fluent in both English and Kriol switch between them much as a white Australian might between formal and informal styes of English. They may not be aware that what they speak is a language in its own right and is not 'sub-standard' English.

Finding speakers of Kriol may fail because the name 'Kriol' is not known to them. Unlike the traditional Aboriginal languages, pidgins and creoles do not always have names associated with them, often because they are not thought of as languages. Kriol may be referred to by its speakers as 'Pidgin', 'Pidgin English', 'lingo', and so on. The best way to find out if someone speaks Kriol is to hear them speak it.

We attempted to overcome these obstacles by creating a sociolinguistic context which experience has shown is conducive to hearing Kriol spoken. When we approached an Aboriginal community, Andrews usually drove with Hall occupying the front passenger seat. The two of them did the talking. Every community had been contacted by mail prior to our arrival. In most cases, the letter had been addressed to a specific member of the community. Where possible, the Ngukurr men contacted people who were related to them or to people they knew. Where the contacts were not personal, we went in as salesmen. We carried Kriol books, video and audio cassettes, and T-shirts.

Linguistic data were recorded on cassettes and by writing down personal observations. Hall, Andrews and Dennis sometimes taped their own conversations with local residents. This was most effective with their relatives or previous acquaintances. Sandefur and I were also able to tape some texts when the initial barriers of speaking Kriol to whites were overcome. In no instance was Kriol spoken to whites in an initial contact situation. But some Aborigines switched from English to Kriol after Sandefur spoke to them in Kriol. Some texts were also taped in church services in which we were invited to participate.

3. COMMUNITIES

We visited Aboriginal communities in nine different places in the Barkly Tableland. All of them fall within the area in which Glasgow reported Kriol to be the main language.

Newcastle Waters

The Aboriginal camp was nearly deserted. The only Aboriginal people around were isolated employees of the station.

Beetaloo

We were unable to obtain permission to visit the two small communities here. There did not appear to be more than three dozen people in both communities combined. We did see a woman at a distance whose grandmother resides at Ngukurr and whose mother resides at Nutwood, both Kriol-speaking communities.

Elliott

Over 250 Aborigines were living in the two communities at Elliott. The larger community is located on the north side of the town. There we found several people who had been living at Newcastle Waters. The smaller 'Anthony's Camp' is about one kilometre south of town. Our initial contact was at the Aborigines Inland Mission church in town. We then made five visits to the camps over the following three days and a brief visit to the school.

In an oral report, Hall observed that the Aboriginal people in Elliott mixed the traditional vernacular, Kriol, and English in their speech. Like Chadwick, we found that Kriol was used among adults but we were not successful in our attempts to observe Kriol being spoken by children. Text 2 in the Appendix, in which English is used, is typical of our observation of children's speech. We heard some Kriol, but mostly English of varying degrees of fluency. Hall also observed: 'Old people talk Kriol. But those people that have talked to us are mainly from the Roper area. They know our old people.' (translation of oral report) This could reflect actual use, or it could indicate the difficulty of making new contacts on such a short visit. Our observations were enough to establish that Kriol is used but we were not able to establish the extent of its use.

Kalumpulpa Community

There were four families living at this outstation just off of the Stuart Highway about an hour's drive south of Banka Banka. They spoke their traditional language among themselves but had no trouble understanding the Kriol spoken to them. The manager of the community spoke a full range of English-related speech from 'heavy' Kriol (Sandefur 1979) right up to very fluent English. An example of his Kriol is found in Text 3 of the Appendix.

Tennant Creek

Several hundred Aborigines were living in town and in seven different communities around the edges of the town. Some of the former residents of Banka Banka were living in one of these communities. As in Elliott, our initial contact was through the AIM church. In the following four days we made several follow-up visits to these people. Most of them lived in town or in the Mulga Camp on the north edge of town. We also made new contacts in a visit to each of the other communities.

Glasgow's observations of Aborigines living at street addresses in town were confirmed by our own. Even those with an apparently European lifestyle spoke Kriol. It was much easier to hear Kriol in Tennant Creek than in Elliott. The switch from English to Kriol was made quite readily by people in Tennant Creek who were addressed in Kriol by a member of our survey team.

Rockhampton Downs

We found only Warumungu people living at this station. Those employed by the station lived with their families in one community. The others lived in a separate community known as the 'pensioners' camp'. In all, half of the 14 houses were occupied. We observed some Warumungu being spoken among adults here. But among the children, at a gathering of the two communities, only Kriol was heard. A man that we had contacted in Tennant Creek had returned to Rockhampton ahead of us. Our association with him was enough to cause people to speak to us in Kriol from the start, rather than starting with English and then switching.

Alroy Downs

As with Rockhampton, only Warumungu people were living here. About 35 people lived in one community adjacent to the homestead. The same man who gave us our initial contact with Rockhampton Downs accompanied us to Alroy, with a similar result. Texts 7 and 8 in the Appendix are extracts of a sermon he preached there. Some Warumungu was used among older adults, but mostly Kriol was observed in the camp. We were told that very few people resided at Alexandria and Anthony's Lagoon. The decision was made to bypass these stations.

Brunette Downs

Over 150 Aborigines lived in one large community near the homestead. We had no contacts in the community, so we went in as salesmen. People spoke Kriol to us while looking over the Kriol materials that we had to sell. A group representing a wide range of ages also spoke Kriol while

playing cards near where we were parked. In the very short time there, we heard nothing but Kriol.

4. SOCIOLINGUISTIC OBSERVATIONS

Many of the Aboriginal people in the survey area seemed to move around frequently, sometimes covering large distances. Several instances of movement within the survey area have already been noted. The people from Newcastle Waters were at Elliott and the people from Banka Banka were at Tennant Creek. In addition, we saw people from Borroloola and Anthony's Lagoon in Anthony's Camp at Elliott. Among the people we spoke to at Tennant Creek, there were people from Lake Nash, near the Queensland border, Ali Curung, and Borroloola. By the time we passed through Borroloola at the conclusion of the survey, the people we had met at Tennant Creek were back home. In addition to them, we saw people at Borroloola from communities ranging from Numbulwar in Arnhem Land all the way to Camoweal in Queensland. We encountered a car-load of people at Daly Waters that we had seen two weeks earlier at Nutwood. They were from Elliott. A cassette that we sold at Brunette Downs was being played when we drove into MacArthur River station a few days later. Populations tended to shift even in the few days that we would stay in one place.

This mobility made it clear how it might be possible for Kriol to be spoken throughout the Barkly Region. The distance and frequecy of travel provides adequate contact with other Kriol speakers to account for the language being known so far south. It also puts a great strain on the ability of Aborigines from distant places to communicate with one another using traditional languages, in spite of their tendency toward multilingualism. The number of languages with which they come in contact is too great. A lingua franca is a necessity if people are to travel those distances and still maintain communication. Kriol is such a lingua franca.

The degree of mobility that we observed considerably complicates the task of sorting out differences which may exist within Kriol, both between the Barkly Tableland and other regions and within the Barkly Region itself. In addition, there are a number of difficulties faced by anyone who tries to collect creole language data on such a short survey. As discussed earlier, creoles tend to be low-prestige, without traditional names, and often not recognized as distinct languages. Direct elicitation of data is not generally possible under these conditions. Indirect gathering of data amounts to writing down what can be heard without elicitation. Such data can be quite valuable. But it often takes considerable time to collect sufficient quantities for a fruitful analysis.

Once creole data has been collected, there are problems in drawing conclusions from it. When a creole is spoken by people who are in frequent contact with speakers of the superstrate language, from which most of its vocabulary is borrowed, it is not always easy to tell which language is being spoken at any given time. This is the case with Kriol and its superstrate, English. Many Kriol speakers are multilingual, English being one of the languages that they control. Not all of them, however, are fully fluent in English. The problem is to determine when such speakers are using Kriol and when they are using English, to the best of their abilities, with an 'Aboriginal accent'.

Even so-called 'monolingual' people engage in a great deal of code-switching. Some vocabulary items, grammatical structures, and even phonological elements may be used only in certain sociolinguistic environments or domains. When the codes for these different domains of usage are distinct languages, they may be quite easy to identify. But most monolingual speakers are not even aware that they speak using several different codes.

Many Kriol speakers switch back and forth between Kriol and English. In the case of a person having a limited knowledge of English, gaps in that knowledge may be filled in by Kriol in his speaking. But between Kriol and English, and any other language that a particular speaker knows, there are codes appropriate to the various domains in which a speaker functions. It may not be possible to isolate something to which we can point and say, 'This is Kriol', or 'That is English'. A simple illustration of the problem is the use of **olabat** and **dei** as third person plural pronouns ('they') by the same speaker in the same sentence. Are they both part of Kriol, or is **dei** 'Aboriginal English'?

5. LINGUISTIC OBSERVATIONS

It would be quite presumptuous to attempt to describe Kriol in the Barkly Tableland on the basis of a few tape transcriptions. What I can safely do is to point out similarities and differences in the usage of certain vocabulary items between the Kriol speakers which we recorded in the Barkly Tableland and some Kriol speakers in other parts of northern Australia. One obvious area for comparison is personal pronouns.

In unelicited data, personal pronouns are not difficult to find. I was able to find all forms in the data with the exception of the first personal dual inclusive ('you and I') and the first person dual exclusive ('we two, but not you'). These forms, together with a listing of equivalent forms heard in other areas where Kriol is spoken, are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Kriol Personal Pronouns

		Ngukurr	Barunga	Fitzroy Valley	Barkly Tableland
Singular					
	1	ai,mi	ai,mi	ai,mi	ai,mi
	2	yu	yu	yu	yu
	3	im	im	i,im	i,im
Dual					
inclusive		yunmi	yunmi	minyu, mela	?
	1				
exclusive		mindubala	mindubala	mindubala, mela	?
	2	yundubala	yundubala	yundubala	yundubala
	3	dubala	dubala	dubala	dubala
Plural					
inclusive		wi, minalabat	wi	milat, mela	wi
	1				
exclusive		melabat, mela	mibala, mela	mela, mipala	milabat
	2	yumob	yubala	yubala	yubala
	3	alabat	olabat	olabat	olabat

The third person singular pronoun heard in southern Arnhem Land is **im**. What we heard in the Tableland was the same as can be heard in the Fitzroy Valley area of Western Australia. **Im** is used in verbless clauses and object positions, and **i** is heard in other subject positions. The first person singular pronouns **mi** and **ai** are also distributed in this way.

The first person plural inclusive form ('we including you') which we heard is **wi**. This is the same form commonly heard in Barunga (formerly

Bamyili) and Ngukurr. **Minalabat** is also heard in Ngukurr. In the Fitzroy area, **wilat** is usually used. First person plural exclusive **milabat** ('we, but not you'), which we heard quite often in the Tableland, is similar to the Ngukurr form **milabat**. **Nela** is used in Ngukurr, Barunga, and Fitzroy. **Mibala** is also used, except in Ngukurr.

The most common form of the second person pronoun heard in the Barkly region is **yubala**. This form is also common in Barunga and the Kimberley. But **yumob** was also occasionally used by the same speakers, sometimes in the same utterance. This is the form most commonly used at Ngukurr.

6. SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

The indications from this survey are that Kriol is spoken by Aboriginal people throughout the Barkly Tableland, as Glasgow reported. However, we were not able to determine the extent to which Kriol is spoken in the region and the role it plays in daily communication. That role does not appear to be the same in each community throughout the region. Nor do we have sufficient data to describe adequately what is spoken and how it relates to variants of Kriol spoken in Arnhem Land and the Kimberley. Our recommendation to SIL on the basis of this survey was that further research should be done in the area to fill in these gaps.

APPENDIX

Text 1

This text resulted from an old man in Anthony's Camp, Elliott, recognizing the name of someone mentioned by one of the men from Ngukurr.

> **Wal tharran na mai andi. En im mai angkul deya, mai angkul yuno tharrei? Tudei oldfela. Dissaid brom Borroloola yuno? Langa, ai dono wet det ples. Thets wai yu mait go en siyim pas.**

Free translation:

> Well that one there is my father's sister. And he's my mother's brother there, my uncle you know over there? Now he's old. This side of Borroloola you know? At, I don't know the [name of that] place. So you might go see them.

Text 2

Boys in the top camp at Elliott (excerpts, not continuous transcription). The first spoke very good standard English. The second hesitated a great deal, and was prompted in the background in Kriol by a third. The fourth spoke English, but departed from 'standard' in noticeable ways, particularly with regard to prepositions. In this segment, he corrected himself once after omitting a preposition.

First boy: This morning we went to school. And on Saturday we went to picture. And on Saturday after... um Saturday in the morning we went to s...language ...school.
Second boy: I...went...to...
Thi d boy (in the background): ...stori weya yu bin go

Fourth boy: My name is Dennis. I go school here. Sometime we go church... we go to church. Mr. Scott an' Mormon church. An' sometime we go a school play.

Text 3

Outstation manager at Kalumpulpa, south of Banka Banka:

Dei gaman blanga det dinggo. Bat ai bin luk orla dinggo goin thru hiya. Ai bin luk langa New South Wales, huh, orla dinggo bin workinabat deya.

Free translation:

They lied about the dingos [saying there weren't any]. I saw all the dingos [when I was] going through here. I saw them in New South Wales, huh, all the dingos walking around there.

Text 4

An old man at Mulga Camp in Tennant Creek:

Imin tayimap wan lenkaunsil men, imin tayimap. Lenkaunsil bin telim ol stret, dis nat ples bla yu. Yu gat chet haus deya bat that graun, bobala det rul kaan gibit la yu, ridim det luk yu bin girrim shok [said while laughing]. Yu garra fens en det haus. Yu gin teigim wat jeya en shiftim bat yu kaan shiftim det graun. Em bla jet ples. [more laughter]

Free translation:

He tied up a land council man. The land council told him plainly, 'This isn't your place. You have that house there, but that land, the law won't give it to you, judging from the look [on your face], you're shocked [said while laughing]. You have a fence and the house. You can take what's there and move it, but you can't move the land. It belongs there.' [more laughter]

Text 5

A middle-aged woman in the 'Village Camp' in Tennant Creek who acknowledged having been to Ngukurr, Nutwood etc., speaking to the Ngukurr men in our truck:

Ai bin lukinat that toyota, aftathet yumob bin go pas this moning. Yumob turnbek thetwei. Yumob bin go langa natha rod, mi kipon tharrei.

Free translation:

I saw that 4-wheel drive when you went past this morning. You turned around over there. You went down another road, and I continued that way.

After an interruption, she turned to someone in her camp and spoke:

Ai bin lukinat this toyota, maitbi fram tharrei... Thet nat blekfela. Thet maitbi munangas toyota ai ben telimbat yu.

Free translation:

I saw this 4-wheel drive, possibly from over there... 'That's not Aboriginal. That's probably a white person's 4-wheel drive', I was telling you.

Text 6

Middle-aged man at Rockhampton Downs:

...en ibin stadin to rain. Wal fram deya ibin ren. Noa warra bin langa dis ples tharrei, noa warra insaid langa dis ples. Warra i go bin git so, O helicopter bin kamin la ten o'clock at night from Tennant Creek, kemp hiya teigimbek, teigimbek sikwan tasol naitaim. From ailibala bin kardim milabat.

Free translation:

Well then it rained. A lot of water covered the place oer there, a lot of water in this place. The water got so [bad], Oh a helicopter arrived at ten o'clock at night from Tennant Creek, took back [the people from] the camp here, took back just the sick at night. From early [it] hauled [the rest of] us.

Text 7

This text is from preaching at Alroy by a man who spends a lot of time between Alroy Downs, Rockhampton Downs, and Tennant Creek. It contains a good example of a clear switch to English in the context of prayer and in a situation where the Bible is being quoted. The prayer is a model, a suggestion of how to address Jesus. The Bible passage is paraphrased, not read or quoted word for word. It is a common sociolinguistic phenomenon for people to switch to more formal speech in a 'sacred' context.

If wen yu git to heaven, yu garra askim Lord Jisas san blanda im hu kamin langa is hat. Yu garra askim im, I want you to be my bos, Jisas, yu kamap langa mi. Wandi folurrum yu, na. Yubala askim im lagija [illegible]ikas bipo yu garra girrin lang hebin, yu garra go thru langa [illegible] Jisas langa san blanda im. Imin sei langa dis Baibul, I am the truth and the life. No one can ever enter kingdom of heaven, only through Lord Jesus san blanda im...

Free translation:

If you are going to get to heaven, you will ask the Lord Jesus, His Son, to come into his [your?] heart. You have to ask him, 'I want you to be my boss, Jesus. Come to me [or 'into me']. [I] want to follow you.' You ask him like that. That is, before you will get into heaven, you will go through the Lord Jesus His Son. It says in this Scripture [passage], 'I am the truth and the life. No one can ever enter [the] kingdom of heaven, only through [the] Lord Jesus, His Son...'

Text 8

This text is from the same segment of preaching as the previous one. It contains some particularly interesting Kriol vocabulary.

Pipul ova deya, norsaid, kilim olabat goinbat olabat lang hospital, ol deya mob olabat. En deya blidimbat, yuno, pipul bin bonim miselb, blekbalawei. Yuno? Bat grog, ai dal yumob, i gat poison. Bikos ai no hau ai bin oldei libum basdam laik det. Yufela ol no

thet ai bin live worse man. Bat ai no what sort of grog is. Im nogud dijan. Dijan meig wi yuno jis laik sneik baitimbat wi, insaid. Jat lagijat na. That grog im nogud igin. Blanda debudebul tharran.

Free translation:

People over there on the north side beat them and send them to the hospital, all of them over there. And there [they] bleed, you know, people pointed the bone [i.e. cursed] themselves, the Aboriginal way. You know? Grog, I tell you, has poison. I know because I used to live like that before. You all know that I lived like a very bad man. So I know what sort of [thing] grog is. It's no good, this one. It makes us, you know, just like a snake has bitten us, [it makes us like that on the] inside. That's what it's like. Grog is no good, I tell you. It's demonic, it is.

Text 9

Middle-aged man at Brunette Downs:

Im tharrei langa Elliott. That waif bla im im git kil na. Ka bin ran ova. Yanggel imin abum yuno.

Free translation:

He's over there at Elliott. His wife got killed. A car ran over her. A young one he had, you know.

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY REPORT: DALY RIVER REGION LANGUAGES

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0. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the results of a survey of the sociolinguistic conditions surrounding the languages of the Daly River region in the Northern Territory of Australia. In addition to researching settlements within the region itself, research was also undertaken on other locations which are inhabited by speakers of the Daly River region languages: Darwin, Adelaide River and Pine Creek. (The language situation around Delissaville is described in my Wagait region languages report in this volume.) The Daly River region covers the area on either side of the river as far north as the Wagait Reserve, as far east as the Fish River area and as far south as the Fitzmaurice River, excluding the region of the Murinh-patha people centred around Pt. Keats. (See map, Appendix 1.) The research was carried out intermittently from November 1983 to August 1984. The major research was done during a four-week period beginning on 25 November 1983. Except for a few days that period of time was spent at the Daly River settlement under the gracious hospitality of Father Bissett, administrator of the Catholic Missions complex there, and with the kind help of many mission residents both white and Aboriginal. Side trips were taken to Wooliana, Wudikapalirr and Peppimenarti. (At Peppimenarti permission to collect data was not given.)

The purpose of the survey was to provide as much sociolinguistic information as possible to help S.I.L. determine Bible translation needs among the dozen or so vernacular languages still spoken to varying degrees in the Daly River region.

The specific aims of the survey were to a) describe the places where Daly River region languages are spoken (see section 2), b) describe the

state of each of the Daly River region languages particularily in terms of language use (see section 3), and c) describe language attitudes of the language speakers (see section 4). The means of gathering data is described under section 3.0, Methodology.

1. ITEMS OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

The sociological history of the Daly River region language groups has had a traceable bearing on the state of the language situation today. Stanner (1933) writes that traditionally the dry season had forced tribes together in billabong and river areas that yet provided food (p. 385). This was probably a factor leading to their 'inter-tribal economic systems [and their] extreme degree of "internationalism"' (p. 380). We can assume that this 'internationalism' has persisted throughout many centuries and the fact that the languages did not therefore amalgamate is probably due to the fact that 'each tribe [retained] a high degree of solidarity' (p. 384) which was probably supported by a 'paralysing fear of sorcery' (p. 383).

Points of settlement in the area, including outstations, have always drawn the Aboriginal people to them (p. 383) because the chance of obtaining consistent provisions (albeit often extremely meagre) was more appealing then a feast or famine lifestyle. In view of today's relative wealth of consistent provisions at population centres in the Daly River region, it is safe to assume that there are no longer any Aboriginal families with a principal residence out bush away from a population centre. Stanner states that the present mission area 'is at present [1932] and has always been the centre of practically all settlement since the first invasion took place probably about the late eighties of last century' (p. 380). It is because of this reason and because the Daly River is said to have been no one tribe's exclusive possession (p. 403) that the mission area has been a 'rallying ground for the remnants [and a] focus of attraction for the general drift [of Aborigines towards settlements] from as far away as the Fitzmaurice River'. Under these special localised circumstances the horde organisation, which was the focal social unit of the past, 'could not help but crumble quickly and irremediably' (p. 404).

These historical factors, then, help to account for the structure of the present-day Daly River region society. Firstly, there is a bond of identity among Daly River region residents collectively. Secondly, despite that strong common bond each individual maintains an identification with his own traditional group and, ipso facto, his traditional group land as well. Lastly, it appears that the horde identification has long since disintegrated although identification with the extended family unit itself is strong.

2. CENTRES OF POPULATION

2.1 DALY RIVER

The present-day relatively high standard of living and community organisation which the Daly River residents of the past and present have worked for has come about through the support of Catholic Missions bolstered by government funds. The present Daly River Mission was officially opened in 1956 in response to Aboriginal request a few years earlier (Pye 1976:12-18). Government funding for the community now comes largely through the Department of Community Development and the Aboriginal Development Commission. Among the Community Development's many funded services is the installation and maintenance of a computerised three-generator power plant which supplies electricity for the expanding community. The community consists of about thirty contemporary block homes used by Aboriginal families, several more used by whites or mixed-race families, several new Aboriginal homes nearing completion, Catholic mission staff facilities, a church, a large mission-operated clinic, a mission-operated school, a community office complex, an all-purpose hall, a police aid office, a community club, a store, an airstrip, a garden complex, various mechanical and carpentry shops, and miscellaneous structures. Funds from the Town Management and Public Utility are also used to support services: parks and gardens, roads, drains, water, electicity, sewer, hygiene, and the community office. The community is stretched out along the Daly River and situated about two kilometres downriver from the Daly River Crossing. There is a police station complex and a hotel/pub complex located at the Crossing. Make-shift or temporary living areas can be found in the area around the pub as well as across the river from the community. There is a small resort, called Wulk Witbi, a few kilometres north of the community which is also used as a flood refuge and is operated and funded by the community. The community has a cattle project.

There are at present nearly 200 Aboriginal residents at the Daly River community representing all twelve or so historical language groups. The main vernacular is Ngankikurungkurr (see section 3.3). The population number fluctuates constantly as relatives move to and from other areas. Of that number the majority are under twenty-five years old. (For age and gender statistics see Appendix 2.)

In line with one of the mission's purposes for existence (Pye 1976:8), the community is a training centre for Aborigines. There are apprentices in carpentry and bricklaying and one with the powerplant, several teaching assistants, several health workers, two store workers, and a couple of office workers, as well as several workers involved with

servicing and general maintenance of the community. Any Aboriginal person interested in steady employment is provided with a job.

Another of the mission's purposes for existence is to care for the spiritual needs of the people, to provide a Christian environment in which people who choose to can develop in their Christian faith.

A third reason for the mission's existence (Pye 1976:67) is to establish education for the children and health care for all people. The mission school provides quality education and is eagerly attended by all eighty or so children enrolled. The school has five divisions: 1) pre-school, 2) first grade and second grade, 3) third grade and fourth grade, 4) fifth grade and sixth grade, and 5) seventh grade and post primary (i.e. continuing education as long as the pupil wants to learn or until he has established a certain level of academic proficiency). Each division has at least one qualified teacher along with a teaching assistant from the local Aboriginal community. The school principal pointed out that the children's performance is comparable to European children in the lower grades but typically it dwindles in the higher grades (apparently due to 'Aboriginal way' peer pressure). Some students go on to further education in Darwin at St. Johns, Salonika or St. Marys.

Although the community is supported by Catholic Missions and several government agencies, it is designed to be controlled by an Aboriginal council which is made up of a president and eight other council members. Decisions concerning community affairs are to be channelled through the council. There are community advisors but they are not members of the council.

Communication to outside the community is by means of a radio-telephone which is operable twenty-four hours a day. There is also an outpost radio to VJY Darwin, Catholic Missions headquarters and other missions. The community receives radio broadcasts from Darwin and it also has a satellite dish receiving national television broadcasts from Brisbane. There is a community television set at the club and several homes also have television sets. A few homes have video machines. The council has a video which shows movies in the all-purpose hall several nights per week. Occasionally there is a professional concert or other special activity in the hall.

Besides the twenty or so whites who permanently reside at the community, there are often visiting whites from government bodies, institutions, Catholic Missions etc., who are involved in elections, linguistics, social awareness, or other programmes intended to benefit the Aboriginal people.

2.2 PEPPIMINARTI

Located on Tom Turner's Creek feeding into the Moyle River, Peppiminarti began in 1974 with the encouragement, advice and physical help of the Daly River Mission (including UNIA, the Aboriginal association) and the efforts of a man who is half English and half Aboriginal, Harry Wilson. The intent behind establishing this settlement was to provide a community where Aboriginal people could provide their own livelihood and handle their own affairs, to foster their own indigenous culture and maintain their Christian faith on their own traditional land. Available funds would be provided by government agencies but the main industry was to be cattle.

In some ways the settlement has fulfilled its aims and in other ways it has not. It nonetheless fulfills a role in the livelihood of the whole region.

At present, the community has a store, a school, a bank/community office, an airstrip, mechanical workshops, miscellaneous structures, and is completing a new clinic building. Previously the residents lived centrally in small iron-clad dwellings, but those are mostly taken down and contemporary block housing is appearing throughout the settlement.

The population which was up to 200 just a few years back is now down to between 125 and 150 due to migration back to the Daly River community as well as to the typical migration to dry season camps. As the wet season sets in, the population will rise as families return from their dry season camps. There is at present one white couple working with community office affairs and there are two white couples and one single person teaching at the school. There are about sixty children in the school.

The settlement has no mission presence but the priest from the Daly River Mission tries to make a trip out every other week to celebrate mass and to meet individual spiritual needs.

The dominant vernacular language of Peppiminarti is Ngankikurungkurr (see section 3.3).

2.3 WOOLIANNA

This small settlement, which is about twenty kilometres downstream from the mission, is the home of some twenty Aboriginal people of the MalakMalak group, most of whom are adults (see section 3.6). They, along with perhaps others of MalakMalak descent in the area, have laid claim to a large portion of land north of the mission area and are

awaiting th results of investigation by the Federal Minister. Two of the MalakMalak people work at the Daly River clinic. The people generally do a lot of fishing and hunting for their livelihood.

At Woolianna itself there is also a caravan park and tea rooms run by a white. Between Woolianna and Daly River Mission there are several farms, a store, and a small school which caters to the children of whites in the area.

2.4 WUDIKAPALIRR

This settlement, located about fifty kilometres northwest of Peppiminarti, is in the process of construction by a particular clan (Parry clan of the Marrithiyel; see section 3.5). It is part of the general trend of Aborigines to move back to their historical homelands.

At present there are a few make-shift or temporary dwellings. Construction of a fully licensed commercial airstrip is proceeding at a rapid pace. They have attracted some government funding for the airstrip and by demonstrating aggressive progress they hope to attract Community Development funds to eventually build a water system, power plant, store, school, clinic etc. The eventual 200 residents that they envision attracting (principally the Marrithiyel from the Daly River community) would live in standard housing stretched along both the airstrip and a rather extensive billabong close by.

The purpose behind the existence of Wudikapalirr is much the same as that of Peppiminarti: to establish a place on traditional lands where Aboriginal people linked to that land can provide their own livelihood.

2.5 OTHER AREAS WITHIN THE DALY RIVER REGION

There are three clan or family settlements that are used mostly during the dry season. Nardirri is situated on the coast at the Moyle River mouth and has about fifteen tin sheds and a wind-driven water pump. There are about twenty people living there (apparently of the Maringar or MareAmmu tribes) who live at Pt. Keats during the wet season. Ferriderr is situated inland from the Moyle about half way between Peppimenarti and the coast. There are about twenty family members there (of the Maringar tribe) who get their supplies from Peppimenarti during the dry season and live at Peppiminarti or Pt. Keats during the wet season where their children go to school year round. There is also another camp in the same general area west of Peppimenarti that is used by a family from the Daly River community (the Miler family of the Maringar tribe) on weekends during the dry. The camp is on their

traditional homeland and supposedly they, like the families at Ferriderr and Nardirri, hope to eventually establish it as a permanent residence.

There is an Aboriginal-owned station called Palumpa located about forty kilometres by road east of Pt. Keats. Perhaps fifty people live there during the wet season and many more workers during the dry season. The people are from either Daly River or Pt. Keats settlements (and hence the language influence is first Murrinh-patha and second Ngankikurungkurr). Just a few small children live there with their families.

There are other possible settlements as well that are probably used just in the dry season, such as Emu Point, Fish River, Papanella, and Cheluk.

2.6 AREAS OUTSIDE OF THE DALY RIVER REGION

There are at least a dozen locations of permanant or semi-permanant habitation by Aborigines in the Darwin area ranging from camping to hostels to Aboriginal-owned blocks of land. Aborigines from the Daly River region are mainly associated with two of these locations: the Catholic Missions headquarters complex and a permanant settlement in Berrimah. The accommodations at the Catholic Missions headquarters would be considered as only temporary housing even though the complex is often in use by Aborigines. The Berrimah location is not only used for temporary housing by visiting Daly River region Aborigines, but it is the permanant home for perhaps fifty Aborigines who traditionally come from the Daly River region. As a result of the efforts of the Aboriginal Development Foundation, the Berrimah people were given title to a large block of land a few years ago. Since that time the Aboriginal Development Foundation has acquired funds to provide quality permanant housing and services. Besides carrying out their own daily affairs, the Berrimah people act as business brokers and hoteliers for those of their kinsmen who come to town to visit or to stay for a while (Sansom 1980:7). The leader of the Berrimah location claims there are as many as eighteen language dialects represented there at various times. Marrithiyel would probably have a slight edge on the others, but according to Sansom (pp. 28-9), the language of the settlement would be their own form of Aboriginal English.

Another camp which has also become permanantly established by the efforts of the Aboriginal Development Foundation and which is also used at times by Daly River region people is Railway Dam (or One Mile Dam) located in town. These people, however, have more association with the Wagait region and even Pt. Keats rather than with the Daly River region.

There are also a few Aborigines at Bagot Reserve who are traditionally from the Daly River region (mostly MalakMalak).

Outside Adelaide River there is a permanant camp which has recently been developed with good housing and services. It is inhabited by Aborigines traditionally from different regions. At least one family comes from the Daly River region. They are Ngankikurungkurr but use a creole in their day-to-day interaction with other residents.

There are two camps at Pine Creek which are largely inhabited by people traditionally from the Daly River region. One camp is made up of permanant buildings and the other, a short distance away, is made up of one old building and some tents. A few kilometres down the track from Pine Creek is a permanant settlement called Kybrook. There is a white manager who is attempting to restore the settlement to a profit-making industry. The thirty Aborigines who now stay there are part of the whole Pine Creek mob who altogether would make up as many as 75 or 100 people. These people, like the people at the Daly River Mission, have a variety of other camps more in the bush which they often inhabit. Exactly how many of these people come traditionally from the Daly River region would require more research. Of those Daly River region people, the majority consider Wagaman to be their traditional language. It is mainly these people who are hoping for a positive outcome on a land claim in the Fish River area.

There is also a small group of Daly River region people at Batchelor and a few others scattered around at various Top End locations and in cities and settlements throughout Australia.

3. SOCIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF EACH DALY RIVER AREA LANGUAGE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The methods of obtaining information concerning the sociolinguistic conditions of each language were observation, interviewing, and document research. Some of the observation and interviewing time was spent in an attempt to answer the ethnograpic questions given in Appendix 3. Most of that time, however, was spent informally seeking answers to questions that arose in the process of visiting the settlements. Most of the interview information concerning the Daly River region came primarily from the mission priest (Father Laurie Bissett), and secondarily from the Daly River Mission school principal (Sister Elsie) and a Daly River Aboriginal woman who has had extensive education experience in Darwin as well as in the mission school (Mrs. Miriam Rose Ungunmerr). Information about the region was also obtained from several other white staff

personnel and from many Aborigines representing language groups at the Daly River community.

Interview information about locations outside of the Daly River region proper, such as Adelaide River and Pine Creek, came mostly from Aborigines living in those locations.

For purposes of analysing the data more clearly, language users have been divided into groups. Grouping by language use was done on the basis of the results of the methodology and with the help of kinship charts constructed during the survey. The language use groups are divided into the following categories (taken from LANGUAGE USE CATEGORIES chart in Appendix 2) and will be referred to in the following sections:

I.	Pre-school	3 yrs old and younger
II.	School	4 yrs to 14 yrs
III.	Post school/young family	15 yrs to 23-25 yrs
IV.	Family	24-26 yrs to 35-40 yrs
V.	Older	38-40 yrs and older

(The reason for the split numbering used in categories III-V is to accommodate generation groupings inside particular categories despite variance in age. This reflects more accurately the number of people in language use groups.)

3.1 ENGLISH

There has been no English comprehension testing in general among Aboriginal people from the Daly River region. If addressed by a Standard English speaker, however, nearly all people would be able to respond except for some people in category V (particularly the older women) and presumably some in category I since many of these children are from homes where the child is exposed only to the Daly River creole or a vernacular as well.

There are a number of reasons why the Daly River region language groups have at least a moderate ability in English. Most of the people have had English contact since the latter half of the 1800s and this contact has steadily increased along with greater accessibility and interest in the area by research, government, and mission personnel, as well as tourists. Transportation to and from Darwin and surrounding towns is easily accessible, compared to the past, and is utilised by all categories of people. Nearly all children are exposed to at least five or six years of school where instruction is mostly in English (except for preschool) by white and Aboriginal teachers. Since the majority of

Aboriginal people from the Daly River region either live at the Daly River community or visit there regularly, they have exposure to English television programming and also English video movies which are shown several evenings per week in the all-purpose hall and in various homes.

The English that is used by Aborigines in the Daly River region varies from Australian Standard English to something not far removed from the Daly River creole. Most speak a variety of English that could be called Aboriginal English similar to that spoken by Aborigines throughout rural Australia (characterised by limited domains, lack of many English language redundancies etc.). The vast majority of Daly River region Aborigines do not have a command of technical English. This assessment is based on observing younger men while they were watching television at the Daly River club and by interacting with them there. Of all categories of speakers these young men, in categories III and IV, should have the greatest command of English since they (versus older men) have not only been through some schooling but they (versus women) also have the most encounter with whites. It is more common for men to associate with whites--via work, the pub, traveling etc.--although women are sometimes more outgoing with other people. Those Aborigines in the other categories, then, would have less competence in English to varying degrees. Many women in category V, for instance, will not respond at all in English since they are either unable to or they are too insecure in their ability. A possible exception to the younger men's stronger ability in English would be with many of the older school children. They have had exposure to technical English in recent years through their exposure to the outside world via their modern school education, visiting with white special interest groups, and the recent availability of video movies. As an example, many of the older school children recently answered most questions correctly on a test concerning parliamentary procedures (as reported by the visiting government workers who administered the test).

Most of the people in categories II-IV at the Daly River community (and possibly at Peppimenarti as well) have some reading ability as a result of their school training. However, they don't read much after leaving school. An exception to this is that some younger mothers often read to their children Bible stories which they have learned through religion classes at the school.

In summary, the majority of Aboriginal people of the Daly River region have a moderate command of English, though this command would largely be confined to domains of Aboriginal interest.

3.2 THE DALY RIVER CREOLE

The Daly River creole is a language variety spoken throughout the Daly River region. No one in the area seems to know when or how it originated but it is at present the main means of communication between language groups. It is to some degree a different variety from the Kriol spoken at Roper River and used in S.I.L.'s Kriol books. Many of the words and phrases used in these books met with either quizzical looks or gales of laughter among the Daly River people. (Admittedly part of that would be due to the awkward way it was read to them.) After repetition and a bit of concentration, however, the Kriol text could be figured out. It appears that the Daly River creole is a more anglicised variety than is Kriol and is often mixed with Ngankikurungkurr words. It should be noted that just a couple hours away at the Adelaide River Aboriginal camp one of the Kriol texts was read with complete unde standing and with a comment, "Yeah, that's just how we talk."

According to everyone interviewed at the Daly River community, the creole is understood and spoken by all categories of speakers. Most of those in category V have limited capability and confidence in the creole and prefer to use their vernacular even when being addressed in the creole. The school administrator at the Daly River Mission finds that nearly all children come to the first day of pre-school speaking the creole. Some come with a vernacular as well as the creole. Confidence in understanding English comes about through time spent with the white teachers. It also comes through fellow pupils in higher grades that share the same classroom. In the lowest division of school the Daly River creole is used as the main medium of instruction because English is essentially not understood and use of a vernacular is too troublesome. Whether this is because of the children's lack of competence in the vernacular, the Aboriginal instructors' preference for the creole, or whether there is a more natural match between the creole and the domains of instruction is not known. By the time the children reach the second division they are receiving instruction in English and speak it well enough for the classroom demands. During classroom breaks and outside of school hours the children of all ages speak mainly the Daly River creole among their peers. According to Aboriginal sources, most of the school children use the creole at home, including those children from homes where their parents may speak to them in a vernacular. The school children will use Aboriginal English when addressing Europeans and it appears that they will shift away from the creole even in the presence of Europeans.

As young Aborigines leave school and begin working on the mission or on outstations or begin shifting between settlements, the creole is still the main means of communication. As the women of this category

(category III) get married they begin associating more with their older kin members. As this happens they begin expressing themselves more in a vernacular with the older women while still addressing their young children in the creole. The young men, however, are observed to continue using the creole as they begin raising their families and work, hunt, and socialise together. According to sources, as the men get older (category IV) the influence of the older people (and perhaps the pressure of the 'Aboriginal way' which they have felt since leaving school) becomes a compelling force and while still using the creole they also try to revive their capability in the use of a vernacular, i.e. Ngankikurungkurr.

The above trends in the creole usage would also apply at Peppimenarti although the vernacular, Ngankikurungkurr, would be used more by each category because of the situation there (described in section 3.3). Several children in category II, however, were observed using the creole while playing, whether or not in the presence of older people. The young men in categories III and IV were also observed to be using the creole among themselves.

3.3 NGANKIKURUNGKURR

The traditional homeland of Ngankikurungkurr speakers according to most sources (including Tryon 1974 and former Catholic Mission priest Father Leary) is located on a relatively large region of land just east of Peppimenarti. Today, this language group is the strongest of the Daly River language groups both in numbers and influence. No one seems to know why it is the Ngankikurungkurr rather than another language group that has come to the forefront. Perhaps historically being one of the larger Daly River groups as well as one of the earlier groups to migrate to the Daly River settlements (Reid 1982), they were always more influential. Early in the present mission's existence at Daly River it was the Ngankikurungkurr speakers who took the most active part in decision-making processes. Today, there are more in the Ngankikurungkurr language group than in all the other Daly River region language groups put together. There are approximately 150 people at the Daly River community who are Ngankikurungkurr, and a few more who claim it as their language, as well as about 125 at Peppimenarti. There are also a few Ngankikurungkurr at Pt. Keats as well as some in towns scattered from Darwin to Katherine. These figures were arrived at with the aid of genealogical charts meticulously compiled by Father Martin Wilson in 1976 and updated in 1980.

Because of the dominance of Ngankikurungkurr at the Daly River community, nearly all Aboriginal residents claim to understand the language. Even a 25-year-old man from another language group who

claimed to no longer speak any vernacular found that he could understand a short Ngankikurungkurr discourse on tape--at least enough to get the basic elements of it. He said he heard the language as a child from his mother.

On the other hand, most people who claim to be Ngankikurungkurr speakers have varying levels of proficiency. Sources told me that there are two kinds of Ngankikurungkurr, one that the old people speak and another that the younger people (category IV) speak. Apparently those in category V actively spoke Ngankikurungkurr or another vernacular as children (before the present mission came into being). But those in category IV, although completely understanding the vernacular as children, have had to learn or re-learn to speak Ngankikurungkurr as adults since they spoke a variety of creole or English as youngsters (because the mission school was by then operating). Upon hearing some recorded discourses of an old Ngankikurungkurr speaker, one speaker in category IV who has demonstrated fluency in Ngankikurungkurr did not respond to the recorded material as would be expected of a fluent speaker. This gives a small amount of evidence to the possibility of there indeed being a modernised Ngankikurungkurr--perhaps a slightly pidginised variety which has come into being on account of the many 're-learners'.

According to another source, Ngankikurungkurr is used in council meetings and with all Aboriginal-culture related activities, like corroborees or circumcisions.

The school has scheduled Ngankikurungkurr language learning sessions with Ngankikurungkurr speakers. During these sessions, usually one or two afternoons per week, the children in categories I and II learn isolated words from charts and books while those in older categories spend time with elders in sessions designed to teach practical skills. It is obvious, as a result of observing one of these practical skills sessions, that the Aboriginal children respond as naturally to instruction from their Ngankikurungkurr-speaking elders as they do to their English-speaking teachers. Most of the instruction was contextual, however. Although the children in the younger categories spend their language learning time repeating isolated words, their understanding of the language was verified by having them listen to the recordings of an old Ngankikurungkurr speaker (mentioned above). About half of the second and third graders individually heard a discourse about hunting goanna and the majority gave an immediate accurate translation. In fact, a boy from a non-Ngankikurungkurr family understood the old person's speech much more readily than a girl from a 'modern' Ngankikurungkurr-speaking family. This is probably due to the fact that whereas the boy lives on the side of the community where all the old Ngankikurungkurr speakers live (which is rather separated from

the mission complex), the girl lives on the side where there are essentially no old Ngankikurungkurr speakers (and where housing is integrated with the mission administration complex).

Based on the above information there seems to be a trend at the Daly River community. During the years of category I, the children hear the creole from their parents and Ngankikurungkurr from the older people, but they begin speaking the creole. During the years of category II, the vast majority have a passive understanding of Ngankikurungkurr but use the creole as their primary means of communication. During the years of category III, the women begin using Ngankikurungkurr as a means of expression and the men continue using the creole. During the years of category IV, the men also begin expressing themselves in Ngankikurungkurr. And during the years of category V, both men and women use Ngankikurungkurr as their primary means of communication even though it is possibly modernised with each succeeding generation.

The Peppimenarti settlement differs from the Daly River settlement in that Ngankikurungkurr seems to be used more readily as a whole, especially among women of category IV. This phenomena is of course due in part to the lack of contact with whites and other Aboriginal language groups. According to one of the school teachers there, who is especially interested in the vernacular, the younger children come to school speaking Ngankikurungkurr as their first language. The teacher also claims to hear it from the older children during classroom breaks. But as referred to earlier, the Daly River creole is still used as the main means of communication among most of the children, most of the young men, and many of the younger women.

There is a general feeling at the mission (and among some at the School of Australian Linguistics as well) that Ngankikurungurr is viable at Peppimenarti. However, no linguist has as yet been able to spend sufficient time there to verify any conclusions one way or the other.

Ngankikurungkurr is not ordinarily spoken at the other places mentioned in section 2, such as Woolianna and Wudikapalirr, but it is certainly understood at most of those places including not only the Berrimah centre but other Darwin camps as well.

Several parties interested in Ngankikurungkurr have done linguistic work at the Daly River community. Besides the work done by Stanner and Tryon, the mission staff reported that there had been research done by Hoddinott. There has been work done by one of the mission staff, Sister Robin, and a graduate student from the Australian National University, Nicholas Reid. The latter two have resumed studies in the South and it is questionable whether they will return to the Daly River region. A few years ago some people from the Bilingual Education Department

visited the school to assess the need for bilingual education. But because of the heavy presence of a creole and the small number of Aborigines genuinely committed to support a languages maintenance program, they felt that such a program would not be successful. This was the conviction of the School of Australian Linguistics as well, after having spent some time with the mission school preparing some vernacular curriculum materials a couple years ago.

Ngankikurungkurr materials that have been produced consist of a dictionary which is the work of Sister Robin, a vernacular story in pamphlet form resulting from Reid's work, songs, and a few Scripture portions and miscellaneous materials done by Miriam Rose Ungunmerr, and the curriculum materials done by S.A.L.

3.4 NGANKIWUMIRI (Nangumiri)

According to Tryon (p.230) this language variety is a dialect of Ngankikurungkurr, being 84% cognate based on a 200-word list. This is verified by the Daly River community people themselves who claim the two varieties to be very close. One woman identified as a Ngankikurungkurr speaker claimed that all of the Ngankiwumiri speakers were also Ngankikurungkurr speakers. Another woman identified as Ngankiwumiri verified this information and suggested that there were five or so fluent speakers of Ngankiwumiri (whether that referred to just the community or the whole region is uncertain). She also said that children could understand it (presumably because of it being so close to Ngankikurungkurr) but that they could only speak a few words that were purely Ngankiwumiri. Another woman who was visiting from Peppimenarti believed that the Ngankikurungkurr and the Ngankiwumiri were all mixed together at that settlement. There appears to be no independent feeling among Ngankiwumiri speakers. They consider the Ngankikurungkurr speakers and themselves to be one language group. Any Ngankikurungkurr materials that have been produced (see section 3.3) or that will be produced are claimed by descendants of the traditional Ngankiwumiri language group to be meant as much for them as any other Ngankikurungkurr speaker. It is for this reason that any figures and findings mentioned concerning Ngankikurungkurr speakers in this report have the Ngankiwumiri speakers integrated with them as one group.

It should be noted that Sister Teresa from Pt. Keats has visited several dry season camps situated along the northern side of the Fitzmaurice River which she reports as being Ngankiwumiri camps. Whether or not these people reside at Peppimenarti during the Wet or are in fact some autonomous/different group is not presently known.

3.5 MARRITHIYEL (Marithiel)

In a thesis on the phonology and morphology of the Marrithiyel language, Ian Green offers the following information:

> Today there are probably as many as two hundred people entitled to be called members of the Marrithiyel tribe, most of them living at the Daly River Mission or in Darwin. There are roughly twenty-five out of this two hundred, all aged over forty, who learnt Marrithiyel as a first language, but only ten of these . . . still use Marrithiyel as the major language of daily conversation. It is not clear what degree of control of the language the remaining Marrithiyel tribespeople have. My research indicates that no-one under about thirty knows any more than a few lexical items, but there is insufficient data to form any conclusions about the competence of the older people. At the Daly River Mission they speak mostly Ngangikurrunggurr, which is now the first language of Marrithiyel children there. (Green 1981:3)

There is no evidence to refute Green's figures except to say that some of his figures are optimistic if anything. There are only five or six competent Marrithiyel speakers who are from the Daly River community. All told, the community has about thirty people who are Marrithiyel by blood. Most of these are teens or younger who speak the Daly River creole, English, and varying degrees of Ngankikurungkurr in that order of preference and proficiency.

All but one of the five or six mentioned above are now staying at the new settlement under construction, Wudikapalirr, which is situated on traditional Marrithiyel land. Along with the four or five older people at Wudikapalirr are three or four young wives, two young men, a very few small children, and two white men who are married into the family. The use of Marrithiyel speech there must be shared with both the Daly River creole and English even at this isolated settlement.

There are a few older speakers of Marrithiyel at the Berrimah settlement and several others in the Darwin area who claim to be Marrithiyel by blood. There is also a family of Marrithiyel living on the Wagait reserve.

Bill Parry, Marrithiyel clan elder, would like to attract all Marrithiyel-related people to the new settlement, as well as other interested Aboriginal people from the Daly River region. According to Parry, Wudikapalirr's future school will have English instruction in the morning and Marrithiyel instruction with the elders every afternoon. All resident children, then, would hypothetically be learning Marrithiyel, thus restoring the language.

3.6 MALAKMALAK (Mullukmulluk)

According to Birk (1975:59), 'the outlook of the language is bleak. There are currently not more than twenty speakers for only nine of whom it is the mother-tongue'. Two of those nine have died since Birk's work, leaving seven. However, one of those seven claims that including all areas there are still nine to eleven fully competent speakers, another eleven at Woolianna and other areas who either understand it or speak fairly well, and there are over twenty children who have at least some exposure to the language but who mainly live away from Woolianna in various towns. Observation revealed that MalakMalak was definitely alive among the older speakers. One young man in his early twenties displayed his confidence in the language by producing a long impromptu discourse onto a cassette. This same young man also explained that he would teach the language to his children when he got married and so keep it alive.

Several of the MalakMalak people live at Bagot Reserve where they use the language to some degree among themselves. Their normal means of daily communication, however, is in the variety of English typical of Bagot Reserve. Any MalakMalak speakers who may reside at the Berrimah settlement would also use the variety of English typical of that particular settlement in their normal daily communication.

3.7 MAGNELLA

Magnella is a dialect of MalakMalak. According to Tryon the two languages are only 45% cognate. But members of both language groups claim to speak freely with one another, each using their own language. Stanner pointed out that the Magnella fused into one social group with the MalakMalak after the numbers of the two groups became depleted. At present there is one man at the Daly River community who has first-language ability in Magnella along with three of his daughters who can understand it. There are also four other men who have an undetermined Magnella speaking ability. No other speakers were discovered.

3.8 TYERAITY, YUNGGOR, KAMOR

Research failed to discover anyone in the Daly River region who knew anything about these languages, although Tryon (p.25) claims that they are in the Mulluk language family.

3.9 MURINTJABIN, MAREAMMU, MARIDAN, MARINGAR, MARAMANANDJI

According to Tryon (p.94) the first three languages above are all dialects of Marrithiyel and the last two are not dialects but are in the same language group.

Sister Teresa (from Pt. Keats) reports that Murintjabin and Maringar are both strong and are both spoken at Pt. Keats. Chester Street (1980:4) reported that there were over fifty Maringar speakers at the new Wudi Puli outstation. There is one family at the Daly River community who often travel to their traditional Maringar land to camp during the dry season (as previously mentioned in section 2.5). The father alone speaks Maringar as a first language and his family identify themselves as Ngankikurungkurr speakers. Murintjabin speakers were not found at the Daly River community but there was one young man who claimed that he and his family members at the community were members of the Murintjabin language group.

Green (1981) suggests that Maridan is merely a place name within the Marrithiyel traditional land but he also suggests that there are a few people left who claim to be Maridan speakers.

There is one old speaker of Maramanandji at the Daly River community. She claims to know of only three other speakers who are still alive.

No evidence of MareAmmu's existence was found in the region except posssibly at Nardirri (as previously mentioned in section 2.5). There is also evidence of MareAmmu speakers in Darwin and in the Wagait region (see 'Sociolinguistic Survey Report: Wagait Region Languages' in this volume).

3.10 MARANUNGGU, AMI, MANDA

Speakers of these dialects are not known to exist in the Daly River region despite the fact that their traditional homeland is largely within the region. There are, however, many Ami and Manda speakers living in the Wagait region (see Wagait report).

3.11 PONGA PONGA, WADYIGIN, BATYAMAL

Tryon (p.187) claims that these are dialects of one language group called Wogaity. There is one old man who is a Batyamal speaker at the Daly River community. He has two daughters living there and nearby who

have some speaking ability in the language. One of the daughters refers to her language as Wadyigin. Wadyigin and Batyamal are most probably the same language variety, as suggested by Tryon. There are many Wadyigin speakers at Delissaville (see Wagait report). Apparently no one at the Daly River settlement believes Ponga Ponga to exist. Some say it never did.

3.12 WAGAMAN

This language is not discussed in Tryon's 1974 work, but it is considered to be one of the Daly River region languages by the people there. A very few competent speakers are reported living at Daly River and Peppimenarti settlements where they find that other languages meet their day-to-day needs. At present, however, most of these Wagaman people, along with the Wagaman speakers at Pine Creek (see section 2.7), are involved in the land claim along the Fish River and are therefore living in that area.

A number of people at the Daly River community are part Wagaman but are not speakers of the language. Those people living permanently in the Pine Creek area would have a better grasp of the language but further research would be needed to determine their actual level of language ability.

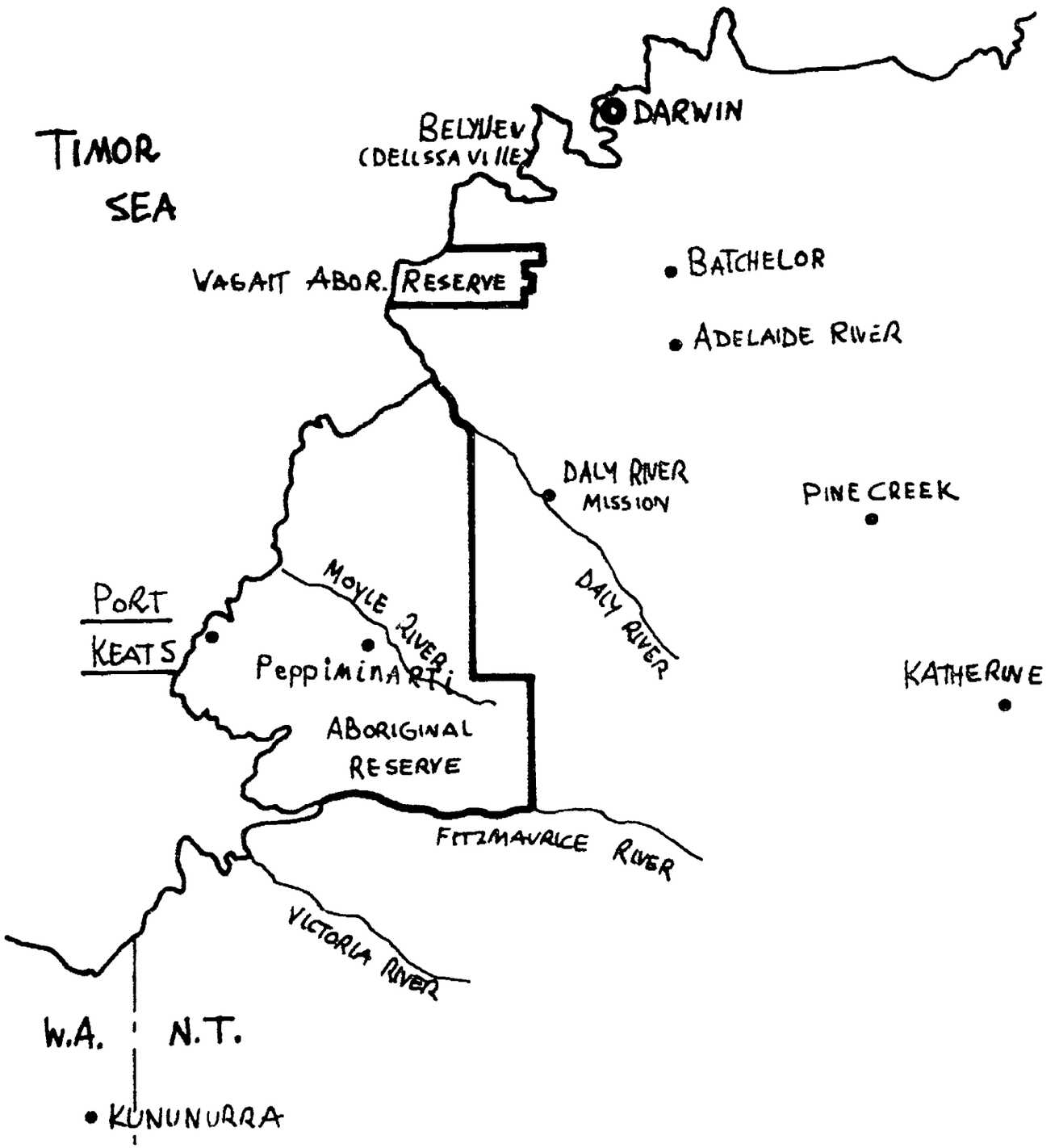
4. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

No one in the Daly River region who is linked to a minority language group enjoys the fact that their language is either dead or dying. They would be happy to see their language and all the other languages return to a positon of prosperity once again. But like others, the Daly River region Aborigines find themselves following the route of least resistance, which is to use whatever language allows for easiest communication. But losing their various vernaculars has not been so painful as long as Ngankikurungkurr is strong enough to act as a representative of the Aboriginal vernaculars. Although Ngankikurungkurr is accepted throughout the Daly River region as the language of the region, there are still a few language groups who have not given up hope for their own language. As mentioned earlier, Bill Parry of the Marrithiyel group hopes to revive the language by teaching it to the children in school when the new settlement is ready. He is also hoping that Ian Green will come back and continue working on the language. The two other Daly River region languages, Murintjabin and Maringar, which are still strong according to reports, have no reason to give up hope. While there are a few representatives from these groups at the Daly River community, those two language groups are essentially dominated by

the Murrinh-patha people at Pt. Keats and their fate lies in the circumstances around that area rather than at Daly River. Concerning MalakMalak, even though the one young man from Woolianna plans to keep his language alive, the older people there realise that while their language is not being dominated by Ngankikurungkurr, it is nonetheless being overtaken by the Daly River creole. The real MalakMalak language will die with them. And it would be safe to say the same fate awaits the Wagaman language.

The Daly River creole is as widely disliked as it is used. Many people in the region do not admit it exists. Some ignore it. Others enjoy it. But no one is proud of it. Like an intruder it has come from an unknown place and spread its influence everywhere. The route of least resistance allows it to stay. Its two main opponents are the mission staff and the older vernacular speakers. The creole is not allowed as instuction or in curriculum at either the school or the church. The only exception to this is in the pre-school where Aboriginal teachers use the creole in order to communicate without difficulty. Many old people deeply lament the fact that their children are proficient in an English creole rather than English or Ngankikurungkurr, and they blame everybody except the 'route of least resistance' for it. Whites and Aborigines alike would like to see all children become proficient in both English and Ngankikurungkurr (the Marrithiyel would like to have their language added to the list) and they are willing to take whatever realistic steps they can to make that happen. However, the barriers appear too formidable.

APPENDIX 1: MAP OF DALY RIVER REGION



REPRODUCED WITH SLIGHT CHANGES FROM STREET 1980:3

APPENDIX 2: LANGUAGE USE CATEGORIES

Categories		Age Ranges	Daly River Figures Male	Female	Totals
I.	Pre-school	under 3	15	20	35
II.	School	4 to 14	23	29	52
III.	Post school/ young family	15 to 23-25	20	28	48
IV.	Family	24-26 to 35-40	7	19	26
V.	Older	38-40 & older	12	19	31
	DALY RIVER SETTLEMENT TOTALS		77	115	192

APPENDIX 3: ETHNOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

[NB: This questionnaire was developed by SIL some years ago. Hence, some of the terminology is outdated. However, it has still proved useful for collecting language information.]

For shorter surveys, you may not find satisfactory answers to many of these questions but answer as many as you can. Use it to guide and stimulate your thinking rather than as a legalistic document.

Name of surveyor (team): ..... Location of survey .....

Language ..... Date and length of survey .....

I. DEGREE OF BILINGUALISM

A. The Home Situation

1. What languages are spoken in the family situation?
   a. vernacular .....
   b. English .....
   c. non-standard English .....
   d. combination .....
2. With respect to the use of English or the vernacular, what is the attitude?
   a. of the parents .....
   b. of the school age children.....

B. The Age Factor

1. Is there any correlation between the age of the speaker and the language he speaks? (This refers to vernacular, English and non-standard English.).....
   .....
2. Do pre-school children first learn:
   a. the vernacular .....
   b. English .....
   c. both languages .....
3. When Aboriginal children begin school, can they:
   a. follow directions from the English teacher.....
   b. understand something of the subject being taught .....
4. Outside the classroom, do Aboriginal children speak to each other:
   a. always in the vernacular .....
   b. always in English .....
   c. in a mixture of both .....

   When they wish to be secretive, do they use the vernacular?
5. Within any given grade, compared to their English counterparts, are Aboriginal primary school students:
   a. older .....
   b. the same age .....
   c. younger .....

   If there is a significant age differential, can it be correlated to a lack of facility in English?

6. Do those who have had schooling continue practising their English literacy after leaving school? Is their English literacy:
   a. forgotten .....
   b. used when required .....
   c. used for pleasure .....

7. Do High School students or those attending colleges such as Kormilda revert to the vernacular when they return home from school:
   a. immediately .....
   b. after 6 months .....
   c. after 12 months .....
   d. other .....

C. The Effects of the Use of the Vernacular
1. Do speakers of the vernacular "mix in" parts of English? If they do, can its extent be determined? Are the insertions:
   a. technical terms .....
   b. nouns and/or verbs .....
   c. names (persons or places) .....
   d. some grammatical feature .....
   e. whole phrases or sentences .....
   f. a complete mixture .....

2. Do the school children use the vernacular in the presence of the English school teacher? .....

3. What is the standard of English of those who consider themselves bilingual:
   a. excellent .....
   b. very good .....
   c. good .....
   d. fair .....
   e. poor .....

4. What is the attitude of Aborigines to you as a European attempting to learn the vernacular? Did they:
   a. highly approve .....
   b. strongly disapprove .....
   c. remain neutral .....

D. Social Contexts in which the Vernacular is Used
1. What language is used in church activities:
   a. in Sunday school classes .....
   b. in formal worship services .....
   c. in "home" prayer meetings .....
   d. for giving testimonies .....
   e. for formal prayer .....
   f. for Scripture interpretation .....
   g. for the interpretation of the message .....

2. In what language do individuals pray:
   a. in private .....
   b. in the home .....
   c. in public .....
   d. when called upon suddenly .....
   e. in mixed groups .....
   f. in groups monolingual in English .....
3. What language is predominant in <u>tribal</u> activities such as:
   a. corroborees .....
   b. council meetings .....
   c. hunting and fishing parties .....
4. Is an interpreter used for :
   a. government officials .....
   b. school officials .....
   c. missionaries .....
   d. tourists . .....

   Would an interpreter mean greater comprehension in these circumstances? .....

E. <u>Relation to Non-tribal Individuals</u>
   1. What Europeans have learned to <u>understand</u> the vernacular?
   .....
   What Europeans have learned to <u>speak</u> the idiom?
   .....
   What motivated them to understand or speak?
   .....

   2. What is the attitude of Europeans who reside within or in close proximity to the tribal area toward the use of the idiom as a means of communication? Do they:

      a. pressure the Aborigines to use English .....
      b. encourage bilingualism .....
      c. remain neutral .....

   3. What is the attitude towards translation of the New Testament in the vernacular of:
      a. missionaries .....
      b. Government workers .....
      c. other .....

II. CULTURAL FACTORS

A. Culture Change

1. How many part Aboriginals are in the tribe? What is their age range? .....
   Do they have full acceptance in the tribe? .....
2. Is the effort of the tribe (or the individual) to retain elements of the culture:
   a. determined .....
   b. vacillating .....
   c. non-existent.....
3. Is the kinship system adhered to:
   a. rigidly .....
   b. loosely .....
   c. only by old people .....
   d. hardly at all .....
4. Does the tribe generally make an effort to pass along cultural skills to the children? .....
5. Did you notice any specific taboos and customs from the past still being practised openly? .....
   .....
6. Does the community hold corroborees etc. as tribal entities or are all inter-tribal? .....
7. How often do people have social singing in the camp?.....
   .....
8. Is the promise system of marriage still in use? What is the attitude to:
   a. wrong marriages .....
   b. extra-marital activities .....
9. What is the current population of the tribe? Is it:
   a. increasing .....
   b. decreasing .....
   c. static .....
   What is the spread of the population with respect to age?
   .....
10. Is the vernacular speaking population:
    a. increasing .....
    b. decreasing .....
    c. static .....
11. What divisions did you notice in the language group concerning living arrangements? Do they live in:
    a. one tight-knit group .....
    b. inter-related communities
       (caused by geographical distance).....
    c. several groups within the community.....

12. Do the people in a given locality live:
    a. in a mixed group .....
    b. in separate groups divided according to language .....
    c. integrated with Europenas .....
13. What are the reasons for the situation described above (last 2 questions)? Is the division in the tribe determined by:
    a. place of employment .....
    b. prestige of one group .....
    c. dialect difference or language difference .....
    d. tribal origin .....

B. Degree of Assimilation (Integration)

1. Do individual families have and/or use conveniences such as:
    a. telephones .....
    b. electricity .....
    c. running water .....
    d. community bathroom and toilet .....
    e. private bathroom and toilet .....
2. Do individuals have access to:
    a. an automobile .....
    b. bitumen roads .....
    c. shopping centres .....
    d. local pubs .....
    e. schools .....
    f. churches .....
    g. clubs and civic organisations .....
3. How many are in steady employment? Are they:
    a. full blood .....
    b. mixed blood .....
4. Of those in steady employment are they:
    a. unskilled labour .....
    b. skilled labour (trained in some way) .....
    c. professional (with academic background) .....
5. About how many individuals:
    a. work full time .....
    b. work part time .....
    c. are self-employed .....
    d. are receiving a tribal payment .....
    e. do not work at all .....
    f. receive unemployment benefits or welfare handout .....
6. How many Aborigines have received specific training for work?
    .....
    What types of training? .....
    .....
    How many are employed locally in this capacity? .....
    .....

7. Is there good opportunity for employment for Aborigines in the area? .....
8. Because they are illiterate in English, are many Aborigines:
   a. hindered from voting .....
   b. unable to obtain a driver's licence OR had to take the written test orally .....
9. Do many individuals above school age read in English:
   a. anything .....
   b. Bible .....
   c. forms, pamphlets, applications .....
   d. magazines and newspapers .....
   e. comics .....
   d. books .....
10. Do many individuals read in the vernacular? .....
11. What individuals:
   a. attend movies .....
   b. listen to news broadcasts .....
12. Is there an adult education programme? In what language is it conducted? .....
13. Is the use of the vernacular (written or spoken) actively promoted in any other way? .....
14. Is the Aboriginal culture actively promoted in any way by outsiders? .....
15. What percentage of marriages are:
   a. tribal .....
   b. legally recorded .....
   c. to Europeans (legal or defacto) .....
16. In the event of death, do they have:
   a. only Christian funeral .....
   b. only tribal burial .....
   c. Christian funeral with traditional wailing and ceremonies also .....

C. TRANSLATION FACTORS

1. What religious groups are working with the Aborigines? .....
2. Are the congregations of such specific groups:
   a. predominantly Aborigines .....
   b. mixed .....
   c. predominantly European .....
3. How many Aborigines are members of churches which are:
   a. predominantly Aboriginal .....
   b. mixed .....
   c. predominantly European .....

   Are the Aborigines "accepted" by the European congregations? .....

4. Do Aborigines hold responsibility within the church or mission as:
   a. pastors .....
   b. local preachers .....
   c. elders .....
   d. ministers .....
   e. staff position .....
   f. other .....
   How much authority do they have? .....
5. In church services, do Aboriginal pastors or interpreters attempt on-the-spot Scripture translation in the vernacular? .....
6. What is the attitude of the Aborigine to:
   a. having his language written .....
   b. having the opportunity to learn to read it .....
   c. having the Bible translated in his language .....
   d. sanctity of old (but of dubious worth) translations .....
7. What is the attitude of the local missionary/pastor to:
   a. a literacy programme .....
   b. Bible translation in the vernacular .....
   c. previous translations in the area .....
8. Have attempts been made (with some sort of orthography) to write the tribal language by:
   a. a member of the tribe .....
   b. missionary, government worker .....
   c. secular linguist, anthropologist .....
   Is he still resident and what are his plans with regard to a literacy/translation programme? .....

III. FACTS ABOUT THE AREA

A. How many languages are there in the area? .....

B. How many children actually attend school? .....

C. How much literature in the vernacular is available? .....

APPENDIX 4 : INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE PLANNING PROGRAMMES
IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, AUSTRALIA

Interviewer's Name ..... Date .....

Items 1-4 to be answered by interviewer

1. Name (if known without elicitation) .....
2. Sex
   a. male
   b. female
3. Approximate age
   a. school age
   b. teenager (16-19 years)
   c. young adult (20-30 years)
   d. adult (30-50 years)
   e. middle aged (50-65 years)
   f. aged (65 and over)
4. Ethnicity
   a. full-blood Aboriginal
   b. part Aboriginal
   c. European
   d. Other

****

5. i. Occupation .....
   ii. Employment status
   a. employed
   b. unemployed
6. i. Place of living now (community name or street location)
   .....
   ii. Place of birth (give name if offered)
   a. town .....
   b. station .....
   c. bush .....
7. i. What languages are spoken in this community? .....
   ii. How many speak each language? (Tick the appropriate column)

Languages	very many	many	few

8. i. What was your father's language? .....
   ii. What was your mother's language? .....
   iii. Which language(s) do you speak now? .....
   .....
   iv. Which language(s) do you understand but not speak? .....
   .....
   v. Which do you consider your own language? .....
   vi. What language(s) do your children speak? .....
   .....
   vii. Which language(s) do your children understand but not speak? ...
   .....

9. Do you understand English (standard) in the following situations?
   a. radio--news broadcasts
   b. radio--popular songs
   c. movies
   d. store
   e. church
   f. school
   g. other

10. i. Do you use English when speaking with:
   a. Europeans
   b. spouse(s)
   c. Aboriginal adults of your language group
   d. Aboriginal adults of different lang. groups
   e. children
   f. no one

(If "c" or "d" is selected, go on to ii.)

ii. Do you use English with fellow adult Aborigines:
   a. at same-sex gatherings
   b. at business meetings
   c. at corroborees
   d. in company with Europeans
   e. with close relatives
   f. other

11. How well can you speak English? Can you:

A. converse with Europeans about
   a. money
   b. God
   c. sickness
   d. school
   e. nothing

B. tell a story in English
   a. to an European
   b. to an Aboriginal

12. i. Can you read English? a. yes b. no

(If "yes", go on to ii, iii, iv, v.)

ii. What can you read and understand?
   a. letters
   b. comics
   c. newspaper
   d. books - novels
   e. Bible
   f. other

iii. Have you ever read a book right through? a. yes b. no

iv. Where did you learn to read? a. at school b. other (specify)

v. Would you be willing to take an English reading comprehension test? a. yes b. no c. not sure

13. i. Would you like to learn more English? a. yes b. no
ii. If yes, where? a. at school
b. in classes at camp
c. other (specify)

14. i. Did you attend school? a. yes b. no
ii. If yes, did you
a. attend primary school but for less than 8 years
b. finish primary school
c. finish high school
d. go to tertiary level

15. (To be answered only by those who claim a language other than English in Item 8.iii)
i. Can you read your own language? a. yes b. no
ii. If yes, where did you learn? .....
Who has produced reading materials? .....
If no, has anyone written in your language?
a. yes b. no c. not sure Who? .....
Would you like your language to be written?
a. yes b. no c. not sure

16. i. Do the children in this community speak English?
a. poorly
b. well
c. as well as Europeans
d. better than adults
ii. Is the children's language different from that of adults?
a. yes
b. no
c. a little

17. i. Do the children in this community speak their parents' language(s)?
a. yes
b. no
c. some do
ii. If yes, how well? a. some words only
b. whenever they speak to parents
c. when they speak to other children

18. i. What language(s) should the children be taught at school?
a. English
b. an Aboriginal language
c. both
ii. If "b" or "c" which Aboriginal language should it be?
(List in order of preference if more than one are offered.)
.....

19. What is the value of learning English?
a. for you .....
b. for your children .....

20. i. What is the main language spoken in this area?
.....

ii. What do you think will be the main language when the children of today are adults? .....

21. i. Would you like educational programmes set up in this community?
a. yes
b. no
c. not interested

ii. If yes, what types?
a. literacy in Aboriginal language(s)
b. literacy in English
c. oral English
d. Aboriginal culture for Aboriginal children
e. Aboriginal culture for European children
f. European culture for Aboriginal children
g. other

iii. Would you attend relevant adult classes
a. once daily
b. twice weekly
c. once weekly
d. when you feel like it
e. not at all

22. If someone was to begin a programme in Aboriginal language, which language should be used? .....

23. i. What materials would you like to have written in this language?
a. newspaper
b. stories about the way life was in the bush
c. stories from the Dreamtime
d. comics
e. stories about European life style
f. books about how to get along in t[illegible]ty
g. books about money, etc.
h. the Bible
i. other (specify)

ii. Who would use these materials?
a. children
b. men
c. women
d. old people
e. Europeans
f. other (specify)

24. Do you think everyone who speaks this language would like to have it written? a. yes b. no c. not sure

25. Would you encourage your children to learn to read in this language?
a. yes b. no c. not sure

26. Is there anyone in this community (Aboriginal) who could help make reading books and teach reading? (Give names)
.....

END OF QUESTIONS TO INTERVIEWEE

27. Interviewer's assessment of language usage.
What language did the respondent use during the interview?
.....
If English, was it a. a pidgin
b. variety of standard English
If "b" what is your impression of his/her fluency:
a. equal to native speaker
b. able to express anything required for the interview with little difficulty
c. able to express most things required for the interview but with hesitation and self-correction
d. spoke it with difficulty but understood questions
e. spoke it with difficulty and only partly understood questions
f. used only a few words

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY REPORT: WAGAIT REGION LANGUAGES

S. James Ellis

0. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the results of a survey done on the languages spoken around Delissaville and in parts of the Wagait Reserve. Actually these languages are part of the Daly River Language Family (Tryon 1974), but sociologically the people are a separate group. For this reason I have made this report separate from my Daly River region survey report (see this volume) and have entitled it accordingly.

In addition to Delissaville (or Belyuen, its Aboriginal name, as it will hereafter be called), Wagait Reserve and points in between the two, I have included in my report the part of Darwin that is integrated with the activities of the former two places. Altogether, these make up the Wagait region.

The word 'Wagait' refers to no language in particular. It simply means 'beach dweller' (Black 1982:22) and it refers to the groups of people that traditionally lived in a region stretching north and south of the mouth of the Daly River, including Peron Island. These people now make up the population of Belyuen. My explanation as to how and why the groups came together would follow the line of reasoning laid out in my Daly River report. They initially came together because of the attraction of European lifestyle. Later depletion of their population and loss of traditional solidarity resulted in continuing unification of diverse groups. Most likely the groups moved initially into the present Wagait reserve area and then into the Darwin area. Upon the establishment of the Belyuen settlement, that became the centre of activities for the various groups.

Three short field trips were made to compile data about the Wagait region languages. I made a visit to the One-mile Dam camp on 1 February 1984 which enabled me to visit Belyuen on 17 June 1984. This visit paved the way for a more extended one on 22-23 June 1984. In addition to these trips, my previous survey at Daly River had given me some background information about the Wagait region.

The purpose of the survey was to provide sufficient sociolinguistic information to enable S.I.L. to determine if there was a need for an S.I.L. translation programme in any of the Wagait region languages.

The specific aims of the survey were to: a) describe the places where Wagait region languages are spoken (see Section 2) b) describe the state of the Wagait region languages, particularly in terms of language use (see Section 3) and c) describe language attitudes of the language speakers and those associated with those speakers (see Section 4).

1. METHODOLOGY

The methods of obtaining information concerning the sociolinguistic conditions of the languages in the Wagait region were solely interviewing, observation, and document research. I used no questionnaire forms or recorded discourses to acquire data, although I had these materials available in case they were to be of use. I did however make use of tape-recording sessions and pre-recorded discourses to gain rapport with the Wagait people.

Interviewing was always on an informal basis. Information came from Allen Nama of One-mile Dam camp, the school teacher at Belyuen, the Aboriginal Health Clinic supervisor at Belyuen, a member of the Department of Community Development in Darwin, a member of the Department of Education in Darwin, and numerous Wagait Aboriginals whom

I spent time with during the course of my field trips. All of these people were eager to talk about the languages and to help wherever possible, for which I was very thankful.

2. CENTRES OF POPULATION

2.1 BELYUEN (Delissaville)

The people who traditionally dwelt around Belyuen (Larakia and Kiok?) are now virtually extinct. The Wagait people have made the area their home since before the war. The bush around the settlement has been the place for their traditional livelihood since the oldest men were small boys.

Today, the settlement covers about a square kilometre of land. There is a full range of modern facilities. Over twenty block homes cover the settlement area along with some school buildings, an all-purpose meeting hall, a store, a health clinic, recreational facilities, a construction and maintenance area, a modern power station, and an airport a short distance away. The buildings are equipped with electricity, plumbing and telephone service. Many families own a colour television. About fifteen minutes away by car is the Mandora resort which is visible across the bay from Darwin. Just north of the resort is a beach area which is called West Point. These two places, the resort and the beach, are favourite spots during leisure time.

There are as many as 200 Aborigines of all ages living on the settlement. The main languages represented are Wadyigin, Ami and Manda.

As far as I could tell, the affairs of the settlement are controlled by the Aboriginal council. Community projects and needs are funded by the Department of Community Development and most likely other government funding agencies as well. There are only about a half dozen Europeans living and working at the settlement. There is no mission presence on the settlement but Mr. Merv Pattemore of the Aborigines Inland Mission and others come to the settlement every week for meetings.

2.2 WAGAIT RESERVE

There are about five Aboriginal groups living on the reserve. Each of them is small in number; the total number of people living on the reserve is no more than a hundred. Apparently the east side traditionally belonged to one group and the west side belonged to another group. At present the east side is made up of a group of Waray, Kurragai(?) and Kiok(?) people who have a land claim on file. The west

side is made up of traditional Daly River people, many of whom were given land rights when the reserve was originally set up.

Of these small groups the one at Bolgo, the Bigfoot family, is the strongest in terms of usage of a vernacular. The Bigfoot family consists of an older man, his two sons, and their wives and children. Ami is the language they use among themselves.

At the mouth of the Finniss River is a group of about twenty Maranunggu people, most of them in their thirties or forties. There are some younger people but their language is an English-based creole.

Even though the Manda and Wadyigin people have legal rights to the land within the reserve, they are all living at Belyuen. It appears that the primary livelihood for these small groups is related to the cattle industry. There is a cattle station at Finniss River employing several Aborigines from various groups. Most likely these include the Maranunggu.

Some time ago the Department of Education surveyed the reserve to see if any schools could be set up. But it was discovered that the children were too few in number and too separated in distance to justify the establishment of a local school.

2.3 DARWIN CAMPS

The camp that is most closely united with the affairs of Belyuen is One-mile Dam (or Railway Dam); the people from both places are closely related to one another and they visit back and forth frequently. One-mile Dam is located close to the Darwin city centre. The permanent residents have claimed ownership to one or more acres of land through the efforts of the Aboriginal Development Foundation. The ADF has also provided about five small block dwellings with one more nearing completion. It appears that water and sewage are supplied by an ablutions block. The common consensus is that there are fourteen to fifteen permanent residents. As many as three or four times that number would use the camp from time to time as a place from which to execute their in-town business (be that for medical needs, family visits, shopping or drinking). These visits from outsiders are often a means of income for the camp (Sansom 1980:7). There are no children residing at the camp to my knowledge. One of the leaders in the camp, Allen Nama, was particularly helpful with all aspects of my survey work. He claims the main vernacular of the camp to be his own language which is Amu (which may be MareAmmu as per my Daly River report). Wadyigin would be the second major vernacular. But the primary language of the camp for normal daily affairs would be an English-based creole.

There are several Wadygin people at Bagot Reserve, some of whom had just left to go stay at Belyuen on the day I visited Bagot. I got the impression at the time that those people had been visiting relations at Bagot who were not normally a part of the Wagait region affairs. But there is, I believe, one Wadygin household permanently residing at Bagot.

The only other two Darwin camps that have normal association with the people at Belyuen are the Berrimah settlement and the Catholic Missions headquarters (both described in my Daly River report). The leader of the Berrimah settlement claims that all of the Wagait region languages are spoken in his camp along with about a dozen other vernacular languages. But such use of the Wagait languages would be the exception rather than the norm. The Catholic Missions headquarters, like the One-mile camp, is used as a place to facilitate relationships and transact business--not only for the Wagait region people, but for the Daly River region and Bathhurst Island people as well. The location is meant for transient accommodation.

There are other Wagait region people who have mixed into the white society either by marriage or assimilation. There may also be a few Wagait region families that live outside of the region proper such as a Maranunggu family which is living at Batchelor.

3. SOCIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF THE WAGAIT REGION LANGUAGES

3.1 Vernacular Languages

The situation regarding each of the vernaculars is much the same. There are perhaps a dozen Wadygin speakers who use the language as a normal means of communication. For the Ami and Manda speakers that number would probably be a little higher. For the Maranunggu speakers it would probably be less. And if Amu (the One-mile leader's language) is a separate language from the above, then the number of speakers of this language would be very small. Only the old people use the language for a full range of communication tasks. Many of the middle-age people may have a proficiency in their various vernaculars, but I never heard them use it. They used English or the creole typical of the Belyuen area or something in between. The young adults that I spoke to both at Belyuen and at One-mile readily admitted that they couldn't speak 'language' but they said they could 'hear' it. They said the same thing of the children. The school teacher at Belyuen who has been there for seven years told me that the children do not use the vernaculars at home but that they understand much of the content of what is spoken to them by the older people. The health clinic supervisor told me that there were at least two families at Belyuen in which the younger parents were

consciously using a vernacular with their children in hopes that the children would use it themselves. And as mentioned previously, there are at least two families on the Wagait Reserve that are using a vernacular for all their day-to-day needs. There may be two or three families elsewhere that are using a vernacular in their daily family life as well. But these families are not only separated by distance and dialect, they are overshadowed by the tide of Wagait region families who are using the vernaculars in only a very restricted sense. As one of the young adults said, 'We're trying to learn the language but it's too hard'. The fact that I was taken only to old Charlie or old Tommy or some other old person for any language data led me to believe that it was only the old people who really felt comfortable with the vernaculars.

The Aboriginal health clinic supervisor, who is from Belyuen, has been trained in the South and has had a lot of exposure to the Top End as a result of his work with government health care. He takes his practice seriously and he has a serious desire to restore traditional lifestyle as well. He performs the circumcision ceremonies in the cleanliness of the clinic. He often takes the young people out camping and fishing on weekends to the familiar bush haunts. And he hopes to see the vernacular language restored. I asked which of the vernaculars would be the most probable to restore. He said that even though the greatest number of vernacular speakers spoke either Manda or Ami (mutually intelligible to each other), the best language would be Wadygin. According to him, the people that still had some interest in traditional things, like the singing men, were Wadygin. On one of the evenings I sat and listened to some young and middle-age men singing with a didjeridu and a beer-can-tapping percussion section. The music was excellent but when I asked them to tell me the meanings of the songs, there was a bit of uncertainty on their part. The school teacher told me he would often run into the same problem when he would ask the children to tell him the meaning of various traditional songs. We figured that perhaps the younger people had been able to memorise the form of many ceremonial sayings and songs but had never grasped the specific meanings. This phenomenon, however, is not unique to the Belyuen people. In many Aboriginal groups the present day singers may have no understanding of the literal meanings of the songs they sing, while at the same time they may speak their traditional language quite well.

Even though there are many older people in the Wagait region who are capable of communicating in one of the four or five vernacular languages, the language of the people is no longer a traditional vernacular. It is some form of English-based creole.

3.2 The Belyuen Creole

After one of my vernacular recording sessions at Belyuen I asked for somebody to give me some creole or pidgin talk. I was immediately referred to a girl who was visiting from Roper River. I tried to get some of the young adults around me to just go ahead and speak their language, but they were unwilling. They would only refer me to a Kriol speaker. They either identified the sound /kriol/ with a language that was different from their speech or they in fact believed that their daily speech didn't have official language status. The Kriol speaker that I did talk to told me that the Belyuen people could understand his Kriol speech easily. He felt that the Belyuen creole and Kriol weren't that different. He obviously knew exactly what I meant by Kriol; he knew John Sandefur and his work and he was able to read a Kriol book that I had given him quite fluently.

I doubt if there are very many in the Wagait region who can't communicate in the Belyuen creole. Even the oldest men who were in my company always spoke to others using either their form of creole or English. The only time I heard a vernacular spoken regularly was between Allen Nama and his wife.

The school teacher feels that the children have an English creole which uses a mixture of words from the various vernaculars. He is not sure that their language is even understood clearly by the older adults. There has been some analysis of the children's speech by recording it. But that was with the purpose of seeing whether they met a level of ability in English necessary to use a particular curriculum programme (i.e. using signalling units). The test revealed that the children qualified in their Engliah ability to profit from the programme. That was no surprise to me since I generally felt that most people I encountered were quite capable in expressing themselves in English, at least Aboriginal-style English.

4. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

In accordance with what I found at Daly River, eve[illegible] Wagait region, including whites with whom the Aborigines [illegible]ould like to see the traditional languages in regular daily use. [illegible] again the path of least resistance continues to weaken traditional [illegible]nguages. The school teacher pointed out his belief that if we want to see the vernaculars restored, we can not define our responsibility as waiting until the Aborigines take their own initiative before we act. It won't happen. We must do something to challenge them or even cause them to act. But there is a point at which language loss is irreversible.

I brought up the subject of developing their creole as a written language and as a means of maintaining Aboriginal solidarity. The school teacher was open to that idea. I suggested that he try to get some candid recordings of the children's speech. It could be analysed to see how closely it lined up with Kriol and to determine the potential for using the existing Kriol materials.

The Wagait people as a whole seem to accept their creole. One night a couple of the young men tried to give me some clear examples of their creole 'the way they talk'. They seemed quite proud of it. Although it would be desirable to help the Wagait people retain or revive some vernacular usage, it is clear that their language of daily use is a creole. This creole should be analysed in order to determine if the Wagait region people can profit from any creole materials that are now or will be available.

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TIWI: A LANGUAGE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

Jenny Lee

0. INTRODUCTION

The Tiwi language, spoken by the inhabitants of Bathurst and Melville Islands north of Darwin, is struggling to survive. Over the years, because of its contact with English and the influence of Western culture upon the communities, the language has undergone considerable change, so that young people no longer speak or even understand much of the traditional language. In any language, change is natural, inevitable and continuous. However, the change that has taken place in the Tiwi language is greater than normal, at least in such a short time, so that not only does the language of the young people contain a number of English words but the actual structure of the language has changed.

> Languages in contact provide dramatic instances of changes in language structure and use. Within one generation, contact situations can lead to extensive rearrangement of language structure (Blount and Sanches 1977:6)

No one factor can be said to be the cause of this change but a combination of factors over a period of years. These will be looked at in more detail in Section 6.

As well as a change in the language itself, with regard to its structure and vocabulary, English is also being used throughout the community in a number of situations. The sociolinguistic aspects of language use will be looked at in more detail in Section 5.

To understand something of the Tiwi situation it is important to look at the historical background.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It seems that before the early 20th century there was little contact between the Tiwi islands and the mainland and what contact there was was primarily hostile. This can be seen in that the Tiwi culture, while fundamentally being the same as that of mainland Aborigines, has some distinct features (see Hart and Pilling 1960:10).

Contact with other outsiders, such as Malays, was also mainly hostile, though Malay influence can be seen in the material culture, such as in the use of dugout canoes. The first contacts with Europeans were also hostile. An attempt by the militia in 1824 to establish Fort Dundas, near the present site of Pularumpi on Melville Island, was unsuccessful. This was in part due to the hostility of the Tiwi people.

Gradually as there were more contacts, through expeditions to the islands and through shipwrecks, the 'Tiwi were drawn out of their hostile insularity by curiosity and their desire for iron' (Hart and Pilling 1960:28).

In the early 20th century Joe Cooper went to Melville Island to hunt the buffalo which had become wild since the militia left. He took with him a number of Iwaidja men, equipped with horses and guns. Through these men the Tiwi learned more of the outside world. The influence of the Iwaidja can be seen in the number of Iwaidja loan words still used in the language.

In 1911 a French priest, Father Gsell, established a Roman Catholic mission on the south-eastern tip of Bathurst Island, at the present-day site of Nguiu, directly opposite Joe Cooper's camping site on Melville Island.

Father Gsell had with him some Filipino workers. When some nuns also joined him later he was seen by the Tiwi as a 'big man', since a Tiwi man's wealth and importance was measured by the number of wives he had. At this stage Tiwi men allowed their women and children to go to the mission.

Father Gsell's policy was to concentrate on the children through the setting up of a school. He persuaded the Tiwi to allow boys who wished to do so to stay at the mission and attend school. He also hoped that with the arrival of the nuns the girls too would be allowed to stay. In 1916 there were 40 Tiwi children and 25 part-Aboriginal children attending the school. It seems that the latter 'were brought from Darwin in an effort to establish some permanency' (Pye 1977:36). However, although girls were allowed to stay for short periods, when they reached puberty, their husbands claimed them.

Tiwi custom was such that no woman or girl could be unmarried. A girl was promised at birth (or even before birth) to a man the same age as her father or older. When she reached puberty the girl would be claimed by her intended husband. As soon as a man died his wives were remarried to other men. A young man's first wife would then be the widow of an older man. Usually she was a lot older than him.

This marriage custom was changed through an action of Father Gsell's in 1921 after a young girl had repeatedly fled to him for refuge rather than becoming the thirteenth wife of an old man. He arranged with the girl's husband to 'buy' her in exchange for some goods, such as calico, axes, knives, flour. She then became his 'wife'. This began a practice which continued for many years, so that Father Gsell later became known as the 'bishop with 150 wives' (Pye 1977:41-42; see also Gsell 1956).

The girls were brought up in a dormitory by the nuns and when they reached marriageable age they were married off to younger men, but apparently ones who were still considered to be in the 'right' marriage relationship traditionally (Hart and Pilling 1960:108). This dormitory system for girls operated until the end of 1972. The Tiwi were never compelled to put the girls in the dormitory, though it appears that the majority of Tiwi women were brought up in it. There was never a dormitory for the boys though there was a school which the boys could attend.

Following World War I, another contact which had considerable effect on the Tiwi, or at least on some Tiwi of southern Melville Island, was Japanese pearlers. These provided a lucrative source of trade, providing goods in exchange for access to Tiwi women. This was discouraged by the government who broke up the Tiwi camp and sent patrol boats to warn off the Japanese. However, the operation was simply moved north to near the present site of Pularumpi (formerly known as Garden Point).

A ration station was set up by the government at Garden Point (Pularumpi) in 1937 in an effort to prevent the continuation of the trade with the Japanese pearlers. This was later moved to Snake Bay (now known as Milikapiti) when an orphanage was set up at Garden Point for part-Aboriginal children. The orphanage was instigated by the government but set up and run by Catholic nuns.

In 1967 the orphanage was disbanded and the children moved to Darwin. People who had been living at Garden Point all along and also some of the orphanage children, who had grown up, married and had families of their own, stayed on. Also a number of Tiwi from the Bathurst Island Mission were encouraged to settle there.

Over the years the people moved from their nomadic way of life 'out bush' to a more settled lifestyle centred around the three settlements. At the Mission, a number of lay people helped to establish the settlement. Gardens were established, and a herd of cattle introduced and kept. As well as the schools (both boys' and girls' schools) a hospital was built. Also houses were built for the Tiwi.

In 1964 the right to drink was given to the Aboriginal people and in 1967 citzenship was granted. Up until this time Aboriginal people were 'protected'. The right to drink has had serious implications for the change in the structure of the society and indirectly in the change in the language.

2. TIWI LIFE TODAY

Today most of the Tiwi live in the three settlements: Nguiu on Bathurst Island and Pularumpi and Milikapiti on Melville Island which are now towns, with elected councils. Nguiu has a population of about 1200 people including 60 Europeans most of the time (some of whom are only temporary). Pularumpi and Milikapiti are roughly the same size with about 200 - 300 people each, including a small number of Europeans. At Pularumpi there are a number of part-Aboriginal people who have returned there to live. A small number of men work at Pikataramoor, a forestry village in the south of Melville Island. A number of older people have also settled at Paru, Joe Cooper's old camp site, opposite Nguiu. There is quite a lot of movement between the settlements.

Each of the three settlements has a certain measure of independence and some say as to which Europeans may live and work there or even visit. Today there is a thriving tourist industry, with regulated guided tours to Nguiu and Milikapiti. New tourist camps have recently been established on both Bathurst and Melville Islands.

At Nguiu there are a few industries established, such as Tiwi Designs (silk screening), Tiwi Pottery, Bima Wear (silk screening and sewing), Pima Arts (carving and artefacts) and a timber treatment plant. Although other industries, such as a fishing company, have been attempted at various times at the other two settlements as well as at Nguiu, none seems to have continued until the present.

In all three places, some of the people are employed in maintaining the community in some way, as teachers and teaching aides, health workers, garage mechanics, store workers, council employees, housing and construction workers etc. Others receive unemployment benefits (which are equivalent to those received elsewhere in Australia). Much of the work in the community is government subsidised or from outside grants.

One internal source of revenue in each community (besides the industries mentioned above) is the clubs, which make their money from the sale of alcohol.

In each place there is an Adult Education programme which over the years has run a number of different courses, such as basic maths and English, carpentry, sewing, cooking, art, driving, silk screening.

So over the years the society has changed from a hunter-gatherer one to one based on a money economy. Most people have fairly substantial housing with electric stoves, washing machines, and in some cases refrigerators (or even freezers). Most families have a transistor radio and/or cassette recorder, and whatever else they may lack few families lack a TV (usually a coloured one), with a number of people having video machines. Although people have houses, much of the living is done outside, particularly in the dry season when some of the older people will sleep outside around the fire. In many cases the houses are constructed in such a way that they have a breezeway with rooms either side, or a large central section which has just wire screens. The TV will often be just inside the doorway of a room but the people watching it may be sitting outside.

Food is mainly bought at the store and consists mostly of flour or white bread, sugar, tea, rice, meat (either frozen or tinned). Fruit and vegetables and other things (including goods ranging from axes to televisions) are available and people will sometimes buy these if they have enough money. Also food from the 'Take-away' is very popular.

When the people have money they generally use it up fairly quickly and it often does not last the two weeks between pays. A considerable amount of money in the community is spent on beer. Gambling has become a popular pastime which circulates a great deal of money in the community.

These days hunting and fishing is mainly a weekend pastime, though people will sometimes go out during the week when the money is low. Also during the long school holidays in July, in the dry season, many of the people go 'bush', at least for part of the time.

Although most people are now Roman Catholic, some of the traditional ceremonial life is still carried on, particularly the 'pukumani' ceremonies concerned with the death of a person. These are normally held as well as a Catholic burial service. The significance of the actual ceremonies seems to have changed, at least for those who are keen practising Catholics. Young people take part in the dances at these ceremonies but it seems to be only the old men and women who do the actual singing.

The Tiwi are caught between two cultures, desiring the benefits from the European culture but also wanting to retain some of the old ways and their own identity. This is reflected in what has happened and is now happening to the language and in people's attitudes to the change in their language.

3. THE PRESENT LANGUAGE SITUATION

The verbal repertoire of the Tiwi people can be characterised by at least five 'languages' or codes: Traditional Tiwi (TT), Modern Tiwi (MT--a modified/simplified traditional Tiwi), New Tiwi (NT--an anglicised Tiwi), Tiwi-English (TE--a Tiwiised English), and Standard Australian English (SAE)[2]. This last is not actually spoken by most Tiwi people but there is considerable contact with it (in school, through increased contact with Europeans, through radio and television) and many have a fair understanding of it.

These codes, while having characteristics which distinguish them from each other, are not discrete entities but merge into one another along a spectrum. Each has its own varieties within it. For instance, within New Tiwi there is a difference between the more formal style used in story telling on tape and elicited speech and the less formal style used in spontaneous speech. Also the New Tiwi used by children is different from that used by adults.

The Tiwi code used by a person is largely dependent upon the age of the speaker but not exclusively so. While most young people do not command much TT (their understanding is greater than their production), older people do appear to command NT to some extent and usually use it in speaking to younger people. In addition to the diversity of codes the situation is made more complex by the 'switching' of codes. This is discussed further in Section 5.

4. THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE IN THE LANGUAGE

4.1 TRADITIONAL TIWI (TT)

Traditional Tiwi is a polysynthetic language, with the verb having an extremely complex internal structure. It is one of the 'prefixing' languages of north-western Australia but it has not been found to be directly related to any other language. The verb is able to take a number of affixes (mainly prefixes), indicating such things as subject person, direct or indirect object person, tense, aspect, mood, time of day and distance in time or space. There may also be incorporated into

the verb adjuncts or forms which give some other nominal, stative, or verbal meaning.

(1) **ampi-nu-watu-ma-j-irrakirningi-miringarra**
she.NP-LOC-morn-with-CON-light-sits

'she (sun) sits over there in the morning with a light'

(2) **pi-rri-mini-wujingi-pirni**
they-P-me-CONT-hit

'they were hitting me'

(3) **Yinkiti nga-ma-wun-ta-y-akirayi.**
food we(incl)-SBVE-them(DO)-EMPH-CON-give

'We should give them food.'

Another verbal construction in TT consists of a free form verb which carries the basic meaning and an inflected auxiliary which can carry the same inflections as an independent verb. The class of free form verbs which occurs in this type of construction is small and even in TT (or a modified form of it) may be expanded by the use of English loan verbs.

(4) **papi ampi-nu-wati-ma-j-irrakirningi-mi**
come out she.NP-LOC-morn-with-CON-light-do

'she (sun) comes out over there in the morning with a light.'

(5) **morliki nga-ma-wun-ta-m-amigi**
bathe we(incl)-SBVE-them(DO)-do-CAUS

'we should cause them to bathe'

(6) **yoyi pi-rru-wujingi-m-am-ani**
dance they-P-CONT-do-MOV-HAB

'they would dance moving around (from place to place)'

4.2 NEW TIWI (NT)

Although there are other changes in the young people's speech from the traditional language, such as phonological changes, changes in vocabulary, in noun classification and in syntax, it is in the nature of the verbal constructions that the greatest change has taken place. The New Tiwi as used by young people is no longer polysynthetic but has

become more isolating. Most of the verbal inflection has been lost, with periphrastic, analytic verb forms replacing inflected verbs. Some of the common TT verb stems (or approximations of them) are known and may be used in more formal speech. Concepts which are expressed within the TT verb (sometimes also by a word or phrase) are expressed only by a word or phrase in NT.

The verbal construction in NT comes from the TT verbal construction discussed above but there are fewer inflections on the auxiliary. Also the small class of free form verbs has been expanded by a greater use of loan verbs from English and also some simple imperative forms from TT. In NT basically the only inflection on the auxiliary is the prefix(es) marking subject and tense, though these are normally changed phonologically.

(7) NT: **wokapat yi-mi**
walk he.P-do

TT: **yi-p-angurlimayi**
he.P-CON-walk

'he walked'

(8) NT: **lukim ngi-ri-mi nginja**
see I-CON-do you(sg)

TT: **ngi-rri-min-j-akurluwunyi (nginja)**
I-P-you(sg)-CON-see you(sg)

'I saw you(sg)'

(9) NT: **tamu ji-mi**
sit she.P-do

TT: **ji-yi-muwu**
she.P-CON-sit

'she sat'

Young people may use some of the affixes marking aspect, particularly the continuous action prefix **wujingi-** (or the changed form **wujiki-**).

(10) NT: **yoyi** **a-wujiki-mi**
dance he-CONT-do

TT: **yoyi** **a-wujingi-mi**
dance he.NP-CONT-do

'he is dancing'

(11) NT: **yujim** **pi-ri-m-ani** **numoriyaka**
use they.P-CON-do-HAB spear

'they used to use spears'

In NT some aspects and moods are given by loan words from English, such as: **stat** or **sat** 'start', **tra** 'try', **jut** or **shut** 'should', **ken** 'can'.

(12) NT: **Jirra tra ju-wuriyi kirrim ji-mi warra.**
she try she.P-go get she.P-do water

'She tried to go and get some water.'

(13) NT: **Sat pastimap yi-mi nayi Jipin.**
start bust.up he.P-do that Steven

'He started to bash Steven up.'

(14) NT: **Ngawa ken ku japuja.**
we can go home

'We can go home.'

The examples above are written in most cases in an orthography which is as close as possible to that used for TT. In actual speech young people tend to drop the initial **ng** (or even the first syllable of the pronouns, saying **awa** instead of **ngawa**, **ija** or **ja** for **nginja**). Most of these examples are also in a fairly formal style as they contain auxiliaries derived from TT. In less formal speech young people tend not to use auxiliaries, using more free form pronouns and depending upon time words or the context to indicate the tense.

In NT there is considerable use of loan words from English. In the speech of young people, particularly children, these may include words for which there is a Tiwi equivalent, such as **pijipiji** for 'fish'.

In general, NT can be said to be an 'amalgam' of Tiwi and English, in other words a 'mixed' code. This is distinguishing 'mixing' from 'switching' which the author sees as a 'looser' operation (see Section 5), though it is often hard to tell where mixing ends and switching begins.

4.3 MODERN TIWI (MT)

In MT (i.e. a style, or a range of styles, between TT and NT) people use more TT verb stems then in NT but do not have the same richness of expression in the verb forms as in TT. In general the incorporated forms and a number of the affixes, particularly those indicating whether an action was done in the morning or evening and the object prefixes, are left out. These are expressed more by free form words or understood from the context.

(15) TT: **(Japinari) yu-watu-mini-pirni.**
morning he.P-morn-me(DO)-hit

'He hit me in the morning.'

MT: **Japinari yi-pirni ngiya.**
morning he.P-hit me

'He hit me in the morning.'

Another feature of MT (or at least the MT used by young people) is the loss of distinction between first person plural inclusive and exclusive forms, as is also the case in NT.

(16) TT: **ngimpi-ri-majirripi**
we(ecxl).NP-CON-lie.down

'we (but not you) lie down'

nga-ri-majirripi
we(incl)-CON-lie.down[3]

'we (including you) lie down'

MT: **nga-ri-majirripi**
we.NP-CON-lie.down

'we lie down'

(17) TT: **nginti-ri-majirripi**
we(excl).P-CON-lie.down

'we (not you) lay down'

nga-ri-majirripi
we(incl)-CON-lay.down

'we (including you) lay down'

MT: **nginti-ri-majirripi**
we.P-CON-lie.down

'we lay down'

5. THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION

Language use depends upon a number of factors. One such factor is domain of behaviour or interaction, as proposed by Fishman (1968, 1971, 1972). Some relevant domains in the Tiwi community are traditional ceremonies and songs, home or camp, church and related activities, school and related activities, work, commercial activities (shop, bank etc), government and administration, and recreational activities (gambling, 'beer' club, films and television, football and sport, children's play etc).

An overriding factor influencing the speech in most of the domains is the presence or absence of Europeans and the interaction with them. If a European is included in the conversation English will be used, unless he or she has a knowledge of Tiwi, but when that European is excluded from the conversation there will be a switch to a style of Tiwi.

The only domain in which TT is used exclusively is that of traditional ceremonies and songs, though the language used by those not actually taking part in the ceremony at the time may be in other styles of Tiwi or even in English.

The language of administration is English, though some pamphlets and posters have been translated into Tiwi, and occasionally something a government department wants communicated may be translated and put on tape to be circulated within the community. In council or general meetings there seems to be some switching between English and Tiwi, probably depending upon what Europeans or part-Aboriginal people are present and also perhaps depending upon the topic under discussion.

Another domain in which mainly English has been used is the church, since there are also a number of Europeans at Nguiu and a number of mixed race people at Pularumpi. This seems to have varied to some extent over the years. It seems that Father McGrath (1927-48) preached in Tiwi (Pye 1977:61). There would have been fewer Europeans in the congregation then. These days at Nguiu the situation is changing so that there is more and more Tiwi being used in the service, such as a number of hymns in Tiwi (mainly MT), some Scripture reading and some of the prayers and liturgy.[4]

Also some of the traditional style dancing is incorporated into parts of the service. Nearly every Easter a passion play is performed in traditional Tiwi. This was made up several years ago and in itself has become a tradition.

Until 1974 the basic language used in the school was English, though it seems that, in his teaching, Father McGrath used some Tiwi, probably as a starting point in teaching English. In 1974 bilingual education was commenced at St Therese's School at Nguiu.[5] Although it was realised at the time that children were no longer speaking the traditional language, it was decided for various reasons to conduct the programme in it. One of the reasons was the concern by the older people that the children did not know the language properly and their desire for them to be taught it in the school. This meant that an extensive oral Tiwi programme needed to be introduced as well as literacy in the language.

Over the years the approaches taken in the programme have varied as different teachers and teacher-linguists have been in charge. It has been found that the language used has had to be simplified to some extent, so that the language now used in the school programme is a style (or several styles[6]) of Modern Tiwi. There is a gradual transfer to oral and written English with a little education continuing in Tiwi in the higher grades. Informal instruction in the classroom is often given in New Tiwi with some switching to English.

There are no formal bilingual programmes at the schools at Pularumpi and Milikapiti. When the programme from St Therese's school was introduced into the government school all sorts of problems arose, mainly because of the lack of understanding of the language situation, the nature of the programme and the lack of training of the teachers and teacher aides to implement it.

In the other domains, the use of Tiwi or English seems to depend mainly upon the interlocutors, and to some extent the actual setting and/or topic. The interlocutors also determine in the main the style of Tiwi used. In talking among themselves older people (over about 45 or 50)

will mainly use TT (or a modified version of TT[7]) but even in this situation will switch to Tiwi-English (TE) at times.

When there are people of varying ages present, there is much switching from one style to another, normally depending upon the person addressed. However, there are times when there seems to be no apparent reason for switching from one code to another. Hatch speaks of 'internal switching' as concerning 'language factors, fluency of the speaker and the ability to use various emotive devices' (1976:202). The following example shows this type of switching. The speaker, a young woman of about 23, is addressing a slightly older young woman.

(18) NT: **Aga, yingampa kakijuwi wuta ku ka jata playin.**
hey(f) some children they go in charter plane

TE: **en sekan wan i was finish**
and second one he was finished

NT: **waya, ap arra palatmen, awinyirra Polin,**
now well he pilot that(f) Pauline

TE: **shi was ka frant en tat palatman jas went in**
she was at front and that pilot just went in

NT: **apawu yimi nayi arrəmkamini awarruwu ....**
well he.did that(m) something there

'Hey, some of the children were going by chartered plane. And the second one (or next one) had gone. Well that pilot (Pauline was up at the front) and that pilot just got in. Well, he did something in there.' ....

This type of switching is common in the speech of bilinguals who are proficient in both languages (though the codes may not be recognised as standard by monolinguals in either). It is 'very persistent whenever minority groups come in close contact with majority languag_ groups under conditions of rapid social change' (Gumperz 1971:316) and where children grow up speaking the two languages.

6. REASONS FOR THE CHANGE IN THE LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE USE

The change has come about through the combination and interaction of a number of factors, some of which have been implied in preceding sections.

The nature of the Tiwi language itself, with its complex verb morphology, is a probable factor in the development of NT. Based on a few studies of the acquisition of languages with relatively complex morphology, it is reasonable to assume that, even before extensive contact with English, Tiwi children would not have developed the full range of affixes and incorporated forms (and the morphophonemic variations of these) until relatively late, perhaps into their teens or early adulthood.[8] In order for these to develop children would need a readily available model, either by frequent interaction with adults or with older children who in turn are in contact with adults.

However, in the Tiwi situation after the coming of Europeans, children were introduced to school and to English. Furthermore there was the dormitory for the girls which meant even less contact with Tiwi adults. When the girls entered the dormitory (some as young as six) their language would hardly have fully developed as they appear to have had little regular contact with their families at that time. Probably, over the years, the language model presented by older girls to younger ones moved further and further away from the traditional adult model. Many women, even women of 50, have commented to the author that they did not learn Tiwi properly until they married, well past the age when language is naturally acquired. This means that the model they presented to their children would have differed from the norm of the men's speech. This in turn would have affected the language learned by boys growing up.

This situation could account for the sort of changes one finds in MT, viz. the simplification of the verbal constructions and changes in pronunciation, with the use of some English loans. However, it does not account for the drastic change involving the loss of the use of most Tiwi verb stems and almost all the verbal inflection. It seems to the author that this type of change can only be attributed to the processes of pidginisation and subsequent creolisation. However, it is not a standard case of these processes, which normally occurs in a multilingual situation rather than a simple bilingual one.

Most languages described as pidgins and creoles have closer links to the dominant language than NT has to English. Although a pigdin English has been used at various times by Tiwi people and it has influenced both NT and TE, it has not become a lingua franca. Although NT shares a number of features with the pidgin and creole languages of northern Australia, there is no evidence that it has arisen from them.

Most young Tiwis have not had their primary socialisation in TT (or even MT), so that by the time they enter school they have not developed even a simplified style of Traditional Tiwi. These days adults and older children speak to young children in a 'baby talk' Tiwi (as well as a

simple TE).This baby talk is basically a casual form of NT (i.e. with no or few TT-derived inflected verbs or auxiliaries). It has some phonological differences from TT, such as y for r.

Baby talk seems to be a common feature in Australian Aboriginal languages as well as in a number of languages around the world (Leeding 1977; Buyumini and Sommer 1978; Brown 1977:20; Ferguson 1977).

In view of this and because of the complex morphology in Tiwi it seems highly probable that even before contact there existed a baby talk style of Tiwi. One feauture in today's Tiwi baby talk which probably derives from an earlier version is the use of the singular imperative form of a verb as a free form verb. (See example 9.) There was probably a point in time when adults started using more English loans, including verbs, in their baby talk. This may have been an attempt in the past by parents to facilitate their children's learning of English at school, just as the switching of adults to simple English when talking to children today is an attempt to prepare children for their changed society in which English is seen as necessary.

Although some adults attempt to teach their children or grandchildren 'proper' Tiwi, this seems to consist mainly of vocabulary items (such as the names of things) and not the complex verbal forms. Most people at Nguiu seem to leave the teaching of the traditional language to the school. The older people expect the school to succeed where they have failed with their own children who are now young adults. In those families where there are grandparents or other elderly relatives, the children have more opportunity to hear TT spoken, but these days children seem to spend little time in interaction with older adults.

With the change in the society over the years there has been an increasing need for people to learn English to interact with Europeans. Since most of the Europeans work in the Tiwi communities for only about two years, there are few who learn Tiwi beyond the superficial level of everyday phrases and some vocabulary items.

Because of the vast differences between Aboriginal and European culture and world view it has been found that the council and the various business enterprises function more efficiently with non-Aboriginal 'bosses'.[9] Therefore in order to communicate with Europeans in a work situation as well as socially people have needed to learn English to some extent.

Over the years a number of boys and girls who have shown potential have been sent away to high school, sometimes as far as Melbourne. This has improved their English ability considerably. Trainee Tiwi teachers attend Batchelor College, 60 km south of Darwin. From time to time

other people attend different courses or conferences, mixing with other Aboriginal people and whites.

Also with the introduction of air transport together with money into the community it has meant increased freedom to move to and fro between the Tiwi islands and Darwin. Although each of the settlements has its own hospital with nursing sisters and Tiwi health workers (and in more recent years a doctor based at Nguiu but for the three communities), the more serious cases are sent into Darwin for treatment. A number of people have actually moved into Darwin for various reasons. Sometimes people will just go into Darwin for the day or for a few days, to attend a football match or a concert, to get beer, or to visit relatives.

A number of people have made trips further afield to other parts of Australia. Some have even travelled overseas, such as when a group went on a pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem in 1975 and when a later group travelled to Fiji to dance.

With the advent of firstly radio and occasional films into the communities and later television and videos, there has been an even greater exposure to English. Children and young people can be heard singing the latest pop songs and the jingles of the television advertisements. People spend their evenings around the television rather than around the camp fire telling stories.

Even when the children are not in school they do not seem to spend a great deal of their time interacting with adults, many of whom are often engaged in their own pursuits. This means that the children do not get a lot of exposure to either TT or MT outside of school, except when traditional ceremonies are held. Even then, unless a child is actually dancing he/she is often playing with others on the fringes of the group.

With the greater exposure to the 'outside world', it is not surprising that the Tiwi communities are now bilingual, though there is a vast range of proficiency in both Tiwi and English throughout the communities. While most people acknowledge the need for children to learn English to cope with the change in the society, there is also a sorrow at the change which has taken place in their own language and the threat of its eventual extinction. Their language is seen to be vital to their identity as Tiwi people. With many people this seems to be their feeling though they are not willing to try to do anything about it or are at a loss as to know what to do. However, a number of people are keen enough to want to try to halt the change and to even reverse it.

7. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SURVIVAL OR REVIVAL OF TIWI

A number of linguists and anthropologists over the years have been interested in the Tiwi language and culture. This has probably encouraged the Tiwi to have a pride in their language and culture. There seems to be a sense of rivalry between the communities as to which one speaks the more 'proper' language and adheres more closely to the traditional ceremonies.

The fact that people do sometimes get away in family groups 'out bush' for a few weeks during the dry season does give some time when children may have more exposure to the language. However, this would probably depend upon the composition of the groups and how much time was spent in traditional activities, such as hunting and stories around the camp fire.

Some Tiwi has been used in the church services and a number of priests over recent years have shown an interest in the language. This has probably helped to stimulate the Tiwis' interest in their own language.

In recent years there has been interest among young people in making up Tiwi songs in MT, both religious and secular. One stimulus for this is the annual eisteddfod run by the 'Mothers' Club'. This has sections for both English and Tiwi songs, traditional and modern.

While the bilingual programme in the school does not appear to be influencing the way children and young people actually speak to any great extent (at least among themselves), it does seem that their comprehension of Tiwi has improved and also their production in certain instances, such as the telling of stories of what they have done.[10] The bilingual programme has certainly awakened interest in the language in general.

Over the years there have been some differences of opinion between the author and those in charge of the bilingual programme with regard to the place of NT in the education system and in literacy in general.

When the author has asked young people who have not been through the bilingual programme but who are literate in English if they would like to learn to read in Tiwi, the response has often been that 'it is too hard'. The author has attempted to overcome this by producing some literacy material in NT, to show that any language can be written and that the language of the young people is as important as any other. These materials are in a formal style of NT, but using Tiwi vocabulary as much as possible and some of the more commonly used NT verb forms. These have mainly been comics, since it was felt that NT might be more accepted at first in a less formal presentation. A later book on Tiwi

foods was produced with each story in the three styles of Tiwi, with the explanation to people that young people can start reading what they know (i.e. the NT version) and can then progress to the MT version and even to the TT version.

In language courses she has had for teacher trainees, she has tried what she thought was the best way to get young people writing for young people, in whatever style they were comfortable in. This has involved getting the writers to just write a variety of stories, first of all as they think or speak naturally, then to edit it putting it into a more 'proper' style if they wanted to (which most did). The author has tried to convey the idea that there are different aims in writing but that one of the main aims is to communicate something. And therefore in writing the readers and the language of the readers need to be considered.

In these courses the author has tried not to denegrate the TT nor MT but to help the participants to understand the verb structures of TT and so to use their reading skills to tackle the TT reading material. This material has been produced over the years either for adults or for use in the school.[11] The participants and others in the school programme have been encouraged to see the need of developing a standardised MT which can be taught in the school and used in written materials.

By writing down NT the author seems to have inadvertently 'stirred up a hornet's nest'. Although the materials have been apparently accepted and enjoyed by some people, a number have objected to seeing NT in writing. The author sees this in one sense as being positive, in that it may have stirred people to the extent that they see the need to do some language planning and development.

Most people, especially those who are in the bilingual programme, can see that: (i) the change in the language has progressed too far for children, and even older young people, to suddenly go from speaking NT to understanding and speaking TT, (ii) there is a need for an intermediate stage and (iii) ways need to be developed for expressing the more complex moods and aspects (not just straight narrative style which so far most of the reading material is in).

Because of the strong reaction from influential members of the community, the author is drawing back from producing materials in NT. She and her S.I.L. colleague hope to act as catalysts in helping the school, church and community to work out suitable forms of expression in MT which are fairly standardised, yet allowing individual expression.

Another project which may help to preserve the language to some extent is a dictionary. The author, using data collected over the years by her colleague and from other sources, has started to put this onto computer.

This is seen as a way to help the Tiwi people to preserve their language. It is also a project in which the Tiwi people themselves can have input. As people work on the checking of entries and finding new words it may also help to stir up more interest in the community in the survival of the language and in thinking what they can do to prevent it dying out.

8. TIWI OR NOT TIWI, THAT IS THE QUESTION

In summing up, as it can be seen from the discussion above, the Tiwi language situation is an extremely complex one. It is a very sensitive issue for many of the Tiwi people. The traditional language can only be acquired in all its intricacies through the regular and consistent use of it in the home and camp environments. However, this is an impossible situation as many of the parents of the children, being young adults themselves, do not speak the traditional language as their first language. The situation may be saved if older people are willing to concede to a simplified form of TT as being acceptable. Even so, a concerted effort with the support of the community as a whole would be needed for such a style of Tiwi to be established as the norm.

The author does not see such a style of Tiwi necessarily being used in all situations since English is here to stay. Also NT as a style for normal speech and interaction between young people is probably too firmly entrenched to be ousted. However, if a standardised form of NT is developed, one which is not too hard for the majority of young people to want to learn, then it may become a 'high' form of young people's language which is used in writing and in other formal settings.

What actually happens in the community only time will tell. It seems though that the Tiwi situation may be one in which the language may survive, though in a modified form, for some time yet. It is up to the people to make a concerted effort to keep it strong and to ensure that it continues. Since the Tiwi people want to keep their own identity and since their language is very much a part of this, then it may have a chance.

NOTES

1. The writer, a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, commenced looking at the changes in the language in 1978-9, under the auspices of the Northern Territory Department of Education and the Australian National University. Further field work was done in 1980.

Both these periods of field work were mainly done at Pularumpi, but with some work at Nguiu and a little at Milkapiti. Her findings were subsequently written up in a brief report to the Department of Education and for a PhD thesis. Since then she has continued to work on the Tiwi language, mainly at Nguiu, under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, in the area of linguistic and literacy work, and some translation.

2. The terms 'Tiwi' and 'New Tiwi' used here are the styles respectively called 'Less traditional Tiwi' (LTT) and 'Modern Tiwi' in the author's thesis (Lee 1987). The reason for the change is that Tiwi people themselves are now calling a modified traditional Tiwi 'Modern Tiwi'. The terms 'New Tiwi' and 'Tiwi-English' are the author's own.

3. The form is the same form past and non-past for this class of verb.

4. From all accounts this is also happening at Pularumpi and possibly Milikapiti, which share a priest.

5. St Therese's school has both boys and girls up to and including Grade 5. In Grade 6 the boys go to Xavier Boys' school run by the Christian Brothers and the girls continue at St Therese's. Both schools have some post-primary classes.

6. As the author sees it, there has been as yet very little actual language planning and working out of just what forms to teach, so that it seems that, over the years, there has been quite a lot of variation in the written materials. This variation is in the forms (particularly verbal forms - see Section 5) and in spelling and could cause considerable confusion to children who are trying to learn a form of the language which is not their natural way of speaking.

7. Only the older men seem able to use the really hard 'proper' traditional language.

8. Some studies of language acquisition in languages with relatively complex morphology are on Egyptian (Clark and Clark 1977:338-9) and Hebrew (Berman 1981).

9. A money economy and traditional Aboriginal culture do not mix very well. Aboriginal people who are in positions of authority have much pressure placed upon them, particularly from their relatives.

10. The author has noted, through informal testing and observation, that young people who have been through the bilingual programme are able to tell stories of what they have done, particularly as it relates to traditional type activities, such as hunting, using appropriate MT verb

forms and inflections. However, when it comes to telling stories about what they will do, are about to do, or how to do or make something, then they revert to NT, except for some very common verb forms. They seem able to handle the past tense prefixes but, in general, not the non-past forms.

11. Some of this material is written with children in mind and so the content is for children but the language has proved too hard for them.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAUS	causative	IO	indirect object
CON	connective	MT	Modern Tiwi
CONT	continuous	NP	non-past
DO	direct object	NT	New Tiwi
EMPH	emphatic	P	past
excl	exclusive	pl	plural
FRUST	frustrative	SAE	Standard Australian English
IMP	imperative		
incl	inclusive	SBVE	subjunctive
IO	indirect object	sg	singular
HAB	habitual	TE	Tiwi English
LOC	locative	TT	Traditional Tiwi
MOV	movement		

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